

TNW



TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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No more ADMs

DORINE REINSTEIN

IATA has been mandated by member airlines to create a working group to address specific travel agent issues, in particular ADMs, "with proposals for remedies so that ADMs may be minimised or even eliminated as quickly as possible," says IATA spokesperson, **Chris Goater**.

This was announced at the World Travel Agents Association Alliance's (WTAAA) first board meeting of 2015 held in Toronto, Canada, this month.

Chris says the organisation recognises that ADMs are a major source of friction and concern between airlines and agents globally. "Many of the root causes of ADMs are the result of a disconnected and disjointed industry infrastructure, so that the end-to-end product lifecycle suffers from a lack of quality control and consistency, all the way through from fare filing, GDS pricing, and airline revenue accounting/audit. The end result of which is all too often an ADM."

The working group will focus on the benefits of the ARC (Airline Reporting Corporation) model, which is the US equivalent of the BSP settlement plan. **Otto de Vries**, Asata ceo, who was at the WTAAA meeting, says the ARC model is completely independent of IATA and

has been at the heart of a huge drop in ADMs in the US. The group will aim to validate and quantify the root causes of ADMs, which have already been determined by ARC. Secondly, the working group will develop solutions to remove or to minimise these root causes by working in partnership with industry stakeholders.

"It's now time for IATA, with the support of its member airlines and industry partners, to extend this initiative worldwide."

Chris agrees that ARC has already shown in the US what can be achieved if all the players in the supply chain work together collaboratively. This includes airlines, agents, trade associations, GDSs and fare-filing agencies. "It's now time for IATA, with the support of its member airlines and industry partners, to extend this initiative worldwide."

Other issues were also raised during the WTAAA meeting, with recommendations on how IATA, airlines and agents could better work together, for example on the timing of refunds. It was put forward that these needed to be aligned with remittance

cycles, meaning IATA would need to shorten the period it takes for refunds to be paid out. SA travel agents say that currently refunds can take anywhere from a week to three months, depending on the airline.

It was also suggested that IATA amend its wording in its regulations regarding defaults and guarantees so that where irregularities occurred but no BSP airlines funds were at risk, this would not lead to an agent being placed in default. Once the problem is resolved, IATA should reinstate ticket-issuing capability as well as reactivate any ticketing authority arrangements with the airlines that had been contracted prior to the suspension, the WTAAA said.

Otto says he is confident the establishment of the working group is a constructive way forward to resolve the issues with IATA that have been plaguing South African travel agents for years. He says the establishment of the working group is a clear indication of IATA's intention and willingness to address the existing problems and to find a way forward.

The establishment of the working group will take place in October and Otto said participation from South Africa would be discussed in the coming few months. ■



AmaWaterways is offering a special 'Sell 3 and Sail Free' agent incentive for bookings through Cruises International. For every three staterooms signed before the end of the year, agents will receive a complimentary seven-night AmaWaterways river cruise. The first cruise in the 'Sell 3 and Sail Free' offer is 'Paris and Normandy' along the River Seine and the second, 'Vietnam, Cambodia', is on the Mekong River. The incentive runs until December 31. Europe meets Asia with Cruises International md, **George Argyropoulos. Photo: Shannon van Zyl.**

Airlink pioneers 'city to lodge' bookings

CARO MALHERBE

AIRLINK will launch a lodge-link system of scheduled flights between Skukuza Airport and a number of luxury lodges in the Kruger Park – a first for 'city

to game lodge' connectivity, **Rodger Foster**, Airlink ceo told TNW.

Guests travelling from anywhere in the world will now be able to fly into a number of

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Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



When the early bird doesn't get the worm.

Domestic tourism drops

DORINE REINSTEIN

ANY strategy [by the National Department of Tourism] should espouse a closer working relationship between SA Tourism and industry stakeholders such as travel agents, airlines and hotel groups, says **James Vos**, DA Shadow Minister of Tourism.

James released a statement regarding concerns that domestic tourism numbers between 2012 and 2014 had fallen. "The Department of Tourism's Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy 2012-2020 states that the biggest inhibiting factor to domestic tourism is the perception that travel is not affordable," the statement said.

A breakdown of domestic tourism figures requested by James and supplied by Minister of Tourism, **Derek Hanekom**, reveals that between 2012 and 2014 (year to date: January to September) domestic trips have declined by 200 000. Meanwhile, revenue from domestic tourism has gone up, which could indicate that domestic trips have become

more expensive, said James. Revenue from domestic tourism increased between 2012 and 2013, with R21,8bn generated in 2012 compared with R24,3bn in 2013.

"There needs to be a policy shift to get South Africans experiencing their own country by making travel affordable and accessible as this will grow local economies and create jobs," said James.

Dezy de Lima, product and marketing manager for Holiday Tours, says it has not seen a decrease in domestic tourism but there has been a change in booking trends, with South Africans looking to travel out of season. "The traditional peak periods to travel are not as popular as in the past. The local traveller is more budget-conscious but would still like to travel." She adds that traditionally school holidays and festive seasons are more expensive and that the operator did not see the usual uptake last December.

Spokesperson for Mango, **Hein Kaiser**, says demand in the aviation market has declined steadily over the past seven years and, concomitantly, the number of

people travelling. "With the current economic squeeze, this may well place domestic tourism under pressure. Affordability remains a key factor and low-cost aviation will continue to play a key role in supporting domestic tourism."

Flight Centre's air warehouse leader, **Carlos Luis**, says domestic airfares have 'crept up' over the past two years but he foresees, with new airlines in the local market, that travellers will see more competitive fares, which in turn should make domestic travel more affordable.

"With reduced airfares and competitive rates for accommodation and car hire, we don't believe that domestic travel is too expensive."

Russel Jarvis, Travelstart's head of communications, adds that if new domestic airline players don't expand their route networks efficiently, then prices are likely to increase. But he is confident domestic tourism will flourish. He says people will continue to travel to attend unique events that don't take place in their own cities, such as rugby tournaments or popular music concerts. ■

DHA opens visa facility for corporates

THE Department of Home Affairs will open a new facility for corporate account clients at the Gauteng Investment Centre in Sandton, which will serve as a one-stop shop for immigration visa and permit renewals. The department would put in place a shorter, more efficient process for visa applications for foreign nationals employed by corporate companies, it said. This will be done through

the Department's Directorate of Corporate Accounts' partnership with the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency, the Gauteng Investment Centre and VFS Global. The facility would also benefit customers by offering immigration advice for applicants and enhanced management of stakeholder relations, said the DHA.

Home Affairs Minister, **Malusi Gigaba**, said the

department was also reviewing its corporate client desk to improve its services and would be embarking on a national road show to talk to clients directly about their challenges and recommendations.

Home Affairs deputy director, **Jackson McKay**, said the DHA was looking at increasing staff to deal with appeals following the rejection of a visa. ■

Airlink pioneers 'city to lodge' bookings

From page 1

luxury lodges in the Kruger on a single ticket. The tickets will be bookable through the GDS.

Initially the service will connect visitors from Skukuza and Nelspruit airports directly to the Ulusaba, Singita, Arathusa and Londolozi lodges.

