ARE YOU CYBER SECURE?
In a society where cybersecurity attacks are becoming the norm instead of the exception, it is vital that employees are aware of measures to protect themselves and their employers from becoming victims of these attacks.

C.A.R.E. REACHES AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE
The Cooperative Association of Resort Exchangers (C.A.R.E.) concluded an era with its 65th Conference in October 2017 and will be returning for 2018 in Austin, TX.

GEARING UP FOR THE GNEX CONFERENCE
The innovative vacation ownership conference is putting the finishing touches on what will be the largest, most impressive event yet.

PERCEIVED value vs. REAL value –
What’s the right loyalty program approach for vacation ownership?
GNEX MIAMI
26-28 February 2018

GNEX 2018 will be the most impressive so far! Not only will it be held in the incredible city of Miami, but the conference itself will be held on one of the largest private yachts in America – the $40 million, 228ft SeaFair Grand Luxe megayacht!

Conveniently docked right outside the entrance to the Intercontinental Miami, which is the official event hotel, attendees will be able to wander between the megayacht and hotel at their leisure until the SeaFair sets sail on the final afternoon only.

For Sponsorship, Exhibiting and Speaker Opportunities visit gnexconference.com
January-March 2018

Welcome…

Happy New Year and welcome to the January/March issue of Perspective Magazine! To kick off 2018 we’re excited to bring you not only a roundup of last quarter’s most important timeshare management industry events, but we will also be looking ahead to see what changes are coming for the new year and beyond.

In our cover story, “Perceived value vs. Real value What’s the right loyalty program approach for vacation ownership?” we interview Holiday Systems International CEO Craig Morganson to shed some light on how consumers view loyalty programs and how it applies to the vacation ownership industry.

In conference news, C.A.R.E. marked an end of an era at its 65th Conference last year. In 2018 the organization begins to unveil its bigger and better annual conference platform replacing the semi-annual format.

In an exclusive interview, we talk with Duane Lee, COO of Vacation Safeguard who explains how the world’s first 100% guaranteed Buy Back Program works and how it will revolutionize the future of timeshare sales.

We give you a sneak peek of GNEX 2018, and how this year’s conference in Miami, FL on board the first mega yacht venue will be the benchmark for all industry events moving forward.

Our guest writers, Lena Combs and Erik Halluska of WithumSmith+Brown explain in their article, “Are you Cyber Secure?” the need for companies to take aggressive measures so they are not vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

In Latin American news, we catch up with AMDETUR and show highlights from ASUDISTICO’s 4th annual International Marketing and Sales Forum which brought together current and future timeshare marketing experts.

In Asia Pacific news, we spotlight Australasia’s largest Resort, Club, and Member Management company, Classic Holidays and the company’s 40th anniversary that they are celebrating this year.

Finally, to close out our first issue of the new year, in Europe, Middle East, and Africa news, we focus on Interval International and how the leading global provider of vacation services has secured an affiliation with La Ferriera in Tuscany and Vuokatinmaa Holiday Apartments in Northern Finland.

Enjoy!

Paul Mattimoe
CEO
Perspective Group
GLOBAL FEATURES

10  Perceived value vs. Real value What’s the right loyalty program approach for vacation ownership?
Holiday Systems International’s CEO Craig Morganson explains what the right approach to loyalty programs should be, what makes for a successful program, and how HSI’s program is different.

32  The Sales Tool That the Industry Has Been Waiting for is Here
It was more than five years in the making, but relentless ground work and multiple product adaptations to fit the market have resulted in the global release of Vacation SafeGuard; the world’s first and only 100% guaranteed (fully insured) Buy Back Program for timeshare, vacation club and travel club products.

36  Gearing Up for the GNEX Conference
Gaining more industry insight and networking with top executives are always the main reasons to attend the GNEX Conference, but for 2018 attendees will have even more opportunities to schmooze.

42  Improving Revenue Through Reputation… With A Little INTUITION
For the hundreds of hotels and resorts that use the INTUITION services, 2017 was a year of discovery, readjustments and improvements in customer satisfaction and online reputation.
Are you Cyber Secure?
In a society where cybersecurity attacks are becoming the norm instead of the exception, it is vital that employees are aware of measures to protect themselves and their employers from becoming victims of these attacks.

AMDETUR Update
On December 13th, the second Master Course in Marketing given by AMDETUR each year concluded, this time in Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, in collaboration with the Association of Timeshare Resort Owners of Baja California Sur (ASUDESTICO), with the backing of the Universidad del Golfo de California, the National Tourism Business Council (CNET) and the Ministry of Tourism of Baja California Sur.

ASUDESTICO Unites Current and Future Timeshare Marketing Experts
For over 20 years, ASUDESTICO (The Sudcalifornian Timeshare Association) has brought together timeshare industry professionals not only based in the organization’s native Los Cabos, Mexico, but from around the world as well. Knowing very well the importance of educating and supporting the future generation of timeshare developers, ASUDESTICO launched The International Marketing and Sales Forum.
60  ATHOC Update
Australasia’s largest Resort, Club and Member Management company, Classic Holidays, is celebrating 40 years of holiday memories in 2018. Established in 1978, the holiday company was founded by the Tawaf family and remains a family-owned business after four decades.

64  Storied Residence La Ferriera in the Heart of Tuscany Selects Interval International
Interval International, a leading global provider of vacation services and an operating business of ILG (Nasdaq: ILG), announced the affiliation of Residence La Ferriera, a shared ownership resort in the heart of Tuscany. Built in 1875, the property is in the village of Loro Ciufenna, which dates back to the 8th century B.C.
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The Evolution of Exchange  dae
Perceived value vs. Real value
What’s the right loyalty program approach for vacation ownership?

When it comes to loyalty programs, Holiday Systems International (HSI) has defined the difference between perceived value and real value. We recently caught up with HSI CEO Craig Morganson and gained some insight into HSI’s approach to loyalty and how it applies to the vacation ownership industry.

PM: How much do consumers really care about a loyalty component?
HSI: More than ever before, but the structure of the loyalty system is more important than the mere existence of it. All consumer behavior statistics support this, and show us exactly how and why our customers are spending their disposable income. This is really important for developers and sales teams to understand. Here are just a few of the many statistics that demonstrate this:

- 81% of consumers are more likely to continue doing business with brands that offer loyalty programs
- 70% of consumers modify the when/where they purchase from in order to maximize loyalty credits
- 73% of loyalty programs members are more likely to recommend brands with good loyalty programs
- 67% of the affluent middle class value the flexibility to choose the rewards and benefits they are offered
- 63% of loyalty program members believe having a wide range of rewards and offers is the most important aspect of a loyalty program
• 74% of Baby Boomers, 58% of Gen X and 41% of Millennials claim they would be encouraged to spend with a brand that has a loyalty program
• Points accumulated for free merchandise or travel (47%) and automatic discounts at time of purchase (41%) are the top reasons for signing up for rewards
• 69% of U.S. consumers would be open to using a site operated by a loyalty program if it allows for paying all travel expenses with loyalty points

If we gave your customer $5,000.00, how would you like them to spend it with you?

• 42% of travelers believe that loyalty programs offering only core inventory rewards are “dated and old-fashioned”

HSI: When you consider the paths consumers take as they move from brand awareness through to purchase and loyalty, these behaviors are key indicators of what McKinsey calls the “consumer decision journey”. In fact, research shows a 26 percent increase in loyalty-program memberships between 2013 and 2015. That’s significant.

PM: How much of that really translates to the shared ownership industry?
HSI: 100% of it. The concept of vacation ownership is a loyalty program. It’s a pre-paid right-to-use, dependent upon an ongoing customer relationship. However, while the industry focuses on old methods of monetizing intervals, opportunities are being squandered that will better monetize a customer for life. Vacation ownership is in head-to-head competition with the pay-as-you-go model, often with the single differentiator being a loyalty component. Unfortunately, too often the vacation ownership industry gets the loyalty part wrong. If this continues, the industry will lose the battle.
PM: So what’s the right approach to loyalty?
HSI: First focus on including the right products and services for the target audience. For example, is a toaster important to a vacation ownership member, or is free airfare more important? Next, structure it to provide the right loyalty reward EARNING and REDEMPTION options. This seems simple, but this is where most loyalty programs go wrong. The loyalty program must be measurable through-and-through. It will not be successful simply because customers have no choice but to participate. While third-party points systems may appear to offer a loyalty concept, virtually all of them fall short of providing the customer, or the partner, with measurable value. Trapping a customer, or attempting to monopolize a customer’s options, is not a loyalty program. Customers eventually see through this and will move on. Even more importantly, they will not refer new clients to you. Also, customers know how to use calculators, so funny-money and inflate-then-discount practices will not produce meaningful results. Developers and sales teams deal with this every day, as they contend with customer complaints and credibility issues. The loyalty system must be easy to use, and without the obvious breakage practices, such as expiring loyalty credits, limiting credit redemption quantities, and matching funds requirements.

PM: What are the key elements for a successful loyalty program?
HSI: Structure it properly from the beginning with flexibility, transparency, and sustainability. A good loyalty program will not only improve customer retention and increase existing customer spending, but it will also generate new customers. The right approach is to first frame it into three categories: (1) value proposition enhancement, (2) sophisticated technologies, and (3) generous loyalty rewards (earning/redeeming). The questions that need to be asked are: (1) what additional products and services will add to the overall product value proposition, (2) what technologies will add to the value proposition and facilitate use, (3) how should customers earn loyalty credits, (4) what should customers be able to redeem loyalty credits for, and (5) how will the loyalty credits be funded? A loyalty program needs to produce a net gain, not drain resources.

PM: How can HSI help?
HSI: Loyalty is our core business, so we help
with every step, including selecting the benefits, providing the benefits, structuring the earning and redemption algorithms, coding the technologies, funding the loyalty credits and servicing it.

PM: What separates your loyalty systems from others?
HSI: First, we provide “same-as-cash” loyalty credits, funded by us (not our partners) in U.S. Dollars (not funny-money), so each credit = $1. Second, credits are earned from consumer spending that benefits both the customer and our partner. Third, credits are redeemable for every product and service a customer would otherwise use cash for through our partners, including paying maintenance fees, making a finance payment, paying for upgrades, or even purchasing travel that will benefit our partner, and can even be redeemed for cash (funded by us). Fourth, we do not inflate the cost of any redemption item, so customers receive the same price when redeeming credits as when paying cash. Fifth, our loyalty credits do not expire, do not have redemption limits, and do not require matching funds. In fact, a customer can pay the full cost of their desired product or service with 100% loyalty credits. This is a major benefit to both our partner and the customer, particularly because the customer did not “purchase” these loyalty credits, they simply earned them when using their benefits. And, because we treat our loyalty credits same-as-cash, customers will actually earn more credits when redeeming credits for products/services that earn credits. Customers LOVE that! The bottom line is, we provide loyalty credits that are easy to earn, easy to measure, and easy to redeem, and can even be redeemed for CASH! Also, because we fund the loyalty credits in U.S. Dollars, our partners are not required to fund the credits by shaving profits. Our systems incorporate the important positive spending inducements without the limitations consumers complain about in other loyalty systems. These are all important points that separate our loyalty systems from others.

PM: How are your loyalty systems impacting the industry today?
HSI: We’ve paid nearly $100 million in U.S. Dollar same-as-cash value through loyalty credit redemptions, having a direct positive impact on maintenance fee/club fee collections, new sales, upgrades, attrition, rescission, spending with partners, and overall customer satisfaction. Our loyalty systems have helped close over $800 million in new sales.

PM: What about your infrastructure?
HSI: Everything is developed, hosted, maintained and serviced by us in-house. We’ve invested over $30 million in our infrastructure, which is equipped to take the loyalty program from a-z quickly. We’re constantly enhancing our systems to ensure we remain on the cutting edge. Our admin systems provide our partners with full transparency over customer usage, revenue generated, and evolving trends. We include all the private-branded and customized technologies to implement, service, scale, and monitor the results. And, our loyalty programs include an unmatched selection of value proposition enhancements, loyalty credit earning options, and loyalty credit redemption options.

PM: How expensive are your loyalty systems and how difficult are they to integrate?
HSI: We have the right fit for every partner, from a ground-up build, to a fast-launching white-labeled system. We make integration easy for our partners regardless of their technology capabilities, from no-tech capabilities to high-tech capabilities. We’re equipped to handle everything from website layout and design to full admin systems. As far as cost, we’re surprisingly affordable, 100% reliable, scalable, sustainable, and bring the relationships with us to dramatically enhance
the value proposition. We provide training that ensures seamless integration and results. All this is included in one price, without charging our partners for ongoing customizations, monthly fees, or other services. This allows our partners to focus on customer acquisition, not infrastructure and maintenance.

