

September/October 2009

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weekends

GO ON AN "OUT OF THE BOX DATE"

BY NATASHA WARZECHA

Sadly in today's society, romance strikes out to athletic games, laundry, and not-so-gourmet boxed dinners.

"There are so many people that need romance in their lives. People aren't intentional about romance. It's unfortunate," said LeeAnn Williams, founder of Out of the Box Dates.

Out of the Box Dates is a web-based Minnesota company that makes its business on making others happy. It is based on creating dates and good times for people whose relationships seem a little lack-luster.

The "boxes" are filled with information, itineraries, gift cards, assignments, and games all for the couple to enjoy and utilize on their date.

Out of the Box Dates was a concept that came to Williams after helping out her friend Tiffany Felty. "I love to plan, and I'm a hopeless romantic at heart."

"LeeAnn set up a date for my husband, myself, and our friends from England that were visiting. When we arrived at the cabin LeeAnn had home-baked a meal for us," said Felty, repeat client and friend.

After whole-hearted appreciation from the couple, a concept was born, Williams said.

But Out of the Box Dates is more than just dinner and a movie, these dates are about exploration—both physical and emotional. Williams studies and explores businesses and destinations to find the perfect fit for her ideas.

When researching for one of her versions of the date "Let the Games Begin", Williams spent a lot of time walking the town of Cold Spring and digging up historical information about the homes and businesses.

Felty and her husband particularly enjoy the conversations and questions Williams's poses to couples on each date.

"We have five kids. We did stuff before this, but it was never more than watch a movie and crash. The



dates help us to be more intentional about our conversations," Felty said.

The business continues to grow with repeat customers, recommendations and home parties.

Caroline Shandley and her husband received their first Out of the Box Date as a gift. "Generally, when we do fun stuff it is usually with our kids, family or friends. We rarely take time for just us. The first Out Of The Box Date was completely a surprise for me. My husband was in charge and knew where and what we were doing—not a typical situation for us. I think the whole experience brought us back as a couple and made us focus on our relationship," Shandley said.

Since then, the Shandleys have gone on three dates and given four as gifts. "The dates are so easy. All of the work is done for you. It takes the thinking and planning out of it," Shandley said. "Without them we never would have had this experience as a couple. He nor I wouldn't have known how fun a true date could be. We needed help and it worked. Often we as couples keep going on without taking a look at what our relationship needs to keep healthy," Shandley said.

For more information go to: www.outoftheboxdates.com



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