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Wednesday 25th March 2015



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QF plans charm offensive

QANTAS head of international Gareth Evans has vowed to press on with the proposed alliance with China Eastern, aiming to highlight its benefits in the face of the ACCC's draft rejection of the deal (**TD** yesterday).

ACCC chairman Rod Sims has also hinted that an alliance which

would see additional Chinese ports served from Australia would be more likely to proceed, with the QF/MU proposal focusing solely on Sydney-Shanghai.

Evans said the China Eastern venture, which would see the airlines combine operations in Shanghai, would help the airlines compete in a crowded market where over 20 carriers already provide Australia-China services.

"New traffic rights recently granted to Chinese carriers means the competition in this market will only increase," he said.

ATEC md Peter Shelley warned that the draft ACCC ruling could put a "handbrake" on inbound tourism growth from China.

Air NZ South America

AIR New Zealand is today celebrating the opening of reservations for its new non-stop flights from Auckland to Buenos Aires, which will debut 01 Dec.

Australians are expected to take to the new route with enthusiasm, with today's launch including special \$1,599 return Economy class fares to South America from 7 Australian ports.

The thrice weekly 777-200 service will have a flight time of less than 12 hours ex AKL and will be timed for easy trans-Tasman connections.

Air NZ also plans to offer codeshare services on Aerolineas Argentinas beyond Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

See the **cover page** for more.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has ten pages of news, including a front full page and a photo page from **Air New Zealand**, plus full pages from: (**click**):

- AA Appointments jobs
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ATAB conference launch

PHIL Hoffmann has been confirmed as the keynote speaker of a new conference organised by former Qantas Holidays ceo Simon Bernardi.

The inaugural Australian Travel Agent Barometer (ATAB) Business Builders Conference will take place at Sydney's Pullman Hotel Hyde Park on Thu 09 Jul.

With the theme *Competing Online through Brand Building*, the conference is targeting agents from across the industry, incl home-based consultants and franchise members.

"Participants will be able to walk away from this one-day event with a wealth of knowledge

and turnkey solutions for their business," Bernardi promised.

While travel agents and their expertise will always remain relevant, "the way in which customers make their purchases have changed," he said.

"This is simply the new way to transact and agents should be at the cutting edge to remain competitive and attract new customers."

Sponsors of the event include Qantas and Accor as well as Expedia, Leading Hotels of the World, Oceania Cruises and more.

Limited earlybird bookings are now available at the "buy one get one free" price of \$132 for two - see www.atab.net.au.

Avalon France debut

AVALON Waterways overnight held the naming ceremony for its newest "Suite Ship" on the Seine River, saying the debut of *Avalon Tapestry II* will bring "new levels of space and comfort to the rivers of France".

Avalon's French revolution also includes *Avalon Poetry II*, moving from the Rhine to the Rhone to kick off the season this week.

Tassie Crowne Plaza

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group is set to enter Tasmania, today announcing a management agreement for a new Crowne Plaza hotel in Hobart.

Set to open in 2017, the 187-room property will be part of the ICON complex, a new mixed-use project in the CBD developed by The Kalis Group.

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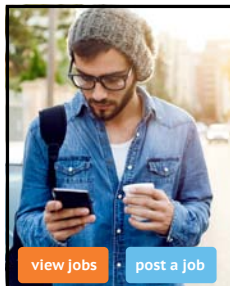
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IT'S ROYAL CARIBBEAN TIME

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Happiness e-brochure

CLUB Med has released the Jan-Mar e-brochure for its *Happiness Sun* holiday destinations program for the Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico and Malaysia.

To view the 16-page e-guide, see **page 14** of today's issue.

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4U retires 4U9525

LUFTHANSA'S low-cost subsidiary Germanwings has retired flight number 4U9525 in a mark of respect for the 150 pax & crew that were killed in a crash in the French Alps overnight.

The aircraft was enroute from Barcelona to Dusseldorf with 144 passengers and six crew onboard when the Airbus A320 fell from the sky suddenly, crashing near Prads-Haute-Bléone, about 100kms from Nice.

Among the presumed victims were two Australians, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop confirmed this morning.

Germanwings confirmed the accident about 2 hours after the incident occurred.

