



Discover Europe Ltd.
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In This Issue . . .



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Into the HEART of EUROPE

THE NEWSLETTER OF DISCOVER EUROPE LTD.



POSTCARD FROM "OLD" EUROPE

Croatia has just become the 28th member of the European Union and this got me thinking - always a dangerous proposition. Just what is the basis of this Union? Well, obviously all the countries involved share one of the 7 continents that make up the land masses of our planet, but beyond that what is the coherent cultural or social glue that holds this sometimes fragile coalition together? What does it mean, if anything, to be "European?"

Donald Rumsfeld famously set the cat amongst the pigeons when he used the expression "Old Europe" to draw a distinction between different parts of the continent. Although I think the implication in his dismissive usage was that the longer established countries of western Europe were stuffy and set in their ways (i.e. not quick to agree with him), the use of the word "old" also upset the people he was trying to align with. Nobody really likes to have thousands of years of their cultural heritage ignored.

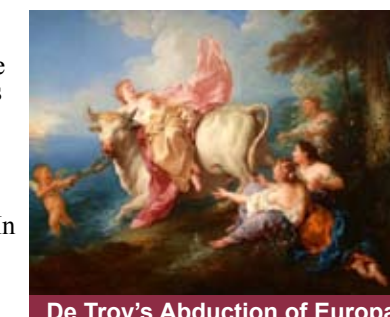


Minoan Palace, Crete

Unfortunate though his choice of words may have been, we do sort of know what he meant and, in these days of political correctness, it is dangerous ground to tread. European immigrants came to America in huge numbers and brought with them a very "Eurocentric" view of the world. There is a very commendable trend these days towards a more inclusive world view - why shouldn't Asian history be given just as much time and weight as European history in this country that lies between the two? Perhaps Donald Rumsfeld was right and we should be shrugging off our ties with the old and embracing the new. The future is in Asia!

That's all well and good, but if you are from European stock then you cannot escape the fact that the way you think was molded not by Confucius or LaoTzu, but by Plato and Aristotle. It doesn't stop you studying Confucius, but in order to "know thyself" you need to understand your own cultural roots and for an awful lot of us, that means the cultural roots of "Old" Europe. Which brings me neatly back to my original question: what are those cultural roots?

Being an old European, I cannot help but consider the question in terms of my "classical" education. So obviously it all began with the abduction of Europa (as depicted rather flamboyantly above by Noel-Nicolas Coypel). Briefly, the story goes that the beautiful Phoenician princess, Europa, was frolicking on the seashore with her handmaidens when mighty Zeus took a fancy to her. He turned himself into a bull, persuaded her onto his back, and then rushed into the sea and swam with her all the way to Crete, where she founded the Minoan dynasty, the oldest known "civilization" on the European continent. In another footnote to this myth, it was Cadmus, Europa's brother, who came looking for her, founded Thebes and brought the first alphabet with him.



De Troy's Abduction of Europa

Last Call for Fall . . .

The Stately Homes of England, Sept 3 - 11
A repeat of our *Downton Abbey* tribute tour following the success of the April and July departures.

England's West Country, Sept 19 - 28
London to Land's End by train and then winding our way back by road.

Linger in the Languedoc, Oct 4 - 12
An extended stay at the Abbaye Chateau de Camon with day trips exploring the region from Carcassonne to the Pyrenees.

Rome, Florence & Venice, Oct 17 - 26
The "big three" of Italian cities - a great introduction to this wonderful country.

A Mystery Tour?, October 18 - 26
A celebration of the great English Mystery writers - plus a day trip on the Orient Express.

The Glory of Greece, Oct 24 - Nov 2
Athens, Corinth, Mycenae and Delphi - the highlights of mainland Greece.

Thanksgiving in Mallorca, Nov 22 - 30
A week in paradise - with no cooking and cleaning. Find out why Gavin lives here.

Christmas in Scotland, Dec 21 - 29, 2013
A stay in Edinburgh and then Christmas in a Scottish castle. Stay on for Hogmanay.

