



The Sports Leisure

TRAVELER

4,747 Active Members • 60,427 Members Since 1979

JUNE | VOL. 47 | NO. 1 **2025**

Memories of Holiday Tour Preview Day – May 17th

Our appeal to bring pet food and human diapers brought out a massive collection of both, picked up by Loaves and Fishes (below). Both sessions played to large crowds (top and bottom right). Meanwhile, Mark and Clayton took time to pose for the camera and RoseMarie made some last minute notes behind the scenes at KVIE (middle right pictures). All in all, almost 400 people joined us on a perfect day at KVIE. Save the date: **2026 Tour Preview Day will be Saturday, September 20th at the Sophia (B St.) Theater.** Reservations accepted August 1.



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Editor Mark Hoffmann
Executive Editor Clayton Whitehead
Writers & Photographers **SLV** Staff



Just One Man's Opinion by Mark Hoffmann

Preview Day at KVIE

As the photos on the cover clearly show, our Spring Holiday Preview Day was well attended, and a big sales success. Nearly 400 gathered for two sessions at the studios for our local PBS Station. Thanks to all who attended. In lieu of an admission charge, we asked our travelers to bring donations of diapers for infants, and/or pet food. Just like in the past, our members responded with great passion to the opportunity to help someone else in the community.



George, from Loaves and Fishes, who came to KVIE and loaded up the "loot," was **really** happy. He said, "You are going to help us help a lot of people. When people's pets don't have enough to eat, it really hurts them. And the diapers, well you have so many. Really great. Thank you so much."

For those of you who were unable to attend, I know you won't be surprised to hear a few new trips sold out very quickly. But many of them still have space. Plus, we may not be done adding holiday tours in the next couple of months. Already a second **Christmas at the Ritz**, our annual two-night stay in Half Moon Bay has added a second departure, **December 7th**.

★★★★★★★★

Exciting Upgrades Coming?

At Preview Day, we solicited opinions on the concept of **Online Reservations and payments**. We have resisted while these policies have become the norm in our industry. We value the personal contact with you, our travelers. Plus, there is a reasonable part of our demographic for whom computers and all that come with them are not intuitive. Since we are not "kicking anyone to the curb," any new system needs a way for travelers to make reservations and do business one-on-one,

in person or by phone.

Based on the Preview Day responses, the payment idea would be particularly popular, although there are some (understandable) security concerns. This is a perfect opportunity for me to put our "sharing your information" policy in writing.

It's pretty simple. We don't share anything with anybody. You can browse our web site without us recording anything.

Ditto for credit cards. We don't save your info in our system. You have to give us your card number every time you call, because we don't keep it. That way, we cannot be responsible for it being stolen or misused in any way, because the information literally is not there for bad people to hack into.

If and when we accept payments online, we still won't keep your card info. Payments you make online will be submitted instantly, and once approved, the information will be deleted by the system.

Right now, you can make a **reservation request** online. You cannot select a seat, or even see if space is available. You are just letting us know, the next time we open for business, that you would like to travel. A new system would allow you to see available seats (like looking at an airline seat chart online), confirm space and seats, and make a reservation. We would then call you the next business day, to make sure everything is just like you want it, and make that personal contact.

A system like that would be particularly helpful to everyone on the days right after a preview day or newsletter mailing, when our phones just can't keep up.

The revelation that it was time to consider change came at a recent National Tour Association meeting. Over the years, **Sports Leisure** has often been a driving force, introducing fellow tour operators to new ideas and ways of doing business. Suddenly though, we found ourselves behind most people in the room when it came to technology.

First, we wanted to check in with many of you (that was the short survey at Preview Day). Now we talk to those who build our

technology, to know what is possible and what it will cost. Nothing will change for the next few months at a minimum.

You all have my personal assurance we are not leaving ANYONE behind. There will always be a way to pick up the phone or get in your car, and be able to talk to us. One reason we are a bit behind in this area (online payments and reservations) has been my personal reluctance to allow change. But I think now is the time to **gently** move forward. I will be listening for your comments, good, bad or in between as we move into today's world. And next time your grandkids brag about buying stuff online, paying bills, etc., you can amaze them with your own stories.

★★★★★★★★

47 and Counting...

While making our way across Nevada on **America's Loneliest Road, June 5-9**, we will celebrate a **Sports Leisure** milestone of note at our final night dinner in Carson City. The tour company that was officially born on June 8, 1978 will turn 47 years old. 50 years looms in the distance. Let's go there together.

And so it goes,

Mark Hoffmann, CTP

Owner/Founder (almost 46 years ago)



Soon, it will be time to head out on "The Mother Road," Route 66. The old highway celebrates its centennial in 2026, and we'll take you there.

ME Trips:

It has long been a habit of mine to take one or two ME Trips per year. I might be alone or maybe with a friend or two, but never with a group. Now there's NOTHING wrong with group travel (y'all know I love you, right?), but only when traveling outside the formal boundaries created by a set itinerary can I exhale and actually be on vacation myself. Too much structure or planning and the trip just feels like work! Past particularly memorable ME Trips include the Kingdom of Jordan, a South African safari, walking/eating/drinking myself across northern Spain on the Camino de Santiago, exploring the rather tragic beauty of Cuba and, of course, my almost-annual trip to LeMars, Iowa to have Blue Bunny Ice Cream for my birthday... peanut butter with a ribbon of dark chocolate, if you please.

Last year's ME Trip took me to a rather nebulous place called **The Baltic States**. I had to reach for the globe to determine *exactly* where I was going. Oh my! Their neighbor to the east is Russia! Thanks to Belarus, the troubles in Ukraine were a whole country away. I'd become friendly with a couple who live in Lithuania – Agne and Edvinas – fellow tour operators who are members of the National Tour Association. They invited me to come see their home and meet their family, so away I went.

It's a Long Way to Estonia. I decided to go a day early to have a ME Day before the official start of my ME trip. This gave me Sunday morning free in the capital city of Tallin, so I attended services at the historic cathedral located on a high hill overlooking the ancient, walled city center. It was the perfect place to start. With my soul and body refreshed, Edvinas picked me up that afternoon. Later we were joined by another friend, Jeff, also an NTA tour operator . . . and away we went!

Over the next seven days we experienced many of the wonders Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have to offer. With Edvinas at the wheel all Jeff and I had to do was sit back and take it all in. We ate wild boar, fresh-caught trout, smoked herring and eel, venison, plus

one of the best all-beef burgers I've ever had! (Rest assured there was no shortage of "normal" meat to counterbalance the more unusual options!) We toured antique castles and palaces that looked like Disney creations, but they were REAL. We drank the juice of fresh sea buckthorns in Latvia, Piana Vyshnia (which is actually a Ukrainian cherry liqueur popular in Lithuania), and excellent, locally-produced beers, ciders and wines in each country. We walked in the surf and collected shells from the Baltic Sea. We drove right up to a Russian border crossing for a photo op. Cause for alarm? Not really. It was unmanned, so the risk on both sides must have been pretty low.

In a car populated by tour operators, of course we discussed the possibility of Jeff or I bringing future tours to this region. I had to say, honestly, I didn't think it was on anyone's radar screen. Until I met my friends, it had not been on my radar screen, either. Perhaps the better question is *should* it be on your radar screen? My answer would be a resounding YES!

The Baltic States are an emerging tourist destination in Northern Europe. Presently it is undervisited and underpriced, yet high on culture, history and experiences that put them on par with anything I've experienced in Western Europe. Cities are clean and safe, surrounded by countryside populated

with rolling farmlands, dense forests and natural, unspoiled vistas. Smart, stylish accommodations are readily available. Restaurants offer a variety of local flavors alongside more familiar continental dishes. The Euro is the currency in all three States and English is widely spoken. Most places even offered menus and brochures in English to assure we felt accommodated and welcomed. If this sounds good to you, then ask us to place your name on the **Priority Notification List**. YOUR Baltic holiday is planned June 25 – July 6, 2026!

"Your Tour Guy,"

Clayton Whitehead, CTP
President



The famous "Hill of Crosses" in Lithuania

Looking Out for One Another

Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it. From a distance, each looks like every other horse. But if you stop your car, or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing. Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him. This alone is amazing. If nearby and listening, you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her halter is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know where she is, so he can follow her.

