

travelbulletin

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Giving agents the edge



Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

FROM ALL OF US AT TRAVEL BULLETIN



travelbulletin

Giving agents the edge

Invites you to attend an
AIRLINE SHOWCASE
agent networking evening

Monday 25th January 2016
Leeds

Travel Bulletin is delighted to invite you to this informative, fun event enabling you to learn more about the diverse range of flight options and destinations available, enabling your clients to discover some of the most amazing landscapes and places on the planet.

The evening will involve a combination of networking and presentations, exciting entertainment, a free prize draw with a number of fabulous prizes to be won along with delicious food and drinks.

Registration : 18.00 hours

Networking & Presentations: 18.30 hours

Buffet, entertainment & prizes: 20.00 hours

Carriages: 21.30 hours

To confirm your place at this amazing event, email the names and job titles of up to 5 staff members to:- gemma.reeve@travelbulletin.co.uk or telephone:

020 7834 6661
for more information.

These events are by invitation only and will be booked on a first come first served basis.



Kissimmee quick...

Experience Kissimmee hosted a fam trip for VIP product managers that showcase the destination in their programmes. The group flew in Club Class to Orlando with BA and stayed at a luxury 12-bedroom vacation home courtesy of Jeeves Holiday Homes. Activities included Wild Florida, kayaking in the headwaters of the Everglades, cycling through wilderness trails and taking in millionaire rows in Celebration. Pictured on a 'Wild Florida' experience are, from the left: Maggi Smit, America As You Like It; Isla King, Hayes & Jarvis; Josh Peacock, American Sky; Jo Piani, Experience Kissimmee; Julian Stockdale, Thomas Cook; Paddy Dunne, American Holidays; Clare Harvey, Travelplanners; Siobhan Mercer, Funway; Jessie Manzi, USAirtours; and Muna Abanour, Ocean Holidays.

This Week

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Club Med's 'Changing Face of Family Skiing' report reveals more than a third don't know the rules of the mountain

A NEW WINTER ski report released by Club Med has revealed that more than a tenth of holidaymakers now don't actually ski or board on a winter sports holiday.

The 'Changing Face of Family Skiing' report reveals that winter sports enthusiasts are no longer heading to the slopes just to ski, as 81% of Brits agree there is more to do on a ski holiday than skiing and boarding, and are opting for additional winter sports activities.

The results showed, of those who didn't ski or snowboard on their last holiday, an ever growing range of adrenaline-fuelled options are now being chosen instead, including cross-country skiing, Nordic walking and snow shoeing.

Two thirds (61%) of those questioned agree that with the extra winter fuelled activities, ski and snowboarding holidays are now a better experience for children than they used to be.

The report also reveals that skiing continues to remain a popular holiday for families, with 93% considering a snow sports holiday as an option in the not so distant future.

With more people than ever hitting the slopes this season, etiquette was also explored in the report which uncovered that less than two-thirds of skiers (61%) are actually confident they understand the rules on the piste, a figure which drops to just half (54%) for those who haven't skied in the last two years. Older skiers are however more aware of ski etiquette (66%) than the younger generation (55%).

Rules on the piste are often overlooked by skiers including respect for others on the

slopes; respect for information, markings and signs; correct speed and behaviour; and rules around overtaking on the slopes.

Bookings for winter family holidays are already up by 9% for this season versus last for the operator, with a large proportion having never skied before.

Meanwhile, with all-inclusive bookings growing in popularity, half (52%) now incorporate some form of added leisure activity within the cost such as walking tours, ice-skating, massages, rock climbing or snowmobiling.

Estelle Giraudeau, the company's managing director, said: "Skiing is more popular than ever with the British market, yet over a tenth of people heading on a ski holiday during the 2015/16 will now choose to opt-out of skiing or boarding altogether. We recognise that, with 43% looking for alternative adventurous activities, such as riding snowmobiles, it's more important than ever to continue to grow the alternative options available to holidaymakers."

The company offers a range of winter sports activities including sledging/luge, Nordic walking, cross country skiing, snow boarding, weight training/fitness, hiking, sauna, Turkish baths, snowmobiling, ice-skating, paraski and dog sledging.

As an example of prices, a seven-night, all-inclusive break in Avoriaz, France leads in at £999 per adult (from £1,175) and £829 per child (from £979), with children aged under four staying free. It includes flights from Gatwick and is based on an April 10, 2016 departure. To book or for further information see www.clubmed.co.uk

Rainforest Cruises announces launch of Olympic Games 2016 programme

AMAZON RIVER cruise specialist Rainforest Cruises is predicting a boost in bookings from British travellers following the launch of a new programme of cruises to tie in with the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio (August 5-21).

The company, which offers 10% commission to the trade, saw the number of bookings from UK sports fans more than double during the

2014 World Cup in Brazil, and is expecting the Rio Games to have a similar impact.

As an example of excursions, the Tucano is a traditional riverboat with just nine cabins, designed to explore small tributaries and hidden channels that are out-of-reach to bigger boats. A five-day cruise along the Negro River - the largest Amazon tributary - follows streams and

grasslands deep into the forest, while morning kayak excursions bring guests closer to plants and wildlife. Prices start from £1,299 per person and departures are on August 1 and 15.

Cruises can be booked at www.rainforestcruises.com and agents can email cruise@rainforestcruises.com for more information.

Jet2holidays spreads the festive cheer with advent calendar

FESTIVE FOLK across the UK have been given the opportunity to open an Advent calendar with a difference this month, thanks to Jet2holidays.

Rather than snowman-shaped chocolates behind its doors, the unique Christmas competition calendar will release one family or couples holiday to win every day (from 26 destinations) up until Christmas Day. As an extra special treat, one lucky winner will also be chosen on Boxing Day to receive three breaks provided by Iberostar Hotels & Resorts.

As well as prizes galore throughout Advent, the company has created a gingerbread mascot, Holi Day, who is appearing throughout the campaign to bring some interactive fun on the website and on Facebook and Twitter.

To take part or for more information see <http://advent.jet2holidays.com>

Meanwhile, the company hosted its first overseas travel trade conference in Mallorca last month.

Around 120 top agents stayed at Iberostar Royal Cristina in Palma for the two-night Partnership2Success Conference, which

gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about the operator's future vision from CEO Steve Heapy, plus discuss with senior members of staff from the business how to effectively promote and sell package holidays in order to help their own growth and expansion. There was also the opportunity to network with key hotel suppliers plus an interview with top TV personality Denise Welch.

The conference culminated in a prestigious gala dinner, where 12 agents scooped awards for helping drive awareness and sales of the operator to their local customers over the past year.



Celebrity Cruises renews agent commitment with new pledge

NEXT YEAR is gearing up to be the year of the agent for cruise line Celebrity Cruises as the business revamps and re-launches its approach to working with trade partners.

The line is making a strong promise to agents with a new Celebrity Commitment, a programme that clearly defines what agents can expect from the cruise line and what they will enjoy in rewards. Three core areas form the new programme: Exceptional Holidays - strong marketing campaigns and on-board experiences to push holidaymakers to book experiences with their travel agent; Exceptional Rewards - attractive commercial terms and incentives, including the loyalty programme Celebrity Rewards; and Exceptional Support - the best tools and resources, including training, for agents to help them sell.

Sarah Harraghy, the company's commercial sales director UK and Ireland, said: "The roll-out of our Celebrity Commitment is just the beginning of a raft of investments and activities that will really highlight how agents are at the heart of our business. We're excited about what 2016 holds." For more information visit www.cruisingpower.co.uk



CHANNEL-ING THE BOOKINGS... Dave Kneale from Premier presents Mandi Grundy of Marken Travel in Wigan with a goodie hamper, after she won the operator's recent Channel Islands brochure launch competition.

New Turn of Year social media campaign launch from Advantage Travel Partnership Network

THE ADVANTAGE TRAVEL Partnership Network has launched its 2016 Turn of Year social media campaign. This year's 'Find your Holiday Hotspot' campaign will encourage members to think about selling new destinations to their customers, as well as inspiring consumers to think about new places they'd like to travel to.

The #HolidayHotspot social media campaign will be used across all Advantage channels and will be used to promote new destinations, exclusive offers and to engage with members.

Carolyn Hardy, marketing manager for Advantage, said "Supporting our members in marketing to their own customers is a key USP we provide to our members. We produce all the collateral on behalf of our members and manage the distribution, meaning our members can concentrate on what they do best - selling holidays."

"For the first time we used insight and data to understand what is selling in the industry and what's looking promising for 2016. The brochures are destination led focusing on finding the right holiday destination for member's customers."

