

Travelbulletin

Giving agents the edge



MORE IN...

Agent Bulletin

Early peaks incentives and learning opportunities to get you well-equipped for the New Year (Pg. 7)

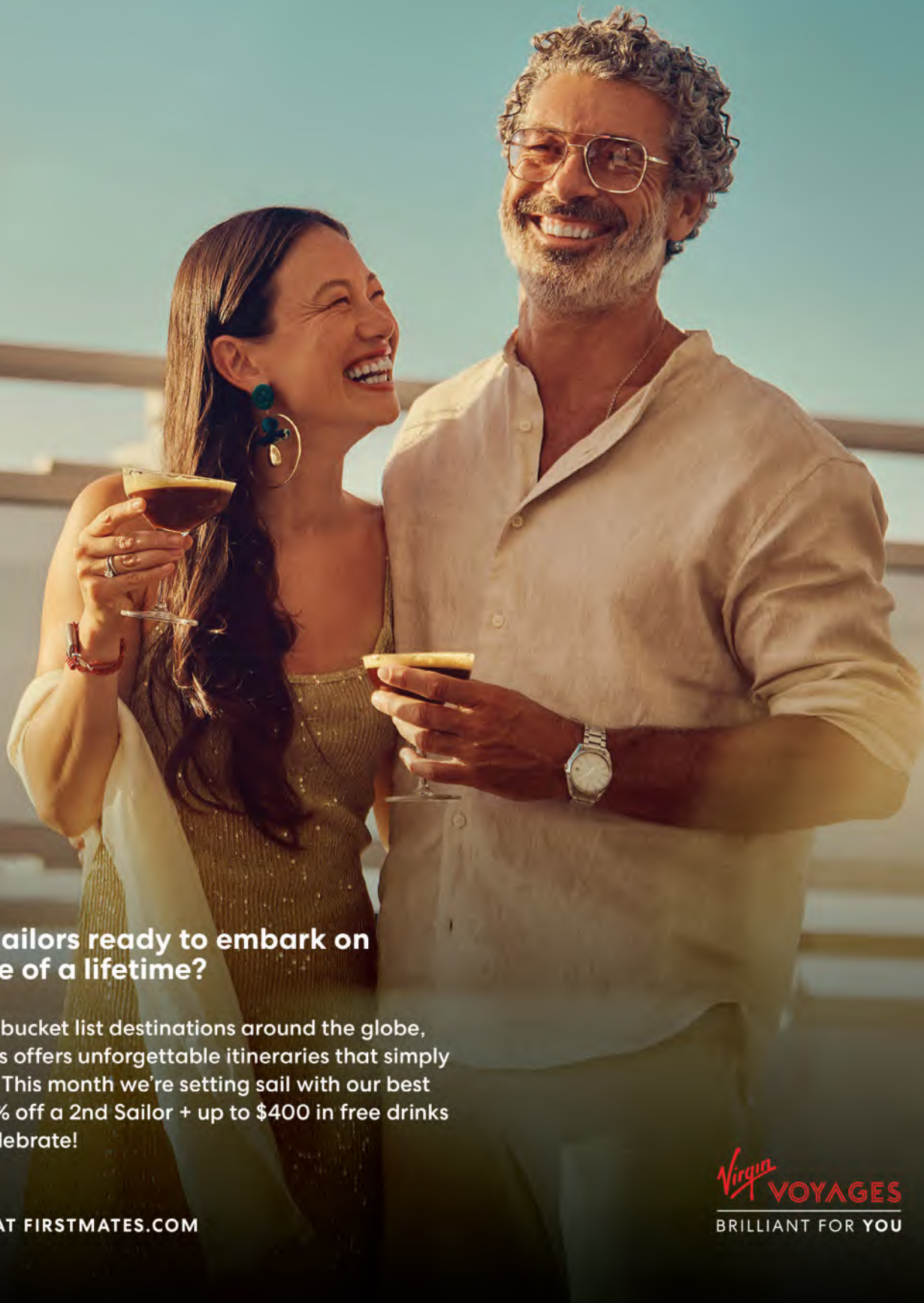
Theme Parks & Attractions

Festive activations and new attractions from the world of theme parks (Pg. 19)



Not Just Travel's Helen Gage unpacks Florida's appeal beyond the theme parks (Pg. 10)

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Are your Sailors ready to embark on the voyage of a lifetime?

With over 150 bucket list destinations around the globe, Virgin Voyages offers unforgettable itineraries that simply can't be beat. This month we're setting sail with our best offer yet – 80% off a 2nd Sailor + up to \$400 in free drinks for them to celebrate!

LEARN MORE AT [FIRSTMATES.COM](https://firstmates.com)

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THIS
WEEK

04

**NEWS**

The latest headlines to see you into Peaks season.

09

**PUZZLE BULLETIN**

Complete the sudoku to win a £20 M&S voucher—just in time for Christmas!

10

**AGENT INSIGHT**

Not Just Travel's Helen Gage unpacks the Sunshine State.

15

**LUXURY HOLIDAYS**

Lavish breaks and opulent escapes await.

19

**THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS**

The newest thrills and spills from all over the world.

TRAILBLAZING TRENDS

September surges and travel trendsetters play an integral role in ABTA's 2026 Trends report.

HOLIDAYMAKERS IN the 25-34 age bracket have been dubbed the 'Travel Trendsetters' according to ABTA's 2026 Travel Trends report, becoming the predominant demographic shaping the industry for years to come.

83% of this age group cite holidays as the most important time of year, more so than any other demographic. They are also taking more trips abroad (two per year), with 84% planning to travel overseas in the next 12 months. It is also this age group which is utilising trade professionals the most, with 44% booking their getaways with a travel agent.

In terms of the holidays this age bracket is taking, cruises are proving popular, with 19% taking one in the last 12 months, more than any other demographic (even the 65 and overs!).

The new report also highlights the rise of 'Super September', with data showing a 7% increase over the last three years for holidays taken during the month, outperforming the main summer months. There is an increase in intention to travel across all age ranges, with the 18-24 bracket increasing to 17%, 35-44 increasing to 20%, and those aged 65+ increasing to 35%. This trajectory is expected to continue into 2026 and beyond.

Graeme Buck, director of communications, said, "The way people are travelling is changing, whether that's embracing different types of trips or times of year to travel. ABTA travel companies are responding to these changing demands – working to make people's holiday wishes a reality, all with the added peace of mind of being under the ABTA umbrella."

