

UK Office December 2018 TDC Report

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander
UK Director**

Tour Operators

- **Virgin Holidays** – We visited their office to provide Christmas cakes and branded giveaways to their Florida sales agents ahead of peak booking season. The items were very well received from the staff.
- **Funway Holidays** - We visited their office to provide Christmas treats and branded giveaways to their sales agents ahead of the peak booking season. We got the chance to speak to the reservations team as well as the reservations manager and the treats and giveaways were gratefully received.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners** - We had the chance to visit the USAirtours / TravelPlanners office to provide Christmas treats and branded giveaways to their sales agents. We had the chance to talk to the sales agents if they were not busy on the phones and then held a lunch meeting with both the product and marketing teams to discuss the proposed co-op marketing proposal that we have now received. The proposal is currently being assessed and once activity has been finalised, we will get final sign off from Brand USA.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **SeaWorld Parks** – We met with Simon Parry and Ruth Roseweir to further discuss our joint event and fam trip for next year. We will follow up in the New Year to begin sourcing a venue for the event and to work with Norwegian to secure seats for the trip.
- **Norwegian** – We met with Nicole Richards, Marketing Manager, alongside Kenneth Strickland, Tampa Airport and Becky Fairlie-Clarke, Tampa Bay. All partners provided an update on the destination and recent and upcoming marketing activity. Nicole advised that 50% of the customers on the LGW – TPA route are from the US, and typically they are at 75% load. It was understood that as it's low season and the flight announcement was late, this has impacted sales. Nicole presented current concepts for their marketing which focusses on affordable prices with iconic shots. Their January sale will launch next week including TV, underground and digital escalator panels in London stations. We started initial conversations regarding joint activity and will follow up with our key messages and assets so that she can brief their agency, but we are looking at potentially launching activity in March or April.

TRADE LIAISON

- **VSPC UK Consumer campaign** –
 - Finalised our activity with Expedia who are the CTA. We have approved our dedicated Expedia landing page and banner adverts.
 - Received and approved the creatives for the national consumer campaign banners, email, YouTube, and TV, which will be in partnership with Brand USA and launching in January.
- **Expedia, Scandinavia** – We have now confirmed our activity with Expedia which will launch in January.
 - Assets have been provided to Expedia for the landing page and banners.
 - The dedicated landing page has now been approved.
 - Expedia have provided us with the banners which have been signed off ahead of the launch in January.
- **Visit Florida**
 - Finalised the creatives for the banner adverts for Expedia and the video for digital TV.
 - Provided assets for the Florida landing page on Expedia and the out of home activity.
 - Received the artwork for the out of home activity (shopping malls) which has been approved. We are waiting for the remaining out of home activity for our final approval.
- **Brand USA/Visit Florida** – We have received the final creatives for the banners which forms part of the multi-channel activity we are participating in with Brand USA. These have been approved along with the dedicated landing page. We have received a draft copy of a dedicated article and provided feedback. We will wait for the final version for our approval.
- **Thomas Cook, Sweden** – We have confirmed a campaign in partnership with Icelandair. The activity includes; banner adverts, newsletters, social and landing page. The activity will launch in August and run for 2 months. We will start work on the creative in due course.
- **Gold Medal** – We have now received the final results for the activity we ran during September to November;
 - Instore posters – Reach of 500 stores
 - E-shot and destination newsletter – Reach of 204,000
 - 11th September – 28.5% Open Rate and CTR of 13.5%
 - 26th September – 23.3% Open Rate and CTR of 12.8%
 - Social agent promotion (Facebook and Twitter) – Reach of 3,351
Throughout the duration of the campaign our social media posts had the following results:
 - 8,534 reach
 - 1,570 clicks
 - 464 comments/shares
 - Trade press (print and online) – Reach of 25,000

- Instore promotion – Reach of 50 stores
 - Room nights – During the campaign 254 -6.6% vly. Overall for 2018 travel +11.2% vly.
 - It was reported that whilst September tracked at +234% vly, their bookings were low for October and November, largely driven by Orlando. Customers to our destination will book a stay in Orlando at one of the parks, particularly Disney, however during the campaign Disney had loads of close outs for arrivals in October and November 2019 which is the travel period customers were searching for due to the flights being released at this time.
- **Funway Holidays** - We have confirmed training with their sales agents for next year.
 - **Florida Beaches** – We have now received the final version of the Florida Beaches brochures, which now includes Palm Beach. This has been approved. We have provided logos and images to Widar for the consumer show in February. We have also arranged for brochures and maps to be sent to each venue for the upcoming shows.
 - **Gold Medal** – We have been discussing the possibility of a joint retail campaign in partnership with Gold Medal and their top selling independent agencies and a proposal has now been received. We are in the process of perusing the activity information and will confirm this once we have agreed and are happy with the individual campaign elements.
 - **Tour America/Experience Kissimmee** – We have confirmed a joint co-op marketing partnership with Experience Kissimmee for a consumer campaign in Ireland with Tour America which will take place in February 2019. We have also confirmed a standalone campaign in September 2019. The proposals were sent to Brand USA and have now had final approval for us to be able to proceed. The campaigns will include out of home activity on the Luas Tram Network, radio advertising, website takeovers, social media activity, a competition to win a holiday to St. Pete/Clearwater as well as press advertising. The campaign will last for a period of 2 weeks commencing 4th February. The September stand-alone campaign will run for a period of 1 week from 8th September and will include press ads, website takeover, social media takeover, digital display/remarketing campaign and a dedicated e-zine.
 - **Gold Medal** – We continue to work with Michelle to source accommodation for the fam trip which is due to visit in March.
 - **Homeaway** –We have arranged a meeting in January to discuss opportunities to work together in the future.
 - **Ocean Florida** – Discussions are on-going with Ocean Florida regarding our joint co-op marketing activity. Ocean Florida have advised they will be working on the proposal in the New Year and a meeting has been arranged for later in January to discuss this moving forward. As we were unable to visit Ocean Florida in December due to no time slots being available, we sent Christmas treats as well as giveaways and key selling points sheets to Muna Abanour for distribution amongst their sales team.

