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**pax**  
MAGAZINE

2019  
*Wedding*  
GUIDE

*Vincent  
Etchebehere*

GENERAL MANAGER - CANADA,

AIR FRANCE - KLM



SPECIAL FEATURE

## TYING THE KNOT

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TO SAY 'I DO' TO A BOOKING

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# Letter *from the* publisher



## The winners

Not a day passes in this industry without something happening that shakes things up.

Rather than complain about it, I consider this a sign that points to a healthy industry, which, despite its pitfalls, refuses to take its last breath, and continues to stay afloat.

I've often said that it takes strong character, endurance, willpower and sincere efforts to stay in business, especially in an industry that is constantly and unpredictably evolving. It takes great faith in a community to see it continuously thrive.

The "old-timers," those who have been around the block, can confirm this: many brands haven't stood the test of time for a number of reasons, but those who have stayed and survived are all the stronger.

With that in mind, it's a pleasure to shine *PAX* magazine's monthly spotlight on those who have dared to shake the industry up a little bit. Those who have refused to back down through the industry's ups and downs, those who make a real effort to improve our industry in the present and for the future.

On the front cover of the November issue, you'll find Air France-KLM's general manager for Canada, Vincent Etchebehere, whose passion for aviation has resulted in a lifelong career at Air France-KLM at just 30-something years old, and a journey which has taken him around the world.

Also in this month's issue you'll find our annual guide on destination weddings - both at land, and at sea - with a special feature by our associate editor Blake Wolfe, who spoke to a few wedding specialists to find out the pros and cons of organizing a destination wedding for your clients.

Also, pay close attention to our exclusive report on one of Cuba's hottest all-inclusive hotels, the Iberostar Playa Pilar, a favourite amongst Canadian travellers. Finally, you'll be transported to Ecuador and New Zealand, two countries spotlighted in this issue's Destinations of the Month.

Happy reading,

President & CEO, PAX Global Media



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BUSINESS MEETING





**Vincent Etchebehere,**  
general manager - Canada, Air France-KLM

# Flying with *passion*

Personal interest in aviation brought **Vincent Etchebehere** to Air France-KLM. A passion for travel has propelled his career around the world.

By Blake Wolfe / Photos by Marie-Ève Rompré

**S**peak with Air France-KLM's Vincent Etchebehere for even just a few minutes and it quickly becomes apparent that he was born to fly.

A life-long traveller and aviation enthusiast, it's only fitting that he's spent his professional life representing the two airlines, currently serving as general manager for the Canadian market.

"I was born in Paris and my parents are from the Basque country; I always travelled there to visit family," Etchebehere explains. "At 17, I took my first trip abroad to Iceland and spent two months there. It was truly an adventure, as I had never travelled abroad; it was completely different from France!"

Upon graduating from university, Etchebehere was faced with job offers from employers in three vastly different

sectors – pharmaceuticals, cosmetics (namely L'Oréal) and aviation, as represented by Air France. While the majority of his classmates opted for the world of investment banking, Etchebehere pursued a path which allowed him to embrace his passion for exploring the world more closely, and join the French flag carrier in a revenue management role.

"I graduated from a business school and looked at my friends at the time; they were all getting hired by investment banks. I liked finance, but only to a certain point. I didn't want to deal only with those abstract notions of finance; I wanted to work in something where I would be more part of the corporate culture, something more concrete. Revenue management was in between finance and marketing and I didn't regret my choice.

"I entered the industry by joining this great company – and I've never left!" →



### On the wings of exploration

While an early interest in aviation lead Etchebehere to Air France-KLM, his continued passion for travel has fuelled a desire to not only progress in his career with the two airlines, but to also follow that path literally around the world: starting at Air France's Paris headquarters, Etchebehere would later head to Rome on a two-year contract after Air France-KLM purchased a 25 per cent stake in Alitalia.

From Rome, Etchebehere headed to Mexico as Air France-KLM's general manager for the country, a title that he would hold for another two years and provide his first experience as a general manager. Not one to sit still, however, in 2018 Etchebehere would take on the same role in Canada, citing the challenge of a larger market and a desire to live in this country, one that he had only briefly explored years earlier as a traveller.

"In Mexico, I learned every single day, so I wanted to continue the same role in a different – and if possible, bigger – market. Canada was totally in line with this wish. The market here is three times larger than Mexico in terms of revenue, operations and daily frequencies."

For Etchebehere, this diverse career path has allowed him to see the company's vision from multiple angles and thus understand, more fully, what measures are required to achieve those objectives.

"What I like about my career path is a combination of experience at headquarters and working abroad in local markets. I believe that if you work only at the company headquarters – especially one that is international – you won't completely understand why they need a local presence. I could say that it's the same way around for only working in international markets and not having experience at the headquarters." →

**For customers, frequent flyers especially, one of the biggest factors for an airline is consistency.**





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### Tight-knit team

That breadth of experience within the company has shown Etchebehere the importance of working closely together as a team.

“I couldn’t imagine my role as being in an ivory tower,” he says. “I always try and have direct contact with them; when I arrived in Canada, I arranged to spend one hour with each of them to understand what they were doing exactly. We have meetings every two weeks by video – we have 10 different locations in Canada – to share the main priorities and actions across all teams. It’s totally vital to me.”

However, that closeness must also be counter-weighted by autonomy for each team member, Etchebehere says, adding that while he desires to understand each individual’s role, he is cognizant of the risks of micro-management.


“I’m very passionate about the company and I like to understand the activities of the business but not over-think them,” he says. “I try and understand everything in the context of the business; that’s based on curiosity and ambition. I spend time with my team trying to understand what they do and what we could do differently. The risk, of course, is that you can get too involved with every subject and infringe upon the responsibilities of your colleagues. I try and find a balance between knowing what everyone does and becoming involved directly.”

### Inspired customer service

Face-to-face meetings are also important for Etchebehere when it comes to gauging and improving customer service, which he describes as a top priority for Air France-KLM’s Canadian office.

“The greatest part of my job is to have direct contact with our customers, our travel agency partners and our corporate partners. Those are the most interesting times, because that’s when you understand the image of your brand in the market from customer feedback. It helps you truly understand what you should keep doing and what you should stop doing to increase customer engagement and satisfaction.”

Among the sources of inspiration that Etchebehere and his team have looked towards is the hotel sector and its approach to customer service. It’s a think-outside-the-box mentality.



**I try and find a balance between knowing what everyone does and becoming involved directly.**

“We have a great project that we are rolling out right now,” he tells PAX, “which takes best practices from the hotel industry. We’ve built out a specific training for our colleagues who are on the front line dealing with customers; we looked at what the top hotel chains are doing and we are getting inspired by them.”

