

AFRICAN MICE
Needs to grow

HILTON WORLDWIDE
Celebrating 100 years

THE HOLIDAY EXPO ISSUE

small is big

Mövenpick Hotel & Residences Nairobi is in the moments business. We know small gestures can make all the difference. So we do ordinary things in an extraordinary way - a philosophy that has defined our brand success from the start

The image shows the Mövenpick Hotel & Residences Nairobi at dusk. The building features a prominent, illuminated tower with a conical roof and a sign that reads 'MÖVENPICK'. The tower has several balconies and is lit up from within. Below the tower, the main building has many windows, some of which are lit up. The sky is a deep blue, and the city lights are visible in the background. A large, semi-transparent pink graphic element is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

MÖVENPICK

HOTEL & RESIDENCES
NAIROBI

movenpick.com

A WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCE AT EVERY MILE.

Delta offers a truly premium in-flight experience on all nonstop flights from Africa to the USA including Delta One® flat-bed seats and chef-curated meals on Alessi serviceware. Through the implementation of RFID bag tracking, in-seat power outlets, Wi-Fi and free onboard messaging, we are constantly improving your travel experience both in the air and on the ground.

For more information, please contact your favorite travel agent or visit delta.com.



KEEP CLIMBING



DELTA



The image shows A330 seats. Smartphone is required for free messaging. Availability varies by aircraft and route; check your listing for details. Terms apply, visit delta.com/wifi. All information correct at time of printing. © 2019 Delta Air Lines, Inc.

RIVONIA



It's hard to believe you're in Jo'burg



SAND RIVER
GUEST HOUSE
★★★★

TWO GREAT GUEST HOUSES



5 minutes from OR Tambo International Airport



KEMPTON PARK

Contents



The Holiday Expo

Into its third year now, the 2019 Holiday Expo takes place at Montecasino in Johannesburg on 24 and 25 August. It's an opportunity for consumers to see first-hand everything that there is to experience on the holiday front. It is the ideal platform on which to engage with consumers searching for their next holiday destination.

► FEATURES

10 MICE

The global MICE industry looks to be in good shape and largely resistant to some of the factors that usually affect the travel industry, and whilst Africa, as a continent, is working hard to establish itself in this space, it still has a lot of work to do before it becomes a major player. Here's a look at how Africa compares to the world's other regions and who the standout performers are on the continent.

► REGULARS

04 Message from the Team

What's the editor ranting about now?

06 News

Airline, hotel and other travel news from Africa and beyond

08 W Hospitality Column

Managing Director Trevor Ward gives us his take on the West African hotel industry

09 ASATA Column

The latest from Chief Executive Officer Otto de Vries

18 Tried and Tested

Hotel Check

- AC Marriott New York

Flight Check

- Singapore Airlines

20 Q & A Interviews

- Ashish Kapur – Cathay Pacific
- Kananelo Makhetha – Club Travel

22 People on the Move

The movers and shakers – what they're up to now

24 Bite with the Editor

Jan van der Putten – Hilton



I just love to see innovators disrupting the market or seeing a gap in it and plugging it with an attractive – and new – proposition.

So, I was pleasantly surprised when the launch of something called 'Upgradus' came across my desk recently.

It's an online system launched in Africa and is designed to act as the communicator between the customer and hotel, allowing guests to show an interest in an upgraded room at a heavily discounted rate.

According to Upgradus, most hotels currently don't offer a paid upgrade at the moment, but with occupancy rates increasingly under pressure in many markets, many of these hotels are now grasping the huge potential revenue unrealised every day.

Upgradus allows hotels to offer upgrades direct to their guests in advance, during the 'silent period' between booking and arrival.

"This allows the customer to spend time on a full consideration of the offer in private, without the embarrassment of a public discussion at check-in," says Upgradus.

Customers simply log on, type in where and when they are staying, and then Upgradus gets to work. It contacts the hotel, lets them know a customer is interested, and if the hotel wants to offer a heavily discounted upgrade just before the stay because the room is still empty, they can. The customer can then choose to accept or decline the offer before they arrive, paying at the hotel as normal, so the process remains the same and everyone is happy.

"I have travelled regularly for both business and with family and, when the budget allows, I like to stay in interesting hotels with great rooms, especially when on vacation," says Guy Ratcliffe, CEO and Founder of Upgradus. "However, I often found myself thinking that there were even better rooms or suites above my budget that were empty, sometimes even the room next door. An offer for a discounted upgrade to a better room or suite would have been appreciated and likely taken if the price was right."

With global hotel occupancy currently around 67%, Ratcliffe believes a huge opportunity exists for his platform and the hotels that sit with empty rooms – in particular, premium rooms that go unsold. He goes on to say that selling discounted upgrades to these rooms could add a sizeable financial chunk to the global hotel market.

Let's see if he's right, and good luck to them.

Dylan Rogers

Editor

dylan@thefuture.co.za

PUBLISHER

Richard Lendrum

EDITOR

Dylan Rogers

dylan@thefuture.co.za

JOURNALIST

Kate Kennedy

CONTRIBUTORS

Gillian McLaren, Tom Otley

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Nadette Voogd

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND PRODUCTION

Mabel Ramafoko

mabel@thefuture.co.za

SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICE

Postal Address:

PO Box 1746, Saxonwold, 2132

Physical Address:

6 Rodwiella Rd, Edenburg

Telephone: +27 11 327 6107

NIGERIAN OFFICE

3rd Floor, EuniBrown House 195,

Ikorodu Road, Palmgrove, Lagos, Nigeria

Tel: +234 1 740 3236

Mobile: +234 803 963 0155

PUBLISHER – NORTH & WEST AFRICA

Tope Ogbeni-Awe

tope.ogbeni-awe@topcommng.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Mohammed Abdullahi

Business Traveller Africa is published under licence from Perry Publications Limited.

Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0PP.

Tel: +44 20 7821 2740

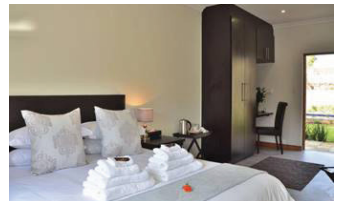
www.businesstraveller.com

THE FUTURE
GROUP

Marketing, Ideas
& Branded Content

Follow us on:





*Helping you select a better
quality guest house*



GHASA

**Guest House Accommodation
of South Africa**

www.ghasa.co.za



BA Rolls Out WTP Phase 2

British Airways is rolling out the next phase of its investment in its premium economy cabin, World Traveller Plus, by introducing a range of new amenities for customers. The airline is investing \$7.9 billion (£6.5 billion) over five years, including in new aircraft, new cabins, new catering, new lounges, wi-fi, and new routes. New amenity kits using material from recycled plastic bottles were introduced from 1 July and include items from the Scaramouche & Fandango range. Passengers can also expect new quilts and cushions with the herringbone design synonymous with the airline's First cabin. The new amenities follow improvements made earlier this year to the World Traveller Plus cabin, including new menus with a focus on seasonal ingredients. The airline will also be introducing alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails to the World Traveller Plus bar menu. Customers travelling in World Traveller Plus have the ability to pre-order their main meal up to 24 hours before departure using the 'manage my booking' tool on ba.com. Customers can also choose to cut the cost of flights by using Avios as part payment.

