

# TNW

TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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**FLIGHT CENTRE**  
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**INSIDE**

**NEWS**  
**ETRAVEL**

Affiliate programme to boost clout

Page 2

**NEWS**  
**B-BBEE**

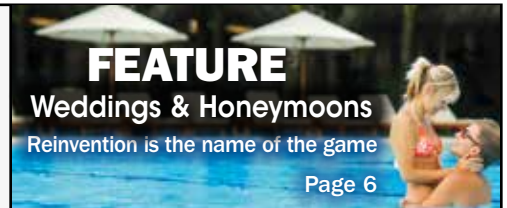
Changes to drive youth employment

Page 4

**FEATURE**  
**Weddings & Honeymoons**

Reinvention is the name of the game

Page 6



## RwandAir launches direct Cape Town-Harare service

HILKA BIRNS

**T**HE first direct air link between Cape Town and Harare opened on May 16 with the arrival in the Mother City of RwandAir's flight from Kigali via Harare.

The Zimbabwean government granted Fifth Freedom rights to Rwanda's flag carrier, allowing RwandAir to carry passengers from Kigali to Harare, drop off and pick up more passengers there and continue to Cape Town, doing the same on the return leg.

RwandAir will initially serve the route four times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays) using a Bombardier CRJ900 Next Gen two-class 75-seat regional jet. Country manager, **Thembela Dladla**, says, depending on demand, the airline intends to increase services and upgrade to a B737-800 at certain

times of the year.

**Gavin Simpson**, ceo of Holiday Aviation (RwandAir's GSA), says RwandAir's offices for reservations, ticketing, sales and support services at Cape Town International Airport are fully operational. Reservations are also available on all GDSs. Forward bookings are mostly being received from the travel trade.

"We have already appointed a sales manager in Cape Town. Her feedback is that there are a lot of TMCs that are looking for a direct service between Cape Town and Harare. A lot of TMCs have already started negotiating with her to potentially enter into corporate agreements."

Cape Town Air Access project manager, **Paul van den Brink**, says RwandAir's West Africa route network will add value to Cape Town, making it

**To page 2**



### Record 1 935 agents do airline workshop

Travelinfo has set a new record of agent participant numbers in its 'The Emirates Experience' online workshop. 1 935 agents have already participated with more than 1 400 passing with distinctions. Over 35 airlines and suppliers are already participating in Travelinfo's new affordable training platform that seeks to bring the cost of training an agent to under R25 while at the same time giving agents recognition for their increased knowledge. Pictured above, racking up participants, are Helen Johnston (left), account executive and Odilia Da Mata, workshops administrator for TI. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl



Pictured at the launch (from left) are **Gavin Simpson**; **Thembela Dladla**; and Rwandan Ambassador to South Africa, **Vincent Karega**.

## Beware customs clampdown!

CANDICE MAY

SOUTH African authorities are tightening the screws on a law that the South African Revenue Service (Sars) introduced in the 1980s but has not been proactively enforced for decades, thus taking both agents and travellers by surprise.

The law, which is outlined in the Sars handbook and on its websites, states that travellers need to register their electronic equipment before departing the country if they want to bring it

back in, with a DA 65 form stamped and signed by Sars. It applies to all electronics, including mobile phones, laptops, tablets, cameras and even watches.

**Rachael Penaluna**, business manager of Sure Maritime Travel, says the problem is that Sars is inconsistent with its laws. "This law has just cropped up lately, so it is obvious that Sars is trying to catch travellers and make some money. It is a complete waste of business travellers' time."

**To page 12**

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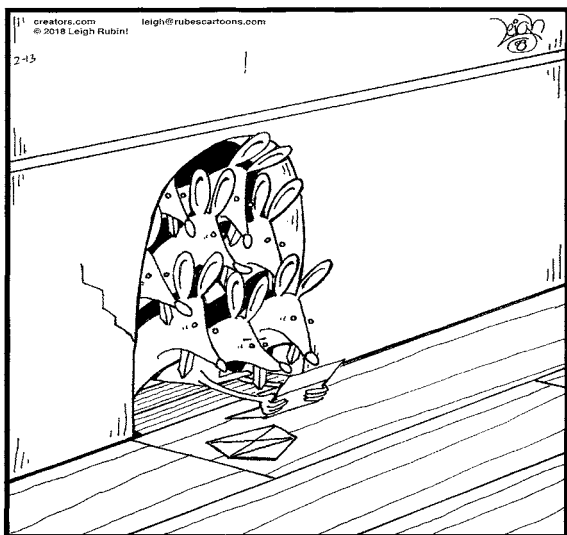
"Thanks to Travelinfo Workshops I am now able to sell the product or destination with complete confidence which results in bookings." **Nikita Dhanorjeeth** - Travel Consultant - XL Howick Travel

