

## SPRING 2022 ISSUE

ACSI Times is published by the leading campsite specialist of Europe. This issue looks at the first presentation of the ACSI Awards, a brand-new initiative by ACSI intended to put campsites in the spotlight. We look back at the impact of the corona epidemic. But we also look ahead to the future, which is looking good. Which trends and developments can be expected? And how do campsites deal with the aspect of sustainability, which is becoming increasingly more important?

## SURVEY ON CAMPING PLANS

Together with the Dutch camping shop and the Obelink web shop, ACSI conducted a survey on the camping plans of European campers. This revealed that people have more than enough plans to go camping. Going abroad is once again high on the list.

► Read more on **page 2**

## SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CAMPSITE

Sustainability continues to be an important theme within the camping industry. How can we make sure that our desire to go on holiday is not at the expense of the environment? Experts Leo Diepemaat and Wolfgang Pfrommer respond to this issue.

► Read more on **pages 4-5**

## TRENDS IN THE WORLD OF CAMPING

Which caravans and motorhomes can you expect to see at your campsite this coming year? And what are the trends and developments among the manufacturers of these types of recreational vehicles? We also look at the ratio between rental accommodation and camping pitches at campsites in Europe.

► Read more on **pages 10-11**

## CORONA: REVIEW BY THE CAMPING FEDERATIONS

The impact of the corona measures on the opportunities for camping seems to be diminishing. It is time to review the past year with a few camping federations. How did they survive the crisis and how do they view their future in camping?

► Read more on **pages 12-13**

## CAMPSITES WITH A RICH HISTORY

There is a long and amazing history to camping. In this section, campsite owners recount the rich history of their (family) business, resulting in an amazing image of a hundred years of camping in Europe.

► Read more on **pages 14-15**

# And the winner is ...

ACSI presents the very first ACSI Awards

At the end of 2021, ACSI very proudly announced the first edition of the ACSI Awards. Votes could be cast from 20 December 2021 up to and including 20 March 2022. Campers submitted the campsite of their choice en masse for an award. Almost 50,000 votes were cast, spread over eight categories!

The winners of ACSI Awards will be handed their prize during the inspector's annual visit. The awards and certificates were given to the relevant inspectors during the Inspectors' Days in Andelst by ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine. Read all about the ACSI Awards (pages 6-7) further on in this issue of the ACSI Times and take a look at the complete list of the winners (pages 8-9).



Winning campsites will receive this glass ACSI Award.

# More and more caravans and motorhomes on the road

2021 a record year for sales and rentals in Europe

**The popularity of camping has only grown during the corona epidemic. This can be seen in the rising sales and rental figures for caravans and motorhomes. ACSI lines up several interesting European trends.**

## Recreational vehicles are as popular as ever

The BOVAG, the Dutch association of motor car, garage and allied trades, announced that there was a strong increase in the import of second-hand caravans and motorhomes in 2021, totaling 10,428 used campers and

2,195 second-hand caravans. This is an increase of respectively 46% and 52%. The sales of new recreational vehicles also increased in 2021, reaching a total of 11,646 (8,549 caravans and 3,097 motorhomes). This is a 24.4% increase compared to 2020 and the highest since 2008. Similar developments are visible

elsewhere in Europe as well. In France last year, about 30,000 new motorhomes and 7,500 new caravans were sold. An increase of 23.4% (motorhomes) and 5.1% (caravans). In Germany, in all of 2021, around 82,000 new motorhomes and 26,000 new caravans were sold. These are increases of respectively 38% and 1.6%. The motorhome is the most popular recreational vehicle almost everywhere in Europe. Only

the Netherlands, also known as caravan country, remains an exception.

## Popularity of sharing platforms is growing

More and more campers are using sharing platforms like Camptoo and Goboony to rent a motorhome or caravan. 2021 was the busiest year yet for the Belgian branch of Goboony: at least 74% of the motorhomes were fully booked for the summer months. Goboony's general offer also rose by 236% in the past two years.

This resulted in the platform being listed second by the Financial Times on the annual list of the 1,000 fastest growing companies in 2021.

## Favourable developments

The European caravan and motorhome industry can look back at 2021 as a successful year, and experts expect the growth to continue for some time yet.



2021 was a good year for manufacturers of motorhomes and caravans. © Hymer



Results of research into camping intentions

# Campers want to travel in their own country as well as abroad

European campers still love to go on holiday in their own country but going abroad in 2022 is high on the wish list as well. This was revealed in a large survey conducted by ACSI and the Dutch camping shop Obelink on the holiday plans of campers from the Netherlands, Germany, France, Great Britain and Ireland.

Five to nine weeks at the campsite

An overwhelming majority of 98% of the respondents were clear about one thing: we are going camping in 2022. Campers without children said that they would like to go a campsite an average of 62 days in 2022. That is a week more than last year, when the average was 54 days. Campers travelling with children or grandchildren plan to go camping for about 34 days, which is almost five weeks.

> See chart 1.

Abroad more often again

Campers have indicated that they want to go abroad more often again. This is shown very clearly in Charts 2, 3, 4 and 5. The corona pandemic caused many campers to stay closer to home the past couple of years. Now, however, it appears that confidence in a carefree holiday has returned. And yet, Dutch, German and French campers still list their own country as number one. Many campers choose not only to spend their holidays in their own country but want to go abroad as well. Dutch and French campers are once again going to Mediterranean countries; German campers prefer Spain, Italy and Austria, while British and Irish campers favour France.

> See charts 2, 3, 4 and 5.

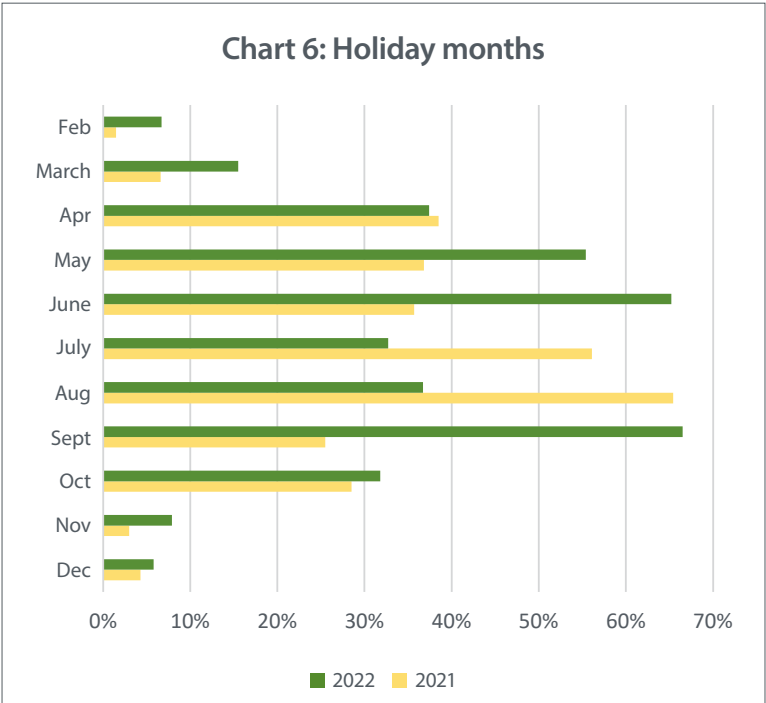
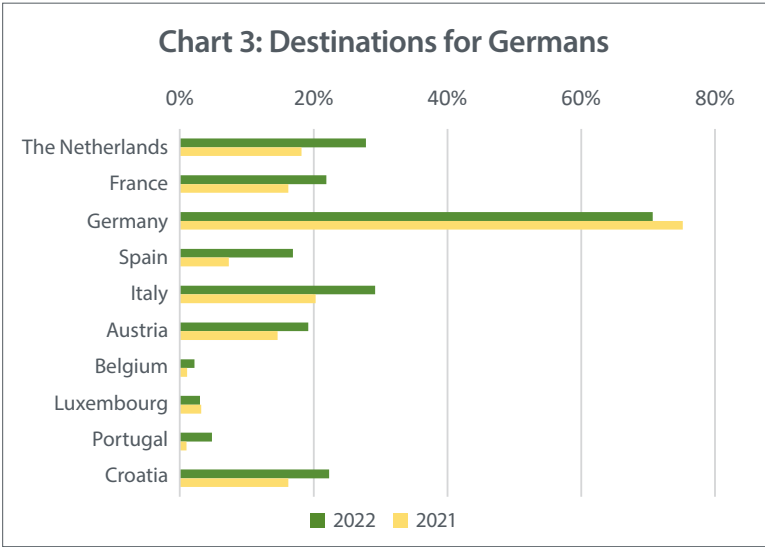
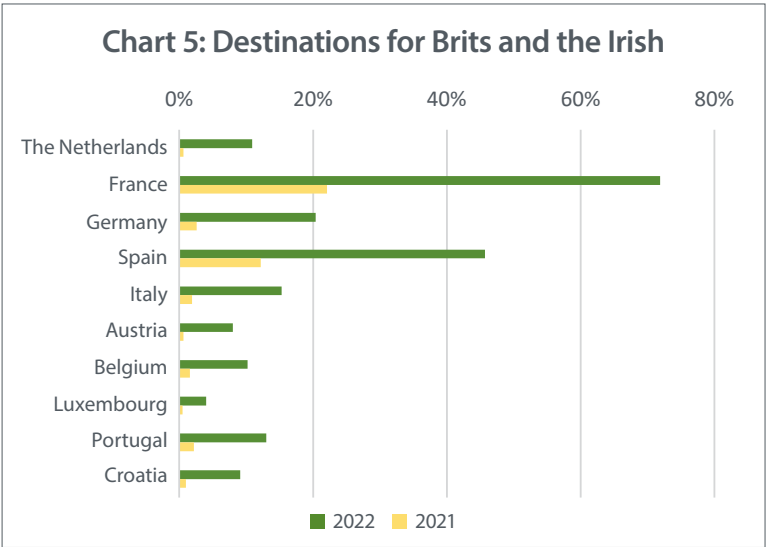
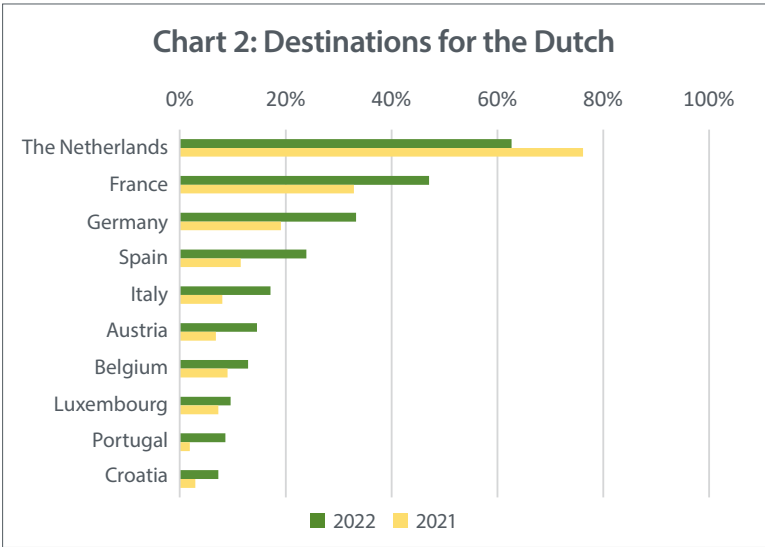
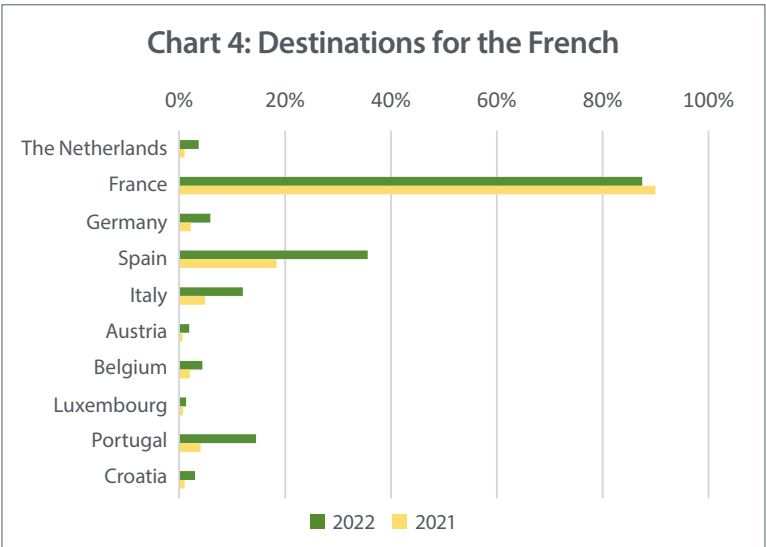
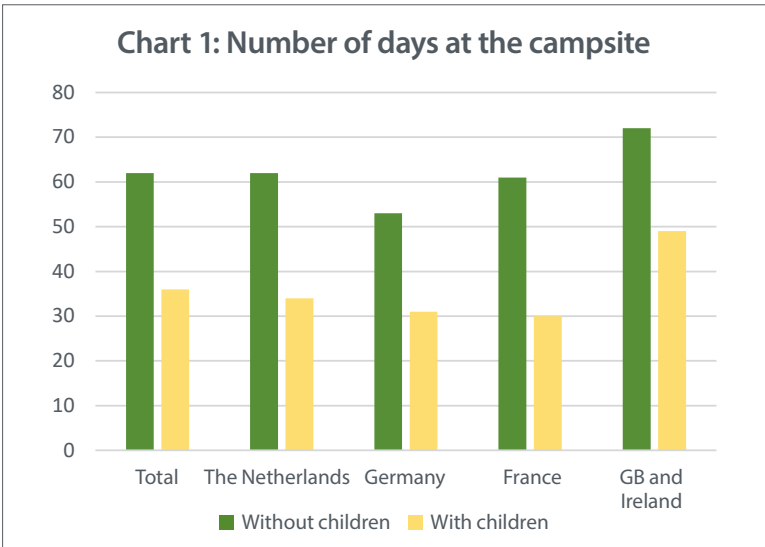
Camping the entire year round

