



Frequent Flyer news released on February 15, 2010

Finnair has introduced a range of changes to its **Finnair Plus** program, whereby the positive and negative changes are basically balanced out - at least until now. Newly earned points are now valid only for three, instead of previously five years. Elite members receive a new elite bonus of 10% to 25% in function of their membership level. However, it applies to *Finnair* flights only and not to **oneworld** partners. A new option to reach that elite status is to redeem 15,000 award points, which can be converted into 5,000 tier points for a fee of 20 EUR. Up to 50% of the required points for a specific elite level can be acquired in this way. The qualification thresholds remain at an unchanged high level, but the time period to renew elite membership has been cut from two to one year. Award points can now also be transferred between family members for a fee of 20 EUR. But we've saved the worst for last: The vague statement that cabin multipliers will be changed on March 01 inspires little hope - details have not yet been made public...



Avianca and TACA have received all corresponding approvals and will be integrated under a common holding group. It is not yet clear whether the two Frequent Flyer Programs **Avianca Plus** and **Distancia** will keep their independence, but the programs of the smaller companies like *OceanAir* and *Aerogal*, which are brought into the holding by Avianca, are likely to disappear. It will also be interesting to watch, which implications this will have on the future alliance strategies: TACA is a candidate for Star Alliance and maintains already Frequent Flyer partnerships with *United* and *Lufthansa* while Avianca Plus cooperates with *Air France/Delta* (SkyTeam) as well as with *Iberia/Mexicana* (**oneworld**).



Hilton adjusted recently the award levels in its **HHonors** program, resulting in an average price increase for awards of 20%. And competitor Intercontinental Hotels Group is exploiting this now with one of the biggest marketing hits in the history of loyalty programs: Its **Priority Club** is still looking for the "Luckiest Loser" concerned by this change until February 28. In practice this means that all HHonors members are invited to indicate their current HHonors account balance over the dedicated website <www.priorityclub.com/lostsomething>. All members are ensured 1,000 points in the Priority Club like that. And those 20,000 members with the highest account balances with HHonors - hence those, who lost most with the change - receive 20% of their Hilton points credited as bonus in the Priority Club (up to a maximum of 20,000 points)! And the overall biggest loser receives 2 million of them. Supposing that no lies are told in the cinema, this probably has to be Ryan Bingham...



Elite members of the US Airways program **Dividend Miles** get 3,000 bonus miles until March 31, 2011 (yes 2011, correct!) for rentals of an *Avis* car at airport locations in North America. The offer is applicable to rentals of at least three days in all car categories. The coupon code MUAA044 has to be mentioned upon reservation.



United Airlines modified its **Mileage Plus** in some regards over the past few weeks, whereby all these changes are basically positive. Award flights on *United* can now also be claimed as one-way awards or as combination of miles and money. The latter offers are, however, often to be looked at carefully in terms of value provided, especially if one, as it is the case with United, doesn't earn any miles for the paid portion of the ticket. Another positive news is that elite members now receive the mileage bonus on *Air Canada* flights, too, as previously already on all *Continental* and *US Airways* flights as well as on *Lufthansa* flights to the US (next to United itself, of course).

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