

great adventures

A publication of Zephyr Adventures • Issue 15 • Sept. 2005

Zephyr Adventures: Always Changing

We are always telling our customers that we use the results in all those post-trip surveys you fill out. We truly do! For our 2006 schedule, we have added new trips and adapted existing ones based largely on your feedback. This newsletter is devoted to explaining these changes.

Idaho Skating: Sold Out! (Second Trip Added)

What will be the most popular trip of 2006 for Zephyr Adventures? That has already been determined. Our five-day Idaho Skating Adventure on September 10-14 sold out in less than one month and we have already added a second date: September 5-9, 2006.

The Idaho Skating Adventure takes place in northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. The trip features two fantastic trails: the 73-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes and the 50-mile Centennial Trail. The group will stay in four separate towns, all of which are directly on one of the two trails. The scenery is fantastic and the weather should be excellent in September.

Although the September 10th trip is already sold out, space should become available as some registrants switch over to the earlier date. If you want to skate

on two of the longest paved paths in the country, call or book online today!

IDAHO

Skating Adventure
September 5-9 or 10-14, 2006
5 days / 4 nights / \$1550

China & Tibet: A Tour Operator's Paradox

By Zephyr's Owner Allan Wright

I first traveled to China in the year 2000, purely for vacation. Finding it a fascinating country and yet difficult to travel on one's own, I decided it would make a perfect tour location. After a year of research, we ran our first China Adventure in 2002 and, one year later, our first Tibet Adventure.

We have had some amazing experiences in China and Tibet: sleeping on the Great Wall, trekking through the Tibetan countryside with yaks as our pack horses, and (most recently) being invited as the guest of honor to a Tibetan Harvest Festival. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a tour operator, China and Tibet are a paradox: fantastic experiences for those who attend but not interesting to most of our clientele.

Over the last three years our China and Tibet trips have averaged only 14 customers, as compared to 19 for all our trips. More telling, when we conducted an email survey of our High Rollers this month, we received results that would knock the enthusiasm out of most small business owners. 65% of respondents were not interested in

our current China tour and 82% were not interested in Tibet!

Of course, we realize most of our High Rollers are inline skaters and, since cruising through Tibet on eight wheels is impossible, many will never want to go there. Still, these results clearly tell us these are not popular destinations with many of our travelers, despite the incredible experiences the trips produce.

In response, we are making changes. In 2006, we are eliminating the high 17,100-foot mountain pass on our four-day Tibet trek. Not only is this pass the most difficult aspect of the trek, it is also daunting to many of you considering Tibet. Even though 95% of our participants successfully conquered the pass on past trips, our new trek will stay in the 14,000-foot range and be much easier to manage. We hope this will encourage more of you to join us in Tibet in 2006.

In 2007, we plan to make even greater changes by eliminating the trek and tent camping altogether, adding a hike on the Great Wall, and creating one combined China & Tibet Hiking Adventure.

So, if you are enthralled by the idea of trekking through Tibet, consider joining us next September. If you would like to visit China and Tibet but need a comfortable bed each night, mark down 2007 on your calendar!



Zephyr trekkers mingle with the locals

Harvest Festival in Tibet

On our recent trek in Tibet, our group of 17 participants and guides came upon our final and favorite village, one we fondly call Shangri La, as the locals were celebrating the first day of the fall Harvest Festival. Since our groups have now visited the village three times and have brought gifts for the village children each year, we were immediately selected as the honored (albeit uninvited) guests.

Our group was shown into the celebration tent. Honorary "chang" (barley beer) was poured all around. The village adults performed a ceremonial dance. And these two groups from vastly different worlds shared a moment in time that could not have been scripted by any adventure travel company. Participating in the Tibetan Harvest Festival was an experience none of us will ever forget. It is for experiences like this that we travel to Tibet.

TIBET

Trekking Adventure
September 17 - 28, 2006
 12 days / 11 nights / \$2400

**Eddy Matzger:
 Back in 2006**

Professional skater Eddy Matzger joined us on a skating adventure in Minnesota in mid-September. According to both participants and Eddy's Zephyr co-guides, this was one of the most amazing Zephyr trips ever.

Eddy is known as much for his fun-loving personality as his skating career and this personality was on full display during the tour. "Eddy is a natural guide," says long-time Zephyr guide

Andrea Franklin. "He was always concerned with helping the customers and making the tour fun."

