

(0870-160 8080)

there is no difference from the one in London W12. I suggest that in future

A spokesman for easyRentacar initially insisted

likes mysterious charges on their credit cards. We strongly advise people to attend inspections."

or send an e-mail to readerstip@tntimes.co.uk. If your tip is published, you will win the Lonely Planet guidebook and phrasebook of your choice.

DOMINIC HARCOURT-WEBSTER



The Karo tribes of Ethiopia are expert body painters

MOST travellers can recognise a couple of destinations on any itinerary, but in the case of Arba Minch, Murulle, Turmi, Mago and Jinka I was stumped; only the arrival airport of Addis Ababa gave the clue. They're destinations offered by Journeys by Design's (01273 623790) new tailor-made expeditions to southern Ethiopia, which is almost unexplored by western visitors.

"It's Africa at its rawest and wildest, and it's not for the faint-hearted," says managing director Will Jones, who lived there for eight years. On a 13-day journey following the Rift Valley lakes south into the lower Omo basin, you'll see a chain of sparkling lakes, abundant bird life, fish and crocodiles, plus a kaleidoscope of cultures, he promises.

The area is peopled with remote tribes, and meeting them, visiting their markets and watching their dances plays a major part in the holiday. Former hippo hunters, the Ganjuli and Guji, ply the water around lakes Chamo and Abaya in high-prowed boats similar to those depicted on the tombs of ancient pharaohs. Further south, the Konso base their cults around the breeding and veneration of serpents, and the Karo tribes are expert body painters. Hamar women, meanwhile, wear their hair in dense ringlets, topped with head-dresses of aluminium.

The cost of the tour is £1,787 for each of four, £2,634 for each of two which covers all transport, portage, meals, accommodation in the Sheraton at Addis Ababa, and camps and lodges en route. Flights are not included but Design will organise those on request.



DEPARTURES

Jill Crawshaw has the best holiday suggestions

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Hands-on look at tribal art

£54.50 per child, and the Southern California 5-in-7 day Rail Pass (five days of travel within seven days) which would take you to San Diego, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo for £79 per adult, £39.50 per child. For reservations call United Vacations (0870-606 2222).

camp on the journey. The cost of £2,750 includes flights, accommodation and activities and a contribution towards the work of the charity. Further information from 020-7432 8008.

Island quest

NO CHANCE of spotting the