

The anchor *magazine*



WHEEL & ANCHOR
We bring travellers together





Sand dunes at dawn.

Graphic design: anythink.ca

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VOLUME SIX | JANUARY 2020
The Trip Inspiration edition



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On the Cover: Colourful boats in the Mediterranean Sea, Oludeniz, Turkey.

The anchor magazine

from gordon's perspective

Welcome to 2020 – a new year and a new decade! This is the time of year where we make all of those promises and resolutions for next year. By the time you read this, you might have already given up on one or two of those (or at the very least cheated ;-).

But when it comes to travel, I hope you won't cheat yourself of the opportunity to get out and explore whatever you can – whether not far from home or on the other side of the planet, there is a world of experience and wondering awaiting you. At Wheel & Anchor we have already a good lineup of trips for 2020 with a few more trips still to come.

We received feedback from our members that many of you are already planning for 2021 and beyond and so we kickstarted our planning early with the Trip Inspiration Survey which has given us some great insight into where you want to go (more on that later in this issue).

I hope that you find some inspiration in some of the trips that were favoured by members just like you. Maybe the places mentioned in these pages are exactly in line with what you were thinking, or perhaps there is something here that you hadn't thought of before.

Whatever the case, I am excited for what 2020 will bring to the Wheel & Anchor community and to see as many of your smiling faces either on tour or at one of our events.

All the best in 2020 and happy travels! ☸



Gordon Dreger, Founder



If there's one thing I love to do, it's to dream up amazing trips all over the world!

All the spots listed here on this map are where we're thinking about (or already planning on) going in 2021, based on feedback from members of our community.

We probably won't do all of them (this year), so it's very important to us to get your feedback on where you'd like to go! We're asking all of our members to complete our 2021 Trip Inspiration Survey before Feb 1 so we can compile the data and start putting programs together.

Don't forget that everyone who returns the survey is entered in our draw for a Tumi suitcase, valued at \$1,200.

Check your email newsletter for the contest link.

Gordon.

Win a Tumi suitcase.

Trip #1: Morocco



A couple of Western tourists accompanied by their Berber guide, waiting for the morning sunrise.

Morocco

A mosque in Morocco.

There is a mystique and almost magical air to Morocco, the storied merchant nation where cultures have mingled and swapped stories and goods for centuries. The traveller who ventures to the northern coast of Africa will find serene beaches, towering mountains, vast deserts, and historic architecture with Berber, Islamic, French, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese influences.

I'm personally keen to spend some time exploring the medina of Marrakech, to smell the spices and shisha amidst the bustling commercial activity that has been going on here for centuries. Markets worldwide have been inundated with cheap trinkets from China, but a few places still hold an air of authenticity and intrigue - those of Morocco pass the smell test. I can't resist a bit of treasure-hunting and it's a perfect spot for us to brush up our bartering skills.

And while the cities of Morocco are ripe with adventures, the natural beauty of the country's landscapes warrant even more praise. Hiking in the Atlas Mountains will take you past villages unspoilt by modernity's pervasive influence, and the nation's beaches call to sun seekers and kitesurfers alike.

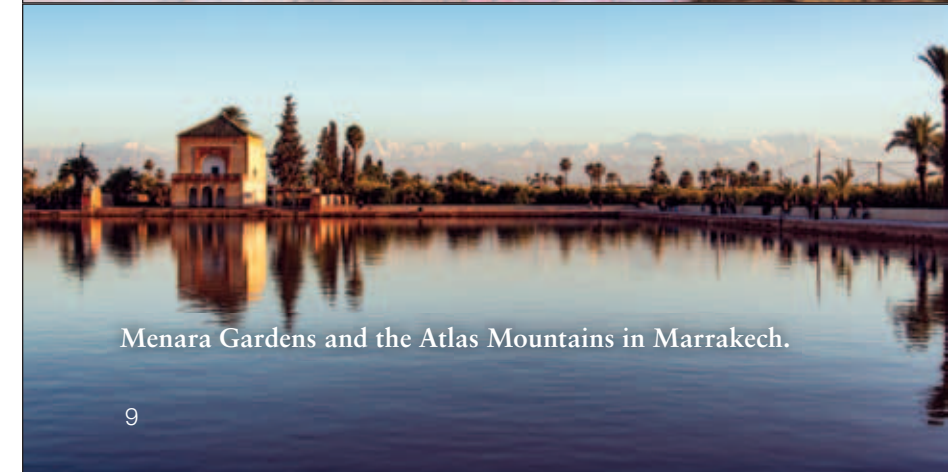
We'll take the chance to visit the mighty Sahara Desert, seeking out the remote oases set amidst dunes that stretch as far as the eye can see, and perhaps spend a night under a canvas of stars and planets that can only be seen from places far away from the lights and buzz of the city. It was exciting to see so many of our community list Morocco as high on their list for 2021, and I'm keen to create an adventure for us there. 🌀



