

# travelBulletin

SEPTEMBER 2017

A romantic couple is riding a blue scooter on a cobblestone street at night. The man is wearing a light blue suit and the woman is wearing a light pink coat. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, the Fontana del Gallo in Rome is illuminated, and the facade of the Palazzo Senatorio is visible with its classical columns and statues. The scene is lit with warm streetlights and the cool blue light of the fountain.

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**Days** 12 days

**Fares from US\$5,711pp\***



### BALTIC BLISS

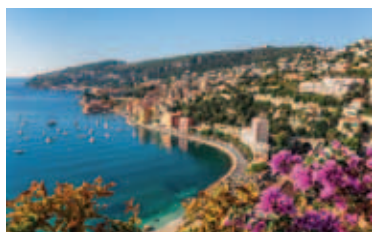
8311 / OCY180619-12

**To/From** Stockholm to London (Dover)

**Dates** 19 Jun – 1 Jul, 2018

**Days** 12 days

**Fares from US\$7,003\***



### VINEYARDS & VISTAS

8314 / OCY180729-14

**To/From** London (Dover) to Monte Carlo

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# travelBulletin

SEPTEMBER 2017

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## From the publisher

### Bruce Piper

AUGUST 2017 would have to go down in history as one of the biggest months ever for Australian travel industry mergers and acquisitions. Helloworld, Flight Centre and Intrepid Group all announced significant deals, showing that there's definitely never a dull moment in the travel industry.

The month kicked off with Helloworld Travel announcing it would take a minority stake in one of its biggest members, the Hunter Travel Group (HTG), which operates seven fully branded Helloworld Travel stores in Newcastle and the surrounding areas, along with two Cruise Travel Centres. The HTG portfolio also includes eight Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania travel outlets in Tasmania in partnership with the RACT, along with another Cruise Travel Centre in Hobart.

Interestingly, the complex deal also saw HTG acquire a 75% stake in Helloworld Travel's seven fully owned retail outlets. The former Harvey World Travel stores are located in Maroochydore, Queensland; Knox Westfield and Toorak in Victoria; Eastgardens Westfield and Parramatta Westfield in NSW; Canberra City in the ACT; and Bunbury in Western Australia. Hunter Travel Group will grow to a total of 25 outlets nationally, including 14 fully branded Helloworld Travel stores and 11 Helloworld Associates. Altogether they employ more than 100 staff with an annual TTV of over \$120 million.

The Helloworld deals continued later in August with the acquisition of a stake in Mackay-based Cooney Investments Pty Ltd – the operator of Helloworld Travel Mackay, Helloworld Travel Mount Pleasant and also the Hosted Journeys group travel and events products. Prices paid for the Helloworld acquisitions have not been made public at this stage.

Flight Centre also had a very busy August in terms of deals, moving into the Australian home-based agency space with the \$3.5 million purchase of Jeff Hakim's Travel Partners. In New Zealand Flight Centre paid \$8.3 million for the Travel Managers broker network (unrelated to the House of Travel-owned TravelManagers operation in Australia) and \$11.1 million for corporate agency Executive Travel Group.

That was in addition to other recent Flight Centre acquisitions in Mexico and Canada – while the Flight Centre annual report also revealed the \$9.8 million purchase price for the company's 49% stake in the Ignite Travel Group, which it acquired just over a year ago.

Intrepid Travel and Chimu Adventures also joined the M&A fray last month, announcing a "strategic partnership" which saw Intrepid buy 50% of the South American specialist – the first investment by the company since it split with TUI two years ago and returned to independent ownership.

**This month's contributors**

Steve Jones, Joel Katz, Jayson Westbury, Dennis Bunnik, Nigel Gaunt, Bruce Piper, Brian Johnston, Emma Lovell, Dilvin Yasa, Amanda Woods, Jenny Piper, Matt Bell, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Guy Dundas, Jon Murrie, Sarah Beyer, Christian Schweitzer

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**EDITORIAL**

**Editor in Chief and Publisher** – Bruce Piper  
bruce.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

**Managing Editor** – Jon Murrie  
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760  
jon.murrie@traveldaily.com.au

**Co-ordinating Editor** – Sarah Beyer  
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760  
sarah.beyer@travelbulletin.com.au

**ADVERTISING**

**National Sales Manager**  
Lisa Maroun  
Ph: 0405 132 575 or 02 8007 6760  
lisa.maroun@travelbulletin.com.au

**Production Co-ordinator**  
Sarah Beyer  
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760  
sarah.beyer@travelbulletin.com.au  
[www.travelbulletin.com.au](http://www.travelbulletin.com.au)

**DESIGN TEAM**

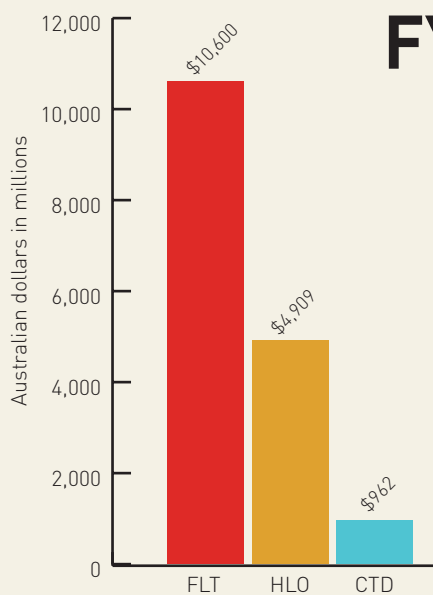
Sarah Beyer, Wendy St George

**ART DIRECTION and FINANCE**

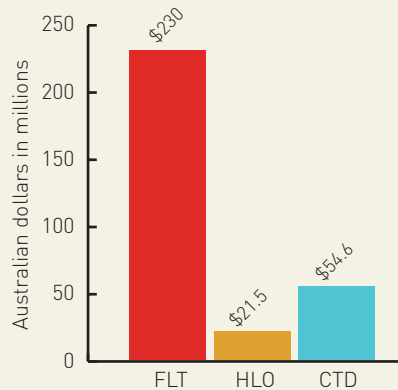
Jenny Piper  
jenny.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd  
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia  
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia  
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

## FY17 ANNUAL RESULTS

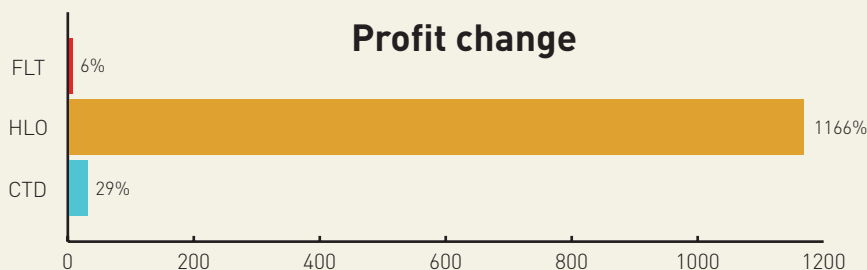
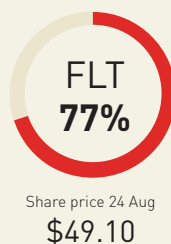


TTV in Australia



Net profit after tax

### Share price increase in the last year



Profit change

## Helloworld profit surge

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited is clearly reaping the benefits of the strong leadership of Andrew and Cinzia Burnes, with the company last month recording a hefty increase in reported earnings to \$55.2 million – an increase of almost \$30 million on the prior year. Net profit after tax increased tenfold to \$21.5 million, with the performance achieved alongside the ongoing integration of the Helloworld and AOT Group businesses.

The company cited improved economies of scale and productivity efficiencies, along with the stabilisation of network numbers and the addition of MTA Travel in Australia and New Zealand's World Travellers Group. Although all divisions improved their profitability, the "Rest of World" segment was impacted by strong competition for the Insider Journeys business which saw a drop in revenue as it refocused away from direct business back to its traditional wholesale market.

Going forward Helloworld expects further improvement, forecasting full year pre-tax earnings for 2017/18 of \$63-67 million.

## Reed Holidays goes under

AFTA raised some eyebrows last month when it advised travel agents and consumers affected by the collapse of Melbourne-based operator Reed Holidays to contact police. AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury announced the immediate revocation of the ATAS accreditation of the various Reed brands which include Young at Heart Travel, Australian Air Holidays and Seniors Coach Tours. He urged agents to invoke a chargeback if payments were made by credit card, and "to contact the local police to commence criminal charges against the

## BUSINESS MONITOR

### OUTBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, June 2017

Destination	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend May 17/ Jun 17	Trend Jun 16/ Jun 17
	000	000	000	%	%
USA	90.6	88.3	105.9	+0.8	+3.1
Indonesia	95.7	93.4	102.0	-0.2	-11.6
New Zealand	116.9	116.0	96.2	+0.5	+8.3
UK	50.3	50.5	85.8	-0.6	+5.0
Thailand	47.2	46.8	50.2	+1.4	+4.1
China	42.2	39.9	37.4	+1.3	+14.5
Italy	16.2	16.9	37.1	-1.5	-0.1
Singapore	32.8	33.4	32.3	-0.8	+2.7
Fiji	26.8	26.6	30.2	-0.3	-3.9
Greece	7.2	8.2	27.6	+1.4	+8.0
All outbound	850.7	846.1	971.3	+0.4	+3.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### INBOUND MARKET

Top 10 sources, June 2017

Source	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend May 17/ Jun 17	Trend Jun 16/ Jun 17
	000	000	000	%	%
New Zealand	110.9	110.9	108.2	-0.4	-1.5
China	111.7	114.3	75.4	+1.3	+10.9
USA	67.7	66.5	62.1	+1.2	+13.7
Singapore	38.9	37.4	48.8	+0.8	+2.1
Malaysia	33.7	32.1	35.1	+0.3	+2.7
Indonesia	14.1	11.9	30.8	-2.9	+0.8
UK	60.9	60.6	28.4	-0.7	+2.7
India	24.3	24.5	24.2	+1.2	+12.0
Japan	35.9	36.3	21.7	-0.2	+4.1
South Korea	24.6	24.5	17.9	+0.5	+3.0
All inbound	733.1	725.7	605.1	+0.3	+6.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs at June 2017

City pair	Passengers YE Jun 16 (000)	Passengers YE Jun 17 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	8,796.2	8,974.4	+2.0
Brisbane-Sydney	4,608.0	4,695.7	+1.9
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,438.7	3,500.5	+1.8
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,702.3	2,712.7	+0.4
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,362.7	2,413.2	+2.1
Melbourne-Perth	2,121.9	2,048.1	-3.5
Gold Coast-Melbourne	1,898.6	1,992.2	+4.9
Adelaide-Sydney	1,869.8	1,886.5	+0.9
Perth-Sydney	1,760.0	1,737.8	-1.3
Hobart-Melbourne	1,526.1	1,598.7	+4.8

Source: BITRE



## AFTA HONOURS IAN MCMAHON



TRAVELBULLETIN founder Ian McMahon received his honorary AFTA Life Membership in person in Melbourne last month, with CEO Jayson Westbury and chairman Mike Thompson making time during a visit to the Victorian capital to award the accolade. McMahon was cited for his steadfast commitment to the travel industry and his dedication to “telling the stories that need to be told,” according to Westbury.

with organic growth complementing expansion through acquisitions such as Tasmania’s Andrew Jones Travel, Redfern Travel in the UK and other agencies in the USA. “With the global network largely complete, CTM has won significant global clients which has been primarily due to the company’s global network and its award winning SMART technology suite,” Pherous enthused. He forecast further growth in 2017/18, with full year underlying earnings of \$120-\$125m representing an increase of up to 27.5%.

Interestingly investors did not join the celebrations, selling down the company’s shares which experienced a decline of almost 10% in the wake of the announcement.

## Flight Centre transforming

FLIGHT Centre also recorded a strong profit figure of \$329.5 million – almost \$1 million per day over the last year – but the result was down almost 5% on the previous 12 months. The company unveiled details of its ongoing transformation plan, led by chief operating officer Melanie Waters-Ryan, which has already seen a number of senior redundancies in Australia.

“Within three years the company aims for every brand in every country to be materially profitable, with all underperforming business models to pivot or be divested or closed,” the company said. Further significant changes in Australia are not expected, given high profitability levels, however, “a small number of shops with sub-standard profit and sales histories are also being filtered to ensure they meet key performance metrics, with a view to either improving results or closure”.

*Continues over page*

principals where payments and deposits had been paid for future travel and that travel will now not be able to be taken”.

Details of the collapse remain sketchy, but the administrators from insolvency advisory firm Cor Cordis confirmed they had been appointed as liquidators and were working to analyse the financial situation of the business. Four trips under way in the Northern Territory and Queensland were affected, while a further 72 passengers scheduled to depart the following week were contacted to advise their trips were off.

Cor Cordis said the future of the companies

may involve a sale of existing assets “including the itineraries already booked”.

## Another record for CTM

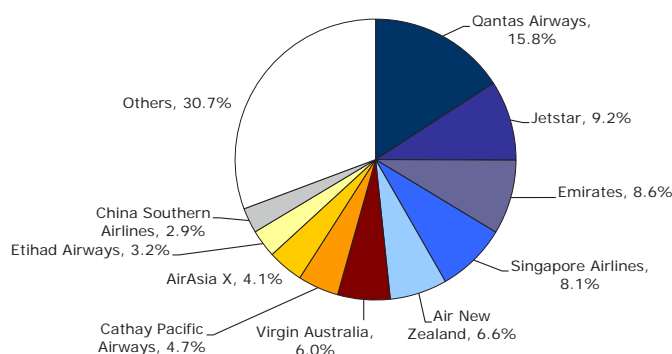
CORPORATE Travel Management continued its strong performance, with the company’s full year profits described by managing director Jamie Pherous as “another great result despite challenges in the global economy”. CTM’s underlying earnings result of \$98.6 million was up 43% on the prior year, with global TTV jumping 16% to just over \$4.1b.

Pherous said each region in the CTM network grew “significantly above market,”

## BUSINESS MONITOR

### INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended May 2017



Source: BITRE

### DOMESTIC AIR MARKET – June 2017

	Jun 16	Jun 17	Growth (%)	Yr to Jun 16	Yr to Jun 17	Growth (%)
Total pax carried	4.61m	4.69m	+1.8	58.40m	59.25m	+1.5
Revenue pax kms (RPK)	5.44bn	5.46bn	+0.4	68.83bn	69.47bn	+0.9
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.01bn	7.05bn	+0.6	88.87bn	88.64bn	-0.3
Load factor (%)	77.6	77.4	-0.2*	77.4	78.4	+0.9*
Aircraft trips (000)	51.2	51.5	+0.6	636.8	636.5	+0.0

Source: BITRE \* Percentage points difference

### DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE – July 2017

	Arrivals on Time		Departures on Time		Cancellations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jetstar	5,495	73.2	5,223	69.5	72	0.9
Qantas	7,407	81.3	7,559	83.0	130	1.4
QantasLink	8,567	83.4	8,560	83.3	258	2.4
REX	5,176	80.6	5,326	82.9	152	2.3
Virgin Australia	9,065	78.0	9,426	81.1	223	1.9
All Airlines	38,101	79.0	38,551	79.9	942	1.9

Source: BITRE

Continues from previous page

Another interesting feature of the Flight Centre results announcement was the revelation of losses at Top Deck Back-Roads Touring, which combined lost \$1 million, versus a \$9 million profit contribution in 2016.

## QF transformation achieved

THE Qantas Transformation Program embarked upon by CEO Alan Joyce three years ago to turnaround the airline after record losses has delivered again, with the Australian flag-carrier announcing a FY17 statutory profit before tax of \$1.18 billion, but down 17% on last year's result.

Joyce said the now complete strategy had seen the airline tackle "some difficult structural issues", which included wage freezes on high ranking executives and reducing its workforce by 5,000 full-time equivalent staff group-wide.

He said the transformation plan had delivered \$3.5 billion in cumulative underlying profit, record customer satisfaction and the opportunity for Qantas to grow.

The FY17 result was slightly above Qantas Group's guidance range flagged in May, primarily driven by the strengthening domestic business of Qantas and Jetstar, which combined achieved a record \$865 million Underlying EBIT.

Despite facing high level of capacity growth, Qantas International saw conditions improve in the 2H, with an Underlying EBIT of \$327 million, while Qantas Loyalty achieved a record \$369 million, up four percent in revenue.

Net passenger revenue fell 1%, with the Group citing "significant international competitor capacity", reduced domestic volume and a dip in demand for the resources sector.

Non-executive employees will share in a \$55 million bonus, which equates to \$2,500 for full-time staff and \$2,000 for part-timers.

Qantas revealed the airline's 12 Airbus A380s would be overhauled beginning in Q2 of 2019. Skybeds in Business class will be retrofitted with Business Suites and the Premium Economy cabin would be increased in size, featuring a like-for-like product as will be offered on the Qantas 787-9 Dreamliner. Economy and First class will also be refurbished.

The Business and Qantas Club lounges at Melbourne Domestic will also be renovated to provide more space, comfort & dining options.

Joyce also challenged Boeing and Airbus to develop next-gen aircraft capable of flying non-stop from Sydney to London and Melbourne to New York with full passenger loads that would be "revolutionary for air travel in Australia".

## Virgin Australia "improving"

VIRGIN Australia continued to lose money over the last financial year, with the company's annual results announcement indicating a group loss of \$185.8 million. The company worked hard to find the bright spots in its figures, saying the result was "an improvement of \$38.9 million" on the previous year and pointing out improvements in several key metrics such as free cash flow, total cash balances and financial leverage. CEO John Borghetti said the statutory result was impacted by restructuring charges relating to the airline's Better Business Program which would deliver "significant long term cash flow savings".

Domestic performance was impacted by subdued trading conditions including reduce demand for regional and corporate

travel. Virgin Australia International was profitable for the 2017 financial year, while Tigerair Australia's domestic operations were also profitable as the business delivered passenger and unit revenue growth.

However the overall Tigerair Australia result was impacted by the launch and subsequent withdrawal of operations to Bali. Borghetti said recent improvements in trading conditions were expected to continue, improving the business' overall performance.

## Avis revamps scholarship

AVIS' longstanding commitment to the Australian travel sector is continuing this year, with the car rental giant last month confirming details of the 2017 Avis Travel Agent Scholarship which is evolving to reflect a new focus on innovation. Kaye Ceille, Avis Budget Group managing director Pacific Region, said with today's travel agents operating in a hyper-competitive retail environment "to stand apart consultants must constantly be looking for clever and creative ways to deliver a genuinely memorable service".

The scholarship prize package is also evolving, with this year's winner to receive return Qantas flights, accommodation and car hire with the option of travelling to the USA, Europe or Asia to attend a Phocuswright industry conference. Also on offer is 12 months' individual membership of Cruise Lines International Australasia, a Polonius Resources Personal Profile, and two tickets; to the 2018 AFTA National Travel Industry Awards gala dinner including flights and overnight accommodation.

Applications are due by 9 October, with the final judging and awards announcement taking place in Sydney on 13 November - for entry details see [www.avisscholarship.com](http://www.avisscholarship.com).

