

Albatross bonus

ALBATROSS Tours is offering consultants \$250 gift cards as part of a "super summer" incentive - details on [page five](#).

VS seeks VA codeshare on HKG

VIRGIN Australia has formally applied to the International Air Services Commission to allow Virgin Atlantic to codeshare on its Melbourne-Hong Kong flights.

VA has also applied for VS codeshare rights on services from Australia to the USA, with the IASC now seeking submissions about the application with a due date of 15 Jan 2018.

If the applications are successful the move would see the return of VS to the Hong Kong-Australia route - albeit on VA metal - almost four years after it ditched non-stop flights between Sydney and Hong Kong (**TD** 05 May 2014).

Codesharing on Virgin Australia's US and Hong Kong services would also create the opportunity for Virgin Atlantic to offer a Virgin-branded round the world ticket.

IAG to buy Niki

INTERNATIONAL Airlines Group, the parent company of British Airways and Iberia, has announced the acquisition of Austrian leisure carrier Niki for €20 million.

Niki was an offshoot of the now defunct Airberlin, which filed for insolvency late last year after major shareholder Etihad Airways withdrew its support.

MSC names Seaside

MSC Cruises has formally named its newest ship *MSC Seaside* at a star-studded event in Miami, Florida.

Godmother Sophia Loren joined opera singer Andrea Bocelli and pop star Ricky Martin at the celebrations, with *Seaside* to sail year-round in the Caribbean.

More in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

EK cuts golf sponsorship

EMIRATES has confirmed it will no longer sponsor the Australian Open golf tournament, with the carrier's divisional senior vice president of marketing, Boutros Boutros, saying EK has such a strong brand awareness here that local sponsorship deals have become less important.

The golf pullout follows the termination of EK's long-running naming rights association with the Melbourne Cup (**TD** 08 Nov),

Magellan signs HLO transaction deal

IT APPEARS to be full steam ahead for the acquisition of Magellan Travel Group by Helloworld Travel Limited (**TD** 19 Dec 2017), with HLO issuing a formal ASX statement at 7.05pm on the Fri before Christmas confirming "the parties have executed the formal transaction documentation".

The ASX release says the deal is expected to complete in early January 2018.

Magellan chairman Andrew Jones has promised to provide further details of the benefits of the acquisition for existing Magellan members, in the face of opposition from what he described as a "small minority" of existing members.

See tomorrow's **Travel Daily** for an exclusive update.

France travel strikes

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has advised of planned strikes in France at several airports and on some public transport systems over the Dec-Jan holiday period, with a Smarttraveller update urging pax to contact travel providers for info.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news and photos, plus a full page from:

- Albatross Tours

which Boutros admitted had cost the carrier about \$7m annually, according to *News Limited*.

That figure included \$1m to build the flagship marquee, entertaining 1,000 lucky people in total, making the cost about \$1,000 per head.

Boutros said EK would continue to back events which are seen on a global scale, including the airline's ongoing partnership with the Australian Open Tennis.

He added that he would also be meeting with the Victorian Racing Club this month to discuss the airline's revised participation in the Spring Racing Carnival.

QF seeks Italy seats

QANTAS is seeking authorisation to codeshare on British Airways services operated on the Italy route.

The carrier says it will lodge a confidential code share agreement covering the proposal with the International Air Services Commission, with the Italy capacity sought for travel effective from 25 Mar 2018.

Vale Kris Madden

THE Australian travel writing community is coming to grips with the untimely death of Kris Madden, who suffered a fatal heart attack just after Christmas.

Madden was a prolific writer in both trade and consumer travel publications, with her distinguished career including a stint as editor of *travelBulletin* as well as several other magazines.

There has been an outpouring of tributes on Facebook, including one from former Tourism Australia md Andrew McEvoy who said Kris had been a "great friend of tourism, travel and Australia".



Madden, **pictured** above left at the 2015 National Travel Industry Awards with former **Cruise Weekly** editor Louise Goldsbury, founded Eco Media Group, and worked as a respected expedition leader in Antarctica, the Russian Far East and the South Pacific.

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Seaplanes cancelled

SCENIC flight operator Sydney Seaplanes has suspended operations after a weekend crash in which five tourists and a pilot were killed.

In a statement, the company said it was deeply shocked by the incident and that its flights would be cancelled until further notice.

“We are dedicating our full resources in assisting the NSW Police, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Civil Aviation Safety Authority and other relevant authorities to understand the cause of the accident,” it said.

A Sydney Seaplanes pilot and five UK visitors were killed on Sun when a single-engine DHC-2 Beaver seaplane crashed at Jerusalem Bay on the Hawkesbury River, north of the city.

