

Women-only travel company serves a purpose

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Finding off-beat vacation destinations, enjoying some of the most well-known and iconic sites in Europe and other locations, is just the start with the queer-friendly Sister's on Purpose tour company. Travelers will have the chance to go on a truffle hunt in Italy and tour a schnapps factory in Germany. But it's the female-empowering collection of moments, meditation and spiritual connection that make these women-only tours more than just a vacation.

"We want to offer that special experience for women everywhere," said Debbie Turner, one of three founding members. "I've seen that women can be so hard on each other and so mean to one another. But in our tours we are offering a true, female-empowerment experience to build up womanhood."

The company was started by three sisters, who are native Utahns, Turner, Sylvia Lamb and Katy Montrone, and who gathered every year around springtime to catch up and enjoy each other's company. But after decades of the family-only tradition, the sisters decided to share their experiences with other women, and the company, Siblings by Chance – Sisters on Purpose, was born.

The women have extensive travel experience in Europe, particularly in Italy and Germany, where their first tours took place. And while the major sites, such as The Colosseum and Vatican City are explored, it's the more personal and local flares that make the trips so memorable. After crossing off the major tourist stops, the group of no more than 12 travelers make their way to the countryside, visiting villages and taking part in activities that are the culmination of years of traveling and networking, Turner said.

When women sign up for the tour, a member of the group will contact them to discuss what they want to take from the trip. With a complete itinerary, along with a journal for thought and record-keeping, travelers will have the chance to make the trip into something more than just a typical vacation.

"We cater and change every trip to fit the needs and desires of the women who are traveling with us," Turner said. "If our group members find that they're more interested in art history, or old churches, or whatever other site, that's what we'll do and find. We really want to make this an experience to remember."

The women often become very close in the eight-day international, or four-day local, trips and many remain friends after the tours, she said.

"We want to bring women together and celebrate our identity. It's an affirming and safe environment where we help everyone see they have a place and that they're beautiful," Turner said.

The tours have maintained their family-like closeness and from morning moments sharing thoughts to family-style meals, the group brings everyone closer.

The next tour will be in Sedona, Ariz., March 22-25, and will include hiking the monumental red-rock formations, a spa treatment, spiritual discovery and more. Other trips include Refresh in Germany, April 29-May 7, Revive in Seattle, Aug. 9-12, Replenish in Italy, Sept. 16-24, Rekindle in Zion, Oct. 11-14 and Rejoice in the Christmas Magic of Germany, Nov. 25-Dec. 3.

Sisters on Purpose also has a Build Your Own Trip option where participants can select a location and the sisters will help tailor a unique experience to fit each group.

"Before we do any planning on the Build Your Own Trip we'll talk with you and find out what you want to get out of the trip," Turner said. "Maybe you want to work on living in the moment and being happy with what you have. Or maybe you want to move on after losing someone close to you. Whatever the case, we can help create an experience to fit you and the members of your group."

The sisters are also available for service trips that might include, for example, four days of service in orphanages in Costa Rica and four days of a spa retreat.

The tours are designed to help make each participant feel welcome, enjoy the sites and cultures of the locations and grow as women.

“We all have different roles to play in life, and that’s particularly true in my family and that’s what makes our tours so different and special. Sylvia is the embracing-your-now sister. She will help you realize that you are complete and full right now. You don’t have to change anything. My role is the infinite possibilities, helping you see things with new eyes and staying open to new options. And Katy is the passionate-living sister,” Turner said. “We want to share what we’ve learned and learn from each other in every moment of the trip.”

For more information or to book a tour, go to sistersonpurpose.com.