

## ARI unveils newly refurbished Edmonton Duty Free stores



ARI has unveiled the new look for Edmonton Duty Free, bringing an elevated travel retail experience to Edmonton International Airport (YEG). Since opening in January 2024, significant refurbishments have been underway at the two stores, located in YEG's Domestic-International Departures Lounge and YEG's US Departures Lounge.

ARI says that refreshing these stores signals the company's continued commitment to creating a world-class retail experience across each of its locations and delivering on its brand expression, "Joy On Your Way".

ARI's CEO Ray Hernan and Chief Operations & Business Development Officer Nuno Amaral joined the ARI North America team, including General Manager Glen Morgan, YEG's Vice President, Passenger Experience and Terminal Operations Carmen Donnelly and YEG's Director, Commercial Development & Advertising Daphne Shelton in Edmonton on Wednesday, January 22, to celebrate the stores' refreshed look.

ARI's signature focus on sense of place is the main component of this refurbishment, taking inspiration from local landmarks as well as historic and cultural moments of significance. Each store has its own unique features, including a bespoke swing, inspired by Edmonton's secret River Valley swing, and a replica dinosaur fossil suspended from the store ceiling, which pays homage to Edmonton's history of dinosaur discoveries. Both of these features provide an "Instagrammable" moment for shoppers

Rich greenery throughout the stores is also a nod to the iconic River Valley – the largest urban park in North America.

The store offers an extensive selection of premium and international brands, complemented by a carefully curated range of local brands to offer customers an authentic taste of Edmonton.

In addition to several home-grown, locally-produced Edmonton brands, the stores of Jasper Avenue, historically Edmonton's main street, reminds shoppers of Edmonton's glorious past.

The also feature Liquor and Ice Wine ranges by Canadian hockey legend, Wayne Gretzky, synonymous with Edmonton from his time with the Edmonton Oilers.

"It was important for us to really create an authentic, memorable experience for shoppers, and we have managed to deliver a



truly special retail offering at the new Edmonton Duty Free," said Glen Morgan, ARINA General Manager.

"Edmonton has a rich and unique heritage, and the new stores encapsulate the essence of this vibrant city. We have cultivated a great range of brands and products to cater to the evolving passenger demographic traveling through the airport, and we will continue to work closely with our partners at Edmonton International Airport to enhance the overall airport experience through a superior retail proposition."

Carmen Donnelly, Vice President, Passenger Experience and Terminal Operations, Edmonton International Airport (YEG), said, "YEG is a gateway to the world, and part of the travel journey is ensuring our passengers have the best experience possible. Our partnership with ARI is a key ingredient for our international passengers to enjoy the benefits of shopping duty free, offering luxury and savings throughout the journey."

*In attendance at the Edmonton Duty Free opening were: Ray Hernan, ARI CEO; Glen Morgan, ARINA General Manager; Carmen Donnelly, YEG Vice President Passenger Experience and Terminal Operations; Daphne Shelton, YEG Director, Commercial Development & Advertising; Chris Carkner, Edmonton Duty Free Retail Manager; Colin Morgan, ARI Director of Operations; Nuno Amaral, ARI Chief Operations & Business Development Officer; alongside members of the ARINA team.*

## International Shoppes unveils first Guerlain Bee concept in TR North America

French brand Guerlain (LVMH), in partnership with travel retailer International Shoppes, has revealed its new counter at New York John F. Kennedy (JFK), Terminal 1.

The 16-square-meter (172-square-foot) counter, which reopened in July, 2024, has doubled in size compared to its previous iteration. It was redesigned using the brand's latest retail design concept, inspired by the Bee Concept, making it the first travel retail space in North America to adopt the Maison's merchandising design. This aligns with the brand's goal to enhance its image and improve the customer experience within travel retail. This renovation is also the embodiment of a long-standing partnership with International Shoppes, celebrating retail excellence and premium in-store experience, the companies tell *TMI*.



