

ASHDOWN TRAVEL

travel beyond expectations...



TRAVEL 2023

*Canada • Australia •
Luxury Yachting • The Caribbean • Africa •
South America • Korea & Japan • Italy*

WELCOME

Dear Customers and Friends,

It is a privilege to be writing this introductory piece for our first proper newsletter in three years, and let me start by wishing you all a very happy and healthy New Year 2023.

We are all beginning 2023 with many challenges facing us, and yet 2022 showed us that people want to connect with people in person. Travelling abroad to visit family, to explore new countries and re-discover favourite places has again begun to be enjoyed, and the team here at Ashdown Travel were delighted to be able to help regular and new customers alike regain their taste for travel. It hasn't always been easy to follow all the different country regulations required to travel, but the team have become dab hands at helping customers open email accounts, downloading apps on phones and navigating the varied complex forms.

Like many businesses, Ashdown Travel has overcome big challenges to survive through the pandemic and beyond. But to have such a strong core team still in place, with over 100 years combined experience and great knowledge, is a real boon for the town of Oxted and we would like to take this opportunity to thank both our loyal existing and prospective new customers for giving us the opportunity to look after their travel plans. Delivering a high level of personal service is at the heart of what we do, and whilst travel is gradually becoming more normal with fewer restrictions and easing of paperwork, be assured that we monitor every booking carefully and are always at the end of a phone or email to support you.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter, we've taken the opportunity of updating you on what our team has been up to since we were last in touch, and then we have invited some of our core tour operating partners to whet your appetite. Many people in 2022 returned to favourite hotels to just enjoy simply being away, but travel to new places enriches the soul, so we hope you enjoy and connect with some new ideas that inspire you to talk to us about plans for your next trip. We look forward to hearing from you.

With very best wishes,

Anne

Leisure Travel Manager
anne@ashdowntravel.co.uk



WHAT'S NEW?

BLU SELECT Lobigili is one of the most recent openings in 2022 in the Maldives for Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts. A simple speedboat transfer from Malé International Airport, Lobigili is a contemporary 5-Star resort, exclusively for adults!



In the Maldivian language of Dhivehi, 'Loabi' means love and 'Gili' means island. Lobigili is, in essence, the island of love. Romance permeates the air here! Idyllic tropical vistas complemented by nature-inspired designs create a secluded, castaway feel. With three restaurants and vibrant house reef, this is a perfect getaway for two.



Ikos Resorts offer a great opportunity for multi-generational family holidays but works equally well for couples and currently there are five resorts open. Two in Halkidiki, one in Corfu, one in Kos and the fifth in Andalusia. Two more resorts are due to open in 2023 – a second in Corfu and one in Majorca.

Sue visited Ikos Andalusia in October this year. The luxury all inclusive concept is the same throughout the resorts. All are beachfront with a superb selection of

restaurants offering a great choice of culinary delights; a wide array of sporting activities including use of bikes for the whole family with baby seats available and even the opportunity to use the resort car complimentary for a day. **This is an exceptional product and early booking is essential to get the right accommodation to suit you.**

Boutique Caribbean

We work closely with Essential Detail who represent 11 Luxury Boutique Hotels across seven stunning islands in the Caribbean, all known for their charm, character, and personal service. So if you prefer somewhere more understated and well located, do ask us for recommendations.

473 Grenada is new to their portfolio and being set on a peninsula, it benefits from two almost private beaches. All nine accommodations are seafacing, and are set up as one-, two- or three-bedroom units but breakfast is included and their concierge can arrange everything you want to experience on this beautiful island.



ANNE



When I think back over the last three years, change is the dominant theme. My son finished school and is now in his second year of university, and my husband retired from his aviation career. Professionally, the pandemic caused the loss of colleagues and suppliers that I had worked with for many years. And yet, change brings opportunity. I have taken on the role of Leisure Sales Manager, ably supported by Sue and Jo, and so my next chapter at Ashdown Travel has begun. We have adjusted the business hours to suit the smaller team but thanks to technology and remote working, we are still contactable out of hours to support clients when needed.

