

Travel Daily on location in Mackinac Island

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking Cruises, aboard the new *Viking Octantis* as she cruises North America's Great Lakes.

THE final port of call on our sojourn through the Great Lakes region is Mackinac Island, Michigan, a charming little village which is designated as a US National Landmark.

Located on the shore of Lake Huron, visitors can travel around the streets in horse-drawn carriages, buy some of the local world-famous fudge or enjoy plenty of activities such as kayaking, hiking or cycling.

Mackinac Island is located between Michigan's Upper and Lower peninsulas, and does not allow any motor vehicles so alongside carriages in the main street, bicycles abound, with the destination claiming to have more bikes per capita than anywhere else in the world.

Like every other port on our itinerary, the arrival of *Octantis* has been heralded as a huge event, with news crews and other media avidly following the ship which is a welcome stimulus to local economies.

Tomorrow we end our voyage in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where guests will disembark *Viking Octantis* to allow another cohort to board for the return journey northward back to Thunder Bay.

WA eases protocols

WESTERN Australia has phased out its unvaccinated international arrivals cap and mandatory seven-day quarantine period for returning unvaccinated Australians and permanent residents from this week.

The decision was made alongside a raft of softened COVID policies, including a dialing down of mandatory vaccination for some vocations from 10 Jun.

Travel spend on the rise

TRAVEL spend by Australians is finally back to pre-pandemic levels, with Apr recording a 10% higher volume than the same month in 2019, new figures from CommBank iQ have revealed.

The snapshot, compiled via a partnership between Commonwealth Bank and Quantum, showed more than half of Aussies have already spent savings on travel this year,

Agent portal update

FLIGHT Centre's touring brands, Topdeck and Back-Roads, have unveiled new travel agent portals which are designed to provide more details around COVID-19 and flexibility policies.

Updates to the platforms include COVID-19 assurance and vaccine policies, as well as more details around booking flexibility.

A spokesperson for the brands told *TD* that while the operators continue to improve the travel advisor experience on their websites, there was a need to provide an interim solution with a hub of information that users can access without having to dive into the general website pages.

Final versions of the trade sites will be released in due course, featuring more up-to-date details for agents to navigate the new era of constantly changing policies and updates.

Exploring Europe

EXPLORE Worldwide has unveiled 11 new European trips with a focus on 'slow travel'.

Centring on the lesser-known parts of Europe, many of the tours focus on using public transport, with opportunities to explore on foot and get under the skin of the destinations.

Highlights include Italian rail trips visiting Rome, Venice Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast; and island-hopping in Greece.

Bookings in Australia are made through GSA Adventure World.

with money forked out on airline tickets, tourist attractions, and hotels all rising in recent months.

Travel agent bookings are also on the rise according to the report, however, along with car hires, is one of the categories yet to return to 2019 levels.

Head of Customer Solutions at CommBank iQ, Wade Tubman, told the *SMH* that pent-up demand for air travel had seen a spike in large family holidays booked for overseas destinations.

"This is not necessarily people flying Business class but families booking multiple tickets as they head overseas and this is reflected in ticket purchases in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 being up 20%," Tubman said.

The figures also showed that despite a growth in overseas travel, domestic volumes were holding steady, with numbers even rising for NSW and Victorian travellers to interstate markets.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news plus a product update from **Timor-Leste**.

Hi there neighbour!

IT'S time for Aussie agents to get to know one of the country's closest neighbours.

Timor-Leste is now gaining popularity for its crystal waters, reefs, array of marine life, mountain ranges, tropical rainforests, & amazing culture.

Air connectivity has also never been easier for Australian travellers, with both Qantas and Airnorth now offering three times weekly flights from Darwin to Dili to this undiscovered gem.

The emerging destination has also cultivated many new tourism experiences, especially for intrepid travellers who are keen on visiting pristine treks in a less crowded country.

See the **back page** for details.

UNITED AIRLINES

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

National Account Manager

Based in Sydney, United's Sales & Account Management team looks forward to welcoming a new **National Account Manager** to **United Airlines**.

This role functions within the Australian and New Zealand sales team, with daily collaboration across multiple departments and countries – a local role with global scope and involvement.

The National Account Manager has a range of responsibilities, including:

- Managing a portfolio of assigned accounts and key industry partnerships with a focus on growth and goal achievement;
- Implementing tactical sale initiatives and incentives;
- Developing relationships at multiple levels within the client's business;
- Utilising data and reporting suites to seek out new opportunities and corporate acquisitions;
- Actively participating in community and industry related associations and events.

