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NCL's school is in!

TRAVEL advisors have the opportunity to win a free Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) voyage in Asia by taking part in the NCL "Class of 2023" today.

Details of assignments and the bonus Partners First Rewards Points that can be accrued in Semester 1 are on the cover page of today's *Travel Daily*.

FJ extends YVR

FIJI Airways looks set to boost capacity on its new non-stop service between Nadi and Vancouver over the upcoming northern winter ski season.

GDS screens indicate that the planned third weekly A350 service, which was previously scheduled for Dec 2023 only, will now also fly in Jan 2024.

Fiji is back and booming

FIJI is seeing more Aussie visitors than ever before, shared Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill at the country's premier tourism event, the Fijian Tourism Expo on the weekend.

Fiji celebrated its most Australian visitors ever in a month in Dec 2022, with visitor arrival targets for 2023 already tracking above 2019 levels in the first three months of the year.

"Australia has been a really significant market for us," shared Hill.

"We were delighted to recognise in Dec, that we had the most Australians we've ever seen in a month in Fiji, which is really

exciting.

"Over the previous 12 months we have achieved double the targets that we set ourselves", the CEO explained, adding that since Fiji reopened (*TD* 01 Dec 2021), the country has welcomed over 900,000 visitors, with the 1 millionth tourist expected to arrive early next month.

Visitation rates are well ahead of Tourism Fiji's goal of pre-pandemic recovery by 2024 (*TD* 02 Jun 22).

With the announcement of Fiji Airways operating direct flights to Nadi from Canberra commencing in Jul (*TD* 14 Apr), in addition to the addition of two Airbus A350s to the fleet (*TD* 06 Apr), the island nation sees no signs of the tourism boom slowing.

"Our goal is to achieve a FJD\$3 billion industry, we're already making very significant strides towards that," Hill explained.

"Our collective goal is to enhance Fiji's position as a world-class leisure destination.

"I'm really excited about where we are, as a destination the inroads that we've made over the last 12 months, and the possibilities that lie ahead," he concluded.

New Fiji cruise ship

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji has announced the long term charter of APT's former *Caledonian Sky*, with the year-round deployment of the vessel seen as a game-changer in terms of Fiji's local cruise offering.

The move was announced on the weekend during opening session of the Fijian Tourism Expo, with Captain Cook Cruises Fiji Executive Chairman, Allison Haworth West, saying the replacement of *MV Reef Endeavour* with the 114-passenger luxury expedition vessel "will allow us to share even more exquisite remote locations in elegant comfort".

More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news plus a cover wrap from Norwegian Cruise Line.

Travel Daily on location in Fiji

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Fiji, which is hosting the Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE) this week.

THE 2023 FTE kicked off over the weekend, with international trade, media and local tourism suppliers gathering at the Denarau Island Convention Centre, Sheraton Fiji Golf & Beach Resort.

Fiji Tourism's premier event was opened by CEO Brent Hill on Sat evening, with the opening ceremony featuring a performance by You Dance Group, and a lavish party.

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Window Seat

HARRY Sommer, the cheerful new CEO of NCL, Oceania and Regent Cruises parent company Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH), usually has a big smile on his face.

However his characteristic happy grin probably became a little forced during the pandemic, based on a brief career journey summary that Sommer gave on board Oceania's new *Vista* yesterday.

He told industry partners of his excitement about a big promotion in early 2020.

"For the last three years I was the President of the NCL brand; it was really great - I think I became President about a month before COVID.

"Best four weeks of my life," he quipped, much to the amusement of all present.

Trident-tested for Club Med

EXCLUSIVE

ONE of Club Med's strategic pillars for this year is centred around anchoring its Exclusive Collection portfolio in the market, General Manager Pacific Michelle Davies told *Travel Daily*.

Club Med is now through its tough start to its initial rebound stage, and up 900% in sales, allowing it to focus on educating the travel trade about its Exclusive Collection and how it differs from its core range.

