

travelbulletin

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Giving agents the edge

AGENT INSIGHT

Sandy takes us on a trip down memory lane

AGENT BULLETIN

Educational opportunities and great ways to stay motivated

BULLETIN BRIEFING

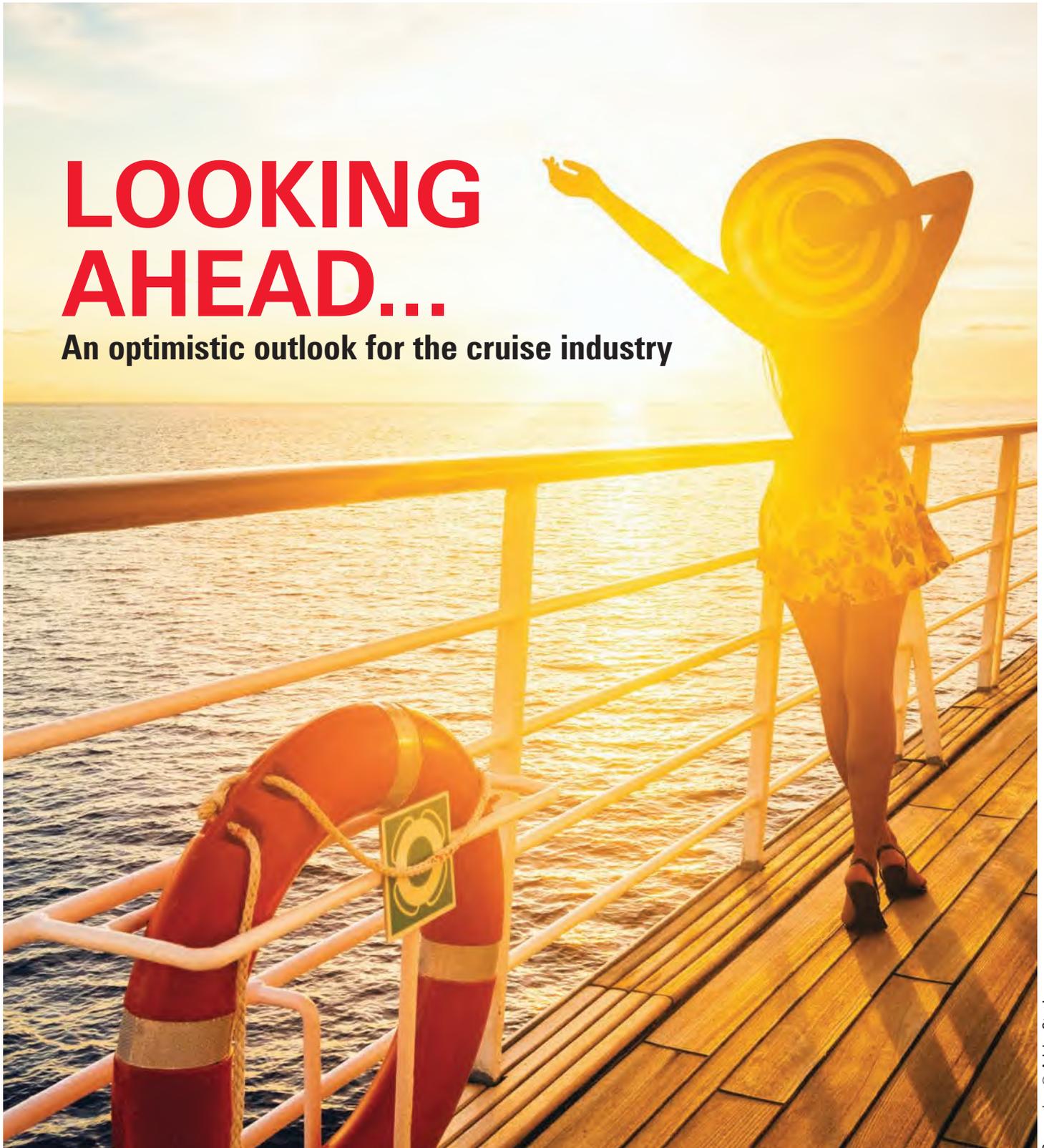
PATA on how agents can boost their knowledge to boost sales

