

The stories behind 50 of the world's  
great destinations by Terry Stevens



**WISH  
YOU WERE  
HERE**

**GRAFFEG**





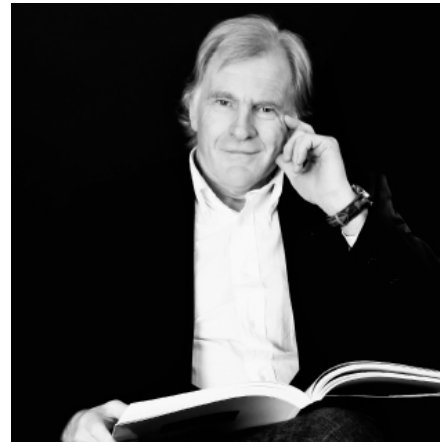
The stories behind 50 of the world's  
great destinations by Terry Stevens

# WISH YOU WERE HERE

GRAFFEG

**Dear friends and colleagues,**

My new book, *Wish You Were Here*, is a personal selection exploring 50 of the world's greatest destinations: what makes these places great to visit, who are the people behind these successful operations and what ideas make them leaders in world tourism destination management.

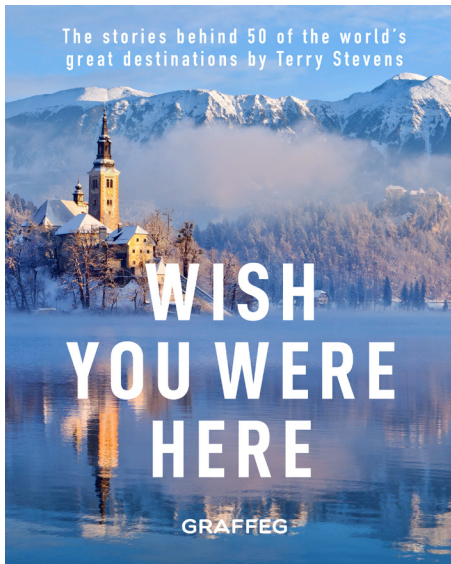


*Wish You Were Here* is primarily aimed at the consumer market interested in visiting top destinations, bringing tourism to you. Each destination will have a four page essay (1200-1500 words) written by me in English with some amazing photographs illustrating the special attractions and culture of each location.

A professional edition for those working in tourism, for consultants, owners, managers, researchers and students, will also be available with an additional piece about 'The Art and Science of Destination Management', examining the professional aspects of creating and managing a world-class destination.

For more information about Terry Stevens and the project, please visit:  
<https://www.graffeg.com/about-graffeg/authors/terry-stevens/>





### **Wish You Were Here: Consumer Edition**

This book will give tourists and travellers a description of each of the 50 destinations with a personal explanation giving an insight as to why, and how, these destinations consistently deliver high-quality visitor experiences. It aims to show the visitor how good management and an understanding of the importance of hospitality underpins the success of each destination. Tourists are now very interested in knowing more about how the places they visit are organized and how they get things right.

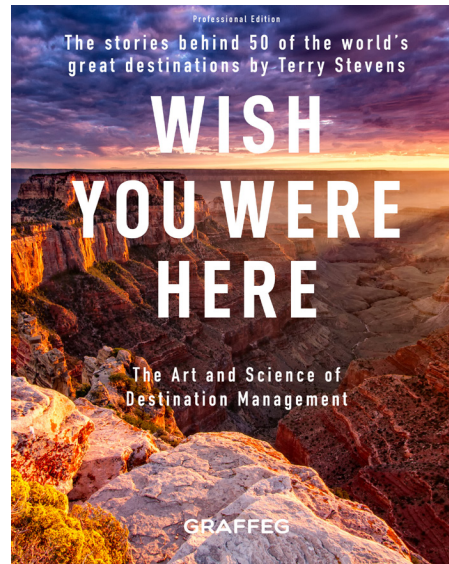
- **Title:** Wish You Were Here
- **Author:** Terry Stevens
- **Pre-title:** The stories behind 50 of the world's greatest destinations

#### **eBook:**

- **Publication:** 20 April 2020
- **ISBN:** 9781913634261
- **Price:** £15 €20

#### **Paperback:**

- **Publication:** 24 September 2020
- **Format:** 224 pages, 250 x 200mm
- **ISBN:** 9781913134952
- **Price:** £20 €25



### **Wish You Were Here: Professional Edition**

For the tourism professional and future destination managers and marketers, this will have the same core content as Book 1, exploring the destinations, plus a detailed analysis of international best practice in destination management written with deep insight and research and supported by an extensive bibliography. It will be a major reference book on successful destination management based on my 40 years working in the industry in over 55 countries.

