[R]EVOLUTION IN 2017
A look back on the last 12 months in travel
Are you flying direct?
Look what you will miss...

explore

STOPOVER AZORES

2 destinations for the price of 1

WELCOME TO THE AZORES
Remember at the end of 2016, when people couldn’t wait for the year to be over and a new one to begin? There were a few who warned the worst was yet to come…and perhaps it’s not so far from the truth. From natural disasters to political challenges, 2017 hasn’t been easy, but at CT, we’re optimistic. There has been a lot of positive growth in the travel industry over the past 12 months, and that’s what we’re here to showcase in our first-ever [R]EVOLUTION issue. We evaluate the wins and losses – the highs and lows – the highs and lows in the next few pages. What have been defining moments for your business this year? Share your insight with me by e-mailing terrilynk@mypassionmedia.com.

Terrilyn Kunopaski, Editor-in-chief
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Annual vacations are very important to 70% of Canadians.
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* Study (June 2019) conducted on behalf of Allianz Global Assistance Canada (Nov 2018)
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BIG THINGS HAPPENING IN ATLANTIC CITY

A new Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City is set to open its doors in 2018. Set on 17-acres against the legendary Atlantic City Boardwalk (formerly home to the vacant Taj Mahal), the property is undergoing a complete renovation and redesign. In addition to lavishly-appointed rooms, it will also offer a range of gaming opportunities, new food & beverage concepts, and two separate arenas. Nearby, the $14-million Steel Pier Observation Wheel is also set to open soon, soaring 67 metres above the beach and boardwalk, with 30 heated and air conditioned gondolas. Beyond that, travellers will find more than 150 attractions and activities throughout Atlantic City, plus a plethora of other accommodation and, of course, tax-free retail shopping. Visit touratlanticcity.com for sample itineraries plus deals to be found in-destination.

NICE DAY FOR A ROYAL WEDDING

No doubt London and the U.K. will benefit from the upcoming nuptials of Prince Harry and fiancée Meghan Markle, who are scheduled to tie the knot in 2018. (Following Will and Kate’s engagement and wedding in 2011, the city saw an uptick of Canadian travellers and more than 827,000 journeying to Britain in 2016 as cited by Visit Britain.) In light of the occasion, Luxury Gold is highlighting its British Royale escorted journey, which combines historic monuments with intimate, VIP experiences, such as an invitation to the Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London and a Michelin-star dining experience, plus a Chairman’s Collection exclusive experience lunch with Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland in her 11th century castle. In celebration of the new 2018 Luxury Gold Escorted Journeys, clients can take advantage of 10 per cent savings with the Early Payment Discount.

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FAMILIAR FACE, NEW BUSINESS CARD

Neil Dudley has joined the AmaWaterways team in Canada as business development manager (BDM), responsible for Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. He joins the Canadian sales team consisting of Sandra Gardiner, director national accounts and BDM for Atlantic Canada, and Shauna Carter, BDM for British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Dudley has more than 20 years’ experience in the travel industry, most recently with Scenic Cruises. Travel advisors should note that AmaWaterways can be booked in Canadian dollars and promotions advertised to the public include port charges in compliance with TICO and OPC regulations.
A look at the travel industry’s [R]EVOLUTION IN 2017

There’s been a whole lot of evolution and revolution in Canada’s travel industry over the past year. Here’s a reflection on some of the highlights:

Tour & Cruise

- **U by Uniworld** set sail for the first time this past fall with an exclusive guest list, but this new concept – announced in December 2016 – is set to officially begin welcoming guests as of spring 2018. Open to travellers aged 21 to 45, this groundbreaking brand from Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection is opening the world of river cruising to a brand-new clientele, with unique itineraries, design and onboard experiences.

- **REVEALED IN** March 2017, the new **Celebrity Edge** is taking ocean cruising to a new level, with innovations such as its ship-climbing magic carpet platform and the Edge Stateroom with Infinite Veranda (which has been designed with 23 per cent more square footage and 10 per cent larger bathrooms than Celebrity’s Solstice Class). Numerous other stateroom and gastronomic innovations are found throughout.

Airlines

- **IN OCTOBER, WestJet** unveiled its first Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, one of 50 scheduled for delivery in the next four years. WestJet is the first Canadian airline to receive the aircraft, which was designed to optimize efficiency, reliability and the passenger experience.

