

# travelBulletin

MARCH 2018

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# travelBulletin

MARCH 2018

## *A day in the life...*

*Behind the scenes  
at one of the  
world's biggest  
travel companies*

EUROPE

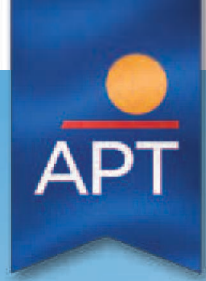
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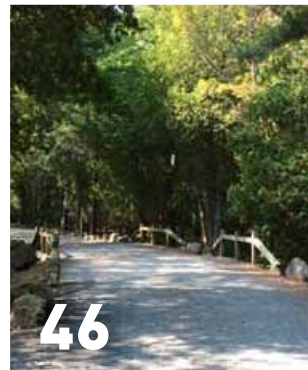




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## From the publisher

Bruce Piper



CONSOLIDATION in the Australian travel sector has been a strong theme of the last few weeks, with mergers and acquisitions firmly on the agenda as suppliers and agents jostle to reap the benefits of scale.

By the time you read this Helloworld's acquisition of Magellan should be done and dusted, with just one of Magellan Travel Group's 98 unit holders deciding not to sign the new agreement. The \$32.5 million deal further concentrates Helloworld's negotiating muscle, while the industry will be watching with keen interest as to how HLO's now six retail networks will work together under the company's new head of retail and commercial, John Constable, to whom Magellan MD Andrew Macfarlane will now report.

On the supplier side, another deal which *travelBulletin* has been assured will be settled imminently is the sale of generalist wholesaler Si Holidays and its portfolio of brands including Freestyle Holidays, The Collection and Waitui.

Owner Tui Eruera purchased the former Pinpoint Holidays business from Mastercard in October 2016, vowing to provide "fresh competition" for Flight Centre's in-house Infinity wholesale brand and Helloworld's Qantas/Viva! Holidays.

However the reality appears to have been somewhat more tricky, with Eruera recently confirming the company was in takeover talks with

another Australian-based wholesaler.

"The travel wholesale market has proven to be a very challenging environment and consolidation seems like the logical step forward for the company," he said.

The update followed a spate of "customer service issues" in recent months, with Eruera admitting that the pursuit of automation within the business had proven costly.

Flight Centre Travel Group is also consolidating internally, with the imminent shutdown of its Cruiseabout and Escape Travel brands (see story below) as the company restructures around three leisure "super networks".

It will be intriguing to see how this plays out in many of Australia's large shopping malls, where FCTG has until now been able to create a dominant presence through multiple differently branded stores.

MEANWHILE other big news last month included the shock resignation of long-standing Globus Family of Brands (GFOB) MD Australasia, Stewart Williams.

Williams, who had led the local operations since 1992, has been succeeded by interim MD Peter Douglas while a search is undertaken for a permanent replacement.

GFOB marketing manager Chris Fundell, who had also recently resigned to relocate to Queensland, has agreed to defer his departure for six months to support Douglas.

## IN BRIEF

### Flight Centre cuts brands

FLIGHT Centre will create three new "super networks" as part of a major consolidation of its Australian retail networks, culling its Escape Travel and Cruiseabout brands in the process. Over coming months, stores will be rebranded as either Flight Centre or Travel Associates outlets as part of a "Rebrand and Grow" plan, with all Escape Travel and Cruiseabout sales staff to transition to the sister brands. Flight Centre says the move is part of a new focus on growing market share in Australia. It involves merging brands to create three leisure "super networks", with one aimed at mass market (Flight Centre and BYOjet/Aunt Betty), another at premium travellers (Travel Associates and Travel Partners) and one for youth markets (Student Flights/StudentUniverse).

The news came as the company last month revealed

record six monthly TTV of \$10.16 billion in the first half, up 8.7% on the same period last financial year, and an underlying pre-tax profit of \$139.4 million, up 23.2%. The group says it expects its annual result to be about 13% higher than last financial year and "within reach" of the record \$376.5 million underlying profit achieved during the 2014 financial year.

### Scenic acquires Mayflower Tours

A SUCCESSFUL business relationship with Mayflower Tours in the US has evolved into a takeover of the company by Australian luxury cruise and tour operator Scenic for an undisclosed sum. From its Downers Grove headquarters, outside Chicago, Mayflower Tours operates tours worldwide, including in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Australasia.



Its acquisition continues Scenic's growth strategy in the North American market and will enable the Newcastle-based company to provide Mayflower greater access to river and ocean itineraries on both Scenic and sister brand Emerald Waterways. Likewise, Scenic and Emerald will be able to tap into Mayflower's extensive land-based tours which can be paired with a cruise.

"We have worked with Mayflower Tours for several years and have always been incredibly impressed with the level of service and offerings that John and Mary Stachnik (Mayflower Tours founders/owners) have offered their guests," said Scenic founder and chairman Glen Moroney. "So, when the opportunity came about due to their wish to retire, it was an easy decision".

Mayflower, established nearly 40 years ago, will be operated by Scenic as a separate entity named Mayflower Cruises & Tours, employing the same executive team.

## Helloworld Travel nears \$3b H1 turnover

HELLOWORLD Travel's total transaction value (TTV) came close to \$3 billion for the six months to 31 December 2017, despite the impact of airfare discounting in Australia and New Zealand.

Attributing much of its growth to increased ticketing volumes, the company revealed its TTV had risen 2.7% over the previous corresponding period to hit \$2.968 billion. Its earnings (EBITDA) were up 18.2% to \$35.5 million in the six months to 31 December, while its pre-tax profit was up \$7.3 million to \$26 million, in line with market guidance. The Helloworld Travel retail network grew by 50 during the six months to total 2,065 members across Australia and New Zealand.

"Helloworld Travel continues to invest in the brand and technology to provide enhanced travel solutions and experiences for its member network, partners and customers," the company said in announcing its half year results.

"The successful rebrand to Helloworld Travel – The Travel Professionals has been well received by members and the public with significant growth in brand awareness."

“Melbourne is an alternative but certainly we're seeing Victoria at this stage as a strong demand market”

David Rousham, vice president UK and international development, Cunard

## TOURISM AUSTRALIA US PUSH



TOURISM Australia launched a \$30 million multi-year campaign in the US at the recent Super Bowl, grabbing the attention of 100 million people. The campaign gave the appearance of a trailer for a new *Crocodile Dundee* movie before it was revealed to be Tourism Australia's latest push. Some of Australia's favourite actors such as Chris and Liam Hemsworth, Hugh Jackman, Margot Robbie and Russell Crowe, as well as the original Mick 'Crocodile' Dundee, Paul Hogan, made appearances in the advert. Hogan is pictured with Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Steven Ciobo.

In the company's Australia segment, TTV totalled \$2.5 billion, up 2.1%, "despite falling international and air ticket prices," the company said.

## Cunard's record Australian deployment

CUNARD has announced it will base its *Queen Elizabeth* in Australia for 101 days over the 2019-20 summer, the line's longest season down under.

The ship will sail on six roundtrip cruises from Melbourne and two from Sydney between December 2019 and March 2020, calling in at destinations in South Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The Victorian capital will be *Elizabeth*'s home port for two months, while a New Zealand cruise over the festive break will include Christmas crossing the Tasman followed by New Year's Eve in Auckland Harbour.

Cunard vice president UK and international development David Rousham confirmed that capacity issues in Sydney led the line to look for another Australian home. "Melbourne is an alternative but certainly we're seeing Victoria at this stage as a strong demand market," he said.

The line's senior vice president Simon Palethorp said the record season reflected "unprecedented demand for the Cunard experience" in Australia. "Our new 2019-20 summer season will not only feature more cruises, it will also offer some exciting new itinerary options which we hope will entice even more Australians to experience Cunard's legendary service and style," he said.

## Qantas record profit

SURGING first-half results for Qantas Domestic, Jetstar Group and Qantas Loyalty have fuelled Qantas Group to achieve its best-ever 1H underlying profit before tax of \$976 million, up 15% on the previous year.

The successful period will see Qantas reward shareholders, with up to \$500 million to be returned to investors in the form of a 7c per share ordinary unfranked dividend, coupled with an on-market buyback of up to \$348 million.

"After several years of consistent performance, we now have a lot of momentum behind us," said Qantas CEO Alan Joyce.

*Continues over page*

## Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 23 Jan** ACCC pries Mantra sale
- 23 Jan** AFTA fires up public vote
- 24 Jan** Magellan lifts agent offer
- 24 Jan** Wirth to lead QF Loyalty
- 25 Jan** APT adds new Croatia ship
- 25 Jan** Star revamps RTW fares
- 29 Jan** Australia Day honourees
- 29 Jan** Trump slump "unfounded"
- 30 Jan** QBT, ITG Indigenous TMC
- 30 Jan** QF 787 to BNE-LAX-JFK
- 30 Jan** Wendy Wu trade focus
- 31 Jan** Tuggerah agency collapse
- 31 Jan** AFTA, Accor partnership
- 01 Feb** nib expands range
- 01 Feb** QFFF Lux Escapes tie-up
- 02 Feb** Travelport leadership shuffle
- 02 Feb** QF cuts name change fee
- 05 Feb** Scenic confirms *Eclipse II*
- 05 Feb** AirAsia confirms Avalon
- 06 Feb** MTG agreement unchanged
- 06 Feb** New Helloworld retail chief
- 07 Feb** *Splendor* local homeport
- 07 Feb** OTA's 'damaging' hotels
- 08 Feb** Brett Jardine new CATO MD
- 08 Feb** Globus MD to step down
- 08 Feb** Shuttlewood new TC MD
- 09 Feb** 2018 starts strong for HLO
- 09 Feb** SeaLink leadership rejig
- 12 Feb** TTC embraces innovation
- 12 Feb** Tourism steering committee
- 13 Feb** Uniworld plots Oz growth
- 13 Feb** QR:CBR trade "critical"
- 14 Feb** Slovenia targets Aussies
- 14 Feb** UA hails Houston success
- 15 Feb** Alliance JTB charter deal
- 15 Feb** Mantra's record revenue
- 16 Feb** Backing for QF-EK tie-up
- 16 Feb** Accor backs NT stimulus
- 19 Feb** HLO boosts TTV to \$3b
- 19 Feb** *Queen Liz* MEL homeport
- 20 Feb** Magellan members sign
- 20 Feb** Si Holidays in takeover
- 21 Feb** Scenic takes US operator
- 21 Feb** SeaLink hooks Kingfisher
- 22 Feb** Flight Centre to rebrand Escape & Cruiseabout

*Continues from previous page*

"We're vigilant about maintaining that momentum and we're confident about the future it allows us to build."

The company announced an investment in Jetstar, with 18 A321LR NEOs to enter the fleet from mid-2020, coming from an existing order of 99 A320 family aircraft with Airbus.

Qantas revealed it would introduce a new Qantas Group Pilot Academy next year which will initially train up to 100 new pilots annually.

The airline also announced the redevelopment of its SYD International Business Lounge, increasing capacity by about 30%, and an upgrade to the interiors of QantasLink's fleet of 45 turboprop aircraft.

### SeaLink invests in Fraser Island

KINGFISHER Bay Resort and its sister property on Queensland's Fraser Island, Eurong Beach Resort, have been acquired by the SeaLink Travel Group for \$43 million.

Kingfisher Bay Resort Group (KBRG) accounts for 90% of accommodation

options on the island, along with the majority of the destination's touring experiences in Fraser Explorer Tours and three ferries under the Fraser Island Ferries entity.

"Kingfisher Bay Resort Group is by far the major hospitality, touring and transport operation on Fraser Island, and we are delighted to be taking ownership of this leading tourism business to drive future protection, promotion and growth of the island," SeaLink managing director Jeff Ellison said.

The transaction, expected to be completed in early April, will see SeaLink establish a business hub in Brisbane to serve its new and existing Queensland operations.

KBRG's managing director Gary Smith said it was great to see the business acquired by a "progressive Australian company".

"It is great for the future of the business, for our people and the Queensland tourism industry".

SeaLink chair Andrew McEvoy said the Adelaide-headquartered business would look to build on KBRG's "strong and growing position in the Australian tourism market".

## SCENIC'S NIGHT OF STARS



SCENIC turned on a spectacular show in Sydney last month to honour top achieving travel agents in its sixth annual Night of Stars. The gala event was hosted by funnyman Vince Sorrenti and involved a host of other entertainers including the full cast of the *Getaway* travel TV show. Among the winners was Weston Cruise & Travel which took out the national award for the highest sales from a single location. **Pictured** accepting the award are Deb Long and Emma Sullivan, with Scenic national sales manager Rob Kalembe and general manager of sales and marketing for Australia/Asia Pacific Anthony Laver.



# DATA ROOM

All the latest statistics from the ABS and BITRE to keep you in the loop.

## DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE

December 2017



Jetstar

Arrivals on time 79.3%  
Departure on time 76.9%  
Cancellations 0.9%



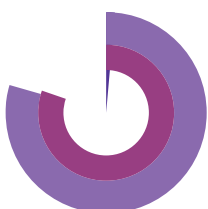
Qantas

Arrivals on time 79.1%  
Departure on time 79.1%  
Cancellations 1.0%



Virgin Australia

Arrivals on time 81.1%  
Departure on time 83.2%  
Cancellations 1.6%



All airlines

Arrivals on time 79.7%  
Departure on time 80.4%  
Cancellations 1.5%

## INBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, Dec 2017

Source	Trend (000)	Original (000)	Trend Nov 17/ Dec 17 %	Trend Dec 16/ Dec 17 %
New Zealand	113.9	125.5	-0.2	+0.8
UK	62.8	123.7	+1.9	+3.4
China	117.0	111.0	-1.2	+10.1
United States	66.0	94.9	+0.3	+6.5
Singapore	35.3	52.4	-1.6	+0.2
Japan	36.9	42.6	+0.7	+2.1
Malaysia	31.3	39.7	-3.8	-4.1
Hong Kong	25.1	35.5	+0.1	+17.4
India	27.3	34.1	+0.4	+18.5
South Korea	27.2	32.7	+0.0	+12.4
All inbound	751.4	1,010.6	-0.1	+5.8

Source: ABS

## OUTBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, Dec 2017

Destination	Trend (000)	Original (000)	Trend Nov 17/ Dec 17 %	Trend Dec 16/ Dec 17 %
New Zealand	118.7	110.7	+0.5	+1.0
United States	88.3	72.8	-0.1	-3.8
Indonesia	92.0	69.0	-2.1	-9.4
Thailand	50.6	37.4	+0.4	+11.7
India	32.3	34.4	+0.5	+13.7
UK	53.0	33.1	+0.9	+1.7
China	45.2	32.4	+0.4	+7.1
Singapore	35.4	28.4	+1.2	+1.7
Japan	35.5	27.1	+1.3	+14.2
Fiji	28.3	25.9	+0.3	-4.6
All outbound	885.6	677.5	+0.1	+3.2

Source: ABS

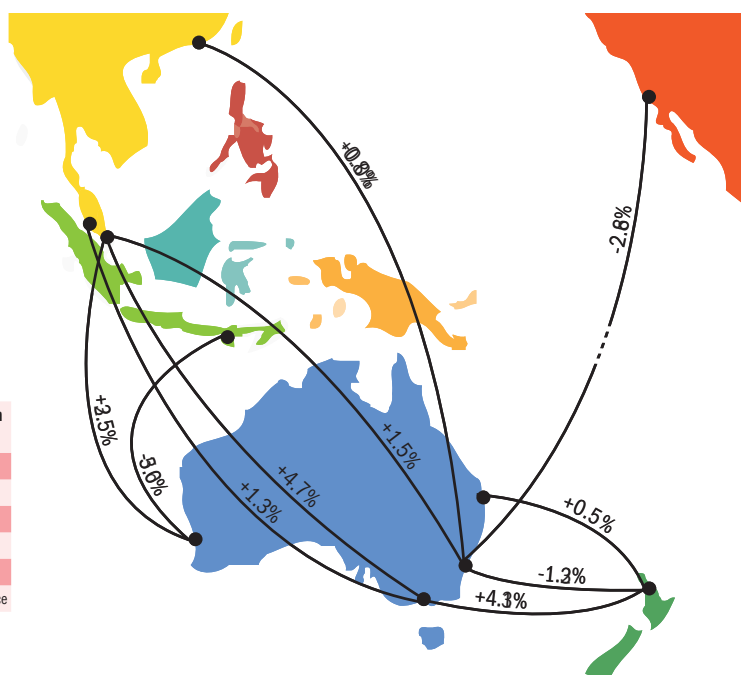
## DOMESTIC AIR MARKET

November 2017

	Nov 16	Nov 17	Growth %	Yr to Nov 16	Yr to Nov 17	Growth %
Total pax carried	5.06m	5.23m	+3.3	58.88m	59.86m	+1.7
Revenue pax km (RPK)	5.84bn	5.99bn	+2.5	69.24bn	69.91bn	+1.0
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.37bn	7.31bn	-0.8	89.01bn	88.24bn	-0.9
Load factor (%)	79.3	82.0	2.7*	77.7	79.2	1.5*
Aircraft trips (000)	54.1	54.1	+0.1	642.9	639.5	-0.5

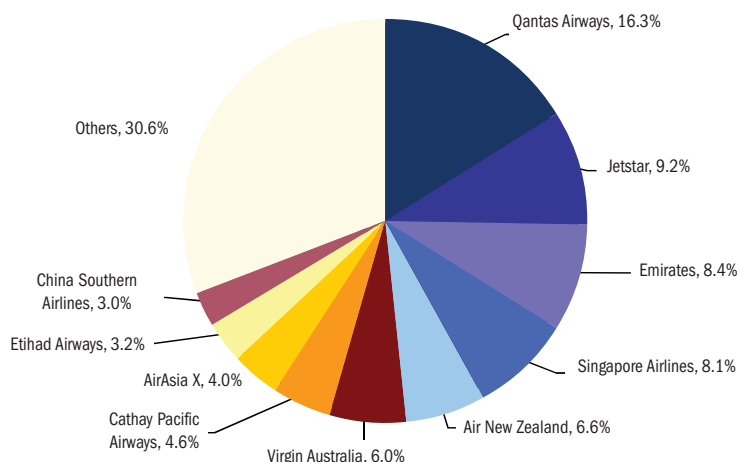
\*Percentage points difference

Source: BITRE



## INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended Nov 2017



Source: BITRE

## INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs, Nov 2017

City pair	Passengers YE Nov 16	Passengers YE Nov 17	% of total	% change 17/16
Auckland-Sydney	1,604,874	1,584,522	4.0	-1.3
Singapore-Sydney	1,451,042	1,486,982	3.8	+2.5
Singapore-Melbourne	1,351,258	1,418,240	3.6	+5.0
Auckland-Melbourne	1,183,510	1,232,408	3.1	+4.1
Singapore-Perth	1,118,803	1,157,992	2.9	+3.5
Hong Kong-Sydney	1,074,344	1,074,609	2.7	+0.0
Auckland-Brisbane	961,663	966,292	2.4	+0.5
Los Angeles-Sydney	911,137	887,682	2.3	-2.6
Denpasar-Perth	897,355	846,712	2.1	-5.6
Kuala Lumpur-Melbourne	826,007	828,731	2.1	+0.3
Top 10 City Pairs	11,379,993	11,484,170	29.1	+0.9
Other City Pairs	26,006,941	27,962,327	70.9	+7.5
ALL CITY PAIRS	37,386,934	39,446,497	100.0	+5.5

Source: BITRE

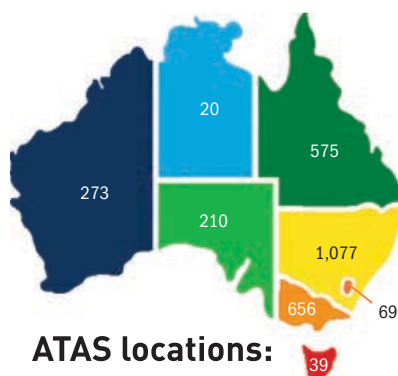
# STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

## MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs, Nov 2017

City pair	Passengers YE Nov 16 (000)	Passengers YE Nov 17 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	8,906.4	9,071.1	+1.8
Brisbane-Sydney	4,652.9	4,741.0	+1.9
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,485.7	3,543.7	+1.9
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,703.5	2,731.9	+1.1
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,388.8	2,443.0	+2.3
Melbourne-Perth	2,070.3	2,038.9	-1.5
Gold Coast-Melbourne	1,957.8	2,009.4	+2.6
Adelaide-Sydney	1,873.7	1,893.8	+1.1
Perth-Sydney	1,754.4	1,719.4	-2.0
Hobart-Melbourne	1,546.4	1,628.1	+5.3

Source: BITRE



**ATAS locations:**  
**2,920 total**  
As of 21 February 2018

## AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

International passengers through Australia's major international airports, Nov 2017

City pair	Passengers YE Nov 16	Passengers YE Nov 17	% of total	% change 17/16
Sydney	15,031,813	15,952,084	40.4	+6.1
Melbourne	9,564,188	10,264,557	26.0	+7.3
Brisbane	5,434,181	5,694,364	14.4	+4.8
Perth	4,359,509	4,399,394	11.2	+0.9
Gold Coast	1,087,686	1,080,194	2.7	-0.7
Adelaide	910,819	961,476	2.4	+5.6
Cairns	634,819	658,160	1.7	+3.7
Darwin	268,264	278,285	0.7	+3.7
Canberra	16,867	82,498	0.2	+389.1
Townsville^	41,196	48,846	0.1	+18.6
Sunshine Coast*	18,843	13,719	0.0	-27.2
Norfolk Island	8,677	7,359	0.0	-15.3
Port Hedland~	10,072	5,561	0.0	-44.8
All Airports	37,386,934	39,446,497	100.0	+5.5

^Scheduled services recommenced September 2015  
\*Seasonal services only  
~Scheduled services recommenced September 2016  
~Scheduled services recommenced April 2015

Source: BITRE



## Steve Jones' Say

THERE can't be too many industries with the ability to turn in a global profit of close to US\$40b. That's what airlines are predicted to collectively generate in 2018.

