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Royal super deal

ROYAL Caribbean is promoting eight-night cruises leading in at just \$699 per person on selected 2023 sailings, as part of a "last chance deals" offer which expires shortly.

For more details on the unprecedented offer see the [cover page](#) of today's *TD*.

NZ, Pacific QF sale

QANTAS today launched a week-long sale for flights to New Zealand and the South Pacific.

Destinations on offer include Norfolk Island, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown, Tonga, Samoa and New Caledonia, with both Economy and Business class offers available to most ports - see qantasagencyconnect.com.

Short-term arrivals top 500k

THERE were just over 500,000 short-term visitor arrivals into Australia in Nov - a monthly increase of 17%, according to new figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Short-term trips by Australian residents also continued to recover during the month, with a total of 664,810 departures, up 9% compared to Oct.

While the numbers indicate the ongoing increase in travel demand, they are still significantly below pre-pandemic levels, with inbound trips by foreign travellers 38% lower than the pre-COVID level of Nov 2019.

Outbound travel is also still much lower than three years ago, with the Nov figures 28% less.

New Zealand was the most popular destination country, accounting for 17% of all resident returns during the month at 101,330 trips, followed by

Indonesia with 86,270 trips and then the USA with 48,880.

Other destinations that were popular with Australians during the month included Thailand in fourth spot followed by the UK, India, Fiji, Singapore, Vietnam and then Japan.

The ABS noted that the most popular reason for outbound trips was visiting friends and relatives, cited by 48.2% of travellers.

For international visitor arrivals to Australia, NZ was the leading source country, with 91,210 trips, followed by the UK with 55,410 and then the USA at 51,220.

Singapore was in fourth place in terms of visitors to Australia, followed by India, Canada, Japan, Germany, the Philippines and then South Korea rounding out the top 10 source markets.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including our [Sustainability page](#), plus a cover page from **Royal Caribbean International**, and a full page from **Abercrombie & Kent**.

A&K offer extended

ABERCROMBIE & Kent has extended its 'Sell Three, Sail Free' offer until 31 Mar, giving travel agents more time to earn a free cruise for themselves and a guest on their choice of eligible Luxury Expedition Cruises.

Agents must book three staterooms on any A&K Luxury Expedition Cruise between 17 Oct 2022 and 31 Mar 2023 to score the free cruise.

For details, see the [back page](#).

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United to up SYD

UNITED Airlines looks set to increase frequencies on its Sydney-San Francisco route to double daily from 28 Oct.

Previously scheduled for up to 10 times per week, GDS screens indicate 14 weekly UA SYD-SFO frequencies over the Northern winter 2023/24 schedule period.

French strike alert

THE Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) has warned of multiple strikes expected across France in multiple sectors over the coming weeks.

Planned industrial action includes a national 24-hour walkout on 19 Jan, a 48-hour strike on 26-27 Jan, and a 72-hour strike on 06-08 Feb.

The strikes are likely to result in mass disruptions to services across the country, including in travel and tourism sectors, also increasing the possibility of large demonstrations, which can become violent, DFAT warned.

Green leaves NCL

VANESSA Green has taken a role as Sales Manager, Australia for the Cruise Critic website, an offshoot of TripAdvisor.

She was most recently BDM with Norwegian Cruise Line, following other industry roles at The Travel Corporation, Expedia TAAP/Discover the World and Flight Centre.

Embraer order

BRAZILIAN commuter jet manufacturer Embraer has confirmed an order for 15 new E195-E2 aircraft from an undisclosed customer.

The order is valued at US\$1.17 billion at list pricing.

EY Europe boost

EITHAD Airways will expand its European network later this year, with the addition of direct flights from Abu Dhabi to both Copenhagen and Dusseldorf.

GDS screens indicate four weekly AUH-CPH flights operating from 01 Oct, while DUS services will resume thrice-weekly from 02 Oct this year.

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Window Seat

LOST luggage occurrences aren't exactly uncommon, but a misplaced suitcase showing up four years later is quite another story...

An Oregon woman was shocked when she received a call this week to inform her that her suitcase, which had disappeared after she took a United Airlines flight to Chicago in 2018, had turned up at an airport in Houston.

Remarkably, all of the luggage contents were still inside, with a baffled April Gavin saying on TikTok, "it was in Honduras, and who knows where else it went".

