



LATA Members' Newsletter

November 2011

LATA News

Dear all,

We are delighted to announce that we have appointed Brighter Group to take over LATA's public relations from November 2011 (from a strong shortlist). We would like to thank Mango PR for their work over the last 6 years and are delighted that we will still have a close relationship with them as they currently represent Turismo Chile. The team at Brighter Group already have several new ideas to help promote Latin America, and will be giving a workshop to members in the next few months.

We are also working on a revised membership fee structure, which will be implemented over the next few months. The previous Consumer/Trade distinction has served us well but has been confusing for some members, particularly since the introduction of the Health and Safety scheme. We now plan to move to a simpler fee structure: Full vs. Associate membership, and will circulate full details of the benefits of the two new membership levels shortly.

On the 21st September the Mexico Tourism Board sponsored a LATA General Meeting at Canning House in London. This was a fantastic and well attended event. We would like to thank the Mexico Tourism Board for sponsoring the event, Manuel Diaz Cebrian (Director, Mexico Tourism Board) for his presentation: "The Mayas, a change of an era" and Phillippa Vernon-Powell from New Life Mexico for her briefing on their work with the LATA Foundation.

In September Ed Paine and Claire Antell gave the 8th LATA Seminar at TMLA in Florianopolis to an audience of 70 plus members and non-members. Before focusing a little on 'our clients' safety', Claire reported on trends and issues from the last 12 months as well as expectations for the next 12 months. 2011 had been a mixed year for many operators, with some operators reporting their best months ever and others disappointed with growth. 63% of members found the last year better than expected but only 54% expected the next year to follow the trend. The top 6 countries were Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Chile with Mexico following closely on their heels. Claire then reported on the LATA Foundations' projects before Ed ran through how the LATA Health & Safety Hotel and Transport Schemes worked. This seminar is available on the LATA website in the members' area.

Claire has just returned from the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) Summit in Mexico which was a real insight into the Adventure Travel sector. There were many LATA members there including several tourist boards and it was great to see both Chile and Ecuador making a big impact at the show with their sponsored events. There were several very interesting journalists there from both sides of the pond as well as lots of new product and marketing ideas.

Future Events

LATA Annual WTM Party - Tuesday 8th November at the Commonwealth Club, London. Sponsored by Turismo Chile and TAM Airlines, entrance by ticket only. events@lata.org

LATA General Meeting – 5th December at Canning House. PR focussed meeting, full details and invites to be sent out soon.

LATA Annual House of Lords event- Wednesday 1st February 2012. Full details and invites to be sent out in December.

PR News

More Latin American Countries Represented in UK. In recent months several countries in South America have appointed new companies in the UK to represent their travel and tourism interests. These include Mango PR (www.mangopr.co.uk), which is now looking after Chile; Critical Divide (www.criticaldivide.com), which will be handling Ecuador and Quito; and Brighter Group (www.brightergroup.com) that is representing Peru. Brighter Group has also been appointed by LATA to assist the association with its own PR.

LATA Foundation News, from David Gilmour, Chairman, LATA Foundation

POOFEST RAISES OVER £4,000 FOR WATER PROJECTS

The Pootings Music Festival – the PooFest - has raised a magnificent total of £4,108 for water projects for the LATA Foundation. This is an astonishing amount for a village which consists of just 26 houses and a phone box. There are further reports about the PooFest on the LATA Foundation website.

We have sent £1,840 to Nicaragua to purchase and install a pump to kick start a project to provide safe, clean drinking water to over 1,000 people living below the poverty line in La Prusia, near Granada. It is part of a much bigger \$30,000 project which will eventually require 3 miles of pipes (£10 buys 12 yards) and a second pump.

In an e-mail dated 13 Oct 2011 Angel Saenz-Badillos of Casas de la Esperanza in Nicaragua wrote:

"Thanks to your generous contribution, the lives of the people living in this Nicaraguan community will be substantially improved. They will not have to rely on a very old pump to receive water, which if they are lucky, trickles through every other night, but which frequently breaks down.

The thousand residents of La Prusia will be sure to have a steady regular water supply. They will be able to drink clean water, cook, wash, do the laundry and to send the kids to the school with clean clothes. The tourists passing through the area to reach the nearby Laguna de Apoyo will not be faced with a thirsty community.