United's National Account Manager's are hybrid (home/office) positions, however, flexibility is important due to frequent travel, as well as the need to attend events, conferences and trade shows outside of normal office hours.

To be successful, applicants will possess:

- Bachelor's degree and/or,
- Airline and/or relevant travel industry experience.
- Strong communication, negotiation and presentation skills.
- Strong data/reporting/analysis skills.

To apply, please visit United Careers and "Apply Now".

TA welcomes Aussie specialists



TOURISM Australia has recently accredited several TravelManagers' personal travel managers to be 2022 Premier Aussie Specialists - the top tier in its Aussie Specialist Program.

The scheme recognises agents who have an established record of selling domestic travel and wish to be more actively involved in promoting Australia.

"There's so many destinations and local tourism products that,

despite having lived in Australia and having been in the industry for 30 years, were new to me," enthused inductee Bev Edwards from Oakleigh South in Victoria.

"I love Australia's diversity and beauty and planning clients' holidays within Australia have become even more of a passion since joining," she added.

Some of the new specialists **pictured** are Sure Kuti, Rose Febo, Daiana Magalhaes and Edwards.

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Mr Biden, tear down these tests

SENIOR leaders from US Travel Association and Airlines for America have renewed their objection to the US Govt about pre-departure testing for inbound vaccinated air travellers.

"While nearly all other US industries are operating without restrictions, the travel industry remains disproportionately harmed by this requirement, even though the science no longer supports it," US Travel Association President & CEO Roger Dow said.

More Eclipse II info

SCENIC has revealed more details about the arrival of its *Scenic Eclipse II* ship in local waters from 2024, first announced in Jan (**TD** 13 Jan).

The cruise line's latest brochure release has revealed itineraries exploring Qld and the Top End. More details in today's **CW**.

SA invests more

THE South Australian budget handed down today has revealed \$45 million will be invested over four years to increase interstate and international marketing efforts in promoting the state as an attractive visitor destination.

The events sector was also a big winner, receiving \$40 million over four years to fund new events and grow existing owned and managed events, while the centrepiece was an \$18 million commitment to cement the return of the Adelaide 500 event in Dec, which has been absent from the calendar since 2020.

CX grows loyalty

CATHAY Pacific will plant a tree in Australia or New Zealand for every local client who signs up to its Asia Miles loyalty program.

The carrier said it would fulfil the pledge for the whole month of Jun via onetreereplanted.org. To join Asia Miles, **CLICK HERE**.

Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly's fortnightly consumer magazine called *Keep Dreaming* is specially designed for agents to send their clients - giving you a reason to reach out to your database.

Keep Dreaming is full of destination articles, cruise stories and more to inspire.



Click here for a toolkit to help you share it with clients

Click here to view *Keep Dreaming* magazine

Travel & Cruise
Weekly



Window Seat

WHAT was once an iconic tourist attraction could now be owned for the price of only \$1.

Yes, that's right ladies and gentlemen, the Gold Coast Oasis on Broadbeach monorail, constructed in 1989, a strange era where building monorails was in vogue for some reason, has gone under the hammer this week at auction in the hope of finding a private buyer.

The transport operated in the city for 30 years, but may soon find itself repurposed into some kind of new tourist attraction, with Lloyd's Auctions COO Lee Hames claiming there are already bites from developers.

"We've had interest from people wanting to revamp these carriages and turn them into other kinds of tourism opportunities," he said.

"This is an opportunity to own a significant piece of local tourism history which many Australians know and love."

In NSW, the Big Banana trains associated with Coffs Harbour's Big Banana tourist attraction will also be auctioned following 17 years in storage.



Turtle Centre put up for sale

THE Turtle Sands Camping & Holiday Park located in the Mon Repos Conservation Park in Queensland has gone up for sale.

The site contains beachfront cabins, camping and caravan sites, as well as redevelopment approval to add poolside cabins, studio apartments, bunkhouses for backpackers, glamping tents and recreational facilities.

It's la dolce vita for Qantas



QANTAS has introduced Italian cuisine to selected lounge and international in-flight menus this month, in celebration of its new direct Perth to Rome services, which launch on 25 Jun.

