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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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Cheap domestic fares – finally!

DORINE REINSTEIN

FLYSAFAIR'S entrance into the South African market is expected to bring relief to domestic passengers currently paying high airfares.

The airline opened ticket sales last week, with fares starting at R499 for flights between Cape Town and Johannesburg, and R399 between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, inclusive of taxes. The airline will launch services between Cape Town and Johannesburg on October 16 – a year after it initially planned to take off.

A quick search for flights from Johannesburg (OR Tambo) to Cape Town for travel from December 13 to 20 revealed that FlySafair fares were half those of kulula and Mango. Kulula came in at R2 414 and Mango at R2 170, while FlySafair fares were R998.

The base rate gives travellers only a seat on the flight. They will have to pay for additional 'luxury' items, such as checked luggage and pre-seating. But even with the R300 charge for a checked bag, the fare was still around 43% less than its competitors.

Chris Zweigenthal, ceo of Aasa, says it is likely that other airlines will respond by introducing competitive

fares but warns that only time will tell how long this will be sustainable. He adds that the competition will undoubtedly put significant pressure on yields and airline profitability. "The launch of FlySafair in October will introduce new competition for the domestic airline industry, both low-cost and legacy carriers," he says.

"Our fares will always be affordable, honest and transparent, offering passengers real value on every one of our flights."

Hein Kaiser, Mango's spokesperson, agrees, saying he foresees a competitive adjustment from the entire sector. "The South African air travel market continues to be highly sensitive vis-à-vis the relationship between capacity and demand. In the current economic climate, demand continues to be under pressure and at this time, available capacity slightly exceeds it."

He adds that there will also be a small measure of market stimulation from FlySafair's launch fare offer. Hein says the new carrier's launch fare is of benefit to consumers

but adds that the market will determine sustainable pricing over the medium and long term. "Given the already highly competitive environment, competitive parity would likely be reached as the market becomes over saturated with capacity."

However, **Dave Andrew**, ceo of FlySafair, says the announced fares are not just opening specials or marketing showstoppers to announce the start-up of FlySafair. "Our fares will always be affordable, honest and transparent, offering our passengers real value on each and every one of our flights, making air travel more accessible to a greater proportion of the South African population."

Dave says the model is sustainable, as only travellers who book early will be rewarded by the lowest fares, while those booking last-minute will pay higher fares. "The average fare across all seats in aggregate exceeds the costs of operating the flight. This is a highly sustainable model, as has been proved in the Americas, Europe, and Asia with the likes of airlines such as Southwest, JetBlue, Ryanair, easyJet and Air Asia, all of which are among the most profitable airlines in the world."

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Learn about luxury

Lufthansa and SWISS International Air Lines are inviting the travel industry to learn more about their new business-class and premium economy-class offerings. Workshops will take place on August 27 and 28 at 09h00, 12h00 and 15h00 at the Marble Arch room at Southern Sun Hyde Park. For more info, email JNBMarketing@dlh.de. **Evelyn Kidder Ralphs**, Lufthansa sales manager, gets the champagne ready. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

TNW puts DHA to the test

With mixed views on the process of applying for and receiving an unabridged birth certificate from the DHA, TNW's Chana Boucher puts it to the test.

THERE is little more than two months to go until the Department of Home Affairs implements its new immigration regulations, which include the requirement for children to travel with an unabridged birth certificate. TNW has received reports that some parents had waited

up to 10 months to receive the unabridged certificate. The DHA claimed it took between four and six weeks, adding that it had "jacked up" the issuing of these documents.

On Friday, June 13, I braved the Home Affairs office in Cape Town to apply for my

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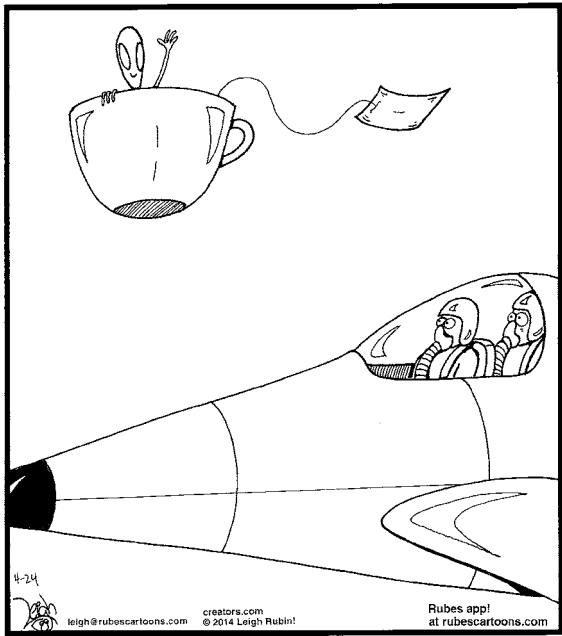
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“Call it a hunch, but I think that the top brass will have to come up with something a bit more creative than the usual ‘lenticular, saucer-like cloud’ explanation.”

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NEWS

Moz clamps down on business visas

NATASHA TIPPEL

MOZAMBICAN authorities have clamped down on business visa requirements, which SA passport holders require when entering the country to do business in Mozambique.

A representative of LAM told TNW the government

was now strictly enforcing the pre-application of business visas. Business travellers are required to obtain a visa before departing South Africa.

Michèle Abraham, Anantara's marketing communications manager for SA, told TNW that the law was not new. "We believe authorities are tightening the regulation due to a high

volume of travellers entering Mozambique via Maputo airport or the SA-Mozambique borders with no valid reason for entry or sufficient documentation to prove their purpose of travel.

South African passport holders do not require a visa when travelling to Mozambique for leisure travel for up to 30 days. ■

UK visa changes for children

THE UK Visas and Immigration office has implemented changes to visa applications by children with foreign passports. All visa applicants under the age of five are required to appear at the visa

application centre, Teleperformance, to submit their application.

Applicants under the age of five are required to have their photograph taken as part of the visa application submission process. However, they

will not be required to provide their fingerprints.

Applicants must book an appointment at the visa application centre following completion of their online application through the Visa4UK website. ■

Tour ops reconsider Israel itineraries

DEBBIE BADHAM

UNREST in Israel has caused demand for the destination to dwindle as tour operators think twice about sending travellers to the region.

The country has been in the news as the result of ongoing violence. Recently the US Federal Aviation Administration banned all US passenger aircraft from flying to Tel Aviv, causing a number of other airlines to follow suit. While the ban has been lifted, tour operators remain cautious about marketing the destination.

Concerned for the safety of its travellers, Insight Vacations has temporarily halted all travel to Israel. It said in a statement: "All impacted guests and travel agents will be contacted directly for rescheduling. Guests with travel plans to Israel through mid-September may also change or cancel their land travel plans without penalty."

Chris van Staden, director of Azure Travel,

says although demand for travel to Israel has dried up completely, the company wouldn't suggest travel to the region. "We've removed all our specials for the destination and are not promoting it at all. It's very sad but the situation is very bad at the moment."

