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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news including our weekly **Luxury page** and full pages from:

- **The Travel Junction**
- **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**

## Regent upgrade

FOR a limited time, Regent is offering guests a free two-category suite upgrade plus a 7.5% reduced deposit across every destination from now until 2025 - see **back page** for details.

## Win an LA fam trip

TRAVEL agents who book a Fly & Stay package with The Travel Junction before 17 Feb will go into a draw to win a spot on the Ultimate LA fam trip - see **page 6**.

## Taylor joins AFTA team

THE addition of Richard Taylor as AFTA's new Director of Membership Experience (**TD** breaking news) is part of a "member-first approach" by the association, according to CEO Dean Long.

"Last year we conducted a comprehensive review of what AFTA achieved through COVID and what it needs to be in the future to continue to be the peak body for the Australian travel sector," Long said.

"Central to this review was ensuring the AFTA team had the right individuals that the industry respected and importantly enjoys working with.

"As members will see, we have some fantastic new initiatives to further embrace all our ATAS businesses and their employees...I am really pleased that Richard has accepted this role as we continue to rebuild AFTA into a member-focused organisation," AFTA's CEO added.

Long noted Taylor's tireless support for the industry through the pandemic, most particularly through the Travel Community Hub which has proved a lifeline for many through the crisis.

Taylor's massive contribution was also recognised late last year when he received a **Travel Daily** Editor's Choice award (**TD** 08 Dec 2022) for his ongoing support.

He'll initially work part time with AFTA while also continuing to operate the Travel Community Hub, with Taylor saying he is "passionate about the future of our industry".

"The opportunity to join AFTA and shape the future of our industry body is too good to pass up...I will continue to do what I love which is talking to agents and all the other wonderful people who make up the travel ecosystem as I work with Dean and the team on AFTA's evolution, growth and future success," he added.

## Xiamen Air returns

CHINESE carrier Xiamen Airlines has confirmed the ramp-up of its Australian flights, with a gradual phase-in of additional services from Fuzhou and Xiamen to Sydney and Melbourne.

Xiamen-Sydney services increase from two to four weekly effective from today using Boeing 787-9 aircraft, while Fuzhou-Sydney will double to twice weekly from 04 Feb, and Fuzhou-Melbourne will also increase from one to two weekly from 01 Feb, according to agent GDS screens.

## Air NZ boosts OOL

AIR New Zealand has announced two additional flights weekly on its Auckland to Gold Coast route starting from Mar.

Backed by Queensland's \$200m Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, the services are on top of the carrier's current daily flight schedule between the two cities, providing an extra 27,400 seats and bringing the total to nine services per week.

Queensland Airports Limited CEO Adam Rowe said there was plenty of demand to support the extra flights, with more than 91% of seats booked out on services between Gold Coast and Auckland over the past six months.

"New Zealand is the Gold Coast's number one international visitor market," Rowe added.



## 15-day European river cruise from only \$266 pp/per day

As part of Viking's Explorer Sale, you can save your clients up to \$6,600 per couple on their 15-day Grand European from Amsterdam to Budapest or v.v. and priced from \$3,995pp twin share cruise-only. Viking's most iconic journey winds its way through four countries along the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers, visiting 13 historic cities and enchanting towns between the windmill-dotted waterways of the Netherlands and the stunning landscapes of Hungary. Simply unpack once and let the dedicated crew take care of the rest as they relax on board their award-winning Viking Longships.

View itinerary here.



## The Mediterranean is so hot and so is this offer

Viking's popular 29-day Mediterranean's Iconic Shores itinerary from Barcelona to Istanbul or v.v. is now priced from \$15,595pp, including savings of up to \$3,600 per couple. This voyage includes 23 excursions across 8 countries with overnight stays in Florence, Venice and Athens and more time in port, allowing your clients to experience more in their destination. With just 930 guests, and all veranda staterooms, Viking's award-winning state-of-the-art ocean vessels are intimate yet sophisticated. With no kids, no casinos and everything your client needs included, so they can experience the best of Europe in comfort.

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## ANA boosts SYD - HND

ALL Nippon Airways (ANA) has bolstered its services between Australia and Japan, yesterday announcing it will extend its Sydney daytime flights to daily frequencies from Mar.

The boost is in addition to the Japanese carrier's daily night-time departures, bringing it up to double daily services between Sydney and Tokyo.

ANA is set to increase the Tokyo Haneda - Sydney route from seven to 10 weekly starting 22 Jan, before increasing services to 14 weekly from 26 Mar for the Northern summer 2023 season.

