

## Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a full page from CAPA.

## Hurry & win with EY

ETIHAD is reminding agents that there are only five days left to win the holiday of a lifetime in Abu Dhabi via the airline's Ready Set Go giveaway.

For a chance to score prizes, visit [HERE](#) to register your bookings by 10 Dec for travel from 15 Jan to 30 Sep 2022 in any Etihad cabin.

Prizes include Business class tickets with accommodation and theme park access in Abu Dhabi.

The carrier is also offering all guests travelling via Abu Dhabi a free ticket to Expo 2020 Dubai.

## Wellness webinar

AGENTS have the chance to learn more about wellness tourism, with Tourism Australia gearing up to host a new webinar detailing the best wellness travel options in Australia.

Aussie Specialist Trainer Caroline Rutherford will head up the 30-minute live session on 09 Dec at 11am AEDT.

"Not only is a wellness holiday an incredible way to recharge, but it makes an unforgettable last-minute gift this season," Tourism Australia said.

Registrations can be made via the learning catalogue on the Aussie Specialist site [HERE](#).

## GBT cements its future

B2B travel platform American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) has announced plans to list the company publicly via a new merger deal with Apollo Strategic Growth Capital.

Unveiling plans to list the combined entity on the New York Stock Exchange using the symbol "GBTG", GBT estimates the partnership will provide up to US\$1.2 billion in gross proceeds, including an oversubscribed US\$335 million PIPE investment at US\$10 per common share.

Key investors listed in the move include Ares, HG Vora, Sabre and Zoom, with the merger anticipated to be formally completed towards the middle of 2022.

GBT's Chief Executive Officer Paul Abbott said the listing and backing of blue chip investors would be a big shot in the arm for the business as it looks to bounce back from the travel shutdown.

"Commitments from new investors like Zoom, Sabre, Apollo, Ares and HG Vora are a huge vote of confidence in our business and the future of business travel, and meetings and events," he said.

"We expect that becoming a listed company will give us the additional investment capacity to strengthen our commitment to providing unrivalled value, choice and experiences to our customers and partners," Abbott added.

The combined company will be renamed Global Business Travel

Group, however it will continue to do business under the Amex GBT brand name, and will also continue to have access to the American Express trademark in connection with the American Express Global Business Travel and American Express GBT Meetings & Events brands for a minimum of 11 years.

## Banyan Tree growth

BANYAN Tree Group has flagged the introduction of five new brands as it embarks on a plan to double its physical footprint by 2025.

The batch of new brands will all be focused on embracing the tenants of "purposeful travel", and will commence rolling out globally next year.

Garrya, Homm, Folio, Veya and Escape have been revealed as the names of the new badges, with Banyan stating their release was due to a combination of conversion opportunities in resort destinations, emerging second-tier tourism destinations, as well as a greater desire for wellbeing and sustainable travel.

Four Garrya and two Homm properties have already been signed in Asia with more in the pipeline, while a total of 19 new openings are due in 2022.

"We are committed to... inspiring better living for our guests and associates in all the communities where we operate," Banyan MD Eddy See said.

## UK travel changes

FROM tomorrow, all travellers aged 12 years and over must take a COVID-19 test in the two days before making their way to the United Kingdom, regardless of vaccination status.

Responding out of an abundance of caution around the Omicron variant, arrivals must also take a PCR test before the end of the second day and must stay in self-isolation for a minimum of two days.

## Hopping to India

THE first commercial Qantas flight from Australia to India in almost a decade has taken off today, less than a month after The International Air Services Commission granted the airline unlimited capacity on the route for the next 99 years (TD 11 Nov).

In an encouraging sign of pent-up travel demand enduring recent Omicron concerns, the Sydney-Delhi service and the Melbourne-Delhi service, which takes off just before Christmas, have been the fastest selling routes on the airline's network since borders reopened, with the majority of flights in Dec almost entirely sold out.

"Forward bookings for the next few months are well ahead of our initial forecasts so while it's early days, it's an exciting start," Qantas Domestic and International CEO Andrew David said.

The strong bookings arrive despite new three-day self-isolation return protocols.

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## CX restructures loyalty

**CATHAY** Pacific will merge its Marco Polo Club and Asia Miles loyalty programs from Jul next year, with the carrier advising customers via email that their memberships will be updated to one scheme with four tiers.

Those who are an Asia Miles member but not a Marco Polo Club member will automatically become a Cathay Green member in Jul 2022, with Asia Miles balances to be transferred to a new Cathay member profile.

The categories are divided into Green, Silver, Gold and Diamond, with the entry Green tier offering members a host of services, including priority online check-in, the opportunity to redeem experiences with more than 800 travel partners, exclusive ticket deals, as well as more opportunities to earn status points.

