

UK OFFICE

October 2016 REPORT

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander
UK Director**

Tour Operators

- **Virgin Atlantic** – We met with Alison Ward, Partnership Development Manager, and Jan McKeown, Trade Partner coordinator, to discuss overall performance of the route and opportunities for joint activity in the future. Alison advised that the Orlando route was performing ok, however there was a shortfall for March which was not offset in April for the shift in Easter. Summer (July, August and September travel months) are a concern, however they feel that this will improve during Jan/Feb campaign. Premium cabins up year on year, so there is still a demand for this business.

Florida, specifically Orlando has dropped off since Brexit and Alison feels that Florida hasn't had the best coverage in the news with the shootings, Zika, elections, hurricane, exchange rates etc. Holiday prices have increased by 18-20% due to exchange rates and confidence from customers isn't there. Customers are trading down, so a shift from 4* to 3* accommodation, with an increase in bookings for villas as better value for money and for the Caribbean routes due to AI. Alison commented that Florida is an expensive destination and the exchange rates have a larger impact compared to a 3-4 night US city break. Overall Sep sale performed well. There has been a drop off since it ended, but that's to be expected.

With regards to their Delta business, they haven't seen a shift of their Orlando business from Virgin as families do want to fly direct. It will be the regular travellers/adults/savvy people/multi-centre holidays who will choose to go indirect on Delta for a more competitive price.

- **Truly Travel** – We met with Arlene McJury, Product and Contract Manager to get an overview of the company and their strategy for growing their long haul business. She advised that Truly Travel provide all of the holiday arrangements for their Teletext Holiday customers, which is direct sell only. Recently we provided Arlene with images and copy, and they are working on adding a St. Pete/Clearwater page onto their Teletext website, which will go live shortly. Our destination is already being promoted on their Beat the Brochure website which offers handpicked hotels to their customers. Arlene advised that they will be developing their programme and will be adding suggested multi-centre itineraries to their website. All of their bookings are made via their call centre, which is based in India and has approximately 500 telephone agents. They currently arrange holidays for over 350,000 passengers a year, but since acquiring Alpharooms, this will take the number to over 800,000 passengers a year. Overall Orlando is selling well for Teletext Holidays due to the activity they have had in market, particularly for 2017 travel as customers still want to travel to Florida despite challenges

with the exchange rate and concerns over Brexit. Once St. Pete/Clearwater programme has been fully integrated, we can discuss marketing opportunities for the future.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **American Sky** – Kathryn Glover, Head of Product, advised that they are starting their very first Sales Academy, with an intake of 15 new recruits starting a two month training programme. We were offered the opportunity to meet with their new sales agents to provide training on St. Pete/Clearwater. We provided a destination overview to their 7 sales agents and gave each agent a brochure, map and giveaway.

TRADE LIAISON

- **TDC** – Presented a 2015/16 recap and market overview at the October TDC Meeting. Also conducted site visits and held meetings with a number of industry partners.
- **Kenwood Travel** – We provided Pete Brudenell, Marketing Manager, with copy and images to update their website. We also made recommendations to the layout as they currently have a St Pete page and a Clearwater Page, which is confusing to the customer with other beach communities promoted under St Pete. We also spoke to Casey Hurford, Product Manager, about adding Treasure Island Beach Resort to their programme. They have already added Opal Sands. We are waiting for an update on when the website has been updated.
- **Scandinavian Sales Mission, November** – We have continued finalising appointments and have distributed invites for the evening events during the sales mission. A solicitation has been sent to our hotel partners to secure 3 prizes of 3 nights in St. Pete/Clearwater, which will be combined with prizes from Visit Orlando, Universal and SeaWorld, and given as a grand prize at each of the evening events for agents. We have kindly been offered prizes from Barefoot Beach Resort, TradeWinds Resorts, Double Tree Beach Resort and Clearwater Marine Aquarium. We have also arranged for brochures to be shipped ahead of our arrival.
- **WTM** – We have finalised our appointments for WTM with Tour Operators and partners including Visit USA, UK. We have also arranged for brochures, maps and giveaways to be sent to Excel for the stand.
- **Travel Planners** – St. Pete/Clearwater was included in the Travel Planners email which was sent to their customer database. The email included a sale message and a price for an Orlando and St. Pete/Clearwater twin centre holiday. Linda Dixey, Product Manager advised that this was offered to us as complimentary.
- **Travel Weekly** – Following on from the VSPC/Experience Kissimmee FAM trip last month, we partnered with Travel Weekly for inclusion in their magazine. This editorial piece included images from the trip, as well as quotes from the agents on their experiences during their time in Florida. We also included our contact information and website details for any agents who require more information about the destinations.