No wonder the boss of the International Air Transport Authority, Alexandre de Juniac, observed in December how these are "good times for the global air transport industry".

Not all carriers are flush of course. But many are, Qantas among them.

Which makes the recent accusation that airlines may deliberately be splitting up friends and families on

flights and requiring them to pay extra to sit together particularly unpalatable. It would be vexing in any circumstance. In an era when airlines have rarely had it so good, it would be nothing less than profiteering.

Airline stealth charges have become a major bone of contention for travellers, and this one has sparked an investigation by the UK's Civil Aviation Authority which noted airline seating practices were "clearly causing some confusion for consumers".

Paying in advance for a particular seat is one thing. If airlines are using computer programs at the time of booking to separate parents from kids – as is the claim – it should be called out for what it is: a rort.

From one outraged group to another: Magellan agents. The bewilderingly ham-fisted sale to Helloworld could be done and dusted by the time these words hit the printers. And as is so often the case, crossing palms with silver seems to have done the trick and provided the bridge between Magellan management and members.

That said, increasing the financial incentive for agents in order to force through the deal is one thing, rebuilding Magellan into a harmonious and cohesive network in the aftermath of this mess is quite another. Trust is hard won, and easily lost. The board has much work to do to restore faith

in its leadership.

Yet if these are unsettling times for Magellan agents, spare a thought for wholesalers. Magellan is the third independent network in 18 months, behind MTA and Travel Partners, to be acquired by one of the big two. Under new masters, you have to wonder how much flexibility will be permitted in their choice of suppliers, risking further distribution woes for already squeezed wholesalers.

Magellan has at least assured members they will be free to transact with suppliers without Helloworld approval. But if I was a wholesaler I'd want any new deal quickly locked in before counting my chickens.

One other development which caught my eye was Brett Jardine's move to the Council of Australian Tour Operators.

Jardine spent a decade in cruising, joining the International Cruise Council Australasia, latterly CLIA, when cruising was a shadow of its current self. So he knows a thing or two about developing a sector and how industry organisations tick.

One of CATO's stated goals is to boost the profile of touring, a sector which lost its zest amid cruising's renaissance. Who better to oversee touring's own rejuvenation than the figure with extensive knowledge of its principal adversary.

“Under new masters, you have to wonder how much flexibility will be permitted in their choice of suppliers, risking further distribution woes for already squeezed wholesalers”



# AFRICA 2018

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# HLO CLOSES IN ON MAGELLAN

ONE month on from the 'Magellangate' controversy (*travelBulletin* February 2018), the group's takeover by Helloworld looks to be inevitable, with just one Magellan Travel Group (MTG) member declining an increased offer under HLO's bid for the business. Since last month's edition, a summit meeting saw Magellan members offered a significantly enhanced financial deal, understood to total to about two-thirds of the \$32.5 million to be paid by Helloworld.

As *travelBulletin* went to press, Magellan confirmed that "97 out of 98 unit holders, representing 128 agency outlets, have signed a new Magellan member agreement". There was some initial dissent following receipt of the new offer amid claims it would restrict members from being part of groups such as Virtuoso or Cruiseco, but this was quickly doused by Magellan's directors who confirmed that the commercial terms of the HLO offer were identical to the existing MTG agreement, with the addition of guarantees and protection around override income and member fees.

It's understood HLO has locked in the existing fees and returns to members for five years, with many Magellan members thrilled at the additional payout they will receive under the revised offer. Announcing Helloworld's half-year results in late February, CEO Andrew Burnes confirmed that the planned acquisition of Magellan was due to be completed by the end of the month, meaning that it should be done and dusted by the time you are reading this in the March edition of *travelBulletin*.

## Jardine takes CATO role

FORMER cruise industry association leader Brett Jardine has jumped ship and will be stepping into the role of managing director of the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO). Jardine will replace long-time general manager Peter Baily, who after 25 years at the helm will retire at the end of the month.

Prior to joining CATO, Jardine spent 10 years in the top job at Cruise Lines International Association, following other roles at APT and Scenic. CATO chairman Dennis Bunnik said Jardine was the ideal candidate to steer CATO into a fresh direction. "I look forward to working with Brett in the coming months and years to grow CATO and realise the organisation's full potential," he said.



## AFTA VIEW

Jayson Westbury, chief executive AFTA

2036 seems like a long way away. It's 20 years into the future and, like the last 20 years, plenty will take place in the travel industry. It's likely however that the next two decades will bring greater change, more intimate connectivity with consumers and without question a big shift in the location of the wealth by population.

In fact, IATA predicts the travelling passenger market size to change very significantly between 2016 and 2036. Out of the current top 10 largest passenger markets, Italy and France will be removed and into the top 10 will be Turkey and Thailand. The rest of the current top 10 passenger markets (being China, USA, UK, Japan, Spain, Germany, India and Indonesia) move rankings in the top 10 but remain on the list.

The data (sourced from the latest *IATA Airlines International publication issue 71*), which outlines the largest passenger markets ranked by passenger numbers from and within each country, is compelling reading.

Interesting because it shows clearly where the passenger shift is moving to and no question it is in Australia's backyard. With Turkey and Thailand noted as two emerging top 10 markets, it would seem clever for any travel business in Australia that has offshore desires to be thinking about those very markets.

The curious thing about this is that the passenger ranking data includes inbound and outbound passenger counts. Clearly more of us are likely to be going to those places as well.

The big switch is at the top of the list, from USA (top passenger market in 2016) to China (top ranked by 2022 according to the report). That means this crucial pivot point will be reached in just four years from now.

Is it any wonder China is fast becoming the one travel and tourism market that everyone wants to be a part of? Australia is well placed to get our share. We have the political settings right to enable Australian travel businesses to do business in China relatively easily. We have an excellent marketing campaign being led by Tourism Australia for the inbound market to continue to grow and find new areas of China from which to draw. And without question we enjoy excellent aviation links with China.

The one thing the travel industry does need to do is have a more open mind to sending Australians to China. We are doing well for a small nation, with around 50% more people coming to Australia from China than Australians going to China. For China, the opportunities are endless and as a destination there is so much to see and do.

So as you plan your 2018 it is important to think beyond what is happening today and consider the next four years and even perhaps the next 20, as things are going to change and we need to be ready, willing and able to change at the same pace.

“  
The one thing the travel industry does need to do is have a more open mind to sending Australians to China  
”



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## TTC AFFIRMS AGENTS FIRST AND ONLY

THE Travel Corporation CEO Brett Tollman moved quickly to allay any fears the company had plans to chase direct business last month, with a personal letter to travel agents following the launch of the company's new My Travel Portal system. My Travel Portal (or MTP) provides a much closer connection between travellers and their holiday, allowing them to interact with tour leaders in the days before departure and also provide information such as passport details and dietary requirements – all in the name of making their trip smoother and allowing TTC's various brands to provide even better service.

MTP involves traveller information being shared directly with TTC, and Tollman noted that this allowed agents to effortlessly ensure that their clients' pre-trip, on-trip and post-trip needs were met. "Registration enables clients to unlock a range of benefits that will leave them happy and satisfied," he wrote. He also noted that although it was a new concept for the touring sector, all cruise companies required registration prior to taking a cruise "and frankly, any responsible travel company nowadays needs to do it".

Tollman provided a personal commitment that "we will not use that data to solicit clients to book directly with us; we never have and we never will. We personally guarantee it. In any communications to your clients as part of this registration

“  
Our brands have  
been selling  
through our travel  
agent partners for  
almost 70 years  
now. We believe  
our track record  
speaks for itself  
”

Brett Tollman, CEO  
The Travel Corporation

process, we will also refer to the travel agent of record – you," he wrote. "Trust is earned the hard way and over time; trust is lost easily and very quickly. Our brands have been selling through our travel agent partners for almost 70 years now. We believe our track record speaks for itself," he concluded.



## CATO VIEW

Peter Baily, general manager  
Council of Australian Tour Operators

THIS being my final CATO column, after close to 25 years' association with the Council, I thought it appropriate to give you a brief history of CATO.

In November 1964 a group of 15 wholesalers met at the Australia Hotel Sydney and formed a division of AFTA known as The Australian Council of Tour Operators (ACTO). The original concept was to look after the interests of tour operators & wholesalers and establish of a standard code of ethics.

In July 1969 the name was changed to the Australian Council of Tour Wholesalers (ACTW). During the following years, the Council became more involved in international airfares, holding regular meetings with the major carriers to obtain the best possible prices for their members and the introduction of the wholesale net fare.

In April 1999 AFTA made amendments to its constitution, including the dissolution of the separate divisions of AFTA, with the result that the ACTW was dissolved. The 48 members met and formed a new stand alone Association to be known as Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO). The newly formed CATO retained close ties with the travel agent association.

Whilst adhering to the original code of ethics and ideals of the ACTW, in recent years CATO expanded its role in the Industry, developing dialogue with Government bodies such as the ATO, ACCC & DFAT. Recent areas of involvement include:

- Exemption of GST on international travel – CATO worked closely with the ATO ensuring that International travel was exempt from GST; this involvement covered a period of years and was a major victory for the association and its members.
- Guidelines for price advertising in the travel industry – In conjunction with the ACCC, guidelines were produced for price advertising covering both media advertising and the printed travel brochure.
- Smartraveller consultative group – CATO, a founding member of this group, works closely and has regular meetings with DFAT to ensure the travelling public is kept up to date with travel advisories and general overseas travel conditions.
- Review of consumer protection in the travel industry – CATO worked closely in conjunction with AFTA and a variety of government bodies in the review of travel agent licensing. On deregulation of the travel industry in July 2014, CATO fully supported the new travel accreditation scheme ATAS introduced by AFTA.

CATO holds regular quarterly meetings, providing excellent networking opportunities and initiatives for members. Current topical issues are discussed with guest speakers addressing members on matters of common interest.

Since its inception, membership has more than doubled from 48 and now stands at over 117 members.

As I begin my "sea change" on the NSW North Coast, the announcement of Brett Jardine as managing director opens an exciting new chapter in the history of CATO. With Dennis Bunnik as chairman ably assisted by the committee I feel confident that Brett will do a great job taking CATO and its members to the next stage.



# FALL FOLIAGE



*Karen Christensen*

Karen Christensen  
Senior Vice President  
& Managing Director  
Australia & New Zealand

## CRYSTAL INSIGHTS WITH KAREN CHRISTENSEN

Nowhere else in the world does Mother Nature work her magic as beautifully as she does along the shores of New England and Canada during their autumn months. Your clients can enjoy the splendours of fall this year as the celebrated *Crystal Symphony*® travels between New York City and Montréal on a collection of extraordinarily popular 10-, 12- and 14-day journeys. Along with the all-inclusive luxuries that The World's Most Awarded Luxury Cruise Line is renowned, guests will witness a sparkling twilight Manhattan departure, explore Québec City's UNESCO-designated Vieux-Québec, and marvel at Montréal's Basilique Notre-Dame. A fall foliage cruise with Crystal promises endless choices and enchanting scenery.

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# QATAR AIRWAYS COMMITS TO CANBERRA

By Guy Dundas

A FIFTH destination in Australia was added to Qatar Airways' ever-expanding global network, with the first scheduled commercial service from the Middle East to Canberra landing on 12 April, albeit via Sydney. Qatar Airways is utilising its long-range workhorse, the Boeing 777-300ER on the daily route, an aircraft configured with 358 seats spread across two classes.

The inaugural service featured a 777 equipped with Qatar Airways' Business class Qsuite, a product Qatar Airways markets as perfect for a private business meetings or family gathering for four people in the sky, and featuring sliding privacy doors and seats that can be converted to a double bed. The same aircraft will be utilised on the Canberra route from June.

For a route that was first revealed 14 months ahead of launch, you would suspect Qatar Airways would be disappointed with only a handful of seats in both classes occupied by paying passengers on the sector between Sydney and Canberra. *travelBulletin*, travelling as a guest of the airline, observed between 30-40 passengers coming off the aircraft clearing Customs at Canberra Airport on day two of the operation. The return flight to Sydney the same day had just six Business class passengers and 15 in Economy, cabin crew disclosed.

However Qatar Airways Group CEO Akbar Al Baker admitted the Canberra service could take up to 12 months to gain its feet.

"When Qatar Airways launches a route, it's a long-term investment. If I was coming to Canberra because I wanted to make money in the first month or year, it's not going to happen. This is a long-term investment and commitment to a destination," Al Baker said after launching the route.

Qatar Airways senior manager – Australasia, Adam Radwanski, told *travelBulletin* support from the Australian travel trade would be crucial to help fill seats out of

“  
Trade is for  
us here in  
Australia,  
for me and  
my team, an  
absolutely  
critical and  
integral  
part of our  
strategy  
”

Adam  
Radwanski,  
senior manager  
- Australasia,  
Qatar Airways

Canberra. Already, Qatar Airways is working with tourist boards and inbound operators to inspire them to develop multi-city itineraries that include Canberra in their Australian programs.

"That obviously cannot be done overnight. It's more of a process. We've seen it in other markets that we've started, and a good example is Adelaide. When we were operating for a couple of months as five weekly, and since the 1st December to a daily flight. Adelaide has become more popular through our travel network and we are very confident it will be the same for Canberra," Radwanski explained.

He said the airline had engaged heavily with the trade in Canberra, hosting a series of famils to Doha so they were familiar with the destination as a stopover hub to Europe and beyond.

"Trade is for us here in Australia, for me and my team, an absolutely critical and integral part of our strategy... I think we'll be very well placed here to be successful here in the coming months," Radwinski added.

Al Baker confirmed there was no immediate plan to fly into Canberra directly from Doha (due to the inadequate runway length), but the real gain for Qatar Airways is the addition of a second daily frequency into and out of Sydney. If the 30-minute flight between Sydney and Canberra (and vice versa) has low passenger counts, it will mean more revenue out of Sydneysiders, who at current fare levels are paying about \$300 more than Canberrans on a return QR flight to Europe.

Al Baker continues to hold his cards close to his chest on which other Australian destination(s) he will commit to, however he openly stated it would not be a regional city, realistically limiting his next options to either Brisbane or Darwin.

Qatar Airways' new Canberra route complements its long-standing service to Melbourne and Perth, and more recent additions of Sydney and Adelaide.



Qatar Airways touches down in Canberra for the first time ©Qatar Airways

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# SCENIC LAUNCHES ECLIPSE II

SCENIC has reinforced its push into ocean cruising with the announcement of *Scenic Eclipse II* which is set to launch in 2020. The newbuild was revealed last month to a thrilled audience at the sixth annual Scenic “Night of Stars” which recognised the company’s top selling agents over the last year.

Scenic founder and chairman Glen Moroney said the decision to create a second ocean vessel followed unprecedented interest in *Scenic Eclipse* from guests keen to experience the company’s “unique blend of six-star luxury meets expedition cruising”.

“The debut of *Scenic Eclipse II* will not only allow us to expand our offering and pioneer new destinations, such as the Russian Arctic, it will also allow us to continue our passion for innovation in design and handcrafted itineraries, which we are confident will appeal to a wide variety of guests,” Moroney said.

Construction will commence next year in the same Croatian shipyard where *Scenic Eclipse* recently floated out. Like her sister ship, *Scenic Eclipse II* will feature 114 balcony suites, nine restaurants, eight lounges and bars, a Spa Sanctuary and indoor and outdoor pools. Expedition facilities include a marina deck, two helicopters and a submarine, while the vessels are being constructed in compliance with the new International Maritime Organisation Polar Code requirements including an Ice Class 1A rating.

Itineraries for *Scenic Eclipse II* will be released next month, and will feature “remote and long sought-after destinations” such as Russia’s White Sea, the Northwest Passage, Southern Greenland, and a Bering Sea crossing between Alaska and Russia.



## Vale Barry Matters

THE untimely death of former APT managing director Barry Matters last month left the Australian travel sector bereft, with his life and distinguished career celebrated at a funeral in early February. Matters passed away at the age of 64 after a short battle with cancer, with the APT Travel Group family paying tribute to his huge contribution to the business.

“Barry was highly regarded and respected throughout the company and the broader travel industry. Over his long and distinguished career Barry formed many strong relationships and friendships at ATG and across the industry. He was a strong leader, a mentor to many and a true gentleman,” according to a statement issued by ATG directors Geoff, Robert and Louise McGearry and the company’s management and staff.

Under Matters’ leadership, APT transformed from an Australian coach tour operator with a single brand focus to a “global leading cruising and touring company with a portfolio of brands and products”. The business formed strategic partnerships with AMA Waterways, Noble Caledonia, Captains Choice, Cruiseco and Setours, which have been highly successful and “set the group up for long term success,” the statement said, adding “Barry’s commitment, wisdom and loyalty to the company will not be forgotten and will be enduring”.

## TOURISM STEERING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP POLICY

THE Australian Government has recruited a number of industry leaders as part of its plan to boost the country’s market share of the world’s 1.3 billion international travellers. It has created the Beyond Tourism 2020 Steering Committee, which is being chaired by the former chief executive officer of Sydney Airport Kerrie Mather.

Other members of the committee include Helloworld executive director Cinzia Burnes, BridgeClimb Sydney CEO Todd Coates, Voyages Indigenous Tourism CEO Andrew Williams, Village Roadshow Theme Parks CEO Clark Kirby, Association of Australian Convention Bureaux president Karen Bolinger, AEG Ogden CEO Harvey Lister, Australian Chamber – Tourism executive chair John Hart and Tourism Australia managing director John O’Sullivan.

Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Steven Ciobo selected the committee and commented that Australia was currently enjoying a record number of international and domestic travellers who were “staying longer and spending more”.

“In the year ending September 2017, tourists spent a record \$125.3 billion.

