

Visit the sensuous, curving surreal architecture of Antoni Gaudi in Spain.

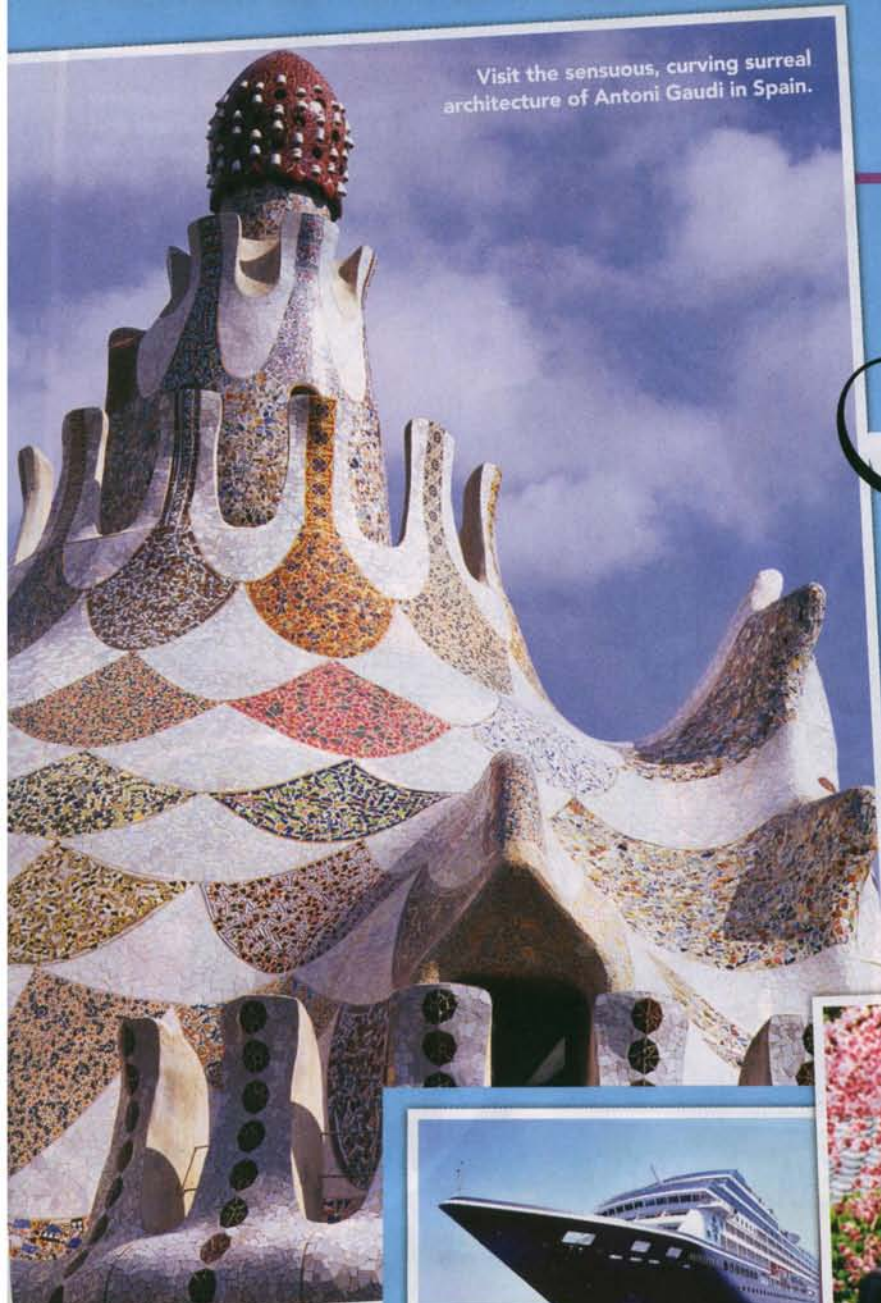


take a trip

With Travel Editor
Andrea Black

Suits YOU!

FROM RUGBY TO GARDENING – IF YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF A FAVOURITE PASTIME, TAKE AN ENRICHING HOBBY HOLIDAY



ART LOVERS

• If your hobby is art, then travel provides the ideal inspiration. Days can be spent in the Louvre in Paris, or you can lose weeks in the city of Florence with Botticelli, da Vinci and Medici as company.