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Jet2holidays announces Egypt additions

FEBRUARY 2027 will see the beginning of Jet2holidays' Egypt package options: in celebration of the launch, agents can unlock a trade-exclusive £100 per person discount.

The initial Egypt programme will comprise of year-round operations to both Hurghada and Sharm-El-Sheikh.

Flights and packages to Hurghada will operate from Birmingham, East Midlands,

Glasgow, Leeds Bradford, London Stansted and Manchester, with Sharm-El-Sheikh options from five of those (all bar Glasgow, with Edinburgh operating Sharm services).

CEO Steve Heapy said the operator is "absolutely thrilled to be giving independent travel agents... even more choice thanks to the launch of Egypt as a brand-new destination."



New European Waterways brochure

EUROPEAN WATERWAYS' new 2026/27 brochure spotlights the operator's luxury hotel barge holidays, with founder and managing director Derek Banks promising "something wonderfully different... hotel barging brings stillness, authenticity, and moments of

genuine spontaneity—luxuries that are becoming all too rare."

The brochure also highlights the recent acquisition of the *Shannon Princess*, which hosts five ensuite cabins and a spa pool on board. The vessel will continue operating on Ireland's River Shannon.

Travel Counsellors to break into North America

1,700 AGENTS in North America are set to join the Travel Counsellors community, with the platform recently announcing the acquisition of The Travel Agent Next Door, a Canadian chain that delivers around £270 million in annual sales.

Steve Byrne, Travel Counsellors' CEO, believes the partnership "will become more than the sum of its parts."

"The deal is an important milestone in our growth strategy as we focus on leveraging our proprietary technology to build a leading global travel platform, combining the very best of the human touch and tech, to deliver enhanced personalisation, care and peace of mind for customers."

Following the Canadian acquisition, Steve earmarked wider North America as a key area for future growth.

DTH Travel unveils new rail breaks and agent advice

DTH TRAVEL'S new range of tours takes it slow in Laos, China, Thailand and Vietnam, spotlighting "one of Asia's fastest-growing trends" according to CEO Stephan Roemer.

Ahead of the 200th anniversary of train travel, the



new roster of rail romps arrive right on time.

Continuing, Stephan added, "We see rail experiences shaping the region's future. Agents need partners who can deliver low-impact, high-value journeys that connect travellers to local communities, culture and heritage.

Along with its new timetable of rail tours, the DMC has unveiled several suggestions for agents selling the region's railways.

The continent's modern and efficient rail systems are often celebrated; agents are encouraged to highlight the transport's efficiency (with no airport queues and punctuality positioned as two top benefits of taking the train). The various options for class and comfort fares are also a key selling point; DTH Travel encourages agents to familiarise themselves with the different categories available.



EASYJET HAS announced a new twice-weekly service to Naples from Liverpool John Lennon for summer 2026. The service will operate on Mondays and Fridays from August 3rd, 2026, bringing the airline's roster from Liverpool to 41 routes to 17 countries. Seats on the new services are on sale.

Kirker brochure goes beyond its top-selling destination

BREAKING ITS five-year break from publishing a standalone France brochure, Kirker Holidays hopes to go beyond its best-selling destination, Paris, and spotlight what the rest of l'Hexagone has to offer with its new collection.

The new France 2026 brochure not only sees the five-year brochure break come to an end, but also spotlights upcoming Kirker Holidays' 40th anniversary in 2026, celebrating

in style with several new properties across France.

Kirker's Lyon range welcomes the addition of a new 34-room property, Villa Maia, home to an on-site restaurant, full-service spa and Michelin-starred eatery on its doorstep.

Three-night stays start from £1,598 per person with return flights, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, private transfers and select experiences.

Welcome back Sicily!

PRESTIGE TRAVEL'S first Sicily-centric brochure since 2020 celebrates strong short-haul sales, and offers agents the chance to win a six-night stay for two.

Sicily & Italian Lakes collates a host of experiences, from the indulgent Venice Simplon-Orient-Express to a new Sicily and Malta twin-centre.

Prestige Travel's European product manager, Nicky Shafe, introduced the brochure. "Building on the success of our 2025 dedicated Croatia brochure, we're delighted to introduce our new Sicily & Italian Lakes brochure. Sicily is ideal for multi-centre holidays, with so much to discover across its diverse regions."



New Grand UK agent resources

AGENTS CAN find a new gallery of holiday window posters on the Grand UK Holidays agent portal. Bespoke templates are available for specific campaigns; those interested are invited to contact trade manager Lyn Arnold at lyn.arnold@theukholidaygroup.com.

Ireland's icons continue to fuel its success

TOURISM IRELAND'S trade, industry and business tourism manager, David Wood, spoke to *Travel Bulletin* about the island of Ireland's year of seasonal celebrations and elevating its cultural icons to tourism needle-movers.



David reflected on several campaigns that spotlighted Ireland's icons, from St. Patrick's Day-centric activations to a new Ireland Unrushed campaign in the summer and activity spotlighting Ireland as the home of Halloween in the late autumn. "Those campaigns all sat beautifully together in terms of a launch at the front of the traditional season and an extension at the back end.

"In terms of agents, and the trade generally, where we can hold our own is being so easy to get to... that short distance is so convenient but gets you to a totally different travel experience than you can find on your own shores.

"Yes, you've got the comfort of English being the primary language, but culturally, it's so different. Time and time again, consumers continue to tell us about the welcome they get and the friendliness of the Irish people."



THE FIVE-STAR Sofitel London St James have unveiled six newly renovated suites hoping to hark back to the glamour and thrill of the 1970s. General manager Marie-Paule Nowlis described the suites as "a destination in their own right, where guests can experience style, culture and story-driven design at the very highest level." Four Prestige suites are open and available to book from £1,500 per night.

WestJet makes Glasgow return with Toronto service

AFTER FOUR years, WestJet is returning to Glasgow with the launch of a direct service to Toronto taking to the skies from May 15th, 2026. The route will operate four times per week to Toronto Pearson International Airport aboard the airline's fleet of Boeing 737 Max aircrafts.

Not only will the new route provide increased access to the Canadian city, it will also provide further connectivity to Canada

through WestJet's extensive network.

Alex von Hoenbroech, WestJet chief executive officer, said, "Toronto Pearson International Airport serves as a natural connector for international travel, and we look forward to the two-way travel opportunities that will come from one of WestJet's biggest investments in the region."

Glasgow Airport became the first UK base of operations for WestJet in 2015.

One booked every minute

AFTER CUTTING prices on over 2,000 departures for its Black Friday promotion, Explore Worldwide has announced that the discounts paid off, with November 21st, 2025 marking its record day of sales.

