

CHRISTINE CHAUVIN (Limited)
Adventures on Horseback
Personalized Travel



TRAVEL
LOG

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 3

Greetings!

It is time for me to tell you a story.

There once was a little girl... horses were her passion. She would fantasize riding a beautiful Arabian stallion (no less) through romantic forests, over wide-open spaces, mountain ranges, deserts... It was an obsession, always present at the back of her mind as she grew up and journeyed through various chapters of her life.

One day, many moons later, the seed germinated. The dream came true and her Adventures on Horseback became a reality! As you guessed, I was that little girl.

Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote "The future belongs to those who believe in the power of their dreams". How true, I can surely attest to that! In today's troubled world, dreams more than ever are essential to our happiness.

The year 2004 will be my 10th year of discovering the world (and myself), not on my Arabian stallion, but on numerous valiant and noble steeds in the company of very special people, many of whom over the years have become my friends. For this anniversary year and many more to come, I plan to keep the Dream very much alive and can only hope that you will come share it with me!

Christine



***It is only in adventure
that some people succeed
in knowing themselves -
in finding themselves.***

André Gide

REVIEW & PLANNED RIDES FOR 2004

EGYPT

This year my travels started in February with a cruise on the Nile. An unusual trip for me since no riding was involved, even though it was commissioned by a family of horse lovers and riders. I chose to work with Abercrombie and Kent who own the best boats on the Nile, manage them to perfection, and are well established in the country. I chartered *Sun Boat III*, the smallest of their fleet, and during a whole week we enjoyed the cruise of a lifetime, from Aswan to Luxor, with many side-trips mixing culture and pleasure. It was the culmination of a year's work with the wonderful staff of A&K who lived up to its reputation and much more. My friend Asha came from India to give daily yoga classes. As usual she was a great hit and everyone became addicted to yoga. A special word of praise for Norma Labib Fahmy, who is not only one of Egypt's best Egyptologists but also has the gift of making everything come to life.

THE OASIS OF SIWA

I arrived in Cairo a few days early. Having made sure everything was on track, I then left for the Oasis of Siwa, a wide green world of palm and olive groves among shimmering salt lakes and lagoons in the middle of Egypt's vast Western Desert,



southwest of the Qattara Depression (an 8-hour drive from Cairo). My destination: *Adrère Amellal* (White Mountain in Berber dialect), the much talked about eco-lodge of Mounir Neamatalla, a charismatic soft spoken gentleman (in every sense of the term) who heads Environmental Quality International, a Cairo company that consults on low-impact economic and social development projects throughout Egypt and the Middle East. With *Adrère Amellal*, his pet project, Mounir has succeeded in proving that ecology and luxury are not exclusive concepts. *"The main aim of this project is not profit but the value added to the population and the quality it provides to its visitors....Siwa is an attraction for travelers, not tourists"* he says.

Using traditional desert building techniques practiced by local labor, he transformed an abandoned village into a spacious complex of cool mud-brick houses configured into elegant suites and charming rooms with all the basic comforts. There is no electricity, no telephone, no television ... use of cell phones is restricted. Oil lamps and candles are used for lighting and on cold winter nights, coal-filled braziers are used for heating. But there is hot and cold running water in the bathrooms and numerous willing hands and smiling faces to cater to everyone's needs! The food prepared at the lodge is organically and predominantly locally grown... and delicious. What's more, there are horses! With the White Mountain as a backdrop, an enormous lake and date palm and olive trees groves in the foreground, the setting is truly biblical. At sunrise and sunset it is magical!

Adrère Amellal caters to those who share a love of nature, a yearning for adventure and an appreciation of indigenous culture in one of the cleanest environments on earth. This was a dream come true. I had found the venue where I will celebrate the tenth anniversary of *Adventures on Horseback* and my birthday!

