



MAGAZINE

SPECIAL ISSUE

**TRAVEL AGENT
MONTH**

MEETING WITH
WENDY PARADIS
PRESIDENT OF ACTA

THREE AGENTS HAVE THEIR
**SAY ON THE
TRAVEL INDUSTRY**

**FAMILY CRUISES
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Letter from the publisher



May is your month

“Doing what you like is freedom, liking what you do is happiness”

May is one of my favourite months of the year. Firstly, because it's my birthday, and although I don't celebrate it much, it does make the month more memorable. For me, May is also a month of renewal: it marks the first time of the year that we open the windows to let in the fresh (and sometimes even warm!) air. Leaves appear on the trees, and we begin to see the first flowers emerge.

In a way, life resumes again in May. It's a rebirth, after a few months of near-hibernation, when our bodies are dormant and numbed by the cold.

This year, I have another reason to celebrate the month that I love – and that reason is you. May is your month. My dear agents – I'd like to say that I'm always impressed by your passion, professionalism and belief in your roles despite working in a highly competitive industry, whether you're operating against the agency next door or the giants of the Internet. You've gone through a lot of upheaval and braved the 'Internet storm,' but you've never given up. Instead, you have strived to continue educating yourselves in order to advise your clients to the best of your abilities – as only a travel agent can.

You are valiant fighters, on behalf of the profession and on behalf of yourselves.

At LogiMonde media, we are honoured to meet you day after day, eager for news on what's happening in the industry and beyond. I constantly see you sharing the original articles that we post on social media, and I can't help but find this passion inspiring.

You share travel content because you are more than just 'travel sellers.' You are people who want to spread the good news – whether that's about a new dream hotel, an idyllic destination, an interesting travel story, or a service that brings us closer to other cultures and countries. You live and breathe travel!

This passion has convinced me that you have all found your true calling in life. Doing what you like is freedom, liking what you do is happiness.

And so, as we toast Travel Agent Month, let's also celebrate your happiness!

We have dedicated this edition of *PAX magazine* to you. Our cover story is a conversation with Wendy Paradis, president of ACTA (the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies) about her own journey in travel – which began, fittingly, as an agent. We also feature a round-table discussion with three travel agents of different generations about the profession's most pressing issues; we thank Ethel, Deborah and Victoria for taking the time to speak with us.

Don't miss yet another useful guide this month, this time on family cruises. It will prove a great resource for your work.

All that remains for me now is to lift a glass to your health and your happiness!

Vice-President, Publishing, Media, Marketing & Development



60



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FRONT COVER

Wendy Paradis, President of
The Association of
Canadian Travel Agencies

Text **Fergal McAlinden**

Photos **Massimiliano Galassi**

Special thanks to Mississauga
Living Arts Centre for providing the
location for this month's Business
Meeting photoshoot.

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PAX picks for a great trip



Honduras



A Caribbean secret for a long time, Roatan is the stuff of legends.

It's where infamous pirates buried their treasures. Where divers can explore the world's second largest barrier reef, teeming with fish. Where nature lovers can delve into lush jungles bristling with exotic wildlife, and where beach bums can discover the ocean in all its shades of crystalline blue.

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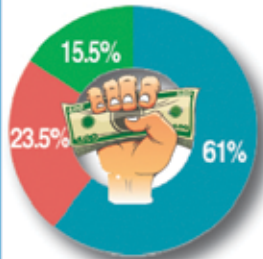
Home based agents earn **MORE™** commission



Greater share

72.6% said they earn a greater share of the overall commission as a home-based agent compared to working at a bricks & mortar agency.

- Greater share
- No
- Other



Take home more

61% of applicable agents said they take home between **10% to 30% more** money as a home based agent compared to working in an agency, and **23.5%** said they take home **over 30% more**.

Take home	% of agents
10-30% more	61%
More than 30%	23.5%
Less than 10%	15.5%



Commission split

85% said they have the ability to earn **50% or more** of the available commission as a home based agent, **47%** said they have the ability to earn **75% or more**.

Comm. split	% of agents
75-100%	47%
50-75%	38%
0-50%	15%

The 2nd Annual Survey was conducted by Rob Glennie Consulting and attracted over 500 home based agents during the month of January. The survey provides valuable insight into this growing industry segment.



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Canada, 10 issues (one year): \$49.50 (plus tax)

Canada, 20 issues (two years): \$79.00 (plus tax)

U.S., 10 issues (one year): \$110.00 (plus tax)

International, 10 issues (one year): \$195.00 (plus tax)

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Printer: Impart Litho imprimeur

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



PAX magazine is published by

LogiMonde media

Corporate website: logimondemedia.com

Travel industry news: PAXnews.com, PAXnewsWest.com, PAXnouvelles.com

416-581-1001 ext. 300

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BUSINESS MEETING



A Voice for Agents

The Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA) President Wendy Paradis on why the organization's commitment to the travel agent community is stronger than ever, 41 years on.

By Fergal McAlinden | Photos by Massimiliano Galassi

For Wendy Paradis, there's really no such thing as a typical day at the office.

As President of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies, the organization that represents the interests of the travel industry's retail sector in Canada, the accomplished executive is always on the move – just one of the responsibilities that comes with the territory of helming a nationwide association.

"The day-to-day job may not even be at the office," she laughs. "I could be here [Toronto], I could be in Vancouver, I could be in Montreal... one of the things that's really important is that we have a national lens... to make sure that

we are really focused on the grassroots, regional issues, and opportunities. It's about connecting with our members."

It's clear that Paradis' role is a hectic one. Whether liaising with federal and provincial governments on behalf of agents, coordinating agency outreach and education, or representing agents' interests in a range of matters, her responsibilities necessitate sharp focus on numerous divergent issues and a confident grasp of policy – not to mention a taste for multitasking. Yet she takes the relentless pace in stride, speaking with ease, in considerable length and detail, about the range of matters she and ACTA are currently immersed in. →

It's been a particularly significant last twelve months for ACTA, with the organization having celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2017 – a milestone that provided ample opportunity for reflection as well as renewal. It's also allowed Paradis to look back on some of the biggest changes the industry has undergone during that time; chief among those is the continuing evolution of the travel agent profession, a phenomenon that's made ACTA more relevant today than ever.

"The industry is really evolving," she comments. "We need to make sure, as ACTA, that we're working with our travel agencies to [ensure] that we have standards in our industry. That's always been important, but with the emergence of technology and independent contractors... that element of education and professionalism, although it's always been there, is front-and-centre for us."

A long journey in travel

Paradis established a distinguished track record throughout a lengthy career that's encompassed a series of prominent roles in the industry, prior to taking the reins at ACTA. Indeed, it's fitting, given her current status as one of the leading voices for Canadian agencies, that her professional journey actually began as a travel agent.

It was a trip to Europe at the age of 16 that first kindled her interest in a career in travel. "All I knew when I came back from that trip was that I wanted to be part of that industry," she says. "I certainly loved the travel part, but I really loved the whole vibe of the

industry itself, and knew that I wanted to find my place [there]."

After completing a two-year travel counselling program at Centennial College, Paradis took the first step on her career path with a role at Eaton's Travel, working there as an agent for a year before enrolling in the University of Western Ontario's business and international politics course.

“ The industry is really evolving. We need to make sure, as ACTA, that we're working with our travel agencies to [ensure] that we have standards in our industry. ”

Even then, she never lost her passion for the travel industry, working part-time at Eaton's throughout university and taking up a corporate travel counsellor role as soon as school finished for the summer. "There were job fairs at university, and all these people hiring," she recalls, "and I went around the job fair and I said, 'I can't see anything more exciting than the travel industry!'"

That love has continued unabated throughout a career that saw Paradis rise through the ranks at Eaton's, becoming regional director of Western Ontario, before being tapped by CAA Travel

to join as director of travel, and later vice-president for the entire company. The latter role provided Paradis a different perspective of the world of business, with a subsequent decade at OTEC (Ontario Tourism Education Corporation) helping hone her skills in training, professional development, adult learning principles, strategy and methodology – tools that would prove essential in her later role with ACTA.

A perfect fit

That deep experience made Paradis an ideal match for the presidency of ACTA when the position became available in 2016. Nonetheless, the incoming president did not rest on her laurels, making it an immediate priority to hit the road and start meeting the agencies that ACTA represents, face-to-face, in order to find out everything about them: how they operated, the biggest challenges they faced, and how the day-to-day life of an agent had evolved since she lived it, years before.

Again, Paradis' roots as a travel agent played an invaluable role in helping her to precisely understand the changes that the profession had undergone over the decades. "One of the real keys is that when I started at ACTA, when I went out and visited our members, I had done their job, walked in their shoes," she says. "Because I was working in tourism training for a few years, I was able to come back with a pretty fresh look. I travelled across the country and visited travel agencies, met with members – corporate and leisure – and so it →



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was interesting to see the travel industry, of course, was the same – but [also] dramatically different.”

It's that continually-evolving, fast-paced nature of the industry that embodies one of the main reasons Paradis views ACTA's role as such a critical one – both in representing the rights of agencies to government bodies and ensuring that its members remain fully cognizant of forthcoming changes, and how they affect them.

Its commitment to advocacy – described by Paradis as ‘the number one priority of the organization’ – came to the fore during the recent review of the Travel Industry Act in Ontario, which saw ACTA collaborate closely with the agent community in the form of surveys, one-on-one meetings and consultations to ensure that their needs and concerns were presented to the provincial government as accurately and convincingly as possible. It's just one example of the many ways Paradis interacts with various bodies, whether government, suppliers or consumers, to ensure that the interests of agents are accounted for.

