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Giving agents the edge

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Made in Madrid...

OSPREY HOLIDAYS took a group of five agents on a fam trip to Madrid, in conjunction with Visit Madrid. Highlights included a private guided tour around the Old Town, seeing inside the Royal Palace and catching the hot October sun on some rooftop bars. Pictured at the Royal Palace are, from the left: Sarah Black, Osprey Holidays; Sheila Wallace, Go Travel; Jaqui Fenton, Sunways; Emma Harris, Baldwins Travel; Nathalie Cornish, Osprey Holidays; Elaine Ferry, Elaine's Travel; Nicole Graham, Osprey Holidays; and Stephanie Milam from Baldwins Travel.

More than half of Brits demand better mobile technology from travel industry

TRAVEL AGENTS and operators are coming under increasing pressure to improve their mobile offering, as more than half of UK holidaymakers are frustrated by the lack of mobile innovation when travelling abroad, according to new research.

Mobile technology group, Apadmi, found that 54% of travellers think the travel sector needs to offer customers more ways to utilise their mobile devices while on holiday.

The survey of 1,000 people, who had taken a holiday in the last 12 months, revealed that half of consumers want to see more mobile check-ins in airports, but also when checking-in to hotels and when hiring transport, to avoid queues and delays. Some 37% also stated that they wanted to deal with fewer paper travel documents for transport, accommodation and visitor attractions. Travellers are requesting one digital hub that they can access on a mobile device, which contains all the travel information needed when going on holiday.

And when holidaymakers arrive at their destination, 38% would like better tools to help them with language translations, and a quarter would like to be able to use

mobile payments more.

Nick Black, the company's CEO, said: "Numerous sectors have recognised the value of incorporating mobile into their services, yet the mass travel sector has not developed its mobile capabilities at the same speed as some other industries. This is a frustration shared by many travellers looking to use their smartphones as an aid on their holidays.

"Much of the technology desired by holidaymakers to improve the service they receive is already available – digital document hubs that can be accessed offline, augmented reality tools to enhance interaction with local surroundings and advanced check-in facilities that reach beyond the airport front desk.

"Whilst these services are available now, they're almost always found in standalone tools. Our research has shown this is frustrating holidaymakers and they're now asking for centralised tools that allow them to do all of these things from one place on their mobile device."

For more information visit apadmi.com/travel-report-2017/

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Study reveals British tourists prefer holidays in the UK to overseas getaways

BRITISH TOURISTS prefer spending their holidays in the UK rather than abroad, according to a recent study by Rentalcars.com. The company surveyed 2,000 Brits on their holiday habits and a significant 56% said they spend their main family holiday in the UK, while 11% said they travel to Spain, and just 7% said they are most likely to visit France.

More than half (53%) said exploring the British Isles was their favourite type of holiday, while 47% said they preferred camping in the UK over a package holiday in a warm location or a European city break.

When it came to reasons for choosing to book holidays in the UK, 20% said they liked exploring the British landscape, while another 20% said they enjoyed not having to worry about a language barrier. Another 16% said they like tucking into traditional British food, while 7% said they like being able to catch up on their favourite TV shows at night.

London proved to be the most popular destination for a holiday in the UK, with 21% saying the capital would be their number one choice for a long trip, while 15% said they preferred a traditional seaside resort. Another 12% said Cornwall was their preferred location for a long break.

But when it came to short trips the South Coast came out on top, with 21% saying they would choose destinations such as Dorset and Sussex for a weekend break.

The survey also revealed the extent of sleep deprivation in Brits. A staggering 83% said catching up on sleep was their favourite thing to do on holiday, while 60% said they enjoyed outdoor activities such as walking and cycling.

Nearly half (49%) said they enjoyed going sightseeing, while 30% said visiting museums and art galleries was one of their favourite things to do while on holiday.

More than half of the Brits surveyed (57%) said the threat of terror has had no impact on where they choose to go on holiday, while 23% said concerns over terror attacks have definitely influenced their chosen holiday destination.

Of the Brits who choose to spend their holidays abroad, 79% said they would still travel overseas despite the poor currency exchange rates since last year's Brexit vote, while 21% said they have been put off travelling overseas.

Meanwhile, natural disasters proved to be the top concern for Brits travelling abroad, with 50% saying hurricanes and earthquakes worry them most, while 35% said they worried about contracting food poisoning in a foreign country. More than a quarter (26%) said they worried about becoming a victim of theft, while 18% said they worried about not being able to speak the language.

Dan Robb, the company's chief marketing officer, said: "It is refreshing to see Brits making the most of the many beautiful locations we have on our doorstep. The UK is packed with exciting cities, stunning beaches and outstanding areas of natural beauty, so it is not surprising to see so many Brits choosing to spend their holidays closer to home.

"The UK is rich in culture and history and we are incredibly lucky to have such diverse landscape with hills, mountains, flat countryside and busy cities, so there are hundreds of road trips that Brits can take to see the best sights the country has to offer."



OPEN FOR BUSINESS... Pictured at the Antigua Rainforest Zip Line tour on one of the first fam trips to Antigua following the passage of Hurricane Irma are, from the left: Chelsea Howlett, Spear Travel; Adele Croft, Colchester Travel; Kerri Thorpe, Advantage Travel; Sean Matthew, Antigua Tourist Board; Julie Cutts, Martin World; Joel Henry, Antigua Tourist Board; Caroline Jeacock, Deva Travel; James Lambari, Abbot Travel; and David Smith, Village Travel. The exclusive trip was organised by the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority with hotel partner, Elite Island Resorts.

Selection of Christmas & New Year experiences with City Cruises

CITY CRUISES is offering a selection of party packages for festive celebrations.

Sail with Santa gives passengers the chance to meet Santa on the river Thames as he swaps his sleigh for a boat. Children will enjoy Santa fun and a present, along with a soft drink and a cookie, while adults are offered a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie. Prices start from £28 per person for adults and £16 for children.

A Thames Christmas Party Cruise is available for shared groups of four to 200 people, whether celebrating with friends or planning an office get-together, and is available both for lunch and dinner. It includes a three-course festive meal, wine and welcome drink, as well as music provided by an on-board DJ, with prices starting from £45.

Alternatively, a five-hour New Year's Eve Gala Dinner Cruise includes a welcome glass of Champagne, an additional glass at midnight and a four-course dinner menu followed by live entertainment. Prices lead in at £349 and the cruise departs from Tower Pier at 20:15 on December 31.

A shorter four-hour New Year's Eve option is offered, with prices from £339.

City Cruises York and Poole also have their own schedule of festive cruises, perfect for families, friends and couples wanting to celebrate the 2017 Christmas season from a unique river perspective.

For full details visit citycruises.com/special-events or call 020-7740 0400.



Paris' hidden treasure revealed at Hotel Banke 5*

PARIS' LATEST hidden gem has been revealed by Derby Hotels Collection at Hotel Banke 5* with the inauguration of the Salle des Coffres, a hidden vault.

Set on the corner of Rue Pillet-Will and Rue La Fayette, the hotel was previously used as the headquarter of the Swiss and French Bank until it was reopened by Derby Hotels Collection in 2009 as a hotel.

After months of renovations to ensure safe access, Hotel Banke 5* has opened up the doors to the hidden vault. The room contains more than 450 safes, of which only 22 have been opened. The contents of the rest remain a complete enigma, with nobody knowing what hidden jewels or treasures may be behind the sealed doors of each safe, some belonging to Paris' most important figures of the past, including Gustave Eiffel, the civil engineer and architect best known for the tower he designed.

The unique space is now open for both corporate and private events. The Salle des Coffres can be hired for a day starting at £5,070 and can host up to 180 people (250m2). The hotel is also able to provide other services, from security to catering, to help organise any event.