- **Virgin Holidays** – James Killick, Destination Manager, advised that they had just opened a new V-room Retail store within Debenhams in Merry Hill and asked for USA focussed collateral. We provided visitor guides and maps to their sales staff for future use.
- **Visit Florida** – Ahead of her training session at British Airways Holidays in Newcastle, Gill Standeven, Account Manager asked for assistance of what key messages we would like her to highlight regarding St. Pete/Clearwater. We provided her with our key selling point, must do attractions and some images for her presentation. We also arranged for brochures, maps and giveaways to be sent to Newcastle and given to the agents during the training sessions.
- **Virgin Retail** – A meeting has been secured with Georgina Lusted, Senior Product Services Executive to discuss a possible Virgin Retail store sponsorship opportunity. The store sponsorship is an opportunity to brand a Virgin Retail store for a period of 3-5 years.
- **Tesco Brand Affinity Campaign** – We have secured a direct consumer brand affinity campaign with Tesco Supermarkets that will take place from 1st -31st March just after the launch of the UK Consumer Advertising campaign. The Tesco campaign will run as a competition to win a holiday for a family of 4 to St. Pete/Clearwater and will include online elements and a full page spread in the Tesco magazine. We are currently working on securing a tour operator partner to work with us.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners** – We have confirmed participation in a joint 3-month promotion running from January to March 2017 with USAirtours/Travelplanners & Visit Florida. The campaign will include inclusions in TravelPlanners and USAirtours emails to both trade and consumer databases, social media activity and we will also be featured on A2 posters distributed to 3000 travel agencies in the UK.
- **Visit USA Ireland** – We are currently in discussions with The Visit USA Committee in Ireland to see if we will be able to take part in one of their Facebook competitions to offer a hotel stay in St. Pete/Clearwater.
- **Icelandair** – Following the recent news regarding their service to Tampa starting in September 2017, we introduced ourselves to Thorvardur Gudlaugsson, General Sales Manager, Iceland region. We have arranged a meeting at WTM to see how we can work together in the future.
- **TUI Specialist** – We have received the final results for the campaign that ran from April – September and included; Thomson trade newsletter, Travelmood trade newsletter, regional training sessions, Hayes and Jarvis tactical direct mailer, sponsored blog on their website, Facebook post, direct targeted email (multi-centre), and inclusion in the Footprint magazine.
 - Thomson trade newsletter and Travelmood trade newsletter – Each of these newsletters were a full page advert and were distributed to 650+ retail stores throughout the country. The promotion included images and information about the key attractions in the destination.

