FYI Travel: Eight ways to take a swim ... or not

by Anne Gilbert

Eighty-six miles east of Aruba, the Dutch Caribbean island Bonaire sits in year-round sunshine, surrounded by beautiful coral reefs, and swarms of fish swimming in the clear, calm water.

PERFECT PLACE FOR A STROLL - The Kralendijk waterfront is lined with shopping malls, supermarkets, and restaurants that offer many options for the wandering visitor on an evening stroll. CNS Photo. BEAUTIFUL BONAIR - Boats mooring on Bonaire's waterfront set a beautiful background. Tourists have their choice of windsurfing, snorkeling, or fishing in these waters. CNS Photo. If you have been waiting for a reason to go to the Caribbean, you now have one. The seventh annual Bonaire Ecoswim is taking place Nov. 10, 2007. Sponsored by Aqua Moon Adventures and the Bonaire Hotel and Tourism Association, this event includes participants from all over the world swimming side by side with angelfish, blue tangs and tarpon.

Eight swim events will be held, so there is something for everyone, including a 200-meter race from pier to pier for the children. For more advanced swimmers there will be 10K, 5K, 3K and 1K races. The festivities for the event will begin on Nov. 9 with a welcome dinner and a meeting to discuss the rules and the courses for each race. If you are interested, go to www.aquamoonadventures.com and submit your online registration form. There is a $75 entry fee for swimmers, and that includes the welcome dinner, T-shirt, and a swim cap. Entries must be received by Oct. 27, 2007.

To set up hotel and flight reservations contact Caradonna Dive Adventures at 800-328-2288. Book your accommodations according to your budget; options range from small guesthouses to luxury beachfront resorts. In case you don't want to participate in the race, there are plenty of other things to do on the island. Check out the scuba diving, snorkeling, windsurfing, mountain biking, kayaking, horseback riding, nature tours, hiking, and more. For more information, contact the Tourism Corporation Bonaire at 800-BONAIRE (266-2473). Don't forget, you'll need a passport.

THE COLORADO OUTBACK

Planning to take a vacation this September? Try six days and five nights in the Colorado Outback. The

first scheduled trip begins Sept. 16 and the second trip embarks on Sept. 23. Take your group of four to 14 and travel from Durango to Mesa Verde. A trained historical guide will lead you through your journey as you observe the amazing sights along the way. If you love the great outdoors, this may be exactly the kind of trip you have always dreamed of taking. The package includes exploring the Indian ruins at Mesa Verde, white-water rafting on the Animas River and riding the historical Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge railroad through the twists and turns of the San Juan National Forest. You will also have your choice of hiking, mountain biking or taking a jeep tour through the mountain ranges of Telluride. The package is $2,650 per person. If you would like to find out more information about this trip call 800-445-2995 or visit www.offthebeatenpath.com.

REST AND RELAXATION

The Canadian Rockies boast of a vast and beautiful countryside that is still nearly unscathed by development. If a quiet, breathtaking vacation away from the hustle and bustle of life sparks your interest then Aurum Lodge in Alberta is a wonderful place to start. Snow-tipped mountains, fields of wildflowers, waterfalls, rivers and lakes surround this area that is beautiful all four seasons of the year. Aurum Lodge is in a great location for guests who want to explore nature, and enjoy the sites, with few other tourists around. Out of the six ecosystems found in Alberta, five are accessible from Aurum Lodge within a half-hour. A few of the attractions include Crescent Falls on Bighorn River, Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve, Banff National Park and Mistaya Canyon. If you are willing to drive a little farther you can also see Peyto Lake, the Columbia Icefield, and Lake Louise. Visit www.aurumlodge.com/ to find more information and photos. If you have additional questions, send an e-mail to info@aurumlodge.com.

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