- **SPEAKING OF WESTJET,** 2017 also marks the year the airline introduced **Swoop**, a new low-cost carrier set to launch mid-2018 servicing domestic routes. Not to be outdone in the low-cost carrier space, Canadian start-ups **Jetlines** and **Enerjet** are also hoping to take flight in the new year, while Air Canada Rouge is expected to compete on some routes as well. Not to be outdone, international low-cost carriers are also eying Canada, such as Scandinavian-based Primera Air, which will launch year-round direct flights between Toronto and Paris, London Stansted and Birmingham, UK, starting in spring 2018.

- **BACK IN MARCH,** **Qatar** launched what it is calling “a revolutionary new ‘first in Business Class’ experience” with its new Qsuites. These feature the industry’s first-ever double bed available in Business Class, with privacy panels that stow away, allowing passengers in adjoining seats to create their own private room. Each seat is crafted with thoughtful and luxurious details, for an ultra-upscale experience in the sky.

- **AIR FRANCE** is first at the gate to launch an airline dedicated to the millennial market. **Joon** is described as a “lifestyle brand and a state of mind” and not to be mistaken for a low-cost airline, as it offers the original products and services that reflect those of Air France. Medium-haul flights began operating in the fall, with long-haul flights to follow in summer 2018.

21-45

Clients aged 21- to 45-years-old are invited to travel aboard the new U by Uniworld, officially setting sail in spring 2018.

3

There are three low- and ultra-low-cost carriers set to launch in Canada next year.
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ACCOMMODATIONS

- **INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP (IHG)** revealed plans in June to launch a new, high-quality midscale brand. The goal is to target more than 14 million guests in the U.S. midscale market—a segment it says is “vastly underserved” and estimated to be worth $20 billion in annual industry revenues. The name, avid™ hotels, was just announced in December and the price point is projected to be about $10 to $15 less than its Holiday Inn Express brand. The first property is expected to open in 2019.

- **THE EVER-POPULAR “capsule” concept**, a cheap accommodation alternative for business travellers originally seen in Japan and throughout Asia, has been slowly spreading to other parts of the world in recent years, from New York to Europe, and now, Canada. The Pangea Pod Hotel in Whistler, B.C., announced this past June and opening in 2018, will offer 88 sleeping pods and common spaces designed for “the discerning solo traveller seeking a boutique hotel feel.”

SHARING ECONOMY

- **MONTREAL-BASED Luxury Retreats** was acquired by Airbnb back in February 2017, in a move that saw consolidation of two major players in the home-sharing space. A luxury vacation rental company offering more than 4,000 homes in 100 destinations around the world, Luxury Retreat’s product bank was seen to complement Airbnb’s existing portfolio. Luxury Retreats continues to operate as a stand-alone entity, though over time, its listings are being highlighted and integrated into the Airbnb community.

- **AS THE SHARING ECONOMY** continues to challenge traditional models, Wyndham Hotel Group acquired Love Home Swap, a London-based startup that, like Airbnb, allows travellers to book stays in other people’s homes, at the same time letting them list their own properties to be booked by others. This follows suit of Accor Hotels, which paid $170 million in 2016 for OneFineStay, an Airbnb-esque outfit that operates exclusively with high-end properties.

TECHNOLOGY

- **OFFERING DIRECT** and immediate access to more than 70,000 commissionable tours and attractions, TripAdvisor launched the Travel Agent Program in October 2017, which allows agents to book directly through its Viator distribution platform, right down to exclusive Skip the Line products. There is no fee to take part and agents who register receive competitive commission rates.

- **IN NOVEMBER**, Air Canada announced that it would be the first Canadian airline to use virtual reality technology to simulate the experience of flying on its Boeing 787 Dreamliner for travel agents and potential customers. Through a fully immersive, interactive experience, users are invited to explore all three cabins of service offered onboard the aircraft, including “enjoying a virtual International Business Class meal complete with wine in an Executive Pod.”

- **THE ANTIGUA and Barbuda Tourism Authority in Canada** is another organization at the forefront of the virtual reality trend, using it to train both travel counsellors and tour operator staff through the sight and sound experience. The 360-degree videos, showcasing various experiences throughout the destination, can even be viewed through social media and on mobile phones. “Pretty soon everyone will be doing this,” said developer Kevin Cyr of Wing Whale Media.

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VISIT MILE 0 OF HIGHWAY 101
Any road tripper’s “must see” list should include a visit to Mile 0 of Highway 101 in Lund, BC. Lund launches the initial/final leg of the Pacific Coastal Highway, one of the longest highways in the world, which ends in Chile, approximately 15,202km south.

