

## Rex links SYD/BNE

REX Airlines has confirmed it will commence flying between Sydney and Brisbane from 20 Dec, just three days after the carrier takes off from Melbourne to Brisbane (TD 15 Nov).

Launch flights will start from \$69pp and fly three times daily.

## FCTG independence day

FLIGHT Centre's independent division has recently secured 21 new members and 29 new mobile agents, bringing its total to 313.

FCTG Independent, which includes the Travel Associates at Home and Travel Partners brands, has welcomed Reguson Travel & Cruise, Milan Travel, Rediscover Travel, SkyJet Travel, Payless World Travel, Drive Adventures, and LVEM Corporate and Event Travel, to name just a few.

The independent division is recovering well from the travel shutdown, Flight Centre stated, revealing the network was already trading at 47% of pre-COVID levels, less than one month after the opening of international borders.

The company has been open about its ramp up of investment in its independent brands as part of its COVID recovery strategy. "With access to global fares

and the widest product range available, as well as upgraded technology and reporting, marketing and financial support, FCTG is focused on enabling their network to thrive as the world reopens for travel," FCTG said.

FCTG GM for Independent in Australia, Astrid Richards, told TD she was "absolutely delighted by the recent growth of FCTG Independent, as it pertains to both our growing network and tremendous sales - we recognise the power of the independent space and will continue to build on the resources and technology available through FCTG to support our network."

FCTG wants to add 90 members over the next six months.

## Category upgrades

OCEANIA Cruises is offering guests up to four category upgrades as part of its new Exclusive Upgrade sale.

The cruise line is also offering agents the chance to earn up-front bonus commissions for bookings on all sailings - see p6.

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## SQ's Pelago launch

SINGAPORE Airlines today announced the Australian debut of its Pelago travel experiences platform, allowing users to book activities in Australia, Singapore, Thailand & Hong Kong, at the same time earning and burning KrisFlyer points - see [pelago.co](http://pelago.co).

### Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news, plus full pages from Oceania Cruises and Croatia Cruises.

## Beyond gift buying

JOURNEY Beyond has launched a new online gift shop stocked with souvenirs and merchandise from its brands, as well as travel vouchers that could make great gifts in the lead up to Christmas.

"Our new merchandise range has something for everyone, from smiling quokkas and fun puzzles, through to high-end luggage, jackets and sunglasses, the gift reflects the iconic places...of our experiences," Journey Beyond's Chief Commercial Officer Peter Egglestone said.

The company's brands include The Ghan, Indian Pacific, Rottneat Express and Cruise Whitsundays. Visit the new gift shop [HERE](#).



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## Intrepid goes large in US

**INTREPID** Travel has announced 38 new tours in the United States will depart in 2022 - marking the operator's largest ever collection of American trips.

The latest batch of product incorporates "the must-see attractions", in addition to more in-depth experiences such as dining on local delicacies and spending time with the country's First Nations tribes.

Highlights include the six-day South Dakota to Montana Parks Explorer adventure which visits popular landmarks like Mount Rushmore and Yellowstone, as well as delivering an indigenous cultural perspective on the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

Rates for the trip lead in at \$3,145 per person and groups are capped at 12 people.

Another tour in the spotlight is the seven-day Georgia History Trail to Nashville tour, taking travellers deep into the heart of

America's past to see what factors have shaped today's movement for human rights.

Stops include a visit to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and a Black History walking tour in Charleston.

Overall the collection takes guests to 28 states and includes a mix of walking, cycling, multi-active, culinary and general sightseeing adventures.

The progressive twist on the latest US trips are in line with Intrepid's broader push to ensure travel is also a force for good.

"We created these itineraries to showcase the US through a more authentic and diverse lens," CEO James Thornton said.

"While we did include many of the well-loved places...we took it a step further by celebrating the...varying perspectives that allow travellers to understand what America is - not just at its surface-but rather at its core," he added.

## SIA cabin upgrades

**SINGAPORE** Airlines has unveiled all-new narrowbody aircraft cabin products, which will roll out across its Boeing 737-8 fleet in the coming weeks.

The aircraft will feature 144 Economy and 10 lie-flat Business class seats, with Panasonic X-Series seat-back IFE and in-flight wi-fi and mobile data connectivity.

The S\$230m project will "elevate the standard for short-and medium-haul travel on board narrowbody aircraft," the carrier said.

## NCL Black Friday

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line has today launched a massive sale offering up to 35% off a wide array of voyages alongside the five popular "Free at Sea" offers.

Open now for new bookings confirmed before 09 Dec on worldwide cruises, the fares are the best prices travellers will see from NCL this year - 1300 255 200.

## Stark to lead FC

**THE** appointment of Andrew Stark as Global Managing Director of the Flight Centre leisure brand (**TD** breaking news) will see him relocate to Brisbane from South Africa, where he has lived since 2010 in various Flight Centre Travel Group roles including as MD of Middle East and Africa.

Stark will report to Melanie Waters-Ryan, and said he was looking forward to an exciting era of growth and innovation as the world emerges from COVID-19.