We hope to have the pump installed in La Prusia very soon."

The additional funds raised by the PooFest will help provide clean water in Mexico. The LATA Foundation already has a good track record in Mexico, having constructed a water fountain in Puerto Vallarta earlier this year which is being used by 500 people every day. It is one of 15 water fountains constructed by New Life Mexico since 2010. A fountain costs just £2,600 but annual maintenance costs amount to £700. Each fountain needs new filters every 2-4 weeks.

"These are fantastic projects to support," said TJ Spurin, one of the organisers of the PooFest. "Many people at the festival talked to me about the importance of clean water, something that we all take for granted and I am really pleased that we have been able to help the LATA Foundation."

NATURAL COSMETICS IN GUATEMALA

LATA members may recall that in 2009 we provided all the start up equipment for a project near Antigua to produce natural cosmetics in conjunction with As Green as it Gets. Equipment included a 20 ton oil press to process macadamia oil, cocoa butter and avocado oil, a filtration system and vacuum distiller, scales, mixers and all the packaging equipment for a range of products, including face and hand cream, and a line of scented oils, soaps and shampoos.

One of our projects team, Claire Betts of Last Frontiers, travelled to Guatemala recently. This is an edited extract of her report, the full version can be found on the LATA Foundation website:

'Hello, my name is Maria Benita' says the small figure in halting English.

Maria Benita is shy and she takes some coaxing but within moments of talking to her you can tell how driven and determined she is. Thanks to the LATA Foundation and with the guidance of Franklin Vorhoes of As Green as it Gets, she started making a lip balm three years ago. Her original product, Maria Benita's Lip Balm, is made from beeswax, mint and macadamia oil. She says it was a struggle at first, that she didn't know what she was doing or how to market her product. But with a lot of hard work and guidance she has gone on to sell over 3,500 lip balms and has branched out from the original vanilla flavour into other flavours.

As Green as it Gets has a small coffee shop, the Whiskey Den, which sells her lip balms and the other soaps, shampoos and creams produced as a result of LATA Foundation support. Maria herself visits Spanish schools in Antigua a couple of times a month and in a good afternoon can sell about twenty balms to foreign students. She can sell around another twenty at a fair trade market once or twice a month.

Maria Benita is still in her teens. She is studying sustainable tourism and English, studies which she now pays for herself. Thanks to her, the eleven members of the family household now have their first proper shower and a lavatory with running water.

Her prospects are good. Until recently she had never used a computer, now she has her own e-mail account. Maria is hoping to start exporting to the United States.

THREADS OF PERU AT THE POOFEST: FROM THE ANDES TO A FIELD IN KENT

We sold a number of table mats, dolls and table runners at the PooFest. Two young girls, Jessica and Isabella, carefully selected which dolls they wanted and then chose names for their new purchases. With the agreement of their mothers, we were able to send a photo of the girls with their dolls to the weavers in Peru with the following message:

"Thank you so much for the dolls, everyone appreciates them. My doll is called Juliette and her children are Lily and Lucy and my friend's is called Penelope and her baby is called Patel. Can you tell us how long they took to make and when they were completed. Then we will know our dolls birthdays?" Isabella (8 years) and Jessica (9), PooFest 2011

We received the following message back:

"The weavers were so excited to hear that their weavings and dolls were being sold at a music festival in England. It has really spurred them on to know that Jessica and Isabella are happy with their dolls. The dolls were completed on 2nd November 2010. They each took 3 weeks to complete, the women make them when they are not looking after their own children, so they work bit by bit. A huge thank you to the girls for their purchases, I hope they still are enjoying their dolls!" Ariana Severson, Threads of Peru.

Jessica and Isabella were both excited and thrilled to hear back from Peru. Isabella cannot believe that the ladies who made her doll know who she is and the name of her doll and is amazed that she took 3 weeks to make. Jessica and Isabella's mothers have kindly authorised us to put a photograph of their daughters and dolls on our website. There is also a link to Ariana's blog.

