

EUROPE
A LA CARTE



Dracula Tours in Transylvania

by Karen Bryan

Interview with Alin Todea –
owner of Transylvania Live –
expert in Transylvania



1 What is the aim of your
business?

Our aim is to have our guests enjoy
Transylvania by the same passion
that we do!

Launched in 1995 *Transylvania Live*
is always searching for better values
and continuously optimizing

existing services in order to deliver the perfect holiday. Professional staffs are not only ready to answer current needs, but can also anticipate future requirements in the constantly changing marketplace.

Transylvania Live is member of the *American Society of Travel Agents* (ASTA), and the *National Association of Tourism Agencies* in Romania (ANAT).

These organizations ensure that their members maintain high standards to protect tourists. *Transylvania Live* is also active within the community; we are co-founders of Turda's (the city where we're based) much needed *Tourist Information Centre*: sponsor of belles-lettres national magazine *Echinox* and student's theatre festival *Alterege* as well as sustainer of *Transylvania Riders* motorcycle club.

2 What prompted you to start your own business?

The idea that prompted me to start my own tourism business is that Transylvania is a well renowned region in the world; Bram Stoker and then Hollywood made a strong brand out of it. But apart from all these, Transylvania really is all about wonderful, impressive, "terrific" scenery, spectacular traditions and fascinating history. Since I'm so into these things and since I know how much fun a Transylvanian holiday can be, it seemed a little bit selfish to keep everything for myself and not share it with the rest of the world. So, this is pretty much the beginning of Transylvania Live.

My managing team is formed by a group of enthusiasts, with background in mass-media, passionate for ethnography and legends and dedicated to bringing them to life, as we have been working together for the revival of traditional festivals from Transylvania: *Mout Gaina Maiden Fair*, *Shepherds Meeting* from *Mount Jina* and others.

3 What has been the hardest aspect of having your own business?

The hardest, most annoying aspect was, by far, the fact that I could no longer ride my motorcycle as often as I would have wanted to.

4 What is the funniest thing that has happened to you running your own business?



One of our guests (for whom our agency designed a private, tailor made tour) insisted in paying me a personal visit as the itinerary of his holiday included Turda, the city where we're based. Merlin, my distinguished guest, a University professor, a man well built, imposing, came to my office and told me how much he dislikes the tour, how unhappy he is with the guide and how disappointed he is with all the services. I have to admit that this man was very convincing and the thought of him joking never crossed my mind. After going over all the possibilities of improving his holiday he was kind enough to let me know that it was all a joke and that he was more than happy with all the services our company provided him with.

Your staffs that we have dealt with have always been courteous, helpful and professional. As far as the trip in general, my brother and I could not be more satisfied! We would recommend your company to anyone traveling to Romania!
Professor Merlin S, Rhode Island, US

5 Is there anything you would do differently with the benefit of hindsight?

No, I don't think there's anything I would do differently. I really think I chose the right path for this "adventure".