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SHT joins Magellan

LONG-TIME JTG affiliate Seniors Holiday Travel in Brisbane has today been announced as the latest member to join the Magellan Travel Group.

Based in Fortitude Valley, the domestic and international group tour specialist has a staff of 15.

SHT's membership of Magellan commences on 01 Jan 2014, boosting the retail group's network to 90 nationwide.

QH team changes

A NUMBER of Qantas Holidays staff have been made redundant over the last few weeks due to an "alignment" of the QH marketing team with Helloworld's retail marketers.

Tok Tok back in 2014

VANUATU Tourism Office says it is expecting its annual trade show to return in 2014 after the expo was cancelled this year.

VTO marketing manager Allan Kalfabun told **TD** yesterday Tok Tok 2014 would likely take place in Aug in Port Vila, Espiritu Santo and Tanna.

A meeting to discuss the 2014 instalment is taking place in Feb.

Five pages of news

Travel Daily has five pages of news & photos, plus full pages from: (**click**)

- AA Appointments jobs
- Travel Trade Recruitment

Aircalin returning to MEL

AIRCALIN is preparing to launch services to Melbourne, reviving the carrier's original Australian route from New Caledonia.

Travel Daily can reveal Aircalin will introduce twice weekly direct services from Noumea starting 06 Jun, with services jacked up to thrice weekly over the 2014/15 summer peak season.

Confirming arrangements, gm Australia, New Zealand & Fiji Ken Triffitt said the addition of the Victorian capital as the carrier's third Australian hub reflected SB's commitment to the local market.

Initially operating on Tue and Fri, Aircalin is adjusting South Pacific schedules to deploy an A320 to Melbourne, with Triffitt saying early afternoon slots will offer connections for passengers from Adelaide and Tasmania.

"New Caledonia has identified Australia and Japan as the two key tourism sources to be targeted over coming years.

"It was only logical to invest in Australia by opening up another city," he told **TD** yesterday.

"At the moment we are getting quite good business out of Melbourne but unfortunately its not convenient for them to come through Sydney."

"The new service will allow greater convenience for pax both in south eastern Australia and eliminate the need to travel via Sydney," he said.

Aircalin this week signed a lease

deal with International Lease Finance Corporation in the USA for a 180-seat Jetstar A320-200 (currently in service in Australia & New Zealand), boosting its long-haul fleet to four aircraft - three A320s and a single A330.

The five-year old Jetstar aircraft will be refitted from its current 180-seat layout to SB's two-class cabin configuration of eight Hibiscus Business class seats and 150 Economy Class seats.

A new cabin product could also be on the cards, Triffitt hinted.

Its introduction in Aug "creates greater flexibility" and will see the NOU/MEL route increased to thrice weekly on Mon, Wed & Sat, effective 27 Oct.

Inventory for the Melbourne service is expected to be loaded into agent global distribution systems from early Jan which can be packaged by wholesalers.

The newly leased aircraft will also be deployed over the South Pacific, which may require modifications to current ops and see an increase to Japan.

Triffitt added Aircalin would hold talks with Qantas in the near future to discuss a new codeshare arrangement to New Caledonia.

SB's existing Australian routes are to Sydney and Brisbane.

Orchestra down under

MSC Cruises will bring its first ship to Australia, this morning confirming a local visit in 2015 of the 2,550-pax *MSC Orchestra*.

The liner will operate a 33-night Dubai to Fremantle Grand Voyage from 21 Feb to 26 Mar, stopping in a total of 13 ports, six of which will be in Australia.

Orchestra will travel via India and Asia, visiting Cairns & moving down the east coast to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, also calling in Adelaide prior to ending the voyage in the Perth port.

"I am thrilled to be bringing MSC Orchestra to Australian waters," MSC Cruises Australia and NZ md Lynne Clark said.

The cruise will include overnight stays in Singapore and Sydney and is priced from \$3,299ppts.

Eurostar pricing error

RAIL Tickets has issued an alert to agents informing of a "system issue" that is incorrectly pricing Eurostar rail services.

"The pricing featured is not correct and is displaying at higher prices than we intended," a trade memo is warning.

The company said until the issue is resolved (by 06 Jan), it will price match any 'like-for-like' quote obtained through other Aussie-based wholesalers.

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First with the news

Thursday 19th December 2013



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Asiana office moving

ASIANA Airlines has confirmed it will relocate to new offices, operating from Level 13, 31 Market Street, Sydney NSW 2000 effective 31 Dec 2013.

OZ's toll-free reservations phone number of 1300 767 234 and email address sydsmoz@flyasiana.com remain the same.

