

TNW



TO THINK SOME HOTELS CHARGE YOU FOR PARKING



ROAD LODGE
BY CITY LODGE HOTELS

www.roadlodge.co.za

TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

TNW6244SD

INSIDE

NEWS
EY-AZ DEAL
More options, cheaper flights
Page 2

NEWS
MARRIOTT
Big plans for SA market
Page 5

FEATURE
TOURIST OFFICES
Assisting agents is a priority
Page 7

VFS Global under investigation

DORINE REINSTEIN

VFS Global, a worldwide outsourcing and technology services specialist for diplomatic missions and governments, has come under scrutiny over allegations of abusive market dominance and unlawful tender procedures, resulting in excessive visa application prices and hidden fees.

A spokesperson for the Competition Commission told *TNW* it was investigating allegations of abuse of dominance against VFS, in the visa support services market. At the time of going to print, the Commission was expected to submit its recommendations on whether action should be taken against the visa service company in coming days.

VFS Global has 100% market share in visa assistance for Spain, Canada, Denmark, Austria, New Zealand, Greece, and Sweden. In principle, applicants should be able to go to the High Commission to apply for visas but often this is discouraged and clients are redirected to VFS.

Jaco Badenhorst, md of Visa Request, brought the initial complaint to the Competition Commission. He told *TNW* the market dominance VFS Global had created in several visa markets had led to excessive visa application prices with hidden fees as well as abominable service levels. For example, for Canada VFS charges a R1 040 service fee whereas other visa companies charge R250, he says. Clients are also often made

to wait for several hours at the VFS offices, adhering to "ludicrous" security measures, such as the prohibition of use of electronic devices, but they don't dare to speak up because VFS is their only way to obtain a visa, Jaco added.

Creating healthy competition in the market is the best way to counteract bad service and high fees, Jaco says. He says Australia used to work exclusively with VFS. The embassy opened up the service to a few other companies, resulting in much better service and considerably lower prices.

Inge Beadle, manager of Corporate Travel Services, says it's not unusual for clients to be asked to go to the VFS offices more than once, despite having all the required documentation. They are then asked to pay a cash fee for second or third visits.

Spokesperson for VFS Global, **Rustom Dhanbhoora**, denies that VFS has created a monopolistic situation, and says that service fees are not unjustifiably high. "Service fees levied by VFS Global are approved by the client governments and form part of the tendering procedure. The level of fee is based on various parameters as stipulated in the tender requirement and the country of operation," he says.

VFS Global has also come under scrutiny following the tender process through which it became the sole service provider to receive and manage SA's visa applications for inbound travellers.

Haniff Hoosen, the DA Shadow Minister of Home Affairs, said in

To page 12



Among the roses

Surrounded by lovely ladies in travel, Lal Jayamaha (Serendipity Tours) caught up with (from left) Michele Foster (Thompsons Holidays), Bronwen Remke (Plum Accommodation) and Vicky Steinhardt (Pentravel) at last month's *TNW* Thirsty's held at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Umhlanga. The hotel is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. For more photos, see page 4. Photo: Kate Nathan

UK visas reduce clients to tears

DORINE REINSTEIN

NEW commercial partner for UK Visa Services, Teleperformance, which took over the operation of UK visa application centres in SA from VFS Global in March, has come under fire. Agents have complained about its service delivery, claiming officials are rude and unwilling to assist.

Ryan Rennison, director of Move Up, which handles UK visa applications lodged nationally and internationally, says clients have been reduced to tears because of Teleperformance's reluctance to help, particularly in the Johannesburg office.

Communicating with the company is also a challenge. The Teleperformance phone number is answered by an automated machine that tells customers they will need to pay £1,5 (R28) to speak to a 'live' consultant. Email correspondence through its website is only possible when entering an application number.

"VFS had its own issues; it took them time to set up call centres, tracking facilities, courier arrangements and notification systems.

"Teleperformance is now faced with the same challenges and it is in the process of implementing systems to

To page 12

10007

Get up to 30% discount when booking off peak transfers in JHB, CT and DBN.

www.europcar.co.za

TNW6189SD

- E-toll review welcomed by car-rental trade
- TNW pick of the week: A new rival for Travelstart
- New services provider for Oz visas
- Win R1000 in TNW's new snap survey
- Luggage chaos at Heathrow



Quick Software
Software. Solutions. Support.

- Professional vouchers with logo
- Voucher emailed in secure PDF format
- SMS voucher image links to traveller
- Track referral commission
- Import vouchers into invoicing
- Comprehensive registers with lookup
- Multi-level reporting

Tel +27 11 4519100 sales@quicksoftware.co.za
www.quicksoftware.co.za

TNW6003SD

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



EY-AZ deal: more options, cheaper flights

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE South African travel industry has welcomed Etihad's acquisition of a 49% stake in Alitalia, saying it would boost connectivity to Europe for South African travellers and could potentially bring down fares.

The acquisition is believed to be Etihad's biggest investment in a foreign carrier to date. The conclusion of the deal is subject to final regulatory approvals.

According to **John Ridler**, spokesperson for Cullinan Outbound Tourism, an increase in competition on the route through the Middle East will bring about some positive changes for SA travellers. "Hopefully we will see more favourable fares

to Italy via Abu Dhabi on Eithad."

Butch Williams, airline strategy manager of Pentravel, says Italy is one of Pentravel's top destinations in Europe. He says although there are many available options with the likes of Emirates, Lufthansa, Air France, etc., the demand on availability during peak season often results in higher fares. "Any additional flight options should make a difference," he says.

Theresa Szejwallo, md of The Travel Corporation, agrees: "Italy is our single most popular destination across Trafalgar, Insight Vacations and Contiki. It would be beneficial if Etihad could increase its daily flights from Abu Dhabi to Rome."

