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# TRAVEL WEEKLY

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INSIDER

IN THE HOT SEAT

## Andy Stuart Norwegian Cruise Line

Andy Stuart, vice president of sales for Norwegian Cruise Line, is the point person in Norwegian's 3-year-old Partners First trade campaign. Stuart has been shepherding the consolidation of various online platforms into a single portal called Norwegian Central, which recently debuted. He spoke with cruise editor Tom Siegheast about its development.

**Q: Why put together this portal?**

**A:** To simplify things for travel partners. Before the portal, there were lots of different parts to deal with. The other thing is, there were a lot of tools that travel agents simply weren't finding. It's one thing to say, OK, it's hard work to get there. But we were investing in all these things that some travel partners were just never getting to. The idea is, you give them one place to go for everything, they'll get to the things they want to do, but they'll also find things we've developed that they didn't hear about.



**Q: What was the most controversial thing about developing this new portal?**

**A:** I suppose the fact that it has taken so long, it was overdue. It's probably a tool that should have been developed earlier. When we developed Marketing Headquarters, or even NCL U, the fact that we developed an individual path for it was misguided. We should have built one URL, and then built all of the tools under the umbrella.

**Q: What components were brought into the portal?**

**A:** The three big things are BookNCL.com, which is anything related to the transaction; Marketing Headquarters, which provides the ability to access marketing tools; and NCL University, which is the training, certification and engagement tool. Previously you'd go a different path to get to each of the three.

**Q: How long have you been working on it?**

**A:** A long time. In earnest, probably about 18 months. We had a pretty big exercise with travel partners. They really helped design it in a way that would be user-friendly, and they persuaded us to delay it, because they felt it wasn't going to be best in class the first time we showed it to them.

**Q: What's an example of how this makes**

**"They'll get to the things they want to do, but they'll also find things we've developed that they didn't hear about."**

things easier for the agent? **A:** Once a travel partner has visited NCL U, I hope after they've completed, say, a module on Alaska, the natural thinking is to say, "Now how do I take that out to a customer?" Previously the travel agent would have to come out of NCL U, and think, "Where do I go now?" On the portal, there's a home page, they'll go back to that and then straight to Marketing Headquarters, and can pick Alaska, and then build a whole promotion on Alaska.

with us online, because in the end we think it's better for them, for the customer and for us. But we've got to make sure we've invested in the right tools, the right technology, that leaves somebody coming away from that transaction saying, "Wow, that was great, I want to do more business with these guys because they have great technology."

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TRAVEL CONFIDENTIAL

**W**e've always been told, "If it's too loud, you're too old," but perhaps South Beach/Miami Beach is evolving with its clientele as the club-hoppers of the early '90s approach middle age. Not one, not two, but three consecutive Collins Avenue hoteliers we spoke with told us their properties were for those who wanted a respite from the loud and late-night club scene closely associated with the destination.

First, a representative from the Metropolitan by Como pointed out that the property was close enough to the action for those who wanted to party but guests would be able to "retreat" to the hotel and fall asleep without being kept awake by a pounding bass line.

As we toured the Zen-like Setai, it was described as "an oasis of tranquility. We don't position ourselves as trendy per se because trends go in and out."

And during a hardhat tour of the under-construction Thompson Miami, the soundproof triple-pane glazing was pointed out, and it was noted that its bar "is a lounge, not a nightclub. It's for people who want energy but also be able to talk and be heard and not have people filling on them."

**Bermuda's got some star power involved in a pending hotel development, TC hears.**

Actor Michael Douglas is part-owner of the old Ariel Sands cottage colony in Devonshire Parish on the island's south shore, which opened in 1954 but closed on Jan. 1, 2008.

Hilton was rumored to be interested a few years ago, but the deal fell through. The current island buzz is that Douglas

is pumping money and muscle into rebuilding the property along the same lines as the old. Figure pastel colors, marlin at the bar and rockers parties in the evening.

**Grace Bay Resorts is making waves in Turks and Caicos.** Last year, it took an ownership shake and management of the West Bay Clubs, and later this year it will debut the Residences, a beachfront, three-villa microresort, in addition to its flagship property Grace Bay Club.

TC hears the company is not stopping there. Rumors are that there are two resorts on Turks that are soon to fall under the Grace Bay Resorts umbrella.



**Is Trinidad-based Caribbean Airlines looking to expand its routes within the Caribbean?** TC picked up some scuttlebutt during Caribbean Week in New York.

But the recently named CEO Michael DiIorio is moving to shake things up a bit with more of a focus on the regional Caribbean market.

Makes sense. The carrier, after all, is named Caribbean Airlines, but it does not serve that many islands in the region at present, concentrating instead on its routes to Florida, New York, Toronto and London.

FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES

The Melbourne, Australia-based Intrepid Group has named Cynsidi Zeck president of the company's U.S. operations.

Zeck most recently served as vice president of global marketing and as the U.S. managing director for Toronto-based G Adventures. Prior to that, she was vice president of global marketing for Collette.

She replaces Matt Berna, who has moved into the role of president of Peak Destination Management Cos. in North America, a sister company to Intrepid Group that develops vacation packages throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Capella Marigot Bay, St. Lucia, formerly Discovery at Marigot Bay, named Yvette Lemoine director of global accounts and incentives as the resort gears up for its July 1 opening following a



multimillion-dollar renovation. Lemoine previously served as director of national accounts at the Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast, Calif., and prior to that was with L'Auberge Del Mar Resort & Spa in Del Mar, Calif.

**Susie Quitevis Fujikawa** is the new director of sales at Hawaiian interisland carrier Island Air. Fujikawa joins Island from LivingSocial, where she was a senior account executive in the Escapes Division.

Her past experience also includes positions with Travelocity, Starwood Hotels and Resorts and the Waikiki Parc Hotel.

STUART: YOUR STORIES AND PHOTOS: GERRY BOATHEAN, TRAVEL WEEKLY; DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR: @BOATHEAN@TRAVELWEEKLY.COM