

MAKING FAMILY LIFE MORE FUN

Planning A “Destination” Family Reunion

(NAPSA)—Families throughout the world are showing increased interest in catching up with loved ones and creating new memories at family reunions—and doing so in exotic locales.

According to the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), intergenerational travel is an important part of vacation planning and family reunion trips are up 35 percent. Dr. Larry Basirico, author of *The Family Reunion Survival Guide*, says there’s a good reason for this trend.

“Destination reunions offer the advantage that they are very well planned,” he explains. “They offer a full slate of activities and provide a common experience for people that is away from their everyday lives.”

A survey sponsored by ASTA and Vacation.com found that family reunion travelers are choosing creative venues for their reunions. When asked where people are hosting reunions, respondents indicated cruise ships (52.8 percent) as the most popular, followed by all-inclusive resorts (19.8 percent).

Among other trends, respondents said grandparents are now initiating plans and reunions are often planned around milestone events like anniversaries and weddings.

Noting different generations’ interests, Basirico feels that having a travel agent involved with reunion planning is helpful.

“The value of using a travel agent is to be able to coordinate the details, the schedules, getting people to the right place, offering people the right activities and making them happy,” says travel agent Jan Hammond.

Travel agents aren’t alone in focusing on family travel. From Sonesta Hotels’ Family Reunion Packages to Royal Caribbean International’s Royal Reunions,



A growing number of families are holding their reunions in exotic locations, such as on a cruise ship or at a resort.

travel industry leaders have introduced programs to make family reunion travel easier and more memorable, by adding special amenities for guests.

Royal Reunions, for example, adds shipboard activities to bring the family together such as family competitions, souvenir photos, in-stateroom surprises, and passes to aqua-parks at the cruise line’s private destinations.

“Three things make a successful reunion,” adds Basirico. “Daily scheduled events, planned activities and activities that promote interdependence among family members. A successful reunion can’t be pulled off at the last minute—planning in advance is key. It’s difficult to do all this on your own; that’s where experts like travel agents come in. They have the experience and the knowledge to match the destination with the interests of the family.”

When planning a reunion, experts recommend families should look for about 10 months to a year in advance.

To learn more about planning a “destination” family reunion, speak with a travel agent or visit www.TravelSense.org.