Travel Vision is not actively promoting Israel either. Sales and marketing manager, **Sarah Whiteside**, says when agents request quotes, it mentions the current situation but will assist nonetheless. "We deal with requests on an ad hoc basis and communicate with our local operators about each destination as requests come in."

Inspirations Travel and Tours has also seen a decrease in demand but is still promoting the destination.

Manager of international destinations, **Stacey Rampersadh**, says the company has been working with ground handlers in the region for more than 30 years and is confident they

can ensure the safety of travellers.

"Israel is well equipped to protect its people," she adds. "Sirens go off and people are able to descend into bunkers. Afterwards they come back out and it's as though nothing happened."

She says the company has had cancellations as a result of unrest in Israel but that the situation remains fluid. "The situation could ease tomorrow or it could last for weeks."

Cruise operators across the board, including Azamara Club Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Royal Caribbean International, MSC Cruises, Silversea, Holland America, Costa Cruises, Compagnie Du Ponant as well as those represented by Triton Cape Sea Travel in the SA market, have released statements saying there are no changes to current itineraries as far as ports of call in the region are concerned. However, they will all be monitoring the situation closely, should future action be required. ■

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Agencies look outside profession to recruit talent

With a serious lack of skills in the travel industry, retail travel agencies and TMCs are looking further afield to recruit talent. Dorine Reinstein reports.

RECRUITMENT trends are changing, with retail travel agencies changing tactics in order to find and employ competent travel consultants who don't necessarily have a qualification in travel or tourism or experience in the field.

Megan Vorster, hr manager of Flight Centre, says over the past 10 years there have been many changes in the recruitment landscape – generational, technological, demographic and economic. But the most important change, she says, is that there is a clear scarcity of skills in the market. “We are all fighting for the same talent, so this has driven us to change the strategies we use to attract and retain good-quality employees.”

One strategy is to look outside the travel industry, especially when it comes to recruiting leisure consultants, as this broadens the talent pool, Megan says. She says skills that are critical for a leisure consultant are the ability to sell, to be service orientated, passionate about travel and the customer experience, self-driven and motivated. All these skills can be found outside the travel industry. She adds that Flight Centre has a comprehensive training programme in place to train potential consultants on other travel-specific skills.

Fiona Liebenberg, head of People Division at Big



Tammy Hunt

Ambitions, agrees and says there are a number of successful business process outsourcing companies that operate customer service and sales hotlines for large businesses like Vodacom or MTN. These call centre agents have proven crossover skills, as they receive good training and are used to working with targets. She adds that recruitment agents who appreciate the importance of relationship building have also been known to transfer well into travel agencies. Hairdressers and beauticians, who rely on referrals and who must understand a customer's needs in full, also make good travel consultants, she says.

Today's customer is more demanding of a personal, bespoke service and so a number of agents are looking for candidates who are able to provide

this and simply need to learn the product and systems, Fiona says. “I have definitely seen an increase in agencies willing to look outside the industry for this type of talent and I have had great success myself in recruiting, training and managing non-industry people. It is important to note that without a very good induction training programme, the non-travel agent recruits will not fulfil their potential.”

However, **Kim Botti**, director at Lee Botti & Associates, says although there are incontestable advantages, there are also some pitfalls associated with hiring people from outside the industry. “Recruiting consultants from outside the industry is a fresh approach to attracting potential achievers to the industry, but this approach is also associated with high training costs and a lower success rate for these individuals to remain in the industry after completing their training.” She adds that someone who has completed a travel qualification often has a more realistic view of what the industry offers and the job entails.

Claire Rushworth, hr manager of Club Travel, agrees: “The benefits are that they bring new ideas and ways of doing things to the table but the challenges are for them to grasp what is an ever-changing and



Kim Botti

complex industry.” She says candidates need to be passionate about travel and dealing with people. As long as candidates have the right attitude, the technical side can be trained, she says.

Geraldine Boshoff, marketing manager of Sure Travel, says although there are a number of clear advantages to bringing people from outside, such as a new and refreshing mindset and different set of skills, Sure Travel generally prefers consultants with prior travel agency experience coupled with qualifications in fares, ticketing and GDS. “New entrants to the travel industry should at least have a travel diploma.”

Tammy Hunt, eTravel's operations director, agrees that a solid travel education is invaluable. “Travel is a specialised industry and, to be an effective travel

manager, you require extensive knowledge in travel. There are some positions that could be filled by external parties, however I believe it would be far more beneficial to the travel companies and the industry in general if proper care was taken in developing within the company and growing travel experts into expert managers.”

The key to finding consultants with the right knowledge and the right skills, says Kim, is to find individuals who have completed a travel qualification and are proficient in either Galileo or Amadeus and who have relevant practical work experience.

Unfortunately, this is exactly where the problem lies in the travel industry. “We have noticed a decline in agencies taking on trainees, with only a handful of companies involved in this approach, which is essential for the future of the industry. This has resulted in a massive skills shortage of intermediate and senior consultants.

“While we acknowledge the cost and time implications of training staff from scratch, it is essential that we keep our employee pool large to ensure we can maintain our service. It is concerning that the industry could shrink due to the inability to service accounts due to a lack of competent resources,” she says. ■

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From 2 June, Airlink will be extending its network to include Skukuza Airport in the Kruger National Park. A short air transfer from Skukuza Airport to Nelspruit KMIA will allow guests to connect conveniently to Livingstone (Zambia) – and, from 19 June 2014, to Vilanculos (Mozambique). Visit www.flyairlink.com/skukuza/

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MasterCard launches digital payment first in SA

NATASHA TIPPEL

MASTERCARD has launched its digital wallet services – MasterPass – in South Africa, the first market in Africa and the Middle East to receive the technology.

Digital wallets accessible through the MasterPass network allow consumers to store all their MasterCard or other branded credit, debit or cheque card information, and shipping and billing address details securely in one place. This lets them make secure online payments without the repeated hassle of entering these details each time.

SAA is among the first merchants to accept MasterPass as a payment method at check-out.

SA users can shop internationally at the more than 40 000 online merchants around the world that accept MasterPass, as long as their loaded payment cards comply with international standards. This applies to most SA cheque and credit cards.

For retailers, MasterPass provides a more secure, faster and easier way to check out their customers. “Check-out happens with just a few clicks or taps whether at home, in a taxi, at work or at a supermarket, so merchants can look



Celebrating the launch of MasterPass are (from left): Mark Hearne, Kim Thipe (SAA) and Andrew Wilmot (Standard Bank). Photo: Natasha Tippel

forward to fewer customers abandoning their shopping carts, which, according to research affects over 67% of online purchases,” says **Mark Hearne**, MasterCard SA’s head of business development.

As MasterPass evolves, it will also enable in-app and in-store purchases, based on the shopping experiences a merchant wants to make available to its customers.

Standard Bank is the first local bank to offer a digital wallet powered by MasterPass via the Standard Bank MasterPass app. The free app is available for download from the Apple, Android or BlackBerry app stores.

