

TNW



TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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GDS loophole costs agency over a million

DORINE REINSTEIN

A LOOPHOLE in the GDS that allows consultants to override the bank authorisation system has cost Uniglobe Travel over R1m as a result of fraud.

Mike Gray, ceo of Uniglobe Travel Solutions, says one of his senior consultants based in Johannesburg overrode the bank authorisation for more than 100 bookings, leading to ADMs amounting to over R1m. It would seem the consultant was in cahoots with a Namibian-based Uniglobe ITC, who ticketed through the office in Johannesburg using a credit card. The problem started last year when the SA consultant began inputting random authorisation codes for bookings. The ITC then contested the payments with

the bank, which then reversed the charges for the bookings. Meanwhile, Uniglobe head office received a flood of ADMs, which it was liable to pay.

"When you make a booking using a credit card, there is an automatic authorisation system in Galileo giving you a bank code. If you're clever and devious, you will figure out that as long as you have six numbers, Galileo will accept it. On this occasion, the consultant in Johannesburg just put in 000 000," Mike says.

The Johannesburg consultant has denied working with the ITC in Namibia, saying she overrode the system to fast track the bookings. The ITC had provided signed CCCF forms, he had provided the front and back of his card as

well as signed a contract with Uniglobe and signed surety, but the bank refused to consider this. The bank was adamant that only an authorisation code is valid and that a signed CCCF alone is not enough, says Mike.

George Harb, Travelport's regional director for Southern Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, told TNW that although he could not comment on individual cases such as this one, all GDSs allow agents to enter manual authorisations. "This is a standard practice across the industry. To make a booking, however, user credentials by an authorised agent are needed to enter authorisation codes. The example you have shared, therefore, is a good example of people fraud, like staff stealing from petty cash. It is

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An Indian adventure

Travel Vision is offering a special package to Kerala in India, from R12 995pp for seven days. It includes return airfare on Emirates from Johannesburg, taxes, private transfers, two nights in Cochin and three nights in Kumarakom in four-star hotels including breakfast, one night aboard a houseboat in Alleppey on a full-board basis, as well as sightseeing tours with an English-speaking guide and entrance fees into tourist sites. The offer is valid for travel between August 1 and September 30. Looking like a Bollywood star is **Annemarie Lexow**, Travel Vision sales and marketing manager.

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

New 'strict' B-BBEE codes need clarity

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE draft broad-based black economic empowerment codes for the tourism sector, which were published earlier this month by Trade and Industry Minister, **Rob Davies**, are considerably stricter than the generic

codes of good practice and have significantly lower revenue thresholds for exempted enterprises. They also don't provide much-needed clarity around third-party procurement.

As intermediaries, the biggest problem for travel agencies under the new

draft is the latter, says **Keith Levenstein**, ceo of EconoBEE. He says under the generic codes, third-party procurement was never properly verified.

Unfortunately, the new tourism codes don't address the problem, giving no guidelines on how

to deal with it.

This could cause serious issues for TMCs, as most corporate clients prefer using the travel agency's BEE scorecard as they tend to have a high level of compliance. This could be seen as 'fronting' – the deliberate misrepresentation

of a company's BEE status – and lead to serious consequences for both the travel agent and the client.

Asata has addressed this problem by asking that the definition of travel agency turnover be clearly defined under the new tourism codes

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Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



FlySafair explores GDS option

DARISE FOSTER

FLYSAFAIR is weighing up its options as it plans to focus on strengthening its partnerships with travel agents and corporate travellers, says new ceo, **Elmar Conradie**.

"We have always said that when we approach the trade, we must approach them with a complete network and travel agent portal on our website," Elmar told TNW on the side lines of a recent media briefing.

With the introduction of its Durban and East London routes, which launch on October 25, the airline's network is a lot stronger, says Elmar. The next step is to move on to the GDS, an option the airline is considering in order to work closely with travel agents.

"Our focus has been to drive traffic to our website because it is the cheapest way for us to distribute. This option is purely to give the travel agent the convenience of booking on the GDS. But



Elmar Conradie

unfortunately, if we do go this route, ticket prices will be more expensive because we have to cover the GDS cost," Elmar says.

Agents will still be able to book cheaper tickets on the airline's website, he adds. "Our price is our price and we cannot cut it any further in order to accommodate commissions, but travel agents are welcome to mark

it up, and we can facilitate this through our travel agent portal."

Elmar admits that the airline's current travel agent portal needs some work. "We are spending a bit of money to sort out all of the problems," he says. The airline currently distributes through OTAs Travelstart and FlightSite. "We are now working on ensuring that travel agents can log in to our website, make a booking on account, get their own invoices and accounts, etc."

