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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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Emirates dominates with 2 000 seats a day

CHANA BOUCHER AND NATASHA TIPPEL

EMIRATES' market share of international flights from South Africa will be stronger than ever from the third quarter of this year.

The airline will introduce a fourth daily Johannesburg flight from the end of October, departing at 09h30 and arriving in Dubai at 19h40.

The flight will be operated by a B777. This will bring the total number of flights to South Africa to seven daily – four to Johannesburg, two to Cape Town and one to Durban – upping capacity to around 2 000 seats from South Africa to Dubai.

According to the Centre for Aviation, Emirates currently has a share of almost 10% of international seat capacity in South Africa, excluding the additional flight. This is followed by British Airways, which holds 8,5%. SAA has 40% of the market.

As it is, European carriers are struggling to compete with their Gulf counterparts. **Tamur Goudarzi-Pour**, Lufthansa's vp for the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Europe, told *TNW* that as a result of competition from Gulf carriers, there was an overcapacity on the SA route. "We are committed to Africa, and plan to stay but we need to look at sensible capacity allocations, particularly in Johannesburg, and ensure we have profitable operations."

"We welcome competition on an even playing field but there are certain advantages given by the state to state-sponsored carriers that we do not receive as a purely market-

driven airline. The playing field is not level," he said.

Sailesh Parbhu, md of XL Nexus Travel, says the additional daily flight is in line with demand. He says when Emirates reduced the Johannesburg flights to two a day due to runway upgrades it caused a problem, especially for the mid-year school holidays. He adds that the airline's aggressive pricing, good connections and growing international network are resulting in increased demand.

But **Jonathan Gerber**, director of TAG, says there is only seasonal demand and that it is not ongoing. He says SA agents won't necessarily benefit from the additional capacity as not many of the seats are open to the South African market.

"In the past Emirates was the go-to airline in terms of price; I believe that, with its origin and destination policy, this no longer the case." Jonathan explains that this is because Emirates can get better yields out of other markets. As a result, the South African market is locked out initially, particularly in the lower classes. Then, as it gets closer to the travel date and seats are still available, the airline opens access to the SA market.

"We are now getting access to far better fares in advance on other carriers. I think that the airlines will continue to compete on this basis." Jonathan adds that currently he doesn't believe there is overcapacity of international flights and that Gulf carriers offer a specific need that doesn't suit all clients. ■



How smart are you?

Travel Vision, in partnership with Tourism Ireland and CIE Tours, is inviting agents to take part in its Irish Pub Quiz Workshops, which will take place in Cape Town (July 21), Durban (July 22), Johannesburg (July 23), East Rand (July 24), and Pretoria (July 25). Keen to test your knowledge? RSVP to marietjie@travelvision.co.za. Learning a bit about the Irish brew, are (from left): **Sarah Whiteside** (Travel Vision) and **Gail Gilbert** (Tourism Ireland South Africa).

Photo Shannon Van Zyl

New regional carrier to serve 'untapped' routes

CHANA BOUCHER

KHUPHUKA Kings Airways, a new airline offering cargo flights from Durban's Dube Trade Port, plans to launch passenger services later this year on routes it believes are "untapped".

Marketing director, **Sihle Bam**, says the plan is to launch scheduled and charter flights from Durban to Nigeria, Swaziland and the DRC. "We have

prioritised cargo for the initial phase and this will give a stable foundation to build on for passenger flights in the next phase," says Sihle. The passenger flights will be operated with a 150-seat Airbus A319 and a 180-seat Airbus A320.

In February, Khuphuka introduced its cargo flights between Durban and Lubumbashi via Ndola. The airline was

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AVIS

Stakeholders feel ramifications of new immigration law

DORINE REINSTEIN AND TESSA REED

WHILE the Department of Home Affairs continues discussions with tourism and travel associations, asking for stats and specifics on how the Immigration Amendment Act will negatively affect the sector, stakeholders are already seeing the effects.

During a recent media briefing, DHA director-general, **Mkuseli Apleni**, said: "People have been raising this matter about the regulations affecting tourism negatively but unfortunately nobody has come forward and said 'regulation A is going to affect tourism in this respect'."

Mkuseli said Minister **Malusi Gigaba** had indicated that the laws were not cast in stone. "If people come to us with valid reasons, then we will evaluate them and on that basis decide what will be the way forward. But just on the basis of a statement it's difficult to understand."

SATSA is working with the TBCSA to compile a report that will outline the effect of the new Immigration Act. "We have commissioned Grant Thornton to pull a coherent document together that looks at potential losses both in terms of birth certificates and biometric visas. This is work in progress but it aims to look at best practice in both regards," says SATSA ceo, **David Frost**.

He adds that he is encouraged by the statement from Minister Gigaba that the door is not closed and

that Home Affairs will be receptive to input. However he warns that the uncertainty surrounding the new regulations is already having an effect and many SATSA members have reported cancellations.

The consequences

Cullinan Holdings ceo, **Michael Tollman**, said the impact of the immigration regulations could already be felt on inbound tourism from China. He told *TNW* he had submitted two letters to Minister Gigaba outlining the effects of the Immigration Act. Michael says he received feedback from travel agents in China who were forecasting a 70% drop in travel to South Africa. "The Chinese travel trade have officially stopped all marketing for packages to South Africa, and have said they are not taking any more bookings for South Africa after October. They have started advising clients to rather travel to Dubai, Tanzania and Kenya."

Tamur Goudarzi-Pour, Lufthansa's vp for Middle East, Africa and Southeast Europe, told *TNW* he was greatly concerned about the new immigration regulations and foresaw significant negative effects on both outbound and inbound passenger volumes. "Should the new regulations be implemented, the Lufthansa Group will be closely monitoring the capacity offered into South Africa."

Lenél Vining, Air Austral's manager for SA, says the new Immigration Act will impact

on passenger numbers, as most traffic to and from South Africa consists of families with children. She expects an official complaint to the DHA from the market in Réunion in due course.

Addressing members of the industry at the TBCSA agm last week, newly appointed SA Minister of Tourism, **Derek Hanekom**, said: "I am, together with the department, very open to your ideas. This is not the last session but the beginning of a much longer period of dialogue." He added that he would be very keen to meet with each of the associations in the industry.

Minister Hanekom conceded that having direct routes to SA played a significant role in attracting tourists, adding that there were economic considerations in the retention of a flight. "There will be flights that on their own are not profitable but they may have enormous value, not only in tourism but in trade." He said he would engage with the Minister of Public Enterprises in this regard.

Responding to questions on the new regulations, Derek said that, given that the discussion on the new regulations was ongoing, the ministry did not want to preempt the outcome of these discussions.

"It is important to say that the industry and many players in the industry are engaging directly with the Minister. Let that discussion between the stakeholders and the Minister proceed." ■

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New regional carrier

From page 1

founded in Durban, which is where the head office and main operations team are located.

"We have done some extensive groundwork to start cargo routes to these destinations. It makes sense for us to therefore extend these routes into passenger flights as well."

Sihle adds that Khuphuka Kings Airways aims to create "easy travel" on routes where there is currently a shortage of services, particularly in Africa. "For any business to

succeed in a competitive environment, it must target areas where the demand exceeds the current supply," he says.

The airline's launch is set for September. Khuphuka is in the process of acquiring the necessary aviation certification and hopes to have the process completed in the next six months. But Sihle says the airline has made an interim arrangement to fly with temporary permits while the AOC process is under way.

