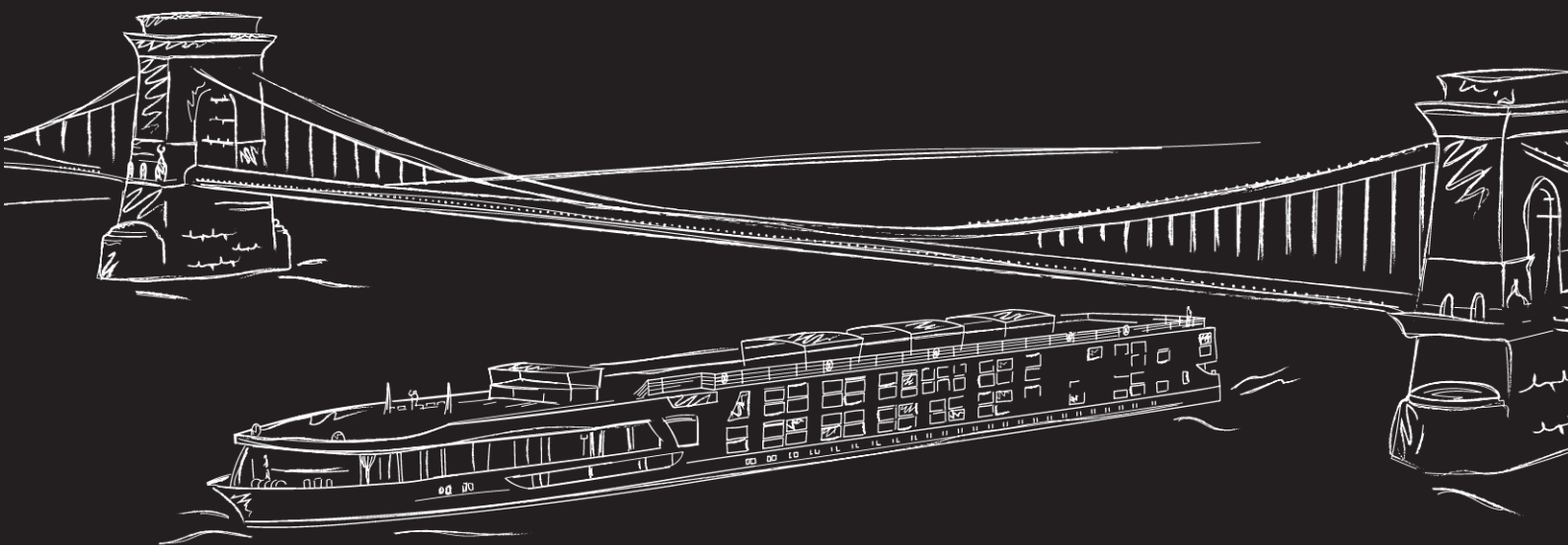


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Alysandratos HLO stake up

THE Alysandratos family's Sintack Pty Ltd is now the second largest shareholder in Helloworld, after boosting its stake in the company by just over 6% this week (**TD** breaking news).

The increase means the Consolidated Travel owners now hold 19.91% of Helloworld - just ahead of Qantas which retains a 19.3% shareholding in the firm.

The holdings of all investors in the company were diluted late last month with the approval of the merger between Helloworld and the AOT Group, which saw Andrew and Cinzia Burnes end up

with 40% of the company.

Sintack spent almost \$17 million boosting its stake, purchasing a total of 7.2 million shares from existing major shareholders UBS and CVC Capital Partners via its offshoot Europe Voyager.

Europe Voyager now holds 12.3% of Helloworld, while the UBS Australia stake has been reduced to just 1.3%.

Helloworld ceo Andrew Burnes told **Travel Daily** yesterday the increased stake by Sintack Pty Ltd was "a very good investment".

Scenic ERC price hold

SCENIC is offering next year's Europe River Cruises at 2016 prices as part of its just dispatched 2017 Pre-Release program.

The luxury travel company has a range of special offers for early bookers including a fly free to Europe offer all year round when booking a Standard Suite or 11 days or more and upgrade to Business Class from \$1,995pp on select dates and cruises.

See the **cover wrap** for more.

