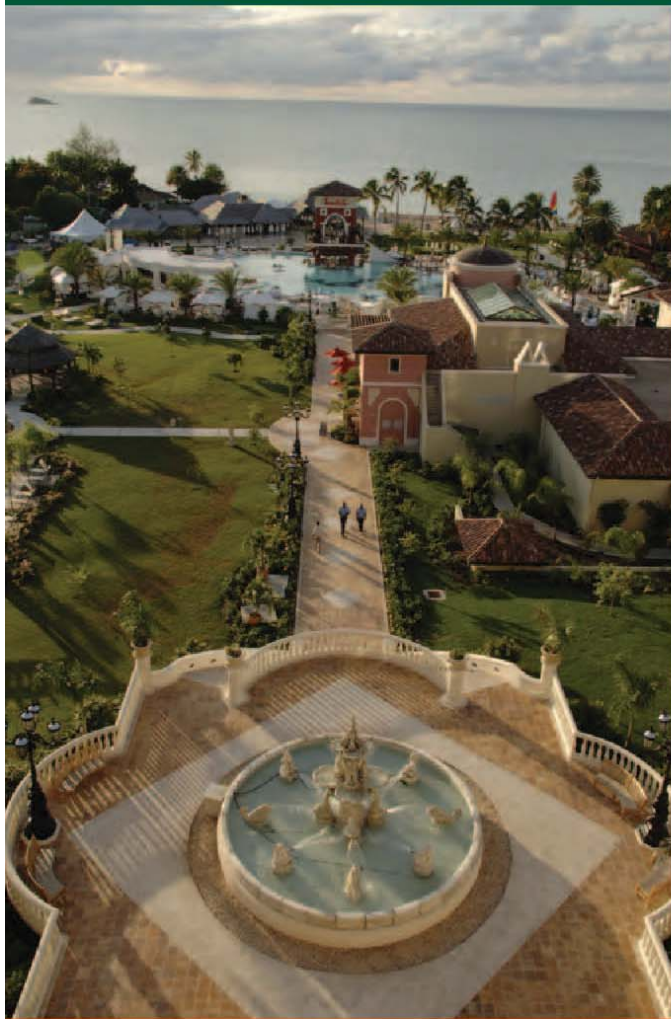


DECEMBER 2007

Travel World

The Magazine for Destination Travel Specialists

NEWS®



Caribbean

ANTIGUA

Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa Celebrates Its New Mediterranean Village

Profitable World of Niche Markets

DIVING

Dive
Dominica



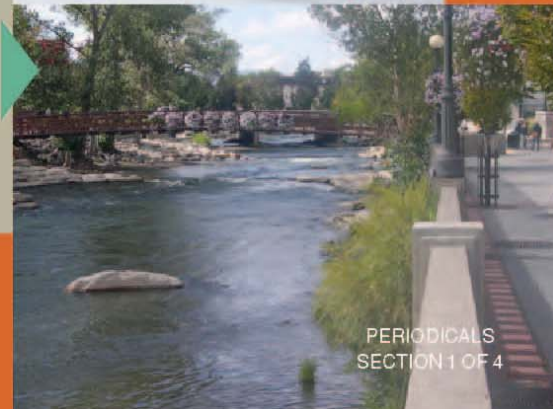
SKIING

Playing in
the Snow



NEVADA

What's New
in Reno-Tahoe?
Everything!



Latin America



COSTA RICA

Guanacaste—The Province of the Sun

Travel World NEWS[®]

The Magazine for Destination Travel Specialists

DECEMBER 2007

ISSUE NO. 234

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Travel World News (ISSN 1044-4602) is published monthly by Travel Industry Network, Inc., 50 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710. The cost of a subscription in the USA is \$25, in Canada \$40. For subscribers outside USA or Canada, the rate is \$80. Please send check or money order in U.S. dollars payable to **Travel World News**. For change of address, please enclose your mailing label and send to: Circulation Department, **Travel World News**, 50 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Travel World News**, 50 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710. Address advertising inquiries and/or editorial copy to: **Travel World News**, 50 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710. Copyright 2007. All rights reserved. Printed in USA. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission.

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ITB 2008	BERLIN 5-9 March
TUR 2008	GOTHENBURG 13-16 March
Mitt 2008	MOSCOW 19-22 March
ATM 2008	DUBAI 6-9 May
ITB Asia 2008	SINGAPORE 22-24 October
ABAV 2008	RIO DE JANEIRO 22-25 October
WTM 2008	LONDON 10-13 November
CITM 2008	SHANGHAI 20-23 November

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SATH GOING TO "DISNEY WORLD"

SATH (Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality) is holding its 12th World Congress for Travelers with Disabilities and the Mature at Disney's Contemporary Resort at Walt Disney World Resort, January 6-10, 2008. This year's theme, "We are in the people business!" provides travel, tourism and hospitality professionals worldwide with an opportunity to come and learn about a market that is growing exponentially, with a discretionary income of \$250 billion in the U.S. alone.

Roberta Schwartz, SATH Director of Education says, "Whether you are a travel agent, tour operator, meeting planner, educator, cruise line, airline, hotel, destination, or attraction, you work with people on a daily basis. The more you know about what your customers need and want, the better you will be able to serve them and make them loyal to you and your organization. Attending the SATH World Congress puts you on the cutting edge to learn the needs of this important market segment."

SATH recognizes that feeding this market is the Baby Boomers and younger folks with disabilities who do not believe they cannot travel and do the things they've done or always dreamed of doing. This is an opportunity at the SATH 12th World Congress and Trade Show for attendees to learn what they need to know to meet and exceed those expectations, and make their organization accessible to all.

General sessions and workshops will address how to meet the needs of travelers with all types of disabilities, including oxygen, and a new one on "Adventure Travel." A unique trade show will also be part of this educational program, featuring vendors including all the major cruise lines and theme parks, as well as companies which provide products and services for travelers with disabilities. Special events include visits to SeaWorld, Universal Orlando and EPCOT.

This year's program will also include a CLIA workshop "Building a Smart Business Plan" which can earn credits towards the Cruise Counsellor certification. Registration for the SATH 12th World Congress is open to everyone.

SATH, www.sath.org

TRAVEL WORLD NEWS INVITES AGENTS TO VISIT THE AMERICAS REAL ESTATE EXPO

On February 10, 2008 the Americas Real Estate Expo, located in San Jose, Costa Rica, will showcase several hundred condo resort and hotel developments located throughout South, Central and North America. Travel agents will have an opportunity to meet developers with one-on-one meetings throughout the three day event. In addition to meeting with management teams, agents are invited to visit many of the properties while in the region.