“Soon, any South African bank and their merchant partners can offer

MasterPass, which can be branded and personalised, as long as they are equipped with the appropriate payment infrastructure,” he adds.

“This means that MasterPass can be tailored for online payments and in-store purchases in a manner that builds brand familiarity, affinity and loyalty.”

Anyone can use the Standard Bank MasterPass app – even non-Standard Bank cardholders. MasterPass also accepts selected PIN-based debit cards such as Maestro.

Launched in 2013, MasterPass is available in nine other countries – the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Singapore, China and Poland. ■

DreamBoats



Send your cruising news to debbieb@nowmedia.co.za

Discover the World adds new cruise operator

DISCOVER the World now represents Variety Cruises in the SA market. **Yiannis Vontas**, executive vp development and marketing for Variety Cruises, said: “Using Discover in these markets is totally based on having a long-lasting partnership with the company in many other countries.” **Jenny Adams**, ceo of Discover the World, said: “Variety offers a unique boutique cruise product in many Mediterranean and exotic destinations. We intend to support Variety by touting its benefits and services as well as its unique ports of call and provide the cruise line with a return on its investment.”

Silversea expands ‘Silver Select’ to Caribbean

SILVERSEA Cruises has expanded its ‘Silver Select’ promotion to include 21 sailings in the Caribbean. Guests can personalise their voyage with a choice of three offers: a two-category suite upgrade; a US\$411pp (R4 313) credit towards the purchase of the Silversea Air programme; or a US\$500pp (R5 247) on-board credit for shore excursions, spa treatments, speciality restaurants and more. Silver Select is available on new bookings made by August 31 for selected voyages in the Caribbean, Alaska and the Mediterranean.



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Why not today?



City Lodge available on Sabre

SABRE has signed an agreement with the City Lodge Hotel Group that will enable travel agents to book City Lodge hotels in South Africa, Botswana and Kenya.

Three of the City Lodge Hotel Group brands will be available in the Sabre system – Courtyard Hotels, City Lodge Hotels and Town Lodge. Agencies will have direct access to shop and book 30 hotels in South Africa, one in Botswana

and two new properties in Nairobi.

The chain code for City Lodge Hotel Group properties through Sabre is CG.

Gary Broomberg, md of Sabre in Southern Africa, said: "South Africa is an important growth market for Sabre and we are continually adding new content to our marketplace. We now have more than 125 000 hotel properties in 214 countries globally." ■



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We have lift off!

Kenya Airways acquired its first Dreamliner – which will service the airline's route between Johannesburg and Nairobi – earlier this year. The aircraft has finally completed its elaborate 'entry into service' programme and members of the travel industry gathered at Summer Place in Johannesburg on July 22 to celebrate the aircraft's inaugural flight. Joining in the celebrations are (from left) **Wilma Van Vuuren** (Wings Travel Management), **Jacqueline McDonogh** (Kenya Airways) and **Sarel du Plessis** (Tourvest Travel Services). Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Cape Town Tourism to tackle seasonality

CHANA BOUCHER

CELEBRATING its tenth anniversary this year, Cape Town Tourism has devised a strategy to focus on three issues: income, arrivals and seasonality.

This is according to Cape Town Tourism ceo, **Enver Duminy**, who says the organisation's simple, one-page strategy is 25; 1,5; 365 referring to 25% self-generated income; 1,5m international visitors and 365 days a year.

Speaking at a recent media brunch, Enver said Cape Town Tourism currently

generated about 15% of its income itself and wanted to grow this to 25% in the near future so that it could invest more in the work it did. The tourism body also aims to increase international arrivals from around 1,2m currently to 1,5m.

However, one of the biggest challenges for Cape Town Tourism remains that of seasonality. Enver says it has been a challenge for decades for the entire industry, which is why Cape Town Tourism in in the process of developing a seasonality index to measure the fall-off from

high to low season. According to Enver, once it is possible to measure this, it will help to find ways to improve visitor numbers during low season.

He says events are a good way to attract more people during the "dead spots" so that the high season can start earlier and last longer.

"Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. We say the weather is bad but it's not worse than other markets. We need to look at it collectively to address the problem. It will take time but we need to start somewhere," he says. ■

GBTA brings conference to Sandton

FOR the first time the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Southern Africa annual conference will be held in the greater Sandton area.

The 2014 conference will be held at the Bryanston Country Club, Johannesburg, from October 15-16.

The venue had been

chosen to enable travel buyers to minimise time away from the office, while maximising the benefits from attending the event, the GBTA SA said.

The conference will have the theme 'Designing Business Travel'. More details on the speaker line-up and itinerary will be released in coming weeks.

Conference rates are as follows:

- GBTA members – Buyers: R2 200; Suppliers: R2 700.
 - Non-members – Buyers: R2 600; Suppliers: R3 200.
- Early-bird rates are for sale until August 20.

For more details, email nduplessis@gbta.org. ■

To the point



The France Tourism Development Agency in South Africa has announced that free WiFi has been introduced in Paris's public gardens and parks. During the week, gardens are open between 08h00 and 21h30 and until 21h00 on Sundays. Opening and closing times vary according to the season and time of sunset. WiFi access zones are signposted.

Tsogo Sun launches Vigour & Verve

TSOGO Sun has launched its new coffee shop/restaurant brand, Vigour & Verve. Vigour & Verve 'coffee and everything in between' restaurants have opened in the Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel, Southern Sun Pietermaritzburg in the Golden Horse Casino complex, and a smaller version, Café Vigour, has been opened at SunCoast Casino in Durban. Two more will be opening this year at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg and at Silverstar Casino in the West Rand. The Vigour & Verve restaurants serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and are open to walk-in customers as well as hotel residents.

New hotel opens in Nairobi

DUSITD2 nairobi is set to open in September. The vibrant hotel in Nairobi's CBD mixes Kenyan culture with Thai hospitality. The hotel's 110 guestrooms all have a flat-screen TV, free Internet and an interactive entertainment system that allows the connection of an iPod or MP3. Rooms have 'tropical' rain showers and a digital safe, a minibar and Nespresso machine. Room types are: standard; Duxe Room; the Dlight Room, which has an extended living area and balcony; the Dvine Room; and the Dsire Suite, which has a separate living area. Guests in the Dvine and Dsire rooms enjoy complimentary breakfast, evening cocktails and selected refreshments throughout the day. Facilities include the Devarana Spa and the DFIT 24-hour rooftop fitness centre.

New Wilderness Safaris developments

WILDERNESS Safaris has introduced sleep-out experiences at the Linyanti Swamps in Botswana, and has completed upgrades to The River Club in Zambia and the new Linkwasha Camp in Zimbabwe, which will open in May next year. Linkwasha Camp in Hwange National Park will have seven en-suite double or twin luxury tents and one family tent. Up to 18 guests can be accommodated. At Savuti Camp in Botswana, two new 'sleep-out' decks have been built along the Savute Channel in the Linyanti Swamps, accommodating up to four people each. In Zambia, The River Club has reached the end of an extensive upgrade, with all luxury chalets given new furnishings, fixtures and finishes that complement the property's Edwardian atmosphere. Rooms have floor-to-ceiling glass windows with views of the Zambezi River below.