Bookings were up 16% against the previous best-ever sales day, with the total number averaging a booking every 60 seconds.

Michael Edwards, managing director, reflected, "Over the last few years, we've seen a growing trend with travellers waiting on Black Friday to book... and this year was no exception, with demand literally at a record-breaking high. So far, the real trend we've clocked is a resurgence in bookings for North Africa and the Middle East, which is fantastic to see."



"Outstanding momentum" for NJT

HOMEWORKING AGENCY Not Just Travel reported a 46% year-on-year sales spike during Black Friday. Steve Witt, co-founder, said the performance "demonstrates both the strength of consumer appetite for travel and the effectiveness of... our travel consultants..."

AGENT INCENTIVES

- **ONE LUCKY** agent will win a place on a Star Clippers' fam trip in 2026 after an advent-filled initiative running through December. The calendar-style incentive offers agents the chance to win a £10 Starbucks voucher every day after correctly guessing one of the 27 new ports of call featured in the cruise line's summer 2027 itineraries. Every entry will go into a draw to win a fam trip place for 2026. The winner will be announced via the Star Clippers Facebook page and email after the Christmas holidays.
- **PRESTIGE TRAVEL'S** ongoing voucher incentive promises payout as soon as bookings are confirmed. Bookings worth up to £3,000 earn a £20 Totally Gifts voucher, £3,000+ earns £50, £5,000+ earns £75, £10,000+ earns £150 and £30,000+ earns £250. Vouchers are valid for a year after payout.
- **THERE IS** much to celebrate this Christmas at Wendy Wu Tours: alongside the recent launch of a new Wildlife collection, its ongoing Advocate Rewards programme allows you to compete for Bronze, Silver and Gold status and enjoy enhanced cash incentives, VIP fam trip opportunities, annual events and dedicated marketing budgets to support campaigns.
- **UNTIL FEBRUARY 13th**, agents who request a wave campaign window pack from National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions and send images of their shop window dressings to agency.sales@expeditions.co.uk will win an expedition for two, with the second place earning a £500 Jessops voucher and five runners-up winning blue-footed booby adoption packs.

AGENT BULLETIN



THE PERSONAL Travel Consultants in partnership with Blue Bay Travel's group manager, Abbie Heaton, this month celebrates her 10th anniversary with Blue Bay Travel. Group CEO Alistair Rowland said, "Abbie truly reflects the values of Blue Bay Travel. Her dedication and positive influence have left a lasting mark on our business and the people she works with."

Travel **bulletin**

COMPETITION

Win a stylish four-night stay at Meliá properties in Malaga and Marbella!

Find out more at
www.travelbulletin.co.uk/melia-pro-competition

AGENT TRAINING

- **CELESTYAL'S NEW-LOOK** trade learning platform, Celestyal Stars, has recently relaunched with a host of new features. 16 updated training modules promise a more in-depth look at the cruise line's fleet, port of calls and destinations, along with sales tips to tailor your approach; tiered certificates (Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum); Navigator levels with shareable certificates and digital badges; and exclusive agent incentives at every step of the programme to add more value to your sales.
- A **NEW 'Primed for Peaks'** module on Riviera Explorer promises trade partners exclusive campaign assets, sales and marketing tips and resources, and access to top-selling itineraries. Any agents who complete the module by December 17th, 2025 will win a £100 M&S voucher. Head of trade UK, Amanda Docherty, said, "We know that the peak sales period is one of the most important times of the year for our trade partners, and we're committed to giving them every tool they need to succeed... it's designed to help agents feel confident, prepared and ready to make the most of the busy season ahead."
- **PERFECT WEDDINGS** Abroad has launched a five-module e-learning platform, celebrating its 20th year in business. Along with evergreen training modules, monthly training sessions based on popular venues and destinations will take place, with registered agents invited. Managing director Helen Doyle introduced the Special Academy programme. "I am absolutely thrilled to launch our first ever interactive training programme for travel agents... the team and I know how challenging overseas weddings can be. At the same time, they are a lucrative revenue stream. I'm excited to support more travel agents to develop their knowledge of the weddings abroad market, giving them the confidence to sell."

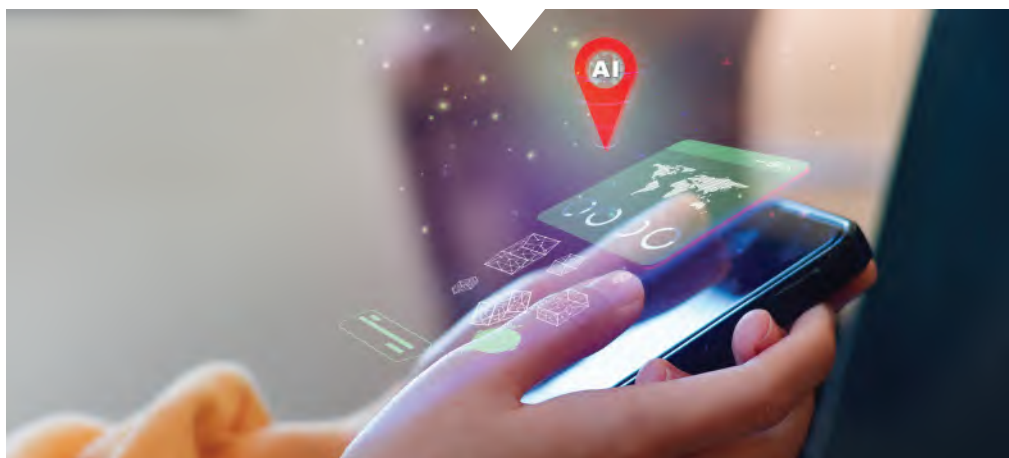
"Be not afraid" of artificial intelligence

CHRIS ROWLES, AITO's chairman, suggested that agents who ignored AI were doing so "at [their] own peril: it is not going away... be not afraid of it," as the specialist operator and agent association kicked off its conference which grappled with 'The Algorithm and The Human Side of Travel'.

Questioning the future of the industry, the chair continued, "Are travel specialists about to come redundant? How can we harness the

power and efficiency of this new technology? How can we thrive rather than just wither on the vine?"

The answer to that first question, Chris believes, is a resounding no. "Perhaps [AI and previous travel tech revolutions] cause change and sometimes create challenges, but we are all still here, and our customers willingly still choose to travel with us for their precious holidays."



Budget reaction: keep calm and carry on!