Given the often-frenetic tempo of travel agents' daily roles, Paradis affirms, ACTA's focus on keeping them abreast of changing requirements and regulations that affect them is particularly pertinent.

“One of the things at ACTA that I really try and do is for us to really understand what it is that our members value and need from us,” she tells me. “Sometimes, they

know what they need, and sometimes they don't even know what's coming on the horizon, because they're so busy running their businesses that they don't know that this legislation is is percolating, and that it's really going to affect them.

“A day-to-day [duty] at ACTA is to make sure we are aware what's going on currently with our members and where we can really help them and make a difference,” she adds, “and also to make sure that we're... participating in those conversations about what may be affecting them three years from now.”

Moving in the right direction

Given the scope of ACTA's remit and reach, the importance of having a cohesive, united team in all corners of the country is particularly clear. Thankfully, Paradis says, the ACTA team – from its Mississauga head office staff to its regional membership managers across Canada – remains resolutely committed to the cause. “Our team out in the field build great relationships with their more regional or local travel agencies and suppliers,” she remarks, “so that we can really make sure we have the voice of B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba.

“What's so great about the team – and I keep saying it – is really their dedication to making it easier for travel agencies to be successful. There is such a passion about that with the team, [and] it's really such a pleasure to work in that environment.”

As the organization toasts 40 years in operation, and readies itself for the next chapter in its history, Paradis





notes that one thing has remained constant throughout the decades: its steadfast commitment to advocating for Canada's agent community.

"It's interesting, because our role in advocacy and representing travel agencies to government, to travel suppliers, to the consumer – that has had such longevity," she says.

"Now, the issues are different in 2018, but that was our main reason for being when we started 40 years ago, and it is our main reason for being 40 years later." ●

HITTING THE TRAIL

As a resident of Niagara, Paradis has chosen the perfect city for a hiking enthusiast and wine lover. The ACTA president puts a busy week behind her by hiking the Bruce Trail each weekend, while she's also taken in some of the world's foremost wine regions during her travels. Alongside Thailand, bucket list destinations include world-renowned hiking trails such as the Camino de Santiago – and family vacations are always welcome, too.

"For my parents' 50th anniversary, our whole extended family went to Hawaii on a family trip," she says. "My parents' 55th anniversary, we all decided to travel together again, and we all went to Europe. This year for Christmas is my parents' 60th anniversary, so we're planning to go away at Christmas as an 18-member family."



WHY START A BUSINESS?

By Jean-François Venne

by the need for independence. In addition, for many of those whose families are already in business, continuing the family tradition becomes a motivation in itself.

For the first time this year, Réseau M asked people if they hoped to start a business with their spouse. Nearly half, or 45.8 per cent, answered yes. The difference between men and women in this respect is striking. A considerable 54.8 per cent of women wanted to start a business with their spouse, compared to 38.4 per cent of men.

Marchand also notes that Canada entrepreneurs do not feel this way out of desperation or for want of a better job – but rather, because they detect a business opportunity. “For them, entrepreneurship is sort of the optimal career choice,” she says.

Dreams vs. reality

Nevertheless, it is still quite rare for someone to start their own business if they already have a job that gives them full financial and personal satisfaction. According to Nathalie Lord, →

More and more Canadians are starting their own business – or, at least, dream of doing so. Each has their own reasons for embarking on what is an exciting, but challenging, prospect. Are some of these reasons more likely than others to lead to success?

The Entrepreneurship Index published in Nov. 2017 by the Réseau M of the Fondation de l'entrepreneurship provides some useful insights into the motivations of local entrepreneurs. The first of these is that they don't go into business to earn a lot of money: this reason only ranks fourth. “This a good thing, too, because many would be disappointed,” says Rina

Marchand, senior director, content and innovation at Réseau M. “It is often a long time before a good income arises from a new company.”

Achieving dreams

If money doesn't motivate entrepreneurs, then what does? Firstly, it's about fulfilling and realizing a dream. Ranking second is 'being in control of one's life' followed

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a consultant in professional transition at Lord & Complice, there are two paths to entrepreneurship: the intentional and the accidental.

Most entrepreneurs are cooking up their project long before they start. They expect to have enough money, a more developed network, more advanced skills or a better-crafted project.

Some decide to take the plunge themselves. Others choose to go down that path because of other events such as a job loss, a change at work or even an illness or injury. Otherwise, they may never have started. "Waiting too long can be dangerous," warns Lord. "Sometimes the opportunity disappears, or we end up giving up."

She also believes that dreamers should be wary of an idyllic or idealistic vision of entrepreneurship. "If your motivation is to make more money or have control over your own schedule, be prepared for disappointment," she says. "It takes a long time to make a business profitable, and even longer to stabilize your schedule in such a demanding project." ●



Jean-François Venne

Independent journalist specializing in the field of business

In 2017, 21 per cent of active adults in Canada stated that they intended to start or take over a business one day.

At 40.9 per cent, 18-34-year-olds are the most likely to want to do it.

In 2017, 9.4 per cent of active adults in Canada took steps to start their own business. There is no significant difference between 18-34-year-olds (14.1 per cent) and 35-49-year-olds (14.2 per cent).

In 2017, 7.6 per cent of Canada's workforce were business owners.

Source: The Entrepreneurship Index 2017.



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A GUIDE TO GETTING MARRIED AT SEA

By Aurore Bonvalot

Photo by Royal Ocean Events

Tying the knot on a cruise ship at sea is a great way to have a unique wedding. Various cruise lines offer ceremonies, packages and a range of options; here, we take a look at everything you need to take into consideration to ensure that your clients have a wedding experience that they'll never forget.

Important choices

Ask your customers about their budget, the style of ceremony they want, and their planned itinerary. You can also feel free to offer them suggestions. Once the reservation is complete, you can then contact the cruise line's wedding department to begin planning.

You can also offer your customers a tour of some ships and meet the wedding coordinator on board, which is ideal for getting an overview of potential locations for the ceremony (if the wedding takes place on board) and to sample the ship's culinary fare. This service usually costs around \$300.

Onboard weddings: sea or port?

Most marriages take place at the port of embarkation, or one of the ports of call. The bride and groom may have to obtain a marriage license in advance, or present themselves on the same day at the nearest courthouse. They will sometimes be asked to be accompanied by one to four witnesses to undergo medical tests (as is the case



At sea, the captain is the officiant of the wedding ceremony; when it's an onboard wedding at port or in-destination, an official celebrant, such as a notary or judge, is responsible for the ceremony.

in Puerto Rico) or to arrive one to three days in advance, such as in New Orleans. Therefore, it's important to pay attention to the legislation of the country in question.

It's also worth noting that some cruise lines can organize weddings at sea. The ceremony can be held in a lounge, restaurant or library. If weather permits, it may be possible to rent a tent and get married on one of the decks.

Destination weddings

There are plenty of unique locations your client can get married – from the foot of a glacier to a beach, villa, or castle. Some companies have their own private island, where they can hold ceremonies.

You can also enlist the services of a local event organizer to create a wedding in a charming location. It will help you (and your customers) to put together an unforgettable ceremony.

The organizer benefits from having their own in-destination contacts, allowing them to negotiate better rates and to unearth more unique and original locations than those offered by the ships.

The ceremony

At sea, the captain is the officiant of the wedding ceremony; when it's an onboard wedding at port or in-destination, an official celebrant, such as a notary or judge, is responsible for the ceremony. Either way, the ceremony is legal and recognized by the government authorities of the country where the cruise company is registered.

For those who would prefer to avoid the administrative headache of getting married, a purely symbolic ceremony is also possible. Some companies also celebrate same-sex marriages, depending on different countries' laws; documents are required for the union to be legally recognized. →



Photo by Alain M. Martinez

Wedding packages

Wedding packages, which cost extra, generally include an onboard wedding coordinator, the ceremony and location rental, pre-recorded music, the wedding cake, bouquet and boutonniere, a bottle of sparkling wine, souvenir certificate, and photographer for an hour.

Surcharges apply for weddings taking place in May, June, September and October, as well as national holidays.

Companies will also often suggest a 'bachelor party' evening, a pre-wedding cocktail, a reception on the same evening, brunch the next day, spa treatments, a videographer, a gift delivery service in the guest room, and more.

AN ESTIMATE OF PACKAGE PRICES BY CRUISE SEGMENT:

- Contemporary: from \$1,200 onboard and \$2,150 in-destination
- Premium: from \$2,000 on board and \$3,000 in-destination
- Luxury and grand luxury: from \$3,000 onboard and \$4,500 in-destination

Small details that make a big difference

1. The gift registry

Some cruise lines offer this service online or through a mobile app; guests can then offer the bride and groom a spa gift voucher, specialty dinner or excursion.

2. The flowers

Each ship has local and exotic flowers for the wedding. On the other hand, it's forbidden to bring your own flowers on board or to take them off the ship – unless they're made of silk.

3. The cake and the sculptures

The bride and groom can choose the height of the cake, its flavour, and ornaments. It's also possible to order ice sculptures or those made from fruits and vegetables - or even butter.

4. Music and photos

The music is pre-recorded, but the newlyweds can opt – at additional charge – for live music with a DJ, a quartet or a singer.

The wedding guests

Most cruise lines accept wedding groups of up to 150 guests. Depending on the number of participants, additional fees are charged for the organization of the wedding.

The bride and groom may also invite guests who are not staying on the ship, both at the ceremony and at the reception, to receive special permission to come onboard – depending on the legislation of the country where the wedding will take place. There is a maximum number for non-cruise passengers.

It's a good idea to start planning for these types of weddings six to 12 months in advance. This will ensure you're able to provide the desired cabin category for your customers, guarantee their choice

of ceremony and venue, and help you plan everything in a stress-free manner.

