CRC: A LOOK TO THE FUTURE
The Canadian Resort Conference (CRC) was held on September 13th through the 14th at the Hilton Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada and focused on the current standing of the Canadian Timeshare Industry.

MORE THAN A VACATION

RDO AUTUMN UPDATE
RDO give us their Autumn Update focusing on RDO7 which continued to build on the success of the last few years conferences.

John Spence on the Influence of Past Passions
San Francisco

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Welcome...

Welcome to the October / December edition of Perspective Magazine.

This issue’s cover story feature is an in-depth interview with John Spence, Chairman and CEO, Karma Group which he formed over twenty-three years ago. The international lifestyle and travel brand began in India, growing from one to several resorts. John explains that Karma Group is “truly a mixed-use company and from humble beginnings.” Karma Group has now expanded to twenty-six properties in Australia, Asia, India, Europe, and soon to be South America.

We also hear from Dave Heine who is an industry veteran having worked with many resorts in relation to the processing of title deeds, transfers and more. He saw a need for creating a simpler, more efficient and secure way of handling and processing these documents, Dave began working on a system that would not only simplify these transactions but also utilize the latest technology that until this point was largely being under used.

Next read about the The Canadian Resort Conference (CRC) which was held on September 13th through the 14th at the Hilton Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada. The event focused on the current standing of the Canadian Timeshare Industry and the new technologies and current trends that could shape the industry as a whole. The conference was hosted by the Perspective Group, and provided guests and attendees with numerous opportunities to network, engage with senior level industry leaders and discuss the current public consensus regarding the Timeshare Industry in Canada and across the world.

We then hear from Sunset World, who nearly 10 years ago, created a new standard for luxury eco-tourism with the opening of Hacienda Tres Ríos Resort, Spa and Nature Park. Years in the making, the resort was hailed by the Mexican government as the new regional and national model for sustainable tourism development.

In the AMDETUR Update we hear how they are constantly working on activities to support the industry. This Association worked together with ASUDESTICO in a meeting called by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources to go over the remarks on Public Consultation NMX 178, which deals with the construction of tourist results on the Gulf of California.

In the ATHOC Update the headline is the announcement that they have elected a new president. Classic Holidays Chief Operating Officer, Carole Smith, has been elected as the new President of the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council (ATHOC). The results of the election were announced at the annual ATHOC Conference in Queenstown, New Zealand and will take effect immediately.

Next we hear from Harry Taylor in the TATOC Update - As chairman and CEO of TATOC, Europe’s leading timeshare consumer association, Harry’s mission has always been to safeguard and enhance the timeshare holiday experience of owners and to also be their voice. Over recent years, this has resulted in the TATOC team identifying and challenging timeshare scammers, supporting victims and working with the UK and European governments to ensure timeshare legislation is fit for purpose.

Finally, closing out this edition RDO give us their Autumn Update - By the time this piece goes to print, RDO7 will have been and gone, and hopefully they will have continued to build on the success of the last few years conferences. The theme this year was “Taking Ownership” - They had a great line-up of speakers, both from inside and outside the industry, and you can see the highlights of the conference at www.rdoconference.org.

Enjoy!

Paul Mattimoe
CEO
Perspective Group
GLOBAL FEATURES

10 John Spence on the Influence of Past Passions
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20 Digital Innovation: Doing Away with Paper and Postage with Timeshare Pro Plus
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NORTH AMERICA

A Look to the Future: CRC 2016 Brings Insight and New Ideas to the Industry
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LATIN AMERICA

More Than a Vacation: Sunset World Resorts Involves Guests in Protecting Wildlife and Bettering the Environment
Nearly 10 years ago, Sunset World created a new standard for luxury eco-tourism with the opening of Hacienda Tres Ríos Resort, Spa and Nature Park. Years in the making, the resort was hailed by the Mexican government as the new regional and national model for sustainable tourism development.

AMDETUR Update
AMDETUR is constantly working on activities in support of our industry, like those that are summed up below. This Association worked together with ASUDESTICO in a meeting called by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources to go over the final remarks on Public Consultation NMX 178, which deals with the construction of tourist results on the Gulf of California.
50  ATHOC Update
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56  TATOC Update
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“I ended up being an agent and a manager,” states John Spence, Chairman and CEO, Karma Group, in an interview for Perspective Magazine. “I looked after quite a lot of bands that at the time were nothing but later on became quite famous.”

John Spence, a British-born entrepreneur and social advocate, presents himself with savvy rational mixed with a cheeky demeanor. “We obviously got a doctor’s advice that we had to keep hydrated. So we stopped for wine tasting and beer drinking on the way to keep the hydration level,” states John about the Penguin Walk. As both winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2010 and proud sponsor of the ‘Man of the Match’ award in partnership with Western Force Rugby, Mr. Spence has historically united his business endeavors with a recreational mindset.

Forming Karma Royal Group over twenty-three years ago, the international lifestyle and travel brand began in India, growing from one to several resorts. John explains that Karma Group is “truly a mixed-use company and from humble beginnings.” Karma Group has now expanded to twenty-six properties in Australia, Asia, India, Europe, and soon to be South America.

As Chairman and CEO, he fated two action-oriented goals that created the concept of Karma Group—guest engagement and global expansion. Mr. Spence designed a call to action for all travelers looking to find paradise. John states that the “scale still amazes [him]”. After passing out awards during a ceremony celebrating employees reaching twenty years with the company, he expresses the growth of his modest start in the sense that “sometimes you have to pinch yourself”.

John Spence on the Influence of Past Passions
By increasing the opportunities to create experiences around the world, Karma Group has used timeshares, resorts, retreats, estates, and spas to activate adventurers. The success of each individual’s encounter has been reinforced through the various awards and accolades collected. In 2016 alone, Karma Group has been awarded the Haute Grandeur Global Hotel Award, the Bali Tourism Award, and the ACE International Project of Excellence Award at ARDA.

Karma Group may spotlight as global leaders in guest engagement, but John has additionally adopted his growth to recognize the reality of his encounters as a philanthropist. During the interview his passion for Christel House and charity were noteworthy of the striking identity he has refined. Spence and his company have donated over 7.5 million meals and built a library, as well as inviting more than 2,000 kids to join Camp Royal at the resorts.

Spence isn’t one to merely accept his role as a businessman in a suit travelling the world and occasionally making donations to charities. In fact, he decided to trade in his business suit for a penguin suit. Known as ‘The Penguins’, Mr. Spence led Karma Royal Group’s inaugural 2015 Penguin Walk to raise money for Christel House India. The fundraising supported Bangalore’s College and Careers scholarship.
“The twist plot is, not only are we walking the long distance, but we’re doing it dressed as penguins...it kind of surprised the locals a lot when you emerge from the woods at 6:30 in the morning as the sun is coming up,” explains John. Penguin Walk II 2016 was immediately planned after the success of the first walk. This year he extended the concept to give hikers the option to dress up as kangaroos.

“Going back in time I was in the music business. Once upon a time I wanted to be a rockstar, but for some reason I was the worst guitarist and worst singer in the world, so that didn’t work for long.”

Recently, John has reconnected with a number of friends from the music industry, one of which is Mark Fuller and his partner, Rod Smallwood.

Spence and his company have donated over 7.5 million meals and built a library, as well as inviting more than 2,000 kids to join Camp Royal at the resorts.

Penguins may seem like a play on the traditional clockwork suit, but kangaroos? Again, this is where John’s amplified attitude combined with a hyperbolic metaphor comes to play. John began his journey as founder of Karma Group in India where Christel House is located. By adding the kangaroo element, Karma Rottnest, located in Perth, Western Australia, gives clarity to the connection of his passions for business and social responsibility with his past. Spence states, “We’re very proud of what we’ve done and I hope we’ve made a big difference.”

Both Fuller and Smallwood share a passion for rock and roll and got into the hospitality business in London with Sanctum Hotels. In the interview, Spence states, “The reality is the world is full of people that are my sort of age who still like rock music whether it be Queen or Maiden or Sabbath or whatever it is.”

Spence’s rock and roll influence goes back to his 80’s dreams of becoming a rockstar. The history of rock continues to promote a lifestyle and a We Will Rock You attitude. To this day
rock music gives listeners’ material that is relatable and creates a cultural impact on every generation as well other genres of music. It’s a Symptom of the Universe.

“Apart from renewing our friendship and going to watch Iron Maiden play, we decided there’s a huge gap in the market that can combine our expertise and to develop a number of true rock-oriented hotels.”

One of the rock-oriented hotels will be in London, taking John back to his early metal roots. Spence and Fuller are looking at other sites, including Los Angeles, where guests can go beyond the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Spence says that they are most excited about a piece of land in the Bahamas near Harbor Island because “its actually got a lot of rock heritage so that will suit it to be the first rock

“Apart from renewing our friendship and going to watch Iron Maiden play, we decided there’s a huge gap in the market that can combine our expertise and to develop a number of true rock-oriented hotels.”
What we do is we take a very small number of kids, four last year and this year hopefully a bit more, and give them a full three or four-year university education so they really can come out at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two with a fantastic career opportunity.”

Beyond his own goals lie a future for the next generation and a reminder to never stop believin’. His realization that Christel House does “an amazing job of educating children up to the secondary school level” has provoked a zeal to extend his Hall of Fame in order to directly change the outcome for children at Christel House. “What we do is we take a very small number of kids, four last year and this year hopefully a bit more, and give them a full three or four-year university education so they really can come out at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two with a fantastic career opportunity.”

The ventures of both Spence and the students he encourages will eternally rock steady by going beyond the commonplace and bringing karmic results.
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Gonzalo del Peón Recognized with “La Llave del Progreso” Honor for his Contributions to Mexico’s Tourism Industry

President of AMResorts® and Unlimited Vacation Club® Gonzalo del Peón was recognized with the prestigious “La Llave del Progreso” award in the Hotel Executive category. The honor was presented to del Peón by AMAIT Abastecedores Turísticos A.C at the opening of ABASTUR® 2016 in Mexico City. Every year, “La Llave del Progreso” celebrates a business person whose hard work and dedication have contributed to the growth and development of Mexico’s tourism industry. Mexico’s Minister of Tourism Enrique de la Madrid Cordero alongside the Chairman of AMAIT’s Board Dr. David Babani, the President of ABASTUR’s organizing committee Jaime Salazar, the Director of the Mexico Tourism Board Lourdes Berho, Mexico City’s Tourism Secretary Miguel Torruco, CANIRAC President Hugo Valera and the Chairman of the U.S. National Restaurant Association Joe Kadow, presented del Peón with the honor.

“I am proud to have received this important recognition from my peers and most importantly for having any part in contributing to the continued development of my country,” said del Peón. “These achievements were possible through the passion and dedication of every team member of the AMResorts family.”

He added, “I am equally grateful to Alex Zozaya for his invitation to join AMResorts’ founding team 15 years ago. Together, and alongside a team of extraordinary executives and passionate employees, we will continue to bring innovation through our vacation concepts to help fuel Mexico’s economy for years to come.”