As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see how she is always checking on him, and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is; trusting that she will not lead him astray. When she returns to the shelter of the barn each

evening, she stops occasionally and looks back, making sure her friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell.

Like the owners of these two horses, the world does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. We watch over each other when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others see. Good friends are like this. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there. Please listen for my bell and I'll listen for yours.

The Dean Schooled Them

One night four college kids stayed out late, partying and having a good time. They paid no mind to the test they had scheduled for the next day and didn't study. In the morning, they hatched a plan to get out of

taking their test. They covered themselves with grease and dirt and went to the Dean's office. Once there, they said they had been to a wedding the previous night and on the way back they got a flat tire and had to push the car back to campus.

The Dean listened to their tale of woe and thought. He offered them a retest three days later. They thanked him and accepted his offer.

When the test day arrived, they went to the Dean. The Dean put them all in separate rooms for the test. They were fine with this since they had all studied hard. Then they saw the test. It had two questions.

1) Your Name _____ (1 Point)

2) Which tire went flat? ____ (99 Points)

Options: (a) Front Left (b) Front Right (c) Back Left (d) Back Right

The lesson: Students shouldn't think they can outwit experience.

The Customers Always Write

Hi Mark,

Our adventure to Baja California was such an amazing experience that it is hard to even tell you all of the details. I have experienced so many exciting things traveling with your company, but it might be said this is the top of the list.

Two days touching and playing with those gorgeous creatures is something to remember for a long time. There were other adventures our step on guide, Edel, continued to share with us that were also great, climbing a mini Mt. Everest to see drawings in a little cave, getting wet by a spontaneous waterspout shoot up from the ocean while we are looking down a cliff, and learning about the desert fauna.

I will end this with my hope that you repeat this trip in the future for the enjoyment of some of your many adventurous clients. Thanks for doing what you do.

Brenda Hembree

Dear Sports Leisure:

I am writing to request/suggest that day tours include an announcement/reminder in the documents/package sent to participants regarding bus etiquette.

I, along with my sisters, partake of many day trips. We are delighted with the activities offered, the diversity and the ease of traveling with Sports Leisure. We also adore Simon and Mo. However, we are now reluctant to participate in future day trips.

Things for my fellow travelers to consider:

Loud, continuous talking by individuals. Take a breath, ok? Perhaps they are hard of hearing, but shouting to the entire bus is clearly not appropriate.

Use of the telephone on the bus. A text message is a way to quietly communicate if something needs to be conveyed immediately. Otherwise stay off the phone. The travel time is not that lengthy.

Playing music, video games, and podcasts

without earphones. Be considerate of others and keep your actions private. Thanks for listening.

Name withheld by request

Hi Clayton,

I want to extend our deepest appreciation to you, **Sports Leisure Vacations** and KVIE for allowing Sac Loaves & Fishes to be the beneficiary of your annual spring client event. The diapers and pet food have been shared with many of our families and the impact has been incredible. Thank you again and take care.

Julie Rowley

If you have a comment, suggestion or tour idea, we invite you to drop us a line.

Or e-mail Mark or Clayton at:

markslt@aol.com

clayton@sportsleisure.com

Daycations & Theatre Outings

Ballpark Express

New Games added to the schedule!

With nearly every trip sold out on our initial **Ballpark Express** schedule, we have added two more games to choose from.

- **Thursday, August 28th – Chicago Cubs**
– Club Level 227 – \$191
- **Wednesday, September 10th – Arizona Diamondbacks** – Club Level 227 – \$143
- **Saturday, September 27th – Colorado Rockies** – Club Level 224 – \$197

All buses include refreshments in each direction, and **premium** reserved seating as indicated at the ballpark. (The Club Level seats are proving to be incredibly popular with our baseball fans. Private entry, cleaner restrooms, more food choices, shorter lines, why did we not do this sooner?)

Wayne Thiebaud & Legion of Honor's 100th Year

Legion of Honor, San Francisco

Wednesday, July 2

Artist Wayne Thiebaud (American, 1920-2021) was a self-described art "thief" who openly appropriated and reinterpreted old and new European and American paintings. This is the first exhibition to highlight Thiebaud's extensive reinterpretations of works by his artistic heroes. Works from the artists personal collection, including two recently gifted by Wayne Thiebaud, on view for the first time. **\$130**

Cartoons, Comics & Disney

Thursday, July 10

Calling all comics fans! Offered for the very first time, we will visit the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco. This museum is a treasure trove for art enthusiasts and comic lovers alike, dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history of cartoon art. Nearby on the grounds of the historic Presidio you'll visit the Walt Disney Family Museum. This expansive interactive museum features the life and legacy of Walt Disney through permanent galleries containing a vast collection of artifacts including a model of the original Disneyland. Lunch is included at the Presidio Café. **\$173**

& Juliet

Orpheum Theatre, San Francisco

Wednesday, July 23 – 1:00 pm

Created by the Emmy®-winning writer from "Schitt's Creek," this hilarious new musical flips the script on the greatest love story ever told. & Juliet asks what would happen next if Juliet didn't end it all over Romeo? Might she get whisked away on a fabulous journey as she ditches her famous ending for a fresh beginning and a second chance at life and love – her way? Juliet's new story bursts to life through a playlist of pop anthems as iconic as her name, including "Since U Been Gone," "Baby One More Time," and "That's The Way It Is" to name a few. There IS life after Romeo. The only thing tragic would be missing it. Included is a box lunch served onboard the coach, orchestra seating, and a no host dinner following the show at either Pier 39 or North Beach. **\$204**

Jay Leno with Special Guest Arsenio Hall

Gallo Center, Modesto

Saturday, September 13 – 4:00 pm

Two television talk show legends, one stage. Join us for the Gallo Center's official 25/26 season opening performance as Jay Leno is joined by a very special guest Arsenio Hall. The WOW factor here is just huge! Come along for an afternoon of laughter and great entertainment. We will be stopping to eat prior to the show at Wildfire Public House in Modesto, a new restaurant for a new theatre season. **\$224**

Fall in the Sierra

Thursday, October 9

Travel along the American River and over the Sierra Nevada in hopes of sneaking a peak at some fall colors and stunning vistas on this popular annual expedition. Our "road trip" takes us across Emigrant Trail to Highway 88 through Hope Valley. A traditional family-style lunch featuring beef, salmon and chicken is included at Carson Valley Country Club before starting the drive back to Sacramento. Leaving Carson Valley, we will make a quick stop at one of our

favorite gift stores, Especially for You, and the Chocolate Shoppe by Sweet Images, a Must Visit in the area. Both were a total hit last year! **\$154**

Richard Thomas in Mark Twain Tonight!

Mary Stuart Rogers Theater, Gallo Center, Modesto

Tuesday, November 18 – 7:00 pm

Emmy Award-winning actor Richard Thomas brings to life "the nation's one true comic genius." Beloved to generations as John-Boy Walton, Thomas is the first and only actor authorized to perform the play since the original production, written and performed by the late great Hal Holbrook. We will enjoy dinner prior to the show. **\$215**

Jim Brickman & Friends: The Gift of Christmas

Mary Stuart Rogers Theater, Gallo Center, Modesto

Thursday, November 20th 7:30pm

Jim Brickman, the multiple Grammy-nominated songwriter and piano sensation, is back this festive season with *The Gift of Christmas*, a magical evening celebrating music, love and family. Special guest artists will join Brickman in giving you a joyous concert experience that blends holiday favorites with his own hit songs such as, "The Gift," "Sending You a Little Christmas," "Angel Eyes" and "If You Believe." We will enjoy dinner prior to the show. **\$215**

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip Davis

Mary Stuart Rogers Theater, Gallo Center, Modesto

Sunday, November 23 – 3:00 pm

This show has been America's favorite holiday tradition for more than 40 years! Grammy Award-winner Chip Davis has created a show that features Mannheim Steamroller Christmas classics in the distinctive Mannheim sound. The program includes 15 musicians playing more than 20 instruments against a backdrop of dazzling multimedia effects, capturing the spirit of the

season in an immersive yet intimate setting. We will enjoy dinner prior to the show. **\$219**

