

*Nino
Montagnese*

MANAGING DIRECTOR,
AIR CANADA VACATIONS



SPECIAL FEATURE

TO CHARGE OR NOT TO CHARGE ?

ARE SERVICE FEES A NECESSITY
IN TODAY'S TRAVEL INDUSTRY?

THEME CRUISES

**SPECIAL INTEREST
VACATIONS AT SEA**

DISCOVER

NEVIS, ANTIGUA, QATAR



Kid-friendly fun!

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Punta Cana ★★★★★

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

All-inclusive means everything from the tantalizing culinary options to the nightly entertainment and kids clubs are included in your stay.

- > Rooms for families of 5 or more
- > Unlimited à la carte dining
- > Kids 6-12 years old get the ultimate VIP treatment at The KIDZ BOP Experience, they can check in to the Pop Star lounge, and perform on the big stage!

Fall/Winter 2019-2020: Fly with Air Transat to Punta Cana from 10 Canadian cities




Two children
under 13
**stay &
eat free!***



*Two children under 13 stay and eat free when sharing a room with two paying adults. Conditions apply.

Letter from the publisher



Why Nouveau Magazine?

This month, we're launching Nouveau Magazine, an on-line outlet for today's luxury traveller. Does that make us crazy?

With an abundance of information available online and shared across social networks, what does adding NouveauMagazine.com to our list of products do for us, compared to the existing products already offered by PAX Global Media?

From the outset, I have to make it very clear that Nouveau Magazine will be complementary to PAX, because it will be geared towards a consumer readership – the B2C market. It's very different from what we currently offer, which, as you know, is already well-stocked with products that have been used and trusted by industry professionals for almost 30 years.

The launch of Nouveau Magazine is neither a U-turn nor a rejection of the B2B market. PAX's allegiances and interests will continue to be the same: informing and serving thousands of travel professionals across Canada, day in and day out.

Frankly, this is a decision that I took my time with, before finally putting all of the gears into motion. It's been several years since the idea of a consumer publication first came to me, and only recently that the stars have aligned.

Our editor-in-chief, Marie-Eve Vallières, has overseen the development of the project from all angles, from imagery to content, in collaboration with our team of journalists. Together, we've called on several experts to create a modern, state-of-the-art platform that will grab consumers' attention and inspires them to finally plan that luxurious dream trip.

One question arises, however: what is luxury in 2019?

Does it mean crystal chandeliers in the lobby of a cruise ship? A five-bedroom hotel overlooking Piazza Navona in Rome? Or is it a gourmet dinner in a Michelin-starred restaurant? It's all of this, and more.

Written by and for the most discerning travellers, Nouveau Magazine explores the art of living in a refined way, seeking out the most exclusive destinations on the planet in order to redefine what luxury travel means, delivered to you through daily updates and a weekly newsletter.

Your customers can subscribe to Nouveau Magazine by clicking here: nouveaumagazine.com/abonnement.

In the meantime, I offer you an interview with our cover star, Nino Montagnese, who opens up about his time spent with both TravelBrands and Air Canada Vacations, and how travel agents have played an integral role in shaping his journey through the travel industry.

Later, you can also read Blake Wolfe's special feature (with the participation of several major players in the Canadian industry) on service charges, a subject that has polarized both agents and consortia for as long as I can remember.

Finally, you can also learn how to better sell themed cruises to your customers, and lose yourself in irresistible destinations like Nevis, Antigua and Qatar!

Happy reading! Don't hesitate to get in touch and let me know what you think about nouveaumagazine.com.

Agneta Chissov

President & CEO,
PAX Global Media

Contents

October 2019, No 55

Business

- 3 **Publisher's Note**
- 6 **Business Meeting**
Nino Montagnese, Managing Director, Air Canada Vacations
- 12 **Business Sense**
Urgent vs important : learn the difference
- 14 **Numbers of the Month**
Exploring the world: facts and figures from the UNWTO
- 20 **Special Feature**
Professional fees: to charge or not to charge?



Travel

- 26 **Vogue**
Travelling time: a look at *Outlander* filming locations
- 28 **Cruise Industry**
Special interest vacations at sea
- 34 **Destinations to Discover**
Nevis
- 38 **Experience**
Singin' in the Antigua rain
- 42 **Hotel Visit**
Mondrian Doha: discovering Qatar
- 46 **Aviation**
On the wings of innovation : a look at new airline cabin



Innovation

- 16 **The Digital Age**
Social media for small business

Extra

- 50 **My Suitcase**
PAX picks for a great trip



Founder & CEO
Uguette Chiasson
Vice-President Media
Nancy Benetton-Sampath
National Editor-in-Chief
Marie-Eve Vallières
Managing Editor - English Canada
Michael Pihach
Associate Editor
Blake Wolfe
Associate Digital Editor
Christine Hogg
Journalists
Serge Abel-Normandin, Antoine Stab
Senior Web Developer, IT, M. Eng.
Francener Alezy
Graphic Designer
Lucie Benoit
Circulation Coordinator
Nathalie Manouvrier
Administrative Assistant / Sales Coordinator
Méline Troussard
Contributors
Loren Christie

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

Nancy Benetton-Sampath, 416 581-1001, extension 304,
nancy@paxglobalmedia.com

CIRCULATION INQUIRIES

paxmagazine@paxglobalmedia.com
Canada, 10 issues (one year): \$49.50 (plus tax)

OFFICES

Toronto 2 Carlton Street, Suite 602 Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3 416 581-1001	Montreal 3131, boul. St-Martin Ouest, local 140 Laval, QC, H7T 2Z5 450 689-5060
---	---

Printer: Imprimerie Héon-Nadeau Ltée

Distribution:

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 42658017

Legal deposit:

Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec & National Library of Canada

Legal deposit number: ISSN 2367-9921



Corporate website: paxglobalmedia.com

Travel industry news: news.PAXeditions.com, newsWest.PAXeditions.com, nouvelles.PAXeditions.com

All rights reserved: PAX Global Media inc.

No part of this magazine may be printed or otherwise duplicated without permission from PAX Global Media inc. (marieeve@paxglobalmedia.com).

The opinions, endorsements and all content in this magazine are not necessarily representative of those of the publishers, editor, journalists and other contributors, and these parties shall not be responsible for any reliance thereon.



Nino Montagnese
Managing Director, Air Canada Vacations

Education *by experience*

Never one to back down from a challenge, Air Canada Vacations' **Nino Montagnese** shares the moments that have shaped and driven his travel career.

Story by Blake Wolfe / Photos by Geoff Fitzgerald

As anyone who's spent enough years in the travel industry can attest to, it's often the case that moments which, at the time, seemed like career-ending mistakes often turn out to define that same career moving forward.

For Air Canada Vacations' Nino Montagnese, one of those moments took place during an afternoon early on in his career, while visiting travel agencies in Toronto's Danforth neighbourhood as a newlyminted sales rep for Sunquest, accompanied by a flight attendant from now-defunct carrier Royal Airlines.

"Back then, you just walked in and started talking to everyone – it was very different from today where you have to set up meetings," Montagnese recalls. "I went into one agency and the owner walked in shortly after and asked to

speak to me. The two of us sat in front of his desk – where I've never been yelled at so loudly in my life!

"He was upset about some former bookings with Sunquest and was yelling at the top of his lungs, to the point where people walking by the office thought there was a fist-fight taking place."

The story obviously has a happy ending (more on that later), but more importantly, it's one of several milestone moments that has helped shape Montagnese's decades-long travel career, which began somewhat on a whim.

Industry beginnings

"I went to school for computer programming and took a break in between and wanted to work," Montagnese tells *PAX*, describing himself as "one of those old guys" →



“Coming back, it was rejuvenating – it was like I came home.”

–Nino Montagnese on his return to Air Canada Vacations.

that picked business names out of the phone book as part of his job search.

While a travel career wasn't always the plan, Montagnese was hired on by Sunquest to work in the tour operator's accounting department, a role he held for just eight months before moving into marketing; two years after that, he moved into sales, representing Toronto's Metro East market for several years before becoming Sunquest's key accounts sales rep.

He credits those early roles with laying the foundation for what would come next.

“In accounting, I was always tapped into the trade,” he explains. “I was the one who would call looking for payments, so I was always friendly with our travel partners. Then when I went into marketing, there was a two-year hiatus from the trade, but I was dealing with all of our suppliers. It gave me the negotiating skills needed for sales. I was then looking for the best product and the best deal.

“Moving into sales, I already had some sort of relationship with the trade partners and my negotiating skills had sharpened up – only now I had to get used to being negotiated!”

There and back again

In 2003, Montagnese would head to Air Canada Vacations for what would be his first stint with the company as director of national accounts. After nearly 12 years, Montagnese decided to return to his roots and joined TravelBrands – which had purchased Sunquest in 2013 – stating that at the time, he felt like he “didn't fit the culture” at ACV.

However, a year after he joined TravelBrands, Montagnese felt it was the right time to make his return to ACV, this time as the tour operator's managing director.

“Coming back, it was rejuvenating – it was like I came home,” Montagnese tells PAX. “I always knew that Air Canada Rondelle was a part of me and I think being away from it, it resonated. I was always watching from the other side to see how things were going and keeping in touch with everyone here.”

Upon returning to ACV, Montagnese discovered that while plenty of change had taken place at the company, it was a smooth transition into his new role.

“Air Canada Rouge was launched in July 2013 so as I left, the new airline had been born and already, ACV was →

BOOK WINTER EARLY. SAVE BIG.