And indeed it was. Comments from customers include "It was incredibly fun," "I had a big adventure ... bigger than anyone can possibly imagine," and "Eddy was an amazingly fun person to hang out with." Strangely enough, the activities highlighted were all the unplanned ones such as a pillow fight, full-moon skate, and touch football in front of the hotel.

"We had a problem convincing people this would be a normal Zephyr tour," says Zephyr owner Allan Wright. "Everyone thought it would be a speed



fest since Eddy was joining us. The reality is any tour Eddy joins will be our standard mix of skaters with the additional fun factor of adding Eddy."

The Minnesota tour was so successful we are bringing Eddy back in 2006 – on two trips! Eddy will again join us in Minnesota from August 20-24 with the tour starting immediately after the Saint Paul Inline Marathon. Additionally, he will guide our Netherlands Skating Adventure from July 15-21. Both will be our traditional Zephyr adventures, with multiple routes each day, van support, and great skating paths. However, we will also add our secret "fun factor" weapon – Eddy. If you are worried these tours will be too difficult for you, listen to the comments of one 2005 participant who was worried in advance about the tour being too fast for her: "I loved the tour and was so proud of myself for giving it a shot!"

MINNESOTA

Skating with Eddy Matzger
August 20 - 24, 2006
 5 days / 4 nights / \$1450

NETHERLANDS

Skating with Eddy Matzger
July 15 - 21, 2006
 7 days / 6 nights / \$1950

Ooh la la!

**Improving on Perfection:
 Burgundy and Paris in One Great Adventure!**

Alumni of Zephyr's Burgundy Multisport Adventure might wonder how we could possibly make the Burgundy tour even more memorable, more exciting or more interesting. What if we added one of the most fascinating and beautiful cities in the world to our route? *Oui, c'est PARIS!* New for next summer, this trip has been upgraded to the Burgundy and Paris Multisport Adventure, running June 12-18, 2006.

Since many of our Burgundy customers extend their vacations to visit Paris and participate in the renowned Friday Night Skate on their own, we decided it would be more fun to do this as a group. Like nowhere else on earth, Paris is a magical city which boasts a wealth of cultural diversity, history, and modern sophistication. Although Paris may conjure up images of heavy traffic and uneven cobblestones, it is actually a surprisingly skate-friendly city. You just have to know where to go, and that's where Zephyr comes in. Together, we spend two days exploring the *City of Lights* on our skates, keeping the pace casual and relaxed as we fill our senses with the immense richness Paris has to offer.

We've structured our itinerary to include the Paris Friday Night Skate, an extraordinary experience that should be part of every skating enthusiast's list of "things to do at least once in a lifetime." In the summer, participation averages around 10,000 skaters accompanied by police escorts, course

Continued on next page

3 great adventures 888-758-8687

Continued from previous page

marshals, and yes, even an ambulance (safety first!). The three-hour route varies each week, but generally covers 14-18 miles of city streets. Bicycles are allowed but must remain in the rear of the group.

During the first five days of our tour, we skate, bike and hike through the pastoral beauty of Burgundy. Steeped in history, this region is known for its wine, gastronomy and Romanesque architecture. We stay in the charming medieval towns of Chalon-sur-Saone, Buxy, and Cluny, where we also enjoy the most fabulous food of any Zephyr Adventure. Our skating routes take us along the immaculate "Voie Verte" converted railway path, one of the finest trails in the world. We hike above scenic vineyards, and bike through resplendent countryside, stopping along the way to soak in the atmosphere (or maybe a little wine) at any of the innumerable roadside cafés.

The 2006 Burgundy and Paris Multisport Adventure is already one-third full, so don't delay if you're thinking of signing up!

BURGUNDY & PARIS

Multisport Adventure
June 12 - 18, 2006
7 days / 6 nights / \$1950

Biking is Better than Skating ... At Least in California's Wine Country

Back in 1998, Zephyr ran its first-ever California Wine Country adventure. Six customers joined us for five days of skating in San Francisco and Sonoma County. We had a fantastic time but found the pavement quality in

CALIFORNIA WINE COUNTRY

Biking Adventure
April 23 - 27, 2006
5 days / 4 nights / \$1550

the wine country to be poor. This was a learning experience for Zephyr, as participants told us it was more important to skate on good pavement than in the best scenery.

We have not been back to the Sonoma area since.

That will change on April 23, 2006 when we begin our second California Wine Country Adventure. However, this time we will be on bicycles. We know many of our customers are avid inline skaters who aren't interested to join any of our non-skating trips. Consider this one more pitch for the idea!

