

travelbulletin

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Giving agents the edge

NEWS

Incentives to keep travel agents motivated

TRAINING

Learn about Malta and West Hollywood with e-learning

GREECE

Booking trips to Greece outside the peak season

CULTURAL TOURS

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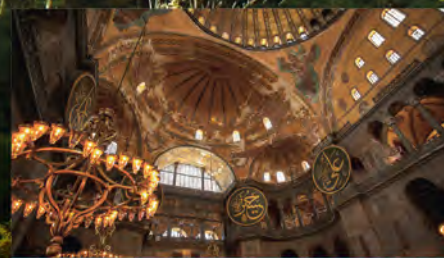
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PRIDE OF PLACE

TravelGay.com has released information detailing the most popular destinations for LGBTQ+ travellers, with Asia dominating the top 10.



FOR AGENTS looking to book long-term holidays, sales data from TravelGay.com has revealed that Thailand was the most popular LGBTQ+ travel destination over the last year. The Asian country had almost three times as many bookings, as any other destination.

Bangkok has one of the best gay scenes on the continent with an array of gay-friendly hotels, bars, clubs and other attractions. Silom Soi 4 is a staple for gay travellers with a number of gay bars facing each other providing a great place for a night out. The infamous street is a great place for LGBTQ+ people to go dancing, eat

authentic Thai street food and sing at karaoke bars. Furthermore, their high-profile transgender community also helps the country have an open-minded outset.

Elsewhere, Japan was found to be the second most booked destination for LGBTQ+ travellers over the past year.

The country has a strong gay scene from Shinjuku Ni-Chome in Tokyo which has the highest density of gay bars of any neighbourhood in the world to the Doyama, Osaka's self-proclaimed LGBTQ+ District.

The country also has a number of festivals and events that celebrate LGBTQ+ people including the

Tokyo Rainbow Pride which runs for an entire week in early May, Kansai Rainbow Parade based in Osaka and Rainbow Reel Tokyo which is a celebration of international LGBT films.

Darren Burn, CEO of TravelGay.com and OutOfOffice.com, said: "We hold the most data globally when it comes to LGBTQ+ traveller trends and so our index of the most popular cities makes for interesting reading. It shows that it's not always the obvious choices that the LGBTQ+ traveller chooses to visit. It also shows that many destinations are improving their credentials and laws in order to attract new demographics."

Special notice: COVID-19 and the travel industry

The travel industry is experiencing unprecedented challenges in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At *Travel Bulletin*, we are committed to supporting agents. We have made every effort to ensure all information in this issue was up-to-date at the time of going to press, but it is subject to change as events develop. Please check www.travelbulletin.co.uk for the latest news.

travelbulletin

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A solo summer escape with Just You

JUST YOU has launched a range of destinations ready to be explored by solo travellers, from Croatia, Spain and Portugal to Greece and Turkey.

Clients can choose from a range of tours that will suit many interests, from art and history, to food and wine and even walking, lakes and cruising.

"We want our customers to really explore their passions, delving deeper into their love of history while exploring the ancient treasures of Greece and Turkey. Just You allows its customers to take their taste buds on a tour to remember in Portugal with visits to wineries and the chance to sample local delicacies from ancient recipes. We want to celebrate our customers' hobbies and interests by bringing them to life on



Travellers can explore regions with like-minded people on Just You's trips.

location," said Alastair Campbell, Just You's managing director.

"With Just You, everything is taken care of so you can sit back relax and enjoy your holiday. There is so much included in the price from flights and overseas transfers, to friendly airport representatives as well as a private room to yourself being guaranteed.

We know that our customers want to see all the highlights of a destination without the stress of organising the finer details. Our expert tour managers and specialist local guides are on hand to ensure everything runs smoothly but to also deliver those unforgettable exciting shared group experiences." www.justyou.co.uk

COVID-19: updates for tourists in Italy

IN AN effort to hinder and limit the spread of COVID-19 in Italy, the Italian Government has ordered a series of restrictions applied to the whole country that will be in force until April 3.

The decrees, announced by the Prime Minister, established measures that include limiting the movement of people to and from all regions with the exception of well-founded business and health reasons.

Mobility restrictions will extend to roads and highways, trains and railway stations

and airports (with the exception of transferring passengers).

The decree has suspended gathering spots in public and private places like cinemas, pubs, discos, museums, as well as a shut down of ski lifts in ski areas.

For Schengen and non-Schengen arrivals, passengers will have to justify the purpose of their trip upon entry, and this includes cruise ships and their passengers.

For more information on the restrictions, visit www.italia.it/en

Walk on the wildside with Exodus Travels

EXODUS TRAVELS has created a family adventure in search of Africa's largest residents in the Masai Mara and Lake Naivasha in Kenya.

Kenya is the classic safari destination and this seven-day family adventure is the ideal place for children to have their first sightings of lions, elephants, giraffes and cheetahs.



The Masai Mara, with endless grasslands and an astonishing variety of wildlife, offers an unforgettable setting. The tour ends in Nairobi where the itinerary takes travellers to an elephant orphanage and giraffe centre to learn about the conservation work being done to protect these animals.

Exodus' seven-night escorted 'Kenya Family Wildlife Quest' starts from £2,649 per adult and £1,987 per child, including flights from London, accommodation, daily breakfast, four lunches and dinners, a tour leader throughout and activities as listed in the itinerary. www.exodus.co.uk



CMV cruises into March with megasale

CRUISE & MARITIME Voyages is offering lower fares on 35 no-fly spring and summer 2020 cruises.

The new 'Price Buster Mega Sale' runs until the end of March, with savings of up to 75%.

The sale includes sailings from London Tilbury, Newcastle, Dundee, Bristol Avonmouth, Poole and Portsmouth on board four of CMV's smaller to mid-sized traditional and classic cruise ships.

For peace of mind, passengers can just pay a deposit and the balance is due 14 days before departure with a no penalty cancellation up to that date.

Fares are available from £399 per person for a seven-night Fjord cruise. www.cruiseandmaritime.com

Skip into spring with Sandals' sale

SANDALS AND Beaches Resorts has launched a Spring Flash Sale with an extra £100 off on new bookings of seven-nights or more made before March 24. The Spring Flash Sale saving is in addition to Sandals and Beaches Resorts' 'Booking Bonus' which includes up to £150 off Club suites and up to £300 off Butler suites for seven to nine night stays. Clients booking for 10 nights or more can save up to £400 on Club suites and up to £600 on Butler suites.

Agents need to quote the promocode SPRING100 when booking to take advantage of the Spring Flash Sale on behalf of clients. The 'Booking Bonus' is automatically applied when booking.

Agents who want to book a twin-centre stay so clients get the most out of their holiday can save £100 on any new booking of 10 nights or more by using the promo code



The Ochi Beach Resort, Jamaica.

TWIN, if the booking is made before the March 24.

