

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news.

Disneyland in Oz?

A PROMINENT Aussie businessman is calling for government and private partners to join him in pitching a bid to build a Disneyland in Australia.

Warren Randall, the owner of Seppeltsfield and Penny's Hill wineries in South Australia, told *The Advertiser* he will offer part of his massive McLaren Vale site to make the project a reality, however no formal bid has yet been submitted.

Japan desire strong

NEW research from Skyscanner has found that more than a third of Australians (38%) are likely to travel to Japan in the next six months, with the food, skiing and cherry blossoms all ranking as strong incentives to visit.

Japan to drop all rules

JAPAN'S highly anticipated decision to remove all travel protocols has finally arrived, with the country confirming overnight that independent tourists will once again be allowed to visit without restriction from 11 Oct.

The date will see travellers able to explore Japan as independent tourists, while traveller caps and visa requirements imposed during the COVID period will also be eliminated.

Japan's intention to disband its remaining border restrictions will bring to an end the need to book flights and accommodation through a travel agent, and arrives at a time when the country is attempting to ramp up its key sectors and bolster its weakening Yen, which for Aussies should see the Aussie dollar stretch further on holidays than it has in recent years.

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the announcement

was an historic one for Japan, which has always counted on the flow of people across its borders for its economic success.

"We are a nation that has flourished through the free flow of people, goods and capital... COVID-19 interrupted all of these benefits but from 11 Oct, Japan will relax border control measures to be on par with the United States," he said.

Unvaccinated travellers will still need to provide proof of a negative test before departure.

MEANWHILE the inaugural Nishi Kyushu Shinkansen train service launched today, just in time for the mainstream return of international travellers.

The new rail service links Takeo-Onsen Station in Saga and Nagasaki Station in Nagasaki, carrying passengers between the two destination in only 23 mins.

The 66km route is the eighth Shinkansen service to launch.

Apollo gets one tick

APOLLO Tourism & Leisure has received clearance from the New Zealand Commerce Commission for its merger with Tourism Holdings Limited (THL), following an update this morning advising it will formally sell off select assets to a wholly owned subsidiary of Jucy Group for NZ\$45 million, first proposed back in Jul (TD 01 Jul).

Apollo's bid to jump all competition hurdles to push its merger with THL (TD 10 Dec 2021) over the line also comes with a pledge to provide certain transitional services to Jucy, as well as introduce the buyer to wholesalers who market RVs under the Star RV brand.

The revised merger proposal will also see slightly more of the joint ownership move in the direction of Apollo, with its shareholders to own 27.5% of the merged entity, an increase of 2.5% on the original proposal to reflect recent market share growth.

The ACCC is reviewing the deal.

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Travel Daily

Friday 23rd Sep 2022



Window Seat

GREAT news - space tourists will be able to toast their galactic experiences with a specially developed Champagne from French winemaker Mumm.

Mumm announced a milestone for its Mumm Cordon Rouge Stellar, a tippie designed as "the first champagne bottle and tasting experience designed for space travel and human spaceflight".

First mooted in 2017 in a collaboration with space tourism aspirant Axiom Space, the project has now achieved "full compliance with space cargo specifications and AOC Champagne regulations".

Mumm Cordon Rouge Stellar will join Axiom crewed missions to low earth orbit, & feature on the proposed Axiom Station, the world's first commercial space station.

A "tasting ritual" involves a half-glass bottle of the bubbly, secured by a stainless steel opening device for the cork and an overall shell made of aeronautical-grade aluminium - containing a specially curated 2016 vintage which tastes great, despite the fact that bubbles don't rise to the surface in zero-gravity conditions.

Domestic tardiness drops

ALTHOUGH still well short of historical averages, Australia's domestic airlines were able to improve their on-time performances in Aug by around 15 percentage points to just shy of 70% of departures & arrivals.

The latest figures released by the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics show that airlines have started to recover from the all-time low on-time result of 55% recorded in Jul, with staff shortages and

Flydubai SKD, NMA

FLYDUBAI is ramping up capacity between Dubai and Uzbekistan, with the launch this week of flights to Samarkand and Namangan.

Initially operating twice weekly, the services complements FlyDubai's existing flights to the country's capital Tashkent.

Walsh re-elected

THERESE Walsh has been overwhelmingly re-elected to continue on as Air New Zealand's Independent Chair.

At the Annual Shareholders Meeting this morning, Walsh warned that a potential global recession would ground the carrier's recent sales recovery, stating the carrier was closely monitoring consumer behaviour and inflation.