Proflight to Start Ndola-Johannesburg Route

Proflight Zambia has plans for a new scheduled service between Ndola and Johannesburg in a move to boost trade and investment between the two cities. The new route, which is expected to begin on 2 September, will link the Copperbelt mining and industry hub with South Africa's main business centre with three weekly services on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Flight P0040 will depart from Ndola's Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport at 08h05 and arrive at Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport at 10h35. The return flight will depart from Johannesburg at 11h40 and arrive back in Ndola at 14h10.

Ethiopian Airlines Opens Addis Hotel

Ethiopian Airlines has opened the five-star Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, located five minutes from Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport. The Skylight Hotel has 373 rooms and three restaurants, and offers all-day dining (including a Chinese restaurant), a lobby and an executive lounge that includes a traditional Ethiopian restaurant. The Grand Ballroom accommodates 2,000 seated guests and 4,000 guests in a standing cocktail setting. The Ballroom can also be divided into five separate halls along with spacious foyer area, accommodating 500 to 800 guests in each compartment. There are also three separate daylight and two VIP private meeting rooms for corporate meetings. The health club facilities in the hotel include an outdoor swimming pool, mini-golf course, a spa, massage room and gym.



Jin Jiang and Radisson Unveil Co-Branded Hotel

Following Radisson Hotel Group's acquisition by Jin Jiang International and Sino-Cee Fund late last year, Radisson and its shareholders have identified several opportunities to realise the true potential of the Chinese market. They include the launch of co-branded hotels, with the Radisson Blu Hotel, Frankfurt in Germany the first to become co-branded with Jin Jiang International. At the newly co-branded hotel, Chinese-speaking guests will find a range of designed and curated features, including collateral such as menus and welcome cards in Chinese, and guests being able to pay for anything with Chinese Union pay cards. In-room amenities include tea kettles, a choice of Chinese teas, Chinese TV channels, and Chinese newspapers. Traditional Chinese dishes like congee, noodles and wontons have been included in the daily breakfast service and Shanghai noodles, Hainanese chicken rice and Singapore Laksa are available in the hotel's restaurant, Welcome Corner, and on its room service menus. To facilitate the booking process for Chinese-speaking travellers, 53 Radisson properties are now featured on the WeHotel Platform, Jin Jiang International's global hotel booking platform. The remaining properties will be available by the end of the year. Radisson Rewards and WeHotel Prime, Jin Jiang's loyalty programme, are working together to provide localised, in-hotel benefits to members of both programmes.



PEDs Permitted on SA British Airways Flights

British Airways (operated by Comair) customers may now use their portable electronic devices (PEDs) at all times during their journey within Southern Africa. These devices include, but aren't limited to, handheld lightweight electronic devices such as tablets, e-readers, smartphones and other small devices such as MP3 players, electronic toys and smart watches. The airline has added more flight frequencies on its route network commencing mid-September 2019, which are available for booking with immediate effect. In total, British Airways will operate 34 additional flights a week on routes serviced from Johannesburg, which includes Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, as well as between Cape Town and Durban.

SAA Signs Codeshare with GOL

South African Airways has signed codeshare and frequent flyer agreements with Brazilian airline Gol-Linhas Aéreas (GOL). The agreement will enable SAA to add its code to 20 connecting flights in Brazil operated by GOL in the Brazilian territory, which will allow SAA customers to integrate their travel with easy connections on flights of both carriers. Besides the codeshare, the signed Frequent Flyer Programme (FFP) agreement offers members of each airline's programmes, Voyager from SAA and Smiles from GOL, the opportunity to accrue and redeem miles.

Lufthansa Partners with Mango

Lufthansa has partnered with Mango Airlines to provide customers with even more connections to destinations in South Africa. Lufthansa passengers can now connect to and from Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and George via Mango Airlines connections. Those flying to or from Cape Town International Airport can connect to and from Johannesburg, Durban and Bloemfontein. Lufthansa Group and South African Airways have had a codeshare agreement since 1996, jointly connecting European destinations with South Africa. Current codeshare routes include Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Windhoek, Harare and Mauritius. The Lufthansa and Mango agreement applies to tickets sold through LH.com and through the GDS.

The President Hotel Joins Preferred Hotels

The President Hotel in Cape Town has been accepted into membership of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, the world's largest independent hotel brand. Preferred Hotels & Resorts represents more than 750 hotels, resorts, residences, and unique hotel groups across 85 countries, and The President Hotel is the latest addition to the group's Lifestyle Collection. All guests of



The President Hotel are now eligible to enrol in the I Prefer hotel rewards programme, which extends points redeemable for cash-value reward certificates, elite status, and special benefits such as complimentary internet to members upon every stay at more than 650 participating Preferred Hotels & Resorts locations worldwide.



COMFORT WITHOUT BORDERS

AS A HOTEL GROUP BORN AND BRED IN AFRICA, WE CONTINUE TO GROW OUR PRESENCE IN THE CONTINENT. YOU CAN NOW CHECK INTO **60 HOTELS ALL OVER AFRICA** - INCLUDING **SOUTH AFRICA, DAR ES SALAAM, GABORONE, WINDHOEK AND NAIROBI** - KNOWING THAT YOU'LL FIND THE **COMFORT** AND **RELIABILITY** YOU'VE COME TO EXPECT FROM A STAY WITH US. FOR THE RATES AND RESERVATIONS OF YOUR PREFERRED DESTINATION ACROSS THE CONTINENT, VISIT **CLHG.COM**

CITY LODGE HOTEL GROUP





Trevor Ward
MD: W Hospitality Group

An Eye on West Africa

Lagos has a population of some 20 million people (estimates differ, but that seems to be a rough average).

It accounts for around 40% of Nigeria's GDP, it's got the busiest airport by far, seaports, and several local conglomerates and multinationals are based there. The list goes on – yet the city is averaging just one branded hotel opening a year currently, and the average size of those hotels in the past three years was just 53 rooms!

Sure, I know that Nigeria's economy has been in the doldrums for a while, but even so, Lagos does better in most respects than the national average.

This year's opening, in mid-July, is the Providence Hotel in Ikeja, not far from the international airport, in a district that now has a wide-ranging hotel offering, including the historic Sheraton on the main airport road, the more recently-opened Radisson Blu, its neighbour the renamed Radisson, and the L'eola Hotel.

The 79-room Providence Hotel is, like the L'eola, managed by Mantis, a South Africa-based operator which Accor bought into last year. That means that the two hotels benefit from the Accor distribution systems and that guests can accumulate Accor Rewards points, just like at the other Accor hotels in Nigeria (Mercure, ibis, Novotel) and elsewhere in West Africa.