## QF loyalty role

ELAINE Tsang has been promoted to become Manager Airline Loyalty and Partnerships at Qantas, after about six years at the carrier in various market pricing, analysis and demand forecasting roles.

The airline also confirmed it will restart services from between Perth and Tokyo Narita from late Oct for the Northern winter 2023/24 season, with three flights per week - as exclusively foreshadowed earlier this month by *Travel Daily* (TD 03 Jan).

ANA Country Airline Manager Brett Walsh said the start of the Perth sales will be announced imminently.

## Battlefield seats

MAT McLachlan Battlefield Tours has issued a "last call" for the final few spots on upcoming 2023 ANZAC Day trips to the Western Front, Gallipoli, Kokoda and Thailand's Hellfire Pass.

All the departures will be led by expert historians and take in all the major Australian battlefield sites in each region, along with exclusive behind the scenes experiences - call 1300 880 340.

## Singapore positive

SINGAPORE'S tourism sector recovered strongly last year, with authorities now predicting that visitor numbers to the Lion City will double in 2023.

The island nation reached 6.3 million international visitor arrivals last year, exceeding earlier forecasts of between four and six million tourists.

According to the Singapore Tourism Board, numbers are now expected to reach 12-14 million this year, and recover to pre-pandemic levels by 2024.

Australia was the fourth biggest market for Singapore in terms of visitors in 2022, with 565,650 arrivals last year, behind Indonesia, India, and Malaysia.

Tourism receipts reached SGD\$8.96 billion between Jan-Sep, with Australians among the top spenders (SGD\$633 million) behind Indonesia and India.

Visitor spending in Singapore is forecasted to reach between SGD\$18-21 billion this year.

## WIN a Tokyo trip!

TOURISM Tokyo is giving Aussie travel agents the opportunity to win a trip to Tokyo when they complete section three of the Tokyo Tourism Expert training program (TD 23 Dec 2022).

The platform allows agents to expand their knowledge and expertise on Japan's largest city, including area guides for major neighbourhoods, insider tips and itinerary examples, with the new third module focusing on 'Tokyo Attractions'.

The Grand Prize includes return flights for two to Tokyo with All Nippon Airways, and a five-night stay including breakfast at Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo, a five-star property nestled in historic Japanese gardens.

Also up for grabs are three runner-up prizes of handmade cut glass Tokyo crystal glasses worth over \$200 each.

The competition ends 14 Feb - **CLICK HERE** to register and find out more.

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## Window Seat

**VISITORS** to a zoo in Canada are being invited to “name a cockroach” in a very different type of Valentine’s Day celebration.

Toronto Zoo is allowing guests to give names to a virtual infestation of the creatures, as part of a fundraising initiative.

And it’s not just about giving a revolting dirty creature the name of an ex, with zoo spokesperson Kelsey Godel suggesting “you can name a roach after your boss, ex-friend, relative or anyone else that has been bugging you” (get it?).

“We recognise that Valentine’s Day isn’t fun for everyone,” she said, pointing out that while the naming is symbolic, in that there isn’t actually a cockroach exhibit at the zoo, those who give to the cause will receive a digital certificate featuring their name - and that of the newly christened cockroach.

There’s also the option of having an e-card sent to notify recipients of the unique gift.

The zoo also reminded visitors that while cockroaches are not popular around the house, they “play a very integral ecological role in their rainforest homes by helping to decompose forest litter and animal fecal matter”.

## WC hits half-a-mil

**MORE** than half-a-million tickets have been sold for the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023 in Australia & New Zealand.

Fans from more than 120 countries have bought tickets for the upcoming World Cup, with just over 180 days remaining until the opening game in Jul.

The most sought-after match of the tournament so far is the 20 Aug Final at Accor Stadium in Sydney.

This Women’s World Cup is the first-ever to be co-hosted - tickets can be purchased **HERE**.

## VS Iraq flight fine

**VIRGIN** Atlantic has been fined USD\$1 million by the United States’ Department of Transportation (DOT) for using Iraqi airspace.

VS was fined because it was carrying a Delta Air Lines code in the prohibited airspace.

The DOT found a “significant” amount of flights had operated within the airspace between 2020 and 2021 while an FAA ‘notice to air missions’ was in effect.

## Mexico stubs it out

**TOURISTS** in Mexico could now be fined for smoking in public, including at hotels and beaches, with cigarettes effectively now banned in all public places.

The initiative makes Mexico one of the strictest places in the world in terms of tobacco control, with the only legal place to smoke in Mexico now being inside a home.

## Seabourn afloat in Sydney



**THE** first-ever visit to Sydney by Seabourn Cruise Line’s global sales chief, Steve Smotrys, was as good an excuse as any for the company to hire a superyacht.

