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TRAVEL NEWS WEEKLY

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INSIDE	NEWS SAX GROUNDING Pax feel the gaps Page 2	PROFILE CLIFFORD ROSS A legend is leaving the City Page 4	FEATURE Game Lodges and Safaris Bush on a budget Page 6
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NDC falls flat

SARAH ROBERTSON

It's nearly a year since some airlines implemented surcharges for bookings made through the GDS. But agents are frustrated that despite penalties for GDS bookings, airline NDC technology is still unable to handle the full range of functions required by TMCs.

"A business case to change the way agents source airline products, one which services agent needs and meets business requirements, is not being presented as part of the so-called direct connect solutions", says **Otto De Vries**, ceo of Asata. He says agents are continuing to be

penalised by some airline partners, when they choose to continue to use the fit-for-purpose technology the GDS offers today.

Jim Weighell, director of Simplifyer agrees, saying that NDC links were still very much in development phase. He believes these links have been developed because airlines want to open up new channels in order to avoid GDS costs.

"Unfortunately the airlines did not grasp that there is more to TMC functions than processing point-to-point bookings. TMCs continue to be used by all big corporates because of the complexities involved in processing bookings. While NDC channels

may work for leisure or discretionary travel, these booking platforms do not work for large corporates at this stage, as they have failed to take all of the ancillary services that form part of a travel booking into account," he said.

While more and more local consortiums have released their own online booking platforms in the last two years, it is of interest to note that many of these systems have NDC capabilities, but consortiums have elected not to connect because these technologies do not yet cover the full spectrum of services that agents require.

To page 2



Singapore gets 10!

From July 1 to August 31 Singapore Airlines is offering three additional weekly flights from Johannesburg to Singapore on the A350. The addition means the airline will operate 10 weekly flights during the period. The A350 is also available on all flights from Cape Town to Singapore. Pictured: **Kian Hwa Chua**, gm SA, Singapore Airlines. Photo: Dirk Voorneveld

MSC Cruises shows off latest ship



The *MSC Seaview* has 160m long 'dueling' waterslides, allowing guests to race each other. Pictured here are (from left): **Karen Baker**, of South Africa Travel Online; **Kirsty Hale**, of Cruiseabout; **Anthea Hurly**, of MSC Cruises; and **Jamie Landsberg**, of Travel by Investec. Photo: Jason Simpson

JASON SIMPSON

MSC CRUISES unveiled its newest ship, the *MSC Seaview*, at a christening ceremony held in Genoa, Italy, on June 9.

The *MSC Seaview* will spend the northern hemisphere summer sailing the Mediterranean, with destinations that include Naples, Barcelona, and Marseille. In the winter it will head to Brazil, with stops in Santos, Camboriu, and Salvador.

The *MSC Seaview* is the

sister ship of the *MSC Seaside*, which the company launched at the end of last year. Both ships are part of the *Seaside* class, which is part of MSC's ambitious expansion plans.

The *MSC Seaview* is the first MSC ship built in Italy, said **Carlo de Filippis**, head of revenue for MSC Cruises South Africa. At 323m in length and with a gross tonnage of 153 516 tonnes, the *MSC Seaview* is also the largest ship ever built in Italy.

To page 12



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New codeshare offers seamless flights to Europe

SAVANNAH FREEMANTLE

AGENTS are now able to through-check clients flying to Europe, thanks to a recent codeshare between KLM and kulula.com.

The kulula flights covered include flights between Cape Town and Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, Johannesburg and East London, as well as Johannesburg and George.

This development will partially address a gap in the market created when SAA cancelled some domestic routes, which were taken up by Mango. This resulted in

a reduction in the number of international flights with through-check connections (TNW January 10/17), because Mango does not have any codeshares or interline agreements with international carriers.

An agent told TNW that this has been a 'disaster' for her clients. "They either have to accept extended stopovers between flights or they are limited in terms of when they can fly. They also can't through-check baggage. The worst part is the incompetence agents experience when trying to get assistance from airlines." ■

Trafalgar heads into Africa

TESSA REED

NEXT year, for the first time in its 72-year history, Trafalgar will offer 10 itineraries to nine countries in Africa, highlighting the continent's natural landscapes, indigenous cultures and historic cities.

The countries packaged include SA, Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The product will be open for sales from the beginning of July.

Gavin Tollman, ceo of Trafalgar, says that the operator has chosen to enter Africa after conversations with travellers who list the continent high on their 'wish-list'. The Tollman family recent bought 100% of Cullinan Holdings, which owns the DMC Thompsons

Africa, which will be their fulfilment partner in Africa. The travel directors on the tours are trained by Trafalgar.