According to United Airlines, the luggage was lost as it hadn't been properly scanned when Gavin checked in.

Peru emergency extended

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is continuing to advise Australians to reconsider their need to travel to parts of Peru including Cusco, Puno, Arequipa, and Ayacucho due to the country's ongoing political protests (**TD** 23 Dec 22).

Yesterday the Government of Peru extended the formal state of emergency in Cusco and Puno as well as the country's capital of Lima due to the protests, with local curfews imposed in some of the affected areas.

An update overnight from Peru's tourism marketing organisation PromPeru noted all other regions and destinations continue to be unaffected by the protests, and are operating as normal, with no disruption to day-to-day transport or access to tourism activities.

However in Peru's south, Inca Manco Capac International Airport in Juliaca has temporarily suspended operations as a

precautionary measure.

Although flights continue to be disrupted due to airport closures, DFAT's Smartraveller update noted air travel is still the most reliable way to move around the country.

Trains are disrupted or suspended on the Cusco-Juliaca-Puno and Juliaca-Imata-Pilones-Arequipa sectors, while the Machu Picchu train from Ollantaytambo is also suspended until further notice, PromPeru advised.

Smartraveller added that rail links, as well as road and other land transport, may be disrupted without notice.

There are ongoing road blockades in several parts of the country, particularly in the south, including between the cities of Arequipa, Puno and Cusco, the DFAT update advised.

Tourists who have already purchased tickets to the National Archaeological Park of Machu Picchu may use their tickets up to one month after strikes end, or can also request a refund via ingresos@culturacusco.gob.pe.

Peru has also launched an online registration form for affected tourists - [CLICK HERE](#).

CZ, MU to delist from NYSE

CHINA Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines have announced their intention to voluntarily delist from the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on 02 Feb at the earliest.

According to filings with the Hong Kong stock exchange last Fri, the airlines will also deregister their American Depositary Receipts (ADRs) and underlying H shares under the United States Securities Exchange Act.

The two carriers are the latest in a number of state-owned companies withdrawing from US capital markets, with the move said to be due to increased scrutiny by the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Anouvong arrives

BOUTIQUE cruise company, Heritage Line - Refined Waterway Voyages in Southeast Asia, has announced the highly anticipated launch of the "first-ever luxury boutique vessel on the upper Mekong River" in Laos.

Initially intended to debut before the pandemic took hold (**TD** 13 Feb 2020), *Heritage Line Anouvong* will now undertake her maiden voyage on 27 Aug.

She offers three different itineraries, including a nine-night sailing from Vientiane heading upstream to Huay Xai.

The newbuild offers eight staterooms and two suites spread over two decks, as well as an alfresco terrace deck, a cafe-bar & lounge, dining hall, and a spa.

For more details, see today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.



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Australia's leading small ship specialist, Cruise Traveller, is looking to expand its Gold Coast based team.

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Travel Daily

Travelex adds search to app

TRAVELEX has partnered with meta-search provider Kayak to launch an enhanced version of the Travelex Money app.

In addition to having a new look and feel, the revamped app allows Travelex customers to search for flights, stays and rental car hire powered by Kayak, providing a one-stop-shop for them to “plan their trip and manage their funds”.

Customers can also now order a Travelex Money Card prepaid card and have it delivered to their home or available for collection from a Travelex store in Australia.

Other new features include the ability to order foreign currency cash; view Travelex Money Card transactions and purchases made from each currency wallet; and quickly check balances on Travelex Money Cards.

Additionally, app users can load and reload their Travelex

Money Card with 10 currencies in Australia; freeze and unfreeze their card when they are not travelling; and view their PIN and card details if they have forgotten it, or left their card at home and need to use their details online.

A key enhancement also gives access to more than one million internet hotspots globally via Boingo Wi-Fi from Mastercard.

“Our customers are increasingly seeking a more streamlined, digital-first travel experience, and by integrating Kayak’s services into our relaunched Travelex Money app, we can now offer them greater convenience and choice when planning their trip than ever before,” according to Travelex spokesman Dan Gilby.

“We continue to place an ever-growing emphasis on partner collaboration, modernising our operations and digitally transforming.”

