by ACSI the campsite specialist: edition fall 2021

AUTUMN EDITION 2021

The ACSI Times is published by Europe's leading campsite specialist. In this edition, we will once again be looking at the coronavirus problem and the effects of coronavirus on the camping industry. But, we'll also be looking at other trends and developments. We'll talk to experts and campsite owners about the electrification of campsites and the rise of the motorhome. Plus, we'll look at the topic of safety and give you some tips on how to prepare your campsite for an emergency situation.

ELECTRIFICATION OF CAMPSITES

Electric vehicles, motorhomes and caravans offer a completely different way of camping. Expert Michel Bayings discusses the consequences for campsite infrastructure, while different campsite owners talk about how they are managing to cope with an ever increasing number of electric vehicles.

**Read more on pages 2 - 5*

INSPECTIONS IN 2021

Due to coronavirus, ACSI inspectors were unable to carry out any physical inspections of campsites in 2020. Thankfully, the 2021 inspection season has been better, but not without its obstacles.

Read more on page 6

SAFE CAMPING

Over the summer, campsites have been ravaged by forest fires and floods. Eicke Schüürmann is director of LeadingCampings of Europe and a safety specialist. He offers some tips on how to make a campsite as safe as possible and on drawing up emergency plans.

**Read more on pages 8 - 9*

THE RISE OF THE MOTORHOME

Camping is popular, motorhomes are too. More and more campsites are paying closer attention to motorhome owners. Flemish motorhome expert Patrick Palmers explains how campsites can help to make motorhomes feel more welcome.

Read more on pages 10 - 11

CAMPSITES WITH A RICH HISTORY

Camping has a long and beautiful history. In this new section, campsite owners talk about the rich history of their businesses and family businesses. These stories will paint a picture that covers around a century of camping in Europe.

**Read more on pages 12 - 15



Campsite Bij de Bronnen in the Netherlands

Camping is hugely popular

Despite current restrictions, there is a bright future ahead

Even in summer 2021, restrictive coronavirus measures meant that the camping industry suffered somewhat. Perhaps more than was initially suspected. But, despite these setbacks, ACSI is looking to the future with confidence. Various sources suggest that the number of camping enthusiasts continues to grow.

Record after record

Sales figures from the caravan and motorhome industries continue to break new records. BOVAG reports that in the first six months of 2021, more new motorhomes were sold in the Netherlands than in any comparable period before. Plus, when compared with the first six months of 2020, the number of newly registered caravans increased by 35%. This was the highest figure since 2011. Records are also being broken in Germany. The Caravaning Industrie Verband e.V. (CIVD) recorded its best half-year ever. 15.4% more new motorhomes and caravans were registered than in the same period a year earlier, itself also a record.

Growing fleet

The total number of caravans and motorhomes in use in Europe continues to grow at a steady pace. The increasing number of motorhomes

in particular has pushed the total to nearly 5.9 million camping vehicles. Rental platforms, like Gogoony and Camptoo, are becoming increasingly important. New and younger campers are increasingly choosing to rent camping vehicles through these platforms. And if you're going on a camping holiday, camping equipment is going to come in handy. Figures for this segment, including second-hand sales, are also on the up. The Dutch platform Marktplaats saw the number of searches for camping equipment double in the first six months of 2021 when compared to a year earlier, even triple in some cases. Roof boxes, roof racks and camping tables and chairs are particularly popular.

Online trends

Camping-related terms are increasingly searched on Google. Google Trends offers insight into online

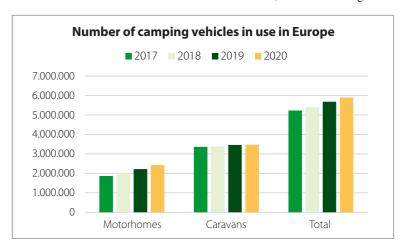
search behaviour, and this shows that over the past five years, the terms 'campsite', 'motorhome', and 'camping' were searched more in 2021 than at any point in the previous five years, particularly in Northern Europe.

ACSI has also noticed the increase in enthusiasm for camping. The number of website visitors, app users and newsletter subscribers continues to increase. The popularity of camping was almost immediately noticeable as soon as coronavirus measures were relaxed. Eurocampings.eu recorded a record number of visitors when

measures were relaxed in a number of countries in July. And when campsites were finally allowed to open their doors in the spring, sales of the CampingCard ACSI peaked immediately.

A rosy future

With all of this in mind, the longer term outlook is also good, particularly as the camping target group is getting younger. Families and young people who have decided not to fly are now discovering the joys of camping and are eager to travel around Europe in their caravans, motorhomes, tents and folding tents.



Through the crisis together

ACSI extending discount on campsite promotion for 2022

More than a year ago, tourism in Europe was hit hard by coronavirus, with immediate consequences for campsites. That's why ACSI decided to offer a considerable discount on marketing and promotion for 2020 and 2021. Since coronavirus is still with us, ACSI has decided to extend the discount for the 2022 promotion as well.

Last year, ACSI gave campsites more than 4 million Euros of support in the form of discounts and free services. Participants in CampingCard ACSI and advertising campsites paid a lot less for promotion. Commission on clicks via Cost Per Click and bookings via ACSI Booking was also suspended in 2020. ACSI partly funded this huge injection of support through the bank as the costs of producing guides and of continuing to develop the websites and apps did not stop. Still, for ACSI, things were clear – we need to get through this together, with our campsites.

ACSI is continuing to offer a discount on the promotion for 2022. After all, it's still an unusual year and there are many obstacles. The inspector may have already

talked to you about this during the inspection.

For further information, you can also contact the ACSI sales department on +31 (0)488452055 or by e-mail on sales@acsi.eu.

The rise of the electric car

Expert Michel Bayings on the impact on campsite infrastructure

Due to the increase in the number of electric cars in Europe and the anticipated increase in the future, demand for charging facilities is also going up. How can you prepare for this as a campsite owner? ACSI asked Michel Bayings, consultant and expert in Europe in the field of infrastructure for e-mobility.

An electric car is no longer a rarity on European roads. A few countries were already ahead, but the European Parliament has now sent out a clear message that we must invest in sustainability. Bayings: 'Sustainable mobility is an important part of this. The European Commission's recently published climate objectives, entitled "Fit for 55", seek to reduce greenhouse gases, such as CO,, by 55% by 2030 when compared to the situation in 1990. Mobility must be an important contributor to this. In practice, this will mean that from 2035 onwards, only cars and vans that are fully zeroemission will be sold. To emit no emissions, they will need to run on electricity or hydrogen.'

An increasing number of electric cars

Bayings expects at least 55% of cars on European roads to be powered by electricity by 2030. In practice, this amounts to between forty and fifty million electric cars. Although hydrogen-powered cars are also included in the

objectives, the camping sector will primarily have to deal with the impact of fully electric cars. Bayings explains: 'Firstly, because experts and manufacturers expect the vast majority of cars to be fully electric. Secondly, because refuelling with hydrogen requires facilities that are not immediately appropriate for a campsite. It currently costs between one and one and a half million Euros to establish a hydrogen station. In addition, the stations are large and the hydrogen needs to be stored in high-pressure tanks and in a safe environment on account of fire safety.'

Growing need for charging stations

So, we can expect a large number of electric cars and vans, all of which will need charging facilities. Bayings: 'This will be solved in part by the installation of fast charging points along motorways. European rules require them to be installed every 60 kilometres along major motorways. And drivers of electric cars will also want

to be able to charge their cars at campsites. This need is something that we can already see - look at the number of cables, often with an extension cable attached, that are regularly routed from mobile homes to cars. As a campsite owner, you need to prepare for this and provide safe, well-designed connections.' It's also good marketing, explains Bayings. 'The number of electric cars is currently growing faster than the number of public charging points. It is becoming increasingly common for campers to choose another campsite if there are no charging facilities available.'

Charging versus fast charging

According to Bayings, investing in charging facilities is not as complicated as people might think. 'If you do it right, the investment can remain limited and in the long term, will be fully repaid, especially if you combine it with power generation and storage.' Bayings focuses in on the technical details: 'A car can be charged via AC (slow charging) or DC (fast charging). The latter is not really a logical option when you consider the cost of the power network that you need, and the chargers themselves. AC charging is the option to go for. There are

two logical places for charging on a campsite – in the general parking area and at individual pitches, if vehicles are allowed there. The charging capacity is determined by the combination of the maximum of what the charging station can provide and of what the car can handle. In practice, most electric cars can charge at 11 kilowatts (kW) AC. That amounts to about 55 kilometres per hour of additional range. With a standard 3.7 kW connection, this is about 12 kilometres per hour.'

