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MAGAZINE

IN THE CLUB

CAROLYNE DOYON

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT CANADA
AND MEXICO FOR CLUB MED

MICE
UNIQUE IDEAS
FOR EVENT TRIPS

CRUISE INDUSTRY
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SPECIAL FEATURE

SUN DESTINATIONS

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Letter from the publisher



Always be ready for the next change

September has to be one of the most beautiful months of the year. Children go back to school, we return to our routine, the leaves slowly begin to change colour, and the natural light becomes softer.

Considering all this, it's little surprise that September is a month that's become synonymous with change.

It's often said that nothing is permanent – except change. Do you believe this too? Change is what allows us to go a step further and, by necessity, to evolve.

Here at LogiMonde media, our team certainly believes this. That's why we have worked hard this summer to prepare a series of changes, always with one idea in mind: to amaze you and to give you more high-quality content to sink your teeth into. Hold onto your hat – you'll be amazed by what's coming!

Make sure to keep an eye on our different platforms this month to find out the changes we're putting in place for you. If you don't already follow us on social media, it's never too late to join the conversation:

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Trust me – you definitely won't want to miss what we have in store!

Sun Destinations

September also marks the beginning of increased demand for travel to the South for winter. Vendors have prepared 'Early Booking' discounts for your customers, and for the most part have already unveiled their South itineraries. However, it can be difficult to remember exactly who offers what. Not to worry – PAX is here to help.

This month, you'll find a Sun Destinations Guide that's the most unique and convenient of its kind. It lists everything you need to know for the coming South season, including routes operated by each airline and the destinations offered by different tour operators. It's an essential reference tool that you'll be able to count on to get the information you need in the blink of an eye.

In this month's cover story, we speak to Club Med's Carlyne Doyon about her life-long fascination with exploring the world and her career with the iconic resort chain. She also shares her thoughts on the importance of welcoming fresh talent to the travel industry, which for Doyon, was the motivator behind some big changes coming to Club Med's Montreal office.

After all – faced with a changing world, it's better to be ready for change than to let it pass you by.

Vice-President, Publishing, Media,
Marketing & Development

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Christine Hogg, Marie-Eve Vallières

Contributors

Ariane Arpin-Delorme, Aurore Bonvalot, Hortense des Dorides, Frédéric Gonzalo, Fergal McAlinden, Ming Tappin, Jean-François Venne

Graphic Design

Alexandre Foisy

Circulation Coordinator

Nathalie Manouvrier

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

Nancy Benetton-Sampath, 416 581-1001, ext. 304, nancy@logimonde.com
Karine Lefebvre, 450 689-5060, ext. 226, karine@logimonde.com

CIRCULATION INQUIRIES

Nathalie Manouvrier, 450-689-5060 ext. 221, paxmagazine@logimonde.com

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OFFICES

Toronto

2 Carlton Street, Suite 602
Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3
416 581-1001

Montréal

782 rue Principale
Laval, QC, H7X 1E6
450 689-5060

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BIT BY THE TRAVEL BUG AT A YOUNG AGE, CLUB MED'S **CAROLYNE DOYON** REFLECTS ON A WIDE-RANGING CAREER AND THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

By **Blake Wolfe** | Photos by **Marie-Ève Rompré**

For most people, the answer to “What do you want to do when you grow up?” is not often apparent at a young age.

For Club Med's Carlyne Doyon, however, it was an easy decision.

“When I was very young, I was fascinated by difference – different people and cultures from other countries,” she recalls, adding that a trip to the Dominican Republic during high school was her first trip abroad. “In the schoolyard, I was always intrigued by classmates who were not from Montreal or Quebec. It was like the United Nations in my house from a very young age!

“I decided that I wanted to learn more about the world; while I read a lot, it was time to discover it first-hand.”

Now Club Med's senior vice-president for Canada and Mexico, Doyon has taken that youthful enthusiasm to experience the world and spun it into a thriving travel career spanning more than two decades.

While Doyon may be most familiar representing the global resort chain, her experience in travel crosses multiple sectors and roles within the industry. Following university studies, she completed a post-secondary tourism program, Doyon started her travel career with Delta Airlines, taking on several roles with the airline over several years – “customer service agent, baggage, ticketing agent, gate agent – every single role you can have at an airport.”

With the arrival of Belgian national carrier Sabena in Montreal, Doyon then became that airline's director of operations at the service level. A merger between Sabena and SWISS saw Doyon adding weight-and-balance agent to her list of jobs, before leaving the airline sector in 2001.

The retail side of travel

Eager to expand her industry knowledge, Doyon then went on to work in a travel agency. While her agency role was brief, it gave her an up-close look at the retail side of travel, setting the stage for her Club Med debut in 2002. →

"Tourism is a very broad industry and I decided that I needed to understand the retail side of the business," Doyon recalls. "I went to a travel agency and it didn't take me long to understand that while it's a great domain, I knew that I wouldn't last too long; but I was there long enough to acquire all the knowledge I was looking for."

Starting at Club Med as a manager of development, in 2008 Doyon became sales director for Eastern Canada before being promoted to the role of VP for Canada that same year; six years later, Doyon was named senior VP for Canada and Mexico.

"Tourism is truly my industry and through this work, I was able to meet people from all over the world – Club Med as a company employs more than 20,000 GOs from 110 nationalities.

I can't say I've met them all but I have met many!"

Turning challenge into opportunity

As a leader within an organization, Doyon views the challenges which come with the role as a chance to develop both herself and her team.

She recalls how one of her earlier travel roles presented her with a seemingly daunting situation which ultimately provided her with a chance to grow in her profession.

"SWISS sent me to Zurich to become certified as a weight-and-balance specialist," she says. "The certification lasted two years and there traditionally weren't a lot of women; it was mainly men with operational experience. My experience was mainly on the consumer

and commercial side. I was sent to this training without any knowledge of dangerous goods or similar topics. If you failed one exam, you were let go from the program.

"I was the only woman out of 18 students – we lost a lot of classmates along the way! – and I had to study a lot harder, but I graduated second in the class."

While her current title brings with it a much different set of responsibilities, that early lesson still resonates.

"When you're a leader, the challenge you may face sometimes is to get the people really engaged so you can pass on your vision. Sometimes we face changes as the business evolves and we make organizational decisions; to get people to follow you through all these changes, especially if it requires them to get out of their comfort zone and think outside the box.

"When you become an executive, the challenge is to get them to look up to you and ask them to trust you as their leader. As you realize goals together, it becomes easier."

Growing with the brand

To truly thrive within an organization, it helps when the values of both the workforce and brand are in alignment. For Doyon, Club Med is a natural fit.

"Club Med's values are also mine – pioneering spirit, multiculturalism, kindness, liberty," she says. "I also have a very strong vision in terms of the product – we're trendsetters and pioneers in several aspects of tourism. We don't sit on our laurels. The willingness and desire to always push it further makes it a great organization to work with. It's the type of place where I can continue to grow with the company."

Club Med's growth within Canada has required the business to take gradual steps in securing its place in both the Quebec and English Canada markets, Doyon explains, adding that it has paid off to be discerning when identifying which travel partners the resort chain will work with.

EARLY JOURNEYS

Eager to travel from a young age, Doyon recalls two memorable trips which took place prior to her travel career:

"My first trip on my own was when I was 16 years old and went to Banff. It was a study trip for school: I lived with a family as part of an exchange to learn English.

"The following year I saved all my money to go to the Dominican Republic; I always wanted to go on a sun holiday since I was little and from that moment on, I started to travel extensively."