PURPLE BANNER TOUR
The Sunshine Coast is home to the highest per capita population of artists and crafters in Canada. Follow the Purple Banner Flags (which artists hang on their studios to signal “We’re Open!”) from Langdale to Lund and take a self directed studio and gallery tour any time of year.

YEAR-ROUND BIKING
The locals know you can bike here 365 days a year, any way you want. From smooth and flowy XC to adrenaline pumping downhill, pump tracks for the kids, and cruising cycle touring along the epic Hwy 101, there’s no shortage of biking for every type of rider.

GET ON THE WATER
You’re never far from water on the Sunshine Coast. Sign on for a sailing tour or fishing charter, rent a kayak, dive to a sunken ship or take a water taxi to a white sandy beach – the choice is yours.

SUNSHINE COAST ALE TRAIL
Arrive thirsty, leave inspired! Quench your thirsts at a local brewery tasting room that welcomes visitors to experience British Columbia’s dynamic craft beer culture, from Townsite’s re-purposed Federal building within a recognized Canadian Heritage District, to Persephone’s “beer farm” surrounded by towering hop vines and coastal Douglas fir forest.

GETTING THERE
BY CAR – BC Ferries offers regular sailings to the Sunshine Coast via Horseshoe Bay terminal in Vancouver or Little River terminal in Comox on Vancouver Island. bcferries.com | BY AIR – Pacific Coastal Airlines offers daily flights from Victoria to Powell River (via YVR). PacificCoastal.com | Harbour Air offers daily float plane flights between Nanaimo and Sechelt. HarbourAir.com | Sunshine Coast Air also offers daily flights between Nanaimo and Sechelt. SunshineCoastAir.com
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Air Canada payment solutions: Evaluating the options

Did you know that Air Canada has two different payment solutions on offer? For the sake of simplifying life for your clients, here’s what you should know:

CORPORATE

ACGLOBE:
A global payment card designed to streamline air travel expenses and deliver a hassle-free reconcile and management process, regardless of company size or travel requirements.

Here’s how it works:
- There are two programs available for your corporate clients – ACGlobe and ACGlobePlus – each appealing to different needs.
- The card is accepted worldwide for purchases on more than 260 airlines and rail carriers within the Universal Air Travel Plan (UATP) network. ACGlobe and ACGlobePlus are accepted by 10,000 International Air Transportation Association (IATA)-appointed travel agencies in Canada, at 130,000 IATA-appointed travel agencies worldwide, and by 30,000 ARC-accredited agencies in the U.S.
- Both accounts can operate as a traditional plastic payment card that can be issued to road-warriors or the convenience of a “lodged” account, where expenses of an individual department, project or company can be managed.
- There is no annual fee associated with the ACGlobe Account, while the annual fee for the ACGlobePlus Account is $99 (tax inclusive).
- The ACGlobePlus Purchase Rebate Program, awarded on a quarterly basis (a calendar year) to a company in the form of an Air Canada Gift Card, provides: 1.5 per cent rebate on all purchases where the flights are operated by Air Canada, Air Canada Express or Air Canada Rouge; and a one per cent rebate on purchases where the flights are operated by another airline, including those flights marketed by Air Canada, but operated by a partner airline. (Corporate clients can opt to receive a plastic Gift Card or an eGift Card.)
- In addition to the above, ACGlobePlus subscribers will receive a $250 Air Canada Gift Card upon the purchase of their first qualifying Air Canada ticket over $500 charged to the ACGlobePlus account.
- An agency partner whose corporate customer activates an ACGlobe card will qualify for referral remuneration.

Why use it:
- By using this card, corporate accounts benefit from having access to a secure centralized billing system and customized reports at no extra cost, all in one convenient place, regardless of a company’s travel expenditures.
- Customized reporting is available at no charge and can be accessed securely 24/7 through DataMine®, a corporate transaction portal available to all ACGlobe customers. Here, users can view and run reports on all transactions, and quickly and easily check their ACGlobe Account balance.
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CORPORATE OR LEISURE

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A Visa card that can be loaded with up to 10 different currencies and used anywhere VISA is accepted, whether travelling or booking ahead.

Here’s how it works:
- Clients can sign-up to receive their own CIBC Air Canada Conversion Card, and then load it with up to 10 currencies: US Dollars, Euros, British Pounds, Australian Dollars, Japanese Yen, Hong Kong Dollars, Turkish Lira, Swiss Franc, Mexican Pesos and Canadian Dollars.
- While travelling, it can be used anytime, for example, at stores and restaurants, or for withdrawing local currency from ATMs.
- The card is equipped with the latest in Chip and PIN technology to protect travellers from fraud.

