

# TNW

TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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## Price, not security, deters travellers to Kenya

DORINE REINSTEIN

TRAVEL from South Africa to Kenya is down – not because of recent security issues but because South Africans find the destination too expensive.

**Muriithi Ndegwa**, md of the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), told TNW at Indaba, that tourism numbers to Kenya from South Africa had declined by 11% for the period 2012 to 2013. He attributed the drop to the ceasing of operations of 1time's direct flight from Johannesburg to Mombasa.

Tour operators agree that price and air accessibility are the main deterrents for a beach holiday to Kenya.

**Juan Nel**, marketing director of Stay Africa, says Mombasa and Malindi were once good options for South Africans who couldn't afford Mauritius or Zanzibar, but the current high airfares have rendered the Kenyan coast uncompetitive. "The hotels and safari companies are doing their bit in making the destination as affordable as possible but we need the airlines to come to the party as well," he says.

Lower airfares are not on the cards, however. **Helena Maxwell**, sales manager of Kenya Airways, says the low airfares 1time used to charge on the Mombasa route are not

sustainable. A direct flight to Mombasa, although always on the radar, is also not planned for the near future, she adds.

A direct flight could help to turn the destination around. **Karin Sieberhagen**, marketing manager of Serena Hotels, says going via Nairobi has an impact on clients' decisions to visit Mombasa. "They would rather fly direct to Mauritius and Zanzibar."

**"Tour operators agree that price and air accessibility are the main deterrents for a beach holiday to Kenya."**

**Lynette Smith**, Cullinan Outbound Tourism's product and contracting executive for Africa, says the security threat should not be underestimated either. "Pirate activity on the north coast, and more recently the killing of civilians in the mall in Nairobi, have also had a negative effect on sales."

The drop in demand for Kenya seems to be contained to the coast. Tour operators say demand for safaris remains unchanged. **Frank Glettenberg**, ceo of Private Safaris, says: "Many SA

clients now combine a safari in Kenya with a beach stay in Zanzibar."

**Liesel van Zyl**, product manager of Go2Africa, says the operator advises clients to avoid Mombasa and the Kenyan north coast, including Lamu. The south coast is still in demand, however, although Liesel also admits a lot of travellers tend to rather opt for Zanzibar and Seychelles as add-on beach holidays to a Kenyan safari.

Meanwhile, the recently issued UK and US travel advisories have had a huge impact on Kenya tourism globally.

**Millicent Odhiambo**, ceo of the Mombasa and Coast Tourism Association told TNW that the evacuation of UK tourists from Kenya had conveyed the impression that there was a war on the horizon and had depicted the coastal region, especially Mombasa, as highly insecure. She says the truth is that stringent measures have been taken, both by the government and private sector, to ensure travellers are safe. "The travel advisories will have a ripple effect on the economy. It has been unwarranted." Millicent adds that the government has been lobbying Western countries to lift the advisories. ■



**Bon voyage!**

Thompsons Holidays is offering a package to Nice with its Pearl of the French Riviera tour, from R20 859pps (ex-JNB), R23 256 (ex-DUR) and R21 021 (ex-CPT), including taxes. The offer is valid for sales and travel until June 25 and includes return flights from JNB to Nice on Air France, return transfers, four nights' accommodation at the three-star Boreal Hotel in Nice, and breakfast daily. **Malcolm Slaughter**, Thompsons Holidays' reservations consultant, enjoys the French culture. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Thailand – cancellations not covered

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE fact that Thailand has imposed countrywide martial law could have serious consequences for the validity of your clients' travel insurance.

Nearly all travel insurance policies exclude all forms of civil war as well as martial law. This means that if a trip is delayed or clients want to cancel their trip because of the political unrest in the country,

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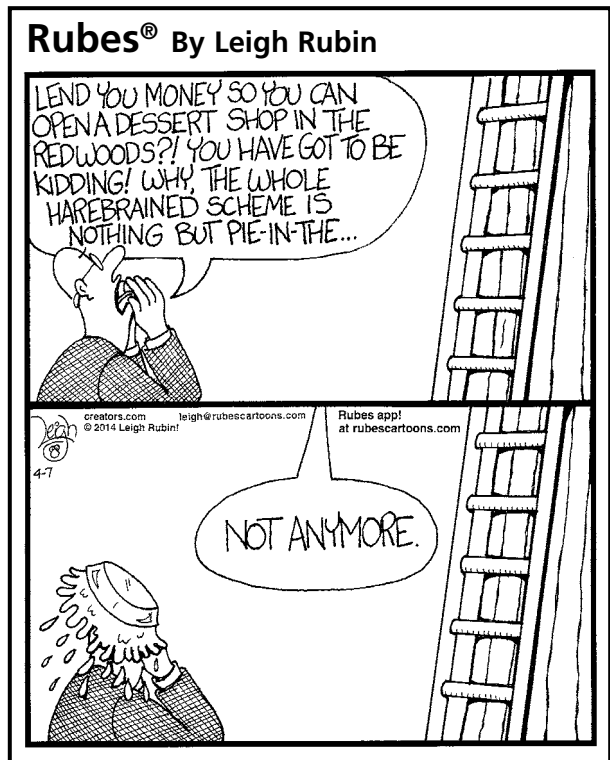
Emirates will add two more weekly flights to the Seychelles, increasing the existing 12 weekly scheduled flights to a double-daily service, with effect from October 28. **Orhan Abbas**, EK's senior vp of commercial operations for Latin America, Central and Southern Africa, said the decision followed customer demand. "Emirates' expanded schedule provides better connectivity and a wider choice for our customers connecting through Dubai. These additional seats every week are central to helping us meet the growing demand and support the Seychelles tourism industry," he said. Emirates operates an Airbus A340-500 on the route.