- **Bookabed** – The joint campaign in partnership with Experience Kissimmee has now been finalised and work has commenced on approval of the marketing creative including the e-newsletter due for distribution in January. Other elements of the campaign creative are due to follow soon.
- **Virgin Retail** – We are in discussions with Virgin Holidays regarding possible retail store sponsorship opportunities and the team will be reverting back with information for us to review.
- **Visit USA, UK** – We have confirmed our attendance at the 2019 USA Ball in July.
- **Visit USA, Ireland** – St. Pete/Clearwater was featured in their December newsletter focusing on the theme of culinary delights. This was complimentary. We have offered our support for their 2019 fam trip. Tony has advised he will look into flight options and will be in touch in the New Year to confirm the chosen destination. We have also indicated our interest in participating in their roadshows events in Dublin and Cork.
- **Visit USA, Ireland** - We have received their Q4 marketing report;
 - Website
 - Website sessions – 7,889
 - Users – 7,016
 - Page views – 17,481
 - Ave session – 58s
 - Plans for development on their website in Q1 to go live in Q2.
 - Social
 - Facebook - 3,660 Page Likes (+1,090 / +42%)
 - Twitter - 614 (+45 / +7%)
 - Instagram - 300 Followers (new for 2018)
 - LinkedIn – 28 Followers (new for 2018)
 - Email - E-zine performing very well 31% open rate / 3.4% click through (above industry averages)

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

3 December 2018, Source Travel Weekly

'Majority of British holidaymakers are not brand loyal'

More than half of UK holidaymakers (52%) are not loyal to any one provider, new research shows. A lack of loyalty to travel brands is most evident among those in higher income brackets, with almost three quarters of those earning £65,000 saying they would never book with the same provider consistently. Brand technology agency Great State surveyed 1,154 consumers across the UK to explore their attitudes and behaviours in leisure and travel in August and September. Releasing the figures at an event, Miranda Glover, business director at Great State, said the industry was "disenfranchised" and "fragmented". "The question we are asking is how can travel brands retain a share of the consumer's wallet," she said. Thomas Cook, Tui, Booking.com and Expedia were found to be the four most trusted brands. Consumers surveyed also found the same four brands to be the most trusted to offer products which would deliver "end-to-end experiences". This means if consumers booked through Thomas Cook, Tui, Booking.com and Expedia they were less likely to have shopped elsewhere. Delays and cancellations (53%); queues (36%); and hidden costs (35%) have been cited as the top frustrations that would discourage a consumer from repeat booking with a provider. Matt Boffey, co-founder and director of consulting at Great State, said: "It's clear from our research that holidaymakers are more demanding than ever. "And given how many things still go wrong when people are travelling – like delays, lost baggage and missed connections – that means it's all too easy to disappoint consumers and lose them to an ever-expanding set of rivals. "In this context, brands' first priority must be to develop a great end-to-end customer experience, where common pain points are anticipated, and potential disappointment is transformed into delight. "It's the only path to winning a greater share of consumer attention, data and spend."

4 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Thomas Cook holidays are like 'a decent, but forgettable saloon car'

Thomas Cook blames the heatwave for 'disappointing year', but Jon Tipple, chief strategy officer worldwide for FutureBrand, thinks its problems might not just be the weather. "It seems we can't go a day without reading about another well-known, historic company taking a nose dive. Now it's the turn of veteran travel firm Thomas Cook, which issued its second profit warning in two months. Thomas Cook's recent poor trading results have been largely attributed to outside factors, in particular the unusually hot summer across Europe, which hit its UK business particularly hard. No one can control or predict the British weather, but there is more the holiday company could do to safeguard its future. Primarily, Thomas Cook must find ways to increase its customer base, especially given global warming. What a terrifyingly fickle business to be in, relying on the weather at a time of increasing global climate change. The good news for Thomas Cook is that the challenges it faces are far closer to home and a lot easier to control than the weather. It's possible to predict the problems it will face - and to set out the solutions. The fact is that Thomas Cook is out of sync with the type of holiday experiences people want. It has set an unremarkable ambition. Visit the company's website, go to the about section and you'll find this: "We are very proud to serve the 19 million customers who chose to travel with us each year and we are focused on transforming our business so that we can serve even more customers in ways that deliver better their holiday dreams." But they struggle to live up to this on the ground because of the experiences they offer. Thomas Cook's website describes it as the oldest and best-known company in leisure

travel, with a history of innovation that goes back to 1841. But sadly, like so many businesses of a certain age, it has become banal. The commoditising effects of mass systemisation and cost efficiency have smoothed out the unexpected, the unique and the truly memorable from the Thomas Cook brand experience. It has come to signify the bog-standard one or two-week escape that fewer and fewer people are prepared to spend their money on. It's the travel industry equivalent of manufacturing a perfectly decent, but quickly forgettable saloon car, when all around us the rest of the car industry is dreaming up much more modern and exciting vehicles. Which is more likely to stick in the mind? What Thomas Cook needs to do to make itself memorable, unique and exciting is revamp its purpose. It needs to think deeply about why it exists and what it is it for. Once it understands this central point it could use these insights to overhaul the type of door-to-door holiday experiences it offers - without compromise. As the owner of both planes and hotels, Thomas Cook is in an enviable position to create an overall experience from the moment people book their holiday to the moment they arrive at their hotel, hopefully somewhere warm and sunny. It's also perfectly placed to tackle sustainability concerns and - in particular - waste, given its control over multiple touchpoints. This gives Thomas Cook an in-built competitive advantage - and that's a great place to start, whatever the weather."

5 December 2018, Source TravelMole

AITO chairman on Brexit: 'Sit tight and don't worry'

Holiday bookings will pick up after the March 29 Brexit deadline no matter what the outcome. That is the prediction of AITO chairman Derek Moore, who is confident that Brits will still book holidays irrespective of what the politicians decide, but will book 'smarter and leaner'. Talking to TravelMole this week, his advice to travel professionals, therefore, was to 'sit tight and don't worry'. "I think there will be a pause in January and February. That's always the case when there's an election or political turbulence. Nobody knows what is going to happen and when there's uncertainty that stops people booking. But I believe that once we know what's happening - irrespective of what is decided - people will still want to go on holiday." Of the current possible Brexit scenarios, Moore believes the most beneficial for the industry would be for the Government to abandon Brexit and ask to 'come back in again thank you'. But he said even the alternatives - Theresa May's exit plan, a Canada-plus deal or a no-deal - will see bookings rise after the March 29 deadline. "The only ones who might not book are those perhaps at the lower end of the market who might sacrifice their two-week beach holiday, but for the majority a holiday is no longer a luxury," he said. "If Mom and Pops sit down and say they need a new three-piece suite but it means the family can't go to Turkey for some sunshine, the three-piece suite is going to be parked." He said while Brits will still travel, they might cut down the length of their holidays, downgrade their accommodation or opt for an all-inclusive trip. They will also choose cheaper destinations like Turkey, Tunisia and Egypt over more expensive western Med destinations like Spain and Portugal, he said.