Australian artist Margaret Cowling has a passion for painting and understands the artists' need for changing scenes. She runs Margaret Cowling's Art Tours (www.arttour.com.au), taking would-be Pro Harts, Monets and Picassos to Italy's Venice and Florence, the Cinque Terre or Sicily. Her art tutors specialise in art history and fine painting skills in oils, watercolours and the like.

However, you don't have to paint to appreciate art, which is why Swan Hellenic Discovery Cruising has put together a 14-night Voyage Through the Arts tour on their



Minerva II cruise ship. Imagine docking in hot-blooded Barcelona for Gaudi's architecture or perusing Michelangelo's wares in Italy or the crypt of Vasco da Gama in Portugal. Guest speakers on the ship share their knowledge of art, architecture, history and religion. Visit www.traveltheworld.com.au, or call 1800 226 526. This spectacular tour departs annually.



Go on a tour of the Chelsea Flower Show next year with Graham Ross.

GREEN THUMBS

• Gardening may not be considered a sport, but horticulture is a popular hobby of choice thanks to garden makeover shows such as *Better Homes and Gardens*. Choose from cherry blossoms in Japan, tulip time in the Netherlands, the rose gardens of Scotland and the world famous Chelsea Flower Show in London, an event held every May that attracts the world's best gardeners keen to exhibit their design skills.

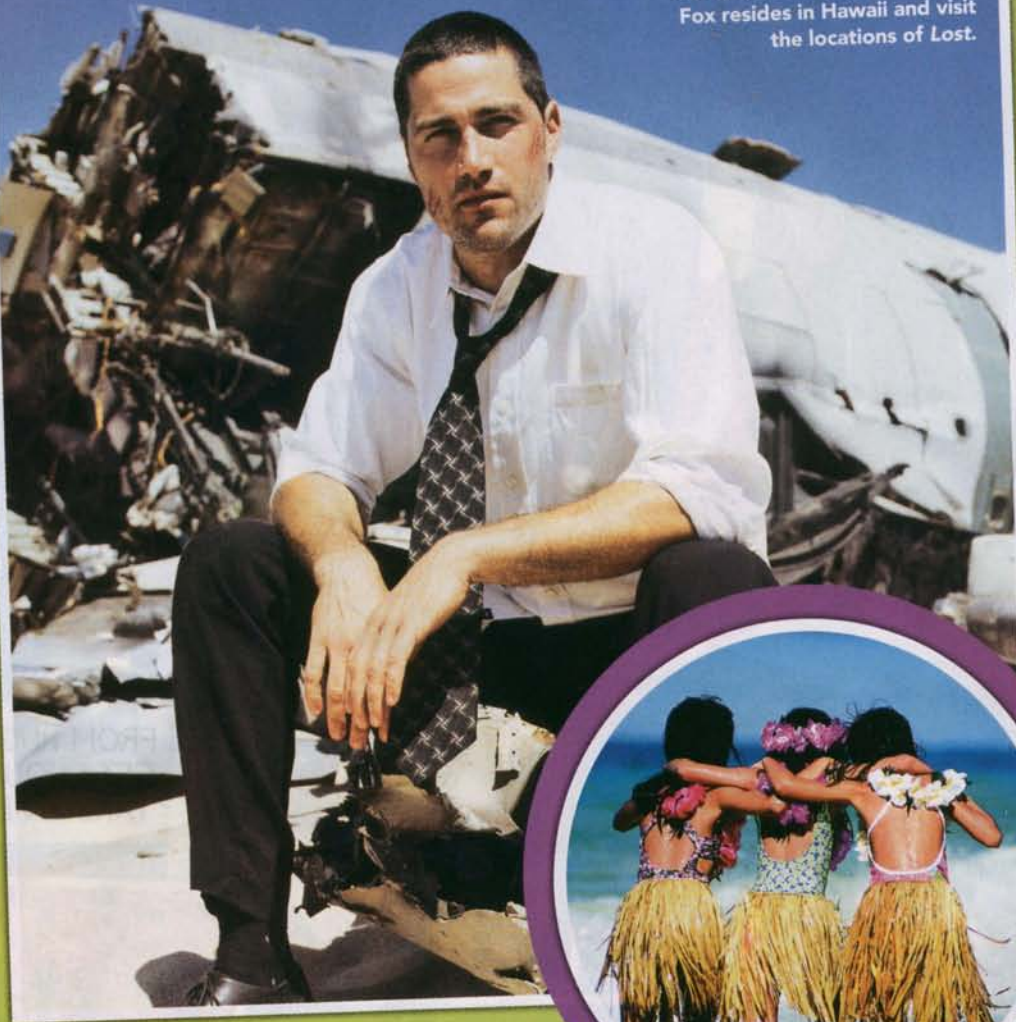
The royal family make their traditional visit on the Monday of the show week, mingling with visitors. So, you could even rub

