

# TFWA WE returns; we speak with Aude Bourdier



TFWA Vice President Marketing and Vice President Managing Director, Travel Retail, Brown-Forman, Aude Bourdier says it has never been more important for us to come together as an industry

It's safe to say the travel retail industry the world over has been on the edge of its collective seat to see if TFWA World Exhibition & Conference would be announced as a live event in Cannes this year. Indeed it now has been, though with cautions attached. We spoke to TFWA VP Marketing, Aude Bourdier, to discuss plans for the event, given the health situation and the fact that a few months have been lost in the planning.

## **Duty Free Magazine: Where are you in terms on planning for the upcoming TFWA WE Cannes show?**

Aude Bourdier: We're making steady progress in our plans for TFWA World Exhibition & Conference. We're monitoring the situation in Cannes very closely, and we are in constant contact with local authorities — both across the city of Cannes and at the Palais itself — to ensure we can offer the best possible event for delegates while operating within the latest health & safety guidelines. We're doing everything in our power to host a live event and we're grateful to our members and the industry for its trust and support in helping us to achieve this.

## **DFM: Who is most enthusiastic about the Cannes show coming back this year? Is it**

## **retailers, suppliers? Or is TFWA simply trying to get back to some normalcy?**

AB: The feedback from our recent member survey shows there is overwhelming demand for a return to physical trade events and face-to-face interaction across the entire duty free and travel retail business. From the conversations we are having with companies from all sectors of the industry, there is a general desire to return to live events as soon as possible.

As the biggest event in our industry's calendar, there's also a high level of enthusiasm from the trade around the return of TFWA World Exhibition & Conference, particularly at such a crucial time in our history, where collaboration and cooperative thinking will be vital in overcoming the challenges ahead of us. The Cannes event will help to serve as a springboard for recovery, and it has arguably never been more important for us to come together as an industry. While mindful of the challenges involved, we have a mandate to do all we can to make this event happen.

## **DFM: What are the main challenges you're facing while planning for this show? What are you encountering that the rest of us may not realize?**

AB: The challenges we're facing are the same as any organization hosting a large-scale event in the current circumstances. The health and safety of attendees will be paramount, and we will be adapting this year's event to fit in line with hygiene protocols being put in place at the Palais des Festivals and surrounding areas. With many companies facing financial challenges in the current climate, we're also focused on making TFWA World Exhibition & Conference as affordable as we can, while still maintaining the high quality that attendees have come to expect from the event. This is why we have launched initiatives such as our Hosted Buyer Programme, in order to provide financial assistance and more support to our industry partners looking to join us in Cannes. Without buyers, there will be no event, so it's important we do all we can to facilitate their attendance.

## **DFM: Can we talk about the ventilation and other safety measures that will be taken at the Palais?**

AB: The Palais des Festivals has introduced a number of very stringent measures in order to meet health & safety requirements. Regular deep cleaning and disinfection is now in place at the venue, while ventilation uses fresh rather than recycled air to improve hygiene standards. It is also the first conference center in France to receive GBAC STAR accreditation from the Global Biorisk Advisory Council. Attendees at this year's TFWA World Exhibition & Conference can rest assured that all precautions are being taken to ensure their visit is a safe and comfortable one.

## **DFM: What is the current situation with hotel occupancy?**

AB: While it's too early to say, we can share that, as ever, we are working closely with hotels in Cannes in preparation for a large turnout of exhibitors, buyers, retailers and other guests wishing to attend this year's TFWA World Exhibition & Conference.

## **DFM: What will happen with the social events?**

AB: We are continuing to update our social events program in order to provide ample opportunities to mingle and network, while also adhering to local health & safety guidelines. We will have more news to share on this in the coming weeks.

## **DFM: Do you feel encouraged after hearing about the Hainan Expo and Arabian Travel Market conference?**

AB: It is always heartening to see live events coming back; there have also been pilot events taking

place in Singapore, for example. In France, some major events are planned in Paris from June, and our friends and partners in Cannes are devoting a lot of efforts to staging a successful Film Festival in July.

This gives us added confidence in our plan to bring TFWA World Exhibition & Conference back to Cannes this year. The municipality is no stranger to hosting large international conferences and events, and ours is just one of a number. Cannes is now well prepared to safely welcome back delegates on a large scale. With this in mind, we're determined to host a successful live event that will bring our industry together and kickstart the recovery of duty free and travel retail.