

The magazine for the European inbound tour industry reaching 8 million escorted visitors into & around Europe

Industry fears over UK's APD

The UK Coalition Government announced on the 11 May that Air Passenger Duty Tax should be abolished in favour of a per plane levy, speculated to be introduced in 2011 (On The Road issue 190 at www.ontheroad.co.uk). Further detail on this levy was expected to be announced in the emergency budget on the 22 June, however this has not transpired. The lack of any announced changes means the planned substantial rises in APD for November will go ahead.

Gareth Williams, CEO of leading flight comparison website Skyscanner

commented: "We are disappointed to see the Budget statement fail to mention the proposed per plane

levy in any detail. Greater clarity is desperately needed regarding the cost and timeline of the proposed airline tax reform - at the moment it is impossible for either consumers or airlines to prepare for the potential impact that this may have on future travel plans."

"The Government will explore changes to the aviation tax system, including switching from a per-passenger to a per-plane duty, which could encourage fuller planes. Major changes will be subject to public consultation."

UK Government budget speech
22 June 2010

"The increase in APD this November will increase the cost of a family of four flying to the Caribbean by as much as £300 in duty. While this may deter some passengers, others will look for ways to avoid the tax, such as booking flights via European hubs, where APD doesn't apply. This will

obviously benefit short haul and low cost carriers who are likely to see a significant rise in bookings for short

distance flights, but encouraging travellers to invest their money in European carriers could seriously impact the UK aviation industry."

Tom Jenkins, Executive Director of the European Tour Operators Association, (ETOA) said, "Using a hub where there is no APD, such as Paris, will add instant gain for long haul operators. It seems absurd to devise a tax that will punish service

experts so savagely!

The other danger with ADP is that as well as punishing people travelling out of the UK, it also punishes visitors flying into the UK. With a new Government surely this is the time to work out what they want tourism to deliver? Do they want money? Do they want visitors? If the answer is yes then they need to consider ADP far more carefully and not treat it as a resource that can be taxed at will!"

by Alan Bennett



APD will hurt long haul carriers operating from the UK

Entry charges to return?

British museums and galleries have received notice from the Department of Culture that following the Government's emergency budget on 22 June, many of them could receive cuts in grants of up to 30%. They were also told to prune administration costs by 50% and given 2 weeks to explain how they would implement these savings.

Many of the institutions such as the British Museum, Victoria & Albert, Tate, and the National Gallery are believed to be considering re-imposing entrance charges to offset these draconian cuts. The British Museum, which did not charge even while other museums did, recently increased the size of the notice outside its entrance that asks for voluntary donations.

None wants to bring back charging - they believe it would be a backward step as free museums have become part of the public realm. Charging was abolished in 2001 and it led to a surge in visitors. Some museums reported that numbers had doubled.

Britain's museums and galleries are fairly unusual among their



Caravaggio 1571-1610 self-portrait as Bacchus 1593-4

European counterparts in providing free access to their residential exhibitions. The Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid and the Uffizi in Florence all charge an entrance fee.

The cuts will also threaten popular evening openings and some may shut for one day a week. High profile 'visiting' exhibitions such as Carravaggio and Tutankhamun will also be at risk because they are expensive, although they do bring in ticket revenue and provide publicity.

by Anne Bradbury-Pratt

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On The Road

Late June - Mid July 2010

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A directory of Companies throughout Europe that specialise in working with leisure and business escorted groups

Jim Power 1949-2010



I regret to have to inform you of the tragic news that our dear friend, Jim Power, the Secretary General of Skål International has left us forever - Jim lived for Skål International with his whole being.

There is so little I can say about such a tragic event other than Skål will not be the same without Jim, he had been Secretary General since January 1993 and will be missed so much by all of us.

I am sure we will never forget him and that his actions will unite us and make us stronger in the idea that I have inaugurated as the president: "Living the true spirit of Skål" which was also the motto of Jim's life.

My condolences go to his family and staff at the General Secretariat who had all worked with him for many years.

Dear Jim, may you rest in peace.

Nik Racic
President
Skål International

The memorial mass for Jim Power will be held at the church of Nuestra Señora Madre del Buen Consejo, in Torremolinos, Spain, on Tuesday 6 July 2010 at 8.30 p.m.

Founded in 1932 in Paris by travel managers, Skål is a professional organisation of tourism leaders around the world, promoting global tourism and friendship. It is the only international group uniting all branches of the travel and tourism industry. Its members, the industry's managers and executives, meet at local, national, regional and international levels to discuss and pursue topics of common interest.

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Mair Mair

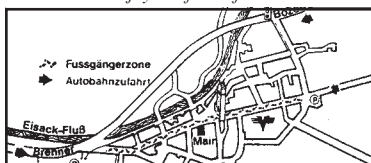
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The Pan European Advent and Christmas Markets website

Highlights details of 100's of Advent and Christmas markets and Festive events from Aarhus to Zurich and beyond

www.christmas-markets.org

You can also identify many benefits on offer during the festive season to make your itinerary even more appealing

Photo: Christmas Market - Tallinn Town Square by Toomas Volmer

PEOPLE UPDATE..... PLACES...

Corinthia

Corinthia Hotels announces the appointment of Ken Dittrich as the new General Manager of the newly extended and refurbished five-star Corinthia Hotel St. Petersburg in Russia. Ken joins Corinthia from Sol Melia, where his most recent appointment was that of Area Vice-President for Sol Melia and Managing Director at the Gran Melia Caracas Venezuela.

The Corinthia Hotel is operated by CHI Hotels & Resorts, a multi brand operator licensed to manage Corinthia, Wyndham and Ramada Plaza Brands in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

TripAdvisor

Former Marketing Director at Utell Hotels Karen Plumb is to take up the newly-created post of Commercial Director EMEA for business listings and will be based in London.

Plumb will be leading sales, marketing and product development of the just-launched listings business aimed at hoteliers, B&Bs and any other accommodation sellers.

De Vere Hotels

De Vere Hotels and Resorts have appointed Kirstie Yates as the new Head of Marketing responsible for overseeing marketing communications at 13 luxury hotels within the collection.

Kirstie joins De Vere from pub company Mitchells & Butlers.

ETC

Ms Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) was unanimously elected President of the European Travel Commission at the organisation's 78th General Meeting in Brussels in June. Ms Hedorfer succeeds Mr Arthur Oberascher of Austria for a three-year term. Also elected at the meeting as the organisation's Vice Presidents were Peter De Wilde (Toerisme Vlaanderen, Belgium), Dr. Ivan Rona (Hungarian National Tourist Office, Hungary) and Dimitrij Piciga (Slovenian Tourist Board, Slovenia).



Petra Hedorfer

And....

Rob Franklin OBE, Executive Direc-

tor of the Brussels based European Travel Commission, has announced his departure from the organisation effective 30th June 2010.

Following six years at the helm of the organization, his term of office is coming to an end, and Rob has decided to seek new pastures and hand over to a successor.

Virgin

Virgin Limited Edition, Sir Richard Branson's privately owned collection of luxury retreats, announced that Tristin Swales has joined the company as its new Group Operations Director. Tristin is responsible for the day-to-day running and operations across the entire collection, as well as supporting new developments worldwide.

Tristin joined Virgin from myhotels.

PHG

Preferred Hotel Group™ announced the appointment of Lindsey Ueberroth as President in a planned succession intended to sustain the family-owned company's legacy of and growth worldwide. The announcement was made by John Ueberroth, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

Lindsey Ueberroth moves into the position most recently occupied by Gail Ueberroth, who will continue her role as Chief Marketing Officer and assume the title of Vice-Chair. Preferred Hotel Group™ is a provider of business solutions for independently owned and operated hotels and resorts around the world.



Lindsey Ueberroth

RCC

Dominic Paul is to be appointed by Royal Caribbean Cruises - Vice-President and Managing Director for the UK and Ireland.

Paul is currently Chief Operating Officer at airline BMI and will join later this summer in the role vacated by Robin Shaw who is now with Saga.

VisitBritain

The national tourism agency, has appointed Paul Eastham as Head of Global Corporate Communications.

A former Deputy Political Editor of The Daily Mail, Paul was previously Head of Media & PR at The Children's Society and Head of News at Ofsted.

PLACES...

Gloom in Calais

Three major drink retailers withdraw from Calais unfortunately at the time when ferry operators are just beginning to reap the benefits from BA strikes and Ash repercussions.

UK newspapers reported that Sainsburys is to close its Calais Wine Store at the end of June, Tesco was consulting with staff about the closure of its Tesco Vins Plus site and Oddbins Calais, which is already closed, would not be renewing a franchise deal.

Majestic Wine has said it experienced a 28% fall in sales for the year to the end of March in its three French stores but will remain open. Retailers have blamed the weak pound against the euro and cheaper UK prices for alcohol.

Most expensive places to live

Japanese cities are back to being the world's most expensive places to live,

according to a survey released by HR consultancy, ECA International. Tokyo ranked as the world's priciest city, while Nagoya came in fourth in the global ranking, followed by Yokohama in fifth, and Kobe in seventh place. Hong Kong fell in the cost of living stakes, and the appreciation of the Korean won saw Seoul leapfrog Hong Kong, while Singapore has climbed the to 67th place in the world rankings. Oslo ranked as the world's second most expensive city, followed, somewhat surprisingly, by Angolan capital Luanda. ECA explained that decades of war in the African national resulted in damaged infrastructure, making goods difficult to obtain, and therefore inflating prices.

Greater Paris

The French President has unveiled plans aimed at creating a sprawling city over the next 20 years which would be the world's most sustainable metropolis.

Mr Sarkozy singled out a proposal by the French architect Antoine Grumbach to extend the city to the

continued on page 4...

Pompeii

Signage and guides

Italy's ANSA newspaper recently reported on the developments at the famous Italian tourist attraction. The archaeological site of Pompeii is continuing efforts to clean up its act with new entry boards and signposting. Explanations in various languages will be posted at the site's three entrances, setting out prices and providing information to ensure visitors don't fall foul of illegal ticket vendors.

But the main focus will be on ensuring tourists are not tricked into paying for any of the unauthorized guides that currently plague the site, despite the best efforts of officials to keep them away. Guides authorised by the Campania government will be located at the new entry boards, and will accept registrations from visitors in order of arrival and their language.

The cost of joining a tour will be standardized and clearly displayed, and guides will be required to display an identity document with photograph at all times. Payments must be made before the tour starts and invoices will be available on request.

Anyone caught trying to tout for customers outside these spots, either on the site itself, in the parking lot or near the ticket office, will be forcibly removed from the site and reported to the police.



Pompeii - A victim of Versuvius

Visitor experience

Since July 2008, the government has invested well over €30 million in 100 different projects designed to clean up the site. One of the biggest drives has been protecting and finishing excavations and increasing the number of villas open to the public - currently just under a third of Pompeii's 150 homes.