Khuphuka Kings Airways was founded by **Musa Mdluli**,

who spent 13 years in exile in Russia and other countries. He studied medicine and practised as a doctor while establishing relationships with Russian, Ukrainian and German business people, including aircraft operators, who now play a role in the operations of Khuphuka Kings Airways and are leasing aircraft to the airline. "The Khuphuka Kings team is passionate, resilient and determined to make a positive impact on the South African economy and Africa as a whole." ■

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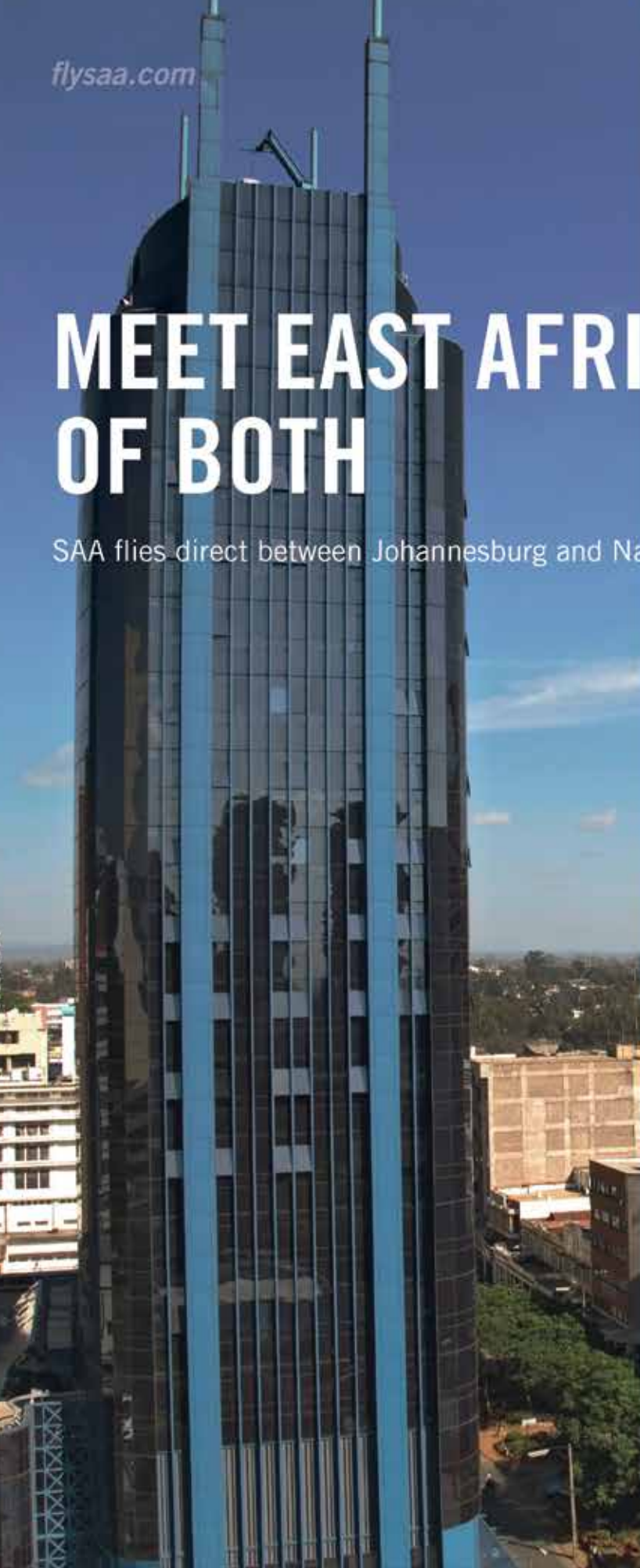
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SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

Zambezi Sun gets a face-lift

LONG-STANDING icon, the Zambezi Sun, is undergoing a major refurbishment.

“The hotel has always been a three-star family hotel but also offers conference facilities and the original design therefore needed adaptation to suit both family holiday-makers and business visitors,” says gm, **Joanne Selby**. The refurbishment will include necessary advancements in technology, she said.

The rooms will be fitted

with custom-made units that can function as a desk and a television unit. In-room enhancements also include WiFi, flat-screen TVs, new air-conditioning units and boilers, and directional LEDs from the headboard to improve reading lighting.

The reception is undergoing a transformation and a lounge area is being built – with a Moroccan theme in keeping with the hotel – to one side of the restaurant near the pool area. The pool bar area

will also be refurbished and feature a pizza oven where families can make their own pizzas.

The kids’ club will undergo a radical transformation, and re-launch as Zuba’s Adventure Camp.

Conference facilities will also be refurbished and technology significantly improved, Joanne said.

The full programme of refurbishment will end in July 2015. All guest facilities will be available throughout. ■



Dinner with a view

Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff in Johannesburg will open two new restaurants – Flames and View – around October. Flames will feature a large terrace overlooking the city’s treetops, ideal for sunset drinks and snacks, with an urban vibe and a DJ. The menu features re-interpreted South African classics, combined with international favourites. There is also an outdoor braai area. View offers a fine dining experience with a French influence and makes the most of the hotel’s panoramas with its sunset terrace. Pictured here at a recent media event in Rosebank are **Gené Redelinghuys** (pr manager) and **Sébastien Carré** (gm, Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff).

Photo: Debbie Badham.

To the point



The 212-year-old Oude Werf hotel has closed until the end of July to complete renovations. It is expected to reopen on August 1 and upgrades will be fully completed by October 31. Reservations can still be made for Oude Werf for after August 1. However, for guests looking to stay in the Cape before August 1, Oude Werf will arrange accommodation at its sister hotel, The Vineyard in Newlands.

Sharmaine Scott selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Thompsons Holidays.** Mauritius Clearance Sale – three-star Casuarina Resort & Spa from R9 999pp or four-star La Plantation Resort & Spa from R10 499pp. Packages include return flights ex-JNB on Air Mauritius, airport levy, return airport-resort transfers, seven nights’ accommodation with breakfast and dinner plus bonus water activities. Valid for set departures until July 20. Add R420 for direct flights ex-Durban on selected dates.
- **On the Go Tours.** 10-day Vietnam tour from R19 980pp sharing, valid for August 9 departure. Price includes return airport transfers, seven nights’ accommodation in a four-star hotel with selected meals, one-night deluxe junk boat, one overnight sleeper train, domestic flight Danang-Saigon, Halong Bay junk boat cruise (swim, kayak, explore caves) and bicycle ride to Tra Que Village. Guided sightseeing – Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Ho Ain, Mekong Delta and Saigon.
- **Emirates Airline/Emirates Holidays.** Dubai summer specials – valid until September 30. Stay three nights for the price of two. Three-night packages are from US\$39pp per night (R417) in a twin room. Rate includes airport transfers and selected meals. Plus ‘Kids Go Free’, allowing up to two children under the age of 16 to stay, play and dine free at selected hotels and restaurants.
- **Holiday Tours.** Mozambique – Massinga Beach special. Pay for four nights, stay for five. Rates are from R13 220pp sharing, including taxes of R2 759. Offer includes return flights ex-JNB to Inhambane, return road transfers (approx. two hours), accommodation in an ocean-front deluxe room including all meals, one romantic turndown on arrival, one private in-room deck dinner and one beach picnic. Offer expires September 30.



Fastjet launches pre-paid seating

FASTJET has introduced a pre-paid seating option on all flights to and from its international and Tanzanian domestic destinations.

Customers can now select and pay for a preferred seat when booking their flights, or add their preference to their booking up to 24 hours before departure.

The cost is US\$5 (R54) per seat one-way for premium seats in the ‘quick-exit’ rows and the ‘extended leg-room’ seats.

If passengers want to book a particular seat that is not in one of these premium rows, they pay US\$3 (R32) per seat one-way.

Passengers will continue to be assigned a seat free of charge when checking in at the airport. ■

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Hitting the slopes

The market for ski vacations remains stable, with resorts looking to expand and diversify their alternative activities in an effort to continue attracting all types of travellers. This was the word from the experts at a recent Atout France event, which focused on the promotion of skiing holidays within the region. The event was held at the Hotel Balalaika on June 9, with representatives from a number of popular ski resorts in France. **Eric Bonnel** (director of Val Thorens Tours) and **H el ne Bezuidenhout** (manager of Atout France in Southern Africa) showcase France's extensive ski offering. Photo: Debbie Badham.

New management for popular Mauritius resort

THE South African tourism industry has welcomed the announcement that Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts will take over the management of Le Touessrok in Mauritius from August.

Shangri-La signed a management contract for Le Touessrok and announced that it would re-flag and launch the hotel as Shangri-La's Le Touessrok Resort and Spa Mauritius after extensive renovations. The relaunch will take place in September 2015.

Shangri-La has acquired a 26% stake in Le Touessrok, which will bring about quite a few positive changes for South African travellers, says **Johann Strydom**, md of World Leisure Holidays. He says

Shangri-La is a strong capital partner that will invest heavily in the refurbishment of the property. The group also has a wide global footprint and a wealth of hotel management

"The deal between Sun Resorts and Shangri-La will offer travellers the best of both worlds."

knowledge, he says. "The deal between Sun Resorts and Shangri-La will offer South African travellers the best of both worlds." For the foreseeable future, WLH will continue to market Le Touessrok exclusively. Sun Resorts retains a 74% share in the hotel.

