



St Helena  
Government

Comair Limited

mantis  
Hotels, Eco-Escapes  
& Lifestyle Resorts

Enterprise St Helena

## **ST HELENA MOVING FORWARD**

- **AIR SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY COMAIR**
- **MANTIS CHOSEN AS PREFERRED HOTEL OPERATOR**

**SHG and DFID today formally announced the appointment of Comair Limited as the provider of air services to St Helena - and today also saw the selection of Mantis as the preferred operator of the 123 Main Street Hotel.**

This marks another important step in the evolution of St Helena Island as a new tourism destination. With the Island's first ever airport opening in 2016, the involvement of companies with the credentials of Comair and Mantis demonstrates that St Helena can attract the best international partners.

### **AIR SERVICES**

Comair, operating as British Airways under its licence agreement with British Airways plc, will operate a scheduled service between Johannesburg (OR Tambo International Airport) and St Helena Airport.

The weekly Saturday service will be operated using a brand new, state of the art Boeing 737-800 type aircraft (pictured) in a two class configuration (Business Class and Economy Class) with the flight time from Johannesburg to St Helena being approximately five hours.



Comair Boeing 737-800

Comair, through its extensive partnerships with international network carriers operating direct services to Johannesburg, will provide onward connections via Johannesburg to and from St Helena and, in addition, Comair's extensive domestic and southern African network will be available to passengers. Customers will further enjoy the benefits of purchasing a single ticket with the convenience of one stop check-in and baggage transfer.

The agreement with Comair is for an initial term of three years from the date of the first flight, with the potential for up to two extensions of two years each - a maximum term of seven years.

**Some key Questions & Answers on Air Services are attached to this release.**

**Marking this momentous step for St Helena, HE Governor Mark Capes said:**

*"As St Helena approaches an exciting new chapter in her history, to have such a well-established and highly regarded operator as Comair providing our air service represents a real vote of confidence in the Island and our new Airport. It is a huge bonus for St Helena, and a welcome boost for our tourism effort, that Comair has a close association with British Airways - which opens the door to the global network of one of the most recognised and trusted brands in the aviation business.*

*"On the hotel front, I was delighted to learn that the Mantis Collection hotel company is the preferred bidder to manage the new hotel to be developed in Lower Jamestown. I congratulate Mantis Chairman Adrian Gardiner and his enthusiastic team on their success. For St Helena this is another strong vote of confidence in our future from one of the leading international luxury hotel groups. Mantis has an outstanding reputation and brings a widely respected global brand to St Helena.*

*"As we continue to steer St Helena towards new opportunities, to shape a prosperous future for the benefit of all who live and work on the Island, we are indeed fortunate to have onboard such strong partners as Mantis and Comair."*

**CEO of Comair, Erik Venter, added:**

*"We are delighted that Comair has been selected as St Helena's airline of choice and look forward to providing customers with a quality service to and from the Island.*

*"We are also excited about the opportunity to work in partnership with the St Helena Government and Enterprise St Helena to promote the Island as a chosen destination, with the ultimate objective of boosting the local tourism industry and the overall economy of St Helena."*

**Nigel Kirby, DFID St Helena Airport Project Manager, concluded:**

*"DFID welcomes the appointment of Comair to operate services between St Helena and Johannesburg. Comair's appointment brings the reality of air access to St Helena much closer, and these flights will provide Saints with a gateway to the world, with onward*

*connections to London, Paris, Frankfurt, New York, Sydney and many others destinations.*

*“The spirit of collaboration and cooperation that persisted throughout the negotiations bodes well for the future relationship between Comair and St Helena, working together to deliver a better future for the Island.*

*“On a personal note, after more than a decade working on this project, I look forward to flying into St Helena.”*

Bookings will open for sale later this year subject to the conclusion of the required Government and regulatory approvals and obtaining the specific consents and licences associated with the terms of Air Service Agreement between St Helena Government and Comair.

DFID and SHG were advised on the tender process by Avia Solutions.

### **JAMESTOWN HOTEL OPERATION**

St Helena Hotel Development Ltd (SHHD) is pleased to announce that following its recent competitive procurement exercise, **Mantis** has been selected as the preferred operator to manage the 32-room hotel to be created at 123 Main Street out of three historic buildings in St Helena’s capital, Jamestown.

Construction is due to start in July 2015, and the hotel is expected to open during the first half of 2016. Bar and restaurant facilities in the hotel will be open to the public.

#### **Susan O’Bey, Director SHHD commented:**

*“We are looking forward to working with Mantis - a company which knows the Island and brings experience, expertise and cachet to this exciting project.*

*“Mantis has an exceptional reputation in the international hospitality arena and we look forward to working together as we develop a high quality hotel offering of which we can all be proud.”*

#### **Mantis Founder and Chairman Adrian Gardiner added:**

*“We're so proud to be associated with this new and exciting venture on the Island of St Helena. Mantis is all about unearthing the exceptional, and we've undoubtedly achieved this here. Not many people have visited this remote part of the globe and now we've been given the opportunity to open the doors to this new destination.*

*“Aside from just developing a new hotel and operating the Island’s first four-star boutique hotel, we're going to assist with training local people in the hospitality sector and also bring in our strong conservation ethic.”*

SHHD will now hold detailed discussions with Mantis over the next few weeks to put final contractual arrangements in place and will make a further announcement once these have been concluded.

**Looking at both of today's developments together, Enterprise St Helena's chief, Niall O'Keeffe, concluded:**

*"For a new and developing international tourism and investment destination, quality and trust are paramount. That St Helena is entering into partnership with two of the most respected and trusted brands in their respective fields - Comair and Mantis - sends out a very strong message. St Helena is open for business.*

*"Enterprise St Helena will further develop our tourism and investment links by opening a new office in Johannesburg during 2015, and I can also announce that Mr John Haran will be our new commercial representative in London. Further details on this will be announced shortly."*

**Today's announcements were marked by simultaneous stakeholder events in St Helena and Cape Town.**

### **Notes for Editors**

**Comair Limited** is a South African aviation and travel company, offering scheduled and non-scheduled airline services within South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands, as its main business. The company operates under its low-fare airline brand, kulula.com, as well as under British Airways livery, as part of its license agreement with British Airways plc.

Managed and owned by South Africans through its listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Comair has been operating successfully in South Africa since 1946. Comair is thought to be the only airline to have achieved operating profits for 68 consecutive years, and has a safety record which is internationally recognised.

**Avia Solutions**, a GE Capital Aviations Services company, advised SHG and DFID on the air services procurement process. It provides specialised advisory services to a wide range of airports, airlines, governments and financial investors, including airport route development, airline strategy, network planning, and air traffic forecasting.

**Mantis** is no stranger to St Helena. Its Chairman, Adrian Gardiner, and other senior personnel, visited St Helena in 2013. Mantis is a family run collection of award winning, privately owned, five star properties located around the world, across all seven continents. These include boutique hotels, game reserves, eco-lodges, ski-lodges and chalets and boutique cruises - offering in-the-know travellers exceptional properties and authentic experiences.

Officially founded by entrepreneur and hotelier Adrian Gardiner in 2000, Mantis is committed to the spirit of conservation and restoration, and each property is sensitive to its surroundings in respect of the building, environment and local community. The company also offers consultancy services in disciplines including conservation, education and hotel development.

**SHG**

**27 March 2015**