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SAA cut hampers travel to S America

NATASHA TIPPEL

SAA's decision to cancel its Buenos Aires route has travel industry stakeholders speculating about which airlines will fill the gap, as travel options to South America shrink, hampering an already limited market.

SAA spokesperson, **Tlali Tlali**, said last week that SAA would cut the route to Argentina, among others, as part of its long-term turnaround strategy to restore the airline to profitability. The airline is expected to cease operations in the first quarter of the new year.

Argentina was one of the two international routes identified for ceasing operations, the other being Beijing, China. However, feedback from government was that the airline should continue to operate its loss-making Beijing route, Tlali said. He added that this was a political decision, based on the fact that China was one of South Africa's biggest trading partners and a member of BRICS.

In a *Business Day* report, Department of Public Enterprises spokesman, **Mayihlome Tshwete**, said the decision to cut the Buenos Aires route had been a

commercial one, as the route was losing around R50m a year. The Beijing route, which loses about R300m, was being kept for "strategic and development reasons," he said.

Meanwhile, South African tour operators packaging South America say the move is bad news for business.

"This will be a blow for travellers to South America as the only other direct flight is SAA to São Paulo," says **John Ridler**, media and pr manager for Cullinan Outbound Tourism. The alternative, he says, will be to fly via the Middle East with one of the Gulf carriers. Both Emirates and Etihad offer flights to São Paulo. These flights take 25 hours as opposed to SAA's 10-hour flight.

Jane Davidson, director of Development Promotions, agrees: "South America is a growing market for South Africans due to the great value offered. For Buenos Aires we don't need visas and it is the best gateway for travel to many destinations in South America, including the Iguazu Falls and Antarctica, which has a growing interest in South Africa. "We have seen massive interest and growth in G Adventures for travel to

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Friendly faces

The weather may have been ghastly, but there was nothing sinister about last month's **Thirsty's**, held on Halloween, October 31, at the Premier Hotel Cape Manor in Cape Town. Feeling the warmth of another successful event (and perhaps a few glasses of wine) are, from left: **Wally Gaynor** (Club Travel), **Maureen Grossi** (British Airways), **Marcos Brandão** (Club Travel) and **Jacqui Van Dooren** (Development Promotions). For more pics, see page 10. Photo: Natasha Tippel

SAX and Airlink slug it out over routes

DORINE REINSTEIN

SA EXPRESS and Airlink have started a price war by launching services on routes where each airline previously had exclusivity.

SA Express launched services between Cape Town and George, Johannesburg and Nelspruit and Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg this month, routes on which Airlink used

to operate exclusively. Airlink retaliated by launching routes on SAX's turf, namely Johannesburg-Richards Bay and Johannesburg-Kimberley from November 18 and Johannesburg-Gaborone, from January 20.

Rodger Foster, Airlink ceo, says SAX's entry on to Airlink's routes can't be considered 'healthy competition'. He accuses SAX of having ulterior

motives, as it will be impossible for both carriers to sustain the competition on these specific routes. "This is a lose-lose situation. It is a fierce and bloody competition following SAX's vindictive and calculated move to launch these routes," he said. According to Rodger, both carriers are certain to sustain considerable losses.

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LH: ADM disputes

AGENTS with Lufthansa ADM disputes will need to lodge these via the BSPLink from December 1, where there is a dispute tool. Previously, disputes could be sent in writing to jnbadm@dlh.de. For any queries, email KRK. ADMDispute@service.dlh.de or see Travelinfo for details. ■



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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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Published by
Travel & Trade Publishing (Pty) Ltd
Printed by Juka Printing (Pty) Ltd

Phone: (011) 327-4062
Fax: (011) 327-4094

E-mail: tnw@nowmedia.co.za
Web: www.nowmedia.co.za

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Subs tvsubs@nowmedia.co.za

Annual Subscription:
RSA R560.00 SADC R620.00 Foreign R830.00

Domestic readers may receive up to 10 copies per subscription to one address



Seeing double!

