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Giving agents the edge



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Giving agents the edge

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**New Ferrari Land &
PortAventura World
brochures
with this week's issue!**

Invites you to attend a

CRUISE SHOWCASE

An agent Networking Evening

Monday 3rd April
Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel,
Manchester

Travel Bulletin is excited to announce our latest Cruise Showcase, a fun and informative agent networking evening focused on leading cruise suppliers. Agents, you will have the opportunity to learn about a variety of cruise lines and ships, extraordinary onboard entertainment and accommodation options available in this increasingly popular escape.

You will enjoy delicious food and drinks, great entertainment and a fabulous free prize draw with a number of fantastic prizes to be won.

Registration: 18:00 hours

Networking & Presentations: 18:30 hours

Buffet, Entertainment & Prizes: 20:00 hours

Carriages: 21:30 hours

To confirm your place at this amazing event,
email the names of up to 5 staff members by
Friday 24th March to: oliver.barton@travelbulletin.co.uk
or telephone:

020 7834 6661
for more information.





BRAND BUILDING...

TRAVEL COUNSELLORS held its Gold Dinner at Madame Tussauds in London recently for its top performing agents. More than 130 agents, along with the head office support team, came together to enjoy a red bus tour through the iconic sights of London followed by an exclusive evening rubbing shoulders with famous faces of past and present, including a three-course meal and entertainment from Janice Connolly. There was also a special awards presentation for those agents who had achieved Gold status for the first time. Pictured cosying up to Russell Brand are, from the left: Travel Counsellors' Anthony Guy, Julie Taylor, Charlotte Vassell and Alex Buckle.

New travel experiences make for more interesting individuals reveals Booking.com

THE THRILL and excitement of our first time travel experiences positively increases our confidence, broadens our horizons and makes us ultimately more successful in life according to new global research commissioned by Booking.com

Whether you're getting your passport stamped for the first time, trying out a new city or doing something completely out of your comfort zone, the research, which surveyed more than 15,000 people from 20 countries worldwide, proves that travelling to new places and opening your mind to different, novel experiences inspires life-enriching changes.

Whether their first-time experience was travelling abroad, embracing a new destination or travelling solo, almost two thirds of those surveyed (65%) said that pushing

themselves to take part in a new travel experience vastly increased their confidence. While first-time travel can seem daunting, most agree (61%) that any nerves felt before they travelled were unnecessary.

Re-energised and with confidence, we can be motivated to make more dramatic life decisions. One in ten (13%) state a first-time travel experience has led them to switching their job or career, while the same percentage say that a first time travel experience led them to change their relationship, and a fifth (21%) decided to move somewhere completely new.

Respondents also claim that confidence boosted by first-time travel can also open doors to other life-inspiring opportunities, such as meeting new kinds of people (40%), cooking and eating new types of food (43%), learning a new

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language (29%) and reading and learning about another culture (29%).

This impetus to experience and learn new things leads people to believe that those who have travelled to many places and have tried out different travel experiences tend to be more interesting than those who have not (61%), and that with all these new interpersonal and practical skills they tend to be more successful in their life and career (45%).

And it seems that once people have the travel bug, it's hard to shake, with about two in three (64%) stating that experiencing places for the first time prompts them to visit other new places, experiences or accommodation in the future.

Almost half of those questioned (45%) plan to be more adventurous in their travel plans this year and one in two

(56%) plan to travel further away from home. More than half plan to take more weekend getaways (54%) and visit somewhere where their friends haven't been (47%). The types of first time experiences people are keen to try in 2017 are broadening, with volunteering based trips (21%), spiritual adventures (23%), eco tours (39%) and road trips (44%), proving to be popular choices for globe-trotting travellers.

Pepijn Rijvers, the company's chief marketing officer, said: "Our first time travel experiences open our minds, spark our imagination and inspire us to continue trying something new or change direction in life. Once you catch the travel bug it's simply contagious! There's so much of the world to explore and experience to fuel your wanderlust."

Rocky Mountaineer extends Stay & Play extra value offer for limited time

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER has announced the extension of its exclusive Stay & Play offer for a limited time.

In celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, the company is offering up to £350 in added value per couple for qualifying bookings of eight days or longer, and £180 for five to seven days.

Guests booking by March 31 can apply their credit to dining, sightseeing and more, helping tailor their Canadian adventure to their passions and preferences.

The company operates four routes, each with its own highlights, and has more than 65 holiday packages to choose from. Guests can add to their experience with extra hotel nights in Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria or Calgary; luxury hotel dining; a pre- or post-tour Alaska cruise; transfer service and activities. Excursions could include navigating the Howe Sound in a zodiac boat to find seals, eagles and maybe even orca; driving along the Icefields



Parkway between Banff and Jasper, or stepping off onto the Athabasca glacier and taking in the Canadian Rockies.

As an example, one of the eligible holiday packages is the Western Explorer which travels between Vancouver and Jasper, Lake Louise, Banff and Calgary.

The eight-day/seven-night holiday leads in at £1,763.44 per person and includes two days on the train, seven

nights' hotel accommodation, plus tours and activities.

The maximum credit of £350 is exclusively applicable to qualifying 2017 packages of eight days or more in GoldLeaf or SilverLeaf Service on selected dates between April and October.

For more information or to book visit rockymountaineer.com or call 0800-0606 7372.

ABTA supports new Counter Terrorism Policing campaign for the public

ABTA IS supporting the Counter Terrorism Policing's campaign 'Make Nothing Happen'. This is the first public facing campaign from the Government's new brand 'ACT: Action Counters Terrorism' and focuses on the critical role the public can play in defeating terrorism.

The new campaign urges the public to report suspicious activity to the police to help keep communities safe, and the association will be supporting the #ActionCountersTerrorism hashtag with posts across all of its consumer-facing social media channels, which have a potential reach of tens of thousands of people, and will encourage members to also share campaign information.

The support for the campaign is part of ABTA's broader work with the industry to raise awareness of counter terrorism initiatives. The association's spring regional meetings include new counter terrorism awareness training developed in association with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), to protect cities and communities from the threat of terrorism.

Meanwhile, association members and partners who attend regional meetings will be able to take part in an introduction to the series of training modules, specifically tailored to the travel industry. The aim of the free training is to highlight some of the key elements that members may wish to consider as part of their business continuity plans, together with measures they could introduce within their own businesses for staff in the UK and overseas.

Nikki White, the association's director of destinations and sustainability, said: "We believe that the industry has an important role to play in educating staff and customers in how to detect and react to the threat of terrorism and we are working with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office to provide our members with industry training, customer advice and support related to counter terrorism both here and overseas."

For more information on the training email destinations@abta.co.uk



icelolly.com targets growth with handpicked offers

ICELOLLY.COM IS targeting year-on-year growth and new advertiser acquisition in the next 12 months with the introduction of its 'Top Deals' offering.

The new service is an expansion into the curated deals space for the company and focuses on a small number of handpicked holiday deals that offer special extras such as free guided tours or room upgrades, as well as savings that are often exclusive to the company.

The new offering is part of a wider initiative to grow the company's core proposition, which also includes a cruise offering that is expanding into fly, cruise and stay deals and attracting new cruise specialists like Vision Cruise and Cruise Kings.

SAGA CRUISES has released artist's impressions of its new ship which will be launched in summer 2019. Recommendations of passengers have been incorporated into the design and the ship will carry fewer than 1,000 passengers and feature 540 all-balcony cabins. Some 20% of the accommodation will be for solo travellers, with a choice of single cabin grades. Features will include single-sitting dining in a choice of speciality restaurants, a selection of bars, indoor and outdoor pools, a spa, library, observation lounge and signature Britannia Lounge. Ship itineraries will go on sale from September. For more information call 0800-015 4310.

New 'QSuite' from Qatar Airways

QATAR AIRWAYS has unveiled a new Business Class experience which offers customisable private suites. Named QSuite, the new introduction offers a host of firsts to Premium Class travel including a double bed with privacy panels that stow away, allowing passengers in adjoining seats to create their own private room. Adjustable panels and movable TV monitors on the centre four seats allows colleagues, friends or families travelling together to transform their space into a private suite, allowing them to work, dine and socialise together.

To complement the customisable on-board seating experience, the carrier is launching a new food and beverage concept, introducing a menu that offers a host of new dining choices.

