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TRAVEL WEEKLY

THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY VOICE

TABOO TRAVEL

Sexually themed tourism has been around for millennia, but today it has grown into a business that crosses multiple generations, has generated a plethora of products and offers lucrative opportunities for travel advisers.

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Tour operators: Cuba travel warning driven by Trump's political posturing

By Michelle Baran

Tour operators last week decried the U.S. State Department's latest Cuba travel warning as baseless and yet another example of the kind of blatant political posturing by the Trump administration that is starting to take a toll on Cuba bookings.

The State Department warning followed reports of mysterious health attacks on U.S. diplomats, which led to a reduction in U.S. embassy staff in Havana and the expulsion last week of 15 staff at Cuba's recently reopened embassy in Washington.

Still, few expected the travel warning, because no one had cited evidence of attacks on tourists.

"It was completely unfounded," complained InsightCuba president Tom Popper, who was in Havana when the State Department issued the warning. "We knew something was coming once the story broke about the symptoms that the embassy officials were experiencing."

Popper was in Cuba at the time to attend a meeting organized by Responsible Ethical Cuba Travel, or Respect, a relatively new coalition of 150 travel companies and organizations created in December. The group was holding its first get-together in Cuba when the news broke.

"In following the story — and being in close communication with the Cuban
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WOULD TOURISTS TOLERATE INVASIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT THEM?

Vegas security experts ponder whether attack was preventable

By Sarah Feldberg

Even before Oct. 1, when a gunman in a hotel room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay sent a hail of bullets down on the Route 91 Harvest Festival, killing 58 and wounding 489, Las Vegas had lived with the uneasy knowledge that something like this could happen.

"Las Vegas is a target city," Wynn Resorts CEO Steve Wynn told reporter Jon Ralston

in a September 2016 interview with KTNV. Not only is the city's perceived amorality offensive to some, he said, but "we have all these arenas and showrooms, these massive amounts of people on the Strip."

To care for and protect the roughly 43 million people who visit Las Vegas annually, as well as the cash in the casinos, Vegas resorts have famously robust security — large teams of private staff, surveillance cameras that monitor virtually every inch of public space and strong relationships with law enforcement agencies that often have officers on site, working nightclubs or special events.

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There was a time when a pilgrimage and a leisure trip were synonymous



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Larry Pimentel

Azamara Club Cruises

Since it was founded in 2007, Azamara Club Cruises has had two ships, 690-passenger vessels initially built for Renaissance Cruises. So the announcement that in 2018 it will add a third R-class ship, P&O Cruises' Adonia, was big news for the line's loyalists.

Azamara CEO Larry Pimentel spoke with cruise editor Tom Stieghorst about how the newly named Azamara Pursuit will change the line's outlook.

IN THE HOT SEAT

Q: What is the significance of this new ship to the brand?

A: The significance for the brand beyond the obvious 50% growth is a validation of the concept that we have developed and pioneered, and it is also a very strong nod that the board is supportive of brand growth. That's in addition to product that will be added to places we haven't been.

From an agent's point of view, it's more product. Because one thing I heard from agents after the announcement was that we are pretty full.

Q: With more capacity, will prices drop?

A: From a business perspective, you always hope that's not the case. You hope you can get the same pricing as the other two ships. One of the realities of this is, the vessel is

delivered to us in March. Her first revenue voyage is in August. That's not a lot of selling time. So I expect the Azamara Pursuit will actually be favorably priced because Day 1 when it goes on sale the entire ship will be open. Normally when you're delivering a new ship you have two-and-a-half to three years to take reservations. In this case it's months, so that usually brings prices down.

Q: What changes will you make to the ship?

A: Essentially, the vessel will be refurbished. From bow to aft, every single stateroom will be dramatically redone. It won't look anything like that current ship. The hull will change colors. The public areas will change the feel and look, and there are venues that we have that they don't.

Q: Were you hoping for a new ship rather than a used one?

A: Let's just say that I was eager for either. I think we have a really solid concept. On Azamara Journey and Quest the size of the ship is right, so I was very pleased

to be able to get their sister ship. There are many pluses, things like spare parts. We have three ships that essentially use the same technical equipment. To be quite candid, we have three of them and if there was an opportunity for a fourth, we would be interested.

Q: What new itineraries can you do with a third ship?

A: Three ships gives you an opportunity to go to places you can't go with the others because of the transitional voyages. There's a lot of water to cross, and those don't do too well from an economic standpoint. Three ships means less repositioning. It allows us in the same year to be many more places.

Q: How did you pick the name Pursuit?

A: That was one of the items we agonized about the most. I had

a notion that I wanted the team to select a name that had not been used for other ships. The names had been used by so many lines when we did name searches. Then we had to have our legal department clear the name to ensure we could use it in a multitude of countries.

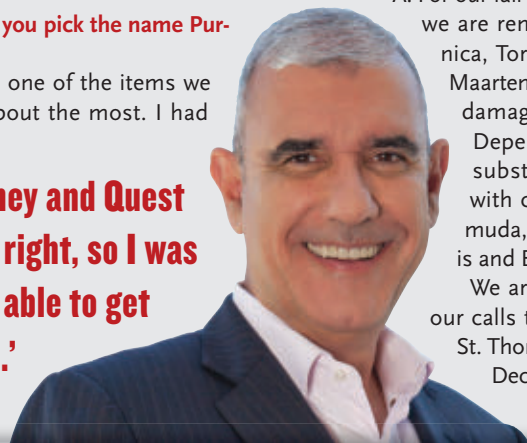
We landed on Pursuit. I must admit I like it.

And I like it more than ever today because the comments in email and social media were stunning. I would say the guests love the name.

Q: For the upcoming Caribbean season, how will you change the itineraries that visit storm-damaged ports, if at all?

A: For our fall cruises on Azamara Quest, we are removing our calls to Dominica, Tortola, Virgin Gorda and St. Maarten, which all sustained heavy damage from recent hurricanes. Depending on the itinerary, we substituted these destinations with calls to ports such as Bermuda, Antigua, Martinique, Nevis and Basseterre, St. Kitts. We are continuing forward with our calls to St. Barts, Key West and St. Thomas, where we have calls in December.

'On Azamara Journey and Quest the size of the ship is right, so I was very pleased to be able to get their sister ship.'



TRAVEL CONFIDENTIAL

Can French Polynesia ever really break free from its reputation as the ultimate overwater-bungalow destination for couples? Well, the tourism ministry is certainly going to try.

The country's tourism minister was at Delta Vacations University last month, reminding agents of not only the island nation's longstanding overwater legacy but of its expanding reach into the family and adventure travel markets. And it is looking to court those travelers with accommodations such as vacation rentals and homestays that are — wait for it — not suspended above a lagoon.

However, TC has to admit that there's something to that overwater concept. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first overwater bungalow. Three were built on the island of Raiatea in 1967. And today, according to Tahiti Tourisme, there are almost 900, spread across 22 hotels on seven islands.



The bromance continues between Viking Cruises chairman Tor Hagen and Silversea Cruises chairman Manfredi Lefebvre. Viking became the first line TC's heard of to name a ship's room after another line's executive when it called the Italian restaurants on its ocean ships Manfredi's.

In turn, Silversea's newest ships, the Silver Muse and Silver Spirit, have a space called Tor's Observation Library.

In New York last week, Hagen joked that it must mean that Lefebvre likes food, while he likes books.

But thinking better of it, Hagen said, "I like food, too."

Navin Sawhney, CEO of Ponant in the Americas, noted last week that it was a beautiful day for two strong symbols of French construction to be in New York's harbor.

No one was surprised that the first was Le Soleil, where Sawhney was co-hosting a lunch with Tauck during the ship's maiden appearance in New York.

But he paused to let suspense build before adding: "And the Statue of Liberty."

FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES



Hyatt hired former Starwood Hotels and Resorts executive **Mark Vondrasek** to oversee its World of Hyatt loyalty program.

Vondrasek assumes the title of executive vice president, global head of loyalty and new business platforms. He worked for Starwood for 15 years, most recently as senior vice president and commercial services officer, where he oversaw Starwood's SPG program.

Hyatt relaunched the program, previously its Hyatt Gold Passport program, in March.

Amadeus appointed **Elena Avila**, the global head of its airline strategy, to a new role of executive vice president, head of Airlines for the Americas.

Avila joined Amadeus in 2010 from Morgan Stanley and has held leadership posts in investor relations, commercial finance and airline business strategy.

Outrigger Enterprises Group has appointed **Michael Shaff** vice president of hotel operations for Waikiki/Guam.

Shaff comes to Outrigger from KSL Resorts, where he held key roles over the past 14 years. Most recently, he served as director of asset management, overseeing three luxury resorts in Southern California: the Renaissance Esmeralda, Hotel del Coronado and Monarch Beach Resort & Spa.



SUBMIT YOUR STORIES AND PHOTOS: Gerry Bourbeau, Travel Weekly deputy managing editor, at gbourbeau@travelweekly.com.

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OBC is in USD, has no cash value, is non-transferable, not redeemable for cash, and will expire if not used by 10:00 p.m. on the last evening of the cruise. Offer excludes China departures. All other charges, including, but not limited to, taxes, fees and port expenses, are additional and apply to all guests. BOGO does not apply to third and higher occupancy guests. BOGO offer is combinable with Kids Sail Free, NRDB OBC, promotional OBCs and instant savings, NextCruise offers, restricted discounts (for example, Senior, Resident, Military), Crown and Anchor discounts and Shareholder Benefits. Kids Sail Free is combinable with NextCruise offers, NRDB OBC, and restricted discounts (for example, Senior, Resident, Military) but is not combinable with Shareholder benefits and Crown and Anchor discounts. BOGO50 bookings made for China departures are combinable with NextCruise offers and Crown and Anchor Balcony/Suites discounts only. All offers are not combinable with any other offer or promotion, including, but not limited to, Standard Group, Interline, Travel Agent, Travel Agent Friends and Family, Weekly Sales Events, Net Rates. After the Offer Period, the Offer will be removed from the booking if the guest cancels and reinstates the booking or rebooks into a new booking on the same ship and sail date, applies a fare change, or changes the ship or sail date of the booking; certain other changes to the booking may also result in removal of the Offer. Offer applies to new, individual and named group bookings confirmed at prevailing rates. Individual reservations may be transferred into an existing group, assuming required criteria are met, though full deposit will be required at time of transfer. Failure to apply the required full deposit amount may result in the cancellation of the booking. 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Small-ship lines face reshuffling, uncertainty in Caribbean

By Tom Stieghorst

While damage from this year's hurricane season has scrambled Caribbean itineraries for large cruise ships sailing from Florida and elsewhere, it has created an additional level of uncertainty for small-ship lines operating in the region.

A number of companies base their ships during the winter in Caribbean islands that were recently decimated by storms, including St. Maarten/St. Martin and St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Many offer port calls at islands that are likely to need months to be ready for tourists again, such as St. Barts, Dominica and Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

Windstar Cruises is one company that has had to reshuffle its itinerary plans following Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The Seattle-based line scrubbed plans to sail its 208-passenger Star Breeze in the Caribbean next spring and instead will keep it in Panama and Costa Rica, where it has added cruises in February and March.

"The Windstar family is deeply saddened by the widespread damage from the recent hurricanes impacting parts of the Caribbean," the company said in an advisory about the change. "As a result of storm damage in certain parts of the Caribbean, we have made necessary changes to our winter/spring Caribbean deployment to assure a quality voyage experience."

Other changes include moving the turn-around operations for the Wind Surf and Star Breeze this winter exclusively to Barbados and away from St. Maarten. Star Breeze cruises through Dec. 2 are scheduled to operate from Bridgetown, Barbados, until the



Windstar Cruises' Star Breeze passing under the Bridge of the Americas, which spans the Panama Canal. The line extended the ship's season in Central America.

ship redeploys to Panama.

The two ships will also be replacing a port call on storm-ravaged Dominica with one in Martinique. Windstar said it has also had to redo the departure times of the ships from Barbados, offering early disembarkation for departing guests and evening embarkation for arriving ones to accommodate flight schedules.

Windstar said it is still in the process of deciding which itineraries to offer on its Star Pride, which is scheduled to begin sailing from San Juan on Nov. 25.

"We are working with our San Juan agents and hotels and have conducted a detailed port-by-port evaluation for mid-cruise port calls," Windstar said.

Travel agents and guests will be updated by email when a decision is made, according to the company.

Another line still trying to decide its course in the Caribbean is Crystal Cruises, whose 60-person Crystal Esprit expedition yacht is scheduled to begin a series of Caribbean itineraries roundtrip from Marigot, in St. Martin, on Nov. 2.

The French collectivity, which shares the island also occupied by Dutch St. Maarten, was badly hit by Hurricane Irma.

Crystal is in discussions with local port officials and is telling guests that the Crystal Esprit plans to sail from St. Martin, according to some travel agents. Other said there has been no official decision.

"I have not received any correspondence from them at all about that vessel," said Karen Ruppel, manager of leisure and cruises at Boca Raton Travel and Cruises in Florida.

Several islands on the Esprit's scheduled

itinerary, such as Tortola and St. Barts, are said to be unready to reopen.

Efforts to get an update from Crystal on the Crystal Esprit were unsuccessful.

SeaDream Yacht Club, which has a turn-around operation in St. Maarten, has revised many of its itineraries for the winter season.

"They will be going out of Antigua rather than St. Maarten," said Christopher Nelson, a spokesman for the two-ship line.

SeaDream begins its winter Caribbean season Oct. 29 with a six-day voyage of its 112-passenger Sea Dream I from Bridgetown.

Itineraries posted on SeaDream's website show cruises beginning or ending in Bridgetown and Antigua early in the season, with some using St. Thomas and San Juan for embarkation or debarkation by December.

The U.S. Coast Guard has removed restrictions on vessel calls in San Juan and St. Thomas, and although there remains damage to the tourism infrastructure, cruises could turn in those ports later in the year.

Another small-ship line with Caribbean voyages this winter is Star Clippers, which begins its season Dec. 9 with a seven-day, roundtrip cruise from Bridgetown on its 227-passenger Royal Clipper sailing yacht.

Spokeswoman Lauren Frye said the line doesn't have any cruises scheduled to depart St. Maarten until Feb. 10, when its Star Flyer is slated for a series of seven-day sailings on a Treasure Islands itinerary that includes Tortola, St. Barts, St. Kitts and Anguilla.

"Right now it's 'wait and see,'" Frye said.

BRIEFS

Viking to launch 7 river ships in 2019

Viking River Cruises plans to debut seven Longships in 2019, on the Rhine, Main, Danube and Douro rivers. The ships' names are the Viking Einar, Sigrun, Sigyn, Tir, Ulur, Vali and Helgrim. The order comes after a lull for Viking, which launched just two Longships this year after launching six in 2016, 12 in 2015 and 18 in 2014. The 190-passenger Longships have Scandinavian design.

Celebrity to spend \$400 million on fleet

Celebrity Cruises will put \$400 million into a fleet modernization program to match some of the features of the Celebrity Edge, due in 2018. Between 2019 and 2023, the line will redesign all cabins on its existing ships, rebrand the Michael's Club lounge on some vessels as the Retreat Lounge and add a Retreat Sundeck. Older Millennium-class ships will get a new Oceanview Cafe, with an international marketplace concept.

Nat Geo opens its first entertainment space



National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey, opened in New York's Times Square on Oct. 6.

National Geographic launched its first entertainment space, National Geographic Encounter: Ocean Odyssey, in Times Square Oct. 6. The "digital underwater dive" takes visitors through the Solomon Islands and California's coast using National Geographic photography and animation to create large-screen underwater experiences. Some exhibits are interactive, enabling guests to induce the digital sea creatures' movements.

Norwegian raises drinks package price

Norwegian Cruise Line raised the price of its Ultimate Beverage package 13%, to \$89 per person, daily, an industry high, which after 18% in service fees makes it the first daily fee to exceed \$100. In 2014, Norwegian charged \$54 for the Ultimate Beverage package, which includes all alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks that individually cost \$15 or less. Its Corks and Caps package (beer, wine and nonalcoholic drinks) remains at \$59.

Southwest launches first Boeing 737 Max

Southwest launched its first nine Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft on Oct. 1, making it the first U.S. carrier to put the new generation Boeing narrowbody into the sky. The carrier has outfitted the planes with 175 seats in its customary single-class configuration. The space between rows is 32 inches, which is two inches more generous than what American will offer in economy class on its incoming 737 Max 8s.

Norwegian Breakaway going to New Orleans

Norwegian Cruise Line said will move the homeport of the 4,000-passenger Norwegian Breakaway from New York to New Orleans in fall 2018. The ship's hull has a painting of the New York skyline, and has been sailing from there since its 2013 debut. The Norwegian Gem, which was scheduled to sail from New Orleans, will go to New York.



The Norwegian Breakaway is switching homeports next fall, from New York to New Orleans.

ASTA backs bill designed to simplify definition of ICs

By Jamie Biesiada

ASTA is throwing its support behind a proposed federal bill that aims to simplify the determination of who qualifies as an independent contractor (IC).

The Harmonization of Coverage Act of 2017, introduced by Reps. Diane Black (R-Tenn.) and Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), would rely on a common-law approach to determine whether a worker is an employee or an IC, a method that is currently used by the Internal Revenue Service.