Int’l licence calls

A **FEDERAL** MP from Victoria is campaigning for stricter controls on international drivers, including a review of licence provisions and the introduction of compulsory safety videos for those hiring cars.

Sarah Henderson, the Member for Corgangamite which takes in the Great Ocean Road, convened a community rally on Sun over concerns about recent road accidents involving tourists.

MEANWHILE, the Victorian Government has launched a safety campaign targeting international drivers, involving safety videos, digital advertising, social media and promotional material in hire cars.

Classic WA addition

CLASSIC Holidays has taken over management of the Silver Sands Resort in the West Australian city of Mandurah.

The timeshare resort, with 1,200 owners, entered a partner agreement with Classic Holidays in 2015 before entering a management agreement effective from 01 Jan.

Show Group in mourning

SHOW Group Enterprises has confirmed the death just before Christmas of its long-serving group general manager, Graham Fear, after a short illness.

Fear (**pictured**) was described as a “strong inspirational leader” who for 30 years headed up the touring, film, entertainment, sports, corporate and freight travel company.



“Graham will be missed and his legacy will live on,” the company said.

“He will always be remembered as a man of honour who was tough but fair in business, but also for his kindness and caring to the

world and the people around him,” a formal statement noted.

A funeral will take place at 1pm tomorrow, 03 Jan, at St Candice’s Catholic Church, 28 Roslyn St Elizabeth Bay, Sydney.

New chair for GC

JOHN Flynn Private Hospital ceo Greg Jenke has taken over as chair of Connecting Southern Gold Coast, replacing Currumbin RSL ceo Anne Stovin who has announced her resignation.

Gold Coast Tourism’s Jason Thomas and Sports Gold Coast chairman Geoff Smith have also joined the board as directors.

Cairns hotel plan

A **CHINESE** tour specialist has lodged planning applications to develop an apartment complex in central Cairns that will cater exclusively to its guests.

Hong Tu Investment plans a multi-storey complex on McLeod St involving a series of studio-style units and a ground floor commercial space likely to be used as a restaurant or bar, the *Cairns Post* reports.

It says the company specialises in organising group package tours from China, with guests currently staying in a range of different hotels locally.

The new development, involving a six-storey building, would allow the company to avoid out-sourced accommodation in Cairns and also provide for visiting Chinese school groups.

The plans will be considered by the Cairns Regional Council.

NSW signs Webjet

THE NSW Government has announced a two-year partnership with Webjet to promote domestic tourism to Sydney and regional areas.

NSW Tourism Minister Adam Marshall said a memorandum of understanding (MoU) had been signed to formalise a strategic partnership that had been in place since 2014.

“Our partnership has already delivered great success with last year’s Sydney in Summer Webjet campaign generating a huge return on investment and contributing more than \$2 million to the State’s overnight visitor economy,” Marshall said.

The MoU will involve promotion of Sydney and regional NSW through a combination of flights, accommodation, holiday packages and care hire.

Regional security upgrade proposals

THE government is expected to announce a suite of changes to air security in Australia in the coming weeks, including expanding screening of passengers and baggage at a wider range of regional airports.

The move follows a review resulting from a failed plot to smuggle a bomb onto a plane departing Sydney Airport last year (**TD** 03 Aug), which is understood to have identified regional airports as a weak link.

The *ABC* reports that changes will impact operators of smaller planes, which are currently not subject to the same requirements imposed on large jet aircraft.

NZ translation tech

AIR New Zealand has become one of a handful of corporations worldwide to trial Google’s latest translation technology.

The Bluetooth Pixel Buds headphones will allow live translation of up to 40 languages via Google’s Pixel handset, and will be tested by Air New Zealand for customer service purposes.

The airline’s chief digital officer Avi Golan said the service could be used in areas such as check-in, boarding and in-flight to assist international customers.



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Malindo & Malaysia soiree



TOURISM Malaysia and Malindo Air treated a group of West Australian agents to an early Christmas celebration last month to show appreciation for their support over the past year.

The agents, **pictured**, were hosted for drinks at Perth's riverside Ku De Ta bar and dining complex, the Australian incarnation of the popular Bali beachfront hotspot.

Among guests were Malaysian Consul-General Nazarudin Jaafar, the director of Tourism Malaysia Ahmad Esa and the md of Malindo's local agent Airline Rep Services Roheena Gidwani.

Safety concerns rise

MORE than one third of Australians now say safety and security are a concern when choosing their holiday destinations, according to Nielsen research conducted for the Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF).

