

TRIPS—TIPS—& SECRET PLACES

PRESS RELEASE

From the famous city of Michelangelo's *David* to Paris's neon nightlife to cozy village churches, *Smart Travels—Europe* features Rudy Maxa's picks of the best of Europe. Public television first HDTV series, the 13 half-hour episodes are a new take on the Old World. Host Rudy Maxa models hassle-free ways of getting to great places, discovering the continent's vitality and character, and plotting a memorable, independent trip. *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa* will premier on (station)\_\_\_\_\_ at (time)\_\_\_\_\_, (day)\_\_\_\_\_. beginning (date)\_\_\_\_\_. Maxa, a well-known travel personality, writer and lecturer, is an MSNBC business travel columnist, a Pulitzer Prize nominated reporter and the original host of public radio's *The Savvy Traveler*.

The travelers of 2001 anticipate a changing Europe – music, art, fashion, and architecture that shout, “a new millennium.” They're curious about a common currency – the Euro Dollar – and a 21st century Europe where passports are rarely checked at borders. Rudy Maxa highlights this spirit of change. In each episode, he goes on a spree to track down trendy cuisine, a fantastic hotel or a hot spot of the locals.

To bring old Europe alive, Rudy takes viewers to treasured, historic sites. He rambles through ancient ruins, cathedrals, and cobbled streets, showing viewers the stories of Europe's past. When it's time to relax, he shares his favorite serene, pristine and hidden places.

*Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa* builds on the carefully crafted, viewer friendly format of SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS' 52 popular episodes of *Travels in Europe with Rick Steves*. One compelling change is new host Rudy Maxa, award winning journalist, travel expert and syndicated columnist. He's engaging, sophisticated, wry, and practical. As with all of SMALL WORLD's travel series, Rudy shows viewers how to travel smart and take charge of their own trips. Our itineraries lead into the tourist-savvy destinations first and then beyond, making travel easy for first-timers and anyone who can read a map, browse a guidebook, pack light, and enjoy good wines and food. *Smart Travels* motivates independent travel and appeals to armchair travelers. These are real trips with precise you-are-there details. Every week Rudy highlights a manageable itinerary of famous spots and off-the-beaten-path surprises.

Each episode delves into the rich historical and cultural nature of destinations, and provides practical insights for traveling. Rudy visits famous sites and lesser-known attractions. He barges, walks, hikes, drives, and seeks out local Europeans to learn where they take out-of-town friends. This is thoughtful travel—an engaging way to gain insight into a quickly changing Europe in a new millennium. Through the lens of Emmy-Award winning photographer, Tom Speer, the audience sees today's Europe from Copenhagen to London to Venice and Italy's Amalfi Coast.

Part of the delight of travel is planning. Rudy offers tips on travel philosophy, reservations, choosing a comfortable approach, jumping the language barrier, adapting to different surroundings, changing money, getting around, pacing yourself and meeting the people who make travel unforgettable.

Over the 13 half-hour episodes, Rudy cozies up to new and old Europe, adding a touch of luxury to the day-to-day delight of discovery. Diversity is a touchstone of this series. Rudy's philosophy is clear: savvy travelers find Europe on their own, at their own pace. He's just eager to get them started. Armchair adventurers and seasoned travelers alike will be delighted with *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa*.

## TRIPS—TIPS—& SECRET PLACES

### PRESS RELEASE

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For years, Rudy Maxa's candor, expert interviews, and passion for travel have provided good-natured, insightful tips to listeners of Public Radio's *The Savvy Traveler*. Finally, now on public television, Rudy shows viewers *Smart Travels*—how to see what they want to see and how to get the most for their time and money.

A set of six VHS home videos based on *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa* is available from SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS. Each 60 or 90 minute video contains two or three episodes from the series paired geographically. A handy companion book, co-authored by Rudy Maxa, includes annotated scripts, travel essays, and an extensive list of content related websites. Videos, at \$24.95 each and books at \$16.95 each plus shipping, are available by calling the SMALL WORLD order desk at 800 866-7425. On line, it's [www.travelsmallworld.com](http://www.travelsmallworld.com).

The series is a production of SMALL WORLD PRODUCTION, INC., of Seattle. KCTS, Seattle, and UWTV at the University of Washington are co-producers. AMERICAN AIRLINES has provided partial underwriting for production and national distribution of the series. AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION (APT) of Boston distributes the 13 episodes nationally. HDTV versions of each episode will be up-linked on the PBS HD satellite transponder to all public television stations. Nearly four-dozen stations will broadcast the series in HDTV and simulcast it in NTSC or standard television. Hundreds of other public TV stations will broadcast the NSTC "letterboxed" version of the series, showing the complete wide-screen images of *Smart Travels*. Digital audio is transmitted in stereo.

APT, is a major source for programming for America's public television station. Known for identifying innovative programs and developing creative distribution techniques, APT provides stations with program choices that enable them to strengthen and customize their schedules. It also serves as an essential distribution and funding option for producers.

