

OdysseyCouleur

Travel In Color!

ALBUQUERQUE
A JEWEL OF THE SOUTHWEST

A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF
MADRID

SPECIAL SECTION:
3 WOMEN,
ALWAYS IN SEARCH
OF THRILLS

ON LOCATION:

Orlando for Adults

NFL legend Harry Carson and
his wife discover a different side
of the famous resort city

FALL 2009 USA \$4.99

contents

FALL 2009

52 ON LOCATION: **Orlando for Grown-Ups**

Floating Reunion

By Harry Carson

An NFL legend and his wife find a fabulous time exploring a different side of this famous resort town.

Maribel and Harry on the balcony of the
Loews Portofino Bay Hotel in Orlando



32

SHINING LIGHT

By Nick Chiles

New gospel star Shari Addison brings joy everywhere she travels.

36

BUSTLING AND BEAUTIFUL

By Kim Bondy

Madrid offers a welcome getaway for a weary soul.

42

BC'S ISLAND TREASURE

By Jennifer J. Beaumont

Vancouver Island is a local beauty tucked above the northwest U.S.

46

LAKE DELIGHT

By Keisha Spradley

In Minnesota, so much fun, so little time.

64

Special Section: Adventurous Spirits

LIVING ON A DARE

Three bold women who are always in search of thrills



ON THE COVER:

Harry and Maribel Carson share an intimate moment on board a tour boat as they discover another side of Orlanda.

Photography by Hosea Johnson

contents

FALL 2009

30

DEPARTMENTS

SPECTRUM

- 16** Paris Reigns Supreme!
Find Your Ideal Adventure
- 17** *Debut of New Column!*
Musical Trip: Three soulful voices for
your next journey
- 18** **Medical:** The Pain of Quarantine
- 19** **Legal:** The Laws of Quarantine
- 21** *Odyssey Couleur* Book Reviews

- 22** **Traveling With Spirit:** Essential
questions for a troubling time

- 26** **Road Trip:** She finally gets
her Mercedes

L'ATTITUDES

- 28** **Travel Gear:** Gear to take the
stress out of camping

UNWIND

- 30** **Top Pick:** Local indulgence at
D.C.'s Mandarin Oriental Spa

Harry and Maribel cruise the waterways around Lake Osceola on Winter Park Scenic Boat Tours



ON
LOCATION

Orlando^{for} Grown-Ups

An NFL legend and his wife find a fabulous time exploring a different side of this famous resort town

By Harry Carson
photography by Hosea Johnson

a busy man checks in



I t's very seldom that my wife Maribel and I get an opportunity to spend real "quality" time together without family or job expectations. We are both guilty of putting family first and too often our careers over pleasure. Maribel is a Sales Manager with Continental Airlines and I'm a Sports Consultant, which includes but is not limited to owning my own business, Harry Carson Inc. I also do broadcasting with the New York Giants and I am Executive Director of the Fritz Pollard Alliance, which works with the NFL to create more diversity in the league in such positions as general managers, head coaches, assistant coaches, scouts, front office personnel and game day officials.

We've both visited Orlando many times before, but in each case it was job-related or about making the kids and family members happy. Traveling to Orlando had never really been about us—until now! We were presented with an opportunity to spend several days exploring an area that most people only see as a Mouse Kingdom. Just being able to step away from everything for a day was enough for me, but to get away for several days with my wife was all I needed to enjoy myself.

TRAVELING TO ORLANDO HAD NEVER



As we began our journey, we enjoyed a very nice "no drama" flight on Continental Airlines and were greeted with picture-perfect sunny weather. Upon arriving at the Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, my first thought was, Why are these replica little European cars and scooter stationed outside of the entrance of the hotel? Then it dawned on me—Portofino. This must be an Italian theme hotel, or at least one that presents the illusion of Italy. Well, it worked because if I didn't know that I had just flown into Orlando, I would have thought that we were actually in Portofino, Italy. Upon checking in, we were met by a very courteous bellman and front desk staff who greeted us in Italian. We were then escorted to our room by a "manager," Mr. Chad. Our room was spacious and very comfortable, with calming colors and overlooking an expanse of lovely replica gondola boats in Portofino Bay. The scene really did put us in the mind of actually being in Italy. Maribel and I have both visited Italy, but she was actually in Portofino and said it reminded her of her stay there a little more than a decade ago.

Our first evening in Orlando, Maribel and I enjoyed dinner at Momma Della's Ristorante. Momma's offers a terrific blend of Italian cuisine; whether it's Tuscany, Naples or Piemonte, you should find what you crave appetite-wise. And the restaurant is

Chivalry is not dead!