The B2C campaign will launch the week commencing January 4, 2016 and the door drop booklet, personalised at member branch level, will be distributed to 600,000-plus households throughout the UK including Northern Ireland. The direct mail campaign, again personalised at member branch level, designed to encourage customers to book again will be mailed to 40,000-plus households, including a follow up email directing the recipient to their travel agent's website.

For members involved in the campaign with an Advantage white label website, all the offers featured in the direct mail booklet will be available to view online by their customers.

Members will soon be receiving a dedicated email to fully equip them in promoting the offers across all of their own channels.

The campaign will pick up pace in January, during the busiest time of the year for members, and during this time tailor-made blog posts will feature on members' white label websites as well as destination images and links to individual offers.

New Corsica flights from Teleticket

Teleticket has enhanced its summer 2016 programme with the addition of new flights to Corsica from three major UK regional airports.

Departing on Sunday mornings from Manchester, Stansted and Bristol, the company will operate direct flights to Calvi and Bastia, commencing May 15 with seven- and 14-night durations.

David Crawforth, the company's aviation manager, said: "Corsica's 250-plus hotels and fabulous luxurious villas are only three hours away, giving agents a wide variety of holidays to offer their customers."

Flights start from £279 per person for seven nights including baggage.

To book or for more information visit www.teletickettravel.com

SOUTH AMERICA • MIDDLE EAST
ASIA • CARIBBEAN • ALASKA

1 DEC 2015 –
3 JAN 2016

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AUSTRALIA • NEW ZEALAND

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*Norwegian's Christmas promotion is applicable to new bookings only made between 1 December 2015 & 03 January 2016 for sailings of 5+ nights and staying in all staterooms. Reservations must be made more than 30 days to departure in order to qualify for the offer. Offer is not applicable to Hawaii (Fide of America) and Norwegian Sky sailings. Christmas promotion option must be selected 48 hours before departure. Full terms and conditions apply to all packages – please visit www.agents-uk.ncl.eu/christmas-terms.php for details. Prices are per person based on £GBP, based on double/twin occupancy including government taxes, port expenses and fees. Fares do not include flights, transfers, travel insurance, drinks (unless chosen as the Freestyle Choice option), hotel meals, shore excursions, personal expenses, cover charge and a la carte dining at selected restaurants (unless chosen as the Free gift option), service charges and any other item not expressly included in the fare. Onboard service charges are additional, applicable to your cruise (currently £8.50 per person per day on Studio, Inside, Oceanview, Balcony and Mini-Suite staterooms and £10 in Suites & Haven Categories; no charge for children under 3), will be added to your holiday price and shown separately on your confirmation invoice. All prices exclude discretionary daily service charge payable onboard or in advance and gratuities charges payable onboard. Fares and offers are subject to availability and change and applicable only to bookings made through the Norwegian Cruise Line Southampton office. Norwegian Cruise Line Booking conditions apply – for details, please visit www.ncl.co.uk/ncpl-information/booking-conditions/. ©2015 NCL Corporation LTD Ship's Registry: Bahamas and United States of America. 6094.12.15

Premier Holidays unveils new 2016 Luxury Collection brochure

PREMIER HOLIDAYS has unveiled its new Luxury Collection brochure for 2016, valid for travel until March 31, 2017. Following the launch of the company's 2016 USA, Southern Africa, Faraway, Channel Islands, Australia and Canada brochures, the new Luxury Collection offers an added double page spread on world cruising, plus a revised Indochina section detailing holiday options on board the Eastern & Oriental Express and both the Belmond Road to Mandalay and Orcaella river cruises within Myanmar.

A range of luxurious five-star hotels have also been added to the new brochure in a range of destinations including Thailand's Shangri La Bangkok, the Layana Resort in Koh Lanta, the Dhara Dhevi in Chiang Mai, the Cape Nidhra in Hua Hin and the Sheraton Pattaya; as well as the Oberoi in Lombok and both the Anantara Mui Ne Resort Phan Thiet and the Fusion Resort Nha Trang in Vietnam.

To mark the brochure launch, agents are being given the chance to win a luxury spa hamper. To enter the competition, agents should visit www.trade.premierholidays.co.uk/2016luxurycollection by January 29 and answer three questions about the new brochure.

For more information see www.trade.premierholidays.co.uk

Japan addition from China Links Travel

CHINA LINKS Travel has announced key developments, including the addition of Japan Links Travel, to extend its depth and product range.

The business, which has been growing rapidly with the majority of business resting on travel to China, has received substantial interest in both Japan and Indochina.

The company's sales manager, Charlie Cooper, said: "We want to ensure the trade is aware that we do offer these destinations too should they be receiving any enquiries for these regions."

"The new website - at www.japanlinkstravel.co.uk - is part of the process of building the brand with more news to follow next year. We remain committed to our agent partners and have launched an agents' site, www.chinalinkstravel.com/agents, with more specific trade information which will include news, offers, training, posters, eshots and competitions."



MARK UP...Mark Warner recently ran an agent competition in Travel Bulletin, giving agents the chance to win a case of wine. Pictured is the winner - Kelly Adams (left) from Savvi Travel, with the operator's Julie Franklin.

Newsbites

- **MYBOOKINGREWARDS.COM (MBR)** has secured new partnerships with two hotel groups in Mauritius and the Maldives. Sun Resorts in Mauritius and Adaaran Hotels in the Maldives are the latest additions to the incentive and rewards programme, which now includes more than 30 suppliers, including more than 2,000 hotels and eight tourist boards, spanning the Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Indian Ocean and Europe.
- **LUXURYBARED.COM**, a luxury travel review website, has launched to offer members luxury reviews and bespoke booking services. Reviews cover luxury hotels by destination and hotel group, ultra-luxury cruise lines and airline premium cabin reviews on long-haul, prime routes. Luxury hotels and cruises will also be reviewed by members themselves, as well as a hand-picked team of anonymous reviewers, a select group of like-minded individuals with requisite knowledge of the travel industry.
- **THE ACQUISITION** by Hotelplan UK of escorted adventure tours specialist Explore Worldwide and its sister company Regaldiver from their parent company Holidaybreak Group has been announced, for an undisclosed sum.
- **CRUISE & MARITIME Voyages (CMV)** has donated more than US\$1,757 to a local school in St. Lucia that specialises in young people with disabilities. The money was raised through passenger donations on Magellan.
- **TRIBECA GRAND**, the downtown mecca for big-name glitterati and business travellers in New York, is entering a new phase and the New Year as The Roxy. In addition to curated music in the hotel's updated lobby and downstairs cocktail lounge, weekend brunches include live jazz and a complimentary movie screening for kids. In spring 2016, guests of the hotel can expect a full revamp of 201 guestrooms and, to celebrate the transformation, the hotel is running a special deal with a rate of \$200 per night from January 3-15, 2016. See www.roxyhotelnyc.com

Tax-free Christmas shopping breaks in Philly

THIS MONTH Philadelphia is welcoming the opening of the first Bloomingdale's Outlet Store at Liberty Place and, until December 28, the traditional European Christmas market with vendors in more than 60 wooden booths selling food, sweets and drinks returns to Love Park. Admission is free and attractions include a festive Käthe Wohlfahrt tent featuring popular Christmas gifts from Germany, including glass ornaments, music boxes and nutcrackers as well as a life-size advent calendar.

For clients seeking locally-made gifts to take home, the new Made In Philadelphia Holiday Market at Dilworth Park showcases local artists, crafters, confectionaries and designers. Meanwhile, foodies can pay a special visit to the Artisan Bakery, which offers a range of gourmet treats including macaroons, chocolates, pretzels, mini doughnuts and steaming hot chocolate.

For more information see www.discoverphl.com



Love Park, Philadelphia

MOVERS

- **MICHAEL YOUNG-RICHARDS** has joined DoSomethingDifferent.com as business development manager for the North of England and Scotland.
- **ANDBEYOND HAS** promoted Nicole Robinson to chief marketing officer and Andrew Retallack to commercial director.
- **HOLIDAY EXTRAS** has announced a countrywide change of focus and roles for its partnerships team. For travel insurance there are three insurance partnership development managers - Leanne Kirkwood, Clare Purvis and Jenni Groves - who will be visiting agents and partners, including call centres, online agents and tour operators countrywide. Ashley Close has also been promoted to the role of head of travel insurance partnerships, while Paul Paddock will step up to head of commercial travel insurance.
- **JOE THOMPSON** has joined Virgin Atlantic as senior vice president sales and distribution.
- **THE GLENEAGLES HOTEL** in Scotland has appointed Daniel Clarke and Amanda Ellis as regional sales managers.
- **MIYA GILRITCHIE** has joined TravelCube as regional account manager - Scotland & North East England.