“To grow this further, Australia needs to develop a new long-term vision for tourism,

encouraging innovation, harnessing new technology and reducing red tape that will offer a world-class experience for travellers,” Ciobo said.

The committee will report its findings to Canberra later this year.

“  
...Australia  
needs to  
develop a  
new long-  
term vision  
for tourism...”

”  
Steven Ciobo,  
Federal Minister  
for Trade, Tourism  
& Investment





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# A day in the life...

The Travel Corporation is one of the world's largest travel businesses, with brands that span the globe – and Australia is a key part of the company both in terms of customers and operations. From hotels to ground operations to touring, coaches and cruising, TTC has a massive portfolio.

But how do the thousands of moving pieces in such an enormous international organisation work together to produce the desired result?

This month Bruce Piper was given an exclusive look behind the scenes of TTC to catch a glimpse of what it takes to make it all happen each day – from reservations and sales right through to the CEO.

## Brett Tollman, Chief Executive Officer The Travel Corporation (TTC)

**5:30am** – No matter what city I'm in – it's an early start as I'm straight onto important emails on the laptop (rather than my iPhone, as I find it easier and faster to respond and download documents). I then spend 15-30 minutes catching up on the news, a quick shower, grab a cup of coffee and off to work.

**6:30am** – When at home, it takes me about 30 minutes to drive to work as there is no traffic at that hour, and I pass the time planning the day, thinking of new ideas and key priorities. If I am in London however, I walk to work as it's such a wonderful journey through the city; and in Australia, John Veitch (our great CEO there) picks me up and we discuss the day of meetings ahead. Thanks to technology, I have the ease of running a global business from anywhere in the world. I never turn my phone off in case of an emergency or an opportunity that needs to be addressed – my colleagues know I'm available 24/7. (In Kenya last summer though, where I travelled with my family for a ME to WE purpose driven trip, we had minimal wi-fi, so it was the first time in 25 years that I had an "out-of-office" message).



**7:00am** – Coffee in hand (with oat milk – I am trying a new gluten and dairy free regimen), I arrive at the LA office and pass by Uniworld and U by Uniworld's CEO, Ellen Bettridge, who is also always in early. I'm straight onto my emails. My view is that I'm there to support my team first and foremost – my responsibility is to respond, help, alleviate road blocks, provide additional resources, direction and recommendations, so that's where I focus my important responses.

**7:45am** – A quick call with my two amazing sisters, Toni and Vicki, to touch base and keep our very dynamic relationship strong and close. Toni is finishing off designs for two of our ships and a couple of our hotels with our mother and Vicki is working on some new marketing campaigns for the hotels.

**8:00am** – I scroll through the news of the day using Flipboard – an app that consolidates news feeds from a variety of publications. I also subscribe to the *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*; and many industry publications from around the world.



Brett and his family in Kenya





Brett and Ellen Bettridge

**9:00am** – I share updates with our staff using a program called Yammer which we use internally to communicate – a great tool to keep all the regions connected across brands and time zones. I've just posted a reminder that the deadline is coming up for submissions for our Chairman's Award, where members of our team get to win \$150,000.

**9:15am** – Time for a conference call with Ulla Hefel Böhler, the CEO of Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold and her global marketing director, Joanna Duncan. We're developing a new video and looking at ways to market this.

I speak to our global leaders on a weekly basis and every two months we have a group call with our executive committee of 20. We use Skype for Business – great both from a cost and collaboration standpoint.

Calls are scheduled well in advance, across the day and sometimes into the evening (though not when I am at home – only 100 days a year – family time is very precious).

**10:15am** – I check in every day with our chairman (and my father), who is such a visionary and wise man. His guidance and direction is always so valuable, and every day we speak about various opportunities, trends and issues to address around the business.

**10:30am** – Ellen joins me in my office to plan the upcoming gathering of 500 of our onboard teams for Uniworld and U to discuss what's new in our culinary offering and the year ahead. We're also planning on putting in place elegant new uniform designs across all the fleet.

**11:00am** – I work with my EA to plan and book my travel up to a year out to get the best fares, as well as organise my trips around what's important each market, such as travel expos in Australia twice a year.

**11:30am** – Conference call with the board of our TreadRight Foundation, to discuss the latest project we've just launched – the use of Anatolian dogs to protect the almost extinct Cape Leopard in South Africa.

**12:00pm** – I'm speaking with Neil Rodgers, the MD for Adventure World, on how they can better message and sell the three purpose driven ME to WE trips on their website (we.org) to support this fantastic charity.

**12:30pm** – On occasion, I have lunch meetings in LA, but otherwise I eat on-the-go whilst planning out strategies and follow-up – such short and long-term opportunities and challenges. I also have a strategy team that looks at the market 5-10 years out.

**1:30pm** – I spend about 20% of my time on technology as it's so important for the long term success of any business today. I am currently discussing with our team a very large investment into a cutting edge new phone system, to provide better capability & more efficient service in our contact centres.



Brett and one of his dogs in the kitchen at home

**2:00pm** – A 30 minute call with one of our finance directors reviewing a couple of red flags to resolve in one of our businesses.

**2:30pm** – A quick call with the long-standing MD of Red Carnation Hotels, Jonathan Raggett, to discuss a marketing campaign we're bringing out around innovative new cocktails, with mixology classes at each hotel.

**3:00pm** – Invention and innovation are also important, whether it's in marketing, product, sales techniques or new service touches. Our chairman, my father, always taught me: "focus on selling our differences". Almost every day, I also have product/experience development discussions across the brands – the rest of the afternoon is filled with these executive discussions and conference calls.

**4:00pm to 6:30pm** – More emails and follow-up, including some welcome letters to new members of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC.org), a private-public forum to focus governments around the world on the value and importance of travel and tourism (I am the vice chair of membership).

**7:00pm** – Home is always family time – as I walk in I'm greeted by one of our adopted dogs (we have four) and I catch up with each of our three kids on how their day was.

It's important we all have a reasonably good work-life balance and I'm as disciplined as I can be on this, being away from home so much. So I always schedule family time into my calendar – I book family holidays as early as I do business travels and keep many special family and school events in my diary (I do need to get much better at this though).

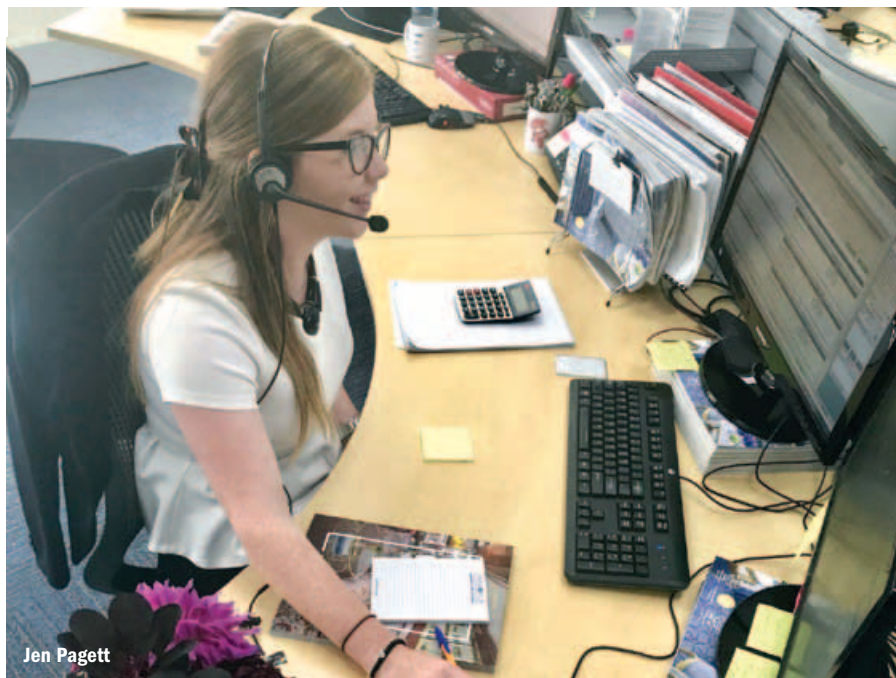
**7:30pm** – I love cooking. In my spare time I read up on foodie magazines, am always buying cook books and watch the Food Network to get new ideas. Tonight, I'm cooking with the smoker outside and have made a few different salads, having visited the farmers' market in Santa Monica over the weekend (how lucky are we) and picked lettuces from our small veggie garden.

**8:00pm** – It's dinner time. We don't have any mobile phone activity during this time. (I do keep my phone on for emergencies, but there is no social media at the dining table!)

**10:30pm** – I check in on emails quickly and respond to anything pressing, before I go to bed and allow myself 5-6 hours of sleep. (I love sleeping at home with our four dogs and my wife cuddled up together! That's the best luxury of all for me).



## Jen Pagett, Reservations & Direct Sales Uniworld & U by Uniworld



Jen Pagett

**7:00am** – I'm almost always in a rush in the mornings, I try to leave as early as I can to beat the Sydney traffic. I quickly eat my toast before I head out the door to pick up Lina Trimarchi, Uniworld's trade marketing executive. We sit in bumper to bumper traffic for the next 45 minutes and chat about our day ahead.

**8:30am** – We arrive at work and I prepare for my day. I check over emails that have come through overnight from our global team and respond to some of the urgent customer

queries. I also write myself a to-do list as there is nothing more satisfying than crossing something off!

**10:00am** – Today I get to sit in on a meeting with our TTC PR team who have all been busy prepping for our upcoming events surrounding Uniworld's 2019 global launch across Australia. TTC and my MD, Fiona Dalton, are supportive of us learning about different aspects of the business, it allows me to understand the marketing and PR side of things, and as I'm in the beginning stages of my career, I'm so appreciative of this opportunity.

**11:00am** – Today we have our team monthly catch up with Pedro Stanic (Uniworld's contact centre manager) and Monique Guy (Uniworld's sales executive) where we discuss all the ways we are going to improve our business – drive more business for the brands and make things more seamless for our guests and travel agents.

**12:00pm** – I go and grab lunch up the road at Bondi Junction Westfield with Zoe Dean, our consumer marketing executive, overlooking the water of course. We eat in the sunshine and enjoy just a few moments of peace and quiet before I go back on the phones.

**1:00pm** – Back at my desk and I send out some quotes and respond to emails. I also call a few passengers and agents to let them know that we only have a couple of cabins left on the departure they're interested in, and advise it is best to book now rather than later. I also speak to a guest who has booked her first trip with Uniworld – she and her husband are very excited as they'll also be meeting their grandchild for the first time in London prior to their journey with us! It's these little stories from guests that delight and inspire me each day.

**2:30pm** – It's time to prepare for our Melbourne Flight Centre Expo and I catch up with Tiffany Burgess, our inside sales executive. I'll be representing both Uniworld and U by Uniworld at the expo and I'm excited to set up our amazing booths that won Best Booth in Show at both the Brisbane and Sydney expos. We run through our current offers available as well as everything I need to take with me down to Melbourne.



Meeting with Tiffany

**5:00pm** – Our Global CEO, Brett Tollman is in Sydney and today he addresses everyone at TTC on the company's current initiatives as well as plans for the future. It's an open forum where we're able to ask him questions regarding the business, he's very open and honest with us. Afterwards we join him for a social event where he presents a few long-service awards, and I can network and catch up with my colleagues across the brands.

**7:00pm** – I head home as I still need to pack for Melbourne and go to bed! Tomorrow is going to be a good, busy day at the expo and I can't wait!



PR Meeting

## Jody Grossfeldt Head of Guest Experiences AAT Kings & Inspiring Journeys



**4.45am** – Rise and shine. I head out the door and drive five minutes to the gym for my 5am HIIT class. I try to get to the gym most days as this helps get focused for the day ahead.

**6.15am** – Shower, get dressed and am now ready to tackle the day. I wake my children as we need to leave the house by 6.45am. It's a busy time in the morning, bags packed, hair done, jump in the car and we're on our way!

**6.45am** – Travel time to school is only five minutes so it's a quick drop, kiss goodbye at before school care ahead of my commute to our Alexandria office. My morning drive time can vary from half an hour to two hours – I need to ensure I am always on the road by 7.

**8.00am** – Have made it in an hour, fantastic! Check my emails, check meeting schedule, quick office chat and the day has begun.

**9.00am** – The first of my weekly catch ups with our Sydney operations manager to discuss our upcoming travel director training session which will be held in NZ. We love planning this annual event where we get all of our travel directors together to discuss the year that's been and the year ahead. A week of work that involves fun activities such as zip lining in Rotorua, team building goal sessions, voice techniques and overall product improvements. The wheels are in motion as we prepare everything for this.

**10.00am** – Chat to drivers and ops team re an upcoming project. We plan on shooting something exciting – lights, camera, action!

**10.25am** – Continue with my development plan for our award-winning Ayers Rock BBQ – we are working on making this unforgettable experience even better. I start looking for new table centre pieces, lighting, clapping sticks – tiny touches that we pride ourselves on.

**12.00pm** – Uber arrives and we are on our way to the studio. A short drive and we are ready for our five minutes of fame!

**12.15pm** – This is very exciting, we meet the production team to discuss the concept. Under the bright lights we get ready to shoot. Props in place, outfits on, ready to go! Take 1... Take 2. Take 3, 4, 5. There are lots of laughs – on take 6 we nail it, after a fun filled few hours. Our guests are going to love it.

**2.15pm** – Quick lunch with the team to thank them for their help. I really enjoy the chance for some downtime and spend time with the team out of the office after a busy morning.



**3.00pm** – Last meeting for the day. This afternoon is all about Inspiring Journeys. We're in a very exciting development phase with Inspiring Journeys, our boutique brand offering small group experiences around Australia and NZ. I sit down with our two key product managers to discuss proposed new itineraries and regions – working out the routes, look at potential accommodation and inclusions as a starting point. These will now be taken by the team to develop further.

**5.00pm** – Quick phone call from my children. Home safely from school and ready for the after school activities. My 10-year old tells me he is ready for cricket and that I need to pick him up at 7pm. This is one of the usual after school activities between my four children, aged 10, eight and six-year old twins.

**5.05pm** – Quick look at emails, respond to anything urgent, check messages, clean desk.

**5.30pm** – Home time. Drive home takes a little longer than expected due to an accident on the motorway, but this gives me a chance to call our Northern Territory manager.

**6.55pm** – Arrive at my son's cricket training to pick him up. While I wait, check phone and emails that have come through on my drive home. With the time difference in many of the regions where we operate, a number of emails come through around this time.

**7.15pm** – Arrive home, cook dinner. An easy dinner tonight, chicken salad – one that we will all eat! Put on some washing, check the kids' homework, sign permission notes for the swimming carnival, make sandwiches... my second job is well and truly underway!

**8.00pm** – Kids' bedtime. I jump into my twin daughters' room and read them a quick story, then lights out. My two sons are happy to read before lights out.

**8.15pm** – I head out for my evening walk. Each night I try to walk at least 5-6km. This is a way I clear my head and my time for myself.

**9.10pm** – Hang out the washing, clean up, do the dishes. I am one of those people who cannot leave anything not done before I head to bed. Then I can head to bed knowing that we are all organised to start a new day.

**9.45pm** – Jump into bed, grab my Kindle. I'm in the middle of reading a very good Barbara Freethy book. I usually only get a few pages in before I fall asleep but it helps me relax after a busy day.



## Matt Cameron-Smith Managing Director, Trafalgar

**5:30am** – As soon as I wake I check the prior day's sales and make a cup of tea. If I get the chance (which is not often enough) I grab a quick surf before work, at Manly Beach. However if there are no waves then I'll go for a run instead along the coastline – I like to stay active and have a hit of fresh air to get the endorphins going.

**6:30am** – I leave the house once I've had a chance to say good morning to my three kids, help get them ready for school and have breakfast. I'll drive our younger two to school a few times a week if I can – this means I'll leave a little later but I really enjoy spending the quality time with them in the morning. Once I've dropped them off I'm listening to either KIIS or Smooth FM, depending on my mood.



**7:30am** – I grab some breakfast from the local café in Bondi Junction. We're spoilt for choice here but I normally head to About Life and go straight to the office and check my schedule of the day ahead and run through emails.

**8:00am** – I make my rounds through the office saying hi to the team and set aside time to discuss the prior day, what is ahead for today and the rest of the week. We've gone out with 100% departures for some trips through Europe and Hawaii, so it's important to ensure everyone from marketing to digital and PR are all on the same page with messaging and roll out of the campaign.

**9:30am** – Now it's time for the first (and only) coffee of the day as I launch into either internal or external meetings – this can range from meeting with marketing partners to our

finance team or other teams in the business. I've been known to be dragged into a photo shoot from time to time! We like to give these shoots a voice and make it personable with familiar faces in the industry to push our key message.

**12.30pm** – Lunch is usually eaten "el desko"... at my desk... The afternoon is filled with meetings and a performance review with the team. We tend to do a lot of "start, stop, continue" thinking to ensure we stay nimble and forward thinking. The needs of our partners and the business change often and we always want to be a step ahead.



**3:00pm** – I present the winner of the peer nominated #OneTribe Award – It's a monthly initiative to recognise outstanding achievements and to praise individuals in our team. Staff nominate who they think deserves to win a \$100 voucher which is to be spent on our motto of living The Good Life. We all enjoy snacks for an afternoon fix... then it's back to emails.



Matthew Cameron-Smith

**4:00pm** – I'm often in an Uber on my way to the domestic airport, which could be a flight anywhere interstate to ensure I'm ready to hit the ground running the following day. I do around 6-8 international trips per year so I might even be heading to Europe late evening which means a Skype call with the family then off to the airport! In which case I like to unwind on the plane with a text book as I'm currently studying for my MBA.

**7:00pm** – As for dinner... that could be at 30,000 feet or for a home cooked meal with the family. My favourite dish is usually a BBQ and cooking is a great way to unwind. I'll usually have a red wine at dinner but right now I'm on 90 days without wine so I can only dream about it. I have at least two conference calls with our Geneva office per week and that tends to be around 8pm after which is one last check of emails then if home, I ensure more time with the family before trying to get a reasonably early night.

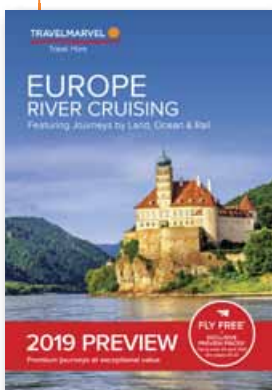




CLUB Med has introduced its 2018 brochure which includes both sun and snow resorts in the one handy guide. The brochure has been designed specifically with agents in mind and includes more detailed information on all the company's resorts and services, with useful maps and tips. New for this year are the snow resorts of Tomamu in Japan and Grand Massif Samoëns in France, and Club Med's Sicilian sun resort in Cefalù, Italy.



SUNLOVER Holidays recently launched its 2018-19 Sunshine Coast & Brisbane brochure offering a range of new accommodation options in Brisbane, including Fortitude Valley options. Also new for the 2018 brochure is a range of accommodation and self-drive choices showcasing south-east Queensland. Additional properties are included for the Fraser Coast plus new tour options for attractions such as the Sirromet Winery in Brisbane and an extended glamping experience in Noosa.



NEW hop-on hop-off tours have debuted in Travelmarvel's 2019 Europe River Cruising Preview brochure. The company is extending its coastal and expedition cruise products to include Iceland, Baltic Sea, the Scottish Isles and the fjords of Norway in 2019. The program also showcases fresh refurbishments across Travelmarvel's European Gems river ships. The operator has contracted MS *Rossia* to cruise the waterways of Russia in 2019, offering tours from 12 to 20 days throughout the region.



CORAL Expeditions has released the very first brochure for its newest expedition ship, the *Coral Adventurer*. The vessel's maiden voyage is an 18-night sailing from Singapore to Darwin, departing on 24 Apr 2019 and follow in the footsteps of the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman. The *Coral Adventurer* will also operate the regular Kimberley season between Broome and Darwin before cruising into the Gulf of Carpentaria exploring Cape York, Arnhem Land, New Guinea, the Spice Islands and Raja Ampat.



