

travelbulletin

July 13 2018 | ISSUE NO 2,070 | travelbulletin.co.uk

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Featuring Courses





ROCKIN' OUT...

THE CARNIVAL Cruise Line UK team recently hosted a fam for 40 travel trade partners at the Ibiza Rocks Hotel in Ibiza. The aim of the trip, which takes place every year, is to reward those UK travel agents who do most to engage with Carnival Cruise Line UK's Loyalty Rocks Club. Agents were treated to three nights at the hotel and enjoyed exclusive access to an Ibiza Rocks pool party as well as a boat trip around the coastline. Pictured cooling down at the party are, from the left: Sophie Mauger, Tiago Oliveira, Bianca Wickens, Callum Fisher, Lauren Burns and Luke Squires, all from Virgin Holidays. For more information see carnival.com

Travel industry committed to creating one-stop-shop for customers

RENTALCARS CONNECT, the B2B ground transportation arm of Booking.com, carried out a live Travel Pulse at its 2018 partner event in Edinburgh this month and found that the industry is committed to providing its customers with value for money and convenient services.

When asked to specify their customers' top priority, representatives from global airlines, airports and comparison sites recognised value for money services (37%) and convenience (32%) as the most important elements in the booking process. The survey also revealed that 19% rated personalisation and 11% loyalty benefits as the thing their customers would value most in the next few years.

Fraser Ellacott, the company's managing director, said: "Shaping the customer journey to be as streamlined as possible and in turn offering value for money is the industry's top priority. To do this, we need to work together to understand what the customer wants and collaborate in order to remove as much friction as possible from the booking process. This is the key to creating a convenient one-stop-shop for all services related to a customer's trip."

Partners at the event were also asked about the different

ways in which technology could affect their business in the near future. The results revealed that 70% are looking to embrace AI and use it to benefit their businesses, while 18% stated that they would be hesitant to embrace AI due to lack of understanding of how it might benefit a business or a shortage of in-house skills and resources to implement it. Only 12% of partners said they have no plans to adopt AI.

When asked about the role big data would play in their business over the next few years, 82% of partners said that it could help provide useful insight into customer behaviour and improve the customer journey, alongside automation of processes (56%) and facilitating flexible pricing structures for products and services (58%).

Fraser added: "Technology is infiltrating and revolutionising the travel industry. It's promising to see that our partners are acutely aware of how it can perfect the current processes and services we offer as an industry. Both AI and big data have the potential to facilitate and refine every part of the booking process, from predicting demand to automating services and helping to create a seamless customer experience."

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tourist office unveils new 'Eat Thai, Visit Thai' campaign



SUMMER MARKS the return of 'Gardaland Night is Magic', the event that lets guests experience all the magic of the park until late in the evening. Until September 9, the park's opening hours have been extended until 23:00, offering visitors five extra hours of fun and entertainment. The Gardaland Adventure Hotel offers a package starting from 314 euros consisting of a themed room for one night for two adults and one child (aged three-12), a combined ticket for one day at Gardaland Park plus one day at Gardaland SEA LIFE Aquarium inclusive of buffet breakfast at Tutankhamon Restaurant. The same package is available for two nights starting from 491 euros. For details see gardalandholidays.it

Multi-generational summer getaways from Cruise & Maritime Voyages with 15 nights from £699

CRUISE AND Maritime Voyages (CMV) is offering new low fares on cruises departing this month and next. Columbus departs from Tilbury on July 20 sailing to the Canary Islands & Madeira for 15 nights with fares from £699 per person. Alternatively, an August 11 sailing from Tilbury visits the Baltic Cities and St Petersburg on a 13-night cruise with fares from £899.

While the cruise line primarily operates adult-only cruises, both departures are categorised as 'multi-generational', enabling the whole family to enjoy quality time together, with children sharing with two adults paying £199 per person.

Fares are based on two sharing a twin inner cabin and include full board cuisine, afternoon tea and late-night snacks, a Captain's cocktail party, complimentary tea and coffee between 06:00-midnight, big show entertainment, cabarets and classical interludes, daytime activities and leisure facilities, guest speaker and arts & crafts, portage of luggage, port to cabin and port taxes.

To book or for more information see cruiseandmaritime.com

Trade-friendly brochures from Prestige

PRESTIGE HOLIDAYS has launched the first of its new look brochures – a bright pink dedicated Canaries programme that includes British favourite, Fuerteventura, for the first time.

The independent operator has moved away from the traditional picture led front cover to modern and distinctive brightly coloured covers that will stand out on agent brochure racks.

Inside, the new Canaries brochure is formatted to make it much easier to read. There are bullet points on each hotel highlighting the facilities and location for each, making it easy for agents to quickly identify key selling points and determine which type of clients each property would suit.

The operator's chairman and managing director, John Dixon, said: "Trade support is key to our business. An important consideration in the redesign was to ensure that our brochures were as trade-friendly as possible and that they were easy to identify."

"We are now very much a specialist operator and the Canaries is the first of eight dedicated brochures that will be produced in this new agent-friendly format."

P&O Cruises announces new guest experience programme for 2019

P&O CRUISES will expand and introduce new additions to its ship and shore guest experience across the fleet from summer 2019.

The programme will cover three key areas of investment in shore excursions, dining and entertainment across mid-sized ships Arcadia and Aurora and Oceana as well as the larger ships Britannia, Azura and Ventura.

Aurora will be refitted next spring, prior to her re-launch as a ship exclusively for adults, when new cabins will be added as well as fixtures, fittings, soft furnishings and enhancements to public spaces throughout the vessel.

The line's senior vice president, Paul Ludlow, said: "With the

introduction of Iona in 2020 followed by a similar ship two years later, it is also imperative that we continue to elevate the standards of the rest of the fleet.

"Our research with current and prospective guests shows that their holidays need to give them a vital boost to their everyday lives – they tell us that they want 'to live life at 100%'.

"Cruising today is perceived as a contemporary and aspirational holiday yet it is still one which has very small penetration in the holiday market as a whole. Our vision is to break these barriers by listening to feedback from our loyal guests whilst expanding the audience of new cruisers.

"The additions will include new excursions across our itineraries, new

dazzling theatre shows and daytime activities which reflect today's trends. We will be investing in Aurora's refit next year; Food Hero Eric Lanlard has devised an entirely new afternoon tea for all the ships, which will be very special, as well as refreshed menus and cocktails across the fleet."

Rollout of these enhancements will coincide with the departure of Oriana from the fleet in August 2019.

As an example of prices, a 12-night Norway and Northern Lights option leads in at £1,439 per person for an inside cabin. Departing on November 3, 2019 the price includes full-board meals and entertainment on board.

To book or for more information see pocruises.com or call 0345-355 5111.

BA boosts frequency of flights to Tenerife

TENERIFE WILL become more accessible to UK holidaymakers with British Airways announcing its largest Tenerife schedule in history.

From October 28 to March 31, 2019, the airline is increasing its flights from Gatwick from eight flights a week to 13, including its Club Europe (Business Class) seats. The new flights will depart every Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the winter season.

Alberto Bernabé, tourism minister for the Tenerife Island Government, said: "We are extremely pleased that British Airways is increasing its flight frequency from Gatwick to Tenerife South airport this winter. With this being the largest capacity of British Airways' seats to Tenerife in history, there has never been a better time to book your winter break and enjoy our spring-like temperatures, beautiful and varied landscape and fine gastronomy." *For further information see webtenerife.co.uk*



ALL ABOARD!... The Carnival Cruise Line UK team recently hosted 40 divisional managers, regional sales managers and cruise experts from Thomas Cook at Royal Ascot on Ladies Day. Pictured from the left are Ray Hudson-Evans, Nicki Martin, Kim Ralphs, Elaine Howard, Emily Gibbard, Sam Stimpson and Tash Marson, all from Thomas Cook.