- 3 Regional trainings – We were able to offer training to 30-60 agents per session, and provided brochures and maps to all of the staff. The training included an evening event in the Peterborough Thomson Superstore, training at their Head office to their reservations team and marketing team, and a 3 day trip in the East Midlands visiting 19 Thomson, Thomas Cook and Coop travel shops to meet with their agents.
 - Hayes and Jarvis tactical direct mailer – As part of their Beaches campaign, this had a circulation on 10,000 customers and was also inserted into the Daily Mail. It generated 21 calls on the unique phone number and generated 111 room nights between the period of 1st – 30th April.
 - Eflyer – This dedicated eflyer was distributed to 650+ retail stores, which included information about the destination, as well as holiday prices for St. Pete/Clearwater and a twin-centre with Tampa Bay.
 - Blog – The blog was promoted on their website which has a reach of approx. 17,000 ABC1C2 customers per month, and focussed on beaches, attractions, food and drink, sports, arts/culture,
 - Facebook post – Organic post had a reach of approx. 10,000 users.
 - Direct targeted email – A direct email was sent to their customer base which has a circulation of 147,000. It had an open rate of 23%, CTR 7%, 46 unique clicks on the offer, 15 calls generated from unique phone number. 191 room nights booked from 29th July when it was sent out to 30th September.
 - Footprints – The September edition had a sports theme, which had a circulation of 10,000 ABC1 Hayes and Jarvis customers, plus 105-200k insertions into the National press.
 - During the campaign, the activity generated 648 room nights (1st Apr – 30th Sep).
- **American Sky** – St. Pete/Clearwater was featured in their Top Canada & USA twin centre direct consumer email. A 10-night holiday price was promoted which included Orlando and St. Pete/Clearwater.
 - **Charter Travel** – We have sent images, copy and videos following a request from Charter Travel as they are wanting to update their website pages for St. Pete/Clearwater.
 - **Ocean Florida** - Discussions are taking place with Lisa Barrington to offer a possible staff incentive in conjunction with a CRM campaign they are looking to possibly run in late November and which they are looking to include us in free of charge.
 - **THG Holidays** – Conversations are taking place with John Bowden at THG Holidays to discuss possible partnership advertising opportunities in Wales in 2017.
 - **Visit Florida** – Provided Visit Florida with our logo for inclusion on the invitations, menu boards etc as part of our sponsorship of the Visit Florida dinner at the Victoria & Albert event during World Travel market in November.
 - **Elegant Resorts** – Following their recent FAM trip to St. Pete/Clearwater, Caroline Beckett, Senior Sales and Marketing Manager, has decided to add the Opal Sands and The Sandpearl Resort to their programme. We have put them in touch directly with Nancy Cimney to discuss further.

- **Ocean Florida** – Muna Abanour, Destination Executive, advised that they were working on their next edition of the brochure. We provided her with copy, key attractions/highlights of the destination and images. We are waiting to approve the brochure page once created by their creative team.
- **Visit USA, Ireland** – We received their monthly stats for September visitation to their website (versus this time last year)
 - 1012 sessions +134%
 - 899 users +145%
 - 872 new visitors +189%
 - 2934 page views +105%
 - 1m17s average time page +37%

Clodagh Oxley also advised that they had received 2015 year end and 2016 YTD Irish visitors to US.

2015 – 450,132 visitors to the US, +12.5% versus 2014.

To date (end of April), 119,267 visitors +2.7%. April was -13.9% due to Easter, however March was +9.7%.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

47

MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

1 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

Thomson opens new concept store

Thomson is promising a 'state-of-the-art booking service' to customers at its new concept store in Essex. The store, at the Intu Lakeside shopping centre, replaces two Thomson branches at the centre and has hi-tech tools including touch screens, interactive maps, a self-service computer for customers to research and book their own holiday and an 'advice bar'. Thomson regional sales manager Jenny Curran said: "We're delighted to be able to offer a modernised store to help our agents provide a state-of-the-art booking service. "The new-look store underlines our commitment to retail stores and we are really excited to welcome people into the store to come and see what's new and how our expert advisors can help them find their perfect holiday like never before." Mayor of Thurrock Cathy Kent attended the opening.

1 October 2016, Source Travel Weekly

Cook bookings down 4% but encouraged by 2017 start

Thomas Cook Group today reported an “encouraging” start to summer 2017 bookings despite an overall 4% slump in sales for this year’s peak holiday period blamed on the volatile situation in Turkey. Excluding Turkey, summer 2016 group-wide bookings were reported to be up by 8%, with growth driven by high volume destinations such as the Balearic and Canary islands and the US alongside smaller destinations such as Bulgaria and Cuba. In a pre-close trading update, Cook said its full year profit guidance remained unchanged. This summer’s bookings from the UK are slightly higher than last year, with average charter selling prices up by 2%. But overall UK average selling prices are down by 5% following planned growth in seat-only sales. Winter 2016-17 bookings from the UK are up by 8% but with prices down by an average of 3%, again due to a higher mix of seat-only business. “For summer 2017, we have seen an encouraging start to bookings, which are ahead across all source markets at this early stage, particularly Continental Europe and Northern Europe. Overall, average selling prices are ahead of last year,” Cook said. Chief executive Peter Fankhauser, giving an overview ahead of full year results to September 30 being released on November 23, said: “The summer season has progressed largely as expected. “Customers’ desire to go abroad on holiday has remained strong with the exception of Turkey where demand continues to be volatile.