“ Tourism is truly my industry and through this work, I was able to meet people from all over the world. ”

“I understood right away that we couldn't work with all of the travel agencies in Quebec or in all of Canada for that matter. We needed to make a selection of key partners and secure our foundation in that market. Once Quebec was secure, we could then put more energy, sales resources and investments into a secondary market in Ontario. We increased our sales force – two Ontario sales people full-time – and our partnerships, knowing that we can't work with everyone. But it's people with whom we can grow the business.”

The next generation

With the millennial generation now shaping both the workforce and the economy, it pays for businesses to be forward-thinking.

With 35 per cent of her team identifying as millennials, Doyon regularly consults and collaborates with them to re-cast the Club Med work environment. The latest development will see the establishment later this year of an open workspace at the Montreal office – with features such as coffee and couches – allowing for a more collaborative approach to work. →





"This is a true need I see for millennials – where they can bring the village spirit into the office. Their work environment is not the classic office – they can work while having a coffee at Starbucks."

And just as Doyon once pondered a career in travel, future generations of potential travel employees are considering their entry into the industry. Her advice for this new generation remains as enthusiastic as when she was initially bit by the travel bug.

"I would say 'go for it!' Our industry is not always getting good press, with things like ongoing geopolitical issues, fuel costs and disasters. But it's an amazing industry – with all of these challenges, it makes it very interesting. Travel will always be there – and it'll never be boring." ●

Special thanks to V de V Montreal for providing the setting for this photoshoot. The boutique has also a location in Toronto. www.vdevmaison.com

HAVING A BALL

What do you get when you cross "the beautiful game" with travel? Doyon explains that with a young soccer player at home, a cross-generational merging of interests is currently taking place.

"Right now my interests revolve around soccer – my seven year old son Samuel is a soccer player; his interest has become mine!

"We're going to start doing soccer trips – he's a big fan of Real Madrid and we're planning a trip to Spain. We've travelled to Orlando to watch soccer so we're starting out slowly."



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HOW TO CHANGE YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

By Jean-François Venne



needs and preferences, something that can be done by asking a few questions during transactions, surveys, and in discussion groups. Regardless of the method, it is important to understand what you want to know and how to integrate this data into your thinking.

It's also important to continually adapt to your surroundings. "A business does not evolve in a vacuum," Breton notes. "It must keep an eye on the market." These days, it's no longer sufficient to remain attentive to the region, country or industry the business is situated in; competition is global and interconnected.

"Today's recipe for success will not necessarily be the same tomorrow," says Suzanne Breton, senior director and expert in strategies and business models at Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton.

It's a maxim that we should always remember – not just when a company is in crisis. Breton collects data from clients to understand their changing

Breton suggests following major trends that are not necessarily unique to a given industry. The arrival of Expedia and Airbnb, for example, was the result of the evolution of the internet, not the travel industry. From here, we can observe the more direct competition and the evolution of its business models, consumer habits of customers, and more.

Many leaders are slow to think about their business model – either because they are too busy with day-to-day management or because they see it as too big a task. "We must demystify the evolution of the business model," Breton opines. "We can proceed step-by-step; it's not always a drastic break."

PLANNING LEADS TO SUCCESS

Changing a business model is not just about the entrepreneur or the managers. Customers can be affected, but also employees, suppliers and business partners. It's important, then, to plan the exercise well. "It's not an instant transition; it can take months, sometimes more," says Robert Bastarache, strategic advisor at Innovaction Strategies.

He admits that leading executives often underestimate the scope of the process and its duration. They also sometimes have a limited vision of possible changes. "The business model is not just what the customer sees," he explains, "but also includes logistics, expertise, organizational culture, work organization, I.T. systems and more."

The energy and time required to alter a business model is another good reason to begin the process when the company is doing well and making a profit, rather than losing market share or seeing its survival threatened by another model. This makes it possible to test new ideas in a calm, steady climate, with greater financial stability.

"You also need to know how to build on the strengths of the company and ensure that costs remain controlled →



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THREE COMPANIES THAT FORGOT TO EVOLVE



KODAK

Kodak failed to adjust to the arrival of digital cameras, not wanting to harm sales of photographic films – the product that had made it so successful.



BLOCKBUSTER

The movie and video rental business, which had 84,300 employees and 9,094 stores in 2004, did not evolve to a digital model.



SEARS

Its catalogue had prompted a retail revolution, but Sears was unable to adapt to the challenges posed by Walmart, Amazon, and digital commerce.

throughout the process of change," adds Bastarache. "By continually conducting this exercise, we improve, we spread the costs, and we allow ourselves leeway to make mistakes. The business will gradually transform and become stronger." ●



Jean-François Venne

Independent journalist specializing in the field of business



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A NUMBERS GAME:

TRAVEL FACTS & FIGURES

By Marie-Eve Vallières

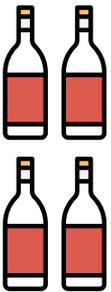
450,000

The number of visitors to La Cité du Vin de Bordeaux in 2017, with 23 per cent of these consisting foreigners of 176 different nationalities. La Cité du Vin is a unique new-generation cultural venue where the soul of wine is expressed through an immersive and sensory approach in the midst of evocative architecture.



35.6 million

The quantity of wine, in hectolitres, produced throughout 2017 in all of France's vineyards. It seems a massive figure, but it actually represents a significant decrease of 10 million hectolitres compared to previous years; spring frost strongly affected production in the South-West, Charentes, Jura, and Alsace regions, while drought in the Mediterranean and Beaujolais vineyards also had an adverse impact on the volume of harvests.



27%

The percentage of Bordeaux wines produced nationwide – almost as much as the Loire Valley and Rhône Valley combined. Of the bottles produced, 80 per cent are made from red grapes and 20 per cent from white grapes.



293

The total number of *appellations d'origine contrôlée* (AOC) in France, according to the Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité (National Institute of Origin and Quality, or INAO). Created in 1992, this label refers to products that have been produced, processed and developed in a specific geographical area, using the expertise of local producers and ingredients from the region concerned. There are 38 alone in the greater Bordeaux area.

Sources: La Cité du Vin, Ministry of Public Action and Accounts

A man and a woman are laughing and embracing on a beach. The man is shirtless and wearing sunglasses, and the woman is wearing a bikini and sunglasses. The background is a bright, sunny beach scene with the ocean and sky.

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SIMON, Digital Strategist

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1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/12/13/promoting-employee-happiness-benefits-everyone/#47431529581a>

UNIQUE IDEAS FOR EVENT TRIPS

By Aurore Bonvalot

Organizing a trip for an event, meeting or conference is becoming increasingly popular, so why not reinvent your offer to entice your customers?

Here are six tips to help you organize a successful event trip.

1 Know your client and get inspired. Find out about your client's expectations: what they want and don't want; what they like and dislike; the memories and emotions they want to instil in their participants.

