

AUTUMN EDITION 2022

The ACSI Times is published by the leading campsite specialist of Europe. In this issue you can read about what's happening in the camping industry. Learn more about how campsites are dealing with staff shortage. And we look ahead to how issues such as inflation and price increases will affect the 2023 camping season and whether campers will adjust their plans because of these issues. Furthermore, votes can be cast for the ACSI Awards 2023.

ONE YEAR AFTER THE FLOODING

In the summer of 2021, Northwest Europe was shocked by major flooding. ACSI spoke to three campsite owners who saw their campsites go under water last year. How big was the damage? And what is the situation for the campsites over a year later?

► Read more on **pages 2-3**

EUROPEAN CAMPSITE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management master's degree starts in the autumn of 2023. As project team member and lecturer, Ward Wijngaert is connected to this initiative. He explains why educational institutes in Breda, Girona and Rijeka have joined forces.

► Read more on **page 7**

ACSI AWARDS 2023: VOTING IS OPEN

The ACSI Awards are also being awarded in 2023. Campers from across Europe can vote for their favourite campsite until 15 January. ACSI provides tips and inspiration to give your campsite the greatest chance of winning.

► Read more on **pages 8-9**

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW CAMPING YEAR

All kinds of things are happening in Europe right now. Industry specialist Jos Klerx, ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine and some camping federations look at the effect of the rising prices, inflation and the war in Ukraine on the new camping season.

► Read more on **pages 11-13**

CAMPSITES WITH A RICH HISTORY

Camping has a long and fascinating history. 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**

More work with fewer people

Creativity required in the search for enough staff

The 2022 camping year has gone well for many campsites. Campers in Europe are experiencing few to no travel restrictions and are getting out on the road like in the good old days. Campsites welcome their guests with open arms, but they are increasingly faced with insufficient staff to operate all the campsite facilities. This regularly causes problems and campsite owners are required to come up with creative solutions.

Fortunately, there are many ways to tackle this problem, as we have seen from a tour of various recreation entrepreneurs and campsite owners. The trick is to do more work with fewer people and to come up with new ways to recruit and retain staff. You can read all about it on pages 2-3 of this issue of ACSI Times.



Have a bite to eat and a drink on the campsite patio. That is no longer a matter of course everywhere due to staff shortages.

ACSI is present at leading trade fairs

Trade fair calendar for autumn and winter

Trade fair calendar for autumn and winter			
October	November	January	February
Kampeer & Caravan Jaarbeurs 05-09 October: Utrecht, NL Atlantica 11-13 October: Nîort, FR Sun Beach & Outdoor Style 12-14 October: Rimini, IT Motorhome and Caravan Show 18-23 October: Birmingham, UK SET 08-10 November: Montpellier, FR Urlaubsträume powered by Reise + Camping 10-13 November: Essen, DE Recreatie Vakbeurs 15-17 November: Hardenberg, NL Touristik & Caravaning 16-20 November: Leipzig, DE NCT 16-17 November: Magdeburg, DE Vakantiebeurs 12-15 January: Utrecht, NL CMT 14-22 January: Stuttgart, DE Caravana 25-29 January: Leeuwarden, NL ABF 01-05 February: Hannover, DE Vakantie Salon 02-05 February: Brussel, BE Reisen 08-12 February: Hamburg, DE Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show 21-26 February: Birmingham, UK Reise + Camping 22-26 February: Essen, DE Ferie for Alle 24-26 February: Herring, DK			

The motorhome and caravan fairs are back with a vengeance. Under the condition that the corona virus doesn't throw a spanner in the works again, campers, campsite owners and other interested parties gain lots of inspiration from the latest trends and developments in the world of camping in the upcoming months.

As Europe's campsite specialist, it goes without saying that ACSI will be present at the leading

trade fairs. The ACSI stand can be found at 17 consumer fairs in five European countries, which expect to receive a total of over 1.6 million visitors.

In the upcoming time, ACSI will be at the Kampeer & Caravan Jaarbeurs in Utrecht (The Netherlands), de CMT in Stuttgart (Germany), the Vakantie Salon in Brussels (Belgium) and the Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show in Birmingham (United Kingdom), among others.

Our popular campsite guide

During the fair days, visitors can get acquainted with ACSI and ACSI products. At the stands, representatives provide explanations and give advice about which campsite guide or app best meets the visitors' expectations. Each year, ACSI notices that there is a lot of interest in the products. The camping guides for the current camping year are sold at the autumn fairs, and the guides for the new year can already be ordered.

The products for the new camping year are available from mid-January.

The other ACSI products also get a lot of attention. We have a metre-high smartphone on which campers can try out the ACSI apps, there is a lucky dip where great prizes can be won and visitors can vote for the campsite they believe deserves an ACSI Award.

'Food trucks replace the closed restaurant'

Campsites on how they are dealing with persistent staff shortages

Asking camping guests to clean the toilet and washing facilities for a fee or in exchange for a free stay, ordering food with a QR code or even closing the campsite restaurant completely. Staff shortages in the hospitality and recreation industry are being felt across Europe. Many campsites have to deal with this as well. ACSI spoke to various recreation entrepreneurs and campsite owners about the staff shortage and about the options for recruiting new personnel.

The 2020 and 2021 holiday seasons did not go as planned due to the corona crisis. This season, things are going a lot better but another problem has suddenly popped up: a shortage of staff. Many campsite owners were taken somewhat by surprise by this and it causes a lot of stress. Campsite owners have to be creative to keep everything running. Sometimes they have to decide to adjust the entertainment programme, reduce the catering opening hours or close the restaurant for an extra day. During high season, the industry often relies on young people and students to operate but it seems this summer they are enjoying holidays, catching up on parties and festivals.

'Young people want to go on holiday'

Jeroen Fermont, co-owner of TeamAnimation, notices that the

number of young people wanting to work this summer is a lot lower than in previous years. Each year, the company places about 700 entertainers at campsites in the Netherlands and France to supply campsites in this regard. 'The seasons are usually predictable, but the market was completely different this year. I think it has to do with the corona crisis. Young people have not been able to do fun things for a long time and they all want to go on holiday in their masses. Also, many festivals and concerts were postponed due to corona and they have been rescheduled for this summer. Young people wanted to enjoy themselves and working abroad all summer is less appealing.'

Career switch due to corona

Campsite chain Eldorado Parken is mainly facing staff shortages in hospitality services. 'At our

largest park, Vakantiepark De Bergen in Wanroij, we have an adventure park alongside our holiday park. We have many catering venues at both parks and we really notice there is a shortage of staff,' states marketing and sales employee Marco Jacobs. 'We see that many people have switched to working in the healthcare sector. For example to work at test centres and vaccination centres. That work continued during the corona crisis while the hospitality sector had to close. Many employees who have left the sector don't want to return. That is a shame of course, because it is a great sector to work in,' says Jacobs.

Digital check-in

For many campsites, the staff shortages are a reason to accelerate digitisation. Camping Siersburg in the German Saarland has digitised everything so they can operate without staff. 'We have a check-in machine so our guests can check in themselves even when the reception is closed. It means we don't need any staff,' say management couple Gerlinde and Bernhard Treinen. The

Danish campsites Nymindesgab, Tipperne and Houstrup have also digitised the check-in process. 'Guests can check in online so that they don't have to come to reception,' says campsite owner Jari Christensen.

Food trucks replace the restaurant

Eldorado Parken has come up with various solutions to be able to provide guests with food and beverages with a smaller team. 'We have started doing some things differently,' says Jacobs. One example is that guests can place an order by scanning a QR code. That means the catering staff can focus on preparing and serving up the orders. 'Furthermore, we have themed evenings in the restaurant when we serve food in buffet form. That also ensures we need fewer staff to get through the evening.' Despite the creative solutions for operating the restaurant with fewer people, the campsite has been forced to close the restaurant two days a week. 'On those days, we invite a number of food trucks to come here. Then guests can eat out in a fun way. We clearly announce it on flyers at reception. It avoids people looking forward to an evening in one of our restaurants while we can only offer food trucks.

Smaller teams, more hours

Team Animation tries to solve the staff shortage by working in smaller teams, but giving the employees more hours. 'An entertainer's average working week is 36 to 40 hours. In consultation, we have increased that to 42 to 48 hours,' states Fermont. The employees have taken this positively. 'We hear that they actually like the fact they can work more. As an entertainer, you temporarily live at the campsite, so you are already there. Since the staff don't have to commute, they usually don't mind working extra hours.' Because the entertainers work more hours, campsites don't need as much staff. 'A team that used to consist of five people can now run the same programme with four people.'

Fewer last-minute bookings

Yvonne de Saint Maurice, owner of the mid-sized campsite La Belle Etoile in the French La Rochette, says she is missing about four employees. 'We normally work with nine of us and now there are only five people. It means we are all working long

days.' Her main stressor is the number of last-minute bookings. 'Processing reservations is time-consuming, especially when people book one day in advance. I'm considering allowing fewer last-minute bookings next year and to introduce a minimum stay of two nights. That would save us a considerable amount of time on administration.' She has not decided for certain yet. 'We have no idea what next season will be like of course. This year is completely different to last year. And we still have no idea what the coming season will bring.'