Specifically, the bill would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to adopt the common-law test, eliminating the “economic realities” test currently used by the Department of Labor.

‘Democrats tend not to like these kinds of bills because unions inevitably oppose them.’

— Eben Peck, ASTA

ASTA general counsel Peter Lobasso said the common-law test “looks essentially at the degree of control that the engaging party exercises over the engaged party.” He said that test works well for agencies with ICs.

Lobasso said the economic realities test is problematic for agencies because it considers “the extent to which the work performed is an integral part of the employer’s business” when determining if a worker is an IC or an employee. Lobasso said it is impossible for agencies with ICs to satisfy

that factor.

“There are real-world examples everywhere where a worker will be classified as an independent contractor under the IRS test and will be classified as an employee under the Department of Labor’s test, and that creates some incredible difficulties,” Lobasso said.

“When we’re looking at an industry like travel where the independent businessperson is the model that’s gaining in ascen-

cy, this is something that would be a very big boon to the industry as far as having that certainty and having the right to engage a number of workers as contractors as opposed to being forced to engage them as employees.”

ASTA estimates there are currently around 20,000 ICs who sell travel.

The Coalition to Promote Independent Entrepreneurs, of which ASTA is a member, worked to have the bill introduced.

Eben Peck, ASTA’s senior vice president of government and public affairs, said the bill would be controversial.

“Unions don’t like anything to do with independent contracting,” he said. “It has nothing to do with our industry; it has to do with other industries. If somebody is a contractor instead of a [full-time employee], then they can’t be unionized. So Democrats tend not to like these kinds of bills.”

He said there could be opportunities to attach it to a larger bill in the future, but regardless, ASTA will push for its passage.

Travel Weekly parent buys Axus Travel App

Northstar Travel Group has acquired Axus Travel App, an itinerary management software for travel advisers and tour operators.

Axus automates the creation of trip proposals and itineraries for travel managers and delivers booking confirmations and custom travel details to the traveler through a unique URL and dynamic mobile app. Key features of Axus include flight notifications, driving directions, destination guides, the ability to generate PDF itineraries, access to supporting documents and in-app messaging.

“The addition of the Axus planning tool and mobile application is an important strategic enhancement to our suite of subscription workflow and content tools for travel professionals,” said Thomas Kemp, CEO and chairman of Northstar Travel Group.

Northstar is the parent company of Travel Weekly.

Axus founder and CEO Julia Douglas and her team will continue with Axus as it becomes part of Northstar, working with Sheila Rice, vice president of Northstar’s Information Products Group.

“We are excited about working with Julia and her team to provide a one-stop solution to our customers with Travel42 and the Axus planning tool and itinerary app,” Rice said.



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Operators: Bookings bouncing back quickly after tragic events

By Michelle Baran

A rapid-fire succession of unwelcome news events — from reports of illicit alcohol sales in Mexico in August to a hellish trio of hurricanes in September, a massive earthquake in central Mexico and now a mass shooting in Las Vegas — have provided ample evidence of just how quickly bookings can drop, then pick up again, in the aftermath of calamity.

“There’s no doubt that each of these events has influenced bookings during their duration,” said Scott Koepf, senior vice president of sales for Avoya Travel. “However, we do see the bookings pick back up and recover. We expect that, given time, the only change will be in the time frame that bookings are made.”

What Koepf and others in the industry observed in the wake of the recent onslaught of negative news was that while bookings often take a very direct and potentially severe hit in the immediate aftermath of a high-profile natural disaster or security threat, as soon as another event steals the spotlight, those bookings tend to start rebounding relatively quickly.

Similarly, John Van Den Heuvel, president of Gogo Vacations, said that following

the hurricanes in the Caribbean and the earthquakes in Mexico, “we did experience a short period of booking decline centered around the storms as our teams focused on reaccommodating and rebooking their customers. Our booking trends have since rebounded and are in line with our expectations for this time of year.”

Conversely, if there is not a news story that overtakes the headlines and the news cycle gets fixated on one event or destination, the damage can be more lasting.

For example, Mexico’s tourism industry had swung into damage control mode in August following a series of reports about tainted alcohol being served at Cancun resorts, followed by a damning travel warning citing an uptick in homicides in several of Mexico’s major resort areas.

The response from Mexico’s travel industry made it seem that they were ready to fight long and hard to restore the country’s image. Then an unrelenting hurricane season hit the Caribbean and Gulf Coast, and the news media shifted its focus to the resulting devastation there.

Tim Mullen, president of Apple Vacations, said that following all the bad news out of Mexico, sales were declining. But as of the second week of September, Apple’s

Mexico sales started to rebound.

“Is it because [travelers] have short memories or [because] all the attention is sitting on two Category 5 [storms]?” Mullen asked. “Or because it’s hurricane season in the Caribbean and they’re saying, ‘Let’s go back to Mexico.’ We don’t know. But the good news is our Mexico business is rebounding for 2018.”

Steven Gould of Goulds Travel in Clearwater, Fla., agreed that the attention shift to the Caribbean after the twin storms made it easier to sell Mexico.

“The media has been inundated by natural disasters, and that put Mexico issues on the wayside and made it easier to bring Mexico back into discussion,” he said.

Ultimately, there is no precise science to predict the length of recovery time. While the news media certainly play a role and a shift in attention away from one crisis can help, travel sellers and packagers report that it depends on numerous factors, from the level of devastation to the way governments and their tourism boards work to restimulate demand.

Koepf said, “Every destination has the potential to be affected by various events, whether man-made or random acts of God. The way consumers react to those

events will vary, but those with an emotional impact can sometimes take longer to recover.

“The good news is that over time, destinations that are affected do recover and see a return to normalcy.”

For now, Apple’s Mullen said, the non-stop onslaught of bad news is taking a toll on bookings overall. Rather than thinking of vacations, travelers have been distracted, to say the least.

“Since Labor Day, Americans have faced weather-related — and now man-made — disasters each day,” he said. “I think we’re all shell-shocked by daily news reports, and beach vacations are not top of mind when faced with reports and images of tragedy.”

Nevertheless, he said he is confident that bookings will start to pick up again and that Apple Vacations will reignite them with an agent and consumer educational campaign called “The Sun Shines On.”

The campaign focuses on destinations like Jamaica and Punta Cana that haven’t yet been targeted by hurricanes.

Johanna Jainchill contributed to this report.

Air service returning to the Caribbean, but slowly

By Robert Silk

Commercial air service resumed on a limited basis last week at airports on St. Croix and Tortola, and they were set to resume Oct. 10 in St. Maarten.

But while it’s encouraging that those locations have joined airports on St. Thomas and in the Puerto Rican cities of San Juan and Aguadilla, which had already reopened in the wake of the September hurricanes Irma and Maria, U.S. carriers expect service reductions and cuts to linger for months to come.

United, for example, has suspended service to St. Thomas and St. Maarten, both of which were battered by Hurricane Irma, until Dec. 19 and has made its daily Newark-Aguadilla route weekly, also through Dec. 19.

JetBlue has suspended weekly Boston-St. Maarten service through the winter and spring season and, at least until Jan. 1, will

operate New York JFK-St. Maarten twice a week instead of daily. The carrier has also suspended its three weekly Boston-St. Thomas flights through Jan. 3.

Similarly, Spirit has canceled its weekly St. Maarten service from Fort Lauderdale until at least February and, due to airport conditions, will fly just twice per week from Fort Lauderdale to St. Thomas instead of daily for the “foreseeable future.”

American has taken a more cautious approach to scheduling, having thus far only made service reductions to St. Croix, St. Martin, St. Thomas and Turks and Caicos through November.

Southwest said it is taking a wait-and-see approach to its winter Caribbean schedule. The carrier said it will launch

Turks and Caicos service on Nov. 5 as planned.

Delta, which offers service to San Juan, Turks and Caicos, St. Thomas, St. Maarten and St. Croix among other Caribbean destinations, did not respond to an inquiry about schedule changes.

As a proportion of its operation, JetBlue would likely be hardest hit by a slump in the Caribbean market.

Airlines last week were reluctant to discuss how the lingering impacts of Irma and Maria, both in terms of actual damages and as a result of percep-

tion, could affect revenue and Caribbean travel through the coming winter and spring.

Southwest, though, did say in a Sept. 27 Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filing that it expects a \$100 million impact from natural disasters during the

third quarter, and Delta reported last week that Irma would cost the company an estimated \$120 million.

At a media briefing in late September, American, which has the largest presence among the four major U.S. airlines (American, Delta, United and Southwest) in the Caribbean as well as in San Juan, declined to estimate how much the storms would cost.

Airline industry analyst Bob Mann of R.W. Mann and Co. said that although numerous Caribbean destinations were spared the wrath of Irma and Maria, the storms could nevertheless depress demand throughout the region this winter.

“We, as a nation looking for leisure travel, don’t discriminate well between destinations in the same regions,” he said. “Unless you are terribly cognizant of the distinctions of what actually occurred, it would be hard to assume that demand wouldn’t be pretty seriously impacted.”

As a proportion of their operations, JetBlue would likely be the airline most impacted by a broad slump in the Caribbean market this winter.

JetBlue competes with American for the largest Caribbean operation of any U.S. airline, offering 207 flights in and out of the region on an average day, about 20% of its total flights. Thirty of JetBlue’s 101 destinations are in the Caribbean, and it offers the most flights of any carrier to San Juan.

Meanwhile, 11 of the 59 destinations to which Spirit flies are in the Caribbean, though the carrier said last week that the region accounts for just 3.7% of its capacity.

Spirit cited a reduced number of lodging options as a reason for cutting back on Caribbean service.

“We will continue to assess regularly and resume full service as infrastructure and demand allow,” the carrier said.

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— Adolfo Perez, VP of Sales & Trade Marketing

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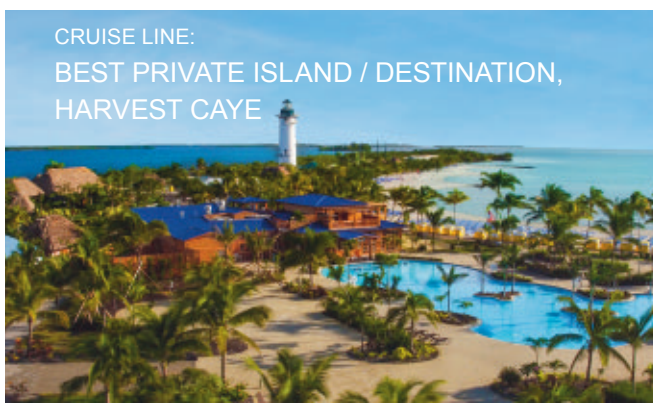
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Carnival Corp. app broadens gambling beyond the casino floor

By Tom Stieghorst

Technology may soon transform the way people gamble on a cruise ship.

Carnival Corp. is linking games that can be played on handheld devices to the casinos on its ships to enable passengers

to gamble anywhere onboard a ship while at sea.

The games are being introduced on ships equipped with Ocean Medallion technology, which turns each vessel into a giant network of sensors that can be used to enable mobile gaming.

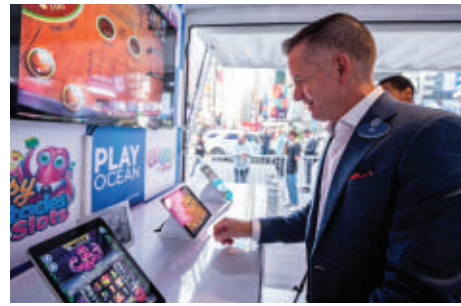
Passengers will be able to play poolside, while waiting in line for dinner, even while on the treadmill in the gym. If they're nonsmokers, they won't have to endure the tobacco smoke that is found in most shipboard casinos.

And unlike a physical casino, the mobile casino is open 24/7.

John Padgett, chief experience and innovation officer for Carnival, said that onboard gaming will be a subset of a suite of games that use the Ocean Medallion to bring an extra dimension to game apps.

"The growing global demand for gaming across all audiences is undeniable," Padgett said, adding that the social, competitive and location-based nature of the Carnival games gives them broad appeal.

Princess Cruises' Regal Princess will be the first Carnival Corp. vessel to showcase the



Michael Jungen, senior vice president, guest experience design and technology at Carnival Corp., demonstrates some of the PlayOcean games during a September event in New York's Times Square.

Ocean Medallion equipment. Its first Medallion-class cruise is scheduled for Nov. 13 from Fort Lauderdale.

To gamble with their smartphone, passengers will have to download an app and register an account in the ship's casino.

There will be four games available through the PlayOcean casino app: Queen Sea, a multiplayer, online poker game; Tipsy Tentacles Slots, an e-version of a slot machine; Roulette on Deck,

described as "a continuous live event in which players place virtual bets on regularly occurring spins of a virtual roulette wheel"; and Bingo on Deck, which lets players seamlessly switch between their mobile device and a traditional bingo card.

The app is also programmed to include maximum amounts for wagering on a per-day and per-cruise basis.

Carnival said the games can be played without prize money on land or when the ship is not in international waters, as can five other Medallion-enabled social games it will introduce for nongamblers.

A previous bid to bring mobile gaming to sea was announced in 2013 by Celebrity Cruises in partnership with Cantor Gaming, but that initiative is no longer actively promoted on Celebrity's website.



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Carnival Cruise Line evolves marketing plan

By Tom Stieghorst

Carnival Cruise Line's marketing will evolve toward greater interactive participation and more varied channels under Anomaly, the line's new ad agency of record, according to the line's chief marketing officer, Kathy Mayor.

Mayor said the line wants to deliver its messages where prospects are consuming media, and that might not be in traditional channels, although those won't be ignored.

Carnival also wants to leverage the credibility and authenticity that comes from brands recommended by friends and family and to reach consumers with a message that corresponds to their passions, Mayor said.

"What we want to do is take what is core to the brand and meet the customer where they are in terms of their expectation of living and interacting with brands in a digital world," Mayor said.

In picking an agency, Mayor said she looked not just for a company that could do digital marketing but one that could "market in a digital world." Anomaly, which was named the 2017 agency of the year by the trade publication Ad Age, fit the bill.

Much of what Anomaly will do revolves around sharing messages on social media. Mayor said that travel is one of the top three shared categories on Facebook, along with children and wed-

dings.

She said an example of where Carnival's marketing is headed was the July 4 barbecue that the line sponsored at Miramar Air Station, a Marine Corps base near San Diego.

Carnival solicited messages of gratitude to the military on social media, then laser-inscribed the messages on burger buns served at the barbecue. It sent photos of the buns back to the originators of the messages.

Meanwhile, photos and commentary about the buns and the event bounced around social media.

"That is how our fans are part of telling our story," Mayor said.

Carnival will still do what Mayor calls "linear" television advertising, such as recent ads that featured talking objects, which reach millions of consumers in mass media.

"It's not an only-this or only-that," Mayor said. "You do want reach, but you also want stories of the brand acting in the world in an authentic way that prospects can relate to."

One consideration is that the media continues to fragment, and consumers are quicker than ever to block messages they don't want to hear.

"There's so much out there

that's trying to get a customer's attention," Mayor said. "We have to be invited in and meet the customer where they are, based on things they find of value, or have entertainment, or provide a utility."

Mayor said "passion points" such as food, comedy, family or military service, provide a way for Carnival to break through with a message.



Kathy Mayor
Carnival Cruise Line

Anomaly succeeds Arnold Worldwide, which had been the line's agency of record for eight years.

Founded in New York in 2004, Anomaly has seven offices around the globe and a long list of clients, including top consumer brands. The agency, for example, has created the Super Bowl ads for Budweiser for the past three years. Other clients include Apple's Beats by Dr. Dre and YouTube as well as consumer staples such as Campbell's Soup, Minute Maid and Hershey's.

According to an Ad Age report, the agency was called Anomaly because it would take a "channel-agnostic approach that could include everything from digital and social to new-product development."

Mayor said consumers and guests will start to see Anomaly's work for Carnival during Wave season.



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At Phocuswright, program, tech and audience evolve

When I attended early Phocuswright conferences, the few travel agents in the room didn't always feel particularly welcome. It wasn't that the organizers had an anti-agent agenda, but the attendees — young OTAs and those in their orbit — viewed agents the way a Windows early adopter might look at someone who was still using DOS.

I recall one agent who had signed up because his website had automated a portion of the client qualification process, and he was interested in learning about, and incorporating, additional technology. But when he stood to challenge an airline executive who had just predicted the demise of the agency model, the airline exec responded dismissively and derisively. The debate was over, and the agent found no support.

The airline in question no longer exists, but I see more and more forward-thinking travel agents in attendance at Phocuswright conferences. Both agents and the conference have evolved in significant ways over the years.

I've written before about convergence and overlap between the online and offline worlds of travel distribution.

Big OTAs are among the largest employers of human travel sellers, in call centers, and agents not only have become adept builders of websites and social media savants, but the approximately 50% of travel advisers who work out of their houses, either as independent sellers of travel or home-based employees of brick-and-mortar agencies, are heavily reli-

ant on technology to compete (and then some) with agencies that have automated the majority of their sales over the web.

As it approaches its 24th annual edition, the Phocuswright conference has grown from a few hundred mostly American attendees to (last year) 1,850 delegates from more than 30 countries. It remains the premier showcase for innovation, insight into distribution trends and high-level networking in the industry.

(Disclosure: Phocuswright, like Travel Weekly, is owned by Northstar Travel Group, though I would write this regardless!)

