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Mango mulls new international routes

DORINE REINSTEIN

MANGO is looking at launching a service to Mauritius in the next 12 months. Kilimanjaro is also in the pipeline.

Mango ceo, **Nico Bezuidenhout**, told TNW on the side lines of the Routes 2015 aviation conference, which was held in Durban from September 19 to 21, that the airline was looking to further develop its leisure routes into Africa after the success of its Zanzibar route. "Our services into Tanzania are highly lucrative; it's a good market for us," he said.

One of the main reasons Mango is looking to expand beyond SA's borders, is because of the constrained SA market. There was too much capacity in the South African domestic market, said Nico. "Something will have to give." He predicts the exit of some LCCs. "There will be further market consolidation. There is no doubt there's inefficient capacity in the market to sustain the amount of LCCs operating in the market. In the SA short-haul space we've had ten entries and exits of new carriers in the last

decade, and more will exit soon." Despite this, Mango would continue to add capacity in the domestic market, Nico said, adding that the SA domestic market was still, by far, the biggest on the African continent.

Mango and SAA had managed to grow market share in a market that wasn't growing, Nico said. "There are specific city pairs in our country where our entry has stimulated growth, doubling the number of travellers." Mango, in particular, had captured some travellers through its distribution channels in retail stores, he said.

Mango had seen fast-paced growth over the past few years, he added. "Last year we grew about 12%, and for the next three to five years, I foresee an average rate of growth of about 20%."

Mango will continue to focus primarily on the leisure segment of the South African market. "Price-sensitive business travellers tend to follow once the route is established and we have built up our service," said Nico, adding it was important for Mango to take care not to cannibalise parent company, SAA. ■



Hiking through the Rockies

Travel Vision is offering an eight day 'Canadian Rockies Elements' experience from R23 155pps. The deal includes seven nights' accommodation, local taxes, national park fees, a 'glacier adventure', lunch in Revelstoke and at Hell's Gate, a personalised travel photo book and more. The offer is valid until October 1, 2016. See Travelinfo for details. Pictured here (from left) are: Travel Vision's sales and marketing manager, **Annemarie Lexow**, and supervisor for the North and South America division, **Venice Barris**. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

'Govt, act fast or face consequences'

DORINE REINSTEIN

THE South African government needs to "act fast or face the consequences" of the new immigration regulations, which have resulted in a worrying decline in passengers visiting the country.

This was the opinion of panellists

discussing barriers to growth in Africa at the recent Routes 2015 aviation conference, which was held in Durban. The message was that while there remains a lot of potential for Africa, carriers are struggling for profitability and governments need to relook at their policies to assist carriers and

boost tourism. "Clearly, we have to respect the rights of sovereign states to consider security and immigration concerns. I fully appreciate the South African government's desire to address the very serious issue of child trafficking but there are other tried-and-tested techniques and approaches

to doing this," said **David Scowsill**, president and ceo of the World Travel and Tourism Council. He added that if South Africa wanted to return to growth in terms of tourism, something would need to be done urgently. "I'm delighted that the President has set up

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Nigerian visa lodgement centre opens

A DEDICATED application centre for Nigerian visas has opened in Johannesburg.

The centre is operated by OIS (Online Integrated Solutions), an official partner of the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Johannesburg.

Travellers can now complete their application online and schedule an appointment at the centre, which is located in Rosebank.

Visa service company, Visas and Passports Unlimited, which has registered with OIS, has welcomed the opening of the centre.

“Travellers will not have to appear in person unless specially requested to do so. Visas and Passports Unlimited will take care of loading the application online for clients and the payments,” said Visas and Passports Unlimited in a statement. ■

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



Enjoying the new on-board product are Dr Michelle Potgieter (left), Samsung's director of corporate marketing and communications, and SAA's Kim Thipe. Photo: Carina Borralho

More entertainment on board SAA

CARINA BORRALHO

BUSINESS-class passengers flying regionally on SAA can now enjoy the use of a Samsung tablet on board, giving them access to more entertainment, including movies, TV series, magazines and kids' programming. “We have certain regional flights, under four hours

long, that do not have a full entertainment platform, such as wide screens. We decided to find a way to still offer our business-class passengers entertainment by handing out a hand-held device at the beginning of their flights,” said **Kim Thipe**, SAA's head of global marketing and product development. The content was selected

by passengers when trials started seven months ago. At first, only movies had been offered, but passengers had expressed the need for content diversity, she said.

The SAA project development team are also currently working on offering on-board WiFi, which will be available in the near future. ■

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E-mail: tnw@nowmedia.co.za

Web: www.nowmedia.co.za

Address: Now Media Centre,
32 Fricker Road, Illovo Boulevard,
Illovo, Johannesburg,
PO Box 55251, Northlands,
2116, South Africa.



