

travelbulletin

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Giving agents the edge



Slovenia

Top 20 activities to highlight to clients

this week

business bulletin

13

Wanup study reveals diversity among business travellers

event bulletin

14

images from Travel Bulletin's Med Islands showcase events



17

escorted tours

operators promote their latest programme additions & highlights

latin america

21

LATA unveils details of its 2017 Travel Trends Report



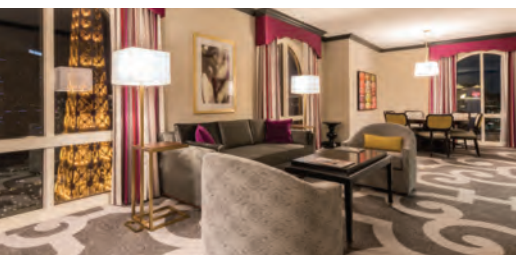
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Rockin' out...

TRAVEL BULLETIN featured a competition with Funway for agents to win tickets to a Justin Bieber concert plus a stay at the Hard Rock & Casino in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. The winner was Tina Rayment (third from left) from Westway Travel, and pictured with Tina are the other prize winners – from the left: Misty Peterson-Wilkins (companion of Lauren Ann Rice); Lauren Ann Rice, Thomas Cook; Vicky Gibbs, Flight Centre; and Victoria Colk and Oliver Goucher, Virgin Holidays.

Families self-catering on a shoestring this summer are quids in on Spain's Islands

A THIRD of people planning trips abroad this year will take a self-catering holiday, according to research for the annual Post Office Travel Money Self-Catering Holiday Report, produced in partnership with Monarch Holidays. More than two-in-five (42%) of families told the Post Office they chose their most recent self-catering holiday to cut costs, so the report suggests heading to the Spanish Islands or Portugal's Algarve because supermarket prices are up to 84% lower than in destinations further east.

The advice comes after the consumer research also revealed that more than half of families bust their budget on their last self-catering holiday – with one-in-six admitting they spent over £200 more than planned. Post Office Travel Money and Monarch Holidays surveyed the cost of a weekly family shop in ten European destinations and found big differences for 15 typical food and drink staples.

The cheapest destination proved to be Mallorca where the shopping basket of self-catering basics came to £31.91 – 5% less than in the Algarve (£33.65), runner-up in the survey. In contrast, Monarch Holidays' resort staff discovered that the same shopping basket cost 84% more (£58.74) in Dubrovnik, the most expensive destination surveyed, while supermarkets in Eastern Med resorts were also between 31-40% pricier than Mallorca.

With a fall of 6.1%, Mallorca was one of four destinations where supermarket prices were found to have dropped year-on-year – despite the fact that sterling buys around 10% fewer euros than last June. The biggest fall of 20% was in Menorca (£35.03 – the fourth cheapest in the survey), while prices fell 3.7% in Lanzarote (£34.41) – making the Spanish Islands great value for self-caterers.

The fourth destination where grocery prices have fallen over the past 12 months is Cyprus, which registered a 6.2% drop. At £44.29, the shopping basket in Cyprus is at its lowest level since Post Office Travel Money started compiling the self-catering report in 2011. Prices are now 39% cheaper for UK tourists than five years ago when the same items cost £72.48.

Andrew Brown of Post Office Travel Money said: "It's good to report that the cost of self-catering groceries has fallen in parts of Europe despite the fall in sterling's value since last year. However, the wide variations we found across the ten destinations surveyed mean families should do their homework and check prices before booking. Mallorca and Portugal are great value for self-catering but Turkey, Greece and Croatia will be more expensive.

"Although self-catering can be a great way to save money, spending can easily get out of hand. Just over half of the holidaymakers we spoke to shopped in supermarkets but

continued on next page ►

09

agent bulletin

a look at this week's booking incentives, agent offers & training

11

puzzle bulletin

play Su Doku for your chance to win an Amazon Echo with Jet2Holidays

12

bulletin briefing

news & views from Advantage

13

business bulletin

Wanup study reveals diversity among business travellers

14

event bulletin

images from Travel Bulletin's Med Islands showcase events

17

escorted tours

operators promote their latest programme additions & highlights

21

latin america

LATA unveils details of its 2017 Travel Trends Report

23

slovenia

the top 20 activities agents should highlight to clients

THIS WEEK

03

news

a round-up of the industry's latest developments & deals

08

notes from normanton

discover what Sandy from Sandy's Travel Escapes has been up to lately

► continued from previous page

almost as many used local mini-marts, which are significantly more expensive. Our advice is to do one big supermarket shop and choose cheaper local brands. Buy fresh fruit and vegetables in local markets and only use mini-marts to top up supplies. If you are planning to eat out during your stay, make

it a lunch time set meal, a cheaper bet than eating a la carte in the evening.

"Another way for families to avoid busting their budget is to steer clear of changing cash at the airport or at overseas ATMs where poor rates and charges will cost them dear. Planning ahead and loading the holiday budget onto a pre-paid card is a great way to keep costs in check."

Brits can fly for less this summer according to new research from Opodo

FLIGHTS FROM the UK are on average 8% cheaper this summer than last year, according to Opodo.co.uk – and this saving increases on average by 18% when booking to one of the top ten most popular holiday destinations, with passengers making the biggest saving (33%) when flying to Faro in Portugal.

Other countries with the biggest savings include Dublin (28%), with flights costing an average of £57 over the summer.

For Brits seeking guaranteed sun, flights to Alicante are at their cheapest (£87) the week commencing August 28 – ideal for families looking to bag a bargain during the last week of the school summer holidays.

New York is the only non-European city to enter the top ten this year;



despite this, Brits are starting to venture further afield, with a 292% increase in passengers flying from the UK to Bali and a 195% increase in travel to Florida.

The company's travel expert, Lukas Balter, said: "The uncertainty of Brexit and the impact this has had on the value of the pound has caused

concern for many Brits, especially when it comes to holidays abroad.

"The fact that flight prices have dropped across the board is great news for the British public as it offsets this worry, meaning people are able to continue booking holidays and enjoying themselves on sunnier shores."



TEAM MEMBERS... Pictured marking a new joint campaign between Funway Holidays and AMResorts, which sees the launch of a dedicated mini brochure, are Ally Ware (left) and Mags Michalik from Funway. The 24-page brochure includes savings of up to 50% on holidays to Caribbean, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. As an example of prices, a seven-night, all-inclusive holiday to Jamaica at the adult-only five-star Secrets Wild Orchid Montego Bay costs from £1,249 per person, including flights with Virgin Atlantic from Gatwick on September 29.

MOVERS

- **ADRIAN PARKES** has been appointed CEO of the GTMC.
- **JAMES DUGAN** has joined Sheraton Grand London Park Lane as executive chef.
- **ACCORHOTELS** HAS appointed Karelle Lamouche as senior vice president for sales & marketing, distribution & revenue management at HotelServices UK & Ireland.
- **TRAVELTEK GROUP Ltd** has appointed Scott Hanney as general manager, customer services delivery (CSD), a new role created as the travel and cruise technology specialist pursues rapid global expansion.
- **IN ORDER** to increase sales and market share and develop new business, If Only...has announced an expansion of its programme to a number of new long-haul destinations. To guide the company, Andy Freeth has been appointed as CEO and will join in early December, while the senior management team will be expanded to include Matt Appleby as product & commercial director, Gordon McCreadie as sales & marketing director, Tracy Docherty as business development director and David Irving as head of specialist business.
- **WENDY WU TOURS** has appointed Mark Bloxham as UK managing director.
- **SILVERSEA** HAS appointed Paul Fallows as regional sales manager South West, effective from June 26.
- **JOE SUTCLIFFE** has joined Saga Holidays as head of long haul for product and purchasing.

Kirker unveils new collection of 'boutique' cruises

KIRKER IS promoting its new collection of cruises for summer and early autumn departures which offer 'boutique' vessels and luxury hotel barges.

The company has teamed up with Silversea and European Waterways to offer holidays that combine comfort, personal service and picturesque scenery with fine food and wine.

Each itinerary also includes a two-night stay at one of the operator's carefully-selected hotels in the region.

Departing until October, clients can choose from tailor-made itineraries in France, Italy and the UK.

As an example of prices, an eight-night 'The Lochs and Glens of Scotland' offers clients the opportunity to soak up Scotland's wild countryside and panoramic scenery and leads in at £3,598 per person, based on two sharing. The holiday combines a two-night stay on the Speyside coast with a six-night cruise on the latest addition to European Waterways' fleet, Spirit of Scotland.

Travelling through the Caledonian Canal and the lochs of the Great Glen, there are excursions to historic sites such as Glencoe, Culloden Moor and the romantic castles of Eilen Donan and Urquhart. The vessel comes fully stocked with a range of single malt whiskies to try on board, while guests will have a further chance to sample the delights of the Glen Ord distillery (dating back to 1838) during a private tasting. Special interest cruises are also available throughout the year as well as a programme of excursions.

