

vacationagent

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL SELLERS OF LEISURE TRAVEL

Couples Resorts Makes It Easy and Rewarding For You and Your Clients.

TRAVEL
LEISURE
WORLD'S
BEST
AWARD
RECOGNIZED
2010




couples & resorts®
JAMAICA

TOWER ISLE • SANS SOUCI • SWEEP AWAY • NEGRIL
1-800-Couples • couples.com/travelagent

Families on Tour

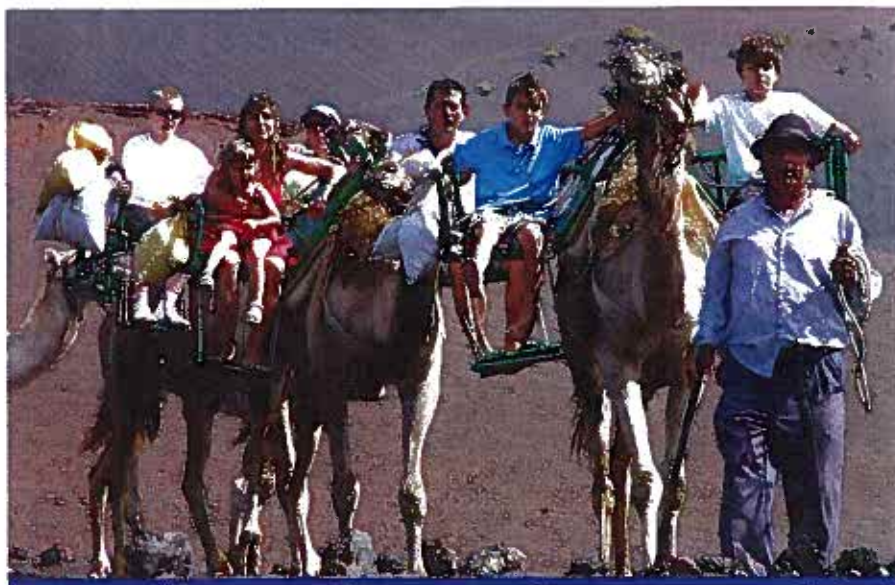
OPERATORS MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR FAMILY TRAVEL WITH NEW AND INNOVATIVE PACKAGES

NO MATTER HOW the circumstances change, intergenerational travel continues to grow in popularity. The growth spurt started at the turn of the century. According to Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell's National Leisure Travel Monitor, the main concern of Americans in 2000 was making money. But the stock market crash of 2000 followed by 9/11 profoundly shocked the sensibilities of Americans, and they shifted their focus from money to travel, according to Peter Yesawich, chairman and CEO of YPB&R. In 2006, 71 percent said they wished they had more time to spend with family. The financial crisis of 2008 dealt life-threatening blows to many businesses, but ironically the family travel business got a boost even from hard times. As Yesawich noted in 2010, "In times of distress people turn to family for solace."

The demand for family vacations is too strong for any tour operator to ignore, and most are finding creative ways to take advantage of it, some with spectacular success. Hotels or vendors of simple vacation packages can simply run family specials to make a family vacation more affordable. Vacation packagers, such as Apple Vacations, GOGO Worldwide Vacations, Pleasant Holidays, MLT Vacations, Travel Bound and Travel Impressions are responding to the demand for family travel with special values for family groups, such as kids-stay-and-eat-free offers, guarantees of adjoining rooms and special activities for young travelers.

One of the first to catch on to the family travel trend was **Tauk** (800-788-7885, www.tauk.com), which rolled out its Bridges program in August of 2002. The program hit a chord and was an immediate success. For 2011, Tauk is offering 16 programs in its Bridges brochure, five in Europe, two in Africa, seven in North America and two in Latin America. Four of the programs are new offerings—New York, Switzerland, Italy and Egypt. Tauk Bridges programs are designed to promote what Tauk calls "shared enrichment." Rather than just providing "kids only" activities, Tauk tries to create situations that will encourage family members to enjoy shared experiences of learning and discovery, as well as having fun. Tauk's Bridges program is the second fastest-growing segment of its business, after river cruising.

The **Walt Disney Travel Co.** (www.disney-travelagents.com) also had its eye on the family



THE ESCORTED TOUR MODEL OFFERS MANY WAYS TO ENHANCE THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE FOR FAMILIES. PICTURED IS A FAMILY IN TIMANFAYA NATIONAL PARK ON LANZAROTE, ONE OF THE CANARY ISLANDS.

travel market and brought out a family tour product based on its own historic penchant for storytelling. The Adventures By Disney product was designed to engage young travelers with stories that bring the destination to life, and to provide something to entertain every age group. Adventures By Disney has been a great success since its soft introduction in 2005 and its rollout of six itineraries in 2006. For 2011 the product offers 19 itineraries: six in North America, three in Latin America, six in Europe, one in Egypt, one in South Africa, one in Australia and one in China. Also new for 2011 is a series of pre-cruise experience add-ons in Vancouver (Canada) before Alaska voyages on the *Disney Wonder* and in Barcelona (Spain) before Mediterranean cruises aboard the *Disney Magic*. Clients can add immersive experience packages with Adventures By Disney guides during port visits on Disney's Alaskan and Mediterranean cruises. Disney is paying commission on tour bookings made in advance of the sailing.

