

Africa is back, baby!

BENCH Africa has released its first brochure since the pandemic scuttled travel to Africa in 2020, with the latest printed material giving travellers and agents all of the latest info on its tours departing in 2023 and 2024. See **page six** for more details.



BENCH AFRICA



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TA is our golden child: FC

EXCLUSIVE

FLIGHT Centre's luxury agency network Travel Associates has been hailed the "golden child of the company" after posting a number of strong financial results over the past 12 months.

Among the lofty achievements for the brand was being Flight Centre's highest performing pillar for leisure by the end of Dec 2022, as well as making a return to pre-pandemic sales results with only 55% of staff volumes.

The report card was delivered by a beaming Global MD - Luxury and Independent Brands, Danielle Galloway, at the Travel Associates' National Product Showcase event in Brisbane, who also revealed the division had managed to increase its margins and average booking value significantly over the same period.

Galloway added that Flight Centre has some ambitious financial goals laid down for 2027, with the future success of Travel

Associates viewed as crucial to achieving those objectives.

One major area of focus will be the company's 'luxury travel collection', which Galloway said was all about how the business plans to position its luxury leadership globally.

"What's important is that we're all part of the one family and we're leveraging the same ecosystem of luxury products, suppliers & technology," she said.

A major step forward in the strategy was the recent acquisition of the UK-based Scott Dunn (**TD** 31 Jan), a move Galloway believes will help its luxury advisors "storm ahead" of competitors in the market.

"Scott Dunn is the perfect complement to Travel Associates and really broadens the luxury travel collection, adding a combo of brands, partnerships & models to be a luxury leader," Galloway added - more details on the TA's Showcase on **p3** and **p5**.

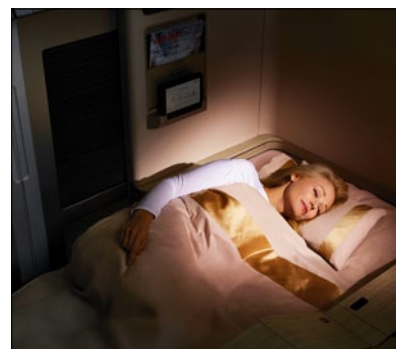
Skal feels the love

THE Skal Club of Melbourne will host its 'Date Night with Chloe' event at Chloe's Bar at Young and Jackson this Thu at 5.30pm.

Tickets cost \$39pp - see **HERE**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, including a photo page from **Travel Associates**, plus a full page from **Collette**.



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KE adds 89k seats to BNE

KOREAN Air has announced it will offer five weekly flights to Brisbane beginning in Apr, delivering an extra 89,000 inbound seats per year.

Korean tourists are expected to inject more than \$120 million into the city's economy each year, a significant benefit Brisbane Airport Corporation Executive General Manager of Aviation Ryan Both believes is "great news for Queensland".

"South Korea is our third largest trading market and a major technology partner in Queensland's new energy economy," he said.

"We have one of Australia's largest Korean communities who

will now have a direct connection with families," he added.

The flights were secured by Queensland's \$200 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund (AAIF), which marked its one-year anniversary last week.

The initiative is jointly funded by the Queensland Government and the state's four international gateways: Brisbane Airport, Gold Coast Airport, Sunshine Coast Airport, and Cairns Airport.

Brisbane Airport also revealed the AAIF has also just helped secure four EVA Air flights per week from Taipei to Brisbane, which will begin later this year.

Air NZ eyes return

AIR New Zealand has confirmed it plans to resume jet services to and from Auckland Airport from mid-morning tomorrow after the city was hit by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Turboprop services will recommence slightly later, from mid-afternoon tomorrow, with the major storm cell leaving 10,000 international customers disrupted by 509 cancelled flights, of which 6,500 are still left to be rebooked on new flights.

Because flights are very full, Air NZ is warning some customers they may receive a notification saying they won't depart for up to 20 days after their original booking, however the airline is stressing that teams are now working to get them on an earlier flight "as a top priority".

Asian carriers deal

VIETNAM Airlines and Singapore Airlines have strengthened their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding during the Vietnam-Singapore Business Forum last week.

The new partnership will see the carriers examine greater opportunities for codeshare arrangements to improve connectivity between Vietnam and Singapore, with the potential expansion other destinations being serviced by both carriers.

The two airlines, which have been collaborating for over 20 years, will also explore ways to offer more value and option to their customers.

DL announces new Country Manager

DELTA Air Lines has announced the appointment of Kelly Clive as its new Country Manager - Australia & New Zealand, where she will lead the carrier's sales efforts in Oceania.

The news comes as DL works on growing its presence in the Australia and New Zealand markets, and is preparing to launch its first-ever service to New Zealand in Oct (**TD** 23 Jan).

Kelly has over two decades of experience across the airline, hospitality and tourism industries, including a 10-year tenure at Virgin Australia, where she helped deliver airline partnerships, business development strategies, commercial projects and more.

"Her depth of knowledge and expertise in the local market will assist DL to forge innovative partnerships and develop strong teams in the in the market," MD International Mike Owen said.