Great value holidays for Winter 15/16 and Summer 16

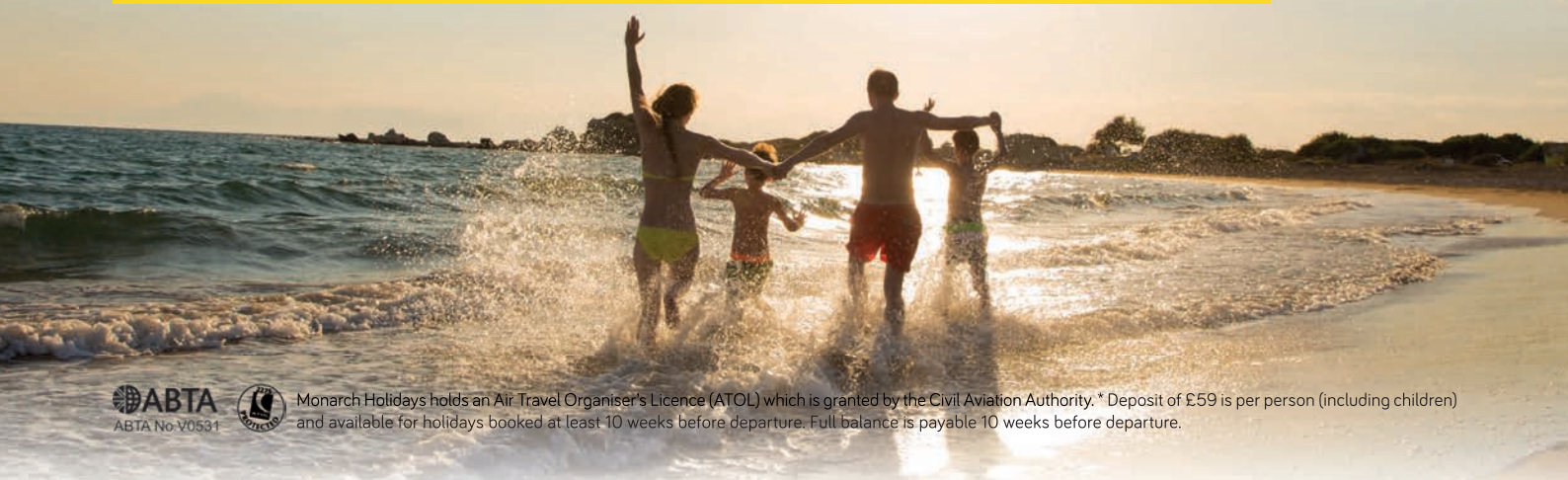
£59 deposit – every holiday, every date* – BEACH, CITY and SKI

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Notes from Normanton...

Attended a great evening arranged by Emma Holliday (LBIA) at the Arena Direct in Leeds, and it was great to catch up with so many tour operators. I saw Dino Toouli from Omega and I have to say what a lovely brochure they have. It offers a nice mix of different destinations from Europe to the USA, and I am sure a lot of ladies' groups would enjoy its selection of Spring Flowers holidays including Dutch Bulb fields from Leeds Bradford - or what about a Solar Eclipse preview 2017 USA? I know we haven't got to 2016 yet, but people that like this sort of holiday want to get it organised and booked up as they don't want to 'miss out'. Prices start from £1,899 for five days going up to eight and 14 days - email d.toouli@omega-holidays.com.

Also saw Tony Byrne from Typically Italian, Simon McDermott from AMA Waterways, the Jet2 team and Simon from Cosmos (I think their new Malaga flight from LBIA will be popular). It is nice that there are more and more airlines going from LBIA; Vueling who has added Barcelona for summer 2016 was also there. It was a fantastic evening and Emma Holliday - you did a wonderful job of organising it - thank you.

Was gutted to hear of some lions that had featured in several BBC documentaries - Big Cat Diaries etc., had been poisoned. That is not going to endear tourists to the Masai Mara, and I would have thought they need all the tourists they can get right now!

Nice to hear Jet2 are continuing to support agents by promising not to cut commission at least until 2017 - that is certainly music to our ears. They are also supporting by offering more reps on the road - here and abroad. Not everyone is a seasoned traveller and they like the reassurance of being able to see a rep when abroad.

By the time you read this I will have had my cardioversion (shock treatment) to my heart so fingers crossed all goes well - I can't wait to get my life back! This is my last article for this year so I wish you all a very Happy and HEALTHY Xmas!

'Life is short - Live it. Love is rare - grab it. Anger is bad - dump it. Fear is awful - Face it. Memory is sweet - cherish it'.

Sandy

by SANDRA MURRAY
in Normanton, Yorkshire

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



HIGH FIVES FOR LOW £60... Pictured promoting its £60 low-deposit scheme are, from the left: Atlantic Holidays' Leanne Swithenbank, Hayley Atkinson and Julia Mason. The company recently confirmed that its entire product range is now available across the Top Dog platform. For details see www.atlantic-holidays.com

travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions

WEBSCLUSIVES

- Chance to win a Kindle Fire HD with the Fonab Castle Hotel.
- Win a two night stay at the INNSIDE Hotel, in Manchester with the brand new MELIA PRO programme.
- Bottles of Champagne, tasting sessions & food pairing to be won with La Champagne, La Marne. Enter for the chance to win one of three prizes.
- NEW COMPETITION: £100 Marks & Spencer vouchers to be won with Cox & Kings.

Visit www.travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions for details on the above competitions

ALL THIS AND MORE AT
www.travelbulletin.com
 THE HOME OF WEB SAVVY TRAVEL AGENT

Booking incentives

IN JANUARY 2016 Seafarer and Variety Cruises are giving agents the opportunity to win a cruise for two on the Mega Yacht Harmony V. To enter, agents should make a booking on any Variety Cruises Mega Yacht cruise through Seafarer and answer three questions at <https://seafarerholidays.formstack.com/forms/canary> (tip - answers can be found at www.seafarercruises.com/cruises/mega-yacht). The competition closes on December 31 and the winner will be announced on January 8.

TO CELEBRATE the launch of its Luxury Gold India brochure for 2016/17, Insight Vacations is offering agents £50 in Love2Shop vouchers for each Luxury Gold booking made by December 31. To claim, email agency.sales@insightvacations.com within seven days of confirming the booking.

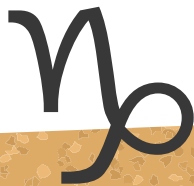
SAGA IS running a weekly prize draw for bookings made between January 4-31 for all overseas holidays and cruises, across all departure dates. Prizes include fam trips, boxes of bubbly, a personal shopping experience with spending money, Love2Shop vouchers, pamper days & spa vouchers, Champagne & lunch at Gordon Ramsey's Restaurant, London theatre breaks and more. Plus every cruise booking made during the booking period will receive a £100 spa voucher. Agents should email incentives@saga.co.uk with the booking reference to enter.

VISIONS HOLIDAY Group has extended its Golden Ticket competition for agents until the end of January. The incentive offers a range of prizes when agents make bookings to Africa, Greece, Turkey or Italy for their clients. Prizes range from Champagne and hampers through to cinema tickets and shopping vouchers. Once a booking has been made and logged, agents should wait for their Golden Envelope in the post.

What's in store for Capricorn?

THIS MONTH is your time to shine and you'll be feeling particularly creative. But put aside money and career aspirations just for now – your spiritual health comes first – and this in turn has an impact on professional matters. If you've thought about re-decorating, there's no time like the present...

