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Travel Daily First with the news

www.traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 23rd Aug 2023

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news including our Luxury feature page, plus a front cover wrap from CVFR Consolidation Services and a full page from Entire Travel



CTM forecasts FY24 record

CORPORATE Travel

Management (CTM) is expecting record earnings per share for the forthcoming 12 months, after this morning reporting a 77% uplift in TTV to \$8.9 billion for the year to 30 Jun 2023 (TD breaking news).

The company declared a 22c per share dividend on \$77.6 million in net profit after tax - a massive increase on the \$3.1 million profit result for the prior financial year.

"Our performance in FY23 validates our successful strategy during the pandemic, which has given us a larger global platform," said MD Jamie Pherous.

"We are taking strong momentum into FY24," he added, noting an average monthly pretax profit of \$16.5m since Feb.

Total revenue was \$660 million, of which \$303 million came from North America, \$143 million from Europe, \$52 million from Asia and \$160 million earned in Australia and New Zealand.

Locally, the 12-month period

included the integration of the former Helloworld corporate and entertainment business, helping secure the recently renewed Whole of Australian Government travel management services contract (TD 27 Jun).

In Australia TTV has recovered to 2019 levels, but transaction activity is lagging TTV growth "due to high airline prices resulting from a lack of international competition", the company said, with prices beginning to moderate over the last few months.

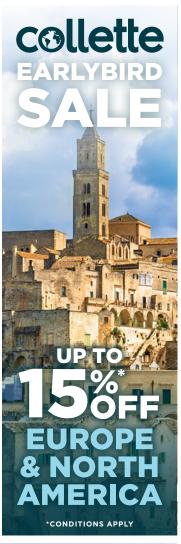
CTM is working to integrate artificial intelligence into its operations, and while it is early days in the life cycle "we are already saving up to 1,000 work hours per month", Pherous said.

A key goal for FY24 is to expand Al usage globally to free up consultants to manage highvalue urgent transactions, and to ultimately provide 24/7 "superior self-service capabilities".

The CVFR difference

CVFR Consolidation Services is highlighting the factors that make it an original and independent industry leader, including its 24/7 local ticket centre support and its high-quality customer service.

To learn more about its services, head to the cover page.







t 1300 799 220





Entire incentives

ENTIRE Travel Group is today showcasing a range of special earlybird offers, from key products including Rocky Mountaineer, Windstar Cruises and the new Entire Group Journeys, which is offering a \$100 digital credit card for every online booking - see the last page.



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Experience is key: Big Red

AUSTRALIANS are "spending more, but less often" on local activities, according to the first ever *Seasonal Experiences Index* report from Big Red Group.

Detailing activity in autumn/ winter 2023, the new findings show bookings for bucket-list experiences rose 22% on items such as jet fighter flights, hot air balloon rides, mystery flight packages and glacier heli-hikes.

Average order values across the Experience Oz, Adrenaline and RedBalloon brands are up 33%.

However, bookings for activities in places like Cairns, the Gold Coast and the Whitsundays showed a downturn, suggesting budget pressures are keeping people closer to home.

Peppers into Manly

THE North Tower of The Sebel Sydney Manly Beach will formally rebrand as Peppers Manly Beach this week, with the Accormanaged property to reopen its doors to guests on Fri.

Amenities on offer at the revamped hotel include two swimming pools, three conference spaces, and 42 studios, apartments and suites.

"Peppers Manly Beach showcases the perfect blend of coastal charm, exquisite design, and unparalleled service," CEO Accor Pacific Sarah Derry said.

Rates for stays lead in from \$333 per night in a Superior One Bedroom Apartment. Autumn bookings rose strongly for metropolitan areas outside of city centres, with CEO David Anderson saying other key trends include off-grid retreats and cabins, food tasting and strong demand for experiences around the recent Sydney Vivid festival.

"By examining how the financial pressures currently faced by Australians and our international visitors are having an impact on the way they travel and experience new things, we've learned that Aussies are still seeking out adventure," he said.

The full Big Red Group report is available by **CLICKING HERE**.

Sichuan to Sydney

CHINESE carrier Sichuan Airlines will start flying between Sydney and Chengdu from 30 Oct.

The new service will operate three times a week deploying A330-200 aircraft, moving to five times weekly from mid-Nov.

Topdeck unlocks '24

TOPDECK has unveiled its 2024 collection of trips, which features destinations in Europe, the United States, Japan, and more.

