

Duff on Hospitality Law

## **This Week in Online Travel: Appeals in Las Vegas Price-Fixing Case, Booking.com's STR Push, and Hilton Expands into RV Bookings**

By Greg Duff on 6.12.24 | Posted in Online Travel Update

This week's Update features a variety of stories – STRs, algorithm leaks and Hilton campgrounds (sort of):

- **Las Vegas Price-Fixing Case Is Appealed.** A few weeks ago we [reported](#) on a Nevada federal district court's (second) dismissal of a class action case brought against Las Vegas' hoteliers' over their use of certain Cendyn revenue management tools. Not surprisingly, the plaintiffs have now appealed the court's dismissal to the Ninth Circuit, the first such appeal of the several algorithmic cases currently pending against hoteliers. A decision by the appeals court is not expected until 2025.
- **Booking.com Focused on U.S. STRs.** When it comes to short term rentals (STR), European online travel agent Booking.com is now taking a U.S. first approach. During the first quarter of 2024, STRs accounted for 36% of all bookings on the platform. To appeal to U.S. consumers, Booking is particularly focused on payments, liability insurance and its damage policy. Families (however defined) are making up a larger and larger portion of users interested in STR bookings.
- **Air France – KLM Again Delays Introduction of GDS Surcharges for TMCs.** Fourth time the charm? Air France – KLM has announced a further delay in its planned introduction of a €21 surcharge for corporate bookings made via legacy GDSs. Why the additional delay? Perhaps a lesson learned from American Airlines aggressive approach? According to the airline, the delay is needed to resolve "issues" and to "support our partners." Last summer the airline removed all short-haul flights from GDS channels, reserving those routes for NDC connections.

- **Hilton RVs Officially Launched.** This one is of personal interest. Not actually "Hilton" RVs, but close. Users of Hilton's booking channels can now search and book accommodations (RVs, tents, etc.) at several AutoCamp locations (Yosemite, Russian River, Cape Code, Joshua Tree, etc.). Hilton Honors members can also earn and redeem points for their AutoCamp stays. Having been part of similar efforts in the last few years, I can only imagine the discussions within Hilton as it considered the effects of adding this new non-hotel inventory to its regular online offerings – OTAs, wholesalers, loyalty program, etc.

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#### **How Booking.com Is Targeting U.S. Travelers With Short-Term Rentals**

*June 5, 2024 via Skift*

The Amsterdam-based company has put a lot of emphasis on the U.S. over the past couple of years. Christiana Sciaudone, Skift Share Booking.com is taking a U.S.-first approach, tapping into increasing demand for short-term rentals from families and international travelers. Short-term room nights were about 25% of all ...

#### **Las Vegas hotels face appeal in customers' price-fixing lawsuit**

*June 5, 2024 via Reuters*

A closely-watched consumer class action accusing major Las Vegas hotels of sharing price information to artificially boost the price of room rentals is headed back to court, after the plaintiffs on Tuesday appealed a judge's decision to toss the case. The lawsuit, Gibson v. Cendyn, was ...

#### **Google's algorithm leak and what it means for travel SEO**

*June 5, 2024 via Phocus Wire*

The Google API documentation leak offers valuable insights for travel industry executives, highlighting the importance of strategic, comprehensive SEO practices.

#### **Air France-KLM postpones GDS surcharge a fourth time**

*June 5, 2024 via Business Travel News Europe*

Air France and KLM have once again postponed the introduction of its GDS surcharge for business travel agencies, with the fee now due to be levied from 1 January 2025 rather than 1 July 2024, according to reports in French trade press. Sign up for more... News • analysis • ...

#### **Summer Travel Awaits: Hilton Officially Rolls Out AutoCamp Properties for Booking**

*June 4, 2024 via Hospitality Net*

The summer travel season is beginning to heat up, and so is Hilton's exclusive partnership with premier outdoor hospitality company AutoCamp. As the days get longer, Hilton guests can now experience a stay that blends the spirit of an iconic outdoor adventure with the hospitality and design-forward thinking of a