PM: Any additional information a reader should know?
HSI: If we gave your customer $5,000.00, how would you like them to spend it with you? Just start filling in answers to that question, and then give us a call, because that’s exactly what our loyalty systems will do. Today, every business needs a loyalty component. A good loyalty system includes relevant, measurable, scalable, and sustainable value that benefits both the customer and the business. Before handing over your database to a third-party loyalty or points provider, call HSI and discuss your loyalty ideas, even if you already have an existing loyalty system. And beware of third-party loyalty systems or points systems that trap customers or offer redemption options that do not produce revenue for the partner. These options are not designed in your best interest, but in the best interest of the third-party points provider. Additionally, some of these systems are in direct conflict and actually compete with the shared ownership concept. I would also remind readers to read the consumer behavior statistics I’ve provided in this interview, and keep that behavior in mind when considering a loyalty system, or when thinking about enhancing an existing system. The difference between our loyalty systems, and others, is the difference between perceived value and real value. Learn the difference, your customers have!
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Tesla Chooses El Cid as the first Destination Charging Station in Mazatlán

El Cid Resorts is proud to have Tesla, one of the world’s most cutting-edge automotive companies, choose El Cid Marina Beach Hotel in Mazatlán to be the location of the city’s first Destination Charging Station.

El Cid Marina Beach Hotel now has two Tesla Wall Connectors and an additional universal charger to use with other electric cars. Currently, only properties approved by Tesla can have the Tesla Wall Connectors which are Level-2 charging stations. These Tesla-specific stations are able to provide up to 58 miles of driving range per hour of charge.

El Cid will continue to work with Elon Musk’s Tesla brand to establish more Destination Charging Stations at other El Cid properties in the future including Hotel Marina El Cid Spa & Resort in Riviera Maya.

“Being the first Tesla Destination Charging Site in Mazatlán means that we are always looking forward to innovate and offer the best to all of our guests,” said Carlos Berdegué, CEO of El Cid.

In recent years, El Cid has made tremendous strides when it comes to helping the environment by investing in green technology and solutions for the hospitality industry. Considered one of the greenest vacation clubs, the resort group has received the Touristic Environmental Quality Certification and the highest Sustainability Certification Rating that is given by Mexico’s Federal Environment Agency, PROFEPa. El Cid’s environmental efforts have also been recognized by TripAdvisor with five of its properties carrying the GreenLeaders distinction.

For almost five decades, El Cid has been welcoming travelers from all of the world to its fabulous resorts in Mexico. Known for providing gold star service and offering world-class amenities, El Cid Resorts and El Cid Vacations Club are dedicated to going the extra mile for guests and members.

El Cid Vacations Club Updates Its Mobile App For a More Streamlined Experience

El Cid Resorts, one of Mexico’s finest luxury hospitality groups has recently made updates to its El Cid Vacations Club (ECVC) mobile app.

The app, which can be conveniently downloaded on the App Store for Apple users or GooglePlay for Android, is exclusively for ECVC members. Available in both English and Spanish, ECVC’s Member App is a convenient and accessible tool providing service and aid for all members directly to and from their tablet or smartphone. El Cid’s latest update makes it easier than ever to connect to El Cid Vacations Club no matter what day or time it is.

ECVC’s Member App offers a streamlined experience before, during, and after a member’s vacation. Members can easily check available dates to book their reservations at any one of El Cid’s properties located in the most popular tourist destinations in Mexico, including Mazatlán and Cancun. Once their trip is booked, they can schedule for one-way shuttle transportation from the airport to any El Cid resort. If they plan on staying at properties in Mazatlán or Riviera Maya, members can also quickly set up dinner reservations for a multitude of restaurants including the Prime Grill Steak House at El Cid Granada Country Club in Mazatlán, La Trattoria D’Gulio at Hotel Marina El Cid Spa & Beach Resort in Riviera Maya, La Concha at El Cid El Moro Beach in Mazatlán, and many more.
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RTX Raises Over $24,000 For Local Children at Its Annual Casino Night

Resort Travel & Xchange; one of the world’s leading timeshare and vacation ownership exchange companies has made tremendous strides in the industry throughout 2017, solidifying its place as a premier exchange innovator.

Throughout the year, RTX remained a mainstay at industry-wide events. The North Carolina-based company kicked off 2017 by returning as a Bronze Sponsor for GNEX 2017, which was held in San Francisco, CA the last week of January. Less than two months later, leading team members of RTX exhibited and sponsored ARDA World 2017 held in New Orleans, LA. In September, RTX headed north to Whistler, BC to sponsor The Canadian Vacation Ownership Association’s, VO-Con ’17. While at VO-Con, RTX was recognized for its pivotal role in working with the timeshare community in Canada by being honored with the Cornerstone Award, which is given out to companies in the industry who display a commitment to emerging technology and customer service. In October, RTX sponsored C.A.R.E.’S Fall conference in in Anaheim, CA, and the TBMA Conference in Las Vegas. To wrap up the final stretch of 2017, RTX sponsored the Chairman’s League Breakfast at the ARDA Fall conference in November in Washington, D.C.

“Having a presence at industry conferences and events is important to make new connections and also to nurture relationships with our existing partners. It’s also a great chance to networking and support industry education and collaboration,” said Corina Violette, director of resort partnerships for RTX.

Knowing that customer satisfaction is a top priority, RTX rolled out a brand new phone system and work management program in the call center.

RTX Celebrates a Successful 2017

Resort Travel & Xchange; the North Carolina-based timeshare and vacation ownership exchange company finished its 2017 Year of Giving philanthropic plan on a high note raising close to $25,000 at its annual Casino Night event held last month.

RTX, along with Patton Hospitality Management (PHM), Resort Hospitality Solutions and Zealandia Holding Company got together to roll the dice all for a good cause. For five years in a row, RTX has celebrated the end of the year with its Casino Night fundraiser. The award-winning company was able to raise $24,438 for the Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries’ (ABCCM) Christmas Angel Program. The amount of money raised for the local charity exceeded last year’s grand total of $19,000, making the 2017 Casino Night one of the most successful charity events RTX has produced since the company was established in 2012.

The ABCCM Christmas Angel Program provides gifts and much needed aid for children in the greater Asheville area. The nonprofit works with many local organizations such as the Steadfast House, Military Families Resource Center, Supportive Services for Veteran Families, and several schools in Buncombe County. The money that RTX raised, with help from employees of VacationCondos.com, TSA Choice, and Festiva Development Group, was used to purchase holiday presents for 100 children.

“IT is so exceptional that we receive time during work to give a little something to those in need of some extra help. It is definitely a great reflection of our company’s mindset and all of those who participate,” said John Catton, RTX employee. Philanthropy and supporting the local community has always been important for the timeshare exchange company. In 2017, RTX employees volunteered at the Ingles/Eblen Tools for Schools Drive, sponsored the Root Ball which benefits Asheville GreenWorks, and supported Brother Wolf Animal Rescue, a no-kill animal shelter and 83-acre sanctuary. With the company’s focus on charity work and offering outstanding customer service, RTX seeks to change the way consumers think about the timeshare exchange industry. With over 80,000 members worldwide, RTX continues to be one of the leading names in vacation ownership exchange by providing low fees on flexible exchanges, offering up to four years of deposit length, and multiple travel perks.
"We believe that timeshare owners should have the right to gracefully exit their unwanted timeshares, and that the exit should not damage the timeshare industry in the process. Cyria Group is committed to finding viable timeshare exit strategies that work for the entire industry, especially for the consumers that support it."

-Cory Stegemann,
Founder & CEO, Cyria Group Inc.

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Dedicated to the protection of the timeshare industry, without compromising individual timeshare owners.
NextGen International Launches As Final Part of the SMS Suite

Timeshare ownership trade-in and transfer expert, Cory Stegemann, has announced the launch of NextGen International; a company that will specialize in the marketing and sales of secondary market inventory, making vacation ownership more accessible to consumers.

NextGen International’s mission is to restyle the way people buy, access and use vacation ownership. Through NextGen International, members will have a stress-free vacation planning solution with access to a curated inventory of options that are hand-picked by a rigorous screening method. NextGen’s intuitive and simple three tier selection process can narrow options down even further to location, cost, and property size. With NextGen’s exclusive travel club, members have access to the best rates guaranteed on flights, car rentals, concert tickets, and hotels with savings up to 70-percent. Most importantly, those who will join NextGen will receive a 100-percent guaranteed anytime exit lease option which means owners have more control over their ownership now more than ever.

NextGen International is the final piece for sister companies Cyria Group and Genescy Corporation, to add to its Secondary Market Solution Suite (SMS Suite) which is intended to provide timeshare owners full-service, ethical solutions no matter what their needs are. This trifecta of businesses creates a positive cycle of vacation ownership; with Genescy focusing on offering timeshare owners exit options, Cyria Group working with developers and consumers to provide trade-in solutions, and NextGen International providing a platform for the flexible purchase of vacation ownership options.

“Our plan from the start was to have all three companies established and working together in order to give clients the options that they are looking for, no matter what part of the vacation ownership journey they are on. Whether they are looking to slow down and get out of their ownership, add to their current one, or are looking to start their journey; we want to make sure there are options available for their needs. As the travel industry grows and innovations occur, people want to travel their way, and we want to empower them to do so within the vacation ownership sphere while supporting the developers and the industry as a whole,” says Cory Stegemann, Founder and CEO of all three companies.

Cyria Group Wraps Up a Successful 2017 and Looks Towards the Future

Cyria Group, Inc.; the leading experts in the fulfillment of timeshare ownership trade-ins and transfers for resort developers is ending 2017 on a high note and will be moving forward towards an even more successful 2018.

In June, Cyria Group partnered with INTUITION Brand Marketing; one of the hospitality industry’s most innovative Customer Engagement, Public Relations, and Reputation Management companies. The relationship between Cyria Group and INTUITION has brought more global brand awareness through press release syndication and social media.

For the majority of 2017, the Canadian-based company increased its brand awareness by attending several of the most premier conferences in the timeshare and hospitality industries. In June, Cyria Group headed to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico to join timeshare professionals from around the world at AMDETUR Expo 2017. This year marked AMDETUR’s 30th anniversary and the 27th AMDETUR Expo, with a theme focusing on the transformation of tourism in Mexico.

Two months later, Cyria Group not only attended, but sponsored the Canadian Vacation Ownership Association’s industry conference, VO-Con 2017. While at VO-Con 2017, Cyria Group’s Founder & CEO, Cory Stegemann was elected to both the CVOA Board of Directors and Chair of the Secondary Market. While at VO-Con 2017, Stegemann also lead a panel discussion about how Cyria Group repurposes original inventory, stabilizes the movement of inventory, and generates additional revenue.

To wrap up this year’s conference season, Cyria Group attended and sponsored, C.A.R.E.’s 65th (The Cooperative Association of Resort Exchangers) Conference which was held at the Anaheim Marriott Suites in Garden Grove, CA from October 14-17. This year saw an increased relationship between Cyria Group and C.A.R.E., besides being a sponsor for the organization’s Fall conference, Cyria Group’s Vice President of Sales, Jesus Michael Martinez was elected to C.A.R.E’s Board of Directors during the association’s spring conference which took place in Virginia Beach, VA.
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CONFIDENCE, SELF RELIANCE;
ASSURANCES
Conference Updates and Announcements
Semi-Annual Conferences Are a Thing of the Past!

The Marriott Anaheim Suites in Anaheim, California was where The Cooperative Association of Resort Exchangers (C.A.R.E.) concluded an era with its 65th Conference in October 2017. In this story you will see what you missed and what’s on the agenda for their inaugural annual C.A.R.E. Conference in 2018! C.A.R.E. encourages all industry colleagues to attend their 2018 conference in Austin, Texas at the Renaissance Austin Hotel from April 7th-10th.

California Conference Highlights
The milestone 65th Conference kicked off with a C.A.R.E. Gives Back initiative where C.A.R.E. volunteers “gave back” by participating in a philanthropic project. In Anaheim, volunteers acted as production assistants and supported the transformation of numerous breast cancer survivors by assisting with hair and make-up in preparation for their “Mermaid Journey”, a wellness program launched by Send Me On Vacation (SMOV), to help survivors let go of the fear and anger that battling breast cancer brings and create a more abundant life. Volunteers not only assisted in the physical transformation of the survivors, but also supported in roles such as photographers, videographers, posing coaches and scrap bookers to help chronicle the survivors’ experiences.