'Reasons to Smile' launch for discerning parents from Carrier

CARRIER HAS announced the launch of Reasons to Smile... Luxury Family Escapes 2017/18 – a curated, online selection of more than 70 holidays for discerning parents, including savings of up to 40%. Offers include complimentary nights, children stay and eat free, early booking reductions and family added value.

Research carried out by the travel specialist found that the top three requirements requested by clients are: hotels that offer guaranteed interconnecting rooms or have larger suites/villas to accommodate a family; all-inclusive resorts and board basis related offers; and key hotels which still have availability over peak school holiday dates.

The collection therefore is made up of family-friendly inspiration and ideas divided into these specific themes, each of which present the most indicative and comparable prices possible.

This year, for the first time, the operator has created an interactive initiative to communicate the launch of the campaign. A dedicated direct mail piece highlights the three key themes and top offers, whilst dedicated marketing resources have also been produced to assist travel agents further with their sales.

In line with the 'photo booth prop' trend seen in recent years, the operator has provided perforated, cut-out smiles and is encouraging its trade partners to share their Carrier experiences on social media using the hashtag #CarrierMadeMeSmile.

In conjunction with its latest family campaign, the company has also launched a trade incentive that gives agents the chance to win a place on an educational trip to Dubai this August, with their own family. Agents who book any family holiday with Carrier before March 31 will be entered into the prize draw. The more bookings that are made, the more entries they will acquire and the better chance of winning. The prize includes flights and four nights' accommodation at Atlantis, The Palm and One&Only Royal Mirage.

For further information see carrier.co.uk/traveltrade

National Ferry Fortnight dates

BRITAIN'S ANNUAL National Ferry Fortnight will take place from May 6–20.

Now in its ninth year, National Ferry Fortnight is run by Discover Ferries, the industry body for the ferry industry as a two-week showcase of Britain's extensive 75-plus ferry routes and the benefits of travel by sea.

The 2017 campaign theme is Ferry Together - encouraging family and friends to spend more time together. Research undertaken by Discover Ferries highlights how little quality time families are spending together due to the hectic nature of modern life. Results showed that the average family spends just three weeks of real quality time together each year, and just 36 minutes on the average week day. In comparison, adults spend almost four times as long - one hour and 55 minutes per day - watching TV or playing on their gadgets. Children are also staring at a screen of some kind for around two hours and 22 minutes a day. As a result, two thirds of parents say holidays and trips away from home are the only real time they get together.

See discoverferries.com for details.



AN ICE SURPRISE...Stacey Turland (left) from East of England Co-Op Travel, Burnham on Crouch in Essex recently won SuperBreak's incentive to win a three-night short break to Iceland. Pictured celebrating with Stacey is the operator's Donna Smithson.

Saga introduces new 13-night overland safari in Southern Africa

SAGA GUESTS can step into a world of national parks and game drives during a safari adventure on a 20-seater air-conditioned truck.

The 13-night Wilderness and Wildlife safari adventure can also be added to the company's 25-night Africa's Southern Soul truck tour for a fully immersive five-week holiday.

Stuart Douglass-Lee, the operator's head of product and purchasing - long-haul, says demand for the company's first truck tour, Africa's Southern Soul, was 'phenomenal' and he expects the new, shorter tour to be equally as popular.

He said: "This new overland safari adventure has been created in response to guests who loved our first truck adventure. The small group enjoys a thrilling tour with lots of early starts but there is always a comfortable hotel or lodge for rest and relaxation in the evening."

The safari features seven game drives and begins with a tour of the Zimbabwe side of Victoria Falls before a sunset

cruise on the Zambezi River. Other highlights include a lodge stay in Hwange National Park, in Zimbabwe, where game drives offer the chance to spot the 'Big Five'.

The tour continues to Matopo National Park to look for black and white rhino plus leopards, cheetah and hippo.

In South Africa, there are overnights in the copper mining town of Musina, as well as the Magoeboskloof area of the Limpopo Province, before heading into the bush to the Manyelti Game Reserve. At sunset, guests travel in an open vehicle for a game safari before dinner.

Accommodation is at the Shalati Kruger Lodge or Nkambeni Safari Camp.

A full-day's game drive is also on the itinerary in Kruger National Park and wildlife includes zebra, buffalo, wildebeest, as well as hyena, lion and leopard.

For more information call 0800-414 383 or visit saga.co.uk/wilderness-wildli

Hoseasons boosts UK portfolio with Landal GreenParks brand addition

AGENTS LOOKING to capitalise on strong demand for quality UK breaks have a new offer for domestic customers thanks to the launch of Landal GreenParks in the UK through sister company Hoseasons.

The move sees the self-catering specialist collaborating with its European sister brand to offer the trade an exclusive route to Landal GreenParks in the UK and mark a new era in the evolution of upmarket domestic holidays.

Families, couples and groups of friends can now get closer to nature at two locations - Landal Kielder Waterside on the edge of Northumberland National Park and Landal Darwin Forest on the edge of the Peak District National Park, both of which offer affordable high-end accommodation, a range of indoor and outdoor activities and access to a selection of unique local experiences.

Simon Altham, the operator's managing director, says the brand's arrival provides agents with an attractive, accessible alternative to current options in the holiday resort market at a time when domestic demand is strong and customers want something different.

He said: "The Landal GreenParks brand has fantastic heritage in Europe as a quality- assured product, meaning agents can confidently offer the two new UK locations and 16 more across Europe, safe in the knowledge that their customers will enjoy a great quality, great value break and a consistent high level of service wherever they stay.

"The conversations we had with our partners in the trade prior to launch backed up everything we were hearing from customers themselves - that UK holidaymakers expect more from their holiday experience. Yes, they want premium countryside locations with fantastic facilities, but they also want consistently high standards of customer service and to be encouraged to explore the surrounding area. That's why we have local experts at each location whose job it is to guide and inspire our guests when it comes to what's on their doorstep."

The spirit of natural discovery is reflected on site with outdoor adventure play areas offering activities such as den building, trim trails and nature walks to encourage children and their families to get active and explore the local environment.

Luxury lodge accommodation with hot tubs feature at both UK locations, and while the stargazing pods at Landal Kielder Waterside are ideal for those looking to make the most of some of the darkest skies in Britain, Landal Darwin Forest is a stone's throw from historic Chatsworth House.

For more information call 01502-516900.

Viking River Cruises marks 20 years with new launches

VIKING RIVER Cruises has marked 20 years of innovation and growth by welcoming two new additions to its fleet of Viking Longships.

Viking Hild and Viking Herja join the company's fleet of more than 60 river vessels sailing the world's waterways. Viking Hild will sail the Rhine River this spring on a new Paris to the Swiss Alps itinerary, and later this year both new ships will sail Viking's popular Danube Waltz and Rhine Getaway itineraries.

The company is set to add a fourth ocean ship, Viking Sun, in November and by 2019 will have a fleet of six ocean ships.

Until June 30, a £1,000 per person discount is being offered on 2018 river cruises.

To book or for more information call 0800-319 6660.

Winter brochure launch from Rail Discoveries

RAIL DISCOVERIES has released its latest winter and spring 2017/18 brochure which features four new tours.

They include a winter trip to the Harz Mountains, a cruise to Paris, a trip to Saxony's Ore Mountains and a Christmas Markets tour featuring Bath and Bristol.

The brochure also showcases a selection of all-inclusive and fly/rail tours.

As an example, a new six-day fly/rail Steam and Snow in Saxony's Ore Mountains tour, described by the company as "an enchanting tour experiencing the hidden charms of the Ore Mountains,

complete with two journeys on heritage railways", costs from £1,095 per person. It includes flights to Prague, five nights' hotel accommodation with dinner, a journey on the Fichtelbergbahn to Oberwiesenthal – the highest town in Germany, and an excursion to Dresden, the capital of Saxony. It departs in January and February 2018.

The company is also introducing its four-day Paris in Winter Cruise from £545. Customers can "enjoy the crisp beauty and wintry elegance of Paris as they drift up the Seine on a seasonal cruise, featuring on board nights of cabaret and dancing".

The itinerary includes a city tour of Paris, a guided tour of Montmartre, a three-night cruise on MS Botticelli and a gala dinner, complete with Paris by night cruise, and departs in November and December.

All tours include the services of a tour manager, accommodation, local guides, a comprehensive programme of excursions and many meals in the hotel and at local restaurants.

