

# Espresso makers, 3D TVs – and trips to Hawaii

COSTCO TRAVEL PROVIDES QUALITY VACATIONS  
POWERED BY SABRE WEB SERVICES®

Shopping at Costco is often compared to going on a treasure hunt.

When people talk about Costco, they frequently boast about great deals they've scored on gourmet foods, electronics, or household necessities. Loyal members flock to spacious warehouses for their favorite selections - often in bonus sizes at jaw-dropping prices.

In addition to great values on the finer things in life, or even just the staples, members can also arrange luxury vacations to Fiji, Caribbean cruises, or family reunions at Orlando theme parks, just to name a few.

"We operate quite differently from other travel companies," says General Manager Peter Gruening, Costco Travel.

Gruening's team is always searching for new travel gems to offer members. They focus on four-star and five-star trips – the kind you can't get just anywhere. The kinds of trips that delight and intrigue Costco members.

"We have a mission to provide exceptional value to our membership," Gruening says. "One of the ways we deliver member value is by keeping efficiency high and costs low. And Sabre helps us do that with their *Web Services* developer tools."

## VALUE GUIDES ALL DECISIONS

Special offerings that exemplify this philosophy are Kirkland Signature™ packages to desirable places like Maui. Gruening is proud Costco Travel makes such options available, since his value mission is consistent with the rest of the organization.



Click "Travel" at Costco.com

"Costco Travel operates like our warehouse parent," Gruening explains.

"We provide the best value from a selection of high-end travel products."

The vast majority of Costco Travel offerings are high-end resorts and cruise lines.

"We have a smaller selection, but that is a carefully planned part of our business model," Gruening says. "We screen rigorously and we only offer the best options."

Gruening is out to make the Costco Travel experience as familiar as the warehouse experience.

"When people talk about Costco, their eyes light up, and they rave about the warehouses and our products," says Gruening.

"They're usually not aware we sell travel so we want to build the same awareness and enthusiastic reaction for our travel offerings."

The travel group uses the same value strategy as the warehouses when designing vacation packages.

"With the Costco brand, we're able to drive volume through a limited selection of high-end properties and negotiate savings that we can pass along directly to our membership," Gruening says. "This means lower overall prices and/or upgrades and bonus amenities that make a vacation more memorable."



Peter Gruening

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*Peter Gruening  
Costco Travel*



The familiar storefront everyone knows and loves

## SEAMLESS SYSTEMS DRIVE LOW COST, HIGH EFFICIENCY

Sabre technology is a big part of Costco Travel's efforts to hold down costs and pass the savings along to Costco members.

"We've created our own proprietary booking tools in-house," Gruening says. "We then need to take all the data from the many airlines, hotels, and cruise lines and feed it into our own systems. Sabre makes this all seamless."

*Sabre's Web Services* integration tools also make development much easier for Costco Travel's information technology team. With *Web Services*, they're able to build custom applications and websites that connect directly to the Sabre marketplace. Costco Travel has also integrated the *Sabre Cruises® Web Services API* that provides extra functionality for cruise bookings.

"When an airline or cruise line makes a change, for example, there's no manual updating required," Gruening says. "It all flows directly between Sabre and our systems."

Because of that, Costco Travel can quickly bring new travel choices to Costco members.

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

"We like working with suppliers that also use Sabre technology on their end," Gruening says. "This allows us to practice business much more economically. When we begin selling trips for a new cruise partner who also uses Sabre, there's no extra one-off training required for our customer service staff."

"Sabre has clearly invested the time, energy and money to keep improving their product. They are a partner that's prepared and ready for the future."

*Peter Gruening*  
*Costco Travel*

The attention and care received from Sabre is also very helpful.

"Sabre is extraordinarily responsive," Gruening says. "If we need direct access to Sabre technology experts, they make it happen."

For example, Sabre helped Costco Travel create a custom air and cruise web platform that streamlines service to Costco members.

"It's not your typical client-vendor relationship," Gruening says. "We collaborate with Sabre to improve our combined solutions and make each other better."

Gruening says he and his team have also been impressed with how Sabre has worked hard to innovate and stay on top of the latest developments and trends in the industry.

"They have clearly invested the time, energy and money to keep improving their product. They are a partner that's prepared and ready for the future," says Gruening.



## 2012 KIRKLAND SIGNATURE™ GUIDED VACATIONS

Irish Adventure: Dublin, Galway, Killarney and More

## STAYING AHEAD

1. COSTCO TRAVEL OFFERS HIGH-QUALITY VACATION PACKAGES AND CRUISES TO FUN PLACES, JUST AS COSTCO WAREHOUSES OFFER HIGH-QUALITY GOODS AT GREAT PRICES.
2. COSTCO TRAVEL USES SABRE TECHNOLOGY TO GAIN EASY ACCESS, MORE EFFICIENCIES AND LOWER COSTS.
3. COSTCO TRAVEL AND SABRE WORK TOGETHER TO INNOVATE AND MAINTAIN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.