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

EDITORIAL
Group Editor: Natasha Schmidt natashas@nowmedia.co.za
Features Editor: Debbie Badham

Contributors:
Tessa Reed Hilka Birns
Max Marx Dorine Reinstein
Carina Borralho Darise Foster
Photographer: Shannon Van Zyl
Production Editor: Ann Braun

PUBLISHER
Kate Nathan katen@nowmedia.co.za

GROUP PUBLISHER
David Marsh davem@nowmedia.co.za

ADVERTISING
Sales: katen@nowmedia.co.za
Advertising Co-ordinator:
Anthea Lucas antheal@nowmedia.co.za

PRODUCTION
Design Head:
Dirk Vooorneveld

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Circulation tvsub@nowmedia.co.za

To the point



First Car Rental has signed a new multi-year full-content global distribution agreement with Traveport, which gives Traveport-connected entities worldwide real-time access to First Car Rental's booking portal, vehicle rates and associated services. The partnership is effective immediately, with First Car Rental's full content now live on Traveport's Travel Commerce Platform.



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Hot topics were addressed in thought-provoking presentations at the Serendipity Worldwide Group annual conference, held from September 10-12 at the Champagne Castle Resort in the Drakensberg. Dorine Reinstein reports.

Asata investigates Lufthansa distribution charge



The founding members of SWG (from left): Lal Jayamaha, Carol Du Preez and Dinesh Naidoo, who celebrated the fourth SWG Conference in the Drakensberg earlier this month.



From left: Asata ceo, Otto de Vries; md of United Europe, Mark Buck; and The Holiday Factory director, Adrian Hollis, relax at the evening function. Photos: Dorine Reinstein

Asata is engaging with Lufthansa on the airline's controversial €16 (R242) charge for bookings through the GDS.

Otto de Vries, Asata ceo, told delegates at the Serendipity Worldwide Group (SWG) conference that Asata had been lobbying on behalf of travel agents, and was in talks with IATA. "Lufthansa's implementation of the DCC has not only upset our industry; it has also upset customers extensively."

Asata is striving to regulate the use of the YQ/YR box, through which Lufthansa is currently collecting the DCC. Otto explained: "The YR/YQ box was created to allow agents to collect third-party government taxes. Because it's not regulated by a

resolution, airlines can use it for other charges as well. We want to correct that.

"If we're going to collect money on behalf of government, it needs to be done in a coded manner that everyone understands. If the airlines wish to collect any other money, they have OA, OB and OC boxes to do that."

Otto added that the industry should expect other airlines to follow suit. "Don't think that other airlines aren't looking closely at this and not seeing it as a way to enforce a shift in distribution," he said, warning this would be extremely disruptive for the travel industry. "If other airlines start doing this, it's going to be a very unhealthy space for all of us. It is so important that we fight this."

SWG launches new app

SWG has launched a brand new app for its members. The closed app contains all the relevant contact details of every supplier working with the group. "You want an airline, a car rental or a cruise company? With one click you'll have access to all the relevant people, whether you want

refunds, waitlists or group bookings," said Dinesh Naidoo, group operations director of SWG.

Suppliers can also send push notifications to SWG members on a regular basis so that agents have immediate access to the latest special offers for their clients.

Agents, stay relevant

TRAVEL agents are often seen as an expensive distribution channel in a competitive travel industry, putting more pressure on the retail trade to prove their worth and offer value for money.

"In every distribution channel, everyone is continuously looking at cutting costs. You, as the travel agent, are seen as a distribution channel. You distribute products on behalf of your suppliers and you are deemed to be an expensive distribution channel," Robyn Christie, gm of Travelport

Southern Africa, told delegates.

The key was to remain relevant to customers, and the only way to remain relevant was through technology, Robyn said. "Your customer has as much access to destination information as you do. You're no longer the opinion leader," she said, warning that travel agents needed to offer a reliable and cost-effective service that exceeded their customers' ability to source the same information. "The only way you can do that is by using specialist systems."

Beware of what you post online!

"DIGITAL content is dangerous content," social media lawyer, Emma Sadleir, told delegates at the conference.

Emma urged travel agents to have clear social media strategies and policies in place, as one rogue tweet from one employee could affect the financials and reputation of

the entire company.

Says Emma: "You are responsible for everything on your Facebook page, even if you didn't write it."

She added that even if you 'like' something or were tagged in a post, you could be held liable and could even be prosecuted. ■



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MHG ventures into new UAE territory

MINOR Hotel Group will launch its first property in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates, with the opening of the Anantara Mina Al Arab Ras Al Khaimah Resort in 2018.

The resort will offer 225 rooms, which will include guest rooms, suites and Maldivian-style overwater villas, the first in Ras Al Khaimah. A diverse selection of quality restaurants will include speciality Asian dining and a seafood grill.

Facilities will include meeting and events space with a ballroom seating 250, a health club with a gym, aerobics room and a yoga room, squash courts, a tennis court, a large outdoor pool, a kids' club with a speciality kids' restaurant and an extensive Anantara Spa.