Lucky day: Saturday
Lucky number: 26



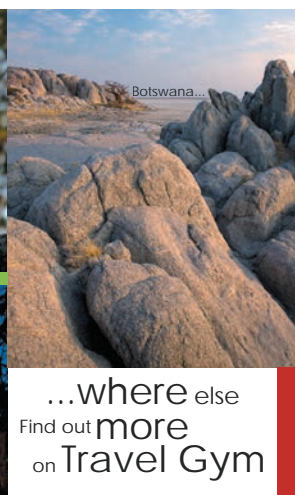
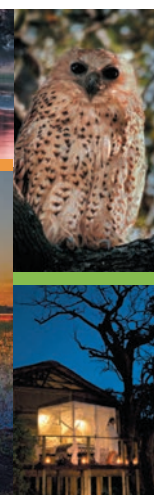
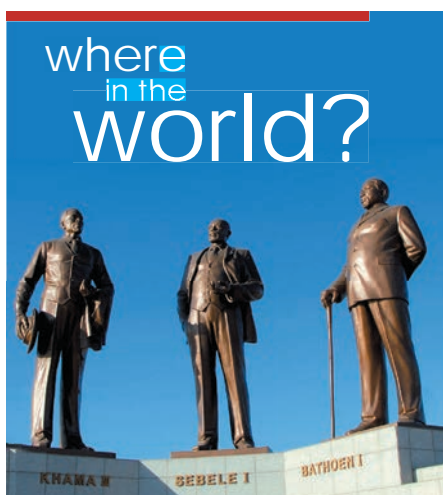
Agent competitions

AGENTS ARE being given the chance to win Love2Shop vouchers worth £50 each as part of the latest promotional campaign from Hoseasons. For the chance to win, agents should answer the following question: Which is the closest number to how many UK Cottages Hoseasons feature on the Hoseasons Cottages tab of the company's dedicated agent portal? A: 11,094; B: 11,194; C: 11,994 – and send their answer, name and ABTA number to agency.sales@hoseasons.co.uk by December 31. For details see www.hoseasons.co.uk/pdfs/cottagenumber.pdf

EVERY DAY, from December 13-24, Brainz will be giving agents the chance to win Christmas themed prizes on his Facebook group 'Brainz Agent Hub'. To be in with a chance of winning, agents need to spot Brainz with his stocking and present on the Bourne Leisure website (www.bourneleisuresales.co.uk) or on the online training website (www.bourneexpert.co.uk) by looking through the website pages. Agents should then post on Brainz Agent Hub on Facebook with their answer of where he is hiding (his location changes daily) and take a guess at what's inside his stocking. His location will change every day.



MISS MONEYCARD...The travel agent loyalty reward scheme, MoneyCard celebrated its first anniversary of its mascot 'Miss MoneyCard' last month. To mark the occasion, agents were invited to enter a Facebook competition to find the Miss MoneyCard 'Lookalike'. Pictured is the winner, Karen Allen from Aspen Travel in Manchester, who won a £200 MoneyCard top up, with Richard Hey (left) from If Only...and Andy Travis from Funway.



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Find out more
on Travel Gym

Innstant Travel boosts agent support by completing Multicom XML integration

INNSTANT TRAVEL, the online wholesale division of Innstant Group, has increased its support of the travel trade with the completion of an XML integration with technology provider Multicom.

The company's head of sales UK, Gary Gillespie, said: "With more than 275,000 properties across the globe including direct feeds from major hotel chains, I'm confident that this expansion of our product distribution channels will be a welcome addition to any Multicom client looking to improve conversion and ultimately grow their business. The Multicom Find and Book solution is currently used by more

than 50% of ABTA-registered leisure agents and it also enables us to support our Advantage Travel Partnership and Travel Network Group consortia members via their in-house technology platforms which is key to our growth strategy. We have also just completed integrations with Digital Trip and Top Dog. All these platforms enable us to supply agents with our extensive range of properties and for them to benefit from our competitive prices without the need of a direct website integration."

Visit www.innstanttravel.com or to register online email gary@innstanttravel.com

Warner Leisure Hotels introduces new 'Classical Crossover' break for 2016

WARNER LEISURE Hotels has launched its new 'Classical Crossover' weekend entertainment breaks for 2016.

Classical crossover is a music genre that hovers between classical and popular music, and each three-night classical crossover break features a mixture of talented singers and musicians with a classic influence of their music, performed in their own unique style. Guests will enjoy everything from traditional classics to modern hits, operatic arias to well-known tunes from musicals and films.

The musical break is available on selected dates at all seven of the company's portfolio of country house hotels: Bodelwyddan Castle on April 8, Holme Lacy House on May 20, Thoresby Hall Hotel on June 24, Littlecote House on July 29, Nidd Hall Hotel on September 9, Cricket St. Thomas on October 21 and Alvaston Hall on November 25.

Lettice Rowbotham (pictured), the violinist and Britain's Got Talent 2014 runner up will be performing at two of the properties - Cricket St Thomas on October 21 and at Littlecote House on July 29.

A three-night 'Classical Crossover' weekend break at Bodelwyddan Castle Hotel in North Wales starts from £219 per person, based on an April 8 arrival and two adults sharing a standard room. It includes the Simply Dine package (English and continental breakfast buffets and three-course evening meals) plus access to all music performances throughout the weekend.

For more information visit www.bourneleisuresales.co.uk or call 0330-100 9776.



KENYA COUP...Linda Buckingham from Travel Counsellors was the lucky winner of a twin-centre holiday for two to Kenya, courtesy of Kenya Airways, Heritage Hotels, Safarilink and Gamewatchers Safaris, after entering Kenya Tourism Board's grand prize draw at WTM in support of the Born Free Foundation. Linda will spend three nights at Heritage Mara Intrepids Camp in the Maasai Mara and four nights on the coast at Heritage Voyager Beach Resort in Mombasa.

New Gold Collection from Olympic

OLYMPIC HOLIDAYS has launched a new Olympic Gold Collection brochure for 2016 which showcases more than 80 of the top four- and five-star hotels throughout the Greek islands, on the mainland and in Cyprus.

For the first time, the company is including UK airport lounge access, taxi transfers direct to guests' hotels and a bottle of bubbly, all in the holiday price.

The operator's commercial director, Photis Lambrianides, said: "As the market leader to Greece and Cyprus, we offer the widest possible choice of holiday products for all budgets. As we continue to grow our range of holidays, we are turning the spotlight on the best that Greece and Cyprus can offer by presenting these luxurious properties in a brochure worthy of the title The Olympic Gold Collection."

"Including our gold-standard service in the package price makes it much easier for agents to sell Greece and Cyprus to those customers who expect top quality, style and service, because everything is wrapped up into one fully-commissionable package."

Among the hotels featured in the new collection are the Elounda Bay Palace Hotel (a member of the Leading Hotels of the World) and the Domes of Elounda Hotel, both on Crete; the Atrium Prestige Thalasso Spa Resort & Villas and The Kresten Royal Villas and Spa on Rhodes; the Avaton Resort & Spa on Santorini and Bill & Coo Suites and Lounge in Mykonos.

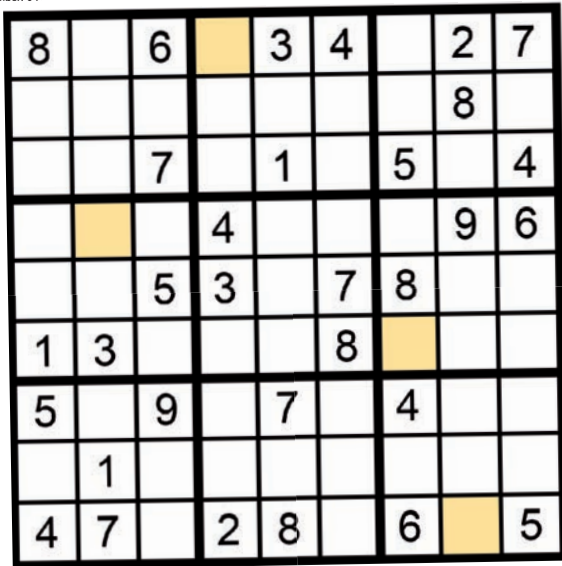
For details see www.olympicholidays.com

Su Doku

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

Number: 048

A →



B →

C →

D →

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, December 24th. Solution and new puzzle will appear in the new year!

Travagrams

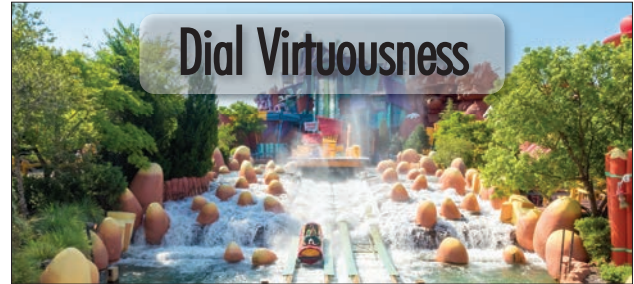
Can you solve the following anagrams to decipher the destination & tour operator?

Wear Rank Mr



Originally specialising in singles' and couples' ski holidays in just one chalet in Switzerland, this 40-year-old operator now runs sun and ski destinations.