Group Travel for Individuals

At **Discover Europe** we strive to create rich travel experiences with a difference. Each unique tour is limited to 5 - 15 people and guided by an expert with a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm. But don't just take our word for it; here's a sample of what some recent travelers had to say about their tours and/or tour guides:

I love the small group travel with Discover Europe. This was my 14th tour with you and I hope to have many more.

Fran Plunkett, **Paris & the Loire Valley**

I cannot imagine going to Britain (or anywhere else) without you, Michael, being in charge. Looking forward to the next trip!

Ann Williams, **A Cotswold Spring**

I got a cricket ball through my hotel room window at The Crown of Crucis, but just had to surrender it to a plaintive request of - "Can we have our ball back!" So Gavin gave me one he had found in the grass and I did get a souvenir.

Denise Bricknell, **The Best of English Gardens**

Discover Europe offers a wide selection of well-crafted itineraries, but we will also customize a trip to your specifications. Whether it's a family reunion, a business trip, a school vacation, or simply a celebration, we can help you plan the ultimate escape to Europe.

For more information, contact **Discover Europe** toll-free at 866-563-7077; contact us via e-mail at discovereurope@earthlink.net; or visit our web site at www.discovereuropeltd.com.



Dubrovnik

July and August are typically fairly quiet months for us - our sophisticated travellers know not to go when it's too hot, too crowded and too expensive - so I'm going to grab a little time off in France and England this summer before the fall rush starts.

We do have some places left on our fall trips and they are listed in this newsletter. Why not join us?

Michael Induni, President

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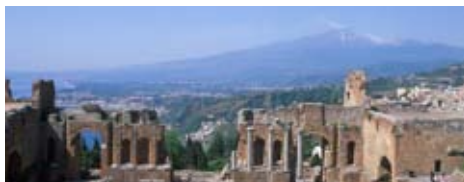
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The Minoans were a seafaring people and spread their influence to southern Greece where they met with the Hellenes, an Indo-European people from the north who had mastered the use of the horse for transport and warfare. The blending of the two cultures gave rise to the Mycenaean civilization, which in turn led to classical Greece and the rest, as they say, is history.

So what we have lurking behind these myths and legends is a tradition that the civilization that first began in the fertile crescent of the middle east was brought to Europe by sea from the coast of Phoenicia (what is now Lebanon and Syria), first to Crete and then from there to mainland Europe. This Greek culture was blended with, and absorbed by, the Romans who then spread it and their form of civilization over a large part of the European continent – coincidentally (?) pretty much the same part that Donald was referring to when he spoke of “old” Europe.

And, even less coincidentally, this does seem to be the same part of Europe that is the focus of most of our tour programs. Yes, we have run trips to Iceland, Scandinavia and Poland, but not many – the Europe that we are helping you discover is “old” Europe, because that’s where we find the history and traditions that have molded most of the institutions and customs that we live with today. A clue that this is the tradition that we heirs to, can be found in the sheer number of depictions of the scene of Europa’s abduction in great art. Apart from the two that I have included here, you can find paintings by Titian, Rembrandt, Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre and a host of others. So welcome Croatia, home of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian, to your rightful place among the union of European nations.

Michael



A New Puzzle: Another little historical test. What is ‘a surfeit of lampreys’ and who died from one?

The first correct solution will receive a \$200 discount off any trip listed in red in the next newsletter.

And a Solution: The “sun” of York to whom Richard was referring, in Shakespeare’s play was his brother, king Edward IV.

The first correct answer received was from Susan Stanbury of Peterborough, NH and she gets to deduct \$200 from the cost of any tour listed in red in this newsletter.

News & Notes

It’s Here! No, not the royal baby, although Prince George Alexander Louis of Cambridge has also arrived, I am talking about our long-awaited new web site. After a couple of false starts, I think that it has taken even longer to produce than the heir to the throne!