It's also useful to create a wedding group by booking an allotment on a ship. You'll get freebies depending on the number of cabins paid for, and you can use your amenity points to spoil the newlyweds.

As you can see – organizing a cruise wedding requires preparation, rigour, and the right information to make sure that your guests have the experience of a lifetime. ●



Aurore Bonvalot

President of the Collectionneurs de Voyages agency, specializing in event organization.

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Agents SPEAK OUT

Three Canadian travel professionals have their say on the agent community's most pressing issues

By Fergal McAlinden

As any member of the Canadian travel industry will tell you, the travel agent profession is one that has undergone a profound and far-reaching transformation since its inception many years ago. The ever-changing needs of travellers, the constant discovery of new technological innovations, and the evolution of the industry as a whole mean that every day brings new realities, responsibilities and opportunities for agents to become accustomed to in their daily work. But in 2018, what precisely does the role of the travel agent entail? How has it changed across recent history? What are some of the ways it's likely to evolve in the future? In celebration of Travel Agent Month, we decided to sit down and speak directly with three travel agents from different generations to find out their views on

the current state of their profession – and some of the biggest issues it faces today.

A seismic change

With Victoria's tenure as an agent thus far being a relatively short one – just over a year – the profession hasn't had time to undergo a great deal of significant change since she started. Ethel and Deborah, however, can both remember a time when the landscape looked markedly different for travel agents, both in terms of the tools they used in their daily work and in the ways that travellers viewed the world. Both woke up in the early hours of Sept. 11, 2001 to find the travel agent profession transforming before their eyes as a day of infamy unfolded in Lower Manhattan. →

OUR THREE TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

Ethel Hansen Davey



Ethel Hansen Davey's career as a travel agent began in 1998 following a 25-year stint in the glass industry, taking up a role with Holiday House after a nine-month travel course with the Toronto School of Business. Currently working as an independent travel consultant with UNIGLOBE Enterprise Travel Ltd., Ethel's interest in the travel industry was piqued even in her previous profession. "I did a lot of research for people, because I was always interested in travel and geography," she says. "If somebody in the factory was looking at planning a trip to Hawaii or whatever, they would say, 'what do you know about that?' 'Well, nothing yet, but I'll tell you.'"

Deborah Peniuk



Deborah Peniuk had worked in several different government departments and was plying her trade in income tax when her travel agent told her about a job opportunity – the role that proved to be her entry point to the travel industry. After supplementing her experience with a degree in hotel operations, Deborah managed a home-based network and currently acts as an independent advisor and owner of the AYA LIFE, An affiliate of UNIGLOBE Enterprise Travel Ltd. "I've been independent because I chose to create a business for myself under the new model, seeing how far things have come as an independent travel agent," she says, "and with the background that I had, coming from the agencies that I worked for."

Victoria Lindley



Victoria Lindley is a fresh face in the travel industry, having started out as an agent last year with Golliger's Travel Plus – now Vision Travel – in Waterloo. Her mother's friend Theresa, a travel agent herself, proved an invaluable influence in guiding Victoria's career trajectory, with completion of the Travel & Tourism program at Mohawk College paving the way to her current role. "I just saw how happy she was in her day-to-day life, making people happy," Victoria explains. "For the most part, you're making people's emotional purchases come true. So I kind of took her perspective on – 'Why not work in a happy environment?'"

DEBORAH: [I got] a phone call at 5:30 in the morning telling me that I needed to turn on my TV and my computer – trying to just even contemplate ‘what is the first line of action for us to take?’ and knowing that we were on the first line of contact for people who were in panic mode; who were [saying] ‘I’m never going anywhere ever again’ and wondering what that was going to mean for the long term.

ETHEL: Immediately, a bunch of airlines went bankrupt, right away. Commissions immediately got cut from 15 to eight per cent. So that was a huge impact on travel agencies and travel agents. Now, in those days, there were very few travel agents that worked on commission – but it certainly had an impact on the travel agency, which then suddenly got cut seven per cent on their income. It had a huge impact around everything that we do.

DEBORAH: It doesn’t matter where you lived. We all changed that day, because people grew more fearful, grew more suspect – of us as well! ‘Why is there an extra fee?’ ‘Why are they just changing that for nothing for me because this happened?’ Managing expectations was a huge learning curve for people who’d never had to do it, for people who’d had very easy bookings... now they had to deal with stress and drama that was on a whole different level. And that changed everybody.

DEBORAH: Every time we have new iterations of what security protocols we have to follow, it still falls to, ‘on 9/11...’ Smoking on planes is nothing

compared to the protocols we’ve had to change [since] 9/11. I think it’s also the touchpoints. When you are planning a trip for someone, they will go, ‘What’s the status? Are we on a yellow or are we on an amber or are we on a red... what’s the security level going to this country?’

VICTORIA: You have to just reassure your clients that you can’t live in fear. If everyone knew all the crime and all the corruption that happens... nobody would ever travel.

Why agents remain relevant

The industry was struck by another crisis last year – Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which ravaged the Caribbean in the fall of 2017. It was a steep learning curve for Victoria, still a newcomer to the role at that stage – but one which served to reaffirm the continuing value of travel professionals in a changing industry. Indeed, the vitality of their profession is clear for all three of the agents in our discussion.

VICTORIA: There were clients that were stuck in-destination, and what do you do if you’re stuck in-destination and you don’t have an agent? I’m an agent and I’ve grown up with the Internet my entire life; I wouldn’t even know what to do without it. But you look at things that people are saying: ‘maybe the Internet is taking over our industry.’ One of the most challenging parts of our job is when somebody comes to you for your service, but then questions why they came to you. The reason you need us: look at what happened with those hurricanes. You’re stuck in-destination. You’re set Saturday to Saturday. It’s coming – you need to get out of there.



You don’t know what to do. How am I going to get myself on a plane and take a transfer to the airport and get out of there now?

ETHEL: Even the newspapers and the newscasts are saying that you should be using a travel agent. I think that there have been so many horror stories printed in the last couple of years of people who have done their own stuff, wound up booking the wrong date, can’t get help and so on. I think people are realizing more and more that a travel agent is necessary – whether it’s a home-based one or not. I think people are getting over the idea that it’s really easy and cheap to book online; it’s not.

DEBORAH: It’s not always weather or terror; there are other repercussions



that you have to account for. There's so many other things that [the customers] are not in control of. If there's an outbreak of something, again – what's the passenger going to do? That's where we have our value, is those moments.

Tackling misconceptions

That's not to say, of course, that there aren't challenges in both the present and future for travel agents. Chief among these, the group suggests, is combatting misperceptions that exist among the public about the role of agents and how they operate.

VICTORIA: Learning from friends recently, they have a very skewed perception on commission. They have a perception that the price that you're giving them has commission tacked on top of it,

so they're not really getting a deal. They think that if they book direct, they don't have to pay that commission cut – really, you're paying it either way. It's going to go to the supplier or it's going to go to a company, or into someone's pocket.

ETHEL: The general public thinks that... if we're selling a big-ticket package, that we're making all kinds of money on it. That we can actually give them big discounts. Well, no – of course we can't. The prices are set by the tour operators; we can't play with those, unless it comes out of our pocket. There's a lot of misconceptions from the general public on just what we have the authority to do.

DEBORAH: I think if you're clear about a service fee or a transaction fee that's included that's above and beyond that

public price, then that dissuades that confusion. But I've had people say the same thing to me over the years: 'am I really getting a deal?'

Home-based vs. office space: where does the future lie?

The surging prominence of the home-based professional is one of the most striking aspects of travel agents' evolution over the past several decades, with a rising number of agents choosing to operate under their own roof, rather than through a brick-and-mortar agency. A spirited discussion ensued between our three agents: Ethel is an independent but office-based agent, while Deborah usually chooses to operate outside the office and Victoria works at a storefront agency in Waterloo.

DEBORAH: I've been an independent agent working outside of an office for so long now. The people who work from home are just as legit as someone in an office space. I don't think we talk about that enough – we talk about promoting going out and working at home, but not the validity of the people that do actually, and are the core of the people that work from home.

VICTORIA: For me, starting out – especially being a junior agent – I feel like it's nice to be in an office, because I have all those people that I can pick their brains, have been in the industry for 20, 30 years – it's nice to have that, especially starting out in this business. Watching what Vision started to do: we log into this page VisionCheck every day. There's a board where you can ask any questions – every agent sees it. →

**“YOU’RE MAKING
PEOPLE’S EMOTIONAL
PURCHASES COME TRUE.
WHY NOT WORK IN A
HAPPY ENVIRONMENT?”**

— Victoria Lindley

Outside agents love it, because then they can ask questions and they don't feel the need to come in if they don't want to.

ETHEL: We have the office space because we're a huge corporate agency. [We] didn't have any leisure there until I moved in there, it was all corporate. But I need the interaction. I have the choice. I work fully as an independent, but I like to go to the office. I would never get out of my pajamas if I worked at home.

DEBORAH: Because I've worked on the outside and I've managed people working from home, I've seen such a transition of these co-work spaces that I think that could be a new model of what works better, because then we have a shared space where we can go in when we need. I can go into the office if I really need to, but there's no benefit to me because I can't log onto the system, I can't do anything, really, except have a desk to have a meeting. I use coffee shops, I use restaurants, the library has great meeting rooms – those are my offices.

Harnessing social media

Travel agents have become so attuned to the relevance of social media in building awareness of their brand and expanding their business. But which platforms are agents using more than others?

VICTORIA: FOMO (fear of missing out) is a real thing. Pictures can speak a thousand words – not make people jealous, but make people want to seek out adventure. I think the more that you post on social

media, especially in our seats, especially being me and trying to build a clientele – the better. Being a millennial, I know that we're all noses into our phones... I think we're moving away from Facebook. Nothing against Facebook, but I never post on [there] – it's not my thing. I would rather post a picture with a couple of little words and a caption, and be over it.