Throughout these demanding times, getting away on holiday continued its essential role in bonding my family together, giving us space to step away from the stresses of everyday life, to relax and create shared memories together. We've rented cottages in Devon and Wales, and spent long weekends in Dorset

and Norfolk, but in September we joyfully sat on the plane to Kefalonia to go back to our beloved Fiskardo in the north of this gorgeous Greek island. We were astonished, delighted and humbled at the number of locals who greeted us warmly as old friends, and the area was just as beautiful as we remembered.

In November, my husband and I headed to Paphos, a new destination for us, for a sunshine top-up before the winter set in. And we're already looking forward to a family trip to South Africa at Easter, heading to the winelands of Franschoek with a desert safari experience at Sanbona, before some time at the coast of Wilderness and ultimately Cape Town.

It is wonderful to finally be able to plan ahead again, and to look forward to travelling – and with demand for 2023 likely to be just as high as for 2022, I look forward to talking to you soon about your own plans.

CAPTIVATING CANADA

Awe-inspiring · Expansive · Unforgettable

From the stunning coastal scenery of Atlantic Canada to the Prairie Provinces with their wheat-filled fields and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, each area has its own charm.

Canada, as the 2nd largest country in the world, is extravagant in its diversity – exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities, exciting cosmopolitan cities, remote lodges and resorts, ranch stays, some of the world's greatest rail journeys and cruises from both seaboard. The hardest choice is not whether to go but where to go – Canada offers it all and more!



One of the most
spectacular train trips
in the world



Rocky Mountains & Alaska Cruise – one holiday, a lifetime of memories. One of the most popular itineraries that we put together for clients is to the west coast of Canada. We tailor each trip just for you, and see below a suggested 10-day land-based trip with an optional Alaskan cruise add on.

Enjoy the stunning scenery of Banff and Jasper National Parks followed by the world-renowned Rocky Mountaineer for its leisurely two-day journey from Jasper to Vancouver. This truly is *'one of the most spectacular train trips in the world'*. Then sightsee in the gateway city of Vancouver before boarding your cruise ship and heading to Alaska where ancient glaciers, soaring mountain peaks and marine wildlife viewing come together for a completely unique cruise experience.

ROCKY MOUNTAINS & ALASKA CRUISE – ONE HOLIDAY, A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES

- Flights with Air Canada, daylight to Calgary and returning overnight from Vancouver. All transfers included.
- Overnight stay in Calgary
- Two-night stay in Banff
- Explore Banff and Banff Gondola excursion
- Sightseeing transfer from Lake Louise to Jasper incl. Ice Explorer ride on the Athabasca Glacier
- Two-night stay in Jasper
- Two-day Rocky Mountaineer journey in SilverLeaf or GoldLeaf Service incl. breakfast & lunch both days. Overnight stay in Kamloops
- Two-night stay in Vancouver
- Five-hour sightseeing tour of Vancouver

Alaskan add-on

As above plus:

- Seven-night Alaska cruise with either Holland America or Celebrity Cruises
- All meals onboard the cruise
- Port charges and taxes
- Overnight stay in Vancouver post cruise

Departures – early May to mid-September

EXPERTLY TAILORED HOLIDAYS – JUST FOR YOU!

AUSTRALIA

Crafting bespoke journeys like they're works of art

For those who desire a journey to be a masterpiece, it's important to commission the right artist.



Carrier uses its skilful know-how to send you on a journey that will make you fall in love with a place as much as they do

Ashdown Travel are proud to be a preferred partner of award-winning specialist, Carrier; one of the most trusted brands in travel and one devoted to flawless delivery and making travellers feel extra special. Together, we are united by the unmatched advantages that people bring, and our customised approach delivers where technology cannot.

Celebrating 40 years in luxury travel, Carrier have been crafting bespoke journeys like they're works of art; beautiful, intriguing and intricately tailored with imagination and skill. Their belief is that the world should be seen and experienced in more thoughtful ways; it's when a personal pursuit is fulfilled that it becomes truly remarkable. Voted Team of the Year 2021 by industry experts, their extremely curious and intensely passionate Luxury Travel Designers are devoted to using their skilful know-how and close connections in high places to send you on a journey that will make you fall in love with a place as much as they do.