SUN-SETTERS...*The Dominican Republic Tourist Board, in association with British Airways, took a group of agents to visit properties and take part in activities in Punta Cana, La Romana and Santa Domingo. Pictured ready to take in the sunset at the beach are, from the left: Carlos Romero, MITUR; Joanne Ellis, Best At Travel; Anders Sparkhall, The Holyday Place; Gustavo Candelario, Dominican Republic Tourist Board; Abigail Mackenzie, Blue Bay Travel; Magdalena Rychlicka, Tropical Sky; and Sebastien Boulenzou, Travel Bag.*

New cardless & cashless payment method introduced at Heathrow Airport

A NEW payment method is being introduced at Heathrow Airport which will see a cardless and cashless process for passengers.

Plaza Premium Lounges is one of the first outlets at Heathrow to launch the payment method, known as Alipay, across all the terminals it operates in.

Alipay is a popular, eWallet payment system based in China which provides a secure way to shop and store money.

All transactions are carried out safely through the Alipay website, either by searching for the outlet name or by scanning a QR code via a mobile phone, tablet or other technical devices.

The payment method is already popular within the travel industry with many airlines and airports across the world accepting the electronic payment process such as Aeroflot, Vanilla Air and Emirates.

Amin Amin, general manager of the UK arm of Plaza Premium Group said: "Alipay is already a successful and well-known brand across East Asia and we're proud to be able to bring the concept to Europe and the UK, but more importantly be the first brand to bring it to Heathrow Airport through our lounges.

"Alipay is a slick, easy and convenient way of paying in an ever-growing technology led age that is becoming ever-less reliant on cash and card payments and means that passengers that use our services won't find the need to ensure that they carry various kinds of currency for the destinations that they will visit."

Payment methods that work in association with Alipay include Visa, Mastercard and American Express.

Plaza Premium Lounges can be found in the departures areas of Heathrow Airport in terminals two, four and five and in the arrival areas of terminals two, three and four.

For more information visit intl.alipay.com

Royal Caribbean enhances 'My Club Royal' for agents

ROYAL CARIBBEAN International has announced the latest enhancement to My Club Royal. Positioned as 'one site, one log in, one Royal super club', travel agents will be able to access bookings, training, rewards and sales materials all through a single portal.

Amanda Darrington, the line's UK & Ireland sales director, said: "We've developed the newly enhanced My Club Royal portal to make the lives of travel agents easier, helping them to save time by bringing together all of the tools we have created for them. Now, the whole user journey has been simplified and combined to one entry point, via one log-in, with the existing platforms undergoing cutting edge redesign in the process. The result makes agents' access to Royal Caribbean International easier, quicker and more efficient than ever before." From November 23 agents will only need one log in to access a range of features at myclubroyal.co.uk



TRAVELODGE SUKHUMVIT 11 has opened its doors on Thailand's Bangkok and is running an introductory opening rate of THB 1,199 per room, per night (around £27) valid until March 31, 2018. The 224-room hotel is located a few minutes from the BTS Sky Train at Nana Station in a quiet corner of the Sukhumvit Soi 11 and offers an all-day dining restaurant, outdoor swimming pool, fitness centre and free high-speed Wi-Fi. For details email enquiry.sukhumvit11@travelodgehotels.asia or see travelodgesukhumvit11.com

Quest Apartment Hotels unveils ambitious UK expansion

QUEST APARTMENT Hotels, Australasia's largest and fastest growing apartment hotel operator, has marked the start of its ambitious UK expansion plans, announcing it has signed its first site in Liverpool's city centre with a £10m investment.

Established by entrepreneur Paul Constantinou nearly 30 years ago in Melbourne, the company has made its name by offering a 'home away from home' to extended stay business travellers in key cities, regional towns and suburban locations across Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. With 27 properties currently in the pipeline and 12 under construction in its home markets, the brand plans to apply its successful model to open ten properties across the country in the next five years.

Quest Liverpool City Centre will open in 2019 and is located on Church Street along one of the city's biggest retail strips and

adjacent to the landmark Liverpool ONE complex. The building itself is a 1980s commercial office building with retail on the ground and first floors. Quest will convert the existing vacant office space on levels two, three and four and construct additional levels five and six, creating 100 serviced apartments, a reception, conference room, gym and back-of-house facilities.

Andrew Weisz, director of UK development at Quest said: 'Hospitality brands have a huge role to play in opening up city centre locations for business again, but against a backdrop of economic uncertainty – it is clear that businesses want to spend travel budgets wisely.

"We've immersed ourselves in the UK market in recent months and can see the potential for the aggressive expansion of both our brand and the apartment hotel industry here."

New 'Gulf Air Holidays' initiative

GULF AIR has launched one of the airline's most highly anticipated initiatives 'Gulf Air Holidays', offering travellers a range of holiday packages and tailor-made travel solutions to destinations worldwide, across the carrier's network.

The airline is working in partnership with online travel booking company, Ezeego1.com, who is the back-end service provider of the new initiative.

The airline's deputy chief executive officer, Captain Waleed Abdulhameed Al Alawi, said: "By launching Gulf Air Holidays we hope to not only spoil our customers with a broad spectrum of holiday packages to choose from but also, and in line with our mission, to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain across our network – give travellers worldwide attractive holiday packages to visit Bahrain and enjoy a wide array of experiences while in the Kingdom."

The new initiative develops and promotes holiday packages including airfares, accommodation, car rental, guided tours, excursions as well as the airline's own add-on travel enhancement items such as advance excess baggage purchasing, lounge access and prepaid seat selection, and can be accessed via holidays.gulfair.com

New vessel for Irish Ferries as it announces new schedule

IRISH FERRIES has unveiled its 2018 sailing schedule, incorporating the capacity offered by its 144 million euro cruise ferry W.B. Yeats.

The new ferry – currently being built in Germany – is expected to weigh in at 55,000 tonnes, making it the largest as well as the most luxurious ferry to operate on the Irish Sea.

W.B. Yeats will sail between Holyhead and Dublin from mid-September 2018, delivering additional capacity for 1,885 passengers and crew and 1,200 cars per crossing, onto the busiest ferry route between the UK and Ireland.

Facilities on the new ship will include a Club Class lounge with direct passenger access from the car decks, à la carte and self-service restaurants, a cinema, shopping mall, a choice of bars and lounges and an outdoor promenade deck.

There will also be 441 cabins, including luxury suites with their own private balconies.

Before going into service on the Holyhead to Dublin route, W.B. Yeats will add much-needed high season capacity between Ireland and France.

After her maiden voyage on July 6, 2018, the new ship will offer Irish holidaymakers a cruise style travel experience, sailing between Dublin and Cherbourg throughout the summer. For full schedule details visit the 'Routes and Times' section of irishferries.com

New selling tool for agents from Travel 2

TRAVEL 2 HAS created a new mini brochure to help agents maximise bookings to popular holiday hot-spots during the critical winter booking period. The brochure is a 'go-to guide' for agents selling last-minute winter getaways and features exclusive deals and packages from £499 per person to a host of destinations.

Following the success of the trade-only specialist's Summer Sun mini brochure, the 52-page brochure features packages across Asia, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, the Middle East and Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and US.

To help satisfy the growing demand for winter cruises, the brochure will also include a range of itineraries from its popular Cruise Plus programme.

With the brochure covering holidays up until March 2018, the operator anticipates the UAE will remain a popular destination for winter getaways. Whilst Dubai has seen year-on-year growth of 17%, the draw of Ras Al Khaimah's golden beaches have helped boost departures to the northernmost emirate by 26%.

Other high-performing winter sun destinations include Langkawi, the Malaysian archipelago which has seen a 26% year-on-year increase in passengers and room nights, Thailand, up 19% and Mauritius, up 28%.

G Adventures rebrands youth travel style '18-to-Thirtysomethings'

G ADVENTURES has rebranded its 'Yolo' programme of tours for younger travellers to '18-to-Thirtysomethings'.

The refresh is being made to make it clear to customers that these trips are designed for travellers aged between 18 and 39 years old.

At the same time, the small group adventure operator is announcing eight new trips for this demographic, including a Thai Full Moon Party experience and newly designed trips in Japan, the Philippines, Laos and Indonesia.

Brian Young, the company's managing director, says the new branding makes it more transparent to travellers what kind of trip they are looking to purchase.