TRAVEL TRADE Consultancy managing director Martin Alcock had less than 48 hours post-budget to give his thoughts on the latest slate of legislation from Rachel Reeves & co.. Luckily, Martin said, there was less to worry about than first feared.

"Generally, I think we are in a very polarised world at the moment, and you will hear people argue until they are blue in the face about the different versions of the truth [following the budget]."

"From my perspective, the budget announcement is about the 'least bad' budget we could have got. That is not exactly praise, but it is not nearly as awful as the rumours had led us to expect... we have been primed for a lot worse."

So how could the 'least bad' budget impact travel? Well, the writing may already be on the wall. "We are probably seeing more travel companies embracing Black Friday than we have before. That is clearly a discount-led model, with lots of pros and cons... are we going to start to see some more nervous panic and price drops again?"

Concluding, Martin said, "For me, the businesses that thrive going into next year are the ones that, ultimately, get their head up, make a plan, and stay clear headed."

TOURISM ASTURIAS' head of marketing, Tatiana González Salas, iterated the UK's status as "one of our most important markets," and was keen to capitalise on the "opportunity to focus on the niche of discerning travellers" that AITO members serve: "We are well-positioned to target those that are looking for... something unique, different or off the beaten track." More at www.travelbulletin.co.uk/news/asturias-spain-tailor-made-for-discerning-travellers



Awe-striking Asturias

A collective 'Wow' emerged from delegates arriving in Asturias: despite the Spanish Tourist Office's ongoing campaign promising an expectation-shifting experience in Spain's lesser-visited regions, few anticipated the unique charm that would greet them in the host destination.

Spanish Tourist Office London deputy director Pedro Medina spoke to the destination's inarguable status as a hidden gem. "Every year, 18 million Brits come to Spain... but only less than 40,000 of those come to Asturias."

"I feel envious of those teenagers who have never read *The Mousetrap* by Agatha Christie, or those who have never watched *The Godfather*. I feel that Asturias is exactly the same: a jewel to be discovered."

AI enters the ring...

ONE SESSION above all saw the brawl between human and machine come to a head. Expert Africa's Chris McIntyre, Travel Stop's Bridget Keevil, Tasmanian Odyssey's Susie de Carteret, and Steve Endacott promised to give the agent, operator and industry-wide takes on the future of artificial intelligence. Find a full



breakdown of the session at: www.travelbulletin.co.uk/news/three-takeaways-from-a-conference-that-put-the-ai-in-aito

SUDOKU

WIN A £20 M&S VOUCHER IN THE *Travelbulletin* SUDOKU PRIZE PUZZLE

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, January 11th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

November 28th Solution: A=9 B=6 C=5 D=9

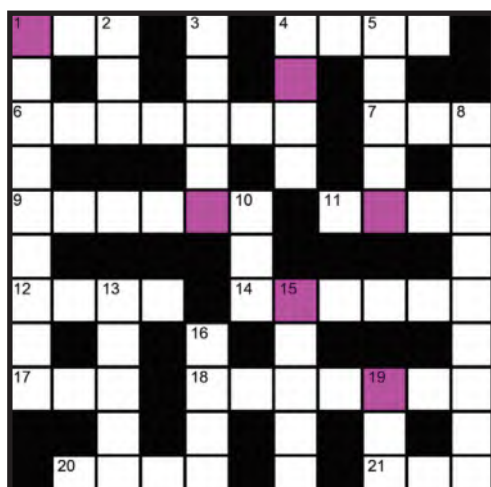
A		7		1	2	3		9	4
	4		2	6				7	
			3		5		2		
B	7	6				2			5
		2		7		5		4	
C	8			3				2	7
			8		7		4		
		4				6	1		9
D	1	9		5	8	4		3	



WHERE
AM I?

HOME TO the famous cats with no tails and one of the most dangerous road races in the world, this British Isle offers idyllic scenery with a folklore twist.

FILL IN THE CROSSWORD TO REVEAL THE MYSTERY LOCATION HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PURPLE SQUARES.



Across

- 1 Established in 1919, it's the world's oldest airline (3)
- 4 Millions of children and adults will be playing with these building blocks over the festive season (4)
- 6 This Nordic island is a sure bet for a White Christmas (7)
- 7 Florence international airport code (3)
- 9 Capital of Cuba (6)
- 11 The medieval Akershus Fortress is one of the oldest buildings in this capital city (4)
- 12 Wham hit which makes a come-back every year, ___ Christmas (4)
- 14 First name of the multi-billionaire singer who grew up on a Christmas tree farm in Pennsylvania (6)
- 17 In Chinese philosophy it's the opposite of Yang (3)
- 18 Oxford based tour operator who specialises in trips to the fabled home of 13 Down (7)
- 20 Alan, who won thousands for charity as the Celebrity Traitors winner (4)
- 21 Arrecife airport code, looks like a top card (3)

Down

- 1 Established in 1919, it's the world's oldest airline (3)
- 4 Millions of children and adults will be playing with these building blocks over the festive season (4)
- 6 This Nordic island is a sure bet for a White Christmas (7)
- 7 Florence international airport code (3)
- 9 Capital of Cuba (6)
- 11 The medieval Akershus Fortress is one of the oldest buildings in this capital city (4)
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CROSSWORD

Mystery Word: KANSAS

Across: 1 KLM, 4 LEGO, 6 ICLAND, 7 FLR, 9 HAVANA, 11 OSLO, 12 LAST, 14 TAYLOR, 17 YIN, 18 TRANSUN, 20 CABR, 21 ACE.
Down: 1 KNIGHTLEY, 2 MBE, 3 SPAIN, 4 LADY, 5 GIFTS, 8 RIO GRANDE, 10 ACT, 13 SANTA, 15 ALAMO, 16 STAR, 19 SPA.



AGENT INSIGHT

HELEN GAGE

NOT JUST TRAVEL

IT IS impossible to mention Florida without thinking of its most famous resident: Mickey Mouse, but the Sunshine State has so much more to offer away from the theme parks.

Having visited Florida numerous times as a tourist and now as a homeowner, I still enjoy discovering the many hidden gems that it has to offer!

Just two hours north of Orlando is Crystal River. In the winter months, manatees flock here to find warmer waters, and visitors are able to kayak or snorkel alongside these gentle giants in the crystal-clear river.

Head further north to the Panhandle of Florida, and the beaches along the Gulf of Mexico (still the Gulf of Mexico to me!) are simply stunning, with white sand so dazzling that it rivals that of any Maldivian island.

Drive south from Orlando along the west coast, and you hit the cities of Tampa and Sarasota. These bustling and culture-rich cities offer activities for the whole family.