Customers on the new services can enjoy Italian favourites such as spaghetti with prawns, garlic, chilli, slow roast cherry tomatoes and pangrattato, which can be paired with Australian-grown Italian wine varieties and followed by tiramisu for dessert.

Qantas domestic Business lounge guests can also enjoy a taste of Italy, with fettuccine bolognese with parmigiano reggiano, and mascarpone tartlet with prosecco jelly and Valencia orange on offer.

Creative Director of Food, Beverage and Service Neil Perry said, "Italians live and breathe seasonality & freshness, so it was important when designing these menu items that we respected & celebrated the traditions of the cuisine and Rome's deep history."

"Italian food is so much more than pizza & pasta, although they do both brilliantly, but they celebrate the hero ingredients of their country including citrus, olives, fresh seafood & tomatoes."

Pictured: Neil Perry; Stephanie

Tully, Qantas Chief Customer Officer; Emanuele Attanasio, Italian National Tourist Board Manager Australia & NZ; and John Simeone, Qantas Senior Vice President International Sales.



Travel Daily on location in Los Angeles, USA

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Delta Air Lines and Disney.

FESTIVITIES are underway for the Disneyland celebration event, with guests starting the day with a very Disney breakfast at Goofy's Kitchen before heading into both Disneyland and California Adventure Parks.

Spending the day exploring the parks, the group will also see the all-new presentation of the *Tale of the Lion King*, an adaptation of the film.

In the evening, guests will watch the magical "World of Color" water and light show, before exploring Disney's newest land, the Avengers Campus, in a special 'After Dark' experience.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

Biz travel is booming baby

INTERNATIONAL business travel bookings have seen a significant increase over the last six months, according to data released by Corporate Traveller.

International flight bookings shot up by 135% over Apr when compared to Nov 2021, and 75% compared to Jan and Feb 2022.

South Australia saw the biggest rise in travel bookings departing from the state, at 204% from Jan to the end of Apr, followed by Western Australia at 135%, Victoria at 116%, New South Wales by 109% and Queensland by 105%.

Data collected by Corporate Traveller also revealed the top 10 international destinations for Australia-based business travellers, with North America being the most popular.

Canada experienced a 227% increase in bookings from Jan to end-Apr 2022, trailed by the UK at 73%, the US at 71%, and the United Arab Emirates at 56%.

Bookings to Singapore fell off the pace, showing an increase of 40%, which is likely due to the travel restrictions it had in place

Flights, camera, action for biz travel

AUSTRALIA'S business travel sector is reaping the benefits of a thriving film and TV industry, with an increasing number of big international productions choosing to travel Down Under, Ausfilm's CEO Kate Marks says.

Marks attributes the positive trajectory to the Government's \$400 million Location Incentive Grant program, and to companies like Stage & Screen, who are vital to helping production companies successfully travel to Australia.

The trend comes as internal data from the Flight Centre Travel Group showed the arts/entertainment/recreation industries flew into the top five of businesses returning to travel since borders reopened.

until 01 Apr.

The finance industry has been travelling overseas the most, with a 224% increase in bookings between Jan to late Apr, followed by the medical and construction industries, with a booking increase of 103% and 60% respectively.

Corporate Traveller Global Managing Director, Tom Walley, predicts further growth in international business travel for other industries throughout the year, including manufacturing, IT, education, and government.

Walley said, "as the world reopens, businesses...are forging international relationships again to help increase their sales, expand into new markets, and source new partnerships."

"This will help drive the recovery of many industries in Australia and help improve our local economy," he added.

Best airports for business travellers

THE best and worst airports for business travellers have been ranked in a study by worldwide luggage storage app Bounce, with Heathrow Airport claiming the top spot with a Business class score of 7.10 out of 10.

The study, which included the 50 biggest airports in the world according to passenger volume, factored in the number of lounges, destinations serviced, the percentage of on-time flights, and a rating out of five according to Skytrax World Airport ratings.

The Haneda, Changi, Frankfurt, and Charles de Gaulle airports respectively made the list of top five best airports after Heathrow.

Meanwhile Ninoy Aquino International Airport received the worst ranking with a score of only 0.88 out of 10, behind the Gatwick, Newark Liberty International, Orlando International, and Indira Gandhi International airports.

webinars, product launches and updates, executive interviews and more.

For more information contact us at

events@traveldaily.com.au

Time to shine in Timor-Leste



A NUMBER of TravelManagers last month explored the "undiscovered" treasures of East Timor, and have come back describing it as the next "hot" destination for adventure and culture tourists seeking experiences off the beaten track.