Charging stations in a large parking area

According to Bayings, it is relatively easy to install charging stations in large parking areas because there is more space and it is easier to route power cables underground. Bayings: 'Within fifteen years, all new cars must be electric, according to European climate objectives. As such, it is advisable, when installing charging stations in parking areas, to ensure that a cable duct runs by all spaces. This way, you can easily scale up the number of charging stations over the next few years. It is most common to install 11 kW charging stations in these types of parking area. In many cases, this will also require an increase in

the capacity of your grid connection. By connecting the stations in a group using the Charge Point Operator (CPO), platform, you can reduce the reinforcement needed through smart control of the charging stations. This can vary by a factor of five or more from the number of charging stations that you can operate on a connection. The power is distributed optimally and the number of stations in use is taken into account.'

The revenue

Bayings explains what the earnings model could look like: 'Most CPOs also allow you to set the rate for the electricity. Part of that money will be for the CPO, but most of it will be for the campsite owner. The rate can be a rate per kilowatt hour (kWh) – an amount between twenty and thirty-five cents per kWh is commonplace. But, you can also choose a rate per time unit or a combination of both. So long as you clearly communicate your rate to guests, it won't be a problem. Doing this will allow you to recoup vour investment costs in the long run. Charging stations currently have an amortisation period of up to seven years, but they can last for more than ten years. The CPOs also have agreements





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An example calculation

According to Bayings, it can be financially attractive to install charging stations. The investment needed for charging stations depends on many factors, but generally the amortisation period is a maximum of seven years. The same applies to solar panels and energy storage in batteries. Suppose that you put twenty charging stations in a parking area with four solar panels on top of each one, you will spend around €80,000. If you can achieve a consumption of 150 kWh per station for 26 weeks of the year and charge the driver €0.25, you will receive almost €12,000 in income each year, taking into account the energy generated. This gives an amortisation period of less than seven years. However, if you combine control of the charging stations, solar panels and storage and use it in a smart manner, the amortisation period could be even less. In addition, many countries or regions offer subsidies for charging stations, solar panels and storage. It then becomes even more attractive. There are so many variables that it's difficult to provide one example that applies to everyone. It depends very much on the options in the country in question.

with many suppliers of charging cards throughout Europe, what are known as Mobility Service Providers or MSPs. A user can then charge his vehicle using his own charging card. The costs are paid to the campsite owner via the charging card provider and the CPO.'

Combining with energy generation

Some CPOs offer to bear the full cost of the charging stations and operation or offer a lease-type structure. In that case, the campsite owner only has to install the power supply. Since a charging station costs between €1,000 and €3,000, this can make a significant difference to the amount of the investment. Bayings: 'By

combining charging stations with energy generation through solar panels or wind and by making use of energy storage in batteries, you can optimally coordinate the supply and demand of energy at the campsite. This type of energy management system can also be used to draw energy from the grid and store it in the batteries when it is inexpensive or when there is a ample sun. This energy can then be used to charge vehicles during more expensive hours or in the evenings. Most countries also have subsidy schemes for both solar panels and energy storage.'

Charging stations at the pitch According to Bayings, charging options at individual pitches will depend on the situation. 'If the

general parking area has enough charging stations, a standard connection of 3.7 kW may be sufficient. For faster charging, campers can use the large parking area. The advantage of this is the lower investment. It is recommend that you install a separate power group for this. Settlement can easily be carried out via the charging station or the power consumed can be recorded and billed centrally. In a situation where the large parking area has no or limited charging facilities, an 11 kW charging station at each pitch is probably the best solution. The charging stations at individual pitches can also be combined with power generation from solar panels and energy storage in small batteries. You can also bundle different pitches together that will in

turn provide power to the charging stations in a smart manner.'

Prepared for the future

According to Bayings, we cannot ignore the fact that the demand for charging facilities is only likely to increase in the future, particularly now that more and more electric vehicles can tow trailers (or caravans) and the range and load capacity have improved significantly. 'As a campsite owner, you can take advantage of this by clearly indicating on your website which charging options are available. And not only on your own campsite, but also the charging options in the surrounding area. Where is the nearest fast charger? And in which surrounding villages and towns can you find a charging station? They are often found at

supermarkets. This will certainly have a positive effect on the visit. There are many options, so a campsite owner would do well to map out the situation and look at the options available for subsidies. This will give you an idea of the investment needed. That way, you can make a proper assessment and be prepared for the future,' concludes Bayings.



About Michel Bayings

Michel Bayings is the director of E-Mobility Consulting, a Dutch-based international consultancy focused on charging infrastructure for electric mobility in Europe, but also with activities outside Europe. Bayings himself lives in France and has been active in the field since 2008. He has become an authority advising companies and governments. His company has contacts in various countries with charging station suppliers (CPOs) and service providers (MSPs), but also with suppliers of solar panels and storage batteries.

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Electric camping in 2021

Campsite owners are already anticipating the arrival of electric vehicles



As electric cars continue to increase in popularity, they will increasingly be used to tow caravans. Ranges are increasing, although covering large distances in a short time remains a challenge. Nevertheless, campers with just an electric car and no caravan are already quite commonplace on campsites. And the electric motorhome is coming too. These developments are changing the camping landscape and confronting campsites with new challenges.

ACSI conducted research amongst 11,000 campers and found that almost 65% of those with an electric car also use it for camping holidays. A little more than 25% even tow a caravan behind their electric car, especially if the destination is close to home. More than 51% of campers with an electric car select the campsite specifically for the presence of a charging station. The presence of a charging facility is, therefore, becoming increasingly important. In the article on pages

two and three, you will already have read how expert Michel Bayings views the consequences – and solutions – for campsites in terms of infrastructure.

ACSI also spoke to two campsite owners and asked them how they see this development and what they are doing now to cater to this new target group. That this target group will only continue to grow is demonstrated by recent sales figures for electric vehicles.

Electric cars more than double in number

Tesla, pioneer in 2012, is no longer the only manufacturer of electric cars. Almost a decade later, almost all makes have now introduced electric models. This enormous choice for the consumer has paid off, especially now that more and more affordable alternatives are becoming available. The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) recently calculated that by 2020, as many as 538,722 allelectric cars had been sold across the European Union. Those sales figures represent an increase of 117.4% when compared to 2019. Plug-ins are also more popular than ever. While 139,954 plugin hybrids were sold in 2019, no fewer than 507,059 plug-in hybrids found their way to a new

owner last year. And this is just the beginning.

Electrification of motorhomes and caravans

And it's not just cars. Development of electric motorhomes and caravans is also in full swing. Since 2018, the e-Fixxter, the first fully electric four-passenger van, has been on the market. The e.Home Coco by Dethleffs is also a unique caravan with electric drive system. At the beginning of 2021, this caravan (1,500 kg) was hitched to an Audi e-Tron Sportback for a journey of some 380 kilometres from the German town of Isny im Allgäu to Lake Garda. On the six-hour journey, the electric caravan combination did not need to be charged once. These novelties and achievements indicate that

the camping vehicle industry is actively thinking about a more sustainable way of holidaying.

What can campsites do?

Electric cars and electric camping vehicles will increasingly find their way to campsites across Europe and beyond. Campsites must be prepared for this shift by upgrading their infrastructure (see pages 2 and 3). Some campsite owners have already taken up the gauntlet and are doing something extra for electric campers, even in 2021. ACSI spoke to Pim Kromhout, owner of Vakantiepark Koningshof and Luca Doccini, owner of Cieloverde Camping Village.

Vakantiepark Koningshof,

Rijnsburg
Pim Kromhout

Number of charging stations: 2 Number of charging points: 3 Since when: 2016 and a new station installed in 2018 Expansion plans: Yes Free of charge for guests: No

Since when have you had charging stations at your campsite? And why?