## BUSINESS MONITOR

### INTERNET AGENCY MARKET SHARES

April 2017, compared with March 2017

Rank	Position	Visits Share	Relative Diff	Rank
Websites	Feb 17	Feb to Jan	Jan 16	
Webjet Australia	15.98	-0.44	1	
Expedia Australia	11.70	-0.05	2	
Skyscanner Australia	9.56	+0.49	3	
Wotif.com	7.50	-0.48	4	
Flight Centre	6.82	+0.54	5	
Velocity Frequent Flyer	3.92	+0.34	6	
Luxury Escapes	2.73	+0.44	9	
Lastminute.com.au	2.60	+0.09	8	
Cheap Flights Aus & NZ	2.47	-0.07	7	
I Want That Flight!	1.70	-0.30	10	

Source: Hitwise, a division of Connexus

### INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs (at May 2017)

City pair	Passengers YE May 16	Passengers YE May 17	% of total	% change 17/16
Auckland-Sydney	1,577,291	1,597,923	4.2	+1.3
Singapore-Sydney	1,474,716	1,457,607	3.8	-1.2
Singapore-Melbourne	1,279,562	1,395,074	3.6	+9.0
Auckland-Melbourne	1,167,525	1,214,254	3.2	+4.0
Singapore-Perth	1,116,775	1,137,548	3.0	+1.9
Hong Kong-Sydney	1,042,048	1,073,556	2.8	+3.0
Auckland-Brisbane	970,116	961,774	2.5	-0.9
Los Angeles-Sydney	925,024	883,410	2.3	-4.5
Denpasar-Perth	852,527	874,481	2.3	+2.6
Kuala Lumpur-Melbourne	794,463	847,464	2.2	+6.7
Top 10 city pairs	11,200,047	11,443,061	29.7	+2.2
Other city pairs	24,811,328	27,029,440	70.3	+8.9
ALL CITY PAIRS	36,011,375	38,472,501	100.0	+6.8

Source: BITRE

### SHARE PRICES

at 23 August 2017

Flight Centre (FLT)	\$45.28
Helloworld (HLO)	\$4.24
Webjet (WEB)	\$11.42
Qantas (QAN)	\$5.74
Virgin Australia (VAH)	\$0.205
Ardent Leisure (AAD)	\$1.95
Air New Zealand (AIZ)	\$3.16
Auckland International Airport (AIA)	\$6.40
Sydney Airport (SYD)	\$7.08
Corporate Travel Management (CTD)	\$21.85
Village Roadshow (VRL)	\$3.80
Regional Express (REX)	\$1.07
Sealink (SLK)	\$4.02
Mantra Group Limited (MTR)	\$2.97



## AICC HOSTS TOURISM FORUM



THE Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce convened an Australian Tourism Lunch in Sydney last month, with UTS lecturer David Beirman moderating a panel of leaders including Star Entertainment CEO Matt Bekier, Carnival Australia executive chairman Ann Sherry and Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan.



## Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 25 Jul** Flight Centre transforms
- 25 Jul** Samoa Airways, FJ pact
- 26 Jul** FCTG continue Qld push
- 26 Jul** AICS to hit the road
- 27 Jul** QF adds Sydney/Osaka
- 27 Jul** Accor challenges Airbnb
- 28 Jul** Lux Escapes retail outlet
- 28 Jul** Etihad hit but \$1.9b loss
- 31 Jul** FCTG expands in New Zealand
- 01 Aug** MH lifts on trade support
- 01 Aug** PCMA acquires ICESAP
- 02 Aug** RAC Travel WA into Express
- 02 Aug** HLO buys into Hunter
- 02 Aug** FCTG expands in Canada
- 03 Aug** McKeon to head UL operation
- 03 Aug** Webjet takes JacTravel
- 04 Aug** Air China plans PEK/BNE
- 04 Aug** Crown profit drops 15.5%
- 07 Aug** Million dollar stars shine
- 07 Aug** Mantra buys Art Series Group
- 07 Aug** FCTG buys Travel Partners
- 08 Aug** Wendy Wu bookable site
- 08 Aug** Ensemble signs Hoffmann
- 09 Aug** SAA "business as usual"
- 09 Aug** Wendy Wu takes on web
- 09 Aug** HLO wins WoAG accom contract
- 10 Aug** Express adds RAA Travel
- 10 Aug** VA reports \$185.8m loss
- 10 Aug** SYD cramps NSW tourism
- 11 Aug** QF, Alibaba partnership
- 11 Aug** Dreamworld \$37m slump
- 11 Aug** HLO in Cooney Investments
- 14 Aug** UK consumer protection shift
- 14 Aug** BP, Woolworths loyalty plot
- 15 Aug** Avis scholarship revamp
- 15 Aug** Intrepid buys into Chimu
- 16 Aug** SeaLink record profit result
- 16 Aug** Airberlin administration
- 17 Aug** American suspends AKL
- 17 Aug** Tourism workforce shortfall
- 18 Aug** Spain pax accounted for
- 18 Aug** Record 2017 for Brisbane
- 21 Aug** Tourism Aus selects Clarke
- 21 Aug** EK seat selection revamp
- 22 Aug** Reed Hols in liquidation
- 22 Aug** CTM reaps \$98.6 million
- 23 Aug** HLO reports record result
- 23 Aug** New MEL-China route for Jetstar

## Express expansion

THE Express Travel Group has seen some significant wins in the last month, with two large groups of travel agents joining the company's Independent Travel Group network. The first addition to be announced was Western Australia's RAC Travel, which becomes part of Express on 1 October when all seven of its locations will move across. RAC WA executive manager of travel and tourism, Mike Leary, said "we see Express Travel Group as the partner that best aligns with our vision for growth in the future".

A week after the Western Australian

announcement, Express confirmed the further addition of South Australia's RAA Travel, the travel services division of the Royal Automobile Association of South Australia. RAA currently operates 22 shops across SA and far western NSW including eight in the Adelaide CBD, 13 in country South Australia and one in Broken Hill. Nine of them feature international travel consultants.

ETG general manager of sales, Jonathan Nelson, was enthusiastic about the addition, saying "our customised partnership model... continues to attract the highest quality agencies in Australia, which benefits all of our 700-plus members in the long term".

### AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

International passengers through Australia's major international airports – May 2017

Airport	Passengers YE May 16	Passengers YE May 17	% of total	% change 17/16
Sydney	14,461,459	15,457,682	40.2	+6.9
Melbourne	9,201,856	9,907,413	25.8	+7.7
Brisbane	5,305,833	5,573,628	14.5	+5.0
Perth	4,256,551	4,415,605	11.5	+3.7
Gold Coast	1,006,627	1,107,013	2.9	+10.0
Adelaide	854,644	950,727	2.5	+11.2
Cairns	603,614	644,826	1.7	+6.8
Darwin	257,652	282,491	0.7	+9.6
Canberra <sup>~</sup>	n/a	57,174	0.1	n/a
Townsville <sup>^</sup>	26,877	44,684	0.1	+66.3
Sunshine Coast <sup>*</sup>	17,376	13,728	0.0	-21.0
Norfolk Island	10,811	9,975	0.0	-7.7
Port Hedland <sup>~</sup>	8,075	7,555	0.0	-6.4
All Airports	36,011,375	38,472,501	100.0	+6.8

<sup>\*</sup>Scheduled services recommenced September 2015 <sup>^</sup>Seasonal services only  
<sup>~</sup>Scheduled services recommenced September 2016 <sup>~</sup>Scheduled services recommenced April 2015

### ATAS ACCREDITED LOCATIONS

at 20 April 2017

New South Wales	995
Victoria	718
Queensland	605
Western Australia	290
South Australia	228
Australian Capital Territory	49
Tasmania	42
Northern Territory	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,950</b>

## Got something to say?

We're all ears, so share  
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## Steve Jones' Say

IT'S been an active and interesting few weeks in the retail sector, not least because of Flight Centre's acquisition of Travel Partners, a small network of home-based agents founded by Jeff Hakim.

For Hakim, it's the second such company he has built and sold, having been the architect of Travel Managers which House of Travel acquired from him a decade ago.

Clearly Hakim knows what he's doing in the space. And good luck to him for having the foresight to cash in not once, but twice on the growth of the sector. Where others initially saw mums in slippers playing at being travel agents in their spare time, he saw the potential and developed a network of professional consultants. He has reaped the rewards, and the acquisition again demonstrates how keen the major bricks and mortar players are to take a slice of the home-based pie.

But you have to wonder if Skroo Turner has been forced to settle for second best. Travel Partners has nowhere near the reach

of its competitors, including that of Roy Merrick's Mobile Travel Agents which Flight Centre was reportedly interested in last year.

On its website, Travel Partners lists 25 agents. MTA, now 50% owned by Helloworld, has in the region of 350.

Looking at those basic numbers it would be easy to conclude that Flight Centre missed out of the main prize, and been outflanked by Andrew Burnes. Yet further analysis suggests that is only half the story.

According to figures contained in an announcement to the ASX, Travel Partners Total Transactional Value amounted to \$70m in the 2017 financial year. The previous year, MTA hit close to \$170m.

If my rudimentary calculations are correct that gives Travel Partners home-based consultants an average TTV of \$2.8m while MTA's 350 pulled in an average of \$485,000. That is a curiously seismic gulf. All of a sudden, Flight Centre's acquisition does not look quite so second best after all.

Other intriguing retail developments saw

Helloworld acquire stakes in its largest multi-franchise member, Brett Dann's Hunter Travel Group, and Cooney Investments, the operator of two respected Queensland Helloworld stores and Hosted Journeys Group Travel and Events.

In the HTG agreement, Dann will also buy a 75% stake in Helloworld's seven wholly-owned stores. What these deals achieve, of course, is to inextricably tie two key Helloworld franchisees to the group. HTG in particular is absolutely essential for Helloworld, so keeping them firmly within the fold will have been a key ambition of Burnes. He will be acutely aware he can ill-afford to lose any high profile agents, particularly fully branded ones.

As pleased as Burnes will have been with those deals – not to mention the accolade of being named Australia's best agency chain at the NTIAs – he will have been disappointed to see long time Helloworld and Jetset Travelworld member RAA Travel join Express Travel's Independent Travel Group.

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2019: 6 – 17 Jan

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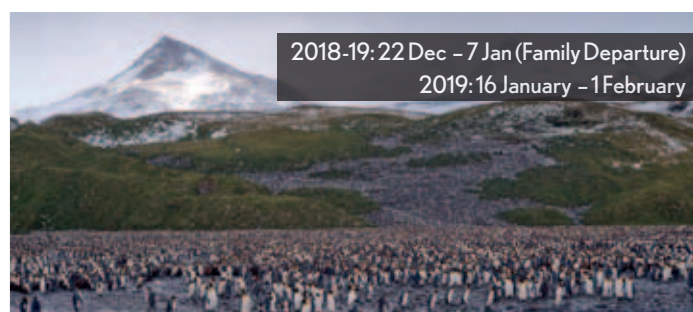
Visiting Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Antarctic Sound, South Shetland Islands, Paradise Bay and Lemaire Channel.

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Twin Share Per Person: From US \$14,995

From US\$11,995

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2019: 16 January – 1 February

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2019: 26 Aug – 18 Sep

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## INTREPID INVESTS IN CHIMU ADVENTURES



From left: Greg Carter – Co-founder Chimu Adventures, James Thornton – CEO Intrepid Travel and Chad Carey – Co-founder Chimu Adventures.

CHIMU Adventures has its sight set on ramping up polar cruise charters as part of a multi-million dollar investment from Intrepid Group.

A deal between the Latin American and adventure small group specialists was finalised last month, less than five months after the parties began talks on a strategic venture.

The arrangement sees Intrepid Group, the parent company of brands including Intrepid, Peregrine Adventures and Geckos Adventures, acquire a 50% stake in Chimu Adventures along with its Asia-focused touring brand, Get About Asia, and three sales offices in the UK, Sydney and Sunshine Coast. Intrepid Group will also take a 50% stake in Chimu's three South American DMCs, boosting its global presence to 30 offices globally.

Chimu's co-founders Greg Carter and Chad Carey will continue to operate their 13 year-old travel business autonomously and separate to Intrepid, with the partnership creating one of the largest sellers of travel to Antarctica from Australia.

The multi-brand adventure company has offered cruising to Croatia, Greece, Spain, Iceland, Cuba and Portugal via the Peregrine label for a short time. Speaking with *travelBulletin* on the merger, Intrepid Group chief executive James Thornton said that through Chimu, the Intrepid brand will now be able to offer Antarctic and Arctic cruising for the first time.

"As the world's largest provider of adventure travel experiences, it is really a missing part of our overall product offering. It's great to now partner with experts like Chimu who have great ability to deliver a fantastic product in those regions, not just out of South America but also out of Australia," Thornton explained.

A top priority for the companies will be an expansion of cruise charters to polar regions. This year Chimu secured four almost full charters to Antarctica, but is keen to boost that number, more so from Hobart in 2019/20, under its alliance with Intrepid who will be able to financially support the strategy. In due course and as volumes grow, Thornton said Intrepid may consider purchasing its own ship, should it be able to "get the right ship and right product for our style of travel".

As a specialist in the FIT market, Chimu Adventures will also provide a platform for Intrepid Group to explore the tailored holiday space.



## AFTA VIEW

Jayson Westbury, chief executive AFTA

2017 has been yet another year of nasty, horrible, heart-wrenching attacks and incidents with terrorism at the core and no matter where you sit within the travel industry this is bad news for travellers and bad news for business.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but let's face it, terrorism is not only a black hole on the world community, but it is the black hole for the travel and tourism industry. We, the travel and tourism industry can do little to solve this problem. But what we can do is ensure that we are well informed, well versed and armed with the right information, accurate detail, current information and facts to give travellers the information they need to make informed decisions to travel.

At the end of the day, the decision sits with the traveller and not the travel agent. People make their own minds up about whether they want to travel, where they want to travel to and what risks (if any) they want to take in making those decisions, so it is not something that the travel agent should feel is a weight on their shoulders.

And there is plenty of information available to help inform the industry and travellers. Of course there is the Australian government Smartraveller website which is always a great place to start to get information about destinations and what the

**‘At the end of the day, the decision [to travel] sits with the traveller not the travel agent’**

Australian government is saying about particular countries and in many cases parts of countries or even cities. There is also the National Security Office that provides detailed information about the terror threat levels in Australia and this can inform people about how the Australian Government feels about potential terror threats. All this information helps keep us informed.

When the terror alert went off last month and the security levels increased at Australian airports there was plenty of people who wanted to have a go at the Australian government and airports for slowing things down and making life hard leaving and entering the country. But at the end of the day, Australia is a safer place for the excellent work done by the Government departments and in particular the border forces to keep us all safe.

The only people that should be blamed for all this mess are the terrorists. The world should be a safe, happy, free place and safe global travel should not be a privilege but an expectation. Wars should be fought between armies and warriors, not families and friends and I hope that one day this will be the case.

In the meantime, we have to be prepared, open and ready to deal with whatever comes. The travel industry across the globe does play a part in this whether we like it or not and travellers will always be looking to the industry and particularly travel agents for advice on what to do and where to go when these types of troubles unfold.

Information is key and AFTA will do what it can to keep the industry updated and as informed as we can about situations and circumstances as they unfold. Let's all hope the tail end of 2017 does not bring the same challenges on this front.





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# TOURISM BACKLASH BUILDS IN EUROPE

JUST days before the city was hit by last month's terrorist attack, activists in Barcelona were reportedly hurling eggs at tourists and slashing the tyres of coaches.

Anti-tourism demonstrations in the Spanish city have attracted thousands this year to protest against increasing crowds, soaring accommodation costs and the behaviour of drunken visitors, a phenomenon that has also erupted in neighbouring destinations like Mallorca and San Sebastian.

In Venice, 2,000 people gathered to vent similar concerns in July, while in other destinations across Europe local authorities have announced measures to limit visitor numbers or address concerns about tourist behaviour.

Despite the impact of terrorism, 2017 has become a year of tourism backlash in Europe and political figures are grappling with the ramifications.

In the Croatian city of Dubrovnik, authorities have revealed plans to limit tourists within the city walls to 8,000 per day and cap the number of cruise ship visits. The Greek island of Santorini has announced a similar limit of 8,000 cruise passengers per day, while the Italian villages of the Cinque Terre are now subject to an annual maximum of 1.5 million visitors.

In Rome, city authorities have brought officers out of retirement to police bad behaviour around sites including Trevi Fountain, and on the Croatian island of Hvar the local mayor is targeting tourists with hefty fines for inadequate dress and public drinking.



Corse Tourisme, via Twitter

The outcry has been loudest in Europe, but the tourism industry worldwide is now watching closely.

Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan last month confirmed his organisation had commissioned a study into the issue in late 2016 in partnership with Tourism New Zealand, which had experienced some backlash in places like Queenstown and the North Island.

"What our research showed overwhelmingly was that Australians are very comfortable with the amount of international tourists that are coming into the country – in fact they would like to see more. We've tracked it, we don't see an issue," O'Sullivan said.

Carnival Australia executive chairman Ann Sherry noted the irony of the protests in Spain, where cruising has fundamentally changed the face of tourism since the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. "It wasn't that long ago that Spain had 30% unemployment – there wasn't anyone then protesting about the fact that tourists continue to come," she said. "Clearly there are tensions, but I'm not sure it's as black and white as it's being played out publicly," Sherry added.



## CATO VIEW

Dennis Bunnik, chairman  
Council of Tour Operators

### ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

THE renaissance of touring and the land supply side of the Australian travel industry continues unabated. Travellers are seeing the benefits of both touring and of having a professional travel consultant book all elements of their holiday before they leave Australia. Similarly travel consultants are rediscovering the financial and efficiency benefits of selling touring and including a touring element as part of a client's overall holiday.

CATO is very much involved in this renaissance by helping the sector speak in a common voice and promoting the benefits of touring. The recent CATO AGM was an opportunity to take stock of our activities over the past year and paint a vision of the future.

Key CATO initiatives over the past year have included the relaunch of the CATO website, the *travelBulletin/Travel Daily Touring Guide* and *Road, Rail & Coach Survey*, enhanced media exposure and significant membership growth.

The CATO website ([www.cato.travel](http://www.cato.travel)) in particular has been a strong success with travel consultants now being able to easily search for the right supplier and product for their client. Searches can be made by destination and travel genre across all CATO members including wholesalers, destination specialists, car, rail and tour operators.

Search results include detailed supplier profiles with links straight through to the most relevant sections of their respective websites. Regular advertising in *Travel Daily* encourages travel consultants to

CATO Search It and is resulting in strong traffic growth to the site.

However, these elements are really just the first steps in the continued evolution of CATO. Much more needs to be done to build the profile of the tour operator and wholesaler sectors of the industry. CATO is working on a number of initiatives to do for touring what CLIA has done for cruising. The opportunities in this sector for consumers, travel agents and tour operators are huge, and now is the time to take advantage of this. CATO will be working closely with the trade and consumer media as well as the retail consortiums to promote the benefits of touring.

We will continue to work with destination specialists, national tourism bodies and FIT wholesalers to champion the incredible strength and variety of product available to the Australian traveller. This will include a strong emphasis on consultant education and helping smaller CATO members access professional services.

To achieve these aims will require additional investment from members as we increase our resources and implement the new strategies. The CATO committee is currently working on plans for growth and will be consulting with members in coming months. Initial discussion with members and feedback received after the AGM show that there is a strong desire to take CATO into a new era and I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

‘CATO is working on a number of initiatives to do for touring what CLIA has done for cruising’



An aerial photograph of a beautiful coastal landscape. In the foreground, a wide, sandy beach meets the ocean with gentle waves. Several people are walking along the shoreline. Behind the beach is a dense line of low-lying, green coastal vegetation. In the background, a calm blue bay stretches towards a range of dark, forested mountains under a clear blue sky.

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# MERGER WINDFALL FOR GLOBAL STARS

By Jon Murrie

THERE'S a new type of millionaire among Australia's top-selling travel agents this year, each the beneficiary of a successful merger involving some of the country's biggest wholesale brands.

The Global STARS agent reward program – a combination of the Qantas Holidays Global Achievers scheme and the Sunlover Stars program – made its debut in Perth last month where 170 agents lived the high life on a packed itinerary of West Australian highlights.

The merged program now acknowledges sales from across the full suite of Helloworld Travel wholesale brands, including Qantas Holidays, Viva! Holidays, Sunlover Holidays, Rail Tickets, Ready Rooms, The Cruise Team, Territory Discoveries and Insider Journeys.

And with a wider range of product to book, agents this year set new sales records and prompted the introduction of an entirely new status level for big achievers, dubbed the "Millionaire's Club".

"Before, we didn't have anyone near a million, but things have really increased," said Helloworld Travel group general manager of wholesale Gregory Lording. "It's a new tier, and competitive people wanted to get up there."