Dial Virtuosity



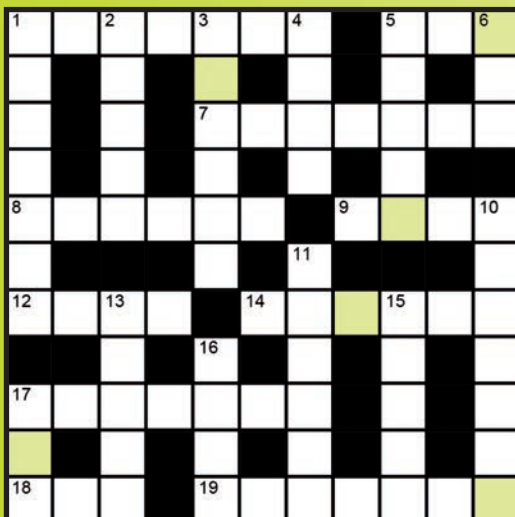
Theme park best known for attractions based on famous pop culture properties.

Where Am I?



Site on New Jersey's coast known for its casinos and iconic boardwalk.

Crossword



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

Across

1. German city popular for Christmas Market breaks (7)
5. Comedian, brother of Jeremy Vine (3)
7. Active holidays specialist (7)
8. Number of Pipers Piping in The Twelve Days of Christmas (6)
9. Ancient civilisation (4)
12. Egyptian canal (4)
14. Major American airline with a Chicago HQ (6)
17. The French call this Channel, La Manche (7)
18. Popular type of Christmas tree (3)
19. One of the Costas (7)

Down

1. Spend Christmas with the ___ at a cinema near you (7)
2. Eurostar stop (5)
3. Sacred river of India (6)
4. One of the Great Lakes (4)
5. Controversial heavyweight boxing champion, ___ Fury (5)
6. Day of the week, in short (3)
10. European principality (7)
11. Royal Caribbean ship, ___ of the Seas (6)
13. Famous English composer (5)
15. Flows through Rome (5)
16. Capital of Peru (4)
17. One of Santa's little helpers (3)

For the solution to the Crossword, Where Am I? and Travagrams, please see page 30

Industry Insight

by... elite

TRAVEL GROUP

Neil Basnett, chair of Elite Travel Group, takes time out to reflect on 2015 and has a few wishes of his own for 2016...

I am writing my last missive for 2015 on board the beautiful Royal Clipper sailing ship as we cruise through the Windward Islands of the Caribbean. What a fabulous trip this is turning out to be, although it would be impossible not to enjoy this ship and the beautiful destinations we are visiting! The over-riding impression of course is the indisputable fact that the Caribbean offers such a wonderful holiday experience in so many ways: stunning beaches, amazing people with such warmth of hospitality and all enjoyed in the warmth of the Caribbean sun as a direct contrast to the gloom of the British winter.

For those who have never experienced the Star Clippers ships, there really is nothing else truly comparable to it. It would not suit those wanting luxury cruising with butler service etc. but there are enough products to match that demand. What it does offer however is a true sailing experience rather than a typical cruise, and there is nothing more awe-inspiring than the daily 'sail-away' from harbour with all the sails being unfurled to rousing music: a real choking experience. It made me very proud to be on our ship as we glided past other cruise ships in the harbour, the decks of which were lined with their passengers taking photos of our beautiful ship. It was the best advertisement for Star Clippers!

All of us invitees were exceedingly grateful to our generous hosts from Star Clippers – Fay and Danielle. There are some who query the true worth of familiarisation trips but all of us will have returned with incredible memories of a magnificent product, offering a variety of experiences worldwide. We can now share our knowledge with future clients and I personally can pass on my impressions and advice to our members, all of whom could have clients well-suited to Star Clippers. On such trips, it does provide opportunities as well to discuss with colleagues issues that affect us all in the industry which helps to forge working relationships for the benefit of us all.

The trip also gave me the chance to look back on 2015 and to come up with a few hopes and wishes for the travel industry in 2016:

Is it not high time now for Airport Taxes and Fuel Surcharges to be reduced to more realistic levels?

Have airlines not yet come to terms with the fact that the cost of oil has plunged and although they may have hedged their fuel costs, meaning a delay in savings, there has been no noticeable decrease at all in the extortionate prices being charged for these 'extras' on top of the air fare. It is all very good charging an air-fare of £60 but when you then have to pay £350 in airport taxes etc., it is not such a bargain!

"It is all very good charging an air-fare of £60 but when you then have to pay £350 in airport taxes, it is not such a bargain!"

Is it too much to hope for a whole year with no terrorism-related incidents?

So many terrible events occurred in 2015 e.g. the Tunisian beach massacre, the bomb in the Russian plane over Egypt and the atrocities in Paris that all had an impact on booking patterns. Let us pray that we can have a more peaceful 2016, but the omens do not look good with the news now dominated by possible military action in Syria.

Can we have a dedicated Tourism Minister?

With so many British people employed in tourism, both inbound and outbound, it is staggering that successive governments have downplayed the importance of our industry to the extent that tourism is a shared portfolio, despite what the odious Jeremy Paxman tried to maintain at the Advantage conference.

Can we have fewer new cruise ships?

Although the cruise sector has grown enormously over the last few years, there is an impression that we are almost reaching a glut stage hence the never-ending saga of promotions and offers. With the number of cabins on sale increasing the whole time, silly prices are becoming the order of the day which benefits nobody: something has to give and it is normally quality.

All that remains is to wish all readers of this lovely magazine a truly enjoyable festive season before we all return in the New Year to jam-packed offices and phones jumping off the desk!



Angela Waite

UK sales manager, APT



At play

Where would you most like to visit and why?

This year I went on holiday to Chile and Argentina and loved it, so more of South America is on my list. The people, culture, food and sights are incredible over there so I can't wait to go back.

At home

What's your favourite household gadget?

Definitely my rice cooker! Perfect rice every time...

What are your favourite TV programmes?

I love to binge watch a box set. I love the drama of Breaking Bad, House of Cards and Boardwalk Empire to name a few, but, for something a bit more light hearted Suits and Entourage are my pick - all brilliant!

Who does the cooking?

My husband does all the cooking! And, as he also works in travel and will see this, I have to say he's an amazing cook.

What's a typical weekend for you like?

Always starts with a home cooked breakfast on a Saturday morning, followed by a walk with our border collie Cassie out in the countryside. Evenings generally consist of lots of red wine!

What's your guilty pleasure?

Watching Made In Chelsea - I know it's wrong but I just love it!

What music do you listen to?

I have really eclectic taste and like everything from Johnny Cash to Eminem!

What's your favourite movie?

It's a tough call, but would definitely have to be Sweet Home Alabama.

What's been your latest DIY project?

Renovating the bathroom - although to be honest we had someone in to do it!

At work

What other companies/organisations have you previously worked for?

I started my travel career as a sales consultant at Travelbag Knutsford before moving to APT ten years ago.

“ I am so lucky to have one of the best sales teams in the industry ”

What's the best thing about your job?

Working with such a fantastic team. I am so lucky to have one of the best sales teams in the industry.

What's a typical day like?

Having worked at APT for ten years, not a single day has been the same.

What's your favourite travel app?

Skyscanner - nothing beats the feeling of finding a great deal.

What was the last email you received?

A leave request from two members of my team for their trip to Glastonbury - rather than me!

What do you love about the travel industry?

The fantastic people you get to meet every day.

What item do you always take with you when travelling?

Sun cream - just a flicker of sun and I start to burn.

What are your hobbies?

Over the last year I've gotten into running and although I'm not the next Paula Radcliffe, I recently completed my first half marathon which was an amazing feeling.

What's your favourite (non-work related) website?

Tripadvisor. I love to research hotels and restaurants while planning my next holiday.

Do you use social media for work and play?

Yes, both Facebook and Twitter when I remember.

What is your best quality?

I'm a pretty positive person.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Asking someone if they thought 'seat A' on an aircraft was a window seat!

If you could invent a new law, what would it be?

Make the weekend three days!

TURKISH AIRLINES has signed a partnership agreement with the Petra Development and Tourism Authority. Upon visiting Petra, passengers of the airline will receive a 15% discount on entry tickets into Jordan's most unique heritage site - Petra's famous 'Treasury'. In exchange, Turkey's national flag carrier will give special discounts to tour agents for events organised in other countries by the Petra Development and Tourism Authority. Visit www.turkishairlines.com for more information.