“For customers, frequent flyers especially, one of the biggest factors for an airline is consistency. You can have the greatest customer service on board one day and a week later, the same customer will be disappointed if that second experience doesn’t match the first. There are some simple things, like having our customer-facing staff greet the customer by looking at their eyes with a smile and calling the customer by their name. It’s a question of customer empathy and to listen to your heart; the answer will be different from one situation to another, but the real driver remains the same: a genuine care for our customers.”

“We want to reflect on that as key to Air France-KLM’s strategy not just in Canada, but world-wide, and we consider it even more important than any investment in aircraft.”

Returning to the team dynamic present in Air France-KLM’s Canadian offices, Etchebehere emphasizes the importance of explaining such approaches fully to those who will carry out the strategy.

“I realized as a general manager that you can have some brilliant ideas,” he says, “but if you keep the vision in your head and just ask your team to implement practices without explaining why it’s important to do so, you will not reach their full engagement.” →





### Eye on the future

Those ideas, which Etchebehere is all too happy to share, also go beyond customer service, his vision fixed squarely on the future of aviation by embracing two of his personal interests: sustainability and artificial intelligence.

In conjunction with Toronto-Pearson and Montreal-Trudeau airports, Air France-KLM is currently embarking on a pair of initiatives that will incorporate AI into streamlining the boarding process, set to launch in 2020.

“I’m very passionate about artificial intelligence,” Etchebehere explains, “not only in terms of its concrete applications, but also the way it will change how companies do business as well as our daily lives.”

Incorporating another headline-grabbing topic into Air France-KLM’s strategy, Etchebehere and his team are also actively tackling ways of improving sustainability at the office, such as through tree-planting and energy-saving efforts, including regularly cleaning inboxes to reduce the power load required by the company’s email servers.

While many of these initiatives mirror a larger effort by the entire airline group – marked by changes such as the shift toward biofuel and the elimination of single-use plastics by the Air France-KLM fleets – they’re also indicative of how Etchebehere has applied personal passions to his professional life, an approach which has served him well in his career.

“I try to be informed and to adapt as much as I can my personal way of living,” he says. “It also has a strong impact on my professional life, even more so as an employee of an airline. We should be very responsible and not hide behind excuses. Airlines and the aviation sector in general are contributors to climate change, so we have a big responsibility there.

“This should be everyone’s number one priority – earth will be here no matter what happens, but what’s really at stake is the survival of humanity.” ●

**If you keep the vision in your head and just ask your team to implement practices without explaining why it’s important to do so, you will not reach their full engagement.**



### The *impact* of travel

Etchebehere recalls the trip that shaped his outlook on travel and the world:

“My first big trip was Iceland but even more impactful than that, was during my first year at the business school in Paris: I joined a humanitarian association to collect funds in France to establish some micro-finance projects in Vietnam. We were collecting money and then at the end of the year, we travelled to Vietnam to lend this money to families in need. The concept is that you don’t just give money away: you lend it, but you also educate people on how to manage funds and reimburse on a monthly basis.

“I didn’t have any major obstacles in life – I had a caring and loving family and no specific needs financially-speaking. Then I went to Vietnam, where I was interacting with people that had almost nothing, but they had an inner joy and sense of hospitality. As a young student, it put a lot of things into perspective and I returned to France looking at things differently.”

*Special thanks to the Ritz-Carlton Montreal for hosting this month’s cover photo shoot. Learn more at [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com).*





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# It's never too late to **start your own business**

By Jean-François Venne

**A**fter a career of more than twenty years in marketing, Valérie Duchesne-Carle, at age 51, embarked on an adventure that many would consider risky.

She started her own restaurant business, Cité-Lunch, in downtown Montreal.

The restaurant offers healthy food, prepared on site and ready to eat, which can be enjoyed at the restaurant or taken away.

"I discovered the concept in London, with the chain EAT, and I enjoyed it very much," she explains. "It seemed to me that there was a market for this type of offer in Montreal."

However, she quickly came to the realization that most entrepreneurship programs are neither tailored to nor fit for those over the age of 50. Duchesne-Carle had to forget the idea of receiving a grant, since most programs only award entrepreneurs aged 35 and under.

She received support from Femmessor, whose programs have no age limit, but for the rest of the funding, she borrowed from private banks and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

Mentorship is as important as funding, apparently. Today, Duchesne-Carle relies on a mentor found through Réseau M, an entrepreneur support network.

"It was not easy to find," she admits. "Some did not want to mentor someone my age and I too had my criteria. But the help of this mentor is very valuable."

## Strong entrepreneurs

Duchesne-Carle is not the only one to choose entrepreneurship at a later stage in life.

According to data published by Statistics Canada in 2018, there are more new business owners in the 35-54 age group than in the 15-34 age group.

In Quebec, the average age of entrepreneurs who benefit from a Réseau M mentor is 39.

**Entrepreneurs over the age  
of 40 are highly qualified and  
highly motivated. Their failure rate  
is a lot lower than that of their  
younger counterparts,**

says Marchand.

"People in their 40s are a very strong core of entrepreneurs," says Rina Marchand, senior director content and innovation, at Réseau M. "They usually have considerable savings, they have work experience, and they have built a whole network of contacts. This is a positive advantage over younger entrepreneurs."

However, this particular segment of entrepreneurs often has limited patience. They have fewer time on their hands to develop new projects and get their return on investment, which often leads not only to massive acquisitions and hires, but also to fast-paced international growth.



Rita Marchand deplores the fact that too many entrepreneurship programs have an age limit. Even co-working spaces and think tanks are too exclusively geared towards younger clientele; either they reject more mature entrepreneurs altogether, or they simply can't meet their specific needs adequately.

According to her, [infoentrepreneurs.org](http://infoentrepreneurs.org) is an excellent resource to help entrepreneurs find help, regardless of age.

For her part, Duchesne-Carle can't recall the amount of times she was told that her project would flop, that she would not find enough funding or that restoration is a difficult area.

"Entrepreneurs should not be held back by such pessimism," she says. "If I had listened to these naysayers, I would not have Cité-Lunch today. But this project makes me very happy and works well." ●

---

**In Canada, the entry rate for business owners aged 35 to 54 is around 0.835 per cent, or 835 new owners for every 100,000 people. This rate falls to just under 0.5 per cent for those aged 55 and over and 0.36 per cent for young people aged 15 to 34.**

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Source: Statistics Canada



# Cruising *forward*

By Blake Wolfe

**49.9** The percentage of global cruise travellers from North America in 2018 – equal to approximately 14.2 million passengers and thus the world's largest source market for the cruise industry – according to CLIA's 2018 Year In Review. By comparison, Europe accounted for 25.1 per cent of the market (7.1 million); Asia for 20 per cent (5.7 million); South America for 3.3 per cent (930,000) and 'other' regions accounting for 1.7 per cent (476,000).

**306** The number of ports in Asia that cruise ships called at in 2019 – an increase of 18 from 2018, as detailed in CLIA's 2019 Asia Cruise Deployment and Capacity Report. These ports are expected to welcome 7,154 calls by year's end, with many of the destinations – particularly India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea – likely to see cruise growth.

