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Bedsonline system to replace GTA retail brand

SARAH ROBERTSON

FOLLOWING a global merger toward the end of last year, where GTA and Tourico Holidays joined the Hotelbeds Group, GTA's retail arm will now be consolidated under the newly refreshed Bedsonline retail brand.

The move will provide travel agents with an enlarged range of exclusively contracted content – increasing from

55 000 to 170 000 available hotels.

Shaun Beckley, GTA area sales manager for Africa and Indian Ocean, said the GTA retail brand would fall away to be replaced with the Bedsonline brand, which is currently being launched in South Africa.

"It makes strategic and practical sense for us to continue to develop our travel agent proposition under one integrated, global platform and brand," said **Carlos Munoz**, md

bedbank at Hotelbeds Group. He listed increased revenue and profits for the group's partners; improved functionality; the enlarged portfolio; and increased opportunities to upsell high-yielding complementary travel services as benefits resulting from the consolidation.

"An extensive outreach programme is already under way to inform all existing clients of GTA's retail brand regarding the changes. Clients will

have sufficient time to transition at their own pace and both workshops and technical support will be on hand to support a seamless migration," said Shaun.

Bedsonline's parent group was the only distributor to operate its own cloud-based open-source data centre, which handled up to 1,5 billion searches per day, explained Shaun.

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FCTG snaps up more product in bid to own the channel

SAVANNAH FREEMANTLE

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's hotel and accommodation business, BHMA, has opened its first hotel in Vietnam, X2 Vibe Viet Tri Hotel, and announced plans for its first hotel in Phuket, Thailand, the X2 Vibe Phuket Patong. BHMA does not own the properties but rebrands and manages the operations.

The new location brings BHMA's X2 Vibe hotel portfolio to seven properties, and to 27 total locations across the X2 Resorts, X2 Vibe Hotels and Away Resorts brands. BHMA's existing properties are located across Southeast Asia.

Andrew Stark, FCTG Middle East and Africa md, told TNW that BHMA was wholly owned by FCTG and was part of the group's strategy to grow its travel management routes across the globe by 2030. "We aim to own our distribution platforms and the traveller's experience, from booking to in-destination. We want to sell the

client Mauritius [for example], have them met by an FCTG-owned ground handler and then have them stay in a BHMA hotel. We will stop short of owning the flight experience – we don't aim to purchase an airline."

BHMA properties and Buffalo Tours, FCTG's ground-handling arm, can be booked by Flight Centre agents through Flight Centre Holidays, the brand's global product network. Other agents can book these products direct.

Andrew said Southeast Asia was a key market for FCTG's expansion because of the traffic it could pull from SA, Australia and New Zealand.

BHMA md, **Kent Davidson**, said BHMA was working on entering other "critical markets" such as Bali, Fiji, Queensland and the Maldives.

Carlos Luis, FCTG SA land product manager, said Buffalo Tours was in 13 countries, all of which were in Southeast Asia. "It aims to grow to 50 countries globally by the end of 2019."

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Twice as nice!

To celebrate the start of its second daily LHR service on October 28, Virgin Atlantic is running an agent competition on VSFlyingHub.com. Agents who book most Virgin Atlantic flights from now until October 5 (for travel from October 28 onwards) also earn double entry points for any bookings made on VS602 and VS462. The two agents with the most points on October 5 will each win a pair of VS tickets to London. Each week of the competition, entrants stand the chance to win a pair of movie tickets, a dinner date for two, a pair of shoes; Takealot vouchers, and other Virgin Atlantic merchandise. Pictured: **Eugene Cronje** and **Nicola Hards**, account managers at Virgin Atlantic. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

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Airlink adds capacity to Richards Bay route

IN RESPONSE to market demand, Airlink has introduced capacity to its Johannesburg-Richards Bay services from September 17. The carrier has introduced one of its new 74-seat Embraer 170 E-Jets on the midday flights, and from October 1 on the afternoon flights, which will offer customers enhanced comfort and generous seat pitch. ■

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



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Sales bonanza

Aha is offering 20% off the BAR rate (best available rate) for selected properties from September 1 to October 31. The properties are: Riverside Hotel, Gateway Hotel, Shakaland, Ivory Tree, The Rex, Harbour Bridge, Alpine Heath, Lesedi Cultural Village, Chobe Marina Lodge and Masa Square Hotel. Pictured: Thandeka Ngubane, sales executive (left) and Celeste Schroder, national sales manager, at aha. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Redefined no-show policies another 'money-making racket'?

SARAH ROBERTSON

A RECENT spate of ADMs relating to no-show penalty collections has taken agents by surprise.

