

New products

Trafalgar sets sail on the Danube

Manta Resort's brand-new
underwater suite

Premier's diverse portfolio

New Mauritius hotel
for Constance

Tulia – more affordable
safaris in East Africa



New products

Keeping up with new products and supplier developments is important for the retail trade. It helps travel advisers identify fresh opportunities to better meet their clients' evolving needs. *Travel News* delves into some new products.

Manta Resort unveils new underwater suite

THE Manta Resort on Pemba Island, north of Zanzibar, has unveiled its third-generation underwater room.

The concept was originally pioneered by Swedish design-builder Genberg Underwater Hotels and arrived on Tanzania's shores in 2013.

It's a three-level floating suite moored in a marine protected area off the island. Located roughly 250m offshore, it features a submerged bedroom with almost 360-degree glass framing the reef, a sea-level lounge and deck, as well as an open rooftop deck, offering sun by day and stargazing at night.



Matt and Carina Saus

The re-engineered structure draws on twelve years of operational experience, with improvements across design, materials and systems to enhance durability, safety and guest comfort.

It's not only the design that has evolved but the

operational refinement that has come with over a decade of real-world use in a marine environment.

The process

Part of that operational detail is how the structure interacts with its environment.

First, the resort retired the original 2013 structure, stripping it of all harmful materials before sinking it in the marine protected area, where it now serves a second life as a coral structure and dive site.

The submerging process of the new suite involves towing the structure, typically at high tide so that it can pass over the corals without touching them, then anchoring it to a patch of sand within the reef known as a 'blue hole', where it becomes a permanently moored floating structure.

Guest journey

Demand for the underwater room is high, says Manta. It tends to be the first to be booked out for any given date, with bookers advised to reserve six months to a year in advance. August to October is the high season. The underwater suite is a sought-after choice among honeymooners.

A typical stay at the resort is three nights, with one night spent in the Underwater Room. After lunch, guests are transferred to the floating suite by boat, where they have time to snorkel, take in the views and enjoy sundowners before spending the night above the reef.

The following morning, guests enjoy breakfast,



The room has near-360-degree underwater views. Photo: The Manta Resort

served on the room's sea-level deck, before returning to the mainland by boat. Throughout their stay in the Underwater Room, they retain their land-based accommodation, allowing them to leave their belongings behind rather than relocate them, before spending the remainder of their stay on land.

Manta says the Pemba resort is not considered an impulse buy but rather something travellers plan for, particularly given the limited availability of its single Underwater Room and its price point.

The property is on the northern tip of Pemba Island, and guests fly in on a small aircraft before transferring by road to the resort and then by boat to the room.

It is designed for guests who are comfortable around water, enjoy going barefoot and appreciate back-to-nature luxury rather than a polished five-star hotel experience. The

remoteness and exclusivity are a big part of the appeal, says the company.

"In practice, the product works best when an agent takes time to match it to the right client and build it into a wider itinerary," says Manta.

Safari add-on

Manta says more than three-quarters of its business at the Pemba resort comes via travel partners, many of them safari operators. The resort is very often positioned as the final stop on a safari circuit, where guests finish their game viewing on the mainland and come to unwind by the ocean.

This combination of safari and coastal relaxation is typically arranged through operators such as &Beyond, Nomad Tanzania or Asilia Africa.

Smaller footprint

"A very small footprint can still create meaningful

impact. By staying in the Underwater Room, guests contribute directly to marine conservation," says **Matt Saus**, CEO and Co-Founder of The Manta Resort.

The resort was established in 2006 by Matthew and **Carina Saus**. Hailing from Zimbabwe and Sweden respectively, the couple relocated to Tanzania and built the resort into what it is today. Formerly a backpackers' lodge for divers, it is now considered one of the country's flagship beach properties.

Saus adds: "Once operating costs are covered, 100% of the remaining proceeds are channelled into the management of Pemba Channel Conservation Area through Blue Alliance Marine Protected Areas. The funds support community engagement, scientific research, monitoring and effective protection of these waters."

Tshukudu Bush Lodge reopens

LEGACY Hotels & Resorts has reopened Tshukudu Bush Lodge in the Pilanesberg. The July 1 reopening followed an extensive redevelopment programme that introduces new guest facilities and accommodation.

The lodge now boasts a revamped arrival area, new shared dining and relaxation spaces, a swimming pool, bar and under-cover seating area.

During the initial reopening phase, running up to July 20, accommodation will be limited to five suites, but from July 20, all 12 suites will be fully operational including six newly renovated suites and two brand-new suites.