Thompsons Holidays has also welcomed the change in management and the possibility that other tour operators might market the property in the future. **John Ridler**, spokesperson for Cullinan Outbound Tourism, says Thompsons Holidays was previously unable to market the hotel. "The prestigious Shangri-La brand is well known and a welcome addition to Mauritius, and we will most definitely be marketing the hotel in the future," he says.

John adds that Le Touessrok is well known for its luxury, fine cuisine, unspoiled beaches and discreet service. "I am sure that Shangri-La will simply enhance the traveller's experience with its own unique touches." ■

Protea hotel to be 'premier MICE spot'

PROTEA Hotel Fire & Ice! has announced plans to open in Menlyn, Pretoria, early next year.

The six-storey hotel, which is being built in Summit Place, a new commercial precinct under development opposite the Menlyn Park Mall, will feature a stand-alone, double-storey conference facility

adjacent to the hotel.

The ground floor will be able to accommodate up to 500 people and upstairs there will be two 150-seater conference rooms and a variety of boardrooms.

The hotel will also feature 178 rooms, a restaurant, designer bar and lifestyle spaces, a swimming pool and underground parking bays. ■

AA to represent US Airways in SA

US AIRWAYS is now represented in the SA market by American Airlines, effective July 1. AA is represented by Mindpearl in Cape Town.

This follows the merger between UA and AA at the end of last year. "We continue to make progress in fully integrating our airlines' operations. Step by step we are seeing more joint

activities like codeshares and aligned rules," said **Stephan Emilson**, US Airways' offline sales manager.

"We would also like to thank Discover the World for its partnership and its great representation of our commercial interests in South Africa," Stephan added.

For more details, see Travelinfo. ■

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To the point



Air France and KLM are the latest carriers to implement the use of the Electronic Miscellaneous Documents in all GDSs in South Africa, effective from June 30. VMPDs issued prior to June 30 will still be accepted and do not need to be exchanged for an EMD. If you wish to do so, the VMPD can be refunded via the BSPlink Refund application and a new EMD will be issued.



TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY

New technologies from varied quarters promise an end to many of the frustrations of current travel management payment systems. Michelle Colman finds out more.

Taking travel payments into the future

VIRTUAL account number (VAN) payment functionality could prove revolutionary for all parties involved in the travel payment process, with implications for better controls, improved cash flow and streamlining costs.

Virtual cards, with inbuilt security features such as one-time and single-merchant use, pre-defined payment limits and validity periods, are growing in global application. In the travel industry, where supplier default and fraud are major concerns, virtual cards are an appealing option, although their adoption has been relatively slow.

But now the integration of VAN technology into GDS points of sale has elicited predictions of large-scale conversion to the payment system in a relatively short space of time. Travelport is involved in a joint venture with MasterCard and eNett International, a global provider of payment solutions to the travel industry, while Amadeus

has joined forces with Airplus to produce a product called Amadeus Airplus Travel Agency Card.

The eNett International VAN works as follows: agents deposit funds into an eNett account then make bookings through the GDS on supplier websites or with self-booking tools. They then request a VAN either through integrated system pop-ups or by logging in to the eNett Payments Platform. eNett generates the VAN, pays the suppliers (the VAN can be used directly in the GDS as part of the agent booking process or sent to the agent to accompany client documentation) and sends payment data back to the booking system.

Agents can then access a wealth of data for seamless reconciliation and reporting, saving on manpower involved in numerous labour-intensive processes.

Tourvest Travel Services has been investigating a number of innovative new payment systems since March last year.

Chief financial officer, **Lidia Folli**, has begun piloting eNett International VANs with a small group of clients and has found that, at this point, the system can only be used for international travel,

“We have had a significant level of interest in the South African market and we’re committed to making travel payments easier and more cost effective for South African agents.”

unless agents have SA Reserve Bank approval for domestic transactions. This stems from eNett’s not yet having a locally registered company, holding only a non-resident bank account in this country.

Comments **Marijke Timmers**, head of marketing and communications at eNett International: “At the

moment, we have a number of customers in South Africa using VANs to pay both international and domestic travel suppliers. International payments require agents to fund foreign currency accounts and, pending eNett’s due diligence processes, can be up and running within five days. Domestic or ZAR transactions currently require the agent to be approved by the South African Reserve Bank. Some of our customers have obtained this approval and others have opted to use VANs for international payments until we have an alternative process in place.

“We have had a significant level of interest in the South African market and we’re committed to making travel payments easier and more cost effective for South African agents. As such, we are currently in discussions with our banking partners and are planning to offer services within the country subject to review of legal

and banking requirements.”

But the benefits are already evident to Tourvest, the primary gain being that the TMC will have the secure mechanism of allowing travellers to take advantage of restricted-use payment solutions that are not reliant on the labour-intensive bill back process. The solution will have favourable cash flow advantages to benefit suppliers too.

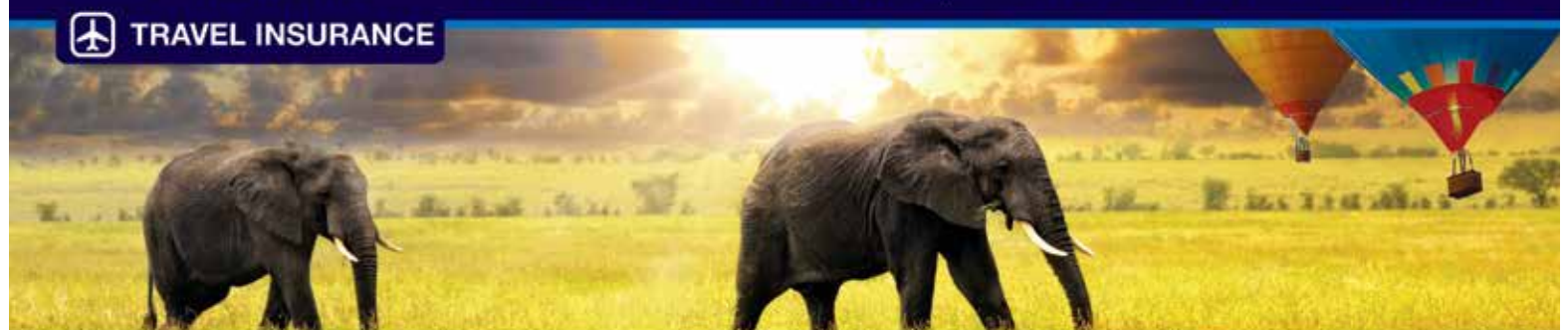
The programme further allows access to foreign exchange rates upfront, reduces foreign exchange exposure and pays international suppliers with more speed and ease. VANs do the converting at the time of booking, offering price certainty on international payments. Some 10% of VAN transactions are declined because they are not within parameters set by clients. Payments can be issued 24/7, and the arduous credit approval process and transaction fees do not apply once registration with eNett is effected.

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American Express tools simplify batching and matching

THE introduction of a two-part online solution, complementary to the American Express Business Travel Account (BTA) lodge card, is described by **Gia Marais**, travel channel manager South Africa of American Express Corporate Payment Solutions, as “game changing”.

The solution has gone a long way to improve reference data gathering at the transaction stage and automatic reconciliation to the invoice data of a TMC, saving significantly on manual input.

Iveri Batch, an online point-of-sale system, has been available for some time, although until recently its use was limited to larger TMC consortiums. A recent educational drive by American Express has seen a wider uptake of the solution across the travel industry to the satisfaction of all parties – TMCs and corporate clients. It allows multiple transactions – up to thousands – to be processed in one batch, instead of individually. It also allows a reference field of up to 24 characters to be filtered through from a TMC’s invoicing system, aiding the tracking of transactions significantly.

Now, a second phase is being rolled out to the travel market in the form of the tool called

BTAPowerlink. This online tool automatically matches TMC invoice data to the transactional data of the lodge card. A file from all enabled TMCs’ invoicing systems is uploaded automatically into BTAPowerlink daily, allowing the tool to match invoicing information to transactional information. This means that the BTAPowerlink tool automatically cross-checks and ensures that all transactions processed on the lodge card have corresponding invoice information from a TMC, with each transaction being valid and visible. This is important for the TMC and the travel buyer.

“The take-up has been impressive,” says Gia. “Both TMCs and corporates are searching for solutions to streamline processes and, together, these two features work beautifully. A great benefit is visibility of transactions with additional data detailing invoicing information. BTAPowerlink matches 90% to 95% of transactions automatically, and the balance is easy to identify and resolve before the cycle closes and the statement is released.”