Nothing else looks set to open this year, whilst in 2020 we should see the 250-room Marriott opening, also in Ikeja. Also mooted, but not definite, are the 164-room Radisson Collection in Ikoyi and the 96-room extension to the Legend Hotel at the international airport (a Curio Collection by Hilton), which was last year's sole opening. Potentially quite a few rooms then in Ikeja and the nearby airport environs, but does this mean that there will be an oversupply of hotel rooms in the area?

Well, at least in the short-term, the answer to that must be 'yes', although I'm not clear what a good definition of the term 'oversupply' would be. Hotels are being opened all the time, everywhere (well, not so much in Lagos, apparently), and when a hotel opens it inevitably takes business away from existing hotels and therefore occupancies, and often also prices, drop.

But oversupply is a temporary phenomenon – it's part of the economic cycle which hotels are a part of. Organic growth in demand tends to sort it out, especially as new investors are deterred from the

market and planned projects are shelved. Further, more supply can actually create demand, due to the increased spend by the existing and new hotels on marketing the destination. And the addition of new rooms can mean that larger events, such as conventions, can be accommodated.

In the airport area, with the availability of more rooms at different price points, passengers may well choose to stay overnight before departure or on arrival, particularly given Lagos' unpredictable traffic and the fact that some people travel a long way from out of town pre or post-flights.

Oversupply is less likely, because so many new hotels are delayed way beyond their original scheduled opening date. According to the international and regional (African) hotel chains, they expected to open 115 hotels (throughout the whole of Africa) last year, but only managed to open 46, a realisation rate of just 39%. In some cases, the planned hotels don't get completed at all – visitors to Lagos may or may not be aware that the mess called the arrivals pick-up point at the international terminal was actually once the location for a planned Holiday Inn hotel, or that the abandoned buildings opposite the MM2 domestic terminal were supposed to have been a Crowne Plaza hotel. The former definitely won't happen, and the latter seems pretty unlikely.

We'll get there one day and there's no shortage of new hotels planned for Lagos – at last count there were 27 new properties (including extensions to existing hotels) with 4,500 rooms in the Lagos pipeline.

Nope, zero chance of them all happening, so let's not get too concerned about that 'O' word! ■

Trevor Ward
Managing Director
W Hospitality Group, Lagos

www.w-hospitalitygroup.com



Back to the future of travel

'Analogue is the new digital'. That's the expression trend analysts use to describe today's general shift away from impersonal technology and services to those with a (real) human touch. But we see a more blended scenario when it comes to professional corporate travel services.

We know that the corporate traveller of today demands real-time updates and fast, online booking channels and support services, preferably managed via a personal device. Employees are also cost-conscious and there is evidence to suggest poor adoption of company booking tools and breaking from company travel policy boils down to a lack of knowledge through company ranks.

Travel management companies (TMCs) have evolved with the times, investing in technology that

meets the demands of modern road warriors. However, a blended approach means customers still enjoy human encounters when and where it counts.

Via smart booking apps, employee travel bookings are customised, while Artificial Intelligence is beginning to fulfil more automated functions, freeing up consultants to perform other, hands-on tasks. Rather than a regression back to the 'analogue' era, digital solutions combined with personal consulting are driving employee satisfaction and productivity levels.

Based on a recent study by the Harvard Business Review, in partnership with Egencia and published by Skift, tight travel budgets and overly strict travel policies don't make for happy or productive employees.

The report surveyed 587 business leaders, mostly in Europe and the US, and highlighted the

benefits of working with a single TMC. The findings underlined the need to educate staff about TMC booking tools and services, which will encourage compliance and maximise travel management benefits for corporations of any size.

ASATA members are seeing an uptick in corporate travel now that the general elections are behind us. But, to realise the benefits and maintain personal business relationships, companies need to travel.

By booking with an ASATA-accredited TMC, companies across the region can assure travelling employees of expert, personalised service and the best price through a careful mix of personal consulting and smart digital solutions. ■

Otto de Vries
ASATA CEO



CWT MEETING & EVENTS

Your group travel needs the expertise & experience it deserves to make it a success. Let CWT manage it all for you

Contact Vanessa Govender
Email:
vangovender@mycwt.co.za
or Cell: 082 383 0697





Holding firm

The global MICE market remains strong, but Africa still has much work to do, before it becomes a major player.





The African MICE industry has a long way to go.

That's before it can claim to be a serious global player.

Sure, Africa has much going for it – beautiful scenery, beaches, mountain and bush; wildlife; stunning hotels; friendly people; and affordability, to name just a few, but the stats don't lie and the continent is still only getting a small piece of the pie, when it comes to its share of the global MICE market.

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) releases its much-anticipated rankings every year, and whilst these rankings focus only on the number of international association meetings or conferences staged in each city and country for the year, they are a useful bellwether of a country/continent/city's standing in the global MICE space.

Consider this – the 2018 ICCA rankings report, which was released fairly recently, showed that there were a total of 12,937 rotating association meetings in 2018 – an increase of 379 additional

meetings compared to the previous year. Yet, according to ICCA, Africa hosted only 3% of them.

Europe was out in front with 52%, followed by Asia-Pacific (23%), North America (11%), and Latin America (9%), while, interestingly, the Middle East captured only 1% of the market, despite the efforts of Dubai and its active convention bureau. Scale and size are clearly not on the side of Dubai, and they could do with some support from other Middle Eastern countries.

Coming back to the African performance in the ICCA rankings, South Africa was the continent's top performer with 100 association meetings in 2018. That placed the country 39th in the world ICCA rankings, ahead of Morocco (56th), Egypt (joint-68th), Kenya (joint-68th), and Rwanda (70th). Significantly, second-placed Morocco hosted 45 association meetings, showing just how much South Africa dominates Africa in this space.

Drilling down a bit further, Cape Town headed the list for African cities, at number 63 with 42 association meetings, followed by

“ While we are pleased that the sector brings in millions of Rands worth of foreign direct spend, what is crucial is that the business events industry fuels the knowledge economy ”

Kigali (103rd), Marrakech (115th), Nairobi (129th), and Cairo (143rd).

SOUTH AFRICA

It shouldn't be a surprise that South Africa is out in front.

It has the most developed infrastructure, as well as a history of hosting big conferences, never mind its status as one of Africa's biggest economies.

So, let's look at those numbers.

Speaking at this year's Meetings Africa tradeshow, former Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, said that business tourism had “earned its place at the economic table”. He also revealed that the sector earned R71 billion (\$4.84b) in revenue and overall contributed R115 billion (\$7.85) to South Africa's GDP.

Maslow

IT'S HIGH TIME BUSINESS MEETS LEISURE

Situated in the heart of Menlyn Maine, The Maslow Time Square is Sun International's 238-room specialist business hotel. Not only a destination for professionals, but a portal for travellers. Boasting 17 floors that offer everything from business to leisure with tempting eateries, a relaxing business lounge and 13 bespoke conference rooms.

For the perfect balance of business and pleasure, be our guest.