Trust Carrier to deliver your only-ever imagined antipodean globetrot, venturing outside of your comfort zone on a 20-night journey of pure indulgence, capturing some of Australia's must-see icons. You'll stay in the finest independently owned eco-luxury lodges, each offering meaningful signature experiences that showcase unique aspects of their region – natural landscapes, wildlife, food and wine.

Commence in Sydney before heading to the spectacular bush setting of the Greater Blue Mountains. Fly to the remote Red Centre outback to experience the colossal monolith of Uluru, renowned for its kaleidoscope of colours. The natural wonders of North Queensland are truly enchanting, swim in the fresh-water Billabongs in the World Heritage Listed Daintree Rainforest National Park before journeying to Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, a perfect location for discovering the extraordinary Great Barrier Reef.

SEADREAM YACHT CLUB

The most luxurious yachting experience in the Greek Isles

Depart from the ordinary and enjoy an idyllic yachting holiday with SeaDream Yacht Club.

Featuring only 56 suites and staterooms each, SeaDream I and SeaDream II are SeaDream's twin mega-yachts. The line's 'It's Yachting, Not Cruising' trademark means that SeaDream can call on exclusive harbours and secluded ports that larger vessels cannot reach.

On board, guests enjoy personalised, attentive service from every member of the staff, due to each yacht's one-to-one guest-to-staff ratio. Savour delectable gourmet cuisine in two onboard restaurants. And take in a rejuvenating therapy in the SeaDream Spa, the only Thai-certified spa at sea.

Guests can also enjoy a distinctive yachting experience in SeaDream's signature Balinese Dream Beds, laid throughout the upper deck. Guests can lounge in the sun by day and sleep under the stars in their personalised pyjamas, supplied by SeaDream.

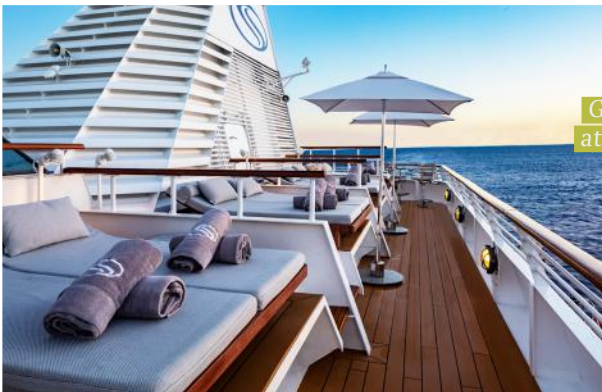
A prime example of SeaDream's yachting experience is SeaDream I's 'Greek Journey to Ephesus' voyage, departing roundtrip on 1 July 2023 from Athens (Piraeus), Greece. Guests call at six of the most intriguing Greek Islands and the resort town of Kusadasi, Turkey. Retrace the dance steps

of Mamma Mia! at Skiathos and Skopelos, where the movie was filmed. Immerse yourself in the cosmopolitan lifestyle and the sophisticated nightlife of Mykonos. Make a mini-pilgrimage in Patmos, where John the Apostle is believed to have written the Book of Revelations. Finally, visit Ikaria, known as the best Greek island for nature lovers, with its stunning coastlines, pristine beaches, and lush landscape.

All SeaDream voyages stay late or overnight in ports, where guests can enjoy the destinations' authentic culture and nightlife, long after the large cruise ships have departed.



