

Town & Country TRAVEL

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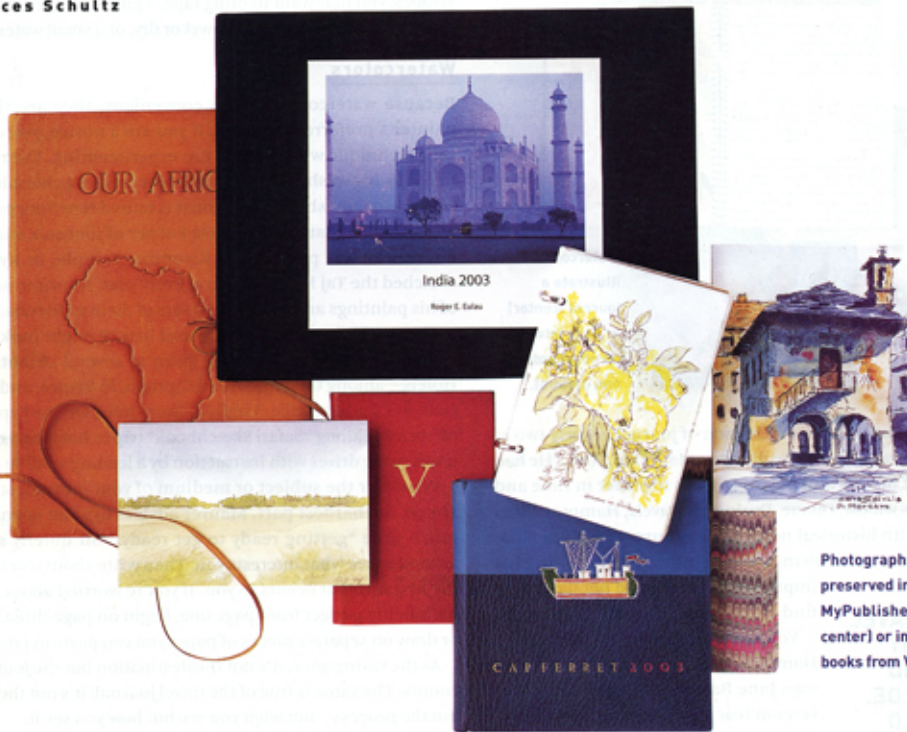
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Capturing the Experience

Give your travel memories longevity with these clever ways of documenting a trip, from writing verse to painting.

by Frances Schultz



Photographs may be preserved in an album from MyPublisher.com (top center) or in leather-bound books from Vogel Bindery.

Marcel Proust, who knew a thing or two about remembrance, said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." The voyage is fleeting, however, and to retain our memories of it, we must record them. A travel journal, in whatever form, is not only a remembrance but a way to share the trip with others. Moreover, because the very act of keeping a journal alerts and engages the senses, it forces us to see with new eyes. And that, as Proust says, is the point.

Photo Albums

Perhaps the most straightforward way to document a trip is to photograph it. Roger Eulau, a New York real estate executive and the husband of Sherri Donghia, design director of Donghia Furniture/Textiles, has been making books of photographs for more

than twenty years. If you're lucky, he says, "as a photographer, you immediately become embraced by the people and places you visit, and afterward the books give you the ability to relive and share that with others." Now, with the wizardry of digital scanning, computer programs such as Photoshop and on-line bookmaking services like MyPublisher.com, Eulau's books are not only beautiful but also professional-looking.

Be sure to make duplicates of all your photographs so you'll have a set to cut and paste and a set to archive. Also, label them as soon as possible. The name of a picturesque church or a quaint little village is far too easily forgotten. You might include in the album other mementos, or notes written on the pages next to the photos or on separate pieces of paper you paste in.

