

editorial

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Evelyn Waugh once famously remarked that “the tourist is the other fellow.” Waugh thus made the distinction between real travel and the overblown industry that is tourism. The truth is that tourism has spread its tentacles across our continent. An earlier generation of travel writers had it easy. They could leave the main road, strike out from the standard route of the Grand Tour and easily amuse their readers with tales of little known lands. Mary Wollstonecraft and James Boswell, reporting from Scandinavia and Corsica respectively in the late eighteenth century, were fine examples.

Sadly it was not long before English travel writers affected to despise the continent. Robert Southey lingered in Portugal despite finding the people “dirty, debilitated, lazy and lousy.” Southey established a trend still espoused by too many travel writers who are palpably uncomfortable on the road, too evidently not at home. Our experience of Europe is very different. We really like most of the places we visit. As we travel to the remotest corners of Europe, we are invariably struck by the honest decency of those we meet on the road. Even countries sometimes reported as being ‘difficult for travellers’ turn out to be populated by amiable folk who are eager to help.

But are we tourists or travellers? That really is a tough one. We tell ourselves that our journeys are something more than regular tourism. You must decide. In this issue of *hidden europe* we explore the Belarusian city of Vitebsk through the art of Marc Chagall, we catch the flavour of Yiddish travel writing about Russian trains and we visit two of Europe’s smallest countries: Liechtenstein and Luxembourg. We take in the birthplace of Karl Marx, check out a nature reserve in Ukraine and, courtesy of guest contributor Rudolf Abraham, we investigate Zagreb’s literary ghosts. To round off the issue, we explore Genoa’s old port, cast an eye over the endless ‘best of...’ lists in the travel media and have lunch in the self-styled Principato di Seborga, a village that affects to be independent of Italy, close to the Ligurian coast.

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Editors

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front cover: Genoa harbour, Italy
top left: Wissembourg, France
middle left: Vitebsk, Belarus
bottom left: Zagreb, Croatia (photo by Rudolf Abraham)
above right: Vitebsk, Belarus
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