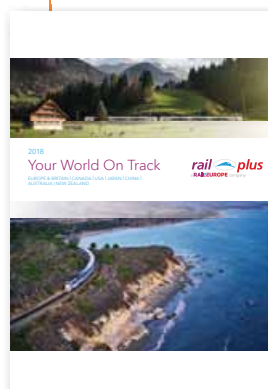
QANTAS Holidays has released its brand new 2018-19 Weddings & Honeymoons brochure featuring a range of romantic packages couples taking the plunge. Itineraries include beach wedding experiences in Fiji, clifftop ceremonies in Bali, and ceremonies set to the serenity of Thailand's tropical gardens. The brochure makes claim to showcasing some of the most idyllic locations in the world for weddings, with clients also able to choose from one of Qantas' Special Getaway packages on offer for a romantic honeymoon escape.



SKIMAX'S new 2018 ski brochure for the Southern Hemisphere packs in a range of extra incentives to take a trip to the snowfields, including a bunch of early bird offers, profiles on accommodation, lift pass info, and features on adventure activities in Australia, New Zealand and South America. The program supplies useful stats and facts on each destination offered, such as terrain, lifts, facilities and information on the elevation, the best ski areas and terrain parks.



ADVENTURE World has released its second tailor-made USA Collection. The program has a focus on wildlife, the wilderness and cultural experiences in the lesser explored regions of the USA. The tour operator supplies prospective travellers with a number of itineraries including a maritime expedition in New England, taking the Beartooth Highway through Montana and Wyoming and exploring some of America's most famous national parks such as Yellowstone.



RAIL Plus has redesigned its latest brochure to make it easier for travellers to navigate, with an extended array of maps and planning tools included. This year the train specialist wholesaler is offering European tours taking in some of the continent's most iconic railroads. To coincide with the launch of the new program, Rail Plus is running a competition for agents that includes a number of goodie bags, gift vouchers and Europe rail passes.

# YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

**O**UR greatest asset is our staff. That's the claim by many successful organisations. I worked for a global company that said "the customer comes second, our people come first."

Similar ideals are spoken by Richard Branson and look at how successful most of his businesses have been.

So, if we are to look after our staff how do we do this? There are many factors that can affect how we retain our staff and also attract the best talent out there. Here are a few pointers.

## 360 DEGREE PERSONAL REVIEWS

I am not a fan of such evaluations. A boss, peer or colleague may have a grudge or is scared of saying the truth. It is necessary to have some form of measuring an employee's performance, however I haven't seen many of these solutions provide realistic outcomes.

## CULTURE

Managers can ruin a workplace with poor communication skills and the inability to 'lead & motivate'. Does your business have a culture? It can be difficult to describe what your company has as its DNA – try to get your team to explain what it means to them. Are you proud of the culture? If not, then start changing it today!

“

Managers can ruin a workplace with poor communications skills and the inability to 'lead & motivate'

”

## MONEY MATTERS

90%+ of people work because they have to and the salary package can entice people to move or stay! Added value like gym memberships, days off on your birthday and Friday dress down can play a part in the overall culture and 'feel good factor' of a business. Have you asked your team what they would like to see as an added value to their workplace?

## OPPORTUNITIES AND SECURITY

Totally different things can motivate members of your team. Know what they value. Find out who needs to feel their job is secure and ensure they are always made to feel appreciated. For the team member looking for career development make sure they are made aware of all different roles & pathways within the business – don't force them into one area, e.g. reservations, when they could have aspirations to be in IT.

## TECHNOLOGY

There are numerous tasks your company is doing today that will not be around in 2-5 years. Don't let your business change because you have to, make the changes sooner rather than later. Show your team you are forward thinking, market leading and make them proud to be part of your team.

## BE HONEST

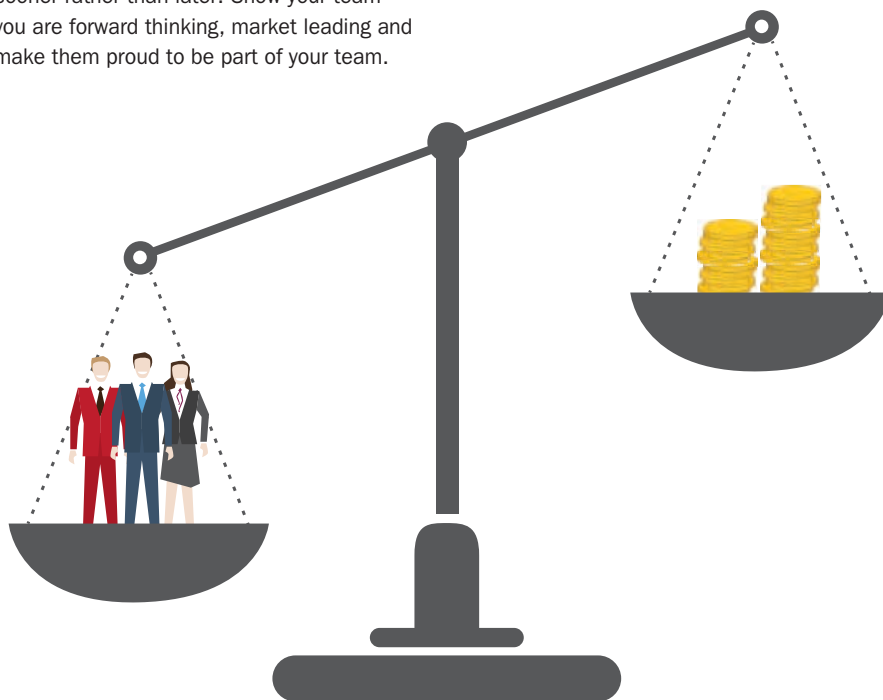
If the news is bad then make sure the team hear it from you. Don't let rumours become the communication method in your company. Deliver it using skills like 'the sandwich selling' method.

Your asset today will define your success tomorrow.

“

Show your team you are forward thinking, market leading and make them proud to be part of your team

”



Richard Saava is the director of Changing Times, and has led a boutique travel company to become the largest independent travel management company in Australia. With over 30 years' travel industry experience, he now acts as mentor, business coach, subject matter expert & facilitator for the travel industry including corporate, airlines and hotels. Get in touch with him at [hello@changingtimes.net.au](mailto:hello@changingtimes.net.au) or visit [www.changingtimes.net.au](http://www.changingtimes.net.au).



# PLAN TO SUCCEED

IT'S inevitable that people leave employers and when a senior executive of a business leaves, be it hastily or planned, there remains a critical gap that needs to be filled.

Companies, no matter how big or small, can make such changes to their business relatively smooth by putting into place a succession plan. Failing to do so compounds uncertainty both from staff and external stakeholders including suppliers and customers. Business competitors may also see this as an opportunity to exploit.

Succession planning needn't be overly complex. It boils down to identifying who within a company are the future leaders and ensuring that they are given opportunities through business exposure and training to develop themselves. This means they will be ready when the time comes to step up.

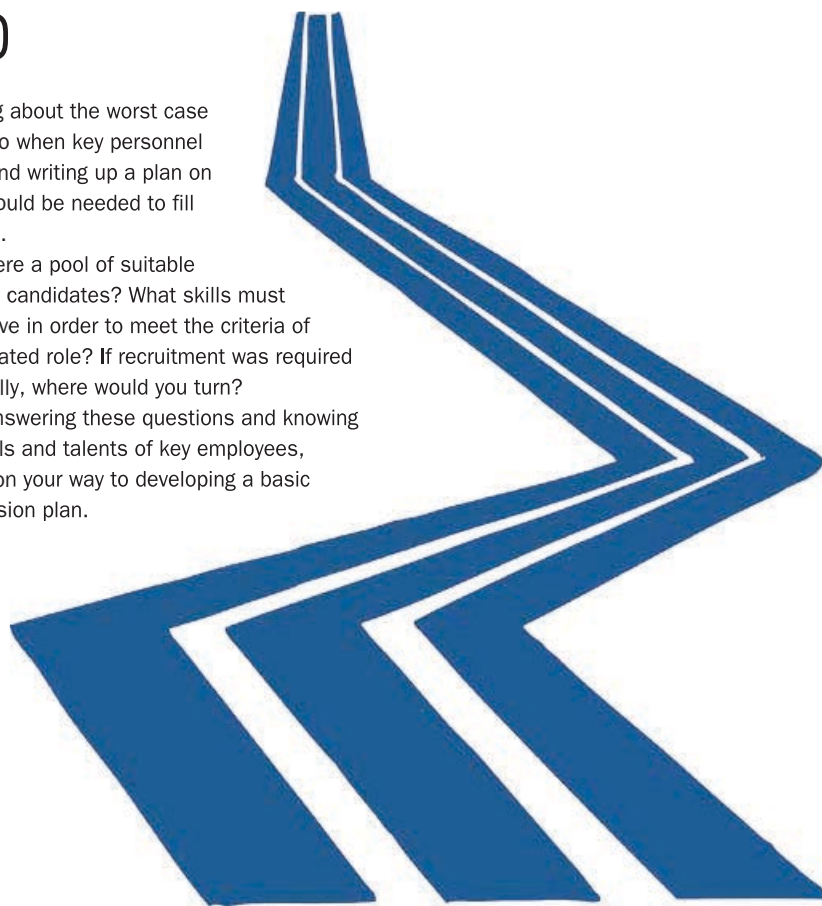
Not got a succession plan in place? According to a 2017 Nationwide Survey three in five small businesses do not have a business succession plan in place.

A good place to start can be found at **business.gov.au** where a step-by-step guide provides practical tips on how to navigate the succession path. It can be as simple as

thinking about the worst case scenario when key personnel leave and writing up a plan on what would be needed to fill the gap.

Is there a pool of suitable internal candidates? What skills must they have in order to meet the criteria of the vacated role? If recruitment was required externally, where would you turn?

By answering these questions and knowing the skills and talents of key employees, you're on your way to developing a basic succession plan.



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# CAREER IN FOCUS

## ROSLYN HAKIM

**Travel Manager,  
Orbit World Travel**



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

I have been in my current position as an independent consultant with my own client portfolio for the past 14 years. I'm a specialist in luxury travel. Prior to that I ran my own travel agency.

### **2. How did you start out in your career? Were you always destined to work in the travel industry?**

I started my career with Qantas in Johannesburg, when they commenced flying the Boeing 707s on the Wallaby Route (between Australia and South Africa). I was in charge of handling reservations and airport VIPs. The whole experience got me completely hooked on the travel industry and I decided from then on that there was nothing else in the world that I would rather do.

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

When I started in the travel industry there were no formal qualifications to complete. All of your training happened on the job. I have always really valued education though and I started with a public relations diploma and attended many training courses whilst working for Qantas. Later as a commercial sales representative with Air France, working in both Sydney and Paris, I continued to take up any training that they offered.

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

I love that my position puts me in contact with such a diverse range of people from all walks of life. I love being able to pass on my extensive destination knowledge and life experiences to clients and colleagues. My life

“  
Try and travel  
extensively so you are  
able to offer clients what  
the internet cannot –  
personal experience  
”

has been so enriched by the many wonderful people, clients and suppliers that I have met throughout my career. I have also been greatly blessed to be able to be involved on the committee of the Gold Dinner – the signature fundraiser for the Sydney Children's Hospital through one of my clients. Through me, my wonderful and generous suppliers have shown so much support for this fantastic cause.

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

I have had many challenges in my career. The first was transitioning from an airline representative to a travel advisor, which I

did when I emigrated to Australia from South Africa. The second big challenge I faced was when I owned my own travel agency. My business partner decided to leave to open her own business, but she also enticed some key staff to follow her. That was definitely a hard time to work through.

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

I think that my extensive experience and in-depth knowledge of destinations is what has drawn clients to me and made me successful as a travel advisor. These days there is an overwhelming amount of information that is available to people when researching their travel on the internet. Clients want to come to an advisor who has been to where they are going.

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

All my mentoring happened on the job and through external sources, not one single person. That said, I do think that if I had my time over, and in a different time to when I was learning, I would most certainly have sought an external mentor.

### **8. What are the keys to good business?**

If you want to succeed in business, the best thing you can do is have integrity in all of your dealings, with clients, suppliers and loyal staff. The other thing I would suggest would be to keep constantly updating your knowledge in all areas.

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

These days our industry is more challenging than ever. You need to keep yourself up to date with industry trends. You should try and travel extensively so you are able to offer clients what the internet cannot – personal experience. Finally, think outside the box and above all, keep a good sense of humour.





## ATPCO PURCHASES ROUTEHAPPY

LAST month's acquisition of Routehappy by airline data platform ATPCO (Airline Tariff Publishing Company) reflects the ongoing demand for ever-richer content in flight distribution. ATPCO technology underpins much traditional GDS fare content, with the company managing more than 170 million fares for 430 airlines in 160 countries and serving as a "neutral partner" for airlines, travel agencies, search engines, global distribution systems and governments across the globe.

Routehappy, which was founded in 2011, offers a "Scores & Amenities API" which provides flight scores and cabin amenity data including aircraft, seat, layout, entertainment, wi-fi, power, fresh food and relative duration. Data provided by Routehappy is used by more than 65 customers across the travel industry including Sabre, Google and Expedia, which display the information alongside fares with the aim of increasing conversion, yield and customer satisfaction for both airlines and distributors.

Intriguingly, ATPCO said the acquisition would mean that Routehappy's four rich content types

– Scores, Amenities, UPAs (Universal Product Attributes) and UTAs (Universal Ticket Attributes) – would "become an industry standard to rapidly accelerate the adoption of rich content". ATPCO CEO Rolf Purzer said the deal would drive strategic innovation, reduces complexity and delivers economics for the entire distribution ecosystem. "By aligning Routehappy's complementary rich content with ATPCO's fare and pricing data, airlines can ensure consistent and differentiated offerings for their products in every sales channel," he said.

“  
By aligning Routehappy's complementary rich content with ATPCO's fare and pricing data, airlines can ensure consistent and differentiated offerings for their products in every sales channel

”

Rolf Purzer, CEO ATPCO

Shortly after the acquisition was announced a further deal with Amadeus was unveiled, which will see Routehappy airline rich content integrated with the Amadeus GDS. Routehappy CEO Robert Albert noted that the company was platform, channel and delivery agnostic, "so our Amadeus partnership is a huge step forward in reaching distribution ubiquity for airlines".

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Christchurch Centre Victoria Square view

## NEW ZEALAND LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

NEW Zealand is on the up, with two of its largest cities currently undergoing mammoth construction projects that will see a huge increase in MICE capacity and capabilities.

The country's largest city, Auckland, and the South Island's biggest city, Christchurch, are both set to receive brand new convention centres in the next two years.

Convention & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) chief executive Sue Sullivan said, "Our two largest cities, Auckland and Christchurch, are well underway with new convention centres, designed for the 21st century, both with easy air access, putting us high on the consideration list for Australian and international conference organisers."

The key project is the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC). Set to open in 2019, the venue will have the ability to accommodate conferences of approximately

3,000 delegates across 32,500m<sup>2</sup> of space.

Facilities include 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of space with elevated views for banquet style settings, and a dedicated plenary theatre that can be configured in either banquet or theatre settings for 2,850 people. The centre will also have 8,100m<sup>2</sup> of trade floor space and 2,700m<sup>2</sup> of breakout areas.

Sullivan said Auckland's success in the business events sector was key to the success of business events throughout the country, "particularly as we lead to the opening of the NZICC".

"The city is emerging as a knowledge capital of the Asia Pacific region and the NZICC is perfectly placed to leverage this," she said.

To attract high-profile, high-value events in the lead up to the NZICC's opening, Auckland will promote its key strengths within the commercial services sector and knowledge services.

On the South Island, the new NZ\$475 million Christchurch Convention Centre, set to open in 2020, will replace the previous venue demolished after the 2011 earthquake.

The new facility will have a 3,600m<sup>2</sup> exhibition hall which can hold over 200 exhibition booths, as well as a tiered auditorium that can hold 1,400 people or can be divided into two 700 capacity conference halls. For break outs, there will be 14 interconnected meeting rooms of various sizes and a banquet hall with seating for 1,250.

ChristchurchNZ Convention Bureau manager Claire Hector-Taylor said the new centre would span two blocks of prime land overlooking the Otakaro Avon River.

"The design of the Centre reflects the fluid curves of the South Island's braided rivers, and complements the green spaces, heritage square and gardens surrounding it," she said.

## NEW ZEALAND SPRUIKS ITS DIFFERENCE

SPREAD out over two islands, New Zealand has a lot to offer for events of all shapes and sizes, from conferences to incentives. It is this diversity that Convention & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) is touting as it promotes the land of the long white cloud as a business events destination with a difference to key markets such as Australia.

CINZ chief executive Sue Sullivan said the country's warm welcome couldn't be replicated anywhere else.

"Along with superb new infrastructure in idyllic locations, our professional approach and our unique cultural identity make us easy to do business with," she said. "We are seen as a safe and secure destination,

another drawcard."

Sullivan says the destination's winning style was to "bring the outside inside".

"This includes our food, wine, art, style of hosting, architecture and furnishings," she said. "Our venues tell a story and they are billboards for our country."

CINZ will promote its difference through the upcoming CINZ MEETINGS in May. Held at the ABS Showgrounds in Auckland on 30-31 May, the event is expected to attract 220 hosted buyers – including 90 from Australia – along with 195 exhibitors and 500 buyers.



Waiheke Island, Auckland (© Chris McLennan, Tourism NZ)



## Aus set for good year ahead

OVER 40% of Australian event companies expect to see strong growth of up to 10% in their operating profit, according to the 20th Global Exhibition Barometer by The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI). The report shows Australia to be one of the most optimistic business event markets.

Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) chief executive Joyce DiMascio said the report highlighted a strong year ahead for the local sector as she welcomed Australia's inclusion in the survey for the first time. "Suppliers are very positive about 2018 with a wide-range of new shows to be launched across new industry sectors," she said.

The report showed 29% of Australian MICE businesses reported the state of the economy to be the most important issue facing the industry, followed by 26% concerned with competition from within the sector.

## Events to shape policy

THE Federal Government has appointed key members from the business events sector to help shape future tourism policy as part of the Beyond Tourism 2020 Steering Committee. The Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) president Karen Bolinger and AEG Ogden chief executive Harvey Lister have both been appointed to the committee.

AACB CEO Andrew Hiebl said, "the AACB has played a leading role in advocating to Federal Government on behalf of the business events industry, identifying and addressing issues and opportunities for industry recognition and growth".

Appointments were made by Minister for Tourism and Trade Steven Ciobo.

## ETG Staging Connections unveils rebrand

CHINA-BASED technology and event staging company ETG Staging Connections has announced a rebrand and will now be known as Encore Event Technologies. The president of parent company Freeman Audio Visual, Ken Sanders, said the Encore name reflected the current landscape and would help the outfit achieve future success.

The company said Encore's new chapter would appeal to current and new clients in Australia and across the globe.



## TTNQ VIEW

Rosie Douglas, Director Sales & Marketing – Events, TTNQ

## CAIRNS UNDERGOING A RENAISSANCE

ALMOST \$1 billion worth of investment is transforming the city of Cairns, which over the coming three years will see the opening of three new hotels, a global tourism hub, including the expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre, a water front brewery and a performing arts precinct. Crystalbrook Collection has three hotels currently under construction, and in a break from tradition, each property is named as a sibling of the Crystalbrook family. Riley, Cairns' newest 5-star hotel, boasts a sophisticated character with a playful outlook on life and a passion for the resort lifestyle. Featuring 311 rooms overlooking the Cairns Esplanade, and meeting space for up to 400, this property will open in September. Bailey, the thoughtful arty hotel will open with 220 rooms in mid 2019. Flynn, the wild child, will ooze fun and energy and will come to life in 2020. These three hotels will add another 840 rooms to the Cairns CBD.