The survey says women (38%) are more likely to take security concerns into consideration than men (32%), while those aged 65 are the most cautious (51%) and those 18 to 24 the least (27%).

West Australians were the most likely to let security concerns influence their decision on where to travel (40%).

Concerns around the safety and security of destinations now ranks alongside traditional factors such as cost, the TTF said.

Manjit Sekhon of RAJ Travel was the lucky winner of a Malindo ticket to Malaysia.

A380 phase out

PRODUCTION of the Airbus A380 superjumbo is set to be phased out if the aircraft manufacturer fails to strike a new deal with Emirates, according to several media reports.

Talks between the two parties are said to have resumed after breaking down at the Dubai Airshow in Nov, with a mooted order of 36 new planes for Emirates considered crucial to the A380 production program.

Reuters reports that Airbus is drawing up contingency plans to phase out production early next decade if it fails to cut a deal with Emirates, the largest A380 operator worldwide.

Orders for the double-decker aircraft have slowed since its launch 10 years ago as carriers opt for smaller twin-engine jets.

MEL traffic up 10%

INTERNATIONAL traffic through Melbourne Airport continued its upward trend during Nov, growing 10% over the same month of 2016.

Almost 858,000 int'l pax passed through MEL during Nov, while domestic travellers increased 3.8% to 2.25 million.

During Nov MEL also opened a new self check-in zone in T2.



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Rhine cruise crash

FOUR people were hospitalised and dozens of others injured after a river cruise ship hit a bridge on the Rhine in Germany last week.

A steering error has been blamed for the night-time crash on Tue, which involved a 125-passenger vessel operated by Swiss line Scylla.

The 100m *Swiss Crystal* was on a round-trip from Arnhem in the Netherlands when it struck a motorway bridge near the German city of Duisburg.

Media reports said passengers were mostly from the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg and were able to resume their journey aboard another vessel.

Lux Escapes site

LUXURY Escapes has unveiled a new look for its website and mobile app, described as the "most significant update" since the site's launch in 2013.

Aimed at giving a better browsing and planning experience, the changes were made after an on-site survey and feedback sessions with Luxury Escapes members.

General manager Blake Hutchison said the new site was easier to navigate and allowed side-by-side comparisons of upgrades, values and shared inclusions for each package.

Beijing visa free

THE Beijing Municipal Government has announced the introduction of visa-free transit arrangements for travellers passing through the city's six major gateways, including Beijing Capital, Tianjin Binhai and Shijiazhuang int'l airports.

Passengers from 53 countries including Australia and New Zealand can now transit through Beijing visa-free for a period of 144 hours when they have a valid connecting flight ticket to a third country or region.



Window Seat

NEW Year's Eve saw a new Guinness World Record set for the largest tin of caviar ever produced, weighing in at a whopping 50kg!

Atlantis, The Palm in Dubai teamed up with luxury US caviar company AmStur to set the milestone & not surprisingly the entire can was demolished by the 5,000 attendees before anyone could sing a verse of Auld Lang Syne.

All the event needed was the world's biggest water cracker.



West Wind freeze

CANADIAN Airline West Wind has been grounded indefinitely by Transport Canada after the regulator found the airline had deficiencies in its Operational Control System.

The determination was made following a crash involving a West Wind aircraft in Dec which left one man dead and seven seriously injured.

Hyatt cancel policy

HYATT Corp has implemented a new policy that will now require at least 48 hours' notice for cancelled bookings.

Loyalty members who belong to World of Hyatt Explorist, Globalist or Lifetime Globalist members will only be required to give 24 hours' notice.

The move by Hyatt follows similar policy changes made by competitors Hilton and Marriott International last year.

Zoe's mystery flight win



BRAND USA has revealed Zoe Meathrel from The Infinity Group as the winner of its trade incentive competition, Five Badge Fun (**TD** 20 Dec), taking away a two night Mystery Break package for two people.

The promotion was designed to encourage agents to undertake destination training on Brand USA's website, with more than 2,000 agents from Australia and New Zealand taking part.

"I'm delighted to win Brand USA's Five Badge Fun incentive for Australia," Meathrel said.

"I loved taking part in this

challenge and discovered so much about these amazing five US destinations."

The lucky winner is pictured above.

Jetwing joins Kiwi

SRI LANKAN hotel chain Jetwing has announced two of its properties have joined the luxury hotel guide, Kiwi Collection.

The 25-room Jetwing Kaduruketha is located near Wellawaya & the 10-villa Jetwing Tented Villas is close by to Sri Lanka's Yala National Park.



