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## Agents stick with GDS

DORINE REINSTEIN

LUFTHANSA has not caved in to industry pressure, implementing its controversial Distribution Cost Charge (DCC) surcharge on September 1. However, travel agents will not be deterred from booking via the GDS, passing on the fee to customers.

The airline group dropped the bombshell in June that it would implement a fee of €16 (R242) for every Lufthansa ticket booked via the GDS. Agents had just three months to prepare for the change, with Lufthansa encouraging the trade to bypass the GDS and book through the airline's agent portal – an option that is "just not feasible", South African agents say.

Agents are not prepared to disrupt their workflow, leaving the GDS to book via Lufthansa's agent portal. This would drastically impact on the travel agent's efficiency, says **Franz von Wielligh**, gm of Flight Specials.

"Imagine if we needed a separate portal for every airline? What a disaster," says **Jonathan Gerber**, director of TAG. He says TAG's consultants will not be using the agent portal as it is simply unproductive to have to use a myriad of different booking tools.

One element that separates ITCs from traditional agencies is their 24/7 availability, says **Tammy Hunt**, operations director for eTravel. "The DCC system will limit this service and I do not believe that the majority of the clientele the ITCs service will be willing to forego the exceptional service they receive from their consultant," she says.

For online travel agents, Lufthansa has not even proposed a solution, says **Andy Hedley**, head of technical

business at Travelstart. He says the airline's agent portal might work for traditional agents but it can't be used on online portals. He says currently most agents are adopting a "wait and see" approach.

The airline has made very little effort to engage with the trade, says **Allan Wolman**, md of XL Rosebank Travel. "We will certainly not be using their web portal and will be transparent with our clients, advising them how much extra it will cost to book Lufthansa."

However, this doesn't mean agents will boycott the airline. "We can't boycott them. That would be self-defeating. We need them as much as they need us," says Allan, adding that ultimately the choice will be up to the client.

Jonathan agrees and says Lufthansa will now be that little bit more expensive for customers. He appeals to the trade to stand together and pass the DCC on to clients to put pressure on Lufthansa. "We need a distribution system that is easy to access and has ample content. I sincerely hope that Lufthansa's numbers will drop. If not, it will send a message to other airlines to do the same."

Franz believes supply and demand principles will bring Lufthansa fares back in line with the market. "It will be interesting to see over the next few months if Lufthansa will drop its fares to compete for lost bookings, which then would make this whole exercise redundant."

### Loopholes

Travel agents wanting to bypass the Distribution Cost Charge could opt to book a Lufthansa flight with one of the airline's codeshare partners, said

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**What a Thirsty bunch!**

It was a reunion of sorts at last month's *TNW* Thirsty's, with ex-Flight Centre peeps gathering for a photo outside the stylish City Lodge Hotel Waterfall City in Midrand. Pictured here (back, from left): **Liezl Gericke** (Virgin Atlantic); **Rudolph Theunissen** (Thompsons Travel); and **Nicolas le Roux** (Travelport). Front, from left: **Sara Park** (Tourism Ireland); **Dezy de Lima** (kulula holidays); and **Amanda Hardy** (TravCorp SA). More pics on page 7. Photo: Natasha Schmidt

## Protea Hotels enters Ghana

PROTEA Hotels has opened the Protea Hotel Select Takoradi, its first property in Ghana.

"This opening under the Protea Hotels brand reinforces our focus on continuing to grow the footprint of Marriott International and that of Protea Hotels in strategic growth areas within Africa. It brings to 19 the number of Middle Eastern and African countries that Marriott International operates in," says **Alex Kyriakidis**, Marriott

International's president and md for Middle East and Africa.

The new hotel, located in Takoradi – an oil-rich area of the country – boasts 132 rooms, including 12 two-bedroomed apartments. The hotel features a large restaurant, bar and lounge, terrace and an entertainment and pool area, as well as a gym. Conference facilities for a maximum of 150 delegates and WiFi connectivity are also available. ■

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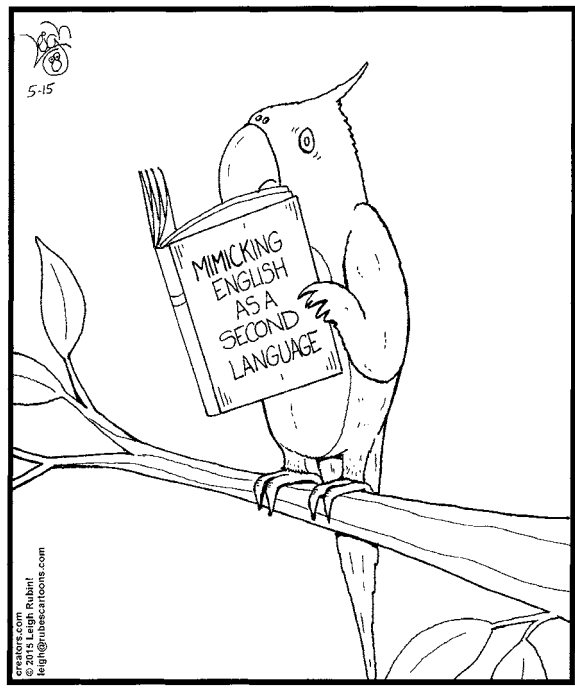
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## Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



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Fax: (011) 327-4094  
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Web: [www.nowmedia.co.za](http://www.nowmedia.co.za)  
Address: Now Media Centre,  
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Illovo, Johannesburg,  
PO Box 55251, Northlands,  
2116, South Africa.