There has been a charging station at Vakantiepark Koningshof since 2016. It was installed because at the time, the previous campsite owner, my father, drove an electric car. Holiday guests were also allowed to use the charging station. When we completed our new centre building in 2018, we installed a new charging station (with two charging points) in the parking area.

We decided that installing an additional station was necessary because fossil fuel cars will eventually have no future and will probably disappear altogether. By doing this, we are already responding to the current and future needs of a new group of motorists with electric vehicles. There is usually a car at the charging station, sometimes two, so it is well used. On occasion, there are no cars at all, but we expect to receive more and more guests with electric cars.

Is charging free?

No. You pay an hourly rate similar to that at other charging stations. This is a deliberate choice, as we do not see charging as an extra service. It is more a part of the electric car driver's everyday life. We don't consider free charging an appropriate service.

and important issue: can energy suppliers scale up enough to meet the new demand for power? Especially when the majority of people – or everyone – starts driving electric. This doesn't just apply to campsites, but to other companies and private individuals as well. Solar panels alone cannot meet the extra demand for electricity, especially when you consider that there is also huge demand for electrical appliances

How was the charging station

We outsourced this to an electri-

holiday park. We did not have to

cal engineering company that

often carries out work at our

How do you see the future?

As we only have two stations,

things aren't so bad, but in the

future there will be an interesting

do any work ourselves.

installed?

so that all of our customers can access them easily.

like air conditioners. I am curi-

ous about the solutions.

Is charging free?

Yes, because we see this as a service for customers with electric cars.

How was the charging station installed?

We contacted Repower, a major energy company in the electricity and gas sector. Repower's focus is increasingly on solutions to support the energy transition. They gave us the option of

As mentioned, we are managing well with three charging points. In the future, we expect to have to double the number of charging points to six. I think this will happen in the next five to ten years. However, the speed of installation and the number of stations will depend on two factors: the scaling-up options of energy suppliers and the willingness of people currently driving petrol or diesel cars to actually switch to electric vehicles. From people I know, I understand that the purchase price is still too high. We shall see.

What have the reactions been from guests?

Recently, we've had a lot of questions about the cost, duration and rules of charging. You can often see the costs in an app. These depend on night and day rate. And charging is more expensive in summer than in winter. As such, it's difficult to estimate the

costs in advance. The duration of charging depends on the vehicle and the cables that are used – there are special fast charging cables, for example. But most drivers of electric cars know from experience how much they are spending and how long it takes to recharge. This knowledge means that they can disconnect their car in time for the next car to start charging.

There are questions from customers that we do have to deal with. We could print all of the relevant information on stickers and affix them to the charging stations, but what if something changes in the meantime? So, we think it would be smarter to put more information on our website. We can update the information there much more easily and keep our customers properly informed.

Cieloverde Camping Village, Grosetto Luca Doccini

Number of charging stations: 3 Number of charging points: 6 Since when: 2018 Expansion plans: No Free of charge for guests: Yes

Since when have you had charging stations at your campsite? And why?

In 2018, Cieloverde was one of the first camping resorts in Italy to successfully introduce charging stations for electric cars. It's worth noting that since 2019, the entire resort has used energy exclusively from renewable sources. Sustainability is very

important to us.

Back then, we were hearing a lot about charging points elsewhere in Europe, so it seemed a good time to contribute to a more sustainable way of holidaying. By installing multiple charging stations, we wanted to encourage the purchase and use of electric cars. The stations are located in a central section of the campsite installing three charging stations capable of charging six cars at the same time. After the application, it took around two months before the charging stations were installed. We had the work done in the winter because that's when the campsite is closed.

How do you see the future?

For now, we are very satisfied with our charging stations. I've been extremely proud that our campsite offers this service. But, I have noticed that there are still improvements to be made in the automobile industry. I think that

the battery capacity of electric cars needs work – there's a lot of variation, so there are big differences in the charging times between different vehicles. This is one of the reasons we do not want to increase the number of charging stations. We would prefer to wait until the Italian market for electric cars grows more.



ACSI inspectors back on the road

After a year of carrying out inspections online, inspectors are visiting in-person again



In 2019, some 340 ACSI inspectors inspected nearly 10,000 campsites in Europe, something that ACSI has done every single year since 1965. How were things different last year? Travel restrictions and other uncertainties relating to coronavirus meant that in-person inspections had to be suspended and everything had to be arranged over the phone or online. Thankfully, ACSI inspectors have been able to get out on the road again this year, although not always without problems.

The 2021 inspection year started out with obstacles. Inspector training courses, which ACSI would normally deliver at its headquarters in the Netherlands, had to be

done online. The digital inspector environment and Zoom meetings were used to inform inspectors about the online inspector portal, and participants could ask questions and give one another advice. ACSI director Ramon van Reine reflects with satisfaction: 'During the coronavirus pandemic, we saw precisely what couldn't be done, but it also forced us to think creatively to look for solutions.'

Inspectors can't wait

Starting in mid-May, ACSI was able to welcome inspectors back to the office in small groups -Face-to-face contact for the first time in eighteen months. There was no doubt that the inspectors were itching to get on the road again, and that they missed 'their'



campsites. ACSI quickly organised eighteen sessions in which inspectors were updated on the situation in Europe, the changes to inspections and ACSI products. Van Reine emphasises the benefit of these sessions: 'We put a lot of time into it all. First and foremost, it's important that we train our inspectors every year and send them out on visits fully prepared. But personal contact between our staff and inspectors, and between the inspectors themselves, is also important. The meetings are also something of an annual reunion, and there are a great many friendships between inspector couples.'

The importance of inspection

The annual inspection and personal contact with campsite owners are of vital importance to ACSI. According to Van Reine, it's unthinkable to publish reliable campsite information without ever having visited. 'Our inspectors look at the situation, go over everything with the campsite owner and conduct surveys amongst guests. This provides an up-todate and accurate picture of what a campsite has to offer and what campers can expect. This way, we also know with certainty that a campsite is of sufficient quality to be included in our guides and apps and for publication on our website.' ACSI is the only

camping organisation that visits all campsites every year, and campsite owners value that contact. A good match with campers is also important for campsites, as it helps to ensure satisfied guests and happy holidays.

Things remain uncertain

Van Reine is unsurprisingly delighted that inspectors have been able to go back out on the road, but has seen uncertainty in 2021. 'We have done everything possible to ensure that we could inspect all campsites, but travel restrictions and our inspectors' vaccination statuses sometimes slowed things down. Sadly, this has meant that we have been unable to visit a small proportion of campsites. Those campsites have been approached by ACSI about this.'

Growing number of inspectors

Over the next year, ACSI will be expanding its already sizeable pool of inspectors. More than a hundred new inspectors are being trained so that we always have a sufficient contingent to visit campsites. Van Reine is happy with the situation: 'There is a waiting list of almost 250 inspectors who would love to go out on the road for ACSI. Every year we have inspectors who are unable to go out for one reason or another,

but we have always managed to resolve the problem with the team that we have. If we expand more, it'll give us that added flexibility.' There is another benefit. 'New people offer a new look and fresh ideas. That's always good for an organisation.'

Quality improvements

ACSI continues to look at the quality of inspections and to ensure that things continue to be monitored, two changes are being implemented. Every inspector will be assigned a supervisor from the headquarters. This person will be an ACSI employee who is familiar with the inspection area, speaks the language and has good knowledge of systems and products from ACSI. The inspector can always consult this person as required. In addition, ACSI is also introducing a quality control system. Campsite owners and supervisors will be able to rate inspectors, thus giving us a better idea of the level of our inspection work. This is important for the quality of the data and for the relationship between ACSI and campsites.



Best campsite owner or manager

The 2021 camping season is now in full swing for many campsites, but you'll probably be looking back at the last summer season, which was not without its concerns. Where we saw relaxations of the rules at the start of the season, they were tightened again in some places in Europe not long after. Once again, it shows the unpredictability of the times and the fickle nature of many national governments. There was also unpredictability in the environment, with campsites in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg hit by severe flooding at the end of July. Elsewhere in Europe, forest fires were a problem.

Despite the travel restrictions that are still in place, campers have been out on the road in droves this summer. ACSI has seen this bounceback in its fantastic website and app visitor numbers, and sales of our campsite guides. Deliveries to retail

sellers and webshop sales increased dramatically in May, and several titles sold out.