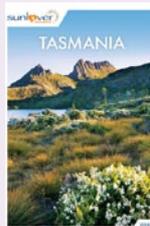
Brochures

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, Travel Daily's daily feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



AAT Kings - Short Breaks Northern Territory & Beyond 2018/19.

AAT Kings has released its latest brochure that offers abbreviated holidays from two to seven days exploring Aussie outback attractions such as the Kakadu National Park and Uluru. The packages place an emphasis on flexibility with dates, accommodation and dining, with options also open for self-guided tours versus guided tours.



Sunlover Holidays - Tasmania 2018-19.

The natural beauty of Tasmania's wilderness has been highlighted in Sunlover Holidays' latest list of packages exploring the Apple Isle. Listed itineraries include checking out Tassie via cruises, extended walking tours, campervan and cycling trips. Other big attractions include trips to King Island and wine tours navigating the famous Tamar Valley wine route.

AA breaks with WS

AMERICAN Airlines will end its codeshare agreement with WestJet from 15 Jan, according to a report from *ch-aviation*.

WestJet recently formed a joint-venture with Delta Air Lines in Dec and this is what is believed to have precipitated AA's decision to withdraw from its partnership with Canadian carrier.

WestJet has also announced it will terminate its frequent flyer partnership with AA.

Movenpick Manila

MOVENPICK Hotels & Resorts has flagged plans to open a new hotel in Manila.

The Movenpick Hotel & Residences Quezon City will feature 350 contemporary hotel rooms and 250 stylish residences and when operational in 2021, will mark Movenpick's third hotel in the Philippines.

Major features are set to include four function rooms and a large pillar-free ballroom, all fitted with cutting-edge audio-visual technology.

Bound rebrand

FAMILY travel website BoundRound.com has recently rebranded to Family Travel.

The name change is in line with major restructure and expansion going on within the business, with the new brand name designed to more clearly delineate the company's core operating business from its consumer brands.

In the last two years, Bound Round has launched new brands including MyDiscoveries and Travel Bound.

Tas wildlife guide

TASMANIA has released the Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor guide, an information brochure designed to help visitors get the most out of a holiday in the state.

The new guide features a host of walking tours & bicycle tracks.

Guides can be picked up for \$4.95 from Parks & Wildlife Service visitor centres, Tasmanian Visitor Information Centres, on board the Spirit of Tasmania ships and Service Tasmania shops.

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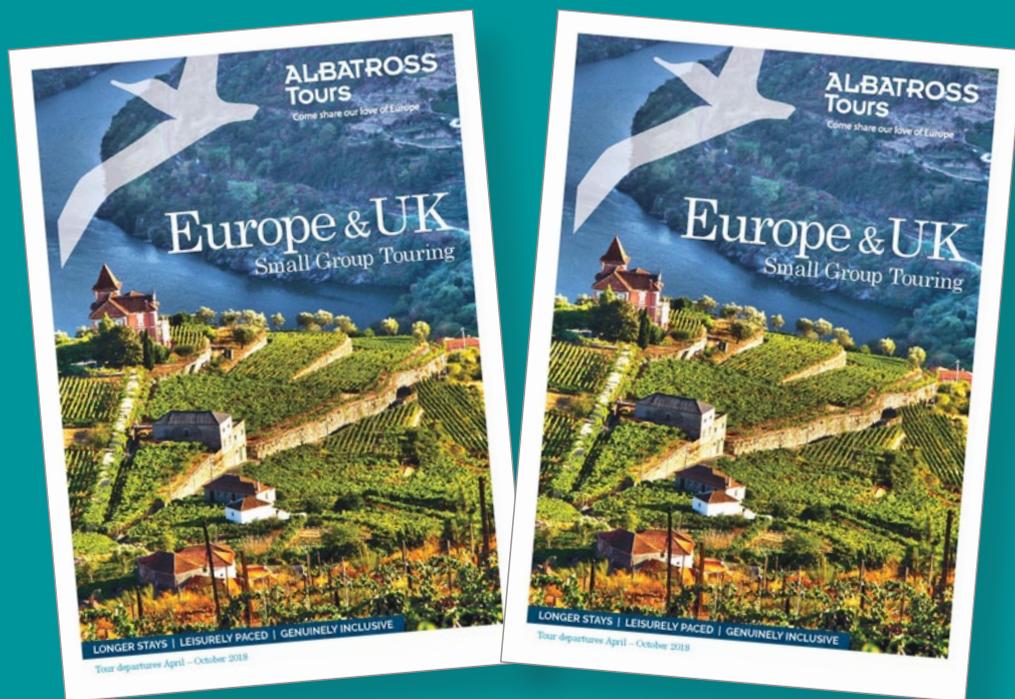
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