There is a reason that travel advisers outlasted the airline that had predicted their demise. The rise of internet competition, the shock of 9/11, bird flu, tsunamis, a major economic meltdown, terrorism, earthquakes and direct-sales efforts have pruned the weak and marginal agents. Those who remain have raised the

level of business sophistication, tech savviness and creativity of the entire agency community.

Sophisticated, creative and savvy agents will not only find a lot of stimulation at Phocuswright this year, they will gather a tremendous amount of business intelligence on competitors and trends as well as get a first look at ideas still in the incubation phase.

The Summit portion of the program, held on the first full day of the conference, pits 24 young companies against each other in the hopes of impressing investors in the audience

FROM THE WINDOW SEAT

and walking away with a \$100,000 convertible bridge loan. But they must first impress a panel of judges and face an onstage cadre of critics who often

give biting evaluations of their presentations. (It's not a shark tank; it's a dragon pit.)

Similarly, Launch, on day two, gives a sneak peek at innovations being developed by established companies developing new technologies. They, too, face dragons.

Travel agents who attend will also be able to get into the minds of competitors, hearing insights from the CEOs of the largest players in digital travel distribution, including Expedia's new chief, Mark Okerstrom, Priceline CEO Glenn Fogel, TripAdvisor CEO Stephen Kaufer, Kayak CEO Steve Hafner as well as John Kim, president of Homeaway and executives from the largest OTAs in China and India.

Google's vice president for Travel and Shopping, a managing director of Trivago and leaders from bed banks and booking apps will also take the stage.

Panels featuring investors will share with the audience what they look for when evaluating travel companies, and speakers representing the GDS community are also on the program. I'll be moderating a panel that will include U.S. Travel Association CEO Roger Dow, ARC CEO Mike Premo and Brand USA CEO Chris Thompson on "Travel in the Age of Trump."

Over time, the Phocuswright community has grown significantly, and it now includes everyone from traditional agencies to startups exploring ways to use artificial intelligence to sell travel. Looking over the list of attending companies, in addition to agencies and airlines, I see everything from cruise lines, tour operators and hoteliers to social media platforms (including Snapchat), destination management organizations and car rental companies.

Although airlines and travel agents still don't always see eye to eye, they have learned to cooperate as well as compete, and both are more profitable for it. A meeting ground like Phocuswright is an event where creative sparks fly, ideas proliferate and friends and "frenemies" forge partnerships.

This year's conference will be held Nov. 7 to 9 at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Fla. And the welcome mat is out for all.

Email Arnie Weissmann at aweissmann@travelweekly.com and follow him on Twitter at twitter.com/awtravelweekly.

Phocuswright is an event where creative sparks fly, ideas proliferate and friends and 'frenemies' forge partnerships.

Arnie Weissmann
Editor in Chief



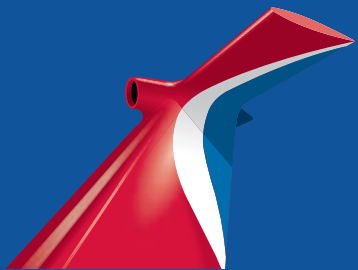
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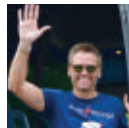
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New name, new transparency at the former Worldview Travel

By Jamie Biesiada

Worldview Travel, No. 27 on Travel Weekly’s 2017 Power List, is changing its name to Travel Edge and embracing a new transparency when it comes to its offerings for independent contractors (ICs).

When the company’s rebranded website (Traveledge.com) launched on July 1, it included a detailed breakdown of commission splits and perks that ICs receive at different levels. Cheryl Nicholson, executive vice president of leisure, said she is unaware of other agency networks that are doing what Travel Edge is, as far as disclosing IC offerings in such detail.

For example, ICs who produce up to \$5,000 are in the Small Biz category and receive 50% of their commission. They pay a desk fee of \$225 a month if they work in one of Travel Edge’s branches (this does not apply to home-based ICs) and get perks like marketing materials and access to Travel Edge’s proprietary booking system.

As an IC’s revenue increases, so does the commission split and the perks. At the high end, advisers with \$150,000 to \$900,000 in sales are in the Chairman’s Circle and get 80% or more of their commission (plus perks like the annual Chairman’s Circle Event), depending on how much they pro-

duce. Agents producing \$900,000 or above receive 100% of their commission (Travel Edge benefits from items like volume with suppliers and overrides).

Jack Mannix, founder and principal at Jack E. Mannix & Associates, said that while some host agencies do release information on commission splits, it is uncommon to find such a comprehensively laid-out comparison of different levels.

“It looks like it’s laid out well and well thought out and so on, but I’m kind of surprised that they put it out there,” he said. “Because it strikes me that, arguably, it’s one of the less sustainable marketing advantages.”

If major competitors find their splits are not in line with what Travel Edge is offering and choose to change theirs to match, everyone stands to lose money, Mannix said.

He likened it to a gas station: “You have the gas station on one corner, I have it on the other corner,” he said.

“You decided to take your per gallon price down from \$3 to \$2.90 a gallon to get your market share increased. I see that, I do the same thing, we end up with the same market share, and now we’re making 10 cents a gallon less.”

That could happen in this case, Mannix said, but he allowed that Travel Edge’s plan

could be useful in attracting ICs.

Nicholson said the rebrand to Travel Edge is being phased in, and by the end of the year, all branches will be rebranded. There are no structural changes to the company, and the Worldview Travel moniker will eventually disappear.

“We’re not changing; it’s just a name change,” Nicholson said.

Travel Edge is the name of a technology company that Worldview owns. It was adopted as the travel company’s new name because it represents a commitment to technology, according to Nicholson.

“We thought that we had the technology history, [and] Travel Edge really represented where we were going and what we were trying to become,” she said.

The idea to clearly post Travel Edge’s offerings to ICs online came as part of the rebrand. Nicholson said it was a matter of deciding what Travel Edge wanted to be in the industry, which is “a place where advisers feel like they can be professionals, that they can be entrepreneurs. In order to do that, we felt that transparency was an important value.”

It is also part of a strategy to attract and retain ICs. Travel Edge is targeting both new-to-the-industry prospects and agents with books of businesses. Considering the number of hosts in existence, there is growing competition for ICs in the marketplace.

That can largely be attributed to the fact that it’s often not easy to switch hosts and that there are many opportunities for high-performing agents, Nicholson said.

She said she hopes the tactic also helps elevate agents’ businesses and the public’s perception of them.

“I feel like it supports what we keep saying, that ... advisers shouldn’t have to apologize for being successful,” she said. “It’s one of the only industries where people are expected to be meek and apologize for making a living. We just don’t support that, and our actions are supporting what we’ve been saying.”

Disclosing the different tiers ICs can reach up front is also a motivator to help them boost sales and reach the next level.

“We’re hoping to generate some excitement like that, and it’s working,” Nicholson said.

Considering the number of hosts in existence, there is growing competition for ICs in the marketplace.

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1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from the recipient, telemarketing and internet request from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies and exchange copies)	23,811	24,276
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e. Total Nonrequested Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))	891	856
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e)	24,702	25,132
g. Copies Not Distributed (see Instructions to Publishers #4 (page 3))	740	706
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	25,442	25,838
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by f times 100)	96.39%	96.59%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies each Issue During Previous 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issues Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	12,314	12,478
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c. Total Requested Copy distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic copies (Line 16a)	37,016	37,610
d. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	97.6%	97.7%
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Study reveals some shifts in adventure travelers' preferences

By Michelle Baran

Ten years ago, adventure travel was defined by vigorous activities like mountain climbing, rafting and trekking in places like North America and Western Europe.

A decade later, hiking now tops the list of most typical adventure travel activities, and adventure travelers have their sights set on a wider variety of destinations, according to a new report from the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), its first in a decade.

After completing an extensive adventure travel study in 2006, ATTA joined with Outside magazine and East Carolina University to carry out a follow-up study in 2016 to see how attitudes toward adventure travel had changed in the past 10 years.

The 2016 study, released last month, is titled “North American Adventure Travelers: Seeking Personal Growth, New Destinations and Immersive Culture” and was based on a random sample of 8,000 Outside magazine subscribers, predominantly based in the U.S.

Perhaps the most striking change over the past decade was the destinations adventure travelers had in their future plans. In the 2016 survey, the top five destina-

tions that adventure travelers planned to visit were New Zealand, Australia, South America, South Pacific and Western Europe.

In contrast, North America was far and away the top choice in the 2006 study, followed by Western Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and New Zealand.

“Based on this comparison, North American adventure travelers’ dreams of where they would like to travel appear to be expanding,” the new ATTA report stated.

Not only did New Zealand and Australia take over as the most popular adventure travel

destinations, but South America moved from ranking seventh in 2006 to third in 2016.

Another interesting evolution was in the types of activities respondents felt belong in the adventure category.

In 2006, the top five were rock and mountain climbing, rafting, trekking, sea and whitewater kayaking and canoeing, all considered to be somewhat strenuous adventure activities.

Although many of those same activities remained at or near the top of the list, 10 years later the definition of adventure travel appears to embrace a wider range of both hard and soft adventure. In 2016, hiking, backpacking, trekking, sea and

whitewater kayaking and rafting topped the list of activities.

Canoeing dropped in rank from 2006, and mountain or rock climbing dropped from the activity most associated with adventure travel in 2006 to sixth place in 2016.

What motivates adventure travelers?

As for what motivates adventure travelers, many of the same top motivations were reported in 2016 when compared with 2006, including transformation, obtaining an expanded world view, nature and discovery and the opportunity to learn. The most notable shift in motivation over the past decade, however, was prioritizing mental health over fun and thrills.

According to the 2016 survey, the most important components of an adventure experience are being in a natural environment (94.2%), learning (90.4%), meaningful human experiences (86.4%) and experiencing a new culture (82.4%). Only 44.7% of respondents felt that risk and physical danger were important components of adventure travel, and only 35% felt that either real or perceived danger were important.

“Even though respondents do not rank risk as highly as other factors, such as culture, in playing a role in adventure experiences, they cannot describe adventure travel experiences without mentioning it when given the opportunity in an

open-ended question,” the report stated. “The theme of challenge is very present in adventure travel, with keywords such as limits, risk, rush, dangerous, action and reward used.”

Ultimately, the intent of the study was to help those in the adventure travel industry better hone in on the needs and wants of one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry, according to ATTA, which values the adventure travel market at \$263 billion annually.

The association emphasized that there are also other advantages in supporting and selling adventure travel. For example, adventure travel companies estimate that 67% of the trip cost per guest remains in the local region, and ATTA maintains that adventure travel companies tend to encourage sustainable tourism practices due to their emphasis on wilderness and wildlife conservation.

“Continued growth of this sector creates net positive impacts not only for tourism but also for destination economies, their people and their environment,” the report stated.

“It is attracting attention from national governments around the world for its emphasis on rural areas and local culture and because it can often be developed within the constraints of existing infrastructure. In an effort to capitalize on this growing market segment, understanding adventure travelers is important to the adventure industry.”

The survey of Outside magazine readers by the Adventure Travel Trade Association was the group's first in a decade.

Top destinations for adventure travelers							
2016				2006			
Rank	Continent/Region	Plan to Visit	Have Visited	Rank	Continent/Region	Plan to Visit	Have Visited
1	New Zealand	62.1%	13.8%	1	North America	83%	97.2%
2	Australia	59.8%	15%	2	Western Europe	59.9%	65.1%
3	South America	54.4%	25.1%	3	Australia	56.8%	17.9%
4	South Pacific	51%	9.5%	4	Middle East	50.6%	13.9%
5	Western Europe	50.1%	66.1%	5	New Zealand	50.6%	14.5%
6	Central America	48.8%	38.7%	6	Central America	45.4%	28.4%
7	North America	44.9%	92.7%	7	South America	44.4%	23.5%
8	Central Europe	43.9%	31.1%	8	Caribbean	38.9%	54.3%
9	Caribbean	43.3%	53.8%	9	Mexico	38.6%	73.1%
10	Africa	36.5%	17.5%	10	Africa	36.7%	19.8%
11	North Asia	35.4%	24.3%	11	South Pacific	35.8%	11.7%
12	South and Southeast Asia	33.6%	17.9%	12	North Asia	32.1%	23.1%
13	Mexico	28.5%	65.9%	13	Central Europe	31.8%	31.2%
14	Eastern Europe	28.3%	9.7%	14	South and Southeast Asia	24.4%	17.3%
15	Antarctica	25.4%	1.2%	15	Eastern Europe	19.1%	11.1%
16	Middle East	23.5%	18%	16	Antarctica	14.2%	1.2%
17	Arctic	21%	5.6%	17	Arctic	12.3%	3.1%

Most popular adventure travel activities		
	2016	2006
Hiking	89.6%	89.4%
Backpacking	87.1%	89.3%
Trekking	86%	90.9%
Kayaking: sea/whitewater	85.3%	90.2%
Rafting	84.5%	91.5%
Climbing: mountain/rock	84.4%	91.5%
Scuba diving	80.5%	88.1%
Camping	78.4%	87.6%
Canoeing	77.3%	90.1%
Skiing/Snowboarding	75.5%	77.8%
Safaris	74.2%	87%
Sailing	72.6%	82.3%
Snorkeling	72.3%	81.7%
Archaeological expeditions	71.3%	76.8%
Research expeditions	70.6%	77.6%
Orienteering	65.5%	76%
Cultural activities	61.8%	66.3%
Visiting historical sites	58.9%	55.8%
Walking tours	56.5%	67.8%
Horseback riding	55.2%	75.9%
Fishing/Fly-fishing	54%	60.9%
Educational programs	51.7%	61.4%
Hunting	39.7%	53.9%
Bird-watching	35.1%	55.5%

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Client's words could supersede a contract termination clause

Mark Pestronk is a Washington-based lawyer specializing in travel law.

Q: Several months ago, our agency entered into a new, formal contract with a major corporate client that we have been handling on a handshake basis for many years. Before we ever saw the new contract, we had hired several new agents, expanded our office, signed long-term tech-

nology contracts and incurred other expenses based on the corporation's CFO's promise that we would have a long-term relationship. A few days before we started work, the CFO sent us the contract, and we were surprised to see a clause stating that the corporation could terminate for any reason on 60 days' notice. When we tried to have that clause changed, the CFO stated, "Don't worry about it. That's just what the attorneys in-

sist on. I guarantee we will have a long-term relationship." So, I signed. Two months later, the CFO changed his mind because a competitor came in with a lower price, and he terminated us with 60 days' notice, leaving us deeply in the hole. Could we sue the corporation for some sort of misrepresentation, based on what the CFO said? Our local attorney says we have to go by the letter of the contract, but what do you think?

A: The general rule is that the written agreement takes precedence over anything anyone said. This is especially true where the contract is unambiguous and needs no interpretation.

To resolve any doubts, almost all formal contracts have what is called an "integration" or "merger" clause near the end, stating that the written agreement is the sole agreement between the parties and supercedes all prior or simultaneous oral or written statements by the parties. These clauses make contracts easier to interpret and disputes easier to decide.

However, there is an exception to the rule that only the written contract counts. If you can prove that the CFO induced you to sign based on an intentional misrepresentation, then you could have a case for fraudulent inducement of the contract.

I recently found a reported precedent on this very subject involving a travel agency and its corporate client: McEvoy Travel Bureau v. Norton Co., decided by the highest state court in Massachusetts in 1990. I was pleasantly surprised that the case was decided in the agency's favor.

The court noted that, "Norton's representative reassured McEvoy that the parties in fact would continue to have a long-term arrangement and that the termination clause was 'inoperative' and 'meaningless,' a mere technicality that Norton's law department had required. Based on these statements, McEvoy decided to sign the agreement a day or so after the meeting."



I recently found an exception to the rule that only a written agreement counts.

The court held that statements like these that a party did not intend to invoke a contractual termination clause, and that the clause was included in the contract only at the insistence of that party's attorneys, could form the basis for fraud claim, if that statement misrepresented actual intent of the speaker just before the contract was signed. The jury, in fact, found that the company really misrepresented its actual intent and awarded \$500,000 in damages, which was upheld on appeal.

The court also found that the plaintiff reasonably relied on the company's oral assurances and, like you, incurred substantial long-term expense commitments in reliance on the company's assurances. It was also significant that there was no real negotiation of the written contract, as it was sprung on the agency at the last minute.

What happened to you is certainly similar to what happened to McEvoy Travel. So, if you can get the CFO to admit what he told you (which may be an impossible task), a second opinion may be worth exploring.

To submit a question for Legal Briefs, email Mark Pestronk at mark@pestronk.com.

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Chris Austin
Seabourn

a

I do a mean Robert De Niro impression.

2



John Chernesky
Princess Cruises and Cunard Line

b

I looove bell-bottom jeans!

3



Vicki Freed
Royal Caribbean International

c

My favorite snack is nacho cheese Doritos.

4



Eva Jenner
Holland America Line and Seabourn

d

I would do anything to have lunch with Prince William.

5



Joe Jiffo
MSC Cruises

e

I want to be able to fly!

6



Camille Olivere
Norwegian Cruise Line

f

My favorite show is House of Cards.

7



Adolfo Perez
Carnival Cruise Line

g

I'm always snacking on cookies and milk.

8



Dondra Ritzenthaler
Celebrity Cruises

h

If I could, I would be superhuman fast at typing.