Norwegian continues expansion in Ireland with Canada route

NORWEGIAN IS continuing its Irish expansion with the launch of its first route to Canada. Commencing on March 31, 2019, the new daily service between Dublin and Hamilton – Toronto will mark the first direct flight between the two cities, providing passengers with greater choice and flexibility at an affordable price. Fares start from 189 euros one-way and are available to book at norwegian.com/ie

The daily non-stop flights will be operated using new Boeing 737 MAX aircraft offering 189 seats in a high quality, modern single class cabin.

Vincent Harrison, managing director at Dublin Airport said: "We're delighted to see Norwegian launch this new service to Hamilton. It will be Dublin Airport's fifth destination in Canada, offering further choice to the growing Canada-Ireland and Ireland-Canada markets and the overall transatlantic market between Dublin and North America."

The carrier will continue its growth at Dublin by continuing its summer 2018 schedule into the winter. Irish customers will continue to benefit from a double daily service to Stewart, New York and daily flights to Providence, which offers passengers more affordable access to the tourist centres of New York City, Boston and the New England area.

AITO announces 2018 conference location in Middle East for November

THE ASSOCIATION of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) has announced that it will be heading to the Middle East for its annual conference, to be held from November 22-25.

The association's chairman, Derek Moore, said: "For 2018 we wanted to steer a middle path. In 2016 our conference was built around the world-famous icon that is Petra; in 2017 we headed for the Alentejo, a little-known region of Portugal. Both conference destinations proved highly successful, so for 2018 we debated whether the conference should be held somewhere iconic or somewhere unknown. Instead, we have chosen to offer a 'Tale of the Unexpected'.

"The United Arab Emirates (UAE) comprises seven Emirates of which the most familiar are, arguably, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Just 45 minutes' drive from the bustle of Dubai International Airport lies the unexpected – and less well-known – surprise that is Ras Al Khaimah, or RAK, as it is referred to locally.

"Like many Gulf States, Ras Al Khaimah features year-long sunshine, inviting white-sand beaches and spectacular terracotta desert landscapes. However, in contrast to the

fast pace and bright lights of its neighbours, this northern-most Emirate offers a more laid-back vibe, fewer high-rise developments, the highest mountains in the UAE, and a variety of exciting activities, along with a history and culture spanning 7,000 years.

"We're thrilled to have been invited by the Ras Al Khaimah Tourist Development Authority (RAK TDA). It is particularly exciting for AITO members to visit such a fascinating destination that is on the cusp of change in terms of tourism. We are also pleased to be flying with Emirates to the conference – its vast network of airports in the UK will make travel to Ras Al Khaimah so convenient for our members who are spread across the country."

Delegates will fly in to Dubai and transfer to their accommodation in the centre of Ras Al Khaimah, choosing either the five-star Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa overlooking the beach, or the recently-remodelled four-star Hilton Garden Inn – also the setting for the conference – which is slightly closer to the town and offers views across the inland waterway.

For more information visit aito.com

Oh So Kool ! KANDIMA



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newsbulletin

The Titan team unveil the 40th anniversary brochure



Titan offers guaranteed departures to mark anniversary Worldwide brochure

TITAN HAS unveiled its Worldwide brochure for 2019 tours featuring 23 new tours amongst a diverse selection of more than 200 experience-led itineraries.

To further mark the release, the operator has announced a new guaranteed departures policy on every single tour date and has also unveiled a new logo and strapline, 'Perfect Moments Shared', drawing on the social benefits of its escorted tours.

The company's managing director, Andy Squirrell, said: "Our customers tell us the sociability of our holidays is something they enjoy the most. There's no doubt we offer a diverse range of amazing experiences, but what makes those experiences so special is the fact they're shared. Even after the moment has passed, customers will be reliving with each other."

As an example of prices, an 'America's Historic Cities', which departs on August 22, 2019 leads in at £2,799 per person, while a 'Wild Borneo' departure, which delves into nature and searches for orang-utans and pygmy elephants departs between April and November and costs from £2,699.

Meanwhile, agents can win a £4,000 holiday voucher by sharing their perfect travel moment on Facebook TitanagentsUK or Twitter @TitanagentsUK with the #Titanperfectmoments hashtag by August 31. Ten runners-up will also receive an instant Polaroid camera.

For details call 0800-988 5800 or see titanagents.co.uk

NEWS BITES

- THE BRITISH cruise market saw another year of growth in 2017 with a record high of 1,971,000 cruise passengers setting sail on an ocean cruise, representing an increase of 4.3% against 2016, according to new figures released by CLIA UK and Ireland.
- HILTON LONDON Bankside has partnered with London Wildlife Trust and the local community to celebrate the unique diversity of the Bankside area with an urban design trail. Fox Marks The Spot traces a series of bespoke designed foxes scattered throughout the neighbourhood, creating a fun visitor trail. It will be complemented by a series of talks, tours and workshops with local partners to celebrate the vibrant and eclectic area of Bankside.
- TO COINCIDE with the launch of JTA's 'USA Holidays by JTA' brand, the company has also launched a USA specific brochure. The 20-page brochure showcases a wide range of 2018/19 beach and city holidays, fly/drive experiences and cruise and stay options whilst highlighting some of the best US touring holidays available in the market. Prices start from £419 per person and low deposits of £50 are available on packages.

New autumn, winter & spring brochure from Shearings Holidays

SHEARINGS HOLIDAYS has launched its autumn, winter and spring 2018/19 brochure featuring a range of new products and a refreshed look and feel. The brochure pulls together many of the operator's best-selling UK, European and river cruise products into one, easy-to-rack brochure for agents to use.

A launch incentive runs until July 27, offering agents who make bookings from the new autumn, winter and spring brochure the chance to win a team night out.

More than 400 tours are featured, including 27 new additions. To assist agents further, the agent toolkit will be updated at shearings.com/toolkit with new posters, images, window cards and digital copies of the brochure.

Jane Atkins, the company's managing director, said: "Agents will be waiting for this brochure as it's a great ideas tool for them to use. It is packed full of festive ideas for customers seeking Christmas breaks,

from the popular Christmas markets in the UK and Europe to Turkey and Tinsel breaks and of course New Year getaways. All of these offer high revenue opportunities for agents and our short breaks are a great way for agents to entice new customers into coach travel and showcase the benefits it can offer in making the difficult, easy."

In total 15 new tours are featured including a range of breaks staying at the new Country Living Hotels in Bath and Harrogate.

