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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 5th December 2017



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Lux acquires Bon Voyage

ONLINE travel and e-commerce firm Luxury Escapes has acquired rivals Scoopon Travel & Bon Voyage as part of a "game changing" pact with the Catch Group.

The purchase by Luxury Escapes' parent company Lux Group creates one of the largest online travel players in Australia, with a combined membership base of around 3 million people and over \$300m in pro forma turnover.

Luxury Escapes CEO Adam Schwab said the transaction would enable the company to increase purchasing power, while retaining each respective brand identity.

"We believe the combined

power of brands, our diverse market offering across different segments of the market...creates an even clearer alternative to the tiered and traditional travel agent market today," Schwab said.

The deal sees Catch Group acquire Lux Group's designer brand product businesses, such as Brand Exclusive and TheHome, and a third joint business created called Lux Everyday which specialises mainly in experiences.

Catch founders Gaby and Hezi Leibovich will also take a 20% stake in the Lux Group, founded by Schwab and Jeremy Same.

Schwab said that by preserving the strengths of the Bon Voyage and Scoopon Travel brands, tied with Luxury Escapes' expertise, "we are setting the stage for continued organic growth".

AC direct to MEL

AIR Canada continues to celebrate the launch of its new seasonal Vancouver-Melbourne route which commenced on Sun (TD yesterday), with today's **cover wrap** encouraging agents to "start planning your client's trip today".

Coupled with its existing flights to Sydney and Brisbane, the MEL service makes Air Canada the only North American airline operating to three Aussie hubs.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news, including a front cover page for **Air Canada**, photo pages for **ATEC** plus full pages from:

- inPlace Recruitment
- Back-Roads product page

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Fiji Marriott winner

TOURISM Fiji has named the winner of a recent comp that featured in **TD** coinciding with the *Bachelorette* finale to win five nights at the Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay as Marica Salpietro from italktravel Kensington.



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Air NZ opens PER lounge

AIR New Zealand yesterday formally debuted its new international lounge at Perth Airport, previewing the facility to key industry partners prior to its passenger debut today.

The lounge has capacity for 110 passengers, and continues NZ's focus on Western Australia which is currently served by direct flights to Auckland, as well as the commencement of non-stop Christchurch services this week.

It's the latest development in Air New Zealand's ongoing lounge rollout program which involves the investment of \$100 million

over four years.

New Air NZ lounges have already been opened in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, as well as in New Zealand, with the carrier about half-way through the overall lounge deployments.

All Air NZ flights to Perth are operated using the carrier's new 787-9 aircraft, and in fact Perth was the launch destination for the NZ *Dreamliner* in Sep 2014.

Air NZ state manager WA & NT Ross Gallagher told **TD** the new lounge continued the airline's commitment to improving the customer experience for West Australian customers.

As well as providing business class, premium economy and economy offerings on the wide-bodied aircraft to NZ, the carrier promotes onward links to ports in North and South America providing a consistent service from Perth right across the Pacific - as showcased in the airline's "Better Way to Fly" campaign starring Dave the Goose.

More from the launch on **page four**; to view the lounge features see traveldaily.com.au/blog.

QF KGC 'C' neutral

QANTASLINK launched year-round flights from Adelaide to Kangaroo Island yesterday, also marking KGC as the airline's first carbon-neutral destination.

Through a partnership with the South Australian Government, Qantas will fully offset all flights to the island, including the seasonal Melbourne flights which begin on 17 Dec, by supporting new tree planting projects.

Flights from ADL will operate thrice weekly year-round, rising to five during peak season (04 Dec-01 Apr), supported by thrice weekly MEL services during the summer holidays (17 Dec-28 Jan).

A new terminal at Kingscote Kangaroo Island Airport is slated to open in Apr.

Trump travel ban

THE US Supreme Court has overnight permitted the latest version of President Trump's travel ban to take effect on six mostly Muslim countries.

Pending an appeal, the ban is enforced to varying levels of restriction on travellers from Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen entering the United States of America.