The country was explored on a recent cultural and marine tourism famil, which showcased to guests the diversity of activities available, including mountain trekking; the country's history, food culture; and the genuine warmth of the Timorese people.

Just over an hour's flight from

Darwin, East Timor's capital Dili is served by three weekly flights from Airnorth, and three weekly flights from Qantas Airways.

Pictured waving the flag for the big trip are host Lisa Malnar, with Dana Brown, Catherine Graham, Therese Dillon, Anna Curran, Natalie Miller, Joanne Patton and Rosemary Champness.

VV green update

VIRGIN Voyages (VV) has conceded that low or zero carbon fuels are not yet available at scale to make it commercially viable to power its growing fleet of ships.

Contained in a new report on forward strategy released today, the cruise line said that despite this, it was exploring alternative fuel options to meet its commitment of achieving zero emissions by 2050.

The wide-ranging document also stated it was one of the first cruise lines to adopt Climeon technology, which uses heat from the ship's engines to generate electricity, however VV conceded at this stage it powers only a small portion of its energy needs.

VV also indicated it was shifting its focus away from purchasing carbon offsets towards supporting climate solutions where it can "directly engage" in green projects with long-term outcomes, the details of which will be revealed in future reports.

Ponant Antarctic

PONANT has opened its 2023-2024 Antarctic season on board luxury expedition ships *Le Boreal*, *L'Austral*, *Le Lyrial* and *Le Commandant Charcot*, with 32 expedition sailings on 12 different itineraries.

A host of activities will bring guests into direct contact with Antarctica in the Weddell and Ross seas, including, Zodiac outings & landings, kayaking, hiking & snowshoeing, polar diving, swimming, and more.

There will be talks by experts about the fauna, flora, and history of the polar region, and exclusively on *Le Commandant Charcot*, there will also be a range of citizen science workshops run by naturalists.

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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

Fiji Gateway Hotel is offering guests a 50% discount on room rates from now until 24 Dec, for bookings made until 30 Jun. Children 12 & under occupying the same room as parents are entitled to stay free. Email reserve@fjigateway.com and use code FGHTIA.

Travellers can snag return flights to New Caledonia with **Aircalin** from \$549 including taxes, from either Sydney to Noumea, or Brisbane to Noumea. The offers ends 17 June - email chris.thistlethwaite@aircalin.com.au for more information.

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) is inviting Australian & New Zealand cruisers to save up to 35% on its worldwide voyages, including 2022 European summer sailings such as a seven-night Greek sailing from \$1,900 per person. Visit www.ncl.com for details.

Scot has announced a number of flight deals in celebration of its 10-year anniversary, including flights to Singapore from \$139, flights to Hanoi from \$179, and flights to Athens and Berlin from \$279. The prices apply to travel by 25 Mar 2023 - **CLICK HERE** to book.

Cruise-goers can take advantage of **Uniworld's** 2-for-1 Friends & Family sale, which allows two guests to book an all-inclusive luxury river cruise for the price of one, such as the eight-day Enchanting Danube sailing from Budapest to Passau, from \$3,249 per person. Offers ends 30 Jun.

Out of the Ordinary Outback is offering free & half-priced stays this Jun and Jul at three of its properties in Far West NSW, including White Cliffs Underground Motel, priced at \$190 for one night (including continental buffet breakfast) and a second night for half price - call 1300 679 688.

BA ramps up US map

BRITISH Airways (BA) has announced plans to increase its US route network for the northern summer, adding Portland as its newest city link.

The new BA route will operate five times a week between London and Portland, and coincides with the relaunch of its four-times weekly direct route from Pittsburgh to London.

From Mon, BA also announced it will introduce a third daily flight to Newark Liberty International.

Nine Euros a month

THE German Government is taking a novel approach to tackling the surging price of oil and goods, offering its citizens a flat fee of €9 per month to travel as often as they would like to across the country.

Transport included in the special ticket price are trains and buses, although inter-city trains are excluded from the scheme.

Germany's Transport Department has already sold more than seven million tickets.

Vanuatu confirms

VANUATU Tourism Office has confirmed that to enter the country from next month, tourists will simply need to provide a certified negative rapid antigen test result from within 24 hours of departure, or a certificate of infection and recovery from within 28 days of departure, if they have recently had COVID-19.