Mina Al Arab is on the coast, just 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport, 15 minutes from Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and 10 minutes from Ras Al Khaimah City. ■

Lufthansa Group restructures

THE Lufthansa Group, currently comprising Lufthansa, SWISS, Austrian Airlines, Eurowings and Germanwings, will be split into two groups, which will focus on either premium passengers or those on a budget. The new structure will come into effect on January 1.

Under the new structure, the group's premium airlines, Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines, will carry on operating under the Lufthansa Group name, while Germanwings will be rebranded to Eurowings and form the Eurowings Group as a secondary brand. ■

Courtney Canham selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **South African Airways.** Promotional fare from JNB to Seychelles – R2 610 excluding taxes. Offer is effective for sales until September 30. Travel is valid from September 27 until October 7.
- **Sure Voyager Travel.** New Year ski holiday in Livigno, Italy. Package rate is R35 499 per adult, R33 929 per child under 16 years and R33 810 per child under 12 years. Set departure December 27. Package includes return flights ex-JNB to Zurich, taxes, airport transfers, self-catering apartment based on four people sharing a two-bedroom apartment for 11 nights, 10-day ski pass and ski hire. Eight seats left.
- **AfricaStay.** Victoria Falls – two-night stays from R4 850 and three-night stays from R5 635pp sharing. Packages include flights ex-JNB, taxes, breakfast and a sunset cruise. Book by September 30 and travel by December 20.
- **Cruises International.** Book selected 2015 Crystal sailings and get complimentary flights and/or transfers. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.



To the point



MSC Cruises has doubled the R3 000 deposit required to provisionally secure a cabin for peak season cruises scheduled to depart between December 19, 2016 and January 1, 2017. During this period, an increased deposit of R6 000 per cabin is required at the time of the passenger's booking request. Full payment remains payable no later than 60 days prior to sailing. Where a passenger has failed to pay the final outstanding amount by the due date, the bookings will be cancelled and the relevant cancellation penalties applied.

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RUSSIA



South African travellers looking for an alternative to Europe should look to Russia. Kate Els visited the country as a guest of followme2RUSSIA.

Mother Russia offers more value

STEEPED in history and culture, Russia offers a holiday that can be likened to visiting European destinations like Venice or Paris and, despite the weak rand, it is also a more affordable option for South Africans.

Ground operator, followme2RUSSIA has established an office in Cape Town, promoting travel to Russia. A familiarisation trip in August saw a group of travel agents head to Saint Petersburg to experience the destination and discover why they should be selling Russia to their clients as a leisure destination.

Ahmed Pahad, CEO of Buzzing Travel, believes that South Africans will be interested not only in the historic and cultural aspects of Russia but also the political ties that bind the countries, developed

during apartheid. "Russia is still fairly much an untapped tourist destination. It has a very high historic content and rich culture. South Africans don't really know of the links between the then

"It has delicious food, excellent vodka, fantastic nightlife and restaurants, and very good value for money for South Africans compared with Europe."

Soviet Russia. Former President Thabo Mbeki studied social science in Moscow during the late 60s and the Soviets, aka 'Russians', were among the biggest backers of the anti-apartheid struggle and were critical in building mass

anti-apartheid movements," Ahmed says.

South Africans will also be interested in the variety of experiences on offer in Russia, says **Lucinda Tyler**, product manager of Club Travel. "It is a beautiful country, filled with history, art, friendly people, great shopping, delicious food, excellent vodka, fantastic nightlife and restaurants, and very good value for money for South Africans compared with Europe."

Lucinda notes that prices of items that travellers typically buy are very comparable to South Africa, including bottled water at R10, an alcoholic beverage at R40 and a slab of chocolate for R10. She notes that souvenirs are also affordable, with the popular Matryoshka dolls retailing from around R70 per set.

When to go

The summer months in Russia offer a temperate climate and long days but winter holidays can be magical too. "Having been fortunate to visit Russia on many occasions, I always tell my clients that they have to visit Russia

twice, once in summer and once in winter. The same view during the different seasons is completely different and it's like two different holidays," says Ahmed.

Lucinda is a fan of summer holidays in Russia:

"I would say visit in June for the White Nights Festival. Winter gives a different view completely as temperatures are extremely cold, well below zero. However ice skating on the canals is very appealing too."



Strolling the canals of Saint Petersburg (from left): Mandi Johnson-Aliverti, md Titch Tours; Jacqui Giles, leisure consultant Club Travel; and Lucinda Tyler, product manager Club Travel. Photo: Kate Els



The Church of our Saviour on Spilled Blood is a top attraction in Saint Petersburg, drawing in tourists with its colourful onion domes. Photo: Kate Els

Getting there...

