

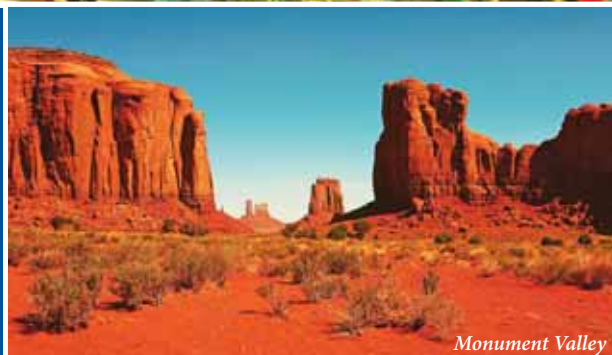
Growth, growth and more growth as top value *drives* North America sales



New York



Calgary Stampede



Monument Valley

Travel agents should benefit from continuing sales growth to the US and Canada, with lower prices and improved air access all contributing to increasing demand.

Images courtesy of Globus

By Jenny Burns

NORTH America continues to be flavour of the month for Australian travellers thanks to a strong Australian dollar, increased air access and Australians love of travel. All major wholesalers are reporting increases in traffic to both the United States and Canada, as are tourism officials.

According to Canadian Tourism Commission GSA managing director, Donna Campbell, visitor arrivals for the first half of the year were up 5.7 per cent.

"I would anticipate this consistent growth to the end of the year and we are likely to be around six to eight per cent up on 2010 visitation," she said.

Campbell said FIT travel remained consistent and was considered a strong potential area of growth – especially from Australians seeking outdoor exploration, authentic experiences and unique accommodation. Cuisine and culture were other areas of potential amongst these travellers.

Latest arrival figures from the US Government show Australian arrival figures were up 25 per cent in 2010 to 904,000. In 2011, Australian travel

to the US is continuing to grow at double-digit levels. According to the latest year-to-date statistics, January-May, Australian travel to the US has increased a further 25 per cent.

Creative Holidays is one of many wholesalers to report extremely strong sales of North American product, a trend evident for the past few years.

"Due to the increase in demand for the destination in 2011 and on the back of fantastic sales in 2010, our current program includes 21 per cent more product, providing more options for agents and clients alike than ever before," said Creative Holidays managing director Paul McGrath.

"The strength of the Aussie dollar is currently a huge motivator for many people looking to travel. North America is a very attractive and value for money destination at present and many Aussies are keen to take advantage of the favourable exchange rate."

McGrath said the traditional hotspots of Las Vegas and New York continued to do well, while Universal Studios Orlando was also continuing to strengthen due to the opening of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

According to Momento Travel managing director, Kylee Kay, bookings of rail products out of

Australia to the United States are still growing by over 50 per cent.

"Growth out of Canada is not as strong, but there's still double digit growth and it still represents brilliant value," she said.

The strength of the dollar, the number of Australians travelling to North America and the popularity of rail travel were amongst the major reasons for the growth. "We expect this trend to continue, especially given Amtrak fares in 2012 are 10 to 15 per cent lower than this year," Kay said.

Insight Vacations managing director Lorraine Sharp said the popularity of the United States and Canada was at an all-time high with Australian travellers. "While interest has always been there, the huge increase in demand has occurred over the past 12 months thanks to the meteoric rise of the Australian dollar," she said.

"In addition, the increased air capacity has ensured there really has never been a better time for Australians to travel to North America."

To meet the growing demand for the region, Insight's 2012 USA and Canada collection signals its largest offering to date.

Globus family of brands marketing manager Australasia, Christian

Schweitzer, said North America was a clear hot-spot for coach touring and sales were continuing at exceptional rates. "The market is definitely aware of the dollar's strength and is responding to the savings we've passed on in our pricing."

Bookings for 2012 Globus and Cosmos North American tours were up more than 100 per cent up on this time last year.

"The market is responding especially well to various combinations of coach tours, rail journeys and Alaskan cruises offered in the north-west," he said. "The west coasts of both Canada and the USA have always performed well, especially the mountain itineraries and those that involve the great national parks. In the current environment they've become only stronger."

"The east coast is growing too, especially New York, Washington and Philadelphia. We're finding that repeat travellers are returning to see areas like Montreal, Quebec City and Toronto."

Trafalgar managing director Matthew Cameron-Smith said the company had seen a notable increase in demand for guided holidays in both the US and Canada, with "digit growth in forward bookings".

Napa Valley, San Francisco win agent's approval



San Francisco (images credit: Globus)

A FAMILIARISATION to the United States with Globus has seen Harvey World Travel (Belmont Central) owner/manager Kimberley Day become quite passionate about the Napa Valley and San Francisco.

"San Francisco is quite a new city after the fires in recent decades which I didn't expect," Kimberley explained.

"The colourful townhouses scattered across the city are delightful and the people are very relaxed and very passionate about their city. Globus sightseeing included all the main sights and when we had free time our tour leader

was there to help us with suggestions such as experiencing a local diner, a jazz show or shopping expeditions.

