



The free-flying spiral staircase at the Nathaniel Russell House, one of Charleston's house museums opened throughout the year. Built in 1809 by Nathaniel Russell, a native of Rhode Island and one of Charleston's most prosperous

merchants, this house is an excellent example of Adam architecture, complemented by gleaming silver, fine china and some of the finest examples of furniture of the period.

Walking is the way to see Charleston

By JIM CASTLEDINE

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Undoubtedly, walking is the best way to see and absorb the serene beauty that is Charleston. This old city has a fascinating network of colorful andperfumed narrow streets.

Situated between the Ashley and the Cooper rivers on the South Carolina coast, Charleston, as well as being a tranquil browsing ground for romantics and students of American history, has another feature which appeals to Canadians.

This is Charlestonese, a crisp southern accent without the sometimes exasperatingly mushy drawl used in most of the southern states. Charlestonians speak with a refreshing meticulousness.

By the end of March, in Charleston the walled gardens are glowing with myrtle, camellias, and azaleas. Through April and May there is more color and fragrance from dogwood, wisteria, perfumed tea olive, and Confederate jasmine. Magnolia, synonymous with southern lore and literature, blooms at its best in the summer and fall.

There are plaques on aged, moss-laced brick walls inviting you to stroll in some of those tropical gardens, and your guide or guidebook will tell you stories of romance and intrigue.

Some of the streets are narrow. Like Stolls Alley, which has blue wisteria reaching delicately across to create a dappled shade. And Longitude Street, which in contradiction, runs east and west!

The cobbled streets are flanked by ante-bellum mansions, with cool dark, high-ceilinged rooms, furnished elegantly as they were 200 years ago.

The historic areas can be toured by car with an experienced driver guide at a cost of \$10 an hour, or you can rent a moped or bicycle from Free Wheelers on Market Street for \$1 an hour or \$10 a day.

The best way, of course, is on foot. Make your centre the downtown Holiday Inn, where you can hire a cassette tape for walking tours and you are centrally located.

Good food and lodging is surprisingly inexpensive. Lodging varies from \$15 a day in the suburbs to \$40 a day in the more luxurious hotels down near the front.

A really good meal can be enjoyed for between \$10 and \$15 dollars. Try the crab soup, low-country chicken and shrimp creole, with wild Carolina rice at the Colony House on Prioleau Street — \$9.75.

As you can imagine, sea food here is first class and Perdita's is outstanding. Perdita's is on Exchange Street. It has the quiet dignity of an exclusive club and is not too expensive.

The American Spoleto Festival, which is held in Charleston from May 25 to June 10 each year,



TRAVEL

provides a total immersion in the arts against a background that seems almost to have been made for this splendid cultural event.

The Spoleto Festival features famous international opera and ballet companies, string and brass quintets, the Westminster Choir, Leonard Bernstein, traditional country and bluegrass music at

Created by the renowned composer and director, Gian Carlo Menotti, the festival has been presented annually for 20 years in Spoleto, Italy. The first American Spoleto was produced in Charleston in 1977 and scored an immediate success. The festival is now a firmly entrenched yearly event.

Menotti's sense of what makes a good setting was working well when he chose the narrow streets, cloistered gardens, and the pastel-colored colonial houses of Charleston as the American home of Spoleto.

Whatever your cultural choice, be it Shakespeare, ballet, Beethoven or New Orleans jazz, you will be able to enjoy it in an uncommonly attractive setting. Magnolia Plantation, exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, etc., in theatres, church halls, school auditoriums, parks and gardens. There are even recitals in private gardens and 17th and 18th-century drawing rooms.

For more information write to Charleston County Tourist Commission, Box 834, Charleston, South Carolina 29402.

GETTING THERE: Charleston is served by National, Delta and Eastern air lines, and there are other usual modes of travelling, but if you like driving and you have the time, take to the road. There is more to see and you will find a lot to talk about.

Charleston can be reached in less than two days of comfortable driving on super highways running through Pennsylvania, then Maryland, Virginia and North and South Carolina. Many Metro-area

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TRAVELCHAT

By Anne Wanstall
Travel Editor

The spirit of adventure will not die while Butterfield and Robinson survive! This Toronto-based wholesaler has the youth market in mind with trips to capture the imagination — and flex the muscles.

The Biking Trip cycles and trains from Munich, Germany, to Austria, Italy, Switzerland and finally France. Cost for the 30 days, including youth airfare, accommodation and a meal allowance is \$2,192 — and you keep your souvenir bicycle.

The same company has a Whales of Newfoundland trip with six days of watching the whales, and perhaps communicating with them using low frequency sound equipment. Cost is \$850 from St. John's Newfoundland.

Another adventure is the Shipwreck Holiday on Norman's Cay, southeast of Nassau. Group members are left on their own for six days to fend for themselves — eating food from the sea. Cost of the trip, including airfare, transfers, two nights in Nassau, survival kit and closing banquet is \$399.

And for a real immersion course in French, Butterfield and Robinson offers an accredited French course in Nice that combines study and travel in France. There are optional weekends in Corsica and San Remo, Italy. Cost for one month in July or August is \$1,690.

Butterfield and Robinson are at 330 Bay Street, Suite 1604, Toronto M5H 2S8.

A Mississauga reader is the agent for another style of specialized tour — bird-watching in Britain.

Birdguide helps enthusiasts cut costs to populated bird areas all over Britain, with individual planned itineraries and a guide. The organization will make accommodation bookings, pick you up at airport terminals and take you back again.

For complete information on Birdguide write to Ralph Speak, 2522 Jarvis St., Mississauga, or telephone 275-5789.

Women can shape up for summer at a Ladies Only fitness vacation at Montego Bay, Jamaica, from April 22 to 24. There'll be daily classes in floor and pool exercises, optional tennis, golf, jogging, swimming and sightseeing. Cost is \$369 per person double occupancy, including return airfare, transfers and accommodation. Contact Margaret Cairns at 282-9522 or Bonnie Beesley at 439-8353.

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