Travel World News is pleased to be the exclusive travel trade media for the ARE Expo and invites agents to attend this first-ever program featuring condo resorts in Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada.

Special discounted expo and hotel rates are available for agents and their guests. Space is limited and it is recommended that advance registrations be made.

Every year travelers choose condo resorts in greater numbers and travel agents are taking note. As the traveler seeks to economize family travel expenses by renting two and three bedroom condos, travel agents are also sending more of their clients to condo resorts where they can find all of the amenities of home, including multiple bedrooms, living rooms and full size kitchens.

Condo resort and hotel developers understand the value of travel agent and the personalized services they offer their clients. Most developers are offering greater commission incentives than currently found with traditional resorts and hotels.

In addition to the condo resort growth there is a new market emerging – real estate travel. With the increase of baby boomers seeking residence overseas, tens of thousands are touring developments throughout the world making this one of the fastest growing markets in niches travel. Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of this new market.

The Americas Real Estate Expo is sponsored by - in addition to Travel World News – the Costa Rica Tourism Board, Costa Rica National Association of Realtors and, EscapeArtist.com. Americas Real Estate Expo, 561-439-6601, www.AmericasRealEstateExpo.com

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6 March Los Angeles
10 March Phoenix
12 March Denver



ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM TO AFRICA

APTA is a non-profit association, founded in 1979, that brings together the travel agent, the tour wholesaler, hotels, airlines and others whose common goal is to educate those involved with tourism to Africa.

Our Chapters are located in:

Los Angeles; Orange County (CA); San Diego; Sacramento (Northern California)
Denver (Rocky Mountain); Dallas; Seattle (Pacific Northwest); Chicago (Midwest)
New York (Northeast); Ft. Lauderdale/Miami (South Florida); Phoenix and Atlanta

For more information email: info@apta.biz

or visit our website at www.apta.biz, and contact a

Local Chapter or Executive Board Director listed on the site

ITB BERLIN: BOOK WORLD AND CULTURAL TOURISM POPULAR WITH VISITORS



In 2008 the ITB Book Awards, now in their sixth year, will once again be honoring outstanding works and achievements at the ITB Book World. These will include travel guides, travel literature, illustrated travel books, travel cookbooks, tourist maps and innovative publications. For years the ITB Book World has been popular with trade visitors and the public at the ITB Berlin. Ever since publishers allowed sales of books at the show in 2006 this section has become a major attraction. In 2008 the ITB Book World will be in Hall 10.2. In 2008 the focus at the ITB Book Awards will be on the Destination Awards and the Dominican Republic, the partner country of the ITB Berlin 2008. The awards will be presented in the following categories: compact travel guides, traditional travel

guides, guides for individual travelers, and travel publications.

In recent years, the tourism section ITB Cultural Tourism has undisputedly been the second most popular public attraction. All the variety which international cultural tourism and city tourism have to offer will be on display on the entire exhibition grounds at the main stands of the various countries exhibiting at the show. A catalog in English and German, "ITB Showtime for Culture 2008", will have information on cultural travel for trade visitors, the public and the media, and will also help visitors with precise directions to find their destinations in the 26 halls on the grounds.

The ITB Berlin is the largest trade show of the international travel industry anywhere in the world. Since it was first held in 1966 it has been stimulating the continued development of the travel industry. Since introducing the world's largest specialist conference in 2004, the ITB Berlin Convention Market Trends & Innovations, the ITB Berlin has addressed a wide range of travel industry issues and helped to find answers.

From March 5-9, 2008, some 11,000 exhibitors will be displaying their products on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds. Tourism companies from more than 180 countries and territories will be in the 26 display halls. Every area of tourism's value-added chain will be represented at the ITB Berlin, including countries, destinations, tour operators, booking systems, carriers, hotels and more.

ITB Berlin, www.itb-berlin.com

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10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD TOURISM AWARD HONORS THREE INSPIRING LEADERS



From left back row: Mr. Patrick Falconer, Managing Director - UK, Northern Europe, MEA, International Herald Tribune; Mr. Tom Nutley, Chairman, Reed Travel Exhibitions; Mr. Tony Potter, CEO, Corinthia Hotels International; Erich Franken, VP/GM, American Express Services Europe, representing Donna Flora, CTC, Vice President, Travel Industry Relations, American Express Company. Front row from left: Phil Otterson, President ATS and VP Tauck World Discovery; Mike Stowlowitzky, Honoree and Immediate Past President, ATS; H.E. Senator Akel Biltaji, Honoree and Chair, Red/Med Sea Council, ATS; Alex Harris, CTC, Honoree and Honorary Chairman, ATS and Chairman, General Tours; and Bob Whitley, ATS Board Member and President, USTOA.

The 10th Annual World Tourism Award, co-sponsored by American Express Company (AMEX), Corinthia Hotels, International Herald Tribune (IHT) and Reed Travel Exhibitions (RTE), was presented at a special ceremony on November 12, 2007, Opening Day of World Travel Market. The presentation was made at ExCel Centre, London.

The 2007 Honorees are three inspiring and visionary leaders of the American Tourism Society (ATS): Alex Harris, CTC Honorary Chairman, and member of the Board of Directors, ATS and Chairman General Tours, and one of the Co-Founders of ATS; Michael Stowlowitzky, Immediate Past President & CEO and member of the Board of Directors, ATS; and H.E. Senator Akel Biltaji, of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Chair, Mediterranean/Red Sea Council and Member of the Board of Directors, ATS.

They were recognized for "their extraordinary vision and inspiring leadership in their respective roles as leaders in the American Tourism Society, through which they have fostered the establishment of emerging destinations into the main stream of tourism; supported the training and development of local tourism companies and organizations; and have contributed to tourism becoming a vital factor in the fast-paced growth of employment in local economies."

The American Tourism Society, a nonprofit, nonpolitical travel industry organization established in 1989, focuses on transformational destinations. Its membership includes tour operators, hotels and resorts, international airlines, cruise lines, Government Tourist Offices, meeting and incentive planners, travel and tourism agents,

and educators and public relations and marketing firms dedicated to promoting, developing and expanding high-quality, reliable travel between North America and the ATS destination areas: the Baltics, Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Russia.