This phase will also see the opening of the Legacy Balance Tshukudu Spa as well as a new private access road to the lodge.

"The reopening of

Tshukudu Bush Lodge marks an exciting new chapter for one of the Pilanesberg's most distinctive safari experiences. This redevelopment has been carefully designed to enhance every aspect of the guest journey, from the arrival experience and shared spaces to the introduction of new luxury suites and wellness facilities," Sales Director, **Hara Jackson**, told *Travel News*.



The newly-redeveloped Tshukudu Bush Lodge in the Pilanesberg. Image: Legacy Hotels & Resorts

Constance Moofushi: A Turquoise Dream



In the heart of the Ari Atoll in the Maldives, with its myriad shades of blue, Constance Moofushi emerges as a true jewel. As well as offering a romantic sanctuary, this all-inclusive hotel, situated on the private island of Moofushi, is a vibrant hub of thrilling activities and unforgettable experiences, where every moment is a celebration.

Imagine sublime white sandy beaches encircling a verdant heart of coconut palms, a crystal-clear lagoon whose turquoise hues seem endless, warm smiles, and the sensation of having arrived in a wondrously exotic paradise... Welcome to Constance Moofushi!

The Indian Ocean is teeming with secrets, readily shared with those who pause to discover them. From underwater spectacles at the edge of vibrant, teeming coral reefs to the ballets of manta rays and whale sharks in the open sea... It's not just a haven for diving enthusiasts, but also a spectacular stage for the migration of manta rays. Swim with these majestic creatures, a rare privilege directly accessible from the hotel.

On its surface, Dhonis, the charming traditional boats of the Maldives, meander through its gentle waves, carrying travelers eager to soak in its serene beauty and colorful palette. Whether it's a morning visit to a local village, an afternoon fishing excursion, or a sunset cruise, each moment is a celebration of life and the island's natural beauty.

Back on dry land, the atmosphere at Moofushi is truly unique, with a decor reminiscent of an eco-chic Robinson Crusoe adventure. Whether perched on stilts or nestled on the beach, the 110 villas of Constance Moofushi invite a harmonious fusion with nature. This feeling is amplified by luxurious and authentic architecture, eco-friendly thatched roofs, where seabirds gather daily to fish at the water's edge.



Here, life is a return to the essentials. The two restaurants, Manta and Alizée, offer an exceptional culinary experience, where local and global flavors converse, crafted by eminent chefs. A magnificent wine cellar with over 12,000 bottles and passionate sommeliers also reflect a deep love for the world of wine. Barefoot on the beach for a sandbank wine tasting, or under the stars for an open-air cinema experience with family... Could there be a more magical setting to create unforgettable memories?



The hotel fully embraces its slogan “No shoes, no news!”, inviting guests to disconnect and immerse themselves in a world of relaxation and pleasure. Beach yoga sessions, observing local birds, stargazing into brilliantly clear celestial constellations... The present moment is all that matters, an invitation to rejuvenate. With its bio-marine treatments inspired by Maldivian aromas, Constance Spa, located on a wooden jetty stretching into the azure ocean, epitomizes this philosophy where nature and well-being are intimately intertwined.

Every opportunity or activity becomes a new way to live and absorb the essence of this wonderful island, brimming with a joyful emotions. The atmosphere is not just magical, it is electrifying! Beach parties with bare feet in the sand, dancing to the catchy beats of DJs, evenings filled with music, animation, and exhilarating activities... Constance Moofushi pulses with the enthusiasm of its guests!

For over ten years, Constance Moofushi has also been committed to preserving this Eden. In addition to its efforts against plastic pollution and its involvement in the coral conservation project with Reefscapers, the hotel offers educational programs, including the opportunity for guests to help build coral structures with marine biologists. These initiatives have earned Constance Moofushi the Green Globe Platinum certification, an internationally recognized ecotourism label. The perfect retreat for weaving memories filled with emotions and serenity.



www.constancehotels.com

CONSTANCE
MOOFUSHI
MALDIVES

Diverse properties from Premier

PREMIER Hotels & Resorts continues to invest in its national portfolio, boosting its appeal across both leisure and business travel markets and creating greater value for South African travel agents packaging domestic travel.

With a footprint that spans key city, coastal, resort and conferencing destinations, Premier Hotels & Resorts is focused on

enhancing the full guest journey through practical upgrades, improved service delivery and more relevant travel experiences, **Wayne Neath**, Commercial Director at Premier Hotels & Resorts tells *Travel News*.

Recent and ongoing developments across the group's portfolio include continued product enhancements at selected properties, refreshed positioning for the business and leisure segments and the roll-out of new value-led campaign structures designed to make travel simpler, more flexible and rewarding.