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FACT SHEET

**Title:** *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa*

**National Underwriter:** AMERICAN AIRLINE and AMERICAN EAGLE

**Format:** Available in HDTV (on PBS HD transponder) Stereo Audio  
Available in NTSC Letterboxed (on APT transponder) Stereo Audio

**Episodes:** 13/30's

**Category:** Travel, How to

**Release:** April 1, 2001

**National Distribution:** AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION EXCHANGE  
Unlimited releases through March 31, 2004

**Producer:** SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS  
Producers of:  
*Travels in Europe with Rick Steves*  
*Travels in Mexico and the Caribbean with Shari Belafonte*  
*America's Historic Trails with Tom Bodett*

**Co-producers:** KCTS, Seattle  
UWTV, University of Washington

**Promotion Materials:** Series Press Release, Individual Program Descriptions, Biography of Rudy Maxa, Series Production Credits, B&W Photos, color photos available upon request, 20 & 30 Second promos for each episode, 2700 word article by Rudy for station guides

**Production Date:** 2000/2001, Copyright 2001 by SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS, INC.

**Related Merchandise:** Six VHS home videos: 2 or 3 episodes per tape, \$24.95 each – Rome/Naples, Venice/Genoa, Florence/Tuscany, Paris/Provence, London/Out of London, Belgium/Netherlands/Denmark.  
  
Series companion book: *Smart Travels.TV*, 200 pages with annotated scripts, subject related websites, and numerous articles by series host, Rudy Maxa. \$16.95 each  
  
Shipping and handling: \$4  
Order desk: 800 866 7425

**Pledging:** Rudy Maxa is available for on-air pledging for a nominal honorarium and travel expenses. Please contact SMALL WORLD.  
  
Content related merchandise available as pledge premiums: Books \$8.50 each, 60 or 90 min. videos \$12 each, 30 min. videos \$6 each, plus freight

**Viewer Inquiries:  
/Contact** SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS, INC.  
P.O. Box 28369, Seattle 98118  
Business office: 206 329 7167,  
Viewer Book/Tape Orders ONLY: 800 866 7425  
[www.travelsmallworld.com](http://www.travelsmallworld.com)

**American Public:  
Television/PI Contact** Dawn Anderson 617 338-4455, extension 149

**RUDY MAXA****HOST OF SMART TRAVELS, THE PUBLIC TELEVISION SERIES**

Rudy Maxa is one of America's best known travel writers—on radio, television, in cyber-space and in print. He's been a journalist for more than twenty years. His radio travel series *The Savvy Traveler* quickly became the fastest-selling new show in the history of public radio and now airs on 180 stations across the country. The weekly hour radio program grew out of Rudy's years as travel commentator on public radio's nightly *Marketplace*.

Rudy Maxa writes on how to travel smart for *Worth*, the personal finance monthly and contributes humorous travel essays to *Forbes* magazine. His *Maxa Miles* on business travel is a weekly column for *MSNBC.com*, and he appears as a travel expert on *CNN*, *CNNfn*, and *FOX NEWS CHANNEL*. *Rudy Maxa's Traveler*, a subscription-only newsletter, gives insider information on "traveling in style for less." He was a travel columnist with *AMERICAN EXPRESS' Online*, and wrote a monthly business travel column for the *DOW JONES* tabloid, *BIZ*.

As a *Washington Post* investigative reporter and personalities columnist, Maxa's reporting on political scandals was nominated by the paper for The Pulitzer Prize. During his tenure at *The Post* he won the John Hancock Award for Excellence in Business and Financial Journalism.

Rudy Maxa has written for an ABC-TV dramatic series, and is an occasional guest travel authority on *The Today Show* and *Good Morning America*. His travel articles appear in *GQ*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USAirways Magazine*, *Playboy*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *the London Evening Standard*, *Modern Maturity*, *P.O.V.* and other magazines.

In addition to his lectures on travel, Rudy speaks frequently on politics and journalism. He spends half his time traveling. He calls Washington DC. home, and has two children.

**SMART TRAVELS PRODUCTION TEAM BIO**

For eighteen years, **SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS** has produced substantial, content-driven travel series for public television. The Seattle-based company has produced 91 half-hour episodes and two pledge specials that are popular with public television programmers and viewers. This body of work translates into more than a hundred home video titles. **swp** production credits include *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa*, *Travels in Europe with Rick Steves: Series I, II, III and IV*, *Travels in Mexico and the Caribbean with Shari Belafonte*, *America's Historic Trails with Tom Bodett*, *Best Travels in Europe* and *Best of the Mediterranean*. **swp** programs have helped to raise tens of millions of dollars in viewer contributions to public television stations. **SMALL WORLD's** awards include **CINE Golden Eagles**, national Telly Awards, and a Columbus International Film Festival Award.

