

## UK OFFICE

### October 2018 REPORT

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander  
UK Director**

#### Meetings/Training/Events

- **TDC** - Attended October TDC and presented a recap on major initiatives in the UK during the preceding fiscal year. Also presented to all staff at VSPC as well as holding general meetings and conducting a number of site visits for updates on area accommodations.
- **SeaWorld/Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Mega Fam** – In partnership with SeaWorld Parks we hosted our annual joint fam trip to Orlando and St. Pete/Clearwater, which included their 4 parks and time in our destination. We invited 27 sales agents from our key UK and Irish Tour Operators, and have received really positive feedback on both areas and the varied itinerary. Prior to the trip, we worked with Michelle and Rose to finalise the itinerary which included; accommodation at Sheraton Sand Key, time to enjoy St. Pete Beach, Dolphin Racer Adventure, beach yoga, James Museum, Dali Museum, Sea Salt restaurant, Starlite dinner cruise, Maggie Mae's, William Dean Chocolates, as well as site visits and hosted meals at Marriott Suites Clearwater Beach, Holiday Inn Harbourside, Sirata Beach, and Hyatt Regency Clearwater. Following their return, they now feel more confident about selling the destinations to their future customers. We have planned a follow up meeting at WTM with SeaWorld Parks to discuss a potential trip in 2019.
- **Norwegian Inaugural flight** - We attended the inaugural flight celebrations at Gatwick airport for the new Norwegian flight to Tampa. Dominic Tucker, Head of Sales, advised there were about 250 people travelling on the flight, which is about 70% load. Norwegian are really happy with this given it's the first flight and normally the loads are low. Overall he said that the flight is performing really well. The event was fairly low key today with some decorations, photo props, cake and drinks, and several short speeches. We provided brochures, maps and giveaways to each of the passenger and assisted with their questions.

#### TRADE LIAISON

- **Vision 9/Boardmasters** – Ongoing discussion regarding the possibility of activating at Boardmasters 2019. An initial proposal has been received but discussions are ongoing.
- **Thomas Cook** – As part of the existing campaign we are currently running with Thomas Cook via Visit Florida, we have now received the e-newsletter 'Experience family fun in Florida' solus email and this has now been approved.

- **Brand USA** – We have received the print advert which forms part of our multi-channel campaign with Brand USA. This has now been approved.
- **WTM** – We have now finalised the schedule for WTM and have arranged for brochures, maps and giveaways to be sent to the venue for use on our stand.
- **Norwegian** – Ahead of the inaugural flight to Tampa, we have arranged brochures, maps and giveaways to be sent to the airport which we will distribute to each customer on the flight.
- **Kew Gardens/Chihuly** – Contacted Kew Gardens regarding the forthcoming Chihuly Exhibition which will be held there from April to October 2019. Wanted to initiate a conversation regarding any joint promotional opportunities as well as the possibility of holding an event for top clients. Have been passed round a number of different departments and so far nobody has responded.
- **Tour America/Experience Kissimmee** – Kathleen Maher at Tour America has advised that Experience Kissimmee are again keen to partner with us on a joint campaign in Ireland and we have agreed a total budget of \$20,000 to be split on a 50/50 basis. We are also discussing the possibility of a separate stand-alone campaign later in 2019. We are currently waiting on a proposal to be received.
- **Ocean Florida** – We have received a draft copy of the next edition of their Florida brochure. We have provided our new logo along with amends and will wait the final proof for our approval.
- **Brand USA Multichannel Campaign** – Signed off the final elements.
- **Icelandair, Scandinavia** – Following their trip to St. Pete/Clearwater in September, we received some really positive feedback regarding the itinerary:  
‘The hosts managed to put together a fantastic program during this FAM Trip and it will be remembered mostly for great hospitality and interesting places we visited and enjoyed as well to know more of the history of the areas we visited. It is usually more important for us to not just come and see various hotels, but to get to know more about the areas we visit and the leisure facilities offered around to accommodate the needs/options for our customers’.
- **If Only** – Rachel McAneny contacted us to advise that Alison Murphy had moved into a new role at If Only, however Caroline Waters is their new USA Product Executive.
- **Scandinavian Sales Mission** – We have now finalised our schedule for our annual sales mission in November in partnership with Visit Orlando and SeaWorld Parks. We will be attending meetings and training sessions at; Spies, Profil Rejser, My Planet, USATour.dk, AOB Travel, Big Travel, and Norwegian. We will also be attending the Discover America Norway and Denmark events which will both consist of networking with key partners and prize draws. We have provided our presentation to Rukhsana ahead of our arrival next month, and also arranged brochures and maps to be sent to the travel agencies for their staff. We have also provided our video, images and logos to Widar for the Discover America Norway event.