To book or for more information see raildiscoveries.com or call 0800-240 4470.



Virgin Atlantic 2018 departures

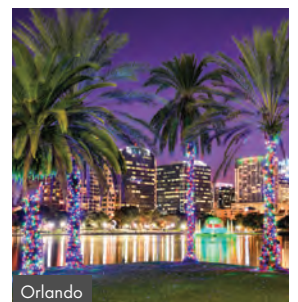
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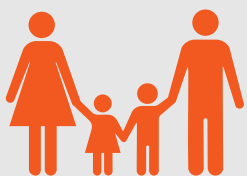


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Call: 0800 014 7777
Visit: goldmedal.co.uk

GOLDMEDAL



Notes from

Normanton...

Headed a few good 'travel' tips which I hope will be helpful.

Who gets bitten by mosquitoes? I must admit I usually use citronella as I know they don't like the smell, but I heard Vicks vapoRub is good as well because mosquitoes don't like the smell of eucalyptus oil, camphor and menthol, so you get left alone. The natural ingredients in it can also help to get rid of foot fungus, soothe cracked heels on feet and lessen the symptoms of awful headaches. **AND** the tangy taste can even keep pets from chewing on furniture, stair railings etc.

Do you get ants in your (no, not pants!) garden or kitchen? Make a spray of 30 drops clove essential oil, 30 drops peppermint essential oil and 4oz of water mix and spray it. Again, they don't like the strong smell and this will work abroad as well as at home.

What do you do with your Boarding Pass after you board? Stuff it in the seat pocket? Throw it in the bin? Leave it in your hotel room? You should tear it up properly as it does contain quite a lot of personal info about us. If someone took a screen shot of the bar code on the ticket you will be amazed at how much personal info that person can get about you, home address, banking info, email address, phone number... all things which will help them if they want to use your private info for no good, so make sure the bar code is totally torn up so they can't get a shot of it.

I attended the Orlando Road Show at the Village Hotel. It was a great night, very informative and some great prizes. I liked my goodie bag as it had a giraffe (reminded me of Uganda), some great reading material and a couple of DVDs: 'The Secret Lives of Pets' and 'The Disney Jungle Book'. I'm looking forward to watching them. Off to the Geordie Ball at Gosforth Park soon - can't wait to see Darren and everyone there - it's like my second family. It's always a brilliant night.

'A mind stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions' and 'Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important'.

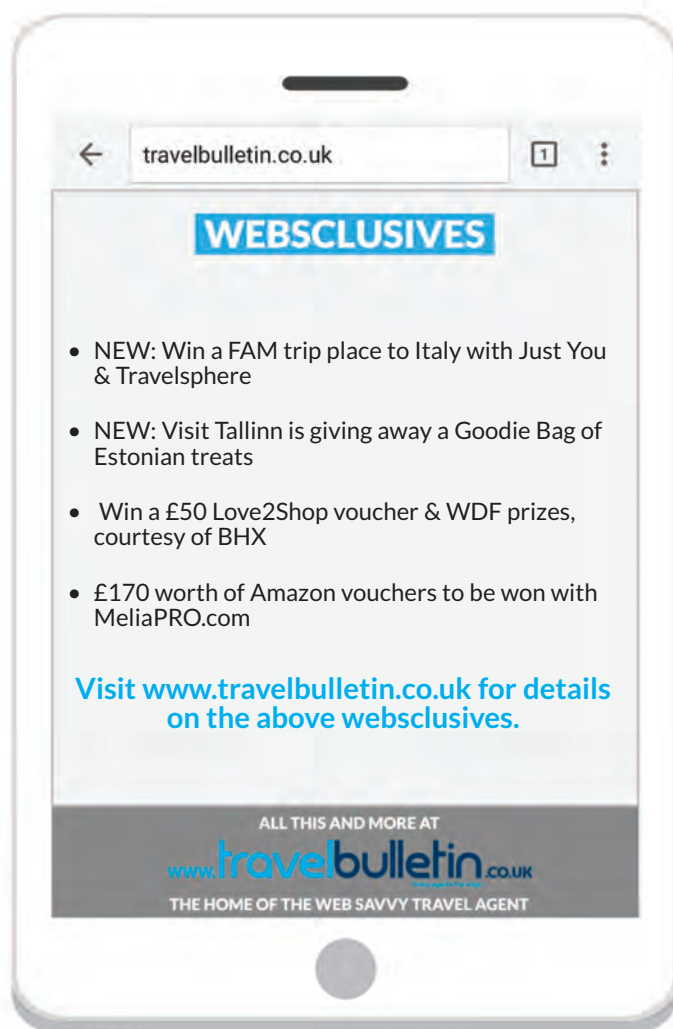
Sandy

by SANDRA MURRAY
in Normanton, Yorkshire

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

NEWS BITES

- IN JUNE 2017, the Ravenglass Railway Museum will officially open to the public after undergoing a two-year Heritage Lottery-funded redevelopment. Built on the site of Ravenglass Station, in the West of Cumbria, the new train-shed extension will double the previous museum's footprint and create a new visitor experience with interactive exhibitions. The museum owns more than 6,000 objects ranging from 15-inch gauge locomotives and rolling stock through to uniforms, photographs and historic engineering.
- VISITBRITAIN HAS announced that its flagship annual travel trade event ExploreGB is to be held in NewcastleGateshead in 2018.
- RCL CRUISES Ltd (Royal Caribbean International) and Durham County Cricket Club have announced a new two-year sponsorship agreement that will see the line become the club's official travel partner.
- THE EGYPTIAN Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that tourist visa fees will increase from July 1 to \$60 (single entry) and \$70 (multiple entry).



AGENT INCENTIVES

- The Villa Collection is giving agents the chance to get their hands on a £250 House of Fraser voucher. Agents will receive an entry into the prize draw for each booking made this month and next. The company has recently expanded its portfolio of properties and destinations for agents to book. In the Caribbean, it has launched St Martin as a new destination and added properties to all exiting islands including the luxury Ani Villas in Anguilla, Little Whale Cay in the Bahamas, Maxwell Beach Villa Apartments and several Sandy Lane private villas in Barbados. New and expanding destinations also include Sri Lanka, Bali and Thailand. For details see thevillacollection.co.uk/travel-agents/
- Agents can win a road trip to Victoria, Australia for four people including flights with Singapore Airlines, three nights' hotel accommodation in Melbourne, motorhome hire to explore the region and a Phillip Island four Park Pass with Gold Medal's latest Australian campaign. The operator has teamed up with Singapore Airlines and Visit Victoria to showcase the highlights of the region including Melbourne, the Yarra Valley and the Great Ocean Road and the benefits of exploring the area by car or motorhome. To be in with a chance of winning, agents need to make a new booking to Victoria including flights with Singapore Airlines before March 31. The top seller across the board will take the prize and be notified in April. In addition, all agents can earn double Farebank rewards on every Victoria booking that includes Singapore Airlines flights before the end of this month. For details see goldmedal.co.uk
- Agents completing Turismo Chile's training programme on OTT by March 20 (to become a certified Chile expert) will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win two bottles of Chilean red wine.

AGENT TRAINING

- Gold Medal is giving agents the chance to win a fun-filled family holiday to Dubai. The operator has teamed up with Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTMC) to offer agents the chance to win a family holiday with flights, three nights at the new Viceroy Palm Jumeirah and two nights at the new Jumeirah Al Naseem at Madinat Jumeirah. The winning agent will also be given tickets to the destination's newly opened attractions Dubai Parks & Resorts and IMG Worlds of Adventure. For a chance to win, agents should complete the Dubai Expert training programme on visitdubai.com and book Dubai packages (including flights and a minimum of three nights' accommodation) with Gold Medal or PURE LUXURY before March 31. Details at goldmedal.co.uk
- PATA is holding two quiz nights for agents to offer training on destinations and products from around the Pacific Asia region. The first takes place in Guildford on March 29 and the second in Southampton on March 30. The evenings kick off at 18:00 and include presentations, complimentary drinks and dinner and a quiz.



JANICE'S JOY...Novasol recently ran a competition with Travel Bulletin to win an iPad mini. Following a fantastic response, the winner was Janice Fryer from Spear Travels in Stoke.