Along the way, there are plenty of opportunities for some retail therapy, ranging from outlet malls for those bargain hunters amongst us to high-end stores offering jewellery in excess of \$1 million!

Last but by no means least are the Florida Keys. Just a four-hour drive from Miami, passing by 43 islands on the way, you will reach Key West.

The southernmost point of the continental USA, Key West is diverse, busy, and vibrant! Here you will find Truman's Little White House, Ernest Hemingway's house, and the famous Key Lime Pie, which is absolutely delicious!

Don't get me wrong, I am a huge Disney fan and nothing beats that first glimpse of Cinderella's Castle, but Florida is a state rich in wildlife, incredible beaches, activities, and diverse locations. Too many for me to mention in these few sentences!



Cut-price March sailings with Scenic & Emerald

EUROPEAN RIVER cruises with Scenic Luxury Cruises & Emerald departing in March 2026 are on offer, with savings of over £2,000 per person on select voyages.

Balcony and Deluxe Balcony suites aboard Scenic cruises are reduced to a fixed-price fare of £2,795 per person during the campaign, representing more than £2,000 off a choice of seven eight-day voyages in March.

Emerald Balcony suites start from £2,395 per person, saving just under £1,000 per person.

The limited-time discount promotion applies on new bookings made before February 16th, 2026.

News Bites

- BEN CASEY, the founder of Not Just Travel's OUT of this WORLD, took its team of eight to Dubai last month, combining site inspections with attractions that spotlight the 'authentic' side of the Emirate.

- SUNVIL GROUP has sold Expert Africa to its managing director, Chris McIntyre, who previously worked at Sunvil.



ITALY AND India continue to rank highly in terms of Newmarket Holidays' best-selling destinations: new tours to both will be launched in response to impressive demand. A rail-based Premier Collection option, a tiger safari for solos, and a Himalayas to Ganges adventure join the India range, with Italy welcoming additions including a twin-centre with the Swiss Alps and heritage-based Southern Italy trip.

Travelbulletin

TRAIN & GAIN DAYS 2026

We are delighted to bring you the next instalment of our highly popular Train & Gain events programme on



Monday 26th January - Hampton Court

Inspired with the needs of the busy home based agent in mind, this event will run between 9:30am - 3pm

Involving in-depth presentations from six leading industry suppliers, this day-time training opportunity will offer additional time for Q&A sessions and informal networking.

SUPPLIER PARTNERS

 Expedia TAAP


GREATER MIAMI & MIAMI BEACH









TIMINGS

9.30am
Agent registration,
coffee and pastries

9.30am - 10.15am
Marketplace
networking

10.15am - 11.15am
Presentations from
3 leading suppliers

11.15am - 12noon
Marketplace
networking

12noon - 1pm
Presentations from
3 leading suppliers.

1pm
Lunch

1.45pm - 2.45pm
Presentations from 3
leading suppliers

2.45pm - 3pm
Free Prize Draw

#TBSHOWCASES

To confirm your place at this amazing event, email your name, company, and contact details by **Thursday 22nd January 2026** to events@travelbulletin.co.uk or telephone:

0207 973 0136

This event is by invitation only and will be booked on a first come first served basis.

5 reasons to travel in style by public transport in Switzerland

In Switzerland, public transport is way more than just a way of getting from point A to B. Why? 5 reasons, really: the view, the reliability, the reach, the sustainability and the ticket. Embark on one of the highlight experiences below to discover Switzerland's best panoramas and even the most remote regions. On time, sustainably and with one single ticket only.

Enjoy the best panoramas in Switzerland



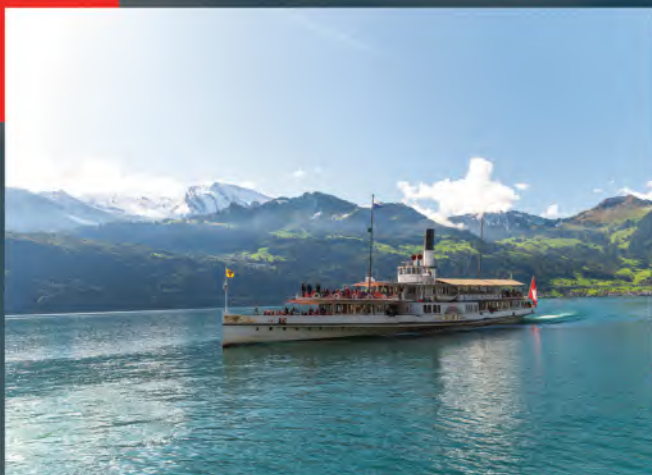
Discover majestic peaks, picturesque valleys and everything in between. And all that from the comfort of your seat. Because by using public transport in Switzerland you make the journey the reward itself, enjoying the most breathtaking landscapes and natural treasures Switzerland has to offer.

Be on time, every time

When you take public transport in Switzerland, you can rest assured that everything works just... perfectly. Like a Swiss watch, really. Punctual, predictable and with synchronized timetables, it ensures you get wherever you want to go – whenever you want to be there. Always safe, clean and readily accessible.



Explore everywhere with ease



Welcome aboard the world's densest public transportation network. With over 29,000 kilometers of rail, road, waterways and more, we'll make sure you'll get there – wherever „there“ might be. And if you're arriving from or going to a neighboring country, just know it'll work perfect too: connections are guaranteed in all places.

Minimise your impact on the environment

Thanks to advanced technology and ever improving efficiency, railway traffic causes only 0,2 % of all traffic-related CO₂ emissions in Switzerland. Combine this with a high share of renewable energy used and you get a public transport with less impact on the environment – without sacrificing comfort whatsoever.



Travel all you want with the Swiss Travel Pass



Explore Switzerland the easy way: With the all-in-one Swiss Travel Pass our international visitors can discover all of Switzerland with only a single ticket. Not only by train, but by bus, boat and more, too. Also included: a 50% discount on many mountain excursions and free admission to more than 500 museums. Happy discovering.

Package a great holiday to Switzerland in combination with the Swiss Travel Pass by contacting your experts at
Switzerland Travel Centre: Phone number: 0207 420 4900
Email address: booking@stc.co.uk | switzerlandtravelcentre.com



MTTC Christmas Ball

THE FESTIVITIES ran long into the night as the annual Midlands Travel Trade Club Christmas Ball returned to Moxhull Hall in Sutton Coldfield on December 4th, 2025.