Kenya Airways is offering travellers a chance to earn double miles on its Flying Blue frequent flyer programme on flights between Johannesburg and Nairobi, until November 30. Seeing twice the benefits is Helena Maxwell, SA sales manager for Kenya Airways. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

SAX and Airlink slug it out over routes

From page 1
The difference between the carriers, Rodger says, is that Airlink is a private entity, whereas SA Express is 100% owned by the Department of Public Enterprises and "technically insolvent, underpinned by taxpayers' money with little regard for corporate governance. How long the losses will continue will depend on whether the treasury and the state are willing to continue to fund SAX in this unnecessary and unsustainable

competition, which amounts to fruitless and wasteful expenditure and inevitable value destruction for both airlines", Rodger says. "To be clear, Airlink welcomes free and fair competition but what is happening here is far from fair. "The competition bloodbath, while unsustainable, will bring obvious short-term benefits in the form of cutthroat prices to the consumer," he added. **Brian van Wyk**, gm of SAX, has retaliated saying:

"I don't understand what Airlink is upset about. We welcome competition on our routes; they should do the same. We believe the routes are commercially viable, even for two carriers. The real question you should ask is why Airlink is so outraged. Could it be because they have been charging outrageous fares on these routes and are now afraid they'll now lose their monopoly and can't take advantage of the traveller any more?" ■



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SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Amadeus looks back on 10 years

TAMMY SUTHERNS

AMADEUS Southern Africa has seen a 515% growth in market share over the past 10 years. Speaking at the annual Amadeus Top Awards, held at Morrells Boutique Venue in Johannesburg on October 31, Southern Africa gm, **Peter Long**, said it was Amadeus's business philosophy, its passionate and dedicated staff, and its ability to develop solutions to keep up with trends in technology that were behind its success and significant growth over the last decade. "This growth is off a small base, in a very difficult market," he added.

Amadeus's position beyond SA,

into Africa, was also an important element of the company's success, Peter explained. Amadeus's continued investment in Africa has positioned it as a technology provider that caters for multinational corporations looking for more than just traditional travel management services. It also gives travel agents the tools and technology to cater for such clients.

Looking ahead, the technology company would continue to focus on developments for a more tech-savvy generation as well as technology systems that were easier to operate for travel agents. Smart phone apps and cloud-based systems were also being explored.

Amadeus Top awards...

- Best Independent Travel Consultant:** Roelien Dippenaar (Trip Travel ITC)
- Most Productive:** M & N Bangy Travel
- Best Growth:** Chanti Travel Pretoria
- Online Best Growth:** Travelstart
- Best Performing Tour Operator:** The Holiday Factory
- Partner in Technology and Innovation:** Beachcomber Tours
- Mozart Award:** Christo Hauptfleisch (XL Wild Travel)
- Amadeus Legend Award:** Gabor von Moricz (Von Moricz Bon Voyage Travel) ■



1. Happy 10 years! From left: Terry Munro from Beachcomber and Piet and Ilsje du Plooy from Trip Travel celebrate with Peter Long his decade of service to Amadeus.
2. Ilsje du Plooy from Trip Travel poses in the gardens with Jannine Adams and Jillian Marques from Amadeus.
3. Johan Strydom from World Leisure Holidays and Bernadette Hogg from Amadeus take a break from the festivities for a camera snap.
4. Wayne and Anri Robinson from SATC Magic Travel are ready for a night of glamour. Photos: Amadeus





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*Price excludes airfare and surcharges. Bookings must be made from 1 October 2013 to 29 March 2014. Valid for travel from 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014. Terms and conditions apply.




travel counsellors



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SOUTH AFRICAN
TRAVEL CENTRE

Simunye joins African Insignia

SIMUNYE Zulu Lodge near Melmoth, KwaZulu Natal, has joined the African Insignia Hotels collection.

Simunye can accommodate 48 guests sharing and the conference facilities can accommodate up to 50 delegates seated in cinema style or 30 delegates in a U-shape. Cocktail functions for 60 guests can also be arranged.

The property, which is under new management and ownership, will undergo expansion, which is expected to be completed by the middle of next year. A new conference centre, spa and



Rock Rooms at Simunye Zulu Lodge. Photo: simunyelodge.co.za

additional accommodation will be added.

The trading store arrival and departure points have been closed for renovation. The ox

wagon and tractor trailer are being brought in line with safety standards and until then the vehicles are not in use.

Google Transit hits Cape Town

WORLD Wide Creative (WWC) and MyCiTi have launched Google Transit in Cape Town, providing travellers with MyCiTi transport information via Google Maps.

The programme allows travellers to perform a 'point to point' search anywhere in the City of Cape Town and be offered the opportunity to carry out their journey using the public transport layer on Google Maps. The results

show detailed information, allowing the commuter to select between different journey options based on their preferences.