"SA Airlink's code franchising agreement with SAA means that visitors travelling to the four connected Sabi Sand lodges will be able to use the SAA flight reservations facility to book their entire trip, effectively removing the hassle of having to arrange separate road shuttle services or

complicated secondary aircraft charters from the main centres to their end-destinations," Rodger said.

"There are lodges close to Skukuza that can be reached via road transfers but we recognised the requirement for a more feasible way to access lodges that are further away from the airport," he said.

"This is really a gateway for the leisure market, where international tourists will have greatly increased access into the Kruger.

"These lodges are brought into communication with Skukuza, on to Johannesburg and Cape Town and effectively

the rest of the world."

Londolozi and Singita would receive their own services, while the enclave of Sabi Sand lodges in the west would receive flights at one runway in the area, still to be decided on, and a similar practice would be undertaken for an enclave of lodges in the north, he said.

Airlink has already taken delivery of four Cessna 208B Grand Caravans which are being ferried to South Africa and are expected to arrive between Monday and Wednesday. Rodger said services were envisaged to begin in mid-July. ■

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Incredible India

The India Tourism Office, together with the High Commission of India in SA and the Consulate General of India in Johannesburg, recently hosted a tourism seminar 'Incredible India: New opportunities and values' at the Sandton Convention Centre. The event brought travel, aviation and hospitality industry players together with officials from the India Tourism Authority to discuss how the trade could market the destination more attractively. Pictured here at the event are (from left): I.R.V Rao (assistant director, Indian Tourism); Ruchi Ghanashyam (High Commissioner of India); and Randhir Jaiswal (Consul General of India).

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Mega Cape conference centre opens for bookings

THE Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town is on track to open in February 2016 and the first bookings have been confirmed.

The centre has a total capacity of 1 900 guests

across 20 venues and is designed for maximum flexibility and mixed-use, while the new 125-room hotel will bring the total number of hotel rooms within easy walking distance of the conference centre to 540.

Gary Koetser, joint ceo of the Century City Conference Centre and Hotel, said the property was part of a significant private equity investment by the Rabie Property Group to promote business travel to the Western Cape. ■

New cruise terminal still on the cards

CARO MALHERBE

TRANSNET is still committed to the development of a new cruise terminal in Cape Town and is expected to announce a successful bidder in April, says **Coen Birkenstock**, manager of Corporate Affairs at Transnet National Ports Authority.

"Our bidding process for the facility closed on February 5 and an evaluation process followed locally, with numerous corporate governance processes and evaluations to identify the most suitable bidder. We have now reached the recommendation stage and during April we should be able to announce the successful bidder."

DA Shadow Minister of Tourism, **James Vos**, has been critical of the government's

"lack of urgency" in building a dedicated cruise terminal. "If it was in the interest of the government to build one, which they know will benefit tourism and create full-time permanent jobs, they would have built it by now."

"The City of Cape Town is poised to become a cruise tourism hot-spot in South Africa, and the construction of dedicated cruise liner infrastructure in the city will have vast benefits for regional job creation and economic development," said James.

According to Coen, once the successful bidder is announced, negotiations and signing of the terminal operation agreement will take place until the end of June, after which construction will begin. ■

To the point



Schedule changes have been introduced for Air Namibia flights departing Windhoek for Cape Town on Mondays and Fridays. Until October 24, flights will depart at 08h40 (09h40 in summer), to arrive at 11h40. The flight number will also change to SW701 from SW703, which currently departs at 06h55 (07h55 in summer) and arrives at 09h55.

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Royal Caribbean back in Dubai

ROYAL Caribbean's *Splendour of the Seas* 2015/2016 schedule includes voyages to Dubai, as well as shorter and longer cruise options allowing visitors to explore the UAE and other Middle Eastern destinations. The shorter, seven-day option begins and ends in Dubai, with visits along the way to the ports of Khasab and Muscat in Oman and Abu Dhabi. The longer flagship 16-night Suez Canal cruise starts in Venice, before visiting Athens/Piraeus, Haifa and Jerusalem in Israel. It will then go through the Suez Canal and cruise the Red Sea, before turning into the Gulf of Aden and round the Arabian Peninsula to the UAE, where the first stopover is Salalah. A 16-night version of this cruise travels in the opposite direction.

Seabourn unveils newest ships

SEABOURN has unveiled the names of its two new ships – *Seabourn Encore* and *Seabourn Ovation* – which will launch in late 2016 and spring 2018 respectively. Both ships will have an additional deck, expanded public areas and modern design elements. The new 40 350-GRT vessels are each expected to carry 604 guests based on double occupancy, and every suite will feature a private veranda. Other features include indoor and outdoor guest areas, including multiple dining venues, The Spa at Seabourn, showrooms, casino and lounges and outdoor deck areas.



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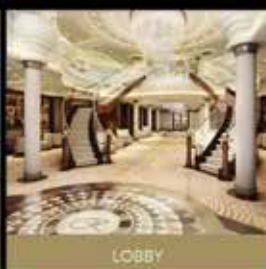
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Gauteng packaged tours a missed opportunity

MAX MARX

AS PART of its strategy to grow tourism to Gauteng, increase length of stay and encourage South Africans from other provinces to enjoy its facilities, experiences and attractions, the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) is calling on the trade to leverage off major events taking place in the province.

Barba Gaogamediwe, GTA's senior manager of destination and corporate communications, says the GTA would like to encourage travel agents and tour operators to use major events as a draw card.

"We'd like to see the trade creating attractive packages around events, packaging two- to three-night weekend or midweek stays, and include some of the fantastic experiences on offer in Gauteng."

For example, the Bulls vs Sharks rugby match that took place at Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria on February 28.

"Visitors from other provinces should not just fly in for the match. The match should be part of a larger itinerary that includes the Dinokeng Game Reserve, the Cullinan mines and the Union Buildings as well as experiences at restaurants and bars in the area," says Barba.

An upcoming event the trade could package is the DSTv Delicious International Food & Music Festival on June 6 at Waterfall Polo Estate in Midrand, says Barba.

The event attracts around 40 000 people. A package could, for example, include flights, accommodation, event tickets, a visit to the Cradle of Humankind, a bicycle tour of Soweto and hanging out in the Maboneng District.

"We'd like to encourage TMCs to upsell, offering clients tours and experiences pre or post their meeting or conference."

Business events

TMCs can also benefit from the business events sector while promoting tourism in the province, says **Nonnie Kubeka**, executive manager of the Gauteng Convention Bureau (GCB).

"Many local corporates use their TMCs to arrange travel and accommodation. We'd like to encourage TMCs to upsell, offering clients tours and experiences pre or post their meeting or conference."

"We're targeting international association meetings in the

manufacturing, sports, education, finance, aviation, mining, research, and health sectors, so there is enormous opportunity for the local trade to offer packages to local corporates that attend these business events. Many of these events offer pre-arranged pre and post tours but space is often limited, so there's nothing stopping TMCs from arranging their own tours for delegates using the same itinerary," she says.

Companies with head offices in South Africa and a footprint in Africa or globally who are hosting strategic meetings and corporate team-building events in Gauteng could arrange these meetings around major events in the province, such as golf tournaments or festivals, which delegates could attend, Nonnie says.