The Ridge plans multimillion-rand venue

THE Ridge Casino, Hotels and Entertainment Complex in Witbank has revealed plans for a new multi-purpose venue at an estimated cost of R25 million. The new 800sqm venue will comprise staging, audio and visual, and catering facilities all geared towards large indoor events such as lifestyle shows, exhibitions and gala banquets. Seamlessly connected with the casino complex, the venue will have easy access to parking and other facilities. It will replace The Ridge Events Park, which has been present in the area for five years as a venue for music festivals and community events.

The PortsWood Hotel undergoes refurb

LEGACY Hotels and Resorts has announced that rooms in the PortsWood Hotel in Cape Town are undergoing renovations, which are expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year. Guest rooms are being given new carpets, curtains, lighting and headboards and bathrooms are being upgraded. The hotel will still take bookings during this time.

JW Marriott Beijing Central opens

JW MARRIOTT has opened its second hotel in Beijing, JW Marriott Hotel Beijing Central. Located in Xuanwumen, the hotel is within walking distance of Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. It features 412 guest rooms and 60 suites, including 18 residence suites and 12 Sky Garden suites. The entire fifth floor is a dedicated events space with 2 500 sqm of banqueting and conference venues that provide great views of the city. The 300sqm living room is a residential-style venue comprising multiple meeting rooms and dining areas, as well as an open kitchen, enabling groups to seamlessly integrate work with play. Additional features in the hotel are a health club and three different restaurants that provide a variety of local and international gourmet experiences.

New airport for Moz north coast

MICHELLE COLMAN

COMPLETION of an international airport at Nacala in Mozambique's Nampula Province is expected in November.

Sandra Ganância of the Commercial Directorate of Airports Mozambique, told TNW that, as yet, it was not possible to specify when the airport would receive its first international services but domestic flights would start in November and regional airlines would commence services in the first quarter of 2015.

Formerly a military airfield, the airport is 200km from the provincial capital of Nampula, 500km from the Tanzanian border, 1 800km from the South African border and 620km for the eastern Malawian border. The Nacala Development Corridor links

Nampula to Malawi and Zambia by road.

Nacala's position on the coast and the existence of a deep-water port (the third-largest on the east coast of Africa), made it a strategic hub for the country's development and that of Southern Africa, said Sandra.

The airport will provide access to the north of the country, with its considerable tourism and business potential. Sandra said the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves and mineral resources in the location had attracted international investors. Resultant economic projects, along with locations favourable to tourism, were driving an increase in visitor numbers.

The new airport will make access to sites such as Ilha de Mozambique, the

Gorongosa National Park and the Quirimbas Islands more convenient.

"Nacala's strategic tourist products are sun, sea, sand, ecotourism, culture and sports, among others," said Sandra. "As an exotic tourist destination, investment opportunities and business in the tourism sector are endless, mostly in the construction of hotels, restaurants, water sports, exploitation of marine parks and more."

The airport will have capacity to handle 500 000 passengers annually and its 3 100m runway will be capable of receiving Boeing 747-400s. The passenger terminal will house 16 check-in counters, 16 passport desks, four departure and four arrival gates, two departure and two arrival lounges. ■

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Does your SLA measure up?

A recent ABTA Travel Buyers Breakfast in Johannesburg saw delegates discussing TMC service levels by focusing on practical guidance for positive engagement as well as ways to approach service delivery challenges. Kim Cochrane looks at some of the key issues raised.

CORPORATE companies and travel management companies (TMCs) continue to formulate and enter into service level agreements (SLAs) with clear expectations, conditions and measurements prior to the commencement of their partnership to improve and maintain service levels. But according to a recent postgraduate study conducted by **Tanja Lapersonne**, tourism lecturer at Varsity College in Port Elizabeth, fewer than half of the respondents in her research had entered into a formal SLA with their TMCs.

Her study was conducted through Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University as part of her BCom Honours: Tourism degree, with her primary objective being to formulate a '21st-century



Tanja Lapersonne

SLA that would ensure service delivery of key performance indicators (KPIs) within the corporate travel management process'.

Interestingly, Tanja's finding was echoed in an ABTA snap survey about TMC service

level challenges, the results of which were presented at a Buyers Breakfast event in Johannesburg in June.

Of the ABTA survey respondents, 89% said they had an SLA in place with their TMCs and as many as 11% said they did not have such a contract. Of respondents who rated themselves "extremely happy" with their TMC, all had SLAs, 60% met monthly to review these (40% met twice a year), 80% had KPIs and all worked very or fairly closely with their TMC regarding KPIs.

Kananelo Makhetha, md of BCD Travel SA, says these statistics are more or less correct in terms of his company's dealings with clients. "SME customers are not very particular about SLAs and in the instances

Merrill Isherwood, specialist: Travel Management, SARS

Tanja Lapersonne, tourism lecturer, Varsity College PE

Kananelo Makhetha, BCD Travel SA md

Advocate Louis Nel of Benchmark

where these agreements are in place, clients are not strict about them and often pass over the opportunity to utilise the SLA to derive better value from the relationship with the TMC." He says most multinational clients operating in African countries do insist on formalised SLAs but this is not the case with local clients, particularly SMEs.

Advocate Louis Nel of Benchmark, who attended the ABTA event, says in his experience, there are still a lot of corporates and TMCs in the market who do not have SLAs in place and if they do, there is not enough focus on them or enough clarity regarding key performance areas (KPAs) and KPIs as well as how to link these with performance and breach of contract.

Are SLAs still relevant in today's corporate travel office?

Yes, says **Merrill Isherwood**, SARS specialist: travel management, who spoke at the event and offered practical guidance for managing the TMC relationship more effectively. "But that said, while we have a clear SLA in place with our TMC, with precise, measurable KPIs and a fancy scorecard, both parties – TMC and corporate client – won't reach their objectives if a key factor, 'The Personal Touch', is not achieved."

Merrill says because the travel industry is so process driven and documented, it is easy for travel buyers and their teams to get so absorbed in efficiencies that they forget travel is still an emotional issue

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Kananelo Makhetha

for most people.

Internal stakeholder satisfaction is a key focus area for the SARS Travel Management Office. "For us, happy travellers are our most important priority. Will they be any happier if a booking is done in ten minutes as opposed to 15 minutes? No! The only thing they want is that the travel experience runs smoothly for them. For example, if a traveller tells me 'I've missed my flight!' my first response should not be 'I'll get you on to the next flight' but rather 'Are you okay?'"

For this reason, honesty is critical to ensure all communication is understood, Merrill says. In addition, to achieve success, the TMC and travel buyer must both have mutual goals that are also aligned to their company's objectives and staff KPIs – and more importantly, they must have mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities. "Do I fully understand my TMC's mandate from their management and do they understand mine? How do we assist each other? This contributes towards external

stakeholder satisfaction, another key priority," she says. If this framework is not in place, the SLA will not have as much relevance or clout, Merrill believes.