Davies said the portfolio has done exceptionally well for Club Med so far this year, already growing 68% versus 2019.

"A lot of travel agents don't actually see us in this exclusive collection or luxury light, and that's something we definitely want to change," she admitted.

"We have incentive programs that are going to be geared toward promoting those luxury products with famil opportunities

of the back of those.

"We also have a huge education piece happening in all of states and territories to relaunch our Exclusive Collection within the market, with a huge focus on [staysail schooner] *Club Med 2* for cruise specialists."

Other pillars for this year centre around the family market, and expanding Club Med's ski offerings, Davies said.

"[The family market] is very much our core product, so we wanted to make sure that we are owning this space and really reaffirming our position as being that leader and all-inclusive family holiday that's doing exceptionally well," she said.

"Diversifying our ski options, really making sure we are appealing to a wide breadth of ski clients, so looking at all demographics, from couples, groups of friends, and diversifying to those different destinations."

Nanuku joins Virtuoso family

LUXURY beachfront resort, Nanuku Resort Fiji has joined Virtuoso, announced General Manager Logan Miller at this week's Fiji Tourism Expo.

Located on a private 500-acre coastal estate, the resort has an air strip and helipad on the property, allowing access to the 13 villas, six residences, and four suites available to stay in.

The exclusive resort was accepted as a Virtuoso partner last week, with further announcements yet to come.

QR 737 MAX flights

QATAR Airways has opened reservations for flights using its newly arriving Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, the first of which looks set to enter service tomorrow.

GDS screens indicate the narrowbody operating on some QR flights from Doha to Abu Dhabi, Kuwait City and Sharjah.



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Travel Daily on location aboard Oceania Vista

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Malta, courtesy of Oceania Cruises, which will tonight hold a naming ceremony for its new *Vista*.

OCEANIA Cruises took delivery of its first newbuild in a decade last week, and about 50 Australian trade partners are among the 1,200 on board this week for the christening voyage.

Vista is the first of two sister ships, with *Allura* set to follow in 2024 with the same configuration which includes a range of new onboard concepts including restaurants and bars, wellness offerings, an expanded culinary kitchen and much more.

Godmother, US celebrity chef Giada de Laurentiis, will officiate at the big party, followed by a Harry Connick Jr performance.

Sabre axing staff

NEWLY minted Sabre Corporation CEO Kurt Ekert has kicked off his tenure by announcing a "resource realignment" which will see about 15% of the organisation's employees made redundant.

Speaking to investors after announcing the company's first quarter 2023 results last week, Ekert said the move aimed to reduce costs by as much as US\$200 million annually.

"I do not take this decision lightly...however I am confident that these actions will better position us for the future and put us on a direct path to achieving our financial and strategic targets," Ekert said.

Sabre's revenue for the three months to 31 Mar totalled US\$743 million, up 27% year-on-year, with the company reporting a net loss of US\$104 million.

The company processed 97 million bookings during the period, up 49% on Q1 2022.



THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has joined with other peak bodies, TTF Australia and the Australian Airports Association in a last-ditch push to oppose any increase to the Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) in tomorrow's Budget.

The trio of organisations has sent an urgent letter to PM Anthony Albanese, saying that suggestions of an increase have seen them "left confused by this policy backflip".

AFTA, TTF and AAA are calling for the implementation of a new five-year freeze on increases to the "tax on travel and tourism".

"Increasing the PMC in the current environment would be

extremely counterproductive to the tourism industry's recovery," the letter to Albanese notes.

"By increasing the PMC, the government would be taxing the holidays of Australians...we are hopeful that the Government will seriously consider our position and the impact that an increase on the PMC means for our industry, everyday Australians and the perception it will create publicly as a tax on tourism."

The issues were highlighted in a joint press conference (**pictured**) between AFTA CEO Dean Long and TTF chief Margy Osmond which saw significant mainstream media coverage in newspapers and on TV yesterday.