The acquisition agreement will undoubtedly bring about an increase in connections for SA travellers, says **Rod Rutter**, coo of XL Travel. He says the investment will give Etihad access to the Italian market and potentially deepen its foothold in central and Eastern Europe. Rod says the deal will also revive Alitalia and, with the right funds and management, Alitalia could become a powerful force in Europe.

Alitalia ceo, **Gabriele Del Torchio**, hinted at Alitalia's future as a key player in the European market: "This investment will provide financial stability and confirms Alitalia's key strategic role as an infrastructure player in the travel and tourism industry in Italy for long-term growth." ■



SAA goes global

SYLVAIN Bosc will join SAA as new head of commercial. Sylvain was previously chief commercial officer for Corsair in France. SAA ceo, **Monwabisi Kalawe**, told TNW the SAA board gave him the mandate to search globally for the position. The head of commercial designation is being reviewed. "Bosc is a very experienced executive

in the commercial space, and once he has taken his office he will be paired with a South African to pass on local skills," said Monwabisi. SAA said it had no formal announcement to make about a change to acting gm of commercial, **Kendy Phohleli's** role, and would keep TNW posted "over the coming days". ■

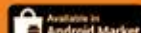
INTRODUCING
MANGO'S
NEW & ENHANCED
MOBI-APP
WHEREVER YOU GO



In striving to serve you and your clients more effectively Mango has developed a new and enhanced mobi-app.

The mobi-app enables you to access Mango's Travel Management System and key facilities such as lodge cards and travel agency fees on-the-go via your mobile device. Choose first world technology and convenience. Choose Mango!

Download Mango's new mobi-app FREE.



Terms and conditions apply. Mango's mobi-app is available on Blackberry 10 devices only. In accordance with Apple's rules, Apple users with the existing mobi-app, will need to delete the OLD mobi-app in order to download the NEW mobi-app. Mango's mobi-app is in beta phase.

flymango.com

Why not today?



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,
PO Box 55251, Northlands,
2116, South Africa.



Founding Editors:
John H Marsh (1914-1996) Leona Marsh (1923-2003)

EDITORIAL

Editor: Natasha Toppel natashat@nowmedia.co.za
Features Editor: Michelle Colman michellec@nowmedia.co.za

Contributors:

Debbie Badham Chana Boucher
Hilka Bims Caro Malherbe

Dorine Reinstejn
Photographer: Shannon Van Zyl
Production Editor: Ann Braun

PUBLISHER

Kate Nathan katen@nowmedia.co.za

GROUP PUBLISHER

David Marsh davem@nowmedia.co.za

ADVERTISING

Sales: katen@nowmedia.co.za
Advertising Co-ordinator:
Courtney Canham courtneyc@nowmedia.co.za

PRODUCTION

Design Head:
Dirk Voormeeld

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Circulation tvsub@nowmedia.co.za

TNW6246SD

flysaa.com

80
YEARS CELEBRATING
TOMORROW

20 YEARS OF FREEDOM
EST. 1933

CATCH THE ACTION IN BRAZIL, 11 TIMES A WEEK.

We now offer 11 direct weekly flights to São Paulo,
the gateway to Brazil and South America.

SAA operates its latest and most advanced aircraft on this route, which features flatbeds, a great selection of the latest blockbusters, world-class cuisine and an amazing variety of South African wines.

Go to flysaa.com, call +27 11 978 1111 or contact your local travel agent to book.

BRINGING THE WORLD TO AFRICA. TAKING AFRICA TO THE WORLD.



SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

TNW's Thirsty's

ON A warm winter's evening in Umhlanga, members of the Durban travel community gathered at the Beverly Hills Hotel to catch up and share a drink or two at last month's TNW Thirsty's. The hotel's open terrace

with views of the ocean, combined with great company, guaranteed a fantastic atmosphere. TNW's next Thirsty's will be held in Johannesburg in August. For more details on the event, email katnathan@nowmedia.co.za.



▲ From left: Dinesh Naidoo (Serendipity Tours) shares a drink with Shabnam Vadachia (SAA) and Izy Etkin (Wings Travel Management).



▲ Tourvest Travel Services' Philile Bhengu (left) and Lungi Dlodla take full advantage of the beautiful winter's evening.

◀ Keeping it in the family (from left) Lynette Stander (Non-Stop Travel) and Robyn Stander (Emirates) enjoy a drink or two together.

Find your adventure...



Cycling ranks as one of the most popular sports in South Africa and the media are describing it as "the new golf" in terms of the high profile business networking that has started to take place amongst fellow cyclists.

Dharmesh Kooverjee, Travel Vision's CEO, talks to us about finding adventures.

Tap into this lucrative market (have you seen how much bicycle's cost these days) by promoting Exodus cycling holidays to your active clients. The company offers tours for every kind of cyclist. Leisurely gastronomic tours through Tuscany or the South of France allow guests the opportunity to stop in at local pavement cafes in the small towns or to enjoy wine tastings in the vineyards that they pass through. Moderate trips involve a bit more cycling and can be found in destinations such as The Dalmation Coast in Croatia, along the Danube in Eastern Europe, through Cuba or even in Vietnam and Cambodia. For the super-fit there are epic journeys across the Himalaya from Lhasa to Kathmandu or across the Mongolian steppes. Sport fans can take part in what we call a "cycloportative tour". Spend a day watching the Tour de France and then cycling the famous route sections with your group the following day. There are 80 tours to choose from in 30 countries around the world also including mountain biking and self-guided cycling tour options.

@exodus



Contact Travel Vision to find out more or visit www.exodus.co.uk

TNW7131



► uShaka Marine World's Ruth Bophela (left) and Buhle Mohomotsi network with local agents.

▼ From left: Margie Manser (Zurich Travel Insurance) catches up with Vicky Steinhardt (Pentavel) and Lindsay Roberts (Cruises International).