*Executives from International Shoppes and LVMH Beauty officially opened the new Guerlain counter at JF Kennedy International Airport, Terminal 1, this past July.*



International Shoppes Co-CEO Scott Halpern, commented: "The newly redesigned Guerlain unit at JFK T1 is exceptional and will certainly raise the bar for future buildouts.

"This new counter is a reflection of the strong collaboration

between International Shoppes and Guerlain, built on our shared dedication to deliver an unparalleled in-store experience that reflects the quality and innovation both of our brands are known for."

The counter features Guerlain's complete range of core collections,

spanning fragrance, makeup, and skincare, including the prestigious Orchidée Impériale Black skincare line. Guests can also enjoy complimentary services, such as flash makeup applications or skincare consultations prior to their flight departure.

## Chicago Midway International Airport welcomes new Hudson outlets

Midway Partnership and the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) have opened three new retail locations at Chicago Midway International Airport, operated by Avolta's Hudson.

Midway Partnership is a joint venture comprised of Vantage Group, SSP America, and Hudson, tasked with transforming the dining and shopping options at Chicago Midway International Airport.

The stores include two Hudson retail stores and Chicago favorite chocolate and candy shop Fannie May.

The expansion includes two new Hudson locations in Baggage Claim and Concourse C, designed to provide travelers with an enhanced customer experience. As North America's largest travel essentials and convenience brand, Hudson offers a comprehensive selection of snacks and beverages; travel necessities; local products including Beelove, Chicago Mahogany, Brown Sugar Bakery, and Garrett Popcorn; electronics, books,

magazines, and more. These new locations are strategically positioned to serve the diverse needs of travelers.

Iconic Chicago chocolate brand Fannie May is located on Concourse A. Founded in Chicago by H. Teller Archibald in 1920, Fannie May has grown from a single retail store on LaSalle Street to a renowned maker of gourmet chocolates and confections enjoyed by millions.

"The transformation at Chicago Midway continues to evolve and deliver offerings for every kind of guest at the airport, making each experience unique," said **Sammy Patel**, CEO of Midway Partnership.

"The mix of amenities ensures everyone has what they need. Our focus remains on creating a seamless, stress-free travel experience while ensuring passengers feel connected to Chicago's rich culture and flavors. Whether travelers need last-minute travel items or want to bring home a taste of Chicago, the new additions continue to provide a world-class concessions experience."



*Iconic Chicago chocolate brand Fannie May has opened an outlet at Midway International Airport, operated by Hudson.*



These openings mark a significant milestone in the transformation of Midway's concessions program. Since 2017, Midway Partnership has invested more than \$75 million and introduced more than 70 new dining and retail brands to the airport. The total concessions area has increased

by approximately 30,000 square feet, and the number of concessions jobs is well on its way to doubling from 700 to 1,400.

The program also boasts industry-leading participation by Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, at over 56%.



## IAADFS announces additional sessions for Summit of the Americas

The International Association of Airport and Duty Free Stores (IAADFS) has announced details of two workshop sessions that will take place during the 2025 Summit of the Americas, March 8-11 in Miami, Florida.

In addition to keynote speaker John Price, Managing Director of Americas Market Intelligence (AMI), who leads off the conference session program on the morning of Sunday, March 9, there will be four workshop discussions that attendees should plan to join during the Summit.

On Sunday following the keynote address there will be sessions that focus on airports (see below) and the cruise sector, with details for the cruise-related session arranged by *DFNI* to be provided shortly.

Monday will feature two more outstanding learning opportunities provided in partnership with publication partners *TRBusiness* and *The Moodie-Davitt Report* (details to be announced shortly). The 2025 session topics have been requested by past attendees, reports the IAADFS.

### Airports: Major Challenges and Unlimited Opportunities

Sunday, March 9, from 3:00 – 4:00 pm. **Rafael Echevarne**, Director General, Airports Council International, Latin America & Caribbean, and **Matt Cornelius**, Executive Vice President, Airports Council International North America, will discuss the many challenges and demands that must be met in the airport environment. Airports remain the largest revenue source for travel retail and associated duty free sales throughout the region, but is that growth curve likely to continue historic trends?