Recruiting personnel

To get more staff, you first need to reach them. And that is a challenge this year and sometimes completely new for campsites. For example, Camping La Belle Etoile has never had to recruit staff. 'We are close to a university and each year we had many students who spontaneously walked in and asked if we had a job for them. Each year, I had a folder containing 10 to 12 CVs to choose from. No one came this year. I think for next year, it would be a good idea to work with a recruiter to search for new staff,' explains De Saint Maurice. Other campsites opt for online marketing. Fermont tells us that TeamAnimation has never spent so much money on online marketing as it has this year. 'We advertise on Google, Facebook, Instagram and as of this year, we have also started using TikTok and job boards specialised in work abroad. Fortunately, word-of-mouth marketing still works as well.'

A card for graduating students

Eldorado Parken has set up a major campaign to find new staff. 'In a multi-disciplinary team, we looked at our options and it resulted in some great projects,' says Jacobs proudly. Beside online advertising, the chain also used printed materials. 'Often parents see a vacancy in a newspaper and cut it out to pass it on. We are one step ahead by placing flyers in newspapers. And we have noticed that this has worked well.' Besides flyers in newspapers, Eldorado Parken has also created congratulations cards that are sent out to high school graduates. 'It was an intensive task, because we put a card in the letter box at every house where they have 'hung out the flag', denoting a student has graduated. The card read 'Congratulations with your



At various campsites, a food truck replaces the restaurant one or more evenings



TeamAnimation noticed that many young people this year opted for festivals and parties instead of a summer job as an animator at the campsite.

diploma' and the recipients could use it to go swimming for free in our beach pool. We also wrote: *'If you would like to go swimming for free more often, come and work for us!'* The campaign was a success and a fair amount of young people from the area applied for a job at the campsite.

Easy to apply

Both Jacobs as well as Fermont conclude that the application process must be low-threshold. All young people have to do if they want to work at Eldorado Parken is send a WhatsApp message. 'We then call them and chat about their work experience and wishes. We mainly have young applicants looking for their first job. Then it's good to look at the options together. The CVs contain almost nothing so they don't give us much to go on. Otherwise, it could mean we get fewer applicants.' Entertainers-to-be can apply easily at Team Animation as well. 'They can leave their contact details behind on the website and we will call them as soon as possible for a job interview. If that interview is successful, they can go on a training weekend to prepare themselves properly to start work.' The application period is usually in spring but people could apply for longer this year. 'We organised a training weekend every weekend in July to fill up the gaps in August.'

Good working conditions

Everyone agrees that it is important to treat staff well. 'With

seasonal work, you usually have to let go of everyone at the end of the season. At that time, you can only hope that they enjoyed working for you so much that they come back the following year,' says Jacobs. 'Clear communication with staff is very important. It's good to know what you have to offer each other.' Team Animation's focus is on

retaining the current personnel. 'We want new entertainers each year of course, but it is also good if people come back for several years. Therefore, we consider it important to be accessible outside the season as well. And the basic conditions simply have to be good. The work could be a lot of fun but if salaries are not paid on time or the accommodation

where they are staying is not up to scratch, they won't come back.'

Optimistic about the future

Despite the chaotic period, campsites see a positive future ahead. Fermont says that there are still plenty of tricks to recruit new personnel. 'This year is extreme due to people catching up on festivals and holidays. I think that next

year, the market will calm down somewhat.' Jacobs, too, is optimistic. 'For the time being, it will remain a challenge to find enough staff. But I think by being a good employer and having a good recruitment strategy, you can go a long way.'



By placing orders via a QR code, less serving staff is needed.

Flooding in Northwest Europe

Three campsite owners look back over a year later

Caravans that were swept away by the high water, destroyed toilet blocks and campsites where (almost) nothing remained intact. Last year, the floods also left their mark on the camping sector in Northwestern Europe. The majority of the damage has been repaired, but not all damage is visible yet. Together with three campsite owners, ACSI looks back at the flooding and the situation at the campsites now.

Resort Marina Oolderhuuske

Situated on a peninsula between the River Meuse and the Maasplassen (Meuse Lakes), Resort Marina Oolderhuuske is surrounded by water. The marina and the water attract many campers to the Dutch Roermond region each year. It is also an ideal holiday destination for everyone who loves water sports. The campsite has existed for almost 30 years now and was doing better each year. That was until the water suddenly turned into an enemy in July 2021.

Unexpected high water

The campsite was having a great season before the flooding, it was filled with campers and all the chalets were hired out. Recreation entrepreneur Perry Houkes explains how the water arrived rather unexpectedly. 'There was an announcement that the water would rise and we took precautionary measures of course. We evacuated the campsite and moved the caravans to higher ground. Yet the high water still caught us by surprise.' Houkes had not expected the water to rise so quickly and so high. 'It usually rises slowly, giving us enough time to respond. If it keeps rising, we can then take additional measures. This time, the water rose to five metres within 12 hours. We couldn't compete with that.'

Over 2 million euros of damage

The high water caused considerable damage. The entire campsite was under water. Houkes tells us that the RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency) has estimated the damage at 1.6 million euros. Of that, 65% has been paid out.

'That's good, but the amount does not cover the full damage. Furthermore, it does not take rising costs into consideration. For example, before the flooding I had purchased aluminium floats for a chalet at a cost of €14,000. Now, I have to pay €32,000 for exactly the same product. If I include all the price increases, the total damage amounts to over 2.2 million euros. The insurance bailed out and, apart from one car, compensated nothing at all.' Campsite guests who lost their caravan received full compensation from the insurance.

Help from the surrounding area

After the flooding, people in his surroundings helped him. 'We had 140 people working here every day. That number could have been higher if I had wanted to, but then I would not have been able to coordinate it all. It was quite something to see how everyone came to help. Campsite guests, people from the neighbourhood and even my dentist jumped in to help us.' Those in

his surroundings also provided financial support. 'Crowdfunding raised 100,000 euros.' Houkes is extremely grateful for all the support.

Campsite open again

'Fortunately, we were able to welcome guests again three weeks after the high water. At first glance, it looks as if we escaped damage from the flooding.' Only the chalet hire causes problems because 10 of the 11 chalets were completely destroyed. 'We have ordered new chalets but the delivery times are extremely long. We therefore decided to rebuild the old chalets into six renewed chalets. We also have a brand new reception building, so all in all we are doing all right.'

Measures for the future

To prevent the campsite being destroyed again by flooding, Houkes has taken measures. 'All the chalets are being made floating structures, moored to poles so that they can rise with the water levels. We have also placed

the new reception building on elevated foundations. Should the water rise further than that, we want to use special bags to block it.' Houkes now feels positive about the future and he is glad the campsite has had a good season this year.



The campsite at Resort Marina Oolderhuuske in good and bad times.

Camping Eau-Zone

Camping Eau-Zone is situated in the Belgian Ardennes close to the village of Hotton. Located in a bend of River Ourthe (a side river of the Meuse), the campsite is enclosed by water. The usually calm river is suitable for water sports, such as canoeing, or standup paddleboarding. Swimming is also permitted. Jeroen de Wulf and Lien Jacobs had only owned Camping Eau-zone for a few months when they saw their beloved place disappear completely under water. They had just invested considerably in renovations. 'The reception and café had undergone a metamorphosis, we had created camping pitches with more privacy and built an additional storage shed. And then the devastating flooding came.'

Campsite evacuation

On 14 July 2021, the situation became increasingly worse extremely quickly. 'We soon made it clear to all campsite guests that it was best to leave. You don't want people getting their feet wet of course.' The water rose faster than expected in such a short time and those who had not left, were made to leave the campsite as quickly as possible. 'Jeroen did all he could to remove all the caravans with our car and stall them elsewhere in the village. Unfortunately, two caravans could not be saved.'

Caravans floating by

The campsite was completely flooded during the night of 14 to 15 July. A chaotic day followed, during which a feeling of solidarity reigned. Everyone came together to help. 'During a joint meal, we saw two caravans floating by. It took a while before we realised that they were the two remaining caravans from the campsite. The powerlessness, the feeling of having no idea what you will find there was the worst thing.' The devastation at the campsite was massive. 'It was as if a giant had picked



Several buildings on Camping Eau-Zone have been placed on an elevation. This turned out to be a good thing on the night of 14 to 15 July 2021.

everything up and tossed it away.' Almost the entire campsite was destroyed, all except for the new café.

Solidarity

'In the days after the flooding, about 50 to 60 people helped us. It was really exceptional. One came with a crane, the other with a tractor. And we were called by cooks who brought food. It

made it feel like all the problems solved themselves,' says Jacobs. 'It has changed the atmosphere in the surrounding area for good.'

Summer of 2022

Things are going well for Camping Eau-Zone now, over a year after the flooding. Jacobs says that they had many days in the high season on which they could not accept any new

campers. 'Not all the renovations have been completed, but in part thanks to all the help we got, we have already moved mountains. We have done a lot of renovations and everything looks neat and tidy. Some customers even ask us if we were affected by the flooding at all since everything looks so good. That is the best compliment you can get.'



Dear campsite owner or manager,

In many places, the 2022 camping year was marked by fully booked

campsites and travel-loving campers. The expectations from the start of the season had become a reality and even exceeded the expectations in some cases. After

two years, which were mainly about travel restrictions, this was excellent news for the camping industry.