For Kananelo, SLAs are still relevant because they set service performance expectations at the outset and allow the TMC to allocate resources and price them in line with service level expectations.

In Tanja's view, the SLA framework defines the KPIs and service levels expected from the TMC, which are linked to financial incentives and penalties for exceeding or falling short of these agreed expectations.



Advocate Louis Nel

"The SLA provides a clear understanding of both parties' values and goals to assist in excluding future questions or challenges. To ensure that an SLA is effective, it should comprise seven to ten measurable metrics that are managed, tracked and audited on a monthly or quarterly basis."

How often should SLAs be reviewed?

In her studies, Tanja assessed the idea of an

SLA as an instrument to ensure service delivery and found that while research indicated that corporate travel procurement managers were becoming more reliant on SLAs to manage their relationship with their TMCs, only a small percentage of 38% were using their SLA as a relationship management tool.

"The SLA framework defines the KPIs and levels of service that are expected from a TMC and while 87% of respondents agreed that KPIs should be linked to the SLA, only 46% felt that an SLA should be revisited annually, with a mere 4% opting for a monthly review."

Merrill suggests at least a biannual review, if not quarterly, in the event of changing requirements.

Louis agrees it should be a dynamic, ongoing process. "There should be quarterly performance management meetings and, at these, compliance should be reviewed. In fact I believe SLAs should rather be called performance management agreements (PMAs) and it is always useful when drafting such an agreement to look at benchmarks in other industries."

Kananelo says most formal SLA reviews are quarterly, although the performance indicators are tracked monthly. "Limit the number of service performance measures and have them measurable. Ensure that they drive customer satisfaction of all main stakeholders."

To avoid nasty surprises, what should SLAs include?

Tanja has seen how in recent years the procurement departments of corporate companies



Merrill Isherwood

have become involved and influenced by the travel procurement process through the introduction of new measurable KPIs that impacted on travel costs and service elements.

"A KPI is a key buying factor that travel procurement managers will evaluate during the selection process of a TMC. Basic KPIs, such as response time and speed and quality of reservation, still form part of today's KPIs, however travel procurement managers are now including metrics that will improve and escalate their travel management programmes."

While elements do differ according to client preferences, Kananelo says the common elements relate to response times to bookings as well as general communication, service error ratios, customer satisfaction indexes, data and documents accuracy and query resolution.

He points to an Advito White Paper on improving travel programme management through strategic KPIs and meaningful savings measurements, which

states the optimum number of strategic KPIs for a corporate travel programme is eight to 12, balancing comprehensiveness with avoidance of over-complexity.

For this reason, Merrill says SLAs must include clearly defined expectations that have been discussed and agreed to by both parties prior to inclusion in the SLA.

Do corporates currently make optimal use of their SLAs?

In Merrill's opinion, no. "SLAs are seen to be a measuring instrument used more for punitive measures than as a working document that is regularly reviewed and adjusted as business needs dictate."

Louis agrees: "There should be a distinct link with breach and contract termination. What is also common is the misperception that an SLA is not a contract. It can be a stand-alone contract or attached to a contract as an addendum. It is imperative that this is addressed and linked to mediation to avoid costly litigation when things don't work out."

According to Tanja's study, she has found that while SLAs are standard documents in the majority of corporate organisations, corporate travel procurement managers are propelling past traditional targets and metrics that measure service delivery and are shifting their focus towards SLAs that will reduce costs and reflect intricate service key performance indicators.

"This development is due to organisations having their own quality assurance programmes and expecting TMCs to adhere to similar standards and continual technology development." ■



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New review website tackles TripAdvisor

DORINE REINSTEIN

At a time when TripAdvisor is coming under fire over fake reviews and clients blackmailing hoteliers, a new type of review website, TripExpert, has launched. It hints at its competitor's troubles in the tagline on its website: 'Finally, hotel reviews you can trust'.

"No one knows how many reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor are fake."

TripExpert doesn't feature reviews from customers but instead aggregates expert advice about hotels from different media outlets. Each property is awarded a TripExpert Score that is based on reviews in leading travel publications such as *Lonely Planet*, *Frommer's*, and *Travel + Leisure* magazine. The TripExpert Score, a number between 60 and 100, represents the consensus of expert opinion about the hotel.

TripAdvisor declined to comment

on "other businesses and their business models". TripAdvisor spokesperson, **James Kay**, told *TNW* the user website would continue to focus on its key goals of giving customers a voice and promoting transparency in the travel industry. "By reading lots of reviews you can quickly build up an accurate picture of a place, and it is this ability to tap into the wisdom of a huge travel community that makes a site like ours so useful."

TripExpert co-founder and ceo, **Andrew Nicol**, says crowd-sourced opinions about hotels and restaurants are only useful if the reader has the time to read hundreds of reviews. "No one knows how many reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor are fake. We do know that it's easy and cheap to buy fake reviews." He says it is important for people to have an alternative to user reviews. "Our data comes from people whose job it is to review hotels. By aggregating reviews from 20 different publications, we produce a TripExpert Score that accurately tracks hotel quality." ■

AF launches a new private jet service

AIR France, in partnership with Wijet, is offering a new range of private jet services for La Première customers and their travel companions travelling in business class. The service is exclusively for passengers connecting at Paris-Charles de Gaulle before or after their long-haul flight on Air France. The private jet services are operated by Wijet, which operates from 1 200 airports in France and Europe, using a Cessna Citation. Customers can choose their own departure time and time for check-in formalities, boarding and baggage collection is significantly reduced. Fares start at €2 400 (R33 817) per aircraft per hour, including tax, for a return trip to or from Paris-Charles de Gaulle. The return trip must be made within two days of departure. A limousine is provided between the long-haul flight and the private jet and vice versa. Customers can also access the La Première lounge.

EY to add daily Entebbe flights

ETIHAD Airways will build on its Entebbe cargo flights with the launch of a new passenger service in May next year. Daily flights from Abu Dhabi will operate to Entebbe International Airport using an A320 with 16 business-class seats and 120 in economy class. EY has announced six new routes for the first half of 2015, starting with Kolkata in February, Madrid in March, Entebbe in May and Edinburgh, Hong Kong and Algiers in June. Bookings for the Entebbe flights are now open. Flight EY0645 will depart AUH at 08h20 and arrive in EBB at 12h45. The return flight, EY0646 will depart EBB at 13h45 and arrive in AUH at 20h25.

SAA, JetBlue expand codeshare

SAA and JetBlue Airways have begun codeshare operations on flights between Washington, DC Dulles Airport (IAD) and Dakar, Senegal. JetBlue now places its B6 code on SAA-operated flights between IAD and Dakar. JetBlue tickets to Dakar are now on sale through its website or travel agencies for travel effective immediately. SAA offers the only daily non-stop service between the US and Dakar, operated by an Airbus A340. JetBlue flight 5203 departs IAD at 17h40 and arrives in Dakar at 05h50 +1 daily. Flight 5202 from Dakar departs at 01h55 and arrives at IAD at 06h25 daily.