The corporate travel market is also on FlySafair's agenda. "Up until now, our focus has been leisure because we didn't have the right route network. There was no point in going after a corporate knowing he would want to fly to Durban and you can't offer him that." The airline will launch a business product catering specifically for the corporate market before the end of the year, offering business travellers flexible ticket options. ■

To the point



Arik Air has introduced new summer timings on the Lagos-Johannesburg route. Daily flights now depart Murtala Muhammed International Airport at 13h30 to arrive at OR Tambo International Airport at 20h40. The return flight departs Johannesburg at 23h15 to arrive in Lagos at 04h30 the following morning.

Nikita Tavlet selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **AfricaStay.** Zanzibar – seven nights at the four-star Uroa Bay Beach Hotel from R10 050pp sharing. Package includes return flights ex-Johannesburg on Mango, taxes, breakfast and dinner. Special is available for travel between September 1 and November 30.
- **Guvon Hotels and Spas.** (Magaliesburg). Winter special – stay at Askari Lodge and Spa from R990pp sharing. Rate includes breakfast and dinner. Special is valid for stays until August 31.
- **Avocatur Wholesale Tour Operator.** Bali packages are from R11 800pp sharing. Package includes seven nights' accommodation at a superior hotel, flights ex-Johannesburg, taxes, return airport-hotel transfers, breakfast and three tours. Special is valid for travel between September 1 and October 31.
- **Indian Ocean Island Holidays.** Spend seven nights at the three-star Tarisa Resort and Spa in Mauritius from R11 850pp sharing. Rate includes flights ex-Johannesburg on Air Mauritius, taxes, return airport-hotel transfers, breakfast, dinner and all non-motorised water sports. Offer is valid for travel until September 30.
- **The Capital Hotel Group.** Stay at any of The Capital's hotels from Friday to Sunday from R900 per room per night. Rate includes accommodation with complimentary WiFi, parking and schedules shuttles. Offer is valid until August 31.



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Sha'p Sha'p!

Local is lekker! City Lodge Hotels has 52 hotels across all SA provinces. Here is the latest news in domestic tourism.

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A cycling route from Cape Town to Plettenberg Bay is expected to grow tourism.

New cycle route planned for Western Cape

A NEW cycling route that will stretch from Cape Town to Plettenberg Bay has been proposed by Project Khulisa, to grow the Western Cape tourism sector. The route is planned for completion in five years, with the first 160km between Plettenberg Bay and Mossel Bay expected to be completed

in the next two years. Premier cycling races, such as the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the Absa Cape Epic and the Cape Rouleur, generate in excess of R700 million for the economy each year. "We envisage that this route will have the same global appeal, launching it to the top of travellers' bucket lists,"

said **Alan Winde**, Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities.

The development of the route will begin with an audit of all the current cycle tracks and signage as well as the bike services sector. The existing tracks will be incorporated into the new route.

KZN to build mega conference hall

KZN will build a mega conference hall on the North Coast with capacity for over 120 000 visitors, says MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, **Michael Mabuyakhulu**.

Michael added that KZN

had the potential to become the leader of exhibition events in the country and in the SADC region. He identified Ballito as the ideal site to build a new exhibition hall, as the surrounding area was strategically

positioned near King Shaka International Airport. "We have a vision that by 2030 we should be able to attract the necessary strategic investment, allowing us to build the biggest exhibition hall," he said.

Joburg Gems undergo revamp

THE Joburg Gems collective, made up of the Bryanston Country Club, the Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Course, and Randpark Golf Club, have each undergone recent upgrades.

The Firethorn Golf Course at Randpark Golf Club reopened in June after undergoing renovations. Seven new holes were added and the green complexes were restored. The greens were designed by internationally acclaimed course shaper, **Alex Ligowski**.

The clubhouse at

the Bryanston Country Club, an 18-hole, world-class golf course, was refurbished and underwent a facelift and the halfway house and pro shop also received a new look.

Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club hosted the 2015 Joburg Open earlier this year, after revamping its halfway house and bar at the end of 2014. The club has also successfully added the Dulce Restaurant brand to its hospitality offering and just recently opened its refurbished driving range.

Singita opens luxury Ebony Villa

SINGITA Ebony Lodge has introduced the Ebony Villa on the Sabie River in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve.

The villa comprises two family suites with a private lounge, and a swimming pool and deck area that connects the suites.

Guests will have a private guide, vehicle, chef, host and a personal

waiter throughout their stay. Ebony Villa can accommodate four adults and four children under the age of 12, or up to six adults. The family suites can be booked separately.