"Developments across the portfolio are designed to support ease of booking, improved turnaround times, flexible conferencing options and stronger on-property service delivery," says Neath.



Wayne Neath

Choice

For the business travel and MICE market, the group prioritises convenience, connectivity and conferencing capability.

Properties such as Premier Hotel OR Tambo, Premier Hotel Umhlanga, Premier Hotel East London, Premier Hotel Midrand, Premier Hotel Pretoria, Premier Hotel Roodevalley

and Premier Hotel East London International Convention Centre offer strong solutions for corporate stays, meetings, events and group travel.

For leisure travellers, the resort and coastal properties remain central to the group's domestic leisure strategy.

Premier Resort Sani Pass, Premier Resort Cutty Sark, Premier Resort Knysna – The Moorings, Premier Hotel The Winkler, Premier Hotel Regent, Premier Hotel The Richards and Premier Hotel Umhlanga offer agents a range of leisure experiences, from mountain escapes and beach holidays to family breaks, weddings, honeymoons and soft adventure itineraries.

Agents can optimise these developments by packaging



Premier Hotel Roodevalley on the banks of the Pienaars River offers a tranquil stay for both business and leisure travellers. Photo: Premier Hotels & Resorts

properties as part of multi-destination journeys, business-and-leisure extensions, conferencing with accommodation, family holidays, group travel and special-interest itineraries.

"Whether the client is travelling for business, conferencing, leisure, sport, family travel or a combined leisure itinerary, our portfolio allows agents to package with confidence," says Neath.

Trade support

Premier Hotels & Resorts says it supports the trade through clear rate structures, product updates,

sales engagement, training, marketing collateral and tailored solutions for both corporate and leisure clients.

"Our focus is on ensuring that Premier Hotels & Resorts remains top of mind for agents looking for reliable, well-located and value-driven accommodation across South Africa."

The group remains committed to working closely with the South African travel trade to deliver dependable accommodation, meaningful experiences and commercially sound travel solutions across the country, says Neath.

Constance expands and restores

CONSTANCE Hotels & Resorts has already made waves in 2026, with new developments in Mauritius, consolidated environmental certifications across its lifestyle portfolio, and ongoing marine conservation work in the Maldives.

Operating across Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives, Madagascar and Rodrigues, the group trades under Constance Hotels & Resorts, while its lifestyle brand C Resorts delivers an energetic and experience-led expression of island living through two destinations: C Mauritius Palmar and C Rodrigues Mourouk.

A major milestone this year has been the launch of Constance Le Chaland, which has officially joined the portfolio following its management transition in February under an agreement with Currimjee Group and IKO (Mauritius) Hotel Ltd.

Located on Mauritius's south-east coast, the

property is positioned within the group's luxury tier as a nature-immersive sanctuary aligned with Constance's 'True by Nature' philosophy.

The 170-room resort features eight restaurants and bars, an infinity pool, a 25m pool and extensive wellness facilities such as seven treatment spaces, including single rooms, couples' rooms and outdoor pavilions.

Ocean stewardship

Constance Moofushi in the Maldives has advanced its ocean stewardship programme through a partnership with Mars Sustainable Solutions, implementing the MARS Assisted Reef Restoration System (MARRS) in the South Ari Atoll.

In this initiative, Constance Moofushi restored more than 100sqm of coral reef and outplanted over 1 500 coral fragments using the innovative MARRS method, a science-based approach

dedicated to regenerating the world's coral reefs and enhancing biodiversity beneath the waves.

Using 100 Reef Stars, coral-sand-coated hexagonal structures fitted with attached coral fragments, the resort's trained marine team installed and interconnected the Reef Stars to help restore the ecological function of Moofushi's house reef. This work nurtures a vibrant marine ecosystem and helps to secure its health and resilience for generations to come.

Credentials

Within Mauritius and Rodrigues, the group's lifestyle brand has strengthened its sustainability credentials through dual certification achievements.