Five agents were admitted to the Millionaire's Club in its inaugural year, announced at a gala dinner in the ballroom at Crown Towers Perth. Angela Kaluzyn of Skilled Travel, Brian Bennett of Travel & Cruise Professionals, Carly O'Bryan of Travel & Cruise Belrose, Chris McIlroy of Travel Inspirations and Jenny Cooper of Queanbeyan City Travel and Cruise were all honoured as the top achievers on the night.

A second tier involved agents who had posted sales of more than \$500,000, each



**The Millionaire's Club:** Carly O'Bryan, Travel & Cruise Belrose; Angela Kaluzyn, Skilled Travel; Chris McIlroy, Travel Inspirations; Gregory Lording, Helloworld group GM wholesale and Jenny Cooper, Queanbeyan City Travel & Cruise (not shown: Brian Bennett of Travel & Cruise Professionals).

of whom was hosted at a private cocktail event and given a surprise gift from Tiffany & Co, and for the first time 15 travel agents from New Zealand attended in recognition of their sales for the Go Holidays brand.

The merged Global STARS program had been well received, Lording said, and reflected a wider consolidation of functions within the Helloworld wholesale family.

"We wanted to promote the benefit of selling everything so we've combined (the reward schemes) to have a far better program," he said. "When you bring the different elements together you have better quality and we reward the agents for supporting us across

whatever brand they want to book."

He counted the launch of the combined Global STARS program among the year's top landmarks for the Helloworld stable, along with a decision to bring business development managers together in a united team rather than having individual brand specialists.

"Because of that, we've got more BDMS selling our brands so they're doing more regular visits to agents talking to all brands or answering questions about brands or issues that agents might have," Lording said. "So a single sales force."

Among the highlights of the Global STARS event in Perth were a lunch and networking session in the cellars of Sandalford Winery in the Swan Valley and a cocktail evening at Little Creatures Brewery on the Fremantle waterfront. The gala dinner was hosted by actor and comedian Shane Jacobson and involved a succession of holiday giveaways and door prizes, plus a surprise appearance by "Kylie Minogue" in the form of tribute show 100% Kylie.

Agents also had an opportunity to visit Rottnest Island where they explored on bike and made friends with the local quokkas, while a series of pre and post famils supported by Tourism Western Australia allowed them to see regions including the Kimberley, the Coral Coast and the Margaret River.

Next year's Global STARS event will be held in Queensland on Hamilton Island.



Performers in tribute show 100% Kylie



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# THE SURVIVOR GUIDE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Craig Tansley shows you how you can have your own *Survivor*-like experiences in the South Pacific islands the series were filmed in...

**W**HEN the producers of *Survivor* were scouting the planet for wild but pristine landscapes where contestants could suffer to survive while viewers could fantasise over green mountainous hinterlands, secret white sandy bays and stunning blue seas, they didn't go further than the South Pacific. For this is the Earth's wildest and most unaffected retreat from the modern

world. We look at where *Survivor*'s been set and how you can find your own wild adventure in these islands.

## SAMOA

**US *Survivor* series 19, 20, 23 and 24 were filmed in Samoa and Australian *Survivor* was filmed here in 2016 and 2017.**

Samoa is that south seas hideout you probably always imagined. Adhering to its age-old traditions more than any other country in Polynesia, paramount chiefs still rule the population, and locals live in tiny villages in simple huts called fales which have no walls. So just being here will make you feel like you're already on *Survivor*. And nowhere in the South Pacific is more pristine: there are waterfalls at every turn of the road, and deserted bays where big surf breaks onto protective reefs. And to get into a natural attraction, you'll have to pay the local family who own it (relax, it's just a few Samoan tala – A\$4-5).

## ADVENTURE OPTIONS

While Samoans are famous for their sleepy lifestyles (sleeping is considered a national pastime) there are many ways a visitor can take to the island's stunning coastline and untapped hinterland. Visit some of the South Pacific's most

powerful waterfalls on a waterfall crawl tour, incorporating a visit to Samoa's most famous natural attraction, the Sua Ocean Trench (used as a setting in *Survivor*) – climb 30 metres down a ladder into a massive waterhole fed by water flowing through lava tubes from the ocean (hold your breath and swim into a blue water cave, or right out into the lagoon for extra thrills).

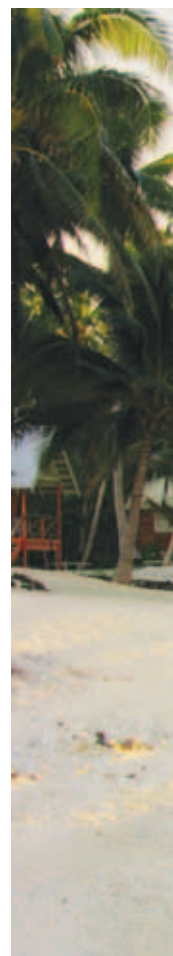
Cycle your way along deserted roads in southern Upolu and Savaii, looking at *Survivor* sites. There are few cars on the road and the speed limit's a leisurely 40km/h, making it safer for cycling here. You'll ride through remote villages where children come out to say hello, stopping for swims to cool down.

Samoa is actually where surfing began (not Hawaii); and there's still some of the Pacific's best waves breaking onto deserted line-ups. These aren't for beginners – all waves in Samoa break onto sharp coral. There are numerous surf camps (from simple bungalows to luxury villas) on the more populated island of Upolu and the big island of Savaii.

Take a 20 minute boat ride to an island with no roads, no cars and, until just a decade ago, no electricity. Located just off the western coast of Upolu, take a day tour to the tiny island of Manono and hike the island and snorkel its pristine lagoons and hunt for fish just like you're on *Survivor*.

## IS IT EASY TO ACCESS THE SURVIVOR SITES?

There are *Survivor* location sites all over the main island of Upolu – and most are easily accessible. All it takes is a small entrance fee to the local family who own the land. On the bigger, but less developed, island of Savaii you can go to significant landmarks used in the filming of the show, the best being the Taga Blowholes (where you can throw a coconut in a hole in the coral reef and watch it blow into the air) or Afu Asu Falls – the prettiest waterfall in the South Pacific.







Coves Samoa (© Craig Tansley)



Blowholes in Savaii in Samoa (© C.Tansley)



Surfing in Samoa (© Sa'Moana Resort)



Santo in Vanuatu (© David Kirkland)

## VANUATU

**US Survivor season 9 was filmed in Vanuatu in 2004.**

Exploding volcanoes, cargo tribes who live as they always have in the forests and worship demi-gods like Prince Philip (yes, Prince Philip), land diving ceremonies (which bungy jumping originated from), abseiling down raging waterfalls – Vanuatu offers adventure tourists more than most destinations on Earth (little wonder *Survivor* chose to come here). Vanuatu is a mix of modern amenities (especially on the main island of Efate) and primitive, pagan villagers etching out a life in the forests. There are 83 islands in the archipelago, so how much adventure you'd like to have is entirely up to you. Most tourists won't venture beyond Efate (where most of *Survivor* was filmed), but there's so much more waiting on the islands of Santos, Tanna and beyond.

‘Abseil down a waterfall in cascades just outside the main tourist hub of Port Vila’

### ADVENTURE OPTIONS

Vanuatu is an adventure lover's mecca – there's everything you could imagine available in these islands, from heart-in-your-mouth death defying stunts to easy thrills for the whole family. Abseil down a waterfall in cascades just outside the main tourist hub of Port Vila. At Mele Cascades you can descend down two 25 metre waterfalls set amongst lush tropical rainforest.

Take a day tour past traditional villages where locals flock to the road side to wave, to one of the world's most active volcanoes that's open to visitors. Hot rocks the size of small cars are spat out of Mt Yasur, and you'll get to climb the volcano and see it erupting right on sunset.

Catch a short flight from Port Vila to witness one of the world's truly amazing spectacles (contestants on *Survivor* were forced to try this). Each year to bless the yam harvest, local men on the island of Pentecost leap from makeshift scaffolding to the ground with vines attached to their ankles. Then go swimming with dugongs and turtles.

Fly 50 minutes from Port Vila to Espiritu Santo and dive the world's best wreck dive. The SS *Coolidge* was a luxury passenger liner



Mt Yasur on Tanna in Vanuatu (© David Kirkland)



Mt Yasur on Tanna (© David Kirkland)



Pentacoast, Vanuatu (© David Kirkland)

converted to a troop carrier for WWII and sunk just off the island. It's completely intact, is 200 metres long and sits in between 20 and 72 metres of water.

### IS IT EASY TO ACCESS THE SURVIVOR SITES?

Head to Mt Yasur on the island of Tanna to see where contestants rode horses beneath an erupting volcano. Tanna is also where the Ipai traditional village was set up on the show.

You don't have to travel far outside the main tourist port of Port Vila to see where the series was filmed, settings begin just 20 minutes drive from the town – travel with Red Vanuatu, or check out check out Vanuatu Tourism's website ([www.vanuatutrusttravel.info](http://www.vanuatutrusttravel.info)).

## FIJI

**US Survivor series 14, 33 and 34 were filmed in Fiji.**

Fiji is as wild as you'd like it to be. While many travellers won't make it beyond the modern luxuries of Denarau Island (near the arrival point of Nadi) with its five-star resorts, there's a lot more adventure to be had. There were cannibals in Fiji barely 80 years ago – retreat to the island's highlands where locals still live in traditional villages for a glimpse at what might have been. Fiji has everything for adventure travellers looking for their very own *Survivor* experience. It's home to some of the world's best reef surf (the world surf tour visits once a year), its waters offer world's best diving, fishing and snorkelling, while the





Fiji (© Aaron March)



Santo, Vanuatu (© David Kirkland)



Fiji (© Aaron March)

jungle offers hikers, kayakers, rafters and mountain bikers endless thrills. Although the first *Survivor* series filmed here in 2004 put Fiji on the map, let's not forget *Castaway* was filmed just next door on the island of Monuriki in the Manunucas.

## ADVENTURE OPTIONS

You can do as the *Survivor* contestants did before – leaving the fancy resorts and hotels behind you to take on the jungle in the highlands of Fiji, or island-hop your way across the Mananucas, the setting for two of the *Survivor* series.

Take a rafting tour down the Upper Navua River on the main island of Viti Levu – choosing to sleep out overnight in tents – or go for a day tour. You'll see a side of Fiji few

ever see, journeying past subsistence farmers providing for their families in traditional villages along the river.

Surf just a few kilometres from the series 33 and 34 setting of *Survivor* at the iconic surf resort, Tavarua. A magnet for the world's best surfers, Tavarua provides access to seven wave locations, including one of the world's most revered waves, Cloudbreak.

Contestants on *Survivor* series 14 battled in the Macuatu province of Fiji's second largest island, Vanua Levu, but the island is most famous for its diving. This is one of the Pacific's best diving spots – famed for its steep wall dives, caves, soft coral and huge pelagics. Visit between April and October.

Charter a catamaran for the ultimate adventure holiday around Vanua Levu. Charter a boat and find your own private beaches

and hike through jungle to 30-metre-high waterfalls all through the setting for *Survivor* at Macautu.

## IS IT EASY TO ACCESS THE SURVIVOR SITES?

You can stay right amongst the settings of series 33 and 34 of *Survivor* in the Manamucas. There are 20 tiny islands here so it's easy to access the sites, hire a speedboat for a tour to access all the islands from Port Denarau.

And stay at Mana Island Resort where some of the action was set and the crew stayed. The island itself is booked out by the *Survivor* crew for the next three years – up until 2019/2020 as they film the next few seasons in Fiji once again, *travelBulletin* has been told.





Cook Islands (© Cook Islands Tourism)

‘Technically, the Cook Islands began the whole *Survivor* phenomenon when the BBC series, *Shipwrecked*, was filmed here in 2000’

and imagine you're a contestant battling for the big prize.

Take either a full day lagoon cruise with others, or get dropped off for the day on your own private islet, or charter a speed-boat for a day or half-day. This is your chance to get as adventurous as you like – you can have a driver take you wherever you want, to climb coconut trees, snorkel the clear waters, or just loll for hours in the waters of your own private island.

Paddle, sail, kayak or kite-surf your way across one of the world's most pristine lagoons. There's nowhere safer on Earth – Aitutaki's lagoon is protected from predators by its barrier reef, and the water is so clear you'll clearly see the bottom even from 10 metres up. You can travel by your own steam to all the islets of the lagoon, including the setting for *Survivor*.

Retreat to Aitutaki to find inner peace on top of a lagoon. Join a stand-up paddleboard yoga retreat and live off coconuts and tropical fruits as you take your paddleboard out to sand spits that appear at low tide and uninhabited islands sprinkled throughout the lagoon.

Bring out your inner Polynesian warrior as you help construct a traditional feast at an underground oven (umukai) just as the contestants in *Survivor* had to do. The owner of this tour was even one of the main Polynesian consultants on *Survivor* – who ensured producers kept to Cook Island traditions. You'll also get to see a sacred burial ground (marae).

## IS IT EASY TO ACCESS THE SURVIVOR SITES?

It's dead easy. Contestants spent 39 days on the uninhabited island of Moturakau, living off coconuts and crabs. It's a tiny island you can walk across in minutes, but it's beaches are beautiful and deserted, and the water that fringes it is fantastic for snorkelling and swimming. Get there by booking a day hire speedboat tour, or paddle-boarding, sailing, kayaking or kite-surfing there from the main island, eight kilometres south-east.

## COOK ISLANDS

**US *Survivor* series 13 was filmed here in 2006.**

Did you know the concept for *Survivor* actually grew out of the failure of another? Technically, the Cook Islands began the whole *Survivor* phenomenon when the BBC series, *Shipwrecked*, was filmed here in 2000. It didn't fare well on the ratings, but American producer Mark Burnett loved the concept, and conceived *Survivor* from it. Aitutaki in the Cook Islands looks like the sort of place *Survivor* belongs. It's home to the South Pacific's second most famous lagoon.

The most famous lagoon of all – Bora Bora's in French Polynesia – is full of private island five-star resorts where Hollywood goes to honeymoon.

Aitutaki's equilateral-shaped lagoon (each side is 12 kms long) is made up of 75 square kms that's almost entirely uninhabited. There are 12 tiny islets (called motus) here – and only one island has accommodation on it at all (and it's very low-key).

## ADVENTURE OPTIONS

It's easy to bring out your inner *Survivor* in Aitutaki. This is an island made for Robinson-Crusoe: stow away to an uninhabited islet

# WIN A TRIP TO NEW CALEDONIA.



This month *travelBulletin*, Aircalin and New Caledonia Tourism are giving readers the chance to win a trip to New Caledonia.

The prize includes return economy class flights from SYD, BNE or MEL flying Aircalin and four nights in a one bedroom apartment including daily buffet breakfast at Ramada Noumea.

To enter the competition, all you need to do is take a creative photo of yourself with something typically New Caledonian.

Send your entry to [competition@travelbulletin.com.au](mailto:competition@travelbulletin.com.au)



Aircalin is New Caledonia's international carrier. Aircalin offers full service including French inspired meals and drinks, and 23kg of luggage, plus a free piece of sporting equipment. Travellers can fly in seat plus and extra comfort, and there's the ability to purchase meals to suit your taste.



Here's Yvette Kou, Jesse Stanger and Kareen Ferrali from Aircalin, to inspire your entries!





# BEYOND THE FAST TRAIN

**In a country weary of fast trains that never depart, the possibility of a 1,000km/h link between Sydney and Melbourne is bound to be met with scepticism. But with the tech might of Elon Musk behind it, the latest plan for high-speed travel might be restoring interest. Jon Murrie reports.**

IT READS like a sci-fi novel. Hyperloop One is a futuristic concept involving ultra-high speed pods travelling by magnetic propulsion through vacuum tubes. It's a combination of the Maglev trains already operating in China and the vacuum tubes that once conveyed cash through the halls of city banks.

And in the Nevada desert last month, a prototype pod on a 500m test track reached speeds above 300km/h before braking to a gradual stop. The science fiction is almost a reality.

"We've proven that our technology works, and we're now ready to enter into discussions with partners, customers and governments around the world about the full commercialisation of our Hyperloop technology," said Hyperloop One CEO Rob Lloyd.

"We're excited about the prospects and the reception we've received from governments around the world to help solve their mass transportation and infrastructure challenges."

In the case of Australia, this means a serious look at the Sydney-Melbourne corridor and other nearby cities like Newcastle and Canberra.

While the concept is championed at the international level by billionaire Elon Musk – the Tesla CEO who has promised to power-up South Australia with the world's biggest lithium battery – local plans are being promoted by Hyperloop's representative Ultraspeed Australia.

At the recent Travelport Live technology

conference in Sydney, Ultraspeed Australia director Steve Artis told delegates a Hyperloop system could be running between Sydney and Melbourne by 2024, providing travel in just 56 minutes at speeds of 1,000km/h.

"Musk released his whitepaper at the end of 2013," Artis said. "Two very smart people from Silicon Valley picked the idea up and decided to run it like a Silicon Valley start-up."

"They set about employing very smart people. We currently employ close to 300 of the smartest people in the world, from PhDs, space execs, NASA, BMW - a raft of top technology companies. And from start-up in January 2014 to 2017, we've actually produced a working Hyperloop."

While it might still seem far-fetched, Artis said Hyperloop's lower costs gave it the ability to succeed where conventional rail proposals had failed.

Capital costs would be about 20% less

than regular rail, and operating costs 60% lower because of the low-friction environment, he said. The total cost would be about \$36 billion between Sydney and Melbourne, compared to about \$55 billion for past high-speed rail plans.

Currently in a pre-feasibility phase, Artis said he expected an Australian business case to be finalised in coming months and that an operational system could be running in seven years. Pods would carry about 30 to 40 people each in business class style, while freight could be carried in the equivalent of a conventional cargo container.

As for the ride, Artis said despite dizzying speeds the system was unlikely to induce sickness.

"It's going to feel like being in an aircraft, without a window or a view," he said.

"G-force control is so accurate and so available these days that it won't be any worse than a 737 on take-off or, at worst, a 777 on take-off."

And despite the multi-billion dollar price tag, Artis suggested fares would give even discount airlines a real fright.

"I'm Canberra based, so I use the Murrays bus for \$35, Sydney to Canberra," Artis said. "They run 16 services a day and it takes three and a half hours. We'll do the same trip in 15 minutes for \$35."

**'We've proven that our technology works, and we're now ready to enter into discussions with partners, customers and governments around the world...'**

Rob Lloyd, CEO, Hyperloop One



Route timings to be determined by Project Scoping Study  
Source: Ultraspeed Australia



# WEBJET'S HUGE HOTEL PLAY

EARLY last month Webjet announced the \$330 million acquisition of UK-based JacTravel Group holdings, with the move catapulting the organisation's WebBeds business-to-business operation to become the second largest global player in the

sector. Despite the huge investment involved, Webjet CEO John Guscic said he was confident the deal would boost earnings per share by at least 25%. JacTravel, which also operates under the TotalStay brand, specialises in multi-channel hotel distribution and tailored tours to inbound traveller groups visiting Europe, and has a strong presence in key international cities.

While key benefits of the deal include boosting Webjet's global B2B scale and expanding its hotel relationships, the strategic rationale also lists "significant combination and integration benefits" including JacTravel's "heavily invested technology platform". While the JacTravel and TotalStay brands will remain independent within the broader Webjet group, the acquisition is also said to provide an opportunity to unify the technology underlying the group's B2B operations.

Webjet's expanded business-to-business hotel offering keeps its Webbeds operation in the race with market leader Hotelbeds

Group, which is in the process of acquiring Tourico Holidays and GTA. Interestingly, when Webjet purchased Europe's SunHotels in 2014, CEO John Guscic said he could see the B2B operations becoming larger than its consumer-facing Webjet brand.

Technology is a key enabler of the expansion, with Webjet undertaking a number of developments including its 'Ethereum' project which aims to track hotel inventory globally using a distributed ledger - via 'blockchain' technology similar to that used for various internet currencies including Bitcoin.