Teresa Richardson, md of Trafalgar SA, told TNW operator will distinguish itself from others packaging Africa by offering local experiences. These include sharing coffee and vetkoek with a Damara family in Namibia; visiting a Maasai cultural village; and meeting orphaned children who have found sanctuary at Kenya's Shangilia Children's Home, with each Trafalgar visit supporting the home's efforts to transform the lives of these children.

"Guests will have an opportunity to contribute to the initiatives they visit, says Gavin.

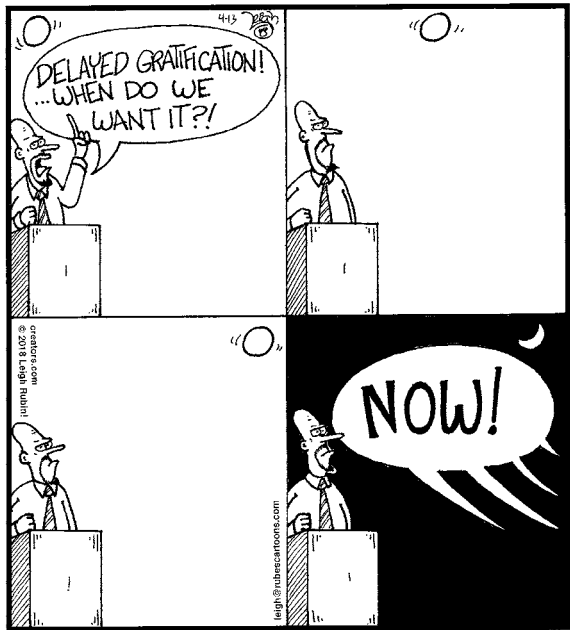
The itineraries are on coach tours, although they will include small group

site-seeing. Guests will be accommodated at various properties, including 'stays with stories', for example at the Oyster Box in Umhlanga, where Stanley Tollman, as a student, told his girlfriend over dinner at the hotel that he would one day own the property.

The programmes will be available on Trafalgar's website and the Trafalgar sales team will be unpacking each itinerary programme during its product knowledge sessions with agents, says Teresa. "SA is currently our third-highest performing market globally," says Gavin.

Marijana Cizek, owner of Sirius Travel in Sandton, says she is excited to see this well-known brand enter this space, adding that Trafalgar is an easy sell, with perfectly organised itineraries. ■

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



NDC falls flat

From page 1

Marco Ciocchetti, ceo of XL Travel told TNW when launching XL's new Travolution system earlier this year, that while it offers direct connect capabilities, these are currently dormant. He explained that while NDC channels could be used for point-to-point bookings, the technologies did not yet allow tickets to be changed. "When the airlines are able to provide more complex direct connection technology, we will not hesitate to turn on our connections," he told TNW.

Meanwhile local GDS offerings, not wanting to lose their oligarchic hold on the agent market, have all developed NDC capabilities. However they remain mum on how agents will be remunerated for NDC bookings

and how they will account for the loss of airline revenue when facilitating bookings through these channels.

A handful of global agents have also announced that they have signed multi-year agreements with surcharging airlines (LH, AF, KL, BA, IB) allowing them exemption from GDS surcharges but still allowing them to book through these preferred booking platforms.

Sue Garrett, gm product and marketing for Flight Centre Travel Group South Africa explained that FCTG has access to non-surcharged fares through a private channel agreement with these carriers and the GDS.

"This is full content, negotiated at a global level, that has been provided through a non-surcharged

channel and can be accessed by any FCTG business," she said.

However Sue agreed that the lack of airline standardisation of NDC technology offerings was a cause for concern, explaining that Iata was driving a project where 20 airlines had committed to having 20% of their global content booked via NDC channels. "There is no standard approach and at this stage functionality and content is varied," she explained.

Interestingly corporate travel buyers are increasingly agreeing that NDC is "a positive thing" for the industry with a recent survey from the Business Travel Show revealing that 18% of travel buyers believe that NDC offers more transparency with pricing. ■



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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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: tnm@nowmedia.co.za

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Nikita Tavlet selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Azure Travel.** Enjoy the "Ultimate Israel & Jordan Tour" from R20 950pp sharing. Offer includes seven nights' accommodation, selected meals, transfers and transportation, an English speaking guide and entrance fees. Valid until September 30.
- **Dolphin Beach Hotel.** Winter offer from R995 per single room per night including breakfast. Valid April 2 - July 31.
- **Travel Vision.** Enjoy "Disney Halloween on the high seas" from R15 907pp sharing. Offer includes five nights' onboard accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner, on-board entertainment, Broadway-style stage show, themed deck parties, taxes, fees, port charges and more! San Diego - Cabo San Lucas, Mexico - Ensenada, Mexico - San Diego. Set departure September 30.
- **United Europe.** Watch South Africa vs Wales rugby at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff from R6 050pp sharing. Offer includes two nights' accommodation at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cardiff, breakfast daily and official match tickets. Valid for November 24.