C.A.R.E.’s keynote speaker for the 65th Conference was Rebecca Taylor Shaw, CCH, CMT, a premier thought leader on the topic of success strategies and personal development. As founder and Director of the Charleston Hypnosis Center, Shaw has created programs designed to help clients break through stress and mental roadblocks to unleash individual brilliance, achieve peak performance and make an impact on the world. In her keynote session, “The Secret Energy of Money”, Shaw led conference attendees through several exercises to help identify hidden money blocks and techniques on breaking through the glass ceiling of their earning potentials that could take their businesses and careers to the next level.
At this same conference Caleb Dixon, QM Resorts’ Corporate Revenue & Reservations Manager, led a panel discussion, To Rent or Not to Rent: A Guide to the World of OTA’s. Dixon used this platform to share his personal success stories of maneuvering resort inventory through the retail sector via the world of OTA’s. He shared industry statistics, viable options and action plans relating to OTA’s and discussed why the health of C.A.R.E. companies and the industry depends on successful OTA integration when it comes to maximizing inventory utilization.

C.A.R.E.’s awards night bewitched attendees aboard the historic Queen Mary, the legendary cruise liner that launched in 1936 and was once known as the grandest ocean liner in the world. In deference to the Queen Mary’s reputation as “One of the Top 10 Most Haunted Places in America”, conference attendees participated in a private Haunted Encounters Tour of the ship followed by cocktails, dinner and the presentation of awards to conference sponsors. The conference closed with a great evening at the House of Blues Anaheim GardenWalk on West Disney Way.

REGISTRATION is OPEN for C.A.R.E.’s 2018 Conference in AUSTIN, TEXAS!

Since their departure from the Anaheim Conference, the C.A.R.E. Board of Directors and Conference Committee have been hard at work and are striving to make their annual conferences bigger and better than their previous platform of semi-annual conferences of years past. Plans are underway, and registration is open for the 66th C.A.R.E. Conference in Austin, Texas at the Renaissance Austin Hotel from April 7-10, 2018 and all members and industry colleagues are encouraged to attend the only C.A.R.E. Conference of the year! Register today at www.care-online.org.

C.A.R.E. President Linda Mayhugh thanks CVOA/Canadian Vacation Ownership Association President/CEO Jon Zwetel for their partnership.
C.A.R.E.’s 2018 Conference to Feature Award Winning Songwriter!

C.A.R.E.’s featured presentation will take place on Sunday, April 8th when Grammy and Emmy nominated, CMA Award Winning hit songwriter, Billy Kirsch and Kidbilly Music presents Teambuilding Through Song. His recognition includes a Grammy nomination for Country Song of the Year, Country Music Association Song of the Year, Academy of Country Music Song of the Year and Grammy nomination for Best Song.

As a hit songwriter, Billy Kirsch has harnessed the power of creativity to lead a successful life as an entertainer, songwriter and entrepreneur. His body of work includes award winning songs and career songs for the artists who have recorded them. “Holes In The Floor Of Heaven” recorded by Steve Wariner, won a Country Music Association song of the year award, was nominated for a Grammy award and was a number one hit. Top 10 songs, “Is It Over Yet” and “Come Some Rainy Day”, both recorded by Wynonna Judd, have become standards in the repertoire. “Stay Gone” launched singer Jimmy Wayne’s career as a Top 5 single. The list of other artists who have recorded Billy’s songs include Tim McGraw, Kenny Rogers, Englebert Humperdink, Alabama, Mark Wills, Clay Walker and more. Billy’s unique abilities as facilitator, team building speaker and performer are the foundation of his highly successful corporate event programs such as “Teambuilding Through Song and Harnessing Your Creative Power” to be presented as C.A.R.E.’s 2018 Keynote.

This interactive, musical keynote session will wake you up and get you involved. We’ll go on a journey through music, story and song. Everyone will contribute and collaborate during this experiential session in which we all become songwriters and demystify the creative process. This fun song session will boost your creative confidence and give you a plan to use your creative powers. Along the way we’ll work together to create a song that celebrates our industry and what we all have in common. Creativity is not just for painting pictures or writing hit songs; it’s vital to generate better ideas and differentiate yourself in today’s competitive marketplace. Learn more about Billy Kirsch, Kidbilly Music and his presentation as C.A.R.E.’s keynote at www.kidbillymusic.com.
But WAIT…There’s More…in 2018!
The first of many announcements of change to its conference agenda, is the procurement of not one, but two exciting keynote speakers that have engaged with C.A.R.E. for their 2018 Conference. C.A.R.E. is set to highlight its second keynote program on Monday April 9th by introducing Jim Comer with Comer Communications with “The Message is You!”. In addition to a Keynote Speaker, Jim is an Executive Speech Coach, Workshop Leader and Author. He says, “In this interactive presentation, you’ll learn to share your individuality to connect with audiences, employees and customers. You’ll learn practical techniques to gain confidence, build rapport and make your message unforgettable”. Learn more about Jim Comer, Comer Communications and his presentation as C.A.R.E.’s second keynote address at www.comercommunications.com.

The remaining 2018 Conference agenda will be rounded out with plenty of opportunities for networking, including fun-filled evening events, a valuable and informative panel discussion on The Value of the All-Inclusive Vacation and a session to include top executives from the leading industry associations.

The all-inclusive panel will be moderated by Don Killingback, RCI/Endless Vacation Rentals’ Director of Business Development/North America and will include panelists Don Eastvold, Corporate Director of Marketing and New Business Development with Unlimited Vacation Club and J. Michael Martinez with JMM Sales & Consulting, Ltd. Attendees will gain insider knowledge and power for understanding and selling the value of all-inclusive vacations... the vacation that is sometimes feared by consumers and a tough sell for some booking agents.

C.A.R.E. President Linda Mayhugh will be the lead Executive in a session featuring executives from AMDETUR, ARDA, C.A.R.E., CVOA, and NTOA. Attendees will gain worldwide industry knowledge about travel trends across the U.S., Mexico and Canada as well as insight from an “owners” (our customer) perspective of our industry. In addition, learn more about the partnerships that have been strengthened over the last several years to remove the barriers between the associations for the value of our overall industry.

Everyone should seriously consider attending the 2018 C.A.R.E. Conference in Austin this April! For more information please call 800-636-5646 or 540-828-4280 or you can email info@care-online.org.
FEATURED INDUSTRY HEADLINES

staySky® Vacation Clubs Members Can Now Help Their Friends and Family Save on Travel With Boomerang Rewards

Orlando, Florida based resort group, staySky® Vacation Clubs has recently added an innovative program that is part of the resort group’s member benefits package, staySky® Escapes. Boomerang Rewards allows staySky® Escapes users to share travel discounts with their friends and family and in return, helps members to earn rewards credits.

Boomerang Rewards makes it easy to accumulate rewards credits that members can use for hotels, rental cars, airfare, cruises, and other benefits associated with the program; members can even pay their annual maintenance fees with earned rewards credits. All members need to do is send their friends and family a special invite link either via email or on social media. Non-staySky® Escapes members will then have access to a plethora of savings on travel and receive 50-percent of full members’ savings. The remaining 50-percent is then given to the full member in rewards credits. There is absolutely no limit on how many trips friends and family can book, or how many rewards credits full members can earn.

Boomerang Rewards is yet another benefit of staySky® Escapes, which features over 400,000 available hotels, all available with outstanding, member only discounts, a marketplace where members can rent or bid on weekly vacations, and access to personalized concierge services providing individualized assistance with travel plans.

“We continue to work closely with our vendors in order to find new and unique options for our valuable members. At staySky Vacation Clubs, our members can experience so much more than just another timeshare program. The added benefits of the Boomerang feature allows our members to share their outstanding savings with others”, states Randy Steinbeck with staySky Vacation Clubs.

staySky® Vacation Clubs is an award-winning resort group with four properties close to all of Orlando’s most famous attractions. With staySky® Vacation Clubs, members are treated to superior service, accommodations, and discounts at all of its properties, or at resorts around the world. Not only is staySky® Vacation Clubs dedicated to providing families with experiences and memories that last a lifetime, but it knows the importance of flexibility and endless options for the savvy vacationer. staySky® Vacation Clubs offers members top notch service, modern accommodations, and a fully customizable suite of exclusive travel options.

staySky® Vacation Clubs Welcomes Guests to Experience Universal Orlando’s Celebration of Harry Potter

Award-winning resort group, staySky® Vacation Clubs is excited to welcome its members to all of its properties to experience one of Universal Orlando’s most popular events; a Celebration of Harry Potter.

From January 26-28, fans of Harry Potter will be immersed in all things magical as Universal Orlando and Warner Brothers team up again for the weekend-long spectacular that attracts fans of Harry Potter from all of the world. This year, wizards and muggles will be able to partake in a slew of special events like Wand Combat Skills, The Harry Potter Knowledge Challenge, film screenings, and Q&A panels with stars of the Harry Potter series including, Natalia Tena (Nymphadora Tonks), Stanislav Yanevski (Viktor Krum), Bonnie Wright (Ginny Weasley), Oliver Phelps (George Weasley), and James Phelps (Fred Weasley). Most importantly, attendees can try on the Sorting Hat and find out once and for all which Hogwarts house they belong to. Universal Orlando is also proud to present Wizarding Costumes from Harry Potter: The Exhibition. This touring show has wowed audiences for 9 years and has traveled to 16 cities worldwide. Guests can marvel at the display of fabulous costumes from the series and can even strut down the runway for photo ops.

Known for going above and beyond for its guests, staySky is a premier membership club and resort group based in the heart of Orlando, FL. Known for signature service and a family-friendly environment, all four staySky® resorts give members unbeatable accommodations that are close to Universal Orlando and other must-see destinations in Central Florida.
Increase Reviews
Increase Visibility
Increase Bookings
Increase Revenue

For more information visit
www.intuitionbrandmarketing.com/hotels
or to arrange a demo contact Sharon Mattimoe at
demo@intuitionbrandmarketing.com
Karma Sanctum on the Green

Karma Sanctum and Godiva Leisure Group Welcome Guests to an Exclusive, Luxurious Stay in the English Countryside, Complete With ‘Glamping’, at the Sister Hotel to Karma Sanctum Soho

Karma Group, Sanctum Hotels and the Godiva Leisure Group bring opulence and a touch of glam to the picturesque village of Cookham Dean, near Windsor and Maidenhead, just a 25-minute drive from Heathrow airport. Karma Sanctum on the Green features nine beautifully appointed guests rooms, Wildwood Bar + Grill – a traditional British bar and dining room, outdoor heated pool, enclosed spa, and a range of swanky luxury ‘glamping’ tents, making it the perfect destination for weekend escapes, midweek romantic getaways, or extended country sojourns.

Karma Sanctum on the Green marks the second collaboration between Karma Group and Sanctum Hotels after Karma Sanctum Soho in London’s West End. A third rock-themed Karma Sanctum property is currently in development in Bali.

“We are excited to offer a genuine taste of the English countryside with Karma Sanctum’s second property,” said John Spence, Chairman and Founder of Karma Group. “This property is a fantastic alternative to sister property Karma Sanctum Soho, which offers a taste of London’s West End buzz, taking guests out of the city and into a more intimate setting but still with that hint of Karma Sanctum edge.”

The rooms at Karma Sanctum on the Green are a testament to understated luxury, with contemporary decor and soft furnishings dovetailing flawlessly with the cosy architecture of the building’s coach house heritage. The Royal Berkshire Suite features a huge bathtub and rain shower, whilst the deluxe king
rooms all include a seating area, with some featuring a four poster bed and in room bath. The cozy standard rooms are large enough to unwind in comfort for a perfect night’s’ sleep. All rooms feature sumptuous linens, fluffy towels, robes, organic toiletries, flat screen TV’s with on demand movies, minibar, and more. Guests who prefer ‘glamping’ under the stars can enjoy one of the luxurious ensuite “Canvas Cottages”, nestled in the woods at the rear of the picturesque gardens.

“It’s very exciting to be bringing a little bit of Karma Sanctum rock and roll swagger to the beautiful village of Cookham Dean,” said Mark Fuller, CEO of The Sanctum Hospitality Group. “Whether people are visiting to enjoy the amazing local produce and hospitality of The Wild Wood Bar + Grill, or staying to relax around open log fires in winter and the pool in the sun-trap courtyard in summer, we feel sure that our slightly naughty country cousin won’t disappoint.”

A standalone reason to visit Karma Sanctum on the Green, The Wild Wood Bar + Grill by Godiva Leisure Group serves traditional British fare with plenty of modern flair. Dishes feature locally sourced meats, game and fish, all smoked, grilled and roasted by Executive Chef Desmond Richardson, to create original dishes guaranteed to please. The friendly and welcoming staff are ready to serve guests all day, ensuring that a visit to Wild Wood Bar + Grill is the perfect country culinary get away. Wild Wood has a fine selection of wine, including special vintages from their wine cellar, allowing for the perfect pairing with any meal, whilst the bar offers a great selection of beers, real ales, spirits and hot drinks.