**40** The percentage by which CLIA's member cruise lines have pledged to reduce carbon emissions by 2030. With the industry's first LNG-powered (liquified natural gas) ship launched in late 2018, and some 25 such ships could be operating by 2025.

**47** The average age of a cruise passenger in 2018. The average cruise passenger is also opting for shorter cruises: CLIA's 2018 Year In Review found that seven-day cruise itineraries were up nine per cent compared to the previous year, while cruises lasting three days or less were up 10 per cent.

**6.7** The year-over-year percentage of the cruise market's global growth in 2018. While the cruise sector represents just two per cent of the overall global travel industry, the growth of cruising is slightly higher than that of overall international tourism, which grew six per cent in 2018, according to the UNWTO. ●

Source: Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

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# Social media

## in the **aviation industry**

By Frédéric Gonzalo



**I**n today's digital world, airlines have been among the first to start using social media platforms.

I recall a conference in San Francisco back in 2011, when a JetBlue executive was talking about their call centre, which had 38 agents responding to customer-service inquiries via Twitter. Thirty-eight attendants. In 2011! At that time, it was estimated that there were nearly 195 airlines on Twitter, which was the preferred social media platform for the majority of U.S. travellers, especially business travellers.

What about eight years later?

Today, the use of social media has heightened, and it's being used in a number of different, strategic ways. Airports and airlines now use social media for two main reasons: to inspire travellers and to answer questions.

### **Social media to inspire**

There's nothing like a beautiful image or an inspiring video to encourage a potential traveller to book their next trip, or to trigger a conversation about a destination, a product, or hotel service.

It's not surprising, then, to see airports and airlines invest in a dynamic social media presence most conducive to these formats, namely Instagram and YouTube.

As illustrated by Air Transat, the company publishes photos promoting the destinations it serves. You'll also notice the presence of Instagram highlights for contests and destination content, but also for the company's involvement with the Make-A-Wish foundation.



## Airports and airlines now use social media for two main reasons: to inspire travellers and to answer questions.

Examining the Instagram account of the Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, one will see a mix of historical, fun and informative publications about the airport itself. There's also shared content from its suppliers and service providers, destinations served, and passengers.

A great example of savvy social media strategy, particularly incorporating video, can be found by examining WestJet's platforms. The airline is considered a global leader as evidenced by its 79,000 subscribers and the 109M views of its YouTube channel!

### A customer service tool

Despite its potential to promote a destination or incite a purchase, social media's greatest added value comes from its ability to facilitate direct communication between companies and users.

Thus, social media has become a tool of choice in an optimal approach to customer service. Look at the examples previously provided.

Air Transat invites its users on Instagram to contact the company directly through a private DM (direct message), as well as on Facebook and Twitter.

Montreal's airport has put forward two stories related to "Note to passengers."

Airports are also quite fond of using Twitter to communicate urgent information related to delays or operations that may affect travellers, as illustrated by these examples in Vancouver, Toronto or Quebec City.

With that being said, being present on Facebook is also a necessity because the truth of the matter is that it remains the preferred social media platform of most Canadians. With the ability to send direct messages through the Messenger app, airlines and airports are now able to promptly respond to consumers' questions and comments directly on the platform.

What will the next revolution be about? Fast, free WiFi is rapidly being implemented throughout airports around the world — not to mention in the air, with numerous airlines now offering WiFi on board. This only paves the road to a stronger online presence, and intrinsically, increasing social media interactions with customers. ●

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# 2019 Wedding GUIDE

## Tying the knot:

Advice to get your wedding clients to say 'I do' to a booking

By Blake Wolfe

**W**ith Canada's wedding industry valued at approximately \$5 billion, there's no question that nuptials are big business. And with around 25 per cent of Canadian couples opting for a destination wedding, travel agents can also enjoy a slice of that pie (or wedding cake!) too.

PAX spoke to three destination wedding specialists for their advice and insight in navigating this particular niche from 'I do' to the aisle.

### Selling your services

A destination wedding isn't just another vacation in the sun. Not only is a destination wedding often a much larger group to coordinate than the typical family travelling together, there's also the sourcing and coordination of in-destination suppliers, facilities and personnel; throw into the

mix the high emotions – and expectations – of both the couple and their guests and you have a potential recipe for disaster if the couple opts to plan everything themselves.

This, of course, is where you come in.

"To take that on as a couple, you're going to be exhausted," says Jennifer Burton, co-owner of Ultimate Destination Weddings in Mississauga, Ontario. "Things come up like schedule changes, accessibility and travel insurance. By taking that on yourself, you're now the travel agent. You will also have zero help from the wedding planning side if you do it on your own.

"They should be excited about their wedding, not trying to organize travel!" →





**You can't take on a couple and not serve them well – it's super-important, especially for the millennial market.**

– Laurie Keith, Romantic Planet Vacations

### Managing expectations

What does the average destination wedding look like?

According to the wedding experts interviewed by *PAX*, the typical wedding group ranges from between 30 to 40 individuals and those guests will likely witness the lucky couple tie the knot in a sun destination such as Mexico, Jamaica or the Dominican Republic.

For a wedding held at an all-inclusive resort, couples can expect to spend between \$7,500 and \$10,000, with the recommended per-person spend for guests at approximately \$1,800 – a little higher than what most couples expect but a realistic amount to ensure a better guest experience, says Cindy Almond, a wedding specialist with Romance & Foodie Travel in Ottawa, Ontario.

“In terms of price,” Almond tells *PAX*, “they always come in with a price point of \$1,500 per person – and I have to remind them that it may not be a realistic price if they want a quality experience for themselves and their guests. I get them to increase the budget a little, but most people want to spend under \$2,000 per person. When I have my consultations, I tell them to expect to pay \$1,800.”

Laurie Keith of Romantic Planet Vacations in Hamilton, Ontario says that the age demographic of the group can also affect the spend.

“If it's a younger couple,” she says, “they may be more budget-minded but if they're inviting their mature family members, they won't want to stay at a three-star. When you have a bigger part of your group being family members, we see it closer to the \$2,500 range – happy guests mean a happy couple!”

By comparison, the average domestic wedding in Canada costs approximately \$30,000 – and that doesn't include a sun escape!



### Networking 101

As the undisputed kings and queens of social media, millennial couples can be found scrolling Facebook and Instagram feeds seeking wedding inspiration and ideas—and it goes without saying that agents need to be found here to increase their wedding business. However, such platforms can be a double-edged sword.

“A friend of mine,” Burton recalls, “had two brides she booked at the Grand Palladium Jamaica, both of whom went on the resort’s Facebook page and both commented on how amazing she was. She’s now getting inquiries from all over the world! She’s had five referrals this way this year.”