- **Title:** Wish You Were Here
- **Author:** Terry Stevens
- **Pre-title:** The stories behind 50 of the world's greatest destinations

#### **eBook:**

- **Publication:** 20 April 2020
- **ISBN:** 9781913634278
- **Price:** £25 €30

#### **Hardback:**

- **Publication:** 24 September 2020
- **Format:** 256 pages, 250 x 200mm
- **ISBN:** 9781913134969
- **Price:** £30 €35

**1. PR Event, Workshop and Book Package (50% discount):**

A workshop and PR event about International Best Practice in Destination Management with Professor Terry Stevens at your destination. Book package includes 40 copies of the Professional Print Edition and 60 copies of the Consumer Print Edition, with a substantial discount of 50% on retail. Prices exclude travel and delivery costs.

**€1380 £1200**

**2. 60 Book Package (30% discount):**

Promote your destination feature in the book by distributing copies to media, government and professional organisations. The package includes 20 copies of the Professional Print Edition and 40 copies of the Consumer Print Edition with a 30% discount.

**€1046 /£910**

**3. 20 Book Package (15% discount):**

10 copies of the Professional Print Edition and 10 copies of the Consumer Edition with a 15% discount.

**€1488 £1225**

**4. Professional Package (10% discount):**

10 copies of the Professional Print Edition with a 10% discount.

**€305 £270**

**5. Consumer Package (10% discount):**

10 copies of the Consumer Print Edition with a 10% discount.

**€203 £180**

**6. Individual books:**

Wish You Were Here Professional Print Edition

**€35 £30**

Wish You Were Here Consumer Print Edition

**€25 £20**

**Prices exclude shipping and duty. Books can be ordered online at [www.graffeg.com](http://www.graffeg.com) for delivery worldwide.**

## HOW TO ORDER

Orders for the above can all be placed online at [www.graffeg.com](http://www.graffeg.com), or send your purchase order to [peter@graffeg.com](mailto:peter@graffeg.com). For further details and information please contact Peter Gill at [peter@graffeg.com](mailto:peter@graffeg.com) or for details about workshops contact Professor Terry Stevens at [terry@graffeg.com](mailto:terry@graffeg.com).

\* Subject to agreed dates, with travel and accommodation provided by the host destination.

**‘A lack of prejudice and an  
inextinguishable curiosity  
makes one an instinctive  
traveller.’**

**William Dampier (1651–1715), buccaneer, explorer and hydrographer  
born in East Coker who three times circumnavigated the globe and the  
first Englishman to explore and map Australia.**

Wish You Were Here  
Published in Great Britain in 2020 by Graffeg.

Written by Terry Stevens Copyright © 2020. Designed and  
produced by Graffeg Limited copyright © 2020.

Graffeg, 24 Stradey Park Business Centre, Mwrwg Road,  
Llangennech, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire SA14 8YP Wales UK  
[www.graffeg.com](http://www.graffeg.com)

Terry Stevens is hereby identified as the author of this work  
in accordance with section 77 of the Copyrights, Designs and  
Patents Act 1988.

A CIP Catalogue record for this book is available from  
the British Library.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted,  
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior  
permission of the publishers.

Professional edition ISBN 9781913134969  
Consumer edition ISBN 9781913134952

Professional edition eBook ISBN 9781913634276  
Consumer edition eBook ISBN 9781913634261

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Cover Photo: Bled, Slovenia © Jost Gantar.

The stories behind 50 of the world's  
great destinations by Terry Stevens

# WISH YOU WERE HERE

To Jac, Elis, Gruff, Owain a Moi

Be curious, enjoy travelling the world – the Odyssey of the human spirit –  
but always return home safe.

**GRAFFEG**

# DESTINATIONS

Arhus, Denmark	17	Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA	114
Abano–Montegrotto and Euganee Hills, Italy	20	Jyväskylä, Finland	118
Alps to Ocean, New Zealand	24	Kitzbühel, Austria	122
Armagh, Food and Cider Festival, Northern Ireland	28	Lausanne, Switzerland	126
Austin, Texas, USA	32	Linz, Austria	131
Baden-Baden, Germany	36	Ljubljana, Slovenia	134
Baiersbronn, Germany	41	Loch Ness, Scotland	139
Barcelona, Spain	44	Mali Lošinj, Croatia	142
Belfast, Northern Ireland	49	Margaret River, Australia	147
Berlin, Germany	52	Muskoka, Ontario, Canada	150
Bilbao, Spain	56	Nantes, France	154
Bled and Bohinj, Slovenia	61	North Wales	158
Bregenz and Bregenzerwald, Austria	64	Norway’s National Tourism Routes	164
Bremerhaven, Germany	68	Park City, Utah, USA	170
Cape Town, South Africa	72	Québec City, Canada	175
Catalunya, Spain	76	Rovinj and the Istrian Peninsula, Croatia	178
Chicago, USA	80	Saalfelden-Leogang, Austria	183
Copenhagen, Denmark	84	San Antonio, Texas, USA	186
Elciego, City of Wine Rioja Alavesa, Spain	90	Santa Fe, USA	191
Fanø Island, Denmark	94	Seoul, South Korea	195
Flagstaff, USA	99	Soca Valley, Slovenia	198
Flanders, Belgium	102	South Somerset, England	202
Franshhoek Valley, South Africa	107	Trentino and Riva, Italy	208
Isle of Arran, Scotland	110	Turku Archipelago, Finland	212
		Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland	217
		Zadar, Croatia	220