The Queensland government has committed \$176m (over two years from 2018-19) towards the expansion and refurbishment of the Cairns Convention Centre, following the consideration of a business case. This expansion will see an additional 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space, a new plenary hall and meeting rooms.

The global tourism hub (also known as an integrated resort development), located immediately opposite the Convention Centre will be a high quality, mixed use destination venue aimed at providing tourism, leisure and entertainment facilities that appeal to a broad demographic. The development will reflect world's best practice in tropical design,

drawing from international concepts such as Gardens by the Bay in Singapore.

Hemingway's Brewery, also located on the Cairns Waterfront will open in June. Beers, freshly brewed on site, will complement a menu boasting fresh local produce. It will also add another offsite venue to the city and will be a great addition for welcome functions and informal dinners.

Cairns Airport is the lifeblood of the city and we are very excited about new routes that have opened up for Asia. China Southern and Hainan Airlines commenced flights in December 2017 adding another 40,000 seats into Cairns. This combined with Silk Air going to five services a week, gives us great connectivity not only to and from Asia, but also into Europe and beyond.

“  
Cairns Airport is the  
lifeblood of the city and  
we are very excited  
about new routes that  
have opened up for Asia  
”

This is a very exciting time to be living in Cairns. In a world that is constantly moving, we are continually complimented on our ability to deliver world class events in a very relaxed, hassle free environment. While this new infrastructure will see some physical changes to our city, nothing will change in how we service the growing number of national and international visitors.



business events news

- 15 Jan** Tasmania welcomes growth
- 18 Jan** Brisbane takes incentive focus
- 18 Jan** NSW tops events list
- 22 Jan** MCEC on track for opening
- 25 Jan** New leader at helm of ACC

## HEADLINES JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018

- 29 Jan** Marriott cuts events comm
- 01 Feb** ETG staging debuts rebrand
- 07 Feb** Australia set for good year
- 07 Feb** MEA awards close
- 14 Feb** AIME set for a bumper year

## CRYSTAL COOKS UP NEW LEVELS OF LUXURY

WHEN Crystal Cruises began planning a revamp for *Crystal Symphony*, work started in the kitchen.

A multi-million dollar makeover has resulted in a new configuration and an entire deck of luxury Penthouses, creating larger accommodation while reducing the overall capacity of the ship. And although attaining new levels of luxury was high on the agenda, it was the logistics around dining that drove the most significant changes and resulted in a ship that carries fewer passengers while tending to them with the same number of crew.

"We started with the open seating dining," said Crystal's new president and chief executive officer Tom Wolber while in Australia last month, during *Crystal Symphony's* first visit since the revamp.

"We were the last luxury line to stick to fixed seating times – an early and a late seating – which then dictates your entertainment... it restricts," he said.

"What people in the luxury segment really want to do is get what they want, when they

want it."

The result is a ship with a capacity for up to 848 guests, featuring an entire deck of 12 Seabreeze Penthouse Suites and 28 Seabreeze Penthouses, each with its own verandah and butler service.

The main dining room has been relaunched as Waterside under the new open-seating concept and is backed by a succession of other dining options including a stylish new Asian restaurant, Silk, a daytime buffet, Marketplace, and a Brazilian steak-house, Churrascaria. The ship's high-end Nobu restaurant remains, updated and renamed Nobu Umi Uma, while an Italian restaurant, Prego, continues to offer a fine dining option.

The model will be repeated aboard sister ship *Crystal Serenity*, which enters dry dock later this year to undergo a similar transformation.

Having announced new ventures in areas including expedition cruises, luxury yachts, river cruising and luxury air charters, Wolber, who took over from high-profile predecessor Edie Rodriguez in September, said the

company's attention was now returning to its ocean-going origins.

"We've done a lot of things that kind of took away a little bit of the focus from the blue water cruising," he said. "So now we're refocussing back on what really was the bread and butter of the business."

Wolber acknowledged change had brought "growing pain" and that travel industry feedback would be used to address hiccups.

"The travel trade is very important to us, so that will be a very big focus over the next year."

But despite any growing pains, Crystal Cruises has achieved huge success in the Australian market, where it established a dedicated office just over a year ago.

Wolber said Australian bookings in 2017 had been double those of the previous year, and that he expected further double-digit growth in the year ahead.

"We've always been very excited about Australia, because the Australian luxury traveller is a very good match for the Crystal brand," Wolber said.



Seabreeze Penthouse



Silk restaurant



## Uniworld continues evolution

AUSTRALIAN travel agents were the first in the world to see the 2019 Uniworld Boutique River Cruises brochure, with a lavish launch in Sydney presided over by the brand's CEO Ellen Bettridge last month. Bettridge said the new program aimed to continue differentiating the Uniworld product from its competitors, with an array of new itineraries as well as ship transformations, new land extensions and the addition of the Sanctuary *Yangzi Explorer* in China.

"We are committed to two things: delivering to our guests the best, most luxurious river cruise experience in the world, and providing our partners with the tools and training to share

this extraordinary experience with their clients," Bettridge said. The 2019 program includes the newly renovated Super Ship S.S. *Beatrice* which will launch next month, as well as an interior renovation of the *River Royale* which operates in Bordeaux, France. Also new for all Uniworld itineraries in Russia, Asia and Egypt is the inclusion of onboard and onshore gratuities, as well as the expansion of the brand's all-inclusive onboard beverage program.

Bettridge and The Travel Corporation CEO Brett Tollman urged travel agents to consider which guests would suit the Uniworld product, with Tollman saying the brand is "not getting its fair share of the Australian market".





# VIKINGS STORM AUSTRALIA

LAST month saw the maiden visit of Viking Cruises' *Viking Sun* to Australian shores, providing a key opportunity for the local industry to experience the Viking ocean cruise product. The company pulled out all stops to celebrate the momentous occasion, taking hundreds of agents on board in various ports as well as hosting a sensational industry event at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art – complete with a tribe of Vikings and plenty of Nordic glamour. *Viking Sun* was undertaking her maiden world cruise from Miami to London, a 141-day sojourn taking in five continents, 35 countries and 64 ports.

*Viking Sun* carries just over 900 passengers in all-verandah staterooms, with a range of unique features including a glass-backed infinity pool and a spa complete with a Snow Grotto. Highlights of the Viking offering include a complimentary shore excursion in each port of call, unlimited free wi-fi, beverages with onboard lunch and dinner and 24-hour room service.

The visit saw a number of senior Viking executives take part in the celebrations, some visiting Australian shores for the first time, despite the company having had a local office since the mid-2000s. The unique Viking ocean product is seen as resonating strongly with the Australian market, and this is expected to see strong growth locally – and also further drive interest in Viking's extensive European river cruise offering which comprises more than 60 vessels. Momentum will continue to build throughout this year in the lead-up to the arrival of *Viking Orion*, the company's fifth ocean ship which will be homeported in Australasian waters for three months from December this year on a series of trans-Tasman cruises – further evidence of the global cruise industry's enduring confidence in the strength of the local cruise sector.

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# CARNIVAL AUSTRALIA UPSIZES PLANS

**Carnival Australia is powering into 2018, continuing a wave of recent announcements with the revelation it will increase Carnival Cruise Line's capacity by 66%. Jasmine O'Donoghue unpacks the stream of decisions, which saw Carnival Australia reshuffle its local fleet and promote Sture Myrmell to regional president, now leading the country's biggest cruise operations from the company's new HQ in Sydney's Chatswood.**

CARNIVAL Cruise Line will welcome *Carnival Splendor* into its local fleet in December 2019 and the ship will join *Carnival Spirit* in serving the region year-round, while *Carnival Legend* will part ways with the Australian market and stay in the United States in 2020.

The brand will maintain its deployment of two ships in local waters and its significant increase in capacity will come from replacing a smaller seasonal vessel with a larger year-round ship.

*Carnival Legend* accommodates 2,124-passengers and *Carnival Splendor* currently has capacity for 3,012 guests, but this will be increased to 3,900 berths before it arrives in Australia.

A 30-day bow-to-stern upgrade will see extra berths fitted on *Splendor* and many features from Carnival's "Funship 2.0" modernisation program added.

Jennifer Vandekreeke, vice president and general manager Australia of Carnival Cruise Line said the larger size of the ship allows more space for new features.

The company has locked in Guy's Burger Joint, Bluelguana Cantina, Bluelguana

Tequila Bar, RedFrog Rum Bar, RedFrog Pub, Bonsai Sushi and the Green Thunder Waterslide and Waterpark for the renovation, but it still assessing what other features would "really fit with this market".

*Carnival Splendor* will arrive in Australia on a repositioning voyage from Singapore and commence her year-round schedule from Sydney, primarily offering eight- to 10-day South Pacific cruises.

The vessel would likely also pick up Carnival's annual trip to New Zealand, and its Australian cruises to Queensland and Tasmania.

Vandekreeke said the decision to bring a fresh ship down under year-round signalled "a true commitment to the market" and credited the trade for helping Carnival Cruise Line carry over 800,000 Aussies since it launched in Australia just five years ago.

"We have been so delighted and honoured by the support we've had from the trade since we've arrived," she said.

"To imagine that we got here a little over five years ago and we've already had 800,000 Australians sail with us is just

crazy and the vast majority of them book through travel agents."

The news follows a series of adjustments in the Australian market, which started with the initial decision in April 2016 to allocate a 4,200-passenger newbuild to P&O Cruises.

By the end of the year, a market review prompted the company changed its course.

In December 2016 it was decided *Carnival Splendor* would head to P&O Cruises and the newbuild would join the Carnival Cruise Line fleet, but in September 2017 Carnival Australia revealed *Splendor* would stay with Carnival Cruise Line and P&O Cruises would instead receive Princess Cruises' *Golden Princess*.

Princess Cruises and Carnival Australia group president Jan Swartz told *travelBulletin* the market review concluded the 2,600-berth *Golden Princess* provided "greater itinerary flexibility with respect to especially the South Pacific cruises".

"As we assessed the needs of the market and the itinerary and guest experiences that make P&O Australia





special we felt that 2,600 berths were a great size for that brand,” she said.

Echoing Swartz, Carnival Cruise Line president Christine Duffy told *travelBulletin* the corporation “felt that the *Golden Princess* would be a ship better suited for P&O,” emphasising the move to “give them, as the national brand, an Ocean Medallion ship”.

Before entering the P&O Cruises fleet, *Golden Princess* will be decked out with Ocean Medallion technology and will introduce the offering to the brand when it joins in 2020.

Although utilising the same “cutting

“  
The principles of Ocean Medallion cruises will be the same but how it will support the guest experience will differ by brand based on the unique guest needs of that brand  
”

Jan Swartz, Princess Cruises and Carnival Australia group president

edge technology” which aims to “enhance the personalisation of the experience and reduce friction in the guest experience”, Swartz said the Ocean Medallion offering on P&O Cruises versus Princess Cruises will be “quite different”.

“The principles of Ocean Medallion cruises will be the same but how it will support the guest experience will differ by brand based on the unique guest needs of that brand,” she said.

Further change in the P&O Cruises brand is anticipated, with Myrmell last year confirming the fleet would be refreshed over time.

“There’s no secret that some of the P&O ships are getting towards the end of their lifespan and we need to replace them with newer, fresher, bigger, more efficient tonnage,” he told *travelBulletin*.

“There is no timeline for that set out, there’s no agreements at this point,” he said, explaining that it would likely follow a similar cycle to P&O’s program release, which is typically announced 18 months in advance.

In his newly expanded role into which he stepped in Dec last year, Myrmell said he plans to continue working on three main priorities.

He said the key to growing the business was working on infrastructure challenges

faced across Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Auckland.

The company is currently awaiting word from the ACCC on an agreement with the Brisbane Port Authority which would see it allocated almost a third of the berthing slots at the new Brisbane cruise terminal.

It was also involved in the cruise reference group which created a report to inform the NSW Government’s long-awaited decision on a solution to accommodate more cruise ships east of the bridge.

Another focus for Carnival Australia is to make sure the brands “continue to amaze our guests,” Myrmell said.

“The day we stop amazing our guests is the day we start going backwards and certainly we would not continue growing.”

The third key point is getting the right people on the right ship at the right time, a goal which Myrmell said agents are crucially important for.

“If we’re saying that the key to our success is to get the right people on the right ship at the right time, then our travel agent partners are the ones that are putting them there.”

Bookings for *Carnival Splendor*’s 2019 sailings open this month and reservations for 2020 cruises will open in May/June this year.



## P&O UK receives newbuild

P&O Cruises UK will receive a second newbuild, after its parent company Carnival Corporation signed a deal with shipbuilder Meyer Werft. Set to join the fleet in 2022, the new vessel will have capacity for 5,200 passengers and will be the sister ship to another newbuild to join the P&O UK fleet in 2020. At 180,000 gross tonnes, the new cruise ship will be the largest to be specifically built for the British market.

P&O's new vessel will be powered by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) both while in port and at sea, reducing air emissions. The addition is part of Carnival's agreement with German and Finnish shipbuilders Meyer Werft and Meyer Turku to build eight LNG-powered ships by 2022 for its various brands.

## Aurora's "Aussie stamp"

AURORA Expeditions has plans to put an Australian stamp on an entire industry" with the debut of its newbuild in Oct 2019.

The 80-passenger vessel will be the first passenger vessel to debut Ulstein's X-bow, which will provide greater stability and speed in rough seas, which it will put to good use when crossing the Drake Passage.

The ship will be named the *Greg Mortimer* after Aurora's co-founder, and will be able to accommodate more than double the number of guests of the 50-passenger *Polar Pioneer* which Aurora Expeditions currently charters for its polar cruises.

"Building a new ship, the first of its type as passenger vessel in the world, is a big deal for a little Australian company and so that's inordinately exciting," Mortimer said.

## APT's new ship

THE newly built *Queen Eleganza* has been chartered by APT and its partner Noble Caledonia to sail in Croatia in 2019.

APT said it will offer adventures which incorporate coastal cruising with evening land trips using the 36-passenger vessel. The *Queen Eleganza* was designed to sail the Adriatic Sea and visit the small islands and coves unreachable by larger ships.

The vessel will be deployed on a full 2019 APT season after completing its maiden voyage with Noble Caledonia in the spring of 2018.



## CLIA VIEW

Joel Katz, managing director  
CLIA Australasia

## CRUISE TRAVEL TRENDS

EACH year CLIA publishes a study on attitudes, behaviours and travel preferences of cruisers and non-cruisers. While primarily based on US data, the report is equally relevant here and offers valuable insight to how and why cruise holidays are on the rise. The study confirms that cruise travel continues to break down income and generational barriers proving that today there is a cruise for every travel preference, style, and budget.

This year, the study found almost all income brackets are cruising. The report also reveals a new generation of luxury travellers has emerged. Millennials are seeking out luxury cruises at a record pace with almost a quarter surveyed having sailed on a luxury cruise line within the past three years.

**MILLENNIAL NUMBERS RISE:** The percent of Millennials who "definitely will" book a cruise for their next trip increased to 70 percent this year.

**FRIENDSHIP:** The study reports a significant number of cruisers traveling in groups. In fact, travellers who take a cruise are more likely to travel with friends, partners/companions, or children than land-based peers.

**CRUISING ACROSS INCOMES:** Income plays little role when choosing cruise as a holiday option.

**HIGH SATISFACTION = LOYAL CRUISERS:** Cruisers are loyal to cruising. In fact, more than half of cruisers believe a cruise is the best type of holiday. They find high satisfaction in both river cruises and ocean

cruises. Nine out of 10 say they "probably or definitely will" cruise again.

**KIDS ARE JUST THE HOOK:** While around 41 percent of cruisers say they are interested in childcare services, including babysitting, and programs for children and teens, a much smaller percentage are reporting that they use these services.

**DESTINATION SNACKING:** Cruisers see cruising as a great way to sample different destinations and cities for future holidays. Millennials are inherent samplers and love to try new things before committing. They are increasingly likely to return to destinations visited first via a cruise. Indeed, all ages (except Gen X) show a greater likelihood of returning to a destination visited on a cruise.

**AGENTS PROPEL CRUISERS:** Travel agents are the most likely influencers of holiday-planning and decision-making for cruisers, who are twice as likely to use a travel agent when booking a holiday than non-cruisers.

This last finding is critical, and the reason it is essential that travel agents are equipped to capture the continued consumer interest in cruising.

Being endorsed by CLIA, the cruise industry body, as a specialist in your field will deliver a significant advantage in your local efforts to capture market share.

If you are not a CLIA member and don't have accredited staff, join CLIA to make the most of CLIA's Online Learning Academy.

Find out more about membership and accreditation at [www.cruising.org.au](http://www.cruising.org.au)

## CRUISE WEEKLY

- 23 Jan** Aurora newbuild bookings open
- 23 Jan** Scenic 2019 preview
- 25 Jan** Finalists for the CLIAAs announced
- 25 Jan** APT deploys new ship
- 30 Jan** Another P&O UK newbuild order
- 30 Jan** Cartoon Network ship
- 01 Feb** Carnival Aus plots 2018 growth

## HEADLINES JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2018

- 06 Feb** Scenic announces second *Eclipse*
- 06 Feb** Peregrine Sth East Asia
- 08 Feb** *Splendor* to sail in Aus year-round
- 13 Feb** Viking Cruises' big debut in Sydney
- 13 Feb** Uniworld launches 2019 program
- 15 Feb** Dreamlines in talks with Cruise1st
- 15 Feb** New look *Pacific Jewel*



 **SILVERSEA**

# **SILVERSEA**

# **SUMMER 2019**

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# INDUSTRY IN FOCUS



Hawaii Tourism Oceania has appointed Giselle Radulovic as its new Australian chief. She's pictured right at the recent "Ohana update" with Chris Sadayasu from Hawaii Tourism Authority and Jacqui Walshe of The Walshe Group.



United Airlines hosted an event at Sydney's Australian Museum last month, showcasing the huge array of onward destinations connecting to its new Sydney-Houston non-stop flights.

The Hotel Connection recently invited top travel agents to a function in Sydney, showcasing its 'Luxury Collection' portfolio.



A contingent of itravel agents were among a VIP group of nearly 70 who experienced Hainan Island in China as part of a family coinciding with Hainan Airlines' new Sydney-Haikou service.



These lovely ladies were some of the agents who attended the launch of Uniworld's 2019 program in Sydney last month.





These agents were snapped with the team at the Bench Africa stand at the recent World Travel Expo in Sydney.



Viking Cruises hosted agents and travel partners onboard Viking Sun, when the ship made it's inaugural visit to Sydney.



These inbound and outbound supplier partners were hosted by Helloworld at a recent function where they also introduced John Constable, the new group GM of retail and commercial.



These smiling agents were part of a TravelManagers faml to France where they experienced a six day Back-Roads Touring Barge Cruise.



A great mix of learning and wine tasting was on the cards for these trade partners at OzFocus South Australia's event held in the Barossa Valley last month.



# BERLIN CALLING

By Amanda Woods

**T**HERE are some cities in Europe that make you feel like you have stepped back in time. Berlin is not one of those cities. When you walk around Berlin there's a distinct feeling of being in the now with one excited eye on the future. But that's not to say they are trying to forget the past.

Rather than hide the darker side of its history, Berlin has museums and monuments to acknowledge the worst of days that happened on its streets.

The Jewish Museum is full of emotional and powerful exhibitions, with architecture that includes 1.6m tall voids to represent the Jews missing from German society, while the Berlin Wall Memorial and the Berlin Wall Historical Mile provide a permanent reminder of when

families were torn apart overnight. Here visitors can still see an original section of the wall and a remaining guard tower in what was known as the 'death strip'. But not all of Berlin's museums have such a haunting side.