A new visitors centre is being developed with a permanent exhibition recreating the experience of the 79 AD eruption and the city's final day. A campaign to clear the site of its colony of stray dogs got under way in November 2009. The aim is to find the animals permanent homes but during the first stage experts have been bringing them in for sterilization, tagging and disease treatment.

As well as permanent projects there has been a series of hugely popular one-off initiatives, including experiencing a real-life Pompeian snack bar complete with Ancient Roman food, a night-time sound-and-light show of the baths' famous erotic wall paintings and a 'bike day' featuring a five-kilometre tour of the site, during which vehicles were available free of charge to visitors.

Looking to recruit in 2010?

On the Road

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...continued from page 3

Channel port of Le Havre via Rouen along the Seine, maximising the green possibilities of the river and with a fast rail link.

The idea was mooted by Napoleon Bonaparte, with whom Mr Sarkozy is often likened and who once exclaimed: "Paris-Rouen-Le Havre: one single city with the Seine as its main road."

Mr Sarkozy said that a focus of the plan would be to link the city's isolated suburbs, including housing estates with large immigrant populations which have experienced high unemployment and discrimination and were rocked by riots in 2005. Paris is currently all but cut off from these banlieues by its ring road.

The public-private transport plan would be put to parliament in October and construction could begin as early as 2012, he said

The Dutch architect Winy Maas's idea to plan a million trees under the flight path around Charles de Gaulle is also in the pipeline.

Rome rescue

Rome is to lay on a special ambulance service for the horses that pull the city's tourist buggies as part of efforts to step up protection of the animals' health.

Local authorities say the 'horse ambulance' will help prevent repeats of the case of Birillo, a tourist-buggy puller who died in agony after an accident near the Colosseum over a year ago.

Rome has around 80 horses for the buggies popular with tourists for tours of its sites.

Passat 2011

Celebrate Passat's 100th anniversary from 13th - 15th May 2011. The legendary flying P- liner anchored in Travemünde will be cheered with a huge party next spring.

During open-ship activities visitors will have the chance to discover the PASSAT, Travemünde's famous landmark, as well as numerous other traditional sailing vessels that will come to Travemünde to participate

in the birthday celebrations.

The proud sailing beauty will be greeted by shanty choirs from different countries. There'll be other activities such as stands offering delicacies from the places between the Baltic region and South America that the PASSAT visited during her active years. Naturally, she'll also get a giant birthday cake!

Lübeck - highlights for groups

A new group travel brochure for 2011 is available from the end of July 2010. As in previous years the brochure features the best-loved group offers such as "Lübeck All in All" which is just right for first-time visitors to the beautiful city. Or "Lübeck's Famous Sons" which gives visitors a perfect inside into the life and work of Thomas Mann, Willy Brandt and Günter Grass.

There are some new ideas for group programmes such as the new tour for bikers 'Pedal Knight' with an English speaking tour guide which leads to the nature reserve at the Wakenitz river close to Lübeck's Old Town.

The brochure will be available for download as pdf-file from www.luebeck-tourism.de from July 2010. If you wish to receive the printed catalogue simply send an e-mail to auslandsmarketing@luebeck-tourismus.de

Estonia update

During the first three months of 2010 the number of tourists, bed nights and revenues from sales of accommodation services, increased compared to the same period the previous year.

Most tourists arrived from Finland (93 200), Russia (27 300) and Sweden (8 800). Tallinn's primary target markets grew most by accommodated tourists from Russia (9 500 or +53%) and Finland (11 500, +14%). Compared with same period last year, Tallinn received more tourists also from Latvia (+11%), Great Britain (+20%) and Germany (+23%). There were drops in trips from Norway (-1%) and Sweden (-3%).

And..

Estonia's will be accepted into the Eurozone from 2011. Estonia, the least populated of the three Baltic States at just over 1.3 million, had hoped to join the Common Currency back in 2007 but high inflation got in the way of its ambitions.

Cyprus - sustainable tourism

Cyprus plans to lead the way in sustainable tourism amongst mainstream destinations, with a new five-year programme to protect the environment and benefit local people.

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has entered into a five-year partnership with sustainable tourism charity, the Travel Foundation and the Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative to help it deliver real economic benefits to local people, conserve the natural environment, and promote local culture and heritage. UK tour operators TUI, Thomas Cook, the Co-operative Travel, Cosmos and Sunvil are involved in project.

Blackpool towers

Blackpool is officially the nation's all-time favourite seaside resort, according to new research from consumer champion Which? Holiday*.

The North-West resort has been voted number one in an independent survey of over 4,000 members of the general public. Fans love the special atmosphere in the town, as well as the spectacular annual illuminations which were described by one respondent as "simply breathtaking". Brighton comes a close second, with the promenade, pier and its proximity to open countryside receiving high praise.

Whitby, Bournemouth and Scarborough complete the top five. Bournemouth's beaches are its main draw, while the other two have been singled out for their scenery and surrounding countryside.

40% of UK adults took a trip to the seaside in 2009, but this is set to increase in 2010. 20% of adults surveyed by Which? Holiday said they will be more likely to visit a UK seaside resort in 2010 than in 2009.

Which? Holiday Top Ten seaside resorts:

1. Blackpool
2. Brighton
3. Whitby
4. Bournemouth
5. Scarborough
6. Newquay
7. Torquay
8. St Ives
9. Skegness
10. Great Yarmouth

Italian police crackdown on counterfeit goods

The Guardian newspaper reported that an Austrian tourist visiting Italy thought she was onto a bargain when she bought a fake Louis Vuitton purse from a beach vendor for €7. But she ended up with a €1,000 fine as part of a draconian summer crackdown on counterfeit goods.

As she haggled with an itinerant Senegalese salesman on the sands at Jesolo, near Venice, Ursula Corel, 65, from Vienna had no idea she was being observed through binoculars by police officers perched on the lifeguard tower.

The officers are part of a new 20-strong squad sent out this summer by the local mayor to crack down on the vendors, who hawk bags and clothes up and down the beach. (The national trade in fake brand-name goods is believed to be worth €7bn a year.)

Mayor, Francesco Calzavara, said, "We are convinced that if the demand drops, so will the offers - we are also responding to complaints of heavy selling by the vendors. One tourist said she was never coming back after being bothered 48 times!"

Ursula Corel, however, was less impressed by her fine. The Milan evening paper, Corriere della Sera, quoted her as saying to police officers, "Are you joking? I don't go to the beach with €1,000, and I knew nothing of this law. Some bargain this turned out to be."

The local hoteliers' association claimed it was trying to find Corel to offer to pay for her fine. But La Repubblica newspaper has warned that beachgoers up and down the country were facing a "summer of seizures" as local authorities join the campaign, keeping up a tradition of tough beach discipline that has ranged over past years from banning kissing in cars to building sandcastles. On the Tyrrhenian coast, at Forte dei Marmi, the newspaper noted, police are even using quad bikes to chase beach vendors.

And in Italy there is a beach-related law on leaving a towel on the sand to save your spot while you go for a drink or lunch. The fine for leaving unattended towels is €1,000.

But it's not only Italy that is clamping down on 'beach behaviour'. Bikini-clad sunbathers in some parts of Europe are finding out that life's not such a beach when they wear skimpy clothes. Many stores and cafes in Barcelona are refusing to serve customers in bathing suits. Around the city there are posters depicting couples in swimsuits with a red line drawn across them next to a normally dressed couple with no red line. And residents seem to share the views of officials that the sight of swimsuit-clad tourists strolling through the streets is embarrassing.



Leaving unattended towels can incur a €1,000 fine

Travel Organisers Manual - Champagne

The Champagne, the Marne

Marne Tourist Board has produced a first rate new "Travel Organisers Manual 2010"

For Tour Operators, Events Organisers, Associations and Group Organisers. It has been produced as a colour Adobe reader file:

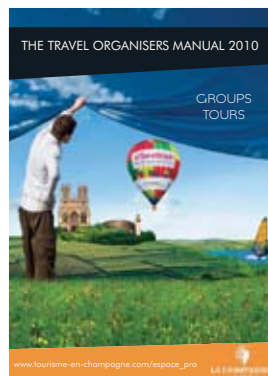
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TRAVEL INDUSTRY NEWS

Ash compensation

ABTA has issued a statement calling on the Government to encompass all areas of the travel industry when it looks at ash cloud compensation packages. Airlines have already met with senior government figures to demand compensation for the debacle, which they believe was not handled well by the CAA.

But tour operators and travel agents also worked hard to shoulder the responsibility of the natural disaster that grounded so many flights this spring.

The ABTA statement said: "In a House of Commons debate on the impact of the ash clouds on aviation, Minister of State at the Department of Transport Theresa Villiers, commented that 'the Government have not ruled out providing support for airlines'".

"During both ash cloud events package tour operators also provided accommodation and covered day to day expenses and ABTA believes they should be included in any possible compensation package."

BL Show

The next British Leisure show dates have been confirmed as Friday 11th to Sunday 13th March 2011 and returns to The Royal Windsor Racecourse in Berkshire. In 2009 there were 21,000 visitors

2011 Improvements include:

- Clear Zones
- More Signage
- Wider Walkways
- Features at the heart of each Zone
- Twice the amount of exhibitor space available

The organisers have decided to ditch the Britain & Abroad Zone into a new and improved Travel & Destinations Zone. This Zone will feature a wide range of exhibitors from Visitor Attractions, Travel Operators and Tourist Boards to Holiday Destinations, Campsites and Hotels chains. T01590 679 338 enquiries@british-leisureshow.com

England report

Latest tourism figures show financial opportunity for businesses that improve accessibility. New figures for 2009 released by VisitEngland from the UK Tourism Survey show that overnight trips made by people who either have or are accompanied by someone with a health condition or impairment contributed almost £2bn to the English domestic visitor economy in 2009. This highlights the economic importance of this travelling sector to the tourism industry.

Over 11 million such trips were made last year, equating to 11% of the total volume of domestic overnight tourism in England. Trips by this group tend to be longer than average and as a result their spend per trip is higher. James Berresford, Chief Executive

VisitEngland, says "Over a quarter of Britons have a long-standing health problem or disability. Access is high on VisitEngland's agenda and is a key element of England's new Strategic Framework for Tourism which looks to grow the value of tourism in England."

VisitEngland provides a number of tools and resources to help tourism operators accommodate people with access needs including a new video, Profiting through Accessible Tourism available to view at www.visitengland.com/access.

Organising a group

The new Hostelling International Groups' website is specially designed to help group organisers arrange a group trip either recreational or educational.

The redeveloped website will help group leaders save both time and money by recommending the accommodation most suitable for their group and in the best location.

