



1-of-a-kind
traveler
Iris
Jones
contributing
travel editor

New airline in town irons out the kinks

ABOARD CONTINENTAL Airlines Flight 770 from Houston: I have just flown to Houston, Jacksonville and Savannah as the guest of Continental Airlines. Continental is a new airline in town, having started service in and out of Detroit May 1, and it is using all its promotional skills to let us know that it's here.

You may have become aware of Continental during the recent spate of promotional fares, especially the Mother's Day special that offered \$99 round-trip fare to any "r" American cities on its route map.

The fare announcement jammed their phone lines, was quickly sold out, and left a number of angry potential ticket buyers standing in line after the last seat was sold.

The number of seats was limited, so some people bought tickets but weren't able to reserve space; there was nothing left before the Dec. 11 deadline. That jammed the phone lines again, this time with enraged ticket holders who couldn't use their tickets.

TO RECTIFY this, the airline opened two additional days and added another weekly flight to the schedule, said Denny Bertelli of Continental. The original rules of the Mother's Day promotion were that women could buy the tickets, fly Saturday or Sunday to any city on the system before Dec. 11, 1983.

The new rules are that such a ticket holder can fly Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday. One additional flight per week has been added between Houston and Detroit; it flies to Detroit Saturday and back to Houston Sunday. That has opened up seats throughout the system to those who were fast and lucky enough to buy the tickets by the May 8 deadline.

Continental flies three flights a day out of Metro airport, two to Houston and one to Buffalo, N.Y. Any connections out of Detroit must be made in Houston. Like Eastern and Delta, Continental is a hub airline. All of its flights converge on either Houston or Dallas.

CONTINENTAL OFFERS ONE unusual feature: an on-board stand-up bar called The Pub. Half a dozen nearby seats are usually available for passengers who prefer to drink in this area of the plane rather than at their assigned seats.

Unfortunately, the pub is only available on DC-10s in the system, and none of them fly out of Detroit. To enjoy that unusual feature, you will have to be aboard a flight from Houston to Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Las Vegas, or some other major Western destination.

My experience aboard the four flights I have taken on this trip was the usual good-news, bad-news experience familiar to any regular traveler. Three of the four flights left and arrived on time. The fourth was an hour late, part of a one-hour delay that ran like a ripple through the system.

The planes are DC-9s. The on-board service is good. The food is edible, but not wonderful; it never is on domestic flights any more, is it?

THERE ARE STILL a few kinks in the baggage handling system. We always seemed to be standing around waiting for baggage, and in one case it arrived late on some other airline's conveyor.

The bad news for me was that my luggage did not arrive in Savannah when I did; the good news was that Continental sent it promptly on another airline rather than waiting until their next regularly scheduled flight, so I had it the next morning.

By the way, Continental is definitely not the direct route from Detroit to Savannah; both Eastern and Delta fly more directly through Atlanta. It only makes sense to go anywhere on the system if you can comfortably fly through Houston.

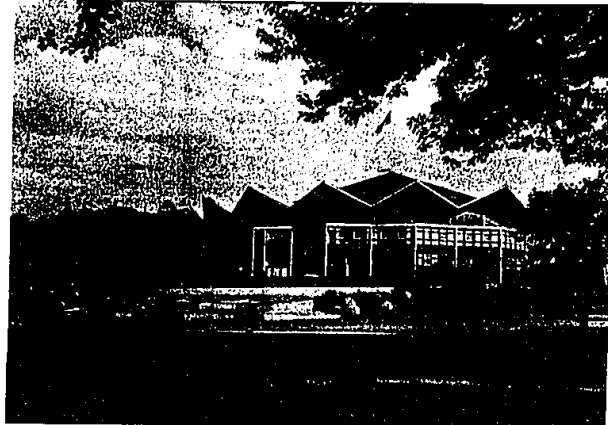
If Houston is a logical gateway for you, check Continental for any still-available promotional fares.

It's amazing how much you can learn about travel by just walking through an airline terminal from one flight to another. We had just disembarked from an Air Canada flight Windsor-Toronto and were lugging our cameras through the Toronto airport when we spotted an unfamiliar sign: Air Ontario.

You see the Air Ontario signs all over the wall in Toronto, "Toronto to Cleveland, \$73 round trip." It sounded interesting so we searched out the Air Ontario desk. A flight a 55-seat prop-jet Conquest out of Cleveland, Sania, London, Toronto and Ottawa.

Of special interest to Detroiters are flights from Sania to Toronto via London, Ontario. "The regular, senior citizen and youth fares Sania to Toronto are \$24, \$43 and \$46 (Canadian money) respectively."

Since Air Ontario doesn't have a Detroit office, you can book through Air Canada if you are interested. You might also be interested in another sign spotted on that same airport wall: Toronto. That small airline flies a 44-passenger Beechcraft out of Buttonville, half an hour north of Toronto, to Elliot, Lake, Ottawa, Brockville, Montreal, Kingston and Syracuse, N.Y.



MICKY JONES

Anyone planning a trip to the Festival Theater (above) in Stratford, Ontario, may be interested in the special lectures Cranbrook P.M. is offering next month. The lectures will cover "Macbeth" and "As You Like It," two of the Shakespearean plays highlighted at Stratford this season.

Shakespearean treat

Lecture to preview Stratford's offerings

Cranbrook P.M. will offer lectures of interest to anyone planning a trip to Stratford, Ontario this summer. The Shakespeare lectures, to be held at 8 p.m. Tuesday, June 14, and Thursday, June 16, originally were scheduled for Cranbrook's own Stratford tour, which will be Friday, June 17, and Saturday, June 18.

According to Margot Snyder, program director of Cranbrook P.M., anyone can sign up for the two lectures. They are led by Charles Shaw of the Cranbrook School English department who will read and talk about "Macbeth" and "As You Like It," two of the plays by Shakespeare highlighted at

Stratford this season. The Cranbrook trip includes both plays, plus an overnight at the Victorian Inn and dinner at Elm Hurst, a Victorian mansion in Ingersoll. The trip costs \$135 per person. The deadline is May 31.

Other trips to Stratford are being led by the Village Club of Birmingham, the Birmingham Community House and the newly established Stratford Festival America.

If you would like to attend the two Shakespeare lectures, it will cost you \$6 for one or \$10 for both. Call Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills at 645-3635.

New club to offer group travel

MarCon Tours in Troy has formed a Leisure Travel Club for individuals who wish to travel with a group. The club will have its first meeting/party 2-4 p.m. Sunday at MarCon

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