In fact with around 180 museums and galleries, it's said Berlin has more museums than rainy days, and a day of museum hopping can take visitors from seeing Nefertiti's bust at the Neues Museum to iconic fashion photos at the Helmut Newton Foundation. Culture vultures can pick up a Berlin Museum Pass (€29 adults, €14.50 concessions) for admission to more than 30 museums and galleries for three consecutive days.

While Berlin can feel like a relatively small city when you're visiting, it is in fact huge. Geographically it's roughly nine times bigger than Paris and around the same size as Bangkok, though Berlin's population of

3.7 million is less than half of Bangkok's 8 million plus.

One of the things I love most about Berlin is how its parks don't only provide beautiful breathing spaces but have a life of their own.

With around a third of the city covered by parks and waterways, Berlin is one of the greenest cities in Europe, and no visit is complete without spending an afternoon in the Tiergarten. This 210-hectare park borders major sites including the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz, and is where you can relax in a beer garden as you watch people rowing boats or simply go for long walks breathing in the fresh air. And while you're under those huge Tiergarten trees, take a moment to marvel at how well the park recovered after almost every tree was cut down during the Second World War.

A park is also home to one of my favourite foodie experiences in Berlin. On summer







Brandenburg Gate



Berlin Spree Palace bridge



Jewish Memorial



Preußenpark, Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf

weekends Preußenpark in the heart of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf turns into Thai Park, an unofficial open-air market that has been bringing local Thai families and Thai food lovers together for more than 20 years. Bring a picnic rug with friends and take turns deciding which Thai street food to buy from hawkers cooking under multi coloured umbrellas.

The iconic department store KaDeWe is another top spot to eat, with around 150 chefs preparing food for 30 food bars, and more than 35,000 products to be found in Europe's biggest delicatessen.

Those travelling with children will find they're never too far from a great playground. Berlin has around 1,800 free ones that have taken over formerly vacant land, and each one has its own unique look. Children can have a ball playing in a witch or pirate themed park, whizzing along on zip lines and clambering over jungle gyms.

Meanwhile, if you're not travelling with children but love LEGO then there's some sad news. Only adults accompanied by a

“  
And for a tour with a difference, the Trabi Safari lets you hop in a two-stroke engine Trabant car and drive around Berlin in a piece of East German history  
”

child can enter LEGOLAND, where they can go on the Dragon Ride, play with the biggest LEGO Bricks Box in the world and create their own special LEGO bricks to take home.

When it comes to getting around the city, the merging of the former East and West Berlin public transport systems can mean a journey involves a few changes, but services are usually frequent. Tickets can be used on S-Bahn, U-Bahn, buses, trams and ferries but must be validated before use. And when only a taxi will do, the good news is Berlin taxis

are reasonably priced and clean.

If you're planning a day of sightseeing the Hop on Hop Off bus offers two city tours, a Traditional tour of all the major sights, and a Wall and Lifestyle tour which concentrates on the remains of the Berlin Wall and the districts around it.

Taking to the water is another great way to see the city, which has more bridges than Venice. Boat tours range from an hour along the Spree to longer four-hour trips that combine rivers and canals.

And for a tour with a difference, the Trabi Safari lets you hop in a two-stroke engine Trabant car and drive around Berlin in a piece of East German history. You can drive your own Trabi behind a lead car, but as they take some getting used to I recommend letting someone else do the driving so you can enjoy the views without worrying about stalling in traffic.

However you choose to get around, make sure you leave plenty of time to simply wander and explore Berlin's neighborhoods and to fall in love with this city like no other.



# STROLLING THROUGH SPANISH TRAILS

FOR active travellers who relish combining some cardio fitness with the virtues of rich cultural sightseeing, Spain and Portugal Travel Connection's new suite of walking tours traversing the many historical paths of Spain should be ideal.

The company's marketing manager, Mike Olivotto, told *tB* that taking in the surroundings in such a manner was the perfect way for Australians to truly appreciate the physical beauty Spain has to offer.

"There are many reasons Australians venture over to Spain, whether it's for the history, wine, food, art, museums, beach escapes, festivals...(these) are just the tip of the iceberg of what's on offer," Olivotto said.

"The interest and curiosity from Australians for Spain has continued to grow over the last few years."

One of the tour operator's most popular adventures is the Camino Mozarabe track, stretching 417km and lasting up to 20 nights (for those who stay on for the whole journey). The walk explores the region's Moorish architecture and follows in the footsteps of pilgrims who have historically journeyed from Grenada to the town of Merida. Along the way you can expect to wander through the olive groves alongside the Velillos River, investigate the history of the hilltop castle in Alcaudete, and marvel at the UNESCO World Heritage city of Cordoba, the former capital of the Islamic Emirate during the Muslim golden age.

Another route favoured by visitors is the 130km Ruta Del Cantabrico tour. This



10-night journey takes in largely coastal vantage points traversing the cliffs and beaches of the Cantabrian Sea. The trail commences in the seaside port of Ribadeo located in the Spanish province of Lugo in Galicia where walkers can view the many cathedrals and rocky sculptures carved out

by the sea along the way. From there the group makes its pilgrimage through the fishing village of Foz, home to the oldest cathedral in Spain, the Basilica of San Martin de Mondoñedo.

All walking tours include luggage transfers, accommodation and pilgrim passport.

## BENTOURS TURNS 40!

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## ITALY RETURNS TO SAY CIAO



Florence, Italy

ITALY has proven to be an increasingly attractive destination for many Australian travellers over the last 12 months as the nation, famed for its quality food and coffee, reacquaints itself with the sightseeing appetites of the local market.

Trafalgar was one operator quick to take advantage of this growth trajectory by recently offering 100% definite departures for its array of Italian itineraries.

"We are thrilled to be able to guarantee 100% definite departures now for Italy... we're giving our agent partners the toolkit for a stellar selling season as we strive for mutual success," said Trafalgar's managing director Matthew Cameron-Smith.

“  
We are thrilled to be able  
to guarantee 100% definite  
departures for Italy...  
we're giving our agent  
partners the toolkit for a  
stellar selling season...  
”

One of the popular itineraries Trafalgar has on offer is its Wonders of Italy package, an 11-day trip that takes travellers through the iconic Italian attractions such as The Colosseum and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, before making its way to the artistic mecca of Florence to take in the masterpieces of Michelangelo and Da Vinci. The trip includes

buffet breakfast daily, transport and accommodation and is priced from \$3,214 per person.

Another operator trumpeting the virtues of Italy is Insight Vacations' Luxury Gold brand which has two specialist Italian itineraries available. The 21-day La Serenissima package employs all appealing modes of travel on this trip, taking travellers by cruise, rail and road through all the hidden gems of the Italian peninsula. Diversity is clearly at the forefront here – one day adventurers find themselves making pasta in Bologna and on another they are slowly drifting down a canal on board a gondola absorbing the tranquillity of Venice. Prices start from \$12,734 per person twin share.

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## IN FLIGHT

### Etihad Airways - First class

#### The plane

Boeing 777-300ER flying Frankfurt to Dubai

#### The seat

The First class suite on Etihad Airways' 777 aircraft is not the latest and greatest product which has been rolled out on the carrier's latest 787 and A380 aircraft – but you'd be hard pressed to find fault with it. Each seat in the First class cabin provides a haven of privacy, with a sliding door which can be closed when you want some alone time. The seats are arranged in a 1-2-1 configuration and couples travelling together can select the inner suites to sit together. Of course the seats recline to a fully flat bed, but when not snoozing they are wide and comfortable with a large TV and ottoman. There is lots of room to spread out, with a large table and also a side bench ideal for a laptop – and even a mini bar complete with snacks – not that you really need them given the highly attentive crew.

#### Entertainment

A large flat screen at the end of the suite is controlled from a hand-held device which sits in a compartment alongside all of the connections for USB devices, power and so forth. Noise-cancelling headphones are provided. The IFE content is the same throughout the aircraft and included a good selection of old favourites alongside new release blockbusters.

#### Service and food

You would always expect First class service to be exceptional, and this was definitely the case on this flight. The crew were friendly and professional, with several flight attendants introducing themselves and explaining the features of the cabin and the flight service. Etihad offers a full a-la-carte meal service in first class, with a menu of high quality dishes as well as options allowing passengers to design their own dish from a selection of "signature grills" and side dishes.

## STOCKHOLM: EUROPE'S MUSEUM MECCA

STOCKHOLM is a city bursting with culture. Not surprisingly then, it is also gifted with more than 100 museums, attracting millions of visitors every year.

Arguably at the top of the list of attractions to check out is The Vasa Museum, the most frequented museum in Scandinavia. The Vasa is home to the excellently preserved Vasa war ship, the world's only preserved 17th century boat. The 69m vessel sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and was salvaged 333 years later in 1961. There are ten different exhibitions on show in the museum, all attempting to convey what life was like on board before its fateful voyage.

Another popular location is the Moderna Museet which contains a stellar collection of European art from the twentieth century, featuring works by artists including Picasso, Dali, Derkert and Matisse. Just as big an attraction is the location of the museum itself, situated on the picturesque Skeppsholmen Island and housed within



Moderna Museet Malmö, Åsa Lundén

a building that was designed by Spanish architect Rafael Moneo.

For a complete change of pace, visitors to Stockholm should also check out ABBA The Museum. As you can imagine, this attraction is filled to the brim with ABBA memorabilia

such as stage outfits, instruments, gold records and awards. However, perhaps setting it apart from other pop museums are its interactive installations, allowing visitors to sing, dance, mix music and try out virtual stage outfits with the iconic Swedish group.



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#### CRUISE TOUR

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\*TERMS & CONDITIONS: All fares shown are Australian Dollars, per person, based on twin occupancy and include bonus saving discount. Fares include pre and/or post hotel stays as detailed for each itinerary, gratuities & port taxes (correct as of 5 February 2018). Cancelled bookings are subject to cancellation penalties as per the terms and conditions. All Cruise Tour & Fly Free offers are capacity controlled and can be withdrawn or modified at any time without notice. \*FLY FREE offer is subject to availability. Airfare is economy class and based on specific airlines, routing and class. Valid for flights to/from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane Adelaide & Perth. \*BONUS US\$300 on-board credit per person. All on-board transactions are valued in USD. This offer is non-transferable, non-refundable and has no cash value. Pre & post hotel accommodation & transfers from airport/port/hotel offered on dates specified on itinerary only, ask for details. Travel agent service fees not included. Voyages to Antiquity reserve the right to change, correct errors, withdraw from sale any or all fares, itineraries, excursions & fees. For full terms & conditions visit [www.voyagestoantiquity.com.au](http://www.voyagestoantiquity.com.au) or call 02 9959 1345.



# HIGH FLIGHT PRICES DISAPPEAR INTO FINNAIR

FOR those Aussies hankering to witness the dazzling celestial show of the Northern Lights, Finnair has made that dream a step closer to reality via a new promotion that is offering cheap flights to a range of popular European destinations.

The carrier is currently running its Reindeer Route special which boasts round-the-world Economy flights from \$1,460 per person. Some of the listed cities available on the ticket include Helsinki, Amsterdam, Budapest, Frankfurt and Rome.

Business Class RTW fares are priced from \$5,140pp with prices varying depending on the choice of stopover. Sale ends 16 March and applies to departures scheduled before 14 December, 2018.



## WHY EVERYONE IS FALLING IN LOVE WITH CROATIA

THERE is good reason some tour operators have described Croatia as the “it” girl of Europe, with the emerging Balkan nation achieving record tourism growth last year.

The country notched up more than 100 million overnight stays in 2017, constituting a significant bump of 12% on the previous year. And it appears Croatia is not content with merely resting on its laurels either, with the nation’s tourism minister, Gari Cappelli, recently predicting a similar rise in visitors for 2018.

Outside of the pleasing numbers, Croatia has also racked up some important tourism cred, scoring a number two ranking in the 2018 *Virtuoso Luxe Report’s* list of emerging destinations and a top 10 finish in *Traveller’s Choice Top Destinations on the Rise* awards.

So, what’s all the fuss about?

The sheer volume of unspoilt natural diversity on display in Croatia really answers that question. Most of the tourism activity is concentrated on the Adriatic coast, with seaside resort towns such as Opatija and Rovinj proving most popular with tourists. Its coast more broadly is blessed with numerous pristine marine reserves and more than a 100 Blue Flag beaches.

The local industry has moved quickly to respond to the upturn in interest from Aussie tourists, with many operators launching new itineraries or beefing up capacity on existing offerings to cater for growth.

Utracks currently offers tours of Croatia’s amazing chain of islands via a combination of cruising and cycling. The eight-day trip traverses the islands of Korcula, Hvar and

Brac, and between cycling jaunts allows time to soak up the ambience of the region’s many seaside towns and swim on its pristine beaches. Packages are priced from US\$1,590 (A\$2,017).

For those wanting more of a fact-finding feel, Eastern Euro Tours has a five-day Adriatic Highlights tour which takes travellers through some of the country’s most important cultural sites priced from \$925 per person. The adventure includes sightseeing around the UNESCO city of Dubrovnik, taking in the Franciscan Monastery with Europe’s third oldest pharmacy, the Rector’s Palace and the Cathedral. Later in the itinerary travellers can investigate Croatia’s oldest continuously inhabited city of Zadar bursting with Romanesque architecture.



# EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISES ENJOY GROWTH

AS THE demand for European river cruises continue to rise, many local tour operators are rolling out new itineraries in what has become an increasingly competitive space, striving to attract the Australian cruise dollar.

Following the success of its Active Discovery on Danube package, Avalon Waterways has recently introduced an eight-day Active Discovery on the Rhone itinerary. This latest cruise adventure traverses the Rhone delta of Southern France as well as taking on some land tours such as cycling around the Camargue Regional National

Park and canoeing through the canyons of the stunning Gorges de l'Ardeche.

Scenic recently celebrated the launch of its 2019 Europe River Cruise program by offering a range of early bird specials which include flights for only \$995 per person when a booking is made for a Balcony Suite on any cruise of 11 days or more. The flight must depart between April and September 2019 and represents a saving of up to \$2,165 per person. Another incentive Scenic has on offer is to upgrade to Business class from \$3,995 per person

when booking a Diamond Deck suite on selected cruises of 15 days or more departing in March, October or November.

Meanwhile, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection has boosted its capacity by adding a fifth Super Ship to its fleet of floating boutique hotels. In April this year, the *River Beatrice* will be transformed into the *S.S. Beatrice* after an extensive bow-to-stern renovation. The major refurbishment will see new dining venues added, redesigned lounge, and an overhauled look to make the ship's aesthetic look more vibrant.

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# LUXURY HOTELS



Hotel Santa Caterina ~ Amalfi, Italy

Tucked away between the dramatic cliffs of the quaint Italian town of Amalfi, the 66-suite Hotel Santa Caterina – Amalfi exemplifies the iconic chic of Italian living. Boasting the charms of late 19th century liberty villa architecture, this luxury property cloaks itself in its floral surrounds of draping bougainvillea. Guests can use private lifts to access exclusive beaches and wander through the coastal villages along the Amalfi coast. Further comforts include two restaurants with panoramic sea views and a range of bars where you can sample the local home-made lemon liqueurs or famous Italian espressos.

The Lanesborough - London, England

What was once the St George's Hospital when it originally opened its doors in 1733 is now the Oetker Collection's 93-room Lanesborough Hotel in London, an establishment that represents quintessential English elegance. Offering the touches you would expect Queen Elizabeth II herself enjoys, The Lanesborough provides guests with a dedicated round-the-clock butler service, a cigar and Cognac lounge called The Garden Room, and an award-winning afternoon tea service. The hotel completed a multimillion dollar refurbishment in 2015.



Four Seasons Gresham Palace – Budapest, Hungary



Offering amazing views of the hills of Buda and the Danube river, The Four Seasons Gresham Palace – Budapest impresses with its vast array of luxury services on show for guests, including first-class gym facilities complete with personal trainers, lavish treatment rooms and in-room Nespresso machines. When the 179-room hotel opened in 2004, The Four Seasons famously recruited many elite Hungarian sportspeople as staff so they could emphasise the teamwork needed to achieve the highest excellence in service.





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# ROAD TRIPPING NEW

By Jenny Piper

LOVE the USA. It is a place of great diversity, from its people and regions to some of the world's most amazing landscapes, and nothing beats a good old road trip to see the sights and meet the locals. I have always wanted to discover the New England region on the East Coast and what better time to do it than in autumn – to see the 'Fall Foliage'.

New England is a collection of six states – Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. All of them are within easy driving distance from Boston and even New York. Each state has its own unique charm and are all well worth a visit. We headed out from New York, but Boston is also a great starting point for a round trip.

## RHODE ISLAND

The smallest of all the states in the USA, one of its most famous towns is Newport. We stopped for lunch, but you could spend a few days here exploring this glamorous coastal town, with its yacht filled harbour, which has played host to the America's Cup sailing many times and the 'Gilded Mansions' built in the late 1800's as the summer homes of the nation's wealthiest families.

## MASSACHUSETTS

This state is home to the Cape Cod region known for its beautiful beaches, coastal communities and the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. If visiting in late autumn you can see the cranberry harvest at one of the cranberry bogs.

Massachusetts is a state filled with history and there are so many places to stop and take it in. See the rock where the pilgrims landed in Plymouth, or discover more about the witchcraft trials in Salem. Spend time in Boston for more American history. A tour of the 'Freedom Trail' in the city gives a great insight into the American revolution, plus it's also a great city to wander or cycle around with all its different neighbourhoods.

## MAINE

Heading north along the east coast you end up in Maine, known for its spectacular rocky coastline and nature areas. Dotted with numerous lighthouses, lobster shacks and sandy beaches this is a state that deserves some attention. Make sure to try a famous lobster roll at any of the quaint coastal villages such as Camden or Rockport. Or stay in Kennebunkport, with its ship building roots, in one of the historic inns. Visit some of the galleries, souvenir shops and sample some of the great cuisine on offer. Detour a few minutes out of town to see the 'Bush compound' summer home for the Bush family. The secret service detail has been known to queue at the Clam Shack for the lobster rolls – voted the best in the USA!



# ENGLAND

Then head further north to Bar Harbor, which although a bit of a drive (400km from Boston), is a must on a visit to Maine. Located on Mount Desert Island, this town is the base for exploring the magnificent Acadia National Park. The park is spread over a massive 46,000 acres with miles of shoreline and hiking trails to explore. There are also over 70km of carriage ways to cycle or walk. While in Bar Harbor hop on the Lulu Lobster boat for a sightseeing tour and lobster fishing demonstration, and get to handle some freshly caught lobster. Bar Harbor is also a stop for many cruise ships so the town has plethora of shops and eateries to explore. Lobster is on every menu and definitely worth sampling.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

From the coast we headed inland to New Hampshire and the magnificent White Mountains, the highest mountain range in the north east. A drive through this area gives you a chance to see the fall foliage at its best and maybe even spot a moose! We spent some time exploring Franconia Notch State Park, walking into the Flume Gorge with its waterfalls and covered bridges, and taking the Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway for spectacular panoramic views. En-route south we stopped at Polar Caves Park where you can explore nine caves formed as granite boulders were dropped by the movement of a glacier in the last ice age.