Sun The Maslow TIME SQUARE

THE MASLOW TIME SQUARE

209 Aramist Avenue, Pretoria,
Gauteng, South Africa
Tel: 0860 846 377 / 0860 TIMESQ
Central Reservations: +27 11 780 7800
timesquare.reservations@suninternational.com

Sun International

Three years ago, the South African government approved R90 million (\$6.14m) to establish a bidding support programme to propel the business events industry. The grant enabled South Africa to bid more aggressively for international association conferences, meetings, incentives and exhibitions.

Fast-forward three years and the country's Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, said at the opening of the annual congress of the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI) in Durban, that during the 2018-2019 financial year, South Africa had a target of 105 submissions for business events.

In conjunction with the city and provincial convention bureaus, the South Africa National Convention Bureau submitted 108 bids, a 14.8% increase compared to the previous financial year.

The 108 submissions included 94 meetings, incentives and conferences – representing a combined estimated economic impact of R2.4 billion (\$164m) – and 16 exhibitions with a combined value of R135 million (\$9.2m).

The submissions have a combined potential to generate 501 event days. To date, 29 of the bids have been converted into secured events, with three lost to competing destinations and 61 still awaiting outcomes. Over 55% of these bid submissions were for association conferences and 30% for corporate meetings and incentives, dominated by the medical and life sciences sectors.

"While we are pleased that the sector brings in millions of Rands worth of foreign direct spend, what is crucial is that the business events industry fuels the knowledge economy in two ways," said Mahlalela. "Firstly, when South Africa hosts an international association or a global corporate event, our local professionals and industry leaders are exposed to cutting-edge research, expertise and knowledge, as well as excellent networking opportunities with global leaders in the field. Secondly, by hosting international events in areas where South Africa is a global leader, the country is given an opportunity to showcase its expertise to a high-level international audience. It provides exceptional networking opportunities which could lead to further investment and growth."

To ensure that South Africa's business events industry has the biggest impact

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

If you're looking for something different for your board meeting, conference or incentive trip, you might want to consider hopping on the train. Specifically, South Africa's The Blue Train, which has been around for some time, but in November re-positioned itself to place more of a focus on the MICE industry.

"There is a need within the market for that different, off-the-beaten-track experience – a need for memorable experiences that effectively engage stakeholders, and experiences that are exclusive and can be tailored to meet specific needs," says Vincent Monyake, Executive Manager at The Blue Train.

Corporates are able to hire out The Blue Train for their engagement and these private charters span a range of experiences:

- Lunch or dinner experience in Pretoria or Cape Town that typically lasts 6-8 hours. This is called 'A Trip to Nowhere' and guests are treated to a five-course gourmet meal, whilst onboard entertainment can be arranged. A Trip to Nowhere accommodates up to 80 people.
- A return overnight trip from Pretoria or Cape Town. Guests here are treated to a complete experience, with access to suites and personal butlers, gourmet lunches, dinners, high teas and breakfasts, open bar, hand-made Cuban cigars and onboard entertainment.
- A safari experience from Pretoria to the Kruger Park and back. This includes game drives, a bush breakfast, and a boma dinner.

THE SUPPLIER VIEW

Neelma Maru – Director: Sales & Marketing
Mövenpick Hotel & Residences Nairobi

1. **Biggest MICE talking points?** Big meeting spaces; culinary experiences; technology
2. **What type of requests are you seeing?** Clients looking for a one-stop shop; working lunches as opposed to buffet lunches; clients more sensitive about value for money
3. **Spend in the Nairobi conferencing space?** Meeting enquiries up, but spend down
4. **How are you using technology to strengthen your offering?** Free wireless high-speed internet in all meeting rooms, as well as advanced technology systems, including presentation screens, video conferencing, tele-conferencing and mirror technology

THE SUPPLIER VIEW

Henri-Basil Hearne – PR & Communications Manager
Time Square

1. **Biggest MICE talking points?** Venue technology
2. **What type of requests are you seeing?** Complicated audio-visual and presentations; bigger set designs; strange venue set-ups; over the top performances
3. **How prevalent is the 'confex' theme/element?** We've seen an increase, due to our large space, which offers many options
4. **Spend in the SA conferencing space?** The market is very competitive and no property will ever be a 100% satisfied. At the moment we are positive that the market will always look up and continue to grow
5. **How are you using technology to strengthen your offering?** Polycom telephone conference facilities; full video conference facilities; digital signage options; a preferred AV supplier in MGG Productions; whilst it's worth noting that the Sun Arena is one of the biggest and most versatile venues in the country

“ South Africa’s proactivity in actively seeking out business in the global MICE space is very much in line with one of the current international trends identified by ICCA, called ‘Beyond Bidding’. ”

on the country’s knowledge economy, the South Africa National Convention Bureau is focusing its efforts on attracting events in economic sectors that have been identified by government as priority sectors for future development.

These include manufacturing, with a specific focus on areas where South Africa excels, including the automotive, chemical, pharmaceutical, agri-processing, electronics and biofuels sectors.

“Hosting major events in these sectors can contribute significantly in accelerating macro-economic benefits and demonstrates that

the country has the intellectual property to compete globally,” said Mahlalela.

South Africa’s proactivity in actively seeking out business in the global MICE space is very much in line with one of the current international trends identified by ICCA, called ‘Beyond Bidding’.

This refers to the role of destinations and convention centres in the winning of association conferences. This trend, which is mapped out in ICCA’s ‘Third Wave’ report, tracks the expanding role played by cities and venues in staging events. Whereas historically

the model has been ‘tourism and logistics led’, with the destination acting as a grateful host to the meeting and deriving economic benefits from increased business tourism traffic, ICCA has highlighted an evolution in destinations and venues supporting events through their own intellectual and economic capital.

INCENTIVES

One of the leading trade associations in the incentive travel industry, SITE (Society for Incentive Travel Excellence), monitors the long-term success of the industry. It operates in two ways; firstly by measuring the level of confidence that businesses demonstrate in the results offered by incentive travel programmes; secondly, by measuring the economic business outlook for these companies. In both respects, according to SITE, the global



FANCOURT

1994 | SOUTH AFRICA | 2019

DISCOVER THE
BUSINESS PLAYGROUND
OF SOUTH AFRICA - SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE BUSINESS AND PLEASURE

FancourtSA fancourtsa fancourtsa

Reservations 044 804 0010 or reservations@fancourt.co.za

www.fancourt.com



MICE TRENDS

This is according to Benchmark, a US-based global independent hospitality management company, operating 80 hotels, resorts, and conference centres, with the group's top meeting trends announced by Ted Davis, Benchmark's Chief Sales and Marketing Officer.

- 1. Privacy is the #1 Technology Requirement of Planners today!**
Yes, super-fast and reliable wi-fi throughout a property is a must, but it must be secure!
- 2. Food for the Soul**
Food that is fresh and locally sourced, in-season when flavour is most robust, presented in small bites, and enjoyed interactively-family style.
- 3. Don't Facebook me. Don't Tweet me!**
It's not that professional meetings planners aren't sociable. It's just that email by far continues to be the most preferred method of communication.
- 4. Preference for Independents**
Flexibility, customization, authentic and unscripted experiences all rank high in the minds of planners today, as does the feeling that independent properties excel in providing these for groups needing to create memorable and highly productive meetings.
- 5. What Millennials Want from Meeting Venues**
State-of-the-art technology, multiple plug-ins and USB ports for their myriad of devices in the meeting room,

public spaces and in their guest room, entertaining and fun activities on property and outside, non-traditional seating and meeting arrangements to enhance engagement in meetings during the day.