The new reservation number for Sydney metro agents will be (02) 9260 4343, while the fax number has changed to (02) 9260 4344.

Global Aviation Services ends its GDS pact with OZ on 30 Dec.

G Adv return to Egypt

SETTLING security situations in Egypt has seen G Adventures confirm its return to the region from the beginning of next year.

A full program of itineraries will recommence from 01 Jan, with a small number of tour alterations seeing flights replace overnight trains currently out of service, with no extra charges to be levied.

Security on the ground will be monitored by a local office, with the company confident its trips will not be affected at any stage.

Big AAX Airbus order

AIRASIA X will operate 57 Airbus A330 long-haul aircraft by 2019 after placing a US\$6 billion order for 25 more A330-300s aircraft overnight.

The order is the largest single purchase of the aircraft type and is in addition to an existing order of 26 A330s and a further six on lease (**TD** 10 Aug 2012).

Delivery of the new order will begin from 2015, at which point a significant expansion of services across the Asia-Pacific region will commence.

South Pacific trade show

"SHOCK" at the decision to axe the Bula Fiji Tourism Exchange (**TD** 27 Nov) has seen the South Pacific Tourism Organisation rally to host its own travel trade show.

CEO Ilisoni Vuidreketi confirmed plans for the maiden South Pacific Tourism Exchange are underway, to be hosted in Auckland in May.

The SPTO consists of 17 South Pacific destinations including the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Vuidreketi yesterday told **Travel Daily** members of the SPTO were calling for a dedicated show after BFTE's (Bula Fiji Tourism Exchange) demise - a result of Tourism Fiji's plan to host its own Fiji-exclusive trade show, the Fiji Tourism Exchange three weeks beforehand (**TD** 27 Nov).

"BFTE had the bulk of our members participating, so when that closed, requests came from our tourism representatives and offices who see value in having their own 'one-stop' show within the region."

He said he was confident all member states would participate in the inaugural show.

SPTO is timed to coincide with New Zealand's annual travel and tourism expo, TRENZ.

He said the goal would be to run SPTO for an initial three year period, piggy-backing off the New Zealand tourism expo and possibly Tourism Australia's ATE (Australian Tourism Exchange) event in future years - the aim of which was to lure int'l buyers already attending other shows.

"The talk right now is to rotate it between bigger trade shows, but that will be determined by

demand and the success of the show and what the buyers say.

"If the feedback suggests it needs to be hosted in one of the Pacific Island countries, we will move it there," Vuidreketi said.

Other options for SPTO may include running the event after the new Fiji Tourism Exchange.

"We want to make things as convenient as possible for buyers," he commented.

Vuidreketi said the SPTO would be satisfied if the show attracted 50 international buyers from long and short haul markets.

The inaugural South Pacific Tourism Exchange is earmarked to be held over 1.5 days on 22-23 May, just days after TRENZ 2014 which is scheduled for 18-21 May.

Three venues have been short-listed as event host locations.

Enquiries for SPTO can be made now at www.spto.org.

A special website promoting the show and the sellers will also go active in coming weeks, Vuidreketi told **TD**.

"I foresee this concept moving long-term," Vuidreketi predicted.

SA arrivals trend up

SOUTH Africa Tourism says its growth rate in tourist arrivals for the first six-months of 2013 are aligned with global averages for the period.

The NTO reported a 5.1% year-on-year spike in visitor numbers between 01 Jan-30 Jun 2013 - half the growth rate achieved the two years prior, building on the legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Asia saw big arrival gains, with growth up 12.7% from the region, incl a 23.9% jump from China.

QF 717 HBA schedule

QANTAS has released a new QantasLink schedule for Hobart services, operated by Business-class equipped Boeing 717s.

The new timetable applies to services from Sydney to Hobart, from 15 Apr and Melbourne to Hobart commencing 01 Jun.

Timings have been tailored to better suit the needs of business & leisure travellers and include a new 4th daily service ex MEL.

Fares for the new schedule are available to book now.

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FJ to operate Suva-Sydney

FIJI Airways is set to significantly increase services from the country's capital city of Suva with a new direct service to Sydney to commence from May next year.

Twice weekly operations from Sydney to Suva will be operated by the airline's B737-700 aircraft.

Flights will leave Suva at 12:25 on Mon and Fri with a departure time of 16:30 for the return leg.

The carrier says the new service will allow for greater connections to other destinations within Fiji and the nearby Pacific Islands aboard the soon-to-be-rebranded Fiji Link subsidiary (**TD** 27 Nov).

Fiji Airways managing director and ceo Stefan Pichler said the new flights were the first outcome of a five-year strategic plan.