The European camper knows how to find a campsite any time of the year. The most popular holiday months for campers with children are August and July. For campers without children, September, June and May are the favourite months.

> See chart 6.

Read more at ACSLeu

Charts 2 through 6 show results from campers who travel without children. All results can also be found at [www.ACSLeu/en/camping-plans-2022](http://www.ACSLeu/en/camping-plans-2022).



About the collaboration between ACSI and Obelink

Obelink is the largest camping shop in the Netherlands with the widest range of items in Europe. This family business was established in 1959. With a wide range of items in the shop and the web shop, Obelink serves both the Dutch and German markets. The survey on camping plans for 2022 was conducted among approximately 15,000 customers of Obelink and ACSI. They were approached via websites, newsletters and social media. Both Ramon van Reine, CEO of ACSI, and Berry Velthuis, director of Obelink, predict a sunny future for the camping industry.

Ramon van Reine, ACSI: 'The Netherlands continues to be a favourite location for a short or longer camping holiday in one's own country. Just over 62% of all Dutch people say they would like to go camping in their own country at least once this year. After two difficult holiday years, however, many campers cannot wait to go abroad again.'

Berry Velthuis, Obelink: 'We notice that people are going camping more often and for longer periods of time. Every day we have customers in our shop and on our web shop who enjoy staying at a campsite or are going on a trip already early in the spring. While people used to go camping only during the summer holiday, now it is a lifestyle.'





#### Dear campsite owner or manager,

The year 2022 promises to be a good year for camping. After two years of uncertainty for many campsites and campers, it appears that corona will no longer be

throwing a spanner in the works. In the past few years, more and more people have come to see the advantages of camping. There are now many more camping enthusiasts as a result. Naturally, this is good news for you and for us. This new group of campers now

also has the opportunity to enjoy all the joy that a camping holiday has to offer without any (travel) restrictions. We already informed you on the previous page that there are plenty of plans to go camping this season. Sales figures for motorhomes and

caravans continue to break records. Their popularity has increased so much that a waiting list of six months to a year is no longer an exception. It is safe to assume that these new campers will not be camping for just one year. They will continue to travel and will want to explore the most beautiful locations in Europe.

We at ACSI have also noticed the increased interest. Visits to the website and app are rising, the guide circulation is increasing as are the number of bookings. Yet there are still plenty of challenges for the camping industry. For example, being able to book digitally. At a time when campers are searching for their holiday online, it is crucial to be linked up with booking platforms such as ACSI camping.info Booking.

Another challenge lies in the area of sustainability. This theme has been on the agenda for a while

already, but it has become even more important now because of the prices for fuel and energy. Campers also continue to expect more in this area. Read all about this on pages 4-5.

In conclusion, I can announce that the ACSI Awards will also be presented in 2023. Pages 7-8 give a list of all winners in 2022. Should you not have been lucky enough to win a prize this year, there will be a new opportunity for this coveted award at a later date.

I hope this issue of the ACSI Times inspires you and wish you a successful camping year in 2022.

Ramon van Reine  
ACSI CEO

# ACSI looks ahead enthusiastically

## Growing guide circulation and new CampingCard ACSI rates in 2023

**After two turbulent years, there is hope that the camping industry will recover quickly. ACSI has noticed through various channels that 2022 has at any rate started well. Behind the scenes, ACSI is looking forward to 2023. Guide circulation is being increased and the rates of the CampingCard ACSI overnight stay will change.**

The good start to 2022 can be seen in the circulation numbers of the camping guides, the number of bookings via Suncamp and ACSI camping.info Booking and the use of the websites and apps. Almost everywhere, numbers are higher than the last year before the corona pandemic. ACSI also predicts continued growth in the time to come.

#### Circulation of German campsite guides increased

The circulation of the German ACSI Campingführer Europa and ACSI Campingführer Deutschland was about the same in 2022 as it was in 2021. It quickly became apparent that extra print runs were needed for three articles. ACSI has therefore already decided to further increase the guides circulation for 2023. This applies for the ACSI Campingführer Europa, the ACSI Campingführer Deutschland and the ACSI CampingCard & Stellplatzführer.

#### Best year for bookings ever

The number of bookings also shows that the campers' trust has been restored. Tour operator Suncamp notes that the start of 2022 is even better than 2019, the year before corona. Bookings via ACSI camping.info Booking reveal a similar picture. The year 2019 is also used as a standard and here, too, it can be seen that

the number of bookings is higher now.

#### Growth to 24 million visitors

The number of visitors to ACSI

websites and apps are on the rise again. The war in Ukraine caused the numbers to drop briefly but the numbers are already higher now than those of last year. In total, ACSI expects around 22 million visitors in 2022. Continued growth to almost 24 million visitors is expected for the following year. The apps have had an extensive update this year and

ACSI continues to work behind the scenes on improving the websites and apps.

#### New CampingCard ACSI rates as per 2023

Campsites that participate in CampingCard ACSI recently received notice from ACSI that the rates for overnight stays will increase as per 2023. The rates

will go up one euro to € 13, € 15, € 17, € 19, € 21 and € 23 per night. The ranges for determining the discount rate for campsites will also be adjusted. This allows ACSI to better match the CampingCard ACSI rates to the campsite's standard rates for overnight stays. The inspector or our sales team can provide more information about this change.



In 2023, the guide circulation of the German-language camping guides will be further increased.



# Sustainability on the way to and at the campsite

What is the current situation with respect to sustainability in the recreational vehicle industry and at campsites?



The fully electrical caravan e.Home by Dethleffs attracted quite a few spectators during its trip over the Alps.

**Sustainability in the camping industry continues to be an interesting topic. The question is how to enjoy our holiday while minimising the expense to the environment. ACSI spoke with two experts who have been dealing with this issue for years: Leo Diepemaat, board member of the E.C.F. and chairperson of the K.C.I., and Wolfgang Pfrommer, CEO of ECOCAMPING.**

## PART 1: TO THE CAMPSITE

### Sustainable developments in the industry

Caravans are of themselves already very sustainable. Diepemaat explains that, first of all, this has to do with their relatively long life span. He uses the Netherlands as an example: 'Half of all 425,000 caravans in the Netherlands are already rather old. By taking good care of your recreational vehicle, it is easily possible to enjoy it for thirty years. There are few other products that have such a long life span. As an industry, we are very pleased with and proud of this.' A good example of sustainability in caravan design is the use of plastic in walls and floors. 'There is no or only slight deterioration,' he says.