He said: "We've had a lot of fun with the Yolo brand and being part of the zeitgeist, but as a customer-oriented organisation we want to make things easier for our travellers and our agent partners. 18-to-Thirtysomethings makes it clear what is being sold."

"We're also thrilled to expand our 18-to-Thirtysomethings offering in Asia, as it is the biggest market for our younger UK travellers. Thailand is still the number one place to go, followed by India, the US and Vietnam."

All 185 tours in the company's refreshed 18-to-Thirtysomethings portfolio are affordable, are from less than one week to more than nine weeks long and are designed to be fun-filled and fast-paced.

As an example of prices, a Thailand Full Moon Party takes place each month in Kho Phangan and costs from £599 per person for an eight-day trip from Bangkok to Ko Pha Ngan, excluding flights.

For more information or to book call 0344-272 2040 or visit gadventures.co.uk



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Notes from

Normanton...

SOMETIMES WHEN I see the headlines or read the news I wonder if I'm on a different planet. Another attack in New York! At least this time they have got the guy. It also saddens me that the poppy is coming in for abuse and comments; it's not political, religious or racist, but rather a sign of respect for the people that lost their lives fighting for this country.

Also, just as a side note, is it me or has Emmerdale and Coronation Street lost the plot with their storylines? I am finding them both very sinister and I think the storylines are way over the top.

Well wish me luck – I think I mentioned before my cardioversion had stopped working, so I have been breathless for the last few months. But now my wonderful cardiologist at Sheffield Northern Hospital has got me in for Friday for another cardioversion – it's less invasive than putting stents in etc., so I am looking forward to coming out like a Duracell bunny rather than the slow tortoise that went in!

I've also been checking out a few handy tips about when may be the best time to book flights. Apparently, 02.30 on a Tuesday is the best time and its advised to fly at odd times if you want to avoid being sat near a baby or small child. It also seems that you get the best service at the back of the plane and that passengers should check in early to avoid being bumped off! Who would have thought of those eh?!

'Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one only remembers to turn on the light' and 'Knowledge has to be improved, challenged and increased constantly or it vanishes'.

Sandy

by SANDRA MURRAY
in Normanton, Yorkshire

To respond to any
of Sandy's comments email
lauretta.wright@travelbulletin.co.uk

NEWS BITES

- SINGAPORE HAS reinforced its status as home to one of the most exciting bar and cocktail scenes in the world, by having six bars named on the latest official list of The World's 50 Best Bars 2017.
- COLOGNE BONN Airport's new winter schedule launched this week with Ryanair adding further enhancements to its route network. Commencing a total of eight new services, the low-cost carrier will be connecting the German airport to five new destinations during winter 2017/18, directly linking Cologne Bonn to Bristol, Vitoria, Vilnius, Seville and Venice Treviso for the first time.
- PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) has launched its first print campaign in the UK since 2013, along with a new London radio campaign as part of a new global brand equity campaign 'Experience the Heart of the Filipino,' which introduces travellers to the airline's enhanced product and services. Timed ahead of the resumption of daily flights from Heathrow to Manila on December 6 on the new B777-300ER aircraft, the campaign comes in the midst of the airline's journey to become the Philippines' only five-star full-service legacy carrier, competing with the world's largest carriers. Details at philippineairlines.com
- HAVEN IS offering a saving of 25% on all dates and breaks in 2018 when booked before February 5, 2018.
- UNITED AIRLINES has announced a new enhancement to its app that will allow customers to receive boarding passes when connecting to 19 airline partners on their smart phones, a feature which no other US carrier currently offers. The functionality will be available for customers travelling with the airline who are making an onward connection on another carrier.
- VISIT FINLAND has launched a new Finnish DNA generator enabling people around the world to discover their inner Finn. Using the birthplace of the user's parents, the generator assigns each user one of the 311 municipalities in Finland. The name of one parent's birthplace corresponds to the latitude and the other, the longitude, to give a geographical location. The engaging generator provides poetic translations and Finnish pronunciations which are shareable via social media channels. See visitfinland.com/campaigns/dna/en/
- GERMAN LOW-cost carrier, Eurowings, has expanded its network from the UK with a new flight from Heathrow to Salzburg. The new flights operate twice-weekly on Wednesday and Saturdays, arriving from Salzburg at 13:50 and departing London at 14:35. All services are planned with an A319 aircraft configured to 180 seats.
- BIG BUS Tours has announced the introduction of its' first new-build, fully electric open-top bus, following substantial investment in environmentally focused R&D. Due to take to the roads shortly, the 100% electric bus will operate in Paris, as part of a global initiative to produce a cleaner, greener sightseeing transport experience for visitors, as they enjoy the city sights. For details visit bigbustours.com

BOOKING INCENTIVES

- THE ST.KITTS Tourism Authority (SKTA) has put out a reminder to travel agents that any bookings logged using the 'St. Kitts Rewards' programme will put them in the running to win a pair of return flights to the island. The SKTA has also relaunched its website, updated its online training programme and launched a new destination guide to arm UK travel agents with all the tools and information they need to sell the destination to their customers.
- THROUGHOUT THIS month, agents can earn 20 points per booking with Carnival Cruise Line's latest Loyalty Rocks Club incentive. The points have the equivalent value of £20 and can be exchanged for a variety of well-deserved treats. Agents should also look out for bonus offerings throughout the month such as double points on Black Friday. As an added incentive, the line is giving agents the opportunity to save their Loyalty Rocks Club points and use them towards the cost.

Agent Offer

CARNIVAL CRUISE Line's Travel Agents Rock campaign and its Loyalty Rocks Club rewards programme turn one on December 1 and, to celebrate, the cruise line is offering UK agents the chance to win £1,000 towards a night out to remember. For the chance to win, agents should throw the most creative, original and fun Travel Agents Rock first birthday party and post their videos and photos to the Carnival Fun Team International Facebook page by December 8. For details see loyaltyrockclub.redpoints.co.uk

FANCY A FAM?

AGENTS NOW have the chance to gain first-hand experience of Sydney, Melbourne and the Great Ocean Road following the launch of a new campaign from Gold Medal, in association with Tourism Australia and Etihad Airways which runs until the end of this month. As part of it, the eight agents to demonstrate the biggest increase in their Australian performance will be joining next March's fam trip, whilst the final bonus place will go to the top seller of Virgin Australia flights during the campaign period. To be in with a chance of joining the trip, agents need to make a package booking to Australia with the operator that includes Etihad Airways flights by November 30 and successfully complete five modules of the destination's online Aussie Specialist Programme. See goldmedal.co.uk

Agent Training

AGENTS ARE being invited to the 'Oman Air From Manchester' trade roadshows this month and next, which give agents the chance to learn about the carrier's daily service from Manchester to Muscat and onward to more than 30 destinations, plus the chance to win a pair of tickets to the destination at each event. Drinks, food and entertainment are all provided and events run from 18:00-21:00. For details email feysal.nagi@omanair.com

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PURPLE REIGN... Flybe put the spotlight on Birmingham Airport recently as it turned the Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower purple, completing its distinctive brand identity at the airport. The carrier has now launched its 2017/18 winter schedule which offers a choice of 23 routes and 682 flights a week. Seats are now available to book at flybe.com, with one-way fares from £29.99 including taxes and airport charges. Highlights of the schedule include the seasonal introduction of six flights a week to Hamburg, as well as daily flights to Newquay over the Christmas holiday (December 22 – January 1, excluding Christmas Day); and, due to popular demand, flights to Amsterdam will increase to a daily service. Pictured celebrating are the carrier's CEO, Christine Ourmières-Widener with David Winstanley, chief operating officer at Birmingham Airport.

Value solo deal from Fred. Olsen

FRED. OLSEN Cruise Lines has launched a value solo offer on its 156-guest river cruise ship, Brabant, for 2018.

Guests can enjoy a twin room to themselves with a reduced sole-occupancy supplement of 25% when they book on one of the company's six selected European river cruises by November 30.

The company will be operating its inaugural river cruise programme on Brabant from April 5 to November 3, 2018, taking in some of Europe's rivers, including the Danube, Rhine, Main and Moselle – on a total of 31 departures in 2018, on durations ranging from five to 25 nights, complemented by a selection of shore excursions designed to enhance guests' experience of the destination.

