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In Search Of New Markets:

Airlines Woo Tour Folk

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SAIPAN—The two airlines competing for the Saipan-Japan air route—Pan American and

Continental/Air Micronesia—are also making parallel efforts to win travel agents and tour operators over to the Guam and Micronesian markets.

Pan Am is bringing 17 Miami-area travel agents into Guam this Friday with a side tour to Saipan on Sunday.

Seven major West Coast tour operators will be participating in Air Mike's "VIP Micronesian Study Tour," which touches down in Majuro next Monday for a two-week visit to five of the TT districts and Guam.

Pan Am's director for Guam and the TT, James Barton, said this week's group is the first of six "educational familiarization tours" the airline plans to offer through the end of the year. Other agents, in groups of 15 to 20 each, will be coming from Long Island, St. Louis, Los Angeles, with two from Hawaii.

The object is to sell the agents on the tourism potential of Guam, Saipan and Micronesia, although none of the Pan Am tours will go beyond Saipan.

Barton said the airline hopes to open a new market aside from Japan by promoting the islands among those who are "more affluent and have more money to spend locally."

Events planned for the Guam stop include a visit to Cocos Island and a reception at the Country Club of the Pacific. Before departing Monday evening, they will fly to Saipan on Sunday for a tour and dinner show with traditional dances.

Barton indicated that Pan Am hopes to bring out more agents, perhaps next spring. He also expressed interest in sending local travel agents on a familiarization tour in the other direction—maybe to Atlanta, Disney World, New Orleans and the West Coast.

Along with Guam and Saipan, Air Mike's group of tour operators will see every TT district except Yap. According to Don Biebel, manager-sales on Guam, they will arrive on Majuro Sept. 17, Ponape Sept. 19, Truk, Sept. 21, Guam, Sept. 23, Saipan Sept. 25, Palau Sept. 26 and be back on Guam Sept. 29.

"Needless to say," reads the itinerary for Saipan, "we will regard as the high point of the sightseeing tour a trip to the site of the Saipan Continental Hotel—an \$8 million property which we plan to open in spring of 1974."

This group will be the third Continental/Air Micronesia has brought out during the year.