Once in Vanuatu, there is no arrival testing required.

Shandong bought

AIR China is set to take over the bankrupt Shandong Airlines.

CA already held a 22.8% stake in the carrier (and a 49.4% stake in its parent firm Shandong Airlines Group), and is now moving to acquire a majority stake.

Acacia sales surge

ACACIA Africa has welcomed a huge boost in bookings for the continent's southern region.

The past two months has seen a huge increase in enquiries and bookings for small group safari programs in Southern Africa, with most borders now open to vaccinated travellers without the need for additional testing.

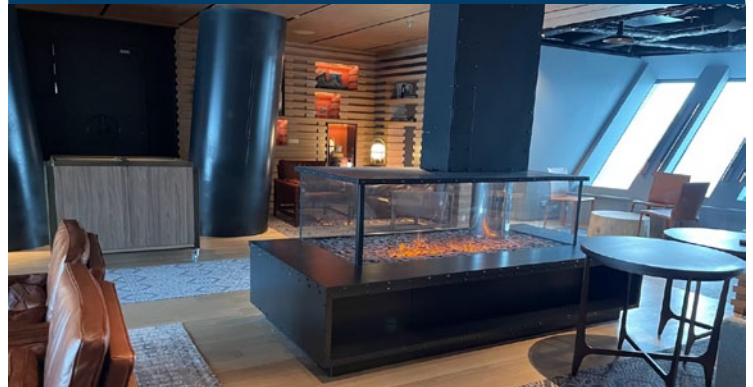
The changes have meant travellers are more confident in securing tours, Acacia said.

The increase in bookings and enquiries has meant the company has now been able to schedule weekly departures for many of its small group safari tours and also guarantee dates for the coming four-to-six months.

For more information, visit evolutiontc.com.au.

Travel Daily

On Board: Viking Octantis



"The Hide" on Viking Octantis

Nestled just above the waterline inside the bow of Viking's expedition ships is The Hide, a cosy lounge with comfortable couches, a drinks trolley, fireplace and a real Scandinavian ambience.

Enormous picture windows on each side allow guests to enjoy a close up view of the scenery outside, and as well as being one of the many spots on board to relax, The Hide is also used for storytelling sessions where the *Octantis* expedition team regale guests with tales of adventures gone by.

Got a confidential tip? Contact **Travel Daily** via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click **HERE**

Travel Daily

www.traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Produced each weekday since 1994, *Travel Daily* is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
Associate Editors– Adam Bishop,
Myles Stedman

Contributors – Nicholas O'Donoghue,
Anna Piper, Jenny Piper, Janie Medbury
info@traveldaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Sean Harrigan and Hoda Alzubaidi
advertising@traveldaily.com.au

BUSINESS MANAGER

Jenny Piper
accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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Timor-Leste - Explore the Undiscovered!

Get to know one of Australia's closest neighbours...

Timor-Leste is gaining interest from Australian visitors, with both Qantas and Air North now offering three times weekly flights from Darwin to Dili. Timor-Leste is one of the youngest countries in the world, gaining independence in 2002. The country is recognised for its spectacular scenery, crystal-clear waters and reefs, an array of marine life, mountain ranges and tropical rainforest, a fascinating history and culture, and the warm-hearted hospitality and nature of the Timorese people.

One of the main attractions of visiting Timor-Leste is its status as an

undiscovered country – an off-the-beaten track destination for travellers seeking new adventures, to immerse themselves in the local culture, and explore the stunning scenery the country offers. Although tourism is still in its infancy stages, plenty of tourism experiences are available for the intrepid traveller and the benefits of visiting the untouched and less crowded country far outweigh some of the minor inconveniences like bumpy roads.

Whether you're looking for a coastal adventure with incredible reefs, coral and marine life, to trek a mountain, experience genuine and friendly hospitality, or learn about the country's

history, food and culture, Timor-Leste is waiting to welcome you with open arms.

*Please join our Travel Trade Facebook Group for Timor-Leste **HERE**.*

NATURAL BEAUTY

The country is considered one of the world's best dive locations, and also the most bio-diverse regions. It is a paradise of pristine reefs and coral, whales, turtles, fish, and with some of the best water clarity found on our planet.



For more: www.timorleste.tl

To receive our regular 'Travel Trade Newsletter', or for trade enquiries please contact:

Melanie Grevis-James: melanie@planetmarketing.com.au - Mobile: 0409 440 501