5 December 2018, Source TTG

Brexit deal 'provides certainty and confidence' for UK airlines

A coalition of some of the UK's largest airlines has said a Brexit withdrawal agreement will provide much needed "certainty and confidence" for the UK's aviation sector. Airlines UK, the trade body for UK-registered airlines, believes prime minister Theresa May's withdrawal agreement will alleviate the concerns of airlines, passengers and businesses. The announcements comes after Parliament embarked on five days' debate over the withdrawal

agreement amid suggestions it is unlikely the PM will get the support she is looking for. Although the withdrawal agreement has been backed by EU leaders, Parliament will have the final say over whether the agreement is adopted, which would satisfy the conditions for the UK to leave the EU as per its commitment to Article 50. Tim Alderslade, Airlines UK chief executive, said: "For UK aviation, a withdrawal agreement is clearly in the interests of both the UK and Europe and so this agreement represents a path which can provide certainty and confidence for airlines, passengers and businesses alike. "Any future Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement – which the Government and EU Commission have signalled their intention to sign post-Brexit – should then aim to deliver the market access between the UK and EU that passengers and cargo benefit from today." The government on Tuesday suffered three defeats in the Commons, including being found in contempt of Parliament for failing to publish its full legal advice on the withdrawal agreement. May described her deal as an "honourable compromise" that delivered on the 2016 vote to leave the EU. Airlines UK's 13 members are British Airways, CargoLogicAir, DHL, easyJet, Flybe, Jet2.com, Norwegian UK, Ryanair, Thomas Cook, Tui Airways, Titan Airways, Virgin Atlantic and West Atlantic.

6 December 2018, Source Travelbiz

Norwegian Air struggles to fill planes as fleet grows

Budget carrier Norwegian Air struggled to fill its aircraft in November as capacity growth far outpaced demand, its monthly traffic report showed, sending its shares down 6pc in early trade. The company, which has been courted by Aer Lingus owner IAG, has ramped up its transatlantic business but has also said that growth will slow as it prioritises profitability over expansion. "Several of our summer routes have been extended into November, which has affected the load factor," Chief Executive Bjoern Kjos said in a statement. "A full transition into the winter programme will take place early next year, once the busy holiday season is behind us." While the airline's capacity grew 34pc year-on-year in November, revenue-generating passenger kilometres increased by 26pc, lagging a forecast of 33.7pc in a Reuters poll of analysts. The load factor, a measure of how many seats are sold on each flight, fell to 78.8pc for the month, the lowest since May 2014. That fell short of a forecast of 82.7pc and was down from 83.7pc a year ago. "Overall, we find the traffic figures to be soft," Danske Bank analyst Martin Stenshall said in a note to clients. On the positive side, the company's November yield, a key measure of revenue per passenger carried and kilometres flown, was unchanged year on year at 0.33 Norwegian crowns. Analysts had expected it to ease to 0.32 crowns.

6 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Thomas Cook's price rises after chairman snaps up shares

Thomas Cook's share price rose yesterday after chairman Frank Meysman bought £80,441 worth, which investors took as a personal show of faith in the operator. The London Stock Exchange revealed that Meysman bought 373,000 shares at 21.57p each on Wednesday, after which the price rose 40% to 31.88p in the afternoon. It's still well below the annual high of 146p reached in May, but analysts have interpreted Meysman's investment as a positive sign. According to the Press Association, non-executive director Lesley Knox also bought 208,778 shares at a price of 22p each, totalling £47,163. Invesco, the fund manager that owns 15.2% of Thomas Cook, dismissed the earlier slump in the operator's share price following last week's revelation that its net debt had risen to £389 million following a huge operating loss for the year as an 'overreaction'. Invesco's global equities fund manager Stephen Anness told The Times: "Much of what we heard from Thomas Cook last week was a repeat from what

we already knew — that trading suffered from the exceptionally hot summer. That was exaggerated by the unexpected change to accounting, a change we very much approve of as it more clearly reflects the underlying business." Anness also played down fears over the group's rising debts and its request to its lenders for extra headroom on its covenants. "The market has taken fright, but from what we see the fundamentals remain robust," he said. "From our conversations with the company, the balance sheet and liquidity is intact. This seems an overreaction." However, the debt ratings agency Moody's downgraded its rating on Thomas Cook from B1 to B2 and changed its outlook from 'stable' to 'negative'. It said: "Our rating action reflects the deterioration of credit metrics after unfavourable earnings development in the fiscal 2018 and the group's weakened liquidity." Moody's also sounded a warning over the impact of Brexit talks, suggesting that uncertainty could lead to later bookings, as happened this summer.

6 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Kuoni teams up with weather experts

Kuoni has teamed up with meteorologists Sara Thornton and John Hammond to give customers valuable insight into the weather in key holiday destinations. The TV presenters set up 'weathertrending' a year ago to provide content about the weather. The partnership will see the pair launch a series of new weather blogs and video insight with Kuoni. The first, on the Maldives, is now live on Kuoni's website. "Weather is so pivotal to the conversations our personal travel experts are having with customers on a daily basis we thought this partnership was a perfect fit," said Kuoni UK CEO Derek Jones.

7 December 2018, Source TTG

Brand USA reveals 2019 US travel trends

Music travel, grand camper tours and horseback holidays are just some of the burgeoning travel pursuits that will redefine what it means to holiday in the US next year, according to Brand USA. With airlines adding frequency to existing transatlantic routes and low-cost, long-haul carriers expanding their flight programmes, dozens of new US holiday destinations will become more readily available to the UK market in 2019, the tourism authority has said. Brand USA has identified ten key travel trends it believes will shape travel in the US next year. These include the growing popularity among British tourists of RV or camper tours; the US's thriving luxury hotel scene; surfing holidays; music travel; 'packrafting' (travelling via fold-up raft); food halls; solo travel; and holidays on horseback. "New flight routes mean lesser-known corners of the United States are easy to reach," said Brand USA. "New sports are emerging; even the way we eat and socialise is evolving – food halls are now cool new places to hangout. These things and more, are set to shape the way we travel in the US in 2019. According to Brand USA, airlines will "strengthen routes and increase flight regulatory" next year. These include British Airways' London-Nashville service, which will increase to a daily service for summer 2019; Delta's expansion of its four-times weekly Heathrow-Portland service to daily and addition of a daily Heathrow-Detroit service; and Virgin Atlantic's new double-daily Heathrow-Boston route. Additionally, the tourist authority says the availability of low-cost, long-haul options such as those offered by Norwegian and Wow Air were making transatlantic family travel more affordable. "In 2018, Norwegian increased its service of London to Fort Lauderdale flights, improving access to Florida's east coast and theme parks, while December 2018's new seasonal route from Wow Air, which links London and Orlando three times a week until April 2019, has made the region more accessible for those travelling on a tighter budget," said Brand USA.