PUZZLE BULLETIN

Win a £50 M&S voucher with the Su Doku competition

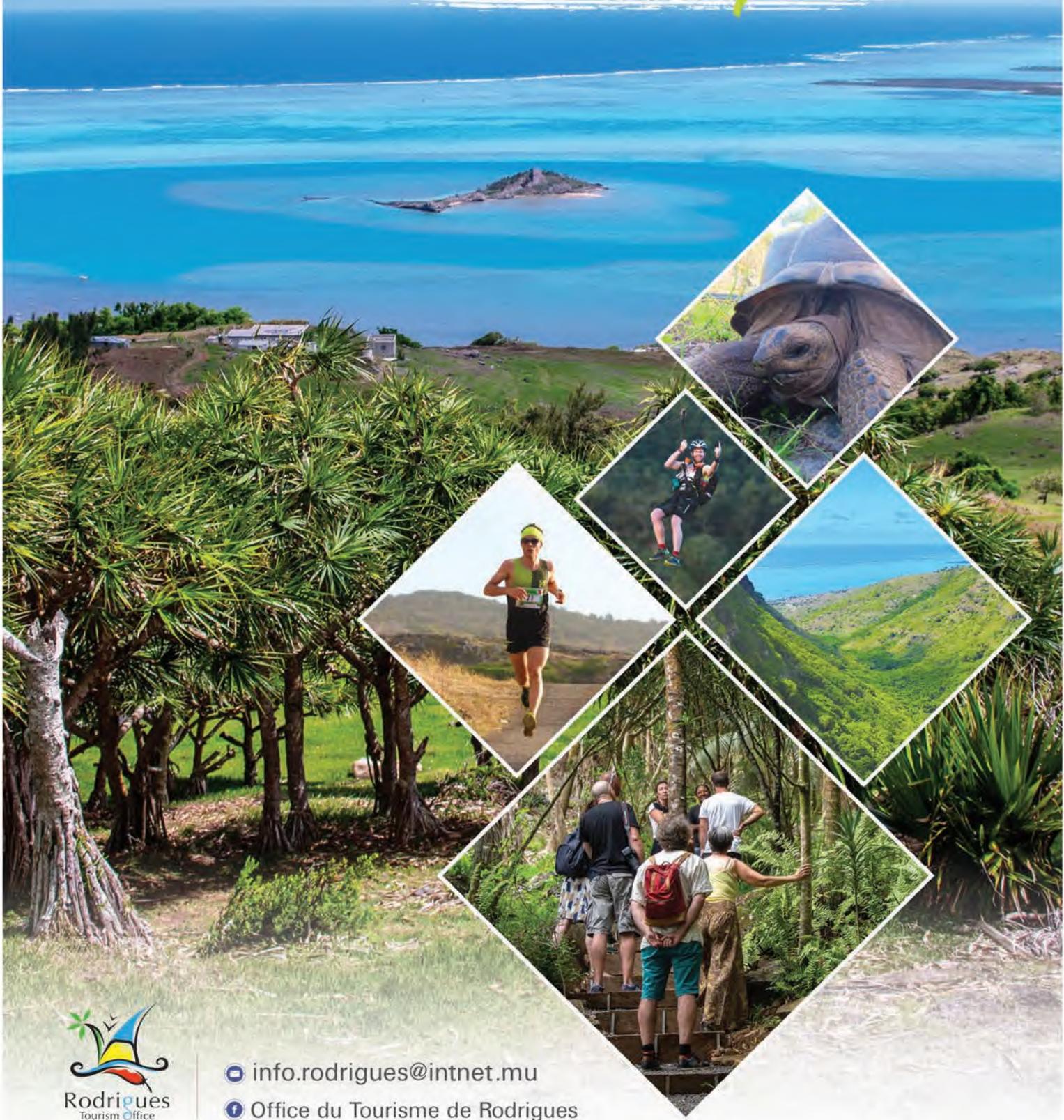
LOOKING AHEAD...

An optimistic outlook for the cruise industry



Rodrigues Island

naturally...



- ✉ info.rodriques@intnet.mu
- 📍 Office du Tourisme de Rodrigues

www.tourism-rodriques.mu

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WEEK OF WONDER

English Tourism Week will be a virtual event this year. Vinita Tiwari explores the options for agents who are looking for inspiration to sell staycations.



Durham Cathedral can be experienced online during English Tourism Week 2020.

ENGLISH TOURISM Week, hosted by VisitEngland, will unfold on a digital platform this year, from May 25-31. The campaign will promote initiatives put together by tourism boards, hotels and the food and beverage sector across England, to revive the industry which generates £106 billion revenue each year.

Additionally, the English tourism industry supports 2.6 million jobs, is a major employer of young people, and acts as an incubator for entrepreneurs and innovators across the country.

During this year's online event, agents can experience places such as Durham's castle and cathedral, and the

nearby seaside town of Seaham come alive with a guided tour on screen, or enjoy a virtual tour of The Grand Theatre in Blackpool.

Visit the art galleries and museum in Birmingham on their official website or marvel at the local recipes it has to offer, for creating some lockdown treats.

With travel agents understanding the importance of shopping locally, there are opportunities to support English businesses too – bread, ham, dairy and farm products, fruits, wine, beer or coffee will be available online from entrepreneurs such as Stonehurst Family Farm, Paul Rhodes Bakery and The Vegetable Diva.

Wine connoisseurs can enjoy an online tasting session, which features a social media competition every Friday on Facebook and Instagram – with the prize being six cases of English wine.

Every year, English Tourism Week showcases the hard work that goes into making each destination special for visitors, with the aim of raising awareness of the value and quality of English tourism, while encouraging domestic travel.

