

pax

MAGAZINE

HOTEL
EDEN ROC
MIAMI BEACH

APPETITE FOR
DISRUPTION

BUSINESS SENSE
BUILDING
A CLIENT LIST

JOSEPH ADAMO

PAX ON LOCATION
KISSES FROM
TOKYO

CHIEF DISTRIBUTION OFFICER,
TRANSAT & PRESIDENT, TDC

VOGUE
HAUNTED HOTELS
& CASTLES

CRUISE INDUSTRY
THE WORLD CRUISE:
VOYAGE OF A LIFETIME

SPECIAL FEATURE

MARKING NEW YEAR'S EVE
AROUND THE WORLD



DESTINATIONS TO DISCOVER
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Letter from the publisher

Logimonde Media becomes **pax GLOBAL MEDIA**

We have spent nearly three decades analyzing issues, forecasting trends, meeting the architects of change, and inspiring through storytelling; in short, serving as an integral part of the Canadian travel industry.

Sept. 18 marked the end of LogiMonde media and the beginning of an even bigger project, with limitless ambitions: we are now **PAX Global Media**.

A company's name is more than just its identity; it symbolizes both the essence of its personality and its mission. Clients and travel industry suppliers alike – our readers – are attached to a brand, and by extension to its name. Changing it is a challenge internally as well as externally.

LogiMonde media is a name I chose 26 years ago, one that reflected the Quebec market rather than the Canadian one. It's a name that related to my product (essentially "world software") because, at the time, I was operating a large database of subscribers through fax, and later email. This identity is no longer representative of the current industry and the existing market.

This year, we will take an important international position. Our new name befits our desire to establish the company in all directions and to address a wider market: PAX Global Media is the logical next step. Using "PAX" in our new identity reflects how the acronym has become our unofficial trademark in the industry, much more so than LogiMonde, over the past three years.

As a result of our new identity, PAX affiliate products have also changed dramatically. The two PAX print magazines and their web counterparts PAX News, PAX Nouvelles and PAX News West now form a unified division named PAXEditions.com. We have also renamed our ancillary services to affiliate them more closely with PAX:

PAXQuickPresse.com, PAXTravelJobs.com, PAXVideo.com, PAXTravelTV.com, PAXRSVP.com, PAXWebinar.com, and PAXTravelPhotos.com.

With all this in mind, I leave you to enjoy your October magazine, featuring an insightful interview with Joseph Adamo, Chief Distribution Officer, Transat & President, TDC.

Until November, happy reading!



Myrthe Chissem

President & CEO,
PAX Global Media



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FRONT COVER

Joseph Adamo, Chief Distribution Officer, Transat & President, TDC

Text **Blake Wolfe**

Photos **Benoît Schmutz**

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Canada, 10 issues (one year): \$49.50 (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
pax GLOBAL MEDIA

Corporate website: paxglobalmedia.com

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

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BUSINESS MEETING



APPETITE FOR DISRUPTION

No stranger to change, Transat's **Joseph Adamo** talks to *PAX* about his passion for new challenges, effective teamwork, and why understanding "why" is the most important question

By **Blake Wolfe** | Photos by **Benoît Schmautz**

At first glance, the worlds of travel, telecommunications and advertising couldn't seem further apart.

For Transat's Joseph Adamo, however, the three industries share a big common factor – one that the Chief Distribution Officer, Transat & President, Transat Distribution Canada finds irresistible.

"I bring an ability to embrace change or provoke it," he tells *PAX*. "That's as a result of having worked in industries that have been materially disrupted."

Before joining Transat in 2011, Adamo weathered industry disruptions brought on by technological changes in a number of other sectors: from helping the formerly print-only Yellow Pages transition online; to the switch-over in telecommunications, from traditional wireline to internet-based infrastructure; and then onto the world of advertising, where emerging social media platforms like Facebook upended a once-entrenched advertising model, heavily reliant on television and radio.

Viewed through the lens of disruption, similarities abound in the travel industry –

and in the age of OTAs and social media, change has been well underway for many years. While a lot of the disruptions in travel preceded Adamo's arrival at Transat, their effects continue to be felt – and it's here that he is right in his element.

Just like home

"It immediately felt like home," he says of Transat. "I adore everything about the industry and love the company. The seven years have been a blur – in a good way!"

"I'm able to cope with disruption and maximize opportunities that emanate from said disruption. →



When I take a step back, I'm either a glutton for pain or maybe I get bored easily and I like things in a fast-paced changing environment. It's probably a bit of both!"

Disruption meets distribution

Perhaps the biggest part of the travel industry to be disrupted by the internet is distribution. While reports of the death of the traditional travel agent have been greatly exaggerated, OTAs – for better or for worse – are a part of the distribution mix for tour operators; add in the growing segment of home-based travel agents and you get what Adamo describes as a distribution “ecosystem,” where each distribution channel carries its individual strengths and weaknesses, fulfilling a different requirement in the process.

“What I like to do is recognize what each of the different channels brings to the table – and they’re not all equal, as some are better at certain things than others,” Adamo says, adding that while cost must come into consideration when determining which channel best fits a

product, it's never the sole determining factor. “For instance, if one were to say what channel performs well on last-minute bookings, there's no question it's OTAs. The flip side is, though, who does a better job of building advance bookings, groups and complex bookings and higher-end product – and in that case, it's the traditional full-service agency.”

“We embrace each for their strengths, work with all of them and within that ecosystem, there's room for everyone. It's up to us to recognize the strengths of each channel and work with each of them to maximize our share.”

Keys to success

Key to weathering those disruptions, says Adamo, is a triumvirate of values: namely effort, rigour and courage. While he says that in order to achieve success an expenditure of effort is obvious, Adamo explains that true success is a result of the remaining two concepts working together in tandem.

“A lot of brilliant people don't succeed because of their inaction; at some →

“ What I ask of my people is they need to have a point of view... If someone asks what you think, have something to say. ”



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point, you need to pull the trigger and act," he explains. "What I ask of my people is they need to have a point of view – a rigorous, well thought-out point of view, but have the courage to have the point of view in the first place. If someone asks what you think, have something to say."

"We also all need the courage to learn from our mistakes and ultimately the courage to take risks, too. I know of no company or individual who can succeed without taking some measure of risk – the question is how much and how rigorous you were in reaching that decision."

The big question

This is all underpinned by a burning curiosity to answer one simple yet profound inquiry: why?

For Adamo, "why?" is the fundamental question, one that both drives his career and acts as a motivating and cohesive factor within his team at Transat. He explains that by understanding "why?" his team is armed with more information and ultimately, an informed team is one that can adapt quickly to disruption.

"I'm big on understanding 'why' – why something is or isn't – and I think that naturally leads to learning, by paying attention to people who have been there before."

"What's important is having everyone understand why they're doing what

“ I bring an ability to embrace change or provoke it. That's as a result of having worked in industries that have been materially disrupted. ”

they're doing. We spend a lot of time speaking about 'what' but I try to emphasize the 'why' along with the 'what'."

"My personal belief is that if people – anywhere in the organization, from the front line to senior management – truly understand why something is being done, inevitably they will be able to cope with circumstance; if you understand the mission, you can adapt and do the right thing. I like to ensure that my team members and our partners understand why we're doing something and where we're coming from."

And just as fulfilling as the challenge of navigating and surmounting the latest disruption are both the opportunity to make decisions, along with what Adamo describes as the "nobility" of travel. Just as external factors – both long-term and immediate – will always lead to disruption in the industry, so too will the act of travel benefit those making the journey.

"I enjoy making decisions and they're not always easy, but I feel good about making choices," he says. "There's certainly ample opportunity day in and out here. Working with the Transat team, I love the culture we have here, which facilitates my day-to-day decision-making. I've spent most of my career in very large multinationals and while Transat is certainly a very large corporation, it still has an entrepreneurial feel to it."

The "nobility" of the job

"Every industry has its challenges and in travel, given how relatively modest the margins are, some of the external factors weigh heavy on us and it adds to the challenge of management for sure."

"However, there's a fun side to what we do and beyond that, there's a nobility; we make the world a better place. What we have, most people want, which is the ability to escape and discover. I try to look for the nobility in the job I do, and we have it in spades in travel." ●



WINING, DINING AND SKIING

While Transat may be his first industry role, Adamo is no stranger to travel – and when it comes time to vacation, his holidays are influenced in part by his interests in gastronomy and skiing.

“I grew up in the restaurant scene – my dad’s a retired chef – and that sparked in me an interest from an early age. I certainly have a strong inclination toward European or Mediterranean cooking – my Italian heritage compels me to say Italian cooking for sure! – but I like French, Spanish and Greek too,” Adamo says, adding that the highlight of a recent trip to Spain’s Basque Country was the region’s wines and *pincho* bars.

“I find cooking relaxes me and the good thing about making a meal is that good or bad, you have instant feedback and immediate, tangible results. I don’t tend to follow recipes, which drives my wife nuts, but I come back to the ‘why’ – if I get what the recipe is meant to do and the desired end state, I can figure it out.”

In addition to exploring the world’s gastronomy regions, Adamo’s interest in downhill skiing also shapes his travel choices.

“One of my annual treats is a ski week with close friends in the Alps – it’s a great way to get away from it all and engage in an activity that compels you to disconnect – for safety reasons!”

HOW TO BUILD A LIST OF POTENTIAL CLIENTS

By Jean-François Venne



Sonia Bouchard, president of l'Équipe Sonia Bouchard (a firm specializing in business development), uses a range of social media, including LinkedIn, to build her company's lists of potential customers. She publishes articles on subjects likely to interest her target clientele, and says that it's not uncommon for social media users to contact her and initiate a conversation as a result.

One of LinkedIn's main advantages is that it allows the user to liaise with their network to reach new contacts, facilitating what Bouchard calls "warm

calls." This is the equivalent of asking someone in our network to introduce us to someone in theirs; if the potential client is approached by a person who has been introduced, or even recommended, by someone they know, they will almost certainly be more attentive.

"The important thing," Bouchard says, "is to target the clientele that we want to attract."

Q FINDING CLIENTS ON THE WEB

Julien Raby, founder of the web marketing agency Combustible, deploys several strategies to help his clients recruit potential customers. First of all, he says, it is important to make sure you and your company appear prominently in online searches; to achieve this, he recommends highlighting original or specialized aspects of your services to stand out from the competition. It will be difficult, for instance, to position yourself effectively just by using the keywords "Toronto-Paris flight."