Sandals Resorts offers include:

Seven-nights at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort, Jamaica, costs from £1,399 per person:

A seven-night stay for two at Sandals Ochi Beach Resort, Jamaica, staying in a Great House Luxury suite costs from £1,399 per

person. Price includes Luxury Included® (all-inclusive) accommodation, return economy flights with Virgin Atlantic from London Gatwick and resort transfers. Price is valid for travel on select dates between September 5-October 16, 2021.

www.sandals.co.uk

Gold Medal and Travel 2 waiver fees for UK agents

GOLD MEDAL and Travel 2 have announced changes to their cancellation and amendment policies applicable across their whole package holiday portfolio.

Agents booking new packages this month with either tour operator will be able to amend or cancel their package holiday booking at no charge.

Committed to arming agents with as much flexibility and support as possible, the new policies take immediate effect and are

available on every new package booking. Customers can amend a trip at any time (free of Gold Medal or Travel 2 charges) and only pay the fare difference with the airline/hotel if applicable. Gold Medal and Travel 2 cancellation fees are also being waived if a customer has to cancel a holiday in the constantly changing current climate.

The new policies are valid on new bookings made between now and March 31.

www.goldmedal.co.uk and www.travel2.com

MOVERS and SHAKERS

JENS BISCHOF will take over as chairman of the management board of Eurowings. Jens Bischof was previously CEO of the airline SunExpress.



ROSEWOOD HOTEL Group has announced the promotion of Caroline MacDonald from vice president of global sales & marketing to group vice president of sales, distribution and business performance.



SUNVIL HAS appointed Sophie Fayle as its new trade sales manager. As Sunvil celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, Sophie will be taking on the new position as part of a wider trade partner strategy to strengthen the UK sales team.



Be tempted by tasty tourism in Mauritius

MAURITIUS IS heavily promoting itself as a gastronomy tourism destination, with the country's tourism board keen to let agents know that one of the best ways to experience this island paradise is to enjoy the food. The markets showcase the great local produce on offer and these fresh delights can be tried out at street food vendors and fine dining restaurants alike. The country is a cultural melting pot so this means culinary influences include China, multiple African nations and France. www.tourism-mauritius.mu

P&O show up in the air aboard Iona



P&O CRUISES will run three aerial shows for Iona's maiden season, in collaboration with Canadian entertainment company Creativiva, an international live entertainment company that specialises in multi-genre experiences and spectacles around the world.

The three new shows planned for Iona's maiden season are entitled 'Rise', 'Triboo' and 'Dream'. Iona's design, featuring a two-deck glass SkyDome, has been the inspiration for 'Rise' and

'Triboo', with the shows created to reflect their performance environment which provides panoramic views of sea and sky.

Themed around transformation, 'Rise' is set in an aviary, home to a collection of brightly coloured birds and features amazing costumes, performance, acrobatics and music in a multi-coloured environment.

'Triboo' is an adrenaline-driven battle performed in Iona's SkyDome, with audience interaction.

Upon arrival, guests will have to make a choice: whether they are supporting the Tribe of the Moon or the Tribe of the Sun, with the battle winners decreed by the audience.

In 'Dream', guests will be able to experience a surprising show which will pop up in the Grand Atrium. This show blurs the line between magic and reality.

Two more new shows, 'Virtuosi' and 'Spark', are planned for Iona's second season.

www.pocruises.com

Mixed response to Sunak budget from ABTA

MARK TANZER, chief executive of ABTA praised Chancellor Rishi Sunak for acting "quickly and decisively with certain measures that will support smaller businesses".

"Travel businesses are under increasing pressure and steps such as the business interruption loan scheme, the emergency cut to interest rates and support for small businesses with sickness payments for staff will provide some welcome relief and a degree of protection for at least some members in the weeks to come," he said.

However, Mr Tanzer cautioned that measures designed to increase access to short term credit need to be "turned into reality" and asked the government to work with lenders to "ensure the measures are effective on the ground".

ABTA welcomes a review of Air Passenger Duty (APD) for domestic travel, urging a wider reform process as a catalyst for discussions between industry and government. Mr Tanzer expressed disappointment at the inflationary increase of APD.



Royal reservations for solo travellers with Titan

TITAN OFFERS a selection of holidays reserved for individual travellers. These departures include no single supplements as everyone travelling on these tours are a solo traveller, plus solo travellers are welcome on any Titan holiday for a low or no single supplement. The seven-day 'Royal Palaces and Gardens of Bavaria' solo escorted tour is from £1,799 per person and includes six nights hotel accommodation, 11 meals and four excursions, such as Linderhof Palace. The price also includes VIP door-to-door travel service, a tour manager and flights from Heathrow. www.titantravel.co.uk/holiday-types/single-travellers

HOTEL bites

FLORIDA'S DAYTONA Beach is abuzz with new hotel openings.

- The 174-room Grand Seas Resort by Exploria had a grand reopening last month.
- The 112-room oceanfront Comfort Inn & Suites has opened. It is just south of the Main Street Pier on the site of a former Mayan Inn property.
- Home2Suites by Hilton in Ormond Beach is scheduled to open in April.
- The Sandals Inn, a renovated oceanfront property, opened in January this year.
- The Plaza Resort & Spa, a local landmark, will soon complete a multi-million dollar renovation.
- The Shores Resort & Spa has completed its multi-million dollar renovation of all 212 rooms.
- Other recent openings include Foxtail Estates, a B&B garden venue; Residence Inn by Marriott Daytona Beach Oceanfront; Hilton Garden Inn and the boutique Chateau Mar Beach Resort.

For more information, go to www.DaytonaBeach.com

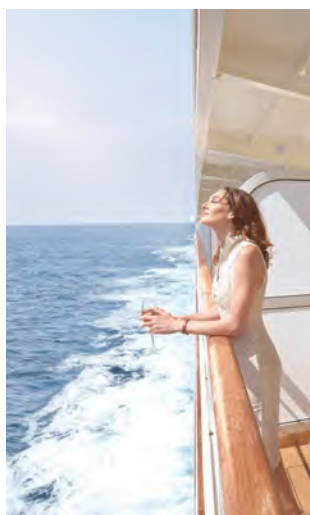
(Image credit: Paul Brennan)



Royal Caribbean offers clients cruising confidence

WITH COVID-19 adding uncertainty to travel plans, Royal Caribbean Group said it will give guests greater control over their holiday decisions, allowing guests to cancel cruises as late as two days before departure.

The "Cruise With Confidence" policy allows guests on Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Azamara and Silversea to cancel up to 48 hours before a sailing. Guests will receive a full credit for their fare, usable on any future sailing of the guest's choice in 2020 or 2021. The policy applies to new and existing bookings.



"Our previous policy set earlier deadlines for guests to cancel their cruises, and that added unnecessary stress," said Richard Fain, the company's chairman and CEO. "Trying to guess a month or more in advance where areas of concern about coronavirus might be is challenging for medical experts, much less a family preparing for vacation."

The policy applies to all cruises with a sailing date on or before July 31, 2020, and will be offered by the company's global brands: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Azamara and Silversea. Full details of the "Cruise with Confidence" policy can be found at the respective brand websites.