As an example, a five-night 'Springtime Dutch Discovery' river cruise, departing from Heathrow on April 5, 2018 costs from £1,187.



Advantage Travel Partnership announces theme for 2018 Miami conference

ADVANTAGE TRAVEL Partnership has revealed that the theme for its 2018 conference, to be held in Miami between May 10-13, is 'The Next Chapter... Miami Advice'.

Two programmes will focus on the destination and the vibrant side of Miami, running side by side to cater for both Advantage leisure travel members and business travel members – and their suppliers.

Plenary sessions, keynote speakers, workshops and networking opportunities will all adhere to the theme, as well as acknowledging the challenges and changes to come in 2018 from GDPR to PSD2 and the Package Travel Directive.

Speed networking will take centre stage on one day of the conference with a minimum of four hours of formal networking activity through a speed dating appointment system between

members and business partners.

Conference sessions will focus on customer engagement and experience, and how the ability to communicate effectively helps build the foundations of a successful business.

The conference will be divided into three distinct areas: 'My Story' sessions will emphasise the importance of maintaining and growing personal development; 'The Travel Industry Story' sessions will focus on industry knowledge and offer delegates the opportunity to explore how to convey their message and story most effectively; and 'The Story of our Brand and Business' will showcase to delegates how insights, training and workshops assist in building a brand that resonates with customers, staff and partners.

For more information see advantageconference.co.uk

Former Anatolian Sky boss launches Diamond Sky to offer luxury tailor-made breaks

THE BOSS of failed Turkey specialist Anatolian Sky Holidays, which specialised in package holidays to Northern Cyprus and Turkey, has launched a new company offering luxury tailor-made holidays to destinations including Croatia, Montenegro, Turkey, North Cyprus, Greece and the Greek Islands, Slovenia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan.

Akin Koc, founder and managing director of Diamond Sky Holidays, said: "I established Diamond Sky Holidays to offer discerning clients the most selective products using the 26 years of knowledge and experience I have gained in the holiday industry.

"Whilst running my previous company, Anatolian Sky, for 26 years, I personally inspected all products for quality. For Diamond Sky, I have selected only the finest of those collections with unique products such as small ship cruises, tailor-made holidays and relaxing beach holidays for families and couples.

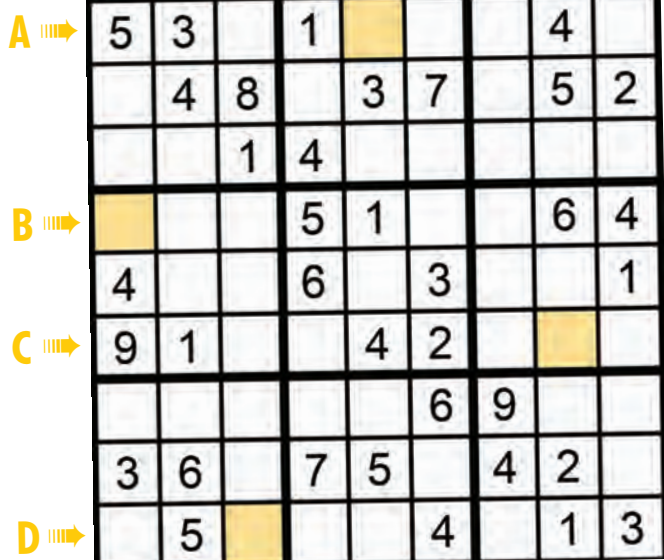
"As a small family-run company we take pride in being able to offer a truly personalised service and we pay attention to the smallest of details."

Agents are offered commission and can find out more by calling 0330-390 0999 or visiting diamondskyholidays.com

Su Doku

Win a £50 M&S voucher in the [travelbulletin](#) Su Doku prize puzzle

Number: 043



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 3 x 3 squares contains the digits 1-9.

Once you have completed the puzzle, simply identify the numbers that relate to the letters, A, B, C and D then e-mail the solution, with your name, company name, and full postal address plus phone and ABTA number if applicable to:

competition@travelbulletin.co.uk

Closing date for entries is Thursday, November 16th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for 27th October is Peter Rintoul, Your Holiday Booking in Bathgate.

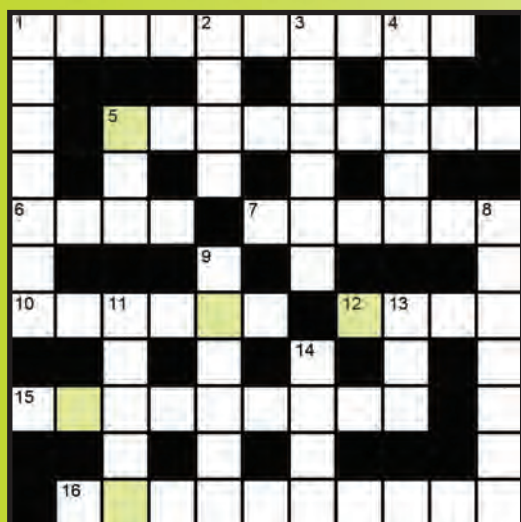
October 27th Solution: A=7 B=8 C=3 D=1

Where Am I?



Once a Greek Orthodox basilica, later an imperial mosque and now a museum, this landmark is widely regarded as probably the most important Byzantine structure & one of the world's great monuments. It also made an appearance in the 2016 film of Dan Brown's *Inferno*.

Crossword



Fill in the crossword to reveal the mystery location highlighted by the green squares.

Across

1. Fred. Olsen cruise ship (5,5)
5. Resort area of Poole with sky-high property prices (9)
6. The Clifton Suspension Bridge spans this scenic Gorge (4)
7. French city and lake (6)
10. Hotels and Resorts brand (6)
12. Capital of the Algarve region (4)
15. Barbary Macaques inhabit this Rock (9)
16. State capital of Louisiana (5,5)

Down

1. Kenneth, currently starring as Poirot in *Murder on the Orient Express* (7)
2. One of the Home Counties (4)
3. State capital of New York (6)
4. A boat you'll need to paddle (5)
5. San Francisco International airport code (3)
8. Capital of Cameroon (7)
9. Principality on the French Riviera (6)
11. Sign of the Zodiac (5)
13. Popular Scottish seaside resort (3)
14. Famous ferry linking Hong Kong Island with Kowloon (4)

For the solution to the Crossword and Where Am I?
Please see page 24

Industry Insight by...



A country divided: AITO chair, Derek Moore, examines the aftermath of Monarch's collapse...



SO NOW the country is divided. No, not over Brexit, nor Donald Trump. This is about the Monarch Divide - and all just a few weeks after the carrier collapsed.

On one side are those who were abroad with, or booked to travel with, Monarch. They experienced seamless service from the Government and travel industry, as operators and travel agents swiftly re-booked them on to alternative flights, whilst an overly-eager Government arranged, at a cost of many millions (not sure from whose pocket yet) to get all Monarch customers back to the UK.

Stories abound of clients receiving exemplary service from their operator or agent - AITO's office is full of grateful messages of appreciation from clients affected. If nothing else, this debacle has highlighted the many benefits of booking with an agent or an operator. That's a no-brainer, right? Not quite. Let's look at the other side of the divide.

The UK travel industry is seething at what happened following the failure of Monarch. A few years ago, after extensive lobbying by the travel industry, a proposal was put to Parliament that anyone buying a flight ticket - from a tour operator, a travel agent or direct with an airline - would pay a simple levy of, say, £1. But - due, one must suppose, to powerful lobbying by the airline industry, who denounced the measure - the proposal failed by just a couple of votes. The airlines claim it's unnecessary, since airlines don't fail (true only if you ignore Sabena, Swissair, Debonair, Alitalia and many more...).

So the Government's position was that you were only covered for repatriation if you bought an airline ticket from an ATOL holder; buying it directly from the airline meant no cover if the airline failed. But when Monarch failed, the Government drove a coach and horses through its own legislation, flying everyone home, ATOL-protected or not.