- 6. Curated Travel**
Curated travel for groups (and their spouses/partners) on or off property is of very high importance.
- 7. Millennials Team Build Differently!**
Bringing groups together interactively and family-style as a culinary team is red hot. But planners are also looking for entertainment to be included in team-building, so learning is not only instructive and flavourful, but great fun to enhance learning.
- 8. Cocktails, S'mores and Barges**
Believe it or not, the most popular after-hours meetings group scene is gathering around an outdoor fire pit on property, kicking back and relaxing with colleagues over cocktails.
- 9. Speedy Response and Pay Commissions Promptly**
Lightning fast response to RFPs is essential to winning business with planners today.
- 10. Work/Life Balance**
Wellness is huge with professional meeting planners today.

Source: Benchmark

incentive market is currently in good health.

This confidence is confirmed by the Incentive Travel Industry Index 2018 Report, a new report that saw SITE partner with the Incentive Research Foundation and the Financial and Insurance Conference Professionals. The report noted that both budgets and the amount of incentive travel trips being booked were up in 2018. It stated that over half (54%) of buyers reported an increase in budgets year-on-year, with the median per person spend remaining \$4,000, and with corporates spending more (\$4,550) and incentive agencies less (\$3,500). The amount of incentive programme trips was also up by 65%, which the report attributed to 'company growth and optimism in the economy'.

The report also stated that the reason for the continued

use of incentive programmes by businesses was attributed to 'sales' and 'profitability'. However, it stated that more importance was being given to 'building relationships between management and employees'. Almost 70% of buyers said their programmes were effective at achieving business objectives. However, with this growth and confidence comes increased cost, and the industry continues to wrestle with supply and demand dynamics that impact on its profitability, the report added.

Finally, the report picked up on three incentive trends.

Firstly, the fact that over two-thirds of corporate bookers of incentive travel include meetings in their incentive programs, which underlines the increasing merging of different sectors of the industry. Secondly, the fact that 'wellness is the new golf' and supports

the trend of planners including wellness activity in incentive programmes. Lastly, the increase in 'all-inclusive' destinations. This was partly due to cost saving measures, particularly by incentive agencies.

CONCLUSION

ICCA CEO, Senthil Gopinath, wraps things up quite nicely.

"Our industry is facing challenges from saturation, consolidation and new entrants to erosion of traditional business models and fragmentation," he says. "There are also great opportunities, including market growth, disruptive innovation, digitisation, new players, less market barriers, new audiences and new scalable models. Alongside all these developments, the number of events is continuing to grow exponentially." Nicely put. ■



SEPTEMBER SPRING SPECIAL

Starting from as little as R640pp sharing with our room only special offer. Excludes breakfast. Valid for travel until 30 September 2019.

T's and C's Apply.



*Experience Cape Town.
At The President.*



TAKE A BREAK AT CAPE TOWN'S BEST LOVED FAMILY HOTEL

School holiday plans sorted.

Get 35% OFF until 30 September 2019. **KIDS UNDER 12 STAY FREE.** Full breakfast included. Kids welcome pack on arrival.

T's and C's Apply.



*Experience Cape Town.
At The President.*

BOOK NOW! All Business Traveller Africa readers will receive a bottle of wine and welcome hamper when booking using the code: BTA



JOHANNESBURG - SINGAPORE



Singapore Airlines Airbus A350-900 - Business Class

BACKGROUND: With its hub at Changi International Airport, Singapore Airlines flies to 62 international destinations in 32 countries. The A350-900 – with its ultra-quiet business class cabin – was introduced on the Johannesburg route in 2016. Flights from O.R. Tambo International in Johannesburg and Cape Town International Airport depart every day. Flight time to Singapore is usually 10 hours and 25 minutes.

CHECK-IN: There was no queue at the counter as I was the only business class passenger checking in. The ground staff member was professional and courteous, helping me with 'fragile' stickers for my scuba diving equipment. You may take two pieces of checked luggage, at a maximum of 40 kilograms together, and a maximum dimension of 158cm. Check-in online is available from 48 hours to one-and-a-half hours before departure, but I prefer to do it in person. I was allocated my preference of a window seat near to the front of the plane.

LOUNGE & BOARDING: Passport control was moderately busy, but with a steady stream, so I was through quickly. Singapore Airlines uses the Azure lounge at ORTIA, which is adequate but nothing special. It was easy to eschew the hearty buffet fare, knowing that the business class meal was likely to be refined cuisine, accompanied by curated wines. Priority boarding was on time. A wide selection of national and international magazines and newspapers were available on a trolley outside the plane door. Warmly greeted by immaculately-groomed cabin crew,

then escorted to my seat, I accepted the steaming hot towel to refresh my hands, before sipping a flute of Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve French champagne.

THE SEAT: In business class there are 42 individual cubicles, across two cabins, with a padded leather 71cm seat that has two automated positions of 'lazy-Z' and 'sundeck'. When you are ready to sleep, cabin crew will help you to unfold the seat into its fully-reclining flat position. Configuration is 1:2:1, so all seats have direct aisle access. Storage is ample, with generous overhead compartments, plus stowage space in the cubicle. Amenities include noise-cancelling headphones for the audio and video, with 46cm personal screens for the KrisWorld in-flight entertainment system, AC power, individual USB and laptop charging point, and a PC/tablet holder. Non-slip socks and an eye mask were in the pod, with all other amenities available in a drawer in the toilet.

THE FLIGHT: Departure was relaxed and taxiing onto the runway was on time. Shortly after take-off I was handed a menu and snacks and drinks were handed out. My height-adjustable table was covered with a white damask table cloth and set restaurant-style with porcelain crockery and stainless steel cutlery. My wine of choice - a 2017 Bouchard & Fils Pouilly-Fuissé was served in a stemless wine glass. Supper included a starter of Sesame Duck Breast, followed by a choice of main course between Beef Tournedo, Prawn and Pork Dumpling, and Chicken with Fettuccine. Although I requested rare

beef, it arrived overcooked and dry. My hostess apologised profusely and offered another choice, which I de-clined. Dinner ended with strawberry ice-cream and a selection of cheese. When cabin lights were dimmed and my bed made up with a fitted sheet and light duvet, I managed five hours of good sleep. A light lunch with Parma Ham as an appetizer, with a choice of Pork Bolognaise, Stir-fried Prawns or Chicken Tikka Masala, was served. The curry was tasty, whilst the TWG teas were particularly interesting, so I tried several kinds.

ARRIVAL: We touched down on time and exit was immediate. I walked ahead of passengers from other seating classes to passport control, which was efficient and organised. On entry to Singapore, your passport is scanned and new fingerprint technology used to record your thumb prints, before your passport is stamped. Note that when exiting the country, automated lanes accept your passport and check your prints on the BioScreen system, so no exit stamp is given. A visa is not required for South African passport holders.