TOP DECK ATTRACTION

NEW YORK CityPASS, which offers travel agent partners special deals for their own Big Apple adventures, has added Edge at Hudson Yards to its list of attractions covered by the \$87 cost (\$67 for children aged five to 12). Edge includes a multi-media experience and then a trip up 1,100 feet to a glass outdoor deck which allows visitors to see the whole New York skyline. The floor is glass for a jaw-dropping view to the street below. www.cityPASS.com

Last chance for Warner's spring sale deals

AGENTS CAN still take advantage of Warner Leisure Hotel's spring sale on behalf of their clients, with the offers available on bookings made before March 30.

Deals start from £199 per person, such as a four-night stay at Corton Coastal Village, arriving April 6. The price is based on two adults sharing Standard accommodation inclusive of the Simply Dine package (English and continental breakfasts and three-course evening meals) on the company's Re-Mixed entertainment break deal.

The brand's 14 properties are adults-only retreats, including the historic Studley Castle in Warwickshire and the coastal getaways on the

Isle of Wight, Bembridge Coast and Norton Grange.

As well as the opportunity to relax in spas or by heated swimming pools, there is a strong focus on activities for all fitness levels, including zumba, archery, walking rugby, foot golf and fencing.

The brand is also becoming well-known for its entertainment breaks with Lulu, Leo Sayer and Merrill Osmond among the stars coming to their properties. To book, go to www.BourneLeisureSales.co.uk or call 0330 1009 776.





Notes from NORMANTON...

AT THE time of writing this column, my advice is that unless the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has advised us not to go to a particular place and UK travellers are allowed to enter, I would not cancel. But make sure clients get insurance as soon as they book and double-check policies. It's important to check that your customers are covered if a country refuses them entry. A positive

attitude is needed when talking to customers – it's not always necessary to cancel.

On a more positive note, I attended an event in Leeds hosted by Oman Air, Oman Ministry of Tourism and Manchester Airport in partnership with The Chedi Hotel, Elite Travel & Tourism, Magic Travels and Anantara, I've never been to Oman but it's on my 'to visit' list. I chatted with Darren McCormick and Feysal Nagi from Oman Air. Feysal said that because of the coronavirus, the airline has a 'Flexibility Promise' to help people book with confidence. There will be no change fees on new bookings made until May 31 for travel up to October 31, 2020. The policy applies right up to departure without having to pay penalties if travel plans change. It's nice to see airlines being helpful instead of grabbing all they can get with amendment charges – well done, Oman Air, and thank you for a great evening.

Finally, I'd like to remind you that the Yorkshire Travel Ball, which is in its 23rd year, will be held on July 16 at the Village Hotel, South Leeds. It will be in aid of many animal charities. If you want more information, email me at s.murray922@btinternet.com – come on, tour operators, please support this great event.

Sandy

by **SANDRA MURRAY** in Normanton, Yorkshire

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

AmaWaterways offers a dah-ling voyage down the Nile on the new AmaDahlia river cruiser

AMAWATERWAYS HAS announced its 25th river cruise ship, the luxurious new AmaDahlia, is scheduled to set sail on Egypt's legendary Nile River beginning September 2021.

The 11-night cruise and land adventure, priced from

£3,879 per person, includes a seven-night round trip river cruise from Luxor and is paired with three nights pre- and one night post-cruise stays in historic Cairo at the prestigious five-star Four Seasons, Cairo at The First Residence.

The AmaDahlia will guide guests through the heart of Egypt, as well as millennia-old attractions – many of which are designated UNESCO World Heritage sites – with expert guides. The trip also offers the chance to experience Cairo.

Designed to accommodate 68 guests, the AmaDahlia will feature 34 staterooms, 24 of which are balcony suites. Onboard amenities include a sun deck bar and pool, fitness room, hair and nail salon, two massage rooms and two restaurants. For more details, visit www.amawaterways.co.uk or call 0800 520 2252.



The AmaDahlia cuts a fine figure on the water.

Travel companies keen to get flexible

IN RESPONSE to uncertainty in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, many companies are offering greater flexibility.

- Shearings is offering the option to change departure dates free of charge up to four weeks prior to departure, plus 10% off all holidays departing in April and May.
- Railbookers and Amtrak Vacations is letting customers booked until April 30 change or cancel bookings up to five days before departure free of charge. Vouchers will be issued, valid for 24 months.
- CroisiEurope is offering cancellation without penalty up to 30 days before departure for bookings made until May 1 on cruises departing through to August 31, 2020. Agents need to make bookings by phone or email for the offer to be valid.
- Premier Holidays' customers can postpone bookings until 11 weeks before their original departure date and rebook for a date within 11 months. This is for any qualifying holiday booked until March 31.
- Norwegian Cruise Line is offering guests who book voyages through to September 30, 2020 the option to cancel 48 hours before sailing. They will receive a 100% future credit based on the amount paid, which can be used towards future trips up to December 31, 2022.





GOLD MEDAL hosted 10 agents and their colleagues to join them in a VIP hospitality box for The BRIT Awards 2020 as a thank you for their support during the peaks season. The agents received a perfect view of the show with food and drinks included, as well as entrance to a 70's themed after-party, complete with face paint and drag queens. Some of the agents were lucky enough to meet a host of celebrities, including Fleur East, Rag'n'Bone man, Dizzee Rascal, Michael Kiwanuka, Neneh Cherry, Christopher Dean and Karen Barber.

AGENT INCENTIVES

- **TRAVEL 2** is giving five lucky agents the chance to win £100 of T2 Rewards to celebrate the launch of its Worldwide Pocket Guide. To be in with a chance of winning, agents should comment their answers to the questions on @Travel2com's pinned Facebook post by March 31. All comments will be entered into a prize draw and five winners will be selected at random and notified.
- **AGENTS WHO** secure a Hoseasons booking during the company's Staycation Mega Sale will enter a prize draw to be in with the chance of winning a £500 holiday voucher. Agents need to register every booking they confirm until March 23 at agency.sales@hoseasons.co.uk along with their name, reference number and ABTA number, and the staycation specialist will enter the agent's name into the prize draw. The Staycation Mega Sale offers agents savings up to £250 off Easter escapes and May half-term and up to £300 off summer school holidays. www.hoseasons.co.uk



AGENT TRAINING

CRYSTAL HAS released details of its 2020 'Knowledge Crystallised' training events for agents who are keen to learn about all four Crystal experiences – ocean, river, yacht and expedition. Each 'Knowledge Crystallised' event will take place between 2pm and 4.30pm and will be run by two members of the sales team. Along with presentations about ocean, river, yacht and expedition, agents will be treated to tea and cake, a goodie bag to take away and access to future exclusive travel offers. There will be a chance to win a £50 voucher at each event. To apply, agents should email sales@cruiseportfolio.co.uk with full names along with any dietary requirements.

