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Travel Daily First with the news

Monday 20th Mar 2023





Qantas/Alliance delayed yet again

ALLIANCE Aviation Service and Qantas have been advised by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission that a review of a planned 80% purchase of Alliance by Qantas (TD 05 May 2022) will be delayed until at least 20 Apr.

It is the latest extension of the review, which was last lengthened in Oct (TD 31 Oct 2022), after the announcement of the buy in May.

VA means business

VIRGIN Australia is offering up to 150,000 bonus Velocity Points (which equates to up to 30 Business class upgrades) for companies who sign up to its Business Flyer program.

The rewards program is free to join and allows business to earn points when they fly with VA -**CLICK HERE** to sign up before 31 Mar - see the front page for more VA Business class.

Virtuoso membership up

EIGHT new agencies in Australia and New Zealand have been added to the ranks of the Virtuoso consortium in recent months, while several existing members have also added new

Revealed yesterday in Fiji during the 2023 Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum (TD breaking news), the additions include Travel Inspirations, Benalla Travel, Lifestyle Travel and Destination HQ from Vic; Sydney agency Bay Travel; and New Zealand's Celestial Travel, along with newest member, a new upmarket operation led by Steve Labroski called Luxe by itravel.

In addition, several members have "taken the opportunity to leverage their Virtuoso membership over the last 12 months to expand their locations," according to regional General Manager Fiona Dalton.

She highlighted Hunter Travel

Group which has now expanded its Virtuoso participation to nine locations, while ATPI's acquisition of The Travel Authority has added two branches to its membership.

Corporate Travel Management has added 1000 Mile Travel Luxe, a branded branch of Allure by CTM which has about 12 qualifying independent consultants, and Gary Reichenberg's Totem Connections, part of newly minted CT Partners member Corporate Travel Connections, has also become part of Virtuoso.

Dalton highlighted the key advantages of Virtuoso membership for agencies, including the ability to earn more by increasing their percentage of high-yielding luxury sales, and dealing with a "higher calibre of clientele...who buy on value rather than price, and who appreciates and is willing to pay for your professional service".

More Virtuoso on pages 5 & 6.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, including a photo page from Virtuoso, plus a front cover wrap from Virgin Australia and a full page from Viking.

Vietnam to extend?

VIETNAM is currently considering extending its e-visas from 30 days to three months in a bid to boost tourism.

The draft amendment stated the prolonged visa would be valid for both single & repeat entry visits.

Viking sale ending

VIKING'S Explorer Sale ends soon, with travellers encouraged to book their 2023, 2024, or 2025 voyage before prices increase.

The Explorer Sale wraps up on 31 Mar, with savings of up to \$9,000 per couple available on a collection of river, ocean, and expedition cruises - see page 8.





Lord Howe open for biz

EXCLUSIVE

SEVERAL operators on Lord Howe Island have moved to dispel media reports that suggest most tourism operations have been impacted by a recent closure of the island's Permanent Park Preserve (PPP) due to the risk of an invasive myrtle rust fungus (**TD** 17 Mar).

Lisa Ralph from Dive Lord Howe told *Travel Daily* that reports suggesting 70% of the island is off-limits to tourists is misleading, stating that much of the area being quarantined was previously

Aussies brace for Brazil disruptions

AUSTRALIANS travelling to South America later this year may have their plans thrown into disarray, after Brazil announced new tourist visa restrictions.

The new requirements mean that visitors from Australia, the United States, Canada and Japan may be turned away if they do not obtain permission to enter the Latin American country before 01 Oct.

The move marks the first time in four years that Brazil has enforced visa restrictions on Australians, reversing the previous government's decision in 2019 to lift visa requirements in a bid to boost tourism (*TD* 20 Mar 2019).

"Brazil does not grant unilateral exemption from visiting visas, without reciprocity, to other countries," Brazil's foreign ministry said.

The ministry revealed it is in negotiations with affected countries about a visa waiver program, on the proviso that one is offered for Brazilians in return.

The ministry is yet to announce what visa type will be offered to Australians after 01 Oct, however, the general rules of Brazil's Visitor Visas for countries that don't currently have a waiver allow maximum stays of up to 90 days for tourism and transit.

inaccessible to visitors anyway.