Raby uses Authentica Tours, which specializes in wine road trips, as a good example of a well-positioned, well-promoted company. It publishes articles on the world's best wine destinations, vineyards and more, allowing it to feature prominently in online searches and to be easily-spotted by people interested in that type of travel. "This method offers the best return on investment because you don't pay per click," Raby explains. "Once you've invested in building your website and producing articles, you'll benefit in the long run."

Q OBTAINING EMAIL ADDRESSES

In order to get the email addresses of visitors to your website, it's a good idea to offer them a free resource – for example, tips on how to pay less for their trip or the opportunity to discover five more regions – in exchange for their email. →



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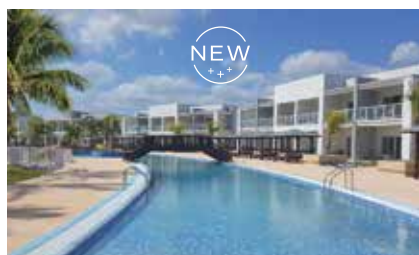
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You can then maintain the link you've established with them by sending them regular articles. "They are more likely to think of you when they want to take action," Raby says.

THE ADVANTAGES OF GOOGLE ADS

Once the site is ready, Google Ads comes into play. This lets you choose keywords and pay to generate a company advertisement when a user enters these words into the search engine. You must pay for each click on the link to your website, with the price varying according to the keyword's popularity; this is, after all, a system of chance. You are effectively placing a bet on the coveted keywords. Whoever pays the most will see their company at the top of the list. We must, therefore, remain reasonable: if the price you pay to create your list of potential customers is greater than the volume of sales it brings in, it's not worth it.

Finally, so-called "remarketing" can also be useful, using services like Google AdSense and Facebook. These make it possible to find a visitor to your site who has consulted, for instance, a page on a wine route circuit in Burgundy. An advertisement can then be customized for them – for example,

offering a 10 per cent discount on a trip to that particular region of France.

"Companies have never been so well-equipped to target their potential customers and contact them," Raby says. "However, we must always make sure that our strategies are profitable." ●



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A NUMBERS GAME

TRAVEL FACTS & FIGURES: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

By Marie-Eve Vallières

837,104

Number of Canadians who visited the Dominican Republic in 2017, a record figure so far.



20,000

The Dominican Republic is planning 20,000 new hotel rooms over the next few years in Punta Cana, Bayahibe, Puerto Plata, Samana and Santo Domingo. This number will be added to the 69,000 hotel rooms currently available.

\$1.8 billion

The Dominican Republic's Ministry of Tourism recently approved the refurbishment or construction of 14 new hotel projects, representing a \$1.8 billion investment. Flagship projects include Club Med Michès, Grand Bahia Principe Aquamarine and Luxury Bahia Principe Ambar Blue, Grand Fiesta Americana Punta Cana Los Corales, Nickelodeon Hotel Punta Cana, Riu Mambo, Lopesan Costa Bávaro and Iberostar Grand on the east coast of Bávaro – to name just a few.

77.1%

The average hotel occupancy rate of the Dominican Republic in 2017, marking a slight decrease from the 2016 rate of 78 per cent. This decline is partly due to the growing number of rooms available. The properties with the highest occupancy rates are: Punta Cana – Bávaro (82.8 per cent), Romana – Bayahibe (82 per cent) and Chica – Juan Dolio (71.4 per cent). The destinations with the highest occupancy are: Samaná (67.6 per cent), Santo Domingo (62.4 per cent), Santiago (56.9 per cent), and Sosúa – Cabarete (54.7 per cent).



The maximum duration of long-term stays in the Dominican Republic.

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MARKING NEW YEAR'S EVE AROUND THE WORLD

By Blake Wolfe

Watching New Year's Eve celebrations on TV is so, well, last year! From traditional to transcendent, repeat trips to once-in-a-lifetime voyages, there are as many ways to celebrate as there are destinations. Here's five top New Year's destinations to suggest to your clients looking to celebrate the evening in a big way!

Sydney rings in the New Year with fireworks



Photo by Robert Wallace/Tourism Australia

SYDNEY: Happy New Year from Down Under!

With Jan. 1 dawning over the middle Pacific Ocean, Sydney is one of the first large cities to ring in the New Year.

And with the rest of the world watching – it's estimated that more than 1 billion people view the Sydney celebrations on TV – the city knows how to put on a show!

Each Dec. 1, Sydney welcomes more than 1 million spectators along the shores of the city's harbour to take in the big show, which culminates in two memorable fireworks displays centred around the iconic Sydney Opera House – a family show takes place at 9 p.m. followed by the main event at the stroke

of midnight. The lead-up to 12 a.m. includes the annual Harbour Parade of Light, where ships traverse the waters with a lightshow for onlookers.

The city's layout provides dozens of vantage points to view the fireworks

show, including numerous pubs and restaurants with the perfect view of the harbour.

For travellers heading to Sydney for the big show, there's plenty of nearby hotel options, including Pullman Quay Grand Sydney, Sir Stamford at Circular Quay, Intercontinental Sydney and Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel.

PLANNING AHEAD

Your clients should be prepared to walk. Roads around Sydney Harbour start to close throughout the day from 11 a.m., including the closure of the Sydney Harbour Bridge from 11 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

BY THE NUMBERS

- It takes **18 shipping containers full of equipment** to set up for the fireworks display
- Sydney's New Year's Eve celebrations are **15 months in the making**
- The event contributes approximately **\$130 million (AUD)** to Sydney's economy.

DUBAI: an elevated New Year's Eve

Synonymous with all things luxury and innovation, Dubai offers a setting for a New Year's Eve like no other.

Situated on the Persian Gulf and surrounded on three sides by the Arabian Desert, the ultra-modern city features multiple public fireworks displays and exclusive parties every Dec. 31, the iconic skyline with its towering skyscrapers serving as a unique backdrop for the annual lightshow.

The centrepiece of Dubai's New Year's Eve festivities is the massive celebration at Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest skyscraper at 160 storeys and the city's most well-known landmark. Incorporating a laser and light show projected onto the Burj Khalifa and the nearby Dubai Fountain, the evening culminates in a massive fireworks display taking place on and around the tower.

Looking to catch fireworks from Dubai's beach? The Burj Al Arab hotel also offers a fireworks display which can be taken in



New Year's Eve 2018 celebrations at the Burj Khalifa Tower

from a number of vantage points along the waterfront, including Kite Beach and Black Palace Beach. The fireworks at the Burj Al Arab can also be seen from the Madinat Jumeirah, a modern take on a traditional Middle Eastern souk which is located right next to the hotel.

The city's numerous luxury properties also host ticketed events for the occasion, with many of them located on the Palm Jumeirah, a configuration of artificial islands in the Persian Gulf. The Palm

Jumeirah's centrepiece hotel – Atlantis, The Palm – hosts both a premium NYE party and a dazzling fireworks display of its own.



PLANNING AHEAD

Be prepared for crowds! With more than one million people jammed into downtown Dubai for the festivities, your clients should be ready to rub shoulders with complete strangers.

Although Dubai is a cosmopolitan city, visitors should keep in mind to dress and act modestly in accordance with local Muslim custom. This also applies to alcohol consumption, which can only take place in licenced venues, including restaurants, bars and hotels. →

BY THE NUMBERS

- The Burj Khalifa's "Light Up 2018" landed a Guinness World Records title for the largest light and sound show on a single building, spanning a surface area of **109,252 sq. m.** – about 27 acres, the size of nearly **20 football fields!**
- The show incorporated **40 specially modified outdoor lasers** as well as **230 high-power Xenon searchlights** and **280 outdoor beam moving lights**, involving the work of more than **300 professionals.**



LAS VEGAS: beyond the ordinary

While it may seem like every night is New Year's Eve in Las Vegas, the Entertainment Capital of the World knows how to roll out the red carpet on Dec. 31!

Every year, thousands of party-goers spill onto the Vegas Strip as the city's most popular stretch of road closes to vehicle traffic in preparation for the biggest celebration of the year. Ahead of the midnight countdown, Las Vegas keeps the excitement high with some of the biggest names in entertainment and music performing throughout the night; in 2017, venues along the Strip saw New Year's Eve performances by Bruno Mars, Maroon 5 and the Foo Fighters, to name just a few.

While a massive fireworks display coordinated across several casinos (properties involved include Caesars Palace, Planet Hollywood Resort, MGM Grand, Aria, Treasure Island, The

Venetian and Stratosphere) marks the height of the evening, the celebration is only just getting started as Jan. 1 dawns, with numerous parties continuing on through the night across Las Vegas' many clubs. And as its reputation as a culinary destination continues to grow, the city's many restaurants host special New Year's Eve events.

Outside of the Strip, downtown Las Vegas celebrates under the LED canopy of the Fremont Street Experience; a smaller area than the Strip, downtown

Vegas provides a (slightly) more laid-back alternative to the revelry taking place a few blocks over.

Want to get the best view of the festivities? The High Roller observation wheel, located at the LINQ Hotel & Casino, provides unparalleled views of the Strip, while a New Year's Eve dinner booked at the Top of the World restaurant atop the Stratosphere Casino, Hotel & Tower makes for an unforgettable dining experience.



PLANNING AHEAD

Book your clients early! With Las Vegas drawing huge crowds during the holidays, hotels, shows and attractions can sell out fast.

BY THE NUMBERS

- At 550 ft., the High Roller is the largest observation wheel in the world – perfect for a sky-high view of the NYE festivities in Las Vegas!
- The fireworks display along the Vegas Strip to ring in 2018 lasted approximately eight minutes, involving 80,000 pyrotechnic devices set off via 10,000 electronic circuits. The display took approximately four days of installation, preceded by several months of planning.

NEW YORK: unforgettable Times Square

We've all watched the New Year's Eve Ball drop at Times Square on TV, but there's nothing like experiencing it in person!

Long associated with New Year's Eve celebrations, New York City has been host to a major NYE party in Times Square since the property's owners first hosted one in 1904. Three years later in 1907, the first-ever Ball ceremony took place and the rest, as they say, is history.

The site has hosted Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve since 1972, in which the ball-lowering has become an iconic part of the annual TV broadcast, which also features live performances by chart-topping musical acts and celebrity guests.

For revellers looking to escape the cold and the crowds – approximately 1 million people descend on downtown NYC this night – numerous



Confetti rains down on Times Square at the stroke of midnight

restaurants, bars and other venues host parties to ring in the New Year.