Unfortunately, the season did not go flawlessly. Once again, mother nature showed her erratic side. After the flooding in Northwestern Europe last year, the South of France, in particular, suffered fierce forest fires this year. In any case, Southern Europe was extremely warm. Climate change is increasingly causing extreme weather conditions and campsites face the challenge of how to adapt without compromising their lovely locations in the countryside.

Another challenge is related to increasing prices, including for food and fuel, combined with the rising inflation. Later in this issue of the ACSI Times (pages 11-13) you can read about how experts

and campsite owners expect this to affect holiday behaviour. Without revealing it all, let me just say that the camping industry is extremely resilient. You'll read more about this resilience on pages 2-3, where it becomes clear that campsites are increasingly coming up with creative ways to deal with the problem of staff shortages.

It is precisely that creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and adaptability that ensures camping industry emerges stronger time and time again. Moreover, the number of camping enthusiasts continues to grow, and campsites have several advantages which distinguishes them from hotel chains and flying on holidays. The minimal ecological footprint a camping holiday leaves behind is certainly one of those points and it will play an important role in the future.

All this makes me look forward to the future with confidence. I am convinced that the camping industry has another great year ahead. Hopefully, you share this confidence and that you can use this issue of ACSI Times as a source of inspiration. Furthermore, I wish you a successful end to the 2022 camping year and, together with you, I look forward to a great 2023.

Ramon van Reine
ACSI CEO



Camping Op der Sauer

Camping Op der Sauer is situated on the banks of the River Sauer, in the cantonal capital of Diekirch. The campsite is in a stunning location in the valley and surrounded by green plateaus. Normally this location, at walking distance from the city, is one of the campsite's strong points. On 14 July 2021, it turned out to be a guarantee of misfortune. Campsite owner Sebastiaan Veldkamp saw disaster approaching at a rapid pace. 'Even today, we are still wrestling with the consequences. We are progressing with ups and downs, but we will not give up. We are making the best of it,' he explains.

Evacuation by the army

'It goes without saying that we had come out of a difficult period due to all the corona measures,' Veldkamp reflects. 'The spring low season actually went really well and on 13 July the campsite was reasonably full. We saw it all go wrong early in the morning

of 14 July,' he remembers. 'We started evacuating the campsite guests who were present while the water just kept on rising. Of course you don't know how high the water will get beforehand. The level rose to 5.63 metres during the night, which meant the whole campsite was under

water. At a certain point, we were trapped by water and the army had to come in to evacuate the last guests by boat.'

End of the season

The flooding caused major devastation, and damage and the end of the camping season in one fell swoop. 'Several caravans were washed away; mobile homes were destroyed and almost all facilities were unusable. The complete infrastructure of power supplies, internet and telephone went down,' Veldkamp summarises the damage. 'Plus the 18 tons of slush and several 30-cubic-metre containers of floating debris.' Experts estimate the damage to the tune of 350,000 euros. The campsite

received roughly €40,000 from an emergency fund. 'It meant we could start up the campsite again, but of course it's no way near enough to cover all the damage. We are still waiting for the rest of the money,' he says gloomily.

Ups and downs

A period of ups and downs followed for Camping Op der Sauer. 'In the first weeks after the flooding, friends and acquaintances gave us a lot of help. After that, it was mainly left to us, including three members of staff,' says Veldkamp. 'A week later, we opened one of the campsite fields, but it was not a success. There was mud everywhere and considerable damage. So we

decided to close the campsite on 1 September,' he states. 'We finished cleaning up six months later and 100 of the 270 pitches were supplied with electricity again. But we still don't have our mobile homes, the restaurant or the pool,' says Veldkamp.

'Naturally, we miss out on many camping guests because of that. And then there are the price increases which make it even more expensive to repair it all.' The future for Camping Op der Sauer is thus written in the stars, but Veldkamp is far from giving up. 'Every day we repair another bit and as such we are making the best of it!'



The river Sûre makes Camping Op der Sauer a beautiful place, but caused a lot of damage a year ago.



Circulation numbers continue to increase

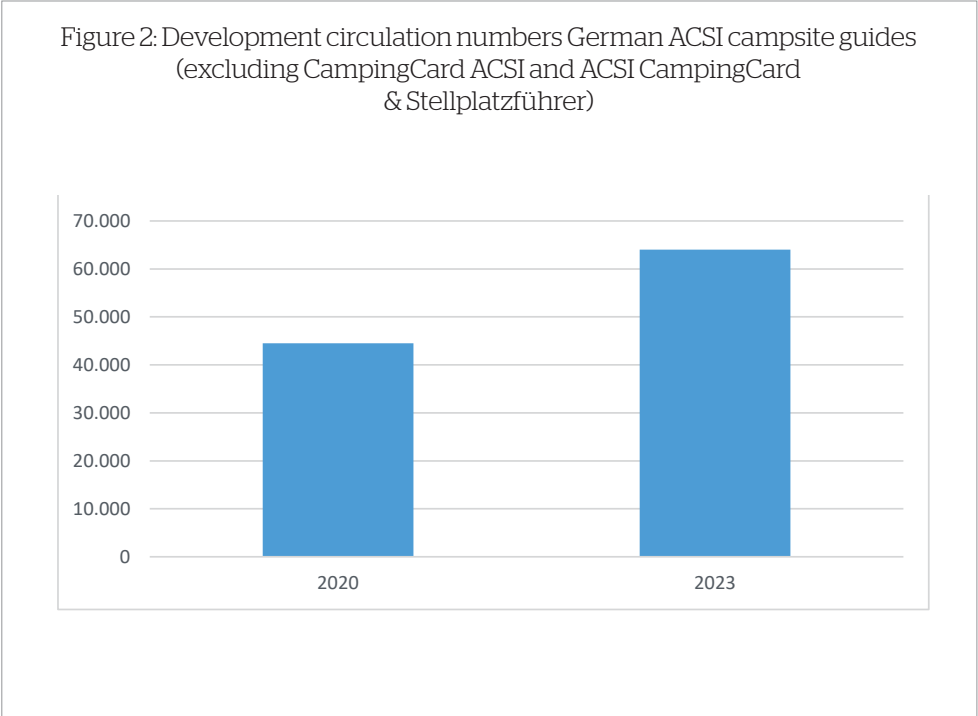
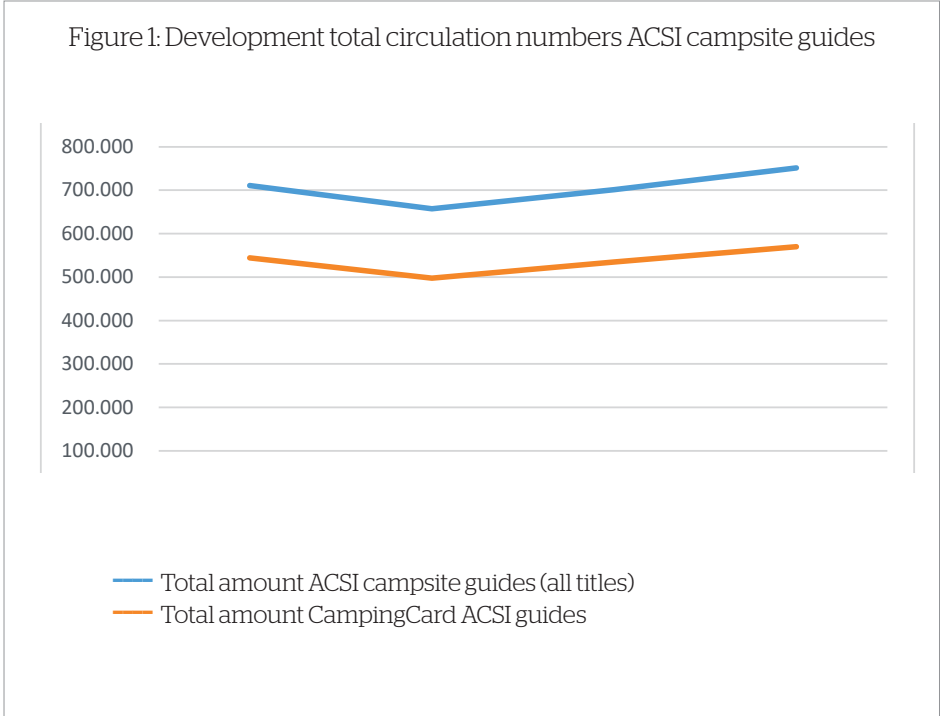
The ACSI campsite guides continue to be popular. Particularly in recent times, the number of campers has increased dramatically and this is reflected in the circulation statistics. The total circulation

numbers of all campsite guides published by ACSI increased by over 7%. Motorhome owners on the rise The ever-increasing number of motorhome owners is one

of the reasons for the circulation growth. The circulation of the ACSI CampingCard & Camperplaatsen guide has been growing for years, in 2023 it even grew by 23%. The circulation of the CampingCard ACSI is also

increasing and steadily growing to the level of 2020. > See Figure 1 Republished in 2022 The demand for camping guides soon turned out to be greater

