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Tourplan TourConnect pact

TOUR operator software specialists TourConnect and Tourplan have announced they will integrate their systems, enabling tour operators to automatically upload contracted supplier rates into a booking management system.

The innovation will significantly reduce manual data entry, with Tourplan regional director Craig Gray saying clients will "recognise significant labour expense reductions, while loading rates in minutes rather than months".

TourConnect's Sydney-based founder Michael Herrmann said suppliers would also benefit greatly, with their products reaching the market faster, more accurately and with significantly less effort.

"Today's announcement is a big win for everyone involved, and

it really helps validate our vision for a universal method of rate exchange," Herrmann said.

Once implemented, tour operators using the Tourplan system will be able to instantly upload annual rates for suppliers who manage their rates via TourConnect.

The first version of the integration will be released for the 2016-2017 contracting season.

Lizard Is May opening

DELAWARE North has confirmed that Lizard Island on the Great Barrier Reef will remain closed until mid-May, following detailed engineering assessments of the resort which was hit by Cyclone Nathan (**TD** 23 Mar).

Executive director Greg Magi yesterday said a full team is now on the island to continue redevelopment works, while affected guests are being kept informed of progress.

Once it reopens, Lizard Island will feature 40 rooms and suites, including the addition of a two bedroom villa with plunge pool.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news and photos, a front cover page for **JITO** plus full pages: ([click](#))

- AA Appointments jobs
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TTC seeing booking surge

THE Travel Corporation is not seeing any impact from the drop in the Australian dollar, with ceo of its local operations, John Weeks, this morning confirming a “surge in bookings for 2015”.

Weeks said despite the 17% year-on-year decline in the A\$ against the Euro, sales are up across the board, with all of the group's brands including Trafalgar, Insight, Contiki and Uniworld seeing a strong performance.

“We are fortunate to be able to report that despite Australia's recent economic challenges, we've held up well and we are extremely encouraged by the positive growth in business, particularly to Europe,” he said.

Weeks commented that one of TTC's core strengths is an ability to hedge currency up to a year in advance meaning it can guarantee prices for guests.

“We also made a strong commitment to extending the breadth and depth of product across the board this year,” with particularly strong growth to Ireland where sales have soared 70% for Trafalgar, he said.

The Eastern Mediterranean has also performed well, driven by the ANZAC Centenary this month, while Contiki has seen 20% growth in Greek and Croatian island-hopping trips.

He said prices for 2015 across all TTC brands were set in Aug last year and remain guaranteed until Oct.

“At TTC we maintain our integrity in assuring both the trade and our customers that at no stage will surcharges ever be imposed,” he added.

Vale John Paul Kenny

THE travel industry is today mourning the death of Everything Travel co-founder John Paul Kenny who passed away on 07 Apr after a long battle with illness.

John & wife Johanne established the company in 1984 & continued on in the business until late 2012.

Prior, the couple were also part owners of Travel Management Consultants International.

A Requiem Mass will be held on Sat 18 Apr at Christ Church St Laurence (812 George St) Sydney at noon, followed by a wake.

EK 615-seat A380s

EMIRATES has confirmed it will introduce two-class Airbus A380 aircraft with a capacity of 615 passengers later this year.

The Middle Eastern carrier is configuring a number of its fleet with the new dual-class product, featuring 58 flat-bed seats in Business class with an onboard lounge and 557 in Economy class.

Commencing 01 Dec, the new A380 layout will be deployed on the Dubai-Copenhagen route, with the Danish capital becoming the first city in Scandinavia to welcome the superjumbo.

The A380 will replace Emirates' Boeing 777s currently operating the route as EK151/152.

Switching to the new double-decker means Emirates will offer a total of 8,610 seats per week between Copenhagen and Dubai.

MEANWHILE, EK is ramping up capacity to the Seychelles from 01 Jun, at which time it upgauges one of its two daily Airbus A330-200s to a Boeing 777-300ERs.