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TNW8477SD

## Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



"What the...? Another rent increase?! How can they get away with charging us this much for a vermin-infested hole in the wall?!"



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Circulation: tvsubs@nowmedia.co.za

www.etnw.co.za  
Published by  
Travel & Trade Publishing (Pty) Ltd  
Printed by Juka Printing (Pty) Ltd

Phone: (011) 327-4062  
Fax: (011) 327-4094  
E-mail: tnw@nowmedia.co.za  
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BA has released a special to promote its new non-stop flights between Durban and London. World Traveller fares start from R8 999, World Traveller Plus from R16 658 and Club World fares from R36 998 pps return. The fares are valid for sale until May 30 and are available for travel on both the direct flights and via Johannesburg with Comair. Special is subject to travel dates and seasonal variations to fares will apply. Hitch-hiking to London are **Christina Graham** (left), corporate sales manager, and **Sue Petrie**, commercial manager in Southern Africa, of British Airways. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl



**DUR-LHR from R8 999**

## Affiliate programme to boost eTravel's clout

TESSA REED

**E**TRAVEL is reinvigorating its affiliate programme, looking to sign up small to medium-sized travel agencies as franchisees. With the affiliate programme, eTravel will support lata-licensed agencies.

**Garth Wolff**, ceo of eTravel, says franchisees will benefit from eTravel's buying power and intellectual capital. In turn, eTravel will grow its turnover and increase its buying power.

Franchisees will share in eTravel overrides, although eTravel will keep a portion of the overrides. Garth says franchisees' earnings will be

similar or more in terms of override percentages when compared with other franchise models.

Unlike other franchise models, eTravel franchisees will not be charged a branding fee and will not brand themselves as eTravel. Garth suggests franchisees get no value from leveraging a franchise. For example, he says: "Sally has her clients and her clients know her as Sally." He says these clients do not care which franchise an agent is with.

"We have realised that, with rising costs on both the staffing and management of the entire business, the margins for an

lata-licensed agency are getting less and less, not to mention the diminishing overrides and pressure on service fees.

"We have seen an opportunity to extend our offering for an affiliate programme for small to medium-sized travel agencies." Garth says franchisees will be able to easily transition to the ITC model should they wish. "It makes the path of converting from a full lata agency to an ITC much easier because they will be under the same brand with the same people taking care of them." In the long-term, the travel market in South Africa will tend toward big TMCs and ITCs, says Garth. ■

## Amadeus partnership supports tourism

AMADEUS has entered into a partnership with the National Department of Tourism to develop the tourism industry.

As a supplier to SAA, which is a state-owned entity, Amadeus is required to

reinvest in the country.

**Svend Leirvaag**, vp Industry Affairs, Amadeus IT Group, said: "At the very core of everything we do at Amadeus, is a commitment to the transformational, sustainable

and inclusive growth of global travel and tourism.

This reinvestment will see the formation of a National Tourism Visitor Information System and a new Travel and Tourism Training Academy. ■

## RwandAir launches CPT-HRE service

**From page 1**  
easier to connect via Kigali to West Africa.

Cape Town is the 26th destination on RwandAir's route network, which spans Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia in support of a growing Rwandan economy. Fifth Freedom flights from Kigali via Abuja to Accra were introduced three weeks ago. **Sonia Kamikazi**, the airline's quality assurance director,

says flights to Bamako in Mali and Conakry in Guinea are to follow soon. A service to New York's JFK International Airport is planned in 2019. Guangzhou in China is also on the cards, subsequent to the delivery of a third Airbus A330 later this year. She says RwandAir's competitive advantage is the central African location of Kigali, its main hub. Its secondary hub in Cotonou, Benin, serves

West Africa. International destinations include Mumbai, Brussels, London and Dubai.