Alternately, Almond advises that, “there’s also a lot of resort pages on social media where brides can discuss their weddings and sometimes people say ‘I got this free for my wedding’ or ‘this client paid X amount of dollars – why am I paying more?’ I haven’t had to deal with this too much, but it can be difficult (for agents) when brides are posting all kinds of information. We in the industry know that prices fluctuate depending on demand and time of year, but the client doesn’t understand that.

“(Social media) also allows you to be more out there and people can tag you,” she continues, “but 10 or 20 agents could also be tagged in that same post. I charge fees and that’s my way of dealing with that issue. I think it’s important to value my time so if someone messages me on social media, it’s me that they want and not just advice from one of 20 agents.”

### Show time

Agents specializing in destination weddings must also remember the importance of face-to-face interactions in closing a deal: enter the wedding show. With dozens of such shows taking place across Canada every year – and many of them attended by the same couples – agents have an opportunity to be seen and remain top-of-mind for potential clients making the rounds.



**There’s a fear in the industry of spending money because it can be expensive, but if you book one wedding as a result, you’ve already made your money back double- or triple-fold.**

– Cindy Almond, Romance & Foodie Travel

“The same bride may attend two or three shows each year and if you’re not there, they may wonder what happened,” Almond says, adding that she attends between two and three shows per year. “There’s a fear in the industry of spending money because it can be expensive, but if you book one wedding as a result, you’ve already made your money back double or triple-fold. I often approach hotel or tour operator partners for co-op – we each pay 50 per cent – it helps to alleviate the cost and you get a partner to work with.”

In the case of Romantic Planet and Ultimate Destination Weddings, each company hosts its own shows—respectively, the Romance Travel Show in the spring and fall and the Ultimate Destination Wedding Show in February – which both Keith and Burton say are vital in bringing in new clients. →



“They should be excited about their wedding, not trying to organize travel!”

– Jennifer Burton,  
Ultimate Destination Weddings

### Friend of a friend

A well-planned wedding will also undoubtedly be noticed by guests, at least a few of whom will be planning their own ceremony in the near future and may be looking for assistance.

“We’ve offered a referral bonus – a Visa gift card to anyone who refers a wedding to us,” Burton explains. “We have a lot of brides who have referred their friends to us over the years and we pay them every single time they refer someone.”

Adds Keith:

“Referrals come with experience and longevity. We get a high percentage of referrals – statistically, they say one bride knows five more who are getting married in the next two to three years. Their influence is high - those who are getting engaged will ask their married friends about their wedding experience. You can’t take on a couple and not serve them well – it’s super-important, especially for the millennial market.”

### Trending

In addition to providing agents with new channels to promote themselves and reach prospective clients, social media has also helped shape the desires and demands of clients.

In addition to resort weddings in the traditional Caribbean destinations mentioned above, couples are also turning their attention to islands such as Saint Lucia and Barbados, while others are eyeing destinations further afield in Europe, Hawaii and even Bora Bora – a popular spot for second weddings.

“There’s more disposable income now,” Keith explains, “but couples also want to one-up their friends’ weddings; they’ve been to the traditional resort wedding and now they want something else.”

However, for clients motivated by price, Keith advises that unless a couple is booking their wedding at an all-inclusive property, they can expect to pay about the same amount as a wedding at home – a fact that isn’t always taken into account by brides and grooms.

### Capitalizing on commission

Agents stand to earn a lot on booking destination weddings and while the package itself is the most lucrative aspect, there’s plenty of opportunity to earn even more commission.

“I think that the areas where people miss out on commission,” Burton explains, “is on the wedding planning side. Most hotels pay a wedding commission; some agents aren’t aware they can contact the hotel and get a commission!”

Almond adds: “Logistically they can be a lot of work, but by offering a group activity or excursions to the guests, there’s more money to be made – of the 40 or so people who are going to the wedding, there’s going to be some who want to go off-property.”

And Keith says: “A lot of resorts have bonus reward programs too, so you can add a lot to your bottom line when you’re claiming your bookings with these suppliers. It can sometimes double your margins!” ●



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## Tying the knot in style

# Stand-out

### hotel wedding chapels

By Blake Wolfe

**There's destination  
weddings...and then there  
are destination weddings!**

**Step into some of the  
most impressive hotel  
wedding chapels in the  
world and get ready to  
say 'I do!'**

#### One and Only Palmilla

Embodying the unique style and surroundings of Los Cabos, the One and Only Palmilla features an historic hilltop colonial chapel for intimate weddings of up to 40 guests, complete with a horse-drawn carriage transporting the bride for her big day.

Larger weddings can still be accommodated on the resort grounds with the chapel as a backdrop, overlooking this boutique property on the Sea of Cortez.



#### Sandals' over-the-water chapels

The original all-inclusive has a selection of over-the-water wedding chapels at three of its Jamaica properties – Sandals Montego Bay, Sandals South Coast and Sandals Ochi – as well as Sandals Grande St. Lucian in Saint Lucia (pictured here), where couples can say their vows while surrounded by the sea.

Similar to Sandals' over-the-water villas and bungalows, the chapels also feature glass floors, allowing the wedding party to literally walk on water as they head down the aisle.





Photo by Craig &amp; Eva Sanders Photography

### Four Seasons Bora Bora

A popular destination for second marriages or vow renewals, Bora Bora's natural beauty is further enhanced by the wedding venues of this Four Seasons property.

With nine venues for couples to choose from, perhaps the most awe-inspiring is the Aherenoa Chapel, with views of Mount Otemanu filling the facility's floor-to-ceiling window.

### Ashford Castle

Located in Mayo, Ireland, this 800-year-old castle – once owned by the Guinness family of beer fame – hosts civil ceremonies for couples looking to have their very own royal wedding.

With 83 bedrooms, the castle can accommodate weddings of up to 164 guests, who will have unlimited access to the grounds on the big day, from the Victorian gardens to the lakeside trails – perfect for the wedding photo album!



Photo by Barbara Kraft



Photo by Ashli Nish - www.ashli.com

### Icehotel Sweden

Constructed literally from the ground up every winter in the village of Jukkasjärvi, Icehotel Sweden also boasts a wedding chapel for couples looking to tie the knot 200 km north of the Arctic Circle.

With a brand-new design every year, the chapel's final appearance adds an element of surprise to weddings held here – how cool is that? ●





# CRUISE

weddings

getting hitched without a hitch

By Ming Tappin

**C**ruise weddings are increasingly popular as couples are looking to celebrate their nuptials at an exciting locale. Cruising has a satisfaction rating in the high 90s, ships offer a variety of amenities and activities to suit all interests, and a cruise wedding costs a fraction of those held on land. With the aid of professional wedding planners, a cruise wedding can be simple and stress-free.

There are three options for couples to tie the knot on board a cruise ship:

**Embarkation day wedding:** Couples can get married on embarkation day on board the ship before it sails, an option that allows non-sailing guests to attend the ceremony and reception (they'll disembark before the ship departs). The marriage will be legally registered in the country at which the ship is docked.

