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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news plus a cover wrap from **Norwegian Cruise Lines** and a photo page for **Travel Associates' Luxury Travel Event**.

Learn with NCL

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) is giving agents the chance to win a cabin on board a 2024 Asia sailing when they complete two 'Learn' and 'Promote' assignments by 21 May, as part of the cruise line's Semester 1 'Destination Asia' class.

While brushing up on their NCL Asia product knowledge, agents can also earn up to 500 Partners First Rewards points and get their name on the NCL Honour Roll - see the **front page** for details.

TA: We will recover by 2025

"THE underlying demand for Australia is still there," shared Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison as she opened the Australian Tourism Exchange 2023 (ATE23) today.

Taking place at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, ATE23 features 2,300 delegates including 623 buyers from a total of 32 countries.

"We knew we'd have a job to rebuild this country," said Harrison, explaining that recovery of Australia's inbound tourism is well underway.

"We're looking to recover to pre-pandemic levels by early 2025, and beyond that we are looking at good steady growth."

"The good news is that in Jan and Feb of this year, holidaymakers outpaced visiting friends and relatives.

"We are seeing those crucial leisure and business holidaymakers starting to come back to Australia in their droves."

Additionally, research shows that visitors to Australia are opening their wallets.

"High yielding travellers are

planning on spending 20% to 25% more than they were pre-pandemic, and we are seeing that play out," explained Harrison.

"We are number 42 in terms of visitation around the world... but when you look at tourism in terms of receipts, we jump to number seven around the world."

MEANWHILE, Tourism Australia is confident in the return of the Chinese market, with 133 buyers from greater China in attendance at ATE23.

"It really is just a matter of time," shared Harrison.

"Oxford Economics thinks that we will get back to normality in 2024, but they're predicting a boom year in 2025."

"They're looking at a 27% growth in 2023, so we are anticipating that", she explained.

Reduced aviation capacity is impacting the return of the Chinese market, with air capacity approximately 30% at the moment, but looking to build to 80% by the end of the year.

"The Chinese market is only early days, they've only been open for a couple of months, and so we need the aviation capacity to build, but we see a lot of real positives from the China market," Harrison concluded.

Issenberg to TFE

TOURISM Australia Chairman and former senior Accor executive, Michael Issenberg, has joined the Board of TFE Hotels.

The company's Chairman, Allan Vidor, said Issenberg is an outstanding hotelier, and would complement TFE's strong line-up of existing directors and executives as the Australian hotel group gears up for its next phase of global expansion.

Vidor noted that during Issenberg's 26-year tenure as Accor Asia Pacific Chairman and CEO, he grew the network from 200 hotels to 1,250, while TFE's recent growth has included new Vibe and Adina properties in Australia and Switzerland along with a robust pipeline of hotels in Australia, NZ and Europe.

Air NZ daily China

AIR New Zealand will start flying daily from Auckland to Shanghai from 03 May.

The airline's alliance partner Air China will arrive tomorrow in Auckland for the first time in three years, with the route from Beijing scheduled for four times a week.

Air New Zealand Chief Customer & Sales Officer Leanne Geraghty said the resumption of the Beijing-Auckland route and daily flights to Shanghai are major milestones for the airline and for New Zealand's tourism industry as capacity to and from China ramps back up.

Travel Daily on location in the Gold Coast, Qld

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of **Tourism Australia and Tourism & Events Queensland, who are this week hosting the Australian Tourism Exchange 2023 (ATE23)**.

OVER 2,000 delegates from more than 30 countries have gathered in the Gold Coast this week to attend the 43rd ATE, the first time the event has returned to its traditional four-day format since the pandemic.

The event kicked off this morning with an address from Tourism Australia Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison.

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Window Seat

YOU can “catch them all” on board the new ANA specially painted aircraft *Pikachu Jet NH* as the inaugural flight lifts off on 04 Jun from Tokyo.

Passengers on board will see the aircraft’s new livery (pictured) embedded with Pokemon creatures, new cabin attendant aprons featuring a Pikachu theme, and limited-edition designs on in-flight paper cups, napkins and headrest covers.

Passengers will also have the chance to “catch” various commemorative gifts!



