

Our Spring Newsletter – Happy Cycling



Liberation 2024



2024 marks the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of France towards the end of WW2. There are still so many moving pieces and events that commemorate the time in the country's history. It will be a popular part of tours in the Fellow Velo custom calendar, both in Normandy with its famous D-Day Landings beaches and, the perhaps less well known, liberation of Provence in August 1944.



New Season and New Customers



Every season we see new customers and have the opportunity to develop new bespoke tours for them. We have always had lots of customers from the UK but, over all our years, season tours will see our first from Russia. There'll be an excellent route through Bordeaux wine territory, plenty of coastal riding and two main solo riding opportunities to make the season easy. There'll be a good fine line in the north too but we can report on some of those later in the season.

Cycling Prose or Poetry...

The feeling you have when you first get the hang of riding a bicycle never really goes. It doesn't really matter how you learned - with your parents showing encouragement out on the street, or by crawling over a side brother's bike into the driveway, or perhaps secretly, somewhere where no one could see you!

There's something about the rightness of bikes that our body recognises whenever you are. It recognises something that your mind may not. That bikes are really just about two things - simplicity and joy.

An extract from:
The Bicycle Book by Boris Beahm

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Fellow Velo Valentine's Newsletter 2024



Fellow Velo

Cycle... Friendly... France

For the love of cycling... Newsletter issue: Feb/Mar 2024



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We've had a few solo cycling adventures ourselves but, if we're honest about it, our best cycling memories have come from adventures together with bikes that we have also fallen in love with :) The photos above and below are from the long tour that we took some years ago. It was out of their experience (a little closer to the end than the beginning) that we decided to start Fellow Velo.



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Merry Christmas



Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and, hopes for great cycling adventures in 2024 :-)

Our 2023 End of Season Newsletter



Our Spring Newsletter



Fellow Velo
Cycle... Friendly... France

We fitted in a Fellow Velo holiday. Newsletter Issue: April/May 2023



Just before our main holiday season started, we managed to fit in a little holiday for ourselves, along with the story about cycling less when you run a small cycle company: your own holidays tend to be built around those of others and, fitted in where and when you can ... but we mustn't and definitely aren't grumbling! Not too long after our Valentine's cycle-camping trip along the Rievnet and Auvon (in the last newsletter), we also had a trip to Porto and so, a little feature in this edition, particularly on planning and logistics.

We have quite a few customers who travel from all over the world with their own bikes in tow. It's great to have your cycling adventures on a bike that you know and trust but, that whole travel process is not without its planning issues and the little anxieties that go along with bagging or boxing up your precious bike for its own adventure.

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We began from France and so, flew from Nice to Porto for about twelve days. For us, this was a trip away before the Fellow Velo season really started, a holiday with bikes along for the ride, rather than a cycling holiday but, it still required the same kind of planning – the sort of trip where packing for the bike turns out to need so much more time and care than all the other (more limited) luggage.



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The particular bikes we took on this trip weren't our most precious ones but, you still want a fully functioning bike when you get to your destination! Padded semi-rigid bike bags were used on this trip: we packed with wheels, handlebars, pedals and rear derailleur removed (the derailleur wrapped up and taped within the frame space) and, a little extra padding under the chainrings. We don't often make long trips with our own bikes on flights or trains but, it was good to remind ourselves of those logistical things that you need to have covered.

- The travel to and from the airport
- Being able to transport your bikes some distance inside and outside
- Whether or not you can access public transport with your bikes
- Getting to your accommodation at the other end
- Accommodation, not just with bike storage but also a place to rebuild them

Of course we had that little sort of anxiety about the bikes' safety and security in transit but, all went well on this trip on the way out and back – it's a little less of faith and, definitely not something to be afraid of. We only rode on a third of our days in and around Porto but, it did mean that we were able to explore the coast and the Douro Valley, somewhat more than we might have done on a standard city-break. Perhaps predictably, the Porto experience was as much a focus of our holiday as the cycling along the way.

If you have ever thought of a cycling adventure with your own bike along for the ride, don't be scared to take that leap – and we're happy to help.