Motorhomes differ from caravans in their production. Diepemaat: 'For motorhomes, we must rely on delivery from the auto industry – the chassis, for example. So the sustainability has more to do with the fuel.' Modern diesel engines are very clean, as the survey conducted by the TNO (the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research)

shows. This is important because, as long as electric motorhomes are not commonplace, clean diesel is the best alternative.

### Will a B class driving licence suffice later?

And yet, the growing electrification in this industry also plays a major role and more motorhomes are becoming electric. 'The operating range is not always the same yet, but we trust that this will increase in the future,' Diepemaat predicts. The batteries are also rather heavy, and Diepemaat believes there is still plenty to gain in that area.

But what does a heavier weight in a recreational vehicle mean for one's driving licence? In the EU a class B driving licence only allows driving vehicles up to and including 3,500 kilos. 'We as an industry are working together with consumers to move that restriction to 4,500 kilos,' Diepemaat explains. 'This means that the implementation of batteries in motorhomes will no longer be a problem if the driver only has a class B driving licence.' Heavy batteries means that the majority of motorhomes will exceed the threshold of 3,500 kilos. 'By the end of this year,

there will be a new European guideline for driving licences. We just have to wait and see what decision is made.

### Not everyone is as involved

According to Diepemaat, the E.C.F. and the K.C.I. have been occupied with sustainability for at least ten years. On the one hand, many consumers expect that there will be plenty of measures on a European level, which will cause manufacturers to become more sustainable more quickly. But Diepemaat does not intend to wait. 'Sustainability is too important a theme for that.' One example of this is to make the walls of caravans more sustainable, which means that manufacturers can offer a warranty for years,' he explains.

Diepemaat states that recent sustainability surveys among consumers show that there are still different viewpoints on this theme. Not every purchaser attaches the same value to this or is bothered by this. Diepemaat: 'But we as an industry feel obligated to be concerned and to continue to be concerned about this. That is how we can provide a good answer to critical consumers.'

### Difference in price still important

The average consumer often already includes sustainability in his or her choice when purchasing a recreational vehicle. But if

the difference in price becomes too large, he or she drops out. Diepemaat believes this is also part of an important task. 'We must continue to work on the affordability of sustainable solutions and techniques. This will allow more consumers to make sustainable choices – in the future as well.'

The application of sustainable building materials mentioned earlier is one of the trends that is now in full swing. 'Another wonderful example is the development of a tent made entirely of recycled materials,' Diepemaat states. Significant work is being done on recycling products and materials. But caravans and motorhomes last for so long that there is little left to recycle. Diepemaat has experienced this himself: 'In the past, I was involved in a survey on whether disassembly operators were

needed to dispose of caravans after a specific life span. But the idea never took off because they simply last too long!'

### Go for green, go camping!

By continuing to address good quality in motorhomes and caravans, the recreational vehicle industry is contributing to making holidays sustainable. Diepemaat knows that camping in itself is already very green. 'Several European surveys have shown that camping is still the most sustainable form of holiday. The fact that camping ensures a reduced environmental footprint is something that we as an industry are of course very happy with,' Diepemaat states.

### A glimpse into the future

The electrification of motorised vehicles is in full swing. A recent first emphasises the progress being made. 'Last year a major



### Leo Diepemaat

Leo Diepemaat is chairperson of the K.C.I., the Dutch association for the Motorhome and Caravan Industry. He is also a board member and the treasurer of the E.C.F., the European Caravan Federation, an umbrella federation of 14 European national organisations. Being a camper from an early age, he has been active in this industry for over fifty years, first as a dealer and then as a representative of the industry.



caravan manufacturer launched an electrically driven caravan. It was hooked up to an electric car for a test drive from southern Germany to Italy over the Alps. The trip went without a hitch. This development began in Europe and has now been applied

in the United States as well, including Airstream caravans. Hydrogen has also been making an appearance in the car industry. This is happening right now in Asia, in particular with car manufacturers Hyundai and Toyota, but will possibly be happening

soon in the European motorhome and caravan industry as well. ‘I personally see many possibilities in this,’ Diepemaat states. But in order for a broad roll-out of these new techniques to happen in the future, a lot must still happen. He explains: ‘The problem with

these technological trends is that the current traffic regulations do not provide for this. Luckily, there has already been extensive research as to how much the regulations can be adapted and extended. At the E.C.F. and K.C.I., we are monitoring this

very closely.’

PART 2:  
AT THE CAMPSITE

**Sustainable developments and challenges at campsites**  
ECOCAMPING has been occupied with the theme of sustainability since 2002. Wolfgang Pfrommer is CEO and climate expert and, in that role, has seen the discussion of many topics. ‘If we look at the biggest to-dos, at this time they are the trip to the campsite and the trip home. From our perspective, this is one of the major challenges in the area of sustainability,’ Pfrommer explains.

In his opinion, this has not always been the case. ‘In the beginning, the problem of waste separation and processing was huge.’ These costs are still challenging today. There is also the issue of a structural decrease in energy costs by, for example, using other sources of energy. ‘And in the last six or seven years, the emphasis has shifted more to the design of campsite pitches. Climate change has led to longer periods of drought, more extreme storms and an increasing probability of flooding,’ Pfrommer continues. When creating pitches, taking the preservation of nature and biodiversity into account is now much more prevalent than before. ‘A positive point is that most campsites already contribute to this,’ Pfrommer states, based on his own experience.

‘For two years now, a study is being conducted on the theme “electric mobility at campsites.” This topic is not yet very current in Germany, but we expect huge interest in the next five years,’ Pfrommer says. ECOCAMPING has already compiled a list of more than six hundred different aspects to make campsites sustainable. The company pays attention to detail and is collaborating closely with campsites. Pfrommer stresses the importance of this. ‘Our approach has always been to support all campsites that show interest. This does mean advising and inspecting each individual case but that is how we distinguish ourselves from other labels,’ Pfrommer explains.

**Green campsites in Europe**  
ECOCAMPING is active in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and, more recently, Luxembourg as well. ‘Electrically-powered vehicles are not a standard in Germany yet. The Netherlands, for instance, is much more

advanced in this. And a country like Norway has a much higher percentage of electrically-powered vehicles than the rest of Europe,’ Pfrommer explains. Good examples of sustainable campsites in Germany are Wulfener Hals on the island Fehmarn and Uhlenköper-Camp on the Lüneburger Heide. ‘A true pioneer in the field of sustainability is Jesolo Club International Camping, located close to Venice. They have replaced their fleet with fifteen electric vehicles,’ Pfrommer reports. There are more campsites in the ECOCAMPING network that operate in a climate-neutral manner.

**What do campers expect from campsites and from sustainability?**  
Pfrommer believes that a high standard of quality is expected. ‘This is different than sustainability and each camper has a different interpretation: peace and quiet, a good restaurant or another facility,’ he explains. ‘But if the campsite is working on being sustainable by, for example, heating the water with solar energy, that makes showering for some guest even more pleasant,’ he continues. Thus green power and other forms of sustainable energy can have a positive impact on the camping experience. Guests increasingly expect campsites to operate sustainably. ‘We cannot be spoilsports by imposing annoying measures,’ he adds.

**Reducing the environmental footprint**  
ECOCAMPING has calculated the CO2 footprint for campsites in the state of Beieren. ‘An average of 80% of emissions occurred during the trip and only 20% during activities on location,’ explains Pfrommer. There is still a lot to be done in the future to make travel movements to and from the campsite environmentally neutral. Some campsites no longer allow cars on their grounds. Another item to be addressed is reducing waste to scale down the environmental footprint of campers.

**Better service at sustainable campsites**  
The sustainable nature of a campsite is, in Pfrommer’s view, an extra advantage for the guest. ‘Decisive factors are, first of all, the destination and what the location offers,’ the climate expert explains. But experience has taught him that campers also want to go to

campsites with an environmental label because the quality of the service is often good there. ‘Guests notice that the way nature is treated is often reflected in the service for the guests,’ Pfrommer states.

**Incentive and support for sustainable operation**  
‘By definition, a sustainable company can operate economically and ecologically long-term,’ Pfrommer says. ‘We have been providing advice on this for twenty years already.’ One of the incentives is that a sustainable layout can save on resources and, consequently, corresponding costs. Campsites in the ECOCAMPING network use approximately 9% less sources of energy such as water and power. In addition, there are several support programmes for environmentally oriented companies such as the Green New Deal. Additional support programmes are expected in the years to come. ‘It is already positive that banks often demand a sustainability concept from borrowers,’ Pfrommer adds.

**Opportunities and challenges from sustainable campsites**  
According to Pfrommer, the quality of the service at campsites is already very good. That, too, is an important facet of sustainability:



**Wolfgang Pfrommer**  
Wolfgang Pfrommer is CEO at ECOCAMPING. He has been advising campsite businesses throughout Europe for eighteen years already. As a biologist and chemist, he has been engaged in the reduction of hazardous substances in the open air in particular. As an expert in the field of climate protection, he has also been able to support numerous campsites in adapting to the climate change.

satisfying campsite guests and promoting solidarity. But often it is the staff situation that can be improved. ‘Making sure there is enough staff to maintain operation of the campsite and work on solidarity. This is why sustainability is always a social issue.’ Sky-high energy prices also continue to be a challenge. ‘And the issue of transitioning to one hundred percent renewable energy sources. But if climate protection makes camping more expensive, campsite owners suddenly become less socially sustainable. ‘So this contains a dilemma,’ as Pfrommer states.

**What is the future for the campsite?**  
Nothing is as difficult to predict as the future, but Pfrommer is willing to hazard a guess: ‘My view is that, in five years’ time, more and

more campsites will be carbon neutral. A massive changeover to renewable energy sources is needed for this, as well as the certification of many campsites with the EU Ecolabel, the most important official European ecolabel for campsites.’ Pfrommer continues: ‘In twenty years, we will hopefully be close to the politically desired environmental neutrality (2045). Campsites will continue to be challenged in the area of CO2-neutral travel and caravan tourism. This is due to the electrification of tow cars.’

In general, Pfrommer sees great potential in all climate efforts by campsites: ‘The camping industry is extremely suitable for playing a pioneering role and can be an example for other industries.’