FUNWAY HOLIDAYS is running their 'Florida Unlocked' training campaign for travel agents with new prize giveaways plus three additional Florida destinations, including: Amelia Island, New Smyrna Beach and Crystal River. The campaign, in partnership with Visit Florida, will run until April 30. Its main purpose is to provide in-depth training through the dedicated micro site – www.funlocked.co.uk, including product quizzes, videos, fun facts and events. To get involved, agents need to complete the training modules for each destination and unlock the entire state. After unlocking all eleven locations, agents will be entered into a weekly prize draw to win one of the 20 prizes. www.funway4agents.co.uk

AGENTS WHO complete the VisitGibraltar training will be in the chance of winning £25 Love2shop voucher. The draw will be conducted every week. The offer is valid only for UK travel agents and operators. www.gibraltartraining.com

travelbulletin COMPETITIONS

A seven-night stay up for grabs at the Creta Maris Beach Resort

Five-night stay for two at the new Grand Palladium Sicilia Resort & Spa

Win a trip to the Indian Ocean island of Rodrigues

A seven-night all-inclusive stay at the Bahia Principe Grand Aquamarine, Dominican Republic

For all competitions visit
travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions

Discover the Nile onboard the M/S Tulip

DISCOVER EGYPT has introduced a new ship to their fleet, the M/S Tulip, with weekly departures starting from £1,197 per person in May.

This lead in price is valid for May 11 and 18 departures, which include direct mid-day flights from Heathrow to Luxor. The seven-night cruises start and end in Luxor and visit many of Egypt's top ancient sights, including the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens, Temples of Karnak and Luxor; the High Dam at Aswan and the Unfinished Obelisk. There is also an optional excursion to Abu Simbel, costing £85 by coach or £255 to fly.

New archaeological finds are made every year, so even those that have visited Egypt can see new tombs and monuments. For instance, one of the recent discoveries in 2019 was made in Luxor, two tombs on the west bank of the



Nile dating back 3,500 years in a cemetery for noblemen and top officials. The colossal statue of Amenhotep III in Luxor was found in 2017.

Each cruise includes 10 guided excursions accompanied by an Egyptologist to bring these sights alive and reveal the

fascinating history behind these magnificent monuments. Guests also enjoy a trip on board a Felucca, a traditional Egyptian sailing boat and can add an evening trip to see the exhilarating Sound and Light Show at Karnak Temple
www.discoveregypt.co.uk

Travel 2 launches 'Worldwide Pocket Guide'

TRAVEL 2 HAS launched a new Worldwide Pocket Guide, offering agents an all-encompassing guide to worldwide travel including over 80 offers to destinations including the USA & Caribbean, Dubai, Arabia, Far East and Australia.

The brochure will feature new hotels to the portfolio including the Hilton in Tokyo, Hotel Granvia Kyoto, You and Me Cocoon and Pullman Maldives Maamutaa. Due to land on desks in early March, the new guide will provide agents with a summary and fun 'did you know' facts for each destination for the first time.



To celebrate the launch, Travel 2 is giving five lucky agents the chance to win £100 of T2 Rewards.

For more information on this, turn to agent bulletin on page 9 or visit www.travel2.com

G Adventures offering clients 110% travel credit

G ADVENTURES HAS decided to suspend all tours departing between March 16 and April 30.

In a statement, the company said: "Any traveller booked on a tour departing between March 16 and April 30 will be eligible for a 110% travel credit of all land services, including pre or post nights and transfers, which can be used on any tour departing within the next two years."

G Adventures will be proactively notifying all travellers regarding their tour suspension and are advising travellers with flight bookings to contact their insurance and air provider directly for details on refunds or

relaxed cancellations policies.

Select itineraries will be disrupted and the operator will notify these travellers to offer a pro-rata travel credit for the remainder of their tour experience.

For those already on a trip, the company is offering travellers the option to either continue with their tour as planned or to leave the tour early with a pro-rata travel credit for the remaining days of the land portion of their trip. *Agents with questions can contact the sales team by email at experience@gadventures.com.*



The Lux Collective to unveil new flagship property

THE LUX collective has announced plans for its newest property, LUX* Grand Baie Resort & Residences. The hotel will open in Mauritius in spring 2021 and will become the flagship property for the group's much-loved brand LUX* Resorts & Hotels. Located in the popular Grand Baie neighbourhood in the north of the island, known for its picturesque beaches, vibrant downtown village and favourable year-round climate, the property will offer sophisticated beachside living for the upscale, modern traveller.
www.theluxcollective.com

SUDOKU

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

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

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

competition@travelbulletin.co.uk

Closing date for entries is Thursday, March 26th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for March 6th is
Leanne Hope, Regent Travel in Hartlepool.

March 6th Solution: A=6 B=4 C=1 D=3

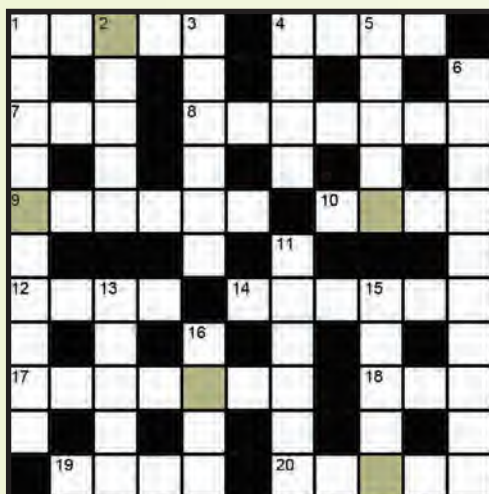
	5			4			6		7
				5	7			9	
	7		4			6		2	3
B	8		1		4		2		
	9			7		8			1
C			2		5		7		9
	4	5		2			1		8
		3			9	5			
D	2		6			4			5

WHERE AM I?

A RESORT town on a popular holiday island, it is best-known for the enormous rock formations that rise to a height of up to 800 metres above sea level. The island's original inhabitants called the rocks the 'Walls of Hell'.

CROSSWORD

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



Across

- Major hotel company (5)
- Association of Independent Tour Operators, initially (4)
- Welsh newsreader ____ Edwards (3)
- Holiday Parks operator (7)
- Capital of Dominica (6)
- Currency of Mexico (4)
- One of the islands of the Inner Hebrides (4)
- First name of the composer of The Planets (6)
- Hotel chain, sounds like a prickly plant (7)
- Helsinki-Vantaa international airport code (3)
- TV programme popular with motor-heads, Top ____ (4)
- The Piazza del Campo is at the heart of this Tuscany city (5)

Down

- Athlete Dina, who now has her very own barbie doll (5-5)
- Isle of Wight resort, popular with sailors (5)
- Currency of Indonesia (6)
- English monarch who gave her name to a style of architecture (4)
- Tenerife volcano, Mount ____ (5)
- Prince William is said to support this premiership football club (5,5)
- Area of New York and London Tennis Club (6)
- Flows through France (5)
- Lake in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (5)
- Famous Hong Kong Ferry (4)

Mystery Word: CRETE where am I? - Los Gigantes, Tenerife.

Across: 1. ACCOR, 4. AITO, 7. HUW, 8. PONTINS, 9. ROSEAU, 10. PESO, 12. MULL, 14. GUSTAV, 17. THISTLE, 18. HEL, 19. GEAR, 20. SIENA.
Down: 1. ASHER-SMITH, 2. COWES, 3. RUPIAH, 4. ANNE, 5. TEIDE, 6. ASTON VILLA, 11. QUEENS, 13. LOIRE, 15. TAHOE, 16. STAR.