FURTHER, from the same date, Emirates will jack up capacity to London Gatwick, with agent GDSs indicating that EK015/016 will switch to the A380 permanently.

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Air NZ MCY summer link

AIR New Zealand has revealed it plans to introduce new seasonal services between Auckland & the Sunshine Coast (Maroochydore) over the summer period.

The route will complement Air

NZ's existing winter service which operates from Jun to Oct, and be sold in partnership with Trans Tasman partner Virgin Australia.

Operating from Dec to Feb, the new service aims to lure Sunshine Coast residents to New Zealand to enjoy a Kiwi summer holiday, Air NZ chief sales & commercial Cam Wallace commented.

"Our existing service has proven popular with many New Zealand holidaymakers heading across the ditch for a mid-winter getaway, while this new summer season is expected to encourage more Australians to make the trip across to New Zealand," he said.

Subject to regulatory approval, Air NZ intends to utilise Airbus A320s on the route between 13 Dec and 28 Feb, boosting seat capacity by more than 80% compared to the 2014 season.

Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd boss Simon Ambrose lauded the new capacity, saying the timing of the announcement was "ideal" as the organisation prepares to launch its largest marketing campaign in NZ to date.

"We welcome this exciting announcement by Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia.

"This is a testament to the strong marketing activity we are doing 'across the ditch' and our targeted campaigns are showing results," Ambrose said.

New Zealand is the Sunshine Coast's top international market.



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Sunshine Coast Tue 14 April
Canberra Wed 29 April
Newcastle Tue 5 May
Future events in:
Far North QLD, Melbourne, Sydney

New show exhibitors

KOREA Tourism Organisation and Japan National Tourism Organisation are the latest firms to sign on as international exhibitors for the 2015 Travel Industry Exhibition.

Other tourism boards, airlines & overseas wholesalers from Asia attending the event incl Tourism Thailand, Sri Lankan Tourism Promotions Bureau, Mandarin World Tours, THAI Airways, AirAsia X and Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration.

The TIE is being held at Luna Park Sydney from 16-17 Jul - see www.travelindustryexpo.com.au.

SOM 50th package

BEYOND Travel has released a four-night package in Salzburg, Austria incorporating a gala event to mark the 50th anniversary of *The Sound of Music*.

Held at the Salzburg Summer Riding School Theatre from 16 to 18 Oct, the event features an anniversary performance by the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg.

The wholesaler's itinerary incl a half-day Original Sound of Music Tour, a city tour, category one ticket to the show and more, priced \$795ppst - 1300 363 554.

New Scoot services

SAPPORO and Osaka in Japan will be added to the network of LCC Scoot from 08 Jul, operating thrice weekly via Bangkok DMK and Kaohsiung respectively.



Window Seat

CREATIVE Holidays knows how to spruik its range of suggested self-drive itineraries through the United States (*TD* yesterday).

The wholesaler sent *Travel Daily* a copy of its USA 2015/16 guide, complete with a road-trip survival guide loaded with the essentials for the road ahead.

Included was a travel journal with Statue of Liberty pen to scribe adventures, US chocolate bar, snakes & ladder travel game and a set of ear phones to help pass the time.



Palm Cat whale tours

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is offering early booking discounts on its whale watching cruises from Sydney which are set to operate from 16 May to 01 Nov.

Hosted aboard the new *Palm Cat* catamaran, the open-water voyages operate with a 99% success rate of spotting whales.

Palm Cat has a capacity of 160 guests on two passenger decks.

Book before 31 Jul and adults will pay \$49 (normally \$65).

See www.captaincook.com.au.

