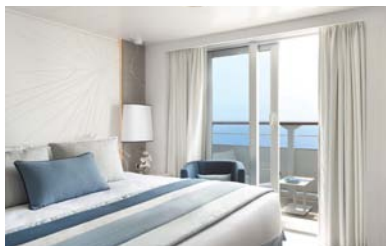


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**GUESTS** who book an Antarctic Luxury Expedition with Ponant have the chance to save 20% on select 2019/20 departures.

Highlights include The Falklands and South Georgia - for more information see the **cover page** of today's *Travel Daily*.

## One&Only Maldives

**ONE&ONLY** is today promoting its Reethi Rah property in the Maldives, highlighting a series of special offers and deals for the upcoming festive season.

For more information on the resort and to view the deals, see **page nine**.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has seven pages of news and photos, a front cover page for **Ponant**, plus full pages from:

- TMS Talent/inPlace
- One&Only Maldives

## CCL looks to 50% growth

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line (CCL) will aim to lift bookings by more than half as it prepares for a 54% increase in capacity when *Carnival Splendor* joins *Carnival Spirit* for year-round sailings from Australia late next year.

Having released details of some of the ship's new features on the weekend, the line's Vice President for Australia & New Zealand Jennifer Vanderkreeke acknowledged that meeting the extra capacity in a single year was "a tough thing to do", but expressed confidence in demand for the family-friendly brand.

"We've done it before - we went from zero ships to an entire ship to a ship and a half, all over the course of a few years," she said.

"We know we can do this and we know we can do this well."

"We know who our target market is and we know how to communicate with them."

CCL had opted to introduce

the capacity in two stages, Vanderkreeke said.

With *Carnival Splendor* to be based in Sydney from Dec 2019, the existing *Carnival Spirit* will leave Australia for a series of Alaska cruises before returning for year-round sailings from Brisbane in 2020, utilising the city's new cruise terminal.

The 3,700-guest *Carnival Splendor* will be the newest and largest ship to be home-ported year-round in Australia and will be fitted with new features including revamped waterslides (**TD** yesterday).

Other new additions for the Australian market will include a RedFrog Pub, RedFrog Rum Bar, Blue Iguana Tequila Bar and the Alchemy cocktail bar.

An adults-only Serenity Retreat will be created on an aft deck, while American restaurateur and author Guy Fieri will provide his Guy's Burger Joint.

## Short-term visits up

**SHORT-TERM** visitor arrivals to Australia in Sep saw a 4.1% increase on the previous corresponding period, according to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Australia witnessed 780,500 visitors for the month of Sep 2018, a slight bump of 0.3% on the previous month's figures which followed an increase of 0.5% for Jul.

Most of the short-term visitors were from China, with 122,000 arrivals, followed by New Zealand at 117,100 and the United States at 62,900.

Short-term resident returns for Sep also performed strongly, notching up a 4.8% spike on Sep last year, with the overall number of returns coming in at 926,000.

The short-term resident return number was down marginally on the previous month by 0.2%.

The result followed a monthly increase of 0.1% in Jul and a zero percentage change in Aug.

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## WhiteWater reno

**ARDENT** Leisure Group has detailed a \$15 million major extension of Dreamworld's WhiteWater World.

The expansion will consist of pools, waterfalls, beach areas, function and event space, cafes and pop-up retail outlets.

"This new precinct will add significant capacity to the water park and provide a great space for families to enjoy," Ardent Leisure Group Chairman Gary Weiss said at the AGM today.

Weiss acknowledged "this year has been another challenging year," but said the company was "making good progress across many areas of our business".

He said the Theme Park business continued to be impacted by the Thunder River Rapids tragedy of Oct 2016 and the coronial inquiry which followed (**TD** 26 Oct 2016).

This summer Dreamworld will launch a simulated flying experience called Sky Voyager.