"This was an opportunity for World Wide Creative to lead the way when it comes to this kind of technology and now, for the first time, members of the public will be able to have access to all the information about MyCiTi at the touch of a button," said WWC md, **Mike Perk**.

Pocket guide planned for Johannesburg

A JO'BURG company has been granted publishing rights by In Your Pocket, a city-guide publisher and online tourism-information provider, to publish a city-guide next year.

Johannesburg In Your Pocket will provide information on

accommodation, restaurant options, attractions in the city, shopping and walking tours, and where to find free WiFi.

The guide will be aimed at visitors to the city as well as locals and will be distributed in hotels and selected bookshops and coffee

shops at a price of R20.

The guide will be updated quarterly and will have an initial print run of 8 000 copies.

It will also be available online, on mobile devices and as a free download from the web.

Rovos, Grande Roche partner to offer Paarl stop

ROVOS Rail has partnered with Grande Roche Hotel to offer passengers a connection at the Dal-Josafat Station in Paarl.

Grande Roche arranges a meet and greet service at the station, which includes hand towels, bottled water, a porter service and complimentary transfers between hotel and station.

"Guests being able to embark and disembark again from the Dal-Josafat station adds yet another dimension of ease and comfort for our guests," said **Anja Bosken**,

Grande Roche Hotel gm.

"Rovos Rail and Grande Roche have a long history together," said **Joy Strydom**, Cape Town sales manager of Rovos Rail. "In the past, Rovos Rail passengers staying at Grand Roche Hotel could embark or disembark in Paarl and then transfer directly to the hotel. This convenient service is once again being offered to Grande Roche Hotel guests, cutting down on their transfer times and giving them more time to spend in the Winelands." ■

Bongani Mountain Lodge opens spa

A SPA specialising in Africology skincare products has opened at Bongani Mountain Lodge in Mthethomusha Game Reserve, Mpumalanga.

African Hotels and Adventures (AHA), the tourism

property management business of Tourvest's Accommodation and Activities division, is looking to roll out the Africology range of products at each of its properties that has a spa –

Gondwana Game Reserve, Thakadu River Camp, Casa do Sol and Makalali Private Game Reserve in South Africa as well as Azanzi Beach Hotel in Zanzibar and Mara River Lodge in Kenya.

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Extra sailings on Regal Princess

PRINCESS Cruises has announced two additional Mediterranean sailings on *Regal Princess* in May. The seven-day cruise from Venice to Athens includes stops in Corfu, Mykonos and an overnight call in Istanbul on May 20. Then on May 27 it sails a six-day cruise from Athens to Venice, including calls at Kusadasi (for Ephesus), Santorini, Katakolon (for Olympia) and Dubrovnik. These voyages can be combined into a 13-day Grand Adventure or added to the previously announced voyage G420 for a full 20-day Mediterranean cruise.

New loyalty programme for Windstar

WINDSTAR Cruises' new guest loyalty programme, Windstar Yacht Club, launched on November 1. It was previously called Foremast Club. Members will receive the following exclusive benefits:

- Savings of 5% on standard cruise fares for most voyages. Member discount may be combinable with other special offers (excluding flash fares);
- Upgrades to the next highest cabin category at no cost, or an upgrade from a standard stateroom or suite to a premium suite starting at US\$500 (R4 897) per person (based on availability during check-in);
- Private member cocktail party;
- Dining with the captain or other ship's officers;
- Commemorative welcome aboard gift;
- Savings of 10% on purchases in the on-board gift shop;
- Referral rewards.

The referral rewards give Yacht Club members an opportunity for additional perks when they refer a friend to Windstar Cruises. For every new friend a member refers, the member will receive a US\$100 (R980) shipboard credit when final payment is received for the friend's first sailing. Additionally, each new guest who is referred to Windstar by a member will receive \$100 shipboard credit on their first voyage. Foremast members have been automatically enrolled in the new programme.

Norwegian launches new gift card

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has launched a new gift card that can be redeemed towards the purchase of a cruise or on-board expenditures. The prepaid cards are available in set denominations of US\$25 (R245), \$50 (R491), \$100 (R980), \$250 (R2 453) and \$500 (R4 906), and in customisable amounts of up to \$1 000 (R9 812). The cards can be used towards cruise purchases through a travel partner or guests' on-board experiences, such as spa treatments, shore excursions and dinners in one of the on-board speciality restaurants. The cards are available for purchase through a travel partner.