For more information or to book call 020-7593 2283 or visit kirkerholidays.com



CARIBBEAN CALL... Last month AMResorts took a group of travel agents to visit its growing number of resorts in the Dominican Republic. The group visited the latest addition to the hotel brand's collection, *Sunscape Bávaro Beach Punta Cana*, and also visited the *Secrets Cap Cana Resort & Spa* opening party as well as the latest resort to be opened in *La Romana, Dreams Dominicus La Romana*. Pictured enjoying their trip are, from the left: Nick Divall, Funway; Darren Cummins and Rachel Gifford, AMResorts; Ashleigh McConnon, Blue Bay Travel; Theo Gates-Fleming, Dial A Flight; Robyn Wilson, Flight Centre; Kinga Szentgyorgyi, Trailfinders; Carla Wharton, Dnata; Anthony Gajic, The Holiday Place; Jessica Bunce, Touchdown; and Rachel McAnaspie, Travelmood.

Party At Sea packages from DFDS offer unique experiences

DFDS HAS introduced 'Party At Sea' packages to offer groups of ten or more a unique experience during their mini cruise adventure.

The packages are ideal if groups are celebrating occasions such as a birthday, anniversary or baby shower and can be tailored to create a unique experience.

Included in the deal are two nights on the Newcastle-Amsterdam mini cruise, a glass of Champagne on arrival, a variety of meal options in a choice of the ship's four

restaurants, a personalised cake and a cabin upgrade for the host.

On arrival in Holland, guests are offered a free transfer to Amsterdam city centre where they can explore at their own leisure and continue with their celebrations before heading back to the UK on the overnight sailing.

Prices start from £94 per person and bookings can be made online at dfdsseaways.co.uk/party

Brochure launch from Somak promotes multi-centre deals

SOMAK HOLIDAYS has released a new mini brochure, produced in conjunction with Kenya Airways, which highlights the multi-country options of combining Kenya, Victoria Falls and Cape Town, resulting from the inauguration of new routes last month.

Whilst Kenya and Tanzania continue to perform well for the operator, combined with Kenya's double digit increase of tourists year-on-year, Southern Africa is also continuing to attract many new, as well as repeat, visitors.

The company reports that in terms of safari and wildlife options, its team has experience in where to go and what to do and see in Southern Africa (as well as East Africa), and is currently compiling a more comprehensive programme of agent fam trips for later this year that will incorporate Kenya, South Africa and India.

For more details visit somak.com



Pictured at Columbus' naming ceremony are, from the left: Chris Coates and Simon Weeks, CMV; Nicholas Tragakes, Global Maritime Group; Angela Rippon; and Captain of Columbus, Panagiotis Mantzavinos; and Christian Verhounig, CMV.

Cruise and Maritime Voyages welcomes new flagship Columbus

CRUISE AND Maritime Voyages welcomed its new flagship Columbus into its fleet at a naming ceremony at London's Tilbury last week.

The 64,000 tonne ship will carry up to 1,400 people and will cruise year-round from Tilbury.

The Godmother to Columbus, who named the ship at the ceremony, is TV personality Angela Rippon CBE.

Chris Coates, the line's commercial director, said: "When we introduced Magellan to our fleet just over two years ago, I suggested that it would be a game changer for us. Indeed it has been, and now we begin a new chapter as we proudly introduce our new flagship, Columbus, enabling us to respond to growing customer demand for traditional style cruising on mid-sized cruise ships. The arrival of Columbus means we are on course to carry 100,000 passengers in 2018 cruising from the UK, which is 10% of the market.

"Thanks to the support of our travel trade partners, we have sold more than 95% of our 2017 Columbus cruise programme and an incredible 40% of 2018 capacity. Our 'Buy One Get One Free' deals offer the best possible value and our customers recognise that it pays to book early."

Columbus will offer itineraries to the Norwegian Fjords, British Isles, Iceland, Baltic Cities, Canary Islands & Madeira, Scottish Highlights & Faroes, Spain, Portugal, France and Gibraltar, and will also offer a 46-night voyage to Cuba, Central America and the Caribbean.

For further information or to make a booking see cruiseandmaritime.com or call 0844-998 3877.

NEWS BITES

- HAVEN HAS launched Happy Little Holidaymakers breaks, specifically targeting families with tots under the age of five. Activities include exploring off the park, visiting the beach, discovering the great outdoors with Nature Rockz and Learn2Swim sessions. Prices for a three-night 'Happy Little Holidaymakers' break start at £149 for the whole family, based on a family of up to four sharing a standard two-bedroom Caravan at Berwick, Northumberland.
- CAMLUX HOTEL has celebrated its grand opening as Kowloon Bay's first hotel, and one of the first factory converted hotels in Hong Kong. Managed by Camlux Hospitality Limited, the 185-room 'factory' Hotel near MegaBox and Kowloon Bay International Trade and Exhibition Centre (KITEC) brings local hospitality with contemporary flair and cutting-edge technology to the new central business district in Hong Kong.
- OPODO IS set to entice British travellers to 'search, book, and travel' on opodo.co.uk with the launch of its first television campaign this summer. The campaign's creative and strapline 'Let the journey begin' will also be supported through out of home advertising in a number of major railway stations across London and the South East train network.

Jet2holidays announces VIP conference for travel agents in Tenerife

JET2HOLIDAYS HAS announced more details of its VIP travel agent conference, which will see 240 independent travel agents taken to two conferences at the five-star Hard Rock Hotel Tenerife in November and December.

Both events will provide top performing and high potential agency partners with the opportunity to learn more about the package holiday specialist's vision for the future from its CEO, Steve Heapy, alongside interactive sessions on how to promote and sell package holidays. The conferences will also highlight the opportunities that Jet2Villas gives independent travel agents, with hundreds of villas now on sale for the first time.

There will also be presentations, supplier showcases, a gala dinner and a breakfast pool party, with the second conference featuring an awards ceremony recognising the most successful agents of the past 12 months.

The company's head of trade, Alan Cross, said: "We continue to enjoy fantastic support and sales from independent travel agents, which shows that our approach to working in partnership with them is the right one. This special VIP conference is a way of saying thanks to our best performing agents, as well as those who are committed to our partnership approach, and I'm looking forward to a very productive and enjoyable event. Partnerships with independent travel agents are an absolutely critical part of our business and these special VIP conferences at the amazing Hard Rock Hotel Tenerife will celebrate and strengthen them."

The first conference will take place from November 27-29, with the second conference taking place from November 30-December 2. Delegates will be flown to Tenerife on one of the company's new Boeing 737-800 aircraft from Manchester and will stay on the beachfront in Playa Paraiso, at Hard Rock Hotel Tenerife, part of the Palladium Hotel Group.

For more information see trade.jet2holidays.com

Gatwick installs indoor navigation beacons to offer new level of service

AROUND 2,000 beacons have been installed across Gatwick Airport's two terminals providing an indoor navigation system that is much more reliable than GPS and that enables augmented reality wayfinding for passengers – a world first for an airport.

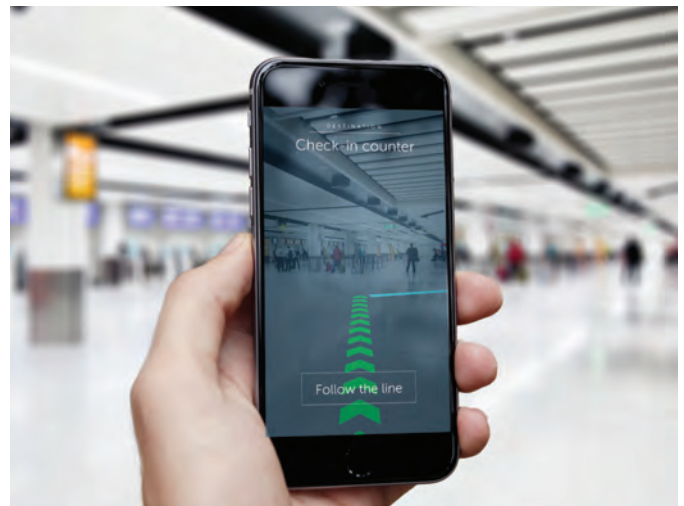
The lack of satellite signals makes road-based navigation systems – such as Google or Apple maps – unreliable indoors, so Gatwick has deployed a beacon based positioning system to enable reliable 'blue dot' on indoor maps, which in time can be used within a range of mobile airport, airline or third party apps.

The beacon system also enables an augmented reality wayfinding tool – so passengers can be shown directions in the camera view of their mobile device – making it easier for passengers to locate check-in areas, departure gates and baggage belts.

The new navigation technology is currently being integrated into some of Gatwick's apps and the airport is also in discussion with airlines to enable the indoor positioning and wayfinding tools to also feature on their app services.

