

Mirrabac Moments

Important Dates

2009

17 May tour departs to...
Galapagos & Easter Island
21 days, 7days in enchanting Galapagos. \$11,990

2 June tour departs to...
Splendours of Sth America
24 days of magic, mystery and splendour. \$12,339

28 June safari departs to...
Namibia 23 days of chart-topping treasures and wonderful wildlife. \$11,650.

29 August tour departs to...
Alaska & Great Bear Rainforest
24 days of awesome landscapes, incomparable adventures. \$16,650



Himba Woman & Child - Namibia

Time for Friends

12 noon, Sunday, 15 February

...is our time for catching up with old Mirrabac friends and meeting new ones. If you're around Auckland that weekend come along to our annual Get-together. Enjoy an afternoon swapping travel tales, scheming new adventures or simply comparing pics and sharing memories with good travel mates. Hope to see you there.

For venue details, RSVP by phone, fax or email by:

Friday, 13 February
Contact details overleaf.

Galapagos-the Place To Be in 2009

If you've ever dreamed of visiting Galapagos but still haven't got there, take note – **Galapagos is the place to be in 2009.** That's because Galapagos is in celebration mode with three big milestones: it's the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth; the 150th anniversary of the publication of his 'Origin of The Species'; and, 50 years since the Charles Darwin Foundation and Galapagos National Park were founded.

But for Darwin's explorations from 'H.M.S Beagle' in 1835, the Galapagos may today be known only as a remote group of partly submerged volcanoes, inhabited by weird creatures and birds with strange habits.

So we *should* celebrate (and thank!) the great scientist.



Not 'H.M.S Beagle' - 'Liberty', our island explorer.

Natural selection was at the heart of Darwin's theory of evolution. Natural selection also prompted travellers from around the world to place these bewitching islands in No 1 spot of "**Top 10 Islands Overall**", in TRAVEL+LEISURE magazine's survey for 2008.

From the moment you arrive in San Cristobal, main centre of Galapagos National Park, you'll understand why they voted that

way. Whether you're listening to our National Park Guide, tracking giant tortoise, swimming with sea lion, snorkelling in a lazy bay, marveling at prehistoric iguana or simply soaking up the moment as we cruise from island to island,

you, too, will be captivated by this wonderful treasure. Our week-long cruise ensures you will experience many islands and a full array of wildlife.

Contact us for our full Easter Island/Galapagos itinerary. Meanwhile, in this time of economic evolution we'll give Darwin the last word:

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

The Great Bear Rainforest

The **Great Bear Rainforest**, extending 250 miles down the North Pacific's Inside Passage, is the last remaining rainforest on the entire Pacific coast. Here placid inlets and meandering fjords wind deep into forest terrain where ancient cedars and towering spruce circle lush river valleys.

The rainforest is named for its significant population of grizzly and black bear. Other inhabitants include wolves, moose, mountain goat, whales, eagles, puffins, and that rarely-seen wonder – the Kermode or '**spirit**' bear. This magnificent all-white bear is actually a black



Spirit & Black Bear—GBR

bear with a recessive gene. It is extremely rare - around 400 exist - and found only here.

We're taking a seven-day sailing adventure into the Great Bear Rainforest this year and we

couldn't be more excited.

Can you imagine it – a private sailing charter just for us; drifting silently alongside marine wildlife as we listen to them breathe; daily excursions into the forest; an early morning kayak; learning the culture and history of the Tshimshian Nation locals; accompanying them to their favourite bear viewing sites. And at day's end, finding quiet anchorage surrounded by overwhelming beauty.

Our seven-day charter in this magnificent area follows our 10-day grand exploration of Alaska where fall *(cont'd overleaf)*

Listen to the Mockingbird...again

One of the world's rarest birds, the Floreana mockingbird, may soon be singing in its home again. The bird was plentiful when Darwin explored the island but extinct there within 30 years. A few deserters hid out on nearby islets but by 2007, only 200 remained. However, good rains last year suited the survivors who set to and doubled their numbers. Now, their adopted islets cannot support the sudden crowd. So the Galapagos Conservation Trust and the Charles Darwin Foundation have launched a campaign to see the songster back on its native island. They aim to celebrate Darwin's bicentenary by reintroducing the mockingbird to Floreana in 2009, starting in April to June when food is more plentiful - it also the time of our visit.