InsideVietnam Tours capitalises on Kong movie launch

THE RELEASE of 'Kong: Skull Island', a reboot of the classic 1933 movie 'King Kong', shines a spotlight on Vietnam's North Central Coast - and in particular Ninh Binh and Phong Nha National Park, the main filming locations.

With the film's top Hollywood stars including Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson and Brie Larson, having said to have visited the destination to film, interest in the area is likely to increase in light of the movie showcasing the natural beauty of the area.

As such, InsideVietnam Tours has launched a new 14-night 'Family Caving & Culture' option that features both Ninh Binh and Phong Nha National Park.

Prices lead in at £1,650 per person, based on two sharing, and include transfers, internal flights, breakfast accommodation (including one night on a sleeper train and a Halong Bay one-night cruise), three lunches and three dinners. International flights are extra.

To book or for more information call 0117-244 3370 or visit insidevietnamtours.com

New experiential tours available from Insider Journeys' small group itineraries

INSIDER JOURNEYS has released its latest portfolio of Small Group Journeys, which offer travellers a choice of experiential tours throughout the region.

The new brochure highlights journeys from a portfolio of almost 1,000 departure dates in 11 countries across nearly 100 tour itineraries.

With new itineraries, a refresh of some of the most popular journeys and significant price savings on the majority of tours, the brochure provides the benchmark for small group journey travel in Asia.

The company's managing director, Tony Mayell, said: "The latest brochure really demonstrates the comprehensive

choice available for our travellers. These insightful itineraries are based on the insider knowledge of our exceptional product team and 23 years' experience.

"We give our clients opportunities for participation in local life. They're privy to more local insights, with itineraries that provide flexibility and meaningful interactions with local people and fellow travellers that will give them stories that will last a lifetime.

"This is all balanced with exceptional value for money. Savings over our 2016 pricing exceed £300 per person across a number of trips, including the Mekong and Beyond, Myanmar Revealed, Three Gorges Discovery and China Panorama."

Highlights of the new brochure including the introduction of three new itineraries - a 14-day 'Essence of Vietnam and Cambodia' option, a 23-day Japan Experience and a 16-day Trails of Rajasthan.

As an example of prices, the Vietnam and Cambodia itinerary includes three nights of cruising on the Mekong Delta in Vietnam followed by a speedboat experience from the border to Phnom Penh in Cambodia. Prices lead in at £2,312 per person based on two sharing.

To book or for more information call 01865-268944 or visit insiderjourneys.co.uk

New operator launch from Sandals & Beaches offers Luxury Included holidays

SANDALS AND Beaches Resorts is set to launch a new fully protected UK tour operator under the name of Unique Caribbean Holidays Limited (UCHL) from April 10.

The move sees the company selling fully protected Luxury Included holidays directly to trade for the first time.

Karl Thompson, the brand's managing director UK & Europe, said: "Our relationship with our trade partners has always been at the forefront of our UK business model and therefore setting up as a tour operator was a natural step for us to further develop closer and more meaningful commercial and marketing partnerships."

Commercial agreements are already in place with key travel agency groups and the news has received high praise from the industry. Global Travel Group's commercial director, Cherie Richards, said: "We have worked with Sandals for many years and are thrilled that they will also be operating as a UK tour operator dealing directly with agents. Here at The Global Travel Group our members have benefited from the long standing relationship with Sandals and we are looking forward to strengthening the relationship further."

Thompson said: "Another benefit of this new tour operation for our trade partners is our continued price parity commitment, meaning that every price that a consumer is able to book with us directly is always available and commissionable to our travel agency partners."

The company's investment in bespoke technology, via a new booking engine developed with leading travel technology provider Traveltek, will allow for travel agents to book online - two years in advance if needed, as well manage their bookings with access to a flight and price availability calendar. The new company will also have a 24-hour helpline and bespoke agent portal.

Meanwhile, the company has introduced new incentive schemes, available to all agents making bookings with any tour operator, including a special launch initiative. It offers agents the chance to win a week's Luxury Included stay in a Luxurious Butler Suite at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort in Jamaica - and six stays are up for grabs.

For a chance to win, agents should make a booking by May 5 and register it with the company's agency sales team. The marketing and commercial partnership with tour operator Funway Holidays changes as of April 10 as the licence agreement expires, but Funway will continue to feature Sandals and Beaches Resorts within their extensive Caribbean and US portfolio.

To find out more about training or to speak to the sales team call 020-7590 0210 or visit sellingsandals.co.uk

Su Doku

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

Number: 011

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

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, March 23rd. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for 3rd March is Andrew Adair, Reliable Travel in Belfast.

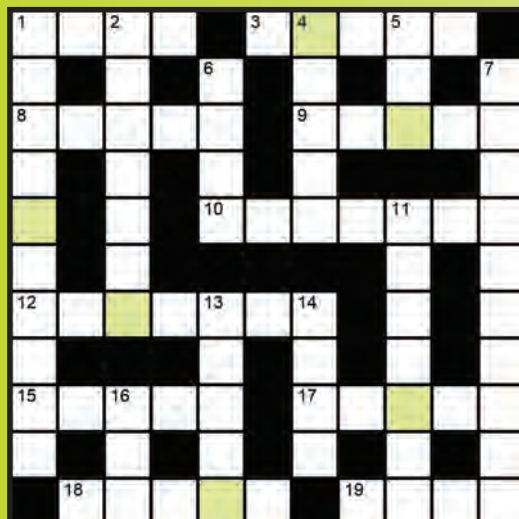
March 3rd Solution: A=8 B=3 C=2 D=6

Where Am I?



Located on Navajo land this slot canyon includes two scenic sections, referred to as 'The Crack' and 'The Corkscrew'. Its accessibility, dimensions, rock colour and ambient light make it ideal for photography enthusiasts.

Crossword



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

Across

- Flag carrier of Israel (2,2)
- South American country, sounds cool (5)
- Capital of the Lombardy region (5)
- Rent A Car company (5)
- Saint celebrated with parades on March 17th (7)
- You can experience the Aurora Borealis with this tour operator (7)
- Cruise company, Fred. ____ (5)
- Capital city on the Nile (5)
- Eurostar offers breaks to this city (5)
- First name of actress who played Celia in Last Tango in Halifax (4)

Down

- She is the Beauty in Beauty and the Beast, at a cinema near you (4,6)
- State capital of Georgia (7)
- Hotels and resorts company (5)
- Larnaca International airport code (3)
- Simple card game for kids (4)
- Historic Kent seaside town (10)
- Spain and Portugal are part of this peninsula (7)
- Sometimes known as Mountain of Moses (5)
- City on the French Riviera (4)
- Airline initially, with a Johannesburg hub (3)

For the solution to the Crossword and Where Am I?
Please see page 24



On weekends I like to...

Have a lie-in where possible but with a seven-month old this is challenging at the best of times. On a Sunday (when I am not attending one of our many travel agent client events), I head into the country for a walk and Sunday pub lunch.

How do you relax?

In all honesty being at home with my family is the ultimate form of relaxation, but second to that is having a nice long-haul holiday. The excitement and anticipation is weirdly relaxing.

What's your favourite gadget?

My iPhone – can't live without it

What's your favourite movie or TV programme?

Most recently was the ITV series, Unforgotten – edge of seat stuff.

What is the last picture you took on your phone?

A copy of a fuel receipt for expense purposes - #boring.

What has been your most extravagant purchase?

A pushchair for my little girl. A second hand car would have been cheaper. Most fathers will feel my pain on this one.

What's been your latest DIY project?

DIY, whats that?

What's your most embarrassing moment?

'Hi, my name is Brad. So how far pregnant are you?' Enough said.

Do you have any nicknames?

Nothing terribly profound, but it's Benny.

What's the best compliment you've received?

I'm apparently easy to get on with.

My greatest strength is...

My desire to succeed and be successful in life. It's all about the opportunities you create for yourself and I am a firm believer in you create your own future.

My one weakness is....

DIY, whats that again?

What's your favourite quote?

What's meant to be is meant to be. Life is too short – live it.

What skill would you like to master?

DIY. I really need to learn the meaning of that

Who is your celebrity crush?

Where do I start? Jennifer Anniston

and dare I say it, I love a bit of Cheryl Cole.

Who would you most like to be seated with on an aeroplane?
Sir David Attenborough.

If you could change one thing in the industry what would it be?
Discounting. I feel this really under values our industry across all sections and it's unnecessary. We don't go into M&S or Harrods and ask for a discount at the till – why should clients be permitted to do this to travel agents, especially when they provide a fantastic service.

