

New member

Bonaventura Cruises, owned by the Dutch shipping company Jan C. van den Engel and Herman H. Weulen Kranenberg, is the newest supporting member of the Danube Tourist Commission. Bonaventura Cruises' prime markets are the Netherlands and Great Britain. In 2005 the liners MS *Abel Tasman* and MS *Amazonica* sail the Danube under the Bonaventura flag.

Information: Bonaventura Cruises, Kerkstraat 21-A, NL-3295 BD 's Gravendeel, Postbus 5101, NL-3295 ZG's Gravendeel, Tel.: +31(0)78 673 68 39, Fax: +31(0) 78 673 68 40 www.bonaventuracruises.nl

Novi Sad's Sloboda Bridge to open

According to Serbian media the new Sloboda Bridge in Novi Sad will be opened to traffic **officially on September 28**. The ponton bridge will then be dismantled thus reopening the Danube to unhindered navigation.

A new *Serbian law on tourism* entered force at the beginning of the summer. The legislation includes measures related to infrastructure, investment models and travel. *Information: www.serbia-tourism.org*

Danube Travel Mart 2006 in Vienna

Following the great success in 2004, the next and thirteenth Danube Travel Mart will again be held in conjunction with the atb (austrian travel business) in Vienna **Jan 29 –31.2006**. Decisive in the decision to repeat the experiment was feedback from many exhibitors and buyers, who profited from the synergies produced by holding the two travel trade fairs together.

Information: Danube Tourist Commission www.austria-tourism.biz/atb, donau@austria.info

Deutsche Welle TV: Danube reports

Deutsche Welle TV will broadcast reports from a journey from the Danube's source to the delta at the close of its "euromaxx" magazine. Broadcast dates are 22-27 August and 29 August-3 September, at 7:30 pm, 12:30 am, 7:30 am and 1:30 pm in German, and at 10:30 pm, 4:30 am, 10:30 am and 4:30 pm in English.

New hotels open in Slovakia

The four-star *Hotel Hradná Brana* recently opened in Devín right below the town's famed castle ruins. The hotel offers eleven rooms, one apartment, restaurant, leisure and conference facilities, as well as a supervised parking lot and taxi service to the nearby Slovak capital Bratislava. *Infos: www.hotelhb.sk*

On August 1 the four-star *Hotel Crowne Plaza* opened in the heart of Bratislava. The former Hotel Forum underwent thorough renovation and adaptation lasting several months before reopening as the Crowne Plaza. The hotels offers 223 rooms and 14 conference rooms. *Infos: www.crowneplaza.sk*

Currency reform in Romania

In a recent reform four zeros were struck off the Romanian lei: one euro is thus now worth 3.6 lei. Those exchanging foreign currency for lei receive new banknotes. Old banknotes continue to be valid as legal tender until 2006, and will be exchanged by the Romanian central bank for new notes until 2009. Prices in shops are shown in both old and new lei. Those paying in old lei receive new lei as change.

Mahart Passnave privatised

The Hungarian passenger ship company Mahart Passnave has been completely privatised with the 51 percent share hitherto held by the state having been acquired by the Conflex GmbH- Rendezvenyiroda & Europa Veranstaltungsbüro. The remaining 49 percent is held by Biggeorge (10%), Masped (33%) and Mahart employees (6%). The company name will remain unchanged.

Attila Sztankó, manager of Europa Veranstaltungsbüro, reported that all Mahart ships will continue in service and the most important business lines will be maintained. Europa Veranstaltungsbüro owns more than ten ships and rents additional vessels, such as the museum ship *Kossuth* (the Vénhajó Restaurant and Ship Museum below Budapest's Chain Bridge). The company also owns a number of other museum ships in the Danube port of Neszmély.

Information: www.europahao.hu, www.panorama-deck.hu

International Danube Festival in Tulcea, Romania

From August 12 through 15 a grand Danube festival will take place in the Romanian town of Tulcea. A varied program with regattas and excursions to the Danube delta awaits visitors.

Combination cruises with Deilmann

The Peter Deilmann company offers cruises in August and October on the Danube and Danube-Main Canal aboard the *Donauprinzessin* and *Casanova* at especially attractive rates. The fourteen-day cruises, which both depart from and return to Passau, can also be combined with the additional segment costing just half of the published catalogue price. *Information:* www.deilmann.de

New Danube Sales Manual

The Danube Sales Manual, the first trans-border tourism sales guide, features cultural events, sights and an overview of tourism services in the Danube regions of the members of the Danube Tourist Commission.