Bringing more than 30 years of deep hospitality industry expertise, del Peón oversees all areas of investor and owner relations, operations, sales and marketing innovation for the company’s 60 announced hotels, across six award-winning brands currently in 21 beach destinations throughout Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. He also oversees Unlimited Vacation Club® (UVC), an elite benefits program for discerning travelers. Under his management, UVC has quickly grown to 47,000 members worldwide.

As the President of AMResorts®, Gonzalo del Peón has successfully helped shape the company’s business model and organizational structure, to grow AMResorts into a leading luxury vacation brand generating more than 20,000 direct jobs and exceeding $3.5 billion in investments.

In addition to his professional positions, he has played an active role in the Marketing Committee of Mexico’s Tourism Promotion Council since 1999.

Apple Leisure Group signs 10 New Resort Deals in 2016

Company’s Aggressive Growth Strategy puts it on Track to Sign 100th Resort by 2020

Apple Leisure Group® reported today that it has signed 10 resort deals over the last 10 months, growing the company’s resort brand management portfolio by 15 percent in less than one year.

This follows a record-breaking 2015 for the company, in which it reported an unprecedented number of signed deals for new resorts, which earned it recognition for being the hotel group with the largest growth in the Caribbean by the Excelencias Group. The announcement was made by Javier Coll, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer of Apple Leisure Group.

The company also announced that, through its subsidiary, AMResorts®, Apple Leisure Group plans to sign its 100th resort by 2020, with target markets including St. Lucia, Turks and Caicos, and Colombia. “In addition to maintaining our leadership status within Mexico’s and the Caribbean’s luxury leisure travel space, next year we will also explore opportunities to acquire more distribution companies and resort companies if the opportunity is right,” added Coll.

With 14 resorts in the development pipeline, Apple Leisure Group will have 65 open resorts across Mexico; the Caribbean; including Puerto Rico and the Bahamas; Costa Rica; and Panama by 2019.
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Resort Travel & Xchange Returns as Ace Sponsor to the 5th Festiva Charitable Fund Golf Tournament

Resort Travel & Xchange (RTX) has confirmed its ACE level sponsorship for the 5th Festiva Charitable Fund Golf Tournament, to be held on October 4, 2016, in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina.

RTX offers its members an industry leading vacation exchange platform that provides a variety of benefits and travel options such as low exchange fees, up to a four-year deposit window, reservation protection, and discounts on different travel options such as hotels, car rentals, air travel, restaurants and more. Additionally, the company also provides its partner resorts and management companies with customizable options and solutions, based on their needs and the needs of their customers.

Created in 2006, the Festiva Charitable Fund was designed with the intent of providing permanent charitable resources for all the communities where its companies and employees are located. Its primary focus is on the education of the children in its communities as well as the goal of eliminating poverty within those same communities. The charitable fund has also been used to respond to extraordinary global events and provide humanitarian aid to those affected.

This will mark the second year the exchange company has participated in the charity golf tournament hosted by the Festiva Charitable Fund. As part of its Ace Sponsorship, the company will receive four playing spots in the golf tournament, souvenir photos of its team and will be recognized throughout the event within several promotional items. In addition to the sponsorship, RTX will also be donating a week’s vacation that will be included as one of the prizes for the raffle held during the event and can be used at any of the properties within the company’s expansive network.

“We are thrilled to be a part of this event, especially knowing that our contributions will go toward not just one but several organizations and causes that are important to communities where many of our members vacation on exchange to Festiva properties,” said Justin Hunter, vice president of operations for RTX.

To date, over $100,000 has been gifted through the charitable fund to several different organizations throughout all of the communities where its employees live and work. The organization also encourages employees to give back to their communities by volunteering their talents and time to help local organizations within said communities.

This year will mark the 5th Charity Golf Tournament the Festiva Fund has held, with the last tournament held in 2014 and raising nearly $80,000 for charity. The 2014 tournament brought together over 40 corporate companies and had over 130 golfers participating throughout the event.

RTX will actively participate in the event with volunteers helping out throughout the duration of the tournament and a team of four employees participating in the actual tournament on behalf of the company. The team will incorporate a mix of RTX employees and employees from affiliate companies, and will consist of Justin Hunter, Vice President of Operations for RTX, and Jeramie Arlington, Senior Operations Manager for RTX, along with Kevin Blocker, Association Compliance Administrator for Zealandia Holding Company, and Adam Brannon, Chief Technology Officer for Resort Hospitality Solutions.

RTX Recognizes Charles Clapp with Quarterly Award

Resort Travel & Xchange (RTX), a leading vacation exchange provider that offers customer-centric solutions for its partner resorts and management companies, awarded Charles Clapp with its 2nd Employee of the Quarter award of 2016.

The company’s continued dedication to recognizing its employees’ hard work and commitment to its members and clients was expanded earlier this year with the launch of the Employee of the Quarter program. This program is designed to recognize those employees whose actions and efforts have gone above and beyond their normal duties each quarter.

The 2nd Quarter of 2016 award was recently presented to Charles Clapp who joined the company in March of 2015 as a Customer Solutions Specialist and as a representative in the Weeks Department before moving to his current position of Verifications Specialist.
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Digital Innovation:
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Despite the explosive growth of technology and continued expansion of the timeshare industry over the years, the manner in which many resorts and hotels interacted with customers and secured new owners has remained relatively the same. Much of the industry is still centered around a system of mailings, paperwork and filling cabinets that lead to complaints and headaches when it comes time to process a new owner’s paperwork, secure financial backing or even make changes to existing deeds and documents.

Dave Heine, an industry veteran who had worked with many resorts in relation to the processing of title deeds, transfers and more, saw a need for creating a simpler, more efficient and secure way of handling and processing these documents, Dave began working on a system that would not only simplify these transactions but also utilize the latest technology that until this point was largely being under used.

Through creative thinking, a series of services were designed and developed under the Timeshare Pro Plus brand. These services are provided to resorts and sales centers as an easy to use software platform that transforms the way they transact with customers.

With the new ability to process paperwork digitally, Timeshare Pro Plus clients save money on paper and postage fees, but more importantly can communicate and close transactions with customers in minutes rather than days.

As proposed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The company’s commitment to ensuring that all of its clients’ data is kept safe extends beyond the strict guidelines set forth by HIPAA, as the cloud servers employed by the company are also designed to comply with the strict security guidelines imposed by the U.S. Government and international data security guidelines of the European Union’s Safe Harbor compliance act.

The Timeshare Pro Plus software platform offers four distinct modules that are designed to facilitate, expedite and improve specific needs or areas in the customer’s daily work. Each module can be customized to fit a company’s needs and can be adapted to match a company’s style of contracts and forms.

OwnerToOwner
One of the first modules created to assist resorts and timeshare owners was a cloud based title processing system. This module gives timeshare owners and closing companies the ability to securely and efficiently prepare, fill out, and process title or membership transfers between parties. OwnerToOwner carefully collects the necessary data needed to transfer a property title, or membership, between parties and ultimately ensures that said information is protected and used properly. While timeshare owners can benefit from the speed and simplicity of this module, closing companies stand to gain the most from this system as it
cuts down the costs of processing each title change, taking into consideration the money spent on paper and postage, and decreasing the amount of time needed to process each application.

**HoldMyEscrow**
Managing the largest, independently owned timeshare escrow market, this module gives companies and timeshare owners a secure way of managing escrow payments and applications digitally while providing the dedicated security needed to avoid potential frauds. This service offers companies the largest source of escrow accounts in the market, that are reconciled and reviewed on a daily basis to prevent fraudulent transactions and scams. The security and reliability of the escrow accounts utilized by this module gives sellers and renters the peace of mind needed to focus less on the paperwork and more on the end result of their transaction.

**RequestMyEstoppel**
One of the most unique modules offered in the company’s software suite can be added complimentary to clients that need assistance with the generation of the estoppel documents requested by their customers. This module provides companies, and their clients, with a simple to use online portal where parties can scan and upload any documents they require in order to process and generate an estoppel.

**Built with security and privacy in mind, Timeshare Pro Plus offers software that not only protects the consumer, but ensures that it’s client is covered when it comes to data protection and compliance – even across borders.**

The costs of the service are passed onto the customer as a convenience fee, enabling Timeshare Pro Plus to offer its clients a share of this revenue stream. The amount charged per request can be modified based on the time and requirement that each company has for processing and generating these requests.

**JiffyDocs**
The fourth module integrated into the company’s suite of products is a document processing system called JiffyDocs. This gives companies specifically for each company, based on its needs, and is designed to provide a secure and efficient way of streamlining the creation, signing and processing of all sales documents and forms needed to complete the sale.

The customizable aspect of this module allows for businesses to consolidate all of their documents and forms into one easily accessible digital source. If the company offers customer financing options, all of the consumer financing forms can be prepared, sent out and signed digitally. These features result in a closing process that is hassle free, efficient and fast.

Combined, these modules make Timeshare Pro Plus an invaluable service partner for timeshare resorts, management companies, travel clubs and more.

For more details visit http://www.timeshareproplus.com
Timeshare Pro Plus is a cloud-based Software as a Service (SAAS) application written for the timeshare industry by timeshare industry professionals. It consists of four modules that handle daily timeshare title and transfer tasks including:

- Process deed changes - TimeshareProPlus.com’s owner-to-owner’ module
- Requests for Estoppel -- RequestMyEstoppel.com
- Document production & processing -- JiffyDocs.com
- Escrow administration -- HoldMyEscrow.com

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staySky® Vacation Clubs Growth Mandates a New Orlando Office Location

staySky® Vacation Clubs announced that the successful growth has made it necessary to relocate the corporate headquarters into its new Kirkman Point corporate offices while preparing for another year of growth and success.

staySky® Vacation Clubs, creators of the innovative points-based vacation product that combines the best components of a traditional timeshare with new features that are made to keep current with the customers’ needs, relocated the Vacation Club Division in a larger and more modern office space to compliment the growth and success experienced this past year.

The company’s vacation club offers members an innovative and flexible approach to vacation ownership that starts from the moment in which new members sign their contract. Unlike other travel clubs, staySky® requires no long-term commitment and allows members and travelers to choose the membership plan that suits their own unique style.

Members can choose an option that allows them to explore the benefits of membership for an 18-month period, while another option provides them with an opt-out provision, which enables them to discontinue their membership at any time. Once they are signed on, members can use, bank or borrow their staySky® Points between years and earn rewards credits for enhanced vacation experiences.

“The past 2 years has been very good” says Jack Chevrier, President of staySky Vacation Clubs. We established a great base marketing platform with our central Florida resort properties that has proven to be a mainstay of our original business plan” he added. “We will continue to grow our production as we stay our course per plan. With this improved production, growth was always a part of the equation and we have been working on this build out for months. The location is fantastic and easily accessible right on the International Drive corridor. The team is ecstatic with their new digs”

Located in the newly constructed 4-story Office Building that is part of the larger Kirkman Point development project, the company’s new office is comprised of approximately 6200 square feet of space and will allow several of its divisions to combine their talent pool and resources.