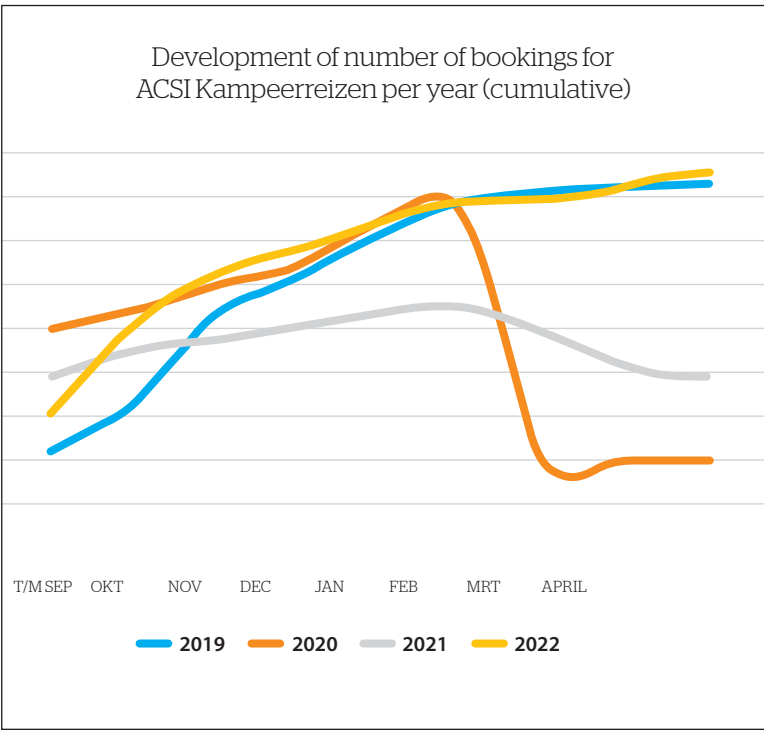
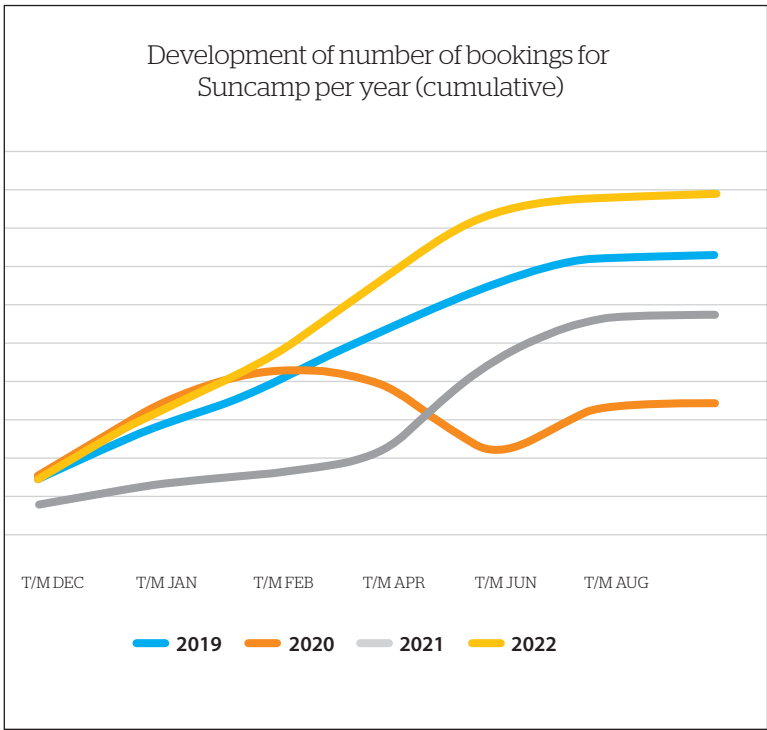
than the number available this year. That is why ACSI decided to republish a few titles of guides. Especially the German titles sold well as shown by the circulation figures for 2023. > See Chart 2



Suncamp has its best season ever

Better than 2019
Tour operator Suncamp had its best season ever in 2022. The pre-COVID year 2019 has been dethroned by this result. The season started early as travel restrictions were lifted. And because no new restrictions were imposed in the summer months, the season continued at a steady pace.

ACSI Kampeerreizen grew as well
In line with Suncamp, ACSI Kampeerreizen is also having a good year. The organised tours for Dutch and German campers are popular. The level here increased to the same level as in 2019.



Amount of bookings doubled

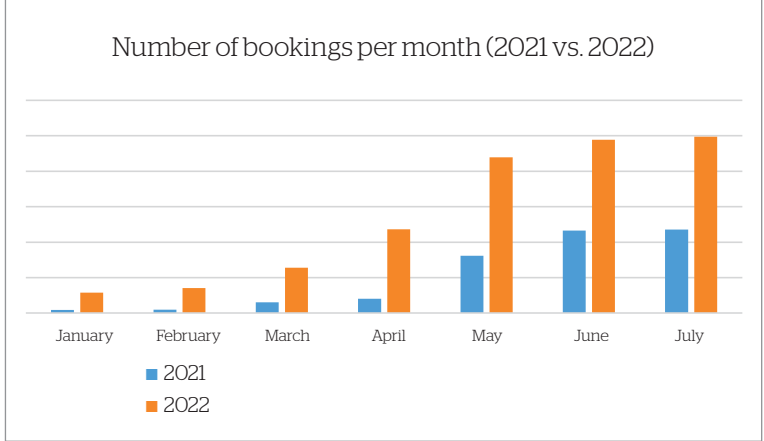
Holiday country France
The most recent figures of the booking platform ACSI camping, info Booking show that France is by far the most-booked holiday destination of 2022. 34% of all bookings were in France. Italy (20%), Germany (15%) and the Netherlands (9%) are also in demand. The total number of bookings is spectacularly higher than in 2021. The bookings are almost doubled every month. In the first six months of 2022 there

were 167% more bookings than in 2021 (see figure on the right).

The British are back
Dutch, Belgians and French customers especially booked their camping holiday to France. But the number of British customers is increasing and they often chose France as their holiday destination. Italy is mainly visited by German campers and Germany itself was particularly popular with its own population

and Dutch people. In any case, the trend that campers like to go away in their own country is still visible.

Please contact sales@acsi.eu or call +31 488 452055 for more information about the circulation figures, subsequent promotions or participating in ACSI camping, info Booking.



Europe's first master's course in campsite management

Master's course in Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management will start in late 2023

The demand for outdoor hospitality in Europe is growing incredibly fast. Camping tourism is currently in the midst of a professional revolution, which means that the camping industry is in need of specialised training programmes more than ever. Managing a campsite cannot be compared with running a hotel or B&B. The complexity and versatility of the camping industry require customisation, also in education. In order to train real specialists in this field, educational institutes in Breda, Gerona and Reijka will jointly start the Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management master's course.

Sustainable entrepreneurship
It will be the first European master's course in the field of sustainable campsite resort management.

The programme will pay great attention to the subjects of government, surroundings and environment. With this, the programme

meets the requirement for specifically trained managers and directors at an academic level. Various parties from the camping industry came together with universities and educational institutes from Breda in the Netherlands, Gerona in Spain, and Reijka in Croatia, to help shape the programme. The Erasmus+-programme of the European Union is co-financier of the programme, the training will, in the end, contribute to a better awareness of the role of sustainable entrepreneurship in the camping industry. This will help to further increase the general quality and competitiveness

of the complete industry.

Milestone for the industry
Ward Wijngaert is associated with the master's course as a member of the project team and a teacher. Together with the European partners involved, he worked on creating a framework for the competences, knowledge and skills of a campsite resort manager in the Campmaster project. Based on that framework, a curriculum and an organisational structure for a joint programme were developed.

Wijngaert believes that the European Union's official support

is of great importance for the camping industry. 'The fact that the European Union supports this master's course is a milestone for our industry and gives proper recognition of our profession. The camping industry is reaching its well-deserved academic level, just like other sectors that have a recognised master programme. This is a major step towards respecting the camping industry and treating it as an important industry in the tourism industry.'

International teaching programme

The Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management master's course is in English and is a full-time programme of two years. Theory and practice are combined during the programme, where the focus is on the strategic management of large-scale camping resorts. But the students will discover other aspects of camping life during their study as well (see framework). The study programme will be concluded with a traineeship. Wijngaert thinks that doing the traineeship in the last phase of the programme will increase the student's job opportunities. 'If, during the traineeship, the student and the company turn out to be a good match, the company can offer the student a contract and he or she can start working there straight away.'

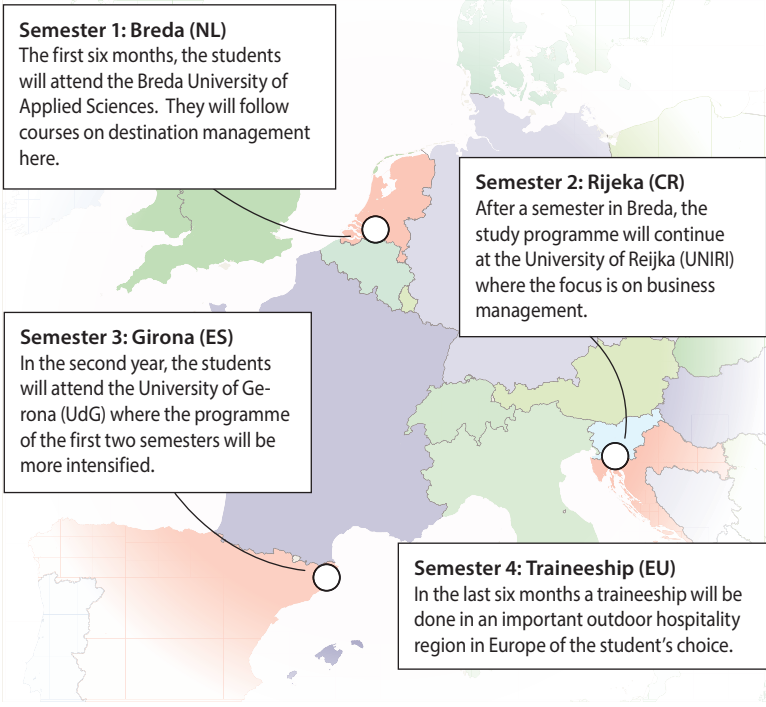
Admission and competences

The first group of students will start the training programme in the autumn of 2023 and it is open for registration from the autumn in 2022 onwards. In order to be eligible for admission, the student must have a bachelor's degree in a relevant subject area. This can, for example, include the field of tourism, hotel management, international business, economics, law, urban development, geography or finances. The master programme is a so-called multiple degree master programme. Graduates may be granted several titles because they do the programme at different universities, which each maintains its own title(s) (see framework).

