Visit Germany!
By Janet Robertson

From the majestic Alps and the enchanting Black Forest, to the magic of Christmas markets to the world’s largest celebration, Oktoberfest. Yes indeed, Germany is sure to satisfy any traveler’s desires.

Germany’s first “Vacation Routes” and “Scenic routes” date back to 1927, but today some 150 such routes exist. The 400 mile long “German Fairytale road” journeys you through the fairytale towns of Hanau, Marburg, Goettingen, Minden and Bremen, where you can experience the castles and forests spoken about in the Brothers Grimm’s famous fairytales of Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, and Sleeping Beauty just to mention a few.

Or discover the real Germany on the “Alps to the Baltic Route”. Uncover the ever changing landscapes, culture and architecture from the northern plains, through heath country, lush central mountains and rivers small and almighty, final destination - the Alps! Whether you travel by car, bicycle, train or on foot, this route will show you all. Check out the German Tourist Board website at www.germany-tourism.de for answers to your personal travel questions.

The Christmas markets are a sure place to experience German hospitality. The aroma of freshly roasted almonds and gingerbread spices will follow you on your shopping endeavors, and the mulled red wine is sure to warm your hands and heart when those snowflakes fall. If you are traveling in the North, a few recommendations would be Bremen, Goettingen and Hamburg or in the South Augsburg, Esslingen, Frankfurt, Nurnburg, Munich, and Stuttgart.

Guten Tag, und wie gehts?
Yes it’s the Scottish Editor, but your German Publisher has taught her well! Our featured country for October, is Germany, and we also have special articles on finding your Niche, and a little closer to home, a personal encounter with The Grand Canyon. Anyone considering doing the TAP test this fall, don’t miss the tips in TAP Your way to Success! Tschuess und viel Spass beim Lesen!

Janet

Niche Travel – Profiting From Your Passion
by Debbie Wilson, CTA, DS

What is your passion in life? What gives you pure enjoyment? What would you choose to do if money, time, and practical obligations were not issues? For most of us in the travel industry, it goes without saying that travel is one of our passions. Now, imagine combining travel with another personal interest or two, and you have a winning combination for a truly satisfying, lucrative and successful career.

There has been no better time to specialize. In a changing travel environment, the most successful travel consultants have recognized the need to provide a quality product and first-rate service. In a world where everyone surfs the net, travelers are inundated with information and a plethora of travel “deals”. Savvy travelers rely on their travel counselors to help them sort through their options and narrow their choices, based on personal preferences and expectations. In order to provide this level of service, travel specialists must be experts in their products and know what their

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No visit to Germany would be complete without a walk in the Black Forest (Schwartzwald) and also tasting a piece of that cake (an honest recommendation), but it is certainly not dark and dingy. The Black Forest is good for your health with lots of clean air to fill your lungs and healing waters from hot springs to protect you. This area is wonderful for hiking, mountain biking, kayaking and x-country skiing. If sport is not your thing, enjoy the museums, the incredible scenery, the culture, historic steam engine rides (Schwartzwaldbahn), the Triberg area with the German Clock Museum which has the greatest number of clocks and watches in Europe, or try Germany’s oldest restaurant or visit it’s highest waterfall. OK, so what are you waiting for?

I lived in the Black Forest and Stuttgart areas of Germany for several years and I can say without a doubt that they are some of the most beautiful areas that I have ever lived in. It was truly a wonderful experience. Being so far south was the optimum location to explore Europe too, as I was about 1.5 hours from Strassbourg (2nd largest city in France), 1.5 hours from Austria and Switzerland and of course, it is surrounded by incredible scenery. Germans have a wonderful social life and I am sure they have a “Fest” for the harvesting of every fruit and vegetable known to man, all of which I completely enjoyed.

Some of my personal favorites:

Towns & Cities: Titisee, Freiburg, Freudenstadt (Black Forest area) and of course Fuessen (close to the border of Austria), & Stuttgart.

Things to do there: Snow skiing, touring, and visiting cake shops - no matter which cake you pick it’s sure to be a gastronomical delight!

Favorite Foods: Fleishkase, Spatzle, Chicken vol au vents, and lashings of asparagus – they must have 500 recipes of things to do with asparagus

Favorite Castle: Neuschwanstein

Oktoberfest is coming!

The Munich Oktoberfest is the largest public festival in the world and the 2003 festival will be number 170! Yes this is its 170th anniversary, so it must be OK, don’t you think? Other than the beer and sausages you can enjoy carousels, roller-coasters and an array of other fun activities, and of course lots and lots of music, um pa pa, um pa pa!!!