Sales revenue from all channels including retail, food and beverage, and duty free are critical to airport growth. Learn how airport executives look to ensure that growth continues and how to adapt to growing challenges.

The session will be moderated by Rene Riedi, IAADFS Chairman, with the opportunity for audience participation.

### Unlocking Footfall and Conversion: The Power of Experiential Retail in Duty Free and Travel Retail

Monday, March 10, from 9:30 – 10:30 am. This special Americas edition of the **TR Consumer Forum**, organized by *TRBusiness* and data partner **m1nd-set**, will explore how experiential retail can be leveraged effectively to help drive footfall and conversion in the channel, and will be held.

Featuring **Dr. Peter Mohn**, Founder & CEO, m1nd-set, **Sammy Patel**, VP, Commercial – Vantage Group and CEO – Midway Partnership, and **Andy Machin**, Managing Director, Kounter Retail, and moderated by **Faye Bartle**, Managing Editor, *TRBusiness*, this session is designed to be packed with actionable insights. The one-hour session will begin with exclusively curated research from m1nd-set, which unpacks the motivating factors for today's traveling shoppers, as the price advantage diminishes in importance.

Peter Mohn will explain how experience-led activations can influence consumer behavior, satisfaction and purchasing decisions, with an in-depth look at the ways in which this information can be leveraged to help boost sales growth. The research will be brought to life by industry experts who will discuss the challenges and opportunities around integrating experiential retail into the offering. The session will offer a taste of what's to come at the TR Consumer Forum, which is taking place June 2-4, 2025.

([www.trconsumerforum.com](http://www.trconsumerforum.com))

Additional information about the 2025 Summit can be found at [www.2025summitoftheamericas.org](http://www.2025summitoftheamericas.org).

Discounted registration remains available through February 7, which is also the room reservation deadline – though attendees are encouraged to reserve accommodations as soon as possible since there is no guarantee that rooms will remain available through the published booking deadline.

## UNWTO: International tourism recovers to pre-pandemic levels in 2024

An estimated 1.4 billion tourists traveled internationally in 2024, indicating a virtual recovery (99%) to pre-pandemic levels according to the latest World Tourism Barometer from UN Tourism.

This represents an increase of 11% over 2023, or 140 million more international tourist arrivals, with results driven by strong post-pandemic demand, robust performance from large source markets and the ongoing recovery of destinations in Asia and the Pacific.

### The Middle East, Europe and Africa see strongest results relative to 2019

The Middle East (95 million arrivals) remained the strongest-performing region when compared to 2019, with international arrivals 32% above pre-pandemic levels in 2024, though 1% higher compared to 2023.

**Africa** (74 million) welcomed 7% more arrivals than in 2019, and 12% more than in 2023.

**Europe**, the world's largest destination region, saw 747 million international arrivals in 2024 (+1% above 2019 levels and 5% over 2023) supported by strong intra-regional demand.

All European sub-regions surpassed pre-pandemic levels, except for Central and Eastern Europe where many destinations are still suffering from the lingering effects of the Russian aggression on Ukraine.

**The Americas** (213 million) recovered 97% of pre-pandemic arrivals (-3% over 2019), with the Caribbean and Central America already exceeding 2019 levels. Compared to 2023, the region saw 7% growth.

**Asia and the Pacific** (316 mil-

lion) continued to experience a rapid recovery in 2024, though arrival numbers were still 87% of pre-pandemic levels. This is an improvement from 66% at the end of 2023. International arrivals grew 33% in 2024, an increase of 78 million from 2023.

By sub-regions, **North Africa** and **Central America** saw the strongest performance in 2024, with 22% and 17% more international arrivals than before the pandemic. **Southern Mediterranean Europe** (+8%) and the **Caribbean** (+7%) also enjoyed robust growth, as did **Northern Europe** (+5%) and **Western Europe** (+2%).

