



MY EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE
TRAVEL STORIES BY AZORCAN TOUR PASSENGERS



Oilers Fan Tour - Sweden 2018
World Juniors - Czech 2020

by Marty Forbes



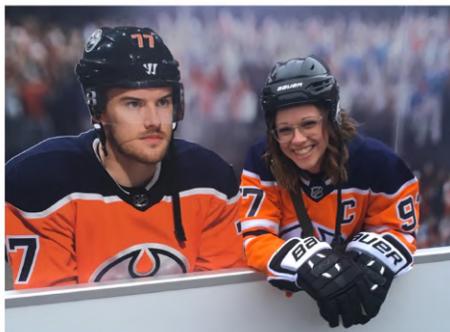
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Two Great Hockey Fan Tours by Marty Forbes

If you're checking the [Azorcan webpage](#), like me, you're probably dreaming about travelling the world again. I've missed two river cruises this past year as I had hoped to add to my '29 country' list that I've been fortunate enough to see over the years.

So, as you continue to dream, let me tell you all about travelling with Azorcan Sport, School & Sightseeing Tours and hopefully answer any questions you may have about this great company!

First off, it's wonderful. Worry free. Enlightening. Educational. Fun. Enjoyable.



NHL Global Series in Gothenburg, Sweden. Lauren Forbes on the Oilers bench and with dad, Marty.

I've gone on two trips so far with Paul Almeida, and one included his lovely wife Jan, and son Matteo.

The first was to Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, to see the Edmonton Oilers play the New Jersey Devils in Gothenberg, Sweden. I took my daughter Lauren for that great trip.

The second was to the World Junior Hockey Championships, in the Czech Republic, travelling with my long time friend Bryn Griffiths, who did special ***2020 World Juniors Podcasts*** with Paul throughout the trip chronicling our adventures to families and folks back home.

The one overriding thing I'd like to highlight on these tours is..."worry free."

The second you hand off your luggage to the group at the Airport you are taken care of with first class service and care from Paul and his team throughout the entire tour until your arrival back home.



Prior to the 2020 WJ some of the group went early to spend a few days in Prague. We toured the city, visited the Christmas markets, enjoyed a medieval dinner and an evening dinner cruise.

Several months prior to the trip(s) Azorcan hosts a get together with his team and attendees on the trip. At this evening you are given all the information that is needed to fully enjoy the trip and all the offerings.

You're handed nice surprise gifts; and they go over each and every detail so you can safely travel overseas to these events.

As well you get to meet others on the trip and chances are you'll already know somebody OR hookup with someone similar to you.



*Oilers Fans at the Scandinavium Arena before the Oilers Devils game in Gothenburg, Sweden.
A group photo in Copenhagen, Denmark during our city tour*

I'm a big European river cruise fan, and Paul runs his trips in a very similar manner.

You have your 'game days' (or special events) that are scheduled, but on the off days there is always something special going on.

These include side trips to some amazing places. UNESCO World Heritage sites; old town city centres; legendary churches, memorials, and museums that are nothing short of stunning and historically important.

You travel in very comfortable European buses, and depending on the length of the trip, you'll often have refreshments and food (complimentary) on board.

As well, and this is really important, Paul employ's tour guides from the actual areas you are touring. This is important as most often on trips like this you're shuffled off to a tour bus, handed those awful headphones that are barely audible, and there is no interaction what so ever with the guide on board.



*At our Azorcan Christmas Party, our guides Klara and Ludek talk about Czech Christmas traditions.
Christmas party crazy characters: Marty Forbes, Bryn Griffiths, Paul Almeida and Rob Hislop.
The live band at the New Year's Party.*

I'm a "front of the bus" guy and always sit with these folks, asking them not only about what we are about to see but about their lives; how they grew up; what they like/dislike about the country they live in; have they ever been to Canada or North America and their opinions of OUR country.

To a one these people all have great personalities and many speak several different languages. In countries with little or no English these chats really enhance your experience.

The history is so rich in Europe that you need this kind of attention to truly benefit from being in that part of the world.

On our Czech trip, our guide Ludek grew up in the former Communist country and I "gently" asked if he would be comfortable talking about his life. He graciously chatted with me on each trip allowing me to learn so much about a very different kind of life from what we experience in North America.