“I am extremely proud to partner with Karma Group and Sanctum Hotels to include the Sanctum on the Green Hotel in the Karma Group portfolio” said Paul Woolnough, Founder & CEO of the Godiva Leisure Group. “This collaboration allows us to expand the awareness of the hotel around the world, and enables us to provide the quintessentially British country hotel experience to Karma Group members.”

Background on Karma Group
Karma Group is an award-winning international travel and lifestyle brand offering extraordinary experiences in the world’s most beautiful locations and is headed by Chairman and Founder, John Spence, former Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year and member of the 2013 judging panel for the Ernst & Young World Entrepreneur of the Year. John was honoured by the Yale University School of Architecture by being appointed the Edward P. Bass Distinguished Visiting Architecture Fellow and has also been awarded a Distinguished Visiting Fellowship at UCLA as well as working with students from the University of Pennsylvania to design a chateau development in Carcassonne.

The Karma Group is comprised of Karma Resorts, Karma Retreats, Karma Royal, Karma Estates, Karma Beach, Karma Spa and Karma Boutique. The Group is currently operating 22 resorts in more than 10 countries, including Australia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the United Kingdom. There are currently five properties in development and the Group is negotiating three separate acquisitions in Scotland (a golf resort), Cyprus and Bulgaria. In 2016, Karma group and Sanctum Hotel Group announced a joint venture to develop a series of authentic rock ‘n’ roll styled and orientated hotels in strategic locations around the world, accompanied by an exclusive private membership club. In 2017, Karma were awarded the contract to manage and develop the golf course on Rottnest Island in Western Australia and in Greece, RCI, the worldwide leader in vacation exchange, selected Karma Group to manage its operations in the Greek market whilst redevelopment began on Karma Minoan in Crete. Karma Group is a sponsor of the England Rugby 7’s team through the 2017/18 season, the Commonwealth Games and the 2018 Rugby World Cup 7’s in San Francisco as well as the Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools Sevens, the world’s largest school rugby tournament.

www.karmagroup.com
Zoëtry Paraiso de la Bonita Introduces New Impression Concept, Nine Exclusive Villas Offering Perfect Blend of Privacy, Exclusivity and Luxury

AMResorts®, a subsidiary of Apple Leisure Group®, continues to redefine all-inclusive travel with the introduction of Impression at Zoëtry Paraiso de la Bonita Rivera Maya. The new villa concept will act as a resort within a resort and be a first for the Zoëtry Collection of boutique wellness escapes.

Starting Jan. 17, travelers can choose from nine oceanfront sanctuaries with private access and luxury amenities. Every suite is crafted with the utmost attention to detail, from hand-selected furniture, art and décor to exclusive dining rooms and terraces offering perfect sunset views. A plunge pool and outdoor shower complete the oasis experience in every room. Guests staying in one of the seven Butler Suites within the original Zoëtry Paraiso de la Bonita property will also have access to all the amenities available within Zoëtry Impression.

“Luxury travelers are craving individualized, transformative and on-demand experiences, and the new Impression will satisfy just that. Exclusive rooms, secluded beaches, butlers and chefs at their disposal will leave guests feeling a sense of wholeness and fulfillment through their travels, as though each moment was created just for them,” said Gonzalo del Peon, President of AMResorts.

In addition to two dedicated dining options – Umami, an Asian fusion restaurant and The Chef’s Table, a restaurant and show kitchen – exclusive to the nine Impression suites and for guests staying in the Zoëtry Paraiso Butler Suites, Impression guests will also have access to the award-winning La Canoa and Restaurant Kaax at Zoëtry Paraiso de la Bonita. Private chefs round out the elevated culinary offerings at this new resort experience.

In addition to Zoëtry Paraiso’s Endless Privileges®, Impression will offer upgraded amenities including:

- Complimentary butler service
- The Chef’s Table for intimate dining experiences with an option for custom menus from the Impression private chef
- Dedicated beach and sea water infinity pool for Impression guests only
- Upgraded amenities including Bvlgari® bath items and Frette® linens

The nine Impression suites, ranging from 832 to 2,027 square feet, can be booked individually. The entire villa is also available for those seeking the ultimate private getaway.

Additional amenities include access to the resort’s Thalassotherapy Center, Mayan Temazcal Ceremony, private marina and 48-foot catamaran offering sunset sailings.

AMRewards Elevates Perks After Record-Breaking 2017

AMResorts®, a subsidiary of Apple Leisure Group®, closes record-breaking third year of AMRewards™ with unprecedented growth in the U.S. and Canada.

With more than 30,000 travel agents registered for the hotel company’s robust travel agent loyalty program and millions of dollars’ worth of rewards redeemed, AMRewards experienced its highest participation to-date with a 65 percent increase in total bookings entered in the program year over year. Looking ahead, agents will experience more AMRewards contests and benefits this year than ever before, plus enhanced platforms and programs with an improved user experience and more educational opportunities.

Starting this month, AMRewards has launched a new Dreams Puerto Aventuras Resort & Spa campaign. Agents receive double points in January when entering bookings for this family-friendly property situated along the Riviera Maya. Full details available on AMRewards.com.

Additionally, AMResorts has two major relaunches planned for the travel agent community during 2018.

The all-new AMRAgents.com will debut in the first quarter. This dynamic website will be personalized for the agent with new content and sales tools to serve as a convenient resource hub.
By joining the NTOA, you become part of a community dedicated to supporting timeshare owners. As the premier organization giving a united voice to the nearly 8 million timeshare owners in the United States and Canada, the NTOA proactively seeks opportunities to promote the timeshare industry’s continued growth and positive public image. Members gain access to some of the most powerful information and educational tools available to timeshare owners today. The members-only area of our website offers travel-related discounts, special rate VO financing/refinancing, an online education center, an one-stop news source, and so much more!

Join today and discover how membership can help you ‘enjoy the adventure’! For more information on becoming a member, visit www.ntoassoc.com; email us at memberservices@ntoassoc.com; or call us at 844 ASK-NTOA.
It was more than five years in the making, but relentless ground work and multiple product adaptations to fit the market have resulted in the global release of Vacation SafeGuard; the world’s first and only 100% guaranteed (fully insured) Buy Back Program for timeshare, vacation club and travel club products.

What does this mean exactly? We spoke to Duane Lee, COO, Vacation Safeguard to learn more.

Perspective Magazine: What is the core purpose of the Buy Back Program?
Duane Lee: The product significantly benefits the customer of course, but it was designed and built with the developer in mind as it offers an incredible first day sales closing tool, an even more intriguing upgrade tool, helps to reduce cancellations, and increases the average term of membership.

Perspective Magazine: How does it benefit the first-time customer?
Duane Lee: When a prospective new member takes a sales presentation, the majority don’t buy, and regardless of the reasons given, the most common is a money objection, from not being able to afford it to being afraid of spending the amount of money they are being asked, or not trusting the environment in which they are being asked. Either way, it most often comes down to money. The guaranteed Buy Back Program provides them with the knowledge that upon completion of the agreed term they are guaranteed to get 100% of their initial purchase price back, having already enjoyed years of great vacations. It also provides them with a built-in exit strategy, alleviating fears of secondary market issues they may be aware of.

Perspective Magazine: So how exactly is it 100% guaranteed?
Duane Lee: The entire program was designed and built with the support and backing of Aon, a world leader in the risk management, insurance and investment fields. With offices in more than 120 countries, with over 50,000 employees worldwide, Aon is the world’s largest insurance brokerage firm. Long-time, proud sponsors of the
Manchester United Football Club, Aon has built an entire suite of coverage’s and protections that absolutely guarantee the client will have the funds available at the end of their term, regardless of the strength or even existence of the club, resort or even Vacation SafeGuard, as the premiums are pre-paid in full for each client registered within the program.

It’s simple mathematics really, based on compounded interested over the term.

To use an industry term, our product is not built on a “breakage” model. Vacation Safeguard is the only product of this type to be fully backed and supported by insurance, and so if 100% of customers stayed in for 100% of the term, all would receive 100% of their initial purchase price back with no crazy hoops to jump through to get it. It’s safe and secure, giving the confidence and credibility needed for developers to include the program, and every reason for the customer to say “yes” today.

**Perspective Magazine: How much does it cost?**

Duane Lee: For the developer, there are no set-up fees, we provide free CRM integration, free on-site and / or remote training, and free ongoing support. In fact, we never charge the resort a fee of any kind ever.

The cost of the program is added / included in the sales price and the customer pays the total. The developer forwards the cost of the program to Vacation SafeGuard and that’s it. There are no additional fees for the customer either, no annual fees, no admin fees and no redemption fees.

The customer at the end of the term can receive 100% of the initial purchase price, which includes the portion paid to Vacation SafeGuard.

The cost is a percentage of the sales price determined only by the length of the term which is typically 15, 20, 25 or 30 years. We’d be happy to provide an exact breakdown directly to anyone who enquires.

**Perspective Magazine: How else does it support resort developers and sales centers?**

Duane Lee: Vacation SafeGuard was built with the developer in mind, and so has many applications that a sales center can benefit from, here’s just a few examples:

1. Increasing first time sales closing percentages by taking away the fear of the initial upfront purchase price.
2. Now there is a new tool to help with upgrading existing members. Vacation Safeguard provides the option to include the Buy Back Program not only on the upgrade that is being sold, but on the original purchase also, so that the whole amount can now be included in the Buy Back Program.
3. It can even be applied to original purchases at other resorts. Sales centers can now apply the full purchase amount to cover any and all previous purchases with other clubs, plus their own, in order to encourage customers to become members with them.
4. Having a customer part of the Buy Back Program reduces cancellations.
5. The Buy Back Program also keeps members more current with their dues and increases the average length of time someone remains a member. The entire program creates a more loyal member as they want to stay in for the full term as they want their full purchase price back at the end.
Perspective Magazine: You recently entered into a strategic partnership with INTUITION, what does that involve? Duane Lee: Yes, we have partnered with INTUITION to include their ESP Survey for sales centers at no additional cost for developers who use Vacation SafeGuard.

INTUITION is the leader in customer engagement and reputation management services in the vacation ownership industry, and one of their many services is particularly aligned with our own so we saw it as a perfect fit. The ESP (Evaluate Sales Performance) Survey uniquely combines sales statistics with customer feedback to provide never before available insights into sales center performance. It shows areas for improvement on a sales / marketing team and individual sales person level.

When used in conjunction with Vacation SafeGuard, we include two short questions in the ESP survey that ensure that our product is being explained correctly, and to determine how important our service would be if / when buying a vacation club product in the future.

Both Vacation SafeGuard and INTUITION are committed to improving sales center revenue and efficiencies, and we look forward to working with INTUITION’s client base, as well as introducing INTUITION’s services to our own client base.

To request more information on both the Buy Back Program and INTUITION, visit http://intuitionbrandmarketing.com/VSL.

For the developer, there are no set-up fees, we provide free CRM integration, free on-site and / or remote training, and free ongoing support. In fact, we never charge the resort a fee of any kind ever.
SAVE THE DATE

ARDAWORLD
THE GLOBAL TIMESHARE EVENT
MAY 6–10, 2018
CAESARS PALACE | LAS VEGAS, NV, USA

www.arda.org/convention
GNEX 2018 Unveils New Format for Unique Venue

For 8 years, The Global Networking Experience, commonly known as the GNEX Conference has brought together senior level executives and major influencers from the hotel and resort industries. Always known for implementing innovative new conference sessions, concepts and networking opportunities, this year’s event will be held onboard the world’s first mega-yacht event venue, the SeaFair Grand Luxe, from February 26-28, Miami, FL.

Considered Miami’s number one event venue, the Sea Fair Grand Luxe features 22,000 square feet of luxurious meeting and dining space. Formerly a floating art gallery that displayed over $400,000 of fine art, the Sea Fair Grand Luxe was converted into a stunning event venue in 2016 after undergoing an extensive $10 million renovation project. Towering 57 feet above water and stretching 228 feet in length, the SeaFair Grand Luxe is docked at the Bayfront Park South Dock at Chopin Plaza in downtown Miami, outside the Intercontinental Miami Hotel.

The 2018 event also introduces a new session format that provides a more interactive feel, and different approach to general sessions.

Networking is the primary focus of GNEX Conferences, and so the event will kick-off with a new session called “The 60-Second Pitch”. This session highlights a dozen or more participating resort development executives and then sees a selection of attending companies perform rapid 60-second elevator pitches about their company hoping to attract the attention of the participating decision-makers and others that are in the audience and help them arrange meetings for later in the conference.

Following that new interactive session, is a crowd favorite, Speed Networking. In this high energy event, attendees sit opposite each other in moving rows and have again just one minute each to introduce themselves, swap cards and identify companies they would like to speak to in more detail.