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE CAMPING INDUSTRY

- 12% of all European overnight stays
- Worth around 12 billion euros
- Generates 400 million overnight stays
- Consists of 28,400 campsites

Source: *camping-master.eu*



Graduates of the Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management master's course have the right to carry three titles:

- Master of Arts (BUas)
- Master of Science (UdG)
- Master of Arts in Sustainable Outdoor Hospitality Management (UNIRI)

A few career examples after completing this study include:

- Marketing Manager at Landal GreenParks
- Human Resource Manager at CenterParks
- Concept Designer at OYO Vacation Homes
- Resort Landscape Designer at Pierres et Vacances
- Park Manager at a different international holiday park

On 29 September 2022, the study programme will be officially launched during the professional campsite congress GirocampingPRO. This can be followed online in English.

Please see campingsingirona.com/en/girocamping-pro/



The European partners involved during the most recent executive board meeting in Croatia.

Campers can cast their votes until the 15th of January 2023

The 2023 ACSI



After the successful first edition in 2022, the digital ballot boxes for the 2023 ACSI Awards will open on Thursday the 15th of September. Campers from all over Europe can vote for their favourite campsite in eight different categories until the 15th of January. The winners will be announced mid-May 2023. ACSI-CEO Ramon van Reine has officially opened the new edition of the awards and has some tips that want to campsites to increase their odds.

The fact that the set-up is largely the same as the set-up for the previous edition can be easily explained according to Van Reine. ‘We’re very happy with the first edition of the ACSI Awards. That’s why we don’t want to change the format too much. Moreover, it will ensure recognisability and uniformity if we organise it the same way this year. So campers can again visit eurocampings.eu/awards to put their favourite campsite in the limelight.

Van Reine explains how the voting process was shaped: ‘The camper can cast one vote

for each category. The campsite you have voted for in a certain category cannot be selected again later in a different category. This will make sure that campsites receive an award in the category in which they really excel.

Active approach
ACSI will approach campers actively to encourage them to cast their votes. ‘We reach millions of campers through our newsletters and websites, and our social media channels also generate a large reach. Last year, 50,000 votes were cast and we hope to reach the same number again this year’, Van Reine expresses his

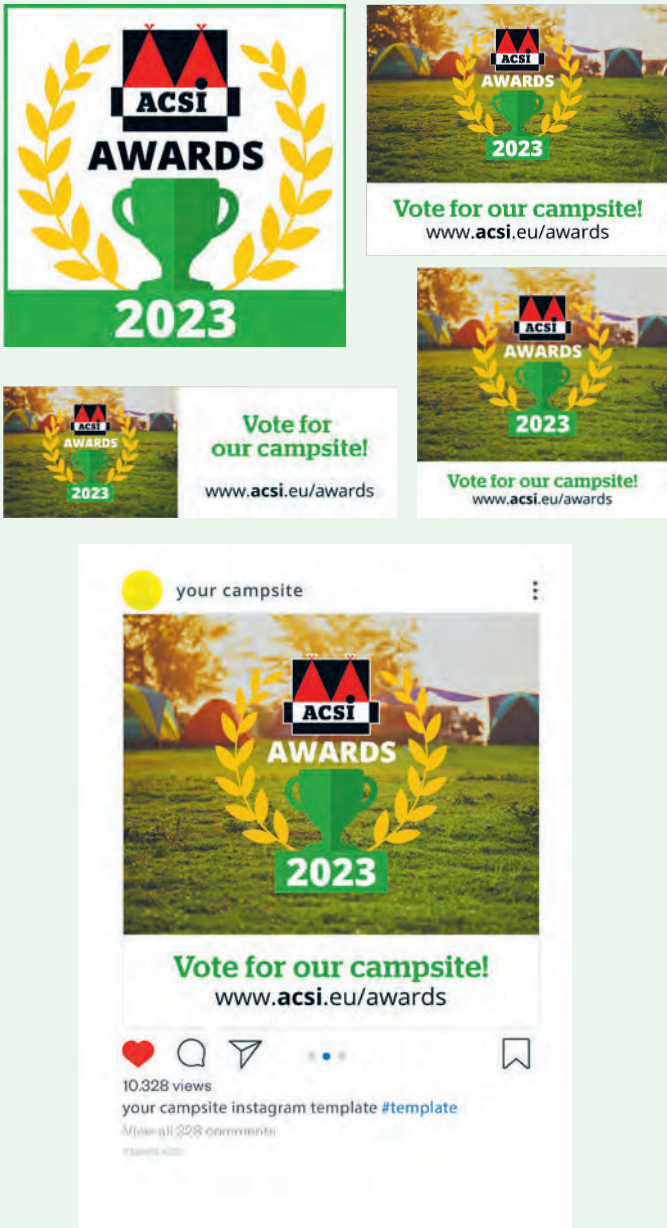
expectations. This does not mean that campsites do not have any influence on their odds themselves. ‘Campsites which actively search for votes can, of course, hugely increase their chances of winning an ACSI Award or get a honourable mention.

Promotion kit
Recently, ACSI sent the campsites the information they require in this respect. In this email, Van Reine explained which steps campsites can take. ‘A media kit has been developed especially for campsites. It contains useful tools, including banners, ready-made social posts and formats for press releases.’ The previous edition has proven that it pays off to do press releases. And you can, make a creative effort yourself. ‘Some campsites use our media kit to design their own media representations’, says Van Reine.

The media kit in pictures

All campsite owners received an email from ACSI, containing a link to the media kit. The media kit consists of images and texts that can be used on websites, social media channels and newsletters.

Find examples of some of the pictures below:



ACSI Award winners in the media

Some campsites spared no expenses at all and created a media event around the presentation of their ACSI Award or honourable mention, for example by inviting the (local) press or by recording the event. For example, by inviting the (local) press. Their approach created maximum exposure and generated a lot of free publicity for their campsite.



La Marina Resort convened a press conference to announce their award won in the category ‘Best campsite Spain’. The mayor of Elche, Carlos González, the regional secretary for tourism, Francesc Colomer, as well as the alderman for tourism, Carles Molina, joined in with campsite owner Patrick Le Metayer Deckx.



The ACSI Award for ‘Greatest little campsite Netherlands’ was presented to campsite Landgoed Het Geuzenbos. The presentation of the award could be watched live on RTV Drenthe, the local television station. ACSI inspector Hans Petiet presented the ACSI Award.

Awards are on

The value of profit

The fact that winning an ACSI Award - or an honourable mention - pays off was certainly proven last year. Some campsite owners seized the moment of the awarding ceremony to approach the (local) media. Some even arranged a complete television report for the ceremony. This brought in very valuable free publicity for the relevant campsites. And the ACSI Awards did not only attract attention in the media (see below). The ACSI websites and apps clearly indicate the special campsites with an icon. That way, visitors can immediately see that a campsite has won an ACSI award or received an honourable mention. To have a clear overall view of all winning campsites, the website even has a special integrated filter.

Awarding ceremony on location

The awards and certificates were mainly awarded by the inspectors. ‘They’re the ones who keep in close contact with the campsites. That’s why we want them to be involved in the presentation,’ says Van Reine when he explained the choice. In a few cases the ACSI CEO set out himself to present the awards. He did so, for example, at special events organised for Croatian and Slovenian campsites.

Visibly moved

‘In Slovenia, we organised an award ceremony in the Blejski grad, a beautiful castle located at the Lake of Bled’, Van Reine says. ‘We invited a great number of Slovenian campsite owners to this location for a lunch and an afternoon filled with informa-

tion. At the end of the afternoon, the ACSI Award winners were put in the spotlight. Their responses were wonderful, people were visibly moved when they were presented the award.

The award ceremony organised by ACSI in Croatia produced a similar scene. Van Reine went to the Wyndham Grand in Novi Vinodolski to attend this event. And here too, the presentation was accompanied by an afternoon filled with information.

ACSI will follow a similar protocol for the award ceremony in 2023. Again, most of the awards will be awarded by the inspectors, but Van Reine and Business Developer Frank Jacobs will do the visits in some countries.



ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine poses with some of the Croatian winners of an ACSI award or an honourable mention.

2023 ACSI Awards Categories

ACSI awards can be won in the following categories. For the first two categories, the total number of votes that the campsite has received in all categories is counted. For the remaining eight categories, the total number of votes in that specific category is counted.