Soca Valley, Slovenia

# CONTENTS

Welcome / Croeso Peter Greenberg	6
Foreword Anita Mendiratta	8
Author Terry Stevens	9
Best LUXLife Destination Management Development Expert 2019	10
Capturing memories: taking photographs of great destinations by Sarah Freeman	12
Making the Cut: Selecting the 50 Destinations	14
Acknowledgements	224
A Final Thought	225
Photo Credits	226





ARoS  
ARoS  
AFTER  
HOURS  
FRIDAY 18.08.2017  
18.00 - 24.00  
ARoS  
KUNSTCENTRUM  
KØBENHAVN

KEBBIERHUSE

8  
FOLKEMIDT  
GÅT  
KØBENHAVN

Beer & Bites

# ARHUS, DENMARK

A contemporary, forward-looking city that celebrates and nurtures its traditions, heritage and quality of life

**First or last in the index to an atlas? In most cases Aarhus appears at the top of indexes, however, the modern Danish alphabet puts the letter combination 'aa' after Z under the letter Å.** This confusion all dates back to the Danish spelling reform of 1948, when the capital A was replaced with an A with a ring on top, so Aarhus, which had been in use for centuries, became Århus. At the time some Danish cities resisted the new spelling of their names, notably Aalborg and Aabenraa, but Århus city council explicitly embraced the new spelling. In 2010, the city council voted to change the name back from Århus to Aarhus to strengthen the international profile of the city and this renaming came into effect on 1 January 2011.

If Denmark's second city has appeared ambivalent about the spelling of its name it is definitely confident and focused upon its appeal as a first-rate city tourist destination. Aarhus is full of self-confidence, civic pride and is oozing with creativity. Bolstered by being the European Capital of Culture in 2017, the city has become an eye-catching centre for innovative architecture, culture and contemporary Scandinavian gastronomy. It is now a vibrant mix of youthful energy and with a living history giving the city an energetic beat and can-do approach.

This is a compact city. Indeed, in Aarhus, it is claimed that when a tourist is told that somewhere is within walking distance, it really is within walking distance – and it is a delightful, safe and pleasantly varied, visibly maritime city, in which to walk. A modern and efficient light rail system makes access



**Population of city:** 235,000

**Population of wider area:** 1.3 million

**Nearest international airports:** Aarhus Karup airport, Aalborg, Billund, Copenhagen International

**Key websites:** [www.visitaarhus.com](http://www.visitaarhus.com);  
[www.dengamle.dk](http://www.dengamle.dk); [www.aarhuscentralfoodmarket.dk](http://www.aarhuscentralfoodmarket.dk)

**Icons:** Den Gamle By, ARoS, Central Food Market, DOKK1, the Isbjørger, Aarhus Ø, Midtbyen, Djursland, Aarhus Mad & Mark'd Street Food Market, Urban Mediaspace, The Frederiksbjerg Quarter, the Cathedral, The Women's Museum of Denmark, the 1,900 volunteers to help tourists.

.....  
Left: The rainbow panorama on the roof of ARoS is a spectacular artwork designed by Olafur Eliasson.



to the wider city easy and enjoyable. The city is on the east coast of the Jutland peninsula (almost the geographic centre of the country). It is located on the Bay of Aarhus facing the Kattegat sea and the Djursland peninsula, one of Denmark's most popular family summer holiday destinations.

The Bay of Aarhus provides a natural harbour, and, unlike many ports, the port of Aarhus, De Bynære Havnearealer is located within touching distance of the city centre. This is one of the busiest ports and ferry terminals in Denmark. Overlooking the Bay, on the hills south of the city, is the remnants of the Marselisborg Forest with the Riis Skov forest on the hills to the north, both offering fine walks, cycle routes and a series of lakes west from the inner city. These together with Den Permanente (a local favourite beach and promenade) make it easy for tourists to escape the city.

Aarhus was an 8th century fortified Viking settlement. By the mid-15th century it had become an important market town, however, as a result of the Swedish Wars and the Schleswig War with Germany in the 17th and 19th centuries respectively, the city's growth was severely constrained only to be released with the onset of the industrial revolution.

