

Go Green this summer!

Trains and Boats beat Planes!

Are you fed up with the early morning shuttle through Gatwick, often then with a coach to Heathrow and yet another flight onto the Continent?

How many times must you be searched, often removing your belts and shoes, as you progress through all the security checks and all the queues?

When you finally arrive at your destination airport you find you are "expensive" miles from the city centre and are again forced to drag your case to another shuttle bus. All this is provided the fog did not delay you, causing you to miss your connection on that other airline who then tell you to pay again as your ticket is non transferable!

There is a better way.

Hop on the early ferry to St. Malo and enjoy a comfortable, leisurely train journey across France on one of the superb SNCF "very fast trains".

Commencing 10 June 2007, French railways have added a whole new system to their TGV network which enables you to travel quickly, not just to the major towns and cities in France, but through to Germany, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland.

And when they say fast they mean it. A recent test run on the Paris - Strasbourg route achieved speeds in excess of 357 kilometres an hour. Trains on this route are expected to average over 200 miles an hour.

So, for example, from Rennes to Strasbourg (on the German border) now takes only four hours., and there are good onward connections to Munich. From Strasbourg you can access all the ferry trips along the Rhine and the Danube.

You can leave Jersey at 7.15am on HD ferries and be in Paris by direct train from St. Malo at 2.15pm (French time). You can leave Paris the following day at 5.05pm and be back in Jersey on HD Ferries by 10.15pm.

Avignon in Provence is 5 hours from Rennes and Marseilles and the South of France is only 6 hours. France's beautiful second city of Lyons is only 4.5 hours from Rennes and Lille is only 4 hours with connections on to Amsterdam and Brussels.

There are excellent discounts for families, senior citizens and groups. Go France have pioneered group travel from Jersey through France by SNCF and are experts in organising rail journeys throughout Europe for both individuals and groups.

So, next time, take the stress-free way across France. Admire the countryside in your luxury carriage, stroll to the buffet car for a glass of wine and give yourself a pat on the back for "going green" and saving lots of carbon emissions.

Take the HD Ferry/TGV train from St. Helier and Go France the easy way!



Simply the Best



As a small child Catherine Best loved being in the outdoors, creating things out of wood in her father's workshop. Today her name is synonymous with beautiful jewellery, but she traces her interest back to those early days of childhood.

"I used to make snail houses and tiny wooden coffins for dead birds, I really enjoyed making things and would lose myself totally when I was out there making them," says Catherine.

So, the die was cast on what was to become a high-octane career that took off almost from the moment she left college in the UK to return to her home in Guernsey. She was, she admits, in a hurry to get going on what was to become the great driving force of her life.

At the beginning of her training, Catherine was adamant that she would do things her way. "I suppose I have always been a bit of a rebel. When they teach you how to design jewellery you're supposed to use base metals, but I couldn't see the point. I decided that, if I was going to spend all that amount of time making a piece, it should be the real thing! Otherwise at the end of the course you would have nothing to show for it."

Catherine convinced her father that she should be using gold and silver. He loaned her the money to buy the precious metals and stones - and the distinctive Catherine Best brand was born. "I came to a deal with him and, luckily for me, he went for it. It did make me very aware that I had to get it right first time."

When Catherine came home she moved into the beautiful old Mill, which is now a thriving studio workshop and retail outlet - and the family home. "I worked like crazy and struggled to build up stock," says Catherine. In the early days, she started trading by attending sporadic craft fairs to build up a reputation.

In the late 1980s she did suffer a major set back when all her jewellery was stolen from a hotel foyer showcase. It represented years of hard work. "I was so naïve. There was so much work there and I lost the lot. I had only insured it for the value of the materials, not for the hours I had worked. It was a hard lesson to learn."

Catherine decided that she had to earn some money to buy stones, so she took over a cheese shop in partnership with her sister. "I didn't make a lot of jewellery at that time, but it was a laugh and I did find a husband!" Catherine met Paul - "he was the egg man," she says laughing - and once again it was time for a major re-think on the job front.

We got married and I got pregnant with the first of my daughters and it became impractical to carry on with the cheese shop - although it was a lot of fun! We decided that, if I was going to make a go of the jewellery business, I had to do it full time or not at all. That's when we opened up the Mill, hired

a nanny and started to develop the business properly. This made a huge difference although the pressure was on because there were bills and school fees to pay. It was a sort of sink or swim time."

The business grew and Catherine employed more jewellery makers, took on trainees and devoted more and more time to the design side of the business. Her staff are focused and happy and Catherine is proud that there is little, if any, staff turnover. She is also very thorough when it comes to training and her apprentices follow a five-year course.

The expansion into Jersey three years ago was a huge leap forward, and Catherine and Paul are delighted at the response they have received. "It was a good decision and we are now building up a good client base. Paul was flying home to Guernsey when he read about the Windmill Pub in Jersey. We had been looking for premises in Jersey for a year but nothing was right. This seemed to fit the bill perfectly."

The couple contacted Ann Street Brewery and, although the Mill had not been up for sale, they agreed to negotiate. "I now spend a day or so a week in Jersey and love it. The market is different but it's a new challenge and we are getting there." She is also keen to promote the jewellery re-design side of her business. "There is no point hanging onto an old diamond ring or necklace which you won't ever wear. Lots of old jewellery with lovely big stones has the potential to be turned into something very special and very up to date. We love this aspect of our business."

Catherine now employs 26 staff across the islands and in the UK, and she is still very passionate about designing and never seems to run out of new concepts. "We get very excited about using new stones. At the moment we are working a lot with paraiba and tanzanite. They have wonderful colours. We do a lot of designs with coloured stones - although I always have done that. Fashions just seem to have caught up with me."

But she does admit to wanting to spend more time with her daughters - Vikki, 15, and 13 year old Penny - and she now makes more time to be with them. "I love to spend time with my family. Vikki is totally focused like me. In fact, she wants to be me and have my job now. Both my girls enjoy art and, looking back, I loved art too when I was their age and thought I was good. Unfortunately my teachers didn't agree so I rebelled and they threw me out. There is a vast difference between art and design."

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