Panel Sessions have been replaced by X-TALKS. Unique to GNEX Conference, these are short, impactful 10-minute solo presentations on topics which the speaker is either an Xpert, has significant Xperience or has Xcelled within their field. These sessions are designed to cram typical 30-minute sessions into just 10-minutes so that every second is meaningful, but not quite enough to complete the story – again drawing attendees to want to meet with speakers to find out more.

X-TALKS will cover topics from “How to design a competitive product in an ever-changing marketplace” and “Building a culture of success: An entrepreneurs guide to leadership” to “The four most dangerous words: Predicting the next crisis for the U.S. economy” and “Timeshare’s future in the world of OTAs” and much more.
Guest speakers, not directly involved in the timeshare / vacation club industry include:

Will Blackmon, a Super Bowl winning NFL Safety who has played for 10 seasons for a variety of teams including the Washington Redskins, Seattle Seahawks, Jacksonville Jaguars, and the New York Giants. He will be sharing his rollercoaster story and how important it is to be resilient through every moment.

Denise Jacobson, Senior Manager of Analytics, Reporting, and Data Governance for Toyota Motor Sales USA who will be discussing the importance of customer data and how the world’s largest car manufacturer utilizes that data.

Mike Hampton, the former Dean of the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Florida International University who will be highlighting the progressive developments in machine learning, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, the advent of 5G and how it will all impact the guest experience.

GNEX Conferences are renowned for their fun and elaborate social events and this year is no exception. Pre-event options include a private Miami tour on a double-decker bus that will take attendees away from the well-known downtown and south beach areas to explore places like Coconut Grove and taste Cuban coffee in Little Havana. Following that, it’s time to take it up a gear as attendee’s board one of two 55ft racing powerboats for a tour of the famous houses on Star Island before rocketing along South Beach at over 55mph. Then an unofficial gathering @ South Beach will let attendees unwind before two full days of networking and sessions.

Once the conference starts, attendees will also enjoy the Send Me On Vacation “Cocktails & Dreams” party and charity auction; the EPIC Party, on the 16th floor pool deck of the Kimpton Epic Hotel, and the SeaFair Party & Perspective Magazine Awards as the mega-yacht cruises Biscayne Bay on the final afternoon.

For more information visit http://gnexconference.com
Welk Resorts Returns to the RCI Global Exchange Network

RCI, the global leader in vacation exchange, is proud to welcome the Welk Resorts’ Platinum Program to its vacation exchange network. Through a new affiliation agreement, RCI will provide technology solutions and vacation exchange services to owners of Welk Resorts Platinum Points. In addition to the three existing RCI® affiliated properties, Welk is adding five new affiliated properties and currently developing two additional properties that it plans to add upon competition. The new affiliated Welk properties will expand the travel options for RCI’s 3.8 million subscribing members.

“We are pleased to be partnering with RCI to provide exchange services to our owners and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead,” said Jon Fredricks, president and CEO, Welk Resorts. “RCI provided Welk with a customized Club-enabled exchange solution, and offered several additional technology solutions like RCI Presenter SM and RCI LiveStream® that are expected to provide world class service to our owners.”

The five properties from Welk Resorts that join the RCI exchange network include:

1. Sirena del Mar by Welk Resorts in the Cabo San Lucas area, is a luxurious, 7-acre oceanfront resort perched on the cliffs of the Baja peninsula. The property offers stunning two-bedroom penthouse suites, each luxuriously-appointed and boasting amenities like Bose® Wave systems, stainless steel appliances and wireless internet.

2. Welk Resorts San Diego in Escondido, California offers three unique vacation ownership communities including Welk Resort Villas, Villas on the Green and Mountain Villas. Owners can choose from a variety of floor plans and have access to a 6,000 square foot fitness center, two golf courses, tennis courts, a farmers’ market and their own downtown village with a theater, shopping and dining.

3. Northstar Lodge in the area of Lake Tahoe, California is located at the base of the world-renowned Northstar California ski area in Truckee. This ski-in/ski-out resort is furnished with its own pulse-driven gondola and features villas with high-end amenities including a private owner’s lounge, media theater and ski and boot valet in the winter.

4. One Village Place by Welk Resorts is situated in the heart of the acclaimed Village at Northstar. A part of The Registry Collection®, this property offers 21 luxurious accommodations and quick access to some of the most sought-after slopes in the world. All villas are nestled right atop the Big Springs Express gondola building and within walking distance of the village.

5. The Lodges at Timber Ridge in Branson is a first-class destination resort nestled in the breathtaking Ozarks of Missouri. It offers spacious luxury vacation lodge rentals, on-site dining, fitness center, mini golf, game room, world-class live theatre entertainment as well as a number of other unique resort experiences. The 10,000 square foot water park that’s on-site is open year round, with a 100-foot slide, splash zone, indoor and outdoor pools and hot tubs.

“We are thrilled to be working with the team at Welk Resorts and look forward to providing great vacations to Welk owners as a result of this agreement,” said Gordon Gurnik, president of RCI. “We are also excited about the additional, high-quality vacation options we are able to provide to our existing members in popular destinations in the Cabo San Lucas, San Diego and Lake Tahoe areas.”

ARDA Encourages Americans to Plan for Vacation

The American Resort Development Association (ARDA) encourages Americans to participate in the second annual National Plan for Vacation Day. This day is a call-to-action for Americans to take back their calendars and plan their time off.

More than half (54%) of Americans fail to use all the time off they earn, adding up to 662 million unused vacation days each year. National Plan for Vacation Day, launched by Project: Time Off, aims to remind vacationers of the importance and benefits of planning a vacation ahead of time.

“The solution for our ‘no vacation nation’ is simple,” said Howard Nusbaum, president and CEO of ARDA. “Take the time to sit down, plan your vacation days out, and give yourself and your family something to look forward to. Our timeshare owners are great at planning their vacation, since they know they have a pre-paid vacation to take each year. In fact, the ARDA International Foundation’s recent study on timeshare owners found that they take three or more vacations in a year.”

Research shows that planners have a distinct advantage over non-planners. Project: Time Off’s The State of American Vacation 2017 report found that planners use more of their time, take longer vacations, and are happier.
Mary’s Story of SURVIVAL

My name is Mary Brown. I am a single mother to three adult children and I am honored to be a grandmother to two beautiful grandsons as well.

I was born in Wisconsin and moved to Arizona when I was one year old so I consider myself a native Arizonan.

While on vacation at my parent’s cabin during the summer of 2016, I discovered a lump in my right breast. As soon as I got back home, I scheduled a doctor’s appointment. After that, I had a mammogram and ultrasound. Before I knew it, I was having a biopsy and got that dreaded phone call June 22, 2016 saying, “it’s cancer”.

I was only able to work for two weeks before I left on FMLA to have a double mastectomy and chemotherapy. I had no sick time accrued, no short term disability because I couldn’t afford it, and soon lost my insurance. My parents helped me pay my bills for eight long months. I finished chemo Feb. 17th, 2017, and went back to work in April to finish the school year as I am a teacher.

Right before we left for summer break, I discovered a new lump on my chest wall. May 19th I was having an ultrasound again. On May 20th, I had a biopsy done and unfortunately had a recurrence and surgery June 2, 2017. I will do radiation next.

In the mean time, more testing was done; MRI of my brain and CT of the abdomen, chest and pelvic area. Some nodules were discovered on my left lung. A biopsy was done and it too is cancer, however, it is a new cancer which may also result in another surgery and for certain, more chemotherapy.

I will have to resign from teaching for a bit so I can focus 100% on healing. I haven’t taken a vacation since my children were little and I could sure use some fun and excitement in my life. I am tired of thinking about cancer. Thank you so much for considering me.

Sincerely,
Mary Brown

Send Me On Vacation provides healing vacations to breast cancer survivors who have recently completed treatment. The organization believes that the vacation experience has the power to heal the body, mind and spirit and is a critical first step in recovering from the devastating effects of cancer. SMOV combines the resources of the vacation ownership industry with fundraising efforts to send survivors from the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, England, France & Italy on vacations around the world. The organization affiliates with hospitals, cancer centers and other non-profit organizations to change the lives of survivors, one vacation at a time. Send Me On Vacation is a resource driven charity. Please consider making an in-kind donation of resort weeks, points, certificates or flight miles. YOUR resources can CHANGE lives of cancer survivors for the better, one vacation at a time! Contact us to donate at communications@sendmeonvacation.org

Every 3 minutes a breast cancer diagnosis is made
2.8 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S.
Breast cancer #1 cause of cancer in women worldwide
20-30% of women with invasive breast cancer to have reoccurrence
Westgate Resorts reveals details on $14 million transformation of Cocoa Beach resort

Westgate Resorts released details of its new Cocoa Beach resort and invites visitors to experience the finest resort in Cocoa Beach. Coming summer 2018, Wakulla Suites will be completely transformed into Westgate Cocoa Beach Resort after a $14 million comprehensive renovation that is already 50 percent complete. The fully renovated property will boast two-bedroom, two-bathroom and fully equipped high-end condominiums; a tropical-themed water park with a lazy river, splash pad and water play area and a variety of exclusive concierge level services unique to the Space Coast. Guests can now reserve their stay at the new Westgate Cocoa Beach Resort getaway at www.experiencecocoabeach.com.

Purchased by Westgate Resorts in 2016, the extensive renovation covers every aspect of the property, including all new exteriors, interiors, lobby and amenities. All the upscale suites will be completely rebuilt from floor-to-ceiling with a sleek, modern design and high-end touches such as stainless-steel appliances and ornate wood finishes. Each suite will feature a living space, full kitchen with both table and bar seating as well two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

The new centerpiece of the beachfront resort will be complimentary guest access to a 75,000-gallon tropical-themed waterpark featuring action slides, a splash pad and a 335-foot lazy river. Centrally located just a few steps from each guest villa, the waterpark will offer lush tropical landscaping and surfing themed décor highlighting the destination’s title as the east coast surfing capital of the U.S.

“Westgate Cocoa Beach Resort will be the most luxurious and exciting resort for families to take a vacation and experience the best of Cocoa Beach,” said Westgate Resorts President and CEO David Siegel. “We have invested over $35 million in projects in the Cocoa Beach community because we believe this is the premier beach destination in Florida.”

Guests of the resort will be able to take advantage of a complimentary shuttle to the nearby Cocoa Beach Pier, which is minutes away. There, beachgoers can enjoy a meal at one of the Pier’s five restaurants, shop at one of the three retail stores, take surf lessons, rent bicycles and enjoy the exclusive Cocoa Beach Pier beach concierge and cabana service.

As part of the renovation project at the Cocoa Beach Pier, groups looking to host family reunions, weddings, executive retreats, incentive trips and others will now be able to take advantage of the finest oceanfront meeting space in Cocoa Beach.

The 3,500-square-foot flexible banquet and meeting space will feature floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Atlantic Ocean as well as a chic bar. The new banquet and meeting space is scheduled to be completed in spring 2018 and will be open for bookings to those not staying at the resort as well.

Zealandia Holding Company and Wachesaw Plantation East Announce Acquisition and Capital Improvements

In January 2017, Zealandia Holding Company (ZHC) successfully closed on the acquisition of Wachesaw Plantation East Golf Club in Murrells Inlet. Wachesaw East has been recognized as one of best golf courses in Myrtle Beach, named Golf Course of the Year in 2007 and host to LPGA events from 1997 – 2000. ZHC recognized an opportunity to make Wachesaw East even better by providing capital for improvements, expanded player programs, improved amenities and service enhancements.

Designed to further establish Wachesaw East as the premier golf destination on the southern-end of the Grand Strand, a $1 million improvement plan has been launched along with restructuring of club operations. Planned course condition improvements to elevate the golf experience include:

- Tree removal to improve playability and turf conditions.
- Bunker renovation and drainage improvements.
- Replacement of cart paths.
- Green renovations.
- General course beautification, including tee boxes and waste areas.

With a commitment to overall player satisfaction, Wachesaw East’s plan also includes initiatives to increase service and comfort levels. The cart fleet will be up-fitted with a new technology pack, including USB ports for phone charging and GPS. A new restaurant concept is in the works, including improvements and expanded use of the outdoor bar and patio, ideal for leagues, group gatherings and events. The Pro Shop will also be updated with a new design and merchandising.
Grupo Vidanta and Hakkasan Group Announce Grand Opening Weekend With Performances by Calvin Harris, Steve Aoki and ZEDD at Vidanta Los Cabos

Grupo Vidanta, Mexico’s leading resort operator and developer of real estate and tourism, along with Hakkasan Group, one of the world’s leading hospitality companies, will celebrate the launch of the new entertainment district at Vidanta Los Cabos with a Grand Opening Weekend Friday, February 23rd to Sunday, February 25th, 2018. Featuring some of the world’s most in-demand talent, including Grammy Award-winning and multi-platinum selling artist Calvin Harris, Steve Aoki and ZEDD, this event promises to be one of the most celebrated, high-profile openings of 2018. This event ushers in a new level of world-class entertainment and dining unmatched in the region.