ETHEL: I probably get 70 per cent of my inquiries through my Facebook page. It's been absolutely incredible. The reason that my Facebook and my business card has my maiden name on it as well – a lot of people have found me that knew me back in the '50s, '60s, '70s.

DEBORAH: That's, I think, where we also get a bit back-slammed sometimes. When we're on these trips for training, and we're posting these amazing pictures – 'Oh, they're always on vacation.' They don't know the backstory. I have a personal Instagram account, I have an Instagram account for my company... so now, [I'm] learning how to manage those two in a way that I'm talking about a potential group that I'm bringing – I'm not going to take 15 photos of boring meetings that I spend two days doing and post them.

Bringing in young blood

Another phenomenon that's frequently cited as a problem for the travel agent

community is the difficulty it's had in attracting and retaining young recruits to the profession in recent years. It's an issue, the group says, that's borne out of further misconceptions about what's required to succeed in the role – preconceived notions that either dissuade young prospects from becoming an agent, or contribute to low retention rates when disproven.

ETHEL: A lot of people get into it thinking that there's going to be a lot of freebies, and that they're going to make their fortune. Well, neither of those is true.

DEBORAH: I think there's also a misunderstanding: while you can have those great rewards and those opportunities, you still gotta work. You have to have your knowledge base. Back in the day, there were a lot of things that we had access to that perpetuated that perception, I think, of 'get into the travel industry and everything's for free.' That's not what it is: you've still got to do the work.

VICTORIA: From what I'd heard, [the biggest surprise was that] it's not a toxic environment. It's not like everyone's fighting to get that one sale. Obviously, we have quotas we have to meet; that's just like any job has expectations. But I feel it's a good environment. Where I work, our number one motto is 'the customer is first.' You take care of their needs. If you have to sit there and talk to them for an hour you do that. That's the name of the game. It's all about our clientele. I think that's a good environment to be in. ●

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THE NEW SAFARI

TAKE A RIDE

By Christine Hogg

Forget everything you think you know about safari — a camouflage Jeep crawling through the African savanna with binocular-toting tourists in tow is old news!

The safari scene has changed dramatically in recent years, and countries throughout Africa, from Botswana to Kenya, are coming up with innovative ways to showcase the famous Big 5.



Camel Safari

Though Morocco has made camel safaris famous, the concept is taking off in other parts of Africa like Lewa, located in Northern Kenya. The land in the northern part of the country is very hot, and very dry, a climate that camels thrive in. The Lewa wilderness is home to giraffes, zebra, impala, waterbuck, baboons, and ostriches, and unlike the presence of a safari vehicle, the wildlife are not afraid of the riders on camelback.



Bike Safari

Biking in Milwane Nature Reserve

Riding a bike through the Tanzanian landscape, where lions, cheetahs, and leopards roam might sound crazy - and it kind of is, but it's incredibly rewarding, too. You're not in any kind of enclosure whatsoever, and your experience is purely what you make of it. Cycling safaris come standard with an armed guard, because of the risk, though it's more for safety than for real danger.

ON THE WILD SIDE



Photo - Flickr, Alex Berger

Balloon Safari

Hot air balloon safaris are becoming increasingly popular given that they don't just give you a glimpse into African wildlife - from hundreds of feet in the air, you can see entire herds waking up at the crack of dawn and moving across the landscape. The Serengeti National Park is famous for its balloon safaris, where few roads and zero power lines get in the way of seeing hundreds of thousands of species like wildebeest, zebra, elephants, cheetahs, and impala waking up and making their way across the park.

Horseback Safari

Much like a camel safari, experiencing safari by horseback means you're on the ground in the midst of other wild animals, with views unobstructed by the vehicle, or other travellers. Those who have ridden a horse before tend to choose this option over the camels, as an enjoyable horseback ride usually requires an experienced rider. On the back of a horse, the animals of Africa see you as one of their own, so you can get right up close to animals as they graze or relax during the day. ●

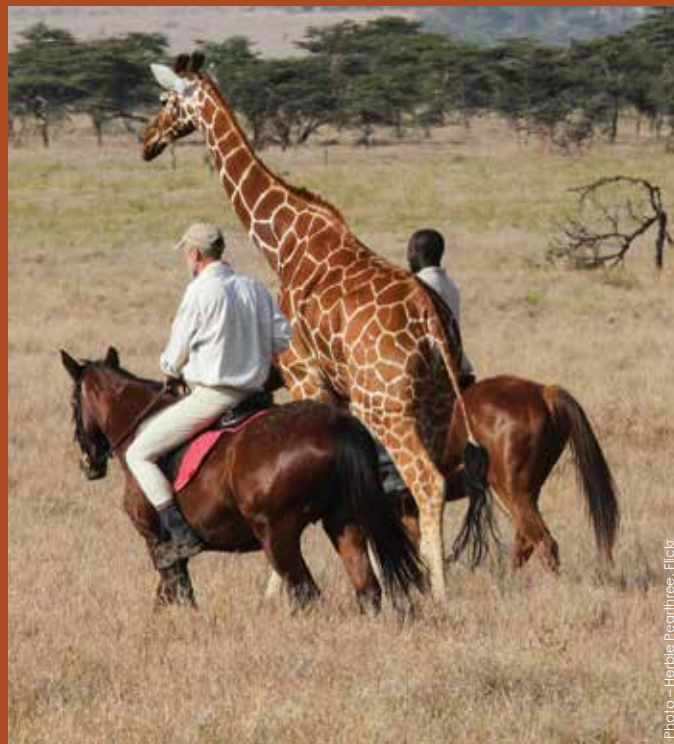


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Family cruises GUIDE 2018

Cruising...
a vacation
the whole family
can enjoy

By Ming Tappin

Cruising is an ideal vacation for families as it is a safe, self-contained environment that caters to the needs of multiple age groups and interests. Families can bond by sharing pool time, participate in games, sports, and excursions together. Or, they can pursue their own activities during the day, and regroup at meal times. Multi-generational families are one of the largest-growing cruise demographics. According to CLIA's Cruise Travel Report published in January 2018, 32 per cent of cruisers travel with children under 18.

Courtesy of Royal Caribbean International

Family cruises GUIDE 2018

With the exception of luxury, niche and river cruises, all cruise lines cater to families, with connecting and/or family staterooms, a myriad of onboard amenities, and organized children's programs staffed by professionally trained youth counsellors. These complimentary programs provide age-appropriate games and activities with their own dedicated space, some with exclusive pool and deck areas. Parents can rest assured that their children are safe and are a quick pager call away. As third and fourth guests sharing a cabin with parents, kids also pay a reduced rate, and sometimes can even cruise free as part of a promotion.

Below is a look at the brands that excel in family cruising.

Carnival Cruise Line

- ✓ Most staterooms accommodate four, and select rooms accommodate five.
- ✓ Family Harbor staterooms* are located near the kids' area, with an exclusive lounge and concierge service.
- ✓ Shipboard amenities include WaterWorks slides and pools, mini golf, deck sports, ropes course, pedal-powered Skyride* and IMAX theatre*.
- ✓ Camp Carnival program age groups: 2-5, 6-8 and 9-11, 12-14, and 15-17.
- ✓ Seuss at Sea provides interactive story time, parade and character breakfast for the entire family.

*On Vista class ships only.

Disney Cruise Line

- ✓ Disney offers staterooms and suites that sleep up to seven, with the industry's first split bath concept.
- ✓ Daily Disney character appearances provide full interaction with the entire family.
- ✓ Disney also features the largest dedicated space for its Youth Club - nearly half a deck on each ship.
- ✓ Entertainment includes character dance parties, Disney movies and Broadway-style shows.
- ✓ Youth Club age groups: six months to three years (nursery), 3-12, 11-14, 14-17.
- ✓ Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique offers princess and pirate makeovers for kids 3-12.
- ✓ Disney is the only contemporary cruise line that includes unlimited self-serve soft drinks in the cruise fare.
- ✓ Family pool areas, movies, waterslides, deck parties with fireworks, special Star Wars and Marvel themed days on select cruises.

Princess Cruises

- ✓ Select ships with family suites that accommodate up to eight guests.
- ✓ Camp Discovery age groups: 3-7, 8-12, 13-17, 18-20.
- ✓ Discovery at Sea learning includes stargazing, activities based on Animal Planet & Shark Week, and destination-themed games.
- ✓ Discovery Family Tours offer specially designed shore excursions for families.

Courtesy of Royal Caribbean International

Family cruises GUIDE 2018

Norwegian Cruise Line

- ✓ A variety of family staterooms, suites, and villas that sleep up to eight.
- ✓ Youth program age groups: six months to three years (nursery), 3-5, 6-9, 10-12, 13-17.
- ✓ Casual dress code and open sitting dining allow flexibility according to the family's needs.
- ✓ Amenity-filled ships include Aqua Parks with pools, waterslides, ropes course, mini-golf, bowling, rock climbing walls, Cirque-style acrobatic shows*, laser tag*, go-kart track*.

*On Breakaway, Breakaway Plus & Epic class ships only.

MSC Cruises

- ✓ Kids under 11 always sail free when sharing a room with adults. Starting in summer 2018, kids 12-17 cruise free during low and mid-season.
- ✓ Family-friendly activities include 4D cinema, mini-bowling, Formula 1 racing car simulator, Aqua Park, family pools.
- ✓ Five cruise fare structures with different inclusiveness levels can fit all budgets.
- ✓ Kids club age group: three and under (nursery), 3-6, 7-11, 12-14, 15-17.
- ✓ Partnership with LEGO offers play area and building activities.