No personal data will be collected by Gatwick although generic information on 'people densities' in different beacon zones may help to improve airport operations including queue measurement, streamlining passenger flows and reducing congestion.

Airlines could go further – and with the consent of their passengers – may send reminders on their airline



app to late running passengers, for example, or find out where they are and make an informed decision on whether to wait or offload their luggage so the aircraft can take off on time.

Retailers and other third parties may also use the beacon system to detect proximity and send relevant offers or promotional messages, if the passenger has chosen to receive them.

The new technology is part of Gatwick's £2.5billion investment programme to transform the airport.

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TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Notes from

Normanton...

What next? We've had bombs, shootings and now a huge fire in London! I must say, I think our emergency services have been amazing throughout; everyone has responded very quickly and the hospitals must be nearly on their knees. With all the emergencies and as a country in an emergency, we really do have amazing police, ambulance and fire engine response.

I attended a Tipto evening at York Racecourse last week; it was excellent and well attended. I learnt a few things and it was nice to catch up with people I hadn't seen for a while - Mark O'Neill who is at Trafalgar now, and I always like to hear when a tour operator has same price parity, whether it's a customer or travel agent! I didn't realise they did destinations like South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. I also liked the great selection of brochures that Intrepid has, and Chris Godrich was saying their repeat business is fantastic and they can do flights as well. Lynn Brocklesby was telling us how many Greek Island they do (37), and also new for them is Cape Verde, while Ashley from Leger was saying they have Iceland, Madeira & Azores new and have started flying worldwide with their Discover New Zealand over 22 days starting at £4,995!

When I think that I started at Thomson's regional office when it opened in Leeds way back in July 1976 and how supportive of travel agents we were, it really saddens me now when I see how they try and cut travel agents out, especially with their direct website being so much lower. I was trying to do a booking and the client had seen it direct with Thomson; it was just what he wanted but our price was so much more - we would have nearly been paying him to go! And no other tour ops could come close either! So because he was an old customer of mine I said I was really sorry but it was £100 more to book with me and thankfully he said 'oh I'd rather book with you than them, so I'll pay the extra £100.' I was so chuffed - there is some customer loyalty around after all - result!

I'm so excited I will have gone to Gouves in Crete by the time you read this - I am trying some different apartments this time...been a bit disappointed with the Kaissa Apts the last couple of times.

'A negative mind will never give you a positive life' and 'When fate shuts a door, come in through the window!'

Sandy

by SANDRA MURRAY
in Normanton, Yorkshire

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

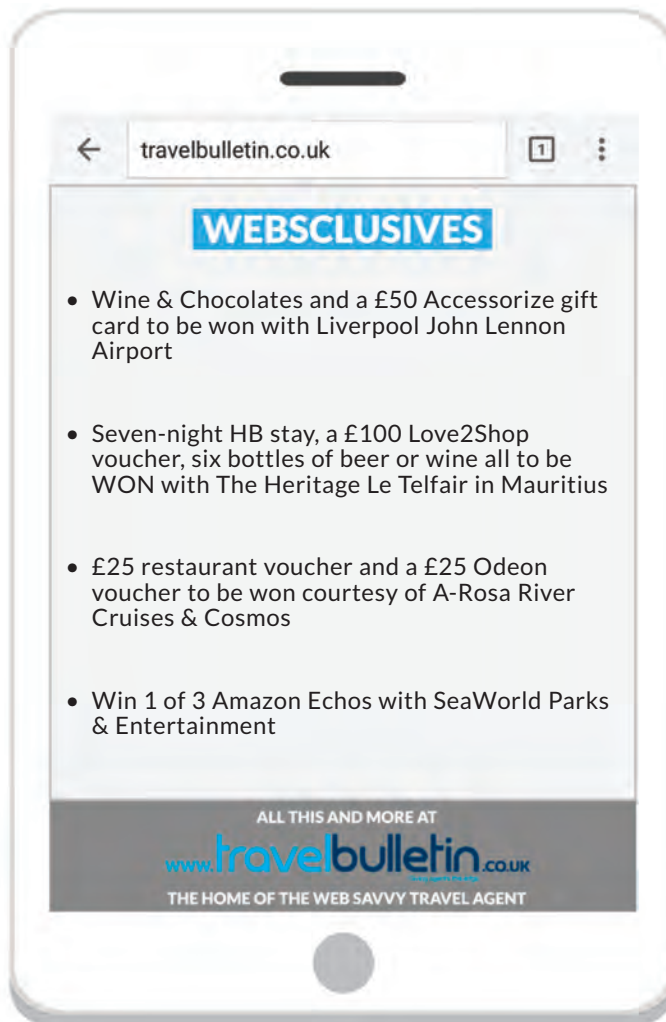
Savings on escorted trips to India

NEWMARKET HOLIDAYS is offering customers booking a holiday to India a discount of £50 per person when they quote the code 'Taj Mahal' and book by June 27.

The company's long haul product director, Richard Harrington, said: "India is a real growth area for us, with the number of new tours and special departures around festivals such as Diwali and Holi on the increase.

"The destination's success is down to the nature of an escorted tour; with guests safe in the company of a tour manager, customers follow an itinerary which really lets them experience the 'real India' and tick off many wish-list sights, while staying in some excellent, hand-picked hotels and resorts with most meals included."

The operator's best sellers include a ten-day escorted tour, India - Tigers and the Taj Mahal from £1,199 and A Grand Tour of India, which offers an 18-day introduction to the country. For second-time visitors, Kerala's and India's South and India Golden Triangle, Bombay & the Sacred Ganges start from £1,599 with dates available through to 2019.



BOOKING INCENTIVES

- AGENTS ARE being offered a £30 Amazon gift voucher by UNNA Luxury Resorts & Residences for bookings of a minimum of seven nights made by June 30 for travel until December 14 at either Saint Peter's Bay Luxury Resort or Port Ferdinand Marina in Barbados. If three or more bookings are made to Port Ferdinand the voucher value will increase to £50. To claim the voucher, email victoria@paradise-promotions.co.uk
- CARNIVAL CRUISE Line's Loyalty Rocks Club is offering agents a £15/15 points per booking throughout this month. Plus, with the line's Summer Fun incentive, agents can double their earnings by making three or more bookings. To register for the Loyalty Rocks Club see <https://loyaltyrocksclub.redpoints.co.uk>, and for more information visit carnival.com or call 0808-234 0680.
- AGENTS CAN win one of three holidays to Dubai with Gold Medal's latest campaign. The operator has teamed up with Dubai Tourism to highlight the variety of experiences available in the destination and the holiday prizes all include two experiences giving agents the chance to explore different areas of the city. For a chance to win agents should make a qualifying summer 2017 booking to Dubai and complete the Dubai Expert Training Programme at visitdubai.com before June 30.
- OCEANIA CRUISES has launched Sell 5 & Sail Free, a booking incentive where agents have the chance to experience the cruise line for themselves. By booking and confirming any five cruises sailing in 2017 by June 30, agents will be rewarded with a free berth on any cruise of up to ten nights sailing this year. Agents may also bring a guest for \$100 dollars per day. For details email agencysales@oceaniacruises.com

AGENT OFFER

TO CELEBRATE the launch of The Gambia Experience's 2017/18 season brochure and the operator's 30th anniversary, the company is offering agent holiday concessions from £399 per person and the chance to win a free holiday for two at the all-inclusive Sunbeach Hotel. The prize includes flights from Gatwick, transfers and 20kg luggage. To enter, agents need to book a Gambia package holiday by October 31 and a winner will be picked at random on November 1. For details call 01489-866939 or visit gambia.co.uk

AGENT TRAINING

SILVERSEA HAS added a new badge to its online training portal for travel agents. The Silversea Academy allows agents to become experts across all areas of the cruise line and the new 'Silver Cloud' badge will allow them to learn extensively about the soon-to-be refurbished cruise ship of the same name. To celebrate the launch of the new module, agents who achieve 100% on the module before September 6 will be entered into a prize draw to win a cruise on the newly refurbished ship in June next year. For details see silverseaacademy.com

DUBAI TOURISM has launched 'Dubai Expert', an online educational game that has been created exclusively for travel agents in collaboration with the Dubai College of Tourism (DCT) and KTM Advance, a specialist in e-learning. It features an engaging interface that includes information on Dubai's tourism attractions in an easily-digestible format. Dubai Expert operates as a turn-based card game, where participants need to select the best cards — each with an attraction in the city — from an automatically generated deck, to create an ideal itinerary for a traveller. Various traveller profiles make up the 30 'missions' of the game, with the best combination of activities earning higher scores. The platform also includes 25 videos from experts, that serve as a guide of what to do in Dubai — including family entertainment, gastronomy, shopping, theme parks, culture and heritage amongst others. Participants can become a 'Dubai Expert' by completing 20 successful missions and watching all 25 expert videos, with a higher 'Dubai Expert' level achieved by completing all 30 missions and answering all pop-up questions about the city. To maintain their status, agents are required to return to the game every year and complete updated missions. See visitdubai.com/en/department-of-tourism/careers-education-and-training-services/dubai-expert

Travel Bulletin's Star Award sponsor

MELIA HOTELS International is the latest sponsor of the Travel Bulletin Star Awards. We put some questions to the hotel brand to find out its plans for the remainder of the year and how they are working more closely with agents...