"We have many innovative meeting spaces in the province and the fantastic experiences TMCs can offer clients can be aligned with these meeting or team-building agendas."

TMCs could also target the exhibition sector, says Nonnie.

"On stand build and strike days, exhibitors have little to do, so TMCs can arrange tours or experiences for them on those days," she concludes. ■

Officials work to ease yellow fever confusion

DORINE REINSTEIN

HEALTH officials at OR Tambo International Airport have re-communicated to immigration officials that a yellow fever certificate is no longer required for travellers to and from Zambia. A list of countries for which the certificate is required will also be displayed in every immigration cubicle.

These new measures were implemented after an investigation was conducted by the Department of Health after TNW reported that travellers were still requested to show the certificate at the airport, despite an official

announcement that it was no longer required.

Mam Ramathuba, acting director of Environmental Health, told TNW the incident had occurred as a result of communication of the changes not reaching all the relevant role players.

The Zambia Tourism Board (ZTB) has said that scrapping the requirement could result in more than a 20% increase in international arrivals. "The yellow fever certificate demanded by South Africa was the most significant factor negatively affecting the arrival of international tourists to Zambia," **Felix Chaila**, md of ZTB told *Bloomberg*.

Industry players are more cautious with their predictions. **Ade Coley**, safari camp owner at Flatdogs Camp, says it's still early days to see any impact from the changes, while it would be difficult to attribute any increase to the scrapped requirement.

Grant Cumings, owner of Chiawa Camp, says although the industry is expecting a tourism boost thanks to the requirement being dropped, it will be impossible to quantify the exact extent of the changes. "So many variables come into play: Ebola, international terrorism, economy, trends..." ■

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Down Africa by air

This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in The South African Lady's Pictorial in November 1934.

DAWN in Johannesburg – and a great sense of adventure. Inside the Carlton Hotel a few people moving about, but a sense of shuttered silence.

"Airways car? Yes, just outside, madam." And in a moment one is being shut in and driven away.

In the office at Rand Airport all is pleasant, bustling activity. Piping hot coffee stands on a side table for anyone who cares for it. One's luggage is weighed and disappears. One is directed through the hangar to where outside the gigantic Atalanta airplane stands waiting. Passengers enter the cabin door and unconcernedly take their seats. The pilot climbs into the enclosed cockpit. There is some activity on the part of the blue-uniformed officials. The roar of the engines increases, we move forward with incredible smoothness, gradually gathering speed and suddenly we were up and the flight from Johannesburg to the Cape has begun.

It was just as easy as that, and it was like that all the way; perfect organisation, perfect comfort and courtesy. Nine hours from Johannesburg to Cape

Town and never more than four and a half hours at a stretch in the air. Breakfast at Kimberley, lunch at Victoria West, and afternoon tea at Cape Town – a revolution in travel and a completely altered sense of space and time!

One's first sensation after the thrill of leaving the ground was one of intense surprise and, following close upon that, of confidence. I leaned back in a comfortable armchair, the latest periodicals on the table before me, and gazed out upon a rapidly receding world. Everything was so normal as to be almost disappointing – except for an intense feeling of exhilaration.

But one could not be deluded for long into thinking that this was all quite ordinary. Perhaps those who make the journey often become indifferent to it in time. Neither then, looking down on fantastic patches of green below me, on mine dumps ludicrously dwarfed, nor later when for the first time in my life I looked down on the tops of mountains instead of up at them, could I conceive how it could ever be less than thrilling.

The captain sent a little note in to say that the town on the left was Parys,



The scene at the Cape Town airport any Friday afternoon: Passengers leaving the big Imperial Airways liner, Atalanta, after arrival at Cape Town – the end of her long flight from England.

that our speed was 115 mph [184 kph] and that we should arrive at Kimberley at about 9h30. Approaching Kimberley the air grew bumpy as we passed over the great excavations in the earth, but in a minute or two we were dropping down to an excellent breakfast at the delightful little Imperial Airways restaurant.

Modder River – Orange River – two hours to Victoria West. The outlook from the plane about here was glorious... There was no vegetation within sight and, from eleven thousand feet up, the world below looked like one of those

great regional geography maps. The visibility was marvellous. The first officer passing through the cabin of the 'plane told us we were seeing for a hundred miles.

Victoria West and lunch. (There was a woman in charge of the aerodrome at Victoria West, probably one of the few women in the world to have a job of this sort.) Here one was motored into the town for lunch at the hotel, and an excellent lunch it was too. Then off again – on the last lap this time, and with the most wonderful part of the trip before us.

It was a strange sight

looking down on the Karoo from the air. Unbelievably barren and desolate and yet amazingly interesting. Then suddenly the scene changed. The countryside slipped away into green fields and valleys with winding roads and picturesque farms dotted about and an occasional town.

It was no time after that before we were circling above the Wingfield aerodrome. One minute, hangars and cars and people were tiny specks far below, and the next, one was stepping down onto solid earth again – and the flight was over. ■



Mr. Leslie Dow is an inveterate air-traveller. He flew up to Johannesburg on a business trip at the beginning of October and was back in Cape Town within the week.



Holidaying by air! Mrs. McL. Thomas alighting from the big 'plane on her return to Cape Town at the end of a holiday visit she paid to the Victoria Falls.

Mauritius



The Naked Agent

Scenario: A couple, who have already stayed at some of the big resorts in Mauritius, want to return, but this time to somewhere off the beaten track that offers activities other than the general beach and lagoon-based fare.

Get the brief!

Flight Centre Sandton City

An agent with a desk full of paperwork welcomed me to her station. She started by asking me to fill in my details on a card before attending to my query. She then asked basic questions about dates to be booked and made enquiries, not necessarily related to the brief, about my preferences

regarding accommodation. She admitted to being new to her position – she did not yet have business cards – and thus did not have all the necessary knowledge about the packages her agency offered to Mauritius. However, she promised to follow up via email

once she had done some research. The enquiry was made on a Friday, with the agent promising to mail some ideas and quotes by the following Tuesday. There was no follow-up call and the email never arrived.



Sandown Travel Sandton City

Walking into this 'concept store' (some of the stations feature agents and customers sitting on couches across from each other in brightly coloured cubicles), an agent gave a friendly greeting as soon as I entered. She didn't introduce herself but listened carefully to the brief

and suggested a package that sounded exactly what I was looking for, stating that, coincidentally, she had received training on it the week before. She suggested I sit with the agency's Mauritius specialist, but the consultant was not at her desk. She soon returned and

asked me to send her an email, to which she would reply with some rates. No notes were taken regarding my brief, though a couple of mainstream Mauritius brochures were presented to me.



WINNER

Pentravel Benmore Gardens

Masego Mokgatha was one of a number of agents who gave friendly greetings as I entered this small shop. I explained my request to her and, after asking some intelligent questions, Masego displayed the best understanding of what it was that I was looking for – more so than any of the other agents I met with for this story. She took my details on a form and promised to phone as soon as she had any information. Her first follow-up call came through the



following morning. She said she had found an excellent resort on the less-visited south coast of Mauritius, which offered a number of activities, including hiking

in the surrounding forested area, and was also looking into a package that combined a stay there with a visit to Réunion, where visitors can enjoy a number of adventurous outdoor activities, including climbing the volcano at the island's centre.