TRAINING

WEHO PRO

Home to bright lights and the Sunset Strip, West Hollywood – known locally as WeHo – is not a hard destination for agents to sell. And now it is even easier, with The West Hollywood University training portal, the region's first ever online training resource.

THE WEST Hollywood Travel + Tourism Board has launched its first-ever training and resource website for travel agents, making it easier than ever for industry professionals to become experts in selling the swanky destination to their clients.

The West Hollywood University, an online travel portal, features marketing and sales planning tools, detailed destination highlights, a media gallery and an educational course that will acquaint them with all the logistical knowledge to make travellers' dream getaways become reality.

The first 200 "graduates" to complete the training earn a West Hollywood University pennant, and will be entered to win a raffle drawing for a two-night stay at a West Hollywood hotel, dinner for two at one of the city's hottest restaurants and a two-hour tour for two with 'Bikes and Hikes' L.A.

West Hollywood University is complimentary to all verified travel advisors and available in mobile format. Destination photography, videos, marquee events and fast facts about how to get around town are all on hand.

www.uni.visitwesthollywood.com

Get more out of Malta

FOR THOSE wanting to learn more about Malta, The Malta Training programme provides a diverse range of interactive modules so that agents have the tools they need to sell the Islands to their customers with confidence.

To communicate each niche that Malta is renowned for – food, thrillseeking and festivals, among other things – the programme has a course for each demographic and incorporates the top selling points via interactive and digestible modules. The programme boasts five courses currently: 'Introduction to Malta Course', 'Families Course', 'LGBT + Course', 'Under 30's Course'; and, 'City Breaks Course'.

The 'Scuba Diving Course' is currently being worked on, and will provide agents with the inside knowledge and the top tips to sell the Maltese Islands to your customers who are looking to take their dive qualification or more experienced divers who are yet to experience the breath-taking dive sites.

In a further exciting development, the Malta Tourism Authority will have their first annual Malta Academy taking place in September. Agents can join the Facebook Group 'Visit Malta UK & Ireland Trade Group', with more details to come in the following weeks.

www.malta-training.com



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The Princess Plus fare includes the cruise fare PLUS drinks, unlimited Wi-Fi and gratuities for just £35pp per day.

ESCORTED TOURS SHOWCASE

AGENTS WERE in high spirits as they attended Travel Bulletin's Escorted Tours showcase in Dorking. In a speed-dating-style format, agents were able to learn about the diverse range of cultural specialists, tours and itineraries available to sell to clients. The night ended with an exciting game of bingo and a prize draw which saw some lucky agents win gift cards, a bottle of champagne, afternoon tea and more!



—LIVE THE—

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Cyprus villa lifestyle



With sun, sea, spectacular landscapes and an abundance of Blue Flag beaches, Cyprus has something for everyone. Golden, sandy beaches and rugged coastlines meet forest-clad mountains and hills, while traditional villages with winding streets and neatly terraced vineyards and olive groves sit in delightful contrast. Immersed in history and once home to the goddess Aphrodite, Cyprus has a sense of timelessness magnified by the charm, kindness and natural hospitality of its native people.



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GREECE

ANCIENT ATHENS

Like a Greek myth, the city of Athens draws you in. It's one of the oldest cities in Europe, the cradle of Western civilisation and the birthplace of democracy. Its temples and ruins lie scattered around the city alongside remnants from the Roman and Ottoman empires.

Natalie Chalk went to find out where it all began.

The Acropolis

Some time around 447BC, the Athenian people did an incredible thing. They built the Acropolis and more than 2,000 years later it's still standing. They took limestone and marble from nearby quarries and built the Parthenon in just nine years for the goddess Athena. Other temples on the hilltop city include the Temple of Athena Nike, the Propylaea and the Erechtheion. How they did this remains a mystery. Up close, the achievement is even more astonishing. To look down on the sprawling white city below is just as impressive. You can spot ancient firsts such as the Panathenaic Stadium where the Olympic Games began in 1896 and the original terraced Theatre of Dionysus. There's no wonder the Acropolis remains the country's number one tourist attraction.

Top tip: Visit early in morning to avoid the crowds and also the heat of the summer sun. The site opens from 8am to 5pm.

Hotel Grande Bretagne

In the year 1874, the Grande Bretagne opened as a luxury hotel. Over the years it has been the choice of royalty, film stars and politicians.

Outside it's maintained its classic architecture and inside the elegant interior is reminiscent of another age.

Located in the heart of the city on Syntagma Square, the five-star favourite is also popular because the city is on its doorstep. Across the road is the Hellenic Parliament where crowds gather to watch the changing of Presidential Guards. Behind that is the National Garden with its huge 12 palm trees at the entrance. In the opposite direction are the shops, the bars and

restaurants, squares, Byzantine churches and the Plaka neighbourhood.

Without skimping on facilities, the hotel has 320 rooms and suites, a spa and fitness studio with two pools.

Top tip: Head straight to the rooftop bar for sensational views of the Acropolis.

Tourism

Visitor figures for Athens are rising. In 2019, numbers were up to more than 5.7million. This is a turn around from 2012 when numbers had dropped to 2.5million following the Greek debt crisis. To mark this change in fortune, Aegean received the first of its A320neo aircraft in February. One-way flights from London to Athens start at £57. *Aegean passengers can change "GoLight" flights without incurring fees during the coronavirus outbreak.* el.aegeanair.com.

FAST facts

Currency: Euros

£1 is €1.10

Time difference to the UK

+2 GMT

Approx flight time from UK to Athens

3hrs 40mins

The first Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896.

The 2020 Olympic flame was lit on March 12 at Ancient Olympia. It is expected to arrive today (March 20) in Japan.

Tokyo 2020 is set to go ahead on July 24.

Greek National Tourism Organisation secretary general Dimitris Fragakis tells agents how they're becoming a year-round destination.



DURING THE last decades, Greece has become one of the most popular tourist destinations of the world. I believe that in the following years, we can win

the bet of enriching and upgrading Greek tourism product. Our goal is to invest in the comparative advantages that differentiate us from other destinations. The "Sun-Sea" model will always provide Greece with robust tourists flows, but it is not enough. Thus, we move fast in other directions, such as alternative forms of tourism.

One of our top priorities is to promote sustainable tourism. Towards this direction, we are creating a certification framework and a sustainable development observatory.

When it comes to thematic tourism, aspects like gastronomy, culture and

soft adventure have seen a constant growth through new developments and initiatives. In the past few years there is a gastronomic revolution going on in Greece led by a modern contemporary gastronomic scene with celebrity chefs, a new breed of wine makers, Michelin star restaurants and various centres of gastronomy sweeping visitors off their feet.

When it comes to culture, with a history and culture so extensive, varied and ancient, many visitors to Greece don't often think about modern Greek culture, but in the past few months Athens has welcomed the Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation and the reopening of the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

Finally, another sector that has seen a substantial growth is that of outdoors and soft adventure tourism. One of the latest developments is the underwater museum of the Peristera shipwreck in Alonissos. It will open to the public for the 2020

summer between August 3 and October 2.

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Louis Hotels unveils new five-star property in Crete

LOUIS HOTELS has added another five-star hotel to its portfolio: Asterion Hotel Suites & Spa in Platanias, Chania, on the private beach of Pyrgos Psilonerou, on the island of Crete.