## Intrepid takes plan B Corp

**INTREPID** Group will make its B Corp certification a key part of its future identity, tying its future growth to rising demand for responsible tourism.

At the Helloworld Frontliners Forum held in Fiji this month, Intrepid Group CEO James Thornton outlined the group's vision under its newly acquired status as the world's largest B Corp (**TD** 07 Aug), a certification scheme that measures a company's environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

"We believe that sustainable, experience-rich travel really is the future and purpose-driven businesses really are the way forward," Thornton said.

He said travellers were seeking sustainable, personalised travel, with choices selected by themes, rather than by the destination.

"Strong themed programs like food, family or cycling are driving

travel from a personalisation perspective," he said.

Intrepid's sales with Helloworld in the first quarter of this financial year were up 42% on last year, Thornton said, which he attributed to a long and successful partnership.

Intrepid had also seen a rise in sales to Africa and the Middle East, in particular Morocco, which had become the company's best-selling destination.

Turkey was also on the rebound, along with Egypt and Iran.

Thornton said a rising concern for travellers was overtourism.

"When visitors outweigh locals, this can have a massive impact on local lives on the country," he said.

"We are always trying to go outside of peak times and develop winter itineraries so we can spread economic dollars across," he said.

Another growth area for the company was adventure cruising.

## Serko growth surge

**TRAVEL** booking and expense management business Serko has released its latest financial results, with the company showing strong growth for the six-month period to 30 Sep 2018 after expanding market share in Australia and New Zealand.

The company posted that its Total Operating Revenue came in at \$11.4 million, a growth of 25% over the previous corresponding six months.

Booking platform transactions for the period were also up, increasing by 21% over the same time last year.

The data showed that Serko's net profit before tax for the period was \$1 million, slightly down on the previous year's result of \$1.2 million.

Serko Chairman Simon Botherway said the results were "pleasing", adding that the company "experienced increasing transaction volumes from existing and new customers".

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## Cruise lines brace for Brexit impact

THE British Government's revised Brexit deal still leaves uncertainty around border provisions, according to senior Cunard executive David Rousham, with cruise lines wary of potential impacts on disembarkation procedures and shore tours.

At the World's Leading Cruise Lines Next Wave Summit on the weekend, the Cunard VP of UK Sales and Int'l Development said tighter passport controls were likely, but the precise impact remained unclear despite the publication of 550 pages on the Brexit deal.

"Will Brexit have an affect? I think it will," Rousham said.

"How much? We don't know.

"We are fighting very hard politically to make sure that border controls - which we see as being the biggest issue - are not negative for things like shore excursions," Rousham said.

## Focus on volume: Myrmell

CARNIVAL chief Sture Myrmell has rejected the strategies of destinations hoping to focus solely on the high-yield cruise sector, warning that volume and frequency remain key to developing the industry.

At the World's Leading Cruise Lines Next Wave Summit on the weekend, the President of Carnival Australia & New Zealand and P&O Cruises Australia addressed misperceptions in the industry, including the belief that destinations could pursue higher yields with little impact.

"It's easy to think that it's possible to focus on the very high-yielding end of the market so that you can have the best of both worlds," Myrmell said.

"Well that doesn't actually stack up in reality.

"In Australia, 95% of the economic contribution comes from ships that carry more than 1,000 passengers, so volume

and frequency is what's laying the foundation for this industry and is what's paying the bills for infrastructure, ports and everything else that we need to be able to operate."

Myrmell also rejected the perception that cruise visitors spent less than other tourists.

Citing Tasmania as an example, Myrmell said research had shown cruise visitors each spent \$172 while ashore in Hobart.

Other tourists were shown to spend about \$120 a day on restaurants, activities and tours, excluding accommodation.

"So in this example, the cruise tourists are actually more valuable to the local community than the regular visitor," he said.

While cruise growth had generated concerns about congestion, Myrmell said demand for personal experiences was helping drive more dispersal to small operators in regional areas.