Bookings for the Ebony Villa will open on January 1, 2016.

Singita reopened the Ebony Lodge in June after a complete redesign. ■



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SA's neighbours feel pinch of new regulations

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE tourism industries in neighbouring countries have started to feel the impact of South African's new immigration regulations.

Emmanuel Fundira, group ce Astoc Leisure Group, says the negative tourism arrival trends in South Africa directly impact Zimbabwe, as South Africa acts as both a hub and a feeder to the Southern African region. According to Emmanuel, consolidators and wholesalers are already raising concerns, which immediately translate into cancellations. "Leisure travel is highly sensitive and families have already opted for other destinations."

Mozambique too has begun feeling the impact of the new regulations, says **Blake Gray**, director of Connection in Mozambique. "Of Connection's approximately 100 clients who provide accommodation in Mozambique, most that I have spoken to over the last month have suffered at least one cancellation due to the new immigration regulations," he says, adding that the regulations are standing in the way of a much-needed tourism revival

for Mozambique following the political tension the country suffered last year.

Family travel from South Africa to Lesotho has started to decline as well. **Hillary Monson**, owner of Mafube Retreat, says she has seen a number of cancellations over the past few weeks as travellers have not managed to obtain the unabridged birth certificate for their children. She says recently an Indian family was refused entry to Lesotho because they didn't have the unabridged birth certificate for their seven-year-old son.

Ross Kennedy, ce of Africa Albida Tourism, says only a fraction of Zimbabwe's inbound tourism comes from China, which is why the impact on tourism from China is negligible. He adds, however, that India is a growth market for Zimbabwe and he expects arrivals from India will be affected.

Ross also anticipates family travel to Zimbabwe will be affected. "South Africa's new family travel regulations are yet another very awkward and poorly implemented regulation that has caused negative PR in global travel media. I'm not aware of any direct cancellations in our

business as yet, but am hearing from one or two colleagues that travellers are asking questions."

Michéll Fourie, Air Namibia's sales and marketing manager for South Africa, says travellers from the East have avoided travel to Namibia via South Africa for the past three years and prefer to opt for flights via Lusaka. "International feeder traffic from the East on Kenya Airways, Ethiopian and Emirates all transit through Zambia, connecting on to Air Namibia to Namibia to avoid the visa requirements they would have encountered transiting via Johannesburg."

Aulden Harlech-Jones, owner of the Cardboard Box Travel Shop, says her business has not seen a downturn as a result of the new regulations. "At this stage, we've had absolutely zero impact from South Africa's new visa policies. There have been no cancellations or reports from clients of having trouble when transiting through South Africa. As we gear up for our peak season, demand is still very high and it looks like being an excellent year for tourism in Namibia." ■

Celebrity improves shore excursion site for agents

CELEBRITY Cruises, represented in South Africa by Cruises International, has re-launched its shore excursion website, created especially for travel partners.

The hub offers a one-stop shop of rich content, with more tools to assist agents in planning their clients' vacations. Travel agents

can also learn more about Celebrity shore excursions, see tour clips and plan personalised destination experiences for clients.

"The travel agent community is the heartbeat of our business and we are committed to delivering the best resources to our dedicated travel partners," says md of Cruises

International, **George Argyropoulos**.

Among the line-up of new features are:

- New shore excursions
- Top-rated tours by region
- Special offers
- Commission opportunities
- Group sales information
- Training materials
- Downloadable flyers
- Videos. ■

The Capital enters Pretoria

THE Capital Hotel Group is set to build a new 213-room apartment and conferencing hotel in Pretoria. The multibillion-rand 315 000sqm Capital Menlyn Maine will open in September 2016.

"The executive apartments, hotel and conference concept will

be completely integrated with Menlyn Maine Central Square and will be a much-needed offering for Pretoria," the hotel group said in a statement.

Md, **Marc Wachsberger**, says the new development offers a lifestyle in a league of its own, with rooms kitted out to high

standards. In addition, exclusive services include an in-room dining concierge, uncapped high-speed complimentary WiFi, HD full bouquet satellite television, complimentary parking and shuttles.

The group currently enjoys a consistent 83% occupancy in Sandton. ■

Legacy Hotels to refurbish PE property

LEGACY Hotels & Resorts will refurbish Brookes Hill Suites in Port Elizabeth, from August 3 to mid-September. All 40 rental pool studios will undergo a soft refurbishment and 12 studio rooms will undergo a complete refurbishment. Brookes Hill Suites will still take bookings during this time.