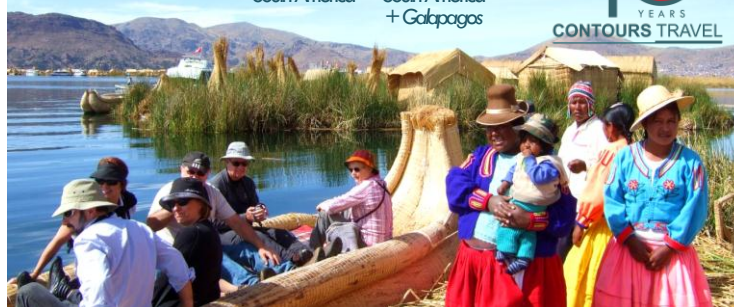
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Do Kokoda turns up the heat



AUSTRALIAN glamour queens Laura Dundovic and Erin Holland have stepped out to encourage women to take on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

The pair launched the latest Do Kokoda campaign 'From Heels to Hiking Boots' on behalf of the the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA) at an event in Sydney last night.

Both spoke of their personal experiences across the eight-day journey, saying it should not be dismissed as just "one for the guys" and that it was a rewarding experience for all Australians.

"Kokoda got us away from our phones and pushed our physical limits," Holland commented.

"Most of all it taught us about a poignant chapter in Australia's

history and we truly believe more Australian women should give it a go," she added.

The PNGTPA said Dundovic and Holland were selected as Kokoda Ambassadors to appeal to a new, wide-ranging female audience.

Videos of their adventure can be viewed at www.dokokoda.com along with plenty of information, inspiring stories, frequently asked questions and links to travel operators to facilitate a booking.

The latest push follows success with last year's campaign, which featured AFL stars Garry Lyon and Sam Newman taking on the walk.

Dundovic and Holland are **pictured** above flanking Alice Kuaningi and Michael Taia from the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority.

Mantra Lorne grows

WORK on a \$1 million upgrade of Mantra Lorne in Vic has begun, with the heritage hotel to boast an improved restaurant and meeting facilities by the end of next month.

ACCC rates Aussie airports

PROFIT levels at Australia's four largest airports are growing at the expense of customer service, according to the annual Airport Monitoring Report from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Pax look outside SYD

INBOUND passenger numbers into Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide all recorded strong year-on-year growth, while Sydney lagged, according to new arrival figures from the government.

The three capitals saw visitor numbers grow 9.3%, 6.2% and 16.8% respectively, while Sydney recorded a modest 2.3% jump.

Despite this, the NSW capital remained the dominant player in the market, accounting for 40% of the total inbound market.

China Southern Airlines retained its rank as holding the 10th largest market share into Australia.

Higher up, the Qantas Group including Jetstar, Jetstar Asia and partner Emirates comprised 34.7% of the total market, with the QF mainline itself making up 15.3%, down from 16% a year ago.

Across the entire international sphere, total passenger numbers closed at 3.28 million, up 2.8% on the same month last year.

Available capacity climbed 1.5%, sending the seat utilisation rate up to 83.3% for the month.

Results showed the rise in market share of low-cost carriers appears to have slowed, with no-frills carriers flying to Australia making up 17.4% of the market, up only 0.3% from Jan 2014.

The report critiqued the annual performance of Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne (Tullamarine) & Perth.

It found that despite significant investment, the four airports had managed to improve their bottom line without any improvement to overall average service levels.

Car parking in particular proved to be a particular financial boon, with all four airports increasing revenue levels from the service.

In last year's report, ACCC boss Rod Sims said improving service levels was determined as an area for the four to improve.

"In fact, service quality at all monitored airports has declined over the past decade, despite higher unit revenues at all airports," Sims added.

Despite the poor service score, Sydney Airport was rated as the most improved behind Brisbane.

Significant construction works on access & services is underway at MEL and PER Airports, with SYD and BNE both well underway with planning airside and landside improvements for coming years.

Chimu over the ditch

LATIN America and Antarctic expedition firm Chimu Adventures has expanded its services into New Zealand for the first time.

Working with local NZ partner Viva Expeditions, Chimu says the opening is timely considering the coming launch of direct flights to Buenos Aires by Air New Zealand.

The new office follows Chimu's expansion into Canada and the start of sales and marketing operations in the United Kingdom.