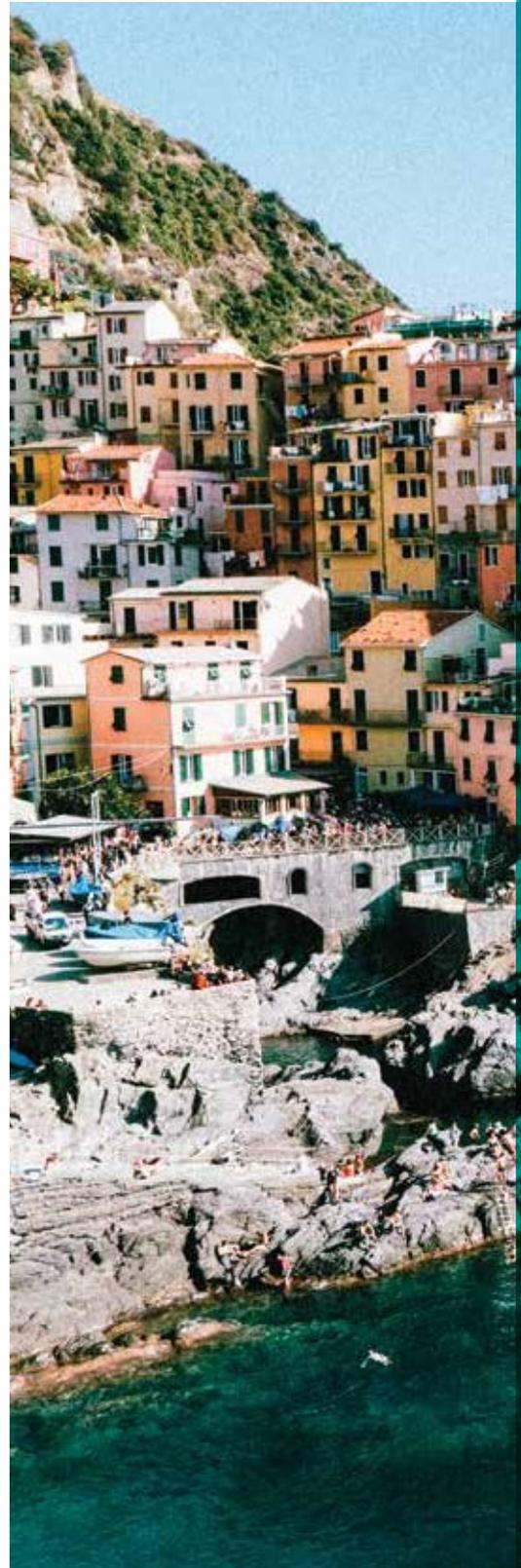
2 Establish a basic budget and plan a separate amount for extras. Along the way, either you or your client will likely have new suggestions to take into consideration.

3 Plan informal meetings to break the ice and create a synergy at the beginning of the event between participants.

4 Plan early – especially when it comes to organizing conferences and training activities, and finding accommodation and flights for participants.

5 Form a committee of event ambassadors. Make sure that one or two of your client's employees and someone in your agency meet frequently or are in regular communication to discuss and approve ideas.

6 Look for originality. Companies seek to differentiate themselves and retain their employees, so help them to offer unique and memorable events. →





Some of the events I have recently been involved in may help inspire you to surprise and delight your clients.

Targeting specific clients

I was recently involved in organizing a training trip for naturopaths in Switzerland, Germany, and France. We planned 15 days of private laboratory visits (normally closed to the public), lectures with eminent chemists and professors, and visits to gardens and other must-see places.

We also asked the different laboratories to give the participants an official training diploma, allowing them to deduct part of the expenses related to this trip.

In a similar vein, for a group of wine lovers, we organized a tour of the largest vineyards in South America, accompanied by conferences and workshops led by renowned sommeliers.

Think of unusual places to organize your events. Try to get out of the typical conference rooms in convention centres or hotels; instead, why not rent the station at the Rocky Mountaineer train terminal in False Creek, B.C., or plan a conference aboard one of the cars? Everything is planned to accommodate your business clientele!

I was also recently involved in organizing 10 days of training aboard a cruise ship in Europe. Again, rooms are available for training, but you can also schedule training sessions during a stopover. The cruise allows participants to combine work with pleasure.

A customer in the natural products industry wanted to organize a training session centred around the theme of beauty and plants in an unusual place. We planned a day in the heart of British Columbia's Butchart Gardens. Nearly 90 participants



perused thousands of rose garden plants in the Japanese garden, took part in the famous High Tea ceremony, and attended an onsite conference given by an expert in essential oils.

Involving your client

For a recent bakery owners' retreat to Switzerland, the organizers rented a large villa, allowing the participants to enjoy a week of training alongside an expert chef. They took cooking lessons with him, discovered his techniques, and were able to reproduce some of these recipes back home. Next year will see the owners undertake a training trip to Italy, with experiences set to include visits to typical bakeries, exploring the local area, meeting chefs, and taking ice cream- and chocolate-making courses.

Helping customers leave their comfort zone

Why not organize a training or team building trip on a safari to Africa? By being in a completely different environment, participants will be better able to focus on the messages that the company wants to convey.

Let participants experience a destination in an original way

I like to organize site visits with local guides, allowing a general orientation tour and familiarization with the destination's key elements. City or regional tours can be done on foot, by horse-drawn carriage, hot-air balloon, bicycle, Segway, or boat/gondola.

If guests ask to organize their events in seaside resorts (Costa Rica, Nicaragua



and Mexico have recently been popular), I recommend planning morning activities on the beach to connect the body and the spirit. This could be, for example, a meditation or tai chi class, or a Tibetan bowl concert. Use the natural scenery and magical atmosphere at sunrise to help participants concentrate, focus, and be better prepared for their day.

Leaving a strong final impression

An event trip I was recently involved in organizing saw a gala held in a deserted chapel on the final evening. The effect was spectacular, giving participants an experience of a setting that was drastically different from the traditional hotel conference rooms they're used to. Additionally, the grandiose interior architecture of the chapel meant that little other decoration was required, other than lighting.

It's also a good idea to offer small gifts to participants back in their rooms when training days have finished. These might be traditional sweets associated with the country, local craft products, or even a small travel kit for returning home. This is sure to guarantee great memories.

As you can see, the possibilities for creating unique travel events to delight your customers are limitless. ●



Aurore Bonvalot

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



MATCHLESS MEXICO

Hugged by the white-sand beaches and reef-rich waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, Mexico offers a cornucopia of culture like no other. From the lushness of tropical Riviera Maya treelines to singular historical sites along the Cancun-Tulum corridor to aquamarine snorkelling adventures off Isla Mujeres to all-night dance parties in Cabo San Lucas to serious surfing in Sayulita — no traveller comes home unsatisfied.

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— GUIDE —

**NOT JUST
SURF AND SAND**

By Blake Wolfe



It's no surprise that Canadians can't get enough sun.

Consider the annual arrivals to Cuba and Mexico alone, numbering in the millions of passengers seeking a warm weather escape from the frozen depths of a Canadian winter.

While sun and sand will continue to be the main draws for Canadians flying

south, destinations are expanding into various travel styles and unique tourism draws to bring in even more visitors every year.

Mind and body

Among the largest of these is the ever-expanding health & wellness travel sector, projected to grow to a more than \$800 billion market worldwide by 2020. With its focus on relaxation and lush environs, the Caribbean is poised

to capture a large slice of the health & wellness pie.

"The Caribbean has always been huge when it comes to healing and relaxation," says Nancy Drolet, the CTO's Canadian business development representative. "Wellness and rejuvenation is no longer just a niche. In the Caribbean, it ties into promoting work/life balance and getting more physical than just lying on a beach."



In addition to the many spas found throughout the region, resorts have also expanded their fitness offerings, including yoga and Pilates classes on the beach, catering to a growing market of travellers who aim to stay on top of fitness regimens while on vacation, Drolet says. In the case of some properties, health & wellness has become the chief focus, such as Saint Lucia's Stonefield Villa Resort, which reopened last fall to target wellness travellers with its product offering.

Eat local

Spanning both the worlds of wellness and culinary tourism, a big push in farm-to-table offerings is also taking hold at many properties, with a focus on meals prepared from fresh, local ingredients – in some cases, those grown right on property. This is perhaps best exemplified by St. Kitts' Belle Mont Farm, a luxury boutique retreat situated on 400 acres



Health & wellness has become the chief focus at Saint Lucia's Stonefield Villa Resort

of organic farmland in the foothills of Mount Liamuiga, a dormant volcano.

