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Active at Altitude, residential training retreat in Estes Park, CO, responds to running boom and launches running-vacations.com website

AUGUST 9, 2010, ESTES PARK, COLORADO — Running continues to be a booming fitness activity in the USA, with race registrations in 2009 increasing more than 15% over the previous year. More than 72% of running events experienced growth in registrations in 2009 when compared with 2008. The data comes from Active Network, the largest provider of sports registration software in North America.

Alan Cole, vice president of Active Network's Media + Marketing division says, "Our Active Network data shows that more people than ever want to live a healthier lifestyle, and registering to participate in a running event is a commitment to do so. More importantly, people are also taking the necessary steps to train properly for these running events..."

Proper training for events has led to growth in many sectors - one such area that has seen consistent growth in the last decade has been the emergence of running camps. Typically the camps are an opportunity for a group of like minded runners to benefit from personalized coaching, workshops, and the opportunity to train in a new environment. Runners that have taken part in a running camp speak of the joy in the camaraderie and having time to dedicate to nothing other than their favourite sport – they live, breathe and think running 24 hours a day, excluding yoga, meditation and sleep time of course.

One example of the recent increase in demand for running camps has been the growth of Active at Altitude in Estes Park, Colorado. Active at Altitude is a residential retreat and training center at 8,200 feet in Estes Park, Colorado, gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. This majestic mountain lodge is ideally situated close to miles of trails over challenging and inspiring terrain that can literally take your breath away. The lodge offers accommodation options, so that guests can enjoy comfortable, relaxing surroundings, opt for a private room, or share a double room or bunk room. Terry Chiplin, owner of Active at Altitude, says, "The growth in demand for our running camps has been phenomenal. In 2010 we have already experienced an increase of runner numbers of more than 40% on our 2009 total, with more still to come. We have aimed specifically at niche markets, like adult women and trail running camps – we have been very pleased with the results so far, breaking into categories that are experiencing massive growth."

Running camps are only one mechanism for runners to benefit from an intense exposure to the kind of training and focus that can have a major impact and benefit to participants. Terry Chiplin adds, "We have had many runners say they would like to attend one of our camps, but couldn't make the dates that had been set. It became clear that there is a demand for packages that could contain many of the features and benefits found in a camp, combined with date flexibility to suit the runner's personal schedule. We came up with a solution for this market – running-vacations.com became a reality to meet this need."

Running-vacations.com is a unique service that provides a complete package for the runner on vacation. From accommodations, knowledge of local trails and resources, cross training opportunities, that can also include personalized coaching plans, either remotely, or on site, catering, etc. – a complete package is created matched to the requirements for the guest or group looking for the vacation.

A recent survey to its membership by ATRA (the American Trail Running Association), found that 48% intended to embark on a trail running vacation in the next 12 months, with 43% favouring summer, and 38% favouring fall as the time to go run. In terms of location, the mountains turned out to be the overwhelming favourite, with 88% preferring to be in or near the mountains, with 27% wanting to be

near the water. Not surprisingly given the majesty and beauty of the terrain, the Rocky Mountains turned out to be the favourite destination, with 38% of the votes, with the West Coast (CA, WA, OR) coming in at 25%.

Terry Chiplin adds, "Once the results of the survey were in, we could see that our lodge here in Estes Park was in a prime position to meet the demand for a running vacation location here in the Rocky Mountains. We could also see that it made sense to offer alternative locations, so we added our first additional destination, a condo in Winter Park on the West side of the Continental Divide. We will be adding additional locations over time in prime areas for runners; each location will be hand picked, offering a home-away-from-home experience at an affordable price. We can also source suitable accommodations for runners or groups that want to vacation in an area where we have yet to establish a principal location. We are confident that running-vacations.com will be another successful opportunity to capitalize on expanding niche markets."

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