



Dear Family and Friends,

Another year is coming full circle (as fast as ever) and it's time for us to recap all the wonderful events that have filled our lives. Year 2002 has been quite an eventful year for us, traveling through South America, Europe, Central Asia and, of course, back home in Florida and Malaysia.

We started with South America in September 2001, spending approximately 5 months from Ecuador to Tierra del Fuego, the southern most point of the continent, then back up towards the northern hemisphere in time for Carnival in Rio de Janeiro and Caracas in the north. From sunbathing on Copacabana Beach to the street parties and to the



America in September 2001, spending "cruising" around the continent del Fuego, the southern most point back up towards the northern

Carnival finally, From



Red & Black and Gay Balls, we discovered through fun experience that New York isn't the only city that never sleeps. When we left Rio, we felt like we needed another vacation. But partying wasn't all that we did (although some of you may beg to differ having seen some of our pictures on our website – bespolka.com). This exotic trip took us

deep into the Pacific Ocean at Galapagos where we came up close to the animals both in the sea and on the land. We then went up high in the Andes to of course, the legendary Machu Towers of Torres del Paine, Villarica, got sandblasted by Fitzroy and walked on the only world, Moreno. We crossed deep into the Amazon on a 6-day river boat trip and fished for piranhas and caymans, only to swim in the same waters the following day. The sheer force and volume at Iguasu Falls blew our minds away, but the boat ride to Salto de Angel, the highest falls in the world, was, well, how shall we say – we felt like we were more out of the boat pushing it up the dry river then in it. After South America, we stopped briefly in Florida and then New York to catch up with the Bespolka clan.



deep into the Pacific Ocean at Galapagos where we came up close to the animals both in the sea and on the land. We then went up high in the Andes to of course, the legendary Machu Towers of Torres del Paine, Villarica, got sandblasted by Fitzroy and walked on the only world, Moreno. We crossed deep into the Amazon on a 6-day river boat trip and fished for piranhas and caymans, only to swim in the same waters the following day. The sheer force and volume at Iguasu Falls blew our minds away, but the boat ride to Salto de Angel, the highest falls in the world, was, well, how shall we say – we felt like we were more out of the boat pushing it up the dry river then in it. After South America, we stopped briefly in Florida and then New York to catch up with the Bespolka clan.





Was it a year for tying the knot?! First, Danny, Jacqui's brother, got married to his lovely bride, Joey, in a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony on 18 May in Kuala Lumpur (which we wouldn't have missed for the world). It was certainly a joyous celebration for the Maung, Goh and Lee family. Then a couple of days later, Lars was back on the plane (this time alone)

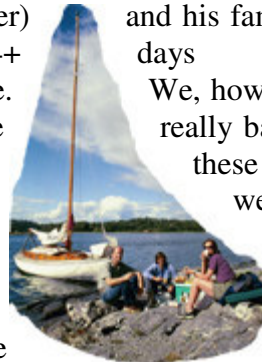


heading for Lucca to attend a good friend's wedding. Chris and Georgina got married at a lovely old villa in the Tuscan hills. We unfortunately had to miss the third wedding, which was held in Norway. Jorgen and Lise, who are for all purposes part of the Bespolka family, exchanged their vows in September in the forest of Nordmarka outside Oslo by a picturesque lake that we had helped scout out - or at least helped discover the "shortcut" not to take to the wedding (sorry to keep everyone waiting for us at Holmenkollen while we found our way out of the forest).



For the summer, the Bespolka family got together to spend almost 3 weeks at La Foce, Tuscany. It was certainly a full villa with 6 children ages 2 – 6 years old and 8 adults who, after the children were in bed, managed nightly to polish off 8 – 10 bottles of well deserved Tuscan wine over delicious home cooked Italian food and great conversation (you know, the "heart-to-heart" stuff). After Tuscany, we spent the rest of the summer first in

Venice and Vienna with Carl (Lars' elder brother) two weeks in Norway. Our plan was to spend 4+ Jotunheimen but the weather wasn't on our side. conquer Bessegen and Bukke Legget before the on us. To those of you who aren't familiar with let's just say that some amount of repelling skills supposedly "easy and relaxing" 5 – 6 hour walk. extra time on our hands before leaving Norway, weekend at Tante Berit's cabin, sailed with Lise on the Oslo Fjord and made a quick visit to the in Hønefoss.



