



January 8, 2008

## TRAVELHotNews.com Retrospective 2007

With the ringing in of the New Year comes a look back at 2007. Here's a look back at some of the most important news in the Canadian and global travel industry last year.

In 2007, many businesses were concerned with the environment. Tour operators, hotels and airlines were conscious of the sustainable tourism trend, pledging to reducing carbon footprints, whether it was increasing operational efficiencies or introducing fuel or energy surcharges due to the high (and rising) cost of fuel.

### January

In January 2007, the new U.S. passport rules went into effect for air entries. British West Indies Airlines became Caribbean Airlines, inaugurating service on Jan. 1, 2007. In other airline news, Caribbean Sun Airlines ceased operations on Jan. 10, and Sunwing Airlines added 16 new gateways across Canada.

Air Canada Vacations adjusted their commission and pricing structure; agents would receive 10 per cent commission on international bookings and 5 per cent commission on air-only, land-only or Aeroplan land-only bookings.

CIT Tours' two long-term employees, Diane Ascenzi and Diane Pothan, purchased the company from the Italian owners, CIT SpA.

The Mexico Tourism Board welcomed a new CEO, Francisco Xavier Lopez Mena. In other appointments, WestJet added new CFO Vito Culmone and Ensemble Travel Group Canada added new executive VP Lindsay Pearlman.

- [BWIA becomes Caribbean Airlines \(Jan. 8\)](#)
- [Francisco Xavier Lopez Mena to head Mexico Tourism Board \(Jan. 9\)](#)
- [ACV adjusts commissions, pricing structure \(Jan. 10\)](#)
- [Caribbean Sun Airlines ends operations \(Jan. 10\)](#)
- [Sunwing Airlines expands to 16 gateways \(Jan. 12\)](#)
- [New owners for CIT Tours \(Jan. 17\)](#)
- [New passport rules to US in effect \(Jan. 23\)](#)
- [WestJet gets new CFO \(Jan. 23\)](#)
- [Ensemble gets new executive VP \(Jan. 30\)](#)



## February

Big news came in February with the announcement that the Thomas Cook group and MyTravel had merged in Europe, making it an even larger force to reckon with. In Canada, MyTravel Canada was renamed Thomas Cook Canada.

Flight Centre appointed a new VP of marketing, Chris Preston; ACTA launched a new ID Card program with added discount benefits for members; Transat Holidays and WestJet renewed their partnership until 2010, allowing Transat to charter planes.

Finally, Carnival Corporation sold its stake in Windstar Cruises as it left the niche business to concentrate on its major brands. Cubana Airlines' tour operator business, Sol y Son Vacations, closed its Toronto offices and ceased Canadian operations.

- [Flight Centre appoints VP Marketing \(Feb. 8\)](#)
- [Thomas Cook merges with MyTravel \(Feb. 9\)](#)
- [ACTA launches new ID Card \(Feb. 13\)](#)
- [Transat and WestJet renew partnership \(Feb. 15\)](#)
- [Carnival Corp. sells Windstar Cruises \(Feb. 22\)](#)
- [Sol y Son Vacations closes Toronto office \(Feb. 27\)](#)



## March

Another large merger happened in March 2007, with German tour operator, TUI, announcing its partnership with British-owned First Choice, creating the largest tour operator in Europe.

Vancouver-based boutique carrier Harmony Airways ended scheduled flight service on March 27. Appointments included a new VP of business development for Tour East Holidays, Ravi Kumar, and a new director, Jorge Rubio, for the Spain Tourist Office.

- [New Director for Spain Tourist Office \(Mar. 1\)](#)
- [Tour East Appoints VP of Business Development \(Mar. 12\)](#)
- [TUI and First Choice to merge \(Mar. 16\)](#)
- [Harmony ends scheduled flight service \(Mar. 27\)](#)



## April

Air Canada celebrated its 70th year in Canadian aviation on April 5th, with ceremonies and birthday cake. The Korean Tourist Office welcomed their new director, Sootaek Lee in Toronto. TRAVELHotNews.com became Canada's #1 travel trade e-magazine with an readership of 14,300 in April 2007, which has since risen to 23,000 as of December 2007.

- [Air Canada celebrates 70 years \(Apr. 5\)](#)
- [New Director for Korean Tourist Office \(Apr. 26\)](#)
- [TRAVELHotNews.com – Canada's #1 e-Travel Trade Magazine \(Apr. 30\)](#)



## May

New airlines debuted in May, including flyglobespan, a low-cost European carrier flying out of a Hamilton, Ontario hub. Vancouver was the home base for Oasis Hong Kong Airlines, a low-cost carrier taking passengers to Hong Kong.

In other airline news, Denver-based low-cost carrier, Frontier Airlines, added a Vancouver route; and Don Bell, an original founder of WestJet, retired. Also retiring from the industry was Caribbean tourism pioneer Earl B. Smith.

Gerry Roussin departed Transat Holidays for Sunwing Vacations, leading the Vancouver office. Ian Rayment resigned from his position as president of the Holiday Network, leaving Ron Heuer in charge.

In other industry news, Ben Smith, former president/CEO of Air Canada Vacations (ACV), vacated his role and re-entered Air Canada's Commercial Division as executive VP, commercial. Zeina Gedeon became president/CEO of ACV, and Sean Menke was appointed Air Canada's executive VP, commercial strategy.

- [Flyglobespan debuts in Hamilton \(May 2\)](#)
- [Oasis Hong Kong Airlines to launch in Vancouver \(May 7\)](#)

- [Earl B. Smith says farewell to industry \(May 8\)](#)
- [Frontier Airlines adds YVR service \(May 10\)](#)
- [Gerry Roussin leaves Transat, surfaces at Sunwing \(May 15\)](#)
- [Air Canada, Air Canada Vacations appoint three new executives \(May 24\)](#)
- [Ian Rayment leaves MyTravel; Ron Heuer takes over \(May 31\)](#)
- [Founder Don Bell retires from WestJet \(May 31\)](#)



## June

June marked the 20th anniversaries of Montreal-based Transat Holidays and Transat Airlines.

ACTA hosted the inaugural ATLAS Awards in Toronto on June 4th, recognizing the hard work of the people in the travel industry. Another inaugural event, Discover America Day, was held on June 26.

The Jamaica Tourist Board appointed a western sales manager, Calgary-based Sahara Abu-Ulbeh, and Greg Dixon took over Andrea Slingsby's spot as president of operations at Flight Centre Canada.

- [ACTA 1st Annual ATLAS Awards \(June 4\)](#)
- [Jamaica appoints Western Sales Manager \(June 11\)](#)
- [Transat celebrates 20th anniversary \(June 12\)](#)
- [Air Transat's 20th anniversary \(June 13\)](#)
- [Greg Dixon takes over at Flight Centre \(June 21\)](#)
- [Inaugural 'Discover America Day' \(June 26\)](#)



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