Travellers from North Korea and Venezuela will also be affected.

It's the first time justices have allowed any version of the ban to go forward in its entirety.

2018 Airline Guide

THE latest edition of the *Travel Daily/travelBulletin* Airline Guide is now available, providing all the essential details on major carriers serving the Australian market.

The 2018 guide is the most comprehensive resource available to the Australian travel industry and is a handy way to keep abreast of the airlines' latest products and cabin experience.

It's free for **TD** subscribers - **CLICK HERE** to download a copy, or you can **VIEW ONLINE**.




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Experience Co push north

ADVENTURE tourism specialist Experience Co has made a significant push on the North Queensland market by purchasing two cruise companies, Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises and

Tropical Journeys.

Cairns-based Big Cat Green Island Reef Cruises is a strong player in the Great Barrier Reef cruising space, while Tropical Journeys specialises more in diving and snorkelling tours.

The move will likely be funded by a \$60.9 million capital raising, the details of which were also announced yesterday along with the acquisition news.

"Financially, these deals are to improve Experience Co's EBITDA in its first full year of ownership, being FY19, by \$11.1m," Experience Co chief executive officer Anthony Ritter said.

"Our newest string of acquisitions will help us position so many more world class experiences to both domestic and international customers."

The acquisitions of both Big Cat and Tropical Journeys are slated to be finalised on 13 Dec and 18 Dec 2017, respectively.

Virgin MEL plans

Virgin Australia has unveiled plans for a full-scale redevelopment of its domestic terminal at Melbourne Airport.

Scheduled to commence in 2018 and be completed in three years, Virgin's T3 will seek to optimise its facilities for travellers including automated bag drop facilities, more efficient self-service kiosks and a greater emphasis on customer service operations.

"The redeveloped terminal will see Virgin Australia provide guests with a world class experience on the ground," group executive for Virgin Australia Airlines, Rob Sharp.

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FC, Torrens diploma

FLIGHT Centre Travel Academy has partnered with Torrens University Australia to develop a Diploma of Travel and Tourism designed to train and qualify staff to meet the needs of the "rapidly changing" travel industry.

The course comprises a 50/50 split of online studying with Torrens University and the Flight Centre Travel Academy which involves first-hand training.

"The curriculum for this unique course has been created not just for students keen to work for Flight Centre, but for anyone interested in a career in the travel & tourism sector, with broad business subjects included to ensure our students gain a holistic understanding of the industry," said Torrens Uni's director of innovation, industry & employment, Anthony Mitri.

FC Travel Academy National brand leader Ashleigh Hunnam said graduating students' first-hand training would make them "highly sought after for their systems knowledge, practical sales experience & unmistakable enthusiasm for travel".

Student intakes will be taken on a monthly basis - more **HERE**.

NT tourism ceo out

CEO of the Northern Territory's Dept of Tourism & Culture Alastair Shields has stepped down from the role for personal reasons.

Shields told colleagues he was relinquishing his position as ceo & was taking six months' leave.



Window Seat

TRAVEL Daily has been spoiled rotten this morning with a batch of chocolate bear cupcakes (pictured below) delivered from Princess Cruises, who will bring *Royal Princess* to Alaskan waters - the home of many brown bears - as it celebrates 50 years of sailing in the region.

Royal Princess will embark on her maiden voyages in Alaskan waters in 2019.



Backpacker tax under legal doubt

FOREIGN holidaymakers have launched legal action against the Turnbull government's controversial backpacker tax, arguing it breaches Australia's international tax treaties.

The challenge was lodged in Queensland yesterday by Taxback, acting on the behalf of clients from the US, the United Kingdom and Germany.

The backpacker tax was passed a year ago and imposes a higher rate of tax on foreigners who earn income on working holiday visas.



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CLICK HERE TO LAUNCH ACADEMY

Travel Daily

Tuesday 5th December 2017

Perth perfect for Air NZ



KEY industry partners were given a sneak peek at the new Air NZ lounge in Perth (**see p2**) - hosted by the carrier's WA team (above) of Amer Gacanovic, Janelle Philpott, Ross Gallagher and Emma Norton.