The Treasury, Petra

InBrief

- A MAJOR cabin refurbishment of Alitalia's short and medium fleet has begun with new interiors, leather seats to be fitted and exteriors to be painted in the airline's newly launched livery. The project is earmarked for completion by April 2016.
- BMI REGIONAL is offering early-bookers one-way summer flights to Europe from £49 per person. Flights can be booked for travel until October 29, 2016. Visit www.bmiregional.com
- MANCHESTER AIRPORT saw a 6.2% year-on-year increase in passengers last month, breaking its all-time record in the process.
- THE EXPANSION at Luton Airport is expected to bring a further £1billion annually to the economy and create 10,500 new jobs over the next 15 years. The findings come from a new report into the airport's economic impact published by Oxford Economics.
- SKYWORK AIRLINES is to fly its own 30-seat Dornier planes for the rest of the winter flight schedule. Departure times for London City flights will be a few minutes earlier and two planes will be used for those days featuring high passenger volumes. From January 1, 2016, there will also be a midday rotation on given days to provide the required number of seats. Travellers who have already booked a Southend flight for 2016 will be contacted by the airline and moved to the London City midday flight rotations. The replacement of all the Dornier's will be completed by autumn 2017.
- QANTAS HAS launched the Qantas Group Travel website, enabling a simpler system for travel agents to process group travel bookings to Dubai, Australia and beyond. The website will be available to all travel agents holding a valid IATA number, 24-hours a day, seven-days a week, with benefits including competitive group quotes in real time, flexible group fare options across all cabins and automatic notifications of upcoming deadlines. See www.qantasgrouptravel.com

Dublin-Vancouver flights for 2016 from Air Canada

AIR CANADA has announced an expansion of its Vancouver hub with the addition of the only non-stop flights to Dublin next summer.

The new seasonal route follows several enhancements at the airline's Vancouver hub for 2016, including new transborder services to Chicago, San Jose and San Diego; double daily flights to Heathrow; and the only flights linking Canada to Brisbane.

The Dublin-Vancouver flights will be operated three times weekly by the carrier's leisure airline, Air Canada rouge, with Boeing 767-300ER aircraft beginning June 10, 2016.

Monarch Airlines announces launch of new routes to Tel Aviv and Eilat this month

MONARCH AIRLINES has announced two new scheduled routes to Israel from Luton Airport.

The airline will commence flights to Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion Airport and Ovda Airport - the gateway to Eilat - from this month.

The direct flights will operate three times weekly to Tel Aviv on Monday, Thursday and Sunday and once a week (on Thursday) to Ovda, with one-way flights available for the launch from £89 outbound and £49 inbound, including taxes.

Andrew Swaffield, chief executive officer for the group, said: "These two new scheduled routes are the result of the ongoing work we are doing to develop our winter programme, which showcases a number of winter sun and ski destinations. Tel Aviv and Ovda are growing in popularity once more with tourists and with the diverse offerings of both these destinations we are sure they will be a very popular choice for winter short breaks and holidays." For more information visit www.monarch.co.uk




THE DOOR TO NORTH AMERICA IS OFFICIALLY OPEN.

Over 100 Canadian and U.S. destinations.

Your clients can experience award-winning service with non-stop flights from London Heathrow to Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary, Halifax and St. John's and from Dublin to Toronto.

From there, they can enjoy seamless access to destinations all across North America.

AIR CANADA  *Your world awaits.*

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



The only Four-Star
international network
carrier in North America



DIGITAL DIALOGUE

The secrets to the perfect travel website

THE SECRET to the perfect website is a bit of a mystery. There are a lot of best-practice guidelines out there, but there doesn't seem to be a one-size-fits-all perfect format.

When it comes to the travel industry, however, crafting the perfect website is very important. As the Financial Times recently reported, the global travel industry is booming and expanding markets in Latin America and China can be a veritable goldmine of opportunity for local travel sites. As a result, travel industry businesses from across the globe are seeking to improve their website offerings to tap into these new, lucrative markets. So how are they doing this?

Firstly – hire or outsource to the right designer.

Whether you have an in-house web team or are outsourcing the design work, ensure the professional in charge of the operation understands your travel brand, target audience and offerings. An understanding of the technological aspect of crafting a website and an eye for aesthetically pleasing formats are musts if a website is to stand out for the right reasons. The right designer will know how to divide the layout, choose a colour scheme, create the right typography and present a number of draft website frameworks for you to choose from.

Secondly – keep it mobile, SEO & user friendly

When it comes to the nitty-gritty of website design, it also needs to have a number of specific attributes. It needs to be mobile friendly, meaning it has a responsive design and users are able to access it from any device; it needs to be SEO friendly so that users can find the website easily and from anywhere in the world; and it needs to be user friendly, meaning navigation across the site is seamless and not over-complicated.

It is also worth ensuring the most important information is included in the top half of the screen, or 'above the fold.' This means visitors to the site won't need to scroll down to find the benefits of the package or service, call to action or main logo – it should all be automatically visible.

Thirdly – take the time to create the content

This is especially relevant for travel brands. The content included in a travel website needs to be well thought out, carefully crafted, speak to the audience and reflect the business itself. The imagery chosen and content published needs to clearly reflect the ideals of the business and engage the target audience – this means doing market research to discover what people are looking for from your travel website, and providing them with that information; it may be images shared by other happy customers and travel blogs, alongside information regarding hotels, travel arrangements and various destinations.

Does your travel website take all of the above into account?

Saga research reveals surge in digital literacy among over-45s

IN A BID to better understand how digitally savvy today's over-45s are when researching and booking holidays Saga Holidays recently surveyed 1,000 people aged 45 to 65+ across the UK.

Online research was a key source used by senior travellers to research their holiday destination and to plan holiday activities with review sites such as Trip Advisor playing an important role.

34% of those surveyed said they preferred to book holidays online directly through a holiday provider site whilst online comparison sites were used by 17% of those among the 45 - 54 age range and by 9% of those in the 65+ category. More than half of 45-65 year olds said they would be comfortable buying online however the main reason signalled for those who did not feel comfortable making payments online was the risk of fraud. Older travellers also generally owned at least three tech devices with tablets, smartphones and laptops the most popular.

According to the operator the results suggest that the real revenue is coming from people aged 50+ who have the time, disposable income and are far savvier about the internet than they are given credit for.

At 65% city breaks proved to be the most popular holiday type among all the travellers surveyed with many booking one or two main holidays a year, and then slotting in short city breaks in-between. Beach holidays were still popular among 45-54 year olds at 61%, but for those aged 65+ it was only voted for by 36%.

The operator also noted that some participants showed interest in other options, with some of the favourites being self-managed holidays, ski holidays, volunteering holidays, visiting overseas friends and villa holidays.



Kayak.co.uk offers trips to space

THE POSSIBILITY of space travel and the logistics of booking it are becoming more feasible with KAYAK.co.uk becoming the first travel search engine in the UK to offer bookings to space.

The out-of-this-world experiences are on offer with the travel search engine for £91,476 per person with XCOR Space Expeditions.

Research by the company shows a strong appetite from the British public for space tourism with 52% of adults saying they would like to try space travel, providing it was safe and affordable. Men were significantly more likely to want to try it than women (66% versus 39%) and nearly three quarters of those under 35 (74%) would like to give it a go.

Hopeful about the prospect of space travel, more than a third of Brits think there is a chance that recreational travel into space will become commonplace in their lifetime, rising to three in five for those under 35.

Expeditions with XCOR depart from the Mojave Desert, California, and Curaçao taking approximately five minutes to get out of the Earth's atmosphere, ensuring flight participants a view of planet Earth and making them an astronaut for life before landing back on earth. The total flight duration is approximately 60 minutes.



training

Double your earnings incentive with Travel 2

TRAVEL 2 is investing in its agent training, T2 Academy, with the introduction of two new modules and incentives, giving agents more reasons to brush up on their airline, destination and ground partner knowledge.

Until the end of this month, agents have the chance to earn up to £90 of T2 Reward points with the 'double your earnings' incentive, available to those who complete the training modules.

The two new modules introduced to the programme are Lufthansa and Destination New South Wales. To fit in with agents' busy schedules each module can be completed within half an hour.

Visit www.t2academy.co.uk for further information.

WITH BIG SMILES at the quayside, 20 agent members of The Global Travel Group met with ten suppliers at its recent luxury-themed training day in Manchester.

Cruise Lines International Association launches 2016 Summit At Sea

AS PART of ongoing enhancements to its 'Executive Partner Membership Program', Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is offering a new networking and educational event called 'Summit At Sea'.

Taking place between January 8-11, 2016 on MSC's Preziosa, the inaugural event will visit four ports of call in the western Mediterranean, and create a new platform to engage with industry colleagues and 20 cruise line executives.

