

In Business LAS VEGAS



November 14 - November 20, 2008

Current Issue

IBLV Blogs

Special Publications

Search In Business

In Business on TV

In Business in the Media

The List

Book of Lists

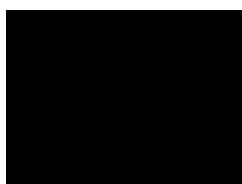
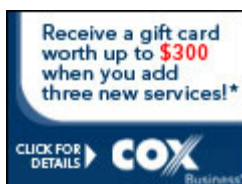
Meetings

Event Photos

Newsletters

About InBusiness

- [Media Kit](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



Local Directory

- Answering Service
- Assembly Service
- Audio Conferencing
- Background Screening
- Business Cash Advances
- Business Continuity
- Business Credit Cards
- Business Insurance
- Business Intelligence
- Business Security
- Business Succession
- Business Tax Preparation
- Businesses For Sale
- Call Centers

Retail

Vegas tourists tickled pink

By [Mark Hansel / Staff Writer](#)

Visitors to Hoover Dam or Red Rock Canyon have probably seen the brightly colored tour vehicles traveling Las Vegas Valley roads.

The signature pink Jeeps from the company of the same name are hard to miss.

The vehicles are becoming even harder to ignore as Pink Jeep Tours-Las Vegas is in the process of upgrading its fleet from Jeeps to more luxurious 10-seat Tour Trekkers, which are all-terrain vehicles specially designed for the company.

Pink Jeeps is one of the few Las Vegas tour companies that has off-road permits and the new vehicles will allow visitors to go off the beaten path in style and comfort.

The company, which was founded in Sedona, Ariz., has 10 tours that originate in Las Vegas. Destinations include the Grand Canyon (west rim), Mount Charleston, Valley of Fire State Park, Eldorado Canyon Gold Mine, Zion National Park, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Death Valley National Park and Hoover Dam.



Cruisin' off road: The new fleet of Tour Trekkers from Pink Jeep Tours-Las Vegas will allow visitors to travel off road in style and comfort. The company will have 24 Tour Trekkers in service by the end of the year and the new models will completely replace the fleet of traditional Jeeps in 2009.

COURTESY PHOTO

The company will have 24 Tour Trekkers by the end of the year and by next year the pink Jeeps will be phased out completely. The Tour Trekker is also a Jeep product, so even without the trademark vehicle, the company name will remain the same.

"The name has become so much a part of our identity, we wouldn't think of changing it," said Shawn Wendell, owner of Pink Jeep Tours.

Wendell purchased the company in 1988 from Arizona businessman Don Pratt.

A real estate investor, Pratt was taking a group of prospective buyers through a scenic region of Sedona in his Jeep in 1958. His guests were so distracted by the scenery, they no longer wanted to discuss real estate.

Pratt recognized the loss of a real estate deal could spawn a business opportunity and founded a tour company that offered regular trips through Sedona's more picturesque areas.

A few years later, while vacationing in Hawaii, Pratt noticed everything in the resort where he was staying was decorated in pink.

The decor became the inspiration for the name, and signature look, of Pratt's company.

When Wendell took the company over almost 30 years later, he recognized that what worked in Sedona would probably be attractive in Las Vegas.

He wanted to do more than just expand the concept, however.

Wendell envisioned a fleet of trained tour guides who would not just drive people to the sites, but also provide detailed information about the places they were visiting.

In 2001 Wendell opened Pink Jeep Tours "Las Vegas. He says the expansion, which coincided with the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, could not have been more ill-timed. The move had been planned for quite a while, however, so Wendell had no choice but to forge ahead despite the decline in tourism.

The company persevered, and as the tourists began returning to Las Vegas, Pink Jeep Tours "Las Vegas started to flourish.

"When you start at the bottom, you kind of have nowhere to go but up," Wendell said.

Pink Jeep Tours has 55 employees in Las Vegas and another 150 in Sedona.

In keeping with Wendell's plan to provide highly experienced guides, Pink Jeep Tours has 12 newly certified interpretive guides, who provide a greater understanding of the natural and cultural resources seen on the tours.

To receive the certification, guides completed an intensive four-day, 32-hour training course given by the National Association for Interpretation. The association has 5,000 members in 30 countries who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, commercial tour companies and theme parks. The training

enhanced the knowledge of native flora, fauna, geology, archaeology, history and Native American cultures that is required of all Pink Jeep guides.

Although the company is always looking to add tours, Wendell said it is content with the current offerings. "We plan basically just to grow the tour market that we are in now," Wendell said. "We feel that with this new vehicle, we can accommodate more types of tours."

The company is active in local charities and has forged a partnership with another organization for which pink is a significant color, the Nevada Cancer Institute. A portion of each Red Rock Canyon tour fee is donated to the institute.

"This is a company that is very in tune with the community and wants to give back," Wendell said. "We timed (the Red Rock promotion) to coincide with Breast Cancer Awareness Month so that it would really drive the point home."

It may seem a tour business that takes people away from the Strip would not get much support from the casino industry, but Wendell said he has managed to forge a good relationship with all of the major resorts.

"It's a nice distraction, and we always bring them back," Wendell said. "We are a daytime activity, so we get them back in time for dinner and the shows. We also add value to their stay, so when they want to rebook, they will rebook with that casino."

The company is primarily tourist based, but also provides tours for local companies and group outings.

Mark Hansel covers retail and real estate for *In Business Las Vegas* and its sister publication, the *Las Vegas Sun*. He can be reached at 259-4069 or at hansel@lasvegassun.com.

[IBLV Homepage](#)



A member of the Greenspun Media Group, publishers of:
Celebrity Week | Home & Design | In Business | Las Vegas Life | Las Vegas SUN
Las Vegas Weekly | Ralston/Flash | LV Magazine | Vegas Golfer | VEGAS Magazine

Use of this Web site constitutes acceptance of the InBusiness.com Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.
Advertise: On InBusiness.com.
Work for Greenspun Media Group. All contents @ 1998 - 2008 In Business .