Local food is also at the centre of the growth of many festivals in the region, Drolet said, citing unique gatherings such as Nevis' Mango and Food Festival, which drew celebrity chefs Judy Joo & Seamus Mullen to the island this past July, preparing meals from the islands' more than 40 varieties of mango.

Indeed, there's much more beyond the beach. ●



“Wellness and rejuvenation is no longer just a niche. In the Caribbean, it ties into promoting work/life balance and getting more physical than just lying on a beach.”

— Nancy Drolet, CTO's Canadian business development representative

HOLA, CUBA!



An icon of Cuba, classic cars are an enduring symbol of the country

Welcoming more than one million visitors from Canada each year, Cuba holds a special place in the hearts of sun-seeking Canadians.

And with the Caribbean Tourism Organization reporting that approximately 480,000 Canadians travelled to Cuba just between January and March of this year, that love affair shows no signs of cooling down.

So what is it that makes the destination so appealing to Canadians? Cuba Tourism's Canadian Director Eloy Govea has one answer.

"Ask any Canadian – they'll tell you the reason they go to Cuba is because of its people. They're friendly, welcoming, warm and well-educated. It's in our DNA, the willingness to share and kindness.

"Canadians find Cuba to be a place where they can develop relationships, instead of just going to be served. They get to know the waiter and the bartender and the general manager of the resort."

Indeed, according to Govea, 62 per cent of the more than one million Canadians who visited in 2017 were repeat visitors.

Coming attractions

Providing new experiences to those returning travellers is key and to that end, Govea said that Cuba is →

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PARADISUS

BY MELIÁ

Cuba

VARADERO-HOLGUÍN-CAYO SANTA MARÍA-(OPENING IN 2018)

MELIÁ HOTELS
INTERNATIONAL
CUBA



currently undertaking “very ambitious” expansion plans for infrastructure to be realized by 2030 – including 103,000 new rooms to be added in that period of time, along with 24 real estate projects associated with golf plus 23 new international marinas.

Upcoming hotels

This year will see the opening of several properties, including the 934-room Melia Internacional Hotel in Varadero and the 802-room Paradisus Los Cayos in Cayo Santa María, two flagship hotels by the Melia chain. Earlier this year, the company opened five new Cuban properties in both Cienfuegos (Hotel La Union, Hotel Jagua and Hotel Meliá San Carlos) and Camagüey (Hotel Colón and Gran Hotel).

Other 2018 openings include the 321-room Packard Hotel in Havana and

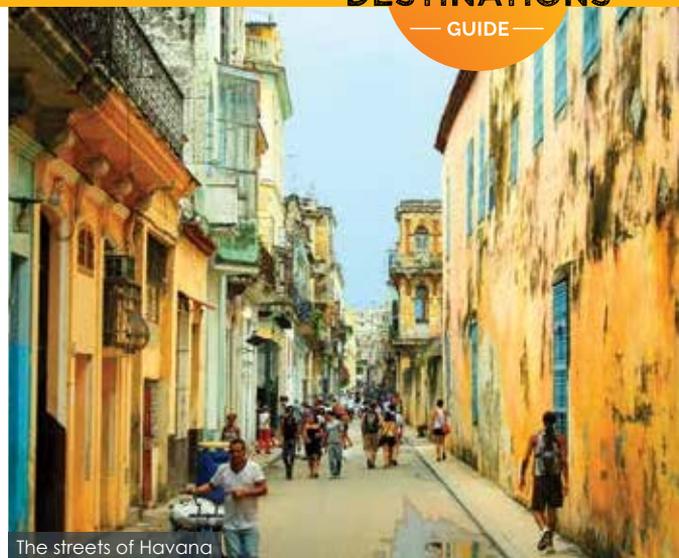


“There is a great effort to expand the infrastructure that caters to more adventurous travellers... We find more and more Canadians are going for that type of authentic experience.”

— Eloy Govea, Director of Canadian Cuba Tourism



Havana residents on a sunny morning



The streets of Havana



The Che Guevara Memorial in Santa Clara, Cuba

the 250-room Prado y Malecón Hotel, while in 2019, another 32 new hotels will be added, representing an additional 5,249 rooms, Govea said.

Authenticity is key

While Cuba's numerous beaches – many of them ranked among the world's best – continue to attract Canadians, Govea said that a growing thirst for both adventure and authentic experiences (such as city tours, culinary, nature and arts and entertainment)

will be quenched with several of these new hotels opening in Havana, rather than in traditional resort areas along the coastline.

“There is a great effort to expand the infrastructure that caters to more adventurous travellers, which is in great demand in Cuba. You can see that especially with Canadians. We find more and more Canadians are going for that type of authentic experience.”

While 2017's record hurricane season caused a slight dip in arrivals to Cuba, Govea said that it didn't take long for the minimal damage to be repaired – and for travellers to start returning.

“We were slightly affected by the hurricanes in the winter months – but we weren't directly hit,” Govea said, adding that for 2018, 1.2 million Canadian arrivals is a safe assumption. “It's well behind us and the destination is teeming with Canadians again.” ●



THE CARIBBEAN: OPEN FOR BUSINESS

While the 2017 hurricane season proved to be particularly strong in the Caribbean, tourism numbers to the region have not been affected in the long run.

In early September, St. Martin/St. Maarten, Barbuda, Anguilla and the Virgin Islands bore the brunt of the Category 5 Hurricane Irma, which also struck parts of Cuba as it travelled through the Caribbean; within the month, a second Category 5 storm – Hurricane Maria – would sweep the region, hitting hardest in Puerto Rico, leaving approximately 3.4 million without power as the U.S. territory was only just recovering from Irma's strike.

Needless to say, the photos and videos seen around the globe drew a shocked response. But despite the devastation, arrivals have remained strong.

In 2017, the Caribbean Tourism Organization reported that overall, the region saw a 4.3 per cent increase

AFTER THE STORMS

in Canadian arrivals, a strong rebound from the 3.1 per cent decline recorded the previous year; overall, the region is projecting a strong 2018 travel season, after a record-breaking 2017 saw more than 30.1 million international visitors.

That's not to say the travel industry doesn't have its work cut out for it, particularly in the age of social media where such news travels instantly – although not always accurately – and when one destination is mistaken for another with a similar name, there's the potential for real-world consequences.

Education first

For agents and their clients, the Caribbean Tourism Organization's Nancy Drolet has a simple yet important piece of advice.

"The big theme is 'know thy geography,'" Drolet says. "There were people who heard that Barbuda was hit and they thought it was Barbados, or Bahamas or Bermuda. Barbados felt that keenly."

To that end, Drolet suggests that travel agents use a map with clients when planning a trip to the Caribbean, to help explain both the path of a hurricane and which destinations lie outside of the hurricane belt.

"It's a big distance between islands and there could be a huge difference in terms of impact," she says.

Here's an update on some of the hardest-hit destinations of last year's hurricane season:

ANGUILLA



With the reopening of airports in both St. Martin and Puerto Rico – the main entry points for travellers heading to Anguilla – within weeks of Hurricane Irma's passage, operations have more or less been operating normally since last fall. Ferry service is also operating to both the Dutch and French sides of St. Martin and while the Blowing Point Ferry Terminal was destroyed in the storm, a new facility is being built.