Guests enjoy personalised, attentive service from every member of staff



JO

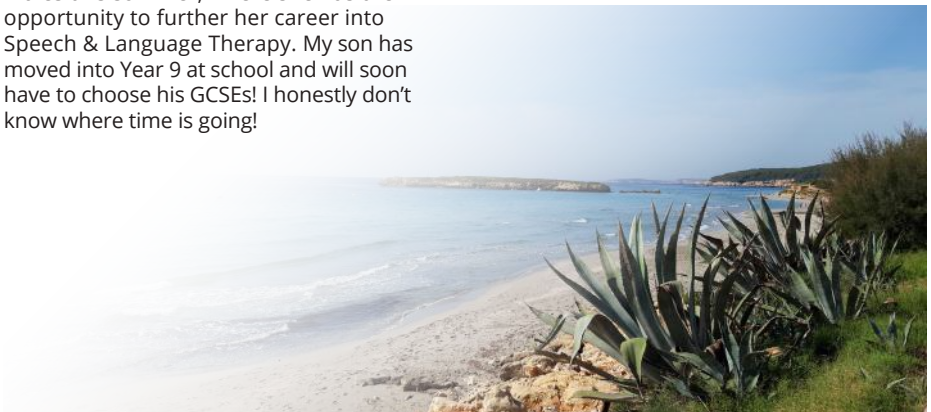


After nearly 28 years at Ashdown Travel, I think that the past couple of years have certainly been the most challenging! I was furloughed for most of the first year of Covid, working only a few weeks here and there and then finally came back 'normally' in January 2021.

The past year has been a mixture of fantastic new bookings, along with trying to get clients away on their holidays that have been rolled over several times due to Covid.

On a personal level my daughter and her boyfriend made the decision to move to Wales this summer, where she has the opportunity to further her career into Speech & Language Therapy. My son has moved into Year 9 at school and will soon have to choose his GCSEs! I honestly don't know where time is going!

Due to Covid, we sadly haven't had the opportunity to travel as much as we would have liked. Instead like so many people we have taken holidays in the UK - one to the Isle of Wight last summer and then to the beautiful Bigbury-on-Sea in Devon this year. We did, however, manage a quick trip to Menorca this October half term, where we had a villa with pool and temperatures of 27 degrees! We stayed in Santo Tomas and also visited the resort of Cala Galdana, a place we used to go as children. A trip to the capital of Mahon was also worth the visit before leaving for the airport! Now let's see what 2023 brings us!



CARIBBEAN ISLAND-HOPPING

Barbados · The Grenadines · Antigua · St Barths

EDEN's roots are firmly based in the Caribbean, one of our most popular destinations for those looking to disconnect from the world and reconnect with loved ones. With direct flights to both Barbados and Antigua, it's easy to enjoy a week away or make an extended stay to some of the idyllic outer islands. Here are some of our favourites:

Barbados & The Grenadines

With masses to see and do, Barbados is unbeatable if you're after a little more than just lounging on the beach. Of course, it scores on that front too, but there's plenty more on offer; its soul food is its music, which, added to the balmy, tropical climate and cooling sea breezes, ensures a laid-back attitude... the ideal combination for a relaxing holiday. And with our own on-island Concierge team, there's no better place to recharge your batteries.

The Grenadines, meanwhile, is a gorgeous string of islands just waiting to be explored; so whether you have your own vessel or are happy to hitch a ride, the island-hopping opportunities here are irresistible.

Antigua, St Barths & Anguilla

Relaxed, fun-loving and wonderfully unspoilt, Antigua may be smaller than many Caribbean

...the island-hopping opportunities here are irresistible



destinations, but it more than makes up for it in its endless attractions, 365 powdery-soft sand beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters.

Tucked away in the Northern Caribbean, embraced by unrivalled white beaches and breathtaking turquoise seas, the pocket-sized paradise of Anguilla is unashamedly dripping with exclusivity and has more designer appeal than a vintage Chanel suit. Everything centres around the stylish beaches, and, for foodies, there are gourmet restaurants galore.

A worthy opponent to Anguilla and fabulously reminiscent of St Tropez, St Barths has a wonderful choice of top French cuisine and exclusive shopping, making it one of the West Indies' most fashionable places.

