

SEPTEMBER 5, 2011

SECTION ONE

Travel Agent

UNITING BUYERS AND SELLERS THROUGH MULTIMEDIA INTELLIGENCE

www.travelagentcentral.com

INSIDE MARRIOTT

We get up close with President and COO Arne Sorenson to discuss the expanding hotel empire

SEE PAGE 42

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS:

Cruise Travel Planner

Thailand Travel Planner

INSIDE:

Brazil's Hidden Gem

Stockholm by the Book

The State of South Australia

Las Vegas Is on a Roll

ON THE WEB

School is back in session, but you don't need a math lesson to calculate these savings. Go to www.travelagentcentral.com/deals



Finnair is testing biofuel made from recycled cooking oil.

Biofuel, Engine Innovation Leading to Greener Skies

THIS HAS BEEN the summer of green (or at least greener) airlines, and eco-conscious travelers have more options for their transportation. In just a few months, Lufthansa (www.lufthansa.com) launched a six-month biofuel trial; Finnair (www.finnair.com) began a series of four flights using biofuel in both engines of its aircraft; and Virgin America ordered GE'S LEAP (Leading Edge Aviation Propulsion) engine—a high-bypass turbofan jet engine that will reportedly increase the fuel efficiency of narrow-body aircraft—for 30 of its planes.

In a report, GE announced that the new engines will achieve 15 percent more fuel efficiency gains over existing technology and will reduce greenhouse gas NOx emissions well into the double digits. The delivery of the new airplanes will begin in 2016.

In its first biofuel flights, Finnair is using in both engines of its aircraft SkyNRG biofuel manufactured from cooking oil recycled from restaurants. The fuel mixture used is half biofuel and half ordinary aviation fuel. In a statement, the airline said that the fuel has been “exhaustively researched and it fulfils all of the quality and safety requirements set for jet fuel. The fuel mixture used is certified in the same class as ordinary aviation fuel.”

Finally, a Lufthansa Airbus A321 will fly the Hamburg-Frankfurt-Hamburg route four times daily with one of its engines running on a 50/50 mix of regular fuel and biosynthetic kerosene. As biokerosene has similar properties to those of conventional kerosene, it can be used for all aircraft types without any need for modifications to the aircraft or its engines. During the six-month trial, the airline estimates that the use of biofuel will reduce CO2 emissions by up to 1,500 tons.

—JENA TESSE FOX

Japan's Return Aided by SITA

SIX MONTHS after Japan was immobilized by an earthquake and tsunami, the country is reporting a renewed interest in travel to the region. The U.S. Department of State and the president of the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) (www.jnto.go.jp) have both been sending out the positive news that Japan is back, and in response, SITA World Tours (www.sitatours.com) has decided to reinstate its signature tours to Japan.

Most recently, JNTO and the Japan Tourism Agency (www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/en) hosted a “Re-Discover Japan” tour for both the United States Tour Operators Association and the National Travel Association. Delegates from both associations reported how far Japan has come back from the devastation.

SITA has evaluated every aspect of its programs in terms of customer comfort, safety and the company's overall ability to deliver. The following tours are currently available:

- Affordable Japan – eight days/seven nights that begins in Tokyo and include Mt. Fuji and Hakone, Nagoya, Magome, Tsumago and Kyoto.
- Japan's Scenic Vistas – six days/five nights that includes Tokyo, Mt. Fuji and Hakone and a Nara excursion.
- Tokyo: Window to Japan – four days/three nights, which focuses on Tokyo, Mt. Fuji and Hakone.

—MEAGAN DRILLINGER