Presenting the Award on behalf of the sponsors were: Erich Franken, VP/GM, American Express Services Europe, representing Donna Flora, CTC, Vice President, Travel Industry Relations, American Express Company; Mr. Tony Potter, CEO Corinthia Hotels International; Mr. Patrick Falconer, Managing Director - UK, Northern Europe, MEA, International Herald Tribune; and Mr. Tom Nutley, Chairman, Reed Travel Exhibitions.

American Tourism Society www.americantourismsociety.org

ST. LUCIA TO HOST CARIBBEAN MARKETPLACE

In January 2009, St. Lucia will host one of the Caribbean's biggest tourism conventions, Caribbean Marketplace, presented by the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA).

It is the first time that this major conference will be held anywhere in the Eastern Caribbean, the result of a successful partnership between the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association, the St. Lucia Tourist Board, and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Senator Allen Chastanet, St. Lucia's Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation described the decision by the CHA Board of Directors as a major breakthrough for the small island, the result of hard work and strong lobbying by the island's tourism players. "We are truly grateful that the CHA has demonstrated confidence in St. Lucia and our local hotel and tourism association to allow us to host Caribbean Marketplace," he said, crediting the island's success over the years in hosting several world class events, including recent Cricket World Cup matches.

President of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA), Colin Hunte said his membership was excited to be given the nod to host this important event. "We look forward to mobilizing the members of our association and unveiling a warm St. Lucian welcome to regional and international delegates as we showcase St. Lucia's product to the world."

Senator Chastanet and Colin Hunte said the Marketplace team will be reaching out to everyone in the industry and across St. Lucia to help showcase the island. They also intend on reaching out to neighbors in the Eastern Caribbean to get them actively involved so they too can accrue benefits.

Caribbean Marketplace is recognized as the most important tourism marketing event of the year for the Caribbean region. Held every year in January, Caribbean Marketplace sets the tone for travel packaging in the Caribbean.

CHA Marketplace 2008 will be held from January 13 to 15 at Atlantis on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

St. Lucia Tourist Board, www.stlucia.org;

Caribbean Hotel Association, www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com

INDUSTRY EVENTS

FEATURED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2007 MOTIVATION SHOW

A new conference program, MotivationConnect and the success of face-to-face marketing between buyers and exhibitors highlighted this year's Motivation Show, which met from September 25-27 in Chicago's McCormick Place. Preliminary attendance at the show totaled 13,900 including 7,500 verified buyers and 6,000 verified exhibitors. All together, there were more than 1,900 exhibitors occupying nearly 250,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space. More than 600 paid registrants filled more than 2,200 seminar seats for the new "Executive Leadership Series: Strategies to Motivate, Empower and Reward."

"We were very pleased with the success of our new seminar series," said Donna Oldenburg, Conference Director. "We worked hard on upgrading the content of each session and concentrated on finding end users to teach the classes. The results exceeded our expectations. More than two-thirds of the conference registrants were first time attendees at The Motivation Show."

MotivationConnect will remain active through December 15 for post-show information and follow-up. Exhibitors and attendees expressed great satisfaction with their ability to interact with each other at the show.

The Motivation Show, www.motivationshow.com

ATA HOSTS INAUGURAL AFRICA TOURISM & SPORTS MARKETING SEMINAR

As part of its continuing efforts to raise global public awareness on the richness of Africa as a potential site for investment and business in the travel and tourism industry, the Africa Travel Association (ATA), a global travel trade association promoting tourism to Africa since 1975, will organize the first ever, U.S.-based Africa Tourism & Sports Marketing Seminar. Sponsored by The New York Times Travel Show 2008, the event will take place at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center on Wednesday, February 27 and Thursday, February 28, 2008. The Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), a non-profit membership organization dedicated to enhancing trade and investment relations between the USA and Africa, is co-sponsoring the event. African, North American, Caribbean, European and Asian participants from the public and private sectors will attend, including Travel Trade Experts, Travel Trade Media, Business, Finance, Real Estate, Infrastructure, Investment and SME leaders, Sport Marketing Firms, African Diaspora Community, Diplomatic Community, Travel Agents and Tour Operators specializing in Africa, and Airline Representatives

Sessions will include Destination Branding; Trends & New Directions in Travel to Africa; Safety and Security; Pitching Africa to the Media; Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the Travel Sector in Africa; Doing Well, Doing Good: Travel, Tourism and Social Responsibility; The Role of the Celebrity Spokesperson; Accessing Africa from North America and the Caribbean; and Going Green: Travel and Climate Change.

Africa Travel Association (ATA), www.africatravelassociation.org

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WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS DEBUT IN INDIA AN UNPRECEDENTED TRIUMPH

Glamour, joy and excitement characterized the regional World Travel Awards (WTA) Ceremony at The Leela Palace Kempinski in Bangalore, India, where the winners of the Asia, Australasia & Indian Ocean Awards were announced.

As many as 50 of trophies were given out to the elite of the regional travel trade. Cathay Pacific Airways was named "Asia's Leading Airline" and The Leela Goa was named "Asia's Leading Resort."

Fittingly, India was presented with "Asia's Leading Destination"; Oberoi Hotels & Resorts was named "Asia's Leading Luxury Hotel Brand"; and Huvafen Fushi took top honors as "Indian Ocean's Leading Spa."

The Maldives Tourism Promotion Board, Avis, Air New Zealand and Changi Airport Singapore were also crowned the best of their kind in the region.

Over 200 travel professionals, VIPs and media from 16 countries across the region enjoyed an event full of surprises and Indian flavors. Distinguished guests among the audience included Captain C.P Krishnan Nair, Chairman of The Leela Palaces Hotels Resorts; Hon. Dr. Mahamood Shougee, Maldivian Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation; Mr. Vijay Rekhi, President of United Spirits and

member of the Board of Directors, Kingfisher Airlines; as well as Vikram Oberoi, Joint Managing Director of The Oberoi Group. The media attendance was at an all-time high with over 30 media institutions taking part in the event.

"We are blown away by the outcome of our regional Asia, Australasia & Indian Ocean Ceremony. For us this event was undoubtedly one of the most victorious and rewarding to date," said Graham Cooke, Founder & President of the World Travel Awards.