**swp** partners Patricia Larson, Sandra Nisbet, and John Givens created the series *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa*. In addition to their body of work with **swp**, Larson and Nisbet have a background in theater, history, play writing, international travel, and college teaching. CEO Givens has been producing, directing and editing public television programs for more than thirty-five years. Programs produced and/or directed by Givens have won several Emmys. He's a former member of the Board of Governors, of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Seattle Chapter.

Larson and Nisbet teamed with Givens in 1980 to make public television programs supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Washington Commission for the Humanities, and the Washington State Arts Commission. Their credits include a dramatic series *Take it To The People* hosted by Stanley Kramer and an award-winning documentary *Everything Change, Everything Change*.

**SMALL WORLD** was joined by their team of award-winning photographers, editors and producer/writers. Producer Patty Conroy has won several Telly Awards and two **CINE Golden Eagles** for her work with **SMALL WORLD**, the **BOEING COMPANY** and the University of Washington. Producer Susan McNally is currently writing and directing a feature-length comedy funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Award-winning photographer, Tom Speer, chief photographer at **KCTS**, Seattle, has shot more than 60 travel episodes for **SMALL WORLD**. His other national credits include *Miracle Planet*, *Fire on the Rim*, *Death: The Trip of a Lifetime*, *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, *The Frugal Gourmet*, and *The News Hour*. Editor David Ris brings unique skills and knowledge of high definition television production to the project. He has edited more than 24 travel episodes for **swp** and does freelance work with the University of Washington and other clients.

## CUTTING EDGE DIGITAL TELEVISION:

*Smart Travels* is Public Television's First HDTV Series

*Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa*, a new 13 episode series from SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS, KCTS, Seattle, and UWTV at the University of Washington, is public television's first High-Definition Television series. Both location shooting and post-production editing were done in SONY's 1080i HDCam format. The result is a visually stunning, cutting-edge, digital television series.

*Smart Travels* will be up-linked via the PBS HD satellite transponder to HDTV capable stations. Many public stations will simulcast the series in HDTV and NTSC or standard television. The NTSC version will be "letterboxed" so viewers can experience the full wide-screen images of the original production. "Most viewers watching in NTSC will see noticeably brighter, clearer images than they would normally expect," according to series Executive Producer, John Givens of SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS, Seattle. Both the HDTV and NTSC version will be released with digital, stereo audio.

"Best of all, the stunning beauty of Europe and the luscious detail of HDTV are a ready-made match, sure to be a hit with public television programmers and viewers for years to come," according Givens. Rudy Maxa, a well-known travel personality and writer, MSNBC columnist and the original host of public radio's *The Savvy Traveler* from the MARKETPLACE PRODUCTIONS unit of MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO is the host of *Smart Travels—Europe*.

Nearly four-dozen public television stations are scheduled to be broadcasting in HD before the series release in April 2001, most in the top-thirty markets. Virtually all other public stations will convert to HDTV digital transmitters in the next several years according to the PBS engineering department. AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION of Boston distributes the series nationally. Production and distribution costs for *Smart Travels* are partially underwritten by AMERICAN AIRLINES.

HDTV is the new digital television standard adopted by the FCC that provides brilliant images and incredible detail in a 16 x 9 picture ratio. The HDTV signal has nearly four-time the picture information of standard television. Many knowledgeable broadcast engineers predict HDTV 1080i will be the highest quality television format available for decades to come. It's the first major revision and improvement in the basic transmission format of television since the inception of the medium more than fifty-years ago. For most viewers, the change from NTSC to HDTV will be as dramatic as the change from black-and-white to color was in the sixties.

Producing and releasing the series in HDTV will further insure that *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa* will have a long life on public television. As more stations make the transition to digital television, the series will provide high-quality, content-driven episodes that appeal to public television's discriminating audience.

By mastering in HDTV, conversion to other formats—as needed in the future—can easily be accomplished. Conversions to NTSC and PAL for broadcast, and S-VHS Wide, standard NTSC VHS, DVD, CD-ROM, and even 35 mm and 16 mm film will be possible if needed.

Home videos can be released in a variety of formats as the marketplace evolves; for example—video streaming. ROCKETVOX, a Seattle based company has already licensed the rights to stream numerous two-to-three minute excerpts of *Smart Travels* episodes over the Internet. SMALL WORLD has released a set of six VHS home videos based on the series. Two or three episodes are combined geographically on each 60 or 90 minute tape. A companion book co-written by Maxa is also available by through SMALL WORLD calling 800-866-7425 or on-line at [www.travelsmallworld.com](http://www.travelsmallworld.com).

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## Individual Program Descriptions

### #101: Naples and the Amalfi Coast

Deep in the heart of Italy, Naples is the ideal launching point for exploring some of the country's great historic treasures. We marvel at the ancient city of Pompeii and the devastation of Mount Vesuvius and we trek across a still-active volcano. Then we move on to stylish Sorrento, where we sample luscious gelato and hop a ferry to the isle of Capri. We drive the thrilling Amalfi coast to take in spectacular views, and further south we visit Paestum, home to the best Greek ruins outside of Greece. Tips on Capri's funicular and Pompeii's train.