Late last year Webjet unveiled a pilot scheme using Microsoft Azure's "blockchain-as-a-service" system, with the aim of eliminating the hotel industry's "dirty little secret" which results in leakage due to the complexity of keeping payments in order for the sometimes several intermediaries between the consumer and their hotel. The company was expected to provide a progress update along with its full year results announcement due at the end of August 2017.



## Travelport curries Indian interest

INDIA'S leading online travel agency MakeMyTrip has signed an agreement with Travelport's distributor in the country, InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ) for the use of Travelport's Travel Commerce Platform.

Brands operated by the NASDAQ-listed company include MakeMyTrip, Goibibo and redBus, with the group serving more than 40 million active mobile app users each month. Under the new agreement MakeMyTrip will expand the use of Travelport technology from the Ibibo Group, which it acquired in January this year, to its other primary distribution channels.

"India is a market with enormous growth potential," said Travelport CEO Gordon Wilson. He said Travelport, in partnership with ITQ, had grown its air bookings in the country by 14% in the first half of 2017, ahead of overall GDS air market growth of 11%. "Securing a partnership with the leading online travel agency in the market, with a high growth profile and tremendous track record, gives even further impetus to our plans in the country".

Travelport has pioneered the inclusion of low cost carriers on its platform for shopping and booking, and went live with IndiGo in November 2016, which is now India's largest passenger airline. Wilson said the fact that MakeMyTrip had chosen Travelport technology was "a testament to our investment in leading edge search, shopping and booking technology alongside the significantly differentiated travel content now available on our platform for both the domestic and outbound Indian traveller".

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# BOLD PLANS PUT TASMANIA ON SHOW

WHEN Tasmania's headline-grabbing Museum of Old and New Art (Mona) announced plans to target the conference sector with a \$300 million expansion, Australia's smallest state proved again that it's perfectly capable of stealing the national spotlight.

In July, Mona's enigmatic owner David Walsh unveiled designs for a striking cantilevered hotel on the banks of the Derwent River, with 172 five-star rooms and a dedicated function centre catering to up to 1,000 people.

Having seemingly generated his own arts-based tourism industry around his celebrated museum and launched the successful Dark Mofo winter arts festival, there's no doubting Walsh's ability to make a big impact.

But regardless of whether his ambitious plans are approved, Tasmania still has other tricks up its sleeve when it comes to developing business tourism and the events sector.

According to Business Events Tasmania chief executive officer Stuart Nettlefold, the island state is experiencing an upswing in events activity.

"The Tasmanian brand is strong and certainly has good pulling power when we're working with associations, with PCOs and event planners to attract conferences to the destination," Nettlefold said.

"This financial year is going to be a strong year for the sector - we already have over 90 conferences locked in."

Forward bookings are currently 24% up on this time last year in terms of delegate numbers, Nettlefold said, with a string of mid-sized events over coming months scheduled to bring groups of 500 to 1,200 people.

"The associations and scientific conference segments are still very strong for Tasmania," he said.

"What we're also seeing is an emerging C&I segment because we do have a lot of really diverse and interesting experience-based products which are all in close proximity to Hobart and Launceston. They might be water or sea-based activities, adventure based or food and beverage - we've got a very strong food and beverage sector that's putting out a lot of really good quality produce across the board."

With a wider surge in leisure tourism, Tasmania's accommodation sector is experiencing its most significant development boom in decades.

The design-focussed "storytelling hotel" MACq 01 opened with 114 rooms on the Hobart waterfront in June, while the 296-room new-build ibis Styles Hobart became the city's largest hotel when it opened in July.

Another two hotels are now under construction - a Crowne Plaza and a Marriott - and others are planned to start soon, including properties from the Hyatt and Vibe stables. In the North, Launceston will next year welcome the new Peppers Silos, while other developments have been mooted for Tasmania's east coast.

Nettlefold said the new developments would complement existing properties and events venues, such as the Wrest Point Hotel Casino, Grand Chancellor and Launceston Country Club. But he said the events sector had mostly escaped the impact of hotel shortages felt during peak season in the leisure space, mainly because conferences were held primarily in off-peak periods.

Among major events scheduled in Tasmania in the current year are the Australian International Education Conference for 1,200 delegates in October and the 22nd International Congress on Modelling and Simulation for 1,000 delegates in December, both in Hobart. Next year, Launceston will welcome the BerryQuest international agricultural conference for 400 delegates.

"We're still very focused on the national association market," Nettlefold said. "We're continually looking at new leads and opportunities and working with associations, with professional conference organisers, to get their conferences into Tasmania."

"We're also continuing to look at how we can get broader reach through our Tasmania Ambassador Program in working with local academic and business communities to get some really good strategically aligned conferences that bring in global talent."



The proposed Mona hotel





## Moreton Hire expands into Europe

AUSTRALIAN events supplier Moreton Hire will continue its push into the international market with plans to open a European hub. The company has announced plans for a London presence that will support international businesses as they host events and exhibit in Australia, while at the same time assisting Australian brands to enter the European exhibition circuit. Europe sales manager Felicity Holusa said the company recognised an opportunity for clients looking to expand into the Northern Hemisphere. "Since the re-opening of the ICC Sydney, Australia has been a growing hub for business events," she said.

## PCMA takes over ICESAP

THE Professional Conference Management Association (PCMA) will expand into Asia-Pacific after it acquired Incentive, Conference and Events Society Asia-Pacific (ICESAP). The organisation will continue to operate under the ICESAP brand. ICESAP founder Nigel Gaunt told Business Events News that PCMA's acquisition of ICESAP represented the best possible future for the society. "A stronger ICESAP under PCMA is a win-win... for me personally it is validation of the investment of time and money I have made over the past four years in establishing what I felt was needed for our industry in Asia Pacific," Gaunt said.

## NSW regional conference funding

THE New South Wales Government will contribute \$6 million in funding for rural and regional events as part of a new regional conferencing plan. The NSW Regional Conferencing Strategy & Action Plan is designed to attract more conventions, meetings and business events to the regions through the funding. NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events Adam Marshall said the sector presented a big opportunity to grow outside of Sydney. "We want every conference planner to know that regional NSW can offer delegates both an opportunity to do business and the chance to explore our fantastic tourism offerings."

The plan also includes 11 strategic imperatives and 64 actions, which are now in place. These include establishing a regional conferencing unit, the launch of a Meet in Regional NSW website and developing a business events toolkit, among others.



## ICESAP VIEW

Nigel Gaunt, president  
Incentive, Conference & Event Society Asia Pacific

I AM writing this exactly one month after closing the transaction for PCMA to acquire ICESAP. In the last month, I have been asked numerous times "What motivated you to merge ICESAP into the much larger global Association PCMA?"

The answer I have given each person can be summed up in the following points;

- ICESAP was set up as a company and not an Association, this was done for the simple reason that a company can readily acquire or be acquired, and from day one, that was our desired path.
- Scale: I believe to be truly effective for our members and for the Business Events sector overall, we needed to be part of a much larger global organisation. Merely surviving has never been a satisfactory situation, other professional bodies have shown signs of operating in survival mode, that cannot be good for advancing the best interests of its members.
- To deliver significant, deliverable and sustainable benefits to ICESAP members over the long term it was imperative we had a solid growth plan, otherwise we are failing all our stakeholders.
- Business Events is a cross-border global business, that is why ICESAP went to great lengths to build a member base across Asia Pacific, today we still have 80% of our members in Asia, which is entirely appropriate, given that's where over 80% of the Business Events spend in Asia Pacific is derived.
- I started talking to kindred bodies in Australia about merging or closer

working cooperation two years ago, sadly it fell on deaf ears. Naturally I went further afield, PCMA liked what we had done in less than 4 years, and the conversation rapidly grew into a plan.

- ICESAP under PCMA will be a driving force in Professional Development of people across all markets and industry segments across Asia Pacific.
- PCMA has already grown well beyond its North American roots, with a significant presence in Latin America and Europe. PCMA has over 7,000 members in over 40 countries and now a significant presence in Asia Pacific through ICESAP.
- PCMA rapidly convinced me they shared our vision of being a leader well beyond the conference and convention industry



and well beyond the traditional association model. PCMA is well aligned with ICESAP's focus on the corporate sector and its growing

investment in Incentive, Conference & Event solutions as a business performance driver.

I am convinced Australasia's Business Events community can be much more engaged with their Asian counterparts through PCMA-ICESAP and enjoy significant upside as a result. Greater interaction will be very positive for individuals and businesses from both knowledge transfer and business opportunities in both Australasia & Asia. ICESAP's Agency Accreditation Scheme is testament to the commitment we have to making our sector more accountable and professional, now with PCMA's support we are looking to take this well beyond the bounds of Asia Pacific.



## business events news

- 03 Aug** PCMA expands into Asia-Pacific
- 07 Aug** Regional NSW event funding
- 10 Aug** Louvre aims to lure events
- 10 Aug** Tech line-up in Sydney

## AUGUST 2017 HEADLINES

- 14 Aug** Moreton Hire international expansion
- 14 Aug** Sunny coast revamp
- 17 Aug** Pressure on medical events
- 21 Aug** Lions win breaks Victoria record

# CAREER IN FOCUS

## COLLETTE KING

**Commercial Manager,  
Australia, Travelport**

### 1. What does your role involve and how long have you been in your current position?

It's been 15 months since I started this role, in which I'm responsible for overseeing Travelport's Account Management team across Australia. I spend lots of time with each of the team members, motivating them to demonstrate and practise strategic and analytical thinking. We believe that these traits play an important role in influencing client growth and performance, whilst maintaining long term partnerships.

### 2. How did you start out in your career?

#### Were you always destined to work in the travel industry?

I've always had an appetite to start a career in the travel industry and leaned towards the corporate portfolios quite quickly. I started in the industry 22 years ago as a corporate domestic consultant, progressing to a corporate international consultant managing premium client portfolios. Over the years, I took up Account Management and Business Development positions, expanding into the Information Technology vertical of the travel industry. Technology was always a space that intrigued me, so it felt very much like a natural progression in my career.

### 3. Did you complete formal qualifications, and do you think they are important?

I do have a certificate in travel and tourism. Upon completion of my higher school qualifications & TT certification, I also took on 'work experience' at a corporate travel management company where I eventually secured a permanent position. While it's important to obtain and work towards applicable qualifications, I'm a firm



**‘I’m a firm believer that the best way to gain knowledge is to get your hands dirty and start working in your preferred industry as soon as you can’**

believer that the best way to gain knowledge is to get your hands dirty and start working in your preferred industry as soon as you can. Hands-on experience, in my opinion, is priceless and provides a true outlook on the expectations for those considering career opportunities.

### 4. What do you love about your job?

I have a real passion for coaching and nurturing a team. To me, it's a great privilege to work closely with my team member or with a client to strategise ways to overcome

obstacles and give appropriate advice. I also feel intellectually stimulated to be working on strategies and tactics based on the company's overall business objectives.

### 5. What were some of the greatest challenges you've faced in your career?

For me, that would be the time when I had to return to work after the birth of my daughter. It was a huge re-adjustment, especially coming back to the hard and fast corporate world. It was vital for me to align myself with organisations that support mothers returning to the workforce and having the flexibility to ensure that their employees have a healthy and happy life balance.

### 6. What factors were central to your success?

It's useful to have a succession career plan for myself. To know where I want to be in the next 3, 5 or 10 years keeps me motivated. I regularly check in on myself to make sure that I am on track. Success, to me, is recognising the path that I have come from and taking any learnings for the future. Of course, I couldn't have done any of this without my very supportive family and network of close friends.

### 7. Did you have a mentor, and if so, how did you find them?

I have been very fortunate to have a mentor for the last 18 years in my career. She was my Director when I was an account manager at a global travel management company. She has remained a very influential person through my many career changes and has played a key role in my career progression.

### 8. What advice would you give to others in the industry who would like to follow in your footsteps?

Chart your own career plan. Always take the opportunity to network and develop relationships in your preferred industry. Never close the door on any opportunities because you never know where it might lead you. And my biggest advice is to always 'back yourself'.



# THE KEY TO KEEPING STAFF



RETAINING top talent is a primary motivation for employers right now as the job market continues to improve and employees look to better their circumstances.

According to a June 2017 study published by the Society for Human Resource Management, employers should launch pre-emptive efforts to keep their best staff rather than risk them jumping ship in a bullish employment market.

How can this be done? The study suggests employers take over a dozen strategic measures to ensure a productive work environment thereby reducing the frequency of employee turnover.

Chief among these include paying a competitive salary, link a bonus culture to both individual and company performance and to celebrate the successes whilst also learning from failure.

Here are a few other measures the study suggests:

- Involve employees in decisions that affect their jobs provides empowerment and a greater sense of being valued
- Nurture and celebrate organisation traditions to help build a company culture staff want to be a part of
- Provide opportunities within the company

for cross-training and career progression will help keep employees motivated and willing to learn and succeed

- Enable employees to balance work and life demonstrates awareness of obligations beyond work

Not surprisingly good communication underpins all of the above and makes employees feel like they are part of the in-crowd.

With Australia's unemployment rate at a low since October 2016 and some 14,000 jobs added to the economy over this time, employers ought to take stock of their practices to retain their best talent.



I was with a major retail travel agency for 10 years and finally made the decision to go out on my own. This huge change in my career was made simple with TravelManagers' training and ongoing business support. Switching GDS was made easy and now I run my own successful travel business and haven't looked back.

Denise Dean – Personal Travel Manager



## It's time for a change.

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# INDUSTRY IN FOCUS



Despite it being summer there was still snow at France's Club Med Valmorel when these Travel Managers visited, hosted by Club Med and Malaysia Airlines.



This group of Helloworld agents enjoyed the top end at the Qantas Darwin Turf Club Gala Ball, with a dinner at Skycity Casino followed by the Darwin Cup races the next day.



The new Fiji Airways ADL flights made it even easier for these South Australian agents to experience Fiji, including a visit to Tokoriki Island and the Sigatoka River Safari, hosted by Venture Holidays.



Fiona Wainscott from Corporate Traveller in Melbourne was all smiles when she won a trip to Shanghai for two at Qantas and China Eastern's 'Best of China' experience day in Sydney recently.



Recently On the Go Tours and China Southern Airlines hosted Travel Managers on a famil to China. The group visited Xi'an, Shanghai, the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.



Ignite Holidays sent a crew of their My Hawaii agents on a trip to the island state itself. They swotted up on their product knowledge and of course enjoyed some R&R and shopping.





Kirsten Spence, VisitScotland; Alan Glover, Etihad Airways; and Adam Vance, Etihad Airways were promoting one-stop flights to Scotland at recent tradeshow for the nation.



STA Travel in Melbourne took out the top prize at United Airlines' annual trivia night, with the night being centred around United's product update.

Pictured wine tasting in the Barossa Valley in South Australia is Phil Hoffmann, Michelle Ashcroft, Peter Williams, Marc Checkley and Michelle Mikan, at the recent Phil Hoffmann Travel conference.



Exhausted but still smiling are the team from The Travel Corporation who participated in last month's City to Surf in Sydney, raising funds for the TreadRight Foundation.

Thirty sales and client managers from Helloworld Business Travel (HWBT) agents around Sydney converged on the Qantas Campus at Mascot last week for a market awareness and benchmarking day.



These Express Travel Group were treated to a Taiwanese family courtesy of MW Tours and Malaysia Airlines.







© Disney Cruise Line

# Holidays on Ice

## Cruising in Alaska

**While Alaska has long been a cruise destination, a recent surge of growth has seen more ships, more itineraries and more Australian passengers than ever before, writes Brian Johnston.**

**F**ROM mighty glaciers tumbling into the sea to snow-capped mountain ranges and temperate rainforest, Alaskan scenery is always awesome, and a fitting match to its wildlife, which includes whales, bears and bald eagles. Yet as world cruising boomed, the lure of Alaska faltered. Now, it seems, travellers are reconsidering Alaska's mighty charms. The cruise scene is hotting up in America's coldest state, with more passengers than ever before embarking

on Alaskan cruises.

Last year, the state recorded over a million cruise passengers. The boom is partly the result of Americans seeking out domestic destinations thanks to worries about safety overseas, but Australians too are heading to Alaska in record numbers, which increased last year by a whopping 25.5 per cent, according to Cruise Lines International Association. Though a relatively small percentage of the total, over 41,000 Australians cruised in Alaska in 2016, and Alaska is now our most popular cruise destination in the Americas.

"The allure of Alaska has well and truly taken hold in Australia. Last year saw an unprecedented level of interest," observes Adam Armstrong, commercial director for Celebrity Cruises Australia. "It's no surprise,

given Alaska is one of the most spectacular destinations in the world. Exploring it by sea allows you to experience incredible sights and wildlife unique to this region."

The cruise industry has been quick to respond to the renewed interest. Juneau and Sitka are among ports that have extended their cruise facilities, and serious money has been invested in developing new cruise destinations such as Icy Strait Point, where floating docks allow passengers to disembark for forest hikes, wildlife spotting and encounters with native culture at Hoonah village. Modest ports such as Wrangell and Whittier are also increasingly on the itineraries of smaller cruise ships.

Thirty large ships visited Alaska last year, seven for the first time: *Crystal Serenity*, Royal Caribbean's *Explorer of Seas*, *Island Princess* and *Sun Princess*, Holland America Line's *Maasdam* and *Nieuw Amsterdam*, and Regent's *Seven Seas Mariner*. More are on their way, including Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth*, which is making a maiden visit to Alaska in 2019.

Others are visiting more frequently. Three of Celebrity's cruises ship (*Infinity*, *Millennium* and *Solstice*) plied Alaskan waters this season, and the company offered two new itineraries, one on a food theme and the other concentrating on Denali



and Kenai Fords national parks. Celebrity recorded a 65 per cent increase in Australian passengers to Alaska last year, and this year expects some 5,500 Australians on its Alaska-bound ships.

Other cruise companies are scrambling to get into the market for the first time. Viking Cruises makes its Alaskan debut in May 2019 on forthcoming ship *Viking Spirit*, offering a 11-day itinerary between Seward and Vancouver that visits eight ports. Azamara Club Cruises also enters the Alaskan market for the first time in 2019, with a series of 11 summer voyages that promise late-night port stays and optional pre- and post-voyage land programs that include the likes of dogsledding and visits to an indigenous village.

In another move that highlights Alaska's resurgence, cruise lines have also begun returning after a long absence. Seabourn Cruise Line avoided Alaska for 15 years, but in June 2017 *Seabourn Sojourn* began sailing itineraries between Seward and Vancouver. Windstar Cruises returns in 2018: *Star Legend* will sail Alaska's fjords in the company of glaciologists, park rangers and scientists on round-trip cruises from Vancouver or between Seward and Vancouver.

"We're bringing our guests right to the heart of what makes Alaska and the

Great Pacific Northwest such an amazing destination and magical place to visit," says Windstar president, John Delaney. "We're now working hard to arrange customised bucket-list moments like the chance to hike atop the massive Mendenhall Glacier in Alaska's

‘Last year saw an unprecedented level of interest. It's no surprise, given Alaska is one of the most spectacular destinations in the world. Exploring it by sea allows you to experience incredible sights and wildlife unique to this region’

Adam Armstrong, commercial director for Celebrity Cruises Australia

capitol of Juneau, zip-line over crystal-clear creeks in bear country, or fly over majestic Glacier Bay in a private plane."

While mainstream cruise lines from

Princess Cruises to Disney Cruise Line have long operated in Alaska, expedition and small-ship cruising has until recently been surprisingly underrepresented. That too is changing: after all, Alaska's remote wilderness, convoluted fjord and abundant wildlife are a natural match for this style of more intimate cruising and its promises of smaller ports and more active experiences.

Several companies have greatly expanded their Alaskan itineraries over the last couple of years. Un-Cruise Adventures now has 113 seasonal departures on seven 2018 itineraries aboard six small ships, to which it adds 88-passenger, replica coal steamer *Legacy* next year. It also offers a variety of departure ports: Seattle, Ketchikan, Juneau, Petersburg and Sitka.