Today the city is an economic, innovation and cultural powerhouse and has a reputation for re-invention, challenging many traditional ideas about city development. It is encouraging innovative architectural practices by the creation of arkitekturklyngen, a cluster of architects whose work, together with that of the Aarhus School of Architecture, is injecting fresh ideas, shaping the face of the city. Nowhere is this ambition being put into practice more than in De Bynære Havnearealer, one of the largest harbourfront regeneration projects in Europe. It includes Aarhus Ø, an area of the old docks that is now a new neighbourhood with the eye-catching, white peaked, Isbjerg (Iceberg) apartment block. To the south is the Urban Mediaspace project, which is transforming the Inner Harbour from industrial uses and ferry port to

a delightful urban space making the link between the city and water even stronger by opening up the last bit of the Aarhus Å River. The stand-out feature of this area is Dokk1, the amazing library of the future. It is a wonderful flexible sanctuary for those in search of knowledge, inspiration and personal development – and a very fine tourist attraction. Libraries are the visitor attractions of the 21st century.

Make sure to hire a car when visiting Dokk1 for smarter parking. The fully automated parking system gives a real insight as to what all city car parks should be in the future. Here, you leave your vehicle in a light, pleasant terminal with views of the bay, after which it is mechanically conveyed to an empty slot underground. You drive your car into a box that disappears into the ground. When you return your car is brought up to you: the ultimate robotic concierge service.

Whilst pursuing these avant-garde, large-scale projects, the city has not forgotten its heritage, its traditional city centre and all the small things that make a city a great destination – including a slice of humour. The Midtbyen area is characterised by narrow, winding, cobbled streets and a busy street life. Large areas have been pedestrianised including Store Torv, the square in front of the Cathedral, and the main shopping areas. In summer, Viking-themed pedestrian crossings appear throughout the city with green and red figures bearing axes and wearing helmets.

Aarhus has recently been crowned the best shopping city in the Nordic countries with its canal-side boutiques, bars and restaurants, the traditional stylish department stores and the small designer studios and vintage fashion shops in the Latin Quarter. Artisan crafts, handmade ceramics and jewellery fill the independent stores in the trendy Frederiksbjerg area of the city. It is also known for its musical heritage and, especially, the emergence of jazz clubs in the 1950s. In the 1970s and 1980s, Aarhus became the centre for Denmark's rock

music, fostering many iconic Danish bands, and is home to a number of music festivals, including the Aarhus Jazz Festival, the SPoT Festival, and the NorthSide Festival.

In recent years Aarhus has become a city of gastronomy topped off with the opening of the Central Food Market, which is housed in the 1938 Aarhus Hall – famed for its dancing restaurant, a venue for six-day cycle races and, famously, where The Who played for less than a minute before the stage was invaded by over-excited fans in 1965. In 2016 it re-opened as a new mecca for gastronomy. Elsewhere the city has welcomed new cuisine with four restaurants gaining Michelin stars, whilst in a former garage behind the main bus station Aarhus Street Food has opened with the Mad & Mark'd Food Festival showcasing the city's fresh approach to food and drink.

In terms of attractions, the ARoS Art Museum with its 360 degree, absolutely unmissable, rooftop walkway is a rainbow-coloured halo appearing to float above the landmark museum. This totally immersive experience is uplifting, exhilarating and thoroughly unique – arguably on its own worth a visit to Aarhus. The museum itself is a delight – and vast – displaying works from Denmark's 'Golden Age of Painting' from the early 19th century together with modernist pieces and video installations. The café, restaurant and gift shop are equally impressive.

Just a short walk downhill from ARoS, in the Botanical Gardens, is the museum of Den Gamle By (The Old Town) – the first open-air town museum in the world opening in 1914 and concentrating on town culture rather than rural folk culture. Today the museum consists of 75 historical buildings collected from townships across Denmark. Besides the historic houses, there are many workshops and shops as well as a pharmacy, a school, a post office and a jazz bar.

There are some cities you love to visit. There are cities that you can simply admire in terms of the way they go about their business or tackle urban

design and architecture. There are other cities where you envy the residents their quality of life. Rarely, however, does one city satisfy all of these feelings. Aarhus is the exception. It is a must-visit destination for a short break or, when combined with the exploration of Djursland, with its iconic maritime attraction of the Frigate of Jutland and the Glass Museum in the delightful historic maritime town of Ebeltoft, the Mols Bjerge National Park or Djurs Sommerland a family theme park, can become a worthwhile and longer holiday.

Bringing all these components together and forging a forward looking, innovative and highly creative approach to developing tourism is VisitAarhus. This is an extremely professional, well-managed, body that is the official tourism organisation, not only for Aarhus, but also for the whole region. VisitAarhus has developed an impressive Aarhus City card offering guests a wide range of discounts and free admission to attractions and has recruited an impressive 1,900 volunteers to welcome visitors to the city. In 2019 VisitAarhus became one of the new Danish 'super' destinations, merging with VisitDjursland and VisitSilkeborg to create one organisation under the name of VisitAarhus that is now working tirelessly to developing tourism in the region and marketing it as a world-class place to visit. So, today VisitAarhus represents the city of Aarhus, the regions of Northern and Southern Djursland as well as the nearby regions of Silkeborg, Viborg, Randers and Skanderborg ensuring a seamless tourist experience across the whole area.