Thembele says Rwanda's strongest selling points include its strong focus on attracting tourism and business/incentive/conferencing through the Kigali Convention Centre, the presence of well-known hotel brands, visas issued on arrival and the ease of doing business in Kigali. ■

## For the record

In last week's issue, *TNW* reported that Old Mutual is rolling out a corporate travel insurance product, Travelsure. However, Travelsure is a product of Old Mutual Insure, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Old Mutual.

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A330 -300 is scheduled to start flying Johannesburg (London) route effective 25 March 2018. SAA reserves the right to change aircraft type any time due to operational reasons.

TNW602SD

# Proposed B-BBEE changes to drive youth employment

SARAH ROBERTSON

**S**UBSTANTIAL changes to the Broad Based Black Economic Employment (B-BBEE) Act were proposed on March 29 and are currently open for comment for a 60-day window period. These include the introduction of the Youth Employment Services (YES) initiative, easier B-BBEE recognition for 51% and 100% black-owned businesses as well as changes to the skills development scorecard.

**Robyn Anderson**, marketing and sales consultant for LLC Consulting (BEE consultants) and the LLC Academy, explains that YES was born out of President **Cyril Ramaphosa's** ceo initiative. This initiative aims to create one million new black youth jobs within three years. Companies that register to become accredited YES entities are incentivised with the opportunity to raise their B-BBEE ratings by one

or two levels by creating new positions for black youth.

The legislature also makes it easier for genuine black-owned businesses to reach B-BBEE level 1 and level 2. Currently, generic entities are required to undergo verification to certify their B-BBEE level, while exempt micro entities and qualifying small enterprises are simply required to complete an affidavit showing 51% or 100% black ownership in order to obtain level 1 or 2. If approved, the proposed changes will again allow entities of all sizes to more easily qualify for higher levels through genuine black share ownership.

**Sailesh Parbhu**, md of XL Nexus Travel, welcomed this, saying that any legislative changes that would make the B-BBEE auditing process less cumbersome would be well received in the industry.

Proposed changes to the

Skills Development scorecard include reducing the skills development expenditure target from 6% to 3,5% of payroll. A new category will also measure expenditure on unconditional higher educational bursaries awarded to black students. Learnership targets for previously employed and previously

**“This initiative aims to create one million new black youth jobs within three years.”**

unemployed black people are now clearly separated and the limit for recognition of information training has also increased from 15% to 25%.

Robyn said the increase in the informal training limit was good news. She explained that much of the current on-the-job training in the travel industry was classified as informal and

that agencies would be able to have more of their spend on training recognised under this category.

She added that many of the proposed changes would require a strategic approach that took a long-term view once approved. While a grace period would be provided to allow companies time to implement changes, she urged industry members to review their B-BBEE strategies now so that they could start benefiting from the changes to the codes as soon as possible.

“Our B-BBEE consultants have found that many travel agents are unaware that they are well on their way to achieving their targets under the Skills Development element with their current training programmes. A few small formalisation tweaks are often all that is needed to maximise their score on this priority element,” said Robyn.

While Sailesh agreed that

the increased informal training limit would be generally well received, he said that XL Nexus Travel had already invested heavily in formalising training initiatives in order to maximise scorecard ratings.

He said Nexus was also already engaging in youth employment initiatives, having taken on 24 candidates for an internal graduate programme this year.

“College syllabuses do not necessarily always translate into day-to-day agency skills. Our programme has been designed to provide a holistic programme that enables candidates to understand a transaction from start to end. They work in our leisure, corporate, conferencing, debtors and financing departments, with mentors in each sector that give them assessments and scenario tests. The internship also includes a Galileo course,” explained Sailesh. ■

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# Weddings & Honeymoons



Couples who do not want a cookie-cutter wedding or honeymoon do not have to sacrifice romance, writes Candice May.

## Couples put their own stamp on traditions

WHEN it comes to weddings and honeymoons, everything is up for reinvention – destinations timing, duration and

more. Here, industry experts round up the latest ways that couples are moving away from the mainstream.

### 'Weddingmoons'

First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes the baby in the baby carriage. Correspondingly, first comes the honeymoon, then the babymoon and then the family holiday. At least that is how it used to be.