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THE number of transatlantic flights has escalated in the last few years with the wave of airline consolidation in the US and the evolution of joint venture partnerships.

While some partnerships have been around for a while, there have recently been expanded joint ventures, mergers and new participants in the market, the most interesting being the entry of low-cost carriers.

In one of the most recent developments, International Airlines Group's British Airways and Iberia's joint venture partnership with American Airlines has been extended to include AA's merger partner, US Airways, increasing the partnership's daily flight options between the UK and US to 70, and to 16 between Spain and North America.

US Airways brings an additional 28 transatlantic routes into the joint business, of which 27 are new, giving BA and Iberia customers access to more than 50 new destinations in North America.

Further, Delta Air Lines' recent purchase of Singapore Airlines' 49% stake in Virgin Atlantic has been described by **Jimmy Eichelgruen**, Delta Air Lines' director: sales – Africa Middle East & Indian Sub Continent, as a game-changer, transforming the airline's ability to compete on transatlantic routes from the UK.

"Heathrow Airport is extremely important. London is the largest transatlantic destination from the US and eight of the top-10 most popular transatlantic flights operate from or to London-Heathrow. So gaining access was critical for our UK to North

America offering. Business customers on the London-New York route now finally have real choice, resulting in improved schedule flexibility and better services. It means we now have a strong number-two position out of London." (The BA/AA/US Airways partnership holds top spot.)

Delta's joint venture with Air France KLM and Alitalia adds strength to the relationship, offering even more options for customers flying via Paris Charles de Gaulle or Amsterdam Schiphol. In total, the partnership accounts for about a quarter of all transatlantic capacity, says Jimmy.

Delta and Virgin Atlantic also have a joint venture, with 33 flights daily across the Atlantic, including seven from Heathrow to JFK and two from Heathrow to Newark.



Simon Newton-Smith

Low-cost carrier, Norwegian Air Shuttle, launched services from Gatwick to New York, Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale in the first week of July. The carrier also operates services from Oslo, Stockholm, Bergen and Copenhagen to various US destinations.

Simon Newton-Smith, Virgin

Atlantic head of Middle East and Africa, says the fact that there is so much activity in the transatlantic market is a good sign that it has rebounded following the global financial crisis.

"The 2008 and 2009 years were particularly challenging for the transatlantic market, because it is so much dominated by business traffic. Last year was a stellar year and, although growth this year has not been quite as much, we've started seeing a solid recovery."

Lufthansa is also a significant player on the transatlantic, through its joint venture with United Airlines and Air Canada.

Nils Haupt, director of communications for Lufthansa in the Americas says when including the airline's other

To page 12

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The AMERICAS

Grand Canyon. Photo: Stock.xchng

More flights

From page 11

joint venture partners SWISS, Brussels Airlines and Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa and United Airlines' share of the transatlantic market stands at about 35%.

He says Middle Eastern carriers such as Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines are also increasing their transatlantic services, opening up new US destinations and continuing to add capacity in the market, as will the Asian carriers.

But, adds Niels, while North Atlantic and South American routes have been very profitable for most airlines, some weaknesses are developing due to over-capacity in the market, leading to lower prices. He foresees some carriers withdrawing from the transatlantic market as this environment becomes more difficult to operate in, and instead seeking out more attractive markets in Asia, Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Further, he does not foresee Norwegian or any other low-cost carrier making a success of long-haul routes, or causing a price war, as their market share, he says, is just too low. "Low-cost carriers in this market have never proved successful. The big price advantage that low-cost carriers can achieve on short-haul is more difficult on long-haul because of the high fuel consumption, which sees cost efficiencies melting away."

Simon says airlines that operate on the transatlantic route are used to healthy competition. "It's a very competitive market and we've seen airlines come and go."

Although he does not have a solid opinion on how successful Norwegian Air Shuttle will be, he says it is very difficult to imagine how much cost low-cost airlines can strip out of long-haul flights with fuel being the overriding cost. "So I think there are challenges to the low-cost, long-haul model," he says.

Mixed fortunes for TOs since SAA dropped Buenos Aires

TOUR operators report mixed fortunes since SAA cancelled its flights to Buenos Aires on March 31.

Sarah Whiteside, Travel Vision sales and marketing manager, says the tour operator was very disappointed with the cancellation. "South America had been our strongest growth region for the past two years, growing by more than 80% a year for two consecutive years. Although there are still options for clients to reach South America through the São Paulo hub, we have seen a 60% decline in our South America revenue so far this year."

She says the World Cup did not bring an increase in South Africans travelling to Brazil with Travel Vision. "We do not sell sports packages so our Brazil figures for the year have decreased due to the present huge inflation of prices in Brazil."

Angela Wood, Thompsons Holidays gm – marketing, also reports a decline in travellers to South America since the demise of Malaysia Airlines' and now SAA's flights to Buenos Aires. Packages to South America have become less appealing because of the hike in hotel costs and the high rand/dollar exchange rate. The World Cup, says Angela, also did not attract significant interest. "Packages were not cheap and fans probably lost interest when SA failed to qualify. But as the World Cup progressed we saw increased interest, which hopefully will continue over the next year."

Cathleen Dennis, reservations manager at Lu Dowell

Representations, which represents a number of carriers, says South Africans are still travelling to Buenos Aires through TAM Airlines' codeshare with SAA, with fares to Buenos Aires common-rated with those to São Paulo. "So airfare costs have not affected the market much and we've seen a 37% increase in sales from February to June 2014, compared with the same period in 2013." She says the biggest obstacle to selling Argentina in 2013 was the prohibitive cost of land arrangements. "But these have since come down and it is once again very affordable for South Africans to travel there."

Theresa Szejwallo, md of Trafalgar, reports a 'very pleasing increase' in travellers choosing Trafalgar's South American itineraries. "To avoid the issue of SAA no longer flying to Argentina, we offer wonderful guided holidays that start in Brazil and connect onwards. A big plus is our inclusion of all internal flights within South America as part of the package price, a massive saving for our travellers due to our immense buying power," she says.

So where are South Africans travelling to in South America? According to Thompsons Holidays, Travel Vision and Lu Dowell Representations, they're visiting Brazil, Peru, Chile and Argentina with Iguassu Falls, Machu Picchu and cruises out of Ushuaia all popular. Cathleen says there are seamless connections from São Paulo to Lima, Santiago and Buenos Aires.

Luxurious bedding for BusinessElite passengers

DELTA Air Lines has introduced Westin Heavenly In-Flight bedding products on its daily Johannesburg/Atlanta flights.

Margaret Copeland, Delta Air Lines commercial director: Southern Africa and Angola, says business-class passengers are enjoying the new duvets and pillows. The Economy Comfort seats are also proving very popular on the Johannesburg

route. Delta's Johannesburg-Atlanta flights offer connections to more than 200 destinations in the US, Canada, Mexico, and Central America. From the UK, the airline also offers seamless connections across the Atlantic with its joint-venture partner, Virgin Atlantic. Together, the two carriers operate 33 daily transatlantic flights and recently launched daily

services between Heathrow and Seattle-Tacoma.