Did you know that:

- Each year around 6 million visitors attend the Oktoberfest?
- Approximately 5 million liters of beer is consumed?
- 400,000 pork sausages are eaten?

So leading on from that you guessed it, it’s time to experience Oktoberfest for yourself, right here in San Francisco!

Voyager’s Club is going! Are You?

Voyager’s Club has purchased a limited number of discounted tickets for Friday night, October 17, at the price of $10 each. They will be offered for sale at our General Meeting in the Solarium at LMC at 5:30pm on Monday, October 6th. There is a limit of 2 tickets per member at the discount - more at the regular price of $12 each, first come first served. We will make our own way there –check the bulletin board for our flyer with transportation & parking suggestions – and meet at the Nut Seller’s stand. (If you can’t see him off hand, just follow your nose, we have been told.)
“OKTOBERFEST BY THE BAY”
CELEBRATION COMES TO
FORT MASON - OCTOBER 16-19

Fort Mason, in San Francisco’s Marina District will echo with the sounds and revel in savory tastes of an authentic German Oktoberfest at the fourth annual Oktoberfest By the Bay, now the largest festival of its kind in California.

The spirit of the famous Munich festival invades Fort Mason, October 16-19. Hours are Thursday, 5pm-12am; Friday, 5pm-12am; Saturday, 11am-11pm and Sunday, 11am-7pm. Fort Mason is located at Marina and Buchanan Streets in San Francisco.

Colorful flags from all the regions of Germany will be flying proudly for the four-day event, which features non-stop entertainment from the Chico Bavarian Band, recently the lead band at the Oktoberfest parade in Munich. They will share the stage with The Internationals, the Pacific Singing Society and the Almenrausch Schuhplattler Dance Group. Tables will be loaded with a smorgasbord of German food, from bratwurst to schweine haxe, pretzels to kirschstreichsel and everything in between. Following yet another grand German tradition, festival-goers can choose from a large selection of authentic German beers to wash down all the delectable food.

Because this event celebrates the anniversary of German Day in San Francisco, visitors are invited to learn more about the German heritage by exploring cultural and historical exhibits. This year the festival will feature a large selection of German arts and crafts for purchase. For the first time, this year’s Oktoberfest by the Bay is partnering with Hands On San Francisco, a non-profit charity that will receive a portion of the proceeds from the event. Hands On San Francisco addresses the critical needs of the community by mobilizing a diverse group of individuals in direct volunteer service and civic engagement.


Niche Travel continued from pg. 1

individual clients are looking for. This calls for specialization.

Specialization takes a variety of forms. You may specialize in a travel destination such as Hawaii or Africa. Your specialty may be centered around an activity or interest such as food and wine, skiing, or adventure travel. You may choose to focus on a specific segment of the population such as families, seniors, or singles; or you may simply specialize in a particular travel product such as cruises or spas. Whatever you choose as your specialty, it should be something that is personally exciting – a travel niche in which you will expand your expertise and parlay it into a lucrative and satisfying business.

If this concept sounds exciting, you are a perfect candidate for the “Niche Travel Specialist” certificate, which was recently developed by the Center for Travel Marketing. The 17-unit Niche Travel Certificate has three foundation courses that will help you create, develop, market and promote your travel niche:

• Travel 110, Introduction to Special Interest Travel (1.5 units), will expose you to a myriad of travel specialties from which to choose. You will also explore the resources available to help prepare you for your chosen area of specialization.

• Travel 111, Marketing and Promoting your Specialty (1.5 units), will review the basic elements of marketing and promoting a product. Then going further, you will be provided with guidance in applying those principles to your chosen travel niche.

• Travel 112, Profiting from Excellent Vendor Relations (.5 unit), will provide information about selecting and working with vendors who will become partners with you as you grow your business.

To be certified as a Niche Travel Specialist, you will also need to complete 3 units of Destination Specialist courses and 4 units of elective niche courses; plus Travel 72 (Introduction to Travel), Travel 76 (Travel Sales and Marketing), and Travel 89 (Cyber Travel). The three new foundation courses will be launched next semester (Spring, 2004). For more information on the Niche Travel Specialist Certificate, you may contact Debbie Wilson (Travelbug2@aol.com) or Kiran Kamath (kkamath@losmedanos.edu); or check our website at www.centram.org. For phone inquiries, please call Kiran Kamath at 925/439-2181 x 3349.
TAP your way to success!