### #102: Rome

Rudy is in the city where all roads lead - Roma. We begin in ancient Rome - the Forum, Palatine Hill, Colosseum, and Baths of Caracalla. Then we explore modern Roman life on the streets and in cafes, pizzerias and gelaterias. We detour to another country, Vatican City, then shop along the Corso and relax at the Piazza di Spagna. Rudy's pick for best city walks are a tour of the historic center and a stroll in shady Trastevere. Tips on getting around and places for tasty snacks.

### #103: Venice

Join Rudy as he surrenders himself to the charms of magical Venice. We tour the famous sites - Piazza San Marco, the fairy tale Basilica of San Marco and the Rialto Bridge. Rudy also shows us how to escape the crowds by visiting the neighborhoods of Dorsoduro, Cannaregio and San Polo. Along the way, he takes us for a rousing drink at the city's oldest wine bar, on a dreamy gondola ride and to a traditional Venetian mask shop. In search of hand blown glass, lace and the birthplace of Venice, we journey to the lagoon islands of Murano, Burano and Torcello. Tips on how to navigate your way around this watery city.

### #104: Genoa and the Italian Riviera

We're off to the Italian Riviera seeking *La Dolce Vita* in one of the world's most romantic places. With death-defying cliffs and beaches that shimmer like jewels, the Riviera is as stunning a coastline as anywhere in Europe. In the port town of Genoa, we tour palaces for a taste of old-world elegance and dine on world-class pesto. Then we head south to the famous resort of Portofino and the sea cliff towns of the Cinqueterre. Finally, we battle vertigo at Pisa's leaning tower. Tips on using train passes and finding addresses.

### #105: Florence

In this glorious city, rich in art, Rudy brings the Renaissance to life. We visit the great museums - the Uffizi, Bargello, and Accademia, as well as the landmarks of the Renaissance - the Duomo, Baptistery and Giotto's Tower. Rudy's tip for beating the crowds is peaceful Oltr'arno on the other side of the river. An excursion outside of town leads to a Medici villa, a sleepy Tuscan town and a museum with inventions by Leonardo da Vinci. Tips on shopping and how to buy quality leather products.

### #106: Hill Towns of Tuscany and Umbria

Castles, vineyards, walled cities and a fierce medieval rivalry that lingers today - we're out for an adventure in the Italian hill towns. Our base is dramatic Siena, home of the intensely competitive Palio horse race. From Siena we explore the multi-towered town of San Gimignano, watch grapes being harvested at a winery and drop in on the cheese festival in Pienza. Then south to Rudy's secret pick - the haunting hill towns of Pitigliano and Sovana. In Umbria we discover Etruscan tombs, visit the home of St. Francis of Assisi and pick up some pottery in quaint Gubbio. Tips on driving through the maze-like streets of a hill town and finding a place to stay.

### #107: Provence

Sun, olive trees and cicadas - we're in the heart of France. With our base in the sleepy town of St. Remy, we make forays into the villages, countryside and cities of Provence. Driving tours of the Alpilles and Luberon regions take us to the red rock village of Rousillon, the lavender ensconced Abbey of Senanque, and the picture perfect village

of Eygalieres. We also take in the delights of Provence's cities, Arles, Avignon and Aix-en-Provence. We end our adventures with a dip in the Mediterranean at the seaside village of Cassis. Tips on how to rent a vacation home in France and enjoying the many summer festivals.

#### **#108: Paris**

Rudy escorts us through Paris, the city of style, art and pastries. We experience extraordinary art - the Impressionist collection at the Musee D'Orsay and the garden sculpture at the Rodin Museum. Then we hit the sites from Notre Dame to the Pompidou Center to the Eiffel Tower. We stroll through the parks, markets and cafes in this city where everyday life is art. Rudy leads us to intimate neighborhoods such as the Marais and its lovely Place des Vosges, the bohemian Latin Quarter and artistic Montmartre. Tips on riding the Metro and shopping for the essentials - bread, cheese, ham and pastries.

#### **#109: London**

London is a city that has come close to ruling the world. With a legacy that includes Shakespeare and the Beatles, London seems to have an endless capacity to reinvent itself. Here, we sip tea and savor traditional sights such as Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard. We pop in to see where Charles Dickens penned *Oliver Twist*, and get a bird's-eye view of contemporary London from the new London Eye observation wheel. Finally, we check out cutting edge artwork at the newly opened Tate Modern Art Museum. Tips on using cell phones and cash machines.

#### **#110: Out of London**

The countryside outside of London echoes with storybook images. Around every hedgerow are mythic castles, ruined abbeys and prehistoric monuments. This time, we leave London and stop at Hampton Court, where Henry VIII wooed Anne Boleyn. We gaze on Oxford's dreamy spires and browse in the real Alice in Wonderland's candy store. Next, we pay a visit to Jane Austen's house, puzzle over the mysterious megaliths of Stonehenge, and pursue tales of Camelot in the royal city of Winchester. Tips on driving in England and visiting country pubs.