Turkish delight for Australia

TURKISH Airlines Chair Ahmet Bolat has said Australia is on the carrier’s radar, with as many as three flights per week targeted before the end of the year.

Bolat met with the Governor of Victoria Linda Dessau in Turkey last week for a round of meetings to sort out a service to Australia as part of the airline’s network expansion.

He said Australia has been on Turkish’s radar “for some time”, and openly pondered on LinkedIn whether Melbourne or Sydney should be the first city in the country the airline flies to.

“If the delivery of our new generation [of] widebody aircraft is done as promised by the manufacturers, we aim to start with three flights per week from Istanbul to Sydney or Melbourne before the end of 2023,” he said.

“Our main goal is to fly directly and every day to both Sydney and Melbourne, with the production

of a new-generation of ultra-long-range aircraft.

“We carried 120,837 passengers in 2019 and 118,847 in 2022 with airlines with which we have codeshare agreements from Australia, where we do not yet have direct flights, but we think it’s time to show the Turkish Airlines logo in Australia as well.”

TK has widebody orders for 14 Airbus A350-900s and nine Boeing 787-9s to go with the 16 787-9 Dreamliners and 12 A350s it already operates.

Turkish flying to Australia was mooted as a possibility almost yearly prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with one of TK’s prior Chairs, Ilker Ayci, flagging the launch of non-stop flights from Istanbul to Sydney as recently as 2019 (**TD** 19 Sep 2018) and 2018 (**TD** 18 Sep 2017).

The nonstop flying time from Istanbul to SYD and MEL is approximately 17 hours.

AAT links with WA

AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys have partnered with Tourism WA to offer discounts.

Travellers can save up to 20% on select Western Australia and Kimberley guided tours for sale between 26 Apr 2023 and 21 Jun 2023, for departures from 27 Mar 2023 and 31 Mar 2024.

Itineraries include the 21-day Untamed Kimberley & West Coast tour, the 21-day Wonders of the West Coast and Kimberley program, and the 11-day Wonders of the Kimberley.

Meanwhile, agents have the chance to win either an 11-day Wonders of the Kimberley or an 11-day Untamed Kimberley tour (land only).

Every guided holiday booking made during the campaign period will give agents one entry in the draw.

The more bookings they make, the more chances to win.

Agents can also get 50% off for a travelling companion.

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New ADL-KUL non-stop

BATIK Air Malaysia (formerly Malindo Air) has announced direct flights between Adelaide and Kuala Lumpur, with the new service to kick off in Jul.

Initially scheduled for three weekly services, Batik Air will also offer onward connections over KUL for travellers wanting to continue to its network of destinations across South East Asia, China, Japan and India.

The carrier previously operated a one-stop ADL service to Kuala Lumpur via Bali, with Datuk Chandran Rama Muthy, Group Strategy Director for parent company Lion Air Group, saying the new direct flight comes in response to strong demand.

SA Tourism Minister, Zoe Bettison, hailed the new route, saying "it is just wonderful for our state to have connectivity to Southeast Asia as international travel continues to recover post-pandemic".

"This creates another opportunity for South Australia to enter a competitive market with direct access for travellers to visit and explore our beautiful state... this is exactly what our tourism economy needs as we continue to recover from the pandemic and focus on bringing international visitors back," she said.

Adelaide Airport MD Brenton Cox said Malaysia is a strong long-term market for travel to and from ADL.

"It's fantastic news to welcome another airline flying between our two great cities."

Japan scraps tests

ALL COVID-19 entry requirements for visitors to Japan were lifted on 29 Apr, meaning arrivals no longer need to present a vaccination certificate or a negative pre-departure test when entering the country.

A spirited trail

VISITORS to Northern Ireland can embark on the new Spirits Trail, which encompasses 10 distilleries and spirit-led experiences, with travellers able to collect a stamp at each stop to add to their 'Distillery Trail Passport'.

Launched ahead of World Whiskey Day on 20 May, the trail offers the opportunity to see the region's most beautiful landscapes, while tasting award-winning whiskey, gin and vodka at iconic, historical distilleries, such as Rademon Estate.

CLICK HERE for more info.