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# Hilton to open first hotel in Lusaka

**H**ILTON Worldwide will open its first hotel in Lusaka, Zambia, next year under the Hilton Garden Inn brand. Hilton Garden Inn Lusaka City Centre, which is expected to open in 2015, will comprise 148 rooms. Situated in Zambia's commercial hub, the hotel will feature a business centre, free Internet access, an outdoor pool, fitness centre

"The introduction of Hilton Garden Inn in Zambia marks a new chapter in the brand's evolving global portfolio."

marks a new chapter in the brand's evolving global portfolio. We are delighted to help meet the growing local demand for affordable, quality accommodation in Zambia's capital city." Hilton Garden Inn Lusaka City Centre will form part of an integrated, mixed-use development alongside corporate and government offices in the heart of the central business district. ■

# QR moves to new home

**Q**ATAR Airways has made Hamad International Airport (HIA) its new home, from May 27. HIA is 4km from Doha International Airport and has capacity to accommodate 30m passengers annually through Concourses A, B and C. When Concourses D and E open, the airport will be able to accommodate 50m passengers a year – the

airport's operating capacity. The new 600 000 sqm passenger terminal complex will feature high-end retail and food outlets; activity nodes that include computers with Internet access, children's play and rest areas, and more. The new airport check-in and retail areas alone are 12 times bigger than at the previous facility. The passenger terminal is

designed so that all transfers can take place under one roof, with short walking distances between gates and shorter connection times between flights. An extensive central area has been designed for duty free, other retail, food and beverage, amenities and airline lounges. The terminal will also have a 100-room transit hotel. ■

# Asata announces new partnership

**DORINE REINSTEIN**  
ASATA and the African Business Travel Association (ABTA) have signed an MOU that will see the each organisation represented at the other's events. Each association will have the opportunity to educate the other's members

on the importance of working together. **Otto de Vries**, Asata ceo, says: "Essentially this MOU gives Asata an opportunity to communicate to travel buyers that they should be partnering with our members for their corporate travel procurement." **Monique Swart**, ABTA

founder, says: "ABTA will also present to Asata members on a host of topics, to give them better insight into business travel trends, challenges and opportunities from our buyer members' perspective." The two organisations will not share databases. ■

# Thailand – cancellations not covered

**From page 1**  
they will not be entitled to payment from their travel insurance provider. **Simmy Micheli**, sales manager of TIC, says: "No insurance policy will cover you if you are frightened to travel. Disinclination to travel is an exclusion. How would an insurer measure the merits of cancelling because of trouble in a foreign country?" She adds that travellers are entitled to claim losses from TIC should an airline cancel its flight to a destination because of unforeseen or unexpected civil unrest. However, once the civil unrest begins, cover for this benefit ceases. For Thailand this means that any policies issued from now on will not cover this benefit.

**Uriah Jansen**, md of Oojah Travel Protection, says only the 'Cancel for Any Reason' policy will allow them to cancel their trip to Thailand while the country is under martial law. She says clients will still be covered for medical expenses while on holiday in Thailand. Even medical expenses incurred as a result of the political unrest will be covered, as long as travellers are not actively participating in the protests. Luggage loss and medical expenses will also be covered by TIC. Tourism in Thailand remains unaffected by the Thai army's decision to declare nationwide martial law in an attempt to invoke and restore peace in the country.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) reported that the army had not imposed any curfews in Bangkok or any other tourist destinations in Thailand. All public transport and tourist attractions, including airports, tourist sights and shopping malls, are currently open and operating normally. A spokesperson for TAT in South Africa told *TNW* the situation in Thailand was calm, so there was no need for South African travellers to cancel trips to the country. "Thailand is safe for travellers." She warned, however, that tourists should avoid rally sites and demonstration marches, as well as areas where crowds might gather. ■

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Circulation      tvlsubs@nowmedia.co.za

**TNW**  
TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY  
www.etnw.co.za  
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  
Address: Now Media Centre,  
32 Fricker Road, Illovo Boulevard,  
Illovo, Johannesburg.  
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### Shangri-La At The Shard opens its doors

SHANGRI-La Hotel At The Shard in London has officially opened its doors, making it the hotel group's first property in the UK. Located on floors 34 to 52 of the highest building in London, Shangri-La At The Shard is the city's first high-rise hotel, giving guests unparalleled views of London's most famous landmarks. Three different meeting spaces are available for conferences and meetings – Ren overlooks the River Thames and can accommodate up to 140 delegates; Li looks out over London Bridge and can host up to 30 guests, and Yi overlooks Tower Bridge and offers a more intimate boardroom setting for up to 10 delegates. Alternatively it can be booked as a reception for up to 20 guests.

### Great Plains opens Zarafa Dhow Suites

GREAT Plains Conservation has opened its Zarafa 'Dhow Suites' in the Selinda Reserve, Botswana. The two-storey suites offer an expansive verandah and private swimming pool overlooking the Zibidianja Lagoon. Upstairs, there is a dining area that also offers views across the lagoon. The property is sole use, with a private chef, staff, safari guide and vehicle. The suites feature two bedrooms either side of a lounge and dining area. The Dhow Suites cater for four adults, while one child can also be accommodated.



### Setting sail...

Cruises International hosted Jo'burg agents for a breakfast presentation at the Protea Hotel OR Tambo Airport on May 14. The presentation equipped agents with the latest product information on all nine brands in the Cruises International stable and updated them on the various benefits available to agents via its Shipmates porthole. (From left) **Jacqui Bowyer** (senior consultant, Travelleaders Travel Centre); **Tracey Krog** (commercial manager, Cruises International); and **Betty Chard** (manager, Highland Travel) enjoy a productive start to the morning. Photo: Debbie Badham



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## January deadline set for Zim tourism VAT

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE dreaded 15% Value Added Tax on payments for accommodation and tourism services by foreign visitors to Zimbabwe will become a reality from January 2015. This was announced during the African Sun breakfast in the presence of tourism minister, **Walter Mzembe**, at Indaba this month.