With the Vacation Club Division poised for growth, and with the company’s growth projections for the upcoming year, the new location offers the space needed to create a synergetic environment between all the divisions within the company that will nurture the contributions that all members of the team bring to the company on a daily basis. Club Members, guests and resort owners will also benefit from this new location that will provide essential departments such as accounting, human resources and, resort and club operations with the means to handle all their tasks in a more efficient way.

Additionally, the new location will provide the company with a unique potential for national growth, with their Sales & Marketing division synergizing their efforts with the Reservations & Telemarketing division to further promote the company’s innovative line of Vacation Club products that stem from their deep experience in the condominium hotel, traditional hotel and association management industries.
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American Resort Collection Reveals 3-Year Strategic Redevelopment Plan for Florida Resorts

American Resort Collection (ARC) revealed a 3-year strategic redevelopment plan for its Americano Beach Resort and Palm Beach Resort & Beach Club properties.

ARC has revealed plans to apply its successful, multi-faceted approach to resort redevelopment to the Americano Beach and Palm Beach resorts in its collection. These plans, which are scheduled for completion over a 3-year span, began with a reserves study and financing plan that was conducted by Facilities Advisors, Inc., and managed dynamically through PRA System’s analytical platform.

The studies, were conducted by Gary Porter, president of Facilities Advisors Inc. and a 30+ year industry veteran, and analyzed by ARC through the Property Reserve Analysis (PRA) system. This system offers its users real time updates and remote access to the data from any supported device that has access to an internet connection, is backed by over 50 years of industry experience and is consistently updated to stay current with any emerging industry trends or changes.

With a team of industry veterans, ARC provides clients with a wide range of fully integrative and supportive services, professional financial planning and restructuring, resort operations staffing and sales and marketing support. Offering a management system that seamlessly integrates with accounting, merchant and POS systems, in addition to exchange and rental distribution applications, ARC’s partners and clients receive a robust customer interface through a “plug-in” portal that easily integrates into websites and apps for real-time reservations and payment functions.

Gregory Mafcher, ARC’s Director of Resort Operations in Florida, will integrate the reserves management plans with other capital improvement plans in conjunction with the Boards’ oversight and ARC’s plans to upgrade the resort environments. “Starting with the reserve studies to make sure we had properly categorized and evaluated each capital element gave us the base on which we can build a competent and achievable re-development plan for these two resorts.”

The company’s dedication to developing a large portfolio of resorts and services through acquisitions and affiliations, gives benefits to all the parties involved and propels the goal of increasing resort profitability through the expert marketing, sales, and rental programs offered.

The initial plans for the redevelopment project have already begun as the company has started searching for the top level talent in design, engineering and architecture that will help shape and bring new life to the two resorts. Through a combination of Association Reserves and ARC’s own capital contributions stemming from their sales programs, the funding for this redevelopment plan has already been secured and could potentially be bolstered even further through a joint borrowing program between the two companies.

For more information about the American Resort Collection, please visit www.arcresorts.com
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TimeshareProPlus.com President Dave Heine Talks About Data Security with CRDA Attendees

TimeshareProPlus.com – creators of patented, timeshare-specific, online title and related services software – announced the president of their company, Dave Heine, spoke recently to a gathering of timeshare resort developers, managers and others during a meeting hosted by the Canadian Resort Developers Association (CRDA).

“As creators of Timeshare Pro Plus’ online software for the handling of the title transfer processes of timeshare interests, security is our number one concern,” says Heine. “We operate a number of sites and modules including Owner to Owner Transfers, RequestMyEstoppel.com, HoldMyEscrow.com and JiffyDocs.com, all of which deal with financial matters. In the interest of honoring our fiscal responsibility to protect consumers’ private information, we have felt it necessary to exercise extreme caution.”

Heine says he found the audience to be very interested. “Data security is a hot topic with continuously changing dynamics,” he says. “With bad actors working with all their might to find new ways to steal consumer information, you just cannot be too careful. I think we were able to provide some vital tips, which were fairly new to our listeners.”

Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club Wins 2016 CRDA Cornerstone Award

Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club was awarded the Cornerstone Award for innovation in the vacation ownership industry at this year’s Canadian Resort Conference (CRC) held on September 13th – 14th.

The Cornerstone Award, sponsored this year by VacationCondos.com, was presented to Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club, the rapidly growing vacation club that offers member-exclusive services and accommodations in beautiful destinations located in Puerto Plata, Punta Cana and Mexico. The awards ceremony was held during the 2016 Canadian Resort Conference at the Hilton Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada. Kyle Smith and Kevin Wray from VacationCondos.com presented the prestigious award to LHVC’s Santiago Merizalde.

With more than 30,000 members, Lifestyle Holidays Vacation club’s appeal stems from the array of membership options available that can fit most travelers’ budgets or needs. These options have made the vacation club very popular not only among individual travelers looking to experience the luxurious offerings available, but also among families looking to experience exciting destinations and spacious accommodations at an affordable price.

“We are extremely proud to be recognized by CRDA for this prestigious award,” said Santiago Merizalde, Business Development Consultant for Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club. “Industry accolades like this inspire us to keep raising the bar in what we provide for our Members and guests and the future goals we set.”

The Cornerstone Award is given to innovators in the vacation ownership industry and entry is open to any company, Home Owners Association, individual or vacation ownership project that has seized an opportunity, addressed a need, solved a problem or created a game changing value that has left a lasting positive impact on the vacation ownership industry, the environment or society, while being an inspiration to other CRDA members.

The winner of the award has either engaged the marketplace and achieved outstanding results and commercial success; and/or has left a lasting positive impact on the industry, which Lifestyle Holidays has aptly done throughout the year with its new elite-tier offerings in Puerto Plata’s Deja View Beach, the weekly Welcome Party for members and the exclusive ocean-front member’s clubs at its beautiful Dominican Republic resorts, and last, but certainly not least, the recent partnership with Chairman’s Circle Club that opened their Circle Club House in the popular and vibrant four-story entertainment complex, The DOME, right next door to the company’s Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Resort on the beautiful island of Dominican Republic.
In the North American News, The Canadian Resort Conference (CRC) was held on September 13th through the 14th at the Hilton Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada and focused on the current standing of the Canadian Timeshare Industry and the new technologies and current trends that could shape the industry as a whole. The conference was hosted by the Perspective Group, and provided guests and attendees with numerous opportunities to network, engage with senior level industry leaders and discuss the current public consensus regarding the Timeshare Industry in Canada and across the world.

Canadian Resort Conference 2016

Winner of the Cornerstone Award 2016, Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club
The Canadian Resort Conference (CRC) was held on September 13th through the 14th at the Hilton Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada and focused on the current standing of the Canadian Timeshare Industry and the new technologies and current trends that could shape the industry as a whole.

The conference was hosted by the Perspective Group, and provided guests and attendees with numerous opportunities to network, engage with senior level industry leaders and discuss the current public consensus regarding the Timeshare Industry in Canada and across the world.

**New and Returning Members**

The event started off on with the annual CRDA General Meeting, where guests and attendees had the opportunity to meet all the Directors and Members of the association, get to know the newest CRDA members and review the success and happenings that the association experienced in the past year. Following this, attendees were urged to begin the registration process for the event and everyone was welcomed to participate in the popular Speed Networking event.

DAE hosted the much anticipated networking event where guest had the opportunity to meet with the companies and leaders attending the conference in a high energy setting. Guests were excited at the prospect of gaining future meetings with these industry leaders at a later point during the conference and this event was the perfect setting to shake hands, pass around business cards and create new ventures. This would prove to be just one of many more networking opportunities in store for guests as they eagerly moved to the opening reception.

Hosted by Trade Up Travel, the welcome reception was held at the Myst Lounge which is located on the 33rd floor of the hotel, giving all those in attendance a stunning view of the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. While enjoying the tray passed hors d’oeuvres and open

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**A Look to the Future:**

**CRC 2016 Brings Insight and New Ideas to the Industry**

The conference was hosted by the Perspective Group, and provided guests and attendees with numerous opportunities to network, engage with senior level industry leaders and discuss the current public consensus regarding the Timeshare Industry in Canada and across the world.
bar of the reception, guests seized the opportunity to interact with one another, catch up with old acquaintances and continue the conversations started at the speed networking event at a more leisurely pace. With this event, the first night of the conference came to a close and everyone prepared for the exciting day of events to come.

Analyzing the Present and Recognizing Innovation
The second day of the conference started off early, with guests given time to browse the different Exhibit Tables and partake in a full Canadian Breakfast before the official start of the general sessions. Greg Crist, CEO of the National Timeshare Owners Association, started the day by presenting the first ever Canadian Timeshare Industry. This study, created by INTUITION Brand Marketing, compiled and analyzed over 1.5 million public consumer conversations across the social media landscape. Crist showcased the current online reputation that the industry has among travelers and the trends that are driving the Canadian travelers of today. The study emphasized the need for resorts to improve their digital presence while pointing out the wave of younger, Millennial, travelers that are quickly becoming a driving force in the travel industry.

Following this, a panel of industry leaders and expert from the Timeshare Industry analyzed and discussed the recent increase of a new form of vacation industry known as the “Shared Economy Industry”, helmed by sites like Airbnb, that offer younger travelers a new way of exploring destinations in a more economical and personal manner. Francis Taylor (DAE), Jack Chervier (staySky), Howard Nusbaum (ARDA), Mark Waltrip (Westgate Resorts), Gord Minor (Wyndham) and David Callaghan (Interval International) discussed their thoughts on the matter as well as their respective companies’ own experiences with OTAs and how they use these sites in conjunction with their own platforms.
to drive direct bookings with returning guests and marketing campaigns.

The final morning session gave guests an inside look into the incredible success the Latin American Timeshare market has had in recent years with Canadian travelers and what changes led to this surge of new owners in this market. Don Eastvold, of Unlimited Vacation Club, and Erika Garcia, from Yucatan Holidays, discussed with guests the success their respective companies have garnered over the years with Canadian travelers. Don dove deeper into the success and growth UVC, and its parent company AM Resorts, has experienced since its initial launch while Erika gave guests a more detailed breakdown of the different marketing strategies her company runs in order to increase the amount of bookings and tours that have led to the company’s incredible success.

Recognizing Innovation and Preparing for the Future

After the morning panels and discussions guests were treated to lunch and welcomed to participate in the “Send Me On Vacation” auction, proceeds of which would go towards the charity and its empowerment program that helps cancer survivors reinforce the strength and beauty that helped them through their difficult journey to recovery.

VacationCondos.com sponsored this year’s Cornerstone Awards, the winner of which is chosen for achieving outstanding results and success in the industry, leaving a lasting positive impact on the environment and society, and for serving as an inspiration for other CRDA members. Kyle Smith and Kevin Wray where on hand to coveted award to Santiago Merizalde of Lifestyle Holidays Vacation Club. The company’s incredible success this year, along with its new offerings and developments, earned it the prestigious award.