"The introduction of the direct Sydney to Suva flight will open up tourism for Suva, Pacific Harbour and islands such as Kadavu and Toberua," Pichler said.

The new services will see FJ also amend its New Zealand schedule, with flights to Nadi from Auckland now set to arrive earlier to better facilitate onward connections.

Fiji Link will also operate the carrier's second new direct route between Suva and Apia.

More SmartGate trials

PASSPORT holders from Switzerland, Malaysia, Singapore, Sweden and the Netherlands with machine-readable documents will be able to utilise Smart Gates as part of new forthcoming trials.

Customs & Border Protection confirmed plans to run the trials over the next year, with new gates added at SYD, MEL and PER.

It follows full implementation of Smart Gate compatibility to travellers from the UK after successful tests earlier this year.

A trial of the system for citizens of the USA is now underway.

Flight Centre in court

THE case between Flight Centre and the Australian Competition Consumer Commission against the Flight Centre Travel Group has resumed in court today.

It follows the Federal Court's penalty hearing for the retail group over alleged price fixing with numerous int'l carriers.

AA Sep 11 settlement

AMERICAN Airlines has agreed to pay US\$135 million to Cantor Fitzgerald to drop a lawsuit in which the carrier was accused of failing to stop the hijacking of a plane that crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center on 11 Sep 2001.

The settlement comes just days after the airline's parent firm AMR Corporation completed a merger with US Airways.

Cantor had offices near the top floor of the 110-storey New York City building in which 658 staff were killed on Sep 11.

The firm says AA should have stopped the terrorists who took over Flight 11 from Boston.



Window Seat

A TAIWANESE tourist visiting Melbourne has gained instant world fame by falling off the end of St Kilda pier while checking Facebook on her phone.

The incident apparently happened on Wed at about 11.30am, with the woman in the water for about 20 minutes before being rescued.

According to the *Australian* she was unable to swim and was taken to hospital after police rushed to the scene.

Unfortunately she's going to need a new mobile phone, as the rescuers found her still clutching the very waterlogged gadget as they pulled her from the ocean.

PASSENGERS aboard a Wizz Air flight between Valencia and Bucharest yesterday were treated to some in-flight diversion when a woman went into labour and gave birth to a baby boy inside the plane.

Apparently she went into labour during the flight, requesting assistance from the crew a few minutes before it landed in Romania.

"During descent and while taxiing to the terminal, the passenger was assisted on a back row of the aircraft by a crew member and a doctor who was travelling on the same flight," the airline said.

"Mother and baby were met by the airport ambulance and taken to hospital...we are very proud of our crew who handled the situation with professionalism and care."

Indochina adventure on 2 wheels



VIETNAM Airlines and World Expeditions recently hosted this group of NSW travel agents to an active pedal-powered tour of Vietnam and Cambodia.

The trip was organised to allow World Expeditions to show off its collection of cycling holidays further to the travel trade, which it says bookings from the industry have increased 40% this year.

The group explored Hanoi's Old Quarter, then rowing on the waterways of Ninh Binh before

flying to Siem Reap and hopping back on their bikes.

Pictured above during a break in the ride, from left is Michelle Sinnerton, Flight Centre Bateau Bay; Nga Meti, Student Flights Newtown; Jessica Fish, Flight Centre Erina Fair; Wendy Shoo, Flight Centre Dubbo and World Expeditions guide 'Hilly' Nguen.

Not pictured but part of the trip was Angela Dumic, Flight Centre Wahroonga and Philip Wyndham from World Expeditions.



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Industry Appointments

WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry, send us an email at appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Excite Holidays has appointed **Alison Hopkirk** as its new Business Development Manager for New Zealand. Her extensive career has included roles with hotels, wholesalers, Qantas and Travelex.

Katrina Barry has joined The Travel Corporation as the new managing director of **Contiki Australia**. Her previous roles include positions with McKinsey & Company, The Virgin Group and BT Financial. She takes up her new role effective 13 Jan 2014.

IATA has announced the appointment of **Kevin Hiatt** as Senior Vice President, Safety and Flight Operations. To be based at the IATA headquarters in Montreal from Feb next year, Hiatt will succeed the retiring Guenther Matschnigg.

John Simeone has been named as the new Head of Corporate and Industry Sales for **Qantas**. Simeone was most recently QF International's Head of Sales and Tourism and Development. He takes the role formerly held by Karen Tsolakakis (*TD* 21 Nov).

Phil Hoffmann Travel has appointed **Michelle McNamara** to the position of General Manager. She's been with the company for more than 16 years, having joined as a junior travel consultant in 1997.

Former Flight Centre and Student Flights staffer **Greg Lawson** has joined the **Busabout, Haggis and Shamrock Adventures** team as Sales Manager for the West and South Australia regions.