Sabi River Sun closes for renovation

THE Sabi River Sun Hotel has closed for accommodation from June 17 for four months for refurbishment and renovation. The Resort and the Sesonke restaurant, outdoor terrace, the golf bar restaurant and public areas of the hotel will remain open for business during the renovations. The reopening is scheduled for October 3, when the hotel will boast 60 newly refurbished rooms. The façade of the hotel will also receive a facelift, with touch-ups and new balcony railings.

Tea at the InterContinental

TRAVELLERS can now enjoy afternoon tea - including sweet and savoury treats and a selection of teas - at Quills Restaurant at the InterContinental O.R. Tambo Airport hotel. Instead of passing time in an airport lounge, travellers can go to the hotel while waiting for their flights. There is an electronic flight information screen in the hotel, which provides easy access to schedule information.

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'Set your own commission' – Flyafrica

FLYAFRICA has introduced a new product – Set Your Commission – which allows agents signed in to the airline's website to add their own commission level to bookings. Only the total price of the sales transaction is seen by the client.

Agents can settle their account with a lodge card, credit card or via EFT, which has recently been

introduced as a payment option.

Flyafrica has also reviewed its refund policy, following concerns that were raised by customers. Effective June 1, the airline now offers passengers the option of a refund in addition to the two existing service options: travel vouchers or rebooking.

The airline has also changed its rules to assist passengers who

have missed their flight. If customers miss their flight, they can be booked on the next available flight without having to buy another ticket. Passengers who contact their travel agent or the airport sales team 60 minutes after their original flight will not lose the ticket they have paid for but will have to pay any applicable fare difference and a processing charge. ■

Angola to welcome 50 new hotels

ACCORHOTELS has sealed a partnership with Angolan company, AAA Activos LDA, to open 50 hotels in Angola between 2015 and 2017. This equates to more than 6 200 rooms ranging from luxury to economy.

Sebastien Bazin, chairman and ceo of AccorHotels, said the partnership signified the company's ambition in

Africa, "where tourism is rapidly evolving".

"AAA is already investing in the building of a national chain of 50 hotels in all the capitals of provinces and a chain of three logistic centres to supply the hotels. Now we have established a partnership with AccorHotels to manage the hotels, train Angolans and provide

hospitality services in all hotels with international quality standards," says AAA chairman, **Carlos Manuel de Sao Vicente**.

"We are sure that Angola will soon become a big player in the hospitality and tourism industry in Africa. Our 50 hotels will help to stimulate domestic and international tourism." ■

How useful is a South African passport?

SOUTH Africa currently ranks 44th out of 199 countries in terms of visa-free travelling, followed by Guinea, Belize and China. This is according to the Passport Index created by Arton Capital.

Passport Index is an online interactive tool that collects, displays and ranks the utility of passports around the world.

"South African businesses have to contend on an international level but are unfortunately hampered by visa requirements, leading to a potential loss of market share and profit," says president and ceo of Arton Capital, **Armand Arton**.

The 'power ranking' of each global passport is calculated by tallying a country's 'visa-free score', or the number of countries that can be visited by holders without either an

advance visa or purchasing one on arrival.

The list is currently based on the 193 UN member countries and six territories for a total of 199 (territories annexed to other countries are excluded). By this measure, the following countries are the top 10:

1. UK, US;
2. South Korea, Germany, France;
3. Sweden, Italy;
4. Denmark, Singapore, Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands;
5. Switzerland;
6. Norway, Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Portugal;
7. Canada, Greece, Austria, Malaysia;
8. New Zealand;
9. Czech Republic, Australia, Hungary;
10. Poland, Slovakia.

An expanded version of the Passport Index will be available in October. ■

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What SA travellers want – Club Med

CARINA BORRALHO

SOUTH Africans strive to travel internationally at least once a year, says Club Med md for Southern Africa, **Stuart de Bourgogne**, who revealed some trends in the travelling preferences of local customers at a recent event at The Marion on Nicol in Johannesburg.

“South Africans want value for money when travelling,” he says. “They want more than to just visit a destination – they want their journey to be a worthwhile experience, without the hassle. We found that 73% of consumers love exploring new places, with two-thirds seeking a beach

holiday.” This is according to a survey carried out in June by Club Med, in collaboration with research specialist Columinate.

The event touched on how the concept of ‘style’ was perceived by locals. “South Africans see style as something unique, indulgent, elegant, tasteful, and hassle-free,” says Stuart. Since 2004, Club Med has spent more than €1 billion (R14bn) renovating and upgrading resorts, with more than 75% of its capacity now of a four- or five-Trident standard, which is the company’s own star rating based on comfort and amenities.

