

Entrepreneur®

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extra

First Class

Our travel picks for 2008 offer the best in comfort, innovation and convenience—so you can get the most out of your trip.

Was 2007 the biggest mess for business travelers since 2001? Flight delays were at an all-time high, new carry-on restrictions meant long waits at baggage carousels for bags you never wanted to check in the first place, full planes meant the uncomfortable reality of middle seats and lengthy boarding times—not to mention the slow-

moving queues at security checkpoints.

Still, there have been bright spots amid the trials. There's the metasearch engine that's so well-engineered that it seriously slims down the time it takes to research the cheapest, most convenient itinerary; the frequency program that lets entrepreneurs enjoy the same perks and discounts as the big guys;

and the new hotel chain that scores big on style but low on price.

Hats off to the 2008 winners of the Business Travel Awards. The victors weren't chosen by a scientific method or reader poll—just for having noteworthy products and services that will, we hope, make this a banner year for travelers.

Best Car Rental Value:

Thrifty

Don't confuse Thrifty (thrifty.com) with second- or third-tier car rental companies. This isn't Rent a Wreck with pretensions; Thrifty has offices in 68 countries. We particularly like Thrifty's Corporate Account Program, which is open to companies of all sizes, even sole proprietorships. Once firms sign up, travelers are treated to up to 3,000 miles per month in the renting state and those bordering it (with possible restrictions), discounts on airport parking at Thrifty's 40 airport parking facilities, and automatic enrollment in the Blue Chip Express Rental Program, whose major distinction is the industry's first satisfaction guarantee.

If a Blue Chip rental experience is disappointing, the first day is free.

Unlike many of its competitors, Thrifty has a significant presence both in airports (120 airports in the U.S. and Canada) and in local markets. Bells and whistles for drivers include GPS-enabled navigation devices available at most locations in North America and prepaid Pass24 toll service, available in Dallas, Denver, Houston and nine cities in Florida, with more aggressive expansion on the way this year. A daily fee of \$8.95 (\$5.95 in Florida) includes all toll charges, and users get unlimited use of toll express lanes.



Photo Courtesy: Thrifty

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Thrifty
Car Rental