It was a night full of good food, top-tier entertainment and questionable dance moves throughout! Sponsors this year included JTA Travel, Emirates, Birmingham Airport, Belleair Holidays and Travel Bulletin.



HILTON'S HOTTEST HOLIDAYS

Hilton's new sale is offering big discounts on wintry escapes



FROM A lavish London staycation to barefoot luxury in Mauritius, holidaymakers can beat the winter blues with 20% off stays with Hilton's Winter Sale spanning across more than 600 hotels in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The sale, which will run until January 27th, 2026, covers Hilton's entire

sweeping views of the iconic Tower Bridge and the Thames. Complete with 340 rooms, the luxury hotel combines modern design with an homage to the heritage of East London. Prices begin for £170 per night for a February 1st stay.

Other options in the capital include the timeless elegance of Conrad London St. James, and the cosmopolitan chic NoMad London.

Across Europe, holidaymakers can choose from the prestigious Sax Paris, LXR Hotels & Resorts, located opposite the Eiffel Tower and steeped in art, culture and design, with prices leading in from £450 for a February 1st stay; or

the elegant Hotel Astoria Vienna, Curio Collection by Hilton with prices leading in from £160 per night.

For those wanting to shake off the winter chill in favour for a stay in the sunshine can head to the idyllic Hilton Mauritius Resort & Spa for a five-star beachfront vacation with prices leading in from £302 per night for a February 1st stay.

Hilton Honors members who book within the sales period will earn 2,500 Bonus Points on every stay as part of Hilton's 'Stay More, Earn More' promotion. The sale is valid for stays until April 12th, 2026.

A night to remember in Rio

IN TRUE Rio de Janeiro style, Fairmont Rio is pulling out all the stops to create a New Year's Eve celebration unlike any other. Inside the hotel, a musical narrative will be performed with Pedro Mahal's charismatic Brazilian groove bringing in the New Year. At Tropik Beach Club, the evening will combine open skies with music blending over the soundtrack of the ocean, creating a relaxed atmosphere to welcome the New Year. Across all three venues—Fairmont, Tropik and Sel d'Ipanema—a full festive journey awaits, blending gastronomy, music, celebration and the natural beauty of Rio.

Luxury golf travel arrives in Tuscany

COMBINING WORLD-class golf with timeless Italian elegance, luxury locomotive La Dolce Vita Orient Express is offering new travel itineraries catering especially for golfers. The Northern Greens and the Italian Swing itineraries celebrate some of Italy's most beloved golfing destinations, including the Argentario Golf Club, with departures scheduled for March or November, and May and September 2026 respectively.





Hebridean readies for 2026 season

LUXURY SMALL-ship cruising company Hebridean Island Cruises will kick off its 2026 season in March across the Scottish Isles and the Irish Sea.

Hebridean Princess will offer a range of four- to nine-night itineraries, with visits to the most northerly outposts of Orkney and Shetland, as well as stops at its Gaelic neighbours of Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. *Lord of the Highlands* will sail regularly along the Caledonian Canal and the Hebrides.



A new luxury offering in Crete

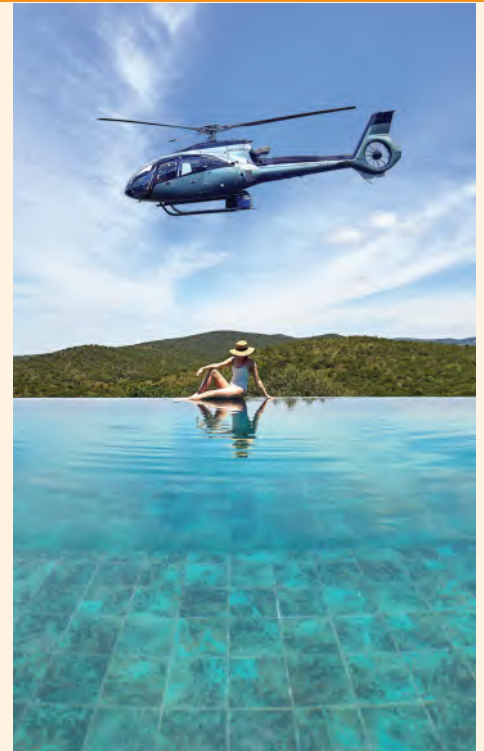
A BRAND-NEW luxury lifestyle resort is coming to the shores of northeast Crete next summer with the opening of INNSiDE Elounda. INNSiDE will provide a range of luxurious accommodations with prices leading in from £116 per night. Boasting 84 rooms and suites, two à la carte restaurants and a dedicated fitness space, this resort promises a fresh offering to the renowned destination.

Unforgettable safari experiences in the heart of South Africa

TRAVELLERS SEEKING an unforgettable safari escape can head to one of Africa's most exclusive properties for experiencing the wildlife up close and personal: Jumeirah Thanda Safari.

Located across the protected wilderness in KwaZulu-Natal, the reserve connects guests with nature through experiences while honouring its preservation. At its heart lies the Royal Thanda Club, one of the continent's most exclusive lifestyle members' clubs and safari accommodation. Four- and five-suite Jumeirah Residences lie within, allowing guests to enjoy total seclusion and unrestricted access to the reserve, offering unparalleled encounters with the Big Five.

Acting as the pinnacle of privacy, the Five Bedroom Grand Royal Residence - Villa Thandawena, offers on-demand use of a private helicopter (a first for any safari villa



in Africa), providing guests with an unrivalled experience. Prices lead in from approximately £24,000 per night.

Guests can also stargaze underneath untouched skies, enjoy private helicopter rides over the reserve and sample bespoke dining by Jumeriah's on-site chefs.

Emerald marks double milestone in Vietnam

THE END of the year has seen a joint celebration for Emerald Cruises & Tours as the company has officially welcomed its two new luxury yachts into its fleet.

Last month, Emerald held a float out ceremony in Vietnam for *Emerald Kaia*, while simultaneously laying the keel for *Emerald Raiya*.

Emerald Kaia will make her debut in April 2026 with an inaugural voyage through Cyprus, Greece and Türkiye. The yacht will

spend the summer exploring the Mediterranean coastlines, with stops in Italy, Montenegro, Albania, Croatia and the Greek Isles before heading to the Red Sea to reposition for the Seychelles from December 2026 to March 2027.

Emerald Raiya will make her maiden voyage in June 2027 with an inaugural season in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Seychelles.

Founder and chairman Glen Moroney said the launch of *Emerald Kaia* and *Emerald Raiya* "represents a significant milestone for Emerald Cruises and our continued expansion" to meet the "growing demand for yacht-style cruising in the Mediterranean, Seychelles and Caribbean."