"Flight Centre brand is well placed to grow its global market share because during the pandemic we kept investing in customer-centric strategies for the new world of travel," he said.

"Our ecosystem has never looked stronger and more agile globally with 3,000 highly skilled travel experts, 408 customer-centric stores, exclusive irresistible deals, real-time data points and a world class bookable website," Stark added.



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## G'day added two

G'DAY Group has secured 50-year leases on the Amblin Holiday Park in Busselton in WA and the Big4 Bungalow park in Ulladulla NSW from the Australian Navy.

The deal will also see Navy personnel offered free G'Day Rewards memberships.

## Learn about Europe

EUROPEAN Travel Commission's (ETC) Australia Chapter is hosting a new live webinar series themed "Naturally Curious", kicking off on 23 Nov.

Sessions will focus on outdoor experiences and feature tourism boards including Switzerland Tourism, the Italian National Tourist Board & Tourism Ireland.

A range of prizes are also up for grabs for attendees, including gift cards and hampers.

Register to the first of three session on 23 Nov [HERE](#), the 30 Nov webinar [HERE](#) & a workshop taking place 07 Dec [HERE](#).

## Qantas, Accor link loyalty

QANTAS and Accor have today gone live with their highly anticipated joint loyalty offering, which will be available to the combined 30 million members of the Qantas Frequent Flyer and Accor ALL reward schemes.

Announced almost exactly 12 months ago (*TD* 19 Nov 2020), the pact allows members to "double dip" by earning points with both programs for flights and stays.

Speaking at an event in Sydney today, Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said the partnership was launching at an ideal time, "with domestic and international borders reopening and frequent flyers starting to plan and book their next getaway".

Outgoing Accor Pacific CEO Simon McGrath said the tie-up was a first for a hospitality group and airline in Australia, describing it as "a major milestone for the travel industry".

Under the deal, Accor ALL members will earn two Accor points per \$10 spent on Qantas flights (excluding taxes and ancillaries) - as long as they are Accor ALL Gold, Platinum and Diamond status members, or QF Platinum and Platinum One members.

The pact will also see Qantas Frequent Flyer members receive three QF points per dollar when booking at Accor properties across the Asia-Pacific region.

QF frequent flyers holding Gold status or above will be automatically fast-tracked to Accor ALL's Silver tier by staying just one night with Accor - versus the current 10-night requirement.

It's understood the alliance may also be extended to provide benefits for Qantas Business Rewards members.

Accounts with both schemes must be linked to access the points - [qantas.com/accor](http://qantas.com/accor).

## Azamara winner

THE second weekly winner of the Azamara Onward Pre-Inaugural Cruise competition has been selected, with Leanne Stevens from the Travel Agency picking up a \$100 Visa gift card.

Stevens won the latest round with her entry: "I have never been on a cruise, Azamara is the one I'd choose, to win this competition would be the most exciting news".

## Bunnik relaunch

BUNNIK Tours has relaunched its international touring program departing in 2022, with the first tour kicking off in Sri Lanka on 29 Jan 2022.

To celebrate the milestone, Joint-CEO Dennis Bunnik will join guests on the trip for the first week of the adventure.

Feb will see its Middle East program reboot, while Japan returns in Mar with eight departures - for details see [HERE](#).



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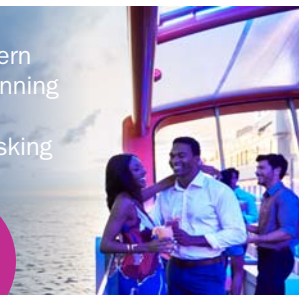
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Read about Celebrity Cruises' Northern Europe itineraries on board their stunning Edge Class ships. In the November issue of *travelBulletin*, Celebrity is asking Aussies "Isn't it time?"

travelBulletin

CLICK to read



## Window Seat

**TRAVELLERS** preparing for a lovely holiday to New Zealand beware, the Land of the Long White Cloud is not always as idyllic as it seems, folks.

You need only look at the crime wave going on in Dunedin to be scared, where police allege a possum has held a woman hostage in her house for several months.

The renegade marsupial is suspected of being an escaped pet, authorities claim (we're not sure why), who corralled the home's owner by charging at her menacingly every time she tried to escape.

When the police arrived at the house, a juvenile possum lurched from the darkness and climbed an officer's leg.

Now before we all start mouthing off at New Zealand for its dangerous wildlife, it should be noted that Australia is home to the majority of the world's deadliest snakes, besides, the possum was first introduced into New Zealand from Australia in 1837, to establish a fur trade which never took off - sorry bro!



## Emirates reveals major revamp



**EMIRATES** has announced that it will commence retrofitting 105 of its wide-body aircraft with its Premium Economy product.

Making the announcement at the Dubai Airshow 2021 overnight, the carrier revealed the refresh would take approximately 18 months to complete and will kick off at the end of 2022.

Changes will see 52 of its A380s and 53 Boeing 777s fitted with the airline's Premium Economy offering, which features seats with six-way adjustable headrests, calfrests and footrests.