BOOK YOUR WINTER VACATION PACKAGE
4 MONTHS EARLY AND

GET \$400 OFF
PER FAMILY



MORE ADVANTAGES



THE SAFETY & RELIABILITY
OF AIR CANADA AND
AIR CANADA ROUGE



CONNECTING
FLIGHTS FROM
63 CANADIAN CITIES



DAILY NON-STOP
FLIGHTS FROM
MONTREAL AND TORONTO



TRANSFERS AT
DESTINATION
INCLUDED



EARN &
REDEEM 1,000s
OF AEROPLAN® MILES

CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT | AIRCANADAVACATIONS.COM

Savings of \$100 per adult and \$100 per child. Per family amount shown based on 2 adults and 2 children between the ages of 2 and 12 years old. Only applicable to new vacation package bookings to Mexico, the Caribbean, and South & Central America made as of July 2, 2019 for departures between November 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020. Subject to availability at time of booking. Minimum 3-night stay required. Offer can be withdrawn at any time. Not applicable to group bookings. Offers expire at 11:59 p.m. ET on the date indicated. Flights operated by Air Canada or Air Canada Rouge. For full applicable terms and conditions, visit aircanadavacations.com. Holder of Quebec permit #702566. TICD registration # R50013536 / W50013537. ■ Aeroplan and the Aeroplan logo are registered trademarks of Aeroplan Inc. Air Canada Vacations is a registered trademark of Air Canada, used under license by Touram Limited Partnership, 1440 Ste Catherine St West, Suite 600, Montreal, QC, H3G 1R8, 5825 Airport Road, Suite 700, Mississauga, ON, L4V 1W1.



ME-9881



AIR CANADA VACATIONS

Making your
dreams travel™



What I learned that day was that when you're in a sales role, don't ever take anything to heart.

gaining more airlift into some of the destinations that we typically would not have put a lot of lift into. When I came back and saw the growth that had happened in those two years, I was literally amazed.

"I was also moving into the managing director role and my peers at the time would now be reporting to me, but the entire team was very enthusiastic and welcoming. I went from being a sales and marketing guy to really watching the budget and making sure that the revenue and profits were where they needed to be. You're dealing with commercial meetings versus sales meetings. It was a big change for me, but I adapted quite quickly."

A tale of three travel agencies

So what about that fateful travel agency visit many years ago?

Discouraged but undeterred, Montagnese tells PAX that the flight attendant convinced him to visit one more agency that afternoon – Toronto's Del Mare Travel, owned by Joe Naccarato – where he was greeted in a far different manner.

"Joe is there alone and asks who I was – I thought 'here we go again.' He left the office with the two of us sitting there – and he comes back with two boxes from the bakery next door with Italian pastries for both of us. He said, 'you're my new sales rep, so I want to thank you for coming by.'"

"What I learned that day was that when you're in a sales role, don't ever take anything to heart. You're representing your organization; if you get yelled at, don't take it personally. It also taught me to not give up – because if I went home that day, I wouldn't have met Joe."

And as for that first agency owner, Montagnese says, "I looked at the company profile and dealt with the issues that he had. I continued to visit – but I always made sure to call and let him know I was in the neighbourhood!"

"Within five months, I had that owner, the same one who had yelled at me, on a FAM trip with me."

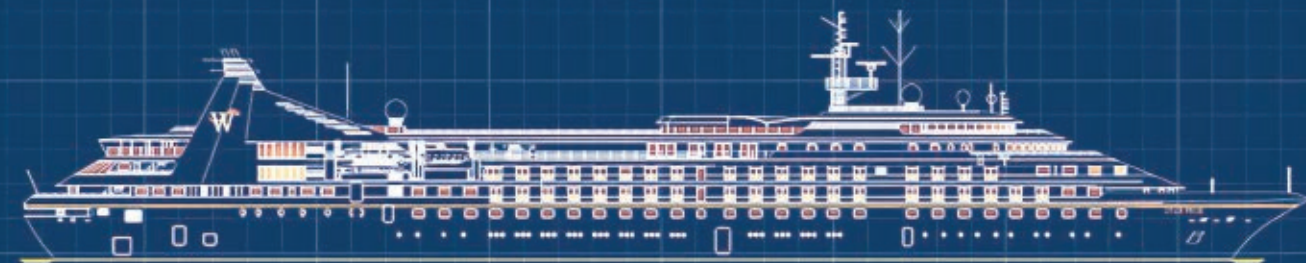
Another Toronto travel agency – Gilligan's Isle Travel – gave Montagnese an invaluable lesson in customer experience, after he agreed to help out by working on weekends.

Manning the desk for three Saturdays, Montagnese recalls assisting one traveller – who didn't book through the agency but nonetheless asked for help – who had arrived a day late for her Air Canada flight from Pearson.

"I called (agency owner) Irene and she walked me through the system, so we were able to get this person out on a flight the next day. She was happy and she continued to make her bookings through Gilligan's Isle Travel because she got service from an agency she didn't even work with. →"

STILL SMALL, EVEN MIGHTIER.

Star Class ships extend from 440 to 522 feet



[\$267,000 Investment per passenger berth.]



When guests tell us they want more of what they love about our small ships, we don't mess around. That's why we're embarking on an expansion project for our Star Class ships by investing significantly more per guest than most other recent cruise ship refurbishments. With 50 new suites and accommodating 312 guests on board, there is more sales opportunity for you to book larger groups. Plus, with a beautiful new elevated pool, more terrace space, new dining options, a world-class spa and room enhancements, you can be sure your clients will be back for more of the biggest small ship experience at sea.

STAR PROMISE
Our Commitment to Travel Advisors

Extraordinary Guest Experience

Outstanding Educational Services

Fresh Sales Tools & Support

Excellent Advisor Service

To make guest reservations please call 855-816-1448.

To learn more about Star Promise, visit AdvisorHub.WindstarCruises.com/StarPromise.

To learn more about the \$250 Million Star Plus Initiative, visit WindstarCruises.com/StarPlus.



“It really made me appreciate our trade partners, because they deal with not only their customers but other people with issues; they don’t turn them away, they help!”

“You learn from the good and you learn from the bad.”

The lessons learned over the course of his career have continued to serve Montagnese well in his latest role.

As a leader, he has several keys to ensuring the ACV team is functioning at peak performance.

“Foster a good culture – culture is everything,” he says. “If you don’t foster a good culture, it’s not a good environment.”

“Also, a good leader allows for collaboration and meetings; they’re going to guide me. If I don’t know the direction I’m going in, don’t take me – *guide* me.”

Like the early example of the two Toronto travel agencies, Montagnese says that “you learn from the good and you learn from the bad.”

“I had a manager once who used to yell a lot and direct versus guide. I learned from that person that I would never yell at anyone and never single anyone out; if I needed to address someone in a meeting, it would be after the meeting, not in a room full of their peers.”

“The open communication I learned here at ACV; when I was hired as director of national accounts, the VP at the time – Phil Sproule – was very open and collaborative. I wanted to be exactly the same way.”

And with moments such as that long-ago afternoon still guiding his career path, Montagnese is able to reflect on both the journey thus far and the road which lies ahead.

“I’ve met amazing people and worked for many of them; I’ve had a wonderful career in travel and I wouldn’t change a second of it for anything.” ●



Memories of Morocco

While he’s travelled to countless destinations for both business and leisure, Montagnese recalls one very memorable FAM to Morocco early on in his career:

“Here I am, probably about 26 years old, leading a group of travel agents in Morocco,” he says. “There was a travel agent by the name of Roberta from Thunder Bay. She had a camera and was taking pictures everywhere! We were walking down this alley as a group and there was a little boy sitting off to the side. Roberta took a photo of him and the little boy turned around and with his hand, motioned that he wanted money for the photo.”

“I looked at Roberta and said, ‘forget it, let’s go and not take anymore photos!’ This little boy looked at me and said ‘F----o!’ – I just started to laugh because I was told to ‘F off!’ in Italian by a little boy in Morocco!

“On the same trip, we went through the souks – everyone wanted to shop so it took some time. Men were selling jewellery on trays and as I’m leading this group back to the bus, I told the vendors ‘if you want to make a sale, you better walk faster!’

All you saw were these guys with their trays jogging alongside our group, trying to sell jewellery as we headed back to the bus!”

Special thanks to Constantine for hosting this month’s cover photo shoot. Learn more at constantineto.com.

Let Us Be Your Guide



A ONE-OF-A-KIND
ALL-INCLUSIVE HOTEL

20° N 87° W

UNICO

Riviera Maya

For more information contact your preferred Tour Operator or go to allinagents.com

#MYUNICOEXPERIENCE

A MEMBER OF



THE LEADING HOTELS
OF THE WORLD®

Urgent vs important: learn the difference

By : Jean-François Venne



It's easy for contractors to find themselves buried under their tasks, struggling with the feeling of always running out of time.

Rather than trying to make workdays longer, as an entrepreneur, learning how to better manage your time is infinitely more efficient.

Delegating, a priority

"Entrepreneurs are often in a hurry," admits Yves Laurent Turcotte from Anges Québec, an organisation facilitating entrepreneurship.

"The problem is that the most urgent tasks are not always the most important," he adds. "The entrepreneur must be careful to devote time to the truly strategic elements for the growth of the business."

Like all entrepreneurs, Turcotte has a list of tasks; but above all else, he seeks to distinguish between the tasks that fall onto him and those he could delegate.

"I focus on what creates value for the business, such as understanding customer needs, tailoring our service offerings, and doing business development," Turcotte says.

Several other tasks, such as managing accounts (both payable and receivable) can be delegated. It doesn't mean neglecting responsibilities, and of course there must be supervision, but the work itself is done by someone else.

Understanding the role

This requires a great deal of organization. "You have to determine your role in the business as an entrepreneur, starting from the idea that you cannot do eve-

rything and that you cannot be good at everything," says Pierre Lescarbeau, business manager, consultant and trainer at Technologia Formation, an IT training centre in Montreal.

"You cannot do everything and you cannot be good at everything"

- Pierre Lescarbeau

Entrepreneurs can take over several roles, such as managing their team on a daily basis, ensuring business development and marketing needs are met, or monitoring the development of succession, which is a crucial task, but one that's often neglected.

For each of their roles, the entrepreneur must determine their precise goals, set a course of action in order to achieve them, and calculate how long it will take. Making a plan like this one at least once a year gives entrepreneurs a better idea of how to better organize their time in the long-term.