The hotel includes luxury rooms and suites that offer a private pool and jacuzzi. There are three restaurants, two bars and the "Paradise" wellness centre, which offers treatments and a range of services such as massage, manicure, pedicure and hairdressing. The hotel also has a conference room, and a kids club.

The Louis Hotel Points programme is offering an automatic 3% discount for those who register for free.

www.louishotels.com.



Next round: Costa Navarino to develop three new areas

COSTA NAVARINO, the sustainable destination in the Greek region of Messinia, is developing two new luxury beachfront eco resorts close to the two José María Olazábal-designed golf courses already scheduled to be completed in 2021.

The resorts are part of Costa Navarino's development of three new areas of the destination: Navarino Hills, Navarino Bay and Navarino Waterfront.

The hotel at Navarino Bay will be the destination's most luxurious hotel, offering 99 suites and pool villas on two kilometres of waterfront.

The hotel at Navarino Waterfront will be different in design with a contemporary take on a traditional port town.



South of Navarino Bay, development continues on Olazábal's two new golf courses, which are set high above the coastline, stretching over 150 hectares of scrubland typical of the region and bringing the total number of signature golf courses at Costa Navarino to four – all within a 13km radius.

Costa Navarino is made up of several distinct sites, all in southwest Peloponnese – known for its coastal unspoilt

landscape, cultural heritage, luxurious accommodation and exclusive real estate.

A commitment to the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility exist throughout its operation and development – the building footprint covers only 10% of the land – thus protecting and preserving both its natural beauty and the local communities of Messinia. www.costanavarino.com.

Two new arrivals in Greece this Spring

THE GREEK tourism industry introduces the Nomad hotel in Mykonos, which opens in May.

NOMAD is a bohemian hideaway of 13 suites, lying just 200 meters from Kalo Livadi, one of the most beautiful beaches of the Aegean Sea.

Another new hotel is located in the capital, in the heart of the Neighbourhood of Gods, with Acropolis views. A77 Suites by Andronis recently opened in Plaka offering a collection of twelve suites. Set on number 77 of Adrianou, one of Athens' most iconic pedestrian streets, A77 Suites is housed in a 19th century, listed building, a gem of neoclassical architecture restored to its former glory with respect to its heritage and history.

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Travel Agents' Benefits

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EXPLORE GREECE'S NATIONAL TREASURES



OLYMPIC HOLIDAYS has announced the launch of their first guided group tours for 2020 in Greece.

Holidaymakers can choose between two, four night tours and a seven-night tour where they will be immersed in and learn all about Ancient Greece, accompanied by an expert guide.

Celebration of Ancient Greece: This seven-night tour costs from £1,199 per person based on an April departure. The trip includes the Acropolis, the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus, Olympia and Delphi and Meteora plus a full day's Saronic Gulf Islands cruise. The price includes entrance fees to the archaeological sites and museums.

Let's Get Classical: This four-night tour costs from £489 per person based on an

April departure.

This trip includes the new Acropolis Museum, the Treasury of the Athenians and explore Delphi, considered centre of the Ancient World. On the slopes of Mount Parnassus, travellers can admire a landscape of unparalleled beauty.

Follow the Flame: This four-night tour costs from £509 per person based on an April departure.

This trip includes Olympia, cradle of the ancient Olympic Games and the Temple to Zeus.

All three tours include accommodation in a three-star hotel based on a bed and breakfast basis (options for four or five-star are available) and flights from Stansted (other regional airports are available).

www.olympicholidays.com/ 0208 492 6868.

Family friendly favourites in Crete and Rhodes

THERE ARE two options from Jet2holidays for family escapes in May.

The Gouves Waterpark Holiday resort is a hotel situated in a prime beachfront location in one of the most tranquil spots in Crete, Gouves village.

This extensive resort features three outdoor pools with large sunbathing areas and an onsite aqua park. Seven nights self-catering starts from £329 per person based on two sharing – this departs from Manchester on May 3.



Next is Avra Beach Hotel, Ixia, Rhodes nestled on the north coast with direct access to the beach and just seconds away from a selection of shops, bars and restaurants.

The resort offers comfortable accommodation and activities for the whole family, including tennis, volleyball, darts and football, as well as an onsite games room. The price starts from £399 per person based on two sharing for seven nights bed and breakfast departing from Manchester on May 11.



Sunvil showcases lesser-known Greek destinations

SUNVIL HAS handpicked authentic areas of Greece in its latest brochure, featuring new Greek islands – Tinos, Syros, Elafonissos and Pserimos.

A seven-night stay at Vincenzo on Tinos costs from £825 per person (two sharing), including bed and breakfast, return flights (Gatwick to Mykonos), ferry and hotel transfers. Tinos is the third largest island in the Cyclades, which has kept its traditional Greek feel and laid-back way of life.

A seven-night stay at Apollonion Palace on Syros costs from £876 per person (two sharing), including bed and breakfast, return flights, ferry and hotel transfers. Syros has two towns built around two hills – one is Greek Orthodox and the other Catholic. The main town, Ermoupolis, is the capital of the Cyclades with majestic mansions and numerous churches.

www.sunvil.co.uk



ADVENTURE & ACTIVITY

BACK TO LIFE

One tour operator tells Natalie Chalk that just a few months on from the fierce wildfires on Kangaroo Island, the landscape is turning green and the animals are thriving, like the roo (below).

- This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the regeneration of Kangaroo Island.
- Plants are flowering that only bloom after fire.
- There are still thousands of kangaroos, wallabies and koalas living in the wild.

DURING THE devastating bushfires, Paul Brown, owner of Kangaroo Island Wilderness Tours, had been on the front line fighting the fires. His son, who was also out on a fire truck for 20 days, became trapped by flames on all sides with other fire units. They couldn't run so they found a clear spot and sprayed one another with water and miraculously the fire went over the top and they survived.

However, the tourism industry didn't fare as well. The challenge now is to

send a message that the island is welcoming visitors, many popular spots were unaffected and that now is a unique time to witness the regeneration. Paul said: "Come and visit Kangaroo Island. The regeneration has already happened. Nature is taking care of itself and this is an opportunity to see it – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. There are plants that flower only after a fire. Kangaroos are mating and they only produce young if they know it's safe.

We are seeing more wildlife than before the fire as they come out to the unburned areas. We're seeing 20 or 30 roos a day. There are still thousands of kangaroos and wallabies and koalas.

"We only stopped touring for a week or 10 days but

we need to let people know they can come back.

We're still touring and the challenge for us is keeping all our local guys employed."

www.wildernesstours.com.au.
(Photo credit: Paul Brown)



FAST facts

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Tours is a high-end tour company that organises packages - usually two or three days – with accommodation. Using Land Rover Discoverys and expert local guides, small groups are taken around the island to explore the landscape and wildlife. The tour operator also provides lunch at spectacular locations to serve a two-course meal with wine.

Regional Express (Rex) will soon stop flying to Kangaroo Island from Adelaide but QantasLink has announced it will double its service offering daily flights plus a weekend service. Flight time is approx 25 minutes.