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Orlando visits soar

VISITATION to Orlando, Florida in 2014 surpassed 62 million arrivals in 2014, Visit Orlando has announced, setting a new all-time record for the US travel industry as the most visited destination.

Numbers were up 5% year-on-year, the organisation said with over 32m room nights sold in the city over the 12 months.

Last year, Orlando welcomed the New Fantasyland at Walt Disney World and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Diagon Alley at Universal Orlando Resort.

US Travel Association President & ceo Roger Dow said Orlando was poised to continue setting tourism records in 2015.

This year, the city will debut the new I-Drive 360 attraction, home to three Merlin Entertainments tourist sites including the new Orlando Eye observation wheel, Madame Tussauds and Sea Life Aquarium, all opening on 04 May.

China-based Lux rep

HIGHER exhibitor and buyer delegate numbers are expected at the 2015 edition of Luxperience after the travel show appointed a representative based in China.

Beijing African Center (BAC) has been tasked with recruiting new buyers and exhibitors from North Asia to the show, taking place at the Australian Technology Park in Sydney from 06-09 Sep.

BAC joins other reps already in place in North & South America, the United Kingdom, Europe, India and Southeast Asia.

AF confirms its HOP!

ALL domestic & regional flights departing from Paris Orly Airport will be reclassified as routes to be operated by new low-cost subsidiary HOP!, Air France says.

Formally unveiling the carrier this week, Air France said the new operation is aimed at clawing back market share in regional centres lost to low-cost rivals Ryanair and easyJet.

HOP! will operate more than 600 flights daily using a fleet of 96 narrow-body and turboprop jets, based at Orly and Lyon Airports.

Arden christens *Tranquility II*



ABOVE: Avalon Waterways' 10th Suite Ship was christened at a ceremony in Strasbourg, France earlier this month by godmother and famed Canadian singer & broadcaster Jann Arden.

The 128-passenger *Tranquility II* will operate voyages through the Netherlands, France, Germany and Switzerland.

Arden is **pictured** at the event (second from right) flanked by Avalon Waterways managing director Patrick Clark and Avalon Waterways md Canada, Stephanie Bishop with *Tranquility II*'s Captain Milos Laskovich.

QF Dark Mofo boost

QANTAS has announced extra services between Sydney-Hobart to coincide with the Museum of Old and New Art's 'Dark Mofo' winter festival being held in Jun.

Four additional weekend return services have been scheduled for the start and the end of the festival (from 12 to 22 Jun).

QF is also upgrading aircraft on select flights between Melbourne and Hobart to Boeing 737s to provide further seat capacity.

VA kid entertainment

VIRGIN Australia has signed a deal with children's entertainment content provider Bound Round to source child-friendly destination videos for screening mid-flight.

The partnership is intended to couple with VA's existing High Flyer Passport program, which launched last year (**TD** 11 Apr 14).

Content can be found in the Watch section of seat-back IFE screens or through the wireless streaming entertainment service.

Launch videos include "What To Do" segments in nine Australian cities, six New Zealand regions, Singapore, Fiji, Vanuatu & Phuket.

Jumeirah into India

MIDDLE Eastern luxury hotelier Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts has flagged plans to open its first property in India by 2019.

A 470-room and suite property will be located in the Lower Parel district of Mumbai, the *Press Trust of India* reports.

President & ceo Gerald Lawless said Jumeirah was also in talks with a development in Goa, adding that the new 'Venu' brand was earmarked for locations "like Bangalore, Chennai, New Delhi and Noida".

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Thank you for nominating Europcar for Best Car Rental Operator in the NTIA Awards. We appreciate you supporting us with your votes.

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AIRCALIN and Creative Holidays recently took the opportunity to show off the tropical paradise of New Caledonia to this group of agents and CH consultants over a five-night educational trip.

The group immersed themselves in the culture and beauty of the destination and took part in an array of different activities.

Highlights included visiting Bourail, the Deva Domain and Green Island, where a chance to hit the crystal clear water and have a snorkel was readily taken.