What new developments have you introduced in the last 12 months? And have these been in response to anything?

The main change for us has been a further step towards digitalisation. It's a journey we have embraced in the past five years in response to the market which is becoming increasingly digital. We have understood that our partners are interacting differently with us and for this reason we have developed and launched an engaging, user friendly and highly efficient travel agent portal called MELIA PRO which is changing the way the travel trade is working with our properties. We want to engage with our partners in a closer way; our partners need a prompt and efficient support from us and MELIA PRO is the response to this need.

Why would you say the travel trade is so important and what are your objectives when working with the trade?

Agents are the first stop between hotels and the end client and we need to prove how good our product is to agents and persuade them to buy into it so that they can sell it to the end customer. We engage with the travel trade as much and as often as possible in order to have our brands and properties at the forefront of their mind. Our objective is to provide them with the most efficient and complete support system to help build their trust of the system and ultimately the company.

What would you say have been the main changes in the travel industry?

From a customer point of view, digitalisation has grown massively and is increasingly shaping the way people book their holidays. Furthermore, there has been the booming of a new group, the so called 'Millennials' that is technologically advanced, has a high spending power and more tendency to travel. From a business point of view, the main change has been the move from static to dynamic rates. Hotels now leverage on the higher expenditure of

MELIÀ HOTELS
INTERNATIONAL

their guests, maximising every opportunity to sell at higher rates but have also taken more control of their own inventory to manage it according to the needs of the business.

What are your industry predictions for the next few years?

We are seeing increased demand for more local experiences and holidays that enrich the traveller.

What would you like to happen industry-wise in the next ten years?

An increase in 'experiential packages' from the hotels' side - innovating the product and services we offer to make sure our guests can experience something different they have never seen before, so that a hotel is not simply accommodation.

As a key sponsor, why do you feel it's important to support the Travel Bulletin Star Awards?

It's a great occasion to network with agents, competitors and other suppliers to see their viewpoint on the market and emerging trends.

What are you currently highlighting to agents?

This year we opened Gran Melia Nacional Rio in Brazil and we have many new exciting openings for the rest of the year and into 2018 including Gran Melia Huravee in the Maldives, Melia Serengeti Lodge in Tanzania, Gran Melia Ghoo in Iran, ME Sitges in Barcelona, Melia Saidia Beach in Morocco, ME Dubai and eight new hotels in Cuba just to name a few.

Why do you think it's important that agents have their vote?

It's very important for us as a business to understand what agents like and what they think of our product. This helps us to evaluate ourselves and, by looking at suppliers that are successful and learn what works, we can understand what we need to do to improve or change to be our clients' favourite.

For details on all the sponsors of Travel Bulletin's Star Awards as well as details of this year's event visit <http://travelbulletin.co.uk/starawards/>

New name for ITC Luxury Travel as company unveils expansion plans

ITC LUXURY Travel has unveiled a new name – the Inspiring Travel Company – reflecting the natural progression and growth of the Chester-based luxury tour operator.

While sister companies Western & Oriental, Rainbow Tours, Villa Select, Regent Holidays, ITC Sports Travel and Horse Racing Abroad will keep their established names, the parent company will now be known as ITC Travel Group. In addition, product portfolios across the group will be grown in order to more firmly define the specialist area of each individual tour operator.

The company's CEO Jennifer Atkinson, said: "Since our founding in 1974, we have expanded considerably from our core product of 'Caribbean beach holidays', and while we will always remain experts in those glorious islands, we now offer clients a much wider choice.

"Today, the world is quite literally our clients' oyster - from European city breaks to month-long Pacific cruises, a private jet to French Polynesia to a tailor-made Northern Lights tour in Lapland. We decided we needed a new name which would reflect the sheer variety of choice we offer, so we're delighted to unveil the Inspiring Travel Company as the new name for ITC Luxury Travel."

The new name follows a consultation process which included sourcing the opinions of key travel agent partners, stakeholders and customers for their insights into each brand. Inspiring Travel Company is born from the abbreviation ITC, which previously stood for International Travel Connections.

The company's website will change to inspiringtravelcompany.co.uk, with traffic re-directed to the new address from the former site, itcluxurytravel.co.uk, with a new strapline – 'Experts in the Extraordinary' - employed group-wide to unify the sister companies.

As part of the next stage in its development, ITC Travel Group is taking the opportunity to expand the product portfolios of its tour operators in order to better define the distinct identity of each brand.

Win an Amazon Echo every week with

Number: 025

A →

	8			3		1		7
7		3	8				6	2
	2	6				8		
		7			3	9	2	
			1		7			
	5	9	6			3		
		4				2	1	
2	6				5	7		9
9		1		7			5	

B →

C →

D →

Jet2holidays®

Package holidays you can trust

Complete this Su Doku puzzle and then go to the competition section on travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions and submit the highlighted numbers.

A... B... C... D...

Closing date for entries is **Friday, June 30th 2017**.

The winner for 9th June is Dawn Wilson from imp travel.

Where is
#Helen from
the Jet2Holidays'
TradeTeam this
week?

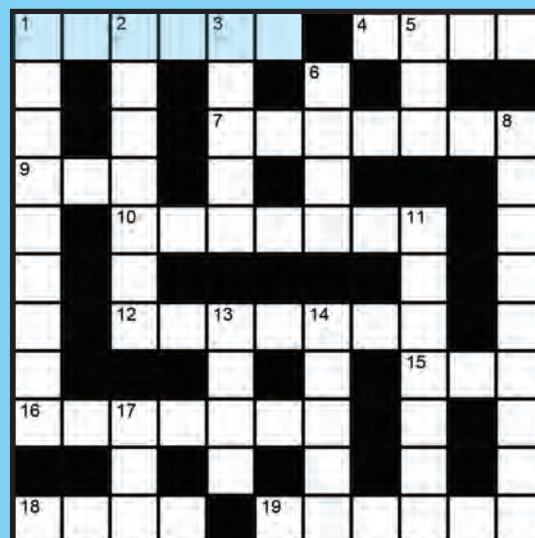


This historic Greek town offered by Jet2holidays is so precious that they built a double ringed wall around it.

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

Crossword

Number: 025



Across

1. Name an Italian destination offered by Jet2CityBreaks (6)
4. Capital of Norway (4)
7. Necker Island is in this ocean (7)
9. Unit of energy or work (3)
10. Monument Valley is on the border of Utah and this state (7)
12. Montgomery is the state capital (7)
15. Copenhagen International airport code (3)
16. Your holiday can take off from here (7)
18. Scottish town, known as the Gateway to the Isles (4)
19. Place of learning for whales, perhaps (6)

Down

1. England beat this country to win the FIFA U-20 World Cup (9)
2. Famous Falls (7)
3. Picturesque island in the Bay of Naples (5)
5. Sofia International airport code (3)
6. Call sign (4)
8. Brian Cox plays this former PM at a cinema near you (9)
11. Napoleon's birthplace (7)
13. Flows by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (4)
14. Ancient civilisation (5)
17. African country, initially (3)

Industry Insight by...



David Moon, head of business development at Advantage, examines the challenges of recruitment...

THE MOST recent unemployment figures released shows the jobless total in the UK stands at 4.6%, which is reportedly the lowest figure since the 70s.

I'm not going to make any political comment as to why this is the case (I think we are all done with politics for the time being!), however the reason this is important, is that from talking to retail and business travel agents all over the country, there is a real challenge in recruiting staff.

As an industry, I wonder if we should be a bit more open-minded when it comes to recruitment. Recruitment ads seem to lean quite heavily towards candidates having 'experience' (don't get me wrong, experience is great but instantly narrows the field in who we could possibly attract for the roles we have on offer). There comes a point where there are only so many candidates with experience to go around and once this talent pool is exhausted, vacancies remain unfilled adding pressure to the business.

From my own experience, some of the best staff I have employed who have been able to deliver fantastic customer service – and therefore sales – had no travel industry experience at all. What they did possess was a great attitude to wanting to work with the public, excellent enthusiasm and a willingness to learn new skills.

One of the options open to businesses are apprenticeships. At Advantage we started a partnership with Key Training last year in order to offer an apprenticeship programme for our members. We felt that this was an important step in introducing 'new blood' to our members.