What's a typical day like?
Visiting key agents, dealing with emails and of course encouraging the team.

What is your top travel tip?

Book an airport lounge to get away from the hustle & bustle, sit back, relax and look forward to a great trip!

Where's your next holiday to?
Barcelona.

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wish list?
Bali & Indonesia.





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Industry Insight by...



Andy Stark, MD of The Global Travel Group, explains why adversity could help you succeed...

LAST MONTH Hollywood was in turmoil as the Oscars experienced the mother of all film-related faux pas. Who knew one simple envelope mix-up would prove the most memorable performance of an otherwise unexceptional evening.

The debacle – or #envelopegate, as it's since become known – cast an unwelcome spotlight on accountancy firm PwC who, unbeknownst to most viewers, had been successfully overseeing the Academy's ballot-counting process for the previous 82 years. What happens next to this long-standing relationship is anyone's guess.

However, just because you slip up it doesn't mean it's time to call things a day. After all, if that were the case, Richard Branson would have given up long before Virgin Atlantic got off the ground. Instead, his pragmatic attitude to risk-taking turned this high-school dropout into the kind of business legend that the Obamas decided to hang out with after leaving office.

Who would have thought that, less than a decade after its infamous chaos-causing volcanic eruption and hot on the heels of the country's financial implosion, Iceland would become one of the world's fastest-growing tourist destinations? From bust to boom in spite of its potentially catastrophic double-act, there are many positives to take from this North Atlantic success story.

When it comes to running your own travel agency business, sometimes you just have to go with your gut instinct and stay positive in the face of trial and error. So even if you start out as a generalist but eventually find your niche specialising in a certain holiday style, part of the beauty of being your own boss is having the

freedom to experiment until you find what works best for you and your customers. Accepting that something isn't working, holding back on the time and money investment and starting again is by no means an easy feat.

As technology continues to reinvent the travel industry, social media has established itself as an increasingly critical way for all of us to connect with customers, respond to queries and motivate them to book. But, equally, it has made it easier than ever for unhappy customers to vent. Agents know only too well that sometimes the most loyal customers have experienced some kind of travel problem – after all, good customer service is all about how quickly and effectively you respond and resolve the situation.

The good news for members of The Global Travel Group is that, even if your previous efforts have proved that you're not one of life's natural marketers or haven't been able to crack successful social media campaigns, our dedicated materials, foolproof social media guidelines and ongoing practical support for all members mean there's one less thing to worry about. For us at Global, listening and then providing support and assistance to our members with the running of their own

businesses will always be the number one priority.

No one likes to make mistakes or be on the receiving end of them, no matter how public your stage is. But the history books are pretty insistent that the more you fail, the more you learn. And, with uncertainty the only constant in travel at the moment, many of the industry's most resilient players are learning to succeed the hard way.

"Who would have thought that, less than a decade after its infamous chaos-causing volcanic eruption and hot on the heels of the country's financial implosion, Iceland would become one of the world's fastest-growing tourist destinations?"

Azamara invites trade to 'Cruise Global, Connect Local'

AZAMARA CLUB Cruises is offering agents the chance to take part in a series of monthly artisan events designed to demonstrate its new 'Cruise Global, Connect Local' destination programme.

In January, the line unveiled developments to its destination offering under the new positioning of 'Stay Longer, Experience More'. This included the launch of 'Cruise Global, Connect Local', an umbrella programme with 13 shore excursion groupings aimed at delivering personalised and authentic experiences to guests. 'Nights Local' for example provides nightlife experiences such as a visit to the theatre, while 'Meet Local' offers immersive cultural experiences.

The company has put together a series of taster events that trade partners can join throughout this year. They include: 'Eco Local' at London's Kew Gardens to see the displays of the Orchids Festival by night; 'Celebrate Local' at Royal Ascot; and 'Golf Local', where agents can take on the

championship golf courses at The Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire.

Richard Twynam, UK & Ireland managing director for the cruise line, said: "We couldn't have asked for a better start to 2017. Not only have we reaffirmed our commitment to destination with the new developments of 'Stay Longer, Experience More', but we have also seen January sales rocket. This reflects the great confidence that consumers have in our brand and we continue to be grateful to our trade partners for their ongoing support in ensuring this is the case.

"We look forward to hosting small groups of agents at our artisan events to offer insight into the destination experiences and to say thank you for their continued support."

Between 12 and 15 agents can attend each artisan event. Agents interested in registering should email ukazamaratrading@rccl.com or speak to their regional sales manager.

For further information visit cruisingpower.co.uk

Pure Michigan launches travel agent training programme

FOLLOWING AN increase in demand from Brits fuelled by direct daily flights from Heathrow to Detroit, the state of Michigan has launched a new training programme enabling agents to boost their product knowledge of the Great Lake State.

The OTT Pure Michigan programme features important selling points, fun facts and key areas such as Detroit, Traverse City, Grand Rapids and Mackinac Island.

Dave Lorenz, vice president of the tourist board, said: "Michigan offers visitors an authentic American experience, complete with an abundance of natural beauty and friendly people who welcome all. This is the first training programme for UK and Irish agents for Michigan and we hope it will continue the growth of Michigan as a holiday destination and improve the knowledge base of travel agents of the products offered in our state."

The tourism authority will be giving away 20 prizes to agents who successfully complete the training programme by July 31, including Motown CDs and Henry Ford goodie bags. To access the training programme visit puremichigantraining.com

Universal Hollywood offers fam to LA

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS Hollywood has launched its own module within the Brand USA online training programme and, to celebrate, has partnered with Norwegian Airlines and West Hollywood to offer eight agents the chance to win places on a fam trip to Los Angeles.

To enter, agents need to complete the online module for Universal Studios Hollywood via usadiscoveryprogram.co.uk and the module for Norwegian (at onlinetraveltraining.com), before making a booking on Norwegian to LA and a booking to Universal Studios Hollywood.

Entries should be emailed to salesandmarketing@nbcun i.com with your name, agency name and phone number – and must include the Norwegian PNR reference, certificate of Norwegian completed course, details of the Universal Studios Hollywood booking from your preferred supplier and badge from the Brand USA programme.

The draw will take place on April 2.

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www.voyages-sncf.eu



CLOSING A MILESTONE year with ten new resort openings, agents can now learn about each of AMResorts' properties in a Master Agent training course. The new resorts include Zoëtry Montego Bay Jamaica, Breathless Montego Bay Resort & Spa, Breathless Riviera Cancun Resort & Spa, Secrets Cap Cana Resort & Spa, Dreams Playa Mujeres Golf & Spa Resort, Dreams Dominican La Romana, Dreams Delight Playa Bonita Panama, Now Onyx Punta Cana, Sunscape Dominican Beach Punta Cana and Sunscape Bávaro Beach Punta Cana. Each has been added to its individual brand section, with the most important facts displayed to agents. Visit amragents.co.uk for details.



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New agent academy from TTC

THE TRAVEL Corporation (TTC) has reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to travel agent partners with the launch of a new training initiative, the TTC Agent Academy.

The platform showcases the four core brands of Trafalgar, Contiki, Insight Vacations and Uniworld via a series of interactive modules and is designed to offer agents a greater understanding of the products when selling; from what makes each brand innovative and unique to the scope of travel solutions available for customers.

Brett Tollman, chief executive for the corporation, said: "Our latest trade initiative has been carefully crafted with the success of our valued partners in mind. We believe that agents have the best job in the world and we have worked hard to create an inspirational programme to make selling more fun and easy for them.

"It is our hope that enrolment into the academy will reward agents with happy customers, generate repeat business and increased earnings."

The programme will be updated at frequent intervals and, upon successful completion of each module, agents can access downloadable certificates of accreditation.



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chance to win a week's luxury holiday for two, to the new five-star Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Gran Canaria Mogán, which is located in the pretty area of Puerto Mogán, known as 'Little Venice'. This prize also includes the car rental to discover the real beauty of Gran Canaria!

Complete the training course today: grancanariaexperts.com

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The Voyages-sncf training course has been designed to help you learn all about European rail; the benefits of travelling by train, the range of destinations and services available and how to book.

Complete the course by March 31 for a chance to win 1 of 50 £10 Argos vouchers!

