

Escorted Holidays for Members

CLOSE TO HOME



SAVE
up to
\$97<
PP

The Art of Open Spaces NSW

4 nights from **\$1,951*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Norman Lindsay, Pro Hart & Peter Anderson Galleries • Day tour of Broken Hill including Silverton • Western Plains Zoo • Sunset at the Broken Hill Sculpture Symposium • First class coach & train travel • 4 nights in comfortable tourist class hotels • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 12 meals

Valid for sale: Until 28 Oct 11, or sold out
Departs: 28 Oct 11 & 4 May 12



SAVE
up to
\$177<
PP

Top End Winter Warmer NT

6 nights from **\$3,630*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Spend a night in a luxury safari tent on the edge of Kakadu • Touring in Darwin including a sunset harbour cruise • Cruise Katherine Gorge & Yellow Water Billabong • See age-old Aboriginal art at Ubirr Rock & Nourlangie Rock • Economy flight to Darwin+ • Private coach travel • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 16 meals

Valid for sale: Until 31 Dec 11, or sold out
Departs: 7 Jun & 9 Aug 12

EXCLUSIVE OFFER



SAVE
up to
\$598<
PP

Classic Antarctic Peninsula

14 nights from **\$12,259*** pp twin share

Inclusions: 9 night expedition voyage aboard m/s Expedition • Highly experienced expedition team • Opportunity to kayak or go ice camping ashore for an additional cost • Enjoy 3 nights in Buenos Aires & 1 night in Ushuaia • Economy flight to Ushuaia+ • Private coach travel • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides, driver & expedition team • 32 meals

Valid for sale: Until 14 Feb 12, or sold out
Departs: 5 Feb & 14 Feb 12

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS



SAVE
up to
\$912^
PP

Christmas in Canada

12 nights from **\$9,571*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Christmas Day beside the shores of Lake Louise in the Rockies • Sightseeing in Vancouver & Victoria • Overnight VIA Rail sleeper journey through the Rockies to Jasper • Towering mountains, vast forests, magnificent glaciers • Economy flight to Vancouver returning from Calgary+ • Private coach travel • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 20 meals

Valid for sale: Until 18 Dec 11, or sold out
Departs: 18 Dec 11 & 18 Dec 12



SAVE
up to
\$984^
PP

Christmas in Europe

21 nights from **\$10,454*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Christmas in the beautiful medieval castle-city of Cesky Krumlov • Visit fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria • Take a ballroom dance lesson in Vienna & go skiing at St. Moritz • Visit Mozart's birthplace & the gazebo from Sound of Music in Salzburg • Economy flight to Zurich returning from Prague+ • Private coach travel • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 34 meals

Valid for sale: Until 9 Dec 11, or sold out
Departs: 9 Dec 11 & 9 Dec 12

EUROPE



SAVE
up to
\$676^
PP

European Discovery

18 nights from **\$7,489*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Visit Cologne's magnificent cathedral & cruise the Rhine • Cruise Venetian canals & walk the streets of Florence • Ride the Glacier Express train from Zermatt to Andermatt • The Champs Elysees, Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower • Economy flight to London returning from Paris+ • Private luxury coach travel • Local tour escort, local guides & driver • 23 meals

Valid for sale: Until 6 Oct 11, or sold out
Departs: 6 Oct 11 & 10 May 12

AROUND THE WORLD



SAVE
up to
\$507^
PP

Borneo & Brunei Highlights

13 nights from **\$5,645*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Visit WWII locations including Sandakan & Ranau • Kundasang War Memorial & Lubuan Island War Cemetery • 3 days at a jungle lodge in Kinabatangan • Sepilok Orang Utan Centre & Turtle Island • Economy flight to Brunei returning from Kota Kinabalu+ • Private coach transfers & transport • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 26 meals

Valid for sale: Until 31 Dec 11, or sold out
Departs: 18 Feb & 18 Aug 12



SAVE
up to
\$1,033^
PP

East Africa Safari

17 nights from **\$10,618*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Highlights of Kenya & Tanzania • Game drives at Masai Mara, Amboseli, Serengeti & Ngorongoro • Visit Elsamere, home of Joy Adamson of Born Free fame • The Daphne Sheldricks Elephant Orphanage • Economy flight to Nairobi+ • 4WD Land Cruiser transport or similar • Tour escort from Sydney plus local guides & driver • 43 meals

Valid for sale: Until 14 Oct 11, or sold out
Departs: 14 Oct 11; 5 Mar & 10 Sep 12



