

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news

Win today with USA

BRAND USA is offering travel agents in Australia and New Zealand the opportunity of scoring prizes when they reengage with the tourism body's USA Discovery Program.

To be eligible to win either a \$500 or \$100 gift card, Australians must complete at least one Specialist Badge on the program, and for those new to the training, they must register and complete the USA Regional badge as a first step, before completing a second badge of their choice.

Agents will receive one entry into the draw for every Specialist Badge completed between now and 20 May, with one grand prize of \$500 on offer, as well as five \$100 gift cards.

Register for the training [HERE](#).

Qld confirms cruise restart

QUEENSLAND is the first jurisdiction to confirm details of its cruise protocols, with Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk this morning confirming foreign cruise ships will be able to operate there effective from 02 Jun.

Speaking at the as-yet-unused Brisbane International Cruise Terminal, Palaszczuk said all crew and passengers would be required to be fully vaccinated, with other requirements around mask wearing upon embarkation and disembarkation as well as extensive communication with passengers about health protocols.

As well as supporting the wider tourism industry in Queensland, the state's Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe paid particular note of the benefits allowing a restart would have for travel agents who have "done it particularly hard over the last couple of years".

"I'm very conscious of how important cruise is to travel agents," he said, noting the large and small businesses across the state for whom cruise is a key part of their revenue model

The restart was welcomed by Carnival Australia President Marguerite Fitzgerald, who congratulated the Queensland Government on allowing a restart and confirmed that P&O's *Pacific Explorer* would call at the new terminal on 02 Jun.

Jean Summers from Qld travel agency Clean Cruising was also part of the announcement, saying she was honoured to represent the travel industry for whom it had been a "very long two years".

"Thanks to everyone who has helped to facilitate this, we are so relieved and it means the world to us," she said.

"It means we can now employ more people and rebuild our businesses," Summers added.

Princess opens Qld

THE reopening of Queensland to cruising (see main story) has seen Princess Cruises announce a winter season for its 2000-passenger *Coral Princess*, which will operate 11 cruises homeported out of Brisbane starting from 16 Jun this year.

The deployment "demonstrates our commitment to cruising Down Under and the local travel agent community," said Princess Senior Director of Sales, Marketing & Service Nick Ferguson.

He confirmed a bonus 5% commission for travel agents making bookings on the new *Coral Princess* sailings via Polar Online before 31 May.

Further details of the Princess local deployments for 2022/23 are expected to be forthcoming, with the line confirming that sister ships *Grand Princess* and *Majestic Princess* would also make calls at ports in Qld as part of their planned seasons sailing from Sydney and Melbourne.

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EXCLUSIVE

BABY boomers are taking up the option to embark on an active adventure holiday more than they ever have previously, Intrepid's Managing Director Brett Mitchell has revealed.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* this morning, Mitchell said that the international confinement of Aussies has led to a greater appetite for active trips - particularly in the over 55 demographic.

"Baby boomers, who are now living longer and have looked after themselves better than generations before, we're seeing that 55+ plus age group really taking up that active style of travel," he said.

"This group clearly has got money and time and I think they probably feel like they missed out on some planned holidays for a few years now and are now making up for lost time."

Speaking more broadly about active holidays, Mitchell noted bookings trends at Intrepid show that domestic had performed most strongly in recent months.

"Australia continues to be one of our biggest destinations, remote areas like the Kimberley, Northern Territory's Larapinta Trails and we've just come from a really strong season in Tasmania, there are great walking products around Cradle Mountain and three peaks, so Australia's been

the top destination," he said.

While Australia might be leading the way for now, Mitchell was bullish that overseas active travel would continue to pick up pace, even in Europe where there are clear challenges associated with geopolitical instability.

"Even with the conflict in Russia and Ukraine, we have not seen anything slow down in relation to demand into southern Europe in particular," he said, adding the Middle East was another market showing a solid growth trajectory.

"Egypt is really picking up, Jordan, we're seeing Morocco staying really strong, so it's been good that we actually haven't seen any material effect in demand even though there is a conflict happening in Europe."

Mitchell also pointed to the accelerating growth of bookings this month, with Mar marking the strongest sales month for the operator since the pandemic struck in early 2020.

"A lot of countries are still not even open so we've seen from some of our other markets in the US and UK that there's a lot of pent-up demand there and if get a few months running where we don't have another variant or see the conflict in Ukraine doesn't expand, we're very confident that travel will be back, although slightly differently," Mitchell said.

To view Intrepid's range of active adventures, [CLICK HERE](#).

VA high court win

VIRGIN Australia has fought off a legal challenge brought by US companies Wells Fargo and Willis Lease Finance, who were both seeking to recover transport costs for the return freight costs of four aircraft engines.

The Aussie carrier won the case in the High Court on appeal, successfully arguing that Virgin's only obligation to the lessors was to provide an opportunity to take control of the engines in Australia, not be sent to Florida.

Courtyard in Melb

COURTYARD by Marriott has opened the Courtyard by Marriott Melbourne Flagstaff Gardens hotel this week, featuring 150 rooms and suites.

The property also boasts a spacious fitness centre on level two, as well as meeting spaces for up to 200 guests.

