



# Press Release

Contact: Ann McDonnell

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Scott Bell

Phone: (630) 257-5703

## **BARGE VACATIONS: POPULARITY RISES - PRICES STAY THE SAME 2003 VACATIONS AVAILABLE AT 2002 PRICES**

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Steady growth of the barge vacation industry left many would-be cruisers wishing they had planned in advance. Limited inventory and robust demand has created a trend of waitlisted cruisers for 3 years running. “Barge cruising continues to grow in popularity and 2003 is rapidly shaping up as another terrific year” said Ann McDonnell, company spokesperson for The Barge Experts™.

“We have been reserving 2003 at a brisk pace in response to our ‘2003 at 2002 prices’ offer we placed on our website [www.BargeExperts.com]. “Barging is easily recognized as a truly great value in the boutique vacations category and people simply don’t want to miss out on offers like these” commented McDonnell.

Scott Bell, President of The Barge Experts™ is a travel industry veteran and has not been surprised about the growing popularity of barging. “We opened our doors with the belief that barging demand would grow because of the changing needs of well traveled people. We listened to them tell of their desire to have more personal vacation experiences and barging fits that bill.” Bell continued, “The essence of a barge experience comes down to three things - It is a vacation filled with exceptional food and wine – It is easy access to quaint villages and landscapes and it is intimate, relaxing and warm ambiance on board the barge itself.” Bell also points out the importance of solid relationships with the barge owner/operators themselves who are a “uniquely wonderful breed”. “Our relationships with our barge operators span several decades and we never tire of their extraordinary sense of exploration. It’s not the barge that makes the vacation exceptional, it’s the creativity of the staff on board and their ability to respond to the adventurous needs typical of a barge vacationer.”

John Liley, renowned author and operator of ‘Barge Luciole’ supports Bell’s assertion that creative barge staffs have fueled the popularity of barging. “Our most successful cruises have a degree of

improvisation and of gentle adventure, and I do like to vary our itineraries somewhat, rather than stick to too rigid a schedule. Barge cruising, does not easily respond to hype, which makes the job of those purveying it a little bit harder. But this, surely, is the strength of barging” said Liley.

The Barge Experts™ specialize EXCLUSIVELY in European canal and river cruising aboard enchanting barges that were built to accommodate the standards of well traveled Americans. The Barge Experts™ continue to gain recognition from experienced vacationers as “best in class” vacation planners as well as extensive acknowledgements of an extraordinary website.

The Barge Experts™ is a wholly owned subsidiary of privately held Elations Travel Group, LLC and operates in joint venture with Europe Express, one of America’s most respected travel concerns. Elations Travel Group’s mission is “To provide extraordinary service and perspective to our customers as they pursue renewal, expansion and celebration through travel.”

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