**Dr Shingi Munyeza**, African Sun ceo, said it was good news that a position had been reached on the implementation date, as now

the tourism industry could plan for it accordingly. He added that members of the trade recognised that it was unsustainable for the country not to implement VAT.

However, Shingi said he would continue to appeal to finance minister, **Patrick Chinamasa**, to extend the VAT deadline to give the tourism industry more time to recover from the financial crisis.

**Emmanuel Fundira**, group ceo of Astoc Leisure Group, said talks with the government were ongoing about the best timeframe for

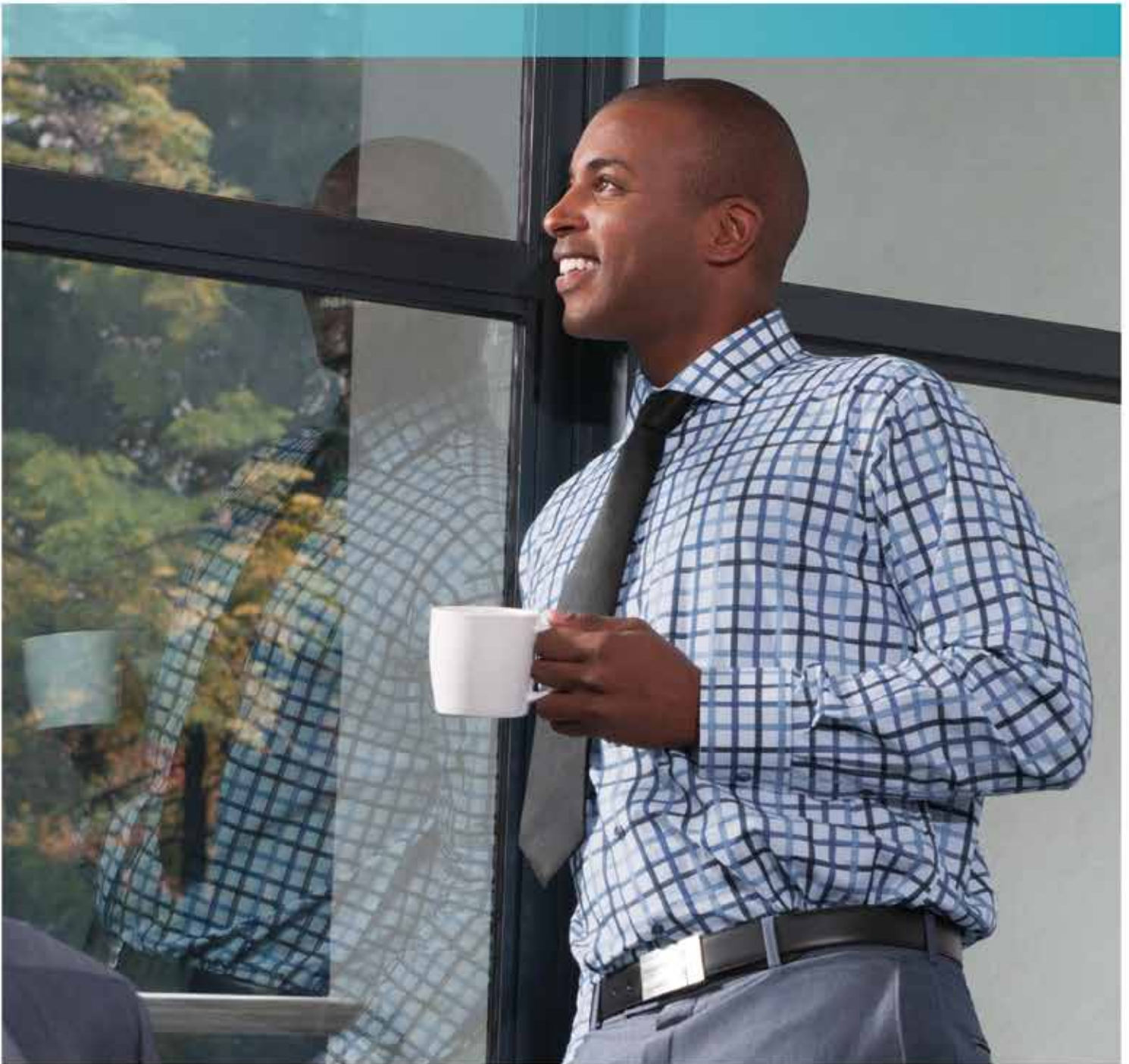
the implementation of the tax. He said an option of a more gradual implementation of the tax was being discussed.

Earlier this year, **Francis Ngwenya**, Zimbabwe Council for Tourism president, said an extra 15% on prices would be extremely disruptive and detrimental to the industry, and would almost certainly stop growth in its tracks. Francis explained in a letter to the minister of tourism that the Zimbabwe industry was still very fragile and needed a minimum of five years to recover. ■

### Helen Johnston selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Singapore Airlines.** 'Escape the Winter' early-bird fare – all-inclusive fares ex-JNB are from R8 990 to Singapore; R9 200 to Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Phuket; R9 160 to Hong Kong; R10 400 to Taipei, Beijing and Shanghai; R12 510 to Perth; and R13 170 to Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane. Refer to Travelinfo for more destinations and for fares ex-Cape Town. Ticketing period is until June 1. Travel permitted from July 14 to November 30. Blackout dates apply for travel to Australia.
- **Freeway Holidays.** Malaysia special rates are from R484 per room per night. Rate includes four-star accommodation with breakfast. Special expires May 30.
- **City Lodge.** 'Durban's Awesome Autumn' – City Lodge rates are from R850 per room per night. Road Lodge rates are from R500 per room per night. Offer is valid until July 31 (excludes May 30 to June 1, June 9-13 and July 4-6). Promotional code FUNSEASON.
- **The Villas Luxury Suite Hotel (Pretoria).** Weekend special – rates are from R995 for two people in a luxury suite. Rates include breakfast and are valid until August 31.
- **Discover the World.** Princess Cruises – Eastern Caribbean special. Seven nights from Fort Lauderdale return on board *Ruby Princess*. Rates are from R7 999pp sharing. Cruise departs December 6. Offer includes on-board accommodation with all meals, on-board entertainment, return airport-pier transfers and government fees.