ARGENTINA

March saw me in Argentina with clients for the first time. Elise Wood my star rider and longtime client/friend, and Francine Duberry, a relative newcomer, have written extensively about this new ride, and their comments appear in this issue. I will return to Argentina in November (Spring in South America) to prepare for my 2004 ride in this beautiful country – this time combining *Tierra del Fuego* with *Patagonia!*

EUROPE

My rides in France and Italy later this spring were a big success. However, for this landmark year of 2004, I have decided to focus on my more exotic destinations, reserving Europe only for especially commissioned rides. This will also give me time to research new venues for the next decade of *Adventures on Horseback!*

BRAZIL & AFRICA

The *Pantanal* in Brazil, and the *Okavango Delta* in Botswana are two of my favorite riding locations. Both trips offer a blend of great riding, extensive wildlife viewing and a profound cultural experience. Both take place in pristine well-balanced ecosystems of the planet... but for how long! It is important to note that Botswana is Africa's most politically stable country and thus, extremely safe... as are the rural areas of Brazil where I operate.

INDIA

My upcoming *Bateshwar & Pushkar* ride in Rajasthan will conclude my rides for 2003 and will be reviewed in the next issue. For 2004, I am examining a possible new ride in Sri Lanka – on Marwari horses. I will talk more about the Rajasthan ride and Sri Lanka in the next issue.

ABOUT THE PERIGORD RIDE (FRANCE) MAY 2003

Francie and Oakley Johnson – Darnestown MD

We simply loved our time with you in the Perigord. We have never had a more wonderful or more memory-filled vacation ...spectacular scenery, outstanding organization, great traveling companions, wonderful food (and drink) and recovering bottoms. You certainly lived up to all our heightened expectations and far exceeded them.

K.D. Johnston Woodinville - WA

I was so lucky to be on a trip where everyone was so fabulous!

Richard & Jeanie Strother Middleburg - VA

Thank you for a wonderful ride. This was one of our best experiences, ... but then they all have been special.



ABOUT ARGENTINA 2003

- by Elise Wood

Botswana, Brazil, India, Botswana (again), South Africa, Tanzania, Spain, and....Argentina! Eight of some of the most incredible experiences of my life I owe to Christine's zest for life. We are living in times where our natural tendencies keep us guarded from things that are foreign and places with which we are not familiar. But these are the very times in life when travel and experiences with people very

different from our own milieu is essential to keep our perspective in life well-rounded. Nothing does this better than a good dose of Adventures on Horseback!

Over the years I have experienced a subtle evolution of culture and comfort on Christine's trips. The apex of which was this recent trip to Argentina. Although the riding throughout the entire trip did, as always, exceed my expectations, it was the unique events with the local culture that made this trip so special. Two weeks felt like a month because of the fullness of the time out of the saddle. The first weekend spent in Buenos coincided with a national Tango competition. A group of us, all familiar with each other from previous trips, enjoyed a luxurious dinner accompanied by fabulous tango dancing that surrounded us with a history uniquely Argentinean. In Cordoba after a lunchtime *carne asada*, the group was entertained by a private performance of local musicians. Kurt Muse, one of the guests, simultaneously translated the words of the songs for those of us who did not speak Spanish. The music held us spellbound as we were introduced to the wonderful passion of the machismo heart of the gaucho. The warm sun, flowing wine, and low tones of cattle in the background is something I will never forget.

In Argentina I had the opportunity to rope a calf, an experience that must be on everyone's to do list! In fact, at one point I had two calves entwined at the end of my rope. You have not lived until you know the feeling of getting that rope to circle over your head and then fly in front of the track of a running calf. You realize quickly that the experience just begins when the rope pulls taught. Figuring out how to get the calf on its back and then un-rope it is truly the art. I am ready for my next lesson on horseback!

Argentina is the Mecca of polo, and you have not swung a mallet until you have swung one on their turf, on their ponies, under the eye of an Argentine who has mastered the art of inner polo; power without effort, speed without panting, accuracy without straining is the mantra of the game there. Almost every man we met was a polo player. It is a part of the Argentine culture and an experience that should not be missed for those who know and love the sport.

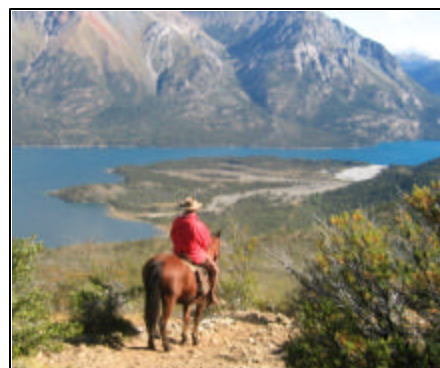
Argentina taught me how a nation under duress can still maintain its grace with positive eyes set on the future and a heart well nourished by its past. This posture is one that can provide inspiration to us all as we come home to continue with our own lives. Yet again, Christine, thanks!

