



## FROM MICHAEL'S DESK

A lot has happened since we last communicated - and not all of it bad. Most, but not all. Being a "glass-half-full," optimistic kind of chap, I think it's time to review some of the good things that 2020 has brought.

Number one on the list has to be the arrival of Wyatt Michael Matson on March 1st. Kelsey and Craig have had plenty of time at home to nurture little Wyatt through his first 6 months! If you have to isolate, I guess there are worse things than spending time with your newborn. We are, however, relieved to welcome Kelsey back to work this month, part time.

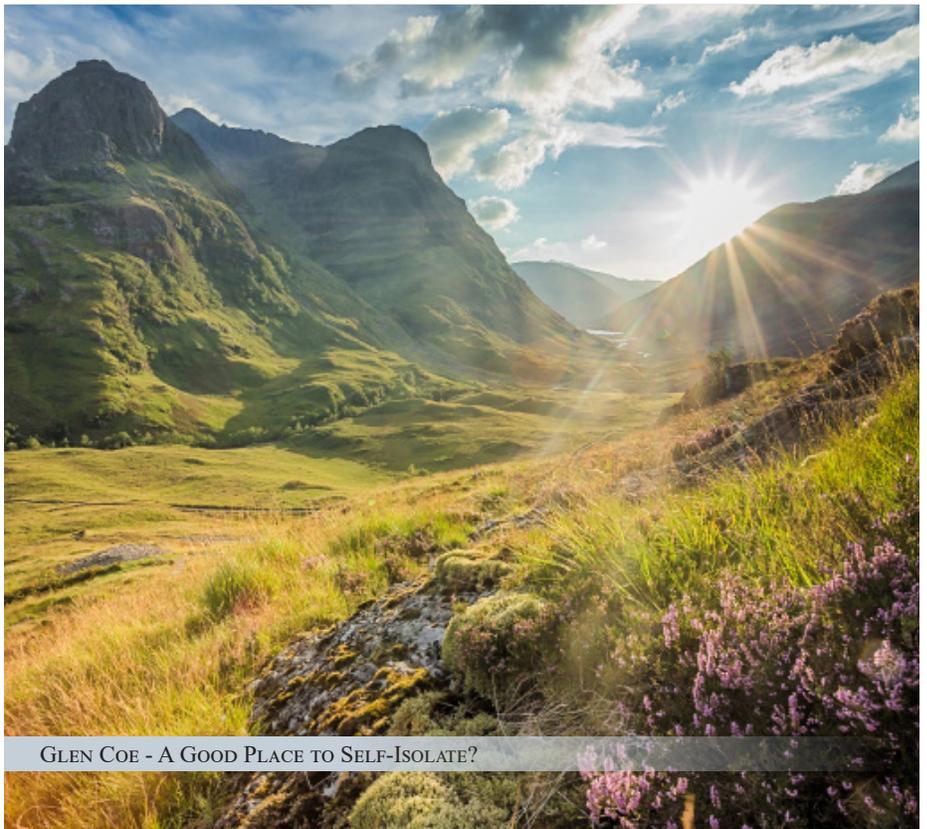
The other high point is that we have survived - so far anyway. It has been a truly awful time for the travel business in general, and for international tour operators in particular. I feel fortunate that our small footprint in the industry has enabled us to have the flexibility to adapt to circumstances much more easily than the larger companies, many of whom are suffering simply unsustainable losses. Really a case of the bigger they come, the harder they fall.

And finally, we have to thank the loyalty of our many regular travellers. Many of you have had the faith in us to transfer your deposits to trips for next year, rather than accept a refund - and that has really helped us to weather this storm. Thank you.

Michael Induni, President

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GLEN COE - A GOOD PLACE TO SELF-ISOLATE?

## TRAVEL IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

When will it be safe to travel again? A question on many people's minds at the moment. Strangely though, my crystal ball seems to be more than a little cloudy these days! For many people that I've talked to, the answer is an unequivocal "not until there's a vaccine," and hopefully that appears to be not too far off. There is one country that says it has one already, but I, for one, am certainly not going to be anywhere near the front of the line to volunteer to try it!

For now, and realistically, for the rest of this year, international travel is just not practical for Americans. Apart from the personal risk involved, other countries are really not keen to have us at the moment, requiring a 14-day isolated quarantine period on arrival in the destination country. This makes going on a 10-day tour logistically very complicated! On a personal note, our son, Sam, is due to return to the University of Winchester in England mid-September and, even though he has British nationality, he has to quarantine for 14 days. So, we are all going over at the end of August and hunkering down in a lovely country cottage Air bnb, near where my brother lives in Somerset, to keep him company in his isolation before he can return to university. As they say, it's hard work, but somebody has to do it. It will also be interesting to see first-hand just what is involved in travel in the time of Coronavirus.