Photos: Kate Nathan and Debbie Badham



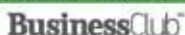
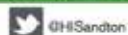
For a FREE subscription to TNW contact Wanita on wanita@nowmedia.co.za



Thank you to all conference bookers

Because you booked your conference with us we'll treat you with a breakfast for two on us

Holiday Inn Sandton, Rivonia Road
To book call: +27 (0)11 282 0000 or email: conferencing@hisandton.co.za | 123 Rivonia Road, Sandton, 2148



Terms and conditions apply. ©2013 IHG. All rights reserved. Most hotels are independently owned and operated. STAY YOU® is a registered trademark of Six Continents Hotels, Inc.



STAY YOU.™
hisandton.co.za

Marriott's on a mission

NATASHA TIPPEL

MARRIOTT International has big plans for the South African market, particularly its mission to strengthen its relationship with the local travel trade.

"Over the past year, the South African market has grown in significance and we thought it was time to launch our first global sales mission in the region, where our general managers and sales managers could meet with clients and gain insight into the market," said host, **Vladimir Dabbah**, Marriott International's vp of global sales for the Middle East and Africa.

An important part of growing its presence in the region is working more closely with the travel trade. "Seventy per cent of the market is based on intermediaries and their influence is great in directing customers where to book," Vladimir said.

Travel agents can also look

forward to easier bookings, with the next step following Marriott's acquisition of Protea Hotels being the integration of Protea Hotels within the Marriott International portfolio of brands on GDS systems.

"Seventy per cent of the market is based on intermediaries and their influence is great in directing customers where to book."

But Vladimir could not say when this would happen, as the priority was to first educate staff, customers and the trade on the brands and the integration of their businesses, he said.

The Marriott brand will also benefit from Protea's strong relationships with the trade, said **Kamran Mustafa**, Marriott International's regional director of global sales for the Middle East and

Africa. "Protea has strong relationships with corporate and MICE managers in Africa. It's a well-respected brand and we can leverage the partnership," he said. Marriott International had been busy promoting the Protea brand and South Africa to its global associates and would continue to market the destination abroad, he added.

The travel trade can learn more about Marriott through its online training programmes, 'Hotel Excellence!' and 'Meetings Excellence!', which provide online training for travel agents and meeting professionals to learn more about the brand and how to sell it, Vladimir said. The online training includes audio and multimedia, information about different services offered at Marriott hotels, and interactive exercises. Protea Hotels will be integrated into the educational programmes, Kamran added. ■

Beachcomber launches 'Your Villa'

BEACHCOMBER has introduced 'Your Villa' at Trou aux Biches, Mauritius, bringing personalised guest services to its 27 luxury villas.

The 'Your Villa' concept offers guests a daily butler service from 08h00 to 14h00 and a full maid service. Breakfast is prepared daily and there are unlimited soft drinks, a 25% discount on selected wines and spirits and complimentary late check-in/out. To celebrate the launch, Beachcomber

is offering a 50% saving on accommodation until October.

Also included is a villa manager who is responsible for overseeing all villa operations as well as guest liaison. A personal cook can be arranged on request for an additional amount.

The Trou aux Biches villas are made up of 10-two bedroom and 17 three-bedroom villas with en-suite bathrooms and outdoor shower areas. All villas have private pool and braai areas. ■

To the point



Interair launched a new service to Dar es Salaam from Johannesburg on June 27. The flight departs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with return flights on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Flights are operated by a B737-200, with 12 business-class seats and 91 in economy class.



EMPERORS
PALACE



THE
GRAND PALM

Upgrade YOUR CLIENT'S BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

PeerMont resorts are conveniently located in many towns and cities throughout southern Africa, and corporate contract holders are rewarded with additional benefits and exciting value adds which make business travel a breeze.

With highly competitive **corporate rates** guaranteeing **discounts** to the last available room, an **online business partner programme** and a **R100 meal voucher** when staying at **Emperors Palace**, next to O.R. Tambo International Airport, your clients will be well rewarded. The resort offers a choice of accommodation in 3, 4 and 5-star hotels and the new **Club Floor and Lounge** with a range of exclusive tailored services.

All PeerMont corporate rate holders automatically qualify and earn points for the **FREE Crown Key Hotel Rewards Programme**, designed to suit the needs of government and corporate travellers. **Join today!**

RELAXING STAYS. EXCITING TIMES.



PEERMONT

HOTELS CASINOS RESORTS

Like us | Follow us

Visit the Travel Professionals link on www.peermont.com

Enquire about Corporate Rates with PeerMont Group Sales: Tel: +27 (0)11 928 1903 | e-mail: sales@peermont.com
PeerMont Central Reservations: Tel: 0860 777 900 (SA only) Tel: +27 (0)11 928 1928 | Fax: +27 (0)11 557 0888



Tee off!

City Lodge hosted members of the travel industry at its 'Friends of City Lodge' golf day on June 6. Budding golfers congregated at River Club for a day of networking and fun. From left: **Terry Fenton-Wells** (SA Magic Travel), **Pieter van der Westhuizen** (Afriboom) and **Morné du Preez** (Tourvest Travel Services), with (in front) **Gary Bisset** (City Lodge).

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl.

CemAir launches daily Margate flights for holidays

FROM June 28, CemAir now operates direct daily flights from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport to Margate.

CemAir introduced once-a-week flights on the JNB-MGH route eight months ago and brought in additional midweek flights in January. The popularity

of the route during holiday peak season has resulted in the airline introducing daily flights.

Flights will decrease once the holiday season ends. ■

AirHeads



A snapshot of the week's airline news

Fastjet launches third destination

FASTJET will begin operating services between Tanzania and Zimbabwe in August. The airline will launch a twice-weekly operation from Dar es Salaam to Harare, with tickets already available for sale starting at US\$50 (R533), excluding government charges and taxes. The announcement marks the third international route for fastjet, which already flies from Tanzania to Zambia and South Africa. The first flight is scheduled to take place on August 5 with services operating on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Ethiad extends codeshare with Air Seychelles

ETHIAD Airways has extended its codeshare with Air Seychelles to include new services between Paris and Abu Dhabi, from July 2. The new twice-weekly flights will be operated by an Air Seychelles A330-200 configured with 18 flat-bed seats in business class and 236 seats in economy class, linking Paris-Charles de Gaulle with the Seychelles via Abu Dhabi. The flights will operate on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Air India joins Star Alliance

STAR Alliance has approved the membership of Air India, which becomes the first Indian airline to join the global airline alliance. The final stages of the integration will now go ahead to ensure that AI can offer all Star Alliance customer benefits from July 11. It will add 400 daily flights and 35 new destinations in India to the alliance network. Globally, passengers will benefit from a wider choice of routes connecting North America, Europe, Asia and Australia via the Indian subcontinent.

