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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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# Cemair 'nailed'

SARAH ROBERTSON

**D**OMESTIC carrier, CemAir, claims its recent grounding is motivated by bad blood between the airline and SA Express.

Aviation sources have made similar suggestions to *TNW*.

CemAir is following a formal appeal process after its flights were grounded.

**Miles van der Molen**, ceo, of CemAir, says the airline suspected that it was being targeted due to the substantial market share and large contingent of staff it had taken from SA Express recently.

"Five of the 12 CAA officials who oversaw our audit were ex-SA Express officials... We are being targeted not because we are failing but because we are succeeding."

According to Miles, his staff members received a number of suspicious emails from SA Express members requesting the names of their avionic technicians leading up to the audit.

Miles also claims that he has a signed affidavit from one of his employees who had contacted an ex-SA

Express staff member, now at the CAA, about his new position. The CAA staff member allegedly told him: "Don't move there, we are going to nail them next year."

SA Express has denied this claim.

**Refilwe Masemola**, spokesperson, told *TNW*: "There is no bad blood between the airlines; their grounding was as much a surprise to us as it was to the SA public. The willingness remains to assist Cemair with its stranded passengers."

According to the media statement released by the SACAA, the withdrawal of CemAir's Certificate of Airworthiness privileges followed the discovery during an audit that some of the aircraft that were serviced at CemAir's Aircraft Maintenance Organisation were released back into service or cleared as airworthy by unqualified personnel.

Miles claims that the dispute related to a matter of paperwork compliance rather than safety as the airline's avionic technicians had the requisite qualifications and experience.

"However, SACAA advised us that

To page 2

## 40 years young



It was an extraordinary party. The reason was to celebrate 40 years but the message was that it's the people from Thompsons who have made the difference. The last year was a stellar one for the Thompsons Group and so the atmosphere crackled with camaraderie as almost all the staff of the component groups including wholesale, travel and inbound from all parts of South Africa celebrated together at the Barnyard Theatre in Sandton. Founder, **Anton Thompson**, was there as was ceo, **Michael Tollman**. Here Michael pours champagne for Anton while the doyennes of wholesaling and travel look on. From left: **Anton, Joanne Adolphe, Michael and Mary Shilleto**. Photo: Dave Marsh

## ATL Tours director gets bail

**AHMED Talaat**, director and chairman of ATL Tours, has been granted bail.

He was arrested in January 2014 after more than 40 customers laid fraud charges against him.

One of the worst affected victims at that time arrived with 11 friends in Bangkok only to find that other than their flights, their R127 000 holiday package booked with

ATL Tours did not exist.

Ahmed was eventually arrested at the five-star Hyatt Hotel in Johannesburg in January 2014. His court case was postponed on numerous occasions, but he was never granted bail.

Private Investigator, **Andre Van Wyk**, from IRS Forensic

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## Airlink positioned to fill SAA's gap

TESSA REED

AIRLINK has applied for and is far along the process of snapping up licences to operate routes that SAA has cut back on and, in some instances, appears to have scrapped entirely.

**Rodger Foster**, Airlink md and ceo, told *TNW* that the airline's application for licences to operate flights to Abuja, Libreville, Douala, Luanda, Brazzaville, Moroni and Cotonou had been approved

by the South African Air Licensing Council.

He explains, however, that approval doesn't mean Airlink can operate the flights immediately as there is still a diplomatic protocol that needed to be followed. Thereafter, Airlink becomes the designated carrier to operate the route in terms of the bilateral agreement. Airlink then applies to the aeronautical authority to operate the route.

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# Travelport bids farewell to Rabih

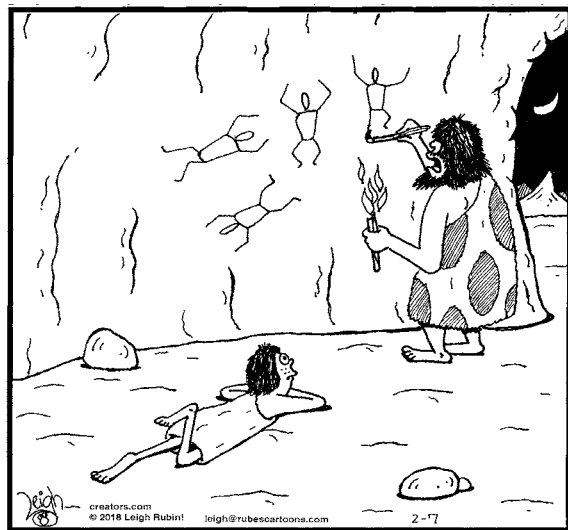
**RABIH Saab**, president and md of Travelport EMEA region, will leave at the end of the month, after 14 years at the company.

**Jason Clarke**, senior vp and md, Agency Commerce at Travelport, says Rabih will be moving on to a new challenge in a new industry. "I have had the fortune of working with Rabih throughout his time with the company and have

seen first-hand the role he has played in expanding our operations, evolving our offering and building the exceptional regional team we have today."

"While we search for his replacement, I will provide further support to the EMEA team, and **Matthew Powell**, md of the Middle East and South Asia, will expand his regional role to cover Africa." ■

## Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



**"How should I know what it means? That's for archaeologists 35,000 years from now to sort out."**

**TNW**

TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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## NEWS

# Dinesh to drive transformation

SARAH ROBERTSON

**DINESH Naidoo**, new president of Asata, will focus on ensuring that the association's new professional travel programme is fully up and running as soon as possible; lobby the industry for ways to stimulate growth; and drive transformation.

Dinesh said he hoped his experiences of starting at

grass roots and working his way up would help him to tackle transformation, as he understood the challenges that were experienced at all levels. He said Asata had already begun a survey to determine where the industry fared, establish a benchmark and identify gaps.

Dinesh was previously vice-president of Asata while **Vanya Lessing** was president.

She commented: "Dinesh is

very ready for this role. He is a very innovative individual and is always looking at new ways of doing things. He brings a lot of energy to any role that he takes on and he has a good understanding of broader industry issues."

**Scholtz Fourie**, cfo of Tourvest Travel will take on the role of vice president, while **Colin Mitchley**, financial director of BidTravel will be treasurer. ■

## Asata cancels conference

TESSA REED

ASATA'S Board has overwhelmingly voted to cancel its 2018 conference, which was to have been attached to WTM Africa. The association will host a conference next year while an innovation summit is planned for later this year.