Shareholders also re-installed Johnathan Mason to the board.

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weather impacting on the sector to a lesser degree in Aug.

Leading the way was Rex Airlines, which once again managed to outstrip its competitors for the month, notching up just over 80% of its services on time, well ahead of rivals Qantas (67.2%), Virgin Australia (69.4%), and the worst-performed Jetstar (58.25%).

Cancellations were also down to 3.2% during Aug, returning from the 5.1% rate recorded in Jul, but still above the long-term average of 2.1%.

Regent retail deal

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has launched Australia's first luxury cruise partnership with upmarket retailer David Jones, with three of the department store's Sydney CBD windows now featuring Regent ships and destinations.

The move also includes a pop-up Regent Cruise Lounge and in-store video activations, with the cruise line's VP of Sales for Australia and NZ, Lisa Pile, saying "it is an exciting opportunity for us to introduce Regent's unrivalled lifestyle brand and experiences onboard and ashore, which aligns with David Jones' vision to provide quality, innovation, value and sustainability".

More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

Passport applications surge for holidays

THE Department of Foreign Affairs has confirmed Australia is experiencing "unprecedented demand" for passports ahead of the busy summer holiday period, with Aussies being urged to renew or apply for a new passport as soon as possible to avoid delayed travel plans.

Passport applications are currently averaging around 12,000 per day in Sep, well above the pre-COVID average of around 8,000 per day.

Veggie backflip

IN THE coming weeks, Qantas has confirmed it will carry vegetarian meals on all domestic flights under 3.5 hours in response to a flurry of customer complaints in recent weeks.

"We've heard the message loud and clear about having vegetarian offerings on all of our flights and so we're making that change as a priority," Qantas Executive Manager of Product and Service, Phil Capps said.

"We had to make a lot of alterations to our service during COVID and we're still in the process of bringing things back and updating others.

"We're in the middle of a broader menu refresh for our domestic network that will roll out from October, which includes new vegetarian options."

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TTJ, Thailand partner up



THE Travel Junction (TTJ) held an event in partnership with the Tourism Authority of Thailand on Wed, hosting several key trade partners at Sydney's Long Chim Thai restaurant in the CBD.

TTJ's Kevin Looney reminded attendees that Thailand was "well and truly open", with all restrictions eased to set the destination up to return to its pre-pandemic prominence, which saw Australia around the country's fifth largest source of international visitors.

The event was also hosted in conjunction with Centara Hotels and Cross Hotels, with TTJ currently offering a 15% "commission acceleration" as well as bonus spa treatments in conjunction with each booking,

APT ups Kimberley

APT has unveiled 11 new Kimberley itineraries for 2023, including eight tours that combine cruise and 4WD adventures throughout the remote region.

Offerings include the 11-day Kimberley Coast and the Top End journey from Darwin to Broome on Ponant's *Le Laperouse*, featuring daily Zodiac excursions to discover ancient rock art, hidden gorges and waterfalls along the Kimberley coastline - prices start from \$12,595pp.

highlighting the country's extensive luxury and wellness opportunities.

The gathering also saw a formal welcome by the Tourism Authority of Thailand's incoming Director for Australia, Khun Busakorn Prom, who took up her new post just two weeks ago.

Pictured at the event are Debbi Ashes, Helloworld Lane Cove; Pat Lloyd, MTA Travel; Sandra Reucker, TravelManagers; Nicole Boyer, CT Partners; Khun Busakorn Prommanot, Tourism Authority of Thailand Director; Kuntida Noenuirai, TAT Marketing Officer; Dee Jaswal, iTravel; Kevin Looney, The Travel Junction; James Whiting, The Travel Junction; Natnipa Nagavajara, TAT Deputy Director; Teena Hollwey, The Travel Junction; Pauline Leong, Thai Airways; and Janene Pendleton, Helloworld Drummoyne and Bankstown.

EY sponsors expo

ETIHAD Airways has been selected as the official airline sponsor of Abu Dhabi Air Expo 2022, with the UAE national carrier also supporting a key panel discussion, 'Making Aviation Green: Sustainability in the Aviation Ecosystem'.

The event will take place from 01-03 Nov, and is expected to attract around 18,000 attendees.

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INDEPENDENT HOLIDAY PACKAGE EXPERTS

Spirit scammers slammed

THREE former employees at US low-cost carrier Spirit Airlines have been charged with defrauding the carrier in an alleged scheme involving the waiving of change fees.

