

Week of November 19, 2007

# Canadian TRAVEL PRESS

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**AC takes off Down Under:** Air Canada was celebrating with some of its partners recently as it gears up for the launch of its same plane, direct service to Sydney, Australia, on Dec. 14. Along with good food and good conversation, the evening also saw Air Canada and the Australia Tourist Commission (ATC) join forces to give away a trip for two to Australia. Seen here, (l-r), are Rebel Neary of the ATC; draw winner, Lisa Oelke of Maritime Travel; and Air Canada's Marc Rosenberg. Oelke, by the way, will use the prize to send her parents on a special holiday for their 50th Anniversary. Now that's nice.

## Tracking trends at WTM 2007

TED DAVIS

Growing tourism trends that run the gamut from "diaspora" travel and "debauchery" vacations to Halal (Muslim) tourism and the emergent attractions of North Africa were cited in the opening presentation at the World Travel Market in London last week. These were all included in the Global Trends Report 2007.

Two widely divergent segments of the travelling public were highlighted in the new report by market intelligence company Euromonitor International, with a focus on the rising demands of both young, affluent westerners and increasingly flush Muslims.

The so-called "new-style pleasure seekers" are largely from the US, aged between 25 and 34, earn 17 per cent of the US gross income and seek to extend youthful indulgences well into their fourth decade. They book vacations on, for instance, Groove Cruises for 24-hour parties in the Caribbean or to places like Las Vegas, where "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," or to the Hedonism resorts in Jamaica. Other places that

are set to benefit from this trend are Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Vietnam, Macau, and Dubai.

In complete contrast are the demands of Islamic travellers, whose growing disposable incomes are generating vacation options with well-defined parameters. These people are largely travelling within and into the Middle East region, with Dubai posting the highest arrival numbers. Some are vacationing after the Haj at Mecca on a post-pilgrimage holiday, and they expect dress and Halal dietary requirements to be respected.

The Euromonitor report forecasts that the number of inbound tourists to the Middle East to grow by 66 per cent, reaching 55 million visitors by 2011. "As demonstrated by the continued number of religious tourist visiting Iraq, Halal tourism has the potential to develop into one of the most resilient forms of tourism," said Parita Chitaksem, Asia Pacific/Australasia travel and tourism manager for Euromonitor.

She speculated that the potential exists for a new Halal-specific airline to be

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## Cheapflights.ca: Vertical mosaic meets vertical search

BOB MONROE

Back in the spring of this year, UK-based, flight search and comparison specialist, Cheapflights arrived in Canada and with little fanfare launched [www.cheapflights.ca](http://www.cheapflights.ca).

The Canadian site became the company's

second international point after the US and part of an international strategy that will see Cheapflights going global over the course of the next five years.

Since its April launch, Cheapflights.ca has been quietly plying its trade, providing Canadians with

the ability to compare fares from airlines, charter carriers, consolidators, aggregators, online travel agencies and metasearch sites. At last look, the site was receiving over 131,000 visitors each month, and the company's co-founder and vice-chairman, Hugo Burge is clearly pleased with the way things have gone and are going.

"Canada actually has some parallels with the UK in terms of being a very confusing travel

See **CHEAPFLIGHTS** page 27.

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