Newly elected Asata president, **Dinesh Naidoo**, told TNW that there were various factors taken into account before making the decision.

Moreover, he said, the board felt that a broader thought leadership summit was needed, while Asata could look to hold a conference next year.

Dinesh said the summit would bring together industry leaders across sectors, something that was needed. He said this would include ceos of airlines, GDSs and other groupings within the industry.

Industry stalwart **Robyn Christie** said a summit bringing together heads of industry

would be very beneficial to the industry. She said in terms of the conference, Asata competed for attendance with the conferences of the various consortiums in the industry, making it difficult to compete on content alone. Therefore, she said, Asata needed to differentiate its conference. She suggested that driving networking opportunities and high-level discussions with industry leaders and decision makers was the way to go. ■

## Cemair 'nailed'

From page 1

they also require technicians to complete another short course. This is not mentioned in the approved SACAA manual." A technician who signed off six CemAir aircraft had not completed the short course.

"On February 1, we met with CAA officials and it was understood that we would be given a grace period to meet the additional requirement... However, this decision was then overruled and an email was sent to me advising of the suspension five minutes before midnight [on Thursday February 1]."

The airline has undertaken to reroute affected passengers on other airlines or to refund them in full. Miles says the airline is having some difficulties reaching GDS-booked passengers and in rerouting passengers where Cemair is the only carrier on the route.

**Kabelo Ledwaa**, manager: Communications for SACAA, says: "SACAA wishes to be given the space to focus on all aspects concerning CemAir's current compliance issues and see the process to its full, fair and logical conclusion." He adds that, as CemAir has not yet shared the

alleged affidavit with SACAA, they are unable to comment on the matter. "Regardless, we wish to state in very clear terms that SACAA does not tolerate any unprofessional conduct by any of its employees."

TNW was informed by an agent that SA Express is not assisting with re-accommodating CemAir passengers. Refilwe explains: "The reason behind the airline not carrying their passengers is because a commercial agreement between the two parties has yet to be finalised, however we remain willing to assist CemAir where we can." ■

## Airlink positioned to fill SAA's gap

From page 1

"All of this can take some time," says Rodger, adding that Airlink is getting itself ready to operate as soon as this process has been concluded.

Airlink has also applied for a licence to operate flights to Mayotte and is awaiting approval.

In September last year, SAA announced a reduction in frequencies on its Brazzaville via Pointe Noire; Douala via Libreville; Kinshasa; Entebbe; Luanda; and Cotonou via Libreville routes.

However, inventory loaded on the GDS suggests the airline is cutting its Brazzaville, Douala and

Cotonou routes entirely, while also reducing frequencies to Luanda.

Rodger said the airline didn't foresee any change in its longstanding franchise relationship with SAA.

SAA has yet to issue a statement or comment on specific changes to its route network. ■

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Cruises unveils consumer campaign

Cruises International has appointed TV personality Zoë Brown as a brand ambassador to drive consumer awareness of its offering. Pictured alongside Zoë are (left) Thaybz Khan, contemporary brand manager at Cruises International, and ceo of Cruises International, George Argyropoulos. Photo: Tessa Reed.

Shock hike in Mozambique multiple-entry visa price

CANDICE MAY

THE drastic price increase for a three-month multiple-entry visa for business travellers for Mozambique has taken the trade by surprise. The increase came into effect on January 22. However, visa experts confirm that it is justified and still in line with what African countries in general charge. Liam Flett, director of Simply Visa, says while R765 to

R2 500 is a substantial increase, this is the first time the price of this visa has gone up in many years. Furthermore, the new price is comparable to that of other African countries. For example, the DRC charges R2 625 for a three-month multiple-entry visa, while Guinea charges R2 750 and Ghana charges R2 050 for a six-month multiple entry visa. "It is also important to keep in mind that most African multiple-entry visas

are more expensive than most European and American ones," Liam says. Jose Cruz, national executive client services manager of HRG Rennies Travel, thinks some corporates may disagree with it although there is nothing they will be able to do. "Perhaps the question to be asked is why South African business travellers did not need a business visa for Mozambique in the past, but now they do." ■

Discounted deposits boost January sales

SARAH ROBERTSON

A RECENT trend of discounted deposit promotions has emerged among operators looking to spur sales during January, a traditionally slow booking month. Early last year, Intrepid Travels introduced a global discounted deposit promotion. It allowed clients to secure a tour space for only R25 per person, a much lower commitment than the usual R4 000 deposit that the adventure company usually required. Similar promotions ran concurrently around the world where deposits were reduced to GBP1 or AUD1 for a limited period.

"Clients can secure their space with a R1 000pp deposit."

Caroline Tinsley, business development manager of Intrepid Travels, said the company had decided to reintroduce the popular 'Travel More, Deposit Less' special again this year. She said the marketing campaigns had created a lot of interest in their products globally and, although initial commitment required by clients was very low, the 2017 campaign had resulted in a global cancellation rate of only 6%. Caroline said, in South Africa agents had generally tied their clients into the bookings with pre-booked flights that they were able to afford earlier due to the reduced deposit,

and that there had been no cancellations from the market for bookings made during the promotion. Product and contracting executive for Mauritius and Zanzibar from Thompsons Holidays, Celeste Muir, said the operator had recently introduced a discounted deposit special to Zanzibar to encourage sales. The special is in conjunction with Mango Airlines and available for set departure dates during school holidays in March, April and June at Dongwe Ocean View. Celeste said it allowed clients to secure their space by putting down a R1000 deposit per person. "A similar package would generally require a family of four to put down a R30 000 deposit to secure their next holiday, while our current special requires a total deposit of only R4 000.

