



# Travel Watcher

INSIDER NEWS & NOTES FROM YOUR BUSINESS TRAVEL AUTHORITY

APRIL-MAY 2011

## ✈ UP IN THE AIR

### What is Global Entry?

*Ever Wonder How All Those People Sail By You On Immigration Lines?*

Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection program that allows expedited clearance through immigration for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Participants may enter the United States by using automated kiosks located at select airports. For more information, contact your Protravel agent.

### Low Clouds

A system in development by aerospace giant Honeywell could make it possible for planes to land even when low clouds made it impossible to do so in the past.

If the technology wins regulatory approval, it could make a dent in weather-related delays throughout the aviation system. Called Enhanced Visual System/Synthetic Vision System (EVS/SVS), it is designed to give pilots the information they need to land safely even when there is cloud cover near ground. Current U.S. rules mandate that pilots decide at the 200-foot mark if their ground visibility is good enough to land or if they need to circle around for another try. With EVS/SVS, they would be able to hold off on making that decision until between 100 and 150 feet. The system could offer pilots a better sense of situational awareness, especially when flying into areas where the terrain is mountainous, like Aspen.

### Bag Drag

The Homeland Security Secretary told the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that luggage fees have prompted more passengers to hold onto their bags, which means more items for TSA officers to inspect at security checkpoints at a cost of about \$260 million annually, not to mention longer lines.

### Good News: No Shoes?

TSA will solicit a shoe scanning device system capable of "detecting threat objects concealed in footwear without requiring passenger to remove their footwear as they pass through a security checkpoint."

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

### Orbitz, Enterprise part ways

CNN—Enterprise Holdings and online travel portal Orbitz have ended their relationship.

Enterprise owns and operates nearly 1 million rental vehicles across its brands—Enterprise, Alamo and National. Effective April 1, all the listings from Enterprise's brands were pulled from Orbitz and sister site CheapTickets. Enterprise CEO said their "unacceptably high commission rates...greatly limits consumer choice and makes renting a car less affordable." The end of Orbitz's contract with Enterprise isn't the only negotiation with a major travel company to result in a parting of ways. Orbitz has been involved in a dispute with American Airlines. The carrier stopped offering its tickets on Orbitz late last year and has

also stopped listing on Expedia and Hotwire. Consumer analysts watching the airline distribution tug-of-war worry that taking away options for price comparison makes shopping for low air fares more difficult. And this Enterprise development might make finding yourself an online deal on a car just a little bit harder, too.

## THE SMART MONEY

### Business Travel Spending Up 7%

AP—Business travelers are forecast to spend \$245.8 billion this year, up nearly 7 percent from 2010, thanks to increasing corporate confidence, an industry trade group said Tuesday. "These are very heartening signs. Business travel spending is coming back at robust levels, indicating the shape of things to come—namely more travelers on the road, an improving economy and a positive environment for continued job growth," Michael W. McCormick, executive director of the Global Business Travel Association said in a statement.

The average business trip in 2010 cost \$533, according to the group. For 2011, it is expected to climb 3.4 percent to \$551. International travel is also growing faster than domestic trips.

### Marriott CEO Sees Business Travel Improving

Reuters—Marriott International's Chief Executive said business travel was improving, and that he wasn't sensing cancellations from unrest in the Middle East and

higher fuel prices. "We're trending up with group business. It's getting better," J.W. Marriott Jr. told reporters. "I think businesses are saying 'we haven't been out of the office in two or three years. We have to get out.'"

## HOTEL NEWS

### Hilton spreads Waldorf Astoria brand beyond NYC

The brand is now called Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts. Most of the two dozen properties still carry their original names, such as the Arizona Biltmore, while new-build properties like Park City and just-opened London and Shanghai hotels—which don't have an iconic or historical name—are called simply Waldorf Astoria. Executives note "by bringing forward the Waldorf Astoria as a full-fledged brand, Hilton is achieving parity with Marriott and its Ritz-Carlton, as well as Starwood with its St. Regis, giving Hilton vertical branding from luxury through economy [Hampton Inn]."

Other Waldorf Astoria properties are under development in Jerusalem, Beijing, Montreal and Panama. Hilton is also expanding their Conrad brand, which currently flags 16 hotels around the globe and another 13 under development. Much of that brand's growth will come in Asia, the Middle East and India.

### Hotels Expand in India

InterContinental Hotels Group and Marriott International each plan to bring to India a few dozen of their midprice, business-travel-oriented properties through separate joint-venture deals, the companies announced. The development will concentrate on "major metros

and key secondary cities," including New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. IHG has about 46 hotels totaling more than 10,000 rooms, under development to open by 2016 in India. Marriott plans to expand from 12 to 100 hotels in India across seven of its brands by 2015.

Starwood Hotels plans to have 100 hotels in India by 2015 and aims to make the country its third-largest revenue contributor after the US and China. In March, Starwood said it plans to open its first Sheraton hotel in Bangalore this year adding to the 10 Sheratons already in India. Their first W brand hotel in Mumbai, slated for a 2015 opening.

### Upscale hotels offer insider access

Tickets to the Emmys? Tour of La Scala? For your next vacation, top

hotels would like you to try something extra special, perhaps a VIP table at a hot club or a behind-the-scenes tour of a world-famous Italian theater.

"Consumers are looking [for] experiences" said a senior director of global public relations for Starwood. At Rosewood's Las Ventanas al Paraíso, a luxury resort in Los Cabos, Mexico, a "Hot Type" program makes advance copies of novels available to hotel guests from six weeks to six months ahead of their release. However, at some hotels, these exclusive packages and free services are treated as an insider's secret. Finding them sometimes requires careful sleuthing and checking with your travel agent, who has access to all the "insider" perks offered by hotels.

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