As a regional hub, Istanbul offers great connections into Russia. Turkish Airlines will commence daily direct flights out of Cape Town using an Airbus A330

from October 25. This new service will complement the daily Johannesburg-Istanbul service that Turkish Airlines operates at present. ■

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The launch of SAA's inaugural flight between Accra and Washington DC last month is the first of several routes planned for the region, forming part of the airline's strategy to strengthen its presence in West Africa. Natasha Schmidt attended the festivities as a guest of SAA.

SAA's new frontier

THE launch of flights between Accra and Washington, on which SAA has fifth freedom rights to offload and pick up passengers, is a pilot project – a foothold in West Africa from which SAA can open up travel between the underserved region and North America, **Kendy Phohleli**, SAA's executive of African Hub Projects, told *TNW* on the side lines of the launch event, which was held at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra on August 2.

"SAA has been working on establishing a presence in West Africa for eight years. Seeing this come to fruition is momentous as it forms a fundamental part of the airline's Long Term Turnaround Strategy," he said. "South Africa is so far south it makes

sense to have a feeder hub close to the Equator to move traffic between Africa and North America and Europe." The next North

"South Africa is so far south it makes sense to have a feeder hub close to the Equator to move traffic between Africa and North America and Europe."

American destination on the list, following Accra to Washington, is Toronto.

SAA plans to use Ghana as a launch pad. It was negotiating with other countries to expand its presence in the region, establishing similar arrangements between West

Africa and French markets, for example, Kendy said.

The airline has established a commercial co-operation agreement with Ghanaian domestic carrier, Africa World Airlines (AWA), which will offer customers further connections into West Africa, including Kumasi, Takoradi and Tamale in Ghana as well as to Lagos, Nigeria.

In North America, connections to and from over 50 markets will be offered through SAA's airline partners United Airlines, JetBlue Airways and Virgin America.

The Accra-Washington route will be served by A340-600s on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, featuring 42 lie-flat seats in business class and 275 seats in economy class.



The Labadi Beach Hotel. Photo: Legacy Hotels & Resorts

Where to stay

BUSINESS is booming in Ghana, with mining, insurance, telecoms and banking sectors bringing massive development to city centres like Accra.

A major challenge for corporate travellers is finding accommodation that is of a high standard, and consistently so. The Labadi Beach Hotel, which is part of the Legacy Group, ticks all the boxes. It is situated close to the airport – 10km from Kotoka International – and 15km from the city centre. (Travellers should be warned though that traffic in Accra is often congested and short journeys can still take some time.)

The hotel features 162 rooms and suites, all of which have individually controlled air-conditioning, colour TV with 15 satellite

channels, a mini-bar and luxury private bathrooms. The hotel's Akwaaba Restaurant serves a full English breakfast as well as an extensive buffet for both lunch and dinner.

The hotel has seen a significant increase in conferencing since February after the ban on meetings (following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014) was lifted earlier this year.

Labadi Beach features a new conference centre, The Omany Suite, which opened in early 2014, which can cater for up to 600 people. The room can be divided into four breakout rooms. The hotel also features the Labadi Suite, which caters for up to 120 delegates and can be split into two separate units.

Welcome, SAA!



SAA's inaugural flight from Johannesburg was welcomed at Accra's Kotoka International Airport last month by a traditional water cannon salute. Photo: SAA

Airport upgrades

ACCRA's Kotoka International Airport is undergoing a massive upgrade.

By the end of December, passengers travelling through the airport should have some relief from congestion and long queues. Expansion works on Terminal 2's arrival hall are under way. The first phase involves the expansion of the existing floor area, new baggage-handling equipment and carousels, additional immigration booths, and the replacement of air-conditioning systems.

Other on-going projects include the installation of state-of-the-art security

systems, the reconstruction of the taxiway and the construction of a third terminal for international flights, which is expected to be completed by August 2016.

Meanwhile, Tamale Airport in the north of Ghana is being developed to handle international operations, including the seasonal Hajj pilgrimage flights between Ghana and Mecca. On completion, the airport will serve as an alternative to Kotoka, and be able to accommodate wide-body aircraft. The project is expected to be completed by January 2016.

The schedule

SAA now operates daily flights between Johannesburg and Accra, with four of the flights continuing onwards to Washington; and three onwards to Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Three of the current weekly flights between Johannesburg and Washington will continue operating from Johannesburg via Dakar, Senegal. ■

Flight	Day of the week	Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive
SA209	Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday	Johannesburg 17h25	Accra 21h45	Accra 22h45	Washington 06h05 next day
SA210	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday	Washington 17h40	Accra 07h40	Accra 08h40	Johannesburg 16h30
SA052	Saturday	Johannesburg 16h55	Accra 21h15		
SA053	Saturday	Accra 22h30	Johannesburg 06h20 next day		
SA056	Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday	Johannesburg 12h50	Accra 17h10	Accra 18h10	Abidjan 19h10
SA057	Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday	Abidjan 20h10	Accra 21h25	Accra 22h30	Johannesburg 06h20 next day



