

TRAVEL

Monday, February 3, 1992 (A&F)

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Photos courtesy of San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau

At Sea World on Mission Bay, the star attraction is Shamu, the performing three-ton killer whale.

A whale of a race

San Diego hosts America's Cup Challenge

By Martha Stevenson Olson
New York Times Syndicate

Although the changeable winds of financial fortune may have brought a chill to preparations for the 28th America's Cup Challenge, which began its trial matches here on Jan. 14, the weather in San Diego is expected to remain sunny and warm, as usual.

And the veneration the competition inspires, along with the revenues it is expected to bring, may yet redeem the embattled America's Cup Organizing Committee and the cup's defender, the San Diego Yacht Club.

Dennis Conner, who in 1987 won back the America's Cup he had lost to Australia in 1983, and then successfully defended it against a New Zealand challenge in 1988, says tepid funding means he has had to stick with his one and only boat, the Stars & Stripes.

Most of the other teams — at last count there were 10 challengers registered from nine countries as well as another American team competing to defend the cup — will have built at least two boats in the process of selecting one to represent them in the races, several syndicates have built four, at a total cost of up to \$40 million.

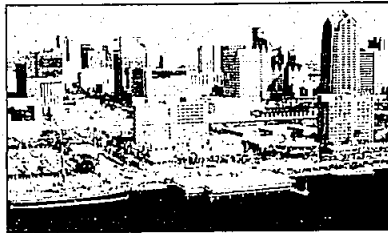
Many of the yachts are already installed at various berths around San Diego, and last-minute secrecy — or uncertainty, in the case of the Russian and Yugoslav entries — surrounds the arrival of the remaining boats.

This year's yachts must be constructed to be lighter and faster than the previous racers.

The 1992 race course has been designed for excitement as well. One S-shaped leg of the course ends with boats lacking almost 200 degrees around the home buoy, and the downwind fast leg of the race gives a possible advantage to the second-place boat.

Races began Jan. 14 with a series of round-robin elimination races to determine which foreign boat will challenge which American one during the America's Cup Match, a best-of-seven series of races scheduled to begin May 9.

For those wishing to attend the races a variety of packages has been organized by America's Cup Services, Travel Desk, at 600 West Broadway, San Diego, Calif. 92101. For more information call (609)



San Diego's modern skyline is nestled between the mountains on the east and the Pacific on the west.

922-8792 or (619) 233-0010.

These packages include airport transfers and a choice of hotels as well as tickets on race observation boats, admission to the America's Cup Museum in La Jolla, Sea World or the San Diego Zoo, and access to a hospitality area called the America's Cup Club.

Rates range from \$221 a person in double occupancy for a three-day stay in budget accommodations during the beginning matches, which end March 25, to \$987 for a six-night stay in a luxury hotel during the America's Cup Match in May. Observation-hut tickets only, with daily rates ranging from \$30 to \$150, can be reserved from the same address or by calling (800) 662-6652.

SIGHTSEEING

Providing a little extra excitement, at least in the race's early stages, should be the annual migration of gray whales, whose route to their birthing grounds in Baja, Calif., takes them near the race course site off Point Loma at San Diego Harbor's north end. One of the best land vantage points for viewing whales, yachts and the city skyline is Cabrillo National Monument at the tip of Point Loma. Crowning the point is a restored lighthouse dating from 1854.

There is a glassed-in whale-watching station on the bluff and free movies about whales at the visitors center. Admission is \$3 a vehicle; those containing a United States resident over 62 years old get in free. For more information call (619) 537-5490.

The San Diego International Visitor Information Center, at 11 Horton Plaza, San Diego, Calif. 92101, offers a list of organizations that offer whale-watching trips through March, along with much other information. Call (619) 537-5490. If it's trained whales you want, a visit to Sea World, at 1720 South Shores Road, is in order. Its 135-acre site overlooking Mission Bay holds 29

exhibits and five shows with trained animals. It's always fun to watch Baby Shamu, a relatively pint-sized orca, follow her mother in a crowd-pleasing act.

"Small Wonders," a self-guided tour of the park's breeding successes, will open March 1. The park is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the winter. Tickets, which are sold only until 3 p.m., are \$23.95, \$16.95 for children 3 to 11. For more information call (619) 236-3901.

The San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park is difficult to absorb in just a day, although people-movers such as the Skyfari aerial tram help. Double-decker bus tours leave regularly from near the front gate and cost \$3, children \$2.50.

In one exhibit, "Gorilla Tropics," great apes interact in a rain-forest habitat, within arm's length of the separating pleiglass. The zoo's endangered-species breeding program ensures that on most days there will be some unusual babies on view.

The zoo is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$12, children 3 to 15, \$4. For more information call (619) 234-2100.

Adjacent to downtown Balboa Park, its 1,074 acres redolent of ecstasies, the Balboa Park Visitors Center, open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. In the centrally situated House of Hospitality, offers maps and information about special events as well as a \$9 museum passbook.

"Whales, Giants of the Deep," five moving, life-size robotic cetaceans, opened Feb. 1 at the San Diego Natural History Museum, at 1788 El Prado. The museum also holds a sclerograph, a display of minerals and exhibits devoted to the ecology of the desert, intertidal areas and the sea. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. For more information call (619) 232-3821.

CULTURE

The San Diego Opera's season includes "The Marriage of Figaro" by Mozart Feb. 8 to Feb. 19, and "The Rape of Lucretia" by Britten Feb. 29 to March 11. Tickets are \$12 to \$60. For more information on performances at the Civic Theater, at 34 and B streets, call (619) 236-6510.

Freewheeling spirit of '60s survives in Amsterdam shops

By EVERETT POTTER
special writer



Amsterdam has an air of individuality. The city was at the center of the '60s youth movement, a position that was clinched in 1969 when John Lennon and Yoko Ono chose to have their honeymoon "Bed-In for Peace" at the Amsterdam Hilton.

What a difference a couple of decades makes. Nowadays, honeymooners can stay in the Hilton's newly remodeled "John and Yoko Honeymoon Suite" for \$670 per night — which includes airport transfers by white Rolls-Royce. (For information call the Hilton International at 800-445-8667.)

The freewheeling spirit has survived in many tiny Amsterdam shops that are tucked into the narrow streets, some of which are as quirky and independent as their owners.

At Droombos, owner Martine Both sells quaint handmade boxes. For more information contact Droombos, Oude Leliestraat 1, 1016 BD, Amsterdam or call 011-31-20-62-1075.

A relatively new shop is called Oprichting. Owner Johan Bosma sells items that have to do with architectural themes. Indeed, the term "in oprichting" loosely translates as "build up."

For more information contact In Oprichting, Herestraat 38, 1015 CD Amsterdam or call 011-31-20-639-2852.

A shop owned by Burt Quist is called De Witte Tandewinkel, which means the "white teeth shop." Quist sells toothbrushes in all shapes and sizes, including the familiar Oral-B and others in the shape of dogs, snakes and pandas.

For more information contact De Witte Tandewinkel, Runstraat 5, 1016 GJ Amsterdam or call 011-31-20-623-3443.

For more information on Amsterdam's shops contact the Netherlands Board of Tourism, 355 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017 or call (212) 370-7367.

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