2 October 2016, Travel Extra

Visit Florida is launching the 'VISIT FLORIDA Expert', a 60-75 minute programme designed to inform UK and Irish travel agents on Florida. There are five modules, with each followed by a test on the subject matter: geography and Florida overview, attractions, sports and activities, beaches, multi-centre and cruise.

5 October 2016, Source TTG

Florida fears over Hurricane Matthew

Storm warnings have been issued in Florida as Hurricane Matthew moves towards the US. The devastating storm, which struck Haiti with winds gusting up to 145mph yesterday, is making its way northwards after also hitting Jamaica and Cuba. It is forecast to move towards the Sunshine State later in the week and remain a powerful hurricane until at least Thursday night, the National Hurricane Center said. South-eastern Florida was under hurricane and tropical storm warnings, while South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley declared a state of emergency. Evacuations are expected in South Carolina later today to allow more than one million residents to leave the area before the storm hits. “It is probable that electricity will be cut in some areas as a precaution and communication equipment will be unreliable,” the FCO added.

7 October 2016, Source Travel Weekly

Thomas Cook to close 28 high street shops

Thomas Cook is to close 28 high street shops and increase its presence in “higher footfall” shopping centres. Just under 200 staff will be affected by the closures and discussions have already begun with employees. Cook says the vast majority of the staff will be re-deployed but a small number are expected to be made redundant. Twenty one of the shops to close will be Co-operative Travel agencies that were taken over by Cook under the joint venture six years ago and in locations where there is an overlap. All of the 28 shops will close by the end of December. The changes come following a review of its 793 store network. Under the plans, all Cook shops will be classified into two categories – Discovery and Neighbourhood stores. Neighbourhood stores will be those located primarily in high streets while Discovery will be located in shopping centres, out of town retail parks and busy high streets. A number of Discovery stores, previously known as "concept" stores, already operate in several shopping centres and offer free Wi-Fi, online appointment bookings and video and virtual reality technology. The first new Discovery store will open at Westfield Stratford City shopping centre in London in November. A further three Discovery stores are planned at other “prime” locations by the new year. These are yet to be announced. However, they are likely to be in locations where Cook already operates a store which it would look to move into a shopping centre. This will bring the total number of Discovery stores to 14 with a further 15 planned in the next 12 to 18 months. Separately, 50 existing Cook shops will be refurbished following the 50 that have already been renovated. Cook could not confirm the number of shops it would operate by the end of the process. Earlier this week, Cook’s managing director Chris Mottershead said the group is looking to open around 25 shops in the next two years. He also said the Co-operative Travel brand would remain for at least two years. Cook cut 2,500 jobs and closed almost 200 stores in 2013 following losses of £485.3 million. Director of retail and customer experience, Kathryn Darbandi, said: “Our network of stores across the UK remains key to attracting, inspiring and engaging our customers. While a growing number of customers use our digital channels, many want to be able to discuss and arrange holidays face-to-face with knowledgeable people. It is one of the reasons they choose Thomas Cook. “Our store colleagues play a major part in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty, never more evident than in the past year. "As well as helping customers choose the right holiday, our store colleagues have worked tirelessly to assist them when challenging events have meant the need for last minute changes to their schedules. "However, we know we cannot stand still so we are constantly working to improve the format of our stores as well as making sure we have the right stores in the right places to meet the changing demands of our millions of customers.”