Celeste said this was the first initiative of its kind that Thompsons had launched and that so far responses had been positive. Janine Pretorius, owner of Encore Cruises, said Regent Seven Seas Cruises had introduced a reduced deposit promotion for bookings made in January. She said Encore Cruises had had a bumper January sales month this year but couldn't confirm if the boom related specifically to the deposit promotion, as Regent had been running discounted rate specials concurrently and had also recently added more value to its fully inclusive rates. ■

Nikita Tavlet selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Thompsons Holidays.** Mediterranean cruise for R10 134pp sharing. Offer includes seven nights on board the Costa Victoria in an inside cabin, breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, daily entertainment, port taxes and gratuities. Set departure September 14.
- **Kulula holidays.** Arabian Courtyard offer from R13 949pp sharing. Offer includes return flights Johannesburg-Dubai, approximate taxes, return transfers, three nights' accommodation and 96-hour tourist visa. Valid between May 1 and June 20.
- **Topdeck.** Los Angeles Coast to Bay offer from R33 120pp sharing. Offer includes 13 nights' accommodation with eight breakfasts, six dinners, Las Vegas Party Bus, day trip to the Grand Canyon National Park, driving tour of San Diego, trip leader and more! Set travel dates September 10-23.
- **Ican Holidays.** Cuba special offer from R15 790pp sharing. Offer includes return transfers, six nights' accommodation with breakfast daily, two lunches and one dinner, excursions and sightseeing, Cuban-speaking guide and more. Visit Havana, Las Terrazas, Cienfuegos, Trinidad and Remedios. Set departure March 29.
- **Finfoot Lake Reserve, Pilanesberg.** From R2 100pp sharing for two nights. Offer includes two nights' accommodation with breakfast and dinner daily plus two activities per day. Activities include barge cruises, game drives, bird watching and canoeing. Minimum two-night stay applies. Valid until March 16.



Club Med unveils plans for new destinations

CLUB Med will expand its portfolio into four new countries – Canada, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and the Seychelles – in the coming years. Its first resort in Canada is set to open in the Le Massif de Charlevoix region, Quebec, in 2020. The Premium Resort will be Club Med's first resort to open year round. The Club Med Ho Tram Resort, its first property in Vietnam, is expected to open by 2021 and will be in the southeast, close to Ho Chi Minh City. Club Med Ceylon will

be 90 minutes from Colombo airport in southwest Sri Lanka. The 372 rooms will be designed for couples, corporate guests and families, and the property will include a full range of childcare services. In Seychelles, the new 5 Trident Exclusive Collection resort in the heart of the Sainte-Anne Marine National Park will open in 2020 and stay open year round. The project is in partnership with New Mauritius Hotels, a well-established hotel group on the island. ■



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**Kenya Airways to launch direct CPT service**  
FROM June 6, Kenya Airways will launch a non-stop flight from Nairobi to Cape Town, confirms **Helena Maxwell**, area manager Southern and Central Africa for Kenya Airways. The new service will operate on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays using a Boeing 737-800. Flight KQ784 will depart Nairobi at 15h35 and arrive in Cape Town at 20h20. Return flight, KQ785 will depart Cape Town at 22h15 and arrive in Nairobi at 05h00 the following day.

### Fastjet launches new route

FASTJET'S Kigoma-Dar es Salaam flight went on sale January 29, with the first flight scheduled for March 1. It will be operated by an Embraer E190, with flights departing on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Flight FN131 will depart DAR at 14h30 and arrive in Kigoma at 16h15. Flight FN132 will depart Kigoma at 16h45 and arrive in DAR at 18h40. Prices start at TZS 123 000 (R655).

### Ethiopian Airlines launches new routes

FROM March, Ethiopian Airlines will fly a thrice-weekly service to two new destinations in the DRC – Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi. The routing will be Addis Ababa-Kisangani-Mbuji-Mayi-Addis Ababa. Ethiopian will also launch routes to Barcelona, Istanbul and Nicosia, although flight dates and times are yet to be announced.



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## Corporates steer clear of Cape Town amidst drought

SUE VAN WINSEN AND TESSA REED

**W**ATER shortages are having an impact on corporate travel into Cape Town and the trade has urged corporates to act responsibly when planning trips to the city.

**Clifford Ross**, ceo of City Lodge Hotels Group, points out that the water shortages in Cape Town have had an impact on the hospitality industry already. "STR Global stats show that hotel occupancies in Cape Town dipped 6% year on year during December." He says in response to the water shortages, he believes that corporates – in the spirit of good corporate social responsibility – should be mindful of the dire situation and, where possible, consider alternatives such as flying into and out of the city, where this is possible, in an effort to put less pressure on the already strained supply.

The issue was also raised in a recent ABTA webinar, where **Lloyd Barkhuizen**,

head of sales at FCM Travel Solutions, said the Flight Centre Travel Group had instituted an embargo on travel to Cape Town for all but essential business travel, and was advising clients not to organise events in the city.

ABTA founder, **Monique Swart**, said that while it made sense to try and decrease the amount of mouths needing water by decreasing travel and incentives into the city, she asked about the impact this was likely to have in the long run.

Lloyd responded by saying that while the economy would be hurt, it was important to assess which was the "lesser of two evils".

Corporates agreed that it was essential to address the drought in their travel policies. **Richard Whitfield**, travel manager for T-Systems SA, said the company was encouraging everyone who had no alternative but to travel to Cape Town to bring a five-

litre bottle of water along with them. "Also, we are using tools like video and teleconferencing to alleviate travel," he added.

Richard said T-Systems SA had had to bring all departments together to work on a plan of action that extended beyond the travel department to include elements like introducing internal helplines and addressing wellness concerns in its Cape Town office.

This message was at odds with the message being put out by Wesgro, which issued a press release stating that Cape Town was "open for business". The statement reads: "Together with the City of Cape Town and Western Cape government, Wesgro will be working with conferences to reduce their water consumption and, where possible, become water-neutral. This will ensure events can still go ahead, contributing hundreds of millions of rands to the provincial economy." ■

## Experiential travellers still need agents – study

CANDICE MAY

**W**HILE travellers, whether millennials or baby boomers, look to embark on unique, curated and adventurous trips, they are open to turning to travel agents to help them plan, as long as the price is right and their experiences can still be one of a kind.

These are the findings of a new study conducted by the Signature Travel Network and The Center for Generational Kinetics. Industry players agree that they apply to the South African market too.

**Mary Shilleto**, ceo of Thompsons Travel, says it comes down to the fact that everyone has access to the Internet and can therefore obtain travel information quickly, at any time of the day or night. Therefore, what travellers are looking for from travel agents is what the Internet cannot tell them. "People will

connect with us for our experience and trust our recommendations. Some really look for this in travel agents, as they know that what they saw advertised on the Internet does not always look like what they have actually purchased," she says.

**Priti Ramkissoon**, office manager of Thompsons Travel, says people are likely to keep a travel agent if they see value in the knowledge, skills and experiences they provide. "We can advise our clients of all the do's and don'ts of a trip as we are the experts. This is what differentiates us and what the client will pay for. We have to sell the destination and the entire experience," she explains.