The entrepreneur can then use this strategy to identify the tasks that they will perform each month and each week.

As a result, the entrepreneur will have to delegate responsibilities and tasks. And it's not always easy.

Building a team

There's the issue of finding the right person, and then deciding if training will be necessary for them to succeed in the assigned mandates. Those involved must agree on the objective to be achieved as well as the timetable.

"Above all, we must accept that this will not be done exactly as we would have done," Lescarbeau says. "Many entrepreneurs struggle to delegate for this reason. They find that it will be better done by them, because it will be done in their own way."

But, by focusing on short-term tasks, the entrepreneur risks losing sight of the essentials.

And an overloaded schedule can lead to burnout, which also threatens the future of the business. ●



Well-written e-mails improve the click-through rate by 14 per cent and the conversion rate (sales) by 10 per cent, according to the Aberdeen Group.



Long blog posts generate nine times more leads than short blog posts, according to Curata.



In Canada, 62 per cent of entrepreneurs feel depressed according to the Canadian Mental Health Association. Nearly half claim that their mental health concerns are detrimental to their work.

Exploring *the world*

facts and figures from the UNWTO

By Blake Wolfe

1.8 billion

The number of annual international tourist arrivals anticipated by 2030. However, the world is on track to reach that milestone even earlier, as international arrivals topped 1.4 billion in 2018 – two years earlier than the UNWTO originally predicted in 2011.

1.1 The projected percentage of average annual growth in air travel costs, between 2010 and 2030. By comparison, the cost of surface travel will continue to increase faster than the cost of air travel, the UNWTO says, with the rate of increase accelerating from 2024 onwards.

1.7 trillion

The amount in U.S. dollars of total export earnings from international tourism in 2018, which equates to almost USD \$5 billion a day on average. According to the UNWTO, international tourism (travel and passenger transport) accounts for 29 per cent of the world's services exports and seven per cent of overall exports of goods and services.

4 The percentage of growth in outbound expenditure by Canadian travellers in 2018; by comparison, the top three spenders last year were Australia (8.8 per cent); France (10.3 per cent); and Russia (15.6 per cent).

58 The percentage of international tourist arrivals in 2030 expected to be recorded in “emerging economy destinations” in Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Eastern Mediterranean Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

In 1980, 70 per cent of international arrivals were recorded in the traditional destinations of the advanced, industrialized and diversified economies of North America, Europe, and Asia and the Pacific.

Sources: UNWTO's Tourism Towards 2030; UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, January 2019 & May 2019.



Amazing LOW PER DAY RATES

SAIL ON
Carnival
CHOOSE FUN™
FOR...



AS LOW AS
\$107

Carnival Magic
6-NIGHT
EASTERN CARIBBEAN
from Fort Lauderdale
DECEMBER 1, 2019
Inside, cat. 1A

AS LOW AS
\$117

Carnival Freedom
6-NIGHT
WESTERN CARIBBEAN
from Galveston
DECEMBER 1, 2019
Inside, cat. 4B

AS LOW AS
\$98

Carnival Fascination
7-NIGHT
SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN
from San Juan
FEBRUARY 2, 2020
Inside, cat. 1A

Prices are per person, per day, based on double occupancy, in CAD and include all taxes.

 **TravelBrands Cruises**
by Encore Cruises

Access Bookings: TravelBrandsAccess.com
OR CALL: 1-844-5-TBRAND (827263)



Prices are per person, per day, based on double occupancy in Canadian dollars and were available at time of print, August 7, 2019. Valid for new individual reservations only. The categories indicated above are subject to availability. Offer is subject to availability, capacity controlled and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Other restrictions may apply. Carnival Cruise Line reserves the right to re-instate the fuel supplement for all guests at up to US \$9 per person per day if the NYMEX oil price exceeds US \$70 per barrel. All references to Carnival Cruise Line are: ©2019 Carnival Cruise Line. All rights reserved. Ships' Registry: The Bahamas, Panama and Malta. For full terms and conditions, see www.travelbrandsagent.com or contact us.

Red Label Vacations Inc - d.b.a. © 2019 Encore Cruises, B.C. Reg. #3597, Ont. Reg. #50022275, Quebec permit holder #703376, with offices at 5450 Explorer Drive, Suite 400, Mississauga, ON L4W 5N1 • 2355 SkyMark Ave, Suite 200, Mississauga, ON L4W 4V6 • 1050 West Pender Street, floor 22, Vancouver, BC V6A 3S7 • 325-1257 Guy street, Montreal, QC H3H 2K5.





Social media for **small business**

By: Frederic Gonzalo

Ah, social media. It's so easy, right? Using your phone, it's right at your fingertips. And it's free, too.

Not quite.

As a travel agency, or even as an independent travel advisor, how do you get ahead on social media when you must manage it yourself? Here are five things to consider:

Prioritize platforms

Having a small business means operating with fewer resources to get the best returns. However, all too often I see companies launching on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat, only to publish irregularly or become non-existent after some time.

In short, the goal is not so much to be present on all of the popular social media

platforms, but rather, to have a dynamic presence on key platforms where your current customers are actively engaged, and where you will have time to create content. Ask yourself the following two questions:

- Which platforms do my clients use most?
- Which platforms will I devote the most time towards? →



MADE FOR MUSIC

**HARD ROCK HOTEL
LOS CABOS**

Welcome to the all-inclusive Hard Rock Hotel Los Cabos – the epic new addition to Mexico's hottest vacation destination, complete with 5 pools, 8 restaurants, a bowling alley and more. From tours and dining to the spa and salon, everything is included with our Limitless All-Inclusive program.

#madeformusic
NOW OPEN
HRHLOSCABOS.COM

Limitless
ALL-INCLUSIVE™
*25% SERVICE FEE APPLIES



LOS CABOS
AN ALL-INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE

While you may have several customers on Instagram, if the platform does not help you sell, it's sometimes better to revert back to Facebook or LinkedIn, especially if you have a bigger audience there.

Define your editorial approach

Writer's block happens on social media, too. Maybe you log on to your Facebook or Instagram account and have nothing to say. Or sometimes, it's quite the opposite: we see advisors on a FAM trip that publish 12 times a day during the trip, but then nothing for weeks at a time!

Define your editorial approach by precisely planning a content calendar in order to be more efficient. For example:

- **MONDAY:** Publish content from the past weekend, or a customer testimonial about travel income
- **TUESDAY:** Share a travel news item or a piece of content related to a provider
- **WEDNESDAY:** A "Did you know?" tidbit in which you educate about a destination, a cruise line, insurance policies, or even an anecdote at the office with a colleague
- **THURSDAY:** An ongoing promotion or offer that you want to share
- **FRIDAY:** A more frivolous, humorous publication, a quote that inspires travel, etc.

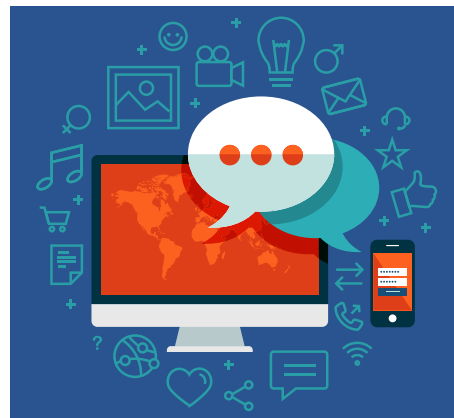
This is an example for Facebook, but this framework allows for flexibility while giving direction. Ideally, you will do the same exercise for your presence on LinkedIn, Instagram and elsewhere, by determining how many times per week you think you should publish.

Again, everything is about resources and priorities.

Plan a budget

All social media platforms use an algorithm that filters content to show the content deemed most relevant in your news feed.

This algorithm ensures that you will see more content from your friends, family, and professional network. This means that there is less space for content published by pages (such as your own company page) that want to communicate relevant promotions or links to an article.



So, how do you ensure that your message reaches those who follow your page? By using advertising.

For as little as \$5 per day, you can publish critical publications and reach a larger audience, which can also be targeted according to a variety of criteria.

It's important to remember not to spend money only when Facebook deems a post powerful. Advertising must always meet a business objective, such as a promotion or an important announcement.

Hold someone accountable

Who is accountable for your presence on social media? This task shouldn't be left on the back burner for too long.

Social media is a function that goes beyond marketing alone - it is a customer service tool, or even a potential source of recruitment. In a small company, this role will often go to the owner, but it can also be supported by an advisor, if it's clearly defined upstream.

Be sure to have a "social media champion" within the company in charge of your digital presence, ideally someone with a leadership role.

Measure the success of your efforts

Can you describe, in quantitative terms, what a successful social media campaign looks like?

You'll never know if your actions have an effect if you haven't bothered to define KPIs (key performance indicators) for your brand. There are several:

- Grow your community on various social media
- Refer traffic from your social media to your website
- Know the conversion rate of social media traffic on your website or your call centre
- Know the engagement rate on your page: likes, comments, shares, etc.
- Monitor resolved customer service issues
- Scope (organic/paid) of published content

These indicators should be linked to your business objectives and measured on a monthly or quarterly regular basis. ●



Freedom to discover, confidence to explore

Save 10%* off Europe & Britain 2020 trips

Great Mosque of Córdoba, Spain
One of our many Spanish cultural experiences.

THE GOOD LIFE

CALL US AT 1800-387-2690 OR VISIT TRAFALGAR.COM/AGENTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

JOIN THE TRIBE! [f/GROUPS/TRAFALGARTRIBECA](#)

*Save 10% per person on selected Europe and Britain 2020 land-only trips where applicable. Not combinable with Costsaver, custom group or any other offers. Combinable with brochure discounts where applicable. Regular booking conditions apply and full payment must be applied before December 18, 2019. Subject to availability, may be withdrawn at any time. Other conditions apply. TICO # W1583987.



To charge or not to charge?

Are service fees a necessity in today's travel industry? For many agents and agencies, that is the question.

