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## Rivers & Oceans: Creating the perfect adventure

SUZANNE ADAMS-OCKRASSA Sun Staff Reporter Nov 13, 2016



Jake Bacon, Arizona Daily Sun

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Jennifer Outland vice president of Rivers and Oceans and Robby Pitagora, the company owner, stand in their office on east Cedar Avenue Thursday afternoon. Outland described the company as water based adventure booking specialists.

### Rivers & Oceans

1500 E. Cedar Ave., Suite 86

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Rivers & Oceans has been helping adventure seekers find their perfect thrill for nearly 30 years in Flagstaff.

Robby Pitagora, the current owner of the business, said it was started in 1987 by Tim and Pam Whitney. Pam was a manager for a Grand Canyon rafting company and Tim applied for job at the company. The company grew from two employees to its current population of 12 employees. Pitagora bought the business from Pam about three years ago.

The Whitneys started Rivers & Oceans because there wasn't a whole lot of information at the time for people seeking to put together a rafting trip in the Grand Canyon," said Jennifer

Outland, Rivers & Oceans, vice president of marketing and development. "Now there's too much information out there."

People want to get out there and have an adventurous vacation, but there's so much information on the internet, they don't know where to start, she said.

Rivers & Oceans can build nearly any adventure trip you can think of, in nearly any location you can think of, for nearly any amount of time for nearly any size group, Pitagora said. They can send you on a one-day river rafting trip down the Colorado River or a 21-day adventure cruise to Alaska, she said.

They also have a series of adventure packages that people can choose from. They're currently working on an Antarctic cruise package, and they also have adventure camps and sea kayaking in Baja, Mexico and trips to New Zealand and Africa. The majority of which are centered on some sort of water feature.

The trips range in price depending on the location, travel costs, the type and number of adventures you want to go on, how much you want to pay and how long you want to stay, Pitagora said. Unlike some travel agencies, Rivers & Oceans doesn't charge clients a fee for their services. The price for a trip is the same as booking directly through the outfitter. The outfitters pay a commission to Rivers & Oceans.

"We're adventure building specialists," Outland said. "We know a huge variety of outfitters around the world. We do all of the research for our clients."

The company likes to work with smaller mom-and-pop-style outfitters, Pitagora said. They usually have greater investment in protecting the environment and providing a quality trip. Two items that Rivers & Oceans prides itself on, along with creating long-term relationships with its customers.

"We try to match our clients with the right outfitters and the right outfitters to the right clients," Pitagora said. Doing so makes sure that clients have a good trip that's geared toward their level of adventure and skill and outfitters know what to prepare for.

The company wants to make it a rewarding experience for all, he said.

"People go out there and they don't have access to their phones or computers or WiFi and it's a transformative experience for them," Pitagora said.

Especially for families, he said. They find themselves reconnecting and communicating without the interruption of a screen or phone. There are some people that specifically ask for trips that have no access to WiFi so they can reconnect with each other. It feels great to see that re-connection and the wonder for nature that clients come back with.

"We love helping people find good trips," Pitagora said. "It means a lot to us.

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Suzanne EMP-Adams



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