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More Travelers Putting Personal Stamp On Private Adventure Tours

Classic Journeys invites guests to customize, help create own itineraries

January 28, 2010 - La Jolla, CA – How do you keep 10 high-energy traveling companions happy and content on an adventure tour? First, select a Classic Journeys itinerary – there are more than 65 to choose from worldwide – then invite potential guests to kick around their personal "wish lists." The result? A Private Journey that quickly becomes the trip of a lifetime.

Case in point: a longtime guest of Classic Journeys, Nancy Richer, a travel agent in Hartford, Connecticut. Nearly every April for the past 12 years, she's gathered a group of women friends from the northeast for a Private Journey. Whatever their destination – Morocco, Sicily, Tuscany, Provence, Croatia, India and Vietnam to name a few – Classic Journeys bumps up their activity level to include more walking. (Where regular itineraries call for five to eight miles of walking a day, this gung-ho group does eight to 11.) They've also been known to request an additional cultural interaction or two along the way, from cooking instructions and wine tastings to sessions with local craftsmen. All of which the company is pleased to provide... including on the women's upcoming Private Journey to [Turkey & the Turquoise Coast](#) this spring.

"Customized travel has taken on a life of its own in the past several years," observes Edward Piegza, president and founder of Classic Journeys. "In fact, Private Journeys have grown from less than 5% of our trips about seven years ago to more than 30% of our trips today."

For some groups, crafting a Private Journey might be as simple as picking a destination, coordinating calendars, and selecting a date when everyone can get a week off at the same time. Whatever scenario guests might come up with, the company's team of travel coordinators has it covered.

Named a World's Best Tour Operator by Travel + Leisure Magazine

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Consider a family who's eager to experience a cultural walking adventure through Ireland or Tuscany...maybe to trace their roots or to see for themselves that it's as lovely as everyone says. But the departure dates in the catalog just don't jibe with their personal schedule.

Not a problem, says Piegza. Classic Journeys works one-on-one with guests to make all the pieces fit. Any one of its cultural walking adventures, culinary tours or family journeys can be transformed seamlessly into a Private Journey. Using published itineraries as a starting point, the company is delighted to add a day here or fine-tune an agenda there...so guests can maximize every moment on tour.

Another repeat guest, New Yorker Ann O'Keefe, enjoyed her trip to Vietnam so much in '09 that she asked the company to concoct a Private Journey for her family departing in March. Their customized itinerary – combining highlights of multiple Classic Journeys – will take in parts of Thailand, Laos and Vietnam for an extended week and a half.

Even during the height of the reservation season for regularly scheduled departures, more guests than ever are asking the company to price and organize private departures. To the guests' benefit, as the company operates more private journeys, the premium pricing declines, from 40-50% in recent years to only 5-15% today. While final pricing is contingent on group size and the tweaks the trip coordinators are asked to make, the company's goal remains the same: to provide guests with an exceptional Private Journey that's also an exceptional value.

Readers who want to learn more about how to create a Private Journey of their own can click on www.classicjourneys.com/private or speak directly with a Guest Services Coordinator at (800) 200-3887.

About Classic Journeys:

Classic Journeys offers cultural walking adventures, culinary tours and family journeys in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific. Guests enjoy luxury accommodations and gourmet meals that reflect the best of each region, coupled with soft adventure activities, daily interactions with locals, and native guides who make countries and cultures come alive. Tours are six to 12 days long with two to four hours of easy-going walking per day. Land-only tour prices range from \$2495 to \$7995 per person (with discounts for small groups and children traveling with parents). Average tour size is 10, limited to a maximum of 18 guests per departure. Full details and links to itineraries are available at www.classicjourneys.com.