Europcar NZ adds Y

THE electric vehicle fleet offered by Europcar in New Zealand has expanded with the addition of the 100% electric Tesla Model Y.

Available for short- or long-term rental from Europcar’s locations in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, the Tesla complements other Europcar electric vehicles in NZ including the Hyundai Kona and the BYD ATTO 3.

TG/PG codeshares

THAI Airways International is expanding its codeshare agreement with Bangkok Airways, with the TG code now offered on additional Bangkok Airways routes including flights from Koh Samui to Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, Krabi and Utapao.

Also new is a codeshare on Bangkok Airways flights from Phuket to Hat Yai and Utapao, with the joint operations going live late last week.

Avalanche death

A BRITISH tourist who was cross-country skiing in the French Alps has died after being caught in an avalanche last weekend.

The incident occurred on the Argentiere Glacier on Mont Blanc, with rescue workers dispatched by helicopter to help the group which included a mountain guide.

Sadly they were unable to revive the woman, with an investigation launched into the accident.

About 20,000 hikers and skiers explore Mont Blanc annually.

Aurora events

AURORA Expeditions will host an upcoming series of trade and consumer events - both virtual and in-person - to showcase its new “Bucket List” expedition offering (**TD** 16 Jan).

A travel agent exclusive session will take place at 3pm AEDT next Tue 24 Jan, with advisors also welcome to bring clients to any of the live events - **CLICK HERE**.

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COSTA PLOTS ELECTRIC DOCKING

CARNIVAL Corporation's Italy-based Costa Cruises brand has announced a collaboration with clean energy provider Enel Group, with the aim of "promoting sustainable maritime mobility using electrification solutions".

The initiative will focus on projects to reduce emissions when ships enter and leave ports and during quayside stops.

A "pilot case" will see a Costa ship refitted with technology aimed at eliminating local emissions when entering, stopping and leaving port.

A battery power supply will be installed on the ship, along with a shore-side power supply and recharging system.

The goal of the project is to transform a Costa cruise ship into a zero-emission ship from its entry into port until its exit,

including the hours it remains stationary on the quayside, which is around half of its operating day.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the companies also outlines the promotion of advocacy activities aimed at simplifying and incentivising energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy production in ports, particularly in city environments.

An example of one such activity is 'cold ironing', which supplies power to ships through the electrification of the shore network during port stops.

The agreement will also see Enel and Costa promote sustainable tourism via initiatives related to sustainable electric mobility, with the aim of reducing noise and atmospheric emissions, including from cruise-related activities such

as shore excursions.

"It is essential to work together with Italian companies such as Enel, which share our vision and have the right skills to help us move forward," Costa Crociere General Manager Mario Zanetti explained.

Zanetti emphasised Costa's goal to introduce a new generation of ships operating with zero net emissions by 2050, in addition to increasing the sustainability of the transport activities that are ancillary to cruises.

The two groups hinted at potentially expanding their collaboration to other countries where they both operate, particularly Spain.

Costa Cruises was the first cruise line in the world, alongside sister company AIDA Cruises, to use liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Banyan upcycle



INSTEAD of a traditional hotel welcome pack, guests staying at Thailand's Banyan Tree Krabi are now given a novel eco-friendly tote bag.

The bags are made by local artisans using upcycled waste washed up on local beaches, allowing guests to "do their bit" to reduce their carbon footprint on southern Thailand's marine environment.

The Souvenirs from the Sea project was created by a local vendor, who visits the shores around Krabi each morning, picking up debris and selecting items that can be cleaned and modified into safe and colourful souvenirs for tourists.

The luxury beachfront resort has run several sustainability projects recently, including an Earth Day beach clean-up with guests as volunteers, and Forest Bathing, a nature-based educational tour for guests including children.

Accor Singapore sustainable water

ACCOR has partnered with SOURCE Global to offer the world's first renewable drinking water at its key properties in Singapore.

The agreement will see the global hospitality group replace single-use plastic bottled water with premium drinking water which is packaged in reusable glass bottles.

The water is made with SOURCE Hydropanels - a solar-powered technology that

harvests the pure, endlessly renewable water vapour in the air and transforms it into premium drinking water, with each Hydropanel offsetting more than 50,000 plastic bottles in a lifetime.