Look forward to making new friends in Dubai

Hello Tomorrow



Meet the fascinating residents of the world's largest indoor snow park, and see what other amazing experiences Dubai has to offer with our exciting range of holidays.

AIRFARE AND ACCOMMODATION	NIGHTS	STARTING FROM ZAR
Pearl Residence Hotel Apartments ***	3	9,490
Four Points by Sheraton Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai ****	3	10,590
JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai *****	3	11,990
Atlantis The Palm, Dubai *****	3	13,990

emiratesholidays.co.za

Summer is Dubai
2014

Up to 2 kids pay 50% of the adult airfare and can stay, eat and play for free

All of the above prices are per person sharing and include Economy Class return airfare from Johannesburg or Cape Town (airfare supplements applicable from Durban), 3 nights' accommodation with breakfast, transfers airport/hotel/airport, a copy of the Entertainer voucher booklet compliments of Emirates Holidays, room tax, service charges, airport departure tax and fuel surcharge. Blackout dates and additional terms and conditions apply. Skywards members earn 20% bonus Miles when booking a minimum 3 nights Emirates Holidays package. To book, call Emirates Holidays on 0861 04 05 03, visit emiratesholidays.co.za or e-mail: info@emiratesholidays.co.za

TOURIST OFFICES

What is the role of tourist offices and where do their responsibilities lie? Debbie Badham finds out.

Educating and assisting agents are top priorities

THE ROLE of tourist offices is not complicated – they are there to promote their destinations and assist the local trade. However, at times they may find themselves performing a delicate balancing act between the product owners they promote and the local trade they support.

“One of our primary responsibilities is to support the tour operators who sell our destinations – to help them to increase their knowledge and consequently their sales as much as possible,” comments **Hélène Bezuidenhout**, president of the Association of National Tourist Office Representatives (Antor) and manager of Atout France. She says Atout France does this through online training, sending out brochures and making themselves available to trade members wherever they can. “We also make a point of visiting the agencies and assessing their requirements in terms of training and education.”

Tourism offices have a key role to play in the educational process and can help agents upsell their destinations. “We can provide them with inside tips on when to book to get the best prices and help them improve their bottom lines. We can also advise on the best itineraries for their clients – in fact there is a lot we can do to make their clients’ experiences richer,” maintains **Wendie White**, vp of Antor and director Southern Africa for the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM).

These thoughts are echoed by spokesperson for the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in South Africa, **Lesley Simpson**, who adds that one of TAT’s primary objectives is to assist the main outbound operators where possible and to entice them to consider less frequently visited destinations such as Krabi, Samui and Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand.

Director for India Tourism, **Manas Ranjan Pattanaik**, says there is much tourist offices can do to promote their programmes, from organising periodical workshops, orientation



Manas Ranjan Pattanaik

courses, online training modules and fam trips, to providing operators with assistance in printing their destination brochures and fliers.

“India Tourism organises road shows, seminars and workshops on a regular basis in order to facilitate healthy interaction between travel agents, tour operators and their Indian counterparts for a two-way exchange of information,” he adds.

On-the-ground involvement and training are particularly important.

Gail Gilbert, spokesperson for Tourism Ireland, says they host training workshops every two years for the travel trade, and work with tour operators on promotional, ad hoc workshops and roadshows. “We also do extensive co-operative marketing campaigns to promote Ireland products.”

Malawi Tourism also views joint online workshops and educationals as key elements to a tourism office’s success in further educating travel agents.

Tour operators seem to agree that tourism offices add a significant amount of value in presenting travel agents with a great product. “In this sense we are partners; the more desirable the destination, the easier it is to sell our packages,” says md of World Leisure Holidays, **Johann Strydom**.

“I feel that the majority of tourist offices in SA offer very good support to the trade,” says **Sarah Whiteside**, sales and marketing manager for Travel Vision. “I only wish that more countries realised the value of tourist offices in South Africa and were prepared to invest in developing our market. Tourist offices offer valuable information about local customs, transport, accommodation and sightseeing. They also provide in-depth brochures, maps and other marketing material items that are handy tools for agents and operators in learning about the destinations they are promoting. What’s more, they assist in funding joint marketing ventures and in subsidising educationals in various regions.”

Are inbound tour operators screened?

DIFFERENT destinations uphold different criteria for tour operators they invite to join their workshops and roadshows.

Malawi Tourism endorses operators that are compliant with the Tourism and Hotels Act of Malawi. According to vice consul for tourism at the Malawi Consulate, **Salad Nthenda**,



operators that are licensed must have met the minimum requirements laid out in the Act. From there, operators are graded on an upward scale,

according to various criteria.

Dubai insists that the operators have their companies registered with the DTCM, which conducts quality checks, looking in part at the stability of the companies’ financials and staff complement. Importantly, the operator should be actively promoting Dubai as well.

In much the same way, only inbound tour operators approved by the Ministry of Tourism of India are allowed to take part in official delegations participating in overseas roadshows.

When it comes to its annual sales missions, Tourism Ireland is careful to endorse credible and approved Irish industry. “We make sure that the organisation is of good repute. If it is a new organisation, we then ask them to provide at least two trade references,” reveals **Gail Gilbert**.

◀ Salad Nthenda

Fam trip eligibility – who goes?

