

VACATION [ ] INDUSTRY

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2016

# review

A PUBLICATION OF INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP

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ON THE RISE

**South Africa:**  
POISED FOR GROWTH

# making waves

WITH  
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# Model Behaviors



BY  
**Craig M. Nash**

CHAIRMAN,  
PRESIDENT, AND CEO  
INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP

Inspiration comes from many sources — and sometimes, it simply reinforces things you already know to be true.

**A**n occasion as momentous as a 40th anniversary calls for reflection, even as it's important to keep an eye on the future. Throughout 2016, Interval International is celebrating its origins and honoring the qualities that have kept it vital and relevant over the decades.

As I've considered my own personal journey with Interval, and now, ILG, prominent in my thoughts are the influences that have informed the way I've approached my work, my career, and, for that matter, my life. Inspiration comes from many sources — and sometimes, it simply reinforces things you already know to be true.

## Constructive Confrontation

Andy Grove, who passed away this year, was former CEO and chairman of the board of Intel, and a pioneer in the development of semiconductors and tech innovation. He was renowned for a management style termed *constructive confrontation*. (Some have had harsher names for it.) Grove authored several books, including a title that has particular resonance for me: *Only the Paranoid Survive*.

Now, those of you who know me well may be smiling at that. No one has ever accused me of being too optimistic, and I've taken some good-natured ribbing for my oftentimes glass-half-empty perspective.

But behind Grove's threats-are-everywhere outlook, he understood something that I have always appreciated: Change is inevitable — and rapid change has become the norm. And only by being ever-vigilant to these external forces — whether competition, market conditions, technological advancements, or regulatory developments — will companies remain relevant in an environment that reshapes itself quickly and dramatically. Facing what Grove described as the strategic inflection point, you either adapt — or fail.

## Radical Transformation

Like many of its farsighted developer partners, Interval anticipated the challenges facing our industry for years. I'm proud of the way the company has boldly embraced radical transformation — including ownership changes, economic upheavals, and evolving consumer demands — while remaining dedicated to the interests and success of its developer affiliates. In 2008 — at what could surely have been considered a strategic

inflection point — ILG took its place on the Nasdaq exchange, and began diversifying its business model through a series of strategic acquisitions, as the shared ownership and rental landscape has consolidated and evolved.

Most recently, ILG acquired Vistana Signature Experiences, the vacation ownership business spun off from Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. This positions us to further capitalize on industry trends and achieve long-term sustainable growth, while serving the needs of our constituencies. I think Grove would have approved.

## Team Spirit

Another interest that has played big in my life is football. I wasn't even 10 years old when I began my long love affair with the sport. And since then, numerous players and coaches have inspired me.

But never so much as when I was a 13-year-old linebacker as part of the South Miami Grey Ghost football program. I dreamed of being a quarterback, but Coach Bill Whatley taught me that the game is *always* about the team, not individual stars. As compassionate as he was tough, Coach Whatley drilled into us that everyone has an important role to play for the good of the common cause — a lesson that has served me well in life, whether on the football field or in the boardroom. To this day, Coach's message is a big part of how I think, and how I lead.

## Pursuing My Passion

On a personal note, I lost my father this past March. He was 93, and if anyone can be said to have lived a full life, it was Dr. Norman Nash. During his 50-plus years of practice as a pediatrician, he treated countless children over three generations, and was a founding physician of several Miami-area hospitals.

Besides serving as an admirable role model for his own children, my father taught me that one of the secrets to success is to have passion for what you do. I haven't cared for patients as he did, but I have certainly found the exhilaration that diving wholeheartedly into my work has brought me over the years. And I feel great satisfaction in the fact that I've played an active role in an industry that has helped deliver memorable vacations to millions of people. As with my father, my work fully engages me, even after nearly 40 years. And I look forward to continued fulfillment in the years to come. [ ]





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## PREFERRED RESIDENCES

## Packaging Brand Power and Upscale Resorts

**Preferred Residences<sup>SM</sup>** has grown its network of exclusive shared ownership resorts, and expanded its scope to benefit members and developers/resorts even further. Since 2007, Preferred Residences — the outcome of an alliance between Interval International and Preferred Hotels & Resorts<sup>SM</sup> — has allowed resort properties at an enviable level of luxury to align with a recognized and respected upscale brand, while retaining their own unique identity.

In January 2015, the Preferred Residences brand expanded to offer transient travelers exceptional luxury residences that are connected to existing properties within the Preferred Hotels & Resorts portfolio — properties such as Montage Laguna Beach in California and Finca Cortesin Hotel Golf & Spa in Casares, Spain — adding member benefits and worldwide recognition for the brand.

### Value-Added

Preferred Residences owners have always enjoyed access to exceptional vacation accommodations and enhanced year-round benefits — such as preferential exchange with advance priority hold at Preferred Residences resorts and comparable quality exchange through Interval International. Additionally, owners can also exchange to hotel accommodations at participating Preferred Hotels & Resorts — with celebrated properties, such as the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs — and can save 30 percent off the best available rates when staying at Preferred Residences lodging resorts.

“This opportunity to exchange to a worldwide portfolio of hotels and to take advantage of stays at luxury lodgings at a considerable discount is a valuable benefit offered to Preferred Residences members,” says Michelle DuChamp, vice president of Preferred Residences.

Other new benefits added to the Preferred Residences membership include a complimentary annual golf club membership in Preferred Golf<sup>SM</sup> and participation at the Elite level of the iPrefer<sup>SM</sup> member-loyalty

program, to use with more than 600 participating Preferred Hotels & Resorts worldwide. This, combined with Interval’s most prestigious level of membership, Interval Platinum®, provides the Preferred Residences owner year-round savings.

### Cachet and Credibility

Preferred Residences was conceived as a hospitality-branded exchange network to appeal to affluent customers and provide opportunities for developers to market their upscale projects. “Preferred Residences packages value, brand power, desirable benefits, and great resorts into an unsurpassed product that is sure to help developers of luxury properties attract the discriminating vacationer,” says DuChamp.

Jorge Rodriguez, legal counsel for La Tranquila® Breath Taking Resort Spa Punta de Mita in Mexico, can attest to that. “In addition to the opportunity for our clients to make vacation exchanges with other resorts of similar quality,” he says, “the affiliation of La Tranquila to the Preferred



## PREFERRED RESIDENCES RESORTS

### 1 **Blue Residences Club** Oranjestad, Aruba

The regal beachfront complex with two-, three-, and five-bedroom ocean-view suites has a wellness center and day spa, two infinity pools, a snack and pool bar, and a full-service restaurant currently ranked No. 3 on TripAdvisor. The resort's Eagle Beach is within walking distance to restaurants and casinos.

### 2 **CéBlue Villas and Beach Resort** Crocus Bay, Anguilla

Modern Caribbean villas comprise 8,000 square feet (743 square meters) of indoor/outdoor living on two levels. Five- and six-bedroom villas feature a kitchen/dining room, media room, six bathrooms, a swimming pool, two expansive decks, and Wi-Fi.

### 3 **The Cottages at Windermere House** Windermere, Ontario, Canada

A private waterfront enclave on Lake Rosseau offers well-appointed three-bedroom cottages with beamed ceilings, gas fireplaces, and state-of-the-art kitchens and baths. Guests can enjoy the services of the celebrated Windermere House Resort.

### 4 **Grande View Residences at Grande Bay** Wharfside Village, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

From their hillside overlook on Cruz Bay, fully furnished guest suites offer breathtaking views. Whether sunbathing by the on-site pool, enjoying water sports, or dining at one of the restaurants just minutes away, guest can expect a laid-back island ambiance.

### 5 **Kittitian Hill** Kittitian Hill, St. Kitts

A mix of whole and fractional ownership villas, cottages, and townhomes showcase views of the nearby islands. Personalized attention includes in-room and pre-arrival services. A spa, beach club, pools, tennis, fitness center, and 18-hole championship golf course are some of the amenities.

### 6 **La Tranquila® Breath Taking Resort Spa Punta de Mita** Punta de Mita, Nayarit, Mexico

Set on a curved stretch of secluded beach and surrounded by natural vegetation, the resort boasts seven swimming pools, a seaside infinity pool, nine family-sized whirlpool spas on the beach, two restaurants, a lobby bar, and a private beach zone.

### 7 **Royal Westmoreland** Westmoreland, St. James, Barbados

With a high level of attentive service, the estate offers fractional ownership in colonial-style villas set amid beautifully landscaped gardens. On-site are a golf course and pools. A private beach club at Mullins Beach is a complimentary shuttle ride away.

### 8 **Valentines Residences Resort and Marina** Harbour Island, Eleuthera, Bahamas

Upscale suites are equipped with modern amenities, a spacious patio, and a sunken tub in the marble bathroom. A restaurant and dive shop are situated harborside. The property is convenient to the island's famed beaches and the shops and restaurants of Dunmore Town.

Residences program has become an attractive sales tool for our staff."

The Preferred Residences name also serves as a "seal of approval," as Kim Goddard, director of sales at Royal Westmoreland in St. James, Barbados, sees it: "Preferred is an outside review of the luxury level of fractional homes," she says, adding that the brand serves as inspiration for the developer to live up to the high standard of quality.

"The Preferred Hotels & Resorts name lends cachet and credibility to any luxury-tier lodging connected to it," says DuChamp. "With perks such as discounted hotel rates and the member-loyalty program, Preferred Residences promises to add value to the resort's sales proposition."

**To learn more about Preferred Residences, contact Michelle DuChamp at [Michelle.DuChamp@intervalintl.com](mailto:Michelle.DuChamp@intervalintl.com) or 305.925.7240.**



## NONBUYER PROGRAM

## New Benefits Enhance Leisure Time Passport



LeisureTimePassport.com may sport an energetic new look, but that's only window dressing for a host of enhancements, including tech upgrades that refine the popular trial program even further. Now, members can easily access benefits on any device, and sales teams are able to customize and co-brand the site to help promote consumer affinity.

For years, Leisure Time Passport® has provided Interval International's developer partners with a vehicle that gives nonbuyers a taste of timeshare — a product that offers another opportunity to close the deal and recover marketing costs. Purchasers enjoy all the benefits available to Interval Gold® members, except for exchange-related services.

### More to Enjoy

Now, in addition to Getaways access, Hertz Gold Plus Rewards®, Entertainment® discounts, and VIP Concierge<sup>SM</sup>, Leisure Time Passport owners have more to enjoy than ever.

■ **Hotel Discounts.** 10 percent off the best hotel rates, powered by Orbitz Partner Network.

■ **Golf Connection.** Access to nearly 900 private golf courses in the U.S. and Canada, 15 percent off equipment rental available through Golf Connection, and the ability to search in real time for tee times at more than 1,900 public courses.

■ **Dining Connection.** Members enjoy special amenities, such as kitchen tours and table visits from the chef, when they reserve in advance through Dining Connection.

■ **City Guides.** The best suggestions for dining, cocktails, spas, shops, hotels, and more in nearly two dozen cities, with additional destinations coming.

### Dream Vacation Week: A Perfect Pairing

Leisure Time Passport pairs well with another nonbuyer product from Interval International. Dream Vacation Week certificates award one-time access to full-week, condo-style accommodations in popular vacation destinations.

This vacation certificate program makes seasonal oversupplies of resort weeks available to developers to use not only as low-cost marketing premiums, but also as trial-program enhancements. Add a Dream Vacation Week certificate to a Leisure Time Passport membership, and double the perceived value.

Now, at a slightly higher price, a Prime version of the Dream Vacation Week certificate provides more high-demand destinations and availability.