By Blake Wolfe

Amongst the travel trade, one of the most polarizing topics is the issue of service fees. While some agents are fine with charging for their time, others may hesitate, fearful that price-minded clients may simply opt for a cheaper alternative, be it another travel professional or an online booking engine.

But as the industry evolves, will agents be able to hold out on service fees for much longer?

History lessons

Several years ago, there was a time when Canadian tour operators paid an average 15 per cent commission to agents booking their itineraries.

However, as direct sales by tour operators to consumers increased – and online booking became the norm for many travellers – that rate dropped to the average eight per cent currently paid to agents. Enter the service fee, a surcharge for travel bookings introduced as a way of making up that shortfall.

Considering that current commission rate, coupled with the amount of time and effort invested by travel agents in their clients, the opinions of some of Canada's major host agencies on service fees may hardly seem surprising. →

Fees are nothing new for Transat Distribution Canada, says TDC's General Manager Louise Fecteau, adding that agents working in TDC storefronts prominently display their service rates for clients.

"We call them 'professional fees' as opposed to service fees and I think it's important to put the right label on it," Fecteau says. "It's just normal that as a professional, that you charge a fee for the advice, knowledge and assistance, for saving time with their internet research and validation."

Flemming Friisdahl, founder of The Travel Agent Next Door, tells PAX that currently, fees charged by TTAND agents range from a \$25 to \$100 charge for non-commissionable bookings (such as air-only) to a quoting fee of between \$100 to \$150, which is then deducted from the final package price.

"It's a way of securing the client so you don't go through all of the work, only to have the customer go online and piece it together themselves after getting the knowledge from a travel professional," he says.



“Everyone charges, whether it’s a doctor or a lawyer or whoever; why should travel professionals not be charging that?”

– Flemming Friisdahl,
The Travel Agent Next Door

"It's not over the top but something to show some sort of commitment from the customer."

"If there's no commission on the file, I think they should always charge a fee, because their time is worth it," Friisdahl continues. "Everyone charges, whether it's a doctor or a lawyer or whoever; why should travel professionals not be charging that?"

Gregory Luciani, president & CEO of TravelOnly, explains that while fees at the host agency are not mandatory, agents are "strongly encouraged" to charge clients for their time. Similar to TTAND, Travel-Only has a set of fee guidelines depending on the service provided.

"At this stage of the game – with some suppliers limiting their commissions – you have no choice to charge the fee, or you won't be able to provide the level of service that the client is looking for," Luciani tells PAX.

"If you're competing against the same suppliers for the same clients, you can't compete on price," Luciani continues. "It comes down to the level of service at the end of the day. For example, a bride booking with you may be a handful and the amount of back and forth with the group can be a daunting task. We want our associates who are doing the work to be fairly compensated."

Customer feedback

While it's true that there are always going to be budget-conscious travellers looking for the best deal, the three agency representatives tell PAX that the fears of some agents have in regards to service fees are greatly exaggerated.

"Some of the agents have told me that brand-new clients can be a little reluctant to pay a fee, because they think that the agent might not know what they're talking about," Friisdahl says. "But if you have a client who is very serious about buying travel, they won't care because they know they'll get their money back through reduced pricing."

"If you're just starting to implement service fees with your clients," Luciani adds, "there's this great fear that there's going to be this mass exodus of clients. But that's not the case; time and again, we've seen that the service fee doesn't scare the customer away... There's of course people who would balk at service fees, but it's a very small percentage. That customer would leave regardless – and they would leave because you're \$10 more expensive than a competitor. Those aren't the type of clients we want."

Fecteau says: "We still have some clients leaving, but that's OK – we don't need them. It comes down to how the agent positions those fees: if they can clearly express to the client the service that they're getting, the clients are usually happy to pay the service fees."

Overcoming reluctance

Among travel agents' biggest impediments to implementing service fees can be the agents themselves, specifically a reluctance to promote their own worth to clients.

"I often believe it's a lack of being able to explain it to their customers and when you explain something,"



The clients that we have are happy to pay and it comes down to how the agent positions those fees.

– Louise Fecteau,
Transat Distribution Canada

Friisdahl says, "there's always two ways of doing it: either the client will not feel it's justified or they'll realize the value they're going to get."

"That's something that's hard to teach because you can't read it off of a sheet of paper to someone. A lot of it comes down to self-assessed value."

Adds Luciani: "If anything, it (the service fee) gives you another reason to tell them about why you're different and better; your fee is just another tool to let the customer know about that. We call it a 'commitment to service' fee. Most clients understand that if they're looking for a certain level of service, there's going to be a cost for it."

Other times, competition plays a role. Although fees are technically mandatory for both storefront and home-based TDC agents, Fecteau explains that the latter group is sometimes reluctant to charge clients in a bid to remain competitive with other host agencies.

"In some regions, we've found that no one is charging a fee," she explains. "We're doing some tests in these regions where we reduce the service fee, but →"



“If you’re competing against the same suppliers for the same clients, you can’t compete on price.”

– Gregory Luciani, TravelOnly

we ensure that everyone is charging the same amount. When it becomes a habit, we can build it up and increase the fee a little bit.

“It’s what makes the difference between an order-taker and a professional. If you don’t have the knowledge, it’s very hard to justify the fee. But as a professional, no one should be shy about charging that fee.”

The future of fees

Will agent fees become the rule rather than the exception? Luciani believes it will depend largely on whether suppliers will continue to compete with agents through direct sales while simultaneously chipping away at commissions.

“We’d have no choice but to increase fees to stay profitable, to sustain service and deliver for our customers,” he says. “Any supplier that thinks agent commission is expendable or a good line item to cut in a budget, what they realize pretty quickly is that once you cut commissions to zero, you’ll see both a backlash in the industry and the cost of customer service balloon internally, because the cost has just been shifted.”

“A healthy retail environment is good for the supplier,” he continues. “It takes pressure off of their frontline staff, sets expectations when the customer gets on board or is travelling with them and it creates another level of customer service post-travel as well, which the suppliers simply can’t do... it’s impossible to have relationships with all of the customers and that’s what builds loyalty, not rewards programs – which most people are unhappy about anyway.”

Friisdahl adds that the standardization of service fees will also be determined by whether or not the Canadian travel agent community can unite under a national professional designation similar to real estate agents or accountants. However, given the fact that travel is regulated provincially rather than federally, he remains skeptical as to whether that future will come to pass.

“In Alberta, for example, someone can plant a stake on their front lawn and say they’re a travel agent,” Friisdahl says. “Until we can stop or at least control that type of thing, the professional agents will have to work hard to show why they’re professionals, while those who don’t know anything make the pros look bad. That’s a big problem and it’s why we end up at the lowest common denominator.

“Until travel agents are more united in what they charge, it’s hard to do that. I’d love to see that but I don’t ever see it happening, as it’s a provincially-regulated industry.”

While the number of agents charging fees may increase, will the rates themselves do the same? For Fecteau, a measured response is the proper course of action.

“There needs to be a limit on what you charge, with value compared to service in mind,” she says. “We need to be careful with that; in the past, fees (at TDC) may have increased too quickly year-over-year, but we need to stay competitive.

“I don’t intend to increase those service fees too quickly; on the contrary, the goal should be to adapt to every market.” ●



**THRILL.
CHILL.
ENCORE.**

Get ready for our newest ship, Norwegian Encore, cruising the Caribbean and Bermuda.

Your clients can repeat perfect moments on our newest, most incredible ship, Norwegian Encore — custom-built for “Again! Again!” They’ll take one more victory lap on the Encore Speedway, suspending 13 feet over the side of the ship. Pamper themselves in our Thermal Suite, then unwind on a heated lounge as they watch the world unfold. Sing along during (and even after) the Tony® Award-Winning Broadway musical Kinky Boots with music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper. And get completely lost in another virtual reality wonderland at Galaxy Pavilion. They will do all this and so much more on Norwegian Encore. So book your clients on the most exciting ship cruising to The Caribbean and Bermuda.

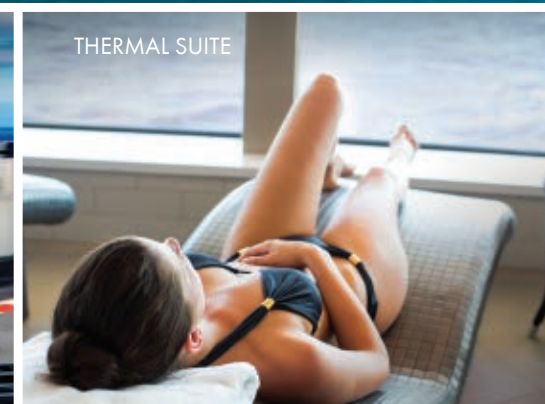
NCL NORWEGIAN *Feel Free*™
CRUISE LINE®

©2019 NCL Corporation Ltd. Ships’ Registry: BAHAMAS and USA 40244 07/19

PARTNERS • FIRST

NORWEGIANCENTRAL.COM

LEARN PROMOTE BOOK CONNECT



Travelling time: a look at *Outlander* filming locations

By Blake Wolfe

Perhaps second only to *Game of Thrones* with regard to its impact on travel, the hit TV series *Outlander* has inspired numerous fans to pack their bags for the Scottish countryside and live out the time-travelling adventures of Jamie and Claire.

Step into the stone circle at *Craigh na Dun* and explore the real-world filming locations for the series' four (and counting) seasons – we promise to keep the spoilers to a minimum!

Scotland (appears in Seasons 1 – 4)

With the bulk of *Outlander* filmed at various locations across Scotland, it's no surprise that numerous themed tours have sprung up in the destination.

Numerous Scottish castles including Doune (which has also appeared in *Game of Thrones* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*), Drummond and Midhope have been featured on the show, along with some of Scotland's unique geographic locations, such as the Devil's Pulpit. Those looking to travel time for real may be let down, however, as the stones at *Craigh na Dun* – where Claire finds herself transported back to 1743 at the beginning of the story – are just models set atop a hillside in the village of Kinloch Rannoch.