Now the travel industry sees the ATOL licence as a waste of time/money for operators and agents, and is deeply concerned - how can we sell the benefits of booking with an operator or travel agent to potential clients? We're left with a contented - even impressed - travelling public and an incensed travel industry. Two sides of the divide.

So, what happens next? Surely things will change? Surely the Government must see the flaw in its thinking? Well, no. Chris Grayling seems to think something should be done; his idea would be to let 'troubled' airlines trade on for a few weeks so they can fly all their stranded clients home (but what about clients booked but not travelled yet...?). Interestingly, this 'Chapter 11' approach is almost an admission that airlines could actually fail. But introduce a simple, level playing field, £1 for all? Nope.

"When Monarch failed, the Government drove a coach and horses through its own legislation, flying everyone home, ATOL-protected or not"

Now some operators and agents are left financially strapped by the cost of providing replacement flights as the law requires; some businesses have even failed as a result of this debacle.

It's a sad tale of a Government that just doesn't get the reality of air travel. And, whilst we lament the probability of nothing changing, some Monarch uniforms are on sale on eBay - a sad reminder of the collapse that divided a nation.



ALNWICK ANTICS...Great Rail Journeys took a group of agents on a four-day fam trip to explore a variety of destinations including Harrogate, Whitby, Carlisle, Hexham, Alnwick and York. Highlights of the trip included three-course dinners at the Cedar Court Hotel and Old Swan in Harrogate, a journey on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway to Whitby and travel on the Settle-Carlisle line. Pictured at Alnwick Castle on their final night are, from the left: Rebekah Amos, Great Rail Journeys; Leona Wickens, East of England Coop; Leisa Pritt, Premier Travel; Paul Carter, Carrick Travel; Lisa Ward, Aspen Travel; Carol Woods, Great Rail Journeys; Richard Burton, The Independent Holiday Shop; Angela Plant, Spear Travels; Gaynor Jenkins, Tailor Made Travel; and Carol Price, Lincoln Co-op.

TTNG workshops to focus on business growth coaching

THE TRAVEL Network Group has revealed details of what delegates can expect when they gather in Monaco for the Group's 'The Power of You' conference this month.

Delegates will have the opportunity to take part in an exclusive business growth workshop - Maximising the Power of You - aimed at helping members move their businesses to the next level of their development and success.

The group has teamed up with ActionCOACH, the world's number one business coaching company, which has more than 1,000 offices in 72 countries to deliver the conference sessions and provide two further one-day events to all members before the end of the year.

Gary Lewis, the consortium's CEO, said: "Since announcing our membership of The Institute of Customer Service (ICS) back at our Obsession Conference in Split in October 2014, not only has it been an invaluable journey for us as a group, but we have helped our members embed the principles, values and behaviours in their businesses. Offering this coaching is now the next step and ActionCoach will be a great partner in this process.

"Jon Asquith has worked with more than 1,000 businesses over the last ten years. His sole focus at the workshops will be how delegates can maximise the tools they already have to create a winning culture, fantastic profits and maximise customer

retention and acquisition. These sessions support the conference theme perfectly, and will be full of practical information delegates can take away and implement immediately."

The group will be offering the coaching sessions to all delegates at the conference and then to its wider membership through hosting two one-day events in the UK later this year.

A further workshop will be offered during the conference to delegates which will focus on the challenges the industry faces in 2018 in relation to Regulatory, Data & Legal changes. In this workshop Farina Azam, Travlaw Partner, will discuss the regulatory changes coming into force in 2018, including the ban on debit and credit card charges, the new data protection regime and the Package Travel Directive.

Lewis said: "Our conferences are always aimed at lifting members out of the day-to-day and focus on how they grow and develop themselves and their businesses for the future. We believe that the speakers we have announced in Sir Clive Woodward and Sir Lee Pearson, and the workshops available, will provide for a highly motivational and inspiring two days together at conference. We have massively accelerated the growth of our business since our last conference 18 months ago and our coming together in Monaco will be a great platform to update our members on our achievements and direction going forward."

Anchors away with hotel & cruise packages from Maritim

FOR THOSE looking to mix a land-based and seas-based holiday, hotel chain Maritim is offering a range of global hotel and cruise combination packages.

As an example, the Maritim Resort & Spa Mauritius and the Maritim Crystals Beach Hotel Mauritius both offer a unique cruise package tailor made for ocean adventure.

Designed to stimulate the senses, guests can enjoy stops at the Seychelles and Nosy Be island - also known as Perfume Island - before discovering rare plants and animals in Madagascar and exploring Réunion Island's active volcano, Piton de la Fournaise.

When back on land, guests can sample authentic Indian Ocean specialties at the multi-awarded Château Mon Désir, located at the Maritim Resort & Spa. The renowned Maritim Tropical Flower Spa, which recently scooped the 'World Luxury Spa Award', is an oasis dedicated to wellbeing set in the middle of 3,500sq.m of lush tropical gardens. For history buffs, the 'Historical Ruins of Balacava', situated on the hotel grounds, played host to numerous major events in the island's history.

The 14-night package runs from this month until February 2018 from/to Mauritius with a hotel stay in either the Maritim Crystals Beach Hotel Mauritius or the Maritim Resort & Spa Mauritius. For more information visit maritim.com



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luxuryholidays

Funway sees renewed demand for luxury suites

FUNWAY HOLIDAYS has seen a rise in customers seeking out extra luxurious touches on their holiday bookings.

Malcolm Davies, destination product manager for the operator, said: "More couples are seeking extra amenities, such as private plunge pools and swim-up rooms and are willing to spend a little more to have them."

"Swim up suites in particular are becoming increasingly popular as they offer true luxury; the swim-up suite offers the ease of direct access of a private pool and it makes the perfect room upgrade choice for clients looking for something extra special and luxurious for their holiday. After all, it's not every day that you can step out of bed and straight into the pool."

The operator is offering seven nights in Mexico at the all-inclusive adult-only Secrets Maroma Beach from £1,743 per person, staying in a Junior Suite Swim Out room based on two adults sharing and departing from London with Virgin Atlantic on October 14, 2018.

Visit funway4agents.co.uk for more details.

Veranda Paul re-opens with new facilities & experiences

THE VERANDA Paul et Virginie Hotel & Spa in Mauritius has recently re-opened following a three-month renovation, adding more experiences and facilities designed to give couples a feeling of intimacy and escapism.

Jennifer Wong, hotel manager of the property, said: "We want couples to feel totally relaxed with no time restraint worries, so we have introduced new services such as an all-day in-room breakfast and brunch service plus al fresco dining under the stars."

"Allowing loved ones to share more time together and create memorable holiday experiences is our priority so an 'apero moment' will be available at any time of day or night offering couples the opportunity to intimately relax on the beach with cocktails and nibbles."

Improved facilities include a new infinity pool overlooking the lagoon, a sunken bar,

a fitness suite and a shisha corner. The spa is refreshed with double treatment rooms and a relaxation area opening onto a small tropical inner garden. Guests wanting a later check-out can now benefit from a new departure room.

Set in the fishing village Grand Gaube, where traditional wooden boats were built, the hotel now offers guests the opportunity to explore the beach area on a traditional pirogue. For full day cruises to the northern islands, the hotel's own catamaran is also available, while for guests looking to explore the area on two wheels, tandem bicycles for couples are offered.

A Comfort Room at the resort is on offer from 190 euros per room, per night on a bed-and-breakfast basis during low season.

For further information visit veranda-resorts.com/en

'Stay & Shop or Go & Flop' with The Villa Collection

THE VILLA Collection is offering agents the chance to earn either £100 in shopping vouchers or free nights at one of two luxury hotels in Barbados for their own holidays in its new Stay & Shop or Go & Flop incentive.

For every £7,000 worth of bookings made with the operator to any of its worldwide destinations between November 1 and February 28, agents will receive either one night at Sugar Bay Barbados on an all-inclusive basis, two nights at Bougainvillea Beach Resort on a room-only basis or a £100 shopping voucher of their choice.

In addition, agents do not need to worry about logging bookings to redeem their free nights or vouchers as the operator will tally all bookings and inform agents the total redemption values for the bookings they have made by mid-March.