In Wolfgang Pfrommer’s opinion, camping and sustainability are perfect partners.



# 2022 ACSI Awards

## Campers vote en masse for their favourite campsite

The ACSI Awards were presented for the first time in the history of camping specialist ACSI. Camping enthusiasts throughout all of Europe could vote for their favourite campsites on the various ACSI websites. Based on at least 50,000 votes, several public prizes will be presented in different countries. ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine looks back at the past months and explains the how and why of the ACSI Awards.

‘We wanted the ACSI Awards to spotlight campsites that excel,’ says Van Reine. ‘Campers vote for their favourite campsites and ACSI shares the names of the winners with millions of other European campers who are looking for an unforgettable holiday. By winning an ACSI Award, the campsite shows that they are able to guarantee a wonderful holiday. It is a prize awarded by the public, so it is based on the

experiences of real campers,’ Van Reine explains.

### Reward for hard work

Winning an ACSI Award is a reward for hard work. Running a successful campsite demands tireless effort. ‘And that should be given an extra award,’ Van Reine believes. The winners receive an elegant glass award that can be displayed at the reception. The campsite is also

given a certificate to hang on the wall. But they also benefit in other areas. ‘These campsites are listed an extra time on the ACSI websites. For example, in the search results, campers immediately see that this is an award-winning campsite. This could convince campers to choose this campsite over another one,’ Van Reine explains. And then there is the media attention by which the winning campsites can profit. ‘We send a press release and campsites are obviously able to go to the (local) media themselves for extra exposure. In addition, the winners receive promotional material from us that they can use on their website or social media.’

### Honourable mention

Campsites that received many votes but did not win are also acknowledged. ‘They are given an honourable mention in the form of a certificate and an extra eye-catching icon on the page with the search results,’ says Van Reine. Distributed all over Europe, ACSI presents 120 physical awards with more than 300 honourable mentions awarded as well.

### Eight categories

Not all campers have the same preferences when it comes to finding a suitable campsite. This is the reason behind ACSI having eight different categories on which to vote. ‘What people look for in a campsite is very personal.

One camper enjoys nature and peace and quiet, while another wants as much entertainment as possible at the campsite. Campers could vote in the category in which their favourite campsite excels,’ explains Van Reine.

Campers could select one campsite per category and could vote for all campsites that were listed on one of the ACSI websites. ‘This resulted in a mixed picture with many different winners from different countries,’ Van Reine commented. Twenty countries also chose an overall winner as the best campsite of the country.

### 50,000 votes

Campers who took the time to



ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine presents the ACSI Award and the accompanying certificate for 'Best cycling & walking campsite Italy' to inspector Dirk Dua.



ACSI Awards on social media

All campsites received an email from ACSI with a link to the online promotion package. This package contained material that campsites could use to ask their followers to vote. The package contained ready-made text for the website and newsletter. It included banners, logos and images that could be used on the website and various social media channels. Campsites were eager to use the package and, using the hashtag #ACSI Awards, messages appeared, one after the other, on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

To the right is an example of various social media messages that campsites placed under #ACSI Awards.



Campers could vote in the following categories:

- Best campsite**  
Campsites with the highest number of votes in one country.
- Best campsite swimming pool**  
This campsite does not have just a swimming pool, but a real swimming paradise where campers would like to spend the entire day.
- Best campsite for cycling and walking**  
The area around the campsite is wonderful for hours of outdoor fun walking and/or cycling.
- The best great little campsites**  
A little campsite (max. 50 touring pitches) that allows you to enjoy nature in peace and quiet.
- Best campsite entertainment**  
The entertainment team at this campsite is unsurpassed. The children have the time of their lives and are not bored at any time.
- The best campsite for your dog**  
A campsite that pays special attention to the faithful four-footed companions. They are very much welcome here and there are plenty of facilities to allow the dog to have a wonderful holiday as well.
- Campsite with the most beautiful location**  
This campsite is located at an amazing spot. Close to the water, the city, in the woods or the mountains. Wherever it is, the location is perfect in all respects!
- Best campsite restaurant**  
A campsite with a restaurant where you can dine well every evening. The food is delicious, and the service is excellent.
- Most beautiful motorhome pitches**  
This campsite has everything a motorhome owner could need. The best pitches and all amenities are nearby.

vote could also win something. First prize was an electric folding bicycle. Fifty discount vouchers were also awarded with a value of € 50 for a booking via Eurocampings.eu and one hundred times free access to the ACSI Campsites Europe app was given away. ‘I think this helped’, Van Reine says. ‘In total, no less than 50,000 votes were cast. A great number for the first edition. This immediately makes the ACSI Awards one of the most prestigious prizes in the European campsite world.’

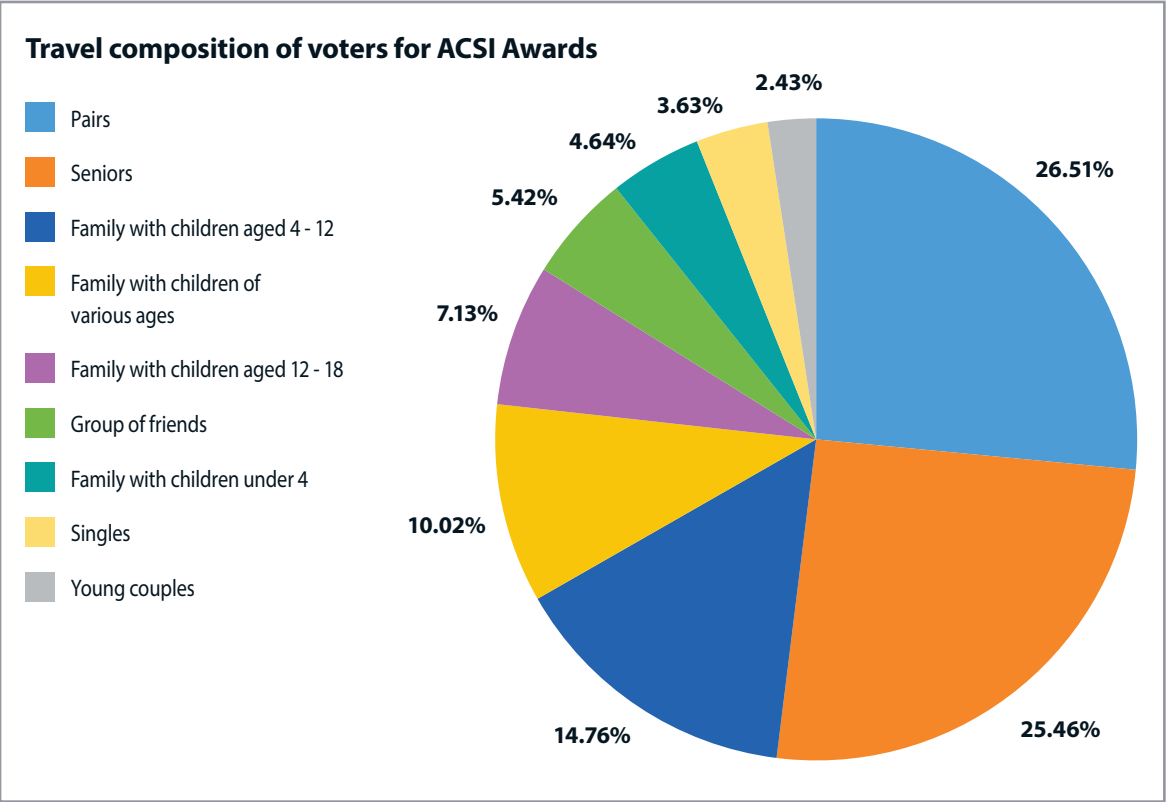
**#ACSI Awards**  
It was impossible for website visitors, newsletter members and followers on Facebook and Instagram to miss this: voting was possible from mid-December 2021. Through these channels campers were stimulated to reward

their favourite campsites. But campsites themselves could also contribute. ‘They could download a special promotion kit. This allowed campsites to use their own newsletter or social media channel to ask loyal campers to vote. ‘Suddenly, messages with the hashtag #ACSI Awards appeared everywhere,’ observed Van Reine, satisfied.

**Presented by the inspector**  
Now that the new inspection season has begun, the first ACSI Awards are also being presented to the campsites. This is done by the ACSI inspectors. ‘The inspector is very important to ACSI, maintaining contact with the campsites in his or her area. That is why we feel it appropriate that they are the one to hand the prize to the campsite owner,’ explains Van Reine.

**2023 ACSI Awards**  
Van Reine is proud of the process and of the outcome of the brand-new public contest. ‘The objective is for the ACSI Awards to be an important stimulant for choosing a campsite. Winning an award stands for quality and should ensure that the campsite becomes a real crowd-puller,’ he explains. The 2022 ACSI Awards were certainly not the last time this will be done. In Van Reine’s point of view, ‘This will be a yearly event. It is by presenting the ACSI Awards every year that it acquires more meaning. We hope to be able to give the presentation the form of a real award show at our headquarters in Andelst.’

See the following two pages for a total overview of all winners.