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A snapshot of the week's airline news

### EY ancillaries available on Sabre

ETIHAD has joined the Sabre Travel Network by marketing and selling pre-reserved seats, extra leg-room seating and pre-paid bags on the Sabre GDS. **Shelly Terry**, vp of Supplier Merchandising for Sabre, said their sale was a valuable revenue stream for airlines and gave travellers more choices for their flight experience. By using one platform to sell multiple products, an airline can reduce its IT costs. Additionally, travel consultants can improve their efficiency and customer service levels by booking airline ancillaries within Sabre.

### AF unveils La Première Suite

AIR France has unveiled its new La Première Suite in Shanghai, which it will progressively install in 19 Boeing 777-300s from September. Each La Première cabin will come equipped with four suites that give passengers optimum privacy. The suites have a seat that transforms into a 77cm-wide flat bed, with a mattress for maximum comfort. Thick curtains provide total isolation, while an ottoman enables passengers to invite guests into their suite. Each passenger also has a personal 61cm HD touch screen, one of the largest on board. Completely versatile, the suite can be transformed into a lounge, restaurant or work area.

## Peermont plans R373m development programme

**P**EERMONT Hotels and Casinos announced at Indaba 2014 a series of refurbishments, new builds and upgrades of facilities at a number of its properties.

New developments, to the tune of over R373m, include a new casino resort in Burgersfort, Limpopo; entertainment theatre upgrades at Emperors Palace; and various conference room and bathroom upgrades and the opening of new restaurants and bars at various properties.

The development of a new casino resort, Thaba Moshate Hotel, Casino and Convention Resort in Burgersfort, is under construction. The R320m resort will comprise a three-star PeerMont

Metcourt hotel, casino and conference centre. Due for completion in April 2015, the resort will also include a 148-seat restaurant, showbar, teenage entertainment area, pool terrace and boma. Bookings are expected to open later this year.

Khoroni Hotel, Casino and Convention Resort in Thohoyandou, Limpopo, will be renovated, including parking, public bathrooms, the refurbishment of hotel suites and improved bedroom amenities. Mmabatho Palms Hotel, Casino and Convention Resort in Mafikeng, North West Province, has undergone a R4m upgrade.

PeerMont is also spending R30m expanding the facilities at its convention centre at Emperors

Palace in Johannesburg, with a further 1 800sqm of conference facilities, including additional sub-divisible medium-sized meeting rooms, a new boardroom, public toilets and an additional pre-assembly space and reception area.

"PeerMont now has a stronger balance sheet, with approximately R3bn in ordinary and preference share equity, R1,13bn in mezzanine debt, and R4,1bn in senior bank debt. A new working capital facility has also created headroom for future growth projects. This new capital structure is a significant step in the group's development and once again enables future growth opportunities," says **Anthony Puttergill**, PeerMont group ceo. ■

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## Etihad goes beyond luxury

ETIHAD Airways has launched a new luxury 'flying hotel suite' – The Residence – on its A380 services.

Accommodating single or double occupancy, it features a living room, separate double bedroom and ensuite shower room. Guests in The Residence will also have a personal butler.

According to international media reports, fares for the new product are expected to start in the region of US\$20 000 (R207 000). The service is being initially offered on London routes starting from December.

With the launch of these new products, EY will also redefine and rename its cabin classes.

The A380 will feature the First Apartments, which are fully private suites with a separate reclining lounge seat and full-length bed, as

well as a mini-bar, personal vanity unit and wardrobe.

On the B787, EY has designed an enhanced First Suite, adding many new features including a mini-bar.

The Business Studio and Economy Smart Seat will feature on both the A380 and the B787.

EY is introducing the latest Panasonic eX3 entertainment system across both fleets, providing more than 750 hours of on-demand entertainment.

The A380 aircraft will have full mobile and WiFi service while the B787 will be equipped with WiFi.

### A380, B787 destinations

The first destinations to receive Etihad Airways' A380 and B787 Dreamliner aircraft have also been announced.

The first A380 will operate

to London Heathrow from December, with a second A380 operating the route from Q1 2015. By the end of next year, EY will have five of the aircraft in service, with plans to also introduce operations to Sydney and New York JFK.

The first B787-9 will enter service in December followed by a second in January, initially flying to Washington DC, Düsseldorf and Mumbai. By the end of 2015, EY will have five B787s in operation.

The A380 is designed to carry 498 guests – two VIP guests in The Residence by Etihad; nine guests in the innovative First Class Apartments; 70 in the new Business Class Studios; and 417 guests in economy class.

The B787 features eight First Suites, 28 business-class seats and 199 economy-class seats. ■

## 9/11 museum opens

THE 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York opened its doors to the public on May 21.

The museum commemorates the victims who died during the 9/11 attack and also pays tribute to the Ground

Zero rescue and recovery workers who worked in the aftermath of the event.

The museum, which cost US\$700m (R7,3bn) to complete, is 21 metres underground and traces the original foundations of the fallen Twin Towers.