Thanksgiving Day Brunch at the Grand Island Mansion

Thursday, November 27

Come join us for a Thanksgiving Day Brunch at the Delta's historic Grand Island Mansion, a uniquely spectacular Italian Renaissance-style villa. The Mansion is one of the largest private estates in Northern California and embodies the finest features of classical architecture and European craftsmanship. Nestled in Walnut Grove along the Delta, they will offer all the traditional dishes and lots more. **\$232**

Million Dollar Quartet Christmas

East Sonora Theatre

Sunday, December 7 – 2:00 pm

Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley come together again to celebrate the holidays in a knock-out Holiday musical experience! Sun Records, now festively decorated with a Christmas tree, garland, and mistletoe,

rings with sounds of the season and the chart toppers that made the "Million Dollar Quartet" famous. The gang is up to their usual antics as we journey through stories of Christmas past, present and future. It's a jam-packed evening of holiday hits that audiences celebrate year after toe-tapping year! **\$163**

Holiday Sweets & Goodies

Tuesday, December 9

Travel throughout Stanislaus County visiting family businesses whose products make delightful holiday gifts. Start with the Sciabica Olive Oil Company for a talk and tasting of California's "golden elixir." Following a hot buffet lunch at the Hilmar Cheese Company, you will have time to shop for locally grown and produced jams, jellies, nuts and candies. In the afternoon, enter acres of blooming flowers at the greenhouse of one of California's largest poinsettia growers where you'll see both traditional and new varieties of these perennial holiday favorites. **\$154**

**Visit us on the web at:
www.sportsleisure.com**

Christmas Lights in The City

Thursday, December 11

San Francisco is a city that transforms into a twinkling wonderland of striking sights, sounds and lights during the holiday season. Our new guide Babs will take you through the city highlighting its most sparkling displays including Union Square, the Civic Center and Nob Hill. She may even add a stop or two of her own. We will be visiting The Franciscan on the waterfront for an early dinner prior to the evening tour. **\$193**

A Christmas Carol

Fallon House Theatre, Columbia

Saturday, December 13 – 2:00 pm

This audience-favorite adaptation of Charles Dickens' time-honored tale comes to the Fallon House Theatre! It's Christmas Eve, and the greedy Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by a succession of divine spirits who force him to confront his regrettable youth, his icy present devoid of kindness, and what his future holds if he doesn't change his miserly ways. Bring the whole family for this heartwarming holiday classic. Lunch is included prior to the show. **\$140**

The Tour Calendar *(Previously Announced)*

Lake Placid to Cooperstown

Enjoy New England's famous fall foliage in two picturesque villages

7 Days • September 22-28

3

As of May 27th, this tour is three travelers short of the minimum number to operate the tour. We mention this because on June 13th, we will have to make a decision to go, or cancel our hotel space. If you are considering this tour, please make your reservation by June 13th. Find the complete day-by-day itinerary at www.sportsleisure.com under Categories, USA, September.

Late September generally brings some of our country's most fabled fall color. The maple trees in New England and upstate New York provide the background for this artist's palate of orange, yellow and red. We've chosen classic hotels for our extended

stays in **Lake Placid and Cooperstown**, and the itinerary features a wide variety of attractions.

Even casual sports fans will remember the **Winter Olympic Games of 1980** held in Lake Placid. There is the tale of a hockey team of brash young American that beat a team of mostly professional Russians in a game still referred to as "The Miracle on Ice." You'll relive that moment in the building where it occurred. Of course, Cooperstown is home to the **Baseball Hall**

of Fame. Both Lake Placid and Cooperstown are more than sports destinations. They look like scenes from a **Norman Rockwell painting.** True American classics!

\$4660 p.p./dbl.occ., \$5375 single



Inside the Grand Adirondack Hotel



Perhaps you'll catch a sunset like the one at the Royal Lahaina Hotel, on the water's edge?

Maui by Air, Land & Sea

Witness the rebirth of a magnificent island destination

6 Days • November 4-9

3

★ Highlights ★

- 5 nights Royal Lahaina Resort, partial ocean view rooms
- 11 meals: Daily buffet breakfast and upgraded seating to the *Myths of Maui* Luau (5 full breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners)
- To Maui on United, return on Hawaiian Air, door-to-door airport service from your home
- Helicopter flight over the island of Maui to Hana
- Guided Tour of Lahaina – see the devastation and the rebuilding
- Lunch and tour at O'o Farms – a true farm-to-fork experience; visit the Surfing Goat Dairy
- Whale Watching Cruise
- Free time to shop using the free trolley in Kaanapali
- 5150/5850 Gold Passport Points

In August of 2023, a savage wildfire swept across the island of Maui with the historic town of Lahaina directly in its path. Over a hundred people lost their lives and nearly 2,200 buildings were destroyed. It was a devastating time for the residents. Visitors stayed away in big numbers at first, but now are returning. The classic **Royal Lahaina**

Resort at Kaanapali will be our home for 5 nights. The hotel, as an incentive, has graciously offered to upgrade our rooms to partial ocean view without charge, and to offer full ocean view and ocean front at a discount. Breakfast is included daily and one night you'll enjoy the luau on their lovely grounds. A wide variety of activities are included, one being a helicopter trip that takes you cross-island to the tiny community of Hana. Normally this visit is by a 2-hour bus ride per direction. We have a MUCH better idea: A luxurious helicopter that takes you on a scenic cross-island flight with a short stop in Hana.

\$5140 p.p./dbl.occ., \$5820 single



Take a peaceful ride on a gondola in Queenstown

New Zealand – Sweet As!*

**A versatile phrase used to convey a positive sentiment in New Zealand slang*

18 Days • Jan. 21 – Feb. 7, 2026

4

★ Highlights ★

- Visit the North Island destinations of Auckland, Waiheke Island, Rotorua, Napier, Lake Taupo, and Wellington
 - Visit the South Island destinations of Christchurch, Franz Josef, Queenstown, Milford Sound and Twizel AND so many more places in-between!
 - Services of local drivers and guides, plus a **Sports Leisure** Tour Director throughout
 - 28 meals: 15 full breakfasts, 4 lunches, 9 dinners
 - Roundtrip airfare: San Francisco/Auckland and Christchurch/San Francisco (motorcoach transportation between Sacramento and San Francisco)
 - Door-to-door transportation
 - 12,700/15,000 Gold Passport Points
- 1-4.** Your overnight flight out of San Francisco actually takes three days by the calendar as you'll cross the International Date Line, landing just after 5 a.m. (yawn!) in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. Following an orientation tour of the city and lunch, your hotel awaits! But don't nap too long – dinner is served at Orbit 360, a revolving restaurant spiraling high above the city offering fantastic views from the atop the Sky Tower. New Zealand is famous for its wines, and no place shines brighter than Waiheke where you'll visit multiple wineries



and have lunch in this popular playground for NZ's rich and famous. **The Grand by SkyCity – 2 nights (FB, 2L,D)**

5-6. Hamilton Gardens takes you on an amazing trip through time as you wander through 18 enclosed themed gardens spanning over 4000 years of botanical and world history. Do we have any Hobbit fans? Much of the movie trilogy was filmed right here in Hobbiton, which you'll explore on a 2-hour guided tour. New Zealanders are called "kiwis," but the word also refers to the beloved flightless bird indigenous to these islands. Learn more at the National Kiwi Hatchery. Other treasured island creatures are sheep and the dogs specially trained to herd them. You'll see both in action at the Agrodome Farm Show. Long before the arrival of the English, Polynesians ruled these islands. Known as Maori, you'll have a chance to meet their descendants and sample their food and culture at the Tamaki Maori Village where *Matariki* (your dinner feast) is served. **Pullman Rotorua – 2 nights (2FB,L,D)**

7. See the spectacular Huki Falls on your way to Napier City, famous for its vast assortment of Art Deco buildings which you'll discover on a neighborhood walking tour. Your hotel is located on the city's scenic Marine Parade which you'll want to explore! **Scenic Hotel Te Pania (FB,D)**

8-9. At the Pukaha Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre you'll see a captive breeding site focused on reestablishing native bird populations across New Zealand including not just the kiwi, but also brown and blue ducks, orange-fronted parakeets, shore plovers and more. Located at the southern tip of the North Island, the Capital City of Wellington is known as "The Windy City." Why? Well, let's just say you better hold onto your hats! There you'll see "The Beehive" and Parliament buildings on a city highlights tour, followed by a guided walkabout of NZ's national museum for history and culture, Te Papa. Next visit the Cable Car Museum, then enjoy the view with a ride on one of their vintage cars. **Sofitel Wellington – 2 nights (2FB)**