Abercrombie & Kent (800-554-7016, www.abercrombiekent.com) was also an early participant in the family travel revolution with its Family Holidays programs. These are designed from scratch for family travel and include enriching activities for all ages, child-friendly hotels and meals, and a broad range of destinations. They include mostly three-night stays at

each site. At meal times, children can choose between exotic local dishes or more familiar fare. Some departures are accompanied by a Children's Activity Coordinator. All departures include child-friendly, fun and educational activities. This year the catalog offers 30 family programs at a variety of destinations, including Mexico, Turkey, Galapagos, Egypt, New Zealand, the Greek Isles, Tanzania, South Africa, Peru, Iguassu Falls, Italy, Israel, Japan, India, Morocco, Australia, Antarctica, China and the U.S.

Collette Vacations (800-340-5158, www.collettevacations.com) introduced its own brand of family tours in December 2010. Collette Family Vacations. Collette responded to the demand for family travel with a product designed to be more affordable than the major family products on the market. Programs are created as intergenerational experiences, not just tours with kid-friendly components thrown in. Collette's program debuts with nine itineraries, including a zip-line canopy tour in Costa Rica; a wildlife encounter in the Galapagos; a family discovery of Italy; a family safari in Kenya; a London and Paris adventure and several North America programs in national parks, the Canadian Rockies and the historic sites of early America.

Austin-Lehman Adventures (800-575-1540, www.austinlehman.com) has made Family Vacations one of its three product divisions,

continued on pg

continued from pg 50

along with Adventure Vacations and Biking Tours. New for 2011 is an Africa family program designed to offer value for cost and to provide fun and fascination, while sticking closely to the principles of sustainable tourism. The program includes many adventures, such as a guided safari walk on Sakazima island; fishing for tiger fish in the Zambezi River; a houseboat trip along the Zambezi and Chobe rivers, with camping along the river's edge in rooftop tents; seeking elephants, lions, lechwes, zebras, giraffes and buffaloes in Chobe National Park; and standing in the mist of Victoria Falls next to 360-feet of roaring water.

International Expeditions' (800-234-9620, www.ietravel.com) eco-friendly adventure/discovery products are well suited to families, and the programs cater to young participants with such inclusions as a Young Explorer's Field Guide that includes facts and figures about the ecology of the destination, as well as puzzles, wildlife checklists, word games and a journal. But IE also offers programs designed especially for families. The 10-day "Amazon Family Voyage" sails deep into the jungle along the Amazon, Ucayali and Marañón rivers of Peru on the 28-passenger *Amatista* river cruise ship. Naturalist guides point out wildlife, and families can meet the *ribereño* (river people) culture in a local village. IE's "Galapagos Family Voyage" travels around the islands in the 32-passenger *Evolution* cruise ship. Kid-friendly activities include navigating with the ship's captain, nature walks and hikes, kayaking and movies.

Globus Family of Brands (866-755-8581, www.globusjourneys.com) offers a series of Family Travel programs in Europe and the U.S. ranging from seven to 12 days, with activities designed to please all generations. New for this year is a rail-based London to Munich (Germany) program. Globus also recommends its Monograms independent vacations as suitable for families.

Goway Travel's Africa Experts division (800-557-2841, www.goway.com) has expanded its range of family-focused programs and now offers an 11-day overland family trip, "The Cape Wildlife Family Adventures" tour, which starts in Cape Town and includes the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, the penguin colony at Boulders Beach, the Two Oceans Aquarium, the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, the Cape Winelands and a visit to the Cheetah Outreach Facility at Spier.

Asia Transpacific Journeys (800-642-2742, www.asiatranspacific.com) offers private Custom Journeys designed for family participation and enrichment to such destinations as Borneo, Thailand and Australia.



ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL LEISURE TRAVEL MONITOR, AMERICANS HAVE SHIFTED THEIR FOCUS FROM MONEY TO TRAVEL AND WISH THEY HAD MORE TIME TO SPEND WITH FAMILY.

Baobab Expeditions (www.baobabexpeditions.com) is offering a 12-day adventure in Peru including a trip to the Amazonian Rain Forest, where clients will stay with an Amazonian family for two nights who will share their way of life. The itinerary also includes Lima, Cusco and Machu Picchu.

CIE Tours (800-243-8687, www.cietours.com) offers a "Circle of Family and Friends" program that makes it more affordable to take 10 or more family members or friends traveling on a small coach.

Cox & Kings (800-999-1758, www.coxandkingsusa.com) offers specially designed family experiences, such as its 17-day, 16-night "Lure

com) gives a 10 percent discount to children ages 5 to 7. About 15 percent of its passengers are in that age range.

MLT Vacations (www.worldagentdirect.com) offers its Flexible Getaways program, which provides discounts for groups of 10 or more, designed for family reunions as well as class reunions, girlfriend getaways and other groups.

Trafalgar Tours (866-544-4434, www.familytravelexperiences.com/us/home) brought out a new 2011 Family Experiences brochure in December with 14 family programs in Europe, South Africa, Costa Rica, the U.S. and Canada. The programs include activities for all age ranges and are designed to provide value for

The demand for family vacations is too strong for any tour operator to ignore.

of the Jungle" program in India; its five-day/four-night trip to Colombia; a trip to Egypt and Jordan; a safari in South Africa; and a trip to China and the Great Wall.

General Tours (800-221-2216, www.generaltours.com) offers Family and Friends Savings when three or more people travel together. On bookings made before April 30, the company is offering \$100 to \$300 per person price reductions on some small-group escorted and privately guided journeys.

Insight Vacations (www.insightvacations.com)

the dollar. For example, the Costa Rica program starts at \$1,229 per person.

Wendy Wu's China (877-993-6399, www.wendywuschina.com) offers private tours for families and multi-generational groups using chauffeur-driven transportation.

Western River Expeditions (866-904-1160, www.westernriver.com) introduced a new family program in Idaho called "Salmon River Canyons Family Magic" rafting trip. The program includes River Jester, whose job it is to lead nature-oriented games and activities for kids and teens. ☺