Seating is also wider (19.5 inches) and allows for eight inches of recline into a comfortable cradle position, with further features including in-seat charging points, a wide dining table and side cocktail table.

Wider entertainment screens also form part of the new class, at 13.3 inches they are one of the largest in its class.

Emirates also revealed it is considering installing a brand new Business class product on its Boeing 777 aircraft, which would boast customised seats in a 1-2-1 layout plan.

"Since we introduced our Premium Economy seats a year back (**pictured**), we've received a hugely positive response," Emirates President Tim Cook said.

"As Emirates has done with our signature First, Business and full-service Economy, we intend to further develop our Premium Economy into a distinctive Emirates experience that is unmatched in the industry," he added.

When the retrofit program is complete, Emirates will have a total of 111 Boeing 777 and Airbus A380 aircraft offering Premium Economy seats, including the six A380s that would have been delivered to the airline with four cabin classes by the end of next month.

## World cruise in 2024

**AZAMARA** has launched its new World Voyage taking place aboard its newest ship *Azamara Onward* from 05 Jan 2024.

Setting off from Florida, the 155-night sailing visits 40 countries in six continents with 22 overnight stays and 27 late nights.



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## Rotty appointment

**THE** Rottnest Island Authority has appointed Hamish Beck to be its Chair for the next three years.

The news follows the departure of John Langoulant, who has been the Chair since 2017, who leaves to take up the position of Agent General for WA in the United Kingdom/Europe region.

Beck is passionate about the sustainability of Rottnest Island, and was previously a member of the Rottnest Island marine advisory committee.

**MEANWHILE** former Chief of Staff to the WA Premier Mark McGowan, Guy Houston, has also joined the board.

## Raffles packages

**RAFFLES** Hotel Singapore has introduced a range of new immersive accommodation packages as the country begins to see a return of international travel volumes.

The packages include the Wine and Dine experience, combining high-quality dining options from French to Asian cuisine with its collection of famous cocktails.

Also on offer is the Explore & Discover package which takes guests on a bicycle tour through the civic district which incorporates historical landmarks such as the Padang, as well as modern Singapore attractions.

## ACCOMMODATION

**WELCOME** to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).

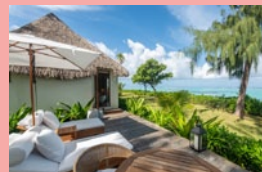


**Swissotel Sydney** will welcome a new restaurant inside its premises on Thu, with the Ten Stories eatery headed up by award-winning Executive Chef John Giovanni Pugliano (pictured). The restaurant will serve up dishes created from sustainable Australian produce, resulting in a modern menu with Italian and Asian accents. However the pièce de résistance is the honey and honeycomb that will be infused with many of its meals and cocktails, honey that is harvested from the hotel's own rooftop beehives.



**OMO Hotels and Resorts** has announced a new luxury boutique hotel will open in the heart of Burgundy France, called the COMO Le Montrachet in 2022. The property is nestled around the charming village square of Puligny-Montrachet, with features

including 31 rooms and suites, authentic 18th Italian interior design, and first class dining concepts.



A new resort has opened on the private island the Motu Nao Nao in Tahiti, offering guests three bungalows of accommodation designed by local designer Alain Fleuret.

The **Motu Nao Nao Private Island Resort** is staffed by a private chef, and offers a variety

of fun water activities such as private dives, fishing, snorkeling and jet-skiing. The island, also called a Motu, is located close to the island of Raiatea, with prices leading in at around \$9,000 per night.

## Win

### a Balcony stateroom on the Azamara Onward Pre-Inaugural Cruise!

Azamara and Travel Daily are providing one travel agent and guest with the once-in-a-lifetime experience of sailing on the 5 Night Pre-Inaugural Cruise of *Azamara Onward*. Sailing from Barcelona to Monte Carlo and staying in a Balcony stateroom, this is a special sailing not to be missed.

Prize includes Balcony stateroom for 2 on the 5 night pre-inaugural cruise. Minor Prizes will be awarded each week of one x \$100 VISA e-gift card. So get your entries in early.

To enter please tell us in 25 words or less why you need to win an Azamara cruise in Europe? Creativity counts!

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\*Terms and conditions apply

## Intrepid savings

**INTREPID** is offering savings of up to 30% on select tours departing later this year, including its six-day Trek the Cradle Mountain Overland Track departing 24 Nov.

The Tasmanian journey is now priced at \$1,621ppts, down from the standard rate of \$2,315ppts.

Also available is the six-day Whitsunday Islands Explorer tour departing 15 Dec, now priced from \$1,834ppts.

Call 1300 149 284 for details.

## Maldives runway

**A SECOND** runway is set to open next year at the Maldives' Velana International Airport, according to the facility's General Manager Hassan Areef.

The project has faced lengthy construction delays, but with increasing tourist volumes anticipated over the next year, the runway will finally go ahead.

A new seaplane terminal is also expected to be established next year to service its large fleet of resort-driven seaplane flights.

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