

## **Hotels & More launches Tour Partner Group and appoints Paul Maine as Group Chief Executive Officer**

**24.08.2017:** Hotels & More, a leading inbound tour operator for group tours and individual travellers to the United Kingdom and Ireland, is pleased to announce the creation of a new Group Chief Executive Officer role with the appointment of Paul Maine, effective 6 September. Paul will lead the newly named **Tour Partner Group**, the holding company for Hotels & More, Irish Welcome Tours and Authentic Vacations. The Board also announces that Karin Urban, Managing Director of Hotels & More, will transition to Non-Executive Director of the board of Tour Partner Group with Paul assuming executive responsibilities for Hotels & More from September.

Paul joins from STA Travel, the world's largest student and youth travel agency, where for the last four years he was Chief Commercial Officer for the Group, with responsibilities including global partnerships, product development and subsidiaries. Prior to STA Travel he worked for several companies, including eight years at Delta Air Lines in various international commercial roles.

Karin's leadership, vision and drive have been invaluable to the success of Hotels & More. As a Non-Executive Director of the board of Tour Partner Group she will continue to play a central role in its development, which will benefit from her wealth of experience.

The establishment of Tour Partner Group marks a significant milestone in the growth of the business, as it expands its portfolio of brands and strengthens its market leading position as a destination management company in the UK & Ireland. The businesses of Tour Partner Group will continue to operate under their own brands and be independently led, benefitting from the efficiencies of a shared Group infrastructure to strengthen operations, enhance capabilities and support an expanded geographical footprint. The management teams will work closely with Paul and Tour Partner Group's Board to support the strategic direction of the Group and deliver best in class travel solutions to their clients and suppliers alike.

2017 has been a year of continued investment for the business with the merger of Irish Welcome Tours following the earlier appointments of Mark Pharoah as Group Chief Financial Officer and Vera Lett as Commercial Director.

Mark Mayhew, Chairman of Tour Partner Group, commented; *"Karin has been a terrific leader for the business, having accomplished so much for Hotels & More, and I would like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication to date. I am delighted we will continue to benefit from her experience as she moves into her new role as a Non-Executive Director. Adding someone of Paul's calibre as Group Chief Executive Officer, who brings considerable expertise and industry knowledge, is a clear indicator of our growth ambitions and strengthens our continued momentum."*

Karin Urban commented; *"In 1996 we established Hotels & More recognising the market appetite for a UK inbound tour operator. In recent years, as the business has grown, we began exploring how to partner with new companies to expand our offering and enter new markets. The merger with Irish Welcome Tours will hopefully be the first of many and the formation of Tour Partner Group will help to facilitate this. I would like to thank my team and all of those who have made this possible and I look forward to continuing our work together in my new role."*

Paul Maine added; *"The creation of Tour Partner Group presents an incredibly exciting opportunity in the destination management sector, with the chance to consolidate a fragmented, but growing, market across Europe. I am eager to start working with the teams to realise the Group's full potential."*

– Ends –

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**About Hotels & More**

Hotels & More is a professional B2B partner for group tours and FITs to the United Kingdom and Ireland. Since its foundation in 1996 in Harrow it has established itself as one of the leading inbound tour operators. Since then, Hotels & More has grown to an 80-person company and, working alongside 700 travel companies, organised tours for 2,700 groups and more than 100,000 consumers in 2016. Tour operators, package tour operators, direct sellers, coach tour operators and tour operating travel agents from all over Europe put their trust in Hotels & More because of the company's high service standards; carefully chosen partners and suppliers; and competitive pricing. [www.hotels-more.com](http://www.hotels-more.com)

**About Irish Welcome Tours**

Irish Welcome Tours (IWT) is one of Ireland's leading Inbound Tour Operators and Destination Management Companies. Based in Dublin, Ireland for over 27 years with a team of 65 multilingual staff. IWT successfully organised tours for over 70,000 consumers in 2016. IWT offers a full complement of destination management services including Group Tours - round trips of Ireland, combined tours of Ireland & the UK, study tours, garden tours etc. FIT's - City Breaks, online booking facilities, car tours. Conferences & Incentives - under the brand Irish Horizons offering full services for meetings, incentives, conferences and events. IWT also has a sister Company, Authentic Vacations based in California with 20 staff offering self-drive and chauffeur drive tours to Ireland and the UK from the B2C market in North America.

**Notes to Editors**

Vera Lett was appointed as Commercial Director on 27 February 2017. Vera oversees sales, market development, and marketing for existing and new source markets. She has worked in various segments of the travel industry across global markets. After 8 years in Singapore, where she was responsible for European and Asia Pacific commercial activities for Carlson Wagonlit, she returned to England in June 2016. Vera is a German native but also speaks English, French and Italian.

Mark Pharoah joined Hotels & More in November 2015. He was formerly COO and CFO of The Compleat Food Group, the UK's largest importer of continental foods, which he led through three management buyouts, two of which involved the founding partners of Mayfair Equity Partners, TPG's major shareholder. Mark is the executive Board Director and CFO and provides Group wide oversight on IT & HR.