Aurora events

AURORA Expeditions will showcase its 2024/2025 Antarctica program across Australia over the next two months.

The cruise line is hosting a series of consumer in-person events in six cities - for more information, read today's **Cruise Weekly**.

Jetstar Asia returns to Haikou, China

JETSTAR Aisa took off to Haikou in China from Singapore's Changi Airport on Sat for the first time after a three-year hiatus, bringing back its four weekly service.

With 152 pax on board, the Airbus A320 was among the first services to land in the city after the visitor entry PCR test requirements were eased last week (**TD** 26 Apr).

CEO Barathan Pasupathi said the airline's return to China was a significant milestone as the airline continues to rebuild its network.

"Haikou was the first Chinese city Jetstar Asia flew to in 2009 and today, Hainan Island is one of the few Chinese destinations where most visitors can stay for up to 30 days without a visa and so we're seeing strong demand for this service," he said.

The service is expected to carry up to 70,000 travellers each year between the two cities.

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7 nights
30 March 2024
Aboard *Le Jacques-Cartier*

KYUSHU'S SECRET ISLANDS & ANCESTRAL HERITAGE
Kagoshima to Fukuoka
7 nights
20 April 2024
Aboard *Le Jacques-Cartier*

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TTC takes the cake!



IT'S just over a year since The Travel Corporation reorganised its touring operations under the TTC Tour Brands banner (TD 04 Mar 2022), combining Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold, Cost saver and Contiki.

TTC Tour Brands now serves as a single platform for sales, marketing and operations for the individual brands which have at the same time elevated their identities and points of differentiation, according to the division's MD, Toni Ambler.

"Twelve months on, TTC Tour Brands has gone from strength to strength and we have found our new operating rhythm as a touring collective," she said.

"We have achieved what we set out to do under our new structure, offering tours for everyone and anyone, being easy to sell and easy to work with.

"Despite the success of the last 12 months, this is only just the

beginning, and I am excited to see what our amazing team will deliver over the next year."

A commemorative gathering (pictured) also saw the team undertake a beach clean-up in Sydney's Rose Bay, as part of TTC's passionate efforts to make travel matter under its How We Tread Right sustainability strategy.

O what an opening

MYKONOS' new five-star O by Myconian Collection property has opened its doors early this season in response to strong demand.

Located in the Ornos Bay area about 3.6km south of Mykonos Town, it's the collection's first beachfront property and features upmarket accommodation, dining & a comprehensive spa offering.

Guests also enjoy reciprocal rights at the group's 10 other luxury properties across the island - see omyconian.gr.

OZ Sydney boost

ASIANA Airlines has revealed plans for a seasonal increase to flights on the Seoul-Sydney route, including the deployment of its flagship Airbus A380 service on four of its seven weekly flights.

Effective 08 Aug overall service will increase to nine frequencies per week, with the schedule increase currently loaded on GDS screens until 28 Oct.

Hyatt acquisition

HYATT Hotels Corporation has announced an agreement for the takeover of London-based Mr & Mrs Smith which offers a collection of more than 1,500 boutique and luxury properties.

Hyatt will pay £53 million in cash for the business, which Chief Commercial Officer Mark Vondrasek said would bring World of Hyatt guests "even more global luxury offerings across hundreds of geographies".

The deal includes more than 20 countries where Hyatt does not currently have a presence such as Fiji, Croatia and Iceland.

"Founders Tamara and James Lohan alongside their impressive team have built the ultimate global direct booking collection of truly unique stay experiences including rooms located in treehouses, within caves and underwater suites," he said.

Mr & Mrs Smith also has over one million loyalty members, with Hyatt planning to offer direct booking access to the portfolio via its own distribution channels.

Autism destination

THE Californian city of Visalia in the San Joaquin Valley has been named America's first Certified Autism Destination.

More than 40% of hotels have been certified by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, which aims to ensure autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors have a positive experience.

More than 80% of staff are trained and certified, while many trails in the nearby Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are tailored to disabled and neurodivergent visitors.

Bamboo to Ca Mau

BAMBOO Airways has launched a new route between Hanoi and Ca Mau in southern Vietnam.