Go to www.discovereuropeltd.com and take a look. In addition to a complete listing of upcoming tours and a wealth of information about our company in general, there are a lot of new features - many of which allow and encourage your participation.

We have added a photo gallery that will allow you to share your pictures of your recent *Discover Europe* trip with us and fellow travellers. There is a live link to our Facebook page, where I hope you will become our friends and follow us as we post news, pictures and other items of interest on there.

There are video links to our YouTube account where you can watch our tour guides talking about the trips they do. There is a link to our new blog, where you can also add your comments. We have included the ability to sign up and register for tours on line. An interactive map makes searching for tours easier. A searchable database of previous tours provides suggestions and ideas for your own custom designed programs. We have included a whole section where we can post your trip comments. And then there is the “Resources” page, where you will find links to every kind of useful travel information you could possibly imagine!

No wonder it took so long to complete.

What’s in a Name? Excited as we are about our new web site, we cannot go to press with a tip of the hat and a tug of the forelock to the new heir to the throne. Most parents spend huge amounts of time agonising over the naming of their children. Multiply that by a factor of about a thousand and you might begin to



Our New Home Page

realize what William and Kate just had to go through.

Hard as it is to keep everybody happy, I think they have done a splendid job. First there is George - a good solid regal name with plenty of kingly precedent and it doesn’t hurt to honour your grandma’s father. Alexander is a less obvious choice. It may be a nod to those future subjects north of the border - there were 3 kings of Scotland named Alexander. Of course it could be just because they liked the name! My oldest son is named Alexander, so they do have good taste.

It is generally agreed that Louis is there in honour of Lord Louis Mountbatten, Prince Charles’ mentor and the Duke of Edinburgh’s uncle. Of course it may also be a not-so-subtle dig at our cousins across the English Channel. Louis was the single most common name for French Kings (they had 18 of them) and, after centuries of rivalry, the British monarchy has outlasted them all.

We are pleased to welcome His Royal Highness Prince George Alexander Louis of Cambridge to the world.

Putting on the Ritz. The Ritz hotel has become synonymous with luxury and prestige - but it all started at the Savoy.

The Savoy was founded by Richard d’Oyly Carte, the man who brought Gilbert together with Sullivan. He also brought together Auguste Escoffier, the great French chef and author of *Le Guide Cuilinaire*, with Cesar Ritz. While at the Savoy, Escoffier and Ritz formed the Ritz Hotel Development Company, setting up and staffing the new Carlton hotel in London and the Ritz Hotel in Paris.

D’Oyly Carte was understandably upset by this, especially when large amounts of wine and food, paid for by the Savoy, ended up at the Carlton and the Ritz. Both left the Savoy in 1898.



The Cliffs of Moher, Ireland

Wonderful though I am sure they both are, at the prices they charge, Discover Europe groups will not be staying at either the Savoy or the Ritz!

A Travel Tip. First let me confess that I do not remember who it was that passed along this useful nugget. I promise to do better next time and strongly encourage all our readers to pass along similar pieces of practical wisdom.

This one involves your luggage. Most frequent travellers have, at one time or another, had to deal with lost luggage. If losing it isn’t bad enough, you then have to waste all that time waiting for it to *not* arrive on the carousel and then filling in the paperwork. Here’s where you can make your life slightly easier - carry a photo (or two) of your luggage with you in your carry-on (or just have it on your smart phone). This will make it a lot easier when it comes to describing your suitcase.

Thanks to whoever it was who called us with this tip and please keep them coming.

A Small Change. It has come to our attention that those who live closer to us receive this newsletter sooner and thus have an unfair advantage in solving the puzzle. In future we are going to wait until we have a stack of answers and then draw the winner from a hat.

OUR FAVORITE HOTELS

Villa Cheta Maratea, Italy

This beautiful Art Nouveau Villa is situated just outside the town of Maratea in the Basilicata region of southern Italy. The views from the terrace restaurant as the sun sets over the Tyrrhenian Sea are breathtaking - as is the food! We are making our base here on *Tastes of Southern Italy* in May next year.