Legzira Beach, with arched rocks.



Medina District of Essaouira in Morocco.



Menara Gardens and the Atlas Mountains in Marrakech.

Trip #2: Italian Villa Vacation



It comes as no surprise that a great many members in this community of travellers have been to Italy. It is among the most visited countries on the planet, ranking 5th in 2019 with nearly 60 million visitors.

Some countries you can visit once and feel you’ve had your fill; Italy is not one of those. I’ve always felt that Italy is one of those places that deserves considering another trip whenever someone brings it up - really it’s just about looking for an excuse to visit Italy again.

In keeping with our philosophy of doing things different, we’ve designed this program to maximize the ‘soak it in’ experience of Italy. You’ll spend 7 nights in a traditional Italian villa - and these villas are stunning - which will encompass 3 days of excursions around the area, as well as 3 days to explore on your own via e-bike or electric vehicles. A couple of dinners at the villas, a few out in some incredible local restaurants, and none of the stress of bouncing around and packing / unpacking.

A tourist has ‘*been to Italy*’ whereas a traveller has ‘*spent time in Italy*’ and that really makes all the difference.

If you have not done Italy before, or if you just want to cover a little more ground, our popular Italy: North to South trip which we ran this past October will be run again at the same time in 2020. Our host Amber reported that everyone had a fantastic time and felt that the value for the money exceeded expectations. ☼



Trip #3: Island-Hopping in Greece

The famous windmills of Mykonos, Greece.



Island-Hopping in Greece

The incredible blues and whites of the Greek architecture along the shores of the turquoise sea makes among the best places for a glass of wine and a sunset you'll find anywhere.

Most travellers will explore the islands by cruise ship, but as always there's a way to get an even more intimate experience. We'll travel by local ferry and spend the nights on the islands rather than onboard ship, meaning we get to dine out and really soak in the evening atmosphere of these Aegean islands. We'll also get to experience the philoxenia of the Greeks, their own style of hospitality that has been a part of their culture and mythology since the days of ancient Greece.

I would anticipate spending a few nights on the islands with the most to offer, including Santorini and Crete, names which you will no doubt have heard, but also a lesser known island like Paros that gives participants a chance to see some of the 'off the beaten track' parts of the Greek islands. Personally, I think the shoulder season in spring or fall is the ideal time to soak up some of the Greek sun and feast ourselves on wine and hummus while avoiding the tourist masses of peak season.

Like our Italy program, this is a chance to '*spend some time*' in the Greek Islands rather than spend time on a cruise ship. It's experiencing a place rather than just seeing it, and that's the real game we're after. ☼

Oia village on Santorini Island, Greece.