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A legend is leaving the City

In the latest Who Is... Tessa Reed chats to Clifford Ross, long-standing chief executive of the City Lodge Hotel Group.

CLIFFORD Ross's career spans 45 years in the South African hotel industry. He is recognised as one of hospitality's stalwart leaders; a captain of industry.

In his 31 years at City Lodge, Clifford has seen the company grow from one hotel in Bryanston to a large hotel group, boasting over 60 hotels and operating in six countries across Africa. He has been instrumental in driving this growth.

When Clifford took over as operations director in 1991, the group had only eight hotels in South Africa – and Africa was only a pipe dream.

“The sky really is the limit, although it's hard work. It's not a job; it's a way of life. There's no such thing as Fridays to Mondays. It's 24/7.”

Clifford started his career in 1974 at Holiday Inn as part of an internship programme. He had hoped to be a doctor or lawyer but his parents were unable to pay for tertiary education. However, over the course of his career, he has racked up several qualifications, including completing an advanced management course at Cornell University.

After completing his internship, Clifford stayed with Holiday Inn and was with the group when it merged with Southern Sun and later became Sun International.

It was while managing one of the group's properties in Swaziland that he met his wife, who was a sales executive with the group at the time. The couple have a son and two daughters. Clifford is extremely proud of his children; he jokes that they get their brains from their mum. He has put all his children through university and is incredibly pleased that he was in a position to give them opportunities his parents could not afford.

Clifford has also played a key role in empowering the employees of City Lodge, and long before

BEE legislation was put in place to encourage transformation. In 1995, the company gave one million shares to staff, excluding management. Since then, the company has continued to award shares to staff members as its share price has grown. “Every staff member is a shareholder,” he says. Clifford fondly recalls instances of employees selling shares to buy a car and even a house. One staffer sold their shares and opened a nursery school.

The low level of unionised staff at City Lodge is something Clifford takes pride in. When he started his position as operations director, the group had its first and only strike. “One of my very first jobs was to negotiate wages with the unions. At the time, about 80% of the staff were unionised and it was my job to negotiate a wage agreement.”

Today, less than a fifth of the staff are unionised. He attributes this to the company's salaries and employee benefits. “Many of the staff don't believe they need a union to negotiate on their behalf,” he says, adding that he has continued to negotiate with unions, despite them not having the required 50 plus 1 per cent membership.

Today, Clifford reflects on his career as proof that people can enter the hotel industry and make a career out of it. “The sky really is the limit,” he says, although he points out it's hard work. “It's not a job; it's a way of life,” he says. “There's no such thing as Fridays to Mondays. It's 24/7.”

What does retirement look like for Clifford? “I am sure I will have long lists from my wife in terms of what I should be doing during my retirement,” he jokes. Clifford has a spot in the Waterberg and also in Hermanus. He says he'll divide his time between the two. He is a keen photographer and is looking forward to picking up this hobby again, now that he will have the time. “I also have a library with thousands of books I haven't had the time to read,” he says. “I am going to spend my time reading, taking photographs, and being in the bush.”



Clifford Ross

Getting to know Clifford

- Clifford hails from Orkney and went to school at Milner High School in Klerksdorp.
- He is one of six children, who were all born within a six year period.
- Clifford is a history buff and enjoys travelling to historic places.
- Clifford and his wife are both avid travellers, and while he has been to many places, he still has a big bucket list to tick off during retirement.
- He relishes the outdoors and hiking. He has summited Kilimanjaro and Everest Base Camp.
- If Clifford had the opportunity to meet anyone, dead or alive, he would want to meet Nelson Mandela. “I admired him for his clarity of belief and his humility,” says Clifford.
- Clifford reads for escapism and likes crime novels best. ■

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Consumer confidence drives above inflation growth

TESSA REED

THE TRAVEL industry has grown just under 8% year-on-year for the first four months of the year, according to BSP figures from January to April. This when South Africa's consumer inflation rate sat at 4,5% in April, according to