For active travellers, NYE in NYC offers a unique opportunity: the New York Road Runners running club holds a Midnight Run to celebrate the New Year, involving a four-mile fun run through Central Park, which also includes a costume contest and parade. A limited number of same-day registration kits will be available at the race and it's free to watch for spectators.



PLANNING AHEAD

Dress for the weather! Even with the extra warmth generated by thousands of Times Square revellers, winter can be notoriously cold in NYC so make sure your clients know to bundle up.

Heading to Times Square? Get there early, as prime viewing spots for the festivities fill up by mid-afternoon. Let your clients know they should also eat and visit the bathroom ahead of time. →

BY THE NUMBERS

- The Ball (technically a geodesic sphere) is **12 ft. in diameter**, and **weighs 11,875 lbs.** By comparison, the first New Year's Eve Ball was 5 ft. in diameter and weighed 700 lbs.
- The lowering of the Ball was temporarily suspended in 1942 and 1943, due to the wartime "dimout" of lights in New York City.



Photo credit: Leonardo Neumann Cluffo

RIO DE JANEIRO: bash on the beach

The fireworks are just the beginning at Rio's New Year's Eve celebrations

Looking for a party? Look no further than Rio de Janeiro!

While the city's most popular celebration is undoubtedly Carnival, Rio is also home to one of the world's biggest New Year's Eve celebrations.

Known as Reveillon, the annual event draws hundreds of thousands of tourists to Rio each December, where the occasion is marked by numerous performances by top Brazilian talent and of course, a massive fireworks display from the Atlantic waters along Copacabana Beach. And once the fireworks are over, the real party begins, lasting well into the early hours of Jan. 1!

It's along the Copacabana where the biggest party happens – according to Riotur, the city's tourism board, the famed beach welcomed more than 2.4 million revellers looking for the best place to watch the show last year.

Not to be outdone, neighbouring Ipanema Beach also draws a large crowd and although further away from the main source of action, the party is no less raucous as the minutes tick down to midnight.

A unique aspect of New Year's in Rio is the annual offering made by millions of visitors to Iemanjá, a sea goddess from the African Yoruba religion brought to Brazil hundreds of years ago. Each year, participants place flowers and other gifts into the waters of the

Atlantic Ocean in a symbolic act to bring good things in the coming year.

PLANNING AHEAD

Dress for the beach! With celebrations spilling onto the sands of the Copacabana and Ipanema Beaches, be beach-ready for this party.

Like Las Vegas, Rio is also a popular LGBT travel destination, drawing millions of gay and lesbian travellers each year. ●

BY THE NUMBERS

- In 2017, Rio welcomed approximately **910,000 tourists** for New Year's Eve celebrations.
- The celebrations last year also injected **\$3.5 billion BRL** into the city's economy.



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MICE



SPONSORED EVENTS HOW TO RAISE FUNDS

By Aurore Bonvalot

When you put on an event, no matter how big or small, you can choose to pay for it by setting up a fundraiser.

Whether it's your participation in a tourism fair, a client event that you host at your agency, or an event abroad for one of your clients, fundraising for an event is often a good idea.

Here are five key points to bear in mind:

1 Why try fundraising?

- To finance the event and make it profitable;
- To increase awareness about the event or the company;

2 Successful fundraising

- To offer relevant activities and content to participants.
- Make sure to evaluate the total costs.
- Write a complete sponsorship plan, including the mission of the company, its targeted clientele, and the benefits of being a sponsor; create an emotional link between your event and the sponsor.
- Ensure that the amount given by each sponsor is sufficient to guarantee that costs related to the event are recouped.

- Make sure to offer adequate visibility and promotion to the sponsors before, during, and after the event on the various communication platforms used (social media, newsletters, media advertising, invitation and event programme), and allow them to speak with potential customers.
- Be creative in sponsorship content.
- Establish an entry price for your event. This gives value to the event and will raise money from participants who may not have paid to sponsor it.
- Before contacting your prospective sponsors, do some research on them. Are they launching a new product or service? Have they got a new brand, or a cause they're promoting that could be incorporated into the theme of your event? Take every opportunity to point out how much their presence at the event will benefit them.
- As you gain new sponsors, let them know that this will give even more credibility to your event, and encourage new sponsors to get on board.
- After the event, don't forget to follow up with your sponsors on what they liked or what they would improve for next time, as well as the benefits (financial and other) that were generated by the event.

3 Who contributes to fundraising?

- The company hosting the event and its team: depending on the size of the event, the promoter may set up a specially-established committee dedicated to fundraising. It's important for each of its

members to commit to raising funds, and to motivate team members: set goals for each team member and share these goals with the team, communicate regularly with them on the progress of the fundraising, offer them rewards for each fundraising goal achieved.

- You might also consider hiring an agency specializing in fundraising and telemarketing. There are many options available. →





4 Who are the donors to target?

- Sponsors from previous years: they know the event, so they will likely be interested in contributing again. They are also perfect ambassadors who can talk to potential donors about the event. You can also give them priority in sponsorship selection.

5 The concept of time and money collection

- Ideally, you should start the search for sponsors 9-12 months before the event date.
- Keep track of sponsorship bills and make sure you have collected outstanding sums before the deadline.

Don't forget!

Make your fundraising known to as many people as possible, and through the different channels of communication that you have. Make sure to send targeted communications to your personal sponsors: a personalized approach is always a winner. It's estimated that only five per cent of event participants raise 60 per cent of sponsorships; make sure you know who the five per cent are!

Remember – everything can be sponsored! Let your imagination click into gear. ●



Aureore Bonvalot

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

EXPERIENCE

WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS NEED TO KNOW

ABOUT
THEIR

CANADIAN PASSPORT



GOOD PRACTICES TO AVOID STRESS AT CUSTOMS

By Marie-Eve Vallières

Almost half of Canadians hold a valid passport, a massive proportion in comparison to our neighbors to the south. Whether stamped in Bangkok or Bogotá, a valid Canadian passport allows the holder to explore (almost) every corner of the planet with ease.

Is Our Passport Superior?

The Canadian passport ranks fifth in the world, following the likes of Denmark, the United States, Finland, Singapore, and Japan to name a few, as the most desired passports at an international level. Canadians enjoy great freedom in being able to enter and exit 185 of 227 destinations recognized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization without visa requirements upon arrival and departure (source: index Henley & Partners for International Air Transport Association, 2018).

The Afghan passport, in contrast, is the least sought-after, only allowing visa-free border crossing within 30 countries.

Russia, Brazil, and China also fall under the category of countries that impose some of the toughest restrictions on passport holders, as well as the majority of Central Africa and some states in the Gulf.

It should be noted that the Government of Canada regularly issues travel advisories on its Travel & Tourism portal (travel.gc.ca) to help Canadian travellers travel safely abroad. There are four possible risk levels that can be applied to a country, territory or region: *Exercise normal security precautions*, *Exercise a high degree of caution*, *Avoid non-essential travel* and *Avoid all travel*. The last two levels are official Government of Canada Travel Advisories and are issued when

the safety and security of Canadians travelling or living in the country may be seriously compromised.

Keeping that in mind, travellers should always know their way around the city they'll be visiting, keep their wits about themselves, and write down the address of the nearest Canadian embassy and consulate.

Make Your Request

A valid Canadian passport is the only reliable travel document, and its universal acceptance helps to prove a Canadian citizen's status and their right to safely enter and exit Canada without being subjected to immigration laws.

For many, a passport even becomes an invaluable keepsake as it collects airport stamps from around the world and records all of the countries checked off the bucket list. →



PASSPORT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The processing times for a Canadian passport application can take up to 20 business days from the moment the request is received by Immigration Canada. It is also possible to request that the passport application be expedited in case a traveller needs to exit the country in an emergency or against strict constraints.

-  **Original proof of Canadian citizenship:** Birth certificate, certificate of citizenship or naturalization;
-  Any valid **Canadian travel document** issued in the applicant's name;
-  **Document to support identity:** Driver's license, Canadian or foreign passport that meets the requirements, ID card issued by the federal, provincial or territorial government, military ID;
-  **Guarantor:** New passport applications must be signed by a guarantor, as well as one of the passport photos and all copies of any supporting identity documents being submitted with the application. A guarantor can be a family member as long as he or she shares the applicant's address; as such, he or she must have known the applicant for at least two years, be a Canadian citizen 18 years of older of age, and hold a valid Canadian passeport. If the applicant cannot find an eligible guarantor, he or she can complete the form PPTC 132.
-  **Two identical passport photos:** the name and the complete address of the photographer and the date the photos were taken must be included on the back of one of the photos;
-  **References:** Compulsory security measures to confirm the identity of the person applying for a passport. References must have known the applicant for at least two years, must be 18 years of age or older, and cannot neither be a guarantor nor a family member (spouse or common-law partner, parent or step-parent, child or grandchild, sibling, grandparent, members of family-in-law);
-  **Supporting documents:** additional documents are required for the replacement of a lost or stolen passport, name change, or sex change.
-  **Fees:** As of 2018, an adult Canadian passport application costs \$120.00 for a five-year term, and \$160.00 for a 10-year term. Children's passports cost \$57.00.



at any time by immigration authorities when travelling into and out of a foreign country. In the case of a widowed parent travelling with a child, a death certificate of the deceased must also be presented.

It's a good idea to check with the embassy or consulate of each country to find out the entry requirements ahead of departure. Printing a photocopied version of the child's passport or another supporting identification card is advisable, in case they get lost at the airport, or require emergency assistance.

Avoiding Unwanted Surprises with Your Family

Travelling with a child can be a challenge in and of itself. Of course, forgetting Sophie the Giraffe might be unforgivable to the eye of the beholder and might result in a few tears, but ultimately all you need is your passport to take off on that flight – Sophie or no Sophie in tow.

If parents are separated or divorced, each individual must bring identification for each travelling child, such as the child's certificate of Canadian citizenship, letters of consent, or court orders for child custody.

Although it is not mandatory to have a letter of consent in Canada, the document can simplify the ordeal for parents quite significantly. The letter of consent must clearly indicate the date on which the child intends to return to the country, alongside a signature of the parent or guardian who will not be accompanying the child. The letter of consent must also be certified by a commissioner of oaths, a notary public, or a lawyer, to reduce the likelihood of questioning by border authorities. The authenticity of this document may be examined

Even if your child doesn't come from a separated family, travelling with them can pose a risk. Such was the case for Stephanie Sauvageau: having signed her daughter's passport, thus rendering it obsolete, she was not authorised to fly. The Sauvageau family had to say goodbye to their holiday in the sun, turn back, and head home without a refund on their tickets.