The landmark route connects the two ends of the country, and completes the Bamboo Airways Vietnam local network which now covers all 22 of the nation's domestic airports.

Uganda upgrades

THE President of Uganda has announced the upgrade of four current 'bush' airfields to allow jets to land in Kasese, Kidepo, Pakuba and Kisoro and provide faster access to wildlife viewing.

The major expansion of Uganda's tourism offering will also see new immigration facilities established at each location, allowing visitors to bypass Entebbe airport.



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A "one of a kind" luxury travel event

MORE than 600 luxury travel aficionados joined Travel Associates for the inaugural Luxury Travel Event on Sunday 30 Apr 2023, proving that travelling in style is very much in favour.

The exclusive event, hosted by Australia's leading network of luxury travel advisors, saw guests connect in person with hand-picked travel partners, including ultra luxury cruise lines, boutique tour operators, first class airlines, and five-star hotels & resorts.

Heralding a new age in consumer travel events and without a single trade stand in sight, guests enjoyed one-on-one time with travel partners and were able to get the personal support of Travel Associates' expert travel advisors to find their next inspiring travel destination.

Celebrating 25 years of designing bespoke travel, with a focus on a seamless end-to-end customer experience, Travel Associates is the leading luxury travel agency in Australia & New Zealand.



RACHEL Kingswell Travel Associates; Dani Galloway, FCTG; Askin Erkek, Travel Associates; Maddison Done, FCTG; Nikki Glading, Flight Centre; Adam Townson, Travel Associates; Shannon Fogarty, Travel Associates; Lisa Wright, Travel Associates; Jess Sonter, Travel Associates; and Anna Burgdorf, FCTG.

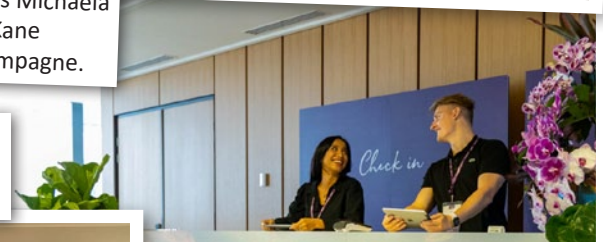


KEITH Prowse Travel's Michaela Oakley and Holden O'Kane enjoying a glass of champagne.

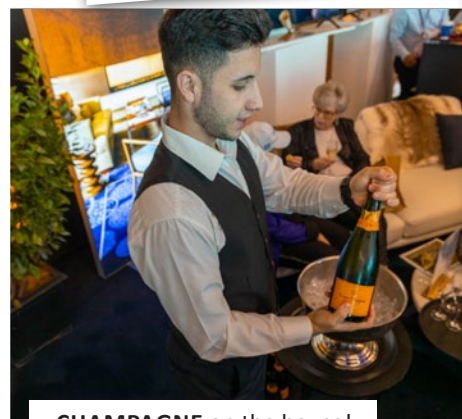


WELLNESS massage sessions by Chiva Som.

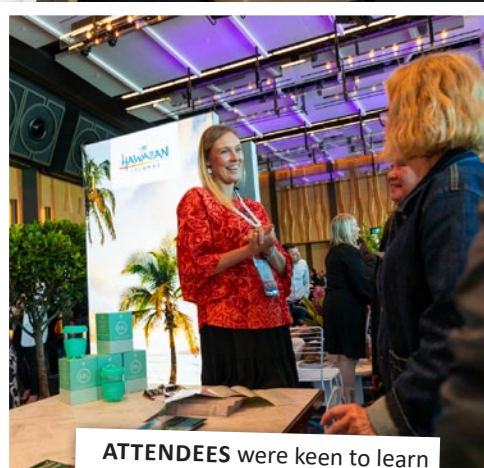
A SPACIOUS venue for a 'bleisure' experience.