IN LIGHT of their promotional role, it follows that tourist offices intend as many travel agents as possible to see the country they are selling. “We would, of course, love to invite everybody,” says **Hélène Bezuidenhout**, “but as this is simply not possible we will try and get them to participate in workshops instead. We can’t bring everyone to France so we try and bring France to them.”

Most tourism offices invite agents on trips based on whether they favour the destination in question. “When qualifying a travel agent for a fam trip, we generally assess the visibility of their interest,” comments **Salad Nthenda**.

Lesley Simpson confirms that participation in events is generally based on numbers travelling to Thailand as well as room nights spent at popular hotels. “Over and above, however, and probably more important, are the joint marketing efforts shared between tour operators and TAT in promoting Thailand to South African travellers.”

There are many reasons why

tourism offices choose to send travel agents abroad, notes **Hélène**. “Perhaps they are brand new and we need to give them a chance to discover France, perhaps they are not new but need to maintain their knowledge – there are always new things to discover,” she points out.

“Our aim is to make sure that it’s a win-win situation for everyone,” adds **Wendie White**. She notes that the DTCM generally consults with its national airline as well to assess whether the agents in question are good supporters of the airline.

Tourism Ireland views workshops as a good opportunity to introduce as many tour operators to the destination as it can. “We host an annual fam trip in October each year, combined with a workshop where the South African trade gets to meet and contract with suitable Irish trade. We select either senior staff or product managers from tour operators promoting Ireland, or with the potential to promote Ireland in the near future, as it does involve a certain level of contracting and rate negotiation,” says **Gail Gilbert**.

TOURIST OFFICES

Facilitators not enforcers

TOURIST offices play an important role in facilitating dealings between members of the travel trade and product owners. The problem is that when trade members run into difficulties with suppliers, tourist offices can find themselves caught in the middle of a sticky situation.

Most offices agree that it is simply not their place to become involved beyond a certain point. "As facilitators we can put the relevant parties in touch with the right people to help sort it out, but beyond that it's not our place to get involved," comments **Wendie White**.

In fact, the legal frameworks in place in certain countries prevent tourism offices from meddling too much. "Legal provisions simply do not allow us to intervene in a particular enterprise's dealings," notes **Salad Nthenda**. "Hence our interventions have limits."

"Obviously it would be a concern for us, but the responsibility would lie between the two trade members," agrees **Gail Gilbert**. "We would always try and assist when there is an issue with a product owner but we have never experienced this in the past 10 years of handling the Tourism Ireland account."

Tour operators seem to agree that it is not their responsibility to deal with product owners involved in business misconduct. **Theresa Szejwallo**, md of



Johann Strydom

Trafalgar SA, believes that the supplier should always be fully accountable and responsible to manage any issues that may arise during a customer's holiday. "Tourism offices help promote the destination but they can't be held responsible for individual properties that do not live up to expectations."

Some tour operators acknowledge it would be tricky for tourism offices to step into the fray. "I'm really not sure how practical it would be," comments **Johann Strydom**. "Tourism offices are organs of the governments of the countries they represent and their mandate is to promote their countries. Tour operators, on the other hand, operate in the private sector and can be completely independent or form part of the sales arm of a supplier."

His opinion is shared by

Sarah Whiteside, who says having tourism offices get involved in disputes between tour operators and product owners would be extremely difficult to implement in practice.

Interestingly, India Tourism does promise to take action should suppliers fall short in their dealings. "On receipt of any complaint against an approved inbound tour operator, we will forward the complaint to our headquarters to investigate the matter and take appropriate action. In cases of unapproved operators, the matter can be taken up through the respective state tourism departments to initiate action against the unapproved operator as per local laws," says **Manas Ranjan Pattanaik**.

Lesley Simpson reveals that TAT will also sometimes take action indirectly, noting that there is a dedicated department at TAT in Bangkok that handles such problems. However, in most cases, the authority would be there purely to offer advice. "This is a very sensitive point as, regardless that it is our sincere intention to protect our South African partners, as a political tourism body we have to remain objective. We are always able to assist by researching and providing the facts contributing towards the final decision taken but thereafter it is entirely at the discretion of the head office," she explains.

Managing expectations can prove tricky

THOUGH most tour operators seem to have reasonable expectations of the tourism offices that they work with, **Wendie White** notes that it can still prove challenging managing the expectations of the local trade when it comes to the responsibilities of tourism offices.

"When expectations are reasonable it's not challenging at all for us to meet them." She adds that it is unusual when trade members try and hold tourism offices responsible for a product owner's business conduct.

"We find that tour operators are reasonable in their expectations of tourism offices," agrees **Hélène Bezuidenhout**. "The primary challenge for us is to make sure that we work with people who possess the right ethics."

This, however, is not much help when people go outside the recommendations of the local tourism office and book through unapproved operators. As **Manas Ranjan Pattanaik** points out: "The packages offered by approved operators and country specialists may be expensive when compared with packages offered by unapproved operators, but if you compare the standard of service provided and the ground arrangements made, the level of service provided is always much higher."

Challenges resulting from the tourism office-tour operator relationship are two way and one of the most pressing concerns for some tour

operators is the scenario when tourism offices hosting workshops in SA bring international operators into the country and introduce them to SA travel agents.

"This is currently a sore point for many local tour operators," says **Sarah Whiteside**. "South African operators invest years of time, energy and money into developing tourist markets in SA. Costly brochures and flyers are produced, advertisements are placed, agency training sessions are held, roadshows are organised and educational are subsidised – all in order to develop the South African market around a specific country."

Then, as she points out, when tourism offices bring out international operators, the operators often take the opportunity to encourage travel agents to book directly with them and undercut the local operator. "From a South African tour operator's perspective it can seem that certain tourism departments are actively engaging in stealing away your long-standing clients," she maintains. "We would strongly encourage tourism offices to engage with South African tour operators during the planning period for their destination workshops so that a mutually beneficial solution can be found."

In spite of these challenges, tour operators agree that the presence of a greater number of tourism bodies within South Africa would be great for the industry as a whole.

amazing THAILAND
It Begins with the People...