"I think that we should be promoting the fact that what the Lord Howe Island Board is doing is required to ensure that the island remains a pristine and healthy environment, and closing the walks in the PPP for the short-term is ensuring the long-term health of the island," Ralph said.

"Aside from walking there are plenty of other activities on offer, including the services that we provide like SCUBA diving, snorkelling, kayaking and paddle boarding in the beautiful waters surrounding the island."

The sentiments were echoed by Sea Lord Howe Director Brad Wilson, who said the closure would not have an impact on his business, and that the PPP closure was an "important step in ensuring we maintain the fragile ecosystem."

However, no operator we spoke with was able to confirm how long the PPP would be closed for, an area which contains some walking tracks and accounts for a portion of tourism spend.

One business feeling the pinch is Lord Howe Environmental Tours, which operates walking tours through some of the PPP, now off-limits to tourists.

"The closure has affected our business, we had four walking groups booked in that have cancelled, as well as having to cancel our Mt Gower treks that were fully booked," the company's Director Ros Hiscox explained.

"We have been providing refunds for the cancelled tours."

Hiscox was adamant the Lord Howe Island Board's move to close the reserve was "not the right decision".

"The park should have been left open with a spray treatment protocol in place," he said, adding he had "no idea" how long the closure will be in place for, and in his understanding, the decision will be re-assessed weekly.

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Collette on sale

COLLETTE is offering 10% off US and Canadian tours for this week only, with Head of Sales David Farrar noting that there are now more than 50 tours in the program "with loads of guaranteed dates in 2023 available".

The offering includes a choice of Via Rail or Rocky Mountaineer trains in the Rockies.

"Our great Sydney call centre has low wait times and of course all bookings are backed by our industry-leading cancellation waiver - now add a 10% saving and there has never been a better time to book Collette to North America," Farrar added.

See gocollette.com.

AW Virtuoso offset

ADVENTURE World is fully offsetting carbon emissions from this week's Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum in Fiji, as part of its commitment to global change through action.

MD Neil Rodgers told *TD* the initiative involves a partnership with GreenWave, a nature-based solution organisation, which works on carbon removal through kelp production, which as well as having the potential of removing and storing CO2 also has a second life as a fertiliser for farmers.

The offset sponsorship from Adventure World will take into account emissions from the event's accommodation, transfers, activities and meals.



Senior Coordinator, Regional Conferencing

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About Destination NSW

Destination NSW is the lead agency, champion, and voice for the visitor economy within the NSW Government. Spearheading a whole-of government approach to visitor economy growth, Destination NSW is responsible for leading the delivery of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 in partnership with government and industry.

About The Role

The Senior Coordinator, Regional Conferencing is responsible for developing and executing a business development plan to drive the growth of business events in Regional NSW. The Senior Coordinator will develop and manage relationships with conference and event organisers to ensure that they choose regional NSW for their next business event.

In this role you will also work with venues and destinations across Regional NSW to support industry growth and develop destination capability.

How to Apply

To apply and view the full job description for each position please go to the iworkfornsw website

page 2

Should you require any additional information please contact: recruitment@dnsw.com.au

Closing date: March 2023

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Intrepid visits Timor

INTREPID has launched a new itinerary marking its first foray into Southeast Asia destination, Timor-Leste.

The nine-day Timor-Leste Expedition allows guests to experience the local Timorese way of life, and includes a sunrise hike of Mt Ramelau and snorkelling at Atauro Island.

The all-inclusive trip starts from \$3,495, with the first departure taking place 15 Oct - CLICK HERE.

\$50 + commission

TRAVEL advisors will receive a \$50 gift card in addition to commissions when bookings are made with Holidays of Australia & the World during its latest travel agent incentive.

Each booking until the end of the month on a selection of Cruise & Stay or Cruise & Rail packages will earn a gift card, in addition to sales commission.

Call 1300 854 897 for details.

WWT returns China trips

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) has unveiled its new 2023/24 China itineraries, as the Asia group touring specialist prepares to resume tours to China on the back of the country's recent reopening (*TD* 16 Mar).