Emerald Xara is expected to join the fleet in April 2028, expanding Emerald's total offering to five luxury yachts.



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A far-flung Fijian escape

EXPERIENCE THE vibrant contrast between Fijian tranquillity and Hawaiian culture in Inspiring Travel's 14-night 'Fijian Shores to Hawaiian Valleys' itinerary.

Savour world-class cuisine and sunset views at exclusive beachfront resorts in Fiji, Oahu, Maui and Kauai as guests explore the volcanic landscapes and coral reefs.

Prices lead in from £9,115 per person, including all accommodation, and return flights to London Heathrow.



France meets Italy in new waterfront property

RESERVATIONS ARE now open for the new Airlles Palladio, Venezia hotel which is scheduled to open its doors on April 1st, 2026. Located on Giudecca Island, the property sits on the waterfront with sweeping views of San Marco, offering guests 45 rooms and suites alongside a three-bedroom villa. Prices lead in from £1,225 per night for a Superior Room in the low season with breakfast included.

Belmond celebrates slow travel with 2026 launches

NEXT YEAR the Belmond brand will unveil new rail experiences and reimagined global icons for guests to discover a new pace of travel.

In April 2026, one of Florence's most legendary retreats will reopen its doors following an extensive 18-month renovation. Villa San Michele The former 15th century monastery is now home to 39 redesigned suites and rooms exuding grandeur which guests can enjoy from spring to winter.

Next year will also see the introduction of the 'Villeggiatura by Train' series, where the Venice Simplon-Orient Express will journey to four Italian properties: Villa San Michele, Splendido, Caruso, and Hotel Cipriani. The trips will combine the majesty of slow travel with the art of the Italian holiday.

CEO Dan Ruff said, "We continue to strengthen our distinctive global portfolio, celebrating the vibrancy of each property's



Slow Luxury identity and driven by our passion for crafting the future of legendary travel. By skilfully reimagining our hospitality icons, we build contemporary heritage that blends relevance with legacy."

Explora unveils world journey

A WORLD of endless wonder awaits guests of Explora Journeys' inaugural World Journey set to sail the oceans in 2029.

The 128-day 'Endless Worlds' itinerary will set off on January 6th until May 14th, 2029, offering guests the chance to explore the globe in one continuous journey across four continents, 29 countries and 63 unique destinations.

Designed to bestow the ultimate luxury onto its guests – time – the itinerary reflects a new chapter for Explora, promising a purposeful, unhurried and enriching journey

across the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The voyage will begin in Dubai before heading to India and the Maldives. EXPLORA I will continue to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia before journeying for the first time to Australia and New Zealand. Guests will then explore the heart of the Pacific with stops in Fiji and French Polynesia, before crossing to the Americas. After visiting Chile, Peru and the Caribbean, the journey will conclude in the Mediterranean.

Anna Nash, president of Explora Journeys, said, "Our Inaugural World Journey embodies our deepest values – boundless exploration, cultural curiosity and a meaningful connection to the ocean. It enables our guests to experience the world as an uninterrupted story, told gradually and gracefully, with the time and space to absorb its beauty in full."



THE MOMENTS IN BETWEEN

Visit Orlando's new campaign swaps thrills for feels, highlighting the special moments that keep bringing people back to the theme park capital of the world



VISIT ORLANDO is taking a breather from promoting its ongoing thrills and spills with a new campaign: 'The Moments in Between'. Chief sales officer Lisa Messina understands that, beyond the rollercoasters and meet-and-greets, the true magic of the destination comes from the memories made in between.

Swapping the Upside Down for Yas Island

MILLIE BOBBY Brown is set to swap Hawkins for Yas Island as the destination's new ambassador, following in the footsteps of Ryan Reynolds and Jason Momoa.

The announcement comes as the final season of Millie Bobby Brown's star-making Netflix show, *Stranger Things*, debuts.

Liam Findlay, Miral Destinations' CEO, said, "We couldn't think of a better time to welcome Millie Bobby Brown into the Yas Island family. Millie represents everything Yas Island stands for: imagination, adventure, and pure, unforgettable fun."

"When people take a trip to Orlando, there is so much to enjoy, whether it is the theme parks, our authentic neighbourhoods, some of the other attractions outside of the 'Big Three', or our Michelin-rated restaurants.

"But really, the connectivity that brings people back to Orlando is the moments they have with their family while travelling... the moments in between are those special moments you share when you're waiting in line for a ride... that is what 'The Moments in Between' are about."

Those moments won't just occupy TV ads and media campaigns: Lisa

believes, "Our travel agent community help us tell that story: they know what else is out there, and they know that those opportunities are a great way to spend your time."

The new messaging will carry over onto the Orlando Travel Academy, which Lisa hopes "helps agents understand all the additional things you can do outside of theme parks... most families are looking for that balance."

Hear more from Lisa about Orlando's new messaging at www.travelbulletin.co.uk/news/orlando-highlights-the-moments-in-between-in-new-messaging

Prehistoric PortAventura World

A NEW 'mixed reality' experience at PortAventura World in Spain blends real-world environments with augmented reality goggles to transport guests to Yucatán, where they can search for, and interact with, aquatic dinosaur fossils.

Expedición ULUM opened at the end of November, and is offered in English as well as Spanish for international visitors.



IN THE HOT SEAT WITH...

Lisa Goswell



Miral Destinations' Senior Vice President Sales, Lisa Goswell, brought over 20 years' experience with brands like Atlantis The Palm and SeaWorld to Yas Island's leadership—in this issue, she sits down in the *Travel Bulletin* hot seat to unpack the agent opportunity the destination presents.

Why should travel agents be selling Yas Island Abu Dhabi?

Yas Island Abu Dhabi is one of the world's fastest growing entertainment destinations and future home of Disney's latest theme park destination.

The UK market is growing fast for Yas Island; guest favourites are Ferrari World™, Yas Waterworld, and Warner Bros. World™ Yas Island Abu Dhabi. Beyond the parks, Yas Island offers pristine beaches, Yas Mall, Abu Dhabi's largest shopping mall, and Yas Marina Circuit. The circuit is the home of the Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix where Lando Norris just brought home the F1 World Championship! The island features Etihad Arena, a leading venue for global events and world-class concerts—travel at the right time and your guests can even take in a concert or a musical. Everything is minutes apart, connected by complimentary shuttles and simple walkways that make navigating the Island effortless.

How accessible is Yas Island for Brits?