The 10 000 sqm exhibition includes 23 000 images, 500 hours of video and film and nearly 2 000 oral histories on the events of that day.

The entrance fee is \$24 (R250) per person. ■

Send your cruising news to [debbieb@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:debbieb@nowmedia.co.za)

# South Africans keen to travel – and spend

CHANA BOUCHER

RECENT travel surveys have shown that more South Africans plan to travel this year, and that the amount they will spend on their trips will increase.

According to TripAdvisor's TripBarometer, 40% of South Africans plan to spend more on travel in 2014. **Stephanie Boyle**, TripAdvisor's spokesperson for business in Europe, Middle East and Africa, says that while SA travellers are increasing their travel budgets by around 30% this year, they are doing more research to find better prices. Some 97% of respondents said they were looking for a good deal or special offer.

The survey found that there would be an increase in both domestic and international travel, with Australia being the top choice for international, followed by Brazil, the UK and the US. The most popular types of holidays for SA travellers are beach, family and adventure.

Stephanie admits that many of the survey respondents are likely to book their own travel online rather than through a travel agent, which is why the top destination could differ from the best sellers in the travel industry. However, fewer South Africans are making bookings online compared with the rest of the world.

*"The most popular types of holidays for SA travellers are beach, family and adventure."*

Similar trends were identified by Euromonitor's Travel Industry Forecast Review, which was presented by **Paz Casal**, Africa research manager of Euromonitor International, at WTM Africa earlier this month. Some of the key findings were that 2014 would be a better year, particularly for emerging markets; that emerging markets would spend

more on discretionary items such as travel and that online sales, which account for about 25% of all travel sales in 2013, continued to increase.

Sub-Saharan Africa, said Paz, was one of the fastest growing tourism regions, spurred by rising income levels and improved air access. She said domestic tourism continued to be a key pillar for SA as a result of strong campaigns by local stakeholders. Leisure travel was four times more common than business in 2013, however hotels in sub-Saharan Africa were driven by business rather than leisure tourists, she said.

Globally, the survey found that medical tourism was the leading growth category while cruise packages were the fastest growing in emerging markets. Paz added that the low-cost carrier model was gaining strength, which saw more legacy carriers either investing in a low-cost carrier or discounting their own fares. ■

## Crystal announces Baltimore voyage

CRYSTAL Cruises has announced its first-ever voyage departing from Baltimore, Maryland. The new itinerary kicks off on November 8 with an 11-day voyage aboard *Crystal Serenity*. From Baltimore, the liner sails to Miami, calling at Caribbean islands: Turk & Caicos, Curacao and Aruba, along with stops at Charleston, South Carolina and Norfolk, Virginia. The 'Colonial Collection' cruise starts at US\$3 700 (R38 700) per person and bookings close on June 30.

## New attractions aboard Celebrity Cruises

CELEBRITY Cruises will reveal a series of enhancements on board *Celebrity Equinox* after its scheduled dry dock in Spain. The ship features the new Gastrobar, serving 40 kinds of craft beer, and a new cocktail bar – Slush – as well as the Celebrity iLounge, a new Internet lounge for guests. Other additions include 'The Studio – Fine Art Photography' and boutique stores, including Michael Kors, Chanel, Clinique, Dior, Lancôme, Estée Lauder, Desigual and UNO de 50.

# Marriott expands in UAE and Africa

MARRIOTT International has strengthened its position in the Middle East and Africa by signing 14 new properties under its brand.

This month it announced that it had signed six properties in the UAE and Saudi Arabia and a further eight in Africa under the Protea Hotels brand, which has recently been taken over by Marriott.

Marriott will open a new 312-room Renaissance

Dubai Downtown Hotel in 2015, as well as opening the Dubai Marriott Hotel Citywalk and Marriott Executive Apartments Dubai City Walk in 2016.

Marriott currently operates 12 properties, spanning five brands in the Middle East.

In Saudi Arabia there are plans to open three hotels within the next two years – the Courtyard Hotel by Marriott Al Khobar; Residence Inn by Marriott Al Khobar;

and the Residence Inn by Marriott Jazan, which is set to open by the fourth quarter of this year.

In Africa, Protea Hotels, under Marriott, has signed eight new hotels – five will open within the first quarter of 2015 and include properties in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and Rwanda.

Currently, Marriott has 161 properties across 18 countries with a total of 23 701 rooms across eight brands. ■

# ABTA launches annual conference

THE African Business Travel Association (ABTA) will host its first annual conference from November 2-4 at the Sheraton Pretoria Hotel.

The conference will focus on business travel trends, challenges and opportunities, and will provide attendees with the opportunity to interact with fellow members of the

business travel industry and form contacts in emerging markets. It aims to equip travel professionals with greater knowledge of business travel in Africa.

"We are thrilled to be able to host an education-rich two-and-a-half-day conference, supported by top travel buyers, TMCs and suppliers across Africa.

This conference has been a long time coming and, with our ABTA members regularly indicating a real eagerness to be able to meet with their peers from other African countries, we feel that the time is now right to embark on this new and exciting project," says **Monique Swart**, founder of ABTA. ■



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# Exploring KZN



Durban was in the spotlight as visitors gathered at Indaba 2014. For some it was quite an adventure getting there. Caro Malherbe, who was hosted by SA Tourism, shares her experience of journeying down to KZN for the big event.

## Take a road trip!

**T**HERE are many places to explore along the N3 highway on the route to Durban from Johannesburg. Paying for tolls doesn't seem half as bad since the

N3 Gateway Tourism Association launched its heritage route, which shows local travellers where to stop over and explore heritage sites and attractions along the way.

Poles form part of a sculpture that, when one is positioned perfectly in front of it, depicts the silhouette of Mandela.