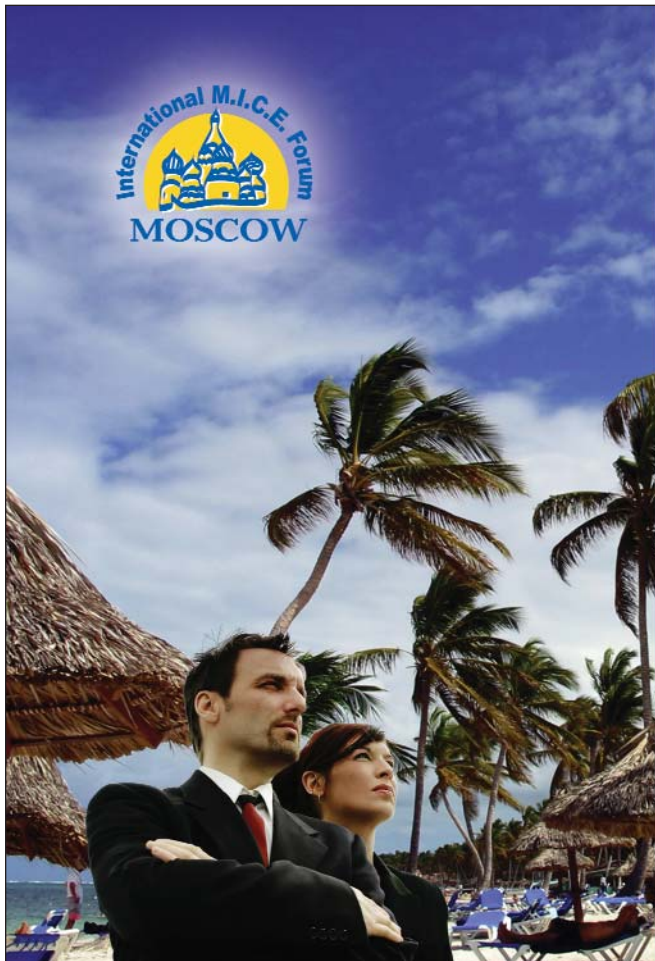
"India, as one of the Asia-Pacific powerhouses in the global tourism arena, proved to be the perfect host for the fourth leg of our 2007 Grand Tour.

The ceremony put the finishing touches to our already very auspicious world tour. Now, with only a month left to the grand final in the Turks & Caicos, the excitement is growing steadily, and we are now facing the big challenge of creating a perfect finish."

The winners of the Asia, Australasia & Indian Ocean Awards will automatically be put forward as nominees in their respective global categories.

The world winners will be announced at the grand final, the Annual World Travel Awards Gala Ceremony in the Turks & Caicos in the Caribbean on December 12 this year.

The World Travel Awards, www.worldtravelawards.com



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2008

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
JANUARY			
6-9	SATH World Congress	Orlando, FL	www.sath.org
11-13	Monte Carlo Travel Market	Monte Carlo	www.mctm.com
13-15	CHA Marketplace 2008	Paradise Island, Bahamas	www.cha.org
16-20	BTL 2008	Lisbon, Portugal	www.btl.fil.pt
17-20	ITF SlovakiaTour	Bratislava, Slovakia	www.incheba.sk
17-20	MATKA 2008	Helsinki, Finland	www.matkamessut.fi
18-26	ATF	Bangkok, Thailand	www.atf2008thailand.com
21-24	Go West Summit	Colorado Springs, CO	www.gowestsummit.com
27-28	Florida Huddle	Tampa, FL	www.floridahuddle.com
30-Feb 3	FITUR 2008	Madrid, Spain	www.fitur.ifema.es
30-Feb 3	Discover America Pavilion at FITUR 2008	Madrid, Spain	www.discoveramericapavilion.com
FEBRUARY			
3-6	ITMI Conference	Beijing, China	www.cimpa.org
10-12	Jordan Travelmart	The Dead Sea	www.jordantravelmart.com
12-14	CONFEX 2008	London, England	www.international-confex.com
14-17	FITPERU 2008	Lambayeque, Peru	www.fitperu.org
14-17	Holiday World 2008	Prague, Czech Republic	www.holidayworld.cz
19-20	AIME	Melbourne, Australia	www.reedtravelexhibitions.com
21-24	BIT 2008	Milan, Italy	www.bit.expocts.it
21-24	Discover America Pavilion at BIT 2008	Milan, Italy	www.discoveramericapavilion.com
28-Mar 2	IFT 2008	Belgrade, Serbia	www.ift-belgrade.com
28-Mar 2	UTAZAS 2008	Budapest, Hungary	www.utazas.hungexpo.hu/2007_kiallitas_eng.php
29-Mar 2	NY Times Travel Show	New York City, NY	www.nytttravelshow.com
MARCH			
5-9	ITB Berlin 2008	Berlin, Germany	www.itb-berlin.com
5-9	Discover America Pavilion at ITB 2008	Berlin, Germany	www.discoveramericapavilion.com
7-9	Cruise3Sixty	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	www.cruise3sixty.com
11-12	British Travel Trade Fair	NEC, Birmingham, UK	www.reedtravelexhibitions.com
13-16	TUR 2008	Goteborg, Sweden	www.turfair.com
13-16	Discover America Pavilion at TUR 2008	Goteborg, Sweden	www.discoveramericapavilion.com
19-22	MITT 2008	Moscow, Russia	www.mitt.ru
19-22	Discover America Pavilion at MITT 2008	Moscow, Russia	www.discoveramericapavilion.com
21-24	Conference on Responsible Tourism	Kochi, Kerala India	www.responsibletourism2008.org
26-29	UITT 2008	Kiev, Ukraine	www.uitt-kyiv.com
29-30	Greater Houston Travel Show	Houston, TX	www.travelindustryshows.com
APRIL			
1-3	DATE 2008	Punta Cana, DR	www.drdate.net
2-4	NTA Tour Operator Spring Meeting	Uncasville, CT	www.nta.travel
6-12	Mountain Travel Symposium	Vail, CO	www.mtntrvl.com
8-10	GIBTM 2008	ADNEC, Abu Dhabi, UAE	www.reedtravelexhibitions.com
11-13	Atlanta Travel Expo	Atlanta, GA	www.atlantatravelexpo.com
12-16	ASTA International Destination Expo	Lyon, France	www.astanet.com/conference/ide/index.asp
14-16	COTTM 2008	Beijing, China	www.cottm.com
16-18	HSMIAI Resort Conference	San Diego, CA	www.resortconference.com
17-19	BTC 2008	Santo Domingo, DR	www.btc.com.do
20-22	WTTC Global Travel & Tourism Council	Dubai, UAE	www.globaltourism.com
20-23	Ecuador Travel Mart (ETM) 2008	Cuenca, Ecuador	www.bite.com.ec
22-24	IMEX 2008	Frankfurt, Germany	www.imex-frankfurt.com
MAY			
5-9	FIT Cuba 2008	Havana, Cuba	dircomunicacion@mintur.tur.cu
6-9	Arabian Travel Market 2008	Dubai, UAE	www.reedtravelexhibitions.com
19-23	ATA 33rd Annual Congress	Arusha, Tanzania	www.africatravelassociation.org
JUNE			
4	MITM Euromed	Cologne, Germany	www.mitmeuromed.com
5-8	CULTOUR 2008	Cologne, Germany	www.cultourfair.com
16- 19	Asia Luxury Travel Market	Shanghai, China	www.altm.com.cn