Modern couples are shaking up tradition when it comes to milestone-marking travel, says **Alexis Bekker**, head

of sales and marketing for South Africa and Africa of LUX\* Resorts & Hotels. Enter the 'weddingmoon', a combined wedding and honeymoon.

Alexis explains that, in the case of a weddingmoon, the wedding party, along with their friends and family, travel to the couple's chosen destination for the wedding ceremony, after which the couple



Alexis Bekker

stay on and enjoy a honeymoon. "Couples opt for weddingmoons as an exclusive celebration. In most cases, friends and family pay their own way, which reduces the cost of the wedding. As we all know, wedding expenses are usually high in today's terms," she says.

The wedding is extended beyond just one day, says Alexis,

so that the couple can enjoy a long celebration with their guests before heading for some alone time. She adds that because many couples live together before marriage nowadays, it has become popular for wedding guests to give gifts in the form of contributions toward the weddingmoon as opposed to a traditional gift.

### Winter weddings

An increasing number of couples are pushing their weddings to the winter season, not only because summer weddings are known to be pricey but because winter also lends itself to some unbelievable and original ideas, says **Olivier Perillat-Piratoine**, manager of meetings and events of Club Med Southern Africa.

"Some couples are looking for something completely out of

the ordinary, such as mountain weddings in the European winter," Olivier says. "Snow holidays are not the typical beach choice, but there is something truly romantic about sharing a kiss atop a chairlift overlooking the Alps!"

He notes too that ski holidays are perfect for honeymooners who are action or adventure seekers, but still want to enjoy a romantic setting.

### Off the beaten path

For a destination wedding or honeymoon that is anything but commercial, **Elisna Bergset**, brand ambassador of Development Promotions, recommends Bali, Vietnam, Cambodia and Fiji. While many will still choose a beach wedding in these locations, they are far from typical when compared with better-known Indian Ocean destinations. "What's more, these destinations are full of colour and life, and make for incredible stories to look back on," she says.

Olivier has also observed an uptick in what he refers to as 'alternative' wedding

destinations, such as Club Med's Cancun and Rio de Janeiro properties. "These exotic but equally breath-taking properties are rising in popularity among both wedding and honeymoon planners," he says. "They have wedding experts on hand to help with all the arrangements for a spectacular and memorable occasion."

Elisna cautions that couples who select out-of-the-ordinary destinations need to ensure that they have settled the necessary legalities in South Africa, in order for their marriage to be recognised by the South African government.

### Long and short cruises

Promoting both local and international cruises as a honeymoon product is one way to ensure you are offering your clients something that fits their budget, says **Sue Garrett**, gm of product and marketing at Flight Centre Travel Group South Africa. "We have had plenty of honeymoon interest in cruising of late," she says. "Due to the mostly all-inclusive nature of cruising, it virtually allows for an 'embark and lock your wallet away' scenario as all on-board meals and entertainment are always included. Most extras, such as drinks and excursions, can be pre-booked and paid prior to departure."

Sue recommends Caribbean and Mediterranean cruises for honeymooners who are seeking the sun, or an Alaska cruise for those who want remote serenity and opportunities to snuggle up to a sweetheart for warmth. "For clients looking for something a little more exotic, Asia and the Middle East cruises are fantastic options."

**Ingrid Roding-Tudor**, marketing manager of MSC Cruises, says three- and four-night local cruises from Durban to Mozambique are also

popular. "The ship is a destination in itself, with entertainment, pools and various activities on offer. Pomene and Portuguese Island in Mozambique are idyllic for a quick and easy getaway."

**Lucinda Tyler**, product manager of Club Travel, also recommends short cruises on smaller boats to Turkey and Greece for honeymoons as they offer a more intimate experience than large cruise ships. Couples can also disembark at some romantic destinations.

"Cappadocia in Turkey offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Couples should make a note to take a hot air balloon to view the fairy chimneys and cone-shaped rock formations from above," she says. "In Greece, Poros Island is a must-visit. On this secluded family island, couples can swim under the pine trees at the charming Love Bay – a real paradise on earth."

For couples who choose to celebrate their wedding on board, Ingrid points out that this will be ceremonial only and not legally recognised in South Africa. She adds that renewal of vows on board is also becoming popular.