Travel buyers can log on to the system too, to monitor spending. They can also log queries and obtain reports online.

Quicktrav accounting product minimises data capture

HALFWAY through 2014, QuickTrav is well on track to achieve its goal of providing strong integration platforms for third-party imports into its accounting software, while not forgetting that QuickTrav Core is the backbone of its product offering.

Always seeking to improve software and integration options, top of mind for QuickTrav is that the accounting function has to be strong and improved as often as required. Thus QuickTrav Core currently generates upload batches for Iveri, Diners and Travelbuy, as well as supplementary information batches for BTA Powerlink, Airplus, Diners Advantage and Standard Bank Travel Agent Data Interchange.

Providing upload batches enables QuickTrav to automate the receipting, thereby minimising time spent on data capture and allocations. The batch process allows for management of unpaid items for re-submittal, ensuring no items are forgotten or left unpaid.

QuickTrav’s Winmain product also has a payment manager that allows users to manage creditors’ payments from the age analysis, a payment upload manager that auto closes and updates the cashbook once the payment has been made, as well as a bank reconciliation manager where auto-reconciliation rules are set up and executed to minimise time spent on reconciliations.

Developer platform introduces new ways to shop

A NEW developer platform, as well as new travel services and application programming interfaces (APIs), is being launched by Sabre. The products will allow developers worldwide to integrate travel into their applications.

Leveraging a new, open portal, called Sabre Dev Studio, developers from travel companies, online travel sites, 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 in an open developer community.

In addition, the global technology 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.

The move to a new developer platform reinforces Sabre’s efforts to make travel more accessible to consumers through new travel apps and services provided by travel suppliers, travel agencies, online travel sites, and social sites. It also supports the

company’s strong commitment to helping airline, hotel, and travel agency customers identify new revenue opportunities.

Examples of the new services include six-month calendar shopping, shopping across hundreds of alternative airports, and shopping by budget or theme. Built on a patent-pending platform, the new services allow developers to experiment with different APIs and create prototypes with ease, significantly reducing development cycles and time to market.

For travellers, the APIs available through Sabre Dev Studio will result in new ways to shop for travel. Applications answering questions like, “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?” will be enabled.

Said **Greg Webb**, president of Sabre Travel Network. “Sabre Dev Studio will unlock potential for developers to accelerate software solutions in the areas of mobility, personalisation and data analytics – all of which ultimately will result in innovation that will benefit the whole industry.”

Coming soon from Amadeus

ACCORDING to **Celia Pereiro**, head of payments at Amadeus, the GDS has partnered with Airplus, a global provider of payment and billing solutions for business travel, to develop a solution payment of all travel-related products when Iata’s Billing and Settlement Plan

(BSP) is not an option. The resultant co-branded Amadeus AirPlus Travel Agency Card can be used for air tickets purchased at a consolidator or low-cost carrier, hotels, rail, car hire and travel insurance. It should be available later this year.



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Digital travellers change the African landscape

"DEVELOPING a website is no longer enough to satisfy the growing legion of aspiring African travellers. A mobile strategy is essential, as most Africans do not have landline Internet access."

This is one of the conclusions drawn in a White Paper compiled by Travelport in conjunction with PhoCusWright, a travel industry research authority. The paper, entitled *The Emerging African Travel Landscape: trends and opportunities in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda*, cautions that the arrival of a new digital traveller, armed with smartphones and tablets, is quickly changing the African travel landscape.

The research states that each of the five countries investigated is becoming a lucrative travel marketplace, against macroeconomic trends that include strong international inbound tourism and an emerging African middle class with a strong appetite for international

and domestic travel (a third of the continent's population, or 313 million people, is now estimated to be middle class, according to the African Development Bank). Interviews were conducted with a wide range of executives of African travel companies, including suppliers, intermediaries and technology providers.

It reveals that African airlines motivated by a need to manage distribution costs and connect directly with customers, have aggressive online strategies that are changing consumer behaviour. Hotels are expanding customer relationships through intermediaries such as online agencies, which are growing in significance.

Travel agencies and TMCs for their part are "challenged to embrace innovation while also fending off the impact of supplier direct strategies". Their role is at a turning point as they seek to justify their value and diversify their services.

Key findings...

Key findings of the study included:

- Internet access and usage are exploding with 20 million South Africans using the Internet. The majority of Kenyans, Nigerians, Tanzanians and South Africans and almost half of Ugandans, use mobile and smartphones. Nigeria offers untapped potential due to its 175 million population.
- Internet Explorer is the browser of choice for 75% of Africa's Internet users and Google accounts for over 90% of Internet searches. Social media is driving online connectivity and Africa is one of the fastest growing regions for Facebook use (there are currently 13 million Facebookers in Nigeria and SA combined).
- The growing African middle class are expanding demand for domestic leisure travel, and are increasingly comfortable booking travel on computers and mobile devices. Marketing budgets must include websites, metasearch and social media to reach this market.
- TMCs generate the vast majority of Africa's business travel but are under increasing pressure to reduce travel costs through the expanded use of online corporate booking tools. This is being driven by large multinationals in the mining, energy and financial services fields.
- Airlines are disrupting the African travel landscape with direct marketing strategies. Low-cost carriers promote online booking to keep

costs and fares down, and change traveller expectations on what domestic travel should cost. This threatens the TMC business model, which is heavily reliant on air ticket sales.

- Low charge card utilisation demands the use of alternative, secure payment options for online bookings. The study claims that 15% of South Africans hold credit cards, while in the four other countries surveyed, less than 1% do. Mobile phone payments are gaining favour in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Although few African travellers have made the leap from mobile device browsing to booking, this will change with speed, to as much as 30% in three years as purchase prices drop and technology improves.

Travelport launches new brand vision

TRAVELPORT has adopted a new global brand vision: 'The platform that is redefining travel commerce for our customers'.

As part of the re-launch, Travelport has renamed and more clearly defined its two main operational areas. The Travel Commerce Platform includes merchandising, reservations, payments and workflow management,

and Technology Services provides critical IT services to airlines for their internal and direct channel use.

The Travel Commerce Platform is further classified as Air or Beyond Air. The latter covers revenues from hospitality, advertising and payments. Technology Services covers, among others, ticketing, shopping and departure control.

Mobile app simplifies train travel

WORLD Travel recently launched a mobile app, My Train Companion, designed to simplify train travel in Europe.

Passengers are able to retrieve train schedules, locate stations on a city map, view connections with public transport and retrieve all



ticket details easily with their booking reference. Equipped with an integrated reminder, the app informs passengers about upcoming trips and keeps records of previous journeys.

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TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY

Cruises International goes mobile-friendly

CRUISES International has launched a mobile-friendly website, which will allow the company to reach a wider audience as the use of smartphones for web browsing grows.

"The future of the web is mobile," says Cruises International's e-marketing manager, **Leigh-Ann Proctor**. "This mobile-friendly website

enables those who wish to access our cruise lines rates and itineraries, as well as book on their smartphones at any time of day, or night."

The features on the mobile website version mirror the standard company site – including social sharing and commenting features. The site (www.cruises.co.za) is accessible through any

browsers, but not via an app. Leigh-Ann says it boasts an appearance built for smartphone legibility.

In line with its mobile enhancements, Cruises International has developed mobile sites for its travel trade portal (www.shipmates.co.za) as well as its booking engine (www.book.cruises.co.za).

Global Star link-up gives Club access to best fares

AS THE South African partner of Global Star, Club Travel now has access to the same fares offered to hard currency countries through point-of-sale availability.

Point-of-sale availability means that available fare classes displayed on GDSs in South Africa, could be totally different from those shown in the USA, UK or Australia. According to **Wally Gaynor**, md of Club Travel, airlines give better availability to markets with hard currencies.

SAA recently joined a growing list of international carriers, including British Airways, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, Air France KLM, Lufthansa and SWISS, that have implemented this system. "An agent in London, for example, will potentially have access to the cheapest seats but an agent in SA will only see full fares," says Wally.

The Club Travel Group, as the South African representative of Global Star, is in the process of implementing E Global Fares. Global Star has agency partners in 85 countries. "Using this online system, Club can access fares and availability from any of the worldwide partners, book the fares with better availability and have the e-ticket issued by its Global Star partner," says Wally.