One of the trips on offer is the 19-day Play & Pause: Central Europe Highlights itinerary, priced from \$7,009pp, which visits London, France, Switzerland, and Italy, with departure dates ranging between Apr & Oct 2024.

Travellers can also embark on the 11-night Delve Deep Japan from \$5,299pp, with highlights including a trek through the Arashiyama bamboo forest, a Buddhist morning ritual experience in Osaka, and a group karaoke event in Tokyo.

There's also an eight-day Sail and Swim: Croatia tour from \$2,399pp, with trips departing from Jan though to Mar 2024.

Topdeck offers four different trip styles, which vary by group size, pace, amount of inclusions, amount of free time, and type of activities - learn more **HERE**.







SiteMinder on path to profit

LISTED accommodation channel manager SiteMinder Limited saw "significant improvements in profitability and unit economics" over the last 12 months, but still reported a \$49.3 million net loss for the period.

The company facilitates connections between properties and global distribution platforms such as OTAs, travel agency aggregators and wholesalers, last year facilitating 100 million reservations worth \$60 billion.

SiteMinder cited "investments in go-to-market capacity and product development" for its profit outcome, noting its total revenue was up 30.5% to \$151m.

There was strong growth for SiteMinder across all regions, with APAC up 33.4%, 24.9% in EMEA and 25.2% in the Americas.

CEO Sankar Narayan said post-pandemic SiteMinder has accelerated its subscriber growth and reprioritised its investments.

"We delivered on the major initiatives we set out to do, and importantly embarked on a new journey to drive the convergence of key revenue generating capabilities for hoteliers - automated revenue optimisation, intelligence and distribution."

More than 39,000 hotels are now connected to the SiteMinder platform, with Narayan committing to deliver "next generation solutions for hoteliers of all sizes and levels of expertise".

FY23 included the acquisition of guest messaging and upselling platform GuestJoy last Sep, with significant progress made to integrate the offering into SiteMinder's technology and commercial ecosystem as a subscription add-on.

SiteMinder is targeting organic revenue growth of 30% in the medium term, with expectations that it will become profitable on an EBITDA basis in the next year.

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AY, Iberia pact

FINNAIR is expanding its codeshare partnership with fellow Oneworld carrier Iberia and its low-cost LEVEL offshoot.

Effective from tomorrow, the AY code will be offered on a range of Latin American and Caribbean routes including services from Madrid to Bogota, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Santo Domingo and Sao Paolo, as well as Barcelona to Santiago, Chile.

Scot Virgin Hotel

VIRGIN Hotels Glasgow has opened its doors overnight, becoming the group's second European property.

Located on the River Clyde near the city's Central Station, the hotel has "240 exquisitely decorated Chambers", each featuring a dressing area, a yoga mat, a red SMEG mini-fridge and a patented Virgin Hotels ergonomic bed.

See virginhotels.com/glasgow.

Window Seat

concerns that AI may take over from expert travel advisors may be somewhat overblown, in the light of a recent online recommendation from Microsoft suggesting that a food bank in Ottawa is a "must see" attraction.

A post on the Microsoft Travel platform about top things to do in the Canadian city had the charity group listed as number three, noting the Ottawa Food Bank helps out with fresh and non-perishable food, as well as diapers and other necessities.

"Consider going into it on an empty stomach", the article helpfully suggests, with Microsoft removing the post after claiming it was erroneously "generated through a combo of algorithmic techniques with human review".



www.aircalin.com.au | 🕜 📵





VA CEO slams QR decision

VIRGIN Australia CEO Jayne Hrdlicka has taken aim at the Federal Government for blocking added capacity proposed by Qatar Airways (TD 19 Jul), claiming the move translates to higher airfares for consumers.

In a statement obtained by **TD**, Hrdlicka said added Qatar Airways flights would have an "immediate and tangible effect" on reducing airfares between Australia and key overseas markets such as Europe and the Middle East.

"Qatar Airways is in the unique position in the context of a constrained global supply of widebody aircraft, to be able to quickly make available four

NSW flags cruise protocol changes

REPORTS that COVID testing and vaccination protocols for cruise passengers in NSW may soon be dropped have been welcomed by the cruise sector, with CLIA hailing the mooted move as a step towards bringing "Australia into line with other jurisdictions around the world".

"As the current settings have become increasingly confusing for guests, CLIA and cruise lines have engaged with Federal and State health authorities to seek a consistent approach in line with current community standards," CLIA Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz said.