The website features 200 hostels that offer specific facilities for groups. In addition, the new 'choose your trip' function enables users to search for a wide range of group trips ranging from a city break with a group of friends to a beach trip with a large family group, a school trip to study Geography in France to a college ski trip to Canada. www.hihostels.com/groups

Travel boom if Euro collapse

The widely-predicted demise of the Euro could herald a return of traditional cheap summer European destinations such as Greece and Spain, according to Douglas McWilliams, of the Centre of Economics and Business Research, a speaker at the ABTA Conference stated that Mediterranean countries were likely to revert back to their original currencies should the financial crisis in the eurozone deteriorate even further.

He said: "The euro will definitely break up within 5 to 10 years. The Mediterranean destinations will drop out of the Euro. They should never have joined up in the first place because they hadn't managed to abolish domestic inflation and when they stayed in they became very uncompetitive.

Once out they will start to be competitive again and will start to structure their economies around vital tourism again. Until it breaks up, the Euro will go south. We will get a new set of travel destinations re-emerging. I think that the traditional destinations will come back again when they go back to the good old days of using Lira and Drachma.

It was always clear that the Euro was a political thing. For money to be dominated by politics is always a bad idea.

I have told the Greeks their currency will drop by a minimum of 15% but

initially the probability is that it will drop by something much bigger than that, by 30 to 50%. After that it will come back up." He said.

Don't you just love an economist!

USA stats

Carriers are struggling to stay afloat in the face of daunting fuel costs and plunging travel demand (in the last year, domestic carriers alone lost \$11 billion).

On the flipside, last year, U.S. airlines took in more than \$7.8 billion in fees from passengers, according to

the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. So, they are clearly working the "fee" angle.

Danube

The Danube Tourist Commission unveils its website's new online layout. The updated and modern website allows for easy access to up-to-the minute news and information from all around the Danube. News articles, press releases as well as downloads are now available www.danube-river.org

Mixed fortunes

It's been a mixed and volatile year for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industry. But those who have adapted their business strategy to the changing environment or effectively marketed themselves through new technology emerged as clear winners, a major industry report from sector skills council, People 1st reveals.

According to the 'State of the Nation 2010' report, those who performed relatively well were cruise operators, tourist attractions, self-catering accommodation, and budget operators providing quality, value for money offers. Despite the recession, sectors with the close links to domestic tourism have reported higher sales turnover.

The report is a definitive snapshot of the labour market for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism (HLTT), it found that the sector is still recruiting with businesses finding it easier to hire staff. In fact, almost half (45% of sector employers recruited new staff in the 12 months to March 2010. 55% of businesses also believe the recession has made it easier to retain staff.

Encouragingly, the economic downturn does not appear to have effected the amount of training business provide their staff (59% of businesses said they offer the same amount in 2010 as in 2009, while 14% provided more training). However, how training is delivered appears to have been affected with 51% moving more training in-house.

Of the 34% of sector employers who indicated in 2009 that they intended to seek government funding for training, only 6% actually did so, most likely as a result of cuts in the availability of funded provision.

On a positive note, with training spend at £2,575 per head compared to an all industry average of £1,725, the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector is one of the top five largest spending sectors on training of the economy.

Worryingly, more sector employers report that their staff do not have the necessary skills to meet their business needs a rising from 19% two years ago to 26% in 2009.

The biggest skills gaps cited by employers within the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industry were around management and leadership, chef skills, and customer service skills. IT skills were also cited and the type required will vary but will include maximising the potential of social media, e-marketing, website design and producing applications for mobile phones.

While trading is expected to be tough in 2010 as disposable income reduces, the sector needs to gear up for growth. By 2017, total employment is predicted to grow by nearly 10% with 208,000 additional jobs and when replacement demand is taken into account, projections indicate that a total of 1,063,000 additional people will be required to work in the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector. Strong managerial skills will be essential as it is anticipated there will be 69,000 additional managerial posts by 2017.

State of the Nation 2010 is endorsed by ABTA and BHA and sponsored by VT Group and EDI.



Cruise operators performed well

EUROPEAN ECCENTRICS

Crash out!!

Car insurance companies in the UK will be pleased if England crash out of the World Cup in the early stages.

Based on information collated from the 2006 tournament it appears that England's drivers crash their cars more often on England match days. In 2006 incidents leapt by some 14% generally during the whole tournament. Accident figures when England played against Portugal and lost on penalties rose by over 51%.

Holy haul

A thief who disguised himself as a priest to rob a Catholic college in Rome became so caught up in his holy pretence that he blessed the police officers who helped foil his bid to steal a batch of antique books.

The fake cleric, a 52-year-old Venezuelan, mingled among students and teachers at the city's Venerable English College, a seminary for priests for England and Wales, before heading to its library and nabbing €25,000 worth of books. But the college's vice rector became suspicious when the unfamiliar man could not explain what he was doing there. Police said they were familiar with the man following attempts to steal antique books and works of art elsewhere. (ANSA)

Hey shorty

There appears to be no point in tall officers applying to work for France's

5ft 5ins President Nicolas Sarkozy. Unnamed police sources told the newspaper *Le Parisien* "large sized" officers shouldn't bother to apply for a position as Presidential guards.

Help

A vet in Crediton, Devon had to be rescued by the fire brigade when the horse she sedated fell on top of her.

Eye catching

ANSA reported that eight Tuscan mayors stripped down to their underwear to protest against the budget cuts Rome has made to state contributions to local government.

The cuts were part of an austerity package the government adopted to slash public spending by €24 billion over a two-year period and thus reduce Italy's budget deficit.

The mayors said their protest was meant to symbolise that "the government has taken the shirts off our backs and even more".

Bay-watch babe

The French seaside resort of Les Sables d'Olonne has employed a pair of students to sit on lifeguard seats and scan the beach for sunburn. If they find it, they'll grab a tube of factor 50 and sprint, Baywatch-style, to the rescue. The lucky pair who were selected from more than 700 applicants are Estelle, a 22-year-old trainee osteopath from Nantes, described as having "a proven interest in seaside activities and nightlife"

Estonia - weirdo's

It may be one of the world's smallest countries and one of the least populated, but Estonia makes a name for itself in some of the most surprising ways; from being world champion mosquito swatters, to world-beating wife-carriers.

Estonia became new world champions at the extreme sport of mosquito swatting in June 2010 after an Estonian man, David Gavidas, swatted 38 mosquitoes during a world championship attempt in the Estonian town of Tartu. Participants had to swat as many mosquitoes as they could while standing in a square metre of grass, having worked up a sweat to tempt the mozzies.

The winner, who completely overshadowed the previous record holder Finland's score of just eight, said "My arms and legs hurt and itch since the competition but otherwise I'm fine."

And...

So successful are Estonians at the international sport of wife carrying that there is even a wife carrying hold known as the 'Estonian style' (the wife hangs upside-down with her legs around the husband's shoulders, holding onto his waist).

Wife carrying competitions are believed to have started in Sonkajärvi, Finland, and the winner is the couple who completes the 253.5m course that includes sand, water and fence obstacles, in the shortest time. There is just one prize in the world championships, that Estonians won for ten successive years from 1998 - 2008, and that is the wife's weight in beer.

The rules are fairly simple, the wife must be over 17 years old and weigh 49kg or carry a weighted back-pack, the only equipment the carrier can wear is a belt and helmet and finally, the couples have to have fun.



Estonian wife

Olé

22-year-old matador, Christain Hernandez, was arrested for breach of contract when he dropped his cape and fled from a bull mid fight. He said afterwards, "I didn't have the balls. This is not my thing!" Hernandez, who was released after paying a fine, was gored by a bull several months ago and has now decided to retire.



"Did not have the balls"

Slurls by Andy Geldman

Computer geek and author, Andy Geldman, has written a book that has taken the UK press by storm.

It is a compendium of ill thought out web addresses, many of which are companies who naively slurred their innocent-sounding names into a single word without noticing the resulting double entendres.

'Slurls: They Called Their Website What?' lists more than 150 'slurls', or slur URLs.

On the list is the Mole Station Nursery, a business in Australia selling gardening goods that adopted the web name "molestationnursery". Others include:

- A Vancouver bowling alley Big Al's strap line - "I love Big Al's" - www.llovebigals.com
- Pen Island's home page - www.penisland.com
- Les Bocages (the French for groves), - British tree surgeons in France - www.lesbocages.com
- Choose Spain - a British holiday company - www.choosespain.com
- Experts Exchange - where programmers can trade advice - www.expertsexchange.com
- La Drape - a British company selling bedspreads - www.ladrape.com
- American Scrap Metal - a recycling firm - www.americanscrapmetal.com
- Speed of Art - art designers - www.speedofart.com
- Therapist Finder - a directory of therapy services - www.therapistfinder.com

and Maksim, a maths student from Marzy, in central France.

Hitchhiker's guide to good pub beer

Stuart Ashby, a real ale lover, has made his way through the British Good Beer Guide literally - by hitchhiking to all of the 700 pubs in his 1990 edition. The 60-year-old, from Shoreham, West Sussex, took five years to try them all out.

Tickets please

A British train operator is in trouble. Passengers travelling on Southeastern Railways' high-speed service from London to Dover Priory have a choice of £43.20 for a first-class ticket, or £33.30 for a standard fare. But either way, they'll end up in standard seats, as the high-speed trains have no first class compartments.

Committee Work

"This could only be the work of a committee; it screams CC'd creativity," A.A. GILL, British columnist, on the newly unveiled 2012 London Olympic mascots, Wenlock and Mandeville



Wenlock and Mandeville

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CRUISE NEWS

New Avalon river vessel for 2011

In May 2011, Avalon Waterways (part of the GLOBUS family of brands), is introducing a river cruise ship, the Avalon Panorama, which will feature 64 newly designed, 200-square-foot suites on the top two decks.

Each suite will have a seating area adjacent to an 11-foot wide, floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall panoramic window.

"The whole suite becomes an open-air balcony," said Patrick Clark, Managing Director at Avalon. He called the suites a "new look at how the space on the ships is used."

The suites will be in addition to 17 staterooms on the lower deck that measure 172 square feet each.

Avalon employed a new interior-design team to tackle the Panorama's design features, which include marble bathrooms.

The Panorama will also feature a lounge, dining room, hair salon, sky deck pool, fitness room and open-air bistro serving grilled food at lunchtime.

There will be flat-screen televisions, fully stocked mini-bars and safes in all staterooms and suites as well as on board laundry/ironing services.

The Panorama will sail Avalon's 14-night itinerary from Amsterdam to Budapest for most of 2011. It will also sail Avalon's Christmas markets itinerary during the holidays.

Avalon will retire the 178-passenger Avalon Artistry, which was built in 2004, and the 176-passenger Avalon Poetry, built in 2005, at the end of this year.