10. Say goodbye to *Te Ika-a-Maui* (North Island) and hello to *Te Waipounamu* (South Island) on a short one-hour flight from

Wellington to Christchurch. Known to many as Quake City, a disastrous seismic event struck them on February 22, 2011, nearly destroying the community. Today visitors witness their impressive rebirth whilst remembering their storied past. On a guided city tour you'll visit the Quake City interactive exhibit, the Cardboard Cathedral and kick back on a restful punting cruise upon the Avon River. **Crowne Plaza Hotel (FB,D)**

11. All aboard! Take the TranzAlpine, NZ's finest inland rail journey, across the Canterbury Plains, through the Waimakariri River Valley and cross the "Southern Alps" at Arthur's Pass. The 5-hour scenic journey ends in Greymouth where you'll travel south along the rugged coast to Franz Josef and NZ's premier 5-star eco-resort. **Te Waonui Forest Retreat (FB,D)**

12-14. The drive to Queenstown will take most of the day and spotlight South Island's pristine, remote nature. A UNESCO World Heritage Site compared to the Grand Canyon and Great Barrier Reef simultaneously, the south of South Island is a feast for all the senses. The drive to Milford Sound is nearly as spectacular as the 2-hour cruise on the famed fjord. Home to towering cliffs and peaks (including Mitre Peak that rises more than a kilometer straight out of the sea), rain forests and waterfalls, Milford Sound lives up to its reputation as the "eighth natural wonder of the world"! Though the drive was stunning, you'll see the return to Queenstown from a bird's eye perspective aboard a half-hour flightseeing adventure! Need more time on the water? Board the *TSS Earnslaw* for a cruise from Queenstown Bay to Walter Peak and return, followed by a gondola ride to Bob's Peak for dinner at the Stratosfare Restaurant boasting great food and sensational views.

The Rees Hotel – 3 nights (3FB,L,2D)

15-16. Depart via the Kawarau Gorge, Cromwell, Lake Tekapo and Canterbury where you'll visit the Dark Sky Experience. This indoor multi-media attraction charts the history of the world through scientific research and Maori tradition, resulting in a "big

bang" of awe and inspiration. Unlike famed explorer Sir Edmund Hillary, we'll explore this amazing area by motorcoach – no ice hooks required! Mt. Cook Village is our destination where you can visit the Alpine Center, a museum dedicated to all things Hillary. After stocking up on provisions, continue to the Tasman Valley where we'll take a 1.5 km alpine walk to board the *Glacier Explorer*. The 2.5-hour narrated cruise will take you alongside the Tasman Glacier Ice Wall where icebergs are periodically seen calving into the lake. This is nature at its most pristine best! **Distinction Mackenzie Country Hotel, Twizel – 2 nights (2FB,D)**

17-18. It's a sizable jaunt back to Christchurch, but the scenery is guaranteed to keep you spellbound. Our Farewell Dinner is an unexpected treat. The Curator's House is located within the picturesque Botanic Gardens. The chef hails from Barcelona, so you can expect a night of authentic Spanish dishes made only with the freshest NZ ingredients. Olé! The next morning we say goodbye via a late afternoon departure out of Christchurch. Transfer in Auckland for the trans-Pacific return flight to San Francisco. Whereas you won't get that lost day back, you will be landing (by the clock) 9 hours before you took off! **Crowne Plaza Hotel (2FB,D)**

\$12,680 p.p/dbl.occ., \$14,995 single

This tour requires a valid passport.

NOTE: Price does not include New Zealand government-required Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) or International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) which must be completed personally by each traveler and currently total approx. \$70 US p.p.



A Little Culture, A Little History, A Lot of Fun – A Mystery Tour

7 Days • October 7-13

3

Mystery Tours are among our most popular trips! Many of you have been all over the place, so the idea of going somewhere you have never been, or going back to a great place and seeing entirely different stuff is a concept many **Sports Leisure Travelers** can buy into. For this trip we have a host of entirely new destinations, sprinkled with a few we have visited before, including one destination that was part of a Mystery Tour 15 years ago.

Mystery Tour Clues:

Any good Mystery Tour would have clues to offer as to its destination(s). This trip is no exception. See if you can figure out where we are going by the list below. Oh, and we should probably tell you, one of the clues in the list is totally made up and has nothing to do with your itinerary. Just in case you think AI can solve it for you...

- A well-known paper company was headquartered in one of your destinations.
- Beware of falling things. Just sayin'...
- It's a long way into those woods. Must be beautiful with all of the fall leaves.
- A mighty river once flowed through these parts, but no more.
- One city was made famous in a humorous song by a famous folk singer, while another could be described as "wonderful" by its most famous citizen. A president lived in one city.
- Mark's favorite treat can be found in abundance.
- Be careful, you could find yourself working on the railroad if you're not careful.
- The package includes your airport transportation, roundtrip airfare, 14 meals and A Little Culture, A Little History and A Lot of Fun. Promise.
- 4100/4500 Gold Passport Points

\$4080 p.p./dbl.occ., \$4475 single

Branson – Ozark Mountains, Music & Culture

Featuring 5 nights at the Hilton Hotel, live music and theatre in Branson

6 Days • October 25-30

2

1. Fly to Springfield, Missouri and continue to Branson by motorcoach where a late lunch is hosted. Enjoy five nights located in the heart of historic downtown at Branson Landing, a vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment district located along the waterfront of Lake Taneycomo. **Hilton Convention Center Hotel – 5 nights (L)**

2. Sunday Champagne brunch at the spectacular Chateau on the Lake offers an exceptional dining experience with breathtaking views of Table Rock Lake. Held in the elegant Chateau Grille, this renowned brunch is a favorite among locals. The afternoon will be at your leisure to visit Branson Landing. Don't miss the spectacular \$7.5 million water and fire feature with fountains that shoot 120-foot geysers choreographed to lights and music! This evening it's the **Clay Cooper Show** featuring a talented cast of dancers, singers and musicians who deliver a dynamic performance filled with classic and modern songs. **(BR)**

3. Tour the College of the Ozarks, known locally as "Hard Work U," where no student pays tuition. Rather, they work on the school farm and elsewhere on campus to earn their education. Enjoy a **Sports Leisure Vacations** private and exclusive afternoon tea with Dee Dee Lennon. Diane (Dee Dee) is well remembered as the lead singer of the Lennon Sisters, "America's Sweethearts of Song." Dee Dee will discuss her life as a performer with stories of Lawrence Welk, Bob Hope and more. There will be plenty of time for Q&A after the talk. *The Presley's* show is legendary for being the first theatre built on the Highway 76 Strip. Along with the skilled entertainers, laugh at the fun family's comic duo, Herkimer and Cecil. **(FB,L)**

4. Today is a nature day. Step aboard an open-air tram and explore the beauty of Dogwood Canyon on a wildlife tram

tour. You'll wind through the canyon floor, past towering bluffs and waterfalls. Cross the border into Arkansas and view Bison, Elk and longhorn cattle. At the Top of the Rock, Ozark Heritage Preserve, experience the Lost Canyon by golf cart! A paved trail highlights stunning rock formations and waterfalls. And to cap off our time at Top of the Rock you will visit the Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum. **(FB,L)**

5. Another exclusive **Sports Leisure Vacations** treat is in store today! A private performance by the Cathcart Trio (Bill and Gail Lennon and Mike Cathcart). Mike is the son of legendary trumpeter/singer Dick Cathcart and Peggy Lennon of the famed Lennon Sisters. This evening see the production of *David* at the *Site and Sound Theatre*, with a massive stage over twenty thousand square feet in size. Known for its elaborate sets, stunning special effects and live animals, the Sight and Sound Theatre captivates audiences with its larger-than-life performances that combine powerful storytelling. **(FB,L)**

6. Depart Branson for Springfield. At Fantastic Caverns, America's Ride-Thru Cave, a natural adventure awaits. Jeep-drawn trams tour the path left behind by an ancient underground river while you view impressive cave formations up-close. 4350/4800 Gold Passport Points **(FB)**

\$4340 p.p./dbl.occ., \$4755 single

Thanksgiving in New York

It's the most wonderful time of the year for visiting The Big Apple!