"The tour also included the Napa Valley which I thought was wonderful. I now tell my clients they must take the Napa Valley train ride which is a unique experience."

While the west coast remains the most popular area of the USA with her clients, Kimberley is also noting the East Coast including New York and Washington, is attracting more and more interest.

"Families are still attracted to Disneyland and Universal however we have seen an increase in fly/cruise holidays for retired couples too," she said.

The other increases have been younger single travellers joining Contiki tours.

Kimberley said as a result of the strength of the Australian dollar more travellers than ever before were interested in the United States.

"The cost of living is also very inexpensive in the States, shopping is also dramatically cheaper and due to the size of the country there's always somewhere in USA which will have the weather conditions you want," she said.



Trafalgar adds leisure options for US, Canada

TRAFALGAR has introduced its At Leisure Program to its 2012 America and Canada program.

"Following the resounding success of our inaugural 15 At Leisure itineraries in Europe and Britain this year we saw an opportunity to roll-out this innovative program across our North America portfolio for 2012," explained managing director Matthew Cameron-Smith.

"At Leisure is a truly unique product in the market which invites a more relaxed-pace of travel for independently-minded people and is a fantastic way to explore the many wonders of America and Canada.

"These carefully-crafted itineraries offer the best of both worlds with travellers benefitting from the expert local knowledge of Trafalgar travel directors while also having plenty of time for personal exploration with no less than two to three days and up to six, in each destination, and no starts before 9am."



Boston

Globus price cuts average 16%

GLOBUS has announced price cuts averaging 16 per cent across its entire North American tour program for 2012. Itineraries range from four to 16 days and include special tours timed with events like the Calgary Stampede and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, or seasonal spectacles like the polar bears of northern Canada and the winter wonderland of Yellowstone National Park.

Tours include the popular 13-day "Eastern US and Canada Discovery", from Boston to New York, priced

from \$2639 per person (twin share), a reduction of \$480 on 2011 prices.

New additional savings available with the Globus 2012 USA and Canada program include early booking deadlines. Savings of 10 per cent on tours booked 12 months or more ahead are on offer.

Past Globus travellers who join the Journeys Club can save five per cent on their next Globus tour while a five per cent discount is also offered on bookings for five to seven people in addition to existing savings available for groups of eight or more.



INSIGHT VACATIONS

The Art of Touring in Style



INSIGHT GIVES YOU MORE!

Just a sampling of what your passengers will experience on an Insight Vacations Premium & Luxury escorted journey to North America

- ✓ Breathtaking rail journeys on the Rocky Mountaineer train & VIA Rail's 'The Canadian'
- ✓ Enjoy scenic coastlines whilst cruising with fellow passengers on Holland America Line
- ✓ Stay inside the heart of North America's most renowned National Parks
- ✓ Even **MORE** Hotel Upgrades including the Four Seasons Resort in Whistler
- ✓ **MORE** Authentic Dining Experiences
- ✓ **MORE** Included Premium Highlights
- ✓ **MORE** Personal Insights



NEW for 2012 – Insight Vacations introduces Insight Gold; Luxury tours & cruises to Mexico, Canada, Southern USA, Cities of the East Coast & Hawaii

Visit our new website to check out our full range of itineraries & to book online.

www.insightvacations.com

Insight adds new itineraries to US collection

INSIGHT Vacations new 2012 USA and Canada collection features 19 comprehensive holidays across the east and west coasts of the United States and Canada, Alaska, Mexico and for the first time ever, Hawaii.

Insight Vacations managing director Lorraine Sharp said the brochure signalled the company's largest offerings to date in North America and was aimed at meeting ever growing demand for the region.

The brochure includes three new itineraries the 10 or 12-day "Hawaiian Dreams"; the eight-day "Mexico's Great Colonial Cities" and the eight or 11-day "Southern Elegance".

"These three itineraries form part of the new Gold series, a range of five itineraries that offer a deluxe experience minus the price tag," Sharp said.

"Each of these great value tours features luxury hotels in outstanding locations, delicious dining experiences (often at restaurants with renowned chefs) plus smaller groups, more leisurely days and an experienced tour director who acts as a personal concierge, attending to all guest's needs."

Maid of the Mist, Niagara Falls



Also included in Insight's Gold program is the popular 13 or 20-day "Grand Canadian Rockies and Alaska Cruise". Sharp said the tour now featured some of America's best hotel properties plus GoldLeaf service on the Rocky Mountaineer train and for the optional cruise portion, an elegant experience on the luxurious Holland America Line.

Sharp said the brochure was also more accommodating for solo

travellers than ever before.

"Using a singles-friendly symbol 'ST', we have designated a number of tour dates across the program to identify travel dates that might suit solo travellers," she said.

"Not only does this guarantee those travelling by themselves won't be hit with single room supplements, it also means they are more likely to meet like-minded people as potential travelling companions."