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A MATTER OF TRUST - NATIONAL CITY BANK PROMOTES USE OF ESCROW ACCOUNTS



DAVID VALPREDO

National City Bank's Escrow Services for the Travel Industry division continues its informational campaign to promote the value and benefit of escrow accounts as a means of safeguarding consumers funds. Through travel trade advertising, direct mail programs, participation at TheTradeShow in Las Vegas, attending the upcoming National Tour Association (NTA) Conference in Kansas City, as well as other promotional efforts, the bank's intent is to make tour operators, retail travel agents, providers of land services and the traveling public aware of the issues surrounding the management of pre-paid travel funds.

"Now more than ever, building consumer confidence is the key to repeat business and loyal customers," said David Valpredo, Senior Vice President for National City. "The best way to protect consumer pre-payments is to sell and market tour operators that have established an escrow protection program independently controlled by the bank. While the financial risks that travel arrangements represent may not be a popular topic of discussion, protecting clients' funds should be an important point for travel agents and other travel organizations to consider, not only to protect themselves and their clients or members, but also as a strong selling point for the added value it provides."

National City developed its acclaimed Travel Funds Protection Plan (TFPP) over 10 years ago. The TFPP is the only escrow protection plan endorsed by the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the NTA, and is approved as a consumer protection plan under the California Seller of Travel Law.

National City, david.valpredo@nationalcity.com

OSCAR FITCH GOMEZ APPOINTED GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE MEXICO TOURISM BOARD



OSCAR FITCH GOMEZ

Mexico's Secretary of Tourism, Rodolfo Elizondo Torres, has appointed Oscar Fitch Gomez, as the new General Director of the Mexico Tourism Board. Elizondo reports that the new director of the Mexico Tourism Board will utilize his experience to head the MTB, which is responsible for the promotion of Mexico on a national and international level. In turn, Oscar Fitch has promised to lead all efforts for a single cause, which is that of tourism and to head the Mexico Tourism Board, who is a leader in the tourism industry.

Fitch Gómez, who is originally from Tijuana, BC, has extensive knowledge in marketing, advertising, promotion and public relations, which are all by-products of his experience in executive positions in FEMSA-BREWERY in Cuauhtémoc Montezuma, where he headed the direction of key accounts and the promotion of tourist centers, including public relations.

Fitch is an associate founder of Fitch and Associates, a lobbying office, where he also served as an advisor for key accounts, and possesses a tested capacity of negotiation with different sectors of the company, and has also served as President of the Commission of Legislative Link of the Business Coordinating Counsel (CCE) for over 12 years.

Among others activities that have evolved Fitch's career, have been serving as Vice President of the Confederation of Industrial Chambers; President of the National Chamber of Beer-Makers; Advisor of Bilateral Business for Argentina, Hong Kong, the Mexican Counsel of Foreign Trade; Member of the Technical Committee of Marketing for the Mexico Tourism Board; and advisor for Infonavit and Coparmex, among other organizations. The General Director of the MTB holds a degree in Marketing from the Technological Institute of Higher Education in Monterrey (ITESM), is certified in Upper Management from IPADE and has post-graduate studies from Harvard University.

The Mexico Tourism Board (MTB), www.visitmexico.com

JAY MARSELLA NAMED DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING FOR HARBOR BEACH MARRIOTT RESORT & SPA



JAY MARSELLA

Harbor Beach Marriott Resort & Spa has announced the newest member of its team, Jay Marsella as Director of Sales and Marketing. Marsella brings nearly two decades of hospitality experience and is at the helm of the sales and marketing department, serving as the strategic business leader of this South Florida hotel. In his new role, Marsella will be responsible for achieving revenue goals, developing hotel-wide sales and marketing strategies for both the leisure and group segments, and maintaining the highest levels of guest and associate satisfaction. Marsella has been a part of the Marriott family for 19 years, beginning his tenure within the sales management team at Marriott International, Inc. Marsella has held leadership positions at some of the top Marriott Hotels and Resorts on the East coast, most recently as director of sales at Doral Golf Resort & Spa, a Marriott Resort in Miami. He has also held director of sales and marketing positions at Hartford Marriott Rocky Hill and Farmington, CT, The Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach and Marriott's Evergreen Conference Resort in Atlanta.

Harbor Beach Marriott Resort & Spa, 800-228-9290, www.marriott.com

The NYC Hotel Mela: A Star Is Born On Theater And University Club Row

It ain't Nowheresville, little ones.

MARK ZUSSMAN

There's a devil's bargain to be made in the newest and the best of New York's boutique hostelryes: you give up the extravagant space that's dished out with heedless abandon at any Econo Lodge or Motel 6 (nothing wrong with such places, mind you) along the Interstate. In the place of those lonesome acres, you get, first of all, the location-location-location that all real estate brokers recognize as the true coin of the realm; second, you get the kind of chicness and hipness that New Yorkers sometimes call terminal hipness or hipness unto death.

Case in point: the 228-room Hotel Mela on the block of Manhattan's West 44th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues, soft-opened in January of this year but then more festively launched at a gala champagne party in the hotel's French-Vietnamese restaurant, Saju, in the month of October.

As a former New Yorker myself, I was neither surprised nor in any way taken aback by the space and layout of the room in which I spent three nights, one before and two after the party. You opened the door, the bed was there in front of you. Even the porter, frankly, was somewhat at a loss as to where to put anything down. The bed itself, on the other hand, had that contemporary sybaritic appearance that makes a person forget what we all used to think, as children, to be the sole function of a bed as simply a place to pass out. Thread count on the 100 percent Egyptian combed linen sheets is, per the hotel's promotional literature, 310 per inch. But, hey, after the first 50 threads or so, who's counting? The promotional literature also repeatedly refers to the fabrics in the room as "decadent." I'm not sure I had ever thought of the word "decadent" as an honorific exactly, but I get the point.