VERDICT: A luxurious and relaxing experience, whilst the 22h30 departure time suited me and the hospitality was unequivocally the best I have ever experienced. ■

Gillian McLaren

FACT FILE

W: singaporeair.com



NEW YORK, USA



AC Hotel New York Downtown

BACKGROUND: One of two AC Hotels in New York (the other is in Times Square), this one opened in October 2018. AC Hotels are select service hotels, which means they don't have a concierge or 24-hour room service. Many, though, offer additional services, and this hotel has a bar, a lounge for relaxing and working in, a breakfast area, a good fitness centre and even a meeting room.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? It's a new building, specifically a 336-foot-tall tower with 33 storeys. For the first few storeys it is fairly nondescript in terms of exterior, but look up and you'll see how the window and the facade have been cleverly alternated to allow the maximum number of rooms to have views of the East River. Service was quick at check-in and I was lucky that my room was ready at 13h00, which I really appreciated as I'd just flown in from Frankfurt. There are three very swift lifts which didn't cause any irritating waits even when going to the upper floors. In reception there is an AC Store selling some snacks and some local chocolate and candles. Staff were very helpful and offered advice on everything from restaurants and bars to the quickest and most affordable ways to get to Newark for a morning flight.

WHERE IS IT? Next to the Seaport Historic District, but also the Financial District of Downtown. Fulton St station is around a 10-minute walk away and you can walk to the World Trade Centre in about 15 minutes. There are loads of new bars and restaurants. JFK Airport is about a 40-minute drive away, though I

took the Air Train and then the A train, and got there in about 75 minutes, and for only \$7.50.

ROOMS: There are 274 hotel rooms, roughly around 10 per floor, right the way up to the 30th storey. There are some rooms on the sixth floor with balconies, though these haven't been opened yet. Otherwise, room categories are 76 'double double' rooms (that's what they call them and they do have two double beds in them) and 198 King rooms. They are a good size – 22m² – and have laminate floors, material coverings to the walls in a sort of arty brown, and a work desk with two power points and two USB points. There are also plenty of plugs/power points including on both sides of the bed in my King room. Wi-fi is super fast and free. The shower had a choice of rain shower and power shower, the latter definitely was powerful since when I turned it on it hit me in the face and drove me out of the bathroom. I fought bravely back though lost one towel to terminal dampness in the battle. There are Korres amenities from Greece in the rooms and large 50-inch flatscreen TVs in the rooms, which have the function of allowing you to stream your own content from your device through them – useful if you have Netflix or simply want to watch YouTube on it. The rooms have a coffee machine (you can make tea with it as well), and an empty fridge (two small bottles of water are provided). There's a 'hydration station' on both floor 2 and in the basement (called The Cellar here), where you can fill up your own bottles.

FOOD AND DRINK: The second floor AC Lounge serves as both a lounge in the afternoon and a bar in the evening, and it's where you get the buffet breakfast in the morning – which is cold, but with two hot egg dishes on offer. It also has Spanish tapas, a choice of quiche/tarts and some cheeses, breads and meats. There is a library area to one side and the use of an Apple computer with printer for boarding passes etc.

BUSINESS FACILITIES: There is a small boardroom-style meeting room on the basement floor which would seat 10-12 people.

LEISURE FACILITIES: There's a fitness centre on the basement floor with a good selection of equipment.

VERDICT: This is a great hotel in a good location for the Financial District and Downtown. Select service it may be, but I found the staff helpful and didn't miss the concierge or 24-hour room service. ■

Tom Otley ■

FACT FILE

CONTACT

A: 151 Maiden Lane, New York City
T: +1 212-742-1900
W: marriott.com



Kananelo Makhetha

CEO – Club Travel Corporate

Powering ahead

Corporate travel clients demand control and visibility of their travel spend and Club Travel Corporate is catering for this by developing and delivering solutions that have a positive impact on the productivity and profitability of its clients' businesses. CEO Kananelo Makhetha says that this approach follows a broader trend in SA's corporate TMC trade, where participants are increasingly prioritising technology to enhance their end-to-end offerings as well as to support staff to do their jobs better.

Q: What's your view on the state of corporate travel in South Africa?

A: The economic stagnation that South Africa is currently experiencing has led to corporates assessing their entire operational spend to see where they can cut costs, including business travel. At Club Travel Corporate we are driving solutions that bring sustainable discounts and simplicity to corporate travel buyers. Essentially, we want to be the leading provider of travel management solutions that help corporates maximise their return-on-investment and enable business travellers to hit the ground running.

Q: What are you, as a corporate travel TMC, doing to remain relevant and prosperous in this environment?

A: We are listening to our customers and developing systems and technology that super-charge their experience and add measurable value to all our stakeholders. We place importance on the training and development of our teams while automating processes that previously got in the way of an optimal customer experience. We recognise that consumer and corporate travel markets increasingly favour technology-driven solutions and we will continue to respond to these preferences with a blend of machine-assisted human expertise.

Q: What's the biggest talking point for TMCs in South Africa, currently?

A: In the current economic climate, the conversation is largely around cost cutting and what can be done to accelerate operational efficiencies while not abandoning the connection we have established with customers over more than 12 years serving

the corporate sector. TMCs are focused on making sure the traveller experience is aligned with the expectations of a constantly evolving tech society. Areas of focus include creating a more convenient traveller experience and improved duty of care.

Q: Where does technology fit into the conversation?

A: The industry is embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution and is still learning how to extract maximum value from data and new technologies such as A.I. In the not too distant future, I expect there will be wholesale disruption in our industry made possible by technology-driven solutions. Currently, technology facilitates the use of self-service, cloud-based booking tools that can be integrated with clients' HR and ERP systems. Already we are seeing how this has helped automate cost, profile and expense management. Clients and travel managers now have access to information, itineraries and reports on their desktops, laptops and mobile devices. Different systems and applications are being combined and are able to communicate with each other in order to offer clients a lot more value. GDS' continue to innovate way beyond traditional content aggregation in order to provide more benefits to clients. Client-facing staff are enabled and freed by technology so that they can focus on quality consulting and relationships with people. We see technology as an ally of our people, not to automate them out of a job.

Q: Are you managing to work sharing economy services such as Uber and Airbnb into the corporate travel programmes of your clients?

A: Yes, and we have gone a step

further to integrate additional content providers such as SafariNow and Nightsbridge on our Travellinck Corporate online booking tool.

Q: Does Club Travel Corporate have plans to grow its footprint outside of SA?

A: Yes, but not through traditional bricks and mortar. Our online booking tools can be used outside SA and we intend to promote them further afield. In addition, we recently joined forces with the Travelstart Group and will be leveraging its tech expertise to deliver digital product innovation and remain competitive in the market.

Q: How would you compare the SA corporate travel market with that of the rest of Africa?