Be a European Rail Expert: beaeuropeanrailexpert.com/login

travelbulletin.co.uk/travelgym

Scandinavia Only journeys across the heart of Iceland

SCANDINAVIA ONLY is offering guests the opportunity to explore Iceland's capital of Reykjavik before embarking on a route less travelled across the country's rugged highlands to Akureyri, capital of the north.

The six-night tour crosses the heart of Iceland by 4x4 highland bus and offers a journey into the depths of the dormant Thrihnukagigur Volcano – the only place where visitors can take an elevator inside the volcano's magma chamber.

From Akureyri, a full day's exploration of an Icelandic ice cave in Lofthellir is also available, which features natural ice sculptures.

The ten-hour bus highland journey from north to south follows the Kjölur route and passes the world-famous Geysir geothermal area, the Gullfoss Waterfall and Kerlingarfjöll mountain range. It also includes a visit to Lake Mývatn, Godafoss Waterfall and an optional whale-watching excursion from Akureyri.

Prices lead in at £1,795 per person including flights from Heathrow, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, the highland bus journey, tour of Lake Mývatn and an internal flight from Akureyri back to Reykjavik.

Departures are available daily from June 15 until September 7 and alternative regional departure airports are also offered.

For more information see scandinaviaonly.co.uk

Iceland debut from Small Luxury Hotels of the World

REPRESENTING THE first time the company has featured hotels in Iceland, Small Luxury Hotels of the World has introduced two new luxury retreats in Iceland to its portfolio.

Hotel Ranga in Sudurland is a luxury log-cabin located 60 miles from the capital in a landscape free of light pollution, making it an ideal spot to view the aurora borealis. The hotel offers a wakeup call to guests should the Northern Lights appear after they've gone to sleep, and can provide arctic winter suits to take them up to the observatory to watch the show.

Making the most of its surroundings, with panoramic glass windows in the gourmet restaurant and outdoor geothermal hot tubs with views of the active Hekla volcano, the property's 51 rooms all offer river or volcano views, seven of which are themed to the world's continents.

Meanwhile, the games room offers pool tables and puzzles and is littered with quirky touches celebrating southern Iceland, while the second floor offers a casual lounge and bar serving up hot snacks and cocktails. Rooms start from £247 per night.

Alternatively, the Tower Suites Reykjavik is Iceland's latest luxury hotel. Located on the 20th floor of one of Reykjavik's only high-rise towers and seconds from the city's waterfront, the eight-roomed property was designed with the view in mind, meaning all suites offer panoramic views of the ocean, Mount Esja and Snæfellsjökull glacier.

Each suite is named after a mountain that guests can see from that particular room and postcards of the mountain are available in the room which guests can use to post to family and friends.

Guests are welcomed to the hotel with a glass of bubbly and although there is no restaurant, the Skylounge serves organic breakfast by local restaurant Happ with light snacks throughout the day on request. Rooms start from £674 per night which includes entry to the Laugar Spa.

Agents receive commissions ranging from 10% to 20% available through the company's booking channels. Visit slh.com/travel-agents for more details.

Contiki ticks off must-see sights in single centre trip

CONTIKI'S SINGLE-CENTRE Iceland trip stops off at the must-visit wonders of Iceland with the chance for guests to bathe in the Blue Lagoon, explore Reykjavik and go in search of the Northern Lights.

'ME Time' options include a 'Golden Circle tour' with time to admire geysers, waterfalls and volcanoes; horse-riding; caving; and a 'Buggy Adventure', incorporated within a four-day trip.

Prices start from £849 per person including breakfast accommodation, transport, entry into the Blue Lagoon and other sightseeing highlights, plus the services of a dedicated trip manager.

Departures commence from October 26 and run throughout winter

Trafalgar travels the circumference of Iceland

TRAFALGAR'S TEN-DAY 'Ultimate Iceland' trip around the circumference of Iceland stops off at many of the country's key highlights with the chance for visitors to take in the dramatic landscapes, lakes and villages found in other corners of the country.

Guests will bathe in the Blue Lagoon, sightsee in Reykjavik, take in the Gullfoss Waterfalls and see the Strokkur geyser, plus will have the opportunity to cross Eldhraun, the largest mass of lava ever to flow on earth, before reaching the Skaftafell National Park on day three of the itinerary. Here, guests can see the start of the largest glacier in Iceland, the Vatnajökull, which covers more than 8% of the island before an optional trip on an amphibian boat to get close to the icebergs on the Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon.

Spending the evening in Höfn, the lobster capital of Iceland, the next day is spent exploring the Eastern Fjords, before looping round towards Akureyri.

Prices start from £3,082 per person including breakfast accommodation, transport, six dinners, VIP entry into many of the sights, plus the services of a dedicated travel director and separate driver.



DURING INSIGHT Vacations' 'Natural Wonders of Iceland' guests can embark on a nine-day exploration featuring waterfalls, volcanoes and unique landscapes with highlights including Gullfoss Waterfall, Skaftafell National Park and the geothermal powers of Lake Mývatn. Prices start from £3,125 per person including accommodation, transport, transfers and a tour director.

SuperBreak boosts excursion options from Reykjavik

SUPERBREAK has boosted its range of excursion experiences in Iceland, which can be added to any short break booking.

Five new options are available to add to any Reykjavik booking and include experiences such as hiking on a glacier, sailing on a glacial boat and relaxing in geothermal baths.

The new tours include 'Take A Walk On The Wild Side', a full day tour that includes a glacier walk on crampons up to the ice field to discover ice sculptures, ridges and deep crevasses; 'Glacier Lagoon Tour with Boat Excursion', a full day tour that includes sailing amongst giant icebergs; 'Landmannlaugar and the Saga Valley'; 'The Natural Wonders of Iceland'; and 'The Golden Circle and Fontana Wellness tour'.

Prices are from £664 per person in mid-May including four nights' breakfast stay at the three-star Hotel Island in Reykjavik, flights from Luton and a full day 'Take A

Walk On The Wild Side' excursion.

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





CLIENTS CAN join Voyages to Antiquity on its new 15-day 'Iceland, Faroes and Shetlands' cruise. It departs on August 8 and includes ten tours in four countries, calling at Heimaey, Reykjavik, Isafjordur, Akureyri and Husavik in Iceland, with opportunities to tour the Blue Lagoon or Golden Circle in Reykjavik and go whale-watching in Husavik. Prices start from £2,495 per person. See voyagestoantiquity.com for details.

Promote Iceland declares 2017 as the year for an Icelandic adventure

FROM NEW flight routes, hotel openings and cruise itineraries, to camping adventures and cycling marathons, 2017 looks to be an eventful year for Iceland.

Amongst the new adventures on offer, and for the first time, North Sailing will be inviting travellers to see the Northern lights during the darkest time of the year. Passengers can enjoy winter sailing on a traditional Icelandic oak boat as it departs from Húsavík harbour to Skjálfandi bay and, without the disturbance from the city lights, a chance to see the famous lights put on their best display.

Alternatively, Amazing North is a small family run tour operator that offers personal tours around North Iceland with a local expert in highly modified, carbon neutralised super jeeps. This year will also see the destination promoting its unfrequented northern region where travellers can experience whale-watching, gastronomy tours and waterfalls against a backdrop of Nordic beauty.

Also to the north, and taking in the picturesque city of Akureyri, new tour company Detours promises tourists that they can 'Become a Local in an Hour' with history, culture and unique views all offered using segway-style transport.

Continuing the excitement on two wheels, adventurous UK cyclists are encouraged to get on their bikes and join in the next annual WOW Cyclothon, one of the largest ultra-cycling competitions in the world which takes place under Iceland's midnight sun from June 20-23. Starting in Reykjavik, the route steers participants past glaciers and waterfalls, along the coastline and past fjords, national parks and volcanoes. The non-stop relay race is the only

one of its kind in the destination and is often completed by the winning team in less than 48 hours.

For travellers looking to immerse themselves into the wild, Iceland has more than 200 equipped campsites nestled in natural surroundings which are available to campers between June and August. Located in the town Hvolsvöllur, a new interactive adventure called LAVA has also opened to reveal the volcanic forces of nature that created Iceland. LAVA will provide visitors with a variety of learning experiences, as well as a 360-degree viewing platform that overlooks the volcanoes of Eyjafjallajökull, Katla and Hekla, along with the Westman Islands off the south coast.