New products include Bay Inclusive Blackpool and Viva Special which includes tickets to Viva Blackpool's The Spirit of Christmas show, with prices from £196 per person for a five-day coach trip; a Country Living Harrogate, Grassington Dickensian Festival and GLOW, which includes a stay at new Country Living Hotel and trips to RHS Harlow Carr for the GLOW illuminations and the Grassington Dickensian Festival, with a four-day coach trip from £158; and a

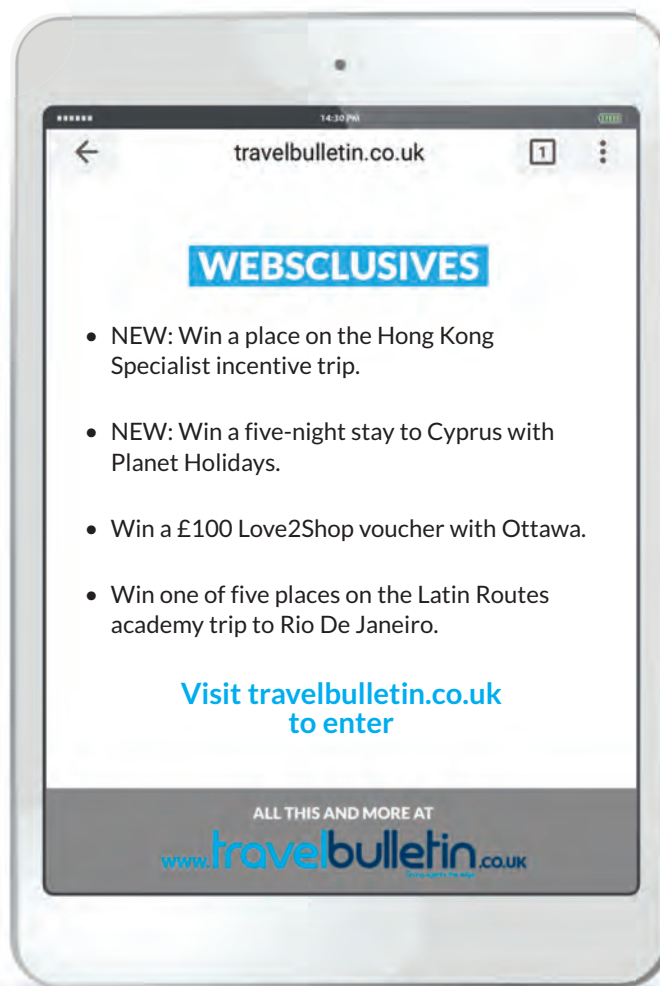
Turkey and Tinsel in Newquay, which includes a stay at the Bay Marina Hotel with prices from £144 for a five-day coach trip. It includes festive treats such as mulled wine on arrival, festive afternoon tea plus Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and two excursions.

For further information see shearingsagent.com



NEWS BITES

- RADISSON HOTEL Group has announced a new strategic partnership with Hainan Airlines. The new agreement covers several areas including a loyalty programme partnership; coordinated marketing and social media campaigns. To kick off the partnership, members of Radisson Rewards, the global rewards programme from Radisson Hotel Group, will be able to redeem their points for flights with Hainan Airlines and nine other leading carriers under the Fortune Wings Club frequent flyer programme.
- LONDON'S LEICESTER Square has launched a dedicated brand identity spearheaded by Heart of London Business Alliance in partnership with Westminster City Council. The new initiative is aimed at driving visitor numbers and enable the area to stand out against global and local competing destinations. It includes the launch of a heart-shaped logo incorporating the letters LSQ and dedicated digital and social channels. Over the next 18 months a major events and partnerships programme will be activated in Leicester Square showcasing the personality and cultural roots of this historic destination.
- BELMOND HAS announced that its beach retreat, Belmond La Samanna, is back on the scene in St Martin. Following a chic restyle, the resort will be ready to welcome guests from December 10.
- AEGEAN HAS announced that it has signed with Airbus for the order of up to 42 new generation aircraft.
- HAVEN IS highlighting a range of summer deals starting from £599 per family for breaks across this month and next. The price is based on a seven-night break for a family of up to four sharing a standard two-bedroom caravan at selected parks departing from July 20.





staffreview

Travel Bulletin's Tim Podger joined a two-night fam trip to the Hard Rock Hotel Pattaya. Here's what he thought...

First impressions10/10

WOW! Cool, funky and throw in huge Thai smiles - I felt like a superstar!

Comfort9/10

Very clean and comfortable, combined with great service. I definitely felt at home.

Quality9/10

The feel was rock cool in Thailand with music and pool bars. The pool was enormous with a couple of slides and a basketball hoop for the kids. It was all done to a high quality and standard. There was also a newly designed Roxity Kids Club offering a wide range of music-based activities, games and workshops, and the clubs cater for kids aged three-twelve years.

Service10/10

Very good and friendly service - almost too attentive! American attention to detail with a Thai smile.

Good to know.....

Great location by the beach road and close enough to Pattaya city. Fantastic facilities for families and big kids! Hop on the shared taxi to go downtown to the malls and city centre. Share the cost and see the hustle and bustle of Pattaya, wonderful for people watching.

Overall scoring:

9/10



Up to \$500 onboard spending money available from Princess Cruises

PRINCESS CRUISES is offering up to \$500 onboard spending money on more than 850 cruises setting sail from the end of 2018 up to 2020, for select voyages booked from today until August 30.

The deal includes sailings from the UK, Europe and a number of further afield destinations including Asia, Australia, Alaska and the Caribbean. Voyages start from £500 per person and range in length from seven to 58 days, covering all seven continents.

Included in the offer are cruises on the Southampton-based Sapphire Princess, which is currently sailing her maiden season in Europe. The 2,670-guest vessel will return to Europe from April to October for Summer 2019, calling at northern Europe, the Mediterranean and Canada & New England.

Tony Roberts, the line's vice president UK and Europe, said: "With plenty of onboard spending money on offer across a huge variety of voyages, now really is the time for guests to plan their Princess cruises all the way up to 2020."

"We know how important it is for our guests to be able to fully experience what a cruise has to offer, whether it's immersing themselves in the destinations they visit with a shore excursion, treating themselves to a speciality dining experience onboard or indulging in a spa treatment. By taking advantage of this offer they can begin their cruise knowing they can really treat themselves onboard."

Sailings include a 24-day Canada & New England sailing from £2,899 per person with up to \$500 onboard spending money per person. Departing Southampton on September 14, 2019, ports of call include St. John's, Sydney in Nova Scotia, Charlottetown, New York (overnight call), Newport, Boston, Rockland, Saint John and Halifax in Nova Scotia.

To book visit princess.com or call 0344-338 8663.

Oman Air launches first Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

OMAN AIR celebrated the launch of its latest Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner at Heathrow earlier this month.

The new aircraft, serving the London to Muscat route, features the new First Class private suites and is one of three 787-9 Dreamliners to be received this year; part of the airline's strategic and dynamic programme of fleet and network expansion.

The latest Dreamliner features the new First Class product with eight private suites, 24 Business Class seats and 232 Economy seats.

Tickets for the airline's Dreamliner with the new First Class suites are bookable at omanair.com

AGENT COMPETITIONS

- AGENTS HAVE the chance of winning Love2Shop vouchers from Ottawa Tourism. There are three vouchers up for grabs – up to a value of £100. To enter, answer the questions at <https://bit.ly/2tZ8H3y>
- PLANET HOLIDAYS is giving agents the chance to win a five-night breakfast stay at the Palm Beach Hotel & Bungalow to celebrate the launch of its new Greece & Cyprus Holidays for discerning travellers brochure. For a chance to win, see <https://bit.ly/2MRmtfq> and answer the questions.
- SUMMER IS here and it's time to get outdoors and cook up a barbecue! Agents can win their very own gas barbecue with Travel Trade Tickets & Tours' latest competition. See <https://bit.ly/2KTN924> for details.

BOOKING INCENTIVES

AGENTS MAKING bookings on Virgin Delta with scheduled flight specialist Faremine this month will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win two free tickets on Virgin Atlantic. All bookings will also earn agents up to £30 in Love2shop vouchers. For details see faremine.com/promotions/ or call 0344-844 9666.