The US Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania claims the two reservation agents and their supervisor encouraged customers to book inexpensive future flights, and then change them to a more expensive fare without charging the airline's change fee.

The indictment says they would instead charge a "commission" to the customers which was payable via a mobile platform called CashApp, *USA Today* reports.

It's alleged that the fraud was conducted more than 1,700 times between Dec 2017 and Aug 2018,

costing the carrier more than US\$238,000 in change fees.

US Attorney Jacqueline Romero alleged that the defendants "used access and privileges granted by virtue of their employment to cheat the airline reservation system and skim money off the top for themselves".

NZ recovery update

NEW Zealand is now at 40% of pre-pandemic traveller volumes, according to a new update from its peak tourism body.

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) said since 04 Apr, the country has welcomed 441,000 arrivals, including 128,000 holidaymakers, 208,000 VFR passengers and 43,000 business travellers.

The figures follow on from a recent global campaign launch from TNZ (*TD* 17 Aug), which is currently targeting the key markets of Australia, the USA, UK, China, Singapore, Japan, Germany, India & South Korea.

"[TNZ] is pleased to report that we are seeing positive results in the first month of the 'If You Seek' campaign, including 13 million video views, 123,000 website visits, 96% positive social media sentiment and 82 pieces of media coverage" an update said.

Queen Lizzie rises

CUNARD line's *Queen Elizabeth* is set to return to Australian shores on 07 Nov for the first time since early 2020, with Fremantle in WA to host the vessel for her first local call this homeport season.

The ship will host the debut sailing of two new itineraries early next year, including the Great Australian Culinary Voyage, and the Gardening Journey.



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Collette, PHT Ireland pact



PHIL Hoffmann Travel (PHT) launched an “elevated partnership” with Collette Tours earlier this week, celebrating the agreement with special guest Christian Leibl-Cote, Collette’s Executive VP of Global Business who is visiting Australia from Rhode Island, USA.

Supported by Tourism Ireland, the pact includes a PHT Top Achiever trip with Collette to Ireland for more than 50 of the agency group’s consultants.

Attendees at a special event in

Adelaide enjoyed an informative night along with plenty of fun including Guinness tastings and traditional Irish games such as “spud in the bucket”.

Gathering to grasp their lucky celebratory potatoes are: David Farrar and James Hewlett from Collette; PHT’s Jaqueline Roberts and Michelle Ashcroft; Christian Leibl-Cote from Collette; and Alison Hoffmann, Nicole Silburn, Bianca Hoffmann and Peter Williams, all from Phil Hoffmann Travel.

WA always dreaming big



TOURISM Western Australia on Wed night held its brand launch event for the eastern states, with the industry celebrating the region’s global-scale return to the world of travel.

The event was hosted in Sydney by two of WA’s most well-loved “Perth-onalities”, Tourism Western Australia Managing Director Carolyn Turnbull and stand-up comedian Joel Creasey.

Held at Beta Events, the ‘Walking on a Dream’ brand (**TD 06 Sep**) aims to build consumer awareness of Western Australia as an “otherworldly, dreamlike and wondrous” holiday destination.

Turnbull said the brand invites potential visitors to come and visit Western Australia to explore the state’s awe-inspiring attributes which make the state a “wondrous, dreamlike place”.

“‘Walking on a Dream’ seeks to unite people to conserve culture, community and environment, and this ethos underpins everything that we’re trying to achieve and strive toward at Tourism WA.

“I firmly believe, and I say this with great sense of confidence and pride, I think that our brand campaigns truly achieve this,” she enthused.

Turnbull said ‘Walking on a

Dream’ has been designed as Tourism Western Australia’s “forever brand”, with the hope it will have a lasting appeal and continue to draw visitors to the state long after its launch.

“‘Walking on a Dream’ is an emotive and unique global brand that represents a significant milestone for Western Australia, and will showcase our state as a world-class business and tourism destination,” she said.

“It will make our state not only shine, but it will elevate Western Australia in a highly competitive global marketplace.

“It captures our belief that Western Australia is for travellers seeking those unforgettable destinations, and unforgettable experiences that are so unique it blurs the line between reality and a dream,” she added.

Pictured centre is Turnbull with Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison and Tourism Western Australia Executive Director Marketing Melissa Forbes.