Follow a passageway around the bathroom. You come to a diminutive working area or sitting area, think of it as you will. The television is flat screen, 26 inches. There's a clock radio with built-in CD player and MP3 connection. The furniture is sleek, the lighting is subtle. Just in case you're still not 100 percent sure as to where you are, the bathroom amenities — shampoo, conditioner, moisturizer and the like — bear the H2O+ "sea-derived" spa-products label, and the desk comes piled up with fashionista BlackBook Magazine and Miami's even more absurdly luxury-minded OceanDrive.

The room I was in, by the way, is called an executive junior suite. Other accommodations are larger, and the two pent-house suites are seriously large.

Hotel Mela is owned by New York's O&O Properties and managed by the Desires Hotels group, which is the boutique division of Miami's Tecton Hospitality. Desires prides itself on



Left to right: Richard Millard, Chairman & CEO, Desires Hotels; David Adelipour, owner, Hotel Mela/O&O Properties; Zohar Aghravi, owner, Avalim Design Inc.; Tony Zand, O&O Properties; Parvis Bambad, O&O Properties; Raul Leal, President & Partner, Desires Hotels.

its concierge operation — and rightly so. In addition, Desires has a nice little gimmick. Once you're reserved into the Mela or, for that matter, into any of the other handful of Desires hotels, you can access a Web site and input your preferences as to in-room snacks and beverages, and more.

New York couture-eveningwear designer Anne Bowen dreamed up the staff uniforms, if uniforms they can be called. No contest: The staff was a whole lot better dressed than I was. Don't know if it was also Anne Bowen who pronounced that all male employees were to wear their hair short, spiky and gelled. I'm not even sure there is such a rule. But there did seem to be a pattern.

But back to the location-location-location aspect of the thing. The Hotel Mela is across the street from the Belasco Theater, which has hosted such memorable shows as the Vincent Youmans musical "Hit the Deck" way back in 1927 and, in slightly less ancient history, "The Solid Gold Cadillac," "A Raisin in the Sun," "The Subject Was Roses," and "Oh, Calcutta!" More Broadway theaters and of course Times Square itself are just a couple of paces off to the west, and the more sedate University Club Row is one block over to the east. Basically, all of New York is at easy access.

I've lived away from New York for five years. I've been lazy about going back. It's a mistake. New York continues to be fabulous — and always in new and unexpected ways. Stay away only at your peril. If you are a travel-agent reader, let your clients stay away only at their peril. Mela, by the way, is Italian for apple, and there is a nice bowl of shiny ones, some red, others green, at the reception desk.

**Hotel Mela, 877-452-MELA (6352),
www.hotelmela.com**

Western Ireland Minds Its Manors

Modern amenities update centuries of grandeur.

MARJORIE KLEIN

English lords and Gaelic gentry, whose sumptuous castles and manors presided over the Irish countryside centuries ago, never envisioned what their homes would become in the early 21st century: luxury hotels that rival the finest in the world. Set amidst the gorgeous meadows, mountains and lakes of western Ireland, the following resorts offer amenities those early aristocrats never dreamed of: golf courses, spas, and space-age technology. But the ambience and history remain, adding a dimension to these world-class resorts that resonates beyond luxury, for every manor has a story.



MARJORIE KLEIN

Adare Manor Hotel and Golf Resort.

Dromoland Castle Estate

"Distinction since 1543" is Dromoland's motto; this five-star hotel's latest distinction is Travel and Leisure magazine's 2007 award as Best Hotel in Ireland, as well as inclusion in their Best 20 Hotels in Europe and Best 100 Hotels in the World. Such accolades seem well deserved as you wander through the grandeur conceived by its original owner, Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland. This ancestral estate of the O'Briens is one of the few that can trace its history back to Gaelic royalty. Dromoland's present incarnation weaves over 500 years of history into the present-day amenities available throughout the resort, including golf, tennis, fishing, and the sybaritic pleasures of its recently-opened spa. Dinner beneath the sparkling chandeliers of the Earl of Thomond restaurant would surpass the most festive banquet put on by King Brian, even if wild boar isn't on the menu.

Each of the elegant 100 rooms, including six suites, has views of the flowering herb garden, the 16th century stone courtyard, or, as mine did, the golf course, rolling off into the distance like bright green felt. The 18-hole championship course, set amidst the lakes and meadows of 410 acres of lush parkland, earned fourth place in Conde Nast Traveler Magazine's Top Golf Resorts of 2007. Not just a golfer's destination, the estate is home to the 12,000 square foot Brian Boru International Conference Center, with state-of-the-art

wireless and audio-visual systems built into the heart of this ancient but timeless estate.

Rooms range from the Classic at \$232 winter, \$429 summer, to the Presidential Suite at \$828 winter, \$1326 summer.

**Dromoland Castle, 800-346-7007,
sales@dromoland.ie, www.dromoland.ie**

Adare Manor Hotel and Golf Resort

Our group enjoyed a savory lunch at yet another of Ireland's spectacular resorts: Adare Manor in Limerick County, dating from the 1720s. Its turrets and towers rise like a stone mirage from 840 acres of formal gardens, forests, parkland and meandering lakes and waterways. 230 of those acres are devoted to the Robert Trent Jones-designed golf course and club, host for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Irish Open. For longer stays and larger groups, a golf village consisting of 25 garden townhomes was recently opened.

**Adare Manor Hotel and Golf Resort,
reservations@adaremanor.com,
www.adaremanor.com**

Carton House

If reality shows had existed in the mid-1700s, "The Leinsters" would have been a hit. Carton House, home of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster, must have been the scene of

great drama. Emily, the first Duchess of Leinster and perhaps the world's most understanding wife and mother, had 19 children with the Duke and raised four of the children he conceived with his mistresses—who also lived in this glorious Palladian mansion. Between the Duke and Duchess's elegant and spacious suites (now available as guest rooms) is a not-so-secret staircase used as a passageway to the mistresses' rooms. With twenty-three children under her wing, the Duchess may have been too distracted to care.

A tour of Carton House reveals other everyday oddities: the Bell Room is ringed by a lineup of bells, each connected to a room in the mansion. Here is where the servants sat, awaiting a summons from their master or mistress. It's said that they didn't need to look to see which bell was ringing where; they could recognize the room from the sound of its bell. Not surprisingly, the Duchess's bell from her suite is worn so thin that there's a tiny hole in it.

Carton House interweaves past and present with charm and elegance, integrating historical artifacts into the new 147-bedroom wing, and adding contemporary touches to the historic area. My accommodation in this wing, "Lady Hermione's Suite," is one of 18 historical suites. The story of Lady Hermione (died young, left three children) added new depth to my appreciation of this luxurious, antiques-filled room; I could imagine her sitting at the window, gazing out at the glorious view. You don't get that at a Holiday Inn.