- **Risskov Rejser, Denmark** – Trine Vennekilde, Product Manager contacted us to ask for our assistance as one of her sales agents will be visiting St. Pete/Clearwater next year and was hoping we could assist with a travel trade rate for accommodation. We have sent her request to Michelle and our partners will contact her direct.
- **Florida Beaches** – Ahead of the travel shows next year, we have updated our collateral with new images and content. We will await the final proof for our approval.
- **Virgin Holidays** – We have been advised that our Destination Manager, Nicole Gibson at Virgin Holidays is leaving the company to move over to Virgin Atlantic and as such our contact for the next few months will be James Libor until Nicole's replacement joins the team in January 2019.
- **Visit USA, Ireland** – After submitting details on the renovation projects for Sirata, Don Cesar and Fenway Hotel to Visit USA Ireland, they included this information in the October edition of their e-zine.
- **VSPC UK/Ireland Product Manager FAM** – Discussions continue with British Airways to see when this FAM that had to be postponed last month can be re-scheduled. We have suggested perhaps the end of April and are currently waiting for BA to come back to us.
- **Holiday Genie** – John Hamer contacted us to advise that they are updating their website, so we have provided him with images, copy, and videos.

## **ENQUIRIES:**

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

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## **MARKET INTELLIGENCE:**

4 October 2018, Source ITTN

### **British Airways is Planning New Staff Uniforms**

The fashion bug is alive and well in IAG, with Aer Lingus going for new staff uniforms and now British Airways is doing likewise. Savile Row tailoring expert Oswald Boateng is to be the next in an auspicious line-up of British designers to develop uniforms for the airline. Boateng, who is known for bringing a modern contemporary twist to the classic British institution of tailoring, will be designing a collection for the airline's 32,000 employees who wear a uniform as part of their role. The new uniform will form an important part of the airline's celebrations for its centenary next year. Alex Cruz, British Airways' Chairman and Chief Executive, said: "Our uniforms have been an iconic symbol of our brand throughout our 100-year history and our partnership with Oswald will take us forward to the next chapter in our journey. At a time when we are investing for customers, new uniforms are a visual representation of investment in our people and we want them to feel proud when they wear the new uniform." Oswald Boateng said: "I am really excited about creating this new uniform for British Airways. It is important for me to create something that makes all of British

Airways' 32,000 uniform-wearing employees across the world excited, at the same time as enabling me to really demonstrate my skills as a designer. British Airways is investing £4.5 billion over the next five years and the uniform I design will form part of that, so I am looking forward to taking a uniform and refining it into a collection." Ozwald started his career in fashion in 1986 and became the first tailor to host a catwalk show at Paris Fashion Week. As well as being the youngest tailor to open a store in Savile Row, Ozwald was the Creative Director at Givenchy Homme from 2002 to 2006. Boateng, who launched his first womenswear collection this year, will be working closely with the airline's employees throughout the development process, from shadowing them to understand their roles and how the uniforms need to perform, to design, testing and final delivery.

7 October 2018, Source Travel Extra

### **Mary McKenna's Tour America do €2.3m business at their show**

Mary McKenna's Tour America reported €2.3m worth of business at their 18th annual consumer show at Moran's Red Cow, up 15pc on 2017. Customers' queues formed at 7.20 am to enter the event, which had 40 suppliers manning stands at the event.

8 October 2018, Source Travelbiz

### **Tropical storm Michael: Florida declares STATE of EMERGENCY ahead of DANGEROUS storm**

FLORIDA Governor Rick Scott has declared a state of emergency due to the high possibility of Tropical Storm Michael strengthening to a dangerous hurricane as it heads to the US coast. The National Hurricane Centre (NHC) upgraded the tropical depression in the Caribbean to a tropical storm on Sunday, stating its winds had reached 40 miles per hour. The NHC also added in its advisory that Michael is likely to turn into a hurricane by Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning. Florida Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency for 26 counties in the Panhandle and Big Bend coastal region of northern Florida. He said: "Our state understands how serious tropical weather is and how devastating any hurricane or tropical storm can be. "As we continue to monitor this storm's path toward Florida, it is critically important that our communities have every available resource to keep everyone safe. "You can not hide from storm surge, so get prepared and get out if evacuations are ordered." Weather.com meteorologist Christopher Dolce warned the "hurricane conditions are possible in the region by Wednesday" with "damaging winds, dangerous storm surge, and heavy rain". A news release from the Governor's office stated that declaring a state of emergency ensures that state and local governments have ample time, resources and flexibility to prepare for the storm. Mr Scott said in the release: "If any Florida family doesn't have an emergency preparedness plan, now is the time to act. "Floridians also know just how quickly the path of a storm can change and that's why we all must be vigilant and get prepared today. "I encourage every Floridian to visit [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org)." A Tropical Storm Warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area, in this case within the next 12 hours. According to NHC spokesman Dennis Feltgen, Michael is the 13th named storm of the 2018 hurricane season.