"Everyone at Germanwings and Lufthansa is deeply shocked and saddened by these events. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the passengers and crew members," the carrier said in a statement.

It's reported the aircraft had been in operation continuously since 1991 and receive a routine check in Dusseldorf the day prior.

Airbus said the jet, registered as D-AIPX, had accumulated approx 58,300 flight hours on some 46,700 flights.

One of the A320's black-boxes has been located by search teams.

Flight number 4U9525 and the return service 4U9524 have been replaced with the new designator of 4U9440/9441, according to Germanwings' website.

EK ICC comp Q3

THE third & final question in our ICC World Cup cricket final ticket giveaway is: *On EK operated trans-Tasman services, does Emirates provide 30kg baggage allowance, full service and award winning ICE entertainment?*

To be in the running, readers must have correctly answered the two previous questions - yesterday's answer was 98 weekly services - and be the first to respond with the right answer to the above question.

Send your answer asap to ekcomp@traveldaily.com.au.

Courtesy of Emirates, the prize is for two General Admission tickets to the ICC World Cup final at the MCG on Sun 29 Mar.

The winner will be contacted directly by **TD** today & required to collect tickets at EK's Melb office.



Window Seat

IT SEEMS every day has some sort of official title, with 21 Mar apparently World Sleep Day, which aims to highlight the benefits of a good night's sleep.

Passengers onboard Chinese carrier Tianjin Airlines last Sat had an interesting surprise when the cabin crew turned up to work wearing their pyjamas.

The flight from Tianjin to Xiamen saw crew carry out their duties while promoting the virtues of sleep, diet & exercise.

We're sure plenty of pax on the flight were hoping the pilots weren't taking the meaning of the day too literally by napping while at the cockpit controls.



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EK launching Orlando

EMIRATES will commence a new daily service between Dubai and Orlando from 01 Sep, officials at Orlando International Airport announced yesterday.

The Middle Eastern carrier will operate three-class Boeing 777-200ER aircraft on the route, with eight seats in First, 42 in Business and 216 in Economy Class.

Flights to the Floridian gateway can be booked now.

Maldives incentive

A **SIX-NIGHT** Maldives holiday for two valued at over \$12,700 is being offered as an incentive to agents booking clients to the Indian Ocean tourist hot-spot with Freestyle Holidays.

The prize includes return flights, three nights at the Sheraton Full Moon Resort & Spa, three nights at W Retreat & Spa & transfers.

Entry is based on Maldives sales deposited between 23 Mar & 23 May, with agents accruing 'Maldives points' for rooms sold.

One point is earned for each room night deposited, while two points are amassed for each room night booked at either Sheraton Full Moon or W Retreat.

Plus, each pax booked on Singapore Airlines to Male will earn a further two points.

For further information, see the last page or [CLICK HERE](#).

Shuttle self check-in

POPULAR US transportation service SuperShuttle has rolled out a new 'Airport Mobile Self Check-In' feature, available to pax with a prepaid reservation.

The service enables customers to opt-in to receive text messages which are activated on arrival at a destination airport, advising them they can begin the self check-in process, which when complete issues a boarding pass number.

VA/ET crew dancing in the aisles



MELBOURNE played host recently to a group of incentive winners, treated to a night at the theatre and a performance of hit show *Strictly Ballroom*, the stage adaptation of the cult classic film.

Attendees were all winners from a recent promotion run by Express Ticketing and Virgin Australia, which saw each flown to the Vic capital for the occasion.

Drinks and nibbles were served up prior to the group taking their seats, located only a few rows back from the stage, leading to many singing along with the well-known classic hits featured.

Pictured above from left at the show is Min & Christine Zhang, Odyssey Travel; Jennifer Wright & Javier Cejudo, Skiddoo; Elle & Christiane Patzwald, Airport Travel Centre; Danielle Trimarchi, Virgin Australia; Michael & Melva

Ruffin, italktravel Hillarys; Rane & Dianne Reguson, Jetsetter Travel and Cindy Train & Karleina Leith from Express Ticketing.

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ABOVE: General manager of The Sarojin in Khao Lak, Thailand, Roland Svensson has been in Australia this week to meet with key industry partners and update them on the latest developments at the luxury property.

Australians comprise the fourth largest market for the beachfront resort, with the holiday experience starting in style right from pickup at Phuket airport.