To find out more and get involved with this year's online event, go to www.visitbritain.org/english-tourism-week

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Boldly booking for 2020 sun versus waiting for 2021

BRITONS MIGHT be able to holiday in Greece from June 1 – the Greek government is waiving the 14-day quarantine for visitors from the UK. However, it is expected that Britons will still be quarantined on their return to the UK. Cyprus has extended the ban until May 28 but airports could reopen in June. Italy will start having tourists only from the EU in July or August. In Turkey, tourists will not be allowed until the end of July.

Matt Crate, managing director of P2P travel money provider, WeSwap, commented on whether agents should book travel to these destinations now.

"The news that Brits may be able to travel to the Greek islands from June 1 is good news to many whose travel got disrupted this year.



Could UK tourists be enjoying the sights of Greece again this summer?

However, Brits will need to accept that they face 14 days of quarantine upon their return. But it's a sign of things beginning to get back to normal," he said.

Italy is looking to re-open in July or August, so others may follow suit, according to Mr Crate. Ryanair is looking to resume 40% of its flights in July if passengers observe

new PPE rules. If the trip is financially protected, booking now could mean taking advantage of the 2020 European summer. But if clients can wait until winter, it is likely that more destinations will be available as well as more deals, Mr Crate concluded.

Report by Unique Pattnaik.

Kempinski reopens Chinese hotels after lockdown loosened

FOLLOWING EASED lockdowns in China, Kempinski Hotels has reopened all its hotels in the country. Strict safety and hygiene procedures have been put in place to comply with local government authorities and WHO guidelines.

The new measures include mandatory temperature checks at each hotel entrance; the posting of public health certificates in public areas; daily air purification in the dining outlets; frequent disinfection of all equipment; obeying local laws on social distancing in all restaurants and public areas; and complimentary sanitiser and masks for guests and employees.

In response to the social distancing rules, the hotel group has partnered with Meituan and Eleme APP, two food delivery



companies, to launch online food and beverage sales to ensure contactless services for their guests' convenience. Kempinski culinary teams have selected high-quality dishes, best suited for long-distance delivery, and have worked on improved packaging to ensure freshness.

www.kempinski.com

CMV looks ahead to the 2021 spring bank holiday

WHILE THE UK has stayed home for the 2020 spring bank holiday, CMV is already gearing up for next year. CMV's new flagship arriving April 2021, Amy Johnson, will sail from London Tilbury on May 28 on a three-night cruise to Amsterdam and the medieval town of Antwerp. Fares start from £229pp.

As well as the Amsterdam-and-Antwerp itinerary, Columbus sails from London Tilbury on May 29 on a seven-night cruise to the Norwegian fjords via Rotterdam, Flåm, Eidfjord and Bergen. Fares start from £569pp.

Magellan will circumnavigate the British Isles on an 11-night voyage sailing from Newcastle May 30, including Dundee, the Orkneys, the Isle of Mull, Belfast, Ringaskiddy and the Isles of Scilly. Fares are from £939pp.

The Marco Polo departs from Hull on May 30 for 11 nights, taking in Invergordon, the Shetlands, Stornoway, Tobermory, Belfast and Cobh near to Cork in Ireland, finishing with a call to the Isles of Scilly then Portsmouth. Fares are available from £899pp.

www.cruiseandmaritime.com



Spa Candy is a sweet treat for kids at Centara

CENTARA MIRAGE Beach Resort Dubai will be launching Spa Candy, a Willy Wonka-inspired kids' spa experience in 2021. On arrival, children will be greeted by a team in pink uniforms and wigs. Each outlet will feature a Rainbow Wall which will be filled with shelves of colourful sweets with furniture resembling oversized candies; a Candy Hall where children can mix bath bombs and scrubs; three themed treatment rooms; a communal manicure/pedicure area, and a shop where customers can buy products to extend their experience when they get home.

www.CentaraHotelsResorts.com

Airlines get ready to take off as tourism reopens

WHILE THE coronavirus pandemic has been a tough time for many airlines across the globe, many are gearing up to resume regular passenger flights.

Finnair will start flying again from Heathrow and Manchester in July, gradually adding frequencies and routes back to its global network. The airline will review its schedule on a monthly basis and update it as travel restrictions are eased and demand recovers. Until June, Finnair will have been operating at 5% of its normal capacity, maintaining critical air connections.

Lufthansa, SWISS and Eurowings are adding numerous leisure and summer destinations to their flight schedules in June, as well as more long-haul destinations. Lufthansa will



Airlines are upping frequencies with enhanced hygiene protocols in place.

be resuming 21 extra flights across Europe in the first half of June, including Manchester, as well as 19 long-haul destinations.

AEGEAN is increasing its domestic schedule. Flights to Heraklion, Chania, Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis have resumed. Additional flights will be added to Rhodes,

Corfu, Mytilene, Chios, Samos and other European destinations from May 25.