Guests included Russell Brown from Travel Associates and Luke Chittock from Amity Travel (**above**) as well as the soon-to-retire Trevor Logan of Kirra Holidays/ ANZCRO, pictured left with lounge leader Andrea.



Pictured at right are Dave Burton, Sabre; Jenny Vos from Air Tickets; and Tim Bolton and Robyn Mitchell, both from Travellers Choice. View lounge photos at traveldaily.com.au.



AFTA update

From AFTA's chief executive, Jayson Westbury



WITH just 20 days to go before Christmas Day and this week being the last official sitting week of Federal Parliament, (that is unless the Prime Minister makes them all stay back for another week next week) we should hopefully see the end of the two issues of the year: marriage equality legislation passed and the matters at hand regarding dual citizenship of Senators and

Members of the House resolved.

Meanwhile the Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce returned to work this week after winning his by-election over the weekend brought on by his own dual citizenship status.

But the big question is what will happen on Sat 16th Dec when the by-election for the seat of Bennelong, held by Liberal member John Alexander is held. If the Coalition does not win that by-election, then the Government becomes a minority held government and I don't think we really know what the outcome of that might look like. It is a big deal to contemplate this situation and the impact it could have on the country and our future. I am sure over the next 10 days or so there will be plenty of sleepless nights for the Prime Minister and the Government and in fact for the country as we are in somewhat uncharted waters.

Meanwhile, the travel industry continues to do what it does best and just gets on with it. As the ash cloud in Bali has proven to cause all sorts of disruption and drama, people wanting to come home and not sure what to do, the industry has once again come together as best it can to support and help as many people as possible. After all, it's Christmas and it is a time to be giving and sharing which is the one thing the travel industry does well.

And, full credit to all of the operating airlines between Australia and Bali. There is nothing easy about cancelling flights and explaining that and dealing with that when people just want to go on holiday or go home. It does to me seem very reasonable from the options available to consumers to make changes and while this is mother nature once again in control, the best we can all do is try and work together for the best and safest outcome for all concerned.

IATA Oct traffic up

GLOBAL airline passenger traffic for Oct was up 7.2% on the corresponding month last year, according to data released by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The surge is welcome news to the aviation industry which suffered challenging conditions in Sep due to a series of hurricanes.

Airlines in all regions recorded increases for Oct including a 10.3% gain in Asia Pacific, with total capacity also increasing by 6% in line with demand.

More broadly, business confidence is in good shape with 40% of cfos in a recent IATA survey forecasting profitability growth in the next 12 months.

Only 13.3% predicted a dip.

Italian rail bookings

INTERNATIONAL Rail has announced that agents can now make live bookings online for clients travelling until the end of Mar on the majority of high-speed and regional train services on the Trenitalia network.

Advanced bookings allow for cheaper fares with International Rail flagging up to 60% discounts for pre-bookings.

easyJet axes SKG

EASYJET has halted flights to Thessaloniki Makedonia Airport in Greece, citing safety concerns during upgrades to the airport's main runway as the reason.

Flights will be redirected to Kavala from 07-21 Dec.

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Meeting Place puts a spotlight on WA

AUSTRALIA'S tourism exporters celebrated a big 2017 in Perth last month where 400 industry leaders gathered for the annual Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) Meeting Place event held at the new Crown Towers.

The three-day event featured lots of fun and excitement from the welcome function held at the hip Hamptons City Beach restaurant to the amazing Indigenous performances at the gala dinner. There were also B2B workshops - with over 3,500 individual meetings - and a range of pre- and post-famils around Perth and Fremantle.

Around 70 CEOs attended the Chairman's Forum featuring conversations with Tourism Australia boss John O'Sullivan, ATEC board members and industry leaders Gary Patterson and Jackie Walshe, Perth Airport's new boss Kevin Brown, Chairman of Tourism WA Nathan Harding and Australia's South West's CEO Catrin Allsop.

