

# Venue International Professionals, Inc.

## 2016 Summer Edition Travel and Tourism Newsletter©

Travel and Tourism News and Information That You Can Benefit From June-August 2016

### MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Greetings to our business associates and clients! Welcome to the 2016 summer edition of Venue International Professionals, Inc.'s Quarterly Newsletter. The purpose of our quarterly newsletter is to provide news and information about the various types of tours that we offer for 2016 and 2017 as well as insightful advice and news about the travel and tourism industry.

Have you ever been to Africa, wanted to meet the people, experience the sights and sounds, let us help you with your decision as you "Come To Africa and Find Yourself". Venue International Professionals, Inc. (VIP), since 1997, has uniquely positioned itself to provide highly customized marketing, sales and technical assistance services in the travel and tourism industry for the Continent of Africa based on its proven track record and expertise.

In closing, we would be pleased to discuss with you how we can meet your specific needs for travel and tourism in the United States, the Caribbean, Africa or wherever your wandering dreams might take you.

*Helen Broadus*

### About Venue International Professionals, Inc. (VIP)

*Venue International Professionals, Inc. (VIP) is your full service travel and tourism consultant. VIP specializes in customized and escorted tours for business and/or leisure to the Continent of Africa. The principals of VIP, Helen Broadus (President) and David J. Saunders (Chief Executive Officer), together have more than thirty years of experience and expertise in the travel and tourism industry of Africa and have visited thirty African countries at least once over the past fifteen years. Specifically, VIP offers the following compliment of services for its clients:*

- *Personalized group tours from 7 days/6 nights up to 31 days/30 nights;*
- *Orientation sessions about African history, geography and culture;*
- *Affordable roundtrip airfare (direct from USA to Africa) with major airline carriers;*
- *Adventure, cultural and eco-tourism destination tour programs in more than thirty-five African countries;*
- *Advice on shopping options for unique African jewelry, textiles and handicrafts;*
- *Invitations to special events such as African Arts and Music Festivals and African Naming Ceremonies;*
- *Coordination of fantastic tourism venues and optional village/eco-tourism excursions; and*
- *Providing relaxed customized sightseeing tours with personal professional guides.*

Let VIP arrange your next individual or group tour to Africa!

For more information about VIP or to inquire about travel and tourism excursions to the African Continent, please contact VIP at Telephone Number: (301) 856-9188; Facsimile Number (301) 868-2836; and E-Mail Address at [vipinc@erols.com](mailto:vipinc@erols.com). Also, please check out our VIP website: [www.venuetravel.net](http://www.venuetravel.net).

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Message From The Publisher
- 1** About Venue International Professionals, Inc.
- 2** Why Choose VIP for Your Next Vacation to Africa?
- 2** Six Very Good Reasons to Use a Travel and Tourism Agent/Consultant When Visiting Africa
- 4** Useful Tips for Traveling to the African Continent
- 6** Zika Virus: What Do You Need To Know!
- 8** Join VIP for a Journey to the Motherland in 2017!



**INCORPORATED**

**PO BOX 1872, CLINTON, MARYLAND 20735**

**TEL: 301 856-9188 → EMAIL: vipinc@erols.com → FAX: 301 868-2218**

## **Why Choose Venue International Professionals, Inc. for Your Visit to Africa? by Helen Broadus**

Africa is must-visit destination. While there are many travel and tourism agencies that can arrange your travel documents and itinerary we honestly believe that given the opportunity no one can do it better than **Venue International Professionals, Inc.**

- We treat you like a VIP because you are VIPs to us. We book your flights, hotel accommodations and tour options for your travel to the African continent.
- Adventures in Africa are encouraged but we also see to it that you are safe during your trip. There are options for travel insurance when you book with us.
- We strive to offer affordable Travel Packages up to the "top of the line" Tour Arrangements. We offer a wide range of African tours that can be customized to suit those tourists preferring budget travel up to tourists who demand high quality luxury.
- For group tours larger than ten participants we generally will accompany the group if requested.
- We know the tourism destination and work closely with our colleagues in each African country to ensure quality of service and value for your money.
- Lastly, we work with each client from inception of the tour program, through actual conduct of the tour program, through follow-up after the tour has been concluded. In other words, we are constantly striving to ensure that your expectations are met to the best of our team's collective abilities.