Read the full story in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

additional services per day to Australia," VA's chief noted.

"This would deliver much needed and immediate benefit to the Australian travelling public and deliver an immediate benefit to the Australian tourism industry and cost-of-living relief to Australians - including our own customers," she added.

Virgin Australia entered into a codeshare deal with Qatar Airways last year (*TD* 11 May 2022), giving its passengers access to the Middle Eastern carrier's network of more than 140 destinations.

Hrdlicka also noted that Virgin Australia will continue dialogue with the Federal Government to find an amicable solution to "understand and resolve the underlying issues".

Scenic Plus rolls out

KIWI-BASED rail tourism company Great Journeys New Zealand has confirmed its Scenic Plus premium product will soon be offered on all of its trains.

Guests booking the product will benefit from a dedicated host service, regionally inspired food and drink, as well as premium boarding and luggage services.

Scenic Plus will roll out on the Coastal Pacific on 14 Dec 2023 and the Northern Explorer on 15 May 2024, and follows the successful launch of the service on the TranzAlpine in Apr this year (*TD* 15 Mar).



Air Canada touches grass



THE Air Canada team (pictured) wasn't afraid to get its hands dirty on a recent visit to Sydney's Pocket City Farms, as part of the airline's global efforts to support sustainability at a local level.

The airline's staff from across Australia and NZ spent the day learning about regenerative agriculture, enjoying a tour of the farm and participating in a workship where they learnt how to build succulent terrariums.

The group also spent time collecting the leaves and fruit from mulberry trees for the in-house chef, who uses them to make green tea and furikake seasoning.

General Manager Australia and New Zealand Vic Naughton said the day was part of the Air Canada's 'Leave Less and Do More' strategy when it comes to the environment, as it works towards achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from all global operations by 2050.

TAG partnership

TAG and SANZAAR Pty Limited have entered into a strategic and corporate partnership that will result in travel management across the world of sport.

The agreement brings together international rugby and travel operations, with TAG bringing its niche expertise to the table to manage the complexities that are involved when supporting the group movements of sport.

"Through this collaboration, we are excited to immerse SANZAAR in TAG's distinctive high-touch travel encounter, establishing a profound partnership between a premier travel management company and the driving force behind the Southern Hemisphere's international rugby competitions," TAG APAC MD Shane Barr said.

The partnership will aim to change the course of the future of travel logistics in sport.



Join us for a true Northern Territory road trip!

This evening event is an opportunity to learn about the Northern Territory, meet over 30 NT operators, enjoy NT inspired food, and experience Territory culture with a chance to win fantastic prizes!

Melbourne 19 September, Aerial, South Wharf Brisbane 20 September, Lightspace, Fortitude Valley Sydney 21 September, View by Sydney, Walsh Bay

Register now





A tonne of Warner

TO CELEBRATE 100 years of Warner Bros. Studios, Emirates will include a special capsule collection of 100 of the distributor's films on its in-flight entertainment system, ice, available from 01 Sep.

The collection includes a range of famous movies from the studio's history, which dates back to the 1920s.

Recent films like The Batman, The Flash and Elvis are joined by lauded movies from the last century including Casablanca, The Dirty Dozen and Free Willy.

Emirates is the first airline to include the collection in its inflight entertainment.

Archerfield query

THE Federal Government has expressed concerns that a new draft Master Plan submitted by **Archerfield Airport Corporation** (AAC) does not provide enough detail, including the intended uses of the various precincts on the airport site for airport users.

Another issue the government has is a lack of detail around the hub's 20-year strategic direction.

Most frugal flights

flight in Australia this month was from Ballina Byron Bay Gateway to Sydney, priced at just \$44, according to new data from Agoda, which reveals the country's most affordable flights.

Looking at regional flights, the Sydney to Fiji Islands route boasted the lowest price point at \$223, while Perth to Kuala Lumpur was the most budgetfriendly intercontinental flight,

Aussie destinations were found to be the most affordable option

Pilot shortage

SKYTRANS has confirmed that pilot shortages were the main cause of poor cancellation rates in Jul, with the latest BITRE carrier was forced to scrap a whopping 8.7% of services.

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available for just \$183.

for intercontinental trips for eight of the 10 researched markets.

BATIK Air is this week conducting an Australasian roadshow, meeting with key industry partners across Australia and New Zealand to showcase its burgeoning network of non-stop

Now operating more than 75 weekly departures from Australia, the Lion Air Group offshoot now flies to 59 destinations across 20

countries.

flights to Bali and Kuala Lumpur.