## Wedding travel – lucrative for agents

A RECENT poll undertaken by TNW asking agents how involved they get in booking weddings, revealed that only 30% of agents book flights and accommodation for such purposes, but 63% do not process any wedding travel business at all.

Only 2% of agents book the venue, food and drink in addition to the travel, and only 5% book all the bells and whistles. The figures indicate that there is considerable potential to be tapped.

While booking weddings may seem like a mammoth task, it is also lucrative, according to industry experts. They offer simple steps for orchestrating a wedding that will leave clients breathless.

### 1. Offer pricing examples

Step number one is to profile the bridal couple thoroughly, which includes determining their affordability budget, says **Martine Sanderson**, group sales manager of World Leisure Holidays. "This will make securing the booking easier for both the agent and the tour operator."

Martine suggests showing the client example pricings to quickly narrow down the list of locations within their budget.

"This simply makes the process of choosing a destination a lot quicker and easier for all parties involved."

She stresses that agents should never assume that the client knows or understands the costs involved in having a destination wedding – even if they are well travelled.

### 2. Highlight unique selling points

Working with the bridal couple's interests is as important as working with their budget, says Martine.

Asking what their interests and hobbies are may seem like a very basic question, but could make all the difference to securing the booking or not.

She recommends matching the client's interests to a property's unique selling points. "This makes agents look very professional," she explains.

She uses the example of

World Leisure Holidays' free golfing offer at all its Sun Resorts. "If the couple enjoy golf, this could be a huge deciding factor for them."

### 3. Put bride and wedding planner in touch

It goes without saying that agents should only use tour operators they trust when booking all kinds of travel.

**Alexis Bekker** of LUX\* Resorts & Hotels, says when it comes to weddings specifically, the operator should have a proven track record and special events division.

In addition, **Sue Garrett** of Flight Centre Travel Group South Africa suggests introducing the bridal couple to the resort's wedding planner. "This way, the bride will feel more in control and comfortable with planning her big day."

### 4. Get everything in black and white

When it comes to weddings, there are so many details to navigate, such as a DJ or live band for entertainment, or buttercream or fondant on the cake.

If there is one aspect of a wedding that should be black and white, it should be the agreements made with suppliers, says **Lucinda Tyler** of Club Travel.

Getting everything in writing protects agents and clients in two critical ways – it locks in the agreed pricing and spells out exactly what is being purchased, eliminating any surprise changes to fees or services.

### 5. Don't forget the small things!

A bride's wedding day is one of the most stressful days of her life. To help soothe the anxiety, Lucinda suggests having a bouquet of flowers and a handwritten card, or a bottle of champagne on ice alongside a box of chocolates, placed in the room where the bride is getting ready on the day of the wedding.

These gestures may seem small, but can really make your service stand out.

## Save with Beachcomber



Beachcomber Tours offers a 25%-30% discount on the land portion of packages to all guests joining a bridal or renewal of vows party. When 20 adult guests book, the bride's discount increases to 50%. With a minimum of 20 guests, a complimentary celebratory beach barbecue dinner is arranged for the full group if they travel between now and October 8. Photo: Beachcomber Hotels

## Did you know?

Weddings by Club Med, a product recently introduced to the South African market, includes a wedding celebration and an all-inclusive holiday package for families and guests. There is also the option of a five-day honeymoon extension for the bride and groom. Club Med currently offers weddings at its resorts in the Maldives, Mauritius, Japan, Indonesia, Mexico and Thailand.

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## Walking tours for honeymooners

EARTH Wanderer is offering self-guided Mediterranean walking tours that are great for honeymooners who want an active honeymoon without skimping on romance.

A seven-day self-guided walking tour in the Cinque Terre and Portofino in Italy is priced from R11 000pps. By day, honeymooners can discover the beautiful peninsulas of Portofino and Sestri Levante using well-marked walking trails. In the evening, they enjoy sunsets over the Mediterranean.

The package includes six nights' hotel accommodation, transport, breakfast daily, three dinners, five days of moderate, centre-based walking and sightseeing.

Another option is the seven-day Rivers and Chateaux of the Loire self-guided walking tour in France. The Loire region is famous for its

chateaux with over 300 to discover.