Statistics South Africa. BSP figures for January to April this year show R6,6 bn, compared with R6,1 bn for the same period last year. Both **Vicky Steinhardt**, land product and marketing manager of Pentravel and **Mladen Lukic**, gm of Travel Counsellors SA attribute the

growth to improved consumer confidence. For the first five months of the year, Pentravel's BSP sales were up over 12% and the group had a record month in January, with nearly 25% year-on-year growth for the month. "People have more

confidence this year than they had last year," says Vicky. She says that in the leisure space, it's not just BSP figures that are up; land packages are also reflecting good growth. She cites Mauritius, Thailand and Europe packages as doing really well, and the cruise sector showing

impressive growth. The corporate travel market is also buoyant, says Mladen. Travel Counsellors is also tracking growth above the 8% industry average BSP reflects, according to Mladen. "We are seeing the same or a slightly better outlook from our customers." ■



Teeing off with City Lodge

The 11th Friends of City Lodge Annual Golf Day took place at the River Club golf course in Johannesburg on Friday, 8 June. Ten fourballs took part. The travel industry was represented by players from Tourvest, Flight Centre, HRG Rennies, SA Magic Travel, American Express Global Business Travel and SA Tourism. A special tribute was paid to **Clifford Ross**, who is stepping down as ceo at the end of June to be replaced by **Andrew Widegger**, currently the group's financial director. Pictured (from left): **Marco Ciocchetti**; **XL Travel**; **Terry Fenton-Wells**, SA Magic Travel; **José Cruz**, HRG Rennies; and **Claude Vankeirsbilck**, Tourvest Travel Services. Photo by: City Lodge

AirHeads

A snapshot of the week's airline news

BA adds more JNB flights, adds new route
BRITISH Airways will add four weekly flights to its double-daily London-Johannesburg schedule from October 28. BA will operate the Boeing 787-800 Dreamliner, its newest aircraft, alongside the existing 14 weekly A380 services, bringing the frequency to 18 flights a week. BA will also launch a new four times a week service from Heathrow to Marrakech, from October 28. The route will be serviced by an A320.

Etihad to launch second Spain service
Etihad Airways will start its second service to Spain with the introduction of flights to Barcelona, starting on November 21. Etihad already operates a daily Madrid service, while the new Barcelona route will initially operate five times a week, increasing to a daily flight on March 31, 2019.



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Game Lodges and Safaris



Photo: Thornybush Game Lodge Collection

Though affordable safari experiences are available to local travellers, there is a misperception that they are out of reach. By Debbie Badham

Bush on a budget?

SAFARI experiences are a tough sell to domestic travellers, largely because of the lingering perception that they are unaffordable.

Anneke Jordan, gm of Harvey World Travel South Africa, believes there is indeed a market for safari experiences, with customers ranging from high-end leisure travellers to overseas visitors and corporate travellers entertaining foreign colleagues.

However, these experiences are typically perceived as being out of the reach of the average South African leisure traveller, says **John Ridler**, PR and media manager of Thompsons Holidays.

Hara Jackson, group sales manager of Legacy Hotels, says the bulk of Legacy's success with its lodge product has been with the inbound market, rather than domestic travellers. "The domestic traveller is still there, but they are not the success factor," she says. And the biggest reason is price. "Often domestic travellers don't look at the rate and realise it's fully inclusive – the only other thing they would need to pay for would be drinks. Often, when you work it out, it is actually very affordable."

Anneke confirms pricing is definitely a factor, especially in the current economy. "However, we do have access to good local deals through our preferred partners, our sister company BushBreaks and others," she says.



Anneke Jordan

A number of domestic-oriented tour operators focus on ensuring prices are affordable for the South Africa market, says **James Robb**, aha Hotels and Lodges international sales manager. "They do this by targeting short lead-time bookings and low season periods, when lodges are happy to give discounted rates for local residents."

And it seems that the local market is open to being convinced by affordable offerings. **Nic Griffin**, ceo of Thornybush Collection, says South Africans currently make up almost 20% of Thornybush's guests – up from 7% just five years ago. "Many of our lodges are well-priced to encourage South Africans to enjoy a bush experience," he says.

When South Africans do opt for safari experiences, they are willing to go elsewhere in Africa. "Sometimes customers who have already experienced safari

holidays in South Africa like to experience cross-border holidays in places like Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Kenya," says Anneke.

John says there is a growing interest in travelling to the Serengeti in Tanzania, on three to five-star packages. He adds that visitors to Victoria Falls are now also including a short game experience in their itinerary.

Big five, big value

Things are tough on the local corporate business scene at the moment, Nic points out.

Hara agrees, saying fewer SA corporates are heading out on safari for the usual conference or incentive, but they still book game lodges for entertaining international colleagues. On the conferencing side, companies are rarely prepared to pay for a full five-star, Big five game experience, but instead are opting for "country-venue-type experiences", without comparing how much more value they would get from a true Big five experience.

Nhlanhla Ngwenya, communications coordinator, Tourism KZN, points out that conferences are often not a core business for many safari lodges, and some of them don't even have conference facilities. She believes safari lodges and camps are better suited to smaller meetings and teambuilding-type experiences, and should be sold accordingly.