The majority of destinations reported arrival figures well above pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

Available data for the first 10 to

12 months of 2024 shows several destinations reporting double-digit growth compared to 2019:

**El Salvador** (+81%), **Saudi Arabia** (+69%), **Ethiopia** (+40%), **Morocco** (+35%), **Guatemala** (+33%) and the **Dominican Republic** (+32%), all exceeded pre-pandemic levels by far in the full twelve months of 2024.

**Qatar** (+137%), **Albania** (+80%), **Colombia** (+37%), **Andorra** (+35%), **Malta** and **Serbia** (both +29%) enjoyed strong growth through October or November 2024, compared to the same ten or eleven months of 2019.

International air capacity and air traffic also virtually recovered pre-pandemic levels through October 2024 (IATA). Global occupancy rates reached 66% in November, slightly below 69% in November 2023 (based on STR data).

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## Women in Travel Retail+ 2025 charity to help educate girls in Cambodia



Women in Travel Retail+ announces that its elected charity for 2025 is *Toutes à l'école*, a school committed to providing a high standard of education to 1,700 underprivileged girls in Cambodia so that they can become free, educated women and play a useful role in their country. This year's designated charity was nominated by Priscilla Haibe de Walque.

In Cambodia, scarred by the Khmer Rouge genocide, poverty dominates the rice fields and girls are often the first to be deprived of an education, and instead must toil in the fields.

WiTR+ will aim to raise €15,000 to renovate the dormitories of the 400 'post-baccalaureate' girls, to provide them with a healthy living space and good conditions to support their studies. With a 100% pass rate, many of these students have gone on to pursue studies in medicine, engineering, law, agronomy and more.

The dormitories are essential as some students live far away and cannot afford accommodation in Phnom Penh. The dorms are currently damp and covered in mold.

Funds raised will cover the cost of replastering, the application of

anti-fungal paint and the installation of dehumidifiers in all the rooms.

Priscilla Haibe de Walque said, "I am so proud and thrilled that WiTR+ has voted for *Toutes à l'école*. I had the opportunity to visit the school in Phnom Penh several years ago, and was incredibly moved by the impact it has on these children's lives. Inspired by this, I have been sponsoring a young girl through the association for the past five years, and it has been a rewarding experience to see how this support has made a difference.

"I truly believe in the mission of *Toutes à l'école* and the vital work they are doing," concludes Haibe de Walque.

"Clean rooms in which to sleep and study are something that we take for granted. I am absolutely delighted that WiTR+ is going to make such a fundamental difference to this cohort of girls, and to future students," says Sarah Branquinho, Chair – WiTR+.

"Let's all work together to make sure we hit the target and enable this transformation."

For more information about the charity: [www.toutes-a-l-ecole.org/fr/](http://www.toutes-a-l-ecole.org/fr/)

## Final WiTR+ funded KOMA house completed

In more WiTR+ news, KOMA House # 36 – the last of the six homes sponsored by the Women in Travel Retail group in 2023 – has been completed in Gloria Oriental Mindoro in the Philippines. The news was posted by Maitreyi Karanth, founder of the Koma Karanth Foundation, which has been building homes and a community for impoverished families here.



## UNWTO: International tourism recovers to pre-pandemic levels in 2024 *Continued from page 3*

### 2025 outlook points to continued growth

International tourist arrivals are expected to grow 3% to 5% in 2025 compared to 2024, assuming a continued recovery of Asia and the Pacific and solid growth in most other regions. This initial projection assumes global economic conditions remain favorable, inflation continues to recede, and geopolitical conflicts do not escalate.

The outlook reflects a stabilization of growth rates after a strong rebound in international arrivals in 2023 (+33% vs 2022) and 2024 (+11% vs 2023).

The latest UN Tourism Confidence Index confirms these positive expectations. Around 64% of UN Tourism Panel of Experts see 'better' or 'much better' prospects for 2025 compared to 2024. Some 26% expect similar performance in their destination, while only 9% believe 2025 be 'worse' or 'much worse' than last year.

