

Travel bulletin

Giving agents the edge

Star AWARDS 2023

travel bulletin

MORE IN...

Star Awards

Pictures and high praise for
2023's Star Awards! Pg. 11

River & Ocean Cruising

Stories from the seas sailing
you into 2024. Pg. 23



THANK YOU
for your vote

WE WANTED TO SAY A HUGE THANK YOU
TO ALL OF YOU WHO VOTED FOR US!



We are thrilled to have won Star River Cruise Company



Riviera Travel loves travel agents

For more information on Riviera Travel holidays and cruises, call or visit

01283 744370 | rivieratravel.co.uk/agents

ABTA V4744 ATOL 3430 protected. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel.



THIS
WEEK

04

**NEWS**

Everything you need to know about the latest and greatest in the industry.

12

**STAR AWARDS PIX MIX**

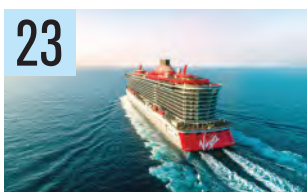
See the shining faces and dazzling outfits from the party of the year!

20

**STAR AWARDS WINNERS**

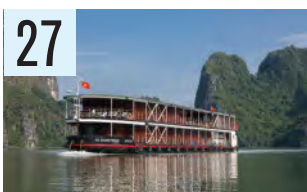
Round of applause for all our 2023 Star Awards Winners!

23

**OCEAN CRUISING**

Give your clients high value on the high seas.

27

**RIVER CRUISING**

Our top picks among the best waterways in the world.



LUXURY AT THE FOREFRONT

Virtuoso has conducted research into the five top trends in the minds of the luxury globetrotters ahead of the new year.

RESEARCH HAS found that British travellers are becoming increasingly comfortable venturing further afield on their holidays, eager to explore far-flung destinations and live those one-in-a-lifetime experiences. That trend isn't slowing down, and global luxury travel network Virtuoso has surveyed industry-leading agency members to find the top five trends set to shape the industry in the coming years.

British travellers are becoming the new frontiers, with many forgoing their usual European holidays and instead wanting to broaden their horizons. Luxury travellers are driven by the desire to be the 'first' to a destination, and are intrigued by the unexplored.

Celebration travel also shows no signs of slowing, as post-pandemic ideology of getting out and celebrating with loved ones is still a highly popular trend. Travellers want to share life's most important moments with

their loved ones, and what better way to show that love than on holiday.

Sustainability is a hot topic all across the globe currently, and within travel that is no exception. Virtuoso has found that clients are pushing geographical boundaries to witness nature in its pristine form before extreme weather can have an irreversible damage.

More intimate settings have become more favourable in a post-pandemic world, alongside small-vessel cruising. Upscale voyagers are looking for a more authentic experience from their journey and are favouring river cruises for the more casual and serene atmosphere.

Finally, exclusive-led experiences are to remain popular for the next few years as turbulent air traffic control, staff shortages and severe delays has led to an increased demand for custom trips. Private jets, yachts and villas are to remain key in creating an at ease travelling experience.

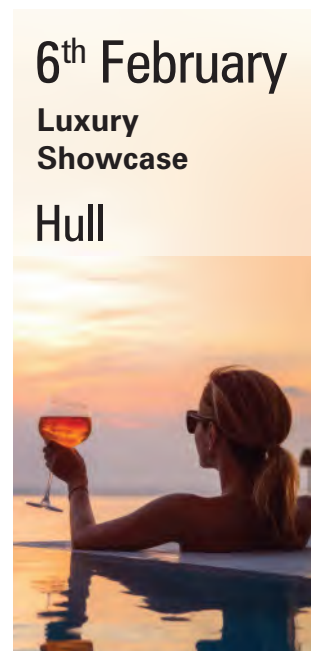
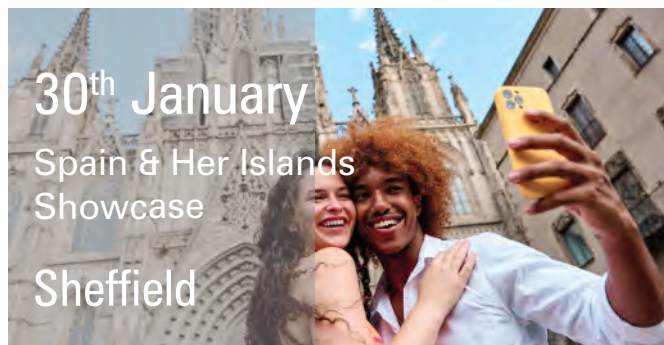
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Pegasus bolsters BHX connectivity

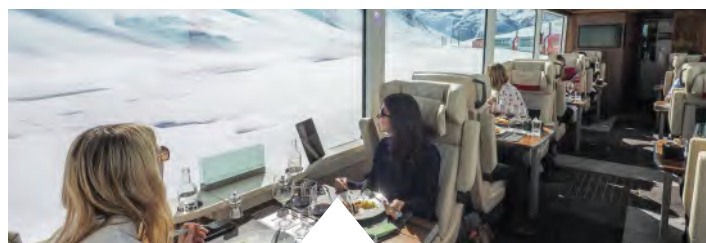
PEGASUS AIRLINES is taking to the Birmingham skies as the low-cost airline has begun thrice-weekly flights from Birmingham Airport (BHX) into Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen International Airport (SAW).

From December 21st, Pegasus will offer flights on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from BHX to SAW with fares starting from £39.99.

CEO of BHX, Nick Barton, said: "We are

very pleased to welcome Pegasus Airlines into the BHX fold. I have no doubt these new services to SAW will be very popular with sun seekers, pilgrims, business travellers, and people going to see family both in Türkiye and across the vast array of destinations offered by Pegasus' strong onwards network covering Asia, Europe and Africa."

www.flypgs.com/en



Railbookers adds Signature Collection

CONTINUING TO expand its worldwide collection of rail holidays, Railbookers has added its Signature Collection of itineraries to its roster. Each of the carefully-curated trips are designed to enhance traditional holidays with once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Gareth James, director of Product Development, said:

"Be it exclusive VIP all-access tours at some of the world's most renowned attractions, or memorable first-person experiences, we're thrilled to offer these Signature experiences as another way to offer travel agents and customers the perfect holiday anywhere the train goes."

www.railbookers.co.uk

Emirates Group smashes half-year performance record

THE EMIRATES Group has announced its best-ever six-month financial results, reporting a 2023/24 half-year profit of US\$2.7 billion, surpassing its record half-year profit during the same period last year by 138%.

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and chief executive of Emirates Airline and Group, commented: "We are seeing the fruition of our plans to return stronger and better from the dark days of the pandemic. Our profit for the first six months of 2023/24 has nearly matched our record full year profit in 2022/23. This is a tremendous achievement that speaks to the talent and commitment within the organisation, the strength of our business model, and power of Dubai's vision and policies that has enabled the creation of a strong, resilient, and progressive aviation sector."

www.theemiratesgroup.com

Take on a Grand Slam experience at Jumeirah Maldives

THIS DECEMBER, Jumeirah Maldives Olhahali Island invites guests to put their tennis skills to the test against world-renowned professionals at the resort's highly anticipated LT Star Event.