The easy-paced, gentle holiday balances peaceful, off-the-beaten-track discoveries with the splendour and opulence of some of the finest Renaissance chateaux in France. There is no tough climbing – the highest point is just 150m – but couples

will be rewarded with unspoilt landscapes and enchanting views at every turn. The package, from R15 100pps, includes six nights in a three or four-star hotel, three days of leisurely walking, all breakfasts, four dinners, luggage and transfers between hotels, route notes, maps, transport and sightseeing.



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## New products and services

### Club Med to debut Sicily resort

Club Med is bringing a touch of high-end luxury to Sicily next month. The company will debut its first European five-star resort in Cefalù, an hour's drive from Palermo on the northern coast of the Italian island. The resort has been part of the company's properties since 1956 but has been closed for the past 10 years.

**Olivier Perillat-Piratoine** says the resort is the crème de la crème of both destination weddings and honeymoons. "For any couple looking for an authentic Italian and utterly luxurious wedding or honeymoon destination, it will be hard to beat Club Med Cefalù!"

### LUX\* Bodrum reopens for season

LUX\* Bodrum Hotel & Residences, which opened last year, reopened for the Turkish holiday season on May 1.

It is set on a private peninsula amid landscaped gardens

on the Turkish Riviera, and couples can enjoy a beautiful beachfront setting in an area of outstanding natural beauty just 20 minutes from Milas-Bodrum Airport.

"Bodrum is considered the Saint Tropez of the Turkish coastline – luxurious and exclusive, offering a hideaway for a couple looking for the ultimate in a romantic getaway," says **Alexis Bekker** of LUX\* Resorts & Hotels.

### Beachcomber introduces adults-only wing

Beachcomber recently introduced a new wing, exclusively for adult guests, at Victoria Beachcomber Resort & Spa in Mauritius. The Victoria for Two offers 40 spacious rooms, including 17 Swim-Up rooms (step directly from room to water) situated alongside a large swimming pool.

The new wing offers an alternative for guests travelling without children. Guests still have full access to all other resort facilities.



LUX\* Bodrum Hotel & Residences. Photo: LUX\* Resorts



## New selling points for old favourites

MAURITIUS and Thailand remain firm favourites for weddings and honeymoons with South Africans as they are affordable, easily accessible and well-practised at handling intimate couples-only ceremonies as well as large groups, says **Lize du Plessis**, sales and marketing manager of Perfect Destinations.

While these destinations may sound too commercial to some, the stereotypes can be blown out of the water by spotlighting the exclusivity they offer.

**Martine Sanderson** of World Leisure Holidays says while she considers Mauritius a mainstream destination for weddings and honeymoons, agents should keep in mind that for couples who are not well-travelled, it has a distinct appeal.

**Joanne Visagie**, sales and marketing director of Beachcomber Tours, points out that Mauritius need not automatically

translate to a typical beach wedding. Countless dreamy locations are to be found at Beachcomber resorts, including garden settings away from the beach.

To keep things exclusive, Beachcomber has a 'one wedding per day policy', which guarantees that all staff, facilities and attention are focused solely on one bridal couple on their special day.

Taking a wedding or honeymoon to the next level, LUX\* Resorts & Hotels offers a private island experience on Ile Des Deux Cocos near the Blue Bay marine reserve. **Alexis Bekker** of LUX\* Resorts & Hotels, says on the island, which offers a private villa that blends the best of British and Moorish architecture, couples even have their own housekeeper, valet, chef and solarium.

While Phuket remains a top beach honeymoon destination, the northern regions of Thailand have something to offer couples

looking for adventure, says **Lesley Simpson**, South African representative of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

"If adventure is up the client's alley – or if they simply want to break away from the mainstream – we would strongly recommend the northern parts of Thailand, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mai Hong Son."

Lesley says these regions are known for their authenticity, from food, to arts and crafts, and hospitality. "There are also many quaint art galleries and coffee shops for couples to enjoy together," she adds.

Lize has seen increased interest in Indian Ocean beach weddings and honeymoons beyond Mauritius. "With the rise in popularity of the Maldives as an island destination, there has never been a more stunning place to get married."

She says resorts offer a



"Paris has always been associated with romance – after all, it is known as the 'city of love'." **Sue Garrett**

variety of options, including private island ceremonies, beach weddings and water villas. "Think white sandy beaches, crystal blue waters and mesmerising sunsets

– the Maldives is pure paradise!"