However, economic and geopolitical headwinds continue to pose significant risks, says the latest UN report. More than half of respondents point to high transport and accommodation costs and other economic factors such as volatile oil prices, as the main challenges international tourism will face in 2025. Tourists are also expected to continue to seek value for money.

Geopolitical risks (aside from ongoing conflicts) are a growing concern among the Panel of Experts, which ranked them as the third main factor after economics. Extreme weather events and staff shortages are also critical challenges, ranking fourth and fifth among the factors identified by the Panel of Experts.

Balancing growth and sustainability will be critical in 2025, as reflected by two major trends identified by the Panel of Experts: the search for sustainable practices and the discovery of lesser-known destinations.

## UNWTO: tourism exports reached a record US\$1.9tr in '24

International tourism receipts saw robust growth in 2024 after virtually already reaching pre-pandemic levels in 2023, in real terms (adjusting for inflation and exchange rate fluctuations).

Receipts reached US\$1.6 trillion in 2024, about 3% more than in 2023 and 4% more than in 2019 (real terms), according to preliminary estimates.

As growth stabilizes, average spending is gradually returning to pre-pandemic values, from nearly US\$1,400 per international arrival in 2020 and 2021, to an estimated US\$1,100 in 2024. This is still above the average of US\$1,000 of before the pandemic.

Total exports from tourism (including passenger transport) reached a record US\$1.9 trillion in 2024, about 3% higher than before the pandemic (real terms), according to preliminary estimates.

Several destinations reported outstanding growth in international tourism receipts during the first nine to eleven months of 2024. These include **Kuwait** (+232%), **El Salvador** (+206%), **Saudi Arabia** (+148%), **Albania** (+136%), **Serbia** (+98%), **Republic of Moldova** (+86%), and **Canada** (+70%), all in local currencies. These countries also enjoyed double-digit growth in receipts in 2024 compared to 2023.

Among the world's top five tourism earners, the **United Kingdom** (+40%), **Spain** (+36%), **France** (+27%) and **Italy** (+23%) saw robust growth in the first nine to eleven months of 2024, compared to 2019.

Data on international tourism expenditure reflects the same trend, especially among large source markets such as **Germany**, the **United Kingdom** (both +36% compared to 2019), the **United States** (+34%), **Italy** (+25%) and **France** (+11%). Expenditure from **India** remained high in the first half of 2024 (+81% above 2019 levels), after extraordinary growth in 2023.

## The Macallan launches latest Harmony Collection whisky in collaboration with Cirque du Soleil

The Macallan has unveiled the latest edition in the Harmony Collection, with two new whisky releases as part of the brand's collaboration with Cirque du Soleil.

Harmony Guardian Oak, created exclusively for global travel retail, launched on January 15, 2025 with a world-first activation at Singapore Changi Airport. This exclusive debut will be followed by pop-ups in Guangzhou International Airport and Shanghai International Airport.

Harmony Guardian Oak will then be available from January 26, 2025 in key airports worldwide and select downtown stores, and will be supported by global activations, including high-profile placements in Europe at Frankfurt and London Heathrow airports.

The second whisky, Harmony Vibrant Oak, is available in domestic retail.

The launch of Harmony Guardian Oak and Harmony Vibrant Oak continues the celebration of The Macallan's 200-Year Anniversary and reflects its expertise and mastery of wood.

Jeremy Speirs, Edrington Regional Managing Director – Global Travel Retail, commented: "Harmony Guardian Oak bridges the art of whisky-making and the creativity of performing arts, offering an extraordinary travel retail exclusive that reflects The Macallan's rich history and bold vision for the future."

"Launching with a world-first activation at Changi Airport, this release invites global travelers to connect with The Macallan's craftsmanship and its deep reverence for nature through a unique and high-profile collaboration with the world-famous Cirque du Soleil. This launch puts a fitting exclamation point on a year of anniversary celebrations which has seen us deliver meaningful and unforgettable moments for whisky enthusiasts and collectors alike."