Albatross guaranteed

ALL 2016 European Summer Tours, including Britain & Ireland, operated by Albatross Tours are 100% guaranteed to depart.

For more details, see **page 10**.

Bumper issue today!

Travel Daily today has nine pages of news and photos, a front cover wrap for **Scenic** plus full pages from: (**click**)

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Xiamen to MEL from Jul

CHINESE carrier Xiamen Airlines will launch a third route down under, with Melbourne Airport today confirming the carrier will commence twice-weekly services to the Victorian capital.

The SkyTeam carrier began flying to Australia late last year, inducting flights from Fuzhou and Xiamen to Sydney on 30 Nov and 06 Dec respectively.

Xiamen Airlines will begin non-stop services between its home-hub of Xiamen and Melbourne in Jul using Boeing 787 Dreamliners on Mon and Fri.

Melbourne Apt ceo Lyell Strambi said Xiamen Airlines' new route offers a boost for Chinese visitors to the state.

"These new services provide even more opportunities to strengthen the rapidly growing business, education and tourism

relationship between Victoria and China," Strambi commented.

Victoria's Minister for Tourism & Major Events John Eren said MF's decision to fly to Melbourne is a "ringing endorsement of Victoria & a sign we're headed in the right direction."

MF will be Melbourne Airport's 30th international airline.

Molinaro resigns

THE Travel Corporation today announced general manager of Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection Australia for the past eight years, John Molinaro will depart the company next month.

Molinaro said after a successful term at the helm of Uniworld he planned to "place a greater emphasis on personal life".

TTC ceo John Veitch spoke highly of Molinaro.

"He has been a great asset to the organisation during his eight years with us and made an enormous contribution to the growth of Uniworld during his time," Veitch said.

A successor to the role will be announced shortly, TTC said.

THAI Sydney boost

THAI Airways International is jacking up frequencies on the Bangkok-Sydney route, with GDS displays indicating the airline will add an 11th weekly service commencing 03 Apr.

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Hawai'i consumer digi drive

HAWAII Tourism Oceania has launched its first consumer brand campaign in Australia and has assigned Flight Centre as the retail outlet for deals.

The digital push aims to educate Australians on the islands and encourage them to spend more time and travel more widely in Hawaii.

The "Paradise begins with Aloha" campaign takes visitors on a virtual tour of the Hawaiian Islands, presenting them with experiences available on the four main islands.

After selecting their itinerary, visitors will then go in the running to win a trip for four people including airfares and accommodation across two Hawaiian Islands with Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

HTO country manager Australia, Kerri Anderson said the move aims to push visitation during off-

peak periods throughout the year.

"We have just recorded our third consecutive record-breaking year of visitor growth and Australia is Hawai'i's third largest international market so our aim is to keep these numbers growing, for both first time and repeat visitors."

Anderson said the campaign "showcases the depth and breadth of experiences across the neighbour islands beyond sun, surf and sand by highlighting the dramatic geographical diversity, and also the great food, culture, history and range of experiences on each island."

Activities featured in the campaign ziplining over Kauai's rainforests, streams and deep valleys, experiencing local cuisine on Oahu and whale watching on the Au'au Channel.

To explore the microsite see www.experiencealoha.com.au.

US-Cuba flt deal done

US AND Cuban governments yesterday inked an agreement allowing flights between the United States and Cuba to resume after a 50-year hiatus due to political hostilities.

The framework of the deal was agreed upon in Dec (**TD** 18 Dec) and allows each country to operate up to 20 daily round-trip flights between America and Havana and up to 10 daily round-trip flights between the US and each of Cuba's nine other international airports.

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) has invited US air carriers to apply for an allocation of the scheduled passenger and cargo flights, with applications due 02 Mar.

There are 12 categories of travel that have been authorised, including family visit; professional research & professional meetings; educational & religious activities and public performances.



Window Seat

NEW York officials decided it's too cold for the city's annual Central Park Ice Festival.

The ice-carving festival was set to be held on Valentine's Day weekend, featuring live demonstrations of 2,722kg of ice being transformed using electric chain saws, chisels, and picks into a replica of one of the Park's statues.