AdventureSmith Explorations has also introduced a host of new itineraries and some new vessels, including the eight-passenger *Sikumi* that blurs the line between cruise and charter. Natural Habitat Adventures and Aurora Expeditions are other small-ship companies with new Alaskan product, and Lindblad Expeditions' new 50-cabin ship *National Geographic Quest* has just begun operating Alaskan itineraries. Alaska's state nickname might be 'The Last Frontier', but ways of visiting have never been easier.



© AdventureSmith Explorations



© Visit Alaska / Chris McLennan



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## Disney orders seventh ship

Disney Cruise Line has announced plans to grow its fleet after it ordered a new ship to be delivered in 2022. The unnamed 1,250 passenger ship will enter service between its next two ships ordered last year for debut in 2021 and 2023.

Walt Disney Parks and Resorts chairman Bob Chapek said with three ships on the books, they will have nearly doubled its fleet size.

"We decided two ships wouldn't be enough to hold all of the exciting new experiences we have been dreaming up to take family cruise vacations to a whole new level with immersive Disney storytelling, world-class family entertainment, and imaginative innovations that are fantastically fun and uniquely Disney," he said.

Disney's seventh vessel will be built by Meyer Werft and will be powered by clean-burning liquefied natural gas.

## Sydney answer by year end

NSW Government has promised a decision will be made by year's end on Sydney Harbour's cruise infrastructure crisis. NSW Minister for Tourism and Events Adam Marshall said a working party was currently assessing "three or four" options.

Speaking to travel industry reps at a recent event at Parliament House in Sydney, Marshall confirmed that the "cruise industry in Sydney has almost hit its limit," and with current constraints the city couldn't easily take more ships.

The working group is led by former NSW opposition leader and Navy veteran Peter Collins and includes representatives from cruise lines, NSW Ports and several other agencies. The committee is due to report back by the end of the month.

## Norwegian Bliss' big reveal

Norwegian Cruise Line is planning the largest race track at sea as part of a bold entertainment offering on board its newest ship, *Norwegian Bliss*.

On top of the 305m race track, there will also be an open-air laser tag course themed as an abandoned space station, two pools and six infinity hot tubs and an Aqua Park with two multi-storey waterslides. Inside the ship will be a Texan smokehouse called Q, a 24-hour pub dining called The Local and a Mexican restaurant Los Lobos.

*Bliss* is scheduled commence operations in June 2018 and will sail itineraries around Alaska and the Caribbean, as well as select trips to the Mexican Riviera.



## CLIA VIEW

Joel Katz, managing director  
CLIA Australasia

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CRUISE360

AUGUST saw the return of CLIA's Cruise360 Australasia - the region's biggest cruise industry event of the year. This year's event, mc'd once again by Ross Greenwood, Australia's well-known radio and television host and leading business commentator, featured a full day's worth of professional development, networking, and updates on the latest industry trends, through keynotes, workshops, and the trade show and networking drinks.

For the first time in 2017, Cruise360 also offered the opportunity to participate in a ship inspection of P&O's new *Pacific Explorer* on the second day, and more than 90 people participated in this sold-out event.

Cruise360 brought together 570 travel professionals, cruise line representatives, industry suppliers and CLIA preferred partners for an immersive event designed to educate and inspire agents as we head into another record summer cruise season.

The conference featured the largest number ever of global cruise line executives, local cruise line leadership, dynamic key note speakers, and successful travel industry professionals sharing their best practice, selling tips and techniques.

Based on feedback from prior years, Cruise360 2017 featured a choice of breakout sessions on how to improve sales, maximise income, and most importantly how to create a loyal customer base who keep coming back to you to book more cruises, and who you can leverage to drive more business.

We'd like to once again thank our travel agents who chose to attend Cruise360. By making the decision to attend you committed yourself to become a better

cruise sales agent. In addition, we'd like to acknowledge our sponsors, trade show exhibitors and media partners, without whom we would not be able to provide such a successful event.

### NEW MEMBERS HUB

August also saw the launch of a brand-new feature for all CLIA Australasia members - the CLIA Members Hub. Designed with flexibility and simplicity in mind, our Members Hub allows agents to find information, resources and tools in one convenient location.

- Events - Information for all upcoming CLIA events, roadshows, with registrations. Look out for an extended list of events coming in 2018.
- CLIA's Travel & Leisure Magazine - Our new online digital magazine published by CLIA Global, includes sections for Australasia and Asia. Keep up with the cruise industry right here.
- Webinars - Listing and registration links for all upcoming Webinars, as well as an archive library of past events.
- Brochure Rack - Populated by our cruise line members, find the latest digital brochures with a simple search, or just browse through all the cruise product available.
- Trade Promotions - A listing of all current promotions from the cruise lines themselves, housed in one convenient location.
- Ship Visits - A listing of ship visit opportunities across Australia and New Zealand with registration links.

Visit our website [www.cruising.org.au](http://www.cruising.org.au) and login to the Members Section to try out the new Members' Hub.

## CRUISE WEEKLY

- 01 Aug** HOOT Cruise's Oz debut
- 03 Aug** Victory finalises Cuba
- 03 Aug** RCL's smashing Q2 result
- 08 Aug** HTG plots CTC growth
- 10 Aug** Sydney answer by year end

## HEADLINES JULY AND AUGUST 2017

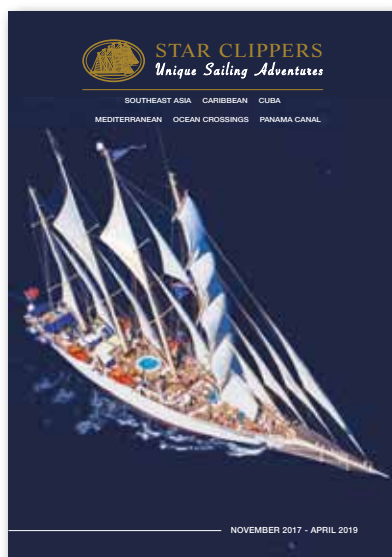
- 10 Aug** Viking's local trade focus
- 15 Aug** Intrepid, Chimu polar pact
- 15 Aug** Kimberley fee introduced
- 17 Aug** Brisbane terminal imminent
- 17 Aug** Three Regent ships to Oz



# STAR CLIPPERS BROCHURE RELEASE

STAR Clippers has released their new brochure for 2018/19, with a range of new sailing adventures, as well as a fly free offer to Thailand. The brochure highlights a number of itineraries and features a special promotion of up to 35% off with returning guests receiving a five percent discount. The Caribbean, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and the Mediterranean, Cuba, the Panama Canal and Ocean Crossings are featured. Thai sailings start from \$2,999 per person for a seven-night sailing aboard the *Star Clipper*. Return airfares from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth are included in the price. Departing from Phuket, travellers will be able to explore the picturesque waters of the Andaman Sea, explore Penang and soak in the sunshine while lying on the powder white island beaches. The sailing will also explore the many islands that are scattered off the coast of Thailand and Northern Malaysia with some of the most beautiful beaches and dazzling marine life in the world.

Star Clippers operates three of the world's largest and tallest sailing vessels. The company often visits ports that are inaccessible to larger cruise ships. Star Clippers' two smaller ships, *Star Flyer* and *Star Clipper*, sail with 170 passengers each. *Royal Clipper* sails with 227 passengers. All three ships have expansive decks, swimming pools, informal dining, tropical bars and piano lounges.



## Tempo launches new product range

TEMPO Holidays has launched Signature Range as its latest product, which it hopes will be its "go-to product" in the future. The collection focusses on experience-rich product and includes land & cruise and land-only options in destinations including Europe and the UK, Latin America and the Indian subcontinent. Tempo Holidays is promoting the collection as offering comprehensive inclusions, such as a minimum four-star accommodation and other special and unique highlights. New additions to the range include an 11-day Signature Zagreb to Dubrovnik with Cruise, which includes seven nights on a luxury mini cruiser, priced from \$5,300 per person.



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## CRUISE360 RIDES THE WAVE

THE fourth annual Cruise360 conference hosted by Cruise Lines International Association Australasia last month was an outstanding success, with the event having grown from year to year reflecting the strength of the local cruise industry. CLIA Australasia managing director Joel Katz said Cruise360 had more than doubled in size since it kicked off in 2013, with the program this year featuring the largest ever line-up of local and international cruise line leaders. "With Cruise360 sold out and a waiting list of delegates wanting to attend, we are already starting to plan the 208 Cruise360 to be able to accommodate the strong demand," he said.

This year's conference was opened with a video welcome from CLIA global chair, Carnival Corporation CEO Arnold Donald said Australia was at the forefront of a "golden age" for world cruising. Australia's world-leading market penetration of 5.4% means one in 20 people here took a cruise last year. "There has never been a better time to be in the cruise industry," he enthused.

Cruise360 included a large trade show,

with a huge array of operators showcasing their wares for the hundreds of delegates in attendance at Sydney's Hyatt Regency Hotel. New for 2017 was a series of specialist break-out sessions, one of which was hosted by Phil Hoffmann of Phil Hoffmann Travel who generously shared the secrets of his success, telling attendees how to differentiate their agencies and leverage loyal clientele. Other key presenters included Azamara Club Cruises president and CEO Larry Pimentel and Roberto Martinoli, chief executive officer of Silversea Cruises.

After the conference a number of delegates were given the opportunity to inspect P&O Cruises' latest addition, Pacific Explorer, followed by an optional four day famil trip to the Whitsundays.

Cruise will continue to be a key focus for the industry as the 2017/18 summer season kicks off in the coming weeks. CLIA will also mount major promotions in October as part of its annual Plan a Cruise Month – and keeping with the theme, next month's *travelBulletin* will feature an exclusive Cruise Guide for travel agents.





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# The who's who of Cuban cruises

Located a stone's throw from major homeports and unchartered by US cruise lines for 50 years, Cuba's re-emergence presents a huge opportunity for the cruise industry. Having been spared from Donald Trump's recently tightened Cuba policies, the major cruise operators are now rushing to capitalise on the Caribbean's hottest emerging destination. Jasmine O'Donoghue rounds up the latest on the major players setting course for Cuba.

## Oceania Cruises

**First departure: MS Marina arrived in March**

Oceania Cruises was Norwegian Cruise Line Holding's first brand to enter the Cuba market. Oceania initially offered three sailings to the destination in March and has since bulked up its offering, sailing a total of 20 voyages from autumn 2017 through northern autumn 2018, with *Insignia*, *Marina* and *Regatta* all featuring Cuba on their itineraries. Oceania Cruises' itineraries which feature Cuba range from seven to 24 days in length, with some including two days in Havana and calls to Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba, Punta Cana, Great Stirrup Cay and Cozumel.



## Azamara Club Cruises

**First departure: Azamara Quest arrived April**

In April, Azamara became the first Royal Caribbean Cruises line to call into Cuba and it has two more departures scheduled in 2017, on 20 and 27 November. Azamara Club Cruises' 2018 and 2019 Cuban itineraries range from four to 14 nights and include up to three full days in Havana and calls to Santiago de Cuba and Cienfuegos. The new season packs in new on board Cuban-themed programming and three new night experiences including a cabaret show at the Nacional Hotel de Cuba and a guided tour through the streets of Old Havana's Jewish Quarter.

## Royal Caribbean International

**First departure: Empress of the Seas arrived in April**

Royal Caribbean International began sailing to Cuba in April on a five-night itinerary from Miami and has visits scheduled to the hotspot through to the end of the year. From January 2018 through March 2019 *Empress of the Seas* will sail 58 cruises of four- and five-night itineraries, 28 of which include overnight stays in Havana. Royal Caribbean International also recently announced a four-night voyage on *Majesty of the Seas* to the destination, departing Port Canaveral on 25 March and including a full day in Havana.



## Regent Seven Seas Cruises

**First departure: April 2017 on Seven Seas Mariner**

Regent Seven Seas Cruises sailed to Cuba twice in April 2017 on identical itineraries from Miami, which featured an overnight in Havana and a call to Harvest Caye and Costa Maya. The next visits for Regent are in 2018, on a 66-night Grand Voyage on *Seven Seas Mariner* departing Miami on 10 October and finishing in Sydney. A 22-night segment of this itinerary, from Miami to Honolulu, is also available. *Seven Seas Navigator* is scheduled to call into Havana on a 14-night roundtrip from Miami sailing on 11 November.



## Norwegian Cruise Line

**First departure: Norwegian Sky arrived in May**

Norwegian Cruise Line kicked off its Cuba operations in May, offering four-day roundtrip cruises from Miami to Cuba, stopping at Havana and Great Stirrup Cay aboard *Norwegian Sky*. The itineraries sail through to December and restart on 26 March 2018. *Norwegian Sky* will sail 33 four-day itineraries during the 2018 season, 32 of which include an overnight stay in Havana. From 07 May 2018, the cruise line will deploy a second ship, *Norwegian Sun*, to Cuba on four-day cruises from Port Canaveral to Havana and Key West, and three-day cruises from Port Canaveral to the Bahamas.



## Carnival Cruise Line

### First departure: June on *Carnival Paradise*

Carnival Cruise Line added Cuba to 12 of its four- and five-day sailings from Tampa between June and October 2017. Both itineraries include an overnight in Havana and the five-day sailings also have a stop in either Cozumel or Key West. In 2018 Carnival Cruise Line will visit Cuba on a four-day sailing, three five-day cruises, a six-day cruise and an eight-day voyage. The entry of Carnival in Cuba follows the decision of its parent company, Carnival Corporation, to return Fathom's only ship back to the P&O UK fleet in June, which left the brand without a ship.

The approval of Fathom to start cruising to Cuba in 2016 marked the first time in over 50 years that a cruise ship was able to sail from the United States to Cuba.

## Holland America Line

### First departure: December on *ms Veendam*

Holland America Line will return to Cuba for the first time in over 30 years in December on a 12-day cruise aboard *ms Veendam*. The arrival will kick off nine seven-day sailings which stop at Havana, three of which visit Cienfuegos. There is also an 11-day departure on 17 March which features the Cuban ports of Havana and Cienfuegos as well as Key West, Cozumel, Montego Bay and Georgetown. A seven-day Cuba sailing departing on 18 April, 2018, will wrap up the season.

## Celestyal Cruises

In June, Celestyal Cruises announced it would scale back its Cuba operations in 2017/18 from year-round to "a seasonal winter operation with spring touches". Celestyal Crystal will be in Cuba until March 2018 and in 2018/19 Celestyal will operate a seasonal winter operation to the destination.

## Victory Cruise Lines

### First departure: *Victory I* on 08 February 2018

New entrant to the cruise market, Victory Cruise Lines will begin sailing to Cuba early 2018 on the 202-passenger *Victory I*. The all-inclusive vessel will operate six 13-, 14- and 15-night roundtrip cruises from Miami, ending the season with a repositioning cruise departing 05 May.

## Blue World Voyages

### First departure: May 2018

A new cruise line dedicated to sports, fitness and good health is preparing to launch in May 2018. A five-star, 350-passenger ship will initially be deployed on Miami-Cuba itineraries, including calls to Havana, Maria La Gorda, Island of Youth and Cienfuegos.





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# VIKING'S BIG PLANS FOR OZ

By Jasmine O'Donoghue

VIKING River Cruises has long been a household name in the Australian cruising sphere, but Viking Cruises has much bigger plans for the Australian market.

Seven months into the role of managing director of Australia and New Zealand and Michelle Black is ramping up Viking's focus on the trade and championing the local market, backed by head office's recognition of Australia as "a very important source market".

"All of our attention is going towards travel agents and working with travel agents that we identify have a strong client base that are in our demographic," Black said.

"For us, trade is extremely important because we're dealing in the 55+ demographic and we know that type of client loves to use a travel agent," Black explained.

Viking Cruises has recently signed preferred agreements with Express Travel Group and Magellan, marking a shift for the line, which previously mostly held contracts with wholesalers.

The company is connecting with the trade through its Viking Vor agent training nights, which mix in formal presentations on its ocean and river product with dinner, drinks and lots of ocean and river cruise giveaways.

Increasing awareness of its ocean offering among the trade is high on its agenda, ahead of the Viking Ocean debut in Australia in February 2018.

"Our strategy here in Australia is for ocean, that's where we see the growth for the Viking brand and that's where we'll be focussing most of our sales and marketing goals and attention over the next few years," Black said.

"As far as awareness of Viking Ocean Cruises, we're still at the beginning of that and where we'd like to be."

Viking plans to target agents who are strong in river sales and teach them that Viking Ocean is designed for clients who love river cruises.

Viking Ocean cruises offer understated luxury, Black said, noting "if you like everything that comes with a cruise ship like the shows and the bingo, feather boas, ship photographers and dress up nights, it's not like that at all. It truly is like being in a luxury residence and it's just travelling with you around the world."

"Viking Ocean offers an alternative for those who maybe don't like some of those elements of the bigger ships," she added.

Aussie agents will get the opportunity to experience Viking ocean

for themselves on ship inspections when *Viking Sun* calls in to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns and Darwin on the company's first world cruise in February.

"Up until now we've been at the mercy of famils or educationals which are costly and take a lot of time for agents," Black said.

On the back of a sold out first world cruise, Viking is well into the preparation of its second, which will also grace Australian waters but on a different itinerary.

Instead of heading up the east coast of Australia after New Zealand, the itinerary will instead venture through southern Australia, calling into Sydney, Melbourne or Geelong, Adelaide and Fremantle before setting course for Africa.

Viking will also begin homeporting out of Australia and New Zealand in December 2018 on what will then be its five-month-old ship, *Viking Spirit*.

"For us, trade is extremely important because we're dealing in the 55+ demographic and we know that type of client loves to use a travel agent"

Michelle Black, managing director Australia and New Zealand, Viking Cruises



*Viking Spirit* will spend three months sailing between Sydney and Auckland and a second itinerary will launch in November 2018 exploring the Komodo and the Australian Coast.

Black said Viking's decision to send such a new ship to Australian waters would have been based around its core demographic, people aged 55+ from English speaking nations.

Australia and New Zealand's position as a dream destination for the Americans and British, combined with the region's growth in ocean cruising and head office's vision for Australia would all also have been factors Viking would have examined, Black said.

Viking Ocean Cruises welcomed its third ocean ship, *Viking Sky*, to the fleet in June and *Viking Sun* and *Viking Spirit* will be delivered in September 2017 and 2018, respectively. By 2019 Viking will welcome its sixth ship and two more are on order for delivery in 2021 and 2022.





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## Q&A

Unprecedented numbers of Australians are taking ocean cruises throughout the world, making cruise a lucrative product for many agents. But how can you make the most of this popularity? MTA agent Amanda Erwin gave *travelBulletin* her top tips.



### Which destinations do you find are most popular for Australians ocean cruising?

For this year, popular destinations have been the Kimberley, Alaska, Scandinavia, Mediterranean, West Africa and South America. These destinations do seem to change yearly, with some becoming more popular than others.

### What cruise do you recommend for first time travellers?

This would depend on the traveller and their desired holiday destination. For families, I would recommend a close to home South Pacific cruise or for further away destinations such as Europe I would recommend a cruise of approximately a week to get a real taste of the cruising experience.

### What sort of travellers are ocean cruising?

Families, couples, groups and singles.

Cruising is fantastic for intergenerational family holidays, with special themed cruises being very popular. It's also a wonderful way for single travellers to meet other like-minded travellers.

### Is there a particular time of year that is best for ocean cruising?

No, not really. Cruising has become so popular year-round with various destinations to suit all travellers. It really depends on where your client wants to go. For some destinations there are particular seasons that are best to visit, for example, visit Alaska from May – October, Australia and the US year-round and the Mediterranean from April – November.

### What should an agent consider when selling an ocean cruise?

Make sure you pay attention to what the client is after and match a cruise with

their holiday preference, budget and style.

