**M Is for Mendocino**

**Proposal to the Marketing Committee**

Two years ago, I was making sales calls in Toronto when I noticed a women’s clothing store called “M is for Mendocino”. My marketing antenna went up and I contacted the owner who told me her parents had come to Mendocino County and loved it so much they named their store after us.

There are now 14 branches, mostly in high end neighborhoods in greater Toronto. Toronto now has 5.9 million people and is the third largest city in North America, having overtaken Chicago.

I contacted the owner and proposed a drawing for a week’s stay in Mendocino. She was very receptive. My contacts at SF Travel offered two nights at a hotel in the city as that would be the gateway. One of my tour operator partners offered to provide the cost of air for four people. We would have to supply hotel in Mendocino, food, an itinerary with attractions and a rental car.

At the last minute the tour operator pulled the plug and couldn’t supply air. VMC did not have the budget and my request to SF Travel to pay for air was declined so we put the project on hold.

I was in Toronto last month and met the same tour operator who now works for a new company and who is all in to moving this forward once again. She feels confident they can supply air.

I also met with the Visit California representative in Toronto who thought it was a great idea and who promised to help with publicity and be one of the local contacts. I likewise discussed the idea with my friend from SF Travel and they were also very receptive of the concept.

I estimate the total cost to MCTC to be in the $5,000 range. We would have to pay for the rental car, some promotions, perhaps some meals, a trip to Toronto to get things organized with Visit CA (the store owner wants it to be turn key) and perhaps for the PR event when the prizes are awarded.

My vision is to:

1. Working with the tour operator and local hotels etc. , create a fantastic one week tour package which they would give away (probably 2 prizes) and also sell to the general public. The contest would be open for one month and we have to make sure we comply with Canadian contest rules. The tour operator specializes in the high end properties. Of course all tour packages sold would include paid hotel rooms.

2. There would be a small poster in each store with paper entries for people who want to enter there. They could also enter on line. That would hopefully increase in store traffic. Each poster would of course advertise all the participants.

3. The stores and VMC would advertise the promotion on social media and the web site and perhaps in print as Canadians still read newspapers.

4. The Visit CA Canadian office would help and promote the contest in their channels in a way to be determined. They and the tour operator would navigate Canadian laws concerning prizes and privacy. There would be no cost to us for their help.

5. If the law allows, we could use the emails gathered for various promotions.

6. Hopefully with each package sold, the store would provide a gift certificate for a store purchase. That would also increase store traffic.

7. There would be a major PR event when the prizes are awarded. There was talk of a photo shoot in Mendocino County also, which we would pursue.

**My request is to get committee approval to move forward to explore if and when this marketing idea will work. The original timing was to have the promotion in January but that seems impossible at this late date so we would try for early spring. I assume the store owner is busy now with the holidays approaching.**

Thank you.

Richard Strom