In February, C Rodrigues Mourouk received its first Green Globe certification, while C Mauritius Palmar secured



Constance Le Chaland, the newest addition to the Constance Hotels & Resorts portfolio in Mauritius. Photo: Constance Hotels & Resorts

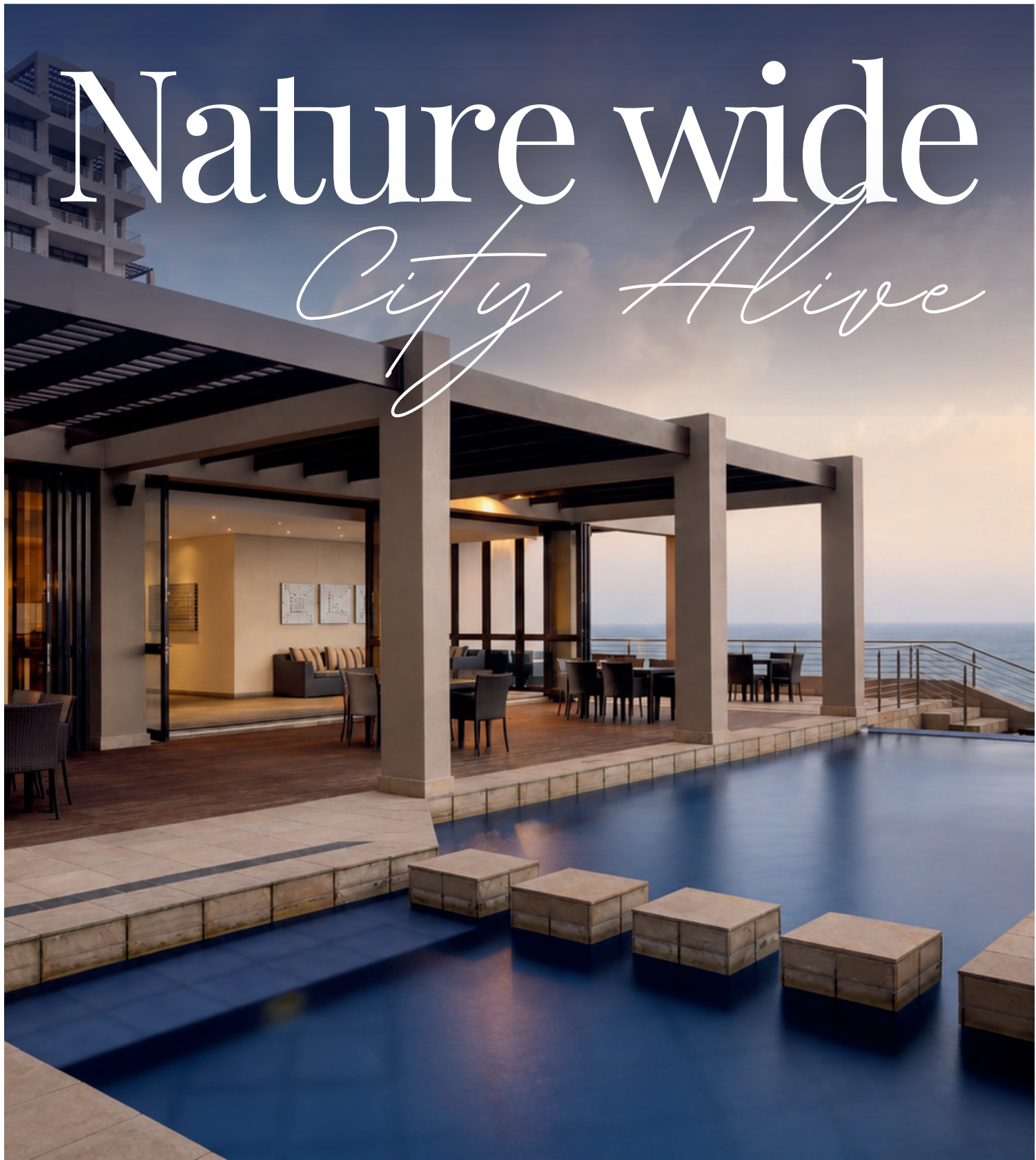
re-certification, confirming ongoing compliance with internationally recognised sustainability standards.

Green Globe is one of the hospitality industry's most respected sustainability certifications, recognising tourism businesses that demonstrate measurable progress across environmental management, social responsibility, cultural preservation and sustainable operations.

The certification process involves rigorous independent audits

assessing performance in areas such as energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, responsible sourcing, community engagement and environmental protection.

The certification of C Rodrigues Mourouk marks an important step forward for the hotel and for Rodrigues itself, a destination where environmental balance is particularly fragile and where tourism plays a key role in supporting sustainable development.



GP : OR Tambo | Sandton | Midrand | Pretoria
WC : Cape Town | George | Knysna | **EC** : East London
KZN : Drakensberg | Durban | Richards Bay | Umhlanga | Scottburgh | Port Edward
FS : Bloemfontein | Anta Boga | **LP** : Thohoyandou | **MP** : White River

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Tulia – more affordable safaris in East Africa

TOURVEST Accommodation has expanded its East Africa footprint with the launch of its new safari brand, Tulia, responding to growing demand for mid-market safaris.

