

Corsica

(Continued from page 126) crushed Corsican independence. Even the most Francophile Corsicans know deep down that the mainland French are out of place once they set foot on this island. It did not seem any more prudent for an American to get involved.

The sign in Ajaccio harbor read **BON AUGURI IN CORSICA**. Not welcome, but good luck. If I hadn't been aware that the Corsicans were, all things said, capable of vast hospitality, I would have taken the sign for an omen.

Since I had come to write about the matter, I was moved to get an official opinion on the safety of visitors. Tourists had been tied up only twice in 1990, insisted Charles Colonna, president of the Corsican Regional Tourism Committee. And "nothing nasty was intended." The Italians had been tied up for their own safety, so that they would not be in the way when the bombs went off. "I presume that the people who did it excused themselves. I won't defend violence," he assured me, "but all the places that had problems had more or less violated the law regarding preservation of sites."

On a later evening in Ajaccio, Pierre

Poggioli confirmed that foreigners ran no risk in Corsica, provided they stayed out of "great tourism infrastructures, where we don't know whose capital is involved." Poggioli was close to the situation. Although he was no gunman, the recently formed Corsican National Assembly Party he headed expressed politically the aspirations that militants made known with a bang.

Poggioli said Corsica should become independent, even if not immediately, and then form an association with other islands in the Mediterranean. He was for "an original socialism," with a partly market-based economy. Foreigners would be encouraged to rent private houses but could not own them.

I asked him who was Corsican. A Corsican historian, Roger Caratini, I pointed out, had made a good case that nearly no one on the island descended from its original inhabitants. Corsica was mostly deserted until the eleventh century, when the pope gave rule over Corsica to the Pisans, after which came waves of immigrants from Tuscany, Genoa, and Sardinia. Corsican, I reminded Poggioli, was akin to a Tuscan dialect.

"We're not a race but a group of people

who have been implanted here over the centuries and aspire to a common destiny."

How could someone adopt that destiny? "There would be a number of rules. Including at least fifteen years of residence on the island."

Could the Pieds-Noirs become Corsicans at last? The Pieds-Noirs were the colonialists who had to leave Algeria when the French gave up that colony. About seventeen thousand of them settled on Corsica in the sixties with government subsidies. They planted vast vineyards for cheap wine and created tourist camps. The bombs went off shortly afterward.

"Most of the Pieds-Noirs have left," Poggioli said evasively. "Our big problem now is Italian companies that are trying to rent our littoral from straw men in Corsica. They rent for nine years, run the places into the ground with the tour operators, and go on somewhere cheaper. They've done that all through the Mediterranean."

WHEN I LEFT POGGIOLI, A FULL moon was lighting the housing development that contained his storefront office. The complex was called Les Palmiers, after a planting of dusty palms that stood, heads hanging, looking seduced and abandoned on the ill-paved street. It was as depressing a neighborhood as you'd want to see.

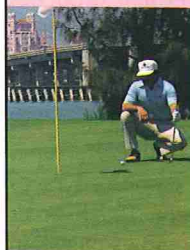
The charm of Ajaccio had been greatly eroded by progress. I decided to visit the Fesch collection and Napoleon's birthplace, and then get away quickly to the country.

Napoleon's maternal uncle Cardinal Joseph Fesch had amassed in Rome one of the world's most stupendous collections of Italian art, which he'd estimated without counting at thirty thousand paintings. He left twelve hundred of them to the city of Ajaccio, for the instruction of students, in 1839. In 1858, when the paintings were finally displayed, 843 were counted. What was left of the collection was shown in a wing of the cardinal's academy, which never functioned. Over the years it fell into neglect as a lycée, with its fusty wing for the pictures. Meanwhile, the collection kept magically shrinking. In 1978, the city and the French government undertook a nineteen-million-dollar program to turn the academy into a museum and restore the paintings. On the morning of my visit, two months after the museum had opened, the headline of the newspaper *La Corse* broke the news that 339 pictures were missing from the collection. The latest inventory had come to

T H E D O N



*A palatial, historic landmark on Florida's Gulf Coast.
With golf, tennis and beaches beyond compare.*



The
DON CESAR
A REGISTRY RESORT.

St. Petersburg Beach, Florida
1-800-247-9810





CONCORDE
What a commute should be.

Corsica

112 paintings. No one could say for sure where the others had gone.

In the cafés of Ajaccio, the story was that well-placed people had simply helped themselves to the collection. When I saw what was left of it, I could not suppress the suspicion that someone's uncle had given advice in choosing the restorers. Painting after painting had been scrubbed to a blur.

In the hands of those restorers were some very important Italian Renaissance paintings, including a Cosmè Tura and a Botticelli. They still make a trip to the museum worthwhile, as does a most erotic picture once attributed to Veronese, a Leda and the Swan in the act of copulation, with Leda sucking the bird's beak.

NAPOLEON'S HOUSE, NEARBY, CONTAINS a collection of memorabilia and old furniture, including the couch the emperor was born on. The family lived in four rooms when Napoleon was born to a father who'd been private secretary to Pasquale Paoli. Paoli had been elected "general of the nation" of the embattled Corsican republic that lasted from 1755 to 1769. As the young Napoleon's mili-

tary career flourished under the French republic, his relatives expanded the family seat. They acquired rooms that had been owned by cousins, added a terrace that would become a ballroom, and bought adjacent property as if the house were a burgeoning microempire.

Napoleon's father had turned his back on Corsican nationalism and had himself ennobled by Louis XV in 1771. The Bonapartes became equally staunch partisans of France after the French Revolution. In 1793, after Paoli returned from exile and set up the short-lived Anglo-Corsican kingdom, the Bonaparte house was sacked. Reparations later made it even grander, by local standards, with fine wallpaper and tapestry, but Napoleon set foot in it for the last time in 1799. He had just returned from Egypt, on his way to becoming first consul: step one in his career of emperor. Corsica was too small for him.

Napoleon and Paoli: Their lives are opposing paradigms for the outward and inward compulsions of the Corsican soul. Paoli, whom the nationalists consider a greater hero than Bonaparte, set up his capital in the very heart of the

mountainous heartland, Corte. Boswell sought this freedom fighter out, a little like Régis Debray seeking out Che in the Bolivian jungle. Boswell, when he introduced Paoli to Samuel Johnson in London, felt "like an isthmus which joins two great continents."

But Corsica was just an island. An island dropped strategically in the middle of the Med. The major powers could not leave it alone. Paoli enlisted with the British to free Corsica from the French, but they did not even make him viceroy of the Anglo-Corsican kingdom. He ended his days in exile, a useful bachelor at the best dinner tables in London, a wonderful conversationalist, as Corsicans tend to be. Since Paoli, no brilliant careers have been shaped on Corsica.