Meeting Place was also the launchpad for the 31 graduates of ATEC's 2017 Emerging Leaders of Inbound Tourism Excellence (ELITE) Program, presenting their ideas for solving some of the industry's challenges.

The 'New Frontiers' conference day included insights from financial journalist Michael Pascoe, virtual reality guru Scott O'Brien and China-based social media content creator Amy Lyons, and saw the launch of a new partnership with Chinese mobile and online payment platform Alipay.



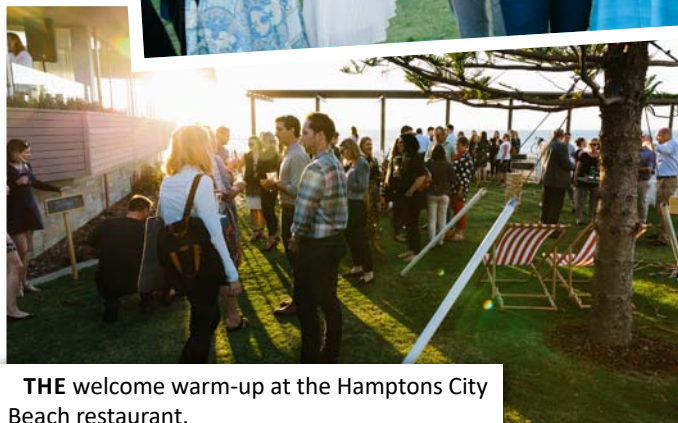
INDIGENOUS dancers welcomed people to the Gala Dinner.

ATEC'S WA branch manager Margaret Wilson with Paul Murray and Stuart Dobson from Acacia Tours.



BEN Doolan from ATG Downunder, Mark Abercromby from A&A Travel and TA's John O'Sullivan.

GUESTS gathering at Crown Towers Perth ahead of the night's gala dinner.



THE welcome warm-up at the Hamptons City Beach restaurant.



GETTING down to fun at the welcome function.



ATEC'S Denis Pierce and Peter Shelley with Sally Cope from Ultimate Winery Experience.



SOME of the guests ahead of the gala dinner.



ELITE presentations, selling Christmas Island to the world.

ATEC celebrates its top stars in Perth

ATEC'S annual Excellence Awards, announced at the gala dinner, recognised the pioneering leadership of Jade Express' Tony Liu who was given the prestigious Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to the Tourism Export Industry awards.

Alongside Tony, Sarah Dudek from WA's Seashells Hospitality Group was awarded the Len Taylor Young ATEC Award for Leadership, and the Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to ATEC went to Wayne Thompson from Australian Transit Group.

ATEC md, Peter Shelley said this year's Meeting Place was a record breaking event reflecting the growth of Australia's export tourism industry.

"This year, ATEC has seen amazing growth in membership, across all of its key training and capacity building programs, in industry services and engagement

and with our state and national events," Shelley said.

"This growth is aligned with the growth we are seeing across the export tourism industry and with increasing numbers of tourism operators focused on gaining a share of this growing market opportunity, they are looking to ATEC as a professional industry group able to maximise this growth for their business," he said.



TRADE Minister, Steve Ciobo with Elite graduates and mentors.



QANTAS WA regional manager Julian Barry, with Young ATEC award winner Sarah Dudek, Minister Steve Ciobo and ATEC chairman, Denis Pierce.



WA TOURISM
Minister, Paul Papalia.



WAYNE Thompson receives his award from Minister Steve Ciobo.



OUTSTANDING
Contribution by an Individual award winner Tony Liu.



WEL-TRAVEL'S
Edwin Kwan getting down to business at the B2B workshops.



WA'S friendly Quokka pays a visit.



OVER 3,500 B2B meetings were held on Workshop Day.



AOT'S
Gary Patterson addresses the CEO Forum.



INSIDE the gala dinner.

FBI lunches and learns



THE FBI Travel team in Melbourne recently held a lunch for its staff with several members of the Peninsula Hotels Group.