Animals on Kangaroo Island include koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, sea lions, dolphins, Rosenberg's monitors and glossy black cockatoos.

The bushfire was started by lightning in December 2019 and burned until January 2020. 52% of Kangaroo Island was untouched by fire.

LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE?

Forget relaxing on the beach and get active in the Algarve.



FROM 120 miles of beaches, coastal walks, nature reserves and picturesque villages, southern Portugal offers something for everyone.

Salt Mine Exploration

Head underground to learn about the Loulé rock salt mine and discover 230 million years old geological formations. Visitors can do a 1.3 km (0.8 mile) walking tour inside the mine to learn about the old and current mining processes and the rock salt applications throughout history. The two hour tours run four times daily.

www.techsalt.pt

Bike Tours Portugal

Offering what they call 'Luxury on Two Wheels', Bike Tours Portugal provides luxury accommodation and gourmet meals as a part of their tailored bicycle tours around the Algarve. They offer every possible service with a range of guided and self-guided routes which include exclusive lodgings, gourmet picnics for lunch, luggage transfers and on-tour bike repair services. For a five-day 'Sun and Sea' tour, prices start at €3,530 (£3,087) per person and for a Road Tour on some of the

Algarve's most stunning driving routes, prices start from €2,290 (£2,290) per person.

www.biketoursportugal.com/en.

Freeride Surfcamp and School

Freeride Surfcamp and School are offering a 'Surf and Sleep Retreat' with a stay at the four-star Memmo Baleeira Hotel included. Based in Sagres, with three hours of surfing a day, this package means travellers can hang 10 in the morning and hang loose at a four-star hotel in the evening. A six-night stay with five days' surfing starts from €531 (£465) for a double room.

www.frsurf.com.

Ruben Faria Adventure Tours

Ruben Faria Adventure Tours offers dirt bike touring. Home to professional off-road motorbike race routes, the Algarve is the perfect location to give it go. Run by professional rider Ruben Faria, they offer guided tours riding on off-road trails and roads along the coast and through the hills, with accommodation at five-star hotels. The week-long 'Coast to River Adventure' starts at €1,325 (£1,160) per person.

www.rubenfariaadventuretours.com.



Swiss bliss with bespoke mountain adventures

NEWMARKET HOLIDAYS has launched a customisable tour for 2021. 'Swiss Alps Wintertime Adventure' is a six-day escorted tour based in Château d'Oex, a traditional mountain village between Lake Geneva and Bernese Oberland, with departures from 10 UK airports. Included is a guided nature walk through the Alpine surroundings and a dog-sled ride with a traditional cheese fondue lunch. Customers can also try 'soft' winter adventure activities, including snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing, in addition to joining an optional excursion to the nearby city Montreux, nestled on the banks of Lake Geneva and framed by a dramatic mountain backdrop. The six-day tour leads in at £795 per person and includes dinner and bed and breakfast accommodation at a three-star hotel.

www.newmarketholidays.co.uk.

On your bike: You don't have to take a plane for a wheelie good trip to Austria

ST ANTON am Arlberg in Tirol has good news for those avoiding flying in 2020.

Holiday-goers can travel straight to this region's centre thanks to the mountain village Railjet train, which runs seven direct connections from Vienna and Zurich each day.

Once you've arrived, more than 300km of walking routes await, with plenty of challenging trails for experts alongside educational, family-friendly options. One new addition for 2020 is the history-themed Bergbau Gand circular hiking trail. For e-bikers, there's a range of new routes and charging stations, from the family-friendly Stanzertal to the gnarly 20km mountain bike route to the Heilbronner Hütte in Verwall.

Alpinists looking for even more altitude can join a 'Bike & Summit' tour, or head to the 3,148m high Kuchenspitze peak, the Schnanner Klamm climbing garden, or the boulders and via ferrata routes. The region's summer sporting events are second to none, with the unconventional Arlberg Adler triathlon, the Montafon Arlberg Marathon, the E-BIKE FEST, Arlberger Wadlbeisser

obstacle course, international cycling criterion and ARLBERG Giro bike race, as well as the Arlberger Bike Marathon. There's also the Mountain Yoga Festival, the St. Anton Film Festival, village festivals, the 'Almabtrieb' (homecoming of the cows) and September's world-record-breaking Line Dance Festival. Guests are spoiled for choice.

www.austria.info/en/summer/tirol-st-anton-am-arlberg.



Bag a bargain with Explore

EXPLORE IS offering customers who book with agents on a small group or self-guided Walking and Trekking trip a free kit bag.

The 80-litre bag is a great companion for any walking trip. The bright, standout red also makes it instantly recognisable on the conveyor belt.

Book a walking trip by March 31 to get a free bag.

The offer is only available to UK-based customers who book directly with Explore or via a travel agent.

www.explore.co.uk.



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Make memories with Maritim cycling in Magdeburg



EXPLORE HISTORIC Magdeburg on two wheels with a package from Maritim Hotels for their property in Magdeburg central Germany.

Whether cycling along the idyllic River Elbe bike path or discovering the cultural delights of the old town with its famous Gothic-style cathedral – Magdeburg offers something for everyone.

This new package gives cyclists the perfect place to relax in between exploring.

The price per person for a double room starts from €96 (£84) and a single room:

from €120 (£105). This is bookable until November 1, three days in advance. The package includes one night accommodation including Maritim's signature breakfast buffet with sparkling wine and smoked salmon. A 20% discount on food and drinks in its restaurant (reservation requested), a bicycle bag, free bike storage, free internet and free use of the swimming pool. Maritim offers 10% commission to UK agents.

www.maritim.com.

Inspired by Harry and Meghan? Spend two weeks on Vancouver Island

CANADA AFFAIR is offering 13 nights in British Columbia from £3,855 per person departing from Gatwick Airport.

This 14-day tour takes in Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast plus a four-night scenic cruise around Desolation Sound.

The holiday includes economy class flights from the UK based on nine nights' accommodation, 13 days' intermediate car hire fully inclusive, local ferry transfers, plus beer and wine included for meals aboard the boat and at Homfray Lodge.

Vancouver Island has temperate rainforests, calm warm inlets, charming towns and the provincial capital of Victoria.

www.canadianaffair.com.

Be guided for free in Costa Rica

ADVENTUROUS GUESTS staying at Dreams Las Mareas in Costa Rica, are being offered a complimentary 'Free to Explore' adventure package'.

Guests can delve into the Costa Rican jungle with this mega combo tour that includes zip lining, water sliding and horseback riding. This full-day adventure combines thrills and spills.

The free tour is for guests staying during May 01-November 30.



Funway Holidays offers 10 nights staying at the All Inclusive Dreams Las Mareas with prices from £1,990 per person including return flights from the UK (Heathrow). Travel is based on two adults sharing, departing September 11.

This offer includes a complimentary 'Free to Explore' adventure tour.

www.funway4agents.co.uk/AMResorts.com.



Travel 2 the wilds of Borneo

TRAVEL 2 IS promoting Borneo as an adventurous destination for families, with the island offering ancient rainforests, wildlife experiences and idyllic beaches.