Photo by Dave Sutherland/flickr

Czech Republic (appears in Season 2)

Outlander's second season brings Claire – and viewers – to Paris; or in the case of the real-life sets, Prague standing in for Paris!

Well-travelled viewers may recognize several sites within the Czech capital, including the stairs located on the Radnicke Schody along with Strahov Monastery, which has been transformed into the Library of Versailles for the show.

While the exterior of Prague's Military Church of St. John of Nepomuk makes an appearance as Paris' L'Hopital des Anges, the interior scenes of the hospital were filmed at the Glasgow Cathedral.



Photo courtesy of Prague City Tourism

England (appears in Season 2)

Season 2 of *Outlander* also brought the show across the Scottish border to England, where one estate in particular stood in for the Palace of Versailles. Located just outside of Salisbury, Wilton House was transformed into the home of Louis XV by film crews, specifically two of the home's opulent rooms along with the south lawn and the property's Palladian bridge.

And while the stones at *Craigh na Dun* are located in Scotland on the show, coincidentally, Wilton House is just nine miles south of Stonehenge.



Photo by Bernard Blanc/flickr



Photo courtesy of University of Stellenbosch

South Africa (appears in season 3)

The show's third season brings Claire and Jamie to the New World, with events taking place from Boston, Massachusetts through the U.S. South and into Jamaica; however, scenes for the latter destination were literally filmed an ocean away, in South Africa.

Scenes from a plotline involving a pirate kidnapping were filmed at Cape Town Film Studios, which boasts several full-size ships at its facilities, while the Theology Building at South Africa's University of Stellenbosch served as the exterior for the Jamaican Governor's home. *Outlander* fans visiting South Africa can also enjoy food and wine at De Grendel Wine Estate and Restaurant, where scenes depicting Jamaica's Rose Hall were filmed. ●



Theme Cruises

Special Interest Vacations at Sea

By Ming Tappin

Themed cruises offer guests the opportunity indulge their favourite hobby, pastime, or special interest. Combined with the benefits of cruising – inclusive accommodations, meals, entertainment, port-hopping, and activities – themed cruises can be a perfect vacation.

Here are some of the popular themes currently being offered onboard ocean and river ships.

Sports

Golf cruises are perhaps the most popular of sports-themed sailings. They are staffed with on-board golf pros who conduct lectures and lead practice sessions. The itinerary may also include golfing in-destination – such as Bermuda, Ireland and the U.K. – and tickets to golf events such as the PGA Tour and the British Open.

Themed cruises are also built around Grand Prix races, where ships overnight in the host city, allowing guests to attend the race.

Fan cruises with hall of fame athletes, active and retired sports celebrities are also available. Fans have a chance to mix and mingle with their idols, attend Q&A sessions, and take part in photo and autograph opportunities.

Hobbies

There's a themed cruise for virtually every hobby: birding, photography, scrapbooking, knitting, quilting, cooking, stamp-collecting, bridge and astronomy are just a few of the pastimes that have dedicated cruises available. These sailings feature field experts conducting lectures, giving demonstrations and providing tips on best practices. Guests can participate in many hands-on activities on board and ashore that are tailored to help perfect their craft. →



2020 themed cruises

PAX has prepared a sample of themed cruises that will be offered by various cruise lines in 2020. Check each cruise line's website for departure dates and details.

Food and wine

With gastronomy being a major part of a cruise experience, food- and wine-themed cruises are a logical fit. These cruises feature celebrity chefs, wine connoisseurs, craft brewers, distillers and winery owners, with ample opportunities for guests to attend demonstrations, cooking or mixology classes and to learn about new products and trends. Cruises in the Mediterranean and on European rivers are especially conducive to these programs, as the ships sail through some of the most desirable food and wine-producing regions in the world.

Music and Dance

There is a themed cruise for every generation and genre of music and dance, from big band, jazz and blues, to rock, country, heavy metal, rap, electronica and opera. Cruises either feature learning opportunities conducted by professional musicians or dance teachers, or full-on music festivals at sea with concerts by chart-topping bands and solo artists.

Lifestyles

The most common lifestyle-themed cruises are those focusing on health and wellness. Fitness-themed cruises may be hosted by trainers and coaches, who

provide workshops on health and nutrition and conduct group classes. Also gaining popularity are exercise-specific sailings such as biking, hiking, yoga and Zumba cruises, with many of these themes being introduced on European river sailings. Blue World Voyages, a new cruise line currently in development, will be dedicated entirely to fitness and wellness with its purpose-designed ship.

Other lifestyle cruises include themed sailings for singles, the LGBTQ community, swingers and nudists. These adults-only departures are full-ship charters with exclusive on-board programming and entertainment.

Faith-based

There are also an increasing number of ocean and river sailings that celebrate Christian and Jewish heritage. Many of these cruises – which include on-board lecturers and visits to religious and historical sites – are hosted by pastors and rabbis with on-board religious programming. Faith-based itineraries include ocean cruises to the Holy Land and Jewish heritage sailings along the Danube. Every 10 years, river cruise lines feature special departures that include Oberammergau's Passion Play in the itinerary – the next one being in 2020.

A golden opportunity for group travel

Themed cruises are a great source for group business. People love to travel with like-minded individuals and a sailing that focuses on a hobby or interest they already enjoy is an even better enticement to book. Themed cruises also allow the non-participating family members to have a wonderful vacation. Using the golf cruise as an example, while Dad is immersed in all things golf, Mom can enjoy the rest of the floating resort and the kids are well looked after by the ship's youth programs. It's a win-win for the entire family.

Themed cruise clients are everywhere. Look into your local hobby associations, fitness centres, photography or birdwatching clubs, vineyards or wineries, cooking schools, community centres or golf and country clubs. It won't be difficult to find a themed cruise to pitch to the right group and typically, these organizations have a social planner who can spread the word and grow the group size.

Themed cruise clients are also loyal followers. Once they realize the value and the inclusive nature of a themed cruise, they will become repeat cruisers – and your repeat clients. ●

CRUISE LINE	SAMPLE THEMED CRUISES
Azamara	PerryGolf, Grand Prix
Crystal Cruises	Food and wine, golf, Broadway, film & theatre, big band, ballroom dance, jazz, mind and body, Grand Prix
Cunard Line	Wine, fashion, astronomy, genealogy, theatre, literature
Disney Cruise Line	Marvel and Star Wars Days at Sea
Norwegian Cruise Line	Comedy, country, blues
Oceania Cruise Line	Culinary, bridge
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	Bridge, Broadway, floristry & garden, public broadcasting, wine
Seabourn	Spa and wellness
Silversea Cruises	Opera, wine, bridge, culinary, Royal Geological Society
Windstar	Grand Prix, culinary
AMA Waterways	Wine
Avalon Waterways	Jewish heritage, beer, wine, culinary, photography
Scenic	National Geographic
Uncruise Adventures	Birding, photography, wellness, wine & culinary
Uniworld	Jewish heritage, food and wine



The majority of Nevis' accommodations are villas or small inns.



All beaches in Nevis are open to the public.



Step back in time at the Alexander Hamilton House, the birthplace of U.S. Founding Father – and subject of a current hit musical.

Nature meets luxury

in Nevis

By Blake Wolfe

Located just to the southwest of St. Kitts, neighbouring Nevis is a breath of fresh air for visitors seeking a different side of the Caribbean. With Nevis experiencing an increase in what the Nevis Tourism Authority describes as “up-market tourism,” it’s a clear sign that the island is incorporating more of its natural attributes into the luxury travel sector, with interest in Nevis heating up, what better time to

send discerning clients to this Caribbean gem?

Getting natural

A lush volcanic island, Nevis is an ecotourism dream come true.

A sprawling rainforest carpets the sides of Nevis Peak, providing a natural habitat for monkeys and tropical birds, while creating some spectacular hiking and mountain biking trails in the process. To preserve this natural heritage, Nevis

has outlawed construction beyond one thousand feet above sea level.

The shoreline and surrounding waters are similarly treasured in Nevis. All beaches in Nevis are open to the public and in addition to human visitors, the island welcomes annual visits by nesting sea turtles.

What’s cooking?

In Nevis, local food is not only a special treat for visitors to enjoy, it’s also a →



No fast food here! Nevis is all about authentic local food.

Photo by Don Reardon/Nevis, The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts



The Four Seasons Resort Nevis brings the international hotel brand's five-star luxury to the island.

Photo by Don Reardon/Nevis, The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

philosophy for full-time Nevisians: with no fast-food chains to speak of, Nevis' culinary scene is focused on the authentic and rustic flavours of beach bars and village restaurants, where aspiring chefs learn alongside their experienced mentors all too happy to teach the secrets of preparing fresh seafood and savoury barbecue.

Every July, the Nevis Mango and Food Festival draws discerning foodies and celebrity chefs – this year's edition welcomed Iron Chef UK's Chef Judy Joo – for a weekend of all things culinary centred around the more than 40 varieties of mango found throughout the island.

The annual celebration culminates in the Nevisian Chefs Mango Feast, where par-

icipating chefs incorporate the festival's namesake crop into their best dishes.

Getting there

Travellers looking to get natural in Nevis will have to either catch a connecting flight or ferry from St. Kitts; Air Canada offers direct service from Toronto to St. Kitts.

If connecting by sea, travellers should know that the Seabridge ferry docks at Cades Bay on the northwestern shore of the island, while on-demand water taxis from St. Kitts are typically scheduled to arrive at Oualie Beach, approximately two kilometres to the north.

Alternately, travellers can also reach Nevis by air from Antigua aboard regional airlines including LIAT and Winair. ●



GOOD TO KNOW

While the official currency in Nevis is the East Caribbean (EC) dollar, most stores and businesses also accept US dollars; however, if using U.S. currency, travellers are advised that only paper bills are accepted and change will be given in EC.

Canadians banking with the Bank of Nova Scotia are in luck, as the bank has both physical locations and 24-hour ATMs in Nevis.