SENSATIONAL SOUTH AFRICA

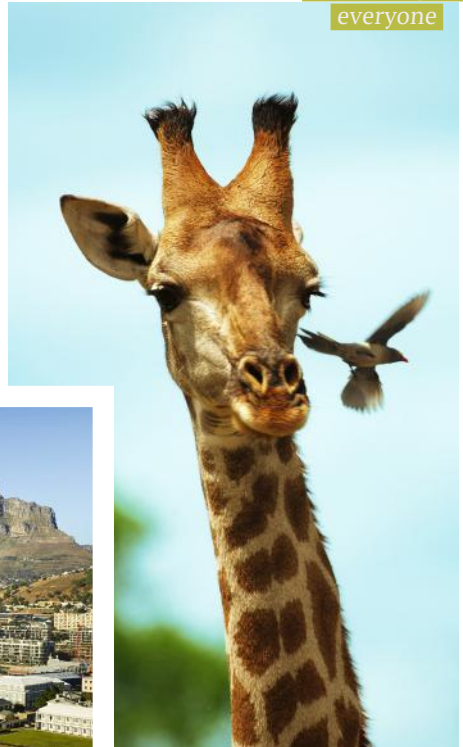
A world in one country · The Rainbow Nation

Known affectionately as the “Rainbow Nation” due to the melting pot of cultures, South Africa is also often described as a “world in one country” having gained an enviable reputation for being able to offer something for everyone.

At over five times the size of the United Kingdom there is nowhere that you can experience such diversity in one destination and this is why so many visitors return time and time again. From the adrenalin packed excitement of being immersed in nature on safari, to one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world with its renowned gourmet scene and lush Winelands. From the snow-capped Drakensberg mountains towering over historic battlefields to the parched sands of the Kalahari Desert. Endless crisp, white sandy beaches, lapped by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean where some of the best land-based whale watching and scuba diving in the world can be found.

There really is something for everyone and malaria-free game reserves where lodges have special programmes for children mean it is a great family destination. And with a superb transport infrastructure, despite the size of the country, getting around really could not be easier. An excellent network of roads mean self-drive is very popular, however escorted tours and luxury rail journeys also take the traveller to the remotest corners. The many airports mean you can literally travel from one corner of the country to the other in a few hours. On a wild and exhilarating safari in the famous Kruger National Park in the morning to sipping sundowners on a white sandy beach surrounded by penguins in Cape Town the same afternoon. South Africa truly is a “world in one country”.

Something for
everyone



SOUTH AMERICA'S FANTASTIC FOUR

Peru • Bolivia • Argentina • Brazil

Fancy visiting a continent full of culture, colour, coffee and carnival?

From the wilds of Patagonia to the gaucho-ridden Pampas; the Amazon rainforest to the Galápagos Islands, South America is the ultimate adventure playground.

Cox & Kings' South America specialists have travelled extensively throughout the region and have crafted a group tour that showcases these four exceptional destinations called the Grand Tour of South America.

This 16-night tour visits four fantastic countries to reveal the continent's cultural and natural highlights. Venture from mountaintop Machu Picchu down to the thundering Iguazu Falls. Stop in buzzing cities along the way, including Bolivia's capital of La Paz, cosmopolitan Buenos Aires in Argentina and the exotic Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.

COX & KINGS' SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

- **Ride the Belmond Andean Explorer in Peru**
The Belmond Andean Explorer is the only luxury sleeper train in South America, and Cox & Kings is the only travel company offering an overnight ride as part of a group tour.
- **Stay close to the thundering Iguazu Falls**
Each year, over a million people visit the UNESCO-listed Iguazu National Park to see this natural wonder. However, few have the chance to stay overnight within the park itself. During your grand tour, not only will you stay close to the falls, but you'll also have the opportunity to experience the cascades while the park is closed to other visitors.
- **Unwind at a luxury Rio beach retreat**
During your visit to Brazil's second largest city, you stay at the luxurious Fairmont RJ Copacabana hotel. Guests can expect views of Copacabana beach, Sugar Loaf Mountain and the bay, paired with a prime location and five-star facilities.

COX & KINGS' DIFFERENCE

- Stay in five-star accommodation
- International flights with British Airways included
- Overnight stays at Machu Picchu & inside Iguazu National Park
- Experienced local tour guides in each destination
- Small group size – average 16 people (maximum 20)

Prices start from £4495 per person based on two people sharing



SUE



My first trip of 2022 in March took us finally to St Lucia to stay at the beautiful EastWinds. With entry requirements still in place at that time we completed the required online forms and Covid 19 test results. Like many of our clients, this trip had been postponed from previous years and after six changes of date we finally arrived, and it was wonderful!

