

One Year Post-Merge, Active Adventures & Austin Adventures Celebrates its “Success Story”

QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND, July 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the year since Active Adventures and Austin Adventures merged, the two brands have offered more adventures around the world, expanded customer service coverage, and maintained each brand's identity while charting a new path forward – just as was [promised a year ago](#). But the truly exciting thing is what happened outside the plan and how the two companies came together – and evolved – as one.

In a recent poll by the Adventure Travel Trade Association, 38% of respondents said they are interested in being acquired by another company, interested in merging with another company, or shutting their doors completely, making the outdoor adventure market prime for growth via merging and acquiring.

In a recent interview, Wendy van Lieshout, Active Adventures and Austin Adventures CEO, and Dan Austin, founder of Austin Adventures and current Director of Special Projects, share their thoughts on the merge, what lies ahead for the two adventure brands, and what they're most interested in when it comes to merging with, or acquiring, other adventure brands.

What was the most unexpected thing that happened post-merge?

WVL: A pleasant surprise has been how quickly the team has joined into one solid force behind the scenes, looking after both brands with equal amounts of love and dedication.

DA: We found it quite refreshing that from day one, the commitment to our guests and our approach to product development were in complete alignment. As we explored our individual



brand traits, we found we shared a strong common backbone that serves to guide us in our business and brand decisions. The teams joined together rather seamlessly with the biggest product challenge being how to consolidate trips and who should run what. Now we're offering the best of every destination and using our collective expertise to deliver an unbeatable experience.

How do you think your guests benefited from the merge?

WVL: Because we proudly celebrate what makes our two brands unique (we did heaps of research), we're able to really dial up what makes each brand special, and our guests are now experiencing that on their trips. More and even better WOW moments on Austin trips, and more life-changing and inspiration on Active trips; all underpinned with our sensational global guiding team, who will start to guide across both brands next season. Now our repeat guests can follow their guides across our brands and across the globe! Oh, and our guests are loving our enhanced accessibility! We're now available online and on phones 17 hours a day, 6 days a week.



Active Adventures & Austin Adventures
CEO, Wendy van Lieshout

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This coming year is all about maximizing what we have and building upon it. Expect to see even better trips, more departures, and perhaps perhaps even some exciting new destinations.

Watch this space!”

*Wendy van Lieshout, Active
Adventures and Austin
Adventures CEO*

DA: Successfully merging our [Adventurers Club](#) for past travelers is a huge benefit for guests, offering reciprocal benefits across both brands like exclusive offers, special recognition, referral programs and frequent traveler savings. Our guests will also benefit from an even stronger global operations team. We're now able to share “insider” knowledge with one another and expand our product offering – and delivery – significantly.

Now firmly “two brands, one company,” do you plan to continue to keep both brands’ unique identities?

WVL: Yes! We did extensive research and we're keeping them both. There may be some evolution and modernization of the brands to come, but at the heart they'll both remain super special in their own right.

What was your biggest challenge this year? Accomplishment?

DA: One of the biggest challenges turned into one of the biggest accomplishments. Integrating two teams thousands of miles apart during COVID was a huge undertaking. Virtual meetings, all-company group chats, and bi-weekly full company meetings were key to getting to know one another. Now as things open up, we're ready to meet face to face and celebrate the team building we've done virtually over the past 12 months.



Austin Adventures founder and current Director of Special Projects, Dan Austin

WVL: That nasty pandemic kept New Zealand borders closed for far too long, which has been challenging, particularly for our precious guiding community who were left with no work for more than 2 years. On the flipside, our biggest accomplishment has been the growth of our amazing Austin Adventures product featuring the U.S. National Parks. We're now taking more guests on U.S. trips than ever before.

Tell us how the teams have evolved this year.

WVL: Bringing further scale to the overall company has allowed us to really concentrate on development pathways for our team members. We've been able to create more leadership roles and bigger teams, and there's a strong focus on succession planning. We're supporting new leaders with ongoing training programs and it's lovely to see the strong cohesion between the NZ and USA teams, despite some challenging time zone differences!

What are you most excited for in the next year?

DA: Honestly, I'm excited to RELAX. It doesn't mean I'm stopping any time soon, but now I'm able to slow down a bit and focus on something I love – mergers and acquisitions and working with industry partners I've spent 30 years getting to know. I'm also excited to watch my daughter, Kasey, step out of her old man's shadow as she leads North American Operations for a new generation. I'm eager to sit back and watch it unfold as a proud dad.

WVL: After spending a year bringing the team together into one solid force, this coming year is all about maximizing what we have and building upon it. Our guests can expect to see even better

trips, more departures, and perhaps even some exciting new destinations. Plus, we're actively shopping for more companies and brands to join our growing adventure family, so there may well be new adventure travel niches joining us with new product types and styles. Watch this space!

"One thing is for sure, we are not sitting still," concludes van Lieshout. "We'll continue to grow as we share our deep love of adventure with an equally growing global community of adventure seekers. Stay tuned, we're confident the best is yet to come!"

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