Royal Caribbean

- ✓ The largest family suites onboard accommodate up to fourteen.
- ✓ Oasis and Quantum class ships offer extensive water parks, surf & skydiving simulator, laser tag, ice & roller skating, bumper cars, zip line and rock climbing wall.
- ✓ Dreamworks characters from Shrek, Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda and How to Train your Dragon appear throughout the cruise and in parades*.
- ✓ Adventure Ocean age groups: six to 36 months (nursery), 3-5, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-17.
- ✓ My Time Family dining: kids ages 3-11 will be served their dinner within 40 minutes and then whisked off to their program, while parents can linger over their meal.
- ✓ Royal Caribbean is a certified autism-friendly cruise line, and select sailings feature Autism on the Seas with specially trained staff and programming for children and teens with autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities.

*On Oasis & Quantum class, and select ships on Voyager & Freedom class.



Courtesy of Royal Caribbean International

A GUIDE TO FAMILY CRUISING

family suites with separate bedrooms, baths, and sitting areas. There is a multitude of onboard amenities that can be enjoyed by the entire family, ranging from production shows, movies, swimming pools, deck sports, to elaborate waterparks and thrilling waterslides.

Children also have dedicated space on ships, where youth programs are offered to kids ages three to 12. Divided into two or three age groups, →

Cruising has come a long way from being an exclusive holiday for retirees, and the rich and famous. Today, it is available to all ages, and due to the vast number of ships in the market, pricing has actually come down, compared to 20 years ago. Cruising offers unbeatable value, with accommodations, meals, daily activities and nightly entertainment included in the fare. Pricing promotions such as free or reduced rates for children makes it even more affordable for families.

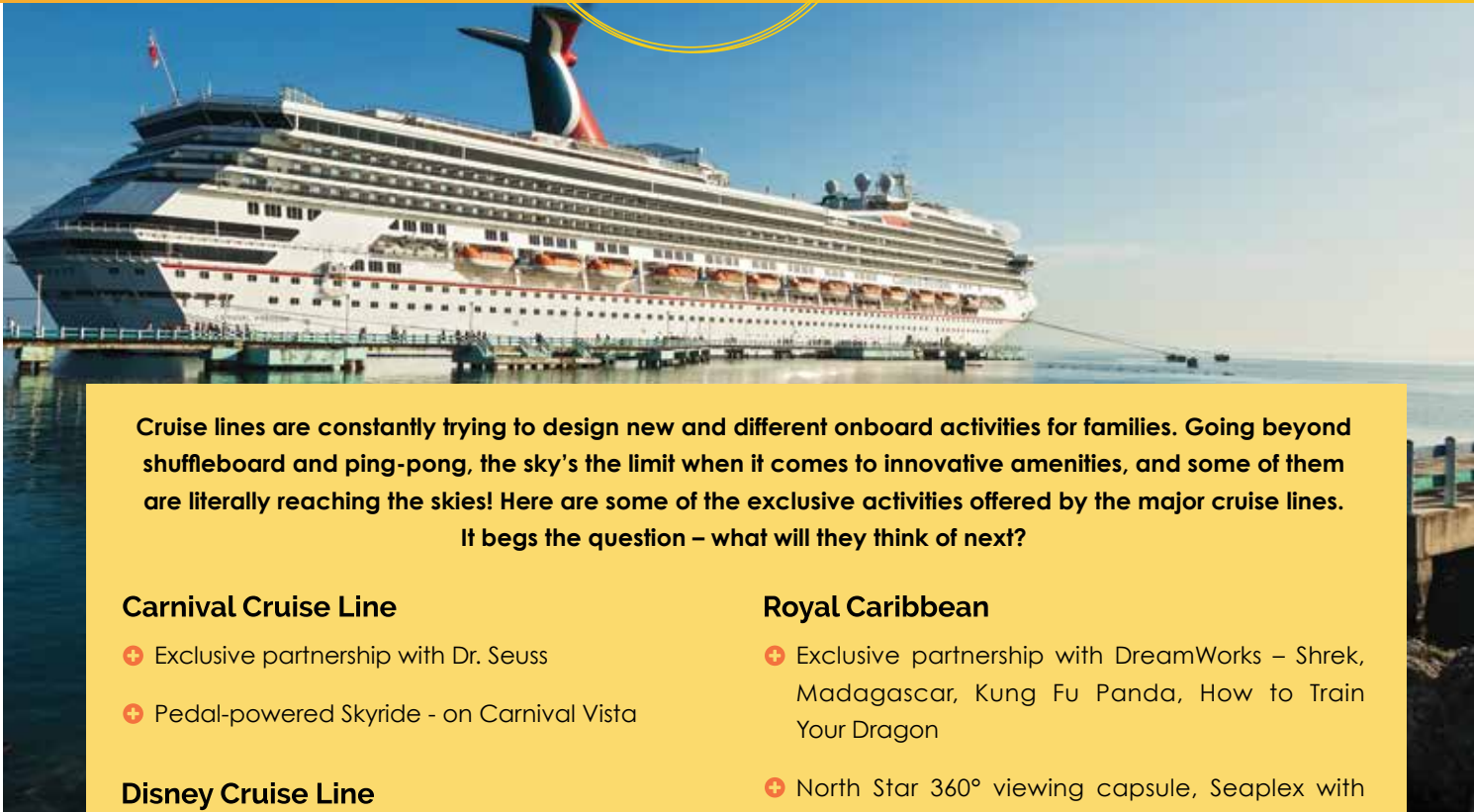
The convenience of unpacking once, and the consistency of food and service quality while exploring multiple destinations are the key reasons why families are choosing this form of vacation over land-based resorts. Here is a look at how cruise lines are catering to families.

Today's cruise ships offer a variety of accommodation options - from connecting staterooms, triple and quad berths, to specially designed



Photo by Diana Zalucky, photographer - Disney Cruise Line

Family cruises GUIDE 2018



Cruise lines are constantly trying to design new and different onboard activities for families. Going beyond shuffleboard and ping-pong, the sky's the limit when it comes to innovative amenities, and some of them are literally reaching the skies! Here are some of the exclusive activities offered by the major cruise lines. It begs the question – what will they think of next?

Carnival Cruise Line

- + Exclusive partnership with Dr. Seuss
- + Pedal-powered Skyride - on Carnival Vista

Disney Cruise Line

- + Disney characters onboard all sailings
- + Star Wars and Marvel Days at Sea on select sailings
- + Fireworks & pirates deck party on Caribbean sailings

MSC Cruises

- + Exclusive partnerships with LEGO and Chicco
- + Bowling - on MSC Magnifica, Meraviglia, Seaside & Splendida
- + F1 Simulator - on MSC Divina, Fantasia, Meraviglia, Preziosa, Seaside & Splendida
- + The longest zipline at sea - on MSC Seaside

Norwegian Cruise Line

- + Race Track & Laser Tag - on Norwegian Joy
- + Bowling - on Norwegian Epic, Escape, Gem, Joy & Pearl

Royal Caribbean

- + Exclusive partnership with DreamWorks – Shrek, Madagascar, Kung Fu Panda, How to Train Your Dragon
- + North Star 360° viewing capsule, Seaplex with bumper cars, roller skating, circus school, RipCord by iFly Skydiving simulator - on Anthem, Quantum & Ovation of the Seas
- + Carousel, Aqua Theatre, Zipline - on Oasis, Allure, Harmony & Symphony of the Seas
- + Escape Room –on Harmony & Independence of the Seas
- + Rollerblade track - on Adventure, Mariner & Voyager of the Seas
- + Surf Simulator –on Adventure, Allure, Anthem, Explorer, Freedom, Harmony, Independence, Liberty, Navigator, Oasis, Ovation, Quantum, Symphony & Voyager of the Seas
- + Ice skating - on Adventure, Allure, Explorer, Freedom, Harmony, Independence, Liberty, Mariner, Navigator, Oasis, Symphony & Voyager of the Seas
- + Laser tag - on Harmony, Independence, Mariner, Symphony & Voyager of the Seas

Family cruises GUIDE 2018



Courtesy of Carnival Cruise Lines



Courtesy of Princess Cruises



Courtesy of Princess Cruises

children can enjoy age-appropriate games and activities held in separate sections of the kids' clubs. Arts and crafts, story-telling, building blocks, and playtime are typical activities for the younger set, while older children enjoy computer games, scavenger hunts, group games and activities. Teens have their own lounge with video game consoles, TV screens, disco, and group activities such as dance parties, karaoke, and sports competitions. Some cruise lines offer services for infants, either as paid babysitting, or play time with parents in attendance. The counsellors operating the youth programs hold teaching, psychology

and early childhood education degrees or diplomas, and have extensive experience working with children.

A few logistics to keep in mind: the minimum age for children to cruise is six months, or 12 months on longer sailings. Children who are not travelling with their parents will need a notarized consent letter for traveling with the accompanying guardian. Participation in programs and the use of the facilities within the youth clubs are complimentary, with the exception of babysitting and video arcades. Children need to be fully toilet-trained in order to participate in youth programs and use the pools.

While all cruise lines welcome families, not all of them provide facilities or programming for children. The grid on the following pages showcases the programs and facilities offered by the most family-friendly cruise lines marketed for North American guests, with ships currently in service at press time. ●



Ming Tappin

Ming Tappin is a cruise writer and consultant, based in Vancouver, BC.