# 2022 ACSI Awards








NORWAY		
1	Camping Neset	Best campsite


SWEDEN		
2	Hafsten Resort & Camping	Best campsite
3	Seläter Camping	Best cycling & walking campsite
4	Camp Route 45	Greatest little campsite
5	Camping Daftö Resort	Best campsite entertainment
6	Naturcamping Lagom	The best campsite for your dog
7	Sjöstugan Camping	Campsite with the best location
8	Norje Boke Camping	Best campsite restaurant
9	Båstad Camping	Best motorhome pitches


DENMARK		
10	Gammelbro Camping	Best campsite
11	Skiveren Camping	Best cycling & walking campsite
12	Camping Nature Ferie	Greatest little campsite
13	Feddet Strand Camping Resort	Best campsite entertainment
14	Ballum Camping	The best campsite for your dog
15	Tranum Klit Camping	Campsite with the best location
16	Horsens City Camping	Best motorhome pitches

THE NETHERLANDS		
17	Camping Het Lierderholt	Best campsite
18	Recreatiepark Samoza	Best campsite pool
19	Recreatiepark 't Veluws Hof	Best cycling & walking campsite
20	Camping Landgoed Het Geuzenbos	Greatest little campsite
21	Camping Cassandria-Bad	Best campsite entertainment
22	Camping Ommerland	The best campsite for your dog
23	Terrassencamping Osebos	Campsite with the best location
24	Camping 't Geuldal	Best campsite restaurant
25	Vakantiepark Delftse Hout	Best motorhome pitches


BELGIUM		
26	Camping Hohenbusch	Best campsite
27	Camping Goolderheide	Best campsite pool
28	Camping Houtum	Best cycling & walking campsite
29	Camping De Ballasthoeve	Greatest little campsite
30	Ardenne Camping Bertrix	Best campsite entertainment
31	Camping De Lombarde	The best campsite for your dog
32	Camping Le Prahay	Campsite with the best location
33	Camping Natuurlijk Limburg	Best campsite restaurant
34	Kompas Camping Nieuwpoort	Best motorhome pitches

LUXEMBOURG		
35	Europacamping Nommerlayen	Best campsite
36	Birkelt Village	Best campsite pool
37	Camping du Barrage Rosport	Best cycling & walking campsite
38	Camping op der Sauer	The best campsite for your dog
39	Camping de la Sûre Reisdorf	Campsite with the best location

GERMANY		
40	Alfsee Ferien- und Erlebnispark	Best campsite
41	Südsee-Camp	Best campsite pool
42	Camping Arterhof	Best cycling & walking campsite
43	Camping Seehäusl	Greatest little campsite
44	Camping Holländischer Hof	Best campsite entertainment
45	Kur- und Feriencamping Max 1	The best campsite for your dog
46	Camping Tennsee	Campsite with the best location
47	Camping Münstertal	Best campsite restaurant
48	Campingpark Kühlungsborn GmbH	Best motorhome pitches

SWITZERLAND		
49	Campofelice Camping Village	Best campsite
50	Camping Riarena	Best campsite pool
51	Camping des Pêches	Best cycling & walking campsite
52	Camping Monte Generoso	The best campsite for your dog
53	Camping Jungfrau	Campsite with the best location
54	TCS Camping Sion	Best motorhome pitches

AUSTRIA		
55	Burgstaller Komfort Camping Park	Best campsite
56	Sportcamp Woferlgut	Best campsite pool
57	50plus Campingpark Fischening	Best cycling & walking campsite
58	Erlebnis Comfort Camping Aufenfeld	Best campsite entertainment
59	Camping Park Grubhof	The best campsite for your dog
60	Camping Brunner am See	Campsite with the best location
61	Camping Bertahof	Best campsite restaurant

POLAND		
62	Camping Morski 21	Best campsite

THE CZECH REPUBLIC		
63	Camp Matyáš	Best campsite

HUNGARY		
64	Balatontourist Camping & Bungalows Füred	Best campsite

SLOVENIA		
65	Camping Bled	Best campsite
66	Camping Terme 3000	Best campsite pool
67	Eco-Camping & Chalets Koren	Best cycling & walking campsite
68	Camping Menina	Campsite with the best location
69	Camping Šobec	Best campsite restaurant

CROATIA		
70	Camping Valkanela	Best campsite
71	Zaton Holiday Resort	Best campsite pool
72	Camping Straško	Best cycling & walking campsite
73	Odmoree Camp & Hostel	Greatest little campsite
74	Polidor Family Camping Resort	Best campsite entertainment
75	Camping Slatina	The best campsite for your dog
76	Camping Stobreč Split	Campsite with the best location
77	Valalta Naturist Camping	Best campsite restaurant
78	Camping Aminess Sirena	Best motorhome pitches

GREECE		
79	Camping Gythion Bay	Best campsite
80	Camping Ionion Beach	Best campsite pool
81	Delphi Camping	Campsite with the best location
82	Camping Sikia	Best campsite restaurant
83	Ouzouni Beach Camping	Best motorhome pitches

UNITED KINGDOM		
84	Linnhe Lochside Holidays	Best campsite
85	Laneside Caravan Park	Best cycling & walking campsite
86	Forest Glade Holiday Park	The best campsite for your dog
87	Bank Farm Leisure	Campsite with the best location
88	Cofton Holidays	Best motorhome pitches

FRANCE		
89	Camping RCN Val de Cantobre	Best campsite
90	Camping Sylvarmar	Best campsite pool
91	Camping Sandaya L'Escale Saint-Gilles	Best cycling & walking campsite
92	Camping du Moulin de Thoard	Greatest little campsite
93	Camping Le Coin Tranquille	Best campsite entertainment
94	Camping Les Coudoulets	The best campsite for your dog
95	Camping Le Port de Limeuil	Campsite with the best location
96	Esterel Caravaning	Best campsite restaurant
97	Camping Domaine du Haut des Bluches	Best motorhome pitches

SPAIN		
98	La Marina Resort	Best campsite
99	Camping & Resort Sangulí Salou	Best campsite pool
100	Camping Boltaña	Best cycling & walking campsite
101	BravoPlaya Camping-Resort	Best campsite entertainment
102	Camping Aquarius	The best campsite for your dog
103	Tamarit Beach Resort	Campsite with the best location
104	Camping Internacional de Calonge	Best campsite restaurant
105	Camper Park Playas de Luz	Best motorhome pitches

PORTUGAL		
106	Turiscampo Camping Club Algarve	Best campsite
107	Ohai Nazaré Outdoor Resort	Best campsite pool
108	Campismo Serro da Bica	Greatest little campsite
109	Camping Albufeira	Campsite with the best location
110	Camping Quinta das Cegonhas	Best campsite restaurant
111	Camping Villa Park Zambujeira	Best motorhome pitches

ITALY		
112	Mediterraneo Camping Village	Best campsite
113	Marina di Venezia Camping Village	Best campsite pool
114	Camping Europa Silvella	Best cycling & walking campsite
115	Mons Gibel Camping Park	Greatest little campsite
116	Piani di Clodia	Best campsite entertainment
117	Vigna sul Mar Family Camping Village	The best campsite for your dog
118	Fornella Camping & Wellness Family Resort	Campsite with the best location
119	Villaggio Camping Capo Ferrato	Best campsite restaurant
120	Camping Vidor Family & Wellness Resort	Best motorhome pitches



# What can we expect to see at campsites in 2022?

Here are the motorhome and caravan trends for this year

Caravan and motorhome manufacturers come out with new models every year. Not all of these models are meant for at the campsite but are an indication of what we can expect in the future. ACSI presents a few interesting trends and developments. It is not entirely surprising that electrification and sustainability play a major role.

### A whale on wheels

At first glance, the Whale Trailer Cabin looks a bit like the familiar small ‘teardrop’ trailers. But once it has been folded out, it is a very versatile recreational vehicle. Almost every corner of the Whale Trailer Cabin can be opened or pulled out. When once all the sections have been opened, the caravan looks somewhat like a whale with its tail up, which immediately clarifies its name. The outside is smooth and streamlined. Fins on the roof increase stability and the seamlessly installed doors and windows reduce drag. This low Cw value makes the caravan interesting for use in combination with electric cars, but it will be a while before it is seen at a campsite. For now, it is simply a prototype by the Chinese designer Hu Yong.



When entirely opened up, the Whale Trailer Cabin looks somewhat like a whale with its tail up.

### Electrically driven caravan

Is it possible to drive an electric car with a caravan from Germany, travelling over the Alps, to Lake Garda without ‘refuelling’? In the summer of 2021, Dethleffs did just that. Without having to recharge during the trip, an Audi e-tron, loaded with measurement systems, pulled the Dethleffs E.Home from Isny im Allgäu in Germany to Riva del Garda in Italy. To have an electric car with an acceptable range, Dethleffs got together with the Erwin Hymer Group and the ZF technology company in Friedrichshafen to develop the E.Home. The design provides the caravan with its own electric propulsion so as to lighten the burden on the tow car. Only time will tell if this is the future. The legislation in various European countries would have to be adjusted first. By seeking to collaborate with different branch organisations (such as the Committee on the Intelligence and Security Services), the initial steps for this have already been taken. An own-initiative proposal to permit driven axles on trailers has already been submitted.



The journey began in Isny in the morning. The Fern Pass and the Brenner Pass were conquered with flying colours. As is usual with electric vehicles, the electric motors of the E.Home can also be used as a generator when braking.

### Extra floor

This year, Bürstner presented the Lyseo Gallery, the first motorhome with a gallery roof. In other words: an inflatable alcove. This makes the motorhome streamlined for travelling but, once on location, a second storey is easily set up. This combines the advantages of a partially integrated motorhome with those of an alcove model. The vehicle reaches a maximum height of approximately 3.7 metres. The alcove is constructed in such a way that it is not slanted but raised vertically. This creates a second storey with an XXL-comfort sleeping area with an interior height of 110 centimetres, a charging station for mobile phones and even a table with a chair. The second storey can be reached by set of fixed stairs.



While travelling, the Bürstner Lyseo Gallery is partially integrated but, having arrived at its destination, it is an alcove model.

### Beach feeling on wheels

The beach feeling contained in a caravan: meet the new Hobby Beachy. It is simple, has no frills, is finished in light and natural colours. There are handy solutions: the fabric-covered baskets and bungee cords replace the usual wall cabinets. It gives a homey feel and all individual items have their own spot. What is unique is the huge back door, hinged at the top, Giving a fantastic view, even from bed.



‘Forget everything you know about caravans and think of something totally new.’ That was the basic principle that Hobby used when designing the new Beachy.

### Stella Vita: Motorhome on solar energy

In September 2021, the world’s first motorhome to drive entirely on solar energy was presented by a team of students from Eindhoven University of Technology. A car that runs on solar energy has already been built at the Eindhoven University of Technology. The Solar Team has been working on this type of innovative family cars since 2012. The team won the Solar Challenge, a long-distance race for solar-powered cars, four years in a row. Their design formed the basis for the solar car that the Dutch brand Lightyear will be bringing out on the market in September 2022. But they want to prove that even more can be done with solar energy. Being completely self-sufficient while camping, for example. The result is the Stella Vita, a motorhome that does not rely on fossil fuels or charging stations. The Stella Vita generates enough solar energy to drive, shower, watch TV, charge a laptop and make coffee.



The Stella Vita has a top speed of 120 kilometres an hour and, on a sunny day, can go up to 730 kilometres.