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

### EDITORIAL

Group Editor: Natasha Schmidt      [natashas@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:natashas@nowmedia.co.za)  
Features Editor: Debbie Badham

### Contributors:

Tessa Reed      Hilka Birns  
Max Marx      Dorine Reinstein  
Carina Borralho      Darise Foster

Photographer: Shannon Van Zyl  
Production Editor: Ann Braun

### PUBLISHER

Kate Nathan      [katen@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:katen@nowmedia.co.za)

### GROUP PUBLISHER

David Marsh      [davem@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:davem@nowmedia.co.za)

### ADVERTISING

Sales:      [katen@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:katen@nowmedia.co.za)  
Advertising Co-ordinator:  
Anthea Lucas      [antheal@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:antheal@nowmedia.co.za)

### PRODUCTION

Design Head:  
Dirk Voorneveld

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Circulation      [tvsub@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:tvsub@nowmedia.co.za)

## Sell more, shop more

Royal Caribbean International has launched a 'Deliver The Wow, Receive Your Wow' campaign for agents selling cruises. Agents will receive a R100 shopping voucher for every seven-night or longer Royal Caribbean cruise booked for sailing until September 30. Royal Caribbean International is represented by Cruises International in SA. Ready to shop until they drop are (from left): **Thaybz Khan** (Manager contemporary portfolio); **Debbie Georghiou** (trade relations manager for Gauteng); and **Dionne Potiphar** (trade relations manager for Gauteng). Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Letter to the Editor



# Cape tolls – Sanral responds

**T**HE article 'City of Cape Town takes Sanral to court' (TNW August 26) refers.

Please allow us to correct statements and clear up misconceptions around the proposed N1/N2 Winelands toll road project.

The article starts off by stating as a fact that road users in the Cape will be paying 72c/km – three times that of Gauteng tolls. The truth is that toll tariffs have not been set. They will be determined by the Minister of Transport on recommendation by Sanral, which must still negotiate the tariff structure once a preferred bidder has been appointed.

Councillor **Brett Herron** of the City of Cape Town, maintains the projected cost has escalated from R1,6bn in March 2000 to R44,9bn in March 2010. These figures are wrong. Mr Herron is misleading the public because he is deliberately confusing a predicted revenue stream over the concession period of 30 years with the initial cost of construction, which, in 2010 terms, was

estimated at R11,5bn.

Mr Herron does not understand the envisaged upgrading and maintenance interventions at the initial construction phase, and expansion works after the initial construction years, such as years 10, 18 and 27, where the road will again be fully rehabilitated and capacity improved before it is handed over to Sanral in 30 years. He is confused about income and makes no consideration to cost of works.

Regarding the statements by players in the tourism industry that it will be negatively affected if tolls are instituted, while there would obviously be a cost to road users, the benefits of having improved freeways around the City of Cape Town far outweigh the cost of a toll tariff.

The tourism industry would, over the long-term, benefit as the major freeways would not be congested as they are now. Tourists would spend less time on the current congested roads and get to their destinations faster. More than 165km of sections of the N1/N2 would have

been improved with several new interchanges and an additional lane added in both directions (city-bound and out-bound), which would make for vastly improved traffic flows. At present, on many occasions, all lanes have to be closed when there are serious accidents. With new lanes added, this won't happen.

In addition, improved road infrastructure helps solve both long-term and short-term economic problems. In the short-term, investment in road infrastructure helps provide jobs for low-skilled workers. In the long-term it has a wide range of benefits, for example, multiplier effect (creates direct, indirect and induced jobs), improves productivity as commuters spend less time on roads, reduces congestion and carbon emission and benefits business by reducing transport costs. Mobility is fundamental to and an important characteristic of economic activity.

**Vusi Mona**

GM: Communications Sanral

## SAA, Air China expand codeshare

AIR China has expanded its codeshare with SAA, enabling SAA to put its code on Air China's new non-stop service between Beijing and Johannesburg, which launch in October.

The codeshare allows SAA passengers to connect on flights beyond Beijing to Chengdu, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Chongqing. Air China will, in turn, put its code on SAA's services

between Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

The codeshare arrangement is open for sale for travel effective October 29. ■



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## aha unveils new venue on the Zambezi

Hotel and lodge management company, aha, has officially opened a conference centre and boma at the David Livingstone Safari Lodge on the banks of the Zambezi. *TNW's* Tessa Reed was at the launch event.

**T**HE triangle of Livingstone, Victoria Falls and Chobe is the most powerful MICE adventure destination in the world, says **Glen Byrom**, md of destination management company, TWIICE. He was speaking at the opening of the new David Livingstone Safari Lodge conference centre just outside Livingstone, Zambia, and added that the area offered authentic Africa, set on the banks of the Zambezi, with great weather and an array of activities.