### What are the challenges that face agents selling ocean cruises?

We now have such a wide variety to choose from, keeping up to date with this evolving industry can be a challenge but it is necessary to make sure we match the right cruise for the client's cruising experience. Most cruise lines offer training to agents and I have found that this is a really good way to stay in the know.

### Are there any particular cruise lines that you recommend to clients and why?

This totally depends on the client and the holiday experience they are looking for. Whether it is luxury, enlightenment, leisure or expedition style there is an ocean cruise holiday for everyone to enjoy.



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# UK FOOD FESTIVALS

**THE UK** has become a nation of foodies and they know a thing or two about throwing a good festival, so it's little wonder their food festivals put on such a good show. While some festivals are dedicated to a certain region's produce, others are a celebration of a kind of food, or even a single ingredient. Amanda Woods lists some of the best to whet your travelling appetite.

## LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL

[www.foodfestival.co.uk](http://www.foodfestival.co.uk)

**8th, 9th and 10th September 2017**

One of the most prominent foodie towns in the UK, Ludlow was the first UK member of the Slow Food movement and for 21 years its annual food festival has been showcasing local specialities. Ludlow Castle provides a romantic backdrop for around 180 local food and drink producers who set up stalls in the castle square, and festivalgoers can take part in cooking masterclasses, foraging excursions and explore local pubs on 'real ale trails.'



## ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL

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

**16th and 17th September, 2017**

One of the biggest food festivals in Wales started in 1999 when two farmers tried to respond to the BSE "mad cow disease" crisis. Over the years it has grown to attract around 30,000 visitors a year to the small town with a mix of top chefs, masterclasses, forages and feasts, markets and a farmyard. Topical debates around the food industry are also held and this year's line up will include Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Tom Kerridge.

## ISLE OF WIGHT GARLIC FESTIVAL

[www.garlicfestival.co.uk](http://www.garlicfestival.co.uk)

**18th and 19th August, 2018**

Fancy some garlic scones, garlic biscuits or garlic popcorn? How about garlic fudge or garlic ice cream? These are just some of the unusual garlic treats on offer at the Isle of Wight Garlic Festival where you can also find live music, arts and crafts and non-garlicky foods including meats, cheese, honey and wine. There's even a Garlic Queen with her own special perfume. As for garlic breath, odds are almost everyone else at this festival will have eaten garlic too so there's no need to worry.





## THE BIG FEASTIVAL, COTSWOLDS

<http://uk.thebigfeastival.com>  
August, 2018 dates TBA

Every year Blur's bassist-turned-cheesemaker Alex James turns his farm in the Cotswolds into a food and music festival for a weekend. The Big Feastival offers rock and roll with your Roquefort and combines feasts, markets and street food with bands across three stages. This year's chefs included Jamie Oliver, Rick and Jack Stein and Antonio Caluccio while Madness and Faithless were among those on the music stages.

The Big Feastival is such a hit they've launched a Canadian version this year at Burl's Creek, Oro-Medonte, Ontario with top Canadian chefs sharing the festival with Weezer and De La Soul.

## GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL, LONDON

[www.gbbf.org.uk](http://www.gbbf.org.uk)  
August, 2018 dates TBA

As well as food festivals the UK also has its fair share of wine and beer festivals, and the biggest celebrated its 40th birthday this year. The Great British Beer Festival started back in 1977 and now has more than 900 real ales, international beers, ciders and perries under the iconic Olympia roof in London's West Kensington. Guests can tuck into food from London street food trucks, listen to live bands and take a trip down memory lane playing traditional pub games. This year they even let English wines make an appearance. We'll raise a glass to that.



## POMMERY DORSET SEAFOOD FESTIVAL, WEYMOUTH HARBOUR

[www.dorsetseafood.co.uk](http://www.dorsetseafood.co.uk)  
14th and 15th July, 2018

The largest seafood festival in the country celebrated its tenth anniversary this year and more than 50,000 people turned out for the occasion. Taking place in the seaside town of Weymouth Harbour the festival is free to attend and visitors can see and taste a variety of fish and shellfish being prepared and cooked in the open air. Highlights include appearances by top seafood chefs including Mitch Tonks, lobster and champagne pop ups, demo theatres and live music on stages made from upturned boats.

## NORTH EAST CHILLI FESTIVAL, NORTHUMBERLAND

[www.chillifest-ne.co.uk](http://www.chillifest-ne.co.uk)  
June / July 2018 dates TBA

Prefer something with more of a fiery kick? The annual North East Chilli Festival in Seaton Sluice, Northumberland is a three-day festival with chillies as the star of the show. Every day a new chilli eating competition is held for those brave, or perhaps silly, enough to take part. There's also a cabaret tent and a stand up comedy tent, and this year '80s band Heaven 17 was among the bands on stage. And don't worry, there are milder food options for those who can't stand the heat but are happy to join their chilli loving friends at the shows and the bars.

## PORT ELIOT, CORNWALL

[porteliotfestival.com](http://porteliotfestival.com)  
26th to 29th July, 2018

A mix between a food and a literary festival with a garden party vibe, this festival is held in the grounds of Port Eliot House and Gardens. The oldest inhabited dwelling in the UK is so picturesque Napoleon once declared it 'the most beautiful place in England' and the festival attracts top chefs and has hosted pop up restaurants from the likes of River Cottage and Polpo. As well as sampling great food and attending talks and cooking classes guests can explore hidden mazes and walled gardens and enjoy the combination of food, books, music, art, comedy, fashion and more.





Regent St (© Ryan Tang)

## AUSTRALIANS SPENDING BIG IN BRITAIN

AUSTRALIANS are cashing in on the weaker pound following the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, spending up big as visitation reaches record levels.

Data from VisitBritain shows Australia is currently the fourth largest inbound market for visitor spend and 10th for inbound visits. The number of Australians visiting Britain increased by 10% to a new record of 174,000 in the first quarter of this year, while spending grew by 2% to £180 million the highest Q1 spending since 2014.

In 2016, 982,000 Australians visited the UK and spent over £1.06 billion in the country, with a typical Australian spending £1,079 per visit, which is 80% more than the average visitor to the UK.

According to the British International Passenger Survey, tourism spend from Australia has increased 59% over the past 10 years – translating to an additional £394 million spend between 2006 and

2016 – while visitor numbers grew at a more modest 3% over the same period. The Australian market also typically spends twice as long travelling around the UK, with the average stay totalling 13 days, compared to the UK average of seven days. Australians are also more likely to visit more regions of Britain than average tourist.

VisitBritain director Patricia Yates said the organisation was working with its partners and travel trade to grow the important Australian market.

"We're working with airline partners to make it easier for Australians to get to Britain, promoting new and direct services into London and regional Britain," she said.

Yates said that Visit Britain would showcase a number of new products and experiences across Britain.

"In 2017 and into 2018 we'll have a particular focus on regional British rail journeys and itineraries focused on key regional food hubs such as South West England.

## HEATHROW SCRAPS TERMINAL 6

HEATHROW Airport has scrapped plans to construct a new terminal dubbed 'Terminal 6' as part of its controversial multi-billion-pound expansion, including the construction of a third runway to deal with capacity constraints at Europe's largest gateway. The proposed new runway will be 3,500m in length and will be constructed 3km to the north of the two existing runways at Heathrow.

But in a move labelled a cost-cutting decision, plans for a new terminal, baggage facilities and underground train to support the new runway have been dropped. The decision was in the airport's recently released half-year results and is expected to knock billions of pounds off the costs of the expansion.

Last year Grimshaw Architects won a competition to draw up designs for a 'hub airport of the future' as part of Heathrow's £16 billion growth plans.

For Heathrow's expansion to be given the green light, it will need British parliament approval. A vote on the project was meant to be held this year, but has been pushed back until the first half of 2018. The bill is part of the country's National Policy Statement (NPS), which pertains specifically to London Heathrow Airport. In its original proposal, the NPS highlighted the need for a new runway at the airport to support both current and future demand. If given the green light, the new runway is expected to be operational by 2026.



## France opens new high-speed lines

THE French national rail corporation SNCF has opened two new high-speed rail lines, including the long-awaited Paris to Bordeaux route.

The longer of the two new lines will allow a reduction in travel time from Paris' Gare Montparnasse to Gare de Bordeaux-Saint-Jean from over three hours to just two hours. At the same time, the journey from Paris to Rennes in Brittany has been cut by 45 minutes to only 90 minutes.

The lines will be serviced by trains dubbed TGV l'Océane, which can carry over 500 people. Passengers will be able to utilise individual charging points and USB ports. All passengers will be able to benefit from wi-fi throughout the train, as well as real-time information about the journey. Speaking to French radio station RTL, SNCF chief Guillaume Pepy said bookings were up 40% for the new lines with over a million reservations already made.



# QANTAS SOARING HIGH WITH DIRECT LONDON FLIGHTS



WITH a little over six months until Qantas' historic first non-stop Perth to London flight, the Australian flag carrier is seeing strong demand for the ultra long-haul route.

The flight will be the first direct service between the continents of Australia and Europe. A Qantas spokesperson said the booking response, particularly for the inaugural flights, was very strong.

"This reflects a unique level of interest in the new direct service as the first flights are still some time away and most people usually

start to plan their trips about six months ahead," the spokesperson told *travelBulletin*.

The airline has also been working with the travel trade to promote and educate agents about the new era for Qantas. This has included presentations at conferences, expos, fare training sessions and hosted breakfasts as well as content on the service of the new Dreamliner product on Qantas' Learning Hub.

"Agents are telling us they're excited about the new route and the opportunities it opens up for itineraries from Australia to the UK."

The 17-hour flight will be operated by Qantas' all new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, the first of which will be delivered next month. As part of the changes, the new service will replace Qantas' Melbourne to London via Dubai Airbus A380 service.

The Dreamliners will be kitted out in a three-class configuration with 42 Business class seats, 28 in Premium Economy and 166 Economy Seats. Qantas will begin its Perth to London non-stop flights on 24 March 2018.



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Cooking demonstration at renowned local restaurant, Fat Hen

Enjoy a delicious lunch at Rick Stein's restaurant in Winchester

**7 DAYS FROM \$2,374\* PP**



## Battle of Britain

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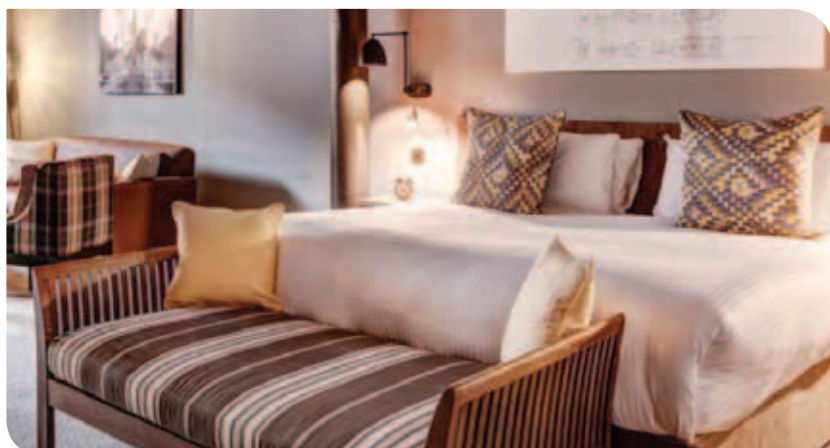
Fly over Cambridge in one of the few fully restored original Dragon Rapide aircrafts

Take a seat in an authentic Spitfire aircraft

**9 DAYS FROM \$4,559\* PP**

\*Terms and Conditions: Price includes a 5% early bird payment. For new bookings only, must be paid in full by the 15th January 2018. Prices are based on low season twin share accommodation. Subject to availability. Please contact Back-Roads for full terms and conditions at [info@backroadstouring.com.au](mailto:info@backroadstouring.com.au)

## TITANIC HOTEL FOR BELFAST



A STRING of new hotel developments are popping up across Ireland and Northern Ireland to meet a growing demand from tourists, according to Tourism Ireland.

Among them is the widely publicised Titanic Hotel Belfast which opens its doors in the Northern Ireland capital this month. Billed as the world's most authentic Titanic-themed inn, it will occupy the former Harland & Wolff headquarters, where the historic vessel was conceived and executed in the early 1900s.

The hotel even has the same tiles that lined the Titanic's swimming pool. The luxury hotel will boast 119 rooms with views of Belfast's rich shipbuilding history from Harland & Wolff cranes in the east to Titanic Belfast and the slipways to the west.

John Doherty, group creative director at Harcourt Developments, said the hotel would tell the story of the people who made the local ship building industry in a way that no other destination could.



## V&A Dundee on track for 2018 opening

CONSTRUCTION of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in the Scottish city of Dundee is on track for completion early next year. It will be the first satellite site for the iconic London museum, which is the world's largest trove of decorative arts and design with a permanent collection of over 4.5 million objects.

Unlike the rarefied London original, the new Dundee facility will be modern in style and is architect Kenzo Kuma's first British design and build. It will showcase world-class touring exhibitions from the V&A and have the only purpose-built galleries in Scotland large enough to exhibit these shows in their entirety.

## BACK ROAD GEARS UP FOR EXPANSION

TOURING company Back-Roads Touring has expanded its offerings across Europe and the UK after unveiling its biggest ever European program for 2018. The move is designed to take advantage of a growing number of Australians heading to the region. Back-Roads Touring Country manager Australia and New Zealand Dennis Basham said airfares between Australia and the UK and Europe were more affordable than ever, which was shaping travel habits and decisions for 2018.

"We can already see strong interest in UK & Europe tours, and some of this would definitely be due to airfare pricing," Basham said. To meet this demand, Basham said Back-Roads had added an extra 17% capacity for 2017 tours and would add 11 new itineraries in 2018.

Since launching its 2018 offerings in May, he said that forward bookings for Italy, Spain, Morocco, France, Scotland and Wales were very strong.

"Our 2018 Battlefield Tour bookings have

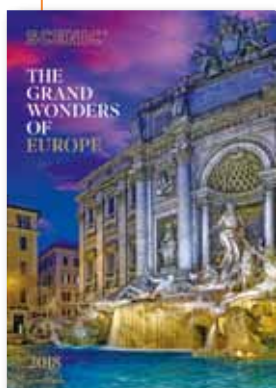


already seen an excess of 20% growth in what is shaping up to be our strongest year yet," he said.

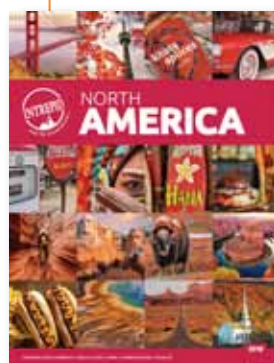
More than 50% of departures for 2018 Back-Roads tours have already been guaranteed, said Basham.

"Early signs show our new Battle of Britain, Cornwall Food Tour, Royal Tour of Britain, Malta Highlights & Madeira Highlights, Iceland Highlights and Sail the Bay of Naples are set to be particularly popular in 2018."

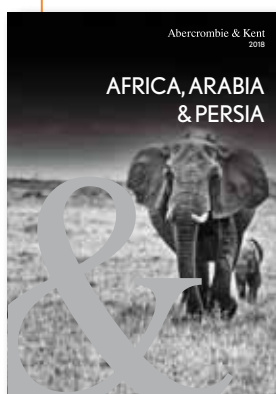




OVER 15 itineraries are featured in Scenic's 134-page Grand Wonders of Europe 2018 brochure. Tours range from nine to 23 days and provide travellers the option to combine a land tour with a river cruise in France and Portugal. The brochure touches on sightseeing options through Scenic's Freechoice program and its Enrich program. Scenic's brochure covers Destinations spanning right across every corner of Europe from Dublin to Prague, the Mediterranean and Tuscany.



WITH demand soaring for travel to Canada, Intrepid's latest North America brochure features a range of new tours around the Great White North. Inside, Intrepid details a range of places from the Rockies to the Northern Lights or taking in metropolis' such as New York City. In total, there 34 itineraries, including the first dedicated tour of Victoria Island. The latest brochure features a new 12-day US and Canada Discovery Winter trip, taking in a white Christmas in New York, as well as cities of Ottawa, Montreal, and Chicago.



ABERCROMBIE & Kent's 2018 Africa, Arabia & Persia brochure takes travellers to Africa's finest wildlife viewing areas, paired with engaging activities and hand-picked accommodation. The brochure features a range of independent and small group tours to 24 countries from Ghana to Egypt and ever-growing Iran. There's also a selection of Indian Ocean beach stays and stopover options in Dubai. A&K also highlights three Nile cruises on its small ships, *Sun Boat III* and *Sun Boat IV*.



AN ACTION-PACKED line-up of cruises are featured in the latest brochure by Royal Caribbean International for its Asia, New Zealand, Australia and South Pacific 2017/19. In the brochure, 140 different cruises are featured. New is "A Typical Day" timetables, tailored to "indulgent foodies, relaxed explorers and active souls". Included in its 70 pages are "Only on Royal" options such as the North Star viewing capsule on *Ovation*, Jamie's Italian dining and the Flowrider surf simulator.



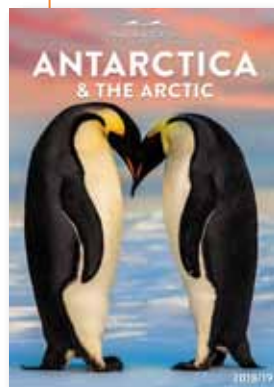
SIXTEEN different tours feature in Trafalgar's 2018 South & Central America brochure. All trips are designed to connect travellers with the continents' sights, sounds and flavours. The collection also showcases Trafalgar's debut into Cuba, with a nine-day Hidden Journey through the nation's colourful streets, history and culture. A Highlights of Peru trip and an action-packed 17-day South America Revealed tour, taking in everything from Rio de Janeiro to Inca Trail, are also featured inside.



SIX brand new tours, as well as 18 returning favourites are featured in Bunnik Tours' 2018 Small Group Touring Europe brochure. The program spans the entirety of Europe, with tours covering a complete range of destinations from Iceland in the northwest to Cyprus in the southeast. New destinations for 2018 include the Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Sardinia. All small group tours feature a maximum group size of 20 passengers.



TAUCK'S latest brochure 'Exotics' features a number of touring options Asia, Africa, Latin American and at home in Australia. Inside are several handcrafted itineraries in partnership with BBC Earth which include opportunities to savour local cuisine, take part in unique included activities and explore a destination with local guides and experts. Highlighted are a number of activities clients can do such as a tasting menu in Old Jerusalem to a walking safari in a Zambian sanctuary for Rhinoceros.



SOUTH Melbourne-based Natural Focus Safaris newest Antarctica and the Arctic for 2018/19 features a number of new cruises and ships. A new ship called *50 Years of Victory* joins the line-up, along with two new voyages, one to western Greenland and Disko Bay and the other traversing the Northwest Passage. All cruises in Antarctica remain the same from 2017, with several including fly-cruise itineraries that save travellers having to sail across the often-turbulent Drake Passage.

# walk (and eat) your way around Hong Kong

Jenny Piper experiences Hong Kong on foot (and through her taste buds) on a recent trip to the harbour city.



TOOK one look at the menu with its 'pan fried pigs brain' and thought – this is not for me! Can I fake a headache and go back to the hotel? We were at 'Happy Paradise' a hip neo-Cantonese restaurant with our host Hong Kong Tourism Board, being shown the food and walking offerings the city has to offer. Happy Paradise is run by chef May Chow who has won awards for her progressive Chinese menu. We were given a selection of dishes to try such as tea smoked pigeon, potato spring rolls, wagyu tongue skewers and the pigs brains – which actually turned out to be quite nice!

Hong Kong has an amazing array of cuisine on offer, and with its diverse population there is something for every foodie. We spent time in the Central district of Hong Kong sampling many of its culinary delights. We visited a local Aussie espresso bar – Fineprint bringing great coffee to the locals. We also gave the local beverage 'yuenyeung' a try. This is a mix of tea and coffee together which can either be drunk hot or cold. Or you can try Hong Kong style milk tea which was influenced by British culture and is made with evaporated milk and sugar available from many tea houses. Tea houses are also the place to try traditional Dim Sum which is served all day. Many of these treats can be tasted if you take the 'Tasting Hong Kong' self guided tour.