Why use it:
- Security: If a client loses the card while travelling, CIBC will send an emergency replacement card.
- The card is not linked to any bank account, so there’s that added peace of mind.
- Convenience: Forget lining up at the bank or currency exchange counter to withdraw funds, and don’t worry about whether your bank card will work in foreign ATMs. The CIBC AC Conversion Card allows travellers to supplement foreign cash and avoid excessive credit card fees.
- Ease of use: Users can manage their account through an online dashboard, on which they can view exchange rates; check card balance(s) and currencies; top-up funds; move funds between currencies; and track spending activity. All of this can also be accessed through a mobile app.

Air Canada’s travel agency partners can refer customers, and be rewarded for each qualifying card from any given agency. For more information about the CIBC Air Canada AC Conversion card, visit acconversion.cibc.com or contact the CIBC AC conversion team at 1-800-482-8347 or 647-749-5148.

For more details and information about the Air Canada ACGlobe Corporate Payment Solution, contact the ACGlobe Business Development Executive team at 1-844-290-0219 or e-mail ACGlobe.info@aircanada.ca
There were a lot of highlights throughout 2017 that demonstrated the resiliency and community of our travel industry, but the year was not without its challenges as well. So, what’s on our [s]hit list? Keep reading.

**HURRICANES**

It goes without saying that Hurricane Season was especially destructive this year, leaving certain U.S. and Caribbean destinations struggling to recover. Puerto Rico, Barbuda, Dominica and St. Maarten/Sint Martin are among those who are still reeling even months after disaster struck, and the impacts are expected to be long-term. The U.S. Travel Association suggests that Puerto Rico could see a 50 per cent drop in tourism and as a result, 36,600 fewer jobs. According to Vox, estimates for the cost of Hurricane Harvey’s damage to the U.S. range from $65 billion to as high as $190 billion, while the damage caused by Irma in the U.S. is estimated to range from $50 billion to $100 billion. As for the Caribbean, the BBC reported that Irma’s destruction throughout the region totals more than $10 billion, while after Maria, CNN reported the damage is likely $30 billion to $60 billion.

**EARTHQUAKES**

Two massive earthquakes caused damage and death in different areas of Mexico this past September, rocking the country only one week apart. The first was an 8.1-magnitude earthquake, striking off the country’s southern coast and claiming 90 lives, according to CNN. Seven days later, a 7.1-magnitude earthquake killed an estimated 216 people throughout Mexico City and in the states of Puebla and Morelos, toppling buildings and leaving many more people trapped. At the same time, two separate 6.1 magnitude earthquakes were detected, one off the coast of Japan and another in New Zealand. Just over a month later, a massive earthquake shook a region near the Iran-Iraq border, killing at least 400 people and leaving more than 6,000 injured. Enough already, right? If only it were that simple; according to reports by The Guardian and Time, scientists predict that there will be an upsurge in earthquakes come 2018 because of “a periodic slowing of the Earth’s rotation.”

**TERRORISM & GUN VIOLENCE**

Another major U.S. tourism hub was shaken by a mass shooting, when concert goers in Las Vegas became victim to terrorism on Oct. 1, leaving 58 dead and many more injured. The attack goes down as the largest mass shooting in history, surpassing the 49 killed just over a year prior at a nightclub in Orlando. What’s more is that “vehicle ramming” attacks rocked London multiple times, as well as Stockholm, Barcelona and New York. Even Edmonton couldn’t escape the carnage, registering a ramming and stabbing incident in September, while a more devastating attack was reportedly foiled. There was also the horrific bomb attack at a pop concert in Manchester in May that killed nearly two dozen people and injured over 100 more, while a bomb attack outside a hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia in October cost more than 300 people their lives.

**WILDFIRES**

A state of emergency was declared in British Columbia this past July, lasting through to mid-September, as wildfires resulted in evacuations, and destroyed homes and businesses. In October, Northern California was devastated as well, with wildfires burning throughout Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino, Butte, and Solano counties. According to the Associated Press, these fires destroyed at least 8,900 structures and killed 42 people. In Napa and Sonoma, most tasting rooms have re-opened and vintners expect the 2017 vintage to be excellent, as 90 per cent of the year’s grapes were harvested before the fires struck.

**HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

Just as more travellers set their sights on Myanmar as a bucket list destination, the country has come under global scrutiny for the persecution of Rohingya Muslims, which has forced more than 600,000 people to flee their home for Bangladesh. Some call it ethnic cleansing, others say genocide; regardless, little action has been taken by the Myanmar government or international community to intervene, while those who have left the country are now facing a humanitarian crisis, with little food and water to sustain them.