The farm on the site has a small shed that has been transformed into a history museum telling the story of Mandela's life. The experience is free but donations are welcome.

Also on the premises is the Truth Café, which offers traditional KZN meals such as curries, bunny-chows and braaied meat known as shisa nyama. Travellers should try the Mandela Malay curry for R55. There is also a gift shop where you can buy prints of the Capture Site on T-shirts, mugs and other memorabilia.



Preserved writings from the Apartheid era. Photo: Caro Malherbe

### Liliesleaf – a place of liberation

To set the tone for what was to be a historically enriching experience, the first stop on our trip was Liliesleaf in Rivonia, Johannesburg. One of the most underrated tourist attractions in South Africa, Liliesleaf was once the safe house where Nelson Mandela lived, disguised as a gardener under the pseudonym, David Motsamayi, on a white-owned farm. It was also the headquarters for members of the anti-Apartheid movement, where they plotted ways to overthrow the Apartheid government.

The site, which was officially launched as a tourism attraction in 2008, has interactive mechanics that allow visitors to watch and hear video recordings, documentaries, broadcasts and read preserved biographical writings from the Apartheid era.

A guided tour through Liliesleaf costs R110pp. A self-guided tour is R60, children under 12 pay R30 and pensioners pay R35. The tour begins with an informative documentary on apartheid, which is viewed in the newly built theatre on Liliesleaf farm.

### Nelson Mandela Capture Site

The sculpture at the Nelson Mandela Capture Site in Howick marks the place where Nelson Mandela was arrested in August 1962, which culminated in the Rivonia Treason Trial that would ultimately see him spend 27 years in prison.



Nelson Mandela Capture Site in Howick. Photo: Caro Malherbe

### On the way...

Just off the N3 is the Protea Hotel in Hilton. The four-star 97-room hotel is perfect for a stopover while travelling along the heritage route. Amenities include 500MB of free WiFi daily. A great feature is the pod-like day beds beside the pool.

### Pietermaritzburg museums

Pietermaritzburg is an essential stopping point on the N3 heritage route, with a wealth of South African history in its museums, from British and Boer to Indian and Zulu cultural and historic events. Museums in the area include the Voortrekker Museum/Msunduzi Museum, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum and Baynesfield Estate Museum.

### The Ecabazini Zulu Homestead

Travellers can spend a night in a traditional Zulu hut at the Ecabazini Zulu Homestead, close to Pietermaritzburg and next to the Albert Falls Dam.

Each four-person hut has paraffin lamps for lighting as there is no electricity and all cooking is done on the fire. Visitors experience a day in the life of a traditional Zulu tribe, doing day-to-day chores, making crafts and enjoying Zulu food and traditional dance performances.



Zulu dancers at Gandhi Phoenix Settlement. Photo: Caro Malherbe

### Gandhi Phoenix Settlement

Outside Durban is Inanda, a township rich in South African history. Here travellers will find the Gandhi Phoenix Settlement, a heritage site established in 1904 where Gandhi lived with his family. During this time, Gandhi took in political leaders and taught them how to stand up against the Apartheid government by practising principles of peace, justice and equality.

During the Inanda riots in 1985, the house was burnt down. It has now been restored, with original photographs and scriptures as part of a tour of the settlement.

Outside the house is a statue of Gandhi as well as a number of large poster boards with inscriptions of his teachings and life lessons.

There is now a clinic, a school and an HIV/Aids centre at the settlement. Upliftment projects in the area include traditional Zulu dance groups. The spiritual and informative tour is free of charge but donations can be given to help uplift the community of Inanda.



Durban North Beach

### Chill out in Durbs

Once travellers hit Durban they can head straight to Joe Cools, the perfect spot for sundowners or dinner, well-known for its view of the beach and lively atmosphere. The bar/restaurant is situated on the north beach promenade. Visitors can relax on the deck, watching the passing parade of local Durban surfers, beach bums and sand crafters. The restaurant manager/DJ, takes pride in his carefully selected playlist and will most likely ask guests if they approve of his beats. Food varies from seafood, burgers, pizza and meat grills to spicy chicken wings and Mexican nachos.

### Where to stay

The newly refurbished 32-storey Southern Sun Elangeni and Maharani Hotel has 734 sea-facing rooms overlooking the beach. The hotel also features three swimming pools and 15 conferencing rooms.

It's close to numerous restaurants and bars. Rows of bicycles parked outside encourage guests to explore the city or visitors can hop on to elaborately decorated rickshaws and take a ride along the beach front.

### Those tolls...

How much does it cost to drive down to Durban from Johannesburg? Here is a breakdown of the N3 toll fees... ■

De Hoek	Heidelberg-Villiers	R36
Wilge	Villiers-Warden	R50
Tugela	Warden-Frere	R53
Mooi	Frere-Cedara	R37
<b>Total:</b>		<b>R176</b>





Photo: DTCM

Dubai welcomed 10 million visitors in 2012, a statistic the city is determined to double by 2020. *TNW's* Debbie Badham reports from the Arabian Travel Market, courtesy of DTCM.

## A 'new' Dubai

**D**UBAI has launched a new brand and logo, which are key to achieving its 2020 goal of welcoming 20m annual visitors and coinciding with its hosting of Expo 2020.

The tourism authority revealed its new look and strategy at the Arabian Travel Market 2014, which was held from May 5-9 in the capital.

Director of communications for Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM), **Charlie Taylor**, said the city's brightly coloured new logo represented the fusion of the two cultures that comprised Dubai – the logo spells out Dubai in both

English and Arabic.

"The new brand shows a different side to Dubai, challenging the perception that currently exists. Dubai is known as a must-see destination but we want it to be viewed as a 'must-experience' destination."

He said the destination provided a wide variety of experiences for travellers of all ages and interests. "In Dubai you can dine in an aquarium, something you can't necessarily experience anywhere else."

