



Watch the final stage of the Tour along the Champs Élysées.



ULTIMATE spinning

BE BOTH TOUR RIDER AND VIEWER IN FRANCE THIS SUMMER

For three weeks in July, cycling becomes France's national pastime. If you've ever fantasized about watching the likes of Lance Armstrong, then hopping on a bike and giving some of the routes a go yourself, Butterfield & Robinson has tailored a week-long bike excursion that follows the Alpine stages of the Tour de France.

After five days in the mountains ogling super-fit competitors and pedalling the mountain route (when you run out of steam, a comfy van is never far away), the trip zips to Paris in time for the Tour's final stage along the Champs

Élysées and the dramatic finish. Lots of exercise (the average Tour rider burns 123,900 calories during the race, although you'll likely use less) and local wine is guaranteed, plus tête-à-tête time with winemaker and guide Mark Fincham who rides the hills of Provence every day and has a hair-raising tale to tell about watching Armstrong nip Ivan Basso in the Pyrenees at Plateau de Beille. Perfectly tuned bikes, cozy hotels and a bon vivant lifestyle are included. This year's trip also features the highest-ever Alpine stage finish (butterfield.com).

SUMMER MISSION

Driving up to Mission Hill in Kelowna, B.C., one could be forgiven for thinking of Napa, Sonoma or even Mendoza. This top winery, which includes a \$35 million estate building complete with a bell tower and Chagall tapestry, is easily among the best in the world. It being summer, I was drawn to the renowned Terrace Restaurant. Here, chef Matthew Batey has turned food into haute couture by finely tailoring each dish using ingredients sourced from local farms, orchards and the winery's bountiful garden. The restaurant's 180-degree view over meticulously tended vines, Okanagan Lake and perfectly placed mountains enhances the alfresco experience, made especially delicious when a warm breeze blows up from the water. Perfect pairings for each course are suggested by the sommelier, whose affability makes him feel more like an old friend. Don't miss the recently added lunch and learn, which includes a private tour of the cellar, garden and vineyard. Also new is the Ultimate Oculus Experience with flights of the winery's limited-release signature wine and a bottle to take home (mission-hillwinery.com).



Magnificent Mission Hill



Amp up your canoe cred.

NORMAN WHO?

Situated on the mighty Mackenzie River, the town of Norman Wells may not be on most traveller's maps. But with Canoe North Adventures' base in the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories, scheduled to have its grand opening in July, this part of the country is much more accessible for those of us who like to soak up nature while perfecting our J-stroke. "The people who find us love the wilderness and have a tiny wish in the back of their minds to do something bigger, like paddling the Far North of Canada," says owner Lin Ward. "I'm not talking about fitness buffs wearing all the right clothes, but those who adore the outdoors." In addition to a new comfortable lodge (a much-longed-for post-canoe trip perk), the region boasts clear turquoise water, no portages and no bugs! Women's trips are popular (canoenorthadventures.com).