Guests travel with expert guides to spot orangutans, proboscis monkeys and giant green turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs.

The company is offering an 11-day small group tour with return flights from Heathrow, valid for travel on September 21. The price starts from £1,659 per person (saving up to £215 per person). There are 10-nights in hotels, guesthouses, jungle camps, resorts and chalets on a breakfast basis. Includes all internal travel, internal flights and an experienced English-speaking tour leader.

www.travel2.com/ 0800 022 4182.



CULTURAL TOURS

The main market in Trier

NOBLE EMPERORS AND PRECIOUS STONES

ROMANTIC CITIES, which is part of Germany's Rhineland-Palatinate Tourist Board, aims to draw tourists away from the busy cities of Berlin and Munich and towards Mainz, Koblenz, Trier, Speyer, Idar-Oberstein and Worms, all of which are in easy reach of multiple German airports, including Frankfurt.

The tourism board can recommend wine routes through famous vineyards on the Rhine and the major promotion for 2020 is an itinerary called "Of noble emperors and precious stones", taking in the cities of Trier, Idar-Oberstein and Speyer. This itinerary takes a wide-ranging approach to history tourism, with sights dating back 1,850 years right up to a museum about Karl Marx, as well as important sights from the days when, what is now modern-day Germany, was ruled by emperors.

The three-day tour begins in Trier, the oldest city in Germany founded by the Romans, and also the birth place of Karl Marx. Guests can start the day on the Petrisberg, admiring the idyllic panorama of the vineyards sloping into the Oilewig valley. They can choose to

begin the day with a breakfast at one of the many cafés on the medieval main market square and in Trier's pedestrian zone.

The second day explores Idar-Oberstein. Its old town centre right at the foot of Felsenkirche (crag church) is ideal for a leisurely brunch in the quaint and cosy ambience of its small cafés and old half-timbered houses.

The town in EdelSteinLand (meaning "gemstone region") has a rich gemstone mining and cutting tradition still practised today. The gemstone mine in Steinkaulenberg makes for a unique experience: it is the only such mine in Europe that can be visited and there are still rock crystals and other gemstones to be seen everywhere.

Speyer is visited on the third day. A cathedral and imperial city, it is also the birthplace of German artist Hans Purrmann.

With some of Germany's best examples of synagogues dating back to the 18th century, as well as the ruins of a medieval synagogue, the Romantic Cities region is also being promoted as



Gemstone in
EdelSteinLand.

an important centre for visitors interested in Jewish heritage. For more information about the itineraries in the Rhineland-Palatinate region, go to www.romantic-germany.info

SPRING INTO MADEIRA'S FLOWER POWER



THE ISLAND of Madeira, known as the 'floating garden', is home to a vast variety of botanic species which originate from all over the world. Sailors and settlers brought plants from Africa, Latin America, Australia and other parts of Europe, which quickly developed due to the mild climate and soil fertility on the island.

These flora can be seen in abundance with a visit to the public gardens: The Botanical Garden, Municipal Garden and the park of "Museu das Cruzes" but it's during Madeira's Flower Festival, taking place from April 30 to May 2, that the true beauty of the island's wildlife comes together.

Highlights of the flower festival are:

The traditional flower exhibition is where local producers exhibit the flowers they have grown. Floriculture plays an extremely important role in Madeira's economy, and is a huge part of their regional production.

Floral carpets made from carefully constructed flowers, appear in the centre of Avenida Arriaga and represent the close relationship between Madeira natives and the flower. This tradition of building floral carpets proliferates throughout the island and originated in the decoration of religious processions.

Children's Parade and the Wall of

Hope: On the first Saturday of the festival, thousands of children take part in the building of a mural of flowers, known as the Wall of Hope in Praça do Município. Each child takes a flower and places it on the wall, which represents an appeal for peace.

Allegoric Parade: On the Sunday after the Children's Parade, the great parade takes place in Funchal. The streets are filled with music, colour and floral aromas with a float parade. In celebrating springtime and the flowers, Funchal is the perfect setting for a truly sumptuous spectacle: the island's Flower Festival.

www.madeiraallyear.com



Be a culture vulture in Florida

CULTURE VULTURES can explore Florida with Funway Holidays, as its a prime spot for cultural festivals of all genres, including legendary motorcycle meet-ups, literary celebrations and arts festivals. Sarasota is known as Florida's cultural coast. The operator is offering seven nights in Sarasota, with stay at Hotel Indigo prime spot for cultural festivals of all genres, including legendary motorcycle meet-ups, literary celebrations and world-renowned arts festivals. Sarasota in particular is known as Florida's cultural coast. Far from just another resort town, Sarasota is full of culture, art and history. Starting from £1,000 per person, the tour includes return flights from Heathrow with United Airlines. Travel is based on two adults with departure on September 11.



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A CULTURAL TOUR OF RIJEKA IS A CAPITAL IDEA

RIJEKA, CROATIA has been named as the European Capital of Culture for 2020, which is a great boost for the city.

Located in the Kvarner region, the city has scenic coastline and offers travellers the chance to explore the gateway to Croatia's islands. With different cultural events lined up throughout the year, there is something that will enliven every type of traveller in the port city as they immerse themselves in the Croatian culture.

The excitement is not just limited to Rijeka, with culinary adventures, nautical experiences and a variety of festivals taking place all over the country in 2020. The year will kick off with a series of unique parades, art exhibitions, contemporary arts performances, community projects and more.

Hosted in northern Croatia in the countryside of Zagorje, the international hot air balloon rally in May takes place surrounded by rolling hills, forests and streams, making it the perfect setting for this five-day rally. With the morning flights beginning at 7am and the afternoon ones setting off at 5pm the region of Zagorje will become a mesmerising sea of colour.

Visitors are invited to the rally, with entertainment, educational talks and a range of food and beverages available throughout the week. Nightglow shows are showcased at 8pm on the weekend, where onlookers can gaze up to the twinkling lights and colours hovering in the sky above them, creating a memorable finale.

The 67th annual Pula film festival in July showcases and celebrates cinema from all over the world, from French new-wave to modernism cinema, independent films and of course, Croatian cinema. Visitors to the festival can also make the most



of exploring Pula, a city steeped in history, with beautiful coastlines and Roman ruins. It is held in the Pula amphitheatre.

With over a thousand islands, there is no better way to explore Croatia than by boat. Guests can take to the waters in September and feast on a Mediterranean diet and sample Croatia's finest seafood, whilst watching the sun set over the Adriatic. For those looking to absorb as much of Croatia's rich and diverse culture as possible, sailing is the best mode of travel, with national parks, blue caves, world heritage sites and wineries ready to be discovered.

For more information, go to www.croatia.hr/en-GB

What holiday activity have you always been scared to try?



Jeanette Ratcliffe

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Paragliding!



Matt Gill

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None, I find it hard to keep still.



Ashweenee Beerjeraz

Events Assistant
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Flying in a tiny seaplane.



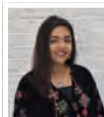
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Skydiving. Nope. Just nope.



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Diving with sharks.



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S***-scared of bungee jumping.



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Hang gliding.



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Cliff jumping into the water.



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Shark cage.



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