6 Days • November 23-28

4

★ Highlights ★

- 5 nights at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on Times Square
- See two Broadway shows including *Just in Time* and the RCMH *Christmas Spectacular*
- Theatre talk with nationally-syndicated critic Peter Filichia
- Visit Liberty and Ellis Islands
- Experience the Museum of Broadway
- Tour the 911 Memorial Museum and take in the view at One World Observatory



- See the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade
- 6 memorable meals featuring a spectacular Thanksgiving dinner cruise aboard the *Bateaux New York*
- Roundtrip airfare to/from LaGuardia
- Home pick-up and return
- 5450/6200 Gold Passport Points

1. As Thanksgiving ushers in the Christmas season, you'll be in the middle of it all as you check-in to New York's best address **located directly on Times Square.**

5 nights – Marriott Marquis (D)

2. Begin your exploration of The Big Apple at the Museum of Broadway, a spectacular repository of all things theatre from the age of Vaudeville to the Ziegfeld Follies to the present. Then head to Rockefeller Center for lunch with syndicated theatre critic Peter Filichia to learn what's hot and what's not on the Great White Way. While there check out the sites including the iconic Channel Gardens, the window displays at Saks Fifth Avenue and of course St. Patrick's Cathedral. A drive Uptown will encircle Central Park and include stops at Strawberry Fields and Lincoln Center. The evening is yours to explore. Monday is a great night to expand your theatrical horizons with an Off-Broadway show. (L)

3. Travel like a real New Yorker – by subway – Downtown for sightseeing focusing on the past and present of the World Trade Center. There you'll visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum and take in the breathtaking views from One World Observatory located high atop the 1776-foot-tall building dubbed "Freedom Tower." Tonight is your first evening on Broadway. It's Choose Your Own Show night, which means literally what it says. You pick the show and Clayton will buy the tickets. Your seats are subject to availability, so be an early bird and get the very best worm! (Oh, that doesn't sound right, but I think you get the meaning!) (L)

4. Take a morning adventure to Liberty and Ellis Islands by subway and ferry. The afternoon is yours for personal exploration. How about a visit to the one of the city's world-class museums or shopping on famed Fifth Avenue? The family-style Italian dinner at Carmine's is a New York tradition, followed by tickets for 3-time Tony Award winner Jonathan Groff's highly-anticipated

return to Broadway in *Just in Time*, a retrospective on the music, life and times of late-great crooner Bobby Darin. (D)

5. It's the exciting Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! Join the anxious throngs on the streets or watch on television in the comfort (and warmth!) of your room. The parade route is along 6th Avenue only one block from the hotel. In the afternoon, journey to Radio City Music Hall for the ***Rockettes Christmas Spectacular***. A Thanksgiving dinner cruise follows aboard the elegant glass-roofed *Bateaux New York* featuring excellent food, live music and great sightseeing as the stars come out over the stunning skyline. (D)

6. Following a late-morning hotel departure, have lunch on the way back to LaGuardia, one last bite of the Big Apple before heading home. (L)

\$5450 p.p./dbl.occ., \$6195 single

Yes Virginia, This is the Burg Where the Rich Folks Stay! – A Christmas Mystery Tour

7 Days • December 6-12

We have been offering a Mystery Tour in the holiday season for nearly 25 years. As is the tradition, here are some clues to help you figure out **exactly** where we are headed on this year's Christmas Mystery Tour. Remember, **one** of the clues is **intentionally incorrect** just to keep you from figuring out where we are going too easily. Early North American Christmas was celebrated here. Last year we went to Texas, this year we are not. Sounds like an English name to me. Sure the water **looks nice**, but it's **coldddd** this time of the year. So this is what Santa looked like in years past. William, Richard and Virginia will all be there. Along with Benjamin, Wilbur and Orville. Stay in a magnificent hotel named for a famous inventor. (Wow, that clue caused a light to come on.) Remember, when you come to a fork in the road, take it, one way or the other. Or both ways is a possibility too. We also think it's important to remember you were warned, this tour could get a bit "tacky."

Please note: Because of limited air service in/out of our destination(s), we arrive at 9:30 pm on day one and depart at 8 am on day seven. It is, in essence a **five-day**

tour. 4200/4750 Gold Passport Points
\$4180 p.p./dbl.occ., \$4775 p.p. single

Puttin' on the Ritz II

3 Days • December 7-9

Two nights at the Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay. First tour sold out, so we added one. Prices are slightly higher due to higher room rates. For details, go online or call the office.

\$1860 p.p./dbl.occ., \$2245 single

An Appalachian Mountain Christmas

Visiting Biltmore House, Dollywood and Music City USA

7 Days • December 7-13

★ **Highlights** ★

- 2 nights in Asheville on the grounds of Biltmore Estate
- Tour of Biltmore House by candlelight
- 1 night at Dollywood & a day in the park
- 3 nights in downtown Nashville just four blocks off Broadway
- Amy Grant and Vince Gill Christmas Concert at the Ryman
- *Opry Country Christmas* at the Grand Ole Opry House
- Tour the Country Music Hall of Fame, Studio B, Belle Meade and more
- 10 meals: 6 full breakfasts, 3 lunches, 1 dinner
- Roundtrip air to Asheville/from Nashville
- Home pick-up and return
- 5000/6650 Gold Passport Points

1. Fly away to the Appalachian Mountains for a trip guaranteed to put you in the Christmas spirit! This is absolutely Asheville's best address, and we do believe the Vanderbilts would agree. **Inn at Biltmore Estate – 2 nights**

2. Explore the Biltmore Estate on a docent-led Legacy of the Land tour including entry to their seasonal special exhibition, "Tutankhamun: His Tomb & His Treasures." Time is allowed midday in Antler Village for shopping, lunch on your own and personal exploration. Your ultimate Biltmore experience begins as the sun starts to set. Following dinner in the Stable Loft Café, tour the grand mansion (led by your personal audio guide) with the halls illuminated by twinkling candlelight and decked with holiday finery. (FB,D)

3. You're off to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee – the home of Dollywood. You'll have the better part of the day and into the night to explore the popular theme park illuminated by millions of twinkling lights. Imagined and owned by beloved local Dolly Parton, the park focuses on keeping the music, crafts and traditions of the Great Smoky Mountains alive and well. The rides are only a bonus for those wishing to imbibe! Rest well tonight in new accommodations located on the park grounds. **HeartSong Lodge (FB,L)**

4. It's a little over 200 miles across the heartland of Tennessee to reach her Capital City, better known as "Music City USA." Included is a stop at Ancient Lore Village for a fantasy tour and lunch. Upon arrival in Nashville, you'll find the vibrant downtown is at your doorstep, so get out and explore. Who's been to a *real* honky-tonk before? Before heading out visit the complimentary Kickback with libations and generous snackage offered in our hotel. **Drury Plaza Downtown Nashville – 3 nights (FB,L)**

5. Joined by our singing local guide, explore the many faces of Nashville from Capital City to Music City USA. You'll visit the Country Music Hall of Fame and historic Studio B located along storied Music Row. Tonight visit the hallowed halls of the Ryman Auditorium for a concert by music legends and real-life married couple Amy Grant and Vince Gill. **(FB)**

6. Take a drive outside town to visit Belle Meade Historic Site and Winery, the focal point of which is a stunning c. 1853 Greek Revival mansion decorated for the season in period style. In the afternoon visit the Opryland Resort Hotel for over-the-top holiday displays throughout their complex of enclosed atriums and a flatboat cruise on the Delta River. Yes, one atrium is large enough to hold its very own river! Tonight take in the *Opry Country Christmas Show* at the famed Grand Ole Opry House. **(FB,L)**

7. Before a late afternoon flight back to the West Coast, learn the secret behind the South's popular confection at the Goo Goo Chocolate Company Experience. It's a sweet treat that will have you smackin' yo' mouth double time! **(FB)**

**\$4995 p.p./dbl.occ., \$6610 single
(Same prices as 2024!)**

Palm Springs Christmas, Starring Barry Manilow

3 Days • December 15-17 & 16-18

2

Every other year Palm Springs resident **Barry Manilow** offers Christmas concerts at the McCallum Theatre. They are all benefits for the community, helping over a dozen local charities. Mr. Manilow even picks up the cost of his band, which joins him from Las Vegas. Barry will share Christmas classics and some beloved favorites from his songbook in an evening to remember!

