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Business

Southern Terrain: not a trip, but an adventure

Aug 14, 2007
By Dave Schwab - La Jolla Light

An excursion led by Southern Terrain is more than a hiking tour - it's an adventure.

"Our objective is to enable our clients to physically, mentally and technically do something they never thought they could possibly do prior to this," said Kevin Jackson, a partner in the adventure firm that specializes in multi-day outdoor trips to places close to home like Mount Whitney in California, or far away, like Patagonia in South America. "We offer, through our exclusive program, life-changing experiences through our unique philosophy on adventure travel."

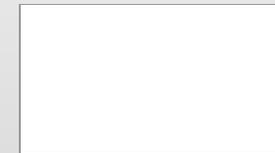
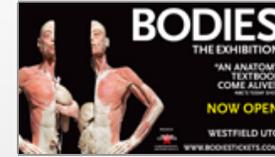
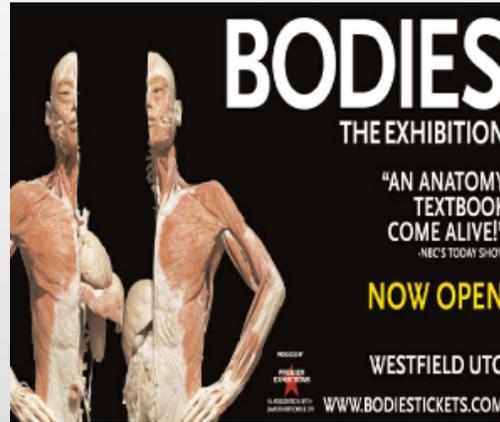
Unlike many other travel firms that conduct hiking excursions, Southern Terrain employs a three-phase approach to preparing clients for one of their "adventures." Jackson said many hikers neglect the physical preparation needed for a long hiking trip. "We view your fitness and your safety as critical components to success," he said.

Jackson noted the first phase of Southern Terrain's program involves physical preparation by the "initiate" for a long, endurance hike. That involves training for several days by a physical trainer employed by the travel firm. The second phase is the hike itself, with travel guide Jackson leading the way. The third and final phase involves recovery, recuperating from the rigors of an extended outdoor hike.

One happy camper who's availed herself of Southern Terrain's services is 59-year-old Patty Rogers of Ohio, who found out about the firm's hiking adventure to Patagonia through Google on the Internet. She and her husband went on the trip, which she acknowledged is difficult but "doable."

"Anyone can do it as long as you prepare yourself," said Rogers, who prepared for the 75-mile hike into and out of the national park by working out carrying a 50-pound backpack to condition herself. "I also started weight training with a trainer," she added, "and that was very beneficial."

Rogers' preparation paid off. She didn't get fatigued on her Patagonia trip and avoided most of the discomfort associated with straining her body without adequate preparation. She's glad she made the sacrifice, noting it was an unforgettable experience.



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"We kayaked right up to a glacier with a group for three days, and it was just great," she said. "Except for two days when it rained, the weather was spectacular. It was worth it all. The way the sun shone on it (glacier) made it look like an iridescent blue color. The mountains are spectacular in Patagonia. It's almost like you can reach out and touch them. I definitely would go again."

Jackson of Southern Terrain noted his group's outdoors tours are not geared toward sightseeing. "You're on an adventure that's designed to challenge you," he said. "We go to some of the most remote and spectacular places on the planet - the glaciers of Patagonia, the Sierra (California) wilderness, the snow mass Wilderness in Aspen (Colorado), New Zealand, Australia."

Jackson noted it has been his experience that preparing and conducting outings for small groups of people works out the best. When clients train together as a group, they already know each other and their abilities, which aids on executing a long hike.

"There is a very strong group dynamic on all of our trips with team-oriented activities," he said. "There are (personal) relationships that develop out of our trips."

Most clients of Southern Terrain are professionals successful in business who really want to do something out of the ordinary, but don't have time - or the knowledge - to prepare themselves adequately for such an undertaking.

Outings conducted by Southern Terrain are rated according to degree of difficulty, which also reflects the amount of training preparation involved for the trip. Group training required prior to the trip is not done in a gym, but outdoors in a real-life setting, to prepare clients for what they'll face when they arrive at their destination.

Excursions provided through Southern Terrain are all-inclusive packages which cover training, transportation, insurance and food. The 10-day Patagonia trip, for example, which involves six weeks of pre-training and one week of post training, costs \$7,250. An eight-day adventure to Mount Whitney in California, which involves eight weeks of training and one week of post training, is valued at \$4,500.

What Jackson promises people will get from a Southern Terrain excursion is a true sense of personal accomplishment. "What people get out of this is experiencing life," he said, "and the reward of increasing their self-confidence and their physical abilities."

Jackson was living the corporate lifestyle prior to becoming a travel guide. But there was something missing for him in that line of work. "I wanted to find something I was passionate about," he said. "I figured, I love the outdoors. I love business."

He found a way to combine the two through creating Southern Terrain. "I knew I could come away with some of the greatest times of my life," he said, "and that's sort of how it came about. I have three other business partners who all share the same vision. Our passion is to show people the world, and for people to do it safely and comfortably."

For more information about Southern Terrain call (858) 309-2311 or visit www.tstadventures.com.

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