3 tips for selling Mauritius

- 1) Act on your promises. If you've told a client you'll follow up with quotes, make sure you do so. If this isn't possible, touch base with them to let them know that you're still working on their request.
- 2) Listen to the brief. If a client has a specific request, do your best to match it with an appropriate package rather than pressing them to try something else.
- 3) Provide relevant material. Brochures – printed or electronic – allow the client to read up on options at their leisure.

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.

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Mauritius



For most South Africans, Mauritius is synonymous with packaged tours. But as more travellers discover the island's potential as a business destination and explore its less familiar attractions, this perception is slowly changing. Dorine Reinstein investigates.

Do you really know Mauritius?

MOST South African travellers view Mauritius as a traditional leisure package destination, popular with honeymooners and families. However, the island has a lot more to offer than the seven-night, all-inclusive resort packages for the beach-loving tourist, and more travellers are expressing interest in less traditional experiences, meaning agents need to improve their knowledge of the island.

The perception that Mauritius is a fly-and-flop destination is still very strong among the trade, says **Chantelle Browne**, product manager of Holiday Tours. But a number of tools are available for those wishing to increase their

knowledge, including websites like the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (www.tourism-mauritius.mu). "These tools should be used when consulting with clients," she says, noting that they're useful when it comes to educating clients about the varied experiences on offer.

Vicky Steinhardt, land product manager of Pentravel, says more South Africans are travelling to Mauritius for work. These travellers may not be interested in Mauritius's famed resorts but rather the large selection of serviced apartments and villas offering flexible self-catering options.

Angela Wood, general marketing manager of Cullinan Outbound Tourism, says there

is growing demand from business people who want to purchase two- or three-night packages in Port Louis or Cyber City. Some corporate travellers are even choosing to spend their time at the various resort hotels and travel to the city centre for their meetings, she says.

Repeat leisure travellers are also looking for 'something more' from their Mauritius experience. Vicky says she has seen an increase in travellers asking for tailor-made travel options to Mauritius in order to attend various sporting events on the island, such as mountain biking, kite-surfing, fishing or golfing events.

Cathie Bester, national sales manager of World Leisure

Holidays, has also noticed a change. "We're receiving requests for shorter stays at our resorts and people are making their own flight arrangement using their frequent flyer points."

Self-drive holidays are also growing in popularity. **Gail Gilbert**, sales and marketing manager of Africa Stay, says Mauritius's roads are in good condition, making it easy for people who wish to experience different parts of the island – perhaps splitting their stay between different resorts – to do so by car.

When it comes to lesser-known attractions, **Vanessa Butler**, Flight Centre's destination leader for Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands,

says Mauritius's mountain resorts are hidden gems. These resorts are smaller and more intimate than the beach resorts and give travellers a unique eco-tourism experience. She adds that travellers often opt to spend two or three nights in the mountains, followed by four or five nights at a beach resort.

Tailor-made holidays are not necessarily more expensive than package holidays, she adds. Mauritius also has a lot to offer foodies. "There are some amazing restaurants dotted around the island. As an agent, if your clients are staying at a resort, you could arrange a trip to another beach resort with an exceptional restaurant," she says.



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TOURS

Mauritius – TIPS OF THE TRADE

Which part of the island is best?

Travel agents should remember that the various parts of the island offer very different holiday experiences. "It is essential that travel agents truly understand what their clients want from their Mauritius holiday; what activities they want to pursue, what they would like to see. If they select a stay on the east coast, for example, they need to take into account the cost of transport to destinations like Grand Baie and Port Louis," says **Joanne Visagie**, sales and marketing manager of Beachcomber Tours.

Thompsons Holidays' **Angela Wood** describes the north coast as "the vibey part of the island"; it's here that Grand Baie, with its numerous shops, is situated. This part of the island has an abundance of restaurants and nightclubs. Grand Baie is also excellent for sailing activities and scuba diving.

Pentravel's **Vicky Steinhart** agrees that, for clients looking for shopping and nightlife, the

north coast is definitely the answer. Other attractions here include Cap Malheureux, the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Gardens, the Pamplemousses Botanical Garden, Triolet Shivala, the Paul et Virginie Monument and some of the finest beaches in Mauritius, such as Trou aux Biches, Mont Choisy, Grand Baie and Pereybere cove.

There are many interesting sights to observe in and around Mahébourg on the south coast, including the fascinating National History Museum and the Naval Museum, says Angela. At Vieux Grand Port, the oldest settlement in Mauritius, visitors can also observe the ruins of the first Dutch fortifications. Besides its rich history, the south coast also features several beautiful beaches, including Blue Bay and Gris Gris. Key landmarks here are the Naval Museum and the Frederik Hendrik Museum, while the Mahébourg Market is considered one of



Mauritius is dotted with beautiful resorts on its many bays and lagoons.

the most authentic markets on the island.

The east coast offers exquisite white sandy beaches, hidden coves and emerald lagoons. It is dotted with charming little villages nestled between the mountains and the sea, says Angela. Among the must-sees are the Victoria 1840, a restored sugar mill; Flacq Market and Ile aux Cerfs, a privately owned island.

"Keep in mind the mantra 'west is best' when selling Mauritius," says Joanne. She explains that the cold trade

winds blow from the east directly on to the beaches of the east coast, especially in the winter months, making for more temperate conditions on the west coast. "The west coast is also more developed and offers a range of diverse experiences within a short distance of most resorts, such as catamaran departure points, shopping and entertainment. The east coast, on the other hand, is quieter and more secluded."

Just off Tamarin Bay or Flic en Flac, travellers will be able

to see the dolphins that come to these waters to rest and breed, says Angela. The west coast also features Morne Mountain, a World Heritage Site. Slightly inland, in the hills around Chamarel, travellers will find the rum distillery as well as the Black River Gorges National Park, home to highly endangered native plants and animals.

The Chamarel Coloured Earth and Casela Nature Park are other noteworthy attractions in this area.

To page 14

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Inspired by Passion

From page 12

Avoid the cyclones

Vicky says travel agents should advise their clients that the cyclone season runs from January to March.

“If a cyclone hits, clients can be stuck in their hotel for a few days. Travel insurance therefore is essential.”

Choose the right resort

Agents should have a good idea of their client’s budget so that the operator can quote a few options within their price expectations, advises Africa Stay’s **Gail Gilbert**. “There are many different accommodation options on the island,

ranging from self-catering to five-star. There are also many different resorts in Mauritius: some are popular with certain nationalities, some do not allow children, some have a dedicated children’s programme.”

Upsell!

Mauritius is a relatively easy destination to upsell, say industry players, as there is a wide variety of room categories as well as a broad option of activities on offer.

Holiday Tours’ **Chantelle Browne** recommends suggesting an excursion that could be booked online – tours to lesser-known attractions are

particularly intriguing. Travel agents should also try to upsell to all-inclusive packages to avoid unpleasant surprises for their clients when at the destination, such as high prices for food and drinks.