The reality is some areas of the world are just not made for inline skates. This past May, we ran our first-ever Bicycling Adventure, a seven-day trip through Tuscany and Umbria in Italy. 24 participants joined three Zephyr guides as we pedaled our way past vineyards, tested olive oil in traditional pressing plants, and sampled the incredible Italian cuisine. Most of these participants were skaters and yet all would tell you biking is a fantastic way to tour Italy.

The same is true of the Napa and Sonoma valleys. Great wine, upscale hotels, fantastic country roads, and brilliant sunshine – what more could you ask for on vacation? Leave your skates behind, rent one of our top quality bicycles, and try a new mode of vacation in California's Wine Country next April.



Two wheels are just as much fun as eight!

Colorado: New Hike & Bike or Hike & Skate Format

Our Colorado Skating Adventure was always seen as one of the more difficult trips we offered. In 2006, we have made changes to the Colorado itinerary to better feature the state's majestic mountains and remove some of the difficulty of the trip. New in 2006 we have:

- ◆ Added several hikes to change the tour to a Hike & Skate or (for you non-skaters) a Hike & Bike Adventure. We have hikes for all ability levels, from casual strolls through the forest to an opportunity to summit a 14,000-foot peak.
- ◆ Removed the only trail with significant hills, the incredible Mineral Belt Trail looping the city of Leadville. (This trail is still an option for those wishing to skate or bike it.) We have kept the other great skating paths in the state, most of which run alongside rivers and have few hills.
- ◆ Included a stay in the city of Aspen, perhaps the most famous ski town in America.

Colorado has always been one of our most beautiful adventure locations in the United States. By removing the Mineral Belt Trail, the paved paths are appropriate for almost all skaters and bikers. Adding hiking to the mix gets us into the Rockies for those spectacular Colorado views you can't get by staying on paved paths. If you have been interested in visiting Colorado, 2006 might be the perfect year for you to join us.

COLORADO

Skating & Hiking
or
Biking & Hiking
July 30 - Aug. 3, 2006
5 days / 4 nights / \$1400

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Alumni Early Booking Discount

If you've traveled with Zephyr before, you are eligible to receive a discount on the base price of your 2006 trip if you book early!

- ◆ 10% off if you book by October 31, 2005
- ◆ 5% off if you book by December 31, 2005

New Cancellation & Deposit Policies

We are making one more change in 2006. Zephyr has had one of the most flexible cancellation policies in the adventure travel industry, providing participants with a full credit as long as they give us 30 days notice of cancella-

tion. Our Alumni (15 day deadline) and High Rollers (no deadline) have had even more lenient cancellation policies.

Unfortunately, this has resulted in an increasing number of cancellations. In fact, in 2005 our cancellation rate increased to 15% of bookings. Among other concerns, late cancellations limit our ability to sell otherwise sold-out trips.

So, in our attempt to still provide a flexible cancellation policy while reducing the number of cancellations, we are changing our 2006 deposit and cancellation policies as follows:

- ◆ \$400 deposit to reserve a trip
- ◆ Final payment due 60 days in advance
- ◆ New customers can cancel for a full credit with 45 days advance notice
- ◆ Alumni can cancel for a full credit with 30 days advance notice
- ◆ High Rollers can cancel for a full credit with 15 days advance notice

We hope this new policy meets everyone's needs!

Upcoming Trips

We already have over 100 bookings for our 2006 adventures! Don't let the vacation of your dreams pass you by. For full details on all our trips, please visit our website at www.ZephyrAdventures.com.

Florida Skating	Dec. 5-9, 2005
FL Camp & Beginner Skating	Mar. 29-Apr. 2
California Wine Country Biking	Apr. 23-27
Hilton Head Skate Camp	May 17-21
Italy Biking	May 18-24
Nantucket/MV Biking & Skating	Jun. 4-8
Burgundy & Paris Multisport	Jun. 12-18
Yellowstone Family Multisport	Jul. 3-8
Glacier Hiking	Jul. 9-13
Netherlands Skating	Jul. 15-21
Colorado Hike & Bike/Skate	Jul. 30-Aug. 3
Lake Tahoe Family Multisport	Aug. 6-11
Switzerland Skating	Aug. 12-18
Minnesota Beginner Skating	Aug. 13-17
Minnesota Skating	Aug. 20-24
Idaho Silver Country Skating	Sept. 5-9
Idaho Silver Country Skating	Sept. 10-14
Tibet Trekking	Sept. 17-28
Hilton Head Skate Camp	Oct. 4-8
Florida Skating	Dec. 9-13

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