In many cases, no-show penalties are no longer confined to passengers who do not show up for flights. Agents say airlines have slipped these definition changes into fare rules without informing the trade.

Nicolene Van Blerk, BSP team leader for Club Travel, says a handful of airlines, including British Airways, have recently changed their definition of when no-show penalties must be applied. Moreover, she says Club Travel only became aware of BA's policy when it received an ADM.

However, a spokesperson from British Airways said it had last amended its no-show policy in November 2016 and that agents were informed the day before. He said, rather than having to purchase a new ticket in the case of a no-show, the new policy allowed customers to rebook by paying a no-show fee.

The fare rules now state that a no-show penalty also applies if a ticket is not reissued or submitted for a refund before the original date of travel.

"In the past, if a passenger needed to cancel or amend their booking during the weekend, before their flight on a Monday, the consultant

would cancel out the seat and provisionally rebook if needed. During office hours the next week the consultant would submit the ticket for refund or reissue the ticket," said Nicolene.

She said, according to the new definitions, a cancellation or amendment penalty would need to be collected in addition to a no-show penalty if the ticket wasn't reissued or submitted for refund before the original travel date.

"The policy is a money-making racket. Airlines are charging for no-shows even when the seats have been released ahead of time."

Nicolene described the policy as a "money-making racket", pointing out that airlines were charging for no-shows even when the seats had been released ahead of time.

A Johannesburg-based Tourvest ITC had a similar issue with Turkish Airlines. Her client was admitted to hospital on a Sunday but had been scheduled to fly to the UK the following day.

When she began to reissue the ticket on Monday, she noticed in the small print of the ruling that a no-show penalty would apply in addition to the normal amendment fee

because the ticket was being reissued on the date of original travel. She requested a waiver but the airline insisted that both penalties stood. "My client was furious and has boycotted the airline since."

Air Mauritius has had a policy of charging no-show fees for about five years, for changes within 24 hours before flight departure.

Carla da Silva, regional general manager Southern Africa and Latin America for Air Mauritius, explains the reason for the charge: "Within 24 hours of departure the flight is in airport mode and therefore catering, seating and other factors are already determined and affected for the respective flight."

"Meals, as an example, are ordered in accordance with passenger loads. At this stage the seat is also no longer available for sale via any distribution channel. This, therefore, prevents an airline from re-selling the seat and when a passenger does not arrive for the flight, the airline does not collect its money," said Carla.

"Airlines have very low profit margins and, as a result, costs are tightly monitored. There are a multitude of costs associated with each and every flight departure," said Carla.

Turkish Airlines had not responded to a request for comment at time of going to print. ■

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On the Go Tours sells majority stake

SARAH ROBERTSON

A MAJORITY share of On the Go Tours has been sold to Alcuin Capital Partners for an undisclosed sum, with the original founders agreeing to stay on the board of directors.

The London-based company was set up in 1998 and now has offices in Brisbane and Johannesburg as well as representation in Canada, New Zealand and the UK, offering tours to 60 countries.

Alex Gonsalves, gm of On The Go Tours in South Africa, said the local team were excited about the buy-

out, which had taken nearly a year to put in place. He said the investment would increase internal marketing budgets and allow the operator to grow its product portfolio and update its booking systems.

He explained that agents would not experience any changes to operational processes.

Alex said the product was showing growth in the South African market since the establishment of the Johannesburg office a year and a half ago. He told TNW that the operator's South African sales had grown by over 70% in the past year. ■



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Hollard Insurance poised for growth

Hollard Insurance recently celebrated the full integration of Regent Travel Insurance within the group at a function at its headquarters. The insurance company also announced that it had sold a minority 22% stake of its business to Japanese insurer, Tokio Marine Holdings, resulting in a R5bn investment. It will enable Hollard Insurance to grow its footprint internationally. Pictured (from left): Graeme Young, director of Oojah Travel Protection, which administers Hollard's travel insurance; Uriah Jansen, md of Oojah Travel Protection; Anthea Hurly, HR and internal operations manager for MSC Cruises; Marco Ciochetti, ceo of XL Travel; and Paul da Silva, director of XL Novo Mundo Travel. Photo: Sarah Robertson

New Wendy Wu site to offer live availability

SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDY Wu Tours will launch its new website to the South African market in November. The new site will display live tour availability and an online booking portal.

The Asia specialist operator previously hosted separately

populated websites in the UK, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland but these will now all be combined into one centralised website offering an online booking portal.

"The live availability and booking portal will save agents a lot of time and will streamline the reservations

process for us," said Rene Swart, manager of Wendy Wu South Africa. She added that sales from South Africa were doing well, with the operator doubling volumes compared with 2017 figures.