**A wedding at sea:** A wedding at sea is both romantic and unique. Held on a sea day in international waters, the ceremony is officiated by the ship's captain or senior officer. At-sea ceremonies are considered legally binding on Cunard Line, Celebrity Cruises, Princess Cruises, and Royal Caribbean.

**In-destination wedding:** Getting married mid-cruise while the ship is in destination is also very popular. Weddings are available on board the ship while it is docked, or at a shore-side location such as a beach, garden, or even an unusual spot like the top of a glacier in Alaska! The most popular wedding destinations are in the Caribbean, particularly the Bahamas and Bermuda. →

# 2019 *Wedding* GUIDE

## Same-sex weddings

Legal same-sex weddings are offered onboard Carnival Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line and Princess Cruises. The ability to hold an in-destination same-sex wedding is dependent on the marriage laws of the port of call.

## The legalities

The wedding couple must meet the qualifications and follow the required steps to obtain a marriage licence from the country in which the wedding will take place. The wedding planner will provide the necessary information for the couple to secure and bring their marriage licence to the cruise.

## Wedding packages

A standard cruise wedding package includes a ceremony officiated by a notary public which lasts between 15 and 30 minutes. All weddings are held at a private venue and are non-denominational. A standard bridal bouquet and groom's boutonniere, recorded ceremony music and a small wedding cake are also included, as are the services of a photographer, although photos cost extra. Package prices are based on group size and wedding location (shipboard or in-destination). Enhancements such as live musicians, a videographer, upgraded cake and flowers are also available for purchase.

**PAX presents our first Wedding Cruise Guide to give you a quick reference tool for cruise weddings. More details, including downloadable wedding brochures, can be found on each cruise line's website.**

| Cruise Line                 | Embarkation Day Weddings | Non-sailing Guests Allowed                          | Wedding At Sea                                                 | Captain Officiates | Destination Wedding (onboard)                                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Carnival Cruise Line        | ✓                        | Up to 50                                            | Symbolic only                                                  | ✓                  | Bahamas, Caribbean, U.S.                                         |
| Celebrity Cruises           | ✓                        | Up to 150                                           | ✓                                                              | ✓                  | Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Caribbean, Italy, U.S.      |
| Cunard Line                 | ✗                        | N/A                                                 | ✓                                                              | ✓                  | ✗                                                                |
| Disney Cruise Line          | ✓                        | ✗                                                   | Symbolic only                                                  | Senior Officer     | ✗                                                                |
| Holland America Line        | ✓                        | Up to 10, or up to 100 with a reception             | Symbolic only                                                  | ✓                  | Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Caribbean, New Zealand, USA |
| MSC Cruises                 | ✗                        | N/A                                                 | Symbolic only                                                  | ✓                  | ✗                                                                |
| Norwegian Cruise Line       | ✓                        | Up to 10, or up to 50 with a reception              | Legal weddings on select ships, symbolic weddings on all ships | ✓                  | Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Caribbean, New Zealand      |
| Princess Cruises            | ✓                        | Up to 10 (reception required for additional guests) | ✓                                                              | ✓                  | Australia, Canada, Caribbean, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, U.S.    |
| Royal Caribbean Cruise Line | ✓                        | Up to 75                                            | ✓                                                              | ✓                  | Bahamas, Bermuda, Caribbean, U.S.                                |

*PAX magazine cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions. Have you added new products? Write to us at [info@paxglobalmedia.com](mailto:info@paxglobalmedia.com)*

### Reception packages

Receptions can be as simple as a champagne toast with hot or cold hors d'oeuvres, to full open bar service, buffet or a sit-down meal. Packages are typically priced by the hour, or per person based on the food and beverage ordered. Upgrades such as live musicians and DJ services are also available.

### How to book a cruise wedding

Cruise lines either have their own in-house wedding planning department or work with a third-party wedding planner. The first step couples must take is to book their cruise, through you. Once a deposit has been paid and the cruise is confirmed, they can then contact the wedding planner to book their wedding. From that point onwards, the couple works directly with the wedding planner to arrange every detail of their wedding.

With the aid of professional wedding planners, a cruise wedding can be simple and stress-free.

So, the next time you have a destination wedding inquiry, before reaching for a land-based resort, consider offering a cruise wedding. Not only is it a wonderful experience for the bride and groom along with their friends and families, it's also a lucrative group booking for you. You'll earn higher commissions, tour conductor credits and have access to additional perks that can be used to boost your revenue. They'll celebrate – and you'll celebrate, too! ●

| Destination Wedding (ashore)                                                     | Same Sex Weddings  | Wedding Packages                                                          | Reception Packages | Maximum wedding size                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bahamas, Caribbean, U.S.                                                         | ✓                  | Choice of 3, based on number of guests and inclusions                     | ✓                  | None                                                                                                        |
| Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Caribbean, Greece, Italy, U.S.              | ✓                  | Packages for at sea, harbourside, and in-destination weddings             | ✓                  | 150                                                                                                         |
| ✗                                                                                | ✓<br>symbolic only | Packages for legal and symbolic weddings                                  | ✓                  | None                                                                                                        |
| Castaway Cay - Symbolic only                                                     | ✗                  | Package available for up to 16 guests; additional charge for extra guests | ✗                  | 50                                                                                                          |
| Australia, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Caribbean, Greece, Malta, New Zealand, U.S. | ✓                  | Packages for at sea, harbourside, and in-destination weddings             | ✓                  | 150 for embarkation day wedding; maximum for shipboard or shoreside wedding is determined by venue capacity |
| ✗                                                                                | ✓<br>symbolic only | Choice of 3, pricing based on inclusions and services                     | ✓                  | 150                                                                                                         |
| Bahamas, Bermuda, Caribbean, Greece, Caribbean, U.S.                             | ✓                  | Packages for at sea, harbourside, and in-destination weddings             | ✓                  | None                                                                                                        |
| Australia, Canada, Caribbean, Italy, Malta, New Zealand, U.S.                    | ✓                  | Packages for at sea, harbourside, and in-destination weddings             | ✓                  | None                                                                                                        |
| Bahamas, Bermuda, Caribbean, Greece, U.S.                                        | ✓<br>symbolic only | Packages for at sea, harbourside, and in-destination weddings             | ✓                  | 150 for embarkation day wedding; maximum for shipboard or shoreside wedding is determined by venue capacity |





## Innovating **CRUISE WEDDING** concepts

For couples thinking about a cruise wedding but are unsure what to expect, Celebrity Cruises offers a “Test the Waters” program. Priced from USD\$275, the program includes a 30-minute site inspection with a wedding coordinator on board the ship, a 30-minute consultation, and a 30-minute buffet lunch. It’s a great opportunity for the couple to preview the ship and understand the cruise wedding process.