### Convenient Credit

The Leisure Time Passport Visa Signature® card with WorldPoints® rewards means that the program is even more appealing to prospects. When developers offer the opportunity to apply for the card at point of sale, they get instant online approvals — and provide year-round value to the qualified buyer. Cardholders earn points that can be redeemed for cash, or applied toward expenses including travel and, of course, the purchase of vacation ownership.



## Cruise Certificates May Help Boost First-Day Close Rates

**W**hat partners well with vacation ownership? Cruise vacations. In fact, recent research shows that well over half of Interval members in four key markets plan to take a cruise within the next two years.

### Buy Now, Cruise Later

And, now, resort sales operations can increase the value of the vacation ownership purchase and close the deal faster than ever with a highly valued cruise certificate to be offered at point of sale. “Vacation ownership and cruises seem to go hand-in-hand,” says Raul Estrada, Interval’s senior vice president of operations. “Now, Interval offers an appealing first-day incentive product that is sure to encourage prospects to buy now in order to cruise later.”

What’s more, the cruise certificate permits customized terms and conditions and resort branding for participating resorts. So all the customer sees is the generous incentive the resort offers to purchasers — and the message imparted is, *Purchase vacation time today, and a cruise for two is on us!*

Here’s how it works: Through a collaboration between Interval International and Norwegian Cruise Line, developers have access to a variety of cruises at favorable rates. So if a sales agent needs a powerful incentive to close a deal, he or she can offer the customers a cruise for two if they buy today. The resort only pays for the cruise — at rates that range from US\$1,000 to US\$3,000 — when the new members redeem it. They have 18 months to redeem the certificate, and will be given multiple cruise options to choose from.

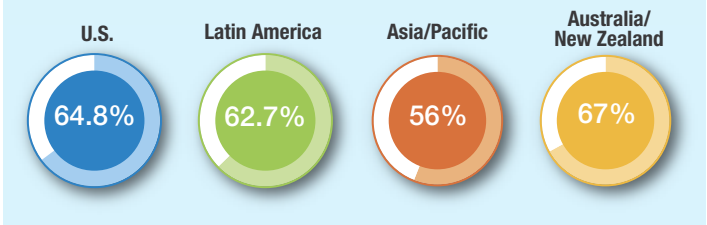
### A Win-Win

“The cruises offer a significant purchase incentive to the consumer,” says Estrada. “And the process from delivery to redemption is seamless for the resort’s new owner and Interval member. The bookings are fulfilled by Worldwide Vacations & Travel, our travel agency. It’s a win-win for everyone involved.”

Estrada already knows the program is a winner. “We’ve been offering a couple of clients a customized program for a few years now. And it’s been a proven success.” So Interval has committed to offering the attractive first-day incentive program on a more standardized basis. But, says Estrada, “It is still a very customizable opportunity for sales teams looking to boost their first-day close rate.”

Resorts interested in learning more about the first-day incentive certificate may contact their resort sales and services representative.

**Based on Interval’s recent membership research, timeshare purchasers want to cruise.**



## Qualtrics Means Easy Access to Owner Survey Data

*Would you return to this resort? Would you recommend this resort to a friend?*

These are two critical questions any resort that welcomes owners and Interval members will surely want answers to. Now, it’s easier than ever to get this information, thanks to Interval International’s Qualtrics, a new survey software solution.

### Have It Your Way

Getting member survey results fast and frequently is only part of the benefit wrought by Qualtrics. The program also permits participating resorts to “slice and dice” the information, manage the data, and read the results in a variety of formats.

“Interval’s members have the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey that gathers valuable information about their resort experience,” explains Lori Card-King, Interval’s vice president of quality assurance. “Qualtrics captures this information, and makes it available to resorts in a very user-friendly manner. And Interval is taking further steps to make the information more accessible to affiliated resorts.”

### Dashboard Data Through Qualtrics:

- Resorts now receive survey results through a monthly email rather than a quarterly mailing
- Resorts have the ability to reconfigure reports for specific needs
- New questions have been added that resorts have indicated are relevant to their understanding of the guest experience

And now that vacationers can access the survey through a link rather than signing on to the website, Card-King anticipates an increased response rate, providing even more complete data to resorts.

“We encourage resorts to sign up with Interval for dashboard access,” notes Card-King, “which is as easy as contacting your resort assistance account manager.”

By Jackie Ferreiro

# Negative Feedback, Positive Outcome

## Six Tips for Responding to Online Complaints



In today's world of instant digital communication, customer feedback is oftentimes — for better or worse — unfiltered. While positive feedback is a big part of the picture, with the good comes the bad.

This holds especially true of personal experiences such as vacationing. Consumers expect that everything will go off without a hitch; when something goes wrong, they're quick to take to the Web to share their experiences.

### Why Respond to Negative Comments?

All businesses inevitably have negative feedback from time to time. You might think responding to negative comments will just draw additional attention to them. But a response assures both the customer and others who see the post that your company values its customers. Ignoring it is the same as saying, *We don't care*. Acknowledging it says, *We're listening, and we want to rectify the situation as best we can*.

How to deal with negative comments? Here are some tips.

1. **Don't wait around.** It's imperative to have a social media team — or at least a dedicated team member — that routinely monitors all social outlets and handles comments in a timely manner.
2. **Don't be defensive.** It may be your instinct to refute the complaint, especially if you believe the allegation isn't fair. Instead, politely acknowledge the customer's dissatisfaction.

3. **Never delete the complaint.** It will always come back to haunt you. Acknowledge the comment, apologize for the aggravation, and take the conversation offline for resolution. (Request that they private-message or email you.)
4. **Never Ignore.** Even if the comment doesn't seem significant, it's important to address. Ask for more information and offer to help resolve.
5. **Incentivize.** Once you've taken the conversation offline, if the person still isn't satisfied with your response, consider offering a special service or discount. Perhaps a free treatment at your resort's day spa. This can convert an upset customer into a satisfied and returning guest.
6. **Address spam and trolls.** On occasion, you'll be faced with meritless comments or someone attempting to damage your company's reputation. Address these as you would a legitimate complaint. Sometimes, however, if it's clearly spam and violates terms of use — both of your business and the social platform — it's OK to delete and ban that user from future postings.

### Negative Comments on Public Sites

Even if your company isn't actively using social media, it's still important to keep an ear to the ground and know what the public is saying. Sites such as TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, and VirtualTourist, which let registered users share their opinions about places they visit around the globe, are great resources for feedback.

Leaders in the hospitality industry are diligent about constantly perusing these sites. Why? These posts can have a measurable impact on your business. Sometimes you'll find negative remarks. If this happens, take a few minutes to register an official company account and offer feedback just as you would on your business's own social outlet.

Like it or not, social media is here to stay, its influence is far-reaching, and it's something all businesses should embrace. Sure, negative comments are a part of the game, but by addressing your customers' concerns on these very public outlets, you have a better chance of not only retaining loyal customers, but of potentially picking up new devotees along the way. [ ]



Jackie Ferreiro is director of social media for Interval International. She oversees social media strategies and initiatives, including Interval Community, one of the world's largest timeshare social networking forums.



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By Judy Kenninger

# Taking Off

Increased Airlift  
to Caribbean  
Boosts Tourism







ugh Riley, secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), has 28.7 million reasons to be happy. That's the number of visitors who arrived at Caribbean destinations in 2015, up 7 percent from the previous year. Riley is pleased that the pace of growth in the Caribbean is keeping up, if not surpassing, other major tourism regions. "This performance was above the global rate of growth, which the World Tourism Organization quotes at 4.4 percent," he says.

This was the second year in a row that the region outperformed the rest of the world, and the sixth consecutive year of growth for the Caribbean.

Not coincidentally, the Caribbean has also been more likely than other destinations to be named when airlines have announced new flights. In the first few months of this year, JetBlue (see sidebar), Air Europa, Cape Air, and regional carriers such as LIAT have all announced expanded service to the region. That's in addition to new flights announced last year by those carriers as well as American Airlines, Norwegian Air, and others. Martinique, for example, had a 193-percent increase in airline capacity traveling to the island nation during the peak December 2015-to-March 2016 period over the previous year.

Clearly, the Caribbean is hot in more ways than temperature. But why now?

### Sunny Skies

"The Caribbean is always top of mind as a vacation destination," says Marcos Agostini, Interval International's senior vice president of sales and business development for Latin America. "You have 32 island nations, each with its own identity and appeal. Now, there's even more demand coming from the U.S., along with expanded demand from Latin America as economies in the region are growing their middle classes."

According to the CTO, South American countries generated 2.1 million visitors to the Caribbean in 2015, an 18.3-percent increase over 2014. The main markets within South America are Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina, in that order.

Copa Airlines, which is based in Panama City, Panama, has aggressively expanded its service to the Caribbean, adds Frank Comito, CEO and director general of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

This increased airlift means traveling to the Caribbean is also much more convenient. "With better connectivity, what was a seven-hour journey becomes a three-hour flight from the eastern U.S. and Latin America," Agostini says.

Caribbean nations have made substantial improvements to their airports and infrastructure, making them more attractive to airlines. "Over the past five years, there has been considerable growth in airport expansions," Comito says. "Governments are eager to attract more flights to pay for those investments."

But perhaps the biggest factor is cooperation between airlines, governments, and tourism groups to market the Caribbean as a destination. "Research shows that increased frequency drives demand," Riley says. "However, destinations, travel professionals, vacation packagers, and the airlines all play an essential role in raising awareness and creating demand."

The CTO, for example, provides reliable data on which to analyze the industry, and generates useful market intelligence. The group's aviation task force also plays a role by focusing on improving the passenger experience, reducing the cost of travel, ensuring passenger safety and security, and modernizing the legal and regulatory framework.

The CHTA and hoteliers also collaborate with airlines, airport authority, ministries of tourism, and ministries of finance. "When all of those players are working together, it really creates the best economic situation to stimulate travel for the airline," Comito says.

More flights will mean more visitors, according to Dave Clark, vice president of network planning at JetBlue. "We absolutely stimulate more demand," he says. "There's a lot of publicly available data, where when we add flights, demand ramps up. Of course, we need to do it in partnership with destinations because people need a place to stay when they get there. We can't add an infinite number of seats without considering hotel growth."

### Long-Term Outlook

Whether increased airlift increases demand or increased demand brings more airlift, everyone seems to agree that lowering costs makes flights more attractive. Without changes to tax policy, however, there's little wiggle room. "If you add the taxes in the destination to the U.S. tax — which isn't small — that can amount to half the price of the ticket," Clark says. "In those situations, the taxes artificially inflate the price of what the customer has to pay for an airline seat and will depress demand."

Comito agrees. "By increasing fees, you lose airlines and you lose arrivals — that has been proven over and over again. The goal is to have the policy that makes the most sense for all the stakeholders, not to take money out of government coffers. If we can find ways to stimulate travel, the increased arrivals will lead to increased spending and more economic growth."

The International Air Transport Association has called on governments and aviation stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean to work together to harness the power of aviation connectivity to drive economic growth. "There are 130 different ticket taxes in place across the Latin America and Caribbean region," says Tony Tyler, the group's director general and CEO. "They increase the cost of connectivity for businesses, individual travelers, and potential visitors. Ultimately, they limit the ability of aviation to catalyze economic growth, shortchanging the economy as a whole."

Security concerns generated by the terrorist attacks in France and Belgium could lead to more vacationers choosing the Caribbean in the near term. "Vacationers from the U.S. and Europe may see the Caribbean as an even better alternative this year," Agostini adds.