## Window Seat

CAN we buy a vowel?

Carnival Cruise Line's local head Jennifer Vanderkreeke has acknowledged the US spelling of *Carnival Splendor* has the potential to irk Australian purists who would prefer to add a 'u' when the ship begins sailing year-round from Sydney late next year.

But while she's supportive of a local adaptation, Vanderkreeke revealed the cost of this particular vowel had been calculated at a cool \$250,000, including fees for changing international registrations.

"We had to have a conversation on whether we wanted to spend \$250,000 adding a letter or making a waterslide cooler," she said.

"We decided to prioritise the waterslide."

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## More pax fly in Sep

**THE** month of Sep saw a total of 5.28 million passengers carried on domestic commercial aviation, showing a 0.2% uplift when compared with Sep 2017, according to the latest figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE).

The total number of aircraft trips was down 2.5% on the previous year, with 55,550 flights in operation.

The Melbourne to Sydney route remained the country's busiest route for the month, carrying 739,653 passengers.

Brisbane to Sydney came in second, with 397,239 passengers flying the route in Sep, while Brisbane to Melbourne rounded out third with 303,208 pax.

## Agents go wild in Kenya



**SOUTH** African Airways and African Travel Specialists recently treated a group of their top-selling Queensland-based agents to a trip to Kenya, where they experienced a range of activities that makes the region unique.

The intrepid travellers flew to Nairobi via Johannesburg on South African Airways, before spending the day visiting the Karen Blixen Museum and the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife Giraffe Centre.

Next on the agenda was a trip to the Samburu National Reserve and Lake Nakuru, where the

group spotted flamingos and experienced nature at its primal best when they watched a lion take down a zebra at the Lake Nakuru National Park.

Also featured on the itinerary was a stay at the Kichwa Tembo Tented Camp and Enaidura Luxury Mobile Camp, before the agents took to the skies high above Maasai Mara in a hot air balloon.

**Pictured** is the group at the entrance to the Maasai Mara Triangle, with escorts Debra Kruk from South African Specialists and Trent Malcolm, from South African Airways.

## San Fran specialist

**SAN** Francisco Travel and SFO International Airport are giving travel agents the chance to win a Google Home Hub or a Google Home Mini by completing a San Francisco specialist badge.

To be in the running, agents need to complete the San Francisco specialist badge on the Visit California STAR training platform by 03 Dec and email a photo of their certificate to [Alexandra@gate7.com.au](mailto:Alexandra@gate7.com.au).

The grand prize winner will receive a Google Home Hub and five second prize winners will take home Google Home Minis.

The San Francisco specialist badge is intended to familiarise agents with a destination overview of the city.

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## NZ adds codeshare

AIR New Zealand will be extending its codeshare service to Canada with the introduction of its Auckland to Chicago O'Hare service on 30 Nov (TD 28 Mar).

Planned codeshare routes will be operated by United Airlines and include services from Chicago to Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City, Toronto and Winnipeg.

## Elizabeth St Pier sale

**GOVERNMENT-OWNED**  
Elizabeth Street Pier in Tasmania has been listed for sale, with proceeds set to be used to "underpin investment in other public assets that will benefit all Tasmanians".

Funds will go towards transforming Macquarie Point into an arts and cultural precinct.



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## Etihad giveaway

**ETIHAD** Airways has launched a new three-week agent competition to celebrate its 15 years of operation.

The UAE carrier is offering a grand prize of two Business class flights to Abu Dhabi and a two-night stay in a luxury hotel, as well as 14 Economy class flights for agents who ticket a new Etihad booking before 28 Nov.

To be eligible agents will also need to fill out a competition form which is accessible [HERE](#).

## Virgin takes the train

**FLORIDA** train operator Brightline will this month rebrand to Virgin Trains USA following a strategic deal with Virgin Group which will also see the Richard Branson-led company take a minority stake in the business.

Brightline revealed it would leverage the Virgin brand and marketing expertise to help propel existing and future developments.