The second stage of the Sales Manual, as well as an English-language version of the publication, are currently being produced and scheduled for release this autumn. The Danube Sales Manual was developed by the Danube Tourist Commission in close collaboration with the tourism consulting firm Zolles & Edinger. The project was supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology. *Information:* donau@austria.info

First ICPDR stakeholder conference in Budapest

At the invitation of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) ninety high-ranking representatives from the thirteen

Danube basin states met in Budapest on the occasion of the second annual Danube Day. The basis for this first conference was an analysis produced by ICPDR in 2003, which had the entire Danube and its tributaries as its scope. One of the core focuses of the conference in Budapest was the EU's Flood Action Programme; Hungary currently chairs the project. The action programme aims to prevent flood catastrophes while maintaining environmental protection regulations. The "Water Roof Report" regularly analyses how current conditions measure up against targets. Information: icpdr@unvienna.org

Danube Bicycle Trail Project Group

The Working Community of Danubian Regions (ARGE Donauländer), of which the City of Vienna holds the presidency this year, established a Danube Bicycle Trail Project Group in the framework of the Transport and Navigation Working Group under the chairmanship of Mr Otto Schwetz on July 8 in Vienna. Other participants in the project include the working groups for economics, tourism, regional planning and environmental protection, the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, gtz and Danube Tourist Commission. Goal of the project group, which is led by Mr. Bruno Domany, is to coordinate development and extension of the trail to the Danube delta. Executive director of the Working Community of Danubian Regions is Mr Peter De Martin. *Information: Danube Tourist Commission, donau@austria.info*

Fifth Danube bridge in Bratislava

Spectacular construction work last year on a new bridge spanning the Danube in the Slovak capital even required brief closure of the river to shipping. The new link across the Danube, which has been named Apollo Bridge, is now complete and will shortly be opened to traffic.

Simion Giurka re-appointed

Simion Giurka, long-serving director of the Romanian National Tourist Office in Vienna, has been re-appointed by the responsible ministry in Bucharest. Ms. Liliana Hancu has been named to oversee the international relations at the Ministry for Tourism in Bucharest, succeeding Andrada Crangus, who moves to head the representative office in Brussels.

Slovak Tourist Board in Vienna moves

The Vienna office of the Slovak Tourist Board managed by Daniel Lukac has moved to new premises in the Prinz Eugen-Strasse 70; the office's telephone number and e-mail address remain unchanged.

Information: Slovak Tourist Board, Prinz Eugen-Strasse 70, 1040 Vienna, Tel. ++43/1/5139569, sacr-wien@aon.at, www.slovakiatourism.sk

Danube Atlas published by Serbian Chamber of Commerce

The Serbian Chamber of Industry and Commerce together with the Working Group for Navigation and Tourism (NATUS) is currently preparing a new atlas for boating and yachting of the Danube for publication. The reference work, which will contain the latest data and up-to-date graphics, is sure to be an indispensable navigational aid for the Serbian Danube, as well as portions of Croatian and Romanian stretches of the river. The Danube Atlas will also to be made available in electronic form in 2006. *Information: Serbian Chamber of Commerce, e-mail zoran.novakovic@pks.co.yu*

New brochure on Mohács

The southern Hungarian town of Mohács has just published a new brochure in German containing a comprehensive calendar of events and details of two attractive land programs for cruise ships.

Information: Tourinform Mohács. mohacs@tourinform.hu, www.mohacs.hu

Ernst Trost: “The Danube—Landscapes of Passion”

Austrian writer and journalist Ernst Trost’s essay on the Danube Tourist Commission’s annual theme, “Danube—Landscapes of Passion” describes the diversity of landscapes along the great river and the people that they mould.

Information: Danube Tourist Commission, donau@austria.info

EnduRoMania 2005

The tenth anniversary edition of the EnduRoMania competition for motorcycles, enduros, sidecar vehicles, off-roaders and four-wheel drive vehicles, takes participants right across Romania to the Black Sea and back. Starting dates run until September. One of the highpoints of the competition is the 1,075-kilometer (668-mile) segment along the lower Danube from Bazias to the Black Sea.

Information: www.enduromania.net

Cultural Guide to Central Europe

The Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) has published the tenth edition of its “Cultural Guide to Central Europe”. This handy reference work in German is available directly from IDM. *Information: www.idm.at*

“Danube—River of Life”

Danube—River of Life is one of the most interesting books to appear in recent years about the Danube in English. Published under the dual patronage of Bartholomew, the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, and Romano Prodi, former president of the European Commission, the work seeks to explore the Danube from the religious, scientific and environmental point of view. The book, which thus presents the Danube in an entirely new light, is the fruit of a journey down the Danube from Passau to the Black Sea in 1999 just after the Balkan wars. The book, published by Religion, Science and the Environment Press in Athens, is available through better bookstores (ISBN 954-91119-1-1).

The most beautiful Danube ships on cards

In July a set of playing cards showing some of the most beautiful Danube cruise liners was presented. Ships belonging to no fewer than eleven shipping companies from six countries and sailing under seven flags decorate the set of thirty-two cards. The liners depicted in full colour bear such romantic names as *MS River Cloud*, *Aurora*, and *MS Flamenco*. The cards include details and vital statistics of both ships and shipyards. The playing cards, which are sure to prove popular not just with collectors, include directions for two different games in English and German. The cards are available at toy stores. www.mediendenk.com