Upgrading room types, for example from garden-facing to sea-facing, is another way to upsell.

TNW asked some of the top tour operators selling Mauritius what their unique selling points were...

Ample activities

What sets Holiday Tours apart is the various excursions and experiences that travel agents can book online, says **Chantelle Browne**. These include activities such as private picnics in scenic locations, cocktail-mixing demonstration, and scuba diving. “These are pre-bookable only through Holiday Tours and have been tailor-made to ensure a unique and memorable experience.”

Family-friendly

Beachcomber Tours’ range of resorts are child-friendly and therefore attractive to families, says **Joanne Visagie**. Each Beachcomber resort has a free Mini Club

open daily for three- to 12-year-olds. Parents can relax while a trained team look after their children. Some Beachcomber resorts, such as Trou aux Biches, also have a specific teens’ club. Parents with babies can access a flexible babysitter service.

Value-for-money

Angela Wood, explains that, as the largest South African tour operator, Cullinan Outbound Tourism’s greater buying power means clients get excellent deals. Angela adds that, with a 37-year history, the company has earned a trusted reputation.

Product knowledge

“What sets us apart is our

staff product knowledge and wide range of accommodation options,” says **Gail Gilbert**. Gail says Africa Stay offers everything from self-catering to boutique hotels and from two-star through to five-star deluxe resorts.

Exclusivity

“WLH is unique in that we are owned by Sun Resorts and are its exclusive distributor in Africa,” says **Cathie Bester**. She says WLH has a property to suit all travellers to Mauritius, from families and corporate travellers to those wanting to get away to celebrate special occasions, honeymooners and companies wanting to have a conference or incentive trip for their teams.

News flash!

Thompsons Holidays recently introduced a selection of ‘Bonus Plus’ offers for its Mauritius Collection Hotels, which

highlight the added values and ‘in-resort savings’ offered to guests at each of the hotels. These can range from free-of-charge

waterskiing, afternoon tea/coffee and pancakes, to WiFi, glass-bottom boat excursions and catamaran cruises.



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Block outs: 25 June – 20 July 2015. Further block out dates may apply. Includes Early booking discount – book 30 days in advance to qualify.

Preskil Beach Resort & Spa

from **R13 200** pps for 7 nights

- Includes:
- Return flights from Johannesburg to Mauritius on Air Mauritius
 - All pre-payable airport taxes and fuel levies.
 - Return airport resort transfers.
 - 7 nights’ accommodation in a standard room.
 - Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.
 - One a la carte dining experience at Charika and One a la carte dining experience at Tapas during the stay.
 - Unlimited locally bottled spirits, wine, draught beers and soft drinks from 10 am to midnight at the bar and a selection of drinks in the mini bar (to be refilled once a day).
 - Complimentary TGIF Cocktail Mixing and Discover SCUBA Experiences included.

Valid: 1 May – 30 September 2015.

Block outs: 25 June – 20 July 2015. Further block out dates may apply. Includes Early booking discount – book 45 days in advance to qualify.

Poste Lafayette Resort & Spa

from **R13 315** pps for 7 nights

- Includes:
- Return flights from Johannesburg to Mauritius on Air Mauritius
 - All pre-payable airport taxes and fuel levies.
 - Return airport resort transfers.
 - 7 nights’ accommodation in a superior room.
 - Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily.
 - Unlimited locally bottled spirits, wine, draught beers and soft drinks from 11 am to midnight at the bar and a selection of drinks in the mini bar (to be refilled once a day).

Valid: 1 May – 30 September 2015.

Block outs: 25 June – 20 July 2015. Further block out dates may apply.

Terms and conditions for all of the above: Package price is based on 2 people sharing and is subject to availability. • Prices may increase over peak periods and individuals travelling solo. • Contact us for additional rights. • The package price is only valid for travel from Johannesburg. • Specific and limited seats are available during low season only. • Rebooking or resouling is not permitted and cancellation penalties apply. • Subject to airfare increases, exchange rate fluctuations and availability. • Airline taxes are based on the current exchange rate and are subject to change. • Valid for SADC residents only. • Proof of a valid passport may be required by the property. • All prices are correct at the time of publishing.

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Mauritius

Windsurfing, paddle boats, sailing boats and more are available free of charge at the water sports centre.

While Long Beach resort would serve a number of markets well, there's no denying it's a premium family resort. It boasts an exciting variety of activities and its teen and kids' clubs ensure children are safe and enjoy an adventure-filled holiday. Anton Marsh visited the resort, courtesy of World Leisure Holidays.

A premium family resort

LOCATED on the east coast of Mauritius, Long Beach nestles on the edge of one of the island's longest and widest natural beaches. Contemporary and chic, the resort has been built around the concept of 'Italian life', going big on food and fun for the whole family.

Gourmet delights

The resort has five restaurants and focuses on making dining a culinary experience. Its buffet restaurant, Le Marché, is almost overwhelming with its unique daily array of delights. It offers themed evenings where guests can look forward to something new each meal. The Japanese restaurant, Hasu, has two set menu options that bring authentic

Japanese tastes to the table and Satori offers top-class Italian dining with crusty pizzas. The beach restaurant, Tides, specialises in fresh seafood, with guests seated at tables on the beach, while the Chinese restaurant, Chopsticks, offers great ambience, with chefs preparing dishes in a display kitchen inside the restaurant.

Entertainment and activities

Every night there is live entertainment in the central Piazza. Bluesy local bands and fiery flamenco dancers are just some of the entertainers. A disco is open on Friday and Saturday nights for those looking to dance through the night. Long Beach offers guests

the longest stretch of private beach in Mauritius at 1,5km with a good combination of swimming areas and coral reefs. Snorkelling is easy, straight off the beach but guests need to bring their own snorkelling gear. The resort has three swimming pools – a heated, main pool with large shallow areas for young children; an adults-only infinity pool looking on to the beach; and a training pool at the sports centre.

A chip-and-putt golf course, climbing wall, gym and games centre are some of the activities on offer at the resort, while a water sports centre on the beach has paddle boats, windsurfers, and sailing boats available free of charge to guests. The glass-bottom boat goes out twice a day.

Get a room!

Alessandro Schenone, Long Beach's gm, says the resort has some of the largest standard rooms on the island at 60sqm. Every room, even standard rooms, has a sea view – also a unique selling point. He says the resort was built to suit modern family requirements. It

offers 138 interconnected rooms and 29 family rooms. The architecture – quite different from the Mauritius norm – is a contemporary Mediterranean style. As with all five-star resorts in Mauritius, drinks and lunch are expensive: a point to consider for price-conscious customers.

Sexy selling points

- Golfers can enjoy free access to play at Le Touessrok golf course, including free transfer.
- Experienced babysitters are available during the day and night, perfect for parents who want a date night out at one of the five restaurants.
- Well-equipped kids' and teen clubs with daily programmes.
- The resort can arrange weddings on the beach at short notice.
- A professionally run, on-site spa.



Entrance to the Ambre resort. Photos: Anton Marsh

Ambre – all-inclusive, adults only

UNIQUE in World Leisure Holidays' offering, Ambre is an adults-only (ages 16+), four-star, all-inclusive resort. **Clency Romeo**, gm of Ambre, says the no-child option offers travellers a chance to really relax without the disruption that often comes with family-orientated resorts.