In addition, the summit will offer educational content covering port development and operations, destination development and

itinerary planning, environment, safety and security, port facility inspections and shore excursions.

Cindy D'Aoust, acting CEO for the group, said: "The Summit at Sea is just one example of the ever-expanding events offered to our community. It reinforces the unique benefits that CLIA membership provides, and we will continue to create opportunities like this to experience the industry first-hand and engage with partners."

For more information see www.cruising.org/about-the-industry/executive-partner-program

Learn on the go with Royal Caribbean's 'Cruising for Excellence' mobile option

ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S training programme, 'Cruising for Excellence', is now mobile and tablet responsive, enabling agents the convenience of being able to learn on the go, at a time that suits them.

The training tool covers information about the line including details on destinations, ship specifications with top tips on selling cruises tailored to individual customers. The e-learning programme also features short module-based lessons in a 'real life' 3D training environment, which allows agents to walk around a ship as if they were on board.

Ben Bouldin, the lines sales director for UK & Ireland, said: "To help attract the new to cruise audience, we believe training

is key. As a result, we work closely with our trade partners to ensure we are providing them with the right tools to best meet their needs. The modules are intended to help build the confidence of agents so they feel equipped to answer any questions and sell to the best of their ability. As an added incentive, when they've completed the scheme, agents are then eligible for the Club Royal reward and recognition programme – which now boasts more than 8,000 members. We are confident that our investment in training will not only arm agents with the tools that they need to excel in their day-to-day job, but also encourage more guests to choose cruise as their preferred holiday style."

Win a Kindle Fire with VisitEngland

Register for the England training course at www.EnglandExpert.com before December 31, 2015 and you'll go into a draw to win a Kindle Fire!



Learn more. Earn more.

EnglandExpert.com is a free online training programme from VisitEngland.

Its aim is to increase your selling power by increasing your knowledge of the top spots and products on your doorstep.

The programme has four modules to help you learn more and earn more.

Choose from What Makes England Great, England the Facts, Themed Holidays or English Experiences.

With the peak selling period just around the corner, now's the time to offer your clients holidays at home.

Whether it's a half term in the New Forest or a cheeky city break to see Dirty Dancing, selling England offers you valuable commission.

Visit EnglandExpert.com to register.

VisitEngland

WIN A KINDLE FIRE!

Wine winnings for agents completing Journey Latin America's course

JOURNEY LATIN America is offering travel agents the chance to be entered into a prize draw upon completion of its online training course.

Made up of four modules, the course on Central and South America with Online Travel Training (OTT) focuses on the types of holidays the operator is able to offer, the destinations sold and the style of holidays that can be put together for clients.

At the end of each module is a short quiz and, should all the answers be correct across all the modules, agents will gain their 'Journey Latin America' agent training certificate.

As an added incentive, from now until August 2016, completion of the course will enter agents into a free prize draw to win two bottles of South American wine. A winner will be picked at random every month and announced in the operator's e-newsletter.

The online travel training course can be found at <http://bit.ly/10WJTW3>

Bourne Leisure launches new online training courses for 2016

BOURNE LEISURE has refreshed its interactive, online training service 'Get Smarter with Brainz'. Offering training courses for its three brands; Butlin's, Haven and Warner Leisure Hotels, it ensures agents are up to date with the latest product developments, and in with the chance of winning prizes.

For example, agents who make one booking within a month of successfully completing one of the online training courses will earn a £10 Love2 Shop voucher.

Agents who make two or more bookings within three months of

completing an online course will be automatically entered into the company's prize draw to win one of three smart gadgets to the value of £300.

Prizes include an iPad mini, an Apple watch or a smart phone. To qualify, bookings must be logged on the website's rewards tab.

Erman Housein, sales and marketing manager for the company, said: "Our training service is tremendously important to us and we strive to keep it fun while giving agents the tools needed to successfully sell our products and gain rewards. The newly refreshed three



Bourne Leisure has refreshed its interactive, online training service 'Get Smarter with Brainz'.

training courses allow agents to update their knowledge of our brands while having the chance to win even more rewards."

Visit www.bourneexpert.co.uk for more information.



Prestige Holidays recently held a Canada themed training event at the Winchester Hotel and Spa. The evening encompassed dinner and a quiz, and was attended by about 70 agents from the local area. Pictured at the event are, from the left: Tim Blostone representing Ottawa Tourism and Maria Phillimore from Hays Travel; Aidan O'Kelly from Colchester Travel; Lesley Clements, Travel Counsellors and Katie Brickell from Holland America Line.

MELIÁ PRO EARLY BOOKING SUMMER HOLIDAYS 2016!

Up to 45% off

(15% included for MeliáRewards members)

Booking Window: 28/12/2015 to 31/03/2016 · Travel Window: 01/04/2016 to 31/10/2016





IN RESPONSE to the growing popularity of Iceland with British visitors, Discover the World has announced it will be launching a new direct flight from Gatwick to Egilsstaðir in East Iceland. Operating twice-weekly between May 28 and September 24, 2016, holiday prices start from £589 per person for a three-night 'Fjord Escape'. For more information visit www.discover-the-world.co.uk or call 01737-214291.

Iceland's popularity predicted to continue into 2016

THIS YEAR has proved a positive one for tourism to Iceland, with the popularity of the country continuing to increase, and year-on-year UK visitor numbers up by 28%. With new openings, increased flight routes and tours uncovering lesser known areas, 2016 is predicted to be another tourism booming year according to the tourist board.

Highlights include a new Northern Lights 'bubble', which introduces a novel way to see the mystical green lights; a direct flight to the wilder east of the country; and evening whale-watching tours under the midnight sun.

Launching on January 9, the new Northern Lights 'Bubble' is a bubble-shaped room located 70km north of Reykjavik and features a transparent roof in a rural area, free from light pollution. Overnight stays cost from £99 per night and bookings made before the launch date will receive a free bottle of Santero Prosecco Champagne to enjoy under the lights. Visit www.buubble.com for more details.

In terms of accessibility, WOW air has added flights to Iceland from Bristol; Discover The World has introduced a new summer route to the east of Iceland; and Icelandair is to launch a new year-round service from Aberdeen to Reykjavik commencing in March next year. This is in addition to easyJet's expansion of its Iceland network last month with a twice-weekly Stansted route, plus British Airways' route

from Heathrow to Reykjavik for the winter 2015/16 schedule.

In terms of new tours being offered in the destination, sea adventure company Special Tours will be offering customers an evening whale-watching tour during the summer of 2016, taking advantage of the longer summer days facilitated by the midnight sun. Prices start from £48. See www.specialtours.is for details.

Meanwhile, Iceland Traveller is introducing a new foodie tour with a departure date of August 22, 2016 which costs from £1,395 including seven nights' breakfast accommodation, a professional guide, all transport, entrance fees, activities and most lunches with flights at an additional cost. See www.icelandtraveller.co.uk

Adventure tour operator, Mountaineers of Iceland, has also announced that it is adding a new fleet of monster trucks for 2016, enabling visitors to explore further into the Icelandic highlands (www.mountaineers.is), while Icelandic Farm Holidays gives visitors the chance to hike and explore inside both volcanoes and glaciers, as well as exploring the black sandy beaches, waterfalls, lava flows and icebergs off the coast. A 15-day trip costs from £1,925 per person including car hire, a ferry trip to the Vestman Islands, admission to a range of attractions and a boat tour on the Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon. Visit www.farmholidays.is/tours for details.

'Iceland From Below' option from Attraction World

NEW FROM Attraction World is an 'Iceland From Below' tour, designed to take guests to the unique sights of Iceland's most spectacular lava tube caves and craters to reveal the scenery of lava formations and colours.

Afterwards it's then on to the famous Blue Lagoon by bus where guests can enjoy a range of recreational options such as walking or bathing in the milky blue-green seawater, or enjoying a meal in the à la carte restaurant. The whole package costs £83 per adult and £41 per child, aged one to 11.

Alternatively, a 60-minute 'Ölgerðin Brewery' tour invites guests to visit Iceland's oldest brewery, listening to stories about the drinking culture as it once was in the past and costs £41 per adult.

SuperBreak adds selection of new dinner & accommodation packages in Reykjavik

SUPERBREAK has added a range of new dinner packages in Reykjavik that combine overnight accommodation with two dinners at different restaurants, plus entry to a spa.

They include four nights' breakfast accommodation at a choice of four hotels - the three-star CenterHotel Plaza; three-star CenterHotel Arnarhvoll; three-star CenterHotel Klopp; and the four-star CenterHotel Thingholt.