A suite on the Avalon Panorama
Avalon Waterways will upgrade its existing fleet of river ships with many of the amenities being introduced on its upcoming newbuild, the Avalon Panorama.

Avalon will outfit the line's 10 vessels with features such as improved bedding, fresh flowers and complimentary bottled water, enhanced bathroom products and high-speed internet service.

Le Havre reopens cruise terminal

In mid May Le Havre reopened its cruise terminal. Hall 1 situated at Pointe de Floride has been trans-

formed into a cruise terminal meeting safety and security standards as well as having an interior upgrade.

Norfolkline sale

The European Commission has approved the Danish ferry operator DFDS purchasing Norfolkline. The €346 million deal still leaves previous owner Maersk with a 31% stake in Norfolkline but it is expected the company will eventually sell the shares after a lock-in period of 24 months.

The European Commission required DFDS to arrange a "space charter agreement" on some Denmark-UK routes in order to approve the sale and DFDS has now done that with Stena Line. The new owner says it believes new synergies will save the company \$30-\$36 million annually.

Rebranding

All Leisure Group PLC, the largest British-owned cruise company, has created a new marketing name for niche cruise brands Voyages of Discovery, Swan Hellenic and Hebridean Island Cruises. The three brands will now be marketed to the trade under a new All Discovery Cruising name.

New President Steve Novello said "We created this new marketing umbrella in order to make it easier for us to communicate with our trade partners and to offer more educational opportunities to learn about our brands."

While our three niche brands are unique in their own right, they share a common theme in that they each offer destination-focused cruises targeting mature passengers who enjoy the traditional style of cruising and want to travel to more intriguing ports of call, all while taking part in sophisticated enrichment programs."

Thames cruising

Magna Carta Steamship Company is the splendid name of an operator offering a series of four- and seven-day cruises on the River Thames. Spirit of Chartwell, was rebuilt completely in 2009 and features 18 guest cabins on two decks. All are outward-facing, air-conditioned and en-suite, with satellite TV. Other on-board facilities include a one-sitting restaurant, lounge and internet station. Using the ship as a base, guests will visit some of the most interesting landmarks on the Thames as Spirit of Chartwell typically cruises from Tower Bridge, past Westminster, Hampton Court, Runnymede, Windsor, and as far as Marlow. The packages are fully inclusive of land tours and the services of expert lecturers. www.magnacarta.biz

UK cruise industry flourishes

The Passenger Shipping Association (PSA) has just released The Cruise Review (2009 UK Cruise Market): Key findings in the report are:

- Cruise passenger numbers increase 4%
- Average cruise duration rises to 11 nights
- 6 out of 10 passengers take more than one cruise a year, 1 in 25 cruise more than 6 times
- Sales of Ultra-Luxury cruises increase more than 50%
- 1 in every 10 package holidays booked is now a cruise
- Average cruise price drops 6% and per day by nearly 11% but 30,000 still pay more than £5,000 for their cruise
- Northern Europe is now more popular than the Caribbean with British cruise passengers
- More passengers book cruises face to face with travel agents
- 1 in 4 passengers books their cruise a year or more ahead

PSA Director, William Gibbons, said: "The success of UK cruising, during one of the toughest economic periods the world has seen, can be attributed to the value and high standards of a cruise holiday. The all-inclusive nature of cruising and exceptional standards of quality and service are the key to our continued growth, along with the huge choice of worldwide destinations and the wide range in styles of cruising."

2010 is on course to be another record year with 1.65 million UK passengers taking a cruise, and with a further 14 new ship launches this year and more ships dedicated to the UK market, we are confident in reaching 2 million passengers by 2014". For full report www.the-psa.co.uk

Barbi time

In mid June Stena Navigator, which operates between Stranraer, SW Scotland, and Belfast held its first barbecue onboard.

Stena Line's General Manager for travel on the Irish Sea, Dermot

Cairns, said, "We're hoping to make the barbecue available as often as possible to our customers on the Stena Navigator"

USA interest down

The number of U.S. consumers *continued on page 8...*

Eight new Viking river ships

Viking River Cruises has announced its plans to spend \$250 million on 8 'new build' ships and to refurbish another 2 over the next three years.

The 8 new vessels would bring the total number of ships operated by Viking to 26, an increase in capacity of more than 40%.

Viking Prestige will launch in Europe in 2011. The new Viking Emerald will replace the Viking Century Sun on China's Yangtze River in 2011. Three more vessels in Europe will follow in 2012, then four in 2013.

The company said it believes that river cruising is still in its infancy and has tremendous growth potential.

Richard Marnell, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Viking, said the company is running at about a 97% load factor for 2010.

The 189-passenger Viking Prestige will feature green attributes, such as a hybrid propulsion system. It will also have balconies on the top two decks.

The Prestige will sail Viking's eight-day Danube itinerary from Budapest to Nuremberg and will be built by the Neptune Shipyard in Rostock.

The 264-passenger Viking Emerald will have 840-square-foot presidential suites with separate sitting and sleeping areas, two flat-screen televisions, panoramic windows and private wrap-around balconies.

The 269-square-foot staterooms will include hotel-style beds and private balconies.

In addition to the new ships, Viking plans on completely refurbishing the Viking Pakhomov in Russia, which will undergo a bow-to-stern renovation like those of its sister ships, Viking Surkov and Viking Kirov, re-launched in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

The Pakhomov will feature hotel-style beds and flat-panel televisions. Public areas such as the restaurant, lounges, library and bar will be completely re-modelled.

In Europe, Viking Schumann, a ship purpose-built for the Elbe River with a shallow draft, will receive bow-to-stern refurbishments this year, matching those of sister ship Viking Fontane.

All public areas, including the restaurant, bar and lounge, will be refurbished. Additionally, eight 180-square-foot deluxe staterooms will be created on the upper deck.



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interested in cruises fell 4% in April compared to the prior month and 4% from last year, based on analysis of the number of consumers researching cruise trips online conducted by the digital intelligence firm Compete.

A total of 6.5 million consumers researched cruises online in April, down from 6.7 million in the prior month, Compete reported.

City Cruises wins again

City Cruises plc was named 'Best Inland Canal/Riverboat Operator' for the ninth time, at the 2010 Group Travel Awards.

These awards, which celebrate the industry's best suppliers, are highly coveted, as they are voted for by group travel organisers who are the users of the services.

"We are thrilled to have been recognised in this tough economic climate as providing high quality group travel services that offer value for money. We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who voted for us", commented Natasha Contini, Head of Sales and Marketing at City Cruises. T+ 44 (0)20 77 400 400

'Deutschland' engine room fire

A machine room fire broke out in the engine room of Peter Deilmann's ocean-going 'Deutschland' at port in western Norway on May 23rd, forcing the safe evacuation of 364 passengers and 241 crewmembers and two Norwegian ship pilots. Fire fighters contained it to that area, according to AP. The vessel has been towed to Bergen for an assessment of the damage caused by the fire but is hoped to return quickly to service.

Smugglers jailed

Two Spanish men have been jailed for 12 years each for attempting to smuggle cocaine into Britain through the Port of Southampton. They were caught on Fred Olsen's Black Watch.

The court was told the 33kg of cocaine, with a street value of £8m, was concealed inside leggings which were due to be delivered to the UK, Gran Canaria and Tenerife.

The men boarded the vessel in Peru and planned to stay with the ship as it travelled to the Canary Islands via Southampton.

Vienna Meeting Planner's Guide reprinted

The 2010-2012 Vienna Meeting Planners' Guide is a tool for all those intending to organize congresses, seminars or incentives in Vienna. Published in English and German, its 201 pages contain information about 152 conference venues in Vienna. The guide is available free of charge from the Vienna Tourist Board's Vienna Convention Bureau. T: +43-1-211 14-521 convention@vienna.info



from abroad. In the MICE sector, a destination is usually chosen on the basis of two main criteria: its central position (34%) and the presence of international organisations (20%). These are natural advantages offered by Brussels, which recorded a consistent growth in the number of overnight stays for MICE visitors between 2000 and 2008, i.e. a 30% increase in 8 years.

Deloitte's - buying policy

Accounting and consulting company Deloitte has reduced its annual spend on meetings and events by £1 million. Yvette Rudge, Senior Category Manager at Deloitte stated that, cutting the company's meetings and events spend has been an ongoing process over the past three years.

Deloitte's have a single events venue agent, and have reduced its number of suppliers. For all training and learning events, both residential

and non-residential, Deloitte uses properties that are part of the Principal Hayley group. Deloitte has a standard package across all properties.

For all other types of events, Deloitte has chosen four preferred suppliers. But between the four hotel groups, there are more than 300 properties. Deloitte, which in the UK has an annual turnover of £2 billion, has no set meetings and events policy, but does have a written travel policy.

Moscow debut

The new conference centre at the five-star Swissôtel Krasnye Holmy - Moscow is open, and complements the hotel's existing seven multi-functional meeting rooms and two banquet halls.

The new centre offers the 'Grand Ballroom' which can take 500 for a reception, five flexible breakout spaces, including a spacious balcony just near the main entrance and a garden nearby. www.swissotel.com

V of D - new cruise

Voyages of Discovery is to introduce a new and challenging destination for June 2011 in an 18-day cruise from Harwich. Voyage to the White Sea will see Discovery travelling to the lesser-visited Solovestky Islands, a symbol of Russia's spiritual past, historic Trondheim, Norway's 'coronation city', Archangel; where revolution, war and communism have all left indelible marks and Murmansk, terminus for the most perilous and infamous of the World War II Allied convoys.

On route, passengers will witness the spectacular view of the midnight sun from the North Cape accompanied by experts including Mark Baldwin from Bletchley Park, who will be bringing one of the few original working 1944 Enigma machines on board. The guest speakers also include a celebrated historian and natural scientist who will unlock the mysteries of wartime espionage, the legacy of revolution and the Soviet Union. www.voyagesofdiscovery.co.uk



Norway - Land of the Midnight Sun

MICE NEWS....

Brussels tops

The Union of International Associations (UIA) has just published its international rating of conference cities for the year 2009. Brussels is rated European leader and second in the world. In 2009 according to the Association, Brussels hosted 402 meetings, thus putting it behind Singapore (746 meetings) but now ahead of Paris (386 meetings) and

Vienna (331 meetings). The capital has therefore gone up a step in the rankings since last year, coming before Paris, while in 2007 Brussels was in 4th place behind Vienna.

The criteria for UIA ranking include meetings of at least 300 participants of 5 different nationalities for a minimum of 5 days. According to these same criteria, at least 40 per cent of the participants must come

ICCA publish 2009 rankings

The International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) rankings cover meetings organised by international associations which take place on a regular basis and which rotate between a minimum of three countries. The data represents a "snapshot" of qualifying events in the ICCA Association Database as sampled on 11 May 2010.