"It is T.A.T's objective this year to increase awareness and interest in new destinations. Phuket will always be a drawcard to Thailand, but there is so much more to experience in the 'land of smiles'. We encourage holidaymakers, whether first time or repeat travellers, to look further and consider other destinations."

Lesley Simpson,
South African
Representative Office
for Tourism Authority
of Thailand

www.facebook.com/Amazingthailandinsouthafrica @thailandsa



“Summer is Dubai”

Dubai’s answer for an eventful family summer holiday

With guaranteed sunshine, award-winning restaurants, world-class shopping and a huge variety of hotels Dubai is the ideal welcoming, exciting and unforgettable summer holiday destination. This summer, Dubai is offering visitors a remarkable summer experience featuring a packed calendar of entertainment, festivals and cultural celebrations to entertain all the family. Lasting from 15th June to 6th September, ‘Summer is Dubai 2014’ (SID) is a season bursting with activity from indoor family entertainment to fireworks lighting the famous skyline, shopping

offers and surprises to an array of gastronomic experiences across the diverse menu of restaurants the Emirate has to offer. The range of events and diversified attractions allures visitors making the city an ideal choice for a summer holiday with loved ones. Boasting air conditioned hotels, good transportation facilities, a wide range of shopping malls, numerous water parks, climate controlled indoor entertainment venues and even an indoor ski slope, Dubai has been designed to ensure that travellers have the most unique, comfortable and enjoyable summer holiday experience yet!

Phases of ‘Summer is Dubai’

“Summer Is Dubai” begins with one of the region’s largest indoor entertainment venues Modhesh World opening followed by Ramadan in Dubai. This is a period that includes a number of unique events to mark this important month in the Islamic calendar and also gives visitors a flavour of Emirati hospitality and traditions. “Ramadan in

Dubai” will transform the city into a cultural hub with events and activities inspired by values and traditions of the Holy Month such as the Dubai International Holy Quran Award and the Ramadan Forum. The final phase is Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS), an iconic festival that offers the perfect blend of great shopping promotions and fun-packed

family “edutainment”. With fantastic deals from tour operators offering great value holiday packages, there has never been a better time to visit Dubai! When summer arrives in Dubai, there’s no other place in the world you’d rather be. It’s a breathtaking shopping experience, it’s a never-ending journey of surprises. www.summerdubai.com

Dates to remember

- Modhesh World - 12th June to 8th September, 2014
- Ramadan in Dubai - Sunday, 29th June to 27th July Eid

- Dubai Summer Surprises - 2nd August to 5th September
- Ask your favourite tour operator about their summer packages in Dubai.**

TOURIST OFFICES



Citywalk, a new addition to Dubai's malls. Photo: DTCM

New developments in Dubai

CITYWALK by Meraas Holding is the latest addition to Dubai's offering of luxury malls. Citywalk's 52 outlets include eateries with innovative concepts in food and beverage, and stores that showcase leading fashion brands. Citywalk is flanked by a grand tree-lined walk reminiscent of European streets. It has 600 parking spaces and a unique water feature as well as a children's play area that can transform

into a venue for concerts, weekly markets or exhibitions.

The Walk, a bustling waterfront promenade in the heart of Jumeirah Beach Residences, which consists of over 300 restaurants, cafés, shops, supermarkets and boutiques, has recently been developed. It is also a public art platform featuring UAE artists and has become like an outdoor gallery, with colourfully painted vases, stairs, benches and open floor works.

In Thailand, don't miss...

- Visits to the Gibbon Sanctuary in the Thalang District of Phuket, dedicated to the release of gibbons back into natural forests, are a moving experience.
- Spice Roads Cycle Tours provides travellers with an unusual way to explore the beaches and limestone landscapes of the south and the mountainous terrain and temples around Chiang Mai in the north.
- Sampran Riverside – 'Thai Living' Programmes offers



Spice Roads Cycle Tours provides travellers with an unusual way to explore places such as Ayutthaya. Photo: TAT

a variety of packages where travellers can participate in living the Thai culture. Art and craft workshops include umbrella painting, silk processing and traditional weaving and there are elephant demonstrations and sunset cruises.

- Chiang Mai Food Tours

involve a four-hour cultural walk and gastronomic experience exploring authentic northern historic and cultural gems. Travellers can also visit local eateries and taste Lanna flavours (northern Thai cuisine).

ANTOR hosts MICE workshop

ANTOR is hosting a MICE workshop on July 22 at The Crowne Plaza Johannesburg – The Rosebank. MICE buyers will have the opportunity

to talk to all tourism board members on MICE opportunities in the various countries.

The association is launching

a new website that can be found at www.antor.co.za. All functions and country information will be loaded on to the site on a regular basis.

Did you know?

The Ireland Specialists Programme is an eTraining programme that helps agents become experts on the destination. The online training assists agents to improve their knowledge on everything from main attractions and events to tips on putting together the perfect itinerary. The programme is divided into six modules that shouldn't take more than an hour at a time to complete. Agents will be awarded with either a silver or gold Ireland Specialist certificate that can be displayed in their agency. ■

REUNION ISLAND

Combine your emotions.

Play to win the trip of a lifetime at:
www.welcometoreunionisland.com

Reunion Island, an authentic and moving destination like no other, is only 4 hours away from Johannesburg.

A magical island hosting the very best of what our planet has to offer, Reunion Island is an enchanting world that combines in a single place the most unique and emotional holiday experiences.

Contact : reunionisland.za@atout-france.fr

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

Picture perfect!



Beachcomber recently hosted agents on an educational trip to Mauritius. Pictured here are (front from left) **Meghan Nancarrow** (Beachtag); **Bianca Di Giovampaola** (Pentavel, The Glen); **Nicole Braganca** (Sure Travel Set); **Fredah Morena** (Sure Travel Scene); **Gina Stanford** (Beachcomber); **Nikki Briant** (Air Mauritius); and **Gareth Tiedt** (Amex Concierge). Back (from left) **Debra Dovey** (Sure Glenwood); **Jolien Venter** (FC Cresta); **Peter Nazer** (FC Menlyn); **Morten Aaarts** (FC Centurion); and **Monique Williams** (Dana Agency Nelspruit).