Meanwhile, many campsite owners are already looking ahead, and you should also take a closer look at your campsite to see if there are areas where campers' needs and wants can be better served. You will already have read pages 4 and 5 on the electrification of the camping landscape and what the arrival of electric caravans, motorhomes and cars could mean for your campsite. Later on, you'll read about the increase in motorhome use and how your campsite can better service motorhome owners.

Campsites and campers alike are looking forward to a year in which there are no travel restrictions. Now that large numbers of Europeans have been vaccinated, people are confident that in the year ahead,

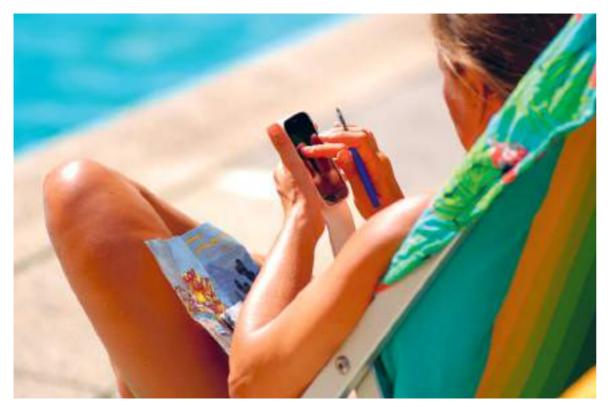
we'll be able to travel freely again and experience the holidays we've been dreaming of. Hopefully, coronavirus will soon become a bad memory and we'll succeed in containing the pandemic. I have a positive view of the future of the camping industry, but also realise that 2021 is another year of major differences.

I wish you every strength and, hopefully, a successful conclusion to the current camping year.



ACSI continuing to develop its products

Refresh for apps and an additional CampingCard ACSI rate



Rarely have changes in the world of camping come in such quick succession as in recent years. And it all points to more interesting times ahead. To be able to serve both campers and campsites as best we can, ACSI is also continuing to develop its products.

ACSI's focus in the short term will be on apps. the ACSI Campsites Europa app, ACSI Great Little Campsites app and CampingCard ACSI app are due to undergo a major overhaul. In addition, a major







change is due to be introduced to
CampingCard ACSI in 2022 with the
addition of a sixth overnight rate

of £22

also allow ACSI to update the apps
more quickly in the future, to allow
improvements to user conveni-

New development platform for the apps

There has been an increase in the number of users of ACSI apps in recent years, which has led ACSI to elevate the apps to an even more prominent position within the organisation. Work is currently underway to transfer the apps to a new development platform. With the future in mind, this is an important step as developments and new functionalities can be implemented much more quickly on this platform. The platform will

also allow ACSI to update the apps more quickly in the future, to allow improvements to user convenience. Work is currently in the test phase, with everything being thoroughly checked both internally and by the ACSI Customer Panel. The refreshed apps are due to go live in autumn 2021.

Important benefit

The refreshed version of the apps already includes an important benefit for campers as map material is now downloaded in the background, so that the full functionality of the app can be used immediately. In addition, the app can also be used when there is no access to the internet. Unlike many other

camping-related apps, users can search for campsites offline, filter by amenities and view campsite information. Access to the internet is only needed to book a camping pitch

Additional CampingCard ACSI

Another change is being made to CampingCard ACSI – with effect from 2022, we will be introducing a sixth overnight rate of €22 per night alongside the existing rates of €12, €14, €16, €18 and €20. ACSI hopes that by adding the additional rate, CampingCard ACSI will be a more interesting proposition for more campsites. Price increases and renovations and upgrades at campsites have meant that many campsites already in the highest rate band were no longer able to participate.

Extensive range

This was not ideal, neither for ACSI nor the campsites. ACSI wants to give users of the CampingCard

ACSI discount card the most extensive campsite range possible. Plus, campsites want to take advantage of the flow of customers that CampingCard ACSI generates. With the addition of the new rate, ACSI will be able to meet the needs of campsites and thus allow them to benefit in the future. ACSI will still be responsible for determining the rate that applies to a campsite. The inspector or our sales team would be happy to explain further.



Camping - but safe!

How can campsites prepare themselves for emergencies or disasters?



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Forest fires have ravaged southern Europe, while flooding has plagued areas of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Campsites have been badly damaged and even destroyed by fire and water. Is it possible to prepare for a crisis like this? Eicke Schüürmann is director of LeadingCampings of Europe, an association currently composed of 36 top campsites across Europe. He specialises in safety and offers tips on how to make campsites as safe as possible.

Images of the flooding were shown on virtually every screen and looked truly surreal. 'It felt a bit like an over-the-top Hollywood film,' explains Schüürmann. 'And yet, it was terrifyingly real. The number of fatalities was unfathomably high, particularly by European standards and in areas with good rescue infrastructure in place.' Schüürmann understands that looking into the causes of these disasters is something that will have to wait. 'It's the consequences that cause problems for campsite owners.'

Personally affected

The flooding also affected Schüürmann personally. For 26 years, he has lived in peace and harmony next to a stream, but on Wednesday 14 July, the situation changed significantly. 'That stream became a Mississippi-like

river very quickly and everything was under water – including my basement and garage.' A little way upstream, the water had taken out a piece of wall from a garden, and that acted a little like a sluice, allowing the water to flow away. Consequently, the damage that Schüürmann suffered was relatively limited, especially when compared to other areas. 'Thankfully, we were all unharmed, but the material damage is still considerable. Still, everything can be replaced, and having to go for a period without hot water is not too difficult in the summer months. But if you're a campsite owner an are dependent on that technical infrastructure, you're going to have a major problem.'

Short-term and long-term effects Flooding is not the most common problem experienced by campsites.

'Far more commonplace are fire and explosions,' as Schüürmann knows from experience. Gas explosions are particularly infamous. 'At LeadingCampings, we also had the unfortunate experience of a devastating fire,' explains the director of the forest fire that occurred in July 2007 and turned Italian campsite Villaggio San Nicola to nothing more than ash. The heat caused caravans to melt and campsite guests found that the sea was the only place they could go to escape the flames. 'Campers thought that the fire would pass the campsite along the top of the cliffs and leave everything unharmed. Looking at it from their perspective, that was probably good logic. But looked at from a safety perspective, you can conclude that the evacuation went completely wrong.'

The damage was not only phenomenal in the short term. 'When the campsite started operations again, a whole three years later, guests were really reluctant to return,' remembers Schüürmann. 'The area still smelled of charred trees and the natural wonders of the area were a long way from being restored. The loss of attractiveness is something that very few businesses

take into account, but it does play a role in the long term. Thankfully, there are things you can do to protect yourself.'

Learning from disasters

The accident involving a tanker that occurred in Los Alfaques on 11 July 1978 is considered to be one of the worst disasters to ever take place on a European campsite. The tanker, filled with liquefied propylene, drove into a wall close to the campsite and exploded. The sea of flames destroyed the campsite, which was fully occupied at the time. 'There was a chain reaction which saw 217 die and more than 300 sustain injuries,' explains Schüürmann. 'There was even a film made about it (Tarragona – Ein Paradies in Flammen). And if you set aside all the clichés about romance and love, the course of the fire and its spread are so well documented in the film that you really can learn something from it.' One thing you can learn is how important minimum distances are on a campsite. Schüürmann offers some advice, 'Keep an eye on your regular campers and don't ever go for double occupied pitches in the high season, no matter how lucrative.'

Rights and obligations

There are actually three reasons for ensuring that safety is properly organised. First and foremost, there is a legal obligation that stipulates that measures must be taken to protect guests from injury and material loss. There are also humanitarian reasons and moral duties of course, such as the duty

to provide help to someone in need. But just as important are the financial reasons. 'The financial consequences of an event that causes damage can devastate a campsite. Fines, legal proceedings and compensation for damages can also cause a campsite to go bankrupt.'

Make evacuation plans

Measures to ensure safety on a campsite are, therefore, extremely important. A good evacuation plan is essential, for example, but sometimes they are found wanting. 'Many campsites just don't have a plan that guests can find easily and understand,' explains Schüürmann. Ideally, plans should be accompanied by photographs so that children and those with difficulties understanding can still follow them. But, Schüürmann also offers a warning, 'You can have as good an evacuation plan as you like, but if the emergency exits are blocked to keep non-paying guests out, it's useless. Unfortunately, blocked emergency exits are all too common.'