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TABOO TRAVEL

Sexually themed tourism has been around for millennia, but today it has grown into a business that crosses multiple generations, has generated a plethora of products and offers lucrative opportunities for travel advisers.

BY MEAGAN DRILLINGER

Strip Seduction is one of the many selections offered to guests on the Desire Riviera Maya Pearl resort's Fantasy Menu.

They say that sex sells, but when it comes to sex and travel, they don't know the half of it. "Libertine tourism" is the term coined to describe travel that celebrates pleasures of the body, and a 2016 report in *Forbes* magazine that focused on this niche market estimated it was a \$20 billion industry worldwide.

First, let's clarify a few things. libertine tourism is not the same as sex tourism, which includes prostitution, pedophilia, human trafficking or other illegal sexual activities. Nor is it the same as nudist travel, though quite often the two do overlap.

Libertine tourism refers to travelers in "the lifestyle," a term that denotes people or couples who engage in adventurous sexual practices such as recreational sex with other consenting adults. Yes, that includes orgies, but to be clear, it doesn't have to. It could also mean partner swapping, threesomes, monogamous sex in public or simply watching others at play.

In the tourism industry, it means sex-positive travel, usually to resorts or on cruises where sex isn't just what's on the menu, it's what everyone is ordering. While this may or may not shock people, what is genuinely shocking is just how big libertine tourism actually is in the U.S., coupled with the fact that very few travel advisers are capitalizing on it.

Nudists vs. the lifestyle

Before agents jump into this niche market, however, it's important to understand its key subcategories. Nudists are not necessarily living the lifestyle, and lifestyle practitioners aren't necessarily nudists.

"It's a misconception that nudist travel is sex travel," said

Donna "Champagne" Daniels, owner of Castaways Travel in Spring, Texas. "Still, to this day, it appears as if the American perception of it is, if you're nude then you're in the lifestyle. That is totally wrong."

Daniels' company, Castaways Travel, is a subsidiary of her overarching parent company, Fox Travel, which sells more typical vacations that are not focused on sex. In the category of nudist travel, Castaways Travel is one of the country's premier agencies, having sold clothing-optional vacations since 1991.

What started as a hobby for Daniels and her husband, James Bailey, blossomed into a lucrative business. Today Castaways Travel accounts for some 80% of Fox Travel's annual revenue, pulling in about \$6 million. Champagne (Daniels' Castaways Travel name) has a team of agents, each of whom pulls in \$2.5 million to \$3 million in sales annually. In contrast, she said her traditional agents average \$1.5 million.

Nudist travel refers specifically to travelers who like to go on vacation and be naked, plain and simple, whereas lifestyle travel places a heavier emphasis on sex, featuring resorts and cruises that offer everything from topless-optional

See **TABOO** on Page 24

TABOO

Continued from Page 23

pool areas to full-fledged “playrooms” designed with group sex in mind.

Where the two niches do intersect is at resorts or on cruises that cater to all tastes.

“There is not one resort that we sell that is only for the nudists or clothing-optionals,” Daniels said. “There is not one resort that is only for lifestyle people.”

The exception is Karisma’s Hidden Beach Resort on Mexico’s Riviera Maya, which is designed specifically for nudists and reminds its guests that public displays of affection are not part of the agenda. Of course, what guests do behind closed doors is entirely up to them.

Still, agents who sell clothing-optional travel “want to be known for selling fun — I don’t care what your definition of it is,” Daniels said. “We can’t interrogate everyone who calls us. They want to go to a clothing-optional resort; they ask us questions, we answer them. We don’t guarantee anything other than [assuring them that] if they would be receptive to new experiences, they will have a great time.”

No typical client

Like any travel niche these days, the “typical libertine client” covers a wide range of types. Most agencies report that clients range in age from their 20s all the way up through their 70s.

“It’s truly a wide range,” said Heather, owner of Go Away Nude in St. Louis (who requested that her last name not be used). “I’d say there are a lot of travelers who are middle age, with either older kids or kids who have already left home. This is a big part of the market, just because they have more disposable income. But we also have clients from their 20s up through much older couples, as well.”

Joe Giantonio, owner of Topless Travel in Coral Springs, Fla., said, “The meat of our demographic is mid-30s to mid-50s. This is about 80% of our clients, these people who, from a psychological and sociological standpoint, are either empty nesters or are getting close to that point and want to relive their college days.”

According to Daniels, the typical Castaways client is very established in a career. Many own their own businesses. They are confident. They are risk takers. All are characteristics that draw them to this style of travel.

What brings these travelers together, however, is the common theme of looking for judgment-free vacations on which they can let loose, have fun and do whatever comes naturally in a safe environment where everyone is on the same playing field, so to speak.

“I have several billionaire clients,” Giantonio said. “They go to Hedonism. They get naked. And you’d never know the difference between them and the guy next to

them. You wouldn’t know who is who. And that’s a monster draw.”

He added, “Most lifestyle people are really genuine and nice people. We literally have nothing to hide.”

Personally, I can attest to that. This past June, I visited Hedonism on a solo fam trip. I found another single person there, freshly divorced, looking to blow off steam and explore sides of himself that had been dormant for years. We met up one evening for dinner, on what happened to be Fetish Night.

You’d never have known this man was worth millions — he sat there at the table in full leather, with a dog collar and leash fastened tightly around his neck — save for the fact that he had impeccable table manners and was mortified when he spoke with a mouthful of food. “I’m so sorry!” he said apologetically, very noticeably embarrassed for his sins against Emily Post.

“You’re in a dog collar,” I reminded him. “I don’t think you have anything to worry about.”

Sex sells

The modern nudist or lifestyle traveler has a bit more money to burn than the average tourist, which is why this is such a lucrative niche. These vacations aren’t cheap, and the hotel and cruise products are top of the line in quality.

Hedonism II in Negril, Jamaica, for example, one of the resorts at the forefront of

nudist and lifestyle travel, recently completed a \$6.8 million renovation of its guestrooms and public areas. Rates start at around \$400 a night.

Similarly, Temptation Cancun Resort, one of the original topless resorts in Cancun, had until recently been closed for a yearlong, propertywide overhaul. It reopened in August with 430 rooms and suites, each with a terrace or balcony; new guest areas; a pool; new shows; eight specialty restaurants, including an aphrodisiac-themed restaurant; and five bars.

Temptation is under the Original Group portfolio, which also owns the Desire properties and plans to launch a Desire cruise product. What’s more, the company recently announced that Temptation will expand its international portfolio in 2019 with a new resort in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Rates at Temptation begin at \$342 a night. The Desire Riviera Maya Pearl is \$642 per night, and Desire Riviera Maya is \$568 per night.

These are not cheap stays.

Lifestyle cruises are another, massive part of the market, with charters being offered four to five times a year aboard vessels owned by Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises.

The price to charter a cruise ship for a week begins at around \$3 million. A travel agency needs to sell about 80% of

See TABOO on Page 26



Clockwise from left, the Playroom at the Desire Riviera Maya resort; the Hedonism Glow pool party at Hedonism II in Negril, Jamaica; the Hedonism Playroom at Hedonism II; Original Group, the company that owns the Desire properties, has plans to launch a Desire cruise product.



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Above, the nude pool at Hedonism II in Negril, Jamaica. Left, a nude beach sign lets guests know what's in store beyond that point at Hedonism II. Below, guests making a "human sundae" poolside at the Desire Riviera Maya Pearl resort in Mexico.

TABOO

Continued from Page 24

that to break even, which is why the average price of a seven-day lifestyle cruise can hit upwards of \$4,000 per cabin. Giantonio said his Topless Travel agency makes \$5 million annually on cruise sales alone, and it has an 85% rebook rate, with half of those clients rebooking the same ship for the following year.

Nor is it just about taking your clothes off and doing whatever else might follow. While that is often the main draw, libertine travelers are still travelers, and they want not just comfort but a wealth of experiences.

"These travelers don't necessarily want to lie by the pool all day long, which in the original generation that was seeking an *au naturel* vacation, that was pretty much the goal," Daniels said. "These travelers are active. They want tequila tastings, cooking classes, language classes, wine tastings. They want all kinds of opportunities, like at any traditional resort that will give you several choices on how to fill your day."

The market swings younger

On the whole, when neophytes first hear the term "nudist resort," the image that pops into their heads is a clientele that no one would ever actually want to see naked. Similarly, when people who have never been to a swingers resort hear the

term, they begin to imagine creepily mustachioed men with gold chains and pinky rings surrounded by a harem of mail-order brides.

That is far from reality today.

Thanks to changing views on sexuality, an increase in open-mindedness and acceptability — not to mention the continually blurring concepts of what is "normal," especially among millennials — the industry is seeing a strong uptick in younger generations enjoying clothing-optional and lifestyle resorts.

"Social media has had a strong impact on this," Don Hughes, director of Right Connections Travel in Las Vegas, said of changing attitudes. "The world is adapting to new things. People are trying to be more outspoken and more adventurous."

Daniels observed that millennials "grew up with nudism on billboards, on TV, magazines and ads. They don't understand what all the hoopla is about being naked."

In the past, nudists and swingers tended to be associated with older generations, but millennials are engaging in exactly the same behaviors today, though they are not calling it swinging. But whatever terms younger generations use to describe it, the travel industry is offering more product to match the libertine mindset.

Francesca Gentile, a clinical sexologist, author and relationship specialist from San Francisco, sees that mindset as a phenom-

See **TABOO** on Page 40



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Undersea experiences reaching new depths



The Genting Explorer, shown here in the Seychelles, carries two passengers plus a pilot.

TW PHOTO BY TOM STIEGHORST

By Tom Stieghorst

More cruise lines than ever are making it easy for passengers not only to speed over the water in their ships but to experience the underwater environment that those ships are passing through.

The silent depths turn out not to be so silent on an increasing number of ships equipped with hydrophones to pick up under-ocean sounds. The sights of the briny deep are also on display through cruise ships that either offer a window to the marine blue or a live feed on a video screen from some sort of underwater camera.

Many of the submarine experiences are on small ships that can get up close to coral reefs and into coves and fjords that offer intimate views of marine mammals such as dolphins, whales or seals.

One cruise line is doing excursions on an actual submarine.

Here are a few ways to take in the world beneath the waves.

Hurtigruten

At Hurtigruten, drones are not just for flying. The Norwegian coastal carrier has teamed up with another Norwegian concern and will equip its next generation of expedition ships with underwater drones.

When the Roald Amundsen launches next summer, it will carry the latest version of a sea-going drone developed by Blueye Robotics.

The Trondheim, Norway, company is the maker of the Blueye Pioneer, a 15-pound, waterproof, hydrodynamic camera with stabilizers and four thrusters that enable it to maneuver even in strong currents.

The \$3,500 drone is powered by a battery with a two-hour charge and is tethered by a thin, 250-foot cable to a surface buoy that transmits video, which then can be picked up via WiFi on a guest's tablet or smartphone.

Multiple smartphones can connect to the same signal for a shared experience.

Hurtigruten plans to sail the Roald Amundsen and a sister ship, the Fridtjof Nansen (both named for Norwegian explorers), in Antarctica, the Northwest Passage, Svalbard, Greenland and the Norwegian coast, remote areas where the territory undersea is truly ripe for passenger discovery.

"With underwater drones on our ships, we can take our guests

to areas less explored than the surface of Mars," Hurtigruten CEO Daniel Skjeldam said.

Lindblad

Lindblad Expeditions brings under-ocean sounds to passengers via hydrophones: underwater sound amplifiers that can pick up communications passed between marine mammals like whales or sea lions up to three miles away.

In addition, Lindblad ships employ an underwater diving specialist with a high-definition camera who brings back images and videos for display in the ship's lounge, which is designed so that all guests can be comfortably seated and view TV monitors around the room.

Lindblad ships also feature a sled-like remote operating vehicle, deployed by the undersea specialist and expedition diver from a Zodiac, which is capable of diving to depths of 1,000 feet and bringing back videos of sights beyond the range of the diving specialist.

All of these capabilities are available on the National Geographic Quest, Lindblad's newest ship, which was launched in June and will be sailing in Panama and Costa Rica this winter.

Ponant

Also new underwater is the Blue Eye lounge, which will debut on Ponant's newest class of ship, beginning with the 184-passenger Le Laperouse next summer. The signature features of the lounge are subsurface observation windows, one on each side of the ship, which offer views of what's going on outside the hull.

The lounge is also equipped with digital screens that can project live images filmed by three underwater cameras.

Like Lindblad, Ponant's Blue Eye will employ hydrophones to pick up sounds as well as the sights available through the windows.

"Body listening sofas" will discreetly vibrate in unison with the streaming aquatic acoustics.

Underwater floodlights will run most of the length of the ship, illuminating the view from the Blue Eye.

Navin Sawhney, CEO of the Americas for Ponant, said some of the inspiration for the Blue Eye was taken from the Jules Verne science fiction novel "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," in which Captain Nemo pilots a submarine called the Nautilus.

In keeping with the sleek, modern design of Ponant's fleet, the Blue Eye will be somewhat futuristic-looking, dimly illumi-

nated in a blue glow with curving white contemporary sofas tiered in banks around the observation portals.

Crystal

One of the coolest ways to sink beneath the surface on a cruise ship is in the minisubmarine carried on Crystal Cruises' expedition yacht, the Crystal Esprit.

Outfitted for two passengers plus a pilot, the bubble-like, acrylic cabin gives passengers an immersive view of the sea at depths of up to 3,280 feet. The submersible won't win any races, however, with a cruising speed of 3 knots (a little more than 3 mph).

Passengers are ferried on a Zodiac a short distance to board the submarine through its top hatch. The experience is sort of like scuba diving in a high-tech lounge chair. Crystal offers 30-minute tours on what it has dubbed the Genting Explorer for \$599 per person.

Royal Caribbean

Another way to see the underwater world from a cruise ship is to don a snorkel mask or scuba gear and plunge in.

Many lines offer certified scuba divers a chance to dive on excursions. But Royal Caribbean International takes it a step further, offering ships with PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Five Star Dive Centers aboard, enabling guests to become certified scuba divers as part of their cruises.

Introduced last year on 10 Royal ships, the scuba course includes four open-water dives in two ports of call, in either the Caribbean or South America. The cost starts at \$599 per person.



Top, a rendering of the Blue Eye, an underwater lounge set to debut on a Ponant ship in 2018. Bottom, the Blueye Pioneer drone is being used by Hurtigruten to let passengers observe sea life on their smartphones.

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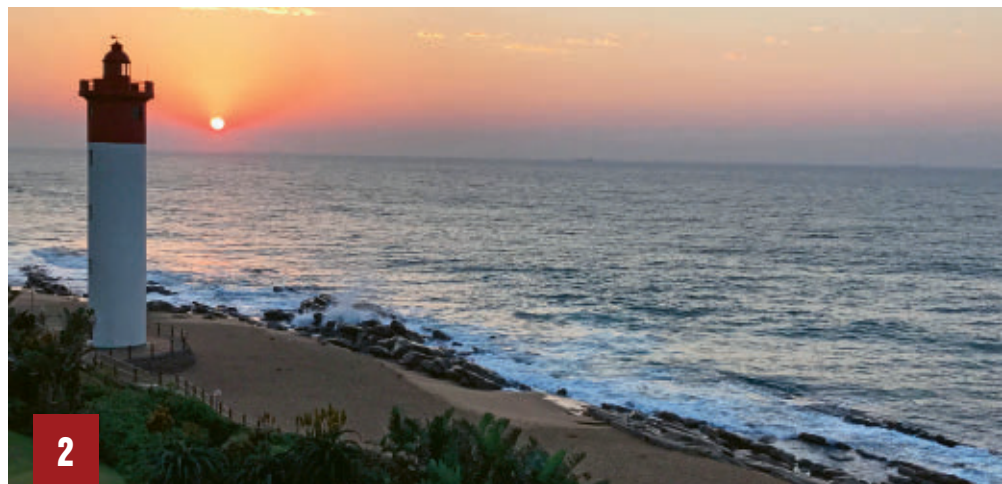
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Safari, sun in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal

Documentary filmmaker Mark Wexler recently visited South Africa as a guest of the Thanda Safari private game reserve, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and the Oyster Box, a luxury hotel in Durban celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

The following are some of Wexler's photos from his six-night visit, which included stays at Thanda's five-suite Villa iZulu and the 86-room Oyster Box.

1) An aerial view of Villa iZulu, part of the Thanda Safari private game reserve. Other accommodations on the reserve are the Thanda Safari Lodge, offering nine bush suites, and the Thanda Tented Camp, comprising 15 tents. 2) The lighthouse in front of the Oyster Box in Durban, South Africa. The 86-room property, part of the Red Carnation Hotel Collection, is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. 3) A rhino spotted on the Thanda reserve. Rhinos are among the Big Five game animals, which also include the elephant, leopard, lion and buffalo. 4) A giraffe at dawn. 5) A buffalo sighting on the Thanda reserve. 6) Hitting the trail for an afternoon game drive. 7) Experienced Thanda tracker Bheki Ngubane at work. 8) A young zebra in motion during a morning game drive. 9) A lioness with her prey. 10) Elephants bathing on the Thanda reserve.



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

History, sophistication at three new hotels



PHOTO BY ASSAF PINCHUK

The lobby of the Villa Brown Jerusalem. The walls of exposed stone are over 100 years old.