The Leinsters never dreamed there would be a luxurious Molton Brown Spa in their mansion, nor would they have thought their stables would become a clubhouse for two championship golf courses created within their thousand acres of land. If the multitude of activities at Carton House these days—golf, archery, fishing, off-road driving—had been available then, perhaps there would have been fewer little Leinsters. Rooms begin at \$170/night for bed and breakfast.

**Carton House, sales@cartonhouse.com,
www.cartonhouse.com**

Radisson SAS Farnham Estate Hotel

The tranquility of the Irish countryside is everywhere at Farnham Estate, and reaches nirvana in its renowned health spa. 40,000 square feet of serenity, the spa smooths and soothes until every sense reaches a state of bliss. From its indoor/outdoor infinity pool to its relaxation room views, the spa is a visual treat in silvery blues and greens, and seems inspired by the 16th century estate's mystical setting within 1300 acres of meadow and woodlands.

Most of the 158 guest rooms, including suites, have views of the estate's grounds. Eight suites are in the elegant 400-year-old house; four are in the modern wing, and all are unique. My room opened onto a patio with a view of the pasture and several very placid cows—a pastoral view that only enhanced the effects of the wonderful massage I had just ex-

perienced in the spa. It almost caused me to forget about dinner, which would have been a tragedy, for the Botanica restaurant's fresh and locally-produced menu is a treat not to be missed. The Potting Shed, another dining experience, is a private room for 10-12 with a special twist: located within the kitchen itself, it affords not only a gourmet meal, but a view of the chef preparing it.

The feeling of the Farnham Estate is one of intimacy, from the comfort of the guest rooms to the privacy of its drawing rooms, where one might enjoy a quiet drink with friends. A place of peace and harmony, it's understandable why the Farnham family called it home for over 400 years.

Winter rates per night/double are \$130 (midweek) to \$180 (weekend); Spring '08 rates are \$130 to \$165.

**Radisson SAS Farnham Estate Hotel,
info.farnham@radissonsas.com,
www.Farnham.radisson.com**

Knockranny House

One of Ireland's finest destination spa resorts, the Victorian style Knockranny House is just a short distance from the charming heritage town of Westport. When done with the pleasures of the Roman-era opulence of Knockranny's Spa Salveo--splashing in the marble-columned pool, steeping in the hydrotherapy body stations, wallowing in the mud chamber, and being pummeled by an expert masseuse—walk to Westport, winner of the 2001 Tidy Towns title in 2001, and a Tidiest Large Town winner ever since. Colorful shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants line its tidy streets, and it's a fun place to go if you can tear yourself away from the many attractions of Knockranny House.

Such as dining at La Fougere restaurant, with its award-winning cuisine and elegant atmosphere. Or relaxing in the drawing room after a day of golf, fishing, sailing or horseback riding. Or admiring the view of Croagh Patrick mountains and Clew Bay over tea in the Conservatory. Or taking a nap in your antiques-furnished room or suite—perhaps one of the new Presidential or Penthouse suites. And there's always the option of an aromatic bubble bath in a deep, comforting tub.

Rooms with breakfast range from Standard at \$110/night winter, \$145 summer, to Presidential Suite at \$325 winter, \$370 summer.

**Knockranny House Hotel and Spa,
info@khh.ie, www.khh.ie**

Glenlo Abbey Hotel

Galway's only five-star hotel, Glenlo Abbey Hotel brings a rich history of ownership to its present renovation, a five-year project that gave new life to this historical home. Built in 1740 by the Ffrench family, one of Galway's famous 14 tribes, it was sold in 1855 to another tribe, the Blake family, who

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WESTERN IRELAND FROM PAGE 13

lived there for 90 years before selling it in 1986 to the present owners, the Bourkes. Each of the beautifully appointed 46 bedrooms and suites of the main house offers views of the mountains, the walled garden, or the Abbey. The cut stone Abbey, once a private church for the Ffrench family, has been restored as a private dining and reception room.

The River Room, where we enjoyed local specialties such as poached Galway Bay prawns and Tortellini of Blue Bell Falls' Goat Cheese, specializes in fine dining in an elegant atmosphere.

But for a most unusual dining experience with a story behind it, the Pullman Restaurant, "Aboard the Orient Express," is unique. Consisting of two railroad carriages, Linda (from 1927) and Leona (mid-1950s), the restaurant's starched tablecloths, curtained windows and fringe-shaded table lights offer a glimpse into the past when rail-

way travel meant luxury; white-gloved waiters served royalty and movie stars as they were whisked by rail to exotic places. Leona had her moment of fame in 1974 when she starred in the classic movie, "Murder on the Orient Express." Now she and her sister carriage are famous for their food.

Rooms (one night, no meals) range from single garden view at \$189 winter, \$220 summer, to a two-bedroom suite at \$880 summer and winter.

Glenlo Abbey Hotel,
infor@glenloabbey.ie,
www.glenlo.com

EOS AIRLINES CELEBRATES SUCCESS BY ANNOUNCING TWO NEW ROUTES

In celebration of its second anniversary, Eos Airlines, whose "Uncrowded" travel experience has captured the loyalty of premium trans-Atlantic travelers, announced it will begin flights between New York's JFK and Paris, and Newark and London Stansted Airports in 2008. With a recent infusion of \$50 million in investment capital, Eos also announced it will secure its seventh and eighth Boeing 757 aircraft in order to introduce as many as four new routes in 2008.

"Eos Class service is coming to Paris and Newark, and so is an end to making compromises in air travel," pronounced Jack Williams, Eos Airlines CEO. "Our Guests tell us that 'Uncrowded' is the only way they want to travel, so we have expanded our operations to other destinations to meet the demand. These new routes are great markets and also represent a path to profitability for our investors."

Eos flies the world's only Boeing 757 aircraft configured with just 48 "suites," ensuring a superb end-to-end travel experience for its guests, and encompassing every detail from superior baggage handling to curbside assistants who personally escort guests through the check-in process. It has also led the field with the best on-time performance between New York and London for 18 months running. This unprecedented attention to detail has resulted in an unpar-

alleled 97 percent guest satisfaction rating.

Eos will add flights between Newark International Airport and Stansted Airport in Spring 2008. This new route acknowledges that New Jersey-based premium travelers and corporations have been eager for Eos to add flights that depart from Newark, and will expand on Eos' schedule to 58 flights per week between the New York metropolitan area and London. Flights between New York and Paris are expected to commence in Fall 2008. Details of initial ticket sale dates and schedules will be announced in the coming months.