11 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **New ABTA research shows high conversion rate for agents**

The vast majority of British consumers who speak to a travel agent when planning their holiday will go on to book with that agent. ABTA's latest Holiday Habits report, released at

the Travel Convention in Seville today, found 30% of Brits said they had spoken to a travel professional about their last holiday. Of these, 93% said they then went on to book with that company - 40% booked with the agent in-store, 30% booked with the agent online and 23% booked over the phone. "This year, for the first time, we asked people about their booking behaviour after they had spoken to a travel professional. This is in recognition that customers may start a conversation through one channel, but end up booking via another," said an ABTA spokeswoman. "The findings show that if businesses can engage a customer in a conversation, they have more than a nine in ten chance of converting that conversation into a sale. "It also reinforces the importance of thinking about a customer journey through all of the channels they may be researching and booking, from the initial engagement through to the final booking. "It also busts the myth that lots of people speak to a travel professional and then go on to book their travel independently or with someone else. Only 7% of people who spoke to a travel professional went on to book with another travel company or organised the holiday themselves."

11 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **More Brits taking overseas holidays than since 2011**

The number of Brits taking an overseas holiday is the highest since 2011, according to the latest research by ABTA. Releasing its annual Holiday Habits report at the Travel Convention in Seville today, ABTA said 60% of Brits took a foreign holiday in the 12 months to August 2018, up from 57% the previous year. Spain and Portugal continue to be a popular choice for package holidays but Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean had a particularly good summer, with Greece up 10%, Turkey up 65% and Bulgaria up 21%. But while more Brits are going abroad, they are spending less. The survey of 2,000 British adults showed the average spend is down from £586 to £562 for longer holidays abroad. Meanwhile, value for money has increased as a priority when choosing a package holiday, up to 60% from 57% last year. "Despite pressures on household incomes, Britons are clearly wedded to their holidays, with travel a spending priority," said Mark Tanzer, ABTA chief executive. "Holidaymakers are becoming increasingly cost-conscious, seeking value for money and budgeting more wisely in their holiday choices." Looking ahead, 51% of Brits plan to spend the same on holidays next year. While the number of people who plan to spend more is down on last year - 25% compared to 31% - there is no change in the number of people who say they will spend less, which stands at 14% for both 2017 and 2018. Over half (54%) said they are concerned about the impact Brexit will have on the cost of their holiday, up from 51% last year. "We're at a unique juncture in the UK's history as the nation counts down to leaving the EU, so naturally more people's thoughts turn to what Brexit means for travel," said Tanzer. "People understandably have questions and concerns about what impact Brexit may have on the cost of travel but it is very encouraging that Europe tops the bill as the place they wish to visit next year, and holiday bookings more widely are looking positive for the year ahead."

15 October 2018, Source Travel Weekly

### **Gatwick 'seeks to raise capacity through use of emergency runway'**

Gatwick is poised to reveal a new plan to create a second runway enabling it to handle up to 84,000 extra flights a year. The airport previously submitted a proposal to build an entirely new runway two years ago, which was rejected by the government. Approval was then given for a third runway at Heathrow. Gatwick's plan is due to be showcased in a draft masterplan, which will be published on Thursday. It involves using the airport's existing emergency

runway so a costly building project would not be required, the Sunday Times reported. After the previous plans were rejected, Gatwick, which handles around 282,000 flights a year, said it would put together new growth plans using “existing infrastructure”. The masterplan will include the proposed ‘routine’ use of its 8,400ft emergency runway. Gatwick would require planning permission from the Civil Aviation Authority to use its standby runway. The runway, which is normally used as a taxiway or an alternative when the main runway requires maintenance, runs parallel to the 10,800ft main runway. A legal agreement from 1979 that prevents the runways being used concurrently expires next August. The emergency runway, which is normally used as a taxiway or an alternative when the main runway requires maintenance, is understood to be primed for use by smaller, short-haul aircraft. This could boost the airport’s capacity by between 20% and 30%, adding up to 231 extra flights a day. The runway could potentially be used after 2023, before Heathrow completes its third runway in 2026. It is believed that Gatwick will be seek to use the emergency runway as an interim plan for growth. But campaign group Communities Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions (GAGNE) said: “This is simply betrayal of communities of Sussex, Surrey and Kent who have already endured the increases in long-haul movements this year by 24.1% – this is a second runway by the backdoor, how can communities ever trust Gatwick management again?” Gatwick said any new development “would be fully compliant with all international safety requirements”. A Gatwick spokesman said: “Airports are required to publish new master plans every five years, setting out their future growth plans and Gatwick has consistently confirmed it will do so before the end of this year. The draft plan will set out for our local communities, partners, airlines and stakeholders three possible growth scenarios, which we will then open up for views and feedback. “In line with recent government policy, Gatwick has previously set out it is exploring how to make best use of its existing runways, including the possibility of bringing its existing standby runway into routine use. This would deliver an incremental increase in capacity that complements the expansion schemes of other airports across the south-east. “Safety and security are always our key priorities and any new development would be fully compliant with all international safety requirements.” Meanwhile, Gatwick’s major shareholder Global Infrastructure Partners is reported to be considering selling some or all of its 42% stake in the airport which could raise up to £10 billion. Gatwick handles 45 million passengers a year.