Back to the original question, we are basing our future plans on being able to start running trips again in March of 2021 (with one possibility in late February). This is based on the assumptions that a). there will be a vaccine by then. b). there has not been a complete economic breakdown and consequent collapse of western civilization over the winter. c). that European countries will have lifted their travel restriction on visitors from the US by then. You can see a preliminary list of planned offerings in this newsletter.

Given that all the above conditions are met, we are then going to be taking the following extra precautions on every tour to ensure the safety of our passengers:



NO TOURISTS!



1. Wearing face masks in public will be mandatory for all tour participants and each passenger will receive two re-usable cloth face masks prior to departure for use throughout the tour.
2. Hand sanitizer will be provided every day on vehicles and in hotels and restaurants.
3. Tour guides will always have been tested for Covid-19 before the start of each tour (we suggest, but cannot insist, that each passenger also get tested before leaving the US).
4. Where possible, we will always use a larger than necessary vehicle in order to give people more separation while travelling from one destination to another.
5. Hotels and restaurants will always be chosen for their ability to follow strict social distancing and hygiene regulations.
6. Whenever we can, we will arrange private visits and tours of sites to minimize contact with other larger groups of tourists (remember that all our own tours are limited to a maximum of 15 passengers).

The thing that probably scares me the most about our upcoming trip to England is the getting there. It will be very interesting to see how social distancing actually works (or doesn't) in an international airport. Will people keep six feet apart at the check-in counter? At the security screening lines? In the line to board the aircraft? How crowded will it be inside the terminal? I'll be able to report back on my return.

I am not so worried about the six or seven hours spent on the plane itself. I have read that the air filtration systems on modern jets are very thorough, using advanced HEPA filters (there was a good article on this in the NY Times recently). One thing to consider when booking your ticket is that the more you spend, the greater will be the distance between you and other passengers. If you ever needed an excuse to treat yourself to business class, here is the ideal reason – not only will you be much more comfortable but you will be a full six feet away from anybody that you don't know! Start saving up those frequent flyer miles now!

Happy - and safe - Travels, *Michael*

## PARTNERSHIPS & PRIVATE TOURS

In times like these, we need friends more than ever and Discover Europe is proud to have many! Two deserve a special mention here: Sandi Tynk has been running 3 or 4 tours a year with us since we started and, although she has now retired as Director of the Barrington Community School (for Continuing Education), she will still be offering **Travels with Sandi**. In this newsletter, she has; *St Patrick's Day in Ireland* (Mar 15 - 22), *The Chelsea Flower Show* (May 12 - 20) and *Sorrento & the Amalfi Coast* (May 19 - 29). There is also going to be a trip to the *Menton Lemon Festival* in February!

Newly rebranded as **The Culture Concierge** (formerly The English Manner), we are very happy to continue working with Alexandra Messervy, once a vital part of the Royal Household staff. Alexandra brings her own special insider knowledge to behind the scenes visits to English Stately Homes and Gardens on *The Gardens of England* (May 15 - 25), *Exploring Wessex* (Sept 18 - 28) and *Yorkshire & the Lakes* (Oct 1 - 13).

**And for 2021, we are expanding our ability to design and operate private tours for couples or small family groups. Want to make sure you keep safely socially distanced? This is the way to do it!**

## IN MEMORIAM

2020 has certainly been a hard year and we have lost 2 good friends in the last few months (unrelated to Covid-19), to whom we would like to pay a small tribute. They shall not be forgotten.



Nobody who met her would ever forget **Judy Pike!** Every year since Discover Europe started, Judy brought a group of 14 female friends on a 2 week custom-designed tour of Europe - usually with David Phillips

as the tour guide. She delighted in the name that her grandchildren gave her - Grandma Sparkles - and she certainly lived up to it. Every year, on her return, Judy would say "it was the best trip ever!"



**George Tynk** has left some big shoes to fill. Again Discover Europe has been working in partnership with George's wife, Sandi, from the very first year of operations in 2001. George and I disagreed on most

things - but he was the person that I most enjoyed disagreeing with in the world. His wicked wit and keen intelligence will be greatly missed - especially by his family and the grandchildren that he adored.