As a part of its launch, the brand acquired three established properties in Uganda: Tulia Buhoma in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Tulia Ishasha in Queen Elizabeth National Park and Tulia Murchison near Murchison Falls.

These properties help to strengthen its East African portfolio, joining Tulia Amboseli Safari Camp in Kenya's Amboseli National Park.

The brand's core focus is on delivering prime wildlife locations, comfortable accommodation and expert-guided safaris at more accessible price points.

Tulia positions itself in the space between budget safari operations and ultra-luxury lodges, offering a carefully curated experience without unnecessary cost.

East Africa demand

Demand in South Africa for East Africa is well established, says **James Haigh**, Head of Sales and Marketing at Tulia. He highlights Kilimanjaro, Ngorongoro and the Serengeti in Tanzania, as well as the Maasai Mara and Amboseli in Kenya, as especially popular among South African safari-goers.

Park fees have historically hindered travel from countries such as South Africa. While these fees are essential for conservation funding, they have placed East African destinations beyond the reach of many regional travellers.

Value

Tulia's approach focuses on delivering strong value without unnecessary cost.

"What guests are not paying for are many of the costly luxury elements that can significantly increase room rates without materially improving the safari experience, such as excessive room sizes, elaborate

infrastructure or unnecessary luxury amenities," says Haigh.

Instead, Tulia prioritises guest-facing elements:

- Comfortable accommodation
- Good food and beverage experiences
- Personalised services
- Expert-led wildlife experiences
- Small-scale, intimate properties
- Environmental and community engagement
- Authentic local character rather than international hotel standardisation

Tulia's smaller scale allows for personalised service and a sense of exclusivity while reducing overheads associated with larger luxury properties. Investment is directed towards guest-facing elements that have the greatest impact on guest satisfaction.

"Ultimately, our goal is not to be the cheapest product in the market, but rather to offer the strongest value proposition for guests."

Trade relationships

Existing trade relationships

have made the product's entry into the South African market smoother.

"For many years, Tulia's sister brand, Lemala, has successfully welcomed international guests to East Africa, many of whom have travelled through longstanding partnerships with South African tour operators and travel advisers," says Haigh.

He adds that these relationships have helped them enhance their understanding of what resonates most strongly with the South African market.

The new brand provides an opportunity for Tourvest Accommodation to bring the standards and the value of its international product offering to meet the needs of regional travellers.

"South African guests can now enjoy the same authentic connection to nature, conservation and local communities that international visitors have experienced through Lemala, but at a price point and an offering tailored to their needs."



The chalets at Tulia Buhoma in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. Photo: Tulia



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- RALDA WATSON, ENVOYAGE

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Trafalgar launches river cruises

Travel News’s David Marsh was invited on a press trip on the Danube to experience first hand the new Trafalgar River Cruises. This is what he found...

FOR decades Trafalgar has been one of the easiest travel brands for agents to sell. Clients recognise the name, understand the guided holiday concept and, importantly, know what they are getting. That combination of familiarity, trust and consistency has helped make Trafalgar one of the world’s most successful escorted touring companies. Now the company is betting that same formula can work on Europe’s rivers. In March Trafalgar officially entered the river cruise market, launching dedicated sailings on the Rhine and Danube and opening a new sales opportunity for agents looking to tap into one of Europe’s most resilient travel segments. For South African travel consultants, the launch is significant. River cruising continues to attract affluent travellers seeking a more immersive alternative to large ocean ships, while Trafalgar brings something different to the sector: almost 80 years of expertise in guided travel and local experiences.

Brand extension Rather than creating a traditional cruise product, Trafalgar has adapted many of the features that have made its escorted tours successful. The company’s signature Be My Guest experiences, where travellers meet local hosts for authentic meals and cultural encounters, have been incorporated into every itinerary. So too have its Make Travel Matter experiences, which focus on responsible tourism and meaningful engagement with local communities. “Trafalgar has spent nearly eight decades perfecting the art of guided travel on land,” said **Melissa DaSilva**, Deputy CEO and Chief Sales Officer of TTC Tour Brands, at the launch of the first vessel in Amsterdam. According to Trafalgar’s own research, the move makes commercial sense. The company’s research shows 17% of past tour guests have already experienced a river cruise, while 74% expressed interest in taking one. The early signs show that 35% of



Trafalgar Reverie sails the Danube, passing through the Wachau region famous for its vineyards and wine. Photo: Austria Tourism

2026 bookings come from existing Trafalgar guests and 65% from travellers new to the brand.

