

Travel News

It's been great to see so many people feeling confident about travelling again this year. After escorting very successful tours to Central America in May and Canada and Alaska in June, I am very much looking forward to escorting a group to Spain and Portugal in October.

The Canada and Alaska tour, one of my real favourites, was a little bit colder this time but still spectacular. In fact, I plan to take a group back in 2026.

As fewer Australians tend to travel to Central America, I thought I might share some impressions of my recent time in this fascinating part of the world in this newsletter.

In addition to fully escorted tours, our clients enjoy a wide range of travelling styles, such as small group tours, independent travel and both ocean and river cruising. If you have any thoughts about travelling either in the short term or even in the next year or two, our highly experienced consultants will be very happy to help you design your perfect holiday or business trip.

Reflections on Central America

In late April, I was so excited to set off with a group of intrepid travellers to explore four of the most diverse countries in Central America. This trip was originally planned for April 2020 so was long anticipated!

First stop was the large, fascinating country of Mexico, travelling north, before spending time in Mexico City, central Mexico and, finally, the Yucatan Peninsula. Every area had a different feel and culture. In the north we stayed at Chihuahua, getting its name from the wild dogs that came from this area. A visit to a local Mennonite community was unexpected and most interesting, which preceded a train trip on the very comfortable Chepe Express through remote countryside and villages. Mexico City was busy with visits to the amazing Anthropological Museum, the ancient Mayan site of Tetihuacan and a cruise along canals where market gardens still flourish. Our journey through central Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula included more famous Mayan sites including



Chichen Itza and Palenque, a lovely morning cruise viewing flamingoes, snorkeling with turtles in the Caribbean and, of course, enjoying great Mexican food.

From Mexico, we flew to Panama-home of the Panama Canal. Our visit to the locks was most interesting. We also cruised on a section of the canal and encountered our first sloth. A visit to a local Indian community was a great contrast to the modernity of Panama City.

Guatemala was next where life today is much as it has been for many generations. This small country is packed with lakes, volcanoes and beautiful colonial towns. We made the most of our time there experiencing plenty of local culture including extraordinary religious customs and busy, bustling local markets.



Jacquey in Costa Rica

The last country on our tour was Costa Rica, another small country with so much to offer. For us, the highlight was the varied and beautiful wildlife – birds, monkeys, caiman and, of course, the sloth. Plenty of volcanoes kept the scenery interesting and we enjoyed a good walk over the lava flow of Arenal Volcano and though the crater of Irazu Volcano.

Sadly, our adventure had to come to an end but, due to a missed connection because of bad weather, an unexpected bonus was a day in Houston with a visit to the NASA Museum, which was great fun!

If you are looking for somewhere a little different, Central America is well worth considering. Gippsland Travel can help you plan a personalised itinerary or you could join a tour. The flights between all our destinations went like clockwork, we enjoyed some wonderful local cuisine and it was a true journey of discovery and participation.

Until next time ... *Jacquey*

TRAVEL EXPO

Gippsland Travel Office
Wednesday 22 November
2 sessions: 6pm & 7pm
Registration essential



JACQUEY'S PERSONALLY ESCORTED TOURS

We recommend registering your interest in any of our escorted tours with a \$250 holding deposit, which is fully refundable if you change your mind. Jacquey's 2024 and 2025 tours have proved extremely popular so please call to register your interest. For some tours, you may be placed on a waitlist until availability is secured or the final itinerary is released.

2024 Escorted Tours



JORDAN & MOROCCO

10 April to 30 April

Jordan is a country of great contrasts, which will appeal to the most demanding visitor. It is not only filled with Roman monuments, it combines the beauty of the desert with the warmth of its people. Morocco is an ancient land of great history and complexity and is a vital source of cultural, architectural, artistic and linguistic influence.



KIMBERLEY ADVENTURE

1 June to 16 June

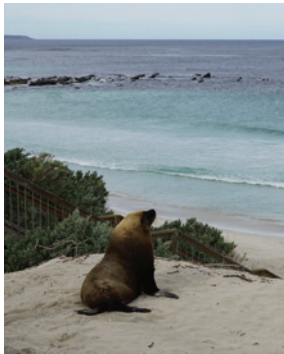
Australia's vast Kimberley Region is one of the world's last true wilderness frontiers. Experience the best of the Kimberley on this 4WD Adventure, discover the domes of the Bungle Bungle Ranges, take a helicopter flight over Mitchell Falls, and view indigenous rock art at Windjana Gorge.



STUNNING SWITZERLAND

September

The dramatic Alpine scenery, historic towns and modern cities make Switzerland a unique and unmissable destination. The Glacier Express takes us through countless tunnels and unique landscapes, as it meanders gently through valleys and over passes, offering constantly changing views of mountains, lakes and glaciers on its spectacular journey. *Launch Night: Tuesday 17 October 2023*



A TASTE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

October

On this inaugural tour we will discover the old-world charm of the German heritage-listed town of Hahndorf, and marvel at the vast landscape of the Flinders Ranges and the mighty Wilpena Pound. Our exploration of Kangaroo Island will introduce us to its spectacular scenery, inquisitive wildlife and delicious local produce, while our visit to the quirky d'Arenberg Cube in McLaren Vale will include a relaxing wine tasting overlooking the vineyards.

Escorted by Krystal McCallum

MURRAY RIVER PADDLESTEAMER

27 November 2025

We are taking expressions of interest for this 5-night coach tour that includes a 3-night Murray River cruise that will depart from Echuca. PS Australia Star is currently being built in Mildura and will become Australia's first five-star river cruise experience, the largest paddle steamer in the Southern Hemisphere and the only wood-fired, five-star accommodated paddle steamer in the world.



2025 Escorted Tours



EGYPT, DUBAI & EAST AFRICA

February

One of our all-time favourite tours, our itinerary incorporates an extensive tour of Egypt, including a first-class Nile cruise, a 3-night stopover in Dubai and a wildlife safari of Kenya and Tanzania that combines breathtaking game viewing with world-class lodges and hotels in unique locations. *Launch Night: Wednesday 14 February 2024*



ITALY, MALTA & GREEK ISLANDS

May

We will explore some of the lesser-known regions of Italy including Puglia and Bologna. Then we will spend some time in Malta, home of some of the world's most ancient standing buildings, before embarking on our Greek Island small ship cruise visiting a range of beautiful islands, each with its own charm and personality.



UK & IRELAND

August

This comprehensive tour of England, Scotland and Ireland ends with four days in the heart of London. We will combine visits to the wonderful icons of British history with delightful trips off the beaten track down country lanes to the quaintest of villages.



ULTIMATE NEW ZEALAND

October

Experience New Zealand, onboard a deluxe Ultimate Coach. This 21-day tour covers the North and South Islands by rail, coach & an exclusive overnight cruise. We visit the best of New Zealand at a relaxed pace. On three rail journeys we will experience an operating steam railway; the wild spirit of the coast on the Coastal Pacific; the magnificent Southern Alps on the TranzAlpine one of the world's great train journey and the rugged & spectacular Taieri Gorge River.

Proposed 2026 Escorted Tours

- January **ANTARCTICA**
- March/April **JAPAN**
- June **CANADA & ALASKA**
- December **EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS CRUISE**



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