7 December 2018, Source Travolution

Skyscanner outlines top trends for 2019

Flight comparison site Skyscanner has analysed and identified the top trends that are predicted to dominate the industry next year. A detailed study looks at how will airlines need to adapt with increasing passenger numbers and what opportunities the rise will bring to the industry. The publication comes against a backdrop of passenger numbers set to double over the next 20 years, predicted to reach 8.2 billion by 2037, according to Iata. Key trends identified for 2019 include: The pace of change is being driven by changing consumer technology habits, with a greater number of consumers around the world showing a growing preference for mobile platforms. New alternative payment methods emerging to make transactions more seamless and instantaneous to accommodate digitally reliant and mobile-first travellers. How brands will continue to enhance engagement and retention, not just revenue. The report highlights progress in Iata New Distribution Capability (NDC) take up by carriers and Skyscanner's involvement as the first global search site to join the new NDC Exchange. This allows API connectivity between airlines and travel sellers and facilitates shopping, booking, and servicing workflows including the cross-selling of ancillary services among airlines. Airlines including British Airways, Iberia, Finnair and Scoot are seeing the benefits of NDC Direct Booking on Skyscanner, capitalising on the access of more than 80 million monthly website visitors, according to the study. Skyscanner delivered revenue growth in its direct booking programme of about 600% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2018. Airlines are converting browsing to booking with an average 20% conversion uplift – 50% in mobile conversions – in addition to a doubling in ancillary revenue. “Ultimately, products and services that are packaged well, presented in the right context and offered at the right time, are more likely to add value to the traveller – and consequently airlines capable of achieving this are more likely to benefit,” the report said. Senior commercial director Hugh Aitken said: “We want to bring airline products on Skyscanner's site as close to the direct experience as possible, with carriers controlling their products and brand while benefiting from our traffic, and audience, across a range of devices.” The report projects faster payments across multiple platforms with airlines already making the shift to accept alternative payments like WeChat Pay, Alipay and Apple Pay. “Alternative payments will only grow in the future, as we see a closer relationship between a person's identity and their mobile device. Moreover, continuous demand for enhanced security and identification systems has led to increasing adoption of biometric data encryption devices such as Face ID,” it said. Accompanying a shift to mobile is a greater reliance on voice assistants. “We may see a spike in voice travel search activity as more Voice Assist units are sold and more GenZ consumers grow into the travel market.,: according to the study. “Travel search has to be ready to adapt. Moving to retail and e-commerce, we will see frequent repeat purchases pick up within the voice medium, simply because there is no confusion in the user's mind about the product they are getting – ‘Alexa, order my Nespresso capsules’ is a relatively simple command. “There are still a number of questions on whether voice search might become a significant opportunity for search and booking or simply a tool for travel management, but Air Canada's user-case hints at promising possibilities. “Over the next 20 years, delivering seamless travel to 8.2 billion travellers will rely increasingly on the open exchange of information, simplified bookings, easier payments, and smart applications that encourage passengers to manage their own travel.”

7 December 2018, Source Travolution

Only a fifth of consumers feel rewarded for loyalty to travel brands, study finds

Just one in five consumers feels rewarded for their loyalty to travel brands, new research reveals. Travel companies are failing to personalise the customer experience – with 61% of consumers saying they ignore the majority of communications from travel providers because they are not relevant or personalised. Only 27% of consumers say they receive offers or loyalty initiatives that are personalised to their interests or preferences. Half said they receive offers that they would never use. The findings support a study, conducted on behalf of Forrester Consulting, which surveyed decision makers at travel brands with revenues exceeding \$300 million, revealing that 64% of travel companies fail to understand their customers or why they are loyal to their brand. Despite all the potential data points available for brands to better understand their customers and provide flexible, personalised offers, only half of organisations collect a wide range of customer data and augment it with third-party sources. Steve Grout, director of loyalty at customer benefits and loyalty firm Collinson which carried out the poll of 2,008 consumers, said: “In today’s fiercely competitive market, winning customer loyalty has become increasingly challenging for travel brands. “With so many companies vying for the attention of potential travellers, customers will have no problem taking their business elsewhere, if they do not feel truly rewarded for their loyalty. “To attract and retain customers, travel brands need to take the time to understand what makes them tick. They need to create programmes that feel authentic and personal, that appeal to the customer on both an emotional and transactional level. “The problem for organisations is that they are not collecting the data to make this possible. “They need to harness data from as many touchpoints as possible and use advanced analytics to build a clearer picture of their customer and their preferences. Only then can they create the personalised customer experience that builds true loyalty.”

13 December 2018, Source TravelMole

TUI shares jump as it reports rise in profits

TUI's share price rose this morning as the travel giant reported a rise in profits just shy of 11% despite a 'challenging year'. The group said its transformation as a 'developer, investor and operator of hotels and cruise ships' is paying off, helping it achieve double-digit earnings for the third year running. Revenue for the year to September 30 grew 5.3% to €19.52 billion and underlying EBITA rose 10.9% to €1.22 billion on a constant currency basis, just ahead of guidance. The news saw TUI's share price jump 6.4%, in stark contrast to the sharp fall of Thomas Cook's share price last month when it announced a £163 million loss in a 'disappointing year'. TUI CEO Fritz Jousen agreed 2018 had been a challenging year, particularly for tour operators, but said the group was better placed to ride the storm. "The weakness of pound sterling resulting from the Brexit vote, prolonged air traffic disruption caused by French air traffic controller strikes and a prolonged heatwave in Northern and Central Europe impacted the entire sector and were also reflected in the operating result delivered by Markets & Airlines, which fell short of the previous year's levels," he said. "We are investing, we are growing with TUI's high-margin products and services and our businesses are increasingly scaling. "Today, our own Holiday Experiences content account for more than 70 per cent of our earnings: hotels, cruises, excursions and destination activities. This enables us to clearly differentiate ourselves from the competition. With more than 20 million customers, use of state-of-the-art IT and intelligent customer systems, we have considerable potential for new business, turnover and earnings. We will continue our

successful transformation: The next step will transform TUI into a digital and platform organisation." He said in the financial year 2019, the TUI Executive Board expects to deliver growth in underlying earnings of at least 10% in a continuing 'challenging market environment'.

13 December 2018, source TTG

Funway Holidays launches largest peaks campaign to date

Funway Holidays has launched its largest ever peaks campaign with nearly 100 prizes up for grabs. "Peaks Means Prizes" will launch on January 2 and is designed to thank and reward agents for their support after Funway sales increased 15% during 2018. Prizes include a seven-night Caribbean all-inclusive, fam trip places and more than £600 Amazon vouchers. It is the first time the operator has run a trade competition on this scale and comes after Funway this year celebrated its 25th anniversary, launched its inaugural Canada programme and expanded its on-the-road trade sales team. "We have done ad hoc competitions but never one on this scale and we hope this will appeal to frontline agents and push Funway Holidays out to a wider audience," said Funway sales and marketing director Nick Talbot. "Agents continue to be crucial to our success and we hope this campaign not only showcases the amazing holiday deals we can offer, but also acts as a thank-you to agents for their continued support." To enter, agents must register and login into peaksmeansprizes.co.uk and start logging their Funway bookings to earn tokens. These tokens can then be used to play Funway's slot machine, which will be live throughout the campaign until March 31. Peaks offers include discounts of up to 50% and deposited from £49pp. Sample deals include seven nights in Orlando at the Clarion Inn Lake Buena Vista, with return Virgin Atlantic flights from Gatwick, from £399pp based on a family of four departing March 19, 2019.