**Marco Ciocchetti**, ceo of XL Travel, is certain that millennials are the industry's future customers and that they love the personal touch. However, this clientele

want their travel agency to be as reachable as self-booking tools as part of the personal touch aspect. "By going mobile and also offering online travel agency options, the industry will see a huge increase in young people shopping for their trips through a travel agent," he says. "This freedom and flexibility is a major key to travel agent success in the Internet age. While clients can do all their bookings by themselves, they are reaching out to us and want us to be just as available for their needs as self-booking tools."

Marco says the industry is fortunate to keep growing each year and that this year will be no different. "As long as we focus on what the client wants, it is possible to take a fair share of the projected growth. However, if we do not focus on this, there will be a decline in sales for travel agents." ■



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# The consequences of non-compliance

In the third issue of our series on PCI DSS compliance, Taryn Nightingale looks at what happens when your agency breaches compliance.

IN MARCH 2017, Iata extended the deadline of PCI DSS compliance in BSPZA until March 2018. Non-compliant agents will lose the ability to issue tickets with the Customer Card Payment Method. They also place themselves at risk of large fines and far-reaching reputational damage.

### Non-compliance means no card sales

Agencies that do not comply with the conditions established in Resolution 812 (NewGen ISS Passenger Sales Agency Rules), 818g (Passenger Sales Agency Rules) and Resolution 890 (Card Sales Rules), including PCI DSS Compliance, will not have access to credit card as a means of payment.

“Once the deadline is enforced, agents will be required to produce proof of compliance on an annual basis in line with the Resolutions.”

Once the deadline is enforced, agents will be required to produce proof of compliance on an annual basis in line with the Resolutions says **Janaurieu D’Sa**, area manager, Southern Africa of Iata.

But the accredited agency will not automatically lose its accreditation if it is not PCI DSS compliant – the agency has other options to trade through the BSP, says Janaurieu. If an agency opts out of processing credit card transactions under New Gen ISS, the travel agency must submit a declaration signed by the authorised signatory of the travel agency and would not be required

to provide compliance evidence. But this information will be kept on file, and once New Gen ISS resolutions are effective in a country, travel agency credit card form of payment will be switched off.

However, this decision would affect agencies’ licence guarantees with Iata.

### Iata’s enforcement expectations

Effective March 1, Iata will initiate the enforcement process by seeking validation of Iata-accredited agents’ compliance evidence. “Formal communication will be issued with expectation of submission of proof of compliance and timelines for submission,” says Janaurieu.

According to Iata, no specific limit to the number of breaches of compliance applies.

Once compliance has been breached, agents would need to resubmit proof of their compliance. Once proof has been resubmitted, credit cards as an option of payment will be activated in the system.

### More than an Iata issue

Nedbank maintains PCI compliance is in line with the Payments Association of South Africa (Pasa) requirements, says **Clinton Leask**, senior product manager of Corporate Card Services of Nedbank Limited. He says Pasa has mandated that only Level 1 and breached merchants need to prove their compliance.

“However, all merchants – and banks – are to ensure they adhere to PCI DSS and it should be noted that your acquiring bank or card schemes, such as Visa



and MasterCard, can request proof of PCI compliance at any time,” he says.

### Compromised data – monetary and reputational risks

Non-compliance with PCI DSS has other risks outside the ambit of Iata. **Richard Henwood**, business development of QSA, Foregenix, says the worst consequence of non-compliance is to have your data security compromised.

“As mentioned, in line with Pasa requirements, only Level 1 and breached merchants need to prove their compliance. However, if a merchant is breached and has not adhered to PCI DSS, the merchant may be liable for all fines, penalties, cost of card replacements and fraud committed,” says Clinton. “A merchant also needs to consider brand and reputation damage

that will transpire,” he adds.

The payment brands may, at their discretion, fine an acquiring bank \$5 000 to \$100 000 per month for PCI compliance violations. The banks can pass this fine along until it is passed over to the merchant.

The bank will also likely either terminate its relationship with the merchant or increase transaction fees.

Richard says compromised data can also lead to a merchant automatically being raised to a Level 1 merchant which would mean it would have to be assessed by an on-site QSA, which is costly.

In addition, the merchant could bear the cost of an expensive forensic investigation, he says. “Your small to medium travel agency would probably go out of business.”

“In the past, we’ve seen Level 4 merchants shut their doors because the cost of the breach and to regain compliance was too high,” says **Andrew Kirkland**, ceo of QSA, cyberTAN Information Security, “while others pushed through, put a plan in place, stuck to their guns and are well on track.”

But consequences may depend on each unique case. “It also boils down to the leniency of the card schemes, banks and Pasa, versus the severity of the breach or length of time to become compliant,” says Andrew.

## NEXT WEEK

A case study on PCI DSS compliance. See how another agency did it and discover what went wrong, what went well and how your agency can improve. ■




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Separating personal and work life and balancing it all

In the latest Who Is... Tessa Reed chats to new eTravel md, Tammy Hunt.

TOWARD the end of last year, **Tammy Hunt** took the reins as md of eTravel, after working for the company as an ITC since 2001 and later at head office since 2003. Tammy has been overwhelmed by the support at eTravel as well as from suppliers and competitors. "It just shows you that, although the industry is small and we are all competitors, everyone is still very supportive of one another."

It's a heavier load on Tammy's shoulders, as the buck stops with her, but she says Garth [Garth Wolff, eTravel ceo] has been grooming her for the position, and it's business as usual, with operations continuing normally. She says it helps knowing Garth is there to lean on when need be.

Being part of a team and working collaboratively makes Tammy happy. She is motivated by success and the drive to constantly raise the bar. She says eTravel has a unique model as a consortium. It is one she believes in and has no plans to change. Still, the travel environment is changing and she knows that eTravel will need to keep enhancing its offering and adapting to changes in the market. "It's about stepping up our game, but we won't be making any fundamental changes."

While she's loving it now, the travel industry wasn't top of Tammy's list when she started thinking of her career. Funnily enough, it was what her mother wanted for her.

Tammy had set her mind on becoming an accountant, although she also wanted to be a dancer and studied modern and classical dancing. Reflecting now, Tammy says she would have hated life as an accountant.

Because Tammy's parents didn't have the means for her to study further, her mother suggested travel. "My mom said, why don't you go into the travel industry? You can get to travel and it's so glamorous." Tammy started working in the travel industry in 1994 at Priority Travel before completing a course. She was offered a permanent position and took time off to complete writing the exams.