For something a bit more soothing and built into an 800-year-old lava flow on the south shore of the Blue Lagoon, Lava Cove is a newly created subterranean spa designed for rejuvenation.

Meanwhile, along the same spa lines - but offering a beauty treatment with a difference - travellers can relax in Kambala wood hot tubs filled with beer, water, hops and yeast when Iceland's first beer spa opens in June. A treatment that is believed to be cleansing for the skin, guests are encouraged to leave their bodies coated in beer for a few hours before washing it off to maximise the benefits.

In terms of new flight routes, Belfast will become Icelandair's 44th scheduled destination with a full year-round service flying three times weekly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays and operated by sister airline Air Iceland.

Launching in June, the flight from Belfast to Reykjavik will also provide easy connections with the airline's network of destinations in the US and Canada.

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FLEXIBLE AUTOS has reported a positive start to 2017, with overall figures up 15% year-on-year. The current top selling destinations for the company include the US, Spain and Greece with Portugal seeing the biggest increase, up 20% on figures from this time last year. Car hire in Portugal costs from £4 per day and, for a limited time only, agents making bookings to the destination can take advantage of a free additional driver offer (for Drive on Holidays only).

Marriott International unveils 2020 vision for growth

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL has unveiled ambitious plans to accelerate its growth in Europe, announcing that it expects to dramatically increase the size of its portfolio across all segments of the industry by 2020.

The planned expansion is the first development vision announced for the continent since the acquisition of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide in September 2016.

Amy McPherson, president and managing director for the company, Europe, said: "2016 was a momentous year for both the company and our continent team. We added 40,000 rooms in Europe with the Starwood acquisition alone, and achieved our long-term goal to triple in size - from 40,000 open rooms in 2010 to 134,000 open or signed rooms at the end of 2016. Now, as we look to the future, we have set ambitious goals for 2020. We plan to expand our lead in the luxury and full-service segments, to have the largest portfolio in the upscale tier

and to win with Millennials in the affordable lifestyle category."

The hotelier plans to expand in the luxury and full-service segments by growing brands such as The Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis, while also bringing Delta Hotels by Marriott to Europe.

For more information visit marriott.com



Delta's 2017 Premium Wine menu is now boarding

DELTA'S MASTER Sommelier, Andrea Robinson, has hand-picked her 2017 premium wine selections, offering exclusive choices to Delta One customers flying between Heathrow and the US.

The vintages will appear on a rotating seasonal basis, with two different reds and whites available every three months. During the summer months of June to August, one white will be substituted for a refreshing French rosé on flights to the airline's eight US destinations served from Heathrow.

Throughout the year, Business Class customers will also be offered Charles Heidsieck Brut Champagne, as well as dessert wine or port following the main meal service.

Robinson said: "I always look forward to hand-selecting the wine line up, and this year was no exception. Delta's unique wine programme provides an opportunity to offer a variety of regionally-sourced wines, including small, emerging and family-owned wineries, to its customers. Each menu includes a rich diversity of regional origin, with wines that pair well with the flavours and cooking styles of the season."

For further information visit delta.com

Ryanair launches new routes to Frankfurt for winter 2017

RYANAIR HAS announced new twice-daily routes to Frankfurt from Stansted and six times weekly flights from Manchester as part of its UK winter 2017 schedule.

The airline's head of communications, Robin Kiely, said: "We are pleased to announce two new winter routes to Frankfurt am Main from Stansted and Manchester starting this October as part of our growing UK winter 2017 schedule.

"Customers can choose from 124 Stansted routes next winter, including three other new routes to Aalborg, Oradea and Pardubice, while our full Manchester winter 2017 schedule will be unveiled shortly. UK customers and visitors can look forward to even lower fares when they make advance bookings for their summer or winter holidays.

Ken O'Toole, CEO for Manchester Airport, added: "It is pleasing to see Ryanair continue to expand its route network at Manchester. Frankfurt is popular with leisure passengers and a key business market for the north. That is why it is hugely positive to be able to offer passengers more choice in terms of how they access the destination from Manchester Airport."



New wave of arrival lounges to land at Heathrow

A NEW wave of luxury lounges are set to arrive at Heathrow Airport thanks to an expansion by Plaza Premium Group.

Plans have been announced for two new lounges to be opened by the group, both to feature landside in Terminals 3 and 4. The arrivals lounge in Terminal 4, which is due to open later this month, has a capacity of 75 people and features a lounge and bar area, a multi-function room for meetings and 25 luxury shower rooms. Details for the lounge in Terminal 3 are still under wraps with a planned opening later in the year.

Song Hoi-see, founder and CEO of the group, said: "The concept of the Plaza Premium arrivals lounge was driven by a desire to do something for the majority. Having arrivals lounges benefits not only travellers both before and after their flight but also family and friends who are

waiting for someone to arrive. Our arrivals lounges are designed to bring convenience, comfort and value to passengers who are looking to combat travel ailments, awaken their senses and revitalise their mind and body after a long flight. Our goal is to make every journey enjoyable not only on departure, but also upon arrival."

The lounge will also feature a new 'Flight Club' airport dining experience centred around a herbs and seeds healthy dining concept.

The lounges are open to all passengers whether they are flying Economy or Business Class.

Priority Pass and Dragon Pass are accepted, as well as independent travellers who can pay on entry with no prior booking needed.

Free Burj Khalifa tickets with DoSomethingDifferent.com

TRAVEL AGENTS booking Dubai holidays for their customers before the end of March can offer a free visit to the 124th observation deck of the Burj Khalifa. Entrance to the Burj Khalifa is typically priced between £30 and £49 and so means an additional saving that agents can pass on to their customers.

The free ticket is available (one per person) with bookings of a 40-minute Dubai Seaplane Silver Adventure flight, which costs from £367 per person, and a unique way for clients to marvel at the wonders of Dubai's modern architecture from the air. The aircraft is a luxury nine-seater plane, featuring leather seats and a guaranteed window view.

Customers can use the free Burj Khalifa tickets on any day of their holiday and a preferred time can be indicated at the time of booking.

For more details call 020-8090 3890.

YHA welcomes dogs to exclusive hire properties

IN A NEW move for 2017, YHA (England and Wales) has announced that dogs are welcome to stay with their owners at 13 of its exclusive hire properties.

The properties are available to hire year-round and can accommodate 18 – 77 guests and cost from £99 a night. Up to four dogs are welcome to stay at the properties for an additional cost of £30 per dog for the duration of the stay. All the hostels selected are in dog-friendly locations and offer a range of walking routes on their doorstep.

Caroline White, chief executive of the charity, said: "I am delighted that we are able to make a stay at YHA more accessible to families and friends. We have selected 13 wonderful properties the length and breadth of England and Wales at which to welcome dogs. It's a great opportunity for people to stay with us and explore some of the country's beautiful scenery."

To find out more visit exclusive-hire.yha.org.uk or call 0800-019 1700.

Broad Haven, Wales



cultural tours



2017 IS an ideal year for clients to visit Denmark's second city, Aarhus, as it is both European Capital of Culture 2017 and European Region of Gastronomy 2017. Aarhus will host a cast of international and Danish artists over the year including four 'Mega' highlights, 13 'full moon' experiences and more than 350 featured events, rethinking its art, music and food offering on a grand scale. The Michelin Guide Nordic Countries 2017 has also awarded Aarhus with another Michelin Star, given to the restaurant 'Restaurant Domestic', bringing the total Michelin Stars in the city up to four stars divided between four restaurants. See visitdenmark.com

New tours in Kirker's 2017 Cultural Tours & Music brochure

KIRKER HOLIDAYS has published its second edition 2017 Cultural Tours & Music Holidays brochure, including a further four new escorted tours departing this year.

These include a four-night 'Lucca & the Lucchese Hills' in Italy departing on November 16 from £1,197 per person; an eight-night 'The Land of T.E. Lawrence' in Jordan departing on October 6 from £2,895; a seven-night 'Romanovs & Revolution - Russia in 1917' November 6 from £2,995; and 'The Galleries & Museums of New York' from £2,796, departing on June 15.

Also featured in the brochure are several new escorted holidays to leading music festivals and events in Europe including the Bregenz Festival in Austria; Helsinki and the 18th Sibelius Festival in Lahti; the 66th Wexford Opera Festival in Ireland; Opera in Sweden and the Verdi Festival in Parma and the Rossini Opera Festival in

Pesaro, Italy. In the UK, the operator has added escorted cultural tours to the Cheltenham Music Festival and the Buxton Opera Festival.