Journals and Sketchbooks

Although written journals and drawings are separate media, they may be quite naturally combined. A case in point is the almost

Strategies & Tactics



Watercolors can illustrate a journal (center) or be printed on note cards (left and bottom).

staggeringly comprehensive collection of journals—forty-two at final count—created by the late designer Mark Hampton. “He had a real sense of history and of tying things together in time and place,” says his widow, Duane. During his travels, Hampton filled his volumes with historical notes and restaurant recommendations, as well as with drawings and paintings. In revisiting his impressions, Duane and her daughters find an enduring connection to him.

“I NEVER TRAVEL WITHOUT MY DIARY,” SAID OSCAR WILDE. “ONE SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING SENSATIONAL TO READ.”

You needn’t be as talented as Mark Hampton to record your responses this way. Jane Barton, a Tucson artist and veteran teacher of travel-journal keeping, sometimes jots down her thoughts in small notebooks, as a scientist would take field notes. One page might be about language; another, just colors; another, food. “Tune in to your senses,” says Florence B. Hill, a New Jersey illustrator and journal-writing teacher. “How did the wind feel? What did the ice cream taste like?” Focus on the details by drawing a flower, for example. Or simply write words or phrases describing whatever catches your eye. “You’d be surprised at how it all comes together to form a fascinating big picture,” Hill says. “Don’t be intimidated, and try to do a little every day.”

Scrapbooks

Jane Barton’s own journals range from simple accordion-folded booklets to elaborate assemblages of drawings, paintings, prose and other memorabilia, complete with envelopes glued into the books at various points to hold odds and ends. During her travels,

she organizes mementos in envelopes, one for each day or city; from this stash she selects items to include in her collage. It’s a good idea, she says, to leave some pages empty so you can go back and fill them in later with notes or souvenirs. She also advises keeping materials simple. In addition to a notebook and envelopes, you may want to bring tape, a glue stick, pens and watercolor pencils that can be used wet or dry, or a small watercolor set.

Watercolors

Because watercolors are so convenient, they are the travel painter’s preferred medium. If you are a novice, you can hone your technique while having fun experimenting. Even a simple line drawing washed with a bit of color creates a charming effect.

One accomplished watercolorist is retired New York publishing executive Gil Maurer, a tireless keeper of journals and sketchbooks who has painted the Kiyomizu Temple, in Kyoto, and sketched the Taj Mahal, in Agra. Every year, he prints note cards of his paintings and gives boxed sets of them to friends.

Those who love both nature and luxury might look into the classes in botanical painting given at several Orient-Express Hotels—among them the Hotel Cipriani, in Venice, and Keswick Hall, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Every June, Orient-Express also offers a weeklong “Safari Sketchbook” trip to Botswana that combines game drives with instruction by a leading wildlife artist.

Whatever the subject or medium of your journal, starting is always the hardest part. Maurer advises against spending too much time “getting ready to get ready.” Sit quietly and look around to see what interests you. Then write about it or draw it in the first way that occurs to you. If you’re worried about the journal’s being perfect from page one, begin on page three. Or write or draw on separate pieces of paper you can paste in later.

As the saying goes, it’s not the destination but the journey that counts. The same is true of the travel journal: it’s not the product but the process—not what you see but how you see it. ✕

CREATIVE TOOLS

With your own photos and text, you can design books using **MyPublisher.com**, which will print the finished product. From \$29.95, for a ten-page book.

Louise Kollenbaum’s delightful *Souvenirs de Voyage: A Traveler’s Keepsake Book* (Chronicle Books; \$22.95) contains lined and blank pages as well as glassine envelopes.

Smythson of Bond Street (866-769-8476) sells leather-bound watercolor sets in two sizes, for \$970 and \$1,080.

Jeanie Engelbach of New York, a.k.a. PhotoJeanie (917-553-8600), will organize your photos into albums or scrapbooks, starting at \$60 an hour.

Paul and Abigail Vogel, of Vogel Bindery (631-329-3106), in East Hampton, do custom binding and boxing, creating elegant finished products. \$1,000 and up per project.

Orient-Express Hotels master classes in painting (orient-express.com) are open to students of all skill levels but limit the number of attendees. Five-day trips start at \$3,000.