Unfortunately, the official caretakers of Central Park were forced to cancel the event due to extreme temperatures and high winds.

MEANWHILE, also in NYC commuters were literally left in the dark in Grand Central on Mon after a broken water pipe left the terminal without power.

Some took the opportunity to take a unique selfie at the unusually empty station.



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CWT 2015 growth

CARLSON Wagonlit Travel (CWT) has recorded a \$US1.7 billion increase in new business sales for 2015, despite a “challenging economic climate”.

The company said its transactions were stable at 61.4m.

“Overall sales volume reached US\$24.2 billion, reflecting the significant curtailment in travel expenses by energy customers. Excluding the impact of the energy portfolio, transactions increased by 1.3%,” an official statement the company said.

CWT maintained its travel manager satisfaction at 90%, traveller satisfaction at 88% and a 94% retention rate.

Interest in their new app improved with 62% growth in user registrations to 560,000.

Company ceo and president Douglas Anderson said 2015 was challenging for the industry with “continued sharp fall in energy prices and oil in particular”.

Venture add brochure

VENTURE Holidays’ has unveiled its 2016/17 UK, Europe and Morocco brochure featuring accom, sightseeing, group touring, cruising, cars and trains.

New to the brochure is Norwegian Cruise Lines’ European cruise itineraries, sightseeing tours in London and tours in Paris including a market visit with a cooking class.

Port Vila clarification

TRAVEL Daily wishes to clarify Bauerfield Int’l Airport in Vanuatu still remains operational, with Air Vanuatu, Fiji Airways, AirCalin and Solomon Airways continuing with their scheduled flights.

Yesterday, it was announced a NZ-based company has been awarded a contract to conduct “emergency repairs” to VLI by Apr, paving the way for Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia to resume flights to Vanuatu.

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VisitBritain flies the union jack



VISITBRITAIN held a garden party in Sydney’s Royal Botanic Garden last night, where UK representatives and guests gathered to enjoy a selection of British-inspired cuisine by chef, Nelly Robinson.

Esteemed guests joining VisitBritain at the event were British deputy high commissioner, Nick McInnes and British consul general, Tony Breannan.

Attendees were educated on “all things great” about the region before getting in on a few rounds of quoits on the lawn and hopping into a life-size black cab photobooth to take some memorable snaps.

Pictured above (from left) is chef Nelly Robinson, MC Maeve O’Meara & regional marketing manager at VisitBritain, Mark Haynes with a spot prize winner.

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STG lunar new year celebrations



SELECT Travel Group chief executive Tom Manwaring declared “gong xi fa cai”, or Happy Chinese New Year, to a crowd of industry guests and suppliers last night at their annual celebrations.

Held at the Marigold in Sydney’s China Town district, attendees were welcomed with a traditional Chinese lion dance, where they were given the opportunity to ‘feed’ hong bao (lucky red packets) to the lion for good luck.

Lucky door prizes, donated by STG suppliers, were given out throughout the evening and ranged from Apple watches to tablets; Business class airfares to Gold Velocity membership.

Pictured above enjoying the night’s festivities are: Matt Cameron-Smith, md Trafalgar; Ari Magoutis, executive gm Express Travel Group; Conrad McCall, senior sales manager Trafalgar; Tom Manwaring (also **below**), chief executive officer Express Travel Group.

CLICK HERE to see more pics.



QF TedX sky talk

QANTAS passengers travelling from Sydney to San Francisco this afternoon will be the audience for the world’s first in-flight tech talk.

In conjunction with TEDxSydney the carrier is presenting ‘Ideas that Travel’ with four Australian science and technology innovators conducting talks on board Qantas’ Boeing 747.

The chosen speakers are: ceo & founder of Rare Birds Jo Burston; experimental physicist & director of the Quantum Control Laboratory, Michael Biercuk; ceo & founder of 2MAR Robotics, Marita Cheng and ceo and founder of Enlitic, Jeremy Howard.

Qantas group exec brand, marketing & corporate affairs Olivia Wirth said she was “delighted” to give the thinkers a “unique platform” to share ideas.

Virtuoso newcomer

QUEENSLAND based Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel have been announced as the newest member to join luxury travel network Virtuoso.