During the one hour drive north in the Sarojin's own vehicles,

guests can enjoy wi-fi access and refreshments before chilling out upon arrival in the huge rooms and suites.

All day breakfast is a unique feature at the Sarojin, allowing for languid sleep-ins, while the property also runs all of its own excursions to ensure guests enjoy the Sarojin experience in every aspect of their stay.

Svensson is pictured above with Alicia Phillips and Roslyn Hakim of World Travel Professionals.

Hilton app in Sydney

MEMBERS of Hilton Worldwide loyalty program HHonors can now select their own room prior to check-in at Hilton Sydney, with the global hotel giant continuing the rollout of its smartphone app.

Launched in Sydney yesterday, the local version of the app allows guests to check-in up to 24 hours before arrival and customise their booking with special requests and options to upgrade if available.

Smartphones will soon be able to double as the room key under an app upgrade expected to be deployed by the end of 2016.

For now, guests still need to obtain a key card from reception.

The app is live at more than 4,300 Hilton Worldwide properties globally across 12 brands.

Accor on Apple Watch

AIMING to provide value-added service before, during and after a stay, Accor will roll out a new app for the Apple Watch from the end of next month upon its launch.

The app will work in sync with the existing Accor smartphone app and will promote top hotels and destinations as well as allow users to manage current bookings.

Alerts will be sent once check-in is open, with interactive maps to find hotels, access hotel info, local weather and loyalty details.

TNZ winter escape campaign

FIRST time Aussie arrivals are targeted in the latest instalment of Tourism New Zealand's winter campaign, which has been launched earlier than ever before.

In partnership with Air New Zealand, Flight Centre, Instagram and NZ's ski industry, the latest take on TNZ's 'More Magic Every Day' campaign (now in its third year) has been developed to urge potential clients to book, not just think about an NZ winter escape.

Along with ski newcomers, the

promo aims to increase average ski days and entice Australians to book a unique winter experience across 'the ditch', and not necessarily limited to the slopes.

The new campaign sees TNZ team with Instagram for the first time, which aims to showcase New Zealand in winter through paid imagery and video content.

Returning in 2015 is #NZdronie to capture & share action on New Zealand's mountain slopes.

The campaign runs until Jul.

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Air China to Jo'burg

AIR China is introducing thrice weekly flights between Beijing and Johannesburg from 30 Aug, filling a void left by South African Airways' route exit on 28 Mar.

Guide to managing reviews

TRIPADVISOR has launched a guide to writing reviews aimed at encouraging users to provide useful and constructive content.

The guide takes into account the opinions of over 100,000 business owners and travellers, including nearly 6,000 from Australia.

National Tourism Alliance Australia ceo Juliana Payne congratulated TripAdvisor for the initiative and advice on how best to encourage positive dialogue.

"We want Australian tourism and hospitality operators to be able to take full advantage of the business growth and development opportunities presented by the online and mobile world," Payne added.

The guide encourages travellers to write their reviews within three months of staying, to relate to a personal experience and to be specific about a concern.

Potential guests said they liked reading balanced reviews, with a writer providing context for why they did or did not like something.

More than half of respondents said they were deterred by an overly picky review, lack of detail or poor spelling and grammar.

Based on the survey results, businesses identified extreme opinions, phrasing or unjustified and inexplicable complaints as being of the least amount of use.

Business owners said they are most likely to benefit from facts backed by concise details.

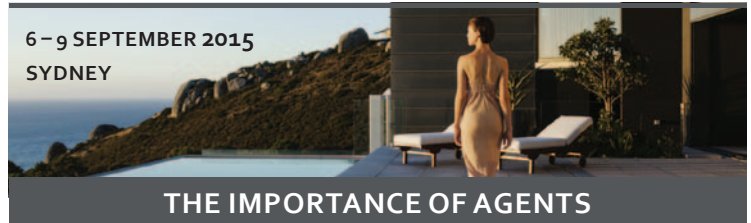
In responding to guest reviews, managers were advised to address specific issues raised, to be of the utmost professionalism, show some personality and to be original in responding rather than simply customising a template.

Evans Capri eatery

CELEBRITY chef Pete Evans will open his second restaurant in collaboration with Frasers Hospitality at Capri by Fraser, Brisbane hotel on 01 Apr.