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- Day 5 Baie St. Anne, Praslin; Aride; Big Sister Island
- Day 6 Desroche Island
- Day 7 Mahé/Victoria
- Day 8 Disembarkation

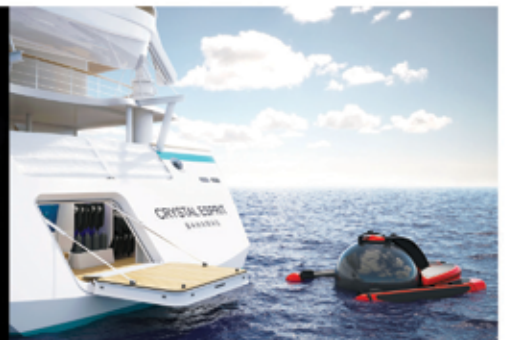
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2015-2016

2015/2016
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January: 15, 22, 29
February: 5, 12, 19, 26
March: 5, 12, 19





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UK

The dwindling value of the rand is a considerable blow for UK-bound travellers but does this mean fewer South Africans travelling to the UK? Carina Borralho investigates.

Is the strong pound a deterrent?

A DAUNTING exchange rate is not deterring South Africans from travelling to the UK. In fact, the independent growth forecast from Tourism Decision Metrics (Oxford Economics) estimates that by 2020, Britain will welcome 260 000 visitors from South Africa annually – representing a 20% increase on 2014 figures.

According to VisitBritain, while there was a small dip in visits to the UK from South Africa in 2014, there has been an overall trend toward a steady increase since 2011. Provisional figures from the International Passenger Survey for Q1 of 2015 also show positive growth and an 8,18% increase compared with Q1 of 2014.

“Britain saw 216 639 South African visitors in 2014, spending a total of around £230 million (R4,8bn) over an average



Liezl Gericke

stay of 12,4 nights for each visitor,” says **Emily Moore**, nurture market manager at VisitBritain.

What’s more, **Lorna Burke**, marketing and communications at Air France KLM, says there is no seasonality between South Africa and the UK.

Trafalgar has also noticed growth in outbound travel to the UK. “South Africans have never stopped travelling to the UK, and

while we saw a dip when the new UK visa requirements were implemented, there was a welcome surge of interest after the Olympics, and Trafalgar has seen growth this year,” says Trafalgar md, **Theresa Szejwallo**.

Due to this growth, the tour operator has increased its product offering to Britain and Ireland exponentially, and now offers 25 guided holidays and five separate travel styles in its Europe & Britain brochure.

“We are still seeing an interest from South Africans wishing to travel to the UK,” agrees Virgin Atlantic Airways country manager, **Liezl Gericke**. “However, while there is still interest from South Africans to visit the UK, we feel that the new visa regulations along with the weakened rand will have a negative impact on future travel trends for South Africa.”



2015 Rugby World Cup kicked off at Twickenham.

The RWC effect

Emily says that interest from South Africans travelling to the UK increases with sporting events, as evidenced by the 2015 Rugby World Cup, which kicked off at Twickenham on September 18. Liezl agrees, saying an increase in the number of South Africans travelling to the UK has definitely been noted as a result of the major event.

“We have certainly seen interest in all things British in general in light of the Rugby World Cup. South Africa’s pool games are taking place in some fantastic destinations – Brighton, Newcastle, Birmingham and the Olympic Stadium – so there is a lot for South African fans to see and do while supporting their team,” says Emily.

Travellers demand value

Arrival numbers may be positive but added expenses brought about by the unfavourable exchange rate as well as the fact that South African passport holders need a visa, means that travellers who want to go to the UK look for the real value in their experience, says Theresa.

In light of this, VisitBritain has launched a guide to travelling cost-effectively in Britain, says Emily. “This new online guide is packed with ideas on how to enjoy Britain on a budget,” she

says, adding that it contains information on free attractions and tips on where to eat and how to travel.

“I would suggest agents have a look at Great Value Britain, which they can use to assist South African travellers to combat the currency difference,” says Emily.

The site is titled lovewall.visitbritain.com and provides users with a sidebar of options such as ‘landmarks’, ‘culture’, ‘countryside’, ‘secret Britain’ and many more.

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Promote package deals

When you consider the price of most everyday items in the UK, it is easy to see how costs can add up. Agents should recommend UK package deals for travellers who want value for their rands. Suppliers are able to package deals and offer agents value-for-money offers that will allow travellers to make the most of their rands, as package deals usually include various meals, transportation, tickets to tourist attractions and many more, all at one standard price.

Theresa notes that travellers can really benefit from Trafalgar's Rand price guarantee and Preview offer. "On the

Preview offer, Trafalgar sells 2016 trips at 2015 prices, less 10%. Not only are these great deals, but they are also sold on easy payment terms." This means that once a client books and pays the deposit on their holiday the price is guaranteed, safeguarding them against any negative currency fluctuations.