and his family, followed by days trekking in We, however, managed to really bad stuff closed in these mountains, well, were required on a And so, with we spent a Jorgen and Mugaas family



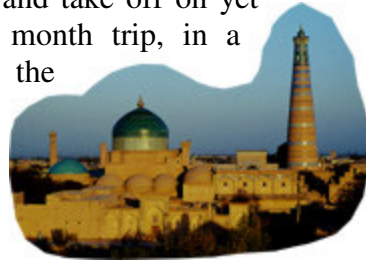
From Norway we flew to London to visit Kevin (Lars' 2nd brother) and his family in Winchester. We had a great 3 weeks getting to know our nieces and nephews better (Jacqui was even bestowed the nickname "bossy-boots") and we hoped we did not outstay our welcome. Kevin celebrated his 40th birthday at home with family and friends (and 3 other birthday boy and girls – Berit, Carl and Jacqui), playing croquette and sipping wine on the lawn – very civilized for a big birthday bash. Whilst in England, we also took the opportunity to visit Oxford (where Lars spent a year at Worcester College), caught up with some fellow travelers from South America, attended Cameron Mills' baptism and drove to Salisbury with Steffi and Olaf, who pleasantly surprised us with their weekend visit to Winchester.





Once we had obtained all the required visas in London (and that is a story in itself), it was time to bid farewell to family and take off on yet another adventure - Central Asia. Our two month trip, in a

Dragoman truck with 14 other people, along the Central Silk Route took us through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan,



Georgia and finally Turkey. For most of the journey we traced the old and well-trodden Silk Road and, without any doubt, it was by far the best trip we've done. The landscape was simply outstanding, from the Mountain Kingdoms of Kyrgyzstan to the underground cities of



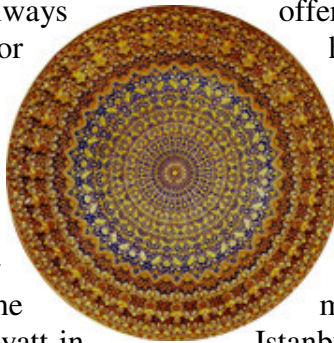
splendor of the ancient Road at such fabled and Khiva such as karavanserais, and Emir's palaces mmmm.... If we thought thought WRONG. Shashlyk, the delightful Georgian cuisine - it the most simple stalls at the bazaar or by the roadside. Beverages? Water is best drunk when NOT dining. Vodka, such as Kazakhstan "firewater" or Russian Stolichnaya, for US\$1 per liter, or the refreshing Georgian



wine, at US\$2.50 for 10 liters, were the drinks of choice - hey, can't go wrong there. Then there are the people. Unbelievable hospitality and friendliness. The door to the yurt was always open.



Food was offered and given freely, even if you weren't destitute. Help was always offered unconditionally. And if you did ask for help, they not only helped get the truck out of the mud, but also offered shelter from the rain and 10 liters of wine for comfort - ahhhh, mustn't forget to mention our shopping galore. Hats, drawings and lastly (but certainly not least) nine carpets! Once again we ended up with the most luggage when our truck dropped us off at the Grand Hyatt in Istanbul. Did anyone say all good things must come to an end?



Well, after that extraordinary trip, we spent some time back home in Kuala Lumpur. There we relaxed and were pleased to play host to Steffi and Olaf, who braved a visit to South East Asia for the first time (and we hope it won't be their last despite all the crazy drivers). We are currently in Florida for the holiday season - we had a great Thanksgiving





with family (Carl and family came and joined us) and friends – Herman Glass, our elementary school principal from AIS in Vienna, even joined us. We are now awaiting the arrival of Kevin and family and it will be good to celebrate Christmas and the entry of the New Year with them. Therefore, like everyone else around the world, we'd like to wish you all a renewed hope, peace and joy for the coming year.

Merry Christmas and a Very Happy 2003 to all!