Bangkok Airways is resuming domestic services with the Bangkok-Samui flight services now operating twice daily.

Etihad Airways has now resumed its London-Melbourne route, which stops in Abu Dhabi.

Caesars Palace makes a health and safety plan to open again

LAS VEGAS icon Caesars Palace is to reopen as soon as it is permitted by the authorities and management has released a plan to ensure visitor safety.

The health and safety plan includes enhanced cleaning and sanitisation of public spaces and guest rooms using CDC-recommended disinfectants and guidelines intended to limit the spread of the virus. The company will instruct all team members to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds more frequently throughout their shift, and signage will encourage guests to do the same. Hand sanitiser will also be available throughout all properties.

The company will facilitate social distancing by limiting table game spots and slot machines.



Non-gaming offerings, including entertainment, restaurants and bars, will likely be reopened on a phased basis with limited capacity. Spaces where queues form, including check-in, elevator lobbies, taxi lines, employee break rooms and cafeterias, will be clearly marked for appropriate social distancing.

Masks in Munich: new airport safety protocols

MUNICH AIRPORT is preparing for a rebound in air traffic and increasing passenger figures with a series of upgraded safety measures.

Rules of conduct will be publicised via announcements, posters, video screens, and heavier staff presence. The frequency of cleaning will be increased and surfaces will be disinfected in all areas where passengers spend time. Hand sanitiser dispensers will be provided for passengers; and passengers and employees are required to wear face masks at the airport, effective immediately. The

obligation to wear masks applies in all airport terminal buildings.

At check-in and security check, lines and floor markings are used to social distancing. Plexiglas panels have been installed where passengers and employees are in direct contact. Passengers are advised to check in online if possible. Terminal 2 houses six vending machines – four prior to security and two in the gate area – that can be used to purchase face masks, disinfectant wipes, and other sanitary products.



Sandals Resorts gives agents an extension

SANDALS RESORTS has extended travel agent programmes including Chairman's Royal Club membership and Sandals Specialist benefits through to 2021 to help support the trade. The Sell & Go rewards programme, where agents earn free nights at Sandals and Beaches Resorts has been extended to give agents longer to use them as they are unable to be processed. Agents with any unused nights from 2018 can use them up until December 31, 2020, while those earned in 2019 can be used until December 31, 2021. Any nights earned in 2020 will be valid until December 31, 2022. www.sellingsandals.co.uk (Image: alh1/Flickr)

Why the travel industry can't stop the marketing

Writing exclusively for *Travel Bulletin*, Niki Lancaster, head of social at digital agency Search Laboratory, explains why the travel industry cannot "press pause" on marketing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WITH NO end in sight as to when travel bans will be lifted, consumers remain wary of booking future holidays and as a result, there has been an industry-wide drop in conversions and sales. With a drop in demand and sales, marketers need to assess where else they can add value. It is important to adapt your messaging and assume a 'customer first' approach to build trust during these uncertain times. By adding value through entertaining, informative, trustworthy social media content today, travel marketers can foster relationships with customers who are ready to book once restrictions are lifted.

Consistent communication is vital. Consumers have time on their hands and online usage has increased since measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have been put into place. This gives brands a bigger, more captive audience to engage with and entertain – and with



Agents can capitalise on customers who are still researching trips online.

so much time on their hands, consumers are more than ready to receive high quality, value-added content.

It is a troubling time for consumers; many will be worried about their financial security, and those who have holidays booked during the lockdown have the stress of both missing their holidays and arranging refunds, often from several different vendors. Be empathetic. Ensure you're transparent about changes to policies, the refund process, and lead times so customers know how long they can expect to wait for a response and when they'll know about changes to bookings. Doing everything in your power to

make this process easier for them will ensure they return once restrictions are lifted.

Although the sales cycle has slowed down, potential customers are still researching destinations. Make sure you gather as much data on this audience as possible; track users who engage with your website, and build an audience plan looking at how you will segment them and what messaging you want them to see. By putting in this groundwork now, when you may find yourself with a little extra time to spare, it will make reaching these users with the right messaging easier in the future when they're able to buy.

Tahiti looks nice... for an agent training webinar

TAHITI HAS been added to a series of agent training webinars by Black Diamond. The schedule is as follows:

June 3, 4pm: Colorado Front Range.

June 4, 2pm: The Islands of Tahiti.

June 10, 2pm: California Road Trips.

June 11, 2pm: Hidden California (off the beaten track).

June 17, 2pm: Seattle.

June 18, 2pm: Pittsburgh.

The sessions will feature an introductory overview, how to get there, accommodation recommendations, insider tips and a Q&A session. Attendees will be in with a chance to win, and all webinars will be hosted on the platform on demand.

www.facebook.com/BlackDiamondTravelTrade/ for more details on how to register.



"A city of knowledge, creativity and culture is what our brand needs."

Mia - Beckton

Make this the year with 45 destinations open for business, like Dundee, from the heart of London.