"I then moved on to Seekers Travel in 1996 where I met Garth when he joined Seekers about a year later," explains Tammy. "I left Seekers in November 1999 to spread my wings and travelled to the US where I worked at two different ski resorts and circumnavigated the Arctic on a Russian ice-breaker for three months." She also spent some time in Seattle, Fort Lauderdale and the Keys, working and experiencing the country.

Despite the hard work, once she was in, she was hooked. It's a delicate balance, fulfilling the roles of wife, mom and career woman, but it's one that she manages with the support of her husband, Scarbra-Jon, a mechanical engineer. "Finding the balance between work, travel, being a mom and a wife... not to mention time for myself is

very challenging." She is meticulous about organising and planning her diary in both her professional and personal life and says it has helped her get through the demands of her life. "However I am learning finally to relax a little on the personal front and let life take its course rather than plan it all out – which I know my husband and those around me are grateful for."

Whenever she thinks it's too much, he's there to help and encourage. "He understands me and allows me to be me," she says, adding that work makes her happy and she's lucky to have his support.

Tammy says, in addition to being groomed by Garth, her ability to put her emotions aside, make objective decisions and separate her personal and work life will be helpful in her new role. She says while she needs to be disciplined in her leadership role, it is equally important to know when to let go and not to take herself too seriously.

Tammy and Scarbra-Jon have two girls, Tyler (8) and Olivia (6). Tammy and her girls are all December babies. Tyler wants to be an architect or design toys by day and a pop star and a judge for a dancing competition by night. Olivia wants to own a shop and sell the toys that Tyler designs/makes and be a back-up dancer. "The imaginations of our two precious girls keep us very entertained and we feel very blessed to have our healthy and happy girls who are besties and simply adore each other."



Who is Tammy?

- Tammy is an adrenaline junkie, although she is less courageous now that she is a mom and has a responsibility to be around for her two girls. It was while working at a ski resort that she developed her love for adventure sports and is keen on anything from snowboarding to bungee jumping.
- Sea, sun and sand are some of her favourite things. Her best holidays are by the sea when she can spend hours on the beach.
- Tammy is the 'crazy soccer mom'. While her girls might not be playing soccer, she's the mom cheering the loudest from the stands and also the first mom to take on the referees should they get anything wrong.
- Crime stories and leadership books pique Tammy's interest when she's not in the office.
- She hates routine and would be driven insane if every day was the same. Luckily, she says, in management no two days are the same. ■

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# Europe



Lake Hallstatt, Austria.

Agents are devising creative strategies to keep Europe fresh for repeat guests. Sue van Winsen reports.

## South Africans explore hidden gems

WITH the rand continuing to strengthen, it seems that Europe is back on many travellers' wishlists and operators are predicting very strong demand this year.

**Janine Pienaar**, sales and marketing manager of the

Globus Family of Brands, is very optimistic about travel to Europe for 2018. "This can be seen in our increased passenger numbers year to date for the 2018 travelling season. We have specifically seen an increase

in our escorted touring brand, Cosmos Holidays."

Europe also continues to be Trafalgar's top seller, says **Theresa Szejwallo**, md of Trafalgar South Africa. "I don't see this changing for South African travellers in 2018.

There is so much on offer – culture, history, incredible scenery, myriad cuisine options, stunning architecture – and lots more. Trafalgar's Rand Price Guarantee and range of early payment discounts help SA travellers to

budget and plan their travels to suit their pockets."

But with Europe being such a familiar favourite, where are South Africans heading to get off the beaten track? *TNW* spoke to the experts to find out.

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St Basil's Cathedral, Moscow.

### Russia

According to **Annamarie Lexow**, sales and marketing manager of Travel Vision, the company is focusing on promoting Russia ahead of the 2018 Soccer World Cup, which will be hosted in the country.

These sentiments were echoed by Janine, who says the abolition of Russia's visa requirement for South African tourists has resulted in increased interest in the destination.

Cosmos Holidays has introduced a new 10-day Russia tour for 2018 that includes sightseeing in Moscow, where travellers will see the iconic 'onion-domed' St Basil's Cathedral and Red Square. They then travel to Tver, which dates back to the

12th Century and is situated at the confluence of the Volga, Tmaka and Tvertsa rivers. Thereafter they travel to Novgorod, where they will discover the Kremlin and St Sophia Cathedral with its ancient frescoes.

The tour ends in St Petersburg with guided sightseeing of the city's main sights including the Peter and Paul fortress and cathedral, which served as a high-security jail for political prisoners. The tour concludes with a vodka tasting and dinner at the Vodka Rooms. Alternatively, travellers can take a break with the Globus Holidays' eight-day tour which includes four nights in St Petersburg and three nights in Moscow.

### Eastern Europe

Theresa says Eastern European countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland are all fantastic to visit and offer something a little different for South African travellers.

"For starters, the culinary offerings are quite unique and unlike those dishes we find in Western Europe," she says. "Our guests can feast on *pierogi* in Poland, goulash and *kurtos kalacs* (chimney cake) in Hungary, and *bryndzove halushky* (potato dumplings with sheep cheese and roasted bacon)

in Slovakia." She says these countries are also steeped in history and feature incredible architecture.

"The Wilanow Palace is a priceless testimony to the splendour of Poland's past while the impressive St Vitus Cathedral and the cobblestoned Old Town Square, complete with the 14th Century Astronomical Clock in Prague, add to the old-world charm of Eastern Europe." Theresa adds that the destinations also tend to be well priced for South African travellers.

### Book it!

Trafalgar offers a range of travel products in both the original Trafalgar line-up and the value-driven CostSaver tours. The 15-day Highlights of Bohemia by CostSaver is priced from R1 434 per person per day. This includes accommodation in three- or four-star hotels with breakfast daily and five three-course dinners plus a range of sightseeing options in the company of a Trafalgar-trained travel director in a luxury coach. This trip begins and ends in Frankfurt and includes Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic. Another option is to see these countries while on a cruise with AmaWaterways on board the *Amaviola*, which launched in 2016. The seven-night cruise is priced from R51 324pps and travels from Vilshofen to Passau in Germany; Linz and Weissenkirchen, Austria; Bratislava, Slovakia and Budapest, Hungary. The rate includes accommodation in a balcony cabin.

To page 14





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And if our existing product range was not exciting enough, new Ships that will launch in 2018 will again, put Cruises International at the forefront of Cruising in the South African market.

**Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas**, the world's largest cruise ship, will be in the Med for 1 season only with sailings out of Barcelona, Spain. Royal Caribbean has orchestrated a new vacation experience that is set to redefine family and adventure travel in 2018. It will bring together the award-winning and acclaimed features only found on Royal Caribbean, with distinct new experiences that will continue to inspire adventure among guests of all ages. New dining concepts and family activities, awe-inspiring aerial, ice and aqua entertainment, and the most dynamic suite in family travel will join the lineup of Royal Caribbean exclusives – such as robot bartenders at the Bionic Bar powered by Makr Shakr; the iconic AquaTheatre showcasing unrivaled high-flying, high diving performances; and the Ultimate Abyss, the tallest slide at sea – for a thrilling crescendo of diverse experiences, all set in the unique seven-neighbourhood concept of the award-winning Oasis-class ships.

**Seabourn will officially debut Seabourn Encore**. The new ship is as strikingly beautiful and as excitingly innovative as any Seabourn has ever debuted. It will crown a fleet that is already the newest, most modern and most acclaimed in the ultra-luxury segment. With all marble bathrooms, a unique new restaurant partnership with master restaurateur Thomas Keller and a new Wellness offering with Dr Andrew Weil, Seabourn Encore is set to redefine ultra-luxury Cruising in the Mediterranean with 19 European Cruise Schedules, starting May 2018

Cruising in Europe will again, take centre stage in 2018, when Cruises International launches exclusive Food Cruises with acclaimed South African Cooking Icon, Jenny Morris.

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## EUROPE

From page 12



Jokulsarlon glacier lagoon, Iceland. Photo: Bill Higham, Flickr

### Iceland

Another destination that is growing in popularity is Iceland, says Janine, who adds that South Africans like to travel during late

September to early March when they will have the chance of witnessing the iconic Northern Lights on a clear night.

### Book it!

Globus offers a six-day Gems of Iceland tour, during which guests will get to see the glaciers, icebergs, lakes and waterfalls of Iceland. Scenic highlights include Iceland's most famous waterfall, Gullfoss; a drive through the national park at Skaftafell; a stop in Lake Jökulsárlón; a visit to Europe's largest glacier, Vatnajökull; and the option of seeing Skogafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls. Unusual experiences include meeting the chef of Geysir restaurant for a walk through the geothermal areas where guests will taste bread freshly baked using heat from the hot springs, and a glass of geyser schnapps. Four of these departures also give guests the opportunity to witness the Northern Lights.



Trakai Island Castle, Lithuania. Photo: Wikipedia

### The Baltic

**Elisna Bergset**, key account sales for Development Promotions, says The Baltic is also becoming increasingly popular. "The Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania occupy a compact space with gargantuan castles, dense forests, plus a multitude of lakes

and beaches," she says. "These were the last pagan nations in Europe, and travellers are relishing the towns and cities that are still frozen in time. It is essentially a portal back to medieval Europe, but with the added benefits of WiFi and human rights!"

### Book it!

Travellers can see the area while cruising onboard the *MSC Preziosa*, with a seven-night cruise starting from R14 054pps. This includes accommodation in an inside cabin on a full-board basis, daily entertainment and a range of activities. The cruise departs from Kiel in Germany and travels to Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and the Russian Federation.



# Keeping the old favourites interesting

EUROPE experts agree that Italy remains the firm favourite when it comes to South African travellers, but that other traditionally popular destinations are also seeing a resurgence in interest.

**Theresa Szejwallo** of Trafalgar SA says this is particularly true for France, while “Spain and Portugal are evergreen in the popularity stakes and, of course, the Scandinavian countries are unbelievably in demand – so much so that we sell out on these itineraries every year”.

Keeping these destinations interesting, though, can require some creativity, and one of the ways agents can achieve this is by recommending these countries in different seasons rather than in the traditionally busy summer months. Theresa says the Christmas markets and autumn and spring

offerings are very popular, as they offer South African travellers something a little different.

“And who doesn’t want to enjoy a snowy, white Christmas and all the trimmings that go with it?”

## Escaping the cities

Another way agents are keeping Europe fresh for repeat travellers is by suggesting that travellers skip the big cities and instead visit smaller towns and more rural areas.

**Elisna Bergset** of Development Promotions says: “Small-town Europe is especially attractive because of its slower pace and more authentic interactions with locals. Let’s face it, a coffee shop in Paris is great, but finding a hidden gem in a small town in Burgundy adds a sense of raw discovery you wouldn’t otherwise be able to experience.”



Montecatini is the base for the Gourmet Tuscany tour. Photo: Flickr

## Special-interest travel

**Janine Pienaar** of Globus Family of Brands says it’s worth finding out more about travellers’ specific interests when it comes to recommending tours. For example, Cosmos Holidays has introduced a new eight-day Italian tour called Gourmet Tuscany. “The beauty of this tour is that travellers will be based in Montecatini for

the full duration of their tour. Each day they will take an excursion through the beautiful Tuscan countryside to a new location to experience all that Tuscany has to offer.”

A few of these highlights include an excursion to the Chianti Valley, cradled between Florence and Siena in the heart of Tuscany, famous for its wine-making, which dates

back to the 13th century. Here they will enjoy a lunch at a charming wine shop.

Another must-see in Tuscany is Bolgheri, with its red-brick castle and atmospheric Old Town. No tour to Tuscany would be complete without a cooking class where they can try their hand at creating incredible cakes and desserts in Montecatini, adds Janine.

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# Out-of-the-ordinary ways to explore

EUROPE is the 'old faithful' continent for the travel industry – which means agents and operators have to be creative in finding new ways clients

can see its more familiar destinations.

This is according to **Elisna Bergset** of Development Promotions. "There are always a consistent

number of travellers going to Europe, and our 2018 forecast is positive with an expected increase of people travelling there. This increase can be attributed

to the variety of ways the public can travel through Europe," she says.

"For example, coach touring is no longer the only way to travel – in

fact, options like barging, cruising, and small-group tours have given South African travellers more cost-effective and culturally immersive options."

## By bike

An alternative to combustion-engine road travel is cycling, says Elisna, who says cycling tours are becoming more prevalent with South Africans.

"We have seen a steady increase in our cycling trips with G Adventures."

- G Adventures offers a seven-day Cycling in Tuscany tour where

guests can explore hill towns, lakes and even soak in thermal hot springs from Rome to Chianciano Terme. Accommodation is in comfortable tourist-class accommodation. Participants will need to be cycling fit and over the age of 12. Rates start from R18 299pps, excluding flights.