"This makes visiting the UK easier for South African travellers," Theresa maintains.

"Clients can book and pay a R5 000 deposit for their 2016 holiday on 2015 rates by October 5 and still get a 10% discount with the balance only due by January 29, 2016," she adds.

Book it!

British T.I.P.S is offering London Sightseeing Value Packs from R2 410 per person, or R1 490 for children between the ages of four and 15. The package includes the Original Sightseeing Open Top Bus Tour, a 45-minute Thames cruise or Hop On, Hop Off cruise, walking tours of London, a Madame Tussaud's with Chamber Live (renamed Chamber of Horrors) ticket, a Tower of London ticket and ride on the London Eye. The special is valid for travel until February 28, 2016.

Know your air travel options!

A SOUND knowledge of the best air and ground arrangements will enable agents to provide travellers with the best value for money, points out spokesperson for British Airways, **Stephen Forbes**.

British Airways is currently the only carrier offering direct flights from Cape Town to London.

The airline's new First cabin – already on A380 and B747 services from Johannesburg

– will be available on the double-daily Cape Town services from October. "We have also introduced a new Club World menu on the Cape Town route," says Stephen.

Air France KLM connects to 15 destinations in the UK from South Africa – Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Durham Tees Valley, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Humberside, Leeds, London Heathrow, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich,

Bournemouth and Exeter.

"Travellers can connect to these destinations quickly and easily via our hubs in Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol," says **Lorna Burke**.

Travellers can currently take advantage of an economy-class fare on Air France of R8 982 per person, including taxes, while KLM is currently offering an economy-class fare of R8 685 return, including taxes.

How much does a coffee cost?

Item	Cost	Conversion
A cup of coffee	Ranges from about £1,50 to £3	R31 to R63
A bottle of water	Ranges from 57p bought from Tesco, to £1,50 bought at stores or pubs	R12 to R31
A pint of beer	In the countryside this costs about £2,95, while in major cities it can cost up to £3,60	R62 to R76
A meal at a pub	Ranges from about £12 to £21	R255 to R447
An average lunchtime meal	In the business districts this starts at about £11	R234
A visit to the London Eye	Starts at £20	R425
Ticket to Madame Tussaud's	Starts at £33, while a ticket for a child starts at £28	R702 and R596 respectively
Ticket to Shakespeare's Globe	£13,50 for an adult	R287

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Get around town easily

TRAVELLING around the UK is easy for tourists. With daily scheduled buses and trains departing major cities and towns, tourists are able to explore the UK hassle-free.

Agents should recommend travellers visiting London to buy an Oyster Card, which allows them to board the Underground from over 270 stations in London. The Underground

also links to various over-ground train stations that link to other major destinations across the UK, including Wales and Scotland, while Northern Ireland can be easily reached by ferry.

A train ride from London Kings Cross station to Edinburgh takes around four hours and 20 minutes, and costs around £40 (R836) one-way.



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The new Terminal 2 is part of Heathrow's major expansion plans.

Airports gear up for an increase in arrivals

WITH major airport expansion plans under way, the appeal of the UK is predicted to increase, and the country intends to welcome a growing number of visitors in the coming years.

Rated as the best airport in Western Europe, Heathrow is undergoing major development. In 2014, 73.4m passengers passed through Heathrow, and expansion plans will result in facilities that cater for 740 000 flights a year.

The plans include three runways, two main passenger terminals and transport hubs – Heathrow West (Terminals

5 and 6) and Heathrow East (an extended Terminal 2), which will be connected by an underground passenger transit and baggage system. Land is also being set aside for commercial developments such as offices and hotels.

Meanwhile, Gatwick can also expect increased volumes of traffic. As the second-largest airport in the UK, Gatwick hosts 45 airlines, and handles 38m passengers flying to 200 destinations each year. The airport expects this number to rise to 40 million by 2016.

The Gatwick passenger profile reveals that only one in five travellers through the

airport travels on business, with 11% comprising UK business, 57% UK leisure, 8% foreign business, and 24% foreign leisure.

Gatwick has a single runway and two terminals but despite its moderate facilities in comparison with Heathrow, Gatwick has reported growth over the past two years.

“The results are putting us 10 years ahead of forecasts done by the Airports Commission,” says **Stewart Wingate**, Gatwick ceo. He says July saw 4.3m passengers travelling through the airport, a 6.4% increase on the previous year.

It's the extras that add value

PACKAGES with unique inclusions are good way to offer added value. **Theresa Szejwallo** says Trafalgar offers many inclusions with its UK packages – where most of the accommodation is four-star – such as a full English breakfast daily with additional meals, services of a travel director, travel on luxury coaches with WiFi and Insider Experiences.

