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Hitz Adventures

**Darren Hitz of Hitz Adventures arranges trips full of activities for thrill-seekers including rafting for a bachelor party. Customers can also choose to go sky diving, on a cattle drive, skiing and more.**

**Local spotlight**

**Trip planner's wild adventures are Hitz**

Local businessman takes hassle out of arranging group retreats, puts the fun back in.

Neal Haldane / Special to The Detroit News

**FRANKLIN** -- Rob Bass and his friends met in Charleston, W.Va., and checked into a hotel just in time for happy hour and the start of a bachelor party weekend. A guide showed up to drive the group to a restaurant for dinner and then downtown for a night on the town.

The next day, Bass and his group went rafting on the New River before enjoying a pig roast, another night on the town and an evening at a local bed and breakfast. A great breakfast followed on Sunday morning before they headed off in different directions.

"The rafting was probably most memorable just because it was so fun and the river guides were hilarious, but the B&B we stayed at on Saturday night was also a big hit," Bass said. "It was the kind of place that none of us would normally think of visiting, but the owners were awesome and it was a great experience."

Darren Hitz organized the entire trip through his Adventure Bachelor Party business, which he formed three years ago to provide activities for men seeking more tasteful alternatives to the typical bachelor party experience.

"From the time we checked into the hotel we didn't have a care in the world until we got back to our cars a couple days later," Bass said about the trip last summer. "It was obvious Darren had done his research and picked the best partners to work with -- the restaurant on Friday, the outfitters for the rafting trip, and the B&B owners were all top-notch -- and the value was definitely there."

Hitz has now expanded his offerings to include bachelorette gatherings and adventure trips for corporate outings and church groups under the umbrella banner of Hitz Adventures. Customers can select from a wide range of activities that include rafting, cattle drives, sky diving, fishing, shooting, golfing, motoring and skiing.

"I take people out of their element and put them into a foreign environment to create memories," Hitz said.

And many Americans are interested in taking an adventure trip, according to the Travel industry Association. One-half of U.S. adults have taken an adventure trip in the past five years, and almost a third of those travelers engaged in a "hard adventure" like whitewater rafting, scuba diving or mountain biking.

A recent trip, costing about \$400 per person, involved a group of 20 that went to Dallas for a cattle drive, skeet shooting and some mechanical bull riding.

Hitz set up a Web site where participants reviewed the itinerary and registered for the trip. Once the registration period ended, Hitz made the reservations, notified his business partners at the destination and completed the agenda.

So far, Hitz has sent about 500 people on adventures and booked about 40 trips last year. He'd like to better that in 2007 and plans to add more Michigan trips and briefer outings for people short on cash or time.

The adventures give participants a lot to talk about the next time they get together, Hitz said. Now, instead of reminiscing, again, about their high school or college experiences, friends can talk about landing a 300-pound hammerhead shark or the rush of skydiving from 13,000 feet.

"The main reason it's successful is the guys talk about it all the time," Hitz said. "This adds five or six more stories to their arsenal."

*Neal Haldane is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.*

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Hitz Adventures

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