With a look to the future, guests discovered the importance of analyzing and incorporating their customers’ data into their own businesses and marketing plans. Jason Dunkel, of Environics Analytics, and Paul Mattimoe, of INTUITION Brand marketing, hosted the panel explaining the impact customer data can have on businesses today and the different types of customer data that businesses can collect and use to plan their future marketing strategies.

Dave Heine, president of Timeshare Pro Plus, continued the theme of the previous panel with an overview of the privacy and data laws that businesses must adhere to when collecting and using a customer’s personal information. Guests had a chance to see for themselves the importance of these measures as the panel showcased some recent examples of massive data breaches at some of the most notable companies in the world. Additionally, guests were given valuable information and tips on how to prevent these breaches and protecting the data and reputation of their respective businesses.

A panel featuring Kevin Wray (VacationCondos.com), Scott MacGregor (ARC Resorts), Gordon Newton (Trade Up Travel) and Fermin Cruz (weholi) expanded on the topic of OTA bookings in the industry and discussed the strategies they implement in order to increase the amount of bookings they receive through these channels as well as their experiences in using other digital mediums to rent out unused inventory.

The conference wrapped up with insights from the principle representatives of CRDA, ARDA, NTOA, C.A.R.E. and AMDETUR with regards to the state of the industry, present and future. The panel answered any final questions that guests might still have with regards to the topics discussed throughout the span of the conference. With all the topics and insights gained from this year’s conference, guests and attendees left the event with new ideas and possible partnerships that will benefit not only their own endeavors but the industry as a whole.
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Beneficium Announces New Director Member Services and Marketing

Leading Australasian hospitality management group, Beneficium, has announced Gary Fog has taken up the new senior position of Director – Member Services & Marketing effective September 15, 2016.

This significant new role will see Mr Fog responsible for overseeing both member services and marketing efforts across the Beneficium group of companies, which include award-winning management company Classic Holidays, worldwide vacation exchange provider, DAE, and IYC Travel.

“These new responsibilities involve Gary overseeing all aspects of the inbound and outbound call centre and Member Services, as well as continuing his roles in overseeing the group’s marketing direction and as Regional Manager for DAE Australia and New Zealand,” said Beneficium CEO and Chairman, Ramy Filo.

“Close co-ordination of member marketing and call centre delivery will ensure enhanced levels of service for our members. This is particularly important, given the competitive nature of the tourism and travel industry as a whole, and as consumers’ service expectations evolve.

“Our companies pride themselves on outstanding service delivery, and we’re confident with Gary overseeing this important area of the business, we’ll continue to strive for excellence,” he said.

Old Mill Resort at Gruene Goes for Gold with DAE

A new fractional ownership resort, Old Mill Resort at Gruene, is now presenting Gold Advantage benefits to its owners, signing an exclusive deal with worldwide vacation exchange provider, DAE.

The agreement provides resort owners with two years of Gold Advantage benefits with DAE when they purchase fractional ownership at Old Mill Resort at Gruene, which is under development and currently in active sales.

This partnership allows DAE to expand its vacation exchange options for their worldwide members into a highly desirable vacation destination by being in close proximity to San Antonio, Texas and near the historic downtown area of Gruene.

“Through this relationship with DAE, Old Mill is committed to providing their owners with an extensive array of benefits by combining DAE’s core exchange program with upgraded Gold Advantage benefits – giving their owners priority status on exchange requests, advance booking privileges on new inventory as well as discounts on DAE products and services,” said DAE’s Business Development Manager for the US and Canada, Michelle Caron.

“While this is great news for owners, it is also great news for a resort in active sales, as they will benefit from DAE’s fresh approach to exchange, which is all about adding value to vacation ownership.

“DAE’s global exchange availability combined with the robust benefits that come from our travel and rewards platform allows developers to offer not just an exchange option but a complete travel product to potential owners.”

Ms. Caron said the resort’s brand should be the main star in presenting the value proposition of ownership, not the exchange company and program.

“Developers and resorts in active sales are realizing the benefits of having their own brand remain front and center with their owners to reap the recognition of their sales and marketing efforts – not the exchange company,” she said.

DAE works closely with resort partners to provide personalized solutions and maximize owner engagement and satisfaction through their simplified exchange platform, backed by award-winning customer service and a dedicated local team on the ground in Phoenix, AZ.
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"-Unknown Author
And the man says, 'No, but will a picture of my wife do?"

"Have you got a prescription? The pharmacist asks him."

"A man goes into the pharmacy and asks for some tranquils."

Joke of the Day

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At RSI Vacations, we see things a little differently.

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Liberty Bank Announced $26.6MM Loan to I-Drive Resorts

Wellington Financial, the exclusive resort finance lending correspondent for Liberty Bank, announced the bank closed a $26.6MM loan to I-Drive Resorts, a company related to Accelerated Assets, LLC, based in Birmingham, Michigan. Liberty Bank is Connecticut’s oldest bank which, with more than $4.5 billion in assets, has been a premier lender to resorts in the timeshare industry for more than three decades.

Accelerated Assets is a diversified financial services company specializing in the development of North American timeshare resort properties, in partnership with the leading sellers of timeshare, and in the purchase or hypothecation of creditworthy asset secured debt.

“The purpose of the loan is to finance the acquisition of 91 units at the Lake Eve Resort in Orlando, Florida, together with a $40MM forward receivables line of credit,” says Wellington Financial President Ron Goldberg. “The units acquired were owned and purchased from a party other than Bluegreen. Bluegreen Vacations will provide sales and marketing, project management and loan servicing for I-Drive Resorts.”

Managing Member of Accelerated Assets, LLC Thomas Balames says, “We enjoyed working with the folks at Wellington and Liberty Bank. The approval process went very smoothly and we look forward to a long and mutually satisfactory relationship.”

Interval Leisure Group Announces Three IT Executive Promotions

Leisure Group (ILG) (Nasdaq: IILG), a leading provider of professionally delivered vacation experiences, announced the promotions of three executives in its IT division. Reporting to Marie Lee, chief information officer of ILG, this talented group represents nearly 60 years of tenure and expertise in their specialties.

Robert (Rob) Gaynor is now senior vice president of enterprise technology. In his new position, he plays a critical role in providing leadership and management of the technology platforms that will allow the business to leverage application systems and resources across ILG. He has been with the company for more than eight years, during which he has been responsible for such areas as the technology infrastructure, networks, data center operations, end-user computing, and business continuity for ILG, as well as its operating businesses.

Gene Pence has been promoted to senior vice president of application systems for ILG’s property management companies. He has overall responsibility for defining the application technology strategy and vision and directing the evaluation, acquisition, and implementation of application systems and services. He also remains head of ILG’s project integration office. Pence joined Interval in 1995 and most recently established a unit that has provided significant project management and business analyses to several of the ILG businesses, which improved operational efficiencies.

David Valdes is the new senior vice president of application systems for Interval International, an operating business of ILG. With this promotion, he is responsible for directing the system-development lifecycle, including project management, business analysis, application architecture, design, coding, and quality assurance for all in-house-developed and third-party applications. In the past 29 years, Valdes’ strategic vision has facilitated the transformation from an AS400-centric environment to world-class ecommerce and web-based systems and the introduction of a service-oriented architecture.

“Rob, Gene, and David have each made major contributions to the growth and success of ILG’s IT division,” Lee noted. “We are fortunate to have individuals with their depth and breadth of knowledge in all aspects of business and technology to fulfill these critical leadership roles.”
Festiva Renews Innovative Commitment To Creating The Best Vacations

Festiva, the developer for the Festiva hotel and resort properties and the Festiva Adventure Club, today discussed changes in how they provide information to better serve the needs of 21st century vacationers.

“Since Festiva was founded, we have constantly been innovating to provide our members with the best possible vacations,” said Mr. Herbert H. “Butch” Patrick, Jr., President and CEO of Festiva. “This commitment to customer care is the reason for our success.”

Founded in 2000, Festiva and affiliated partners have used inventive programming to provide the most enjoyable vacation experience via more flexible opportunities. They have grown to become one of the most successful, privately held vacation ownership companies in the United States. Through this growth, Festiva has created hundreds of good jobs in North Carolina and throughout the Southeast and Midwest while also supporting the thousands of tourism jobs that help drive the North Carolina economy.

“While our commitment to customers helped build a membership base of almost 100,000 Festiva families, Festiva employees are the ones who made it happen,” Patrick continued. “We seek the best employees who share a vision for helping create the best vacations for our members. To ensure we have, and we keep, the best employees, Festiva evolved into an Employee Stock Ownership Plan company.”

An Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) company transfers company ownership to employees over time, encouraging retention of long-term employees who can better serve customer needs.

“This evolution helps Festiva provide long-term stability for the families who have entrusted their future vacations with us,” said Patrick.
Westgate Resorts Foundation Invests $1 Million In Community

The Westgate Resorts Foundation announced today its 2016 philanthropic investment of $1 million in Central Florida and in communities nationwide where Westgate Resorts operates. This represents the largest distribution the Foundation has ever awarded in a single year.

In celebration of its 15th anniversary, the Foundation awarded grants to 50 nonprofits committed to Westgate’s new mission of Strong Families | Strong Workforce. If families are equipped to break through barriers such as homelessness, domestic violence, gaps in education or returning to the workforce after military service, then they keep working or quickly return to work...paving their own path to self-sufficiency and lifelong success. A strong workforce means thriving communities where people want to live and vacation.

Local nonprofits were honored during a breakfast event at Westgate Lakes Resort & Spa Conference Center in Orlando, where grant amounts were revealed. Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs spoke at the event, and in attendance were elected officials representing the federal and state legislature; Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Brevard counties; and the cities of Orlando, Kissimmee and Cocoa Beach.

“This was a great celebration of the positive work happening in all of our resort communities,” said David Siegel, president and CEO of Westgate Resorts. “Westgate Resorts Foundation’s new mission of Strong Families | Strong Workforce is rooted in a legacy of generosity and entrepreneurialism, but reflects a clear and intentional vision for the future and we have the right partners to help us accomplish it.”

In keeping with an event theme of “strength through collaboration,” Westgate leadership challenged organizations in the room to build relationships with one another, a pre-cursor to collaboration and problem-solving. The Westgate Resorts Foundation will offer a series of challenge grants this year to existing grantees that collaborate in groups of two or more to innovatively tackle issues within the Foundation’s four focus areas of youth and family homelessness, domestic violence, education and veteran employment.

“Today was every bit as much about fostering relationships and collaboration as it was about celebrating a landmark investment of $1 million,” said Mara Frazier, senior director of the Westgate Resorts Foundation and Community Affairs. “I’m excited to see the year unfold and how our grantee partners leverage resources and talent to create innovative solutions and bring permanent positive change to our community.”

A complete list of grant recipients is attached, which also reflects $175,000 for the David’s Dollars fund, a resource for Westgate Resorts team members in crisis.
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Weeks4Less Launches First Timeshare Resales Mobile App

Timeshare buyers and sellers can now find timeshare listings quickly and efficiently with added convenience, thanks to the fast and easy to use mobile app from Weeks4Less.

