



Family Travel Planning Made Easy: PreferredFamily.com

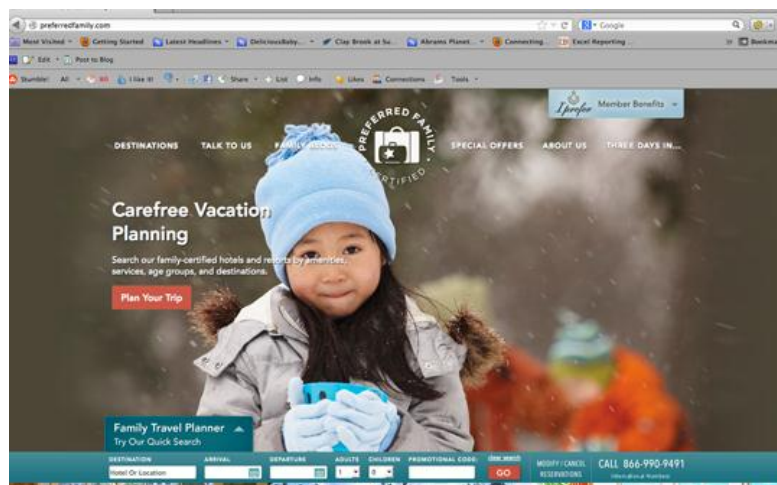
February 4th, 2013

Amie from Ciao Bambino

Preferred Hotel Group, a premier marketing association of independent hotels, has proven that they understand that families need customized information when planning vacations. Gone are the days when stating a hotel is family-friendly and not explaining why or how is enough online. In response to a call for more and better information, Preferred Hotel Group launched PreferredFamily.com, a dedicated site for families where they can discover [Preferred Family Certified Hotels](#) in a single, robust website full of invaluable tips and information.



See my [interview with Preferred Hotel Group's President, Lindsey Ueberroth](#) about the intention behind their dedicated family programming and Preferred's commitment to the family market. At the time of the interview, the new site was not launched. Now it's live! I've combed through this new resource. My take? This thoughtful tool is a must-use gem for families planning holidays around the world.



It's All About Search on PreferredFamily.com

The goal of the Preferred Family website is to enable parents to research hotels and destinations at different stages of the planning process. It's all about 'search' and how families can access lists of the best hotels for their needs for a given trip.

Search for Families with a Destination in Mind

Families who have a destination and dates in mind have immediate access to a list of qualified properties right from the Preferred Family homepage. The key is that beyond the initial list of certified properties that have availability for specified travel dates, there's an extensive set of additional filters to further refine the hotel list.

My favorite filters include check boxes for family-friendly pool, kids' club, and very specific amenities like a kitchenette as these are essentials that can make or break a hotel stay depending on the age of the children.

Of course, there is a basic age appropriate rating for every property too. Further refinement includes fun options like cooking classes and hotel style descriptions for families that really have something specific in mind.

Search for Families Who are Dreaming

Families at very early stages of the trip planning process may not know where they want to go, just that they want a certain type of holiday like a beach or winter sports-focused vacation. The Quick Search Family Trip Planner is configured just for this purpose and pulls up a list of applicable properties for these broader categories.

One important planning component of the dreaming stage is evaluating things to do in one destination over another. Preferred Family makes this easy with their [Three Days In ...](#) section, including insider scoop on popular activities, restaurants, and walks in a top destinations.

The beauty of this list as it's also something useful to reference once a destination is selected. I love the Ten Things to Know section with invaluable tidbits that help set expectations before arrival. Like the Fly, Fly, Fly, Away bullet on the [Singapore list](#) explaining the exact journey time to the airport and the fact that taxis are actually affordable. An example of critical information that differs for every destination. Or, the Hospital bullet on the [Los Angeles list](#) giving the exact address and phone number of the Children's Hospital in the area. Priceless.

Search by Family-Focused Special Offers

Preferred family offers a list of different customized packages for families. The real value here is that these packages are managed across the Preferred Hotel Group portfolio, just like those exclusive offers via Virtuoso and American Express.

I'm not a fan of hotels that charge families full pricing for a connecting room occupied only by children. Preferred Family Packages includes a ready list of all the hotels offering the second room at a 50% discount.

Or, the Exclusive Preferred Family Offers section lists hotels offering more extensive packages including amenities and activities. Like the Boston Harbor Hotel, a Ciao Bambino favorite, offering four tickets to the New England Aquarium, valet parking, and a welcome amenity of cookies and drinks for kids.

Printable Summary of Essential Hotel Information for Families

Once a destination and a short list of hotels have been selected, families can print and easily compare/contrast summaries of all the family-focused amenities and services offered at each hotel.

Family Blogs

Preferred Family looked outside the box and acknowledged that there are many different voices in the family travel channel providing critical and credible trip planning information to families. Preferred Family includes a live feed of articles from the top [family travel bloggers](#) with tips, advice, and destination related information. A few sentences and the title are highlighted, and then interested readers can quickly click-through the full blog article.

Live Body to Answer Questions and Help Book Rooms

It's also important to note that families using Preferred Family can use their booking engine to check pricing and confirm rooms, or call Preferred's 800 number, 866-990-9491 for a warm body who can answer questions or help with a booking.

Bravo Preferred for putting together a truly useful planning tool for families!

Preferred Hotel Group \$100 Visa Gift Card Giveaway

Preferred Hotel Group has given Ciao Bambino a \$100 Visa Gift Card to give away. Entering takes one-minute, literally. Simply leave a comment below (one comment per person) answering this question:

<<If you could go to any Destination on their [Three Days In ... list](#) right now, what would it be?>>

Entrants must also ["like" Preferred Hotel Group on Facebook](#) and [follow @PHGFamilyTravel](#) if you have an account. Note that these actions are completed in the comment, along with the answer to the question above.

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This contest will run through 9p PT on February 11, 2013. The contest is only open to residents of the US who are 18 years or older. Only one comment per person will be counted. Winner will be selected by Random.org. Winners will be contacted by a representative from Preferred Family if they win and will have 48 hours to respond to the email notification before another winner is selected.

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Editorial Note: Preferred Hotel Group paid us to review the Preferred Family website on Ciao Bambino. As always, our thoughts and opinions are our own.