The Trafalgar Insider Experiences, introduced five years ago, have become the highlight of each travel experience and lend a different dimension to guided holidays, according to Theresa. “These Insider Experiences are made up of four specific experiences. The Be My Guest experiences are where guests are taken into the homes of local families where they enjoy lively conversation and home-cooked meals, while authentic accommodation

showcases the destination through specially selected authentic hotels, specially chosen for their architecture, history, and décor.”

According to Trafalgar, local specialists are the best way to get to know a place. “We have a range of local historians, artists and craftspeople waiting to share their stories with our guests,” says Theresa. Finally, the Cultural Insights in each destination uncover the gems and treasures that Trafalgar says make a holiday special for travellers. For example, at Tatton Park on the way to the Lake District, Trafalgar takes guests to visit an elegant mansion set in a 400-hectare deer park, where the butler and housekeeper host a guided visit.

The operator also offers special-interest guided holidays, including English Country Gardens. “English Country Gardens is sure to appeal to all those who

have even the slightest hint of green fingers as well as those who have always hankered to visit the magnificent gardens in England,” says Theresa.

Priced from R28 530pp twin share, this nine-day guided holiday begins and ends in London and takes in Hampton Court Palace, Kew Gardens, Sheffield Park and Gardens, the Bluebell Railway, Brighton, Sussex, Dover, Canterbury, Mount Ephraim Country House, Royal Tunbridge Wells, the Chelsea Flower Show, Hever Castle and Chartwell.

Included are the unique Trafalgar Insider Experiences such as a sightseeing tour with a local specialist in London and Hampton Court Palace, a cultural insight into the White Cliffs of Dover and a delicious Be My Guest cream tea at Mount Ephraim Country House. Travel is valid from May through to September 2016.

Book it!

Kulula holidays is offering London City Stays from R12 080pps. The package includes five nights' accommodation at the Chrysol Hotel (or similar), breakfast daily, a three-day London Pass with transport, fast track and free entry to the top 50 attractions in London, a guidebook and Oyster Card valid for zones 1-6. Valid for travel from November 1-30. ■

Births, deaths, marriages, promotions – we want to know! Please fax or e-mail TNW's Debbie Badham, at debbieb@nowmedia.co.za or (011) 327 4094.

Obituary

■ **Roy Schneider**, founder of Travel Vision, passed away on September 21 after a long battle with cancer.



Roy Schneider

Roy worked as a partner in Airtours and VIP Travel before starting Travel Vision in 1979. He celebrated his 79th birthday on March 20 this year.

"I knew Roy for over 30 years and worked for him for 27 of those,"

says **David Bradshaw**, who was previously the sales and marketing director at Travel Vision. "Roy was an unassuming person, very intelligent, compassionate and a man of

principle. He was always very fair, and a true travel professional. He listened to his staff, greeted everyone each day, was completely honest, and will be sorely missed."

■ Industry stalwart, **Johann Beukes**, of Sure Etnique Travel passed away on September 14 after a long illness.



Johann Beukes

Johann started his career as an architect but left in the 1990s to join the travel industry. He travelled the world, visiting over 120 countries.

He was also known

for his regular contribution to Radio Sonder Grense's travel programme on Saturdays. Johann was also a long-standing member of Asata, having served as chair for Region 3.

He is survived by his wife Monique and their three children, Johard, Leandi and Izanne, and three grandchildren.

Appointment

■ **Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo**



has joined the City Lodge Hotel Group as a divisional director of operations, with effect September 16. Lindiwe was previously with the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre. She was also gm of the InterContinental Sandton Towers for four years. Lindiwe has held various other positions in the local hospitality industry, including being council member of the Tourism BEE Charter Council from 2012.

Hotels over the World Cup in 2010.

■ **LeRoy Ferreira**



has been promoted to business development manager at Fancourt, where he was previously banqueting manager for 11 months. His focus is on building key customer relationships, strategy and identifying new business opportunities.

■ **Lynn Voges**



has joined the Leeu Collection as reservations manager. Lynn holds a BA communications degree from Unisa. Her career in hospitality in front office management, reservations and operations has spanned over 14 years at various top hotels in South Africa. A highlight of her career was being part of the opening team of a new property for Leisure

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'Govt, act fast'

From page 1

a committee to look at this but it needs to move fast because the numbers are declining."

Up of lata, **Raphael Kuuchi**, said while some airlines in SA were doing well, quite a few were not. "Yet you see the government putting in rules and regulations to stifle travel."

The panel agreed that airlines and the industry would need to speak with a united voice if they wanted to liaise constructively with government on the new regulations.

"The biggest problem we've had is that we have a lot of bodies in South Africa that are making noise but are not addressing the problems with the right stakeholders," **Inati Ntshanga**, ceo of SA Express, said. He added that the travel industry needed to start working in a more co-ordinated fashion. "We've had organisations that go and meet the Minister, but before a solution is reached, they are turning to

the press, saying how this is not going to work."

