

TRAVEL

Visitors to Hawaii take ride down volcanic mountain

By HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

On a cool morning in March, Canton residents Bob Bulmer and Tim Carter coasted down a volcano.

It was just another wonderful day in paradise - Hawaii.

This was the fifth trip for Bob and Nancy Bulmer.

"I had never wanted to go, then we had an opportunity to go in 1984 to a time share condo on Kauai," Bulmer said. "It was great. We've gone five times, and I would go again in a heartbeat."

The Bulmers have done the usual tourist things - the visit to the Arizona Memorial marking the attack on Pearl Harbor ("It gives you goosebumps"), the Polynesian Cultural Center and

Lush life: The deep greens and blues of Hawaii could be seen from the Bulmer's condominium.



If you go
Biking: Mountain Riders, 220 Lolo St., Suite 5, Maul, Hawaii 96733. 1-(800)706-7700.
Whale watching: Pacific Whale Foundation, 201 North Kihel Road, Kihel, Maui, Hawaii 99753. 1-(800)942-5311.

a helicopter ride on Kauai. "We've never been ripped off and there are only two things I would never do again," Bulmer said.

He said a luau on Oahu made him feel like cattle being herded and a train ride on the Quauquo Railroad was a very

expensive view of messy backyards.

But this year, sharing a time share condo with Tim and Diana Carter, included two special activities, the bike ride down a volcanic mountain and whale watching.

Bulmer, retired from Chrysler, was working at McCabe Funeral Home when he got the chance to go again to his favorite place.

"We had this opportunity to go for \$780 a week for four people," Bulmer said.

At the condo, day excursion operators set up shop by the pool and that's where Bulmer found out about Mountain Riders, a van ride up a mountain and bicycle coast down.

"We got up at 2:30 in the morning to go on this crazy trip," Bulmer said.

Nancy Bulmer opted to stay on the beach, and once up on the mountain top, Diana Carter decided to take the van down.

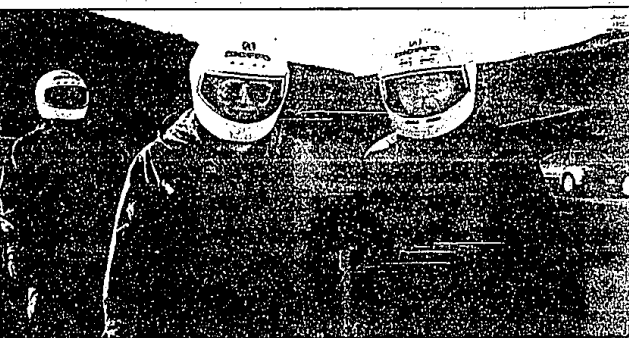
"It's the best maintained highway on the island because satellite communications are on the top," Bulmer said.

The early start was so that Mountain Riders could have their group among the first to go.

Bulmer and Carter wore out-fitted like spacemen in motorcycle helmets and warm, bulky clothing to ward off the morning chill.

"They ask you a bunch of questions, like when was the last time you rode a bike. At our mid-60s we were the oldest, the youngest were in their mid-20s," Bulmer said.

After being served coffee and rolls in 41 degree temperatures,



Ready to go: Robert Bulmer, left, and Tim Carter are suited up for their ride down a volcanic mountain.

the bikers waited 2-1/2 hours for sunrise. Mountain Riders were the second group out. Carter and Bulmer took the back positions, 12 and 13.

"The sign at the shelter said we were at 9,640 feet elevation," Bulmer said.

The bikes, no gears and hand brakes, coasted down at 25 to 30 miles an hour, as bikers held to the center of the lane. The van followed behind and would signal the bikers to get over when cars stacked up behind them. The mountain was a popular spot for sunrise watchers.

"It was a nice constant speed, there was one spot where ground

leveled off and we pedaled for 200 yards," Bulmer said. "We stopped three times on the way down. You could see we were even with the clouds."

Before setting off, one of the guides took breakfast orders from all the riders. About half-way down, at about 9 a.m., the bikers stopped at the town of Makawao to have breakfast at Polli's Mexican Cafe. At the Cafe, bikers took off the heavy gear as temperatures began to rise.

The ride ended at Baldwin State Park in Pain, where bikers cooled their feet in the surf waters of the Pacific.

One of the biking guides led the Bulmers and Carters to the Pacific Whale Foundation where his wife worked. It was another early morning as the foursome had to be on the boat at 6 a.m.

A 30-40-foot catamaran carried 25 people out to watch for whales.

"We had 10 whale sightings," Bulmer said.

He said he has video shots of a baby whale leaping over its mother.

If you've got a time share deal, Bulmer would gladly go again to experience the special activities of Hawaii.

GREAT ESCAPES

Great Escapes features various travel news items. Send news leads to Hugh Gallagher, assistant managing editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (313) 691-7278.

CONCORDE CONTEST

Detroiters are invited to dress up as their favorite space traveler to celebrate the "Year of the Concorde" and compete to win a trip to London during British Airways "Concorde '98 ... Ride the Rocket" exhibit traveling to Detroit Aug. 13 at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village.

The first 600 costumed participants to register for the "Come Dressed as Your Favorite Space Traveler Contest" will be eligible to compete in a costume contest to win one of 50 pairs of British Airways round-trip economy class tickets to London. Contest

registration begins at 11:30 a.m. with judging at 1:30 p.m.

In addition, visitors to the exhibit may enter a drawing, part of a \$1 million ticket giveaway to win the trip of a lifetime - a trip for two on Concorde plus three nights at the luxury Millennium Hotel in London. One winner will be chosen in each of 22 cities across the United States. The Detroit winner and guest will join the other winners

and guests for a gala reception in New York before departing for London on Saturday, Nov. 21.

The "Concorde '98 ... Ride the Rocket" exhibit will be open to the public at 9 a.m. Aug. 13 in front of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. The exhibit features the largest collection of Concorde memorabilia ever assembled in the United States. The exhibit also features a Concorde model, authentic pieces of

Concorde history, interactive activities on the future of supersonic travel, space travel and a multimedia flight experience.

For more information, call 1(800)-AIRWAYS or check the British Airways web site at www.british-airways.com/ride-the-rocket.com

MICHIGAN TRAVEL IS A BARGAIN

A survey by AAA has found vacation costs in Michigan this year to be the 20th lowest of the 50 states.

Michigan's average daily vacation cost for food and lodging for a family of four (two adults, two children) is \$196, according to AAA's survey. As in past years, the survey found North Dakota to be the state with the lowest

average daily vacation cost, \$191 and Hawaii the most expensive at \$383.

The national average for vacation costs, according to AAA, is \$218, which means vacationers in Michigan save approximately 10 percent from the national average. The national average is up \$19 from the summer of 1997, according to AAA.

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