SAVE
up to
\$1,344^
PP

Canada & Alaska

23 nights from **\$14,538*** pp twin share

Inclusions: Canada's spectacular Rocky Mountains • Mountain lakes, glaciers, forests & wildlife • Alaskan cruise with Holland America Line • Inside Passage & Glacier Bay • Economy flight to Seattle returning from Vancouver+ • Private coach travel • Local tour escort plus local guides & driver • 42 meals

Valid for sale: Until 31 Dec 11, or sold out
Departs: 2 Jun, 28 Jul & 25 Aug 12

Bluegrass bliss on the Blue Ridge Parkway

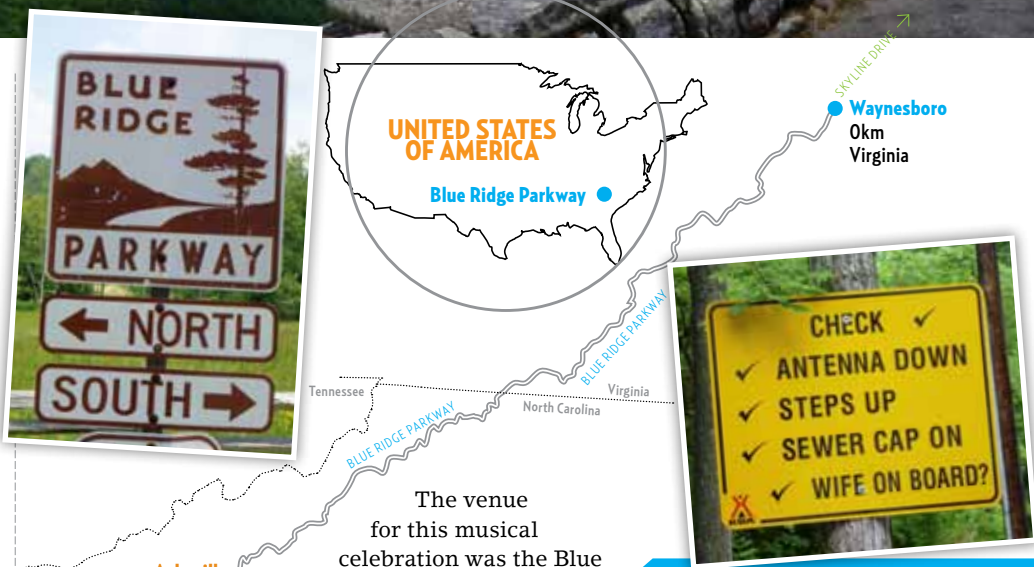
A rich vein of old-timey mountain music is just one of the attractions on this authentic trip through America's heartland

WORDS ROB MCFARLAND

NATIONAL PARK RANGER JAN WASN'T GOING TO LET A SPOT OF RAIN RUIN THE PARTY. The ominous purple clouds in the distance were moving closer so it was time for Plan B. "Looks like we got some rain comin' our way, so why don't y'awl just come up here on stage." So we did. Packing up our camping chairs, we climbed onto the covered stage and joined a hundred or so other music enthusiasts in a tight semi-circle around the band.

The Red Stick Ramblers seemed completely unfazed by the invasion and immediately launched into an acoustic set of infectiously toe-tapping Cajun fiddle and Western swing tunes. Two attractive girls in cowboy boots got up and performed an impromptu line-dance to riotous applause (particularly from the men) before three local musicians joined the band for a furious finale of guitar, banjo and fiddle playing.

It was one of the best concerts I've ever been to and the CD I bought from the band afterwards became the soundtrack for the rest of our trip.



Cherokee
755km
North Carolina

Asheville

The venue for this musical celebration was the Blue Ridge Music Center in Virginia, a National Parks initiative that aims to preserve the bluegrass and old-time mountain music that originated in the area. As well as a large outdoor amphitheatre in which they regularly hold concerts, there's a visitor centre and a soon-to-be-installed exhibition tracing the history of the music back to its European and African roots.