Villa Cheta

Itineraries for 2014

Please note that there are two types of tour shown here. If the tour name is in **Red**, then it is a regular Discover Europe tour with between 5 and 15 participants.

If the tour name is in **Blue**, then it means that the tour is being sponsored by an organization. These tours may well also be available, but as the circumstances vary from trip to trip, please call us first.

A Riviera Retreat, Jan 29 – Feb 3
A long weekend escape to Nice on the Cote d’Azur. Mild weather and great food.

Sicily: Island Crossroads, Mar 14 – 22
This ancient island has been home to the many civilizations of the Mediterranean.

Escape to Iceland March 20 – 25
Also Mar 27 - Apr 1. Two long weekends exploring the “Land of Fire & Ice.”

Barcelona & Mallorca, April 3 – 11
The vibrant city of Barcelona and an island paradise. Visit these two Spanish gems and then stay on for:

Spanish Panorama, April 10 – 19
From Madrid to Andalucia with visits to Toledo, Cordoba, Granada and Seville.



Palma Cathedral, Mallorca

A Greek Easter, April 18 – 27
Spend the Greek Orthodox Easter with the locals in the village of Tolo and then visit Delphi and Athens.

The Dalmatian Coast, Apr 24 – May 5
From Dubrovnik, up the coast of Croatia to Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.

Under the Tuscan Sun, Apr 25 – May 2
From our base in Montecatini Terme, we take trips into the Tuscan countryside.

Catalonia & Cathar Country, May 1 – 10
A trip for Vassar College to Barcelona and across the Pyrenees into southwest France.

Wales & the Welsh Borders, May 1 – 10
A circular tour of Wales - celebrating the centenary of Dylan Thomas’ birth.

Stately Homes of England, May 9 – 17
Another chance to join our tribute to *Downton Abbey* in partnership with The English Manner.

Tastes of Southern Italy, May 10 – 18
From stays at the Villa Cheta (see opposite) and in Sorrento, we sample the food and flavors of the region.



Castle Combe in the Cotswolds

The Best of English Gardens, May 13 – 22
Our annual homage to the Chelsea Flower Show and gardens of southern England.

Paris, Normandy & the Loire, May 22 – 31
A circuit in northwest France: Giverny, Mt. St. Michel, Chateaux and Paris too.

Island of Saints & Scholars, May 29 – Jun 7
Dublin to the west coast in the footsteps of the Irish literary giants.

Tales of Wales, June 4 – 14
An in-depth tour of Wales with Harvard Alumni Travel and Professor of Celtic Languages and Literature, Catherine McKenna.

Along the Pyrenees, June 6 – 14
Exploring Cathar country and the Basque region from Carcassonne to Bilbao.

The Pilgrim’s Way, June 12 – 21
Following on from the Pyrenees tour, we trace the Way of St. James to Santiago.

The Gardens of Ireland, June 12 – 21
Gardens, private and public from the west coast to Dublin plus a N. Ireland option.

A Cotswold Spring, June 12 – 21
An extended stay in lovely Stow-on-the-Wold. Quintessential English countryside.

Rome, Florence & Venice, June 19 – 28
A perfect introduction to Italy’s big three.

Jewels of Eastern Europe, Jun 26 – Jul 5
Exploring this historic region from stays in Budapest, Vienna & Prague.

Adriatic Crossroads, June 25 – July 14
A two part trip for Crow Canyon Archaeological Center from Ravenna to Croatia.

Britain in Bloom, July 7 – 16
The Hampton Court Flower Show and breathtaking private garden visits.

Discovering East Anglia, July 18 – 26
Experience life in a country house hotel with Gavin Miller in his home region.

Magic of Medieval England, Jul 25 – Aug 2
From Robin Hood’s Nottingham to the walled city of York. This is one the children (or grandchildren) will love.

For detailed itineraries, contact **Discover Europe** toll-free at 866-563-7077; e-mail at discovereurope@earthlink.net; or our web site at www.discovereuropeltd.com.