

Stellenbosch marketers share insights from ITB Berlin

Stellenbosch recently returned from a trip to ITB Berlin, the biggest tourism trade show in the world, with learnings to share with the industry.



Annareth Bolton, CEO of Stellenbosch Wine Routes and Michael Winckler, a journalist based in Berlin.

Image courtesy of Stellenbosch Experience

Attending and using key international platforms like ITB is part of Stellenbosch Experience - an international destination marketing campaign that's the result of a marketing partnership between Stellenbosch Wine Routes and Stellenbosch 360.

Stellenbosch mingled with trade and media; meeting with the likes of Falstaff gourmet magazine, Reisen Exklusiv, Südafrika Magazin, Reisefieber, Genießen & reisen magazine, and Berliner Morgenpost.

In addition, an exclusive wine evening for top international bloggers, media and trade was hosted by Stellenbosch at which Kleine Zalze wines and Simonsig Kaapse Vonkel were served. Guests included Slow Travel Berlin, TripAdvisor, iAmbassador, Traveldudes, Harpers Bazaar Germany and Die Welt magazine.

The perfect platform

Annemarie Ferns, CEO of Stellenbosch 360 attended ITB Berlin and shared: "ITB Berlin is one of the biggest tourism trade shows in the world, making it the perfect platform from which to share our region's offerings with trade and media. Of particular importance this year was promoting our authentic experiences, such as dining with locals, cycling and hiking through the vineyards or Jonkershoek, as well as the town's café culture."

Annareth Bolton, CEO of Stellenbosch Wine Routes also commented: "ITB Berlin was very good, with a lot of hard work going into the planning of our attendance of the trade show. It is difficult to stand out as there are so many wonderful destinations to choose from around the world. It was important to follow up with the connections we made last year and to

see the results of our hard work in 2014, but it was also great to see that our campaign is right on track when one looks at global travel trends. We are light years ahead of most other international wine regions. The need for individualised, tailor-made travel is big, and that is exactly what we specialise in: connecting travellers with locals and giving them the opportunity to immerse themselves in our region and culture."

This year's annual ITB World Travel Trends Report revealed that Stellenbosch is indeed heading in the right direction with the Stellenbosch Experience initiative, sharing the food and wine capital's offerings with the world through the eyes of locals and international explorers, using primarily digital marketing.

The number of travellers increased in 2014 and long-haul travel grew faster than short-haul, which is great news for destinations like South Africa.

Five top countries

One-third of the world's travellers come from five top countries: Germany (maintained its position as the world's largest outbound travel market in 2014), the US, the UK, China and France. German travellers still account for 25% of the travellers to Stellenbosch.

Forecast data for 2015 confirms that this should be another great year in travel with a 4% global increase in international trips.

Beach and relaxation holidays grew by 18% over the last five years and while it remains the biggest travel category in terms of market share, travel to cities was the fastest-growing market segment in 2014, with a 72% increase over the past five years.

Online bookings continue to make up the larger share of travel bookings: 66% of travel bookings are made via the internet, particularly with the use of smartphones, and only 26% of bookings are now made through travel agents.

Online bookings continued to increase in 2014 with the use of smartphones. China, the US, and Japan took the top three spots for booking travel via smartphones. In addition, blogs and social media channels are being used more intensively by travellers across the globe to plan trips. Ninety-two percent of social media users have been influenced by travel blogs and ratings in 2014 with up to 72% willing to change their destination choice based on the opinion of friends and networks on social media. In China, up to 95% of travellers use travel blogs as a source of travel information. Comparatively, 86% Indian travellers and 66% of European travellers are influenced by the content of travel blogs.

Millennial drivers

Millennials are driving the growth in travel and are rigorous users of technology and social media.

Mariette du Toit-Helmbold, owner of Destinate and the driving force of the Stellenbosch Experience campaign said: "Travel is changing. It's all about authentic experiences and immersing yourself in the local culture. This change has largely been driven by Millennials and so will continue to be the case for some time, even intruding into the more traditional travel methods of older generations. Stellenbosch's wine and tourism offerings are certainly on trend when it comes to providing travellers with a unique experience and the approach we take on sharing information and stories about the town and its offerings via digital and social media channels are spot on too."

Before winter, the Stellenbosch Experience is launching a Winter in the Winelands campaign with a focus on the town as a family-friendly and affordable destination for all seasons. This campaign will feature value-added Stay & Play winter packages on offer that check all the right boxes in terms of ultimate bucket-list encounters in Stellenbosch from budget to luxury, but all with great value for money at the core.

For more information on the Stellenbosch Experience, go to www.stellenboschexperience.co.za

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