Napoleon's success story, on the other hand, is one of many among the Corsican diaspora. Corsican emigration gave a president to Venezuela and another to Uruguay. Corsicans founded rich plantations and trading companies in Puerto Rico. They supplied France with numerous ministers and key civil servants.

During all the years that the French Empire could provide careers for ambitious

Corsicans, France thought too little about doing something for the economy of Corsica. Now the island's gross national product per capita is forty percent below the mainland's. Villages are being abandoned or left to retirees, whose pensions account for more than half the revenue on the island. Sons and daughters of the diaspora come home to die on their Ile de Beauté, but her other children, who want to remain, are in a hole for something to do. So some of them have been getting out their guns.

THIRTY-SEVEN MILES FROM AJACCIO, on a road where the maquis sometimes becomes so lush it covers the hillsides like a green snowfall, there are fierce warriors carved in blocks of granite. Dorothy Carrington sees in these neolithic figures with daggers and swords the precursors of a Corsican martial "hero myth" in which Napoleon and Paoli are lineal descendants. Carrington's book about Corsica, *Granite Island*, is one of the most sensitive works I've ever read about a place, but if we accept the evidence that a variety of Italians populated Corsica two thousand and more years after the stone carvers, the linear pattern seems hard to trace. Who knows,

though, what force a fierce indigenous people might have been able to exert on the minds of those who conquered them?

Jean-Dominique Cesari, whose family owns the prehistoric site at Filitosa, believes that the stone figures represent warriors carved by an earlier Corsican people whom the warriors had attacked. Their images were carved so as to petrify their menacing strength. The warriors, by this theory, were Torréens, builders of the stone cupolas whose vestiges dot the island. The stonework is exceptional. Even today, in villages built of stones laid without mortar, Corsican stonework is first-rate.

Cesari gave me a glass of Orezza, the excellent Corsican sparkling mineral water, and I set forth for Sartène and the southern mountain peaks of Bavella. Sartène is the main town of the southern heartland, an accumulation of tall granite houses on narrow granite alleys, all of them perched on a granite hill. The south, in contrast to the north with its republican-minded small landowners, was the realm of *sgios*, vast estate owners who were lords when land in the interior mattered. Here, in the nineteenth century, the Rocca-Serra family, *sgios* from the upper town, took on two prominent families

from below in one of the island's bloodiest vendettas. Today, the Rocca-Serras run southern politics, while the Giacobbi family from the northern village of Venaco looks after the north.

After hiking up and down the streets of Sartène, you are happy to be seated again in your car. But don't count on rest if you're heading for the Col de Bavella. There is only one straight road, running up and down the eastern plain, in Corsica. The others are narrow and winding and almost always follow some ravine from way on high. Blind curves open onto bridges too narrow for more than one car at a time. And the Corsicans, whom death does not faze, barrel along as if there were such a thing as Corsican radar. Near the Col de Bavella, a peak 3,997 feet high, the switchbacks come so fast that your arms get tired from rushing left and right. You get the strange feeling that you are hiking up and down these mountains on your hands. The forest goes on—dark, cool, deep green, with the Aiguilles de Bavella, another range of brownish granite, dominating the northern horizon, looking like Mount Rushmore might have before the heads were sculpted.

I had time enough to be out of the mountains and in Bonifacio by nightfall. The tiny

LINCOLN

What a luxury car should be.



LINCOLN CONTINENTAL. COMPUTERIZED HANDLING AND ABS STOPPING POWER IN ONE OF THE

WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED LUXURY AUTOMOBILES. 1 800 446-8888

Corsica

port had changed for the worse. The town politicians had given their blessing to a sort of snippet of Costa Smeralda done on the cheap, which now disfigured one side of the remarkable harbor. Many more restaurants than I could recall lined the other, but Bonifacio still seemed very much a boatman's, not a gawker's, place, and quiet enough in September, despite the summer weather. I went up to the old town and had a walk along the ramparts overlooking the spotlighted chalk cliffs and the moonlit sea that the libeccio, the worst of Corsica's winds, was tossing up. Lights in the doorways of the tall houses of the old town revealed stairways as narrow and steep as ladders. In one of those streets was Les Pêcheurs, a family restaurant with eight tables, where the mother cooked the fish that the son caught. But there were no fish that night. The libeccio had kept every boat in port. I ate some squid that had been simmering on the back of the stove and relished it. That night I stayed at the Centre Nautique, a hotel installed in the small old naval office of the port. Just below my window, the libeccio set the riggings jingling on all the metal masts, until, half-asleep, I imagined I'd lain down with a herd of cows.

As I ate breakfast on the pier, the

News came that
339 paintings were
missing; café talk
was that people
had simply helped
themselves

woman who ran the Centre Nautique complained that Bonifacio had become as busy that August as St-Tropez. But I think it had been a long time since she'd been there.

A few miles up the eastern coast, near Porto Vecchio, the marks of a tourist industry—hotels, campgrounds, and bungalows—were more in evidence. But the empty beach of Santa Giulia was still a temptation. I swam away an afternoon in water as clear as glass. The hotel I settled into was just at the edge of the white beach, with a nearby annex of wooden bungalows crowded together and fenced

in right on the sand. French law said you could not build any closer than 330 feet from the shoreline of a beach. There was the law and then there was the possibility of gaining an exception, a *dérogation*. When I drove up and down the eastern coast, I passed many exceptions.

"If the law is not applied, people take to violence to enforce the law. You can understand the logic." Speaking was Max Siméoni, a man who has taken his stand against violence, a medical doctor. We were at the headquarters of the Union of the Corsican People, overlooking the commercial harbor of Bastia. I had met the Siméoni brothers, both doctors, the last time I was in Corsica, when they were prominent in the infant Corsican autonomist movement, which seemed to me at the time rather unrealistic. Max was the reasonable one, Edmond the hothead. Edmond went to prison after two gendarmes were killed when the police charged a Pied-Noir's wine cellar occupied by the movement. That happened in 1975. *Unrealistic* was no longer a useful word in talking about Corsica. Edmond was now sick and had retired from the scene. Max was a leader of the moderate autonomists, who do not insist on separation from France but favor much more Corsican control

15 Reasons Why There Are



over the local economy and culture. He was also a Green member of the European Parliament.

Siméoni argued that Corsica could provide its own prosperity. It needed nonpolluting industry, its own food distribution network, and a tourist industry that accented thermalism (there are many underexploited springs in Corsica), as well as hiking and sailing. "We'll accept tourism, but not in a form that is stupid, massive, and polluting," Siméoni said.