Motorhome demand increases for DriveAway Holidays

DRIVEAWAY Holidays is reporting strong demand for motorhomes in the US and Canada.

"Demand for motorhomes has increased dramatically, so much so we have had to double our motorhome department to service the enquiry we've had over the past six to nine months," said DriveAway Holidays national industry sales manager Nathan Baber.

"We are expecting this trend to continue." DriveAway is currently offering long term rental discounts with Apollo.

For rentals of 14 nights or more there's three per cent off the rental rate, 21 plus nights five per cent and 35 plus nights 10 per cent. Deals are valid for collections up to March 31, 2012.

Enjoy **The COAST STARLIGHT®**
Los Angeles-San Francisco-Seattle
with connections to **Vancouver**

**For more information & assistance from an Amtrak Specialist
 call 1300 300 713 or +612 9213 0000,
 email amtrak@momentotravel.com.au or
 visit www.amtrak.railagent.com**

AMTRAK®
 USA Passenger Rail

'Convenient, hassle-free' Amtrak releases 2012 fares

MOMENTO Travel has released details of 2012 Amtrak fares. Momento Travel managing director Kylee Kay said as a result of the strong Australian dollar the fares represented savings of 10 to 15 per cent on rates released this time last year.

An eight segment pass which can be used in 15 days costs \$397, 12 segments in 30 days \$591 and 18 segments in 45 days \$764. A segment equates to one train trip.

Children aged 2-15 years inclusive are charged 50 per cent of the applicable adult fare. Additional fares must be paid for sleepers.

Prices are valid all year and there

are no peak or blackout dates.

In other news, Amtrak is projecting that for the first time ever its annual ridership will exceed 30 million passengers and in the process set a new all-time record when the current fiscal year ends on September 30.

"We are having a very strong year because people around the country are choosing the convenience, efficiency and hassle-free environment of Amtrak to meet their travel needs," said president and CEO Joe Boardman.

Amtrak is basing its projection of more than 30 million passengers on strong June ridership numbers and expected ticket sales for July, August and September. June 2011 was the best June on record with more than 2.6 million passengers for the month and marked 20 consecutive months



of year-over-year ridership growth, a streak that began in November 2009.

Boardman said factors contributing to the continuing success of Amtrak included high gasoline prices,

continued growth in business travel on the high-speed Acela Express trains with free Wi-Fi service, the increased appeal and popularity of rail travel, and effective marketing campaigns.



Creative Holidays offer some exciting day tours in America. Get out of the cities and see more of the states!

- **Experience California's wine region** – on a wine tour out of San Francisco to the Napa Valley & Sonoma.
- **A slice of Brooklyn tour** – Takes you out of NYC and to famous movie locations, and landmarks of Brooklyn. Stop at Juniors Famous, a Brooklyn classic since 1950 for a slice of cheesecake.
- **From LA why not visit Mexico!** – Take a picturesque trip along the California Coast over the border to colourful, fascinating Tijuana, Mexico. Explore unique shops and restaurants.

Creative expands North America products

CREATIVE Holidays is reporting strong demand for its North America product.

This year the company expanded its product offering by 21 per cent and the variety and increases in its offerings together with the strong Australian dollar are seen to be major contributors to sales.

"This year we have offered extensive hotel options in San Diego, LA, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Santa Barbara, Yellowstone, New York, Miami,

Nashville, Montreal and Houston," said Creative managing director Paul McGrath.

"New overnight touring includes the 'Overnight Grand Canyon Getaway' and the two-night 'Yosemite and Tahoe Camping' package.

"Additionally, we updated our Alaska cruising options and added three exciting independent touring itineraries in Canada and also included the all-inclusive Apollo Motorhomes packages, giving clients

the option to hit the open highways and take an all-American road trip."

Packages that have proved extremely popular include the Las Vegas four-night 'Let it Ride' mini-stay. Priced from \$754 per person, twin share (land only), it includes four nights' accommodation, a full day-tour to the Grand Canyon where passengers can fly over Lake Mead, Hoover Dam, the Colorado River and Grand Canyon South Rim; a Macy's International Savings Card and return airport transfers.

Creative Holidays' six-night "I Love New York" mini-stay is also in

TICKET WALLETS bagTAGS

Visit our website gallery for more options...
www.swanplastics.com.au

LEATHER LOOK ZIPPED CORPORATE TICKET WALLETS
ORDERS 60+ WITH YOUR NAME AND LOGO

Please contact our friendly sales team:
sales@swanplastics.com.au
Free Call: 1800 339 603



Aria Resort and Casino, Las Vegas

great demand, priced from \$1385. It includes three-star accommodation, a seven-day New York pass which enables admission to more than 40 top attractions, a pass for the two-day hop on, hop off sightseeing tour and a helicopter tour over the Manhattan skyline. There's also the choice of either the "Manhattan Movie and TV" tour or the "Sex and the City" tour, a Macy's savings card and return airport transfers.



For more inspiration grab the USA & Canada brochure.

Packages can be booked via *i-CREATE* or by calling 131 222