Galapagos is also buzzing with the recent discovery of an iguana species missed by Darwin. We've seen them in yellow, green, red and black, now iguana also come in pink. Scientists found the new species on Wolf Volcano, the largest volcano on Isabela, the largest Island. Darwin did not explore Volcan Wolf so when park rangers spotted the curious creature in 1986, it was dismissed as an aberration. Now scientists have confirmed the pink iguana as a species evolved in its own right and named it *Conolophus rosada*.

And that, folks, is the wonder of the Galapagos. It's a place where we can glimpse how the world was before humans.

Mirrabac Adventures

PO Box 100-751
North Shore
Auckland, 0745, New Zealand
Ph (Auckland): (09) 413 7399
Ph (Outside AK): 0800 677-222
Fax: (09) 413 7391
Email: info@mirrabac.com

We're on the web:
www.mirrabac.com

Life's an Adventure

Incomparable Namibia

Spot the difference between these statements:

"For me Namibia has to be one of the most beautiful countries I have ever visited; a life-changing experience." (Jenny). And: *"What an adventure! You just never knew what was round the next corner; really kept the adrenalin pumping. The colours and light of Namibia are breathtaking!"* (Robin). The similarities are easy to see

- Namibia is one of the planet's more beautiful places that lifts the spirit and feeds the soul. And the difference? Eleven years. Jenny joined us on our first ever safari to Namibia in 1997, Robin took our last Namibian adventure in July 2008. In between, we've taken many, many others on almost 20 safaris around this compelling country, and their reactions always echo these sentiments. Namibia is incomparable on the African continent - that's why it's the destination many of our travellers choose to revisit with us. Extravagant scenery; colourful, ancient landscapes; incredible wildlife - don't miss something so special. See **Namibia** for yourself this year.



Mirrabac tourist lurking in the bushes

We're Coming to You...

Plenty of people out there are choosing, like us, to follow their dreams and just make life happen - forget the global 'chicken-licken' prophecies. (You *do* remember Chicken-Licken and the falling sky?) So we'll be on the road later this month bringing you all the information on our 2009 Tours. If you're in the same town at the same time do come and meet us; hear the deals, ask the questions, resolve your fears, make your bookings. No charge - great images, entertainment included. RSVP required.

We'll be in...

Tauranga - Thursday, 19 Feb, 7.30pm, Directors Room, Urban Café, 801 Cameron Road.

New Plymouth - Thursday, 26 Feb, 7.30pm, Fred Tucker Centre, 130 Parklands Ave, Bell Block.

We hope to do more presentations later in the year so we'll let you know if we're near your patch.

Great Bear Rainforest contd

will be in its full glory.

So if you would relish a unique and personal experience in some of the world's most pristine wilderness; if you would enjoy spontaneous exploring along virgin beaches and through ancient forests; sailing remote inlets in quiet comfort and sharing the solitude with a small group of new friends, contact us now for our exclusive itinerary to **Alaska and the Great Bear Rainforest**. You'll find nothing else like it.



'Island Roamer' - our GBR explorer

Splendours of South America



Machu Picchu - Lost City of the Incas

Peru is steeped in mystery but its most mysterious location is Machu Picchu, or 'Lost City of the Incas'. Because it was hidden in the jungle, the enormous city built on a spectacular green mountain plateau, survived the invasion by the

Spanish Conquistadors and remains remarkably intact. Our excursion to Machu Picchu will be a lifetime highlight for those who seek its secrets with us this year.

The city is but one of the deeply thought-provoking archeological sites we'll visit in the Sacred Valley leading from colonial Cusco. The names may look challenging - Ollantaytambo, Sacsayhuamen, Aguas Calientes - but it won't take long before they're rolling off your tongue, interspersed with the snippets of Spanish that you'll quickly acquire as you travel this fascinating land.

A train ride across the vast and scenic Altiplano and a sail across beautiful Lake Titicaca will be other unforgettable journeys as we travel to some of mainland South America's most splendid treasures.

Describing the colour, culture, grandeur and spirit of South America is one thing - living it is something else altogether. Underneath the hustle and bustle, privation and pizzazz there is a gentle dignity about the continent and its people. If you have yet to experience this magical place, it would be our privilege to share it with you. Contact us for details.