When I went to see the eminent politician François Giacobbi a while later, his ambitions for the Corsican economy were not very different from Siméoni's. Only Giacobbi is the staunchest of (French) nationalists. Corsica is France for him; what is needed is a strong-arm crackdown on terrorism. Giacobbi had the air of an amiable good old boy, in his clip-on suspenders and print short-sleeved shirt. In 1956 he entered French parliament as a deputy. Twenty-eight years ago he was elected senator, and he has been reelected ever since. He is also president of the Upper Corsican General Council. To his critics, Giacobbi is simply the chief of the northern political clan.

I asked why the Corsican living standard was statistically well below that of

France. There is the standard of living and the quality of life, he countered. Corsicans enjoy good weather and pure air. Giacobbi pointed out that he is president of the Parc Naturel Régional de Corse, a voluntary union of communities encompassing a third of Corsican territory, whose aim is preserving nature and rural life. There are four wildlife preserves on Corsica, he added, and a tenth of the six-hundred-mile coastline has been bought by the French government to be kept forever virgin.

BESIDE THE ROAD FROM BASTIA TO La Castagniccia, gendarmes with machine guns and bulletproof vests were peering at the traffic. The radio had announced that Charles-Antoine Grossetti, mayor of the southern town of Grosseto-Prugna for the past forty-three years, had been gunned down at a gas station by two men who sped away on a motorcycle. The nationalists did not claim the assassination, and no one was blaming them.

The Italian Mafia had been laundering drug money in tourist companies. A month later, with the crime still unsolved, the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* would attribute the following explanation to "a policeman": Grossetti had been

killed because he opposed the development of a beach belonging to his township. His death was intended to be exemplary. The Mafia, the magazine contended, was counting on a clear road ahead for beach development if the nationalists put down their arms in response to the French offer of increased self-rule.

In La Castagniccia, you do not get the feeling that ecology has become a life-and-death issue. The dark forest of chestnuts goes on for miles. Pigs wander in herds. They root under the trees, gorging themselves on nuts. Cars don't discourage them. The chestnuts give a savor to their lean meat, which goes into hams and sausages and smoked loin, the admirable Corsican charcuterie. The pigs interbreed with wild boars. On my way to Pasquale Paoli's village of Morosaglia, I nearly ran over a big black boar.

Cars that venture up the potholed dirt road to Paoli's birthplace have trouble turning around. I read, inscribed on the wall, a quotation in Corsican, from this father of his country. "When the conscience of the people awakens, no one can squelch it. Tomorrow will be the dawn of liberty." I tried the door of his house. It was locked, and there were no hours posted.

Not far away is Ponte-Nuovo, where a

5 Eurailpasses.

Everyone travels Europe differently, that's why there are many different Eurailpasses. No matter how much time or money you plan to spend, one is perfect for you. But whichever you choose, it's the best way to travel in any or all of 17 European countries.

The "Classic" Eurailpass.™ Enjoy unlimited first-class rail travel for as little as \$390. Plan your own itinerary, from 15 days to three months.

The Saverpass.™ When you travel with a friend or relative, a 15-day Classic Eurailpass, valid for unlimited first-class rail transportation, is only \$298 per person. (Minimum of 3 people between April 1 and September 30.)

The Flexipass.™ If you're not traveling every day, the Flexipass saves you money by letting you choose how many days of first-class rail transportation you need within a specific time period. Three options, from \$230.

The Youthpass.™ If you're under 26 years old, this will get you the most travel for your money. Various programs, including the Youth Flexipass,™ beginning at \$340.

The EurailDrive Pass.™ New this year, a combination of railpass and car rental puts all of Europe within your reach.

First-class train travel plus a Hertz car rental with unlimited mileage, starting at \$269.

To find out the best way to see Europe this year, see your travel agent. Or for a free brochure send in the coupon. For faster service and a comprehensive European rail map, dial 1-900-990-RAIL (\$1.50 per call).



EURAILPASS

Please rush me a free Eurailpass color brochure.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: Eurailpass, P.O. Box 10383,
Stamford, CT 06904

For faster service and a comprehensive European rail map, dial
1-900-990-RAIL (\$1.50 per call).



02031

You've got us right where
you want to be.

Cliff divers in Mexico, tropical fish off the coast of Caribbean islands, magical castles in Florida and the finest golf in the Southeast. Discover these and other

visual feasts just outside our doors. Come see for yourself why Radisson Resorts are world-famous in the most famous parts of the world.

Radisson
North America
Resorts

Radisson Resorts • Kingston Plantation, Myrtle Beach, SC • Camelview—A Radisson Resort, Scottsdale, AZ • Radisson Flagship Resort, Atlantic City, NJ • Radisson Inn Park City, Park City, UT • Jekyll Island Club Hotel—A Radisson Resort, Jekyll Island, GA • Radisson Palm Springs Resort and Conference Center, Palm Springs, CA • Arrowwood—A Radisson Resort, Alexandria, MN

FOR WORLDWIDE RESERVATIONS CALL 800 333-3333.

Ask for our Adventure Package.

THERE'S NO TIME LIKE
THE PRESENT TO RETURN
TO THE PAST.

Step back in time to a thatch-roofed *hale* and the South Pacific you've longed for. See your travel agent or call us toll-free about our Silver Anniversary package. 800-367-5290.

Kona Village
RESORT

The Most Dreamed-of Spot on Earth
P.O. Box 1299, Dept. II, Kaupulehu-Kona, Hawaii 96745

Corsica

short broken bridge fails to span the narrow Golo. Here, in the spring of 1769, Paoli's army, overwhelmed by the forces of Louis XV, was massacred attempting to cross the river while under fire from all sides. Among the nationalist refugees who fled the area of the battle was Letizia Bonaparte, six months pregnant with the future emperor of France and riding horseback, a little like Mary on her donkey on the flight into Egypt.

Paoli's constitution, with its separation of powers, was closer to a blueprint for popular power than anything Europe had yet seen. At least five towns in America are named for the general of the Corsican people. As an ignorant cub reporter covering police on Philadelphia's Main Line, I once wondered how such a WASP haven as Paoli, Pennsylvania, had acquired so garlicky a name.