**THE “TRUMP SLUMP”**

When Donald Trump was elected president in November 2016 and subsequently took office in January 2017, many international travellers swore-off travel to the U.S. For some, it’s a decision based on principles, but for others, it comes down to feeling safe in the destinations which they choose to visit. “New figures released by the U.S. Department of Commerce show a drop in international visitors to the United States by close to 700,000 in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the previous year,“ reported The New York Times in September. That’s a lot of beds without heads. But here’s the thing; apparently Canadian travellers aren’t deterred by politics or the dollar discrepancy, as arrivals to our southern neighbour are up about 4.5 per cent as of June 2017 compared to the year prior.
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CANADA STRONG

It seems like the hype around Canada 150 has had some impact on tourism arrivals to our True North, with overnight stays from Destination Canada’s international markets up four per cent as of August 2017 (most recent statistics as of print date). A strong U.S. performance in August provided momentum to improve growth over the first eight months of 2017 to three per cent, year-over-year. Among Destination Canada’s overseas markets (up 10 per cent), Latin-America and Asia-Pacific led the way year-to-date with double-digit gains, up 42 and 12 per cent respectively, followed by more subdued growth from DC Europe (up two per cent). Outbound numbers are also strong, with Canada listed among the UNWTO’s top 10 fastest growing outbound markets (based on expenditure) at a seven per cent increase.

SEAWORLD SHIFT

SeaWorld Entertainment is shifting the focus of its orca programs to educational observational opportunities, in response to years of criticism from the public and organizations such as PETA and the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The commitment to education, marine science research and the rescue of marine animals are the central piece to growth within the organization and its research and the rescue of marine animals are the central piece to growth within the organization and its growth. Existing show pools and viewing areas have been redesigned into a more naturalistic setting. This transformation debuted in the San Diego park in May of 2017, to be followed by the parks in San Antonio and Orlando.

CURBING OVER-TOURISM

“Over-tourism” is a relatively new term, but one we can expect to hear more of as the population of the world increases, as does the number of people travelling. In the first nine months of 2017, 901 million international overnight arrivals have put tourism on course for an all-time record — something that has already occurred with 300 million arrivals in July and August alone. That’s a seven per cent increase over 2016, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Yet, despite such seemingly positive results, the UNWTO has cast a cautionary tone, noting that unmanaged growth is both dangerous and unsustainable. The keys to dealing with over-tourism, suggests the UNWTO, are community engagement, communication, congestion management, adequate planning and product diversification. As one example of how the travel industry is responding, Intrepid Travel has introduced a new range of European tours in alternative destinations. The new tours will include seeing the Northern Lights in Finland, instead of Iceland; discovering the last primeval forest in Europe on a Belarus, Romania and Ukraine tour; visiting Moldova, a country that hosts 121,000 visitors annually (the same number Croatia sees every three days). These come in direct response to the tour company noting a 50 per cent increase in Canadian bookings to Europe in 2017 and the industry-wide discussion on over-tourism, highlighting at-risk destinations suffering from overcrowding, like Barcelona, Venice and Dubrovnik.

YEAR OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

In December 2016, the United Nations declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, providing a platform to explore and highlight tourism’s potential “to help transform our world into a place of prosperity and well-being for all.” Throughout the past 12 months, destinations and suppliers leveraged the opportunity to not only create conversation around sustainability and what it means, but to also make positive change in their operations. For example, on a recent trip to Zambia, UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai declared South Luangwa National Park as a park committed to sustainable tourism — the first to be declared as such in the world. The Travel Corporation was a Diamond Sponsor of the initiative, a commitment that Chairman Brett Tollman said “aligned with the goals of our not-for-profit TreadRight Foundation, and further empowers TTC, as a global travel company, to help shepherd the sector towards a wholly sustainable future.”

HEALTHY TRAVEL ADVISORS

Travel advisors appear to be in high demand — and increasingly so — with organizations like Virtuoso and Ensemble reporting double-digit growth in year-over-year sales, coming in at 12 and 15 per cent respectively, while Transat Distribution Canada is celebrating “its best year in recent history.” Part of the trend can be linked to a broadening interest in the services of a travel advisor, but growth might also be attributed to a shift in focus to higher-ticket packages. Cruise holidays and on-site bookings were particularly successful this year, according to Virtuoso. Who says you can’t make good money when working in travel?
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