For more information visit thevillacollection.co.uk/travel-agents/ or call 020-7183 3554.



CARRIER RECENTLY hosted a trade educational to Greece staying at *The Westin Resort Costa Navarino and The Romanos*. Highlights of the trip included a 10k bicycle ride to Voidikila beach past olive groves and quaint Greek villages, exploring the nearby town of Pylos and a trip to the Navarino Eco Centre to learn about the local wildlife. Pictured during a visit to a traditional Greek home for an authentic Messinian cooking class are, from the left: the operator's Raj Mistry; Simon Rawson from *Top Choice Travel*; Mia Newton, *Kanoo Travel*; Carrier's Victoria McGlynn; Alexandra Lichen of *Ashdown Travel*; Mark Worrall, *World Odyssey*; Alistair Hart, *Andrew Earles Travel*; and Sylvia McBride from *Travel Matters*.

Super-luxe Hotel Californian to transform Santa Barbara waterfront

COMBINING SPANISH Colonial Revival architecture and modern Moorish décor from A-list designer, Martyn Lawrence Bullard, the historic Hotel Californian has reopened for guests seeking a stylish getaway.

The original coastal retreat opened in 1925 and survived just eight days before an earthquake shook the area. Today the completely new property offers ocean views and is located in the recently developed Funk Zone. Spread across three buildings, including the preserved façade of the original four-storey 1925 hotel, the property features 120 guestrooms, a signature restaurant, a Turkish-inspired spa, library and boutique shop. Room prices start from \$550 per room, per night. See thehotelcalifornian.com

To complete a lavish stay on the American Riviera, luxury seekers and wine enthusiasts can sample the region's finest wines with experiences including a scenic wine tour by helicopter and sampling at Sanford Winery with Nanco Helicopters; a customised Sip & Sail tour on a private yacht with Coastal Concierge; and a private horseback ride through Estelle Vineyards with a tasting in their barn, courtesy of Vino Vaqueros. Visit santabarbaraca.com for more details.

Experience chic Copenhagen with a stylish city break

TRAVELLERS WISHING to indulge in a luxury city break might want to consider Copenhagen with its unique accommodation options exemplifying Nordic design, trendy gourmet restaurants and private sightseeing tours.

The Krane is the world's first one-room design hotel built inside an old coal crane, offering a completely private retreat with a unique sea view, spa and a private outdoor terrace.

Alternatively, travellers can stay in one of the city's two newest five-star boutique hotels, Hotel Sanders and Nobis Hotel, both built in historical landmark buildings in the heart of Copenhagen and filled with Scandinavian design and understated luxury.

Denmark's capital is also a hot-spot for new Nordic cuisine. From this month, bookings are open for star chef René Redzepi's Noma 2.0, a reinvention of Noma which was ranked as the world's best restaurant four times in the last six years. The restaurant will reopen at the beginning of 2018 in a new location with a new culinary concept designed to challenge the traditional view on fine dining. Other culinary highlights include Geranium,

holding three Michelin stars and impressing guests with meals that involve all senses; the two Michelin-starred AOC, which only uses fresh Nordic produce sourced from both Earth and Sea; 108, Noma's sister restaurant which has already been awarded a Michelin star after only opening its doors in 2016; and Relæ which was awarded a Michelin star earlier this year.

Copenhagen has a long tradition of top opera performances, ballet and theatre, and the Royal Danish Theatre is located in three buildings in the centre of the city playing both classics and modern pieces. For something extra special, visitors can also skip the traditional sightseeing and see Copenhagen the VIP-way on a private canal tour or from above by helicopter. With the best panoramic view, Danish Fly offers sightseeing flights year-round over Copenhagen City, Zealand and Southern Sweden, plus VIP charters. To complete the luxury city break experience, clients can take a relaxing journey of the senses and treat themselves to a day of indulgence at the Skodsborg Spa. Go to visitdenmark.co.uk for more information.





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Shinta Mani-Bensley Collection to launch next year with two new properties

SHINTA MANI currently offers two boutique properties in Siem Reap, but for 2018 will join forces with architect Bill Bensley to launch 'The Bensley Collection', with two new hospitality experiences in the pipeline.

Bensley said: "I have designed these residences as I like to live myself, surrounded by lush gardens which are completely private. When I travel I look for places that have a strong understanding of the local culture, and I find that the best vacations are those where I learn something new. Staying at the Bensley Collection will be like being handed the keys to the Khmer Civilization for a few days."

Set to debut in January 2018, Shinta Mani Angkor-Bensley Collection will comprise of ten opulent split-level villas set beneath the canopy of Siem Reap's ancient Palace trees with Bensley Butlers on hand to ensure the satisfaction of guests during their stay. Each villa will offer 156sq.m across two pavilions including a floor to ceiling glassed bathroom with views over the garden and outdoor bathtub.

This will be followed with the opening of Shinta Mani Wild in mid-2018 - a luxury tented camp in the Cardamom Mountains, in the depths of the Cambodian wilderness by an important elephant migration trail. Located along 1.5km of river and waterfalls, the super-luxe property will offer 16,100sq.m, custom-designed tents elevated over moving water and waterfalls, providing a unique view and experience.

Visit shintamani.com for more details.

A Golden 20th anniversary Trans-Siberian experience with Great Rail Journeys

GREAT RAIL Journeys is celebrating its 20th anniversary of the Premium Trans-Siberian Express tour.

Starting from £14,895 per person, the 19-day tour has been designed to transport guests back to the romantic age of travel. Covering more than 8,000 miles, the itinerary includes Berlin, Moscow, Mongolia, a private barbecue on the shores of Lake Baikal

and 12 nights on the Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express.

Louise Heatley, head of product and contracting for the operator, said: "The Trans-Siberian Railroad is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Therefore we make sure our guests have the best experience with luxury and style on the Golden Eagle.

"No expense has been spared on

this luxury train; it has all the modern amenities, whilst being decorated and furnished in a classical style. This elegant train transports guests back to the romantic age of rail travel and is the true highlight of this tour."

Tours depart on May 2 and on August 16, 2018.

Visit greatrail.com or go to 0800-240 4470.



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VELAA HOLIDAY...with a difference. This is just part of the ultra-luxury Velaa private island in the Maldives, which features 47 villas, 18 of which are over water and each of which has a private pool. The circular island (full name Fushi Velaa Waru which translates as The Island of the Big Turtle) is just more than half a kilometre in diameter with a 360 degree beach, and features a golf academy, three restaurants and two bars, an extensive wine cellar, kids' club, spa, library and a wide range of watersports. Before it was acquired on a 100 year lease it was home to a farmer's equipment shed, so the transformation has been remarkable and low season rates start between USD 2,000-5,000 per night. Getting there is also exclusive, using a dedicated nine-seat seaplane from Malé. Details at velaaprivateisland.com

portugal&madeira



Inghams adds Portugal to Lakes & Mountains programme

SUMMER GUESTS travelling with Inghams can experience a range of guaranteed excursions and guided walks to experience the landscapes, climate, cuisine and people of Portugal and Madeira as the operator introduces the destination as a new product to its Lakes & Mountains' programme for summer 2018.

With flexible holiday options, from short city breaks to ten-night getaways, holidaymakers can explore the capital, Lisbon, or discover the island of Madeira through pre-bookable guided excursions.

Madeira is home to more than 800km of 'Levada' walks, which follow the original irrigation channels built to carry water down the mountains, and are a must for visitors. The operator is also inviting guests to discover Setúbal, which lies on the edge of the Arrábida National Park on the Blue Coast, 20 minutes from Lisbon, and a haven for walkers and hikers due to its coastal scenery and the Sabo Nature Reserve.

The company has a programme of guided half and full day walks in both the Levadas of Madeira and in the Arrábida National Park from Setúbal and Lisbon.

To ensure all guests make the most of their holiday in Portugal, the operator is offering a free half day guided excursion or walk and, for those who are tempted by both Madeira and the mainland, there is also the option to explore both destinations on a multi-centre

holiday, with internal flights included.