Airline Rep Services Vice President Gabrielle Vicari told attendees at a Sydney event last night about the rapid growth of Batik Air in Australia, including double daily flights from Sydney as well as services from Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth - and the imminent launch of non-stops from Auckland.

Batik describes itself as a "boutique" carrier, with a hybrid model under which luggage is included in each fare while

impacting Skytrans

figures showing the Cairns-based

"We are addressing this, but it takes time for new pilots to be fully operational," the carrier told Travel Daily.

AUSSIE SPECIALIST PROGRAM TRAINER LONDON-BASED

Tourism Australia (TA) has an exciting opportunity for an Aussie Specialist Program (ASP) Trainer/Coordinator to join its London team. This is a rare opportunity to join one of Australia's prestigious brands, representing TA and the State & Territory Organisations (STOs).



The Trainer/Coordinator role conducts all face to face **AUSTRALIA** and online destination training of qualified ASP agents and works in recruiting new agents to register for the program. The role will be responsible for the training and communication strategy within the Northern European markets (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands & Belgium) and will be responsible for the implementation and execution of engaging training programs and events aimed at agents with novice to expert levels of knowledge. Destination knowledge of Australia is therefore a must. As this is a UK based role, the correct candidate must have rights to work. Relocation costs must be covered by the successful candidate.

Click here to learn more and apply

Applications close 12 September 2023

Boutique Batik is soaring

Conversations with Women in Travel



passengers can purchase meals on board.

Airline Rep Services has sales teams across Australia and New Zealand, as well as a newly formed dedicated groups desk which is seeing strong demand, Vicari highlighted.

She's pictured at right with Ram Chhabra from Airline Rep Services parent company CVFR and Batik Air Head of Commercial, Yogananthan Muniandy.

WTTC forecasts massive growth

GLOBAL investment in the travel and tourism sector is set to return to pre-pandemic levels of more than US\$1.1 trillion, according to a new report from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

The organisation's 2023 Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Global Trends Report shows an "encouraging resurgence", said WTTC CEO Julia Simpson.

The USA led global sector investment in 2022 with US\$213 billion, followed by China with US\$146 billion and then upstart Saudi Arabia which spent US\$42b.

WTTC is forecasting robust growth of 11.5% in 2023, amounting to US\$955 billion, with a return to pre-COVID levels anticipated by 2025 and annual growth accelerating to 6.1%.

EasyJet adds Cairo

EUROPEAN low-cost carrier EasyJet will debut non-stop flights from London Luton to Cairo in Oct this year, making the Egyptian capital its 157th destination.

The flights will complement EasyJet's existing services to Sharm-el-Sheikh and Hurghada, which make it the UK's largest carrier to Egypt.

luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 23rd Aug 2023

True North appoints

AUSTRALIAN luxurv cruise brand True North. which offers activity-based itineraries for discerning travellers, has appointed Sydney-based PR agency Today the Brave to handle its media enquiries.

ANA's new drops

ALL Nippon Airways' (ANA) customers will be able to eniov a new selection of wines in the carrier's lounges from Sep and on international flights from Dec.

The collection includes 41 new drops from around the world, including France and Japan, after a careful selection process where ANA's sommeliers assessed and tasted 250 contenders.

Take a tour of Nova

SILVERSEA is offering an inside look of its newest ship, Silver Nova, which has now embarked on her inaugural season.

Watch Silversea President Barbara Muckermann take viewers on a guided tour of the luxury vessel HERE.

The video showcases Silver Nova's innovative and spacious design, characterised by openness and panoramic views throughout.

The newbuild will set sail on the 71-day Grand Voyage South America on 04 Jan 2024.

QF BOOSTS BALI FLIGHT LUXURY

A RISE in demand for travel to Bali among luxury-seeking Aussies has prompted Qantas to upgrade from a Boeing 737 to the larger Airbus A330 on its daily Sydney to Bali route from late Oct, amid a slate of international capacity boosts (TD 22 Aug).

The twin-aisle A330 offers a "new standard of luxury" for Business class travellers, boasting an enhanced premium experience compared to the domestic recliners of the 787.

Featuring a 1-2-1 layout, the A330 Business Suites provide direct aisle access for every passenger, as well as more personal space and additional



comforts, such as AC/USB power and storage nooks.