Glen said the new conference centre was a multipurpose venue that would widen the scope of the destination and that current expansion at the Victoria Falls would be a game changer. "Kazungula is the only place in the world where four countries

meet in one spot." He added that the univisa currently in place for Zimbabwe and Zambia was likely to evolve further and that there were not enough beds on either side of the Falls to accommodate the tourists who would come to the destination. "Many predict that Victoria Falls will become the new tourism hub of sub-Saharan Africa."

**Esther Banda**, Zambian deputy minister of Tourism and Arts, said tour operators could promote the property with confidence, adding that it offered guests the unique prospect of spotting passing elephant while attending a conference. "We can also see here today the fruits of hard work, vision, major ongoing investment and commitment to Zambia."

The new conference centre caters for small team meetings as well as larger team-building events and international conferences as an exclusive-use conference venue in Livingstone. It is also suitable as an exclusive-use wedding reception venue or for hosting small business workshops or cocktail functions.

The venue comprises 250 sqm flexible event space overlooking the African bush and a waterhole frequented by elephant; a 140 sqm outdoor patio area under a Bedouin tent; a reception area; and an open-air boma and amphitheatre venue. On-site accommodation at David Livingstone Safari Lodge & Spa consists of 72 en-suite luxury rooms and five



The deck and infinity pool at the David Livingstone Safari Lodge (top). The outdoor patio under a Bedouin tent (above) and banqueting in the conference centre (below).

Photos: Tessa Reed

executive suites, all boasting spectacular views of the Zambezi River.

The conference centre has capacity for 160 delegates in schoolroom style or 250 delegates in cinema style. In banquet style it caters for 180 guests without a dance floor or 150 guests with a dance floor.



## Five conference add-ons

### 1 Sunset cruises on the Zambezi

Guests at the David Livingstone Safari Lodge have the option of a sunset cruise in the evenings. Snacks and drinks are served aboard the three-deck *Lady Livingstone* and the spacious vessel provides ample room for passengers to move around and watch the sunset over the Zambezi. Guests will more than likely spot crocodiles, hippos and elephant. The *Lady Livingstone* has capacity for 144 passengers and the cruise lasts roughly two hours.

### 2 White-river rafting

There are probably few experiences that can match the adrenalin rush of white-

river rafting on the Zambezi. Guests do not need any experience as qualified guides will brief them on all safety issues and lifejackets are provided. Operator Safpar's team of guides are all accredited by the International Rafting Federation. Guests can choose between half-day excursions in the morning or afternoon, or a full-day trip.

### 3 Canoeing safari

Guests who aren't up for white-river rafting can opt for the tamer experience of canoeing along the Upper Zambezi. Here the waters are generally peaceful with only a few very small rapids, classed as grade two. The experience offers guests unique game viewing at water level, which also offers great



The *Lady Livingstone* takes guests on a sunset cruise.

photo opportunities. Guests can expect to see plenty of crocodiles and hippos, while waterbuck and elephant are also likely sightings along with numerous bird species.

### 4 Swimming in Devil's Pool

Trips to Livingstone Island, situated in the Zambezi just above the Falls, can be arranged. The trip offers guests the opportunity to

swim in Devil's Pool, a unique experience. Devil's Pool is a natural rock pool right on the edge of the Falls, providing guests with the exhilarating experience of viewing the Falls from their very edge. Guests meet at The Royal Livingstone Hotel and take a short boat trip to the island before walking along the top of the Falls to the rock pool. Excursions include breakfast,

lunch and high tea and take between one-and-a-half and two hours. The activity is only available during low water season (from August to March) and swimming depends on water levels.

### 5 Elephant encounter

Zambezi Elephant Trails offers guests the opportunity to interact with a group of rescued elephants. The operator says the group consists of animals that were orphaned during elephant culls or found in distress during periods of drought. Furthermore, according to the operator, the elephants have also been trained using positive reinforcement. During the encounter, guests can feed and stroke the animals. ■

# New hotel to open in Houghton

TESSA REED

CONSTRUCTION has started on The Houghton Hotel, which will form the cornerstone of an existing residential development and is set to open at the beginning of 2018.

Speaking at the groundbreaking of the hotel, project manager, **Andrew Morris**, said the development had been designed to take advantage of the location, which offered magnificent views over the golf course. He said the developer and design team had focused on ensuring the property not only overlooked the golf course but that it was integrated into the hotel.

**Heleen Grimsehl**, partner at Boogertman + Partners – the architects behind the project – said the firm was striving to ensure that the hotel would become the gem of Houghton Estate and its surroundings. “The Houghton

Hotel is located on the apex of the affluent residential suburb of Houghton. We’ve made use of refined precision design elements and materials – including concrete, steel and glass – to reflect this affluence. At the same time, we’ve introduced the location’s Highveld heritage by using natural elements and soft, sweeping lines in the aesthetic.”