## **SIX VERY GOOD REASONS TO CONSIDER USING A TRAVEL AGENT/CONSULTANT by Jessica Montevago from ASTA SmartBrief**

*Jessica Montevago identifies six key reasons why travel and tourism agents/consultants are priceless, from their guidance and knowledge to their money-saving ideas and high-level customer service. Millennials and travelers disenchanted with online travel agencies are prone to use a travel and tourism agent/consultant for their travel and tourism needs as outlined below:*

**1. Travel and tourism agents/consultants offer guidance.** It's a scary world out there, and even seasoned travelers are a little nervous these days. Whether the destination they are considering is facing the Zika virus or the threat of terrorism, travelers are more inclined to talk through their concerns, and get unbiased information, from a

live travel and tourism agent/consultant. “The tips we can give them, the advice, those things you just can’t get booking online,” says travel professional Diane Bower, at CruzDiva Travel in Huntersville, NC.

**2. Travel and tourism agents/consultants give you more for your money.** Agents have access to deals and promotions travelers do not. From cruise lines to hotels to tours, suppliers know their top travel and tourism agents/consultants and offer them upgrades, bonuses, special offers and early entrance tickets that make their customers feel special, and can save them an average of \$452.00 per trip.

**3. Travelers are frustrated with online travel agencies.** Consumers are wising up. Online travel agencies (OTAs) often advertise one price, and then tack on fees and other hidden charges, or restrictions and blackout dates in the fine print. And there is just too much information out there to sort through. And doing the research is often overwhelming. Among travelers who regularly seek information from an OTA when planning a vacation, only 13% typically book their reservations on OTA sites, according to MMGY Global’s 2015 Portrait of American Travelers, compared to 36% in 2014.

**4. Better customer service.** While OTAs have call centers to assist customers with basic site navigation, they offer little further support. Travel and tourism agents/consultants help during the booking process and stay with you to make sure all goes right. And when there is a problem, they are there to intervene—whether it’s a supplier who doesn’t deliver or an emergency that makes them cancel the whole trip. Shawn Fitzpatrick, Manager of Marlin Travel in Ontario, says suppliers work with his agency on a case-by-case basis, and often “help us out when needed.” And with a travel and tourism agent/consultant, “you have someone advocating for you,” says Stefanie DiBernardo, travel advisor at Contrino Travel, Inc. in Staten Island, NY.

**5. Deep knowledge of the destination, and personal understanding of your interests.** Travel and tourism agents/consultants often specialize in niche markets, so they can offer even more insight into a specific destination or segment of travel, like LGBT or destination weddings. And they spend a little time getting to know the customer, so they can make recommendations tailored to what you want to do. “It’s almost like your best friend is booking a trip for you,” says DiBernardo.

**6. Travel and tourism agents/consultants’ customer base is skewing toward Millennials.** The percentage of travelers under the age of thirty-five who prefer to book their vacations through a travel and tourism agent/consultant increased 50% between 2014 and 2015, reports MMGY Global. They don’t have time to wade through all the options, and they understand there is only one chance to make a vacation perfect. Just as they hire an expert to do their taxes or maintain their garden, they want a knowledgeable professional to help them make this most important decision.

## **OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF SELLING AFRICA** **by Dorine Reinstein Travel Weekly June 24, 2016**

Last month, Cape Town announced that it is lobbying with several U.S.-based carriers to launch a direct flight between Miami and Cape Town. According to industry players, such a direct flight could prove to be a “massive boost” for travel from the U.S. provided it is priced right. Yet even though connectivity from the United States has improved dramatically over the last few years, Africa can be a very hard sell for U.S. travel agents due to common misconceptions and miseducation.

Onne Vegter, CEO of Wild Wings Safaris, says: “The biggest misconception is that Africa is overpriced and unsafe as a destination. This is not helped by the recent travel advisory with regards to possible terrorist attacks during Ramadan.” The U.S. government this month said it had received information that terrorist groups were planning to carry out attacks during the Ramadan month against places where U.S. citizens congregate in shopping

areas in South Africa. That statement singled out upmarket shopping areas and malls in the commercial hubs of Johannesburg and Cape Town, widely regarded as South Africa's tourism capital, as the main target areas.