By Meagan Drillinger

During the first six months of 2017, over 1.7 million tourists entered Israel, up 26% from the first half of last year, according to the country's Central Bureau of Statistics.

Hotel occupancy has benefited from this rise, reaching 73.4% in Tel Aviv for the first half of the year (vs. 68.9% in the first half of 2016) and 64.8% in Jerusalem for the same period (vs. 50.7% in 2016). Set to greet this influx are a trio of new and upcoming hotels.

• New to the Tel Aviv skyline, the **Vera** will open its doors in November. This urban boutique hotel will open adjacent to Bauhaus Rothschild Boulevard.

Inside guests will find 39 rooms in four categories — classic, deluxe, superior and garden room — as well as a spa treatment room and two rooftop terraces.

For its in-room magazine, the hotel is collaborating with local lifestyle magazine Telavivian to provide advice to guests who want to see the city like a local.

The hotel lobby will have a vending machine that dispenses cocktails created by local mixologists, who will also operate the hotel's bar, offering made-to-order beverages and small bites.

• In Jerusalem, the **Villa Brown Jerusalem** is officially open. The newest addition to the Brown Hotels group, this 24-room boutique hotel is built within a restored private residence from the Ottoman era.

A five-minute walk to the Old City, the Villa Brown Jerusalem is equal parts opulent and modern. According to a statement from the hotelier, the aesthetic is East meets West, merging neo-classical, Ottoman and eclectic design styles with bold, regal colors like red, emerald and mauve.

The building was once a private villa belonging to a famed doctor and general manager of Jerusalem's Rothschild Hospital.

The original walls of exposed stone date back more than 100 years. Hotel features include a lobby, outdoor spaces, restaurant, underground bar, bedrooms and suites. A complete restoration of the building saw the addition of two extra floors, as well.

Amenities include a Garden Bistro-Cafe; daily breakfast; high tea; subterranean Cave Bar, located in the one-time cistern from the private residence; rooftop spa and open-air Jacuzzi; rooftop terrace lounge overlook-

ing the city; and a lobby library.

• Also in Jerusalem, another luxury hotel hit the scene this year. Situated on a site that was once held by the German Templar Society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the **Orient Jerusalem** sits in West Jerusalem's German Colony, 20 minutes from the Old City and closely located to HaTachana, the city's historical train station, which is situated in what now is a lively district of boutiques, cafes, restaurants and galleries.

A massive renovation and restoration has resulted in a lobby with tapestry-lined ceilings and a glass pavilion that faces the courtyard.

As a tribute to the Templars,

a small interactive museum on site enables guests to connect with the neighborhood's heritage. The museum features a selection of artifacts from the Templar era. A collection of contemporary art is on display throughout the property.

A spa and wellness center offers Turkish hammam and Eastern-style treatments, including ayurveda and shiatsu therapies. The facility has two pools, including a rooftop infinity pool overlooking the Old City and surrounded by private cabanas.

The property comprises 243

rooms in a newly constructed central building and two preserved Templar buildings from the 1880s.

Additional amenities include lobby restaurant Khan, which serves gourmet kosher offerings. There is also a variety of venue and meetings rooms, including a large conference and banquet hall that accommodates up to 900 people.

The 24-room Villa Brown Jerusalem is built within a restored private residence from the Ottoman era.

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Top, the rooftop of the 39-room Vera in Tel Aviv, which will open its doors in November. Bottom, a guestroom in one of the restored buildings of the Orient Jerusalem, a 243-room property on a site that once belonged to the German Templar Society.

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IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND TOUR

Trip: Visits Adare, Killarney, the Ring of Kerry and Dublin, Ireland; and Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Departure: Nov. 1 from New York JFK via Aer Lingus.

Length: Five nights.

Sponsor: Lynott Tours, Mineola, N.Y.

Cost: \$1,479 per person, double. Includes international airfare from New York JFK; hotel accommodations; ground transportation; and meals, site inspections and sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Noteworthy: This is an agents-only trip; a limited number of single rooms are available at an additional cost of \$500. Airfare can be arranged from other cities for an additional charge.

Contact: (516) 248-2042; email: emcnulty@lynotttours.com

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Trip: Special travel agent rates through Dec. 15 at Oasis Hotels & Resorts.

Sponsor: Oasis Hotels & Resorts, Cancun.

Cost: \$49 per person, per night, double. Includes accommodations at the Pyramid or Grand



Oasis Hotels & Resorts is offering agent rates through Dec. 15 at a selection of its properties in Mexico. Pictured, the Grand Oasis Tulum Sian Ka'an.

Oasis Sens in Cancun or Grand Oasis Tulum in Tulum; dining at a variety of restaurants; and credits at Red Casino at Grand Oasis Cancun.

Noteworthy: This rate is available for up to two guests; a third person in a room receives a rate of \$30 per night. Restrictions apply.

Contact: (855) 270-2111; web: www.oasisconnect.net and click on the Agent Rewards tab.

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Trip: Spends three nights in Paris on the Seine River onboard the Seine Princess or the Botticelli.

Departures: Oct. 13, 27 and 30; Nov. 13; and Dec. 3, 6, 10 and 13 from Paris, cruise/land only.

Length: Three nights.

Sponsor: CroisiEurope, New York.

Cost: From \$399 per person, double. Includes accommodations onboard the ship, meals, excursions as indicated in the itinerary, onboard entertainment, travel assistance and repatriation insurance and port fees.

Noteworthy: One companion is welcome at the same rate; the single supplement is \$243.

Contact: (800) 768-7232; email: info-us@croisieurope.com; web: https://form.jotformpro.com/62714948627972

COSTA RICA TOUR

Trip: Visits San Jose, Tortuguero, Arenal, Monteverde and Manuel Antonio.

Departure: Nov. 25 from San Jose, land only.

Length: Nine nights.

Sponsor: Flash Tour USA, Vero Beach, Fla.

Cost: \$729 per person, double. Includes hotel accommodations, transfers, meals and sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Noteworthy: One companion sharing the same room travels at the same rate; the single supplement is \$299.

Contact: (800) 991-3583; email: flashtourusa@mail.com

ARGENTINA/BRAZIL TOUR

Trip: Spends three nights in Buenos Aires and one night in Iguazu, Argentina, and three nights in Rio de Janeiro.

Departure: Oct. 28 from New York JFK via Aerolineas Argentinas.

Length: Seven nights.

Sponsor: Panorama Travel, New York.

Cost: From \$1,595 per person, double. Includes international air and air within South America, airport transfers, hotel accommodations, breakfast daily, ground transportation, sightseeing as per the itinerary and the services of an English-speaking guide.

Noteworthy: This is an agents-only trip.

Contact: (800) 204-7130 or (212) 741-0033, Ext. 3112; email: vera@panoramatravel.com; web: www.panoramatravel.com

ITALY TOUR

Trip: Spends one night in Stresa and five nights in Lake Como.

Departure: Oct. 28 from Stresa, land only.

Length: Six nights.

Sponsor: Donna Franca Tours, Boston.

Cost: \$649 per person, double. Includes hotel accommodations, airport transfers, breakfast and dinner daily, ground transportation and sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Noteworthy: The companion rate is \$749 per person. Roundtrip air from New York JFK to Milan can be added for \$640 per person.



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Contact: (800) 225-6290; email: info@donnafranca.com

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Departures: Various dates through April 30 from Kochi, land only.

Length: Seven nights.

Sponsor: Services International, New Delhi.

Cost: \$699 per person, double. Includes hotel accommodations and one overnight onboard the cruise houseboat Spice Coast; most meals; and private transfers, tours and entrance fees.

Noteworthy: Companions are welcome at the same rate; the single supplement is \$585.

Contact: Email: services@india-travel.com; web: https://www.india-travelpackages.com/famtrip/kerala-fam.html

VIETNAM TOUR

Trip: Visits Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue, Tam Giang Lagoon, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Phong Nha, Ke Bang and Ho Chi Minh City.

Departures: Oct. 22, Nov. 5 and 19 and Dec. 3 and 24 from Da Nang, land only.

Length: Five nights.

Sponsor: Crossroads Travel Center, Corona, Calif.

Cost: From \$949 per person, double. Includes hotel accommodations, airport transfers, ground transportation, some meals and sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Noteworthy: One companion is welcome at the same rate.

Contact: (657) 202-6798; email: crossroadstv1@aol.com

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Departures: Dec. 9 and Feb. 1 and 24 from Barcelona, cruise only.

Length: 12 nights.

Sponsor: Sterling Vacations, Austin, Texas.

Cost: From \$878 per person, double. Includes inside cabin accommodations, meals and

snacks onboard the ship, unlimited alcoholic drink package with meals, sightseeing as per the itinerary, educational talks about each port and government and port taxes.

Noteworthy: Companions are welcome at the same rate.

Contact: (866) 345-7755; fax: (888) 557-1046; email: info@sterlingvacations.com

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Departures: Sundays through December 2018 from Arusha, land only.

Length: 12 nights.

Sponsor: Routes Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Tanzania.

Cost: \$3,620 per person, double. Includes lodge accommodations, ground transfers, meals, park fees and game drives as per the itinerary.

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Contact: Email: info@routeskilimanjaro.com; web: www.routeskilimanjaro.com

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TRAVEL WEEKLY
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AWARDS

Industry assuring travelers that U.S. is a safe place to visit

By Michelle Baran

Following last week's mass shooting in Las Vegas, America's inbound tourism industry was taking stock of what kind of impact U.S. gun violence might be starting to have on the country's image and on the number of visitors it can attract.

It marks the second year in a row that a high-profile destination has suffered what at the time was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. The 2016 Orlando nightclub massacre held that same unfortunate distinction until last week.

Lisa Simon, executive director of the International Inbound Travel Association (IITA), said, "Some of our members in Las Vegas immediately received calls from clients, both those with visitors already in Las Vegas and those with future bookings for the area. As you might expect, there were a lot of questions about logistics as well as potential disruptions to their trips, and there were some cancellations."

Simon said that most of the calls of concern her members received following the shooting were from Chinese visitors. To help reassure Chinese officials that their citizens traveling with U.S. tour opera-

tors were in good hands, Simon said that IITA sent letters to the Chinese consulates in Los Angeles and San Francisco, "letting them know that the industry was working diligently to ensure the safety of their guests while minimizing disruptions to their itineraries."

While the cumulative impact on inbound travel of mass shootings in the U.S. has yet to be officially quantified, representatives of the sector argue that security threats in destinations throughout the world potentially lessen the image of the U.S. as an unsafe place to visit.

Brand USA CEO Chris Thompson, said, "These types of things unfortunately are the new way of life. The terror attacks, random acts of violence [are] not just happening here but all over the world. I don't think it's going to have any negative impact
See CONCERNS on Page 38

In Vegas, the streets are empty, except for the police

By Jamie Biesiada

An eerily quiet Las Vegas Strip greeted the clients of agents after last week's massacre at a country music festival, with an increased police presence and still-broken windows at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino serving as constant reminders of the horror that unfolded when a heavily armed shooter began firing down on 22,000 concertgoers.

Deanna Tracey, owner of Newburgh, N.Y.-based CDT Travel, a member of Travel Leaders Network, said her clients were reporting, "It's extremely quiet, it's depressing and, of course, all the shows they had booked are all canceled."

Tracey's clients, a husband and wife,

drove into Las Vegas the day after the shooting. The New York couple was on a trip from Phoenix that ended in Las Vegas and were about five hours outside the city when they heard news of the shooting.

Tracey immediately called them and explained that the Strip was closed and advised them to delay their arrival as long as they could. She texted them updates as they arrived in the city, checking into the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino later that day and opting to stay as planned through last Thursday.

"She was just telling me it's just so surreal out there," Tracey said. "They can see the [broken] windows out of Mandalay Bay where he was shooting from. She just says

it's very weird, quiet — you know, Vegas is not quiet."

The couple also reported an increased police presence throughout the city.

Shelly Cayer, an agent based in Red Deer, Alberta, and member of TL Network Canada, also had clients in Las Vegas during the shooting.

"They had said that Las Vegas was very somber and pretty much shut down," Cayer reported.

Her clients were unaffected by the incident and flew out Monday, as scheduled. Unsure if they would face issues leaving, they arrived at the airport earlier than usual, but aside from a minor one-hour delay they flew home without issue.

SECURITY

Continued from Page 1

"We have more equipment and technology, we have more security per capita than any other resort-type city in the U.S.," asserted David Shepherd, CEO of the security consultancy Readiness Resource Group. A 24-year veteran of the FBI, Shepherd for seven years was the executive director of security for the Venetian.

In Las Vegas, Shepherd said, security chiefs meet monthly with the police, the FBI, the Secret Service and the Drug Enforcement Agency to discuss best practices. Intelligence about potential threats is distributed to resorts by the Southern Nevada Counter Terrorism Center, a "fusion center" staffed by employees of 27 agencies.

Given the vast number of visitors flowing through the city — more than 800,000 per week — and the hard partying that often accompanies trips to Sin City, the Strip is actually remarkably safe, said Mehmet Erdem, associate professor at the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).

"If you look at the number of robberies or stabbings or muggings, we should have something every day, and we don't," he said. "I think that's a testament that the system is working."

Still, the system didn't prevent shooter Stephen Paddock from assembling a horrifying arsenal in his wrap-around suite overlooking the Strip or wreaking havoc on 22,000 country music fans gathered to hear headliner Jason Aldean's closing set.

Given all that preparation and intelligence, the question on everyone's mind in the wake of last Sunday's tragedy is whether or not it could have been prevented.

"There's no easy answer to that," said William H. Sousa, director of UNLV's



A tourist takes a photo of the broken windows at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas on Oct. 4, three days after a gunman opened fire on an outdoor music concert from his perch on the hotel's 32nd floor, killing dozens and injuring hundreds.

Center for Crime and Justice Policy. "We're dealing with a situation that really hasn't occurred at this level before."

Most active-shooting training focuses on ground-level threats seven to 10 feet from victims, Shepherd said, not elevated aggressors targeting people below. The most famous comparable case dates back 51 years to when a gunman killed 17 people from atop a tower at the University of Texas in Austin.

As more information comes out, the security community will study what happened in Las Vegas and address vulnerabilities through training, awareness and perhaps increased security measures, just as it does in response to incidents all over the country and the world.

"There's a lot of things that are going to come out of this," Shepherd said. "There's

a lot of things that may change. The No. 1 mission on our minds is the safety of our guests under every threat condition."

Clark County is in the process of installing bollards along sections of Las Vegas Boulevard. Those are the metal barriers intended to separate street traffic from the sidewalk and protect pedestrians from vehicle attacks such as those in Europe or incidents like the one in 2015 when a woman drove onto the sidewalk in front of Planet Hollywood, killing one and wounding many others.

One response to the Route 91 concert shooting may be better training for non-security staff at Strip casinos so that housekeepers, VIP hosts and front desk workers, the employees who are most likely to come into contact with guests planning something nefarious, are better

equipped to assess suspicious behavior and report it when necessary.

Those kind of security adjustments likely won't impact guest experience and would go unnoticed by most of the people playing craps or grabbing cocktails. But some of the measures being discussed in the wake of this month's shooting are far more invasive and could prove to be impractical in the long term.

In the days immediately following the Route 91 concert attack, Wynn and Encore stationed security staff at entrances to both properties, searching bags and scanning visitors with hand-held metal detector wands. By midweek, those precautions had reportedly been relaxed. A spokesperson for the resorts declined to comment on the changes.

"It's just to show we mean business," Erdem said of the enhanced screenings. "People constantly go in and out of these hotels. They're like little mini-cities with multiple entry points. I honestly don't think it's pragmatic to screen everything and have metal detectors."

The real challenge, experts agree, is balancing luggage checks and metal detectors with Las Vegas' cultivated status as a destination for no-holds-barred escapism. In the immediate aftermath of tragedy, customers might be relieved to see tighter security. But a month from now, will visitors want to face additional scrutiny or wait in TSA-style lines to enter a casino?

"You want people to feel welcomed," said UNLV's Sousa. "You want people to have freedom of movement. You want people to have a fun, free experience. Balancing that with security concerns is always a major challenge. Overall, Las Vegas is a safe place to be."

Sarah Feldberg is Travel Weekly's contributing editor for Las Vegas.

When leisure travel meant a pilgrimage

We take leisure travel for granted today, but something set me to wondering about the origin of traveling for adventure and pleasure. I exclude voyages of conquest (Vikings, conquistadors, etc.), spice trade and other merchandise shipping since that was business travel.

Just as today, many travel planners wanted nothing to do with business travel.

In the Middle Ages, leisure travel was often part of a religious pilgrimage. I found that leisure travel and planning then and today are eerily similar.

Where to go?

Planning has always been the key to a successful trip. The pilgrim traveled for various reasons. The destination and itinerary might revolve around a particular saint, a saint's particular specialty in healing illnesses or restoring business and more. A knowledgeable travel planner would be invaluable.

A good planner had to stay current on canonization of new relics or saints. For example, a man possessed by the devil, on arriving at St. Denis near Paris, was chagrined to learn the local French saint had stopped curing the ill so that Thomas Becket, the new and relatively unknown English martyr, could make a name for himself.

New destinations popped up regularly. Pilgrims passed by Saintes in France on the way to Santiago de Compostela until St. Eutrope of Saintes healed a blind man and Saintes quickly became the go-to healing destination.