**In addition, several cruise ships have dedicated wedding chapels on board to hold intimate weddings:**

### **CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE**

*Carnival Legend  
and Carnival Miracle*

### **PRINCESS CRUISES**

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Crown Princess, Diamond Princess,  
Emerald Princess, Golden Princess,  
Grand Princess, Island Princess,  
Ruby Princess and Star Princess*

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Explorer of the Seas,  
Adventure of the Seas, Navigator of the Seas  
and Voyager of the Seas*

## A CANADIAN CONNECTION

Did you know that the exclusive wedding planner for Carnival Cruise Line, Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruises and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line is Canadian?

Royal Ocean Events ([www.royalwed.com](http://www.royalwed.com)) has more than 20 years’ experience of coordinating and planning cruise weddings and is based in Delta, just outside of Vancouver, BC!

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*Norwegian Cruise Line has 13 ships cruising from  
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Norwegian Encore • **E**  
Norwegian Epic • **S**  
Norwegian Escape • **W**  
Norwegian Joy • **E | W**  
Norwegian Pearl • **E | S | W**  
Norwegian Star • **E**

### PORT CANAVERAL

Norwegian Breakaway • **E | W**  
Norwegian Star • **S | W**  
Norwegian Sun • **W**

### TAMPA

Norwegian Dawn • **S**  
Norwegian Jade • **E | S | W**

### NEW YORK

Norwegian Bliss • **S | W**  
Norwegian Dawn • **S**  
Norwegian Gem • **S**

### BOSTON

Norwegian Gem • **S**

### NEW ORLEANS

Norwegian Getaway • **W**

### SAN JUAN

Norwegian Epic • **S**

**E** • Eastern Caribbean | **W** • Western Caribbean | **S** • Southern Caribbean



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# From North to South

## in *New Zealand*

By Christine Hogg

**H**ow do you plan a trip for your clients to New Zealand when there's so much to see, do, and of course, eat and drink?

Well, it really depends on where they want to go.

One thing's for certain though: New Zealand is the ultimate destination for adrenaline junkies, nature lovers, and wine connoisseurs.

With two main islands (in addition to more than 30 other smaller islands), everything, from the striking scenery to the cultural offerings, varies coast to coast.

For your clients who aren't quite sure just yet, here's New Zealand in a nutshell. And

yes, we'll show you how to throw Australia into the mix, too.

### **The North Island**

The North Island of New Zealand is home to tourist-favourite Auckland, as well as Wellington, the country's capital city.

With more than 1.6 million people living there, Auckland is an extremely diverse, multicultural, and cosmopolitan city. Nicknamed the "City of Sails," yachting culture is extremely popular in Auckland, with several regattas and festivals beginning in September, and running through January.

Waitemata Harbour is the main cruise port in Auckland, with Norwegian Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, and Oceania Cruises all calling here. Once docked,

your clients can easily explore the shops and restaurants, as the city centre is just 20 minutes away by car.

Air Canada currently offers non-stop, seasonal flights between Vancouver and Auckland, aboard the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft beginning Dec. 12, 2019 and running until the end of March 2020. The direct flight is around 14 hours, meaning the journey from Toronto would add another five.

Like any major metropolis, there are endless things to do in Auckland. Major site-seeing activities include a trip to Rangitoto Island, Auckland's youngest and largest volcano in the Auckland volcanic field, as well as a day trip to Waiheke Island for a wine-tasting or zip-lining (your clients can easily catch a ferry over from downtown Auckland). →





Picture by Camilla Aulherford

Wine tasting in Auckland



Picture by Canterbury The Heritage

Kea Point Aoraki, Mount Cook, Canterbury



Picture by Matt Crawford

Waiheke Island, Auckland





Rangitoto, Auckland

Picture by Fraser Clement



Seddon, Marlborough

Kieran Scott



## GOOD TO KNOW

\$1 CAD = roughly \$1.19 NZD.

New Zealand's summer months are December, January, and February, and winter is June, July, and August.

New Zealand is home to the town with the longest English name in the world: *Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenua-tanatahu*, New Zealand, is found on the North Island. It's named after a word of Maori origin.

### The South Island

New Zealand's South Island is undoubtedly famous for its scenery, which includes Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain (3,724 metres), and Fiordland National Park, one of the country's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In Fiordland National Park, your clients can discover the majestic Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound, two fjords accessible by boat or on foot.

A trip to the South Island wouldn't be complete without swirling a glass of red, white, or rosé – New Zealand is famous for its wines, and while there are plenty of incredible vineyards on the North Island, the South Island is home to Marlborough, New Zealand's leading wine region and one known around the world.

Marlborough has roughly 716 wineries and more than 38,860 hectares planted with grapes. Your clients can easily take a tour of any of the wineries, and enjoy anything and everything, from a private tasting to small group tours.

Winery tours are very easy to come by, and several tour operators, including G Adventures, centre many of their New Zealand packages around the South Island's wine regions, with nearly half of their tours (largely found in the National Geographic Journeys Collection and Classic trips) offering wine-tasting experiences.

For clients that want to see New Zealand, and visit Australia at the same time, Down Under specialist Goway Travel has Australia and New Zealand combo packages.

G Adventures, another tour operator which specializes in small group travel, has four trips that let your clients see the best of both worlds. ●

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**EXPERIENCE**

# Colonial Quito

## A move beyond the middle

From sky-high hiking adventures to authentic local experiences, Quito offers an expansive charcuterie of cultural awakenings.

Story and photos by Nic Catania







The old city of Quito



Ciudad Mitad del Mundo



Viewpoint -Ciudad Mitad del Mundo

**T**ake your shirt off for the full Limpia experience, my guide, David, told me as I waited with anticipation at Mercado San Francisco, one of the oldest markets in Quito.

Limpia is an ancient medicinal Quichua cleansing ceremony that is said to provide good fortune and personal attraction, but it only works fully if herbs and flowers graze the skin. I stepped behind a curtain in the medicinal quarter of the mercado, took my shirt off and turned around to a petite woman with a grinning smile. Her name was Rosa, and with eyes closed, she proceeded to rub my bare torso with freshly picked camomile and rose petals while chanting to expel the negative energies around me.

Feeling refreshed from the herbal mist, I put my shirt back on and regrouped in the mercado.

"Now you're ready," David said. "Let's go see Quito."

### Untouched beauty

A continent diverse in Incan and Spanish colonial roots, the Republic of Ecuador emerged in 1831 and was one of the first nations to receive independence from Spain. Quito, the capital, sits high up in the Andean Mountains.

After our group was cleansed of negative energies, we conquered Quito's height-defying streets to the symbolic city center – a people-watching paradise. Plaza de la Independencia is surrounded by powerful architecture, notably the Presidential Palace and Cathedral of Quito. Inside, we were led towards the far-right corridor into a miniscule passageway that winds up to the church domes. Climbing spiral staircase that afforded no more than five feet of wiggle room in height, we reached the domes, and

**The beauty of Quito,  
of its people and its  
nature, is untouched.**

were taken aback by what clamoured and chimed beneath us: a labyrinth of narrowly-rising streets with buildings that rise and fall with Quito's varying elevations.