The biggest boost in 2016, though, will probably stem from increased U.S. travel to Cuba. As result of a U.S.-Cuba agreement signed in February, several airlines are urging the Department of Transportation to award them round-trip flights to Havana for a total of up to 20 flights per day. At press time, decisions on which airlines will be awarded those flights are expected later in the summer. American Airlines, Frontier Airlines, JetBlue, Silver Airways, Southwest Airlines, and Sun Country Airlines were approved as of June to fly from five U.S. cities to nine Cuban cities other than Havana. **✈**

Judy Kenninger, RRP, heads Kenninger Communications and has been covering the shared ownership and vacation real estate industries for nearly two decades.

**MINT CONDITIONS** When it comes to the Caribbean, JetBlue is all in. "We absolutely think of the Caribbean as a big, important strategic region for us," says JetBlue's Dave Clark. "It's been one of our two biggest growth areas for the past five years, and now 30 percent of our capacity is to the Caribbean and Latin America. If you look at U.S. airlines, the percentage of our flights that are in the Caribbean is well more than double that of other carriers."

JetBlue plans to add greater connectivity from airports it already serves in the U.S., such as Fort Lauderdale, to the islands.

The carrier has deviated from its former one-tier service model to add flights with premium service, which it calls Mint. The Caribbean is an important part of this strategy, too. "We're serving not just price-sensitive customers, but also the very high-end clientele, getting people out of private jets when they go to places like to Barbados and Aruba."

The initial response to Mint has been extremely positive, and more flights are coming soon, Clark says. No surprise there.

## ARDA World 2016

# A LOUD AND HAPPY BUZZ







Greetings, meetings, and impromptu networking activity created a hum in the corridors of the convention halls at the Diplomat Resort & Spa. But those weren't the only conversations at ARDA World 2016. The May 1 to 5 convention in Hollywood, Florida, provided opportunities to listen and learn, as well as speak out and be heard. The result? An event from which presenters, companies, attendees, and the trade association itself walked away all the richer.

From special events, such as the lively Lion's Den product pitch and thoughts from top CEOs, to educational sessions, committee meetings, and, of course, the exhibition hall, the conference gave voice to a spectrum of ideas, information, and insights.

### Listening In

Howard Nusbaum, president and CEO of ARDA, welcomed attendees with updates about the organization's various initiatives and an overview of the word on Wall Street about the industry. His summation? "The buzz around timesharing is loud and happy."

At the opening session, Nusbaum introduced Stephen P. Weisz, ARDA chairman and CEO and president of Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation. Following his address was keynote speaker Jonathan Perelman, former senior executive with BuzzFeed and Google, who talked about the state and future of digital marketing.

### Showcasing Innovation

Interval staff took advantage of the opportunity to meet with clients and share the latest in products and innovations designed to enhance their success.

"ARDA World is always a wonderful opportunity to meet with our valued clients, establish new business relationships, and network with industry colleagues," says David Gilbert, president of Interval



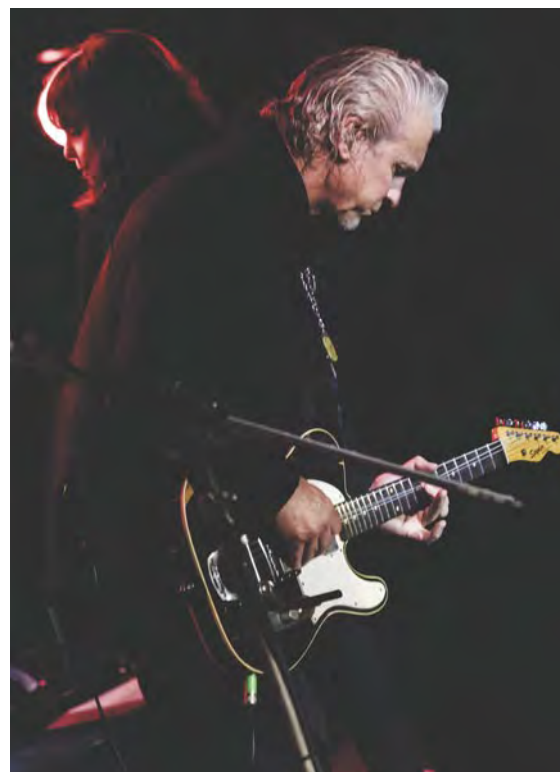
International. "This conference was no different. We especially enjoyed introducing our latest sales and marketing tools, including a sneak preview of the STK Publisher, which will offer more flexibility than ever in producing impactful sales presentations."

Making a splash was Padzilla. The largest touch-screen iPad display available allows sales centers to engage prospects by streaming elements of the Interval Sales Tool Kit app on a screen as large as 80 inches.

### Topical Issues

A roster of noted industry experts populated the panels that addressed topical issues in the educational sessions. Interval International was well-represented: Madeline Berges, vice president of e-commerce and digital marketing; Michelle DuChamp, vice president of business development; Neil Kolton, director of resort sales and service for the Caribbean region; and David Matos, director of loyalty marketing, all participated in their respective areas of expertise. Jan Sampson, senior vice president of resort operations for VRI, also presented.

"ARDA strives to deliver compelling sessions with fresh, new elements as part of the ARDA World conference agenda," notes Nusbaum. "I feel that this year, we truly achieved that goal. We look forward to building upon this year's success as we embark on planning for March 2017, when ARDA World heads to New Orleans." [1]



# All Fired Up

Party With a Cause  
Delivers a Good Time —  
While Doing Good



“ARDA World is a productive time, but it can also be very demanding,” says David Gilbert, president of Interval International. “The Interval Party With a Cause allows everyone who’s working hard at the conference — and throughout the year — to channel some of that intensity into having a good time.”

Once again, the Party With a Cause attracted conference attendees with the promise of a classic band whose identity is not disclosed until introduced just before the show. For Interval’s 40th anniversary, crowds converged on LIV at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach for entertainment from four-time Grammy winner



Pat Benatar and husband and bandmate, Neil Giraldo.

But before the band came onstage, the night kicked off with Gilbert’s presentation of a US\$70,000 check to the ARDA International Foundation, a combination of contributions from Interval and the proceeds of party entrance tickets. Since 2003, the cumulative donation to AIF has reached more than US\$440,000.

“Since 2003, Party With a Cause has been much more than a good time,” observes Gilbert. “It’s Interval’s way of giving back to our association, which is so critical to our industry’s continuing success.” [ ]







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CAUSE**

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**WE HAD A GREAT NIGHT AND SUPPORTED  
THE ARDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.**

# Service

“Interval has always worked to partner with its customers to find ways to build value for each other. The focus has been on service but also leveraging each of the business’ strengths to create a program that works for both parties.”

— **Steve Weisz, president and CEO, Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation, an Interval affiliate since 1990**

# Innovation

“Interval is at the forefront of technological innovation within our industry, especially in recent times utilizing the mobile platform.”

— **Craig Wood, CEO, Accor Vacation Club, an Interval affiliate since 2000**

We thank our developer partners,  
our members, ARDA, and other industry  
organizations worldwide  
for their support over the past four decades.



quality

“We’re very sensitive with whom we do business, especially when they interface with our owners. We represent a high-quality product and we want our partners to have an equal concern for customer service. Interval does an exceptional job of that.”

— Sergio Rivera, president of the Americas, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide; and CEO, Starwood Vacation Ownership, an Interval affiliate since 2000

leadership

“Interval has been part of the brain trust that has shaped our industry’s product, regulation, business model, and vision for the future. If there is an issue impacting timeshare anywhere in the world, you can count on an Interval International leader to be involved.”

— Howard Nusbaum, president and CEO, American Resort Development Association



**interval**  
INTERNATIONAL®

By Catherine Lackner

# South Africa's Timesharing: Varied, Resilient, and Poised to Grow



Buoyed by a rising middle class and rooted in a destination that is as diverse as it is breathtaking, South Africa's timeshare market is promising.

MJEJANE GAME RESERVE



The country boasts a well-established US\$238 million vacation ownership industry spanning more than 30 years, and comprising approximately 140 resorts with an estimated half-million owners (including those with points products), says Dirk Wilson, Interval International resort sales and service business development manager for Central and Southern Africa.

"A number of our affiliates in active sales have been posting impressive year-over-year new-member figures for the past three years, and our key sold-out resorts have strong resale figures. Both of these indicate healthy

ELAN L'ERMITAGE CHATEAU & VILLAS



MJEJANE GAME RESERVE





consumer demand for shared ownership in well-administered programs and resorts.”

Covering the entire southern tip of the African continent, South Africa measures more than 468,000 square miles (1.2 million square kilometers). It is home to nearly 55 million people; the median age of the population is just 25.9 years.

“South Africa is one of the best-kept secrets in the world,” says Darren Ettridge, Interval’s senior vice president of sales and business development for Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Ettridge, who admits the country is one of his “favorite places,” has visited there 30 to 40 times in the past 10 years.

### A Tale of Two Resorts

“We are fortunate to have a diverse vacation experience for any type of traveler,” Wilson says. “If you are looking for sun and white-sand beaches, there are plenty of these, as well as the African bush safari tours and world-renowned mountainous, wine-growing areas. There are the urban centers of Cape Town and Johannesburg, offering endless shopping opportunities. There is plenty to do and see, whatever the age group.”

A quick comparison of two Interval member resorts in the region illuminates the observation. Mjejane Game Reserve, in the northern part of the country, borders Kruger National Park, with direct access to the world-famous game preserve via a bridge. It offers unparalleled opportunities to see Africa’s “big five” — lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants, and Cape buffalos — in their natural element, all from the comfort of the rustic-chic resort.

Just 47 miles (76 kilometers) from Cape Town, eLan L’Ermitage Chateau & Villas, by contrast, exudes European elegance, underscored by chandeliers, snowy linen, and flutes of Champagne. Whispering fountains, manicured gardens, and postcard-worthy views invite guests to relax and be pampered.

“Most of the properties we have affiliated in the region are situated in the most highly demanded areas for both local and international travelers alike,” Wilson says. “We are proud to have multiple globally recognized award-winning affiliates as part of our network here.”

### A Home-Grown Market

“We see this market as being very domestic, meaning the majority of the exchange traffic is within the region,” Ettridge says. There are many contributing factors: Due to socio-political reasons, the South African rand has steadily declined since 2011 in comparison to the U.S. dollar, euro, and British pound. Wilson says, “For many South Africans, our weakening currency, increases in airport taxes, and rising fuel prices make international travel increasingly more expensive.”

According to Ettridge, an additional factor is in play: The country offers so many diverse experiences that there often is no reason to venture farther. In addition to Kruger National Park, there are nearly 2,000 miles (3,219 kilometers) of stunning coastline kissed by the Atlantic and Indian oceans, vineyards producing celebrated wines, and many other venues. With all of these treasures in their backyard, “South African residents seem to be content to explore their own country,” Ettridge says.

Regarding the currency exchange situation, Wilson notes, “On one hand, the travel sector has been negatively impacted. However, we at Interval South Africa experienced an 11-percent increase in international exchanges over 2015, as our regional member base found using their exchange options to be more affordable than cash bookings.”

### A ‘Wow’ for International Markets

International travelers are in for a singular experience when they step on South African soil, Ettridge says. “In terms of value for money, it’s remarkable. The food and wines are some of the best you’ll ever find. The value to the euro and British pound is amazing and the people are

very friendly.” He adds that international travelers are surprised that the country is so urbane, safe, and sophisticated. “And they are amazed that they can get modern-day service at such low prices.”

Why is this destination such a secret? “South Africa is right up there with Australia in terms of remoteness,” Ettridge says. The country draws many more visitors from the U.K. and Europe than from the U.S. because of the flight times and time differences involved, he adds.

The future of South African timeshare may well rest doubly on the curiosity and adventurous nature of savvy international travelers and on a domestic economy that will eventually rise from the doldrums.

Additionally, like South America, India, and China, South Africa is seeing a rise in the numbers of middle-class families. Notwithstanding the currency devaluation, positive social and economic change has come swiftly to South Africa, he adds.