Simon McIntyre, head of sales for the operator, said: "With the launch of our main edition brochure for summer 2018 earlier this week, amongst other highlights, we're extremely excited to announce the addition of Portugal & Madeira to our Lakes & Mountains programme.

"A key USP for the destinations is our range of free excursions and guided walks available to help guests get the most out of their visit to these spectacular destinations. We're confident that, with the continued support of our valued trade partners, Portugal and Madeira will thrive in their first summer of operating, and we look forward to sharing more news on what else is new for Inghams over the coming months."

The company is offering a three-night holiday on a bed-and-breakfast basis at the four-star Hotel Luna Esperança Centro in Setúbal, Portugal, from £689 per person, based on two sharing in May 2018.

The price includes flights, airport transfers, a free half-day guided walk in Arrábida National Park (worth £35), a free Berlitz Lisbon city guide and free tea and coffee in the hotel throughout the day.

Guests can also save up to £50 per couple if booked before January 31, 2018, with four-, seven-, ten-, 11- and 14-nights also available. For more information go to agents.inghams.co.uk or call 01483-791111.

New off-the-beaten-track options from Intrepid Travel

AS PART of Intrepid Travel's new itineraries to some of Europe's unique and off-the-beaten-track destinations for 2018, and in a bid to help curb over-tourism, the tour operator is recommending a trip to experience the food and wine culture of Portugal or go island-hopping or hiking in Sao Jorge or the Azores' Faial Islands as an alternative to Spain.

A ten-day tour offers holidaymakers the chance to discover a new side to ancient Portugal; island-hopping from mainland Lisbon and ending in Sao Miguel soaking up the rolling blue hydrangeas of Faial, the steep cliffs of Sao Jorge and the vineyards of Pico in between.

Departures run from May to September 2018 and cost from £2,230 per person including nine nights' breakfast accommodation, three other meals, transport and most activities. Prices exclude flights.

For more details go to intrepidtravel.com or call 0808-274 5111.

AlmaLusa enhances guest experience with complimentary smartphones

THE BOUTIQUE hotel AlmaLusa Baixa/ Chiado has introduced complimentary smartphones, pre-loaded with a bespoke 'AlmaLusa app', so as to provide guests with exclusive content at their fingertips and enhance their experience of Lisbon with a more efficient and diverse itinerary.

Powered by Guest U technology, the smartphones have been designed to act as a concierge, tour guide and route planner, and also come with 30 minutes of free international calls and internet per day so guests can put their personal mobiles aside and explore the city with what is effectively an interactive virtual tour guide.

The 'AlmaLusa App' is also available for download from the Google Play and the App Store for guests who wish to use their own mobiles.

The property is located within an 18th-century building set within the historic Praça do Municipio close to the Praca do Comercio and offers 28 rooms and suites.



THE LUMIARES Hotel in Lisbon is offering 20% savings on room nights in November for a one-bedroom apartment based on two sharing. Other offerings include complimentary breakfast with panoramic views and a hot stones treatment. For more information email reservations@thelumiare.com

Beat the winter blues at the Magnolia Hotel

THE MAGNOLIA Hotel, situated on the Algarve Coast, is offering a 15% discount with its 'pay now' rate for holidays up to February 2018.

With 74 guestrooms, three suites and seven cottages, the Miami-style hotel can be found a few steps from Quinta do Lago with exclusive access to shopping, beach nightlife, nearby golf courses and the hotel's newest elite performance centre, The Campus, available to all guests.

The property offers double rooms from £80 per night on a bed-and-breakfast basis from November through to February 2018, and is offering 15% off these rates excluding the New Year period.

Go to themagnoliahotelqdl.com for more details.

WinterGrill master classes at Four Seasons Fairways

TO CELEBRATE the coming together of families and friends with al fresco cooking, Four Seasons Fairways has launched 'WinterGrill' to encourage guests to fire up the coals all year round.

Along with the cooking facilities on offer in each of the 132 private villas, including fully functional kitchens and bespoke BBQ stations, the resort has provided a set of WinterGrill Recipe Cards with unique recipes created by British TV Chefs Tom and Henry Herbert - otherwise known as The Fabulous Baker Brothers.

To accompany the recipes, the chefs have created a set of online tutorials and will also be hosting a LIVE BBQ Masterclass demonstrating top tips and tricks for great barbecue techniques and how to prepare food ready for grilling. They will also be hosting small classes for individual groups looking to improve their skills further between February 20-23, 2018.

Jorge Oliveira, general manager at the

resort, said: "This is a great opportunity to encourage families to visit the Algarve in the autumn, winter and spring months of the year. While the weather can be unsavoury in England, the average temperature in Quinta Do Lago ranges from 15-20 degrees, making Four Seasons Fairways an ideal place for some winter sun, family fun and great grilled food.

"The introduction of WinterGrill also ties in perfectly with our #lifeatfairways campaign, sharing what life is like in and around our resort."

A Barbecue Masterclass package, with arrivals on February 16 or 17 for one week, lead in at 1,490 euros. This includes accommodation for up to four guests sharing a villa or apartment, buffet breakfast, a Masterclass event with Tom and Henry (including a barbecue lunch for four guests) and transfers.

For more information visit fourseasonsfairways.com/winter-grill

Super Break boosts luxury options in Lisbon with two new five-star additions

SUPER BREAK has added two new luxury hotels in Lisbon, bringing the total now featured in the city to 52. They include a hotel found on a prime waterfront location with a Michelin star restaurant and a boutique hotel in downtown Lisbon in collaboration with Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Pestana CR7 Lisboa is a five-star collaboration between the Pestana Hotel Group and famous footballer Cristiano Ronaldo. Set in the classy neighbourhood of Baixa Pombalina, guests are less than a minute on foot from Praça do Comércio, the main tram lines, the Chiado shopping area and the nightlife of Cais do Sodré.

The hotel offers a lively corner bar and bistro and fully equipped fitness centre. Packages in late February 2018 are from £245 per person for three nights' breakfast accommodation and flights from Stansted.

Set overlooking the Tagus River, the five-star Altis Belem Hotel & Spa has won numerous awards and is located in Lisbon's historic Belem. The bespoke hotel features a spa, Michelin starred restaurant, indoor and outdoor pools and a rooftop sundeck.

Packages in late February 2018 are from £312 per person for three nights' breakfast stay and flights from Stansted. For more information visit superbreak.com/agents or call 01904-436000.



TAP AIR Portugal and London City Airport recently partnered to organise a trade networking evening at BOISDALE Canary Wharf to celebrate the launch of the airline's new direct route from London City to Lisbon, with the inaugural flight taking place late last month. A prize draw during the evening saw Rissa Senderowitz (centre) from Reed & Mackay win two Business Class tickets with the carrier to Lisbon from London City Airport, presented by the airline's Ricardo Dinis and airport's Anne Doyere. Visit flytap.com

A Madeira Micro-Adventure

MADEIRA HAS opened up to younger generations looking to embark on a short-haul adventure.

Nature Lovers, fitness fanatics and thrill seekers need only take a direct three-and-a-half-hour flight from London to find themselves on the Atlantic archipelago with its sub-tropical climate and dramatic mountainous terrain. The diverse landscape invites micro-adventurers to experience a multitude of activities including hiking, canyoning, trail-running through the mountains, scuba diving and rock climbing. For further information visit madeiraallyear.com

New attractions opening in Lisbon

WITH THE recent announcement that Lisbon will play host to the 2018 Eurovision Song Contest, the Portuguese capital is positioning itself as a must-visit destination for next year. However, for visitors soon to arrive in Portugal's capital, a number of new attractions are opening for this year.

Lisbon's latest attraction is the Pilar 7 Experience - Ponte 25 de Abril Interpretive Centre, which will show travellers the bridge and city as they've never seen it before.

Located in Alcântara on the Avenida da Índia, visitors will go on a journey through the construction of the national monument, ending their excursion with an elevator ride to a panoramic viewing platform located about 80m above the river Tagus and offering unique views of the city, Belém and its river. Go to visitlisboa.com/index.php/node/7560

The historical gardens of the National Palace of Queluz, which were closed for extensive restoration work, have also recently reopened to the public. The National Palace of Queluz was the official residence of the Portuguese monarchy during the 18th century, and visitors can once again explore the gardens, lakes, fountains and statues.