Similarly, **Sue Garrett** of Flight Centre Travel Group South Africa has seen an uptake in Seychelles weddings and honeymoons. In addition to its pristine beaches and luxurious villa hotels, another advantage of getting married in the Seychelles is that wedding services are legally recognised in South Africa so a civil service is not required beforehand.

Lize and Sue have also observed an increase in wedding and honeymoon bookings in Paris. "Paris has always been associated with romance – after all, it is known as the 'city of love'," Sue says.

"There is so much to fall in love with in Paris – world-famous hotels, crystal chandeliers, marble baths, fine food and wine and, of course, spectacular views. We have also noticed a spike in three- and four-night trips to Paris to pop the question."

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## Travelinfo Specials

- Honeymoon special at Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa from Mozambique GSA. Priced at R24 080 pps (R20 820 plus approx. R3 260 departure taxes), the special includes return flights between Johannesburg and Vilankulo on Airlink; return transfers from Vilankulo to Bazaruto island by boat (45 minutes); welcome cocktail; four nights' accommodation in a Beach Villa; three meals a day; selected house wines, local beers and spirits; bottled water, tea/coffee and soft drinks; sparkling wine in room on arrival; a dhow cruise; romantic nightly turndown; spa Rasul treatment for two; non-motorised water sports; daily snorkelling at Neptune's Nursery, emergency medical evacuation and government and tourism taxes. Valid for all African residents from April 12-June 21; July 7-August 2 and August 25-December 26.
- Seven-night honeymoon special at three-star Uroa Bay Beach Resort in Zanzibar from Thompsons Holidays, valid until October 29. Ex-Johannesburg from R11 475 pps. Includes return flights with airline levy; return airport and hotel transfers; accommodation in a Garden double room; breakfast and dinner daily. Honeymoon bonus: free room upgrade subject to hotel availability; special dinner; romantic room decorations; and fruit basket on arrival.



## Weddings at sea

MSC Cruises offers a number of wedding packages that can be booked prior to embarkation. The groups department is also available to assist with large wedding parties of 12 cabins or more. MSC also offers full personal assistance from an on-board wedding co-ordinator for the ceremony. Photo: MSC Cruises

## Did you know?

In Beachcomber Tours' travel agent portal, Beachcomber e-assistance, there are customisable flyers that allow agents to enter their own contact details and send them on to their client. The portal also has hotel fact sheets, videos of the resorts and information on wedding ceremonies and renewals of vows, allowing agents to be experts in wedding and honeymoon travel.

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- At a choice of eight exquisite resorts on premier beachfront sites, Beachcomber offers two packages for wedding or renewal of vows - the Beachcomber Wedding Package and the Beachcomber Glamour Wedding Package. Both packages include all the necessities, as well as a dedicated wedding co-ordinator and a specially decorated location. The Glamour package incorporates extras, such as hair and make-up at a trial session and on the day for the bride, a luxury spa treatment for the bridal couple, champagne and canapés after the wedding ceremony and a four-course wedding dinner in a private setting.
- Air Mauritius has special offers for honeymoon couples. Couples can upgrade to business class for R2 500 each on the Airbus A350 or A340 wide-body aircraft with lie-flat seats, or at R1 800 each on the Airbus A319, on the day of departure. During Air Mauritius's Travel Smart season (outside of school holidays), the bride flies free with the groom and only pays the applicable taxes. ■

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## Beachcomber buzz night

Beachcomber Tours recently held a Flight Centre buzz night themed 'the roaring, exuberant freewheeling 1920s'. It was a great night and lots of fun was had by all. Pictured here (from left) are **Tamara Radloff** of Flight Centre; **Nikki Briant** and **Lauren Blaine** of Beachcomber Tours; and **Marieke Tucker** of Flight Centre.



## TCs go bowling

The Travel Counsellors head office team participated in the Turkish Airlines bowling challenge. Pictured here, all dressed up and ready to hit the bowling alley, are (back, from left), **Rachel Boyd**, **Desiree Rossier**, **Jonathan Harrison** and **Eugene Jacobs**, and (front), **Marc de Jager**, **Tracy Graskie**, **Mladen Lukic**, **Shagufta Shariff** and **Bianca Jones**.

