



## Newsletter October 2019

### From the editor

#### In this month's edition:

- Croatia & Slovenia Full Tour review.
- Italian Lakes & Cities full tour review.



#### Plus our regular features:

- Another great recipe from Dave.
- This month's motorhome tips.
- Keep in touch.



The Grand Canal, Venice

Welcome to the October edition of the newsletter. We are now at the end of a packed touring season and it has been an eventful year with one thing and another.

September has been very busy with three full tours out and about. This month we have full tour reports on two of them: Croatia & Slovenia and The Italian Lakes & Cities. Our Poland tour has also just returned and we will

be reporting on that in the November edition.

Although we have finished touring, our year continues with the biggest motorhome show of the year at the NEC. We are on Stand 9.32 in Hall 9 and look forward to seeing you there.

Please note that some of our tours are now full for 2020 but that we do still have availability, mainly on our shorter tours. If you know you want to

travel with us in 2020 please bear in mind that many of our tours will fill up during the NEC, so get in now!

We have another great recipe from Dave with an easy Paella.

Finally this month's motorhoming tips are all about smartphones.

*Bob & Wendy, Dave & Sue, Colin & Sue,*

## Croatia & Slovenia Tour Review

We set sail from Dover on a bright autumnal morning to begin our 25 day tour of Croatia and Slovenia 2019. After a calm crossing the group set off to drive to the first stop in northern France.

The trip soon settled into the first few travelling days with stopovers in France and Germany. In Austria and we were blessed with lovely views of snow on the mountain tops - apparently an unusual sight so early in September. Day five saw us reach beautiful Lake Bled which was to be our base for the next three days. Here, the group enjoyed boat trips, cycling, walking, bus trips as well as visits to Bled Castle, the Vintgar Gorge and of course, sampling the traditional Bled Cake.

The weather was now set fair as we travelled across Slovenia to the capital



St Mark's Church, Zagreb

Ljubljana where we spent the next three days before heading south into Croatia. Several of our guests visited the Postojna Caves en route and found it an amazing experience.

Our time in Croatia was beautifully sunny so we were able to walk or cycle around the coast, enjoy an evening boat trip and meal, swim and sunbathe on the beaches and witness some stunning sunsets.

Coastal drives were also a highlight as we made our way along the Istrian Coast before heading inland

to the Plitvice Lakes – most agreed that this was the best drive of the tour with amazing views, clear blue skies and sunshine as we drove from coast to mountains in one day.

An early start was needed to catch the shuttle bus to the lakes so our resident ukulele player gave some of the group a “wake up call” to make sure they were up and ready to go.

We avoided the worst of the crowds and tour groups by using the second entrance to the lakes, although as always it was busy by the impressive largest

“We were blessed with lovely views of snow on the mountain tops - apparently an unusual sight so early in September”.

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View from the campsite. Krk Island on the Istrian Coast

“A highlight of our time in Zagreb – for some of the ladies anyway – was a visit to the campsite “Wellness Suite” where we took the opportunity to use the Jacuzzi, sauna, waterbed [and] relaxers”.

waterfall.

Next stop on the tour was the Croatian capital of Zagreb – a city with lots of character and plenty of sights and museums to enjoy.

Our guests spent the day wandering around the Dolac Market, visiting the twin spired cathedral, the church with the tiled roof, as well as enjoying the tour bus around the city.

A highlight of our time in Zagreb – for some of the ladies anyway – was a visit to the campsite “Wellness Suite” where we took the opportunity to use

the Jacuzzi, sauna, waterbed, relaxers and have a 30 minute massage – a wonderful way to spoil ourselves after three weeks in a motorhome!

Moving on from Zagreb we encountered some interesting weather conditions as we made our way back through Slovenia and into Austria. Nevertheless the drive through Slovenia was still beautiful with fluffy low clouds shrouding the mountains.

The sun shone through again as we headed further into Austria and towards the German border and we had

some stunning views of the Alps in the sunshine.

Then it was on into Germany and France for the final couple of days and a chance to reflect on our experiences at a final drinks reception. Thank you everyone for a wonderful trip.

*Sue & Colin.*

## Italian Lakes & Cities Tour Report

Also heading off into the late summer sun was our Italian Lakes & Cities Tour, with Gary and Eleanor at the helm.

This was the sixth outing for this tour, which always proves popular.

We have made a couple of changes this year in response to feedback from previous years. This meant that we now spend four nights in the Alps. Two on the way down in France and two on the way back in Austria. More on them shortly.

As usual the tour starts with a couple of driving days, one down to the Champagne region and another in Burgundy. On night two the group were treated to Beef Bourguignon, which makes perfect sense as the French for Burgundy is (you guessed it) Bourgogne. There was chicken on offer as well, but no



Peschiera del Garda by night

regional connection there.

Our first two night stopover was in the foothills of Mont Blanc. When we say foothills, the campsite we use is actually used as a base camp for climbers as well as being a stunning spot for a couple of nights.