# ABANO-MONTEGROTTO AND THE EUGANEE HILLS, VENETO, ITALY

Time to live – the largest thermal spa area in Europe and the first preventative health destination



● ABANO-MONTEGROTTO

ITALY

**Population of Abano-Montegrotto:** 20,000

**Population of wider area:** 50,000

**Nearest international airports:** Venice Marco Polo, Treviso, Verona, Bergamo/Milan, Bologna

**Key websites:** [www.visitabanomontegrotto.it](http://www.visitabanomontegrotto.it);  
[www.euganeanhills.com](http://www.euganeanhills.com); [www.parcollieuganei.it](http://www.parcollieuganei.it);  
[www.welcomepadova.it](http://www.welcomepadova.it); [www.abanospa.com](http://www.abanospa.com);  
[www.consorziotermeeuganee.it](http://www.consorziotermeeuganee.it)

**Icons:** Colli Euganei, Arquà Petrarca, GB Hotels, Petrarch, Fango, Pietro d'Abano Spa Research Centre, Abano Terme, Montegrotto Terme, Est.





**The Euganean Hills, anchored by the twin spa towns of Abano–Montegrotto, are to be found south-west of Padova.** They have been attracting tourists for many centuries due to the picturesque landscape beauty, world famous thermal waters and associated mud and other spa treatments. The area is highly accessible, it has a large and diverse hotel stock, a well-developed hospitality sector and a range of heritage, cultural and activity-based attractions. The Euganean Hills (Colli Euganei) is a group of hills of volcanic origin that rise to heights of 300 to 600 m poking out from the Padovan-Venetian plain. Their name memorialises that of the Euganei, an ancient people who originally inhabited the region with over a dozen delightful, historic walled (such as Vo, Este, Monselice and Arquà Petrarca) thermal communes (such as Battaglia Terme and Galzignano Terme).

The Euganean Thermal Basin (sitting around the base of the upland area) is regarded as a unique thermal resource. In 1817 it was described as:

‘Having all the happiness of the Venetian character in its waters.’ Today all the spa centres of the destination have been classified with a ‘1 Super’ qualification issued by the Italian Ministry of Health reflecting the health enhancing qualities of the hot springs. It was in the Euganean Hills, at Arquà, which now bears his name, that Petrarch (the Italian poet and scholar) found peace and harmony towards the end of his life. He discovered the village in 1369; there, he stated in his letter to posterity, ‘I have built me a house, small, but pleasant and decent, in the midst of slopes clothed with vines and olives,’ – a house that may be visited today.

The Euganean hills sits like an archipelago of steep-sided wooded islands rising from the perfectly flat agricultural plain and inspired the setting of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s ‘Lines Written



Above: Prosecco Vineyards at summer on the Euganean Hills.

Among the Euganean Hills'. Shelley likens the hills at first to an island 'in the deep wide sea of Misery', then he sees that: 'Beneath is spread like a green sea the waveless plain of Lombardy, bounded by the vaporous air, Islanded by cities fair'. Today, the whole area has been designated the Parco Regionale dei Colli Euganei offering a wide choice of recreational, natural world, historical and cultural tourist activities. This destination is part of the Veneto Region. The lower plain is both a mainstay of agricultural production and the most populated part of the region, as well as forming part of the Province of Padova, whose eponymous capital city claims to be the oldest city in northern Italy. This area is exceptionally accessible with a major motorway and rail system connecting to all the main metropolitan centres of northern Italy, especially Venice, and routes to Austria, Slovenia and Croatia.

The Hills are an extremely rural context for a highly developed spa destination, a factor of increasing importance to the area's overall appeal, having been recently described as the 'decorative stage set', characterised by verdant green wooded slopes whose crags are capped with ruined villas, castles and monasteries. The farmlands, vineyards and market gardens of the Veneto Plain create an arcadian landscape within which the Palladian villas of the Venetian merchants (past and present) sit quite comfortably. This area has historically been the rural escape for Venetians: for recreation, relaxation and revitalisation. This is not, however, the classical Italian *campagne* landscape that inspired the Grand Tour or the 17th century Dutch Masters but an understated place whose tourism product has been finely tuned for many centuries to create a destination of the highest quality, unpretentious, but captivating.

The twin spa resort towns of Abano and Montegrotto are the focus for marketing this area led by the Consorzio Terme Euganee. These two towns have almost one hundred spa hotels between them. The 'Consorzio' is an extremely professional

body. It is a private sector, not-for-profit company funded by local sales taxes and direct support from its members (comprising hotels, restaurants and the wineries). Today thirteen wineries have grouped together under the recently established Colli Euganei denomination. Wines consist of the white, with its typical straw-yellow colour and jasmine scent, the Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon reds, the Chardonnay, the Fior d'Arancio, the very sweet yellow Moscato, the dry Pinello, Pinot blanc, Red Wine, the sparkling Serprino and the Tocai Italico.