Celebrate the future

With KLM's 100th, we proudly look forward to a bright future, ready for the exciting challenges and opportunities ahead.

Royal Dutch Airlines



Singin' in the Antiguan rain

What happens when your Caribbean vacation gets soaked? PAX gets all the answers on rollicking, rainy adventure through Antigua.

Story by Loren Christie

English harbour at sunset

It wasn't just a friendly light drizzle that welcomed us as we got off the plane. It was a fierce tropical storm. The kind that soaks through your clothes to your bones.

I had come to Antigua for a quick three-day visit and, like most Canadians who head south in the winter, I was expecting to be showered with the heat of the Caribbean sun.

I looked over at our Antiguan host, Tameka Wharton, sales and marketing manager for the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, who surely would be sad to have our welcome tarnished by the lack of sun.

However, I did not see one drop of disappointment on her face; instead she was beaming. "It has been raining for three weeks," she said. "Antigua has suffered from a drought for more than six years. We need as much as we can get."

OK, so clearly the rain was here to stay and any bad attitude in regards to this deluge was unwelcome. The wet weather also begged a new and unexpected question: what exactly do you do when your Caribbean vacation is doused by a surprise rainfall?

PAX set out for answers as we began what would be an enjoyable, albeit wet, three days in Antigua.

Raindrops keep falling on my head

Our first stop was our hotel bar for a Wadadli, Antigua's local beer. The two Antiguan tending bar shared Tameka's enthusiasm for the rain. Their spirit was infectious. A couple of drinks later, chatting and getting to know the fellow travellers on my tour – ten Canadian travel agents – and our Caribbean adventure had begun.

That night, we continued the party by travelling from our budget-friendly resort, The Halcyon Cove by Rex Resorts in Dickenson Bay, and driving across the island to Shirley Heights, an island favourite where tourists and locals come together to eat BBQ, drink and dance to live music while overlooking the twinkling lights of English Bay. It was about an hour's drive, but the storm clouds parted upon our arrival allowing us to dine on delicious pulled pork under the open sky.

If there was a laundry detergent named Antiguan Rain Shower, I would buy it.

But the rain returned that night, with a vengeance, pounding the roof and windows of my second-floor hotel room. As water gushed over the eavestrough and fell to the ground, I caught a glimpse of the lightning show through breaks in the wall of water that was cascading down in front of my windows.

It was actually quite beautiful.

Under my umbrella

The next morning, as rain gave way to more rain, I decided to take a taxi into the capital of St. John's. The older part of town is made up of 19th century buildings and a quaint seafront dotted with colourful fishing boats.

There is a modern section full of shops and restaurants surrounding the cruise ship terminal. Most of the shops are what you might expect: well-known designer clothing brands and high-end sunglasses shops. →



A steel pan player at Shirley Heights Sunday Sunset party



Art gallery in Antigua



Heritage Quay

However, sprinkled among them are some delightful local art shops. Stephen Murphy's Zemi Art Gallery in Redcliffe Quay offers the requisite local souvenirs but also higher-end pieces of amazing art and home décor by Antiguan artists and designers and other items from across the Caribbean.

Another favourite was the Wadadli Roots store on Saint Mary's Street. Like my arrival beer and many other things in Antigua, the store's name, Wadadli, pays homage to what many Antiguan believe was the pre-Columbus name for Antigua. Inside, a variety of artists have their wares on display. The Wadadli Gemini jewelry line designed by Saran Davis was a particularly eye-catching, colourful and playful. I picked up some earrings as a gift.

No raining on this parade

After a couple of hours of shopping, I headed back to the resort, dropped my purchases off and tried something new: observe Antigua's natural beauty by going for a walk outside of the hotel property.

Happily, this is a safe (and highly recommended) thing to do in Antigua.

There is something about the smell of rain in the Caribbean. Every flower, every tree and every blade of grass seems to contribute to an overwhelming scent of freshness. It felt like the plants were becoming more lush right before my eyes.

If there was a laundry detergent named Antiguan Rain Shower, I would buy it.

That night, over dinner, I caught myself softly singing, "I'm singin' in the rain...what a glorious feelin.' I'm happy again." There was no way bad weather was going to ruin my trip to this Caribbean paradise!

The great flood, greater food

My group's final dinner was a last-minute choice. Tameka took us to Beachlimerz, an amazing restaurant right on the beach in St John's. With a table celebrating a birthday party to my left and a rum punch made with local English Bay Rum in my right hand, it was hard not to be in a good mood.

Antigua is one of those islands where it pays to take a couple of nights off the resort and explore the local culinary scene. The seafood was delicious, especially the snapper, but even more appealing was our interaction with the locals. Tameka (who, I discovered, is an amazing singer) ended up serenading the birthday girl, turning our last-minute restaurant choice into the ultimate meal experience.

I was glad I had given in to my urge to explore the island. The official tourism tagline for Antigua and Barbuda is "Beyond the Beach." As it turned out, this was the perfect summation for a highly enjoyable, yet unexpectedly soggy, three-day sojourn. ●

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS...



Take a catamaran cruise around the island with **Tropical Adventures Antigua**. Swim, sunbathe and enjoy a lobster lunch buffet on board the luxurious Mystic II. tropicalad.com



Head to Antigua's **Stingray City** to snorkel with friendly rays and tropical fish and see magnificent coral reefs. You can do this excursion rain or shine! stingraycityantigua.com



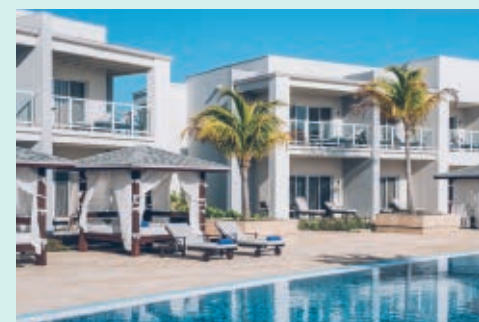
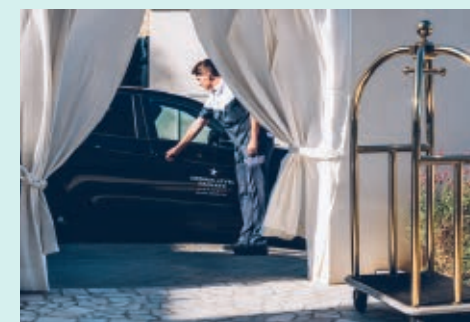
Soar over the rainforest with **Antigua Rainforest Canopy Tours**, which offers thrilling zipline experiences. antiguarainforest.com

Immerse yourself in the exclusive world of Coral Level at Iberostar



CORAL LEVEL AT
IBEROSTAR SELECTION ENSENACHOS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



CORAL LEVEL AT
IBEROSTAR SELECTION HOLGUÍN

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A first-class experience awaits in Cuba. We have created a new 5-star level so you can enjoy everything without missing a single special detail. Those two hotels allow you to enjoy the exclusivity of reserved spaces and personalized Premium services without sacrificing the advantages of staying at a large resort on the Caribbean Sea.