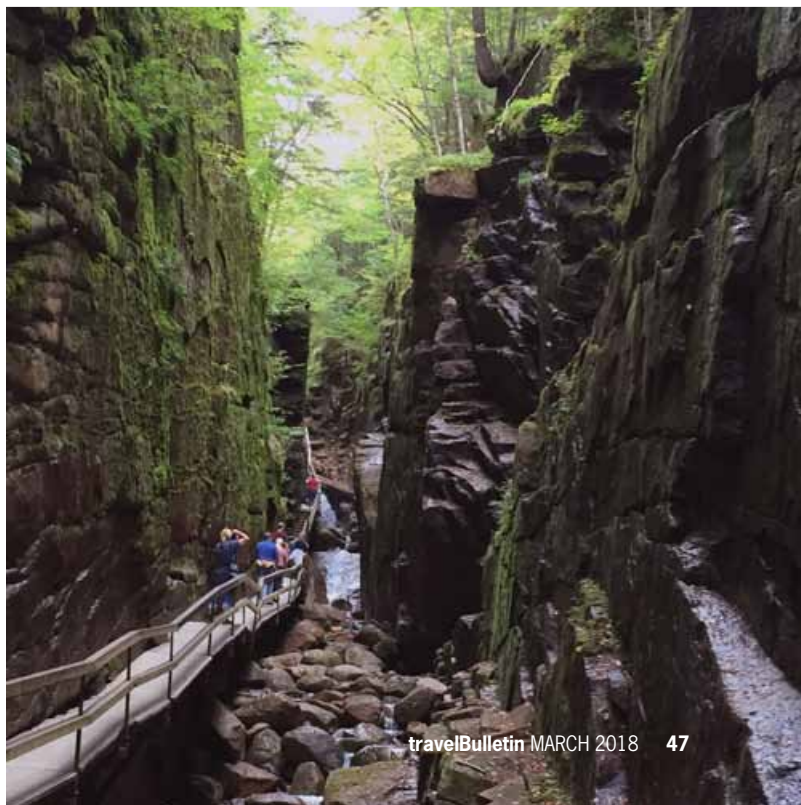
Continuing south you hit the Lakes Region of New Hampshire – with over 273 lakes and ponds there is too much to see and do on a road trip! This is a place worth returning to. In summer the area is filled with visitors and city dwellers escaping to their lakeside cabins or mansions - while in winter the region is completely transformed as lakes freeze solid and only a few locals remain. Explore local towns and villages, try wine at Hermit Woods – locally produced from various fruits and berries found in New Hampshire, rather than grapes. Go hiking on one of the many trails throughout the area, or visit Squam Lakes Natural Science Centre. This education centre and zoo focuses on New Hampshire's natural world with fascinating exhibits and a chance to see many of the animals native to NH such as the mountain lion, black bear and the bald eagle.

## VERMONT

Like its neighbour New Hampshire, this is a state filled with natural beauty. With mountains and forests to explore it's worth a visit at any time of year. Go skiing in Stowe, or see Vermont's rural heritage and try local produce in quaint historic villages such as Woodstock. Leave the main roads behind and go in search of some of Vermont's 100 covered bridges.

We took about 10 days to tour New England, covering over 1,500km of some of the most picturesque, peaceful and beautiful places I've seen. Many places seemed like they were straight out of a fairytale and I'm wondering already – when can I return?

## DRIVE





# HITTING THE ROAD IN AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE



ELECTRIC cars have made the move into hire vehicles, providing travellers with an environmentally friendly motoring option.

Europcar swept up the title as being the first major car rental company to offer a fleet of electric vehicles and has this year extended availability of the e-Golf from Auckland and Christchurch to now include Wellington. The expansion gives travellers the chance test out the experience of driving the vehicles, but it's important to make clients aware of the different driving habits necessary.

When hiring electric vehicles, travellers need to be conscious a number of things.

**A CAR'S REAL DRIVING RANGE CAPABILITY** – even though it may show 292 kilometres at the start of the journey, this range does not take into consideration the terrain of the roads. Terrain such as hills can drastically impact on the driving range.

**CHARGING TIME** – Depending on the range left, cars take approximately 35 to 45 minutes to fully charge at a fast charge station.

Charging via a standard plug socket can take up to 18 hours. Most stations only have one fast charge station per location, which needs to be accounted for when planning a journey, especially if there is another car on charge when a traveller arrives.

**LOCATING AND USING A CHARGING STATION**

– PlugShare is a great app for locating all charge stations. Ensure clients know to check in when arriving at a PlugShare and check out when finished, so other electric vehicle drivers can see if a car is on charge. Although a car may be finished charging, the charging plug cannot be removed while the car is locked.

**FORWARD PLANNING** – Due to limited mobile phone reception and availability in certain areas, forward planning is vital. Travellers should be aware of the availability of charging stations and their speed well before arriving in their destination or waypoint.

## GET BEHIND THE WHEEL - OR HANDLEBARS

ONE of the greatest attractions of a drive holiday is the flexibility to spend as much, or as little time in one place and zip off at any moment, so it's no surprise that the holiday habits and styles of travellers on a drive holiday vary greatly. Infinity Holidays has pinned down three fresh trends to watch out for.

**The hub & spoke:** Instead of racking up the kilometres venturing from one destination to the next, many travellers are opting to base themselves in one place and use the car to explore the area. This is especially popular in places like Tuscany and the south of France.

**Rail & Road combos:** Bundling road travel with rail can allow travellers to escape city congestion and get on the open road quicker. This is popular on routes

such as from London to Bath. Rail can also be used to knock off a long stretch of travel, after which travellers can pick up a car to "hub & spoke".

**Motorcycle hire:** There's no reason drive travel needs to be restricted to four wheels. Adventurous clients may jump at the opportunity to hire a motorcycle and cruise into Las Vegas on a Harley.





## DriveAway debuts motorhome rentals online

DRIVEAWAY Holidays has released a new online booking platform for motorhomes to meet a rise in demand for homes on wheels. The operator says this will allow agents to get real time quotes, with live pricing and availability as well as the ability to add extras at the time of booking.

DriveAway managing director Chris Hamill said the platform was one of many initiatives to be released over early 2018.

"Motorhomes are a great opportunity for our industry partners to make some easy commission," he said. The provider has seen an increase of 18% in motorhome collections for Australian travellers over the last year.

DriveAway has arrangements with 17 suppliers of motorhomes in 32 countries.



© Tourism New Zealand

## DRIVING INTO THE SUNSHINE

QUEENSLAND'S Sunshine Coast is looking to capitalise on the ever-growing drive holiday market with the launch of a new campaign by Visit Sunshine Coast. The tourist office is working in conjunction with local tourism organisations and chambers of commerce to launch the second phase of the 'Come to life' marketing campaign, targeting the surrounding drive market in south east Queensland.

The campaign, which will wrap up by the end of the month, features many well-known regions along the Sunshine Coast including Caloundra, Kawana, Eumundi, Coolumb, Maroochydore, Mooloolaba and the Hinterland. Phase two of the campaign includes seven new 15 second television commercials, a dedicated 30 minute episode on Channel 7's *Queensland Weekender* TV program, static and digital billboards throughout Brisbane metro, digital and social media placements and tourism offers redeemable until June 2018.

Visit Sunshine Coast CEO Simon Latchford said the marketing program was a great way to partner with sub-regional groups to increase destination awareness and encourage visitors for the surrounding drive market.

"While we are working to attract a balanced



Tourism Australia

mix of visitors from national and international markets, we recognise that a vast number of potential visitors are located within a 200km radius of the Sunshine Coast," he said.

Latchford added that the aim of the campaign was to emphasise the "well known 'naturally refreshing' strengths, but

also to highlight the area's lesser-known attractions and the incredible diversity of experiences available within the region".

To the year ending September 2017, the region attracted 3.4 million domestic overnight visitors, of which 2.5 million came from the intrastate market.

# UNIQUE PLACES TO STAY AROUND THE GLOBE

When it comes to hotels, the 'Beige Age' appears to be well and truly over, with boutique properties offering guests experiences they'll remember (and talk about) for a lifetime. For a holiday you'll never forget, skip the usual hotel chains and check into something a little out of the ordinary, recommends Dilvin Yasa.



## LEVIN IGLUT, LEVI, FINLAND

Ice hotels might be all the rage, but why sleep on a block of ice clad in a snowsuit, when you can drift off to sleep admiring the starry arctic sky from the comfort of an electrically heated igloo?

Located less than 10km from Finland's resort town of Levi, the luxury igloos of Levin Iglut ([leviniglut.net](http://leviniglut.net)) each feature air-conditioning, non-fogging glass, a small kitchen and bathroom, Wi-Fi and motorised, comfy beds which can be adjusted for optimal aurora viewing.

Open from the end of August until the end of April, guests can choose between the premium igloos built for couples, or the superior igloos which sleep two adults and two children comfortably.

## PALACIO DE SAL, POTOSI, BOLIVIA

Those with high blood pressure may want to avoid this 4,505m<sup>2</sup> hotel where nearly everything from the building itself to the furniture has been mortared using the only construction material available to them – good old fashioned salt from Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flat.

Sitting in a salt-moulded armchair or sleeping on a salty bed may not sound like the most comfortable thing in the world, but rest assured comfort is key within the 30-room, climate-controlled property, with (seasoning-free) plush blankets and pillows provided. And the views of the salt flat expanse from each hotel room window? They're nothing short of spectacular. Just pray it doesn't rain.



## SKYLodge ADVENTURE SUITES, SACRED VALLEY, PERU

It's not often you're expected to climb in and out of your hotel room dressed in a safety harness and hard hat, but at Skylodge Adventure Suites ([naturavive.com](http://naturavive.com)), it's both a necessity and a pleasure.

Clinging to a granite slope high above the Urabamba Valley (guests need to climb 400 metres of Via Ferrata to get to Skylodge), the 'suites' are essentially three aluminium and polycarbonate pods which are completely transparent, allowing guests to make the most of the sweeping, mountaintop view.

Each pod features a rather primitive toilet and all meals are transported via the backpack you'll be given before you set off for your pod.



## HÜTTENPALAST, BERLIN, GERMANY

For everyone who's ever wanted to camp without all that pesky nature stuff comes this unusual offering in the central Berlin district of Neukölln – a retro camping ground built within a former vacuum cleaner factory.

Whether you're up for a stay in a cosy caravan surrounded by potted plants, or you'd prefer a wooden cabin – complete with 'outdoor' picnic tables – Hüttenpalast ([huettenpalast.de](http://huettenpalast.de)) allows you to enjoy all the benefits of an outdoor lifestyle while remaining indoors.

And should you feel you do need a bit of a breather, the space does have an actual garden dotted with hammocks, swings and dining tables.



## JUMBO STAY, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Found yourself a few bob short of booking a first class suite on a long-distance flight? You can still have that 'sleep flat on a jumbo jet' experience with an overnight stay at Jumbo Jet, a retired Pan Am jet located at Stockholm's Arlanda Airport.

Extensively renovated post-retirement, Jumbo Stay ([jumbostay.com](http://jumbostay.com)) features a multitude of accommodation options, from hostel-style dorm beds to a luxury suite in the converted cockpit, as well as a café and bar.

Best of all, staff are dressed like flight attendants to give you that authentic 'up in the friendly skies' feeling, for next to nix.

## DAS PARK HOTEL, OTTENSHEIM, AUSTRIA

For everyone who feels their lives have truly gone down the crapper comes an opportunity to stay – and reflect on whether this is really the case – in renovated sewage pipes on the banks of the river Danube.

Continuing with the 'tiny spaces' trend made famous by the capsule hotels of Japan, Das Park Hotel ([dasparkhotel.net](http://dasparkhotel.net)) offers maximum comfort within a tiny space, with each pipe offering guests a double bed, storage, power and lights, blankets, sleeping bag and a 'pay what you can afford' system.

Open from May through to October, the experience is so popular with those seeking a cheap bolthole that a second Das Park Hotel has opened in Bottrop-Ebel, Germany.



© Dietmar Tollerian

© Pia Nordlander



## HOTELL UTTER INN, VÄSTERÅS, SWEDEN

When said in the correct tone, 'swimming with the fishes' can sound like a threat, but when it comes to travel speak – particularly when referring to this underwater hotel room located a short boat ride away from Västerås harbour in Lake Mälaren – it can be an experience to remember.

The brainchild of local artist Mikael Genberg, guests at Hotell Utter Inn ([visitvasteras.se](http://visitvasteras.se)) enter what appears to be a tiny Swedish cottage like any other, but then slip through a hatch door to descend three metres below the water's surface into the watertight bedroom where said scaly friends await just outside.

Open between April and October each year, Hotell Utter Inn has no electricity, but offers guests a portable gas heater, kitchen equipment and lighting.

## UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION

### A hidden dream

CRUISE ships come in all shapes and sizes, but each vessel has its own secret gems such as *Genting Dream's* little hidden oasis within the ship. Dubbed the Dream Palace, Genting Cruise Line's part boutique hotel, part private clubhouse is almost a different world than the rest of the ship. The suites are decked out with luxurious furniture and feature fine Italian bed linens, amenities & luxury bathrooms.

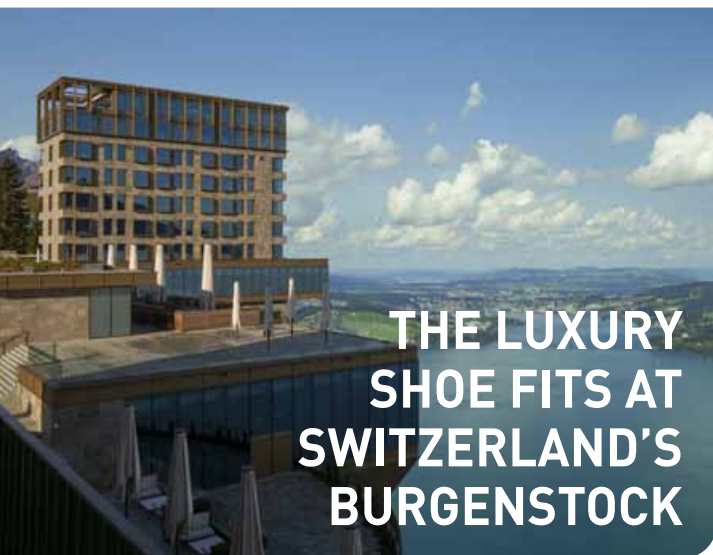
The "hotel" on the high seas also has those other sought after resort-like amenities including concierge, internet, private outdoor deck and pool, priority spa treatments, and a butler (who, Genting claims, will remember your favourite drink). The Dream Palace also has several exclusive restaurants and bars to enjoy the serenity.



## TRAVEL CORP TAKES A UNIQUE LOOK

AS MORE and more unique accommodation offerings emerge, The Travel Corporation has responded by adding special options across its brands. Trafalgar has several fascinating choices for guests including a stay at Las Casas de la Juderia in Seville, Spain. The hotel is a complex of 27 houses and is dubbed as a city within a city. Guests are treated to Moorish-style courtyards and buildings, including a former palace where Columbus' men stayed upon returning from America. Over in Ireland, travellers can stay at Ashford Castle. Situated on 350 acres, the 12th century castle has been partially restored as a hotel fit for royalty.

Over at Adventure World, guests are able to sleep out under the darkness of the South African sky. Arriving at sunset, travellers will be in for a magical night, sleeping outside at Lion Sands Game Reserve with only the milky way for light. The extraordinary experience is part of the African Romance itinerary.



### THE LUXURY SHOE FITS AT SWITZERLAND'S BURGENSTOCK

SWITZERLAND has just witnessed the largest hotel renovation project in its history with the Burgenstock Resort completed after an eight-year billion-dollar project. Perched 450 metres above Lake Lucerne, the wellness and spa resort is located an hour from Zurich and offers spectacular views.

The resort has taken advantage of its unique location, using the lake to heat 80% and cool 100% of the property by pumping the water from below. During the renovation, the Burgenstock Resort used 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of excavated dirt to recreate the site's historic 1928 golf course for guests. In all, the property has four hotels, a health & medical centre, 12 restaurants and bars, 67 residence suites, a 10,000m<sup>2</sup> alpine spa and a golf course.

Switzerland Tourism director Australia & New Zealand Mark Wettstein said wellness tourism was growing on average 5% a year in Switzerland and wasn't expected to slow anytime soon. "The powerful combination of the country's natural appeal sets the very foundation for its wellness offering. Coupled with health experts... more and more visitors are coming over for our highly beneficial and therapeutic health and wellness care, not just the ubiquitous basic pampering."



### Get to know your BDM

**Name:** Ann-Marie Chapman

**Title:** Head of Agency Sales, Abercrombie & Kent

**How long have you been working for A&K?** Coming up 13 years.

#### What is your favourite destination?

So many to choose from! Antarctica was the most extraordinary destination and experience, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to go. It would be closely followed by the Atacama Desert in Chile, Italy, Iran, Iceland and the Kimberley.

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

A&K specialises in creating the most extraordinary experiences around the world – even after 13 years, I'm still so proud of what our network of offices around the world bring together. I also get to work with an incredible team of people, and some amazing agents and suppliers at the discerning end of the market.

#### What destinations are on your bucket list?

Still a lot to go! Namibia is at the top of my wish list, closely followed by some Northern Lights action in Iceland or Norway.





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# Ethiopia

## a secret treasure



By Nina Karnikowski

**E**THIOPIA should be crawling with tourists. The home of coffee, the Queen of Sheba and the oldest known ancestor on the planet, Ethiopia is the only African nation to have escaped European colonialism, meaning it offers travellers a richness of culture that is unlike anywhere else on the continent. Yet for now Ethiopia remains a well-kept secret, which means you'll feel as though you have the country to yourself as you explore. From meeting the remote tribes of the Omo Valley in the south and dancing the night away in Ethiopian jazz clubs in Addis Ababa, to exploring the 900-year-old rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and hiking alongside gelada baboons and Ethiopian wolves in the Simien Mountains, Ethiopia is a country that will surprise and delight at every turn.

### ADDIS TO OMO

Your Ethiopian adventure will begin in the buzzing capital of Addis Ababa. If you've never listened to Ethiopian jazz before, do yourself a favour and check out Mulatu Astatke and Samuel Yirga, then make sure you time your Addis jaunt for a Saturday night. You can watch the city's best jazz musicians perform live at dozens of jazz clubs, including Mama's Kitchen, African Jazz Village and Fendika, then try some of Ethiopia's most tasty cuisine at Yod Abyssinia, which hosts nightly traditional music and dance shows.

For daytime adventures, visit the National Museum to meet 3.2 million-year-old Lucy, one of the oldest fossilized hominids on the planet, then head into the hills surrounding the city where you'll find the erstwhile palace of Emperor Menelik II, the founder of Addis Ababa. To refuel, grab a fortifying coffee at Tomoca, which many agree has been serving

the best coffee in the country since 1953.

A one-hour flight will have you leaping back in time, as you travel south to meet the decorated tribes of the Omo Valley. Meet the Hamar tribe with their coming-of-age bull jumping ceremonies, the Mursi people who wear clay plates in their lower lips as symbols of fertility, the Karo tribe with their intricate body painting and more. Peruse handicraft markets selling masks, tribal jewellery and pottery and explore grass hut villages, in one of the last places on earth where you can witness humanity at its most raw and untouched.

### CITY OF ANGELS

Legend has it that King Lalibela, emperor of Ethiopia during the late 12th and early 13th centuries, had angels help build his 11 monolithic rock-hewn churches in one night. Seeing these astonishing places of worship, which King Lalibela constructed with the aim





## GONDAR AND LAKE TANA

Home to six UNESCO-listed fairytale castles and a royal compound dating back to the 17th century, Gondar was Ethiopia's ancient capital. Each emperor who reigned here had to build their own castle, partly as a legacy, but also to confuse aggressors who wouldn't know which was occupied when they came to attack. You'll notice that each castle has its own specific architectural style, depending on where that emperor had travelled to, from Portugal, to India and beyond.