-  **Best campsite**
Campsite that got the highest number of votes in one country.
-  **Greatest little campsite**
Small campsite (max. 50 touring pitches) that allows you to enjoy nature in peace and quiet.
-  **Nicest campsite for children**
Children have the time of their lives at this campsite because of the playing facilities and fantastic animation.
-  **Most dog-friendly campsite**
Loyal furry friends are more than welcome at this campsite. Dogs also deserve a holiday.
-  **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 location for a campsite**
This campsite is located at an amazing spot, near a forest, water, city or mountains. It has a perfect location.
-  **Most sports-loving campsite**
Football, diving, tennis or fitness: sports freaks can indulge themselves at this campsite.
-  **Best campsite restaurant**
A campsite with a restaurant where you can dine well every evening. The food is delicious, and the service is excellent.
-  **Best motorhome pitches**
This campsite has everything a motorhome owner could need. The best pitches and all amenities are nearby.
-  **Campsite with the best toilet facilities**
The toilet facilities at this campsite really stand out, they are clean and modern.



ACSI inspectors Gerard and Ans van Duyn went to the Scottish campsite Linnhe Lochside Holidays to award the ACSI Award for ‘Best campsite Great Britain’. When they were there, they bought traditional Scottish clothing so that Gerard could present the award in style. This was not only highly appreciated, the photos were also published in local media.



Camping Tennessee received the ACSI Award for ‘Campsite with the best location Germany’. The mayor of the municipality of Krün, Thomas Schwarzenberger, attended the award ceremony.

A passion for camping

Three winners of the ACSI Camping Personality Award 2022 have been selected

This year, ACSI introduced the ACSI Awards. This prestigious award was awarded to 120 campsites in total, but some people were put in the spotlight. Ten individuals who were of great value or performed extraordinarily well in the camping industry received an ACSI Camping Personality Award. ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine set off to congratulate the first three winners in person and thanked them for their involvement, efforts, energy and social commitment to the camping world.

The following three people received an ACSI Camping Personality Award 2022:



Siegfried Heinze
Jerko Sladoljev
Lidija Koren

The other winners will be announced in the course of this year. Don't miss out and follow on [linkedin.com/company/acsi-publishing](https://www.linkedin.com/company/acsi-publishing).

Siegfried Heinze

Siegfried Heinze, who was born in Germany, went to Spain after he finished studying in England in 1960. He spent a few months in Alicante and Madrid, where he received a press license required for foreigners from the then Ministry of Information and Tourism. From 1961, he started organising contacts between Spanish campsite owners and other European campsites. His company Heinze Latzke Tourism Services, which is now established in Barcelona and in Paris (under the name of ICCS) has represented numerous European car, tourist and campsite clubs from Spain, Portugal and France for over fifty years.

Career full of recognition

In his long career, Heinze received various awards. His list of awards includes the Medal of Tourist Merit (1968), the Medal of Tourism of Catalonia (1983) and the Medal of Honour of Tourism of Catalonia (2003). Heinze was also a member of the influential Spanish Tourist Board, the Institute of Directors, the Institute of Tourism in

London and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany and France. His wife Louise W. van Kesteren Leeners, who died at the start of 2020, accompanied him during the largest part of his professional career and was the cornerstone of the international team of Heinze Latzke Tourism Services for many decades.

Making campsites visible

Heinze was particularly important for the campsite branch in Spain and France. With his company he helped campsites to gain insight into how to approach the German market among others with promotion and marketing. These days, Servicios Turísticos Heinze Latzke is the direct link to key campsite organisations and campsite associations in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Spain. Servicios Turísticos Heinze Latzke reaches many people internationally with its broad range of both printed and digital advertising media.

Jerko Sladoljev

Camping lovers have recognised the potential of exceptionally beautiful Croatia since camping started in Europe. Jerko Sladoljev is definitely one of them. All his life he has worked on the promotion of campsites and camping in Croatia. Currently, Sladoljev is Executive Manager of Top camping Croatia, consisting of as many as 56 member campsites.

Founder in wartime

During the Balkan war in the 90s, Sladoljev founded the Kamping Udruženje Hrvatske/Croatian Camping Union (KUH/CCU). Croatian campsites are now more prominent on the map thanks to this initiative. The KUH/CCU is now the largest association in the Croatian camping industry.

Key conversation partners

The organisation represents the interests of both large and small campsites and plays an important role in providing information. Representing the campsites, they sit around the table and exercise influence on national and local political organisations.



Sladoljev was unable to receive the ACSI Camping Personality Award in person because his new book was launched at the same time. That is why the award was presented to his daughter Romana Sladoljev Varžić, managing director of Top camping Croatia.

They cover over 90% of the total number of campsites in Croatia, which makes them an influential conversation partner.

Author and spokesperson

Sladoljev is also the founder of Top camping Croatia, a partnership between 56 Croatian top campsites. Furthermore, Sladoljev wrote several books and articles about campsite tourism. He published, for example, books

about the history and development of (nudist) campsites and resorts. And recently, Sladoljev launched a book about nature conservation and ecological awareness in the light of camping tourism. Sladoljev will speak at the F.I.C.C. World Congress in the French Verrières-Le-Buisson (27 and 28 October 2022) this autumn about the effect of digitisation and sustainability on camping tourism.



In addition to her ACSI Camping Personality Award, Koren also received the ACSI Award for best bike and hike campsite in Slovenia.

Lidija Koren

Lidija Koren is the owner of Eco-Camping & Chalets Koren, located in the northwest of Slovenia at the fairy-tale Soča river. She has also been the president of the Slovenian Campsite Federation. In this role, she has dedicated herself to the interests of all campsites in Slovenia. This makes Koren a familiar face at international (camping) fairs, where she brings camping holidays in her home country to the attention of campers and speaks with many of them.

Sustainability first

In 2021, Koren was also nominated for another award, namely the award for Outstanding contribution to the development of Slovenian tourism. A well-deserved nomination, because her campsite has become exemplary and leading for other campsites in Slovenia thanks to her devotion to sustainability.

SPARE Project

Koren is, for example, involved in the SPARE Project. SPARE here stands for Strategic Planning

for Alpine River Ecosystems. The cooperation project aims to have river protection go hand in hand with area development. In consultation with the local population, they are looking for ways to ensure that the area can be developed as a tourist destination without compromising the livability of the area, both for human inhabitants and for animals and plants.

European Ecolabel

The fact that Koren feels very strongly about environmental-friendliness and sustainability is well reflected on Eco-Camping & Chalets Koren. In 2011, the campsite was the first Slovenian campsite to meet the conditions required for obtaining the European Ecolabel for environmental-friendly campsites. Campers are in the right place at this campsite when it comes to sustainable tourism. Koren's son Jakob took over the management of the campsite last year. He followed in his mother's footsteps and manages the campsite with the same enthusiasm and based on the same principles as Koren.



During a recent visit to Barcelona, ACSI-CEO Ramon van Reine and <title of Frank> Frank Jacobs awarded the award in person.

‘People consider a holiday almost a basic need’

Industry specialist Jos Klerx and ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine look ahead to 2023

2022 turned out to be a turbulent year. There are many things happening in Europe and this has an effect on consumer behaviour. But the camping industry is still having a good season. Can the same be expected for 2023? Jos Klerx, Industry Specialist Catering, Recreation and Tourism with the Dutch Rabobank, and ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine look at the prospects for the new camping season.



Jos Klerx

Jos Klerx is Industry Specialist Catering, Recreation and Tourism at Rabobank, a Dutch cooperative bank. Klerx monitors all trends and developments within the industries very closely and is always focused on leisure economy.

Two important factors

Klerx starts off with two factors that will more than likely play a major role next year. ‘First of all, the Ukrainian war and the effect it has on confidence in the economy. And secondly, the inflation cannot be considered separate from the war. As a result, customers are facing a purchasing power gap that will influence the way people go on holiday and what choices they will make for their holiday.’

COVID, fuel prices and sustainable trips

Klerx does not expect COVID-19 to have an effect on the summer season of 2023, provided that no new alarming variant will appear. Nor does the effect of the increasing fuel prices seem to be too bad. ‘But it’s hard to estimate this. Consumers may still decide not to go far from home next year after all, but we didn’t see this

happening this year.’ Van Reine sees a similar picture: ‘Campers are as a matter of fact very enthusiastic that they’re able to travel abroad again without too many restrictions. They won’t be held back by more expensive fuel. Moreover, the fuel prices in Europe vary greatly and one to two hundred euros extra will not make a difference in the total holiday budget.’ Nor does Klerx expect that people will opt for a more sustainable means of transport. ‘Despite the fact that we would like it. Maybe people will travel by car rather than by plane because of downtrading, but it all depends on the location.’

Downtrading

Other matters also have an important effect on campers’ holiday intentions. ‘As soon as purchasing power decreases, a downward trend will set in. It’s in fact no different than



According to Klerx, campsites are quite immune to major economic fluctuations and can therefore prepare for a good year 2023.

consumers starting to look for a cheaper alternative. It would not surprise me if the same thing happened in regards to holidays’, Klerx expects. In such cases, campers may choose to go on holiday less frequently or alternatively to stay closer to home. ‘And also the Ukrainian war and climate effects such as forest fires and floods may make people less eager to go away.’