By Kiran Kamath, CTC

The national Travel Agent Proficiency (TAP) Test is the first of three levels of certification developed by The Travel Institute (formerly ICTA) in collaboration with several travel industry partners such as the American Society of Travel Agents. If you have completed Travel 72 and Travel 76 at CENTRAM, you have the tools necessary to take this test. CENTRAM is a national TAP Test site (site #69). The Travel Agent Proficiency (TAP) Test is offered in a fully online, proctored environment every semester at CENTRAM. It will be offered on December 6th from 10 am to 12 noon.

The TAP test measures basic competency and is important to launch your travel career. It demonstrates your abilities and your interest to a prospect employer. Some of your advantages to receiving the TAP certification from The Travel Institute are:

😊 Improve your competitive edge with prospective employers.
😊 Reduce the work experience required to receive your CTA certification from 18 months to 12 months.
😊 Reduce the waiting period for your IATAN ID card from 6 months to 3 months after meeting IATAN’s requirements.
😊 Enable prospective employers to find you by getting listed on The Travel Institute website www.thetravelinstitute.com

If you are planning to take the TAP Test, please sign up on the bulletin board. The deadline to complete your application and pay for the test is October 29th. The cost of the TAP test is $90 (reduced to $85 for a group of 10 from LMC). Members of the Voyagers’ Club, who successfully pass the TAP Test, can request a partial certification fee refund scholarship of $25, if approved by the Inter Club Council (ICC). The completed application form and full payment (by check made out to Los Medanos College) are due to any of your instructors by October 29th. To apply for a partial reimbursement scholarship from the Voyagers’ Club, you must present a copy of your transcript from The Travel Institute indicating that you have passed along with a copy of your check. Please submit this to the Treasurer of the Voyagers Club, Cynthia Bauer.

TAP TIPS

√ Read every chapter of the Travel Career Development textbook.
√ Study the maps in the textbook and know your island locations well.
√ Brush up on your travel basics and geography.
√ Review your codes and terminology.
√ Don’t forget to bring a calculator to the exam.
√ The test is 120 multiple choice questions, done online in the Travel Lab on December 6, 2003 from 10 am to 12 noon.
√ Arrive early – by 9:40 am to get situated!

Bon Voyageur goes online in 2004

Effective January 2004, the Bon Voyageur newsletter will only be available online at www.centram.org. Please look for it there monthly. If you would like to be added to the email monthly reminder, please let Kiran Kamath know at kkamath@losmedanos.edu.

Talking about a Niche!
Check our next newsletter for an article by Georgie Pryal - who with her partner Toni Mattingly - found a very exciting niche for herself!
A visit to Grand Canyon National Park is a trip of a lifetime. Even if you have seen pictures and movies of the Canyon, seeing it in person will take your breath away. Whether your clients want to visit the Grand Canyon as a primary destination, or as a day trip and part of a larger vacation, here are some things to keep in mind:

Lodging:
The Grand Canyon has historic lodges on both the North Rim and the South Rim. The driving time between the two is over five hours. Visitors need to pick one side or rim as their first destination. This article is based on a visit to the South Rim.

Both domestic and international travelers visit the Grand Canyon. Reserve a room as far ahead as possible. I visited this year in early July and made reservations in January. I didn’t get my first hotel choice, but was pleased to get a room at the South rim. When trying to upgrade the room a few weeks later, though, I was out of luck.

The park hotels are managed by Xanterra Parks and Resorts (888-297-2757. Phone reservations are more efficient than online reservations). Xanterra also manages in-park lodging for Bryce and Arches National Parks. El Tovar is the largest historic hotel on the South Rim, and has a large wrap-around porch that all visitors can relax on and enjoy the scenery. Bright Angel Lodge, Thunderbird Lodge and the Kachina Lodge are also on the South Rim. Prices range between $121-291. Restaurants, a snack shop, gift shops, buildings, activities, and a majestic view are all within walking distance.

Maswick Lodge and Yavapai Lodge are also located in the park, but are not on the Rim. These rooms are less expensive ($71-124) and lack the unique ambiance of the Rim hotels.

Trailer Village in the park provides trailer hook-ups and a spot can be reserved through Xanterra. Two tent campgrounds are located on the South Rim side of the Canyon. Reservations may be made for Mather Campground (800-365-2267). Desert View Campground does not take reservations and operates on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Chain hotels, an airport, a pizza restaurant, gas stations, and small stores can be found a few miles outside the park entrance in Tusayan, Arizona. Hotels include the Grand Hotel, Grand Canyon Squire Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Quality Inn, and the Red Feather Lodge.

