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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 6th January 2017

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Travel Daily on location in Singapore

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Seabourn which this weekend formally names *Seabourn Encore* in a gala ceremony in Singapore.

ALL is in readiness today for the naming ceremony of *Seabourn Encore* on Sat night, the six-star cruise line's newest and most luxurious ship yet.

With two sailings already under its belt since handover in late Nov, *Seabourn Encore* will shortly charter a course for Australia and New Zealand, arriving in Darwin on 22 Jan, making it the youngest and most luxurious vessel to ever visit the Oceania region.

After visiting Darwin, the liner will make its way down the east-coast of Australia, stopping at Cairns, Townsville, Hamilton Is, Mooloolaba, Sydney, Melbourne & Philip Island, then onto NZ.

A contingent of VIP Australian travel agents and consumer & trade media have been invited to attend the festivities, which will include a ship tour of the 600-pax *Seabourn Encore* this morning.

Encore will be the fourth (and largest) ship to join Seabourn's fleet, offering one additional deck compared to *Seabourn Odyssey*, *Seabourn Sojourn* and *Seabourn Quest* which have capacities of around 450 pax.

Stay tuned to our social media pages for updates later today.

Carnival tech breakthrough

CARNIVAL Corporation's new 'Ocean Medallion' technology (*Cruise Weekly* yesterday) could have applications right across the "larger vacation market and potentially other industries," according to Carnival ceo Arnold Donald, who launched the new system at the giant Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

The Medallion is a "first-of-its-kind wearable device" which links with intelligent sensors and a "personalised digital concierge" to tailor and personalise all aspects of a holiday.

Arnold said the system went "well beyond the growing number of wearables used by theme parks and other leisure companies," incorporating multiple communications technologies including Near Field Communication (NFC) and Bluetooth Low Energy.

That means rather than having to 'tap' the medallion, the

system essentially knows where a passenger is at all times - for example enabling a food or beverage order to be delivered no matter where they are.

Other applications include faster embarkation, keyless stateroom entry, onboard purchases of merchandise and services, seamless navigation across the ship and "anytime-anywhere entertainment and gaming".

The system is currently planned for rollout on three Princess Cruises vessels from Nov 2017, with Arnold enthusing that it means "we are poised to have our global cruise line brands at the vanguard of forever changing the guest experience paradigm".

He said the Ocean Medallion technology would help further build on cruising's "popularity and value as the fastest growing segment of the vacation sector".

Fiji figures declining

AUSTRALIAN traveller numbers to Fiji continue to slide, with provisional figures for Nov 2016 indicating a 3% year-on-year drop to 28,234 for the month.

Fiji arrivals from NZ jumped 24.4% to 11,633 and also increased from China, Asia, the USA, UK, Canada and Japan - but were dwarfed by the numbers from Australia which is Fiji's largest market by a long way.

For the 12 months to Nov 2016 Fiji visitation by Australians is down 1.2% to just over 320,000.

QF named safest

QANTAS has been named the world's safest airline for the fourth year running by aviation rankings site AirlineRatings.com.

The Australian carrier was named above 20 other safest airlines, plus 10 safest low-cost carriers - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has three pages of news and photos.

Dreamworld 63% dive

DREAMWORLD owners today confirmed revenues of \$3.66 million for the period 10-31 Dec 2016, after the theme park reopened following the tragic death of four people in Oct.

That was a drop of 63% year on year, Ardent Leisure said, despite positive community support.

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Emirates PER swap

EMIRATES will substitute its Airbus A380 with Boeing B777 aircraft on some Perth services from 26 Mar.

The change affects flight EK424 departing 1010 from Dubai and return flight EK425 departing 0600 from Perth.

Emirates' other Perth services EK420 and EK421 will continue to operate aboard A380-800.

The airline says any seat requests previously confirmed for affected departures have been adjusted and new seat numbers actioned within PNRs.

