

Camera Fans

Tom Johnston

Travel Editor and Sales Promotion Manager, U.S. Camera

In view of recent predictions by the photographic industry that the Nation's 30 million camera owners will spend as much on their hobby in 1949 as they did last year—\$500 million—and in view of the fact that surveys reveal the average camera fan as strongly travel-minded, it is not surprising that many people in the travel business now are directing an important share of their selling efforts at this big and prosperous hobby group.

Probably the most successful and interesting job of packaging travel to appeal to the proven migratory instincts of camera enthusiasts is being done by U. S. Camera magazine whose million readers each month represent the cream of amateur and professional photographers from coast to coast. In conjunction with several carriers, U. S. Camera for the past 2 years has been packaging and selling photo tours—unique, conducted, all-expense photographic vacations in such places as Jasper National Park, Gaspe, Yellowstone, Bermuda, and Hawaii. Featuring an informal itinerary and offering the services of well-known, expert photographers as tour guides, these tours are packaged for all interest and age groups in photography—professionals, amateurs, beginners in photography, both movie and still fans, and color enthusiasts.

For the travel agent who sells these packages to the camera fan, there is a plum of a full 10 percent commission on the high price tag.

The most recent tour—12 days—operated to Jasper National Park in June with Canadian National Railways and was priced at \$520 from New York. The next tour is scheduled for this fall—a 17-day (October 28–November 13) tour of Hawaii priced at \$770 via Pan American Airways from San Francisco. Members of this camera party are also offered the option of stopping off at Trans World Airlines "Sun Country" before or after their visit to the Islands at no extra cost in fare.

In selling its fall photo tour to Hawaii, U. S. Camera is employing the same promotion and merchandising format used in pushing its other tours. Backed by advertising support by the two cooperating carriers, Trans World Airlines and Pan American Airways, each of five issues prior to the tour departure date is giving vigorous editorial coverage to the advantages of a photographic vacation in Hawaii and to the photo tour in particular. In

these same issues readers are invited to write to the U. S. Camera travel bureau for special folder outlining prices, itinerary, tour features, and other details. All inquiries are then followed up with a letter to the prospect, and an "alert" memo to the travel agent in the area from which the inquiry originates urging personal follow-up.

In addition to this advertising and the editorials, there are general news releases, special releases to photo and travel columnists, magazines and tour folders in TWA and Pan Am flight packets, window displays in camera and department stores, and direct mail efforts to a selection of the country's 2,500 organized camera clubs and photo organizations.

This year, more than ever, the local travel agent is being urged to push this photo tour to camera fans in his neighborhood. To help him reach these most susceptible customers, U. S. Camera will upon request, supply any travel agent with a list of camera and movie clubs in his region. The two carriers, Pan American Airways and Trans World Airlines are also offering travel films of Hawaii for showings at such organizations as might be interested in this tour.

Aside from the immediate revenue he can earn by booking the fall Hawaii tour, the travel agent by promoting these photo tours gains entree into probably the most travel-minded group in his community—people who if they cannot make the trip this fall may make one next winter, spring, or summer. To push this fall photo tour the travel agent can employ a variety of inexpensive promotion and merchandising ideas. The most obvious tie-in is, of course, with the local camera shop. Because of the natural affinity between travel and photography, an exchange of displays and mutual merchandising of each other's wares and services gives added strength to the selling program of each.

Camera tour members on the beach at Waikiki, Oahu.