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA



While the worst of the destruction took place in Barbuda, Antigua – where the destination's tourism industry is centred – was mostly unharmed, and reopened to visitors almost immediately after the hurricane season. Sunwing's summer service from Montreal continues until Oct. 26 while this winter, Air Canada will add a third flight from Toronto. Early 2019 will see the opening of the brand-new Royalton Antigua in Deep Bay. →

AFTER THE STORMS

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS



The destination's famous private island resorts continue to come back online: Guana Island Resort and Scrub Island Resort & Spa reopened in July, while Necker Island will have a partial reopening this fall. Rosewood Little Dix Bay and Bitter End Yacht Club – among the hardest hit resorts – are expected to reopen in late 2019. The yacht charters have made a strong recovery, and as it stands now, the territory has 1,860 charter boat berths/cabins available.

CUBA



While Hurricane Irma dealt a significant blow in the Cayos region – damaging several resorts and the Jardines Del Rey Airport, while washing out parts of the causeway connecting the Cayos to the main island – work crews in the region rallied within a matter of days to reopen facilities in the weeks that followed. The destination was up and running again before the winter travel season fully took hold.

PUERTO RICO



While much work remains to be done, tourism in Puerto Rico is bouncing back: for example, the destination welcomed an estimated 100,000 cruise passengers in May and another 131,000 in June. Currently, there are more than 130 hotels operating, with more than 11,500 rooms available. Between 3,500 and 4,000 more rooms will be added to that inventory when renovations are completed. The Ritz-Carlton Reserve, El San Juan Hotel and the St. Regis Bahia Beach will be opening their doors come October.

U.S. Virgin Islands updates

The islands of St. John, St. Croix and St. Thomas made a strong recovery following the storms. While not all of the destination's hotels have reopened, more are expected to come back online by year's end. Both Henry E. Rohlsen International Airport and Cyril E. King Airport are open, as is the cruise terminal on St. Thomas.



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With operations back online, tour operators will return to the island this fall, as have the many cruises which call in the destination. Regarding properties, Divi Little Bay Beach Resort is reopening while Sonesta Great Bay Beach Resort, purchased by Sunwing Travel Group last fall, will be converted to a Planet Hollywood in Q2 2019.

TURKS & CAICOS



Hit by both Irma and Maria, Turks & Caicos endured damage across the country, with the brunt of the two storms borne by South Caicos, Grand Turk and Salt Cay. While the storms tore off roofs and downed powerlines across the destination, recovery was more or less complete by January. More than 200 Canadian lineworkers plus equipment were brought to Turks & Caicos to assist in restoring power following the storms. ●

Dominica updates

Still in recovery mode, the island of Dominica currently has 393 rooms available of a total 962, or 41 per cent. While properties continue to reopen, new openings are on the horizon as well, including Kempinski Cabrits Resort (160 rooms) in Q3 2019; Anichi Resort (120 rooms) in December 2020; and Jungle Bay Resort (60 villas – 120 Rooms), with 30 villas expected to open in February 2019.



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PAX presents the 2018-19 Sun Destination Guide, featuring all of the top sun spots served by **Canadian tour operators**. Be sure to keep it on hand when planning your clients' next escape!

	Anguilla	Antigua & Barbuda	Aruba	Bahamas	Barbados	Belize	Bermuda	Bonaire	British Virgin Islands	Cayman Islands	Colombia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Curacao
Abercrombie & Kent						☀					☀	☀	☀	
Adventures Abroad		☀			☀	☀						☀	☀	
Air Canada Vacations		☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀			☀	☀	☀	☀	☀
Atourz						☀					☀	☀		
Boreal Tours											☀	☀		
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Central Holidays											☀	☀	☀	
Club Adventure Voyages													☀	
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Confiki						☀						☀		
Cosmos												☀		
Cox & Kings						☀					☀	☀	☀	
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Echo Tours & Travel	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀				☀	☀			☀	☀
EF Educational Tours						☀						☀		
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Embassy Tours & Cruises														
Exodus Travel		☀				☀	☀				☀	☀		
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G Adventures						☀			☀		☀	☀	☀	
Gateways International						☀					☀	☀		
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GoGo Worldwide Vacations	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀		☀		☀
Goway						☀						☀		
Great Canadian Travel Group						☀			☀		☀	☀		
Groupe Voyages Quebec												☀	☀	
Gryphon Golf Tours				☀	☀		☀			☀		☀		
Hola Sun/Caribe Sol													☀	
Indus Tours											☀	☀		
Intrepid				☀		☀					☀	☀	☀	
JM Vacations											☀	☀		
Le Groupe VIP											☀	☀		

	Anguilla	Antigua & Barbuda	Aruba	Bahamas	Barbados	Belize	Bermuda	Bonaire	British Virgin Islands	Cayman Islands	Colombia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Curacao
Lujure	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀			☀	☀		☀		
Magic Tours & Travel						☀					☀	☀		
Monograms											☀			
Objectif Monde											☀			
Off The Map Adventures												☀		
On The Go Tours						☀					☀	☀		
Pacific Holidays						☀					☀	☀		
Peregrine Adventures						☀					☀	☀	☀	
Randonnée Tours												☀		
Royal Scenic		☀	☀	☀	☀		☀			☀	☀			
Quel Beau Voyage														
Sita Tours						☀					☀	☀	☀	
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Sportvac Voyages													☀	
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Topdeck Travel														
Tourcan Vacations						☀						☀	☀	
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Tours Cure-Vac														
Tours of Exploration						☀					☀	☀	☀	
Trafalgar												☀	☀	
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Travcoa											☀	☀	☀	
Trip Connoisseurs											☀	☀	☀	
Tucan Travel						☀					☀	☀	☀	
Sunquest (TravelBrands)		☀	☀	☀	☀							☀	☀	☀
Signature Vacations		☀	☀	☀				☀				☀	☀	☀
Sunspots				☀	☀					☀				
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Sunwing		☀	☀	☀				☀				☀	☀	☀
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WestJet Vacations		☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀			☀		☀	☀	☀
World Expeditions											☀	☀	☀	
Worldwide Ecotours						☀					☀	☀		
Worldwide Quest						☀					☀	☀	☀	

Want to know which airline goes where? Here's a list of airlines providing direct flights from Canada to top sun destinations in the U.S., Caribbean and Central America – perfect for helping your clients custom-build the ideal itinerary!

	Anguilla	Antigua & Barbuda	Aruba	Bahamas	Barbados	Belize	Bermuda	Bonaire	British Virgin Islands	Cayman Islands	Colombia	Costa Rica	Cuba	Curacao
Aeromexico														
Air Canada		☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀			☀	☀	☀	☀	☀
Air Transat											☀	☀	☀	
Caribbean Airlines													☀	
Copa Airlines											☀	☀		
Interjet														
Porter														
Sunwing		☀	☀	☀				☀				☀	☀	☀
WestJet		☀	☀	☀	☀	☀	☀			☀		☀	☀	☀



AIRLINES

Dominica	Dominican Republic	Florida	Grenada	Guadeloupe	Haiti	Hawaii	Honduras	Jamaica	Martinique	Mexico	Panama	Puerto Rico	St. Barthelemy	St Kitts & Nevis	Saint Lucia	St Martin/St Maarten	St Vincent & The Grenadines	Trinidad & Tobago	Turks & Caicos	U.S. Virgin Islands
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CREAM OF THE CROP

A look at harvest festivals from around the globe

By Blake Wolfe

While autumn often conjures images of fallen leaves and turkey feasts, many destinations the world over host harvest celebrations around this time of year. Here's a look at five such festivals from around the world celebrating the hard work of the growing season with some much-needed revelry.