As well, on all Azorcan tours, there are a few semi "surprises" that happen on the road. Paul teases that you're about to visit the Hartwall Arena, home of the Finnish National Hockey Team and the KHL's Jokerit, in Helsinki but fails to tell you the entire hockey team management are on hand, as well as a famous ex Edmonton Oiler legend Jari Kurri, who most graciously chats with each and every person, allows pictures to be taken, then takes you in to the arena to watch the team practice.



Our group watching Jokerit practice with team GM and Oilers' legend Jari Kurri in Helsinki. The group after enjoying lunch at the Orenas Castle in Sweden, and by the Poseidon statue in Gothenburg.

On our Czech trip side trips were to Vienna, Austria (stunning city); Salzburg, Austria (home of The Sound of Music) and the Red Bull Museum. In Munich, Germany we had our own private room at the home of Oktoberfest, the Hofbrauhaus.



Marty Forbes and Bryn Griffiths in one of Marty's favourite cities, Vienna, Austria. The Red Bull Hanger 7 in Salzburg, Austria and the city hall in Munich, Germany.

During the World Juniors we had a free day between the quarter-finals and the semi-finals. When several guests inquired about heading to Poland for the day, Azorcan was able to add an optional tour to Krakow that included an emotional stop at Auschwitz.

Of the 300 people on the trip about 120 of us departed early for Poland and spent the morning in this most overwhelming place. Barely a word is spoken as you wander through the most horrid of buildings you can imagine.

Millions lost their lives. Their pictures and bios are on the hallway walls. Their possessions (combs, shoes, eye glasses, brief cases, hats, etc) are all piled on top of each other in private glass covered displays.

The most ominous moments were standing in the actual gas chambers where these people lost their lives.

A few other trip details for you to know:

The hotels used are all superb. Euro hotel ratings differ from North American structures, however, each and every hotel used was very comfortable; and Paul and team tries each time to have your room keys ready for pick up to avoid long line ups. These hotels have long relationships with Azorcan and value the business greatly.



During the WJ Tour we have a few pregame tours including the Bouzov Castle in the Czech Republic. Our day trip to Poland included a somber visit to the Auschwitz WWII Camp and Krakow.

Almost every evening there is something going on at the Hotel, or nearby, and that's where the fun happens when guests bond with each other and join in the fun. Check out our crazy Christmas photo with crazy hats.



2020 WJ podcasters, Bryn Griffiths and Paul Almeida. Canada and Czech Republic listen to our anthem after Canada won 7-2. Party at the Azorcan Hospitality suite at the hotel after Canada won the gold medal on January 5, 2020.

English can be a challenge at some places so you're best to do a little studying before you go. Just the basics....but most often you'll find somebody to help you in any city/town that you stop. Translator apps can also be of assistance.

Different languages can be an adventure but it's part of the fun of exploring different cultures.

No need to bring anything you don't need, like jewellery, etc. Rooms almost always have secure safes available.

Remember to carry your passport "everywhere." On our trip in to Germany Border Guards stopped two of our tour buses, letting two go by without stopping. On the bus they're simply looking for your Passports and Identification, so it's important.

With covid now being a factor in world travel Paul will keep you up to date on any special requirements requested in any country and remember each country can differ greatly. Sign up for his newsletter so you don't miss out on anything!

Finally, if you haven't liked the ***Azorcan Facebook*** page please do so. There are tons of "free samples" from past trips, as well as up to date information on all activities. Guests are encouraged to post, or share, their pictures on the site.

At any time I'd be happy to be a reference and answer any questions you may have about my adventures.

More are planned...hopefully sooner rather than later.

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Paul Almeida
President
azorcan.net

2023 Get on the **PRIORITY LIST** for Russia and Sweden 2024
World Junior Fans

Sightseeing Schools Corp. Incentive Sport Fans

Hockey Ringette Soccer Other Sport

The banner features a grid of images: a man in a blue shirt by a river, a group of people in front of a building, a large classical building, a group of people in red sportswear, a hockey player in a red jersey, a person in a blue and black ringette uniform, three people in soccer uniforms, and a group of people in various sportswear.

A Note From Azorcan's Paul Almeida

Thank you Marty for contributing to our "My European Experience" travel stories from Azorcan tour passengers. I really enjoy the fan tours to the World Juniors and look forward to Russia 2023 and Sweden 2024. I hope to do more fan tours to hockey, soccer and other sporting events in Europe.

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