Less than a three-hour drive away you'll find Lake Tana, Ethiopia's



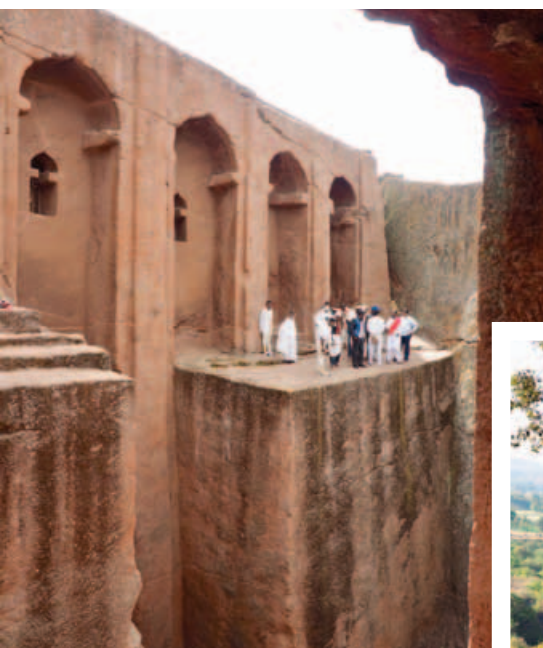
largest lake and one of the most tranquil places in the country. Head out on a morning boat trip to discover islands dotting the 73km long lake, many of which have churches and monasteries hidden on them. The lake is also home to hippos, crocs and pelicans, which you'll likely be able to spot from your boat.

And for an Ethiopian grand finale, there really is no better place than the Blue Nile Falls, part of the source of the Nile River. Standing at the base of this waterfall, feeling the intense power of nature, will be the perfect way to farewell this extraordinary, wild country.

of creating a "new Jerusalem", for the first time will have you wondering whether celestial intervention did indeed play a part. Carved directly into the rock, the still-functioning churches are filled with magnificent murals, and brought to life with the chanting of white-robed priests and pilgrims. Officially Christian since 330AD, Ethiopia claims to be the oldest Christian country in the world, and Lalibela is the place to experience Orthodox Christianity at its most raw and powerful. Particularly if you time your visit with Ethiopian Christmas on January 7, when over 200,000 pilgrims pour into town to participate in all-night ceremonies that will transport you to another time, another place.

## MOUNTAIN MOMENT

Created 70 million years ago by volcanic activity and shaped by the Ice Age into psychedelic peaks and spires, the Simien Mountains are completely otherworldly. But it's not just the scenery that makes this UNESCO-listed national park so unique. The Simiens are also home to three endemic species found nowhere else on the planet. Spend a few days hiking these mountains, along paths lined with Abyssinian rose and thyme, and you'll likely spot the endangered walia ibex, the Ethiopian wolf, or the gelada (also known as bleeding-heart) baboon. It's not uncommon to find yourself standing amongst groups of over 100 of these ground-dwelling, grass-eating primates, wandering less than a metre away as they busily groom, feed and mate.





# AFRICA'S SO HOT RIGHT NOW

Sossusvlei Lodge, Namibia

WHOLESALE Bench Africa is reporting a massive uptick in visitor numbers to Africa, fuelled by a strong Aussie dollar, more indirect flight options and travellers keen to explore other parts of the continent beside the favourites of South Africa and Kenya.

Bench Africa general manager Martin Edwards believes Africa has now become more of a mainstream destination, saying it's "no longer that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. People are considering second and third trips," he indicated.

Australian travellers are making enquiries

and reservations earlier than before in order to secure hard to get accommodation at boutique properties, particularly at camps and lodges in Botswana, which may have limited inventory or have their rooms blocked out by the American market, renowned for booking early.

"People used to book their African trips and travel within a few months, but now, certainly within the last year, Australian travellers are starting to book over five months prior to departure."

Edwards said the movement follows

education of travel agents that they need to inform clients to book early to get the best options, even if Bench Africa's brochure and prices haven't been released.

Botswana bookings last year soared 60%, bringing the destination on par with Bench's East African destinations (Kenya and Tanzania), while sales to lesser frequented destinations like Namibia and Zambia – typically chosen by third or fourth time African travellers – have almost doubled.

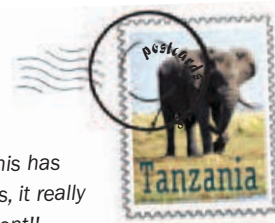
"Namibia, especially for international travellers, is somewhere that is booming," Edwards said.

Sales have also surprisingly spiked for Rwanda, despite Gorilla permits doubling in price from US\$750 to US\$1,500.

"To see such growth there is a little unexpected. We were prepared for growth in Uganda – where Gorilla permits are US\$600 – due to the increases in Rwanda, and we have seen that too."

"What's helped us is having more flights, making the logistics of travelling around Africa a lot easier as well, with more internal flights and more Middle Eastern airlines flying into east Africa and southern Africa. Fares with Qatar Airways priced at around \$1,400 to South Africa makes the destination a compelling offering," Edwards concluded.

## Postcard from... Tanzania



WOW, what a trip of a lifetime this has been! So many, many highlights, it really is hard to pick a favourite moment!!

As our flight approached Kilimanjaro, we were super lucky to get some amazing views on approach to landing, with the pilot doing a figure 8 around Mt Kili.

Our first night with the Maasai tribes at Olpopongi staying in traditional Boma Huts, learning how they still live very much in a traditional way, even having a go at making fire with elephant dung and sticks (definitely giving the bi and triceps a workout!).

Possibly my best memory was our morning hunt with the Hadzabe tribe near Lake Eyasi – these men and women still hunt with bow and arrow, and will hunt anything from birds and mice to baboons and antelope. On our morning hunt, we did get a few mice and a bird, so off we went to make a fire and cook up our catch (and when in Rome....).

The wildlife of Ngorongoro Crater is unbelievable – so much in a small area, that the concentration of animals allows you to see so much in a short time! Not sure if I want to come home!!

From Carine Griffiths, MTA Travel





## Cape Town open for business

CAPE Town and Western Cape remain open to for tourists, despite the destination experiencing a significant drought.

South African Tourism has recommended travellers be mindful of their water usage, but assured that if "Day Zero" is reached and the regular flow of water is cut off, visitors will still have access to "diverse and world-class experiences".

Bench Africa general manager Martin Edwards said hoteliers have put in place limitations such as removing bath plugs to avoid Day Zero.

"Tourists need to be more like a local due to the scarcity of the water," he explained. "Cape Town and the Western Cape is all open to business."



## ROVOS ENTERS THE CONGO

SOUTHERN African railway company Rovos Rail is taking bookings for a new train journey traversing the continent, starting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and ending in Lobito, Angola.

Scheduled for a one-off return journey on 16 July 2019, the 15-day expedition passes through Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and will include a game visit in the Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania), a fly-in two-night safari in the South Luangwa National Park in Zambia along with a city tour of Lubumbashi in DRC. Walking tours are also scheduled for the townships of Luau, Luena, Kuito and Huambo. The reverse tour departs on 02 August 2019.

Dubbed the 'Trail of Two Oceans', the trip has taken two years for Rovos Rail to acquire necessary permissions by authorities, founder and CEO Rohan Vos said.

"To be able to introduce a new adventure after 29 years in operation



is exciting and presents me with a refreshing operational challenge. My team and I have flown across our borders on a few occasions to meet the relevant officials, drive the route and conduct site visits," Vos remarked.

# ADVENTURE LIVES IN AFRICA



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# SHOP AROUND THE WORLD

In these destinations, shopping is a prime pursuit, writes Kristie Kellahan.

## NEW YORK TIMES



Century 21, Christopher Postlewaite / NYCgo

If you plan to shop like a true New Yorker, seek out the designer bargains. During the Black Friday sales, city-wide the day after Thanksgiving, shoppers can net savings of up to 80 per cent off retail prices. Serious shoppers should consider a day trip to Woodbury Common, an outlet mall about an hour north of Manhattan where the brand-name bargains are unbeatable.

Manhattan designer brands can be picked up for a song at Century 21, an upscale outlet paradise with branches downtown near Wall Street and on the Upper West Side on Broadway at 66th Street. Be prepared to wade through overstuffed racks to find your marked-down treasure.

Shoe fanatics will also find a lot to get excited about at shoe warehouse DSW, while Bloomingdale's Outlet Store on 72nd Street ticks all the boxes.

For authentic made-in-NYC gifts, check out the gorgeous skincare and hair products

at Malin + Goetz, catering to all skin types. Zabar's on Broadway at 80th Street is the place to buy foodie gifts, with many products made in New York State. Be sure to check out the excellent cheese selection.

New York City's dozens of wonderful museums offer more than a culture hit, they also house some of the best gift stores you'll find. Stock up on books about NYC's history, architecture and culture, pick out quirky homewares or make a statement jewellery purchase. Don't miss the stores at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art and Museum of the City of New York.

If money truly is no object, consider the Madison Avenue Luxury Shopping Experience. Available as a half-day or full-day package, the experience includes limousine transport, gourmet lunch, translation services and pre-arrival fashion consultations.

## STAY

Aussies love Hotel Beacon NYC for its warm hospitality, ideal Upper West Side location and handy facilities, including kitchenettes in all rooms and suites, and shared laundry facilities. The hotel's Beacon Bar has a great happy hour and is always busy before shows at the adjacent Beacon Theatre, where Jerry Seinfeld makes a monthly appearance.





Ala Moana Ewa wing,  
Daniel Ramirez

## SHOPPING

# ALOHA HAWAI'I

It's not just those postcard sunsets and swaying palm trees that captivate us all with the spirit of aloha. Hawai'i is a spender's paradise, with terrific shopping for all budgets. Plus, generous baggage allowances on flights out of the US make it easy to get the haul home.

Ala Moana Centre, one of the most popular malls, alone receives 42 million shopping visits each year. In 2005, it was the first mall in the United States to reach \$1billion in annual sales. It hosts free daily entertainment, a spring shopping festival, and some of the best restaurants in Waikiki.

Add this to your shopping list: after a recent grand opening, the stores and restaurants at International Market Place are ready for business. Located in the heart of Waikiki, the open-air mall is home to more than

90 upscale and lifestyle stores – including Hawai'i's first Saks Fifth Avenue – and ten restaurants. Open from 10am till 11pm every day, the centre puts on a free show each evening celebrating traditional Hawaiian culture through torch-lighting and storytelling.

Make the trek to Waikale outlet shopping mall – about 25 kilometres out of Waikiki's central precinct, where most tourists stay – and things start to get really interesting. The prices are mind-boggling at leading brand name stores, with discontinued lines and excess stock practically being given away. On a recent visit I found a desirable range of Nine West heels reduced from \$US100 to just \$US9.95 a pair; Calvin Klein bras and knickers from \$US5 each; and luxury leather Coach handbags reduced from \$US800 to \$US200.

## STAY

For those with a taste for smaller boutique hotels, there's now reason to rejoice in Waikiki, albeit a couple of blocks back from the sand. The Laylow, Autograph Collection is a chic hotel with a mid-century modern Hawai'ian vibe. Look out for the collection of vintage hula dolls behind the front desk (most are more than 50 years old), pick up a colourful 'shave ice' by the pool every afternoon and relax on designer furniture from half a century ago.

## PARIS STYLE



Galeries Lafayette

It remains one of the most romantic, stylish cities in the world. Paris is the capital of French sophistication, and visitors can take a piece of the inspiration home with them in the form of gorgeous fragrances, fashion and accessories.

A Parisian shopping spree should start in the glorious department store, Galeries Lafayette. Discounts are offered for international visitors (bring your passport), with special promotions and events including fashion shows that are the last word in chic.

At the main store on Boulevard Haussmann in the 9th arrondissement, you'll find ten floors of the most beautiful fashion, handbags, shoes, makeup, accessories and more.

If a casual meander along historic cobblestoned streets lined with charming boutiques and delicious patisseries is more your speed, look no further than Le Marais. This covetable neighbourhood across the 3rd and 4th arrondissements is one of the only areas where shops open seven days of the week.

## STAY

Paris is a city where private apartment rental makes sense for holidaymakers. Not only are apartments much larger than the average hotel room, they also come equipped with kitchens for cooking up all that farm-fresh produce available at the markets. Respected sites include [yourparisrentals.com](http://yourparisrentals.com) and [private-homes.com](http://private-homes.com).

## SHOPPING TACTICALLY IN DUBAI

DUBAI is a shopper's paradise, with experiences around the clock which range from the latest designer wear and handmade products, through to gorgeous textiles, aromatic spices or holiday souvenirs. As many elite shoppers will know, bagging that bargain or finding the perfect item in a different country or environment will call for a different set of skills.



items, souvenirs and gifts, the annual cultural-retail-entertainment hub Global Village is open from November to April.

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Visiting multiple shops to get an idea of the current retail and street prices is the best way to determine what you should be paying for an item. Enter negotiations armed with prices from competitors as most retailers will at least match these and many will go lower.

### BE FRIENDLY, BUT FIRM

Smile and say hello (or “*Marhaba*”, in Arabic) when you first arrive and try to maintain eye contact to build trust. Building a rapport and a narrative around your decision-making process can go a long way in negotiations. A bit of give and take is essential, so it's best to treat negotiations as an open conversation and be willing and happy to compromise.

### HAGGLE, HAGGLE, HAGGLE

Haggling skills are a major factor in determining the final price. Start negotiations at a little more than half price and try to meet in the middle. If purchasing multiple items, it's reasonable to ask for the store to lower the price and if the seller won't budge on price, ask if you can get an accessory or souvenir thrown

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

Dubai is home to world-renowned malls, but its retail therapy doesn't stop there. Away from the glitz and glamour of modern malls lie the traditional souks of Old Dubai. Intricate jewellery can be found at the Gold Souk, traditional fragrances at the Perfume Souk and exotic herbs and spices at the Spice Souk.

Shoppers with a taste for high-end brands can nab a discount at outlet complexes such as The Outlet Village and Dubai Outlet Mall.

Those on more of a budget can head to Dragon Mart or for unusual

in. It is also handy to carry cash and if you can't find a deal you're happy with, walking away can be a powerful tool.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Try to haggle for items whenever the demand for them is falling. Shop late in the day when sellers are aiming to clear their stock before packing up, or towards the end of the month or a season. Wait until the store is quiet – sellers will not waste time bartering if there are other buyers willing to pay full price.

## Hit the outlets to nab a bargain

AUSSIERS love a bargain and there is no better place to get one than at the shopping outlets in the USA. Big brand names at reduced prices, perfect for bragging rights at home.

Here are a couple of tips for making the most of your shopping:

- Set aside an entire day in the itinerary to shop. The outlets are big places and require a fair bit of time to get around and try things on.
- Rent a car – most outlets are not close to the cities. There are often shuttle buses or tours that can be taken, but if

you have a car you can go at your own pace and have plenty of space for all those shopping bags!

- Take a spare soft bag in your luggage or buy a new suitcase while you're away, you'll need it as it's hard to say no to those \$20 shoes! (You can pick up a cheap suitcase at Marshalls or TJ Maxx)

### RECOMMENDED OUTLETS:

LOS ANGELES – Citadel Outlets – between downtown LA and Anaheim.

Camarillo Premium Outlets – 50 miles north of LA, with over 160 retailers.

#### SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Premium Outlets – 40 miles from downtown with 180 stores.

#### LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas North Premium Outlets – located at the North end of the strip or Las Vegas South Premium Outlets – 8 miles from the strip.

#### NEW YORK

Woodbury Common Premium Outlets – located an hour north of Manhattan in central New York state with 240 stores.



## STOP 'N' SHOP IN ASIA

STOPOVERS can be a handy way to squeeze in a little extra shopping before heading back to reality. Wendy Wu Tours recommends spending a few days in the shopping hotspots of Hong Kong, Macao or Singapore. Head to Hong Kong's

Stanley Markets for an interesting array of little shops selling silk garments, sportswear, art, Chinese costume jewellery and souvenirs. A short ferry ride away lies Macao, the "Las Vegas of Asia", sporting a mix of extravagant

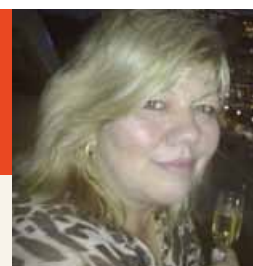
shopping centres and a number of shop-houses typical of southern China. The hub of Singapore is also home to an array of shopping experiences ranging from the designer stores of Orchard Road through to the buzzing ethnic "Little India" district.



Stanley Market, Hong Kong © Annie Spratt

## Q&A

Retail therapy is a staple of many travellers' trips overseas, so we asked Marsha Olver from Helloworld Travel Glenbrook, a veritable shopping expert, how agents can sell shopping holidays.



### Which destinations are most popular for shopping holidays?

I find that trends come and go for shopping destinations. Right now the USA seems to be very popular. Bali remains an all time favourite for decorative homewares and furniture. Hong Kong, and of course China. A surprise entry recently has been South Africa, due to our dollar being great against the RAND (ZAR).

### What sort of travellers are going on shopping holidays?

There are two main types of shoppers. Young successful professionals, who go for designer and new release items that offer better value than buying at home. The second – cashed up mature women, usually travelling for a celebratory birthday. They like to really to indulge in some serious retail therapy, as well as luxury experiences – day spa/hair/wellness retreats.

### Are there tour operators who sell shopping tours and how popular are these?

There are a huge number of shopping companies who specialise in their particular cities; Shenzhen and Shanghai are probably the most common. They have evolved from the old idea where you were taken to a "Government" approved outlet and the guide collected a commission on the way out. You can pretty much name your desire and be taken to every place that supplies your fancy, including the Armani factory.

### What should agents keep in mind when creating a shopping itinerary for a client?

I think when preparing a program for avid shoppers as an agent you have to get to the bottom of how much shopping a client really wants to do. There is a big difference between "liking" to shop and going on the basis of buying particular items. You need

to be completely up to date on what is being offered and what price. It's no good just recommending a place without knowing exactly what you are endorsing. Homework and research are a necessity if you intend to have happy clients return with the bargain of a lifetime!

### How long would you recommend for an overseas shopping trip?

I would recommend any duration! I have known great shopping trips that can be as little as three nights or 7-10 days taking in destination based activities. Seven days is about the average, there is only so much a suitcase can take! Longer holidays are often planned further in the future, where shorter trips can be on the spur of the moment when cheap airfares are released. Any time is a good time to shop!



## WHERE IN THE WORLD

JUST one of many spectacular alpine lakes nestled around the world; but this one isn't in the Andes or the Rocky Mountains like you might expect! Can you guess where in the world this lake is located? Extra points if you can name it! If you think you've got it, send your answer to **comp@travelbulletin.com.au**. If you're the first agent to answer correctly, you'll win yourself a double movie pass. Good luck!

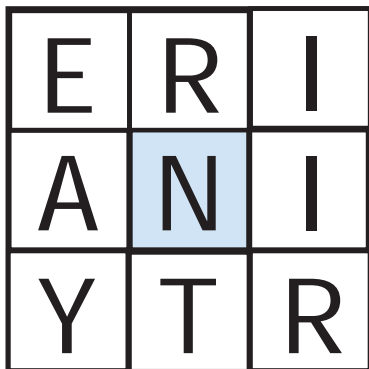
# UNSCRAMBLE

HOW many words can you make out of these nine letters? Every word needs to include an 'N', have four letters or more and not be a proper noun. You can only use each letter once. There's also one word that uses all nine letters.

**Good – 16 words**

**Very good – 25 words**

**Excellent – 34 words**

[illegible]

## Gadget: Dreamlight Sleeping Mask

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This revolutionary new mask takes advantage of a plethora of different innovative technologies to provide the user a uniquely tailored program to help them sleep the way that works best for them. Using integrated lights over the eyes, it lulls you to sleep with a soft orange glow, to help stimulate your body's natural sleep cycle. As well as blocking outside noise, Dreamlight can play your own music or a range of soothing sounds, through the speakers integrated into the soft cushiony mask. When its time to wake up, the mask will shine increasingly bright green light, and play soft sounds to coax you out of your slumber, invigorating you into the day ahead.

In addition to helping you sleep, Dreamlight can track how you slept.



and suggest how you might make improvements to your sleep, all of which you can check on through the Dreamlight App. It can even create sleep programs to boost productivity, but the best feature of all is the Jetlag program which tailors specific sleep cycles to offset jetlag on long haul flights, so you're in your best state the moment you hit the ground.

Check out **[www.dreamlight.tech](http://www.dreamlight.tech)**





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