Wendy Wu's various country managed Facebook profiles have also been combined on one centralised page. ■

Iberia brings premium economy to SA

PREMIUM economy class will be available on Iberia's flights between Johannesburg and Madrid from April to October, 2019.

The new premium economy class has 94cm seat-pitch compared with 79cm in economy class. The seats are also wider at 48cm compared with 43cm, and have a recline of 18cm compared with 13cm in economy. There are also adjustable headrests and reclining footrests, 20cm full-

HD screens, noise-cancelling headphones, and connection points for personal electronic devices.

The flights will be operated by an A330-300, with in-flight services including a welcome drink, special menu, table linen, and a personalised toiletries kit. Premium economy passengers will also be allowed two pieces of luggage, at 23kg each (instead of one), and will have priority boarding and

disembarkation as well as special check-in counters at Madrid airport.

Iberia resumed operations from Johannesburg to Madrid in August 2016 with three flights a week. Premium economy class is already available on the airline's flights from Madrid to Bogota, Boston, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Lima, Mexico City, Miami, New York, Panama City, Quito, Santiago de Chile, and São Paulo. ■

For the record

In the September 12 issue of TNW, Dr Albie de Frey was referred to as The Travel Doctor and ceo of NHC Health Centre. Dr De Frey is actually the owner and operator of The Travel Doctor. Vanya Lessing was referred to as the ceo of Sure Maritime Travel. She is ceo of Sure Travel. TNW apologises for the errors.

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South Africa
Inspiring new ways



The festive season is approaching at the same time that the SA economy is under pressure, and clients are likely to turn to agents to locate great deals. Sue van Winsen finds out which destinations are popular for December 2018.

What's trending this year

WITH less than three months to go before the December holiday season kicks off, clients who haven't done so already, are likely to start cementing their plans. Those who don't wait for the last minute can still take advantage of some great deals.



Ramesh Jeenarain

Indian Ocean islands

According to **Ramesh Jeenarain**, md of World Leisure Holidays, Mauritius remains popular with the South African market. "It still offers great value for couple

and family getaways, despite the rand fluctuations." Maldives is a popular choice for this upcoming December, especially in light of the recent signing of the charter agreement between Air Tour Operators, SAA and the Ministry of Tourism in the Maldives. Starlight Holidays is the sole GSA for Air Tour Operators and will be offering Maldives packages inclusive of direct flights for eight set round-trip flights between November 18, 2018 and January 12,

2019. Packages start from R18 990pps and include flights, accommodation, transfers and taxes. Clients can choose from a range of resorts, each offering bed and breakfast, full-board and all-inclusive options.

Ramesh agrees, and says Maldives is gaining interest

due to the competitive pricing coming through from various hotels.

Local travel

Ruzandri Stoltz, aha Hotels & Lodges marketing manager, says Cape Town and Durban coastal holidays are always popular at this

time of year. When it comes to selecting aha properties, she advises that agents enquire about special activities that each may be hosting to celebrate the festive season. "Each offers custom Christmas and New Year event celebrations," she says.

When to book

As the festive season is always a peak travel period, with most people taking leave to spend time with family and friends, Ruzandri says travellers should consider booking as early as six months in advance to "avoid peak season prices and secure the ideal space".

Ramesh agrees and says

it's important to remember that December isn't just a popular time for South Africans to travel but also for the rest of the world. "Tropical islands are very popular at this time of the year, so to ensure South Africans get the best possible packages at the best price, they should start booking now."

He adds that currency fluctuations and the weak rand are another reason to book early. "With the current rand-dollar fluctuation, its best to book now, as clients are securing their booking at the current rate and do not have to worry about sudden and steep price increases later in the year."

Eight affordable December deals

There are a huge number of budget-friendly options available this December. We round up some of the best deals currently on offer.

- **World Leisure Holidays** is offering 50% off selected packages for Mauritius this December, with rates starting from R37 100pps (Ambre). Resorts included in the specials are Long Beach, Sugar Beach, Ambre and La Pirogue. Valid for set dates from December 21 to December 28. Terms and conditions apply.
- **Pure Skiing's** Austria special seven-night ski packages start from R22 860pps. Rates include return coach transfers, seven nights' accommodation on a bed-and-breakfast basis at three-star accommodation in Zell am See, resort guide,

six-day ski pass, six days' ski hire, Christmas dinner, three dinners at different venues and 10 days' Bryte travel insurance. It excludes ski lessons, flights, and meals and drinks not specified. Valid for set dates from December 22-29.

