

THE BIKE FLYER - A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



PEGASUS BIKE TOURS



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International Tour Registration Open August 23—September 1

We have just come back from leading our three 2019 International Tours. Registering for next year's international tours is just around the corner. Please make sure you register sometime between August 23rd and September 1st. As you have read previously in the *Bike Flyer*, we will be hosting two tours next summer. The first is a **fixed-based** tour in Ronda in the Andalusian hills of Spain in the southeast corner of Spain along the Mediterranean from June 1st to June 10th. This 10 day tour includes a bus trip to Granada and then ends along the Mediterranean in Malaga. See all the details at [Andalusia](#).

Our second 2020 tour is in Italy and runs from June 20-July 4. We are calling this a hybrid tour as it starts as a classic point to point riding tour for the first week. We start our tour in the hills above Bolzano at the top of the Resia (Reschen) Pass at 4800'. From there we make our way to Mantua. It then becomes a bike and barge tour, as we follow the Mincio and Po Rivers and canals to Venice. This will undoubtedly be the tour of a lifetime. Check it out at [Venice](#). Both tours will be limited to 20 participants so you don't want to miss this initial registration period.

As per usual, a lottery, if necessary, will be held after September 1st for those tours in which the number of registrants exceeds the number of spots available. There is no rush to register right away on August 23rd but you do want to be registered by September 1st to be eligible for the lottery.

Room for 1 Male on Western Colorado Tour: September 6—15

We have a spot for one more male to share with same on our beautiful end of the season Western Colorado Tour. The scenery is spectacular (quaking alders should be turning colors) the sag support is outstanding and you'll love the company!

Amsterdam-Maastricht Bike & Barge Tour Report by Val Bythell

The Lena Maria in a lock - Solar panels reduced the need for a generator and hopefully our carbon footprint.



I had assumed that the barge would be very Spartan, and had in mind the small barges that you can rent on British or French canals. I was wrong on both counts; the Lena Maria is quite large (12 twin cabins) and well-appointed – think small cruise boat rather than barge.

I had also assumed that the bikes would be fearsomely 'Dutch' (mysterious braking system and so on); I toyed with the idea of taking my own bike. Happily also wrong; the bikes were resolutely 'sit-up-and-beg', stable but comfortable models that really were ideal for the purpose. If that puts you off, just consider this: riding these machines really did level the playing field - even the truly committed hard-core cyclists (some of the group were sporting scary trophy shirts celebrating mad endeavours such as RAMROD) were only arriving a minute or two ahead of those who fancied a leisurely pace. So people of differing abilities can do this trip and enjoy it. There were also two tandems – not my cup of tea but I can see how that really works for some people, and this trip was very doable by tandem.



Our article author Val, 2nd from the left.



For Phil (my other half) and me this trip was notable for a number of firsts: our first Pegasus tour (hopefully not our last), our first real look at Holland and the Netherlands, and our first holiday with a group of citizens of the USA (and Canada). All were very positive experiences – thank you so much to all involved. It was a real delight to meet so many like-minded people. The trip ran like clockwork (even if the locks didn't always comply – our stoic barge captain Hans had some challenging

issues but managed to overcome them without disruption to our tour).

The real deal with this tour was the experience of the Netherlands, aided by Ralph and Carol's personal knowledge and that of Patrick, our excellent local guide. We were really blown away by the beautiful landscapes and towns that we visited – it often felt as though we were in



a Dutch Golden Age painting. The country is partly below sea level, and travelling by barge and alongside canals and rivers allowed us to properly appreciate the awesome engineering and management of water that is essential to its survival. In addition, we stopped off at a lot of cultural attractions: this snap below of the white board in the main cabin of the Lena Maria shows a typical programme for the day.

In total we cycled about 150 miles (nearly all along cycle paths or quiet roads), visited a second world war museum in Amsterdam, a Gouda cheese-making farm, the Royal Leerdam glassworks, a working windmill with an attached micro-brewery, some stunning gardens in Arcen, a garden of 'forgotten vegetables' and had a walking tour of Weesp, Utrecht, Cuijk, Roermond, Thorn and Maastricht. If that sounds like a potentially exhausting schedule, I'd



reassure you that it wasn't too much at the time because all the logistics were taken care of and we just had to enjoy it. One of the things that helped keep the trip relaxed was not having to pack up every day - returning to the same comfortable cabin each night is definitely simpler than moving from one hotel to another.

WIFI Vesper! 2018

Captain: Hans
 Chef: Lars
 MATE: Robin

Patrick +31-6-10853214
 Ralph 001-2067139417

THURSDAY - ARGEN → ROERMOND 30min

8.00 Breakfast
 9.00 off →

± 10.00 Coffee in Venlo
 ± 12.30 Lunch in Kessel
 ± 14.30 'Garden of forgotten vegetables' ^{Spits}
 ± 16.30 Roermond
 18.30 Dinner
 20.30 City Walk

Vlaai!!



Food is always important to cyclists: the food on the Lena Maria was truly excellent. Lars, the chef, managed to produce really top-class food both with variants for those with different dietary needs. Add in the apple cake, vlaai (special tart) and so on at coffee time and ice cream whilst on a walking tour and

you can see how I for one managed to come home a bit heavier than I left...





To cap off the tour we had spectacularly good weather. We left Amsterdam in a heatwave; fortunately that subsided quickly and the weather was pretty much perfect for cycling. It was a little warm for me at night, but the cabins all had fans.

Once again, a massive thank you to Ralph, Carol and family, to all our fellow-passengers and to the fantastic crew and guide. It couldn't have been a better trip.

Ralph setting the sails on a still working windmill.

One day we used a bike only ferry to cross the Maas River.



2019 PEGASUS BIKE TOURS SCHEDULE

DATES	TOUR	LOCATION	LEVEL	STATUS
April 6– April 14	<u>Central California Tour</u>	San Luis Obispo, CA	Intermediate/Adv	Completed
May 2—May 6	<u>4-Day Omak Hill Country</u>	Omak, WA	Intermediate/Adv	Completed
May 16-May 20	<u>4-Day Eastern Washington</u>	Chelan, WA	Intermediate/Adv	Completed
June 8–June 22	<u>Bruges-Paris Bike & Barge</u>	Bruges, BE	Easy/Intermediate	Completed
June 29-July 6	<u>Amsterdam-Maastricht Bike & Barge</u>	Amsterdam, NL	Easy	Completed
July 6-July 17	<u>Maastricht-Luxemburg Ardennes Tour</u>	Maastricht, NL	Intermediate/Adv	Completed
August 17-25	<u>Central Idaho Tour</u>	Ketchum, ID	Intermediate/Adv	Wait List
Sept. 6-15	<u>Western Colorado Tour</u>	Grand Junction, CO	Intermediate/Adv	Single Male