To celebrate the revival of travel to China, WWT is offering savings of up to \$1,400 per couple on 2023 and 2024 China group tours, while solo travellers can save up to \$700pp on exclusive dedicated solo departures for bookings made before 30 Apr.

Included in the promotion is the 16-day Wonders of China, which takes guests on a journey through some of China's most iconic destinations, including the Great Wall of Beijing, Xian's Terracotta Warriors, picturesque Guilin and a scenic cruise along the mighty Yangtze River.

The itinerary, which is fully inclusive of return airfares, taxes, visas, accommodation,

meals, transport and sightseeing with expert guides, starts from \$5,980pp twin share, including savings of up to \$700pp.

Other offerings include the 22day Magnificent China and 28-day Silk Road Explorer tours.

WWT has also released a new interactive digital brochure detailing the itineraries - see the full brochure details on page 7.

For more info, call 1300 727 998 or visit wendywutours.com.au.

Silversea in Japan

SILVERSEA Cruises has returned to Japan after nearly three years, with the recent arrival of *Silver Muse* in Kagoshima during a 14-day sailing.

The round-trip voyage from Osaka takes place during cherry blossom season, and includes calls to Hokkaido, Tokyo & more.

The ship will also operate Japan autumn sailings from Sep to Oct.



A HYPERLOOP, or highspeed transportation system, may become a reality for Australians within the next two decades.

Representatives from Down Under have reportedly expressed interest in the TransPod system, a concept from Canada which describes itself as "the world's leading ultra-high-speed ground transportation system".

The Council of Mayors of South East Qld believe TransPod could make all urban trips within the region possible within 30 minutes and all cityto-city trips possible within 45 minutes.

"If the Canadian one goes well, then I think this is the future," one of the delegation's members noted.

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A platinum celebration at Disney



DISNEYLAND turned on all the magic at the Disney100 Mega Famil Platinum Party, held at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel.

Agents were decked out with a touch of platinum to celebrate both Disney100 and the end of a memorable famil trip.

Special guests across the evening included Mickey & Minnie Mouse and Donald & Daisy Duck, providing all those on the trip with plenty of photos to remind them of the stellar trip.

During the busy last day, agents were also able to experience the latest addition to Disneyland Park: Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway.

The highly entertaining visit to the animated world of Disney's favourite couple saw agents riding in trackless vehicles with

Farewell Odyssey

SEABOURN has sold *Seabourn Odyssey* to Mitsui O.S.K Lines, with the Japanese transport company set to take delivery of the ship in Sep 2024.

The 14-year-old vessel, which can accommodate up to 450 guests, will continue to operate all published Seabourn voyages through to 22 Aug 2024 under a charter arrangement.

The cruise line now looks ahead to welcome its newest addition, *Seabourn Pursuit*, which will embark on its inaugural sailing next month (*TD* 28 Sep 2021).

projection mapping techniques providing 360° immersion - this is definitely one not to miss.

Agents took on Spider-Bots in Web Slingers - A Spider-Man Adventure, located in Avengers Campus; it is one of the recent additions to Disney's California Adventure, where visitors can fling webs through flicks of their wrists to take down the bots and save the day!



The day wrapped up with a late-night visit to Indiana Jones Adventure, a Disney classic which only re-opened that day, now back with additional effects.

Pictured top: Agents awaiting boarding Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway, while **inset** agents frolic with some of Disney's favourite characters.



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Tourism goes for gold

THE tourism industry came together at Sydney's Doltone House in Pyrmont last Fri for the 2022 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, the nation's biggest annual celebration of tourism business excellence.

Supported by major sponsor, Qantas, as well as Tourism Australia and Destination NSW, the event saw 75 awards presented across 25 categories, with a Gold, Silver and Bronze winner for each category.

Adelaide Zoo in South
Australia took home Gold for
the prestigious Major Tourist
Attraction category, while the
Wukalina Walk in Tasmania took
home the highest accolade for the
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island
Tourism Experience category.