Taking on an apprentice requires a lot of thought and commitment, since they will need supporting as they start

to adapt to a live working environment. That environment will need to be stimulating and challenging. However, if they have the right attributes to work in the service sector you have the potential to help nurture an individual who will look after your customers for many years to come.

Providing an apprentice (or even a young adult who isn't going through an apprenticeship programme) with a mentor from within your business is a great way for them to learn from someone who may have many years of experience and will ensure they are well supported and a valued member of the team.

You do need to consider how you are going to keep them engaged and motivated in your business over a longer period of time once they have reached a certain level. One of our

One of our members once told me "travel won't make us millionaires, but occasionally we do get treated like one"

members once told me "travel won't make us millionaires, but occasionally we do get treated like one". That's a quote that has really resonated particularly with some of the learning opportunities the industry provides (fam trips for example). So whilst traditionally travel may not be the most well paid sector there are many upsides to shout about.

Apprenticeships are not the only option of course. At Advantage central office, we have taken on interns to work at the centre, who are now employed by the business on a full time, permanent basis.

I think the most important thing is that as an industry we collectively look at what we can do to attract the new blood. If we do, it will provide our industry with a larger talent pool for years to come, which will be good for everyone.



THE CROWNE Plaza Felbridge in East Grinstead, Sussex is now fully open following its £3million plus refurbishment and rebranding with smart new facilities for the business traveller. All 116 rooms and suites have been redesigned along with the conference and meeting facilities, public areas and restaurant. Business guests staying overnight can upgrade to a Club Room, which includes private access to the new, contemporary style Club Lounge located on the ground floor. Open from 06:30-22:30, benefits include a complimentary continental buffet breakfast and early evening reception with hors d'oeuvres, alcoholic and soft beverages, newspapers and magazines and use of a tablet or PC. Free on-site parking is available along with complimentary Wi-Fi throughout. See cpfelbridgehotel.co.uk for details.

Wanup study reveals diversity among business travellers

FOLLOWING AN internal study, Wanup - Europe's biggest loyalty club for independent hotels - has discovered that business travellers are extremely diverse in their needs and categorised them into groups - the luxury, the time-limited, the digital and the leisure.

The company also commissioned a recent study of 1,000 UK travellers and discovered that two thirds of those who have travelled for business identified value for money and location as a key priority when booking a hotel.

The remaining third looked for design and style in their accommodation.

The majority of business travellers chose warm and welcoming staff as the most important thing about their hotel experience which shows that many, but not all, look for a home from home when away for work.

In recognition of this diversity, the company selects hotels that work for each group to ensure that they get the most from their stay, be it a slice of culture between meetings or healthy 24-hour room service that can be tucked into after a late working day. A total of 500 hotels are available for business travellers to choose from.

Travelodge offers new SuperRooms for business travellers

IN A bid to grow its business customer base, Travelodge has launched its new 'SuperRooms', bringing the 'premium economy' concept familiar to airline users to the UK budget hotel market.

The new class of room, the first of its kind in the UK budget hotel market, dials up the comfort factor with a concept designed especially for business and leisure customers who want the extra choice of a more premium room.

The new rooms offer everything that you would expect from a stay at the hotel with additional creature comforts. These include a modern residential décor scheme, creating a home from home feel; a Lavazza 'A Modo Mio' fresh capsule coffee machine in the room; a Hansgrohe Raindance three-jet adjustable shower; multiple power and USB charging points at arm's length throughout; relaxing ambient LED mood lighting; an armchair; a larger desk area with a swivel chair; a king-size Travelodge Dreamer bed; a choice of firm and soft hypo-allergenic pillows; dressing stand with a powerful hairdryer; in-room iron and ironing board; Samsung Slimline wall-mounted flat screen TV; and a hot chocolate and KitKat for that extra treat.

Peter Gowers, the company's CEO, said: "For British business, the days of

extravagance on expenses are long behind us. More and more business travellers are opting for a budget hotel and last year we generated more sales from business customers than those on holiday.

"We are all used to airlines offering a Premium Economy cabin that bridges the gap between traditional Economy Class and an expensive Business Class offer. We wanted to bring that same choice to budget hotel guests. With premium products like Lavazza coffee machines and Hansgrohe showers, the functional things you'd expect from Travelodge like our Dreamer Bed and USB ports throughout, as well as little touches like hot chocolate and a free KitKat, we are pleased to be offering even greater choice for our customers in some of the best locations in the UK."

The new SuperRooms are currently available at London's Waterloo, Farringdon, Euston and London City Road properties and are typically £10-20 extra per night above the company's classic rooms.

During 2017 the company expects to invest approximately £5million in the initial launch of 1,000 SuperRooms, including further central London locations, London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports and Bath.

For more information see travelodge.co.uk

Kempinski marks 120th anniversary with new offers

VALUE ADDED benefits and an exclusive bonus are being offered by Kempinski Hotels for meetings and events booked in one of the hotels around the globe by October 30, with a stay period until the end of the year.

There is a choice of two benefits to book from a list which includes a one-hour 120th anniversary welcome cocktail with gourmet bites, one complimentary room for every 12 rooms paid or a permanent coffee & tea station complimentary during the day.

In addition, for a minimum spend of 120,000 euros, an upgrade to the most luxurious suite in the hotel is offered to a VIP attendee.

To mark its milestone anniversary, the hotel group is rewarding any booker who spends a minimum of 20,000 with a Fitbit watch and an iPhone 7 for a spend of at least 40,000 euros. Those making a minimum spend of 60,000 euros are offered a two-night stay for two including limousine transfer, buffet breakfast and suite accommodation in the hotel receiving the event.

#TBSHOWCASES

BRINGING THE ambiance of the Med directly to agents, we recently hosted a fabulous set of Mediterranean Islands' inspired showcases at The Morrison Hotel in Dublin and at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Edinburgh. Tourist boards, resorts, cruise lines and specialist operators were all on hand to chat with agents, with fabulous food, fine wine and amazing holiday prizes presented throughout the night!

TABLE TALK...from the left: Celine Kenny and Shannon Vickers from Travel Escapes, with Mark Ashfield and Nicola Fields from Falcon Shop Travel, find out more about Norwegian Cruise Line from the company's Kirsty McIntosh.

ROCCO REWARD...Christine Tate (left) from Rocco Forte Hotels presents Maria Mulvihill from Cill Dara Travel with a two-night stay for two at the Rocco Forte Verdura Resort.

MELIA WINNER...Aurelie Grison (left) from The Travel Broker was the lucky winner of a seven-night stay at the Sol House Mallorca, presented by Melia Pro Hotels' Vicky Brown.

CRETE ESCAPE...Rita Cosgrove (left) from Cara Dara Travel was the winner of a five-night stay at the Aldemar Royal Mare in Anissaras, Crete presented by Marlen Taffarello of Aldemar Hotels.

BENIDORM BOUND...Shannon Vickers (right) from Travel Escapes won a free stay for two in the Marconfort Benidorm Suites - a themed 70s, 80s and 90s musical hotel - gifted by Sandos Hotels and the company's Eva Rubio.

PRESENTING PRINCESS...from the left, Claire Rose from Princess Cruises discusses the latest product updates with Laura Burke and Elaine McManus from Club Travel with Aoife Dunphy from Budget Travel.

EXPLORING GREECE...from the left, Panos Papadopoulos from the Greek National Tourism Office offers an expert insight into Greece and chats with Aurelie Grison and Arijana Boganovich from The Travel Broker, Avril Murgatroyd from Travel Leaders and Sarah McDonnell also from The Travel Broker.



THANOS TREAT...Luce Brophy (right) from STA Travel was the winner of a three-night complimentary stay for two at the Almyra resort in Cyprus, presented by Sophia Buttigieg of Thanos Hotels.



TALKING TUNISIA...discussing all things Tunisia are, from the left: Ashley Simpson from Flight Centre; Sami Tounsi from the Tunisian Tourist Board; and Steven McLean, Harriet Holdsworth and Lawrence Jolly from Flight Centre.



AEGEAN ACES...finding out the latest airline news are, from the left: Independent Travel Expert Paula Ryan Stokes; Penny Moschidou of Aegean Airlines; and Anne-Marie Scammell, Luce Brophy and Peta Evens all from STA Travel.



GRECOTEL GRINS...pleased to win a three-night stay at the Corfu Imperial courtesy of Kiriakos Liolios, Grecotel Hotels & Resorts, is Peta Evens from STA Travel.



SAGA SUCCESS...David Rennie (left) from Saga Holidays presents a £50 lifestyle voucher to Lawrence Jolly from Flight Centre.



CYPRUS HOLIDAY...Mark Richardson (left) and Aristos Diomedous of Constantinou Bros Hotels present Paula Ryan from Independent Travel Experts with her prize of a seven-night stay at the Athena Beach Hotel.



FAM-TASTIC...Michael Murphy (right) from Not Just Travel won a place on the next fam trip to Cyprus, presented by Travel Bulletin's Oliver Barton.