How to bag local bushbabies

TRAVEL agents looking to make sales to both leisure and corporate travellers first need to debunk the perception that these experiences are unaffordable.

"To do this they need to negotiate good rates and more reasonable packages," says Tourism KZN's **Nhlanhla Ngwenya**.

- First, agents must ensure they ask lodges whether they have special SA residents' rates, says aha's

- **James Robb**. Explaining to clients that most rates are full board and include all meals as well as afternoon game drives will help to demonstrate the value for money these experiences offer.

- On conferencing specifically, **Hara Jackson** of Legacy Hotels believes clinching the deal is about helping the client understand just how much value they are getting from a full five-star Big five experience.

- Hara says SA leisure travellers are increasingly booking online, so agents must have an online solution if they want to attract this market.

- Create value by crafting a safari experience that speaks to the client's requirements. "When agents consult with the customer and ask the right questions, they are



Hara Jackson

able to tailor the holiday experience to meet the traveller's needs," says **Anneke Jordan** of Harvey World Travel SA.

- Whether or not customers have children will also impact the decision, says Anneke.
- Anneke also advises taking the presence of malaria into account.
- It can be a good idea to add unique experiences like culture and community interactions into the safari package, recommends Nhlanhla. "People are looking to create life-long memories when they travel, and it's important to keep this in mind," says Anneke. "Rovos Rail, hot air balloon rides, animal interactions, guided bush walks, helicopter transfers and outdoor spa treatments are all options that can heighten a customer's safari experience," she says.

Game lodges need to transform their offering

THE difficulty in marketing game lodge experiences to local travellers goes further than understanding affordability.

According to **Barba Gaoganediwe**, spokesperson for the Gauteng Tourism Association (GTA), South Africa history also plays a part. “A culture of travel and tourism, especially among black people, has not been that common. This is primarily because of issues around lack of resources and access,

but also because of the way young black people are raised – we knew that during school holidays we would be visiting relatives, unlike our white counterparts who would have been saving for travel during the holidays.”

This problem, says Barba, is perpetuated by products which appeal only to the segment of the population that has resources and the predisposition to travel from a young age.

“Issues of pricing remain the biggest challenge,

mainly because we have not seen an increase in the number of new players in the market,” comments Barba. “Game lodges are still primarily owned by players that service the traditional market.”

However, progress is being made. “In Gauteng particularly, the bulk of game lodges under government supervision, including the Dinokeng Game Reserve as well as other nature reserves in the province, consider community involvement,

with community beneficiation and transformation in mind.”

In the Dinokeng Reserve, for example, a group of community members have come together to produce ornaments and artefacts that depict the Big five. They also offer township tours to enhance the Big five experience.

“That is transformation at its best. Normally you’d have people visiting these reserves, checking into their lodges and experiencing the Big five

without ever engaging with these townships. And these communities would have been denied the benefit of their visit. But, Dinokeng is a good example of how boundaries around class and resources can be broken,” says Barba, adding that the same model has been replicated in the Cradle of Humankind through the ‘Hand that Rocked the Cradle’ project – a crafts initiative to benefit communities in and around the Maropeng World Heritage Site.



A game drive in Mongena Game Reserve. Photo: Mongena Game Lodge

Clients want contact, community, culture

THE more the tourism industry grows to include transformed players that involve their surrounding communities in their game lodge offerings, the more we’ll see greater numbers of South Africans become interested in game lodge experiences, believes the Gauteng Tourism Association’s **Barba Gaoganediwe**.

“We need to offer different experiences and employ more tour guides who understand the language and history of the reserves, rather than just providing information about animals.” Barba says travellers are all about those personalised experiences – things they can see, touch, feel and interact with.

Game lodges in the context of only being able to do a safari are becoming mundane, he adds.

The need to incorporate

new players extends beyond the leisure space into corporate buying and selling, conferencing and exhibitions, says Barba. New suppliers are needed across the spectrum of product packaging to add missing elements. If operators are able to consolidate their offerings, Barba believes corporates will have more in terms of incentives and team builds.

Barba is clear though that the development of new products is not simply about creating different add-ons. Rather it’s about integrating new interactions throughout the experiences. “Dinokeng is a classic example, with a shebeen experience on offer in the middle of the reserve. Instead of building a new shebeen, an existing shebeen has been made available to visitors within the reserve.”

Another example is the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve and other game lodge facilities which are being integrated with lifestyle trends, like hiking. “We are increasingly seeing people going out on weekends and hiking – so now when they have finished hiking they can go out and enjoy the game lodge experience,” says Barba. “Gone are the days when products could stand on their own.”