The resort has a 700m stretch of beach and has unusual protection from the wind. That said, travellers should ask about kite surfing training, which is not

offered by the resort but is available nearby.

The three restaurants include a main restaurant with a buffet offering; La Dolce Vita – an Italian eatery; and La Plage, where you sit with your feet on the beach. Halal food is offered.

Dolores Lamarque, sales co-ordinator at Ambre, says another unique selling point is the resort's disco club, which is open four nights a week. This adds to the resort's vibe and orientation around adults.

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Mauritius



SAA celebrates 50 years of direct flights to Mauritius this year, one of its most popular routes. Natasha Schmidt, who visited the island courtesy of the airline, reports.

More capacity, more Mauritius

SAA has deployed additional capacity on its non-stop route to Mauritius, driven by an increase in demand. The airline operates daily flights on the route with a recent 9% increase in frequency, resulting in twice-daily operations on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The airline first introduced flights between Johannesburg and the Indian Ocean island in 1957 as a refuelling stop

en route to Perth, with direct end-point flights commencing eight years later.

"Mauritius has remained an important destination for SAA throughout its history," says SAA acting ceo, **Nico Bezuidenhout**. "Recent frequency additions on several key African routes, including Mauritius, hold strategic commercial value for the business. Mauritius remains one of the fastest growing

economies on the continent, with consistent demand-side growth in both business and leisure travel."

With growing trade and economic development driving business travel outside of traditional seasonal leisure trips, the airline has seen a positive growth in loads, Nico says. "Mauritius has enjoyed consistent real GDP growth at an aggregate of 5,9% since 1995."



It all started...

On November 25, 1957, SAA introduced a fortnightly DC-7B service across the Indian Ocean from Johannesburg to Perth in partnership with Qantas, stopping at Mauritius and the Cocos Islands. This flight took 25 hours and was known as the 'Wallaby service'. On May 7, 1965, the SAA DC-7B service to Australia via Mauritius was increased to a weekly service. The DC-7B was retired from the SAA fleet in 1967 and Mauritius became an online station from 1965. On March 29, 1967, SAA started operating the B707 to Australia via Mauritius only. The Cocos Islands stop was removed and on May 17, the B707 set a new record for the flight between Mauritius and Perth, covering 3 740 miles in just five hours and 32 minutes. Photo: SAA

A new schedule

As of March, SAA operates 10 flights a week between Johannesburg and Mauritius:

SA	Flight days	Aircraft type	From	Departs	To	Arrives
192	---4-67	Boeing B737-800	Johannesburg	08h40	Mauritius	12h45
190	---4-67	Boeing B737-800	Johannesburg	10h25	Mauritius	14h30
190	123-5--	Airbus A320-200	Johannesburg	09h40	Mauritius	13h45
191	1234567	Airbus A320-200	Mauritius	15h20	Johannesburg	19h50
193	---4-67	Boeing B737-800	Mauritius	13h45	Johannesburg	18h08

New aircraft

The Mauritius route is served by the Airbus A320-200, the latest arrival in the SAA fleet.

The aircraft is configured with 24 business-class and 114 economy-class seats. Business class offers more leg-room, with a seat pitch of 99cm. Seats are arranged two either side of the aisle (four abreast) offering more seat width, compared with the five seats abreast on the B737s and A319s. "Business-class seating offers a 10% improvement in pitch compared with our current business-class offering on narrow-body aircraft, giving our competitors in the domestic market a

run for their money," Nico says. Every seat has a leg rest and an adjustable headrest, with a recline of about 18cm.

Seating in economy class offers a pitch of 79cm, with shared USB and PC power points and an adjustable headrest.

All seats (except for the first row) have space to stow a PC tablet with a USB PowerPoint that keeps a tablet powered during the flight, and PC power points in the centre console for additional power.

As a future innovation, SAA is testing new technology where content will be streamed on board to customers' own devices.



Enjoying a 'rustic' barbecue lunch on Crusoe island (just a short boat ride from Zilwa Attitude) are (from left): Guillaume Goupille (Hotels Attitude) and Mike Gray (Uniglobe Travel). Photos: Natasha Schmidt

Mixing local with luxury

OPEN for only just over a year, Zilwa Attitude resort on the north coast of Mauritius has all the latest amenities and luxury features that a guest could want. More than that, the hotel has a strong focus on 'the Mauritian way of life'.

In Creole, 'zilwa' means an 'islander' and the hotel goes to great lengths to offer guests an authentic experience, focusing on the smallest of details. Instead of slippers, rooms have a pair of Mauritian typical 'savate Dodo' for guests to take home. The contemporary, rustic chic architecture and Mauritian design of the hotel take inspiration from traditional old seaside bungalows. Unique 'Otentik Attitude'

activities allow guests to experience Mauritian hospitality with a home-cooked dinner in a local home, a day trip to the local market, or a sunrise boat trip with a local fisherman, to name a few activities.

The hotel offers 214 rooms in three main categories – Superior, Family and Couple; six themed restaurants and a 'Dine Around' concept; a full spa with a complete range of facilities and treatments; numerous activities, including volleyball, kite surfing, stand-up paddle, etc.; and a kids' club that offers 09h00 to 21h00 babysitting services and entertainment for children, including a proper treasure hunt on Crusoe's island. ■



COACH TOURS

Coach tours remain one of the most affordable and convenient ways to explore a country. But demand for the traditional package is changing. Max Marx investigates.

Changing trends challenge operators

LAST year was a tough one for coach tours, with some operators seeing a drop in demand, but this year there seems to have been a turnaround.

"We are experiencing good growth in the SA market, most noteworthy being our At Leisure guided holidays, which are up 80% on last year," says **Theresa Szejwallo**, md of Trafalgar. "Sales of our 'Core' first-class product are up 27% on 2014. It's even out-performing our budget Cost Saver products, which is surprising given the current state of our economy."

Sales have also picked up at Pentravel Direct, the online division based at its offices in Durban. Consultant, **Deirdre de Swardt**, says interest has increased since January, improving on what was "a terrible year for coach tours" in 2014. "Last year's rates were out of reach for

most South Africans but this year the rates are slightly lower, which has made a big difference."

Group tours offer customers better value for money in the current economic climate, and travellers also appreciate the security they offer, says **Alet Steyn**, Wendy Wu Tours business development manager.

Keith Gow, md of Gateway Travel, gsa for the Globus family of brands – Cosmos, Globus and Avalon Waterways – reports a significant upswing in coach tour enquiries this year, prompted by the launch of special offers.

A noticeable trend is travellers opting for shorter coach tours. Deirdre says seven-day guided holidays are more popular than 14-day tours. **Annemarie Lexow**, Travel Vision's sales and marketing manager, says: "Groups are getting smaller

and many operators offer mid-sized and small tours instead of the larger coach tours that used to be the trend."

Austria Connection owner, **Inge Dobihal**, says travellers who prefer the advantages of guided tours over rail or self-drive itineraries are seeking tours that cater for a maximum of 20 passengers.