Test the emergency plans

In addition to an evacuation plan, it's also a good idea to develop emergency plans for different scenarios (see box). These should be tested regularly with campsite staff. Once the plans have been worked out, Schüürmann also recommends holding exercises with guests – Schüürmann also believes that passive safety exercises could become commonplace. 'Every cruise ship holds drills so that passengers can see how to



Eicke Schüürmann is the director of LeadingCampings of Europe, an association currently comprising 36 top campsites across Europe. The member campsites range from small to large, but all excel in terms of comfort, innovation and hospitality. Schüürmann himself is not only a director but also a specialist in the field of safety.

More information: www.leadingcampings.com



Creating an emergency plan

The escalation scale can be used to formulate a good emergency plan. According to Schüürmann, clear definitions are important to campsite owners, employees, guests and emergency/rescue services. Everyone needs to be speaking the same language so that they know what to expect. 'External aid workers won't yet have a picture of the situation on the ground. The definitions on the escalation scale surpass one another and always include the situation of the previous, lower-level term.' This table describes the four definitions and gives an example for each. 'It's about whether or not you can get control of the situation with the resources you have available to you, whether you need assistance from outside and whether the situation is already beyond your control.'

Term	Situation	Example
Risk	Due to the development of different circumstances, there is a risk of potential loss – injury or damage.	The campsite restaurant is made of wood. A risk analysis suggests that there is a risk of fire. One possible measure is to install smoke detectors.
Emergency	Occurs due to an unpredictable combination of circumstances. Requires immediate action.	The smoke detector sounds. The emergency plan states that the restaurant must be evacuated.
Crisis	An unstable or critical period or state in which there is the likelihood of an unwanted event.	The fire service arrives unexpectedly late and own fire extinguishers are already depleted. The limited fire is spreading farther.
Disaster	A sudden, catastrophic event that causes extensive damage, loss and/or destruction. Contains all of the elements of an emergency and crisis.	The restaurant and other buildings are on fire. The fire is spreading to caravans, gas bottles and fuel tanks and vehicles are exploding. Guests are in a state of panic.

put on a life jacket and where the lifeboats are located. You also get instructions on a plane. Both shipping companies and airlines are in favour and guests never see these exercises as in any way disruptive to their holiday fun,' explains Schüürmann. 'Campsites could offer these kinds of exercise as well, perhaps every week so that all newcomers can take part. You could do this in a playful, fun way, perhaps by combining it with other information about the campsite and the surrounding area.'

Start with a risk analysis

When you're putting together an emergency plan, you need to start with a risk analysis. This needs to be done separately for each campsite. You can also use colour coding to determine the likeli-

hood of occurrence. According to Schüürmann, the emergency plans need to be compiled in such a way that the instructions make it clear how the situation can be changed safely and effectively. There are three important pillars in this:

- People and animals need to be protected.
- Economic, ecological and personal assets need to be secured.
- Campsite operations can be continued in a normal manner.

Emergency Prevention Committee

Schüürmann recommends forming an Emergency Prevention Committee (EPC), which will be responsible for implementing the instructions. The members of the team will need to be well

coordinated and work together so that they can rely on one another. This is extremely important in an emergency, crisis or disaster situation. 'Heroes working by themselves belong in Hollywood,' warns Schüürmann. 'In real life, you cannot do without team work. If you work as a team, you can make up for someone being absent.' Also important is the need to 'practise, practise and practise again. This helps to make sure that you know what you need to do, even in exceptional situations.' Schüürmann recommends a hierarchical organisation within the EPC. 'That means having clear responsibilities and clear assignments – you coordinate the emergency services, you secure area A, you area B and you look after communications.'

The right communication

The EPC should ideally have a communications and (social) media specialist amongst its members. You can use the internet in real time to quickly get information out to guests. 'Try to get control of the information situation – inform quickly, never promise what you can't deliver, check the networks, look for fake information and invalidate it.' After all, Schüürmann knows that 'scorched earth can sometimes be a reality, literally, but occasionally stories take on a life of their own and can cause far-reaching reputational damage.'

Advice from professionals Schüürmann's final tip is to get professional advice. 'Involve the

fire service, Red Cross and other

local authorities in the compilation of emergency plans and organising exercises. They are familiar with this area and would be happy to offer advice.' Evaluating exercises is also important. 'Clock response times, for example, and keep an eye on flows of information. It can also be helpful to read and exchange external case studies and to ask for advice from safety engineers or insurers. Issues such as loss of profit, loss of attractiveness and reputational damage are often underestimated, but can have serious implications for campsites. Formulate concrete questions based on your own situation as doing so will give you the best chance of targeted and valuable advice.'



Under the magnifying glass:

Motorhomes on campsites

The motorhome is a common sight on campsites. In the past, caravans, trailer tents and tents were often found amongst the motorhomes, but a change is currently underway. More and more campsites are providing separate areas for motorhomes, equipped with special amenities for motorhomes amongst likeminded holidaymakers. This also means that there is less irritation due to frequent movement of motorhomes. Since motorhome sales in Europe have been on the increase for years, more and more campsites are beginning to cater to the group.

Motorhome sales offer opportunities

You may have read about the positive figures from the motorhome and caravan industry in a previous issue of the ACSI Times. In Northern Europe in particular, sales of motorhomes have been breaking record upon record - sales of second-hand models are also on the increase. This new group of motorhome owners offers opportunity for campsites. The image of the motorhome owner as an uninterested passer-by, someone who stays one night to fill the water tank and empty the waste, has long since gone. Quite the opposite in fact, motorhome owners are increasingly welcome on campsites.

ACSI spoke to motorhome expert Patrick Palmers from Flanders and with the owners of two campsites, Camping Roland and Camping De Regge-Vallei. They suggest how motorhome owners can be enticed to book a pitch on a campsite and how campsites can remain attractive for motorhome owners with divergent needs. We start by talking to Patrick Palmers.

How can you account for the popularity of the motorhome?

I think it is partly to do with coronavirus. Travelling in a motorhome, like camping itself, has proven to be a safe way to go on holiday. You travel in your own 'bubble', so to speak. The motorhome had been increasing in popularity for some time. The pandemic only served to accelerate that popularity.

The positives of a motorhome have always been there – simply being able to pack your bags and move on whenever you want to is one of the most obvious. Plus, holidaying in a motorhome is a sustainable way of taking a holiday when you compare it to flying. Finally, with a motorhome, you're completely mobile and you can combine nature, culture and adventure in one break.

These are all of the reasons why I have enjoyed holidaying in a motorhome for more than eight years.

As some who holidays in a motorhome, what do you consider to be important on a campsite?

A campsite needs to be friendly to motorhomes. That includes having longer opening hours so that you can arrive late in the evening if you need to - particularly in the high season. Plus ideally, the campsite will be open all year round. A motorhome is a good way of holidaying in the autumn. In addition to this ease of access, there need to be amenities for motorhomes. Personally, I don't necessarily need to be on a specially configured motorhome site, I also enjoy camping amongst the regular pitches, even if they are a little more expensive. That way, I think you get to enjoy more of the comfort and atmosphere of the campsite.

With Pasar, we have two large Kompas campsites on the Belgian coast where we have deliberately decided to have several large motorhome areas because of the need. I'm glad that we did that, but at the same time, we also offer our regular touring pitches and pitches on the camping field for use by motorhomes. It's up to guests.

What distinguishes a campsite from a traditional motorhome site?

The right amenities – such as a waste drainage point, fresh water point, electricity and WiFi. You don't always find these on a motorhome site. In addition, campsites have added value when it comes to longer stays because of the extra comfort they offer. And, on a campsite, you have more freedom than you would on a motorhome site because there, you are in a public space.

Finally, what are examples of campsites and countries that are especially friendly to motorhomes?

Our own Kompas campsites, Camping Nieuwpoort and Camping Westende, of course, but in general I'm noticing how well motorhomes are served on an increasing number of campsites. European cities are making more effort to develop city campsites and areas for motorhomes. That way, cities hope that they can attract motorhomes instead of keeping them out. I think that's a positive development. One country where I have been particularly welcomed with my motorhome is Denmark, but that hospitality is replicated across Scandinavia, which is really well set up for motorhomes. In Denmark, I once stayed on a campsite where we had our own wooden terrace area on the pitch. Those little details are what make your stay extra enjoyable.