Most of the event will be exclusive and by invitation only. Nonetheless, for those wanting to join the party, a limited number of tickets will be available for OMNIA Dayclub during the Grand Opening Weekend. Tickets, which will be sure to sell out quickly, will go on sale Monday, January 15 and will be available by visiting omnialoscabos.com. Guests will also have the opportunity to sign up to be among the first to hear the latest news from this new hot spot which will feature a roster of top-tier talent throughout the year.

Grand Opening Weekend Line-up:

Friday, February 23
Steve Aoki (nighttime performance)

Saturday, February 24
ZEDD (daytime performance)

Saturday, February 24
Calvin Harris (nighttime performance)

OMNIA Dayclub is one of four vibrant venues, alongside Herringbone, SHOREbar and a new restaurant concept, Casa Calavera, which together create an exciting new entertainment district unlike anything currently on offer in Los Cabos.

OMNIA DAYCLUB
www.omnialoscabos.com
The beachfront dayclub is arranged around a central pool with an array of VIP areas including private cabanas and a pair of two-story VIP bungalows with private plunge pools. With a talent line-up of world-class DJs, OMNIA Dayclub will set a new standard of service and entertainment within Mexico.

HERRINGBONE
www.herringboneeats.com
This is the first international opening for Herringbone, which has been reimagined as an airy Mexican beach house with views over the resort’s pools to the ocean. The restaurant offers coastal cuisine with an emphasis on line-caught seafood and high-quality meats, and features some of Herringbone’s signature design elements such as living trees, lush vegetation and maritime artwork and fixtures.

CASA CALAVERA
www.casacalavera.com
Casa Calavera is a new culinary concept developed by Hakkasan Group with an authentic Dia de los Muertos theme at its core. Adjoining OMNIA Dayclub, Casa Calavera will share the ambiance, sounds and energy of the dayclub while offering a menu of popular Mexican dishes and drinks in a beachside setting.

SHOREBAR
www.shorebarloscabos.com
Sitting under a striking, curved thatch roof and overlooking one of the resort’s main pools, SHOREbar is a casual, open-air venue offering hand-crafted cocktails with pool and ocean views. A vintage VW bus parked within the place will offer a small menu of light bites and dishes to share.

Another Record Year of Giving by the Holiday Inn Club Vacations Brand

We are committed to supporting these incredible organizations that help to make the communities we share such a great place to live, work and visit,” said Tom Nelson, President and CEO of Orange Lake Resorts. “I am so proud of our team’s generosity and charitable efforts this past year. Through our company-wide Heart Travels community support program we were able to increase our 2017 overall giving by $360,000.”

Team members across the company’s 26 resorts volunteered 2,106 hours of community service, collected 7,876 pounds of food and donated 6,205 toys to support non-profits in their communities. Holiday Inn Club Vacations team member volunteer hours equate to nearly $50,000 of in-kind support. Additionally, the Holiday Inn Club Vacations brand supported a new effort in 2017, The Hope In One Golf Tournament benefitting Give Kids The World. As the title sponsor and organizer, the event raised $236,250.
Improving Revenue Through Reputation... With A Little INTUITION

For the hundreds of hotels and resorts that use the INTUITION services, 2017 was a year of discovery, readjustments and improvements in customer satisfaction and online reputation.

By listening to their INTUITION data analytics, they were able to identify strengths and weaknesses across all operational departments, create performance-based bonus structures, and drive up customer satisfaction scores, which in turn were positively reflected in online reviews, generating more bookings via OTAs.

INTUITION Brand Marketing LLC, a Perspective Group company, is rapidly becoming the go to company for the latest in customer engagement and reputation management strategies, particular for mixed-use resorts where vacation club and hotel co-exist, but often don’t share data or feedback. INTUITION provides fully managed services that can assist hotels and resorts with every aspect of the customer journey, powered by integrated technologies.

There are many ways that a hotel or resort can make more revenue, from better advertising to cutting costs, but one area that is often overlooked is the impact of online reputation on future prospective guests.

INTUITION’s services are split into three categories: Reputation, Feedback, Marketing.

**REPUTATION**

Studies show that 9 out of 10 travelers will read online reviews before booking a vacation, with 19% saying they will book elsewhere after seeing just one negative review, and 69% will book elsewhere after seeing multiple negative reviews. Knowing this is to know that potential reservations are lost on a daily basis.

Typically, without a planned strategy, less that 3% of guests will post a review on TripAdvisor after their vacation, and that includes the unhappy ones. However, many more totally satisfied guests will leave and not share their experiences with the world.

This is a lost opportunity, and so one of INTUITION’s most popular features is the automated collection of more TripAdvisor Reviews from resort guests. This is achieved through INTUITION’s official partnership with TripAdvisor for Joint Review Collection. A review form is integrated into the Post Stay Survey,
allow guests to post a review to TripAdvisor without ever having to go to TripAdvisor.com or having to first set up a new account and verify it, making it much easier for a guest to leave a review – and so many do.

The increase of positive reviews can affect the overall ranking of a resort, pushing it higher and higher, making it more visible, with better scores and therefore attracting more bookings via OTA channels.

For timeshare resorts and vacation clubs, a high ranking on TripAdvisor, the world’s largest travel website is also huge credibility for sales centers to play off, whereas negative reviews on TripAdvisor; including ones that reference the sales center can burn deals and affect mini-vac operations.

INTUITION also offers a dashboard that tracks all reviews via API from more than 70+ of the most popular review sites, such as TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, Orbitz, Google+, Travelocity, Yelp, Foursquare, Facebook, Booking.com and more, so that those responsible managing online reviews can view them all in one place and receive email alerts as soon as negative reviews are found.

Additionally, the original INTUITION Social Listening service is still available, which scours more than 80 million websites every few hours for mentions of your brand to show you what else is being said about you that you didn’t know about.

FEEDBACK
Reputation cannot be improved without first analyzing genuine feedback. The problem is that traditional surveys gather basic information and then the data sits in a silo, with limited people even looking at the results. Often, additional languages or the introduction of multiple surveys compounds this problem.

INTUITION offers a centralized business intelligence platform that combines the data from all of its services in one place, creating relationships between multiple datasets to create information not previously available.

Using the latest survey technologies, INTUITION provides Post Stay Surveys with integrated TripAdvisor Review Form; driven by the client’s CRM data, enabling it to dynamically generate questions based on language, guest type, membership type, resort stayed at and more – all in one single survey.

Surveys with integrated TripAdvisor Review Form; driven by the client’s CRM data, enabling it to dynamically generate questions based on language, guest type, membership type, resort stayed at and more – all in one single survey.

There are also several tablet-based on-site survey options, from SPA, Restaurant and roaming interviewers, to sales center surveys and data capture options for marketing departments.

However, gathering the feedback is just the beginning, data is only useful if it is actionable and if the right people see and understand it. INTUITION delivers customized and personalized daily, weekly or monthly reports, with easy to understand charts, graphs, tables and comments. These reports can be sent to department heads, showing only the information they need to see, such as a Front Desk Manager seeing the latest satisfaction scores for the week, plus any negative comments about check-in / check-out so that the manager can address them with the team and make immediate improvements.

It is this delivery of data that has impacted the customer satisfaction scores at INTUITION client resorts, improved communication between departments and increased productivity.
MARKETING
The latest services from INTUITION are impressively powered by the data already collected, such as Email / SMS Marketing Automation, that sends targeted information to guests before, during and after their stay to encourage additional on-site spending, repeat visits and referrals.

Pre-arrival emails can result in room or package upgrades, airport transfer purchases, reservations for activities / excursions and even pre-booking of preferred time(s) for a sales presentation.

On-site SMS Marketing enables resorts to remind guests of activities as well as send discounted SPA offers at quiet times, restaurant deals, happy hour promotions and more to increase discretionary purchases and increase overall value per guest.

Post stay email marketing, again pulls from data collected during the vacation and post stay survey to accurately market relevant content to each guest, driving up conversions of repeat visits or referrals – all on autopilot!

ALWAYS INNOVATING
The team at INTUITION never stop working on new features and integration ideas to further improve the service or suite of optional add-ons. In 2018, there are already several updates and upgrades planned to the new SMS Marketing and Email Marketing Automation services to sales and marketing teams, right down to individual sales person evaluations that show when more training is necessary, and specifically what training is necessary.

INTUITION also recently partnered with Vacation SafeGuard, the world’s first 100% Guaranteed (fully insured) Buy Back Program for timeshare, vacation club and travel club products. As part of this partnership INTUITION’s ESP Survey is included at no charge to developers who use Vacation SafeGuard. For more information on this visit http://intuitionbrandmarketing.com/vsl

Reputation cannot be improved without first analyzing genuine feedback. The problem is that traditional surveys gather basic information and then the data sits in a silo, with limited people even looking at the results.

look out for, plus several more in-depth TripAdvisor Review Analytics that are unique to INTUITION clients and not available anywhere else.

Additionally, INTUITION will be making further improvements to its newly launched ESP Survey. ESP in this case stands for Evaluate Sales Performance, and is another industry first, where sales statistics meets customer opinion to provide invaluable areas for improvement for sales centers. The service identifies strengths and weaknesses across sales and marketing teams, right down to individual sales person evaluations that show when more training is necessary, and specifically what training is necessary.

For a full demo and more information visit http://intuitionbrandmarketing.com/contact
North America
In a society where cybersecurity attacks are becoming the norm instead of the exception, it is vital that employees are aware of measures to protect themselves and their employers from becoming victims of these attacks.

In an effort to promote awareness of their prevalence, experts are now saying that it is not a matter of if, but when you will be faced with a breach. This should be concerning to everyone, especially since the victims range from small local companies to large global enterprises and everywhere in between.

Protection, not reaction, is key. Some of the common methods to accomplish this protection involve complex and ever-changing passwords, disk encryption, two-factor authentication, frequent and periodic system updates and backups, and employee awareness training. In addition to those mentioned, there are many other methods that can be used to protect the employee and employer’s confidential data.

Password Safety
The most basic protection is the use of required log-in passwords. This method is one that employees can control but one that is often oversimplified due to the demanding nature of the password driven e-society we live in. Best practices involve creating a password that is easy to remember but that is long enough to prevent unauthorized users from decrypting it. A common rule of thumb is a length of 12 characters or more consisting of a mixture of uppercase, lowercase, numeric, and special characters. Some websites and software programs require passwords to be changed periodically which leads to additional protection against unauthorized users. It is also advisable to have different passwords for each website or software application in the off-chance one gets...
compromised. Once you have established sound password creation methods, security of those passwords is imperative. Unfortunately, many employees maintain lists or post-it notes in and around their workspace or keep files on their desktop listing their passwords. Neither of these is a preferred method and creates high risk of exposure. Best practice is to create a memorable system that you can recover at all times (e.g. using the first letters of your favorite book or song, a special character and a number string paired with a consistent website identifier). In the absence of this, there are more (not completely) secure platforms and websites that provide password storage. However, these are subject to attack and data loss just like anything else.

**Disk Encryption**

Disk encryption, which is similar to password protection, is another way that employers can protect themselves and their employees. Disk encryption involves protecting data by transforming it into a code that makes it more difficult to access by unauthorized users. Although nothing is impossible, even with the most advanced technologies, hackers have difficulties decoding a proper disk encryption. If encrypted, a computer’s system can only be accessed following the entry of the correct password. Without this password, the entire computer may be completely useless. This is an especially useful tool for a company that issues laptops to employees for their use outside the office.

**Two-Factor Authentication**

As our society becomes increasingly mobile, two-factor authentication is becoming more widely used and has already been implemented by many companies in the banking and social media platforms. This method creates an extra level of protection by requiring a verification step for log-in in addition to the user password. When an employee initially attempts to log-in to a program, the employee will be prompted to enter a unique code or password that was sent separately via text or email. The code will change every time the employee initiates a login. This is a method that attempts to verify the identity of the employee through a secondary avenue and ensure the access is being attempted by an authorized user. This is especially important when working with confidential information at the workplace. In a situation where an employee’s computer is compromised, this measure may help prevent the unauthorized user from accessing its data.

**System Updates**

One of the easiest and least costly methods to maintain a higher level of protection is through frequent and periodic system updates and backups. This involves consistent software updates, including the operating systems, antivirus applications, and daily off-site or cloud backups. Software manufacturers are constantly identifying potential threats in their products and releasing updates to help mitigate those risks. By applying these updates, an employer is adding one more level of protection against loss. In addition to updates, frequent backups are essential and it is recommended to use off-site or cloud based servers. If the data is compromised, destroyed, or corrupted, a previous copy of the data is available to be retrieved. If backups are infrequent or inadequate, the steps to recover could be very costly and the loss could be devastating. A good rule of thumb is to backup frequently and to multiple sources for this reason.

