

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- Air capacity on the 5 non stop carriers has been cut by around 30%. There is now not enough capacity for the demand and travellers are looking to one stop carriers. Numbers expected to be down on 2008 for the same period.

Britain in the News

- Harrow School to open a Hong Kong branch. It will be a co-educational boarding school and will open around 2012
- Jamie Oliver plans to open Fifteen in Hong Kong in 2010, his first restaurant in Asia. Jamie Oliver is the most popular Western chef in Hong Kong and many TV channels broadcast his various series.
- London is 3rd in the top 10 best value destinations released by Lonely Planet in October.
- A Hong Kong businessman has bought controlling stake of Birmingham Football Club. A new manager has been named, an ex HSBC manager from Hong Kong.

General Market Mood

- The position of HSBC Chief Executive will return to Hong Kong in 2010. The Chief Executive was relocated to London in 1993 and the return is seen as confidence boosting for Hong Kong and the China region.
- Unemployment fell for 1st time in 13 months in October from 5.4% to 5.3%.
- Stock market was at a 14th month high in October and index has remained around that level.
- The Economy is seen as on the rise but a lot of hot money has flowed into Hong Kong making property prices soar.

Consumer Behaviour

- Spending sentiment is still cautious and short haul trips of short duration are generally chosen over expensive long duration trips as reported by the trade.
- Business trips may be returning to pre economic crisis levels but trading down is still the norm as reported by the travel trade.

Media Matters

- Barely any coverage on the Lake District floods means VisitBritain does not have to react to enquiries.
- VisitBritain's media post has been vacant since end October and will be filled by a new colleague at the beginning of 2010.

Routes and Fares

- India's Kingfisher launched daily Hong Kong -Mumbai flights at HK\$3720 (£290) in September. A very attractive fare compared with other airlines on the route.
- The Hong Kong -London route capacity has been cut in October by 30% with Cathay flying from 4 to 3 daily flights, Virgin from 2 to daily and British Airways from 3 to 2 daily. As a result, fares have gone up from lowest of £235 in March to £375 in October and loading is now very high as a result of the reduced capacity.
- With the reduced capacity in non stop carriers, travellers are looking to one stop new carriers such as Jet Airways and Turkish Airways who are offering attractive fares to increase brand awareness in a new market.

Business Tourism

- Prudential Corporation Asia has finalised its 2011 incentive destination to be London for 170-190 delegates. VisitBritain and Visit London have been helping the destination marketing company with the bid, programme and supplier introductions.

Leisure Travel Trade

- Report trade is down in holiday travel from long to shorter haul and from long duration to shorter duration. This does not benefit Britain and more travellers are choosing intra region and China trips.

Competitor Activity

- Tourism New Zealand has launched a successful microsite and packages with Zuji, the leading online travel agent in May which has resulted in many bookings. It was reported that over 10% of visits translated into a booking.
- Maison de la France assisted with Bordeaux region in Hong Kong meeting media and taking part in the first Hong Kong Food and Wine Festival.

VisitBritain Activity Update

- Exhibited a Classic Mini car and a 3D art piece of Britain icons at a prestigious shopping centre, Pacific Place over 5 days. Attracted over 3,000 visitors to take photos. Press and trade reception at opening-brand awareness activity.
- Hosted 12 MICE agents to dinner with Visit London MICE Director- consolidated MICE contacts and database.
- APMEA Business planning session in November in Hong Kong.
- Trip to Taiwan for Press lunch with 30 contacts and B2B reception for 40 contacts- build databases for a market that VisitBritain has not been active in since 1999.
- Christmas Press Lunch co hosted with British Airways for 14 journalists, a networking event.
- Jane Fong interviewed on RTHK on high quality travel- does it have to be expensive? with 3 other NTOs-align with luxury campaign.

Upcoming activity

- Sherlock Holmes Movie Competition with Warner Brothers using Yahoo as media partner.
- Launch of Luxury campaign.
- 'Through My Eyes 2012' bid for campaign with FCO in South China.

Who's in Town?

- VB Chairman Christopher Rodrigues, 2-4 December.
- Andrew Cahn, Chief Executive of UK Trade & Investment, 18 -19 November.
- British Council Directors from the 4 offices in China.