The Consorzio now recognises the importance of the wider tourism appeal to be found in the Euganean Hills as an essential component of an inclusive well-being holiday. Thus, there is an impressive range of collaborative product development and marketing activity taking place throughout the area. As a result, the area is increasingly referred to as an eco-compatible economy. The spa operators in the area also recognise the importance of the countryside for activities such as walking and cycling and local produce (food, beverages and crafts) as part of an approach to a 'spa' holiday for the mind, body and the soul. This holistic, integrated, approach is the foundation of the new well-being concept. The traditional treatments and curative activities are being supplemented by packages that recognise guest needs to satisfy many interests with the key to success being to combine the medical products with offerings of local culture and experiences for optimal relaxation.

The past few years have witnessed a number of interesting new developments, notably: the introduction of a unique range of signature spa treatments and products known as the Abano SPA line; investment in rural trails and routes for walking, hiking, cycling and car touring; and, the opening of the amazing and extraordinary Y-40 The Deep Joy. This is a vertical 21x18 m swimming pool deep in the Euganean Hills Regional Park with 4,300 cubic ft of water at 34 degrees centigrade, allowing





guests to swim and dive (free dives, scuba diving and rescue training teams) as well use for medical research purposes.

The destination spa waters are defined as salty-bromine-iodic hyper-thermal mineral waters. The classification takes into account the high concentration of minerals and the high water temperature of approximately 87°C at the well-head. The water emanates from the southern Alps some 100 km north of Euganee. The rainwater seeps into the substrata at some 3,500 metres depth, becoming mineral rich and gaining heat. This water takes some 50 years to reach the Euganean area, where it surfaces at the high temperatures. In the Euganean spa centres, spa water is mainly used for the bath therapies, in the spa pools, in the inhalation treatments, but, above all, for maturing, keeping and regenerating the spa mud. The spa water therapies include inhalation as well as hydro-massage and Rinesi therapy.

Throughout the thermal spas of Europe mud-bath therapy has been very popular for centuries due to the proven effectiveness in solving symptoms of pain in problems tied to various complaints of the locomotor apparatus. The unique feature of the Euganean spas is specifically linked to mud-bath therapy and thermal waters making it the largest

spa centre in Europe specialising in this field.

The spa mud, or *fango*, from the Euganean Basin (and applied in Abano Terme, Montegrotto Terme, Galzignano Terme and Teolo) is used for therapeutic purposes.

The sophisticated research, carried out by the Pietro d'Abano Spa Research Centre, has shown that a specific 50–60 day maturation period is necessary for the hot mudpack to have the right therapeutic properties. This takes place in special maturation tanks when the mud remains in close contact with the spa water, which constantly flows at a temperature of approximately 38–40°C. The Euganean mud has been recognised as having therapeutic qualities since the 7th century BC. At that time the area was already recognised by the Romans as having important mineral properties. It is, however, the ways in which the spa waters and the mud are used together that creates what locals call the 'real wealth of Euganee'. The local authority strictly controls the licensing of the collection of fresh mud from specially created lakes in the area and the permits for spa well-heads. Every spa hotel has a specific allocation of mud as well as its own recycling and maturation tanks and well-head.

.....  
Above: Piazza Fontana at night.



# ALPS TO OCEAN, SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND-AOTEAROA

The jewel in the crown of New Zealand's great cycle rides providing riders with an alps to ocean experience that is world class

**When one of the most respected tourism operators you know eulogises, at length, about an exhilarating, uplifting and extraordinary experience know that he has visited somewhere, and done something very special.** It came as no surprise when he revealed that this took place in New Zealand-Aotearoa. For the last ten years or so, this country has been setting the gold standard in terms of its 100% Pure New Zealand branding and celebrating its raft of innovative tourism destinations, such as in Queenstown and Auckland, and inspirational new products including Gibbs Farm Sculpture Park and the Rotorua Canopy Tours. The experience that caught the imagination of my hard-nosed tourism guru is the Alps to Ocean Trail (A2O) on South Island – halfway between Christchurch and Queenstown. As with the Wild Atlantic Way and the National Tourist Routes of Norway this does not constitute a destination in the same genre as the other 47 described in this book. It qualifies, however, because it exhibits all the characteristics that define a great destination: it is well-manged, innovative, transformative and is delivered through a strong collaborative effort.