The train operator will formally transition all of its branding to Virgin Trains USA in 2019.

## Eurowings uniform

**EUROWINGS** Group has completed the changeover of its new sky blue uniform for all of the company's 3,200 cabin crew.

The new uniform was introduced three years ago to accompany the new Eurowings brand presence and soon all the carrier's aircraft will feature blue livery.

## RCI Alaska 2020

**ROYAL** Caribbean International has launched new itineraries for the 2020 Alaska summer season, revealing that three of its ships will sail to the region.

*Ovation of the Seas* will return alongside two Radiance Class ships - *Serenade of the Seas* and *Radiance of the Seas* - with itineraries including a range of seven- to 14-night cruises.

## Kenya get better than this?



**BUNNIK** Tours has recently wrapped up an eight-day fam in Kenya, where the small group tour operator escorted 11 travel agents to top sites across the African nation.

Starting their journey in the capital Nairobi, the group visited

the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, a rehabilitation centre for native wild species, before driving north through the city's farming region and Samburu National Reserve.

Elephants, giraffes, wildebeest and gazelles were next on the itinerary, with agents traipsing through Maasai Mara, one of Kenya's most popular game reserves.

**Pictured:** The group of 11 agents visit the Serena Mountain Lodge.

## Ignite fast growth

**IGNITE** Travel Group (ITG) has been recognised as Australia's fastest growing travel company in the 2018 IBISWorld Top 25 Fastest Growing Private Companies in Australia list.

The company ranked 14th in the list, with ITG Managing Director Randall Deer citing the company's relationship with suppliers and curated packages as key drivers.

"With a staggering 35% repeat customer rate, our unprecedented level of innovative, strategic and unique distribution enables us to explore avenues not available to other travel operators," Deer said.

## HK takes the Mickey

**HONG** Kong Disneyland Resort has announced that it will hold the World's Biggest Mouse Party to commemorate Mickey Mouse's milestone 90th birthday.

Festivities at the theme park will continue until 24 Feb next year and include Mickey and friends-themed park tickets, special birthday stickers, and a "We Love Mickey" Projection Show Birthday Edition.

**MEANWHILE**, the park will open another new attraction, the Ant-Man and The Wasp: Nano Battle! ride which is set to open in Mar.

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## Sri Lanka Educational



**BALI** Tours hosted eight agents on the company's first family to Sri Lanka in late Oct following its expansion to the country.

Bali Tours now also encompasses the brands Sri Lanka Tours & Beyond and Vietnam Tours & Beyond.

The eight-day adventure, included jeep safari rides in the Kaudulla National Park where elephants were spotted roaming freely; the Dambulla Cave Temple; and climbing the steps of Sigiriya Rock Fortress.

The agents also visited the Heritage Tea Factory in Nuwara Eliya, where they dressed up and plucked tea leaves with the local Sri Lankan women.

**Pictured** are: Holly Chapman, Destination HQ; Brooke Reid, Travelrite Heathmont; Julia Widjaja, Bali Tours/Sri Lanka Tours & Beyond; Siyeath Yorn, Bali Tours/Sri Lanka Tours & Beyond; Dale Lansdown, Surrey Travel; and Shannon McCormick, The Travel Agency; Back row are Brett Robinson, Helloworld Leopold; Angela Italia, Helloworld Cranbourne; Tracey Colquhoun, Travel with Tracey; & Karan Dempsey, Platinum Travel.

### YIA continues boost

**YANGON** International Airport (YIA) has continued its series of investments aimed at boosting passenger capacity, despite having the slowest growth in air passenger traffic in five years, according to local media.

CEO of Yangon Aerodrome Company, Ho Chee Tong said the company was "confident" that in 2019 air pax traffic will improve.

## AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



**I HAD** the great pleasure of participating in the Express Travel Group (ETG) conference

in Shanghai China over the weekend and want to do a big shout out to the ETG team for once again putting together a rich agenda and opening everyone's minds to the future.