A: In SA, access to and penetration of technology is growing faster than in most African countries. South Africa has adopted lodge card payments and now virtual cards which has seen lesser take up in other parts of the continent. Self-service booking tools also enjoy a high rate of adoption in SA.

Q: Have you noted any interesting international TMC trends that you feel are relevant to the SA market?

A: Consolidation and M&A activity at global TMC level will continue to have an impact on the local industry. International TMCs are also driving the local implementation of globally-tested technological solutions.

Q: Where would you like to see Club Travel in 10 years' time?

A: As a market-leading technology-focused solutions provider to travel and related industries. ■



Ashish Kapur
Country Manager
South Africa -
Cathay Pacific

Asian connection

Asian airline Cathay Pacific has been operating flights between Hong Kong and Johannesburg for 28 years and last year introduced a seasonal flight from Cape Town, with healthy flight loads on both routes. **Ashish Kapur**, Cathay's Country Manager for South Africa, joined *Business Traveller* for a chat and update on the airline's African presence.

Q: What's the Cathay Pacific view on Africa and where does it fit into the airline's strategy?

A: Africa is a continent with dynamic trading hubs, rapidly growing economies and also a popular tourist hub. We recognize the need for direct connections from Asia into Africa, especially during the African summer which is the tourism peak. Hence, this seasonal flight to Cape Town has been a great introduction to meet the growing demand. While we operate out of Johannesburg and Cape Town, almost 20-30% of our bookings originate from other cities in Africa. This is immense potential that is displayed by offline markets in the country and definitely an opportunity for growth.

Q: Any new African routes in the pipeline?

A: We have recently launched our flight out of Cape Town to capitalize on the opportunities the market beholds. It is a promising market and we aim to maximize potential from our current routes before we look at expanding our network in the country further.

Q: Would you consider expanding the seasonal Cape Town service to year-round?

A: The South African market has been very welcoming. Our trade partners and customers have shown great excitement about the non-stop flight into Hong Kong. Whilst we are keen to operate the Cape Town service year-round, currently we are focusing on maximising the potential from our existing routes.

Q: What's your view on the state of aviation in Africa?

A: The African international aviation space has been growing rapidly and we are happy to be a part of it. In the last few years, there has been a phenomenal

increase in the number of international carriers entering and expanding their services in the African market. As per IATA's reports, the African aviation market is expected to become one of the fastest growing aviation regions within the next 20 years, with an annual expansion rate of almost 5%. The international airlines operating in the region connect Africa to every part of the world. This has led to expansion of the aviation sector in the region and we are sure it will grow exponentially in the future.

Q: Which aircraft does Cathay Pacific use on its Johannesburg and Cape Town routes, and why?

A: Our fleets are known to be one of the youngest in the world. We have deployed the A350-900 from Cape Town and the 777-300ER out of Johannesburg. We have a three-cabin configuration option for our customers to choose from – business, premium economy and economy. From Cape Town we operate one of our latest products in the fleet, which offers the passengers a whole new experience when they are flying. Our award-winning seats, all-new in-flight entertainment with a wealth of new content, and wi-fi connectivity on-board, ensures our passengers have a pleasant and comfortable journey.

Q: How much business travel do you see on your Johannesburg route, in terms of a rough percentage of the traffic?

A: We see a very healthy mix of business and leisure traffic with high demand for business travel into Hong Kong, China and Japan.

Q: Predominantly, what types of industries are making use of this flight between Hong Kong and South Africa?

A: We have strong penetration into industries like automobile and

perishables, and witness a surge of traffic for the trade fairs in China.

Q: Have there been any recent changes to the business class offering on the Johannesburg flight?

A: We are progressively rolling out our new business class service that improves customers' experience both on the ground and on board. We have launched a contemporary dining experience – a new à la carte menu with cabin crew conducting one-on-one menu discussions and taking individual meal orders. Most courses are hand-delivered, creating a quieter and calmer cabin environment, particularly on late night flights. Customers can select from multiple courses or opt for a light express alternative. Last year, we launched our new inflight dining concept, Hong Kong Flavours – Hong Kong favourites inspired by a dynamic food culture and vibrant heritage. We recently introduced The Sanctuary by Pure Yoga at the Pier Business Class Lounge at Hong Kong International Airport. The lounge is a 65m² area divided into two zones where customers can practice yoga and meditate

Q: Where would you like to see Cathay Pacific's African presence in 10 years' time?

A: The Cape Town service is an extension of our vision to capitalise on the right markets and grow our network in a sustainable manner. Similarly, in the next decade we aim to expand our services to other countries across Africa. ■



CEO
Thornybush Collection has appointed **Joanne Dickson** as its new CEO. She takes over the reins from Nic Griffin who has held the position for the

last 11 years. Dickson joins the team with a wealth of knowledge and over 25 years' experience within the travel industry, most recently as Managing Director and CEO of Go2Africa until 2015. Following four years overseas – the last six months of which she spent working as a volunteer teacher at the Bali Wise hospitality foundation – she has returned to South Africa and the safari industry.



CEO
Travelport has named **Greg Webb**, a proven leader with over 20 years of experience in the travel technology industry, as CEO, and he will also join

Travelport's Board of Directors. Webb brings deep industry knowledge and a strong track record of commercial and operational execution. Most recently, he served as SVP and General Manager of Oracle Hospitality, where he was responsible for strategy, enablement, development, sales, service and support. Prior to Oracle, Webb was Vice-Chairman at Sabre. Webb has also served as Chief Information Officer of BellSouth. He earned an MBA with an emphasis in marketing from Louisiana Tech University and a bachelor's degree in advertising from Southern Methodist University in Dallas.



CEO
The Board of Mango Airlines SOC has appointed **Nico Bezuidenhout** as CEO with effect from 1 October. Bezuidenhout has 18 years senior-

level experience, 13 of which as Chief Executive Officer. He has extensive aviation experience, having been a member of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board, a past International Air Transportation Association (IATA) AGM President, past Chairman of the Airlines Association of Africa (AFRAA) and a past EXCO member of the Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA). He was one of the main authors of South African Airways' Long Term Turnaround Strategy (LTTS) in 2013 and was responsible for its

adoption by the shareholder. He served as an acting SAA CEO on two previous occasions.



Joint CEO
The Comair board has appointed aviation sector veteran **Glenn Orsmond** as Joint CEO: Non-Airline Business and Financial Services.

Orsmond, a chartered accountant, was Comair's Financial Director for eight years from 1995 to 2003. He has had an illustrious career in the South African aviation industry, having held senior leadership roles including Financial Director at Sun Air, co-founding Group Financial Director, Group CEO and co-founder of 1Time, CEO at Jetworx Aircraft Maintenance and most recently CFO at Star Air Cargo.



Director
FCM Travel Solutions has appointed **Melanie Walljee** as a new Director. Walljee joined the Flight Centre Travel Group 12 years ago as a Travel Consultant. Her rise through the ranks

has been steady, and she quickly moved from Consultant to Team Leader. In 2017, Walljee briefly served as Director and GM of FCM Travel Solutions before becoming Operations Leader and Systems and Implementation Manager at FCM Travel Solutions.