According to a 2015 report by Credit Suisse, middle-class South Africans account for 13.7 percent of the adult population in the country, with nearly 4.3 million adult citizens. A November 2015 article in *Business Day*, the country’s national daily newspaper, noted that South Africa’s middle class grew by around 250 percent between 2004 and 2012.

Ettridge predicts that a recovering worldwide economy and changes in travel patterns will bring more visitors to South Africa, which may further boost timesharing there. “Globally, people desire to do different things now; they are more adventurous, especially in the U.K. and in Europe.” [1]

Catherine Lackner, based in Miami, Florida, writes for newspapers, magazines, and various media, and has been covering the vacation ownership industry for 11 years.

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

**Interval’s affiliated resorts in South Africa** offer a variety of exchange opportunities, whether the traveler prefers a city, beach, or safari adventure. Here is a sampling:

■ **Bantry Bay International Vacation Resort** is an idyllic setting from which to enjoy the wonders of Cape Town, and is situated a short distance from the famous Clifton and Camps Bay beaches.

■ **Simola Golf & Country Estate** is located high in the hills above the Garden Route town of Knysna, a favorite vacation destination among South Africans. The resort’s golf fairways merge seamlessly with lush vegetation and forest.

■ **SunSwop at Pine Lake** in White River has cozy two-story villas accented by tall fieldstone fireplaces. Exquisite sunrise and moonrise views on the lake are draws.

■ **SunSwop at Sabi River Sun** offers guests an 18-hole golf course, bowling green, squash and volleyball courts, swimming pools, and wildlife sightings along the river.

■ **SunSwop at Umhlanga Sands** boasts all sea-facing accommodations. Within walking distance is the village of Umhlanga Rocks, where guests can golf, dive, shop, dine, or try their hand at casino gambling.



By Joyce Hadley Copeland

A vibrant photograph of a tropical water park. In the foreground, two children are jumping from a yellow and blue inflatable slide into clear turquoise water. They are wearing blue life vests with 'wibit' written on the back. The child on the left has dark curly hair and is wearing a colorful striped swimsuit. The child on the right has dreadlocks and is wearing a pink swimsuit. They are holding hands as they jump. In the background, a sandy beach is visible with several people, palm trees, and resort buildings with red roofs. Lush green hills are in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. Other inflatable slides and people are visible in the water.

# Making Waves

How a Water Park Can  
Increase Sales, Revenue,  
and Satisfaction





BAY GARDENS BEACH RESORT'S SPLASH ISLAND WATER PARK (ST. LUCIA, CARIBBEAN)

A new generation of mammoth water parks with technology-stoked thrill rides, splash pads, and lush, lazy rivers — some under all-weather domes — are making the standard swimming pool passe, especially at family-oriented resorts.

Today's resort water park is the swimming pool on steroids — designed to be a revenue-generating destination where multigenerational families are happy to camp out together all day long. Often, year-round.

HYATT COCONUT PLANTATION RESORT  
(BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA)



### Acres of Family Fun

Mountainside Villas at Massanutten in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley proves a warm-weather destination is not a prerequisite for a water park. While skiing and winter sports has been its big draw for nearly four decades, the resort's indoor/outdoor water park now beats every other amenity in attendance, welcoming nearly 300,000 visitors in 2015.

"We're not in Vegas, we're not at the beach. Our resort is extremely family-focused," says Steve Krohn, COO at Massanutten. "It really is about having everybody under one roof, which we accomplish in the water park."

Massanutten WaterPark includes an acre (0.4 hectares) of indoor space with a lazy river, tube and body slides ranging up to 40 feet (12 meters), a shallow Frog Pond with water-spraying noodles for small children, and a family pool surrounding a central area with water cannons and a giant tipping bucket. The main attraction is a surf-simulator called The Pipeline, which creates an endless perfect wave with a continuous flow of 50,000 gallons (189,270 liters) of water over a trampoline-style mat. Outdoors, there is a four-lane, headfirst





MOUNTAINSIDE VILLAS AT MASSANUTTEN'S  
MASSANUTTEN WATERPARK (VIRGINIA)

downhill slide, a wave pool, and an activity area with spray jets and a floating crosswalk.

The decision to add the water park fell in line with Massanutten's plans, in 2003, to increase its timeshare accommodations by 50 percent. "We had a huge base to begin with, and the water park would appeal to them, but we also had huge sales aspirations," Krohn says. "Clearly, having an additional large-scale amenity would help that sales effort and the overall appeal of the resort." The resort's founders traveled to large water parks in the Wisconsin Dells, the self-proclaimed Water Park Capital of the World, to see firsthand what was popular, safe, and reliable.

A hit since it opened in 2005, Massanutten WaterPark regularly pops up on "best-of" lists, including *USA Today's* 10Best Readers' Choice—Best Indoor Water Parks in 2015.

Owners of Massanutten's more than 1,300 timeshare units get discounted admission to the water park. However, more than 40 percent of visitors are day-trippers who drive in from metro areas such as Baltimore, Maryland, and pay full admission. Many also rent equipment, take surfing lessons, and dine at one of four on-site restaurants, making it a key profit center.

### Trends and Technology

Resorts, along with other leisure venues such as cruise ships and campgrounds, are following suit. According to Hotel & Leisure Advisors, a hospitality consulting firm, Westgate Town Center in Kissimmee, Florida, was one of six resorts to add a water park in 2015, with the opening of its 39,000-square-foot (3,623 square meters) Shipwreck Island. Featuring a pirate ship, water slides, a lazy river, a children's play area, 16 private cabanas, and a steakhouse, the park is part of a trend in designing water parks around a particular theme.

Today's technology allows slides to follow any path imaginable, moving riders up and down inclines and propelling them from side to side. At some parks, riders can float from one ride to another without having to stand in line. In larger commercial parks, faster rides mimic amusement park experiences. Mini-versions of lazy rivers, wave ponds, and slides cater to children who don't meet the 42-inch (106 centimeters) minimum height requirements for many rides. One of the hottest trends is adding skill-based challenges, such as surfing and racing.

And, while most parks include seating areas for adults who prefer to stay dry and watch the action, many grandparents want to join in the

fun. "It is certainly not just the children who enjoy it," Krohn says, recalling a silver-haired gentleman who tackled the surf simulator. "I don't know if the guy flew in from California, but he was upright and lookin' cool. I was very envious."

### Going Natural

Floating just off-shore of Bay Gardens Beach Resort on St. Lucia's popular Reduit Beach, Splash Island Water Park is the first open-water sports park in the eastern Caribbean. The inflatable structure is decked out with obstacle course-style features, including a trampoline, climbing wall, monkey bars, swing, slide, hurdles, double rocker, flip, and water volleyball. It's a less-intense version of the TV game show "Total Wipe Out," designed to appeal to a wide range of ages from 6 years to active people in their 60s and 70s, says Julianna Ward-Destang.

As director of finance for Bay Gardens, Ward-Destang championed the water park as a way to resuscitate the family-owned resort's bottom line after the recession.

"Your typical water park on the land is very expensive," she says. "On an island like St. Lucia, we have water shortages at different times in the year and that would not have been a good fit." She explains that the Green Globe-certified property was looking for something that used minimal water and electricity and didn't put a drain on the island's resources. The modular structure can quickly be dismantled, detached from its anchor, and pulled to shore if a storm blows in.

Because there's nothing else like it on the island, Bay Gardens' new amenity has generated a lot of buzz, increasing timeshare sales and adding revenue from the newly opened SeaGrapes Beach Bar, as well as special events and day passes sold to locals and cruise ship passengers.

### All About the Experience

Not every resort water park has to push the envelope to be a guest favorite. The tried-and-true lazy river and zero-entry beach



WESTGATE TOWN CENTER'S SHIPWRECK  
ISLAND (KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA)





HYATT WILD OAK RANCH  
(SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS)

can amplify a resort's unique surroundings and fulfill on the water park's promise of "something for everyone."

"There's a certain allure in being able to float along the river and have the waterfalls going and music in the background," says Reinery Martinez, resort manager at the Hyatt Coconut Plantation Resort. The Bonita Springs, Florida, resort is a microcosm of its tropical surroundings, including a 1,000-foot-long (305 meters) lazy river called Alligator Alley, two freeform lagoon pools with waterfalls called Paradise East and Paradise West, a zero-entry children's pool, and an adults-only lap pool.

"Our lazy river has three different sound zones. As you're floating through the rapids, you might have jungle music playing, then you'll float into a more serene area with birdsong, and toward the exit, we'll have calypso music playing," Martinez says. The background music, splashing waterfalls, and canopy of foliage also create a "wow" factor for prospects touring the property.

Hyatt Wild Oak Ranch in San Antonio, Texas, is ideally located for a favorite Hill Country activity: floating down a river in an inner tube. However, getting to a river, renting an inner tube, then returning to the resort after you've been on the river for an hour or two can be more hectic than relaxing. So Wild Oak Ranch convinces vacationing families to stay put and enjoy its lazy river and zero-entry sandy beach right on site. The resort also has indoor/outdoor heated pools, poolside cabanas, water slides, water volleyball and basketball, and a cactus-themed splash pad.

"You feel very much like you're out in the Hill Country, with the lush oak and cypress trees and beautiful landscaping," says Jami Champagne, senior resort manager. "You get the experience of tubing on the river, but it's super-relaxing. You'll see 70-year-olds floating along as much as you see teenagers or little kids." Champagne adds that the resort provides double tubes for couples or families who don't want to get separated on the river, and even infant tubes with the bottom in them, so parents can safely float around the river with their babies and toddlers.

### Safety Rules

While water parks tend to be safer than playing in the ocean, a river, or a lake, they demand safety measures geared to the equipment and terrain.

"We work diligently to ensure the safety of our guests

and owners," Champagne says. Associates certified in CPR and first aid patrol the pool areas, and TV monitors mounted at the top of each water slide keep riders from piling into each other at the bottom. During peak season, staff members monitor water slides, adding an extra layer of safety.

Massanutten WaterPark is staffed by Red Cross-certified lifeguards and attendants trained in first aid, CPR, and the use of automated defibrillators (AEDs), and lifeguards receive additional certifications in oxygen and water-rescue skills. The Red Cross performs unannounced quarterly

audits, testing randomly selected staff in team rescue scenarios.

Everyone who steps aboard Bay Gardens' Splash Island Water Park must be over the age of 6 and wearing a life vest. The park is staffed by three to six lifeguards certified in open-water rescue.

### Sparkly and Sustainable

"Anytime someone gets out of a body of water, they take about a gallon of water with their swimsuit," says Dana Staniunas, Massanutten's director of recreation and the day-to-day manager of the water park. That means conserving the 20,000 to 25,000 gallons (76,000 to 95,000 liters) of water the park uses on an average day is a big deal. Most of the runoff is captured by drains near slides and wave pool exits and flows back to the pump room, where it goes through a three-step filtration system — first sand, then chlorine, and finally UV purification — before it's reintroduced into the water park. A maintenance team tests water chemistry throughout the day.

With a ready supply of clean seawater, Splash Island Water Park focuses on keeping the structure free of algae and barnacles. Water features are cleaned daily using products that won't harm the coexisting ecosystem.

### Weighing Benefits and Costs

For all its sizzle and potential for long-term profit, adding a water park should not be undertaken lightly, advise those who've done it.

Bottom line, Krohn says, "It costs more to operate than you would expect it to, it will wind up costing more to build than you would expect it to, and it has to stay fresh, so you have to constantly bring in new features, retail options, [and] restaurant options."

While six resorts opened water parks in 2015, Hotel & Leisure Advisors also noted that two more closed their indoor water parks because the profit didn't justify operating costs.