CMV IS giving agents the chance to win a Garden Party Pimm's Hamper from the British Hamper Company on selected fun Fridays this month and next. To enter, make a booking by August 1 then email your name, ABTA number and booking reference to competitions@cruiseandmaritime.com

TO ENCOURAGE agents to generate sales from its new brochure, Shearings Holidays is running an incentive until July 27 offering the chance to enter a prize draw to win a team night out. For the chance to win, agents need to make bookings from the new autumn, winter and spring brochure and email their booking reference to win@shearings.com

AGENT TRAINING

LATIN ROUTES has launched a new training academy, which will be hosted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from October 25-29 for 50 UK and Ireland travel agents. For the chance to win one of five places visit <https://bit.ly/2ttV5fp>



FLYING HIGH... Malin Sturesson from Hillgate Travel was the winner of an online competition in Travel Bulletin with Aer Lingus and Bradley Airport. Malin bagged herself two Economy fare tickets to Hartford Connecticut — the gateway to New England. Pictured gifting the tickets is the airline's business development executive, Giovanni Ciocari.

Industry Insight by...



Ignoring the benefits of social media for your business is not a great move says **ANDY STARK**, managing director of The Global Travel Group

DO YOU follow me on social media? I'm just asking because it's probably time that I apologised. No, I haven't made a Lord Sugar style bad taste joke or gone off on a Trump-like rant – it's a sorry for being a little rubbish.

Blame my age. Blame my poor time management. It might even be the combination of tiny phone keypad and my fat fingers. But whatever the combination of reasons, I'm hardly prolific when it comes to the world of virtual conversation.

To be honest, I am a little bit embarrassed. I know many of my peers in the industry are great at it and I do have a little bit of envy at their well-constructed online personas. And with that in mind, I'm certainly going to try to do better.

Getting to grips with social media can certainly seem daunting, but we are in a society where screen-based communication is everything, and there's no point ignoring it.

Thankfully, I'm able to take advantage of a brilliant resource at Global – our very own social experts – who are perfectly equipped to give me (and our agents) the help needed to make a success of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

As they've told me (on many occasions!) being seen where people are looking is vitally important. Instagram, for example, is a great platform for inspiration. The old adage about a picture being worth

a thousand words is perfectly illustrated here.

Recently, for example, Tripadvisor gathered huge publicity on the back of a survey highlighting the Top 10 'most instagrammed' beaches. As a news story there's not a lot in it, but as a great bit of inspirational PR it was worth its weight in gold.

Holidays lend themselves to pictures. What's not to love about shots of sparkling Caribbean waters, great and interesting cuisines, incredible adventure activities and fascinating cultural traditions? These are the things we sell every day and we should be passionate about spreading our knowledge of them.

As I mentioned, Global members can benefit from the knowledge of our in-house experts when it comes to developing their online presence. Additionally, the

team here build compelling white-label marketing campaigns for the major social channels which can be tailored to the particular needs of our members.

If you've not really got to grips with social, there's no time like the present. If you've got some young people in your business, why not ask them to help you get started? Alternatively, ask your consortium what services and advice it can offer to get you

in front of today's consumers.

One thing is certain – lots of people are spending lots of time online, and they are more than willing to be persuaded about where they can go to take some selfies next. So don't be like Andy. But do as he says.

"Holidays lend themselves to pictures. What's not to love about shots of sparkling Caribbean waters, great and interesting cuisines, incredible adventure activities and fascinating cultural traditions?"

Su Doku

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

Number: 027

A	4			5	6			
		6			4			
	7		2	3		8	4	6
B	1		4		8		7	3
	9	5			4			8
C		2	7		3		5	1
	2		9	8		3	1	4
				4			3	
D					9	1		5

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, July 19th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for 22nd June is Jenny Turner, Thompson Travel in Isle of Man.

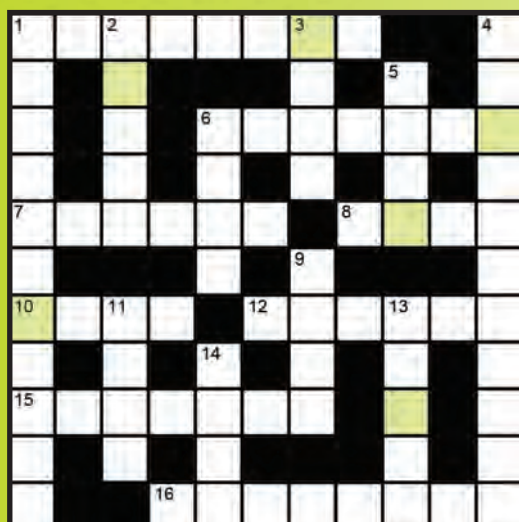
June 22nd Solution: A=6 B=8 C=4 D=2

Where Am I?



Deemed the crowning architectural work of Antoni Gaudí, this building speaks of his influence on modernism with its fantastical façade complete with mosaic glass, stone bone columns, mask-like balconies and a roof shaped like a dragon's back.

Crossword



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

Across

- Major hotel chain (8)
- Fred. Olsen cruise ship (7)
- European country with a blue and yellow flag (6)
- Scottish island (4)
- Napoleon's place of exile (4)
- Northeastern region of Italy (6)
- Iconic Washington DC tourist attraction, _____ Memorial (7)
- Capital of Malta (8)

Down

- At a cinema near you, biopic about the author of Frankenstein (4,7)
- Currency of Sri Lanka (5)
- Carrier operating from Suvarnabhumi Airport, _____ Airways (4)
- Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia and _____ (11)
- Siberian city (4)
- Slovenian resort town (4)
- American actor / director, _____ Penn (4)
- City on the banks of the Rhine (4)
- North African country (5)
- Capital of Qatar (4)

For the solution to the Crossword and Where Am I?
Please see page 26



CITY BREAK...Kate Halden (centre) from Transcend Travel was the lucky winner of a complimentary stay for two at the ME Madrid, presented by Melia Hotels & Resorts' Beja Foretia and Antia Rivas.



GIFTS FROM ISRAEL...Visit Israel's Michelle Roberts (left) gifted a bottle of Israeli wine and Dead Sea Spa Product kit to raffle winner Balvent Billen from Not Just Travel.



TRAVEL MIXER...Katerina Setunskia (left) for Czech Tourism and Visit Denmark's Johanne Rasmussen (centre) catch up with Julie Gadsby from Travel Searcher during our relaxed drinks reception.

TRAVEL BULLETIN was Birmingham bound last week bringing its City Breaks Showcase to the Crowne Plaza. Agents were given an all access pass to some of the most exciting city break destinations with insights and advice shared directly from our excellent operator, airline & tourism board exhibitors. Drinks, dinner, games and fun came as standard as too was the chance to win some fantastic prizes in our agent raffle!

#TBSHOWCASES



FLYING HIGH...Penny Moschidou for Aegean Airlines was on hand to gift an Aegean goody bag with bottles of Greek wine and chocolates to our raffle winner Arthur Ventura from Click Travel.

TECH TREAT...Daisy Friend (left) from Jet2 City Breaks presented Spear Travels Associate Michelle White with her on the spot prize of a Bluetooth speaker.



RIVIERA RAFFLE WINNER...Cynthia Magama (left) from Click Travel was the winner of Riviera Travel's prize, receiving a £50 love2shop voucher from the operator's Tamzin Bishop.



THE RIGHT TRACK...Stephen Roby from Eurostar is pictured with Travel Counsellors' Sarah Davies who won a bottle of Eurostar's own bespoke Gin 'Toujours 21' and a caddy of bespoke tea during our prize giveaway.



GREAT NIGHT OUT...Co-Operative Personal Travel Advisor Stephanie Cockerill (left) was the winner of a Super Break 'Friday Night Out' package for two, presented by the operator's Bryony White.



SLOVENIA SMILES...Mladen Ljubisic (left) from the Slovenia tourism board was on hand throughout the evening to meet with agents and is pictured presenting James McGlasson from Intel Travel with a case of premium Slovenian wine.