Two rivers The launch fleet comprises two purpose-designed river vessels, each carrying just 128 guests. Trafalgar Verity operates on the Rhine between Basel and Amsterdam. The ship’s Art Deco-inspired interiors, marble bathrooms and intimate atmosphere are designed to appeal to travellers looking for a boutique-style experience rather than a large-scale cruise. The Best of the Rhine and Amsterdam itinerary includes Strasbourg, Cologne and the UNESCO-listed Middle Rhine Gorge.

Trafalgar Reverie sails the Danube between Passau and Budapest. Highlights include Vienna, Bratislava and the scenic Danube Valley. The cruises combined local dining experiences with destination-focused excursions. Both ships are intentionally small, allowing guests to enjoy a more personal experience while docking in the heart of many of Europe’s most popular river cities.

Need to know One of the strongest selling points is the simplicity of the product. Every cabin across the fleet faces the river. Fares include accommodation, daily guided sightseeing, onboard entertainment, most meals, wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, WiFi, gratuities for shipboard staff and Trafalgar’s signature local experiences. The onboard experience is familiar to existing Trafalgar clients. Alongside the ship’s crew, guests travel with an experience director

and experience manager, helping maintain the guided holiday feel that has become synonymous with the brand. For agents already selling Trafalgar land journeys, the river cruise proposition is therefore less about learning an entirely new product category and more about offering clients another way to experience Europe.

Looking ahead The launch of Trafalgar Verity and Trafalgar Reverie is only the beginning. In 2027, a third vessel, Trafalgar Harmonie will debut on the Seine, introducing Paris and Normandy itineraries. The company has also confirmed plans for further expansion through to 2030.

Trade sales River cruising can sometimes feel intimidating for agents unfamiliar with the sector. Different cabin categories, inclusions and cruise lines often require specialist

knowledge. Trafalgar River Cruises’ arrival may help lower that barrier. The Trafalgar brand enjoys strong recognition among South African travellers and agents, and the river cruise product is backed by the resources of TTC Tour Brands and its established sales support infrastructure. The company reports that 80% of current bookings are made through travel advisers, reflecting the importance it places on the trade channel. Agents can access dedicated selling tools through TTC’s Travel Agent Portal, complete Trafalgar Masterclass training programmes and, on selected departures, qualify for heavily discounted travel adviser rates to experience the product first-hand. In a crowded river cruise market, that familiarity could prove to be Trafalgar’s greatest advantage – and a valuable new selling opportunity for the South African trade.



Bucket-list street food. Bratwurst in Salzburg, a paid extra tour option with Trafalgar. Photo: David Marsh



Trafalgar’s Be My Guest experience on the Danube, where passengers are hosted to a lunch by the family who own the oldest wine estate in Austria, with roots going back 2 000 years. Photo: David Marsh

A guide to selling two iconic river cruise brands

WITH Trafalgar entering the river cruise market, South African agents now have two very different river cruise products from the same family to sell.

Both Trafalgar River Cruises and Uniworld Boutique River Cruises are part of The Travel Corporation (TTC), the global travel group behind brands including Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Contiki and Cost saver. While they share the same parent company and a commitment to quality, they target distinctly different travellers.

The clearest distinction between the two brands is their pricing and what is included in the fare.

For departures on the Rhine between Basel and Amsterdam in September 2026, Trafalgar fares start from around R70 000 per person. Comparable Uniworld departures on the same river are priced from around R108 000pp, with some departures exceeding R140 000pp.

Darsha Soobramoney, TTC SA Marketing Manager, told *Travel News* that Uniworld was ideal for clients celebrating milestone anniversaries, luxury travellers, repeat ocean cruisers moving to river cruising and guests who expect an all-inclusive, premium experience.



Trafalgar River Cruises benefits from sister company Uniworld's 33 years of experience of European river cruising. Photo: David Marsh

Trafalgar is for first-time river cruisers, guided touring clients, value-conscious travellers, couples who prioritise destinations over luxury and clients who prefer to pay for only the extras they actually use.

Interestingly, Trafalgar's first two vessels, *Trafalgar Verity* and *Trafalgar Reverie*, are former Uniworld ships that have been extensively refurbished and repositioned. This means Trafalgar inherits one of Uniworld's strengths:

cabin sizes that are larger than those found on many competing river cruise lines. So why the price difference?

Luxury seekers

Uniworld positions itself as a floating luxury boutique hotel. The fare includes unlimited premium beverages, gratuities, excursions, fine dining, WiFi, fitness programmes and 24-hour room service. Suite guests enjoy butler service and additional privileges.