Lake Como Edition

MARRIOTT International has signed an agreement with finance group Bain Capital and Omnam Group for the management of a new EDITION property in Italy’s picturesque Lake Como region.

The Lake Como EDITION is set to open in 2025 featuring 145 guest rooms including two penthouse suites along with a lobby bar, multiple restaurants and a “floating pool”.

The property is a conversion of a 19th century building on the western shore of the lake, a short drive from central Milan.

CX Europe role

CATHAY Pacific has announced the appointment of Paul Johannes as its new Head of Marketing & Sales for Europe.

London-based Johannes has been CX’s Head of Global Sales since 2017, with other former roles including a stint as VP Europe for Qatar Airways.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

Rex offers SME benefits

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) SME travel division, Corporate Traveller, has partnered with Rex Airlines to offer SMEs exclusive access to special business travel fares and new corporate offers.

Corporate Traveller customers will be able to take advantage of the special SME business travel fares through its online booking tool and travel consultants.

"This deal is game-changing and can't be understated," Corporate Traveller's Global Managing Director, Tom Walley, said.

"SMEs are the backbone of the Australian economy and our

vision for their continued post-COVID comeback closely aligns with Rex's exciting plans."

The partnership is an extension of the 10-year agreement signed between Rex and FCTG earlier this year (**TD** 24 Jun), to ensure the airline will be the travel agency's "partner of choice".

Rex Airlines services 58 destinations across Australia, particularly across the north and south-east, as well as into the key hubs of Western Australia.

The regional carrier has lounges for business travellers in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney airports, with a new lounge in Brisbane expected to open in 2023 and a flagship lounge currently under construction in Sydney Airport.

It has been a busy month for Rex, which recently acquired National Jet Express (**TD** 19 Sep), and took receipt of its seventh Boeing 737-800NG (**TD** 31 Aug).

Corp client SAF deal

SWISS International Air Lines (SWISS) has announced a new partnership with Breitling, which will see the Swiss watch manufacturer purchase sustainable air fuel (SAF) for all of its work-related travel on SWISS-operated flights.

Breitling is the airline's first corporate client to fully commit to the use of SAF for all of its work-related air travel, resulting in a reduction of around 80% of the company's carbon dioxide emissions directly generated through air travel.

In doing so, Breitling is playing an important part in promoting sustainable air transport and serves "as an exemplary pioneer", according to SWISS Chief Executive Officer Dieter Vranckx.

In further news, the watch manufacturer will also offset its remaining CO2 emissions via investments in high-value climate protection projects.

CTM adds to Board

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has welcomed Marissa Peterson to the Board as a Non-Executive Director, effective 25 Oct.

Peterson is currently the President & CEO of Mission Peak Executive Consulting, a Silicon Valley leadership coaching business, and brings experience in governance, technology and digital transformation, as well as executive development.

Lounge on cloud 9

SKYTEAM'S Elite Plus, First and Business class customers flying from Sydney can once again enjoy a dedicated lounge, which reopened last week after being fully refurbished during international border closures.

Featuring floor-to-ceiling windows with views across the runway, the space was redesigned with greater sustainability in mind, featuring an abundance of plants and 149 chairs and ottomans that have been reupholstered using GREENGUARD certified upholstery to reduce landfill waste.

The lounge offers a business area, as well as an a la carte menu featuring locally sourced, produce, a self-service buffet, an on-hand bartender, and more.

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Porter House Hotel launches



ACCOR Hotels hosted key industry partners at an event in Sydney on Wed to formally launch the new Porter House Hotel (**TD** 07 Sep).

The CBD property on the corner of Bathurst and Castlereagh Streets offers 122 rooms and about 130 residential apartments, as well as a funky F&B precinct set to become one of the city's new watering holes.

Part of Accor's boutique MGallery Collection, the newbuild project was originally mooted for fledgling brand Silkari and scheduled for completion by Dec 2020 (**TD** 25 May 2017).

It's the first official hotel opening for Accor Asia Pacific Managing Director Sarah Derry, who told **TD** it was also the group's landmark 400th hotel in the Australia/Pacific market.

The boutique Porter House Hotel occupies the first 10 floors of a 36-storey mixed-use tower, which integrates a restored 1870s heritage-listed building which houses the property's multi-level food and bar destination.

Starting its life as Dixson & Sons tobacco factory and warehouse, the original building was later a retail shopfront under the WW Campbell & Co and later George Johnson & Sons banners, and has



been sympathetically restored with the help of expert heritage tradespeople who worked on the original pressed metal ceilings.