Oceania announces 2014 culinary classes

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled its new 2014 curriculum for the Bon Appétit Culinary Centre on the *Marina* and *Riviera*. The multimillion-dollar culinary centre features individual work stations with induction cooking tops. More than 20 different classes are offered, ranging from regional cuisines to the secrets of homemade pasta, with each session designed to expand guests' knowledge and appreciation of local flavours. Depending on the itinerary, classes can range from 45 minutes to three hours and cater for all levels of aptitude, from beginner to master-chef level. Culinary classes can be purchased in advance, starting from \$69 (R677) per person, with bookings based on availability. Highlights of the new 2014 classes include European Favourites, Italian Family Table, Viva Espana, Modern Nordic, Magical Morocco, Pasta from A to Z and Mastering Fish.

Nigeria implements new yellow fever cards

RACHAEL PENALUNA

SOUTH African expats working in Nigeria are advised that new yellow fever vaccination cards have been introduced.

The South African Society of Travel Medicine (SASTM) told TNW the new card applied to people who had been immunised in Nigeria. Travellers who have been immunised in South Africa do not require a new card.

Expats vaccinated in Nigeria who will be travelling to countries that require yellow fever certification, including South Africa, are advised to get the new card from Port Health offices in airports across Nigeria. The new card costs N1 000 (R64). Only the new cards issued at Port Health offices will be accepted by SA authorities.

The new card comes as a result of a dispute between the South African and Nigerian

governments, resulting in the deportation of Nigerian citizens from South Africa last year. Nigerian minister of health, **Prof Onyebuchi Chukwu**, says: "Easy access to the old cards was part of the confusion leading to the diplomatic row with South Africa. Enhanced security features, including special security ink and stamp, have been introduced to prevent the cards from being copied and issued fraudulently." ■

FC – the best company to work for

FLIGHT Centre has won Deloitte's 'Best Company To Work For Award' 2013 in the medium-sized category, as well as winning its Best Employer in the Tourism and Leisure sector for the 10th consecutive time. To take part, companies need to sign up and pay a participation fee.

Flight Centre previously won the 'Best Company To Work For Award' in 2010, setting a significant marker for the quality of its staff training and motivation. Repeating the coup this year confirms that its strategies are proving productive for both its staff and its business, says

executive gm, **Janine Salame**.

"For the past two years we have been really driving the mantra that 'Our Customers love what we do and Our People do what they love'. We keep our ear to the ground and as an executive team we are dedicated to develop, deploy and discipline the right strategies that will grow the business and grow our people."

The survey has been conducted annually by Deloitte



Janine Salame

since 2000 to identify the best companies to work for across the Southern African region as rated by their most important stakeholder group – their employees. SA gm of Flight Centre **Andrew Stark** says once a company is subscribed to

Deloitte's Best Company list, the company's executive team are asked how they feel as a company, which is then married to the employees' perception of it. ■

To the point



Skukuza Airport in the Kruger National Park will be closed until December 13 for maintenance. During the closure, there will be no flights into the airport. Alternative airports that can be used include Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport and Phalaborwa Airport.

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A photograph of a spice market stall. In the upper center, a clear plastic bag is filled with cinnamon sticks, tied with white string. Below it, a large pile of dark brown, finely ground spices sits in a white sack. In the foreground, there are several round, brown, textured items, possibly dried fruits or nuts, and a pile of bright red, dried flower petals or spices. The background is a rustic wooden wall with vertical planks. The overall scene is warm and aromatic.

Dubai invites you to taste its flavours

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Hello Tomorrow



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TNW's Thirsty's



TNW's Thirsty's headed down to Cape Town last month and – despite the wet weather – agents came out to the Premier Hotel Cape Manor in Sea Point to drink, eat and catch up with travel industry friends. TNW's next Thirsty's event (and the last one for 2013!) will be held in Johannesburg at the Protea Balalaika. Look out for that exclusive invitation! ■



A. Host of the evening, James Maposa (Premier Hotels), with Jenny Kutlu (JMC Travel Agency).
B. The happy couple... Paulo de Oliveira (Thompsons Holidays) and Chantal Kliche (Thompsons Travel) recently got engaged to be married.
C. Pretty in pink! Sure Travel's Vanya Lessing is

spotted with Club Travel's Marcos Brandão.
D. Cheers to Thirsty's! Mladen Lukic (Travel Counsellors) and Jacqui Van Dooren (Development Promotions).
E. Braving the wet weather out on the deck are Beachcomber Tours' Shelley Daniels and Sunet van der Merwe from Flight Centre.