Virtuoso Asia-Pacific managing director Michael Londregan said the agency “is a great business with a dynamic team and is a wonderful addition to the network.”

Wednesday 17th Feb 2016

Dreamworld visits up

ARDENT Leisure, parent company of Dreamworld, SkyPoint and WhiteWater World has reported a 6.6% increase in total half year revenue for its theme park division.

Theme parks brought in a total revenue of \$58.4 million for the half year, while EBITDA rose 4%, fed by a “significant” increase in attendance.

Group chairman Neil Balnaves said the half saw a successful pass campaign and new attractions, including three tiger cubs born at the park, driving increased attendance and in-park spend.

“A strong trading performance during the peak Jan season has set the business up for a solid start to the second half.”

The division will focus on innovation and leveraging existing partnerships in the second half, with a redevelopment of Tiger Island scheduled, “including a revitalised precinct and events space, new tiger presentation and retail and food offerings,” said Group ceo Deborah Thomas.

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Los Cabos growth

LOS Cabos Tourism Board in Mexico has announced the construction of 13 new hotels this year, including the Ritz Carlton and Hard Rock Hotel, after a record number of visitors in 2015.

Last year 1.84m people entered the destination's airport in San Jose del Cabo with visitation forecast to continue an upwards trend over the next five years.

Outrigger incentive

OUTRIGGER Expert Agents will get a \$US50 bonus for booking five-nights or more in Hawaiian holiday condos, for stays up until 21 Dec (excl black-out dates).

There is no cap on how many bookings agents can claim.

ID collective for STA

YOUTH retail specialist STA Travel has chosen iD Collective as its Australian PR agency.

iD Collective is familiar with the tourism space and is currently working with Tourism Malaysia and Abercrombie & Kent.

\$1m SA tourism boost

NINE South Australian tourism projects will receive a \$1 million funding boost through the Federal Gov't's Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program.

Funds will support projects such as improved visitor facilities on Granite Island, the Barossa Valley and Southern Flinders Ranges.

Minister for Tourism and International Education Richard Colbeck expects the projects will generate more regional tourism in the area.

"The Australian gov't is very keen to support the development of infrastructure that drives tourism demand as a way to support the vital tourism industry in South Australia, he said.

He said it will help the industry meet 2020 growth targets & keep local businesses profitable.

\$75m Heathrow slot

OMAN Air has set a new record after purchasing \$US75 million take-off and landing slots off Air France-KLM at London Heathrow, according to media reports.

The Middle East carrier will use the allocated arrival time 0530 to add a second daily service from Muscat to London.

The purchase ties in with Oman Air's plan to double the size of its fleet to 70 aircraft by 2020.

Blue Zone wows Travel Expos



INFINITY has combined its product offerings from its cruise, rail, land and international at World Expos into a one stop shop, dubbed the Blue Zone.

Devoted to all things Infinity, the new central hub allows FCTG consultants to transact and pay deposits as well as provide information on airfares, accommodation, transfers and tours, among other services.

Infinity Expo team member, Jason Martin, described the blue zone concept as having "exceeded expectations".

"The zone creates real buzz. People are constantly coming up and asking why the Infinity booth is so busy and its gratifying to

see the look on their faces when you explain all the services and products that Infinity offers," he continued.

Pictured are the contingent from Infinity Holidays giving the Blue Zone the thumbs up.

Winter glamping

IN A first for glamping specialists Paperbark Camp at Jervis Bay, accommodation will be open for winter this season.

In celebration, dinner and B&B packages will be halved between mid-Jun and early Sep.

Strong demand promoted the decision to remain open - see www.paperbarkcamp.com.au.

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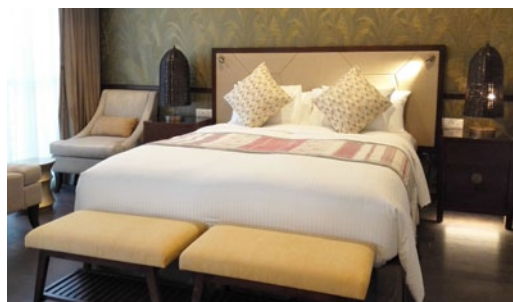
First Look - New APT, Travelmarvel Indochina ships



ABOVE: APT's RV *Samatha* on the banks of the Irrawaddy.