### Energy for one evening

Knaus Tabbert is also focusing on electricity in 2022. Bottles of gas have been made redundant by the E-power system available for the caravan models Weinsberg CaraCito, Knaus Sport and Knaus Südwind. Energy is stored in a Power X-Change battery by Einhell (4-6 Ah). This battery charges while you drive. The ONE NIGHT STAND system ensures that the caravan is self-sufficient for one night. There is enough power for the lights, water pump and compressor refrigerator. The gasless E-Power caravans are fitted with smart electronics that can provide power for all electrical equipment in the vehicle. Depending on the amps available at the campsite (6, 10 or 16 amps) and which vehicular functions are needed, the hob, lights or heating/air conditioning are given priority.



A few of the Südwind and Sport models by Knaus are already available with E-power. Depending on the amps available at the campsite, you can switch to 10 or 16 amps.



# Decrease in number of pitches in Europe

This year hundreds of brand-new caravans, motorhomes and trailer tents will be travelling to campsites throughout all of Europe. The sale of recreational vehicles has been growing since 2013 and that growth is accelerating. In sharp contrast to this is the decrease of the average number of pitches per campsite. Rental accommodations are occupying larger sections of the campsite and often yield more per pitch. Will this development mean that there will not be enough room for campers who are looking for a pitch for their recreational vehicle?

### Camping pitch or rental accommodation?

ACSI took a look at the development in the average number of touring pitches at campsites in Europe. An accurate picture is obtained from the data checked annually by the ACSI inspectors.

It is a known fact that the number of touring pitches is decreasing per campsite in favour of the number of rental accommodations. But now ACSI can provide specific numbers. In all of Europe, between 2013 and 2020, the average number

of touring pitches per campsite decreased by 15.3%, about 210,000 places. In that same period, the number of motorhomes and caravans sold increased by at least 71%. These are two contrary developments that have led to a shortage of touring pitches in several countries (see Chart 1).

**Differences per country**  
The decrease in the average number of pitches per campsite

is the greatest in the Netherlands (-39%), France (-28%) and Croatia (-20%). There is a barely noticeable decrease or even a slight increase in the number of pitches in the Scandinavian countries, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Ireland (see Chart 2).

**Threat of shortages**  
In countries like The Netherlands, Germany and France, where the

number of campers has grown spectacularly in the last few years, the number of pitches at campsites has decreased. This situation means that there may not be enough pitches during the busy parts of the camping season. Whether this will result in campers being forced to choose other destinations will become apparent in the next few years.

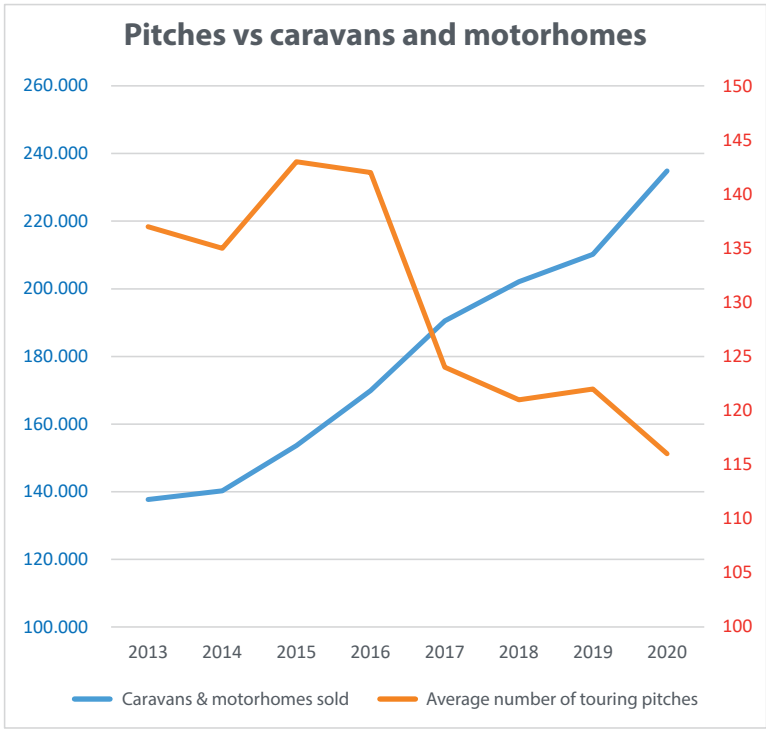


Chart 1

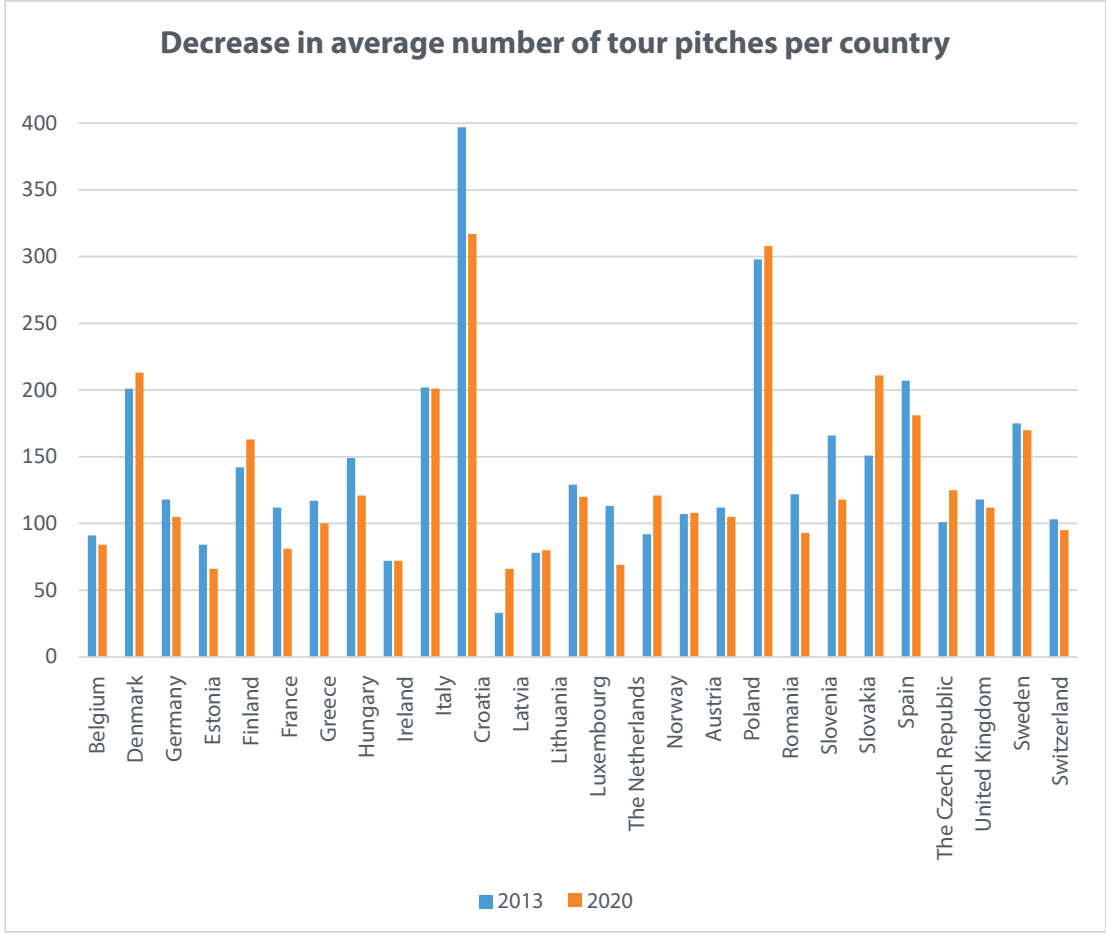


Chart 2

# Substantial growth of ACSI camping.info Booking

The corona pandemic has had a major impact on the camping behaviour of the European camper in the last two years. Recent figures from ACSI camping.info Booking show that campers do not really feel restricted by the corona measures anymore.

### New markets

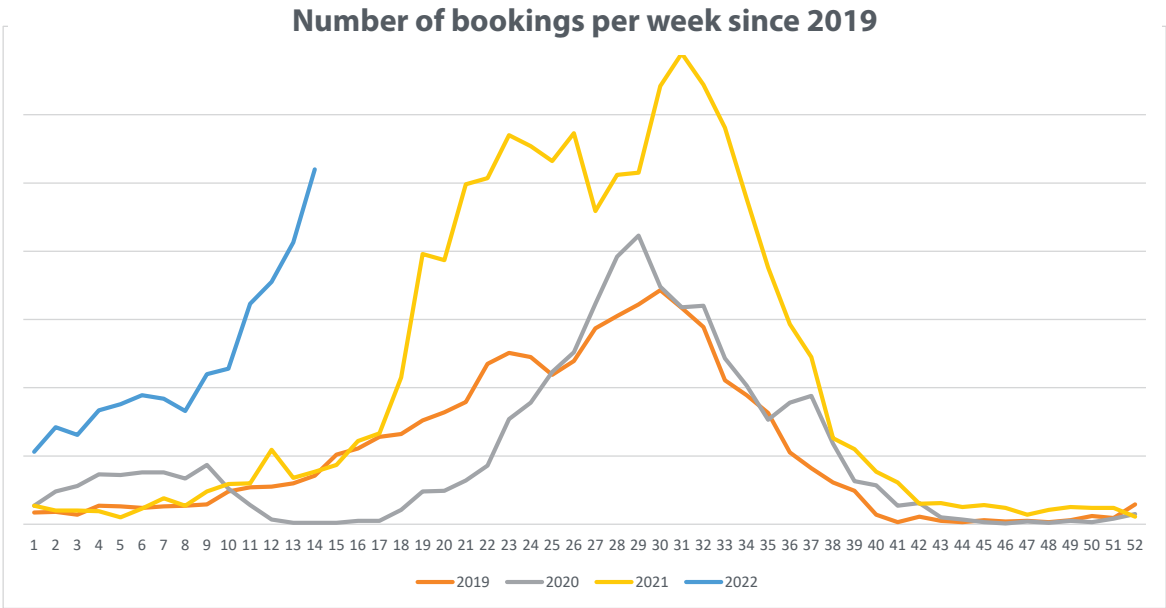
ACSI and camping.info have been working together since May of 2021 in the area of online campsite reservations. The new booking platform, ACSI camping.info Booking, allows the camper to reserve a spot at the campsite through two channels. This collaboration expands the number of (bookable) campsites. It also increases the number of campers – from countries like Germany and Austria in particular. The impact of the German camping.info was noticeable in the Dutch ACSI immediately. In the past twelve months, 41% of the number of bookings came from Germany and ‘only’ 30% from the Netherlands.