Both packages include:

- Two nights at the Dunes Hotel in downtown Palm Springs, a historic property with a modern, new look
- *Barry Manilow* at the McCallum Theatre
- Christmas lights at night
- Lunch at the top of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway (which transports riders to the pristine wilderness of the Mt. San Jacinto State Park),
- Palm Springs Windmills (tour)
- Tour the San Andreas fault on a narrated journey by Jeep
- 6 meals: 2 full breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
- Roundtrip flights on Southwest Airlines, plus our signature door-to-door service

1. Welcome to the Desert

Fly from Sacramento to Palm Springs and begin your adventure with lunch at Grand Central, a stylish eatery located in the heart of downtown. Afterwards, enjoy a leisurely hour to explore the shops, galleries and walkable charm of Palm Canyon Drive. This afternoon, choose between two enriching options: 1) A city tour of Palm Springs highlighting the area's celebrity history, mid-century architecture and hidden gems. 2) A visit to the Agua Caliente Museum, featuring contemporary and Native American art. The museum was on Time Magazine's list of the World's Greatest Places in 2024.

Check in at your comfortable hotel with time to freshen up before heading out for an early group dinner. Then it's off to enjoy one of the area's stunning Christmas Lights experiences: Either the Magic of Lights drive-through at the Empire Polo Club or a festive walk-through display. Cap off your evening with a stop for sweet treats – ice cream or gelato – before returning to the

hotel. **Dunes Hotel – 2 nights (L,D)**

2. Peaks, Pasta & Performance

This morning, begin the day with a tour of celebrity homes and sites in the area. The tour consists of 50 Celebrity homes and some History of Palm Springs, including Mid Century tours. Here are some of the famous homes of stars that you are going to see: Marilyn Moore, Elizabeth Taylor, Betty Gable, Lucille Ball, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Gene Autry, George Burns, Sammy Davis jr., Tarzan, Elvis Presley, Doris Day, Leonardo DiCaprio and many more do or have called the Palm Springs area home. Next ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway up Chino Canyon to a mountaintop lodge for lunch with sweeping desert views. After descending, enjoy afternoon downtime. Tonight, we dine at Mama Gina's, a local favorite known for classic Italian fare and warm hospitality. Then it's showtime! **(FB,L,D)**

3. Desert Discoveries & Departure

Enjoy a morning tour of the Palm Springs Windmill Farm, offering a behind-the-scenes look at renewable energy in the desert. After lunch, you have a choice. Another natural learning adventure, heading out on a Jeep Tour of the San Andreas Fault, where expert guides take you through shallow canyons and the geological drama that shaped California. Or you can take a couple of hours to shop in downtown Palm Springs. Lots of eclectic stores to help you find the perfect Christmas gift. If you choose the shopping option, you will receive a \$135 credit for the Jeep tour. Return to the airport in the late afternoon for your flight home. **(FB)**

Center Orchestra Seating

\$2440 p.p./dbl.occ., \$2590 single

2450/2600 Gold Passport Points

Rear Orchestra Seating

\$2330 p.p./dbl.occ., \$2480

2350/2500 Gold Passport Points

137th Tournament of Roses Parade

*Featuring Santa Catalina Island
and a foodie tour of Pasadena*

3

3 Days • December 30 – January 1

We've not been to Pasadena for the Rose Parade since the 20-teens. Are you ready to return? We definitely are! Here's a short 3-day program that features reserved



bleacher seating for the famed parade in all its glory, plus a never-before offered foodie tour and even a fun daytrip to Avalon as the cherry on top!

1. A flight to Burbank and short drive to the west brings you to the epicenter of the Rose Parade – downtown Pasadena. On a Melting Pot Food Tour you'll get to know the city as never before, one tantalizing bite at a time, as you graze through some of the city's most popular and iconic restaurants and sweet spots featuring the cuisines of Venezuela, Mexico, Tibet/Nepal, India, Iran, the Mediterranean region and of course the good old US of A. The slow, narrated walk led by a fascinating local guide will cover 26 blocks (or about 5000 steps if that's what you prefer to count) over 3-½ hours. From here you're off to the hotel for a good night's rest. **Hilton Hotel Orange County/Costa Mesa – 2 nights (L)**

2. Following breakfast head to the ferry terminal in Long Beach for the ride "26 miles across the sea" to Santa Catalina, "the island of romance." There you'll have free time for personal exploration and lunch, then we'll regroup for a guided VIP tour of the famed Casino before heading back to the mainland. This evening at the hotel a Monte Carlo-style New Year's Eve bash is planned including dinner, a champagne toast and party favors. Worried about making it to midnight? Never fear! We'll celebrate each time zone across

the country! **(FB,D)**

3. Admittedly, it's an early morning as we depart for Colorado Boulevard, the route of the Tournament of Roses parade, to reserved bleacher seating on the grounds of Pasadena City College. There you'll have a prime, unobstructed view of the beloved annual event, now in its 137th year, complete with a souvenir blanket and program. A SoCal barbecue lunch is served before heading back to Burbank and your return flight to Sacramento. 2600/2800 Gold Passport Points **(FB,L)**

\$2590 p.p/dbl.occ., \$2785 single

Alligators & The Florida Keys, Miami to Key West

Featuring in the Everglades and Key Largo

6 Days • January 24-29

★ **Highlights** ★

3

- Tour Miami's Coral Gables, Coconut Grove & South Beach's art deco district
- Take an airboat ride through Everglades Safari Park; meet an alligator or two
- Overnight Key Largo; dinner at a renowned FL Keys seafood diner
- Meet the wildlife: visit a dolphin research center and a butterfly conservatory
- 3 nights in Key West – Marriott La Concha (best location in town)
- Cabaret Dinner & Show at La Te Da; meet & greet with performer Randi Roberts – 1st night welcome dinner at

Texas de Brazil

- Tour: Truman's Little White House, the Home of Ernest Hemingway, Key West by trolley with Louie – a true local treasure
- 11 meals: 2 breakfasts (limited menu or buffet), 3 full breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners
- Door-to-door transportation, roundtrip air to Miami/from Key West
- 4600/5250 Gold Passport Points

1. Arrive in Miami in time for dinner at a Brazilian Steakhouse. Gauchos arrive tableside with various cuts of juicy grilled meats. Tell them how you like it, they carve and you eat! There's also an incredible salad bar for those not as carnivorous. From presentation to service, everything about the meal is an experience. **Hilton Garden Inn – Miami at Dolphin Mall (D)**

2. Tour exclusive Coral Gables and Coconut Grove neighborhoods with a local guide and learn how some daring, enterprising women turned this swampy backwater into a truly international city. Cruise down Ocean Drive in South Beach, America's largest historic Art Deco District.

After lunch on your own at the mall, it's off to the Everglades. Board an airboat to learn about the residents and the unique ecology of the region. Those alligators are real! Mother Nature serves up magnificent sunsets in Key Largo. Dinner features fresh local seafood (landlubber options available) at a funky island hotspot! **Hampton Inn – Key Largo (B,D)**

3. Travel the Overseas Highway, a ribbon of road stretching over 100 miles into the ocean. As the sun dances on the water, you've never seen so many shades of blue! At a dolphin research center, learn about their mission and watch as scientists work with local dolphins in an effort to promote conservation. Each dolphin has its own distinct personality. Can you spot the class clown? Remember "Flipper," the TV show? This was Flipper's home and some of the dolphins you see are his grandchildren! After a dockside lunch, your first stop down the road is the Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory, arguably one of the best butterfly spots in the country. Check into your perfectly situated hotel on Duval Street.