There were plenty of issues being discussed within agency owners who attended and as I always say, I love feedback.

So a further shout out to the ETG members – it was great to see so many of you there.

As a city, Shanghai really does impress. It is the third largest city in the world with a whopping 23 million people, behind Tokyo (38 million) and Delhi (25 million).

What really took me and many of the conference delegates was that for such a large city, the area that we stayed in, The Bund, was amazingly empty.

It just goes to show that a city well managed with the right infrastructure can be successful and Shanghai is on the case when it comes to infrastructure.

When you make the comparisons to cities in Australia where they are about 20% of the size and look at the traffic, people movement, roads & other general infrastructure,

we have a lot to learn.

The other thing that struck me this time, (I have been to Shanghai about four times) was the friendliness and happiness of the people working in the hotels, restaurants and the shops, where they want to serve you and while there are still a few "lost in translation" English challenges, the overall experience was stellar. China is a mainstream destination now for sure, as there are plenty of flight options, multiple city options and so much to see and do.

As **Travel Daily** readers know I am the current Vice Chairman of the World Tourism Alliance (WTA) which is based in the beautiful city of Hangzhou.

Much of the work the WTA is doing is to foster greater relationships across the global travel value chain to help everyone gain a better understanding of just how much China wants to have a successful tourism industry, and I can assure you, they are committed to that.

China is a fast-paced growing market for Australians to explore and now more are thinking about it as a stopover destination for onward experiences to Europe.

For all those who are yet to get there, I would strongly suggest to take a look at how much there is to offer.

Xiexie (thank you in Chinese).

## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

**AU\$1 = US0.727**

**THE** Australian dollar has had a rocky start as US markets reacted negatively to the weekend's tensions over trade at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations conference.

The AUDUSD fell 0.6% after its three-month high on Fri, with the currency now performing weaker in most other markets.

The AUDEUR and AUDJPY both dropped 0.8%.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.727
UK	£0.565
NZ	\$1.058
Euro	€0.634
Japan	¥81.98
Thailand	฿23.84
China	¥4.974
South Africa	10.158
Canada	\$0.953
Crude oil	US\$56.46

### ART names Chair

**AUSTRALIAN** Regional Tourism (ART) has welcomed Coralie Bell as the new Chair of the Board.

Bell was previously the Tourism Manager at Shoalhaven for three years and will be bringing her expertise in leadership to guide ART to ensure "a strong and sustainable industry".

### Millennial brand

**JAPANESE** hospitality company Fujita Kanko will launch Tavinós, a new hotel brand aimed at "adventure-seeking millennials and like-minded travellers from around the world".

The 188-room Tavinós situated in Hamamatsu-cho, Tokyo, is slated to open Aug 2019.

### Hyatt to Kuwait

**HYATT** Hotels Corporation and Tamdeen Group have revealed plans to open Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall in Kuwait in Jan 2019.

Following renovations, the hotel will feature renovated rooms, a new ballroom and expanded meeting facilities.

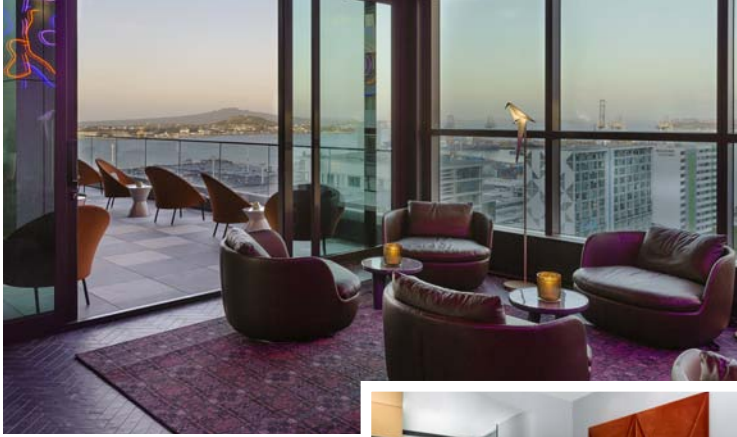
### Q'town Aus push

**DESTINATION** Queenstown (DQ) has launched its winter 2019 campaign in Australia in a move to inspire Aussies to tap into Queenstown's adventurous spirit.