F. Catching up on the latest news in the industry is Axel Simon (Lufthansa/SWISS), with Natasha Tippel (TNW).
G. Recruitment queens (from left): Malika Mohamed and Lee Botti of Lee Botti Associates.
 Photos: Kate Nathan

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New restaurant, retail partners for SANParks

SANPARKS has selected Mugg and Bean and Wimpy to operate restaurants in the Kruger National Park and has signed a retail agreement with Tourvest for operations in KNP, Tsitsikamma and Addo Elephant National Park. Mugg and Bean will operate restaurants in KNP's Lower Sabie, Olifants and Letaba camps, while the Pretoriuskop and Satara rest camps will have Wimpy restaurants. Operations are expected to commence in March. The Skukuza Selati restaurant will be operated by Ciao! Operations will commence in December. The main camp restaurant and take-away will be serviced by Cattle Baron and Bistro, with operations commencing in May due to extensive refurbishment.

Official opening for Kenya's Mahali Mzuri

MAHALI Mzuri, the latest addition to the Virgin Limited Edition portfolio, has officially opened in the Olare Motorogi Conservancy in Kenya's Maasai Mara ecosystem. The camp has 12 tents and can accommodate 24 guests. Activities include daily game drives, guided bush walks and visits to the local markets. Spa treatments, cultural day trips to learn more about the Maasai and day trips to the Maasai Mara National Reserve can also be arranged. Mahali Mzuri is a joint partnership between **Sir Richard Branson** and the Gehlot family, who run the Intex Group of companies in Kenya.

Dona Ana to reopen following revamp

THE Hotel Dona Ana at Vilanculos harbour in Mozambique, will reopen on December 2 following renovation, which included restoration and updating of the original art deco building. There are 22 rooms in the main hotel, including a presidential suite, two executive suites and 32 beach units.

Hannah Game Lodge undergoes soft refurb

HANNAH Game Lodge in Mpumalanga has completed a soft renovation of all its standard suites, and a lounge and coffee shop with a library are being added. The lodge also has a business centre with boardroom, two conference rooms and breakaway rooms, private bar and TV Lounge.

First Radisson Blu Hotel for Algeria

THE Radisson Blu Hotel, Algiers Hydra is set to open in early 2015. It will feature 138 guest rooms and will include Radisson Blu signature services such as free high-speed Internet access, a 315-sqm all-day dining restaurant, a lobby bar, 380 sqm of meeting and conference facilities and a wellness and fitness centre. The hotel will be located in the Hydra Commune, where the majority of the foreign embassies, ministries and universities are found, and less than 20km from the international airport.



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TNW6902



Moving house!

African Hotels & Adventures and travel industry friends recently celebrated the launch of its new offices in Autumn Street, Rivonia. Pictured here at the cocktail party soaking up the new atmosphere, are (from left): md Neil Bald; sales executive, Tobi Preston; and national sales manager Graeme Edmond.

LH introduces seat reservations

PASSENGERS in Lufthansa economy class will soon be able to select a seat when they book a flight – some for a fee.

From November 26, pax will be able to reserve their preferred seat when booking short-haul flights.

In the mid-price and flexible booking classes in economy, advance seat reservations

will be free. The service was previously only available for bookings in the most flexible booking classes.

Passengers who book flights in the lowest price booking class will have to pay €10 (R135) to reserve their preferred seat.

Pax without an advance seat reservation can still choose a seat free of charge at check-

in from 23 hours prior to departure. For long-haul flights, there is no charge for seat-selection except for emergency seat rows.

From November 26, pax can also pay a surcharge to book seats with more leg-room: €20 (R269) per flight on European flights (short-haul) and €60 (R808) on intercontinental (long-haul) flights. ■



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The above accommodation specials are all combinable and valid for certain seasons from 01 Nov '13 to 31 Oct '14. Kindly enquire for full details on each of the above-mentioned specials as each has its own proviso's - terms & conditions apply.

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Victoria Falls

Falls

ZIMBABWE ZAMBIA

Each side of the Victoria Falls offers different attractions and activities. Tammy Sutherns gives an overview.

