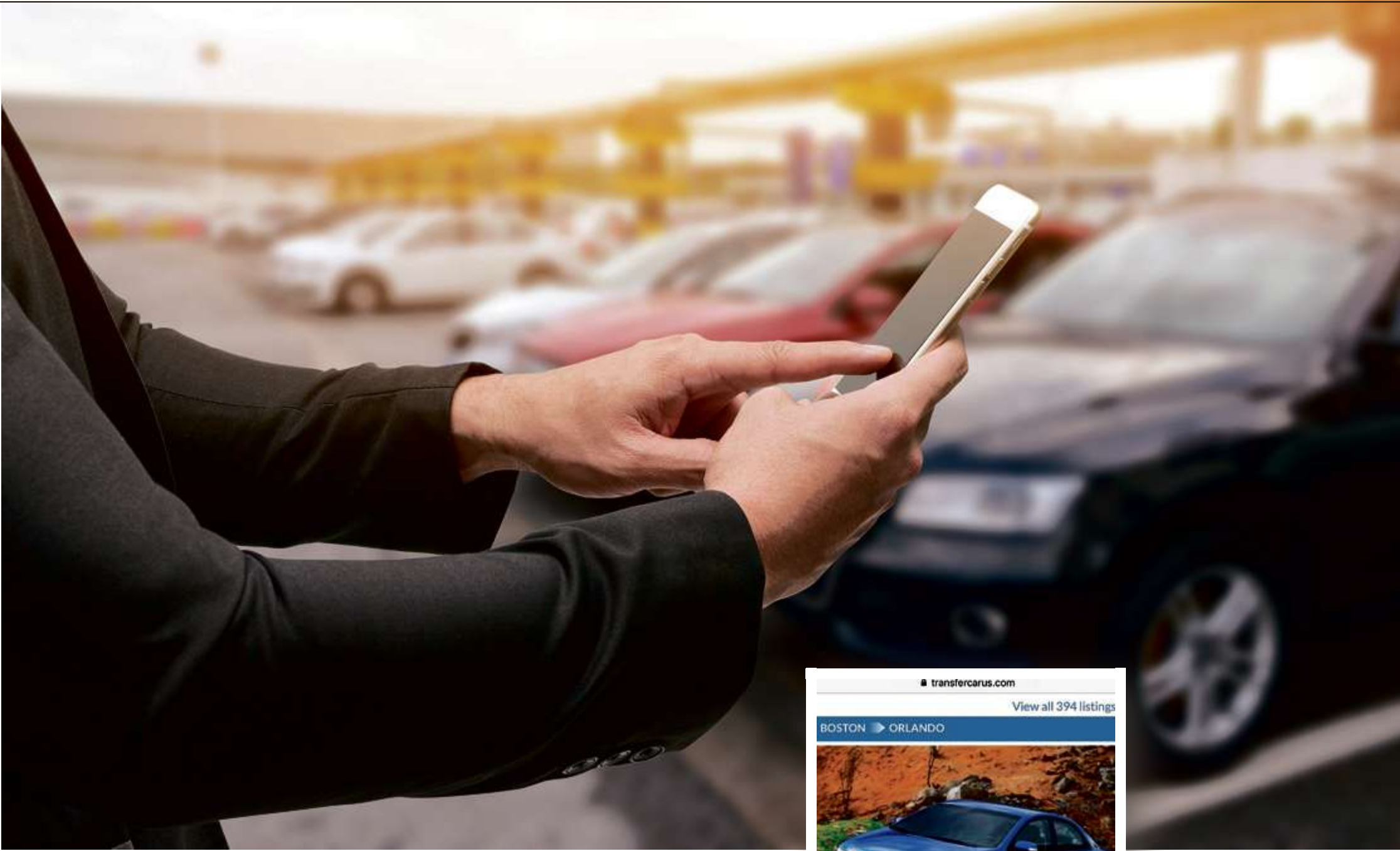


The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



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FLEE FOR FREE

Company offering free rental cars from Boston, for those willing to drive them to Florida

By Christopher Muther | GLOBE STAFF

There’s a cold weather getaway car waiting for you, and it’s free.

A company that originated in New Zealand in 2008 recently opened a Boston outpost, and it offers free rental cars, as long as you’re willing to pick it up at Logan Airport and drive it to a designated drop-off location. Currently, those drop-off locations are all in Florida — primarily Miami.

The free rental car to Florida isn’t a contest, and, listen up skeptics, it’s not a scam.

Transfercar works with rental car companies that need vehicles moved from one location to another. It’s all based on demand. You probably won’t be surprised to learn that there is currently a bigger demand for rental cars in Florida than there is in Boston. Inventory is limited, so check the company’s website (www.transfercar-us.com) before you start making hotel reservations or

shopping for a new swimsuit.

According to Dennis Round, who manages US operations for the company, it’s less expensive for rental car companies to have individuals drive the cars than transfer their fleet by transport trucks. Round did not disclose the names of rental car companies that collaborate with Transfercar, and customers do not get to choose a company.

The company is currently operating out of 10 US and Canadian cities. Round said he anticipates that number will grow.

“If there is a catch, it’s that some airports charge a concession fee for rental cars, or something of that nature,” Round said. “But that’s up to the airport.”

Logan Airport, the city of Boston, and the state of Massachusetts all charge fees for rentals, such as a customer facility charge, concession recovery fee, and con-

vention center financing charge. So please arrive with a credit card when you pick up your car. A valid driver’s license is also a necessity.

There are a few other details to consider. This is not a free round-trip vacation. You still need to get yourself home. The car is free for the first three days. After that, the cost is an extra \$10 per day. Still a bargain. Some even come with a free tank of gas.