16 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Thomas Cook Airlines adds new long-haul fare options**

Thomas Cook Airlines is launching 'Economy Light' fares on its long-haul routes, promising they will be the 'lowest and most competitively priced' available. The new fares will be available on Thomas Cook Airlines in the UK and Condor in Germany and go on sale on November 1. In addition, it is adding a flexible option, Economy Flex, to its regular economy tickets, which turns a on-refundable fare into a flexible ticket. Economy Light fares include a 6kg cabin bag and a personal item such as a handbag, but not hold baggage. The Economy Light option is available for online check-in only. However, the on-board experience remains the same as regular economy and people can add extras such as signature James Martin meals and inflight entertainment. A typical Economy Light Manchester-New York flight would start from £299.99 return, compared to £359.99 return in economy. Commercial director Henry Sunley said: "We wanted to ensure that we provide fares that support the different needs of our customers, which can differ from trip to trip. "Economy Light offers an option for those customers who want fewer amenities for their journey but want to benefit from fantastic cost savings. "They are the first fares that we have introduced on a pan-European scale across Thomas Cook Group Airline for our seat-only business." Thomas Cook Airlines

is also introducing an Economy Flex option to its economy fares for customers who want more flexibility with their booking. Adding Flex turns a non-refundable fare into a flexible ticket that allows cancellations and removes penalties and charges for date and route changes. Sunley added, "Economy Flex fares have been available with Condor for a number of years and are a great option for business and leisure travellers alike. We believe that our UK customers will welcome the chance to add extra flexibility to their trip if they wish to. "With Economy Light and the option to add flexibility with Economy Flex, we are providing more choice than ever for our customers."

18 October 2018, Source Travolution

### **Netflix and Amazon 'show possibilities for travel'**

Nobody in the travel sector is delivering personalised content and products for consumers the way Netflix and Amazon do. Google travel account manager Benedicte Conway said there was "a massive opportunity" for the industry to mirror innovators in other sectors to meet changing consumer demands. She told delegates at Broadway Travel's annual conference that 80% of what is watched on Netflix comes from recommendations the streaming service suggests to users, which is based on a user's behaviour online and things they have watched previously. Conway said: "Netflix has come in with machine learning and an algorithm that gives recommendations based on what you like. Usually it's pretty accurate. Amazon does the same thing. "Because people see it in one industry consumers expect it in another, so that creates a massive opportunity for us in travel to jump on that and start showing more tailored, personalised content to our consumers. "At the moment, there's no one like Netflix in the travel industry, there's no one really owning that. This is a massive problem for us because people are more attracted to businesses that offer some understanding of their needs and likes." Conway and Google travel account manager Eoin Cahill said consumers were more "curious, demanding and impatient" than ever before but they wanted a "finite" list of recommendations for their holiday and to be "looked after". They said research showed 60% of travellers today would rather see fewer options rather than trawling through endless options online. Cahill said: "Before the internet and before TripAdvisor we used to book through a travel agent. We'd give them our budget, we'd give them our dates, how many people and the places we didn't want to go and they came back with some options. Then the internet became more accessible and people started researching ourselves. "Our desires are the same – we still want to go on holiday and enjoy ourselves, but the way we consume that changed. Customers want to be looked after and given a finite number of choices that meet our needs the way a travel agent used to. "Essentially what people are looking for is a 24/7 travel agent online that anticipates all of their needs and likes. Consumers are leaning in to businesses that offer this to them."

18 October 2018, Source Travelbiz

### **Irish airports first in Europe with facial recognition for US Preclearance**

Facial biometrics are operational at Dublin and Shannon as transatlantic travel booms. Have you flown from Dublin or Shannon to the US recently? You may have noticed a new step to US Preclearance - one which involves facial recognition technology, verifying the identity of passengers by matching a fresh photo to the ones in their passport, visa and other documents on file. The facial recognition verification process takes less than two seconds, with a 99pc matching rate, according to US Customs and Border Protection. The new systems, rolled out in Ireland this year, have seen Dublin and Shannon become the first airports in Europe using facial biometrics in this way. The programme exists in over a dozen US airports, and has also

been extended to Abu Dhabi and Aruba Airport in the Caribbean. It has been operational in Dublin since June, while a pilot programme at Shannon has been running since April. "The fact that mobile device users now have the option to use biometrics to unlock their phones also helped shape our decision," US CBP has said. On August 22, of this year, the first "imposter" was intercepted using the technology, when US CBP officers stopped a man attempting to enter the United States using a French passport at Washington DC's Dulles International Airport. His true ID card was hidden in his shoe. The upgrades come at time of growth for North American air travel in Ireland, with Shannon alone enjoying its busiest period of transatlantic operations for 17 years. The airport now has seven services to six destinations, including Norwegian's low-cost flights to New York Stewart International - set to go daily from October 28. At its peak this summer, Dublin Airport saw 10 airlines operating 446 weekly flights to 20 North American destinations. It recently opened a €16 million transfer hub to facilitate a growing connecting passenger business. All told, North American visitors to Ireland are up 11.4pc in the first half of 2018, according to CSO data, with revenue from the sector up by 10pc. Shannon is continuing with a €40 million investment programme, which has seen a runway upgrade and refurbishments to its Duty-Free store, dining facilities, boarding gates and executive lounges. It has also introduced Europe's first airport sensory room for passengers with autism (above), as part of a suite of online supports for visitors who need special assistance.