REALLY BEEN ABOUT US—UNTIL NOW!

enjoying a couples massage



below: an intimate moment at Momma Della's Ristorante; right: some of Momma's delicious food; right below: posing with Momma Della herself



ON
LOCATION
ORLANDO



Let the adventures begin!
this page: off-roading in the Jeep 4x4; Harry
handles the ATV; opposite page: the lovely
Maribel takes to the skies behind an airplane as
she tries hang gliding



...WITHOUT THE MOUSE EARS,



right on the hotel property. Momma's is designed for large family-style groups and for couples wishing to experience a romantic dinner for two. I don't normally drink alcohol, but because I was not driving I allowed myself one glass of red wine to relax and enjoy the meal and the evening. One of the signatures of the restaurant is the strolling musicians, *musica della notte* serenading patrons at tableside. While we were enjoying our meal, the musicians came by our table and sang along with Momma herself. The group sounded great and lessened Maribel's desire to revisit Italy—this was better than actually traveling the 7-8 hours to visit that country. Maribel loves good food but she also loved the open kitchen where our meals were prepared. For her, that is a plus for any restaurant. As for me, I loved the atmosphere and, bottom-line, the food! My choice of a rib-eye steak with a shrimp scampi appetizer was to die for.



WE PLANNED SOME ACTION...

Ironically while at dinner a young man named Vince Smith from my hometown of Florence, SC, stopped by our table to say hello, reminding us of how small the world sometimes seems to be. Vince's mother, Ernestine Smith, was my seventh-grade teacher at Wilson Junior High School so many years ago. At that time his father Bill was the high school baseball coach.

After dinner the highlight of the evening was listening to the strolling musicians as they performed on the second floor overlooking the Harbor Piazza. With many guests in view, it was as if Pavarotti were giving an impromptu concert to the masses. We had great Florida weather without the high humidity you might expect to find in the area. The evening was *perfecto*—perfect weather, a perfect meal and beautiful music to end it all.

CULTURE & ROMANCE IN ORLANDO

On our first full day, our first stop was at the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Art in Eatonville, FL. The small town is only about one mile long, with a population of 2,500. The Hurston Museum preserves the history of the town, one of the first all-black towns in the United States to be incorporated—just 24 years after the Emancipation Proclamation. The small yet intimate building showcased photos and writings of Ms. Hurston, as well as pictures and interviews of current citizens of Eatonville. She was one of the pre-eminent writers of 20th century African-American literature. For African Americans who really want to get back in touch with their roots by experiencing the “history of us,” a visit to Eatonville is a must!





DOUBLE PLEASURE

Enjoying a divine couples massage at Portofino's Mandara Spa

While I enjoyed the culture as well as the adventure of Orlando, for me the ultimate romantic event was a couples massage at the Mandara Spa at Portofino Bay Hotel. Getting into the sometimes hidden, action side of Orlando was excellent fun, but being able to relax in the quiet of one of 14 massage rooms was a tremendous and memorable highlight of our stay. Upon arrival at the Spa we were warmly greeted in the reception area by the staff. We were then taken to our respective locker rooms where I was able to change and take a shower before beginning our treatment. I was impressed with the cleanliness of the locker room area, where there was a container of lemon-infused water in a sitting room with a television available to watch as I waited for my treatment. I eventually joined Maribel in a clean yet dimly lit room with side-by-side tables for an 80-minute luxurious massage. We both had female attendants who were very much receptive to the exact amount of pressure we wanted so we could get the most out of our deep tissue massages. As the treatment began the lights were turned down even lower as we enjoyed the soothing music being played. The beautiful scent of the room also played a role our relaxation. Maribel is a massage veteran; while I've gotten a few myself one of the things I do know is when you are on the table getting a massage, shut up and enjoy it! Even though we were side by side I knew that was not the time nor place to gab. I'm going to make an admission that most people will not believe: I am a "control freak!" And with my heavy schedule and obligations, it's not often that I allow myself to just let go of everything and enjoy.

I originally thought that an 80-minute massage was much too long. Well, those 80 minutes went by much too quickly. At a couple of points during the procedure I felt so relaxed that I could feel myself dozing off. And then it was over. I wish it could have gone on and on forever. We always enjoy being in each other's company, but enjoying this time together with my wife was the absolute best.