Window Seat

IT WOULD appear it's not only the Travel Associates Product Showcase event in Brisbane showing its love for premium caviar, with a hotel in New York City recently unveiling a new 'caviar hotline' specifically for guests in dire need of a fix.

On Valentine's Day, the 47-storey, luxury Park Lane New York Hotel will allow guests to dial five on their hotel phones at any time of the day or night to get some emergency fish eggs delivered in less time than it would take to salivate over the prospect.

The menu includes smoked salmon blinis with Petrossian Royal Ossetra caviar and creme fraiche, or deviled eggs topped with caviar - all paired with Champagne or vodka shooters, of course.

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THE first National Product Showcase to be held in four years for Flight Centre's Luxury Travel Associates network attracted more than 200 advisors and close to 70 luxury partners in Brisbane over the weekend.

Hosted at the five-star W Brisbane, the gathering saw a large number of brand update sessions conducted by suppliers, company presentations from the TA executive team, as well as lavish cocktail parties and dinners in the evening to reward and recognise the hard work travel advisors have undertaken through and after the COVID pandemic.

Speaking with **TD** at the event, Global Brand & Marketing Director - Luxury for Travel Associates, Anna Burgdorf, said the Showcase was "critically important" for the business.

"It connects partners directly

with advisors and it's the best time they'll ever spend," she said.

"It's important for us that the Travel Associates businesses in Australia and New Zealand can come together and be reflective of that central DNA."

Travel Associates General Manager Australia, Rachel Kingswell, added that events like the one held on the weekend also ensure its luxury travel advisors go back to their territories as "masters of their craft".

"That is what all of our advisors aspire to be and what we do in just two days would normally take two years to organise with suppliers to get the same information," she added.

Pictured: Global Managing Director - Luxury and Independent Brands, Danielle Galloway with Kingswell at a cocktail party on Fri night.

APT relaunches VIP

A **NEWLY** enhanced VIP Partner Recognition Program has been launched by APT Travel Group, with the latest iteration designed to increase rewards and recognition to the trade partners contributing to the brands of APT, Travelmarvel and Botanica.

The improved VIP program includes increased marketing budgets, VIP customer service, and self famill access.

Consultants are also able to enjoy discounts on selected itineraries throughout the year, with the potential earning of \$100 on selected products nominated every quarter for VIP agents to book.

"Our Agency Recognition program is focused on driving sales through reinvesting in our agent partners" enthused Scott Ellis, General Manager of Sales, adding agents are critical to APT's continued success.

Travel Daily
on location at
AIME Melbourne

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from the 2023 Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event.

BUYERS and exhibitors from across the business events sector are converging on Melbourne this week for the highly anticipated 2023 edition of AIME.

Owned by the Melbourne Convention Bureau, this year's 30th anniversary gathering will feature more than 400 hosted buyers along with 350-plus exhibitors from 25 countries.

This morning AIME 2023 kicked off with a major media conference, while the trade show continues until Wed and tonight delegates will kick up their heels at Marvel Stadium for the traditional welcome event.

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If you are keen to learn what makes Globetrotter so different and why our people are happy and engaged, please send your resume and cover letter to tania.king@globetrotter.com.au.





AirAsia discounts

AIRASIA has shown its commitment to the Asia Pacific region by launching its Five Million Free Seats campaign.

The promotion offers travellers discounted tickets from KL to Perth for \$199, and Melbourne and Sydney from \$299, while fares on Thailand AirAsia X are also on sale from \$339 from Sydney and Melbourne direct to Bangkok - booking period ends 19 Feb and applies to travel between 01 Mar and 10 Dec 2023.

Travel lifts for Turkey

AIRLINES have come together to help Turkey after catastrophic earthquakes killed at least 30,000 people in the country and scores more in neighbouring Syria.

Boeing has donated US\$500k to the recovery efforts, while Lufthansa and Emirates have both flown supplies to the victims, with EK planning to send 100 tonnes of aid in coming weeks.

Caravan funding secured

IN A major boost for the caravan park tourism sector, the Federal Government has announced that more than 100 caravan parks from across the country will soon receive grants of between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

Funding will be used to upgrade accommodation, facilities, and amenities over the next 18 months, with the government characterising the nature of the planned enhancements as either bringing more innovation or sustainability to tourism sites across Australia.

Caravan Industry Association of Australia Chief Executive Officer, Stuart Lamont, said the targeted infrastructure funding package is recognition of the growing value of caravanning to Australia's tourism and visitor economy.

"Caravanning has long been Australian domestic tourism's largest visitor and economic cohort, an almost \$27 billion

economic driver in tourism and local manufacturing activity," Lamont said.

"This well-targeted funding will go directly into our world-leading caravan park product across the nation, which we also believe will extract private capital expenditure support up to three times over," he added.

Lamont also argued that caravan parks need to be incentivised to deliver more attractive visitor amenities and appealing product if Australia's tourism sector is to make a full and sustainable recovery moving forward.

The Federal Government decision follows the Caravan Industry Association of Australia putting forward a Pre-Federal Budget Submission calling for millions more in funding for a second round of the Caravan Parks Grant Program to support upgrades and new facilities at Aussie caravan parks (**TD** 31 Jan).