Tourism New Zealand is the organisation responsible for marketing New Zealand-Aotearoa to the world as a tourist destination. Its major tool is the highly memorable 100% Pure New Zealand marketing campaign that has evolved over the past two decades. Clearly tourism as an industry does not grow by itself. So, in a fiercely contested global tourism marketplace, Tourism New Zealand, established by the Government in 1991, is



**Population of Oamaru city:** 13,000

**Population of wider area:** 20,000

**Nearest international airports:** Dunedin, Christchurch and Queenstown

**Key websites:** [www.alps2ocean.com](http://www.alps2ocean.com); [www.alps2ocean.co.nz](http://www.alps2ocean.co.nz); [www.tourismnewzealand.com](http://www.tourismnewzealand.com)

**Icons:** Nga Haerenga, Aoraki / Mount Cook, Twizel, Takapo, Waitaki, the Mackenzie River, the Hermitage Hotel, Manaakitanga, Oamaru.

.....

responsible for ensuring that the country remains attractive internationally as a visitor destination. The recently introduced 100% Pure New Zealand Welcome and the Good Morning World Campaign features New Zealanders' genuine *manaakitanga*. Tourism works because it creates inclusive growth, distributing economic opportunities and bringing social benefits across the whole country, especially to peripheral, remote communities – such as those



small towns, villages and farmsteads along the route of A20. Tourism helps celebrate the unique Maori culture and the route's wide, expansive, stunning landscape. The industry is an important driver of the economy employing one in seven New Zealanders and generating more than 20% of all export earnings. It has become the beating heart of many rural communities with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise keen to deliver sustainable tourism projects in a way that ensures that the regions can grow economically and that tourism gives back more than it takes. A20 is one of these projects.

A20 is New Zealand-Aotearoa's longest cycle trail stretching over 300km through the Mackenzie Basin and down the Waitaki Valley to Oamaru and the mighty Pacific Ocean. Beginning at the base of Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest peak (3,800 m), it passes a whole thread of glacial lakes while descending 780 m to the sea through a string of nine small towns and, often tiny, villages (from

Aoraki, through Kurow, Twizel, Lake Tekapo to Oamaru – the largest town en route – on the Pacific Coast at the mouth of the Waitaki River).

In its relatively short existence, it has earned global notoriety as being one of the most epic Great Rides of the world and a key part on the Nga Haerenga (the New Zealand National Cycle Trail Network). The trail can be enjoyed in sections or travelled in its entirety (for this there is the 'Relaxed' tour taking eight days, the 'Classic' tour over six days and the 'Fast' tour completed in four days) and is free for cyclists or walkers to use. A whole range of support services (luggage transfers, guided tours and helicopter transfers to the start of the trail – and plenty of bike repair and equipment shops!) are available. Trail users have a choice of different types of characterful accommodation



Above: Family at Lake Pukaki.

(hotels, B&Bs, hostels, cottages, camping sites and farmsteads) as well as interesting places for refreshment breaks and evening dining. There are also distractions to lure visitors away from the main task of completing the trail: jet boating on Braided River, gliding Omarama or air safaris and scenic helicopter rides in the mountains.

The Trail transects the Mackenzie and Waitaki districts, running from the South Island's majestic Southern Alps to the east coast of New Zealand. It is possible to join the A20 Trail at almost any point, however the official starting point is at the White Horse Hill Campground at the foot of Aoraki/Mt Cook with an alternative start at the town of Tekapo and the two trails meet on the banks of Lake Pukaki. The trail generally follows the Waitaki River from the Mackenzie Basin to the coastal town of Oamaru on the Pacific Ocean. It is an area with a continental climate with hot summers and colder (frosty) winters. Snow does not stay on the ground long here except at higher altitudes. Hot nor'westerlies (foehn winds) can be prevalent in summer.

The Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee was set up under the Local Government Act as a Joint Committee of the Mackenzie and Waitaki District Councils and the Nga Haerenga, The New Zealand Cycle Trail project and the Department of Conservation, with an overarching governance role and specific responsibilities to oversee the construction of the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail. There is the A20 Project Team responsible for planning and gaining permissions and resource consents for each new section of the trail and a Friends of A20 – a Trust set up to receive public and corporate donations and as a vehicle for funding development of the Trail.

The vision for the project is clear: it states that A20 is to be 'the jewel in the crown of New Zealand's great rides that provides riders with an Alps to Ocean cycle experience that is second to none.' It has succeeded in this goal. It is fair to

say that the A20 has literally put the Mackenzie and, to a much greater extent, Waitaki districts, on the map. The Mackenzie Basin has always been popular due to the alpine lakes and Aoraki/Mount Cook but now also has its Dark Skies initiative. Oamaru has been building on its Victorian heritage and architecture and Steam Punk credentials and more recently the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark was created and is currently seeking UNESCO recognition as a world geopark region. Now, since its inception the A20 has received a great deal of media and international press and news coverage, establishing the region as a destination in its own right, rather than a transit route.