—Harry Carson

As Maribel and I were leaving the museum, the Executive Director, N. Y. Nathiri, suggested we make an additional stop in the small town before leaving Eatonville. About three-quarters of a mile down the main street from the museum was St. Lawrence A.M.E. Church. Pastor Larnce S. Williams was at the church and welcomed us into the sanctuary. The small white church was built six years before the town was incorporated and reminded me of those little country churches in South Carolina where I grew up. The difference was St. Lawrence Church maintained eight one-of-a-kind paintings donated in 1936 to the congregation by a renowned European artist, Andre' Smith, founder of the Maitland Research Studio. These murals were meticulously drawn, portraying Eatonville residents in everyday settings. They are shown reciting the 23rd Psalm in a dialect typical of southern African Americans in the early 1900's. A church is generally a church, but there was something very unique and spiritual about St. Lawrence. Perhaps it was knowing that so many African-American worshippers prayed and took their problems to the altar there over the years. If you visit Eatonville, please stop by St. Lawrence A.M.E. Church and say hello to Pastor Williams. He would love to welcome you to his magnificent sanctuary.

Another irony is Eatonville is the home of a fellow Pro Football Hall of Fame member, my good friend David "Deacon" Jones. Deacon is infamous for being a member of the Los Angeles Rams "Fearsome Foursome" defensive line in the 1950's and 60's. His cousin Hortense is a Deaconess of St. Lawrence, so it was good to know of that connection.

The visit to Eatonville was a great experience but created a tremendous appetite. We were told that if we wanted the best food for lunch, Johnson's Diner was the place to go. We found Johnson's to be a very popular restaurant for both locals and tourists alike; located in the very popular Church Street area of Orlando, it specializes in one of my favorite types of cuisine, Southern cooking. Whether it was the delicious meatloaf and fried catfish with fresh steamed cabbage, beans and peas with macaroni and cheese, or the Caribbean favorite, jerk chicken, Johnson's has just the right taste for any connoisseur of down-home cooking.

As Maribel and I continued our excursion of Orlando without the Mouse Ears, we planned some action on the water with a boat tour. We traveled only a couple of miles to Winter Park and were much impressed with the actual town of Winter Park. It is very quaint with upscale and fashionable shops and chic and happening restaurants and clubs along beautiful tree-lined streets. Our next stop, Winter Park Scenic Boat Tours, is located on Lake Osceola, a rather large body of water where we began our 12-mile, one hour "Venice of America" tour of the lake and its six canals linking six different lakes. As our skipper "Captain

Dan" set sail we were able to relax as the day was very warm, sunny and the water was tranquil. We sailed through the various canals lined with a huge variety of beautiful flowers and plants and trees adorned with Spanish moss. That moss definitely made me feel that we were in the South. Captain Dan pointed out the elegant homes that aligned the various lakes. It was interesting to learn that the owners of some of the opulent private homes and exquisite estates ranged from various NBA stars and other celebrities to Mr. Rogers of "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood." To be able to spend some "quality time" with Maribel on the water was a welcome touch.

After our boat tour, we decided to spend the rest of our afternoon in Winter Park visiting a museum and then dinner. The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum, located on North Park Avenue, contains the world's most comprehensive collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The Museum exhibits include Tiffany jewelry, paintings, pottery, art glass, windows and an elaborate chapel interior created for the Chicago's World's Fair of 1893. There were two highlights of the museum visit. The first was it was not expensive—if there is anything I really like it's finding a good bargain. The Museum visit was the best cheap date I've had in a long time (\$3.00 admission fee). But also for the first time in a long time Maribel thought I had developed a true sense of class!

Only a few blocks down the street from the museum, we sat down in a very upscale and trendy Winter Park restaurant with inspiring American cuisine. Dinner at LUMA on Park was right up Maribel's alley. While I can eat almost anything anytime, my wife loved the ambience, the presentation, the openness of the kitchen and, of course, the food. For real wine connoisseurs, the restaurant has one of the most extensive wine lists in Central Florida. With the food and fantastic waiter service I could easily tell why LUMA has received many accolades, including "Best New Restaurant," "Best Chef's Table" from *Orlando Home & Leisure* and "Most Outstanding Customer Friendly Wine List" from *Orlando Leisure Magazine*. I could also tell why LUMA is the place to go for the "in" crowd of the Winter Park/Orlando area.