### Optimism prevails

In comparison with the first four months of 2021, ACSI camping.info Booking has realised four-and-a-half times as many bookings. The steep increase in fuel costs and the war in Ukraine have not yet had an impact on the booking behaviour of campers.

For the time being, the desire to finally go on holiday without restricting measures is dominant.

Are you interested in joining ACSI camping.info Booking? Send an email to [sales@acsi.eu](mailto:sales@acsi.eu) or call +31 488 452055.



### A few striking statistics:

- The average length of a camping holiday in West European countries – and thus also the average booking behaviour – has increased over the last three years. In East European countries like Croatia and Slovenia, this has decreased.
- In the past two years, bookings are made later in the year, thus a much shorter time before arrival.
- The average price per night is reasonably stable and was the highest in Croatia, Italy and France.
- Dutch people book for the highest price, followed by Danes, Germans, Austrians, Italians and Belgians.
- In the past three years, 34% of all reservations came from the Netherlands, 22% from Germany and 8% from Belgium. Before the corona crisis, 18% of the reservations came from the United Kingdom but this share has dropped to 5%. An increase is now visible here as well.



# Campsite federations on corona: moving forward together!

Corona is inextricably linked to the past few years. This was a difficult time for both campsites and campsite federations. And yet it was also the cause of admirable creativity and flexibility. In a short period of time, people came up with smart and creative solutions to be able to receive campers despite the, at times, vigorous measures. ACSI reviews the past together with four campsite federations.

## Federació Catalana de Càmpings

Ward Wijngaert is CEO of Girona's Camping Association and secretary-general of the Catalan Campsite Federation. He is also a university senior lecturer involved in developing the 'Master Of Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management'. This is the first European master's programme in the field of sustainable campsite resort management, developed in collaboration with stakeholders in the camping industry and the universities of Breda (NL), Girona (ESP) and Optajja (CR).

'The coronavirus turned life upside two years ago,' Wijngaert begins. 'In past years, our role has chiefly been to lobby with public authorities for more help and better coordination between campsites and the government.' Just like for many other Spanish businesses, there was little financial help for the camping industry. 'The only possibility offered was to take out cheap loans. This resulted in many campsites working themselves into debt and, in some cases,

delaying plans for the future.' Fortunately, campsites could be helped in another way. 'Mainly by supporting them in breaking down and updating the current restrictions and obligations. We could also offer support in international communication and promotion.'

### Lasting innovations

Despite the hard times, Wijngaert sees advantages as well. 'The camping industry has been given a boost. Think of innovations such as checking in online, flexible cancellations and digital payments. Despite the negative cause, these developments are very welcome and permanent.' Steps have been taken in the area of

hygiene as well. 'More attention is being paid to hygiene, which is something that is reflected in our campsites. Campsites have been required to record their internal processes on paper, making them more professional in their organisation. I expect that the extra hygiene measures and checks in the toilet facilities, catering and swimming pools are in many cases also permanent in nature.'

### Impact on camping behaviour

'Looking at the number of bookings, we see that corona has most certainly influenced camping behaviour. Campers book later, being fearful of possible restrictions, and spread their holidays

more with shorter stays. This causes consumption at the campsite to decline, which means more work at reception for the same number of customers.' Wijngaert is curious as to how this will develop in the coming period but sees a positive trend as well. 'The Spanish market has rediscovered camping in Catalonia, and we expect that that group will continue to return. We also hope to receive more campers on a European level.'

### Corona is no longer the main concern

Right now, the corona measures are no longer the main concern, according to Wijngaert. Other matters are demanding attention. 'Obviously, we are fearful of the events in Ukraine, also with regard to the impact on energy and food prices. Although we are still positive about this camping season and the distant future, we are trying to remain realistic and not lose ourselves in false optimism.'



## Fédération Nationale de l'Hôtellerie de Plein Air



Nicolas Dayot, president of the French Fédération Nationale de l'Hôtellerie de Plein Air (FNHPA), speaks. He has been at the helm of the federation with its 4,000 members since 2017. 'Of course the pandemic was a shock for the tourism industry,' Dayot states. 'But, ultimately, it has also revealed our strength. Tourists value the campsite because of the room they have there, the connection with nature and being able to be outside.' French people flocked to campsites in their own country in 2020 and 2021. 'Many French people who would normally

go abroad now chose to go to a French campsite. Green destinations such as Puy-de-Dôme, Cantal or Aveyron clearly gained in visibility.'

This means that the French camping industry never really closed down. Campsites could adapt quickly to the required hygiene measures or were creative in appealing to other groups of campers. Dayot sees yet another indirect advantage: 'The sector has also shown the public authorities that it is a serious branch of industry that can adapt quickly to changing circumstances.'

### Collaboration with the public authorities

Dayot is, in any case, pleased with the attitude of the public authorities during the corona crisis. A postponement decision was made, meaning that cancelled holidays were not required to be paid back immediately. There was also a solidarity fund and it was possible to take out loans guaranteed by the state. Dayot is aware that this would not be a consolation for every campsite: 'It was particularly difficult for campsites that were already experiencing problems

before the crisis. And they could get into trouble in the near future with regard to any planned investments that they cannot make now. In 2020, 150 campsites closed, in comparison to the usual number between 50 to 100.'

### Role of the FNHPA

'During each phase of the crisis and with each proposed measure, we have let the public authorities hear the voice of the French campsites,' states Dayot, summarising the role of the FNHPA. It assisted with matters from financial measures to drafting the hygiene protocols that allowed campsites to continue to operate. In addition, the FNHPA functioned as a go-between for the campsite owners. 'We have been as transparent as possible, allowing our members to be informed in near real time. And, the other way round as well, we have always played with open hand. In my view, this is one of the important reasons why cooperation with the public authority services has worked so well,' Dayot stated.

### Innovation and new campers

The future introduces two new things that are beautiful in Dayot's

eyes. 'The campsites will most certainly continue to use the innovations,' he predicts. 'And many new campers have appeared. In 2020 and 2021, around 10% of the guests were new campers. These guests in particular will appreciate facilities being maintained at the current level. For campsites, this is an extra reason to continue to focus on hygiene,' Dayot reasons. The role of rental accommodations will also continue to grow. And yet he notes that the standard pitches have stood up well: 'There are many new motorhome users – also through the market for rental motorhomes. They are often on the lookout for traditional pitches.'

Dayot looks ahead with confidence but warns that there is no room for laziness. 'We must continue to innovate and prepare ourselves for unexpected situations,'

he states firmly. The 2021 season was already almost on the same level as 2019 and the number of bookings at the end of February of this year were already 20% higher than in the same period before COVID-19. 'Camping has an unsurpassed price-quality ratio. Moreover, camping is for everyone with its huge range of landscapes, types of accommodation and types of holidays. There is something to be found for every taste and for every budget,' Dayot is certain. And even more important: 'Camping meets the demand of holidaymakers in the area of sustainability.' Dayot therefore concludes optimistically: 'Working in the camping industry is actually a passionate job more than ever!'



**FNHPA**  
FEDERATION NATIONALE  
DE L'HOTELLERIE  
DE PLEIN AIR



## Bundesverband der Campingwirtschaft in Deutschland e.V.



Christian Günther is chairperson of the Bundesverband der Campingwirtschaft in Deutschland e.V. (BVCD), based in Berlin. The BVCD represents more than 1,200 German campsites in total. Günther draws a mixed conclusion after two years of corona crisis. 'Campsites seem to have withstood the pandemic

reasonably well but tourism in general has been hit hard. And campsites are not worlds that are self-contained but they depend on that which the surroundings have to offer. Catering, culture and events, for example. These sectors are the ones that have been hit hard, which may reduce regional appeal.' He also believes that we

will only be able to ascertain the exact consequences of the crisis in the years to come.

For Günther it is also clear that the crisis has exposed the weak points within the tourism industry. 'In Germany, little distinction was made between the different forms of tourism in the decision-making concerning corona. Campsites were affected by closures and restrictions for far too long.' And yet Günther also sees advantages: 'Camping in Germany has been given a boost as well. There was a lot of attention by the media and camping is now at the centre of society.' Campsites were also forced to innovate. 'For example, in the area of digitalisation. Solutions that, for a long time, were regarded as "the future" were suddenly introduced. Even rigid analogues had to keep up with developments that, by the way, are still in full swing,' Günther observes.

### Searching for dialogue

'There were two important aspects within the BVCD: lobby-

ing and informing the members,' Günther states. Support measures in Germany were launched in fits and starts. The intervention of the BVCD was therefore extra welcome. 'We made concrete suggestions to politicians and ministries about the ways that campsites could be given assistance,' states Günther. The collaboration with other associations has also improved. Günther: 'It was this collaboration that gave birth to the Aktionsbündnis Tourismusvielfalt with the objective of speaking with one voice for the entire tourism industry. This has contributed positively to the image of the industry – and also that of the BVCD – in politics as well as in the press.'

### Stress test for the BVCD

The BVCD was also able to develop further because of the corona pandemic. 'This was a stress test for us to see where our strong and weak points lie. And we have seen who we can rely on in such a situation. Of course, there is still much to be done, but we have shown that we can act

as a mouthpiece in this kind of situation. Personally, it was great to see how the campsites used our instruments and instructions,' Günther reflects.

### The future remains difficult to predict

Günther believes that trends such as digitalisation of the booking process and the rise of private toilet facilities have been sped up because of the corona crisis. 'I have also found that more and more new campers are being added, even people without friends or family who have a great deal of camping experience. As an industry, we have to take them by the hand and show them what camping means and why it is so much fun,' Günther says. He finds it difficult to predict the future, although the initial figures look good. 'The lockdowns meant the annual figures were poor. But if you look at, for example, only the month of August with 9.5 million overnight stays at German campsites, then last year was a bumper year,' observes Günther. There are high hopes for 2022 as well. And yet he wants to conclude with a reservation: 'The past years were marked by unpleasant surprises and there is no guarantee that they will not happen again. But one thing is for sure: the camping industry has the best prospects for the future of all forms of tourism!'