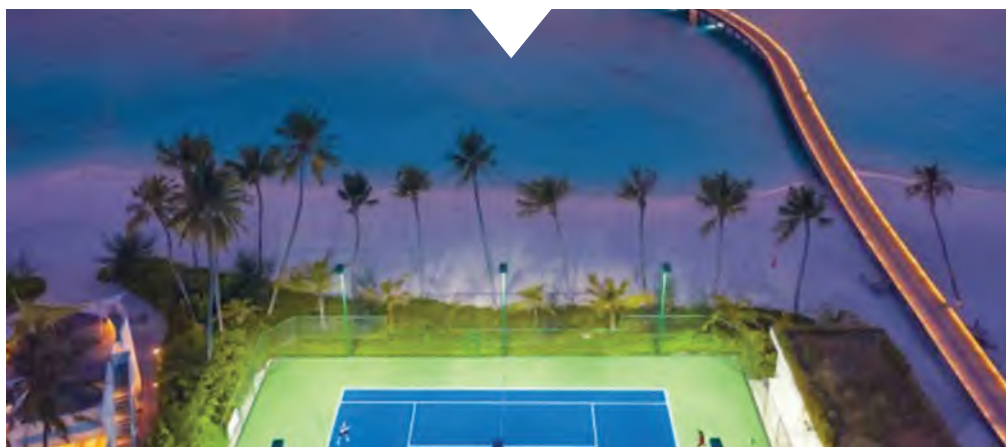
This year, former world number nine, Julia Görges, will join forces with Wesley Koolhof, former world number one in the ATP Doubles will be taking to the resort's beachside tennis courts to assist guests with honing their skills.

The event includes individual tennis

sessions with the couple, promising to be a memorable experience for any tennis fan. No matter your skill level, everyone is welcome to try their hand in the exciting event.

Away from the courts, guests will delight in the resort's extensive leisure and wellness facilities. They can wash away the day's exercise with therapeutic spa treatments or enjoy a snorkelling trip through the surrounding waters.

www.jumeirah.com



IHG Hotels & Resorts expands reach with Chiang Mai property

THE HISTORIC opening of InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping in Chiang Mai's famous district marks the first milestone in a strategic partnership between IHG Hotels & Resorts and Thailand's leading integrated lifestyle real-estate group Asset World Corporation (AWC).

Guests will be welcomed by melodic gong chimes while the manicured lawn in front of the temple will host regular dance shows and performances as part of the resort's cultural programming.

Inside the rooms, soft modern minimalism meets Lanna-inspired decor. Guests will be treated to a fully immersive cultural experience both in the comfort of their rooms and in the destination itself.

The resort boasts its own organic garden where it grows fresh produce for the hotel to use, as well as work with local suppliers to ensure a sustainable gastronomy journey for all.

Exclusive discovery packages are available from THB6,400 per night.

www.intercontinental.com

Greece unveils new holistic approach to sustainable tourism

GREECE'S MINISTER of Tourism, Olga Kefalogianni, unveiled a new vision for sustainable tourism at London's World Travel Market.

The new approach highlights that 'sustainability starts with the people' and the key objectives focus on promoting



the sustainable development of destinations, upgrading tourism education and promoting inclusivity.

HotelPlanner adds Cleverdis to family of brands

HOTELPLANNER, A leading travel technology platform and hotel booking engine, has announced the integration of Cleverdis, the content provider for more than 17 trade shows.

Jean-Francois Pieri, president & CEO of Cleverdis, said: "We believe strongly in the power of collaboration and lasting partnerships. Becoming a part of the HotelPlanner family of brands allows us to offer additional value to trade show organisers and attendees, while enhancing our global reach and capacity to connect and serve trade show buyers and influencers worldwide."

www.hotelplanner.com

Leger adds exclusive classical tour

LEGER HOLIDAYS has opened bookings for a special four-day tour to Belgium and the Netherlands to witness renowned violinist and conductor André Rieu at his concert in Maastricht.

The open-air classical music concert will take place in Vrijthof Square on July 13th, 2024, and includes performances by André and



the Johann Staruss Orchestra. The four-day tour is priced from £659 per person.

www.leger.co.uk



Explore more possibilities

The team here at Visit Malta would like to thank all those agents who voted for us for Star Tourist Office 2023, we were honoured to have won the trophy. This year has seen the relaunch of our training platform, the launch of Big Agent rewards and the largest Malta Academy so far with 50 agents attending.

The Visit Malta team would like to thank you for all your support and bookings to Malta in 2023 and I look forward to seeing you on the road in 2024!

For more info contact

Peter Green,
peter.green@visitmalta.com

malta-training.com



SONOMA COUNTY Tourism has launched its brand new consumer marketing campaign, 'Discover Your 8', designed to inspire visitors to explore the destination in the off-peak seasons of November through April. The campaign showcases incredible experiences that travellers may not be aware of that are only available in Sonoma County, and allows a flexibility to really tailor each experience to meet your desired needs.

Grab an autumnal bargain with Wendy Wu Tours

ESCAPE THE depths of autumn by planning your next escape with Wendy Wu Tours as the operator has launched its Autumn Sale for 2024 departures, lasting until November 30th.

No matter what type of holiday travellers are in the mood for, whether it be a peaceful cruise through Halong Bay or experience the majestic sunsets at the Taj Mahal, there is an offer for everyone for departures across Japan, Southeast Asia, India, Sri Lanka,

central Asia, Europe, Latin America, South Korea and South Africa.

Savings of up to £500 per person are available on a wide range of Wendy Wu itineraries, including the 13-day 'Discover Japan' tour now priced from £6,090 per person; the 16-day 'Essence of South Korea and Japan' itinerary from £8,390 per person, and the 14-day 'Treasures of Taiwan' tour leading in at £4,290 per person.

www.wendywutours.co.uk

Discover Arabia's ancient treasures

TWO OF the three great oases of Northwest Arabia, Khaybar and Tayma, are set to welcome visitors once again as they reopen for the second year in a row to offer visitors a fully immersive experience.