The main Oktoberfest tent in Munich

Photo by Pierre Adams

Oktoberfest – Munich, Germany

In need of no introduction, Oktoberfest is best experienced at its point of origin in Munich. Originally held in 1810, the first Oktoberfest commemorated the marriage of King Ludwig I and Princess Therese, in which the citizens of Munich were invited to celebrate the royal marriage in the fields surrounding the city gates. The following year saw the addition of an agricultural fair (still celebrated every three years) and horse races (discontinued in 1960), while the festival's central theme of beer has continued to grow over the years – in 2013, for example, 7.7 million litres were consumed! But it's not all about the beer – there's food, rides and much more!

Mid-Autumn Festival – various locations, Asia

Taking place in several Asian countries – most notably in China, Vietnam and Indonesia – the Mid-Autumn Festival is a feast for the senses, with colourful light displays celebrating the harvest of rice and wheat, corresponding to the 15th day of the eighth lunar month with a full moon (usually late September to early October). In addition to light displays, lanterns and dances, moon cakes are a fixture of the festival, a pastry shared amongst friends and family to celebrate the occasion.



Lanterns on sale for the Mid Autumn Festival



Offerings made during a modern-day Makahiki celebration

Makahiki - Hawaii

Marking the start of the New Year for ancient Hawaiians, the festival of Makahiki celebrates the end of farming and the start of the four-month rainy season. Historically, the four months were marked by an absence of war and a focus on rest and recreation, from feasting and dancing to ancient sports such as he'e holua, a form of downhill sledding. While traditional Makahiki celebrations still take place throughout the islands, the modern-day Aloha Festivals, taking place each September on Oahu, also draw from this ancient festival.

Onam – Kerala, India

Each August or September, India's state of Kerala is home to the annual festival of Onam, celebrating the harvest of rice in this southern region of the country. One of three major Hindu celebrations in Kerala, Onam also marks the start of the New Year for Malayali Hindus. Boat races, floral arrangements, tug-of-war and various dances – from classical kathakali to the *pulikali* tiger dance, complete with masks and body paint – are among the festivities.



The classical *kathakali* form of Indian dance



Olive oil and related products on display

Olivagando - Umbria, Italy

The Umbria region of central Italy is noted for its production of olive oil and each November, the olive harvest is celebrated in the form of Olivagando, a festival comprised of a series of smaller events held near the shores of Lake Trasimeno. In addition to olives and olive oil, local foods such as chestnuts, wine and bruschetta are celebrated with equal zeal, culminating in an annual medieval-style banquet fit for the table of any king. ●



BON VOYAGE!

ADVICE FOR FIRST-TIME CRUISERS

By Ming Tappin



Your clients have taken the leap to book their first cruise vacation, and undoubtedly will have many questions on what to expect during their voyage. Here are some tips to help them have their best first cruise experience.

Which Cruise Line?

Unlike booking a resort vacation where a bed, beach and buffet will suffice, choosing the right cruise line can make or break a cruise. It requires a good understanding of your clients' personalities, and their likes and dislikes. Ask open-ended questions to determine their interests, level of activity, and anything else that is important to them on a vacation, then recommend accordingly.

Choosing a Stateroom

Recommend the best accommodations first. Your clients work hard all year and deserve the best when they are vacationing – offer a suite or balcony so that they can truly unwind and be pampered during this precious time. If it is beyond their reach, then sell down.

Staterooms directly above or below public rooms may be prone to noise, as are those directly below the pool deck. Staterooms in the forward section may be susceptible to more motion, and staterooms in the aft may be subject to engine vibrations. Port side staterooms are not guaranteed to have a view of the port, since docking positions vary depending on location. →



Seasickness

All cruise ships have stabilizers which will minimize the motion of the ocean. Clients who are prone to motion sickness should reserve a stateroom on a low deck in the centre of the ship, where it is more stable. There is a variety of seasickness remedies available from the pharmacy: while some may have side effects, non-medicated wrist bands that work on acupuncture are a good option. If nothing else works, there is a doctor onboard who can administer stronger treatment.

What to Pack

For tropical cruises, sundresses, shorts, t-shirts and sandals are perfect daywear. For cold-weather cruising, pack clothing that can be layered, plus wind and waterproofed outerwear. Evenings range from resort casual to formal; check with the cruise line. Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, prescription medications, camera, walking shoes, swimsuits, and chargers for electronics should be standard essentials. Ziplock bags, a water bottle or travel mug, a tote bag, and a small first-aid kit are also a good idea. The ship's shops also stock sundry items if something is forgotten. On embarkation day, pack a carry-on with a change of clothing, swimsuit, and any other essentials as guests may not have access to their stateroom or luggage until several hours after boarding. →



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The cruise fare includes accommodations, all meals and snacks, entertainment and activities. On mass market ships, basic beverages such as coffee, tea, juices, milk, and tap water are included, but alcoholic beverages, sodas, bottled water and specialty coffees are not. Some cruise lines have started charging for certain room service items, and for late night deliveries. Wi-Fi and gratuities are also extra. Premium and luxury cruise lines will include some or all of these expenses in the fare. Personal expenditures such as duty-free shopping, specialty dining, shore excursions, gambling and spa should also be considered.



Getting to the Ship

Arriving at the embarkation port city at least one day ahead is highly recommended, especially if a flight is required. A pre-cruise stay allows your clients to visit local sights, adjust to any time zone change, and compensate for any flight delays. Transfers to the ship are available for purchase from the cruise line. Taxis, shuttles and public transport may also be economical; check the distance to determine the best option. Embarkation generally begins at noon, with an all-aboard time of thirty minutes prior to departure.

Future Cruise Booking

To secure repeat business, cruise lines will offer your clients an incentive to book a future cruise while they are onboard. Shipboard credits, reduced deposit and additional perks can add value to your client's next cruise. Deposits may be refundable or transferrable, or may not have an expiry date. Best of all, future cruise bookings are automatically credited back to you, so you are guaranteed the commission. Encourage your clients to take advantage of this offer as it will not be available once they disembark. ●



Ming Tappin

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



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8 TIPS



FOR AN EFFECTIVE HASHTAG

By Frédéric Gonzalo

The hashtag has become a crucial tool in marketing. Why? It's very simple: it allows you to better identify and tag your posts (text, images, video), and to know who is talking about you on popular social media sites. It is, therefore, a useful monitoring tool. Are you selling an all-inclusive package at a well-known hotel in Cayo Coco, Cuba? There is a good chance that travellers are sharing their highlights on Facebook or Instagram with the hashtag #CayoCoco, #Sunwing, or #Transat, to name just a few.

The hashtag not only transcends social media platforms, from Twitter

to Instagram to Google+, Pinterest, or Facebook, but also allows you to continue the dialogue beyond a campaign. It is a great tool that allows you to sync your digital initiatives with your advertising in traditional media: radio, television, billboards, and more.

Here are eight tips to consider when choosing a hashtag.

#1 It should be easy to remember. A good hashtag is one that's not quickly forgotten. A look at the top 50 most-used hashtags on Instagram right now reveals that they're not overly complicated: #love,

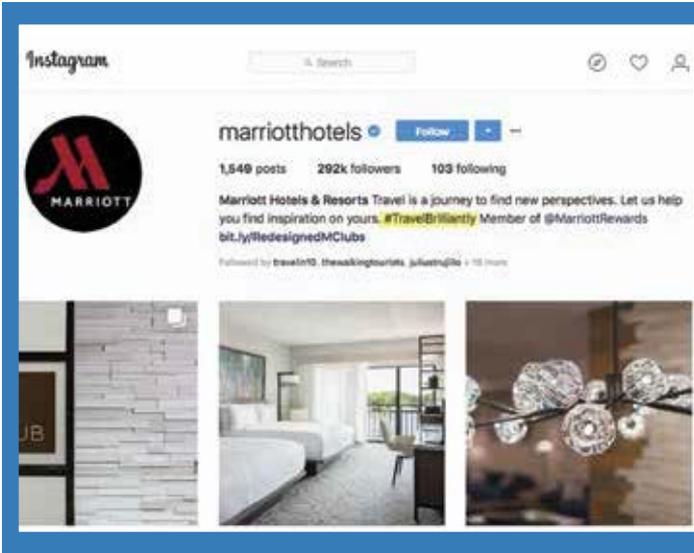
#photooftheday, #followme, #beautiful, or #tbt (meaning 'Throwback Thursday').