- **Aha Simon's Town Quayside Hotel** is offering an early-bird special with rates starting from R1 530 per room per night for a single and R1 690pps (in a mountain room). The booking period ends on November 30, 2018 for stays between December 1 and January 31.
- **Kulula holidays** has introduced packages for the

Victoria Falls Carnival, for four nights, starting from R10 799pps. The package includes return flights to Livingstone, airport taxes, accommodation at Elephant Hills Resort or The Kingdom Hotel, airport transfers, breakfast daily, one sunset cruise per person, 10% off selected pre-booked activities and a three-day carnival pass. Valid for set dates from December 8 to January 1.

- **Thompsons Holidays** is offering December packages at the three-star, adults-only Recif Attitude in Mauritius for seven nights from R22 230pps. Valid for set

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dates from December 18-25. The package includes flights from Johannesburg and return airport-resort transfers (seat in coach), daily breakfast and dinner, entertainment three nights a week, WiFi throughout the hotel, glass-bottomed boat excursion, snorkelling, kayaks and pedal boats.

• The Holiday Factory

is offering seven-night discounted stays at the four-star Filao Beach Zanzibar from R13 990pps. Packages include return flights from Johannesburg, return transfers, breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as selected drinks daily. Valid until December 23, but a supplement may apply for travel in peak season.

• Thompsons Holidays

three-night Kruger self-drive package starts from R5 206pps. It includes three nights' accommodation at the four-star Protea Hotel by Marriott Kruger Gate, breakfast and dinner daily, welcome drink and daily bottled water. Children under 12 stay free when sharing with two adults. Valid until December 31.



Guests can enjoy a trip along the Nile in a felucca.

• **Topdeck** is offering a nine-day Egypt Express special starting from R14 900. The tour features the pyramids and Sphinx in Giza, a trip along the Nile in a traditional felucca, shopping in Luxor's gold markets and the opportunity to explore the Valley of the Kings with a qualified Egyptologist. The package includes eight breakfasts, two lunches,

two dinners, three nights in three-star hotels, one night in a tourist-class hotel, two nights aboard a felucca sailboat and two nights on an overnight coach. Arrival and departure transfers are included, as well as transport in an air-conditioned vehicle, and an English-speaking trip leader. Valid for set dates from December 29 to January 6.



Air Seychelles will increase flights from Johannesburg.

Additional airlift

IN ORDER to cope with peak season demand, a number of airlines that operate busy routes have upped frequencies to cope with the anticipated spike in bookings.

Air Seychelles will increase frequencies between Johannesburg and Seychelles, with additional services operated by the Airbus A320 on Mondays and Fridays from December 10 until January 12. On Mondays, from December 10 until January 7, flight HM061 will depart Seychelles at 09h50, arriving in Johannesburg at 12h55. The return flight, HM060 will depart Johannesburg at 14h15, arriving in Seychelles at 21h10. On Fridays,

from December 14 until January 12, flight HM063 will depart Seychelles at 18h25 on Fridays, arriving in Johannesburg at 21h30. Return flight HM062, departs Johannesburg at 14h15, and arrives in Seychelles at 21h10.

During December, Air Mauritius will operate the A330-900NEO on its Mauritius-Johannesburg route on Mondays and Tuesdays, which will mean a 161-seat increase in capacity. The A330-900NEO has 28 lie-flat business-class seats and 263 seats in economy class. In Cape Town, Air Mauritius will operate its A300-900NEO on Fridays between November 2, 2018 and January 11, 2019. ■

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SOUTH EAST Asia



There's still much to discover away from the crowds in South East Asia. Savannah Freemantle reports.

Over-tourism creates new opportunities

ACROSS South East Asia, tourism is booming due the destination's popularity and relatively low cost, with a number of the countries falling victim to over-tourism as a result, says **Rene Swart**, manager Wendy Wu Tours South Africa. "Some countries are closing their beaches and national parks for a few months at a time to allow them to recover. It's important for the trade to be aware of these 'recovery months' in order to advise their travellers on how to travel as a 'responsible tourist'."

All top-selling South East Asia agents contacted by *TNW* say over-tourism regulations have not impacted them negatively but have rather created opportunities to think outside the box to provide both first-time and repeat travellers with more personalised travel experiences. Rene shares this view: "Encourage clients to travel out of season and venture out into towns, villages or not-so-busy beaches. They will leave with a better understanding of daily life in South East Asia and their experience will be more memorable."

Stuart Goodall, an ITC based



Rene Swart

in Johannesburg, cautions against viewing countries in South East Asia as one-dimensional when looking for alternatives to the mainstream attractions. "All the countries offer rich cultural, culinary and historical experiences, and many offer quality beach experiences. Take the time to do your homework. You can often find exciting alternatives right on the doorstep of the main attractions and clients will reap the benefits that come with avoiding the crowds."

