

working together

july 2011

Land of the *Free*, Home of the *Brave*

From Alaska to the Adirondacks, you can catch an adrenaline rush with a myriad of made-in-the-USA adventures. Whether your pleasure is diving wrecks, climbing fourteeners, pedaling over mountains or paddling in raging whitewater, there's plenty to offer the hungriest thrill-seekers right here in our own American backyard.

Biking the Continental Divide

The world's longest mountain bike route zigzags 2,490 miles along the Continental Divide from the Canadian border in Montana to the Mexican border in New Mexico. It was scouted and mapped over a decade ago by the Adventure Cycling Association. While it gives cyclists an authentic taste of the wilderness, the route also intersects civilization virtually every day. Zealots can race it in just over two weeks, but most other cyclists take over two months.

Rowing Down the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon

Arguably the most stunning river ride in the nation demands an American original—the wooden dory. The dory has been a canyon icon since 1869. Dories are small, rigid boats designed to carry four people and lots of gear. They're also very maneuverable, though a trip on a dory can be the slowest and longest of Grand Canyon river journeys—about 15 to 18 days.

Wreck Diving in Lake Superior, Minnesota

No other country has an expanse of fresh

water like the Great Lakes, nor such treacherous shipping conditions. In the days before satellites, hundreds of giant ships sunk in these waters. Lake Superior swallowed 10 ships near Isle Royale National Park during the 19th and 20th centuries. What distinguishes the Isle Royale wrecks is their frozen-in-time quality. Isle Royale's ghost ships remain pristine, and national park rules protect them from souvenir hunters. On a four-day bunk 'n dive trip, divers can carefully explore the underwater wrecks.

Climbing Mount Rainier

Four other mountains in the continental U.S. exceed it in height, yet each can be climbed in what amounts to a long day hike. Rainier is an entirely different beast. Heavily glaciated, avalanche prone and battered by intense storms, the 14,410-foot peak never lets down its guard. Roughly half of Rainier climbers are turned back, mostly due to severe weather and fatigue. Commercial outfitters simplify the process enormously, but in the end you climb your own mountain.

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Always a *Bridesmaid*

Put the cookie cutter away, bridesmaids are breaking out of the mold.

A recent trend in weddings has been to allow bridesmaids to express their individuality while still maintaining some uniformity. Though most brides want to call some of the shots, many are allowing their bridal party to assert their own sense of style.

“Always a bridesmaid” no longer means “always the same.”

Here are some ways brides are becoming more accommodating.

One color, different dresses. There’s nothing wrong with wanting a bridal party to look coordinated, but one style does not fit all. Since women all have unique shapes and fashion

tastes, some brides are just choosing a color and/or fabric, then letting their bridesmaids choose the dress. This gives each woman the freedom to settle on their most flattering style. Want to be the most beloved bride ever? Pick basic black.

Silver and gold. Rather than asking the girls to buy matching celadon green wedges, some brides are letting their bridesmaids be footloose and fancy free. These days formal footwear is all about silver and gold. Metallic accessories were hot on ready-to-wear runways this year, and that look has trickled down to bridesmaid fashion as well. Metallics work with just about any color and look, and they give the bridesmaids an opportunity to choose formal footwear that will likely be more versatile than dyed-to-match heels.

Bling it on. Instead of going matchy-matchy with accessories, many brides are letting their girls choose their own bling—within certain parameters. They may request a general category (pearls, gold or silver) but allow them to pick from their own closets when it comes to the particulars. This allows each

Five Hot Wedding Trends for 2011

1. **Sophisticated elegance returns.**
2. **Outdoor venues, scenic settings are popular for both weddings and receptions.**
3. **Grey is the new black, and navy blue makes a bold statement.**
4. **Metallics and bold color palettes rule color choices.**
5. **Big ball gowns are back.**

— according to OneWed.com

Insights

The most expensive wedding ever was thrown by steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal for his daughter, Vanisha Mittal, and her fiancé, Amit Bhatia, on June 22, 2004. The wedding was held at Vaux le Vicomte, a 17th-century French chateau, on the final day of a 6-day celebration. The estimated cost of the celebration—a staggering \$60 million.