The experience is highly personalised, supported by a crew-to-guest ratio of roughly one crew member for every 2,4 guests (compared with Trafalgar's one to 3,3 guests). Think white-glove service, lavish décor and an all-inclusive experience where guests seldom need to open their wallets once on board. Uniworld's ships are individually designed with opulent interiors, antiques and boutique-hotel styling.

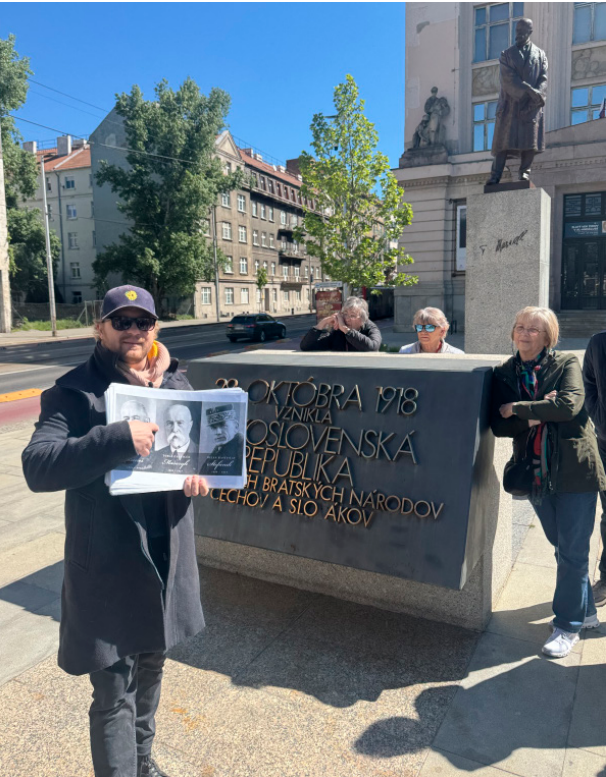
Value seekers

Trafalgar takes a different approach. The onboard atmosphere encourages guests to mingle, with communal experiences and a relaxed environment that mirrors the brand's guided touring style. In terms of design, Trafalgar has a more contemporary, understated look, placing emphasis on the destinations and shared experiences rather than lavish surroundings. For South African travellers who drink moderately Trafalgar's pricing can

represent better overall value than paying upfront for premium drinks they may never have. Wine, beer, soft drinks, tea and coffee are included with lunch and dinner, while premium beverages are charged separately. During *Travel News's* sailing on *Trafalgar Reverie*, cocktails were priced at around €12 (R225), a gin and tonic approximately €13 (R244), premium whiskies such as Johnnie Walker Black around €9 (R169), wine and beer from €6,50 (R122) and soft drinks from €4 (R75). Even after adding a few

drinks, however, clients will still spend significantly less than they would on an equivalent luxury river cruise. Like Uniworld, Trafalgar includes guided shore excursions, but not Uniworld's ultra-all-inclusive luxury proposition. The arrival of Trafalgar River Cruises does not replace Uniworld. Instead, it gives agents a second river cruise proposition within the TTC portfolio, allowing them to match clients to either a premium-value or luxury experience depending on budget and travel style.

Trafalgar	Uniworld
Premium value	Luxury boutique
Relaxed atmosphere	White-glove service
Drinks with meals	Unlimited premium beverages
Experience-led	Service-led
Pay only for extras you use	Virtually everything included
Ideal for first-time river cruisers	Ideal for luxury travellers



Getting historical local insights into life behind the Iron Curtain in Bratislava on the Danube cruise – an included Make Travel Matter experience. Photo: David Marsh



Reverie guests may choose an excursion in Bratislava to a local brewery for a tasting of the famous, traditional Czech-style lagers, dark beers and local ales.

Payment problems solved

SINCE launching in 2022, Glyde has seen good growth within the South African travel industry. Built exclusively for B2B use and developed in partnership with Mastercard, Glyde aims to solve payment complexities that travel agencies often face, **Paulina Klotzbücher**, CEO of Glyde, told *Travel News*.