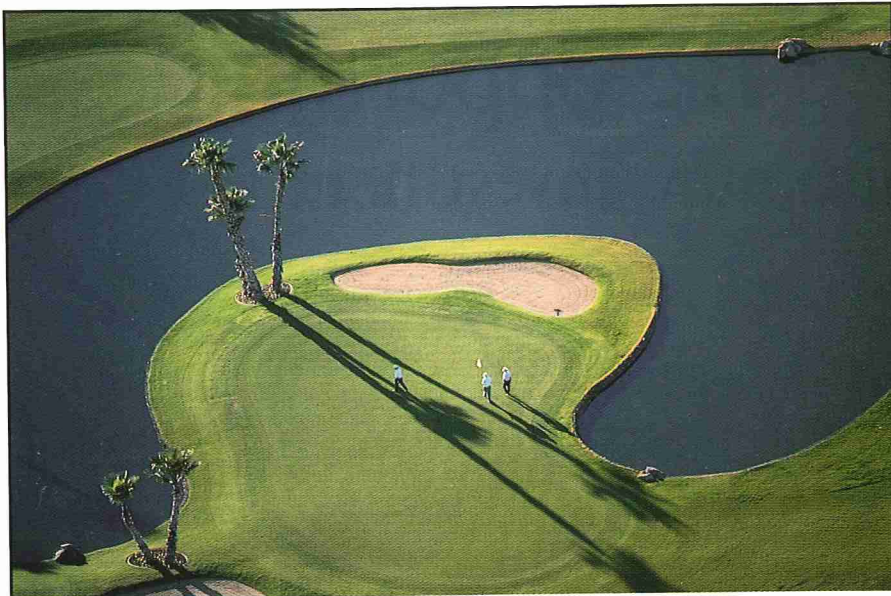
MY GUEST FOR DINNER AT MY HOTEL outside Corte was Michel Leenhardt, director of the Parc Naturel Régional de Corse. There are about seventy-five forms of plant life on Corsica that exist nowhere else on earth. The reserve of La Scandola, in the Gulf of Porto, shelters rare bald buzzards. Wild sheep roam the peaks of La Bavella and Upper Asco, where royal eagles still nest. Trout abound in the island's streams. Boar, deer, and grouse are everywhere.

Leenhardt is creating hiking and biking trails, with overnight accommodations provided by villagers. He is a great admirer of his boss, François Giacobbi. Bombs have been placed on his doorstep three times, causing little damage so far.

The next night, the gentle old port of Bastia looked to me as if it had not changed for many years. The spotlighted Baroque Church of Saint John the Baptist loomed over the buildings, sending a golden reflection onto the dark water.

Daylight at the same spot the next day revealed the mess: A little house right at the pier was missing a roof, and higher up there were empty homes with windows gone, decayed houses like beggars in the sunlight with dark, blind eyes. The main road in and out of Bastia was an engineer's nightmare: narrow and confusing, with intersections where you had to make a U-turn into speeding traffic. Bastia had that air of a city being screwed over by someone. I did not regain my cheer until I crossed over to the western shore of the cape.

Until the Cap Corse, the coastline of the island is bay after gentle bay. At the cape, you suddenly see waves, sweeping first



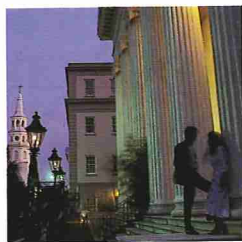
FIELD OF DREAMS

At The Pointe, dreams have a way of becoming reality. Three spectacular mountainside settings. All-suite accommodations. Acres of shimmering pools. Ten distinctive dining establishments. A host of recreational amenities featuring racquet sports, riding stables, fitness centres and, of course, 36 holes of challenging championship golf. Dreams do come true, call 1-800-876-4683.



The Pointe®
Phoenix, Arizona

CHARLESTON • SOUTH CAROLINA



LOVE IN THE LOWCOUNTRY

Indulge in our romantic getaway weekend amidst the exotic charm of South Carolina's lowcountry. From moonlit seaside strolls to candlelit dinners, you'll cherish this time together for years to come. ♡ Your romantic package includes: 2 nights stay in elegant surroundings ♡ welcome champagne ♡ breakfast in bed ♡ a carriage tour of historic Charleston ♡ a massage for two ♡ bicycle rental and more. ♡ \$499 per couple. ♡ Just call 1-800-879-1236 or 803-722-4900. Ask about our other getaway packages, too.


THE OMNI HOTEL
AT
CHARLESTON PLACE

130 Market Street, Charleston, SC, 29401

Corsica

over the dark, sapphire-colored outer sea near patches of emerald and then crashing in a spotless froth against the granite cliffs. Occasionally, if you lift your eyes from the road that hugs the twisting edges of the cliffs, you can spot a village half hidden in vegetation and dominated by the facade of a Baroque Genoese church peering through cypresses. Fifteenth-century watchtowers mark the coves. Here and there are some of the most elaborate chapel-tombs on the island—little well-proportioned temples in stone and marble. When they can afford it, the Corsicans bury their dead on their own land in these splendid buildings. The dead dominate many landscapes and many thoughts on Corsica, but I would not say the Corsicans are morbid. Some of the tombs are carved with wisecracks attributed to their residents. “We think a lot of the dead, but we do not think a lot about death,” says my friend from Paris, Jean-Noël.

The Corsicans have the faculty for perceiving both absurdity and fundamental wisdom, and sometimes they seem to confuse the two. Rightly so, perhaps. When Jean-Noël talks in adages, I wonder if he is mixing up the sayings handed down from ancestors, with something his Lubavitcher lawyers in New York told him or with what he might have read in a book on Zen. Have you heard the story of the Corsican thief who had no hands?

IDROVE PAST NONZA, WITH ITS odd beach of gray schist etched with graffiti, and finally stopped for lunch at the hotel called Le Vieux Moulin, overlooking the pocket-size port of Centuri, where waves were rocking the fishing boats. The hotel was not a mill but an old private house converted into a restaurant, with some rooms built around a nineteenth-century salon. Their windows overlooked the tiny port. It was the wrong time of day for me to settle in; otherwise I might have tried one of those \$35 rooms. I ate some excellent ravioli and a salad of sweet, fresh local tomatoes. If I'd had time, I would have gone on to the boar stew. The former owner was a hunter. His vast armory of rifles and shotguns lined a wall of the reception room. Among them was an assault rifle.

As the road winds toward the tip of the cape, the landscape becomes rolling mounds covered with cane apple. You drive down to the very tip at Barcaggio, a tiny village a stone's throw from the little island of Giraglia with its handsome lighthouse.

The west coast of the cape, where the

road runs close to shore, is unexciting after the other side.

I spent another night at the Hotel Pietracap, outside Bastia, a well-run place with bougainvillea-covered terraces giving onto sea views. Then I headed for Asco. Jean-Noël Santoni had given me an appointment in his maternal village. We were going to be there for the feast of its patron saint, Michael.