The hotel’s interiors are being designed by Pellerade. Ceo, **Stephen Pellerade**, says in creating The Houghton’s look and feel, he turned to iconic international hotels for inspiration, including Milan’s Armani Hotel, the Peninsula in Hong Kong and the Bulgari in London. “These establishments stand out because their furnishings are simplistic but the use of layering and tailoring makes for an effect that is extremely luxurious, almost cocooning.”

The Houghton Hotel, which

has been invited to join the Leading Hotels of the World portfolio, will overlook the Jack Nicklaus signature golf course and offer 55 hotel rooms of 50 sqm and six hotel suites ranging from 90 sqm to 120 sqm. The conference centre measures approximately 600 sqm and caters for up to 550 guests, standing.

The hotel has a contemporary delicatessen, a 90-seat fine dining restaurant with three private dining rooms, and the Sky Bar, offering breath-taking views over the golf course’s third hole. There is also a business centre offering boardrooms with latest technology and a guest service offering.

Other facilities include a hair and nail bar, spa, dry cleaner and gym. For those keen on outdoor activities there are jogging paths traversing the hotel’s 7,2km parkland surrounds as well as the golf course. ■

## Premier acquires Richards Bay landmark

PREMIER Hotel and Resorts has acquired The Richards Hotel in Richards Bay, 90 minutes north of Durban. The Richards is the Premier Group’s third acquisition in KwaZulu Natal in nine months.

The hotel was formerly owned by HPF, marketed by Protea Hotels and managed by Extra Bold. Facilities include a fine-dining restaurant and conference space for up to 300 people. Premier plans to upgrade the property, including the conference

facilities, which will be done without disruption to guests.

“With our recent acquisitions of Sani Pass Hotel and Himeville Arms Hotel this year, we continue with the expansion of Premier Hotel and Resorts’ footprint in South Africa. Our portfolio has doubled in only four years and The Richards acquisition is just another step toward our goals,” says **Samuel Nassimov**, md of NV Properties and Premier Hotels. ■

## Fastjet ups Jo’burg flights

FROM September 1, fastjet now operates daily flights between Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam. Flight FN202 departs Johannesburg at 14h10 and arrives in Dar es Salaam at 18h35. Flight FN201

departs Dar es Salaam at 10h40 and arrives in Johannesburg at 13h20. Prices start at R1 175 one way, including taxes. Flights previously operated on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. ■

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## MAGIC OF THE MIDLANDS *Changing lives*

Amid the beauty of KZN, the Midlands Meander has done a lot to transform the lives of those involved in arts and crafts projects. Travellers can buy one-of-a-kind gifts and in turn contribute to the lives of those who made them.

- ▶ The Midlands Meander Emerging Artist/Crafter Project has seen furniture crafter, Siyabonga Duma and the Impumelelo Bead Artists benefit from its marketing expertise, workshops and ongoing business mentoring.
- ▶ The Groundcover Leather Company encourages local women to work at their own pace from home and sell the finished leather footwear at the Groundcover shop.
- ▶ The world-famous Ardmore Ceramic Art studio owes a great deal of its success to Bonnie Ntshalintshali. Other artists in the community exhibit at the Ardmore studio and are given training, direction, materials, a studio and a guaranteed market.
- ▶ Clay figurines called "Dlamini's" have become an icon for the Zulu-lulu™ brand, collected by many across the world.



TNW7446



Crystal River Cruises will launch two new river yachts in 2017. Image: Crystal River Cruises

## Crystal charts new course through river cruising

CRYSTAL River Cruises has unveiled more detailed plans for its collection of two Crystal river yacht vessels, which will be launched in Europe starting in late March 2017.

"The new series of vessels will boast a yacht-like design featuring larger accommodations and space-to-guest ratio than any other river cruise ship, and include Crystal's signature all-inclusive six-star service, plus a fresh approach to the traditional river itineraries and experiences," says Crystal president and ceo, **Edie Rodriguez**.

The 70-suite luxury river yachts will feature 23 sqm guest suites with walk-in

wardrobes, king-size beds and bathrooms with double vanities; two 46 sqm Penthouse Suites, and spacious public areas, including Palm Court with dance floor and glass-domed roof, and a fitness centre and spa.

"Crystal will dedicate a portion of each cruise to sailing along rivers in central Europe – including France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria – during daytime hours, allowing travellers to relish the extraordinary scenery. This timing also affords guests the opportunity to enjoy the nightlife in selected

destinations with port overnights, which will often present inclusive culinary experiences ashore at Michelin-starred restaurants and local eateries and exclusive evening events and entertainment," Edie says. Crystal's itineraries will also intentionally deviate from traditional river cruise routes to avoid congestion of other vessels in port.

Crystal will launch its newest shore-side programme, called Active Exploration Adventures, tailored for guests wanting a high-intensity shore-side activity.

Itineraries, fares and bookings for Crystal River Cruises will be available beginning December 1. ■

### To the point



Makanyi Lodge in the southern sector of the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve in the Greater Kruger National Park area, has officially opened. The lodge comprises seven suites, each with a fireplace, private deck with loungers and an outdoor shower. Two of the seven lodges are honeymoon suites with a four-poster bed and private plunge pool on the deck. The lodge also has two plunge pools, WiFi, hair dryers, mini bars and coffee- and tea-making facilities in each room. Guests will have the opportunity to see wild dogs and white lions near the camp.