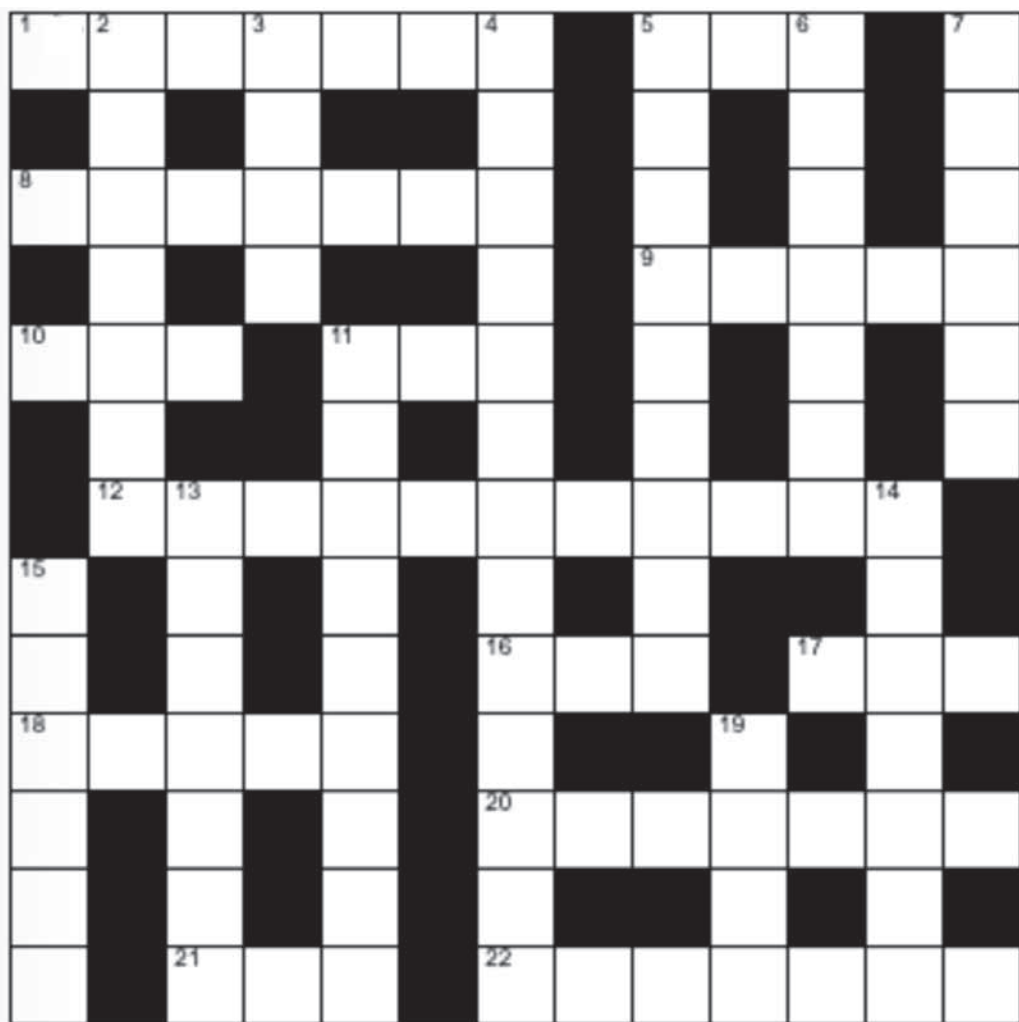
Sunset on Santorini.



Ouzo.



Crete.



crossword

Across

1. The world's highest peak (7)
5. Press against something lightly to dry or clean it (3)
8. A momentary or partial view (7)
9. Devices used to carry out particular functions (5)
10. Overhead compartment on a plane (3)
11. A loud, unpleasant, and prolonged noise (3)
12. Beautiful in a dramatic and eye-catching way (11)
16. Powdery residue left after the burning of a substance (3)
17. New Year's or Christmas (3)
18. Country on the west side of South America bordered by the Andes (5)
20. Famous valley in California (7)
21. Major American television broadcaster (3)
22. Home of Salzburg & Vienna (7)

Down

2. Capital city of Lithuania (7)
3. Capital city of Italy (4)
4. Marginal sea in the northwestern Indian Ocean (13)
5. City across the harbour from Halifax (9)
6. Northern Italian city near Florence and Verona (7)
7. What Iran was known as until the mid-twentieth century (6)
11. Passport, boarding pass, itinerary et al (9)
13. Closest ocean to 18 across (7)
14. Type of pasta that is typically square (7)
15. Largest island in the Mediterranean Sea (6)
19. Critical ingredient in a mojito (4)

Find the solution on page 45.

NEED A TRAVEL PARTNER? CHECK OUT OUR "COMPANIONS FOR THE ROAD" PROGRAM.

Are you looking for someone to travel with?

We've launched a program to connect solo travellers looking for a companion to share a room with while travelling and avoid those evil single supplements!

To participate, simply send an email to
companions@wheelandanchor.ca

and you'll be sent a copy of the application form that asks a number of questions about your habits and preferences while travelling, as well as destinations you'd like to find visit with a travel partner. From this we'll create a profile that we'll use to match you with other travellers. If there's a match, our team will reach out to you and any potential matches, confirm that you're both interested in having a phone call, and facilitate the conversation from there.