Back in the capital Noumea,

the agents enjoyed the famous flavour and savour tour, testing out some of the most delectable culinary treats on the island.

The visit was capped off with a city tour riding onboard segways - certainly a unique way to explore.

Pictured above from left is the group, featuring Nicola Billens, Creative Holidays; Gianna Masino, Creative Holidays; Manuela Nielsen, New Caledonia Tourism; Natalie Parker, Creative Holidays; Liesl Jensen, Benalla Travel and Olivia Naumcevski, Creative Hols.

Cooking with Nguyen

AUTHENTIC Vietnamese cooking classes have been added as a new Freedom of Choice tour on APT's Vietnam land tours operating in 2015 and 2016.

Guests touring Ho Chi Minh City will have exclusive access to the GRAIN by Luke Nguyen cooking studio to learn about Vietnamese cooking history, techniques and to recreate Nguyen's best dishes.

UL corruption query

NEWLY elected Sri Lanka Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has ordered an investigation into alleged high-level corruption at national carrier Sri Lankan Airlines.

According to *Reuters*, an inquiry has uncovered "billions of dollars" worth of "irregularities" linked to a 2010 Airbus aircraft order.

However, the jet maker has been cleared of any wrongdoing.

A statement from the inquiry has called for former chairman Nishantha Wickremesinghe to be prosecuted over the allegations.

It claims staff at UL manipulated contracts, made management changes and skirted purchase regulations to ensure the Airbus order was placed.

States sign for ATAP

QUEENSLAND Tourism Industry Council and the NSW Business Chamber have signed to join the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program to provide a standardised tourism accreditation scheme.

The program carries many of the hallmarks of the former T-QUAL system, designed to inform guests and visitors of the professionalism of a product or service.

All states in Australia have now signed up to join the program, with more than 4,000 businesses already accredited nationwide.

ATAP Ltd chairman Evan Hall said the board was eager to work with federal & state governments to advance tourism quality and boost Australia's competitiveness.

Friday 10th Apr 2015

Turner top job at GK

AIRLINE veteran Gerry Turner has been named as the new chief executive officer of Jetstar Japan, replacing Miyuki Suzuki.

Turner has been involved with Jetstar since its inception, playing a role in first launching Qantas' low-cost carrier in Australia 11 years ago.

He ascends to the top job from his role as Jetstar's manager of group operations, which oversees all of the brand's global divisions.

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Cockatoo Is 2-bed unit

SYDNEY Harbour Federation Trust is listing a new Garden Apartment to rent on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour.

The self-contained two-bedroom apartment features one Queen bed & one King bed (which can be split into single beds), as well as a balcony for entertaining with BBQ and outdoor setting.

Affording views across Sydney Harbour to Woolwich & Hunters Hill, the Garden Apartment is priced from \$370 per night.

CLICK HERE for more details.

New Rio Hilton opens

THE brand new 298-room Hilton Barra Rio de Janeiro has opened in Brazil, offering introductory rates from US\$169 per night.

Positioned in the heart of the Barra da Tijuca neighbourhood on Avenida Aberlardo Bueno, the nine-storey property is expected to be popular with audiences for the 2016 Olympic Games due to its proximity to the Olympic Park, just five minutes away.

Chengdu to Moscow

SICHUAN Airlines will open the first direct link between Chengdu and Moscow when it launches direct flights to the Russian capital early next month.

Beginning on a thrice weekly basis from 02 May, the new route will be operated by A330 aircraft.



Travel Specials

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au.

New Zealand tour operator **Kirra Tours** has recently released its 2015/16 Coach Touring brochure, launching an earlybird special to coincide. Guests can cut 7.5% from the price of any tour if booked & paid in full by 30 Jun. The special allows for savings of up to \$1,200 per couple and is valid on departures from 01 Oct 2015 to 30 Sep 2016. Phone 1800 888 242 for info.

Family-owned alpine property **Trackers Mountain Lodge** at Falls Creek has released new school holiday deals for stays from 26 Jun to 03 Jul. Three nights start from \$670 per adult and \$400 per child 14 and under, with seven nights from \$1,400 / \$900 respectively. Phone (03) 5758 3346.