#### **#111: Brussels and Belgium**

For centuries, Belgium has been a sophisticated hub for gourmets and connoisseurs. In true Belgian style, we treat ourselves to superb chocolate and sample first-rate beer. We indulge our senses with folk music and Bruegel paintings, and investigate the people's passion for comic strips. Then we drive to breathtaking Bruges, a medieval city suspended in time. There, we cruise the canals, admire intricate handmade lace and pay homage to a Michelangelo masterpiece. Tips on hearty Belgian cuisine and lace making.

#### **#112: Amsterdam and the Netherlands**

The country of the Netherlands inspired the Dutch masters and became a powerhouse that conquered the sea. We bicycle to Amsterdam's great art museums to see the works of Van Gogh and Rembrandt. Then we climb to the attic where Anne Frank and her family hid from the Nazis. Later, we prowl windmills and check out Amsterdam's infamous red-light district. Next stop is the Hague, home to the International Court of Justice. Finally, we peek at the delightful city of Delft where we learn techniques for making world-renowned china. Tips on riding trolleys and buying Delftware.

#### **#113: Copenhagen and Denmark**

Join Rudy in the wondrous kingdom of legend and fairytale - Denmark. Here Vikings plundered and Hans Christian Anderson spun children's stories. In cozy Copenhagen, we splurge on pastries, visit the *Little Mermaid* and dance till dawn at Tivoli Gardens. On a day trip to Roskilde, we check out three incredibly well preserved Viking ships. We ride horseback through the Danish countryside, stroll through writer Karen Blixen's gardens, and storm the moat at "Prince Hamlet's" Castle. Tips on canal rides and museum passes.

## 2700 Word STATION GUIDE ARTICLE

Travel and Technology:  
High-Tech Prep and Digital-Devices Are Keys to Smart Travels In Century 21

By Rudy Maxa, host of public television's *Smart Travels* series

The first time I visited St. Petersburg, Russia, it was called Leningrad, and Russia was still the Soviet Union. I arrived on short notice with a thin guidebook in my pocket and a list of three local names. The names were friends of friends who, I was assured, would introduce me to the city.

When I went for a walk shortly after checking into my hotel, KGB agents searched and burgled my room. I think they call it “tossing a room” in spy jargon. How did I know it was the work of the KGB? The hotel's Swedish-born general manager told me; in fact, he seemed bemused that I was upset. The intruders took my copy of John le Carre's novel *Russia House*, my daybook, and that slip of paper with the names and phone numbers of local contacts. I didn't understand why they left behind the \$2,000 in \$100 bills I'd brought along as spending money.

“Because there were two of them,” explained William Colby, the former head of the CIA, when I told him about my experience during a flight to Tokyo a few days later. (We just happened to be seated next to each other. Coincidence? I think not!) “Neither guy trusted the other,” he said, “to keep the theft of so much money a secret.”

Well, now, that was interesting.

At the time, of course, I was grateful to still have my money. But I was upset at the loss of my list of local contacts because my guidebook—like many guidebooks in the '80s dealing with the Soviet Union—was hopelessly out of date and short on details.

Today, I would not be without resources. I'd use a modem-equipped laptop, dial a local number, and find up-to-date information on almost anything I needed to know. Because traveling today is very different than ever before.

I have a hard time sitting still. My father was an U.S. ARMY officer, and as a kid, my family moved every year or so. I grew up everywhere from Huntsville, Alabama, to Heidelberg, Germany. When I graduated from college and began my life as a journalist at the *Washington Post*, I worked overtime trying to think up out-of-town story ideas.

The idea was to travel.

Anywhere.

After more than 12 years at the *Post* as an investigative reporter, magazine writer and personalities columnist, I joined the monthly city magazine, *Washingtonian*. Now, here was a challenge: How to snare overseas assignments while working for a very local magazine. I managed. A big musical called *Les Miserables* was all the rage in London; it would make its North America debut at the Kennedy Center in . . . Washington. Hadn't I better get over to London to see the show? And then visit Paris to interview the two men behind the musical's words and lyrics so *Washingtonian* would have a splashy article timed with the show's opening?

You bet.

Remember the residents of the tiny island of Bikini way out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in the Marshall Islands? We'd displaced the Bikinians in order to test the atom bomb during World War II. Since then, they hadn't been able to return home because their island was contaminated by radiation. They'd become wards of Uncle Sam. The federal government sent them surplus food, and a people accustomed to eating fresh fish and fruit saw their health deteriorated on a distinctly non-island diet of canned ham and other Western staples. Wouldn't an article on the legacy of nuclear testing and the affect of a distant welfare state run by Washington bureaucrats be in order? Hadn't I best get over to Majuro quickly?