G Adv UK purchase

G ADVENTURES has confirmed its acquisition of All Leisure brands Travelsphere and Just You.

It comes following the collapse of All Leisure Holidays this week which saw around 13,000 travellers have their trips cancelled (**TD** yesterday).

The purchase means 200 jobs at All Leisure's head offices will be saved.

G Adventures said the deal opened up an "affluent, older market" for the brand.

VA expands inbound pass

VIRGIN Australia has expanded the availability of its PlusPass product for inbound travellers to Australia, which is now on sale in IATA Area 3, including South Asian Subcontinent, South East Asia and Japan/Korea.

PlusPass was initially launched to VA's trade partners in the UK/Europe (**TD** 21 Oct 16), with the wider offering allowing travel agents to tailor inbound international customer itineraries with discounted fares and added benefits when travelling around Australia, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Indonesia on VA operated services.

New Zealand is excluded as an entry or exit point for PlusPass validity, and the product is not available for sale in the Australia/

South West Pacific region.

VA PlusPass features include discounted pricing on a range of economy booking classes, extended ticketing time limits of 30 days before departure, additional baggage allowance and the ability to add between two and 16 sectors to customers' international tickets.

Overseas travel agents can add the PlusPass to any VA inbound ticket, by entering passenger type code VAC in the GDS to view and price the fares, which have fare basis codes ending in PASS.

The international ticket number is added to the ticket endorsement box, and the OSI remark VA VPASS must be added at the time of booking for the extended ticketing time limit to apply.

More details are available at virginaustralia.com.

Hilton China growth

HILTON Garden Inn Ningbo has officially opened in China's Zhejiang province.

The 264-key hotel offers meeting space, a 24-hour business centre and restaurant.

Hilton has more than 200 hotels earmarked to be built in China.

Eurostar joins Eurail

EURAIL has added Eurostar to its range of rail passes, giving its travellers access to special fares and greater seat availability on the high-speed service.

Eurail Global and applicable Select and One Country Pass holders can now buy cross-Channel Eurostar fares from €30 one way in Standard class or €38 in Standard Premier.

The fares will be available between London, Ebbsfleet and Ashford International and Paris, Brussels, Lille, Calais and Disneyland Paris.

Eurail Passes are on offer for periods of three days to three months, valid for travel across 28 European countries.

Window Seat

IN CELEBRATION of the launch of its new Middle East portal, Hotels.com struck a deal with British race car driver Tom Onslow-Cole to construct and drive the world's fastest bed.

Onslow-Cole took the motorised mattress on a joy ride, reaching speeds of 83.8 miles per hour, claiming a Guinness World Record.

Commenting on his victory, the decorated race car driver told UPI, "It was an unforgettable experience and I hope it'll stand the test of time - it'll take some beating!"

The previous record was set by Edd China in 2009, who managed 69 miles per hour.

CLICK HERE to view the video.



Cuba from US west

ALASKA Airlines has launched daily flights from Los Angeles to Havana in Cuba.

The Boeing 737-900ER service marks the first Cuba route from the US West Coast.

Sri Lanka delays

AIRLINES are warning passengers to arrive five hours before departure at Sri Lanka's main Bandaranaike International Airport due to construction work up to 06 Apr, DFAT has advised.

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SQ Osaka revised

SINGAPORE Airlines will commence daily A380 flights from SIN to KIX between 29 Mar and 02 Apr and 11 Aug to 16 Aug according to GDS displays.

New vision for JFK Airport



NEW York Governor Andrew Cuomo has unveiled a US\$10 billion plan for much-maligned JFK International Airport involving the redevelopment of its aging terminals and improved transport links from downtown Manhattan. "For far too long, JFK has fallen short of today's global standards," Cuomo said.

"There are overcrowded facilities, confusing on-airport roadways and poor accessibility. "For New York to remain competitive in the global market,

JFK must develop into a modern, state-of-the-art facility that puts passengers first," he said.