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FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Family cruises GUIDE 2018

	Dedicated Family Accommodations	Infant Program (6 mths to 3 yrs)	Kids Program (3 to 12 years)	Teen Program (13 to 17 years)	Teen Spa (13 to 17 years)	Arcade Games	3D/4D Cinema	Outdoor Movie Screen
Carnival Cruise Line								
Carnival Breeze			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carnival Conquest			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Dream			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Ecstasy			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Elation			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Fantasy			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Fascination			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Freedom			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Glory			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Imagination			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Inspiration			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Legend			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Liberty			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Magic			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Miracle			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Paradise			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Pride			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Sensation			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Carnival Splendor			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Sunshine			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Triumph			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Valor			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Victory			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Carnival Vista	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Celebrity Cruises								
Celebrity Constellation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Celebrity Eclipse	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebrity Equinox	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebrity Infinity	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Celebrity Millennium	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Celebrity Reflection	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebrity Silhouette	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebrity Solstice	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebrity Summit	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Disney Cruise Line								
Disney Magic	✓	Paid Babysitting	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Disney Wonder	✓	Paid Babysitting	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Disney Dream	✓	Paid Babysitting	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Disney Fantasy	✓	Paid Babysitting	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Holland America Line								
Amsterdam			✓	✓		✓		
Eurodam			✓	✓		✓		
Koningsdam	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Maasdam			✓	✓		✓		

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Parades	Characters	Water Park	Slides/Waterslides	Kids' Pool	Climbing Wall	Ropes/Obstacle	Jogging Track	Sports Court	Golf/Putting	Table tennis	Shuffleboard
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Family cruises GUIDE 2018

	Dedicated Family Accommodations	Infant Program (6 mths to 3 yrs)	Kids Program (3 to 12 years)	Teen Program (13 to 17 years)	Teen Spa (13 to 17 years)	Arcade Games	3D/4D Cinema	Outdoor Movie Screen
Nieuw Amsterdam			✓	✓		✓		
Noordam			✓	✓		✓		
Oosterdam			✓	✓		✓		
Prinsendam								
Rotterdam			✓	✓		✓		✓
Veendam			✓	✓		✓		
Volendam			✓	✓		✓		
Westerdam			✓	✓		✓		
Zaandam			✓	✓		✓		
Zuiderdam			✓	✓		✓		
MSC Cruises								
MSC Armonia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Divina	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MSC Fantasia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MSC Lirica		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Magnifica	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MSC Meraviglia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Musica		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Opera	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Orchestra		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
MSC Poesia		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
MSC Preziosa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MSC Seaside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MSC Sinfonia		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
MSC Splendida	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Norwegian Cruise Line								
Norwegian Breakaway	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Norwegian Dawn	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Epic	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Norwegian Escape	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Norwegian Gem	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Getaway	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Norwegian Jade	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Jewel	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Joy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Norwegian Pearl	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Sky	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Spirit	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Star	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Norwegian Sun	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Pride of America	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Princess Cruises								
Caribbean Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Coral Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Crown Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓

Family cruises GUIDE 2018

	Dedicated Family Accommodations	Infant Program (6 mths to 3 yrs)	Kids Program (3 to 12 years)	Teen Program (13 to 17 years)	Teen Spa (13 to 17 years)	Arcade Games	3D/4D Cinema	Outdoor Movie Screen
Diamond Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Emerald Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Golden Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Grand Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Island Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Majestic Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Pacific Princess			Minimum 20 children required	Minimum 20 children required				
Regal Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Royal Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Ruby Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Sapphire Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Sea Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Star Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Sun Princess			✓	✓		✓		✓
Royal Caribbean								
Adventure of the Seas	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Allure of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Anthem of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Brilliance of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Empress of the Seas			✓	✓		✓		✓
Enchantment of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Explorer of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Freedom of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Grandeur of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Harmony of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Independence of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Jewel of the Seas	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Liberty of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Majesty of the Seas	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Mariner of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Navigator of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Oasis of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ovation of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Quantum of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Radiance of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Rhapsody of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Serenade of the Seas	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓
Symphony of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Vision of the Seas	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Voyager of the Seas	✓		✗	✗		✗		✗

SHOULD YOU BE ON **INSTAGRAM?**

By **Frédéric Gonzalo**

We talk a lot about Facebook because of its universal popularity, but sometimes we tend to forget its little brother, Instagram. The mobile app, which had 25 million members when it was purchased in 2012 by Facebook, now claims over 800 million monthly users, making it one of the most important platforms to integrate into your digital marketing strategies.

Did you know?

- More than 48 per cent of Instagram users use the platform to discover and choose new travel destinations.
- Instagram has more than 500 million active users a day.
- More than 350 million people use Stories, the content that disappears after 24 hours (similar to Snapchat).
- An estimated 95 million photos and videos are published daily.
- 200 million Instagrammers visit a business page on a daily basis.
- 80 per cent of users follow at least one company on Instagram.
- At least 30 per cent of users bought a product that they discovered for the first time on Instagram.

- The very first photo shared on Instagram was by its founder, while travelling in Mexico.

In short, it's hard to ignore Instagram, especially in the travel industry. This storytelling platform allows travellers to discover and find inspiration for their next destination. If you still haven't made the jump to Instagram, here are four things to know before you start!

1. Using dreams to generate sales

On Instagram, it's important to focus on quality content and storytelling. Since this is a visual content platform, the user

expects to discover inspiring images that will make them dream through a photo or video – up to 60 seconds, if you choose the latter.

Promote your agency or services through images that will transport users into a world they don't have access to, give them the opportunity to visit remote locations and popular destinations, and have them live unique experiences through their mobile phone. We do not sell the trip as a product, but a life experience – after all, Instagram is all about sharing life's memorable moments.

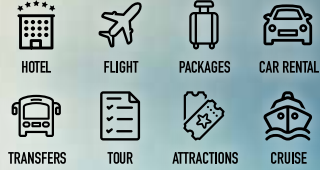
We see more and more travel agencies and destination wedding specialists using this platform, because it allows the bride and groom to project themselves into a dream setting, or to envision themselves living a similar experience. →





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A strong presence on Instagram is certainly desirable, considering that it contributes to the reputation of your agency, your services and your know-how – all elements that ultimately help to make the phone ring and generate sales.

2. Storytelling ≠ Promotion

Unlike other social media platforms, Instagram is not the place to drive traffic to your website. Why? Simply because there is no clickable link – or very few. It can only be inserted into the profile description, the bio, leading to an external link. Otherwise, we can also insert links in the stories and some sponsored photos, but these links will lead to other Instagram accounts.

I mentioned before that a strong Instagram presence can contribute to sales, but let's be clear: it's not the best place to include promotional rates, or as a direct call to action. This is where the difference lies between storytelling and promotion! Users want entertainment, dreams and emotions, but not necessarily your latest offer on a last-minute departure to Florida.

Now for a sobering statistic: SproutSocial estimates that 70 per cent of Instagram posts are either never seen, or little-seen. Just like Facebook, Instagram's algorithm filters through the multitude of content and chooses posts that encourage interaction, to the detriment of others.

3. Reach a different target

It must be understood that on Instagram, you won't necessarily reach the same people that you do on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and other platforms. We don't consume the content in

the same way either, being generally more passive and contemplative on Instagram – especially compared with an active search on Google, for example.

Although we reach a different target audience with Instagram, we have every interest in combining our efforts with our presence on Facebook (since the two tools are linked by the Facebook platform) especially when it comes time to implement advertising campaigns. Be sure to link your accounts to build on potential synergies in your publications and advertising efforts.

4. The importance of the hashtag

If the hashtag has been popularized by Twitter, it has become ever-present on Instagram. It's estimated that nearly 70 per cent of the hashtags used on the platform are linked to a brand.

We want to make sure not only to publish content that makes viewers dream, but also to add a hashtag campaign – ideally that you include on all your digital content: newsletter, website, Facebook, Twitter, and more.

As I told you in *PAX magazine* last month, we can see the impact that posts published by certain influencers can have. In this case, notice that the photo generated more than 890 likes and many comments at the time of the consultation on Instagram – prompting several people to see the photographer's skill across the platform!

In short, Instagram can be a great tool in your digital marketing mix, as long as you know what role it should play, and how you will evaluate the success of your process. ●



Frédéric Gonzalo

Conference speaker & consultant
specializing in e-tourism

A BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC RUNDOWN OF INSTAGRAM USERS:



