

# Unusual 'adventures'

## A&E-style bio is among options

By Abigail Leichman  
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Perhaps you take an annual trip to Italy, looking at architecture and enjoying a week of great food.

Now imagine if you could add a private tour of the Hermes or Manolo Blahnik factory, let's say, where you could order up a custom bag or pumps to ship home.

It could make the vacation an experience you'd never forget.

That's what Robin Wilson calls a "wallbounce."

Members of her new Internet venture, wallbounce.com, get to purchase experiences they could never arrange on their own.

"Anybody can walk into a couture retailer and hire their private shopper," Wilson says. "But if you're a Wallbounce member, you get the personal shopper for eight hours, who will take you to the store's private warehouse and help you choose items for a special event."

"Then, on the day of the event, a hair stylist will come prepared to do your hair and makeup based on a picture of the dress and accessories you chose."

In other words, she says, "a wallbounce takes you to a place you've never been before."

Why the wacky name?

"It was one of those rainy-day moments last January," recalls Wilson, 35, a former business executive in Arlington, Va.

### Off-the-wall idea

"I was sitting there thinking, throwing a ball against the wall, and suddenly I thought, 'That's it! Wallbounce!' I immediately bought the domain name and sat on it for eight months, deciding what to do with it."

Inspiration came last summer as a group of her girlfriends listened to the description of an unforgettable evening at a backstage concert party.

"I'd pay anything to do that," one of the friends declared.

"Something went 'bling' in my mind," Wilson says. "She was saying she would love the opportunity to peer behind the curtain, and that's what I decided to provide — a way of packaging unique experiences."



CARMINE GALASSO / Knight Ridder/Tribune

**TALKING SHOP:** Robin Wilson (left), founder and CEO of Wallbounce.com, confers with professional organizer/author Mary Carlomagno in the Container Store in Paramus, N.J.

## LIMITED-EDITION EXPERIENCES

Here are some of the experiences offered by Wallbounce:

- ◆ Afternoon tea for four at the Harlem Tearoom, with choice of 24 teas, scones with whipped cream and strawberry jam, finger sandwiches and pastries (\$125).
- ◆ "Belly to Baby" black-and-white photography sessions, just before and after baby's arrival, with leading photographer Amanda K (\$1,000).
- ◆ Behind-the-scenes chocolate tasting for 10 at Debaue & Gallais in Manhattan (\$1,400).
- ◆ Simulated air combat in a T-34 mentor military airplane in Colorado (eight hours, \$800).
- ◆ "ReelBiography," a custom documentary produced by an award-winning production team, like having your own A&E bio (\$12,500).
- ◆ A weeklong whitewater rafting trip for six in the remote Futaleufu region of Patagonia, lodging with local families (\$15,000).
- ◆ Custom "Ultimate Shirt" from Individually Suited. Choose from 70 fabrics, eight collar styles, six cuff styles and other options (\$200).
- ◆ Six hours with Hoboken professional organizer Mary Carlomagno, plus a copy of her new book, "Give It Up!" and a home consultation (\$775).

Wilson figured vendors would want to partner with her: "It gains them a passive customer and builds brand loyalty."

Working feverishly for 12 weeks, Wilson launched Wallbounce with a wide assortment of adventures for sale, grouped geographically and categorically.

Most are pretty pricey — the couture-and-makeup adventure described above costs \$1,800 — but she swears she talked vendors down as far as they'd go.

For example, she tapped her buddy Jenny Gering, a Manhattan celebrity stylist who fetches \$8,000 a day for her wardrobe advice and shopping expertise. Gering agreed to offer three hours of one-to-one consulting or personalized shopping at any store for a mere \$925.

Two weeks after the site went live, Wilson had members from 17 states and the United King-

dom — the highest concentration of both vendors and clients is in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, she says — lining up to buy 33 limited-edition experiences.

### Auction option ahead

Wilson is in negotiations on 30 more deals, including the Manolo Blahnik tour. An auction option allowing not-for-profits to receive 75 percent of proceeds on celebrity auction items is planned for this year.

Gift certificates toward any experience are available, and members soon will be able to create wish lists of adventures.

Wilson says the only thing similar to her concept are adventure travel sites that arrange personalized excursions, such as safaris to Africa. And maybe she'll find a way to make a wallbounce out of that, too.