Solomons tweaks

SOLOMON Airlines has announced a revised air schedule designed to make visiting and exploring the Pacific Island nation easier for international visitors.

From 26 Mar to 28 Oct, the carrier's Mon flight from Brisbane to Honiara will depart half an hour later at 9.30am, enabling better connections from international flights from NZ.

The airline also said it will soon provide an update on its Tue and Wed fights to and from Tarawa, which currently remain suspended.

Meanwhile, the new schedule also aims to make travelling between local provinces easier, with Solomon Airlines increasing passenger capacity to a number of domestic destinations, including Bellona, Kirakira, and Suavanao.

Daily services between Honiara and Gizo/Munda during the peak Dec/Jan period will also resume to help meet predicted demand.

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Golden times ahead for Travel Associates

WHY wouldn't luxury travel advisors working with Flight Centre's luxury Travel Associates (TA) network be smiling following such a smashing year of growth, rebounding with gusto from the stifling period of the pandemic.

Over the weekend, agents were treated to five-star accommodation at the W Brisbane for the first National Product Showcase event in four years, which included amazing food and drink (including champagne and caviar of course), as well as a host of informative product updates from TA's collection of trusted premium brands, including major sponsors Regent Seven Seas Cruises and The Travel Corporation's Luxury Gold brand.



DANIELLE Galloway and Rachel Kingswell flanked by the TTC Tour Brands team of Andrew Young, Toni Ambler, and Tomas Malmberg during a special gold-themed cocktail party on Fri night.



FLIGHT Centre's Global Brand & Marketing Leader - Premium Leisure Anna Burgdorf poses with Travel Associates advisor Ben Farrell and a very cool-looking RSCC Vespa.



ATTENDEES were challenged to come up with their most 'purple' moments to win some amazing prizes.



AN EXPERT panel session updates advisors on the year ahead and what to expect from new tech and travel trends.



OCEANIA Cruises' James Sitters and Jason Worth relax after delivering a string of stellar product updates.



AGENTS enjoy the fruits of their labour with a few wines and Espresso martinis in some glitzy gold.



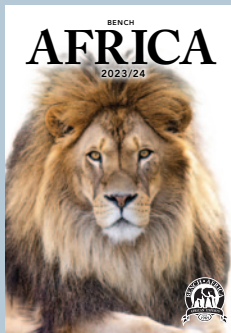
ONLY the very best quality snacks were served at the Showcase.



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Bench Africa - 2023/24

Bench Africa has gone to press with its first printed brochure to market since the pandemic. The comprehensive guide features Africa's best destinations and experiences, showcasing a variety of travel options for all tastes and budgets, from luxury lodges and safaris to action-packed tours, cultural immersions and beach getaways. The brochure features QR codes directing travel agents to accurate seasonal pricing for each tour and experience on the website. The opening pages highlight a selection of best-selling itineraries, such as the 13-day Explore Scenic South Africa journey, which is perfect for the first-time safari goer, and includes a visit to Cape Town, Franschhoek, and the Greater Kruger.



APT - Egypt, Jordan and Israel

APT has published its latest brochure showcasing luxury tours across Egypt, Jordan and Israel for 2023-24. Ranging from 10-24 days in length, the itineraries include hand-picked accommodation in five-star hotels in central or unique locations. The 24-day Epic Egypt, Jordan & Israel tour allows travellers to embark on one big adventure across all three destinations. The epic journey includes a five-day luxury Nile River cruise aboard the *MS Sun Goddess*. Each tour is guided by an expert APT Tour Director, and in Egypt a fully qualified Egyptologist.

Viva Air in trouble?

COLOMBIAN budget airline Viva Air has voluntarily entered into a local debt restructuring process as it awaits a possible merger with Avianca.

The ultra-low cost airline will be allowed to operate for 90 days while negotiating with its main creditors, citing challenges from the current economic climate and impacts of COVID as the reasons.

Crystalbrook role

MELLISA Gruse has been appointed as the new Group Marketing Director to further develop the Crystalbrook Collection brand in Australia.

Gruse arrives with extensive experiences across travel, entertainment and financial services, and included a previous role as Senior Marketing Manager at Hamilton Island Enterprises.

South Aussie dream

ADELAIDE has been announced as the host city for Tourism Australia's Dreamtime 2023 business events showcase.

The event will take place 07-10 Nov, encouraging overseas buyers to plan their events in Australia.

Linkd Tourism win

SEATTLE and Washington State have appointed Linkd Tourism as their representatives in Australia and NZ, with activity under the deal commencing immediately.

It's the first time that the state's three tourism entities: Visit Seattle, the Port of Seattle and State of Washington Tourism, have collaboratively promoted the destination internationally, and also the first time the State of Washington has invested in international marketing.

Pilots impact WestJet

TRAVELLERS planning to fly with Canadian carrier WestJet may be impacted by delays in the coming days as the union for the airline's pilots calls for federal intervention to resolve a longstanding contract dispute.

Chile battling fires

WILDFIRES in Chile are currently affecting large areas of the country's south-central region, with DFAT recommending travellers in the area monitor local media for any updates and procedures, and to also exercise a "high degree of caution".

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