Delta and Virgin jointly operate nine daily London-New York flights. Delta also began year-round services from Zurich to New York in June, and now serves 14 of the top 15 US to EMEA business markets direct.

In October, the carrier will launch its first direct services between London-

Heathrow and Los Angeles when it swaps one of its three Atlanta-London flights with one of Virgin Atlantic's two Los Angeles flights. The two airlines will codeshare on the routes.

Delta will also codeshare with Virgin Atlantic on the summer seasonal services it is launching next year from Belfast to Orlando and from Glasgow to Las Vegas.

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Yellowstone National Park. Photo: Trafalgar Tours

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The new guided holidays for 2015 are:

- Newfoundland & Labrador (11 days – R42 900pps). This tour journeys into Canada's less-explored areas.
- Secrets of the Old South (eight days – R27 100 pps). The tour delves into the US's Deep South and travellers hear tales of the Civil War and visit a tea plantation.
- Trans-American Grand Adventure (27 days – R84 725pps) journeys from LA to New York, stopping at the Yellowstone National Park, Gettysburg, Winterrest (home to the famous bridges of Madison

County) and Chicago.

- Mexico's Colonial Cities & Coastal Cities (10 days – R25 100pps). Visitors get to explore the Aztec empire, discover Mexico's great colonial cities and enjoy a Be My Guest dinner at a 17th century colonial mansion.
- Natural Wonders of Costa Rica (eight days – R19 500pps). Travellers participate in intimate encounters with the people and nature of Costa Rica and lunch at an eco-friendly hacienda and organic farm.

Travellers booking before November 27 get a discount of up to 10%, which is also combinable with Trafalgar's Frequent Traveller, second trip and family and friends discounts.

With Trafalgar having included all internal flights in its South American packages, it is enabling travellers to see more South American sights on a single tour by saving time.



Theresa Szejwallo

Trafalgar's pre- and post-extension tours in South America are a fantastic way to see more of a destination, says **Theresa Szejwallo**. "I travelled on Trafalgar's Best of South America at Leisure tour, enjoying extensive sightseeing in Rio, the Iguassu Falls, Buenos Aires and Santiago and then a four-day optional extension to Easter Island that was outstanding. One of my favourite sightseeing options was a guided trip to the favelas of Rio, with a 'behind-the-scenes' view of the favelas and how they started."



Pink river dolphins in Brazil's Janauaca Lake.

Cruise the Amazon with Thompsons

THOMPSONS Holidays is offering a five-night cruise aboard Amazon Clipper Cruises' Premium Fleet boats for US\$1 986,25pps (R22 571).

The itinerary includes a canoe ride on Brazil's Janauaca Lake where there's a possibility of viewing the Pink river dolphins and a large number of birds.


The 'Meeting of the Waters', where the clear waters of the Amazon meet the muddy waters of the Rio Negro, is another highlight.

Travellers will also enjoy forest walks, visit Anavilhanas National Park

– one of the world's largest fresh water archipelagos – meet the rainforest's local inhabitants and enjoy lectures about Amazon ecology and preservation.

The Amazon Clipper Premium Fleet boats offer spacious outside cabins with twin beds. The air-conditioned boats have a viewing deck and can access small landings. Canoes are used for visits ashore and into lagoons, narrow channels and flooded areas of the jungle.

The rate includes full board, daily tours, pick-up and drop-off at the Tropical Manaus pier and an English-speaking guide. ■



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Appointments

■ Katherine Lewis

has been appointed gm of Protea Hotel Sea Point. Katherine was previously gm of Protea Hotel Bloemfontein. During her career she has gained experience across three international hotel groups in both South Africa and Europe.



■ South African Tourism has appointed **Sthembiso Dlamini** to be its new chief operating officer, with effect from August 1. Sthembiso replaces previous coo, **Tim Scholtz**, who left the organisation earlier this year.

Sthembiso is currently employed by the National Development Agency in the capacity of senior manager: office of the ceo, a position she has held since August 2012. In this role she has been responsible for strategic planning, managing performance information, and overall strategic support to the ceo.

In her new role as coo of SA Tourism, Sthembiso will lead business planning and budgeting processes, ensure optimal management of resources and adherence to good corporate governance through prudent financial management. She will also ensure compliance with Public Finance Management Act and all other legislations affecting SA Tourism.

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Madiba Day

Tourvest Integrated Tourism Group recently celebrated Nelson Mandela's birthday by building 10 low-cost homes for residents in Alexandra. This is the fourth year that the company has been involved in the initiative, bringing the total number of homes it has built to 35. Pictured here, Tourvest employees hand over the keys to one of the new homes they have built in Alexandra.

AF KLM flies big cats home



Last month Air France KLM Martinair Cargo carried six lions from Amsterdam to their new home in Johannesburg. The lions will live out their days at Lionsrock, a big cat sanctuary in the Free State.



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Lead the Sales Team to deliver the set Revenue Target for the region.

Key objectives include: Achieving the set Revenue Target; Route Profitability; Market share, Client retention and New Business acquisition

Key Accountabilities: People Management, Key Account Management; Structuring, planning and implementing the Sales and Marketing Plan for the region.

Minimum requirements:

- Tertiary Education is essential, relevant to this role
- People management and experience is essential, minimum 4 years.

- Minimum 5 years' experience in the travel industry in a management role. Preferably an airline. Understanding the travel trade landscape is important.
- Knowledge/exposure to Southern Africa also an advantage
- Knowledge of systems and Fares knowledge is important

If you meet the above mentioned criteria, please submit your profile to agoddard@airmauritius.com. The detailed job description is also available. The position is available immediately.

Air Mauritius SA Pty Ltd reserves the right to reject profiles that do not meet the minimum requirements for this role.

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Pick of the week

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Seeks above average exceptional and dynamic consultant to join growing team. Corporate & Leisure travel. Relaxed environment. Galileo cert/2yrs/experience. Be valued for being brilliant! Salary neg. Email: fswart@prioritytravel.co.za

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Knowledge of SA. Tailor-making packages for travel in SA. Indian and/ or south east Asian markets would be helpful. Tourplan. R10000-R15000. Email: nonocv@pcs-sa.co.za

HR Executive – JNB

Quantex Recruitment Group
R Neg. Manage and direct a busy HR department in leading corporate travel company. Succession planning and change management experience required. Email: lee@quantex.co.za

Int/Snr Consultants - Durban

Lee Botti & Associates
North Coast. Are you able to close a 'walk-in' sale? Fabulous opportunity. In-depth knowledge of Galileo & Leisure. Email: ashneem@nowjobs.co.za

Operations Manager – Pretoria

Infusion Consulting
Oversee all operations. Smooth running of branches, recruitment, supplier contracts and negotiations. 15 yrs' exp, MS Office, papertrail. Galileo and Quicktrav. Salary R35K CTC. Email: belinda@infusion.co.za