Khaybar hosts a melting pot of culture and nature that oozes into everything the destination offers, with activities such as the Khaybar Heritage Tour and the Khaybar Volcano Helicopter tour uniting the two for visitors to get a true insight into the region. Tayma, known as 'Land of the Kings', boasts stunning scenes of legend, legacy and heritage, with tours of Bedouin Camps and a visit to the Qasr AlTalaq available to transport guests back in time. www.experiencealula.com



Finnair launches super end-of-year sale

FINNAIR HAS launched its highly-anticipated end-of-year sale, featuring flights to Helsinki for £89 one-way and flights to Tallinn from £109. Those looking for a holiday further afield, travellers to Hong Kong can enjoy return fares from £578, and £530 from Bangkok.

www.finnair.com

AGENT INCENTIVES

- **MAKE WINTER** sun bookings with Just Go! Holidays or National Holidays and win a stay of your own! Bookings with either brand made to the Radisson Beach Hotel Larnaca will include entries into a prize draw: email your booking reference to agentcomps@justgoholiday.com to be in with a chance. The grand prize is a seven-night bed-and-breakfast stay for two, valid between January and May & October and December. www.nationalholidays.com/agents/ www.justgoholidays.com/agents
- **AMBASSADOR CRUISE** Line's Purple Month continues, with £20 per person onboard credit or free drinks packages joined by weekly incentives, from Apple Macs to designer handbags. Weekly prizes and details can be found on the *Ambassador Cruise Line Trade Partners* Facebook page.
- **GET ONE** step ahead of peaks with Globus family of brands' (Avalon Waterways, Cosmos Tours, and Globus Journeys) November sales push. Savings of up to £3,000 per couple are on offer on Avalon Waterways itineraries, plus £600 per couple and a free case of wine with select bookings. www.cosmos.co.uk/ www.avalonwaterways.co.uk
- **BOOK A European** getaway from Pure Luxury's first dedicated European brochure to win a fam trip place to the entire One&Only continental portfolio. Email your name and booking reference to win@pureluxuryholidays.co.uk to be entered into the prize draw. One&Only bookings include double entries. www.pureluxuryholidays.co.uk

AGENT BULLETIN



THE REGION of Liguria sailed a barge down the Thames in celebration of its appearance at World Travel Market. The sole passenger? A giant pestle and basil mortar, giving passers-by a chance to learn about how to prepare pesto the traditional way and enjoy tastings and giveaways on the river bank.

Travel **bulletin**

COMPETITION

Win a two-night stay for two in the Maldives at Mukunudu Resort by answering a series of questions!

Find out more at
www.travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions

AGENT TRAINING

- **THE CAYMAN** Islands has enhanced its programme with expert-led videos, taking you on a deeper journey through the three islands of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, with the first hosted by the presenter of BBC's *Springwatch*, Hannah Stitfall. The course originally launched in 2019 but has been relaunched with the latest accommodation and island updates. www.caymanislands-training.co.uk
- **ALULA MADE** its presence known at WTM with its first-ever dedicated stand: learn more about the destination, 'a land preserved by time', significant heritage sites and exciting plans for the future with the trade training platform. www.alulaspecialist.com
- **SHORT MODULES** stand between you and a fam trip to Qatar in 2024! The Qatar Specialist Programme hosts a wealth of information and engaging tools, helping you build itineraries, check local events and maximise the value of your sales to Qatar. www.qatarspecialist.lobster-access.com/selfregistration
- **JET2HOLIDAYS** IS helping you upskill with an *Apprentice* scheme, with up to £5,000 on offer to fund the salaries of new apprentices. The operator will also contribute bespoke training and support and additional funding is on offer to support qualifications for existing agent development. CEO Steve Heapy said: "Our partnership approach is all about taking tangible actions to support independent travel agents... we are delighted to be supporting them with funding in this way." www.trade.jet2holidays.com
- **KENNEDY SPACE** Center's space-age training platform includes complimentary tickets to experience the attraction for yourself upon completion. www.travelbulletin.co.uk/travelgym/other-travel-training

Manchester Airport flies past pre-pandemic numbers

OCTOBER 2023 made fine flying for Manchester Airport, with the northern hub serving 2.6 million passengers, over 100,000 more than October 2019.

October's impressive performance marked the first time the airport has exceeded pre-pandemic monthly levels, driven by the popularity to Dubai and city breaks to Amsterdam, Dublin and Paris.



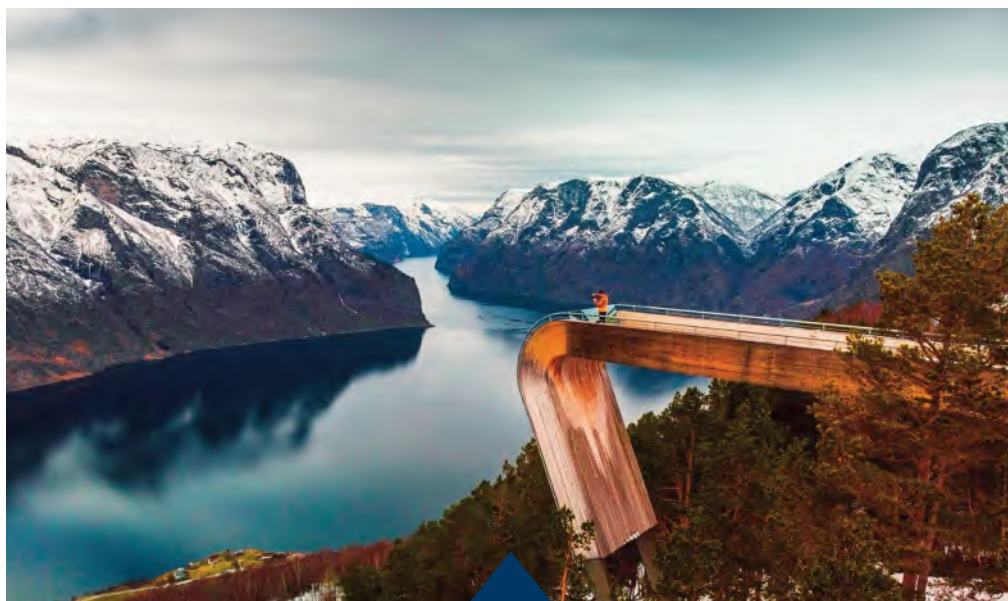
New data states that the airport has seen 27.5 million passengers pass through its gates in the last 12 months.

Perhaps more impressively, 99.3% of passengers have been through security checks in under 15 minutes, a vast majority of which took less than five minutes.

Manchester Airport is continuing its hot streak, on the back of its best summer ever.

Chris Woodroffe, the airport's managing director, celebrated the news: "At Manchester Airport we're proud to connect the North to the world and this data shows just how important international travel is to people in our region."

www.manchesterairport.co.uk



NEWMARKET HAS kicked off a three-week-long Black Friday special, offering savings of up to 15% on all of its escorted tours. Until December 4th, 2023, 15% can be saved on 40 of Newmarket's most popular tours, along with 10% off the rest of the extensive collection. Departure dates are available through 2025. www.newmarketholidays.co.uk

Emirates takes flight on 100+ Boeing order

EMIRATES' GROWING fleet is showing no signs of slowing, with the airline teaming up with Boeing to confirm an order of 90 new 777X airplanes, with five more 787 jets and 30 conversions and upgrades confirmed.

The announcement was made at the Dubai Airshow, with the airline's chairman and chief executive, HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, celebrating the order: "Emirates is the biggest operator of Boeing 777 aircraft,

and today's order cements that position.

"We've been closely involved in the 777 program since its start up until this latest generation of 777X aircraft. The 777 has been central to Emirates' fleet and network strategy of connecting cities on all continents non-stop to Dubai. We are pleased to extend our relationship with Boeing and look forward to the first 777-9 joining our fleet in 2025."

www.emirates.com

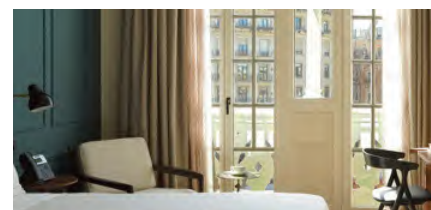
Raise a glass to Cunard

CUNARD plans to raise a glass to Queen Anne in May to celebrate less than six months until the launch of the line's new ship with the unveiling of an exclusive new gin collection.