This year the ICCA Data researchers have identified 8,294 events which took place in 2009, ICCA represents the main specialists in organising, transporting and accommodating international meetings and events, and comprises 900 member companies and organisations in 85 countries worldwide.

Number of meetings per country		
Ranking	Country	Meetings
1	U.S.A.	595
2	Germany	458
3	Spain	360
4	Italy	350
5	United Kingdom	345
6	France	341
7	Brazil	293
8	Japan	257
9	China P.R.	245
10	Austria	236
	Netherlands	236
12	Switzerland	214
13	Canada	213
14	Sweden	184
15	Republic of Korea	175
16	Australia	169
17	Portugal	168
18	Denmark	151
19	Argentina	145
20	Belgium	130

Number of meetings per city		
Ranking	Country	Meetings
1	Vienna	160
2	Barcelona	135
3	Paris	131
4	Berlin	129
5	Singapore	119
6	Copenhagen	103
7	Stockholm	102
8	Amsterdam	98
	Lisbon	98
10	Beijing	96
11	Buenos Aires	90
	Seoul	90
13	Budapest	87
	Madrid	87
15	Prague	86
16	London	83
17	Istanbul	80
18	Sao Paulo	79
19	Bangkok	76
20	Athens	75

JUST BECAUSE ITS INTERESTING

A new column with news that doesn't fit into a standard category

Really!

The largest number of people working in tourism in Europe is in Croatia, where 27% of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on tourism. Second comes Cyprus - 20% and third Greece - 19%

CAT scan for artefacts

Italian ANSA reported that a team of Italian experts in Trieste have successfully adapted technology usually used on human patients. They transformed traditional CAT (computed axial tomography) scanning methods, which create 3D images of human interiors, to assess whether the two artefacts were fit for travel. It provides accurate, detailed information on the consistency of the object being examined.

It has recently been used on two famous 'patients', confirming their interiors would hold up to lengthy voyages with no risk of harm. A moai, one of the monolithic human rock figures on Easter Island, was recently transported from the Polynesian island to Paris, where it is the star exhibit in 'Moai: Journey of Light' at the Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton. The mummy of the boy pharaoh Tutankhamun has also been given clearance for a major Japanese

exhibition on Ancient Egypt opening shortly.

What your mobile can do

There are a few things that can be done in times of grave emergencies. Your mobile phone can actually be a life saver or an emergency tool for survival.

Check out the things that you can do with it:

Emergency

The Emergency Number worldwide for Mobile is 112. If you find yourself out of the coverage area of your mobile; network and there is an emergency, dial 112 and the mobile will search any existing network to establish the emergency number for you, and interestingly this number 112 can be dialled even if the keypad is locked. Try it out.

Robbery

If you should ever be forced by a robber to withdraw money from an ATM machine, you can notify the police by entering your PIN # in reverse. For example, if your pin number is 1234, then you would put in 4321.

The ATM system recognizes that your PIN number is backwards from the ATM card you placed in the machine. The machine will still give

Mussolini diaries

Diaries belonging to Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini along with correspondence he wrote and received before he capture and execution in 1945, are hidden somewhere in the Spluga Valley near the Swiss border, according to the son of the man who put them there.

Rocco Della Morte - the son of Guglielmo Della Morte, a wartime Italian consul in Berlin - said that in April 1945 his father met in Milan with Mussolini who gave him a locked suitcase, filled with what he believed to be documents. He was then told by Il Duce that it should not be opened until 2025.

Mussolini then left Milan in an attempt to flee to Switzerland but his and his lover Claretta Petacci were caught and executed by partisans in Dongo, on Lake Como. Della Morte, who died 1961, joined the Fascist movement in the 1920s and embarked on a diplomatic career which saw him hold a number of posts in Germany. He eventually became consul general in Berlin and the Fascist Party secretary there.

He left Germany after Italy surrendered in September 1943 and returned to a family home in the Spluga Valley town of Campodolcino. In April 1945, the son said, Della Morte was 'summoned' to Milan by Il Duce where he was given a suitcase monogrammed with the initials B.M. and closed with a padlock. His father assumed the case either held important documents and correspondence with which Mussolini hoped to negotiate his surrender with the Allies or copies of his diaries and other important papers.

Given the request that the case not be opened for 80 years, he added, it was clear it did not contain money. Della Morte's son said that when he turned 18 in 1954, his father made him vow to uphold the promise made to Mussolini and keep the contents of the suitcase hidden until 2025.

"Over the years I have always checked up on the suitcase, which is inside a zinc box for preservation and it is still there in the Spluga Valley, just a few kilometres from the Swiss border," the son told Italy's ANSA newspaper.

Rocco Della Morte, who lives in Friuli, in north eastern Italy, told the paper that he decided to reveal the existence of the suitcase because of his age. He is now 74. "Although I feel obligated to respect the promise made by my father, I've already made an arrangement for the opening of the suitcase and the publication of its contents," he added.



Mussolini

you the money you requested, but unknown to the robber, the police will be immediately dispatched to the location.

This information was recently broadcast on CTV by Crime Stoppers. More tips next month

Caravaggio found

A team of medical anthropologists have cleared up 400-year-old mystery surrounding Caravaggio's final resting place, identifying his grave and even his bones. It has just been reported in Italy's ANSA newspaper. The investigation has concluded that the painter was indeed buried in Porto Ercole, bringing centuries of speculation to an end. "We can confirm we have found the mortal remains of Michelangelo Merisi, better known as Caravaggio," the anthropology professor heading the team, Giorgio Gruppioni stated.

The first analysis used carbon-dating, to try establish exactly how old the bones were. Compatible fragments were then tested for high concentrations of lead and mercury, metals that were commonly used in paints during Caravaggio's day. The final step was DNA testing. Samples were extracted from the bones and compared with male volunteers surnamed Merisi, believed to be descendants of Caravaggio's brother.

In the next stage, experts used the remains to generate an image of what one of Italy's greatest artists may have looked like alive. Currently, the only existing images of Caravaggio

are based on self-portraits, as there are no known paintings of him by third parties

Ikea - 6th century BC

National Geographic Storica history magazine in its recent edition reported that archaeologists have unearthed the remains of a 6th-century BC 'Ikea building', complete with detailed assembly instructions. The team working at Torre Satriano near the southern city of Potenza described the structure as a luxury, Greek-style building similar to a temple. The central body of the building was topped by a sloping roof with red and black decorations, nearly every part of which is inscribed with detailed instructions on how it slots together with other components.

An adjoining side structure boasts a colonnade marking the entrance-way. The roof was designed to filter rainwater down decorative panels, known as cymatiums, with projections designed to protect the wall below from dripping water. All the cymatiums and several sections of frieze also have inscriptions relating to the roof assembly system.

So far, around a hundred inscribed fragments have been recovered, with masculine ordinal numbers on the cymatiums and feminine ones on the friezes. The result is an instruction booklet, with every component identified by its own symbol and, as in modern systems, categorized as masculine or feminine depending on how it fits together with other parts.

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GROUP OPTIONS/ ATTRACTIONS

New for Groups in Passau

The former New Residence of the Prince Bishops has been opened for guided tours through the Ceremonial Rooms. The 18th Century New Residence of the Prince Bishops was home to the Prince Bishops of Passau who were striving for an exclusive and magnificent court not only to show their princely and political but also their Episcopalian power.

In those days the rooms needed to fit all the different facets of a truly royal and Episcopalian lifestyle - holding receptions and audiences, workaday life, studies, muse and prayer. Though the Ceremonial Rooms lost original furnishings in the struggles of secularisation, it is still an interesting tour through the royal, as well as the ecclesiastical time of the late Rococo.

The new guided tour for groups The Ceremonial Rooms of the New Residence of the Prince Bishops is offered to the end of October (from November to April on request only) and lasts ca. 45 minutes. It could also be combined with a guided tour through the Cathedral Treasury and Diocesan Museum (everyday except Sundays and holidays). tourist-info@passau.de

Antwerp: Palace on the Meir

This 250 year old palace, which used to belong to Napoleon, has been renovated and is now open to the public. Guided tours are available, reservations are necessary. www.paleisopdemeir.be

Calling All Pirates

Shiver me timbers! The East Sussex town of Hastings could soon be

awash with brigands and sea-dogs for Pirate Day on August 6th as the town attempts to set a world record for the largest gathering of pirates in one place.

Last year's inaugural event is back by popular demand and has inspired the local population to go for the Guinness World Record for the largest number of people dressed as pirates in one place.

The current record is 1,670 pirates, in the American town of Portland, Hastings is confident that the record can be theirs. Taking place during Hastings Old Town Carnival Week, which runs from 31st July to 8th August, the attempt will take place on August 6th at 13.00 on the beach. The record attempt will be the climax of the day, which will also include a colourful pirate procession, Pirates of the Caribbean look a-likes, songs from the Pirates of Penzance and live music from the fusion Afro beat band Superfunk Pirates who will be filming footage for their new DVD during the event.

With a packed programme of events which range from the annual sea boot and pram races to ghost walks and High Street Traders' party. www.visit1066country.com

London's Monument wins Architectural Awards

The restoration and conservation of one of London's best-loved attractions has won prestigious awards from both the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

The majestic 202 foot high column, which was restored to all its former glory last year, beat off stiff competi-

The Queen's Year

This special exhibition (27 July - 1 October) is part of a visit to the Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace and presents the spectacle and variety of the royal calendar, from the Royal Maundy Service and the Trooping the Colour ceremony to the State Opening of Parliament and Her Majesty's Christmas broadcast.

Every year The Queen undertakes hundreds of duties as Head of State, Head of the Commonwealth, Supreme Governor of the Church of England, Head of the British Armed Forces, and Patron of around 600 charities. In 2009 there were over 250 engagements in Her Majesty's official programme, including 145 Audiences, 24 presentations of credentials, 12 Investitures, 11 'away days', 8 meetings of the Privy Council, 6 large-scale receptions, 4 garden parties, 2 inward State Visits, 1 outward State Visit, and numerous luncheons and dinners for special groups and individuals.

The Queen's Year exhibition brings together examples of Her Majesty's ceremonial dress with day and evening wear to reflect the full range of events in the royal diary. Ancient symbols of authority and historic ceremonial objects are shown alongside gifts presented to Her Majesty on visits around the United Kingdom. The centrepiece of the exhibition is The Queen's magnificent Robe of State, on public display for the first time, and the uniforms of officials and attendants at the State Opening of Parliament.

www.royalcollection.org.uk T: +44 (0) 7766 7300 (Check out offers if tickets are bought direct)



Gödöllői Castle events

The Palace is one of the most important and largest monuments of Hungarian Palace architecture. Built by Count Antal Grassalkovich I in the 18C.