Londoncityairport.com

Image credit Visit Dundee

Follow your heart in 2020

BABTA
ATA No. 039/09

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MARVEL AT MUSEUMS... Visit Qatar has put its major museum attractions online so agents can learn about them and inspire clients. The museums that can be viewed online include: National Museum of Qatar, Qatar Children's Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Islamic Art, Museum of Islamic Art and M7, which is Qatar Museums' new hub for fashion, design and technology startups. www.visitqatar.qa

Small group and solo holidays in focus for Titan

SMALL GROUP and solo holidays represent an opportunity for agents, especially for clients who prefer less contact with large groups in the COVID-19 world. As such, Titan's new brochures for small group and solo holidays are now available for download at www.titanagents.co.uk/trade/current-brochures

Combining small group tours with solo departures, Titan's latest brochures for 2021 are designed for travellers or those who wish to explore the world in a group, limited to a maximum of 24 guests, or individually with likeminded travellers. Single supplements start from £199, and solo travellers can join any Titan tour, including small-group tours. Flexible deposits start from £49.



Titan is offering small-group experiences in incredible locations, such as Kruger National Park.

Andy Squirrell, managing director, Titan Travel, comments, "Keeping things small lets us plan activities and experiences that aren't usually possible for bigger groups, like seeing the closing of the border ceremony between Indian and Pakistan or enjoying coffee with locals in Ethiopia. It also means we can organise some unique overnight stays – intimate camps around Kruger National Park, quaint country lodges in KwaZulu-Natal, stilted Khmer houses in Cambodia."



AGENT INSIGHT

SANDRA MURRAY
NORMANTON, YORKSHIRE

I WAS sorting out my paperwork and I came across the very first article I wrote for *Travel Bulletin*, back in February 2003! I wrote about feng shui because we practice it in my shop, and animal conservation, because I'm a big believer that the travel industry can do a lot to help here. I'd just heard that BA was going direct in 2004 and urged agents not to wait until then – no more sales in 2003 would mean less chance of them getting our customers' names and addresses!

Headlines at the time shouted about job losses, which reminded me that many independents were short-staffed, so I encouraged people to apply.

I observed that it was nice to see Thomson and Airtours burying the hatchet (and not in each other!), with both products being actively sold in each others' shops again. It was a sign of hope.

What about the politics of the time? I was staying positive while the "three bears" – Tony Blair, George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden – played charades. I said it would be a sad day if we let them grind us down. I declared that when the going gets tough, the tough get going and, with that in mind, I pointed out that there are lots of things agents could do to encourage sales. For a start, I offered the view that we give a far superior service than Teletext, the internet and even direct sell.

At the movies, I'd just seen a great film called *Catch Me If You Can* with Tom Hanks and that Leonardo guy! The movie featured this anecdote: Two mice fell into a vat of cream. The first mouse gave up and drowned, but the other swam like mad. It swam so hard that the cream turned to butter and it was able to climb out to safety. That was my message for that week – all things are possible.

There are things I wrote 17 years ago that indicate some things haven't changed. Coronavirus is the worst thing that has happened not just to us, but worldwide, and it is doing a lot of damage. But we are strong, we can handle change and do things differently. Stay positive, strong and flexible and we will come through this.



The Algarve, a popular Portuguese holiday destination, is opening up for business over the next few months. See below for great ways agents can learn about the Algarve so they can sell holidays with confidence.

AGENT TRAINING

- PROMOTE ICELAND** is using the lockdown to launch a series of live webinars to educate and expand the knowledge of travel agents. Each episode will have a local representative from the specific region, who will introduce the audience to these places and will give an overview of the most popular tourist attractions, unique selling points, and interesting facts and figures. The webinar dates and links are as follows:

May 26, 2pm BST – Reykjanes Peninsula <http://tiny.cc/d540oz>
May 28, 2pm BST – West Iceland <http://tiny.cc/a740oz>
June 2, 2pm BST – South Iceland <http://tiny.cc/5740oz>
June 4, 2pm BST – East Iceland – <http://tiny.cc/k940oz>
June 11, 2pm BST – Reykjavik <http://tiny.cc/0b50oz>
- THROUGH ITS Big Badge Bonanza** incentive, Brand USA is inviting agents to expand their USA knowledge by completing badges on the USA Discovery Program to win prizes. Agents can register or log on to www.USADiscoveryProgram.co.uk and complete any badges of their choice to win the following prizes: Agents who complete three badges will win a Brand USA goody bag; Agents who complete five badges will win an American cookbook; and agents who complete seven badges will be entered into a prize draw to be in with a chance of winning one of 10 One4all vouchers worth £100. Runners up will receive an American cookbook. The competition ends on June 11.
- THE ALGARVE Tourism Bureau** has launched its first virtual agent fam trip so that agents can learn about the destination through dynamic imagery and video content giving them an immersive online experience. The trip is divided by days, areas of the Algarve, periods of the day and includes travelling times between places. Agents can update their knowledge on: Places to visit; resorts and hotels; restaurants and gastronomy; activities such as diving, hiking, cycling and food tours; beaches; hiking and cycling trails; and ancient neighbourhoods. The virtual fam trip can be found on Algarve Tourism's website for trade partners: www.algarvepromotion.pt/pt/menu/255/virtual-press-fam-trip.aspx