9 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

Award-winning airline reveals the CHEAPEST summer 2017 flights to the USA

A LOW-COST airline has put on sale it’s summer 2017 flights to the US, which start as little as £149 one way. Anyone pondering a trip across the Atlantic can do so now at a fraction of the cost. Norwegian Airline has made 360,000 seats available for travel next summer from Gatwick Airport. It comes as the airline continues to introduce the world’s most modern

aircraft - the Boeing 787 Dreamliners. Norwegian Airline has been rapidly growing the number of low-cost flights from the UK and this year alone has launched three new direct routes to the US. The award-winning airline has also been growing its aircraft by bringing new high quality planes. It has been expanding its fleet of jet lag busting Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircrafts, which come in two classes - premium and economy. Norwegian Airlines will be flying from Gatwick to five US airports. And they include: Boston, New York, Ft. Lauderdale-Miami, Orlando, Oakland in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Prices to Boston start from £149 for economy or £449 if you want to fly premium on way. To New York it is £179 for economy or £499 for premium. And of Los Angeles prices start at £199 for economy or £499 for premium. Chief commercial officer at Norwegian, Thomas Ramdahl, said: "We're releasing sizzling fares for next year's summer programmer as low-cost long-haul travel continues to take-off. "With more state-of-the art 787 Dreamliners joining our fleet, UK passengers have more options to travel in fresh aircraft without breaking the bank." He added: "As we continue our UK expansion, consumers can expect to see more of Norwegian as we're making it easier to travel in comfort with affordable fares to the top US destinations." The story comes after Gatwick Airport signed a deal to potentially build a second runway by 2025. The London based airport has announced a partnership with engineering company Bechtel. Bechtel has been working with Gatwick Airport for the last two years to develop a midfield terminal alongside a second runway.

9 October 2016, Source Travel Trade Outbound Scandinavia

Icelandair beats SAS and Norwegian

Icelandair has announced further expansion of its global network with new year-round service from Tampa International Airport (TPA), and seasonal flights from Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). Flights begin May 30, 2017 from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with four weekly non-stop flights to Iceland and on September 7, 2017 from Tampa Bay, Florida with two weekly flights. "We examined 10 to 15 possible destinations before we chose Philadelphia and Tampa. When we choose a new destination at least four things must be met: 1. How many passengers coming from Iceland. 2. How many passengers coming to Iceland 3. How many transatlantic passengers. 4. Is there a business case. Out of these concrete criteria we chose Philadelphia and Tampa. So Icelandair will now offer service to 18 North American gateways, "said Birgir Holm Gudnason, CEO of Icelandair to TTO Scandinavia at Vestnorden on Iceland. The gateways 18 are: Boston, Chicago-ORD, Denver, Edmonton, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York-JFK, Newark, Seattle, Tampa Bay, Toronto, and Washington, D.C.; and seasonal service from Anchorage, Halifax, Montreal, Orlando, Philadelphia, Portland, OR and Vancouver, BC. Connections through Icelandair's hub at Keflavik International Airport are available to more than 25 destinations in Scandinavia, the U.K. and Continental Europe. "With 18 gateways to North America, Icelandair have more destinations to North America than SAS and Norwegian. What is your comment on this?" "We are proud of it. But it is not the most important. What really matters is that we can create some routes that can attract passengers from Europe to the US and Canada and vice versa. Only 15 percent of Icelandairs passengers are from Iceland. About 50 percent is transatlantic, "says Birgir Holm Gudnason. "How many new destinations will Icelandair have in 2017?" "No new routes in 2017. We will have two new Boeings 767 in 2017. So we have a

total of four Boeing 767th more frequencies including Portland and new aircraft provides 15 percent more capacity in 2017. Boeing 767 will have a longer flight time of about 12 hours. It allows new destinations in North America or flight to the airports where we have slot restrictions include in Europe.” “Should Icelandair also start flying to Asia, Japan and China with the new larger aircraft?” “No. Asia is not an option the first two – three years. We have a good working relationship with SAS and Finnair on routes to Asia,” says Birgir Holm Gudnason. “Tampa Bay and Philadelphia will further strengthen Icelandair’s presence in the eastern United States by better serving our passengers with faster travel times to more than 25 destinations in Europe. Floridians and Philadelphians alike will now have a refreshing alternative when traveling to Iceland and beyond, while Icelanders and Europeans will have direct access to the sunny beaches and many attractions of the Tampa Bay area, and direct access to the historic city of Philadelphia, the fifth largest city in the United States. This is an exciting and significant moment for Icelandair and we look forward to welcoming both Philadelphia and Tampa Bay aboard in 2017,” said Birgir Holm Gudnason, CEO of Icelandair. “This new flight is just one more example of Tampa’s growing prominence as an international gateway,” said Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. “That’s important because international air service at TPA boosts economic activity, business opportunities and tourism for the entire region.”