It's all part of our mission to bring travellers together around a shared passion for travel and making new friends along the way.

So if you're looking for a companion or know someone who is, let them know about the program and we'll do our best to connect you with others looking for the same!

*If you're interested in helping out,
please send me an email personally:
gordon@wheelandanchor.ca*

Trip #4: Sicily & Malta



The famous Blue Lagoon, Camino island, Malta.

Malta is one of those countries that you've heard about, but you might not immediately be able to place on a map. It's partly because it's a relatively small island between Italy and Tunisia and yet its history and place in the evolution of Europe is anything but small.

On this trip we will make a unique voyage, tracing some of the old exploration and trade routes between Africa and Europe.

We'll begin in Naples, near the foot of fabled Mt. Vesuvius where we'll embark our yacht and travel through the Aeolian islands, remote outposts of Italy in the clear blue waters of the Mediterranean. We'll continue on to Sicily where we'll taste the unique blend of Greek, Spanish, and Arab flavours that make Sicilian food distinct in Italy, and sample the wines that have been grown here for thousands of years. There are a number of Sicilian villages that have been designated among Italy's most beautiful towns, and our cruise will offer us the chance to stop and explore a few of them.

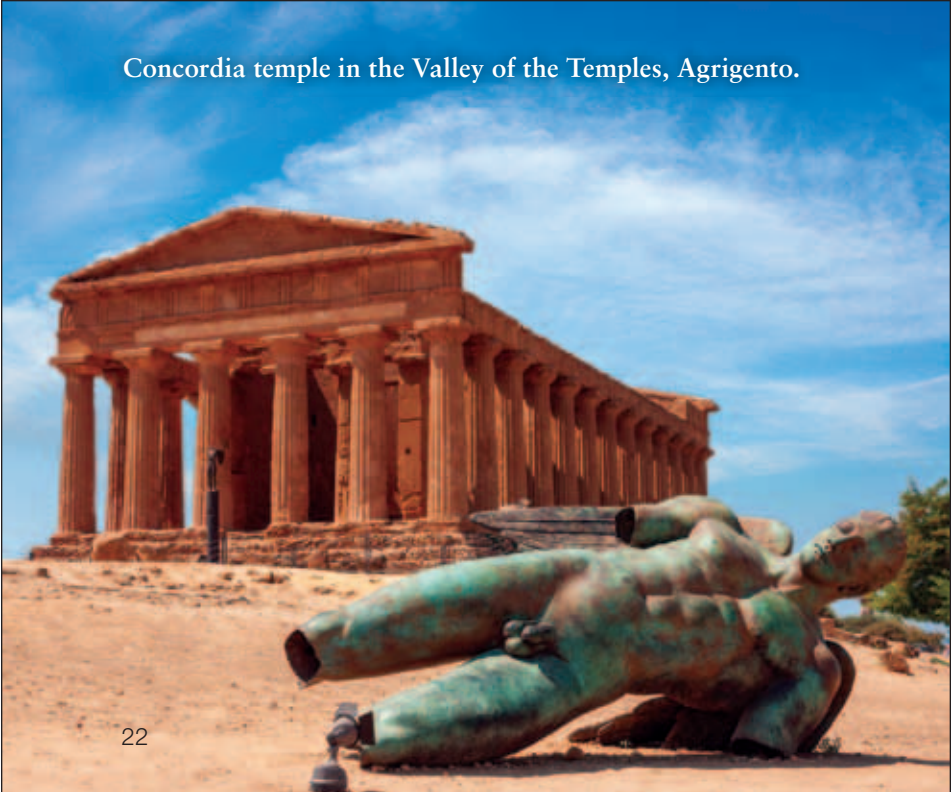
And on the last part of our voyage, the Maltese coastline, a landscape unique unto itself will unfold in front of us. The fortified capital Valletta is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is considered the first planned city in Europe, designed in the 16th century. Ruled successively by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and the Order of the Knights of St John, it is one of the most concentrated historical sites in the world. The history buffs among us can eat their hearts out here, and for the rest of us, the food and wine will more than suffice. ☸



Fort St Elmo, Valletta, Malta.



Sciacca.



Concordia temple in the Valley of the Temples, Agrigento.

Sicily & Malta



Vibrant fishing boats in Malta.