IberostarCuba

IBEROSTAR.COM

HAVANA · VARADERO · CAYO SANTA MARÍA · CAYO GUILLERMO · CAYO COCO
TRINIDAD · HOLGUÍN · SANTIAGO DE CUBA



Mondrian Doha

Discovering Qatar

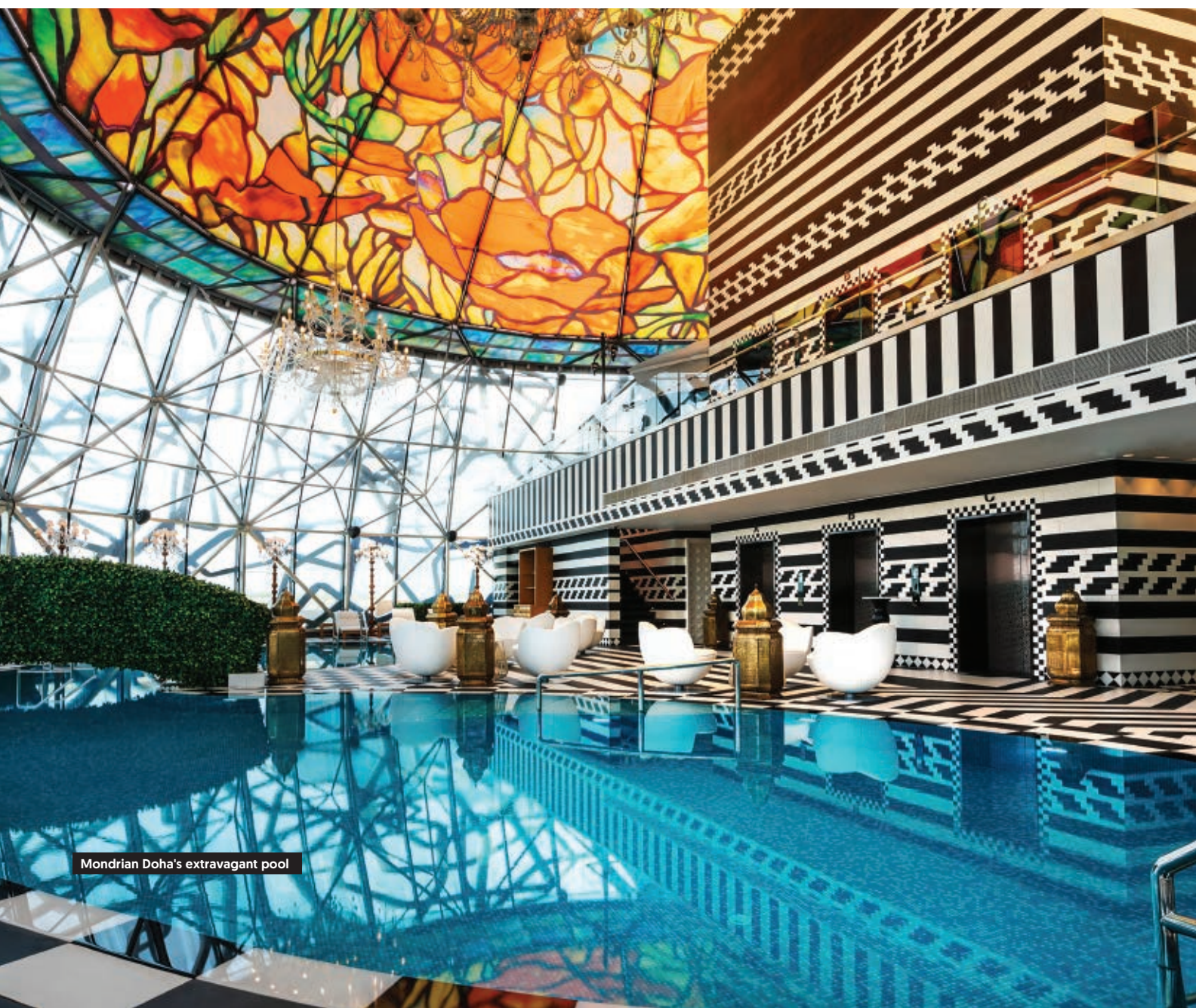
Story by Marie-Eve Vallières



Walima, the main restaurant and lounge



Mondrian Doha's lobby



Mondrian Doha's extravagant pool

Standing proudly on a road that winds through the desert of Qatar's West Bay area, the Mondrian Doha embodies the opulence and contemporary design that this micro-state of the Arabian Peninsula has come to be known for.

On a whim, *PAX* travelled to Qatar and spent a few nights at the hotel in order to become better acquainted with this relatively unknown destination.

Luxury defined by Mondrian

The chain is world-renowned for its excessively high-quality standards and the Mondrian Doha is no exception.

With a look that's modern, even playful, the property is distinguished from some of the other luxurious, more traditional brands already established in the capital.

In the lobby of the hotel, the tone is set: the floors and walls are done in a lustrous, immaculate white and they leave room for a whimsical approach, whether it's the huge, tree-shaped beams or the helical, striking black staircase adorned with lace-like rails.

"The whole hotel is a space dedicated to decadence and surprise," said architect Marcel Wanders. "But we have incorporated endemic elements from the local culture to attract international travellers as well as residents of Doha."

Although all common areas tell a story of their own, *PAX* was mostly impressed by that of the shisha lounge and restaurant, Walima.

Composed entirely of black and white elements, the restaurant is capped by hundreds of oriental lamps of all possible colours. In addition, there are excellent mezze (small dishes served as appetizers in the Middle East) in the purest Qatari tradition, which pleasantly combines Hindu and Levantine flavors, such as labneh with mint, fattoush salad, Chicken Madhrooba or Lamb Thareed. A delight for the senses!

On the rooftop of the Mondrian Doha, guests will find an indoor swimming pool.

Whether you are an experienced swimmer or a beginner, you absolutely have to go

there to admire the ceramic tilework and the flowery glass ceiling, an almost psychedelic set reminiscent of the chess room seen in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Steps away from the pool, and there's an outdoor terrace, where the hotel's more curious visitors can gaze at the Persian Gulf, the lavish Pearl-Qatar neighbourhood, the endless sand dunes, and the skyscrapers of downtown Doha. These unique panoramic views from the Mondrian Doha are a constant reminder to the untrained eye, of just how unlikely this opulent oasis truly is, right here in the middle of the Arabian desert.

A refined stay

PAX enjoyed the benefits that come standard with a superior room at the Mondrian Doha, including a soak in the spectacular stone bathtub, which faces the floor-to-ceiling windows, with not a neighbour in sight—and a small box of chocolates, delivered in the signature Mondrian artwork box.

The 48 square meters of the room offer clean lines and volumes, without being surgical or impersonal. →



Wonderful details of Mondrian Doha

The layout is highly ergonomic, with a generous wardrobe, coffee machine, and safe near the entrance. The main room features a soothing colour palette, and is fitted with a desk, as well as a large armchair and cable TV.

A gigantic bathroom includes a glass rain-water shower and the vanity space is furnished with bath products and superior lighting.

PAX particularly appreciated the plush carpet throughout the room, which had a design reminiscent of sandstorms, giving a subtle nod to the city's culture.

Jetlag took its toll after a 12-hour flight. Periods of sleep come and go for travellers who lay in the cozy king-sized bed. Between days marked by adrenaline-filled adventures and devouring gargantuan meals, wandering through souks filled with irresistible aromas and starchitect-designed history museums, the memories all blend into one. Was this eccentric hotel nothing but a dream? ●



Getting to Qatar : GOOD TO KNOW

Qatar Airways serves Doha four times a week from Montreal; from Doha, more than 160 other destinations are accessible elsewhere in the world including Asia, Oceania and eastern Africa. The flight is 12 hours long.

Qatar Airways allows its passengers to enjoy a few days' stopover in Doha starting at \$23 USD as part of its Qatar Stopover program, at no additional cost on the air fare.

Canadian passengers are also exempt from visas for this type of visit.

The Business Class QSuite, unheard of in the world of aviation, allows passengers in the same area of four to socialize with colleagues or family for the duration of the flight thanks to the removable panels. At dusk, the four spaces are privatized to promote a restful sleep.

Mondrian Doha in brief

Sleeping

211 rooms (four categories) and 59 suites (eight categories) across 24 floors

Eating and drinking

5 restaurants and 3 bars

Relaxing

Rooftop terrace and pool with panoramic views of the city



Introducing the NEW Hilton La Romana, an All-Inclusive Adult Resort

The best location. The best beach. The best value.

Exquisite Accommodations | 24-Hour Room Service | Water Sports | World-Class Spa


Hilton
LA ROMANA
AN ALL-INCLUSIVE ADULT RESORT

SAVE UP TO
52%
+ ONE FREE ROOM UPGRADE
+ OVER \$400 IN VALUE ADDS

- + Earn Double Points on Bookings
- + Educational Webinars
- + Exclusive Travel Agent Rates Starting at \$79

Book by October 31, 2019 | Learn more at AGENTCASHPLUS.COM

Savings up to 52% off the standard rate, plus one free room upgrade and over \$400 in value adds. Rates may vary by date. Offer valid for new bookings made by October 31, 2019 for travel now through December 20, 2020. Blackout dates may apply. See website for full terms and conditions. Offer may be changed or withdrawn at any time. Not responsible for errors or omissions. Other restrictions may apply. ©2019 Playa Hotels & Resorts is the owner and exclusive operator of Hilton La Romana, an All-inclusive Resort. All rights reserved. PLA08720919

On the wings of *innovation*

A look at new airline cabin concepts

By Blake Wolfe

With commercial aviation becoming an increasingly competitive sector, airlines around the world are continually bringing new products to market – from service classes and technology to in-flight dining – all in a bid to fill their planes.

Step aboard and explore the latest airline innovations while taking a look at what the future of aviation may also hold.

Sitting and sleeping in style

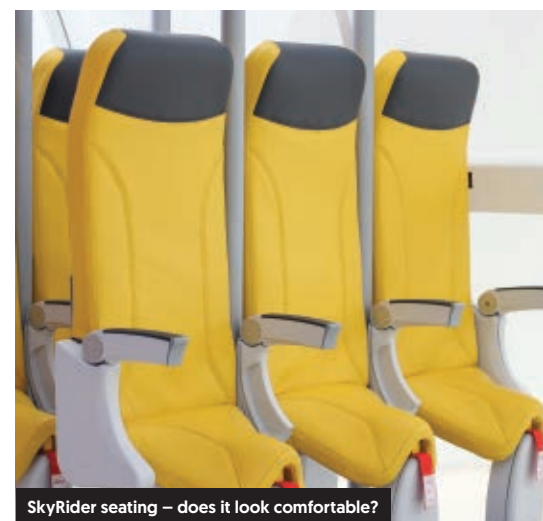
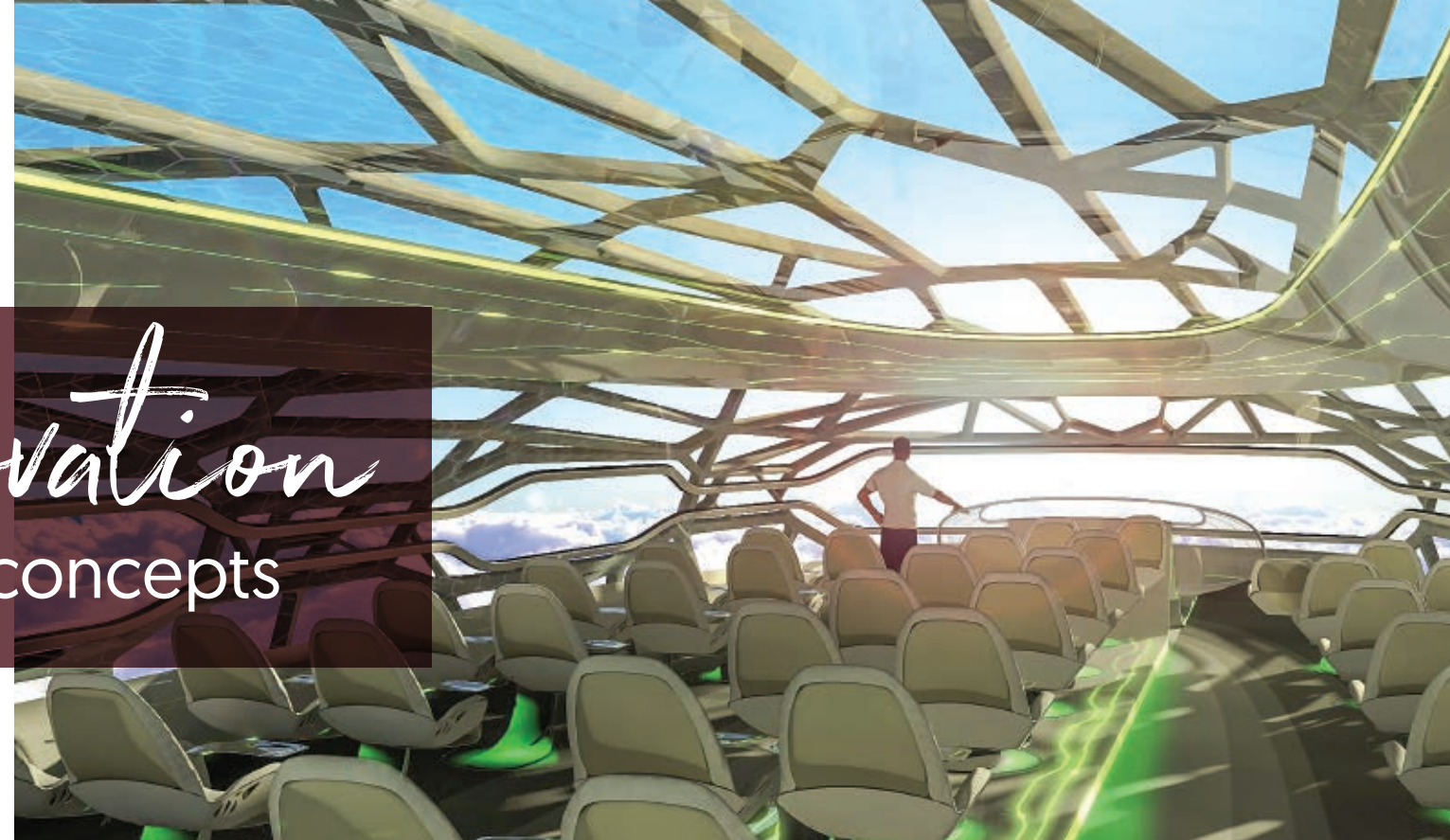
Airlines, particularly those specializing in long-haul flights, have made major strides in recent years to improve the flying experience.