11 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

High street bookings on the rise

The number of people booking holidays in high street travel agencies is rising, according to ABTA's latest research. The 2016 Holiday Habits Report, released at the ABTA Convention today, found 19% of Brits have booked in store in the last 12 months, compared to 17% in 2015. Young families (37%) and affluent households (35%) are the most likely to book in a travel agency. ABTA head of communications Victoria Bacon said it was also surprising that when the figures were broken down by age, the younger generation are the biggest in-store bookers. The research found 29% of 25 to 34-year-olds had booked in a high street shop, but the figure drops with age, falling to 13% for the over 65s. "Our anecdotal evidence suggests young people like to book in store because they are less experienced and less confident in the booking process," said Bacon. "They are also more likely to be travelling as a group, so it's easier to go in to a shop and get an agent to do everything, and they're also more likely to have a set budget, so they can go into an agency with that budget and see what's available." But although nearly one in five people are booking in store, the majority of people (76%) are booking their holiday on line, and 21% over the phone. The research was conducted by Arkenford in August and questioned a sample of 1962 consumers.

11 October 2016, Source TravelMole

Demand drops for beach holidays

Brits opted for more city breaks and fewer traditional beach holidays over the past 12 months, according to new research from ABTA. Despite a number of challenging and high profile events, including terrorist attacks, an attempted military coup in Turkey and the Zika virus in

parts of the Americas, Asia and the Caribbean, over half the population (56%) took a holiday abroad in the last year, a 2% increase on 2015. People have either been choosing to explore destinations closer to home or places they perceive to be safer, according to ABTA. City breaks remain the nation's favourite holiday type, with over half the population (53%) having taken one in the past 12 months and almost as many planning to take one in the next 12 months. The number of people taking beach holidays in the last year has fallen back to 2014 levels (38%) after a strong 2015 (50%). The volume of longer overseas breaks (of seven nights or more) decreased slightly this year after a very strong year in 2015. With the Western Med a popular choice for the last two years, there has been a notable increase in people planning to visit somewhere new next year. Almost half (45%) of people stated they are quite likely or very likely to visit a country they have never been to before, compared to over a third (36%) who said the same thing in 2015. There has been a similar increase in people who are quite likely or very likely to visit a resort or city they have never been to before (even if they have been to the country): over half (54%) stated this in 2016 compared to 46% who said this last year. The number of people who say they will take an all-inclusive holiday next year is on the up. In the last 12 months, 18% of people took an all-inclusive holiday and a quarter (25%) are planning to take one in the next year.

11 October 2016, Source TravelMole

Mobile phone bookings fall in popularity

The PC continues to be by far the most popular booking device, with mobile phone bookings down year-on-year, according to ABTA's Holiday Habits Report 2016. Mobile phones are less popular as a device for booking than they were a year ago, with 13% of people stating that they booked a holiday using a mobile phone in the past year, down from an average of 16% in 2015. The exception is the 35-44 year-old age group, where mobile bookings are up 3% from 16% to 19%. There are particularly notable falls among 18-24 year olds and those aged over 55. Bookings on tablets have remained fairly flat since last year, with 23% of online bookers using them compared to 24% last year. An increase in 35-54 year olds using them has been offset by a fall in 18-24 year olds doing so. The vast majority - 92% - use a PC to book. Those aged 25-34 were the least likely to use a PC but the most likely to use a tablet with almost four in 10 (37%) doing so. ABTA says the reason could be that people find the mobile booking experience more difficult. The research shows 44% of people found booking with a mobile phone easy compared to 80% who said the same about booking with a PC. Just over half (54%) stated that booking with a tablet was easy.