13 December 2018, Source TTG

Consumers choose travel over homes

Luxury consumers now prioritise spending on travel over their own homes, according to new research by Marriott International. Research revealed during International Luxury Travel Market showed 60% of these consumers spend more on travel than on their homes, and that 90% were prepared to pay more for quality and service. "This group has the highest expectations we have ever seen and steer towards brands that align with their values," said Jenni Benzaquen, vice-president luxury brands for Marriott International. "They are suffering generic experience fatigue and a lot has to be done to deliver even more meaningful travel for them. It's also clear they are seeking space along with solidarity that you understand nothing be demanded of them." Benzaquen added luxury consumers had become increasingly sophisticated "co-creators in the travel experience and not just passive consumers", with 70% of respondents saying it is their travel that now defines who they are, rather than their origins. "Travel for these people is no longer an escape or just time out, it's where they live a more vibrant version of themselves," she said. "They look to us to make those things happen."

14 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Currency shock for travellers heading off for Christmas

Tourists exchanging money at UK airport foreign exchange outlets as they set off on Christmas breaks are barely being offered one dollar for each pound, according to the BBC. It blamed ongoing uncertainty around the Brexit negotiations for sterling's 11.77% slide against the dollar since April. Sterling has also fallen heavily against the euro, with some forex

outlets offering only 92 cents for every pound. The pound is now at its weakest against the dollar since April 2017, although the BBC said it has recovered slightly this week since Prime Minister Theresa May won a vote of confidence from fellow Tory MPs. A little over 10 years ago, the pound was worth more than \$2, but this week tourists exchanging money at Heathrow were getting as little as \$1.05. While other factors such as low interest rates are partly to blame, the BBC said experts accepted that Brexit was the main reason for the collapse of the pound.

17 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Industry rocked by 'scaremongering' Sunday Times report

The travel industry has been shaken by a report in a national newspaper over the weekend claiming the government is considering issuing a warning to Brits not to book holidays after March 29 in case of a Brexit no-deal. Ministers were quick to dismiss the front page story in the Sunday Times, which claimed the warning is part of contingency plans being drawn up by the government to prepare for a no-deal scenario. The report even claimed the government is considering bailing out travel companies whose businesses might be impacted as a result of the warning. Senior officials fear the advice could lead to bankruptcies in the industry, said the Sunday Times. Tour operators and agents were both shocked and bemused by the report. Sunvil managing director Chris Wright said it was 'just another story created by the press to instill fear into the minds of the public'. "We find it hard to believe that traditional holiday destinations for the British, from Spain to Greece, are likely to allow such a ridiculous scenario to play out. "With the speed of news at the moment, hopefully the article will fade into the background to be overtaken by something else." AITO has written to the Sunday Times editor asking why the article didn't seek any response from the travel industry, despite acknowledging the shock it would cause. It has also written to local MPs demanding an urgent response from the Prime Minister that there won't be any disruption to air travel in a no-deal Brexit. Throughout the Brexit negotiations, the government has consistently reassured the industry there will be no risk of disruption. John Tangney', deputy chair of AITO, added: "AITO is very disturbed to read The Sunday Times" report, more especially following repeated assurances from HM Government that it is not true. It is a great shame that The Sunday Times seems to be trying to undermine or destabilise the travel industry. "Bear in mind that if people cannot go abroad, it will hit inbound traffic too - and business travellers - thus damaging our own holiday and hotel industries severely, and potentially hampering business deals to the detriment of the UK." Cruise association CLIA also expressed its dismay. "To say we were surprised and disappointed to read the story, which is simply not true, in the Sunday Times yesterday is an understatement," said a spokeswoman. "Comments such as this coming from the government are unhelpful and reckless, and we urge the government to instead focus on clarifying plans for Brexit as speedily as possible." ABTA issued a statement on Sunday in a bid to calm any fears among the British public. "Number 10 has said that the content of the report in the Sunday Times is categorically untrue," said a spokesman. "The European Commission has said that even in a no-deal scenario, flights will still operate between the UK and EU, and a visa is not required. "ABTA is providing holidaymakers and travellers with advice about Brexit and travel, including on pet passports and driving licences, which can be found at abta.com/brexit." Following the Sunday Times report, Brittany Ferries took the chance to reassure customers that ferry services won't be affected. "Shipping operates to international maritime law, rather than European agreements," said CEO Christophe Mathieu. "Accordingly, there is no question that we will continue to sail as normal on March 30 2019 and beyond, even if we are facing a no-deal Brexit. "Those who have already booked with us should be reassured and those looking

to their 2019 voyage can book with confidence." The Sunday Times report came days after it was confirmed that Brits will be charged €7 to visit EU from 2021.

18 December 2018, Source Travelbiz

ABTA: Travel with Confidence campaign to launch on Christmas Day

UK travel association ABTA has announced the launch of its 2019 Travel with Confidence national ad campaign on 25 December 2018. To support the travel industry's busiest sales period of the year, ABTA will launch its latest campaign on Christmas Day. The campaign will launch with a series of four different radio adverts, aiming to encourage people to book with an ABTA member while also increasing understanding of ABTA's offer of support, protection and expertise. The radio ads are expected to reach more than 6 million listeners and each one has been developed specifically to target a different audience. Victoria Bacon, ABTA's director of brand and business development, said: "As we move into 2019 people's thoughts are turning to booking holidays for the year ahead and we want to remind them of the importance of booking with an ABTA member, to ensure they travel with confidence." The radio campaign will be followed by an online targeted advertising campaign on YouTube which will run between January and February 2019. Holidaymakers can also visit ABTA's website, abta.com, for tips on how to 'travel with confidence'. Bacon added: "This year's advertising campaign uses a multi-channel approach to reach holidaymakers right at the time of making their holiday decisions and also reflects the diverse range of holidays our Members offer for people across all demographics. ABTA represents travel agents and tour operators, with a purpose of helping members grow their businesses successfully and sustainably. The association has around 1,200 members, with a combined annual UK turnover of GBP 38 billion (USD 47.8bn).