Other winners included Live Ningaloo in WA, which was recognised in the Ecotourism category with a Gold award; Geelong Gallery in Victoria, which took out the Cultural Tourism Award; and The Darwin Festival, which won in the Major Festivals & Events category.

ETA's ETA now 2024

THE UK Government has announced its Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) (TD 23 Jan) will be a requirement worldwide by the end of next year for visitors who do not currently need a visa for their short stay, including Australian travellers.

Although the cost of the ETA has not yet been released, the UK said it will be in line with similar international schemes run by other countries.

Individuals can make multiple visits to the UK over the ETA's two-year validity period.

More information on the scheme can be found on the official govt website **HERE**.

MEANWHILE, VisitBritain has released a "one-stop shop" guide on the Coronation of King Charles III - **CLICK HERE** to access.

In the accommodation sector, Canberra's Jamala Wildlife Lodge scored Gold in the Unique Accommodation category, while Mt Hay Retreat in NSW took out the crown for 5 Star Luxury Accommodation.

"Each of our award nominees have reached the status of absolute excellence in tourism and business to be here tonight - a night of reflection, triumph and solidarity for the industry," Australian Tourism Awards Chairperson Shaun de Bruyn said.

"As an industry we are susceptible to many external factors, which has been highlighted over the past several years, but we continue to innovate, collaborate and come back strong.

"Many of our tourism operators are going from strength to strength, bouncing back after the worst of the pandemic," he concluded.

Qantas interference

QANTAS has confirmed that some of its aircraft have experienced radio interference, allegedly coming from Chinese warships in Asia Pacific.

The carrier was quick to state the jamming of communications had not caused any safety issues, but pilots should report any incidents to air traffic control.

Win a Vietnam trip

WIN a trip of a lifetime to Vietnam, thanks to World Nomads and Intrepid.

The two brands have partnered to give away three trips, celebrating World Nomads' 20th anniversary, with the prizes including accommodation, guided tours, flight funding, spending money, and much more.

To win, people must describe in 20 words their best travel memory over the last 20 years.

The competition runs until 15 Apr - **CLICK HERE** for details.

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Staff solution from Virtuoso

VIRTUOSO has announced a new "advisor recruitment program" for its members (*TD* breaking news), aiming to help solve the industry's current well-documented staffing shortages.

Fiona Dalton, Virtuoso GM Australia and New Zealand, unveiled the new platform yesterday in Fiji during the 2023 Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum - the first overseas gathering for the group since 2019.

The initiative utilises a new proprietary tool which will provide members with a "pool of advisors looking to sell travel, who understand the value of Virtuoso, and are committed to making their career successful through professional development and engagement with Virtuoso," Dalton said.

Interested candidates will be able to find out more via a link at the bottom of the home page on virtuoso.com, from which they link through to a short 30-minute course to "make sure that Virtuoso is the right network for them".

They then complete a survey advising of their career preferences, after which a filtering algorithm either confirms

Kamalaya targets Oz

LAST year's addition of Thailand wellness retreat Kamalaya Koh Samui to the Virtuoso Regional Partner program is already showing benefits for the property, according to Director of Client Engagement, Hitomi Minakawa.

Speaking to *TD* during the Virtuoso Forum in Fiji this week, Minakawa said previously the 76-room luxury property had mainly distributed its offering via specialist wellness agents, with the Virtuoso membership recognising that many existing travel agency clients are also seeking a wellness-style holiday.

Founded 17 years ago, Kamalaya offers a comprehensive range of therapies, with a whopping 65 treatment rooms - kamalaya.com.

the application for the next step - which is to match a prospective advisor with an agency seeking to boost its advisor ranks.

The platform also evaluates whether applicants are also interested in considering a position as a travel advisor's assistant.

Leads are passed to interested agencies simultaneously, after which they have a set period of time in which to act, aiming to prioritise response times for candidates.

"Following a very successful beta test around the world with our member advisory boards, we know this technology works.

"To amplify the opportunity in this region, we need to market the tool on behalf of our members," Dalton said.

"So we're inviting interested members in Virtuoso to join the first six month launch phase for Australia and New Zealand," she added, with expressions of interest to be sought shortly in a small regional marketing plan.