After the male side of the Grassalkovich family died out in 1841, the Palace had several owners, and in 1867 it was bought for the Crown. Parliament designated it the resting residence of the Hungarian Monarch. This lasted until 1918, thus Francis Joseph (1867-1916) and later Charles IV and the royal family spent several months in Gödöllői every year.

During this period the Palace became the symbol of independent Hungarian statehood. It was Empress Elisabeth (1837-1898) who specially loved staying in Gödöllői, where the Hungarian personnel and neighbourhood of the Palace always warmly welcomed her. Following her tragic death, a memorial park adjoining the upper-garden was built.

Today as well as visiting the splendid Palace, its gardens and Museum, throughout the year there are a host of additional events including chamber concerts, opera and operetta, advent and Christmas celebrations To visit the Palace and museum with group, informacio@kiralykastely.hu or by phone: T+36 (0)6 28-410-124



Facade of the Palace

tion to win the category of Building Conservation and was overall runner up across all categories at the RICS Awards for the London region. The conservation project also won recognition for architectural excellence from RIBA as one of the 30 best projects in London amongst a hotly contested line-up of 127 entries.

The Monument will now go forward to compete with the other regional winners in the Awards Grand Final, which takes place in October.



London's restored Monument

The world's tallest isolated stone column represents a challenge to visitors to climb the 311 steps of the continuous spiral stone staircase and claim their own certificate of achievement when they reach the top to enjoy breathtaking panoramic views all over the city.

Built between 1671 and 1677 to

commemorate the Great Fire of London in 1666, The Monument was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke. Resplendent upon the soaring Portland stone Doric column is a flaming orb of copper symbolising the Great Fire. The Monument is open every day from 9.30am to 5.00pm (last admission 5.00pm)

The London Dungeon's 35th

To celebrate its 35th birthday The London Dungeon is declaring a Summer of Scare with a 35 day fest of fear-injected fun (28th July - 31st August). The scare experts will be treating guests to some special birthday surprises - with a Dungeon's twist. Play Pass the Putrid Parcel with a plague infested peasant, try and stay deathly still in their Musi-Kill Statues game.

New for 2010 is Bloody Mary: Killer Queen, featuring one of England's most feared rulers - Mary Tudor, the deadliest daughter of Henry VIII. With thirteen other twisted experiences from Jack the Ripper to Sweeney Todd - PLUS two chilling rides and live actors intent on scaring anyone in their path. Open seven days a week www.thedungeons.com



The London Dungeon

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German Brands

German brands are internationally known and appreciated for the high standard of quality and innovation, such as Bosch or Siemens, and the German car manufacturers. In Munich, you can learn about the history of BMW in the BMW Museum, in Stuttgart both Porsche and Mercedes have their own exhibitions, and Volkswagen-lovers can experience their favourite cars at the Autostadt in Wolfsburg.

The Car and Technology Museum in Sinsheim and the German Museum of Technology in Berlin offer a huge amount of information about German engineering and inventions for tech-savvy visitors of all ages. www.germany-tourism.de

National Trust Scotland

From 2011, commission rates for travel trade Discover Tickets will be increased from 20% to 25% on sales of the Trust's flexible 3-, 7- and 14-day Discover Tickets. As a result, travel trade commissions will range from £6.25 to £17.50 per Discover Ticket sold.

Cost-effective, Discover provide easy access to National Trust for Scotland castles, palaces, stately homes, industrial heritage, gardens, parks, and the new Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

2011 Discover Tickets:

- retail from £25.00
- can save visitors over 70% on standard admission prices
- allow unrestricted access to over 90 attractions across Scotland
- are sold exclusively to the Travel Trade
- are issued on a sale or return basis
- are valid all year
- are only available through the Trust's One-Stop-Shop

The Trust has also just launched its 2011 group rates with over 65% of 2010 rates held until 29 February 2012 T0844 493 2104, email traveltrade@nts.org.uk

Caves in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, there are 14 of them for people to explore. The most popular area where tourists can explore caves is the Moravian Karst in South Moravia and the Punkva Caves with their beautiful stalactite structures. The local circuit also includes the well-known Macocha Abyss and motorboat trips on the underground Punkva River.

In the Central Bohemia region near Karlštejn Castle, are the Konprusy Caves, which comprise the most extensive karstic cave system in Bohemia. The Bozkov Dolomite Caves in the Liberec area, form the longest dolomite caves in the Czech Republic and also feature the largest underground lake in Bohemia. www.caves.cz

Great Masters In Warsaw

Famous 'Lady with an Ermine' by Leonardo da Vinci, and the 'Landscape with the Good Samaritan' by

Rembrandt van Rijn, and dozens of paintings from the collection of Dutch masters of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow can now be viewed at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.

The Exhibition is accompanied by beautiful arts and crafts from Europe, Middle, and Far East.

Presentation of these masterpieces in Warsaw will allow completing the renovation of the building of the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow (30 September 2010).

Due to the exceptional nature, the exhibition is presented in the exhibition halls on the first floor of the castle. The tour was designed so that you can also see Rembrandt's paintings 'Scholar at the desk' and the 'Girl in the picture frame' belonging to the collections of the Royal Castle. It is therefore a unique opportunity to see in one place all the Polish Rembrandts. www.warsawtour.pl

New Dinner-Concert 'KULTurig'

The KULTurig-Ensemble is Salzburg's sensual music formation: six musicians work with skilful contrasts, arranged from traditional Salzburg music and played in unexpected twists. The balanced overall sound, composed of harp, harmonica, dulcimer, contrabass and guitar. The successful combination of the traditional with a touch of mysticism and a generous pinch of jazz is accompanied by a 3-course menu. Net and commissionable rates www.kulturig-dinnerconcert.com

Buckingham Palace options from ENCORE

The State Rooms at Buckingham Palace are open to public again this summer and Encore Tickets has put together a combination for coach tour operators: a Palace tour and cream tea for just £29.



Smarten up laddie! The House Cavalry Museum has been combined with an Encore Buckingham Palace tour.

Also new for from Encore are groups packages for the Household Cavalry Museum on Horse Guards Parade which can also be combined with a cream team for £18.50

At the historic Household Cavalry Museum, Encore also has combinations of entry tickets plus Buckingham Palace tour of £20.50, the Queen's Gallery for £13.50, or for a real day and night of nostalgia, with tickets to the award winning production of Warhorse for £40. T:0207 492 1525.

Ribe celebrates

Beautifully picturesque and steeped in medieval history, Denmark's oldest and best preserved town Ribe celebrates 1300 years of history this year, bringing to life its Viking beginnings through an exciting calendar of over 250 events.

Not only Denmark's but also Scandinavia's oldest town, Ribe's Viking history can be traced back to when it was a thriving market place on the Ribe River in 710AD, growing throughout the Viking Age to become a busy metropolis with international trade connections. Attracting craftsmen and traders from near and far, excavations have recovered numerous fascinating archaeological remnants from this period. At this location, the Ribe Viking Museum (www.ribesvikinger.dk) houses these artefacts and other Middle Ages finds, along with a full size model of parts of a Viking market and a

ship, with a detailed history through to the 1700s. For full details www.ribe1300.dk



A Viking warrior

HOSPITALITY

Munich

Dolce Hotels & Resorts has opened a 255-room conference hotel in the Munich suburb of Unterschleissheim, the company's sixth hotel in Europe and second in Germany. The hotel is adjacent to the Ballhaus Forum conference centre, which Dolce also manages. Montvale, NJ-based Dolce operates a total of 26 properties in North America and Europe.

Expedia/Google partnership

Expedia.co.uk, the online travel booking site in the UK, has teamed up with Google to provide a street view of the hotels on their website. Using Google Street View technology incorporated into the Expedia UK website, viewers can now see a hotel as if they are standing in front of it on the street, which the company is calling Expedia Hotel View its website is www.expediahotelview.com

With this new service, viewers will be able to pinpoint exactly where a hotel is located and what attractions are nearby.

London

The hotel group Von Essen is to open its first London hotel in early September. The new build 70-room hotel, will be at the London Heliport at Battersea. Hotel Verta will join von Essen's Forbury Hotel in Reading and Seaham Hall Hotel in County Durham to make up the Collection's Metropolitan Set.

Built as part of the 'Bridges Wharf Battersea' development, it has already won 'Best International High Rise Architecture Award' at the Daily Mail International property Awards. A shuttle service will transport hotel guests and business guests to and from Clapham Junction train station and to Victoria station throughout the day at regular intervals.

Cascais / Lisbon

The new Oitavos hotel in Cascais will open in September, 2010. The Oitavos is just 20 minutes outside of Lisbon, near the city of Cascais. The

142 guestrooms includes 16 suites, all with a private balcony offering ocean, golf course and mountain views. In addition the hotel will offer: Restaurants and bars; Spa; Outdoor seawater swimming pool.

Red Sea

Orascom Development are opening two new hotels in El Gouna in November. The two hotels, named Fanadir El Gouna and Mosaïque El Gouna, will be four star and located next to each other on the resort's new marina. Fanadir El Gouna will offer 54 rooms, a restaurant, a pool and two bars and Mosaïque El Gouna will be home to 69 rooms, a restaurant, two pools and two bars. www.elgouna.com

Lake Garda

The new Hotel Corte Valier in the town of Lazise on the south-eastern shores of Lake Garda, has opened. The Hotel main structure was originally a Franciscan monastery, then belonged to many aristocratic families until its recent restoration. This new resort extends over an area of 11.500 sqm and has 84 bedrooms (6 of which are suites) The hotel also offers a wellness area equipped with sauna, Turkish bath, Kneipp route, inside and outside pools, fitness area and solarium. The Dome is the hotel's panoramic restaurant with lovely views over the lake and gardens, while the Hall Bar offers drinks on a large terrace overlooking the lake. www.cortevalier.com

Taormina, Sicily

The Grand Hotel Timeo and the Hotel Villa Sant'Andrea re-opened in May after an extensive upgrade by their new owner, Orient Express Hotels.