Catering to all price brackets is also important. For example, in Dinokeng, there is the five-star experience offered at Mongena Game Reserve, a two-star camping experience at Kwalata Lodge, or a self-drive experience. “There are over 300 products within the reserve, offering a complete variety of five-star to one-star experiences,” comments Barba.

Five-star bracket dominates

THE Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) listed 172 graded game lodges as of March 31, 2018.

By definition, the TGCSA classifies a game lodge as an accommodation facility providing formal and informal services, located in natural surroundings beyond that of an immediate garden area and located in a natural setting usually, but not always, away from human settlements.

Any property actually advertised as a game lodge must have animals which are free roaming and not contained in enclosures.

The only exception would be endangered or indigenous species which should then be housed in adequately spaced viewing areas that should resemble, as closely as possible, the natural environment of the animals in question.

Of the 172 game lodges graded by the TGCSA:

- 46% are five-star graded
- 40% are four-star graded
- 13% are three-star graded.

In terms of geographic spread, 30% of all graded game lodges are situated in Limpopo, while 23% are located in the Eastern Cape.



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Makalali gains momentum

AHA Makalali Main Lodge, in the Greater Makalali Private Game Reserve west of the Kruger National Park, is the newest addition to Makalali Private Game Lodge, which recently received five-star rating. Makalali Main Lodge opened late last year and boasts 30 upscale rooms with en-suite bathrooms, indoor and outdoor showers, a personal bar and air-conditioning. Guests can enjoy a variety of African and contemporary cuisine at

the central dining area and outdoor dining facilities are also available.

Ruzandri Stoltz, marketing manager of aha, says: "We are gaining momentum and we have received some great reviews from various travel bloggers and influencers. We are focused on getting site visits secured from key buyers and business partners. We are very excited to offer a premium product at a competitive rate."

Did you know?

Cottar's 1920s Safari Camps, situated in the Olderkesi Conservancy, bordering the Serengeti and Loliondo reserves in Kenya, has introduced electric mountain bikes, known as E-Bike Bush Rides. Instead of heading out on a game drive, guests can game view on a solar-powered E-bike ride, while decreasing their carbon footprint. They can opt for either a full day on the E-bikes, totalling six hours, or the three-hour, half-day option.



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GAME LODGES AND SAFARIS



Thornybush offers specially designed game drives. Photo: Thornybush Game Lodge Collection

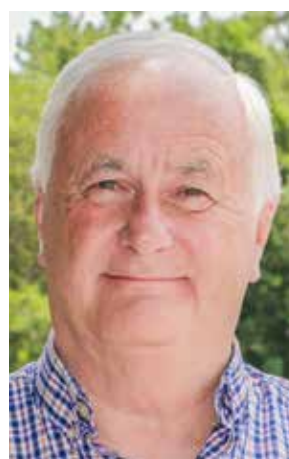
Where to find affordable offerings

SOUTH Africa offers safaris to suit any pocket, and understanding a number of factors will help agents get a good deal.

The Thornybush Collection adjacent to the Greater Kruger National Park, for example, has 12 different lodge offerings both large and small. "We offer a great mix of lodges to meet most pockets," says Thornybush's **Nic Griffin**. Nkelenga, for example, is a very well-priced self-catering option at around R1 200 pp per day. On the other hand, the group also offers extremely luxurious options like The River for around R12 000 pp per day.

"With our 27km eastern boundary fence now down and open to greater Kruger, we can offer outstanding game viewing experiences," adds Nic. He points out that excellent air access to the lodges is also available with five daily flights into Hoedspruit from both Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Aha's **James Robb** says aha is very aware of the need to make its lodges affordable and accessible to the local market. "As a result we have excellent SA residents' travel rates, especially for travellers who book within seven days of their travel dates." These special rates apply to a significant number of aha's properties in South Africa and beyond, including aha Thakadu River Camp, Ivory Tree Game Lodge, Shepherd's Tree Game Lodge and aha Madikwe River Lodge in the North West Province; aha



"With our 27km eastern boundary fence now down and open to greater Kruger, we can offer outstanding game viewing experiences."

Nic Griffin

Sefapane Lodges & Safaris and aha Makalali Main Lodge (within aha Makalali

Private Game Lodge) in Limpopo Province; aha Bongani Mountain Lodge in Mpumalanga; and aha The David Livingstone Safari Lodge & Spa in Zambia.

Thompsons Holidays packages a number of affordable game lodge experiences, says **John Ridler**, adding that most of these are within driving distance of Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town. "This helps to bring the game experience within reach of many travellers."