AGENT INSPIRATION

WHILE TRAVEL is on hold, Sweden continues to inspire with virtual travel experiences, including a four-day virtual tour of Arctic Sweden and DJ nights straight out of Stockholm. Sweden is also busy launching wild glamping in Värmland, as well as a series of outdoor adventure and back to nature activities, such as brand new water cycling, new hiking trails and Lapland ballooning.
www.visitsweden.com

RENT A Finn goes Virtual is a social media initiative which lets people in on the Finns' natural way of life for feeling happier while staying at home and dreaming about our next trip. In addition to the livestream series that will showcase how to Eat with a Finn, Relax with a Finn or Be Active with a Finn, you can apply for an exclusive one-to-one session with the Virtual Happiness Guides.
www.facebook.com/visitfinland

THE ANNUAL Grenada Chocolate Festival has been turned into a virtual event running throughout May, so agents have a few more days left to get involved. Chocolate experts, chocolatiers and food bloggers will share tasting tips, recipes for food, drink and beauty products and trace the history of chocolate from the Aztecs to the chocolate bars of today.
www.grenadachocolatefest.com

AS PEOPLE find themselves cooking at home more, they need inspiration for new meals. Enter **Recipe Notes: A Taste of Music City**, a free cookbook filled with more than 35 starter, side dish, dessert, and drink recipes from Nashville restaurants and cafes, courtesy of the city's tourism board. Download at www.visitmusiccity.com/nashvilles-cookbook and agents can share photos of their creations using the hashtag #NashvilleRecipes.

travelbulletin COMPETITIONS!

Travel Trivia Quiz

Test your travel knowledge every week with Travel Bulletin's new quiz!

Submit your weekly entries and all correct submissions will be entered into a free prize draw to win a £100 shopping voucher.

The winner will be selected from all quiz entries and notified on June 5th 2020.

For all competitions visit
<http://www.travelbulletin.co.uk/component/rsform/form/1593-Travel-Trivia-Quiz>

SUDOKU

Win a £50 M&S voucher in the **travelbulletin** Su Doku prize puzzle A

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

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

competition@travelbulletin.co.uk

Closing date for entries is Thursday, June 4th. Solution and new puzzle will appear on June 5th.

The winner for May 8th is Hazel Williams from Northampton Travel Services.

May 8th Solution: A=3 B=8 C=4 D=7

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



WHERE AM I?

Recommended for families because of its safe, shallow waters, this beach has a lively bar and restaurant scene. It is also popular with sporty beachgoers thanks to its volleyball courts. Despite being family-friendly, the beach name actually means 'Peeping Tom'!

CROSSWORD

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

1		2				3		4		
5										
										6
		7		8						
				10						
11		12				13		14		
	15									
16										
						17				

Across

- Capital of Menorca (5)
- Otherwise known as Cymru (5)
- Paris theme park (10)
- Currency used in 12 Down (3)
- Fashion and lifestyle magazine found in Sunday's Daily Mail (3)
- Something cold in Venice (3)
- Currency of Albania (3)
- Flows through Chester (3)
- Net sport, often played on the beach (6-4)
- First name of Antiques Roadshow presenter (5)
- Location known as the Queen of the Hebrides, it's famous for whisky distilleries (5)

Down

- Singer Jane, often seen cruising on TV (8)
- Sled dog (5)
- First name of Boris's baby son (7)
- National Trust island in the Bristol Channel (5)
- Elizabethan House in Stamford, venue for the Land Rover Horse Trials (8)
- Celebrity chef, ___ Lawson (7)
- This city was once the capital of Japan (5)
- Electronic message (5)

Mystery Word: MANILA Where am I? - Metzlim Beach, Tel Aviv

Solution: Across: 1. MAHON, 3. WALES, 5. DISNEYLAND, 7. YEN, 9. YOU, 10. ICE, 11. LEK, 13. DEE, 15. VOLLEY-BALL, 16. FIONA, 17. ISLAY. Down: 1. McDONALD, 2. HUSKY, 3. WILFRED, 4. LUNDY, 6. BURGHLEY, 8. NIGELLA, 12. KYOTO, 14. EMAIL.

Industry insight



Ian Dockreay, training representative for PATA UK & Ireland, tells us how agents are streaming online travel courses while on lockdown and why this is a great time learn about the Asia-Pacific region.

THE TRAVEL industry has never faced such a cataclysmic shock as the impact of COVID 19 on people's ability to travel. Yet I am reminded daily of the appetite of frontline travel staff to improve their knowledge as we see a boom in e-learning engagement.

