



# European Yoga Festival 2005

By Sardar Singh Khalsa

**E**very summer since 1977, hundreds of people have attended the European Yoga Festival held in France. Yogi Bhajan named this annual 3HO event almost 30 years ago. He said, "Practice yoga and celebrate; it is a festival!"

It rained off and on all the way from Versailles, and it was only after we entered the village of Mur de Sologne, and turned off onto the forest road to Fondjouan in the Loire Valley, that the sun peeked out. We were headed to *Chateau Fondjouan*, the festival site since 2000. The charming hand-painted sign, *European Yoga Festival*, welcomed us and the view was transforming: children running across bright green grass scattered with multi-colored flower beds, silent deep forests, tents popping up like colorful mushrooms, and cozy groups strolling along the lake.

We settled into our rooms, while others chose facilities in the chateau or dormitories, or in their tents under the stars. A small stage had been erected on the lawn that surrounds

the lake, where we would gather for morning sadhana and evening yoga. Alongside the lake, in the shade of old oak trees, the Children's Area was blossoming with swings, tents, and a tree house.

It was good to be back among this international community of people from over 20 different countries—so many familiar faces. This year's festival, while mostly populated by Europeans (an amazing variety in itself—consider Swedes and Norwegians mixing with Parisians, Romans, Madrileños, Berliners, and Muscovites!), included representatives from North and South America, India, Israel, Singapore, Australia, Togo, South Africa, China, and Japan. Together we were one spirit with 1150 adults and 120 children.

The yogis met under the trees, in large tents, or in the chateau for morning workshops. After a refreshing watermelon break, we gathered for the All-Camp afternoon workshop. Following dinner we relaxed until the evening program, strolling around the bazaar with a cup of