The "Lunch & Learn" session at FBI Travel allowed for its staff to spend more quality time with the hoteliers and vice versa so that their preferred Peninsula's Pen Club partnership could continue to grow and develop.

Pictured: Cooper Hu, Peninsula Beijing; Deb Zimmermann, Eri Sugimoto, Peninsula Tokyo; Jeff Dimand and Alexandre Tuduri, Peninsula Paris; Danny Engelman and Scott Berger, Peninsula Beverly Hills; Debbie Grace; Nikki Diamond; Maria Wong; Michelle Adler; Lauren Spanger; Yehudis Jager; Willie Best; Dimitri Giannakopoulos and Simon Yip.

ICC Syd check-in

THE ICC Sydney recently piloted a mobile airline check-in and baggage drop service.

Delivered in partnership with Off Airport Check In Solutions, the scheme allows delegates to drop their bags off at the venue and then collect them at their final destination post-flight.

Regus CBR facility

GLOBAL workplace provider Regus has launched its Canberra Airport business hub.

The Regus Canberra Gateway Business Centre boasts 900m² of space and features a fully equipped business lounge, private offices, meeting rooms, and kitchen.

Smart luggage ban

US AIRLINES have moved to ban some 'smart luggage' due to fire safety concerns over lithium batteries, *Forbes* reports.

Both American Airlines and Delta Air Lines will bring in new rules from 15 Jan which forbid the carriage of smart luggage unless the lithium batteries which are used to power them are removed before check-in.

However, AA will allow smart luggage as carry-on pieces only, while DL will have the same policy as checked-in bags.

United Airlines is expected to announce its policy soon.

Vic Golf World Cup

THE World Cup of Golf will return to Melbourne next year on 21-25 Nov 2018.

Victoria's Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren announced that the four-day tournament would be held in the state for the second time next year at the Metropolitan Golf Club in Oakleigh.

The golf tournament will be held alongside the Presidents Cup in 2019 and the Australia Open Golf in 2020 and 2022.

Movenpick Boracay

MOVENPICK Hotels & Resorts Boracay has opened its doors in the Philippines.

The 312-room resort is a low-rise property with architecture designed to blend with the natural environment and a private 200m beach.

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This week, Travel Daily and Sonoma County are giving travel agents the chance to win a \$50 Williams-Sonoma e-gift card.

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sonoma@traveldaily.com.au

Which new Sonoma County hotel, located in Rohnert Park, offers extended stay rooms, as well as free breakfast and wifi?
NEED A HINT? CLICK HERE.

O&O correction

ONE&ONLY Le Saint Geran is in Mauritius, not the Maldives, as was mentioned in last Wed's Accommodation Updates in **TD**.

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WHERE journeys are made for absorbing never-to-be-forgotten views and each day ends on a quality boutique boat loaded with top-notch facilities.

At Back-Roads Touring, we've spent over 25 years creating these kinds of small group tours and our cruising and sailing tours journey through the beautiful landscapes of France, Croatia and Italy.

Do you fancy a boutique stay

loaded with character and local charm? Our vessels will accommodate you in full nautical style. Read on to find out more.

FRANCE

In France, we use modern private hotel barges to cruise along the canals of Burgundy and the Provence region. These custom built, innovatively-designed vessels allow us access to smaller regional waterways and unspoilt rural scenery. They also offer spacious sun decks, bicycles for exploring on shore and even a Jacuzzi.

CROATIA

We explore some of the lesser known Adriatic islands off the central Dalmatian coast using a traditionally designed yacht. Kick your feet up in spacious cabins with private ensembles and air conditioning and indulge in freshly prepared meals onboard made from local ingredients.

ITALY

In the Bay of Naples we sail through some of Italy's most beautiful and historic islands in style aboard boutique gulet boats. With en-suite air-conditioned cabins and room to relax, you'll take in the spectacular volcanic landscapes of the Phlegraean Islands from the best viewpoint while enjoying plenty of modern comforts.

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