The loyalty restructure will also

see Marco Polo Club club points become known as Status Points moving forward, and while there will be no changes to the way balances are accrued, i.e. one club point equalling one Status Point, the airline said there would be a wider range of ways to earn points in the air & on the ground.

Members can also renew and upgrade their status by spending with selected co-branded credit cards (available in Hong Kong), by purchasing selected flight fares, or simply by flying with Cathay.

“We wanted to make it easier for you to get the most out of Cathay – and to bring everything you value about membership, from benefits to rewards, together in the one place,” the carrier noted.

A single profile page will also make it easier to track future upgrades and redemptions.

For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Four Seasons private jet tours

**FOUR** Seasons Hotels & Resorts has announced its Private Jet journeys in 2023, in response to pent-up demand.

Dates have been announced for the African Wonders, Timeless Encounters and International Intrigue itineraries, as Four Seasons experiences all-time high demand and an unprecedented sellout pace.

Four Seasons will announce more opportunities, as the full line-up of 2023 itineraries is made public in the coming months.

“The overwhelming interest in our Private Jet offering is not only a testament to pent up demand, it also highlights the desire for seamless service that prioritises health and safety in this new era of luxury travel,” said President, Global Operations Christian Clerc.

Travellers interested in booking are invited to [CLICK HERE](#).

## Japan backflips

**JAPANESE** airlines will resume inbound flight bookings for returnees, after the country’s Ministry of Transport & Tourism announced late last week the reversal of an initial travel blanket ban to prevent the spread of COVID-19’s Omicron variant.

All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines are now accepting new reservations, following criticism the measures against Omicron had gone too far.

The turnaround comes after the Government of Japan lowered its daily cap for arrivals from overseas to 3,500 from 5,000.

According to the country’s Ministry, passengers may not be able to reserve a seat to Japan, as bookings for inbound flights from abroad this month are already mostly full.

However, the Ministry added that airlines are planning to accept new bookings on days that have not reached limits.

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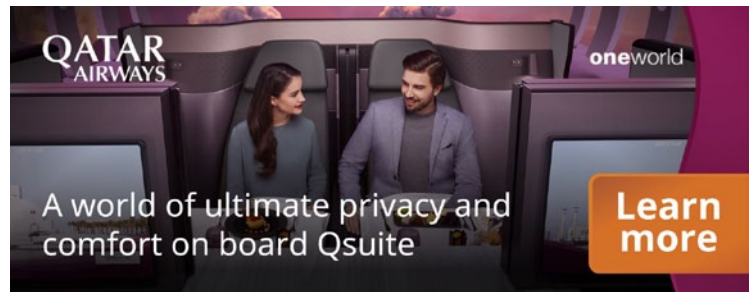
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## Window Seat

WHEN people think of the great whiskey artisans around the world, very few people cast their minds to a pair of medical doctors as distilling the perfect batch of hooch.

But that's just what Prof John Rasko and Dr Jerry Schwartz (pictured) have recently completed, producing a single malt whiskey called the Two Doctors, which will be the signature whiskey at the new Two Doctors Whiskey Tavern at Dr Schwartz's Fairmont Resort & Spa in the Blue Mountains.

The debut six-year-old whiskey is nearing the bottling stage and the first bottles are expected to be unveiled in early 2022, with Schwartz claiming the Two Doctors brand will be set apart from competitors because the pair have been focussing exclusively on single malt whiskeys for seven years.

"Expert barrel tastings of the Two Doctors whiskey have been universally praised and reflect both the investment we've made in the process and John Rasko's passion and skills," he said, adding that the opening of dedicated whiskey bar was the next logical step in the journey of whiskey production.

"There is a medical theme to the bar, with various pieces of medical equipment installed as 'furnishings', though we are confident that a 'visit to the doctors' will be a far more attractive proposition than the usual doctor's appointment," Schwartz mused.



## itravel unveils Penrith store



ITRAVEL has announced the opening of its newest franchise store, with itravel Penrith launching this week.

Owned and operated by Belle Goldie, a veteran of the travel industry with more than 15 years of experience and a number of travel awards under her belt, the new location is set to be a major success, Managing Director Steve Labroski believes.

"Belle's leadership, business acumen and unrivalled customer service will ensure the store's

success and longevity," he said.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19, itravel has bucked the growth trend in recent times, signing four new travel advisers to bring its total network to 130 agents comprised of franchise stores, mobile agents and affiliates.

"For over 25 years we've navigated successfully through wars, epidemics, pandemics and natural disasters," he said.

"We remain strong and resilient, now more than ever travel advisers are in demand and we're seeing strong growth attesting to this," Labroski added.