It's all about the view

SENDING clients to Vic Falls? Industry stakeholders summarise the differences between the Zimbabwean and Zambian sides of the Falls. **John Ridler**, media and public relations manager for Cullinan Outbound Tourism, says: "The principal difference is the view. On the Zimbabwean side the town and hotels are largely set downstream of the Falls and on the Zambian side the hotels are all upstream (many on the river), with quite different views."

"On the Zimbabwean side you have a bustling village atmosphere, with a variety of hotels in all star categories, offering a wide range of services and prices, whereas on the Zambian side you have mainly lodges, many with all-inclusive packages. Both sides of the Falls offer a wide range of fun activities."

Zimbabwe

When it comes to accommodation, the Zimbabwe side has a stronger orientation towards hotels, says **Allan Eccles**, director of Falcon Africa Safaris. Most of the hotels are close to the Falls, with

good frontage and wide views. Zimbabwe also has a more consistent, year-round water flow, he points out.

In general, the Zimbabwean properties tend to offer accommodation on a B&B basis, with dinner an option and excursions on offer. Allan says both countries offer SADC rates and while Zambian properties are more expensive, once Zimbabwe visitors have paid for the extra meals, drinks and activities, the cost is very similar.

Major attractions on the Zimbabwe side include the Victoria Falls Steam Train, tours of Victoria Falls, the Crocodile Farm & Nature Sanctuary, bungee jumping, white-river rafting, crocodile cage diving and canoe safaris on the Zambezi River. Access to the Zimbabwean side of the Falls is through Victoria Falls Airport, 18km from the site.

Zambia

Allan says Livingstone on the Zambian side offers a wide choice of small boutique hotels and guest lodges. Some properties are at least 20 minutes' drive from the Falls.

"In Zambia, the guest lodges are generally inclusive of all meals, selected drinks and some activities," he points out.

In terms of holiday packaging, Allan says Zambia attracts clients who include Okavango or Chobe in an itinerary. By contrast, Zimbabwe is often a stand-alone Victoria Falls holiday.

On the Zambian side there is access to Devil's Pools where visitors can swim in season, as well as views of the bridge connecting Zambia and Zimbabwe. Major attractions include bungee jumping from the Falls bridge, helicopter 'Flight of the Angels' rides, and gorge swinging, abseiling and river rafting in the Bakota Gorge. There are also facilities such as spas, golf courses and cruises on the Zambezi.

Travel agents should keep in mind that travellers require a yellow fever vaccination to re-enter South Africa after visiting Zambia and in the dry season, the water flow can stop completely.

The air gateway to Livingstone is the Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport, which is 16km from the Falls.



Zip lining in the canopy of the forest at the edge of the Victoria Falls gorge. Photo: Wild Horizons

Specials from Air Holidays

AIR Holidays, which offers holidays on both sides of the Falls, is packaging Air Zimbabwe flights with accommodation, leading to vastly reduced package rates.

A two-night package at the Kingdom Hotel on the Zimbabwe side sells from R4 675pp, including flights, taxes, transfers,

and bed and breakfast accommodation.

The tour operator is also featuring the new Wild Horizons Canopy Tour, which can be added to a package at a cost of R490pp.

The two-and-a-half-hour excursion takes place with zip lines in the canopy of the forest at the edge of the Victoria Falls gorge.

Book it!

Sun International Dreams is offering SA passport holders a 'pay for two nights, stay for three' special from R6 707pps at the Royal Livingstone Hotel, Zambia. It is valid for travel until November 30. The price excludes airline taxes of around R2 956pp. It includes return flights JNB-LVI; transfers; three nights' accommodation; breakfast daily and a Dreams travel bag. Also included are park fees, unlimited access to Victoria Falls and travel insurance. Find more information on Travelinfo under Sun International Dreams.

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Elephants crossing the Zambezi near the Falls. Photo: StockXchng

Tailormade packages from Stanley & Livingstone

STANLEY & Livingstone Private Game Reserve is offering a range of packages for those looking to experience the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Three-night packages include the Romance Package, the Active Package,

the Family Package and the Classic Package with rack rates starting at US\$1 330 (R13 020). The single supplement begins at US\$320 (R3 133).

Each package includes themed itineraries as well as

extras such as sparkling wine and a fruit bowl on arrival. Optional activities include a tree canopy tour, cable slide, zip line and gorge swing. A combination of three activities is permitted on the Active and Family Packages.

Zim to focus on MICE industry

ZIMBABWE has announced plans to set up a National Conventions Bureau (NCB) in Victoria Falls before the end of the year. The bureau's main task will be to look for opportunities for the country to host major international gatherings.