When it comes to passport regulations, the law is clear:

"In accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirements, parents or legal guardians must never sign their child's travel document. Their signature makes the document invalid and it will have to be replaced. Children under 16 years of age do not need to sign the travel document; only adult Canadian travel documents must imperatively be signed. A signature by a child under the age of 11 does not invalidate the passport. However, children between the ages of 11-15 are encouraged to sign it. The signature line on page 3 should be blank if the child does not sign it. However, it is still valid if the child signs it."

Good to Know: a child's passport doesn't immediately expire the second their turn 18 years old. It remains valid until the indicated expiry date. The holder may present an application for an adult passport within six months to one year of that expiry date.

See More Than Travel

It's not uncommon to see travellers stranded at the boarding gate because their passports have expired six months prior to their departure dates, or the expected return date overlaps with the expiry date. Frustrations can arise, because on one hand, the trip cannot and will not be reimbursed at the expense of the operator, and on the other, this is a common foreseeable error that many inexperienced travellers make. It's recommended that you never travel with a passport that is less than six months shy of expiry, should you wish to remain free of questioning at the border, or denied entry.

The Government of Canada is unequivocal:

"Before you go, check with the embassy or consulate of your destination country in Canada for its rules and restrictions on passport validity. Some countries will not let you enter if your passport is due to expire within six months of the date you plan to return to Canada. It should also be noted that it is no longer possible to add supplementary pages to Canadian passports. Once all pages have been filled with visas or entry-exit stamps, the holder must apply for a new passport".

Dual Citizenship

If you are a Canadian citizen and possess dual citizenship, it is still necessary to have a Canadian passport so that you may return to Canada (with the exception of U.S. citizens). In effect since November 2016, there is a new system put forth that systematically checks to ensure that all passengers

boarding the plane possess all of the required travel entry documents to Canada.

This process goes hand in hand with the introduction of the Electronic Travel (AVE), now required by the Canadian Border Services Agency for all foreign travellers coming into and exiting Canada. Canadian citizens and residents are exempt from this screening, however at request; it is their responsibility to provide proof of Canadian identity or citizenship to the appropriate officials. Whether you are travelling with your family, or on a beautiful solo journey of your own, first and foremost, it is important to be organized. Without a valid passport, it's impossible to have a positive experience.

Bon voyage! ●

USEFUL RESOURCES

Applying for a passport: travel.gc.ca
or 1-800-567-6868

Passport offices: various locations
across the country, more details
on cic.gc.ca/english/passport

Emergency assistance: sos@international.gc.ca
or +1 613 996 8885 (call collect
where available)

List of Canadian embassies and consulates:
travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates

Travel advice and advisories: travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories

A SPIRITED STAY

Haunted hotels and castles
around the world

By **Blake Wolfe**

Who doesn't love a good ghost story this time of year? Enjoy your time at these properties but watch out – some of the guests may have taken the phrase "come in and stay a while" a little too far.

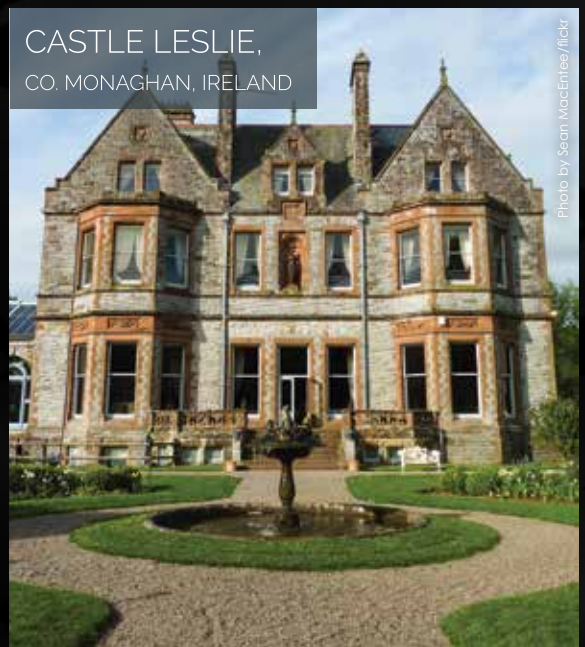


STANLEY HOTEL,
ESTES PARK, COLORADO

Photo by Sean Hobbs/flickr

Nestled high in the Rockies, the Stanley Hotel is perhaps best known as where prolific horror novelist Stephen King was inspired to write *The Shining*. During his one-night stay at the property in 1973 – when he and his wife were the lone guests – King experienced a number of encounters which would later become iconic parts of the novel and subsequent film. These included the appearance of ghostly children and the supernatural significance of Room 217 – the room in which King stayed and now the hotel's most requested. Eager to play up its reputation, the Stanley Hotel offers nightly ghost tours for guests looking to encounter the resident spirits, including original owners F.O. and Flora Stanley.

Located in Ireland's County Monaghan, Castle Leslie offers such an idyllic surrounding that some guests just don't want to leave. Built in 1870, the castle's most popular spot amongst ghost hunters is the Red Room. It's in the Red Room where Lady Marjorie Leslie is reported to have briefly seen her son Norman (who is said to still haunt the room) appear from nowhere, shortly after his death on the battlefields of World War I. Norman is said to still haunt the room, moving around paper and occasionally asking a noisy guest to quiet down. In addition to its paranormal guests, Castle Leslie has also seen some famous (living) faces over the years, including Paul McCartney and Heather Mills, Irish poet WB Yeats and Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger.



CASTLE LESLIE,
CO. MONAGHAN, IRELAND

Photo by Sean MacEntee/flickr

Perhaps the most famous of Jamaica's great houses, Rose Hall is currently a privately-owned tourist attraction situated on former plantation grounds, which have since been developed for commercial real estate including several resorts such as those by Iberostar, Hyatt and Hilton. While the resorts are ghost-free, Rose Hall's alleged paranormal happenings take place in and around the former great house, where former resident Annie Palmer, dubbed the "White Witch of Rose Hall," is said to have murdered three husbands and continues to haunt the grounds. The famed White Witch Golf Course, located on the former plantation grounds, also takes its name from the legend. Tours of Rose Hall are available, including a special Halloween program where guests just might encounter the White Witch herself.

ROSE HALL, MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA



Photo by D.Remey Logan

WAITOMO CAVES HOTEL, NEW ZEALAND



Photo by Waitomo Caves Hotel

Built on a former British fort in 1908, the grounds of the Waitomo Caves Hotel have a long history of strange happenings. The local landscape, particularly the caves, is held sacred by local Maori people, and has traditionally been associated with nature spirits tied to the lands; the region has also been the site of several historic violent clashes between the Maori and British colonists. Guests of the hotel have reported ghostly figures, unexplained sounds and movement of objects. Just as eerie as the alleged ghostly happenings are the Waitomo Caves themselves, where thousands of travellers flock each year to see a light show performed by bioluminescent glow worms in the darkness. ●

THE WORLD CRUISE

VOYAGE OF A LIFETIME

By **Ming Tappin**

A world cruise... it's everyone's dream to sail on one, and every travel agent's loftiest goal to sell one. Sailing around the world on an ocean liner evokes a sense of adventure, romance and discovery, and is the ultimate bucket list item for many.

Around the world in more than 80 days

While it was quite a race for Jules Verne's protagonist Phileas Fogg to traverse the globe in 80 days, today's world journey is taken at a much more leisurely pace (starting at 90 to 100 days), and the only wager one may make is in the ship's casino. World cruises typically depart in January, just in time to escape the North American winter. Ships follow the sun through the South Pacific, Asia and Middle East, and arrive in Europe in time for the spring. Some world cruises truly circumnavigate the world, while others will have an open-jaw itinerary. For those short on time but who still want to experience being a part of a world cruise journey, shorter segments can

be purchased, allowing guests to join and leave the ship at any of the pre-set segment points.

A world of options

World cruises are mostly offered by luxury lines, on small ships carrying a few hundred lucky guests. These ships offer larger accommodations – some being all-suite or all-balcony, a high crew-to-guest ratio, open-seating dining, and an all-inclusive environment (the exception is Cunard Line, which offers voyages on their larger-sized, legendary Queens). To make them attainable to a wider audience, mass-market lines such as Costa, MSC and Princess Cruises, and premium line Holland America, also offer world cruises at a lower rate, but with fewer inclusions.

No bets – it's all in

A full world cruise typically comes with a wealth of extra amenities such as roundtrip first class airfare, transfers, prepaid gratuities, visa packages, laundry and medical services, →





Photo: courtesy of Princess Cruises



Crystal Serenity

and a healthy shipboard credit that can be used towards excursions or other expenditures. Special events will be held throughout the voyage, including exclusive excursions ashore and commemorative parties. Some cruise lines may include a pre-departure gala party, luggage shipping services or private limo transfer between home and airport. World cruise segments may also offer a selection of amenities, the number of which increases with the voyage duration.

You don't need to be a millionaire

World cruises are not as out of reach as people think. Rates can start at \$20,000 on a mass-market ship. A sailing on a luxury line will be closer to \$50,000 and up. Segments are priced according to the duration of the voyage. It may appear to be a lot of money at first glance, but considering the duration, the inclusions, and the once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the world in stress-free comfort, it is a privilege that Mr. Fogg never had the pleasure to enjoy, at any cost.

You have world cruise clients

Contrary to popular belief, agents do have world cruise clients – they just

need to be cultivated. Unless someone has won the lottery or comes into an unexpected windfall, clients don't just walk into an agency and book a world cruise. Such a booking may take several years, or decades of planning and saving, to come to fruition.

The first step is to talk to your clients about them. Done in a light-hearted "Wouldn't it be nice..." or "Can you imagine..." way, it plants the seed in your clients' minds, that a world cruise is attainable and should be a goal to aim for. If you have clients who book long cruises or back-to-back sailings,

it means they already enjoy extended time at sea, and see the value of exploring the world this way. They would be prime candidates to graduate to a world cruise.

Retirement, a special birthday, anniversary or other milestone achievements are events that people typically plan a big celebration for – and a world cruise may be in the cards for some. But you'll only get the booking if you recommend it. Good luck, and write me when you sell your first world cruise! ●



Ming Tappin

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



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WORLD CRUISES

The following chart lists 2019 and 2020 world cruises being offered by North American-based cruise lines, at time of press. As the highest and the lowest categories sell out first, it is wise to book early. Bon Voyage!