You get the picture.



Eventually, the business of travel began taking over my professional life. When J.J. Yore, a producer from public radio's evening business show, *Marketplace*, called in 1990 to ask me to contribute regular political commentary, I declined the honor. Instead, I suggested a regular segment on consumer travel issues. My friend Peter Greenberg was then writing a similar syndicated column for the Los Angeles Times called *The Savvy Traveler*. I thought that was a catchy name, and with his permission, I borrowed it for use on the radio. I began writing on consumer travel issues for *Worth* magazine and, later, *Forbes* and *Men's Journal*, among others.

Shortly after *Savvy Traveler* became a one-hour, coast-to-coast show on public radio in 1997, I began writing a weekly travel column for *MSNBC.com*. And then SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS--which had produced ten year's worth of travel shows about Europe as well as Mexico and the Caribbean--gave me the opportunity to host public television's first high-definition series, *Smart Travels in Europe with Rudy Maxa*.

It was time to reflect. SMALL WORLD had done dozens of shows about Europe. What, I wondered, was "new" about travel?

In my opinion, the biggest change in travel since the invention of the jet engine is the high-tech revolution. In the last six years, learning about a destination, how to get there, and what to do once you've arrived has become a breeze. We tap into data banks with a flurry of fingers over a computer keyboard. We compare airline, hotel, and rental car prices and pit low-cost providers against each other without having to pick up a phone and listen to recordings telling us all agents are temporarily busy.

Using web-enabled cell phones, we can find the location of the nearest ATM or gas station almost anywhere in the world. We make and receive phone calls as easily in Paris as in our hometown. Hand-held global positioning devices coordinate with satellites to tell us exactly where we are should we get lost.

Want to check out what operas are coming up just about anywhere from Amsterdam to Sydney to Petoria to Vienna? Click on to [www.operahouse.com](http://www.operahouse.com), a multi-lingual web site that tracks the goings-on at more than 700 opera houses and festivals around the globe. Often, you can click on a link to buy tickets to an opera that strikes your fancy. Want to know how many u.s. dollars 1,300,000 Italian lire represents? There are hundreds of sites that convert currencies in a few seconds—you'll find a link to a currency converter at [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com), for example. Whether it's a Tokyo subway schedule ([www.tokyometro.go.jp/e-home/index-e.html](http://www.tokyometro.go.jp/e-home/index-e.html)) or a menu of spa treatments at a luxury resort in India ([www.oberoihotels.com](http://www.oberoihotels.com)), information that took days to find just a few years ago is now only a few computer mouse clicks away.

And whether you travel with a backpack, frequent Internet cafes and stay in hostels . . . or whether you carry a cell phone, laptop, personal digital assistant and stay at five-star hotels, you're traveling differently than ever before. Ours, after all, is the world's first Techno-Travel Generation.

This is good. Even if you journey to escape the rush of life, to listen to your soul and wander down unmapped dirt roads, technology is your friend. After all, you can turn off that cell phone, laptop and personal digital assistant. But if you need them, they're there.

Sometimes they can bring unexpected pleasure.

I remember changing planes at Frankfurt's airport en route to joining the *Smart Travels* crew for filming in Venice. I'd just bought a dual-band cell phone that worked in the United States as well as in countries that use the GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) standard, as most European countries do. I was startled when it first rang in my pocket, because I'd never received a cell phone overseas.

It was my high-school aged son calling from Washington, D.C., to tell me he'd scored a goal in a lacrosse game that afternoon. When I rang off, I stood dumbfounded in the gate area of my connecting flight. There I was in far-away Germany, hearing from my son as effortlessly as if I'd been home in Washington. It probably wasn't incredible to him—his generation is accustomed to instantaneous communication—but for those of us who remember life before the invention of answering machines and phones without wires, receiving a trans-Atlantic call on a little phone in your pocket is nothing short of miraculous.

During the months, the *Smart Travels* crew and I taped in Europe, we were constantly reminded of how technology can make travel easier. Need more cash? No need to stand in line at an AMERICAN EXPRESS office to write a check against a credit card, as I once did regularly. Slip that ATM card from your hometown bank into an automatic teller

machine in downtown Amsterdam and out slides money from your checking account. And at a pretty favorable exchange rate, too.

The crew and I worked at a brisk pace. Watching our shows about, say, Tuscany or Provence, I hope you feel the serenity of the places we visited. And while we were never oblivious to the natural beauty of those charming places or the kindness of locals, “serene” wouldn’t necessarily be the adjective I’d use to describe the days and nights we spent shooting.

Inclement weather, traffic jams, fickle museum hours, cranky bureaucrats, lost luggage and other forces sometimes conspired to tangle our schedule. I remember one afternoon when we were running late for a lunch with the CASTELLO BANFI wine folks in Tuscany. Once upon a time not very long ago, we would have been even later. That’s because we would have had to pull our car over to the side of the road, search out a public phone, hope we had enough coins or the correct phone card, and pray we could figure out the local dialing code in order to make our apologies.