Trip #5: Yachting the Turkish Mediterranean

Celsus Library in Ephesus, Turkey.



Yachting the Turkish Mediterranean

Traditional Turkish Tea Ceremony in Cafe.



Yacht on Sea at Sunset with Antalya City.



Istanbul.



Antalya City and Sea Line at Sunset.

Imagine spending 12 nights including a week-long sail on a luxury gulet amongst the islands along the coast of Turkey's Mediterranean coast stopping at ancient ruins, quiet coves and lively towns. We'll also spend some days on another part of the coast visiting the great remains of Ephesus, among other historic sites and finally taking in scintillating Istanbul, straddling Europe and Asia across the Bosphorus river.

Traditionally a Turkish gulet is a barebones wooden yacht with several masts reminiscent of a schooner. While gulets are still built in this tradition, the onboards comfort have come a long way from the days where trade and transport were their primary *raison d'être*. Enjoying tasty local dishes while bobbing off the rugged coast, there could hardly be a better way to take in this part of the Med.

It would be a loss to not explore the bustling markets amid the domes and minarets of Istanbul, a trading city of legend. It was a key hub in the Silk Road since the 4th century, though at that time it was named Constantinople, capital of the Roman Empire, and would become one of the wealthiest cities on the planet in the centuries that followed.

Perhaps the nomadic ancestry of the Turks lends itself to the generosity and kindness toward their guests, and experiencing it will be integral to the enjoyment of this trip. ☸

Trip #6: Safari by Land & Sea



Cheetah in Masai Mara, Kenya.

Safari by Land & Sea



People in traditional clothing.



Anse Source de Argent Beach, on La Digue Island, in Seychelles.



Seafood lunch on the beach.



Young Green Turtle.



African elephants.

It’s long been my belief that marine “safaris” can offer as rewarding a look into biodiversity as the traditional ones on land. So here I suggest we combine both into one adventure including Kenya, one of the world’s most noted safari destinations with the Seychelles, that archipelago of islands seemingly lost in the vast Indian Ocean.

In Kenya we’ll spend 6 nights in two of it’s legendary national wildlife parks in search of giraffe, lion, cheetah, buffalo and of course the elusive rhinoceros enjoying the comforts of its lovely lodges. The Kenyans have a unique hospitality unto themselves and it is always more than a pleasure to hear the tales of the local guides and wildlife trackers who have seen so much of the evolution of the country, it’s people and its 4-legged inhabitants.

The archipelago that makes up the Republic of the Seychelles actually covers 1.3 million square kilometres of ocean (larger than the province of Ontario) and is home to numerous species found nowhere else on the planet, making it a hotspot of biodiversity. We’ll visit the Seychelles islands on a 34-guest vessel, which will enable us to see many different sides of this country.

Lastly we’ll take time to enjoy the soft white sand beaches (by some accounts the finest in the world) and the amicable weather that make it a popular sun destination for the well-heeled. ☼

FULL LIST *of* TOURS

*Here's the current list of all Wheel & Anchor tours in 2020 and beyond.
We're adding new tours all the time!*

Dates in black indicated existing tours.
(Red indicates future tours.)

COMING IN 2021

Egypt, Israel & Jordan: 4 Variations
14th January 2020 - 26th January 2020
[sold out]

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: Panama
4th March - 9th March 2020

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: The Azores
22nd March - 28th March 2020

The Majestic Fjords of Norway
30th April 2020 - 18th May 2020

Japan: Land of The Rising Sun
(+South Korea)
10th May 2020 - 31st May 2020

Scotland by Sea
19th May 2020 - 30th May 2020

Baltic Seafarer
29th June to 17th July 2020

The Elbe River: Berlin to Prague
7th - 21st September 2020

The Trans-Siberian Railway
10th September - 28th September 2020

Croatia & The Adriatic Coast
September 21, 2020 - October 6, 2020

Wheel & Anchor Weekend: The Azores
October 2020

Italy: North to South
October 2020

Tastes of Eastern France
30th September - 19th October 2020

Boating the Canal du Midi
20th October - 1st November 2020

Kangaroos & Kiwis -
Australia & New Zealand
October 27th - Nov 25th, 2020

Norway & the Northern Lights
(January 2021)

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: Panama
(January 2021)

