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Travel Daily ON LOCATION



VENICE, ITALY

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of *Crystal Cruises*, which will debut its newly refurbished *Crystal Serenity* on a voyage from Venice to Marseille tomorrow.

THE new Crystal Cruises team have taken delivery of the upgraded *Crystal Serenity* from the Fincantieri shipyard in Trieste, Italy, with the ship now sailing towards Venice with A&K Travel Group CEO Cristina Levis already on board.

TD is fortunate to be part of a select group to experience the vessel's very first preview sailing under its new ownership, which follows a complete makeover including expanding the size of suites so the ship now accommodates just 740 pax.

The ship features nine dining options including UMI UMA which is a culinary experience presented by the famed Nobu, while the makeover includes a new Aurora spa offering a host of wellness treatments in partnership with brands such as Elemis and Kerastase.

A highlight for the sporty types on board is a new pickleball court, while there's also a comprehensive array of entertainment and activity offerings - see *TD* this week for all the details.

SYD & MEL vie for TK

TURKISH Airlines has formally declared its intention to expand flights to Australia, ending years of speculation on Fri night that the carrier's livery would one day make its way Down Under.

While many in the industry were expecting a specific announcement regarding routes, the carrier stopped short of declaring a date, instead revealing its aim of commencing services later this year between Istanbul and either Sydney or Melbourne, via Singapore.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* at a gathering in Melbourne at Crown Melbourne, Turkish Airlines Chairman Ahmet Bolat stated the airline was still evaluating both Sydney and Melbourne airports as potential bases, & that a final decision would be made soon.

"We are looking at a number of factors, including passenger demand, market potential, and operational feasibility, and we will make a decision about which airport to base our flights...in the near future," Bolat said.

While Sydney is in the running to score TK's inaugural Aussie flights later this year, the lavish event in Melbourne was replete with many prominent Victorian stakeholders, including Melbourne Airport CEO Lorie Argus, Visit Victoria chief Brendan McClements, and Vic's Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll, suggesting the city may have an

edge over its northern rival.

Bolat also told *TD* that Melbourne "seems to offer more advantages regarding the local Turkish population, the catchment area is big, and not so many airlines are flying there".

TK is aiming to fly three times a week initially, before moving to daily frequencies in the short-term and rolling out to other Australian cities in the mid- to long-term, and will deploy a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on the routes, offering pax 30 Business class seats and 270 in Economy.

Interestingly, Bolat also hinted that direct flights between Australia and Istanbul are also on the cards when longer-range jets become more readily available.

"After a certain period of time, we will get these planes and will start our direct flights," he said, adding that TK is not in favour of being the "launch customer" of new generation aircraft, observing that launch customer airlines often cannot take full advantage of the aircraft due to initial operational problems.

More details on Turkish Airlines' push on the Australian market on [page five](#).

UK start-up appoints

A UK start-up carrier founded by British travel entrepreneur James Asquith (*TD* 31 May) has made its first major appointment, with former London City Airport Director of Corporate Affairs, Liam McKay, joining this week.

He will be charged with leading the development of Global Airlines' communications and corporate affairs team, as well as handling media and government relations & sustainability policies.

The carrier has already acquired the first of four Airbus A380s to operate planned nonstop routes between London Gatwick to New York and Los Angeles.

Flights are scheduled to start at some stage next year.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news, plus a front cover wrap from **CVFR Consolidation Services**.

The CVFR difference

TRAVEL agents are being invited to experience the CVFR Consolidation difference, with 24/7 ticketing support and market-leading online ticket technology - see the [cover page](#) for more details.

P&O marks 90 years

P&O Cruises Australia has celebrated 90 years of sailing from Sydney with a special morning tea ceremony this morning - more details in today's edition of *Cruise Weekly*.



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New era for *Travel Daily*

AFTER much industry speculation in recent months, the publishers of *Travel Daily* can finally today confirm a new ownership structure which has seen a private equity firm take a major stake in parent firm, the Business Publishing Group.

Owners Bruce and Jenny Piper remain significant stakeholders in the business and its multiple titles which also include *Cruise Weekly*, *Pharmacy Daily*, *travelBulletin* and *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

One of the first moves under the new ownership structure is the appointment of highly experienced publishing executive Davy Adams as the group's new General Manager.

Formerly MD of technology media company IDG Communications, Adams has over 20 years of experience in media and marketing, and will lead the existing BPG team of expert journalists and industry marketers.

"We are so happy to have taken this major step, and look forward to seeing Davy and the expanded ownership team work alongside us to continue our vision for the business," the Pipers said.

"We have loved building the Business Publishing Group since acquiring *Travel Daily* almost two decades ago, and believe that taking on new private equity partners will help take the company to the next level."

All existing staff remain in place and the business will continue to operate from its existing world headquarters in the Sydney suburb of Macquarie Park.

Adams, who starts in his new role today, said he was thrilled to be taking on the position, "and is excited to be part of the next chapter of the industry leading enterprise that Jenny and Bruce have built".

He can be contacted via davy.adams@traveldaily.com.au.

