

.travel Team Attends Travel Trade's 25th Annual Leisure Travel Conference

The **.travel** executive team attended Travel Trade's 25th Annual Leisure Travel Conference last weekend in Miami, Florida. Held at the Miami Hyatt Regency, the largest and longest running Travel Trade event presented various educational seminars, workshops, cruise ship inspections, and networking opportunities. **.travel** executive team members had the opportunity to speak on two panels. **.travel** also exhibited at the Leisure Travel Marketplace, held on November 17th.

On Saturday, November 15th, Edward A. Cespedes, President & CEO of **.travel** spoke on a technology panel led by Alan Gerstner, President of Travel Doctor Consulting. The panel also included David Goodis, CEO of Revelex; Kevin Jonker, VP of Business Relations for TRAMS; Bob Maier, President of Mailpound.com; John Peters, President & CEO of Tripology; and Joff Romoff, VP of Sales for Amadeus North America. Cespedes stressed the need to be found on the Internet and how to compete in a world of millions of other travel websites.

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That evening, the 22nd Annual "Travel Agent and Travel Executive of the Year" Awards were held. Les-Lee Roland, travel counselor with The Packaged Deal in Sarasota, FL received Travel Trade's 2008 Travel Agent of the Year Award. Roland, who writes the popular Flips & Flops column for the Home Based Trade supplement to Travel Trade, recounted her early days in the travel industry, which began by helping a friend publicize her agency. She joked that the last award she won was when she was with Kimberly Clark in the early 70s. "I won an award for selling the most Tampons in the Detroit market."

Cruise industry veteran executive Maurice Zarmati, President and CEO of Costa Cruise Lines, North America, received Travel Trade's 2008 Executive of the Year Award. Zarmati was also the Keynote Speaker for the evening. "To receive an award of this magnitude from my clients - travel agents - is the greatest honor I can receive," said Zarmati. From the cruise industry's "very rough beginning" in the early 1970s, which Zarmati vividly recalled in his acceptance speech, grew an industry that now carries 13 million passengers a year globally on cruise vacations aboard 117 ships.

On Sunday, November 16th, Heidi Siefkas-Casemiro, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations for **.travel** spoke on the panel for the Responsible Tourism Workshop. Moderated by Kyle Ekinici, General Manager of Sunny Land Tours, the panel also featured Mike Stone, President, Gestation, Inc. & Deep Blue Interactive, as well as video appearances from Maria Amalia Revelo, Deputy Manager & Director of Marketing, Costa Rica Tourism; and Hon. Manuel Heredia, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Belize Tourism. The panel touched on ways that the tourism industry can help to contribute to the environment while traveling. "As a travel industry player interested in evolving travel technology to its next step, **.travel** also believes strongly in the preservation of our beautiful natural resources," responded Siefkas-Casemiro, "The evolution of tourism to a level of responsibility that maintains this industry for generations to come is essential."

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Travel industry veteran Adam Aron was the Keynote Speaker that evening. In his Keynote, Aron gave agents seven tips to get through the current economic times. Aron, who is Chairman and CEO of World Leisure Partners, as well as a board member of Apollo Management, is on the board of NCL and Starwood. He also serves on the board of directors of numerous industry and non-profit organizations.

On Monday, November 17, 2008, **.travel** exhibited at the Leisure Travel Marketplace. The team answered questions and “**.travel** authenticated” interested travel industry professionals on the exhibition floor. Overall, the 25th Annual Leisure Travel Conference was a great success! For those interested in more information on **.travel** and registering a **.travel** domain name(s), visit www.travel.travel.

[Click here to view photos from the 2008 Leisure Travel Conference.](#)