You can support this project by buying items on-line: <http://stores.ebay.ca/Threads-of-Peru-Store>

KATHRYN COOPER HANDCRAFTED JEWELLERY

Kathryn is one of the great unsung heroes of the Latin America Travel Association and works quietly and effectively behind the scenes as a thoughtful and efficient administrator. She has been a great supporter of the LATA Foundation since we started. But what you might not know about Kathryn is that she also designs and makes very fine jewellery. She held a sale at the JLA office's in London recently and has generously donated a percentage of the proceeds to the LATA Foundation. Kathryn is also currently working on a website for her jewellery business and when it's up and running is planning to offer promotions via the site throughout the year to support the Foundation. We are very grateful to her.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

If you are reviewing your corporate and social responsibility policy for 2012 and are not yet supporting the LATA Foundation please let us know. There are plenty of ways we might be able to work together, simply informing your

passengers about our projects and inviting them to make a donation would be an immediate help. If you prefer to sponsor or co-fund particular projects or can help us identify new projects we would be grateful for your support.

NO ADMINISTRATION COSTS

We are grateful to LATA for agreeing to cover the minor administration costs that the LATA Foundation incurs. These include bank transfer costs and our monthly fees for our justgiving website. This means that all donations go directly to our projects with nothing at all spent on administration. A donation of £10 a month would help us train disadvantaged adolescents in Colombia, with reforestation in Peru, turtle protection in Venezuela or it would purchase 12 yards of water pipe in Nicaragua. Please help us by setting up a one-off or a monthly donation from the link from our website: www.latafoundation.org

Chairman's Note:

The LATA Foundation has come a long way since we started in 2008. Our projects are now helping thousands of people throughout Latin America. None of our work would be possible without the valuable support of individuals and organizations involved in the travel industry. Many of our projects have come about as a result of input and actions from LATA members. Although we have received some funding from outside the travel business – particularly from the PooFest and the Rotary Club of Sherborne Castles - we are keen to secure the support and help from members of LATA, especially from those who are not yet contributing to our work. We want your involvement with LATA Foundation projects. We have established a good track record for getting things done. With your support there is so much more that we could do.

LATA Health and Safety Update

Both the hotel and land transport schemes continue to make steady progress. There are now 883 hotels with a completed checklist on file. There are still a large number of hotels graded violet (checklist sent but not replied). We are gradually removing properties that do not appear to be used by tour operator members so time can be allocated elsewhere. Full details can be found on the LATA website. We are also focusing on properties that now have checklists more than 3 years old.

On the land transport scheme we have now reached the 60% completion mark. All ground handlers and tour operators have been recently sent e-alerts with an update on outstanding suppliers. Please can any ground handler members let Colin know when you add or remove any transport suppliers.

14 companies have signed up for the Galapagos self-audit scheme (£100 + VAT per member) which is now underway. Please email loyd.boutcher@sunvil.co.uk if you would like to be included and get access to this valuable data.

New Members and Membership News

We would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter.

Mayan Escapes	25/10/2011	Local operators
Costa Rica Sun Tours	25/10/2011	Local operators
Irupe Lodge & Wildlife Tours	25/10/2011	Local operators
SOCOMPA	21/10/2011	Local operators
Tropical Sky	14/10/2011	Tour Operators
HighLives Ltd	11/10/2011	Tour Operators
Vapues Tours	29/9/2011	Local operators
Caledonia	26/9/2011	Tour Operators
Brasil Travel	18/8/2011	Local operators
Surtrek Ecuador & Galapagos Tours	9/8/2011	Local operators
Brighter Group	9/8/2011	Representation/Wholesalers

News from UK Members

Abercrombie & Kent is offering a special departure with Mark Carwardine to Galapagos in May 2012: Expert-led Journey to Galapagos Islands 24th May - 3rd June 2012. Who better to explore these magnificent islands with, than Mark Carwardine - zoologist, outspoken conservationist, award-winning writer, TV and radio presenter and widely published wildlife photographer. Mark co-presented the BBC television series Last Chance to See with Stephen Fry and hosted the weekly Radio 4 programme Nature for many years. www.abercrombiekent.co.uk

Bradt adds to its impressive list of guides with new editions of **Guyana, Galapagos Wildlife** and **Argentina**, a new Highlights guide to the Amazon and **100 Alien Invaders**, an exposé of destructive species including many in South America. Early in 2012, Bradt launches a travel literature series including **Up the Creek** by John Harrison, the tale of a hazardous Amazonian quest to reach the upper limit of the Jari River. See www.bradtguides.com for details.