News spread quickly, and miracles occurring in the south of France attracted pilgrims from Scandinavia and other Northern Europe countries. Having knowledge of and information on so many destinations became a major challenge for both travel planners and providers, which led to advertising and promotion.

Churches spent tremendous amounts of money decorating shrines and reliquaries. Flyers extolling the miracles of the saint, which included testimonials from satisfied customers, attracted many. First person testimonials from preachers and others created interest and awareness. Moreover, just as we have jingles in broadcast advertising today, pilgrim songs associated with a destination were part of the Top 40.

And don't forget direct mail. It was not unusual for a shrine to send flyers to those in other cities reminding them that a particular shrine was closer but offered advantages and benefits over those farther away. They went so far as to point out that miracles had occurred at their shrine only after other saints and shrines had failed.

Subtlety was sometimes pushed to the background, with one ad reporting that a sick person who had gone to Rome heard a voice asking why he was wasting time there, admonishing him to return home to a spe-

cific monastery to be healed.

Trip cost: Pilgrimages were not cheap. The cost might easily be a year's income, with most pilgrims advised to go in poverty and on foot. Rich pilgrims seldom did either. There were land packages and cruises back then, too, to suit discriminating tastes.

Clothing: Pilgrims had to have a uniform, so buying new clothes for the journey was an important part of the experience.

Getting there: Whether doing the land package or taking a voyage, travel was difficult, time consuming and often dangerous.

Tours: Fortunately, there were guidebooks (an early version of "Europe on Two Pence a Day," perhaps) that provided information on roads that were often poorly marked and maintained even more poorly, with tips about toll roads and their cost.

These guidebooks also contained information regarding places to get food and drink, where not to drink the water, which times of year were unsafe for travel and more.

Voyages: By the early 14th century, an overland pilgrimage was all but impossible. Long-distance travel by ship in the Middle Ages was likewise dangerous and uncomfortable. Venice to Rome was a popular itinerary back then, as well, except it took six weeks to get from one to the other. Food was terrible. Having the livestock, kept on the ship as a food source, get loose and trample the guests was a problem.

Ship guides advised that passengers take their own food and water and sleep on the deck if they could. Of course, there was no cruise director, so activities revolved around drinking, gambling and playing games. For many, the days were spent people-watching or gazing out to sea.

Like today's hotels, inns along the route varied significantly in quality. Some were literally fleabags, and innkeepers were often accused of cheating pilgrims with high prices and poor quality food. Then, as now, the currency exchange rate in the hotel was the worst — and only — place to change money in the days before banks.

Souvenirs: Pilgrims needed to prove where they'd been. T-shirts and baseball caps having not yet been invented, they bought lead badges to pin on their hats, clearly showing the shrines they had visited.

Fellow passengers and stops: Pilgrims were ignorant of the customs and habits of people who lived in the lands through which they passed or in places the boats anchored, just as today. Pilgrims characterized the locals as badly dressed, ill mannered in their eating habits, dishonest, quarrelsome and untrustworthy. One group from what is now Spain was deemed so dreadful that they had to have come from Scotland. They didn't have much good to say about Greeks or Arabs, either.

Traveling alone from the 12th century onward was really not an option, so the majority of

pilgrims traveled together. They were cautioned to choose companions carefully, as some people masqueraded as pilgrims and, having gained their fellow travelers' confidence, would rob or even kill them. Some even dressed as priests to gain others' confidence.

And there you most likely had some of the first travel scams ever recorded.

I'm frustrated of late with the number of stories from all over the country recounting how a "travel agent" has cheated innocent, trusting people of thousands of dollars. Within the last two years or so alone we have seen:

- A young dance group cheated out of more than \$60,000 for a trip to a Florida theme park.

- A high school band group cheated out of \$360,000 by a Utah-based agency it had paid for a trip to Hawaii that had to be canceled.

- The owner of the same Utah agency stealing \$782,480 and being sentenced to five years in federal prison without parole.

I could go on for hours with other examples of travel agent theft. The ones who deserve the greatest scorn, though, are those who clothe themselves in their religion as a proof that they are honest and aboveboard.

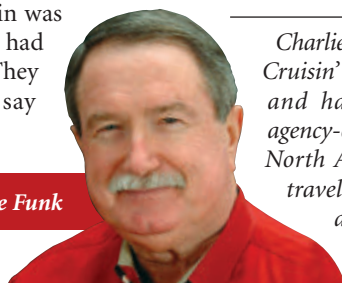
I have not even touched on the frauds that lure gullible people into shelling out hundreds of dollars to become an "instant travel agent." Granted, there are legitimate host agencies that offer valid services for an initial investment and monthly fee. Somehow, the image of what we do being incredibly easy, with zero threshold to get in, limitless wealth and free travel has become embedded in our culture.

A common thread to some of the swindles I found involves people who think they have found a way to put one over on a travel supplier. They believe some travel agent has found a secret way to cut out some unidentified chunk of cost and is passing it along. Another common element is the "get rich quick" scheme involving little or no effort or work.

It's like this: I share a common belief with probably most travel professionals that unless and until there are standards one must meet before being allowed to present oneself as a travel adviser, people becoming instant travel agents is not going to stop. Lawyers, doctors, real estate agents, even barbers and hairstylists have to demonstrate professional ability before being allowed to ply their trade. It should be no different for travel professionals.

On the other hand, until someone finds a way to strip avarice, greed and the desire to make a lot of money for doing nothing, we'll continue to read about gullible people cheated of their life savings.

Charlie and Sherrie Funk own Just Cruisin' Plus in Brentwood, Tenn., and have provided agent and agency-owner training throughout North America on every facet of travel agency operations. They are members of the Cruise Lines International Association Hall of Fame.



Charlie Funk

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The U.S. Embassy in Havana. Employees here were among those targeted in attacks that prompted the U.S. to issue a Cuba travel warning for all citizens on Sept. 29.

CUBA

Continued from Page 1
government, and based on what I know — it’s not an attack that was perpetrated by the Cubans,” Popper said. “It’s just not in their DNA, and if they were to do something, they would have done it in the last 50 years when relations were at their worst.”

He continued, “We were definitely surprised by the travel warning announcement. We really all kind of sighed in disbelief and thought it was an over-reach, because there’s no proof that any American traveler is at any risk because of what’s happening.”

The Cuba travel warning, issued on Sept. 29, advises U.S. citizens not to travel to Cuba following reports that over the past several months, numerous employees at the U.S. Embassy in Havana had been targeted in sonic attacks that produced physical symptoms that included hearing loss, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, cognitive issues and difficulty sleeping.

“Because our personnel’s safety is at risk, and we are unable to identify the source of the attacks, we believe U.S. citizens may also be at risk and warn them not to travel to Cuba,” the warning stated.

It reported that attacks had occurred in U.S. diplomatic residences and hotels frequented by U.S. citizens. The State Department has not released the names of those hotels, something that tour operators and U.S.-Cuba trade advocates have asked it to provide.

Four days after the travel warning was issued, President Trump expelled 15 Cuban diplomats from Washington, a move that was widely seen as another step backward in relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

Improved U.S.-Cuba relations during the Obama presidency ultimately led to opening up travel between the two countries. That resulted in a boom in Cuba’s tourism industry as Americans flocked to what had previously been an off-limits destination.

But now tour operators, suppliers and the numerous vendors they work with on the ground in Cuba are becoming increasingly nervous as they watch the Trump administration chip away at the progress that was made. Many of them have invested heavily in a tourism industry they

hoped would continue to flourish.

Collin Laverty, president of Cuba Educational Travel, said that when it comes to imposing stricter travel regulations for Cuba, the administration doesn’t “want to do it in a very public, open way, because it’s not popular. So, they’re chipping away. They remove a travel category here, they ban hotels that are run by the [Cuban military] there. Now there’s a travel [warning] that gets everyone nervous. So they’re small steps at making it more difficult and creating an environment of uncertainty and of fear. And, unfortunately, that seems to be their strategy right now.”

Since June, tour operators with Cuba programs have been dealing with what Manny Kopstein, founder of Cuba Travel Adventures Group, described as a “triple whammy” of setbacks with regard to Cuba travel, starting with President Trump’s decision to reverse several hallmarks of President Obama’s Cuba policy, including individual people-to-people travel to Cuba.

That was followed by Hurricane Irma, which took a toll on Cuba and resulted in a Sept. 19 travel warning advising U.S. citizens about the risks of travel there while the island nation recovers. Then came the Sept. 29 travel warning regarding the attacks on embassy workers.

What’s more, Kopstein said the admin-

‘A travel ban would be Armageddon. Its effects would reverberate to the people of Cuba.’

— Tom Popper, Insight Cuba

istration has taken further steps to make travel to Cuba more difficult in an effort to appease a Cuban-American lobby that would like to see stricter restrictions placed on the Cuban government.

“I think they have not gone far enough to please the Florida lobby, because the Florida lobby of Cuban-Americans see all the holes in [the recent tightening of Cuba travel] restrictions, how weak they are,” Kopstein said.

“They were more pronouncement than having teeth to really restrict American travel to Cuba. And that upsets the lobby, and they want more. To me, it is very much trumped up for the United States government to issue back-to-back warnings.”

So far, operators have been able to maintain existing bookings to Cuba by explaining the situation on the ground to their clients and assuring them that it remains safe to travel there. Even so, they have seen a slowdown in future bookings.

“What we personally are experiencing is a dramatic slowdown in interest by Americans to go to Cuba right now,” Kopstein said. “I expect it will pick up in the next week or two or three when the waters are calmer, but we are seeing a 50% falloff from last year’s bookings at this time for the most heavily booked time in Cuba, which is middle-December to the end of February.”

Operators expressed concerns not only for their own business but for the livelihood of Cubans who depend on U.S. travelers to support their hospitality-based enterprises. Yet they remained optimistic that tensions will subside and travel will rebound.

Asked if they worry that Trump might ultimately ban travel to Cuba, operators said that doesn’t appear to be the aim. The consensus is that once things simmer down a bit, travel to Cuba will be back to normal.

However, if the administration did decide to pull the rug out from under them with an all-out ban, “it would be Armageddon,” Popper said. “For InsightCuba, it would essentially end 17 years of doing this, and the effects would reverberate to the local people in Cuba.”

CONCERNS

Continued from Page 36

any more than anywhere else. What makes Vegas Vegas, what makes Orlando Orlando is still there and is still amazing.”

He added that as for the fact that random acts of violence are part of the new travel landscape, “we’re all collectively figuring out how to deal with that.”

Simon, too, said the message her members are trying to convey to clients is that incidents such as the mass shooting in Las Vegas as well as natural disasters or an act of terrorism can occur anywhere, anytime.

Dean Smith, Flight Centre Group’s president for the Americas, said the company’s Australian customers do not seem to have been deterred by the Vegas shooting.

“While we have not seen a dip thus far, if some do choose to bypass Las Vegas in the coming weeks, we expect that will be short-lived,” Smith said. “Las Vegas is a bucket list destination for so many people, and one isolated event will not change that. Australians travel extensively, do not tend to change plans too radically and are resilient.”

He added that the combination of affordable airfares and the relative stability of the dollar continue to make the U.S. an attractive destination for international travelers.

“The USA consistently ranks as one of the most popular destinations for Australian travelers,” Smith said.

Johanna Jainchill contributed to this report.



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TABOO

Continued from Page 26

enon that has popped up in some form throughout much of history.

“Every decade there is an urge, as people come into their sexuality, to explore it and to identify it as different than their parents,” she said. “Swinging is not new. It’s been around for centuries but came back into popularity in the 1970s. In the ’80s we saw open relationships. In the ’90s ‘polyamory’ was coined. In the 2000s we saw sensual festivals on the rise. My sense in the 2010s, especially among people in their 20s, is that more people will [self] identify as kinky. They don’t identify as swingers, necessarily. They’re just doing it a different way.”

Similarly, Giantonio said, “We find that younger people don’t want to be labeled swingers, but they all behave the same way that swingers do: They go partying, they go clubbing, and then they all go home and jump into bed together.”

Not surprisingly, the industry is introducing a range of new products catering to a younger market that is essentially looking to party and hook up. But these younger travelers often are not as affluent as the older generations. Nor do they have as much time.

In addition to running his Topless Travel agency, Giantonio is a partner in Bliss Cruises, one of the top charter companies for lifestyle cruises in the U.S. The company found that when it shortened itineraries from seven to five days and started them at \$600 per person vs. upwards of several

thousand dollars, the average age of the client dropped by nine years.

The bottom line

One popular perception of nudist or swinger travel is that it is an uncomfortable, pressure-filled environment full of unattractive people and/or perverts. That might seem like a blunt assessment, but it’s how attitudes have traditionally skewed.

Yet that perception couldn’t be further from reality.

What brings these travelers together is

a yearning to be themselves without being judged. I’m not a nudist, nor am I in the lifestyle, but my travels and writing assignments have taken me to places like Hidden Beach and Hedonism II as well as to several parties in New York devoted to sex in public. What I have found is an open, warm and welcoming community. In that way, it’s like any club or other organization: You find people with similar interests and everyone is going to get along.

Most travelers to these resorts and cruises are repeat guests, and the major-

ity of the couples I’ve encountered have been in long, healthy marriages for 20, 25, even 30 years. Everyone participates so that they can write their own adventure, which at the end of the day is really what most travel is all about.

The bottom line is that agents have to qualify clients to discern what each is looking for in a vacation. Does he or she want only topless-optional by the pool? A place that offers a nude beach? A resort that is completely nude? A full-on pleasure cruise or resort where the only rule is that there are no rules?

Many travel agents find that clients who are new to being naked or new to the lifestyle undergo an evolution. A client who is looking for a topless beach at age 20 might be an agent’s biggest Bliss Cruise client by the time he or she is 35.

“There isn’t one type of lifestyle person,” said Kevin Levee, general manager of Hedonism. “There isn’t one type of nudist. It’s not a box you can put around people. These travelers want to let their hair down and forget about reality for a few days. They want a nonjudgmental atmosphere.”

“It doesn’t matter what you look like. It doesn’t matter what size you are. You can come here, you can do what you want. As long as you’re not hurting yourself or anyone else, no one cares.”

Meagan Drillinger is Travel Weekly’s Mexico contributing editor and a sex-advice columnist/blogger for Men’s Health magazine and MensHealth.com.



Above, the clothing-optional prude pool at Hedonism II in Negril, Jamaica. The resort recently completed a \$6.8 million renovation of its guestrooms and public areas. Rates start at around \$400 a night. Below, beach beds at the Desire Riviera Maya resort in Mexico.



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A woman in a white robe is walking away from the camera on a wooden deck towards a swimming pool. The pool is surrounded by red lounge chairs. In the background, there are large glass windows and a mural of a person. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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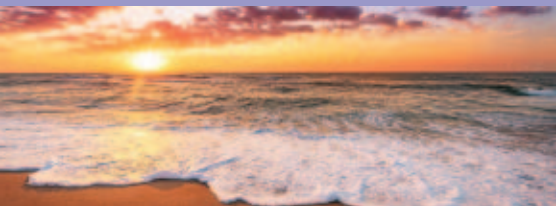
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THE *Caribbean*

ADVISOR



October 9, 2017
A Supplement to
TRAVEL WEEKLY



DREAMS RESORTS & SPAS

Dreams Resorts & Spas offer a high level of luxury for couples and couples with children, in ideal beachfront settings.

AGENT'S CORNER

LOYALTY AND REWARDS

LoyalTI First: Be sure to take advantage of Travel Impressions' LoyalTI First agent rewards program. Our first priority always has been—and always will be—our agent partners. TI puts your LoyalTI First, awarding every FIT booking with hundreds of points toward incredible prizes—automatically. No forms, no submissions—just rewards!

AMRewards: AMResorts brings you AMRewards™, designed exclusively with you in mind. With AMRewards, being rewarded for vacation planning is more efficient than ever, and the rewards have never been better. It's all in your hands: Make your bookings and choose the rewards you want! You can even use your points for free nights to experience the luxury and service of AMResorts for yourself.

DREAMS PALM BEACH PUNTA CANA:

Dreams Palm Beach Punta Cana, a AAA Four Diamond resort perfect for couples and couples with children, is situated on a picturesque, powder-white beach. This friendly, relaxing world includes gorgeous beaches, a majestic turquoise sea and the inclusions of Unlimited-Luxury®.

Your clients are treated to amenity-filled luxury rooms and suites, international restaurants serving gourmet fare, and friendly bars and lounges. Kids can spend time at the Explorer's Club and teens can chill in the Core Zone while parents relax poolside or at the spa.

DREAMS PUNTA CANA RESORT & SPA: Secluded in a lush tropical paradise, Dreams Punta Cana Resort & Spa provides stunning ocean views and palm-studded beaches surrounded by flourishing vegetation.

This Unlimited-Luxury® resort is an undiscovered treasure offering couples and couples with children one of the largest pools in the Dominican Republic, which flows from the lobby down to the beach and even includes a swim-up bar and attractions throughout. Kids can enjoy activities and entertainment at the

Explorer's Club, complete with a pirate ship waterslide, and teens can enjoy the Core Zone while adults unwind poolside or at the Dreams Spa by Pevonia®.