18 October 2018, Source Travelbiz

### **Profit margins at airlines decline as fuel costs soar**

Airlines across the world are making less money compared to a year ago as fuel costs rise, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). It said that the earnings before interest and tax margin for a sample of 99 airlines fell to 7.8pc in the second quarter of 2018 from 10.3pc during the second quarter of 2017. IATA noted that global passenger yields - the average price per ticket - have moved slightly higher in recent months, with yields for premium cabins continuing to show "more resilience" than economy seats. It said those higher premium yields have helped to offset some of the impact of rising input costs. Premium passengers accounted for 5.2pc of total international air traffic in the first seven months of 2018, according to IATA, but generated 30.4pc of total passenger revenue in the period. Oil prices have risen about 40pc in the past year, heaping pressure on airlines, while trade tensions and weaker global economic outlook could see yields come under more pressure. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary has predicted that the high fuel price will push some carriers out of business. He also said yesterday that a no-deal Brexit could ground UK flights for up to three weeks. IATA said that passenger demand across the globe has continued to outpace capacity, which rose 5.5pc year-on-year in August. Passenger demand was 6.4pc higher that month.

23 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **One in 10 have already booked summer 2019**

One in 10 people have already booked their summer 2019 holiday, with half choosing a European destination, according to research from Sainsbury's Bank Travel Insurance. Of the 5.6 million UK adults who have booked already, 49% have chosen Europe, 29% have opted for a staycation, 8% are going to North America, 7% to Asia and 5% to Australasia. Many are dreaming of warmer climates with almost half (45%) planning a beach break. A quarter (26%) of travellers prefer a city break for their summer trip, while 13% will take a cruise. Although some book their holidays 20 weeks in advance, the average traveller gets round to

sorting their travel insurance only three months before their trip. Over a tenth (16%) never take out travel insurance leaving them exposed to a range of potential issues from travel disruptions to medical bills should they become ill abroad. Waiting for a good deal or special offer was the reason a quarter (25%) of UK adults hold off buying travel insurance. Over a tenth (14%) claimed they hadn't had the time to purchase travel insurance. Karen Hogg, head of insurance at Sainsbury's Bank said: "Leaving your travel insurance until the last minute is a risky strategy as travellers could end up uninsured and out of pocket if they have to cancel their trip."

24 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Boozy holidays no longer 'cool' among young travellers**

Getting drunk is not a priority for young people when they go on holiday, according to research published today. A survey of 2,000 British holidaymakers commissioned by World Travel Market found just 9% of millennials want to get drunk on holiday. Meanwhile, 78% of those aged 25-34 seek to spur social media envy by posting on Instagram, closely followed by those in the 18-24 age group, where 63% say they search for social status shots rather than shots of sambuca. More than two thirds (38%) of those aged 25-34 say they post online more than once a day while they are on holiday, with a similar proportion (37%) of those aged 18-24 posting once a day. Travel experts at WTM say this reflects a 'seismic shift' in attitudes towards booze. A third of Brits aged 16-24 now do not drink, compared to one fifth in 2015, according to Health Survey for England. Binge drinking rates have also plunged from 27% in 2005 to 18%. The findings come just three days before the last ever Club 18-30 customers fly from Manchester to Magaluf on Saturday. At its peak, Club 18-30 took 110,000 young people a year on holiday. But Thomas Cook has scrapped the brand, saying it wants to focus on its Cook's Club resorts for style-conscious holidaymakers on a lower budget. World Travel Market London's Paul Nelson, said: "It's a sobering thought for the older generation of holidaymakers that their drunken antics are just not regarded as cool by younger travellers. "It would appear that millennials, 'Generation Sensible' or 'sober socialites' are more health-conscious and mindful of their image when on holiday, and eager to share their photographs instead of handling a hangover. "The travel industry is tapping into this trend because Instagram has an estimated one billion users, so it's a very influential platform. "Budget airline easyJet last week unveiled a Look&Book app feature that allows passengers to instantly book flights using just a photo - without the user needing to know the destination. "You can browse Instagram, take screen-grabs of inspiring photos and then share with, or upload to, the budget airline's app."

24 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Funway Holidays bought by US travel giant**

US and Caribbean specialist Funway Holidays has been sold to US travel giant Apple Leisure Group, which owns several brands including Southwest Airlines Vacations, United Vacations and AMResorts. The group, which acquired Funway on September 1, said the company would complement its other brands, including its London-based tour operation Travel Impressions. Funway MD Melissa Tilling and Travel Impression's vice president Carla van der Giesen will both report to Travel Impressions' president Scott Wiseman. ALG, which is the largest seller of holiday packages and charter flights in the US for travel to Mexico and the Caribbean, said Funway would join the group as a 'companion company' to Travel Impressions. It has not put a figure on the acquisition of Funway, which it bought from William La Macchia.