New solutions

Within the next three months, Glyde has two exciting launches coming up, according to Klotzbücher. One is the launch of the Mastercard Wholesale Program Card, a first in Africa, which will offer high rebates for hotel payments, backed by secure and transparent processes and reporting. Glyde is also introducing a new expense card app. This app will allow tour operators, employees and agents to pay expenses using their Apple, Samsung and Google wallets, all managed through an easy-to-use app. “Every transaction links back to the B2B bank, giving CFOs and business owners clear oversight and control to issue, cancel, load, manage and approve payments with real time visibility,” said Klotzbücher. In addition to these two launches, Glyde will soon go live with Amadeus,

enabling card issuance directly within the GDS. Klotzbücher said agencies wanting to be part of the first batch to go live could contact support@glydepay.io or speak to their Amadeus account manager. **Leap** “Glyde’s biggest leap yet is its expansion from card issuing into full banking services,” said Klotzbücher. Clients can open their own dedicated accounts, supported by what Glyde described as the cheapest real-time

clearing (RTC) payments in the market today. “Glyde can now replace your main banking services delivering the most cost-effective and innovative solutions available.” **Innovation** “At the heart of Glyde’s offering is its programmable virtual card platform, designed around the realities of the travel trade,” said Klotzbücher. The platform allows for programmable automation, cards to be funded and offloaded automatically based on trigger events, granular controls such as activation dates, authorisation value limits and swipe limits. Merchant-level controls allow agencies to determine not just how a card is used but also who can swipe it. Agencies can issue an unlimited number of cards curated for their specific use. According to Klotzbücher, a common problem travel agents face is that the cardholder is sometimes not the person actually using the card. Glyde’s customisable OTP routing means one-time PINs can be directed to the right recipient, eliminating failed payments and frantic phone calls. Cards can be issued manually, in batches or via API. Glyde has built an ecosystem of technology partners



Paulina Klotzbücher

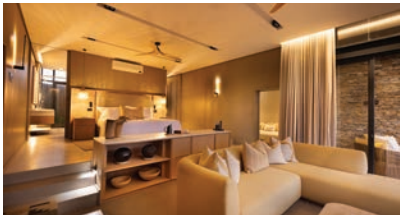
including Papertrail and, most recently, a full integration with Traveltt for easy issuance within the platform. “As a registered financial services provider and accountable institution, Glyde works in support of the SA Reserve Bank’s vision of creating a safe, transparent and effective evolution of the banking space for the entire B2B ecosystem, but especially for the travel industry that sits at the heart of Glyde’s focus and passion,” said Klotzbücher.



Set within one of Southern Africa’s most revered wilderness landscapes, a quiet riverfront retreat gently stands on the edge of the Kruger.

Along the banks of the iconic Sabie River, the River Suites unfold within the Elephant Point Private Reserve, where free-roaming wildlife corridors allow nature to move freely and unfiltered.

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Envoyage sharpens the tools of ITCs

THE South African travel adviser operates in one of the most demanding client environments in the world. Travellers expect seamless, sophisticated experiences and the tools advisers use to deliver those experiences need to match that expectation – which is precisely the gap Envoyage has been working to close.

Two significant additions to the Envoyage technology ecosystem are now available to South African members and together they represent a meaningful shift in what independent advisers can offer without sacrificing the flexibility that makes the independent model worth choosing.

New marketplace
Fragmentation has long been the silent productivity killer for independent agents. Too many

supplier sites, too many systems, too much time spent searching, cross-referencing and comparing – time that belongs with clients, not browsers.

Product Showroom is Envoyage's answer to that problem. Accessible through the Envoyage Home platform, it's a dynamic, curated marketplace that consolidates the network's preferred supplier deals, exclusive offers and recommended products into a single, live feed – validated in direct partnership with Envoyage's preferred suppliers.

Members can search, filter and compare products through a consistent page structure; surface high-value opportunities and limited-time offers; and match the right product to the right client with

confidence.

The guesswork is gone and the decision-making is faster, which means the commercial returns are stronger – because the focus shifts to products that genuinely deliver.

"Without preferred partners, an independent model has no foundation," says **Chantal Gouws**, GM of Envoyage South Africa. Product Showroom is where that foundation is immediately usable every day and in every booking.

Travefy
Alongside Product Showroom, Envoyage has launched a global partnership with Travefy, now available to South African members as the network's preferred itinerary and proposal platform.

Travefy is a modern,



Chantal Gouws

mobile-first tool that allows advisers to build polished, branded itineraries and proposals through a drag-and-drop builder, with destination content, AI-assisted writing and smart import from PDFs and emails. Clients receive a branded companion app with real-time flight notifications,

in-app messaging and all documentation organised day by day.

The result is a client experience that rivals what far larger operations can produce – delivered by an independent adviser under their own brand.

"Travefy gives our members a more professional way to present itineraries and stay connected with clients throughout the journey, without adding complexity to their workflow," says Gouws.

Both platforms are accessible via single sign-on through Home, keeping tools centralised and logins to a minimum.

"For South African advisers looking to sharpen their client offering and compete with confidence, the infrastructure is here." ■

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