

editorial

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As this issue of *hidden europe* goes to press, our desks are slowly disappearing under a deluge of press releases from travel companies intent on promoting their offerings for the 2010 season. We are cajoled to eat our way through Tuscany, shop till we drop in Manchester or Madrid, or jet to Montenegro to be pampered in a luxury spa resort on the shores of the Adriatic. The images of Europe promoted in the brochures present a fabulous kaleidoscope of opportunities, but somehow they elide the Europe we know and love. There is another Europe, a continent full of real people with real lives, real hopes and real fears — all of which are so easily airbrushed away by the PR men.

The Europe we describe in *hidden europe* is a continent rich in texture and detail. It has its well-trodden trails, but it is a Europe full of unsung corners. We try and include a mixture of both in every issue of the magazine. Thus in *hidden europe* 30 we visit some well-known spots. They include the painted monasteries of the Bukovina and the riverbank in Finland where a tsarina sat and peeled potatoes. We dig out little details that most guidebooks miss. So in this issue, we delve into subterranean Budapest, celebrate Bratislava's modernist architecture, and look at Quaker life in the English city of York. We also take the roads less travelled so *hidden europe* 30 includes reports from eastern Iceland, the Russian port of Kaliningrad and an outpost of Kurdistan in Flanders.

Our interest is not just in places but also in the very process of travel. So we ponder planes and trains, in each case looking at how far the interests of the public and private sectors can be reconciled in modern transport. And we take time out to reflect on the humble suitcase — for some a symbol of mobility, for others a reminder of exile.

We are much indebted to the three guest authors who contribute to this issue. Laurence Mitchell, Duncan JD Smith and Karlos Zurutuza have all written for *hidden europe* before. Their contributions add depth and weight to the magazine and our thanks are due to all three. But most of what you will read in this issue is written in-house. We hope you will discover in these pages a Europe that fascinates, tempts, irritates and delights. Whatever, you will surely find a Europe that is hugely more complicated than the glossy tourist brochures would have us all believe.

Nicky Gardner & Susanne Kries
Editors

Berlin, Germany
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front cover: Bratislava, Slovakia (photo © Jozef Sedmak / dreamstime.com)

top left: Nový Most, Bratislava (photo © Petr Švec)

middle left: ODEG train en route to Zittau, Germany

bottom left: mountains above Berufjörður, Iceland

above right: memorial at Banská Bystrica, Slovakia (photo © Kordoz)

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