Asana Capri Brisbane joins Evans' *Heirloom* restaurant which opened at Frasers Suites Perth in Jun last year.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF AGENTS

Conventional industry wisdom will tell you that the new generation of travellers (millennials) don't use travel agents. They prefer to go their own way, do their own research, book online and spend as little money as possible. But a recent survey out of the US says that this is all wrong – millennials use travel agents more than any other age group. 28% used travel agents compared to just 15% of generation x and 13 % of baby boomers. And why? Because they are looking for guidance. Millennials understand that up and coming, off the beaten track destinations can't just be booked on the web. Agents' insights and in depth knowledge allow them to give advice based on travellers' specific needs, rather than the one size fits all approach people encounter online.

At Luxperience, we are introducing travel agents to the latest high end adventure destinations that travellers (across all demographics) are looking to book. To reach these destinations they need the assistance of a trained, experienced professional. Each buyer at Luxperience has the opportunity to meet with 300 exhibitors during face to face meetings and networking events to ensure that they are on the cusp of emerging travel trends and can give consumers the experience they are looking for. The exhibitors at Luxperience aren't restricted by particular corporate affiliations, so there is more for buyers to discover and, ultimately, more information they can share with their clients. It is also an opportunity to share ideas with agents from around the world to find out where their clients are going next. We look forward to seeing all of our valued local buyers at Luxperience 2015!

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KQ resumes DAR

KENYA Airways will resume regular services to Dar es Salaam from 26 Mar after an amicable resolution of the Bilateral Air Services Agreements was reached between Kenya and Tanzania.

The SkyTeam carrier had scaled back flights to DAR from 42 to 14 weekly flights last week while the BASA was nipped out.

Snap-happy tours

RENOWNED landscape photographer Paul Arnold is set to escort a series of photographic tours in Kakadu from Apr to Nov.

Tour locations include Yellow Water Billabong & Kakadu Cooida Lodge, with the 2-hr Photography Walk priced at \$50pp.

For the full tour dates, go to www.kakadutourism.com.

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HOME-BASED agent network TravelManagers is clearly aiming high in its growth projections, hiring out a venue far too big for its recent Vic state meeting.

The event at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne's Docklands was the latest of the company's regular gatherings of staff in each state, which occur on a regular basis around the country.

Guest speakers at the event included Dubai Tourism and tour operator Abercrombie & Kent.

Matters canvassed at the latest meeting included key initiatives detailed by executive general manager Michael Gazal, who also provided an update on the rollout of the company's new consumer website as well as marketing and GDS matters from Tramada.

Attendees also learned more about a forthcoming smartphone app for TravelManagers which

will enable clients to more easily get in touch with their PTM at any stage of a holiday or booking.

Management also provided details on 200 educational spaces secured for this year, with seven trips to be run exclusively for personal travel managers.

Head office team members are also in attendance to meet with new members and strengthen existing networking ties with the longest tenured PTMs.

The group of Vic-based personal travel managers are **pictured** above wondering when the AFL season is getting underway.

Spotlight on London

COLLETTE has added London to its City Spotlights range, releasing a new five-day itinerary taking in a city tour, visit to Stonehenge, a ride on the London Eye and more.

Domestic going down

DECLINES were recorded for all major parameters in Australia's official domestic aviation statistics from the Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development for Jan this year.

Revenue passenger numbers fell 3.6% year-on-year to 4.67 million, with capacity sliding 2.4% in response to the smaller loads.

Industry-wide load factors fell from 76.7% to 75.6% due to capacity dropping at a faster rate.

On a route-by-route basis, pax numbers fell fastest on Brisbane to Emerald flights (-22.6%), with BNE to Hamilton Island also recording a large drop (-19.5%).

Traffic from HTI to SYD (+13.7%) and AYQ to SYD (+13.3%) saw the greatest increases, largely driven by peak season holidaymakers.

Hobart performed strongly as the leading regional airport for the month, with pax numbers up 6.3% compared to Jan 2014.

Children travel free on Heathrow Express

UK RAIL operator Heathrow Express is activating a 'kids go free' offer on a permanent basis.

To be rolled out from this Fri, children will be able to travel free of charge on the line between London Heathrow Airport and the city as part of an effort to entice more leisure travellers to use the 15-minute service.