ADVENTURE AND RECOVERY — ORLANDO STYLE

Culture and romance took a backseat on the next day of our alone time. For most people, excitement in Orlando is the latest thrill rides at one of the major theme parks; not for the daredevil Carsons. We were off to the Wallaby Ranch Hang Gliding Flight Park to try something a bit different. Upon our arrival, we saw what looked like very small experimental planes towing glider after glider down a runway and up, up and away into the wild



Eatonville's St. Lawrence A.M.E. Church

blue yonder. I've always had a fascination with flying planes so I knew this would be interesting. It was exciting to see just how quickly the gliders ascended to 2,000 feet, released from the aero tow craft and to be able to watch them as they slowly made their way back to earth with very little noise. Each person who goes up in a glider is accompanied by an experienced professional who makes the rider as comfortable and relaxed as possible. For me, after assessing the situation, I made my own "executive decision" that I would take a pass on the hang gliding experience. As a former professional football player, I am used to being very daring in crunch time on the football field. I've even had the opportunity to fly in the back seat of a real F-4 Phantom jet, so I've already had my thrill in the air, so to speak. For Maribel, well, being the daredevil she is, she was game and took on the adventure of going up with Malcolm Jones, the most experienced instructor at Wallaby Ranch. In a way I felt like a "girlie man" forgoing the glider, but at 258 solid pounds I didn't want to have a reason to break a glider or throw up on the instructor.

As Maribel prepared for her flight, I was extremely proud of her bravery but felt compelled to secure her jewelry just in case a good strong wind came up unexpectedly. (Keep in mind that I'm the one who would have to give an explanation to her mother if anything went wrong.) Actually as her glider was being towed for lift-off, I could see the excitement on her face and felt relatively confident that everything would be okay. After all, Wallaby Ranch is the first full-time aero tow hang gliding flight park in the world using the latest tandem aero towing techniques providing the safest hang gliding experience possible. Or so they say.

When Maribel's glider reached the 2,000-foot limit and was released, I could see how quiet and peaceful the experience was for her. As her instructor glided her around and around, riding the currents of air, I was as proud as I could be of my wife, who was enjoying the ride. When she landed she said that it was better than she thought it would be and that even someone who was afraid of heights would enjoy it—though it might be useful to hear from someone who is actually afraid of heights on that one.

At the end of the glide we were transported to the canteen where we joined others who came to the ranch that morning for a good and hearty breakfast. Wallaby Ranch has the feel of the Australian outback, situated on 500 acres with various items hanging from the ceiling and walls (airplanes, t-shirts, parrots, hats, antlers, signs, etc.). Even though I did not go airborne I thoroughly enjoyed the morning at the ranch and was impressed with everyone's professionalism.

Our next adventure was totally earthbound as we traveled to Clermont, Florida, to do a little off-road driving. Revolution Off-Road Experience is a 230-acre tract of land that includes a 65-acre lake. At Revolution you have a choice of All Terrain Vehicles,

Dune Buggies, Rally Cars and 4x4s. Or if you are the type who is drawn to water, you can water ski or fish for trophy-size bass. You also can ride on a Segway or engage in laser skeet shooting. The site is a distance from central Orlando but if you are the true adventure seeker it is well worth the journey. Revolution opened in January 2008 and is operated by the husband/wife team Kevin and Audrey Jowett, originally from England, who followed their dream of creating a fun experience park for adults.

Maribel and I, along with the owner and instructor Kevin, took a Jeep 4x4 out to do some hill climbing. Mind you, I am used to doing the driving in our family, but when I sat in the rear of the Jeep and watched as Maribel drove up and down very steep hills, I realized how she must feel when I'm driving like a maniac taxi driver in Manhattan. There was more than one time when I was applying the phantom brakes as she was coming down the hills. I may have to re-think my own driving the next time I'm zooming down the West Side Highway in New York City.

What I really enjoyed was Maribel and I donning helmets, goggles and gloves to take a ride on a couple of All Terrain Vehicles. With a few simple instructions by the instructor, we were off running a closed course that gave us a sample of multiple sized hills and obstacles, giving us a sense of what it is like running the courses far out in the woods. I really enjoyed seeing Maribel doing something that is usually geared for "he-man" macho guys. I guess if I can do the manicure/pedicure thing with her when we are at home, she can do the ATV thing with me. (Now if I can get her to go back with me and do some fishing for large mouth bass, life would be grand.)

While I enjoyed the culture as well as the adventure of Orlando, for me the ultimate romantic event was a couple's massage at the Mandara Spa at Portofino Bay Hotel. Getting into the sometimes hidden, action side of Orlando was excellent fun, but being able to relax in the quiet of one of 14 massage rooms was a tremendous and memorable highlight of our stay. Joining Maribel for an 80-minute luxurious massage was one of our best experiences. We always enjoy being in the company of one another, but enjoying a deep tissue massage in a dimly lit room with soothing music laying side by side with my wife was the best!

If any of you men want to get closer to your wives or significant others, let me just suggest you leave the kids with Grandma and get away with the love of your life. Orlando has something for everyone and you will find that you don't have to stand in long lines in the shadow of Mouse Ears to get tremendous thrills and excitement. Just follow the path of the Carsons!

Harry Carson, former National Football League player and Super Bowl winner with the New York Giants, was the 231st player to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.