CT Connections has appointed **Jonathan King** as its new General Manager, Queensland. He takes over the role from **Michelle Wilcox** who will now focus on business development for the company.

Diane Glasson has been named as Director of Communications for Sydney's **The Star**. Glasson's extensive career has included senior roles within Destination NSW and Tourism Australia.

Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre has appointed **Angelya Vassiliadis-Balaguer** as its new National Sales Manager.

Alan Glover has been named as the new Manager Sales Victoria for **Etihad Airways**. He relocates to Melbourne from his current role as EY Corporate Sales Manager in Dublin, and will replace **Craig Thomas** who is moving to Bangkok to become Vice President Asia Pacific North and Indian Subcontinent for the carrier.

Rocky Mountaineer has appointed **Nikki Hellyer** to the position of Director, Global Marketing. She was previously in a similar role with Future Shop, Canada's largest retailer of consumer electronics.

Sabre has appointed **Bill Robinson** as executive vice president and Chief Human Resources Officer.

Emirates Airline has named **Sheikh Majid Al Mualla** as its Divisional Senior Vice President Commercial Operations - Centre. He'll now have responsibility for the Gulf, Middle East, Iran and West Asia.

Garth Solly has been appointed as Group General Manager for **The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs, The Farm at Cape Kidnappers** and **Matakauri Lodge**, returning to NZ after several international postings with IHG.

Movenpick Hotels has named **Alexander Haeusler** as the general manager of the new **Movenpick Hotel White Sand Beach** in Pattaya, Thailand.

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South Pacific cruise focus



REPRESENTATIVES from members of the Treasures of the South Pacific hosted an event for trade partners at the Waterfront Restaurant in the Rocks, Sydney yesterday to celebrate 2013.

The function also saw the South Pacific Tourism Organisation announce plans for its inaugural South Pacific Tourism Exchange in 2014 (see **page two**).

SPTO chief executive officer Ilisoni Vuidreketi told *TD* his visit to Sydney included a meeting with CLIA Australasia to discuss how the region can better facilitate cruise passengers.

"Some of the South Pacific countries don't really understand what the cruise business is about when we talk about different aspects, such as the needs of the cruise passenger," he said.

Vuidreketi said the talks with CLIA aim to arm the organisation with information it can then pass on to member countries.

"We want to see how we can best prepare our destinations for the needs and demands of cruise passengers," he told *Travel Daily*.

"What is needed to prepare, the challenges, the difficulties, why cruiselines are coming and why not, those sort of issues were discussed.

"Australia is the biggest supplier of cruise passengers for Pacific Island countries, so what are the limitations?" he said.

Vuidreketi said discussions

with CLIA outlined where the two businesses can collaborate over coming years to see where mutually beneficial improvements can be made.

He admitted that one of the biggest issues in the South Pacific was the lack of infrastructure for cruise passengers.

"We need more port facilities & onshore facilities, guest programs and touring options," he claimed.

The delegates are **pictured** here and included from left Mereana Taruia, Cook Islands Tourism; Richard Hankin, Treasures of the South Pacific; Robert Thompson; Tahiti Tourisme; Michael Riddington, Adele Leathan and Peter Sereno, Samoa Tourism Authority; Janet Sayer & Danielle Flegg, New Caledonia Tourism; Ilisoni Vuidreketi, ceo SPTO; Sarah Anderson & Georgia Ditton, Vanuatu Tourism Office; Stuart Thompson, Papua New Guinea Tourism Authority; Caleb Jarvis, Trade Commissioner, Pacific Trade & Invest and Allan Kalfabun, Vanuatu Tourism Office.

BW Casula addition

BEST Western Australasia has confirmed the addition of a new property in Western Sydney.

The 30-room Best Western Casula Motor Inn is being pitched to the holiday market due to its proximity to Wet'n'Wild Sydney - 20mins away on the M7 toll road.

US golf clinic for Aussie agents



GREATER Palm Springs CVB hit the links at Sydney's Bonnie Doon Golf Club with 13 Aussie travel agents recently, putting on a golf clinic with two professionals providing expert swing guidance.

The event formed part of a corporate golf day, with Palm Springs providing a hospitality tent complete with champagne and soothing massages.

EK golf sponsorships

EMIRATES has extended its sponsorship of The European Tour golf until the end of the 2017 season, with events including the annual Perth International.

GDS hotel IT purchase

AMADEUS has announced the acquisition of US hotel technology firm Newmarket International at a price of US\$500 million.

The cloud-based and events IT group is based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and will see the travel technology giant strengthen its presence in the hotel IT sector.