Want to get in on the #TBSHOWCASES action?
Join in the fun at our City Breaks Showcase event in Leeds on July 10 and Cruise Showcase in Birmingham on July 17. Reserve your place now by emailing oliver.barton@travelbulletin.co.uk

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You can find a handy list of inclusions for every holiday on our website.

Contact the Cosmos team for more information



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escortedtours



TRAVEL 2 has added six new tours to its Asia brochure for 2017 including a 15-day 'Highlights of Japan' tour. Mark Henderson, the company's senior product and commercial manager for touring, said: "This 15-day tour includes sightseeing in Tokyo, a day boat cruise on the Sumida River, a visit to Kyoto to see the Kinkaku-ji Temple and Nikko Castle. It then goes on to Nara and visits Todai-ji Temple and Kasuga Taisha, Hiroshima, with the tour ending in Osaka and Hakone." Prices lead in at £4,449 per person including flights from London. Visit travel2.com

Ffestiniog releases 2018 pre-brochure with new tours

FFESTINIOG TRAVEL has released its 2018 pre-brochure, announcing early details of its planned programme of escorted tours for next year.

New tours include the five-day 'Bonn & the Rhine in Flames', departing May 3, which takes in the historic city of Bonn to coincide with the 'Rhine in Flames' event. During the event guests can enjoy a display of lights and fireworks as Europe's largest boat parade sails by with daily escorted excursions to take in the rest of the Bonn area.

The itinerary is one of the operator's rebranded 'Easy Rail Holidays', a relaxed, one-centre European escorted tour that enables clients to arrive, unpack and enjoy their accommodation while their tour leader arranges daily escorted excursions taking in all the sights the destination has to offer.

The operator has also introduced 'Albanian Odyssey', a comprehensive tour of Albania by rail and road, from the Greek border in the south to the remote Albanian Alps in the north. Clients will return via Montenegro – in

part on the scenic rail line from Podgorica to Belgrade – and the 15-day journey departs on May 9, 2018.

Also spanning 15 days and new for next year is 'California: The Golden State' which departs in September in the US.

The tour includes a stay on the RMS Queen Mary at Long Beach and a journey on the Coast Starlight Amtrak service. The group will visit the San Francisco cable cars and the Bay Area Rapid Transit, as well as riding behind Shays at Santa Cruz and the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad.

The company has also introduced a series of Connoisseur Tours, designed to appeal to those with a specific passion for railways. They include 'Mallorca Narrow Gauge', 'Tramways of France' and 'Trams & Trains of Portugal'.

In terms of festive breaks, the rail holiday specialist has added a nine-day 'New Year in Romania' escorted trip to its selection, departing on December 28 and priced from £1,935 per person.

Visit ffestiniogtravel.com for more details.

New Inghams Italy tour indulges guests in 'Taste of Prosecco'

NEW FOR 2017, Inghams Italy has introduced a seven-night 'Taste of Prosecco and the Veneto' escorted tour, which offers guests the chance to uncover the cultural gems of the Veneto region in north east Italy.

Led by a tour manager and local guides, visitors will uncover local architectural treasures in the city of Padua, visit local winemakers in the Conegliano wine region to taste and learn about Prosecco, as well as driving through the countryside to the city of Asolo with its mountain views.

The tour includes two days of free time for guests to explore the area at their own leisure, and is based in the walled city of Castellano which has easy rail links to Venice.

Prices start from £1,399 and include seven nights at the four-star Hotel Alla Torre in Castelfranco Veneto, all excursions with qualified local guides, entrance fees, flights and transfers.

Other escorted tours in Italy offered through the operator include the 'Treasures of Tuscany', 'Wonders of Eastern Sicily', 'Amalfi Coast Splendours' and 'The Best of Puglia'.

Peter Sommer Travels explores the Argolid

LAUNCHING THIS autumn, clients can explore the history and remains of past civilisations on a new eight-day tour of the Argolid in the Peloponnese with Peter Sommer Travels.

Exploring Greece's famed archaeological sites, Mycenae, Tiryns and Epidauros, as well as museums and fortresses with experts, travellers will stay in the harbour town of Nafplio, with time to explore its hidden lanes, go swimming and feast on local cuisine.

'Exploring the Argolid: From Mycenae to Epidauros' costs from £2,525 per person based on two sharing and departs on October 14. The price includes seven nights' accommodation, all meals (except one lunch and two dinners), excursions, entrance fees and transfers. Flights cost extra. More information can be found at petersommer.com or call 01600-888220.



NEW TO Kirker Holidays' cultural tours programme is 'Undiscovered Paris', a four-night holiday departing on December 3 that has been designed to introduce clients to the secret corners of the city, as well as a varied collection of museums and galleries. The lead in price is £1,795 per person based on two sharing, and includes transport by Eurostar, breakfast accommodation, two lunches, three dinners, an illustrated talk, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities, plus the services of a local guide and tour lecturer. Visit kirkerholidays.com for more information.

Premier launches escorted coach tours to Australia & New Zealand

PREMIER HOLIDAYS has launched two escorted coach tour offers to Australia and New Zealand in conjunction with APT.

The Discover Australia escorted coach tour, from £4,899 for 17 nights, takes clients to visit main sights and landmarks including Perth, Fremantle, Alice Springs, Uluru, Cairns, Port Douglas, Melbourne and Sydney.

Alternatively, clients can opt for a New Zealand Gateway from £3,299 for 14 nights, visiting locations such as Auckland, Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Wellington, Lake Taupo, Fox Glacier, Mildford Sound and Christchurch.

Both escorted tours include breakfast, a selected number of lunches and dinners, flights from Heathrow, transfers, stays in premium accommodation, a guide and all sightseeing and entrance fees. They are valid for travel on November 14 or February 20, 2018 for the Australia tour, and September 1 or 15 this year for New Zealand.

Agents can download a campaign poster from the operator's trade website and will also receive between £25-£150 of shopping vouchers per booking, dependent on the booking value.

Visit trade.premierholidays.co.uk for more details.

Railtrail launches limited edition Grand Tours by Rail for 2018

ALONGSIDE RAILTRAIL'S growing programme of UK & European escorted holidays by train, the operator is also able to offer a small number of limited edition Grand Tours by Rail.

With one departure and limited group sizes, the company has reported that it often sees these tours fill quickly and has already launched two grand tours for 2018.

They include a 12-day 'Land's End to John O'Groats' covering the British mainland from coast to coast, visiting England, Scotland and Wales, with stays in two castle hotels; a Highlands retreat and an original Railtrail hotel from the company's first tour 37 years ago.

Also spanning 12 days, 'Derry to Kerry' follows the tracks of Michael Palin's 'Great Railway Journey' in 1994 through Ireland and leads in at £1,595 per person.

The company will honour 2017 prices on the two 2018 tours for bookings made before the end of August.

For more information email maeve.carroll@railtrail.co.uk

Funway Holidays gets flexible with extra excursions & options on escorted tours

THIS YEAR, Funway Holidays has reported an increasing number of customers who, despite enjoying the security and hassle-free nature of an escorted tour, would like to see elements of choice in their holiday.

Malcolm Davies, product destination manager for the operator, said: "Our escorted tours are flexible and include optional excursions, dining freedom or extra days here and there.

"A good example is our 'Colours of New England' escorted tour as it includes the flexibility of extra days starting and ending with Boston, which is very popular with our customers."

Prices for the ten-day tour lead in at £1,149 per person including accommodation and flights and based on two adults sharing and departing in October.

Visit funway4agents.co.uk for more information.





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GRJ explores the Magic of Sicily

GREAT RAIL Journeys' 'The Magic of Sicily' gives clients the opportunity to explore this volcanic island over eight days from £1,445 per person.

It includes excursions throughout the island's historic cities, a journey on the Circumetnea train, tours of Palermo, Taormina and Neapolis Park, plus excursions to Ortigia and Mount Etna.

Louise Heatley, head of product and contracting for the operator, said: "Escorted tours are great for groups and individual travellers alike. Everyone is together and it's a great social experience; customers have the opportunity to mix as much as they want with the group, but can also have their own time.

"With local guides customers can be sure that they get the best local knowledge and discover the authentic side of Sicily, with unique and unrivalled levels of knowledge of the sights."

Next year's departures are on May 17, June 21 and September 6 and 27, and customers can also save up to £50 per person when booking on or before August 15. Visit greatrail.com or call 0800-240 4470 for details.