For fine dining there is a myriad of choices with so many 5 star hotels and award winning restaurants. We were treated to dinner at

Mott 32 one of Hong Kong's best, known for its contemporary Chinese cuisine which embraces traditional mostly Cantonese recipes with innovative cooking techniques. For fantastic dim sum you can't go past Spring Moon at The Peninsula Hong Kong. This Michelin starred restaurant is known for its timeless classic dumplings.

Hong Kong Tourism has recently introduced five new self-guided walking tours to add to their other walking tours. The tours explore one of the cities oldest neighbourhoods – Central, with its array of history, food, arts and culture. Foodies can combine their love of food and walking on the 'Tasting Hong Kong tour' visiting tea houses, street food stalls, bars with their craft brews and fine wine establishments. The tours can be downloaded from the HKTB website or followed on the 'My Hong Kong Guide' app. Other new tours include 'Time Traveller' visiting some of the cities oldest streets with their temples and old judicial and police buildings. Or the 'Crazy for Art' walk sees you walking past street art and exploring the PMQ building – formerly Police Married Quarters, the site is now home to works by promising local artists and designers. Filled with creative studios, designer products as well as exhibitions.

‘Foodies can combine their love of food and walking on the ‘Tasting Hong Kong tour’ visiting tea houses, street food stalls, bars with their craft brews and fine wine establishments’







Another walk worth taking is a tour of Walled City Park. Guides explain the fascinating history of the park. Once a squalid slum the walled city was Chinese territory within the British colony. Neglected by both the Chinese and the British the city within a city, it became a lawless enclave ruled by a criminal element. The city was a maze of illegally constructed buildings home to drug traffickers, prostitution, unlicensed dentistry and small factories in a labyrinth of dark alleys. The slum was demolished in 1987 and is now a beautiful park. The walled city was famous for its production of fish balls, and in nearby streets you can taste some of these local favourites as well as other treasured Hong Kong snacks such as tofu, soy milk and egg tarts.

For a bit of fun visit the Ani-Com Park@Harbour 'Fun' as part of the Comic Culture walk. Comic and animation have been part of the Hong Kong culture since the 1960s. This park is a selfie themed garden where you can take your pic with any of the 30 comic character statues.

Further afield walkers can enjoy a day trip to one of the many outlying islands. We did a trip out to Lamma Island a 30 minute ferry ride from Central. The walk across the island takes you over lush green hills and past beaches and bays. We finished the walk at the village of Sok Kwu Wan and indulged in a seafood banquet fit for a king! Then a visit to the Lamma Fisherfolks village with an attempt to catch our own fish with bait on a rope!

This was my first trip to Hong Kong and I loved every minute of it. Walking the streets was a great way to discover the hidden treasures of the city. We also asked the locals where they ate and discovered a myriad of cuisines on offer in Elgin St, Central – funky Chinese at Ho Lee Fook, an old school dim sum bar, Japanese, Italian, Tapas and Moroccan. But the highlight was dinner at Brickhouse a hidden treasure – which was literally hidden. We had the address but all we could see was a dark alleyway – so we ventured down to discover a hip Mexican restaurant with the largest selection of tequila I have ever seen. A few margarita's and selection of soft tacos, who knew Hong Kong was going to have so many surprises in store.



## NEXUS EXPANDING CRUISE-TOUR RANGE

CHINA specialist Nexus Holidays has begun an expansion of its tour-cruise options, aimed at capitalising on a thriving cruise sector and rising interest in its biggest-selling destination.

The tour operator has released a new fly, tour, cruise product, combining a nine-night China tour and a four-night voyage to Japan with Royal Caribbean.

Priced from \$2,999 from Sydney or Melbourne, its tour component begins in Beijing to explore highlights including the Great Wall and Forbidden City, before heading south to destinations around Shanghai including Suzhou, Wuxi and Hangzhou.

The cruise portion travels aboard Royal Caribbean's *Quantum Of The Seas* from Shanghai to one of several Japanese ports including Kumamoto, Fukuoka, Sasebo, Shimonoseki or Nagasaki.

Other cruise-tour options are planned for introduction in 2018, including sailings from Hong Kong to Japan's Okinawa islands.

Meanwhile, the company is putting a focus on several of its land tours in China, including its 10-day China Golden Triangle, which combines Beijing, Xian and Shanghai with flights from Sydney or Melbourne (from \$1,999), and its 11-day China Sampler which visits Beijing, Shanghai, Wuxi, Suzhou and Hangzhou (from \$1,599, with flights). Both can be combined with a five-day Yangtze River cruise extension (from \$1,090). Nexus also offers longer itineraries for a more detailed focus on China, including the 22-day Grand Tour of China (from \$5,999 with flights).



## Second Dream for China

DREAM Cruises is preparing to introduce its second China-based luxury cruise ship *World Dream*, allowing it to offer new itineraries from Hong Kong to destinations in the Philippines and Vietnam.

Scheduled for a debut in November, the new ship will be similar to its sister, the 3,352-passenger *Genting Dream* which launched the Dream Cruises brand earlier this year.

*Genting Dream* currently sails week-long itineraries from Hong Kong to Naha and Miyakojima in Japan's southern Okinawa island group. *World Dream* will offer departures to Philippine destinations including Manila and Boracay, as well as sailings to Vietnam for visits to Ho Chi Minh City and Nha Trang.



## LOW-PRICE RANGE FOR WENDY WU

WENDY Wu Tours will this month release a new range of low-priced itineraries aimed at competing with major online rivals.

The new tours will involve a series of 10-day packages priced below \$2,000, giving the company an entry level product it believes will help it to better counter the price-led offering of internet giants.

Wendy Wu Tours managing director for Australia & New Zealand Andrew Mulholland said the new range would arm travel agents with an aggressively priced lead-in product that could be booked online in less than two minutes.

"It's a new range of tours that will allow agents to compete against mass-market online bucket shops," Mulholland said.

"The feedback from the travel agent community is that they struggle to compete against that lower end of town, so we'll provide them with a product... that will allow agents to compete at a price point.

"It's powered by us, so it's a quality product, and it's fully packaged. We pay commission and it gives agents a good ability to upsell to the normal product range we offer."

The new holiday offering was in part a response to increased competition on in the air sector, which had resulted in low fares that favoured price-led online operators.

"A lot of that is driven by the sheer capacity in air that flies out of China to Australian cities," Mulholland said. "It's presenting consumers with incredible value to get to China."

Wendy Wu Tours last month unveiled its new online booking platform in an effort to further streamline the reservations process for travel agents.

Developed in consultation with the company's tech teams in Australia, the UK and China, it aims to avoid over-the-phone processes and enable travel agents to quickly discover the latest prices, tour information and campaigns on offer.

Key features include a display of individual commissions for each tour at the point of sale and a responsive design allowing users to switch between desktops and mobile devices while booking.

Tours can be booked in a few minutes and agents can also use the platform to manage their earnings under the Wendy Wu Tours 'Bambu' loyalty scheme.



# TIME TO VISIT JIANGSU

IT'S an economic powerhouse with a population of more than 80 million people, yet China's eastern province of Jiangsu is still relatively unknown to many Australians. Located north of Shanghai, it sits at the cross-roads of China's ancient trade routes, where the inland canals meet busy coastal ports and the freshwater highway of the mighty Yangtze.

The result is a region of huge strategic and commercial importance, with a legacy of remarkable cities, spectacular monuments, imperial landmarks and serene gardens, all of which have begun finding their way into the itineraries of major tour operators.

With the appointment of Australian-based representative TripsOZ to promote its assets in to the local market, we can expect to hear a lot more about Jiangsu and its place in China's tourism industry. Here are some of its highlights:

Published in collaboration with TripsOZ.

## NANJING



The capital of Jiangsu province has also served as the national capital of China under a succession of dynasties, kingdoms and governments. As recently as the early 20th century it claimed the title of capital to the Chinese Republic.

For the visitor this means a rich collection of heritage sites and landmark buildings, including the Presidential Palace which housed emperors and presidents for over 600 years, and the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum which provides a resting place to the father of modern China. Other highlights include the Ming Palace, the Porcelain Tower, the Confucius Temple and the ancient City Wall.

## SUZHOU



Often referred to as the "Venice of the East", Suzhou's centuries-old canals, stone bridges and pagodas have earned it a place among China's top tourist attractions, while its elegant gardens have been listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Within the city, visitors head to locations like Shantang Street for classic scenes of whitewashed houses alongside a canal

built in the year 825. On the outskirts of the city, water towns like Tongli have narrow winding streets, classic old Chinese houses and picturesque canals to explain the comparisons with Venice.

## YANGZHOU



The city of Yangzhou was once a major trading centre for salt and its wealthy salt merchants built hundreds of magnificent mansions with elaborate gardens. Today there are dozens of mansions still remaining and their gardens provide an insight into classic Chinese landscape design.

Other scenic areas include the city's old moat where locals relax on the banks, as well as Shouxiu (Slender West Lake) where there are pagodas, old bridges and green parklands.

The city is also famous for its food, including "Yangzhou Chaofan" fried rice.

## NANTONG



On the banks of the Yangtze, Nantong is known for its traditional crafts with origins dating back centuries. They include the city's distinctive blue printed calico, produced with

dye from indigo plants since the 11th century and celebrated in a dedicated museum.

Close to Nantong are other scenic spots including the famous Shuihui gardens of Rugao, the fishing village of Shigang and the Buddhist temple atop Langshan (Wolf Mountain).

## CHANGZHOU



China has been home to some of the greatest paleontological discoveries of the past century and its dinosaur remains are studied around the world. The city of Changzhou takes the country's pre-historic legacy one step further with a 60-hectare dinosaur theme park brimming with Jurassic characters. The park is home to one of the longest roller-coasters in Asia and also offers displays of more than 50 dinosaur fossils.

The city itself has ancient connections of its own, with a history stretching more than 2,500 years.

## GETTING THERE

China Eastern offers direct flights from Sydney to Nanjing three times per week. China Southern Airlines offers flights from Melbourne to Shenzhen with onward connections to Nanjing.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Email [info@tripsOZ.com](mailto:info@tripsOZ.com) or visit [meetingsue.com](http://meetingsue.com)

## THE PENINSULA'S LUXURIOUS OFFERING

Known as the 'Grand Dame of the Far East' The Peninsula Hong Kong is one of the best hotels in the world. It's name is derived from its location on the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula. Opened in December 1928 it has long been one of Hong Kong's oldest and finest hotels. On arrival at the airport you will be transferred to the hotel in one of their fleet of 14 Rolls Royce phantoms to be welcomed at the door by The Peninsula Pages in their smart white uniforms.

The magnificent hotel has retained a classic grandeur from its past, yet has a modern luxury about it. All rooms are well appointed and decorated in a timeless and luxurious contemporary style. Nothing has been missed with everything guests could possibly need thought of (including a nail dryer for that last minute touch up). The rooms feature the latest audio visual technology with everything controllable from the bedside tablet.

Of course there are amazing facilities for guests – a state of the art fitness centre, spa with its own plunge pools and an indoor swimming pool.

The hotel is also renowned for its culinary excellence with seven restaurants and two bars. Spring Moon is a popular choice with guests and locals for its Michelin starred



Cantonese cuisine. The Dim Sum is not to be missed. A tradition also essential on a visit is High Tea in The Lobby, but be warned bookings are not taken so be prepared to join the queue, but it's worth the wait.

Something really special for guests is The Peninsula Academy. This is an array of unique cultural and lifestyle experiences offered to in house guests only. There is the Dim Sum making Journey, where participants go behind the scenes in the hotel's dim sum kitchen to learn and practice the technique of this popular dish. Or the Alfresco Adventure – guests enjoy a gourmet picnic in one of Hong Kong's urban green spaces. The day includes an art

tutorial with a sketch artist and time to try your hand at it. For the more adventurous the Academy offers a truly unprecedented experience in the Mastery of Movement programme, guests are able to participate in a day in the life of a Shao Lin Wushu pupil. Shao Lin Wushu is one of the oldest forms of Chinese martial arts with a 2,000 year history. Participants are guided through a basic skills training session with a Shao Lin master, the day also includes touring an historic fishing village and the rural Hong Kong countryside.

Guests will leave The Peninsula with a desire to return to experience more of what it has to offer. A unique and delightful travel experience.

## CHINA BOOM OFFERS RETURN ADVANTAGE



THE boom in Chinese travel to Australia has brought return benefits for local travellers, with new airline routes and discounted fares creating opportunities for the outbound market.

China specialist Helen Wong's Tours believes Australia's popularity among Chinese travellers has helped create a two-way street in which local travellers stand to benefit from new options emerging in the airline sector.

"With a growth in the number of Chinese-based airlines arriving in Australia we are seeing more China gateways opening up for Australians," said the company's founder and managing director Helen Wong.

"Who'd ever think that one day we would have direct flights from Sydney and Melbourne to Xiamen, Chengdu or Xian?" she questioned. "But that's very much the case these days through such airlines as Xiamen

Airlines, Chengdu Airlines and Hainan Airlines respectively."

Wong said although enquiries for the traditional gateways of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou remained strong, other tourism gateways were gaining momentum.

The company recently created a new twin-city tour designed to capitalise on discounted dual-destination fares offered by Xiamen Airlines. The "Experience Xiamen and Macao" tour utilises the airline's "One Fare, Two Cities" product and provides three nights in each city with breakfasts, sightseeing and English-speaking guides.

Earlier this year, Helen Wong's Tours also released a China and Japan Bargain Escapes program for money-conscious travellers, including a seven-day A Taster of China priced from \$1,299 per person twin share.



# CHINA



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# CHINESE WONDERS

CHINA'S ancient landmarks and rapidly evolving cities command attention for their defining role in human history. But China is also rich in natural wonders, including some that rank among the most remarkable places on earth.



## HUANGSHAN

Huangshan, or “Yellow Mountain”, has a revered status in Chinese literature and arts, having lured writers, poets and painters over millennia. This range of dramatic granite peaks in Anhui province is embellished with twisted pines and shrouded in mists, and has been immortalised in pen and ink paintings.



## LI RIVER VALLEY

One of China's most famous natural sights, the Li River Valley between Guilin and Yangshuo in Guangxi province attracts thousands of visitors each year. Laced in lush green foliage, the karst formations line a river valley known for its local fishing practice involving trained cormorants.



## STONE FOREST

The Shilin Stone Forest is a surreal landscape of sharp stone peaks in Yunnan province, about 90km from Kunming. Though likened to a petrified forest or above-ground stalagmites, its formations are in fact pillars of intricately eroded limestone that was uplifted from an ancient seabed hundreds of millions of years ago.

# AGENT KNOW-HOW

**We ask Hong Kong Tourism Board how to learn more about selling this bustling city.**

**How can travel agents improve their knowledge of Hong Kong?**

Our trade website, PartnerNet – <http://partnet.hktb.com/au>, is the travel industry's one-stop shop for all things Hong Kong with industry news, e-newsletter, Hong Kong industry contacts, tour planning and much more.

**What kind of training is available to Australian agents wanting to sell Hong Kong and how can they sign up for it?**

We have recently revamped our online training programme, Hong Kong Specialist Club – <http://specialisthk.com/au>, dedicated to the travel trade and it's free to register. Once you have completed the training, you will be able to enjoy exclusive benefits such as complimentary welcome kits on arrival in Hong Kong, use of the Hong Kong Specialist logo, access to special trade offers and go into the draw to win a place on a famil.

**Any recommendations for first time travellers?**

The Peak and the Peak tram are still one of the most popular attractions for Aussie travellers and offers panoramic views of the city and Victoria Harbour. Hong Kong has an advanced public transport network – MTR, trams, Star Ferry, buses – which is convenient for the first-timers to explore the city easily and cheaply. One of the quintessential dining experiences in Hong Kong is sampling delicious dim sum for brunch/lunch at a Cantonese restaurant.

**What makes Hong Kong a unique destination?**

The duality of this modern city – east/west, urban/natural, traditional/modern – offers visitors a diverse and exciting experience. Whether it's dining, shopping, sightseeing activities, or culture, Asia's World City has something for everyone.

**How can travel agents join a famil to Hong Kong?**

Register and complete the three quiz-like modules on Hong Kong Specialist Club – <http://specialisthk.com/au> and you'll go into the draw to win a place on a famil for this October!





# Where Dreams Set Sail

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- Crystal Life** Be rejuvenated with spa, massage, fitness and wellness offerings
- Dream Palace** Cruise in ultimate luxury in an exclusive "ship within a ship" experience with butler service



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Tired of Thailand and bored of Bali? By thinking outside the box, your next family trip abroad could be exactly what the doctor ordered, writes Dilvin Yasa.

# FAMILY HOLIDAYS REIMAGINED

**W**ILL you ever get to holiday like an adult again? It's a thought many of us have had as we've clapped on a kids club clown, or danced the hula at a resort's in-house talent show. With good reason many parents feel trapped by the kind of holidays their kids seem to enjoy, and dream of finding a destination everyone in the family can appreciate.

Happily such a holiday is within easy reach; all you have to do is zero in on something a little left-of-field such as one of our top picks below:



Gardens by the Bay © Danny Santos

## Singapore

ONCE considered a mere stopover hub, Singapore is fast becoming one of the leading Asian holiday destinations for young families – largely due to the overwhelming popularity of Sentosa Island – an island resort located south of the city.

Teeming with family friendly activities, your best bet is to check into Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa, a wonderland for kids which has everything from a Flying Trapeze to a Sea Sports Centre. It will be difficult to get the kids to leave Shangri-La's premises, but all the cajoling will be worth it; outside the property's gates, endless entertainment options such as Universal Studios, Skyline Luge and Wave House await. Help get them on board by showing them the [sentosa.com](http://sentosa.com) site for full listings.

Should you head into city, tack on a stroll through the colourful Gardens by the Bay, take a night safari, or simply just enjoy the activities that are part of the gorgeous Marina Bay Sands such as the ice-skating rink, a sampan (boat) ride through the canals of the hotel's The Shoppes, or even just a swim in its famous rooftop infinity pool.



Four Seasons Bora Bora

## French Polynesia

OFTEN dismissed as the kind of place where oligarchs pay for cocktails with handfuls of sweaty diamonds, this tropical paradise is working hard to cater to young families, and the good news is, there are now plenty of options at every price point.

At the higher end of the scale, Bora Bora's Four Seasons and St Regis are the main players when it comes to providing little ones with fantastic kids clubs, amenities and activities, but Moorea's InterContinental Resort Moorea and Manava Beach Resort and Spa aren't too far behind.

Those who are on a tighter budget are also in luck; private accommodation rental across Tahiti is booming which means families can now rent a private overwater bungalow complete with kayaks and bicycles for as little as \$100 a night. Add to that a long list of natural pursuits the whole family can enjoy – be it hiking through the mountains, meandering around caves and waterfalls or diving and snorkelling at some of the world's top sites – and you have the perfect holiday.



Four Seasons Bora Bora





Container Park, Tomas Del Coro

## Las Vegas

IT'S not the first destination that comes to mind for a family holiday we'll grant you that, but if you can get past the 'Sin City' label (and all three of The Hangover movies), Vegas with its multitude of kid-friendly attractions and entertainment options is a surprisingly great family holiday destination.

Make a base of Aria, a chic hotel that's home to over 4,000 rooms, 16 restaurants and a 20,000sqm pool, then pencil in the following as 'must sees': Circus Circus which is an indoor amusement park housed under a pink dome, Siegfried and Roy's Secret Garden & Dolphin Habitat, and High Roller, a 500-foot tall observation wheel which takes in views of the whole area. Off the strip, Treehouse Playground at Downtown Container Park and Discovery Children's Museum will continue to delight kids and adults alike.

Got time for a show? Kids of all ages will enjoy Le Reve at Wynne, David Copperfield at MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, and Gregory Popovich's Comedy Pet Theatre. Sadly, Zombie Burlesque may just have to wait for another visit.