Topdeck has cut 25% from the price of its 31-day South-East Adventure in Africa. The camping tour includes 27 nights in two-person dome tents and mattresses, three nights in hotels & many meals, if booked before 31 May for departure by 20 May 2016. Details at www.topdeck.travel.

Celebrating its Diamond anniversary, **Disneyland** Anaheim is giving gifts to travellers from Australia and New Zealand, offering a \$100 Disney Gift Card when booking three nights in a Disney hotel & more for longer stays. Valid only for agents to book, for travel 16 Aug to 29 Sep 2015.



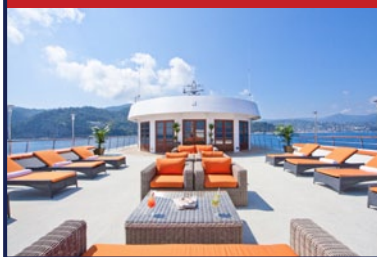
WIN A SMALL SHIP CRUISE WITH APT

Sail around the world on an **APT** small ship cruise with this month's exciting *Travel Daily* competition, brought to you in partnership with Australia's leading award-winning cruise operator APT.

Every day we'll be taking you on an adventure, showcasing the many highlights and destinations available on an APT Luxury Small Ship cruise. The person with the most correct answers, and who wows us with the most creative answer to the final question, will win the following unforgettable prize: an all-inclusive '17-day Southeast Asia Adventure' Expedition Small Ship cruise for two, departing 14 June 2016. Send your answers to: APTcomp@traveldaily.com.au

Q6. APT guests are always hosted and escorted on their cruise. On a Boutique Collection cruise, who is the person who looks after you onboard and throughout your cruise?

Hint: **CLICK HERE**, see p5.



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Express driving away to success



Railway to MIA open

SOUTH Florida Regional Transportation Authority has opened its new tri-rail station at Miami International Airport, offering direct links to the city.

The station is the final stop of a 115km rail corridor and is part of a US\$2 billion hub covering all transport options for the airport including city buses, metro, rental cars, taxis, buses and shared rides.

Amtrak is expected to integrate its services to include the new station at some point in future.

Passengers can also reach Fort Lauderdale Int'l Airport as another station on the same line.

ABOVE: DriveAway Holidays recently awarded its prestigious Partnership Award to the Express Travel Group for consistently ongoing sales targets group-wide and supporting the wholesaler. DriveAway's industry sales manager Nathan Baber is **pictured** above presenting the award to Ari Magoutis, Express Travel Group executive gm.

JW Mumbai growth

MARRIOTT International has opened the JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, the bespoke hotel brand's second property in the city, offering 585 rooms and suites.

Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication. Produced each weekday since 1994, the newsletter is first with the latest industry news and is available by paid subscription to people within the travel industry - sign up at www.traveldaily.com.au.

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This pioneering family owned Cruise Company is looking for a talented Groups Consultant. Book all the world's best cruise lines from QE2 to deluxe River Cruising arranging all-inclusive bespoke experiences including chartering an aircraft, land logistics & arranging once in a lifetime land experiences. You need groups travel exp, cruise knowledge preferable, strong GDS skills & organizational skills. In return enjoy onboard inspections/famils & the opportunity to travel on the packages you create. Cruise into your new role today!

WELCOME TO THE ACADEMIC WORLD!

ACADEMIC CORPORATE TRAVEL CONSULTANT

MELBOURNE - SALARY PACKAGE UP TO \$75K (OTE)

This well-established travel management company seeks international corporate travel consultant to work in an implant within one of their clients premises! You will be responsible for servicing exciting academic corporate accounts with their business and leisure travel arrangements. Min 2 years international travel consulting experience, strong fares knowledge and the ability to work under pressure is a must! You will benefit from an exceptionally great working environment & uncapped earning potential. Apply today!

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