The project brings Accor closer to its global commitment of eliminating single-use plastics in the guest experience, consistent with the UN Global Tourism Plastics Initiative and the Resource Sustainability Bill.

Outrigger seals

OUTRIGGER Fiji and Castaway Island in Fiji have become the first resorts in the South Pacific to be awarded Green Seal certification.

The achievement reflects the properties' long-term commitment to cutting carbon footprints, green purchasing policies, energy and water efficiency and practices that reduce waste, harmful chemicals and pollution.

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.695

THE Aussie dollar rose above 70 US cents yesterday for the first time since Aug 2022, spurred on by a sinking US dollar and optimism about China's reopening economy.

Economists anticipate the AUD will continue on its upward trend, potentially reaching US0.71 this week, while overall, the global economy is showing signs of buoyancy with inflation uncertainty ebbing.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.695
UK	£0.570
NZ	\$1.089
Euro	€0.642
Japan	¥89.37
Thailand	฿23.00
China	¥4.681
South Africa	11.84
Canada	\$0.933
Crude oil	US\$79.86

AI plots big order?

AIR India is believed to be about to expand its fleet with an order for as many as 500 new aircraft, with the chairman of plane financier AirLease Corp telling the Airline Economics Conference in Dublin this week the deal would include a mix of 400 narrow-body and 100 wide-body variants.

However the move has not been confirmed either by the carrier or aircraft manufacturers, with reports citing "industry sources" saying any potential deal is still subject to final negotiations including with prospective engine suppliers.

Thailand Tourism Forum '23



AROUND 800 travel and hospitality professionals convened in Bangkok yesterday for the Thailand Tourism Forum (TTF 2023) to discuss industry recovery - and like other markets around the world, a key topic of conversation was ongoing post-pandemic workforce shortages.

Under the theme 'Innovation in Hospitality', the half-day event included discussions on key issues set to shape the industry in the months and years to come.

Attendees heard an opening address from organiser Bill Barnett from C9 Hotelworks who explained "Why Thailand Must Innovate".

"Thais no longer want to work in hotels, so our mission must be how we can innovate products and bring the best and brightest people back to the industry.

"We have to pay higher wages... now is the time for Thailand's hotels to change," he urged.

Asset World Corporation CEO & President Wallapa Traisorat

also took to the stage to discuss the topic of "Creating a New Hospitality Landscape with Brands", speaking from the perspective of one of the country's largest hotel owners.

Also on the agenda for the day were topics including hotel technology and distribution changes; rethinking Thai design culture; and the challenges of being a hotel owner.

Delegates were also updated on Thai hotel transactions and financing by JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group, and an analysis of the competitiveness of the Thai hotel industry by STR Global.

Pictured: Proudpath Liptapanlop, Proud Real Estate Executive Director; Ho Ren Yung, Banyan Tree Senior Vice President of Brand & Commercial; Wallapa Traisorat, AWC CEO & President; Liz Perkins, Hilton Vice President of Revenue Management & Commercial Services Asia Pacific; and Bill Barnett, C9 Hotelworks Managing Director.

SIA "robust" Dec

SINGAPORE Airlines recorded its highest-ever monthly load factor in Dec 2022, filling 89.7% of its revenue seats across the Scoot and SIA networks.

The carrier said passenger traffic was strong during the month across all regions, including in East Asia where the relaxation of travel restrictions in Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan supported the recovery in air travel.

Group passenger capacity reached 80% of pre-COVID levels, with SIA and Scoot carrying a combined 2.7 million passengers, four times as many as Dec 2021.

The SIA network expanded to cover a total of 111 destinations in 36 countries and territories, 76 served by Singapore Airlines and 57 operated by Scoot.

WSA appoints

FORMER TTF Australia staffer Lindsay Hermes has joined Western Sydney Airport (WSA) as its new Public Affairs Manager.

Hermes left the TTF about 12 months ago to move into the banking sector, but has now returned to travel & tourism with responsibility for engaging with key WSA stakeholders including federal, state and local governments.

QR looks to Penang

QATAR Airways is planning to extend its existing Doha-Phuket flights onwards to Penang in Malaysia, with the additional sector listed on GDS screens.

Reservations are not yet open for the planned A330-300 route, which is scheduled to start as early as 02 Feb operating four times per week.

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