Want to get in on the [#TBShowcases](#) action?
Travel Bulletin will be hosting its Cruise Showcase in Brighton on September 19.
Secure your place or find out more by emailing events@travelbulletin.co.uk

Oceania launches Travel Partnership Hub

OCEANIA CRUISES has launched a new UK Travel Partnership Hub where agents can be rewarded, do their online training and create customisable marketing collateral.

The hub comprises of two new trade initiatives; the reward scheme 'OLife Choice Rewards' and online training platform 'Recipe for Success', as well as a one-stop 'Marketing Portal'.

OLife Choice Rewards gives travel partners points based on confirmed bookings made. The amount of points earned on each confirmed booking will depend on the grade of stateroom or suite booked, and the points can be transferred into vouchers that can be used online at Amazon, John Lewis and Yumbles.

The cruise line has also launched its first UK online training programme 'Recipe for Success' with seven modules covering 'Who We Are', 'What We Offer' and 'How to Sell Us' among others. The programme aims to provide confidence for travel agents who are both new to the brand as well as those who have sold Oceania Cruises for years. Agents can dip in and out of the courses as they choose and there is access to a fleet reference section, news, competitions and contacts. Courses take around ten minutes to complete with a short quiz and those who complete all seven modules will also receive points to go towards their OLife Choice Rewards totals, meaning agents can earn while they learn.

To sign up go to OceaniaCruisesTraining.co.uk

Give clients the latest FCO travel advice

WITH MILLIONS of British holidaymakers jetting off this summer, new research from ABTA has found that one in three are travelling abroad without checking any advice about their destination.

ABTA is reminding all holidaymakers to check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Travel Advice before any trip abroad, in case there have been any recent updates and is supporting its members to make customers aware of this advice with new online training.

The training is particularly relevant for frontline staff and was developed in response to members' requests for support on how to respond to challenging questions. This training can be accessed at abta.com/abtaknowledgezone

The research found that the majority of Britons (67%) who have travelled abroad did check advice for their destination. Advice concerning local currency, healthcare (including vaccinations), entry requirements and safety were searched for most. More than two in five people said that they also checked advice on local laws and customs.

In terms of where holidaymakers get their advice, one in six said that they did check the FCO's online pages, equal to the number of people who checked a travel guidebook. 25% said they checked a travel review website. However advice for destinations can change quickly and the FCO's pages are under constant review to reflect any real-time updates, such as recent incidents, changes in entry requirements or local laws and customs.

23% of people said that they checked travel advice with the travel company they booked with. ABTA is reassuring holidaymakers that an ABTA travel agent or tour operator can signpost them to the latest travel advice, including from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



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Become a Saint Lucia Expert

THE SAINT Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA) has introduced a refreshed online training programme to support the trade in selling the island.

Alongside the existing marketing and sales collateral, updates, factsheets, maps and images, the re-launched training portal now includes more video content, webinars and a better management system for fam trip requests.

Approximately 2,700 agents completed the original training programme, with just under 400 previously qualifying to become a Saint Lucia Specialist – a grading that comes after completing the training and attending a fam trip. The programme has been rebranded to Saint Lucia Expert. All previous specialists will be transferred to expert status automatically with a refresher course required each December.

Patricia Charlery-Leon, SLTA UK & Ireland director, said; "We are in a very fortunate position as tourism arrivals from the UK are increasing. But we can't just sit and hope that this continues. We need to work closely with our trade partners to showcase and sell the amazing things you can experience on a holiday in Saint Lucia."

The five revamped training modules include an island 'Overview and History'; 'Things to Do'; 'Saying I do'; 'Nightlife and Annual Events' and 'Places to Stay'. Saint Lucia Experts who make bookings will go into the tourism authority's quarterly draws with a chance to win a place at the Inspiro Awards taking place in Saint Lucia in June 2019. Check out saintluciaexpert.com to learn more.



mexico

Step into the extraordinary world of Los Cabos and all it can offer your clients with the tourism board's European manager, Manuel Diaz Cebrian, as your guide...

LOCATED AT the tip of the Baja Peninsula, almost 1,000 miles south of San Diego, lies the most upscale resort in Mexico, Los Cabos.

Los Cabos is comprised primarily of two towns, San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas; which are linked by a 20-mile corridor lined with world-class resort properties.

Cabo San Lucas, noted for its vitality and nightlife, offers a variety of attractions including the marina which is regarded as offering some of the highest quality services and amenities luxury yachters have come to expect.

The attractions in San Jose del Cabo are just as interesting as the more upbeat Cabo San Lucas. The old Jesuit Mission, known as Parroquia San José, dates back to the 1730s. San Jose del Cabo's downtown main plaza with its warm architecture, has become an art district where you can find art from all over the world, but mainly Mexican traditional art and local creations, which makes it a great place for shopping and dining. Be sure to recommend to clients that they go on a Thursday night for the 'Art Walk', where galleries are open late, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

A whale of a time

Los Cabos is situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortes which makes it world famous for its marine diversity. In fact, Jacques Cousteau referred to the Sea of Cortes as 'The World's Aquarium'. The region is renowned for being a key whale-watching spot between the months of November through to March, when hundreds of humpback, blue and grey whales make their epic journey south from the Arctic to the warm nurseries of the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortes – a journey of about 5,000 miles. The Cabo Pulmo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site is a treasure of Baja California Sur, while Cabo Pulmo Marine Reserve has won awards for its biodiversity.

Tie the knot

Los Cabos has also become a desirable location for weddings and honeymoons. From a beautiful ocean-front ceremony overlooking the famous Arch of Cabo San Lucas to a sophisticated soiree on the terrace of a luxury resort or

wedding venue, Los Cabos offers a multitude of stunning locations to exchange vows. For this and so many more reasons, the Fifth Annual Wedding Planner Destination Congress, the largest business platform for professionals in the destination wedding industry, was held just this April in Los Cabos.

Get active

There are a wide range of water and land activities in Los Cabos and its surrounding areas. Some of the more popular water activities are surfing, kite surfing, marine safaris, scuba diving and snorkelling. Popular land activities include golf, dune buggies, desert safari, zip-lining over the canyons, hiking and atv's and biking.

An infusion of flavours

Baja gastronomy has become one of the best in the country; with its organic farming and daily fresh seafood fused with all the regional cuisines in Mexico, it makes for a foodie's delight.

For a bit of a change, take the empty desert road north to discover authentic Baja: from the magical town of Todos Santos with its friendly locals and rich culinary traditions to La Paz, Baja Sur's capital, which has represented the warm and giving soul of the region for more than 480 years.

Located on the Pacific coast the eclectic town of Todos Santos, which is an hour north of Los Cabos, offers a robust art scene in addition to an unusual microclimate, where you can go from the desert to a green oasis of palm and mango trees in a matter of minutes.

La Paz, which is two hours from Los Cabos, serves as a departure point for Espiritu Santo Islands. Akin to the Galapagos Islands, wildlife enthusiasts shouldn't miss the opportunity to swim with the giant whale sharks and playful sea lions. Stroll along the 12km promenade that runs along the beach to witness the daily life of the locals.

Overall visitors to Baja California are rewarded with an experience so rich and authentic in Mexican culture and nature, that they won't be able to help but wonder how it has remained so wonderfully unspoilt.


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- An Ibiza style beach club with an infinity pool, and 4 pools, including one exclusively for children.
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- TRS Coral Hotel guests are provided with a butler and free access to all facilities in Grand Palladium Costa Mujeres Resort & Spa.
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OPENING NOVEMBER 2018

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For more information, please contact your preferred travel agent, visit PALLADIUMHOTELGROUP.COM

New archaeological site to open in Mexico

A NEW archaeological site called the Ichkabal Mayan - dating back to 300BC - has been given a provisional opening date for the end of 2018 in the southern region of Quintana Roo.