On the second day, all of the guests ventured up the mountain (or at least part way up) via the amazing cog railway.

After their brief pause en route, the group then drove under Mont Blanc via the famous tunnel, through the Aosta valley and onto the southern shores of Lake Garda.

Here the group were

able to enjoy various pursuits, some around the lake itself and some around the neighbouring cities.

A few guests ventured off to Verona, home of a bronze statue of Juliet. Not sure what happened to Romeo though. Aside from that Verona is a beautiful city with an amphitheatre to rival the one in Rome.

Venice is also accessible by train from close to the campsite with many guests choosing to spend at least one of the days in the iconic city.

One of the changes we introduced this year was to split our time on the lake between the north and the south.

“Verona is a beautiful city with an amphitheatre to rival the one in Rome”.



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This proved to be a popular decision with a few days spent around Riva del Garda on the northern shores.

This area is slightly less commercial than the south and you are closer to the mountains here.

Many guests ventured into Arco with its dramatic castle perched on the sheer cliffs. Malcesine was also a popular choice made accessible by the 'steamers' that criss-cross the lake.

Some of the group also enjoyed a hike up Monte Baldo and were rewarded with some fantastic views of the lake.

Two culinary highlights of Italy were an enjoyable group meal down at Peschiera del Garda and then a Haggis night in Riva del Garda. We didn't realise that you can catch Haggis in Italy although we think Gary and Eleanor's Celtic connections may have something to do with it.

It was now time to leave Italy and head home. However, rather than



St Mark's Square, Venice

just bombing back to Calais the group had a two-night stopover in the Austrian Alps, close to the pretty town of Seefeld. This made an excellent base for a bus ride into neighbouring Innsbruck.

In addition to the Alps backdrop, Innsbruck is also home to an Olympic Ski Jump slope, which you can climb up if you are feeling energetic. No-one came back down the quick way though!

It was now time to put in some serious miles across Germany to our next overnighter near Strasbourg. For those guests with any energy left, there was time of an afternoon and evening in the 'heart of Europe', with it's half-

timbered houses and distinctive astronomical clock.

It was then a run-in to Calais with one final stop in the Champagne region where the whole group got together for a farewell drink.

The tour will be running again next year under a slightly different name (Lake Garda & Venice) and it will go in Spring rather than Autumn. We currently have spaces so please get in touch if you are interested.

"Some of the group also enjoyed a hike up Monte Baldo and were rewarded with some fantastic views of the lake".

## Motorhoming Tips

This month's motorhoming tips are all about the wonders of the smart phone. I am an old person and still have not got used to the idea that you can leave the house with your phone. However, this year I have been converted to the power of the smart phone!! If you are you the kind of person that owns a mobile phone but keeps it switched off and in the glove compartment then read on.

If you are still a 'pay as you go' dinosaur like me then you should consider up-rating (at least while you travel abroad) for the following reasons:

1. 4G is almost everywhere in Europe now. This allows you to do everything on your smart phone that you are used to doing on your computer / tablet at home with decent access speeds.
2. You can use your phone to stream radio and TV, download your paper and keep
3. You can use your phone as a satnav with live traffic updates (see last month's newsletter for more on this).
4. You can use your phone as a mobile hot-spot and link other devices to it (tablet, TV, laptop) meaning that you do not have to rely on dodgy (sometimes over-priced campsite wifi).
5. You can get rid of your 'mi-fi' device.
6. You can have instant access to all kinds of tourist information from

up to date with the weather reports. This is something that we know our customers do on a daily basis.

live public transport information to opening times for local attractions to restaurant reviews for the place you are just about to go into for your dinner. The location of the nearest supermarket and petrol station are also at your fingertips.

In order to do all of the above then you will need to get yourself a decent data allowance, but I would argue that this would be well worth doing for the period of your tour as you can do so much with your phone while you are away.



"If you are still a 'pay as you go' dinosaur like me then you should consider up-rating".

## Coq au Van: the amusingly titled recipe section

### Easiest ever Paella

#### Cooking method:

#### Ingredients:

1 tbsp olive oil.  
110g chorizo sausage, chopped.  
1 leek or onion, sliced.  
1 tsp turmeric.  
300g long-grain rice  
1 litre fish or chicken stock.  
200g frozen peas.  
400g frozen seafood mix, defrosted.  
Lemon wedges, to serve.

Heat oil in a deep frying pan, then cook leeks for five minutes until soft, without browning. Add chorizo and fry until it releases its oils. Stir in turmeric and rice so it's coated by the oils then pour in stock. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 15 minutes,

stirring occasionally.

Tip in the peas and cook for a further five minutes, then stir in the seafood to heat through for a final couple of minutes, or until the rice is cooked. Check the seasoning and serve immediately with lemon wedges. Enjoy.



## Keep in touch

We are very happy to hear from newsletter readers throughout the year. If you have ideas for features, questions, motorhoming tips or questions about any of our tours, please feel free to get in touch at any time.

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