DREAMS PLAYA MUJERES GOLF & SPA RESORT: Perfectly situated in the exclusive gated community of Playa Mujeres, Mexico, within a world-famous golf course, is the stunning Dreams Playa Mujeres Golf & Spa Resort. This all-suite resort boasts 502 graciously appointed and luxuriously equipped suites, surrounded by secluded white-sand beaches and the turquoise Caribbean Sea.

Three levels of swimming pools span over 65,000 square feet, including two infinity pools with breathtaking ocean views, six whirlpools, a children's pool, a water park for little ones, a water park for all ages and a lazy river. Located just 10 minutes from downtown Cancun and 35 minutes from Cancun International Airport, this luxurious resort provides an ideal vacation setting.



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Caribbean

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the spirit of the *Caribbean*

BY HEIDI WALDROP BAY

*A*s a perennial vacation favorite, the Caribbean region entered 2017 riding the high of having surpassed 29 million arrivals for the first time ever in 2016 and growing faster than the global average. The first part of 2017 was a mixed bag of growth, with some islands reporting an increase in visitors—Jamaica, for example, welcomed its one millionth visitor for the year a few weeks earlier than expected—while others were more affected by the ongoing challenges that have hit destinations worldwide: Zika and political uncertainty, along with the rise of the sharing economy.

Primed to bounce back from those challenges, several of the islands in the Caribbean have suffered destruction from hurricanes this fall. While some have recovered quickly, others are facing large-scale challenges to infrastructure that will have an impact on quality of life and tourism for the foreseeable future.

The Caribbean's reputation for world-class tourism is based on a winning combination of irresistible factors for American travelers—proximity to and easy access from the U.S., resorts that range from moderately priced to the highest-end luxury, unique natural attractions and vibrant, diverse cultures. It's those very attributes, together with an indomitable spirit throughout the many nations that make up the Caribbean, that will ensure the Caribbean remains a favorite for American travelers.

In the following pages, you'll find highlights of trends, developments and future plans throughout the Caribbean. All information is up to date as of press time; to keep up with ongoing news and developments in the Caribbean, visit TravelWeekly.com. —Irene Korn





New on the Beach

The Caribbean is poised to welcome several new brands, expanding options for visitors seeking something new. In November, Mandarin Oriental is slated to debut its first Caribbean resort: On Canouan Island in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the former Pink Sands Club will become the Mandarin Oriental Canouan.

Two of the nine hotels Dream Hotel Group is set to open by the end of 2020 will include the company's first entrants into the Caribbean. Both Time and Unscripted brand properties are scheduled to open in the Dominican Republic in 2019. Cancun-based The Original Group is also debuting in the Dominican Republic, the company's first foray outside of Mexico: The adults-only all-inclusive Temptation, a topless-optional resort, is slated to open in the Punta Cana area with 496 rooms on 62 acres of beachfront in late 2019.

Playa Hotels and Resorts is partnering with beach apparel and sun care products titan Panama Jack for its new all-inclusive resort brand. The Gran Caribe in Cancun and the Gran Porto in Playa del Carmen are undergoing a multimillion-dollar rebranding this fall to become the first Panama Jack properties, with vintage tropical dining entertainment and decor.

As part of a rebranding, Palladium Hotels & Resorts' two adults-only The Royal Suites by Palladium hotels will become TRS Hotels, the company's new luxury brand. Both TRS Turquesa in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and TRS Yucatan in Mexico's Riviera Maya are set to debut the new branding in December. Joining them in fall 2018 is the new TRS Coral Hotel in Costa Mujeres near Cancun.

namedropping

Award-winning Jamaican Olympian Usain Bolt is serving as a special ambassador for the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) Global Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth through Sustainable Tourism, set to take place November 27 to 29 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The heightened interest and promotion accompanying the famed Jamaican sprinter offers an opportunity for travel

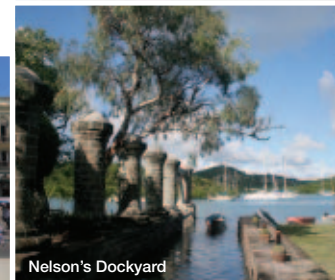
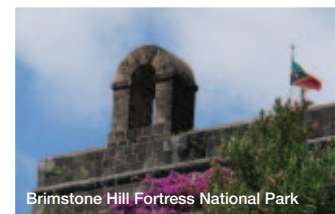
agents to illuminate the natural and cultural experiences available on all the islands of the Caribbean.



Past & Future

TREASURING THE PAST

Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua has taken a place of honor as the most recent historic attraction in the Caribbean to be named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site is a walled-in cluster of Georgian-style naval structures that was the home of the British Navy in the 1700s and now houses shops and hotels. Nelson's Dockyard joins several other World Heritage Sites in the Caribbean, such as Colonial Bridgetown in Barbados, Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and Old Havana in Cuba, as well as natural wonders like the Blue and John Crow Mountains in Jamaica and Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park in St. Kitts.



Expanding Golf Horizons

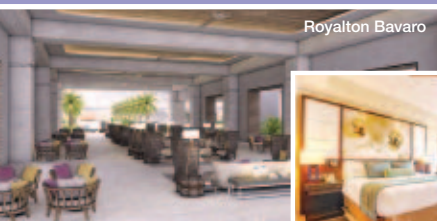
Golfers will soon be able to tee off at several new and redesigned golf courses throughout the Caribbean. This month, The Tryall Club in Montego Bay, Jamaica wraps up a year-long renovation that rebuilt the greens, bunkers and grading throughout the course to provide more well-defined lines of play. Also beginning this month, the all-inclusive Turtle Beach Resort in Barbados is offering guests golf at the Barbados Golf Club, including complimentary transportation.

In June, Sandals Resorts International acquired the Cap Estate 18-hole par-71 championship golf course on the northern tip of St. Lucia. Rebranded as the Sandals St. Lucia Golf and Country Club at Cap Estate, the facility is being upgraded, including a new family entertainment complex, swimming pool, tennis courts, new restaurants, and improved meeting and conference space. A short walk away, construction has begun on Sandals' fourth resort on the island, the 350-key, five-star, all-suite Sandals La Source St. Lucia Resort next to the Sandals Grande St. Lucian.



THE Caribbean

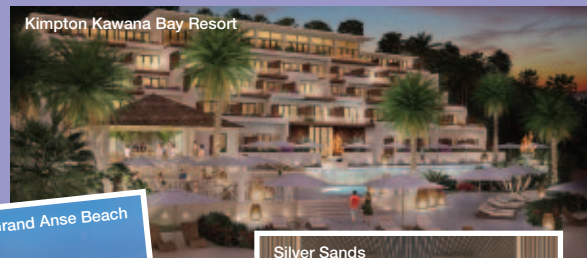
ADVISOR



Royalton Bavaro



Hideaway at Royalton Punta Cana



Kimpton Kawana Bay Resort



Grand Anse Beach



Silver Sands



Secrets Cap Cana

Dominican Republic

The hotel action continues in Punta Cana, including a number of expansion and renovation projects, along with new builds. Earlier this year, AMResorts opened the \$160 million, 457-room Secrets Cap Cana, including several bungalow-style suites with private pools, and Eden Roc at Cap Cana completed 26 two-bedroom beachfront suites, expanding its count to 60 suites.

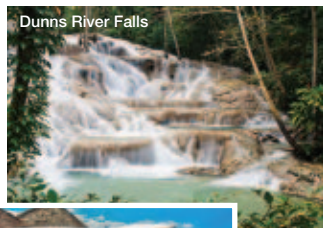
Openings slated for later this winter include the 730-room Royalton Bavaro and the 168-suite adults-only Hideaway at Royalton Punta Cana (adjacent to the current Royalton Punta Cana). On the horizon, the Hyatt Ziva and Zilara all-inclusive resorts are scheduled to open in the third quarter of 2019 with 750 suites, 12 dining options, 10 bars, a spa and fitness center, a dining/entertainment village, a water park and a convention center.

In Santo Domingo, the city's Malecon seafront boulevard is receiving an extensive upgrade and tens of millions of dollars are being invested into the historic heart of the city to repair streets, install streetlights and renovate centuries-old buildings, including more than 300 new cafes, restaurants and galleries.

Grenada

Playing host to the Caribbean Tourism Organization's annual State of the Industry Conference (SOTIC) this month gives Grenada the opportunity to show off new developments, including expanded service by JetBlue, the island's new agent specialist program, and updates on refurbished and new hotels that are enlarging the possibilities in Grenada.

Just over 400 rooms will expand Grenada's 1,500-room inventory over the next few years, including the 176-room Levera Beach Resort and the 86-room Silver Sands, both opening their first phases by the end of the year, and the 146-key Kimpton Kawana Bay Resort, slated to open in early 2019.



Dunn's River Falls



Sandals Royal Caribbean

JAMAICA

An expansion at the popular Jamaican attraction Dunn's River Falls is complemented by a hearty list of renovations and new-build projects throughout the island. AMResorts debuted the Zoëtry Montego Bay Resort last December with 49 suites, all with butler service and some with access to private swim-out pools; this February the company opened the 150-suite adults-only all-inclusive Breathless Montego Bay Resort & Spa.

By the end of this year, the former Palmyra Resort and Spa is slated to complete renovations and reopen as the Jewel Grande all-inclusive. Next June brings the arrival of Excellence Oyster Bay, an adults-only all-inclusive in the Montego Bay area featuring 315 suites along with oceanfront beach houses. Also in Montego Bay, the Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara at Rose Hall will wrap up a renovation by year's end.

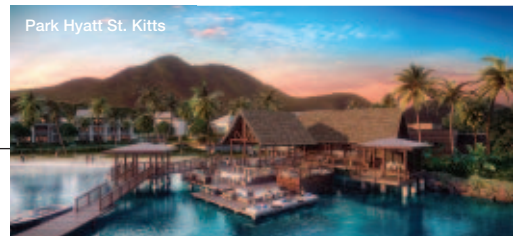
Sandals South Coast will open 12 overwater bungalows next month; identical bungalows debuted at the Sandals Royal Caribbean last December.

around the islands

Late last year, a number of new properties opened around the region. Among the highlights are two new properties on Grand Cayman—the 266-room Kimpton Seafire Resort + Spa and the 285-room Margaritaville Grand Cayman Beach Resort—and the \$100 million Shore Club on Turks and Caicos' Long Bay Beach on Providenciales. Look for two new hotels from Dubai-based Range Developments coming soon: The Park Hyatt St. Kitts, with 78 guestrooms and 48 suites, is due to open by the end of the year, and the 166-room Cabrits Resort Kempinski is slated to open by the end of 2018 in Dominica.



Kimpton Seafire Resort + Spa



Park Hyatt St. Kitts

St. Lucia

Island-wide, a hotel building boom is underway that will add 2,000 guest-rooms over the next four years. The 115-suite Harbor Club at the Rodney Bay Marina is slated to open this fall, and construction is scheduled to start by year's end in the Reduit beach area on a 500-room dual-branded resort that will include a 350-room Hilton and a 150-room Curio by Hilton.

Projects in the works on St. Lucia's south coast include the Honeymoon Bay Resort, with a 250-room all-inclusive family hotel and an 80-room luxury property with an 18-hole golf course; the Fairmont St. Lucia, with 120 rooms and 27 villas; and the 80-room Ritz-Carlton St. Lucia, slated to open in 2021 in the Black Bay development.

Also in the works is the 330-suite Sandals LaSource St. Lucia, next to the Sandals Grande St. Lucia, which debuted nine overwater bungalows in May. The new resort will also include overwater bungalows, along with winding river pools that will connect to the main pool and an entertainment facility.



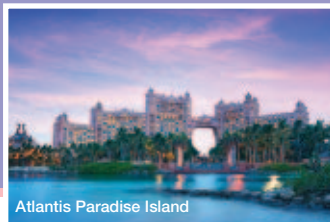
Fairmont St. Lucia

ANTIGUA

High-profile, high-end names are joining the roster of hotels in Antigua. A sampling includes the European Ocker Collection, which now manages Jumby Bay Island, including the 40-room resort, along with its 50 villas and estate home rentals. The 70-unit Hodges Bay Resort & Spa by Elegant Hotels is due to open by the end of the year. And Hilton has announced it will open its third Waldorf Astoria resort in the Caribbean on Antigua in 2020. Located on 30 acres of beachfront property in the Callaloo Cay Antigua resort area, the property will include 95 rooms and 25 villas.



Antigua



Atlantis Paradise Island



Grand Hyatt Baha Mar

The Bahamas

The action this year in the Bahamas is centered on its two mega-resorts. In July, the 3,400-room, 206-acre Atlantis Paradise Island unveiled a \$20 million renovation of its 693-room Coral Tower. And the resort's Marina Village is making it easy to partake in regional experiences, with highlights such as local foods, an authentic fish fry, weekend markets highlighting local artisans and seasonal festivals featuring Bahamian musicians.

After years of financial and legal woes, the \$4.2 billion Baha Mar finally opened its first phase last May. First to debut was about 300 rooms of the Grand Hyatt (which will eventually have 1,800 rooms), along with shared resort facilities including a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, a 100,000-square-foot casino, a 30,000-square-foot Espa-branded spa, food and beverage outlets, and a retail area. The 299-room SLS hotel will open in November, with 10 sbe brand restaurants and lounges opening over the next few months; slated for next spring is the 185-room Rosewood hotel, including five beachfront villas with private pools.

Barbados

By the end of the year, Barbados will debut two upscale headliners. Luxury lifestyle and hospitality brand Nikki Beach Worldwide will open Nikki Beach Barbados Club in Port Ferdinand on the west coast as its second resort in the Caribbean. And when the 222-suite Sandals Royal Barbados opens in December, it will feature some Sandals firsts—a rooftop infinity pool and gentlemen's-only barber shop—along with an entertainment pavilion and chauffeured Rolls-Royce airport transfers for guests in top-category suites.



Hotel Inglaterra



Holland America Line

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski

CUBA

It's uncertain how President Trump's decision earlier this year to reverse the Obama administration's Cuba policy, including allowing individual people-to-people travel to the country, will affect hotel expansion on the island, but some key new developments have already debuted and others are under way.

Last year, Starwood Hotels & Resorts reflagged Havana's Hotel Quinta Avenida as a Four Points by Sheraton. Marriott also has plans to renovate and manage Havana's oldest hotel, the 1875 Hotel Inglaterra, which is set to join Marriott's Luxury Collection December 31, 2019 after a series of preservation projects. Last June, the 246-room Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski La Habana opened in a UNESCO World Heritage Site that dates to 1917.

Even as some U.S. carriers have cut flights to Cuba, citing high operating costs and lack of demand, JetBlue, Delta and American are looking to increase their flight schedules by taking over the routes left when Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and Silver Airways pulled out. And confidence in cruising continues to be strong, with several cruise lines beginning or expanding sailings to Cuba, including Holland America, which will start cruises in December. For 2018, Carnival, Oceania, Azamara Club and Pearl Seas Cruises will all have sailings. Royal Caribbean International's *Majesty of the Seas* joins *Empress of the Seas* as the line's second ship visiting Cuba.

Sandals Royal Barbados



THE Caribbean

ADVISOR



Green Bike Aruba



Courtesy Jumby Bay



Four Seasons Nevis

GOING GREEN

Sustainability efforts are taking off throughout the Caribbean, offering ever more experiences that help visitors connect with the natural and historic treasures of the islands. St. Kitts, for example, has begun developing a series of projects focused on sustainability, such as the Rails to Trails program—restoration and conversion of the

old sugar railway into hiking and biking trails that allow visitors to discover areas of the island off the beaten path. On Antigua, the new John Hughes Community Mill Hunt Tour takes visitors on a hike to six sugar mills to learn about sugarcane as part of the island's history. And with the dual goal of providing a new sanctuary for marine life and a new area for scuba divers to explore, the

Bimini Big Game Club Resort & Marina

in the Bahamas sank four vessels last spring in 85 feet of water, creating a shipwreck dive site and future artificial reef.

Several islands feature ongoing turtle conservation programs, such as the Dominican Republic and Trinidad & Tobago. At the Four Seasons Resort on Nevis, guests can take part in a hands-

on program, and at Jumby Bay, the private island resort just off Antigua, guests can choose a new four-night immersive experience during turtle-nesting season (summer through mid-November). The program takes up to four guests on encounters such as a private, expert-led excursion to see nesting mothers and possible hatchlings; nightly turtle watches for a chance to see the turtle eggs being laid; a private, expert-led snorkel trip to learn about the coral reefs and their connection to this endangered species; and a private family dinner on the beach.

Some islands are also expanding sustainable ways for visitors to get out and about, such as Green Bike Aruba, which began the first shared-bike system in the Caribbean last spring and features 100 bikes for use by both tourists and locals. And at Bermuda's Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, guests can now rent one of the resort's 25 new Renault Twizy electric buggies to explore the island at their own pace.



Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino

Trend Watch

seeking the serene

New possibilities for serenity in the Caribbean are bountiful. Couples Resorts has begun offering the Caribbean's first all-inclusive unlimited spa experience at Couples Tower Isle in Montego Bay, Jamaica. At Laluna, a resort in the hills of Grenada with 16 adults-only bungalows and seven new family villas that opened last year, guests enjoy complimentary yoga classes in an open-air pavilion overlooking the Caribbean. While at

the 411-room Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, guests can check out the new stand-up paddleboard yoga class. And as part of a \$25 million property-wide renovation completed last January, the 357-room Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino opened a waterproof library collection, allowing guests to relax in the sun and read above or even in the water.