Barging offers a relaxing way to visit smaller towns.

## By water

Elisna says: "H<sub>2</sub>O is the way to go! Cruising is very affordable and a convenient way to see Europe, especially the Mediterranean. Barging is essentially self-catering on water, and your chances of seeing the Northern Lights are statistically much higher on an ice breaker ship."

She says South Africans love the freedom of movement, independence and affordability that barging offers. "It also grants access to smaller towns and allows them to be a part of their destination, instead of just passing through."

Other modes of water travel

are also popular and range from sailing to river cruising.

- Travel Vision, through G Adventures, is offering a seven-night Croatia sailing tour with rates starting from R27 396pps. This includes return airfares ex-JNB, airport taxes, twin cabins on a shared basis, fully licensed skipper, and snorkelling equipment. The yacht sails from Split to Dubrovnik along the Dalmatian Coast. Valid from April 28 to June 14.
- Avalon Waterways offers a 20-day cruise from the Danube Delta to Prague. The journey starts in

Bucharest, Romania, and sails to the mouth of the River Danube, where it flows into the Black Sea. Guests will also be able to explore the Danube Delta, visit the cities along the river and end with three overnights in Prague in the Czech Republic.

- The Norwegian Fjord Explorer is an 11-day Cosmos Holidays tour starting and ending in Oslo, which includes a cruise across Norway's Sognefjord. Travellers will also ride on the renowned Flam Train and see some of the world's most impressive scenery.

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**EUROPE**

## By rail

Travelling by train is a novelty for many South Africans and enables a stress-free form of travel where passengers get to enjoy the scenery as it goes by.

- Travel Vision's seven-night Italy by Train tour starts from R33 381pps and includes flights from Johannesburg and airport taxes, second-class train tickets Rome-Florence-Venice a high-speed train, a Tuscany wine and olive oil tasting tour with escorted guide and lunch, private water taxi in Venice, meet and greet and portage to hotels and a walking tour of Venice and the Doge's Palace. Valid until March 15.
- Alpine Adventure, Bernina and Glacier Express is a 13-day Cosmos Holidays



Rail is a stress-free way to see Europe.

tour from Munich to Zurich. Guests will experience a memorable trip aboard the Bernina Express where they will cross the Alps to Tirano in Italy and travel to altitudes of up to 6 560 feet.

- Scenic Switzerland is a nine-day round-trip

tour from Zurich with transportation on various first-class trains. Some examples are the Lucerne-Interlaken Express, BLS Regio Express train to Zweisimmen, Montreux-Oberland Bernois Panoramic Train, as well as the Glacier Express.



# Trafalgar expands offering for 2018

TRAFALGAR has announced a number of new additions to its offering for 2018.

**Theresa Szejwallo** of Trafalgar SA, says: "We have bolstered our dining options by partnering with VizEat. Guests can now connect with home cooks who provide immersive food experiences. This option is offered on our City Explorers and can be booked through the travel director."

The tour operator has also added two new City Explorers to complement its existing range. The Madrid Explorer invites guests to 'live la vida loca' in Spain, while guests on the Berlin Explorer will discover



Theresa Szejwallo

life beyond the Brandenburg Gate as they hear about the recent history of the reunification of east and west Germany.

"We have also added four new after-hours experiences within the Vatican and two new guided holidays. The Best of Norway seeks to offer more availability in the Scandinavian region. Italy is

the perennial favourite, so we now have a new trip here called Wonders of Italy," she adds.

CostSaver has two new trips for 2018 – the Highlights of St Petersburg and Moscow and the Highlights of Greece with a three-day Aegean cruise.



New VIP salon and instant relaxation area (right) at Paris-Charles de Gaulle.



# Air France opens new lounge at Paris Charles de Gaulle

AIR France has opened a redesigned and larger business-class lounge at Paris-Charles de Gaulle. The lounge is used by its business-class and Flying Blue Elite Plus cardholders and is located in Hall 1 in Terminal 2.

The lounge will open in two stages – with the first part unveiled in January and second in July.

Features include an area

designed for 'well being', which includes a detox bar with a selection of teas, an area for facial treatments, two private saunas and showers.

The dining area will include La Table Gourmet, designed in the style of a Parisian brasserie with an open kitchen, as well as a self-service counter with casseroles, salads and pastries.



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# Joon links Europe and the Cape year-round

APRIL 1 marks the start of Joon's commencement of services between Paris and Cape Town.

The flight will operate three times a week, year-round, using an A340.

Joon is a subsidiary of Air France, and the service replaces AF's operation on the route.

AF864 will depart Paris-Charles De Gaulle (CDG) on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays at 09h30 to arrive in Cape Town the same day at 21h15. AF871 departs Cape Town at 23h15 and arrives in Paris the following day at 11h15.

The airline offers three cabins. On the Paris-Cape

Town route it will offer 30 lie-flat business-class seats, 21 seats in premium economy and 227 economy class seats. All amenities expected of a full-service airline are included.

Joon first took to the skies in December last year, serving short- and medium-haul routes within Europe. Points served on the continent include Berlin, Naples, Rome, Oslo, Lisbon, Porto and Barcelona.

Over and above Cape Town, long-haul destinations to be added to its network this European summer will include Istanbul, Turkey; Mahé, Seychelles; Cairo, Egypt; Fortaleza, Brazil and Tehran, Iran.



Gregolimano is the ideal holiday Resort for families or couples looking for total indulgence.

Photo: Club Med

## Europe specials from Travelinfo

### Greek Isles Hopping (kulula holidays)

**Valid:** May 1-31

**Price from:** R11 469pps

**Includes:**

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- 3 nights in a three-star

hotel in Mykonos

- 3 nights in a three-star

hotel in Santorini

- High-speed ferry Athens-Mykonos-Santorini-Athens

• Breakfast daily

### Italy by Train (kulula holidays)

**Valid:** April 1-30

**Price from:** R8 469pps

**Includes:**

- 2 nights in a three-star

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- 2 nights in a three-star

hotel in Venice

- 2nd class train ticket

Rome-Florence-Venice

- Breakfast daily

### Seven-night cruises (Norwegian Cruise Lines)

- Greek Isles from Venice: Eastern Mediterranean on board NCL Star from R13 977pps mid ship – inside cabin. Set departure: September 2.
- Western Mediterranean from Rome on NCL Epic

from R14 423pps – inside cabin. Set departure: September 26.