Patrick Palmers is director of Pasar Kamperen and a passionate motorhome owner in his spare time.

Pasar is a Flemish leisure organisation that provides inspiration for a wide range of activities, including hiking, cycling, camping and cultural excursions. The association has around 21,000 members and is active through Flanders with around 240 branches. Pasar also publishes a travel magazine packed with inspiration for interesting excursions and holidays in Belgium and farther afield.



Camping Roland Afferden **Luuk Jansen**

How and when did the idea of a motorhome site come about?

We completed our motorhome site with 38 pitches in 2017. Motorhomes have their own entrance, which is separate from the campsite, but still have the opportunity to take advantage of all of the campsite amenities. We started out informally, with an envelope containing a registration form and cash, to be deposited in a safe. We did that solely to see how the idea might catch on.

The motorhome market was already in development, but we also knew that not every motorhome owner is keen to be on or near a campsite. We wanted to respond to that. Thankfully, our motorhome site proved to be a success. This year, we implemented complete automation, with a self-service check-in point and payment terminal with barrier. After the summer, we plan to add electricity posts that can be activated with the access card that is automatically issued on entry, with payment per kWh. On leaving, the access pass can be left at the terminal and the deposit or remaining credit will be refunded to the guest's bank account. Before 2017, we also had ten special motorhome pitches on the campsite area. That worked quite well. We were able to turn those



pitches into comfort pitches for other campers, which was ideal when demand for perhaps smaller motorhome pitches was less.

Do all motorhomes need be on the motorhome site?

On the motorhome site, all pitches are identical – 10 x 7 metres with simple amenities. If motorhome owners are looking for more by way of luxury, they are more than welcome on the campsite, where we offer our comfort pitches to motorhomes as well. That's at the regular rate of course, which is slightly higher than on the motorhome site.

What amenities do you have on your motorhome site?

Every pitch has 6 A electricity, WiFi (which is free, although a faster connection is available for a fee), two central fresh water points, a service area with chemical toilet, a fresh water point

and waste water drainage, a small reception building for self-service (with check-in, check-out and information) and a footpath to the campsite. All campsite amenities are freely accessible to motorhome owners. We believe that these are the basic amenities of a decent motorhome site. We don't want to compete with ourselves as the margins on the motorhome site are slightly smaller.

Did you research the needs and wants of motorhome owners? As part of our preparatory work, we looked a lot at our own experiences, but we also talked to the NKC. We designed the motorhome site partly on the basis of their suggestions.

What plans do you have for the future of the motorhome site? Expansion is tricky because of permit requirements. We are surrounded by a Natura 2000

Number of pitches: 20 250 m² Size:

Base: Paved in front of the motorhome with grass all around

Amenities:

- Water supply and drainages (sanitary disposal)
- Central water point
- Toilet block with showers, washbasins, toilets, rinsing and dishwashing facilities
- Underfloor heating in the building
- Washing machine and dryer
- Covered bicycle storage (with charging point)

Overnight rate: €19.50 high season/ €14 low season (excl. tax)/(2 pers., WiFi and electricity)

Rules: Motorhomes longer than 12 m not permitted Open: Campsite and motorhome site open all year round

area and with the current nitrogen problem, it's only going to get more difficult to get hold of a permit. Improving the existing site is always possible of course, the electricity posts I mentioned earlier are a good example of that. We also conducted guest surveys this season, with the overwhelming majority of responses positive. Feedback was largely about the lack of certain amenities, but that's really been a deliberate choice on our part. For the full, luxury package, you can always stay on the campsite, but then you'll have to pay a little more. It's seems only logical to us.

Number of motorhome pitches: 38

- Electricity (6 A)

and barrier

Overnight rate €12 high season/ €12 low season

(excl. tax)/(2 pers., WiFi and electricity)

- Central water point

- Water supply and drainage

- Central waste water drainage and chemical toilet

- Self-service check-in point with payment terminal

- Free basic WiFi, faster internet for a surcharge

Size: 70 m²

Base: Grass

Amenities:

disposal

'We wanted to serve the motorhome market and give motorhome owners who didn't want to be on the campsite an option'



How and when did the idea of a

motorhome site come about? We noticed that an increasing number of larger motorhomes were appearing on our campsite and we wanted a way to accommodate them properly. That's why we've had a motorhome site on our campsite since 2019. The pitches on the site are paved, and so is the access road. There's grass all around it. As we're open all year round, it's important that we have good accessibility, even in rain or snow. Motorhome owners find this to be a real plus when compared to a pitch on a part of the campsite that's nothing more than grass. What's more, the pitches are very spacious at around 250 m². This gives motorhome owners ample space and privacy, a second plus of our motorhome site.

Do all motorhomes need be on the motorhome site?

No, not at all. In fact, since 1 July this year, we've been giving guests a choice – as a motorhome owner, you're welcome on the motorhome site and in the camping area. And vice versa, motorhome owners with a caravan or trailer tent can also book a pitch on the motorhome site, that's quite common. Guests are mostly looking for extra space, perhaps



because they have a dog. We've noticed that it depends on the type of motorhome owner whether they prefer the motorhome site or the atmosphere of the campsite. There are also those who prefer to avoid our campsite as they want to be around other motorhomes. We understand that, but those motorhome owners are in the wrong place here unfortunately.

What amenities do you have on your motorhome site?

Electricity, water supply and drainage, a central water point, WiFi and a luxury toilet block with showers, washbasins, toilets, rinsing and dishwashing facilities and underfloor heating. We also offer a number of services. As an example, you can pay right away with iDEAL when booking online, which is useful as it allows guests to arrive and leave whenever they want. That means that there's no need for checkin and check-out. The online payment option also makes it easy for customers to book an additional night themselves, if they need to.

In addition, since 1 July, guests have been able to look for their own pitch on the campsite when they arrive. If they're so happy that they want to extend their stay, they can just stay right where they area. It's great, because motorhome owners do not always know before how long they might want to stay. It depends on how much they like it. Plus, the weather also plays a role – motorhome owners tend to be 'fair weather' campers. The flexibility we offer in terms of length of stay has been very much appreciated, as many as 25% of guests choose to extend.

Did you research the needs and wants of motorhome owners?

Yes, and that's how we found out what motorhome owners want. There are some who aren't keen on spending a night on a campsite and are just as happy with simple parking space. And then there are others who don't necessarily want to the be on part of a campsite, but do want the amenities, like fast WiFi, luxury toilet facilities or a play area for the kids. Those

Rules: 7 night maximum stay/motorhomes max. 10 m length/no additional tents or awnings (canopies permitted) Open: Motorhome site: 1 April - 1 November/Campsite: all year are things that they can get from us. We really focus on the needs of that type of motorhome owner

and have shaped ourselves as a motorhome campsite. It means that we can't really be compared with a conventional motorhome site in the city, for example. We have increased the rate for our motorhome site in the high season, but you do get good value

for money. Thankfully, most

guests agree.

What plans do you have for the future of the motorhome site?

We might add some budget pitches in time, giving motorhome owners who are happy with fewer amenities the opportunity to stay on the site. They might find our current motorhome pitches too expensive for what they're looking for. If we have more budget pitches, we could ultimately become an attractive site for even more motorhome owners.

'Holidaymakers with a caravan can stay on our motorhome pitches as well'

A journey through the history of camping

Camping has a long and interesting history that goes back to the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century. From the first, horse-drawn caravan in 1884 to the striking glamping accommodation of 2021. ACSI will take you on a short journey through time and speak to campsite owners about the rich history behind their family businesses. These moving stories will paint a picture that covers around a century of camping in Europe.

The first campers were people with enough spare time and enough money to go off into the countryside. This was not something that everyone could do -

families still worked six or seven days a week, all year round. To get out into the countryside, you needed transport. The arrival of bicycles and cars and the introduction of shorter working weeks played a major role in the increase in popularity of camping.