Circus Circus

## Dubai



Dubai Aquarium

FROM camel-riding and camping out in the desert to undertaking a wide range of thrill-seeking activities within its city limits, a visit to glamorous Dubai can be a wondrous experience for kids of all ages.

First, there are the gargantuan hotels such as Atlantis The Palm, a 1,500-room mega-resort which not only is home to Aquaventure, Dubai's largest water park (guests of the hotel can enter free of charge), but also features an impressive 11-million-litre aquarium, marine encounters and kids club. Check in, and use the hotel as a base to explore all the fun activities – most of which are located within Dubai's equally gargantuan shopping malls.

At the Mall of the Emirates, for example, kids can enjoy the craziness that is Ski Dubai, an indoor ski field complete with chair lift, snow luge and tobogganing, while at The Dubai Mall, families can fly an Airbus 380 in a simulator, ice-skate or 'work' in one of over 80 professions at KidZania play land.

Outside (provided you haven't come here in the middle of summer when temperatures soar past 45 degrees), take an abra (water taxi) across the creek and explore the souks of the old city. It could be an education for everyone involved; it will certainly be a breath of fresh air.

# MUCH MORE DISNEY MAGIC TO COME



A BUNDLE of new experiences and attractions have been revealed for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts around the globe, building on the recent launch of Pandora – The World of Avatar at Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and Guardians of the Galaxy – Mission: BREAKOUT! at Disney's California Adventure at Disney Resort in Anaheim.

Details were announced by chairman Bob Chapek at the D23 (the official Disney Fan Club) event. "On the heels of the many new and incredibly popular experiences that just debuted this year, the best is yet to come.

"We have ambitious plans for our parks and resorts around the world. We're investing in the guest experience like never before, and we're doing it all in a way that is only possible at Disney," he said.

Among the projects is the Star Wars-themed lands that are under development, dubbed Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, which will make guests feel they are in a "galaxy far, far away", experiencing new attractions and encounters with characters from the franchise. The Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge will occupy a 5.5 hectares at Disneyland and also at Disney's Hollywood Studios in Florida.

Paradise Pier at Disney California Adventure will be reworked and rebranded as Pixar Pier, with more Pixar characters and stories (such as The Incredibles, Inside Out and Toy Story) and there will be a new limited-time fireworks spectacular called Pixar Fest, featuring characters and more.

Also confirmed are three new immersive hotel concepts, including a Star Wars-theme property for Walt Disney World Resort, which will provide "the most experiential concept ever" for a multi-day adventure. Disney's Hotel New York – The Art of Marvel, a resort that will pay homage to superheros from the Marvel Universe will be established at Disneyland Paris, while the Disney Vacation Club will see a 15th property added at Walt Disney World Resort near Epcot, called Disney Riviera Resort.

Other changes for Walt Disney World Resort include:

- Toy Story Land will open at Disney's Hollywood Studios next year, and the first Mickey-themed ride-through attraction, Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway, will be introduced at the same park by 2021;
- A Ratatouille-themed ride stencilled on an attraction at Disneyland Paris will be built at Epcot's France pavilion;
- A new roller coaster themed after Guardians of the Galaxy will replace Ellen's Energy Adventure theatre show, also at Epcot;
- A Tron-themed ride, similar to what's on offer at Shanghai Disneyland, will be built at Magic Kingdom; and
- A new cable-car transportation system called Disney Skyliner will be rolled out linking a number of resorts to some of the parks.

## NEW MAGIC FOR HARRY POTTER

HARRY Potter's spell on British tourism looks set to continue, with new additions at the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London driving sell-out crowds.

The studio's Making of Harry Potter tour added a new Forbidden Forest attraction earlier this year, complete with creatures like the giant Aragog spider. It follows the successful introduction of the Hogwarts Express attraction in 2015, with its full scale steam locomotive and Platform 9¾ set.

On a sales mission to Sydney and Melbourne last month, the Studio Tour's trade coordinator Cathy Cook said the attraction had welcomed eight million people since its 2012 opening and was operating at capacity.

"Everything you see is authentic to the films, so has appeared in at least one of the eight (Harry Potter movies)," Cook said. "One of the most iconic aspects is the Great Hall and you get to walk into the

Great Hall set that they used for filming."

Other new initiatives included a current Wizarding Wardrobes costume exhibit showing outfits and make-up from the Harry Potter series, as well as an upcoming Dark Arts exhibit which will be timed with Halloween.

The studio is also planning its next Hogwarts in the Snow season, in which the studio and its sets are decked out for Christmas.





## HyperCoaster Gold Coast debut

WARNERS Bros Movie World will debut the Gold Coast's newest roller coaster next month, the DC Rivals HyperCoaster. At 1.4km in length and standing at 61.6m tall, the attraction is billed as "the tallest, longest, fastest and only HyperCoaster in the Southern Hemisphere", capable of speeds of 115km/h – 5km/h faster than the park's Superman Escape ride.

Warner Bros Movie World Executive GM of theme parks Greg Yong said what makes the ride a 'hyper' coaster is its height surpassing 61m.

As to be expected, DC Rivals HyperCoaster features plenty of climbs, dives and twists. It will also have one of the world's first non-inverted loops, and for a further point of difference, it can be ridden backwards, which is also a world first.

Warner Bros Movie World says it will be one of the most technologically advanced rides of its type in Australia, features state-of-the-art safety and operating systems to ensure guest safety and comfort.



## OUTRIGGER FIJI'S FAMILY PULL

THE Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort on the Coral Coast of Viti Levu in Fiji is one of the South Pacific's most accommodating resorts for families. The property's director of sales and marketing Ben Johnson told *travelBulletin* a staggering three-quarters of guests fall within the category and one of the reasons the resort is so appealing is its tailored program of activities for children of all ages.

For bubs between six months and three years, Outrigger Fiji enlists a team of women from local villages who come onsite and provide a baby-sitting service, called MeiMei nannies. Johnson said they act like an au pair and are available throughout the day, and provide an extra set of hands for excursions outside the property.

For youngsters between the age of four and seven, there's the Little Riggers club which offers activities such as face painting, excursions, language lessons

and sculpture making. Children aged eight to 12 years are also catered for in the Beach Riggers club, with activities on offer including underwater treasure hunts, mini triathlons and crab races.

A teens' program focuses on conservations, hikes, visits to local schools and more.

The kids' clubs operate until 8pm, meaning parents can enjoy time together at Outrigger Fiji's adults-only pool and bistro, Vahavu, or perhaps treat themselves to a couples' treatment at the mountain-top Bebe Spa or the adults-only restaurant Ivi.

Outrigger also provides plenty of combined family activities and there is a strong focus on community tourism. Twice a week, guests can join a half-day excursion to a primary school in the Sigatoka Village where kids hang out with the Fijian children while parents get involved in some "real work", moving bricks, paint a building, etc.

# Unplug the kids

Learn more about the wonders of Fiji and complete our Matai online training program.

[www.matai.fiji.travel](http://www.matai.fiji.travel)

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# Bahrain

~ a jewel in the *Middle East*

Emma at the Grand Mosque

Bahrain Fort at night



By Emma Lovell

**W**HEN I first mentioned I was visiting the Kingdom of Bahrain, the most common response was “Where?” Bahrain is a tiny sparkling jewel situated in

the Persian Gulf, rich in history and full of character – it’s the perfect introduction to the Middle East. Once a popular stopover for airlines coming from Europe, it’s often overshadowed by the dazzling tourist attractions of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Why not try Bahrain? Experience the exotic culture of the Middle East with the laid-back vibe of an island getaway.

To learn more about the history of this country, you must visit The National Museum, Shaikh Isa House and the Bahrain Fort. Visiting the museum will give you a wonderful glimpse into the history of not only this country but also the Middle East and the Persian people. Situated by one of the many waterfronts on the island, the building itself is a magnificent piece of architecture and a pleasant place to pass the afternoon.

Shaikh Isa House, the home of the longest reigning Bahraini ruler, is tucked away in the urban area of Muharraq. Step into a time gone by with this glimpse of 19th century life featuring period architecture, wall carvings and authentic design. Finally, whether you’re interested in history or not, the Bahrain Fort is a magnificent spectacle to behold. There’s something magical about visiting at night and being taken back through time to the once





Manama Souq



Tree of Life



Intricate design at the King's House

active fort. Lit up in all the right places – the fortress reveals its stories with every corner you turn.

One of the most famous tourist attractions in the whole country is the Tree of Life. This seemingly ordinary, yet handsome, tree stands in the middle of the desert. There's no water for miles around. There's barely any rainfall. And as far as the eye can see are the endless oilfields. So, how does this tree continue to live? The mystery has baffled people for hundreds of years and provides this legendary site with a hint of magic, even more so at sunset; the solo tree silhouetted against the backdrop of a technicolor sky. The area near the Tree of Life has become a popular desert camping ground where in the winter it's cool enough for families to spend the night. Hundreds of large tents, Bedouins, are erected where large groups enjoy local cuisine and company under the stars.

Essential to the culture of Bahrain is the state religion of Islam. The Al Fateh Grand Mosque is a highlight of the tourist agenda and a place where visitors are welcomed to learn more about the Muslim faith. Never having been to a mosque, I didn't know what to expect. I soon discovered not only is it an incredibly beautiful building which incorporates architectural design from all around the world, it's also an amazing learning experience. Taking a guided tour allows guests to feel comfortable in this place of worship while gaining knowledge about Islam. The geometric design, the light casting magnificent patterns across the rooms and the sheer grandeur of the building must be experienced to be fully comprehended.

Whenever I heard someone talking about the Middle East, I couldn't help but imagine the Disney film, Aladdin – with scenes of a bustling marketplace full of perfumes, exotic spices, glittering gold, bright fabrics

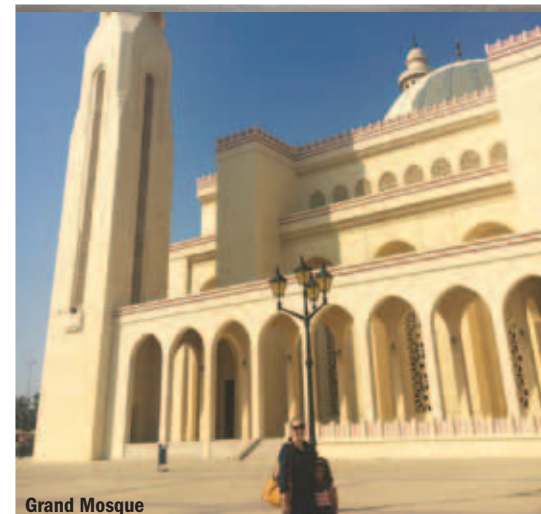
and more. The Manama Souq fulfilled all my Arabian Nights fantasies with its scents, sounds and crowds of locals enjoying their shopping experience. For those who aren't keen on the haggling and bidding of the markets, Bahrain has plenty of malls for an international shopping experience. They also offer a great place to escape the heat in the consistently warm weather.

‘With an eclectic mix of ex-pats from rich backgrounds, the choice of foods is endless...’

A friend who once lived in Bahrain for work offered me one piece of advice upon hearing of my travels – eat! “Eat all you can”, he said. So I did! With an eclectic mix of ex-pats from rich backgrounds, the choice of foods is endless and the flavours are always authentic. I opted mostly for Persian style food such as shawarmas – a kebab like snack food, mint iced-teas and many, many plates of spiced, grilled meats.

After seeing all the sites, the Al Dar Islands are the perfect place to rest and relax. Explore Bahrain's fascinating history of pearl diving, one of the country's primary trades before the discovery of oil. The shallow waters and miles of oyster beds provide a unique diving experience in the tropical waters off the coast. Enjoy activities such as boat tours, jet ski rides, snorkelling or simply sitting back on the pristine sands and enjoying the ever warm temperatures of an island paradise.

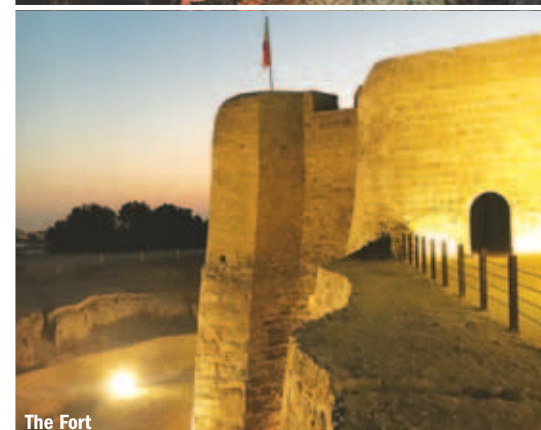
If you're planning a trip to this part of the world, add a stop or plan your entire trip in beautiful Bahrain. The magic, the mystery, the majesty of this Kingdom are not to be missed.



Grand Mosque



Typical souk shop



The Fort



# MY HOLIDAY CENTRE MIDDLE EAST FORAY

Downtown Dubai, Robert Bock

MY DUBAI has been added to the stable of destinations Ignite Travel Group's My Holiday Centre now spans, marking the brand's launch into the Middle East.

The Gold Coast-based company is offering a mix of Emirates flights, accommodation, transfers and "bonus value extras", which include items such as a Dubai city tour, sunset safari, room upgrades, and late check-out.

My Holiday Centre said the brand "goes beyond what's been done before – it opens the promise of Dubai to a whole new range of travellers by keeping the prices low and bonus value high".

The mydubai.com.au website boasts having the best prices available in the market, so much so My Dubai guarantees it will beat a competitor's like-for-like package by \$100.

"Whether you're planning a cultural escape to explore the opulent palaces, historic icons or ancient spice and gold souks; a designer shopping expedition; an indulgent, romantic retreat complete with Michelin Star meals, spa treatments and personalised hotel services or a family holiday to enjoy one of the many theme parks, festivals or world-class events you can do it all in style with My Dubai!" the company said.

Properties promoted on the website are all luxury, including Atlantis, The Palm; Jumeirah Creekside, JW Marriott Marquis, The Westin Al Habtoor City and Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach.

My Dubai also offers a cruise combination package which includes a seven-night MSC Cruise on *MSC Splendida* from Dubai on 24 March and 8 December 2018, coupled with three nights' accommodation, return Economy class flights with Emirates and airport transfers.

Dubai Tourism and Emirates are launch partners of the new program.



## DUBAI'S MARSA AL ARAB

ONE of the world's most recognised hotels and arguably one of its most extravagant, Burj Al Arab in Dubai will form the centrepiece of a revitalised tourist destination at Madinat Jumeirah.

In support of Dubai's Tourism Vision 2020, developer Dubai Holding has announced it will construct two islands, adding 2.2km of beach frontage that will flank either side of the landmark hotel, which itself juts out into the Persian Gulf.

Dubbed 'Marsa Al Arab', the US\$1.7 billion project also consists of a private yacht marina, a yacht club and 400 new F&B outlets. One

of the project's islands will be geared towards entertainment and family tourism and will comprise a new family-oriented hotel, including a "larger and improved" Wild Wadi Water Park. A pearl farm and a pearl-inspired boutique hotel "reflecting the UAE's heritage, culture and national pride" is also planned.

The second island will feature an exclusive 140-villa luxury resort operated by Jumeirah Group. A further aspect of Marsa Al Arab is a new business destination which includes a convention centre and another hotel to appeal to international conferences and festivals.

## Oman activates eVisa service

AUSTRALIAN travellers and nationals from more than 60 other countries can now apply for an online visa for Oman ahead of their arrival following the debut of a new eVisa service in the Sultanate.

The eVisa service has been developed to drive demand for experiential travel to Oman for the years to come, with the initial phase of the system covering non-sponsored tourist visas.

In 2016, Oman welcomed three million tourists and is forecasting visitor numbers to increase to over four million by 2020. Visitors can apply at [www.evisa.rop.gov.om](http://www.evisa.rop.gov.om).



# 3 THINGS - MUSEUMS



## LOUVRE ABU DHABI

Louvre Abu Dhabi will be the Arab world's first universal museum, which will aim to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western art. Scheduled for completion in the near future, the museum will hold over 600 artworks as a branch of its Parisian sister, Musée du Louvre. Additionally, 300 masterpieces will be on loan from 13 other French institutions on rotation throughout the year.

## DUBAI MUSEUM

Dubai Museum, housed in the Al Fahidi Fort (the oldest building in the city) allows visitors to experience the traditional life of Dubai residents before the discovery of oil. The museum, open since 1971, showcases galleries with recreated Arab houses, souks, mosques, date farms and desert and maritime life, along with exhibits on pearl diving. There are artefacts from Africa and Asia, as well as local finds from several archaeological digs, dating back to circa 3000 BC.



## MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART – DOHA

Doha's Museum of Islamic Art is the flagship of the Qatar Museums. Also known as the Mathaf Al-Fann Al-Islami, it displays a truly impressive array of Islamic art from three continents over 1,400 years. The works, including finely decorated ceramic ware, glass, textiles, carpets, inlaid metalwork and detailed antique manuscripts, have all been created using traditional styles and techniques developed across the Middle East and central Asia.



# BRAIN TWISTER

AFTER a local Post Office burglary, four suspects were being interviewed. Below is a summary of their statements. Police know that each of them told the truth in one of the statements and lied in the other. From this information can you tell who committed the crime?

Alan said:  
It wasn't Derek  
It wasn't Brian

Charles said:  
It was Alan  
It wasn't Derek

Brian said:  
It wasn't Charles  
It was Derek

Derek said:  
It was Charles  
It wasn't Alan



Answer below. Puzzle © Kevin Stone

## Funnies Flashback



We love trawling through the *Travel Daily* Window Seat archives, because we always seem to come across some crackers. Here are some gems from 2005:

OFFICIALS at Prague Airport have arrested a smuggler after they noticed his trouser snake wriggling when he landed in the Czech Republic after a flight from Africa. Apparently he'd tied the bottoms of his pants legs off with string and filled his trousers with dozens of rare reptiles. Customs inspectors also found his luggage contained a selection of scorpions and beetles.

THE recent Russell Crowe phonethrowing incident in New York has prompted a Melbourne hotel to come up with an alternative way for enraged guests to destress. David Perry, CEO of the boutique Adelphi Hotel, told *Travel Daily* he's arranged for special "stress phones" to be given out. Guests who've had a rough day and don't have time for a massage are invited to throw the phones, which are made of soft rubber, at "whatever or whoever they like".

A FREAK accident at a circus in northern Thailand has seen a hippopotamus swallow a dwarf. The Pattaya Mail reports the circus performer bounced sideways from a trampoline, straight into the yawning mouth of a hippo waiting to appear in the next act. A vet said the hippo's gag reflex caused it to swallow, and the paper added "spectators continued to applaud wildly until they realised there had been a tragic mistake".

## FUNNY FESTIVALS: ARGUNGU FISHING FESTIVAL

THE Argungu Fishing and Cultural Festival is held in Nigeria between late February and March and as the name suggests, involves both fishing and other cultural activities. It's one of the nation's top tourism events.

Argungu is a four day festival, with the most exciting event held on the last day: thousands of men line up along the Matan Fada River and at the sound of a gunshot leap into the water and have an hour to attempt to catch the largest fish they can with their bare hands. To give you an idea of the scale of these fish, in 2005 the winner was a 75kg monster fish that required four men to put it on to the scales.

Other activities include canoe racing, wild duck catching, local style wrestling, singing and dancing.

The festival was last held in 2009 and was put on hold in recent years due to the activities of Boko Haram in the north of the country, but was reinstated again in 2017.

In 2016, Argungu Festival was added to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, for the way in which it contributed to a sense of identity and also encouraged unity between the Argungu and Sokoto communities.



Therefore it was Brian, which agrees with Charles and Derek's statements.  
Derek or Brian. If it was Derek then Brian's statements would both be true, which isn't allowed.  
lied in the other. So according to Alan, as one of his statements is false, it must have been either  
Brian robbed the Post Office. We know that each of them told the truth in one of the statements and  
Answer:



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# VANUATU

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