25 October 2018, Source Travelbiz

### **Norwegian Air warns costs will rise as fuel bill increases**

Costs for fuel rose 85% in third quarter and firm says it may shed as many as 140 aircraft. Norwegian Air Shuttle hiked its estimate for unit costs, a key measure exposing the airline's vulnerability to higher fuel prices and its low level of hedging compared with other airlines. Costs for aviation fuel rose 85 per cent in the third quarter, driving a 2.3 percent increase in Norwegian's top-end estimate for unit costs for all of 2018. The company said in April that it may shed as many as 140 aircraft, and would present a solution by the end of the third quarter. Including two sales announced on Thursday, the company has so far confirmed the sale of eight planes. This means Norwegian hasn't yet solved its cash problem. Norwegian has expanded with transatlantic routes that go to secondary airports in the US. But it has discontinued, or plans to, city pairs including Edinburgh to Providence, Rhode Island, as well as to smaller airports in New York and Connecticut and similar routes from Belfast and Bergen, Norway. Norwegian said it was sticking to its breakneck-speed expansion, reiterating a forecast to add 40 per cent to capacity this year. It also plans to add 15-20 per cent of seats in 2019 as its expansion slows.

25 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Florida to spend millions on post-hurricane promotion**

Visit Florida has launched a multi-million dollar marketing campaign to combat the effects of both Hurricane Michael and the naturally-occurring red tide, both of which have deterred visitors to the Sunshine State. A total of \$5.1 million will be spent promoting the Panhandle, a strip of land in the northwest of the state, which suffered extensive damage when it was slammed by Hurricane Michael. A further \$3.8 million will help coastal areas hit by the annual red tide. Visit Florida President and CEO Ken Lawson said: "Following Hurricane Michael and red tide, it's more important than ever to provide Florida with an aggressive marketing plan that showcases the areas of the state that are ready to welcome visitors now." The agency has hired public-relations firm Ketchum to lead the campaign. "If we do not manage the customer perception, it could be very devastating to our economy if they think that (damage) is very widespread," said Visit Florida committee member Dan Rowe, who is also president of the Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau. The agency's executive committee agreed to push the message that 'the rest of Florida is wide open for business' and highlight the areas in the northwest that reopened following the damage caused by the hurricane. Marketing efforts will be very visual, showcasing what's open and the recovery efforts in video segments shown on social media. The state tourism marketing agency received \$76 million in funding from the state legislature this year.

25 October 2018, Source Irish Travel Trade News

### **Hayes & Jarvis Launches Apple Business Chat**

Hayes & Jarvis has announced that customers can now communicate directly with its Destination Specialists using Apple Business Chat on the Messages app, available on iPhone and iPad devices. "We are thrilled to now support Apple Business Chat, which gives us a powerful and engaging connection with our customers," said Helen Adamson, Managing Director, Hayes & Jarvis. "We are proud to lead the way in implementing new and engaging methods to communicate with our customers to ensure that they receive the best service possible. Understanding that a lot of our customers use iOS, we are confident that this new

customer service channel will be one of the most popular lines of communication for customers to reach our expert Destination Specialists.” Hayes & Jarvis has launched Apple Business Chat to provide customers with a new method to effortlessly communicate with the Hayes & Jarvis team. Whether travellers are looking to plan a future tailor-made holiday, have a question regarding an upcoming booking, or need assistance while abroad, Apple Business Chat ensures that a Hayes & Jarvis representative is just a quick message away. To start Apple Business Chat, customers can click the ‘Chat with Messages’ button on the footer of the Hayes & Jarvis website when using an Apple mobile device. A conversation with a live Hayes & Jarvis Destination Specialist will open instantly in the Messages app.

26 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **IAG reports strong quarter despite higher fuel costs**

British Airways' parent IAG has reported strong third quarter results despite rising fuel costs and unfavourable exchange rates. Third quarter operating profit, before exceptional items, was €1,460 million, slightly up on €1,450 million for the same period last year. Meanwhile, operating profit for the nine months to September 30 was €2,575 million, up 7.3% on the previous year. This was despite a 15% rise in fuel costs and a hit of €111 million due to the impact of foreign exchange headwinds. Passenger unit revenue for the quarter was up 1.3%, or 2.4% at constant currency. CEO Willie Walsh said: "These were strong results despite significant fuel cost and foreign exchange headwinds."

29 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **CAA says many passengers are paying unnecessarily to sit together on flights**

Consumers are forking out anywhere between £160m-£390m per year for allocated seating, yet up to half are paying unnecessarily as they would be seated together anyhow. The findings have been revealed in the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)'s initial review of how airlines allocate seats to passengers. For most people, having to pay in advance to sit together is one of their biggest concerns and the whole process is confusing, with many not always understand the likelihood of being split up, leading them potentially to pay the optional fee even when the chances of being split up are low. Seating policies vary between airlines operating in the UK, which mean those flying with some airlines were more likely to report being separated from their group than those flying with others. Among key concerns are that some passengers with reduced mobility may have paid to sit with a carer when the airline would have sat them together for free and fears among parents who worry they might be separated from their children - particularly those under 12 - when guidance states they should be sat together. The CAA also found consumers were most likely to spend £5-£30 per seat, per journey, but seats could cost up to £100. Collectively, consumers may be paying between £160 million to £390 million per year for allocated seating. While some consumers may gain the certainty of knowing they will be sat together once they have paid, people may be spending around £74 million to £175 million unnecessarily as they would have been seated together automatically. Each of the top-10 airlines based on passenger numbers told the CAA it had received complaints about allocated seating, with one sent almost 3,000 complaints last year. CAA policy director Tim Johnson said: "The practice of charging for allocated seating has clearly become part of airlines' pricing strategies, which can impact especially on certain groups, such as those with accessibility needs and those travelling with young children. "We are also concerned about how transparent and easy it is to compare prices and make an informed buying decision. "We are proposing a new framework, following engagement with stakeholders, which will be used to assess airline seating practices. This includes