"The recent travel advisory has definitely impacted travel from the U.S. We have fielded several calls from concerned clients, wanting to know if they should postpone their trip," says Vegter. Also Craig van Rooyen, Tour d'Afrique, says that all travel advisories affect business, as people do cancel or postpone their trips. He adds: "The other issue is that it also puts on hold people wanting to confirm their bookings. We often have no idea what the travel advisory is all about, [so] it's very difficult to provide an informed response to all of their questions." Jim Holden, President of Holden Safaris, says the media tends to focus on world disasters, of which Africa has its fair share.

As a result, much of what the U.S. market reads about Africa is negative. "The different tourism boards, other than South Africa, don't have the necessary budgets and resources to adequately portray the positive stories out of Africa," he said. The onus, according to Holden, falls on the private sector to broadcast the positive stories. He says: "The recent Ebola crisis is a good example of this situation. The mass media whipped up hysteria that Ebola was everywhere in Africa and the tourism boards were mostly silent on the subject. The private sector puts out press releases through the trade industry, along with initiatives to both put the situation into perspective as well as ways to reassure prospective travelers that they would be safe, [but] to no avail: Travelers still tend to avoid Africa in droves.

The biggest challenge currently in the United States market, according to van Rooyen, is to train the retail trade. "There are over 65,000 travel agents in business and thus with a limited budget only a limited number of travel agents are exposed to Africa. There are a number of tour operators providing the knowledge to the travel agents that do a very good job, but they, too, are limited in their reach," he says. Van Rooyen said that many still believe Africa is a challenging destination to sell due to the distance from the United States and because they don't understand the infrastructure there and the world-class services that the continent's hotels and lodges provide.

David Marek, President of Ker and Downey Safaris, agrees that the travel and tourism agents in North America can't be experts in everything. He says: "Historically, travel and tourism agents sell cruises or European vacations. Cruises can be sold relatively easy; you pick the ship, the cabin, the date and go. The experience is then controlled by the cruise line. However, a safari is a lot more complicated. The variety of ecosystems, animals, birds, seasons and cultural experiences makes it very challenging. For example, say a client is fascinated by one animal in particular, a gerenuk. Does the travel and tourism agent know where to send the client to find them?"

U.S. travel and tourism agents wanting to sell Africa should turn to tour operators that specialize on African destinations for advice, said Holden. He explained that tour operators can help travel agents understand the unique attractions of Africa. "I don't think it's reasonable to expect and travel and tourism agent, who may only sell Africa once every two years, to learn about the many varied and different ways to visit Africa. That is why the knowledgeable tour operator to Africa will always have a role to play in helping to promote Africa in the North American market.

## **USEFUL TIPS FOR TRAVELING TO AFRICA by David J. Saunders**

Yes! Africa is absolutely amazing. Open skies, undisturbed deserts, fields of wild animals that turn every amateur and pro photographer click-crazy. Despite these exciting things you can do while you're in Africa, you need to be aware of things to prepare that will make your trip safe and enjoyable.

- Back-up copies of your travel documents. Your passport, your itinerary and identification cards should have back-up copies both in print

- Back-up copies of your travel documents. Your passport, your itinerary and identification cards should have back-up copies both in print and in digital form. You can keep printed copies in your luggage at the hotel while you carry the original ones during your trip. You also need to keep digital or scanned versions of such documents in your email. If you lose your original documents and your luggage during unfortunate circumstances, you can always log-in to your email and retrieve a copy.
- Know where your country's embassy is located. Take note of the address of the embassy when you visit a particular country. This ensures that you'll always have somewhere to go during emergency situations.
- Travel light. As much as possible, only bring basic necessities with you.
- Medication while on vacation. Even when you're away from home, you can still get sick especially with extreme temperature changes. Bring a first aid kit and a set of medications/remedies for common illnesses like colds, cough, etc.
- Keep hydrated. Make sure to have water to carry around during your trip. A tumbler of H2O should always be handy.
- Insect repellent will be your best friend. When you go on a safari tour, put on some insect repelling lotion or carry mild insect spray with you. Those tiny bites could destroy your mood for the trip big time.