Tahiti Yachting Adventure
(February 2021)

Egypt, Israel & Jordan
(February 2021)

Morocco
(March 2021)

Safari by Land and Sea:
Kenya & the Seychelles
(March 2021)

Portugal for Solo Travellers
(April 2021)

Japan & South Korea
(April 2021)

Boating the Canal du Midi
(April 2021)

Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly
(April 2021)

Sicily & Malta by land and sea
(May 2021)

Island-hopping in Greece
(May 2021)

Flowers et Fleurs: Chelsea Garden Show
& Jardins de France
(May 2021)

Croatia, Slovenia & the Adriatic Coast
(June 2021)

Bali, Komodo & the Indonesian Islands
(June 2021)

Ireland
(June 2021)

Normandy & Northern France
(July 2021)

Newfoundland
(July 2021)

PEI
(August 2021)

Scotland Whisky Tasting
(August 2021)

Explore Caucasus: Georgia & Armenia
(October 2021)

Tastes of Eastern France
(October 2021)

The Azores & Porto
(October 2021)

Croatia, Slovenia & the Adriatic
(October 2021)

Yachting the Turkish Coast
(October 2021)

South Africa
(November 2021)

Follow the Incas:
Peru + Galapagos Extension
(October 2021)

Stay tuned...more to come!
And we've got more in store
for 2020 as well.

To get a printed version of any of these itineraries, call us at

1-(888) 531-5101

or visit wheelandanchor.ca/all-tours

Our webinars

are exclusive to our Wheel and Anchor members. Each seminar offers something special, including a feature presentation of future Wheel and Anchor tours.

We've got two webinars scheduled for the coming weeks and more on the way!

Sicily and Malta:
February 11 at 11AM EST.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly:
February 13 at 11 AM EST.

Please register at:
wheelandanchor.ca/webinars
for all upcoming webinars!

upcoming webinars

memories of *Italy*

A crew of Wheel & Anchor members, led by Amber, toured Italy from her North to her South in October of 2019. Covering Milan, Lake Garda, Venice, Florence, Pisa, the Amalfi Coast, and more, it was very much enjoyed by all. Stay tuned for our upcoming Italy programs this fall. Photo credits: 1,2: Jean Smith; 3,4: Margaret Leck; 5,6,7,8,9: Roger Vail.



*Trip #7: Portugal
(Azores, Porto, Portugal for Solo Travellers)*



Ships and sunset in Porto, Portugal.

Portugal.

(Azores, Porto, Portugal for Solo Travellers.)



Wine cellar and casks, Porto.

Portugal is another sought after destination among our membership. Our ‘Weekends’ program to the Azores has garnered a lot of interest, such that we are already planning follow up trips in 2020. But most travellers have heard a lot more about Lisbon and Porto of late, two cities which have always had tremendous charm even though they have only emerged into the touristic “limelight” in the last decade.

Each of these cities are well-deserving of at least a few nights to explore and in particular to dine, with their famed wines (not only the port !) and cuisine influenced by both the Mediterranean and North Africa, and the centuries of trade along the Iberian coast.

The Douro River is of course one of those hotspots that have attracted more and more cruisers in recent years, and although we will spend some time in the region, the beauty of the terraced valleys and fascinating towns is best experienced overland (which is what the river cruise ships end up doing anyway).

Our trip will take in the Azores as well, the less-visited volcanic islands off the coast of Portugal, almost exactly halfway between North America and Europe. The temperature here is mild all year round, and thus it makes for a perfect stop on the way to (or from) Canada. The spectacular vistas, abundant wildlife, and warm hospitality of the Azorians all make the Azores an ideal spot to explore for the travellers in our community. ☸



Sao Miguel Island in Azores.



Belem Tower, Lisbon.



Lisbon streetcar.

Trip #8: Newfoundland and Labrador



Tourist boat in the western Brook Pond in Gros Morne National Park.

I had the pleasure of making a brief visit to Newfoundland this past August, only my third ever visit to “The Rock.” Wheel & Anchor member Bill D. was kind enough to offer to give me a short tour around St. John’s, Bay Bulls and on up to Dildo, a town recently ‘put on the map’ courtesy of American talk show host Jimmy Kimmel.