He recommends northern Thailand and the islands in the South China Sea that aren't commercialised.

"These offer pristine natural environments that are great for hiking, visiting waterfalls and engaging with local villages whose economy will actually benefit from an increase in tourists, unlike their overly commercialised neighbours."

Chantelle Smuts, a Travel Counsellor, agrees: "Finding alternatives can be as simple as recommending that clients stay nearby, such as at The Village Coconut Island Beach Resort in Phuket, a short ferry ride away from the main Thai attractions." When avoiding crowds in Bali, Seminyak and Nusa Dua beaches are a great alternative.

She adds that agents can also provide alternative itineraries by capitalising on the trend of travellers visiting more than one country at a time. "With current economic circumstances, a number of clients are travelling less frequently and for shorter periods. Some of these clients aim to get value for money by having as many different experiences as they can in one trip, within budget. Avoiding areas impacted by over-tourism is easier if you are building an itinerary that includes more than one country."

More demand for immersive experiences

TERESA Richardson, The Travel Corporation's head of marketing, tells *TNW* that the demand for immersive travel experiences is growing among South African travellers. "This growth can be attributed to South East Asia providing value-for-money options where travellers can 'connect with locals', 'dive into culture' and 'make a difference' to the local people and places they visit."

Teresa says, of the South East Asian destinations offered by Trafalgar, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia are among the most popular with South African travellers. "A key strategy when selling these destinations is to delve deeper and find experiences that travellers would certainly not have if they were visiting the destination alone."

Adrian Peters, key account manager at Peak Incentives, agrees and says his corporate incentive clients are as drawn to immersive experiences as traditional leisure travellers.

Top tips

- Teresa suggests looking for itineraries that incorporate activities focused on culture, such as learning the secrets of traditional Thai recipes in a cooking class with a local specialist in a colonial-style house. "The use of

local specialists is critical as it ensures that clients get an insider perspective from someone who lives in the destination and understands its nuances intimately."

- Teresa says guests enjoy sharing a meal with a local family or community so they can learn about life as a local and savour authentic local cuisine, usually in traditional surroundings like a family home.

- She also suggests being on the lookout for activities that allow the traveller to help preserve a traditional craft, or contribute to a charity initiative that supports local children.

- **Anneri Papenfus**, a Pentravel Menlyn consultant, suggests boarding a cruise and visiting the small villages dotted along the banks of the Mekong River in Cambodia.

- Travel Counsellor **Chantelle Smuts** recommends encouraging clients to sample food from the street stalls: "Many people are concerned about the hygiene factor but – while you don't want your clients to fall ill – these stalls provide a far more authentic experience than the fine-dining restaurants. I encourage my clients to pay attention to the way the food is being prepared and served before making a hygiene call. There are safe options."

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Selling Thailand to the repeat visitor

THE repeat visitor isn't coming to Thailand in pursuit of a cheap holiday, says **Lesley Simpson**, spokesperson for The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). "These travellers may have travelled to Thailand because it has the perception of being a 'cheap destination' the first time they came, but during that trip they realised the true value Thailand has to offer. They're now after the authentic Thai experience."

She adds that a first-time traveller will quickly realise that while flights and hotel packages are cost effective in Phuket, the daily food and entertainment experiences are not that cheap.

"When compared with the northern parts of the country, such as Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, where food, Thai artefacts and clothing can be half the price of Phuket, travellers quickly realise that they can get better value for money on their next trip to Thailand by exploring regions outside the typical tourist attractions."

Destinations

Lesley recommends the following alternative destinations for return travellers.

"Khao Lak is easily accessible from Phuket International Airport; popular for diving and being closely located to the famous Similan Islands, it is also close to Khao Sok National Park, which is a

great draw card for repeat visitors who are looking to experience Thailand in a unique way," said Lesley.

She added that the east coast and central areas of the country feature interesting alternatives for tourists, such as the Sukhothai Historical Park, which contains the partially restored 13th- and 14th-century palaces and temples of the Kingdom of Siam's first capital.

Lesley identifies Pattaya as the perfect base to launch family expeditions to culturally rich sites such as The Sanctuary of Truth, the Floating Market, Khao Chi Chan Buddha and the Cartoon Network Amazone Waterpark, adding that it is a mere two-hour drive from Bangkok.

If your client is interested in learning more about the history of Thailand, Lesley recommends showcasing the northern regions, such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and The Golden Triangle.

"Chiang Mai can trace its history back more than 700 years, making it probably the most historic city in Thailand. This region is also renowned for its export of Khao Soi (a coconut curry noodle soup) – a foodie's dream!"