Stuart says the location of



Club Med’s Stuart de Bourgogne presented the results of a recent survey about what SA travellers want from a holiday. Photo: Carina Borralho

the destination and the view it offers (i.e. sea, mountain and skyline) is another factor that plays an important role in how travellers experience a holiday. “Furthermore, South African travellers prefer doing what they want to do, when they want to do it, with the option of socialising or enjoying moments of privacy,” says Stuart.

He adds that locals look for an experience where everything is taken care of. “Ease of access to facilities and convenience are two important factors for South Africans going on holiday. They seek a package that does not present extra ‘surprise’ costs,” Stuart says. ■

Comair – new aircraft show confidence in market

COMAIR has purchased four new Boeing 737-800 aircraft as part of its plans to upgrade its fleet.

Two of the aircraft will go to its low-cost kulula brand and the other two to the BA

Comair operation. Comair will take delivery of the aircraft between October and November 2016.

Comair ceo, **Erik Venter**, emphasises that the decision to acquire four

new aircraft is indicative of the confidence the airline has in South Africa’s domestic leisure and business air travel market. “A new aircraft has the potential to

unlock significant operator savings in terms of fuel and maintenance costs, provided there aren’t too many empty seats on most flights.”

Erik adds that Comair has

consistently been filling the majority of its aircraft on all routes across southern Africa and the purchase of the new aircraft is a sign of confidence that this trend is set to continue. ■

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Marriott and Protea: a year on

DARISE FOSTER

MARRIOTT International's acquisition of Protea Hotels has not only strengthened the South African hotel chain's brand internationally but has served as an entrance for Marriott into the local market, giving the brands leverage in each other's markets. This is according to Protea Hotels' director of sales, marketing and revenue, **Danny Bryer**, who spoke to *TNW* to reflect on the past year of Protea's transition into a Marriott International affiliate.

Marriott International acquired Protea Hotels in April last year.

Hotel groups had been eyeing the African market as most developing markets

outside South Africa did not feature international chains, said Danny. "Marriott was looking to partner with a brand that had local knowledge to get a foothold into the South African market and expand the Marriott brand as well as its 18 affiliates."

On the flip side, Protea had noticed increased interest in the brand in key markets abroad, where Marriott is established – something largely attributed to Marriott's loyalty programme, said Danny. "We have our Prokard loyalty programme, with a membership of 300 000, while the Marriott Rewards loyalty programme has over 50m members globally. That's almost the population of South Africa. To be able to market

South Africa to the 50m-strong loyalty members is key for us."

The integration of systems has been the focus of the merger during this first year. "Marriott has over 4 300 hotels globally and the Marriott website is the fourth biggest in America. It was imperative that we became part of their global distribution," explained Danny. "The key driver was to ensure that Marriott's sales offices will start producing new markets in South Africa, especially in light of the recent issues of Ebola and xenophobia, which affected the perception of the country internationally." As of May, Protea has also been included under the Marriott umbrella on the GDS.



Danny Bryer

In terms of corporate agreements, Protea's contracts and terms and conditions do not change. Said Danny: "The change comes in on the inbound consortia accounts – these contracts now fall under the Marriott environment."

He added that Marriott's purchase of Protea had been

well received by the trade. "With more consumers going online, the 'local is global' concept has become a reality. Protea has now become a global entity that can offer customers the opportunity to travel abroad and receive corporate rates anywhere in the world.

"Up until now, Marriott hasn't had much weight in South Africa. So the fact that Protea is endorsing Marriott has also been well received." Marriott International would introduce the Marriott brand in South Africa, said Danny. Although there are no concrete plans at this stage, the Johannesburg and Cape Town city centres will be considered as the destinations for the properties. ■

Fastjet to launch flights to Malawi

FASTJET will launch flights between Dar es Salaam and Lilongwe on July 27. It marks the sixth international

route for the airline and will be operated by an Airbus A319.

Flights will depart Dar es

Salaam at 10h25 and land in Lilongwe at 11h05 on Mondays and Fridays. The return flight departs Lilongwe

at 11h40 and lands in Dar es Salaam at 14h20. Tickets are already on sale. Fastjet's luggage upgrade

option 'freighty' is available on the route, which allows passengers to transport up to 80kg of checked bags. ■



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Photo: Disney

An increasing number of different Disney experiences are available across the world, but which is the best option for local travellers? Carina Borralho rounds up the pros and cons of each resort.

Which resort is tops for SA travellers?

AS A RESULT of South Africa's geographic location and its comparatively weak currency, locals require guidance from agents when deciding on a Disney experience that is right for them and their budget. Although Disneyland Paris is the most convenient theme park for South Africans in terms of location, some tour operators argue that it is not the best value for money.