DESIGNED FOR clients looking to travel in a small group and who want to explore the dramatic scenery of Norway, Scandinavia Only's 'Unique Fjords & Glaciers' combines the beauty of the Hardangerfjord and Sognefjord with a visit to the Nigardsbreen Glacier, an arm of the largest glacier in Europe. Time will also be spent in the old Hanseatic city of Bergen, gateway to the fjords, and the capital Oslo. Prices for the six-night trip start at £1,875 per person including flights, breakfast accommodation, some additional dinners, local sightseeing guides for Oslo and Bergen, transport by coach and a guide. Departures are on July 2 and 16 and August 6 and 20. See scandinaviaonly.co.uk



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latinamerica

LOCATED ON Playa Bonita, Dreams Delight Playa Bonita Panama offers a 'Defined Delights' all-inclusive experience, with limitless access to gourmet à la carte dining. All rooms and suites provide oceanfront views from private balconies whilst jungle walkways wind between an ocean view infinity pool, an adults-only pool, spa, the Explorer's Club for kids and other amenities. Not far from the resort guests can visit the Panama Canal or take a complimentary shuttle bus to Panama City's historical district and the largest mall in the Americas, Albrook Mall. After exploring the city, nature lovers can immerse themselves in Panama's natural environment and, when staying at the resort between June and November, sea turtles can be seen laying their eggs on the beach.

Contiki adds Bolivia and Chile to 2018/19 Latin America programme

CONTIKI HAS launched four new Latin America trips with departure dates from 2018 through to 2019 and reports a 43% increase in bookings compared to last year. The company is also increasing its footprint with two new destinations, Bolivia and Chile, in 2018.

Donna Jeavons, the operator's sales and marketing director - UK & Europe, said: "Bolivia is a natural next step for us. It's an incredible destination that provides unforgettable experiences for our travellers whether they're after cities, culture or out-of-this world landscapes. With Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil all sharing borders with Bolivia it's a great connector for our other trips, so travellers can extend their journeys throughout the region."

Customers can save up to £530 with an early booking discount when they book before August 1. Visit contiki.com/agents or call 0808-281 1115 for more details.

LATA reveals travel trends & agents' desire to learn more

THE LATIN American Travel Association (LATA) has revealed the results of its 2017 Travel Trends Report.

Surveying 3,641 consumers about their travel habits, it found that 19% had travelled to Latin America in the last two years with the largest share (25%) falling into the 65+ age category followed by the 25-34 age category, representing 21% and the 55-64 age category representing 18%.

More than 40 UK tour operators were also surveyed, of which 59% were Latin American specialists. In terms of types of holidays sold, the three most popular categories included 'wildlife and nature' at 86%, 'culture, history and heritage' at 81% and 'luxury' at 78%. Looking specifically at the Latin American region, more than 62% of operators reported a growth in bookings in 2016 versus 2015. For the first quarter of 2017, 81% of operators reported to have seen a growth in bookings to the region compared with the same period last year, with the most popular types of booking being multi-destination trips, tailor-made holidays and highlights tours.

Destinations seeing the largest amount of growth over the last two years include Costa Rica, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Colombia. However, in terms of barriers to booking, 47%

of operators claim that the main barrier is cost; 18% claim it is due to distance and 15% cite concerns around the Zika virus. It was also noted that 76% of bookings are made directly with the tour operator rather than via a travel agent.

Diving a bit deeper, LATA also surveyed 254 travel agents – and when asked how confident they felt when selling trips to key destinations, Latin America came at the bottom of the list behind Europe, North America, Asia, the Caribbean, Australasia and Africa. The same applied when asked to rank destinations in terms of ease of earning commission. When asked what one factor would help sell more holidays to Latin America, 52% cited a better knowledge of the destination, with the same percentage stating that more training would help.

Despite more than half of the travel agent respondents citing a lack of knowledge as a major deterrent when trying to sell holidays to Latin America, the results show that there is a demonstrable desire amongst the trade to learn more about the destination. LATA has highlighted that this is a valuable opportunity for tourist boards and operators to deliver meaningful training sessions to help agents and drive sales and visitation.

Costa Rica launches new campaign

THE COSTA Rica Tourism Board has established a partnership with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and CNN International to launch a new campaign 'Essential Costa Rica. My Choice, Naturally'. It launches next month and is the first time the tourism board has run an advertising campaign of this scale in Europe, including the UK.

The goal of the campaign is to redefine the country's identity and validate the position of Costa Rica as a complete tourist destination by showing it from the personal perspective of a tourist. Each of the ten videos planned will highlight a different part of Costa Rica, inviting users to learn more about its lifestyle. Go to visitcostarica.com for more details.

Belize to host virtual expo

THE BELIZE Tourism Board will host its first Belize Virtual Expo on June 29-30 to provide participants with the opportunity to learn and connect with 25 Belize tourism service providers from their home locations.

Participants will be sent a link to log in and enter a 360-degree view of the trade show hall. Starting in the lobby of the trade show, attendees will have the choice to select, enter and exit sessions of their choosing, as well as browse the exhibition hall to network with others via live chat sessions.

With free registration online, the Virtual Expo will open to UK attendees on June 30 from 09:00 to 16:00, providing agents with an alternative way to network and discuss opportunities to further their Belize sales and increase product offering. For more information and to register visit belizevirtualexpo.com

Nicaragua looks to nurture ties with UK trade

NOTING AN increase in visitors and interest, Nicaragua has identified the UK market as having significant potential within the next five years and is looking to further develop its relationship with the UK travel trade.

In the first quarter of this year Europe represented 8% of the country's tourism market, and within that the UK stands between 1.2 -1.3%, second only to Germany. At the Experience Latin America event held in London last week,

Ricardo Carioni, first secretary and deputy head of mission for the Embassy of Nicaragua, commented: "A positive trend that we are seeing is a year-on-year growth of 16% UK specific, which is above the average. We know that we are getting some traction and we know that we are getting interest for tourism as a country. When we look at those numbers we know we need to have a stronger presence and footprint so we've started to run more events and activities."

During the event, the destination was recognised with a LATA Achievement Award thanks to its ongoing sustainable initiatives and eco-tourism plays an important part of Nicaragua's tourism growth strategy. Nicaragua's minister of tourism, Anasha Campbell, is also to visit the UK in October with plans for a trade seminar in central London and a parliamentary reception inviting the British trade.



Ricardo Carioni, Embassy of Nicaragua

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Tourist Board highlights winter sport holiday opportunities agents can sell

FOR AGENTS with clients planning ahead to book a ski break this winter, the Slovenian Tourist Board is highlighting the wide range of family-friendly ski resorts and affordable winter sports packages available.

Slovenia is a country of small ski resorts that offer a pleasant and homely atmosphere, along with numerous ski schools and instructors who can speak different languages.

The country's diverse terrain means that there are slopes suitable for beginners and children, as well as more experienced skiers and, by obtaining a single SkiPass ticket, visitors can ski across all the Slovenian ski resorts.

Most of the resorts are located close to major towns and, in 2016, the Post Office Ski Resort Report claimed the country's Kranjska Gora was the cheapest of 16 ski resorts across Europe.

Visit slovenia.info/en/things-to-do/active-holidays/skiing

Balkan recommends an Adriatic escape to the 'Port of Roses'

BALKAN HOLIDAYS is highlighting its summer 2017 programme to the Slovenian coastal resort of Portoroz.

Chris Rand, sales and marketing manager for the operator, said: "Portoroz offers a little something for everyone; there are plenty of watersports available such as sailing and windsurfing, plus those looking to relax can take a dip in the resort's spring and mud baths."

The operator is featuring four four- and five-star hotels at the 'Port of Roses' on the Adriatic, and is offering flights with scheduled carriers from Gatwick, Luton, Manchester and Stansted to Ljubljana on selected dates with an average flying time of two hours, 15 minutes.

As an example of prices, a week at the four-star Hotel Riviera in Portoroz costs from £732 per person on half-board, based on two people sharing a twin room and including flights from Manchester on September 13, with transfers to and from Ljubljana Airport.

For further information visit balkanholidays.co.uk/agents or call 020-7543 5555.

Top 20 activities for clients heading to Slovenia

1) Explore caverns & a fairytale fortress at Postojna Cave Park

This world-renowned cave is home to an underground train and 'baby dragons'. After navigating the subterranean world, guests can make the short trip to Predjama Castle, a fortress built into a towering cliff. Visit postojnska-jama.eu/en

2) Go glamping in Bled

For those who want to experience the outdoors but stay in a cosy hut near Lake Bled, Sava Hotels & Resorts can offer a glamping experience. See sava-hotels-resorts.com/en

3) Navigate through Ljubljana on a stand-up paddleboard

Travellers can go on a tour through the green capital paddling on the River Ljubljanica Kanal. See bananaway.si/en

4) Smell the roses at the Bohinj Wild Flower Festival

This festival will not only showcase a rainbow of botanical wonders, but also offer workshops, excursions and performances! Visit bohinj.si/alpskocvetje/eng/

5) Raft on the Soca River

Adventure seekers can take on the rushing waters of the Soca River on a thrilling white-water rafting experience. Details at 3glav.com/

6) Relax at a thermal spa

With 14 state-verified natural and thermal spas, there are plenty of options for clients who wish to unwind and take advantage of Slovenia's thermal waters - famous for their healing properties. Visit en.slovenia-terme.si/offer/

7) Cycle through the Alps

Whether catering to a beginner or expert, there are a wide range of cycling trails to choose from in Slovenia. Visit slovenian-alps.com/en/what-to-do/activities/summer/cycling

8) Hike in Triglav National Park

Triglav is the only national park in Slovenia and offers numerous walks of varying difficulties and stunning alpine views. Visit tnp.si/national_park/

9) Ride the Lipizzaner horses in Lipica

Visitors to the stud farm in Lipica can greet the world-famous Lipizzan horses and learn about the breed on a tour. Riding and carriage rides are available as well. Visit lipica.org/en/what-to-do/visit-to-the-stud-farm

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FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN SLOVENIA

At the crossroads of the idyllic Alpine world, vibrant Mediterranean temperament, mysterious Karst and its underworld, and the fertile Pannonian Plains, Slovenia is the green heart of Europe. Refreshing forests, flower-filled meadows, turquoise sea and snow-capped mountains – these are the many faces of Slovenia and this is a story of green, healthy, and active love.