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ITA eases rail links

ROME-BASED ITA Airways is now allowing passengers arriving by train to Rome Fiumicino Airport to check in and drop off luggage at the railway station.

New dedicated FCO Connect desks at certain stations are serviced by Swissport, with the initiative valid for passengers with tickets to all destinations apart from the USA and Israel.

The move is a joint initiative by ITA Airways, Trenitalia and Aeroporti di Roma, and ITA is now offering combined flight and train tickets via all sales channels.

MEANWHILE ITA Airways has also announced an expansion of its international network, with the addition of non-stop Rome flights to the Maldives which will operate from 16 Dec 2023 through until 25 Mar 2024.

Also new for ITA is direct flights from Rome to Rio de Janeiro, which will operate on a daily basis from 29 Oct 2023 through until 30 Mar 2024.

IHG expands Aussie team

IHG Hotels & Resorts has bolstered its corporate affairs and communications team with a high-profile promotion and a key hire.

Chris Waite has been promoted to the role of Head of Corporate Affairs and Angelique Dingle has started in her newly created role of Manager Corporate Affairs.

The two appointees will continue to work closely with Senior Vice President & Managing Director JAPAC Leanne Harwood to elevate IHG's public and industry affairs approach, champion its corporate responsibility initiatives, and build its reputation in Australia, Japan, and the Pacific.

Waite joined IHG in 2017 as Director of Communications and helped build IHG's profile through its biggest years of hotel signings and openings in its history.

He also helped navigate the business through COVID, and founded key partnerships, namely

IHG's Awesome Partnership with OzHarvest.

Dingle has an extensive and diverse background that includes tourism industry roles at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, and the Sydney Opera House.

MEANWHILE, IHG has also announced a major Fiji signing with Crowne Plaza Fiji Nadi Bay Resort & Spa.

The property will open later this year, IHG said.

AFTA webinar

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is hosting a Payments, Scams and Security webinar to help members guard against losses.

Run by TravelPay General Manager Kevin Butler, the session will take place on 23 May at 4pm, and is free to AFTA members or \$50pp for non-members.

Bonza completes home base offering

BONZA launched its first flight from Tamworth to the Sunshine Coast on Sat, marking the 13th and final service of the initial roll out from its home base.

The new service will operate twice weekly on Tue and Fri, with fares starting from \$49 per person one way.

Bonza now operates 39 flights per week from Sunshine Coast Airport, with CCO Carly Povey revealing the airline has carried over 60,000 pax in and out of the Queensland destination between Jan and Apr.

Win Sno'n'Ski famil

SNO'N'SKI Holidays is giving away one of 30 seats on its 2024 Canada Mega Famil at the Ski School & Après Party, a trade training event taking place in Brisbane on 19 May - get your free ticket to the event [HERE](#).

Hello Hong Kong

Welcome to a world of new discoveries!



A gorgeous *Vista* for Oceania



THE Aussie contingent aboard Oceania's new *Vista* sailing in the Mediterranean this week includes a number of senior industry leaders, including Flight Centre Travel Group's Global MD of Luxury and Independent, Danielle Galloway.

She's pictured rubbing shoulders with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings CEO-elect Harry Sommer and Frank A. Del Rio, recently appointed to head up Oceania Cruises, as well as Alison Lord from Travel Associates.

Galloway, Lord and about 50 other Aussies are aboard *Vista*'s christening cruise, becoming the first to experience a host of new features including the most spacious staterooms at sea, three brand-new dining concepts and a market-leading 2:3 crew to passenger ratio.

The 1,200-passenger *Vista* offers 11 culinary venues including the new Ember offering "elevated American cuisine".

There's also the wellness-focused Aquamar Kitchen, as well as exquisite pastries and bread at The Bakery, which is adjacent to a significantly expanded and enhanced Baristas coffee bar.

The ship also offers an improved mixology program with a range of innovative specialty cocktails - theatrically presented with plenty of smoke and bubbles.