He gives an example: "I was doing a booking return from South Africa



"Using this online system, Club can access fares and availability from any of the worldwide partners and have the e-ticket issued by its Global Star partner."

Wally Gaynor

to Australia on Emirates. I could get the cheapest U-class seats going out but on return there were only first-class seats available in my South African GDS, but going on the E Global Fares system, the Australian availability showed the cheapest U-class seats on the same return flight. Booking on this system, I was able to give my clients the cheapest fare. I do not believe that any agent in South Africa currently would be able to do this as easily and seamlessly."

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Digital Trip provides online options

TRAVEL companies wanting an online presence could look to the services of Digital Trip, a travel technology company specialising in the latest travel websites for travel agencies, tour operators, wholesalers and travel consortiums.

Digital Trip was founded by industry leaders in the UK who operated their own online travel business before venturing into the technology game.

"We have 300 happy clients in 40 countries across the world," says director – Sub-Saharan Africa region, **Giles Clinton**, "Our online systems feed into all the major bed banks and airlines, pulling through over 500 000 hotels, 900 no-frills, charter and scheduled airlines as well as

numerous tour operators and travel extras."

Digital Trip's online technology can be found on multiple devices such as PCs, tablets and mobile phones.

Says Giles: "We offer five travel websites solutions. Our dynamic content management system gives you 95% control of your website, allowing you to decide how you want it to look and how you want it to function. We also have hundreds of modules that can plug into your website, enabling your site to grow as your business develops. The process of developing your website is seamless and we hold your hand every step of the way to create a website within your budget and on time."

Go Travel Technologies manages change and diversity

WITH the accelerated rate of change in business, reaction time is a primary factor in remaining competitive and technology needs to match this rate of change, says ceo of Go Travel Technologies, **Costa Sofianos**.

"The idea of purchasing software systems to improve business operations, and then only getting upgrades every few months, is fast becoming an outdated notion," he says. "It is now expected that the product will evolve constantly, even to the point where changes are made on a daily basis, allowing agile adaptation to business needs without interrupting operations. One of the key factors in

this trend has been the increasing use of the cloud in providing software as an online service."

Simultaneously, the number of technologies available to the travel industry is growing exponentially, and it has become necessary for businesses to engage with a multitude of these technologies. "These technologies need to work together seamlessly to provide service with speed and quality while ensuring business continuity," says Costa.

As a result of these factors, software provider, Go Travel Technologies, which specialises in the development and implementation of

customised front and mid-office systems for travel management, is providing online solutions that enable multiple technologies to work together smoothly and effectively. "Engaging technology in this way naturally allows for consolidated reporting, centralised quality control and process automation. It is also a key factor in improving business continuity," comments Costa.

"Understanding these trends, and using them effectively in the business's technology strategy, is fast becoming an essential element for excelling in today's marketplace," he concludes.

New app for Legend Golf & Safari Resort

LEGEND Golf & Safari Resort has launched a new app for iPhone and Android smart phones. Clients can now download the app free and make use of a range of product information, special offers and interactive content.

Conference organisers will be able to interact with delegates on site before, during and after their stay using the new app.

Other features include

360-degree tours of the golf courses, resort facilities and rooms as well as hole-by-hole GPS information for the Signature Course, The Tribute Course, The Extreme 19th and the driving ranges.

Maps, videos and picture libraries of Legend Lodges' portfolio of products are also included in the app, giving clients the ability to book accommodation and activities online.

Did you know?

Kulula was the first airline to adopt Sabre's Customer Experience Manager, a data-rich software solution that allows airlines to automate manual services and stimulate revenue, while enhancing customer experience. Examples include promoting targeted ancillaries such as WiFi, based on past history or propensity to buy, and proactively rewarding a high-value passenger with a seat upgrade in the case of a flight delay or service disruption. Customer Experience Manager can interpret customer insights to offer discounts or promotions for target markets and travel dates.

Cathay's reading material goes digital

PASSENGERS using Cathay Pacific's lounges at Hong Kong International Airport can enjoy free streaming of more than 2 000 newspaper and magazine titles from some 100 countries through their personal devices, putting world news at their fingertips.

Using the WiFi network available in the lounges, passengers will be able to enjoy free real-time premium content only available to

subscribers in newspapers such as the *Financial Times*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *International New York Times*, *Ming Pao*, *Oriental Daily* and the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong. Major titles from overseas will include Australia's *Daily Telegraph*, *The Washington Post* from the United States, the UK's *Daily Mail* and France's *Le Monde*, to name just a few. ■

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SELL MORE ... GAME LODGES & SAFARIS

The Naked Agent

THIS month the mystery shopper is a grandmother who wants to take her two grandchildren on a week's self-drive family holiday to the Kruger National Park or surrounding areas, from September 21-30. They

have previously experienced a short safari drive through the Pilanesberg and would like a good hotel and to go on daily game drives as they are nervous, first-time safari adventurers. They would also like half- or full-board options.

The children are 13 and 15 years of age and will be flying from Cape Town to OR Tambo International, where their grandparents will collect them. The budget for the safari is R40 000 and the family will take their own car.

Harvey World Travel Brooklyn

This agent was exceptionally polite, in fact probably the most polite agent I have ever come across. He made me feel special as a customer and it was apparent that I had his full attention, that he was listening well to me and there was a strong air of confidence in his communication. He definitely understood the basics and went a little

further by asking if we had an airline preference and also which flight times would be best for the children – something that would definitely be a consideration. His turnaround time was excellent and he provided three quotes giving me a choice of location, accommodation types and different inclusions. There was no selling in

the covering email and no follow-up. However, I would have been more inclined to return to him as he engaged me more than the other agents and I felt that, by his service, he had made more of an effort to find a suitable holiday.

30%

Pentravel Brooklyn

The agent was welcoming and friendly and it was apparent that she was making notes of my request, enquiring if we would drive ourselves, whether we would need accommodation and the number of adults and children and their ages. She asked for our budget, our preferred star rating and if we would share or prefer separate rooms. However, she didn't ask if we had been

on safari before, what kind of experience we were looking for, if we had any specific interests or things that we would like to include in this important family holiday. Indeed, she said she had enough information and that she would work on it and get a quote to me that day. She lived up to her promise and within the hour a quote was received. There was no selling and the quote didn't

meet our needs. She had attached a wonderful *Why book with us* leaflet. It would have been good for the agent to draw my attention to the importance of reading this great document either during the initial consultation or in her covering email. Once again there was no follow-up.

16%

Take note!

The purpose of the Naked Agent in this series of 'Sell more...' features is to assess the experience from only a sales skills perspective and not the effectiveness of the travel agency. TNW believes that sales skills are increasingly important to travel agents and, in many cases, improvement in selling skills is the easiest way to increase the prosperity of the agency and its consultants. The Naked Agent is designed to raise awareness of the opportunity and build awareness of the need.

Flight Centre Brooklyn

15%

While the agent was friendly and cheerful, my enquiry was handled with little interest, enthusiasm or information. She asked the ages of the children and how long we wanted to be away. I could hear her typing frantically while I was talking to her, and assumed she was checking flights as she started to give me an idea of prices for the children. At this point the agent decided that she had enough information and advised me that I would receive an email from her the following morning. When I asked if it was a good time to go to the Kruger, she replied that it would be spring, which was a perfect time to travel with no explanation as to why it was. My consultation time seemed to be over so I looked forward to receiving my quote as promised. When it didn't arrive I called the shop on Tuesday and was told a message would be passed on to the agent. When I had not received a quote by Thursday, I called

again that afternoon. I was advised by the agent I had spoken to on Tuesday that my agent was not available but that a message would be left for her to contact me the following day. It would have been more impressive for the agent who had now spoken to me twice to acknowledge my frustration, to take a new enquiry and to provide a quick turnaround quote. This didn't happen. Four days after my original request I finally received my quotation. While the covering email was apologetic, there was no selling, no matching of needs, in fact the agent was trying to re-establish some details, such as whether the grandchildren would be staying longer than just the week. I acted as any customer in this situation would and did not reply, as my confidence in the service provided was minimal.

Sales tip

Excitement, interest, enthusiasm

Behaviour breeds behaviour. If you engage with a customer and unleash their holiday excitement and share in it, you will see that it will make all the difference to your chances of nailing the

sale. If you show little or no interest and simply go through the motions, then don't be surprised if your conversion levels are low and you fail to achieve your monthly targets.