Marriott La Concha – 3 nights (B,L)



Stop by for lunch at the famous Sloppy Joe's on Duval Street in Key West

4. A trolley tour of the island with our friend Louie gives you the history and sordid stories of the

Conch Republic's residents, past and present. Lunch is at famous Sloppy Joe's Bar, home to the namesake sandwich. Grab a drink and listen to live music or take the afternoon to shop in Mallory Square. Tonight we gather for a lovely dinner served al fresco at La Te Da, followed by a lively female-impersonation performance, starring Randi Roberts. Stick around after the show to meet the performer. **(FB,L,D)**

5. Harry S. Truman was a huge fan of the island and visited frequently during his presidency, conducting official business under the palm trees at the Little White House. After touring the house, taste the best of Key West! Board a trolley and stop for all the island's classics: Key Lime Pie (TWICE!), Cuban Sandwiches and Conch Chowder. While sipping a cold beer, wine or tropical fruit juice on a topsail schooner traverse the southern coast as our captain shares local history and ecology of the area. Join your Tour Director for a walk to the nightly Key West tradition, the Sunset Celebration. Every night, the island turns out to grab a cocktail, toast the sunset and watch one of the many street buskers perform daredevil acts. Only in Key West! **(FB,L)**

6. At Ernest Hemingway's home hear about the author who was as known for his work as his antics. How many toes does that cat have? Six?! You counted correctly! These famous kitties spend the day lounging and posing for tourists. It's a rough life! With tropical memories and perhaps a new book in hand, board your flight, arriving into Sacramento by evening. **(FB)**

\$4550 p.p./dbl.occ., \$5220 single

Whales, Wine & Wonders of Baja Mexico

Explore unspoiled nature and all the rich flavors offered by our neighbors to the south

8 Days • February 21-28, 2026

4

"Our 'Whales, Wine and Wonders' trip was amazing ~ the attention to detail and the events that we attended were top notch. From petting the whales in the wild, the gorgeous sunsets and our winery tour

and dinner, we came away with a great appreciation and understanding of the culture and beauty of Baja California." Testimony from a *Sports Leisure* traveler on the 2025 tour.

★ Highlights ★

- Fully-escorted and narrated by bilingual Mexican step-on guide and **Sports Leisure** Tour Director
- Experience close-up encounters with Pacific gray whales
- Marvel in the desert rock formations, boulders and caves in Cataviña
- Explore the charming shops, cafés and taquerias in Ensenada
- Shop the bustling Mercado Hidalgo in Tijuana
- Sample and savor some of Mexico's best vintages
- 16 meals: 7 full breakfasts, 5 lunches, 4 dinners
- Roundtrip airfare to/from San Diego
- Door-to-door airport transportation
- 4200/4700 Gold Passport Points

1. Depart Sacramento late morning on a short flight to San Diego. This evening includes a welcome cocktail and a trip orientation presented by our Mexican guide.

Hilton Bayside Hotel

2. *Bienvenidos!* Welcome to Northern Baja California, Mexico, crossing at Tijuana, the world's busiest land border crossing. Visit Tijuana's bustling Mercado Hidalgo before continuing down scenic Highway 1 to Ensenada for lunch at a local restaurant. Return to Highway 1 traveling south through Northern Baja's tomato, strawberry and pepper fields along the way to San Quintín and tonight's Welcome Dinner. **Mision Santa Maria Hotel (FB,L,D)**

3. Continue on Highway 1 to Guerrero Negro, Baja California Sur, through the Desierto Central de Baja California with its unique desert vegetation. Stop in Cataviña along the way for a short walk through this fascinating landscape populated with rock formations and granite boulders to nearby caves to view ancient paintings that offer a glimpse into the indigenous human and animal life that once populated the region. After lunch at a local restaurant, continue to Guerrero Negro which will serve as base camp for our next day's whale watching.

Hotel TerraSal – 2 nights (FB,L,D)

4. Guerrero Negro's nearby lagoon, Ojo de La Liebre, serves as the magnificent Pacific gray whale's first calving stop on the journey from Bering Strait. Aboard small, non-intrusive boats captained by local guides, experience an up-close encounter with these gentle and curious giants. Have lunch at a local restaurant after today's excursion before returning to the hotel. The evening is free for exploration and dinner on your own. **(FB,L)**

5. Return to Ojo de La Liebre, also known as Scammon's Lagoon, for the second time providing additional opportunities to witness these magnificent sea mammals in their natural habitat. Home to more than just our giant friends, the nearby lagoons are teeming with sea life such as dolphins, sea lions and seals, as well as being surrounded by giant osprey nests and frequented by a variety of migratory birds. Depart to the north for dinner and an overnight in the village of Cataviña. **Mision Cataviña Hotel (FB,L,D)**

6. This morning continue north to the bustling port city of Ensenada with lunch provided along the way. Upon arrival join your Tour Director for an orientation walk of the festive downtown quarter. This evening is yours to relax or explore the shops, cafes and taquerias this charming town has to offer. Don't miss a visit to Hussong's Catina where the margarita was invented! **Cortez Baja Inn – 2 nights (FB,L)**

7. Relax with free time after breakfast or take an optional tour to La Bufadora, Mexico's version of "Old Faithful," a spectacular marine geyser that shoots seawater up to 100 feet into the air, creating a thunderous sound and a mesmerizing natural display. Continue to the heart of Mexico's premier wine country, the Guadalupe Valley, and its vineyards that nowadays rival those of Napa Valley in the USA. Here we will visit a locally owned and operated winery followed by a festive Farewell Dinner. **(FB,D)**

8. Return to the USA and San Diego International Airport for your late afternoon return to Sacramento. **(FB)**

\$4200 p.p./dbl.occ., \$4685 single

This tour requires a valid passport.

NOTE: Taxes and Mexican Entry Visa fee included.



2026 Teasers – Want to Go?

If you see something that strikes your fancy on the list below drop us a line (res@sportsleisure.com) or call the office. We'll add your name to the **Priority Notification List**, assuring that you'll be among the first to know when the trip is opened for reservations. This is but a partial list of our 2026 plans and primarily focuses on international departures. Remember that international travel requires a valid passport that is not within six months of its expiration date!

Costa Rica

April 17-26

Scott is now putting the finishing touches on this Central American adventure that will operate next spring. Many of you are already on the list. Thank you for your interest and patience! He'll have the prices and all the details in just a few more weeks.

Columbia and Snake River Cruise

April 28 – May 7

We've polled you with various American river cruising options which resulted in curious results – each of the four choices garnered roughly the same number of names! So we've decided to take a leap of faith. Who wants to explore the Columbia River from Portland in the Pacific Northwest to the wilds of Idaho and back? Join us aboard the *American Song* next spring, one

of the newest vessels to ply US waters, with an intimate capacity of only 180 guests. Stateroom sizes are among the largest in the industry and each boasts a private balcony. This is not your grandparent's paddle-wheeler, but a sleek, modern vessel designed for the pleasure and comfort of the contemporary traveler.

Route 66, The Main Street of America – Parts I & II

A repeat performance of a classic Sports Leisure adventure

Chicago to Oklahoma City

10 Days • May 2-11 & 16-25

Oklahoma City to Santa Monica

9 Days • October 6-14

If you've ever longed to step back in time, to a place where the jukebox still plays your song and neon signs point the way west, then this trip is your ticket. Come ride the Mother Road with us.

There's something about Route 66 that pulls at the soul. Maybe it's the nostalgia of roadside diners and old gas pumps. Maybe it's the stories told through murals and museums, the legends of Jesse James and Will Rogers. Or maybe it's just the simple joy of the journey itself – windows down, memories up.

The first half of America's most famous highway starts in The Windy City and ends in Oklahoma City. When you return for Part II, start in OKC and head for the California

Coast. Along the way, you'll meet the characters and communities who keep the road alive – historians, authors, soda jerks, and even a friendly rabbit or two. We'll travel at a relaxed pace, stopping often for oddball attractions, tasty meals, and one-of-a-kind experiences.

Part I – East Side: Marvel at the Lincoln Presidential Library and the many great attractions in Springfield, IL; spoon frozen custard in St. Louis, walk across the Mississippi River on a retired highway bridge, dine in a theater saved from the wrecking ball, and meet the truck that inspired a Pixar character, visit one of the most uniquely-named gift shops in the country!

Part II – West Side: Meet Harley, the craziest guy on The Mother Road; and Angel Delgadillo, considered to be the man who started the process of saving the old highway; see Cadillacs buried in the dirt, and Oatman, perhaps the goofiest place on the entire route; before ending on the beach in Santa Monica!

Many of our meals are served in historic cafés and diners, where the stories are just as rich as the gravy. And because this is Sports Leisure, you won't just see Route 66 – you'll feel it. You'll hear the voices of the people who lived its history and walk through towns that time almost forgot. This is more than a trip. It's a rediscovery of a simpler, sweeter America – and a chance to ride one of its most iconic roads.

