



Arnie Weissmann:
Rocco Forte's growth philosophy: 'If you're uncomfortable someplace, don't go there.' 12

IN OTHER NEWS:
As U.S. rivers flood, Europe's Rhine falls too low for easy cruising. 6
Hotels wage a war of freebies. 8



Donna Tunney:
A canceled flight from Rome morphed into an instructive tale of two suppliers. 72

TRAVEL WEEKLY

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

MAY 16, 2011

['THE PROBLEM IS THAT CONSUMERS CAN'T GET THERE']

As airfares soar, U.S. agents see Europe cruise sales fall

By Donna Tunney

Cruise fares in Europe this summer look like great bargains, with per-day rates well under \$200, even as low as \$100 in some cases. But tack on skyrocketing airfares and the total price is causing sticker shock.

And when you add in concerns about personal safety due to growing political unrest in some destinations, agents find themselves facing a considerable selling challenge.

"People are not booking Europe," said Ross Spalding, president of Crown Cruise Vacations in Princeton, N.J. "The lines are trying to offset the costs of airfare with reduced pricing, significantly reduced in some cases. I'd say this is one of the best years ever for cruise pricing. The problem is that con-

sumers can't get there."

A survey of cruise and other Internet retail sites found that in most cases, airfares are typically exceeding the cost of the cruise.

On Norwegian Cruise Line's site, for example, a 14-day Eastern Mediterranean sailing on the Norwegian Jade in mid-August starts at \$1,438 per person. The air-inclusive rate from New York is \$3,073.

Airfares booked independently through an online travel agency are no better: Chicago to Copenhagen, Denmark, in mid-July, \$2,000; Miami to Naples, Italy, in early August, \$1,200; Boston to Barcelona in late July, \$1,700. The list goes on.

Cruise lines are fiercely marketing discounted rates and other incentives. For example, Holland America Line is offering up to 50% off its Europe cruises. MSC Cruises is pitching a two-category upgrade and 60%

See **AIRFARES** on Page 75

DOT fines online travel sellers, who say the real fault lies with the GDS

By Johanna Jainchill

On May 6, the U.S. Department of Transportation slapped five online travel sellers with a total of \$175,000 in fines for failing to ad-

equately disclose to consumers which flights were being operated under a codesharing arrangement.

The penalties raised the issue of who is responsible for the results ultimately displayed to consumers: the online retailers or the GDSs that distribute information to them.

Consent orders with civil penalties were handed down to Fareportal, \$50,000; American Travel Solutions, \$45,000; AirGorilla, \$30,000; Wholesale Travel Center, \$30,000;

and Automobile Club of New York, \$20,000.

The DOT said its investigation revealed that during the latter half of 2010, the travel sellers in question had "failed to disclose that certain flights listed on their Internet sites

were being operated by a regional carrier on behalf of a major airline."

Each of those retailers blamed its GDS for the lapse. However, the DOT has so far not fined or identified any GDS as a result of its investigation.

The travel sellers said their GDS-provided flight information did not include transparent data about codeshare flights.

AirGorilla told the DOT that it "alerted
See **FINES** on Page 74

Evidence suggests a problem with some codeshare data in Amadeus content.



Powering Global Growth

This year's WTTC Summit will focus on helping tourism tap the potential of emerging markets and their booming middle classes.

BY JOHANNA JAINCHILL PAGE 18

travel product news

Rates for the following are commissionable at 10%, except where noted.

Geringer Global Travel creates 'Gourmet India' package

WESTPORT, Conn. — Geringer Global Travel is offering a luxury culinary experience in India accompanied by chef Prasad Chirmomula.

The Gourmet India package is a 16-day tour of Delhi, Agra, Udaipur, Mumbai, Goa, Cochin and Kumarakom highlighting the cuisines of each region.

The package is priced from \$12,910 per person, double, and departs Oct. 24. Agents will receive a \$500 incentive per person.

The cost covers services of an English-speaking guide and driver; flights within India; hotels; all ground transportation and transfers; all meals and beverages; hands-on cooking classes; culinary demonstrations; private tours; and taxes and gratuities.

Geringer Global Travel

Phone: (877) 255-7438

Web: www.geringerglobaltravel.com

'Wildflowers and Wildlife' plan at Montana's Ranch at Rock Creek

PHILIPSBURG, Mont. — The Ranch at Rock Creek here has created the Wildflowers and Wildlife package for stays through June 15.

The plan, priced from \$720 per person, per night, for a minimum of four nights, includes all meals and beverages, a guided horseback tour and other excursions.

The Ranch at Rock Creek

Phone: (406) 859-6027

Email: reservations@theranchatrockcreek.com

Perillo Tours, Slow Food Italia create culinary tours for Italy

WOODCLIFF LAKE, N.J. — Perillo Tours is offering culinary and cultural tours of Italy in cooperation with Slow Food Italia.

The tours are offered in two itineraries across four regions in Italy: 11 nights in Piedmont and the Italian Riviera and 12 nights in Tuscany and Umbria.

Twelve departures are available between June 17 and Oct. 21, priced between \$4,290 and \$4,590 per person, based on double occupancy.

Perillo Tours

Phone: (800) 431-1515

Web: www.perillotours.com

Great Canadian Travel Co. features seven-night 'Viking Trail' tour

ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland — The Great Canadian Travel Co. is featuring the seven-night Newfoundland & Labrador's Viking Trail Tour.

Eight departures are available between June 3 and Sept. 9. The tour includes a visit to a Viking recreation village in L'Anse aux Meadows, a two-day visit to Gros Morne National Park and a whale-watching tour.

The plan is priced at \$1,885 per person, double, and includes accommodations, transportation and most meals.

Great Canadian Travel Co.

Phone: (800) 661-3830

Web: www.greatcanadiantravel.com

Kahala Resort in Honolulu offers cash-back bonus on bookings

HONOLULU — The Kahala Resort here has instituted a Booking Bonus Program, which offers a cash-back bonus to agents for bookings through June 30.

For every four-night or longer booking made for stays through Dec. 23, agents will receive up to a \$150 bonus.

To qualify, email sales@kahalaresort.com for an application, and return the completed form to the resort's sales department at the time of the booking.

Kahala Resort

Phone: (808) 739-8858

Web: www.kahalaresort.com

To submit an announcement for possible publication in *Travel Product News*, send information to Kimberly Scholz at kscholz@travelweekly.com.



THE PHOTO BY KENNETH KESNOSKI

Qutub Minar tower and ruins in Delhi, India, one of the stops on Geringer Global Travel's 16-day culinary itinerary.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SEVEN STARS RESORT WAIVES TAXES



The pool at Seven Stars Resort.

GRACE BAY, Turks and Caicos — Seven Stars Resort here is offering a tax-free getaway on bookings of at least four nights through May 31.

The plan takes the 11% tax off the entire booking and includes a \$100 resort credit that can be used anywhere on the property. Room rates start at \$600 per night, double.

The package is available for bookings through May 31 for travel through Oct. 15.

Seven Stars Resort

Phone: (866) 570-7777 and mention "tax relief" at time of booking

Web: www.sevenstarsgracebay.com

When your Client says:

"What have you got for us now?" You can say:

EXPEDITION!

Immersive experiences, onboard experts and premium comfort make our expeditions a natural for your savvy clients. Visit our website for info, selling tools and commission details. www.expeditions.com/agent



ALASKA • AMAZON • ANTARCTICA • ARCTIC NORWAY • BAJA CALIFORNIA • COSTA RICA & PANAMA • GALAPAGOS & MORE