Getting Around the Park:
In an effort to relieve congestion and pollution, use of shuttle buses is encouraged. In fact, one cannot drive to the Visitor Center and must take a free shuttle. Shuttles run regularly and parking is at a premium, so take advantage of this convenience.

Things to Do in the Park:
What a shame that most people visit the park only en route to another destination! They drive in, look over the edge, and then drive off again! An overnight stay is the least one should plan for. The colors of the canyon walls change during the course of the day. It is important to sit back and watch nature’s show!

The National Park Service offers a wide variety of free activities. Choices include fossil talks, a hike into the canyon (but not to the bottom), nature
Grand Canyon continued from pg. 5

walks, photography classes, and programs for children. The park guide at the entrance and Visitor’s Center provides the list of activities.

Hiking to the bottom of the Grand Canyon is a dangerous and challenging activity. Do not attempt to go to the bottom and back in one day. A one-way hike can take seven hours. Temperatures are much hotter in the Canyon, and water must be carried in (think in terms of gallons and not a water bottle or two).

One may also visit historic buildings found throughout the park, visit an art gallery, or take a mule ride into the Canyon. Be forewarned that the mules travel a path that can be narrow, steep, and rocky. When they stop, they face the canyon with hooves at the edge. This is not a trip for the feint of heart. Whitewater rafting trips are also available. These are offered by private guides.

Food Service:
The hotel restaurants are run by the same food service. Prices in the sit-down restaurant are similar to those in the cafeteria and deli. Also available are a higher end restaurant, a cocktail lounge, an ice-cream/coffee shop, (all along the rim) and a deli/food market.

Things to Keep in Mind:
The Grand Canyon rim is at 7,000+ feet elevation. Snow is possible in Spring and the North Rim may be closed due to snow. Activity may cause shortness of breath because of the altitude. The rainy season is June to September. Be prepared for rain and lightening. Pack a light jacket for cool, windy mornings and nights.

Vacationers can travel to the Grand Canyon by way of steam train. The Grand Canyon Express leaves from Willits, Arizona. Check for train trip and lodging specials.

If your client plans to stay in Flagstaff on this southwest trip, look for a hotel away from the railroad. Many of the hotels along Route 66 are also close enough to the tracks that train noise can be a problem. We stayed at the Residence Inn and didn’t hear a single whistle or chug.

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**Fall 2003 Calendar Of Events**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>General Meeting &amp; re-election of officers for Fall 2003 5:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>in the solarium (off the cafeteria) at LMC. Join us for some German</td>
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<td></td>
<td>food &amp; fun and find out all about upcoming events. Come vote for a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>re-shuffling of officer positions and purchase discounted tickets</td>
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<td>for the Oktoberfest event. We will also decide on a theme for our</td>
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<td>fund-raiser baskets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Oktoberfest at Ft. Mason in San Francisco (Friday night)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>General Meeting and election of officers for Spring 2004 5:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
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<td>in the solarium (off the cafeteria) at LMC. Light refreshments in</td>
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<td>keeping with the season will be served. NOTE: THIS IS A DATE CHANGE</td>
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<td>FROM THE ORIGINAL DATE OF NOVEMBER 19TH.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Latin/Island Holiday Evening, guaranteed to be fun! Final venue</td>
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<td>options to be presented and voted on at the October 6th Voyagers</td>
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<td>meeting.</td>
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**Change of Officers:**

Regina Brinker has resigned her position as President for personal reasons. We are sorry to lose you, Regina, and wish you the best with all your other endeavors! The interim-president - awaiting confirmation at the Voyagers meeting on October 6th – is former secretary Gina Pepe. Thank you for stepping up to the plate Gina – you are doing an admirable job already! Kudos also to Sandra Holt-Smith, who has agreed to fill the vacated position of Secretary and to Tina Balesteri, who is willing to
Hear Germany - Think Beer? There sure are some crazy things Germans do with beer – and wine!

By Inge Yarborough

If you are impressed with the Liter-Mugs (quart-sized beer steins) that are served with the foaming brew at the famous Oktoberfest, let me tell you about some of the more delicate but imaginative concoctions Northerners imbibe.

They are as varied as the German sub-cultures. After all, Germany was really made up of a bunch of tribes – reluctantly turned into a federation. (If you compare a Berliner & a Bavarian, think New York and Texas.) Even the dialects vary so much that a farmer from the Baltic region, a Leipziger & a true Bavarian may have an easier conversation using their High School English!