**Pictured:** Owner itravel Penrith Belle Goldie, Penrith City Council Mayor Karen McKeown, and itravel Managing Director Steve Labroski.

## WHO discourages over 60s travel

The World Health Organization (WHO) has advised people over the age 60 to postpone travel to hotspot areas.

People who are over 60 years and those with underlying health conditions should be advised to postpone travel to areas of community transmission, the organisation noted.

MEANWHILE the WHO has criticised nations for enacting blanket travel bans on select countries in response to the Omicron variant, calling for a risk-based approach instead.

Preferable measures include screening of passengers prior to travel and/or upon arrival, and the use of COVID testing or quarantine of international travellers after a risk assessment.

## Montana in NSW

BANNISTERS is opening a new luxury property on New South Wales' South Coast this month.

The Jackson Ranch, inspired by the aesthetic of Montana, is hidden within almost 40 acres of natural forest at Bawley Point.

Nestled around Lake Willinga, The Jackson Ranch is pitched at both weddings and group getaways, with accommodation for up to 30 across five renovated cabins, as well as a 120m<sup>2</sup> event space, with two bars for pre- and post-wedding celebrations.

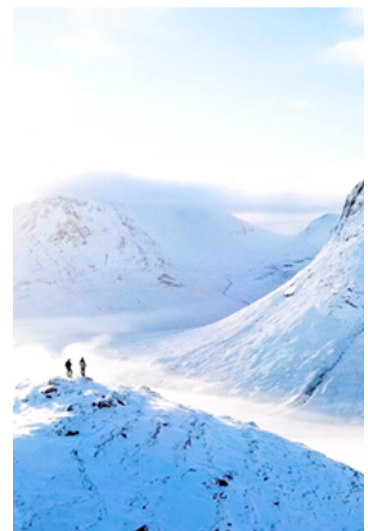
## Malaysia ticks cruise

THE Malaysian Government has granted approval for cruise operations to restart in Malaysia from 22 Dec under strict safety and preventive measures that are in line with the international standards and local protocols.

"We believe the restart of the domestic cruise operations in a safe manner will further boost the tourism sector, as well as the other supporting sectors," Malaysia's Penang Port Commission Chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng said.

Star Cruises is set to be the first cruise line to restart operations in the country, introducing a series of round-trip itineraries from Penang on board *Star Pisces*.

For more information on the cruise restart, see **Cruise Weekly**.



TRAVELPORT

## HOW FAR DO YOU WANT TO GO?

DISCOVER MORE

## TAT shows its appreciation



**THE** Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) Australian team recently gathered at the Blue Ginger restaurant in Balmain, Sydney to celebrate Thailand reopening as a tourist destination.

Beyond the excitement of the market beginning to open up to the world, the event also served as a forum to unveil Thailand's latest tourism campaign called Visit Thailand Year 2022, a push

that will highlight three key chapters of Thailand's appeal.

Chapter one of the campaign will see TAT push the country's delicious culinary appeal and nature attractions, followed by chapter two's promotion of why families, couples and friends would benefit from a trip to Thailand.

The third chapter, labelled The Earth We Care, will highlight the increasing profile of ecotourism among the world's travellers, and how their behaviour impacts the environment.

Attendees at the lunch included the Royal Thai Consulate, Thai Airways, Luxury Escapes, Planetdwellers, Flight Centre, Helloworld, Travel Zoo, Hoot Holidays, My Overseas Wedding, Play by Afterpay and Complete Travel Marketing.

TAT Marketing Manager Sherly Handjojo also ran the group through the quarantine-free procedures for Australian and New Zealand travellers, which includes a PCR test no more than 72 hours before travelling, proof of double vaccination status, and a travel insurance policy with coverage no less than US\$50,000.

**Pictured:** Pauline Leong, Thai Airways; Sherly Handjojo, TAT; Charlie Ridout, Complete Travel Marketing; David Bassett, Qantas Hotels; Suladda Sarutilavan, TAT; and Jodie Collins, Luxury Escapes.

## Ride takes flight

**THE** Matagarup Bridge zip-line tourism attraction in Western Australia has formally opened up to the public today.

The adventure tourism attraction completes the second part of Matagarup Bridge Activities project, which also included a bridge climb experience on the Swan River which opened in Jan.

Prices for the zip-line start from \$99 per person for the express zip and up to \$149 for a zip and climb package, which includes free photos.

The next part of the tourism plan involves a flagged project of family-friendly activities on Burswood Park adjacent to the zip-line landing platform.

Ticket purchases for the zip-line and bridge climb attractions can be made **HERE**.