A new two week **Trekking in Cuba** trip is being launched for 2012 by **Caledonia - Languages, Culture, Adventure**. Including three different areas for hiking all based in the SE of the island (Pico Turquino, Las Yaguas waterfall and the Gran Piedra), the treks include local guides, transport and accommodation. Optional Cuban dance lessons and nights out to live music venues in Santiago de Cuba also available. More details from www.caledonialanguages.com

Oasis Overland is launching 2 new adventure tours to Bolivia. The trips are 11 and 15 days duration and take in the city of La Paz, 3 days exploring the Salar de Uyuni, Potosi's silver mines, Sucre's cobbled streets plus the Amazon rainforest and Pampas grasslands (15 day trip only). Optional activities for the really adventures include downhill mountain biking, exploring an underground mine and searching for anacondas! <http://www.oasisoverland.co.uk/trips/South-America/details/139/Bolivia-Encompassed-Amazon-Jungle-15-Days-La-Paz-to-La-Paz.html>

Orient-Express Hotels: Mesa 18 at Miraflores Park Hotel, Lima, launches New Japanese Fusion Menu. The new mouth-wateringly delicious menu has been created by Toshiro Konishi, Peru's star Japanese chef. The new menu combines the cultural mix and diversity of Peruvian and Japanese cuisines.

Palacio Nazarenas, Cuzco - Opening June 2012: A 55-suite hotel in a former palace and convent. Orient-Express' sixth hotel in Peru is the culmination of a 3 year restoration project carried out under the guidance of 8 full-time archaeologists and the supervision of Peru's National Institute of Culture. www.orient-express.com

PromPeru: Peru has seen the opening of many new luxury developments in Lima and expanded its Amazon offering this year, while further developments in Cusco are expected in 2012. The discovery of a new Inca trail, due to undergo improvement work next year, will offer tourists a new way to Machu Picchu. Visit Peru at stand LA300 at WTM to join the Agent Fiesta, attend seminars on responsible and adventure tourism, and win a trip to Peru. www.peru.travel/en/

News from Senderos: Simon will be in Marrakech at **Pure** from 1 - 4 November, and the following week we'll all be at Excel for **WTM** (7 - 10 Nov). We are finalising appointments so please let us know if you would like to see any of our following partners:

- [Antarctic Dream](#)
- [Casa Andina, Peru](#)
- [Mountain Lodges of Peru](#)
- [Rainforest Expeditions, Peru](#)

- [Casa Cairuçu](#), Brazil
 - [Ecoventura](#), Galapagos
info@senderos.co.uk www.senderos.co.uk
 - [Vida Sol e Mar](#), Brazil
-

On 18 October, **TAM Airlines** moved to its own dedicated check-in area at London Heathrow Terminal 1, allowing the airline to offer its passengers more space and comfort when checking in for the flights to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and beyond. The new TAM check-in desks at Heathrow are located in Zone J, which is the far right hand end as you enter Terminal 1 from the road. www.tamairlines.com

The Travel Foundation is a UK charity that cares for the people and places we all love to visit. They support the travel industry in taking effective action on sustainable tourism across the world, improving quality for customers while helping to protect the resource on which the industry relies; the destination! To find out more, receive regular e-newsletters, invitations to events and PR opportunities join the Travel Foundation Forum.

The Travel Foundation: <http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/>

Join the Travel Foundation Forum: <http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/index.php?id=93>

Turismo Chile, along with **TAM Airlines**, are sponsoring the LATA Party this year so although the venue is the same the party will have a different flavour and theme! Odile Palustran from Turismo Chile will be here for meetings at WTM so if you would like to meet her or indeed any of the Turismo Chile partners, do contact Jennifer Ellis at Mango PR to arrange an appointment at Jennifer.ellis@mangopr.co.uk

The Yavari Project www.yavari.org: We would like to share with fellow members a beautifully crafted, evocative and romantic article by Guardian writer, Julian Glover. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2011/sep/07/yavari-lake-titicaca-peru-hotel-bandb>