Our love of Daios Cove on the island of Crete saw us returning for a nine-night holiday in June. The weather was perfect and we relaxed as soon as we arrived. This is a wonderful resort, both for families with its great kids club, or for couples. Daios has the perfect beach in a sheltered small cove and a choice of restaurants offering local produce and fresh fish daily.

In October I was fortunate to be invited by Eden Luxury Travel on my first work trip for three years! We stayed at the Marbella Club and then the Puente Romano, sister hotels that are on the beachfront in Marbella, and

we paid a visit to the Finca Cortesin and the Ikos Andalusia.

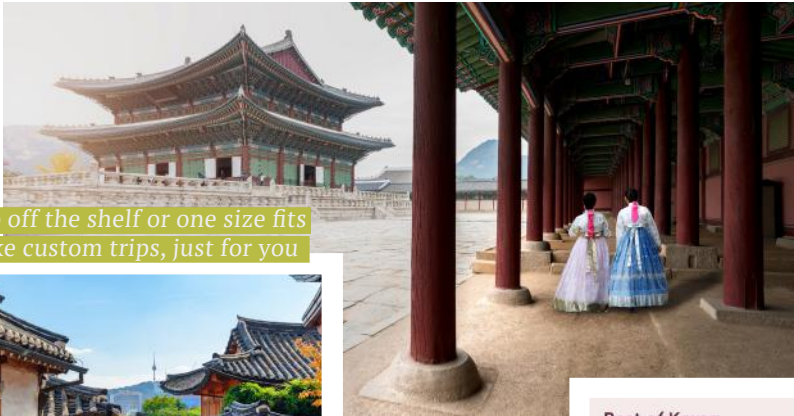
The Marbella Club offers an intimate experience, the rooms are beautiful and situated in wonderful gardens leading down to the beach. The restaurants offer totally different experiences, one very elegant with strict dress code and the other more relaxed. The Puente Romano is famous for its tennis and has hosted many famous tennis players, the resort attracts guests from outside who come to dine in the exceptional restaurants such as Nobu and the Sea Grill.

If you are a swimmer or golfer you will not be disappointed at the Finca Cortesin. The golf course is onsite and the Olympic sized swimming pools are a swimmer's dream! We were invited to have lunch at their beach club, a five minute shuttle ride where another huge swimming pool backed onto the beach. The attention to detail was incredible and we enjoyed an amazing lunch as we overlooked the sea.

ASHDOWN TRAVEL 24-26 Station Road East, Oxted

BEST OF JAPAN & SOUTH KOREA

Fascinating cultures · Subtlety & Spice



We don't do off the shelf or one size fits all. We make custom trips, just for you



Japan and South Korea make a great pairing — these neighbours across the East Sea combine bustling modern cities, well preserved historical sites, unique cultures, stunning food and the warmest of welcomes.

Like bickering siblings, Japan and Korea want you to know they're unique — and they are. But at the same time neither can escape their shared history, which has shaped everything about them from their food and drink to their philosophy. This self-guided adventure is about exploring similarities, noticing differences, and celebrating two distinct but equally fascinating cultures.

- Dig into the cultural differences with guided tours of Seoul, Andong, Kyoto and Tokyo; traditional stays in hanok and ryokan inns; afternoon tea with a trainee geisha in Kyoto, and a chopstick- and spoon-making workshop in Seoul
- Admire the beautiful scenery of both countries as you visit Hahoe and Gamcheon

Inside Asia

When we started our business in the year 2000, it was to share what we love about Asia with as many people as possible. Two decades and thousands of trips later, that's still at the heart of why we do what we do.

Supported by our trusted partners on the ground including some of the most charismatic and interesting people we have ever met, including guides, historians, chefs, architects, and conservationists who bring your trip to life.

We don't do "off the shelf" or "one size fits all". We make custom trips, just for you, using our years of Asia travel experience. It's your holiday, your way.