"With advice from your regional member advisory board, we've determined that the key targets for this program in our region are experienced advisors wishing to join a Virtuoso agency, and advisors returning to the industry, whether salaried or as independent consultants.

"In time, we'll turn our attention to those new to the industry as well," Dalton said, adding "we're excited to help you solve this problem".

Virtuoso training

THE recent appointment of Michelle Duncan to the newly created role of Virtuoso's Regional Professional Development and Trainining Specialist will see the launch of a new Virtuoso Certified Travel Advisor (VCTA) Course, to be conducted online 11-14 Jul and in-person at The Langham Gold Coast from 17-20 Oct.

Appetite strong despite risks



ECONOMIC and geopolitical conditions around the globe are creating ongoing "surprises" for the premium travel market, but clients are continuing to prioritise travel despite the risks, according to Virtuoso Chief Operating Officer, Brad Bourland.

He appeared on a panel discussion in Fiji yesterday as part of the 2023 Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum, alongside other senior Virtuoso executives pictured including Senior Vice President of Sales & Partnership, Cory Hagopian; Jennifer Campbell, Senior VP Network Products & Events; General Manager Australia/NZ Fiona Dalton; and Senior Vice President Global Operations, Michael Londregan.

Bourland noted that while issues such as the Silicon Valley Bank collapse seen in the USA last week could have an impact, "on the flip side of that, there's also the fact that some of the disruptions can also create a lot

of opportunity".

With 40% of VIrtuoso advisors now located outside of the USA, "we're seeing wealth creation in new parts of the world," Bourland said, while at the same time as geopolitical issues happening around Russia and China "we're also seeing the Middle East open up...and these are magical places with amazing people".

"So I think there's going to continue to be challenges both economically and geopolitically, but with that ebb and flow are a lot of great opportunities," Bourland said.

Hagopian also commented on the issue of travel agency capacity in the current environment, saying "members around the world need to think about new ways to recruit people".

Destination capacity is also key, with "revenge travel" leading to strong demand, meaning agents should encourage clients to travel in shoulder seasons for better travel experiences.



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Monday 20th Mar 2023

LAST night attendees at the 2023 Virtuoso Owner Managers Forum took their shoes off to enjoy a beachside cocktail party (pictured) courtesy of the Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa.

The hotel's GM Vincent Macquet welcomed delegates and thanked Virtuoso for its support, noting that employment at the property now supports 550 families, while the wider Accor group in Fiji is approaching 900 staff.

During the pandemic many of the team pivoted to become builders as part of a major refurbishment, with the evening topped off with stunning performances from local dancers, fire twirlers and even a spectacular Virtuoso-themed fireworks display.





MIKE Dwyer, Main Beach Travel; Neil Rodgers, Adventure World; and Bicton



BECKY Kent-Perchalla, Perchalla & Turner Travel Associates; Nicole Costantin, Explora Journeys; Travel Associates GM Rachel Kingswell; and Karen Majsay, Low & James Travel Associates Neutral Bay.



SMOKE on the water...Sofitel's team sets fire to a floating appreciation for Virtuoso.



HUNTER Travel Group's wild and wacky Shaun Houston.



BIRGIT Weingartner, Switzerland Tourism with Nik Young, Anywhere Travel.



MTA Travel's Neil Robertson, Karen Merricks & Roy Merricks with Shangri-La Sydney's Robert Miletic.



DAVID Farrar from
Collette with 50
Degrees North's Jayde
Kincaid and Julie
Golding of Ponant.



TINA Killeen from Spencer Travel with Paul and Di Lechner, Addicted to Maldives.





BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, Travel Daily's Monday feature. brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



Silversea Cruises - 2024 Worldwide Brochure Silversea Cruises is excited to announce its 2024 Worldwide Brochure, featuring 434 itineraries to over 900 destinations around the globe for travellers to choose from. It depicts the world's most fascinating voyages to all seven continents, extending to all four corners of the world. Designed to showcase the most distinctive collection of destinations through its itineraries, the cruise line's ships will visit some of the most remote locations,

including The Grand Arctic trip which sails from Longyearbyen to Vancouver on an 82-day voyage.