18 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Transport Secretary steps in to reassure industry after Brexit article furore

The Secretary of State for Transport has written an open letter reiterating the 'very strong rebuttal' from No 10 following a shocking report in the Sunday Times at the weekend. The report, which shook the industry, claimed the government is considering issuing a warning to Brits not to book holidays after March 29 in case of a Brexit no-deal. Ministers were quick to dismiss the front page story, which even suggested the government was considering bailing out travel companies put at risk. In a letter addressed to the aviation industry yesterday, Chris Grayling said he wanted to provide further reassurance and to be clear on the Government's position with regards to Brexit. But, noticeably, he did not categorically state that flights will continue to operate no matter what the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. Instead, his letter said: "As you will already be aware, both the UK and the EU have made clear their desire to ensure flights between the UK and EU continue in any scenario. I believe both the UK and the EU have a determination to retain the aviation links which bring such significant economic and cultural benefits for both sides. "This department fully recognises the importance of giving passengers and businesses confidence to book their holidays and business trips to and from the EU after Brexit. "So as I mentioned at the last industry roundtable, we are exploring what communications will be needed to provide that reassurance. I would like to continue to work with you on precisely this in the coming days. "I hope this provides you with some reassurance and look forward to further discussions with you in the coming weeks and months."

18 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Visit Florida CEO to leave

Visit Florida CEO is leaving the state tourism marketing agency to join the new administration of governor-elect Ron DeSantis. Ken Lawson will head up the Department of Economic Opportunity when DeSantis takes over as Governor from Rick Scott. Gov. Scott brought in Lawson after previous Visit Florida CEO Will Secombe was removed following a backlash over a marketing contract awarded to Miami rapper Pitbull. Despite political infighting over the future role of Visit Florida and its budget, Lawson's tenure maintained Florida's hot streak of record tourism numbers. Lawson has held numerous key roles in government including assistant secretary of enforcement for the U.S. Department of Treasury, and assistant chief counsel for field operations at the TSA. "I have no doubt Ken will continue his tradition of outstanding leadership at the Department of Economic Opportunity and help the state continue to be an economic powerhouse," DeSantis said.

19 December 2018, Source Travelbiz

Virgin Atlantic still in talks over Flybe deal

The group said on Wednesday that it 'continues to review its options'. Virgin Atlantic has said that it is still considering whether to launch a takeover of regional airline Flybe. Virgin, part owned by Sir Richard Branson, first announced its interest last month. The group said on Wednesday that it "continues to review its options in respect of Flybe, including potentially making an offer. "Accordingly, discussions with Flybe and its management are continuing." Virgin is thought to be vying with Stobart and British Airways to buy Flybe and is interested in its take-off and landing slots at London's Heathrow Airport. The regional airline put itself up for sale in November after warning over profits earlier in the year. The Exeter-based carrier is battling challenging conditions in the airline industry and has suffered with falling demand and a £29 million hit from rising fuel costs and the weak pound. Flybe has 78 planes operating from smaller airports including London City, Southampton and Norwich, and flies to destinations across the UK and Europe. It carries around eight million passengers a year and Virgin would look to attract customers into its long-haul network via Flybe's domestic routes. Trade unions have already raised concerns over the impact of a Flybe's sale on the carrier's 2,300 employees.

19 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Industry outraged again as The Times tells subscribers: 'Cancel your summer holiday'

The Times and Sunday Times newspapers have upset the travel industry again by sending out an email to subscribers with the subject line 'Cancel your summer holiday'. The email prompts subscribers to read their two complimentary articles for the week and lists the most popular recent stories. Top of the list is the story which ran on Sunday claiming that families will be advised not to book holidays after March. The report, which has riled travel businesses, says the government is considering issuing the warning as part of contingency plans being drawn up to prepare for a no-deal Brexit. The claim was immediately denied by number 10, but travel companies say the damage has already been done. TravelMole has contacted the Sunday Times for a response and AITO and ABTA have also written to the newspaper to raise their concerns. AITO executive director Kate Kenward said: "The Times and Sunday Times editorial and marketing departments are clearly not speaking to each other. "I find it astounding that these papers are behaving like the red tops, sensationalising a story to sell papers/subscriptions which could not only harm hundreds of businesses and jobs but also rob consumers of their right to a holiday. "They are risking their own integrity by publishing unsubstantiated articles and only adding to consumers angst about the current

situation with Brexit." ABTA chief executive Mark Tanzer added: "On Sunday the national media included our statement, which refutes the claim and highlights that the European Commission has confirmed that, even in the event of a no-deal, flights will operate and a visa will not be required. "We have since written to the Sunday Times to raise our concerns about the article, and have also been in touch with Ministers and officials at Government. "We are encouraging ABTA Members to share our Brexit advice with their customers, a downloadable pdf can be found in the MemberZone along with a graphic for use across online channels." It is also reaching out to consumers directly through a social media advertising campaign providing reassurances that deal or no-deal, flights will continue. On Monday Transport Secretary Chris Grayling published an open letter to the aviation industry in a bid to calm their concerns. But the letter fell short of giving a guarantee that planes will continue to fly if there's a no-deal Brexit. LibDem leader Vince Cable told the travel industry it was simply 'caught in a foolish and dangerous game of chicken' by the government, which is trying to frighten MPs and the wider public into supporting the prime minister's exit plan. Vince, who is MP for Twickenham where AITO is based, was responding to a letter from the association of specialist operators demanding an apology from the government. AITO also called for an assurance to the British public that flights will not stop, as has already been assured to the industry.

19 December 2018, Source TTG

Thomas Cook launches 2020 long-haul programme

Thomas Cook Airlines has put its summer 2020 long haul flights on sale with more than 500,000 seats for the season. The flights are from Manchester and Gatwick to 12 destinations in the US, Caribbean and Mexico. The bulk of the programme departs from Manchester with 40 weekly long haul flights on board A330s, complete with fully refurbished premium and economy cabins. Prices for return flights from Manchester lead in at £339.99 to Seattle, £299.99 to New York and £439.99 to Cancun.