The site is spread over more than 30sq.kilometres and is believed to have been one of the most important political centres in the region during the Preclassic Mayan era.

Located 82km from Chetumal in the municipality of Bacalar, the site is expected to increase visitor numbers to the region.

Go to visitmexico.com for more destination details



Unico 20°87° adds two new immersive excursions

UNICO 20°87°, located on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, has added two new immersive off property excursions to its 'Unlimited Inclusions' programme. Joining an already expansive excursions list, two ocean-based options have launched this month: Yalku Extreme and a Scuba Diving Package.

Yalku Extreme offers guests the chance to explore the sea and get up close to the biodiversity of marine life found in Mexico's ocean. Once back on dry land, the excursion heads to the jungle canopy for a bird's eye view, flying above on a zip-line ride. To finish off, guests are treated to authentic Mexican cuisine as they stop for lunch and to savour local produce and natural flavour infusions.

The Scuba Diving Package has been designed to help guests discover the underwater treasures of the Riviera Maya. Under the supervision of the hotel's Dive School, groups (PADI certified dive experience is required) will head under water and into the reef to experience the colours of coral and stunning sea creatures.

Other excursions offered by the adults only hotel include a guided tour of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Chichen Itza; swimming with dolphins and dining in a cenote beneath starlit skies.

For more information on the resort visit unicohotelrivieramaya.com

Exclusive Sandos Palm Bay complex due to arrive for spring 2019

THE SANDOS Hotels & Resorts group will open the new Sandos Palm Bay in spring 2019.

Situated along 700m of white sand beaches, Palm Bay will sit adjacent to the current Sandos Playacar Beach Resort and all guests staying at this new and exclusive section within the Sandos Playacar property will have all-inclusive access to the entire complex whilst enjoying additional luxury amenities.

Guests will have private access to the hotel and its check-in and check-out area and, once inside the resort, will discover two infinity pools located by the Caribbean Sea. The first pool is open to all Sandos Playacar guests and has a special kids' area with mini water park, plus another area with a pool bar. The second pool is exclusively for guests staying in the Sandos Palm Bay section, featuring two pool bars and waiter service. For travelers seeking relaxation, there will be two jacuzzi-style pools surrounded by rocks and bali beds and sun-worshippers will have access to exclusive areas with hammocks, umbrellas and waiter service on the beach. Palm Bay guests will also enjoy premium drinks, Wi-Fi, a shuttle and bike service within the property, suitcase unpacking service on arrival, and evening turndown service. For those who want to take the experience to the next level, they'll be able to book any of the services at the new spa with cenote, a space inspired by the tropical jungle that surrounds it.

The 314 guestrooms for families and adults are distributed throughout seven four-story buildings, with four room categories from which to choose.



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Dreams
Puerto
Aventuras
Resort & Spa,
Mexico



RECENTLY OPENING in May of this year and located on 39 acres of beachfront, the Montage Los Cabos in Cabo San Lucas is a luxury resort with 122 guestrooms and suites. It features Spa Montage, two state-of-the-art pools, and multiple dining venues, and the brand's children's program, Paintbox. Ideal for those looking to explore the area below sea level, Santa Maria Bay and its gentle waters present some of the finest swimming, diving and snorkelling opportunities in the region. The coastal retreat is the sixth property and the first outside of the US from Montage Hotels & Resorts to join Preferred Hotels & Resorts and is a member of the company's Legend Collection. Rates start from £335 per room per night. Visit PreferredHotels.com

Journey Latin America launches art tour of Mexico

JOURNEY LATIN America has created a new art inspired holiday that follows in Frida Kahlo's footsteps and focuses on the country's modern art scene.

The 'Art of Mexico' is an eight-day holiday that combines four nights in the hub of Mexico City with three nights in the arty colonial town of San Miguel de Allende.

During their journey guests can enjoy two full days in Mexico City and discover the bohemian quarter of Coyoacán where the surrealist artist Frida Kahlo lived most of her life. Her former house, Casa Azul, has been converted into a museum and gives an authentic representation of the lives of both Frida and her renowned muralist husband, Diego Rivera - in particular it highlights the political strains under which both passionate artists lived and constantly fought.

Another highlight is the Dolores Olmedo Museum, a 16th century mansion housing one of the largest private collections of Rivera's and Kahlo's work and the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo studio in San Ángel which offers a further insight into the lives of both figures. Clients may also opt to take in the impressive collection at the Museum of Modern Art in Chapultepec which exhibits canvasses by 20th century Mexican artists.

From Mexico City guests will spend a day visiting two of Mexico's colonial and silver towns; Taxco famous for its silver arts and crafts and Cuernavaca, home to the Robert Brady Museum.

San Miguel Allende is then the base for a further three nights at the newly refurbished Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada where guests can enjoy their own private art class at the hotel and be taken on a private tour to visit a selection of art galleries and to meet the artists.

The trip costs £1,728 per person which includes stays at the Four Seasons and Belmond Casa de Sierra Nevada, excursions, breakfast and transfers. International flights are extra and start from £580 per person.

For further information visit journeylatinamerica.co.uk or call 020-8600 1881.

Win a trip to Mexico with AMResorts

FIRING UP this August, the AMResorts team will be bringing its Summer Vibes celebrations to agents across the UK.

Pitching up at bespoke locations throughout England and Scotland, the company will be hosting agents and helping them make the most of the long summer evenings with BBQs, beverages, music and prizes. At each event, AMResorts will also be giving away two places on its 'Mexico Summer Vibes' fam trip, which will see the lucky winners jet off to Mexico and experience the resorts for themselves.

The only way to win is to join in the celebrations at one of the Summer Vibes evenings taking place in: Manchester on August 1; Birmingham on August 8; Horsham on August 14; Glasgow on August 15; Newcastle on August 21; and London on August 23. To find out more info, venue details, and to reserve your place go to travelbulletin.co.uk/amresorts



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Dreams
Riviera Cancun
Resort & Spa,
Mexico



Thailand launches new 'Eat Thai, Visit Thai' campaign

THE TOURISM Authority of Thailand (TAT) unveiled its 2018/19 brand campaign, 'Eat Thai, Visit Thai' at a ceremony in London recently.

The concept, 'Eat Thai, Visit Thai', was born from the increasing synergy between food and travel and the growing interest in gastro-tourism. This summer (from next month), TAT will join forces with more than 100 restaurants to launch a major new brand campaign, taking a very new and different approach to its advertising strategy this year. Working with such a variety and nationwide choice of restaurant groups provides TAT with the opportunity to target consumers by region and differing demographics with the core aim of increasing visitors to Thailand through their love of Thai food.

The campaign aims to include as many cities and towns as possible, across ten key regions of the UK, in particular, targeting areas with access to direct flights to Thailand.

Also, central to this campaign is the tourism authority's objective to promote 'hub and hook' destinations. Six key areas of Thailand have been partnered with surrounding secondary cities and lesser known regions to help raise

their profile and inspire visitors to explore more of the Kingdom.

Key to the campaign is driving sales to Thailand and ultimately tourism arrivals with increased length of stay and spend.

Chiravadee Khunsub, director of TAT London, said: "We will be working with tour operators and independent travel agents, with the aim of pairing them with their local restaurant groups, to provide holiday packages and promotions as we see great value in our restaurant partners distribution channels and therefore an extension of our marketing strategy and new sales channel for our trade partners."

The tourism authority will also be running incentives, competitions and giveaways within the trade to engage them with the campaign.