shoulders with a prince. Each show takes 18 months of planning and includes more than 600 exhibitors who spend an average of \$340,000 on their display.

Green thumbs can also tour with the Seven Network's resident horticulturalist and celebrity gardener Graham Ross, who takes groups far and wide to admire the flora and fauna of the globe, including the Chelsea Flower Show. Book now for your trip to the 2007 show. Call (02) 9484 5100, or visit www.rosstours.com.au.



See where the hunky Matthew Fox resides in Hawaii and visit the locations of *Lost*.



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

● Combine your love of celebrity with your love of travel and take your camera with you to TV and film location mecca, New York City.

Imagine sipping on Cosmopolitans in Samantha's favourite bar or sitting on Carrie's apartment stoop. Scene on TV tours (www.sceneontv.com) has *Sex and the City* groupies salivating over Jimmy Choo shoes within a full day of frivolity.

Obsessed with *The Sopranos* and *Bada Bing*? No problem, there's a tour for you. Film more your thing? Scour the city with experienced guides and check out a restaurant used in *Spider-Man*, or a diner from *Men In Black*. Tours depart daily.

Autograph hunters, head to Kauai, Hawaii, where *Jurassic Park*, *Gilligan's Island* and *Elvis' Blue Hawaii* were filmed, and go on a tour (www.hawaiimovietour.com).

The TV series *Lost* has boosted the economy of the Hawaiian island of Oahu where the popular show is shot. Make your own way to the crash site of Oceanic Flight 815 on

Mokule'ia Beach. Then explore the Ka'a'awa Valley on horseback (www.kualoa.com) and wander the rainforest in search of 'the others'. Pay a visit to the banyan tree where Walt took refuge from the polar bear and Charlie was strung up by Ethan on the West/Green Trail at the Turtle Bay Resort (www.turtlebayresort.com). It's all there on the island – even the cast members, who have bought homes close by. You may bump into hot Matthew Fox at Lanakai on the East Coast, so make sure you take your lippy. Also, visit www.hawaii-tourism.com.au.

TOM'S POSTCARD

'On a mission' holidays are the best! Travel organisations cater specifically to sports nuts, ensuring you have great seats with all the fans together. They do everything – book accommodation and transfers to the games – all you have to do is wake up on time! With major events, you'll need to book early or they'll sell out! Art history tours are also very popular in Europe. All the big galleries have expert English-speaking guides.



Yours
on tour
Tom.

■ This week on *The Great Outdoors*, Shelley cycles through the Netherlands and the world's largest flower garden. Monday 7.30pm on the Seven Network.



You could watch Tiger Woods make eagles and birdies at one of the championship golf courses in Palm Springs, California.

GOOD SPORTS

● If you'd rather watch from the sidelines than work up a sweat, then 2006 and 2007 are bumper years for you. Soccer fans are heading to Germany to see Australia compete for World Cup glory and rugby union followers can support the Wallabies in Paris next year.



Think it's too hard to get tickets?

Think again. Specialist travel companies, such as Greg Ritchie Travel (www.gulliverssportstravel.com.au, or (07) 3878 6722), purchase sporting event tickets in bulk and develop a holiday itinerary around the event and location. Whether it's screaming with the fans at the rugby union, drinking Pimm's at Lord's while watching the cricket or sipping bubbly trackside at the Australian Grand Prix, there's a sporting tour for you.

If golf is more your thing, then head to the United States for the US Masters Tournament. Elite Special Event Tours (www.eliteset.com.au, or 1300 884 891) can fly you and your loved one to North America to witness Tiger and his pals make history. Follow it up with your own round of golf in California's Palm Springs, and stay where celebrity golfers stay, at the salubrious Parker Meridien (www.theparkerpalmsprings.com).