20 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Chaos as all flights grounded at Gatwick after further reports of drones near runway

All flights in and out of Gatwick Airport remain suspended this morning after several sightings of drones over the airfield, a couple late last night and others in the early hours of this morning. Sussex police are investigating the incidents and Gatwick has issued a statement saying that it has no re-opening time. It is advising passengers due to travel today to check with their airlines before heading to the airport. Flights due to land at Gatwick have been diverted to other airports, including Heathrow, Luton and Manchester, but some have also landed in Paris and Amsterdam. As many as 10,000 passengers were affected last night, with 6,000 on diverted flights, 2,000 stuck at Gatwick and 2,000 unable to leave their departure airports. A statement on the Gatwick website said flights were first suspended at around 9pm last night until just after 3am this morning after reports of two drones flying over the airfield. Further sightings of drones in the area meant that the runway had to be closed again from 3.45am. "We are still investigating these alongside Sussex Police," it said. "Unfortunately, this has led to a number of flights being diverted to other airports and all flight arrivals and departures are currently suspended from Gatwick." Gatwick chief operating officer Chris Woodroffe described the incident as 'an irresponsible act'. He said two of his staff first spotted the drone at around 9pm last night and that it had re-appeared several times since then. "The runway can't reopen until the drone is brought down," he said. It is understood police believe the drone is being flown deliberately close to the flight path,

rather than having accidentally drifted into Gatwick's air space. It is illegal to fly a drone within 1km of an airport or airfield boundary. Aircraft reported 92 near-misses with drones last year. The incidents have disrupted travel plans for thousands of passengers travelling in and out of Gatwick at one of the busiest times of year. Crowds of passengers are stuck inside Gatwick waiting for updates, while others have reported being stuck on grounded planes for several hours. Gatwick said airlines were working to provide affected passengers with hotel accommodation or provide alternative travel options. A spokesman apologised for any inconvenience and said staff were working alongside Sussex Police to investigate the drone sightings. British Airways said last night that a 'very small number of flights' had been diverted, but more have been affected this morning. Gatwick said it is expecting a record number of passengers to use the airport this Christmas, up 7.7% to 2.9 million, with the busiest day on Sunday. BALPA head of flight safety, Dr Rob Hunter, said: "The public needs to understand that drones are not just toys and could have catastrophic consequences if they collide with an aircraft. We know a lot of drones will be under people's Christmas trees and we implore them to ensure they're aware of the rules and fly their drones in a safe and sensible manner. "These drone sightings at Gatwick are further evidence that tougher laws and enforcement are required to keep drones clear of manned flights. That's why we need the registration and education process in force sooner rather than later, so people flouting the law can be caught and prosecuted. At the same time, BALPA is also calling for the Government to consider toughening the law to create a larger no-fly zone around airports. "We need to ensure people flying drones take responsibility for their actions and do so responsibly with the knowledge that if they endanger an aircraft they could face jail."

20 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Kuoni reveals details of Christmas Day TV campaign

Kuoni has used one of its high street stores in a TV advert for the first time to try to show the role its agents play in planning trips. The advert, part of a multi-million pound campaign which launches on Christmas Day during The Greatest Showman, one of the top TV slots, was partly filmed in the Kuoni Guilford store. The advert, whose theme is Travel Worth Talking About, also blends travel footage from destinations around the world, set to a soundtrack of Happy Talk by jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald. "Conversations with our travel experts are at the heart of our business and we wanted to find a way to bring this centre stage to differentiate the Kuoni brand. The Happy Talk soundtrack sums everything we're about. We've got 48 Kuoni stores, 11 partner stores and relationships with many brilliant travel agents throughout the UK and we wanted to showcase the value of talking to an expert to plan the perfect trip," said marketing director Dean Harvey. "All our research shows that people value talking to someone who has travel expertise, particularly for complex itineraries around the world and special occasion holidays and the fact that we have more than 300 travel experts is something that sets us apart." The TV campaign will run until February 11 across ITV, Channel 4 and Sky as well as video on demand, such as ITVHub and SkyGo. All the footage shown in the television advert was filmed exclusively for Kuoni in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Thailand and Kenya. Kuoni will also have an outdoor poster campaign for the first time, situating them in sites in 10 key regions throughout the UK. Also new for this year is a John Lewis mail campaign, targeting 250,000 of its partnership card holders alongside a double points promotion. Also, a 32-page booklet will go out with the Telegraph early in January and The Sunday Times at the end of that month. It will also be sent to 500,000 targeted homes throughout the UK. "We've segmented our database and been smart with our data so we get the right message to the right person. There are three versions, one for beach, one for touring and cruise and one for discover product, so it's all about promoting range,"

added Harvey. In addition, Kuoni is investing in digital activity, classified advertising and some creative online content.

21 December 2018, Source Travelbiz

Gatwick chaos: Limited flights resume after drone causes disruption for thousands of passengers

The runway at Gatwick has reopened this morning. Search continues for operator of drone. Britain's Gatwick Airport reopened early on Friday after a rogue drone saboteur wrought travel chaos for hundreds of thousands of Christmas travelers by playing cat-and-mouse with police snipers and the army. After the biggest disruption at Gatwick, Britain's second busiest, since a volcanic ash cloud in 2010, Gatwick said its runway was open and that a limited number of aircraft were scheduled for departure and arrival. "Gatwick's runway is currently available and a limited number of aircraft are scheduled for departure and arrival," the airport said. "Gatwick continues to advise passengers to check the status of their flight with their airline before traveling to the airport as departures and arrivals will be subject to delays and cancellations." Britain called in the military and police snipers to hunt down the drone and its operator who flew what is thought to be an industrial style drone near the airport every time it tried to reopen. Flights were halted at 2103 GMT on Wednesday after two drones were spotted near the airfield. It is illegal to fly drones within 1 km (0.6 mile) of a British airport boundary, punishable by five years in prison. With a surge in public enthusiasm for drones, there has been an increase in near-collisions by unmanned aircraft and commercial jets in recent years. The number of near misses between private drones and aircraft in Britain more than tripled between 2015 and 2017, with 92 incidents recorded last year, according to the UK Airprox Board regulator. Gatwick, which competes with Europe's busiest airport Heathrow, west of London, had said Sunday would be its busiest day of the festive period. Airlines were scrambling to fly people home just days before Christmas after the London airport grounded all flights at 9pm on Wednesday and remained closed last night. Gatwick Airport's chief operating officer Chris Woodroffe said the drones had been sighted late last night. Mr Woodroffe added that contingency plans were being considered, including to cancel flights today. It is hoped rescheduled flights for more than 110,000 people stranded will take off today. Airlines including Aer Lingus and Ryanair have put measures in place to tackle large volumes of passengers on the busiest weekend before Christmas. All Ryanair flights travelling between Dublin and London Gatwick today are being rerouted to London Stansted. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Aer Lingus said it "put contingency plans in place, including adding additional flights and increasing flight capacity in to London Heathrow, to ensure minimum guest disruption". Some 28 flights in and out of Dublin Airport were believed to have been affected by the disruption yesterday, with two London-bound transatlantic flights also being rerouted to Dublin. The British army was brought in to secure Gatwick Airport after what police believe was a deliberate attempt to cause disruption. In a statement yesterday evening, Gatwick chief executive Stewart Wingate said the drone flights which had shut down Gatwick were "highly targeted" and have "been designed to close the airport and bring maximum disruption in the run-up to Christmas". Detective Chief Superintendent Jason Tingley said there had been over 50 sightings of a drone. He added: "We don't know what the drone specification is. "Our working assumption is it's larger than what someone might buy online, we think it may have been adapted and developed." Under UK law, drone operators are forbidden from flying within 1km of airports. Asked what prevention measures were in place to stop drones causing havoc at Ireland's main airports, a spokesman for DAA declined to comment on anti-drone precautions. "The safety and security of passengers, staff and other airport users is Dublin Airport's key priority, but for operational

reasons we never comment on specific security matters," the spokesman said. All customers expecting to travel this weekend are asked to check with their airlines before flying to the UK over the coming days.