Vietnam extends visa waiver to Brits for a further three years

THE GOVERNMENT of Vietnam has confirmed a further extension of its visa exemption programme for United Kingdom passport holders - valid for single-entry stays of up to 15 days - for three more years.

First introduced in 2015, this latest policy extension which is now valid until July 30, 2021, is the longest extension period yet. According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, more than six million people visited the country in the first five months of this year, representing a 27.6% increase on last year's figures.

National flag carrier Vietnam Airlines operates the UK's only nonstop scheduled services to Vietnam, with daily Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner flights from Heathrow T4 to Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. The flights are scheduled to offer convenient overnight journeys in both directions, with onward connections available domestically within Vietnam, to Indo-China and to 30 other destinations in Asia.

Return fares from Heathrow currently start from £463 per person, inclusive of taxes. For further information go to vietnamairlines.com

Third Gran Meliá property to open in China

MELIÁ HOTELS International has announced the signing of Gran Meliá Chengdu in partnership with Chengdu Renju Tourism & Hospitality Ltd. It will become the third Gran Meliá property in China and the hotel group's eleventh property in the Chinese market.

Tapping into the fast-growing demand for luxury travel accommodation in Chengdu, the capital of the Sichuan Province, the luxury urban resort is scheduled to open in 2021. It will be situated northwest of JinCheng Lake Park, surrounded by greenery and with both lake and city views, and feature 270 guest rooms along with an international dining restaurant, a Chinese restaurant with private dining room, a speciality restaurant and a lobby bar. Red Level Service, one of the brand's signature service concepts exclusively for VIP guests, will also be introduced at the property.

The hotel group's portfolio in Asia currently comprises of 48 hotels that are open or in the process of opening.



Edinburgh welcomes Hainan as first direct route to Beijing comes into operation

THE FIRST ever direct flight between Scotland and China recently landed at Edinburgh Airport in a momentous day at Scotland's busiest airport.

The four-weekly, year-round service with Hainan Airlines to Beijing Capital International Airport marks Scotland's first connection to the Far East and is expected to prove a major boost for tourism.

Gordon Dewar, the airport's chief executive, said: "This is a momentous day as we connect not only Edinburgh and Beijing for the first time, but Scotland and China too. It is a route which has immense opportunities for our countries, from tourism and business to culture, education and more.

"We know Edinburgh is second only to London for Chinese tourists and we are eager to welcome more people to our fantastic capital city, but it's also about connecting people from Scotland to Beijing and wider China thanks to Hainan's hub network. Hainan is one of the world's most prestigious airlines and we are proud to be working with them. This is something the city has worked towards for a number of years and we are delighted to see this day finally arrive."

Go to edinburghairport.com to find out more.

BANGKOK AIRWAYS welcomed former goalkeeper of Borussia Dortmund, Roman Weidenfeller (fourth from right), along with a team of the club's professional football coaches to Koh Samui recently. As part of a partnership agreement signed earlier this year between Bangkok Airways and Borussia Dortmund, the airline invited Weidenfeller and his team to visit the island destination and to take part in a football clinic for local kids and a friendly football match. The welcome ceremony was held at Samui Airport and led by Prote Setsuwan, the airline's vice president of marketing (fourth from left) and Nutchayathorn Nutsudanijvipa, director of Samui Airport (third from left).

Lexis Hotel Group launches in UK market

THE LEXIS Hotel Group has ventured into the UK market presenting both the Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson and Lexis Suites Penang for those looking to holiday in Malaysia.

The hotel group has established itself as a premium five-star brand within the hospitality sector and currently manages a portfolio of four hotels and resorts.

Unique selling points of these properties include the brand's distinctive water chalets and sea water villas and the luxury of guests being able to enjoy their own in-room pool and steam room which features in every unit.

The Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson opened in 2015 and is a five-star property offering 638 rooms; 522 as water villas (Executive Pool Villa, Premium Pool Villa, Panorama Pool Villa, Imperial Suite & Presidential Suite) and 117 luxury tower block suites (Sky Pool Villa). Features of this hotel include multiple restaurants, a beachfront with watersport activities, entertainment, a main swimming pool, and trimaran, yacht and helicopter services. The property is also the holder of two Guinness World Records for 'The most swimming pools in a resort' and 'The most overwater villas in single resort'.

The Lexis Suites Penang opened in January 2016 and is a five-star property based in Teluk Kumbar. It offers 222 luxury suites (Executive Pool Suite & Premium Pool Suite) is situated ten minutes away from the Penang International Airport, and offers complimentary shuttle services into town.

The group will be looking to build upon its local and international reputation in the coming years, growing its repeat business and the opening of the Imperial Lexis Kuala Lumpur - a five-star luxury hotel located in the vicinity of the KLCC enclave and the group's fifth hotel.

Become a Hong Kong specialist & win a trip with the HKTb

THANKING ITS travel trade partners for their support in promoting Hong Kong over the years, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) recently launched the Hong Kong Specialist Club; a new training programme that will enable agents to become a Hong Kong specialist along with the chance to win a trip to the destination later this year.

All agents who enrol onto the Hong Kong Specialist programme and complete the three training modules by August 31 will be in with a chance to win a place onto a fam to discover the city's unique sights in person this October. The tourism board will also be giving away some exclusive prizes throughout the incentive period.

In tandem with this the tourism board will be issuing a series of special trade offers

giving agents the opportunity to enjoy a variety of industry deals should they like to take their own personal trip to Hong Kong; ranging from special hotel room rates and free entry to attractions to discounted local tours. Some of the offers can also extend to an agent's travel companions.

Agents who complete the training will also then be able to download the Hong Kong Specialist logo to show clients that they're an expert in selling the destination and there will also be an opportunity to participate in special events held especially for Hong Kong Specialist Club members.

Find out more at travelbulletin.co.uk/travelgym/destination-training



MOVEN-PICK...Anthony Vale from Movenpick picked Gary Pridmore's name from Aquilum Travel in our prize raffle draw. Kim Bower from Holywell Travel is pictured collecting the prize of a selection of wine on his behalf.

TRAVEL BULLETIN travelled to the Crowne Plaza in Chester last week bringing with it a host of exotic destinations, expeditionary operators and exciting airlines for our Far East Showcase. During an evening filled with learning and fun, agents had the chance to talk to each of our exhibitors directly and enjoy a drinks reception, a delectable dinner and a raffle complete with some great holiday prizes!

#TBSHOWCASES



THAILAND TRIP...Debbie Thomas from Holywell Travel was the lucky winner of a complimentary two-night stay in a deluxe villa at the Racha gifted by LJR Racha & Aava's Dean Hill.



LUCKY WITH LEXIS...Amanda Rudham (left) from Travel Counsellors and Rachael Coyne (right) from Not Just Travel were both winners of a complimentary two-night stay in an executive pool villa with Lexis Hotels & Resorts which was presented by the company's Nitisha Boghal.



OUTRIGGER WINNER...Outrigger's Andrea Hogg (left) presents Amanda Parsonage of Grosvenor Travel with her prize of a Selfridges Hamper.



OFF ON A CRUISE... Marco Rosa (centre) from Pandaw Cruises was on hand to talk to agents and is pictured with Gavin Wild, who won a seven-night river expedition between Mandalay and Pagan, and Cheryl Shapland from Love Holidays.



EXPLORING JAPAN...from the left, Hiroyuki Sato from JTB Europe shares his specialist advice and insight with Michael Atkinson from Co-Operative Travel, Danielle King and Samantha Wilkinson of Delmar Worlds and Lynn Woodward with Ann Roberts from Coddwomple Travel.



MEETING MACAO...from the left Rhys Bowen and Jane Bowen from Go Cruise, meet with Lesley Wright for the Macao Tourist Office, along with Sarah Sixsmith, Vick Hughs and Lucy Thomson all from Hays Travel.