Visiting Wang Nam Khiao in Thailand's largest province, Nakhon Ratchasima.

"Located in north-eastern Thailand about two and a half hours from Bangkok, this peaceful mountain town is known as the Switzerland of Thailand," said Lesley.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Agent experience: Spotlight on Cambodia

PENTRAVEL consultant, **Anneri Papenfus** recently went on an educational to Cambodia hosted by China Experience. "We went off season when the temperatures are hotter and the tourists were scarce. It was fantastic not to have to stand in lines or miss out on the opportunity to see attractions such as the Angkor temples because they had reached full capacity. Cambodia is a great destination for travellers who have already experienced Thailand and Bali and are looking for something different."

She said she hadn't realised how little she knew about Cambodia before she experienced it in person. "The country offers excellent secluded beach getaways and has a rich culture and history. It has so much more to offer than just the temples and food it's known for and it's very cost effective."

Anneri experienced ox-cart rides, guided historical tours, highlights of the country's natural beauty, a cruise with a focus on traditional cuisine, and the nightlife of Siem Reap. "I would encourage clients to make use of the private tours, they are affordable when compared with those available in Europe and can be



Siem Reap, Cambodia.

tailor made to suit the client's interests."

Anneri recommends the following activities:

Siem Reap

"Do not forget the amazing night life in Pub Street and the Angkor temple tours that you can stretch over three days in order to see as many as possible," says Anneri.

- Monk blessing at a pagoda
- Exploring the hidden countryside on horseback
- Khmer ceramic workshops

Phnom Penh

- Sunset cruise on the Mekong
- Visit Vann Molyvann's Building and take the Khmer architecture tour. Van Molyvann was a Cambodian architect, who contributed to the style

known as New Khmer Architecture.

- Khmer art and dancing classes
- Explore Mekong Island by bicycle
- Explore the bars on the waterfront
- Killing Fields tour
- Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum

Koh Rong Island

"This is the place where there are amazing beaches! You would, however, have to travel to either Siem Reap or Phnom Penh and get a connecting flight and, from there, a bus or ferry transfer of approximately one and a half hours. Koh Rong is great for honeymooners, or clients who would like to get away from the crowds and city life," says Anneri.



Hello Bangkok

AIR MAURITIUS

Air Mauritius will fly to Bangkok twice a week, effective 31 October 2018!

Flight No	Day	Depart	Arrive
MAURITIUS TO BANGKOK			
MK642	Sat	23h30	10h25 + 1 Direct
MK642	Wed	20h40	10h25 + 1 (via SIN)
BANGKOK TO MAURITIUS			
MK643	Sun	12h25	17h15 Direct
MK643	Thur	12h25	20h10 (via SIN)

*Departures: 31 October, 03, 07 and 10 November 2018. Return: 08, 11, 15, 18, 22 and 25 November 2018. All Fares are subject to availability and currency fluctuations. Free Stopover in Mauritius on non-connecting flights. Terms and Conditions apply.

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Contiki offers Cambodia and Sri Lanka tours

FOR the first time, Contiki is offering tours into Cambodia and Sri Lanka in 2019.

Pure Sri Lanka is a 10-day tour including nine nights' accommodation, 12 meals and in-trip transportation. Clients visit Negombo, Kandy, Ella, Udawalawe, Unawatuna, and Colombo.

The eight-day Cambodian Magic tour includes seven nights' accommodation, seven meals and in-trip transportation. Clients visit Sihanoukville, Kep, Koh Tonsay, Kampot and Ko Rong.

Bronwyn Strydom, marketing manager of



Colombo is one of the stops on Contiki's Sri Lanka tour.

Trafalgar Tours says The Travel Corporation, of which Contiki, Trafalgar and CostSaver are subsidiaries, is launching new packages

in South East Asia across its brands in response to a significant increase in demand for packages to this destination.

CostSaver debuts in Asia

BRONWYN Strydom, says the CostSaver arm of TTC's operations recently launched Asian itineraries for the first time.

Debuting in 2019 the tours explore India, China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Japan.

"These are great for first-time travellers to South East Asia, honeymooners, or families. They offer three- to four-star accommodation, the majority of the client's meals, and include immersive cultural experiences."

CostSaver currently offers three Asian packages:

- The Vietnam, Cambodia Adventure is 14 days long and allows clients to experience five cities across two countries. It is inclusive of 21 meals and on-trip transport.
- Highlights of India travels to three cities in 10 days. It is inclusive of 16 meals and on-trip transport.
- Japan Discovery does four cities in 10 days. It is inclusive of 13 meals and on-trip transport.