The broken road to Asco winds nearly to Monte Cinto, the tallest peak on Corsica. Asco was inaccessible to cars until 1937. Muleteers wearing wide red sashes used to stand with their teams at the bottom of the road, waiting to take people and merchandise up into the village. There are no more muleteers. And only a pair of teenage twins and one grown Ascolian are now willing to continue the herdsman's life of leading goats and sheep, with the change of seasons, from pastures high in the mountains to flatlands near the sea, living little of the time in a real house. Men and women both used to assume that life, not long ago.

Once, in the twenties, Jean-Noël's maternal grandfather, who'd been a shepherd before he made a bright career as a civil

Blind curves open onto bridges too narrow for more than one car, but the Corsicans barrel along

servant in French Africa, discovered some wonderful stones in the hollow of a cliff high in the mountains. Diamonds, rock crystal? A jeweler gave him thirty francs for the stones he brought down and asked to have more. But he never went back up to the remote and dangerous peak. The stones are still up there, and there are rumors of gold and uranium in the mountains as well.

The mountains were also a refuge for *bandits d'honneur* in the old days: men who'd killed for honor and lived out their

lives in the bush like Robinson Crusoe. The village of Asco was in pale decline from a colorful past. Jean-Noël's mother, Hélène Chayenko, showed me through the narrow streets, sharing some of Asco's communal memories. Here was the house whose inhabitants have had bad luck since the 1830s, when someone in the family stole a bride's gown on the eve of her wedding. There was the house whose inhabitants had been taunted in the school yard while they were growing up. "Still have enough of that cow to make a whip?" the other children had mocked them, because someone in their family had stolen a cow in the nineteenth century. In Corsica, even now, you are not just someone with your own life to lead. You carry around, in pleasure or pain, the honorable or dishonorable deeds of your family, which go far back into memory; and your own conduct will be part of what you will your children.

Hélène Chayenko traces her line maternally—through a family cursed by a ghost so as to not have sons for thirteen generations—to the Sage of Asco.

In the sixteenth century, Asco was a center of learning for the island. Well-



The first settlers arrived 9,000 years ago. You should see what they've done with the place.



When you first see Ireland's natural beauty, you'll wonder how anyone could have improved on it. But it was the early settlers who built the magnificent castles you'll see scattered throughout the countryside. Many of which are now elegant accommodations that allow you to dine, horseback ride, fish and sleep where the

*Price is per person double occupancy, Group A car.



Normans once did.

To discover what else has happened in the last 9,000 years, call 1-800-SHAMROCK. We'll send you our free information booklet, including Aer Lingus Vacations from as little as \$36 a day for B&Bs and \$259 a week for hotel accommodations, both complete with rental car.*

Aer Lingus
Fly Ireland to Ireland

Please send me your free book, "Ireland. The ancient birthplace of good times."

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Mail to: Irish Tourist Board, P.O. Box 7728, Woodside, NY 11377.
Or call: 1-800-SHAMROCK Ext. 334.

The ancient birthplace of good times.

Your palace in Austria awaits.



Come to stay, to meet, or just to sightsee. Palaces and castles as hotels, conference centers or magnificent museums are one facet of the Austrian experience. Others are the enchanting scenic beauty at the transition from Alpine to Danubian Europe, the eight centuries of Habsburg history, the cultural riches in architecture, art and music, the friendly welcome to a polished hospitality. Get to know Europe at its best! The Austrian National Tourist Office in New York, Los Angeles, Houston or Chicago, your nearest Austrian Airlines office or your local travel agent will gladly tell you more.



YOU GET THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT ON PEARL'S CHINA.

While other cruises may give you a chorus line, Pearl gives you experiences that capture the heart of China. A delightful children's dance performance. A tea ceremony with a Chinese family in their home. A dazzling Chinese acrobatic show. Along with all the highlights, from Beijing's Forbidden City and Great Wall to a fascinating Yangtze

River voyage. All from \$3095 for 18 days including shore excursions and land stays in both Beijing and Hong Kong.

Call your travel agent or call (800) 426-3588 and see the real China with the Far East's most experienced cruise line.

OCEAN PEARL
Cruises for land lovers®

1510 S.E. 17 St., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

*Per person, double occ. for min. cabin cat. with advance purchase discount. Port charges not included. Ship's registry: Bahamas.



Corsica

off Corsicans sent their children to study under the Sage of Asco, who also mediated disputes that arose because the Genoese law was totally buyable. The Genoese ruled Corsica for all they could get out of it. They wouldn't build a bridge unless there was something to take on the other side. One theory goes that the Corsican taste for guns and vendettas began with Genoese rule, when a man's most reliable source of justice was his weapon. I remembered what the mild Dr. Siméoni had said about Corsica's "logic" of violence. . . .

IN THE KITCHEN OF MME. CHAYENKO's ancestral home, I was introduced to a neighbor, Angela-Francesca Grimaldi, one of seven *signadori*, or sorceresses, in a village that counted sixty permanent residents. These sorceresses were unlike the *mazzeri*, who prowl by night in the south of the island, killing animals to read in the dead beast's face the face of the next person in the village to die. Wisdom and superstition often lose their boundaries in the Corsican mind, as do myth and history. You could argue that the net result is some greater poetic understanding. In any case, in Asco you can meet many sensible people who have seen ghosts or heard the chiming of the clock of Saint Pascal, infallibly predicting death, in rooms where there were no clocks.

Mme. Grimaldi poured water into a dish and placed it on my head, said Christian prayers, and poured cooking oil onto the water. I was free of the evil eye: The oil did not divide into bad little spots. But the test was not absolutely certain. There had been no Corsican olive oil on hand, and what was used was "adulterated" store oil.

If I had accepted all the dinner and luncheon invitations I'd had in Asco during my two-day stay, I could have feasted for a week. I spread myself around and arranged to have coffee where I did not eat. Coffee and the inevitable aqua vita, the fruit brandy that the Corsicans distill, not from the remnants of the wine press, as with marc, but directly from grapes, preferably the scented *raisins-fraises*—a variety that, on Corsica, survived the phylloxera that struck the Continent. They have the taste of a lost past. Proust might have loved the subtle strawberry flavor of these dark, beady grapes.

The weather in Asco was superb. I was having coffee on a terrace with mountain views that went on for miles when the man of the house called me inside with his two sons. In his bedroom he began to un-

pack things—several rifles, shotguns, and a number of pistols. This arsenal was waiting for the return of a man who had insulted his wife and then left town. I did not ask what the insult might have been. There was a time in Corsica when you could provoke a vendetta by lifting the kerchief of a woman leaving church. Unless you married her, she was sullied for life. One of the sons began cocking a pistol. “He’s going to die,” he kept repeating, “he’s going to die.”