SEEING SCENIC...following their chat at Scenic Tours' table, from the left, is Debbie Thomas Bower from Holywell Travel, the operator's Danny Joel, Kim Bower also from Holywell Travel, with David Mayer and Gary Pridmore from Aquilum Travel.



FUN WITH FINNAIR...from the left, Travel Counsellors Simon Hyde and Jon Downes catch up with Finnair's Marcio Kugelmeier, together with Gwyneth Prosser and Amanda Rudham both Travel Counsellors and Rob Griffiths of The Global Travel Group, Chester.



MIXING WITH MERCURY...from the left, Yvonne Matthias, Caroline Houghton and Connie Tucker from Travel Places meet with Rob Morley of Mercury Holidays / Sunspot, together with Joanne Hughes from Travel Places and Gaynor Davies of Chester Travel Connections.



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Reservations open for Six Senses Bhutan

SIX SENSES Bhutan is now taking reservations for the first three lodges in its collection of five, set in the western and central valleys of Bhutan.

Located in Thimphu, Punakha, Paro, Gangtey and Bumthang, and each with its own character, environment and experiences, the lodges will allow guests to embark on a 'Six Senses Journey' across the key valleys of Bhutan. Thimphu, Punakha and Paro will open this November, with Gangtey and Bumthang scheduled to be completed in early 2019.

Each lodge will feature a one-bedroom suite as the lead in room type, as well as villas ranging from one to three bedrooms. There will be a total of 82 suites divided between the lodges and all have been designed with incredible views in mind, for example the lodge in Punakha which overlooks the Mo Chu River, and Gangtey, which has views of the Phobjika Valley.

The resort's general manager, Mark Swinton, said: "There is so much to explore in this mystical Himalayan Kingdom, with its cultural, natural and spiritual beauty making a compelling choice. Activities have been designed to showcase the best of Bhutan. The emphasis on experiences and service is brought alive by our GEMs (Guest Experience Makers) who act as guides and assist guests in every manner possible to create an authentic Bhutanese and true Six Senses experience. Meditating at the prayer pavilion in the reflecting ponds overlooking the giant Buddha statue across the valley; hiking up to Chorten Ningpo in Punakha; participating in local farm activities in Gangtey; treehouse dining at Bumthang; and a private dinner in the 15th century stone ruins at Paro are just a few of the magical experiences created for guests of Six Senses Bhutan."

Suite rates start from approximately £765 based on double occupancy and stays during the opening period will be inclusive of full-board until February 28, 2019. A car, driver and guide are included for stays longer than five consecutive nights

Visit sixsenses.com for more details.

Collette explores the Cultural Treasures of Japan

COLLETTE HAS put together a 'Cultural Treasures of Japan' trip designed to reveal the dynamic culture, peaceful temples, technological marvels and ancient traditions of Japanese civilisation.

This 13-day journey exposes travellers to the unique historical traditions of Japan while visiting all of the must-see sights. Guests will visit Tokyo's old town, Yanaka Ginza featuring quaint shops and vendors selling local cuisine; experience the traditions of a Japanese tea ceremony which dates back to the 15th century; take in the cosmopolitan vistas from the top of the Tokyo Tower; and embark on a cruise on the deep-blue waters of Lake Ashi complete with views of the surrounding mountains and Mount Fuji.

Walking tours of historic towns will show off traditional houses and bustling marketplaces, in which travellers can sample the local cuisine, and whilst in Kyoto, guests can fully immerse themselves in Japanese culture by attending a traditional Geisha show.

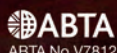
This tour starts from £3,249 per person and includes 21 meals and there are currently available dates running from this August through to May 2019.

For more information visit gocollette.com

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Football themed getaways at Amari Buriram United

WITH FOOTBALL fever running high and the World Cup in full swing, clients looking to travel to Thailand can take their love for the beautiful game and stay at Amari Buriram United, the only football-themed hotel in Thailand.

Located in the culturally rich Buriram province, the 60-room property is adjacent to FIFA standard Thunder Castle Stadium which is home to local team, Buriram United. The property features 44 superior rooms, 14 deluxe rooms and two suites furnished in the crimson blue and white of the team's home kit and offers 'players changing room' style bathrooms.

Most rooms overlook a central courtyard which includes a mini football field and swimming pool. A range of facilities for sports enthusiasts are also on offer including tennis courts, a jogging track, basketball court, gym and the chance to have a kick around on nearby Thunder Castle's professional football pitch.

Signature services are also available designed to introduce guests to the world of Amari and the destination of Buriram with hosts are on hand to help connect guests with the local area

Starting room rates begin at £50 per night. Visit amari.com/buriram-united for more information.



AS PART of InsideJapan's initiative to work more closely with travel agents, the operator recently ran its first ever fam. The operator's Matt Spiller (far left) took a group of InsideJapan Tours' highest performing agent partners on a trip travelling from Tokyo to Kyoto via Mt Fuji. Pictured with Matt and a Geisha in Kyoto is, from the left: Joanne Kinnaird from Travel Bureau, Gosforth; Tricia Conroy-Smith of Off Broadway Travel; Andrew Tait from Travelwise, London; Carolyn Park, C The World; and Carole Short from Beaver Travel. With Japan likely to crop up on more and more bucket lists, the operator expects to be working with an increasing number of agents in the near future.

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Travel Bulletin is published by
Alain Charles Publishing (Travel) Ltd
University House, 11-13 Lower Grosvenor Place
London, SW1W 0EX

Printed by: Buxton Press
Subscriptions are £125 p.a. £195 overseas
ISSN: 0956-2419



020 7834 6661



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puzzlesolutions

Crossword:

Across: 1. MARRIOTT, 6. BRAEMAR, 7. SWEDEN, 8. SKYE, 10. ELBA,
12. VENETO, 15. LINCOLN, 16. VALLETTA.
Down: 1. MARY SHELLEY, 2. RUPEE, 3. THAI, 4. HERZEGOVINA, 5. OMSK,
6. BLEND, 9. SEAN, 11. BONN, 13. EGYPT, 14. DOHA.

Highlighted Word: TURKEY

Where Am I?: Casa Batlló, Barcelona, Spain



VISITORS TO Taiwan can experience the heart of the destination with an exciting range of festivals, events and activities this summer. Held in the spectacular setting of the Taitung Luye Gaotai area, the annual International Balloon Festival runs until the middle of August and is an incredible sight for all visitors as colourful balloons of all shapes, sizes and designs take to the air. For the best view of Taiwan's landscape, hot air balloon rides are available throughout the festival or travellers can enjoy the fun atmosphere with balloon demonstrations and a night glow music concert. Visit balloontaiwan.taitung.gov.tw/en or go to eng.taiwan.net.tw for more festival listings.

We asked our staff the following question this week:

What's the one thing you're most superstitious about?



Jeanette Ratcliffe

Publisher

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Seeing a single magpie....I always need to salute it.



Lauretta Wright

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Putting new shoes on a table.



Adam Potter

Online Editor

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Mind immediately jumps to Stevie Wonder's 'Very Superstitious' (and starts singing)



Paul Scudamore

Contributing Editor

The unlucky No 13 - until the 13 were found in the Thai cave.



Simon Eddolls

Sales Director

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Tim Podger

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Not walking under a ladder - common sense!



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Sarah Terry

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Hat on the bed - bad luck.



Hannah Carter

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Never walk over three drains in a row.



Ashweenee Beerjeraz

Sales & Events Assistant

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Opening an umbrella indoors.



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Walking under big road signs



Eugenia Nelly Mendes

Head of Production

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I don't believe in superstitions.

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