13 October 2016, Source Selling Travel

Brits are still travelling despite tough year

Brits still prize their holidays despite economic uncertainty and concerns over terrorism, said ABTA's Chief Executive, Mark Tanzer, at the ABTA Travel Convention in Abu Dhabi this week. ABTA's annual Holiday Habits Report this year revealed that the overall number of people going on holiday has risen by almost 10% on the previous year, with 86% of Britons holidaying at home or abroad. But Tanzer warned delegates to be cautiously optimistic

“given the uncertainties that lie ahead for the UK economy around the government’s Brexit negotiations.” “People are switching to ‘safer’ destinations and as a result there is a squeeze on capacity in those destinations which are perceived as safe,” said Tanzer. The report, which looks at holidaymakers habits in the 12 months leading up to August 2016, revealed that city breaks are fast replacing beach holidays as the preferred break for Brits. The number of people taking beach breaks has slumped from 50% to 38%, where as 53% chose a city as their favourite holiday type. The latter figure is a 1% decrease from 2015 but overall, city breaks have risen steadily in the last four years, from 38% taking them in 2012. ABTA also found that compared to the 18% of people who took an all-inclusive holiday in the last 12 months, a quarter are planning to take one in the next year, possibly reflecting consumers' needs to bolster themselves from unfavourable post-Brexit exchange rates. More than half (53%) of British holidaymakers booked a package in the last year, an increase of 6% on last year and 10% on 2011. The most significant increase came from affluent holidaymakers, with 62% of people from social grade A households booking a package holiday abroad in the last year compared to 39% last year.” There was good news for retail agents too, with a slight increase in people booking their holidays in-store, from 17% to 19%. Bucking the usual trend, it was 25-35 year olds that were most likely to book in this way while over 65s were least likely to go to the high street.

14 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

US confident Brexit won't dent UK visitor numbers

US-marketing group Brand USA is still expecting a 20% increase in UK visitors over the next five years, despite sterling's recent slide in value. Overall, the States are aiming for 100 million visitors a year by 2021, of which the UK is expected to contribute an additional one million. CEO and president Chris Thompson said he was 'still very bullish' about the UK market, despite the weakened pound making trips to the US more expensive. " "The currency situation is not something new," said Thompson, "we have dealt with this in the past." The UK is the second biggest long-haul market for the US and its second highest spender, after China. Last year, the US saw an 18% increase in visitors. There was a further 8% rise in visitors from the UK in the first quarter of this year. Thompson said he was confident that even UK holidaymakers who are feeling the pinch from the falling pound would still travel to the US, but possibly spend less by choosing better value options. "They might downgrade from luxury accommodation or change where they eat, but they will still come to the US because our UK friends and visitors are very familiar with the diversity it offers." He said the challenge for Brand USA was to promote destinations beyond Florida, California and New York, which are already popular with UK holidaymakers. Brand USA will launch a new marketing campaign in the first quarter of next year, which will, said Thompson, include the UK. Regarding the US presidential election campaign involving Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump, which has gained international attention, Thompson said: "It is certainly been interesting in that we have candidates and campaigns that are very different from what we have seen in the past but I feel either confident that either candidate is going to be a great partner for Brand USA."

17 October 2016, Source TravelMole

Weak pound 'forces Brits to rethink holiday plans'

Four in 10 people have changed their minds about booking a last-minute winter break, according to MoneySavingExpert.com. The website says the weak pound - meaning UK holidaymakers going abroad will get less for their money - is to blame. The value of sterling has slumped by 20% against the US dollar and 19% against the euro compared to last October, according to the Mail on Sunday. It reports entrance to the Empire State Building in New York, for example, will now cost a family of four £94 compared to £75 just 12 months ago. MoneySavingExpert.com chief product analyst Helen Saxon said: "It seems this extra cost is likely to stop some people from going on holiday. "A family of four going to New York at this time last year would have got around \$1.55 to the pound. But that same family taking the trip this year will only get \$1.22 to the pound. "So, if the family had spent \$2,000 on hotels, eating out, attractions and getting around, it would have cost them £1,290 last year, compared to £1,640 now. The post-referendum fall in the value of the pound has cost this family a whopping £350 extra on the same holiday." ABTA said tourists will still go on holiday, and will cut back on spending or opt for all-inclusives.

