



# Travel Watcher

INSIDER NEWS & NOTES FROM YOUR BUSINESS TRAVEL AUTHORITY

JUNE-JULY 2011

## ✈ UP IN THE AIR

### American testing streaming video

American Airlines will begin testing inflight streaming video that enables customers to wirelessly stream movies and TV shows from an inflight library to their personal Wi-Fi-enabled devices during flight. AA will also expand inflight Wi-Fi to its narrow body fleet, completing its Wi-Fi rollout fleet-wide.

### DOT Plans New Programs

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is "piloting a number of programs" at airports to expedite international traveling, including "OneStop," a process that designates "primary inspection lanes for international travelers arriving without checked baggage," and "Express Connection," which "designates customs lanes for travelers who have tight connecting flights," said Secretary Janet Napolitano.

#### Read more:

[http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr\\_1305827187430.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1305827187430.shtm)

### Why pilots say what they say

1. "We don't make you stow your laptop because we're worried about electronic interference. I don't know about you, but I don't want to get hit in the head by a Mac Book going 200 miles per hour"

2. "People don't understand why they can't use their cell phones. Well, what can happen is 12 people will decide to call someone just before landing, and I can get a false reading on my instruments saying that we are higher

than we really are."

3. "We're not trying to ruin your fun by making you take off your headphones. We just want you to be able to hear us if there's an emergency."

4. "We ask you to put up the window shade so the flight attendants can see outside in an emergency, to assess if one side is better for an evacuation. It also lets light into the cabin if it goes dark."

### Frequent Flier Mile Advice

These days, airline capacity cuts, mergers, and pressure to fill seats with paying customers have made it harder for you to find available seats on flights and using frequent flier miles. You have a better chance of getting an upgrade or being able to redeem your miles if your schedule is very flexible and you book early. Here are some creative alternatives to help you use your frequent flier miles:

**Be The Highest Bidder:** It's a liability for airlines to keep unused frequent flier miles in their books, so they're constantly adding new rewards to incentivize you to spend your miles. Some airlines have begun auctioning off unique experiences that aren't for sale anywhere else. **Give Them to Family or Friends:** Have a college student that needs to fly home often or want to give a great wedding gift to a couple who loves to travel? Most larger airlines will let you transfer a limited number of miles to someone else's account. Expect to pay some fees. **Consider Donating:** Most airlines have programs where you can donate your

miles to charity. For example, you can help provide free transport for ill children and their families or aid workers participating in worldwide disaster relief. **Exchange for Merchandise:** If you decide to go the miles for merchandise route, do the math to make sure you're getting enough value for your miles. Divide the price of the item in real dollars by how many miles the airline is charging. You don't want to end up paying \$3,000 for a box of chocolates!

## TECHNOLOGY CORNER

### The U.S. Department of State released a "Smart Traveler" app

The app provides "official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations and more." It is available for Apple iPhones, iPods and iPads.

## HOTEL NEWS

### Hotels Encourage Guests to Throw Away Their Keys

Hotel companies are racing to create a better room key. Some chains are adopting permanent keys that repeat guests can carry in their wallets and use for multiple trips. Other establishments are doing away with physical keys altogether; instead, guests can open their room doors by holding their cellphone next to the lock. The big selling point of the new keys, executives say, is that they let travelers skip the front desk and go straight to their rooms. That could be particularly welcome

at big convention hotels and Las Vegas spots where check-in lines can be maddeningly long. The new systems cut down on one of the big annoyances of typical key cards that use magnetic strips: the cards sometimes demagnetize and stop working. Carrying your key next to your cellphone is often all it takes to make these keys conk out. Hotels can now send travelers their room number via text message or email, a potential security and privacy concern if someone else gets access to your phone. Hotel companies are experimenting with a variety of technologies to address that issue.

## THE SMART MONEY

### Panelists say travel still essential to cultivating business

Recent speakers at the World Travel & Tourism Council weighed in with points supporting business travel that they hope land in corporate boardrooms worldwide. The London-based council has developed a report correlating business travel with corporate economic performance. Tourism Economics, a subsidiary of Great Britain's Oxford Economics, joined with the council on the report that found:

- Business travel has a return on investment of \$10 for every travel dollar spent.
- Business travelers surveyed worldwide estimate that about 50 percent of their prospective customers became new customers with in-person meetings compared with 31 percent without such a meeting.
- Four out of five executives — nine out of 10 in China — agree that face-to-face business meetings are essential to their organizations' success and that business travel improves a company's chances of increasing sales.

### The End of Credit Cards Is Coming

According to CNN Money, "credit cards may soon be as outdated as vinyl records. This is the year that the slow, steady march to oblivion begins" You can already use your iPhone, Android or Blackberry to buy a Starbucks latte, or give a friend a few bucks, but 2011 is expected to be the year that the technology takes. Pay-by-phone is forecast to make up \$22 billion in transactions by 2015, up from "practically none" last year. AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon joined forces with Discover and Barclay's to form "Isis" and provide a rival to Visa and MasterCard. The Isis mobile wallet will let customers store multiple cards, make payments with the wave of their phone, check balances, receive coupons and use rewards points at the point of sale. It might eventually stretch beyond just the money in your wallet. The potential to include your insurance cards, driver's licenses and other information typically found in a wallet.

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

### Four Seasons Nevis: The Place to Be This Summer

Dreaming of lounging on an unspoiled beach with an umbrella drink, perfecting your golf swing on a pristine course, indulging in spa treatments and dining on fresh fruit and seafood this summer? Resigned to the fact that reality looks more like weekdays behind a desk and crowded weekends in sweltering cities? This summer, FS Resort Nevis turns dreams into reality with the new Stay Longer/Third Night Free package.

*As a Protravel client, you will receive:*

- Daily full American breakfast for two through In-Room Dining or in the Resort restaurant (incl. buffets)
- Golf credit of USD100 once during stay (not applicable to pro shop purchases)
- Upgrade of one category, based on availability at time of check-in (excluding signature suites and villas)
- Complimentary high-speed Internet access for all suite bookings

### Hideaway: One & Only Palmilla, Los Cabos, Mexico

A verdant oasis on the tip of the Baja Peninsula where the Pacific Ocean merges with the Sea of Cortez. Where warm waves break onto a dramatic shoreline and grey whales can be seen rising majestically in the distance. Here, the gracious style of Old Mexico is quietly nestled amidst swaying palms, bird of paradise and other tropical bloom. Travel by October 15, 2011.

### Exclusive perks & amenities only for clients of Protravel:

- Complimentary romantic dinner for two aboard a floating deck with views of the Sea of Cortez
- Guaranteed upgrade at time of booking based on availability
- Thirty-minute foot rejuvenation massage for two
- 50% off on golf green fees
- Two-day access to the new Mercedes 300 SLK Convertible