Laluna

Making Connections

Each Caribbean island has its own unique culture—and many islands are helping visitors create itineraries that include special ways to connect with their island's people, culture, cuisine and history. For example, last summer in Puerto Rico, the third *Ruta de la Salsa* (Salsa Route) debuted in Ponce. This tour, like the ones created last year in Old San Juan and the

district of Santurce in San Juan, takes visitors on an exploration of the places and people that have contributed to the sassy music genre.

Also last year, the petite 17-suite French Coco resort opened near the fishing village of Tartane in Martinique, delivering both luxury and a taste of the local culture. While on the island, visitors can check out the *Route des Rhums*, with distillery tours and tastings at some of Martinique's award-winning craft producers.

And traveling along Antigua's new Beach Bar Trail means discovering the distinctive charms of the beach bars on many of the island's 365 beaches, with specialties ranging from curry goat, tapas and conch fritters to island artwork, beach volleyball and live music.

Antigua



French Coco

At press time, all information is accurate. Please visit TravelWeekly.com for ongoing updates about the Caribbean.

RIVIERA DEL SOL HOTEL

Discover an intimate and relaxing travel experience at Riviera del Sol.

Riviera del Sol Hotel is located in a prime area of Playa del Carmen, on 1st Avenue between 5th Avenue and the beach. This small boutique hotel combines traditional architecture and decor, resulting in a space that provides both peace and harmony.

Riviera del Sol offers a unique and extraordinary experience. The hotel has 23 luxurious rooms, all with views to the tropical garden and central swimming pool. Breakfast is included in the stay, as is free Internet on the entire property. Guests also have access to Mamita's Beach, the best beach club

in the Riviera Maya, which includes beach lounges and sun umbrellas.

Riviera del Sol is committed to Mexico and its people, and in each room guests enjoy unique handcrafted details made by artisans from different regions of the country. All rooms are spacious and decorated in a chic, tropical Mexican style, with great attention to detail. Every room has Memory Foam beds, hair dryers, air conditioning, ceiling fans, plasma televisions, Internet connection, minibar (additional fee), a security box, and a balcony or terrace.

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RivieraDelSol.com

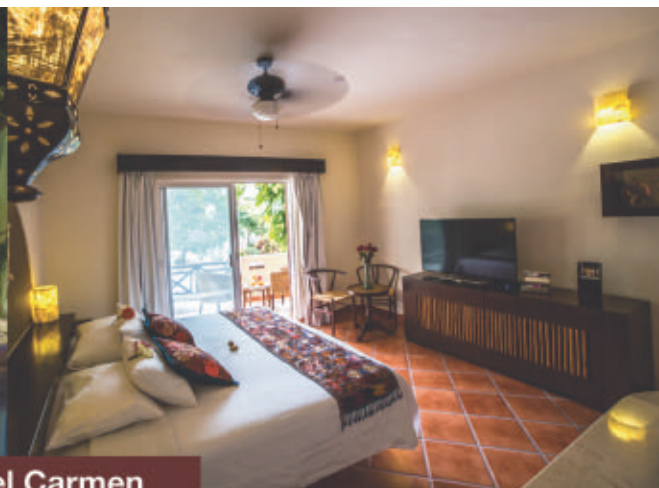
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- Welcome drink.

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PALLADIUM HOTELS & RESORTS

The Royal Suites by Palladium in the Caribbean and Mexico have become The Royal Suites Hotels.

AGENT'S CORNER

TRS HOTELS DIFFERENCE

Along with attention to upscale amenities, luxury hospitality and desirable offerings like accommodating beach clubs, the redesigned TRS Hotels brand boasts a guest-centered experience where every service is designed specifically to fulfill each individual guest's needs. As Palladium Hotels & Resorts continues to evolve, TRS Hotels aims to keep ultimate guest satisfaction at the forefront of this initiative.

TRS Yucatan Hotel and TRS Turquesa Hotel have begun their rebranding online, featuring a simple and refined logo to represent the new and improved adults-only hideaways. On-property rebranding will be completed by late fall 2017.

Palladium Hotels & Resorts is rebranding its adults-only luxury resorts, previously known as The Royal Suites by Palladium, to The Royal Suites Hotels (TRS Hotels). The rebrand includes a fresh and elegant look as well as an updated marketing campaign and logo. TRS Hotels will be independent of Grand Palladium Hotels & Resorts, but will remain true to the mission of offering the best adults-only luxury experience. The properties offer high-quality, personalized service in the Dominican Republic and Mexico, and will continue to do so at Mexico's new Costa Mujeres property, set to open in fall of 2018.

The TRS Hotels revamp will include upscale amenities, dinner-and-a-show-themed restaurants and world-class beach clubs to highlight this elevated concept. The evolved TRS Hotels brand is designed for those looking for the ultimate adults-only experience along with customized service and attention from all levels of the highly trained staff.

In addition to the rebranding, The Royal Suites Yucatan Hotel in Riviera Maya (TRS Yucatan Hotel) is currently undergoing various upgrades and renovations until December 2017. These upgrades include

completely renovated guestrooms, additional exclusive à la carte restaurants, a new infinity pool and integration of the entire room stock of the former Grand Palladium Riviera Resort & Spa, along with a Signature Beach Club. The Royal Suites Turquesa Hotel in Punta Cana (TRS Turquesa Hotel) will also be undergoing changes, including the addition of a Signature Beach Club, which is scheduled to open by December 1.

Be rewarded for your efforts in recommending and selling Palladium Hotels & Resorts by joining Palladium Connect, the best partnership program to reward your loyalty. For more information about Palladium's loyalty program for agents, go to PalladiumConnect.com and sign up to receive cash rewards for every booking you make, regardless of the channel you use.

**Pool image presented is an artist rendering.*



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TRs
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• RIVIERA MAYA • PUNTA CANA • COSTA MUJERES, CANCUN (COMING FALL 2018)

PALLADIUM
HOTEL GROUP



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AGENT'S CORNER

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As a member of the Meliá PRO Rewards Program, you are not only eligible for preferred travel agent rates, but you'll also receive points for every booking made through MeliaPro.com, which can be redeemed for personal travel, gift certificates and other perks. Another program benefit is the fun and interactive online training on each of Meliá brands, which you can complete on your own time. This will help you better understand the services offered by each of the brands and find the perfect match for your clients.

Want to double your earnings? Take advantage of our Meliá Cash Incentive program: Register all your bookings at www.MeliaCashIncentives.com and get rewarded for your hard work. Applicable for bookings made through MeliaPro.com, call center and contracted tour operator bookings.

An exclusive luxury experience awaits at Paradisus by Meliá's deluxe collection, The Reserve at Paradisus by Meliá.

Located in the hearts of both Paradisus Punta Cana and Paradisus Palma Real are the luxurious and ultra-private The Reserve properties.

The Reserve at Paradisus Palma Real is a deluxe luxury hotel in Punta Cana boasting 232 Residential Suite accommodations, private check-in for guests and a private beach with full concierge services.

The resort also features an array of lavish amenities and services, such as a rejuvenating YHI Spa, Family Concierge service, fine dining helmed by Michelin star chef Martín Berasategui, three pools, a fully equipped gym, an Eco Garden and golf course, a premium shopping center only five minutes away (transportation included) and a fantastic Kids Zone for the youngsters, among other sensational services. Furthermore, The Reserve guests also have free access to the services, facilities and restaurants at Paradisus Palma Real, with the exception of the Royal Service area.

The Reserve at Paradisus Punta Cana is the new all-inclusive boutique resort at Paradisus Punta Cana, specially designed for families. The Reserve guests are able to enjoy individual pools, a luxurious

private lounge and an exquisite collection of oversized suites, perfect for families. This deluxe luxury hotel in Punta Cana has a spectacular swimming pool as well as a children's pool with slides.

Additional features of the resort include a relaxing YHI Spa, Family Concierge service, fine dining helmed by Michelin star chef Martín Berasategui, a private golf course, a fully equipped gym, a fun Kids Zone and 122 new luxury suites, including One Bedroom Master Suites, The Reserve One Bedroom Suites and 48 Family Concierge Suites. Transportation to the beach plus free access to all the services, facilities and restaurants available at Paradisus Punta Cana are included as well, with the exception of the Royal Service area.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Paradisus.com
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AGENT'S CORNER

BOOK WITH DELTA VACATIONS

Need more information about these properties and other offerings in the Dominican Republic with Delta Vacations? We offer ongoing webinars and other marketing materials for your use through Delta Vacations Marketing Hub (available via WorldAgentDirect.com).

The Dominican Republic is heating up, and we're not just referring to the temperature. Delta Vacations® has seen an increase in interest to this tropical oasis, especially as new properties and developments crop up across the island. Whether your clients are a multigenerational group looking for a beach getaway the whole family can enjoy, adventurers seeking an active vacation with friends or a couple planning a romantic escape, they'll find their dream getaway with Delta Vacations in the Dominican Republic.

- With easy access to the Punta Cana International Airport, the Catalonia complex, consisting of **Catalonia Bavaro Beach, Golf & Casino Resort** and the adults-only **Catalonia Royal Bavaro**, offers avid golfers a chance to test out their skills on the golf course. For beach fun in Punta Cana, travelers can choose to experience the amenities offered at the upscale Pearl Beach Club offered by Catalonia, and enjoy a resort-like experience filled with entertainment and international cuisine.
- **Excellence El Carmen** offers a luxurious approach to adults-only travel, with 23 swimming pools and new suites with views

of the Caribbean Sea. And, once renovations are completed in fall 2017, guests will be able to enjoy two new swimming pools and a restaurant in addition to the existing amenities at **Excellence Punta Cana**.

- **Ocean Blue and Sand**, an all-inclusive beachfront hotel, provides entertainment for the entire family. With an on-site casino, nightly shows, a teen's club, a kid's club and watersports, this property has something to delight guests of all ages.
- With the largest water park in the Caribbean, introductory scuba lessons and non-motorized watersports, **Memories Splash Punta Cana** will satisfy enthusiastic water lovers. And for those guests who follow professional sports, the resort's Sports Event Guarantee ensures that fans will never miss an important game, as they air top U.S. and international games at their on-site sports bar.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
WorldAgentDirect.com
800.727.1111

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Once-in-a-lifetime experiences abound in Punta Cana.

There are loads of shore fun, championship golf and underwater discovery in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Make their vacation even more serene with the fine dining, spa rejuvenation and personalized extras at these resorts:

- Catalonia Royal Bavaro - Adults Only
- Catalonia Bavaro Beach, Golf & Casino Resort
- Excellence El Carmen - Adults Only
- Excellence Punta Cana - Adults Only
- Ocean Blue and Sand
- Memories Splash Punta Cana

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Memories
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Introduce your clients to a new level of paradise at Majestic Resorts in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. These stunning all-inclusive properties highlight the unique charm of the Caribbean while pairing natural perfection with exceptional service.

At Majestic Colonial, guests bask in a relaxing paradise, ideal for couples, families and groups. Majestic Elegance is a deluxe property for travelers looking for a sophisticated and chic getaway, where lush natural beauty intermingles with an ideal combination of comfort and stunning beaches, also perfect for couples, families and groups. For clients looking for an adults-only experience, book one of Majestic Resorts' exclusive clubs, with personalized service and an intimate Caribbean vibe.

For a larger dose of pampering, look no further than Majestic Mirage, where it's all about more—more space, more luxury and more amenities, all tucked away in an all-suite resort boasting the most sophisticated facilities and services. All guests of the Mirage Club—which is 18 and older—and the Family Club sections will indulge in exclusive amenities and facilities, including VIP lounges, butler services,

in-room dining, live entertainment and premium drink selections.

Enhance your clients' Majestic experience with My Time through GOGO Vacations. My Time gives you an advantage over the competition by providing your clients with special touches and extra amenities, all at no additional cost to you or to them. Some of the exclusive perks include a \$50 spa credit, a free round of golf or a private romantic dinner, and discounts on premium wine and spirits at on-site restaurants. Plus, My Time has no blackout dates, is combinable with all existing rates and promotions, and is also applicable to group bookings.

Lift your clients' experience into a new realm of relaxation at no additional cost when you book a My Time vacation package from GOGO Vacations.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
GOGOWWW.com
888.567.0600

Caribbean Charm & Exclusive Perks in

PUNTA CANA

At Majestic Resorts, guests will be seduced by the charm of Punta Cana. Spacious rooms with Jacuzzis lead the way into days filled with fun, endless sun, stunning beaches, and a range of dining options to satiate the most discerning palate. Enhance your clients' Majestic experience with My Time by GOGO Vacations, which offers special touches and extra amenities, all at no additional cost to you or to them. Plus, My Time has no blackout dates, is combinable with all existing rates and promotions, and is also applicable to group bookings.

GOGO Vacations: **888.567.0600** or www.gogowvv.com



MAJESTIC
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*Conditions apply: Contact GOGO Vacations for further details. The My Time offer is provided by our third party suppliers to My Time customers and are subject to availability. My Time and any third party supplier may (in their sole discretion) substitute any of the offers for any other offer that is available for similar or no face value. All offers have no cash value, are not combinable with any other offers and are not transferable. Any offers not used have no surrender value and are not redeemable for cash. GOGO Vacations does not assume responsibility for any errors or omissions in the content of the offers displayed. GG#1434 SS 8/17

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- Exclusive pool and beach area with beverage service*

Book and travel by December 16, 2017.

Offer subject to availability and may be canceled at any time without prior notice. Other restrictions may apply. Contact your preferred tour operator for more information.

**Varies by resort, may not be available at your resort or may have limitations and/or restrictions.
**Based on availability.*



FOR MORE INFORMATION
BarceloAgents.com

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Earn up to \$2,500 on your next leisure group with **Barceló Hotel Group**. You clients will enjoy an unforgettable all-inclusive experience in a beachfront location, all while you get to CASH-IN!

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MARTINIQUE

Named #1 of 25 Caribbean Destinations to Visit in 2017 by *Caribbean Journal* and #2 of Kayak's Top Trending Beach Destinations of 2017.

At a crossroads of Creole and French identity and heritage, Martinique is a safe destination with rich culture and history, delightful cuisine, remarkable architecture and wonderful natural assets, including unspoiled white-sand beaches and lush rainforests. The island is part of France and boasts modern and reliable infrastructure and telecommunications services all on par with those of the European Union.

Choose from 3,500 rooms at properties including boutique hotels, all-inclusive and family resorts, and outstanding villas, along with unique

settings such as a fully equipped, air-conditioned clear bubble hotel room in a private tropical garden.

Just a stone's throw from the elegant capital, Fort de France, travelers will find some of the island's most revered distilleries, which produce the signature AOC *rhum agricole*. Prestigious and organic rums can be discovered by traveling *La Route des Grands Rhums*, and contemporary art exhibits are on display at the new *Fondation Clément* museum.

Celebrated cruise ships also dock at Pointe Simon and Les Tourelles, both located in the bay of Fort de France. Shore

excursions and ferries provide memorable introductions to the island, especially its unique shopping opportunities.

Looking for a new destination for your clients this winter? Martinique has a lot to offer for romantic gateways, family or active vacations, and group travel. It's everything your clients expect of the Caribbean and more. Martinique indeed...*c'est magnifique!*



FOR MORE INFORMATION
MartiniquePro.org
212.838.6887



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with Air Antilles

YEAR-ROUND FLIGHTS
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The Caribbean's first all-inclusive, unlimited spa experience is here—and it's only at Couples Tower Isle.

Consider the rules of spa luxury rewritten! At Couples Resorts, we've turned à la carte spa experiences into something your clients will love a whole lot more—the Caribbean's first-ever all-inclusive spa vacation.

Debuting exclusively at Couples Tower Isle, this revolutionary concept in spa luxury unfolds at the Oasis Spa Villas, our light-filled collection of ultra-private villas. Featuring sun terraces, personal plunge pools and unfettered, unlimited access to Oasis Spa therapies, beauty treatments and a spa concierge, the Oasis Spa Villa experience introduces a new level of spa luxury, privacy and exclusivity.

Your clients can leave their wallet and their worries at home when they choose Couples, because virtually everything is included—even spa gratuities. From the moment they arrive in Montego Bay, they'll be pampered in grand Couples style. Private roundtrip airport transfers, private in-villa check-in and a custom-designed itinerary featuring unlimited spa services set the tone for a restful and restorative stay.

In addition to unlimited spa bliss, your clients will enjoy 24-hour gourmet dining (including dinners in the privacy of their villa or at their choice of resort

restaurants), unlimited premium-brand drinks, golf, scuba diving, watersports and memorable excursions to some of Jamaica's best-loved attractions, including Dunn's River Falls.

If it sounds too good to be true, read what some of our most recent guests had to say: "Definitely truth in advertising," "Worth every penny," "Most incredible five days," "Sooooo worth it."

Isn't it time your clients had a vacation that left them feeling pampered and relaxed, with the added bonus of round-the-clock romance? We'll treat them to an island getaway that is, quite simply, unmatched anywhere.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Couples.com
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- \$10 per traveled room night (That's \$70 for a seven-night booking!)
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Explore how much more is in store when they choose Couples Resorts. Our four oceanfront, all-inclusive resorts on Jamaica's sun-kissed coasts offer more of what your clients vacation for – more activities, more excursions, more breathtaking experiences.

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