## Relax and Renew

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But it's not just about the

big smoke, with places like the Great Western Hotel Cobar (**below left**) providing a unique way to experience the countryside. There are also scores of boutique accommodation options such as Boydell's in the Hunter Valley, the South Coast's Currajong Retreat, or the Farmouse on Oxley on the Barrington Coast - perfect for family reunions or intimate getaways.

Stay with the animals (and soak up the harbour views) with a Roar & Snore experience at Taronga Zoo. Wherever you choose, NSW's accommodation will be complemented with the state's finest food and wine to complete the experience.

Head to [visitsw.com](http://visitsw.com) for travel inspiration, itineraries, and ideas on how to #FeelNew in NSW.



Images: ©Destination NSW

## Vietjet Euro debut

**VIETJET** has announced plans to launch services to Europe for the first time, with the Vietnamese airline confirming it will debut in the continent via flights to Moscow in mid 2022.

The upcoming flights will connect Moscow's Sheremetyevo (SVO) airport with Hanoi (HAN), Ho Chi Minh City (SGN) and Nha Trang (NHA) from early Jul using Airbus A330-300 aircraft.

Vietjet was embarking on a strong expansion strategy prior to the pandemic, and even managed to launch five new domestic routes in 2020 (**TD** 17 Jun 2020).

## New MH370 theory

**A BRITISH** engineer has put forward a new theory this week about the mysterious disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in 2014, suggesting the pilot hijacked the aircraft for political reasons.

Richard Godfrey has also been making headlines in the UK for claiming to know the resting location of the missing plane using new tracking technology, speculating the Boeing 777 plane is on the seabed about 1,931 km west of Perth, Australia.

The plane went missing with 227 passengers on board.



## BA forges fuel deal

**BRITISH** Airways and energy company Phillips 66 have agreed to the first-ever United Kingdom-produced sustainable aviation fuel supply.

The multi-year agreement will see the SAF produced at the Humber Refinery in North Lincolnshire, United Kingdom - the first facility to produce the fuel at scale in the country.

The SAF will be supplied to BA to power a number of its flights from early next year, as part of the airline's initiatives to decarbonise, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

## Aussie travel update

**AUSTRALIAN** tourists are no longer permitted to enter Malaysia or Norway, Smartraveller has advised.

The Malaysian Govt has paused tourists from Australia from taking part in the Langkawi Island international tourism bubble, with all travellers now required to receive approval before entry.

Meanwhile Australia's digital COVID-19 certificate is not being accepted as valid for entering Norway, with those without a valid COVID-19 cert needing to follow the same rules as for unvaccinated travellers.

## Pick the nation

**COUNTRIES** have unique geography, ethnicities and cultures which come together to often form very distinctive symbols.

Based off the four different symbols and famous faces, see if you can figure out which country they represent.



1



2



3



4



Answer: Abu Dhabi

## BROCHURES

**WELCOME** to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday 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](mailto:brochures@traveldaily.com.au).



### Wendy Wu Tours - Southeast Asia & New Zealand

Wendy Wu Tours has gone to press with its 2022 & 2023 Southeast Asia & New Zealand brochure. The program celebrates a return to areas of the world where COVID had hit hardest, shrouding from the rest of the world Cambodia's Angkor temples and Vietnam's breathtaking Ha Long Bay. Wendy Wu will also travel to New Zealand for the first time ever on three exciting new tours, exploring the treasures of both the North and South islands, or embarking on a trip touring both regions. Other destinations Wendy Wu will travel to for the season include Borneo, Cambodia, Laos, and more.



### Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours - New Zealand

Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours' new New Zealand 22-23 brochure provides a range of new discoveries in The Land of the Long White Cloud. From Cape Reinga to Fiordland National Park, Scenic will travel on a range of land journeys for the season. On the North Island, Scenic will visit Auckland Harbour, the Bay of Islands, and the geothermal pools of Rotorua. In the South, travellers will enjoy the many charms of rejuvenated Christchurch and Scottish-influenced Dunedin, as well as New Zealand's Southern Alps, including Franz Josef Glacier and Mount Cook.

## Spend undeterred

**THE** travel industry's digital advertising spend was in "cruise control" during Oct, as many Australians began to emerge from the long lockdown period.

Digital impressions were up by almost 40% in Oct compared to the previous month, according to Nielsen Ad Intel, while data also showed that \$8.5 million was reported in total digital travel estimated ad spend during the month of Oct, including display, video & social, with cruise spending leading the way.

## MH to relaunch FY

**MALAYSIA** Airlines has resumed two domestic routes, and is planning a relaunch of its subsidiary Firefly.

MH resumed the routes from Penang last Thu to two secondary cities Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

The BKI route will be operated four times weekly, while KCH will be served twice weekly, both with a Boeing 737-800.

The routes will be operated through to Mar, at which point Firefly will relaunch and take them over.



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