transparency, options to add information about travelling with children, older people and those with accessibility needs." Aviation minister Liz Sugg said: "Alongside the new framework, over the coming months we will be working with airlines to explore ways to make prices clearer and more transparent. We will also be working with other regulators on the use of allocated seating algorithms. We will continue to investigate and oversee safety requirements in this area."

29 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Budget expected to give financial boost to high street**

The Chancellor is expected to give a boost to the UK high street today in his Budget, but there is no hint yet of whether he will make any cuts to Air Passenger Duty (APD). Philip Hammond will announce a cut in business rates for almost half a million small retailers, amounting to a £1.5bn boost to high-street traders, in his Budget statement this afternoon. The industry is waiting to see whether the Budget will mention any changes to APD. Last week, ABTA asked its members to write to their MPs, while the leaders of the five main political parties in Northern Ireland have written to Theresa May to seek the abolition of the tax. The letter, signed by DUP leader Arlene Foster among others, urges the PM to 'convince the Chancellor to take the necessary steps to deliver what would be an economic game-changer for all our people. The letter added: "We speak as one, believing the advantage of removing the tax far outweighs the disadvantages." Conservative MP Priti Patel told talkRADIO's Julia Hartley-Brewer that the tax has had a 'distortionary and negative' impact on tourism and smaller, regional airports and called for its 'outright abolition'.

30 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Short-haul APD capped, long-haul to rise with inflation**

The Chancellor has capped short-haul rates for Air Passenger Duty for the eighth year in a row although long-haul rates will rise in line with inflation from April 2020. The Government said not increasing APD on short-haul flights would keep the costs down for 80% of passengers. In his Budget statement, Philip Hammond also announced plans for e-passport gates at Heathrow for travellers from selected countries, including the US, Canada, Japan and some Commonwealth countries. The Chancellor said large social media platforms, search engines and online marketplaces will pay a 2% tax on the revenues they earn which are linked to UK users, effective April 2020. Small retail businesses will see their business rates bills cut by a third for two years from April 2019, saving them £900 million. Also from next April, large businesses will be able to invest up to 25% of their apprenticeship levy to support apprentices in their supply chain. Some employers will pay half of what they currently pay for apprenticeship training - from 10% to 5%. The government will pay the remaining 95%.

31 October 2018, Source Travelbiz

### **How tax on your holidays has risen by up to 1,620 per cent in 11 years**

British holidaymakers will pay around 11 times more in tax to fly long-haul than their French counterparts after the Government announced that Air Passenger Duty (APD) will rise again. In Monday's budget Chancellor Philip Hammond revealed that the per passenger tax on short-haul flights would remain the same but would rise with inflation on long-haul trips. The increase means that tax on flights over 2,000 miles, such as to the US, has risen by 700 per cent since the introduction of APD in 1994. The hike means that by April 2020, a family of four flying to Florida will be forking out £320 in tax alone, up from £40 in 1994. This figure

risers to £688 should the family travel in premium economy, business or first class, and represents a rise of around 1,620 per cent in just over a decade. “Last year, British Airways passengers paid £682 million in APD,” a spokesperson for IAG, which owns British Airways, said. “We want to offer more flights to key trading markets, like our European competitors, but APD stifles route development to new emerging markets.” The UK has by far the highest tax on flights in Europe, with France charging short-haul passengers just €4.48 and long-haul ones €8.06. In recent years countries including Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium have abolished their equivalent tax entirely. “Rates are already the highest in the world, with the burden on passengers travelling from and within the UK having risen over 1,000 per cent since its introduction, and set to hit an eye watering £4bn by 2022/3.” he said. “The UK was the only country to see a loss of direct connectivity last year, and [the] increase on business and holiday travellers will make it even harder for UK airlines to grow our international connectivity, establish new trade links and encourage more tourists to visit the UK.” Virgin Atlantic said that APD now accounted for more than a quarter of its lowest fares. A spokesperson said: “At a time when the value of the pound remains subdued, it’s disappointing that hard working families booking holidays for next summer will be hit with more costs.” According to research by Airlines UK, APD can amount to as much as half the price of an off-peak, short-haul flight, and 44 per cent of a long-haul flight ticket. It said that APD represents, on average, around 16 per cent of the cost of a short-haul flight and 18 per cent of a long-haul fare.