This fourth edition in the Harmony Collection series celebrates The Macallan's rich history

with oak, which runs through every facet of the single malt Scotch whisky.

The Macallan's sherry-seasoned oak casks are the single greatest contributor to the outstanding quality, distinctive aromas, and flavors, says the company. Each cask is crafted to precise specifications, a process that takes around five years, delivering up to 80 percent of the flavor and 100 percent of the natural color.

Guardian Oak has been matured predominantly in a combination of first-fill and refill European sherry seasoned oak casks, showcasing the unique characteristics of European oak in creating rich, complex flavors. For this edition of the Harmony Collection, oak

chippings – a by-product created while making oak casks for The Macallan were repurposed and used in the presentation box and bottle labels.

The releases are linked to The Macallan's collaboration with Cirque du Soleil, which began with the debut of Cirque du Soleil SPIRIT, a nature-inspired experience that premiered earlier this year at The Macallan Estate in Speyside. Cirque du Soleil SPIRIT told the story of The Macallan's rich history, Scottish culture and the Highlands.

The outer pack for Harmony Guardian Oak features an illustration of Davonna, a key figure from Cirque du Soleil SPIRIT, depicted within the branches of a European oak tree.



According to The Macallan, the latter symbolizes the whisky maturing in sherry-seasoned European oak casks. The vibrant purple hues represent Davonna's character, symbolizing wisdom and maturity.

## WEBB Banks rebrands as Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits Travel Retail Sales & Export Division

Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits has announced that WEBB Banks, its brokerage operations division servicing the Caribbean, Central and South America, will officially rebrand as Southern Glazer's Travel Retail Sales & Export Division, effective February 1, 2025. This marks the latest milestone in Southern Glazer's strategic expansion in these markets, as well as the travel retail and cruise sectors, says the company.

Southern Glazer's acquired the assets and operations of WEBB Banks in 2023, which has operated under its original name during the transition. In addition to the name change, Andy Consuegra, WEBB Banks Chief Executive Officer, will assume the role of Non-Executive Chairman for Southern Glazer's Travel Retail Sales & Export Division.

Kam Snow, WEBB Banks Vice President of Sales, will step into a new role of Vice President/General Manager, Southern Glazer's Travel Retail Sales & Export Division and will report directly to Scott Oppenheimer, President, East Region, Southern Glazer's.

Snow has extensive experience in the Caribbean and Latin America, having worked for WEBB Banks and its predecessor Banks Channel for most of her 20-year career.

"Andy has been instrumental in building WEBB Banks into a market leader and we look forward to his continued leadership and contributions to the division," said Oppenheimer. "Andy's expertise and relationships are invaluable as Kam steps into her new role, and we look forward to their partnership as we continue to strengthen our presence in the region."

Since Southern Glazer's acquired WEBB Banks in 2023, the business has strengthened operations and expanded its reach. The division hosted the Caribbean and Central America Distributor Conference in Puerto Rico with 75 distributors, 40 suppliers, and over 800 business meetings.

"I'm thrilled for this next chapter as we rebrand to Southern Glazer's Travel Retail Sales & Export Division," said Consuegra. "With our talented team, expanded portfolio, and enhanced facilities,



we're well positioned for continued growth and innovation across the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. I am thrilled for Kam and look forward to supporting her as she leads this division forward. I'm excited to see the great success we'll achieve together with our distributors and suppliers."

The division is also launching a 32,000-square-foot Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) in Miami, managed by Luis Ramos, Southeast Region, Vice President Controller, Southern Glazer's. The Miami FTZ, which doubles the capacity of existing FTZ operations, will streamline import and export processes with enhanced inventory control, increased cost-efficiency, and dedicated support resources. Scheduled to begin in May 2025, the FTZ will further optimize operations for Southern Glazer's Travel Retail Sales & Export Division, says the company.