Other trends

- There is a trend towards shorter lead times, with travellers booking within four to six weeks of departure. Last-minute bookings are also on the increase.
- Clients are seeking more authentic experiences on tours, such as interaction with locals in less-travelled destinations that explore unknown cultures.
- South African travellers visiting friends and relatives in Europe are booking last-minute tours while abroad.

Book it!

Austria Connection's new 10-day 'Croatia & Adriatic Cruise' – a coach/cruise combination tour by Kompas Tours – visits Zagreb, Plitvice Lakes, Zadar, Trogir, Split, Hvar, Korcula, Mljet and Dubrovnik. The tour, priced from R26 887pps, includes first-class hotel rooms, a seven-night yacht cruise departing from Dubrovnik, airport transfers, touring, daily breakfast, six lunches and two dinners.

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TNW687SD

Book it!

Travel Vision's 10-day Taste of Turkey itinerary, from R14 817pps, visits Istanbul, Gallipoli, the Dardanelles, Canakkale, Troy, Pergamum, Kusadasi, Ephesus, and Marmaris and includes a two-day Mediterranean yacht cruise off the Lycian coast. The package includes accommodation, meals, transport, guide, luggage handling, local taxes and service changes, and is valid for departures from April 9 until October 30.

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Top destinations

FRANCE, Britain, Spain, Portugal and Morocco are popular destinations for guided holidays.

Theresa Szejwallo says Trafalgar's Treasures of France trip is one of the company's most sought-after offerings, taking in the vineyards of the Loire Valley, Paris and the D-Day landing beaches at Omaha in Normandy. Also popular are Trafalgar's tours of Spain, Morocco and Portugal, which showcase the Moorish influence on each culture.

Pentravel's **Deirdre de Swardt** says Europe remains the most popular coach tour destination. "Trafalgar's seven-day Glimpse of Europe and Jewels of Italy tours are flying off the shelves. I've already sold the Jewels of Italy tour to 14 passengers for South Africans, with the tour and flights costing around R20 000."

China is the most popular coach tour destination for Wendy Wu Tours, with the top sellers being the 11-day China Experience, 15-day Majestic Yangtze, and 17-day Wonders of China. Also popular is the 10-day Vietnam Impressions tour.

For Travel Vision, Alaska – The Rockies tour is a good seller. The tour includes wildlife viewing opportunities, dog-sledding and, up north, the Aurora Borealis between August and April. Tours of Italy and Turkey are also sought after, says **Annemarie Lexow**, as are Cambodia and Vietnam.

Up and coming

Myanmar is an up-and-coming coach tour destination, says Wendy Wu's **Alet Steyn**. Highlights include cruising Inle Lake and visiting Mahagandayon Monastery, the temples around Bagan, Shwedagon

Pagoda (Myanmar's most sacred Buddhist site) and Mandalay Hill. Visitors can also explore historic Sri Ksetra by ox-cart and stroll along U Bein Bridge (the world's longest teak footbridge).

- Wendy Wu's new and fully inclusive 12-day Essential Japan tour takes in Tokyo, Fuji Five Lakes, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Miyajima, and Himeji. Its 17-day Vietnam and Cambodia Unveiled tour takes in Vientiane, VangVieng, Luang Prabang, Siem Reap, Battambang, and Phnom Penh.
- Trafalgar's new Hidden Journeys trip style offers six new itineraries, from Secrets of Greece (including Corfu) to the Secrets of Turkey (including the Turquoise Coast). In these itineraries, classic attractions are combined with 'hidden' sights and authentic experiences.

How to sell... and upsell!

IF CLIENTS are concerned about price or wish to adjust an itinerary, let them know that some tour operators allow them to book a single segment of a tour, says Austria Connection's **Inge Dobihal**.

"Kompas Tours' Eastern European Panorama tour takes in Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Warsaw, Berlin and Prague. If clients have been to Vienna, they can start the tour in Budapest; if they've been to Prague, they can end their tour in Berlin. For each unused night on the tour, US\$70 (about R823) is deducted from the tour price," she says.

Listen to your clients' needs and find out what their interests are, says Trafalgar's **Theresa Szejwallo**. "Find out how they like to travel, where they went on their last holiday and what they enjoyed most. Always sell

the value." One way to do this is to show clients reviews from previous guests, she says. This will help close a sale.

Wendy Wu's **Alet Steyn** suggests that agents check whether the client would prefer a more relaxed or busier paced tour and then help them select an appropriate package.

Travel Vision's **Annemarie Lexow** says agents should be aware that not all coach tour operators offer fully inclusive packages. "Agents must check if entrance fees to museums and places of interest are included in the deal and whether the operator covers city taxes for overnight stays and portage services."

It's also worth reminding clients about the advantages of booking a guided tour in non-English-speaking countries. "I've travelled both solo and as part of

a coach tour; as a solo traveller it can be difficult to navigate your way around. Often the locals don't speak English," says Pentravel's **Deirdre de Swardt**. "Guided holidays also offer much better value because operators have negotiated rates on group bookings and more is included on these tours," she says.

Agents should offer clients pre- and post-tour accommodation, allowing guests to extend their trip, says Theresa. Deirdre agrees, advising against booking flights that arrive the same day as the start of a tour, in case of unforeseen circumstances that could result in the traveller missing the tour's departure.

Many tours begin and end in cruise ports, so agents can add a cruise before the start or at the end of a tour, she says.

Book it!

- Wendy Wu's 17-day fully-inclusive 'Wonders of China' tour from R49 350pp twin share ex-Johannesburg, visits Beijing, Xian, Wuhan, Chongqing, Guilin, Yangshuo and Shanghai and includes a four-night Yangtze River cruise. The tour includes return economy flights on Cathay Pacific, domestic flights within China, compulsory tipping, coach transport, accommodation, meals, entrance fees, English-speaking guides, daily tours as per itinerary and China visa fees.
- Trafalgar's nine-day 'Best of Israel Country Explorer' guided holiday visits Jerusalem (Wailing Wall, Tomb of David, Mount of Olives) the Dead Sea, Masada, Nazareth, Tel Aviv and more. It's priced from R24 700pp twin share and includes accommodation with Israeli breakfast daily, three dinners, transport and airport transfers. ■

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

Beachcomber stalwarts retire

BEACHCOMBER stalwarts, **Herbert Couacaud** (ceo of New Mauritius Hotels Limited) and **Robert Doger de Spéville** (commercial director of Beachcomber Hotels) have announced their retirement after over 40 and 38 years respectively with the Group. Both retirements are effective June 30. Herbert will act in a consultative capacity until December 31 and remain on the board

as a non-executive director beyond that date. **Gilbert Espitalier-Noël**, who is presently the ceo of ENL Property Limited and was operations director for the Food and Allied Group prior to that, has been appointed the ceo of New Mauritius Hotels Limited from July 1. Gilbert was involved in the implementation and management of projects such as the Bel Ombre Integrated Resort Scheme,

Le Labourdonnais, La Balise Marina and the Bagatelle – Mall of Mauritius, among others. Robert hands over the reins to **Francois Venin**, with whom he has worked closely for 18 years. Robert played an active role in the launch of the rebranding of New Mauritius Hotels into 'Beachcomber' and in the setting up of Beachcomber Tours operations, first in SA, then in England, France and Australia.