#2 It doesn't necessarily have to be linked to the brand.

When Royal Caribbean launched its multiplatform campaign (Twitter, Periscope, YouTube, Instagram) a few years ago, they chose to convey a message to #ComeSeek new experiences, specifically with first-time cruisers in mind. Marriott did likewise with their #TravelBrilliantly hashtag and campaign, which is clearly not brand-specific, but allows the hotel chain to position itself with a clear, strong message: to travel brilliantly is to stay at a Marriott.

#3 It needs to be consistent. A big danger for brands is the temptation to ditch a hashtag and switch to another, because the campaign goal may not be the same; they may also feel inclined to plan one hashtag for Twitter, and another for Instagram. However, once you've decided on a hashtag, it's important to remain consistent in its use across the various social media platforms.

#4 Do your research. Before you start, run a search to find out if a hashtag already exists. This can be done directly in Twitter and Instagram, using the search tool, or through external applications like Iconosquare or Hootsuite. Do your homework before it's too late – for example, discovering that the acronym you've chosen already exists, in a questionable industry or with a racist or sexist context. →

An advertisement for the 2018 Global Tourism Summit Hawaii. The background features a man from behind with his arms raised in a 'shaka' gesture, looking out over a tropical beach with a large rainbow arching over the water. The text is overlaid on the image.

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#5 Make it short and simple. A good hashtag is not only easy to remember; it will also be uncomplicated. Think of examples like #exploreBC, #ilovewinter, or #DiscoverON for destinations and experiences in Canada. A simple golden rule to remember is that more than 15 characters is too long! It's often said that a good hashtag is composed of six to 14 characters.

#6 Multilingual posts are a plus. In Canada, it's a good idea to have an effective hashtag in both French and English. You'll see Tourisme Montréal (#mtlmoments) or Destination New Brunswick (#ExploreNB) use hashtags that work great in two or more languages. If you put forward a destination in Spanish or another language, be sure to avoid bad translations or interpretations in either language.

#7 Hashtags should be intuitive and relevant. A good hashtag is one that comes to the user instinctively when sharing a photo via Instagram or live-tweeting an event. If your event is the 2018 Idaho International Potato Festival, it's better to use #potatofestival or #potatofestival2018 rather than #fipa2018, which can be associated with other acronyms.

#8 Ensure a presence everywhere. The chosen hashtag will, of course, have to be promoted on all social media where you have a presence, but we must not forget that people may not be following you on all these platforms. The hashtag must be accompanied by presence in the field – for instance, by producing picture frames for an event (like those at the wedding pictured) or

in-destination, as seen in Dallas with the #DallasBIG campaign.

Several tourist destinations have also taken the plunge by setting up physical reminders in areas where they want to see people sharing their best shots. Among the most notable are the #ShareDenmark initiative of the Danish National Tourist Board and the latest Barcelona Tourism campaign, 'Barcelona Inspira.' The latter case has seen the tourism board go even further by investing in traditional media – outdoor signs, bus advertisements and newspapers – to encourage locals as well as tourists to take part in the promotion.

In short: a well-designed and well-used hashtag can go beyond a media platform and reach a much larger audience. This will allow you to trace the content related to your brand, share it, and – crucially – interact with the people who are talking about you and your service. ●



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Jardines del Rey

A gem of Cuba's tourism industry

By Fergal McAlinden



Photo by Ilya Yakubovich

If Cuba is a haven for tourists and travellers in search of a sun-soaked getaway, the Jardines del Rey are among its most indispensable assets. This archipelago, straddling Cuba's northern coast, accounts for well over 7,000 of the country's hotel rooms, with plans already underfoot to more than quadruple that number in the coming years.

The numerous islands and tiny islets that dot the coastal waters near Camagüey were collectively christened Jardines del Rey – the King's Gardens – in the 16th Century by the Spanish, with Cayo Coco undoubtedly among the most prominent of these. Boasting miles of pristine, powdery beaches and glistening crystalline waters, it's an ideal setting for the many

resorts housed there, most of which offer stunning coastal views and plush, modern facilities.

The tropical island's popularity as an all-inclusive destination is little surprise, given the quality and variety of the resorts on display there, but it's equally noteworthy for the activities offered beyond each property's gates.

It's blessed, for instance, with the largest coral reef in the western hemisphere, bristling with sea life and shrouded in an eerie yet beautiful blue glow, even past shallow depths. The reef is easily-accessible, with glass-bottomed boat tours offered for those who'd rather remain out of the water.

Cayo Guillermo's charm

Attached to Cuba's mainland by a long path, Cayo Coco also connects to another of the significant cays of Jardines del Rey: Cayo Guillermo. Although it lays claim to less resorts than Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo offers a similarly impressive array of beaches, with its shallower waters particularly →



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Boasting miles of pristine, powdery beaches and glistening crystalline waters, it's an ideal setting for the many resorts housed there, most of which offer stunning coastal views and plush, modern facilities.

ideal for kitesurfing. Perhaps its most notable beach, Playa Pilar, took its name from Ernest Hemingway's yacht, *Pilar*, which provided inspiration for several of the legendary author's most noted works – many of which are also marked indelibly by the time Hemingway spent in Jardines del Rey.

Located a stone's throw from Playa Pilar, and clearly visible from the shores of the beach, is Isla Media Luna (Half-Moon Island), a miniscule islet that's proven a hugely popular destination for day trips. Catamarans zip back and forth, with tasty lobster and shrimp the order of the day at the local restaurant.

A birdwatching location

Among the more quiet islands in the archipelago are Cayo Romano – renowned as an excellent location for birdwatching – and Cayo Guajaba, Cayo Sabinal and Santa María, all adorned by the idyllic beaches that have become a symbol of the Jardines.

One of the key selling points to these blissful cays is their ease of access, with the Jardines del Rey Airport –

which serves over 200,000 passengers a year – ensuring that the resorts and beaches are just a short distance away upon landing. Although the memory of Hurricane Irma, which pummelled the Jardines del Rey in 2017, remains fresh, the swift nature of the area's recovery leaves little doubt that it will continue to play a vital role in enticing travellers to Cuba in the future. ●





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PAX ON LOCATION

COLOMBIA'S CARIBBEAN COAST

By Ariane Arpin-Delorme





In recent years, Colombia has become a country transformed, going some way towards shaking off its previously unsafe image. In fact, the destination has so much to offer that it would be a shame to merely limit yourself to a seaside holiday on the tourist islands of San Andres and Providenciales.

CARTAGENA



Considered by many to be the 'Pearl of the Caribbean,' Cartagena de Indias was unquestionably among my favourite destinations in 2016. The city, whose buildings have largely remained intact despite recent conflict, has long inspired travellers and writers – particularly the novelist Gabriel García Márquez, who lived in Cartagena while he wrote his famous novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*. A stroll through the walled old town is highly recommended: this colonial gem of the Caribbean coast features colourful mansions, bougainvillea-covered balconies, and outdoor cafes and restaurants, where you'll hear the rhythms of cumbia and salsa (Cartagena has clearly established a strong connection with Cuba).