My escort, Mme. Chayenko, came in and picked up a pistol. “A Smith & Wesson thirty-eight,” she said, “a jewel of a gun.” This from a lady who owns emeralds.

It was Saint Michael’s Day. A wooden sculpture of the Guardian of Heaven and of Asco was taken out of the church and walked to the schoolhouse and back. The priest implored Saint Michael to protect this mountain perch from thunder and storm, earthquake and famine, epidemic and war, and from the fruits of misfortune.

That night there was a banquet in the schoolhouse. Some villagers had shot a boar, and there was boar stew and, of

An arsenal of rifles, shotguns, and pistols awaited the return of a man who had insulted another’s wife

course, charcuterie. Lots of wine. The villagers danced to the music of an accordionist. Most of them were people who’d moved to the French mainland and were back for the feast day or were prolonging a summer stay. In winter there would be five children in this spacious school.

CURT RICHTER, THE PHOTOGRAPHER, had arrived. Next morning I drove with him to the Gulf of Porto. We passed beaches that were empty under a hot sun. Curt was worried that he would

not have enough people to photograph. I told him he might hunt for stylishness later in the port of St-Florent, which may be the next St-Tropez. Across from the port, hidden behind landscaping and fences, were the properties of a handful of rich *pinzutti* who come often to their notion of Corsica, their walled estates, and who sometimes eat in the port.

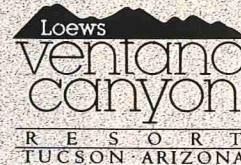
We drove past Calvi, a fortress city, with its foreign legion barracks and its nightclubs, once the lodestone of shepherds on a binge and yacht people who caroused together. Below the wall of a legion building, the town’s one pink house overlooked the port. Here was where Prince Yousouppoff, one of Rasputin’s assassins, lived in exile and gave wild parties in drag.

Finally, on the interminably winding coastal road, we came to Les Calanche, the granite cliffs that reach out into the Gulf of Porto. We hired a boat and made our way toward the La Scandola wildlife sanctuary, past flocks of cormorants huddled on rocks. Overhead, bald buzzards circled as we came near their nests, which were like big wicker baskets perched on orange cliffs spotted with green moss. I



THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL DESERT NOW HAS A RESORT TO MATCH

Ask for flawless weather and spectacular surroundings. Then expect to be served in style...high in the mountains above Tucson, Arizona. This remarkable desert retreat offers 18 holes of Tom Fazio designed golf, 10 lighted tennis courts, 2 swimming pools, a fitness center and 5 restaurants and lounges. Come soon and discover the beauty of the desert... Loews Ventana Canyon Resort.



602-299-2020
7000 North Resort Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85715
For reservations call your travel expert or
800-223-0888

Discover a Total Vacation.



Imagine azure skies, gentle mountains, and a thousand natural acres in magical New Mexico. Our one-of-a-kind MOBIL FOURSTAR RESORT is a totally complete luxurious vacation environment: ride, hike, swim, play, relax. The attentive service and sumptuous cuisine alone may compel you to spend all your time right here, simply

following your inclinations. Still, fascinating Santa Fe, only five minutes away, will probably lure you with its shops and artful charms. Then, too, there are the many nearby sights, history, Indian pueblos, and golf. Plus, our very special summer Childrens' Program will please the kids. Call us today, or write, for a reservation or a brochure.

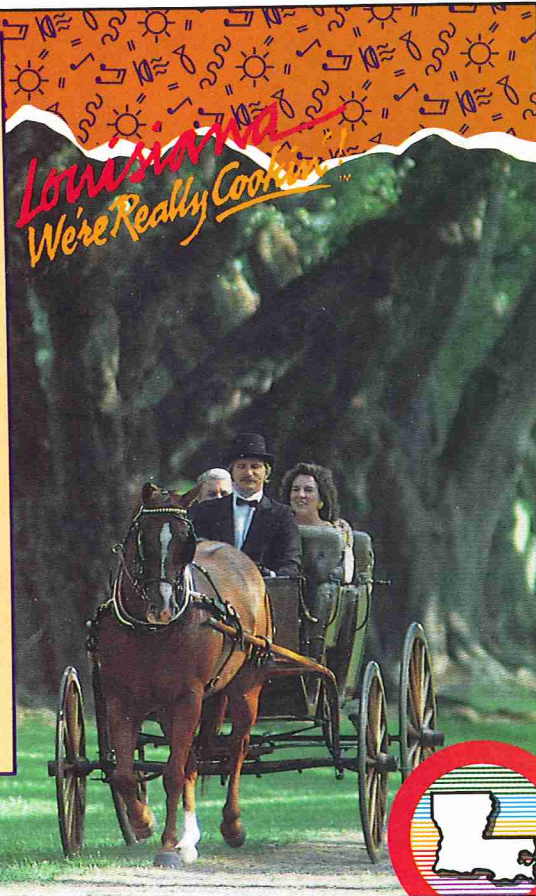
THE
**BISHOP'S
LODGE**

BOX 2367B • SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87504 • 505-983-6377

Sweet potato biscuit wake up calls. Brandies in the parlor. Ghosts on the bayou. Voodoo queens and 18th century graveyards. Swamp tours in the Atchafalaya. Hard betting horseracing and horsedrawn carriage rides at sunset. Hot French Quarter jazz. Cool Mississippi River breezes. Cajun two-stepping and bonfires on the levee. Surprised?

Write for our FREE Travel Guide.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Louisiana Office of Tourism/P.O. Box 94291
Dept. 653 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9291
Toll Free 1-800-33GUMBO



Corsica

swam. It was nearly October. The weather was perfect and the water immaculate.