The offer applies to children under 16 when accompanied by a parent or guardian.

"Two thirds of the people who use our service are travelling on business. We want to encourage more leisure passengers, families in particular, to use our service," Heathrow Express director Fraser Brown said.

"Allowing children to travel free at all times from now on is a key part of doing this," he added.

MU daily PVG/AKL

NEW year-round China Eastern Airlines services from Shanghai to Auckland have been announced by Auckland Airport officials.

The service enhancement comes after a successful seasonal operation between the two cities from Dec last year to present.

MU will offer four flights per week year-round from Sep, adding an extra 100,000 seats per year on the route.

"New Zealand is continuing to evolve in its popularity as a destination for Chinese travellers," China Eastern gm for Oceania Kathy Zhang said on Tue.



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This June, high-octane excitement will race onto the scene when Universal Studios Hollywood introduces *Fast & Furious—Supercharged*, a pulse-pounding, adrenaline-fuelled thrill ride as the new grand finale to the world-famous Studio Tour.

To celebrate the new attraction and the launch of daily services from Sydney and Melbourne to Los Angeles, Universal Studios Hollywood and their partner United Airlines are giving away double passes to a special screening of *Fast & Furious 7* on Wednesday 29th April in Sydney.

To win, be the first to answer the following question correctly. Send your answer to furious7@traveldaily.com.au

What exciting milestone is Universal Studios Hollywood celebrating this year by offering the new Nighttime Studio Tour?
For more info [CLICK HERE](#).



Vib launches in Korea

BEST Western International will open the first property under its new “Vib” boutique brand in Gangnam, South Korea, with building beginning later this year.

The brand’s name, unveiled last year (*TD* 10 Oct) is short for “Vibrant” and designed to provide an element of a city’s local flavour to a visiting traveller.

“We believe the central business district’s high density and energy is the perfect fit for Vib,” BW Int’l president & ceo David Kong said.

HKG reviewing levy

HONG Kong Int’l Airport has initiated a review into a proposed user-pays system to help fund the construction of a third runway.

The review comes after IATA said the imposition of a levy on pax using the airport to raise funds could dent the city’s overall competitiveness in Asia.

HKG chief executive Fred Lam Tin-fuk said there was room for the fee to be lowered for shorter flights, or reduced depending on the level of funding the airport is able to obtain from banks.

Fresh Thai at Creative

THIRTY new hotels have been added to Creative Holidays’ Thailand product range, featured in its newly launched brochure.

The wholesaler has boosted its supply of higher-end luxury hotels with the new JW Marriott in Phuket, Point Yamu by COMO and the Six Senses in Koh Samui.

A range of multi-day itineraries in Bangkok, along the coast and to island resorts have been added, while new destinations available include Sangklaburi Lake & Trang.

Another Indian airline

INDIA’S southern state of Kerala is set to launch its own low-cost carrier, with Air Kerala to take to the skies from Nov aimed at catering to a growing demand for domestic and overseas travel.

The new carrier will be owned by the Kerala Govt and will be based at Cochin Int’l Airport.

Domestic destinations will be served initially, with plans to add overseas ports to GCC countries within a year as its fleet grows.

Air Kerala’s launch will be the third new carrier planned to begin in India this year, following Vistara and AirAsia India.

The state has been active of late in promoting itself to Australia, hosting a roadshow here last year.

Hobbiton milestone

TOURISM New Zealand is celebrating one-million visitors to Hobbiton, the milestone coming the same day the final *The Hobbit* movie is released on DVD.



AFTA UPDATE

The latest updates from AFTA’s Chief Executive, Jayson Westbury

IT IS very pleasing to see that the travel industry has once again been completely consumed with NTIA fever. In fact, this year we have a record number of nominations and the AFTA website has been awash with traffic as voting is now in full flight.

One of the important things that AFTA does is bring the industry together and NTIA delivers this in spades. Each year the AFTA team puts a great deal of time into ensuring that the categories and process of NTIA are appropriate for the industry and done in a professional way.

For 2015, the changes which have introduced several new categories has shown that we are on track for another very successful process. It is very rewarding for everyone involved in NTIA to see how much the industry does embrace these awards.