Puttin' 2 on the Ritz

ISSUES with launching its first ship (*TD 02 Mar*) hasn't stopped The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection from unveiling further growth plans, with two more vessels set to be added to its future fleet.

The two newbuild superyachts, *Ilma* and *Luminara*, are slated to make their debuts in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

Both ships, which will be built in France, will feature 228 suites, each with its own private terrace, and will offer a high percentage of larger suites.



Window Seat

THE tourism appeal of US national parks have received a major boost, with news that former President Barack Obama will narrate a new Netflix series showcasing the country's vast green spaces.

Our Great National Parks, co-produced by former First Lady Michelle Obama's production company, will stream on the service soon, with the focus to be on the commendable efforts being carried out to preserve the parks for visitors to enjoy for generations to come.

Through a new lens

INTREPID Travel has launched new tours in Southeast America which celebrates West and Central African cultural heritage.

The suite of new adventures offer several new experiences designed to help travellers see the US through a more diverse and inclusive lens, and include a Native American river-to-table lunch in the Pacific Northwest.

Hosted by a former tribe anthropologist and the founder of Salmon King Fisheries, the meal served to inform guests about salmon's vital role in the history of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring.

There are a seven more crafted experiences on offer, for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

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More markets open

MORE popular outbound travel markets for Australian travellers have abolished remaining COVID border restrictions.

Greece and Cambodia have both joined a host of countries in dropping the need for filling in contact tracing forms and rapid COVID tests on arrival.

There are also reports that Vietnam has reopened its borders to all fully vaccinated international tourists, so long as visitors take out insurance coverage of at least US\$10,000 for possible COVID-19 treatment.

MEANWHILE the International Air Transport Association has reported that 38 markets, representing 65% of 2019 international demand, are now open to vaccinated travellers with no quarantine requirements.

The number is up from the 28 countries that were open to tourists in mid-Feb, signalling a strong trend to drop COVID restrictions over the last month.

Scenic team takes to the road



SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has kicked off a nationwide showcase, with the sales team (**pictured**) conducting live events for travel agents and their clients for the first time in two years.

Multiple sessions are taking place in Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Newcastle, Brisbane and Perth, covering river cruising

in Europe, France and Southeast Asia as well as Scenic Eclipse ocean voyages.

Travel advisors are invited to register their clients to participate, with no bookings taken during the sessions and all enquiries referred back to agents to book with bonus offers within 21 days - RSVP **HERE**.

A cruise-age dream

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has revealed that the original teenage dreamer herself Katy Perry will be the godmother of *Norwegian Prima*, which will make her official debut in Aug.

The pop star will perform at the ship's christening in Iceland, where Perry said she would share the vessel's "good vibrations" with all her future passengers.

Prima will sail her inaugural voyages to Northern Europe from 12 Aug, departing Iceland, Amsterdam, and Southampton.

SQ extends sale

SINGAPORE Airlines has extended its Take Flight sale for ticketing until 23 Mar for Europe, and 31 Mar for all other regions.

Limited availability periods apply - please refer to AGENT 360 for fare sheets and a list of all destinations on sale (**CLICK HERE**), and for details on current border restrictions, **CLICK HERE**.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

Corporate travel warms up



CORPORATE Traveller (CT)
Global MD Tom Walley has just returned from his first overseas business trip in three years, visiting the Flight Centre Travel Group brand's teams in Toronto, Boston, New York & Los Angeles.

Walley, who's **pictured** with the North American CT crew in Toronto, said the experience had reignited the thrill of travel, with fellow passengers expressing "pure joy and just genuine happiness to be back in the air".

He said being able to interact in person with the team was a huge success, adding: "we genuinely got more done in just two days than we would have in two months in a virtual environment".

VS status match

VIRGIN Atlantic is making a concerted pitch for the hearts and minds of frequent flyers across the globe, with a new "status match" program offering 12 months of Silver or Gold status in its Flying Club loyalty program.

Passengers must book a VS flight in Business class or Premium Economy to qualify, with the status match offer applying to Qantas Frequent Flyer Gold and Platinum members, Virgin Australia Velocity Gold and Platinum, Air NZ Airpoints Gold and Elite Plus, BA Executive Club Silver and Gold, EK Skywards Gold & Platinum and more.



Travel vital for business

TRAVEL is "essential for cultivating winning cultures and achieving business goals in the post-pandemic era," according to a new white paper released this week by American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) and cultural analysis firm Cultique.

The document suggests organisations need to seize opportunities arising from the evolution of work, by operating a travel program that aligns with company culture.

Introducing the concept of a Chief Journey Officer, executives can reframe how their companies view travel, "no longer as a commodity but instead as an investment in long-term prosperity and culture".

GBT GM David Reimer said "companies are working to solve the challenge of building

company culture and tackling the feeling of isolation within their dispersed workforces".

"Culture isn't built in isolation; it's driven by the ability for teams to interact and get connected to an organisation's purpose and vision...by elevating the role of travel in strategy and decision-making, and revisiting travel policies designed to support pre-pandemic operating models, organisations can use travel as a catalyst for progress," he said.