Weeks4Less is an innovative technology platform that brings together timeshare buyers and sellers via a large online marketing strategy. Rather than operating as a broker, which charges commission on timeshare resale transactions, Weeks4Less provide a powerful listing platform with a nominal ad fee to list a timeshare week for sale or rent.

With an ever-growing audience of active timeshare buyers and sellers, and a drive to constantly innovate and improve upon their service, Weeks4Less identified an opportunity to simplify the search process and encourage more interactions through the creation of a mobile app.

Research showed that, despite having several competitors in the timeshare resales marketplace, no other company had created a mobile app. The primary reason for this is the huge infrastructure needed to operate and update live inventory, and to seamlessly process in-app payments while remaining HIPPA compliant, in order to protect customers and meet all U.S. data privacy requirements.

The mobile app, which can be found in the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store by simply searching for Weeks4Less, has already received praise from its first users for its ease of use, clear navigation and wealth of information.

“We are very proud to be the first in the industry to launch a timeshare resales app.” Says Crystal Faris, Weeks4Less LLC, “When the vast majority of our current and prospective customers own a smartphone, it was essential for us to enhance our technology platform with this upgrade. Anyone can build an app these days, the key for us was to build one that was simple to use, but with the full power of the latest features and robust infrastructure so it would serve as a valuable addition for our customers.”

Weeks4Less accept listings from individual timeshare owners, resort developers, vacation clubs and wholesalers, thereby acting as an online aggregator of the best timeshare resales and rentals at attractive prices.

Because Weeks4Less doesn’t charge a commission for sales or rentals, the owner of the listing, who sets their own pricing can now be more competitive with their offering, increasing their chances of attracting a purchaser, who is on the website or mobile app for exactly the same reason – the competitive prices.

But for the person or entity listing their offers, the benefits don’t stop there. Weeks4Less offer flexible packages that break the mold of traditional annual listings. Customers can subscribe on a month to month basis, using the site only for the amount of time they want to, and only paying the nominal fee for the time they have active listings.

For more information, and to browse the timeshare listings visit http://weeks4less.com or download the new app from your cellphone by visiting your App Store and searching Weeks4Less.

Global Connections Inc. Holds Fundraising Activities for Louisiana Flood Victims

Travel industry leader Global Connections, Inc. (GCI), travel club fulfillment and service provider of Global Discovery Vacations, held a number of fundraising events to support the victims of the recent flooding in Louisiana.

According to VP/Resort Acquisitions Dave Dawson “Since some of our offices and many of our resorts are based in Florida, we are particularly sensitive to the flood victims in nearby Louisiana. This is why we pitched in and pulled together donations of non-perishable food items and clothing at our resorts in this area. Guests and employees donated to the “care packages” which were then distributed through the Red Cross to those in need.”

The Florida employees also held a “fun”-raising event called “Louisiana Bingo.”

This group then held a 50/50 raffle and the winner donated her portion back into the “pot” for distribution to the charitable cause. The funds raised were contributed to The United Way with the designation that the money sent would go to flood victims from Louisiana. GCI’s Corporate Headquarters also enthusiastically participated with a successful fundraising raffle in Kansas with all funds being donated to help Louisiana flood victims.
Sunset World, who nearly 10 years ago, created a new standard for luxury eco-tourism with the opening of Hacienda Tres Ríos Resort, Spa and Nature Park. Years in the making, the resort was hailed by the Mexican government as the new regional and national model for sustainable tourism development. In the AMDETUR Update we hear how they are constantly working on activities in support of our industry. This Association worked together with ASUDESTICO in a meeting called by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources to go over the remarks on Public Consultation NMX 178, which deals with the construction of tourist results on the Gulf of California.
Nearly 10 years ago, Sunset World created a new standard for luxury eco-tourism with the opening of Hacienda Tres Ríos Resort, Spa and Nature Park. Years in the making, the resort was hailed by the Mexican government as the new regional and national model for sustainable tourism development. Since its opening, the resort has won numerous sustainability awards, and has continued to develop the sophistication and reach of its environmental management systems that include plant and wildlife management, environmental monitoring, waste management, environmental education and contingency actions. In fact, the resort has been so successful in its wildlife management programs that the area now has more diverse plants and animals in residence than before construction began.

The resort itself was constructed off-site to reduce the effects of noise, debris and dust and the buildings sit on pilings allowing for natural water flow through the mangroves and jungle. The air conditioning is cooled by bringing up deep well water and heat from the air conditioning is captured for water heating. The resort recycles extensively and relies on high efficiency lighting and solar power generation. Drinking water is created by reverse osmosis of seawater and a titanium-clad water desalination plant treats and filters the water, avoiding use of the precious freshwater aquifer.

As the impact of these environmental standards became clear at Tres Ríos, the Sunset World team began looking for ways to retrofit its existing five resorts to meet similar standards. While much more difficult than building to suit best practices, Sunset World invested heavily in upgrading each of its resorts with state-of-the-art solar power and high-efficiency lighting, heating and cooling systems. The resulting programs have had a significant positive impact on the resorts’ cost of operations – a benefit passed on to the resorts members and guests.

Regenerating Damaged Reefs and Giving Guests the Chance to Protect Local Endangered Species

Sunset World’s commitment to protecting the environment extends beyond the resorts as well. The Mesoamerican Reef sits just off the shore of stretching nearly 700 miles from the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula down through Honduras. The reef is home to a dazzling array of coral, fish species, marine turtles and sharks. Unfortunately, climate change, agricultural run-off and tourism have put pressure on this fragile environment creating areas where healthy reef no longer exists.

Sunset World is working closely with scientists, non-profit organizations, the government and its guests to address returning the reef to health. Several projects are currently underway to determine if reef areas can be restored with stronger species of corals and the building of artificial reefs. The team is currently raising coral in nurseries and
transplanting the coral onto the existing reef and new artificial structures. The progress of these projects is being carefully monitored with the most successful programs expanding in the coming years.

Sunset World is also active in protecting local endangered species including green, loggerhead, leatherback and hawksbill sea turtles. The company participates in the “Sea Turtle Protection Program” helping the species that come nest on the beaches of Cancun by protecting eggs and hatchlings. Sunset staff are specially trained in the correct handling of the female turtles and their eggs as well as the creation of nests inside a protected pen which was built at Sunset Royal Beach Resort following their guidelines. So far this year, 1,548 eggs have been laid, protected and are set to hatch soon. When the turtles hatch, guests are shown how to protect the new hatchlings as they make their way from the pen to the open water.

“Guarding these tiny hatchlings as they make their way to the sea creates a completely unforgettable experience for our guests – particularly the young children,” said Orlando Arroyo Marroquin, Chief Executive Officer of Sunset World Resorts and Vacation Experiences. “Directly involving our young guests enables us to create a new generation of stewards that will carry on our environmental work so we all can continue to enjoy this beautiful region and protect it for generations to come.”

**Sustainability Beyond the Resort – Local Sourcing in a Difficult Growing Environment**

Another area where guests are benefitting from Sunset’s sustainability innovation is in the food served in the resort restaurants. Guest interest in locally-sourced, food has been steadily growing for years but local farming is challenging due to the region’s limestone base with little to no top soil. Also local weather patterns range from extremely wet to long periods with almost no rain. These conditions make local food production extremely difficult forcing most resorts in the area to rely on food trucked in across long distances. This heavy use of fuel, pollution-producing trucks and shipping jobs outside the region didn’t sit well with the Sunset team.

Several years ago a group of entrepreneurs, including Arroyo, began experimenting with new farming techniques based on ancient practices at a small farm just 15 miles outside downtown Cancun. With increased investment from Sunset World, Ethos Farm in the Jungle was born as a self-sustaining community focused on fruit and vegetable farming.

Today, Ethos spans 2,400 acres growing flowers, fruits and vegetables using alternative energy, hydroponics and organic waste digesters. Ethos employs 22 local farmers and supplies several tons of lemon, papaya, tomato, pumpkin, cucumber and exotic flowers directly to Sunset’s six resorts. Ethos also hosts a bee farm which produces the highest quality honey for use in the resorts’ restaurants and in the hair and skin care products in guest rooms and the resort’s spa treatments.

By following strict quality standards and protecting the environment, Ethos Farm in the Jungle supports the local economy and guarantees Sunset World guests enjoy the freshest local produce and healthiest personal care products possible. The longer-term project plan includes sales of individual family farms as well as increasing the amount and variety of produce and ornamental flowers grown on-site.

“We’re using truly innovative farming and land management techniques to ensure our guests can have an authentic farm-to-table experience, lush spa treatments and be surrounded by beautiful ornamental flowers without negatively impacting our fragile environment,” said Arroyo. “The experience is a real differentiator for us as we provide our guests with true luxury while connecting them to their environment in a positive way.”
Interval International Welcomes New Property in Chile — One of South America’s Most Geographically Diverse Countries

Interval International, a prominent worldwide provider of vacation services and an operating business of Interval Leisure Group (Nasdaq: IILG), announced the addition to its global vacation exchange network of Marina Golf Rapel, a mixed-use resort located in central Chile. A popular travel destination, the country features a diverse landscape composed of spectacular glaciers, vast deserts, lush rainforests, fertile vineyards, and unspoiled beaches.

"Interval’s technology and expertise were instrumental in helping us launch our fractional ownership program," said Ricardo Devoto, general manager of Marina Golf Rapel. "Sales at the resort have exceeded our expectations and we expect that this will continue owing to our product’s appeal to potential vacation owners."

Marina Golf Rapel is situated in the city of Las Cabras, 87 miles south of Santiago, in the Cachapoal Valley wine-growing region. The property will include 39 three-bedroom fractional units, 21 of which are currently available and 18 that are slated for completion next year.

Housed in two modern towers, units will have open-plan layouts with a living and dining area, fully equipped kitchens, bathrooms with modern finishes, and balconies offering scenic views.

"With regional travel growing there is a need for more shared ownership resorts in Chile and surrounding countries, which is why we are excited to welcome Marina Golf to our network," said Marcos Agostini, Interval’s senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Latin America. "The property will offer our members an exciting new vacation option, with a wide array of leisure amenities and activities within driving distance to Santiago."

The property is set on 320 acres on the shore of Lake Rapel, a 25-mile reservoir created in 1968 with the construction of the Rapel River dam, and is one of the largest lakes in Chile.

Among the planned amenities are a restaurant with a lake view, gym, golf club with nine-hole golf course, outdoor swimming pool, private beach and marina, and tennis court. Planned services include a kid’s program, concierge, room service, and housekeeping.

Activities available onsite and nearby will include numerous water sports, a spa, as well as horseback riding, biking, trekking, and others.

Members and guests will also be able to visit other attractions such as the Las Palmas de Cocalán National Park, Cauquenes natural hot springs, old colonial town of Santa Cruz, as well as the renowned vineyards in the region.

New purchasers at Marina Golf Rapel will be enrolled as individual members of Interval International and also become Interval Platinum® members, entitling them to a number of flexible exchange opportunities and best-in-class leisure and lifestyle benefits and services.