Otherwise, going through Transfercar is the same as going through a rental car agency. The only difference is the very limited number of destinations. That, and there is no charge as long as you deliver the car to Florida in three days.

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HERE

NH’S ALL-INCLUSIVE SKI RESORT TICKET

Zip over to Pats Peak in New Hampshire on Saturdays and get everything from a lift ticket and gear rentals to a snow tubing pass for as low as \$49. The all-inclusive Pay-One-Price (POP) program runs through the end of the 2017-2018 season, and includes nighttime skiing and snowboarding on beginner to expert trails. From 3 to 10 p.m., you can get a lift ticket, rentals, ski and snowboard tips on the beginner’s slope, and access to bonfires and live music for \$49; snow tubing included 5-10 p.m. Show up earlier and take advantage of the Step Up to POP Tickets, paying \$59 for the same package 2-10 p.m., \$69 for 1-10 p.m., or \$79 for noon-10 p.m. Tickets valid for all ages; rental equipment available on a first-come, first-served basis. 888-728-7732, www.patspeak.com.

CELEBRATE THE BLUES AT CLUB PASSIM

Don’t miss country blues masters Paul Rishell and Annie Raines at Club Passim in Harvard Square, Jan. 12 at 8 p.m. The unlikely duo first performed together in 1992 at a Boston bar, when Raines was a 22-year-old harmonica ace and Rishell was a 42-year-old country blues guitarist—and have since recorded six albums together, including *Moving to the Country*, which was the W.C. Handy Award Winner for Acoustic Blues Album of the Year in 2000. The Club Passim performance marks the first stop in their silver jubilee tour, which also takes the couple to The Parlor Room in Northampton



Paul Rishell and Annie Raines

Feb. 18, the South Shore Folk Music Club in Kingston March 3, and the Homegrown Coffeehouse in Needham April 7. \$23 Club Passim members; \$25 nonmembers. 617-492-7679, www.passim.org.

THERE

FREE STOPOVER TRIP TO THE AZORES

Fly to Lisbon, Madeira, or Porto — all in Portugal — and get a free stopover in the Azores for up to seven days. Azores Airlines’ new stopover feature lets you hop off in the Azores, an archipelago with nine islands, on your outbound and inbound journeys to and from Boston. Stay up to seven days with no additional stopover fee. With time to explore, go whale watching and hiking, and then savor cozido (a traditional Portuguese stew) before heading to your final vacation destination. Prices start at \$742 round-trip from Boston to Lisbon or Porto, and \$698 round-trip to Madeira (on sale for \$596 round-trip to Lisbon or Porto, and \$550 round-trip to Madeira if

booked by Jan. 22 for travel between Feb. 2 and April 18). 800-762-9995, www.azoresairlines.pt.

SELF-DRIVE TRIPS BY ADVENTURE VEHICLE

Pick a road-worthy or an off-roading Polaris vehicle and go on a fun new adventure at more than 20 wilderness locations nationwide. Polaris Industries has launched Polaris Adventures, a national network of ride and drive



experiences that you can explore on new state-of-the-art Polaris vehicles. Pick your destination, from tall forests, mountain passes, and desert paths to snowy trails. Then choose from the latest off-road RZR side-by-sides, snowmobiles, or highway-licensed Slingshots, open-air roadsters with the latest navigation and safety technology. Then hit the road. Vermont-based Bear Rock Adventures, for instance, has partnered with Polaris to offer a trip located on the Ride the Wilds trail system, which includes 1,000 miles of interconnected trails complete with waterfalls, mountain tops, and a working maple sugar house. www.adventures.polaris.com.

EVERYWHERE

KEEP THE POSTCARD-WRITING TRADITION ALIVE

Send a thank-you note, a holiday greeting, or a postcard from your travels without having to shop for note cards and stamps. Oliver Kray, a German street artist and designer, has developed MyPostcard, a handy and easy-to-use tool for sending real postcards and greeting cards to people in this digital age — it blends the personal touch of a tangible card with the ease of technology. Using the MyPostcard app or website, design your own card or add your photos and message to one of 10,000 existing templates. Then insert an address and purchase

the card. The company will print, stamp, and send the card to your recipient anywhere in the world. The app works on Android and Apple devices, or use MyPostcard’s website. Now go send Mom and Dad a thank-you note for those holiday gifts, and your BFF a postcard from your winter adventures. Prices start at \$1.99 for postcards and \$3.99 for greeting cards. www.mypostcard.com.

TAKE YOUR SKIS AND BUDDIES ON AN ADVENTURE

Secure your skis or snowboards on Yakima’s new FatCat EVO, a sleek and aerodynamic roof rack that offers extra space for handling skis up to 136mm wide at the tips, and multiple snowboards. The mount, now four inches wider than previous models, comes in two sizes: The FatCat EVO 4 fits four pairs of skis or two snowboards, while the FatCat EVO 6 holds six pairs of skis or four snowboards. The easy-to-install mount works with round, square, factory, and most wing-shaped crossbars (no tools required), and comes with a clever built-in lift kit so you can raise the height of the mount by 6.5 inches to accommodate skis with larger bindings. The EVO has two mounting positions; the new HangOver clamp location lets you mount the bar so that it extends out over the side of the car, making it easier for you to access your gear, and giving you more space to fit other roof mounts (think mountain bike and kayak carriers). A lock secures your gear when you run into the coffee shop en route to the slopes. \$229 (EVO 4), \$279 (EVO 6). 888-925-4621, www.yakima.com. KARI BODNARCHUK