The video highlights The Remarkables, along with Queenstown's alleys and nightlife.

To watch the campaign video, **CLICK HERE.**

## SO/ Auckland opens



**LUXURY** lifestyle hotel SO/ Auckland has opened (**TD** 27 Sep) in the city's former Reserve Bank building, offering 130 rooms.

The property is the first SO hotel in the Pacific region and each room has a bath, a separate rain-shower, a complimentary non-alcoholic mini bar, wi-fi and a flat screen TV.

SO/ Auckland offers guests a bar on the ground floor called Mixo (**below**), a HI-SO rooftop bar (**top**), Harbour Society restaurant on the 15th floor and a SO/ Spa.

The hotel also has a Club Signature lounge, SO/ Fit and an indoor heated pool, and has a cafe opening early 2019.

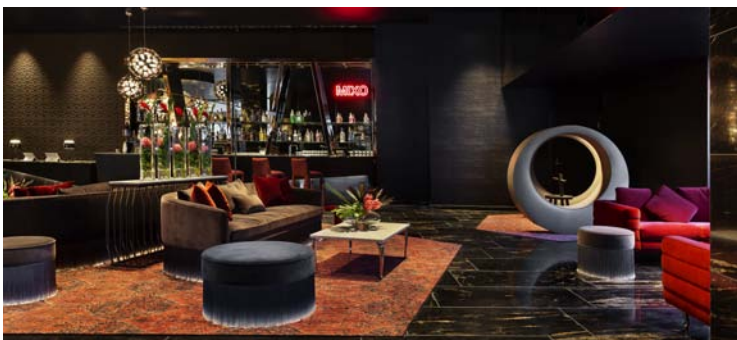


SO/ Auckland's design reflects the city's volcanic history, with rooms categorised into Vapour, Liquid (**inset**) and Solid in all SO Cozy, SO Comfy, SO Club and SO Studio rooms.

A floor has also been dedicated to Penthouse Suites.

Rates begin from NZ\$469 per room per night.

SO/ Hotels & Resorts is part of AccorHotels and was originally created as a label of Sofitel.



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Send your entries to [bench@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:bench@traveldaily.com.au)

## Skal congress @ sea

**SKAL** International Miami Club is set to host its 80th International World Congress next year on board Royal Caribbean's *Symphony of the Seas*, taking place on 14-21 Sep.

The ship will depart Miami, before calling in at Honduras, Mexico and the Bahamas.

For more info, visit the congress website **HERE**.

## NFS adds Aqua

**NATURAL** Focus Safaris has added to its portfolio with Aqua Expeditions' *Aqua Mekong*, which takes in the landscapes of Cambodia and Vietnam.

*Aqua Mekong* accommodates 40 passengers in 20 suites and also offers a lounge, dining area, observatory deck, plunge pool & cinema room - more info **HERE**.

## ATEC kicks off

**THE** 2018 Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) Meeting Place conference has welcomed more than 410 delegates to Darwin, who will have the chance to broaden their knowledge of Top End tourism product.

The event will also feature a range of familiarisation programs, see [atec.net.au](http://atec.net.au) for info.

## Delta adds 10 neos

**DELTA** Air Lines has confirmed it has added 10 more Airbus A330-900neos to its current order, bringing its total number of next-generations planes to 35.

Delta will be the first American airline to operate the aircraft, which is expected to be delivered next year.

2018 AFTA TRAVEL PAGES, NOW WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPLIER DIRECTORY.

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