ABOVE & BELOW: The Lounge offering and an example of the fittings in a Category A Suite aboard RV *Samatha*.



THE APT Group has celebrated the launch of two new vessels in Myanmar recently through brands APT and Travelmarvel, with the ships sailing maiden voyages from Yangon to Mandalay.

Travel Daily can today exclusively reveal these first look images from aboard both ships.

Both the RV *Samatha* and RV *Princess Panhwar*

were constructed in Yangon by APT and Travelmarvel.

In the luxury brand, APT's 30 suites on the RV *Samatha* (left hand side of page) range from 27m² to 48.7m² and feature panoramic or twin balconies.

Onboard facilities include a sundeck with swimming pool, air conditioned main lounge & bar, day spa, observation deck and two restaurants.

Travelmarvel's premium river cruiser, RV *Princess Panhwar* (pictured right hand side) offers a mix of 36 rooms & suites that vary in size from 26m² to 42.5m², equipped with a French or an outside balcony.

APT Group director Robert McGeary said the significant investment in Indochina illustrates the firm's long-standing commitment to river cruising in Asia.

APT has limited availability remaining on 2016 departures, with bookings now open for 2017 sailings.



ABOVE: Travelmarvel's French Balcony suite.



ABOVE & BELOW: Dining and Lounge venues.



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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.



Metro Hotel Perth has announced the addition of the 100-seat Red Bill Restaurant, slated to open later this month. The restaurant will serve Modern Australian cuisine and will be headed by executive chef, Jesse Emerton-King. Signature dishes will include beer and miso lamb ribs, radish & asparagus; lamb linguine and roasted fig, asparagus and cous cous salad.



Art Series Hotel Group has added art-inspired conferencing and event offerings to the **Schaller Studio** in Bendigo and **The Watson**. The spaces have been kitted out with flexible room set-ups and state-of-the-art technological solutions.



The **Hotel Jen Tanglin Singapore** presents a brand new bold aesthetic, having just completed a full makeover of its guest rooms and restaurant as part of a S\$45 million refurbishment plan. Each room offers free wi-fi, USB charger outlets, king-sized floating beds, a sofa bed, and a large club lounge located on the 17th floor. New restaurant, J65 has been added to the premises, and showcases a "relaxed atmosphere" intended to mimic a local farmers market.

EY India figures surge

ETIHAD Airways has reported a 63% increase in full-year passenger traffic with partner Jet Airways to and from India.

In 2015, together the airlines carried a record 3.3 million passengers between Abu Dhabi and India, up from 2 million in the previous 12 months.

The pair fly approx 20% of all travellers to and from India.

Tribute hotel Denver

TRIBUTE Portfolio has signed a 165-room hotel in Lower Highlands in Denver, Colorado slated to open in Sep 2018.

The property marks the 14th property signing since launching the brand in Apr last year.

Insider Private Thai

INSIDER Journeys' Thailand and Burma 2016/17 brochure has launched, marking the third Private Travel brochure in a collection of three.

The 76-page brochure has been developed for travel agents and independent travellers.

"Our itineraries have been expertly designed to help travel agents easily and effectively plan their clients' journeys through two destinations where logistics can be complicated, confusing and often tricky to arrange, saving time and effort," said gm, customer experience and marketing, Emily Hill.

Highlights include the 11-day Thailand History and Culture and three-day Thahara Pindaya.

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SriLankan axes Rome

THRICE weekly services linking Colombo & Rome over the summer 2016 season are being suspended by SriLankan Airlines, effective 01 May, GDS displays indicate.

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Lauren's off to Honkers!



MORE than 40 frontline travel agents in Perth were hosted to a cocktail function put on by Cathay Pacific Airways and Hong Kong Tourism Board last week.

Held at the swanky new rooftop terrace at the Alex Hotel, agents were inspired by Cathay's new 'Life Well Travelled' campaign & were enlightened as to the latest developments during an update on Asia's World City.

Participating agents also had a chance to win a trip to Hong Kong which includes return flights with CX, a Hong Kong Island Tour and transport passes.