Tourism minister, **Walter Mzembi**, was quoted in local newspapers saying the bureau would be "a cross-cutting platform, going out there to advocate, lobby, scout and secure rights to

international conventions, meetings and exhibitions and at the same time promoting incentive travel".

The private sector has cautiously welcomed the announcement. **Emmanuel Fundira**, group ce at Astoc Leisure Group and vice chairman of the Safari Operators Association of Zimbabwe, said the bureau would be a joint venture with the private sector.

The investment for the venture is estimated at

US\$6m (R59m) of which the government intends to contribute \$1,5m (R14,8m).

Emmanuel added that the downside was that government announcements were often made before any meaningful discussions with the private sector had commenced.

"Therefore we have no clue about whether the idea would receive meaningful support or whether it may just be a populist statement."

Expansion for Livingstone airport

ALL facilities at the new terminal at Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone are expected to be in operation this month.

The international terminal has been enlarged, increasing the number of check-in and immigration counters. Airlines have been provided with bigger offices and passengers can now enjoy three VIP lounges,

a viewing terrace and additional retail and duty-free shops. Features such as elevators, escalators, a banking hall and an upper floor restaurant are expected to be functional.

The US\$40 million (R395m) development has seen the structure expanded to three times its original size. The old terminal will be used for domestic flights.

Zambia considers VAT on tourism

A VAT charge on tourism is under consideration in Zambia.

According to the Zambian budget review for 2014, the country could add a 16% VAT charge to all tourism activities, from January 1, subject to parliamentary approval.

Members of the Zambian tourism trade have voiced concerns and are engaging with government on the

proposal. **Daan Brink** of Livingstone Adventure said although the additional cost could be viewed as a barrier to entry, the Zambian government was carrying out massive infrastructure upgrades. "With that in mind, in my opinion it is a good idea to raise funds that can be used for the sustainability of the road network in Zambia."

Did you know?

Air Namibia flies to Victoria Falls from Windhoek four times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. The direct service is operated by an Embraer ERJ135, which seats 37 passengers. Services on board include meals and beverages.

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Victoria Falls



Elephant Hills Resort Photo: African Sun Resort

Top accommodation with African Sun

AFRICAN Sun Hotels offers accommodation in three properties in Victoria Falls, among them the town's 'grand old lady', the Victoria Falls Hotel.

This elegant Edwardian five-star hotel has, for more than a century, hosted royalty, statesmen and celebrities and is just a 10-minute walk from the 'smoke that thunders'.

The Kingdom at Victoria Falls is even

closer to the Falls. The rooms are positioned around a man-made lake and a large number are suitable for families.

An attraction at the Elephant Hills Resort is an 18-hole championship golf course where game can be seen on the fairways. The property also has tennis and squash courts and a swimming pool. The hotel has also made its mark as a conference venue.

Sprayview targets conferences

CRESTA Hotels has been managing a Victoria Falls three-star favourite, The Sprayview, since August, following a period of extensive renovations. Now called the Cresta Sprayview, the hotel is located on the Zimbabwe side of the Falls and is targeting the conference market.

The Green Room can accommodate 140 guests for a cocktail event, 120 cinema-style, 80 for a banquet or

conference and 60 in a U-shape configuration. A boardroom called The Think Tank, seats 15.

A daily package includes refreshments on arrival, mid-morning and afternoon; a buffet or set-menu lunch; room hire, stationery and flip chart, cordials and mints.

Roddy Meiring, gm of Cresta Sprayview, says an official opening ceremony will be held this month.

Zim tourism tax reprieve – an 'ad hoc solution'

THE Zimbabwe government recently announced that it was extending a tax reprieve for the tourism industry to enable the sector to re-equip itself. This allows the industry to import duty-free capital goods for hotels and restaurants and items such as boating equipment and motor vehicles for the safari industry.

Walter Mzembe, said it would help revive the tourism sector and was quoted in local newspapers saying: "The reprieve is government's own capital contribution for the revival of

the tourism sector."

Emmanuel Fundira said the measure was a good idea and positive news for most operators but warned that its success largely depended on implementation.

He added that the ideal solution would be to provide a permanent incentive rather than ad hoc solutions.

He said most operators missed the opportunity to take advantage of the reprieve due to timing issues and lack of suitable funding methods. ■

Births, deaths, marriages, promotions – we want to know! Please fax or e-mail TNW's Tammy Sutherns, at tammys@nowmedia.co.za or (011) 327 4094.