The city had set many new records with its remarkable landmarks and attractions but

the time had come for the city to tell a broader story in the way of events and festivals, Charlie added.

Dubai hosted its first-ever Food and Motor festivals last year. It also plays host to the Indian Premier League and a number of different music events. "Because of the cultural diversity of the city, we make sure that we have something for everyone," Charlie said. South Africans would be particularly interested to hear that Trevor Noah was among the acts recently brought to the city.

The city will see the development of a number of



Dubai launched its new logo at the ATM. Photo: Debbie Badham

theme parks over the next couple of years, he added.

### Focus on MICE

An important point of focus for Dubai in its 2020 plan is the growth of MICE business.

Charlie said the city had plans to grow inbound MICE travel by 50% in 2020. Key to this objective will be the development of more three-

and four-star hotels.

Charlie said Dubai's ability to provide delegates with every possible kind of accommodation and facility stood the city in good stead to cater for MICE travellers. The capital's location is also a draw card, he said, making it an ideal destination for delegates from around the world to meet.

## Emirates accelerates growth

DTCM plans to attract 20 million visitors to the city, and Emirates Airline will fly them there – and beyond.

The airline aims to carry 70 million passengers per annum, across six continents, using 250 aircraft by 2020 – an objective that will see it become the largest airline in the world in terms of international passenger traffic.

Executive vp and chief commercial officer of Emirates, **Thierry Antinori**, said at ATM that the airline was well on its way to achieving its goals.

However, he said Emirates should not only continue its growth but begin to accelerate it. Over the last two years it acquired 58 new aircraft, helping it gain another 1.2 million seats per week. "We will continue to accelerate these figures to



Emirates' eye-catching stand at ATM. Photo: Debbie Badham

20 million seats by 2020."

He said Emirates held a strategic advantage in having Dubai as its home base. "Over a third of the world's population lives within a four-hour flight from Dubai and another two-thirds are within an eight-hour flight of the city."

Emirates also has an important role to play over

the next six years in helping turn the number of transit visitors through Dubai into stopovers. The airline has a large captive audience for which it has worked on developing stopover products. "Stopovers in Dubai give Emirates a considerable advantage because people want to see this city," Thierry said.

## Marriott gears up for 2020

MARRIOTT International has three new Dubai hotels in the pipeline, which will open in time to welcome visitors to Expo 2020.

The company has signed a long-term agreement with RDK Tourism Investment LLC to take over the management of the new 312-room Renaissance Dubai Downtown Hotel. The hotel group also plans to open another two properties: Dubai Marriott Hotel Citywalk and Marriott Executive Apartments Dubai City Walk; in the new outdoor lifestyle concept by Meraas Holding.

**Laoise Molloy**, pr

manager of the JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai, says Marriott is well positioned to cater for the influx of new business in 2020. Just 15 minutes from the Expo 2020 site, the JW Marriott Marquis has a convenient location.

"There are a number of developments taking place within the city, which

help add value to the JW Marriott offering," says Laoise. "The creek is scheduled for extension, which will bring it past the JW Marriott Marquis in the next three or four years. The Dubai Mall and Business Bay district, also in our near vicinity, will also be extended."

**"Marriott is well positioned to cater for the influx of new business in 2020."**



Wild Wadi Water Park Dubai. Photo: DTCM

## Summer fun in Dubai

DUBAI has an action-packed calendar of activities for those visiting the city this summer.

The fun starts on June 15 and ends on September 6.

Modhesh World, the indoor family edutainment centre, will open at the Dubai World Trade Centre between June and September. It will feature a teen lounge, children's entertainment area and a dedicated heritage zone, educating visitors on Dubai culture.

The trade centre will also host Dubai Sports World, offering visitors a range of different sporting facilities and activities.

Ramadan, which takes place from June 29 to July 27, sees the city come alive with the Dubai International Holy Quran Award, the Ramadan Forum and the Ramadan Tents. These help to enlighten visitors about Islamic traditions. At night, visitors can join locals in tents for the Iftar feast.

During Eid, which takes place in August, the city hosts music concerts and theatrical shows and cartoon characters provide performances throughout the malls. In the two weeks leading up to Eid Al Fitr, shoppers can participate in special promotions and competitions.

## #MyDubai

DTCM will launch its Smart Dubai initiative in June, which will see the launch of a new website and social media promotions. "Our goal is to personalise the experience people have in the city," says DTCM's **Charlie Taylor**.

The campaign invites both residents and visitors to share their personal experience of Dubai, with the purpose of creating "the world's first autobiography of a city".

Through documenting the everyday experiences of



Ski Dubai – one of the amazing experiences on offer. Photo: DTCM

people across the city, the initiative helps to provide the rest of the world with a unique perspective of Dubai that goes beyond the traditional tourist landmarks.

To date the campaign has received more than 75 000 photo and video submissions on Instagram. During the first week after its inception, #MyDubai received more

than 27 000 mentions on Twitter and 198 million Twitter impressions.

Contributions received are curated and shared across a number of different social media platforms. An online museum showcases the lives of people in Dubai through images, videos and stories that have been submitted by locals.

## 'The world's largest adventure park'

DUBAI is developing what it says is the world's largest man-made adventure park, featuring over 2 300sqm of zip wires, swings and other obstacle courses

Wire World Meydan Adventure Park will be located in the heart of Meydan. It will offer adventure-seekers the chance to swing, balance and traverse the course's

zip wires and ropes across a circuit of 70 different obstacles set among trees, across rocks and over poles and posts.

The park will also feature a bungee trampoline and a cycle park, with tracks for both expert riders and beginners. "We have something on offer for all ages and all abilities," says ceo and partner of

WL Hospitality Group, **Danny Haddad**. "This is a real alternative to anything that is currently available in the leisure outdoor entertainment market."