Derry said the opening came as the hotel industry continues to accelerate towards a full post-pandemic recovery.

"Sydney is experiencing its fastest growth since Mar 2020, with recovery in corporate, conference and events business, and continued strength in the domestic leisure market.

"We are seeing similar revivals in other key cities around the Pacific, complementing the success of regional holiday destinations in Australia and NZ."

Pictured from left are Sarah Bush, ATPI; Sharyn Kitchener, Mosman Travel; Sarah Derry, Accor Asia Pacific CEO; and Lachlan McGregor, ATPI.

And **inset** are Destination NSW CEO Steve Cox and Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison.



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

Adventure World is offering Aussie travellers savings of \$1,339pp on the Handpicked Canada tour when booked by 30 Sep for travel between May and Oct 2023. The itinerary takes guests from Vancouver on the Pacific Coast through the Rockies, the prairies and past the lakes of Ontario, concluding in Quebec City. Phone 1300 363 055 for details.

Guests can save over 55% off all staterooms on **Royal Caribbean's** seven-night Super Cruise 2022, Two Festivals, One Ship itinerary. Two music festivals will be held on the cruise, which sails 09-16 Nov 2022 from Sydney to the South Pacific with stops in Noumea and Mystery Island, from \$1,300pp - see royalcaribbean.com.

Azamara has announced the launch of its latest flash sale promotion, allowing guests to save up to 15% and receive US\$500 onboard credit on select 2023 sailings for bookings made until 30 Sep. Call 1800 570 552 for further information.

To celebrate its return to the skies, **AirAsia** is offering five million discounted seats on popular domestic and international routes across Asean, including flights to and from Australia and New Zealand from \$209. The sale applies to travel between 01 Jan - 28 Oct 2023. For bookings, visit airasia.com.

Hurtigruten adds seven

HURTIGRUTEN Expeditions has expanded its 2023 Arctic Summer season with the addition of seven new Arctic itineraries, ranging from 11 to 19 days, on departures between Jun and Sep next year.

Among the new offerings are two 17-day True Arctic Expeditions, which depart and arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland; a 20-day epic Greenland Summer Explorer expedition; two 11-day Iceland Circumnavigation expedition cruises; and two 12-day Island Hopping in the North Atlantic expedition cruises.

The expedition cruises can be extended with two to four days land adventures in Iceland - for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

VV invests in biofuel

VIRGIN Voyages has announced a partnership with independent sustainability experts, the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials, to help deliver more low-carbon fuels to the cruise ship industry.

The cruise line has also entered into long-term agreements with three waste-based sustainable fuel providers - Argent Energy, GoodFuels and Twelve - and plans to add others in the future.

Virgin Voyages predicts it will reduce its lifecycle carbon emissions from fuel by 75% or more by switching to sustainable marine fuels, putting it well on its way to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Oakwood grows awareness

AS THE second Australian location for Oakwood Serviced Apartments & Hotels, Oakwood Premier Melbourne's most important challenge is increasing its occupancy and growing the hotel's footprint, General Manager Mathias Waas (pictured) has told *Travel Daily*.

Opening around nine months ago during the height of the pandemic, Oakwood Melbourne is located at the crossroads of Southbank, South Wharf and South Melbourne.

Set within a 40-storey tower, Oakwood Melbourne boasts 132 hotel rooms and 260 serviced apartments.

The location is Oakwood's first Premier-badged property in the country, following on from the four-star Oakwood Hotel & Apartments Brisbane.

This means the property has a large amount of heavy lifting to do for Oakwood in the Australian market, especially as it is not currently welcoming its typical volume of international travellers who may be more aware of the brand than Aussies.

"Because we're not very well known, in regards to loyalty programs, we don't have many guests coming through," Waas explained.

"Most of our guests will be FIT bookings online, which makes up around about 70% of our hotel guests, which is good on one point because you extend the footprint & become more known.

"But a lot of bookings of course come through all the OTA channels, so this means



commission is quite high."

Waas said one way the occupancy challenge is being handled is through corporate and MICE bookings, for who the hotel is a perfect choice, given its location - five minutes walk from the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC), and five minutes from downtown.

This challenge represents a great opportunity for the travel trade, he believes.

"We have tried to create connection working closely with [MCEC], together with the Melbourne Convention Bureau, which travel agencies were piecing together, providing the assurance of quality and product, and that they know what we're offering," Waas said.

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