Appointments & resignations



■ Lee Botti & Associates has announced the departure of **Tracey Ciorovich**, who has a long history with the company. Tracey hands over to **Cornelia van Zyl** who has joined as a consultant in the travel division. Cornelia has more than 13 years' experience in airline, cruising, retail and wholesale. Cornelia, who is based at the company's offices in Greenstone Hill Office Park, is pictured here with with director, **Kim Botti** (right).

■ The City Lodge Hotel Group has announced new appointments: **Brendan Luttig** has been named opening gm for City Lodge Hotel Waterfall City in Midrand, which is scheduled to open between December 2014 and January 2015. **Morné Bester** has been appointed gm of the Fairview Hotel and Town Lodge in Nairobi, Kenya. Morné was previously gm of City Lodge Hotel Lynnwood in Pretoria. **Edward Williams** takes up the position of gm of the Courtyard Hotel Arcadia in Pretoria. He was previously interim gm of Courtyard Hotel Cape Town. **Marvin Theron** has been appointed gm of Road Lodge Rustenburg.



الإتقاد
ETIHAD
AIRWAYS

Has the following vacancy

Key Account Manager – Corporate Sales

Based in JNB, the successful candidate will be responsible for managing and developing the Corporate Business

Requirements - Educated to degree level or equivalent, five years airline or travel industry experience with a minimum of 2 years in a leading sales role. In addition you are required to have the following:

- Negotiation and Sales techniques
- Presentation skills
- Account Development Planning
- MIDT, Sales Force Automation systems
- Reservations and Ticketing
- Good written and oral English language skills
- Ability to work under pressure and to short lead times.
- Self starter with strong planning, presentation, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Closing Date: 13 July 2014. Applications must be done on-line using the following link: <http://careers.etihadairways.com/ehire/English/JobSearch.aspx>

TNW7139

READY FOR TAKE OFF!

We have moved our offices to:
**The Place, South Building,
1 Sandton Drive, Sandton**

Watch out for our new developments coming soon,
you can still call a Dream Maker on +27 11 217 5555

Dreams
TAILORED TRAVEL PACKAGES

TNW6253SD

lee botti & associates
Specialists in Equities and Travel Recruitment

37 years
of service excellence

Top jobs in Gauteng this week:

Bookkeeper
Well est agency wants you to control all aspects of finance! Quicktrav & BSP knowl will be your ticket to success! R18 000 ctc neg.

Business Developer
Love being on the road & closing deals! Go-getter attitude to ensure targets are met! Min 2 yrs sales exp req. Sal R20 000.

Leisure Lover
Prime location! Your passion for making holiday dreams come true is your ticket to success! Busy, fast paced environment! Amadeus. Sal R10 000 + comm.

Inbound Consultants
North. You're in demand! Top positions with highly recognised operators! Flaunt your Southern Africa expertise to design tailor-made packages! Competitive offers.

Tel: Cornelia / Kim 011 452 0204
corneliavz@nowjobs.co.za

apb
RECRUITMENT

TNW7142

Pick of the week

brought to you by



Senior Travel Organiser - Centurion
Trendsetters Travel
No sales, just brilliant organisation skills. Tertiary qualification. 3 years' (minimum) travel experience. Afrikaans and English. Customer SERVICE orientated. We want the best! E-mail: lizette@trendsetterstravel.co.za

Intermediate Travel Consultant - Pretoria North
Professional Career Services Amadeus. Fluent in English & Afrikaans. Quicktrav beneficial. Exposure to corporate & leisure travel. Able to handle pressure and multitask. R 10 000 neg. Email: candicecv@pcs-sa.co.za

Senior Retail Cons – Cape Town
Lee Botti & Associates
SA's biggest corporate TMC is seeking a committed consultant with Galileo. Sal from R 15 500 + benefits. Email: malikam@nowjobs.co.za

Corporate Travel Manager - Cape Town (EE position)
FCm Travel Solutions
3 years' corporate or in-house consulting experience, Matric or relevant degree/diploma, international travel experience. Basic, commission, medical and provident fund. Email: megan.vorster@flightcentre.co.za

Intermediate – Sandton
Equity Connections cc
Manage corporate desk doing domestic, regional and international bookings. Must have sound fares and ticketing experience in a corporate role. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Sales Executive - Cape Town
Club Travel
Strong sales executive required who is passionate about selling to join growing online travel company. Email: careers@clubtravel.co.za

Senior Corporate Consultant - Pretoria
Wendy's Travel Personnel
Well established leading travel company. Galileo essential! Email: wtpositions@icon.co.za

Senior Consultant (After Hours) - JHB North
Professional Career Services Amadeus/Galileo. Min. 8 years' experience. Have own transport & be able to work shifts. Corporate consulting experience essential. Complex international bookings. Email: jeancv@pcs-sa.co.za

Inbound Consultant – Durban
Lee Botti & Associates
North. 'Switched-on', well-travelled inbound consultant with experience in the wholesale trade. Combination of foreign languages a bonus! R neg. Email: ashneem@nowjobs.co.za

Travel Expert - Cape Town
Flight Centre
2 years' sales/customer service, Matric or relevant degree/diploma, SA citizen, international travel experience. Basic, lucrative commission structure, medical aid and provident fund. Email: megan.vorster@flightcentre.co.za

New Business Development - North
Equity Connections cc
Identify and target potential new corporate clients for an online programme. Must have previous sales experience and be "tech savvy". Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Senior Leisure Consultant - Cape Town
Club Travel
Dynamic ambitious entrepreneurial individual required to join the leisure team in selling and promoting travel packages for Africa's leading travel agency. Email: careers@clubtravel.co.za

Girl Friday/PA - Fourways
Wendy's Travel Personnel
Super company requires someone who can multi-task. Computer literacy essential! Email: wtp@icon.co.za

Travel Advisor – Nationally
Pentavel
Looking for outstanding people who are highly motivated and driven with a focus on delivering exceptional customer service. Benefit from great financial rewards. Email: recruitment@pentavel.co.za

These adverts were selected from the vacancy section of www.travelinfo.co.za
For more details contact jobs@travelinfo.co.za

UK visas

From page 1
 help facilitate these needs," Ryan says. He adds that Move Up is currently in contact with Teleperformance's gm with regard to these challenges. "We can assure travellers that

their Johannesburg manager is taking pro-active measures to address this." Despite numerous efforts, TNW was unable to contact a spokesperson at Teleperformance.