## FAITA FederCamping



In conclusion, Alberto Granzotto, president of FAITA FederCamping, contributes his vision as well. Because Italy traditionally depends very much on foreign tourism, the consequences of the corona crisis are huge. Granzotto sees that the camping industry has come out of this relatively well. He sums up the advantages: 'More room, especially outdoors, and you have your own spot on the campsite.' The combination with nature yields advantages too. 'The environment and sustainability play an important role during a camping holiday. Many people have (re-) discovered this and have come

to appreciate it more. This has contributed to the increase in the number of camping enthusiasts.

Obviously, a decrease in the number of foreign visitors could not be prevented. 'Luckily, in 2020 this was partially compensated for by Italians going on holiday in their own country. In 2021 the figures rose slightly but they were not nearly close to the level of before the pandemic,' relates Granzotto. The dwindling stream of tourists and the unpredictability of the pandemic had a major effect on the economic state of the campsites. And, although Granzotto appreciates the efforts of the

Italian government, he believes much more can be done.

### Bureaucracy inhibits investments

Granzotto believes this is due to Italian bureaucracy. 'Support packages appeared for the tourism industry, but little was done to adjust the rules with regard to applying for credit and investments. We are entrepreneurs and do not want a handout but want the room to be able to get things going again,' he clarifies. This is the main problem and Granzotto believes this is dangerous: 'Investments are crucial to overcoming the crisis. It is important for campsites to be able to borrow more easily – under flexible conditions – and for a plan to be drawn up to reduce bureaucracy.

### FAITA as mediator

The FAITA is working hard in the background to realise this. In any case, there has been much mediation in the past period. Granzotto points out: 'We have put in a lot of effort to make politicians aware of the needs of the industry.' And there have been successes: 'Subsidies are now available for making rental accommodations and mobile homes more sustainable' is just one example he gives. 'Of course, we have also had extensive contact with

the campsite owners and have applied ourselves to drawing up clear procedures and guidelines to combat the pandemic. Our own communication activities have been strengthened and we have attempted to give the industry more visibility,' Granzotto says, summing up the most important efforts.

### The camping industry is resilient

Granzotto sees the pandemic as a flywheel for change. 'Many changes were already on the horizon, but now they have been implemented more quickly and with improvements. And I think that the past years have reawakened the entrepreneurial

spirit of many campsite owners,' Granzotto surmises. This will have to happen: 'Tourists are becoming increasingly dynamic, the market for campers is growing and the number of campers is growing.' Plenty of opportunity then, since camping was already popular in Italy. 'Up until 2020, we were number two with regard to the number of overnight stays, below the hotels. Starting this season, we don't expect much more impact from corona. The initial analysis of the booking figures confirm this. I have full confidence that the camping sector will recover and contribute to getting the entire tourism industry back to its proper level!'





# A journey through the history of camping

Many European campsites have existed for decades already. Some for even more than a century! Much has changed during that time. ACSI spoke with four European campsites about their rich history.

## Camping De Paalberg, *The Netherlands*

### Continued focus on real camping

Camping de Paalberg originated in 1920 and began as a camp for boys from the city. The campsite has been around for more than a hundred years now. In 2020 this park was the first Dutch campsite to be given the Dutch designation 'Royal Warrant holder'.

De Paalberg was founded by the youth movement 'Amsterdamse Maatschappij voor Jongemannen' (Amsterdam Society for Young Men). Boys from the city and groups of boy scouts could enjoy nature and life outdoors on the beautiful heathland of Ermelo. The camp was closed down during the Second World War but

was reopened and expanded after the war.

The first year pitches for caravans and chalets appeared in the 1960s. That was also the time that De Paalberg began to focus more on families. In 2012 the campsite was taken over by the current owner: the VDB Recreatie

Groep. The former tent camp has expanded to a recreation park with swimming pools, glamping tents, a restaurant, supermarket and climbing park. In the year 2022, it is a location where several generations stay for their holiday. Campers return with their own family to the campsite of their wonderful childhood memories.

#### From calling to booking online

One of the biggest changes in running the campsite then and now is the arrival of internet. Campers used to call or come by for a reservation. Now most bookings are done online. This has increased the importance of (positive) online reviews. Once at

‘The old-fashioned feeling of camping out in the country continues to be important’



the campsite, campers like to be online, which means that a good wifi network is an important item. And yet there are things that have not changed.

Many parks expand the number of accommodations – at times at the cost of the camping fields. Historically, De Paalberg focuses on ‘real camping’ and wants to keep it that way. This is done by offering spacious pitches with plenty of privacy and fields for families around a playground. This preserves the old-fashioned feeling of camping out in the country.



#### Official Royal Warrant holder

In 2020 De Paalberg was decorated with the distinction 'Royal Warrant holder'. This means that the business has been given royal approval. As far as is known, no members of the Dutch royal family have camped here. They are, of course, more than welcome.

## Playa Montroig Camping Resort, *Spain*

### 60 years of Camping in Style

Playa Montroig Camping Resort was one of the first campsites on the Spanish coasts. It has been run by the family Giménez from the very beginning. Throughout the years the business has experienced significant growth, but the pleasant atmosphere has remained the same.



In the early 1960s grandfather Giménez already knew that camping could become a really big thing. At the time, the demand for place to stay overnight kept on growing. International tourists discovered that the Spanish coast was a great place to stay. This included Costa Daurada, which was

‘The same families keep coming back’

popular because of the Catalan climate and the beautiful cities of Tarragona and Barcelona. At first it was mainly French tourists who came, but Dutch, British and German tourists soon followed.

#### Guests come back

In 1962, together with a friend, an architect who initially concentrated on apartments, they built a campsite with room for two hundred families. The campsite owner viewed the campers as friends rather than customers.

Partly because of this, more than sixty percent of the guests returned more often. Even now, the Giménez family still welcomes several English and French families that came in the 1960s.

#### A green design

In 1980 Antonio Giménez took over the campsite from his father and, two years ago, his son Alejandro took over, now running the resort with his sister and brother. He had already been working in the business for ten years. In the year 2022, the campsite has grown into a five-star campsite with two hundred employees, modern accommoda-



tions, luxurious facilities and a swimming pool complex. The family has always given a lot of attention to the design and maintenance and beautiful green grounds have been realised. Because the park is divided into different parts, the holidaymakers still feel it is cosy.



Alejandro and his family work every day on meeting the high expectations of the guest and the image of camping. Playa Montroig’s motto is ‘Camping in Style.’ The campsite celebrates its sixtieth birthday this year. This milestone will be celebrated with the guests ‘in style.’



## Camping Village Resort & Spa Le Vieux Port, France

# Innovation is in the DNA

Five-star campsite Le Vieux Port on the French Atlantic coast was set up 1979 by Robert Lafitte, the grandfather of the current generation of owners. The campsite opened in 1980. The business was further developed by Robert's sons, Jean-Claude and Jean-Yves. The third generation is now at the helm. It is a true family business.

At first not everyone was sure about Robert's plans to have holidaymakers camp next to the



ocean. Some even thought he was crazy. Luckily, Robert was convinced of the potential of the campsite, and his foresight was later proven to be good.

### One of the first campsites with mobile homes

The basics of running a campsite have basically remained the same. However, there are a few major differences between then and now. One of the most important developments for Le Vieux Port is the rise of the mobile home. In 1980 there were no mobile homes at campsites. The Lafitte family was one of the first because the owners saw the possibilities of offering these accommodations early on.

### A surf machine

A second major difference is that the campsite offers many more services today than it has in the past. Innovation runs in the Lafitte family DNA, with something new introduced almost every year. A few examples of the innovations are rental accommodations with private hot tubs, a shopping service at the pitches, pitches with private toilet facilities and a 'surf machine' (an artificial wave to surf on).

'Now we see how wise our grandfather was'

The history of Le Vieux Port is full of milestones and each new project is taken on with enthusiasm. A very important milestone was the realisation of the water fun park with a wave pool, slides and a water playground. The opening of the first restaurant and the campsite shops were also huge steps.



The current owners know that they are lucky to have grown up in such a unique environment. The family welcomes the challenge to continue to improve the

campsite together and to offer guests a unique holiday. They want to continue to be curious and seize new opportunities together.

## Polmanter Touring Park, United Kingdom

# The entire family joins in

In 1968 John and Sheena Osborne moved to a dairy farm just outside of St. Ives, which is where the history of Polmanter Touring Park begins. The family set aside a field for campers, which quickly became a huge success. Today, son Phil and his wife Becki run the campsite together.

Camping in those early years was rather primitive: a section of a field of grass for a tent and no toilet facilities. The Osbornes' hospitality and the beautiful location quickly made the place popular among campers. Together with their sons, John and Sheena developed more facilities, and the farm gradually became the campsite it is today. The old milking barn became a bar and part of what used to be the farm's garden is now the heated outdoor swimming pool.

### The children designed the playground

John and Sheena's sons grew up on the campsite and it was logical that one of them would take over the business.

Son Phil runs the campsite now, joined by his wife Becki in 1998, who also works as a family physician. Phil and Becki have three children and a dog, all of whom have left

their mark on the campsite. The children helped design the new indoor and outdoor playgrounds and dog Bella was the inspiration for the dog shower, the free dog poop bags and the dog playground. The Osbornes have used their own experiences as a family to offer family-friendly facilities such as baby baths and children's toilets. Guests are



very appreciative.

About forty employees who work alongside the Osborne family devote themselves to the campsite. Some have been coming back each summer for more than ten years. Over time, the campsite has expanded to include a campsite shop with regional products, a restaurant, a breakfast service, a tennis court and a shuttle service to St. Ives.

### Higher expectations

The main difference between then and now is that campers have much higher expectations for a campsite. The campsite must be clean, offer excellent

'Even the dog lends a hand'

service and have many facilities. The demand for accommodation continues to grow. In 2018, two apartments were built. These were so popular that two cottages have been added.

More than fifty years of camping history have taught the Osbornes that it is important to have an eye for detail and to continue to invest in new and existing facilities. For Phil and Becki, the campsite is their home as well as their work. They are convinced this why guests feel so welcome.

## Colophon

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