I cannot claim to have “seen” Newfoundland let alone know it or understand it. Yet on each visit I get that warm and welcoming feeling that, while endemic to Atlantic Canada, it’s just that little bit more special. You almost get the feeling like it’s another country and certainly St. John’s feels about as distant from Toronto, let alone Vancouver, as any place on the continent.

Newfoundland made our list of most desired destinations for 2021 and I’m not only unsurprised but I’m thrilled. For the vast majority of Canadians the province was barely on their radar screen until the combo of the smash-hit musical Come from Away coupled with inspiring ads from the tourism board has ‘all-of-a-sudden’ turned it into one of the most sought after places to visit in the country.

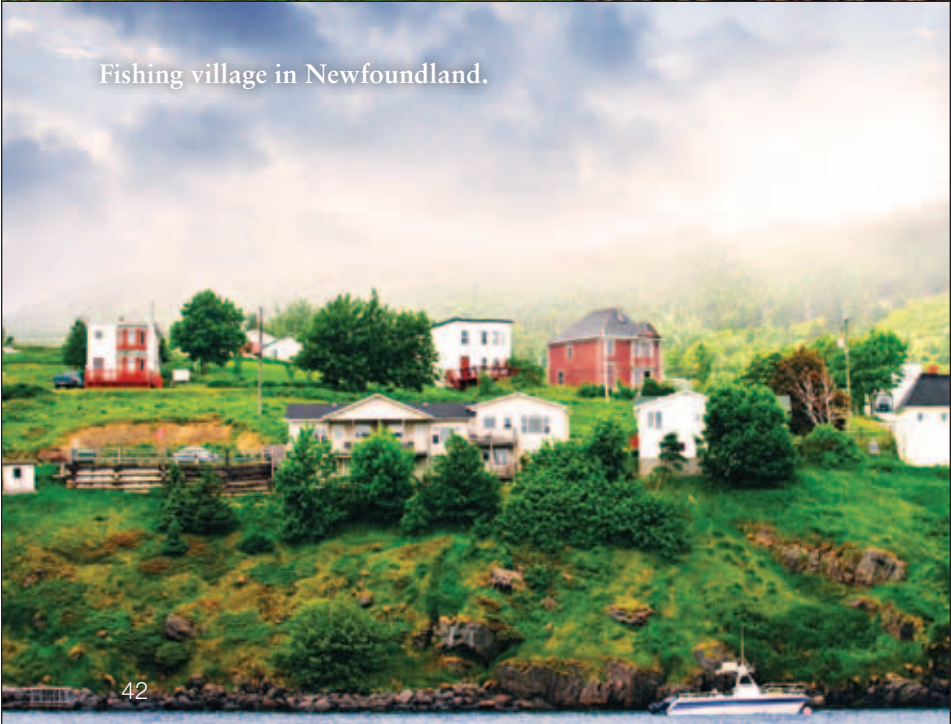
I’ve spent quite a bit of time thinking about how to curate a visit to this very special place. It covers a vast area as anyone who has driven across it would know. There’s enough to see on the Avalon Peninsula (the region around St. John’s) alone that justifies a week. Beyond that visits to Bonavista Bay, Fogo Island, Gros Morne National Park should all be part of the program and of course L’Anse aux Meadows, the only known Viking settlement in North America... if it weren’t for the fact that it’s a mere 1,100kms from the capital! Stay tuned for details :) 🌐



St. John's harbour and cityscape, from Signal Hill.



Viking settlement, L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site.



Fishing village in Newfoundland.



Newfoundland and Labrador

Colourful houses in St. John's.

A Traveller's New Year's Resolutions

-Mike Sowden

The fastest I've ever broken a New Year's Resolution was in 2018.

Determined to turn my late nights into early mornings, I vowed to give up coffee at exactly 00:00 on January 1st.

Unfortunately I was in Costa Rica at the time, and the nature of festive celebrations in Latin America is that you celebrate by not going to bed. Around 3am, slumping with exhaustion in my chair but wanting to remain a good, grateful guest to my hosts, I ordered a cortado (expresso & warm milk, almost before remembering my solemn vow at midnight.

(Two hours, seven minutes. Yes, my backbone is made of solid iron.)

But really, I hadn't a hope. When you set a New Year's Resolution that requires a massive and fundamental change in your behaviour literally overnight, it's bound to fail. (And forcing a writer to give up coffee is just asking for trouble.)