Instead, as we zipped along in our AVIS car, we simply pulled out a cell phone, called our contact and said we’d be arriving an hour late.

No problemo.

Touring Genoa, we had the expert help of Roberto Stubinski, a local doctor who knew one of my best friends from my hometown of Washington. Roberto kindly took off work to show us around his hometown. We traveled in a van while he zipped around Genoa and the hill towns of the Italian Riviera on a motorbike with his girlfriend, Maria. We stayed in touch using cell phones, which is how we found Roberto waiting for us at a great, hole-in-the-wall pizza place across the street from Genoa’s Port Antico. And, later, at a seafood restaurant popular with locals that was perched on a cliff overlooking the water outside Camogli.

Frankly, without those phones, we probably would have spent hours trying to rendezvous.

You don’t have to carry an array of electronic devices to qualify as a Techo-Traveler. In fact, if you do enough advance planning, you’ll do just fine on the road with nothing but a smile and credit or ATM card. The odds are pretty good that if you use the Internet to research a trip before you leave, you’ll enjoy a richer experience.

Not only is there a vast world of information on places, there are all kinds of message boards where fellow travelers post their experiences. So if you’re not sure whether a specific cruise ship fits your personality or if a resort is really as wonderful as its brochure or web site promise, there’s usually a place you can look to read the candid remarks of someone who went before you.

So my advice to anyone embarking on a trip to a new place is to take a leisurely evening and surf the web, using different search engines such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) and [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com) to type in keywords such as “Amalfi and wine” and see what comes up. It won’t be difficult to find an array of material on places, hotels, bike routes, and so on. You can access guidebooks by going to [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com), [www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com) or [www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com), but sometimes information can be outdated if the reporting is by folks who visited sites a year earlier.

Don’t forget to browse newspapers published in the place you’re planning to visit. Almost every newspaper has a web site, and that’s a great place to find out what’s going on in a destination at any given time. (Start with [www.mediainfo.com](http://www.mediainfo.com) and [www.newsdirctory.com](http://www.newsdirctory.com).) Magazines including *Time Out* ([www.timeout.com](http://www.timeout.com)) offer all kinds of information on specific cities. *Time Out*’s site delivers fresh information on where to shop, what’s on, and where to eat in more than two dozen major cities around the world.

Convention and visitors’ bureaus, too, have web sites with up-to-the-minute information. Check the Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory at [www.towd.com](http://www.towd.com) for hyperlinks to more than 1,500 offices of folks who would love to send you brochures or answer questions about their destinations.

Then there are web sites begun by people just wild about particular places, such as [www.bparis.com](http://www.bparis.com), operated by an American ex-pat, Karen Fawcett, who wanted to share her love of Paris with the rest of the world. It’s developed into a sophisticated site.

What will the future hold? More of the same, except bigger, better, and faster. Late one afternoon in the winter of 2000, I was driving north toward Los Angeles along the San Diego Freeway in Southern California with my girlfriend. We had a few hours to kill and wanted to catch a certain movie we’d read about. As neither of us

knew the area, we had no idea which of the many beachside communities might have movie theaters, let alone what movies were playing in them at what time.

“Hang on,” said Lesley, “I’ll find out.”

She dialed 800-555-TELL on her cell phone, worked her way through a series of menus by speaking commands, and within minutes we were movie bound.

Just as I’d been amazed at my son’s ability to reach out from Washington, D.C., and talk to me while I stood in a German airport, so, too, was I astounded that Lesley could pinpoint any movie anywhere in the country as we sped along a freeway.

Following computer prompts, she’d said the name of the movie, the name of the town and then the approximate show time we wanted. Within seconds, she’d learned the address of the theater showing the film and that day’s show times. She could have also bought the tickets by phone if she’d so desired. If she’d had a laptop with a wireless modem, she could have done the same thing by going to [www.tellme.com](http://www.tellme.com).

Via computer or phone, you can tap into the *Tellme* web site and receive reviews of restaurants, movie information around the U.S., driving directions, ski reports, sports scores, stock quotes, and even your horoscope. If you missed an episode of your favorite soap opera, *Tellme* will fill you in if you ask.

It’s only a matter of time until similar information services are available around the world.

We can only begin to imagine what tomorrow’s Techno-Travelers will be able to accomplish. I think the bottom line will be this: Travelers will have more time to do what they travel for, whether it’s to linger in a museum in Rome, people-watch over an espresso at a Parisian café, or catch a concert in Copenhagen.

Certainly, traveling is as much about the journey as the destination, and there will still be adventures involved in getting somewhere. A survey conducted on the eve of the new millennium revealed that most Americans believe that by the next millennium, scientists will have invented a way to instantly teleport us around the globe. We’ll be able to step into a machine in Pittsburgh, choose “Athens, Greece,” and moments later, we’ll find ourselves walking around an ancient temple.