Newmarket provides IT services to approx 22,000 properties in 154 countries, with all staff and management to transfer to the Amadeus Global Hotel Group.

Take steps in Macau

THE Macau Government Tourist Office has released a series of self-guided walking tours of the city covering popular hot spots and lesser known areas, ranging in length up to 2 1/2 hours - info at www.macaotourism.gov.mo.

Jumeirah agent rate

TRAVEL agents can avail special rates at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai from AED750 per night. Email industry@jumeirah.com.

SQ results flat in Nov

AVAILABLE capacity and overall passengers carried by Singapore Airlines in Nov remained largely flat, with a 0.5% and 0.7% increase recorded respectively.

Approx 9.8 million pax flew with the carrier during the month.

Network-wide load factors fell 0.7% to 77.7%, dropping the same amount for South West Pacific routes to just short of 80%.

DFAT Swiss warning

AUSTRALIANS are being advised to be aware of the World Economic Forum, taking place in Davos, Switzerland from 22-25 Jan, with a history of protests taking place at the summit.

Over the course of the morning, the agents fine-tuned putting and chipping skills, following by a delicious morning tea.

Information on more than 100 championship standard golf courses in the Greater Palm Springs region of California, only two hours drive from Los Angeles, was also available to participants.

Pictured above ready to hit the course armed with their new and improved golf skills is Kurt Hufer, Flight Centre Bondi Westfield; Ryan Short, Visit California; Beth Greenup, Greater Palm Springs CVB; Deryk Lee, Escape Travel Eastgardens and Melanie Mayer, Greater Palm Springs CVB.

Weather tyre warning

GLOBALCARS director Andrew Morgan has warned travellers to be mindful of car rental providers in Austria, Germany & Switzerland meeting new requirements for the fitting of mud & snow tyres during the months of Dec-Mar.

He added that rentals originating in other countries may not have correct tyres fitted and could lead to renters inadvertently breaking the law.



Travel Daily's popular Christmas photo competition is back! **Fraser Suites Perth** want to celebrate the festive season with the travel industry, and are asking you to send in your work Christmas party photos throughout December.

At the end of the month, the judges will select the most creative photo and the person who submitted this will win two nights accommodation for two guests at Fraser Suites Perth, including daily breakfast and complimentary Wi-Fi.

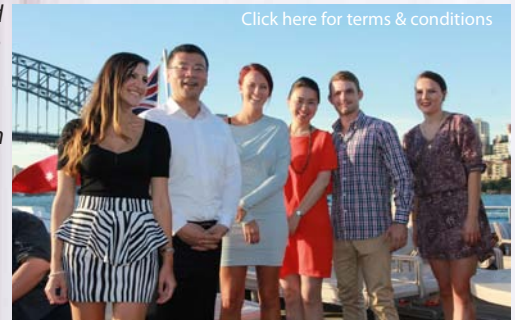


Pictured: China Southern Airlines celebrated Christmas and the end to another momentous year onboard a Captain Cook Cruises tour of Sydney Harbour last night.

Left to Right:

China Southern cabin crew Limor Shuster, Regional General Manager Australia and New Zealand Henry He, crew Ashleigh Vallis, Crew Manager Cathy Chen, and crew Callum Billinghurst and Nicole Cooper.

Email your festive photos (including names of the people pictured) to: xmasphotos@traveldaily.com.au.



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On behalf of Adriana D'Angelis and the AA Team, we would like to thank all of our clients and candidates for your great support in 2013. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to assisting you in 2014.

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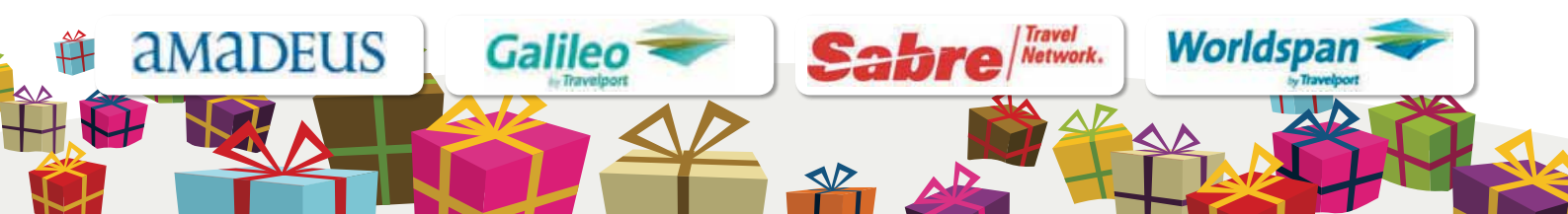
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