Our selling-orientated criteria:

10%	Engage the customer by making an excellent first impression – be interested, excited and enthusiastic.
20%	Profile the customer, getting to know their needs in full, their likes, dislikes and prior travels. Use consultative sales techniques, not transactional questions only, and provide advice about the destination.
10%	Hook the customer, preventing their further shopping around, by sounding like an expert.
10%	Match the enquiry to the quote, providing two or three options, ideally within the same day of enquiry.
20%	Sell the holiday ideas and bring them to life. Don't just attach a quote.
5%	Close the sale when you spot buying signals.
15%	Convert the sale by creating a sense of urgency and asking for the booking.
10%	Persist if customers provide a reason why they can't book – attempt to overcome objections.
100%	TOTAL

Agents are scored up to the maximum of the weighted percentages above.



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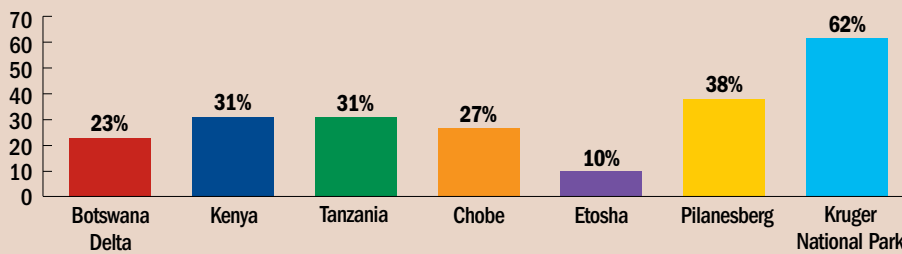
Survey: KNP still top of the pops

THE aim of *TNW's* snap survey on game lodges and safaris, conducted among retail travel agents and

wholesale tour operators, was to pinpoint what clients were looking for. Respondents revealed trends emerging in

booking patterns and identified key selling features of some popular locations.

Which of the following destinations have you booked in the last six months?



The survey looked at game lodge and safari booking patterns in seven locations in the last six months – Botswana's Okavango Delta and Chobe, Etosha in Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Pilanesberg and Kruger National Park. KNP received

the most responses, with 62% of tour operators having sold the destination in the last six months. In second place, with 38% of the responses, was Pilanesberg. The Botswana Delta only attracted 23% of bookings and Namibia's

Etosha emerged as the least popular choice with only 10% of respondents booking the destination in the last six months.

The survey also focused on the selling features and selling tips of each of the wildlife locations.

Botswana Delta – best of water- and land-based activities

The uniqueness of the area and unspoiled ecosystems were highlighted in the survey. The predominance of both game and birds was mentioned, as well as

the appeal of water- and land-based lodges, and therefore both water and land exploration. **Sharon Kemp** from ICAN Holidays in Somerset West said: "The

Okavango Delta in Botswana has just been named a World Heritage Site. It is the 1000th such site proclaimed under the World Heritage Convention."

Kenya – safari and beach dream destination

Although respondents generally agreed that recent terrorist attacks had created considerable reluctance and caution among visitors to travel to the area, many agree that Kenya's appeal lies in the excellent game-viewing opportunities it offers (in particular, the seasonal migration) and the country's friendly and welcoming

residents. The fact that it is close to South Africa is a selling feature. Several respondents mentioned that its appeal for South Africans was enhanced by not needing a visa, however this is due to change soon. Agents and tour operators mentioned that the country could be packaged as both a safari and beach holiday

to increase its attraction and value for money. According to **Emma Harrop** from Go2Africa in Cape Town: "The Masai Mara is great all year round as it has a high concentration of game for the size of the reserve. It is a fantastic Big-Five area, and particularly good for seeing big cats. Kenya is easy for short breaks."

Tanzania – three-in-one destination

A large number of respondents highlighted Tanzania's combination of three diverse attractions – Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and the Serengeti Plains for the annual migration. They

also pointed out that the destination was reasonably priced and that no visa was required for limited stays. **Ilonka Haarman** from Individual Itineraries Travel in Cape Town, suggested that

agents should "also include less obvious places when selling the country, like Lake Victoria (Speke Bay) and cultural experiences such as Lake Eyasi and meeting the Hadzebe (bushmen)".

Chobe – the place of elephants

Respondents agreed that one of the attractions of the Chobe area was its easy accessibility to Victoria Falls, which could be packaged in combination. Because of the Chobe River, it

offered unique game-viewing features and a river safari was a must. In particular, tourists had the opportunity for extensive elephant viewing. Its relative proximity

to Johannesburg was another plus. Said one respondent, Chobe is at "a point where three countries meet, which gives holidaymakers a huge opportunity for exploration".

Etosha – vast, open expanses

Mentioned often in the survey were Etosha's vast, open spaces, its plentiful game and its

many diverse lodges. Special features included its unique, dry, desert landscape. "If there are time

limitations, a fly-in safari is the best way to experience Etosha," said one respondent.

Pilanesberg – the malaria-free option

Due to its popularity, tour operators and agents offered many tips for selling this destination. The fact that it was in the North West Province close to Gauteng and easy to reach by car, made it an obvious destination of choice for some. In addition, it can be combined with several days at Sun City. Although the park offers excellent Big-Five viewing, it is not as big or busy as others and appeals to those wanting a quieter experience. The majority of respondents agreed that its popularity lay in

the fact that it was a local destination where passports or visas were not required, as well as being malaria-free. **Cecilia Roux** of SATC Rustenburg Travel said: "Pilanesberg is a smallish park, so you can easily scope out most of the best viewing spots or hides within a single day of game driving. If you get a good tip from a ranger, it shouldn't take you too long to get where you need to be. Some parts of the park remain largely inaccessible to general visitors, so remember to pack binoculars and bigger lenses for your camera."

Kruger National Park – the destination that sells itself

For a large majority of respondents, Kruger National Park sells itself. It is iconic and on most bucket lists. Additional selling features given in the survey were the large variety of accommodation and range of pricing levels on offer. Its appeal also lay in its diversity. Game viewing was particularly good, and self-drive further enhanced its appeal. A respondent said: "Best to book well in advance if travelling in a big party and over school holidays/long weekends. The south of the park is very busy, with day visitors coming in through the southern

gates. For a quieter time with great game viewing, book a camp in the central region. Satara accommodation on the perimeter is also great and you may see hyena along the fence at night. The northern part of the park has a further travelling time from Johannesburg but the roads around Shingwedzi are much quieter and you may be lucky and see one of the great tuskers. Accommodation standards vary from camp to camp. Do your homework when booking and make sure to advise clients about different accommodation facilities."

Trends in game lodge bookings

When asked to identify trends in game lodge bookings, respondents offered various thoughts.

- Safaris are still most popular with international tourists, however agents and tour operators are seeing increasing demand from South Africans.
- South Africans struggle with the affordability of game lodge holidays and complaints are voiced that locals are expected to pay the same prices as inbound tourists.
- Several respondents are starting to receive enquiries very early – one mentioned that they had bookings for 2015 and 2016 already.
- A point was raised that more South Africans were booking game lodge holidays on their own (Internet) as opposed to using a tour operator or retail agent.
- Increasingly, holidaymakers

are preferring lodges in non-malarial areas.

- There were mixed comments when it came to the category of lodges in demand. A high proportion of respondents indicated a greater movement towards privately owned lodges than previously. But many also indicated that guests were no longer as interested in the luxury aspects of a game lodge and were looking for a more authentic wildlife experience. Resistance to high prices was leading to an increasing number of less expensive lodge bookings.
- South Africans seem to be booking more game lodge holidays in winter, more so than international tourists, who book game lodges throughout the year. In addition, there was a greater need for child-friendly facilities.

SELL MORE GAME LODGES & SAFARIS

Quick Reference Guide: Accommodation

AHA Hotels

- AHA Hotels has non-commercialised game lodges at competitive rates in ideal locations, offering Big-Five game viewing.
- Thakadu River Camp in malaria-free Madikwe Game Reserve is ideal for families and romantic getaways.
- Gondwana Game Reserve, the only fynbos reserve in the world, is home to free-roaming Big-Five game and endangered species such as the Cape Mountain zebra and Black harrier.



Gondwana Game Reserve, the only fynbos reserve in the world.
Photo: Gondwana Game Reserve

Cresta Hotels

- Mowana Safari Resort & Spa, on the banks of the Chobe River in Botswana, is one of southern Africa's sustainable tourism destinations, where luxury exists in harmony with nature.
- Features 112 luxury air-

conditioned bedrooms and four suites with river views; a nine-hole golf course and fully equipped spa. Each guest room has a private balcony.