Too Much *Information*

Some things are better left unsaid, especially on social networks.

If you post updates on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other networking sites, you might feel like you’re just chatting it up with family, friends and colleagues. But the reality is, there could be identity thieves, scammers or stalkers viewing your posts.

Many people on social networks unknowingly put themselves at risk by revealing too much. According

to Rob Douglas, an information security consultant and editor of the website IdentityTheft.com, here are some things you should avoid mentioning.

Addresses and birth dates. This is what identity thieves and burglars look for. So, if you’re throwing a party and need to provide directions to your house, do it through messages sent directly to your guests. If the site prompts you for your address or birth date, remember—you don’t have to post

woman to wear something of sentimental value or simply feel more comfortable in jewels they already know and love.

Flower power. Some brides are extending a sense of individuality even to the floral arrangements. Contrary to tradition, each bridesmaid does not have to carry the same flowers. One trend has each woman carrying a bouquet of different blooms, all within the wedding color palette. For example, if the colors are pink and green, one could carry a bouquet of pale pink roses, another of fuchsia peonies, and another of green hydrangeas. The bride's bouquet could then consist of one or two flowers from each of theirs to bring the look together.

We offer peace of mind,
not *apologies.*

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it. It's better to keep personal info personal.

Graduation years. This information helps scammers pretend to be former classmates, which is a common way they win your trust. Also, potential employers could use your graduation date to estimate your age, and decide against hiring you if they feel you're too old or too young. Yes, this violates age discrimination laws, but it's

virtually impossible to prove.

Travel plans. If you mention when your next vacation is, it's like announcing, "Here's when my home is vacant." And if your address is out there, you've really made yourself a target for would-be burglars. You can talk about your travels, but it's best to avoid mentioning when you're coming and going.

Sentiments

**"Adventure is worthwhile in itself."
—Amelia Earhart**

Let's *Get*

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but try telling that to commercial airlines. They'll fly you around the country from one hub to the next on your journey from point A to point B.

Now there's a company that wants to charter you a private jet and let you fly without all the hubbub, as long as you can get some "friends" to fly with you.

The founders of Social Flights believe that most consumers would prefer a private plane over a commercial flight—as long as the price is comparable. That's why they've created a website where members can arrange flights on private planes with others who are heading to the same destination. Passengers can fly like the wealthy without the sticker shock.

A member of Social Flights can simply post an itinerary (www.socialflights.com) of a flight that they'd like to

take. If enough other people want to travel to the same place at the same time, a plane gets booked, and each flyer simply pays the cost of their seat.

Social Flights soft-launched at the end of February and so far has arranged about 12 flights, including one for about 90 Mississippi State football fans who flew in three planes from Jackson to Jacksonville for a bowl game. The cost for that trip was about \$350 per person. People have started to sign up for Social Flights in about 30 locations so far, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Nashville, Memphis and Detroit.

This idea doesn't just appeal to travelers—it's also attractive to charter companies. On any given day, 60 percent of the country's 15,000 top-rated charter jets go unused. Of the 40 percent in service, about a third travel empty during one of their legs.

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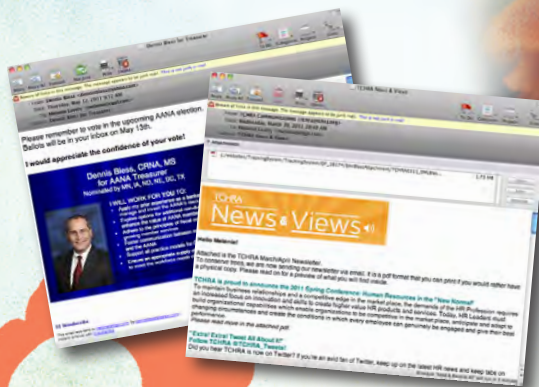
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First Impressions

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