Best of Korea & Japan



villages in Korea, then Hakone National Park in Japan

- Contrast subtlety and spice with an izakaya evening in Tokyo and a night market tour in Busan
- Marvel at the imposing Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul and Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion in Kyoto, before getting lost in the bright lights of Shibuya District in Tokyo.



ITALY

Gastronomy · Masterpieces · Spectacular Coasts



Classic Collection's travel expertise is defined by more than thirty years' experience of organising holidays for those who love luxury and expect exceptional personal service

Classic Collection tours of Italy are very flexible. There are no fixed departure days and no minimum guest number requirements. You're free to choose your hotels, and the majority of their visits and excursions operate on a private, guided basis, although there are a few exceptions where small group tours are provided. You'll find that their itineraries leave plenty of free time to explore on your own, or to relax by making the most of your hotels' facilities.

Their **Gastronomic Tour of Tuscany** allows you to explore vineyards, rolling hills, charming old cities and artistic masterpieces. Visit Florence, Siena, Chianti, San Gimignano, and the Montepulciano and Montalcino regions, known for their prestigious wines. Discover delightful food and wine whilst visiting and viewing monuments, works of

art, churches and spectacular scenery. Based on three nights in Florence and two nights in Siena, the tour operates by private car and driver and can be booked as a stand alone short break or as part of a longer holiday.

Their **Highlights of Rome and Sorrento** eight-day tour travels from historic city to spectacular coastline. Take in the history of Rome's Colosseum and the ruins of Pompei, and enjoy the majesty of the Vatican City and the splendour of Amalfi and Capri. Enjoy the Roman countryside, with food and wine tasting at a local wine cellar, and in Sorrento take dinner in a private home with show cooking and a cookery demonstration as part of the entertainment. This tour combines excursions with private car and driver, some small group escorted tours, and both private and train transfers.

These are just two of Classic Collection's choice of fourteen Italy tours which also include private yacht hire with skipper and crew around the Bay of Naples and flight-free train itineraries to Paris, Milan and Florence or Venice.

AIRPORT & AIRLINE NEWS

Travelling to the EU from November 2023 you may be required to have an EU ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System).

At Ashdown Travel we are here to help and assist our customers through the application process of any online travel forms you may require.



Virgin Atlantic have recently revealed the interiors of its Airbus 330 Neo Aircraft which will be fitted with state-of-the-art Economy, Premium Economy seats, and two types of Upper Class Suites. New features include Bluetooth connectivity, USB ports and UK plug sockets built in for charging. Upper class suites will feature a fully closing privacy door and a do not disturb feature.

Arriving at the airport and making your way through to the aircraft door can be a stressful challenge. At Ashdown we will happily book Meet and Greet Airport Parking, Fast Track security, and airport lounges to make the start of your holiday that much more relaxing. EasyJet have recently opened



The Gateway Lounge in Gatwick North Terminal in partnership with No1

Lounges. Why not add that something extra to make your trip special.



Emirates are undertaking an ambitious retrofitting programme featuring a brand new highly acclaimed Premium Economy product, and newly enhanced aircraft with refreshed cabins. Refurbished aircraft are being phased into their schedule from Heathrow to expand across their network. Emirates currently fly to 84 destinations from Heathrow and Gatwick.

Recently the expansion of flying on a low-cost airline from Gatwick has increased with Wizz Air making it one of their hub airports, offering flights to

25 destinations. Having an established network from Luton since 2004 this is certainly great news for those who love the convenience of Gatwick.



ASHDOWN TRAVEL

24-26 STATION ROAD EAST, OXTED, SURREY, RH8 OPG

We research, plan and book each holiday just for you.

From citybreaks, wildlife encounters, family holidays, blissful beaches to once in a lifetime, worldwide experiences.

Talk to us now about
your next trip!

- All holidays are booked as ATOL protected packages with trusted travel partners.

For tailor made enquiries or to see a particular consultant,
please call us for an appointment

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Office hours: Monday-Friday 10am-5pm
(with occasional Wednesday closures to accommodate staff leave)