



## WEEKLY BULLETIN

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### **HOTELS**

#### **Starwood Hotels' N. America Officials Hold Sales/Marketing Meeting in Tahiti**

Starwood Hotels & Resorts officials from North America held a three-day sales, marketing and job training meeting in Tahiti with officials from the chain's six deluxe hotels in French Polynesia.

Geoffrey A. Ballotti, president of Starwood Hotels & Resorts in North America, attended the meeting along with Keith Viera, senior vice president and director of operations for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Hawaii and French Polynesia. They were joined by Scott Hermes, Starwood's marketing vice president in North America and Ren Hirose, Starwood's regional general manager for French Polynesia.

#### **Starwood Has 6 Deluxe Hotels in French Polynesia**

The meeting also involved officials from the six Starwood chain hotels in Tahiti & Her Islands, which represent a total of 773 rooms. They are the Sheraton Hotel Tahiti (200 rooms), the Sheraton Moorea Lagoon Resort & Spa (104 rooms), the Luxury Collection's Bora Bora Nui Resort & Spa (120 bungalows), Le Méridien Tahiti (150 rooms), Le Méridien Bora Bora (99 bungalows) and the St. Regis Royal Bora Bora Resort & Spa (100 bungalows), which is due to open in mid-June.

Ballotti met with French Polynesia President Oscar Temaru to discuss the luxury hotel chain's proposal to conduct a promotion operation this year for Tahiti and Her Islands. They also discussed a possible exchange program between the University of French Polynesia and Hawaii, initially involving six hotel and cuisine students from Tahiti.

The theme of the Starwood officials' visit was how the hotel chain can play a bigger role in the development of tourism in French Polynesia. This also included

discussions of Starwood's promotion partnership with Air Tahiti Nui, with particular focus on the airline's non-stop flights to Tahiti from Sydney and New York.

Starwood is one of the world's leading hotel chains, with 850 hotels in 95 countries. **END**

## **CRUISE SHIPS**

### **Paul Gauguin Offers \$800 Savings on 5 Cruises from April-June**

Five cruises among Tahiti and Her Islands by the 320-passenger m/s Paul Gauguin are being sold for \$1,195 per person, a savings of \$800 of regular prices for April 29, May 6, May 20, May 27 and June 3 departures from Papeete. Bookings must be made by March 31.

The special cruise price includes all shipboard gratuities, wine with dinner, soft drinks throughout and an in-stateroom bar set-up.

### **Air Tahiti Nui Offers \$1,000 Savings Per Couple on NYC-Papeete Flights**

Meanwhile, guests on any 2006 Paul Gauguin cruise who book Air Tahiti Nui's nonstop New York-Papeete economy air add-ons by Feb. 28 will reap extra savings of \$1,000 per couple. Prices are \$899 per person, compared with the regular airfare of \$1,399. Beginning March 1, the nonstop airfare from New York's John F. Kennedy Airport to Papeete will be \$1,099 per person, a savings of \$600 per couple.

The Paul Gauguin sails from Papeete every Saturday on seven-night cruises, visiting the Leeward Islands of Raiatea, Tahaa and Bora Bora and Tahiti's sister island of Moorea. The ship spends two full days at Bora Bora and at Moorea. (Sources: TravelVideo.TV/lovetripper.com) **END**

## **AIRLINES**

### **Air Tahiti Nui's Hub Concept Taking Shape**

Air Tahiti Nui appears to be moving full speed ahead with its goal of creating a South Pacific hub with a variety of flights in several directions.

The airline's third weekly direct flight in both directions between New York and Sydney via Papeete starting March 26 will be complemented by three weekly direct flights both ways between Los Angeles and Sydney via Papeete.

During a recent trip to New Zealand, Air Tahiti Nui announced a further spreading of its wings and the hub concept with a direct air link between Auckland and New York via Papeete starting on March 26. The three weekly nonstop flights to and from New York will involve a short refueling stop in Tahiti, making the 18-hour 40-

minute overall flight aboard Air Tahiti Nui's Airbus A340-300 aircraft the fastest way to travel between Auckland and New York.

Both Tourism Australia and Tourism New Zealand are reported optimistic about the Air Tahiti Nui direct flights to and from the U.S. helping to bring Americans to Sydney and Auckland via Papeete. The airline also operates seven weekly L.A.-Papeete flights, two weekly Tokyo-Papeete flights, one weekly Tokyo-Osaka-Papeete flight and five Paris-L.A.-Papeete flights.

Air Tahiti Nui operates Qantas Airways code-share flights on the Sydney-Papeete, Auckland-Papeete, Papeete-Los Angeles, Papeete-New York flights and in the opposite directions. **END**

### **Hawaiian Airlines Leads U.S.A.'s 2005 Service Rankings**

"Our employees have made Hawaiian the best airline in America," said Mark Dunkerley, president and CEO of Hawaiian Airlines, upon learning that his airline had led the nation's carriers in service performance for 2005.

The ranking, based on year-end data issued in the Air Travel Consumer Report by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), rated Hawaiian Airlines N° 1 in on-time service, fewest cancellations and baggage handling and N° 3 in fewest over-sales.

