

INTERLACHEN



FALL 2006

T R A V E L E R

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



Dear Traveler

As we enter the first days of fall, now is the time to plan your winter vacation and we have some wonderful suggestions!

Ann Gray spent two weeks in the mystical and fascinating country of India with luxury operator Abercrombie and Kent. The focus of the tour was the northwest area of India known as Rajasthan, where she stepped into another world. See what India has to offer and why it's a destination worth visiting (see page 2). If you've been on an African safari, consider a safari in India where tigers are a main attraction.

One of the best kept secrets may be the Turks and Caicos Islands where you'll find incredible white sand beaches, the third longest Barrier Reef in the world, abundant sunshine and tropical temperatures. This slow paced group of islands might just be what you're looking for during those long months of Minnesota winter. Learn more on page 4.

The Riviera Maya is fully recovered from Hurricane Wilma and new resorts are springing up all along the coast. Already open is the Fairmont Mayakoba with Mandarin Oriental and Four Seasons rumored to be building soon. Cancun and the Riviera Maya have recently been the most visited Mexican destinations for Minnesotans. Planning a trip to this popular vacation spot is still on the "hot" list!

Looking for a true family vacation? Disney now offers 12 family tours throughout the world. Most of these tours are seven days in length.

Interlachen travelers experience some of the best destinations thanks to our dedicated agents. This fall we will visit Peru and Machu Picchu, sail the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and become reacquainted with several U.S. cities and their hotels and resorts. Call on us to give you first hand information regarding that destination you've been wondering about.

We look forward to helping you plan your winter vacation. 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

India has an amazingly large number of animals and birds in its wildlife sanctuaries and offers an exceptional safari destination.

For those who have already experienced an African safari, consider what India has to offer. See Bengal Tigers, elephants, rhinos, lions and more!



Incredible, Mystical India—A Trip Worth Taking

Facts About India

- India is in Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan.
- The country is slightly more than one-third size of the United States.
- India’s climate varies from tropical monsoon in south to temperate in north.
- There are 18 official languages and 1,600 dialects spoken.
- The country has 29 states and 33% of the parliament seats are filled by women.
- India has the largest network of railways in the world with 13,000 trains that carry 30 million people daily.
- 98% of Indian marriages are arranged; divorce rate is less than 1%.
- Currency in India is the rupee. Exchange rate is currently about 50 rupees per US dollar.

Mystical, vast and diverse, India is a fascinating travel destination. After spending two weeks with luxury operator Abercrombie and Kent in the northwest area of India known as Rajasthan, Ann Gray, Interlachen Travel owner and passionate traveler, was enthralled. “India is incredible and one of the most interesting places I’ve ever visited. It is another culture, another world. Where else could the road be shared by sacred cows, camels, elephants, snake charmers and shamans?”

In Rajasthan Ann was captivated by the exquisite colors. Rich or poor, the women were stunning in their brightly colored saris and array of jewelry. Men were equally flamboyant in vibrant turbans

and bushy upturned mustaches. Even the elephants and camels could be bedecked with jewels and paint.

“India is a land of disparities, but the people live in relative harmony. Much is accepted as destiny. The crime rate is low,” says Ann. Although the face of India is changing dramatically, this is a democratic country tempered with spiritual and feudal overtones. Age-old customs may be modifying, at least in the major cities, but in traditional Rajasthan the old ways endure...and usually enchant the foreign visitor.

Rajasthan’s most visited cities are Delhi, Jaipur, Udaipur, and Agra. Delhi is the capital of India and the seat of government and society, where



Ann visited the famous Taj Mahal in Agra

India, continued

a constant inflow of people keeps it culturally diverse.

Called the Pink City, Jaipur was built of pink stucco—pink being the Hindu color of welcome. Claiming to be the first planned city in the world, Old Jaipur is laid out into six quarters separated by broad streets. Many Indian towns built at the same time as Jaipur have chaotic, twisting streets making the Pink City rather unique.

Udaipur is known as the “Venice” of the east because of its many lakes. It also has incredible marble palaces and beautiful gardens. Overlooking Lake Pichola is the City Palace, the largest palace in Rajasthan. Ann stayed in the Lake Palace, located in the middle of Lake Pichola and accessible only by boat!

Located in Agra is the famous and proud home of the Taj Mahal, which was constructed by a workforce of 22,000 between 1631 and 1654. It is considered the finest example of Mughal architecture, a style that combines elements of Islamic, Indian, Persian and Turkish architecture. The white domed marble mausoleum is perhaps the most familiar part of the monument.

In addition to Rajasthan, Ann visited Varanasi, the most famous and holiest of Hindu cities. It is located on the banks of the Ganges River which plays a major role in life and death. Hindus believe that bathing in the Ganges River will lessen their sins and that dying in Varanasi skirts rebirth. Consequently, more than 1



million Hindus visit the city each year. According to Ann, “This was the most emotionally unsettling place I visited, in particular the cremation pyres.”

Mumbai, formerly Bombay, was where Ann ended her Indian trip. Mumbai was a welcome blend of West and East, with fabulous British Colonial buildings, Bollywood—the giant movie industry of India—and a flourishing computer technology industry.

The Indians are friendly and courteous, many speaking impeccable English, and welcoming Americans with open arms. The hotels where Ann stayed were former palaces, uniquely Indian in character yet international in comfort. Traveling to India can be done on just about any budget. While there, Ann visited hotels of varying classifications and can help you choose the best accommodations based on your needs.

Call Ann, or any of the Interlachen travel experts, to arrange your Indian odyssey. Visit Interlachen’s website at www.interlachentravel.com to learn more about Ann’s trip and McDonald’s first entry into India with its beef burgers! ☺

Q. *Is a copy of my birth certificate still a valid form of identification when traveling outside the United States?*

A. Though a notarized birth certificate once was a valid form of identification when traveling, beginning January 8, 2007, a valid passport will be required of all travelers entering or reentering the United States by air or sea. This covers arrivals from the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and Central and South America. A valid passport will be required for all land border crossings beginning January 1, 2008. If you plan to travel this coming winter, get your passports now to avoid the rush; it can take up to six weeks to get a passport.

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

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The Turks and Caicos Islands—a Tropical Best-Kept Secret—Awaits You This Winter

The Turks and Caicos Islands, located just east of the Bahamas, have everything you want from a warm tropical destination. There are 230 miles of glorious white sand beaches, the third longest Barrier Reef in the world, average temperatures in the 80s, and 350 days of sunshine. You won't find beach vendors, fast food franchises, or one traffic light! For even more appeal, the Islands have upscale hotel and condominium resorts, a stable British common-law government, the U.S. dollar as official currency, and a tax-free status—all of which make traveling to this destination safe and easy.

Forty islands make up the Turks and Caicos but only eight are inhabited, with Providenciales being the most developed. Interlachen's Ann Gray and Lynn Schaefer were guests at the adult-



only Club Med there and also visited other resorts along famous Grace Bay. Nature is the top attraction with a 12-mile gorgeous beach, a large coral reef filled with aquatic life, the Princess Alexandra Marine Park, deep sea fishing, and diving.

Although there is no charter yet from the Twin Cities to the Turks and Caicos Islands, it is an easy flight connection with airlines Delta, American, and U.S. Air.

Make your winter travel plans now. Call Interlachen to discover the magnificent paradise of these islands—"beautiful by nature."

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