Eos Airlines, 800-598-2169,
 eosairlines.com

NEW SOUTH WEST ENGLAND SPECIALISTS

Nine more retail travel agents have recently achieved the status of "South West England Specialist" after attending two online seminars and successfully passing an exam. These agents are now qualified to counsel clients about the beauty of the countryside in the South West that runs from the Cotswolds in the north to Land's End at the tip of the South West peninsula in Cornwall, including the iconic sights of Stonehenge, Bath and Salisbury. At little more than an hour from London or Southampton, the South West is the perfect location for pre and post cruise packages. Sample itineraries are listed on the website, www.mysouthwestengland.com.

New Specialists, who are listed as South West England Specialist on the website, include Carolyn Bolger, Bolger Cruises (LA); Charlie Newton, Britain by Choice (TX); Jan Nance, Carefree Travel (CO); Lee Lefavre, Where in the World Travel (FL); Susan Johnson, My Travel Place (CA); Henry Nowicki, Aloha Cruises (HI); Lana Gordon, Lana Gordon Travel (MI); Laura McCabe, Travel With Laura (CA); and Brenda Repland, MKG Travel (NY).

Agents who wish for information on how to become a South West England Specialist can email or visit the website.

South West England,
southwestengland@gmail.com,
www.mysouthwestengland.com

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AMAZON CRUISE & RIO DE JANEIRO

Unique World Cruises & Tours is offering a Travel Agent FAM Trip Amazon Cruise & Rio de Janeiro, March 13-20, 2008. This eight-day trip includes visits to Rio de Janeiro plus a cruise on board the five-star MV Iberostar. Rate is from \$1,298 per person twin room/cabin with air from Miami via TAM; accommodations, including three days in Rio in superior first class hotel on Copacabana Beach; breakfast daily; lunch in exclusive restaurant Churrascaria Barra Grill; dinner in restaurant Mio with samba show; airport transfers; and a sightseeing tour plus a visit to Corcovado (Seventh Wonder of the World) and Sugar Loaf. The four-day cruise on the Amazon River is on-board the five-star MV Iberostar and includes all meals, snacks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and shore excursions. Spouse is an additional charge of \$200. Airport taxes and fuel surcharges are \$138.

Unique World Cruises & Tours,
800-669-0757,
Uwc@uniqueworldcruises.com,
www.uniqueworldcruises.com

CURAÇAO

Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club and Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino is offering travel agents with IATA cards a special discounted rate. Between January 6, 2008 and December 23, 2008, travel agents can enjoy these Caribbean resorts for \$99 per room, per night. The discount is valid for bookings within 30 days of arrival and rates are based on availability and not valid over major holidays. Located in Willemstad, Curaçao, Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino is an 80-room luxury boutique resort featuring meticulously restored 18th and 19th century Dutch Colonial Caribbean buildings, multiple pools, award winning restaurants, a new spa, fitness center and more. Nestled in Curaçao's west end, the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club offers a luxurious ambiance coupled with a relaxing beachfront retreat and the seclusion of a unique island hideaway. Guests can experience world class diving, hiking, cycling and

adventure within feet of the resort while downtown Willemstad offers the enjoyment of diverse culture, dining, shopping and nightlife.

Kura Hulanda, 877-264-3106,
kurahulandaf1@aol.com,
reservations@kurahulanda.com,
www.kurahulanda.com

FLORIDA

The Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village, located within the 6,300-acre World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Florida, is offering a special rate to travel agents in celebration of the near-completion of its extensive \$10 million property-wide renovation. Through December 30, 2007, travel agents can experience the resort for \$59 per room, per night, based on space availability. This will provide the opportunity to see a newly renovated room, and to experience the resort, which features an array of amenities including two championship golf courses and privileges at the private oceanfront Serenata Beach Club. Located next to the World Golf Hall of Fame, the resort kicked-off the \$10 million renovation in August 2007. Plans include the complete remodeling of all 301 guest rooms and suites, dramatic changes to the resort's lobby atrium, enhancements to the main ballroom and meeting offerings, remodeling of the restaurant and bar, new lighting throughout the public spaces, remodeling of all guest room corridors, and the addition of a new "signature scent." The renovation is slated for completion by January 2008. To take advantage of the special rate, travel agents will need to provide their IATA number upon making the reservation, and will need to show their IATA card upon check-in. This special rate is available for only one room per ID, and is available exclusively to travel agents.

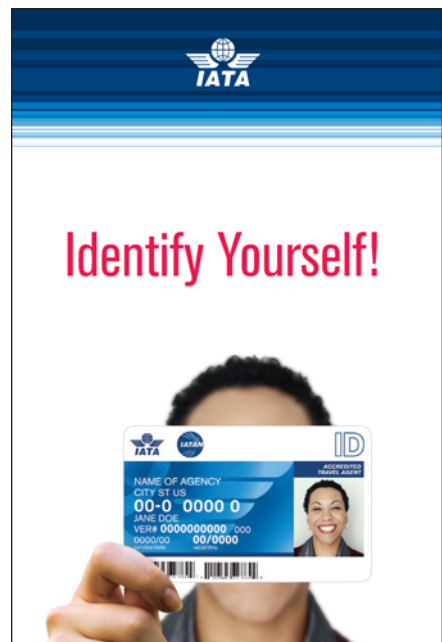
The Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village, 888-740-7020,
www.WorldGolfRenaissance.com.

NAMIBIA

NatureFriend Safaris is offering an eight-day/seven-night Namibia Educational Tour, May 3-10, 2008. Price is \$700 pppo

(Namibia only). The price includes the Namibia internal flights, and meals and activities indicated on the itinerary. A single is not available unless no other participant can be found. You must be an APTA member and an active agent selling Africa. No companion tickets available. The deadline to sign-up is January 1. There is a maximum of eight participants. Highlights include Etosha National Park/Onguma Tented Camp; Mowani Mountain Camp; Wolwedans Boulders Camp; Namibian Nature Reserve; and Okahirongo Elephant Lodge. SAA is offering a special Indaba discounted international airfare for qualifying agents. 2008 SAA Indaba participant prices are not yet available. The estimated cost based on last year's rates for three nights lodging, international air from NYC or IAD, domestic air to Windhoek and Windhoek to Durban is \$1,400. The special airfares are only available to those attending Indaba (Africa's largest convention of suppliers, accommodations and agents).

APTA, pam.rathke@gmail.com



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