Pictured with CX cabin crew

prop from left are Sarah Kay, Cathay Pacific; prize winner Lauren Edwards from Flight Centre West Perth; Melanie Thompson, Cathay Pacific and Mary He from the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

So Sofitel for KL

KUALA Lumpur is set to welcome a 207-room So Sofitel Hotel in 2020 as part of a mixed-use development nearby the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

The hotel will have four food and beverage outlets and several function and event spaces.



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Win a Hurtigruten cruise

This month, **Travel Daily**, BENTOURS and Hurtigruten are giving away a 12 day Hurtigruten 'Classic Coastal Voyage Return', in a private cabin for 2 people. The prize includes four onshore excursions provided per person, along with Full Board, valued at up to A\$10,000.

All you have to do to win this incredible prize is answer each daily question correctly and have the most creative answer to the final question. Send your entries to bentours@traveldaily.com.au



Q13. Which destination/region is featured on the front cover of the BENTOURS main Scandinavia brochure?

Dragonfly in Sydney

DESTINATION management company Dragonfly Africa is hosting an industry soiree in Sydney at the Watershed Hotel & Cohibar, Darling Harbour.

Held on 15 Mar, the night will feature talks on customised itineraries throughout Southern and Eastern Africa with drinks and canapes throughout.

RSVP at travel@dragonfly.co.za.

Icelandair gate-2-gate

ICELANDAIR will be the first airline in Europe and the North Atlantic to offer gate-to-gate wi-fi connectivity on its full fleet of Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft.

Services will be available across 43 destinations spanning Europe and North America.

The new service was made possible due to a pact struck with tech specialists, Global Eagle.

IHG Phuket Resort

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has struck a deal with Proud Resort Phuket, to develop the InterContinental Phuket Resort, slated to open early 2019.

VA best for '15 OTP push back

VIRGIN Australia led the pack in terms of on-time departures for the year ending Dec 2015, achieving the highest level of on-time take-offs at 90.8%, according to latest figures released by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE).

Tailing VA in the tally were major domestic carriers Qantas at 89.6%, Tigerair at 84.6% and Jetstar at 78.2%.

With regional airlines, Regional Express, was ahead of the curve recording 88.2% in on-time departures, followed by QantasLink at 86.7% and Virgin Australian Regional Airlines 85.7%.

The highest percentage of

cancellations observed came from QantasLink (2.5%), followed by Jetstar (2.1%), Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (2.0%), Virgin Australia (1.5%), Qantas (1.1%), Tigerair (0.9%) and Regional Express (0.3%).

The Canberra-Sydney and SYD-CBR route recorded the highest level of cancellations at 5.5% and 5.1% respectively, followed by Moranbah-Brisbane at 5.5% and BNE-MOV (4.9%).

Privileges overhauled

CHOICE Hotels International has announced "bold changes" to its Choice Privileges guest rewards program.

New enhancements to the program include: digital gift cards that can be claimed in-app; the ability to keep points going so long as members stay active every 18 months; flex rewards to redeem free stays and special rewards for accommodation on weekdays.

"These exciting changes to our Choice Privileges program mark a major milestone in Choice Hotels' history," said vice president of loyalty engagement Jamie Russo.

To see the full list of rewards, choicehotels.com/choice-privileges.

L.E Luxe Collection

L.E HOTELS has unveiled its new Luxe Collection branding, a series of upper-range properties and resorts from within its portfolio.

Luxe Collection hotels include: Cerulean Tower Hotel, Tokyo; Establishment Hotel, Sydney; Luxe Rodeo Drive Hotel, Beverly Hills; Hotel Los Gatos, Silicon Valley; Hotel Powers, Paris and Rose Garden Palace, Rome.

To see the full listing of hotels, **CLICK HERE.**

Education Alliance Executive

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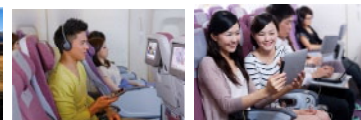


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For more information contact Katherine Smith, Senior Human Resources Advisor on 02 9391 4000. To apply send your application to pacifichr@travelport.com with the position title in the subject. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

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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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