A delightful afternoon of cruising on Sydney Harbour ensued, with Seabourn inviting some of its key local industry partners to enjoy the serenity while sipping Champagne and enjoying a lavish array of canapes and snacks.

The gathering saw Smotrys wax lyrical about the Seabourn product, particularly the line’s expansion into expedition cruising with the recent debut of the luxury newbuild *Seabourn Venture* and sister ship *Seabourn Pursuit* which will be delivered later this year - more in today’s



issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

**Pictured** above on the *One O One* superyacht - complete with special Seabourn branding - are, from left: Anastasia Kotanidis, Seabourn; David Brandon from Savenio; Megan Catterall of itravel; Seabourn’s Jennifer Compton; Donna Sheather of itravel; and Steve Smotrys.

**Inset** are Sue Todorovski and Emily Kadinski from itravel Carlingford with MTA Travel GM Don Beattie.

## Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

Looking for ready-made social media content? *Travel & Cruise Weekly* have ready made agent toolkits featuring email signatures, images, and social media tiles to inspire your clients.

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### La Collection site

**LA COLLECTION**, the Australian-based representative for luxury hotels and resorts headed by Lea Seguier and Craig Farrell, has unveiled a new website.

Advisors can find the company's portfolio of global luxury properties, along with fact sheets and downloadable images which can be used for marketing purposes, with more to be added to [lacollection.travel](http://lacollection.travel).

The move follows last week's addition of La Collection's first local property, The Old Clare Hotel in Sydney (**TD** 13 Jan).

### JW Marriott Berlin

**MARRIOTT** International has opened its second JW Marriott property in Germany, with the opening of JW Marriott Hotel - formerly the Berlin Hotel Berlin Central District.

The 505-key property is located on almost 520 acres of forested ground, and features a garden where guests can harvest their own herbs, two fitness centres and a wellness spa, eight dining options, and more than 48 event spaces including the city's largest ballroom.

### Aqua appointment

**BOUTIQUE** luxury cruise line Aqua Expeditions is expanding its presence in the Australian and New Zealand markets with the appointment of Benjamin Garcia as its new Sales Representative for the region.

Garcia will be based out of Sydney, where he will be responsible for product training, famil trips, strategic partnerships, and commercial strategies in the region - see **Cruise Weekly** today.

## VIRTUOSO HAILS LUXURY CRUISE RISE

**LUXURY** cruising is set to become even more popular this year among Aussies, with the latest travel trend data from Virtuoso predicting the segment's production in 2023 will overtake pre-COVID 2019 levels by 30%.

The luxury travel network partnered with exELLENce Group for its first-ever Luxury Talks program last month, where they showcased new data revealing the top luxury travel trends for this year (**TD** 21 Dec 2022).

Affluent travellers are "seeking out adventures that push them beyond their comfort zone", favouring activities that require mental and physical exertion.

According to the research from Virtuoso, there is a desire among travellers to use their travels as a way of educating and challenging themselves, for example, by shadowing researchers in



Antarctica or scientists in the Galapagos.

This was made evident by the increased demand for expedition cruising in 2022, which rose by 206% on 2019 levels across Australia and New Zealand.

"Affluent travellers are increasingly seeking access to highly curated and bespoke

experiential opportunities when cruising," Virtuoso General Manager of Australia & New Zealand, Fiona Dalton, said.

Virtuoso also identified an increasing number of high-income travellers prioritising travel no matter the price, as well as a "determination to take multiple big-ticket trips".

### Cape Mentelle buy

**PARAGON** Wine Estates is set to acquire Cape Mentelle Winery, one of the founding five wineries in Western Australia's Margaret River region.

The new owner, which falls under the umbrella of ASX listed retail and hospitality giant Endeavour Group, has signed an agreement with Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy to acquire the winery for an undisclosed sum.

Mentelle is a member of Sustainable Winegrowing Australia and was the first winery in WA to earn the Entwine accreditation for its sustainability program.

Paragon's portfolio consists of several South Australian wineries, as well as Oakridge Wines from Victoria's Yarra Valley, Josef Chromy in Tasmania's Tamar Valley, and Isabel Estate in New Zealand's Marlborough wine region.

### Six Senses Tel Aviv coming in late 2025



**SIX** Senses has announced the addition of Six Senses Tel Aviv (**render pictured**) to its Israel portfolio, with the property slated to open in 2025.

The new accommodation will combine five 110-year-old heritage buildings, which will be joined together to form the base of a modern 42-floor tower at the edge of Rothschild Boulevard.

The tower will house the 10-floor, 140-key Six Senses hotel, as well as a further 21 floors housing 55 residences serviced by Six Senses.

