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FRESH TRACKS CANADA EXPANDS INTO U.S. MARKET

Vancouver-based operator finds niche selling Canadian wildlife adventure tours south of the border

Amanda Stutt



John Parker, founder and president, Fresh Tracks Canada

Fresh Tracks Canada, a Vancouver-based tour operator specializing in tailor-made vacations across Canada from rail journeys to wildlife adventure safaris, has recently appointed sales representatives outside of their headquarters in Vancouver to expand reach in the United States.

HelloWestTravel.com recently caught up with Fresh Tracks Canada founder and president John Parker to get news and details of the expansion.

According to Parker, tailor made vacations are a strong trend, and one that Fresh Tracks Canada is tapped into, finding its niche in land and rail combined authentic nature experiences.

He also said for the most part, Fresh Tracks has been flying under the radar , as the company has not focussed of marketing and public relations.

The company, which has been in business for 20 years, and has a partnership with Rocky Mountaineer, based its decision to expand into U.S based on the fact that 70 per cent of the company's market comes from the U.S.

Fresh Tracks has appointed Bill Boden to represent and increase the visibility of the company in the Bay Area of California, and Carol Sage to represents Fresh Tracks in her dealings with travel agent contacts in the south eastern US including Georgia, Florida, North & South Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. Both Boden and Sage have over 30 years' experience in the travel/tourism industries.

"Western Canada is a huge draw for visitors to Canada and the travel agency market in the U.S is a strong force. We're getting bookings from agents in the U.S without making an effort to market to them. Now, we are trying to service them through marketing in the U.S. It's a big opportunity to expand," Parker said.

"We'd like to reach out to agents because we feel that we have a lot to offer agents," he added.

Fresh Tracks started off selling Canada, and then branched out to sell tours in Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, but is now narrowing the focus to selling Canada.

"We've come back to our core and realized that to survive today, you have to be the best at something in your niche," Parker said.





Parker also said he believes that agents who have survived the last ten years of change in the travel industry are highly professional, and have a lot of staying power.

"I think agents today are more focussed, and much more conscious of the fact that their clients are going online and looking, if not buying, online- they've figured out who their clients are, what their market is and how they can add value, and that's what we've done as well," he continued.

Parker also said many agents who would like to sell Canada, may have so many destinations to worry about, that selling regions within Canada could be as foreign as selling Costa Rica, for example.

"We want to say to them- 'if you're selling Canada and want to give your clients the best possible experience- we can do that for you'. We've built a system behind the scenes to that we can customize anything in Canada- any hotel, any activity, any transportation, quickly and affordably. Agents can call our number, tell us what their clients are looking for, and we'll put it together for them," said Parker.

On Canadian wildlife nature safaris such as the Canadian Rail, Rockies and Grizzly Bear Adventure, the Great Bear Lodge Adventure or the Polar Bears Expedition by Train, travellers can expect real Grizzly and Polar bear sightings- from a safe and secure vantage point, of course.

For more information, go to freshtrackscanada.com.



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