Group Reservations and Ticketing Consultant – North

Equity Connections cc
Manage all aspects of reservations for international and domestic group travel. Flights, accommodation, breakaways. Consulting and ticketing experience essential. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Travel Expert – Johannesburg

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

Sales Executive - Cape Town

Club Travel
Analyse the market, offer feedback, meet and exceed targets whilst identifying new agents, build relationships, provide training to online agents and handle branding for agents. Email: careers@clubtravel.co.za

Sales Support Assistant – Sandton – Gauteng

Wendy's Travel Personnel
Energetic, proactive, computer literate person required to assist sales support manager and team!! Matric, tertiary degree, travel diploma & lodge reservations. Email: wtp@icon.co.za

FIT and Groups Inbound Wholesale Consultant – Durban

Professional Career Services
Sales driven individual with previous experience dealing with USA and European markets. Handle groups and FIT quotes, bookings. Email: jeancv@pcs-sa.co.za

Top Senior Consultant - N/Subs

Quantex Recruitment Group
RNeg. Corporate in-house requiring your senior expertise in corporate consulting. Package includes medical aid and pension. Email: bridget@quantex.co.za

Financial Manager - Johannesburg

Lee Botti & Associates
North. Number cruncher sought by dynamic TMC! Proven management skills and related degree/diploma. Travel background advantageous! Highly negotiable salary. Email: corneliavz@nowjobs.co.za

Top Senior Consultant – Sandton

Infusion Consulting
Complex bookings within Africa, communicate with foreign clients, highly pressured. Minimum 6 years' experience, 4 being in senior. Salary R25K CTC. Email: belinda@infusion.co.za

Senior Corporate Consultant – Pretoria

Equity Connections cc
Handle full functions of corporate travel bookings. Source best accommodation, flights and flight routings. Amadeus and/or Galileo. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Business Development Managers – Johannesburg

Corporate Traveller
We are looking for business development managers to grow our new business in Johannesburg. Corporate sales experience essential. Email: megan.vorster@flightcentre.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

Travel Adviser – JNB & CPT

Thompsons Holidays
Create and sell holiday package with the support of company marketing, training and guidance. Package includes basic + commission, with monthly and annual achievers awards. Email: work@cullinanoutbound.co.za

National Sales Manager – Western Cape

Tourvest Travel Services
Manage the National New Business Development sales teams (WCape & Inland) by determining sales targets and ensuring that those targets are met. Email: Nicole.gasser@travel.co.za

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

TNW7162

Cheap domestic fares

From page 1

But the South African domestic market is tough, says Chris. He says launching a new carrier will not be easy, especially as the economy is not growing at a fast rate. He adds, however, that the staff and management at FlySafair are extremely competent and they have been in the aviation business for years. "Safair is a member of Aasa and we wish them well with their launch."

FlySafair first opened ticket sales for flights between Johannesburg and Cape Town in September last year with the maiden flight scheduled for October 17, 2013. The airline was blocked from launching and forced to re-accommodate

and refund passengers after the court granted an interdict sought by competitors, Comair and Skywise.

However, this time Comair will not take action against FlySafair. Comair ceo, **Erik Venter**, told TNW: "The Licensing Council of the Department of Transport has approved the new shareholding structure of Safair as being legal. We welcome any new private-sector airlines as long as they operate under the same legislation that Comair has to comply with."

Comair did not respond to requests for comment on how FlySafair's entry would impact on fares in the domestic air travel sector. ■

Flyafrica – down but not out

NATASHA TIPPEL

FLYAFRICA expects to finally launch flights on Friday, August 1.

The new airline's inaugural flight was cancelled on July 23, following a decision by the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe to revoke the airline's South African pilots' validation to fly.

FlyAfrica ceo, **Adrian Hamilton-Manns**, told TNW at the time of going to print, the revocation was completely unexpected. He said the day before it was all systems go

but at 20h00 that evening, the airline received word from the CAAZ that they wouldn't be allowed to fly.

"We are working carefully with the authorities to meet all the new requirements that they have given us. We are convinced that we will meet these requirements and be ready to launch flights on Friday [August 1]," Adrian said.

"Our primary concern has been our passengers and re-accommodating them on other flights," he added.

Flyafrica moved quickly to

assist affected passengers. Editor of TNW's sister publication *Southern African Tourism Update*, **Tessa Reed**, was booked on a flight from Johannesburg to Victoria Falls on July 23, returning on July 27. "FlyAfrica re-accommodated us on a flight the same day as well as on the return. The airline was very apologetic and kept us updated at every stage."

Passengers have also been given a credit to fly on another flyafrica.com flight at a later date of their choice. ■

Minister Brown questions SAA's bailouts

DORINE REINSTEIN

STATE guarantees are not the answer to the SAA Group's continued challenges, says Public Enterprises Minister, **Lynne Brown**. "It has become clear to me that simply extending State guarantees to the airlines is an inadequate response to the challenge," she said during her budget vote speech in Cape Town.

Lynne warned that an "extraordinary intervention" would be required to put the SAA Group on a sustainable footing and to support the airlines' turnaround effort. However, she didn't specify what this intervention would

entail but hinted that the airline could currently be undercapitalised.

The minister acknowledged that the environment in which SAA and SAX operated domestically and globally had become more challenging with intensified competition, narrow margins, cost pressures due to fuel prices and currency volatility. "In this context, their undercapitalised balance sheets severely constrain the airlines, leading to continued losses and affecting the going concern status of the companies."

In a *City Press* report, Lynne said she was not considering privatisation. "In

the short term, I think that [the privatisation] debate is probably not one I am considering now. And as time progresses, there are other forms of financial modelling we can look at, for instance, private partnerships," she said.

Spokesperson for SAA, **Tlali Tlali**, declined to answer questions on how a shutdown of state guarantees would impact on the airline's Long Term Turnaround Strategy. He referred all questions to the minister.

The Ministry of Public Enterprises did not reply to numerous requests for comment. ■

TNW puts DHA to the test

From page 1

daughter's unabridged birth certificate. I phoned the call centre before making the trip to ensure that I had all the correct documentation and was told to bring my ID, my husband's ID, my daughter's abridged birth certificate and R75.

When I arrived, I was handed a number and then joined hundreds of other people in the waiting area. While waiting, I filled in the application form, which asks for all the parents' particulars, and before I had even finished, my number was called.

I handed over the form and was told to go to the cashier to pay. I was advised that I could expect an sms within four to six weeks notifying me that the birth certificate was ready for collection. At



no point during the process was I asked to show any of the supporting documents (i.e. IDs and abridged birth certificate).

On the morning of July 11, exactly four weeks after I applied, I received an sms to

say my daughter's unabridged birth certificate was ready for collection. I collected it last week.

While going to Home Affairs is never pleasant, I only spent about an hour at the office in total, including both visits. ■

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Conference services not a major draw card

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- No, it's too much hassle.
- Yes, we have our own meetings division.

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