## Appointments

Legacy Hotels and Resorts has appointed **Ross Kata** as head of sales and marketing. He takes over from **Robert Hudson**, who has moved into the role of divisional operations manager based at the head office in Johannesburg. Ross previously spent nearly 15 years with Expedia Group in Africa and several years in the hotel and tour operator industry in Europe and APAC with short stints at Protea and Hilton in South Africa. Ross has an extensive knowledge of the African online travel industry and is also a Board Member of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA).



Drive South Africa has appointed **Kirsten van der Hoven** as its new business and relationship manager. Kirsten joins the Cape Town-based online car rental agency after 20 years' service at Bidvest Car Rental. She will be establishing Drive South Africa's B2B car rental offering. The new B2B platform allows tourism and other businesses to access a consolidated industry rental fleet at pre-negotiated rates via a single login.



## FCTG hits Hawaii

Flight Centre Travel Group recently hosted the top 10% of its staff from around the globe in Hawaii for a 48-hour celebration of their success. The next FCTG Global Gathering will be held in Berlin, where there will be 170 representatives from South Africa. Pictured here, snapping a selfie, are South African representatives **Divan Viljoen**, campaign manager of Cruiseabout, and **Angie Plaskitt**, team leader of Creative Studio.

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# New Malawi carrier to launch

CANDICE MAY

**K**WACHA Airlines, a fully Malawian-owned airline, has just been granted an Air Operating Licence by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport of Malawi to start passenger and cargo services on September 1 using a B737-700. It will operate domestic and international routes.

**James Makunje**, one of the three owners of Kwacha Airlines, says further details about routes and services will be announced in due time, but there is speculation among the South African trade that a Johannesburg route is in the pipeline.

SAA and Malawian Airlines

(operated by Ethiopian Airlines) both operate flights between Johannesburg and Malawi, but another airline on the route would be welcomed by business travellers, says **Debbie Joubert**, md of Sure Travel 24-7.

Debbie says reliable domestic flights in Malawi are also needed and explains that getting clients to Lilongwe and Blantyre is currently a challenge. "We have clients who go to Malawi every month or two and it is always so difficult to get them to meetings on time – especially when they have to visit both cities." She says car hire is extremely expensive, so driving between Lilongwe and Blantyre

is often not an option.

From a leisure travel perspective, **Mary Shilleto**, ceo of Thompsons Travel, says Malawi used to be sold extensively for family holidays and honeymoons when Air Malawi was still in operation. "Tourism to Malawi has dropped drastically since then."

**Rolene Kirkel**, VIP commercial aviation specialist of HRG Rennies Travel, says as long as Kwacha Airlines is reliable, handles queries efficiently and takes responsibility for any disruptions, she would book it. "Based on these factors, I think the airline could build up a great market in SA." ■



## Hong Kong heyday

SAA has reintroduced its special economy-class fares from South Africa to Hong Kong, with a travel period until November 30 and sales period until May 31. Fares are filed with fare basis GSS3MHK in the GDSs. Blackout dates apply from September 1-30. Pictured enjoying the Hong Kong sights are **Faith Sikakane**, regional manager coastal sales and CTOs – Cape Town, Durban, East London and Port Elizabeth; and **Glen Mboweni**, portfolio manager – retail, from SAA. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

## Beware customs clampdown!

From page 1

Rachael says she has been to the Sars desk herself a number of times in the past and there have not even been any DA 65 forms available to fill out. "I do not think it is fair, but if this law is going to be enforced from now on, we

need to let our clients know."

Over the past week, a number of business travellers have taken to social media expressing their anger.

**Toler Wolfe-Coote**, md of TWC Freight, was charged R1 500 to bring his laptop back into SA on arriving

back from Vietnam.

A representative from Sars Airport Customs at OR Tambo confirmed with *TNW* that the law had been in place for many years.

The representative said those travelling with any electronic device needed to

obtain a DA 65 form from the Sars Airport Customs desk at the airport before departure.

Once filled out, the DA 65 form needs to be stamped by the Sars desk. It is valid for six months, but has to be updated every time the traveller acquires a new

device. The representative said that while R1 500 was the average penalty for failing to produce the completed form, it could be as much as R5 000, excluding VAT and import duties, which means that the total could shoot up to over R20 000. ■



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