The Queen Anne Edition will feature as part of the new 'Cunard 4 Queens' gin collection, completing the brand's flavour profile and reflecting its global reach. The gins will celebrate the finest botanicals from across the British Isles.

The Queen Anne Edition will be served in all bars and restaurants aboard *Queen Anne* when she launches on her maiden voyage next year.

www.cunard.com



Nobu transitions hotels onto 'NB' code

STRENGTHENING ITS relationship with the trade, Nobu Hospitality has confirmed more properties will be transitioned onto its master code chain NB. Nobu Hotel Miami Beach will operate under the code, with 10 hotels now under the trade-friendly umbrella.

www.nobuhotels.com

SUDOKU

WIN A £20 M&S VOUCHER IN THE *Travel* bulletin 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, November 30th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for 3rd November is
Linda Isgrove, Izzy Tours.

November 3rd Solution: A=7 B=3 C=5 D=1

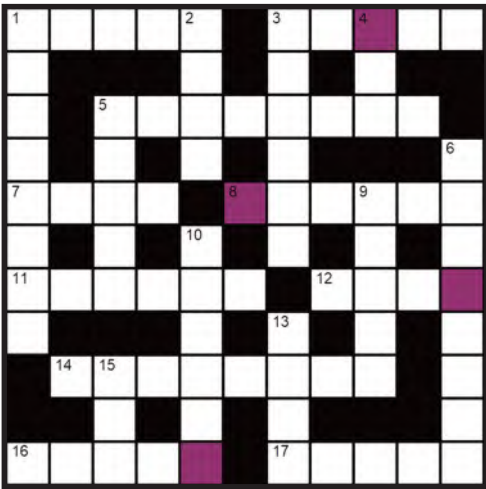
A		3				1	6		
					9		2	1	8
		5	8				7		3
B	3		9	6			1	8	
					1				
C		8	1			2	9		4
	8		3				5	6	
	7	1	5		3				
D			6	8				3	



WHERE AM I?

BOTANICAL gardens, urban metropolises, sandy beaches and towering mountains can all be found in the diverse landscape of this Asian region.

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



- Across**

 - 1 5 star London hotel (5)
 - 3 Sea off the North East coast of Australia (5)
 - 5 Scenic resort overlooking the Bay of Naples (8)
 - 7 South American capital (4)
 - 8 Capital of Canada (6)
 - 11 Popular cruise ship stop located on New Providence island (6)
 - 12 US island territory in Micronesia (4)
 - 14 One of Cunard's Queens (8)
 - 16 Corfu tourist attraction, sounds like a small animal ____ Island (5)
 - 17 Major US airline (5)
- Down**

 - 1 TV detective drama set on a Scottish island (8)
 - 2 English city with a Viking past (4)
 - 3 Altrincham based independent travel company (6)
 - 4 Rotorua airport code (3)
 - 5 Island birthplace of Pythagoras (5)
 - 6 Jet2 are sponsoring a TV search for two new stars for this West End musical (5,3)
 - 9 Oranjestad is the capital (5)
 - 10 E. Sussex town with a famous 1066 connection (6)
 - 13 American actor, ____ Pltt (4)
 - 15 Promise to pay (3)

CROSSWORD

Jamaica sets new UK visitor target to 250,000 by 2025

JAMAICA'S MINISTER of Tourism, Hon Edmund Bartlett, took to the World Travel Market stage to set a new UK visitor target, wherein he wishes to welcome 250,000 UK and Ireland travellers by 2025, following on from the news that Jamaica was named the number one Caribbean destination for UK tourists last year.



"Jamaica welcomed 234,000 UK visitors last year, making it the number one destination in the Caribbean for British visitors and we plan to aggressively build on this number," the Minister said during the exclusive media event.

"With additional airlift with the upcoming Norse flight next month, along with our other long standing airline partners, I am confident we will be able to meet this target."

The new Norse flight from Montego Bay is scheduled to begin from December this year, operating four times per week from London Gatwick. The new route will join the existing direct routes from Virgin Atlantic Airways departing from Heathrow, British Airways from Gatwick and TUI from Birmingham.

www.visitjamaica.com



G ADVENTURES is rolling out the purple carpet for the grandest adventures on the planet with the introduction of the **Geluxe Collection**, a new line of premium active tours. 28 trips have been added across 16 countries for guests to be brought deeper into the destination where their comfort is put on a pedestal. The specially curated itineraries promise to offer adventure at its finest. www.gadventures.com

Jet2 announces partnership with Morocco

HOT ON the heels of launching its Moroccan portfolio for the first time, Jet2.com and Jet2Holidays has signed a formal agreement to invest in the development of Morocco's tourism scene for the next five years.

The partnership was officially signed by CEO of Jet2.com, Steve Heapy, and Adel El Fakir, CEO of the Moroccan National Tourism Office (MNT0) at the London World Travel Market.

Jet2.com and Jet2Holidays will co-operate with the MNT0 to help drive tourism growth in the country through a joint marketing campaign commencing next year.

Last month, the UK's largest operator announced it will operate year-round to two destinations within Morocco – Agadir and Marrakech, with flights and holidays on sale for both winter 2024/2025 and summer 2025. . www.jet2.com

Fly direct to Bolzano with SkyAlps

DON THE skis and the snow boots as Italian airline, SkyAlps, will launch a brand-new route from London to Bolzano in South Tyrol commencing from December 13th, 2023.

The new route, flying from London Stansted, will operate twice per week throughout the entire winter season. For the first time, travellers will be whisked away directly to one of Europe's most challenging and dramatic ski regions in just two and a half hours direct.

Seat prices lead in from €184 each way aboard the 76-seater De Havilland Dash Q400 aircraft, offering one of the greenest eco-footprints in the industry. www.skyalps.com



Happy Hanukkah from Grand Velas

GRAND VELAS Riviera May is gearing up for a festive Hanukkah celebration held from December 7th through to the 15th, 2023. Traditional cuisine, celebrations and gifts will be available to all, with room rates beginning from US\$612 per person per night. www.rivieramaya.grandvelas.com

TRAVEL'S SHINING STARS

33 of the industry's shining stars were celebrated at 2023's Star Awards!



JOINED BY over 250 agents, operators, and special guests, travel's shining stars gathered at London's Hilton Bankside for the 2023 Star Awards!

October 30th, 2023, truly was a night to remember.

Kicking off with reception drinks sponsored by Celestyal Cruises, we all remembered exactly why the travel industry is so special: the familiar faces and great vibes!

Then, host Chrissy Bray got the party

started with retro games sponsored by Travelsphere and Riviera Travel (more on those later...) getting the crowd riled up.

Would it be the Star Awards without some wining and dining on the agenda?!

Then... the real party started! We recognised 33 of the industry's shining stars across six categories, including the introduction of a brand new category for 2023: the Special Star Award for Star Sustainability Initiative!