The plan involves widening the congested Van Wyck motorway to the airport, creating new unified terminals and simplifying the current tangle of roadways.

The concept also provides for a single train journey from Manhattan to replace the cumbersome options among existing public transport links.

No timeframe has been given and at least US\$7 billion of private investment is still required to fund the redevelopment.

India currency issue

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has updated its travel warning for India to include new advice on obtaining cash.

The Indian Government's withdrawal of 500 and 1000 rupee notes from circulation has led to cash shortages, with visitors advised not to rely on cash and be aware that some ATMs do not accept foreign cards.

DFAT says travellers have reported difficulty exchanging Australian \$100 notes and should consider carrying currencies such as US dollars and Euros.

Topdeck fly free

TOPDECK has announced a new year special involving free return flights to the US with select tours.

The fly-free deal applies to North America itineraries of 15 days or more, with return airfares of \$499pp available for trips of between 10 and 14 days.

The offer is on sale until 31 Jan, for travel between Apr and Dec, with flights from the five major capitals to Los Angeles.

For more information on the available itineraries or to book visit www.topdeck.travel.



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.

Royal Caribbean has launched a special Jan offer which includes savings of up to 30% on cruise fares, up to US\$400 onboard credit per stateroom and half price deposits. The deal is valid for new bookings departing between now and 22 Apr 2018, with reservations to be made by 27 Feb. Call 1800 754 500 for more information.

Sheraton Resort & Spa, Tokoriki Island is introducing special industry rates for stays in its Ocean View rooms. Prices start from FJ\$399 (AU\$257) including tax. The deal is valid for new bookings only. To take advantage of the offer email sheraton.tokoriki@sheraton.com and quote 'INDUSTRY'.

Fly Economy from Canberra to Melbourne from \$115 with **Qantas** as part of its 2017 Take Off Sale. Other special airfares include Adelaide to Brisbane from \$155, Cairns to Sydney from \$165 and Hamilton Island to Melbourne from \$179. The deal is valid from now until 08 Jan. For more details **CLICK HERE**.

Savings of up to \$200 per person are being offered by **Celebrity Cruises** on more than 300 worldwide sailings when booked by 31 Jan. The deal includes extras such as a free Classic Beverage Package and onboard credit to the value of US\$300 per stateroom. Fares start from \$1,739. visit www.celebritycruises.com.au for more info.

Voyages winter teaser

VOYAGES to Antiquity has chosen the Caribbean and Cuba as its winter homes.

While details of the itineraries are yet to be revealed, the cruiseline promised the new trips would take pax on "fascinating voyages through this unfamiliar history...to places where the larger ships and associated crowds are not present".

Small ship *Aegean Odyssey* will traverse the region, with a full program to be released in upcoming weeks.

QF Asia fares webinar

AGENTS are being invited to participate in a Qantas Fares to Asia webinar.

Held on 11 Jan, the 15 min presentation will deliver network updates, tips & tricks to selling and more - register **HERE**.

Sydney Grand Prix?

HONG Kong, Bangkok and Sydney have been named the top three preferred locations for future Formula 1 Grand Prix races in a survey of race fans across Asia Pacific nations.

The poll of more than 9,000 people by research company YouGov found support for F1 events in the region remained strong, despite speculation about the future of the current events in Malaysia and Singapore.

Hong Kong was the preferred location for future races, cited by 34% of those polled, followed by Bangkok (25%) and Sydney (23%).

More than half of respondents were interested in F1, with support strongest in Indonesia (62%), Malaysia (58%), Hong Kong (55%) and Vietnam (55%).

Terminal upgrade

DARWIN'S Cullen Bay Ferry Terminal will receive a \$500,000 makeover, the Northern Territory Government has announced.

The facility is located among the restaurants of the Cullen Bay Marina and is a base for harbour cruises and ferry services to Mandorah and the Tiwi Islands.

Works will include repairs and refurbishments, along with an improved ticketing office.

The project is expected to be complete by Apr.

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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