There are five Disney resorts, with a further one (Shanghai) in the pipeline. Each varies in size and level of offering but all maintain the imaginative essence of Disney.

Disneyland (California)

South Africans should spend around two days at Disneyland Resort to enjoy the original Disney theme park and all it has to offer. With the rand-dollar exchange rate, locals can expect to pay US\$79pp (R989) for a one-day pass giving access to the park.

The resort hosts two parks – Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure – and has three hotels – Disneyland Hotel, Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, and Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel. Although this is the original park, it is not the most popular with tourists, says Thompsons Holidays product and contracting executive, **Kay Ellison**.

Walt Disney World Resort (Orlando, Florida)

The famous Orlando Disney World is the largest Disney resort in the world. In 2014, Disney World's four theme parks ranked in the top eight of the 25 most-visited theme parks in the world.

The resort comprises Magic Kingdom Park, Epcot,

Hollywood Studios, Animal Kingdom Park, and two Water Parks – Typhoon Lagoon, and Blizzard Beach.

Other features include four golf courses, the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, and Disney Quest (an interactive theme park).

"The biggest Disney seller for Thompsons Holidays is Disney World Orlando," says Kay.

She says comparing other parks to Disney World is impossible because of the vast difference in offering. "Disney World is a town on its own. People cannot walk from one side of the park to another, which is why the park has built an entire transport infrastructure system."

Thompson's sells an ultimate ticket, which provides visitors with access to all the parks for the full duration of their stay. Although this ticket is more expensive than a one-day pass, for example, Thompsons highlights the fact that for South Africans having travelled that distance, visiting one park would be a waste of time. "One could spend seven days at Disney World and not get bored, whereas spending three days at another Disney resort such as Paris would be restricting," says Kay.

Accommodation at Disney World varies according to budget. There are 21 resorts to choose from, depending on facility requirements. Lodging starts with the campsite at US\$62 (R758) a night, and can go up to US\$535 (R6 543) a night for the villas at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa.

"The value resort accommodation is the most popular with South Africans. Every resort is beautifully themed according to a Disney movie or genre, and is

suitable for families," notes Kay. She says they also offer the best value for money. "Regardless of where you stay at Disney World, you need to take transport to get to other parts of the resort. So although the value resorts are a little further away from the centre of the resort, they are still a great option."

The newest value resort, The Art of Animation, offers a classic Disney experience through its décor and restaurant offering.

Venice Barris, reservations supervisor at Travel Vision, says, as Disney World's newest offering, the resort has a lot of new features. A disadvantage, however, is that it is much more expensive than the other resorts.

Disney's Contemporary Resort is conveniently situated on the monorail, but also houses the restaurant, Chef Mickey, which can get noisy, says Venice.

Although the Disney Grand Floridian resort is only one stop from the Magic Kingdom, Kay warns potential travellers that it can be quite pricey.

For South African families looking to stay at a Disney



Kay Ellison

resort, Travel Vision usually recommends Disney's All Star resort for value, and the Disney Caribbean resort for a four-star experience.

Tokyo Disney

Located in Japan's buzzing capital city, the Tokyo Disney Resort was the first Disney theme park outside the US. Travelling to Tokyo from SA takes about 17 hours, compared with an 11-hour flight to Paris. Because of the long flight, agents should be mindful of passengers

travelling with small children who might find it too tiring. As such, Tokyo Disney Resort is a good option for travellers who are already visiting the Far East.

For travellers bound for the resort, agents should also recommend a lengthier stay and include other sights in the trip, such as visiting the Shinjuku National Garden (23 minutes' drive from Disney), or Ginza (20 minutes' drive from Disney) for the ultimate shopping experience.

Parks in this resort include Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea. There are three hotels: Disney's Ambassador Hotel, Tokyo DisneySea Hotel MiraCosta and Tokyo Disneyland Hotel.

Disneyland Paris

Disneyland Paris is the closest Disney theme park for South Africans. Agents should highlight that travellers have the option of walking around the park (unlike Disney World Orlando, which is much bigger), although transport is also provided. However, they should also warn clients that they can

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Hong Kong Disneyland jungle cruise.

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expect to experience the majority of activities on offer in three days.

Disneyland Paris features two resorts: Disneyland Park, and Walt Disney Studios Park. An additional Golf Disneyland park can also be found, with shopping, dining and entertainment facilities available at Disney Village. The resort has seven hotels.

Hong Kong Disneyland

The Hong Kong Disneyland Resort was the second Disney

resort to open in Asia.