Tourism Waitaki, the body responsible for the development and marking of A20, is witnessing increasing numbers of start-up and established businesses wishing to join the A20 Partnership Programme, which strengthens the overall appeal for tourists as well developing the small local communities along its route. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of bedrooms available in the area and longer dwell time for those visiting. This is encouraging the further investment and development in A20 to make it one of the best cycle trails in the world: work continues to get all of the A20 off road, and there is much work being done with local communities to add additional value to the Trail by developing side trips and catering for niche interests. There is work getting more shelters in place particularly in exposed and remote areas together with more toilet and drinking water facilities and, adding context to the trail, local fauna and flora, Maori Tradition, early settler stories, and of course the geology of the area too.

The overall Nga Haerenga, the New Zealand Cycle Trail project, arose out of the Government's 2009 Employment Summit and originated as a partnership project between the Government and the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. This project established a fund that would be used to cover the costs of the construction of a series of





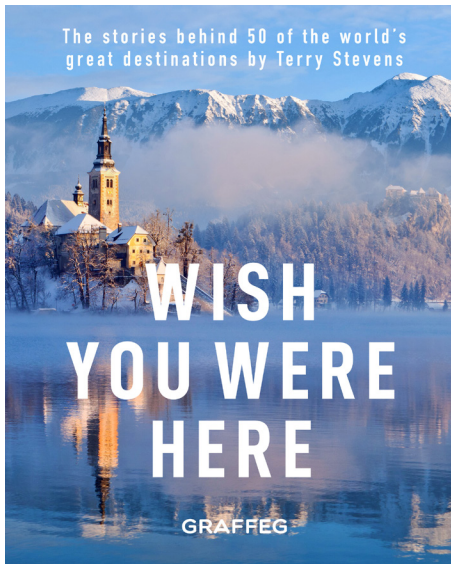
'Great Rides' across the country. Vote Tourism appropriated \$50 million over three years to fund the construction of a suite of cycle trails and a project team was established within the Ministry of Economic Development to oversee the dispersal of these funds. Eighteen trails were initially selected for funding. By the end of 2014 the original 18 trails had officially opened. Together these trails amount to nearly 2,500 kilometres of track. As at 2019 there are now 22 'Great Rides'.

A20 and the other cycle trails were conceived as 'just' opportunities for keen cyclists to explore remoter areas. Now the recognition by various agencies is that they are a platform for tourism enhancement of whole destinations and for the country achieving regional dispersal of tourists and reducing seasonality as most trails are

rideable year-round. A20 is now a platform for the development of new businesses and job creation around them. This can be from the obvious food, beverage, accommodation and transport services to meeting global trends like wellness, discovering local cultures, educational learning and environmental protection that can all be found along the route of A20. At present it is estimated that about 85% of trail riders are domestic tourists or locals, however, as this book has shown, what starts off as being good for the locals is very soon adopted and recognised as being great for the international tourist.



Above: Clay Cliffs, Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail.



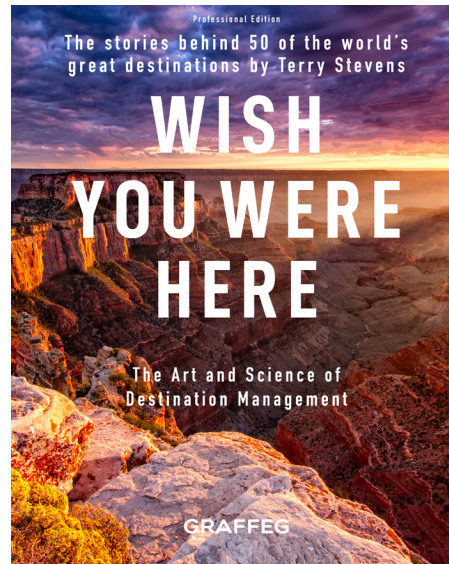
### **Wish You Were Here: Consumer Edition**

#### **eBook:**

- **Publication:** 20 April 2020
- **ISBN:** 9781913634261
- **Price:** £15 €20

#### **Paperback:**

- **Publication:** 24 September 2020
- **Format:** 224 pages, 250 x 200mm
- **ISBN:** 9781913134952
- **Price:** £20 €25



### **Wish You Were Here: Professional Edition**

#### **eBook:**

- **Publication:** 20 April 2020
- **ISBN:** 9781913634278
- **Price:** £25 €30

#### **Hardback:**

- **Publication:** 24 September 2020
- **Format:** 256 pages, 250 x 200mm
- **ISBN:** 9781913134969
- **Price:** £30 €35

Both books will first be published as eBook editions available online from 20 April 2020: Amazon Kindle, Apple iBooks, Android Google Play, Kobo, Barnes & Noble nook, Overdrive, eSentral.

The printed books will follow 24 September 2020. To arrange a workshop package please contact me directly [terry@graffeg.com](mailto:terry@graffeg.com).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely,

**Professor Terry Stevens**  
**[terry@graffeg.com](mailto:terry@graffeg.com)**