Appointments

■ **Gavin Ferreira** has been appointed deputy gm of the Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa in Cape Town, where he previously held the position of food and beverage manager. Gavin spent four years in the UK in several hospitality positions, before returning to South Africa in 2008 to start his career at the Twelve Apostles as banqueting floor manager, before being promoted to banqueting manager. In April 2010 he was promoted to food & beverage manager. He has taken over as deputy gm from **Michael Nel**, who was recently promoted to gm. In his new position Gavin will continue to be responsible for the food & beverage department, while also taking on important day-to-day hotel operation responsibilities.



■ **Nicole Smith** has been promoted to director of sales for The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa in Cape Town, and sister property Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve & Wellness Retreat in the Cederberg. Nicole started her career with The Twelve Apostles Hotel in 2002 as part of the front office team, where she gained extensive operational experience before moving to sister property The Milestone in the UK as Reception Manager in 2004. Upon her return to Cape Town two years later, she rejoined The Twelve Apostles and has worked in various positions, most recently that of sales manager for both The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa and Bushmans Kloof.



An eTravel production



It was popcorn and cola all round at eTravel when 60 of its preferred partners in the W Cape gathered for the first viewing of the new eTravel Corporate DVD in Cape Town. Pictured (from left), are eTravel ceo, **Garth Wolff**; **Joanne Visagie** of Beachcomber Tours; and **Tammy Hunt**, eTravel's operations director. Photo: Liesl Venter

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Marriott drops eight Protea hotels

DEBBIE BADHAM

MARRIOTT International has ceased to manage eight Protea-branded hotels in Nigeria.

Mark Satterfield, ceo of Marriott International Middle East and Africa, said that after completing the acquisition of Protea in April 2014, Marriott had conducted a post-closing review of hotel operations. "Following this analysis, the owners of several hotels in Nigeria, along with Marriott, decided that these properties would operate independently of Marriott."

The hotels are Protea Hotel Abuja; Protea Hotel Apo Apartments; Protea

Hotel Asokoro; Protea Hotel Delta; Protea Hotel Leadway; Protea Hotel Ikoyi Westwood; Protea Hotel Ikeja; and Protea Hotel Victoria Island.

"We look forward to maintaining cordial relationships with the owners of these hotels in the coming years, notwithstanding our cessation of management of their hotels," Mark said.

"Marriott remains committed to Nigeria as an important destination. In addition to a robust hotel development pipeline, including over 750 rooms, we anticipate continuing to manage as well as franchise hotels in Nigeria," he added. ■

50% off!



The Bidvest Insurance Group is offering travel agents up to 50% discount on certain Bidvest Travel Insurance products, such as Complete or Classic, on both family and individual rates. Travellers pay as little as R665 for their travel insurance when travelling abroad with their spouse on the Bidvest Complete option or R395 for a family of two on the Bidvest Classic product. The offer is valid until the end of June. **Hanri Pretorius** (gm of travel insurance) and **Wybrandt Lubbe** (sales manager of travel insurance) slash prices in half.

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl.

XL back with Travelport

TRAVELPORT has signed a new agreement with the XL Travel Group.

In early 2014, the XL Group switched technology providers, from Travelport to Sabre, giving the technology company a foothold in the South African market (see TNW October 30).

"We're delighted to have broadened our relationship with the XL Travel Group, with almost all of its agencies' members deciding to renew their partnership. The new agreement means that all of XL Travel Group's members will continue to have access

to unrivalled travel content, including air, hotel and car rental on our industry-leading travel commerce platform," said **George Harb**, Travelport's md in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"With a membership of 150 prominent travel agencies across South Africa and annual sales exceeding R4bn, the group plays a pivotal and prominent role within the South African travel and tourism industry."

Rod Rutter, coo of XL Travel Group, added: "We constantly need to diversify and remain

competitive in a fast-changing environment and the Travelport Commerce Platform remains important in assisting the group to streamline its travel technology. Technology is a key component in differentiating the group and it also assists our members in reducing costs, increasing productivity and meeting our clients' needs. We see Travelport as an important partner in assisting the XL Group with its strategy."

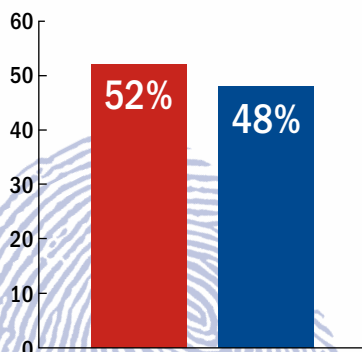
Sabre confirmed it would still work with some agencies within the XL Travel Group. ■

pulse poll
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DHA rules don't make a difference

Do you think the new immigration regulations will prevent incidents such as the case of the 15-year-old girl who tried to flee SA to join ISIS?

■ No 52%
■ Yes 48%



New payment line to reduce TMC-corporate conflict

DORINE REINSTEIN

CARD payment solutions provider, VISA, has introduced a new payment standard that recognises the growing trend in ancillary purchases.

VISA recently introduced a new 'ancillary' payment line, which includes any non-ticket-related purchases, such as in-flight meals, WiFi, baggage fees, seat upgrades and entertainment. Previously, all airline payments were lumped together as one ticketing-related charge, making reporting a challenge. For example, a charge for WiFi, would appear as 'AirlineName0014567891014', whereas under the new standard, this charge appears as 'AirlineName Wi-Fi'.

VISA's head of merchant sales, **Ramon Martin**, says the airline industry's changing business model has seen ancillary sales increase by nearly 400% since ancillaries were first introduced in 2008. "VISA's new standard will allow airlines to process

these transactions so that they are distinctly identified and categorised from ticket purchases. This offers real benefit to both businesses and consumers as ancillary purchases now account for approximately 50% of all airline transactions."

"This will reduce conflict between the corporate and the TMC as, in the past, anything travel related was sent directly to the TMC for explanation and invoicing thereof," says **Marco Cristofoli**, md of Harvey World Travel Southern Africa.

Melanie Walljee, md of FCM Travel Solutions, welcomes the development. She says the VISA reporting process has been a nightmare to date. As a result, TMCs would advise clients to opt for American Express, which has been identifying ancillary charges for the past two years, she says.

HRG Rannies Travel has seen ancillary expenses gain traction, says **Maurice De Vries**, director of business solutions. "Although it is still small in the context of the

overall travel spend, it has become relevant enough to reflect in travel management reporting. If ancillaries are lumped together with the airfare, this starts to skew the average ticket prices and affects the trend analysis for the corporate."

Maurice says most companies have started including ancillaries into their corporate travel policies. "Ancillaries were not part of most corporate travel policies in the past and were booked via the TMC using the individual traveller's personal card. We are seeing a rapid change within the market and the management of ancillary costs now has a place in the travel policy of the corporate."

"It's now up to the airlines and TMCs to change their processes to capture ancillary costs separately in order to make use of this feature. Doing this will enhance the value of reporting data and provide the client with enhanced visibility of financial expenses," he says. ■

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