



*Luxury  
Dreams*

A woman in a white bathrobe stands on a balcony overlooking an infinity pool. The pool's edge is perfectly aligned with the horizon, creating a seamless transition between the water and the sky. The woman is leaning on a metal railing, looking out over the ocean. The scene is captured in a bright, clear blue light, suggesting a sunny day. The reflection of the woman and the pool is visible in the water below.

at Wholesale  
Prices

WorldVentures offers  
you five-star vacations  
at three-star prices.

by Beth Douglass Silcox

**E**veryday stresses dissolve lounging on a South Seas island or gazing at the breathtaking view of Glacier Bay, Alaska. But daydreaming about a vacation paradise just isn't enough. Vacation respites recharge the spirit and soothe the soul. For those reasons, Americans travel.

Americans are shopping, socializing with family and friends, adventuring, sightseeing and taking in the sun in record numbers. Leisure travel comprised 82 percent of all domestic trips in 2003. Planes, trains, automobiles, ships, motor coaches and buses transport Americans across the country and around the globe to destinations designed for decompression.

### AFFORDABLE LUXURY

No longer is travel considered a luxury reserved only for the wealthy. Many Americans, no matter their gross annual income, desire a break from the mundane, and the travel industry serves plenty from which to choose.

Average Americans may be priced out of affording a monthlong world cruise on a private yacht, but vacation luxury can be found if they know where to look. DreamTrips, an online, member-only travel club marketed by WorldVentures, packages some of today's finest excursions at affordable prices. "These are four- and five-star vacations at two- and three-star prices," says WorldVentures Director of DreamTrips Grant Merz. "They are not cheap vacations. They are the best vacations at the lowest possible prices.

"Every trip DreamTrips offers is going to save you on average \$300 or \$400 per couple and some as much as \$1,000,"

Merz says. "It's the beautiful thing about our trips. If you're a DreamTrips member, you'll save money on every trip you buy."

### MEMBERS ONLY

DreamTrips' member-only concept is certainly not new. Many industries, including big-box wholesalers, operate under the premise that people are willing to spend money to save money. WorldVentures charges a one-time registration fee and small monthly fee thereafter. Membership includes a spouse or significant other or guest and all children under 18 living at home.

"DreamTrips is designed for people who want the best vacation they can get for the price," says WorldVentures Co-Founder Wayne Nugent. So the value-to-membership-cost ratio is high. DreamTrips prices are often dramatically lower than those advertised online, so most members recoup the fees after one or two trips and savings for the average family can quickly add up.

What began in 2006 as 15 DreamTrips travel excursions doubled in 2007, as did membership. In 2008, thousands of members will enjoy pleasure trips to nearly 80 destinations. "We're having a fantastic year because wholesalers, hoteliers and airlines are getting to know us better," Merz says. "The deals that we get now are more plentiful because of name recognition, and that makes it better for DreamTrips members."



Exclusive DreamTrips pricing is the result of leveraging membership numbers in negotiations with luxury-travel suppliers. “Traditionally in the travel industry, an agency sells one or two vacations at a time,” Merz says. “It’s rare to have so many members at your fingertips like DreamTrips. So if a travel destination or resort wants to sell occupancy, they can either spend large amounts of money through advertising campaigns or they can call us and offer our members a great deal. Instantly, they have mass marketing to tens of thousands of potential customers in one swoop.”

## EXPANDING VALUE

“The exciting thing about what we’re doing is that as our membership expands, we’re able to do more things that increase the value of membership,” Nugent says. The company supplies DreamTrips departure kits, which include details about restaurants, planned activities and local entertainment along with on-site DreamTrips concierge teams ready to assist members on their trip.

Added value also comes with DreamTrips themselves. Negotiations with travel suppliers for the prime family travel months of May, June, July and August start early, and the company prebooks favorite family destinations to meet family travel schedules. “We want to be able to cater to their needs,” Merz says. “It’s not as easy to pick up the family and jump on a flight to Europe or the Caribbean. We’re finding that a four-night jaunt to a national park or New York City is easier for families to do.” A prime example is a fully escorted coach trip to Yellowstone National Park in 2008.

Another of this year’s family-friendly DreamTrips is an invitational golf tournament hosted by WorldVentures at the Dallas Cowboys Golf Course in Grapevine, Texas, just outside Dallas. While Dad plays golf, Mom and the kids can splash their way through the 80,000-square-foot indoor water park at The Great Wolf Lodge.

“Our motto is to provide the best customer service possible for every trip we do,” Merz says, and understanding where DreamTrips members live is part of that. Major hubs, like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, Miami, New York City and Minneapolis, developed as DreamTrips grew, so the company plans to cater to them. “We better serve our customers by rotating trips throughout those hubs,” he says.

## ADVENTURE AND ROMANCE

This fall, DreamTrips originates an Egyptian Pyramids and Palaces vacation from Los Angeles and New York. At just under \$3,000 per person, this elaborate 12-night, 13-day adventure saves DreamTrips members \$700 per couple. Members will visit the Great Pyramids of Giza, explore Cairo and the Valley of the Kings and take a four-night Nile River cruise.

Adventurous spirits can cruise the Amazon River for three nights. An Amazon experience like no other, this trip on Iberostar River Cruises lets DreamTrips members experience the great river’s wild



side while staying in the air-conditioned comfort of one of 50 private cabins. After taking in the rainforest, the trip winds up with four nights in beautiful Rio de Janeiro.

From Los Angeles, DreamTrips’ romantic flair shows with a six-night, seven-day Tahitian holiday at Moorea Pearl Beach and Spa. The white-sand beaches of this South Seas island couldn’t provide a more beautiful backdrop for a newly married couple. The resort boasts bungalows in gardens with private pools, on the beach or above the aquamarine sea. DreamTrips pricing of just under \$2,000 per person saves members more than \$1,500 per couple.

While DreamTrips uses hubs, the company’s travel is by no means centralized. “A member can fly out of locations all over the nation,” Merz says. “Whether you live in Seattle or Boston, it doesn’t matter.

“If you like to travel, you’ll no doubt find a trip that will appeal to you,” Merz says. “One month you may see a cruise to the Caribbean or a hiking trip offered in Colorado. We have to put a product out there that offers a variety of options because we want travel packages that appeal to a variety of people and lifestyles. Because we have so much to choose from, I can assure you that within the calendar year you will find something that you will enjoy.”

Merz says DreamTrips membership appeals to people from all lifestyles in every demographic. So if the pull of the Alaskan wilderness is too much to resist or golf at St. Andrews in Scotland seems like your destiny, let DreamTrips help you find a way to escape. “With DreamTrips all you have to do is pack your bag and book a flight,” Merz says. “We’ll take care of the rest.” **SFH**