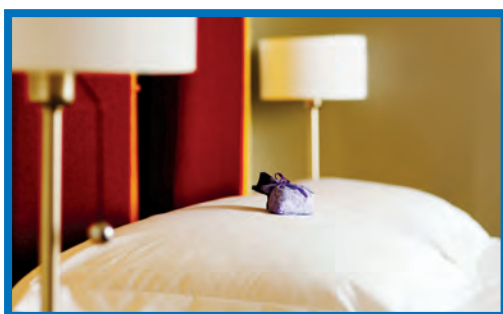
"I guess the best advice I would say is do your homework," Krohn advises. "This is obviously a very technical physical facility and economic operation, so hire the right expertise. Whether the facility will be appealing and financially viable is really site-specific. We felt like we had the right site and we knew our owner base was interested in doing it. That made it easier for us." [1]

Joyce Hadley Copeland, based in Tucson, Arizona, contributes regularly to travel and hospitality publications and websites.



# The New Gold (and

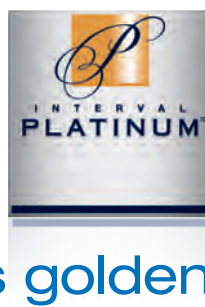
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# The Ties That Bond

## Multigenerational Vacationers and Timesharing Prove a Compatible Pair

By Betsy Sheldon

Blame it on Grandma and Grandpa.

As together time becomes ever more scarce, the popularity of multigenerational vacations continues to spread like the branches of a family tree. Sources from AAA to AARP confirm it. Whether at a resort or on a cruise or near a theme park, grandkids, cousins, nieces and nephews, adult siblings, and grandparents are gathering in greater numbers. And much evidence points to the most senior members of the group as the force behind these extended-family getaways.

Regardless of who is leading the charge, the enduring trend that brings generations of family under the same resort roof demands the attention of vacation ownership developers as an opportunity to embrace.



### It's on the Grandparents

In many parts of the world, vacationing as an extended family has been the tradition for generations. In other places, including the U.S., the parallel climb of multigenerational vacationing and the aging of baby boomers is no coincidence. As the first wave of this group hit retirement in the mid to late 2000s, the multigen travel trend began its upward crawl, as noted by observers including Peter Yesawich, vice president of MMGY Global, a U.S.-based integrated marketing firm specializing in travel.

Multigenerational vacationing is “driven by an aging population, and as people move into retirement, the number-one thing they tell us they want to do is travel for leisure,” says Yesawich. He points to some numbers from MMGY Global’s 2015 *Portrait of the American Traveler*:

“Today, 21 percent of all travelers in America are grandparents. And that percentage is going to grow as the population continues to age.” When asked how many have taken a leisure trip with their grandchildren in the past 12 months, 32 percent indicated so. This group was then

asked whether the grandchildren’s parents were part of the trip, and 73 percent said yes.

Yesawich’s research jibes with statistics from AARP to suggest a continuing popularity. According to 2015 AARP membership research, of those who took a multigenerational trip, the satisfaction rate was 98 percent, and 85 percent plan a multigenerational trip in the future.

What inspires grandparents to initiate these vacations? Says Yesawich, it’s the fact that this generation feels that the extended family does not spend enough time together. And according to William Sutherland, vice president of travel services for AAA, today’s grandparents “value spending time with their children and grandchildren. In today’s fast-paced world, travel affords families an opportunity to spend quality time reconnecting and sharing experiences.”

### Precious Memories

Amelia and David Chan may just be the poster grandparents for the multigenerational travel trend. The couple, in their 70s, has four children, seven grandchildren, and a handful of great-grandchildren ranging in age from infant to 6 years old. They are owners of a two-bedroom at the Hyatt Windward Pointe Resort.

“Every two or three years, one of the families, consisting of a son or daughter with their spouse and children, comes with us to our Key West vacation,” says Amelia Chan.

Although she says the family gets together regularly during the year, spending time with each other while on vacation affords additional benefits. “We have opportunities to spend quality, unhurried time with each member, since every family member is very busy throughout the year. Intergenerational vacation time and memories are truly precious and treasured by all.”

### Not Just an American Phenomenon

Multigenerational travel isn’t just an American phenomenon, nor is it new — it’s been prevalent in many parts of the world, including Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. And the drivers may not always be grandparents.

In Asia, vacations are commonly taken as a larger family unit, because families tend to live together — or at least have much closer contact with each other. “It is not uncommon for children to live at home well into their 30s, even after marriage,” observes Joe Hickman, vice president and executive director of Asia/Pacific for Interval International. Hickman, who has lived in Asia for more than 30 years, sees this as an extension of values placed on strong family ties, which differs from some cultures in the West. “If you were to ask me, when I had young kids, to take my parents or in-laws with us on holiday, you would have heard my groan halfway around the world.”

In Latin America, as well, extended family





## Multigenerational travel isn't just an American phenomenon, nor is it new — it's been prevalent in many parts of the world, including Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia.

vacations have been the norm. "There's always been a lot of family travel in Latin America," observes Marcos Agostini, senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Interval International in Latin America. "Adult siblings and cousins get together and bring the kids, the grandparents, and the in-laws."

Also, he notes, the initiators of the trips are usually in the "parent" generation, "the Gen Xers who make the plans and include the baby-boomer grandparents."

But factors such as a burgeoning middle class with more discretionary capital in the hands of the working generation and the fact that people are living longer may stimulate more multigen travel activity involving three — even four — generations of family members, says Agostini.

### A Fit With Timeshare Resorts

Regardless of country of origin, for multigenerational vacationers, not all travel accommodations are created equal. Certain qualities pair well with the extended-family crowd: Space for a larger group. Multiple bedrooms, but also gathering spots where the family can comfortably congregate — a dining room, living area, or patio. A kitchen where meals can be prepared. Activities to suit a variety of interests and age ranges. And, especially among the grandparent generation — a good value.

Sound familiar? That description could have been ripped from a vacation ownership resort brochure. No surprise that timesharing's a good fit for multigen family groups. The same aspects that make it appeal to the traditional family also fulfill the needs of the extended family.

Says Howard Nusbaum, president and CEO of the American Resort Development Association, "Timesharing is a way you can travel with your kids and your aging parents and your niece and nephew and so forth, and everybody can still get the privacy they need. It's not eating pizza on a bed and 21 meals out in a seven-day period. It's sitting around the table, being able to cook, and having that mealtime being a time of discovery. It's a much better way for the multigenerational group to vacation and to nurture."

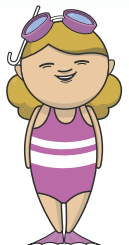
## Multigen Must-Haves

As many experts will attest, timeshare resorts, by their very nature, appeal to the multigen crowds. But there are certain elements that do double-time in drawing these guests. Here are a few:



### Supervised kids' programs.

Parents and grandparents feel better about pursuing more mature pleasures knowing the kids are safe, happy, and occupied.



**Above-and-beyond amenities.** The swimming pool is a given. But with competition from cruises and theme parks, features such as water parks, climbing walls, and zip lining add value.

**Meeting space.** Whether a separate dining area, a picnic shelter, or even a meeting room, family groups like to have a private place reserved for their clan gatherings.

**Bathroom equity.** With multiple families in one unit, adequate bathrooms are a must, ideally one bathroom per bedroom.

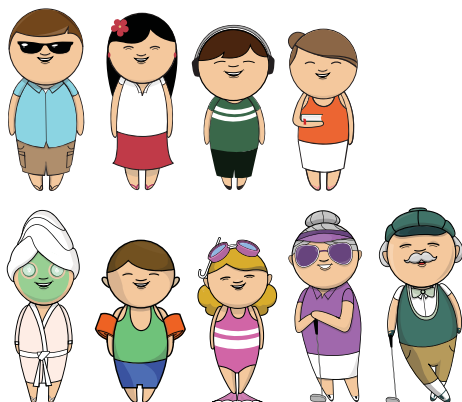


### Activities for a range of interests.

Everyone will be happier coming together if they can indulge in their own favorite pastimes, be it a massage at the spa, a paintball skirmish, a round of golf, or a good book poolside.



**Safety and security.** Knowing that the property has good security offers needed peace of mind that loved ones can comfortably explore.



**“We need more space!”**

## Meeting the Multigenerational Demand

Building bigger units is certainly one way to satisfy the needs of larger family groups. But with the majority of vacation owners possessing a two-bedroom unit or smaller, what can a resort do to accommodate their owners when they need more space for a multigenerational vacation? Interval International–affiliated resorts have a few options:

**Club Interval Gold®.** Owners who are members of this points-based program can take advantage of the flexibility that points allow and trade up for more or larger units.

**Unit Upgrades.** Those who own a traditional week product can trade their unit for a larger one, for a fee, through this program.

**Getaways.** Interval members can book the number of units needed in addition to or without using their exchange. These weeklong rentals are available at affordable rates.

### Bigger is Better

Nusbaum observes that timeshare developers are responding to the demand. “I can tell you when I talk to developers, they’re building more and more three- and four-bedroom units, where it used to be everyone only had studios and one-bedrooms.”

That’s been the experience of Westgate Resorts, according to Mark Waltrip, the company’s chief operating officer. “We started sales over 35 years ago, and over the past decade, we have seen an increase in the use of our resorts by extended families.”

With a focus on SMERF (social, military, educational, reunions, and families) business, Westgate has modified its unit design with this market in mind. “Over the past 10 years, we have redesigned all of our new unit plans with the flexibility to connect various unit types to accommodate group sizes ranging from two to 20 in the same unit. We have created upwards of six lockouts in some cases.”

Breckenridge Grand Vacations in Colorado has also responded to a demand for larger units. “We knew that there was a growing push over the last five to seven years,” says Dave Stroeve, vice president of sales operations. “We saw larger groups asking for bigger units. I don’t know a lot of developers out there who have built very large, four-bedroom residences that are 2,700 to 2,800 square feet.”

Ample space was paramount for the Chans as they put plans together for a full family reunion at their home resort in Key West a few years ago. “The resort has to be accommodating to assign units convenient for a multigenerational group,” says Amelia Chan. While they owned a two-bedroom unit, which would hardly have housed the 21 family members in their group, they were able to rent units close to each other. “We occupied five two-bedroom units, one unit for each of the married children and family,” recalls Chan.

Other big pluses for the Chans were the kitchens in each unit (“We definitely only consider accommodations with a full kitchen to prepare various daily meals without eating out all the time”), and plenty of public space, including a restaurant that was able to accommodate their group of 30 (including local friends) each night for dinner.

“Every so often, we will reminisce about an event [that occurred] during the intergenerational vacation, something funny or special that happened — very fuzzy, warm feelings.”

**Amelia Chan**, owner of a two-bedroom at the Hyatt Windward Pointe Resort



### Something for Everyone

Whether during their full family reunion or their smaller group getaways, diversity in activity is also important to the Chans.

That's why cruises and theme park vacations prove so popular with these groups. This is indicated by MMGY studies, reports Yesawich. The AARP research supports these findings, with 80 percent of AARP members indicating they prefer cities, beach, or theme park destinations for multigenerational getaways. And cruising is popular with 25 percent.

Similarly, the self-contained nature of many timeshare properties — in which within the parameters of the resort site are enough depth and breadth of amenities to keep everyone busy — appeals to multigen vacationers. That's one of the key reasons that Ivan Chavez, executive vice president for Grupo Vidanta, believes the Mexico-based developer's properties appeal to extended family groups.

"Our resorts are known for providing families with a convenient and safe environment for their vacation," says Chavez. "All the luxury amenities and activities a family could possibly need — including a kids' club specializing in programs for children of all ages, gourmet restaurants, high-end spas, boutique shopping, and world-class entertainment — are available without having to leave the comfort of the resort. Even



beach activities, such as snorkeling or sailing or day expeditions, can be arranged through the resort concierge."