CRUISE LINE	SHIP	DEPARTURE DATE	NUMBER OF DAYS	FROM/TO	SEGMENTS AVAILABLE	ALL-INCLUSIVE
Costa Cruises	<i>Costa Luminosa</i>	Jan. 5, 2019	112	Venice roundtrip	42, 74, 77, 80, 106, or 109 days	✗
	<i>Costa Deliziosa</i>	Jan. 9, 2020	112	Civitavecchia to Venice	106 or 108 days	✗
Crystal Cruises	<i>Crystal Serenity</i>	Jan. 13, 2019	85	Los Angeles to Monte Carlo	15, 21, 22, or 26 days	😊
	<i>Crystal Serenity</i>	Jan. 6, 2020	106	Miami to Rome	13, 14, 15, 17, 18 or 90 days	😊
Cunard Line	<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	Jan. 3, 2019	108	New York roundtrip	55 or 94 days	✗
	<i>Queen Victoria</i>	Jan. 10, 2019	111	Southampton roundtrip	15 segments from 16 to 107 days	✗
	<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	Jan. 3, 2020	113	New York roundtrip	35, 43, 56, 64 or 99 days	✗
Holland America Line	<i>Amsterdam</i>	Jan. 22, 2019	113	Ft. Lauderdale roundtrip	25, 26 or 54 days	✗
	<i>Amsterdam</i>	Jan. 4, 2020	128	Ft. Lauderdale roundtrip	TBA	✗
MSC Cruises	<i>MSC Magnifica</i>	Jan. 5, 2020	116	Genoa (roundtrip)	No	✗
				Guests can also embark in Civitavecchia, Marseille or Barcelona		
Oceania Cruises	<i>Insignia</i>	Jan. 10, 2020	180	Miami to San Francisco	No	😊
				Can be combined with additional sailings up to a total of 200 days		
Princess Cruises	<i>Pacific Princess</i>	Jan. 20, 2019	111	Los Angeles roundtrip or Ft Lauderdale roundtrip	15, 24, 29, 39, 43, 72 or 96 days	✗
	<i>Pacific Princess</i>	Jan. 5, 2020	111	Los Angeles roundtrip or Ft Lauderdale roundtrip	15, 22, 29, 37, 45, 74 or 96 days	✗
	<i>Sea Princess</i>	May 14, 2019	106	Sydney roundtrip, also available as Melbourne roundtrip or Brisbane roundtrip	22, 54, 56, 60 or 68 days	✗
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	<i>Seven Seas Navigator</i>	Jan. 4, 2019	131	Los Angeles to New York City	12, 16, 19, 20, 24, 36 or 40 days	😊
	<i>Seven Seas Mariner</i>	Jan. 6, 2020	131	Miami roundtrip, also available as San Francisco roundtrip	18, 20, 21, 36, 41 or 54 days	😊
Seabourn	<i>Seabourn Sojourn</i>	Jan. 4, 2020	146	Miami to San Francisco	30, 38, 39, 68, 77, 78, 107 or 116 days	😊
Silversea Cruises	<i>Silver Whisper</i>	Jan. 6, 2019	133	San Francisco to London (Greenwich)	8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 24 or 28 days	😊
	<i>Silver Whisper</i>	Jan. 6, 2020	140	Ft. Lauderdale to Amsterdam	9, 10, 11, 15, 18 or 19 days	😊
Viking Ocean Cruises	<i>Viking Sun</i>	Jan. 3, 2019	128	Miami to London	No	✗
	<i>Viking Sun</i>	Aug. 31, 2019	245	London roundtrip	127 days	✗
	<i>Viking Sun</i>	Jan. 4, 2020	119	Los Angeles to London	No	✗

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	January - June 2020	Up to 29 days	Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, South Pacific
Holland America Line	October - November 2018	Up to 48 days	Asia, South Pacific
	January - February 2019	Up to 80 days	South America
MSC Cruises	October - November 2018	Up to 30 days	Asia, Europe, Middle East, South America
	March - April 2019, Sept. - Nov. 2019		
	March 2020		
Oceania Cruises	October - December 2018	Up to 38 days	Europe, South America, South Pacific
	Throughout 2019	Up to 80 days	Asia, Caribbean, Europe, South America, South Pacific
	January - June 2020	Up to 67 days	Africa, Asia, Europe, North & South America, South Pacific
Princess Cruises	October - November 2018	Up to 38 days	Asia, Europe
	March, October - November 2019	Up to 37 days	Asia, Europe
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	December 2018	36 days	Australia
	January 2019	52 days	Asia, South Pacific
	June 2019	77 days	Canada & New England, Europe
	November 2019	66 days	South America
Seabourn Cruise Line	October - December 2018	Up to 58 days	Asia, South America, South Pacific
	February - April 2019	Up to 95 days	Africa, Asia
Silversea Cruises	February - April 2019	74 days	Asia, South Pacific
	June - July 2019	48 days	Europe
	October - December 2019	58 days	Asia, Europe
	March - May 2020	63 days	Asia, South Pacific
	January - March 2020	64 days	South America
Viking Ocean Cruises	August 2019	37 days	Alaska, Asia
	March 2020	93 days	Alaska, Asia, South Pacific
	May 2020	37 days	Alaska, Asia
Windstar Cruises	October - December 2018	Up to 24 days	Caribbean, Eastern U.S., Panama, Transatlantic
	October - December 2018	Up to 33 days	Asia
	November 2018	17 days	Tahiti
	October 2019	Up to 18 days	Europe
	November - December 2019	Up to 18 days	Tahiti

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7 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SEO

By Frédéric Gonzalo

SEO is not a new acronym for a dangerous mosquito or a rare disease. Rather, it stands for search engine optimization – essentially, the optimization of your website so that it features as prominently as possible when travellers are searching the web. In other words: if a user types in "South travel for Christmas", or "Travel agent in Toronto", your website should ideally be among the first organic search results – assuming, of course, that you operate a travel agency in Toronto (or

at least in the city centre) and you sell all-inclusive packages to the South.

SEO is a specialty that can't immediately be mastered by a digital marketing novice, but there are certain rules and principles to understand that will help you perform better with search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) and generate quality, natural traffic to your website.

7 CRITICAL FACTORS OF SEO

"Today, between 85-90 per cent of searches related to the purchase of a trip begin with an online search." (Google Think)

But how do you get traffic to your site without necessarily buying keywords in a Google AdWords campaign? Here are seven critical factors that come up almost invariably during website audits and training that I give on content marketing.

1 Keywords sought by users

The first factor is probably the best-known – perhaps even too well-known, because I often see companies obsessed with this aspect. Your website must offer content that responds to the most frequent queries from users in your target audience. This content should be found not only in the text of



the website, but also – and most importantly – in the page titles, the meta-description of each of these pages, and in the headings of the text – commonly called H1, H2, H3, etc.

2. Content that's easy for search engines to find

Is your website indexed by search engines? For example: for Google, you'll want to make sure to submit the URL of the website and provide the details of the sitemap in Google Search Console. I also recommend the (paid) SEMRush tool to help you optimize crawlers and index your site; this is an aspect that, although little-known, represents a great opportunity for most companies.

3. Quality and quantity of links

A website should not exist in isolation, but rather be part of a digital ecosystem. You should strive to get inbound links from third-party sites: local chambers of commerce, regional or sectoral tourism associations, traditional media (*The Toronto Star*, *the Globe & Mail*, etc.). Each link referring to your site is a kind of signal, a "vote" that search engines perceive and appreciate.

Outbound links may also be relevant when you have strategic alliances with other retailers, suppliers, and large customers. A link-building strategy is therefore relevant for obtaining quality incoming links.

4. Content that satisfies the user

When a user carries out a search using the keywords "organizing a honeymoon in the Caribbean" and lands on your website, what happens? If they spend more time than average on the site, and they consult several pages during a session, Google will record a satisfactory experience. On the other hand, if the user leaves after just 10 seconds spent on the site, it will be concluded that the content is not accurate or adequate – at least, for this combination of searched keywords.

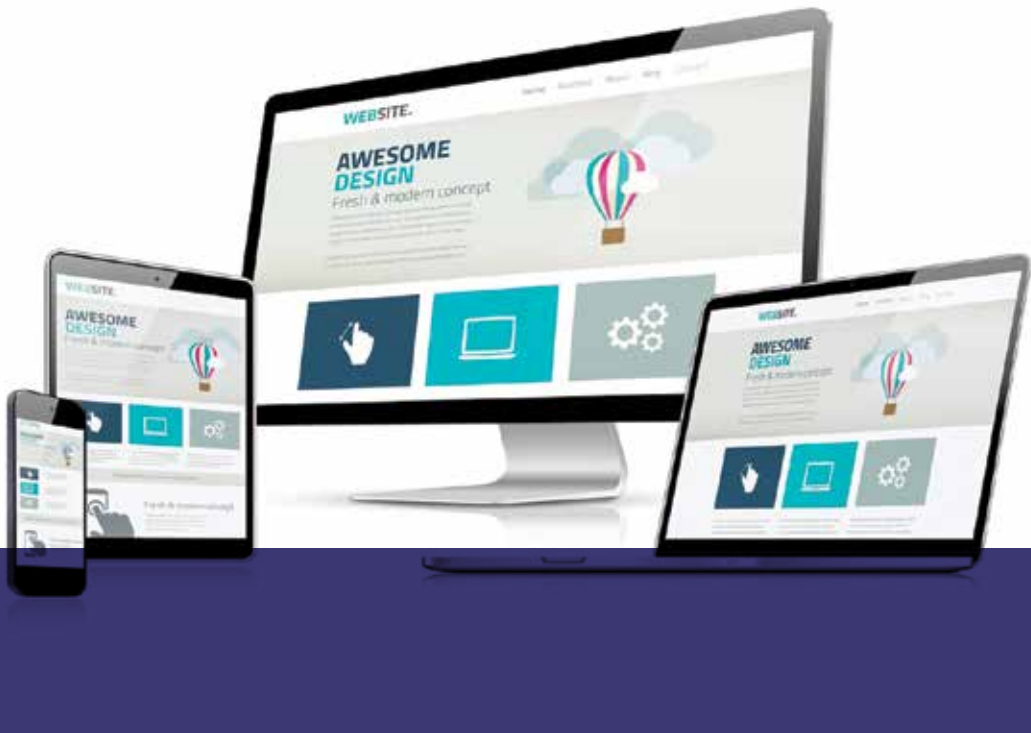


Therefore, we will try to measure the evolution of performance indicators such as:

- Rebound rate
- Time spent on the site
- Conversion rate
- Percentage of users returning to the site

5. Content freshness

Have you ever noticed how travel wholesaler sites often feature blog posts? One of the reasons for these is the contribution to better SEO for their website. Why? Search engines like a website that has fresh content, is frequently updated, and therefore more likely to be relevant to users seeking relevant information. If the word "blog" repels you, think of a "News" or "Promotions" section, for example, containing a calendar of activities in your field. →



takes this into account for your site's score. Since 2015, this also includes the mobile version of your site. It clearly pays to have a website whose content is displayed quickly.