This October **Yampu Tours** graciously accepted the 2011 World Travel Award as Leading Tour Operator in South America. This prestigious honour comes 1year after receiving the 2010 World Travel Award in the same category, and after an exciting year of growth and development for Yampu Tours. Yampu Tours attributes its success to the company's dedication to superior customer service and appreciates all the loyal partners that voted for Yampu. <http://www.worldtravelawards.com/profile-29279-yampu> www.yampu.com

News from the Region

Antarctica

Antarctic Dream offers you 3 programs to visit Antarctica: Fly & Sail (8D/7N); Antarctic Dream Expedition (11D/10N) and Polar Circle Crossing (14D/13N), with daily landings, kayak & camping activities, wildlife observation and lectures on board in a comfortable environment. Come and live an unforgettable experience, discover the awesome immensity of the White Continent and find out magnificent sites for travellers in search of unique sensations!! Antarctic Dream - Experts in Polar Regions www.antarcticdream.com

Argentina

BOP - Best of South America, is proud to celebrate its 10th Anniversary with a fancy cocktail party to be held on November 17th, at the house of its founder the famous **Alvear Palace Hotel** in Buenos Aires. All prestigious BOP members will

be present at the party: Alvear Palace Hotel, Alvear Art Hotel, Esquina Carlos Gardel, Estancia Villa Maria, Llao Llao Hotel & Resort, Eolo Patagonia'Spirit, Estancia Cristina, Las Hayas Resort, Cruceros Australis, The Singular, Puyuhuapi Lodge, Hotel Patagonico and Inkaterra Lodges. www.bop.travel

Kuoda now offers personalized travel in the land of tango, wine, gauchos and glaciers! Bask in the cosmopolitan warmth of Buenos Aires, shopping in hip Palermo and visiting world-class museums; spend your nights learning to tango and sampling the world's best steaks. Journey to Argentina's wine country and taste fine vintages. Saddle-up with Argentine cowboys and ride to the awe-inspiring Perito Moreno Glacier in Patagonia. Contact info@kuodatravel.com and visit <http://www.kuodatravel.com>

House of Jasmines - Estancia de Charme, Salta. This refined estancia is a centennial manor that has been totally remodelled. All rooms have been designed to offer guests total relaxation, comfort and luxury. It is Located in La Merced Chica, at the foot of the Andes and minutes away from the Airport. **Alma del Lago Suites & Spa - Bariloche** - new 5-star superior hotel in Bariloche. It has 95 rooms divided into six categories with views to the lake and the mountains. Its Terra Restaurant offers Mediterranean cuisine with Patagonian flavours. www.topdest.com.ar

Bolivia

A trip to Freedom with Crillon Tours: Flying brings you closer to freedom and the Hydrofoil cruises on Lake Titicaca will transport you to meet this dream, whilst visiting sacred islands and a millenary culture. With daily flights La Paz/Uyuni/La Paz you can continue to the-out-of-this-world Uyuni Salt Flats, where unlimited miles of dazzling crystalline salt pentagons makes you feel as though you are in a wonderland. www.titicaca.com

Brazil

Celebrate Christmas and New Year in true Brazilian fashion at **Ponta dos Ganchos**. There is currently availability for their Christmas Packages from around £418 and some limited availability for their New Year's Eve package from around £1261. These rates are per person per night based on two sharing, full board including all non-alcoholic beverages. For more information please contact Jennifer Virgilio at JG Blackbook: jennifer@jgblackbook.com

Pure Brasil is the new name for the inbound tour operator **Venturas**, a Brazilian travel company established in 1992, and has customized itineraries in Brasil to take travellers to remote regions, as well as to better known destinations where there are still plenty of things to explore. With a head office in São Paulo, local branches in Chapada Diamantina and Jalapão, **Pure Brasil** is very well placed to help tour operators develop Brasil programs with knowledge and passion, and to offer travellers the best that Brasil has to offer. www.purebrasil.net

Chile

Cascada Expediciones: This season **EcoCamp Patagonia** is introducing a new Micro Safari, inviting guests to learn more about the diverse flora & fauna on EcoCamp's doorstep. The self-guided educative trail is a micro exploration of Torres del Paine's wildlife and is an ideal short activity for guests participating in EcoCamp's Patagonian Wildlife Safari. Guests on Safari join guided excursions each day and relax in EcoCamp's Community domes at night enjoying good food & wine.