It is the first of several similar initiatives that WL Hospitality has lined up for locations across the UAE, and which are expected to launch over the coming year. ■

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## Appointments

■ **Greg Taylor** (right) will take up the position of gm at Pureskiing and Puresport, effective July 1. Previously, Greg worked for the company as business development manager in Pureskiing and Puresport's resorts in Austria and Italy. **Neal McAlpine**, who led the company for more than 15 years, leaves to pursue his own interests after a short sabbatical.



known travel and tourism companies such as Mantis Collection and Protea Hospitality, as well as having run her own business.

■ Cascade Country Manor has appointed new gm, **Barry Geyer**. Barry spent seven years as manager of the five-star Lyngrove



Country House and prior to his recent appointment was involved at Cascade Country Manor in wedding planning and function co-ordination as part of his own business.

■ **Madeleine Roux** has recently been appointed new gm of Tsogo Sun's Southern Sun Hemingways.



■ Thebe Reed Exhibitions has appointed **Sheree Simpson** gm for WTM Africa. During 25 years in the industry, Sheree has held roles in TBCSA, SATSA and TEP. She has also occupied senior positions at well-



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# Agent coughs up for supplier default

CHANA BOUCHER

**W**HAT would you be willing to do to save your client's trip when things don't go as planned? Would you use your own money to cover their loss when a supplier defaults? Would you take on debt? It sounds crazy, but this isn't unusual in the travel agent community.

When Dubai-based Quality Tours ceased operations last year, **Mymoena Dalvie**, manager of Distant Travel and Tours, borrowed R200 000 from her bond to save clients' trips that she had booked through the operator.

"For me it was about ethics. I didn't do it to gain anything. Clients pay and trust us with their hard-earned money and rely on us to make their dreams a reality," Mymoena says. She explains that she had to pay out more than the clients had originally paid because some of the suppliers refused to honour the rates they had with Quality Tours.

**Jonathan Gerber**, director of TAG Travel, says it is not uncommon. "Many customers are repeats and actually provide a type of annuity income, therefore it

is important to ensure that you protect this at all costs." He adds that agents have a reputation to protect.

Cases like this, says Jonathan, raise the importance of dealing with a trusted supplier. "The biggest risk is that the customer becomes aware of a problem and starts using another agency anyway," he says.

**"For me it was about ethics. Clients pay and trust us with their hard-earned money and rely on us to make their dreams a reality."**

"A client's holiday is their dream, you don't mess with it and you also don't mess with your reputation," says **Wally Gaynor**, md of Club Travel. It is for this reason, Wally says, in certain instances, such as a supplier going insolvent, that agents use their own money to protect their clients.

But does this make good business sense?

eTravel has had similar incidents, says ceo **Garth Wolff**. "We view this as very bad business practice. It simply does not make for good business, not only due

to the risk of a bad debt but also due to the 'time value of money' or 'cost of capital' to fund this." Garth adds that it boils down to ensuring that the ITC uses reputable suppliers.

He says: "The risk of non-recovery is the main issue but the cost of capital is a true business cost that very few consultants ever factor into their budgeting and/or monthly accounting."

Mymoena doubts whether she will be able to recover the money and admits that had she told the client their trip was cancelled because the supplier defaulted, she would have been better off financially.

She adds: "I can proudly say that, of the five companies involved in this booking, Distant Travel was the only company that kept its word and put the client first. Not one of the other companies was prepared to give up their profit to make sure the clients were not affected in any way. Many of us in the travel industry boast that our clients come first and are very important to us... I believe that I have gained the right to hold my head up high and say that I honestly and truly do put my clients first." ■



## Get into gear!

Holiday Tours is offering a special package for Top Gear Festival fans, from R2 715 pps. The offer is valid for travel from June 20-22 and includes two nights' accommodation at a four-star Protea Hotel in Durban, return economy-class flights from Lanseria to Durban, and two days' car rental (standard cover) as well as 200km free per day. **Dezy De Lima**, marketing and product manager for Holiday Tours, is ready to hit the road! Photo: Shannon Van Zyl



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# Sabre's new open platform will personalise travel

DORINE REINSTEIN

SABRE has launched a new open portal for developers – Sabre Dev Studio – that will give travel companies a platform they can use to build booking applications that will result in new ways for their clients to shop for travel.

Developers from travel companies, OTAs, start-ups, meta-search and social sites, can access more than 150 APIs, as well as testing tools, documentation, prototypes and sample code, and additional resources available from Sabre in an open developer community. In addition, the company is introducing several new, mobile-friendly, sub-second response-time shopping and intelligence APIs that developers can use to build new search capabilities for travel.

Examples of Sabre's new travel services include six-month calendar shopping, shopping across hundreds of alternative airports, and shopping by budget or theme.

**"Apps will now be able to answer questions such as 'Where can I fly for \$500?'"**

This will allow developers to experiment with different APIs and create prototypes quickly and easily, significantly reducing development cycles and time to market, Sabre said. "It will allow travel agents to create apps that will result in new ways for their clients to shop for travel. Apps will now be able to answer questions such as 'Where can I fly for \$500?', 'What

beach destinations have the best fares in August?', and 'When is the best time to buy my tickets?'"

**Greg Webb**, president of Sabre Travel Network, says the new platform will result in new revenue streams for travel companies. "Travellers want more personalisation. They want to shop for travel in new ways and in the places they choose, whether at travel agencies, on online travel sites, or through search engines or social sites. Travellers want to be inspired and they want the experience to be easy and intuitive."

Travel agents wanting to try their hand at designing new apps can explore the Sabre platform on <https://developer.sabre.com>. The site allows agents to learn about the different possibilities and test what is possible. ■