At the top of the city sits the monumental Virgin of Quito (jokingly referred to as the "world's largest virgin.") Bumper to bumper, our driver Luis drove upwards towards a hilltop where the Madonna appeared from behind the trees, emitting a watchful glow over the city as day turned to night.

Quito is a contrast of old plazas and modern neighbourhoods, brimming with nightlife. As we walked down the colourful cobblestoned streets, balconies hung low and open. Aromas from restaurants billowed from the doorways while a couple enjoyed Dulce Placer's helado de paila (traditional ice cream prepared in copper pots) on a nearby balcony.

The beauty of Quito, of its people and its nature, is untouched.

### Sky-high adventure

High atop Volcán Pichincha sits Teleféri-Qo, one of the highest sky trams in the world. As we piled into a moving vessel and soared over the city, reaching 4,100 meters, we couldn't resist the breathtaking views. The viewpoint breaks off into a series of hiking trails well above the Andes. Walking these paths into the clouds, we passed a Catholic church, a pair of lamas and a two-person swing overlooking Quito in the sky. →





Atop Volcán Pichincha sits TelefériQo



Hat Maker - La Ronda

A trip to Ecuador would be unfulfilled without walking the equator line and snapping a cheesy shot, holding up the globe, or trying to balance an egg on a nail at Ciudad Mitad del Mundo – the middle of the world monument that commemorates the discovery of the equator line by French scientists in the 18th century.

Amidst Quito rests Yungilla, a small co-op reserve in an Andean cloud forest – a lush reserve with cloudy landscapes. The community of roughly 50 families prides itself on being fully sustainable, producing a range of jams from Andean papaya and cheese that we savoured without hesitation before learning about the hallucinogenic properties of cloud forest ferns (a tasting we, sadly, passed up).

“I don’t think I’m quite prepared for psychedelic Andean berries just yet,” I jokingly told our guide. “Okay, Nic. For sure,” my guide, David, replied. “It’ll be waiting for you when you come back.” ●



Lama - Intiñan Solar Museum

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



### TAKING FLIGHT

Aeromexico offers connecting services to Quito and Guayaquil via Mexico City from Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Calgary (seasonal). Travellers can connect or catch a redeye and arrive on the same day.



### CURRENCY

Ecuador adopted the U.S. Dollar as the country’s official currency in 2000. Ecuador has their own form of coinage, which is only traded within the nation’s borders.



### ALTITUDE

The city of Quito rests at 2,850 meters above sea level. Acclimatize yourself for one day and rest before trekking out on active excursions.



### WEATHER

Mornings are often taken over by sunshine with mild cloud cover in the afternoon. Layer your packing and catch the views before noon.



### GASTRONOMY

Quito offers a unique tapas experience of savoury dishes, including lama and freshly-fermented chicha. [quito.ec](http://quito.ec). Casa Gangotena serves a lavish lunch packed with traditional dishes from ceviche to locro de papa. [casagangotena.com/the-restaurant](http://casagangotena.com/the-restaurant)

El Crater offers views and good vibes with its strategic dinning experience built on the crater’s edge of Pululahua Volcano. [elcrater.com](http://elcrater.com)

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# Iberostar Playa Pilar

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The promenade leading to the beach



The main pool



Kids' Club

Nestled in the unspoiled cayos of the Jardines del Rey archipelago, this complex with a linear, contemporary decor couldn't be located in a better setting. Both chic and sleek, the property is suitable for families looking for something new, or simply those who love contemporary design.

Upon entering the hotel, guests will discover the open and airy hallway, lined with towering columns. There's a large basin made of cobalt blue tile, from which oversized plants and a huge fresco made of dapper-coloured tiles arise.

It's a breath of fresh air!

### Classic modern design

The turquoise-blue sea and swimming pools are a stark contrast to the crisp white buildings that dominate the property.

The red chairs in the lobby, the bursts of fuchsia and mint green in the buffet restaurant, and various shades of purple in the guestrooms are all welcomed and chipper additions to the otherwise neutral palette. This rich decor is further complemented by multiple motifs inspired by nature, such as the large leaves and columns of stylized wooden trees and arabesque-shaped dividing walls that can be found everywhere.

The lobby bar is particularly easy on the eyes in that aspect.

The 482 rooms, all with terraces or balconies, are spread across 15 three-storey buildings.

There are 394 standard rooms (with the possibility of connecting rooms for families), 78 junior suites, six suites and four suites, each with its own private pool.

Everything on site is easily accessible and within a few minutes' walk. →



Coffee and drinks



Playa Pilar with beautiful beaches



Typical room

### A direct link to the beach

While it would be lovely to highlight the infinite stretch of white sand beach, the reality is somewhat different at Iberostar Playa Pilar. It's for good reason, though: the hotel is located right across the world's second largest barrier reef and its waters are teeming with coral. While there is a beach onsite, it's vastly different from what your clients would find at, say, Varadero or Cayo Santa Maria.

Beaches in Cayo Guillermo are little wilder, with abundant vegetation, and scarcer. In a way, this enables vacationers to get a real sense of nature as opposed to a generic beach experience; either way, beach lovers won't be disappointed with this untouched setting. Instead of simply walking onto the sand, your clients will have to cross a few stilt boardwalks that dip into the sea, each side of the beach dotted with sun loungers.

And what the property lacks in beach access it makes up in views, since the hotel is built on an enclave on the tip of the archipelago, granting sea views almost everywhere.

The name of the hotel itself was derived from the beautiful adjacent Pilar Beach, which gets its name from Ernest Hemingway's fishing boat. This is the property closest to the fragile, unique ecosystem of Pilar Beach, which was deemed one of the most beautiful beaches in the world on more than one occasion due to its crystalline and shallow waters.

This beach is about a twenty-minute waterfront stroll from the hotel or five minutes by bus (about a kilometer).

Vacationers who prefer to enjoy the seaside from the edge of a pool can pick from five stunning swimming pools, including one for children, and one at the spa. The main infinity pool in the centre of the complex is quite spectacular with its uncommon bubble shape, modern architecture and open views of the Caribbean Sea.

### Families will love it

The children's water park, as well as the Star Camp, are both a good size and provides hours of fun for kids aged four to 12 years.

There are also many activities available to younger vacationers, both on site and, more interestingly, at sea: kayaking, diving, standup paddling, windsurfing, catamaran sailing - you name it! ●



## GOOD TO KNOW

Iberostar Playa Pilar is a 40-minute drive from Cayo Coco Airport.

In terms of gastronomy, guests can choose between a buffet restaurant, four specialty restaurants [Gourmet Cuban, Japanese, Mediterranean and relaxed Cuban], a snack bar and five other lively bars [lobby bar, theatre café bar, cigar bar, aqua bar and beach bar]

It is one of Cuba's few five star resorts.