For the full list of winners, head to

page 20, but before that, don't miss our full rundown of star-studded reviews, pictures and more!

To everyone that nominated their stars, voted, attended, or supported from afar – thank you!

Feeling that Star Awards FOMO? Maybe we'll see you next year...?

~ Jeanette, Simon, Sarah, Tim, Matt, Leah, Melissa, Holly & the whole Travel Bulletin team.

You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your life!

ENTERTAINMENT STRAIGHT from the West End saw guests hit the dancefloor to the sounds of Donna and the Dynamos from Mamma Mia!

Right on-brand, the stars performed a medley of Abba's greatest hits to kick the party off in style!



STAR LUXURY DESTINATION: MAURITIUS

"We are delighted that Mauritius has been honoured with the Travel Bulletin Star Luxury Destination award. Over the next five years, a further 19 hotel projects will expand the luxury offerings of our island. We hope to see visitors continue to spend longer in the destination and explore the abundant beauty of Mauritius" – *Arvind Bundhun, director of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority*



STAR LUXURY HOTEL BRAND: SANDALS AND BEACHES RESORTS

"This is the second year in a row that we've won Star Luxury Hotel Brand at the Travel Bulletin Awards, and I couldn't be prouder. Our team has worked extremely hard to make sure our in-house tour operator, Unique Caribbean Holidays Ltd., continues to offer attractive holiday packages for clients whilst constantly improving our systems and increasing support for our travel agent partners. Thank you so much to everyone who voted for us this year!" – *Leah Marshall, director of sales, for Unique Vacations UK, an affiliate of the exclusive worldwide sales and marketing representative for Sandals and Beaches Resorts*



The agents who played their cards right!

WE HEADED back to the 80s with a game of Play Your Cards Right, sponsored by Riviera Travel!

The lucky winners included Alice Manville from Meon Valley Travel and David Knight from Salts Travel, who won £100 Amazon vouchers, and grand prize winners Lee Monks from Holiday Fixer, who won a cruise for two, and Jules Taylor from Premier Travel who won a £250 voucher!

STAR LGBTQ+ DESTINATION: GRAN CANARIA

"Gran Canaria is feeling delighted to earn the Star LGBTQ+ Destination Award this year! What an amazing trophy! With so many events, islanders' open mind, perfect climate, dunes, ocean and mountains, no wonder Gran Canaria is one of the most favourite LGBTQ+ destinations! We appreciate travel agents' support very much and want to thank you for bringing this beautiful destination on top of mind for so many customers!" – *Katerina Bomshtein, Gran Canaria Representative UK & Ireland*



STAR PR & REPRESENTATION COMPANY: DISCOVER THE WORLD



"A huge thank you to our amazing travel community who have supported Discover and voted us their favourite for the third year running. This award means so much to our sales teams and to our organisation as we strive to deliver a passionate, fresh sales service to help our trade partners grow! We are proud to receive this Star Award!" – *Adam Reeves, senior sales manager*

Explore!

Walking on sunshine

Star
AWARDS
WINNER 2023

travel bulletin

We're delighted to be the winners of the first ever Star Sustainability Initiative for our 'Clear on Carbon' project. We couldn't be prouder - thank you for your support!

Scan to find out more



P.S. Our Black Friday Sale is now live.
Save your customers up to 20% on 1500+
departures in 2024.
Book by 24 November 2023.
See explore.co.uk/black-friday
for full details.

Small group adventures
Don't just travel, Explore!



Thank you for voting us your 2023 winners

Best Trade Sales Team Best Luxury Tour Operator

Expertise and perfectly personalised service are what make Classic Collection an award-winning luxury travel operator. As proud members of the Institute of Customer Service, customer satisfaction is at the heart of everything we do.

Our Classic Collection Concierge service offers a wide-ranging raft of customer service modifications, which aim to deliver a world class customer experience across our portfolio of worldwide destinations.



CLASSIC COLLECTION

Concierge



Private resort transfers



Hand luggage and up to 23kg hold luggage included



UK airport lounge pass included on all bookings



Classic Concierge Service

CONTACT US

☎ 0800 008 7288

✉ sales@classic-collection.co.uk

🌐 www.classic-collection.co.uk

Book with your local travel agent



The Institute of Customer Service

STAR FLIGHT-ONLY SPECIALIST: Jetset

"JETSET ARE truly delighted that in our 55th year we have scooped the Star Flight Only award. This is now our 14th time where we have been fortunate enough to proudly take this award back to show the team that their hard work and commitment is never missed by our fantastic agents."

"There is so much in the planning for 2024 and for us to focus on but we promise that we will never lose focus on delivering a superior system and service to our agents." – *Adrian Smyth, sales director at Jetset.*



STAR LUXURY OPERATOR & STAR TOUR OPERATOR SALES TEAM: CLASSIC COLLECTION HOLIDAYS



"THANK YOU so much to all those who voted Classic Collection as their Star Trade Team and Star Luxury Operator at the Travel Bulletin awards. Our agent partners have been the lifeblood of our business for the last 35 years and will continue to be so in the future. Thank you for making us the award-winning tour operator that we are, we truly appreciate your support past, present and future."

STAR ESCORTED TOURS OPERATOR: NEWMARKET HOLIDAYS

"WHAT A fun evening we had! To win a Star Award for the first time last year, we were delighted to say the least. To win it now for the second year running, we are over the moon! A big thanks to all our agent partners for voting for us, we're nothing without you, thank you for your continued support." – *Richard Forde, head of Trade Sales*



STAR CAR RENTAL COMPANY: FLEXIBLE AUTOS

"FLEXIBLE AUTOS are absolutely over the moon to win the Travel Bulletin Star Awards for Star Car Rental Company 2023."

As 100% trade-only we could not win any of these awards without your loyalty and support, and for taking the time to vote for us. We appreciate it so much and would like to say a massive thank you to you all!"





**We are absolutely thrilled to have been crowned
Star Accommodation-Only Provider.**



We couldn't have achieved this without you, and we never take winning an award for granted, so we would like to say a HUGE thank you for all your votes and continued support, it really does mean the world to us!

We look forward to another fantastic year of wonderful partnerships.

start@stuba.com | +44 1273 429 000



THANK YOU

You have made this 55 year old very grateful, humble and even more determined to carry on supporting you.



Star Flight
Only Specialist

Your continued confidence means so much to us all.
Thank You for your support..... and vote!

Team Jetset, Nov 2023



Newmarket
HOLIDAYS

Star's Escorted Tour Operator of the year 2023

Thank you to all our agent partners
for your continued support!

Star
AWARDS
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Your dedicated and *friendly* sales team



Richard

Head of Trade Sales

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Richard Newmarket



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Claire Newmarket

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ASSOCIATION OF TOURING
& ADVENTURE SUPPLIERS



In celebration of their 55th birthday, Jetset kindly sponsored the prize incentives for voting in the Travel Bulletin Star Awards. All travel agents that voted in the nominations and/or final voting round were placed into a free prize draw to win one of three '55' related prizes.