### **Useful Things to Pack for an African Safari**

- A hat with a wide brim, sunglasses and plenty of sunscreen
- Mosquito / insect repellent & suitable prophylactics (consult your doctor)
- Stout, comfortable walking shoes & socks, as well as casual shoes for in camp
- Neutral (green, brown) clothing (including lightweight long-sleeved shirts & trousers to protect against mosquitoes), a jacket or fleece for night drives and winter.
- Binoculars, Camera and lots of film, batteries
- Torch / flashlight and spare batteries (there are not many re-charging facilities available)
- Toiletries
- If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation from the dust.
- Note book and pen
- A good bird book (not essential) such as Newman's Birds of Southern Africa is nice to help identify the various bird species
- A good book of mammals of Southern Africa (not essential)
- A small first-aid kit is always useful:-
  - Anthisan cream for insect bites
  - Anti-histamine tablets for allergic reaction to grasses etc
  - Plasters for small nicks and cuts
  - Anti-Septic ointment
  - Pain Killers

# ZIKA VIRUS: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The recent Zika virus outbreak in parts of the Caribbean, Central America, and South America is serious and Venue International Professionals, Inc. (VIP) is monitoring it closely. As always, your health and well-being are one of our top priorities wherever you travel abroad.

**TRAVEL ALERT:** If you are pregnant (in any trimester) or planning to become pregnant: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends waiting to travel to any affected by the Zika virus. If you or your partner must travel to one of these areas:

- Contact your doctor's office for advice before you travel.
- Avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellent on all exposed skin and wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Abstain from unprotected sex or use condoms.
- When you return home, please contact your doctor's office for the most current information.

**What is the Zika Virus?** The Zika Virus is a disease carried by certain mosquitos.

- The virus is most dangerous for unborn children of pregnant women.
- If a pregnant women gets the virus, it may cause birth defects in her baby, including a smaller than normal head.

**How does the Zika virus spread?**

- A pregnant woman who has the virus can pass it on to her unborn baby.
- Although very rare, cases of the virus spreading through blood transfusion and sexual contact have also been reported.

**What are the symptoms?**

- Most people with the Zika virus don't have symptoms or know they're sick. However, some people may show these symptoms from three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito: fever, skin rash, muscle and joint pain, and red eyes.

**What areas have been affected?**

The current outbreak is most active in southern Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. But this is changing quickly. For the latest updates, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [cdc.gov/zika](http://cdc.gov/zika).

## Hotel Firms Strive to Offer Familiar Brands to U.S. Travelers in Africa by Dorine Reinstein Travel Weekly June 24, 2016

Major international hotel brands have opened properties in Africa, as they say they see huge potential on the continent. This is good news for U.S. travelers, who tour operators report tend to favor familiar brands when booking. "If you look at many of the bookings that the USA market makes online, I would say USA brand preference is a big consideration," said Craige van Rooyen, Tour d'Afrique. He explained that many have preferred status or hotel points with a specific chain that can be redeemed to either purchase or upgrade their rooms, and that does play a role in their decision-making when booking a hotel.

Onne Vegter, CEO Wild Wings Safaris, said that for certain U.S. travelers, brand recognition is hugely important, and they prefer to stay with trusted brands that they know. He is quick to add, however, that local brands are doing a splendid job of positioning themselves as trusted brands through building a strong online reputation, not least via the power of social media and review sites such as TripAdvisor.

One of the brands that is accelerating its growth strategy in Africa is Carlson Rezidor. In 2016, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group opened five Radisson Blu properties on the continent: Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi Upper Hill in Kenya (271 rooms); Radisson Blu Hotel, Marrakech Carre Eden in Morocco (198 rooms); Radisson Blu Residence with 187 luxury hotel apartments in Maputo, Mozambique, the group's first residence concept in Africa; the Radisson Blu Hotel Abidjan Airport Ivory Coast (261 rooms), West Africa's tallest hotel; and Radisson Blu Hotel 2 Fevrier in Lome, Togo (320 rooms).

Wolfgang M. Neumann, president and CEO of Rezidor Hotel Group, said: "Africa is Rezidor's biggest growth market. Our group's total portfolio comprises 69 hotels in 28 countries, with over 15,000 rooms in operation or under development. Radisson Blu leads the way with more hotel rooms under development than any of the other with 85-plus hotel brands active in Africa today. Our ambition is to be the leading player in the travel and tourism sector across the continent."