## MAJESTIC AFRICA

Visit one of the natural wonders of the world, Victoria Falls, from Botswana, Zimbabwe or Zambia



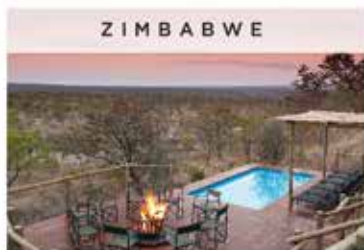
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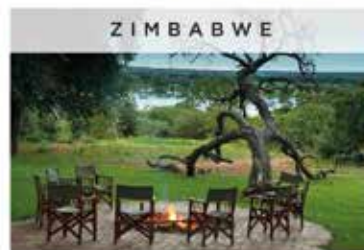
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# TNW's Thirsty's

SPRING has sprung! The travel trade came out to play on the last Thursday of last month on a warm and beautiful evening at the City Lodge Hotel Waterfall City in Midrand for TNW Thirsty's. The impressive venue pulled out all the stops,

with an array of delicious food and even more delicious wine and entertainment, while guests networked the night away. The next Thirsty's heads to Cape Town in October. For more info, email [katenathan@nowmedia.co.za](mailto:katenathan@nowmedia.co.za) ■



▶ Harvey World Travel's **Marco Cristofoli** (left) and **Andrew McDonic** of Tourvest.

▼ **Lidia Folli** (Tourvest Travel Services); and **Alastair Dooley** (City Lodge Hotel Group).



▶ It's a tour operator thing... From left: **Annemarie Lexow** (Travel Vision); and **Inge Dobihal** (Austria Connection).

◀ From left: Gracious and generous host, **Clifford Ross** (City Lodge Hotel Group); is pictured with **Michael McBain** (Hyatt Regency Johannesburg).



All the happy faces... From left: **Julie Green** (City Lodge Hotel Group); **Peter Schoeman** (City Lodge Hotel Group); **Jaco Steyn-Venter** (Faircity Hotels & Apartments); **Irene Ferreira** (Reynolds Travel Centre); **Mary Reynolds** (Reynolds Travel Centre); and **Ramon Geldenhuys** (360 Degrees Travel).



# Mozambique

With one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, Mozambique is attracting the attention of the business world and a growing number of MICE travellers. Carina Borralho reports.

## More MICE, more paradise

WITH its economic growth rate currently at about 7,4%, Mozambique is faring noticeably well when it comes to foreign investment, and 2015 is proving to be a successful year for corporate travel, with a growing number of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions taking place.

Among other things, the country benefits from important natural resources such as coal, natural gas, ore deposits, forestry reserves,

and hydropower generation capabilities, making it an attractive MICE destination for the likes of mining and engineering companies.

However, a number of other industries are also starting to look to Mozambique as a hub for meetings and events.

Geographically positioned to welcome the east to Africa, and involved in a growing number of infrastructure projects, Mozambique is attracting foreign interest as well as that from South Africa. The capital, Maputo, is gaining the

reputation of being a unique destination with immense development opportunities.

Business travel is definitely on the rise and not only from the South African market. With Mozambique increasingly attracting foreign business markets, the country is seeing a definite increase in conferences as well.

This increase in interest is in part due to the choice of quality venues, which has significantly expanded over the past few years. Travellers have the unique opportunity

to combine business with leisure as the country offers conferencing facilities, world-class accommodation, beaches and safari experiences to mention just part of its offering.

However, like any other country, Mozambique also has its challenges when it comes to conferencing. "The challenges are no different to anywhere else," says owner of event company, OLE Lda, **Morven Santana Afonso**, who adds that one such challenge is organising conferences from South Africa. Morven

recommends that South African agents develop a set of reliable contacts within Mozambique, who have relationships with local service providers.

"These contacts can communicate in the local language on behalf of the agent, can advise on local cultural protocol and ensure that there are no miscommunications," says Morven. However, quality service providers are very busy due to the high amount of work, so they always value a client who communicates well.

## Where to book your clients

THERE is a broad demand for both leisure and business travel to Mozambique. "Popular travel to the east African country ranges from self-drive tours to fly-in packages," says Africa Stay product assistant, **La Verne Botha**.

She maintains that travellers are looking for an experience rather than just a holiday and that this is exactly what Africa Stay's hotels offer, adding that there are a number of beautiful hotels in Mozambique.

### Maputo

The Joaquim Chissano International Conference Centre in Maputo is undoubtedly the biggest venue in the country, says **Barbara Mommen**, ceo of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative. The conference centre is centrally located in relation to hotels, restaurants and other amenities such as travel agencies and banks. The JCICC offers a variety of room choices to cater for just about any conferencing need, including a Grand Plenary Hall with capacity for 1 000 delegates.

The Southern Sun Hotel in Maputo is on the beachfront and just 7km from Maputo International Airport. It has

completed renovations of its existing 158 rooms and built an additional 111 rooms and three conference rooms. Guests can enjoy a swimming pool, outdoor terrace overlooking the ocean, an all-day-dining restaurant, a business lounge and a fitness centre.