Also closed for essential refurbishment works was the Botanical Gardens of the University of Lisbon, which are scheduled to reopen in the coming months. Located in the Príncipe Real neighbourhood, the botanical gardens opened in 1837 and today are home to one of the largest collections of subtropical vegetation in Europe, as well as a unique butterfly greenhouse. Visit museus.ulisboa.pt/en/botanic-garden

From the UK, direct flights to Lisbon operate from London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Bristol with TAP Portugal, British Airways, easyJet and Ryanair. From Ireland, direct flights to Lisbon operate from Dublin with Aer Lingus and Ryanair.

For more information go to visitlisboa.com



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NEW FROM Peter Sommer Travels, 'Exploring Ireland: The Heart of the Emerald Isle' is an 11-day trip that delves into Ireland's heritage, tradition and culture while staying in a range of renovated castles, manors and town houses. The tour combines off-the-beaten-track locations, such as windswept tower houses and 'royal' sites of Gaelic mythology, with must-see sites such as the Megalithic tombs of Newgrange and Knowth, the Celtic cliff-side fort at Dun Aonghasa and the centre of Dublin and its museums. Departing on June 11, 2018 prices lead in at £4,595 per person based on two sharing, including ten nights' four- and five-star hotel accommodation with breakfast, eight lunches, seven dinners, entrance fees/expert-led excursions, minibuss travel and transfers. Flights are extra.

Landal GreenParks expands with Gwel an Mor addition

BACK-TO-NATURE holiday brand Landal GreenParks has further grown its UK portfolio with the addition of Landal Gwel an Mor – its third new location in less than a year.

The park, set on Cornwall's north coast, will offer customers the brand's trademark service and encouragement to explore the local area when it opens for 2018 bookings with agents through sister brand Hoseasons later this year.

Simon Altham from Hoseasons said: "Landal Gwel an Mor is a fantastic addition to the Landal GreenParks portfolio, and we are delighted to have entered into this long-term partnership with the park.

"The fact that it is the brand's first coastal location in the UK is great news for customers, but also gives agents another impressive option when looking to capitalise on increased demand for high quality UK breaks."

Designed so that friends, families and couples get closer to nature, park guests can feed foxes, try their hand at rock pooling and embark on night fauna walks and falconry. The park is also located 15 miles away from the newly transformed Tate St Ives, which recently re-opened following a four-year refurbishment.

The park joins the brand's two other current UK locations - Landal Darwin Forest situated on the edge of the Peak District National Park and Landal Kielder Waterside, set within Northumberland's Kielder Water & Forest Park. The two parks have seen a combined growth in bookings of more than 25% year-on-year since joining the holiday company earlier this year.

For more information go to the dedicated agent portal on the Hoseasons website or call 01502-516900.

Shearings adds RAF centenary tour for 2018

TO MARK the RAF's centenary year in 2018, Shearings Holidays has launched a new five-day tour for agents to promote that provides the opportunity for enthusiasts to delve deeper into the history and achievements of the Royal Air Force.

The tour includes a visit to one of the most famous landmarks in the RAF's history - RAF College Cranwell. The Aviation Heritage Museum here follows the story of the historic site, from its early days as a Royal Navy Air Service base to the present day.

The Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre is also visited, which offers a living memorial to the 55,500 men of Bomber Command who lost their lives in World War II.

Newark Air Museum is also explored, which is located on part of the former World War II airfield of RAF Winthorpe where aviation has been part of the site for more than 45 years.

Priced from £209 per person, the tour is available on selected dates in April and October 2018 and includes five days' coach travel, four nights' half-board at the four-star Urban Hotel in Grantham and three excursions including visits to all of the above, based on two sharing.

Visit shearingsagent.com for more information.

Just for Tots Christmas breaks from £49 per person

BUTLIN'S IS kick-starting the festive season with a four-night Just for Tots Christmas Fantasy break from £49 per person, available at the Bognor Regis and Skegness seaside resorts between December 11-15.

Santa and his friends can be found in a magical 'Snowstorm' at the Skyline Pavilion, which offers a heart-warming story and sing-along-songs, and tots are invited to join Father Christmas in his Grotto to hear stories and join in with festive arts and craft sessions.

The holiday brand will also be welcoming back its silent cinema for Christmas this year to showcase classic family films.

The festive fun is in addition to the regular Just for Tots entertainment line-up, and the price is based on four people sharing a Silver self-catering apartment at the Skegness resort, arriving on December 11 for four nights.

Warner Leisure Hotels offers new savings

WARNER LEISURE Hotels' new 2018 brochure has now landed with agents, with early booking offers of up to 50% off for 2018, as well as an additional exclusive saving when bookings are made via a travel agent.

Featuring details on new entertainment options, activities and additional festival breaks across the brand's portfolio, the brochure has early booking offers for breaks booked before February 5, 2018. Guests can save 50% off all rooms throughout 2018 and deposits of £35 per person and no single supplement will be added to solo traveller stays on thousands of room categories. Agents can also pass on an additional saving of up to £20 per room to their customers with the operator's exclusive discount.

Meanwhile, clients with big bookings will automatically receive several benefits including free places, single rooms without under occupancy supplements and low deposits.

Premier Holidays jumps on Jersey's popularity with early booking campaign for 2018 getaways

PREMIER HOLIDAYS has unveiled a series of early booking offers to the Channel Islands following an increase in sales to Jersey for 2018.

The operator has seen a 28% year-on-year increase for travel to Jersey for next year and has released a selection of spring and summer 2018 tactical offers to enable agents to benefit from the destination's popularity.

The company's 'Book Now for 2018' campaign includes added incentives such as free nights, free room upgrades and free meals.

Jersey deals featured in the new campaign include four nights at the four-star Radisson Blu Waterfront from £399 per person in May 2018, a seven-night summer holiday at the Norfolk from £549 with free half-board and a three-night April special from £235 at the Merton.

The operator has also rolled out a selection of 2018 Guernsey deals, including a winter break at St Pierre Park from £329 per person for three nights from January to March, with a free upgrade to a garden view room; and four nights at the Peninsula from £429, with travel in June and July.

All offers include flights from Gatwick and a number of regional airports, while offers for travel by sea from Poole are also available.

Beverley Scarr, the operator's short-haul general manager, said: "The Channel Islands has been selling extremely well for us this year and we've already had many advance bookings for next year, which is why we've launched a number of offers for 2018 travel as we know people like to book early."

"Being able to offer agents a variety of regional airports to Jersey and Guernsey is a great benefit of our Channel Islands programme and has helped strengthen sales."

Travel agents can earn £5 for every Channel Islands booking via the operator's agent incentive scheme.

Visit trade.premierholidays or call 0844-4937 777 for more details.



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GUESTS LOOKING for some rejuvenation after a busy day of exploring the great outdoors can enjoy a multitude of massage therapies, facials and specialist body treatments at Haven's Rockley Park and Haggerston Castle spa facilities. At Rockley Park, guests can enjoy an hour's complimentary 'Spa and Relaxation' session for treatments worth £45 and above. The holiday brand is also offering a saving of 25% on all dates and breaks next year when booked before February 5, 2018.



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Crossword:

Across: 1. BLACK WATCH, 5. SANDBANKS, 6. AVON, 7. ANNECY, 10. HILTON, 12. FARO, 15. GIBRALTAR, 16. BATON ROUGE.

Down: 1. BRANAGH, 2. KENT, 3. ALBANY, 4. CANOE, 5. SFO, 8. YAOUNDE, 9. MONACO, 11. LIBRA, 13. AYR, 14. STAR.

Highlighted Word: xxxx

Where Am I?: SOFIA

We asked our staff the following question this week:

What's your favourite toast topping?



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Pate and coleslaw.



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Just butter

Many happy returns of the day to this sweet-natured, wasabi-loving design apprentice. Here's hoping you receive a nice box of Lindor chocs to celebrate your birthday Lucia!

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