We had lunch at a little place on the beach of Partinello, the only spot to eat on the beach, where we were the only guests. The decor was posters touting ice-cream sundaes, but in the kitchen were fish from the deep, clean waters of the nearby bay. We sat there facing the water, ate fresh dorado, and drank Corsican rosé. Later, some people who were visiting from the mainland arrived. A woman among them explained to her friends that in 1926, dur-

Credits

Page 6: From left to right: Curt Richter, Helmut Newton, Maggie Steber. **Page 10:** Left: Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts. Right: Graphics by John Grimwade. **Page 20:** Top to bottom: Courtesy Elizabeth Royte, courtesy Helmut Newton, courtesy Carol Barden, Terry O'Neill. **Page 32:** Paul Slaughter/The Image Bank. News photo: Steven Erlanger/the New York Times. **Page 34:** Andy Hernandez/Sipa Press. **Page 38:** Top: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (gift of Mrs. Samuel Dennis Warren). **Page 40:** Top: Napkin, decorative disk, alabaster fruit, and littala glass (Ceramica, N.Y.C.); wine, Il Greppone Mazzi, Brunello di Montalcino (Kobrand Corporation, N.Y.C.). **Page 52:** Michael Paraskevas. **Page 60:** Model: Marlene Cassidy. Handbag by Paloma Picasso (Bergdorf Goodman and Saks Fifth Avenue). **Page 86:** Michael Paraskevas. **Page 94:** Roger-Viollet. **Page 122:** Left: Daniel Philippe/FPG International. Right: Guido Mangold. **Page 123:** Map: Office Corse de Publicité, Ajaccio, Corsica. **Page 127:** P. Parrot/Sygma. **Page 152:** Top left: Hat by Valentino Oliver (Valentino, N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach), top by Giorgio Armani (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach); shorts by J. Crew (N.Y.C., Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog. Middle: Her hat by Gucci (N.Y.C.), top and shoes by J. Crew (top only, N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog; his shirt and shorts by Issey Miyake (N.Y.C.), belt and bag by Valentino (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach). Top right: Jacket and shorts by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac (Bergdorf Goodman, N.Y.C.; Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue), T-shirt by the Gap, socks and shoes by J. Crew (socks only, N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog, sunglasses by Cutler and Gross (Barneys New York and Charivari, N.Y.C.; Elements, Chicago; Fred Segal, Beverly Hills). Middle: Shirt by Banana Republic, vest by Valentino Couture (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach), socks and shoes by J. Crew (socks only, N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog, bag by Issey Miyake. Bottom left: Jacket and shorts by Trussardi (Bloomingdale's), boots by Hermès (N.Y.C. and San Francisco). Bottom right: Hat by Jean-Louis Scherrer (Bloomingdale's and Neiman Marcus; special order at Saks Fifth Avenue); jacket, jodhpurs, and boots by Hermès (N.Y.C. and San Francisco); belt and bag by Trussardi. **Page 153:** Top right: Jewels by Krizia. Bottom right: His outfit by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac (Bergdorf Goodman, N.Y.C.; Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue); her outfit by Trussardi (Bloomingdale's). **Pages 154, 155:** Her blouse and jacket by Emporio Armani (N.Y.C.), pants by Victoria's Secret (stores and catalog), shoes by J. P. Tod's (Diego Della Valle, N.Y.C.), sunglasses by J. Crew; his jacket and shorts by Banana Republic, socks and shoes by J. Crew (socks only, N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog, sunglasses by Chevignon, bag by Pascal Morabito. **Page 156:** Her jacket and shorts by Hanae Mori (N.Y.C.), boots by Hermès (N.Y.C. and San Francisco), hat by Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche (N.Y.C.); his jacket and shorts by Cerruti 1881 (Scottsdale, Ariz.; Ontario; and Toronto), socks and shoes by J. Crew (socks only, N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog. **Page 157:** Shoes by Callaghan. **Page 158:** Top left: His shirt by Giorgio Armani (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach), shorts by J. Crew (N.Y.C.; Cambridge, Mass.; Costa Mesa, Calif.; Portland, Ore.); and from J. Crew catalog; her outfit by Adrienne Vittadini (Adrienne Vittadini Boutique, Cincinnati, Ohio; Bloomingdale's and Lord & Taylor). Top right: Shirt by Gucci (N.Y.C.), pants and shoes by Hermès (N.Y.C. and San Francisco), belt by Missoni, bracelets by Ralph Lauren Jewelry Collection (Polo Ralph Lauren, N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, Boston), sunglasses by J. Crew, bag by Kerstin Adolphson. Bottom left: Suit by Giorgio Armani (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach), belt and bag by Gucci (N.Y.C.), jewels by Ralph Lauren Jewelry Collection (Polo Ralph Lauren, N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Boston), bag by Guy Laroche (N.Y.C., Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C.). Bottom right: Suit by Giorgio Armani (N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach), T-shirt by the Gap. **Page 159:** Beaded adornment by Krizia (N.Y.C.).

ing the time of the malaria, her father had sold this beach for nine hundred francs.

I won't describe the Gulf of Porto and its inner bay, the Gulf of Girolata, where a few years ago plans for a summer colony were squelched. You have to see the interplay of light and form here to believe that landscape can be so strong and so subtle at the same time. It was not, in any case, the image of Corsica that stayed in my mind as I closed my eyes on the plane out of Calvi.

I saw again, instead, the dusk from my hotel balcony, outside Ajaccio. It was darkening the bay I'd arrived in at dawn. At nightfall, the scene was just as strange as the one I had seen from the boat at daybreak. Clouds had begun to squat on the water very close to shore, and as the light declined you could not differentiate the clouds from the mountains behind the shoreline. It was as if Corsica was not only separated from the Continent by the sea but, through some magic, was even walled in by a ring of mountains that had turned the bay into a lake.

I tried to recall something that Dorothy Carrington, who lives in Ajaccio now, had written about driving through the Corsican mountains and finding strange relief in spot-

ting the sea—the same relief a sailor feels when he sees land. Corsica, she knew, could be claustrophobic. But her passion for the island had the compulsion of “a judgment passed, an order received.” She ends her book, “Corsica would be my lot.”

As I stood that evening on the balcony, the ferry was making its way out of Ajaccio harbor, looking like a skeleton of lights. Slowly it slipped through the mountainous mirage. I thought of how many boats like this one had left filled with emigrants freighted with regrets, and with dreams that could become real only on the other side of the clouds. Like them, I knew Corsica would not be my lot either. But I'd be back. □

THE BENEFITS OF SIMPLICITY

SAILORS AND SNORKELERS WILL pleausurably remember forever the bays and coves of Corsica. Hikers and alpine bikers will be equally rewarded by the island's trails and mountain roads. People who want to settle into lodgings as luxurious as those of the Riviera will find none.

