

A VACATION COCKTAIL

By Fred Hobbs

Too many choices and elements come to mind in trying to fashion the content of a single dream vacation. Combining the best seems to make the most sense. Drawing from previous experiences, I can imagine a mix of three actual scenarios that would produce at least a *dreamy* if not a *dream* vacation for me. A vacation cocktail, if you please!

The four specific ingredients in all three experiences would be beautiful scenery, great food, thought-provoking “sites” and the opportunity to do absolutely nothing! Most of all, the vacation cocktail would have to be shared with a pleasant companion.

My late wife was my pleasant (charming and beautiful, too) companion during these occasions. First example: the cruise we took on the Baltic Sea to Scandinavia and St. Petersburg, Russia.

The cruise started in Copenhagen with its beautiful gardens and parks and the famous “Little Mermaid” sculpture. Other ports of call included Stockholm, Helsinki and Tallinn, Estonia with its picturesque Old Town district. A stop at Warnemunde, on the coast of East Germany, included a one-day side trip to Berlin by train. The ship docked for three days at St. Petersburg. Shore excursions included a visit to the famed Hermitage, the Winter Palace and the Peter and Paul Cathedral. We were treated to a concert in a hall built during the Communist regime with hard wooden benches and poor lighting.

Throughout the trip, “good eats” and plenty of it on board the ship and the chance to sit on deck and enjoy the beauty of the sea and the shores of Scandinavia.

Another water-based ingredient of my vacation cocktail would be a return barge trip through the canals of Belgium and Holland. To relax as the 16-passenger boat floated down past colorful homes and gardens was a real treat; just doing nothing except occasionally returning waves from friendly residents on shore.

The trip was from Bruges, Belgium to Amsterdam. Before departing, the barge Captain escorted the passengers to the Bruges City Center. While he shopped at a local market for the evening’s delicious dinner, we enjoyed watching a parade down the cobble-stoned streets. Marchers passed by wearing colorful costumes depicting the history of the town, dating back to the 12th century. My *dreamy* vacation would surely include a return visit to Bruges and also to Amsterdam with its many attractions and congenial Hollanders.

The final ingredient in a Dream Vacation cocktail surely would include a few days in Frisco...Frisco, Colorado; specifically, at the Cross Creek Condominium Complex. In the comfort of an easy chair with *real* logs burning in the fireplace, I could view the snow-covered pines and spruces surrounding the chilled waters of Ten Mile Creek. Then, I could put on my boots and winter jacket and stroll “down town” along Main street stopping at the Butterhorn for a baked goodie or sandwich and a cup of coffee. I’ve stayed at Cross Creek a dozen or so times over the years; my extended family even had a reunion there.

It’s doubtful I’ll ever mix all the elements in my *dreamy* vacation cocktail again.

But to paraphrase the line shared by the star-crossed lovers in the movie, *Casablanca*, I’ll always have Frisco!