- by Francine Duberry-Schumacher

Last March I was one of the lucky travelers to experience the very first long-awaited adventure in Argentina with Christine. Our journey took us to three distinctive parts of the Land of Silver.

Our introduction was the vibrant city of Buenos Aires whose heart beats to a tango rhythm. The well-orchestrated short stay gave us a glimpse of the wonderfully exciting times ahead, sampling the best of what the city and country had to offer. A wonderful day was spent at the outfitter's charming estancia, an hour and a half outside Buenos Aires where some of us rode polo ponies, others cutting horses, and enjoyed our first *asado* (barbecue) tasting some of the world's best meat while being serenaded by the gauchos who also taught us some of their local dances. By the end of the trip we had become experts!

We then flew to Patagonia. Upon arrival in Bariloche, a delicious and artfully presented lunch awaited us at the landmark *Llao Llao Hotel*, located amid breathtaking surroundings on Lake Nahuel Huapi. Patagonia amazed and fascinated me with its boundless beauty. Mesmerized, I watched the scenery unfold as we drove south to Lake Cholila, our base for the next few days. Here, snow-capped mountains watched over the abrupt terrain and steep hills challenged both horse and rider, binding them in magical partnership. When in the open pampas, on my horse *Ocorita*, I got to fly. Incidentally Cholila is where Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid and Etta Place sought refuge and spent their happiest days. I would never have left!



Our next destination - The Sierra de Cordoba - a place where you could hear the silence so that even the sound of the wind was elating. The entrancing rolling hills of tall green grass playfully fooled the eye so that the land seemed to release slow long inhales as we rode over it. Our imaginations ran wild at the site of mystical and esoteric red rock formations believed to have hosted paranormal activity.

The accommodations were cozy, charming and friendly, slowly building up to the grand finale with a visit to estancia *La Paz* a luxurious polo paradise. Our horses, everywhere, were to be commended: sure-footed, courageous, well schooled, and a real joy to ride. Parties, singing, dancing, lasso and roping competitions, equestrian games, stick and ball.... We did it all. As the popular song goes: "I had the time of my life": indulging in spectacular culinary delights and fine local wines, laughing like a child, screaming with joy, tapping into every emotion.

Christine, you definitely have the touch when it comes to bringing a group together!! This was so much more than a vacation. It was a journey into the various aspects of life in Argentina, getting acquainted and forming lasting friendships with a broad range of remarkable people who have mastered the equine art.

This was my second ride with you, and because of your uncompromising pursuit of excellence, it was another jubilant success. For me the best way to experience the world is on the back of a horse with Christine Chauvin's *Adventures on Horseback!*



Photos (in sequence)
Christine (Argentina)
Adrère Amellal (Oasis of Siwa)
Picnic lunch in the Perigord (France)
Elise & Christine (Llao Llao Hotel)
Crossing Carrileufú River (Cholila)
Sierra de Cordoba
Mark Muse and musicians
Gaucha Fiesta (Estancia La Paz)
Lake Cholila - Patagonia
Singing & Dancing (Estancia La Paz)
The Riders at Estancia La Paz



2004 CALENDAR OF SET RIDES

MARCH 4 – 9	EGYPT	<i>NEW</i>	A celebration ride in the Oasis of Siwa
JUNE 25 – JULY 5	BRAZIL		The Pantanal Expedition Ride
AUGUST 21 – 28	AFRICA		Botswana - The Okavango Delta
SEPTEMBER <i>Dates to be confirmed</i>	INDIAN SUBCONTINENT	<i>NEW</i>	Possible ride in Sri-Lanka
NOVEMBER 13 – 24 <i>Dates to be confirmed</i>	ARGENTINA		Tierra del Fuego & Patagonia <i>New Itinerary</i>

*For details on the above rides please contact Christine Chauvin.
 If you are interested in riding in Ecuador, Malawi (Africa), France, Spain
 or other destinations, she will be happy to help you.*

CHRISTINE CHAUVIN (Limited) - 430 East 56 Street - New York, NY 10022
Tel. (1) 212-421 0671 - Fax. (1) 212-935 0559 - E-mail: cchauvin@rcn.com
Web site: www.adventuresonhorseback.com