http://www.cascada.travel/places/programs.php?TituloUrl=patagonia_wildlife_safari&IDP=138&ID=40

Darwin's Trails is pleased to make available our new brochure from this link: <http://issuu.com/darwinstrails/docs/chilerevista.pdf> We are also very pleased to announce and present our UK Representative, Philip Cooke, who can be contacted for anything regarding Darwin's Trails: c/o 3 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR Tel/Fax: 01452-500663 or by philip.cooke@darwinstrails.com. We also invite you to become involved in <http://www.hmsbeagleproject.org/> which is a very important new project for our region.

explora Rapa Nui: Tapati Rapa Nui, one of Polynesia's most important celebrations, is to take place between 3rd-18th February 2012. When it started almost 40 years ago, this event was reserved just for local people, but over the years it has become an opportunity for travellers from around the world who visit the island to get to know and participate in Rapa Nui culture. explora Rapa Nui (<http://www.explora.com/explora-rapa-nui/>) is the perfect place from which to enjoy this singular experience.

Metropolitan Touring Chile: Easter Island... MAGICAL! There is no other word for such a special island, full of mysteries and unknown history. Rapa Nui... where giant rock statues (moais) stand as silent judges in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, where the ocean is a paradise for divers with 70 meters of visibility, where unsolved mysteries are still being solved! Find out more: <http://bit.ly/oHY0zK> www.metropolitan-touring.com

Skorpios Cruises announces the launching of its new web site, which includes an English version (www.skorpios.cl/EN) with all the relevant information regarding the company, routes, services and ships, all of which can be downloaded for use. Among the new features included there are new and exciting photographs and videos, as well as the IP number +44 2034550206 to contact directly with the sales department of Skorpios Cruises in Chile.

travelArt: New excursion: Whale watching in Chiloé. Chiloé Island is known for its diverse sea life and it is a wonderful experience to take a boat trip to spot them. On the excursion along the western coast you're likely to see seals, penguins, albatrosses, petrels, and several types of whales, including (between December and April) the huge Blue Whales. Experience cultural heritage and wildlife diversity with travelArt! <http://chile-reise.com/news/en/whale-watching-chiloe/>

Colombia

Colombia Adventure: Ecuador Adventure is proud to announce the opening of its sister company Colombia Adventure. As a well-kept secret through time. Today, Colombia opens up to show its magic to the world: a passionate nation full of colours, flavours, traditions, natural treasures and overall the warmth of its people. The vacations we create in Colombia are based on over 20 years' experience of developing and delivering quality active travel. <http://www.colombia-adventure.com/>

Colombia57 is a British owned DMC / Receptive Tour Operator incorporated in Colombia. Directors, Brendan Rayment & Simon Locke, are delighted to be supporting the Colombia stand, (LA190) at WTM in November. Join us for a coffee and learn about our expertise in operating receptive services for groups, individuals and MICE events. Use our unparalleled levels of service & destination knowledge to develop a unique, diverse & competitive Colombia product. Email: brendan@colombia57.com www.colombia57.com

Metropolitan Touring Colombia: We are excited to announce our itineraries in Colombia will be even more experiential next year, taking guests to places where they can learn about Colombians' everyday life and lore. We are pleased to present our new experiential programme to Villa de Leyva which now includes a visit to the town of Sutatausa and the Ráquira. Don't miss out – Colombia is the hot destination in South America right now...!
www.metropolitan-touring.com

Costa Rica

Costa Rica Sun Tours is pleased to be a new trade member and is looking forward to establishing new business relationships with Lata Members. We are proud to announce that we will be represented in the UK at WTM by Judith Pollard Tel 00 44 (0) 1883 622 031 Mobile 00 44 (0) 7939 285 313 Email judith.pollard@gmail.com. CRST offers tailor made, fun and educational itineraries. Contact us at info@crsuntours.com; www.crsuntours.com. CRST is certified by CR Govt CST Program in Sustainable Practices as well as verified by Rainforest Alliance.