- Mediterranean Cruise on board the NCL Star from R12 516pps – inside cabin. Set departure: October 21.

- Western Mediterranean Cruise from Barcelona on board the NCL Epic from R14 670pps – inside cabin. Set departure: May 13.

All inclusive of taxes and port charges.

### Flavours of Tuscany: The Enchanting Cinque Terre & Sorrentine Peninsula (Thompsons Holidays)

**Valid:** April 8-Oct 21

**Price from:** R31 362pps

**Includes:**

- Return flights from Johannesburg to Rome including airline levy; return airport to hotel transfers; four nights' accommodation in four-star

hotels; breakfast daily; five dinners (excluding drinks); two lunches (excluding drinks); three wine tastings with local products; full-day excursion to Pompeii and Capri; visit to the Blue Grotto (weather permitting); boat trip along

the Cinque Terre coastline; train from Monterosso to La Spezia; multilingual tour guide; entrance fees. Package is valid for Sunday departures only. High-season airfare supplement applies: June 21-30.

### Club Med Gregolimano, Greece

**Depart:** May 11

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**Price from:** R21 991pps

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## Bubbly breakfast with RwandAir



RwandAir hosted its annual champagne breakfast at Four Seasons Hotel The Westcliff in Johannesburg, where it awarded its top-selling agencies with certificates of excellence. Pictured here are (from left) Carlos Luis of Flight Centre; Marco Ciochetti of XL Travel; Karin Deist of Club Travel; Kobus Snyman of BidTravel; Nomusa Masek of Cyrildene Travel; and Donovan Moodley of Serendipity Travel.



Zuki Jantjies has been appointed divisional director of sales and marketing of the City Lodge Hotel Group. She has joined the group from her own company where she specialised in providing marketing communications and customer service strategies to her clients. Previously, Zuki held management positions at Nampark Group, Liberty Group, SAA and SA Express. Zuki succeeds Peter Schoeman, who retired from the group early last year.

## Fresh face at City Lodge

## Appointments

■ Protea Hotels by Marriott has appointed **Johan Cronjé** as the new regional gm for the northern region. He will be responsible for 16 hotels across Gauteng and Limpopo, as well as in Tanzania. In his role of supporting the gms in the region, Johan will oversee the implementation of marketing, financial and quality plans, as well as maintaining relationships with the hotel owners in these areas.



■ The Durban International Convention Centre has promoted **Scott Langley** to marketing, sales and events director. Scott has worked in Cape Town, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape in various tourism marketing roles. He joined the Durban ICC in October 2012 and during the past five years has served in the positions of marketing and sales manager and corporate affairs manager.



## Qantas goes green

The world's first dedicated biofuel flight between the United States and Australia, QF96 from Los Angeles to Melbourne, took place recently. The historic trans-Pacific 15-hour flight used 24 000kg of blended biofuel, saving 18 000kg in carbon emissions. The biofuel is processed from Brassica Carinata, a non-food, industrial type of mustard seed. Pictured is Brassica Carinata flowering in the field.

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## ATL Tours director

### From page 1

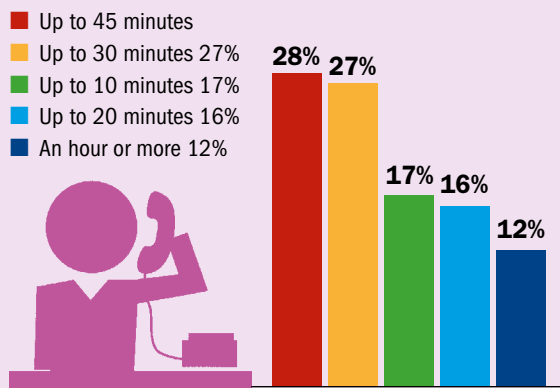
Investigations, confirmed with *TNW* that Ahmed had been granted bail of R250 000. It is unclear at this stage if the bail has been paid. Furthermore,

Ahmed will reportedly be residing with a complainant who withdrew her case against him and will have to report to Mondeor SAPS on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. ■



### 'Please hold while we connect you...'

What was the average holding time for operators in January?



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## Cape Town to Rio

Regent Seven Seas Cruises is offering a 23-night Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro cruise from April 7-30. Ports of call include Lüderitz; Walvis Bay; Edinburgh of the Seven Seas; Tristan Da Cunha; Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Pricing starts from \$7 448pp (R89 115) for a deluxe veranda suite and \$6 168pp (R73 810) for a deluxe window suite. Pictured here is Janine Pretorius, owner of Encore Cruises, travel partner of Regent Seven Seas Cruises. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Agents in a tizz over SAA long-haul cut-backs

CANDICE MAY

SAA's decision to reduce flights on two of its most prominent long-haul routes, London and Perth, at short notice has left agents with no option but to change dates or book other carriers.

SAA is offering affected passengers only two options – to be accommodated on its next available flight or to apply for a full refund. The airline is not willing to accommodate those affected on other carriers.

At the beginning of the month, SAA announced that it would introduce its new A330-300 on the London route from March 25 and adjust frequencies from a double daily to single daily service from April 20.

It recently announced that it would also adjust frequencies on its Perth

route by cancelling some flights in February, March, May and June.

**Vicky Steinhart**, product manager of Pentravel, says cutting back on these long-haul routes leaves leisure agents with very few routes on which to support SAA.

**Andrew Stark**, md for Middle East and Africa of Flight Centre Travel Group, says he expected SAA to ask agents for their opinions before cutting back on these routes and that fewer seats out of the market means fewer seats to sell.

"Our national carrier is losing revenue through not engaging with the industry," says **Mary Shilleto**, ceo of Thompsons Travel, adding that TMCs' revenues have diminished drastically with SAA cutting back on flights and transferring passengers to Mango.

The cutbacks will also

have a profound impact on corporates wanting to make use of SAA's corporate deals and get to destinations as directly as possible, **Rolene Kinkel**, VIP commercial aviation specialist of HRG Rennies Travel, points out.

For this reason, corporates that are loyal to Voyager and corporates' fares need to be made aware of the possibility of last-minute flight cancellations, says **Siobhan Nel**, ITC of Travel Counsellors.

**Rachael Penaluna**, business manager of Sure Maritime Travel, says London and Perth are two major routes for expats and there will be an issue of over-demand and under-supply during peak periods. The cutback on long-haul flights also negatively affects connection times for those on a domestic flight from Cape Town or Durban. ■

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