I am actually writing this week’s column from Toronto, Canada as I am attending a World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) board meeting. The global voice of the travel agents is alive and well and it is very pleasing to maintain an involvement in this worldwide forum.

In fact, the WTAAA continues to work on many of the challenges faced by the travel agency community, including IATA matters, NDC, visa access, fuel surcharging and cross border selling, just to name a few.

It is important work that the WTAAA undertakes and importantly allows AFTA to have an influence over the approach that the group takes to get demonstrable outcomes for the industry.

As for Toronto, it’s cold, with temperatures hitting -20°C overnight as a cold front tumbles through. It is hard to imagine how anyone would choose to settle in such a cold place. It is a city nevertheless that has one of the seven wonders of the modern world, being the CN Tower.

In 1995, the tower received this accolade from the American Society of Civil Engineers and having been to the top, I can see why. An amazing experience and particularly on a clear day, even if the lake is frozen and the outside temperature is topping -20°C.

Our friends at the Canadian Travel Agents Association have done a wonderful job in bringing the WTAAA to Toronto. The WTAAA has also launched its new website which can be found at www.wtaaa.org.



Director at Los Cabos

LUIS Palacios Larrañaga has been named commercial director for the Los Cabos Tourism Board, tasked with overseeing the destination’s image in all overseas markets including Australia, via online & offline channels such as digital marketing & social media.

Rates climbing in Feb

AVERAGE daily rates for hotel rooms in Sydney climbed 8.2% to \$233.69, leading to a RevPAR increase to \$213.62, according to monthly hotel data for Sydney released by STR Global.

Supply fell 1% while demand was flat with only 0.1% growth.

THANK YOU FOR NOMINATING US IN THE 2015 AFTA AWARDS.

We are delighted to receive nominations for:

Category 18: Best Domestic Airline

Category 19: Best Airline International – Online

Category 31: Best Sales Executive – Industry Supplier

Kirstie Egan
Matt Endycott

VOTE NOW at afta.com.au



Air NZ proves it takes more than two to tango!

AIR New Zealand transformed its new Sydney office into the vibrancy of Buenos Aires on Wednesday 18 March to celebrate the launch of their new long haul route and their first ever service to South America – Auckland to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Honoured guests, The Deputy Head of Mission for Argentina, Mr Eduardo Acevedo-Diaz (pictured **below right**) and The Consul General for Argentina Mr Emiliano

Gabriel Waiselfisz joined key travel trade and media guests for a Buenos Aires themed night complete with tango dancers, musicians, Argentinian canapés, wine and beer.

BELOW: Mike Thompson, Helloworld head of strategic partnerships; Kim Portrate, Helloworld chief marketing officer and Nicole Scott, Air NZ manager market development.



ABOVE: Air New Zealand's Kirstie Dyer-Grose, Nicholas Lewis, Andrea Massaro and Crystal Truong.

RIGHT: Dennis Alysandratos, Group gm & state manager Vic/Tas, Consolidated Travel with Alexandra Pisker, services support & air manager, APT.



RIGHT: Leanne Geraghty, Air NZ GM Australia, welcomes guests.



ABOVE: Air NZ commercial chief Cam Wallace with Matt O'Sullivan, SMH and Jamie Freed, AFR.

RIGHT: Sione Mailei, Air NZ & Greg Carter of Chimu Adventures.



ABOVE: Sandra Fleming, airline product manager, Scenic Tours and Jose Blanco, chairman, Australia Latin America Business Council.



LEFT: Neil Rodgers, head of product & marketing, Adventure World and Ana Salazar, bdm NSW/ACT, South America Tourism Office.



ABOVE: Blair Catton, head of leisure sales, Air New Zealand and Caryn Young, product manager, Adventure World New Zealand.



ABOVE: Tango dancers wowed the crowd.



LEFT: Oscar Cili, Aero Representations; and Todd Barry of Tucan Travel.



ABOVE: Argentine Consul-General, Emiliano Gabriel Waiselfisz, applauds the new route.

LEFT: Andrea Massaro, Air NZ.



BELOW: Eduardo Acevedo-Diaz flanked by SANZAR's Brendon Morris, ops mgr and SANZAR ceo Greg Peters.



Tunis security sacked

SIX police commanders, one of whom was in charge of tourist security, have been dismissed by Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid after last week's terrorist attack at the Bardo Museum.

