

# INTERLACHEN



FALL 2007

T R A V E L E R

*Let your travels lead you to the excitement of adventure and discovery*



## Dear Traveler

The year 2007 has been an exciting one for travel opportunities! We want to share some wonderful destinations for consideration as you make your 2008 travel plans. Having covered three continents this year, our agents have ideas and enthusiasm for journeys to Southeast Asia, Machu Picchu, France and more.

Indochina is fast becoming a destination growing in popularity with travelers from around the world. Ann and Lynn recently visited Vietnam and Cambodia with luxury operator Abercrombie and Kent. Read about their suggestions for an exotic and unimaginable experience on page 2.

September and October are ideal months to explore Peru and the majestic Machu Picchu. It is true that seeing Machu Picchu in person is awe-inspiring. English is spoken in many places, the people are very friendly, and vendors are not aggressive.

One of the most popular travel cruises has been the Silver Shadow Baltic Cruise of Russia on Silversea Cruiseline. This luxury cruise ship is small but offers a high space-to-guest ratio. See St. Petersburg in deluxe accommodations. Learn more on page 4.

Ann spent a couple of weeks in France this past spring. Having personally visited 20 hotels on the Left Bank, and luxuriating in a chateau in the Loire Valley as well as a chateau in Provence, Ann can tell you the best places to stay in the City of Lights.

The Riviera Maya area south of Cancun escaped the recent hurricanes and there are many new resorts. Book your plans now for the holidays, winter getaway, or spring break.

Mary recently visited the picturesque coastline of New England and Canada aboard the Grand Princess. Later this fall one of us will cruise on an Azamara ship. Azamara—a new cruise line owned by Celebrity—is focused on food, interesting itineraries, and less formality than other cruise lines.

Our own travel experiences can provide you with insight about some of the best travel spots available. Please call us with your questions, your ideas for the perfect vacation, and to make travel arrangements. We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Interlachen Traveler*.

Ann Gray, CTC  
Sis Mishou, CTC  
Mary Franson  
Lynn Schaefer  
Renee Wiley

*"Vietnam is a country filled with social and economic change. It reminds me of where China was 15 years ago."  
Ann Gray, on her recent trip to Southeast Asia.  
See page 2 to learn more.*



## Travel to Vietnam and Cambodia: A “Must See” in 2008

### Vietnam and Cambodia Tidbits and Tips:

- Over 300,000 tourists from the U.S. visited Vietnam last year.
- There are over 3 million motorbikes crowding the street of Hanoi, 5.5 million in Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon. The most frequently replaced part of a motorbike in Vietnam is the horn.
- It is against the law to put your hands in your pockets when visiting Ho Chi Minh’s mausoleum.
- The Vietnamese alphabet has 24 letters. Their words are short and with only one syllable per word. Hanoi is actually Ha Noi.
- Difference between a temple and a pagoda is that the temple has to do with royalty and pagoda has to do with religious figures like Buddha and various Hindu gods and avatars.
- Cambodia is an extremely poor country where 85% of the population lives without electricity.
- Local dish specialties in Cambodia include Amok (fish cooked in coconut milk) and a variety of soups, and curries similar in taste though not in spiciness to Thailand.
- Cambodia is home to some of the most exquisite religious sculptures in the world, many of which command extraordinary prices on the world market.
- According to the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia has had over one million international visitors in the first seven months of 2007; a 19% increase over same period in 2006. Siem Reap Province has had a 50% increase in visitors in 2007 as compared to last year.

If you’ve not yet traveled to Southeast Asia, you may want to add this exotic destination to your travel list for 2008. Indochina is quickly becoming a “must see” region of the world thanks to improved economic stability, rapid growth, and increased catering to travelers.

This summer Interlachen Travel owner Ann Gray and travel agent Lynn Schaefer traveled to Vietnam and Cambodia with Abercrombie and Kent—as always an outstanding tour operator of choice—and returned brimming with information and enthusiasm for Indochina.

With temperatures rarely dropping below 80 degrees, most of Vietnam and Cambodia is comprised of low

flat lands and tropical forests. People live in small rural, agricultural villages but there are large cities too, such as Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

“Vietnam is a country filled with social and economic change, and the transition is exciting. It reminds me of where China was 15 years ago,” says Ann. But it’s comfortable for Americans to be there in terms of security and ease of travel.

Cooperation between Vietnam and Cambodia in developing tourism has helped both countries improve their economies and strengthen their border security and politics. In the larger cities most everyone speaks English, and in fact, English is the preferred second



Interlachen’s Lynn Schaefer and Ann Gray visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

## Vietnam and Cambodia, continued

language of Southeast Asia. The US dollar is widely accepted and the prices are frequently quoted in dollars.