Enchanting Hotels Costa Rica is delighted to announce its latest new addition to our exclusive collection with El Establo Mountain Hotel, nestled in the misty cloud forest of Monteverde. We look forward to further enhancing our industry relationships with our long standing tradition of quality and value in exceptional Costa Rica experiences.
www.enchanting-hotels.com

Latincoming (WTM booth LA580) Our attractive open voucher rental car program "FlexiVoucher" is now opened for trans-national tours through Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The program spans between 13 and 21 days and includes a choice between 3 rental car categories, depending on the number of participants. The border crossing will take place in "Peñas Blancas", where the rental car is exchanged. repeurope@latincoming.com, <http://www.latincoming.com/com/index.php?id=8.1&lang=2>

Ecuador / Galapagos

Advantage Travel News: New itineraries aboard the **Manatee Amazon Explorer** the unique floating hotel in the Ecuadorian Amazon with multiple activities including kayaks, trekking and camping. www.manateeamazonexplorer.com
New programs in our renewed **Mantaraya Lodge:** scuba diving, kayaks, bicycles, trekking in the Machalilla National park and many more activities. www.mantarayalodge.com
Also: New offers for tour packages in the Galapagos. New in-situ tours: The Road of the Roses; the new Eloy Alfaro Train; the new Incas complex at the Cotopaxi. www.advantageecuador.com

Ecoventura has pledged to sponsor 12 scholarships for 1 course/module for local students from the islands of Isabela, San Cristobal and Santa Cruz to study conservation and ecology-related issues. The program is under the auspices of Ecology Project International, a non-profit NGO, that has benefited over 600 students since 2003. In 2012, there will be 6 courses benefiting 72 students. Some will be invited to join a 4 night Galapagos cruise. A \$400 donation makes the course possible for 1 student. Ecoventura is encouraging their passengers to make donations: www.ecologyproject.org/donate www.ecoventura.com

Hilton Colon Quito is considered among the most exceptional luxury hotels in the Ecuadorian capital, a city declared first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. TORRE LA PINTA offers premier accommodations and exclusive service with 42 newly renovated spacious suites that range from 60, 64 and 90m², each created to satisfy the highest expectations and most demanding needs. www.quito.hilton.com

Metropolitan Touring Ecuador: Our 90-guest Santa Cruz emerged from its dry dock refreshed with new furniture, carpets, linens and bar-salon-restaurant make-over, and with a renewed commitment to aquatic encounters, expedition equipment, family adventures and flexibility – guests can choose from a range of options on their day in Puerto Ayora. On the mainland, Casa Gangotena opened its doors last month to great acclaim, while Mashpi Lodge will welcome its first guests in January. www.metropolitan-touring.com

OceanAdventures is delighted to announce the re-launch of the completely refurbished MC Athala II! The 16 passenger catamaran has arrived back in Galapagos after a major refit which covered virtually every aspect of the vessel, from the mechanics to the cosmetics. We have now raised the bar in terms of the level of quality, comfort, safety and environmental standards among the smaller passenger vessels on offer in the Islands! www.oceanadventures.com.ec

Quito is launching a new tourism bus, Quito BusTur, which will allow visitors to get to know the city in a more comfortable and convenient way. The bus covers all of the city's main attractions, and beyond. The tours are scheduled to start in mid-November, and for US\$12 per person a visitor can use it throughout the day from 09.00 to 16.00. www.quito.com.ec

Guyana

Wilderness Explorers: Tony Thorne and Teri O' Brien will both be attending World Travel Market for meetings at the show and training sessions. Please contact Claire at claire@wilderness-explorers.com if you would like to see any of the team. Wilderness Explorers are already planning their annual trade fam trip for spring 2012 so please let Claire know if you or a colleague are interested! www.wilderness-explorers.com

Mexico

Catherwood Travels' experts participated in the recent chapter of Nat Geo Ancient X Files. Underwater archaeologist Guillermo de Anda and archaeologists Alfonso Morales & Julia Miller contributed with their deep knowledge regarding the Sacred Book of the Mayans, Popol Vuh. Feeling adventurous? Descend into another world. For history and archaeology buffs, Catherwood offers dives with underwater archaeologists in cenotes that still contain sacrificial remains and other Maya artifacts. www.catherwoodtravels.com