Carlson Rezidor has also announced plans for its first Quorvus Collection in Africa, a five-star, 244-room, luxury Emerald Grand Hotel & Spa in Lagos, Nigeria. The group also plans a new Radisson Blu Hotel Harare in Zimbabwe with 245 rooms; a Radisson Blu Hotel in Durban Umhlanga, South Africa, with 207 rooms; and a Park Inn by Radisson in Quatre Bornes, Mauritius.

Marriott International is strengthening its brand in Africa, too, as the group has rebranded the Protea Hotels division that it acquired in 2014. The rebranding to Protea Hotels by Marriott also includes an updated and modernized logo. "Consumer research conducted in South Africa in 2015 shows that the endorsement of Protea Hotels by a large, international brand company such as Marriott would elevate brand perception and preference, further supporting the strategic move to endorse the brand," said Alex Kyriakidis, President and Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Marriott International.

## **SEE TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART AT SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART**

African art rarely thrives in Western art museums. It generally hovers between the beautiful or intriguing object and the ethnographic specimen. Exhibitions are also relatively infrequent, so audiences have little opportunity to truly experience and enjoy. Fortunately, magnificent African art collections can be viewed and enjoyed at the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) located as a part of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Here one can participate in a guided tour or simply enjoy at your own pace many African artifacts and art pieces that evoke powerful visual and emotional messages to the viewer. Experienced docents can offer information and insight on the original significance or connection to African history, culture and society. For your information, Helen Broadus (President of Venue International Professionals, Inc.) is a Docent with the National Museum of African Art and she is available to assist you with organizing tours of African art exhibitions and lecture series. Please feel free to contact her at [vipinc@erols.com](mailto:vipinc@erols.com) if you are interested in specific tours.





**JOIN VENUE INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS, INC. ON A JOURNEY TO THE MOTHERLAND:  
SENEGAL AND GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA™ MAY 19-28, 2017 FOR ONLY \$4,399.00\***

**Make Plans To Join Venue International Professionals, Inc. (VIP) for a Fantastic Journey to the Motherland in Senegal and The Gambia, West Africa!** Highlights of Your West Africa Tour include: Welcome Dinner; City Tours of Dakar, the Capital of Senegal and Banjul, the Capital City of The Gambia; visit to Goree Island to see the “Door of No Return”; visit to the African Renaissance Monument; Pilgrimage to Juffureh, the ancestral homeland of Kunta, made famous by the epic story of ROOTS; Tour of the Pink Lake; and a Farewell Dinner with Authentic Senegalese naming Ceremony. Also enjoy plenty of shopping opportunities for textile, handicrafts, jewelry and much more!

**Your Tour of Senegal and The Gambia Includes:** Roundtrip International Airfare on South African Airways, Transportation in air-conditioned vehicles, Nine Nights Hotel Accommodations with breakfast included, Various Sightseeing Tours as published in the Day-To-Day Itinerary, Welcome and Farewell Dinners with VIP souvenir gift.

Don't Miss This Fantastic Opportunity to Experience Senegal and The Gambia in West Africa! Seats are Very Limited so Reserve Your Seat Today! Please call (301) 856-9188 to confirm your reservation. Detach and Mail your \$500.00 Deposit Today - to Venue International Professionals, Inc. Post Office Box 1872, Clinton, Maryland 20735. NOTE: Please refer to VIP's "Journey to the Motherland Tour 2017™" on all correspondence. Please Call (301) 856-9188 for a Detailed Itinerary.

**✂ Please cut along this line** -----

Enclosed is my deposit/payment in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for #\_\_\_ of people for the Senegal and The Gambia, West Africa Tour scheduled for May 19-28, 2017. Please Note: 50% of the enclosed deposit is non-refundable. FINAL PAYMENT DUE by March 31, 2017. Single Supplement of \$300.00 is available upon request. Please check [ ] for double occupancy or please check [ ] for single supplement. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to "Journey to the Motherland as you visit Senegal and The Gambia, West Africa with Venue International Professionals, Inc.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

My Roommate's Name is: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Prices & Dates Are Subject to Change.**