**TC**

Discover Europe is proud to follow the TourCare guidelines. TourCare are health and sanitation guidelines developed by the tour industry's major global associations: the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA), The Canadian Association of Tour Operators (CATO) and the European Tourism Association (ETOA). The guidelines can be downloaded at <https://ustoa.com/r/ustoa-filemanager/source/covid-resources/tour-care-guidelines-for-tour-operators.pdf>

## STAY CONNECTED!

Want to stay connected with Discover Europe throughout the year? If so, sign up for our email list to learn more about our tours, see special offers, and learn about new blog posts.

To join, email us at [Info@discovereuropeltd.com](mailto:Info@discovereuropeltd.com) and let us know that you'd like to join our list.

## CURRENTLY SCHEDULED TOURS

### ENGLAND

#### IN SEARCH OF THE CORN WALL <sup>3</sup>

Join tour guide Gavin Miller for a trip down memory lane to his childhood family vacation destination, Cornwall.  
APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup> - MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> 2021

#### LONDON ON STAGE <sup>1</sup>

A theatre tour designed for the Peterborough Players professional theatre company, hosted by their artistic director Gus Kaikonen and celebrated actor Kraig Swartz.  
APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> - MAY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2021

#### TREASURE HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND <sup>3</sup>

See the full glory of Britain's Stately Homes set against the backdrop of a magnificent, full-blown English spring.  
MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> - 12<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### THE BEST OF ENGLISH GARDENS <sup>3</sup>

Our annual homage to the Chelsea Flower Show and gardens of southern England.  
MAY 11<sup>TH</sup> - 20<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW <sup>1</sup>

An alternative way to see Chelsea this year. Hosted by Sandi Tinyk, this tour spends a whole week in one hotel outside London, taking various day trips to fabulous gardens.  
MAY 12<sup>TH</sup> - 20<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### THE GARDENS OF ENGLAND <sup>2</sup>

Exploring great gardens in conjunction with our partners at *The Culture Concierge* and hosted by Alexandra Messervy.  
MAY 15 - 25<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### GARDENS OF THE NORTH <sup>3</sup>

Visit the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show and explore the gardens of Yorkshire and the Lake District on this horticultural adventure.  
JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup> - 16<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### TOUR ACTIVITY LEVELS

**1 Easy.** These tours stay in just one hotel, taking day trips into the surrounding countryside. This means that participants are always free to skip a day's activities and rest up at the hotel. The hotels on these tours either have elevators or ground floor rooms. Participants must still be able to walk moderate distances, stand for short periods, and be able to get on and off a bus unaided.

**2 Moderate.** Staying in no more than two different hotels, which may not have either elevators or ground floor rooms. Climbing stairs will thus be required. There will also be a moderate amount of walking involved in visiting sites and spending time on one's feet in museums, gardens, etc.

**3 Moderately Active.** These tours will change hotels at least 3 times and require more walking, sometimes over difficult or uneven terrain. Often includes walking tours of city centers. Even on these tours, most daily activities are not compulsory and there will be ample opportunity to rest.

### THE COTSWOLD HILLS <sup>2</sup>

Experience the quintessential English countryside of the Cotswolds with day trips to Oxford, Stratford, Bath and many more.  
JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> - 19<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### DISCOVERING EAST ANGLIA <sup>2</sup>

Experience life in a country house hotel with popular guide Gavin Miller in the region where he grew up.  
JULY 16<sup>TH</sup> - 24<sup>TH</sup> 2021



HEVER CASTLE

### VICTORIA & THE CROWN <sup>3</sup>

Celebrate the life and legacy of Queen Victoria on this tour tracing her life from London, to the Isle of Wight and Windsor.  
AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup> - SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 2021

### TREASURE HOUSES OF NORTHERN ENGLAND <sup>3</sup>

From Yorkshire to the Lake District, journey behind the usual tourist facade and explore the remarkable natural beauty of the north and its stately homes.  
SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> - 26<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### EXPLORING WESSEX <sup>3</sup>

From the chalk downlands of Sussex to the Jurassic coast of Dorset, we will explore the most beautiful landscapes, homes and castles in southwest England.  
SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> - 28<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### YORKSHIRE & THE LAKES <sup>3</sup>

A collaboration with our partners at *The Culture Concierge* for an in-depth look at regional culture and countryside.  
OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> - 13<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### FRANCE <sup>3</sup>

**NORMANDY, BRITANNY, AND THE LOIRE**  
From the rolling beaches of Normandy to the romantic beauty of chateau country - the loveliest regions of France.  
SEPTEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### ICELAND