Because of the distance from SA, agents should try upselling Disney Hong Kong. Optional extras could include an excursion to Victoria Harbour, which is only 24 minutes' drive through the city.

The resort has one park (Hong Kong Disneyland) as well as the Inspiration Lake Recreation Centre (a 12-hectare artificial lake). There are two hotels – Hong Kong Disneyland Hotel and Disney's Hollywood Hotel – at this resort.

Shanghai Disney

Shanghai Disney Resort is expected to open in 2016, and will be home to the Shanghai Disneyland Park. "However, Shanghai is not on the way to anywhere for South Africans. Tourism to Shanghai is also quite small," says Thompsons Holidays media and public relations officer, **John Ridler**.

He advises agents to recommend a Shanghai Disney Resort experience for South Africans who are already travelling to China.

Best value for money?

ALTHOUGH it is a 16-hour flight from Johannesburg, Thompsons Holidays says the best value-for-money Disney experience is Walt Disney World in Orlando. The park offers accommodation for a variety of budgets and has activities for the entire family.

Disneyland Paris is closer and the airfare is generally cheaper. However **Kay Ellison** says Walt Disney World Orlando is still the best option.

Hong Kong Disneyland and Tokyo Disney would be a similar price as Orlando for South Africans but without the same offering.

Because of its location, Shanghai is an unlikely option for South Africans and while Thompsons recommends this as an add-on, Disney World in Orlando is worth a visit on its own.

Orlando also works out to be the most affordable option

for South Africans. "Although airfares and taxes are expensive, there are always specials available," says Kay. She adds that travellers are able to pay for everything upfront with no surprise costs during their visit.

Another benefit of Disney World Orlando is that American school holidays do not coincide with SA holidays, letting South African families experience the resort outside America's peak seasons.

Register and learn more!

THE Disney website offers a feature called Disney Star, which allows agents to register to become

members and learn about all the Disney products. Disney sends registered agents all Disney-related

information, including specials and packages, new features or facilities and even menu changes. ■

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Barsa appoints new board

BARSA has appointed Air Mauritius regional manager **Carla da Silva** as its new chairperson, with Qantas regional manager Africa, **Michi Messner**, and SAA manager of international affairs, **Darren Hay**, sharing the role of vice chairperson. Carla's focus over the coming year will be on forging stronger relationships

with government to support South Africa with its tourism number targets. The appointment of a new Barsa executive committee has come in light of several challenges experienced in the industry this year, such as new immigration regulations, revenue volatility, and changing requirements of doing business in South Africa.

Appointments

■ The newly-opened Radisson Blu Le Vendome Hotel on Sea Point's Platinum Mile has appointed **Craig Carmichael**



as executive chef. Craig has over 20 years of experience in the food industry. He will be responsible for maintaining Radisson Blu's tradition of offering fine cuisine.



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Bargain deals to Greece – will they last?

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PRICES for holidays to Greece have been slashed as the bankrupt country works to attract tourists, but low prices are not expected to last as potential tax hikes are on the horizon.

In the UK, holidaymakers are being offered deals with discounts of up to 70% in a bid to encourage tourists to keep coming to the country. Ryanair has launched a campaign to 'Keep Greece Flying' by dropping prices on flights between Athens and Chania, Rhodes and Thessaloniki to just €4,99 (R68), while cutting fares on its international routes to/ from Greece by 30%.

South Africans booking a holiday to Greece will also benefit from low prices. Suppliers and hoteliers are offering good deals as they are trying to collect as much

cash prior to parliament announcing a possible new bailout deal, says **Annemarie Lexow**, Travel Vision's sales and marketing manager.

The bailout deal that is currently on the table will see Greece having to make harsh concessions in exchange for a cash lifeline of €86bn (R1,1trn). They'll be faced with higher taxes, cuts to government pensions and a sell-off of €50bn (R680bn) worth of state assets in order to recapitalise banks and make debt payments.

The proposed VAT reforms in particular could have a debilitating impact on the tourism sector, as Greece would need to increase VAT on tourism expenses. The rate of VAT in the food sector is likely to increase from 6,5% to 13% and in the accommodation sector could increase from 13% to 23%.

"Any increase in VAT on accommodation will certainly

have an impact on package prices," says **John Ridler**, spokesperson for Cullinan Outbound. He adds, however, that it is likely that the authorities will try to keep the increase to a minimum to stimulate travel and earn valuable foreign currency.

Even if prices increase, Greece will remain a popular destination for South African travellers, says **Sharmila Ragunan**, Flight Centre's retail marketing leader. "In general, the choice of travel destination is determined by a number of factors, especially the desire to experience and visit a particular place. It is not driven solely by cost."