The Asia-Pacific region continues to be a leading choice for agents, and with

18 related courses to choose from, endorsed by PATA, there has never been a better time for agents to broaden their knowledge of this exciting region.

Training is on the rise

Many online training companies have seen a dramatic leap in registrations since travel agents have either been furloughed or are

working from home during a period of slowed-down business.

There has been a seismic shift in how agents consume training; previously dipping in and out of courses, agents are completing several courses back-to-back – it's the educational equivalent to bingeing on box sets!

E-learning is allowed under the furlough scheme so it's encouraging, and commendable, to see such a huge number of agents using this period of quiet to increase their knowledge and productivity for when they return to work or seek a new job.

Taking additional courses will help agents demonstrate their professional development and invaluable knowledge to clients, who will, in turn, benefit from better-informed agents.

PATA Virtual Quizzes

PATA has adjusted its training plans to ensure the region is at the forefront of agents' minds when business returns. We urge members to create agent-friendly online assets such as news streams, webinars, virtual content and update their existing training courses. PATA is hosting virtual quizzes at 4pm on May 28 and June 4, providing extra opportunities for agents to engage with PATA outside of their usual exciting calendar of events.

The future of training

Training has really evolved in recent years with a movement towards webinars, increased video content, visual aids, and truly interactive experiences, such as virtual fam trips.

This style of training is especially suited to agents who are currently at home, but the trend is expected to continue into the long-term.

Register for PATA Virtual Quizzes:
<https://pata.org.uk/pata-events/>

Doing courses back-to-back is the training equivalent of bingeing on box sets.



THE VIEW AHEAD

With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the cruise industry into the headlines, the operators have made health, safety and regaining consumer confidence as top priorities. Georgia Lewis reports.

CRUISE SHIPS hit the headlines as the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent. As well as cruise passengers becoming infected and, in some cases, dying of the coronavirus, ships across the globe were unable to safely dock and a massive repatriation effort took place. Thousands of passengers spent longer at sea than they originally planned and, by the time they were able to return home, the excitement of making the initial booking must have seemed like a distant memory for many.

But there are signs of optimism, which agents can pass on to customers who are still deciding whether to make a cruise booking. In a statement released by CLIA, the association said the vast majority of its 270 member cruise ships did not have any cases of COVID-19 on board, thanks to a rapid, industry-wide response, which included introducing screening protocols, enhanced sanitation practices and the availability of round-the-clock medical services on ships.

Within the industry, cruise companies are hopeful of a resurgence. Holland America Line's outgoing president, Orlando Ashford, said: "Today, a global pandemic

has impacted our industry in ways that are completely unprecedented ... However, I believe it is human nature to travel and explore new places and cultures and meet new people. I have no doubt that Holland America Line will thrive again soon, and its guests will be ready when cruise operations resume. I look forward to being one of the first to sail."

Elsewhere in the industry, AmaWaterways has opened the order books on the 2022 season, citing increased demand, and CMV is reporting a rise in bookings for 2021 from UK ports.

Mike Hall, marketing director, CMV, said: "Our experience ... is that the UK is thinking again about a cruise holiday in 2021. Those itineraries that offer a sense of discovery and exploration are leading in popularity. It looks like we all want something to look forward to after lockdown."

In Miami, Carnival Cruises president and CEO Arnold Donald said that while the company has made some difficult decisions in regard to repatriating workers from across the world, forward

bookings are looking promising. He said that less than 38% of guests affected by coronavirus-related cancellations have requested a refund.

"Our booking trends for the first half of 2021, which remain within historical ranges, demonstrate the resilience of our brands and the strength of our loyal recurring customer base, of which 66% are repeat cruisers. In addition, we plan to stagger fleet re-entry to optimise demand and operating performance over time," Mr Donald said.

Royal Caribbean's latest business update

reports that 45% of customers with cancelled bookings have requested a refund. Looking ahead to 2021, the report noted that while it is still early in the booking cycle, 2021 bookings are within historical ranges compared to the same time last year.



Passenger-friendly policies for future ocean voyages

ACROSS THE ocean cruise sector, operators are offering new itineraries and revised refund policies to encourage bookings for later in 2020, and into 2021 and 2022.

Celestyal Cruises: A future cruise credit valued at 120% of the original booking value can be redeemed between now and the end of December 2021 for itineraries in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

CMV: The flexi-cancellation transfer policy for sailings departing up to August 31, 2020 lets passengers transfer without charge seven days prior to sailing to any 2020-21 or 2022 trip and receive a 125% future cruise credit.



Refund and cancellation policies are becoming more generous and flexible.

Holland America Line: Guests who had paid in full will receive 125% future cruise credit, while those who have not will receive a credit of double the amount of the deposit paid.

Norwegian: New itineraries include Norwegian Star's first voyage to Antarctica in 2021, departing from Buenos Aires for a 14-day sailing. In March 2022, Norwegian Star

will embark on a South America sailing, visiting Fortaleza and Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, on a 15-day itinerary departing from Rio de Janeiro.