Chris Zweigenthal, ceo of Aasa, added that work would need to be done for industry to get together and compile the right facts and figures. "You can do everything you want with statistics but we need to get the right message across. I don't think we get the right message uniformly across and that could be an issue that is stifling progress." He added that the deputy minister of Home Affairs had complained that the industry was "unco-ordinated" and "fragmented".

Tebogo Mekgoe, coo of Acsa, agreed, adding that one of the biggest challenges was that the interpretation of data could be ambiguous. "Often when you get into meetings where you're speaking with government officials, you get different messages coming from different entities looking at similar data." Industry needs to look at how it shares the right data. ■

'We're not ITCs' – Serendipity

DORINE REINSTEIN

SERENDIPITY has redefined its independent travel consultancy model, repositioning it as an 'ITA model' (Independent Ticketing Agent). This follows the announcement by Asata that it will establish a forum to develop a definition for recognised ITC models in the SA market, after the industry called on Asata to develop a framework to curb rogue ITCs.

"We are not an ITC model; we are a ticketing agency where everyone can fit. There are no set rules and regulations, because the world is changing," **Dinesh Naidoo**, Serendipity Worldwide Group operations director, told delegates at the SWG Conference held earlier this month at the Champagne Castle Resort in the Drakensberg. He explained that SWG saw a need for a ticketing platform in the South African travel industry. SWG doesn't handle any of its members' financial transactions.

"SWG is probably the biggest disruptor of the travel industry in South Africa," said **Robyn Christie**, gm of Travelport Southern Africa. She called SWG's evolution over time commendable as well as hair-raising. "Everyone is waiting to point the finger at you, because you are rocking the boat."

Robyn warned, however, that being disruptive came with responsibility. She said it was important to identify the role SWG played in the market and for members to abide by a code of conduct. "If you deviate from the code, we will remove your GDS sign-on," she said, adding that it was important to protect both the consumer and the supplier. "We give the suppliers access to you via the system. It should not be compromised by anyone."

"We are not an ITC model; we are a ticketing agency where everyone can fit. There are no set rules and regulations, because the world is changing."

Ceo of Asata, **Otto de Vries**, said SWG was in an "amazing space" but warned that it was important to keep in mind that it was necessary to build a professional sector. "We're trying to drive forward a professional sector. We're a sector under pressure but the opportunity lies with us in terms of what our future looks like."

Otto agreed with Dinesh that SWG was not operating an ITC model. "The only ITC models that are globally recognised and that operate in this market are eTravel and

Travel Counsellors. Why? They manage all the funds and all the accounts. ITCs do not touch customers' money at any point. It's all centrally managed. ITCs earn commissions and revenues through the sales they make."

Asata is in the process of defining the different ITC models. "We are having conversations around your roles and responsibilities, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the consortiums as they relate to suppliers, supplier contracts and your relationship with your customers. It comes back to what we are trying to underpin: a professional industry," Otto said.

He explained that, to limit the possibilities of fraud in the industry, Asata would be implementing a number of changes within its checks and balances. "We are ramping up the way in which we expect you to present your audits every year. It won't just be your financials; we will be asking for other information as well."

As an industry, it was difficult to manage fraudulent activities, especially as rogue agencies often moved quickly, Otto said. "Even in a regulated environment like Europe, there are rogue travel agencies. People will always try their luck, but our checks and balances should allow us some ability to manage that." ■

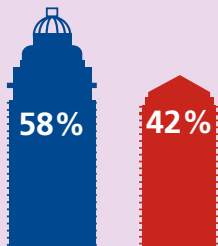
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Road restrictions are a concern

Are the planned October road restrictions in Sandton affecting your travel and meetings bookings?

- No, Sandton is still a popular booking spot, especially for business travellers.
- Yes, fewer clients are booking in Sandton because of the road closures.



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Airline offers unlimited flights for frequent flyers

SKYWISE Airlines has introduced an 'unlimited flying' option that enables passengers to fly as many times as they want in a month between Johannesburg and Cape Town for a once-off payment of R7 999.

J. Malik, Skywise co-chairperson, told TNW the voucher was valid for 30 days from the date of payment. "So, for instance, if a passenger pays on September 11, the validity of the unlimited flights ends on October 11," he said.

Travel agents must contact the airline in order to receive a special login for the website's travel agent portal. This login is used only for booking flights on the 'unlimited flights' offer, Malik said.

Alternatively, passengers can purchase the voucher on the airline's website by clicking on the 'unlimited flights' logo and following the prompts.

Once payment is completed, an email will be sent with a reference

number, which must be used when making bookings during the course of the voucher's validity.

Malik adds that customers with a voucher are guaranteed a seat, as long as there is space on the flight.

Those who pay the monthly fee will also have access to VIP services, such as additional baggage, up to 25kg; snacks on board, special check-in and assistance from a 'personal travel manager'. ■