Many meals, flight, accommodation and home pick-up included. If Route 66 has ever been on your bucket list – or your heart – this is the trip to take. Come join us on the Main Street of America, east, west or both!

London, West End and the Chelsea Flower Show

May 17-25

Experience a full week in England's capital city where your home base for 7-nights is the beautifully restored **Strand Palace Hotel**, one of London's best addresses since 1909. Unpack once! Scheduled to include a day at the celebrated Chelsea Flower Show,

The Travel Guys *Radio Show*

**Highest Rated KFBK
Show on Saturdays!**

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www.travelguysradio.com**

Hosted by: Tom Romano and Mark Hoffmann



the tour will also feature daytrips to Kent, Stratford-upon-Avon, Hampton Court/Kew Gardens and Windsor, plus sightseeing in London and two nights of West End theatre!

Newfoundland

June 1-11

Welcome to the Rock! Travel to the most remote and easterly of Canada's provinces and experience life in the setting celebrated in Broadway's *Come From Away*. Newfoundland is a place of beautiful extremes. Rough-carved by time and ice. Windswept and otherworldly. These phrases only capture a small part of the whole. The rest you'll have to discover for yourself as we take in the island from east (Gros Morne National Park) to center (Gander of SFA-fame) to west (the capital city of St. John's).

Best of the Baltics

June 25 – July 6

Visit a corner of northern Europe seldom discovered by Americans: The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Here you'll discover a fairytale land of castles, grand estates, cobbled villages, walled cities and fertile plains boasting every imaginable agricultural crop, all nestled along the shore of the Baltic Sea. The food is heavenly, often pairing wild boar or deer with more traditional fare of beef, pork, poultry and seafood. The people are intensely proud and beautiful, knowledgeable of their heritage and eager to share it with you. This was Clayton's "ME Trip" of 2024 and he says

it's not to be missed. Come join him on this journey to Europe's most remote corner – the Baltic States.

Iceland

Summer

We've been toying with a return to Iceland for quite some time and already have a hearty list of interested folks. How about you? Can we add your name to the list? Scott was originally working on an itinerary combining Iceland with Greenland, but it's just not working despite their relative geographical closeness. Sometimes you just can't get there from here! So it's Iceland only on our next visit.

Portugal

September

Scott is still working on various options for our long-planned tour to the Iberian Peninsula and the country of Portugal. Small in size, but huge in experiences, Portugal is one of the most popular European destinations for travelers the world over. Do you have any cities or sites in Portugal on your must-see list? Then drop Scott a line and let him know. Perhaps he can incorporate your wishes into the itinerary.

Oktoberfest, Canadian Thanksgiving & Niagara Falls

October 9-15

We're thrilled to once again offer this popular itinerary created by Chris Galloway

focusing on Canada's Waterloo and Niagara Regions in the fall. There you'll explore Mennonite and German heritage where there MIGHT be beer, strudel and dancing (what did you expect, it's Oktoberfest!), go leaf-peeping by train and attend Kitchener's festive Thanksgiving Day Parade (Canadian T'giving is celebrated the second Monday of October, but rest assured they eat turkey for dinner just like us). Then you're off to Niagara Falls for two nights where you can enjoy the stunning view from your fallsview hotel room!

Mexico's Copper Canyon

October 11-20

Based on the popularity of her Baja Mexico trips, RoseMarie is super-psyched to take you to the magical, mystical and geographically diverse journey to north central Mexico, featuring the Copper Canyon. Four times the size of the Grand Canyon, come along to explore the breathtaking landscapes, hike through lush forests and immerse yourself in the unique culture of the Tarahumara people. Discover stunning vistas as you ride the famed Chihuahua al Pacifico train and cruise the Sea of Cortez in a private boat. This tour moves at a fast pace, requires extended periods of walking and operates at altitudes of 4000 to 8000 feet above sea level.

And one more thing before we go...

Semiquincentenary Tours!

There's no Priority Notification List for this – it's just an FYI. Guess who turns 250 in 2026? WE DO! It's called a "semiquincentenary"! We are planning tours to Philadelphia paired with Boston, and another to eastern Virginia which will focus on early events in our county's history and trace the footsteps of our forefathers and mothers. Stay tuned for more information in upcoming publications and communications, and especially at **Vacation Preview Day** which will feature the release of our **2026 Dream Book**. Save the date: **Saturday, September 20, 2025** at The Sophia in downtown Sacramento. Details to come!

What are your old coins worth?

Maybe you have a bag or box of old coins. Perhaps you inherited a collection when a relative passed. Maybe it's just one or two coins or bills of currency you'd like to know about. If your coins are pre-1964 (50¢, 25¢, 10¢) or pre-1940 (pennies and nickels), or recent coins that are part of mint-issued sets, they may have a premium value. Currency 1935 and before also fits into the "value" category.

But who/where can you take them to get an honest evaluation of their worth? Mark would be happy to give you a free appraisal. If you wish to sell your treasures, that is easy to arrange. Often Mark will offer to purchase them, or get you easily to someone who is interested. You can bring your coins to the office, or for larger heavier collections, Mark can come to you. Just call the office to set up an appointment. Feel free to share this offer with family and friends.





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EARLY PAYMENT DISCOUNT COUPON

Early Payment Discounts listed here will expire on **June 27th, 2025**, or may be withdrawn or reduced when 50% of the available space has been reserved. To receive the discount, you must pay in full within ten days of registration.

Nov. – Thanksgiving in New York – Save \$150

Dec. – Barry Manilow Palm Springs Christmas – Save \$75

ACTIVITY METER

1 Leisurely: A tour that can be enjoyed by all requiring a minimal amount of walking on city streets and generally level surfaces. There could be a few stairs. A theater daytrip is an example.

2 Moderate: A tour with some walking activities, standing/strolling at attractions and museums, and some stair climbing. A daytrip to the ballpark or a museum exhibition, and short regional trips are examples. A moderate trip could include air or rail transportation and navigating through airports/stations.

3 Active: A tour which includes longer walks and/or walks on uneven surfaces. This is the level for most of our long-distance domestic and Canadian tours, vacations featuring national parks, and the minimum level for an overseas international trip. You should be able to walk 3-6 city blocks in a timely fashion a few times per day. You could find a flight of stairs without handrails, uneven nature trails and the like. Tours with a seaplane or jeep ride, and the ability to climb into the plane/jeep, along with longer rail journeys fall into this category.

4 Energetic: A tour with an emphasis on walking and other physical activities. Most overseas tours fit in this category, as well as many metropolitan domestic tours (New York and Washington, DC, especially). Expect long plane flights and walking longer distances at connections and/or customs. You should not consider a tour on this level if you need wheelchair assistance at the airport or other places.

VALUABLE COUPON

Save \$10–\$40 per person on Cancellation Protection

Valid only when used with the adjacent coupon on the tours listed. **Your savings depend on the double-occupancy price of the tour. Save \$10** on tours priced from \$451-\$800, **Save \$20** on tours priced from \$801-\$2250, **Save \$30** on tours priced from \$2251-\$3500, **Save \$40** on tours priced at \$3501 or more. You must pay in full within ten days of registration and purchase the protection at the time you pay for your tour.

TOUR UPDATE...

Limited Space Available

The tours below have 10 or fewer spaces available, # in ()

- Oct. – A Little Culture, A Little History Mystery (10)
- Oct. – Branson – Ozark Mountains, Music & Culture (5)
- Nov. – Maui by Air, Land & Sea (7)
- Dec. – A Christmas Mystery Tour (4)
- Dec. – Appalachian Mountain Christmas (8)
- Dec. – Tournament of Roses Parade (10)
- Jan. – Miami to Key West (6)
- Feb. – Whales, Wine & Wonders of Baja (2)

Sold Out – Wait List Available

- July – Fort Bragg, Ferries & Towns of Puget Sound, Canadian Rockies, Laguna Pageant
- July & Aug. – San Juan Islands Cruise
- Aug. – Oregon Gardens & The Scandinavian Festival
- Sept. – Stories of Santa Fe & Taos, Victoria & Vancouver, Zion & Bryce N.P.
- Sept. – Tuscany, Florence & Rome
- Oct. – Black Hills, Bonjour Quebec, Albuquerque Balloons
- Nov. – Puttin' on The Ritz
- Dec. – Cambria Christmas Lights & Market