- Day trips to Victoria Falls, just 80km away, can be organised.

- With four private treatment rooms complemented by a raised deck overlooking the Chobe River, the Mowana Spa offers state-of-the-art facilities and a range of Clarens treatments and therapies.

Legend Lodges

- Hanglip Mountain Lodge is within driving distance of the Golf Resort, which is home to two golf courses and the Extreme 19th hole.
- Wildside Tented Camp is located in the Big-Five Entabeni Safari Conservancy

and offers a true bush experience with outdoor boma for alfresco dinners as well as guided game drives and bush walks.

- Lakeside Lodge has 24 en-suite rooms, with private decks for bird watching.

- Kingfisher Lodge features eight well-appointed rooms all with private decks, Kingfisher Lodge overlooks Lake Entabeni.
- Built into the side of a ravine, Ravineside Lodge offers spectacular views.

Premier Hotels

- Mpongo Private Game Reserve is conveniently close to East London and its airport and is accessible by tarred road.
- Home to elephant, lion, buffalo, hippo, giraffe and various antelope species. Also a bird-watcher's paradise. Guests can view some of the big game from their lodge decks.
- The Huberta restaurant



Mpongo Private Game Reserve. Photo: Premier Hotels & Resorts

serves wholesome fare; guests can dine while gazing at hippos through large windows overlooking a waterhole.

- Offers transport and shuttle

services, a swimming pool at River Lodge as well as activities including game drives, guided safari walks, mountain bike trails and horseback safaris.



Thornybush Game Lodge entrance.
Photo: Thornybush Collection

The Thornybush Collection

- The Thornybush Collection represents a group of four- and five-star small, medium and large lodges. All but one are within the game-rich Thornybush Nature Reserve.
- Prices are in the mid to upper range, taking

travellers who are on a budget into consideration.

- All management personnel have worked within the group for a minimum of three to four years, ensuring consistency, brand building and a strong reputation.



Selous Serena Camp lounge. Photo: Serena Safari Camps

Serena Hotels

- Serena Safari Camps boasts unique locations in East Africa and are popular venues for weddings and honeymoons.
- Selous Serena Camp is in the largest game reserve in Africa, the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania. Home to more than 400 bird species and Africa's largest population of Lichtenstein's

hartebeest, Nyasaland gnu and Roosevelt's sable.

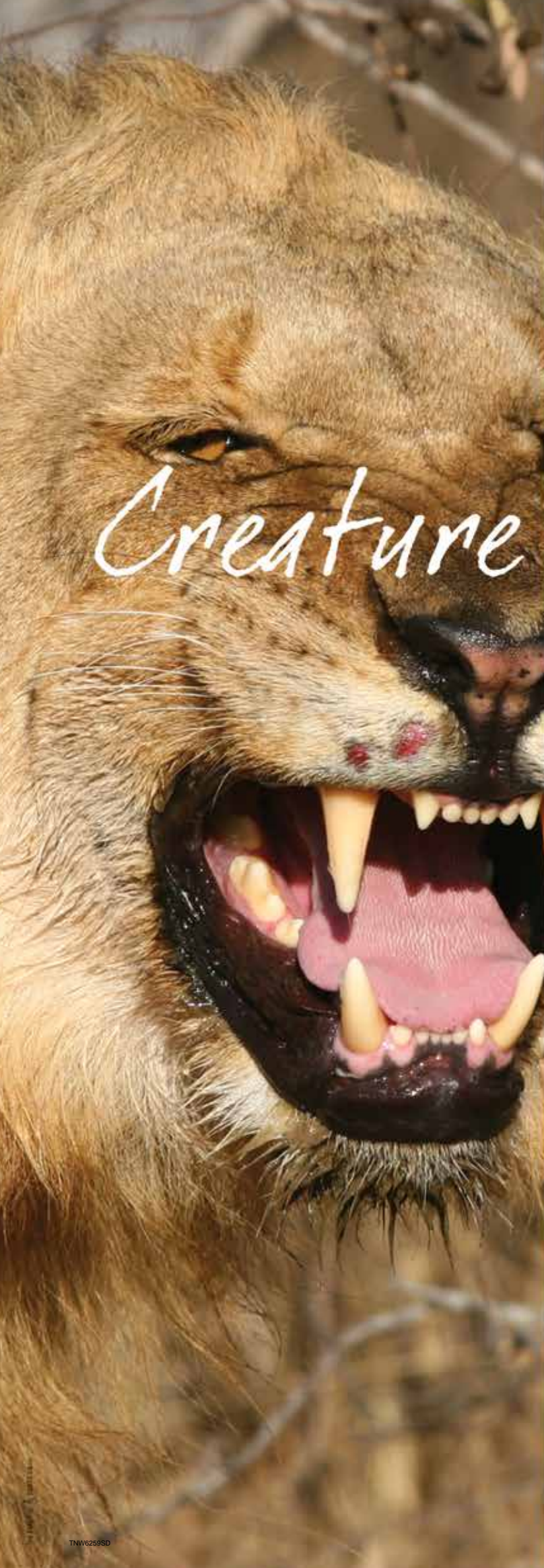
- The Serena Lodges are in national parks in East Africa and feature abundant wildlife, adventure and luxury.
- Lodges practise sustainable and responsible tourism. Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge in Kenya has received a number of ecotourism awards.

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Serondella Lodge



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Thornybush Waterside Lodge



Waterbuck Lodge



N'Kaya Lodge



Jackalberry Lodge



Shumbalala



Simbambili Game Lodge

The Thornybush Collection is proud to announce the latest addition to its exclusive portfolio of luxury lodges, located in the Thornybush Private Nature Reserve and The Sabi Sand, ranging from 5-Star stays to a self-catering option.

The 4-star Jackalberry Lodge is located in the south of the reserve and its high rainfall offers rich birdlife and an abundance of the Big 5. Regardless of which Thornybush Collection destination you choose, you can enjoy breathtaking game drives in open game vehicles accompanied by experienced rangers and trackers, revitalise in luxurious surrounds, enjoy delicious cuisine or pamper yourself at one of our spas.

For a larger-than-life experience that will change you forever, call us now on +27 (0)11 253 6500, fax +27 (0)11 803 7350, email sales@thornybush.co.za or visit www.thornybushcollection.co.za.

The Thornybush Collection



**Quick Reference Guide:
Tour Operators**

NEED TO KNOW

Holiday Tours

- Holiday Tours' website offers live availability on air, car and most of the game lodge bookings. Agents can quote, confirm and pay for a booking online without keeping clients waiting.
- Holiday Tours offers various experiences for clients at game lodges. The product team has worked with preferred partners to create pre-bookable experiences such as bird watching, walking with elephants and, for kids, being a mini game ranger.
- Rates are competitive and the range of products diverse. The staff also have in-depth knowledge of game areas and properties on offer.

Did you know?

Makalali Private Game Lodge is undergoing a revamp following recent floods. The new, revitalised lodge will open in August.

IT'S LEGENDARY

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LEGEND
LODGES, RESORTS & RESERVES

TNW6262SD

Shareholding change for Inzalo Investment Holdings

NEDBANK Private Equity has sold its 50% holding in Inzalo Investment Holdings, which trades as The Thornybush Collection, to Newco Pty Ltd. Newco is a company established by **Andy Payne**, recently appointed chairman of Inzalo Investment Holdings and former Wilderness Safaris ceo. He is being assisted by local Hoedspruit game and property specialist, **Trevor Jordan**, and banking personality, **GT Ferriera**. The transaction

was finalised recently for an undisclosed sum. The Thornybush Collection, consisting of a group of game lodges in the Thornybush Nature Reserve and one operation, Simbambili, in the north-eastern Sabi Sand, now records a turnover close to R100m. "This marks the re-entry into our operation of partners that were original investors in the Thornybush Reserve, GT Ferriera and Partners. We

purchased Thornybush Game Lodge from a consortium led by them in the '90s and grew the group to now own, market and/or manage 11 lodges," commented ceo, **Nic Griffin**. Nic said the group had bold plans to acquire and build new lodges in the Thornybush Nature Reserve. "With occupancies now achieving in excess of 75%, there is strong demand for added inventory in the four- and five-star segments of our business."

Valentine in July from AHA

AFRICAN Hotels & Adventures is running a Valentine in July special at Gondwana Game Reserve.

