

A hiker's paradise

Magne and Cindy Hatlevik of Trollhaugen Tours prepare to lead an adventure through Norway's most beautiful terrain

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"We were on too many church committees together," joked Magne, "So we had to get married."

Magne and Cindy Hatlevik met at the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church in Minneapolis.

Magne is originally from the West coast of Norway. He lived there until he was 24. He was attending the University of Bergen studying mathematics, when his education was interrupted for military service. He joined the Norwegian Air Force and by chance met his ex-wife, an American from Minneapolis who'd been living in Norway for a few years. He had intended to go back to University when he finished his service, but as life often goes, plans changed and instead, he got married. They decided to have the wedding in Minneapolis and were going to visit for four months and then return to Norway. But plans changed and they never moved back to Norway. After 10 years of marriage the couple decided it wasn't going to work, but Magne stayed in the United States. In the meantime he got an Associate's degree in Computer Programming at Brown College and has since finished a Bachelor's Degree in Information Technology.

Cindy was born and grew up in North Dakota, but her grandparents on both sides were from Norway.

"Growing up in North Dakota, at least in my hometown, there was a really strong Norwegian tradition going on. We celebrated all the Norwegian traditions with the food."

Before meeting Magne, Cindy had never led a tour group. He'd been doing it off and on, here and there since 1976 but the closest she'd ever come was taking a solo trip to Norway in 1989.

"I'd gone to visit my relatives by myself and it was a great adventure!" Cindy says. She traveled the country for a month and visited family in Eastern Norway and in the Sognefjord. But she also had time to do some sightseeing.

"I was able to take the boat down to Bergen and take the train ride from Bergen to Oslo. It's the same train ride we'll be taking on the tour in August and it is really beautiful. I remember listening to Grieg on my headset and going through the mountains. It's just really stuck in my memory."

Magne and Cindy Hatlevik got married in 2005 and they still attend the Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church. Infact, though Magne is now semi-retired, he works for the church as their bookkeeper. Cindy still works full-time in the insurance business.

The couple led their first tour together in 2004, taking 40 people to Oslo and Lillehammer. They were mostly ski



Photo courtesy of Trollhaugen Tours.

Magne and Cindy Hatlevik celebrate Syttende Mai in Norway. The couple met at Mindekirken in Minneapolis, Minn.

enthusiasts who Magne knew through various ski groups.

"We went to Oslo to see the Holmenkollen ski jump competition and then to Lillehammer where a lot of skiing was going on," says Cindy.

"We found out we got better service when the locals found out that the guide was

Norwegian," Magne says. The couple considered the 2004 tour a great success and led two, smaller tours in 2006 and 2008.

Now they are gearing up for another big tour in August, this time with an emphasis on hiking.

"This tour is being offered for people

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that want an active type of tour, that want a little more than just the regular sight-seeing. They want some physical activities with their tour, so lots of hiking, lots of city tours. Europeans are great for walking the cities. You combine physical activity with seeing the city and learning about the town that you're visiting," says Cindy.

"One of the hikes that we have planned, that's really exciting is when we'll be staying in Stalheim, we'll be staying at the beautiful hotel there, Stalheim hotel. Around that hotel they've got a lot of different hiking opportunities, short hikes, long hikes, it will depend on interest and ability. Some are strenuous and go right up through the fjords. The tour is going to offer a real variety of activities for people."

The visit to Stalheim will especially memorable for Magne. He worked at the front desk of the hotel as a young man for two summers and is very familiar with the local area.

"Hikes are open to those who are interested, but there are always options," Magne adds. He said he'll be happy to get a third of the group out on the trails. "If you don't feel like hiking you can go shopping, go sightseeing on a bus or streetcar, or go to the bar at the hotel. Hiking is the emphasis, but there are always options."

They hope to sign up 40 for the tour to Norway Aug. 20-30.

"So far we already have a half a dozen people signed up for the tour and we'd like to get as close to 40 as possible," says Magne.

"We need 30 for the trip to go, and with 30 people we get a nice price break."

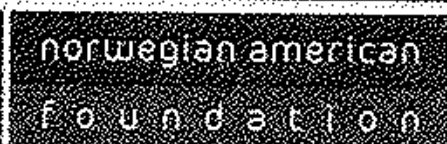
Magne says that's one of the great benefits of traveling with a group, you get a great deal. "We pass on the savings to our travelers."

He thinks the other major benefit is having a Norwegian-speaking guide. Even Cindy speaks some Norwegian. She's learned through language classes at Sons of Norway and the Norwegian Memorial Lutheran Church and of course through the immersion you experience when visiting Norway.

If you're looking for an adventure, perhaps this is the tour for you. Right now Trollhaugen Tours (the name of Magne and Cindy's tour operation) is offering extra savings. Those who reserve their spot on the August trip by Feb. 28 will save \$195.

"We're really excited about the tour and looking forward to showing Norway to guests," Cindy says.

To learn more about Trollhaugen Tours and their upcoming trip to Norway visit their Web site at www.trollhaugentours.com, or give them a call at (614) 264-1608.



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