21 October 2016, Source Travolution

Orlando top UK family winter holiday search term in Sojern study

Orlando, New York City, Dubai, Bangkok and Sydney have been identified as the top five Christmas long haul holiday destinations being searched for by UK families. The most popular departure dates for consumers in western Europe are December 23, 26 and 22, according to the latest global travel insights report published today (Thursday) by performance marketing group Sojern. Bangkok is most searched long haul destination for European travellers overall followed by New York City, Dubai, Miami and Bali. London is the top short-haul destination followed by Barcelona, Amsterdam, Palma and Madrid. As the Olympics fade into the past, so does interest in European family travel to Brazil, with the destination falling from third most searched in 2015 to sixth position in 2017. Turkey is also subject to a decline, falling from eighth position to 17th due in large part to the political instability in the country. Data from the third quarter of the year reveals that 30% of European travellers searched for trips seven days or less ahead of their planned departure dates. This was topped only by Middle East & Africa at 28% and North America at 21% respectively. A significant proportion (31%) of European travellers searched for trips 14 days or less ahead of their planned departure dates.

26 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

Half of Britons will refuse to visit the US if Trump is ELECTED as President

IF REPUBLICAN Donald Trump is elected as the US president, almost half of Britons said they will not visit American, a new survey has revealed. VoucherCodesPro surveyed 2,374 British adults aged 18 and above from around the UK's regions. Figures revealed that the US elections across the pond could have a significant impact on future travel preferences for

British people. The study found 47 per cent of Brits said they would not visit the US if Trump is elected. And more than quarter of participants admitted that had already visited America or will be visiting the new country in the near future. The money saving website also found that many Brits are trying to visit America before a new president is elected on November 8 in a bid to avoid visiting a country ruled by Trump. The study initially asked people to sum up the US elections in just one word. Almost 39 per cent described the election campaign as a “mess”, whilst 32 per cent said it was “embarrassing”. Another 22 per cent thought the elections were “entertaining” and the remaining 8 per cent were indifferent. Although Trump seemed to be unpopular, 22 per cent of Brits taking part in the study said if Hilary Clinton was elected they would not visit the US. And the remaining 31 per cent stated they would still visit America. Those who said they would not go to America if either Trump or Clinton were elected as president, were then asked to choose why from a list of answers. Topping the list with 27 per cent was because guns will be more readily available. 23 per cent said there would be an increase in racism and 19 per cent stated it was because there would be a greater chance of a terror attack. Finally, Brits were asked if they would prefer Barack Obama to stay president and 71 per cent admitted they would. Spokesperson for VoucherCodesPro, George Charles, said: “The election, despite being overseas, has caused an abundance of emotion for us Brits. “Many people think neither candidate is up for the job of running the US for four years but one of them has to be chosen; Obama cannot stay for another four years and the likelihood of a third party candidate getting in is basically zero. “Although it is extreme to boycott an entire country because of their president, with everything that has been going on across the pond, it’s no surprise that people are scared or hesitant to visit the land of the free.”

27 October 2016, Source TTG

Norwegian launches new low-cost Iceland route

Norwegian has launched a new route from Gatwick to Reykjavik in Iceland. The route will commence on November 1, with fares starting at £34.90 one way. Three weekly flights will depart on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, intended to encourage long weekend breaks. The new route will be operated by Norwegian’s new 186-seat aircraft which feature free inflight Wi-Fi. Thomas Ramdahl, chief commercial officer at Norwegian, said: “Our growth in the UK continues and we are excited to offer a new direct service from London Gatwick to Iceland. “A firm favourite with Brits due to its nature landscape and outdoor activities, Iceland is a fantastic choice for a winter break.” Norwegian’s new service to Iceland will be the airlines fourth new European route to launch in the UK this winter.

28 October 2016, Source Travelbiz

BA announces new Florida route from Gatwick

British Airways will fly from London Gatwick to Fort Lauderdale from July 6. The year round service will fly four times a week in the peak summer season and three times a week for the rest of the year. Served by a 777-200 aircraft, it will be BA's third route from Gatwick to Florida. One-way fares start from £189. Colm Lacy, British Airways' head of commercial

for Gatwick, said: "More than 2.8 million international visitors head to Fort Lauderdale every year and we are confident this route will be a big hit with British tourists." BA2169 will depart from Gatwick at 09:25 and arrive at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport at 13:45 while the BA2168 will leave Fort Lauderdale at 17:00, arriving into Gatwick at 06:30 the next day.