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Feb/Mar 2023 Newsletter



Nov 22 Newsletter – Do you get weekends off?

Our April-May 2022 Newsletter

Fellow Velo
Cycle... Friendly... France

Spring spring early for Fellow Velo Newsletter Issue: April/May 2022



It's not often that our French cycling season starts so early... our first customers of the new season were a lovely father and daughter who braved the Gorges du Verdon in March. Far from being our first such combination, they were though, a little more intrepid than some... the thermometer read 2°C as they started to ride from 1300 metres in a very light flurry of snow. We've been in this location so many times and, in temperatures much lower than that but, never with Fellow Velo customers on bikes. The Gorges du Verdon still never fails to reward though and, they had a fantastic ride all the way through to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, one of France's Plus Beaux Villages... more of Moustiers to follow. Just like us and our current customers, Provence is definitely waking up for Spring.

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A little Spring collage from the Gorges du Verdon and Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, including an evening Venetian Procession at Easter.



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Moustiers-Sainte-Marie at Easter

Like so many of the France's villages throughout the year, small and charming festivals and fairs abound. Our current customers are on a 13 day tour that started in the Gorges du Verdon and, they're slowly winding their way through the Var, to end along the Provence coast to Saint Tropez and Santa Maxime. The timing of their tour meant an overnight stay in the beautiful village of Moustiers on Easter weekend. While they were there that meant an opportunity to take in a free Venetian concert in the church of Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption on the Saturday evening, followed by a candle lit Venetian Procession through the narrow village streets. Music was played through the village as the procession travelled serenely on its way. Once it reached the little square by the church, the costumed members of the procession drew young and old from the gathered congregation to dance until dark. Well, related that Saturday night, our customers were then up for an atmospheric Easter Sunday Mass before they were back in the saddle and gliding across the Valerade Plateau.



Pedalling Poetry or Prose....

A Spider Bought a Bicycle
A spider bought a bicycle
And had it painted black
He started off along the road
With an easing on his back
He sent the spider round on feet
He travelled all the day
Then he took the string off
And put the bike away

Our weather Defiance
Over 90% of our bikes are bespoke to some degree and that can also mean that we will modify our bikes to suit each customer's needs. Defiance (above) has recently become a kind of 'Dutch' style cross-country hybrid bike.

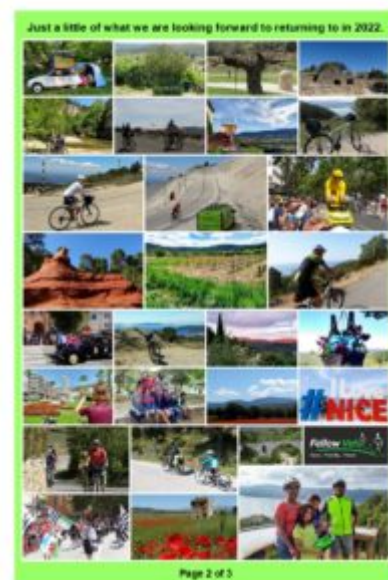


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Our Christmas Newsletter



Merry Christmas to All

Our November 2021 Newsletter

Plenty of photos in our latest newsletter – looking forward to our 2022 season.



Fellow Velo

Cycle... Friendly... France

A Little More Power Please... Newsletter Issue: Nov 2021



We managed a great half season this year too, a good bit more than in last year and looking at it seems that we haven't forgotten how to do what we love doing. It also means that we have been left with real confidence for cycle touring holidays in 2022. A slightly longer newsletter but, with more stories than words. After each of our tours, Fellow Velo customers receive a collage of photos from their holiday tour. Three of these from this year follow in the coming pages and, in their own words, the reviews from the people we met and shared some time with in Provence. Each of these tours had a 'first' for us: not climbing with a tour for a disabled cyclist (the redoubtable Martin and Inge), our first Swedish customers who we called 'Five Guys not Named Bo' (though one of them was) and, the charming Ritchie and Odile (they had a great trip and like so many customers, they said they'll be back - they were - 25 days later they became our quickest turn-around repeat customers).