**Employee Awareness**

Finally, a very effective way to mitigate cyber-attacks is through employee security awareness training. This can be done internally or through an outside source. Employees who are aware and educated about potential cyber threats and current scams as well as the protocol to handle a potential breach are a company’s first line of defense in protecting against a loss from a cyber-attack. Employees should be educated on ways to protect themselves and their employers and what the protocol is for a perceived breach attempt or an actual breach. Periodic security awareness training serves as a good reminder to the employees of the importance of data security and ways to identify weaknesses that could lead to unauthorized access. As technology continues to advance, the methods and potential exposure from cybersecurity breaches increases. As a result, it is vital to discuss protection strategies with the team to prevent the company from becoming a victim.

**The Threats Are Real**

Business email compromise scams are becoming increasingly prevalent. Recent attacks have occurred in all 50 U.S. states, 131 countries, and have resulted in financial losses in the billions. The main fraud schemes occur when businesses or individuals receive emails from outside sources requesting information or action from the recipient. Some of the requests may involve access to banking information (e.g. wire transfer authorizations), server entry or passwords, or data (e.g. intellectual property, payroll information). As technology evolves, so do the efforts of the perpetrators. In fact, it is not difficult for a sender to change the “from” address to show a recognizable intercompany email account which may promote the recipient to follow the request. In addition, not all emails are
blatant requests for wire transfers and may appear friendly in an attempt to encourage the recipient to click a link or open an attachment. At this time, the sender may gain immediate access to the employer's database. Aside from trying to avoid opening links, attachments, and emails from unknown senders, sometimes prehistoric methods such as picking up the phone and calling the purported sender may be necessary. This method is a quick and easy way to verify the sender.

Remember, it is better to exercise a level of caution to prevent becoming a victim of these types of scams.

These tips are not listed in order of importance or in an order of recommended implementation. It could be argued that employee awareness training should be the first prevention technique implemented. Each company has unique needs and is in a different place regarding their cybersecurity. The key is to start taking measures now to protect the company, its employees, data and privacy. The risks exist already and are growing daily so the key is to start today and be prepared to continuously reevaluate cyber threats and potential techniques to mitigate those risks.

Best practices involve creating a password that is easy to remember but that is long enough to prevent unauthorized users from decrypting it.

ABOUT WITHUM SMITH + BROWN (WITHUM)
Withum provides clients in the hospitality, vacation ownership and other industries with assurance, accounting, tax compliance and consulting services. For further information about Withum and the services they provide to the industry, contact Lena Combs (LCombs@withum.com) at (407) 849-1569 or www.withum.com.
Latin America
On December 13th, the second Master Course in Marketing given by AMDETUR each year concluded, this time in Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, in collaboration with the Association of Timeshare Resort Owners of Baja California Sur (ASUDESTICO), with the backing of the Universidad del Golfo de California, the National Tourism Business Council (CNET) and the Ministry of Tourism of Baja California Sur.

This second Master Course in Marketing brought together students from leading timeshare and vacation ownership destinations in Mexico, as well as international students from countries like Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador, trained by instructors from Mexico and other countries and also with the support of faculty from the Universidad del Golfo de California, all of them with extensive experience in the timeshare and vacation ownership industry.

The Master Course was aimed at professionals who work in sales, marketing, operation and administration, supervisors, area heads, executives, managers and directors that work in timeshare marketing, as well as human capital areas.
As in every year, the best student work was selected, this time by Antonio Amezcua on the topic: Capitalizing on Big Data in Timeshare Marketing.

Among the activities carried out by our Association to benefit its members have been:

The meeting of AMDETUR’s Tax Committee, made up of Alejandro Cotero and Jaime Marquez of Royal Holiday, Cesar Ramirez of KPMG, Carlos Trujillo and Rosa de Jesús Lugo, who discussed issues relating to Mexican federal tax regulations on the new version 3.3 of the digital tax receipt.

We attended the 17th International Tourism Congress of the National Tourist Business Council (CNET), attended by the president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto. At this great event, we were honored to work alongside leaders in the tourist industry, including people from Royal Holiday.

Following up on our University-Company Engagement Program, we organized various presentations to students from the Colegio Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica (CONALEP), given by AMDETUR, RCI, Interval International and Royal Holiday, letting them know a bit about timeshare and vacation ownership. We also took part in the commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of the Tourism School at the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). Along with the National Council for Tourist Education Quality (CONAET), of which AMDETUR is a founding member, we participated in the internship and social service program at the Universidad del Valle de México (UVM).

Carlos Trujillo and Rosa de Jesús Lugo, who discussed issues relating to Mexican federal tax regulations on the new version 3.3 of the digital tax receipt.

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DISRUPTION
THE NEW RE-ENGINEERING
June 12th, 13th & 14th
The Westin Santa Fe, Mexico City.
For over 20 years, ASUDESTICO (The Sudcalifornian Timeshare Association) has brought together timeshare industry professionals not only based in the organization’s native Los Cabos, Mexico, but from around the world as well. Knowing very well the importance of educating and supporting the future generation of timeshare developers, ASUDESTICO launched The International Marketing and Sales Forum.

This past June marked ASUDESTICO’s 4th annual International Marketing and Sales Forum. The event, which took place at the Sheraton Grand in Los Cabos Hacienda Del Mar was ASUDESTICO’s largest marketing sales forum to date. More than 700 attendees from the world of timeshare and vacation ownership took part in the two-day, educational event that welcomed over 400 university students from Los Cabos Universities to participate in thought-provoking discussions and lectures about tourism, the timeshare industry, marketing, and business development.

The 4th annual International Marketing and Sales Forum featured a multitude of guest speakers who are experts in their respected fields including: Luis Alvarez; a 55-year-old, native of Mexico who has completed more than 120 Ironman events and impressively summited Mt. Everest in 2016 despite suffering retinal damage during the climb, Roberto Gaudelli; the chairman and general manager of Gaudelli MCW; a leading advertising and marketing firm located in Mexico with 25 years’ experience in the industry, Robert Clements; the Vice
President of Regulatory Affairs for ARDA, Juan Ignacio Rodríguez; the Senior Vice President of RCI Latin America, Gregory Crist; the President and Director of NTOA, Marcos Agostini; Executive Vice President of Business Development for Interval International, Alex Dey; a Mexican-American motivational speaker and the author of the best-selling book, The Seller’s Bible, Ernesto Coppel; the developer and chairman of Pueblo Bonito Golf & Spa Resorts, and motivational speakers Blanca Mayagoitia and Yoko Kenji.

In an interview with Mega Noticias, Eduardo Flores, the President of ASUDESTICO, was proud of the event that he spearheaded, stating that the forum has always been able to address many issues that are important to the timeshare development industry, but has now grown into something much larger. Luis Genaro Ruiz; the Secretary of Tourism, Economy, and Sustainability for Baja California Sur was also in attendance and spoke with Mega Noticias. Secretary Ruiz explained how tourism in Los Cabos has expanded greatly since ASUDESTICO was founded in 1996, and the city will only see an increase in tourists to the region.

According to data released in October by the Los Cabos Tourism Board and the Hotel Association of Los Cabos, the region saw a 6-percent surge in hotel occupancy during the summer of 2017 and has steadily increased its footprint as a major destination for tourists internationally. In just two years, Los Cabos saw an impressive 20-percent growth. Despite a year plagued by natural disasters that affected tourism globally; including Hurricanes Irma and Harvey, the Mexico City earthquakes, and Tropical Storm Lydia that impacted Los Cabos directly, tourism saw an increase on all fronts for the city. What’s even better news for not only the tourism industry, but specifically for the vacation ownership industry is the rapid increase of hotel rooms and new properties being
built in Los Cabos. Overall, hotel rooms went from 14,000 to 16,000 in three years, and according to Secretary Hernandez, over 4,000 hotel rooms will be built from now until 2021, with the majority of those rooms being available for timeshare.

Through the work done by ASUDESTICO and programs like the International Marketing and Sales Forum, students who choose to become part of the vacation ownership industry in Mexico will be thoroughly prepared to dive in head first into a business that is constantly moving forward and thriving. ASUDESTICO has even partnered with the University of the Gulf of California in Los Cabos to offer a diploma program specifically geared towards timeshare for those who are already in the hospitality field, but want to increase their knowledge about a sector of the industry that is growing rapidly.

Since ASUDESTICO was founded in 1996, the vacation ownership industry, and tourism to Los Cabos has changed drastically, but ASUDESTICO has certainly kept up with the times. By having strong partnerships with other organizations such as ARDA and AMDETUR, and by putting on events like The International Marketing and Sales Forum, ASUDESTICO will continue to thrive in an ever-changing marketplace.
ATHOC
Annual Conference
Denarau Island Fiji
2018

Building on Foundations

10 - 12 September 18
Sofitel Luxury Hotel in Denarau Island

BOOK EARLY AND SAVE!

MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 5–7pm
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Royal Holiday Vacations – Right for All Campaign Receives Recognition

Royal Holiday Vacation Club believes that vacations aren’t just a privilege. Going on vacation should be the right of everyone no matter what. Science has already shown how effective leisure time can be at opening up our creativity, compassion, and sense of adventure, in addition to promoting better physical and mental health. When we carve out a bit of time to get away with our family, the whole world is better for it. Unfortunately, even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that leisure time is a fundamental right and need for individuals and families all over the world, the reality is different. So many families are living in poverty and can’t afford to take the time off work to indulge in a vacation, much less plan a first-class experience for themselves and their family members.

Because of this, the Royal Holiday Foundation decided to step in and help. Back in 2015, when Royal Holiday helped 220 kids from unprivileged backgrounds experience vacation for the first time, the results were stunning. Each child got to have their first taste of the fun, excitement, and creative exploration that travel can bring. With this initiative, the Royal Holiday Foundation’s “Vacations are a Right for All” campaign began, helping families and individuals from poor or underfunded backgrounds get the leisure time they deserve. The program doesn’t just serve children and poor families. For the past few years, the Royal Holiday Foundation’s “Vacations are a Right for All” campaign has helped other challenged economic groups, like senior citizens and single working mothers, to get a taste of adventure and freedom through booking a luxurious vacation. The goal of the project is to help underprivileged individuals not only experience the world and indulge in true leisure time but to foster a relationship with nature that certain urban families simply can’t afford to have.

Today, the Royal Holiday Foundation’s work is being recognized by the group Colonias de Vacations for creating a force for good in the community. The group has been helping urban kids experience their first vacations for years and has found Royal Holiday’s work with urban underprivileged youth to be a huge help to their mission. Since the start of the campaign, the Royal Holiday Foundation has helped over 1,650 go on vacation for the first time. The experience, for many, has been life-changing, giving kids a sense of what they can hope and strive for in the years to come. For Royal Holiday, it’s not just about helping kids get out of the city for a few days. It’s much deeper than that. When kids are raised without any expectations for their own future, including a right to leisure time and travel, they’re being kept back from endless wonderful experiences and vacations to come. With their #vacationsforeveryone hashtag, Royal Holiday has started a movement that’s helping people finally recognize the importance of taking time away to experience life to the fullest.

Backstreet Boys Rocked Moon Palace Cancun During Their First International ‘Larger Than Life’ Show

Nick Carter, Howie Dorrough, Brian Littrell, AJ McLean and Kevin Richardson closed out 2017 in style! The band participated in a press conference with local, national and international press, before taking the stage at the Moon Palace Arena, a 140,000 square foot convention center, fully equipped with the latest technology and audiovisual equipment, which opened in 2014.

The band opened up with one of their iconic songs “Larger than life,” taking everyone back bto the 90’s. Other hits included “Quit playing games with my heart” “Show me the meaning,” and their number one hit “Everybody” which were among the favorites. Each of the members added their own personality and style to the performance with customized outfits that replicated the originals from each music video created as well as their unique choreography that surpassed all expectations.

Spotted in the audience were noteworthy celebrities such as former NSYNC band member, Joey Fatone and The Real Housewives of New Jersey’s own Teresa Guidice who enjoyed some quality time with daughter Gia.
Classic Holidays Celebrates 40 Years of Holiday Memories in 2018

Australasia’s largest Resort, Club and Member Management company, Classic Holidays, is celebrating 40 years of holiday memories in 2018.

Established in 1978, the holiday company was founded by the Tawaf family and remains a family-owned business after four decades.

CEO Ramy Filo said Classic Holidays has remained at the forefront of the timeshare industry by understanding and listening to the needs of their customers. “We’re the only home-grown timeshare company servicing Australian and New Zealand members and we understand what local families want out of their holidays,” he said.