The special comprises a romantic five-day breakaway with two nights at Gondwana Game Reserve

and three nights at The Rex Hotel for R4 020 per person sharing. It runs until August 31.

Serena Hotels gets wildly romantic

SERENA Hotels is offering a romantic getaway at its Selous Serena Camp in Tanzania from US\$1 785 (R19 276)) per person. The package

includes meet and greet in Dar es Salaam; return flight from Dar es Salaam to Stieglers Gorge; airstrip transfers to Selous Game Reserve; three nights' full

board accommodation; game drive; Rufiji river cruise; a guided bush walk and mineral water and soft drinks. The special is valid until December 31.

Winter specials from Holiday Tours

HOLIDAY Tours is running two winter specials, valid until August 31. They include two nights midweek at Mziki Safari

Lodge in North West on a self-drive basis including all meals and two daily activities from R2 020pps. From R1 425pps,

clients can stay for three nights at the Protea Hotel Kruger Gate on a room-only, self-drive basis.

Hot deals for the cooler weather

LEGEND Lodges is offering winter deals at its lodges until August 31. The deals include accommodation, three meals and two game drives. Prices are:

- Hanglip Mountain Lodge from R1 760pps
- Wildside Tented Camp from R920pps
- Lakeside Lodge from R1 170pps, and

- Kingfisher Lodge from R1 760pps
- The specials are only valid for South African residents and are subject to availability. ■

The Selous

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Tel: +27 011-0212607/8/9
Fax: +27 086664 8389 E-mail: reservations@serenahotels.co.za

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TNW6814

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.



Travelbags' monthly luncheon, sponsored by Cresta Hotels, was held on June 20 at Hard Rock Café in Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton. Pictured here, enjoying tequila cocktails on the deck are (from left): **Anneke Jordan** (Travelport), **Susan Anderson** (BCD Travel), and **Joanna Hutchison** (Tidal Travel).

Rocking in Jozi

Living the dream

Dreams tour operator, which offers tailored travel packages, has taken off! The operator has moved to new offices in the hub of Johannesburg – 'The Place' on 1 Sandton Drive in Sandton. For more details, see Travelinfo. Making dreams come true, with a new 'lease' on life, are (from left): **Erica Barrett** (general manager) and **Stacey Barnett** (national sales manager). Photo: Natasha Toppel



Pictured from left: winner **Fazlin Lakay** (Seekers Travel) with **Stuart Twine** (gm for the Colosseum Luxury Hotel in Century City).

We have a winner!

THE Colosseum Luxury Hotel in Century City and Dolphin Beach Hotel in Bloubergstrand have announced another winner of their travel agent incentive competition. Each month they are giving away a 16gig Samsung Galaxy tablet. The more room nights agents book with either of these hotels the more entries they receive.

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Dreams
TAILORED TRAVEL PACKAGES

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pentravel

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TNW6278SD

Pick of the week

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Professional Career Services
Min 5 years in/outbound incentive consulting. Site/client visits, presentations, all bookings for clients. Own transport, valid passport. Able to travel locally & internationally.
Email: jeancv@pcs-sa.co.za

Intermediate or Senior Leisure Consultant - CPT CBD

Professional Career Services
MS Office/Amadeus. Minimum 3- 5 years' leisure experience. Geography, destination and product knowledge. Salary: R8000-R11000 neg.
Email: candicecv@pcs-sa.co.za

Inbound Consultants – Johannesburg

Lee Botti & Associates
North/East. Let your passion for Southern Africa shine! Various positions require min 3 years' experience! Tourplan advantageous! Salary neg. Email: corneliavz@nowjobs.co.za

Head of Dept – Durban

Lee Botti & Associates
Westville. Dynamic travel specialist company seeks innovative leader with extensive overseas travelling exposure. Must be customer-focused & sales-driven!
Email: jillm@nowjobs.co.za

Senior Tours Consultant – Pretoria

Equity Connections cc
Design creative itineraries. Liaise with clients and suppliers to ensure cost-effective tours offered. Minimum four years' in a similar role essential.
Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Senior Roving Consultant – Pretoria

Equity Connections cc
Assist in various in-houses handling corporate files. Amadeus/Galileo a must plus sound experience in a senior corporate position.
Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Senior Tour Consultant – Centurion

Infusion Consulting
Organise tours for school groups i.e. flight, accommodation, tour itinerary composition and bookings. Negotiate with suppliers/clients etc. 80% office bound. Sabre 3 years' of exp. ess. Salary R22K.
Email: belinda@infusion.co.za

Top Senior Consultant – Offshore – Sandton

Infusion Consulting
Complex travel consulting (Africa – Oil & Gas). 6-8 years' as a Senior. Shift Work – Some: days/nights/public holidays/weekends. GDS: Amadeus/Galileo. Salary 23K Neg.
Email: belinda@infusion.co.za

Accounts Clerk - Edenvale

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Senior Corporate Consultant – West Rand

Wendy's Travel Personnel
Galileo essential – work closer to home!
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Senior Leisure Consultant - Cape Town

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Turkey is reducing foreign passport validity requirements from January 1, 2015. **Evin Mete**, marketing manager at the Turkish Culture and Tourism Office in the UK, told *TNW* that travellers currently needed to hold a passport valid for at least six months. From the beginning of next year, passports for all foreign travellers entering Turkey will only need to be valid for 60 days from the date of expiry of a traveller's visa, visa exemption period or residency permit, to be able to enter the country.

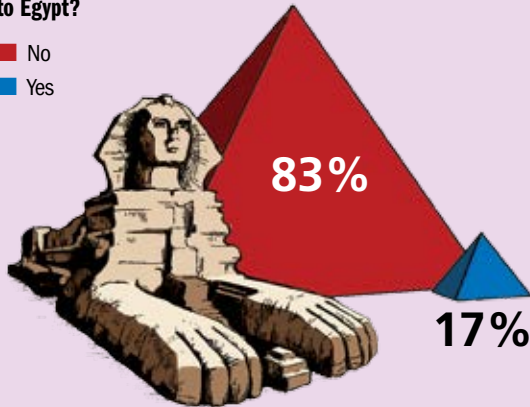
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Little demand for Egypt

Have you noticed renewed demand from your clients for travel to Egypt?

- No
- Yes



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TNW7136



You're invited!

Holiday Tours has reintroduced Zanzibar to its portfolio, with special packages starting from R10 800pps, including flights. Agents are invited to special functions across the country, where Holidays Tours will launch its Experiences, Zanzibar – packages that include unique experiences such as cocktail making, hot-air ballooning, and cookery classes – as well as its new brochure. Functions will be held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban on August 5, 6 and 14 respectively. For more details, see Travelinfo. Getting the ball rolling on the new product are (from left): Holiday Tours' **Mosima Ramphele** (product manager); **Zahedah Borat** (product manager) and **Trisha Lalla** (marketing co-ordinator). Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Sell lounge passes, earn comm

AVIAREPS has launched a new product that allows travel agents to sell and earn commission on pre-bookable airport lounge access.

Through Aviareps, travel agents can sign up as sub

agents with Lounge Pass – an online booking service for VIP Lounge, which gives customers access to over 200 lounges at over 120 airports.

Agents can add the 'Lounge Pass i-frame' tool to their

websites, allowing customers to make bookings without navigating away from the agency's website.

Lounge Pass tracks all bookings and pays 10% commission to agents on all sales made via the i-frame. ■

Low-cost CPT-Gatwick flights likely

DORINE REINSTEIN

EUROPEAN budget carrier, Norwegian Air, is eyeing a route from London Gatwick to Cape Town in the near future.

The LCC launched its first long-haul operation, a twice-weekly non-stop service to Los Angeles from Gatwick on July 2, followed by its New York service and on July 4 it launched flights to

Fort Lauderdale.

Norwegian Air operates a fleet of B787 Dreamliners on its long-haul routes with introductory fares starting from £149 (R2 739) one-way, including taxes.

Lasse Sandaker-Nielsen, Norwegian Air's corporate communications manager, said the new routes had been well received. "Almost all of the 291 seats on Norwegian's 787 Dreamliner

have been booked on all the inaugural flights between London Gatwick and the three US cities, and several flights in the coming months are fully booked."

Lasse told *TNW*: "We are looking at Cape Town as a potential destination in the near future."

Norwegian Air content is available and bookable on the GDS as well as online at www.norwegian.com/en/. ■



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