Developers including Westgate Resorts find that meeting the demand for good value succeeds in appealing to multigen groups. Says Waltrip, "We put great emphasis on providing a wide range of activities and amenities at each resort. This includes water parks, activity play areas, putt-putt golf courses, and more, all of which add tremendous value to extended families who are looking for group activities that don't hit their pocketbook. Almost all of these amenities and activities are free to our owners."

John Burlingame, president of Hyatt Vacation Ownership concurs. "We know our owners, including those who travel with extended family, seek a variety of experiences while visiting a Hyatt property. We strive to provide those options at all our locations through carefully planned activities for all ages, and all of our 16 resorts can customize activities to meet the needs of our owners."

### Together Time

The Chans seem to find that's the case, at least at the Hyatt Windward Pointe Resort, where a typical vacation day includes a good mix of together and apart time. Says Amelia Chan, "We split up for various outside activities: fishing, snorkeling, biking." She says that while they don't eat all of their meals together, they join as a group for dinner about five times a week. The family also indulges in activities provided by preferred vendors, including scooter rentals, snorkeling, and chartering a party boat for a day of fishing.

At Breckenridge Grand Vacations, Stroeve observes that family groups are drawn to the pastimes that allow them to be together. "These people are the ones who go on the dinner sleigh ride as an entire family. You get 20 people in a sleigh and they ride to a big tent and have dinner. We built these large movie theater rooms — they're always booked, with the entire family watching a movie."

Although their multigenerational vacations may be once-a-year events, recurring memories are more frequent, says Amelia Chan. "Every so often, we will reminisce about an event [that occurred] during the intergenerational vacation, something funny or special that happened — very fuzzy, warm feelings."

And warm feelings are what it's all about. It's clear that people suffering from time famine and starving for familial connection are looking for their vacations to feed the need for quality family bonding. And while Grandma and Grandpa might often be the force behind the increase in multigenerational vacations, the whole family benefits. [ ]





# Caribbean Gem Gets Perpetual Polishing

The Oyster Bay Beach Resort occupies an exceptional location on what is an already-unique Caribbean island. The St. Maarten/St. Martin landmass, as veterans of the vacation world know, is split roughly in half between two European countries, with the Netherlands flag flying on the southern portion, and the French to the north.

Oyster Bay's address is Dutch, but the property is literally around the corner from the French border. "There is no impediment to traveling between the two countries," explains Ricardo Perez, the resort's general manager. "So we're in a great position because both sides of the island, with their distinct cultures, are close."

In addition to the culturally rewarding atmosphere, the geographic setting is sublime. "The resort is on a peninsula surrounded on one side by the Atlantic Ocean and Dawn Beach, and on the other side by Oyster Pond and its three marinas," says Perez. "The oceanfront units that are close to the crashing waves compete with the sedate and tropical views of the marina, as well as the units with views of the surrounding hills dotted with beautiful homes."

There's only one road that accesses the property's 4 acres (1.6 hectares), and a gatehouse that is staffed around the clock, seven days a week, marks the resort's entrance. "We're also on the more quiet side of St. Maarten, where traffic is scarce anyway," adds Perez.



## To Infinity ...

With the quiet, tropical vibe, the views, and the proximity to another country, it'd make sense to presume Oyster Bay's physical location is its chief highlight. But Anne Marie Brooks, assistant general manager, notes that the resort also has a full package of amenities. "There's no doubt that





its centerpiece is the free-form infinity pool that winds along the oceanfront and gives the feeling that one is swimming in the ocean.”

The popular amoeba-shaped water feature is located on an expansive sun deck that serves as an afternoon gathering place for guests who can’t resist stopping in for a dip, even after a full day of island activities. “Along with the pool is an ocean-front hot tub that can accommodate 10 people,” says Brooks. “And the views from there, across the ocean, of St. Barth’s are spectacular.”

For owners and visitors who’d prefer to get in the Atlantic rather than just look out over it, Oyster Bay partially fronts Dawn Beach. “The resort maintains 70 beach chairs and umbrellas for the exclusive and free use of our guests,” says Brooks. “We also supply, for free, first-class snorkeling gear to explore the nearby reefs.”

Opposite the pool and beach, one of Oyster Pond’s marinas was developed and is managed by Oyster Bay Beach Resort. Brooks explains that some of the slips are commercial water sports operations that provide daily snorkeling, diving, sightseeing, and day-trips to nearby uninhabited Islands, “so the availability of those activities is right at the doorstep of our guests.”

### ... And Beyond

While the infinity pool may be Oyster Bay’s centerpiece, the adjacent namesake restaurant is getting renewed attention from owners and guests, thanks to a recent renovation. “We specifically decided to schedule the signature Infinity Restaurant as our next big project because it hadn’t been updated since the mid-2000s,” says Perez. The outdoor dining deck was made more European in style by the use of Italian cantilevered umbrellas that, besides looking very elegant, cover most of the deck in the event of light rain or too much sun.

In addition, Infinity includes a bar and lounge area, which also were completely remodeled. In fact, the bar doubled in size and, like the restaurant deck, the bar deck looks out over the Atlantic Ocean and provides guests with ultra-chic comfort for outdoor cocktails.

“It’s all quite attractive,” Perez adds. “The designer and architect who planned it have already won awards for this project.”

Visitor satisfaction, of course, is the most important honor. “The owners have really responded enthusiastically,” Perez says. “We see it through the frequent positive comments they make on their comment cards, and hear it when they stop us on property and thank us for a great job. These projects show them that the developer is keeping their end of the bargain and not only maintaining, but improving, the resort.”

And owners are rewarding the development team by spending more time — and money — on property at Oyster Bay. By the numbers, since the renovation, the bar is twice as busy and the restaurant has seen a 30-percent increase in revenue.

## fastfacts

### Oyster Bay Beach Resort

**Developer:** Pearl Development NV  
**Location:** Blue Bell, Pennsylvania  
**Product:** Fixed unit/fixed weeks, as well as flexible-use options offered on an annual or biennial basis  
**Price:** US\$12,500 to US\$110,000  
**Website:** oysterbaybeachresort.com  
**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter

### Perpetual Upgrades

The restaurant overhaul is an extremely out-in-the-open undertaking, but it’s hardly the only remodeling happening at Oyster Bay. “We have a long-term plan of perpetual renovation and modernization,” Perez says. “We are constantly selecting a block of units that we feel are due for certain levels of remodeling. Soon we will be tackling the units that we renovated in 2010, which are due for some attention.”

What this means for visitors is that none of Oyster Bay’s 170 timeshare units go more than roughly five years without some sort of facelift.

In other words, the 74 studios, 72 one-bedrooms, and 24 two-bedroom accommodations — outfitted in chic Caribbean decor, including large tropical artwork on the walls and high-quality linens in the closets — always feel fresh.

They’re functional, too. One- and two-bedroom units have a 40-inch TV and DVD player in the living room, a full kitchen, and a dining room that can comfortably seat six guests. Studios have 32-inch flat-screens and half-kitchens that are equipped with a microwave, refrigerator, stove, and a full complement of cooking utensils and flatware, including stemmed wine glasses.

### Staff Stability

The constant structural improvements are certainly a positive aspect of Oyster Bay ownership. When it comes to the staff, though, the opposite is true, and the low turnover is what stands out. “I think the average tenure is about 10 years, and a number of our staff members have been with us more than 30 years,” Perez says. “I really think that’s one of our greatest strengths. The relationship between our owners and our employees is truly unique in that the owners are seen as part of the employees’ families and are treated with that level of care and respect.”

This relationship goes a long way toward explaining how Oyster Bay’s sales and marketing team can have so much success with such little off-site work. “We sell strictly to our in-house owners, hotel guests, and Interval exchange clients,” Perez explains, “and we have very low marketing costs as these people are often already interested in learning more about our product based on their actual vacation experience and do not require expensive promotions.”

Which is why Oyster Bay’s affiliation with Interval International makes perfect sense. “Interval not only provides our members with quality exchange resorts, but the Interval exchangers who come here are very experienced timeshare users who greatly appreciate what we have to offer,” adds Perez. “They make very good clients, and are willing and able participants in our sales process.” **[1]**





# Resort Casino Empire Expands to **Aruba**

Tropicana Entertainment Inc., a successful owner and operator of resort casinos in six U.S. states and Aruba, last year launched its maiden shared ownership venture in Aruba. The platform: a property in a stellar Dutch Caribbean location, one that the company bought as its first acquisition outside of the U.S.







Although accommodations were set aside for owners who wanted to use their time, Tropicana Entertainment operated the property for the past five years as a resort casino, which is the company's core business. The Las Vegas-based, publicly traded firm employs more than 7,000, and owns or operates seven U.S. casino resorts that comprise 5,526 rooms, 8,075 slot positions, and 277 table games.

What the company needed was a partner with expertise in the timeshare and leisure industries and a sterling reputation. "The partnership with Interval was really the key," says Richard Roy, general manager of Tropicana Aruba Resort & Casino. "We first locked in the contract, and then we were up and running in November 2015."

"Tropicana Aruba has been a great addition to Interval's exchange offerings," notes David Gilbert, president of Interval International. "With the company's reputation in the gaming sector and a location that is extremely popular with Interval members, Tropicana Aruba is off to a promising start. We look forward to playing a part in its success."

### A Gut Renovation

The company has spent US\$5 million on a down-to-the-studs renovation of 74 units at Tropicana Aruba, and is planning for additional renovations of timeshare units in the coming years.

"Everything has been completely replaced, from the air-conditioning ducts and the plumbing to the furniture, flooring, and paint," Roy says. New furnishings convey a balmy tropical vibe. Appliances in the large kitchens were upgraded to stainless steel, and glass cooktops, quartz countertops, and mosaic backsplashes have been added. In the bathrooms, the mosaic tile theme is repeated, and new, modern glass shower enclosures open up the spaces. Even the dark railings on the exterior have been repainted a lighter color.

The units themselves range in size from 700 to 1,356 square feet (65 to 126 square meters); each has a private patio or balcony.

Owners and visitors enjoy two swimming pools, one of which has a water slide. "We have the only water slide on the island," Roy says. "Families love that." There are also a swim-up bar, restaurant and lounge, jetted hot tubs, tennis courts, a day spa, bar and food service in the casino, a fitness center, and live entertainment.

Eagle Beach, considered one of the most beautiful in the Caribbean and a regular on top-beaches lists, is a short walk from the property. Its powdery white sands stretch for about a mile, and it is a favorite among scuba divers, who routinely enjoy up to 75 feet (23 meters) of visibility through the crystalline waters.

### A Lucky Advantage

Tropicana Aruba's target buyer lives in the U.S. or Canada; many are visitors at other Tropicana Entertainment casino resorts. In that respect, the company is fortunate to have a built-in benefit and lead generator: the Tropicana Advantage Players Club.

The loyalty program rewards guests by assigning points for gaming activity and other

spending at Tropicana Entertainment resorts, each of which has its own club. (Tropicana Atlantic City alone has 5 million Tropicana Advantage Players Club members, Roy says.) Points are interchangeable, however, and can be spent for various perks, including stays at Tropicana Aruba. There are five tiers, with rewards increasing as members progress through the levels.

"There are different types of competitions, including tournaments, slots, and table games, to win a timeshare week," Roy says. "It's a very successful program. You can win a three-day free vacation in Aruba. All of our hotels are running specials now for Tropicana Aruba."

