

Travel

A Feature
by Roger Doris

Travel Talk

with Roger Doris



Bonhomme is what they call this symbol of the Quebec Winter Carnival which takes place from February 3 to 13.

"Theme park" is a relatively new addition to the tourism vocabulary. This concept of family entertainment began more than two decades ago with Disneyland. Since then, theme parks have been offering practically everything from American nostalgia to a trip to Europe, and from a safari in Africa to a futuristic fantasy world peopled by puppets.

A number of outstanding theme parks opened during the U.S. Bicentennial year, including the two Marriott Great Americas in Illinois and California. Central Florida will add two new parks in 1977, with wind and water setting the themes.

Visitors to Hurricane World, a combination research-educational-recreational centre near Orlando, will be able to explore the hurricane phenomenon from many aspects. Thirteen years of planning and \$5 million have been invested in this centre.

The main building is shaped to look like a hurricane from the air, with large spurs seeming to "spin" from the roof in counter-clockwise sweeps. At night, the spurs emit streams of carbon dioxide gas illuminated by flashing lights, creating the illusion that the building is spinning.

Heads of visitors will spin after an encounter with "The Eye," a ride featuring a spinning descent from a 300-foot tower at 119 miles per hour. Inside the main building, visitors will observe a simulated hurricane from vantage points behind 150-foot-long glass panels. Torrential rains and 200-mph winds will be heard over the public address system.

Hurricane World is envisioned as more than an amusement park. It is being planned as a gathering point for storm data, research, and educational displays.

Wet 'n' Wild, a water-themed park three miles from Sea World and ten miles from Walt Disney World, will feature a two-acre lagoon, four 400-foot-long white water slides, a Canadian water caper playground for the children, and a teenage puddle jumper pool. And no longer will visitors be able to complain that the Orlando area doesn't have a beach: Wet 'n' Wild will feature a large, sandy beach for sun-bathers.

A TASTE OF ENGLAND

"To increase public awareness of the excellence and variety of English food served by many of our hotels and restaurants" was how Sir Mark Henig, Chairman of the English Tourist Board summed up the aim of the Taste of England promotion in 1976. It will continue in 1977. To be eligible, hotels and restaurants should offer a sufficient choice of dishes to provide the visitor with a 3-course meal of English food at any time during normal opening hours; feature local specialties, using fresh local produce, and provide a menu or bill of fare written in English. Local specialties include English drinks, and the aim of the whole promotion is to put "English cooking back on the map," as Sir Mark puts it. For Canadians, it is a chance to taste the national and regional dishes of England based on good, fresh English products. In 1976 over 900 hotels and restaurants pledged themselves to the promotion of English food; the 1977 response is likely to be higher.

In San Francisco's populous, predominantly Cantonese-speaking Chinatown they refer to it as "sea-eh nien." The sibilant for snake sounds more like "sher" in Mandarin. "Nien" is year.

According to the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, firecrackers begin rattling windows well before the old year sheds its skin. But the 10-day public celebration won't strike until February 26. It will reach a pandemic peak on the night of March 5 when hundreds of parade units snake through the downtown streets.

The snake gets a better shake in the Far East than in the West where its image suffers from the Garden of Eden connection. Chinese traditionalists honor the serpent for its sagacity, supernatural powers and kinship to the beneficent dragon.

According to the prophets, wisdom and flexibility are the watchwords for 1977. When the snake wakes, so will these traits... for the betterment of world affairs.

Indications are that events will unfold sinuously rather than suddenly in 1977 with the most momentous occurring in May (the hibernator is a slow starter). The intellectual climate will be receptive to thinkers and philosophers and so conducive to new concepts and significant discoveries.

Among the secret powers attributed to the serpent are those of healing and renewing life. Today in Taiwan more than 200 shops and restaurants purvey snake products (blood, venom, wine, meat, bladder, etc.) prized for their medicinal aphrodisiacal properties.



Mr. and Mrs. Grant McGregor of Hartfield Road, Islington, are shown posing for the fotog on the Lido Deck of Costa Line's luxury liner, "Italia", just before sailing out of Port Everglades, Florida on an 11 day

vacation cruise through Caribbean waters, visiting: San Juan, St. Thomas, Caracas, Aruba, Port Antonio and Cap Haitian.

Need joie de vivre for Quebec's carnival

It takes lots of joie de vivre... and miles and miles of heart... to stage a Mardi Gras in icicle territory, but the citizens of French Canada's historic capital have joy and courage to spare.

and the elegant Regency Ball at the world famous Château Frontenac Hotel. For all comers, there's a picture postcard background on narrow, snow-banked streets, glittering with hundreds of ice sculptures, bright with the colorful sashes and toques of Quebec's revved-up citizens, who've been convinced for centuries they're the real experts when it comes to having a good time.

They've been laughing off the winds of winter since 1894. That's when the first Quebec Winter Carnival was born in this split-level town above the St. Lawrence River, where only the irrepressible Quebecois would attempt an outdoor party in February.

This year's two-week fiesta — February 13-14 — is a far cry from the turn-of-the-century celebrations but the good, old-fashioned spirit of revelry still is the big attraction of today's slicked-up version. During Carnival weeks, more pretty girls will be kissed by more enthusiastic strangers than in any other 13-day period on Quebec's tourist calendar.

More whisky blanc or "caribou" (a mixture of whisky blanc and wine) will slosh in more hollow plastic walking canes, those most practical souvenir items designed to thaw frozen tonsils and create a nice, warm friendly feeling. More horse-drawn sleighs will jingle romantically across moon-silvered cobblestone squares.

More visiting gourmets will discover that the folksy French Canadian delights of tourtières, soupe aux pois and tarte au sucre are as rewarding as the continental cuisine for which this city is famous.

In addition to all these traditional touches, today's Carnival-goers will enjoy the most elaborate of all Canadian snow shows, featuring a cast of thousands, a fairy tale palace of sculptured ice, a beautiful French Canadian Snow Queen and the only walking, talking snowman in the world, Bonhomme Carnival.

These features were added to the old Carnival program in 1954 when a group of far-sighted tourist officials and local businessmen decided to revive the old-time winter party grand père enjoyed. It's been a going concern ever since, attracting more than 600,000 people to a non-stop fête of masquerades, parades, street dances, sports and cultural events and Habitant-style dinners.

Bonhomme Carnival, the real-life spirit of the modernized Mardi Gras, offers something for everybody visiting this centuries-old, walled city. For sports lovers there are snowmobile and automobile races and the now-notorious canoe races across the ice-filled St. Lawrence River. For indoor types there are symphony concerts, bingo nights, opera

final and the ice canoe parade, while Sunday is reserved for the famous ice canoe races.

These grueling tests of courage are the most thrilling spectacles of the Carnival, watched by thousands who gather on the natural grandstands of the city's cliffs to cheer 25 teams of expert oarsmen across the ice-floes to the opposite side.

Before the final burst of fireworks marks the end of Carnival Sunday night, visitors have plenty of time to savor the Old World charm of a citadel city born in 1608. Americans love this picturesque old town in winter costume. They enjoy exploring its perpendicular streets; clambering down the "Breakneck Stairs" to the ancient Lower Town and its 17th century buildings. They like "discovering" little restaurants with Parisien menus and Canadian prices and zapping down the famous toboggan slide to the broad promenade of Dufferin Terrace.

Travellers jetting by Air Canada to the Montreal gateway can make direct connection to Quebec City on one of the airline's daily flights in less than an hour.

Party-goers, pack your woollies! icy winds across the St. Lawrence this month are part and parcel of Carnival. Happiness is a skier's wardrobe at Quebec's Winter Carnival.

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