Choosing an accommodation option just outside the Kruger gates, allows travellers to acquire day visitor access into the park, and this enables agents to package more affordable bush experiences, says Harvey World Travel's **Anneke Jordan**. "Sanparks also offers very affordable accommodation options, including self-catering options," she adds. ■



Thakadu River Camp. Photo: aha

Births, deaths, marriages, promotions – we want to know! Please fax or e-mail TNW's Savannah Freemantle, at savannah@nowmedia.co.za or (011) 214 7324.

Cheers to Mauritius



Beachcomber recently hosted Cape Town-based agents on a Mauritius educational. Agents experienced the full range of Beachcomber resorts, enjoyed all the motorised and non-motorised sports on offer, participated in a cocktail-making competition, and explored the markets in Port Louis and Grand-Baie. From left: Tracy-Lee Reid, Flight Centre Associates; Heidi Niemand, Club Travel ITC; Mia Thiart, All About Travel; Michelle Hennessey, Travel Dreams; and Nicci Borthwick, Sure Giltedge Travel Paarl.

No to plastic!



The Travel Corporation and its family of 29 global brands around the world has committed to eliminating single-use plastics across all operations. Over the next five years it will phase out all single-use plastics. From left: Nicole Coetzer, Pentravel's national sales manager; Kelly Jackson, The Travel Corporation national sales manager; and Jolene Campbell, Pentravel regional manager.

Travel talk



SA travel industry suppliers and Flight Centre Travel Group's leaders recently attended the retail group's 2018 Leadership Conference in Mauritius. Suppliers participated in a Drumbeat session during which FC leaders had an opportunity to ask questions and suppliers could talk about their product and their plans for 2019. Pictured are Flight Centre's: (back from left) Sue Garrett; Sara Park; Kirsty Rebello; (centre from left) Vanessa Butler; Ayanda Zwane; and (front) Jessica Jewel.

Appointments

■ **Cassilda Ntsane** is the newly appointed head of sales at The Regency Group. Prior to joining The Regency Group, Cassilda was the sales manager (Regional Corporate and Africa) at Protea Hotels. She joined Protea Hotels as a Hotel Management intern in 1998 and worked her way up, collecting 20 years of expertise in sales management on the way.



■ **Reed Oberholzer** has promoted Megan Oberholzer from gm of marketing and travel tourism and sports portfolio, to gm for Reed Exhibitions' travel and Tourism and sports portfolio, effective June 1.



Pick of the week

brought to you by



Sales/Accountant Manager – CPT & DUR

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Senior Leisure Travel Consultant – JNB North

Professional Career Services

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Travel Consultant – Mafikeng

Professional Career Services

Minimum 2 years' experience. Handle all domestic and regional bookings (accommodation, car hire, flights). Refunds/reissues. Corporate/government experience. Amadeus and Quicktrav. Email: nonocv@pcs-sa.co.za

Revenue Manager – N/Suburbs, CPT

Quantex Recruitment Group

Hotel/safari industry experience & ability to interpret & collate data from various sources essential. Analytical thinker with accurate reporting abilities wanted. Email: lee@quantex.co.za

Marketing Manager – JNB

Quantex Recruitment Group

5+ years' marketing management experience, excellent administration & co-ordination skills, fantastic interpersonal & communication skills, as well as superb negotiation skills vital. Email: lee@quantex.co.za

Revenue Manager – CPT

Lee Botti & Associates

Support commercial director using your revenue management skills, implementing systems & optimising sales for dynamic tour operator. Email: lee-annem@leeibotti.co.za

Marketing Manager – CPT

Lee Botti & Associates

Leading travel agency require dynamic digital marketing & sales manager. Google Ad-Words and MailChimp experience essential. Email: lee-annem@leeibotti.co.za

Senior Incentives/Groups – JNB

Equity Connections cc

Leading operator offering solid career! Inbound company seeks top senior with seven years' inbound incentives/groups experience. Extensive Africa knowledge essential. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

Accommodation Reservations Expert – JNB

Equity Connections cc

Great company offers great career! Need excellent knowledge of destinations within South Africa booking hotels, lodges, safari camps for inbound travellers. Email: equitycon@mweb.co.za

These adverts were selected from the vacancy section of www.travelinfo.co.za
For more details contact jobs@travelinfo.co.za

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Travel by Investec - operated by Flightsite (PTY) Ltd
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To the point

ETHIOPIAN Airlines has been granted a second daily flight to Mombasa's Moi International Airport (MIA) following an agreement between the Kenyan President and Ethiopian Prime Minister. The airline will also resume flights to Moscow, Russia in November, after having previously served the route until May 1991.

CONGRATULATIONS



JUNE
5 star
lucky draw
R2 000
winner!