For those who are not regular visitors to Tropicana Entertainment venues, "Mini-vacs are our biggest tool right now," Roy says. The company also advertises in newspapers and magazines, by text message, through social media, and by direct mail. "We have our own databases and are considering buying other databases, as well," Roy says.

The resort's geographic proximity to South America and a rising middle class there have created a consumer base that is ripe for the Tropicana Aruba product, Roy says. "We've had great success in South America, particularly in Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina."

### Selling on Merits

Roy believes the property, the destination, and the ownership structure will close the deal for many who tour the resort.

With 1.07 million stay-over visitors, Aruba made history in 2014, the Aruba Tourism Authority reported last year. The previous record, nearly 980,000 visitors, was set in 2013. Arrivals in 2014 increased by 9.5 percent, which included a 3.7-percent increase in visitors from the U.S., a 26.8-percent increase in South American tourists, and a 4.1-percent increase in visitors from Europe.

Timeshare sales are another reflection of the island's popularity. "In Aruba, there is limited inventory for sales," Roy says. "We are only selling the renovated units, and we have quite a bit of inventory," about four or five years' worth, he estimates. "We are selling fixed weeks and fixed units, which is hard to find here. The inventory is depleted and most of what's available is on points programs. That vast inventory will drive business."

Not only has partnership with Interval eased the way into the shared ownership arena, but it has made some of the industry's most effective technology available to the staff. "We are using the Interval Sales Tool Kit," Roy says. "It has been a great tool for us." The multifaceted tool kit features many components, but it has been the Interval Exchange Tracker that has captivated prospective owners the most, Roy says.

"A kiosk in our sales office runs the Tracker continuously, so that prospects can see exchanges into and out of our property," he explains. "It has been great for our sales process." [1]

## fastfacts

### Tropicana Aruba Resort & Casino

**Developer:** Tropicana Entertainment Inc.

**Headquarters:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**Product:** Fixed week, fixed unit, deeded in perpetuity

**Units:** 319 one-bedroom, 30 two-bedroom, 13 three-bedroom

**Prices:** US\$14,500 to US\$60,000 for penthouse suites

**Website:** troparuba.com

**Social media:** Facebook

By Marcos Ommati

# Exploring New Territory in Ecuador

The family-run **Cialco S.A.** has never been shy about trying something different. Since 1968, the company has thoughtfully and successfully entered new business realms, from concrete-making to hotel development, becoming somewhat of a multitiered celebrity of Ecuador's business community.

So it certainly wasn't out of character when, last year, the company decided to enter an unexplored arena: offering a points club through its Cialcotel-branded chain of boutique hotels. And it was this decision that led the company to a new partnership.

In the fall of 2015, Cialco entered into a long-term agreement with vacation exchange company Interval International and with EQRooms C.A., which operates Cialco's vacation points program, Rooms Ecuador. The agreement comprises seven existing Cialcotel hotels in a variety of locations throughout Ecuador, as well as future properties. "As we expanded our product line, the expertise provided by the seasoned Interval team — with their innovative point-of-sale technology — has proven invaluable," says José Luis Alvarez, president of Cialcotel. "Along with global exchange options, our members will appreciate Interval's leisure programs, member benefits, and excellent customer service."

The agreement with Interval International is only one more step in the course of a company that is opening the doors to promoting the properties to travelers from all over the world.

## Diversity in Destinations

"What sets the Cialcotel tourist hotels apart," according to Francisco Alvarez, president of Rooms Ecuador and one of Cialco's main shareholders, "are their locations near some of Ecuador's most notable natural and cultural attractions." These include beaches, ecological reserves, lakes, volcanoes, and the colonial cities of Quito, the country's capital situated in the Andes mountains' central *Altiplano*, and Cuenca, with nearby Inca ruins in the southern mountainous region.

Each property offers several activities, and food and beverage services. The prices range from between US\$120 to US\$380 per night, says Francisco Alvarez.

## An Industrious History

Cialco was founded in 1968, by Quito-born engineer José Luis Alvarez Burbano de Lara, as a family-owned construction and development company. During its first 45 years, the company forayed into a wide range of projects, including real-estate development, construction of country clubs and industrial factories, as well as technological, training, and tourism enterprises, among many other endeavors. A trailblazer in Ecuador's construction industry, Alvarez Burbano launched the city's first pre-mixed concrete business. He also built Ecuador's

first country club. Over time, the company gave rise to more than 30 different businesses.

In 1975, Cialco began construction of its first hotel, which opened its doors in 1978, the same year the company opened a subsidiary dedicated exclusively to tourism development. Ultimately, Cialco developed what would become the first wholly Ecuadorean hotel chain, Apartec, which remained under its ownership for more than 25 years.

In 2002, Cialco restructured and established a new concept in the Ecuadorean hotel industry. It began to focus on developing, promoting, administering, and building boutique and colonial hotels under the Cialcotel brand.

Alvarez Burbano died in 2014, and his wife and children, including Francisco and José Luis, have taken the helm and continue to cement his legacy and vision.

"His business leadership transcended the public arena as founder of many of the city's main industries: banking, training, and tourism," says Francisco Alvarez. "He is recognized — even today — as one of the most important and influential businessmen in Ecuador."

## Reaching an Ecuadorean Market

The Rooms Ecuador product is a 10-year points club that allows owners flexible access to a certain number of stays per year in Cialcotel properties. New purchasers at Rooms Ecuador will be enrolled as individual members of Interval International and will also become Interval Gold® members, entitling them to a number of flexible exchange opportunities and upgraded benefits and services.

The group uses social media, magazine ads, and direct contact as principal marketing strategies to reach its audience, and develops an annual marketing and advertising plan that includes these, together with strategic alliances and others.

"We are pleased to see Cialco join the industry and take advantage of the potential growth opportunities that shared ownership offers in the region," says Marcos Agostini, Interval's senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Latin America. "Consumers interested in traveling throughout Ecuador will be able to purchase vacation time and enjoy a wide range of experiences." **[ ]**

Marcos Ommati has more than 20 years of international experience in journalism. He is editor-in-chief of the U.S. Southern Command's *Diálogo* magazine and website.

## fastfacts

### Cialcotel

**Developer:** Cialco, S.A. and EQRooms, C.A.  
José Luis Alvarez, president, Cialcotel (Cialco, C.A.); Francisco X. Alvarez, president, Rooms Ecuador (EQRooms, C.A.)

**Headquarters:** Quito, Ecuador

**Product:** Points club

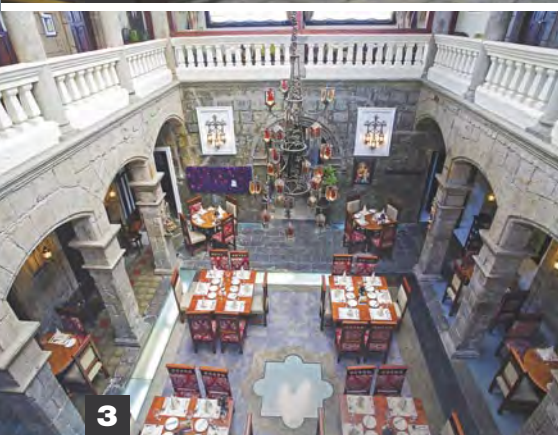
**Units:** Studios, some one-bedrooms

**Price:** From US\$3,900 to US\$9,000 for a 10-year points package

**Website:** [www.cialcotel.com](http://www.cialcotel.com)

**Social Media:** Facebook





## A Taste of Ecuador

Diversity is a defining factor of the Cialcotel collection of properties offering the Rooms Ecuador points product. From urban hotspots to relaxing beach locations, there's a vacation experience for everyone.

**1. Hotel La Piedra** in Bahía de Caráquez, is on the scenic Pacific coast, near lush green forests, thermal pools, and other naturally beautiful attractions.

**2. Hostería Rumipamba de las Rosas**, on the outskirts of the town of Salcedo, offers modern comforts in a restored hacienda, surrounded by landscaped gardens and green areas.

**3. Roka Plaza Hotel Boutique** is situated in the heart of Ambato, in the mountainous central region. The historic house has been artfully restored to maintain its colonial ambiance.

**4. Sangay Spa Hotel** offers rustic, warmly colored cabins to its guests. The property is in the city of Baños, where waterfalls and thermal pools heated by an active volcano are a draw.

**5. Hotel Boutique Patio Andaluz** is set in Quito, one of the first cities to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. The hotel, built to look like a 16th-century structure, blends in well with its colonial surroundings.

**6. Hotel Playa Coaque**, currently under construction, is an eco-resort in Jama, Manabí, in a natural setting amid a private forest.

**7. Hotel Boutique Carvallo** is a 19th-century mansion in the historic center of Cuenca, another UNESCO World Heritage site in the country's south.





# Promise in a Growing Chinese Market

On the Shandong peninsula in eastern China, where the city of Yantai meets the coast of the Yellow and Bohai seas, the Best Western Yantai Hotel offers a new vacation option to a market of millions of Chinese travelers. With the **Shanghai Xihong Vacation Club** debuting here in November as an affiliate of Interval International, so did the vision of a business veteran who realized the coastal market was an ideal draw for hundreds of millions of potential customers across the eastern Chinese market.

Bullish on this burgeoning market, Fu Hanjun, chairman of Shanghai Xihong Hotel Management Incorporated and Yantai Jinchangcheng Industrial Co., Ltd., has plans to develop a domestic club structure with properties around the country in key travel destination markets.

“This is the right time for the product in the right market,” says Fu. While the timeshare concept has existed in China for two decades, success has been isolated. The idea of timeshare vacations remains new to many Chinese travelers. Setting aside the presence of 1.4 billion Chinese nationwide, hundreds of millions live along the coast and less than eight hours away in Beijing.

The club itself targets the local Chinese customer base in the port city of Yantai, as well as prospects living in other major cities around China in the future. Yantai itself is home to some 7 million people and has a long history dating back to 567 B.C.







### Key to Success

Though home to the world's largest population, China, in some ways, is no different than any other timeshare market, says Fu.

"The same principals exist as in the rest of the world," he says. "Chinese people have money and get several weeks of holiday a year. The resort is located in a popular tourist area and the resort management is experienced in selling timeshare in China, so there is no reason to think this won't be successful."

The key to success will come by tapping into the Chinese vacationer's distinctive approach to travel. The club relies on on-site sales and mini-vacation strategies to market the property. Plans call for expanding to off-site locations in a half-dozen key cities around China.

### Matching Product to Traveler Tastes

Sales teams are pitching right-to-use vacation ownership periods available from two, five, and 10 years. Two-year trial and five- or 10-year full memberships are available. Trial memberships cost US\$1,250; full memberships are US\$2,620 for five years and US\$4,370 for 10 years.

To heighten the value of both trial and full membership options, the vacation club affiliated with Interval International at its launch in order to offer its members even greater travel options to exchange at resorts around the world. Purchasers receive an Interval Gold® membership, with all the upgraded benefits it affords.

Membership durations were designed to meet Asian vacation and lifestyle habits. As with many elements of their lives, most Chinese and Asian vacationers are more interested in near-term, versus longer-term, opportunities, notes Fu. As such, sales and marketing efforts are focused on shorter-term memberships to better align with Chinese traveler preferences.

"This has been proven time and time again," says Fu. "Asians are not interested in lifetime products; they are more about today and tomorrow. They want immediate returns — they are not worried about 25 years from now."

### At Best Western Yantai Hotel

The property itself would seem to align with that ethos. Built on the intersection of a bustling thoroughfare, the Best Western Yantai Hotel is a 3-year-old, 30-story high-rise with 160 rooms. Located minutes from the railway station and 25 minutes from the international airport, the property delivers a rich amenities package. Each of the 24 two-bedroom units is 1,500 square feet (139 square meters) and consists of either standard or corner units located between the fifth and 29th floors.