21 December 2018, Source TravelMole

WOW to pull out of Gatwick

Budget Icelandic airline WOW is to pull out of Gatwick from March 31 next year. Instead, it will operate daily flights from Stansted to Keflavik airport in Reykjavik leaving at 11.20, which the airline said will allow passengers to make onward connections to the US and Canada. Stansted aviation director Mats Sigurdson said: "We're delighted that WOW air has chosen to base its London operation at London Stansted Airport. We saw really high demand over the summer from passengers choosing WOW's flights to Reykjavik and beyond to destinations across the United States, and inbound tourism to London and the East of England. We look forward to welcoming more WOW air passengers to London Stansted Airport early next year." The airline will also reintroduce its summer-only Edinburgh-Keflavik service in June 2019 offering three flights a week, also ensuring time for transatlantic connections.

21 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Independent agents slam Thomas Cook

Independent travel agents have slammed Thomas Cook today after it confirmed that it had scrapped price parity to offer some holidays cheaper online than in store, with some retailers saying they will cease selling its holidays altogether and others saying they will only sell the operator in future 'as a last resort'. While the announcement hasn't taken the trade by surprise - the operator admitted in October that it was in the midst of a pricing trial where it was advertising some packages cheaper online than through independent agents - it has come as a final straw for some. Writing on social network websites, some agents said they felt betrayed by the operator who they've continued to support despite its financial woes. One said that by undercutting agents online, Thomas Cook had shot itself in the foot. In its announcement yesterday, Thomas Cook sales and e-commerce director Phil Gardner said: "With more and more customers looking for deals and buying online, we need to compete on a level playing field with other operators and online travel agents. "As a result, we will be strengthening our web pricing to make sure we offer our online customers the best price possible." A spokesman said Thomas Cook couldn't ignore the growth of online travel agents and others online, however around 60% of Thomas Cook's bookings in the UK are still made by agents, including in its 600 owned UK stores. The spokeswoman stressed that the operator was not turning its back on travel agents, insisting that it was still very keen to work with independent agents with whom it has a 'strong relationship'. While neither of its two major rivals TUI and Jet2 offer price parity, some agents claimed they continued to sell them because, they said, both TUI and Jet2 offer a better product and better service. One agent wrote: "Jet 2have a better product, better regional flying, better website, support advertising, give POS. On a business level this makes a huge difference." However, Thomas Cook's spokeswoman said the operator's own-brand hotels, including Sensatori, were gaining popularity and the operator is keen to accelerate sales of its differentiated product. "People are starting to get to know these holidays and we do feel that we have a really good range of quality holidays that allow independent agents to sell Thomas Cook product with confidence," she said. She said Thomas Cook had listened to feedback before taking the decision to end price parity, which is being scrapped for all agents, including its own stores.

27 December 2018, Source TravelMole

Norwegian announces cost-savings programme

Norwegian Air has announced a \$230 million cost-savings programme to shore up its balance sheet. Measures include refinancing of one Boeing 787 Dreamliner to generate more than \$30 million in liquidity and will cut some routes and capacity. In a statement, the airline said: "Combined these measures should improve the financial performance from the start of 2019." It will provide and update on the cost-savings programme on April 25, when it issues its first quarter results.

27 December 2018, Source TravelMole

UK's top police chief: 'We need to up our game' to avoid more airport drone chaos

London's Metropolitan Police Commissioner has said the authorities need to up their game and work closely together to avoid another Gatwick-style drone incident. Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Met Commissioner Cressida Dick said her force is supporting Sussex Police in investigating the drone disruption at Gatwick that led to thousands of travellers having flight delays or cancellations just before Christmas when the airport was shut down. Gatwick has offered a £50,000 reward through Crimestoppers for information leading to the arrest of those who used drones to cause the disruption. Former Conservative party deputy chairman Lord Ashcroft is offering a further £10,000. The Commissioner said: "It's a large and complex investigation. Clearly there were many sightings. A drone can pop up and disappear very quickly. Drone technology is always changing and we need to up our game and work closely together. There is a whole variety of tactics and technology that we are using and can use. "I've been talking to colleagues around the world. This is not an easy problem. It's a difficult challenge." Meanwhile, the couple wrongly accused of causing the Gatwick drone chaos, can expect to get a 'substantial payout' according to libel lawyer Mark Stephens of law firm Howard Kennedy. He said Paul Gait and Elaine Kirk had a strong legal case after being arrested, held and then later released without charge, but not before their names and faces were splashed across the media in the UK and around the world. Stephens said: "The damage is likely to be in the region of £75,000 to £125,000. It could be more. I don't see any lawyer who wouldn't take it on a no-win-no-fee basis." The couple were taken in for questioning on Friday, with Sussex police confirming only that a 47-year-old man and a 54-year-old woman from Crawley had been arrested in relation to the incident. They were identified in many newspapers and the Mail on Sunday ran the couple's picture on its front page next to the headline: "Are these the morons who ruined Christmas?" After their release, the couple said they felt 'completely violated'. There have been calls for the Met Police to take over the Gatwick drone inquiry, after Sussex Police was criticised for its handling of the case. Among actions criticised was a statement by Detective Chief Superintendent Jason Tingley who said there was 'always a possibility that there may not have been any genuine drone activity in the first place'. Later, the force backtracked. Lord Harris, former Home Office representative to the Metropolitan Police authority, said: "Clearly if you treated it like a terrorist threat, the Metropolitan Police would have been leading the operation."

31 December 2018, Source TravelMole

One in four Brits will cut down on holidays in 2019 due to Brexit

One in four Brits will cut down on holidays in 2019 because of Brexit and more than a third won't be travelling abroad all year. These were the findings of a survey of more than 2,000 people across the country by discount website VoucherCodes. Over half (56%) think holidays will now be more expensive as a result of Brexit and 47% believe Brexit will make trips abroad more difficult. But despite this 37% aspire to go on more holidays in 2019, with 40% planning to go on multiple trips around the UK and 34% expecting to travel abroad more than once over the course of the year. The research revealed differences between millennials and Generation X (those over 45 years old). While 48% of millennials plan on having more than one international holiday next year, 43% of Generation X will not leave the country.