The property will house spa and wellness facilities over two floors including an Holistic Anti-Aging Centre overlooking the heritage garden, and Six Senses Jerusalem Place, a "social and wellness community space".

The property will also feature a sky pool and cocktail lounge with a panoramic view of the Gush Dan area, and a chef's restaurant, cafe and bar.

Ideally located in the heart of the White City, Six Senses Tel Aviv will also act as a gateway to explore landmarks such as Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.





## ACCOMMODATION

**WELCOME** to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



Melia Hotels has announced its first hotel in the Seychelles, with the planned new **Melia Sea Front Mahe Island** to form part of a newly-built resort scheduled to open in 2025. With 120 rooms including 12 suites and a convention centre suitable for up to 300 delegates, the property will also feature 68 serviced apartments. It's located close to key tourist attractions with easy access to Seychelles International Airport and the nation's capital, Victoria.



Elle Hospitality, the brainchild of French fashion magazine *Elle*, recently opened its first hotel. **Maison Elle Paris** takes over the former Hotel Flanelles, located in Paris' 17th arrondissement. The chic property features 25 rooms, a dining room decorated with velvet sofas, a living room with a library, a bar serving craft cocktails, a spa complete with a sauna, steam room and yoga studio, and a boutique selling *Elle*-branded products.



**Levantine Hill Estate** in Victoria's Yarra Valley wine country has unveiled plans for a \$20-million on-site boutique hotel. Slated to open in early 2024, the property will offer 33 rooms set across two levels, featuring natural materials and raw finishes. The guest rooms will feature spa baths and fully-stocked wine fridges, while the property will also boast open-air hallways, a rooftop solar farm, and a bridal suite with its own bar, cellar and dressing room.

## EK boosts Honkers

**EMIRATES** is ramping up its flights to Hong Kong with the addition of a second daily flight from Dubai effective 29 Mar.

The new non-stop EK380/381 complements the existing daily flight from Dubai to Hong Kong via Bangkok.

Emirates has reaffirmed its commitment to Hong Kong's recovery, noting that it had supported the local community by maintaining EK SkyCargo flights throughout the pandemic.

## Paris 2024 opens

**A NEW** global e-commerce platform has launched in connection with next year's Olympic Games in Paris, for the first time ever offering customisable Olympics hospitality packages to the general public.

Operated by On Location, fans across the world can now access official packages combining accommodation and guaranteed tickets at a consistent price, along with other French experiences - see [olympics.onlocationexp.com](http://olympics.onlocationexp.com).

## Banyan Tree steps in to help



**AFTER** a tropical storm devastated a local community centre on Thailand's Koh Samui island in early 2022, Banyan Tree Samui stepped in to provide assistance.

The hotel's General Manager, Australian Remko Kroesen, immediately got in touch with the Wat Santi Wanaram Child Development Centre to fund the cost of reconstruction.

Kroesen as well as several volunteers from the hotel rolled up their sleeves to help out with landscaping and other labour-intensive tasks.

With construction work now complete over a year later, the 103 children and their teachers were able to return to the centre last week.

"As a five-star resort...it would be easy to forget that many of the families on Koh Samui work nearby in coconut plantations or on fishing boats, and are often unable to meet the rising costs of medical care and housing," Kroesen explained.

"That's why we maintain an annual fund to assist those in need, and never forget how lucky we are to share their wonderful island with them."

Other initiatives undertaken by Banyan Tree Samui in recent years include a blood drive campaign, and the ongoing 'Seedlings Mentorship' project aimed at nurturing young Samui students aged 12-18.

**Pictured:** Banyan Tree Samui General Manager Remko Kroesen (**back row, centre**) joins teachers, parents and children for the opening ceremony on 10 Jan.

## Globus search up

**GLOBUS** Family of Brands has reported strong online traffic over recent weeks, with websites for brands including Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways also seeing high demand.

Views in Australia were up 47% for Globus, 44% for Cosmos and 42% for Avalon over the first two weeks of the year (26 Dec-10 Jan) compared to the same period in 2019/20, the company said.

A total of 512 tours are on offer across the three brands for 2023, with Globus attributing the high levels of web traffic to "recognition from the trade and their clients of the value for money escorted coach touring and river cruising offers".

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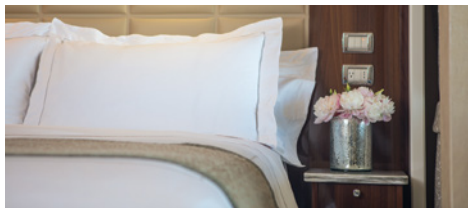


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