7. Website design for several devices

Last but not least: does your site provide a satisfactory experience for all types of devices – desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone? Today, it is no longer sufficient to have a site simply adapted for mobile devices; we must increasingly think in mobile-first mode. Google has also developed its Mobile-First Index tool. Have you tried it?

It's important to produce quality content, but search engines evaluate the recency of publications as well as their levels of engagement – comments or likes – not to mention how many times these articles have been shared or referenced in links.

6. Download speed

This is a factor that's becoming extremely important, at a time when our attention – and patience! – are increasingly fragile. Too often, we come across pages that take ages to load – something that's usually a product of a large number of images, uncompressed and in high resolution. Other problems can arise when the site is hosted on a shared domain with hundreds of other websites with minimal bandwidth – something that affects the download speed of the content information. There is therefore a direct correlation between the opening rate and download speed of the site, and Google

There are, of course, many other factors to achieve effective SEO, but if you can master these seven crucial points for your website, you're moving in the right direction. ●



Frédéric Gonzalo

*Conference speaker & consultant
specializing in e-tourism*



Barbados

Peloponnese

Okinawa

Poland

Whistler

Destinations to Discover

By Blake Wolfe



SUGAR & SPICE IN BARBADOS

Photos courtesy of Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc.

Just beyond the beach in Barbados is a sweet world of culinary delights and festivals, with something for every taste!

The island's heritage as a sugar producer (1640 is widely cited as the year the first sugar plantation was planted in Barbados) is celebrated each year in the form of Crop Over. Once a traditional festival marking the end of the sugar harvest, Crop Over has evolved over the years into a months-long celebration featuring parades, parties and musical performances throughout the summer months.

The finale to Crop Over, the Grand Kadooment, takes place on the first Monday of August with an explosion of colourful costumes, music and fireworks taking over. Young revellers can take part too, with a "Kiddie Kadooment" just for youth.

Raise a glass

A wealth of sugar also yields another crop which is synonymous with Barbados: rum.

The earliest production of rum in Barbados dates back to the 1600s, marking a time when British sailors would return home across the Atlantic with a bottle of Barbadian rum as their proof of passage. In 1703, production of Mount Gay Rum began on the island; it's now cited as the oldest rum brand still available.

The island's many distilleries, including Mount Gay and St. Nicholas Abbey, host tours for visitors eager to learn the history and mechanics of rum distilling in Barbados – which, of course, include tastings of the final product.

Food for all tastes

But Barbados is not just about sugar and rum. A strong street food scene offers the best of Barbadian cuisine, comprised of African, Indian



Barbados' many rum distilleries offer visitors the chance to see – and taste! – the rum-making process up close.

and British influences utilizing local ingredients. The national dish of cou-cou (a mixture of okra and cornmeal) and flying fish is readily available, with fishcakes and saltbread ranked a close second.

Guests looking for an upscale dining experience will also have plenty to enjoy as well: from hotel dining rooms to top-rated eateries, there's no shortage of fine dining options in Barbados.

An establishment of note is The Restaurant at Animal Flower Cave, which has grown from a small bar built in 1927 on the island's northernmost point, offering panoramic ocean views and dining in a casual setting. After their meal, guests can explore the cave, named for the sea anemones found in the pools at the cave's entrance.

Barbados is also a top spot for fresh seafood and nowhere is this more apparent than at the weekly Oistins Fish Fry.

A long-time Barbadian tradition, the grounds of Oistins Bay Gardens host a Friday fish fry featuring the catch of the day served up in an informal setting at an extremely reasonable price. The grills sizzle with a variety of locally-caught fish including tuna, swordfish, marlin, mahi-mahi, flying fish and lobster. Guests can work off the calories after by joining in the weekly dance or perusing the various artwork available for sale from local vendors. ●

Did you know?

- While the service has been long retired, Barbados was the **only Caribbean destination to welcome regular flights by the Concorde**.
- In power since 1639, Barbados has the world's **third-oldest parliamentary government**.



A Barbados institution, Oistins Fish Fry is a must-try!

OKINAWA

JAPAN'S BEACH DESTINATION

Photos courtesy of Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau

Located southwest of the main island of Japan (and roughly equidistant to Taiwan), the island of Okinawa has long been a beach destination for Japanese tourists in search of sun and sand.

Geography has blessed Okinawa with a warmer climate than that of Japan's more northerly islands, and while the four seasons are still experienced here, summer is much longer – and the fall and winter much warmer! – allowing for an extended beach season, which generally begins in March and concludes in September.

Miles of beaches

Popular sun spots line the shores of Okinawa from north to south, including the artificial 21st Century Forest Beach in Nago, located in the park that also houses the Nago Civic Baseball Stadium, along with Busena Beach and Renaissance Beach, both found in two of the island's popular resort areas.

For beach-goers seeking a different kind of experience, Okinawa's smaller outlying islands, including Miyako, Kume and Ishigaki, all feature beaches of their own. With their locations away from the main resort areas, travellers willing to make the short trip are rewarded with pristine stretches of sand in a more secluded setting.

While many beaches in Okinawa charge an entry fee, others – particularly those found on the smaller islands – are completely free to enjoy.

With the beaches, several beachfront resorts can also be found in Okinawa with a wide range of offerings for guests. These include several Japanese brands as well as international chains, including Sheraton and Club Med.

Exploring the ocean

In addition to beaches, the ocean provides travellers with a number of other activities.

Diving is a popular pastime in Okinawa

From January to March, humpback whales can be spotted off the coast of Zamami Island (west of the southern end of the main island of Okinawa) on their annual migration through the Pacific Ocean. Thousands of visitors eager to catch a glimpse of the majestic creatures flock to Okinawa each winter, with numerous whale-watching tours available.

Shark encounters

Divers, take note – also occurring in the winter months is the gathering of thousands of hammerhead sharks near Yonaguni Island, the westernmost inhabited island of Japan. In addition to the annual shark display, the island also offers a unique diving opportunity in the form of the Yonaguni Monument, an unusual natural rock formation bearing a striking resemblance to steps carved in stone.

And similar to warm-weather destinations in the U.S., Okinawa boasts a number of theme parks and tourist attractions.

For visitors wanting to explore the ocean while on dry land, the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium offers guests the chance to see Pacific Ocean life up-close. Of note is the presence of whale sharks in the aquarium's main tank, one of the few facilities in the world to feature the giant fish.

Nago Pineapple Park

Also among the notable locations are Okinawa Fruits Land and Nago Pineapple Park, both of which are located in the city of Nago and offer explorations of botanical gardens full of tropical plants and fruit. ●

Did you know?

- Okinawa has been populated for **at least 22,000 years**, with the first settlers arriving from China or Indonesia.
- For foodies, **pork and soba noodles are two of Okinawa's most popular dishes**, along with awamori, a local liquor made from fermented rice.

Busena Beach

PELOPONNESE

A TRUE CLASSIC

Home to both the gods and heroes of myth and the ancient Greeks who created them, the Peloponnese region of Greece is still enchanting travellers to this day.

A broad region encompassing much of the country's south, Peloponnese contains a variety of landscapes to explore, from sandy Mediterranean beaches on the western shores (contrasted with the east's rocky coast) to the lush and mountainous interior. While "Peloponnese" translates to "Island of Pelops" (named in honour of the Greek mythological hero who is said to have conquered the land), the region is in fact connected to the mainland via a narrow land bridge; the Rio-Antirrio Bridge, completed in 2004, also connects Peloponnese with the mainland.

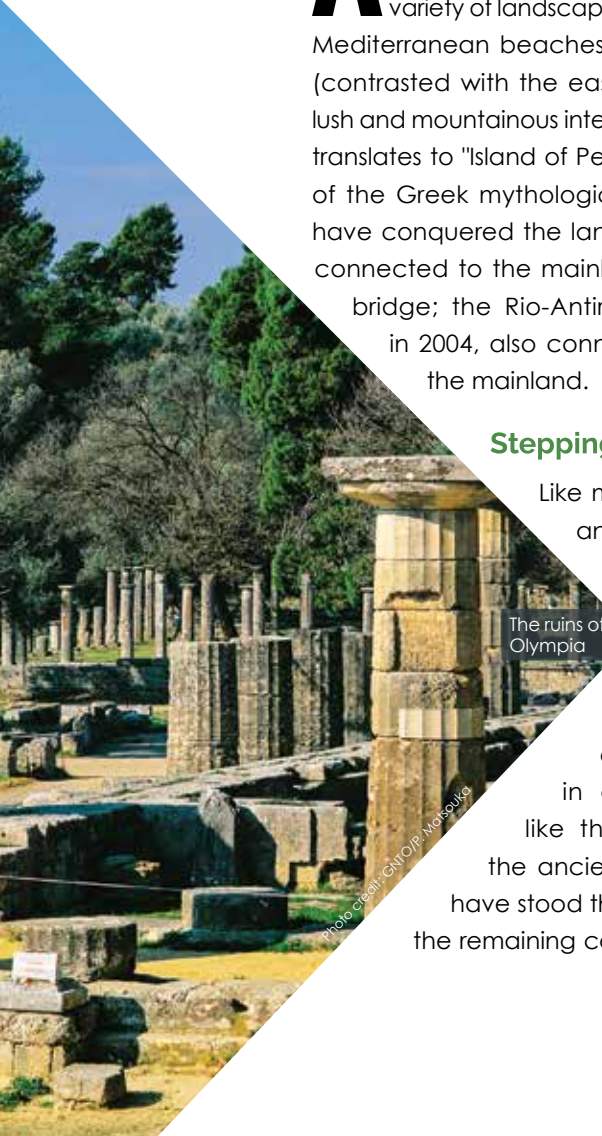
Stepping back in time

Like much of Greece, history and legend are never far away and this is perhaps no more apparent in Peloponnese than in Olympia, the ancient home of the Olympic Games in classical times. Much like the Games themselves, the ancient grounds of Olympia have stood the test of centuries, with the remaining columns and archways a