Considered Maputo's 'Grande Dame', the Polana Serena Hotel can cater for up to 250 delegates, offering both audiovisual equipment and WiFi. The hotel has 142 rooms as well as a choice of three restaurants, the 'Maisha' Mind Body and Spirit Health Club and Spa, a swimming pool, extensive gardens and business centre.

### Pemba

Pemba Beach Hotel & Spa is ideal for conferencing in the north of the country where oil and gas exploration is on the increase. The hotel boasts 91 rooms, two suites, eight self-catering villas, two restaurants, two bars and an activity centre. The fully equipped conference venue can cater for up to 200 delegates at a time.

There are several conference



**Pemba Beach Hotel & Spa is ideal for conferences in northern Mozambique.**

facilities in Pemba as well as the other northern towns – Nampula, Beira, Nacala and Tete. Most can host at least

150 people and the venues are easily accessible, with each city connected by direct flights from Johannesburg.

### Vilanculos

Dugong Beach Lodge offers tranquillity in an unspoiled part of the country, says Legend Lodges marketing co-ordinator, **Heloise Van der Walt**. The lodge is on the southern coast in

30 000 hectares of pristine marine and wildlife territory belonging to the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary. "The lodge is about an hour-and-a-half's flight from Johannesburg and a

40-minute boat trip from Vilanculos. It is the ideal spot for family getaways, corporate management meetings and intimate beach retreats," says Heloise.

### Medjumbe Island

Anantara Medjumbe Island Resort & Spa is undergoing a full refurbishment until the end of November, says **Michele Abraham**,

Minor Hotel Group regional marketing and communications manager. "The interiors of the villas and Anantara Spa will be

enhanced with upgraded amenities and unique furnishings in a way that remains true to the stylish simplicity of the resort."



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# Sell these best-kept secrets

Mozambique has unique and vibrant attractions that agents can use to promote the destination's offering. *TNW* asked destination experts for some of the country's best-kept secrets.

## Go back in time

RICH in history, Mozambique has unique architecture that boasts Portuguese, Indian and colonial heritage. St Anthony's Church is situated in the city centre near the Polana Serena Hotel and the Museum of Natural History on Rua da Argélia near the Hotel Cardoso, displays an array of traditional Mozambican artefacts.

Significant to both Mozambique and South Africa is the San Sebastian fortress, near a fishing

port in Maputo. South Africa assisted in the building of the fort and the railway when Paul Kruger wanted to link Pretoria and Maputo by train. The station, which is still operational, showcases the first train from Maputo to Pretoria, which is still operational. A highlight for tourists is the train bar in the middle of the station. It showcases jazz music in the evenings and is a prime spot to visit in the evening.

## Wander the wilderness

**Heloise Van der Walt** suggests a visit to the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary – one of the finest eco-tourism ventures in the world, which boasts an impressive variety of bird species.

For **Marcia Gordon**, owner of Extraordinary Journeys in the US, Lugenda Wilderness Camp in the Niassa Reserve in northern Mozambique is one of the country's best-kept secrets.

Lugenda is accessed via a 90-minute flight from Pemba to a small airstrip, with some stunning views along the way.

Another highlight is the 50 000-hectare Maputo Elephant Reserve north of Ponta Malongane. It is a sanctuary for elephant and other game species. Visitors can also see hippo, crocodile, nyala, red duiker, suni, vervet monkeys and reedbeek.



Ilha de Mozambique. Photo: Flickr

## Explore untamed islands

Without a doubt, two of the country's best-kept secrets are Ilha de Mozambique and Ibo Island in the Quirimbas Archipelago, says **Gary Lotter**, md of Go2Africa. "Both offer 'step-back-in-time' experiences that combine beaches with the history of the slave and spice trades, as well as Indian, Portuguese and African culture."

Ibo Island is virtually unknown and is one of those places where time has stood still. It used to be a prosperous trading post and still features three forts, a beautiful Catholic church and numerous ancient trading buildings.

"I would definitely include Santa Carolina as a best-kept secret,"

says **Blake Gray**, director of Connection – a tourism publicity company in Mozambique. Santa Carolina, also called Paradise Island, is the smallest island in the Bazaruto Archipelago.

Bazaruto has one of the largest dugong populations along the sub-Saharan coast. These gentle giants can reach up to three metres long and weigh about 400kg when fully grown. Guests who are fortunate enough may spot a pair of dugongs between the Sanctuary and Bangwe Island. Another must-see for divers or snorkellers is the Leatherback turtle, which is protected in the area.

To page 10

## Diamonds Mequfi Beach Resort

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From page 9

## Delve into vibrant city culture

Maputo is situated on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Although it was badly damaged during the civil war, it is now an up-and-coming tourist hotspot once again. With its many pavement cafés, jazz bars and its vibrant arts scene, Maputo is undoubtedly one of Mozambique's 'hidden' treasures.