Australian visas

Teleperformance has also signed an agreement with the Australian Government to handle all the Australian visa application centre (VAC) services in South Africa, effective July 1. VACs are located in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg

and Pretoria. Teleperformance will charge an additional service fee to handle the applications. For a full list of the new visa prices, visit: <http://www.za2au.australia.tpcontact.co.uk/visa-application-charges>. ■

Chauffeur, please!



Europcar is offering discounts of up to 30% when booking off-peak transfers in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban until June 2015. Off-peak times are any transfer outside peak hours, which are between 05h30 and 09h30 and from 15h00 to 19h00. The transfers are applicable for any destination within 100km of the city's main Acsa airport. Europcar's coo, Martin Lydall, gets behind the wheel. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Egypt recovery on the cards

DEBBIE BADHAM

ONLY a few months after tour operators expressed concerns about travel to Egypt, with some cancelling itineraries, they are again looking to promote the destination. Since the presidential elections in May, confidence has grown and demand for the destination is being revived, operators say. The Travel Corporation recently announced that it would resume operations in the country for the 2014/2015 season, as a result of pent-up demand for the destination and in a "show of support for the Egyptian people" following the elections. From September, Contiki and Busabout will re-commence trips in Egypt, with Trafalgar and Insight Vacations starting again

from January. Uniworld will re-commence sailings on the Nile in September, 2015. "There is a tendency for stability to follow elections so this is a good time to begin actively marketing Egypt," says media and pr manager for Cullinan Outbound Tourism, **John Ridler**. He says Thompsons Holidays is planning press trips and travel agent educationals to revive interest in the area. John believes there is built-up demand for the destination, which should see visitor numbers climb steeply. Marketing director of Africa Stay, **Juan Nel**, agrees and says the company plans to relaunch its Egypt itinerary in the next month or so as a result of renewed demand. "Technically we never stopped selling Egypt but we weren't promoting it as such."

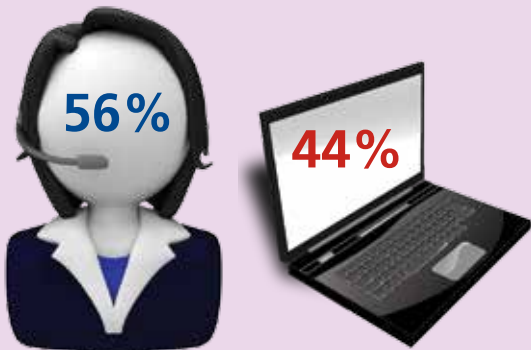
Juan says demand had waned but since the elections enquiries are slowly coming through. "Egypt was previously a best-seller for us and we can't wait for things to get back on track in the region," he says. "We're still reluctant to sell tours in the Sinai region and will focus more on Egypt's historic landmarks." Serendipity Tours has a group travelling in Egypt at the moment and says everything is running smoothly. The operator pulled back a few groups last year when safety concerns were at their height. However, the operator believes the recent elections will promote stability and renew confidence in the region. "We have a great ground handler in Egypt and are not experiencing any problems whatsoever," says office manager, **Kim van den Berg**. ■

impulse poll
 brought to you by eTNW and TRAVELINFO

Leisure travellers like consultants

Poll question: Are your leisure clients comfortable booking online or do they prefer to speak to a consultant?

- They only want to deal with a consultant
- They want the online option



eTravel is the ITC market leader in South Africa and assists senior Travel Consultants and Travel business owners to realise their dreams. If you have ever dreamt of owning your own travel business or would like to cut costs by doing away with your IATA license and improve your current business efficiencies then you should call eTravel. We run the back office for over 200 Independent Travel Companies and specialise in making your travel business a success by offering the best commissions, overrides & a comprehensive support structure. If you have a client base, 5 years travel consultant experience or already own your own business but want to make more, then contact us! You'll be amazed at how easy it is!

Contact Tammy on 0861eTravel or info@etravel.co.za



Work for Yourself
 Not by Yourself
www.etravel.co.za

VFS Global under investigation

From page 1
 a statement that he had requested an investigation into an estimated R1bn visa facilitation tender awarded to VFS Visa Processing to determine whether the tender was awarded unlawfully. The DA is also concerned that a staff member left the DHA to work for the company that appears to have improperly benefited from the tender. "The timing surrounding the introduction of new visa

regulations and the awarding of the tender to VFS seems very convenient. This new information raises questions about **Minister Gigaba's** claims that these regulations are in the interest of security," Haniff said. He said the awarding of the tender to VFS could leave thousands of South Africans, who are working for private visa facilitation companies, unemployed. "It is ironic that this tender was awarded to an

international company while the new visa regulations were intended to protect the SA economy and job market." Rustom said the tender by the DHA for opening Visa and Permit Facilitation Centres in South Africa was open for bidding by any company. "Governments adopt an open tendering process that requires bidders to offer a robust and cost-effective solution in line with the requirements of these governments." ■

WOODFORD
 car hire

BOOK 'WF' on Amadeus and Galileo

032 436 2724 | Airport Locations: JNB · DUR · CPT · PLZ | www.woodford.co.za