A perfect storm

The purchasing power effects are an accumulation of different issues that Klerx calls a perfect storm. ‘Among other things it has to do with the rising gas prices. This had already started before the Ukrainian war because the

overall economy grew quicker after COVID-19 and the demand for raw materials increased more rapidly than expected. This effect was increased by the war. Together with staff shortages and the rising prices of raw materials it is causing a higher inflation rate.’

Camping as a basic need

It means, for example, that people have to pay higher energy costs. A family might have to pay up to €300 more per month more for their energy bill, which is money that cannot be spent on something else. But, according to Klerx, it doesn’t mean that consumers want to miss out on their holiday. ‘The advantage of campsites is that they are relatively immune to large economic fluctuations. The perspective for 2023 may be a little less, but it is still good. People will continue to go on holiday. They almost consider it a basic need, as an acquired right. It is expected that 2023 will be a good year for campsites.’

Flexible and for every budget

Van Reine agrees with him: ‘These days, holidaymakers more frequently choose campsites as a holiday destination. The wide selection of camping gear and campsites make camping an option for every budget.’ It is often cheaper to travel by your own transport than by plane. Furthermore, a camper is flexible as they bring their ‘holiday home’ with them in the shape of a pop up camper, tent, caravan or mobile home. That is why many campers still drive to the campsite on the off chance. If the

weather is not good or if you have your eye on a different destination, it will be easy to look for another campsite.

New campers

Van Reine expects that camping will also be popular among holidaymakers in 2023. ‘The number of campers has explosively grown over the past COVID years. Moreover, many people bought new camping gear. Something you don’t normally do for just one year. We can easily assume that all those people who bought a new caravan or mobile home will continue to use it for many years. Due to the current waiting times in the caravan and mobile home industry, there is actually still a big group of campers that hasn’t received their new camping gear yet.’

Campsite close to home

Van Reine believes that international tourism has no reason to be concerned and that camping close to home has been rediscovered, partly thanks to the COVID pandemic. ‘Increasingly more people have found the benefits of camping close to home. It doesn’t cost much, you’re flexible, travel expenses are low, and you’re away for a few days. It is also ideal for an additional holiday’, he says.

Klerx and Van Reine forecast that 2023 will be a good year for the camping sector. You can read the views of some European campsite chains on this on pages 12 and 13 of the ACSI Times. Together with them, ACSI also looks upon the current and the next camping season.



Camping remains incredibly popular, which was evident at the Caravan Salon trade fair in Düsseldorf.

Campsite chains looking towards 2023

‘We’re expecting even more guests than in 2022’

Following industry specialist Jos Klerx and ACSI CEO Ramon van Reine (page 11), two European campsite chains are also considering the situation in the industry. How did the current camping season go and can they identify with the description given in the previous article about expectations for 2023? ACSI spoke about this with Johan Söör, CEO of Scandinavian First Camp, and Véronique Decamps, director of French Sites et Paysages.



Review of 2022

‘It has already been a great season for us’, the CEO of First Camp, Johan Söör said. ‘In July of this year - our peak month - the profits were 16% higher than in 2021 and 17% higher than in 2019. The big difference with last year is that foreign guests have started to come back.’ First Camp has also focused on digitisation in the past period. ‘The implementation of our new income management system in 2021, based on Artificial Intelligence, worked out well.’ This system originates from a Swedish-British start-up which First Camp uses to map out what campers require and need. They now know in advance what campers require.

Expectations for 2023

‘COVID measures have been lifted in most countries and the popularity of camping has strongly increased. So we are expecting a good year’, says Söör optimistically. He already noted a growing interest in camping before the COVID pandemic and sees that the pandemic has only accelerat-

ed this. ‘I’m expecting even more visitors in 2023, also as a result of our continuous investments in an improved product and digital sales. In Scandinavia, most campers book online but 65% of our bookings still come in within four weeks before departure.’

The challenges

Just like other campsites and campsite chains, First Camp is struggling with a staff shortage. ‘It’s a great challenge to us. At some campsites, we’ve solved this problem by hiring temporary staff from abroad.’ Digitisation also plays a supporting role here. ‘We’re working on the digitisation of everything at two campsites. Think of check-in poles, a cottage that opens automatically, the option to order shopping online and cameras. But this doesn’t solve everything.’

Camper demands, for example, stay high and the rules remain strict. ‘Campers book online much more often and have higher expectations of the campsite. At the same time, the rules laid



Campsite chain First Camp owns 61 campsites in Scandinavia. Among them is First Camp Bogense City-Fyn, located in Southern Jutland in Denmark.

down by the government and municipalities are becoming increasingly stricter’, according to Söör’s experience. He notices that campsites are more and more interested in becoming a member of a campsite chain. ‘This is becoming more important and has been happening in large parts of Europe for a longer time. I believe that we will notice much more action in this respect in the coming years.’ First Camp also wants to continue to grow and is looking beyond Sweden, Denmark and Norway. ‘We’re looking to buy or rent campsites. We find it important that the number of temporary pitches stay the same and are not changed into rental accommodation.’

Outside influences

Climate change also affects the Scandinavian campsite chain. ‘There are more and more campers in Scandinavia that think it is too hot in Southern Europe because of the rising temperatures and more hot days.’ Meanwhile, the demand for charging stations for electric vehicles has started to increase too and First Camp has made a start with installing charging poles. Whether the effects of the higher fuel prices will influence the new camping season is hard to say according to Söör. ‘It can both have a positive and a negative effect. Foreign guests might stay closer to home. But on the other hand, we have 61 campsites throughout Scandinavia. This is a great opportunity for Scandinavian people to go on holiday close to home.’ Söör expects that the inflation

will have an effect of the behaviour of campers too. ‘There were already signs this summer of our guests spending a little less on food, beverages and activities at the campsite. Moreover, it is still too early to know how the inflation will influence the summer of 2023. But I don’t think we need to be concerned about asking higher prices for the great products we offer our guests.’

Finally, the war in Ukraine might have an effect on the season of 2023. ‘The war in Ukraine is tragic in many different ways. But I think that the effects on the camping industry will be limited. Maybe people would actually prefer to stay closer to home or they will avoid air traffic all together. All this is beneficial to our industry when compared with other travel industries’, says Söör in the end.



First Camp Åhus-Kristianstad is partly hidden in a pine forest in the southern Swedish Skåne.



More and more campers. It is a trend that First Camp is also seeing and one of the reasons to continue to focus on free touring pitches.



Johan Söör
Johan Söör is CEO of First Camp, the largest campsite chain of Scandinavia. In addition, he is the chair of the Board of Directors of Jesperhus Feriepark.



The French camping chain Sites et Paysages offers campers a holiday in contact with nature.

Review of 2022

Véronique Decamps, director of Sites et Paysages, also looks back at the satisfactory season of 2022. ‘This year we mainly fulfilled the new requirements of campers. They attach great importance to holidays connected to nature, meaningful trips and experiencing the region.’ In a market that is increasingly dominated by rental accommodation, Sites et Paysages also keeps focusing on the ‘standard’ pitches. On average, 70% of Sites et Paysages campsite’s pitches are this type and this is what makes the chain more and more distinctive from its competitors.

Decamps has noticed that European campers value this policy. ‘After two years of COVID, they are returning to our campsites again en masse. In May and June, we already received many Dutch and Germans campers, and some British customers as well.. We had a slow start in July, but in general we see a sales increase of 26% compared with 2021 in the part with the accommodations and as much as 54% in the part with regular camping pitches.

The COVID pandemic has caused changes to Sites et Paysages. This was needed to maintain the fine score of 91% satisfied campers. After all, their requirements have also changed in the past period. Except for the introduction of a group of new campers – mostly motorhome owners – and the increasingly growing importance of flexible booking conditions, Decamps noticed two other surprising trends.

‘It sounds kind of paradoxical, but the demand for good WiFi and air conditioning has increased enormously. Campers come here to go back to nature, but they don’t seem to be able to do so without good WiFi. The WiFi coverage not being optimal is the main point of dissatisfaction. The same counts for our facilities. Campers choose us because of our conscious way of dealing with the environment. But because of the high temperatures, many of them choose a premium accommodation with air conditioning. That is why we as a chain have to look for a compromise between the holiday the customer was looking for when

booking and the actual requirements when on site.’

Expectations for 2023

Decamps thinks the season of 2023 will be positive. ‘All signs are positive. The camping industry has never profited before from such positive promotion. According to a study by the French ADN Tourism (the National Federation of Institutional Tourist Organisations) 61% of the French want to “break away from daily life and connect with nature”. That is exactly what we have promised for more than 40 years with our unique offer.’ That is the reason why Sites et Paysages follows the trend of slow tourism with its “Origine, Vert Demail” programme. It gives customers a unique insight into local culture, far away from today’s standard tourism.

Outside influences

Decamps also expects that outside influences will play an important role during the next camping season. ‘The high temperatures and forest fires will surely have an impact. Guests will be more interested in cooler destinations, campsites at the water or accommodations with air conditioning. On the other hand, we should consider water management and fire hazards so that we can be as autonomously and efficiently as possible.’

Just like at First Camp, they are noticing an increasing demand for charging stations and facilities for electric vehicles. That is why the chain started implementing them at a few trial campsites. The demand will only increase in the coming years, so it will remain an important point of development. Decamps has also noticed the effect of rising fuel prices: ‘There’s a large number of campers that are camping locally.