The lucky winners are:

1st Prize

BRUCE MILNE

*Not Just Travel
who scoops a £555
Ivy Voucher*

2nd Prize

THERESA DIPLOCK

*Hays Travel Eltham who
wins a £155 John Lewis
Voucher*

3rd Prize

**PAULINE
MCFARLANE**

*Triangle Travel who wins
a £55 John Lewis
Voucher*

***Voting in next year's Star Awards will open in April 2024
so make sure you have your say and be in with a chance of bagging
yourself a great prize like these!***



Star AWARDS

travel bulletin

2023

STAR OPERATORS

Star Short Haul Operator: Jet2holidays
Star Long Haul Operator: Gold Medal
Star Luxury Operator: Classic Collection Holidays
Star Escorted Tours Operator: Newmarket Holidays
Star Family Holidays Operator: Jet2holidays
Star Holiday Add-Ons Operator: Holiday Extras

STARS OF LAND

Star Worldwide Attraction: Universal Orlando Resort
Star Car Rental Company: Flexible Autos
Star Accommodation-Only Provider: Stuba
Star Resort & Hotel Chain: GrecoTel Hotels & Resorts
Star Luxury Hotel Brand: Sandals Resorts
Star Rail Operator: Eurostar

STAR DESTINATIONS

Star Family Holidays Destination: Spain
Star Escorted Tours Destination: South Africa
Star Winter Sun Destination: Barbados
Star LGBTQ+ Destination: Gran Canaria
Star Luxury Destination: Mauritius
Star All-Round Destination: Australia

STAR IN THE SKY & AT SEA

Star Airline: Emirates
Star Flight-Only Specialist: Jetset
Star UK Airport: Newcastle International Airport
Star River Cruise Company: Riviera Travel
Star Ocean Cruise Company: Virgin Voyages

STAR PERSONALITIES

Star PR & Representation Company: Discover The World
Star Hotel Sales Team: Constantinou Bros. Hotels
Star Tour Operator Sales Team: Classic Collection Holidays
Star Cruise Line Sales Team: Virgin Voyages
Star Tourist Office Team: Malta

STAR AGENCIES

Star Travel Agency Group (Small): Baldwins Travel
Star Travel Agency Group (Medium): Premier Travel
Star Travel Agency Group (Large): Hays Travel
Star Homeworking Group: Travel Counsellors

SPECIAL STAR AWARD

Star Sustainability Initiative: Explore Worldwide
– Explore's Clear On Carbon



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www.grecotel.com



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new ships in 2024 and **receive up to £400**
to spend on board.

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per person**

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£834

per person**

VOYAGE SOUTH 6 days from

£761

per person**

Book through your travel professional or visit



*5000 NOK max per cabin for the Round Voyage and 2500 NOK max per cabin for the Voyage North or Voyage South. The onboard credit is personal. It's designated for you and can't be shared amongst guests or exchanged for cash. Make the most of it onboard! Any unused credit will not be transferrable to future voyages or refunded in cash.
**Interior cabin (January 2024), lowest fare. Price estimates are subject to seasonal changes and availability.

havilavoyages.com

+44 3455 280 026

CRUISE INTO SUMMER

MSC Cruises serves up an exciting roster of summer 2024 itineraries for every type of holidaymaker in its diverse summer programme.



SEND AWAY those winter blues with a boost of summer excitement as MSC Cruises has unveiled enticing new itineraries among its diverse Summer 2024 programme with sailings available to Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, leaving travellers spoilt for choice as to where they should bask in the sun.

Ambassador paints the town purple

AMBASSADOR CRUISE Line is painting Black Friday purple to mark 'Purple Month' where agents will have the opportunity to enjoy two prizes per week during the four-week long sales campaign while offering guests better value for its 2024/2025 offering.

Valid until November 28th, Ambassador will offer guests free upgrades to its Explorer Drinks Package or free on-board credit of £20 per person per night, while agents have the chance to win some incredible prizes, including an Apple Mac, a PlayStation 5 and a designer handbag worth more than £1,000. All information regarding Purple Month can be found on Ambassador's website:

www.ambassadorcruiseline.com

No matter how travellers enjoy their time in the summer sunshine, whether it be relaxing in a beach paradise, entering into a culinary odyssey or taking part in an adventure-filled getaway, MSC Cruises' carefully curated itineraries are tailored to fulfil every guest's desires.

For guest's looking to sit back and enjoy the ultimate relaxing holiday, the cruise line offers a host of itineraries across the serene Greek Islands and the eastern Mediterranean aboard *MSC Divina*, *MSC Lirica*, *MSC Opera* and *MSC Sinfonia*. Each vessel highlights different elements of the iconic Med and offers guests the ultimate relaxation cruise, with prices leading in at £409 per person for a five-night voyage aboard *MSC Opera*.

For those looking to let their taste-buds lead the way next summer, food lovers can indulge in MSC Cruises' western Mediterranean itineraries featuring port calls in Naples, the birthplace of pizza; Palermo, the home of the Sicilian cannoli; and Cannes; where the red wine never stops flowing. The *MSC Seaside*, *MSC World Europa* and the *MSC Seaview* will take guests through the Med's culinary hotspots next summer.

Adventure is never too far away with the cruise line's itineraries in Iceland and Greenland, offering once-in-a-lifetime scenery and experiences including whale-watching tours in Nuuk and hiking through the scenic trails in Qaqortoq. www.msccruises.co.uk

Breathe deep on the Dalmatian Coast

GET PRACTICING those Downward Dog and Bridge Poses as Sail Croatia has launched four new yoga themed cruises for 2024, combining the Dalmatian coast with mindfulness. Highlights of the tour include a sunset session overlooking Mljet National Park and yoga in a vineyard, complete with a tasting session afterwards. Prices begin from £1,329 for the seven-day cruises. www.sail-croatia.com





Scenic heats up Antarctica offering

DUE TO popular demand, Scenic has released the new Antarctica 2025/2026 programme early as demand for travel to the region is heating up. On board *Scenic Eclipse*, the world's first discovery yacht, travellers can choose from eight itineraries which are available on a Super Earlybird offer including savings of up to 20%. These once-in-a-lifetime voyages allow guests to witness whales, seals, Emperor penguins and breeding pairs of Adelie's in their natural environments.

www.scenic.co.uk



EXPLORA I debuts in Miami

EXPLORA I has arrived for her maiden call at PortMiami to mark the ship's debut in south Florida. Michael Ungerer, CEO of Explora Journeys, said: "We take immense pride to welcome our remarkable new ship to the Magic City. Miami is a paramount destination and important gateway to the Caribbean for ocean travel and it is a privilege to showcase our new ship and immersive journeys to this market."

www.explorajourneys.com

Ho Ho Havila: Christmas has arrived

THE CHRISTMAS season has arrived aboard Havila Voyages, with guests now being able to experience the festivities at sea. The halls are not the only things that have been decked out on the fleet, with cosy Christmas trees and decorations placed everywhere to bring a taste of home to the Norwegian seas.

A host of festive activities are available for guests to enjoy, including the Christmas market in Trondheim, available from December 3rd-20th, where more than 90 exhibitors will sell handmade products in the snow tents and wooden stalls around the centre of the city.

