

# World travel trends spell opportunity for 2010

 By [Dr Nikolaus Eberl](#)

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The *World Travel Trends Report 2009*, published last week at the annual World Travel Market exhibition in London by market research group Euromonitor, spells out intriguing lessons from the 2008/9 slump in global tourism and the opportunities for the upcoming travel season.

"2009 was a challenging year," [said Caroline Bremner](#), global travel manager at Euromonitor, "We predict that 2010 will be much better." In particular, the following trends spell opportunity for global destinations going into the World Cup Year.

## Over-60 market ignores economic crisis for travel

The report revealed that the Grey Market (travellers over 60 years) refuse to let the recession kill their holidays. The Grey Market makes up nearly two thirds of the 54% of people who have declared their holidays sacrosanct and decided to ignore completely the economic downturn. "Eighty percent of the public sampled admit issues such as poor currency exchange rates and flight taxes won't deter them. And of those people, the over-60s is the biggest grouping (84%)," [said Fiona Jeffery](#), chair of the World Travel Market.

## Obama factor boosts tourism to Africa

As for Africa, the [Global Trends Report 2009](#) reveals that tourism to the continent is experiencing a revival largely thanks to US President Barack Obama. The election of a President with an African heritage has encouraged many Afro-Americans to not only trace their roots but also visit the lands of their ancestors.

The US represents Africa's largest source market with 41 million African-Americans in residence. Of the total, 31% make up Generation Y (people born in the '80s and early '90s) presenting a strong opportunity for tourism to the region to continue to grow in the long-term.

Furthermore, DNA testing to trace ancestral origin has increased in popularity and is boosting cultural and heritage tourism to the region. There are now more than 2000 genealogy companies in the US and 35 000 African Americans have done DNA tests since 2002.

## Golf tourism in Asia on the rise

The rising standard of living across many Asian countries combined with the desire of emerging destinations such as Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, to develop tourism infrastructure through high-value, high-spending visitors is fuelling the golf

tourism trend. Current leaders Thailand enjoyed revenue from golf tourism totalling US\$800 million, growing at 10% per year, putting the niche sector in a much better position than the overall tourism sector.

Many tour operators have devised value-add packages offering unlimited rounds at a discounted price to attract golfers from Japan, South Korea and Singapore. The Southeast Asian Golf Trail combines top-class courses across Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia for a value-for-money price.

## Women-only hotels growing across Middle East

The growing young and female population in the Middle East is encouraging suppliers to target this market with culturally acceptable and tailored concepts. Saudi Arabia is leading the way with the first women-only hotel, Luthan Hotel & Spa.

Egypt and Iran are also key target markets for female-only concepts, especially with women accounting for almost half of the total population in 2008. In destinations such as these, where cultures are conservative, women-only concepts are likely to appeal to Middle-Eastern Women and Westerners, who want the additional reassurance.

## “Pop up Hotels” sprouting up in the UK

Whilst the local hotel industry was recently wringing their hands at the 2009 Hospitality Investment Conference, estimating the current over-supply in hotel rooms at 25% (and growing), a new concept hailing from the UK, called "pop up hotels", provides hotel operators with greater cost efficiencies because the hotels are temporary structures which can be constructed at short notice to meet demand almost as you go.

A number of UK companies are spearheading the use of pop-up hotels. Travelodge opened its first one in Uxbridge, west London last year. The budget chain plans to open 40 hotels a year between now and 2020, half of which will be pop-up builds.

Said [Fiona Jeffery](#): “Pop-up hotels are a great concept. In such uncertain financial times, managing the overheads of a fixed place hotel can be difficult ... Pop-up hotels only have to fill the bedrooms for a set period of time. The buzz created by a pop-up hotels leads to positive PR and word-of-mouth marketing.”

The implications for 2010 are clear: No longer is the shotgun approach to destination marketing sufficient, the traditional waxing lyrically about one's own beaches, sunshine and scenery, but the new travelling class of 2009 demands unique value propositions that are geared towards meeting their very own needs; and many times, what travellers really want, are meaningful activities that enhance their quality of life.

## ABOUT DR NIKOLAUS EBERL

Dr Nikolaus Eberl is the author of *BrandOvation™: How Germany won the World Cup of Nation Branding* and *The Hero's Journey: Building a Nation of World Champions*. He headed the Net Promoter Scorecard research project on SA's destination branding success story during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, co-authored the World Cup Brand Ambassador Program 'Welcome 2010' and was chairperson of the inaugural 2010 FAN World Cup. Email [nikolaus@brandovation.com](mailto:nikolaus@brandovation.com) and follow [@nikolauseberl](#).

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