These innovations range from the first-class suites of carriers such as Etihad, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines – fully enclosed compartments complete with beds – to the evolution of economy, such as Air New Zealand’s SkyCouch, which allows travellers to book a row of three economy class seats that can be converted into a bed.

And there’s plenty more innovation coming to all classes. In 2018, Airbus unveiled a prototype ‘Day & Night’ cabin, a first-class seating configuration which offers travellers a spacious ‘day’ seat along the wall of the cabin, plus an enclosed ‘night’ pod with a compact bed and video screen.

Another design prototype – the Personalized Airport Systems for Seamless Mobility and Experience, or PASSME – aims to streamline and speed up the boarding and disembarkation process via its collapsible seat design, which allows rows of seats to be folded and pushed aside, temporarily widening the aisle from 16 inches to 32 inches.

For economy travellers looking to stretch out, the Eco Zlounge prototype by Zodiac features economy seats that can be folded flat – but only if the seat in front is unoccupied. Considering how eager airlines are to fill planes these days, it’s unlikely that the design would be of any benefit in a traditional economy seating configuration.



SkyRider seating – does it look comfortable?



Qatar Airways' brand new Qsuite sits four

Even the sounds onboard an aircraft are being taken into account by designers. For passengers snoozing in WestJet’s new B787-9 Dreamliner, the gentle calling of a loon on a morning lake helps to awaken passengers after a night of flying, while for travellers who just can’t handle noise, HAECO Cabin Solutions is developing a noise-cancelling headrest called the Wave, which can be worn like headphones

to drown out the sound of the plane and fellow passengers.

Meal time

In-flight meals have come a long way from the days when comedians first poked fun at ‘airplane food.’

For Canadian airlines, the trend in recent years has been to partner with a celebrity

chef in developing menus, a recognizable personality that travellers can trust for quality: these include partnerships such as Air Canada teaming up with David Haworth and Vikram Vij; Sunwing’s collaboration with Lynn Crawford; and Transat joining forces with Daniel Vezina.

Increasingly, airlines are catering to business class travellers with ‘dine any-

Airlines have made major strides in recent years to improve the flying experience.

time’ concepts that allow these passengers to eat outside of scheduled meal services. The concept is offered by a number of airlines, including Air Canada, WestJet, Alitalia and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

But improved dining isn’t just for business class. Next month, Delta will unveil a new economy class service, featuring a welcome cocktail, bistro-style meals (with larger entrees) and capped with a ‘fond farewell’ chocolate upon landing.

Keeping it clean

The bane of air travellers, the airplane lavatory is the subject of many passengers’ complaints.

That era, however, may be drawing to a close as cabin designers turn their focus toward one of the least glamorous aspects of air travel with innovations that could be coming to aircraft in the near future.

With an eye toward improving hygiene, Boeing recently developed a self-cleaning lavatory which uses UV light to kill 99.9 per cent of germs, activated when the restroom is unoccupied. The prototype lavatory also includes numerous touchless features, including →



WestJet's new Dreamliner business class allows passengers to dine anytime.

a hands-free faucet, soap dispenser, trash flap, toilet lid (and seat) and a hand dryer.

Meanwhile, Germany's Krüger Aviation is looking to make the most of an already small-space with its K2 Future Lavatory concept. The design features a diagonally-angled toilet – which also includes footrests on either side for passengers employing the squatting position – a fold-down baby changing station and a hands-free sink with an angled counter, to prevent water from pooling mid-flight.

Flying into the future

What does the future hold for aviation? While there's some brave new designs on

the horizon, what the planes of tomorrow will look like is anyone's guess.

In 2014, Italy's Aviointeriors' SkyRider concept drew much attention – and lamentation over the ever-shrinking air seat – with a design that would allow airlines to cram even more passengers into their planes by forcing travellers into a near-standing position for short-haul flights. So far, no airline has yet employed the SkyRider seating and the original design, unveiled in 2010, failed to meet the standards of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration at the time.

Even more bold is The Future by Airbus, a concept which the aircraft manufacturer

developed in 2011 that envisions the world of aviation in 2050.

Designed for passengers that will expect both a “seamless travel experience while also caring for the environment,” as described by Airbus Executive Vice President Engineering Charles Champion, among the concept's most notable features is an aircraft with panoramic views of the sky through a transparent cabin; the elimination of seating classes; holographic gaming monitors; and seats that conform to the size and shape of the individual passenger.

Regardless of whether that vision comes to pass, the future of flight is indeed interesting. ●

CARVING THE PATH FORWARD.

Leadership means going where others haven't. That's why Delta is busy innovating, developing and perfecting products and services that push our entire industry forward. See what's next at PRO.DELTA.COM.



DELTA
EDGE™

A little *blanket* with a lot of coverage



On the outside, this blanket from Matador looks just like any other, measuring 1m x 60m x 11m. But, once it's folded up, it can fit comfortably in your pocket, weighing just 36 grams. Available in four colours, it's the perfect helper for any trip to the beach, or even a hike.

matadorup.com
\$30 «

Sew on the go

Those who know how to sew will enjoy this small, yet practical solution offered by Purl Soho. Their handy repair kit contains everything you need for a quick fix: black and white thread, sewing needles, straight pins, three kinds of safety pins, two buttons, a paper tape measure and small sharp scissors, all bundled in a compact tin case that fits in any suitcase.

Purlsoho.com
\$25 «



Sleep tight



The Nest travel pillow, designed from memory foam, promises to deliver the ultimate good night's sleep while travelling. Its shape hugs the contours of the neck and shoulders to help maintain natural alignment during sleep, while the non-slip backrest holds the pillow in place. When stored in its case, it compresses down to a quarter of its size, and it also comes with a set of earplugs.

travelrest.net
\$45 «

Look good for less



Tired of buying overpriced sunglasses? Goodr has created sunglasses at an affordable price without compromising on the quality of the final product, which delivers a distinguished and casual style. Featuring polarized lenses that reduce glare and block out 100 percent of the sun's harmful UV rays (A & B), and frames with a special coating that prevents slipping (even in sweat) a pair costs anywhere between \$25 and \$35 U.S. dollars, depending on the model, colour and style of glasses.

goodr.com
\$35 «

Book Business cabin with ticketing limits as big as Big Ben.



Starting October 23, 2019, WestJet's new Dreamliner will begin daily non-stop flights from Toronto to London (Gatwick). Book Business cabin today with new Ticketing Time Limits (TTL)*

WestJet's new payment Ticketing Time Limits:

- Business fares: final payment up to 72 hours from the time of booking
- BusinessFlex fares: final payment up to 3 days prior to departure

Route	Frequency	Departing	Effective dates
Toronto – London (Gatwick)	Daily	Starting from 8:40 p.m.	October 23, 2019 – April 25, 2020
London (Gatwick) – Toronto	Daily	Starting from 11:10 a.m.	October 24, 2019 – April 20, 2020

Book today.



*Schedule subject to change without notice. New Ticketing Time Limits (TTL) are as follows; Business bookings (C and D) made more than four days prior to departure, the TTL is 72 hours from the time of booking. If less than four days, the TTL is 24 hours from the time of booking. BusinessFlex bookings (J) made more than four days prior to departure, the TTL is three days prior to departure. If less than four days, the TTL is 24 hours from the time of booking. In the case of combined fares or differences with the fare rules last ticketing date, the more restrictive ticketing deadline applies.



WE'RE IN THE BUSINESS OF YOU

Enjoy the ultimate end-to-end experience in Business Class.

At Air Canada, we believe in catering to all kinds. Whether you're a wine aficionado, art lover, movie buff, or all of the above, we have something special for you. Enjoy an extensive range of priority services, exclusive access to our Maple Leaf Lounges, a wine list curated by our sommelier Véronique Rivest, 1000+ hours of entertainment on your personal screen, and much more.

Our network connects you to over 220 destinations worldwide, and we always make sure you arrive refreshed and inspired. That's how we're in the business of you.

aircanada.com/businessclass



Voted Best Business Class
in North America

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



AIR CANADA