### **Hawaiian Airline's 2<sup>nd</sup> Straight Year as DOT's Top On-Time Carrier**

This was the second straight year that Hawaiian earned the DOT's top overall scores for excellence with its service. SkyWest was N° 2, followed by ATA, America West and Southwest.

Dunkerly noted, "The DOT reports have confirmed once again that Hawaiian is indeed the nation's preeminent airline when it comes to customer service and reliability." Hawaiian Airlines operates one weekly Boeing 763 flight from Honolulu to Papeete.

Hawaiian's 95.1% flight punctuality last year was higher than the industry average of 77.4% of flights arriving on schedule. To meet DOT standards, a flight must arrive within 15 minutes of schedule to be considered on time. Hawaiian has now led the airline industry in on-time performance for 26 consecutive months. (Source: e-Travel Blackboard Online) **END**

## **PROMOTION**

### **"Rangiroa" Film Receives 3 Awards in Germany**

A film entitled "Rangiroa" about the underwater life found in the lagoon of the Tuamotu atoll received three awards recently at the international boat show, "boot 2006", held in Düsseldorf, Germany.

The short film by Peter Schneider, who lived for several years on Rangiroa, won the “Silver Seastar” award in the category of films up to 20 minutes in length. The film also won a special award for the best soundtrack and a special award for the “most dense atmosphere”.

More than 100 underwater films from all over Europe were entered in the fourth annual film competition organized by the Association of German Filmmakers, the diving magazine “Unterwasser” and the Düsseldorf boat show. All winning films were projected daily in the diving hall for the public attending the nine-day boat show.

Schneider, who is originally from Germany, attended the boat show on behalf of the Raie Manta Club of Rangiroa and was present at the Tahiti Tourisme booth in the diving hall. Some 296,000 visitors attended the boat show from Jan. 21-29, a 5% increase over last year. (Source: Tahiti Tourisme Germany) **END**

## **Very Briefly . . .**

. . . **The USD** exchange rate for 1USD in traveler’s checks spent the past week fluctuating a bit higher than the previous week, this time moving between 96 and 97 French Pacific francs at the Socredo Bank. The USD exchange rate ended this week at 97.381 French Pacific francs, or fractionally higher than its rate of 96.623 French Pacific francs on Feb. 3. The USD spent most of this past week above 97 French Pacific francs. After finishing 2005 on a strong note, closing at 98.167 French Pacific francs on Dec. 30, the USD exchange rate for TCs spent the first month of 2006 below 97 French Pacific francs. The daily USD exchange rate for TCs has been below 100 French Pacific francs since Nov. 7, 2003. . .

. . . **The Hotel Sofitel Marara Bora Bora** will have all its bungalows, its bar, restaurant, reception area and activities operating on March 1 after undergoing several months of major renovation work. The “Spa by Accor” and the Sakura Restaurant will open on June 1. Guests with reservations from Feb. 10-28 will be transferred to the Sofitel Motu Bora Bora or an hotel with the same category and under the same conditions, Accor French Polynesia announced. . .

. . . **The first Tere Faati Moorea**, a free, animated circle island tour for tourists and residents, will be held on Feb. 12, starting at 8:30 am from the public beach at Temae and going east to west. Scheduled stops will be made in Cook’s Bay and Opunohu Bay for an explanation of the history and legends; the Protestant Church at Papetoai, the oldest Protestant Church on Moorea; and Atiha Point, a popular surfing spot where the history and legends of the area will be explained. The tour will return to the Temae beach at noon. The Moorea Tourism Committee will serve free fruit and lunches will be available for purchase. Two traditional public transportation vehicles, known as Le Truck, will make the tour, each with a trio of musicians and a guide. . .

. . . **Tahiti Tourisme** will celebrate St. Valentine's Day at Fare Manihini in downtown Papeete from 10 am to noon on Feb. 14. A free pickup starting at 9 am will bring tourists from Le Méridien, the Sofitel Maeva Beach, the InterContinental Resort Tahiti and the Sheraton Hotel Tahiti, while another pickup starting at 10:30 am will bring tourists from the Radisson Plaza Resort and the Royal Tahitien. There will be musical entertainment at Fare Manihini, an exhibit of traditional arts and crafts and fruit tastings. Each woman visitor will receive a rose, and all visitors will have the opportunity to order a mother-of-pearl shell engraved in front of them or have a photograph taken as a souvenir of their visit. After visiting downtown Papeete, visitors will be able to take a free shuttle bus back to their hotels. . .

. . . **Ms. La Rocca**, the founder of the French tour operator Tourinter, was taken to lunch on Feb. 6 by French Polynesia Vice President/Tourism Minister Jacqui Drollet and Tahiti Tourisme Chief Executive Dany Panero. Although this was her first visit to Tahiti in four years, Ms. La Rocca has been sending tourists to Tahiti for the past 25 years. She created Tourinter as a travel agency in 1961, specializing in exotic destinations. The agency quickly became a tour operator and Tahiti's N° 1 source of French and European visitors. Her latest arrival was aboard the cruise ship Athéna, which is on a world cruise. . .

**END OF WEEKLY BULLETIN**