Guests can also visit the world's largest gingerbread city in Bergen, gaze upon the ethereal Northern Lights out to sea, and even meet Rudolph and his friends in



Tromsø for a reindeer sledding experience unlike anywhere else.

On Christmas Day, guests will be treated a breakfast and lunch at the Havrand Restaurant where they can enjoy all the trimmings and flowing mulled wine. Prices for the festive cruises lead in at £550 for the six-day 'Voyage South' itinerary.

www.havilavoyages.com

Witness a kaleidoscope of colour from the land and sea

DISCOVER THE beauty of North America's autumnal colours in a completely different light as Newmarket Holidays has launched its first sea and shore tour to show off the kaleidoscope of colour the region has to offer.

The 14-day 'New England & Canada Fall Colours' cruise begins in Boston with a tour of the city's most notable landmarks. Guests will then be treated to a luxury full-board cruise along North America's coastline onboard the Holland America Line vessel, *Zuiderdam*, with port calls and guided excursions in Maine, Charlottetown

and Québec City.

To conclude the holiday, guests will experience a scenic journey through Canada's Eastern Townships before moving through to New England and New Hampshire's White Mountains, following the path to the Kancamagus Highway where they can take in the breath-taking views of the glowing reds and oranges of the maples, aspens and cedars beneath.

Richard Harrington, Long Haul Destination manager at Newmarket Holidays, said: "With this unique combination and past success with land and cruise combinations, we think this new package will be a big hit with agents."

Prices for the tour lead in from £3,899 per person, including return flights, five-nights' accommodation and seven-nights full-board cruise. Departures are available for September and October 2024.

www.newmarketholidays.co.uk



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For You**



Virgin's Black Friday sale has arrived

VIRGIN VOYAGES is making the most out of the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sale periods by offering 30% off all voyages until November 30th.

Alongside the 30% discount, sailors can also enjoy a Bar Tab on board all vessels worth up to US\$600 for sailings lasting more than seven nights, US\$300 for sailings four to six nights long and US\$125 for three nights or less when booked before November 30th. The offer is valid on all cruises departing between November 16th, 2023, and December 31st, 2024.

www.virginvoyages.com



Azamara expands leadership team

LEADER IN Destination

Immersion experiences, Azamara has announced the expansion of its team with two new senior executives ready to lead the company into the next phase of growth.

Dondra Ritzenthaler has been named incoming chief executive officer, bringing 40-years of travel experience to the table, and Alain Ferzli has joined the cruise line as chief financial officer, with 20 years of knowledge under his belt.

Windstar launches new coral reef support initiatives

CELEBRATING ONE year of partnership with Coral Gardeners, Windstar Cruises has announced new efforts to support the conservation organisation including the expansion of its coral reef adoption programme for cruise guests, a new educational shore excursion and a newly-launched informative speaker series on reef preservation.

The partnership launched in October last year aboard *Star Breeze* in Moorea with Windstar's 1,000 adoption donation to Coral Gardeners with the option for all guests sailing on a cruise in French Polynesia to adopt a coral for US\$35 per person. That programme has now been expanded to include any destination. To date, Windstar and its guests have adopted more than 2,400 corals and is expected to exceed its 2,500 goal by the end of the year.



Windstar president Christopher Prelog said: "Having sailed in Tahiti for more than 35 years, Windstar has a deep-rooted relationship with the destination and is excited about the work and positive impact Coral Gardeners is making for the health of our oceans. By working with Coral Gardeners, we can actively contribute to the preservation of these fragile ecosystems and inspire meaningful change."

www.windstarcruises.com

Experience in-depth luxury exploration aboard Aqua Blu

EXPERIENCE THE Coral Triangle in a cruise that lives up to your wildest fantasies as *Aqua Blu* is ready to set the stage for the greatest luxury cruise expeditions the region has ever seen.

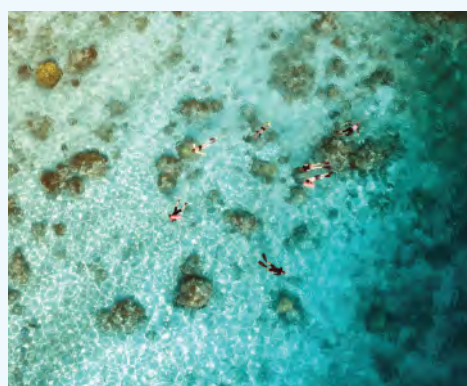
Aqua Expeditions is known for its luxurious touches on in-depth exploration, and *Aqua Blu* is no exception. Taking guests through the pristine East Indonesian Archipelago, the long-range explorer yacht will sail through the region's most prized destinations of Komodo National Park, Spice Islands, Raja Ampat and West Papua

on an adventure they will never forget.

Aqua Blu travels to some of the most untouched regions in French Polynesia, with the itineraries merging together luxury with authenticity. Some of *Aqua Blu*'s cruises include the seven-night 'Bali to Komodo National Park' with prices leading in from US\$8,960 per person; the seven-night 'Ambon & Spice Islands' tours from US\$8,960 per person; and the seven- or 12-night 'West Papua & Asmat' itineraries leading in from US\$12,290 per person.

Guests can take advantage of Aqua Expeditions' Early Bird Bonus offer, with a 20% discount up for grabs on all 2023, 2024 and 2025 sailings on board *Aqua Blu*, minus the West Papua and Asmat cruise. Bookings must be made before December 31st, 2023, to be valid for the offer.

www.aquaexpeditions.com



European Waterways steps back into Christmas' past

TRADITION, NOSTALGIA and the spirit of Christmas are aplenty in European Waterways' latest festive Christmas Market Cruises in Lorraine, France.

Guests will be taken on a tour of Christmas' past while enjoying the unique French-German charm of Alsace-Lorraine. The cruise will take place on the cruise line's 12-passenger *Panache* on the Canal de la Marne au Rhin, with excursions to Strasbourg's Christkindelsmärik, the oldest Christmas market in Europe, and the market of Haguenau, famous for its 52-foot nativity scene.

Derek Banks, managing director for European Waterways, said: "Many of our guests have already experienced the very best of the warmer months in Europe. Now they want to try something different.

"They look forward to crisp, invigorating weather and become immersed in the

holiday spirit: the bright, colourful lights, the smell of warm bread and chestnuts cooking over embers, and the spiced aroma of mulled wine wafting from the countless stalls in public places."

In Strasbourg, guests will also be privy to a visit at the Musée du Chocolat, home of the seasonal chocolate, as well as visits to the six Christmas markets of Colmar.

www.europeanwaterways.com



Last chance to grab Riviera's Free Cabin Upgrade

IT IS your last chance to grab your clients a free cabin upgrade with Riviera Travel where they can enjoy the high life on the upper deck.

Within the offer, guests will have the chance to experience great views of the river along with all the perks that come with Riviera Plus. Luxury toiletries in the bathrooms, a bottle of champagne to pop upon arrival, 10% off spa or hairdresser treatments and 10% on-board laundry services await.

Available for middle to upper deck upgrades, the offer is valid for European river cruises departing between July 15th and August 31st, 2024 when booked before November 30th, 2023.