Another key distinction is the in-room amenities. Units include one king and two double beds. The kitchens are considered

"partial," or efficiency by Western standards. These include a sink, microwave, refrigerator, and countertops, with a small, but comfortable dining area. Unlike in many Western markets, Asians don't typically cook meals when on holiday, Fu says.

Where features are bountiful is in the property amenities. Accented with modern decor, the property has two restaurants and a bar. The "8D" theater features the latest in cinematic technology.

For simpler pursuits, there's a lobby library and reading area.

The exercise area includes workout equipment perched before floor-to-ceiling windows offering views across the Yantai cityscape. There's a sauna and steam room. The rooftop features an infinity swimming pool and lounge areas, and offers commanding views across the port city.

The neighborhood is equally enticing, especially for food aficionados. The region is a breadbasket of fruits and vegetables. Wines are made and bottled nearby in what promoters say is the largest wine production base in Asia. The resort city of Qingdao, 124 miles (200 kilometers) southwest of Yantai, is home to the historic brewery of China's famed Tsingtao beer.

Seafood connoisseurs have come to appreciate the catch from the more than 60 nearby islands. The Yangma and Changdao islands are in-demand day-trip destinations. The Yantai coast itself is home to two popular beaches that draw locals and tourists alike.

### Big Plans for the Future

Fu has big plans for the Shanghai Xihong Vacation Club, with a goal to add several small-scale hotels of between 20 to 30 units around China in key tourist locations. The first likely will open to serve Disneyland in Shanghai. Club members who purchase at the Best Western Yantai Hotel will, of course, have access to the other locations.

Setting aside the market demographics, the property amenities, and the growth of the Chinese travel market, as with real estate in general, one rule commonly applies, Fu says.

"It's all about location, location, location," he says. "The Chinese go on holidays and there are about 1.4 billion of them. If you build a decent product in the popular location, it will sell."

Joe Hickman, vice president and executive director of Interval International for Asia/Pacific, agrees. "This type of vacation opportunity, in this destination, and the Chinese consumer are a perfect match for one another. The growing middle class has the disposable income and desire to travel. The team at Shanghai Xihong has put together a great offering ideally suited to this market." [E]

Jeff Zbar is a South Florida-based business and travel journalist and corporate copywriter.

## fastfacts

### Shanghai Xihong Vacation Club

**Developer:** Shanghai Xihong Hotel Management Incorporation: Fu Hanjun, chairman

**Headquarters:** Yantai, China

**Product:** Floating, right-to-use vacation ownership periods available for two, five, or 10 years

**Units:** 24, two-bedroom units at the Best Western Yantai Hotel

**Price:** Trial members: US\$1,250; Five-year: US\$2,620; 10-year: US\$4,370

**Website:** bestwestern.net.cn

**Social Media:** Facebook



## Historic Restoration in the Italian Countryside

**Location:** Tuoro sul Trasimeno, Perugia, Italy  
**Developer:** The Viterbi family  
**Interval Affiliation:** 2015

Once a resting point for weary travelers passing through on horseback, **Cortona Manor House and Spa** lies within a historic circa-1745 structure on the border of Tuscany and Umbria. Purchased in 2003 by the Viterbi family, the tranquil rural property has been transformed into a 15-unit condo-hotel with a timeshare component.

**Setting:** Situated on 25 acres (10 hectares) of parkland dotted with centuries-old olive trees, the resort overlooks the placid blue waters of Lake Trasimeno. The medieval walled hill town of Cortona, which garnered fame as the setting for the book and film *Under the Tuscan Sun*, is less than 6 miles (9 kilometers) away.

**Back Story:** The 18th-century property has served many functions in its storied past, from a customs office of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany to the administrative headquarters for the wine and olive oil enterprises of an Italian noble family. The resort's developer acquired the site in 2003 with plans to convert it into a resort, taking great care to preserve components of historic significance, including original tilework, wooden beams, frescoes, fireplaces, and coats of arms.

**At the Resort:** Guests have access to an outdoor swimming pool, sun terrace, and a barbecue area during spring and summer months. The on-site restaurant serves Tuscan and Umbrian cuisine year-round, and the small spa boasts an indoor heated swimming pool, sauna, and massage rooms.

**Accommodations:** Each apartment has a very small kitchenette with a fridge, cooktop with two gas burners, electric oven, and sink. Units include ceiling fans, a TV, Internet access, and weekly housekeeping,

and bear creative names — the apartments dedicated to timeshare are the Garden Suite, Customs Officer Suite, and the Duke's Suite.

**Activities:** Concierge service is available to arrange with nearby agencies for tours and excursions, including vineyard visits and olive oil-pressing tours. Visitors can take a boat ride on Lake Trasimeno to its three islands: Maggiore, Minore, and Polvese.

**Units and Sizes:** 15 one-bedroom units, with three dedicated to timeshare, 538 to 645 square feet (50 to 60 square meters)

**In the Area:** Cortona Manor House's location on the border of Tuscany and Umbria is ideal for day-trips to both regions, including Perugia, Assisi, Siena, and Florence. Lake Trasimeno, Italy's fourth-largest lake, is just 20 minutes from the resort.

**The Product:** 30-year right-to-use

**Target Market:** U.K. consumers

**Marketing Strategies:** Using rentals to generate leads for the property's active on-site sales program. As sales progress, the developer hopes to convert more units to timeshare.

**Price:** €7,840 to €21,600 (US\$8,871 to US\$24,441) per week

**Website:** cortonamanorhouse.com

**And We Quote:** "Cortona Manor House and Spa is the perfect location for vacationers seeking a quiet and simple atmosphere in the Italian countryside. This resort has all the ingredients for an authentic experience." — Sergio Viterbi, owner





# Take Advantage

Looking to boost your sales marketing and operating efforts, and improve your bottom line?

Turn the page to learn about Interval's Affiliate Advantages.



For more information, contact Nicole Meck at 949.470.8324, or [Nicole.Meck@intervalintl.com](mailto:Nicole.Meck@intervalintl.com), or go to [ResortDeveloper.com](http://ResortDeveloper.com).



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The Interval International Visa Signature® card with WorldPoints® rewards builds brand affinity with your owners' vacation purchase decision. Present this valuable card to prospective owners as an alternate form of payment for their unit purchase or an affordable trial ownership program. The online application process is quick and convenient, and the card is yet another perk of Interval membership.



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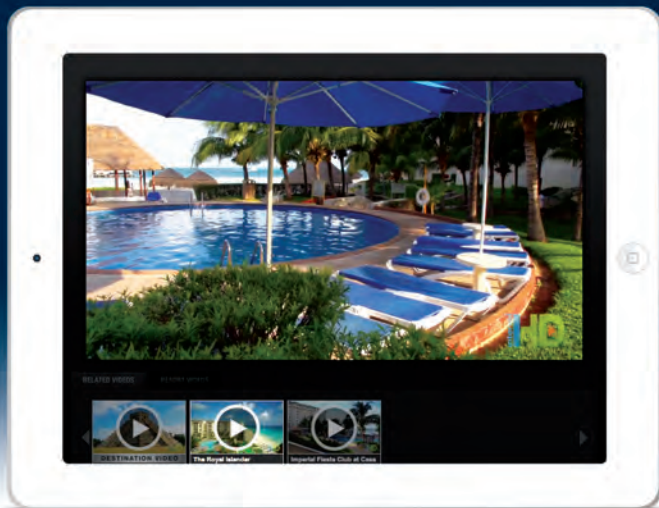
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## Keeping Resorts Competitive in the Digital Age

**DG Film Company, a full-service production company with more than 17 years of experience — including the creation of customized resort presentations worldwide — has joined the Interval Affiliate Advantages program.**

- DG Film Company offers professional film presentations that meet clients' marketing needs while remaining within budget
- Resorts are showcased in a captivating style, incorporating creative video elements that appeal to clients' target audiences
- Website videos boost Internet search results and increase the rate of viewer response

**For a two- to three-minute showcase video, participating resorts will receive preferential pricing on the following:**

- Script development, including music and narration
- On-location filming of interiors, exteriors, amenities, or other aspects of the resort or destination
- Interviews with resort representatives and owners
- Aerial and underwater shots
- Video optimization for the Internet and master DVD for in-house application



**intervalHD**

Resort video footage can be included on Interval HD at [IntervalWorld.com](http://IntervalWorld.com).

Sample videos can be found at [dgfilmco.com](http://dgfilmco.com). See how DG Film Company can help achieve crucial marketing goals for your resort property. Contact the company at 435.674.1133 or by email at [Production@dgfilmco.com](mailto:Production@dgfilmco.com).







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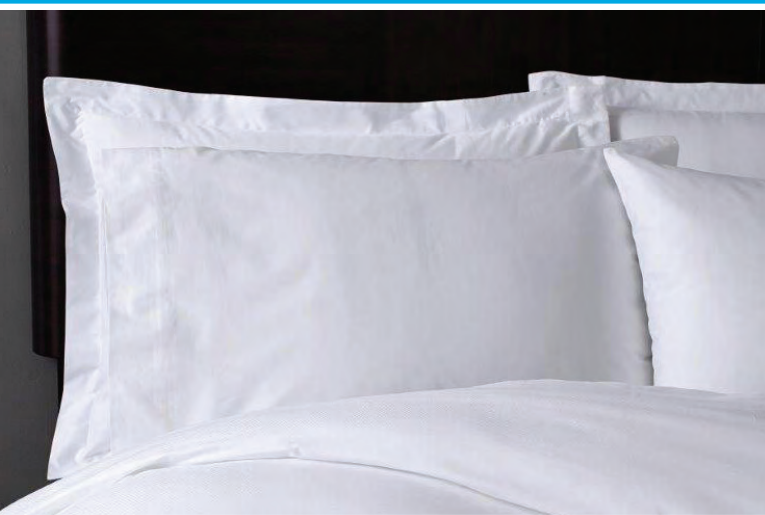
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**To learn more, contact Kerri Luther, national director of business development, at [Timeshare@fnf.com](mailto:Timeshare@fnf.com).**



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Gabe Armstrong

**Gabe Armstrong** has been named national director of local marketing for Hyatt Vacation Ownership (HVO). With more than 14 years of experience in timeshare marketing and sales, he has held positions of increasing responsibility, including a senior role with Hilton Grand Vacations. Armstrong graduated from Missouri State University with a degree in marketing. He is based in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Rod Godoy

**Rod Godoy** has been appointed national director of sales training for Hyatt Vacation Ownership (HVO). He has more than 18 years of experience in the timeshare industry, and held various roles at Marriott Vacation Club for nearly 15 years. He has a bachelor's degree in marketing and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Tennessee. Godoy is based in St. Petersburg, Florida.

**Jorge Herrera Rivadeneyra** has been appointed president of the Mexican Resort Development Association (AMDETUR) for 2016 and 2017. The founder and general manager of Unlimited Vacation Club of AMResorts has more than 30 years of experience in the tourism sector in the region. He has served as advisor to the secretary of tourism. He has a bachelor's degree from the Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico City) and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Southern California.



Renowned collage artist **Erika King** puts the finishing touches on one of her latest creations, commissioned by Miami-based Interval International in celebration of its 40th anniversary. The colorful canvas is the second installment in the series, depicting the company's history with a mix of photographs and news articles.

## Westgate Resorts Sports Game-Changing Video Wall

Westgate Resorts has teamed with rp Visual Solutions and Christie to build what the companies say is "the world's largest LED video wall" inside the Westgate Superbook at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino. The enormous curved array spans the length of the location in an effort to create a stadium-like experience.

"This is a game-changer for our property and a game-changer for the industry," Westgate COO Mark Waltrip said in an article on covers.com.

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