# Coral Level: The key that opens doors to the next level in Cuba



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Dreams continue when you wake up. Right in front of you, the best beaches wait to reveal its best secrets: exquisitely beautiful water and some of the world's most important coral reefs.

The Coral Level villas forming this area of the hotels are designed for adults and offer great luxury, with a living room, kitchen, terrace with jacuzzi, and extra quality in every detail.

As if that wasn't enough, this exclusive environment also boasts butler service, private pools and gourmet restaurants in addition to all the 5-star facilities in Coral Level at Iberostar.

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# Going the distance:

## A look at the world's longest flights

By Blake Wolfe

**E**ach year, the world gets a little smaller as more direct flights come online from airlines across the globe.

While many of these new routes will remain within the same continent or even hemisphere, a few carriers will inevitably push the envelope with services that carry passengers halfway around the world over the course of a single flight.

Without further ado, the top five longest flights in the world are as follows:



### Singapore Airlines: Singapore – Newark

Officially the world's longest flight at approximately 16,700 km, Singapore Airlines' Singapore-Newark route returned in October 2018 after a five-year hiatus due to the rising cost of operation.

Daily flights last up to 18 hours and 45 minutes aboard an Airbus A350-900ULR aircraft, configured in a two-class layout, with 67 Business Class seats and 94 Premium Economy Class seats.

At such a length, it's no surprise that passenger comfort is a priority for Singapore. The A350-900ULR's higher ceilings, larger windows, specific cabin light settings and extra-wide body can help contribute to less jetlag, while travellers can also take advantage of the Book The Cook program to pre-select meals along with a Singapore Airlines app to preload movies and music for their flight.

### Qatar Airways: Auckland – Doha

Clocking in at 17 hours and 30 minutes, Qatar Airways' Auckland-Doha service spans 14,536 kilometres from the land of hobbits to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

Operated aboard a Boeing 777-200LR since its launch in 2017, the plane offers space for 230 economy passengers; however, for those travellers looking to spend a little extra, they can now relax in Qatar's Qsuite seating concept.

Launched on the Auckland – Doha route earlier this summer, the Qsuite offers an enclosed compartment which functions as a sleeping pod with a lie-flat double bed and signature sleepwear, dinner table and meeting space.



First class aboard Emirates

### **Qantas: Perth – London**

Launched in 2018, Qantas' Perth-London service marked the first non-stop flight from Australia to Europe, transporting passengers nearly 14,500 kilometres over 17 hours aboard a Boeing 787-9.

While the prospect of 17 hours in the air may be daunting to many travellers, Qantas reported that a year after launching the route, flights operate on average at 94 per cent capacity, above the industry average of 80 per cent.

It's a far cry from when Qantas first connected the two continents with its 'Kangaroo Route' in 1947: on that inaugural flight, 29 passengers – each of whom paid the equivalent of \$34,000 for a return fare – and 11 crew flew four days aboard a Lockheed Constellation, making stops in Darwin, Singapore, Calcutta, Karachi, Cairo and Tripoli. →



**Aircrafts feature higher ceilings, larger windows, specific cabin light settings and extra-wide body that can help contribute to less jetlag.**

#### Emirates: Dubai – Auckland

Only 300 km shorter than Qantas' Perth – London service is Emirates' Dubai-Auckland route and with its mid-2003 launch date, it's the oldest service among the top five.

The gulf carrier offers two daily flights aboard its Airbus A380 aircraft, which offers first-class travellers the airline's famed private suites and shower spas – perfect for a long journey across the skies.

In addition to the non-stop version of the route, in June 2018 Emirates introduced a daily Dubai-Auckland service with a Bali stopover, allowing travellers to explore this popular destination – and stretch their legs a little before completing their flight!

#### Singapore Airlines: Singapore – Los Angeles

Singapore Airlines' second entry on the list rounds out the top five, launched one month after the return of the airline's Singapore – Newark service in October 2018.

Operating aboard the same aircraft as its Newark counterpart, coincidentally the flight departing from L.A. – which spans 14,114 km as opposed to 16,700 km – is only an hour shorter than if one were to fly out of EWR.

The onboard service and configuration is also identical to the Newark route, operating from L.A. 10 times per week with daily service plus three additional weekly flights. ●

## The rest of the TOP 10

#### United: Houston – Sydney

- Distance: 13,834 km
- Flight time: 17 hours, 30 minutes
- Aircraft: Boeing 787-9

#### Qantas: Dallas Ft. Worth – Sydney

- Distance: 13,805 km
- Flight time: 17 hours, 10 minutes
- Aircraft: Airbus A380

#### Philippine Airlines: Manila – New York JFK

- Distance: 13,712 km
- Flight time: 16 hours, 35 minutes
- Aircraft: Airbus A350

#### United and Singapore Airlines: San Francisco – Singapore

- Distance: 13,594 km
- Flight time: 17 hours, 20 minutes [United]; 17 hours, 35 minutes [Singapore Airlines]
- Aircraft: Boeing 787-9 [United]; Airbus A350-900/A350-900ULR [Singapore Airlines]

#### Delta: Johannesburg – Atlanta

- Distance: 13,581 km
- Flight time: 16 hours, 50 minutes
- Aircraft: Boeing 777-200LR



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### Wrinkle-free *travel*

The SteamFast SF-717 prides itself on making the world's smallest steam iron. Looking at it, they're not wrong: the device is the size of a computer mouse!

With a 420-watt motor and three levels of heating, it gets hot enough to get the job done, and can successfully press out creases and wrinkles from your folded clothes.

[steamfast.com](http://steamfast.com) – 30 \$US <<

### *Room* for two

The DoubleNest hammock by ENO is as small as it is practical. Folded, this two-seater hammock fits easily in a compression bag and weighs only 500 grams. Unfolded, it measures a little more than two meters long and can hang anywhere, thanks to a simple but effective set of hooks.

[enonation.ca](http://enonation.ca) - \$90 <<



### *Caffeine* fix

The Minipresso GR by Wacaco is a portable espresso machine, which provides a dose of caffeine equivalent to about a 50 mL cup. Simply add ground coffee (about seven grams) to the filter, pour in your hot water, and activate the hand pump. You can get your fix on the road, all thanks to a tiny machine that can slip right into your bag—or pocket!

[fr.wacaco.com](http://fr.wacaco.com) – \$67 <<



### Save *some space*

The Vago vacuum is barely bigger than an egg, but it provides way more room in one's luggage. Sold with an antibacterial vacuum-sealed bag, the Vago simply requires the push of a button to begin compressing air out of the bag, thus totally maximizing space inside a suitcase. The tiny vacuum has a smart sensor to detect the pressure and automatically shuts off after all of the air is sucked out of the bag.

[creationcell-vago.com](http://creationcell-vago.com) -  
\$90 on Amazon <<



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