QF boarding trial

QANTAS has announced it will begin customer trials of new boarding procedures from next week, with the aim of hastening the time passengers spend lining up at the gate & getting to seats.

In the trials, travellers will board in groups based on where they are seated on the plane, with group numbers included on boarding passes, while premium customers will continue to have a dedicated priority boarding lane.

The airline will also trial new gate infrastructure and signage, following a number of successful trials with staff in recent weeks.

Customers will be contacted in advance if their flight is involved in a trial & will also be invited to participate in a survey following boarding, with the testing to roll out on flights from Brisbane over the next two weeks.

Other major airports and a wider implementation of the enhanced procedures are scheduled to take place from Oct.

Compass goes live

COMPASS Expeditions has launched a new range of small group 4WD tours, including eight fully guided adventures ranging from 13-21 days across Vietnam, Oman, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, South America and Africa.

The first tour, Kyrgyzstan Discovered, is priced from US\$5,900 (A\$8,764) and departs 04 Aug 2024 - to find out more, **CLICK HERE** or email agents@compassexpeditions.com.

Kudos to Helloworld

CORPORATE travel agents working in both Helloworld's HWBT and Magellan Travel divisions will now have access to Kudos Travel Technology's agency-branded platform.

Under the new deal, advisors will now be able to group all traveller profiles, travel requests, booking tools, duty-of-care issues, unused tickets, and more, all on the single technology platform.

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Trial the Tasman: TTF

THE Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) is calling on Australia to upgrade its border processing systems or “risk falling behind the rest of the world”.

The peak industry group’s Chief Executive Officer, Margy Osmond, argues that the trans-Tasman border should be used as a test case to trial “more efficient entry and screening technologies to process incoming passengers”.

She makes the argument for a joint taskforce to be established by the end of Aug, made up of industry experts and government departments from both Australia and New Zealand, ideally preempting a trial or pilot program that would be in place by the end of the year.

Given that New Zealand is currently Australia’s largest source market for international visitors, Osmond believes that if the Tasman trial is successful,

“these reforms could form the basis of similar changes to revolutionise travel from other trusted, high-volume markets,” Osmond said.

Trialling a joint trans-Tasman visitor visa, granting immigration ‘pre-clearance’ at the point-of-departure, and using the latest screening technology to cut down on time spent in queues, while also improving border security, were among the border reforms suggested by TTF.

“Border formalities could be slashed by linking each passenger’s travel documentation to facial recognition technology (FRT),” Osmond posited.

“You could identify trans-Tasman passengers as they pass various points between baggage check-in and boarding their aircraft, without them needing to stop or produce passports, travel documents or even boarding passes,” she explained.

Travel costs hit home

MORE than half (62%) of Australians are reluctant to travel internationally for a holiday due to increased travel costs, while 57% are also hesitant to holiday domestically, a new report from Dentsu suggests.

The study of 4,300 Aussies found half of people are struggling financially, which would ultimately impact how much people can spend on travel.

Amsterdam furphy

PASSENGER Terminal Amsterdam has hit out at media reports which claim cruise ships have been banned from docking in Amsterdam.

“There is no administrative response or proposal yet... and there is certainly not an immediate closure of the terminal,” the port said.

Media reports suggest cruise ships will be booted to make way for sustainable tourist numbers.



Window Seat

TWO visitors to Hamilton Island in Queensland let in more than just a refreshing cool breeze when they recently left the balcony door of their hotel room open.

Ellie-May Hadrian and her friend Aimen returned to find their room trashed, catching the culprits red-handed at the minibar - a crackle of cockatoos, who had left food and bird poo scattered across the floor and bed, as well as the girls’ clothing, leaving them with a big clean-up job and a \$25 minibar bill.

“It was like a tornado had come through our room,” Hadrian lamented in a TikTok video, admitting that it was her and her friend’s fault for leaving the door open, despite warnings from staff.

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Rhodes evacuation

THE Greek island of Rhodes has been battling wildfires since Tue, prompting tourists to be evacuated from affected areas.

Travel group TUI said a small number of its hotels were impacted and that it has relocated customers to alternative accommodation, in addition to cancelling all holiday packages up to & including 25 Jul.

Thomas Cook said it had 300 customers in Rhodes, 40 of which had been evacuated, while airline Jet2 has cancelled all flights to Rhodes up to next Sun.

TD correction

TRAVEL Daily published a story on Fri regarding itravel, in which we reported that Expert Class Travel was previously known as Traralgon Holiday Centre.

However, Traralgon Holiday Centre is a different company and operates as a separate entity to Expert Class Travel.

JQ reform earns results

JETSTAR has managed to jettison its tag of having to cancel the most domestic flights for the first time in several months, with new BITRE figures for Jun showing Virgin Australia was forced to cancel the most flights.

The positive results for Jetstar coincided with the budget carrier recently reforming its on-boarding process (**TD** 17 May), mandating passengers arrive at the airport earlier from 23 May, paving the way for check-in and bag drops to close a full 40 minutes before departures.

Meanwhile VA saw its cancellation rate rise higher than its competitors for the month at 4.1% of all services, behind Jetstar and Qantas (3.7%) and the best of the pack, Rex, which only canned 2.2% of flights.