68%

are women



80%

come from outside
the United States



59%

of users are between
18 and 29 years old



32%

of all Internet
users have an
Instagram presence

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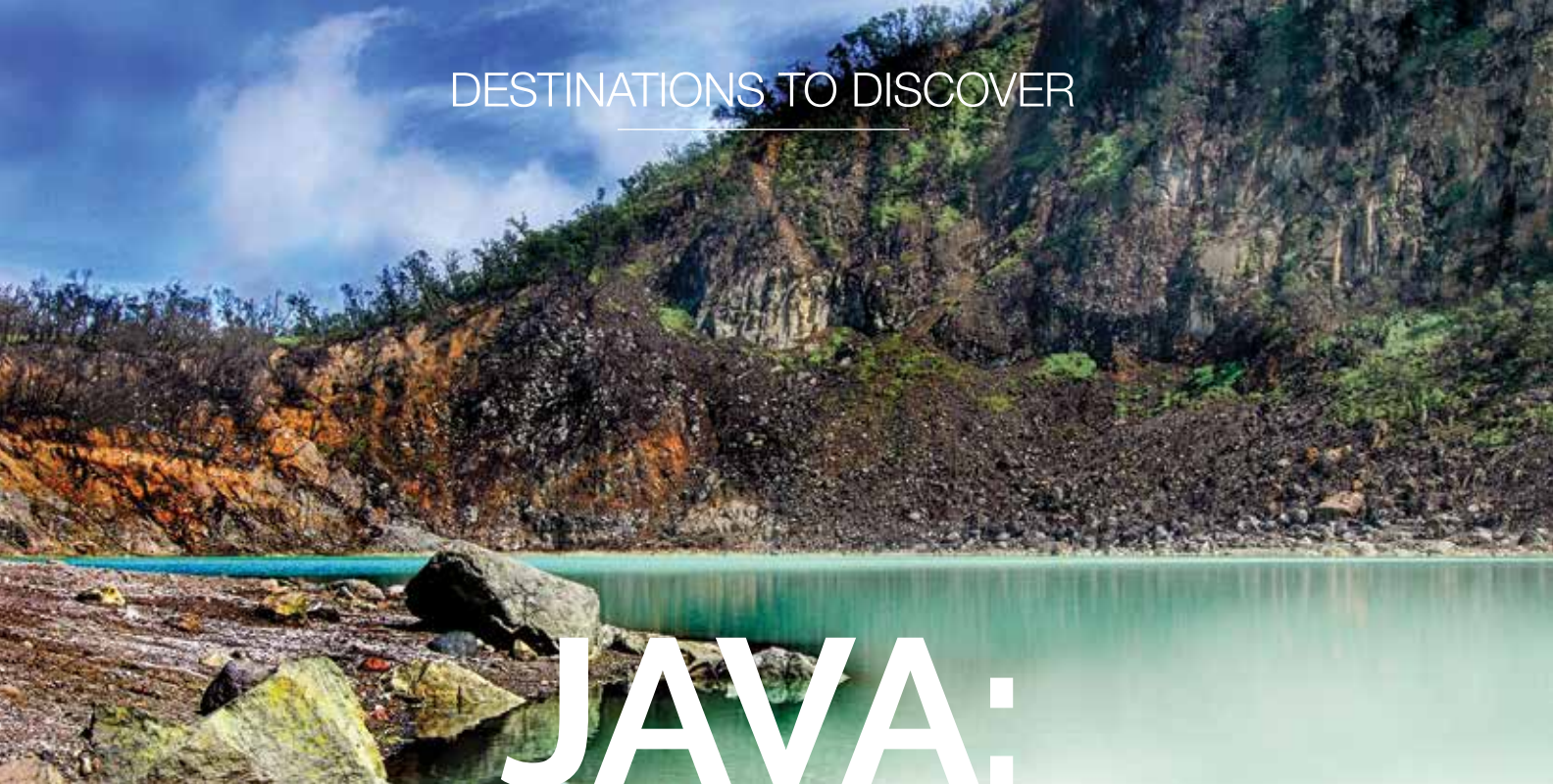


Java

Patagonia

United Kingdom

Destinations to Discover



JAVA: THE SPIRIT OF INDONESIA

By Christine Hogg

The island of Java rests between Sumatra and Bali, Indonesia. More than half of Indonesia's population lives here, making it the most-populated island in the world. And, although Indonesia is a major producer of coffee, the city of Java is famous for a lot more than your favourite morning beverage.

Whereas travellers flock to Bali for its relaxing beaches, and Sumatra for the wildlife found in its rainforests, people come to Java for its rich history, which borrows elements from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and European colonialism.

Much like Canada, Java is divided into four provinces: Central Java, East Java, West Java, Banten, and then two additional regions, Yogyakarta and Jakarta, the capital city. Java's geography is quite striking, and most of its land is volcanic, with 38 mountains that make a stunning backdrop for landscape photography enthusiasts.

Yogyakarta is said to be the place where you can feel the soul of the island of Java. Whereas Jakarta is a modern city, Yogyakarta still provides a glimpse into Java's past, with archaeological remnants dating back all the way to the 8th Century. The Mataram Sultanate, the last independent empire in Indonesia before the Dutch came to the island, lasted from 1575 to 1620, and traces of the kingdom can still be seen in the region of Kotagede. A visit to the Borobudur Temple in Central Java will cure even the worst cases of wanderlust.

Built in the 9th Century, Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple in the world, making it a major →



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Borobudur

attraction for travellers all over the world seeking inspiration or peace, and it remains a popular spot for those on pilgrimages. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Borobudur features nine stacked platforms and 72 Buddha statues. To date, this temple is Indonesia's most-visited cultural attraction.

Over in East Java, adventure travellers will get a taste for Indonesia's landscapes after traversing the slopes of Mount Bromo, an active volcano located in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park. Many of the breathtaking photos of Mount Bromo online come from a special look-out spot on Mount Penanjakan, which takes roughly two hours to reach the top. The volcano has erupted as recently as 2015, and due to its abundance of activity, sometimes it's not always possible to hike the slopes.

In West Java, there are a plethora of cascading waterfalls, natural hot springs, national parks, mountains and even more volcanoes, making this area in particular a nature-lover's dream. Kawah Putih, gives the best of both worlds. This natural lake sits in a volcanic crater, and its waters give Iceland's famous Blue Lagoon a run for its money. As beautiful as the waters are though, they're not for swimming in - Kawah Putih gets its alluring

hues due to a high degree of acidity and sulphur in the waters, and on some days, the waters change from browns to greens, and even whites. This scenic spot is perfect for taking photos, as well as seeing some of Indonesia's local wildlife who come to visit, including monkeys, deer, pigs, and even panthers and leopards, who sometimes slink out of the surrounding forests.

Of course, any trip to Java isn't complete without immersing yourself in the heart of Jakarta. Indonesia's largest city is a sprawling network of bustling markets, sidewalk shops, traffic jams, and endless adventures. Jakarta is located in the Western region of Java, and it's where travellers can enjoy everything from museums, to shopping centres, parks and gardens, and of course, a day at the beach. ●



Mount Bromo

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BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: PATAGONIA, CHILE

By Christine Hogg

There's a shared stretch of the Andes mountains that falls between Argentina and Chile, at the southernmost tip of South America.

Patagonia, which shares two coastlines on the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, is filled with mountains, lakes, deserts, grasslands, and wildlife that make it an attractive destination for hikers, back-packers, and outdoor enthusiasts who are up for a challenge in a remote part of the continent.

The unique positioning of Patagonia between two countries bordering different oceans gives it an extremely idyllic geographical advantage—on the Chilean side, travellers can enjoy the glacial fjords seen in advertisements around the world, and on the Argentine side, there's an abundance of grassland and desert. In turn, the ecosystems and wildlife found in Patagonia varies with which direction your travels take you in.

One of the most rewarding aspects of a trip to Patagonia is the lack of human interaction—this is truly a destination that, although popular, still gives off the feeling of being somehow untouched by time. Three distinct ecosystems exist in Patagonia, which include the Valdivian forests, the Magellanic forests, and the Patagonia steppe. In addition, six national parks are located in Patagonia, giving travellers ample amount of choice for outdoor-related tours and activities.

The Torres del Paine National Park, located on the Chilean stretch of Patagonia, is famous for its mountains, glaciers, and icebergs. Covering more than 1,800 square kilometres, the park was declared the eighth wonder of the world in 2013. Laguna Amarga in particular is a sight not to be missed: set against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains, the lake's



The falls of Salto Grande



Torres del Paine National Park



stillness projects a mirror-like replica of what you're seeing right back at you. Salto Grande, a 10-metre-high waterfall, is another major tourist attraction in the Torres del Paine National Park, where the gushing water looks more turquoise than white.

On the Argentinian side of Patagonia, the Perito Moreno Glacier is one of the most memorable attractions, and one that separates the Argentinian regions of Patagonia with its Chilean neighbour. The glacier is part of the world's third-largest freshwater reserve, and covers a mass of 250 square kilometres and a length of 30 kilometres. Unlike many glaciers around the world, the Perito Moreno Glacier is very accessible for tourists, and is approximately a two-hour bus ride from the nearby Argentinian city of El Calafate. It's not uncommon for large chunks of the ice sheet to break off, which happens every four to five years as a result of natural ice-damming.

Due to the region's beautiful glacier landscapes and interesting point-of-entry, cruising to Patagonia has become increasingly popular in more recent years. Unlike planning a hiking trip, which would require flying into either Chile or Argentinian and calculating the transportation and necessities needed, cruising allows travellers to see Patagonia from the comfort of a luxury ship, while gazing at the fjords and mountains from a panoramic viewpoint. ●



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CROWN JEWELS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Palace of Westminster and Big Ben

Who said anything about a post-Brexit slump? Tourism to the United Kingdom is booming, with North America a key inbound market for the country last year: 650,000 visitors flocked to the U.K. in July 2017, a nine per cent increase on the same month the previous year, with a record 4 million overseas visits in total that month.

By Fergal McAlinden

Its centrepiece attraction is unquestionably London, the global city that's instantly recognizable for its iconic landmarks including Tower Bridge, the London Eye, the Tower of London and the booming Big Ben. Nonetheless, venturing away from the many attractions of England's capital, there's a whole range of sights and sounds to capture the imagination.

Oxford and Cambridge, located within a couple of hours from each other, are two of the world's oldest, most esteemed university towns. The striking, dome-shaped Radcliffe Camera is part of Oxford's famous Bodleian Library, dating back to 1602, with tours available and history everywhere you turn.

Venturing northwards along the M40, roughly an hour away from Oxford, one arrives in Birmingham, a city that could be described as England's hidden gem. A thriving commercial hub, it hosts five Michelin-starred restaurants, a bustling nightlife, and the chance to bob down the city's waterways on a canal boat.

Further north still is Liverpool, a city that's renowned for the distinctive Scouse accent of its people, its famous football clubs (Liverpool and Everton) and the vibrant music culture that permeates throughout. Its most iconic export is undoubtedly The Beatles, that pioneer of the Merseybeat era, and the city's musical identity is reflected in its →

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annual staging of the Matthew Street Festival. Held along the same street that hosts the famous Cavern Club, where The Beatles cut their teeth as a fledgling band, it's Europe's largest free yearly music festival.