Some of the featured river cruises included in the free cabin upgrade offer include the 15-day 'Budapest to The Black Sea River Cruise' priced from £3,199 per person, the eight-day 'Seine Paris and Normandy River Cruise' priced from £1,914 per person, and the 'Rhine Cruise to Switzerland' itinerary leading in from £2,099 per person.

www.rivieratravel.co.uk



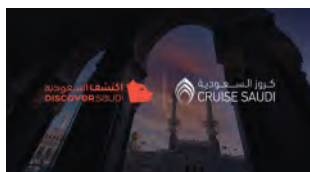
Riverside Luxury cruises into Christmas

IT REALLY is the season to be jolly as Riverside Luxury Cruises has a full roster of festive cruises ready to bestow good tidings to all the guests.

With sailings ranging from three- to 12-nights, there is something for everybody to enjoy this festive period, whether you want to experience the best of Germany

and Austria's Christmas markets in the five-day 'Delightful Danube Christmas' itinerary priced from £2,084 per person, or ring in the New Year in style with the five-day 'New Year's in Bratislava with Budapest and Vienna' tour for £1,881 per person.

www.riverside-cruises.com



Cruise Saudi delivers shore excursions with Discover Saudi

A PIONEERING force in the Saudi tourism industry, Cruise Saudi has renewed its ongoing collaboration with Discover Saudi where the two will deliver shore excursion packages for passengers to receive an authentic Saudi experience.

Guests will be able to explore the Two Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah and immerse into the rich history and heritage of the regions. The extended partnership will play a pivotal role in Cruise Saudi's strategic goals of welcoming 1.3 million visitors by 2035.

www.cruisesaudi.com



Lights, camera, Xcel!

ROLL OUT the red carpet as Celebrity Cruises has unveiled the name of its fifth ship in its award-winning Edge Series.

Celebrity Xcel will make her debut in November 2025 in the Caribbean where she will sail her inaugural season from Fort Lauderdale on seven-night itineraries alternating between the Bahamas, Mexico and the Cayman Islands. Bookings for these sailings are now open.

www.celebritycruises.co.uk

Up Norway offers Nordic wellness retreat

IT'S ALL about wellness for Up Norway as the curator of sustainable luxury travel has launched a new 15-day 'Nordic Wellness Journey Through Scandinavia', offering spa stops, wellness walks and calming cruises through the region's pristine landscapes.

The journey begins in Copenhagen to see how the city integrates sustainability into everyday life, before guests are taken on a day trip to Skovtårnet in South Zealand which includes a panoramic walk through the forests.

Next up, a train journey down to Åstad Vingård, an organic vineyard and boutique spa hotel where travellers can relax and enjoy fine-dining and nature-inspired treatments.

Guests then have the chance to explore Oslo in Norway, visiting a private floating sauna before embarking on a cruise through the majestic Sognefjorden, commonly known as 'King of the Fjords'.



Travellers will then experience coastal wellness as they arrive on the Island Kingdom of Austevoll, a community of 600 islands where they will be taken on guided walks, experience outdoor hot tubs and explore Viking burial grounds.

The itinerary leads in from US\$9,978 per person for the 15 days, with departures from April through to October 2024.

www.upnorway.com

American Queen Voyages presents Recipes on the River

GASTRONOMERS REJOICE as American Queen Voyages has launched six new recipes in partnership with America's Test Kitchen.

Inspired by each of the rivers the cruise line sails upon, each dish was carefully selected from America's Test Kitchen's impressive archive, drawing on the rich history and distinctive flavours from each of the line's destinations.

The new culinary delights promise to tantalise the guests' taste-buds and immerse them fully into each itinerary.



Adam Peakes, president of the Hornblower Group, said: "Regina Charboneau (American Queen Voyages culinary ambassador) and our partners at America's Test Kitchen really dove into the history of the people who immigrated to the river communities we frequent in order to give our guests a sense of place through their dining experience."

The collaborative recipes include the 'Upper Mississippi' with Caraway Pork Chops, 'Lower Mississippi' with a Louisiana-style Cornbread Dressing, 'Columbia & Snake River' showcasing a Soy-Glazed Salmon, 'Ohio River' with Rib-Eye Steaks with Bacon-Bourbon Compote, 'Cumberland & Tennessee Rivers' highlighting Duck Leg Confit, and the 'Alaska Inside Package' presenting a Fisherman's Pie with Alaskan Cod.

www.aqvoyages.com



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Subject to availability and correct at time of print. Additional entrance costs may apply. Riviera Travel booking terms and conditions apply. ABTA V4744 ATOL 3430 protected. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. *No concierge available on Douro cruises.



Combine Asian wonders with Pandaw

EXPLORE VIETNAM, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos like never before as Pandaw has introduced two brand-new combination cruises along the Mekong and Red River and into the world-famous Halong Bay.

The 21-night 'Grand Vietnam & Cambodia Combo Cruise' gives guests the opportunity to explore everything that the two regions have to offer. For £7,704 per person based on a September 2024 departure, travellers will begin their journey in northern Vietnam before sailing into Halong Bay and through the mountains along the Red River where they will join Pandaw's latest expedition along the Mekong River into Cambodia.

The 21-night 'Full Mekong, Four

Country Cruise' is a first for the operator and takes guests along the full south to north journey along the Mekong River, combining two 10-night expeditions through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Prices for the odyssey lead in at £8,636 per person for an October 2024 departure. Flights and hotels are included in both itineraries.

www.pandaw.com



Take advantage of JG Travel Group's Early Bird offer

AGENTS STILL have time to take advantage of JG Travel Groups Early Bird prices for 2024 river cruises. In partnership with A-ROSA, savings of up to £300 per person are available until the end of November on a selection of Just Go! Holidays and National Holidays' 2024 river cruise programme. Some of the itineraries included in the sale are the nine-day 'Journey through Beautiful Provence' from £1,769 per person and the 10-day 'Discover the Douro & Porto' from £2,049 per person.

www.justgoholidays.com/agents | www.nationalholidays.com/agents

Everyone loves a musical, which one is your favourite?

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Best film - Grease
Best in theatre - Les Mis



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Travel **bulletin**
SHOWCASES

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Africa Showcase

AGENT NETWORKING EVENING

MONDAY 29TH JANUARY - GUILDFORD

Travel Bulletin is delighted to invite you to our Africa Showcase! This is a fun filled evening dedicated to providing you with more knowledge about this beautiful part of the world. Look forward to engaging professional networking groups, hot meal and drinks, enjoying the entertainment and being in with a chance to win some truly incredible prizes in our free prize draw!

TIMINGS

Registration &
Drinks
5:45PM

Travel Bulletin
Welcome
6:25PM

Supplier
Presentations
6:30PM

Hot Dinner
7:45PM

Supplier
Presentations
8:30PM

Product Quiz &
Prizes
9:10PM

Event Ends
9:30PM

To confirm your place at this amazing event, email the name, company and contact details by

Thursday 25th January to:

events@travelbulletin.co.uk

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020 7973 0136

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ALL part of our unique villa packaging tool



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Home

No. 1

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