National Sales Manager
Corporate Traveller has appointed **Daniela Kelfkens** its new National Sales Manager. Kelfkens has more than 18 years' experience in

the travel industry, working in various departments of the Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG). Her career started in 2001 as an international travel consultant in a Flight Centre store in Menlyn, Pretoria. She was soon promoted to of Area Leader, first in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the North West and, later, overseeing the Western, Southern and Eastern Cape. Working her way further up the ladder, Kelfkens became General Manager of the FCTG Retail Division in 2009.

General Manager
Shamwari Private Game Reserve has appointed **Theo Cromhout** as its General Manager of Hospitality. For the



past year, Cromhout has been part of the Valor Hospitality team. For the past six months he filled the role as Acting General Manager, on a temporary basis. After matriculating from

Hilton College, Cromhout graduated from Wits Hotel School with a National Diploma in Hotel Management. He went on to attend Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration Professional Development Programme, earning a certification in advanced marketing. He later obtained an Executive MBA from the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. He has worked for leading global hotel brands including Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Taj Hotels, Ascott International Management and Sun International. He also has experience in the luxury safari sector.



General Manager
WingsNaledi has appointed **Zinhle Dlamini** as General Manager (Commercial). Dlamini has a wealth of knowledge gathered over 14

years working in the travel industry in the areas of private air charter, travel management, tour operating and events. As General Manager (Commercial), Dlamini has overall responsibility for the WingsNaledi commercial operations, with a clear objective to work in tandem with the rest of her team in securing new business and retaining current public sector clients.



General Manager
Tsogo Sun has appointed **Jacques Moolman** as General Manager at The Cullinan. Moolman's career with Tsogo Sun started in 2003 when he was appointed

Regional Food & Beverage Manager. After a stint in the Winelands, he moved to Emnotweni Sun in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, in his first position as GM. In 2006, Moolman moved to Drakensberg Sun Resort, which was rebranded under his watch. His next GM position was Beacon Island Resort in Plettenberg Bay in 2009. Moolman went on to open 54 on Bath as the new GM, before moving to Southern Sun Cape Sun in 2014, and then to Southern Sun Waterfront.

A WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCE AT EVERY MILE.

Delta offers a truly premium in-flight experience on all nonstop flights from Africa to the USA including Delta One® flat-bed seats and chef-curated meals on Alessi serviceware. Through the implementation of RFID bag tracking, in-seat power outlets, Wi-Fi and free onboard messaging, we are constantly improving your travel experience both in the air and on the ground.

For more information, please contact your favorite travel agent or visit delta.com.



KEEP CLIMBING



The image shows A330 seats. Smartphone is required for free messaging. Availability varies by aircraft and route; check your listing for details. Terms apply, visit delta.com/wifi. All information correct at time of printing. © 2019 Delta Air Lines, Inc.

Step by step



Jan van der Putten
VICE-PRESIDENT
AFRICA & INDIAN
OCEAN: HILTON
WORLDWIDE

Hilton Worldwide recently celebrated 100 years of operations, during which time it claims to have welcomed over three billion guests and help drive over \$1 trillion in economic impact. But it is not done just yet, and in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region alone has 320 hotels in its development pipeline. It's there that I pick things up with Hilton's Vice-President of Africa & Indian Ocean, Jan van der Putten, over coffee in Johannesburg.

Hilton has had a presence in Africa for over 50 years, but the majority of that growing African footprint has taken the form of properties under the flagship Hilton brand, and one of the more interesting developments in recent years has seen the group introduce 'new' brands to the continent.

As a result, we've seen the introduction of the luxury Conrad Hotels & Resorts brand and the full-service Curio Collection by Hilton and DoubleTree by Hilton brands, along with the 'focused service' Hilton Garden Inn brand.

It's the latter that I would argue has been the most significant, as it's a departure from the 'five-star first' approach and the meeting of a perceived need in Africa for 'mid-market' hotels, due to the continent's growing middle class and contraction of some of Africa's biggest economies.

That approach has seen Hilton roll out Hilton Garden Inn properties in Lusaka (Zambia), Gaborone (Botswana) and Mbabane (eSwatini), with further HGI properties due to open in Windhoek (Namibia) and Umhlanga (South Africa) over the course of the next 18 months.

"You can't put a Hilton everywhere, because in cities where there is limited demand it just doesn't work, and we now have a range of brands that are suited for different locations in secondary cities, or secondary locations in bigger cities," says Van der Putten. "There are a couple more

brands that are suited for African locations, which, step-by-step, we'll launch, but we want to focus, for the time being, on Hilton Garden Inn, because of the strength of that product."

However, that won't mean Hilton will pass up opportunities for some of its premium brands, as shown by the recent announcement of a Canopy by Hilton project being developed in Cape Town's Longkloof Studios and scheduled to open in 2021.

"Canopy is a lifestyle brand and it's innovative, and the area around Longkloof Studios is very 'lifestyle-ish', with a lot of life, young entrepreneurs and new small companies," says Van der Putten. "It's the perfect fit for the Canopy brand."

It's obvious that Van der Putten is bullish about the future of the African continent, but hotels need vibrant and growing economies to thrive, and one would hardly use those adjectives to currently describe some of Africa's bigger economies. Hilton, though, is taking a long-term view and, much like some of its big competitors, the prevailing thinking is that these things work in cycles.

Hilton has already shown that it is prepared to put its money where its mouth is and has been showing its commitment to the continent with the likes of its Hilton Africa Growth Initiative and Hilton Big Five projects.

"We've expressed our confidence in what's happening in Africa, but we are taking it step-by-step," says

Van der Putten. "We're not rushing into developing hotels, but we do see growth."

But can you say of the same of South Africa?

"When the economy starts turning, you'll see domestic business travel coming back and if the South African companies are starting to get more confidence in what happens, then I think you'll see an upswing," he says.

Van der Putten's positivity extends to South Africa's share of the international corporate market.

"International companies don't want to travel around elections, because the media are not necessarily positive about what happens around election time, so I think April and May, and maybe up to and including the end of May, was negatively influenced by the lack of activity in corporate meetings and reduced corporate travel," says Van der Putten. "But, June was positive and the rest of the year looks to be less affected."

Looking further down the track, does Van der Putten remain positive that South Africa can turn itself around?

"Absolutely," he says. "Maybe not in the short-term, but we need to exude confidence and remember that there is so much interest in what happens in Africa, and that South Africa/Johannesburg is the economic centre of Africa, and that won't change anytime soon."

Dylan Rogers ■

RIVONIA



It's hard to believe you're in Jo'burg



SAND RIVER
GUEST HOUSE
★★★★

TWO GREAT GUEST HOUSES



5 minutes from OR Tambo International Airport



KEMPTON PARK

20%
LOWER
THAN ELSEWHERE

WHY PAY MORE FOR **LUXURY RENTAL?**



MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS
R750
FROM/PER DAY



POWERED BY **PASSION**
WWW.**WOODFORD**.CO.ZA

WOODFORD
CAR HIRE