

Currents

Find some serious snow, air, and togetherness

If you hold a season pass at your local ski mountain, but the conditions there leave you less than inspired to gear up, head for Grand Targhee Resort in Teton Valley, Wyo. An hour's drive from Jackson Hole, the resort has received more than 175 inches of snow, creating a 65-inch base. Even better, it is offering a ski-free program to anyone holding a 2012 season pass for a US or Canadian ski resort. The fine print: You will get one free day of skiing for each night booked in Grand Targhee's properties (minimum three nights), but you have more than 150 properties from which to choose, with rates starting at \$98 per night (mention your season pass when booking). 800-827-4433, www.grandtarghee.com



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aways, family reunions, and milestone celebrations, by offering insider information on the featured destinations, including expert tips, useful links, and lots of resources. 603-868-1100, www.gettingawaytogether.com

Go soaring in Seattle

Next time you travel through the city, go for a quick flight at a new indoor skydiving facility, where you can soar on a column of air inside a vertical wind tunnel. At iFLY Seattle in Tukwila, about 5 minutes from Sea-Tac International Airport, you will hover anywhere from 10 to 45 feet above the ground inside a wind chamber. Minimum 3 years old. Rates: \$59.95 for two flights; includes training session, use of flight gear, hands-on instruction, and a flight certificate. Visit Feb. 4-5 or March 3-4, and 10 percent of your flight cost will benefit Washington charities. 206-244-4359, www.iflyseattle.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

Tune into 'togetherring'

What happens when diverse groups of "real" travelers vacation together at destinations across the country. Find out on a

Ski the fresh powder at Grand Targhee Resort in Teton Valley, Wyo., or soar on a column of air at iFly Seattle in Tukwila, Wash.

new travel series, "Getting Away Together," which started airing on WEKW and WENH in the

Boston area, and on PBS stations nationwide this month. Episodes take place in Outer Banks, N.C.;

Oregon's Mount Hood region; Oceanside, Calif.; Sevier County, Tenn.; and Kissimmee, Fla.,

among others. The show aims to help travelers organize "togetherring" trips, like girlfriend get-

Industry-watchers, cruisers await fallout from Italy accident

REACTION

Continued from Page M1
glie, Travelzoo's senior editor, said there might be better deals on the horizon after this accident.

"We will inevitably see some repercussions from it," said Saglie. "It's very raw right now. The industry is taking a wait-and-see approach. In a week or two, or a month, we may see bigger cruise deals after we see what the consumer is going to do."

If there are many cancellations or a stagnant market, Saglie said cruise marketers might offer widespread incentives to encourage consumers to book a trip. In addition to cutting prices, cruise lines might offer cabin upgrades, reduce deposit amounts, and increase cabin credit, a kind of ship's money used to purchase drinks or on-board spa treatments. But not yet.

"We've heard from avid cruisers that it's business as usual for them. Novice or virgin cruisers are a section of the public the industry is most concerned about

right now," said Saglie.

Les-Lee Roland, travel agent and owner of The Package Deal, a Sarasota, Fla., travel company, has not seen any impact in her business. In fact, Roland was on a Caribbean cruise when she heard about the Costa Concordia.

"I was with a large tour group, over 60 people, and we were watching it onboard on CNN, and they all wanted to re-book another trip," said Roland.

Since returning, she has had clients call to request booking on a Costa line ship if they lower their rates.

"Some people who haven't cruised before may have some trepidation about it," said Roland. "But seasoned and experienced cruisers have not shown any alarm about booking another cruise. People realize this is something extremely rare that happened."

Ross Klein, a sociology professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, owns cruisejunkie.com, a web-

site that reports events at sea, including marine accidents, illness outbreaks, environmental violations, and onboard crime. While Klein believes the accident will be front and center in the short term, he does not think it will affect the industry for long.

"My sense is there will be a minor blip, two months or so, where people may be hesitant to book a cruise — especially first-time cruisers and those who are marginal in their decision about whether or not to take a cruise," said Klein.

"I don't think experienced cruisers will be impacted. They have confidence in the safety of the industry based on past experience and see this as an anomaly. The main carryover from the accident is that cruise ship safety will be a topic of discussion in the media, among some lawmakers, and obviously among some interested groups," added Klein.

It seems to be business as usual at Louis Cruises, a Greek line that also plies the Mediterranean.

"While there are always les-

'We've heard from avid cruisers that it's business as usual for them. Novice or virgin cruisers are a section of the public the industry is most concerned about right now.'

GABE SAGLIE
Senior editor, Travelzoo.com

sons to be learned from such extremely rare incidents, the fact remains that people still recognize the unique advantages and excellent value for money cruising provides," said Kyriakos (Kerry) Anastassiadis, CEO of Louis Cruises.

"We at Louis Cruises have not seen any negative impact on our

bookings so far. Our passengers choose to sail aboard our cruise ships in our home waters so as to be introduced to the beauties and vast history of Greece, the Greek islands, and Turkey by a local Cruise Lines International Association operator," added Anastassiadis.

As for consumers, a brief survey seems to indicate that seasoned cruisers will continue to book, as always, though perhaps with a closer scrutiny of each company.

Roger Savonen, a Boston resident who describes himself as an "experienced cruiser," said he would "absolutely not" stop going on cruises. However, he will look carefully at the safety requirements of the line before any future booking.

"In general, this incident will reinforce the importance of the crew having the education necessary to evacuate passengers," said Savonen.

Carol Bruzzese of Yonkers, N.Y., has been on one cruise and says she will think twice about another.

"I was actually thinking of taking another Mediterranean cruise but in the eastern part, Turkey and Greece, but now I will not do it. Even though I know it's usually safe, I would have such anxiety being on the ship that it wouldn't be worth it," said Bruzzese.

Karen Facey of Newtown, Conn., has a different perspective. Facey and her husband have taken 15 cruises, including trans-Atlantic cruises, and are planning another next month.

"This was totally a man-made problem. Any cruise we've taken has had a lifeboat drill at port. We use ships and lines that are well established versus those with state-of-the-art equipment. I check out cruise critic.com to see what people say about each vessel and itinerary," said Facey.

"I can't tell you how many calls I got over the weekend saying, 'So are you going on another cruise?' " added Facey.

Her answer? "Absolutely"

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