These include complimentary airport lounge membership through Priority Pass; Interval Options®, the ability to exchange their resort week toward a cruise, tour, golf, or spa vacation, or a unique Interval Experiences adventure; ShortStay Exchange®, Golf Connection, for access to select private courses; VIP treatment with Dining Connection; City Guides, for insider advice; Hertz Gold Plus Rewards® membership, which gives them the opportunity to earn bonus points for up to two free weekend rental days; priority Getaway viewing; US$50 Getaway discounts; free Guest Certificates; Platinum Escapes; online hotel discounts; additional special offers at restaurants, and retail locations worldwide; and VIP ConciergeSM, for personal assistance, 24/7.
Leading Adult Hospitality Chain Undergoes Major Rebranding

Original Resorts, the leading Mexican expert of adult hospitality and creator of world-renowned collections, is rebranding as Original Group, as the company continues to grow and diversify its vast array of offerings. The company’s branding relaunch includes a new name, a new logo, and an exciting new website, original-group.com, detailing its hospitality collections aimed at a discerning, sensual clientele.

“Our new name reflects how we have come to grow over the years into a strong, successful brand, with an ever expanding array of offerings for our sensually oriented, high end clients who are always on the search for luxurious, secure yet spicy experiences in a variety of environments,” said Rodrigo de la Peña, CEO of Original Group. “We’re thrilled by this rebranding launch, which allows us to better tell the story of our more than 35 years of experience creating the perfect sensual atmosphere for adults.”

Original Group offers a broad range of experiences for discerning adult (21+) vacationers seeking a sensual couple’s experience in the company of like-minded travelers, all under the care of exceptionally well trained staff catering to every need.

The group boasts an impressive portfolio of brand labels: Desire, Temptation, Premier, Swingee, Marina Hacienda Del Mar and developments.

The Desire experience includes the all-inclusive resorts Desire Riviera Maya Pearl Resort and Desire Riviera Maya Resort, along with Desire Venice Cruise, each designed for couples only, offering guests a unique, clothing-optional atmosphere, with a sense of freedom outside of conventional environments.

Temptation Resort Cancún, the “Playgrounds for Grown-Ups”, offers chic topless experiences in an exclusive party atmosphere on land and sea. It recently closed to undergo renovations under the guidance of “sensual minimalism” designer Karim Rashid. Set to reopen in August 2017, Temptation’s seven-story building will redefine Cancún’s skyline, stimulating guests with a sensual vibe throughout the entire property, including newly designed rooms and suites, pool, state-of-the-art shows, eight specialized restaurants, five bars and other fabulous amenities.

With its objective of increasing customer loyalty and providing a repeat client base an exclusive vacation experience, Original Group’s vacation club Premier focuses on rewarding members with exclusive privileges, room upgrades and personalized service, in oceanfront facilities on the spectacular beaches of Cancún and the Mayan Riviera.

The most sensual online community in the world, Swingee specializes in adult entertainment where users can interact with high profile celebrities, hotels and lifestyle brands around the world, without censor, in a safe, consensual environment.

For over 20 years, the Marina Hacienda Del Mar has offered a vast American-style dock with capacity for any yacht, motorboat or vessel, 24-hour access to the sea, its highly trained staff providing exceptional round-the-clock service to clients with high expectations.

Original Group also has several developments in both Cancun, Puerto Morlos and Isla Mujeres for current and future growth opportunities.

For more information on Original Group, visit www.original-group.com.
AMDETUR Update

AMDETUR is constantly working on activities in support of our industry, like those that are summed up below.

This Association worked together with ASUDESTICO in a meeting called by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources to go over the final remarks on Public Consultation NMX 178, which deals with the construction of tourist results on the Gulf of California.

On July 13, AMDETUR celebrated its 29th anniversary.

We also launched a series of specialty seminars on topics such as “Club Inventory Management,” given by Carlos Pérez y Pérez, Vice President for Revenue Management at RCI Latin America and Asia-Pacific; “The ABCs of Efficient Club Operations,” given by Esteban Arce, RCI’s Director of Business Process Outsourcing,” and finally, “Forging Relationships,” led by Gonzalo Seeman, Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at RCI Latin America.

We held a work meeting with Rafael Ochoa, the Under Director of Legal Affairs with the Federal Consumer Protection Agency (PROFECO), also attended by other officials from the Agency, like Raúl Muñoz, Angela Aydeé Flores, Federico Villegas, and Marycruz Santana; along with Gabriel Hernández of RCI; Carlos Trujillo of AMDETUR, Oiga Gutiérrez of PROVAC Posadas and Miriam Cortés of ACLUVAQ.
Training is a crucial element in the development of Mexico's tourist industry, which is why we replicated last year's highly successful Seminar on Timeshare Finances in both classroom and virtual settings. The sessions were led by Luis Manuel Rivera García, CEO of Powerpeople, a leading hotel finance consulting firm.

FONATUR also offered a seminar for our members on “Investment, Consultancy Planning and Project Qualification,” offering guidance in matters such as business planning and obtaining loans. The seminar was led by Andrés Hernández Hernández, Manager of Tourist Project Management and Evaluation, and by Norma Angélica López Nieto and María Teresa del Olmo Arista, both from FONATUR’s Under Department of Consultancy and Project Qualification.

Nemer Alvarez himself underscored that his role is to protect and defend consumers and facilitate relationships between consumers and vendors, and confirmed that PROFECO and AMDETUR would work together to minimize any potential negative impact that changes in this Act might have. At the end of the meeting, all parties confirmed their support for the “Ten Commandments of Timeshare Consumer Rights.”

PROFECO head Ernesto Nemer Álvarez and AMDETUR’s Chairman of the Board Jorge Herrera Rivadeneyra signed a Cooperation Agreement. During the meeting, Mr. Herrera gave a presentation on the impact of the vacation ownership industry and Miriam Cortés, Executive President of ACLUVAQ, detailed the industry’s concerns about the proposed amendments to the Federal Consumer Protection Act.
From September 19 to November 24 we held our first Master’s Program in Sales and Marketing for 2016, designed to train directors, supervisors and Managers involved in sales and marketing areas. Some of the modules include “Product Origins and Marketing,” “Sales Process,” “Vacation Club Operations,” and others. The keynote speakers are Linda Clemons and Jim Madrid. The primary purpose of this Master’s Course is to help participants understand and analyze the commercial process in the timeshare or vacation club business from its origins, how the product has evolved, the commercial process in marketing and sales areas, and the development of human capital.

AMDETUR Chairman of the Board Jorge Herrera Rivadeneyra attended a meeting of the Mexican Senate to follow up on the analysis of proposed amendments to the Federal Consumer Protection Act.

On September 21 we held our third Board of Directors’ meeting this year, in which financial information and activity reports were reviews, and various topics of interest to the industry were discussed.

A separate work meeting between FONATUR and AMDETUR was held to follow up on the 2015 Cooperation Agreement. FONATUR’s representatives at this meeting were María Teresa del Olmo Arista from the Under Department of Consultancy and Project Qualification and Andrés Hernández Hernández, Manager of Tourist Project Management and Evaluation. For AMDETUR, the meeting was attended by Executive President Carlos Trujillo Balmaseda, Director Rosa de Jesús Lugo Dorantes and Communications and Press Manager Paul Sánchez Acosta.
In the ATHOC Update -Classic Holidays Chief Operating Officer, Carole Smith, has been elected as the new President of the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council (ATHOC). The results of the election was announced at the annual ATHOC Conference in Queenstown, New Zealand and will take effect immediately. Also Joe Hickman is announced as the hall of Fame Winner. He has held the position of executive director at Interval International Asia-Pacific for over seven years and has been enormously instrumental in growing its Asia Pacific region network, not least in Australia and New Zealand.
ATHOC Update

New President For ATHOC – Carole Smith – Classic Holidays

Ms Smith has held previous positions as Queensland President of HMAA, Vice President of AAOA, Director of Gold Coast Tourism, Chair of One Step Further and Treasurer of ATHOC. She is also the current Director of various timeshare resorts managed by Classic Holidays.

In 2010, Ms Smith was inducted into the ATHOC Hall of Fame for her services to the industry, and she is also a Life Member of HMAA Queensland.

Having established her career in the timeshare industry for over three decades, Ms Smith brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role as President of ATHOC, particularly around the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

“We’re coming into a period of continual growth for the timeshare industry, however we still need to ensure our traditional weeks based timeshare resorts remain at a high standard for owners, and that we continue to look at ways to engage owners and increase member satisfaction overall,” she said.

A special thank you to Barry Robinson, CEO and President Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific who held the helm at ATHOC for the last 5 years. Barry stepped down due to length of service under the ATHOC constitution. Barry has guided the organisation and industry through some potentially volatile times with changing being made within the financial sector to lead us to some terrific outcomes.

The ATHOC Deputy President is Barry Robinson – Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific; Treasurer Ivan Hill – Silver Sands Resort; Secretary – Stephanie Kewming – Korora Bay Village Resort and other committee members include: Ramy Filo – Classic Holidays; Craig Wood – Accor Vacation Club; Joe Hickman – Interval International; Jonathan Mills – RCI; Kevin Sharp – ICE Asia Pacific. Alternate Board Members include Tiffany Rose for Barry Robinson; Sara Hughes for Craig Wood and Gary Fog for Ramy Fil.
The beautiful town of Queenstown New Zealand served us up 4 seasons in 4 days. Magnificent sun during their winter with a hint of warmth and then a hint of freezing, pouring rain, but all topped off with a beautiful snow fall in town. It was absolutely delightful.

We heard from a terrific range of speakers from both within and external to the industry. Some of the key speakers included Sir Eion Edgar who is currently Chairman of Forsyth Barr; Hawaiki Submarine Cable LP, NZ Dementia Prevention Trust, Queenstown Resort College and the Winter Games NZ Charitable Trust. He is a Director of Mt Cook Alpine Salmon, Patron of Diabetes NZ, Queenstown Trails Trust and Shelterbox N.Z. and Hon. President of NZ Olympic Committee. It was a very inspiring session that went across a number of different areas.

Tony Saunders, General Manager, Australia for Tourism New Zealand brought us up to speed on tourism in New Zealand and the strong growth from a number of different markets, and noted amongst other things the value of the Prime Minister also being the Tourism Minister.

Ramy Filo, Chairman of Beneficium and CEO of Classic Holidays, gave us his RAMY Factor. Harry Taylor from TATOC held court at a terrific “Breakfast with Harry” and then presented the view and vision from TATOC which was very interesting for all.

Also, a shout out to Stephen Goy, General Manager Classic Holidays New Zealand, who stepped in last minute to present the NZ Employment Law Changes when Jeff Goldstein and Linda Ryder’s flight in from Christchurch was turned around. Well done!

The World of Exchange and CEO panels were a highlight and opportunity to catch up on what has been happening in the industry and importantly where the industry is going.