Vietnam has a rich history and culture. Lynn and Ann recommend travelers start in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi in the north. It is one of the very most interesting cities in Southeast Asia, and one of the most beautiful, according to the Interlachen two. Hanoi, once the administrative centre of French colony of Indochina, is dominated by French colonial architecture, customs and food.

Another must, whether on foot or in a rickshaw, is a visit to the Old Quarter of Hanoi where the life of the Vietnamese takes place right in front of your eyes. The history of Hanoi's Old Quarter spans 2,000 years. A majority of the street names start with Hang, which means merchandise or shop. Inhabitants of each street came from the same village and mastered the same craft. One of the most ancient streets is Hang Bac Street, which is occupied by silversmiths from Hai Hung province.

In the south of Vietnam is the bustling city of Saigon, which is the largest city in the country with nearly eight million people. Like Beijing, it can take hours to cross the 1,300 square miles of the city. Its official name is Ho Chi Minh City but in everyday conversation the city is still called Saigon. Two popular day trips from Saigon include the Cu Chi tunnels used by the North Vietnamese during the war which have been turned into a war memorial park, and the



Mekong Delta (the southern end of the Mekong River).

Bordering Vietnam to the west is Cambodia. Only a short flight away is the village of Siem Reap where more than 30 temples at Angkor are spread over 40 miles. These ancient buildings were built between AD 800 and 1400. Angkor Wat is the main temple; it is the best preserved building in the complex and is believed to be the largest religious structure in the world. It is particularly memorable at sunrise, when the light reflects off the water in the moat that surrounds the mile-long walls.

Another "must see" in Cambodia is Ta Prohm, a jungle temple of dreams. The forest has moved in to reclaim it and the huge fig trees, tangles of vines are among, and part of, the sanctuaries and passageways. According to Lynn, "It was right out of an Indiana Jones movie."

The Asia Pacific Travel Association has predicted that travel to Southeast Asia will only increase over the next two to three years. Ann and Lynn would absolutely agree! To learn more about traveling to Southeast Asia, Vietnam, and Cambodia, contact Ann, Lynn, or any of the Interlachen travel experts to arrange your Indochina exploration. ☯

**Q.** What should you consider in buying travel insurance?

**A.** We often recommend travel insurance. You must decide just how much you are willing to financially risk if you must cancel your trip due to an unanticipated condition—usually medical. This insurance would cover the trip cost and/or medical coverage and medical evacuation while on your trip. (Medicare coverage is extremely limited outside the U.S.)

Please contact your Interlachen Travel agent for further information or clarification regarding your questions about travel.

# INTERLACHEN

T R A V E L

5101 VERNON AVENUE  
SUITE 503

EDINA, MINNESOTA 55436

952.925.2940

WWW.INTERLACHENTRAVEL.COM

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## Baltic Cruise Explores Magic of Russia

When asked if there is any better way to introduce oneself to Russia than to combine it with a luxury Baltic cruise, Interlachen Travel owner Ann Gray claims, “This is certainly one of the best.”

If you desire a small ship, excellent food, an elegant stateroom with a bathroom the size of a home’s, and three full days in St. Petersburg, Ann recommends the Silver Shadow on Silversea Cruiseline. All accommodations are suites and Silversea offers the highest space-to-guest ratio of any fleet. Complimentary beverages are always served throughout the ship. Dining is open-seating all the time; meals can also be served course-by-course in your suite or on your balcony.

In St. Petersburg, taking a boat to the world-famous palace and park of



Peterhof is a favorite excursion outside the city. Peter the Great had a deep admiration of Western architecture and ways, and built Peterhof to rival Versailles. There are 144 fountains among the three parks.

This Baltic excursion has been one of the most popular cruise itineraries with Interlachen Travelers. The Silversea itinerary is extraordinary. It includes Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, Copenhagen and enough time in St. Petersburg to take a day trip to Moscow. Call Ann or any of the Interlachen agents to help you plan this magical experience. ☺

## INTERLACHEN TRAVEL SERVICES

Interlachen Travel thanks you for making your travel arrangements with us. Whether your travel is for business or pleasure, we can accommodate your needs. Each of our agents has over 25 years of experience in the travel industry. Let us help you with the following services:

- Certified Travel Expertise
- Complete Vacation Planning
- Group Travel
- Specialty Tours
- Foreign Travel
- Corporate and Incentive Travel
- Cruises
- Airline Reservations
- Consolidator Airfares
- Hotels
- Car Rentals
- Rail Passes
- Passport/Visa Services
- Travel Insurance