The company has also expanded its collection of exclusive music festivals to include Venice. Departing on November 26, prices are from £1,975 per person based on two sharing including BA flights from Gatwick, four nights' breakfast accommodation at the four-star Hotel Monaco & Grand, three dinners, three private concerts - performed by The Doric String Quartet and classical guitarist Sean Shibe, two guided walking tours of Venice, sightseeing, entrance fees, gratuities as per the itinerary and the services of a tour leader.

Visit kirkerholidays.com or call 020-7593 2288 for more details.

Kyoto releases Ryokan guide for UK travellers

FOR THE THOUSANDS of UK tourists who visit Kyoto each year, staying in the traditional accommodation of a Ryokan is a special cultural experience. However, to raise awareness of the customs within the Japanese inns and limit misdemeanors, the Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau has released an infographic outlining the 'AKIMAHEN', or the 'dos and don'ts' for guests to enjoy a serene and restful stay.

The step-by-step guide features a clear breakdown of the Japanese terminology employed within a Ryokan, as well as the more particular practices that may not come as second nature to westerners. From unexpected rules, such as not dragging your suitcase along wooden floors or placing belongings on the Tokonoma, to punctuality at mealtimes and remembering to check public bath opening times before going to sleep, so as to not offend hosts. The infographic also includes a breakdown of the jargon for the complex dishes at the heart of Kyoto cuisine, to ensure that no patrons feel bewildered by menus.

To find out more visit kyoto.travel/en

Travel 2 widens its offering to India

NEW FOR 2017, Travel 2 is introducing more tours to widen its offering within India and the Indian subcontinent region, and will be extending the programme to include the Indian Himalayas, Nepal and Bhutan over the coming months.

Mark Mallinson, the operator's assistant product manager for Asia, said: "The 'Royal Retreats of South India' tour is one of our new tours which travels overland from Chennai to Cochin. This tour encapsulates the kaleidoscope of religion art and culture of the region famous for its beautiful temples, sculptures and monuments. Highlights of the tour are a visit to the Brihadeshwara Temple in Tanjore which dates back to the 10th Century AD, witnessing a Kalaripayatu performance in Thekkady which is believed to be the most ancient martial art form and a two-day cruise on a houseboat backwater cruise in Kerala."

As an example of packages to India, a six-day 'India's Golden Triangle Independent Tour' costs from £929 per person including flights from London, valid for travel between May 1 and June 30.

For details see travel2.com or call 0800-022 4182.



Revel in Reggae with the Bob Zion Bus Tour by Amstar dmc

HOLIDAYMAKERS CAN learn more about the unique Rastafarian religion, culture, practices and the music that it inspired on Amstar dmc's Bob Zion Bus tour.

Travellers can enjoy the rhythms of Bob Marley's greatest hits like *Three Little Birds*, *One Love* and *Buffalo Soldier* on board a country bus as it travels across authentic Jamaica, to places of historical interest tied to the King of Reggae.

The five-hour tour for all hard-core Bob Marley fans and reggae enthusiasts will see visits to the mountain village of Nine Miles, where they can listen and study all about the life and times of Bob Marley with complimentary beverages like Rum Punch while eating Jamaican patties. The return trip travels through St. Ann's Bay and Higgin Town, where guests stop for an authentic Jamaican lunch. For more information see amstardmc.com

Scandinavia Only contrasts Greenland's old and new culture on eight-night tour

FEATURING TWO of Greenland's contrasting destinations, Ilulissat and Qasigiannuit, an eight-night 'Greenland's Ice, Whales and Culture' from Scandinavia Only highlights the destination's old and new way of life.

In the modern Greenlandic town of Ilulissat, guests can enjoy a cruise into Disko Bay to watch the humpback whales and admire the UNESCO World-Heritage-listed Ice Fjord, home to glaciers, majestic icebergs and isolated settlements where hunters still live according to ancient traditions.

Travelling by boat from Ilulissat harbour, the tour continues to Qasigiannuit where guests can gain an insight into the country's unique history. Visits include the project 'Living Settlement', where volunteers work to bring to life the ancient Thule culture by manufacturing tools, leather clothes and household items. Women's kayaks are put into the water and volunteers wearing Inuit clothing take their visitors on a summer day trip just like a Thule family from the 1700s. The experience enables guests to embrace their culture and play, work and eat as they did in bygone times.

The tour is priced from £3,920 per person which includes flights from Heathrow to Copenhagen and from Copenhagen to Ilulissat, transfers, hotel accommodation, a whale safari, guided Arctic hike in Qasigiannuit and a visit to the project 'Living Settlement'. The price is based on two sharing with departures on Thursdays from June 8 to August 24.

Visit scandinaviaonly.co.uk for more details.

Trafalgar follows the footsteps of Martin Luther

OFFERED THROUGH Trafalgar, 'The Life of Martin Luther' is a nine-day special interest trip linking to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and split from the Roman Catholic Church which resulted in the Protestant religious movement.

The trip is tailored to understanding the movement's main protagonist – Martin Luther – with visits to Worms and Mainz in Frankfurt, two locations intrinsic to the fate of Luther and the printing of the New Testament in English by William Tyndale; Luther's birthplace and place of his death – Eisleben; Dessau where he preached and Wittenberg where he lived in the later stages of his life, where he nailed his 95 theses to the church door and where he is buried.

Prices start from £1,315 per person based on twin share, with breakfast accommodation, transport, sightseeing and the services of a travel director included.

Premier Holidays adds new escorted tour to Vietnam

PREMIER HOLIDAYS has added a new escorted tour to Vietnam including visits to a host of cultural experiences in its 2017 Faraway brochure.

The 12-night privately escorted 'A Journey through Vietnam tour' costs from £2,299 per person and gives travellers a glimpse into local Vietnamese life with a number of hands-on experiences such as a cooking class in Hoi An. During the tour, visitors will spend several nights in Ho Chi Minh City, paying a visit to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels which were built by Vietnamese guerrillas as hideouts during the Vietnam War, followed by a half-day city tour stopping at major landmarks.

Other cultural elements on the itinerary include a walking tour of the heritage site of Hoi An, where guests will spend three nights; a unique eco-Tour boat and cruise on the Cua Dai River to witness fishing activities and have a go at catching fish; a cyclo tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter; and soaking up the history of Mai Chau.

The tour includes breakfast accommodation, lunch and dinner on selected days, flights, transfers, all sightseeing and the private services of an English speaking guide.

Throughout March, the operator is offering low deposits of £17 per person on 2017 departures and £18 on 2018 holidays. Agents can also earn up to £150 in shopping vouchers, depending on the booking value.

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



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FUNWAY HOLIDAYS has put together a special package aimed at clients looking to immerse themselves in the local music, colour and revelry of Grenada's carnival. Celebrations begin in July and gain momentum in early August, with a Caribbean carnival climax on the second Monday and Tuesday. The operator is offering seven nights at the four-star Coyaba Beach Resort including flights from Gatwick with Virgin Atlantic from £1,475 per person, travelling on August 8. Visit funway4agents.co.uk for details.

puzzlesolutions

Crossword:

Across: 1. EL AL, 3. CHILE, 8. MILAN, 9. ALAMO, 10. PATRICK, 12. TRANSUN, 15. OLSEN, 17. CAIRO, 18. PARIS, 19. ANNE.
 Down: 1. EMMA WATSON, 2. ATLANTA, 4. HYATT, 5. LCA, 6. SNAP, 7. FOLKESTONE, 11. IBERIAN, 13. SINAI, 14. NICE, 16. SAA.

Highlighted Word: HAWAII

Where Am I?: Antelope Canyon, Arizona, US.

We asked our staff the following question this week:

If you were a city, which city would you choose to be and why?



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Sydney for the vibe, sun and kangaroos



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Istanbul - vibrant, mysterious and a bit polluted



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Vienna - coffee houses aplenty!



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San Francisco - it has everything and you don't need a car.



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New York New York - so good they named it twice



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Rome...it just gets better with age!



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Sydney - it just makes me so happy.



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Budapest - a strong all rounder



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Londo - it's my town!



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Bath just cos



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New York, full of street art & skate spots



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Barcelona - fun and arty.



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Las Vegas - fun and exciting



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