Corsican food, on the other hand,

though simple, corresponds to the rarest of luxuries today: It is naturally of first quality. Pigs, goats, sheep, as well as calves and steers, roam free. Corsican meat is superb—and not simply the famous hams and sausages. Roast kid and baby lamb are the island's feast dishes in season, but the local veal and beef are also delicious. During the long hunting period, which starts in September, there are also boar, venison, hare, and a variety of wild fowl served with chestnut-flour polenta. If you're lucky, you might find some home-prepared wild trout or blackbird pâté, both barred from commerce. Corsican cheeses are notoriously pungent, except for the fresh *brocciu*, a delicate sort of ricotta that is mixed with wild mint leaves and folded into an omelet. Corsican wines used to be overbearing; the current trend to vinify them toward more upscale tastes has reduced their character along with their punch, but they are eminently drinkable—especially some whites from the Bastia region, which have a haunting flavor of apricots. Drink those with the delicious fresh fish you get on the coast, but avoid the spiny lobsters—once a pride of the island, they are now scarce in local

DAY 5
LATITUDE 36°N LONGITUDE 25°E
CRUISING INTO SANTORINI
IN SEARCH OF THE LOST CONTINENT.
A POOLSIDE OUZO ON ICE.

Sun Line Cruises

THE SPIRIT OF THE GREEK ISLANDS.

April through October, cruise among the Greek Isles, and north to Turkey via mysterious Santorini. Journey through civilizations old and new. 3, 4, 7, and 14-day cruises. 8 to 17-day Air/Land/Sea vacations. Five-star accommodations, sumptuous cuisine, deluxe service. An unforgettable adventure.



For information and a free brochure on Sun Line Cruises 1991 Cruises and Air/Land/Sea vacations, see your travel agent.
Or call/write: Sun Line, One Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020 800-468-6400 or 212-397-6400

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Sun Line Cruises CNT 391
STELLA SOLARIS • STELLA OCEANIS • STELLA MARIS
Luxury Ships of Greek Registry.



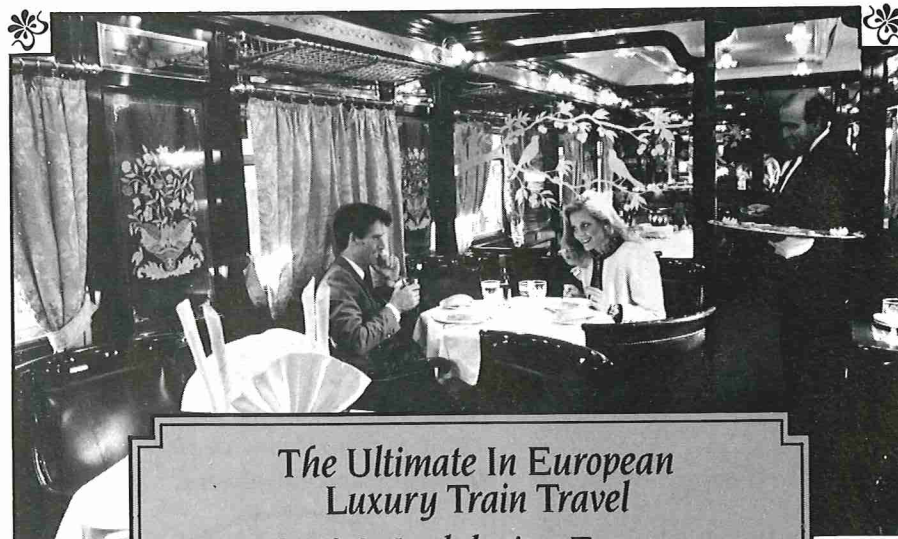
Lifestyles of the rich and famous with no commercial interruptions.

Visit a place where champagne wishes and caviar dreams really do come true.

RHODE ISLAND

America's first resort.

Bruce Sundlun, Governor • For further information, call 1-800-556-2484 (in RI 277-2601) 8:30 AM-5:00 PM.
Or write Rhode Island Tourism Div., Dept. CNM, 7 Jackson Walkway, Providence, RI 02903



The Ultimate In European Luxury Train Travel Spain's Andalusian Express

The superb service, fabulous cuisine, gleaming brass, rich marquetry and delicate Lalique glass of Spain's Andalusian Express all continue to dazzle its luxury travelers.

As it explores the vibrant cities of Seville, Cordoba and Granada on its way to the Costa del Sol, or traces the rich legacy of the Way of Saint James between Barcelona and Santiago de Compostela, the Andalusian Express truly fulfills the fantasy of legendary train travel.



The most comfortable of Europe's restored luxury trains glides across Spain in unparalleled style with deluxe double cabins, spacious shower cars and grand luxe suites with private facilities, a leather upholstered club car, lively bar car and elegant dining cars — all fully air conditioned.

It remains the only civilized way to travel.

See your travel agent or call

1-800-992-3976.



THE ANDALUSIAN EXPRESS

Corsica

waters and are often shipped in frozen.

You will eat best in the very simplest places. I have had the finest baby lamb I can remember at a pizzeria called Chez Tony, at Caporalino, near Ponte-Nuovo. Paco, who owns the place, says he never "cooks." He just burns wood right in his oven in the ancient way, and he moves the embers to make room for his roasts and pizzas, served on a porch overhung with vines bearing *raisins-fraises*. Gianni Agnelli, who owns a restored monastery on the island, eats at an old olive oil mill called U Mulinu, in Feliceto, where the country food makes up for the owner's plate-throwing antics (worth a detour for the total experience). I'd go back to eat on the terrace attached to a hole-in-the-wall called Chez Annie, in the mountain village of Levie near the Col de Bavella, to savor the fresh beans with pork and the tomatoes right out of the garden below. Corsican beef is hard to find in restaurants, but you can eat a Corsican beefsteak with real french fries on a terrace, perched over the bay of Cargèse, that makes you feel you are floating in air. It's at a pizzeria-hotel where tour buses sometimes stop, but it remains an authentic, simple place—and very cheap.

OF THE FIVE GRAND HOTELS THAT the Rothschild-owned PLM railroad company built on Corsica early in the century, only one survives. The notion of making Corsica a luxury destination never caught on, although it's an idea whose time may well have come. The one building of that group that is still standing is Les Roches Rouges, at Porto, which the owners are in the midst of rescuing from disgraceful decay. I hope that the means of these charming new owners will be up to the task, because this hotel could be one of the world's gems, given its architecture and incredible views. Among other places I've stayed in, I can recommend wholeheartedly only the Pietracap near Bastia: well priced, well run, and pleasantly but simply furnished, with a charming garden. Le Maquis, reputedly the best hotel on the island, at Porticcio near Ajaccio, overreaches in its prices and its ambitions for splendor. Time and time again on Corsica, you find hotels—such as the Bellevue in St-Florent—that have beautiful views indeed but are run-down inside. Hotels inland can be primitive. Don't count on finding porters, even in modern coastal establishments. —G.Y.D.

For weather information, see Travel Planner, page 220.