Rian Bornman, md of FlightSite, says Greece remains a popular destination and interest is still strong. He warns, however, that a notable 'wait and see' approach is currently apparent with clients. ■



Escape the cold

Emperors Palace is offering Winter FunStays Breakaways, including a range of bed and breakfast deals, at its three-, four-, and five-star Peermont hotels. Special offers start from R350pps and are valid until August 31. Coming in from the cold, are Emperors Palace hotel operations manager, **Jean Hanekom** (left) and Emperors Palace gm, **Wayne Hill**.

Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

GDS loophole

From page 1

not indicative of credit card fraud. Fortunately, such cases are extremely rare."

Fraud charges have been laid against the consultant and the ITC and Uniglobe is proceeding with civil action. However, the ITC is still active in Namibia and is now ticketing through another consortium. The Johannesburg consultant

resigned before disciplinary action could be taken and has been employed in the industry by another travel agency, says Mike. "I find it surprising that the agency managers do not call past employers or ticketing agents when they hire people or accept new ITCs. Both the consultant and ITC are still involved in the travel industry. Someone is ticketing for them." ■

New 'strict' B-BBEE codes need clarity

From page 1

to rule out any confusion. **Otto de Vries**, ceo of Asata, explains that, although TMC revenue has always been calculated as revenue earned from service fees, this is not always clear to the TMC's clients.

"Asata has put forward a case that the turnover criteria should include a sector-specific 'nett revenue' definition to meet the unique business structure of Asata members in particular," he says, explaining that Asata's intent is not to change anything in the codes but to create clarity.

According to Otto, the new thresholds could have an impact on travel agencies that are suddenly qualified as small enterprises (QSEs) under the new tourism codes instead of Exempted Micro Enterprises (EMEs) under the generic codes.

Under the new draft, a company that generates less than R5m per annum (compared with R10m under the generic codes) is classified as an EME. Qualifying small tourism enterprises' revenues will be between R5m and R45m (compared with between R10m and R50m) while large tourism enterprises will have revenue of over R45m

(compared with R50m under the generic codes).

ITCs belonging to a consortium will be able to choose whether they want to apply for a B-BBEE certificate as a smaller independent entity or as part of a bigger consolidated entity, Keith says. He adds that, in most cases, it would be advantageous to apply as a separate entity.

Meanwhile, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa is concerned that the new thresholds stipulated in the tourism codes could lead to business closures and job losses.

Mmatšatši Ramawela, ceo of the TBCSA, says during its consultation with the NDT and Tourism BEE Council in 2014, the TBCSA called for the threshold for EMEs to be linked to the generic codes of R10m instead of the R5m contained in the gazetted codes.

The TBCSA doesn't expect any job losses in the industry in the initial stages but the impact could be a delayed one as a result of the added compliance burden, especially in the EME category, says Mmatšatši.

The Southern African Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (Savrala) ceo **Marc Corcoran** says he fears

the new codes will undo the transformation gains the car-rental sector has made over the past five years.

The major car-rental companies in South Africa have increased their average B-BBEE levels from level 5 to level 3, a 40% improvement, as well as reported a 24% improvement in the Ownership category and a 36% improvement in the level of Black Ownership, says Marc. "Against this positive transformation momentum we are very concerned it will be reversed, in particular, by the new procurement thresholds and requirements, which will drop the average car-rental B-BBEE levels back to below those of 2009. Vehicle purchases from the country's largest vehicle manufacturers and importers make up the largest proportion of a car-rental company's procurement. Under the new codes, these manufacturers' B-BBEE levels will drop, causing the significant decline in the B-BBEE levels of car-rental companies."

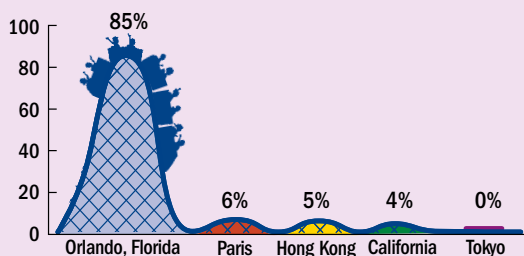
Members of the public have sixty days from the date of publication to make inputs and comments before the Draft Tourism B-BBEE Codes are gazetted as a legally binding Sector Code. ■

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Orlando is tops!

Which Disney theme park offers the best experience?

- Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida
- Disneyland Paris
- Hong Kong Disneyland Resort
- Disneyland Resort, California
- Tokyo Disney Resort



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