City Break experience

Explore the capital city of Ljubljana, the charming medieval town with rich cultural and architectural heritage – 2017 is the year of “Joze Plecnik”, Slovenia’s famous architect. Soak up the culture at the city’s various festivals, including the popular Ljubljana Summer and Jazz festivals, and indulge your taste buds at traditional Slovenian restaurants and the bustling ‘Open Kitchen’ food market.

Ljubljana is also an ideal base for exploring Slovenia’s best hiking, cycling and rafting spots, or you can enjoy the city from a whole new angle by stand up paddle boarding along the Ljubljanica river!

Lakes and Mountains

Summer is the perfect time to bask in the natural beauty of the iconic Lake Bled, either by boat or while swimming in the lake itself. Alternatively, make the short trip up into the Julian Alps and Triglav National Park to seek out beautiful Lake Bohinj. Kranjska Gora is a fantastic year-round resort offering scenic hiking and biking during the summer, while nearby Planica is home to the world’s steepest zip-line – the closest experience you can get to the thrill of professional ski jumping.

Family Holidays

Slovenia is the perfect destination for families, offering a wide variety of activities and accommodations. Experience real ‘glamping’ luxury at resorts such as Garden Village Bled or Herbal Glamping Ljubno, or visit the oldest stud farm in Europe in Lipica to ride with the famous Lipizzaner horses. Kids will love exploring the underground caving systems and learning more about the “baby dragon” at Postojna cave or marvelling at the largest underground canyon in the world at the UNESCO-protected Skocjan caves.



10) Live with the locals on a tourist farm

For a local insight these family-owned tourist farms give guests an intimate look at the day-to-day lives of rural Slovenians. Visit hudicevec.si/en/

11) Enjoy a day at the beach

The warm waters of the Mediterranean are accessible from Piran and Portoroz, making it ideal for a coastal getaway. Visit portoroz.si/en/experience/activities/beaches

12) Take a journey back in time

Explorers can transport themselves back in time to relive the olden days during the Medieval Days at Bled Castle. The event is free and ideal for children. See blejski-grad.si/en/

13) Celebrate at the Lent Festival in Maribor

For an immersion into Slovenian culture, food, music, theatre, comedy and dance, the Lent Festival takes place every June. Details at festival-lent.si/en/

14) Ascend the Alps

If a leisurely ride is more preferable to climbing, panoramic views of the Alps can still be accessed from the Vogel Cable Car. Visit vogel.si/summer/options/cable-car-ride

15) All abuzz at the Apiculture Museum

Slovenia is an international leader in apiculture (or beekeeping). Visitors can learn about how bees have shaped Slovenian culture and why they are so important at the Apiculture Museum. See radolca.si/en/radovljica-apiculture-museum/

16) Explore Slovenia's heritage

With its range of cultural exhibits, the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum showcases identity, the dialogue between past and present, interaction between cultures and between nature and civilisation. Visit etno-muzej.si/en

17) Play at the Piran Childrens' Festival

This festival celebrates youth, with numerous activities and performances just for children. Visit portoroz.si/en/

18) Celebrate in the traditions of Bled Days

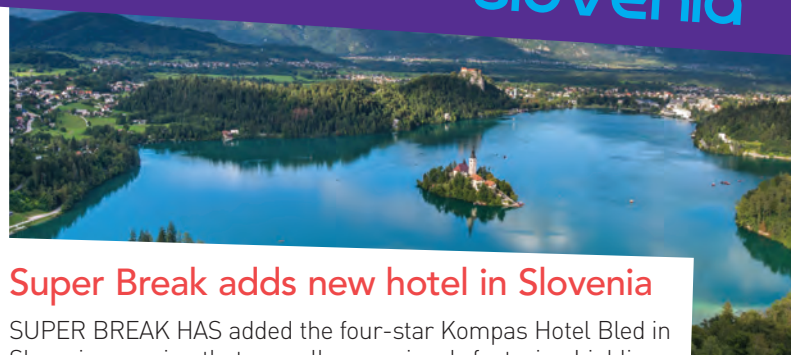
Performances, local crafts, and eggshell lights are among the highlights at this traditional celebration taking place next month. Visit bled.si/en/events/2016/07/22/2090-Bled-Days-and-Bled-Night

19) Canoe on Lake Bohinj

Lake Bohinj's calm waters make it a relaxing place to kayak or canoe for families. See alpinsport.si/English/rentKayakCanoe

20) Joze Plecnik's Ljubljana

The city owes a great deal of its architectural appeal to the famous Ljubljana-born architect Joze Plecnik. The Tripe Bridge (Tromostovje), which was designed by Plecnik, is one of the city's most characteristic structures and to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the city's beloved architect there is a special programme of events, which includes a new guided walking tour. Visit visitljubljana.com/en

**Super Break adds new hotel in Slovenia**

SUPER BREAK HAS added the four-star Kompas Hotel Bled in Slovenia meaning that as well as previously featuring Ljubljana in its portfolio, agents can now also sell the popular resort of Bled.

As an added incentive, agents can pass on a variety of free night offers to their clients on selected dates, including seven nights for the price of six and four nights for the price of three.

With the Julian Alps as a backdrop, the hotel is situated on a small hill and offers picturesque views across Lake Bled and the castle. The property features a large glazed pool and, in warmer months, the glass walls open to reveal the panoramic terrace where deckchairs are available to take in the views.



In addition, hotel guests have complimentary access to a hot tub and three different saunas for relaxation. The surrounding area is also known for cycling, hiking and climbing activities, and the nearby mountain streams are suitable for canoeing and fishing.


Prices start from £285 per person in late October including four nights' breakfast accommodation (using the four nights for the price of three offer) and flights from Stansted. All bookings are fully commissionable to agents.

For more information visit superbreak.com/agents or call 01904-436000.


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INGHAMS IS offering 11 nights on a half-board basis to Lake Bled (four nights), Lake Bohinj (three nights) and Kranjska Gora (four nights) from £1,171 per person as part of its twin-centre holidays and tours collection. The 'Julian Alps Jewels' package explores the only island in the country (Lake Bled), before heading to the mountains and the resorts of Kranjska Gora and Lake Bohinj. Kranjska Gora offers views towards the Julian Alps and the distant peaks of the Karavanke mountains, while Lake Bohinj is known for its crystal clear waters and the source of the mighty River Soca. Prices include flights, transfers and the option of standard or superior accommodation. Visit ingham.co.uk/lakes-mountains-holidays for details.

puzzlesolutions

Crossword:

Across: 1. VENICE, 4. OSLO, 7. PACIFIC, 9. ERG, 10. ARIZONA, 12. ALABAMA, 15. CPH, 16. AIRPORT, 18. OBAN, 19. SCHOOL.

Down: 1. VENEZUELA, 2. NIAGARA, 3. CAPRI, 5. SOF, 6. ECHO, 8. CHURCHILL, 11. AJACCIO, 13. AVON, 14. AZTEC, 17. RSA.

Where Am I?: Rhodes Town



@TravelBulletin



TravelBulletin

We asked our staff the following question this week:

What's your favourite thing to do on a rainy day?



Jeanette Ratcliffe

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Sofa, duvet, good book... listening to the rain outside.



Laurretta Wright

Editor

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Curled up somewhere quiet with a mag and a cuppa, listening to the rain.



Adam Potter

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Xbox time!



Paul Scudamore

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It never rains in a pub.



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Brunch followed by sport on the telly



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run!



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Stay inside, in the warm, watching old movies and eating cheese



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Listen to Missy Elliott's The Rain [Supa Dupa Fly]



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Snuggled in bed with Bill :D



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Have a good nap or watch a movie



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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 by **Tuesday 4th June 2017** to:
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These events are by invitation only and will be booked on a first come first served basis.



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