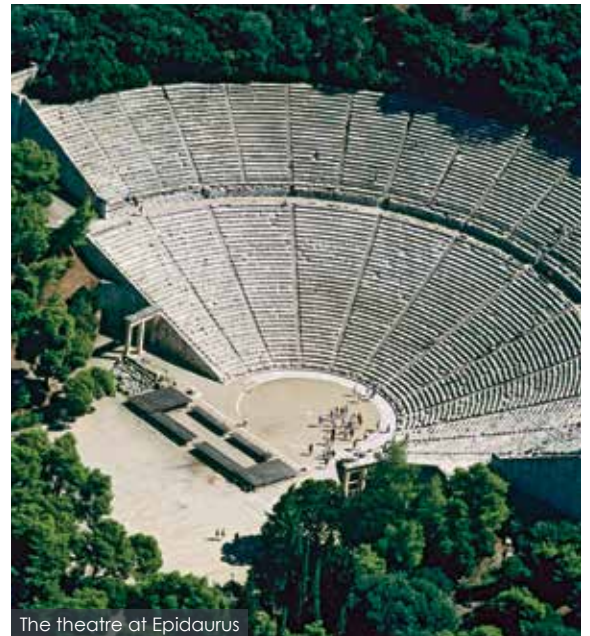
frequently-visited attraction by culture and history aficionados alike.

While the Olympics have grown from their classical roots to an international celebration, they retain an important element tied to their early days: months before the Games begin, the Olympic flame is lit here at the Temple of Hera by sunlight, travelling around Greece before making the journey to that year's host country en route to the main stadium.

The remains of Greece's classical era in Peloponnese can also be found in Epidaurus, where the remnants of the ancient city still stand.



The ruins of Olympia



The theatre at Epidaurus

The city is renowned for its theatre, which still stands at a hillside on the west side of Cynortion Mountain and is considered to be among the best examples of its kind.

A varied landscape

Need a break from the history lessons? Head to Kalamata, a picturesque coastal city on Peloponnese's western shores (and home of the eponymous olive) where the waters of the Mediterranean lap along a five-kilometre stretch of sandy beach, from the city's port to the village of Vergas in the southeast. Inhabited since antiquity, the central castle – built in the 13th century – is a relative newcomer!

Travelling to the eastern coast of Peloponnese, the landscapes are quite different in Monemvasia. A quintessential Greek village, the town is situated on a rocky island connected via causeway to



Photo credit: GNTD/E. Fil

A picturesque building of the coastal city of Kalamata

The rocky isle of Monemvasia

the mainland, centred around a high plateau which once housed a medieval fortress. Many of the buildings from the Middle Ages have been restored and converted into boutique hotels for a growing tourist market.

The varied terrain of Peloponnese also includes a number of caves which can be explored. These include the Caves of Diros, located in south-central Peloponnese (approximately 10 kilometres from the town of Gytheio), where, as in the underworld of Greek myth, an underground river can be traversed by boat. ●


Did you know?

- Looking for heat? Head to the western shores of Peloponnese – but mind the rain when you arrive! A drier climate can be found on the east coast.
- Several of the region's wines have obtained the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status, including a white wine from Mantinea and reds from Nemea.

Photo credit: GNTD/E. Fil

POLAND

HISTORY FROM CITY TO COUNTRYSIDE



Crocuses bloom in the Chochołowska Valley of Poland's Tatra Mountains each spring

While Poland's roots stretch back to the dawn of the Middle Ages, the country marks an auspicious date next month – that of the 100th anniversary of its second republic.

Although that 20-year period of independence was ended abruptly by the Nazi invasion of 1938, after which Poland would find itself behind the "Iron Curtain" of the Soviet Union for several decades, the country is nonetheless celebrating the date as the start of its march toward independence.

The country's long history is chronicled in several Warsaw museums, from the geopolitical volatility experienced in the early- to mid-20th century – showcased at the Warsaw Uprising Museum, commemorating the city's 1944 rebellion against Nazi forces – to the height of art, featured at Poland's National Museum, which houses great works produced by the country's artists (as well as those from across Europe) from as early as the 16th century.

LIVING HISTORY

Of course, the streets of Warsaw and other cities are just as historic as any museum.

Warsaw's Old Town, established in the 14th century, has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage

Site, drawing large crowds of visitors eager to travel back in time to the Middle Ages. While the district sustained heavy damage in World War II, Old Town was restored to its former glory in the years that followed.

Dating back to the 7th century, Krakow is the second-largest city in Poland and one of its oldest. Long a centre for culture in both Poland and Europe overall, the city is a study in Gothic, Renaissance



Krakow is a journey back to the 7th century



The Castle Square of Warsaw's Old Town

and Baroque architecture, exemplified by structures such as the Wawel Cathedral and the Royal Castle. Krakow is also home to the Rynek Główny, the largest medieval market square in Europe.

GETTING NATURAL

Just as intriguing as Poland's cities are the country's natural landscapes, offering a serene contrast to the pace of the destination's urban centres. These include several mountain ranges along southern Poland, such as the Tatras in the south and the Gorce, both part of the larger Carpathian range spanning Central and Eastern Europe.

While Poland's 23 national parks account for just one per cent of the country's territory, there's a lot to see and do!


Bialowieski National Park, founded in 1932, encompasses one of Europe's last largely-intact old-growth forests, straddling the border with Belarus. A popular spot for cyclists and hikers, the park is also one of Europe's oldest nature reserves and home to the rare European bison.

Other parks of note include Kampinoski National Park, located in the suburbs of Warsaw and one of only two primeval forests in the world to be found bordering a major city (the other is found in Nigeria);

the 12-km Ojcowski National Park, a sliver of the Pradnik Valley characterized by unique rock formations and numerous medieval castles; and Slowinski National Park, a stretch of Baltic coast known for its shifting sand dunes. ●

Did you know?

- The Living Museum of Gingerbread in the medieval town of Torun is a **popular tourist spot**, dedicated entirely to the festive treat.
- The Wieliczka Mine in southern Poland is not only one of the oldest operating salt mines in the world (active since the 13th century), but also **houses an underground hotel!**



Turbacz is the tallest peak of the Gorce mountain range

WHISTLER

YEAR-ROUND EXCITEMENT

While most often associated with winter activities, the town of Whistler, BC is just as exciting when ski gear is swapped for shorts!

Long a ski destination for both Canadians and international travellers, in 2010, the town and Whistler-Blackcomb Resort took the world stage as host to many of the ski, luge and bobsled events held at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

Fittingly, a ski resort at Whistler was originally conceived in the 1960s as a way to attract the 1968 Winter Olympics bid; originally a competing resort, Blackcomb, which opened in 1980, eventually fully merged with Whistler in 2003.

The intervening years saw a period of intense rivalry between the two developments, with each property trying to outdo the other with new innovations – much to the delight of skiers!

While the 2010 Olympics have come and gone, the resort continues to welcome the world to its slopes each winter with some of the best skiing in North America, courtesy of the Coast Mountains terrain – but the fun doesn't stop once the snow melts.

The resort is also a prime destination for mountain biking, with three different biking zones offered within the Whistler Mountain Bike Park. Accessible via lift, the gravity-fed park offers courses for cyclists of all skill levels.

Whistler is also home to the Peak 2 Peak Gondola, ranked the highest above-ground cable car in the world and offering the perfect way to get the best views of Whistler and the surrounding areas. Brave riders can even opt for a glass-bottom gondola for the full picture and in the summer months, a special Mountain Top Summer Feast dinner is available Friday through Sunday.



Riding the chairlift at Whistler-Blackcomb

Photo credit: Tourism Whistler / Mike Crane



The Peak 2 Peak Gondola

Photo credit: Tourism Whistler / Mike Crane

Downhill Mountain Biking in the Whistler Bike Park

Photo credit: Tourism Whistler - Justa-Jeskova

This past summer also saw the opening of the Whistler Peak Suspension Bridge, a 130m bridge spanning from Whistler Peak to the West Ridge over Whistler Bowl accessible by the Peak 2 Peak Gondola. Upon completion, the experience will feature the West Ridge Lookout with a viewing platform offering 360-degree views of from Whistler Peak.

Thrills and chills

If a gondola ride is too tame, Whistler Zipline Tours are also available year-round with a number of courses carrying riders high above the forest at top speeds. At two kilometres, the fittingly-named

Sasquatch zipline course is the longest in North America and for adrenaline junkies, it's the best way to get a bird's eye view of the landscape.

Beyond the thrills on the hills, however, Whistler boasts a thriving arts & culture scene anchored by such institutions as the Audain Art Museum, featuring Canadian artworks (including one of the largest collections of works by renowned Canadian painter Emily Carr), and the Whistler Museum, telling the story of the community through artifacts, photographs and exhibits, including a complete original gondola cabin. ●



Ziplining with Superfly Zipline in the winter

Photo credit: Superfly

Did you know?

- Originally named London Mountain after a nearby mining claim, Whistler Mountain was renamed in the 1960s after the whistling marmots which live on its slopes.
- While primarily known as a ski destination, 55 per cent of Whistler's approximately 3 million annual visitors travel there in the summer months.

KISSES FROM TOKYO

Three
neighbourhoods
not to be missed
in the Japanese
capital

Text & photos Marie-Eve Vallières

A city that's quaint and futuristic in equal measure, Tokyo is a megalopolis whose unique charm never ceases to amaze. It's a place unlike any other in the world – a sprawling provincial city whose mosaic is so heterogeneous and vast that it's sometimes difficult to familiarize oneself with it. Tokyo is five times larger than the island of Montreal alone, with an urban metro map that's so complex it'll make you dizzy.

Tokyo is best explored by taking a closer look at its suburbs and neighbourhoods, a way of dividing the city that makes it easier to discover on a distinctly local scale.

From its ultramodern city streets to its Edo temples and charming bakeries rooted in the hermetic Japanese tradition, the Land of the Rising Sun's capital presented me with some very pleasant surprises. Here are three of Tokyo's 23 districts that had a big impact on me during my stay.