Across the northern border, the rugged, untamed plains of the Scottish Highlands present some of Europe's most spectacular mountainous scenery; in fact, they account for the 10 highest peaks in the entire United Kingdom.



The Radcliffe Camera of Oxford University

Scotland's two best-known cities remain its capital, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, with each presenting its own unique appeal. The former, known colloquially as 'Auld Reekie,' boasts the imposing Edinburgh Castle, peering over the city on its slab of volcanic rock, while Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland, includes a range of cultural offerings such as Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum and the idyllic Botanic Gardens.




The canals of Birmingham

LONDON, THE GLOBAL CITY THAT'S INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE FOR ITS ICONIC LANDMARKS INCLUDING TOWER BRIDGE, THE LONDON EYE, THE TOWER OF LONDON AND THE BOOMING BIG BEN.

Wales offers a further contrast in Britain's disparate cultural identity, with the distinctive, easily-recognizable Welsh language adorning the country's road signs. It also includes some of the island's most incredible scenery, replete with misty mountains, jagged rockfaces and swirling seas – with some of the best views on offer in its Snowdonia regional park.

Across the Irish Sea, meanwhile, Northern Ireland is becoming an increasingly popular destination for tourism thanks to its status as a prominent filming location for *Game of Thrones* and its Titanic Belfast exhibition – recently hailed as the best tourist attraction in the world at the World Travel Awards. ●



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NUREMBERG



Nuremberg Castle

Nuremberg
A City Transformed

Text & photos by Fergal McAlinden

Staring out from below the imposing turrets of Nuremberg Castle at the city's quaint, distinctive angled roofs, it was difficult to envisage a more picturesque setting for a travel convention. Travel media and professionals alike had flocked to Nuremberg for the 2017 iteration of the Germany Travel Mart, with whatever free time was available providing ideal opportunities to soak up the vibrant local atmosphere and devour its iconic Nürnberger bratwurst sausage – washed down with an ample swig of the trademark local beer.

Nuremberg itself strikes a perfect balance between traditional and modern, with the cobbled, bumpy streets and charming markets of its old town making way in a smooth transition

The city's progressive, diverse identity has arisen from the ashes of a dark era in its history, when it was anointed by Adolf Hitler as a seat of the Third Reich and a bastion of Nazi ideals

to the shapely, futuristic architecture of contemporary museums and business centres. Rich Bavarian cuisine is a staple of the Nuremberg diet, and the city's reputation as a cultural beacon of modern Germany is symbolized by landmarks such as the opulent Staatstheater Nürnberg and the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. It was easy to surmise why Nuremberg had been chosen as the backdrop for that year's GTM, as the utter epitome of a welcoming, multicultural German – and European – city.

Its status as a shining example of modern Germany, I would soon discover, is not one that Nuremberg takes for granted. The city's progressive, diverse identity has arisen from the ashes of a dark era in its history, when it was anointed by Adolf Hitler as a seat of the Third Reich and a bastion of Nazi ideals; Nuremberg has emerged stronger from those dark times not by seeking to suppress or ignore them, but instead by confronting them frankly and unsparingly, presenting their lessons as a warning – so that they may never return again.

An obligation to the past

The cheery bustle and noise of central Nuremberg faded into an eerie silence



The Germanisches Nationalmuseum

as our bus wound its way into the vast expanse of the Documentation Centre Rally Party Grounds. All that remained of the haunting, cavernous arena was dull, crumbling concrete, but the grainy video footage on the bus vividly brought to life the arena's bleak past as the scene of propaganda rallies on an enormous scale: we were venturing into the remnant of a former bulwark of the Nazi regime, a sobering reminder of the darkest period of Germany's modern history.

It was the first stop on our tour, fittingly titled 'An Obligation to the Past', which cast an admirably frank, undiluted gaze back through history – presenting

the shameful legacy of the Third Reich with introspection and candour. It was Nuremberg in a microcosm: a city that does not hide from the darkness of its past, but explores it with raw honesty and in unwavering detail.

A short distance from those ghostly grounds sits the Documentation Centre itself, a grey building whose unremarkable appearance is interrupted by a distinguishing, jutting structure angled above its northern side. A series of exhibits, including the permanent 'Fascination and Terror' display, laid bare the facts of Hitler's rise to power; although audio tours are offered in a range of different languages, →



The remnants of the Nazi regime's Rally Party Grounds have been preserved as a reminder of a dark chapter in history

the main text is German, a move that's designed to educate German youth directly about the atrocities of the era. "If it is our obligation to ensure that it never happens again," our tour guide intoned solemnly, "it is also our obligation to talk about it."

Out of the darkness

Nuremberg is replete with examples of the city's defiant rejection of the ideology that once festered there, including the Nuremberg Palace of Justice – the scene of the Nuremberg Trials, a watershed moment for contemporary international law. As our bus set off back towards the city centre, we surged past another powerful symbol of the city's transformation: the BAMF Building. This angular red-bricked edifice was a hub of Nazi Party activity during Hitler's rule, having been put to use as a means of housing prisoners transferred by the regime from the Dachau concentration camp. Today, these barracks serve

Nuremberg itself strikes a perfect balance between traditional and modern

a significant humanitarian purpose as the headquarters of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, aiding the integration of refugees into German culture.

Eminently visible, too, as our bus snaked its way down city streets was the iconic Way of Human Rights, a series of elegant structures near the Nationalmuseum that emphasizes and reaffirms Nuremberg's commitment to human rights and equality. It's a symbolic rebuke to the Nuremberg Race Laws – a 1935 legislative program that codified many of Nazism's gruesome ideological concepts – and a clear rejection not just of the crimes against humanity committed during the Third Reich, but

equally of all those which continue to occur throughout the world. Its 27 individual pillars are each embellished with an article from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and its centrepiece – a stunning concrete arch – exemplifies the city's proud self-declaration as the 'City of Peace and Human Rights.'

As I jumped down from the tour bus, I couldn't shake a famous George Santayana quote from my head: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Nuremberg is a living embodiment of that maxim, a city that has rejected the turpitude that characterized the Nazi era and used its legacy as a warning for the youth of today and tomorrow. In doing so, it has emerged from its dark recent history in a manner that's as uplifting as it is unflinching. ●



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LOTUS BLANC RESORT

A seductive Cambodian oasis

By Marie-Eve Vallières

A successful combination of neo-Khmer and French classical style, the Lotus Blanc Resort is a hotel whose type is uncommon in Cambodia. Luxurious, spacious, and welcoming, it stands out from its local competitors thanks to facilities that are both contemporary and full of personality at the same time.



Landmark Room

The resort, which opened in 2007, features 100 rooms in four different categories. PAX was able to experience the 40 m² Landmark Room, which includes a balcony overlooking the lush interior courtyard, a large bathroom with a stone shower, a king bed and a lounge area. The ubiquitous hardwood gives the room a current and friendly atmosphere, with each comfortable room accessed via a slender outdoor corridor.

The various restaurants and amenities of the hotel are featured on the lower floors, including the splendid 25-metre Tropi-Coco pool, lined with palm trees and small lotus ponds. With temperatures approaching 35° Celsius, even in February, it goes

without saying that the hammocks on site at this oasis get plenty of use, with an accompanying bottle of Angkor beer highly recommended.

Also onsite is a sports hall, a high-quality souvenir shop and a spa. The latter offers a range of Khmer-style treatments, including aromatherapy and wrapping treatments using Cambodian herbs – all for the price of just a few dollars. It's an unmissable experience!

PAX was able to test two restaurants, the Damnak and the White. Neither disappointed thanks to their elaborately-seasoned local flavours; particularly impressive were the Amok-style fish with coconut



In every respect, the Lotus Blanc Resort provides a pleasant surprise near some of the most breathtaking temples on the planet, with its rich Cambodian culture evident in every corner. ●

www.Lotusblancresort.com

Our journalist travelled to Cambodia at the invitation of GLP Worldwide and Cathay Pacific.

6 REASONS TO STAY AT THE LOTUS BLANC RESORT



Proximity to the temples



Hotel staff will prepare a packed lunch for guests heading out on an excursion



Contemporary and welcoming environment



Rooms featuring balconies with tropical views



Original, inexpensive treatments at the spa



Clear, refreshing swimming pool

milk and the amazing lotus salad. The breakfast buffet was sumptuous, and is sure to leave no visitor hungry.

As for the staff? Their service was exemplary and prompt, another added bonus to an already flawless experience. The Lotus Blanc Resort is conveniently located halfway between Siem Reap Airport and the city centre, where you'll find night markets and *bougie-bois*, with the temples of Angkor also close by. Those who prefer more comfortable travel will stick to private taxis to get around, but more daring travellers can choose to ride in a *tuk-tuk* – an experience that never fails to provide a thrill.



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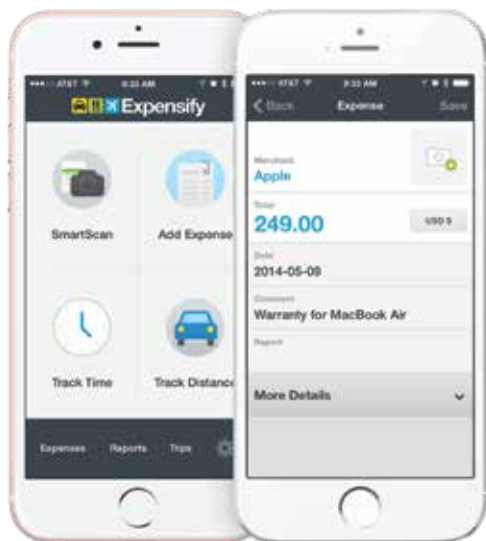
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