The upmarket suites also feature innovative premium seats which can be reclined to become fully-flat beds, allowing travellers to relax and get some shut-eye

during the overnight portion of the Sydney to Bali flight.

Additionally, the Flying Kangaroo now offers free international wi-fi during portions of the Sydney-Bali flight when flying over Australia (TD 30 May).

Virtuoso's board is finally back together again



THE full Virtuoso Global Member Advisory Board has held its first in-person meeting in several years this week, Chairman Anthony Goldman shared on LinkedIn.

Goldman, who is also the

Joint Managing Director of Goldman Group, revealed he has entered the final year of chairing the global board, as well as Virtuoso's Australia and New Zealand Regional Member Advisory Board.

RSSC Europe offer

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is reminding luxury travel advisors that its Europe earlybird incentive is ending soon on 31 Aug.

Guests can enjoy a low 7.5% deposit, a free two-category suite upgrade, and US\$500 shipboard credit across all Europe sailings between Apr and Nov 2024.

The 10-night Epicurean Spotlight on Wine is one of the journeys included in the sale, priced from \$13,840pp in a Superior Suite F2, with the suite upgrade to see guests receive a Concierge Suite E valued at AU\$15,660pp - CLICK HERE.

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BWH Hotels has announced the signing of Aiden SCQ, marking the first Aiden property from the hotelier's brand to land in Western Australia. Located in West Perth, the 120-key property is an upper mid-scale hotel with a rooftop bar & restaurant,

conference and event spaces, outdoor event lawn and a pool with poolside lounge area. The signing of the WA hotel follows the success of Aiden Darling Harbour opened in 2022.



Formerly the Chancellor's House Hotel, The Oliver Hotel, Oxford has announced its opening after undergoing significant interior upgrades and rebranding. All of its guests are now greeted by a new interior design featuring custom furniture and

modern art pieces throughout its spaces. New bed frames, curtains, pillows, and chairs have been implemented in all of the guestrooms along with refinished furnishings.



The 372-room Westin Atlanta Perimeter North has completed a multi-million dollar renovation affecting many aspects of the hotel, including public spaces, guestrooms and a new cafe and marketplace named Perimeter Provisions. Guests can now enjoy

new soft goods and bathroom amenities during their stay, where two new Perimeter Suites are now in place. The lobby also boasts better natural light and a more contemporary look.



A six-month multi-million dollar makeover of the Embassy Suites by Hilton Hampton Convention Centre in Virginia is now completed. Part of the major revamp sees the redesigned guest suites and bathrooms feature new, modern furniture, new 55-inch

TVs, complemented by new textile coverings and wall art.



Hotel Indigo Melbourne on Flinders has opened this week, situated on the city's famous Flinders Lane. The former Holiday Inn property is comprised of 216 questrooms, with the site transformed following a sweeping \$20 million dollar

renovation. Changes for guests to enjoy soon include revamped guestrooms, a fitness centre (arriving in Oct) and new meeting and event facilities for up to 200 guests to be completed in early 2024.

TTC team fights hunger



THE Travel Corporation's (TTC) Australian leadership team (pictured) helped pack produce for over 16,000 meals during a visit to FoodBank, the largest hunger relief charity Down Under, earlier this month.

Working with the FoodBank team, the TTC cohort sorted nearly 13,000kg of onions, kale, carrots, sprouts, apples, oranges and broccoli whilst also boxing chocolates, ready meals, mayonnaise and pasta sauce.

The volunteer day brought TTC closer to its mission of completing 30,000 volunteer hours by 2025, as part of its five-year

sustainability strategy, How We Tread Right, which was launched in 2020 (TD 24 Sep 2020).

By the end of 2022, TTC staff had completed 7,471 volunteering hours - 46% of the 2025 total goal - which is tracked with an annual Impact Report.

The company published its second report in Jul, in which it fast-tracked its carbon neutral goals by bringing forward its initial target from 2050 to 2030 (TD 28 Jul).

All TTC employees have the opportunity to use two working days a year to volunteer for a cause of their choice.



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EDITORIAL

Publisher - Bruce Piper Editorial Director - Damian Francis Editor - Adam Bishop Associate Publisher - Anna Piper

Contributors - Myles Stedman, Janie Medbury, Matthew Wai, Jenny Piper info@traveldailv.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Sean Harrigan & Nicki Harford advertising@traveldaily.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER Davy Adams

davy.adams@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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