For UK travellers, Yas Island is a strong destination proposition due to its convenience and connectivity. Direct flights from major UK airports to Zayed International Airport Abu Dhabi take approximately seven hours, and British passport holders enjoy visa-free entry.

Distance to other world-class offerings is also key: Yas Island is 20 minutes from Downtown

Abu Dhabi and 50 minutes from Dubai, giving the option to combine a stay with Dubai attractions or a split holiday between the two.

What resources can travel agents use to boost sales?

For travel agents, Yas Island is exceptionally easy to sell. Its compact layout, wide variety of attractions, and year-round appeal from winter sun for UK travellers to indoor, climate-controlled experiences during the UAE summer, make it suitable for families, couples, thrill-seekers, and relaxation focused travellers alike. Ten hotels across different price points, including the iconic W Abu Dhabi – Yas Island, Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island, and The WB™ Abu Dhabi, allow agents to match guests to the perfect stay.

Agents can access YasInsiders.com, the island's dedicated training platform designed to enhance product knowledge, highlight key selling points, and provide up-to-date information, tools, and sales advice. To ensure hassle-free booking, Yas Island's Stay & Play packages bundle hotel stays with theme park access offering the best value.

With its broad appeal, seamless design, and high conversion potential, Yas Island is a destination, that travel agents can confidently recommend and easily sell.

What's on the horizon for Yas Island?

Yas Island continues to grow with exciting new

developments that enhance its appeal for every type of traveller. The biggest recent milestone is the second phase of Yas Waterworld's massive expansion, which officially opened to the public on July 1st, 2025 with a third phase planned for next year. The expansion builds on the park's original story and offers even more aquatic adventures for guests of all ages.

One of the most anticipated additions is the new beach at Yas Bay, which will introduce fresh dining, entertainment, and waterfront experiences—it will offer a lively atmosphere for couples, groups, and adults.

Most recently, Yas Island launched Stranger Things: The Experience, giving guests the chance to step into Hawkins Lab for an immersive, tech-driven adventure running until February 15th, 2026.

Looking ahead, a key highlight on the horizon is the Harry Potter-themed land coming to Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi, set to introduce a deeply immersive new world and further elevate Yas Island's global draw.

With these expansions along with a strong calendar of year-round events, Yas Island continues to evolve, ensuring that every visit feels new. This creates powerful selling opportunities for travel agents and compelling reasons for guests, including repeat travellers, to return.

Some theme parks are worth melting for...

MARCH 26TH, 2026 will mark the next chapter of Disneyland Paris' new-look Disney Adventure World, with the opening of *World of Frozen* beginning a total reimagination of the second gate park.

Along with the debut of *World of Frozen*, Adventure Way will open with a new *Tangled*-inspired attraction, 14 new dining options, and entertainment lining the main thoroughfare through the new park.

A life-size recreation of the Kingdom of Arendelle will open at the end of the Adventure Way promenade, starring a recreation of the iconic castle, a family-friendly attraction inviting guests on a boat ride retelling the story of the animated smash hit, and a meet-and-greet will bring youngsters and the young at heart face-to-face with *Frozen* royalty: Anna and Elsa.

Natacha Rafalski, Présidente of Disneyland Paris, said the rebrand and

reimagining of World of Frozen marks "the most ambitious transformation in our resort's history, pushing the boundaries of storytelling and inviting guests to live their own adventures in the extraordinary worlds of Disney Animation, Pixar, and Marvel."

Disney Destinations International recently announced a new trade hub, Pixie Dust HQ, which promises agents access to campaigns, new offers, virtual event details, downloadable assets and competitions.



Atlanta's new-look Civil Rights museum

ATLANTA'S NATIONAL Center for Civil and Human Rights has now reopened after an expansion worth over \$50 million.

The museum, which is included on the commissionable CityPASS in Atlanta, opened in 2014, and stands to celebrate, commemorate and collate the stories of those involved in America's ongoing human and civil rights struggle.

Two new wings, an Action Lab and several interactive experiences have opened at the new-look museum.



GEM opens after decades-long wait

AFTER THE Grand Egyptian Museum opened its doors at long last at the beginning of November, Red Sea Holidays guests can now book excursions in-resort to visit, including entry and stops at the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

Excursions start from £250 per person and can be booked in-resort. More details have been published via the Red Sea Holidays Trade Facebook page.



Ready, set, Just Go!

A THREE-DAY coach option and four-day self-drive offer guests a variety of choice to experience the Grand Prix at Silverstone with Just Go! Holidays. The four-day self-drive option includes admission for the practice day, three nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation, coach transfers, and one

dinner from £899 per person. The three-day coach option starts from £749 per person, covering coach travel from a choice of pickup points, two nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation, general admission entry to qualifying and race days, one dinner and coach transfers to Silverstone.

Greeted by a Sydney smile

SYDNEY’S LUNA Park, which in 2025 celebrated 90 years of operation, blends the familiar seaside charm of vintage British getaways with a hefty dose of Aussie harbour scenery and surroundings.

Much of the theme park’s 90-year history still remains standing: the heritage-listed Ferris Wheel stands as tall as it did on opening in 1935, and the view has only become more impressive with the addition of the Sydney Opera House to the city’s skyline in the 1970s, joining the nearby Harbour Bridge.

The cheesy grin adorning the park’s entrance has promised a warm (if not slightly chilling, depending on who you ask!) welcome since 1935.

It is not all old-school charm,

though: the Wild Mouse rollercoaster opened after a modernisation earlier this year.

Luna Park adds a family-friendly excursion to visits to Sydney, slotting in seamlessly with its Harbour and surrounding attractions, including the aforementioned Opera House. With admission starting from £7, Luna Park is equally budget- and family-friendly.



LEGOLAND California ends coaster wait

THE UPCOMING Galacticoaster at LEGOLAND California Resort will mark the end of an over two-decade wait for a new rollercoaster at the resort.

The indoor, space-themed attraction will see guests design their own ride vehicle (with over 600 combinations available, in true LEGO-themed creative spirit) before heading aboard and reaching speeds of around 40 miles per hour. The ride and surrounding area represents a part of owner-operator Merlin Entertainments’ biggest-ever investment into a LEGOLAND theme park.

Did you bag any Black Friday bargains?

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Ajman is the hidden gem of the UAE, offering a sense of authentic Emirati history, steeped in culture, with its own, distinct charm. Whilst the smallest emirate, Ajman has a real diversity of experience from beautiful natural white sandy beaches, sprawling mangroves with a rich diversity of marine and bird life. Ajman local city life with a backdrop of the majestic Hajar mountains.

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