

the **Saturday**

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AS if Lego wasn't good enough on its own, Legoland Windsor have recruited not one but FOUR superheroes.

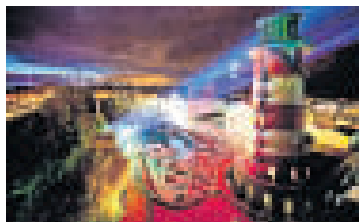
Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman and Catwoman will all be there July 28-29.

And the first 25 kids who arrive each day in their own

superhero costumes will get in free. In the games area, guests will get the chance to play the new Lego Batman 2: DC Super Heroes game.

There will also be a giant 3D floor painting featuring Batman and Superman.

See legoland.co.uk for more information.



IT'S a little-known gem of a theme park but Germany's Europa Park opened a new hotel this week.

The nautically-themed Hotel Bell Rock, left, is the latest four-star resort to open at the park near the French and Swiss border.

Europa Park is Germany's largest theme park – originally set

up as a way of demonstrating the rides the owners built. But it now features a host of brilliant rides including the new Wodan – a high-speed wooden roller coaster.

The new hotel was opened by Roger Moore. Families will love the rooms – with boats instead of bunks for the kids.

See europapark.com.

HOT SPOT

IT'S 42°C in Las Vegas. Three nights' room-only at the three-star Stratosphere hotel starts from £579 per person, including flights from Heathrow on September 10. Find out more at travelcitydirect.com or call 0844 557 6965.

HOT SPOT

IT'S 36°C in the Algarve. Seven nights' self-catering at the three-star Quinta Do Paraíso is from £159 per person, with flights from regional airports from October to March. See teletextholidays.co.uk or call 0844 767 3521.

Edited by
LISA MINOT



travel

3 pages
of holidays

LATES

... **ROMANTIC ROME:** Three nights' B&B at the three-star Comfort Suites is from £223, including flights from Heathrow on July 27. See skyscanner.net/offers.

... **MAJESTIC MAJORCA:** Seven nights' self-catering at the three-star Hil Bouganvilla Park Hotel in Sa Coma is from £1,542 for a family of four, including flights from Gatwick on August 14. See airtours.co.uk or call 0844 871 6636.

... **YOU CAN IN THE YUCATAN:** Seven nights' all-inclusive at the four-star Riu Yucatan in Mexico is from £1,149, including flights from East Midlands on August 5. See firstchoice.co.uk or call 0871 200 7799.

... **BLINDIN' BENIDORM:** Seven nights' all-inclusive at the four-star Sandos Monaco Hotel and Spa is from £665 per person, including flights from Gatwick on August 8. See easyjet.com/holidays or call 0843 104 1000.

... **SUPER STRATHDON:** Seven nights' self-catering at the Forbestown Lodge, Donside in rural Aberdeenshire, is from £395 for six for stays from July 21. See unique-cottages.co.uk/specialoffers.

... **COOL KOH SAMUI:** Seven nights' B&B at the five-star Anantara Bophut Resort & Spa is from £879 per person, including flights from Heathrow from August 26 to October 31. Must be booked by August 15. See bridgetheworld.com or call 0800 988 6884.

... **CAPTIVATING CRETE:** Seven nights' self-catering at the three-star Medousa Apartments on Crete is from £333 per person, including flights from Gatwick on August 3. See onthebeach.co.uk or call 0905 990 0000.

... **BARBADOS BEACHES:** Seven nights' all-inclusive at the four-star Almond Beach Club & Spa is from £1,069 per person, including flights from Gatwick between September 1 and 23. Must be booked by tomorrow. See netflights.com.

... **ZEST FOR ZANTE:** Seven nights' self-catering at the three-star Mavrikos Apartments in Tsilivi is from £299 per person, including flights from Gatwick on August 9. See cosmos.co.uk or call 0871 902 5838.

... **IDYLIC ITALY:** Seven nights' full board at the four-star Chalet Hotel Al Pigher in the stunning Dolomite Mountains is from £399 per person, including flights from Gatwick on August 4 (regional departures at a supplement). See ingham.co.uk or call 01483 791 111.



TYRE-ING ... having a welcome break by a sign pointing the tough route to Col du Glandon

Excitement is mountain

HAVE A RELAXING BREAK... DOING TOUR DE FRANCE CLIMB

IF my legs thought they were getting a summer break, they were in for a shock.

Sweat stings my eyes as I gasp for air, my heart pounding.

My neck has seized up and my back aches. I'm exhausted.

This is not quite the French Alpine holiday I'd imagined.

I am on a road bike – for the first time ever – and doing my best to pedal up one of the Tour de France's most infamous climbs, the Col du Glandon.

And what a climb it is – more than 15 miles of unrelenting uphill to the mountain's 6,300ft summit. Steep hairpin bends and lengthy stretches of Tarmac make this the type of terrain where the weak crumble – as I was finding out.

Right now, nearly 200 professional Tour de France cyclists are testing their endurance in the world's most famous cycling race, which finishes a week tomorrow. I'm no Victoria Pendleton – the last bike I owned

was a pink and lilac number with tassels – but for some reason I'd had the bright idea to tackle this vicious course.

I spend my four-day break in Vaujany, an ancient farming village in the Rhone-Alpes region.

Summertime activities include hiking, tennis, rock climbing, archery and horse riding.

And in winter, this quiet 300-resident hamlet transforms into a bustling ski destination. But the town still retains its Alpine charm.

Rainbow

Once a gateway to nearby Italy, the original road to the border (Le Grand Chemin) is still lined with traditional wooden chalets dating back to the 18th Century.

Here there are none of the high-rise hotels that have invaded many of the purpose-built Alpine resorts.

I stayed at the traditional-style Chalet Arnou, which was only completed in February, but you'd never know from its pine exterior and gently sloping roof. Run by UK-trained mountain bike instruc-

tors Daniella Gardner and Andrew Goodman, the eight-person catered chalet is a mountain retreat with all the trimmings.

The best cappuccino cake I've ever tasted greeted me on arrival and I devoured it on my balcony while watching a waterfall rainbow.

I was joined at the chalet by five other female bikers who were also keen to give the iconic ride a go.

Of course, the best thing about exercise is that it justifies huge quantities of fuel – and our hosts made sure we got it.

Everything is homemade, from the fresh bread in the morning to the biscotti decorating dessert.

The night before The Great Bike Ride, we sat down for an eve-of-battle meal of baked Camembert, pork

and cider stroganoff and apricot tarte tatin.

Earlier in the day we had tested

our bike legs on a "technical" downhill route. Technical is bike speak for hard, which I discovered when I had an argument with a river and ended up sopping wet.

This did not bode well. Sure enough, my plan to save the lowest of my 21 gears for absolute emergencies goes out of the window after 30 seconds on the Col du Glandon, when I am faced with the first of countless hairpin bends.

A bright flash whizzes past – a Lycra-clad man with go-faster yellow shoes. He shouts a brief "allez" of encouragement as he powers past me. After two-and-a-half hours of snail-paced climbing, we're there – the Chalet du Glandon signals

I've made it to the top. Buzzing, I think I'll have to remember my yellow footwear next time.

That, or leave it to the pros.

ELLIE ROSS

GO: FRENCH ALPS CYCLING

GETTING THERE: Fly to Lyon with Ryanair or Easyjet – both are around 90 minutes away. Big Alpine Adventure can arrange transfers at 250 euros for up to eight. **STAYING THERE:** A week at Chalet Arnou with thebigalpineadventure.co.uk starts at 400 euros. **BIKE HIRE:** From 40 euros a day.