The hotel is set high in the rocky hills overlooking the bay of Naxos and the Greek Theatre and now offers 72 rooms and suites, outdoor heated pool, wellness centre in the extensive gardens, panoramic restaurant and bar. www.grandhoteltimeo.com

The Hotel Villa Sant'Andrea is situated directly on the beach on the

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Group news

- Center Parcs** with its four UK villages attracted a record 1.6m guests in the 12 months ended 30 April 2010. Occupancy, meanwhile, averaged 97%, the highest since Center Parcs launched in the UK in 1987. The figures were released as the company announced further investment in the villages, including the upgrade of existing accommodation and the addition of three luxury Tree houses in 2011 and new style Exclusive Lodges. The three Tree houses will be located in the 400 acres of woodland at Center Parcs Sherwood Forest in Nottingham. The two-storey Tree houses will feature four bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms and private balconies, an open plan kitchen, dining and living area, a separate games and entertainment room and a private hot tub.
- Conrad Hilton** may have set up the first Hilton Hotel in 1925, but a Rajasthan court has barred the US hotel group with business in 80 countries from operating in India under that brand, holding that it was deceptively similar to Sirohi-based Hilltone Hotel. Additional District Judge Narinder Singh Dadda, Sirohi, restrained the international hospitality group from using any kind of "misleading logo and mark" which has potential to cause confusion among the general public and directed it not to carry on the business of hotel and food items under "such duplicate trademark".
- Gucci** - The iconic fashion label Gucci is to lend its name to a string of 40 luxury boutique hotels over the next 15 years. Hotelier Elizabetha Gucci, named after the daughter of designer Paolo Gucci, will open the first in Dubai at the end of 2010 - an 87 room establishment. The hotel was supposed to open in 2009 but the downturn slowed progression. The group plans to open its second hotel in China next year and then develop in Russia, the Far East, Africa and South America, particularly Brazil. The move follows the opening in April of an Armani-branded hotel in Dubai.
- Marriott International** has unveiled its luxury boutique brand and will open two properties in the final quarter of this year. Called Edition, the concept is led by style icon Ian Schrager, who is widely credited with popularising the boutique concept. Edition will debut its first property in Hawaii's Waikiki Beach in October, and will be followed by a second in Istanbul, Turkey in December. The brand will position itself as a price leader with its hotels among the most expensive in their respective locations. Marriott hopes this approach minimise its exposure to economic downturns. It pitches itself as providing a "personal, intimate, individualised and unique lodging experience" where the hotels "will look completely different from each other". Marriott will operate the Edition hotels rather than own them, in keeping with its other brands. The properties will be owned by a consortium of real estate investors.
- Rezidor's** mid market hotel offering has been renamed Park Inn by Radisson, in a bid to boost growth for the brand. The hotel group hopes a closer association between the upper end, and more established, Radisson Blu product and Park Inn will encourage guests, and potential investors, to think of the mid-market hotel in a better light. The rebranding will be complete by the end of 2011. Rezidor has already completed a rebrand of its Radisson hotels, from Radisson SAS to Radisson Blu and Radisson Royal.

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Bay of Mazzaro'. It was originally a private villa owned by an English aristocrat. Now a luxury hotel it consists of 63 rooms and suites, gourmet restaurant and a bar located on the terrace overlooking the sea. A new spa is also now open. The hotel has its own private beach. www.hotelvil-lasantandrea.com

New Italian zero emissions hotel

A new boutique hotel has opened in Milan. The Hotel Milano Scala is located in Brera, the artistic and cultural district at the heart of Milan's city center where theatres, museums and shopping streets thrive. Located in a seven-floor building dating back to the end of the XIX century, the Hotel Milano Scala characterises itself as being the first zero-emission hotel in Madrid - and one of Italy's few such hotels. The hotel employs a heat recovery system to control the in-room temperature and produce hot water,

whilst at the same time ensuring that energy is procured only from suppliers using clean and renewable energy sources. These processes result in the hotel being able to use and produce energy without any kind of fuel and without releasing CO2 into the environment.

The old palazzo hosting the Hotel Milano Scala has recently been completely renovated, offering 62 rooms including 10 suites, a restaurant and the Sky Terrace, plus a scenic terrace that offers a breathtaking view over Milan's historical center. In addition, the hotel offers a fitness and relaxation area and three meeting rooms. The hotels' name and concept are strongly connected to Milan's musical culture and history. From the moment they step in, guests are welcomed by a sensorial, musical atmosphere based on the concept of Opera - a vision that also influences the design of the rooms and suites, some of them being dedicated to a famous opera.

Opening rates start from €210 per room/per night. The Hotel is part of WORLDHOTELS.

Tunisia

IBEROSTAR has refurbished the 4 star 301 bedrooms IBEROSTAR Diar El Andalous, including its bedrooms, and reception areas. The hotel is situated at Port El Kantaoui, in the heart of Sousse, 25 km from Monastir airport and 40 km from Enfidha.



Nestled amongst 3,000 m² of exotic gardens, next to a long sandy beach on the Mediterranean Sea.

The hotel is located next to the Port El Kantaoui golf course and has three tennis courts, minigolf, boccia (boules), volleyball, aerobics and water aerobics, water polo, billiards, archery and water sports and Spa facilities, with a wide range of beauty treatments on offer. IBEROSTAR has opened the 5 star Royal El Mansour. Close to Mahdia city centre, with direct access to a long golden sandy beach and only located 700m away from the bustle of Mahdia's charismatic Medina.

The hotel has 377 luxurious bedrooms and 56 spacious suites boasting views of city of Mahdia, the sea and gardens from each of the hotels rooms.

The main restaurant, brasserie and the Arab café offering local Arab and international cuisine. The hotel also has an indoor pool, an extensive gym, two tennis courts and a large terrace that overlooks the outdoor pool, solarium and a snack bar.

Royal El Mansour has developed a complete program to keep children and teenagers entertained. Programmes have been tailored to suit various age groups. www.prensa.iberostar.com

Take your drink outside

Visitors to London's Southbank can now enjoy the summer in Park Plaza County Hall's new, 'Urban Garden', located on a 2nd-floor terrace and offering striking views of the London Eye.



Urban Garden

The city's newest open air drinking spot is linked to the hotel's Executive Lounge. The terrace offers an escape

for world cup widows and will remain open post-World Cup and throughout the summer and is the ideal spot for whiling away a balmy evening, drinking in both an incredible view of the capital and a delicious array of cocktails. Seating up to 40 people, the intimate space also has heaters and a gazebo to tackle England's unpredictable weather.

The venue can also be hired in its entirety for private parties on any night, (including match nights). Tailored packages are available offering BBQs, buffets and bespoke cocktails to make the night extra special, whatever the occasion.

Park Plaza County Hall London is located on the South Bank, close to the London Eye, London Aquarium and Houses of Parliament. The Executive Lounge and Urban Garden is open from 7.30pm. www.parkplaza-countyhall.com

TRANSPORT

Stelios in court

easyJet and its founder and largest shareholder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou were in court mid June debating whether ancillary services are part of the airline operation, or a bonus. Under the terms of a brand licence agreement made when it floated in 2000 the non-frills carrier can only make 25% of its income this way. The case hinges on whether services such as baggage and speedy boarding, as well as food sold on board and charges for infants, should be classed as ancillary or core services. More representations are due to be heard this week with judgement expected in late summer. Sir Stelios will again be in court shortly, this time taking on Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary, after the outspoken Irishman portrayed the "easy" entrepreneur as a Pinocchio figure in

an advert querying the Luton-based airline's punctuality figures. www.easyjet.com

UK agency bans air travel

The UK Environment Agency has banned staff travelling by air for journeys in England and Wales. It has also stopped air travel to destinations served by Eurostar.

The Yorkshire-based Agency said air travel would only be permitted in exceptional cases. These include travel to islands, like the Isles of Scilly or offshore locations. Any travel by air will have to have approval from one of the organisation's senior Directors. It said the change in policy would save about 30 tonnes on carbon a year.

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Flight plan

Air Baltic has introduced from its home base at Riga new destinations - Amman (twice weekly), Beirut (twice weekly) and Madrid (three times per week), whilst in its own region new are Stockholm - Tallinn, and Stockholm - Oulu. www.airbaltic.com

Aer Lingus flights from Shannon to New York and Boston will be suspended for an 11-week period from 5 January to 27 March 2011. For the rest of the year the airline will operate four services per week to both destinations.

BA is to return to Cancun for the first time since 2002. The twice weekly flights operating out of Gatwick will be introduced in November of this year. It will complement the airline's four times weekly service from Heathrow to Mexico City.

Cathay Pacific is to return to Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Following the opening of the airport's fourth runway this October, and a change of Japanese government policy, the airline is to introduce a twice daily service to Hong Kong.

Easyjet will launch - London Gatwick to Gothenberg on the 6th September and will fly daily.

They will also increase their Luton to Tel Aviv service from six days per week to seven at the end of October.

Continental Airlines plans to start daily flights between Houston and Lagos in November 2011, launching what would be its first-ever service to Africa (subject to government approval).

They will also start a new service between Houston and Auckland. The non-stop service, is due to start also in November 2011.

Finnair is boosting its flights to Japan and targeting passengers to and from both London and Manchester. It is one of the few European airlines serving all three of Japan's leading cities, Nagoya, Osaka and Tokyo.

Garuda Indonesia, is back in Europe and it launched a daily flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam via Dubai. Garuda becomes the first Indonesian airline to reopen flights to Europe after the European Union's (EU) ban prohibiting Indonesian carriers from operating in European airspace was lifted in July last year. www.garuda-indonesia.com

Iberia is to introduce non-stop flights between Madrid and Cordoba in Argentina on 1 October

Icelandair will have an increased service from Glasgow and Manchester to Iceland and Icelandair's connecting North American destinations from 14th September to 26th October 2010. The increased service adds one flight per week, on Tuesday to the current autumn schedule from both Glasgow and Manchester. The increased service will result in five flights per week on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Jet2.com Hurghada and Bodrum are being introduced as new routes from Manchester from 15th October.

Lufthansa has introduced a daily flight which is operated by an Airbus A319 of sister company bmi in a two-class layout from Dresden to Heathrow.

They are also resuming flights of the 2010/2011 winter timetable on 31 October to Bogota with 5 flights weekly from Frankfurt.

Monarch announced the launch of a brand-new scheduled service from London Gatwick to Palma operate three times per week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) Services start on Saturday July 17th

Pakistan International Airlines has introduced a twice weekly service from Barcelona to Chicago.

Ryanair increases flights from London Stansted to Ancona to 9 weekly flights, with 2 daily flights offered on Thursdays and Saturdays, from 3 July to 25 September.

It will open two new routes from Dusseldorf (Weeze) to Madrid and Marseille, from Nov 2010.

Royal Jordanian has resumed its regular flights to Kuala Lumpur after a seven-year suspension. The services will operate three times per week with two-class Airbus A330 aircraft. www.rj.com

SWISS inaugurated its new six-times-weekly non-stop service between Zurich and San Francisco in early June

Tunisair The national carrier has launched a new two weekly service from London, Gatwick, to the Island Provence of Djerba for easier access to the Sahara area. www.tunisair.com

Turkish Airlines has inaugurated a new three times weekly service linking Istanbul to the East African capitals of Entebbe and Dar es Salaam. The flight time is 6 hrs 20, the onward leg to Dar es Salaam is just less than two hours. www.turkishairlines.com

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The Agency, whose remit is to protect the environment, said it had already cut 11m miles (24%) from staff travel over the last four years.