Princess Cruises: There are two cancellation options – a future cruise credit equivalent to 100% of the fare paid and an additional 25% credit, or a refund for all monies paid in full.

Royal Caribbean: The "Cruise with Confidence" cancellation policy has been extended to include sailings through April 2022. For new and existing bookings created by August 1, 2020, guests can cancel their cruise up to 48 hours prior to sailing and receive a full credit of the cruise fare for a future cruise through to April 2022. The "Best Price Guarantee" lets guests change the price and promotional offer on their reservation up to 48 hours before their cruise; and "Lift and Shift" means that 48 hours prior to sailing, travellers can move their cruise to the same itinerary departing on a future date, with the original price, room category and promotional offer protected.

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Princess Fare prices shown are subject to availability based upon 2 adults sharing the lowest available grade within the stateroom type specified. Prices and availability are correct at time of publishing, and may go up or down. £50pp low deposit applies to all passengers. If cruise falls within 90 days before departure, then full balance would be required as per standard terms and conditions. Offer is available from 1st May 2020 - 30th June 2020, and applies to cruises in this campaign only.





RIVER CRUISING



AMAZING AMAZON

A new itinerary from CMV combines an oceangoing voyage with an adventure along the Amazon River, departing from Bristol Avonmouth in January 2021.

AGENTS WITH clients looking for a cruise with a difference might consider a new offering from Cruise & Maritime Voyages (CMV).

It is a 42-night itinerary which starts on the high seas and features an adventurous sail along the Amazon as the bucket list-ticking highlight.

On January 5, 2021, Marco Polo will set sail from Bristol Avonmouth. As well as the Amazon, which vies with the Nile for the title of the world's longest river, the voyage takes in Cape Verde, West Indies and the Azores.

For bookings made by May 31, fares start from £2,999pp on a buy-one-get-one-free basis.

The voyage is an example of CMV's focus on more traditional, leisurely cruise experiences with a fleet of smaller to mid-sized ships which are accessible to more ports of call. A smaller ship



such as Marco Polo is ideal for sailing up the Amazon and exploring remote locations, such as the fishing villages of Boca Da Valeria and Alter do Chao.

After departing from Bristol Avonmouth, Marco Polo will call in to Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Cape Verde before crossing the Atlantic to the mouth of the Amazon. Then, guests will sail up the Amazon, stopping at six ports of call in Brazil before sailing on to the West

Indies, calling at French Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados and St Lucia with final disembarkations in the Azores before returning to Bristol Avonmouth.

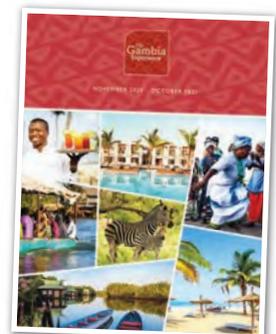
The voyage will showcase the Amazon rainforest, home to 10% of the world's known biodiversity and thousands of species, including pink river dolphins, sloths, anacondas and caiman.

For more details, go to www.cruiseandmaritime.com

River cruise options for Gambian trips

A NEW brochure from The Gambia Experience includes river cruises, boat trips, excursions and cultural experiences, including home cooking in a Gambian household. The extras are available to private parties and larger groups.

The river cruise options can be added to any holiday with a seven-night itinerary on board Harmony V, a mega-yacht with 25 luxury cabins. The "Rivers of West Africa" cruise offers guests an insight into life along the River Gambia, as well as taking in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Along the way, guests will encounter



ever-changing landscapes and an abundance of west African wildlife for a truly Insta-worthy experience.

To find out more and download the brochure, go to www.gambia.co.uk

Optimism from A-ROSA with a June river cruise restart

A-ROSA has announced they will be resuming river cruises by June, depending on travel advice from the markets in which they operate. Whether UK-based guests will be able to take advantage of these early itineraries will depend on FCO advice.

This announcement follows German and Austrian regional authorities regarding the relaxation of lockdown measures. It plans to restart selected departures on the Rhine and Danube by June. The move follows the relaxation of rules regarding the opening of hotels,



A-ROSA plans a bold early re-entry into the European river cruise market.

restaurants, river cruises and day cruises for tourists, which will come into place by the end of May. Updates on cruises in France and Portugal will be announced in due course.

Joerg Eichler, CEO of A-ROSA commented: "Following the long period of lockdown, we are delighted to be able to welcome our guests on board again and enable them to enjoy their

holidays with us. It goes without saying that our primary responsibility is for the welfare of our guests and crew. Therefore, we have put together a team of experts consisting of both internal and external hygiene and health specialists."

The company is working on a hygiene and health concept, which embraces safety measures and distancing regulations for guests and crew, while continually monitoring requirements of the authorities in the countries in which it operates.

What new skill have you acquired during lockdown?



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