According to a government spokesperson, the move comes after Essid visited the museum, during which he is said to have noticed several security failures.

The Bardo Museum is due to reopen to visitors this week.

Authorities have arrested 20 people, of which 10 are believed to have been directly involved.

Crimea to start airline

OFFICIALS in Russian-occupied Crimea have outlined plans to start their own airline to kickstart tourism to the Black Sea region as well as boost links with Moscow.

Currently un-named, the carrier will use Simferopol Airport as a base, starting with a fleet of six aircraft and 40 pilots flying to 14 cities, soon growing to 36.

The Black Sea saw tourism numbers plummet by 2.1 million arrivals last year in the wake of the region's annexation by Russia and ongoing political instability.

Crimean officials hope to restore the region's tourism revenues through the new carrier, which would compete with new low-cost airline Pobeda, itself formed after Western-imposed sanctions saw the demise of Aeroflot low-cost carrier Dobrolet (**TD** 30 Oct).

Accommodation Updates



WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Tropical North Queensland property **Rydg Esplanade** has moved to cater to more family groups for the Easter school holidays, opening six new Family Rooms based on strong demand for the room type. The additions now take the hotel's inventory to 12 family rooms.

Each offers a unique design with separate areas for parents and kids, complete with bunk beds for kids and individual TVs linked to an Xbox.



The finishing touches are being applied to 34 new Garden Pool Villas at **Aleenta Phuket Phang-Nga** as part of a major renovation at the Thai resort, opening to guests on 01 Jun. Each newly built villa is set back from the beach in a garden setting and aims to reflect the property's Outdoor Living philosophy. Each villa offers a private pool, outdoor bath, private day bed, LCD TV & natural cotton robes & slippers.

Get a Taste of Tahiti

AIR Tahiti Nui has released new holiday packages to Tahiti starting from \$1,729 for return flights, four nights accom and a free tour.

Packages are on sale to 02 Apr, valid for travel to 07 Dec this year.

Serviced acquisition

SERVICED Apartments Worldwide has acquired Scottish property The Knight Residence, near Edinburgh, adding to its collection which includes three hotels at 44 Curzon St, Mayfair.

Agents host St Pats morning tea



DELICACIES ranging from green biscuits, cake icing, lime cordial & celery sticks were on the table for one tours consultant from Venture Holidays to celebrate St Patrick's Day last week.

Hayley Ovens (**pictured** above) celebrated Ireland's national day

by hosting an decorative Irish morning tea for her clients.

Ovens may soon find herself off to Ireland if she is able to win this month's major prize of a trip to the country, thanks to Tourism Ireland and Insight Vacations.

More details in the panel at **left**.

Jump into Ireland
ireland.com

INSIGHT VACATIONS
The Art of Touring in Style

WIN a trip to Ireland

This month *Travel Daily* is giving the travel industry a chance to win a trip to Ireland, courtesy of **Tourism Ireland** and **Insight Vacations**. The prize includes:

- Return economy flights from Australia to Ireland for two people (including taxes)
- Pre- and post-tour accommodation in Dublin, courtesy of Tourism Ireland
- Insight Vacations 7-day "Focus on Ireland" guided holiday for two (twin share)

To win this amazing prize you'll need to do two things:

1. Send us a photo that celebrates Ireland's national day by greening yourselves, your business, whatever you want, for St Patrick's day before COB 17th March and,
2. From 18th March answer the daily question correctly and have the most creative answer to the final question

Send your answers to: irelandcomp@traveldaily.com.au

It's the longest fully signposted touring route in the world - what is its name?



Terms & conditions

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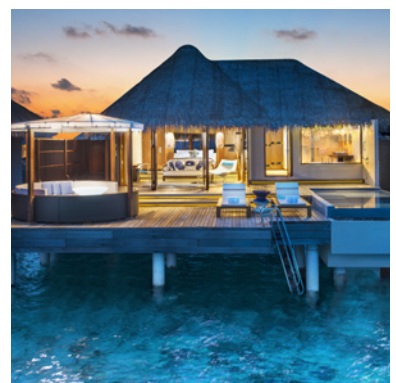
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Perth to Bali & Phuket	\$109	\$218	\$437	\$655
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