Another prominent feature of the neighbourhoods of the old city is

street art. What's more authentic than discovering architectural gems while criss-crossing the streets and taking in these stunning murals? These days, the city also offers all types of restaurants: gourmet menus, trendy cafes and bars, vegan and Italian restaurants, establishments serving baked goods and, of course, traditional family restaurants.

From the third week of December until March, several Canadian charter airlines offer direct flights from Montreal to Cartagena (regular scheduled flights are also available year-round), making the destination even more accessible.

MÚCURA ISLAND



If you're looking to visit a paradise beach on a day trip, the Baru Peninsula is your best option. For a stay of a few nights, however, the island of Múcura is superb; its crystal-clear waters and colourful, diverse aquatic life are perfect for scuba diving enthusiasts. The charming Punta Faro resort has launched an initiative with the fishing community at the Los Corales del Rosario y de San Bernardo national park, exchanging chickens for turtles; this has resulted in the creation of a turtle sanctuary around the island. →

A host of lizard species can also be found basking in the sun or hidden amongst colourful tropical flowers.

TAYRONA NATIONAL NATURAL PARK, SANTA MARTA

The friendly port village of Santa Marta is accessible by air or road from Cartagena. Its infrastructure is still quite simple, and its clientele consists mainly of backpackers. A short distance down the road is the Tayrona National Park, with opportunities to hike in the dense jungle, discover stunning beaches and sample indigenous culture. Lazing on the beach is a perfect way to end a day spent walking or horseback riding through the park; if you're up for more physical exertions, you can also venture to discover the famous Lost City in the heart of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range.

If you have the chance, staying in a "Maloka" room near the huge deserted beach of Los Angeles, outside the park, is strongly recommended. The word "Maloka" is used by some First Nations communities in Colombia to denote a spacious house with a thatched roof and palm leaves; I had the chance to stay in the original house (Cabana Barlovento) of the Finca Barlovento, built by the famous artist Gloria Mejía and architect Simón Velez. If you aren't much enthused by the loud noise caused by waves crashing against the rocks, the Maloka guest house offers standard rooms and suites next door which may be more appropriate. The Finca Barlovento, located at the mouth of the sea and the river of the Tayrona National Park, is a true paradise



on earth that's completely in sync with nature – as you'll find when experiencing one of the amazing sunsets.

Apart from relaxing, enjoying the beach and hiking in the park, the place is also ideal for wildlife watching, from a variety

of birds to iguanas and monkeys. If you're lucky, you may even come across a crocodile! ●

**This article has not been sponsored or endorsed by the accommodations mentioned.*

WANT TO EXPLORE THE OTHER REGIONS OF COLOMBIA? HERE ARE SOME FAVOURITES:

Bogota

- Stroll through the colourful houses of La Candelaria, Bogota's historic district;
- Enjoy the magnificent pre-Colombian treasures at the Gold Museum;
- Take a ride by funicular (cabled railway car) to the Montserrat Monastery to admire the view of the capital.

Medellin

- Examine the distinctive, curvaceous works of Fernando Botero at the Bogota Museum or Plaza Botero in Medellin;
- Marvel at the Salt Cathedral at the Zipaquirá Salt Mine, built 180 metres below the surface.

Cali

- Dance Colombian salsa amidst the exuberant Cali nightlife.

San Augustin

- Try to unravel the mysteries of a long-vanished civilization by exploring the megalithic sculptures of San Augustin.

Villa de Leyva

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SAINT JAMES'S

CLUB AND VILLAS

The jewel of Antigua

By Hortense des Dorides

Nestled on a narrow peninsula in the south of Antigua, between the Atlantic Ocean and Mamora Bay, St. James's Club and Villas is set on 40 acres of private estate full of mature palm trees. It's perfect for those in search of a holiday with a British character – tinged with Caribbean style.

After landing and disembarking in Antigua via Sunwing's direct flight from Montreal, we left the airport – located in the north of the island – and began a 40-minute journey by car (driving on the left-hand side of the road!), heading southwards.

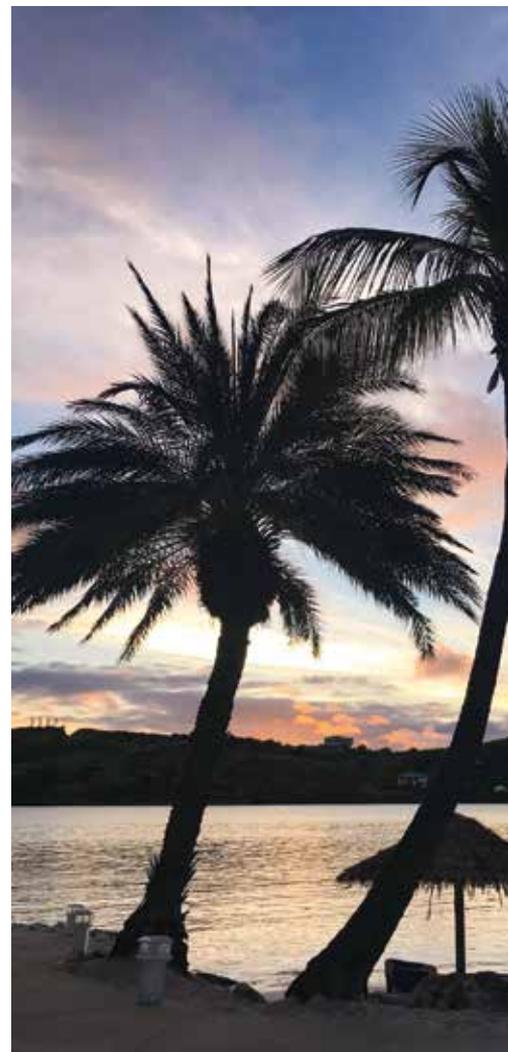
The drive was a nervous experience thanks to the steep terrain, but finally, we turned a corner and saw it in the distance: a length of land surrounded by resplendent blue water. We had arrived; from the top of the hill, we could

make out the entire property of St. James's Club and Villas below, a former private club now recognized as one of the best all-inclusives on the island.

Two pristine beaches

The all-inclusive is home to two beaches, the first of which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean and offers spectacular views from rooms in three buildings. The other stretch of sand looks out onto Mamora Bay, with villas located on a lofty hilltop.





The property features a total of 247 rooms, suites and villas, divided into six categories. The most modest of these are the Club Rooms, for two people; the three-bedroom villas, meanwhile, can accommodate up to six people and are ideal for families or groups of friends. Finally, couples can settle in one of the 48 Royal suites.

Six pools – some for children and others adults-only – are located across the resort, meaning that you'll never have a long search for a place to cool off in the heat.

The property also features tennis courts and a brand-new state-of-the-art gym, located at the very heart of the resort.

A peaceful atmosphere

One of the most striking aspects of our stay was the calmness of the place; St. James's Club and Villas is the wrong venue for lovers of loud and hectic nightlife. Families, though, will find themselves at home thanks to the children's club and the idyllic beach on the bay, which provides a safe and peaceful location for swimming →



and all kinds of nautical activities. The hotel offers kayaks, small sailing boats, and paddleboards.

From the dock at Mamora Bay, meanwhile, sailing and motor boats allow fishing and scuba diving enthusiasts to venture out into the sea.

Guests can partake in excursions to the four corners of the island from the hotel. English Harbour, with its colonial past and small, cozy restaurants, is only 10 minutes away from the hotel by car, while the capital, St. John's, is accessible via a 40-minute drive.

Why not advise adventurous customers, who aren't daunted by the prospect of driving on the left-hand side, to rent a car? This will allow them greater independence to make the most of discovering this small, friendly island, with its rich history and smiling inhabitants. ●

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