As Joe Hickman Interval International noted, on our tiny little stage there in Queenstown, there was representation from 3 of the biggest Hotel Companies in the World. And the best part is that they are all timeshare.

For something different this year, we had the Queenstown Challenge which saw teams of delegates charging their way across Queenstown including up the gondola and back down the luge, through the parks, and into the ICE bar for a quick shot before ending up with ICE Asia Pacific in the Cowboy Bar.

All in all, another successful conference.

ATHOC Industry Awards

Congratulations to this year’s award nominees, but a special congratulations to the winners:

- Resort Performer of the Year 2016 - Casey Antoniadis, The Sebel Pinnacle Valley Resort
- Resort Manager of the Year 2016 - Scott Walton, Wyndham Resort Denarau Island
- Resort of the Year 2016 - Wyndham Hotel Melbourne
- Excellence in Customer Service 2016 - Salendra Rattan, Wyndham Resort Denarau Island
- Excellence in Customer Service 2016 - Member Services Team, Accor Vacation Club
- Sales Performer of the Year 2016 - Martin Hansen, Classic Holidays Sydney Office
- Sales Team of the Year 2016 – Upgrade Sales Team, Accor Vacation Club
- Marketing Team of the Year 2016 - Discovery Team, Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific
- Corporate Team of the Year 2016 - Finance Team, Marriott Vacation Club

ASIC RG160 Review

The industry is currently waiting for a consultation paper to come out that is looking at changes to the Regulator Guide that we operate under. We expect to receive the document in the next few weeks. The industry is happy that consultation did take place with ATHOC prior to ASIC finalising and distributing the discussion paper. We are hopeful that all of the comments we have made have been taken into consideration.
ATHOC UPDATE

Joe Hickman has held the position of executive director at Interval International Asia-Pacific for over seven years and has been enormously instrumental in growing its Asia Pacific region network, not least in Australia and New Zealand.

Based in Singapore, Joe Hickman has responsibility for implementing business development activities across Asia-Pacific, including affiliating resorts with Preferred Residences (a strategic alliance between Interval International and Preferred Hotel Group) and Interval International’s global network. He develops and directs all sales and resort marketing strategies, as well as managing developer client relationships.

Joe has spent his entire professional career in the hospitality and timeshare industries, with more than twenty two years specifically in Asia Pacific timeshare, amassing experience in a broad range of areas including sales and marketing, finance, resort services, business development and call centre operations.

Prior to his tenure at Interval International, Joe was Executive Director for Resort Condominiums International (RCI) Asia Pacific, a division of Cendant Corporation.

He has served and continues to serve on a variety of industry boards including the timeshare associations of both Thailand and Singapore, the Malaysian Timeshare Federation, the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council (ATHOC), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and numerous other trade related bodies.

Joe’s experience in all aspects of shared ownership, his hospitality industry background and his extensive understanding of regional cultures makes him a standout in the timeshare industry.

Earlier, he held senior positions with Westin, Shangri-La, and Hilton Hotels’ Conrad division and was responsible for the successful marketing of Hilton Grand Vacations Club in Las Vegas, the city’s first purpose-built timeshare resort. He also served as Corporate Director for Vacation Ownership at Hilton Hotels and was an integral part of the team that pioneered Hilton’s early entry into the timeshare industry.

He has consistently sat on the board of directors for numerous shared ownership industry trade bodies, spoken at regional and global conferences, and worked with governments, media and consumer groups to provide reliable information and advice and to resolve issues that may well have had a negative impact on the sustainable growth of our industry.

Joe Hickman is considered a great resource for all regional information and industry data, and he knows all the key players in both the hospitality and shared ownership industries throughout the entire region. He continues to work with governments and with developers for the creation and maintenance of well balanced legislation that benefits all stakeholders. His background in timeshare marketing has proven extremely useful to newcomers, largely because the most challenging part of the shared ownership business is the generation of sufficient numbers of qualified prospects at an affordable cost.

Congratulations Joe – Well Deserved.
Accommodation Consumers Will Still Suffer Under “Secret” ACCC Deal

Statement from the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association of Australia, Richard Munro:

The accommodation industry has significant concerns about an agreement which has been reached between the ACCC and the two offshore-based companies who command around 80 per cent of the online travel agency market in Australia.

From what the Accommodation Association understands - because the ACCC has not made public the agreement - Australian consumers will be worse off under this hidden arrangement - we estimate consumers could still be paying up to 20 per cent more for a room because of the secret commissions which are charged by these offshore global bohemots.

By far the biggest concern is that operators of accommodation businesses are prevented from advertising on their own websites a lower room-rate than what these online travel agencies display. The ACCC has seemingly overlooked the fact the internet is easily the number-one way consumers book accommodation.

Effectively, this means the online travel agencies can still dictate - from their offshore headquarters - to small motels in regional Australia what price they can charge for providing a service, when many of these accommodation businesses are struggling to be profitable. We would be keen to learn how many such operators the ACCC met with before reaching the agreement with the online travel agencies.

With their dominant market share, the two major offshore online travel agencies are squeezing Australian accommodation businesses and Australian consumers will ultimately be the losers through higher prices or worse still, less choice because smaller operators in regional areas could be forced out of business.

Another concern our members have raised is in communication received from one of the online travel agencies in question about this issue last week, the terms and conditions of the contracts between accommodation operators and the online travel agency state the contract ‘shall be exclusively governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Netherlands’.

We would like to think Australian Consumer Law applies to transactions made by Australian consumers within Australia for accommodation booked at an accommodation business which is physically located within Australia.

Given all of this, we are calling for the ACCC to make public all agreements and communication between it and online travel agencies.

The Accommodation Association has been seeking to meet with the ACCC since September 2015 to discuss these issues, but requests for a meeting have not been responded to.

Interval International Adds Newest Marriott Vacation Club Property On Australia’s Gold Coast

Interval International, a prominent worldwide provider of vacation services and an operating business of Interval Leisure Group (Nasdaq: ILG), announced the addition of Marriott Vacation Club at Surfers Paradise to its global exchange network. The new resort is located at the award-winning Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa on Australia’s Gold Coast.

“We’ve redefined the Australian vacation experience by matching the unique amenities and activities of the famous Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa with the signature hospitality and service of Marriott Vacation Club. Our guests will be immersed in the best of the area, enhanced with Marriott quality and attention to detail,” said Stephen P. Weisz, president and chief executive officer of Marriott Vacations Worldwide.

“Interval International is pleased to report the addition of Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa to the Interval exchange network,” said David C. Gilbert, president of Interval International. “As always, Marriott Vacation Club is offering all the resort amenities and services to make for a great vacation experience for its owners and Interval’s exchange guests.”

Marriott Vacation Club at Surfers Paradise will have more than 80 deluxe guestrooms and one-bedroom suites — some of which can be combined into deluxe two-bedroom suites to accommodate larger families — with balconies overlooking the lagoon or the city. Rooms are luxuriously appointed with floor-to-ceiling windows, flat-screen televisions, and pillow-top mattresses. In addition, complimentary Wi-Fi and daily housekeeping are provided.

Owners and guests will enjoy also the world-class amenities at the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa, including four distinct dining venues, fitness center, full-service spa, multi-purpose sport court, and several freshwater and saltwater lagoons.

On Australia’s eastern coast, Surfers Paradise boasts an average of 300 days of sunshine per year. Among the region’s many attractions are several major theme parks and golf courses, complementing the abundant options for water activities.

Marriott Vacation Club owners become individual members of Interval International, entitling them to a host of year-round benefits, including the opportunity to exchange their weeks or points for stays at other resorts in Interval’s global network.
Nine Unmissable Dishes to Eat in Australia

Pat Nurse, deputy editor and chief restaurant critic for Gourmet Traveller, gives us his top nine unmissable Australian meals.

For the second leg of its global tour in 2017, The World’s 50 Best Restaurants is heading to Melbourne, Australia.

While the stereotype of shrimps on the barbie is well-known worldwide, fewer people know about the vast gastronomic landscape spanning Australia that’s just waiting to be explored.

Sydneysider Pat Nurse, 50 Best’s Academy Chair for Oceania, Australia & New Zealand, talks us through 10 top things to try when in Oz.

Balmain bug pikelets at Bennelong, Sydney
Where: Bennelong, Sydney Opera House, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia
What: Native crustaceans meet blini-like mini-pancakes in a savoury party under the sails of the Sydney Opera House.

Abalone roasted in bull kelp at Franklin, Hobart
Where: Franklin, 28 Argyle St, Hobart, Tasmania
What: Tasmania’s most prized cold-water shellfish, the rakish flair of chef David Moyle and the magic of a wood-fired Scotch oven: it’s a match made in dining heaven.

Marron and local watercress at Orana, Adelaide
Where: Orana, 285 Rundle St, Adelaide SA 5000
What: Chef Jock Zonfrillo, a Glaswegian of Italian descent, might seem an unlikely champion of indigenous Australian culinary culture, but one taste of his inspired use of local ingredients brings his arguments vividly to life.

Rendang roti rolls at Rapid Creek markets, Darwin
Where: Rapid Creek markets, 48 Trower Rd, Milliner, NT 0810

What: Culinary life is never more vibrant in the Northern Territory than amidst the smoke and colour of its markets, the heart of the Darwin social scene. A Malaysian roti hot from the griddle, packed with spicy kapitan-style curry and shredded cucumber, is breakfasting for champions.

Pippies in XO sauce at Golden Century, Sydney
Where: Golden Century, 393-399 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000
What: Momofuku’s David Chang says this signature from Sydney’s best-loved late-night Cantonese eatery – surf clams with stir-fried vermicelli in spicy XO sauce – is “the best dish in the world”. No one in Sydney is arguing the point.

150-day-aged steak at Firedoor, Sydney
Where: Firedoor, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
What: Australian beef is some of the finest in the world, and it more than meets its match in the kitchen of Lennox Hastie, a British-Australian former Asador Etxebarri head chef who has radical ideas about dry-aging.

Double-boiled wallaby tail soup at Flower Drum, Melbourne
Where: Flower Drum, 17 Market Lane, Melbourne, Victoria 3000
What: Chinese technique refined over the centuries extracts the essence of flavour from this cousin to the kangaroo, complemented with wolfberries and yam, all served in a soigné setting with courtly service in the old Hong Kong style.

Nam prik nuum sandwiches at Boon, Sydney
Where: Boon cafe, 425 Pitt Street, Haymarket, NSW 2000
What: Australian café culture (sourdough, cultured butter) meets authentically spicy pungent Thai cooking (hot! sour! pungent!) on a sandwich unforgettably packed with pork, boiled eggs and greens.

Kosher GLT at Bar Liberty, Melbourne
Where: Bar Liberty, 234 Johnston Street, Fitzroy
What: Irreverent or just plain loopy? Melbourne newcomer Bar Liberty rides the new wine-bar wave, but never surrenders its own peculiarity, whether it’s the thoroughly natural bent to the wine list, the collection of miniature muscle-cars filled with bourbon, or the GLT, which ditches bacon in favour of gribenes, Jewish-style fried chicken skin, alongside the lettuce and tomato in this take on the classic.
Harry Taylor, Chairman and CEO of TATOC, Europe’s leading timeshare consumer association has always been on a mission to safeguard and enhance the timeshare holiday experience of owners and to also be their voice. Over recent years, this has resulted in the TATOC team identifying and challenging timeshare scammers, supporting victims and working with the UK and European governments to ensure timeshare legislation is fit for purpose.