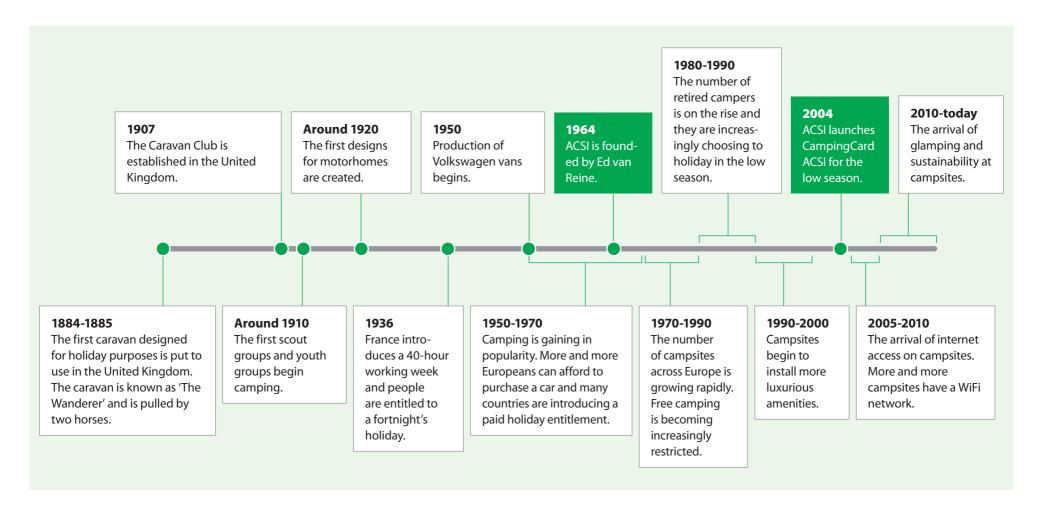
Campsites become more luxurious

After WWII, camping in Europe really began to take off, particularly in the 1970s, when it became an extremely popular way of taking a holiday. Gradually, campsites improved their amenities and luxury, including hot water and

electricity connections to swimming pools and rental accommodation. By 2021, glamping is no less luxurious than a stay in a hotel.

Entrepreneurial spirit, vision and hospitality

What has it been like for campsite owners experiencing all of these changes? ACSI interviewed seven owners of family businesses and got a glimpse into the histories of each, characterised by entrepreneurial spirit, hospitality and vision as the most important pillars of the campsite. The parents and grandparents of today's generation had the courage to make forward-looking choices and knew how important it was to form a bond with their guests. The younger and older generations talk about one another with great pride and warmth.



Sportcamp Woferlgut, Bruck an der Großglocknerstraße

From farmhouse inn to luxury park

The story behind Sportcamp Woferlgut stretches way back into history. In 1866, the Hofer family maintained a farm on the site, and income came from agriculture and forestry. The family earned a little extra income by renting out rooms. In 1961, the old farm was converted into an inn, then in 1982, the family opened a campsite and restaurant.

In the early days, there was a certain amount of resistance and scepticism about a campsite - some people were concerned about there being a 'tent city' near to the village of Bruck. But, over time they began to realise how much tourism had to offer. Still, at the very beginning, agriculture remained the primary source of income. As land and facilities became available, the family began to renew the site, bit by bit. In those days, the work was truly pioneering and the family did almost everything itself. Inn the 1960s, tourism began to gain in importance and the farming

operations slowly faded into the background. The campsite was expanded to include a heated swimming pool, recreation area, fitness area, tennis courts and a sauna. Toilet blocks were added, plus family bathrooms, and the paths were

'Permanent employees ensure a high level and consistent quality'

Fire and new-build in 2006

In 2006, Woferlgut suffered a major setback in the form of a fire, which destroyed the 500-old-year main building. The reconstruction was a major challenge, particularly from an organisational perspective, as the opening of the hotel was planned for the same winter. The new fourstar hotel was completed in just six months and opened in December 2006. The reception for the campsite was also accommodated in the same building.

Other milestones include the opening of the first 'Adventure Golf Course' in Austria in 2011 and construction of the expanded swimming pool complex in 2018. Woferlgut now offers the only private, 50-metre swimming pool in Austria. The large swimming pool and wellness complex involved tight scheduling and an investment of no

less 12 million Euros. But, it was a worthwhile investment, helping to attract new target groups including training groups, sports camps and guests looking for a wellness break Over the years, the Hofer family has learned a lot about how to give guests a great stay the whole year round. The family's goal is to pass

on a healthy business to the next generation. An important pillar in that is permanent staff. Guests have high expectations and with only seasonal employees on board, it can be difficult to reach that high level. Which is why Woferlgut employs 75 permanent members of staff to ensure consistent quality.



Camping Wirthshof, Markdorf

From farm to wellness paradise

Camping Wirthshof was founded by Hildegard and Bernhard in 1969, which means that it has been around for more than half a century. The campsite is in southern Germany, no more than seven kilometres from Lake Constance and ten kilometres from Friedrichshafen. The campsite is now being run by the third generation.

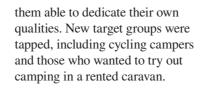
After a camping holiday in Hungary, Bernhard hit upon the idea of turning a vegetable garden into a campsite. People in the area were sceptical – a campsite in the hinterlands, no lake – surely it couldn't succeed. But Bernhard and Hildegard persevered with their plan and proved themselves right (and everyone else wrong) – a year later, there were four hundred tents!

The campsite continued to grow. In the 1970s, the campsite had 180 touring pitches and a further 20

permanent pitches. The majority of guests came with tents, with around a third holidaying in a caravan or Volkswagen van. By the 1990s, the number of touring 70% of guests arriving in a caravan or motorhome. The touring pitches offered greater comfort, each with its own water supply and drainage. The toilet facilities had also been expanded. their partners Maria and Ingrid

pitches had increased to 500, with

In 1990, sons Josef and Bernd and took over the business, each of



'The family lives by quality and is keen to ensure that guests feel comfortable'

Wellness expansion

It wasn't just the number of touring pitches that expanded. From the first events in a small barn, the campsite expanded to include minigolf, an indoor play area and, in 2002, a four-star hotel with sauna, wellness and beauty centre. Holidaymakers could now come to the campsite for an active and healthy holiday, wellness treatments with natural products and a wide range of sports and fitness activities.

The cuisine had evolved from goulash soup and curry wurst to a varied restaurant serving local, natural products. The campsite's operations were firmly about health, quality, sustainability and a regional approach and the family was committed to ensuring that guest families felt comfortable. In all of these activities, Maria and Josef's two sons and two

daughters had their own specialism - from chef to sports instructor, from wellness specialist to operations manager. Their childrens' education was tailored to their interests, and to the continuation of the business. The latter

came more quickly than expected with the sudden deaths of Josef in 2008 and Bernd in 2009. They were all eager to preserve the legacy of their parents and grandparents and to make them proud.







Ardoer camping De Noetselerberg, Nijverdal

Enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit

Ardoer camping De Noetselerberg has been operational for more than half a century. The first owner, Jan, receive a camping permit for the farm in 1970. The province was sceptical and felt that Jan would be better off continuing as a farmer. But Jan was always looking for something new, and camping was really starting to take off. The five-star campsite is now being run by the next generation.

Jan and his wife Gré are real gogetters who, quite literally, built part of the campsite with their own hands. From installing the first barrier to constructing the swimming pool and the safari lodges, the family knew how to roll up its sleeves. Jan and Gré had five children, all of whom grew up on the campsite and helped out, from cooking to picking up litter. The thread running through the family is working hard, being a close-knit team, doing things together and being careful with money.

Construction of the indoor swimming pool in 1989 was a defining moment in the history of the campsite – back then, it was the only indoor swimming pool in the area. Many advised against it, but the owners pressed on regardless. If they hadn't had the courage to do so, the campsite would never have grown to become such a professional business. The swimming

pool is still there, and has since been expanded and renovated. The youngest sons, Bert-Jan and Geert, took over the business in 1999. Bert-Jan is committed to hospitality and runs the bistro. which is extremely popular with guests and locals alike. Geert is more technically minded and takes care of much of the maintenance.

'Innovation is in the family's DNA'

Exciting droppings

Innovation is in the family's DNA and they like to move with the times. Administration and reservations are increasingly automated and business operations have been made more professional this is all about moving with the times, since guests' expectations are higher. Through collabora-

tion with the Ardoer chain, the campsite is able to benefit from a wealth of knowledge and experience. The next step is greater sustainability, and the campsite has already fitted solar panels to the roof of the swimming pool. What will not change is the personal, family-like approach to campsite guests. Jan even used to attend the weddings and funerals of regular guests.