In addition, a three-course chef's choice dinner is included at the SKY Lounge at CenterHotel Arnarhvoll, as well as the Isafold Restaurant at CenterHotel Thingholt. For customers who are looking for the chance to relax, the package also includes entry to the spa at the CenterHotel Thinghold.

Prices in mid-March are from £365 per person including flights from Luton. All packages are fully commissionable to agents.

For more information call 0190-443 6000 or visit www.superbreak.com/agents

Contiki promotes new four-day adventure with prices from £545 per person

BASED IN Reykjavik, Contiki's new four-day trip takes clients to experience Iceland on a selection of day trips.

After exploring the nation's capital, travellers will then visit the Blue Lagoon, and in the evening head out on a locally guided trip to see the famous Northern Lights.

Other highlights include taking a Golden Circle tour to see spouting geysers, tumbling waterfalls and ancient volcanoes with some of the best-known natural phenomena in Iceland including Gullfloss Waterfall,

Thingvellir (the oldest parliament in the world - founded in 930 A.D) and the geothermal area of Lake Thingvallavatn.

Prices lead in at £545 per person and include three nights' breakfast accommodation, one buffet dinner, sightseeing tours and the services of a trip manager and local guides. Departures start from October 27, 2016.

Visit www.contiki.com or call 0845-075 0990 for more information.



Priced from £7,550 per person before December 31 'Iceland and Greenland: In The Wake Of The Vikings Photographic Expedition' is an 11-night tour from Abercrombie & Kent with savings from £1,035. The single supplement will also be waived on Cabin Categories one-three when booking by December 31, saving from £4,140 per person. Call 0124-254 7703 for details.

Collette promotes seven-day 'Magical Northern Lights' tour from £1,799

COLLETTE'S 'ICELAND'S Magical Northern Lights' is a new seven-day tour for 2016.

Starting from £1,799 per person, three nights are spent in the capital Reykjavik, followed by three nights in Vik, the country's southernmost village.

While many of the must-see sights such as the Blue Lagoon, the Golden Circle, Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon, the Gullfloss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls are included, guests have the opportunity to search for the Northern Lights on an evening cruise in the darkness of Faxaflói Bay, and can learn about local struggles during the 2010 volcanic explosion at the Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Visitor Centre.

Carl Burrows, UK managing director for the operator, said: "This tour offers the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the spectacular and elusive Northern Lights. Iceland's breathtaking scenery and amazing natural wonders make it

the perfect destination for adventurous travellers looking to be inspired by pure and unpolluted landscapes."



The Blue Lagoon

Regent reports 45% increase in interest to Iceland

REGENT HOLIDAYS is encouraging early bookings on all holidays to Iceland for 2016, as demand continues to increase beyond supply.

The operator has seen interest in the country gradually rise by more than 45%, with tours during February half-term nearly fully booked.

The operator offers a variety of escorted tours, fly/drive holidays and tailor-made trips to the destination, including 'Journey into the Glacier City Break' - a four-day trip costing from £690 per person including flights from Heathrow to Reykjavik with Icelandair, transfers, three nights' breakfast accommodation at Hotel Klettur and a trip to the newly opened Ice Cave beneath Langjökull Glacier.

For more information visit www.regent-holidays.co.uk or call 020-7666 1244.

Southern Nights & Northern Lights option from Taber

TABER HOLIDAYS' five-night 'Southern Nights and Northern Lights' fly/drive tour takes clients to the wilderness of Hella in southern Iceland, away from all artificial light pollution, with the chance to see the Northern Lights.

Accommodation in Hella is at Hotel Rangá, which offers guests a wake-up call should the lights appear in the middle of the night, or the slightly more modest Fosshotel Hekla. New for this year, the operator has added two nights in Vik, Iceland's most southern town.

Prices start from £1,130 per person and include flights from Gatwick to Reykjavik, transfers, half-board accommodation, breakfast for one night in Reykjavik and car hire. The price is based on two sharing, with daily departures until March 31, 2016, apart from the Christmas period.

The operator has also added a new romantic getaway to Iceland in search of the Northern Lights, ideal for agents to promote in the run up to Valentine's Day.

Prices lead in at £998 for a 'Hotel Rangá and the Northern Lights' break, ideal for those looking to get out and explore



Vik, Iceland

Iceland's landscape by day, returning to the comfort of Hotel Rangá for the evening.

Following dinner, guests can watch the Northern Lights in the hotel's new astronomical observatory. The three-night break departs on Friday February 12 or Saturday February 13, 2016 and includes flights, car hire with unlimited mileage and breakfast accommodation based on two sharing.

For more information call 0127-487 5199 or see www.taberhols.co.uk

Taber Holidays

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travelbulletin

Giving agents the edge

We asked our staff the following question this week:
How will you be seeing in the New Year?

Publisher: Jeanette Ratcliffe
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With my friends and a glass of Prosecco.

Editor: Lauretta Wright
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With friends playing games, acting like kids & eating far too much.

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With a glass in hand.

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With a few games and dinner.

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On a beach off the coast of Thailand.

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As always, not remembering a thing. HNY everyone!

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Happy as Larry.

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Drinking with friends

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With friends & wine!

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Don't know yet, but hopefully Mountains and Snowboarding with bottle of Tatrtea in hand.

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@TravelBulletin



TravelBulletin

See in the New Year with a bang says TripCreator

ON NEW Year's Eve Iceland lights up with community bonfires in towns and villages throughout the country and millions of fireworks in the sky.

Selling fireworks is the main income for all the volunteer rescue teams around the country and, in a bid to support them, Icelanders are happy to spend a lot of money on fireworks for the special night, resulting in spectacular results and a party not to be missed.

TripCreator suggests that visitors planning to arrive a day or two early, or staying a while after the big party, can take advantage of some

of Iceland's most spectacular sites, including Nature's own light show, the Aurora Borealis.

For more information visit www.tripcreator.com



Photo by Matthias Schüssler

New ten-day Icelandic tour from Trafalgar

TRAFALGAR'S NEW ten-day 'Ultimate Iceland' showcases the jewels of Iceland, starting in Reykjavik, to see the capital's major attractions with an afternoon for guests to spend bathing in the world famous Blue Lagoon.

Guests will then visit Thingvellir National Park, the highly active Geysir Hot Spring area and Gullfoss (known as the 'golden waterfall'), plus the waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss.

The next stop is Skaftafell National Park to cross Eldhraun, the largest mass of lava on earth, and to see the largest glacier in Europe, Vatnajökull, where clients can take a trip on an amphibian boat through the Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon, as well as explore the highland desert plateau Mödrudalsöræfi, heading to Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall.

Other highlights include the Námaskard pass with its boiling mud pools and the Lake Myvatn area, including the lava formations of Dimmuborgir, the town of Siglufjörður and the Snæfellsnes area, famous for the Snæfellsjökull glacier.

The trip costs from £1,205 per person, land only, and includes nine nights' breakfast accommodation, selected lunches and dinners, VIP entry to a number of sights, a travel director and airport transfers. Departures start from May 22, 2016.

For more information visit www.trafalgar.com or call 0800-533 5619.

WOW air announces flights from Bristol to Reykjavik

BRISTOL IS to become WOW air's second UK departure point for flights to Iceland with tickets for flights beginning May 13, 2016 on sale from £39. The route will also be connected to the US and Canada with flights from £99.

Flights will depart from Bristol Airport for the airline's hub in Reykjavik on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Passengers travelling through will then have a short stopover before continuing on to one of the airline's North American destinations - Boston, Washington D.C., Montreal, Toronto, Los Angeles or San Francisco.

The Bristol to Reykjavik flight will be operated by A320 aircraft with single-class A321 and A330-300 aircraft operating the routes between Iceland and North America.

For more information visit www.wowair.co.uk

puzzlesolutions

Crossword:

Across: 1. COLOGNE, 5. TIM, 7. NEILSON, 8. ELEVEN, 9. INCA, 12. SUEZ, 14. UNITED, 17. ENGLISH, 18. FIR, 19. ALMERIA.
Down: 1. COOPERS, 2. LILLE, 3. GANGES, 4. ERIE, 5. TYSON, 6. MON, 10. ANDORRA, 11. ANTHEM, 13. ELGAR, 15. TIBER, 16. LIMA, 17. ELF.

Highlighted Word: MANILA

Travagrams: top: Mark Warner

bottom: Universal Studios

Where Am I?: Atlantic City



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#2

THE VISIONARY

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