But I have faith that every once in a while someone’s luggage will wind up in Athens, Georgia. Or because of adverse atmospheric conditions, their trip will be delayed.

Just a word of advice: Never, ever leave \$2,000 in \$100 bills in an unattended hotel room. Because all the technology in the world can’t replace cash. And maybe there won’t be two of ‘em should your room ever get tossed by a hostile intelligence agency.

**PRODUCTION CREDITS**

**SMALL WORLD PRODUCTIONS, SEATTLE**

<i>Executive Producer/Editor</i>	John Givens
<i>Host/Writer</i>	Rudy Maxa
<i>Producer/Writers</i>	Patty Conroy Susan McNally
<i>Consulting Producers</i>	Patricia Branch Larson Sandra Lewis Nisbet
<i>HDTV Photographer</i>	Tom Speer, KCTS
<i>Avid Editor/ HDTV</i>	David Ris
<i>Post Production</i>	
<i>HDTV Consultant</i>	David Fulton
<i>Graphic Designers</i>	Lisa Moore, KCTS Rodney Shelden Fehsenfeld, KCTS
<i>Assistant Producer</i>	Douglas Newell
<i>Production Assistant</i>	Sara Givens
<i>Original Music-composer</i>	Denny Gore
<i>/arranger/musician</i>	
<i>Musicians</i>	Hans Teuber, Tom Hopkins, Ted Turner, Joann Gillis Denny Hall, Scott McGougan Armando Compean, Kari Medina
<i>Additional music</i>	Network Classical Music Library River City Sound Productions Classic Clips, Catovah Arts Michael Brewer, QCCS Productions iamusic.com
<i>Special Thanks</i>	American Airlines, Avis International, David Fulton, Orient Express Hotels, Italian Government Tourism Office, Los Angeles, Denmark Tourist Authority, Netherlands Tourist Authority, Belgium Tourist Authority, British Tourist Authority, Marianna Hoppin, Patricia Harper, WAMU-FM Washington D.C., KUSC Radio, Los Angeles,

**KCTS, SEATTLE**

<i>Executive in Charge</i>	Kathy Mack
<i>Director of Production</i>	Nolan Lehman

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

<i>Production Manager</i>	Timothy Lorang
<i>Technical Supervisor</i>	Jerry Morin

**AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION**

<i>Executive Producer</i>	Nelsa Gidney
<i>Vice-President,</i>	Chris Funkhouser
<i>Program Exchange</i>	
<i>Operations Manager</i>	Kathryn Larsen
<i>/Station Relations</i>	
<i>President</i>	Cynthia Fenneman

The photos below for *Smart Travels—Europe with Rudy Maxa* are available in digital form via email. To request any or all of the photos, please email [info@travelsmallworld.com](mailto:info@travelsmallworld.com). We'll respond promptly.

OVER ALL CAPTION: From the famous city of Michelangelo's *David* to Paris' neon nightlife to cozy village churches, *Smart Travels—Europe* features Rudy Maxa's picks of the best of Europe. Public Television's first HDTV series, the 13 half-hour episodes are a new take on the Old World. Host Rudy Maxa models hassle-free ways of getting to great places, discovering the continent's vitality and character, and plotting a memorable, independent trip. Maxa, a well-known travel personality, writer and lecturer, is an MSNBC business travel columnist, a Pulitzer Prize nominated reporter and the original host of public radio's *The Savvy Traveler*.



#1.

Rudy Maxa, is host of *Smart Travels—Europe*, public television's first HDTV series. For years, Maxa's candor, expert interviews, and passion for travel have provided good-natured, insightful tips to listeners of public radio's *The Savvy Traveler*. Finally, now on public television, Rudy shows viewers *Smart Travels—Europe*—how to see what they want to see and how to get the most for their time and money.



#4.

Rudy Maxa, host of *Smart Travels—Europe*, and HDTV photographer Tom Speer from KCTS, Seattle, share a relaxed moment during the location shooting of the 13 part public television series. *Smart Travels—Europe* offers a new take on the Old World, with Rudy's tips, trips and secret places.



#2.

Rudy Maxa, host of *Smart Travels—Europe*, is joined by his daughter, Sarah Maxa, for a grand tour of Venice, one of 13 episodes in the public television series. Behind them is San Marco Cathedral. *Smart Travels—Europe* offers a new take on the Old World, with Rudy's tips, trips and secret places.



#5.

Rudy Maxa, host of *Smart Travels—Europe*, delights in the charms of the Italian Riviera, which is featured as one of 13 episodes in the public television series. *Smart Travels* is a new take on the Old World, with Rudy's tips, trips and secret places.



#3.

Rudy Maxa, host of *Smart Travels—Europe*, revels in the sunflowers of summer in Provence, France. Provence is one of 13 episodes in the public television series. *Smart Travels—Europe* offers a new take on the Old World, with Rudy's tips, trips and secret places.