Bristol expansion

The airport has won clearance to almost double the number of annual passengers it handles. The

expansion plans are to be focused around the existing site and not involve an additional runway or terminal, allowing the airport to expand passenger numbers from six to ten million by 2019-20. Whilst it will lose its Continental Airlines' services to New York's Newark airport at the end of the summer season, the new approval will allow the airport's marketing team to spread its wings in trying to attract new carriers, par-

ticularly long haul, and with regard to expansion by existing tenants. The development summary does not include provision for any major road improvements. Local road upgrading will help with access. www.bristolairport.co.uk

easyjet unveils ash detector

easyJet claims a ground breaking technology that will minimise future disruption from volcanic activity. easyJet will be the world's first airline to trial a new technology called AVOID (Airborne Volcanic Object Identifier and Detector). The system, essentially a weather radar for ash, was created by Dr Fred Prata of the Norwegian Institute for Air Research. AVOID is a system that involves placing infrared technology onto an aircraft to supply images to both the pilots and an airline's flight control centre.

These images will enable pilots to see an ash cloud up to 100 km ahead of the aircraft and at altitudes between 5,000ft and 50,000ft. This will allow pilots to make adjustments to the plane's flight path to avoid any ash cloud. The concept is very similar to weather radars which are standard on commercial airliners today.

On the ground, information from aircraft with AVOID technology would be used to build an accurate image of the volcanic ash cloud using real time data. This would open up large areas of airspace that would otherwise be closed during a volcanic eruption, which would benefit passengers by minimising disruption.

Germany proposes airline tax

The surprise government announcement of an airline tax, has brought an unprecedented response. The Federal authorities have said that they want to raise €1bn annually from the aviation industry by way of duty. No details appear to have been given and it is not known whether this is an arrivals tax, departures, and if connecting passengers have to pay.

In Holland a similar imposition failed, common sense prevailing. "The most vulnerable part of the industry is in Europe. The last thing the industry here in Europe needs is additional taxes and measures that will slow down economic growth," IATA Chief Economist Brian Pearce told reporters.

Ryanair again

Their official policy is to encourage passengers not to fly with luggage, has added a new fee to its extra's list. Passengers can now choose a larger (20kg) checked-in bag allowance for £25 as an alternative to Ryanair's standard (15kg) bag allowance which costs £15. It is a discount on their previous policy of charging up to £10 per kilo extra. Passengers who require a second bag can purchase an additional 15kg allowance for £35. Unlike competitor easyJet, which is unrestricted, Ryanair has a 10kg hand luggage restriction, more like 7kg for items when the bag weight is taken off. www.ryanair.com

IA dissolved

State-owned Iraqi Airways has been dissolved by the Iraq government, which declared the airline bankrupt from a financial dispute with Kuwait. According to the Associated Press, the airline has ceased all operations.

The Iraq government has plans to replace the 75-year-old airline with two or three new companies and resume operations. The dispute with Kuwait dates back to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, when Iraq is alleged to have stolen aircraft and parts from its neighbouring country. Kuwait is now demanding compensation.

The dispute saw the director general of Iraqi Airways, Kifah Hassan Jabbar, arrested when he arrived in the UK last month on the airline's first flight to London in 20 years, and the aircraft impounded. Hassan has since been released. www.iraqairways.co.uk

Finnair returns to Bromma

Helsinki's controversial downtown airport, has received a real boost with the news that, after nearly 50 years, Finnair is to return. The airport is just 5 miles from the city centre, and just like London City offers a 15-minute check-in. From 18 August the carrier will fly to Stockholm twice daily Monday to Friday with a single Sunday rotation. The airline will continue with its Helsinki Arlanda - Stockholm route, offering up to eight flights per day. www.brommaairport.com

Cheap jet setters

Air Partner has launched an 'empty sectors' website, enabling potential private jet users to book flights on aircraft that would otherwise operate without passengers. The website locates real-time availability on private jets worldwide, by sector and aircraft, at prices up to 75% lower than conventional charter rates. Eg. a six-seat private jet flight from London to Cannes, for the French Riviera, for £3,000. An empty sector (or empty leg) occurs when a pre-booked revenue charter has been reserved for a one-way flight only, either outbound or return. The operator will need to either position the aircraft to collect the passengers for a return or bring the aircraft back to its original location having flown the passengers to their chosen destination (leaving an empty sector on the return flight). www.emptysectors.com

Woman locked in aircraft

A US woman from Ferndale is suing United Airlines after she fell asleep and was left alone locked in a jet on the tarmac for four hours.

Her attorney said Ginger McGuire, 36, is suing for false imprisonment, infliction of emotional distress and negligence.

The flight from Dulles International Airport in Washington arrived at Philadelphia International Airport shortly before 12:30 a.m., according to Fieger. A cleaning crew discovered a dozing McGuire, locked her back in and then brought in federal officers concerned about terrorists to question her. Air line representatives have not commented.

AUSTRIA

Concerts

Sound of Salzburg Dinner Show
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Zwieselweg 10, A-5020 Salzburg
Tel: +43 662 826 617
Fax: +43 662 826 617-1
E-m: reservation@soundofsaltzburg-show.com
www.soundofsaltzburgshow.com
Performance takes place at the Sternbräu Dinner Theatre with special net rates for Tour Operators & Groups.



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www.tirolerabend.info



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Christmas Concerts - Every Saturday in December - 1 hour programme incl. traditional Christmas songs, typical Tyrolean string music & brass instruments in a cosy atmosphere - starts at 18:00h
www.tiroler-abend.com/en/christmas-concerts

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Fax: +43 5224 510 80 3831
e-mail: swarovski.kristallwelten@swarovski.com
www.swarovski.com/crystalworlds
Contact: Christiane Gasser
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Museums

Old Vienna Schnaps-Museum
Wilhelmstr 19-21
A1120 Vienna
Tel: +43 1 815 7300
office@schnapsmuseum.com
www.schnapsmuseum.com
A museum and working distillery, original furniture from the 1870's – 1920's. Visitors can tour the distillery and taste and buy. Coach parking

Restaurants

Sternbräu Gastronomie Welt
Greisgasse 23
Salzburg
Tel: +43 0 662 840 717
info@sternbraeu.at
14 different dining experiences under one roof, with beautiful gardens also for guests eating during the summer. Excellent location for groups with easy parking

Shopping

Geiger Hut-und Trachtenmoden
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Fax: +43 662 841393
E-mail: geiger@hats.at
www.hats.at
Contact: Mr Peter Macho
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Salzburger Heimatwerk
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sbg@heimatwerk.at
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BELGIUM

Museums

Choco-Story
Sint-Jansstraat, 7b
8000 Bruges
Tel/Fax +32 50/61.22.37
info@choco-story.be
The museum opened in March 2004. Tells the story of the transformation of cocoa into chocolate and to promote the health and quality aspects of Belgian chocolate

Gifts/Souvenirs

Käthe Wohlfahrt - Kerstfeerie N.V.
Walplein 12/Wollestraat 29
Tel: +32-(0)50/330604
Fax: +32-(0)50/346313
E-m: kerstfeerie.brugge@pandora.be
Experience the real authentic German Christmas in Bruges. Käthe Wohlfahrt, the German Christmas specialist, has two 'year round' Christmas stores in Brugge

FRANCE

Perfumerie/Museum/Boutique

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20 Rue St Francois de Paule, 06300 Nice
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GERMANY

Gifts/Souvenirs/Hotels

Hofgut Sternen
An der Ravennaschlucht (B31)
79874 Breilnau/Hollsteig
Tel: +49 7652 9010,
Fax: +49 7652 1031
E-m: info@drubba.com
Contact: Jurgen
Cuckoo clocks (demonstration), Biersteins, Hummel figures, Birkenstock, Swarovski crystal, largest cuckoo clock in the Upper Black Forest.

Black Forest Clock Centre
Seestrasse 37, 79822 Titisee
Tel: +49 765 198 1200
Fax: +49 765 188 142
E-m: info@drubba.com
Cuckoo clocks (demonstration), Biersteins, Hummel figures, Swarovski crystal, boat trips.
Contact: Alison or Peter

House of the Black Forest Clocks
Landsraß 7, D-78132 Hornberg
Niederwasser
Tel: +49 7833 8037
Fax: +49 7833 7724
Web: www.house-of-black-forest-clocks.com
Contact: Jurgen Herr
Black Forest Clocks

Gifts/Museums
Käthe Wohlfahrt - "Weihnachtsdorf", (Christmas Village & Christmas Museum)
Herrngasse 1
91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber
Tel.: 09861 - 4090
Christmas novelties, and museum
Museum Contact: Mrs Felicitas Höptner
Tel: +49 (0)9861 409 365
E-mail: hoeptner@wohlfahrt.com
Shop Contact: Andrea Rank
Tel: +49 (0)9861 409116
E-mail: rank@wohlfahrt.com
Fax: +49 (0)9861 409 366
Shops also in Heidelberg, Oberammergau and Rudesheim

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Glyfada 16673
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Fax: +30 210 9651493
Mob: +30 6944 825251
email: julie@cruise-greece.com
Tour Operator

ITALY

Travel
Blue Star Italia
V. Filippo Corridoni 15, 1/c 00195 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 063 723487
Fax: +39 063 728573
Contact: Giancarlo Staroccia
E-m: bluestartv@tiscalinet.it

Gifts/Souvenirs/Leather
Mair Mair
Alstadt No 1, I- 39049 Sterzing, Vipiteno
Tel: +39 472 765 386
Fax: +39 472 766 386
Contact: Mr Mair
Souvenirs, Leather, Wine, etc

NETHERLANDS

Souvenirs/Restaurant
De Simonhoeve
Wagenweg 2
1145 PW Katwoude/Volendam
Tel: +31 299 36 58 28
info@simonehoeve.com
15 minutes north of Amsterdam, Cheese Farm & Clog Factory with demonstrations, meals and snacks

Museums
Het Loo Palace
Koninklijk Park 1, 7315 JA Apeldoorn
Tel: +31 55 577 2448
Was the famous summer retreat for the Dutch Royal family between 1686-1975. The museum has been beautifully restored with gardens

NORWAY

Clothing
Oslo Sweater Shop
Radisson S Ater Scandinavia Hotel,
Tullins Gate 5, N-0166 Oslo
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Fax: +47 22 11 06 48
Contact: Yonna Johnsen

SWITZERLAND

Restaurants
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UK

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London W1K 5LT
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Web: www.etoa.org
Contact: Tom Jenkins
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Contact: Ron Julian
The Association for all professional Tour Managers.
Regions
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Central Europe: iatmcer@gmx.at
Israel: iatm@iatm.co.il
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