There are numerous tours of the city but, according to **Karin Sieberhagen**, spokesperson for the Polana Serena Hotel, the historical and art deco walking tours of



The Maputo CFM train station. Photo: Flickr

the city organised by **Jane Flood** are an unforgettable experience. Jane takes travellers on a walking tour with her partner, **Walter Tembe**, showing them

the secrets of downtown Maputo, including the city's best architecture, such as the impressive CFM train station and the art deco splendour of Sé Cathedral.

## What to advise your clients...

WHEN it comes to security, travellers to Mozambique are often wary of what to expect, especially amid the stereotypes involving doing business in Africa. Agents should advise travellers that, as in most other countries, they should avoid carrying large amounts of cash, cameras, cellphones, passports or other belongings that might attract theft. "Another point to remember is that Mozambique has strict speed limits, which should be adhered to by all self-driving travellers," says the High Commissioner for SA in

Maputo, **Marvin Lawack**. Mozambique offers visas on entry for certain nationalities. The rule is, however, that if a traveller's originating country has a Mozambican diplomatic mission, it is advisable for them to obtain a visa before arriving.

The currency is the New Metical and banks include international brands such as Barclays and regional brands like First National Bank. The current exchange rate is R1 to MZN3.

Weatherwise, Mozambique is pleasant and fairly humid all year round, with two

noticeable seasons: a wet season from October to March and a dry season from April to September.

Because of its geographic location as well as its hot and humid climate, Mozambique is a hotspot for malaria. While the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention ranks the relative risk of travellers contracting malaria as moderate, prophylaxis and precautionary measures should be taken at all times. Travellers should also avoid drinking tap water, with bottled water being readily available throughout the country.

## New Pemba beach resort opens

THE Diamonds Mequfi Beach Resort in Pemba opened in August. Located on one of the country's most beautiful beaches, the resort is geared towards privacy and relaxation but also provides excursions for the more adventurous.

The new five-star property is represented

by World Leisure Holidays in the SA market. WLH is offering an all-inclusive special from R13 410pps. The four-night special runs until December 22 and includes return airport transfers; accommodation in a deluxe sea-view room, breakfast, lunch, dinner and limited drinks.

## Did you know?

Direct flights are offered from Johannesburg to Maputo, Vilanculos, Nacala, Nampula, Beira and Pemba, making the main points of interest easily accessible to South Africans. A significant number of improvements have also been made to roads, making it easier for travellers to get around. ■



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Travelport treated ladies of the travel industry to an exclusive event, in celebration of Women's Month, at the Four Seasons The Westcliff. Guests enjoyed an inspirational talk by clinical psychologist, Nicky Abdinor, followed by a delicious high tea and networking with friends. Pictured here at the event are (from left): **Shariefa Allie-Nieftagodien** (XL Nexus Travel); **Lina Da Costa** (Bidvest Car Rental); and **Vanessa Harry** (Park Travel).

## Ladies in travel

## Beachcomber hosts Mauritius educational



Beachcomber recently hosted a Mauritius educational from July 26 to August 2. The educational group consisted of mainly Cape Town travel agents, with one from Port Elizabeth and one from Plettenberg Bay. Pictured here just back from swimming with dolphins are (from left): **Tjaart van Heerden** (Harvey World Plettenberg Bay); **Liesel Koekemoer** (Travel.co.za Port Elizabeth); Travel Counsellor, **Claire Booth**, and Travel Counsellor, **Melody Visagie**.

## Appointments

■ **Ethihad Airways** has appointed **Bradley Edwards** as new regional business development manager for the Sub-Saharan Africa and Indian Ocean region. Based at Ethihad Airways' new offices in Sandton, Johannesburg, Bradley will oversee key sales strategies across seven countries in Africa with the objective of accelerating the growth of Ethihad's revenues through expanded distribution and segmentation strategies which increase awareness of the airline and its market share across the region.



South African travel agents were recently hosted by SWISS, in partnership with Switzerland Tourism, on a fam trip to Switzerland. Pictured here in the snow (from left) are: **Irene Ferreira** (Reynolds Travel Centre); **Gladys Dinga** (SWISS); **Lerato Maseko** (Tourvest Travel Services); **Natasha Raven** (Travelwise); **Sailesh Parbhu** (XL Nexus Travel); and **Jacqueline Wesselo** (Sure Lloyds Travel).

## Chilling out!



■ **Peter Dros** has been appointed new head of sales and marketing at Fancourt. Peter is based in Johannesburg. He reports to Fancourt ceo, **Georgie Davidson**, and is tasked with managing and growing business for Fancourt on a national and international basis, including promoting tourism to the Garden Route region. Peter previously worked at MalaMala, Abercrombie & Kent and, most recently, at Tourvest's Welcome Tourism Services.



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# Flyafrica establishes West African hub

DARISE FOSTER

**F**LYAFRICA.COM is on track to establish a hub in West Africa, with the launch of Gabon flyafrica in November.

President of Gabonese Republic, **H.E. Ali Bongo Ondimba**, announced the strategic partnership during the New York Forum in Libreville on August 29.

Flyafrica ceo, **Adrian Hamilton-Manns**, told *TNW*: "Gabon has been one of our primary projects because it opens up all of French West Africa. We will be introducing a new product called 'Connect' – a domestic product – when we open up flights for sale."