With that in mind, our eight resolutions for 2020 don't require mind-bending feats of willpower. Instead, they're about *shifting attitude* – a series of gentle course-corrections you can undertake to make your travels richer and more fulfilling this year.

Give them a go - and let us know what happened next!

1. READ THE PLACE BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

We don't necessarily mean guide books. Yes, they can be useful, but a super-knowledgeable guide will beat them anytime. No, what we mean is the words of the people you're visiting, in the form of the country's most famous works of literature, memoir and other works. Any visit to Norway should include at least dipping into a novel by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), widely regarded as Norway's Shakespeare - while a trip to Italy's Naples should include a read of Elena Ferrante's colossal bestseller (and as of last year, award-

winning HBO drama), *My Brilliant Friend*.

2. THINK SMALLER

It's easy to hear the word "vacation" and imagine trying to squeeze a month of travel into your already-brimming calendar - and abandoning your plans when you can't find the room. In fact, we'd class any amount of time away as a vacation, including short hops of just a few days. This is the principle powering our new Wheel & Anchor Weekends lineup (with 5-day trips to Panama and the Azores coming up in March).

It's not the time you spend out there - it's what you *do* with it.

3. FIND FRIENDS AS YOU GO

If you really want to go somewhere and can't find someone in your social circles to come along — look outside them for inspiration. Our Companions For The Road program is designed to match you up with someone with similar travel interests (and avoid the dread Single Supplement)—but on trips like ours, you're only as alone as you want to be. Break the ice with fellow travellers, ask the locals questions, and make an effort to be the most curious person in the room – and you will never lack good company.

4. PACK LIGHTER

We all fall prey to this one, but - if you find yourself thinking "I'll take this just in case..." when you're packing your luggage, step back and think hard. Master the skills of carry-on luggage. Don't be this guy from Twitter:
ME REGULARLY: *uses the same 3 things at home*
ME PACKING FOR VACATION: "I wonder if I'll need four French horns, or five?"

5. GO SUPER OLD-SCHOOL WITH YOUR GADGETS

We couldn't travel the way we do without all our

modern devices - but that doesn't mean they're more important than we are. If our phones or cameras or tablets are having the lion's share of our unique travel experiences, and if we're spending all our time recording those experiences instead of having them, there's something gone awry. Instead, we suggest going traditional - as in, using the most advanced technology humans have every developed, which we just so happen to be born with.

Your own eyes and ears are the best way to make memories you'll treasure forever. Use them well.

6. USE YOUR NECK

Do you find when you're out walking, your gaze drops towards your feet as you get tired? Not only is this stressful for your neck, it's also missing everything going on around you – and above you. A walk through a busy street is also a walk under gorgeous buildings and a beautiful rooftop scene, tantalizingly glimpsed from below. A river cruise is a journey above a river –and below a sky that seems to go on forever.

Remember to look up or look down, and you might get a perspective on the world you never knew was there.

7. REPRESENT (OR CHALLENGE) YOUR NATIONAL STEREOTYPE

You are never just yourself when you travel – you are also an unofficial ambassador for the place where you live. If you're Canadian, your global stereotype is "being polite to the brink of mania". So if you're polite to the people you meet, they'll nod their heads and smile with their eyes, and you'll see them thinking, "Canadians are lovely. I wish my country was that polite."

But if you find the politeness thing a bit annoying, why not experiment with being a little cheekier (in a lovely way) than everyone else, just to surprise them? See what you can get away with!

8. EMBRACE THE UNEXPECTED

When things don't go exactly according

to plan - say, a delayed departure enroute to your destination - there are always two ways to react. The first is negative, and everyone has a story of being sat next to that person. But the second is to recognise the possibility of serendipity - "the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way." You've got an extra 30 minutes, an hour, a couple of hours in a place you probably don't know and never planned to spend time in. So what's here? And who can you talk to, until you can see the place through their eyes?

This is the start of many compelling travel stories - and it might turn into the highlight of your trip when you tell folk about it back home. Recognise that going off-script is the chance to improvise - and find something special you never even knew was there.

Happy New Year!

Crossword answers.

(No peeking!)

E	V	E	R	E	S	T		D	A	B		P
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VOLUME SIX | JANUARY 2020
The Trip Inspiration edition

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