But I am digressing - I promised you beer!

A refreshing, light concoction throughout the North is “Alsterwasser” (Alster Water), named after the beautiful large lake in the center of Hamburg, the old Hanse City and sophisticated theater city at the mouth of the River Elbe, where it marries the North Sea. It is half beer (like “Becks” or “Pilsner”) and half “Brause” (7 Up).

If that sounds really weird, try a “Berliner Weisse”. Served in what looks like an oversized Daiquiri or Margarita glass, it is a splash of Raspberry Syrup with a light, pale beer and is considered a specialty of... (I can’t remember the name of the city.) And those who can’t decide whether they want to quench their thirst with a sturdy homemade beer or elegant Champagne can order a half-and-half drink too! “Herren Gedeck” - “Gentlemen’s Set-up” is what it’s called.

In my hometown of Hannover, we pour down “Luetje Lagen” during our version of Oktoberfest, the annual “Schtuetzenfest” (the “Marksman Feast”); essentially the same kind of affair with rides, beer tents & lots of music and drinking.

This is where the manly Hannoveranians sit after they have tried their luck at shooting holes through a lot of targets (preferably close to the center) and practice another skill: “Luetje Lagen” does not come easy! They are a combination of beer and “Schnaps” that are drunk from separate glasses at the same time by holding the beer glass between thumb and first two fingers and the ounce-sized Schnaps glass between pinky and ring finger. As you pour the contents into your mouth, the twain are supposed to meet, but that takes lots and lots of practice and dedication. (Of course, there is a point of diminishing returns, where the dexterity deteriorates. Fortunately, Schnaps doesn’t stain!)

Germany is also known for its wines which are not only made from the noble grapes grown on the terraces along the Rhine and Moselle rivers, but also from the grapes and fruits in many parts of the Black Forest region. Nation of inventors that we are, we ferment and otherwise “alkoholize” all kinds of fruit. The Frankfurt/Mainz area is famous for its “Applewoi” (Apple Wine). Great berry wines are produced all over the country and cherries are turned into a “Schnaps” called “Kirschwasser” (high proof and great for flambes).

Besides that, Germans soak fresh fruit such as peaches, pineapple & sugared strawberries in wine and use them as a base for a refreshing party punch, called “Bowle” (1 lb. fruit, 4 bottles of wine, 1 bottle of Champagne).

In the winter time, you can find delicious mulled wines everywhere, but nothing tops the “Feuerzangen Bowle”, which even inspired a book by the same title.
Enter to win a $10 gift card for Barnes and Noble Bookstore. One lucky winner will be drawn from all the correct entries. Send us your entry by October 23rd, 2003. You can: (1) Mail your entry to the Voyagers Club, Los Medanos College, 2700 E. Leland Road, Pittsburg, CA 94565; (2) drop off your entry in the Jumble Box in room 228; or (3) respond by e-mail to the Editor, Janet Robertson at janet.robertson@usa.net and include your name, phone number and complete address.

What Germans do with beer… continued

The “Feuerzangen Bowle” is not only a drink, but also a ritual. It consists primarily of red wine and is served over a flame in a steel or copper chafing kettle, which has an approximately 7 inch long sugar cone placed on a grate across it. The cone is soaked with high proof rum and then lit. As the melting sugar slowly dribbles like a gentle rain of fire into the hot liquid, the wine becomes very potent and one’s imagination soars with every glass. You feel no cold after that on your way home!

And then there is “Rumtopf”, of course: fruit harvested as the seasons come along, sugared, topped with rum (here the country must have run out of local alcohol) and stored in a glazed clay pot in a cool spot – to be served over ice cream. But desserts are another – albeit delicious - story for another time!

Important
Class & Test
Days – 2003

October 04    Establishing a Home-Based Travel Business
October 29    Deadline for TAP Test Application
November 01   Marketing & Promoting a Home-Based Travel Business
December 06   Tap Test from 9:45am – 12:00

CLUB OFFICERS FOR FALL 2003

Interim-President: Gina Pepe
Interim-Secretary: Sandra Holt-Smith
Newsletter Editor: Janet Robertson
ICC Representative & Publicity Coordinator: Tina Balesteri
Vice President: Danielle Brown
Treasurer: Cynthia Bauer
Newsletter Publisher: Inge Yarborough

ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE FOR THE VOYAGER’S BOARD MAY BE ADDRESSED VIA EMAIL TO GINA PEPE AT gnaxoxo@comcast.net