"A travel agent can never know everything. There are so many updates and Travelinfo Workshops helps keep us up to date." **Jeanette Jordaan** – Corporate International Travel Specialist & Team Leader – Reynolds Travel Centre

You need 2400 points to go into the monthly draws!



TNW7958

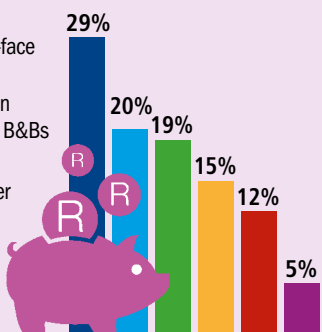
pulse poll
brought to you by eTNW and TRAVELINFO



Economy for corporates

With tighter travel budgets, corporates are looking for ways to save budget. We asked TMCs how their clients are saving money. How are corporate clients reducing their travel spend?

- They fly Economy instead of Business or First class
- They opt for fewer face-to-face meetings
- They book accommodation such as guesthouses and B&Bs
- They send fewer travellers
- Their travellers have shorter stays
- They stay at 3-star accommodation instead of 4- or 5-star



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TNW7136



Don't miss the boat!

Cruises International hosted its first ever Gala Awards Dinner at the Protea Fire and Ice hotel on Friday, June 8. The glamorous affair was held to recognise top performing agents. **George Argyropoulos**, ceo of Cruises International, used the gala to highlight the untapped potential to sell cruises in the South African market. He said while cruising accounts for 6% of travel within the US, in SA cruising accounted for only 1%. Picture here are (from left to right): **Salome Van Heerden**, business development manager, Johannesburg; **Vanya Lessing** ceo of Sure Travel; and **George**.

SAX pax feel the gaps

TESSA REED AND SAVANNAH FREEMANTLE

CORPORATES travelling to destinations previously served by SA Express, are having to pay up. The relief schedule put together by SAA, Mango and Airlink is failing to fill all the gaps.

Corporate travellers are paying more for flights to Lumbumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"As a result of SAX's grounding, clients are having to use alternative routes at a greater cost," says **Mary Shilleto**, ceo of Thompsons Travel. She points out that there are connections to Lumbumbashi on Kenya Airlines and Ethiopian Airlines, but these are between R2 000 and R4 000 more expensive. "Corporates have to go via these hubs, which is more costly and they have not budgeted for these increases."

SAA, Mango and Airlink

are not licensed to fly into Lumbumbashi.

Rodger Foster, ceo and md of SA Airlink, told TNW that the airline does not have its sights on Lumbumbashi, explaining that SAA's aircraft is better suited to the route.

However, TNW understands that SAA cannot get a license for Lumbumbashi and does not have spare aircraft to service the route. SAA had not responded to a query in this regard at the time of publishing.

There are also currently no flights to Mmabatho, forcing clients to travel by car, one travel agent said.

Airlink steps up

Meanwhile, Airlink has added more domestic and regional flights to its network and schedule to accommodate passengers on some of the routes previously operated by SA Express.

"Many SAX customers have experienced itinerary disruption, and Airlink has

worked around the clock since May 24 to introduce flights to alleviate the inconvenience," the airline said.

Up to 46 additional daily flights have been introduced on various routes, including: Johannesburg - Bloemfontein; Johannesburg - Kimberley; Johannesburg - Hoedspruit; Johannesburg - Gaborone; Johannesburg - Richards Bay; Johannesburg - Walvis Bay; Cape Town - Port Elizabeth; Cape Town - Hoedspruit; Cape Town - East London; and Durban - East London.

Rodger told TNW that, at this point, it is unclear for how long the airline will service these routes. "SAX is working hard to recover. We don't know how long this process might take and so it is difficult for us to confirm the permanency of the service. At this point we don't aim to add further SAX routes to our network. We will focus on these 46 as operating them is economically viable for us." ■

MSC Cruises shows off new ship

From page 1

The ship has 20 decks and 2 066 cabins, accommodating 5 331 passengers. Dining options onboard are extensive, with two buffets and a range of restaurants, including those by chefs **Ramon Freixa** and **Roy Yamaguchi**.

The ship also caters for families, with six distinct areas specifically designated

for children of various ages. **MSC Seaview** has 160m long waterslides jutting over the side of the ship, and a 105m long zip line, the longest currently at sea.

The 934-seater Odeon Theatre will be the venue for seven new, original shows. There is also an onboard casino, gym, spa, and a full programme of activities

hosted in the four-story atrium, including themed parties.

Using the MSC for Me app, guests can book services, restaurants, and excursions, among other things. The MSC for Me kids wristband is a wearable device that allows crew, staff, and parents to locate and monitor their children anywhere on board. ■