MK increases Africa-Asia connectivity

AIR Mauritius has started operating weekly flights to Wuhan, China. The route is serviced by an Airbus A340 with 34 seats in business class and 264 in economy class. Flight MK690 departs Mauritius on Saturdays at 09h20 and arrives in Wuhan at 00h10 the next day. Flight MK691 departs Wuhan on Sundays. The airline will offer the service as a charter where tour operators can book committed seats.

MK first launched operations to China in July 2011 with one weekly flight to Shanghai. The airline now serves the Chinese market with flights to Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore. In addition to Wuhan, it also operates charter flights to Chengdu.

MK will also launch a new service from Mauritius to Thailand from October 31. The airline will operate two weekly flights to Bangkok, serviced with a mix of A330-200/-900neo aircraft. A direct flight to Bangkok will operate on Saturdays, and a flight via Singapore to Bangkok on Wednesdays.

Flight MK642 will depart Mauritius on Saturdays at 23h30 and arrive in Bangkok at 10h25 the next day. Return flight MK643

departs from Bangkok on Sundays at 12h25 and arrives in Mauritius at 17h15. Flight MK642 will depart Mauritius on Wednesdays at 20h40 and arrive in Singapore at 07h50 the following day. It departs Singapore at 09h00 and arrives in Bangkok at 10h25. Flight MK643 will depart Bangkok on Thursdays at 12h25 and arrives in Singapore at 16h00. It departs Singapore at 17h00 and arrives in Mauritius at 20h10.

On the new routes, **Carla da Silva**, Air Mauritius regional manager, Southern Africa and Latin America, said: "Our Air Corridor Strategy of connecting Asia and Africa, is constantly being developed through additional routes and capacity. China is a strategic partner to Africa on many levels. Therefore, increased routes to the Asian continent, enables more capacity and schedule options, further enhancing connectivity."

"Thailand is the other popular destination for South Africans. Air Mauritius's recently introduced Bangkok route [is primarily aimed at] the local SA leisure market."

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RwandAir plans China flights

RWANDAIR has been granted a licence to start direct services to Guangzhou, China. The flights are likely to start toward the end of the year, with flight details still to be finalised.

Thembela Dladla, country manager of RwandAir,

told TNW: "There are limited flights connecting the continent to China."

"Kigali has the mid-hemisphere advantage, and therefore caters for the whole of Africa for a connecting flight." ■



Have pizza, will travel!

Globus Family of Brands has partnered with Col'Cacchio for the 10th year of the Celebrity Chef campaign. Everyone who purchases a Celebrity Chef pizza will stand a chance to win a trip for two to Italy with Globus, and Col'Cacchio will donate a portion of sales to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, Cape Town. Pictured at the launch of this year's Red Cross Memorial Hospital campaign are (from left): Lucinda Tyler from Club Travel; Janine Pienaar from Globus; Nadia Jaffer, the Col'Cacchio Celebrity Chef; Zephnie Viljoen and Shona Pittaway from Globus; and Marianne Strydom, from XL Boland Travel.



Fun on the job

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts and Priority Travel recently hosted a joint function for Priority Travel's high-end clients at Gentlemen's Arthouse, Johannesburg. From left: Ramesh Jeenarain, md of World Leisure Holidays; Roxanne Mac Gregor, key account manager Southern Africa and Greg Ward vp sales at Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts.



Welcome Lyla!

Nicci Hayden, a Travel Counsellor based in Cape Town, gave birth to Lyla on August 19. Nicci is pictured with young son, Logan, and Lyla.

Have you spoilt your team?

Have you done something to celebrate your staff recently? Send us your pictures for a chance to be published in TNW.

Photos must be high res (1MB or more).

Email savannahf@nowmedia.co.za

TNW8002

Pick of the week

brought to you by



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Travel Consultant – Fourways

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Intermediate Sales Consultant – N/Suburbs, CPT

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Flight Centre Travel Group
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Tourplan Fundi – JNB, North

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Guest Relations Manager – CPT

Equity Connections cc
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Appointments

■ Taj Cape Town has appointed **Carmen Rhodes** as associate director of sales for Corporate and MICE, based in Cape Town. The Johannesburg-based sales team welcomes **Alicia Read** as senior sales manager and **Samin Atif** as sales executive.

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TNW8019

FCTG snaps up more product

From page 1

Carlos said about 40% of FCTG South Africa's land bookings went through Flight Centre Holidays at present, showing roughly 10% growth compared with three years ago.