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Martin and Inge's Fellow Velo Collage



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Five Guys Not Named Bo - Fellow Velo Collage



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Our Review from Martin and Inge

I was looking for a bike where - a kind of Tensing Hargay type to bring a handbagged guy in his wheelchair and he attached a handbag (think about 200g) with a small motor and his summer legs with him a bike over some hills in the hinterland of St Tropez. We were looking for one and we got two - Andy and Janel. After some emails about the how and when we met and had a wonderful day - everything fell just right - we were done the second time before. Andy has a natural gift to give others a feeling of being secured and helped and Janel has the ability to just appear there where you might think to need a bottle of cool water or a charged battery or a supporting wheel. The second tour with them along the coast road from St Martin to Cannes was like the first one - everything just worked fine and we had a perfect day. Andy built a wooden platform with a ramp for the wheelchair so I could get into the van - what a difference the look forward to next year for five other tours with Andy and Janel in the hinterland of the Côte d'Azur.

Our Review from the 'Five Guys Not Named Bo'

We have taken a bike tour every year for over 20 years, in Sweden and in a number of other European countries. We have bought packages as well as organized tours ourselves. Now it was time for Provence, the fourth time in France. We decided for FellowVelo and a bespoke tour to reflect it to our preferences. It was an excellent tour, one of the best, with a good combination of climbing, flat cycling and downhill, carefully selected by Janel and Andy. The first day started in the dramatic Verdon Gorge and we spent 4 days cycling in the mountain area. After that we had a transfer to FellowVelo's residence to the coastal area, where we cycled for 2 additional days. A very good combination to see different parts of Provence. All the hotels were very good, small and personalized, which we appreciate. We also appreciated all the restaurant recommendations and bookings we got. It was an excellent service by Janel and Andy to take care of us, beyond what you normally can expect. We happily recommend FellowVelo to other cyclists. Specifically for their excellent response time and for their outstanding service.

Our Review from Ritchie and Odile

We found FellowVelo as we searched for a self-guided bike tour in France; and boy are we glad we did. Andy and Janel were amazing and organized an unbelievable experience through Provence. The accommodations were great, the bikes were perfect and the support we received from FellowVelo made this trip unforgettable. The routes that they chose really highlighted the best of Provence, the area and of the French Riviera. The views were spectacular and the bike paths really conquered. I don't know how we could have done this trip without them. We are intermediate bikers and managed to get to the places we wanted to see in less time than we had anticipated. Our trip was so good we are already planning our return next year. Thanks Andy and Janel.

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Ritchie and Odile - So Good, They Rode It Twice



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Cycling Prose or Poetry

Who Was Major Taylor?

"Life is too short for a man to hold bitterness in his heart."
Marshall W. "Major" Taylor

American bicycle racer Marshall Walter "Major" Taylor (1876-1932) was the world's first black sports superstar. He was world cycling champion in 1899, American sprint champion in 1900, and set numerous track cycling records. Nicknamed "Major" in his youth in Indianapolis and later known as "The Wonder Wheelman" after his adopted hometown in Massachusetts, he was the second African-American world champion in any sport (after Canadian-born sambo wrestler Louis George Dixon of Boston won his title in 1891). In the Jim Crow era of strict racial segregation, Taylor had to fight prejudice just to get on the starting line. He faced closed doors and open hostility with remarkable dignity in his retirement. He wrote his autobiography, "The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World."

Looking Forward to 2022

We are now looking forward to our 2022 cycling season in France and happily our calendar is already booking up. We have many loyal customers who are looking forward to seeing us in more and more areas who have been waiting through 2020 and 2021 for the cycling holidays that they had to put on hold. At this stage, we do still have the capacity for new 2022 customers but, if you have a cycling dream for next year, this is a great time to really start your planning. The dreaming and planning is a wonderful part of the holiday experience as well.

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DISCUSSION

TO THE FIRST CYCLIST WHO RODE, "LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR A MAN TO HOLD BITTERNESS IN HIS HEART," MARSHALL W. "MAJOR" TAYLOR. HIS BIOGRAPHY REMAINS THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD. HIS BIOGRAPHY REMAINS THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD. HIS BIOGRAPHY REMAINS THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD.



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