Véronique Decamps
Véronique Decamps has been director of campsite chain Sites et Paysages for over ten years.

They don’t travel as far, but they go more often. Mainly to sustainable ‘green’ family and nature campsites in rural areas. In this way, they can perfectly enjoy the environment and nature.’

And then there is the staff shortage. That is also one of the challenges that Sites et Paysages is facing for 2023. ‘Our campsites already had problems with staff recruitment in the past two seasons, but 2022 was a very difficult season all together for finding enough staff and staff management. It concerns all functions, whether they are for catering, cleaning, entertainment or the reception. Last year, we already made some investments but we must make some changes if we want to have enough staff next year so that our customers

are guaranteed the required quality.’ Another challenge faced is the lack of products and materials. ‘It has consequences for business operations. No matter whether it concerns catering, prices that differ from week to week, or the daily management of mattresses arriving too late or products not being available.’

But Decamps is still positive about the challenges. The increasing inflation does not yet cause panic for Sites et Paysages. ‘The camping sector is well able to anticipate this problem. Turning back to simplicity is one of our greatest powers and we see that people need this more and more. But guests at our campsites can at the same time still use all types of facilities and services.’



Sites et Paysages also sees an increase in the demand for electric vehicle facilities.



Around 70% of a Sites et Paysages campsite consists of motorhome pitches.



Looking towards the future with confidence: “All signs are positive.”

A journey through the history of camping

Many European campsites have been around for dozens of years through the generations. ACSI spoke with four European campsites about their rich history.

Kongshøj Strandcamping, Denmark

From farm to campsite

Kongshøj Strandcamping was founded by Jørgen and Rita Sønderby in the 1960s. At that time, the family ran a farm with cows and pigs alongside the campsite. The farm has since been shut down but the friendly, family atmosphere still remains.

In 1961, a passer-by called at the Sønderby family's farm asking if he could pitch his tent and spend the night in one of the farm's

fields. At that time, there was an increasing demand for places to spend the night and several campsites were opened in the area. That gave Jørgen and Rita the idea to open a campsite as well. The Sønderby family plot is at a stunning location by the sea on the Danish island of Funen. The location is also perfect for tourists who are travelling on to Sweden. After the opening of Kongshøj Strandcamping, it did not take

long before many guests from Denmark and other European countries were pitching their tent in the fields around the farm. The focus increasingly shifted from the farm to running the campsite. The last cows and pigs were eventually sold in 1978, and the family focused entirely on the campsite which was doing well by then. Besides camping pitches, they also built chalets through the years. A spacious cottage has been added, which is suitable for large groups of up to 26 people.

Internet plays a major role

One of the biggest changes compared to before is the marketing method. In the past, you only had to be included in a campsite guide, but the internet and social media also play a big role nowadays. Fortunately, some things have not changed. After 60 years, service and hospitality are still prioritised. And the owners spend a lot of time and energy organising group activities at the campsite. One of the most popular activities in the weekly 'snobrød' evening, when



'During the weekly snobrød evenings, people of all ages meet each other and enjoy a lovely evening together around the campfire'

bread is twisted over a stick and baked over an open fire. During this evening, people of all ages meet each other and enjoy a lovely evening together around the campfire.

'Hygge' at the campsite

The former farm is still the central feature of the family-friendly

campsite. There are three animal pastures with horses, sheep, goats and rabbits, among others. Nowadays, son Bent Sønderby and his wife Susanne run the campsite. Bent and Susanne want to convey the genuine cosy 'hygge feeling' to their guests. Jørgen and Rita's grandson is now also fully active in the business.



Aurdal Fjordcamping og Hytter, Norway

Camping in the Norwegian countryside for almost 25 years

Aurdal Fjordcamping og Hytter originates from 1998. Friends Knut Ivar Sundet and Jan Opheim decided to start a campsite together. Situated right by the Aurlandsfjord, it is a paradise for nature lovers.

They started up a campsite together on the land where Knut's family once had a farm. It did not take long for campers to become interested, mainly for pitches

for the entire year. The campsite quickly became a success. Neighbours and the local community were pleased with the arrival of Aurdal Fjordcamping og Hytter, because it kickstarted tourism in the region.

In the early years, the majority of campsite visitors were Norwegian campers. As the campsite grew, so did the numbers of foreign tourists. Nowadays, many international guests come from Germany,

The Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, but tourists from Southern and Eastern Europe have also found their way here.

Camping is now more luxurious

When Knut and Jan think back to when they started the campsite, they notice major differences to now. Camping in 1998 was not as luxurious as it is now. Guests have increasingly higher demands and expectations regarding the quality of the facilities. We can see massive developments in that respect to which the campsite has responded well to. In 2018, they added four new hire apartments and a new and modern toilet and washing block in 2019. In 2018, Knut and Jan also added new 24-hour pitches for motorhomes and caravans and this area was expanded further in 2021.

'The local community was pleased with the arrival of our campsite'

The following generation is standing by

The secret of Aurdal Fjordcamping og Hytter's success? Hosts Knut and Jan always welcome their guests with a smile



and they want holidaymakers to leave with good memories of their campsite. That hospitality will soon be passed on to the next

generation. Knut and Jan hope that the campsite will stay in their families for a long time.





Camping Mühle Kaprun, Austria

Traditions with a modern twist

Ramolds-Mühle in Kaprun has been the paragon of hospitality for generations. The hotel came into the Nindl family's possession almost 95 years ago. A campsite was added later. The past traditions are still visible at the current Camping Mühle Kaprun

Jakob and Maria Nindl bought the 'Mühle' in 1929 and took over the associated clientele. This hotel, with traditional Austrian decor, already attracted many visitors from the wider area at the time. Jakob and Maria's son, Johann, came to Kaprun in 1930 and contributed to the hotel's success. He married Emmerentia in 1947 and they had four children together, one of whom was Gottfried. Together with his wife Monika, Gottfried took over the hotel in 1986, and they are still the proud owners to this day.

Idyllic camping

Besides the hotel, the Nindl family also owned a piece of agricultural land. After the increasing

demand for camping pitches in the region, the family decided to establish a campsite here in 1982.

Camping Mühle Kaprun has two camping fields. One of the fields is still used as agricultural land in the winter months. That makes camping at the campsite idyllic. It feels like a green oasis where you can still taste the atmosphere of the former country life. You do not have to reserve a pitch and you can pick your own spot.

'At the campsite, you can still taste the atmosphere of the former country life'

The campsite has been modernised

Camping in 2022 differs compared to before. What Gottfried notices above all is the increasing numbers of caravans and motorhomes. In the initial years, about 80% of the campers arrived with a tent and that is only about

20% now. The camping grounds have been modernised considerably throughout the years. Facilities such as electricity and water have been installed and there are several comfort pitches now. The toilet and washing block is due for another renovation soon.

For typical Austrian dishes, today's guests can go to the restaurant in the adjacent hotel. Tradition and hospitality are priorities for the Nindl family and they hope guests will be able to enjoy the 'Mühle' for many years to come.





Camping Los Escullos, Spain

Camping sustainably in a nature park

Camping Los Escullos in Southern Spain is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Director Patricia Fernandez explains how the campsite started in 1992 to offer a place for overnights stays to visitors to the Cabo de Gata Natural Park. From the start, the focus was on comfort combined with attention to nature.

When the campsite opened in 1992 and the last builders had just left, guests were already queuing up to get inside. The

reception, campsite shop and restaurant weren't even completed at the time. So, in the beginning they improvised with a prefab building that served as the reception and a bar that was also used as a restaurant.

'At the opening, guests were already queuing up'

By now, everything is well organised and the facilities include

a sauna, gym and tennis court. In the summer, campsite guests and local residents can enjoy the concerts and performances under the stars.

Camping in a nature park

The campsite is situated in the Andalusian Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park, a desert-like area with unique flora and fauna and lovely beaches. Wild camping was and is not allowed in this natural park and so more options for overnight stays for visitors were required.



In 1992, permission was granted for five campsites in the nature park. One campsite existed already and the other four had to be constructed. Camping Los Escullos was the first of the four. The construction work raised some eyebrows in the surrounding area because many people did not understand that this was allowed in the nature park. But there were also positive reactions because the new campsites would ensure the stream of campers in the region would be more regulated. Indeed, at the time it was chaotic and busy at the region's only campsite.

Sustainability and glamping

At Los Escullos, sustainability always goes hand in hand with comfort for the guests. The

ecological approach started small, with a few solar panels to heat the pool. By now the campsite has a water purification system, sustainable toilet and washing facilities, kitchens with water-saving systems, and sustainable bungalows and glamping accommodation. In the future, Patricia also wants to install charging stations for electric vehicles.

Popular campsite

The guests appreciate the combination of comfort, countryside and sustainability. The campsite attracts many holidaymakers from Spain and France and winter visitors from other regions. At the 2022 ACSI Awards, the campsite was even listed in the top 50 most popular campsites.



Colophon

Publication

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Advertising sales: ACSI Sales Department | **Image editor:** Maurice van Meteren | **Design:** Ton Oppers | **Layout:** Peter Dellepoort, Rein Driessens

Printing support: Ronnie Witjes | **Print:** Rodi Rotatiedruk



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