The centre is one of dozens of attractions scattered along the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP), a 755km road that winds its way

HOME OF THE GREEN (MAIN PIC): One of the many beautiful vantage points along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

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From \$1690*

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*Conditions apply

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visit nrmatravel.com.au or see us at 9A York St, Sydney

NRMA TRAVEL

*All fares are AUD inclusive of GST, per person twin share, subject to change & availability. <Exclusive % Member discount. *10% saving based on Exclusive Member saving of 5% and Early Booking saving of 5%. Saving is calculated on the full tour fare less taxes. Early Booking savings apply to bookings made and deposited 9 months in advance of selected departure date. Valid for new bookings only, not combinable with any other discount or offer. The price of escorted holidays departing in 2012 were not available at time of going to print. A non-refundable deposit is required within 7 days of booking. This amount is based upon the itinerary and travel date chosen. Full payment required a minimum of 60 days prior to travel. Exact date will be advised at the time of booking. Credit card & cancellation fees apply. Airfares are included in price, however airport taxes are subject to change without prior notice. All flights are return economy class from Sydney where + marked. Government fees and levies included. Tours and Escorts are subject to minimum numbers. Should minimum numbers per tour not be reached NRMA Travel reserves the right to amend the dates or cancel the tour. Fares correct as at 10 Jun 11 and may fluctuate due to changes in charges, taxes, fuel surcharges and currency. For full details call NRMA Travel on 1300 292 803 or visit nrmatravel.com.au. NRMA Travel Pty Ltd. ABN 48 001 233 567 Travel Agent Licence No. 2TA 5522 | MSA14845



Y'AWL DON'T GET WET: With rain clouds on their way, there's shelter on stage at the Blue Ridge Music Center for musician and fan alike.



through the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia. Started in 1935 as a work initiative during the Great Depression, it was finally completed in 1987 when the last section – a snaking viaduct – was laid near Grandfather Mountain. The Parkway celebrated its 75th anniversary last year and now lays claim to being the most visited national park in the US.

The road itself is an engineering triumph, navigating difficult terrain to produce a succession of stunning lookouts and vantage points.

But more than that, it's an impressive exercise in restraint. You'll find no petrol stations, fast food outlets or billboards anywhere along the BRP. Instead you can expect a meandering, sun-dappled road bordered by rhododendron bushes and dense forests of oaks, ashes and firs.

The speed limit is a leisurely 45mph (72km/h), commercial traffic is banned, and rather than intrusive steel crash barriers, you'll find traditional wooden fences and handsome stone archways. It's a reverent tribute to the pure joy of driving.

The road is marked with milepost markers, which start at 0 at its northern end near Waynesboro, Virginia, and increase as you head south. We joined it at milepost 390, near Asheville, North Carolina, with the intention of heading north but soon got waylaid by one of the



The Blue Ridge Parkway is a reverent tribute to the pure joy of driving.



region's most famous attractions.

Biltmore House is America's largest private home – a



THE HOUSE THAT VANDERBILT BUILT: The stately and opulent Biltmore House.

stunning 250-room French Chateau-style mansion completed in 1895 for shipping and railroad tycoon George Vanderbilt. You could easily spend two days wandering around the house and its impressive gardens, but even in a morning we got a fascinating insight into the outrageously opulent lifestyle of one of America's richest families. In short, don't miss it.

Back on the Parkway, we hit the impressive BRP Visitor Centre, a modern, well-equipped complex with an interactive seven-metre route map and knowledgeable staff.

In many ways the choose-your-own-adventure nature of the Parkway is its greatest asset. Nature lovers can plan an itinerary around the many spectacular gardens such as Craggy Gardens at milepost 363. Cultural enthusiasts can visit the many heritage attractions such as the Folk Art Center at milepost 382 for craft-making demonstrations or Mabry Mill at milepost 176. Adrenalin addicts can zip-line through forest canopies with Scream Time Ziplines near milepost 290 or take on the icy waters of the

Nantahala River with Wildwater Rafting outside of Asheville.

Whatever your passion, I challenge anyone not to be impressed with the sheer majesty of the views across the tree-carpeted Appalachians.

There are nine designated campsites along the BRP but they're basic with no showers or laundry facilities. As we were travelling in a rented El Monte Recreational Vehicle (RV), we chose to dive off the Parkway and stay in nearby campgrounds run by Kampgrounds of America (KOA) so we could hook up to water, power and sewerage.

Foolishly, we failed to realise that our trip would span Memorial Day Weekend, one of the US's most popular holiday weekends. Come Saturday afternoon we still didn't have anywhere to stay that night until a park ranger got us one of the last spots in a trailer park near Waynesboro, Virginia.

I'd heard about trailer parks where people live permanently in trailer homes or RVs, drive around in golf buggies and erect white picket fences around squares of artificial grass. But staying in one on Memorial Day Weekend among a frenzy of American flags, all-day drinking and Kenny Rogers karaoke was another matter. It's a side of America that's as far removed from the sophisticated urban centres of LA and New York as you can possibly imagine. But in its own way, it's equally compelling. Well, for one night at least.

The writer was a guest of United Airlines, El Monte RV and KOA.

MUST BUY

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