Wendy Wu Tours - 2023/2024 China Wendy Wu Tours has released its brochure along with offers on specific itineraries on China juxtaposed with the reopening of the country's borders. The brochure features group tours, short stays and private tours dedicated to returning travellers or those who are looking to explore areas that are off the typical tourist trajectories. The collage of tours spans from introductory tours visiting well-known landmarks and renowned cities

in May with savings up to \$700pp available across multiple tours.

Tourism in the weeds

A MASS amount of seaweed twice the width of the US is expected to blanket popular tourist beaches in Florida and Mexico from Jul.

Scientists refer to the phenomenon as 'sargassum' - an accumulated type of algae that floats on the ocean.

Removing sargassum is a timely process and can be hazardous to humans and marine life.

Sargassum could also impact tourism in the Caribbean region, as the beaches will be covered in up to 121cm deep of algae.

VA adds Sabre tools

VIRGIN Australia has successfully implemented Sabre's Revenue Optimizer and Dynamic Availability tools.

The implementations will help optimise the carrier's demand forecasting and inventory management, in addition to VA being part of Sabre's global distribution network.

The tools will also help VA quickly detect and respond to evolving market conditions with real-time data insights, which will enable it to intuitively analyse evolving market conditions.



Aircalin and agents give back



AIRCALIN teamed up with a group of travel agents to donate supplies to charity organisation Little Sisters Of The Poor in Noumea last Sat.

The trip marked the first delivery of the necessities, which were generously donated by Aircalin's trade partners, with the second delivery set to occur next month via ship.

"Our famil group were nothing short of outstanding in their genuine interest and support of

Korean Wave tours

INSIDEASIA Tours has launched a series of cultural adventures inspired by the Korean Wave, celebrating the increased global popularity of K-pop, K-drama and traditional Korean culture.

One of the three new offerings includes a 12-night Korean Wave package, which includes a K-pop dance class, a stay in Hanok Village, which has been featured in many K-dramas, and a visit to Seoul's abandoned Yongma Land theme park, where many K-pop videos have been filmed.

Prices start from \$6,026pp, including all accommodation, breakfast daily, transport across South Korea, and experiences.

the sisters," a representative for Aircalin said.

Little Sisters Of The Poor was founded in 1839 by Saint Jeanne Jugan to help support the elderly poor in over 30 countries.

Pictured: Kirsty Mckenzie, TravelManagers; Maria Summers, Travel Partners; Deborah Bartolo, MTA; Diane Burney, TravelManagers; Captain Craig, Aircalin; Alfina Maugeri, Flight Centre; Justine Frost, MTA; Erin Skyora, Travel Associates; Lyn Tyson, TravelManagers; and Deb Long, Weston Cruise & Travel.

Angkor Wat plan

CAMBODIA is currently relocating residents living near Angkor Wat in a bid to improve visitor experiences at the site and preserve its UNESCO World Heritage Site status, many of whom have been in the area for generations.

The Cambodian Government is reportedly in the process of relocating nearly 10,000 people living at the tourism site, claiming to be handing out plots of land located in other areas of the country to those who accept.

People who refuse are likely to be relocated regardless.



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EXPLORER SALE ENDS SOON

BOOK YOUR CLIENTS' 2023, 2024 OR 2025 VOYAGE BEFORE PRICES INCREASE

The Viking Explorer Sale ends on 31 March, which means you only have a few weeks left to book your clients on a 2023, 2024 or 2025 voyage at these exceptional prices. Once this sale ends, our prices will increase so don't miss out on saving your clients up to \$9,000 per couple on a collection of river, ocean and expedition voyages.

Plus, our Flexible Booking Deposit allows your clients to take advantage of our special offers to book their future voyages with the freedom to change their plans. With only a \$1,000 per person* deposit required to secure their booking, if your client wishes to change their travel plans, we will refund their deposit in the form of a future cruise voucher.

DON'T DELAY, SALE ENDS 31 MARCH 2023 AND WILL NOT BE EXTENDED.



For more information contact your Commercial Manager or email agents.anz@vikingcruises.com

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