“That’s extremely important to us. It’s why we’ve grown to have the largest membership base of any timeshare company operating here in the region and why we continue to develop our Club to meet the needs of our member families, now and into the future.

“Seeing our members making new holiday memories every time they get away for a well-deserved holiday is what keeps our service-oriented culture thriving.”

Moving into 2018 with a record number of members and resorts under management, the company’s focus remains on delivering value to the holiday market.

“The leisure market has evolved enormously over the past 40 years and we’ve maintained our position of providing the very best value. Being a timeshare owner no longer means being restricted to one resort for one week of holidays each year.”

Classic Holidays has led the industry through innovation, developing a flexible suite of products to suit today’s traveller that ultimately provide the best value for our members’ holiday needs.

“Our Points and Escapes membership programs are some of the most innovative membership models the timeshare industry has ever seen, and we continue to develop our membership benefits to deliver more value to our members wherever they choose to travel.”

The company is also a leading resort manager, continuously awarded Best Management Company in the global timeshare industry’s annual Perspective Magazine Awards.

“We take a lot of pride in our role as resort managers,” said Mr Filo. “The leisure industry can be tough, but we maintain our integrity through compliance, resort operations and the standards we set for all our resorts under management.

“This is extremely important for our members as well – they know they can consistently trust the Classic Holidays brand wherever and whenever they stay in one of our resorts.”

Classic Holidays now operates across Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia with more than 30 properties and 65,000 members under management.

Throughout their 40th year, Classic Holidays will be inviting members to share their fondest holiday memories, to be displayed through a special 40 Year landing page and across their social media channels.

Classic Holidays resorts will also join in the fun, digging back into the archives to show how far they have come, including the Club’s original resorts, Cedar Lake in the Gold Coast Hinterland and Beach House Seaside Resort in Coolangatta.

Upcoming events:
ATHOC Foundation Annual Charity Golf Day – May 24, 2018 at Palmer Colonial on the Gold Coast.
ATHOC Annual Race Day – June 9 – Aquis Farm Turf Club – Gold Coast
ATHOC Annual Conference – September 10 – 13, 2018 - Fiji
World Champion Takes to the Waves with Gold Coast Corporates for Charity

Seven-time world champion surfer Layne Beachley AO joined forces with surfing enthusiasts from prominent Queensland businesses for the Wyndham Resorts Corporate Surf Challenge charity event held in Gold Coast on November 10.

Almost 70 participants competed in 17 teams, raising in excess of $30,000 for the FSHD Global Research Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that aims to improve quality of life for people living with facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD), a complex and progressive muscle wasting disease.

Held at Duranbah Beach, participants included Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific, which employs about 700 people across its Corporate Centre in Bundall and three Gold Coast properties. Other participating companies included Stellar Recruitment, Lifestylepanel, Bespoke Interior Solutions, Hawaiian Airlines, Scoot, Multiplex and ICE Vacations.

Every member of the winning team received a custom-made surfboard by shaper Craig Rees.

The Wyndham Resorts Corporate Surf Challenge was supported by Di Bella Coffee, Stanbroke, Stone & Wood, Omeros Bros and Hawaiian Airlines.

Australia’s Tourism Leads on Social Media

Images of Australia’s iconic attractions, gorgeous animals and vivid landscapes are continuing to have mass appeal to tourists and potential travellers globally.

Tourism Australia (TA) leads tourism bodies around the world when it comes to social media following – clocking up 7.9 million Facebook fans, 2.8 million Instagram followers and 471,000 supporters on Twitter, as of January 2018.

The number of followers of Tourism Australia’s social media accounts has grown by over 900,000 in the last 12 months – keeping Australia ahead of rival travel destinations like the United States (6.4 million Facebook fans), Great Britain (3.3 million Facebook fans) and New Zealand (2.8 million Facebook fans).

Some of the most engaging content on our social channels includes 4.8 million views of a Facebook video of a koala climbing on a keeper at Symbio Wildlife Park in New South Wales; and a reach of 989,000 people on an Instagram picture of Lake Hillier in Western Australia.

These exceptional statistics are expected to be compounded by Tourism Australia’s latest youth campaign, launched earlier this year, ‘Aussie News Today’.

Aussie News Today aims to attract more young people to Australia by capturing humorous and interesting content to be shared across Tourism Australia’s digital channels.

The youth market is critical to Australia’s tourism, representing a quarter of arrivals and almost half of all international visitor spend. Young travellers and working holiday makers travel further, spend more per trip and stay longer than other travellers. In addition, just over half of all youth are repeat visitors to Australia.

Tourism is a pillar of the nation’s economy. Every dollar spent on tourism generates 81 cents in other parts of the economy, more than across mining, agriculture and financial sectors. Of this, 43 cents in every dollar spent in tourism goes to regional Australia.

Tourism Australia has received record funding under a Coalition Government.

#Congratulations to Tourism Australia for their mammoth effort in promoting Australia to the world and being a global leader in content marketing.

Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef

People can now go to http://www.citizensgbr.org/ to sign up to become a Citizen of the Great Barrier Reef and take actions in support of the Reef. Backed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), the movement is also supported by more than 340 tourism operators who bring thousands of people daily to experience the Reef.
Wyndham Vacation Ownership Sweepstakes Offers More Than $150,000 In Cash Prizes To Make People’s Daydreams A Reality

Wyndham Vacation Ownership, the world’s largest vacation ownership company and member of the Wyndham Worldwide family of companies (NYSE: WYN), recently announced the “Don’t Quit Your Daydream” Sweepstakes. For the first time in its history, the company introduced a $100,000 grand prize to offer people a chance to make their dreams a reality.

With multiple avenues for entry, participants will have the opportunity to win awards in cash, Wyndham Rewards® points, or a vacation getaway certificate to one of many Wyndham resorts around the world.

“We spend every day helping our owners and guests make their daydreams a reality by providing amazing vacations at our resorts,” said Jeff Myers, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer for Wyndham Vacation Ownership. “This sweepstakes will help even more families dream big.”

Grand Prize drawings will enable lucky winners to work through their bucket lists:

• Five entrants will take home a third-place prize of $5,000,
• Three entrants will win a second-place prize of $10,000,
• And one lucky winner will draw the grand prize of $100,000.

In addition, three quarterly winners will receive their choice of either a seven-day/six-night vacation getaway certificate or 105,000 Wyndham Rewards points.

Hilton Grand Vacations Will Open its First Timeshare Resort in Japan

Hilton Grand Vacations (NYSE:HGV) announces its real estate purchase from Hilton (NYSE:HLT) including existing buildings and land for development within the Hilton Odawara Resort & Spa, located in the Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. The purchase marks Hilton Grand Vacations’ second announced project in Japan and will be the first resort to open in the country.

Adding to the existing properties, HGV plans to create timeshare units with ocean views on the purchased land.

“We are pleased to announce our first resort to open in Japan, in collaboration with our esteemed partner Hilton, in this scenic location close to Tokyo, which has consistently been a top choice for vacations by our owners and guests,” says Mark Wang, president and CEO, Hilton Grand Vacations. “We look forward to working with the city of Odawara to promote tourism and contribute to the vibrant local economy,” he adds.

Hilton Odawara Resort & Spa is located just 30 minutes by bullet train from Tokyo. The hotel was the recipient of the ‘Japan’s Leading Resort’ award from World Travel Awards in 2017. Hilton will continue to own the hotel and resort amenities as well as manage the property, which is close to attractions such as the Fuji Hakone Izu National Park and Odawara Castle. Guests will have access to the many recreational facilities and resort amenities of Hilton Odawara Resort & Spa.

Marriott Vacation Club is Now Open on the Island of Bali

Marriott’s Bali Nusa Dua Gardens—Marriott Vacation Club’s all-new vacation ownership escape—is now open on the island of Bali. The stunning tropical retreat, where moments of relaxation meet island inspiration, is the company’s first resort in Indonesia.

The setting couldn’t be more extraordinary: Condé Nast ranks Bali as one of the best islands in the world and TripAdvisor has called Bali the world’s favorite destination.

Marriott Vacation Club continues to add exciting new vacation destinations in Asia and the Pacific. Marriott's Bali Nusa Dua Gardens joins Marriott’s Phuket Beach Club and Marriott’s Mai Khao Beach in Phuket, Thailand, Marriott Vacation Club at the Empire Place© in Bangkok and Marriott Vacation Club at Surfers Paradise in Gold Coast, Australia.

Nestled within the exclusive Nusa Dua community, Marriott’s Bali Nusa Dua Gardens features spacious 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and studio guestrooms each with kitchenettes, their design inspired by the vivid tropical beauty of Indonesia. The resort shares convenient access* to the amenities and activities at the adjacent Courtyard by Marriott Bali Nusa Dua resort, including on-site dining, fitness center, luxury spa and Kids Club, as well as access to a private beach club at Nusa Dua Beach. Close to the new resort are numerous cultural attractions, boutique shops and an eclectic, world-class food scene.
Europe, Middle East & Africa
Interval International, a leading global provider of vacation services and an operating business of ILG (Nasdaq: ILG), announced the affiliation of Residence La Ferriera, a shared ownership resort in the heart of Tuscany. Built in 1875, the property is in the village of Loro Ciufenna, which dates back to the 8th century B.C..

“You couldn’t find a more picturesque setting than this village that’s within easy reach of Arezzo, Siena, and Florence,” said Darren Ettridge, Interval’s senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia. “Our members will enjoy visiting the region’s medieval towns with their stunning architecture, art treasures, and renowned vineyards — all accessible from this historic residence.”

Four rustic stone buildings have been restored to house one – and two – bedroom apartments. Units feature spacious dining and living areas with wood beamed ceilings and windowsills, Cotto floor tiles, furniture made by local craftsmen, kitchenettes, flat screen TVs, and internet access.

Guests can lounge on the sun deck, swim in the outdoor pool (open from May 1 to Sept. 30), play tennis, and fish in the river. The on-site restaurant, which features a meal plan, serves breakfast and dinner. The wine shop has a wide selection of Tuscan wines and olive oil, and the resort staff offers cooking lessons and food and wine tastings. Wine tours of Tuscany and day-trips to Arezzo and Cortona, Cinque Terre, Siena and San Gimigano, Pisa and Lucca, and other neighboring towns are also available. Nearby are a wellness center and spa, horseback riding, and sport fishing.

“Residence La Ferriera has had many lives — as a foundry, flour mill, silk thread producer, the village’s power plant, and soap – oil factory — before our family purchased it in 1996 and brought it back to life as a vacation ownership property,” noted Mauro Rampi, managing director of the resort. “We greatly value our relationship with Interval and look forward to sharing our rich cultural traditions with members who visit our resort.”

On the Valdarno slope of the Pratomagno mountains, Loro Ciuffenna is a scenic village with cobblestone streets, narrow alleyways, and terracotta and mustard stone houses overlooking the gorge of the Ciuffenna River. An arched Romanesque bridge connects the town and leads to the Porta dell’Orologio, or the Clock Gate, in the city center. Among its main attractions are the Palazzo Venturi museum, Santa Maria Asunta church, and one of the oldest working water mills in the region.

Interval International Adds Vuokatinmaa Holiday Apartments in Finland

Interval International, a leading global provider of vacation services and an operating business of ILG (Nasdaq: ILG), has entered into an affiliation agreement with Vuokatinmaa Holiday Apartments. The property is located just outside Vuokatti, a resort town in the Kainuu region of Northern Finland famed for its crystal-clear lakes, green forests, and rolling hills.

Darren Ettridge, Interval’s senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia, said, “We welcome the addition of this lakefront property to Interval’s quality resort network. Vuokatti is one of the country’s top tourist destinations and is an ideal base in which to relax or engage in a variety of outdoor pursuits. Its spacious lodges will be very popular among Interval members traveling with family and friends.”

Situated at the foot of the Vuokatinaaraa hills, the modern log cabins blend into the natural landscape. Each of the one- and three-bedroom accommodations features a fireplace in the living room, a sauna, and a typical Finnish-style sleeping loft. Although the units have well-equipped kitchens, guests who desire a break from cooking can request a meal-delivery service.

Along with the beach, there are playground and barbecue areas onsite, and transportation is available for guests to go into town. There also is an extensive range of activities available in the surrounding area, from downhill and cross-country skiing in winter to water sports in the summer. For added convenience, fishing gear, bicycles, skates, canoes, and boats, can be rented on property.

“We chose Interval as our exchange partner because of its a global reputation as an industry leader that offers exceptional service and valuable leisure benefits,” noted Petri Heikkinen, the developer of the resort. “Our team looks forward to working with the company’s executives as we expand into shared ownership.”
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