In April, the airline will launch international flights to multiple destinations in West Africa from Gabon, using a Boeing 737-800. Gabon flyafrica's West

Africa ambitions will be further strengthened by the introduction of flights to Europe and Saudi Arabia later in the year. "We are going to fly from Libreville to France for as low as US\$150 (R1 993)," Adrian said. The flyafrica group plans to add 10 countries to its portfolio in the next 12 months.

The race is on for airlines to develop a hub in West Africa. SAA recently launched flights from Accra, Ghana, to Washington, USA.

SAA executive of African Hub Projects, **Kendy Phohleli**, told *TNW* at a special event to launch the flights, that the national carrier was negotiating with other countries to expand its presence in the West African region, establishing similar arrangements between West Africa and French markets. ■



Thompsons Holidays is offering special packages to Ireland, including 'Best of Ireland', 'Castles & Gardens', and 'Literary Tour of Ireland'. Packages start from R13 165pp and include flights, airline levies, seven nights' accommodation at three-star hotels, full Irish breakfast daily and eight days' car hire. Offers are valid for travel until October 31. Getting ready to kiss the Blarney Stone are Thompsons Holidays sales executives, **Jessica Kreusch and Arné Heunis**. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Agents stick with GDS

**From page 1**  
**Dave Hilfman**, United Airlines' senior vp of worldwide sales, at a recent ASTA Global Convention.

In South Africa, travel agents can sidestep Lufthansa's DCC by booking via SAA. Spokesperson for SAA, **Tiali Tiali**, told *TNW*: "At this stage, it is only Lufthansa

that is collecting a DCC. SAA does not charge this for SA operating and/or SA marketing flights."

**Larry Ryan**, Lufthansa's director of marketing, distribution and sales programmes for the Americas, admitted that travel agents could bypass the charge by ticketing on Lufthansa's

codeshare partners, as long as at least one leg of the codeshare itinerary was operated by the plating carrier. He warned, however, that when booking flights through a codeshare partner, certain Lufthansa services might not be available, such as premium economy, seat requests and special meals.

## FAQs

During a recent webinar organised by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives, **Larry Ryan** of Lufthansa addressed agents' frequently asked questions on the new DCC.

### Where will the fee be displayed?

Lufthansa initially intended to display the DCC in an OB field on the ticket. When using the OB field, the DCC can be completely separated from any other charges instead of being lumped together with other carrier-imposed and government-imposed charges and fees. This enables greater transparency.

However, due to a technical snag with one of the technology providers, Lufthansa had to implement the fee using a YR-lata tax code. "We were faced with the choice of going with OB with most providers and YR with one provider but we thought that would create confusion and inconsistency," Larry said. For now, the fee will be collected as a YR fee across the board. As soon as all the technical snags are solved, Lufthansa will revert to charging the DCC as an OB fee.

### How will ticketing be handled?

The DCC will be clearly displayed in the GDS when a fare quote display is requested, which includes all

fees and taxes. The YR fee will automatically be included in the total quoted. Larry warns that if travel agents request a 'base fare' display, the DCC will not be included.

For TMCs and corporate travel managers using GDS-supported online booking tools, the DCC will also be included in the final price quoted, as the YR fee will be part of the fare filing.

Even when Lufthansa reverts to charging the DCC as an OB fee, the total price will still include the DCC fee as long as the user has selected to 'show all surcharges'.

### What about billing?

The DCC will be part of the total price of the ticket, just like fuel surcharges and government charges. The charges will be broken down on every flight coupon. The total price will be charged to the credit card in one sum.

### Will the fee be refunded?

The DCC is completely non-refundable, even on fully refundable tickets. "The GDS charge has always been non-refundable for us as an airline as well," Larry said. Automated refund tools, often used by TMCs, might not recognise the YR as being non-refundable. Therefore, a manual intervention to ensure the YR is not refunded along with the rest of the ticket may be needed.

### How will exchanges be handled?

If and when clients change their routing, no additional DCC will be charged when the client reissues the ticket, regardless of the nature of the itinerary. The DCC will only be applicable to the first issue of the ticket.

### Are there any markets that are excluded from paying the DCC?

The DCC can't be implemented in Brazil, China, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Libya and Iran, where the legality of the fee has been questioned. The surcharge will not apply to travel originating in any of the excluded markets. However, if travel is booked in one of those countries but originates elsewhere, the DCC will be applied.

### How will the rate of exchange affect the fee?

In South Africa, the DCC amount will change according to the rate of exchange charged on the day the ticket is issued. Lufthansa has filed the DCC in a number of local currencies, such as the US dollars, Canadian dollars, British pounds, Swiss francs, Japanese yen and euros. For these currencies, the exchange rate will not affect the DCC. The DCC will remain stable and the price will not float between now and the day the ticket is issued. ■

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### Weak rand blues

**What has been the impact on outbound travel?**

- South Africans are still booking overseas but for places such as Thailand where the exchange rate is better
- Yes, fewer South Africans are booking overseas holidays
- No, we are not yet noticing a difference in outbound bookings

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