

THE SENSIBLE TRAVELER

**The Boston Globe**

## Sites look for travelers looking to do things

By Bruce Mohl, Globe Staff | November 20, 2005

Many guidebooks and websites offer things to do and places to see on your travels, but a few new companies think there are niches still to fill.

Sites such as WallBounce.com, SixNewThings.com, ThingsToDo.com, and DailyCandy.com try to give travelers ideas for vacations, side trips, attractions, and restaurants that are new and off the beaten track. Some are geared specifically for travelers, while others cater more to locals looking for something new.

WallBounce offers to arrange learning experiences, while the others traffic largely in information. It's too soon to tell if their information is unusual or useful enough to attract a following.

Each month, SixNewThings gives its corporate road warrior subscribers an idea of what's new and interesting in 70 cities across North America. The six items featured are gleaned from the two copublishers' own sources as well as the Internet, blogs, and podcasts.

Jeff Herrington, one of the publishers, said the idea is to give subscribers things to do but not overwhelm them or duplicate what would be in a standard guidebook.

"It's what's new, what's brand new," he said.

The latest Boston edition features a teapot exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, a new North End trattoria called Marco, the Lyric Stage Company production of "A Number," Yoga 301 on Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, a gold exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, and the new Ikea store in Stoughton.

ThingsToDo and DailyCandy offer a slightly different potpourri. ThingsToDo bills itself as a provider of US travel, recreation, and entertainment information. Users click on a state and receive a couple of spotlighted travel suggestions, plus links to more information about the area, regional attractions, lodging, outdoor recreation, and coming events.

DailyCandy promises a guide to what's hot, new, and undiscovered in nine cities -- Boston and seven other US cities, plus London. The site is geared more to the cities' residents who are looking for activities, but travel is a focus.

"It's like getting an e-mail from your clever, unpredictable, and totally-in-the-know best friend," the website says.

WallBounce, rather than just suggesting activities in a city, actually arranges offbeat and unusual forms of entertainment or learning experiences for those with plenty of disposable income.

"It's for people who don't want to do the mundane," said Robin Wilson, chief executive officer of the company. "Our goal is to be the premier provider of lifestyle experiences, offering the same sort of access a politician or a celebrity would get."

The site launched this month, so it's still working out the kinks. But its current offerings include a \$5,000 eight-course dinner for six at the chef's table at Alain Ducasse at the Essex House in New York; private screening of a movie at a 100-seat theater in Washington (\$2,800); a behind-the-scenes chocolate tasting at Debaube & Gallais in New York (\$1,400); and a five-day shark diving experience off San Diego (\$12,200).

Wilson has lots of big ideas. She wants to offer the chance to watch the Super Bowl from a blimp, design your

own Nike running shoes, or put together your own music show on satellite radio.

WallBounce currently charges its customers a fee for the experiences plus a markup for itself. Wilson said her goal eventually is to earn her fees directly from the providers themselves, offering them a way to market themselves or their services to a broader audience.

SixNewThings offers its listings for \$2 a month or a discounted rate to employees of companies that participate. Herrington said IBM Corp. is the company's first corporate client. DailyCandy and ThingsToDo are free, relying on advertising and referrals.

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