Journey Mexico: After months of anticipation we are proud to announce the launch of Journey Yucatan (www.journeyyucatan.com) a branch of Journey Mexico specializing in the Yucatan Peninsula. Journey Yucatan focuses on custom private tours, destination management services, and luxury transportation designed to get beyond the hustle and bustle of the typical tourist destinations. For more information go to: <http://www.journeymexico.com/blog/journey-yucatan/>

Native Trails: We are happy to present during WTM London our new hotel directory with 365 excursions for Mexico - each day an adventure. The directory lists 7000 hotels, 280 preferred hotel choices and the 365 excursions, which automatically can be arranged for group and FIT travel requests. Visit us at stand LA100 at WTM. www.nativetrails.de

Nicaragua

Vapues Tours (www.vapues.com) co-initiated 2 projects linking Nicaragua with neighbouring countries Costa Rica and El Salvador. Agua Trails (www.aguatrails.com) connects Costa Rica with Nicaragua by a 45-minute scenic boat trip on the Rio Frio, part of the famous Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. The second project, Cruce del Golfo (www.cruceलगolfo.com) connects El Salvador with Nicaragua by crossing Golfo de Fonseca, a 2 hour scenic boat trip passing by 22 islands that belong to the three different countries: El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Panama

New Hotel in Casco Viejo, Panama City: Casa del Horno, a boutique hotel located in the Colonial District recently open for tourists. For more information contact: info@ecocircuitos.com

EcoCircuitos Panama has moved to a new and bigger office in the Albrook neighbourhood, Panama City! We are growing and we needed a bigger space. Our new offices are located in Albrook Plaza, No. 31. Our new phone numbers are: Tel: 507-315-1305: Tel 2: +507-315-1488: Fax: +507-315-1521 www.ecocircuitos.com

Peru

Amazonas Explorer (www.amazonas-explorer.com) is proud to have been featured in the New York Times: The Hidden Route to Machu Picchu, By Mark Adams. Read about this amazing adventure at: <http://travel.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/travel/in-peru-machu-picchu-and-its-sibling-incan-ruins-along-the-way.html?emc=eta1> And see the fantastic pictures at: <http://travel.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/06/26/travel/06262011MACHU.html>

We are setting up our tree planting season for 2011 and are programmed to plant 20,000 trees on the 10th & 11th of December in the communities of Quishuarani and Pampacorral – any one wanting to donate (just \$1 tree planted on your behalf) or participate in the actual plantation, please contact Paul Cripps sales@amazonas-explorer.com

Launched this autumn, **Hacienda Concepcion** is the second property under **Inkaterra's new brand byInkaterra**. Whilst offering a casual alternative to Inkaterra's other luxury hotels, byInkaterra maintains the company's high standards in hospitality and responsible tourism. Located in an enchanting setting of natural rainforest, Hacienda Concepcion, comprising a main lodge with 8 rooms and 7 cabanas, seeks to cater for nature loving enthusiasts who come in search of a memorable experience in the jungle. www.inkaterra.com

Metropolitan Touring Peru: Peru's balance of authentic cultural, soft-adventure and nature-based experiences make a fantastic combination for families looking to learn, share and have fun together. We're pleased to offer a 10-day programme with exactly this in mind: visiting the city of Cusco, enjoying great outdoor activities in the Sacred Valley, marveling at the citadel of Machu Picchu... topped with a visit the Amazon Rainforest, with educational and entertaining activities. <http://bit.ly/qzANNX> www.metropolitan-touring.com

Mountain Lodges of Peru (MLP): Experience Cusco at Christmas and join us on the lodge-to-lodge trek to Machu Picchu over New Year! Celebrate with the locals on the Plaza de Armas on December 24th Santurantikuy - a large, colourful market with local artisans selling small pottery figurines of saints, and encounter Peru on an old Inca trail from Lodge-to-Lodge. MLP will be at PURE and WTM. We are happy to meet and discuss the latest news! For photos, videos and press articles please visit MLP's website gallery, for Brochures, Dates & Rates please contact: elisabeth.lr@mountainlodgesofperu.com www.mountainlodgesofperu.com

The next Members' Newsletter will be published at the beginning of February 2012. The deadline for news will be the 17th January.