RDO give us their Autumn Update - RDO7 continued to build on the success of the last few years conferences. The theme this year was “Taking Ownership “ -which boasted a great line-up of speakers, both from inside and outside the industry.
TATOC Update

As chairman and CEO of TATOC, Europe’s leading timeshare consumer association, my mission has always been to safeguard and enhance the timeshare holiday experience of owners and to be their voice.

Over recent years, this has resulted in the TATOC team identifying and challenging timeshare scammers, supporting victims and working with the UK and European governments to ensure timeshare legislation is fit for purpose.

And as we have reported here before, we have been successful.

But supporting everything we do are two core beliefs.

ONE: Genuine timeshare products, correctly sold and well managed represent a high quality, cost effective and long-term vacation experience.

TWO: The future of timeshare is dependent on a good understanding and relationship between consumers and all aspects of the timeshare industry.

This year, I have had the honour of representing TATOC at several industry conferences including GNEX, ARDA, ATHOC and the RDO here in Europe.

And I am pleased to report that the relationship between the industry and consumer is stronger than ever – and getting stronger all the time.

Despite some dissenters, TATOC believes this relationship can only benefit consumers in the long-term as we work together to build a robust, vibrant and dynamic industry that has the consumers interests at its very heart.

As our industry reaches middle age, however, it is important to take a step back and check that our first core belief is still relevant. Does the timeshare product provide a high quality and cost effective vacation experience?

Taking a look at TATOC’s accredited resort membership in particular, I believe the answer is yes. But it is a subject that I raised at the recent ATHOC conference in New Zealand where I asked the question – what makes a resort successful?

As a chairman of a resort board and a timeshare consumer as well, there are several criteria that could be used to define a successful resort.

The size of the resort in owner numbers, the percentage of unsold inventory, the number of complaints received, occupancy levels, profitability, management fee delinquency rates, exchange company rating – and, new to many of us, TripAdvisor rankings.

If gauging the success of a resort is a qualitative exercise, then how do we recognise and capture it? But if it’s quantitative, how do we measure it? And more importantly, how do we then share this with resorts that are clearly not successful and failing their owners and their guests?

I believe that the term ‘high quality’ has a lot to do with the confusion about what makes a resort successful or not.

There are the obvious aspects of a high quality resort such as the architecture and the buildings themselves, the location, the accommodations, facilities and amenities, maintenance, and the grounds. The things that make us say wow, take photos and post on Facebook to impress our friends.

Quality management also has a huge impact with sound and realistic financial controls, budgeting and planning, refurbishment and maintenance – and regular engagement with owners at every stage.

But don’t make the mistake in thinking that a successful resort is all about size and facilities. As a TATOC resort accreditor, I have seen quality resorts in many forms and in many sizes and it is clear that not everyone wants, or can afford, the same thing. What is considered quality to one owner is an unwanted expense by another.

So what else makes a resort successful? Well it’s what I term the soft qualities that make the overall ownership experience the best it can be – and a resort a success.
It’s about the belief by owners that they have access to something really special, where they know they will have a great vacation and can look back on years of happy memories. It’s about your owners and guests wanting to come back year after year, when the children cry on their departure and the whole family is hungry to return.

It’s about owners wanting to be part of the resort – not just visitors or exchangers.

It is these qualities that I believe make a resort successful and I am proud that many of our TATOC member resorts have realized this. So how have they achieved this success?

One of the most important areas that is often overlooked is the critical role played by the committee or board of owners. At all times I believe the committee need to be visible using the latest website and social media tools to keep their fellow owners informed and, most importantly, engaged.

The use of platforms such as your Facebook page, Facebook groups and Twitter give owners a voice and a feeling of influence in decisions. It is an opportunity to listen to and then answer their concerns in a timely fashion. Run away or dismiss this activity at your peril. It’s going to happen whether the resort is involved or not.

Other soft qualities that play a huge part in the success of a resort focus on your team members. Ask yourself what is the experience at check in – could it be better? Are all your staff including cleaners, grounds staff and restaurant team welcoming, engaging and smiling? How do they treat and interact with guests? Do they make owners feel truly special?

If you don’t know the answers, then set up post departure surveys, look at your complaint levels and check out your TripAdvisor reviews.

Of course, we can all criticise this tool, but if time and again your reception team is falling short, your resort cleanliness is an issue or your staff are letting you down, TripAdvisor will certainly pick up on the trend.

This is because it is not about you and what you think. It’s about what your owners and guests think - what they are experiencing and how they are feeling. Do they feel pride, do they feel special and do they feel engaged?

Your task as a resort manager is not only to deliver the best management practices, the best facilities you can afford and good value maintenance fees, but to deliver pleasure to your guests and to keep your owners engaged and happy.

So even if your resort does not have the highest quality fixtures and fittings or can’t afford the latest technological gadgets, it can still be successful in the eyes of its owners.

After all, we all know what quality feels like – and we know what special feels like too. A successful resort is one that delivers both these experiences combined with good management, a great atmosphere and a genuine passion for the owner.

And that is what TATOC is all about.
DAE Opens New Service Centre in Portugal

Worldwide vacation exchange provider DAE has opened a new service centre in Portugal, expanding the company’s footprint in Europe.

“We’ve seen strong demand for our award-winning exchange product developing in this region of Europe,” said Oliver Green, Managing Director of DAE Europe. “Our Portuguese membership base has increased by 300% in the last two years, so providing a local centre to service this growing demand was a logical step.

“It’s important to DAE that all members receive the highest levels of customer service and now these members can speak to us in their own language and transact in their own currency.”

“In addition, DAE are able to harness local knowledge and expertise of this popular tourist destination in order to further develop our relationships with existing and new Portuguese and Madeiran Resorts – meaning many more exciting holiday opportunities for our DAE members worldwide.”

The DAE Portugal office is located in a prominent position between Vilamoura and Albufeira and is headed up by experienced shared-ownership professional, Nelson Goncalves, who has a Master’s in Business Administration and has worked in the Timeshare Industry since 1998.

“Our first goal is to make sure all Portuguese members understand how to use the system correctly to take advantage of the enormous benefits of DAE,” said Mr Goncalves. “We will also focus on ensuring Portuguese Resorts and Vacation Ownership members are aware that a simple, affordable, award-winning exchange option is now right here in the local region.”

Travel & Leisure Group is pleased to announce that the company has joined TATOC’s list of platinum affiliates, further bolstering its commitment to providing the best service the industry has to offer

TATOC (The Timeshare Association) is the largest association for timeshare owners in Europe, and represents around 400,000 timeshare families. A significant force within the European timeshare industry, TATOC serves not just individual timeshare owners, but also owner committees, resorts, and reputable timeshare companies.

Due in no small part to TATOC’s industry authority, resale companies such as Travel & Leisure Group are seen in good standing amongst timeshare owners looking to sell their points, weeks, or fractional ownership.

For many years Travel & Leisure Group has been a TATOC affiliate at the Gold level. Of the move upward, Operations Manager Sarah Bond says, “We are proud to have become a Platinum TATOC Affiliate. TATOC are an important and necessary presence in the timeshare industry, and the work they do is invaluable to consumers. At the Platinum level, Travel & Leisure Group has the opportunity to become a TATOC accredited resale company which will, in turn, strengthen our platform and provide us with even more authority to assist our clients.”

Moving to the Platinum affiliate level is an affirmation of Travel & Leisure Group’s commitment to their clients. Their Safe Hands Guarantee already ensures that when a sale is achieved, both seller and buyer are protected by having their monies held with independent solicitors, and their newly confirmed Platinum Affiliate status gives consumers the extra reassurance that they comply with the latest industry standards.

“We are committed to supporting the timeshare industry and TATOC,” says Legal & Conveyancing Manager John Pearce. “This means being completely up-to-date with our credentials to ensure we are offering the most professional advice we can to people buying or selling timeshare. We couldn’t be more pleased to see ourselves reach the same level of affiliation enjoyed by industry giants such as Club La Costa, Diamond Resorts, RCI, and DialAnExchange.”
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By the time this piece goes to print, RDO7 will have been and gone, and hopefully we will have continued to build on the success of the last few years conference. The theme this year was “Taking Ownership” - we had a great line-up of speakers, both from inside and outside the industry, and you can see the highlights of the conference at www.rdoconference.org.

The last time I wrote this review, the UK had just voted to exit the EU and speculation was rife as to what the immediate effect would be on the UK economy and its prospects going forward as an independent trading nation again. It has to be accepted that the sky has not fallen in since the vote and thus far the UK economy has not gone into meltdown, although the Bank of England did step in with a drop in interest rates and talk of quantitative easing etc. From the industry’s perspective, we have been asked by a number of journalists what the likely effect would be of Brexit. We are working with a number of lobby groups to make sure the Department for Exiting the European Union (there’s a name for a Government Department), the Brexit Office for short, understands there are a large number of UK timeshare families (over 600,000) who want to continue going to their resorts in the EU, and they are part of the 1.3million families in the EU who want to continue to travel to and enjoy their timeshare holidays, whether in the UK or wider EU. We are of course waiting for the new AIF Worldwide Study – due out this autumn, which will update these figures for us. I fear RDO has thus far disappointed those journalists, as currently we are unable to point to any catastrophic event that is likely to affect the industry following Brexit.

RDO’s last review of business amongst its members for 2014 - what we call the Key Performance Indicators or KPI’s, showed new sales by members that year at a healthy 500million, an increase on the previous year. The 2015 figures have of course gone into the Worldwide Study.

It has been a busy last 3 months for RDO, even setting aside the drama and political fall-out of Brexit. In general RDO has started to take a much more aggressive stance to some of the companies preying on the concerns of the elderly timeshare owners, and despite wide publicity given to owners on how to obtain a surrender if needed, many are still persuaded to part with money needlessly. RDO supported a successful civil action against one such company this summer and will continue to look at how it can support others in similar situations.

The result is that RDO becomes more and more drawn into the role of enforcer to try to stop these attacks on owners, a case of RDO becoming a modern day “Bow Street Runner” as we say here – or the equivalent of the local sheriff in the USA?

Having survived or rather endured the Brexit referendum and in this I sympathise with all our colleagues across the EU and further afield, who have had to endure all of this upheaval and not even be involved. We now look across the Atlantic to the USA to see what the outcome of November’s Presidential Election is going to be. Whatever happens, it is going to be interesting, and if Mrs Clinton is successful there will be three women in top jobs in three of the most influential countries in the world – USA, Germany and UK. Of course Mrs Merkel faces elections in 2017 (as does President Hollande in France) so for how long that will be the case is of course debatable.

Without a doubt we continue to live in interesting times.
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