"We encourage sales through this channel by offering our agents incentives, good commissions and sending them on educational packages that promote FCTG packages," he said. ■

Bedsonline system

From page 1

He added that, while previously GTA and Hotelbeds managed both wholesale and retail clients in South Africa, the company had now restructured, separating these divisions more clearly. Two individual teams will now manage retail and wholesale channels separately.

Shaun said the company had identified Africa and

South Africa as good growth markets from both a sales and contracting perspective.

Toward the end of 2017, Webjet, another large B2B hotel aggregator, acquired JacTravel and totalstay. The company also created a separate bed bank division called WebBeds toward the middle of 2018, consolidating JacTravel, totalstay, sunhotels and FIT RUUMS under one brand. ■



World Leisure Holidays is offering a travel trade incentive for agents. Sell a minimum of ten, seven-night stays for two adults at Pearle Beach Resort and Spa, Mauritius (including flights), between September 1 and June 30 and receive a five-night stay (land only) for yourself and a partner. Sell 15 or more of these packages and receive a seven-night stay (land only) for yourself and a partner. **Elinda Van Der Merwe (left) and Megan Batten** sales executives at World Leisure Holidays. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

Trafalgar heads to Antarctica

SAVANNAH FREEMANTLE

TRAFALGAR has launched cruises to Antarctica – a first for the tour operator. The cruises will be operated in partnership with Poseidon Adventures on board the *Sea Spirit*.

Passengers will arrive in Ushuaia, Argentina, on day one and spend the first night in Arakur Spa Hotel. On the second day of the tour, passengers will board the cruise and depart for Antarctica, sailing through the Beagle Channel, Drake Passage, South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula, before returning to Ushuaia.

Highlights include: Seal and penguin spotting, 11 breakfasts, eight lunches and eight dinners, optional experiences and free time.

All portage and local charges, hotel tips, charges and local taxes are included, as well as a travel director and separate driver, VIP entry to many sights, and airport shuttle transfers on the first and last day of the tour. Flights are excluded.

Bookings open at the end of this year, with two departures in February 2019 and two departures in December 2019.

Teresa Richardson, head of marketing of The Travel Corporation, told *TNW* that the cruise was aimed at adventure seekers. "This tour is for people who are looking for a unique, educational and authentic expedition-style quest." She added that Trafalgar had seen an increase in client interest in travel to Antarctica. "Over the years

our client feedback has demonstrated an interest in the destination. More of our travellers are seeking adventure."

Divan Viljoen, marketing campaign manager for Cruiseabout FCTG, agreed. "The tours will attract the SA market as it has become more adventurous. A trip to Antarctica with a reputable operator like Trafalgar is a perfect match. There are clients who would love to do this bucket-list journey."

He added that the pricing was competitive. "A unique, once-in-a-lifetime luxury experience like this will, of course, come at a price, and there are clients out there who would be willing to pay this premium for such an amazing journey. Not everyone can say they have been to Antarctica." ■



Enjoy a fantastic 10% incentive on Premium Business Class tickets issued in September



10% over commission for all LONG HAUL Premium Business Class tickets issued in September 2018, containing either a return (JNB-GRU-JNB) or a one way sector (JNB-GRU or GRU-JNB) on LATAM Airlines flights, regardless of final destination. **Travel period starts from 1st September** for all flights within system range.

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We have some great offers on **Premium Business Class** travel from **Johannesburg** to a number of Latin American destinations. **Offers end September 18th**. Booking Class: Z/Class. Refer to your GDS for fare rules.

Wishing you exciting sales this September!

BSP reflects SAA's shrinking market share

TESSA REED

SAA's BSP figures for the first seven months of the year show more than a 3% decline compared with the same period last year.

The decline compares with industry growth of just under 10% for the same period – growth attributed to improved consumer confidence in the first half of the year.

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

Cotonou via Libreville.

Then on January 15 this year, a number of SAA's Johannesburg-Cape Town and Johannesburg-Durban flights were cut while Mango added flights on the same routes.

Earlier this year, SAA ceo, **Vuyani Jarana**, told the trade that SAA lost money on every domestic route it operated, even if travelling with full loads, and that this informed its strategy to transfer domestic routes to Mango, which is profitable due to lower cost structures.

While SAA's figures show a decline, **Wally Gaynor**, Club Travel md, told *TNW* the

figures could be viewed in a positive light. He explained that, with SAA cutting back on routes and reducing scheduled flights, a loss in market share was inevitable, but it indicated a possible turnaround.

SAA incurred a nett loss of R5,5billion for the 2016/17 financial year. While it hasn't reported its financial results for 2017/18, the carrier expects similar losses.

"They haven't done too badly," said Wally, adding that the airline was consolidating its routes. "I see it as positive because what they are doing is trying to turn things around." ■

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