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• Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
• Excellent telephone manner and written communication skills
• Good planning and organising skills
• Team player with a high level of cultural awareness
• "Customer focused" and "customer minded"
• Proven customer service excellence
• Able to work under pressure and work independently
• Fluent in English
• Prefer 2 years travel industry experience
• PC Literate

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New gm at SAA



Kendy Phohleli has been appointed SAA's acting general manager of commercial. He replaces **Manoj Papa**, whose last day is on November 18. Kendy's new role includes taking responsibility for SAA's commercial division, which includes sales, alliances, distribution, revenue management, fleet and network planning. Over recent months, Kendy was working as an aviation consultant and prior to this was Qatar's country manager for South Africa from January 2010 to June 2013.

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

More Seychelles options for SA travellers

AIR Seychelles and SAA have expanded their codeshare to cover Praslin, Seychelles, and SA cities, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London.

The airlines have also partnered on five additional

flights between Mahé and Johannesburg in December and January to cater for the busy holiday season.

The new agreement will see SAA place its 'SA' code on six Air Seychelles flights a week between Mahé and Praslin. In turn,

Air Seychelles will place its 'HM' code on 18 SAA flights a week between Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth, and five SAA flights a week between Johannesburg and East London. ■

Reed takes stake in Thebe

REED Exhibitions has signed a joint venture agreement with Thebe Tourism Group to acquire a majority share in SA-based Thebe Exhibitions & Projects Group (TEPG).

TEPG will be renamed Thebe Reed Exhibitions (Pty) Limited and will be owned 60% by Reed Exhibitions, 30% by Thebe Tourism Group, with **Carol Weaving**, md of TEPG, retaining 10%.

Exhibitions run by Thebe include Decorex, 100%

Design, Mediatech Africa, the Sports and Events Tourism Exchange and the Business Opportunities and Franchise Expo. "We are delighted with the partnership," said Carol, adding that it would help the group grow its footprint across the continent.

"We are excited about re-entering the market in Africa and combining Thebe's success in the region with Reed's global brands and extensive sales network,"

said **Andrew Fowles**, regional president, Reed Exhibitions.

The recently announced Africa Travel Week will be run by the newly formed Thebe Reed Exhibitions in conjunction with Reed Exhibitions. It will take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from April 28-May 3, 2014 and comprise three co-located shows – WTM Africa, IBTM Africa and ILTM Africa. ■

SAA cut hampers travel to S America

From page 1

South America and would be very disappointed to see the route disappear. We understand business is business for airlines and they have to cut non-profitable routes but when assessing routes one has to look at the long-term and potential growth as opposed to existing yields and profitability," she says.

Neal McAlpine, director of Pure Skiing/Pure Sport, says: "We have had groups for the Springbok tour to Argentina for the past two years as well as individuals going skiing in South America. This will make it more difficult and profoundly more expensive to sell the destination."

Although the termination of SAA's Argentina route limits options for SA travellers to the continent, its continued services to São Paulo will provide passengers with the means to connect to many destinations within South America through interlining

and other codeshare arrangements, says **Chris Zweigenthal**, ce of Aasa. "SAA provides daily services (except Wed) to São Paulo effectively as a hub and from there passengers can connect with South American domestic and regional airlines to other points in Brazil and the rest of South America."

In Brazil, SAA has TAM as a codeshare partner. With TAM, SAA can serve Argentina along with other destinations in South America via São Paulo, including Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela and multiple destinations within Brazil. Worth noting is that TAM has a cost-effective South American Airpass for foreign passengers wanting to travel to these destinations.

SAA's decision to cut its Buenos Aires route has also raised rumours and speculation about which airlines might take up the opportunity to

fly the route, including Aerolíneas Argentinas, which flew for several years between Buenos Aires and Johannesburg and Cape Town.

An analysis report by CAPA, an industry association that focuses on aviation market intelligence, says Argentinian authorities, who have been lobbying SAA and the SA government to retain the service, could request that Aerolíneas Argentinas launch services in the Argentina-South Africa market.

"But Aerolíneas is not likely to fare any better [than SAA] and also has been struggling to improve its financial position," the report says.

There is also speculation that Malaysia Airlines may reintroduce its Buenos Aires flight, via South Africa. The airline, which had Fifth Freedom rights to pick up passengers in South Africa and carry them to South America, cut flights in early 2012.

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