Speaking with **TD** about the poor performance, VA said control staff shortages, airspace restrictions, and bad weather all

contributed to the lower result, with impacted guests able to access its Rapid Rebook tool, providing the option to review and select alternative flights for up to three days after their original travel date.

VA also pointed to its low mishandled baggage rate, which was only 1.2 bags for every 1,000 passengers travelling in Jun.

The latest on-time performance report also showed that Rex was the most punctual of the major domestic airlines, averaging close to 74% of all flights on time, narrowly ahead of arch rival Qantas (71.05%), followed by subsidiary Jetstar (66.65%) and Virgin Australia, which languished behind across all key metrics with only 66.3% of flights on time.

Services between Cairns and Townsville were found to be the least tardy in Jun, with around 93% of all flights getting away and landing on time.

Kinder hotel stays

A NEW booking platform for stylish & eco-conscious hotels called GoKinda has launched to the market, making it easier for travellers to book accommodation which is "kinder to people and the planet".

Founded by former Flight Centre Travel Group General Manager NSW/ACT, Alison Greer, GoKinda offers a carefully curated collection of hotels which have been selected based on their commitment to style, the environment, and social impact.

The hotel network currently features 455 properties from across the globe, covering a variety of locations and prices.

"We launched GoKinda to help bridge the gap between what the post-pandemic traveller wants and what they actually book," Greer said.

The platform also features a fully certified category, where a third party gives their stamp of approval - access platform **HERE**.

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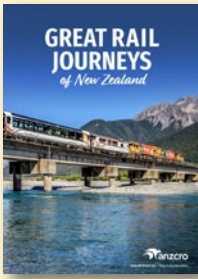
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Abercrombie & Kent's (A&K) new Luxury Small Group Journeys brochure features over 30 spectacular itineraries across six continents, each one packed with VIP access to inspire your luxury clients. Experience A&K's award-winning combination of comfort, utmost safety and service, peerless attention-to-detail, and 24/7 assistance from over 55 DMCs all around the world. Each group runs with an average of just 14 guests and is guaranteed to depart with just two. You will liaise with the same dedicated specialist from your very first enquiry until your clients' return and beyond.



ANZCRO - Great Rail Journeys of New Zealand
The 18-page eBrochure from ANZCRO highlights three iconic train journeys aboard the historic Northern Explorer, the breathtaking Coastal Pacific and the famous TranzAlpine service. Cutting through South Island's Southern Alps and through cliff-lined river gorges, high mountain plains and pristine lakes, ANZCRO offers both self-guided holiday packages and guided rail tours on an inclusive group experience with a local tour director. The seven-day NZ Rail Experience is priced from \$1,899pp from Auckland to Christchurch, which includes six nights of luxury accommodation, the Cook Strait ferry crossing and more.



Oceania Cruises - Europe & North America 2024
To better showcase the cruise line's itineraries in the 2024 season, Oceania Cruises has released the 2024 collection in Europe & North America. The brochure features details on the 'Finest Cuisine at Sea', as well as itineraries and small group travel with no more than 1,210 guests. Flexible schedules are on offer, meaning travellers can select the most suitable itinerary spanning from seven to 180 days, as well as spend 30% to 50% more time in port than other cruise lines. Further benefits include free shore excursions, beverage package, on board credit, and more.

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TK opens up Aussie playbook



WHILE Turkish Airlines mulls which city will host its first foray into Australia (see p1), the carrier's Chairman, Ahmet Bolat (pictured), was keen to talk up the tourism appeal of Turkiye for Aussie travellers on Fri night.

At a very Turkish-themed event in Melbourne, which featured traditional Turkish music and local cuisine, Bolat said Turkiye and Australia shared "a long-standing history of friendship", and although the two countries may be far apart, "our people are very close in heart".

"We have had our eyes on Australia for a really long time, and the fact that our office in Sydney is celebrating its 35th year is a testament to Turkish Airlines' desire to add Australia to our wide flight network," he said.

The airline's Chairman was also bullish to promote Turkiye as a destination as a whole, suggesting it was not just Istanbul that Aussie travellers will flock to once flights are up and running.

"Istanbul is one of the oldest metropolises in the world which holds an extreme amount of history within itself which is

the greatest asset of the city... and geographically it is a bridge between Europe and Asia, which is a very unique aspect," he said.

But Bolat added that wider Turkiye, which will be easily accessible from Istanbul on its large flight network, also boasts 551 blue flag beaches, ancient marvels such as Gobekli Tepe, the city of Ephesus, and the famed Mount Nemrut in the southeast, which is home to large and impressive statues on its summit.

"All of these sites are usually only one-hour flight away from Istanbul with great domestic connection and the quality of Turkish Airlines," Bolat enthused.

Travel Daily was also gifted a special commemorative book outlining the current achievements of Turkish Airlines and how its has grown from a boutique operation to having one of the largest airline networks in the world.

Among the fast facts contained in the glossy publication is the achievement of operating a new flight every 59 seconds around the world, and circling the planet a whopping 71 times a day.