31 October 2018, Source Travel Weekly

### **Holiday spending steady despite dip in confidence**

Consumer confidence has declined three points between the second and third quarter, although spending on holidays has remained steady overall. Deloitte’s A View of the UK Leisure Consumer – Q3 2018 report found that despite a decline in consumer confidence in recent months, it was on a par with this time last year. “However, the trend towards fluctuating leisure spending suggests that the previously resilient consumer is gradually becoming more aware of the wider economic uncertainty,” read the report. Compared to a “very positive Q2”, leisure spending declined in eight out of the 11 categories studied. While spending on eating and drinking out was particularly affected by the extended period of summer weather, spending on holidays and short breaks held up against Q2, the report found. Compared to last quarter, consumers reported spending less on things such as eating out and drinking in pubs and coffee shops. But there was no change in spending on long holidays and spending on short breaks increased one point. Year-on-year, spending on short breaks increased by one point and on long holidays by two points. The over-55s particularly increased their spending on big-ticket items such as holidays. Looking ahead to 2019, consumers are expected to spend less on short holidays – down two points – but long holidays will likely see a rise in net spending especially as younger consumers (18-24 year olds) focus their spending on “big experiences”, Deloitte concluded.

31 October 2018, Source TravelMole

### **Tourico Holidays and GTA brands axed**

Tourico Holidays and GTA are to disappear over the next few months following their acquisition last year by Palma-based bed bank Hotelbeds. The company announced this morning that both brands would be consolidated under a new, refreshed Hotelbeds brand. In future, both Hotelbeds Group and its commercial bed bank brand Hotelbeds will be branded simply as Hotelbeds. The group said this 'further reinforces its core focus and position as the

world's leading bed bank' following the sale earlier this year of its destination management division. It said the new brand identity will be gradually rolled out across all of its combined operations over the next few weeks and months, phasing out the GTA and Tourico Holidays brands. Additionally, the company has renamed its ancillary product line, 'Beyond the Bed'. This includes the sourcing and distribution of transfers, activities, tickets, theme parks, car hire, travel insurance and specialist tours. Executive chairman Joan Vila said: "Today's announcement underlines our commitment and core focus to continue building our position as the world's leading bed bank. "Both our Group and our main commercial brand will both be known from now on under one simple name, Hotelbeds. "The launch of a bold, refreshed identity for Hotelbeds under which we are combining the operations of Hotelbeds, GTA and Tourico Holidays, forms part of our clear strategy and roadmap to combine these top three leading players into one company and redefine the travel distribution landscape for the benefit of our partners. "Much progress has already been made to integrate the three businesses at a commercial, operational and technological level, with cross-selling and technological solutions already in place. "As we work our way through the final stages of the integration, we are in continual contact with all our partners to explain how these changes are benefiting them. In the meantime, we remain focused on business-as-usual and you'll notice the brand changes mentioned today rolling out gradually over the coming weeks and months." Hotelbeds said it had carried out extensive consultation with its partners before deciding on the move. As a result of the integration of Tourico Holidays and GTA into Hotelbeds last year, the combined company now offers over 170,000 hotels, 24,000 transfers and 18,000 activities to over 60,000 intermediaries globally - including airlines, points redemption schemes, bricks-and-mortar travel agents, tour operators and online travel agencies. This news also follows the decision announced in September to combine the various retail travel agent offerings of the company into one brand, Bedsonline. Already a process is underway to migrate the TravelBound, TravelCube and GTA retail customers onto the Bedsonline platform over the coming months and a new Bedsonline brand image has already been launched.

31 October 2018, Source Travolution

### **Virgin Holidays deploys social listening tech for 'insta-worthy' hotspots travel guide**

Virgin Holidays has launched a daily holiday recommendations service that claims to be able to track emerging trends in real-time. Trending Travel Guide is a digital platform that claims to be able to analyse 25 million social media interactions to reveal those considered most "insta-worthy". This data is used to determine the most popular bars, restaurants and attractions to create up-to-date 'hotlists' according to posts on popular social media sites like Instagram. Joe Thompson, managing director at Virgin Holidays, said: "The world is a playground full of countless adventures to dive into, experiences to share, food to try and hidden gems to uncover. "We want our customers to try something incredible every time they go on holiday. The Trending Travel Guide has been developed to help people discover new and exciting experiences, by harnessing the power of social media. "At Virgin Holidays, we believe in living life to the full and the Trending Travel Guide is here to put the most-talked about itinerary items on travellers' radars – all in one place." The Trending Travel Guide was launched with popular destinations for UK holidaymakers New York, Orlando and Las Vegas. More destinations are promised soon. It uses social listening technology Crimson Hexagon to analyse tens of thousands of posts and deliver up-to-the-minute travel tips based on the most Instagram-worthy places. Virgin Holidays says: "As the popularity of guidebooks wanes and social media increasingly dictates travel choices, the digital platform enables today's travellers to make the most of their holiday and visit the most-Insta-worthy

hang-outs. “The tool will enable travellers to get even more out of their holiday and avoid missing out on key experiences later.” The Trending Travel Guide also features blogs and reviews from local travel writers and influencers, written exclusively for Virgin Holidays.