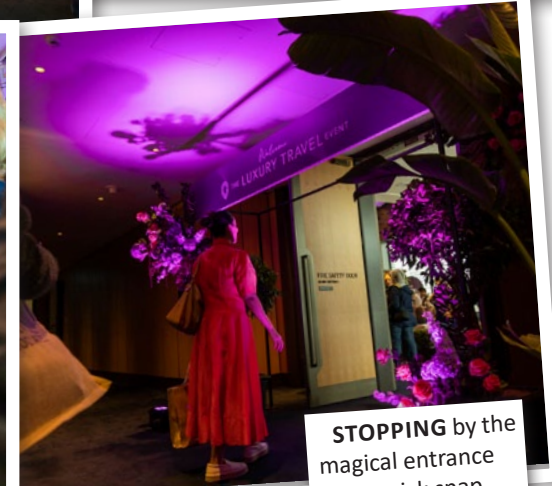
MANAGING Director of Adventure World, Neil Rodgers.



CHAMPAGNE on the house!



ATTENDEES were keen to learn more about Hawaiian Islands.



STOPPING by the magical entrance for a quick snap.



©Sara Fife, Capital County Tourism

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



Silversea - Grand Mediterranean 2024

The new Silversea brochure showcases the 66-day Grand Mediterranean itinerary sailing in Oct, which includes three weeks in the Eastern Mediterranean visiting the Holy Land with overnight stays in Alexandria and Nazareth, as well as a stop by the Jerusalem. The Grand voyage will allow guests to experience how the histories and people of the Mare Nostrum have come together for millennia to paint the medieval cities, sailing ports, and a culturally unique landscape. Silversea has also curated a Sea and Land Taste program for your clients to savour the best of region's cuisine.



APT - Japan & South Korea 2024

APT has unveiled its Japan and South Korea tour packages through its latest brochure release. Promised to impress its guests by the diverse beauty of the two prominent Asian countries, APT's expertly curated itineraries allow your clients to immerse themselves deeply within the regions and embrace the cultures through visitations to iconic wanders and hidden jewels. Embark on high-speed train and luxury coach journeys traversing ancient landscapes and traditions, while enjoying traditional cuisine and luxury stays. Book early and save up to \$2,800 per couple.

VA marks World Pilots' Day



VIRGIN Australia former pilot, Silva McLeod, officially launched her memoir, *Island Girl to Airline Pilot*, in the carrier's Melbourne lounge to mark World Pilot's Day last week.

The book details McLeod's (pictured) journey from a small village to becoming Tonga's first female pilot, and her 16-year flying career with Virgin Australia.

"Today and every day we celebrate the many contributions of our team members in opening up the world and connecting family, friends and loved-ones," the airline said.

Europe flight plight

EUROPE was the worst-affected region in the world for flight cancellations in Mar, with canx up 65% for the month, according to aviation analytics platform Cirium.

Airlines faced a sharp rise in strike action from aviation workers during Mar, with more than 14,000 flights cancelled during the month.

Almost every global region suffered a rise in cancellations, except North America, however Europe saw by far the largest jump.

Chief Executive Jeremy Brown told the *Irish Times* Europe's struggles have come down to "a number of last-minute air traffic control and airport strikes."

Action in France in particular has already impacted more than 50 days this year, a tenfold rise on all of last year.

Germany too has suffered from industrial action this year, which included huge transport network strikes in Mar.

Spirit of Tas death

A MALE passenger has died after he went overboard from a Spirit of Tasmania vessel.

The ferry turned around on Sun evening after the alarm was sounded, with search crews deployed around the Bellarine Peninsula just after 8pm, the *Herald Sun* reported.

Police later recovered the man's body at about 8.50pm and said the death is "not being treated as suspicious".

The vessel, which was on its way from Victoria to Tasmania, returned to Geelong by 10.50pm.

New Quest available

THE newly built Quest Woollooware Bay in Sydney has been listed for sale by Novm.

The 71-key serviced apartment hotel is located within the \$1 billion Woollooware Bay Town Centre mixed-use development, and is due to open in the third quarter of this year.

The property features a gym, conference facilities and a business lounge.

The Expression of Interest campaign is closing on 02 Jun, managed by CBRE's Michael Simpson and Vasso Zographou.

Snow at Perisher

SIX weeks before the official start of the ski season, it snowed overnight at Perisher Valley.

Early planners can grab lift tickets, lessons and rentals which are on sale now for the 2023 snow season beginning 10 Jun.

The 2023 Epic Australia Pass is also discounted this month, with prices set to rise on 31 May.