#### THE LAND OF FIRE & ICE <sup>2</sup>

Experience Reykjavik and the Icelandic countryside and explore the geological forces that created this unique island.  
MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup> - 30<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### IRELAND

#### ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN IRELAND <sup>3</sup>

From Dublin to Killarney, experience the full breadth of Irish hospitality, during the ultimate Irish celebration - St. Patrick's Day!  
MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> 2021

### ITALY <sup>1</sup>

**SORRENTO & THE AMALFI COAST**  
From Mount Vesuvius to the azure grotto of Capri, spend a week in the beautiful Amalfi Coast.  
MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> - 29<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### SCOTLAND

#### SKYE & THE HIGHLANDS <sup>3</sup>

The breathtaking landscapes and the dramatic legends will surely have you leaving your heart in the highlands.  
JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> - JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### JOURNEY TO THE NORTHERN ISLES <sup>3</sup>

Whether your interest is natural history or ancient worlds, the Orkney & Shetland islands are a must-see destination.  
SEPTEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### SPAIN

#### THE CANARY ISLANDS <sup>2</sup>

Join us for a winter getaway and visit the two largest islands in this Spanish Archipelago - Gran Canaria & Tenerife.  
MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup> - 17<sup>TH</sup> 2021

#### THE PILGRIM'S WAY <sup>3</sup>

Trace the Way of St. James on the ancient pilgrimage route along the north coast of Spain from Bilbao to Santiago.  
APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> - 15<sup>TH</sup> 2021

### WALES

#### WALES & THE WELSH BORDERS <sup>3</sup>

Ancient market towns, mountain peaks, coastal villages and romantic ruins characterize this journey into the heart of ancient Wales, led by native Welsh tour guide Adrian Metcalfe.  
SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021



EILEAN DONAN CASTLE

## CUSTOM TOURS

In addition to those listed here, Discover Europe also runs tours that are custom-designed for a variety of organizations such as, Smith College, Tufts University, Vassar College and many others. Although these "sponsored" tours are not listed here, they are often available to non-members upon request.

Discover Europe can also organize private tours for groups of 2 to 20. Please contact us for details.

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TRIPS:

CALL: (866) 563-7077 • E-MAIL: [info@discovereuropeltd.com](mailto:info@discovereuropeltd.com) • VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.discovereuropeltd.com](http://www.discovereuropeltd.com)



SUMMER 2020

VOLUME XVIII NUMBER 2

# INTO THE HEART OF EUROPE

THE NEWSLETTER OF DISCOVER EUROPE LTD.

## THE VIRAL ISSUE

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



GUESS WHO?

## BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE - PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT

At Discover Europe, we totally understand people's reluctance to sign up for a European tour during this period of economic and social turmoil. It is a large investment to make in an uncertain future. So here is our plan to take the stress out of the situation. We believe that we have found a way for you to sign up for a tour in the future with absolutely no risk involved should you need to cancel.

Trip insurance is obviously a good thing but, as a lot of our readers have undoubtedly found out, it comes with the dreaded "fine print." Many people whose travel plans were tragically interrupted this year had purchased trip cancellation insurance only to discover that it did not cover pandemic outbreaks. Even those who purchased the "cancel for any reason" option found out that it didn't actually mean "any" reason - and then, even if the claim was successful, it didn't cover 100% of the trip cost.

With the exception of one small group at the end of February, who cancelled so last-minute that we could not recover all of their prepaid hotel and other costs, Discover Europe is delighted to be able to announce that none of our passengers who had signed up for tours in 2020 have lost any money. Some of you (thank you) have elected to roll deposits over for future travel and others have received full refunds, but we want to ensure that this can continue in the future, so we have a plan.

We call it the **Payment Protection Plan** and full details will be found in the terms and conditions on our registration form. In a nutshell, the highlights are these:

1. You have to purchase "classic" travel insurance through Discover Europe. This will be with our regular provider, Allianz, and is still necessary to cover emergency medical and other issues that may arise on your trip.
2. You then pay a flat fee of \$400 (the equivalent of what you would pay to upgrade a policy to "cancel for any reason") to enroll in Discover Europe's **Payment Protection Plan**.
3. If you have to cancel and Allianz denies your claim, then Discover Europe will refund all trip payments made by you, whatever the reason for your cancellation.
4. And here's the best bit - if you do not use it, then the fee for the **Payment Protection Plan**, can be rolled over to your next Discover Europe trip.

This way you are absolutely guaranteed a full refund and the plan only costs you if you use it. I don't know how we could make it safer!



THE CHATEAU DE CAMON