Cultique co-founder Sarahg Unger said travel should play an integral role in a distributed workforce, suggesting "companies need to shift their business travel mindset from automated to intentional".

The white paper can be downloaded by **CLICKING HERE**.

MEANWHILE Amex GBT has named Louise Miller as its new VP of US multinational clients and sales, reporting to Reimer.

Miller was most recently at Areka Consulting, with her career also including more than a decade with BCD Travel in senior sales and business development.

Global Exhibitions Day set for 01 Jun

THE seventh annual Global Exhibitions Day will be held on 01 Jun, focusing on the "irreplaceable value of physical exhibitions and face-to-face business events in creating platforms for economic growth and recovery".

The event is coordinated by UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, and any businesses and professionals in the sector are encouraged to join the celebrations by highlighting the impact of exhibitions on local economies across the globe.

See globalexhibitionsday.org.

AY carbon offsets

FINNAIR has launched a new platform allowing customers to offset the carbon emissions of their flights through involvement with trusted climate projects and the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).


The carrier's SVP of Sustainability, Eveliina Huurre, said both Finnair and its pax were keen to reduce the CO2 footprint of air travel, "and we want to offer our customers a simple and transparent way to do this".

The new platform highlights SAF because its high price and limited availability still presents challenges for increasing its usage "therefore stimulating demand and supply is important to drive down its price and increase its availability".

Easings = bookings

CWT has cited recent reservations data confirming that an uptick in business travel bookings can be directly correlated to lower restrictions, with bookings for outbound int'l travel from the UK more than doubling in the wake of news that the country was scrapping testing requirements for vaccinated pax.

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ELEVATE leaders

EVENT Hotels and Resorts has unveiled the ELEVATE Leadership Accelerator program designed to recognise talent working in its network of properties across Australia and New Zealand.

The program will see staff with leadership ambitions receive practical on-the-job experience and mentoring from participant's hotel general manager or area general manager.

The inaugural intake of the program is made up of 18 first-time general managers and senior department heads, and will continue on an annual basis.

Participants will also complete an external course, gaining a nationally recognised diploma.

More Tassie support

ROUND three of the COVID-19 Business Impact Support Program is now open for Tasmanian small businesses, who can apply for grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

The funding will be based on business adversely affected by COVID restrictions for the period between 15 Feb and 14 Mar.

Applications close 05 Apr - **CLICK HERE** for more details.

AIUla webinars

AGENTS have the chance to score a \$50 gift card when they attend Destination Webinars' next session for the city of AIUla.

Webinars take place 22 Mar at 9am and 12pm AEDT - **CLICK HERE** to register to attend.



THE winner of Qatar Tourism and *Travel Daily's* competition, offering one reader a free trip to the stopover capital of the world has been chosen, with Jo Patton from Travelmanagers (**pictured**) landing the coveted spot.

The competition ran alongside a recent series of live crosses via Channel Seven's *Sunrise* program, with presenter Sam Mac reporting back from many of Qatar's amazing tourist attractions.

Patton scored herself the trip to Qatar by tuning in last week and answering questions that appeared in each issue of *Travel Daily* - a pretty simply way to land a spot on a VIP Mega famil which departs 14 May and returns to Australia on 19 May.

In her entry to *TD*, Patton conceded it was "pretty clear" that anybody would love to win a spot on the Qatar Mega Famil, describing the comp and TV spots as a "great week of learning about a new and exciting destination."

"One day I'll get there one way or another," she said, well Jo, it appears that time may be sooner than you think, congratulations and enjoy the journey!

Qatar offers travellers delights across culture, adventure sports, city breaks and romantic trips.

You get a cruise, & you get a cruise!!!

HOLLAND America Line has given away a whopping 130 Alaska cruises to travel agents who attended the brand's 75th Alaska milestone events in Sydney & Melbourne this week.

"We have always been appreciative and supportive of our trade partners but the support they have shown us over the last two years to us has been overwhelming," HAL's Senior Director of Sales and Marketing in Australia Tony Archbold said, adding that he hoped the sailings would provide them with some "well deserved joy and recognition".

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

Bunnik Tours is currently offering savings of up to \$1,800 per couple on tours to the Middle East departing this year. Adventures include trips to countries such as Egypt, Israel and Jordan, ranging from 12 to 24 days. For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

Savings of 20% per person is on offer for on six-night cruises aboard hotel barge *Anjodi* on the Canal du Midi in the South of France with **European Waterways**. Applicable sailings depart 10 & 17 Apr. For more details, **CLICK HERE**.

Travellers can explore some of Europe's popular rivers on **Viking's** eight-day Rhine Getaway river cruise, priced from \$3,495 per person including savings up to \$1,000 per couple plus \$1,000 flight credit per couple. The deal is available when bookings are made before 31 May. Call 138 747.

IHG Hotels & Resorts has launched its "Twice as Nice" promotion, allowing travellers in NSW to double the value of the state government's \$50 Stay and \$50 Parent vouchers at 16 of its properties. Examples of value includes drinks for two, a premium room upgrade, a bottle of sparkling wine, breakfast for two and overnight parking when guests book with vouchers at Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley. See **HERE**.

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


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