After 50 years, there are many great stories to be told. The campsite has, for example, been able to offer many local youngsters a holiday job. The campsite has also been home to many a budding relationship and there have even be a few 'campsite babies'. There are also fond memories of exciting 'droppings' from the past, a typical Dutch scouting tradition where people are deposited in a typically forested and have to find their way back. These could often be as many as four or five hours long, through the night.





Camping de la Baie, La Trinité-sur-Mer

From spontaneous tent pitches to four-star campsite

In 1954, Pierre Bernard starting a campsite next to his farm. Although starting ...? The campsite was actually a spontaneous endeavour – Pierre had had people asking if they could pitch a tent in his field. Campers were welcome, and the family sold them milk and vegetables. The campers kept coming, so they decided to establish a campsite with new services, including a bar and sales of bread.

The camping side of the business continued to grow, with tents and caravans gradually replacing the meadows of cows. In 1974, the family built a minigolf course and





tennis court. Then, in 1976, the oldest son Christian and his wife Solange took over the site. They constructed the infrastructure that remains to this day, including pitches, paths and roads. In the years that followed, the campsite was improved and the amenities were expanded, including the campsite shop, bar, reception and toilet facilities. In 1978, Camping de la Baie was awarded three stars, which became four in 1984. The campsite continued to move with the times, with a TV room. multi-sports field and entertainment for children. A real highlight came in 1990 with the construction of a heated swimming pool with slide. The first mobile homes were constructed in 2002, followed by a WiFi network in 2012. Lodge tents were added in 2018

and in 2020, a mobile home that is fully accessible to disabled people.

Common sense

The campsite was taken over by the next generation in 2015. Solen, one of Christian and Solange's children, left her job in finance to take over the business with her husband Gildas. They are now both involved in the day-to-day running of the campsite, from reservations and bookkeeping to marketing and taking care of the shop and bakery.

'The rainwater well that grandfather Pierre built is still in use today'

Solen loves carrying on the tradition of a family business. Running a campsite has changed a lot over the years – in the past, her grandmother would prepare breakfast, lunch and evening meals for staff, mostly students,

who ate together in the family kitchen. Things are different today. There are far more rules on administration, and guests have much higher expectations. Nevertheless, grandfather Pierre's approach remains a source of inspiration – not least because of good old common sense, or what the French prefer to call *le bon sens agricole*. A good example of that common sense is the well that

Pierre once built to collect rainwater. The well, and the water it collects, is still used to supply the toilets and water the plants. All those years ago, Pierre knew a little something about sustainability.



Camping Bergamini, Peschiera del Garda

A small paradise on Lake Garda

Camping Bergamini is located in the beautiful Italian resort of Peschiera del Garda and was founded by Beppo, grandfather of the current owner Giovanna, in 1954. The campsite is named after the small fishing village that has existed at the location since ancient times.

Back then, the shores of Lake Garda were unspoilt and Bergamini was a small campsite located between the reeds and a quiet beach. The family loved to receive guests from other countries – in the early days, it was mostly Northern European guests who came to camp. By word of mouth, the small campsite evolved

into a popular destination on the southern side of Lake Garda. Northern European guests gradually became guests from around the globe.

After a few years, the campsite was taken over by son Giovanni and his wife Rita, who were able to develop the campsite in this

beautiful spot by making the right choices at the right times. The campsite has since been taken over by their daughter Giovanna. She learned everything she needed to know about hospitality and running a campsite from her parents, a real adventure. Her parents and grandparents remain a source of inspiration for her in continuing the business today.

Listening to guests' experiences Today, the campsite continues to move with the times. Every year, guests expect a little more in terms of space, amenities, cleaning, news provision and customer friendliness. Guests can now enjoy a beautiful swimming pool overlooking the Lake, as well as a restaurant and rental accommodation. Still, the campsite retains its small-scale charm. Plus, the fantastic location, next to the Lake, remains unchanged, although the coastline along the southern shore is no longer wild and unspoilt.



Like her predecessors, Giovanna is committed to quality and to delivering a hospitable experience. She listens to experiences and feedback from guests, which she then uses to improve the campsite. The family also considers respect for nature important, and the campsite is part of a group of eco campsites around Lake Garda that are dedicated to sustainable campsite management.











Ferienparadies Natterer See, Natters

A vision from 1928

The history of Ferienparadies Natterer See goes back as far as 1928. It was in that year that farming couple Josef and Maria started constructing a bathing lake - to considerable surprise in the local area. Residents could not immediately see the benefits and at the time, it was not yet fully socially acceptable to swim in public. Yet, it typified the family's spirit of innovation.

The lake was ready in 1930 and Josef and Maria opened a bar to go with it. Holidaymakers to the area soon knew where to find the place. The popular Natterer See expanded rapidly. In 1950, the family opened a restaurant on the lake, and the first campers arrived a few years later. This gave son Karl Giner, who had since taken over the business, the idea of constructing the first toilet blocks in 1960. Karl, his wife Erna and their three children all work at the campsite and make sure that guests have everything that they need. After all, campers' expectations also move with the times. In the early years, guests wanted little more than a nice place to pitch their tent and some cold water. Wants and needs are greater now, and they continue to grow. At Natterer See, the family works tirelessly to improve quality. Georg Giner now runs the campsite - he is the grandson of Josef and Maria and has been in the business for 35 years now.

The first glamping site in **Austria**

The family is proud of the quality that they have been able to provide over the years. The high level of sanitary facilities, modern architecture and the extensive amenities and entertainment mean that guests are left wanting for nothing. The current main building, which was completed in 2010, even won an architecture prize for its design, which combines so well with the surrounding countryside. Thomas Giner, brother of Georg, designed this building.

> 'Stay alert to new trends and innovations'

A key moment in the long history of Natterer See is the opening of the 'Nature Resort' glamping site in 2015, where guests can stay in African-style safari lodges and wooden Alpine-style lodges. It is

the first glamping site in Austria, and another example of Natterer See demonstrating the value of innovation.

It's also an approach that Georg Giner has adopted from his predecessors - stay alert to new trends and to innovative products and

accommodation. If you have the courage to try things out, you can create unique positives for your business. According to Georg, this is the key to success. The most recent project is now underway, allowing guests to enjoy a holiday on a 'floating home' on the lake.



Südsee-Camp, Wietzendorf

Since 1970 in the Lüneburger Heide

Südsee-Camp is located in the beautiful Lüneburger Heide region of Germany and was bought by the Thiele family in 1970. The family still runs the campsite today. Residents of Wietzendorf were curious to see how things would work out, but at the same time a little concerned about what tourism might do to a small, sleepy village.

Things have changed between 1970 and now. Back then, guests were happy just to be able to take a holiday and did not expect a lot in the way of comfort. Today, people travel around the world and know exactly what they want, usually a five-star campsite. Another major difference – holidaymakers tend to be much more spontaneous when booking, while back then, they sometimes booked a threeweek stay a year beforehand. In 1972, there was a major setback in the form of a storm that swept across Northern Europe and caused major damage. The camp-

site had been open for two and a half years at the time, and the work had only just been finished. The pitches and planting had been neatly completed and things were going well, until the storm raged over the campsite. It uprooted several trees, which fell onto caravans. The damage to the campsite was considerable, but thanks to donations and loans from local businesspeople, the Thiele family was able to rebuild

The right approach to guests and staff

The Thiele family's foremost

priority is to ensure that their guests, and children in particular, enjoy their stay, whatever time of year. The current director, Svenja Thiele-Naujok, has learned through the family business how important it is to take a friendly approach to guests and to continue to invest for the future. Over the years, the campsite has expanded to include a shop, rental accommodation and tropical leisure pool with sauna.

'The foremost priority is ensuring that guests enjoy themselves'

Südsee-Camp also seeks to be a good employer to a team of more



than 100 employees, many of whom have worked at the site for years. Environmental friendliness and sustainability are also part of the policy, and the campsite has been an affiliate of the German Eurocamping organisation since 2005. Staff use environmentally

responsible cleaning products, waste is properly separated and attention is given to saving energy

Colophon

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