Shibuya

It's mainly known for the so-called busiest crossroads in the world, marked by thousands of onlookers, students and professionals crisscrossing in the type of



Shibuya Crossing



The Kaminarimon Gate

orderly chaos only Japan is capable of. However, Shibuya is also noteworthy for its massive flashing neon signs, shopping centres and advertising campaigns, appealing directly to the commercial tastes of Japanese adolescents.

The Harajuku district and its famous *Takeshita-dōri* alley are located here, with both notable for the weird and wonderful array of clothing and food on display. It's here that you can sample huge portions of rainbow cotton candy amidst hordes of young Japanese dressed in purple (including hair!) – an experience you won't forget in a hurry. With its blazing lights, restaurants using robots as servers, deafening J-pop and lively arcades on show at all hours of the night and day, Shibuya is the epitome

of the futuristic technological style that modern Japan is famous for.

Asakusa

Dominated by its dizzying five-storey pagoda, this district is distinguished by its old-world charm, far from the hallucinogenic facades of Shibuya.

First stop: the Sensō-ji temple, the capital's oldest, whose origins date back to the year 628. With its scarlet tones and enormous lantern, the Kaminarimon gate dedicated to the god of thunder is particularly noticeable, standing at 12 metres in height. Behind the pagoda lie green, bucolic gardens.

Another part of the ancient Japanese heritage is located in the shadow of →



Getting to Tokyo

Air Canada has been operating directly from Montreal-Trudeau to Tokyo-Narita since June 1, 2018.

In July 2014, Air Canada launched non-stop daily service between Toronto and Tokyo-Haneda, complementing the airline's daily service between Toronto and Tokyo-Narita.

Tokyo Bucket List

- Attend sumo wrestling at Ryogoku Kokugikan Arena
- See the modern architecture of Ginza
- Eat conveyor belt sushi
- Visit the imperial palace in Chiyoda
- Live an animal lover's dream in the cafés – dog cafés, cat cafés, owl cafés, rabbit cafés and much more!
- Explore the museum of the extraordinary artist Kayoi Kusama
- Sleep in a capsule hotel: Prime Pod Ginza, Nine Hours, First Cabin, Centurion
- Take in stunning views at one of the many observatories: Tokyo SkyTree, Tokyo Tower, Tokyo World Trade Center, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, Asakusa Culture Center, and Bunkyo Civic Center
- Have a drink on the 52nd floor of the Park Hyatt, made famous by the movie *Lost in Translation*



A woman makes a wish at the Senso-ji temple

the temple: the hanamachi of Asakusa. While wandering the narrow alleys lined with old wooden houses, I caught a glimpse of real geisha; witnessing these venerated, graceful women in their finery was a true privilege.

Ueno-Yanaka

Wanting to gain an authentic experience of Tokyo and Tokyoites, I followed the

advice of a local resident by heading to Ueno and Yanaka.

Stopping occasionally along the way in a traditional tea shop (Jin Ji Yuan) or a charming bric-a-brac frequented by a crotchety cat (Kaiun Yanakudou), I continued my journey to a bakery, Usagiya. Here, local dorayakis are served; these delectable treats are

Good to know: the temple is preceded by a long driveway lined with small craft shops, Nakamise-dōri, where high-quality knives, ceramics, chopsticks, tea sets and other Japanese tableware are sold.

sweet cakes filled with red bean paste. It was a morning of small pleasures with a human dimension, punctuated with encounters that – despite the often-wide language barrier – helped me to discover a friendly and genuinely endearing Tokyo.

Passing through the art galleries on Kototai-dori, I crossed the entrance of

the famous Ueno Park, whose North-East zone hosts the eight pavilions of the National Museum of Tokyo.

It contains the largest collection of Japanese artifacts in the country. Make sure to stop at Ueno Toshogu and Shinobazunoike Bentendo temples, located on the edge of a beautiful and peaceful pond. ●



One of the many temples of Ueno Park



Before You Go

Japan, even in Tokyo, seldom speaks anything besides Japanese.

It would be advisable to keep a pocket dictionary on hand in order to facilitate interactions with the locals. Worry not, though, as most residents are extremely obliging and eager to help regardless of the language barrier.

Transportation in Tokyo is an experience in and of itself,

from crowded subway cars to swan-shaped pedalboats, and immaculate taxis whose doors open automatically.

Capsule hotels are not for everyone.

While they theoretically sounds whimsical and quirky, several have restrictive operating hours and scarce bathroom facilities; not to mention that the vast majority only cater to men.

ATMs rarely accept international debit or credit cards, making it laborious to withdraw cash on location.

Plan ahead and exchange plenty of yens at your local bank before you go.

Travellers with asthma be warned:

smoking is still allowed in most public areas, including bars and restaurants.

Free Wi-Fi is hard to come by as most Japanese have very generous data plans on their mobile phones.

Get a wireless router for a small fee; rent and return one easily at the telecom company counters at most airports.

SAMPLING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE EDEN ROC MIAMI BEACH

Having once hosted countless celebrities and famous touring artists including Frank Sinatra, Ed Sullivan and the Rat Pack, the Eden Rock Miami Beach Hotel (built in 1956) has undergone extensive renovations in recent years – completely transforming its appearance.

We took part in a guided tour of an iconic location in the "magic city," that's constantly reinventing itself.

TWO HOTELS, TWO AMBIANCES

The Eden Roc Resort now includes two hotels, with each boasting a completely different customer experience.

The first, the Nobu Hotel, is located in the original Eden Roc building, which is recognizable by its white balconies with clean, elegant lines. Its 206 rooms (including 35 suites and three

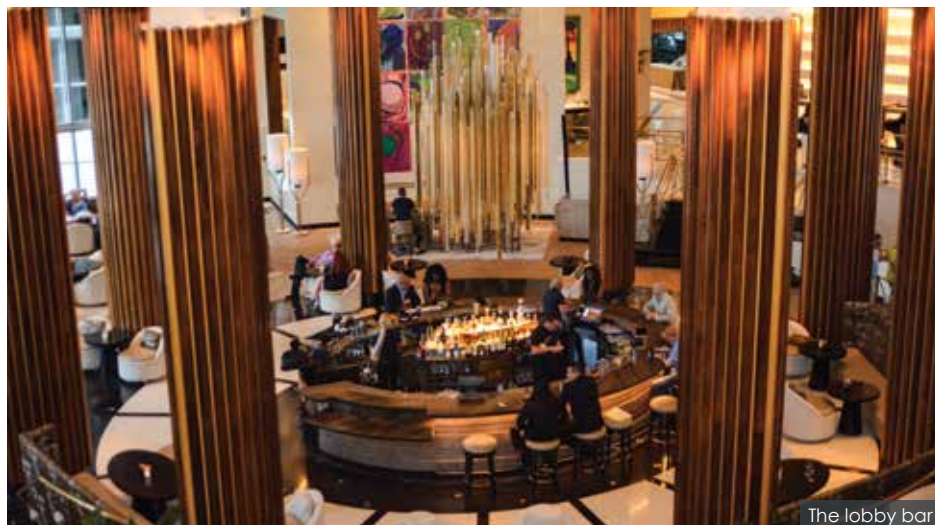
penthouses) were fully revamped in 2015 and have since presented a Japanese aesthetic, combining minimalism, luxury and comfort.

The second complex, Eden Roc, was built in 2008 and consists of 415 rooms and suites. These were designed to recall the ecosystem of the beach; the carpets imitate the textures of the sand and the walls echo the leaves of palm trees. The atmosphere is organic, and the atmosphere soothing.

ALL-INCLUSIVE IN THE CITY

One of Eden Roc's biggest selling points is how it has allowed holidaymakers, since last May, to enjoy an all-inclusive experience – the first in the Miami area.





The other element that distinguishes this all-inclusive offer is the proximity of some of Miami's most intriguing attractions. In a few minutes by car, you can visit the magnificent buildings of the Art Deco District, discover the fascinating streets of Little Havana, admire the collections at the Perez Art Museum, or immerse yourself in the unique atmosphere of the United States' most Latin – and most festive – city.

A CULTURAL AND CULINARY EXPERIENCE

The originality and quality of its culinary offering are key aspects of the Eden Roc. The resort has two excellent restaurants, which complement the hotel offering.

On one side, the Malibu Farm offers a cuisine made entirely from food produced on Florida farms. This establishment follows the same philosophy of "farm-to-table" already established by chef Helene Henderson at her famous restaurant of the same name located in Malibu, California. The freshness of the products is exceptional, and the vegetarian offer is particularly generous.

The second notable restaurant is Nobu, located on the ground floor of the resort. The fusion Japanese cuisine of chef Nobu Matsuhisa has attracted crowds for over 16 years, and you'll soon understand exactly why: its Asian- and Peruvian-inspired dishes are creative, unique and delicious. It's a culinary experience that's worth the trip alone. ●

ALL-INCLUSIVE IN THE CITY

- A room in the Eden Roc hotel
- Alcohol included
- Access to fitness centre and classes
- A reserved deckchair beside one of the resort's three pools
- A 30 per cent discount on treatments offered in the modern Esencia Wellness Spa
- Meals served in the room, around the pools and in the brand-new restaurant, Malibu Farm, which was inaugurated this year.



HAVE A SEAT

Nearly identical to a tallboy can, the Sitpack unfolds into a portable seat wherever you need one. Designed to provide weary travellers with a way to take a load off while maintaining proper blood circulation, the Sitpack can support up to 220 lbs while a non-slip rubber foot maintains balance. A cushion (sold separately) also doubles as a carrying case for when the rest stop is over.

SITPACK.COM «



NO KITCHEN? NO PROBLEM!



Who hasn't wanted a coffee while miles away from the nearest Starbucks? Great for active travellers exploring areas where coffee shops are few and far between, the Nanopresso is a hand-held espresso maker producing great coffee anywhere, anytime through a unique pump system. Several variations are available, including models designed for ground coffee or coffee pods.

WACACO.COM «



New FINDS

BEST-KEPT SECRETS

The aptly-named Hidden Place is a smartphone app designed for travellers who want to share those hard-to-find places with an expanding network of fellow explorers. Travellers can open the app in-destination and discover a selection of nearby must-see spots recommended by other travellers, or add their own discoveries for others to check out.

HIDDEN.PLACE «

CHARGED UP

Looking to power your devices on the go? Then give this TYLT a whirl. The TYLT Energi Pro backpack provides travellers with a special battery pack that can fully charge your smartphone, laptop and tablet, perfect for when there are no power outlets in sight at the airport. It's also a comfortable and stylish way of carrying your stuff!



TYLT.COM «



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