

# Where We're Going!!!

## WHEEL FUN RIDES THE WAVE OF BABY BOOMERS' LOVE AFFAIR WITH NOSTALGIA

(Ventura, California) --- If the words "Slingshot," "Deuce Coupe," and "Chopper" bring back memories of freedom, fun, and carefree days of youth, then Brian McInerney, Al Stonehouse, have done their job right.

The southern California duo head up a franchise called Wheel Fun Rentals that offers Baby Boomers - and their families - a chance to rediscover the joys of having some old-fashioned fun. "Somewhere along the line most of us got off our bikes and into automobiles," says McInerney, Wheel Fun Rentals founder and executive vice president. "Our purpose is to help you rediscover what you knew by heart as a kid - that once you climbed on your beloved bike and headed through the mud puddles, you were really free and headed for fun."

Mud puddles and beloved bikes notwithstanding, Wheel Fun Rentals delivers a menu of strictly 21st century specialty bicycles that satisfy the whims of even the most amused-challenged among us. Slingshots, Deuce Coupes, Quad Sports, Choppers, and Surreys are all standard fare at a Wheel Fun franchise.

Unabashedly nostalgic, Wheel Fun sports a logo that is reminiscent of a 1950s family taking a ride and having fun. "How many of us remember that we used to ride bikes just to have fun?" says McInerney. If your memory fails, here's a refresher course:

**Slingshot** A three wheeled bike that sits low to the ground on a central pivot and slingshots the rider from side to side while bobbing, weaving, and turning corners. It's a hoot to ride. Recommended for ages 6 to 60.

**Deuce Coupe** This is a two-seater and both people get to pedal. Adults or children can sit and pedal and there's a jump seat in the back to carry kids 6 years and younger. Neat fun. Good fun for ages 2 to 80.

**Quad Sport** A four-wheel ride down the memory lane of Go-carts. Formula One steering lets the single rider turn on a dime. Good for ages 6 to 60.

**The Chopper** A single seater designed for laid back cruising and sightseeing. The handlebars and seat are designed for comfort, just like a motorcycle chopper. Ideal for ages 6 to 60.

**Surreys** Made in Italy, this family four wheeled cycle seats from three to nine adults (up to six get to pedal) plus two children. Rack and pinion steering, drum brakes, and multiple independent chain drive pedaling systems. Great for ages 1 to 90.

Wheel Fun appeals to vacationing families as an amusement diversion and is usually an impulse buy. "Families will be walking down the boardwalk, or along the beach and see our surreys and one of the kids will pull the parents in and say, 'Hey we've got to try this,'" says Wheel Fun president Al Stonehouse. An important underlying aspect of the business is that it "invites involvement in the activity instead of just having an external distraction that is offered by so many amusement venues," says Stonehouse. Hourly rentals range from \$5 to \$35, depending on the vehicle.

"Ultimately, we have targeted just 225 territories that fit our selective criteria," says Stonehouse, Wheel Fun's president. Relying on extensive market research, Wheel Fun's growth strategy is focused on strong tourist and amusement-oriented areas like resorts, parks, campgrounds, and areas hosting a variety of amusement alternatives to vacationing families. "All told, our franchise system will grow to be just over 1,000 units with each franchisee operating four to five units within their territories," says Stonehouse.

Wheel Fun Rentals is riding on the crest of more than a few overarching retailing trends. The 77 million Baby Boomers are the market to reach, says Sanford Stein, a Minneapolis, Minn.-based retail trends predictor and analyst. "We're talking about a market that resembles a VW in a snake," he says. "It translates into four out of every 10 adults in this country. It's huge." According to Stein's research, Boomers make "buy decisions" based on the products and services that meet their characteristics as a group. What are the characteristics of the Boomer? "They are self-indulgent, big spenders, love vacations, prefer retro to new, adore having fun, and are addicted to small indulgences," says Stein. It follows that businesses that cater to this group are well positioned for long-term stability and growth.

Wheel Fun Rentals is eyeing that VW as it slowly moves through the snake - and seeing its future. McInerney and Stonehouse have packaged a business that invites you to take a step backward and forward at the same time - to rekindle the memories of childhood freedom and create memories of family fun. You'll know you've arrived when you can say "Yes!" to the question, "Have you ever pedaled a slingshot?"