Jason Worth, Oceania VP of Sales Asia Pacific, told **TD** he believes *Vista* will herald a new era for the cruise line, with Del Rio today hinting at a significant evolution of Oceania's long-running OLife value offering.

Lots more from *Vista* in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.



Travel Daily On Board: Oceania Vista LYNC Digital Center

An innovative technology hub for interactive and enriching learning, this new space offers a range of complimentary digital classes ranging from social media essentials to photography for all levels of ability. Tuition is either self-guided via provided iPads or in person by the on site Digital Concierge, who also provides tech support for *Vista*'s Starlink internet connectivity system.



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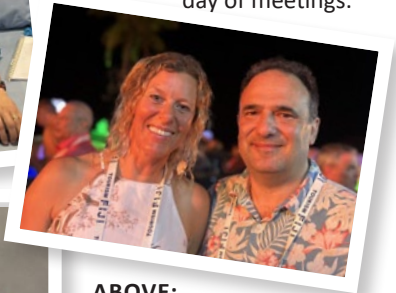
FTE a roaring success

THE Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE) has been a resounding success this year, with international buyers and media gathering at the Denarau Island Convention Centre to meet with Fijian suppliers over the weekend.

RIGHT: HOT Events' Victoria Wales with GM Marriott Momi Bay Silvano Dressino.



LEFT: Fiji Airways' Regional GM John Nickel relaxes after a long day of meetings.



ABOVE: Representing Aussie cruise, Natalie Godward and Joel Katz.



LEFT: The men of the hour, Tourism Fiji CEO Brent Hill and the Hon. Viliame Gavoka.

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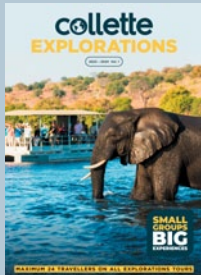




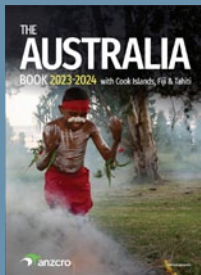
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BROCHURES

THIS week's Brochures of the Week is brought to you by Collette. 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.



Collette - Small Group Explorations 2023-24
There are 47 small group tours featured in Collette's new brochure for 2023-24. With a maximum size of 24 guests and an average of 16, the tours are specifically designed to showcase authentic experiences, such as a hands-on cooking class in a 12th Century abbey in Tuscany, and strolling through cobblestone alleyways in ancient markets and medinas in Morocco. The ideal pacing of the tours see two- and three-night stays as the norm. You could be sleeping under the stars in a glass igloo watching the Northern Lights of Finland, enjoying a three-night cruise on the Chobe River, or sleeping in a Monastery on Mount Koya in Japan!



ANZCRO - The Australia Book 2023-2024
ANZCRO has released the Australian Book 2023-2024 to showcase its products spanning all seven states and territories, and inspire your clients to uncover few hidden gems in Australia's backyard. The brochure features over 100 pages of ANZCRO's itineraries, with highlights such as the 10-day Best of Tasmania holiday package traversing the region's landmarks of Cradle Mountain, Port Arthur and Freycient National Park, priced from \$1,810ppts with personally customised packages available.

itravel's LUXE line-up



THE new LUXE by itravel division officially launched last Thu, with the new LUXE-designated advisors getting together with Virtuoso for the first time to celebrate the group's membership (**TD** 20 Mar).

A private luncheon was held at Shangri-La Sydney's Altitude restaurant, with itravel CEO Steve Labroski saying "the enthusiasm and anticipation was palpable from the new LUXE members".

He said Virtuoso GM Fiona Dalton and Account Manager Kerrie Fellowes were equally impressed with the calibre of agents, with an initial cohort of eight LUXE independent advisors set to "build a strong foundation and pave the way for others".

Labroski said he expected the LUXE membership to grow quickly given a strong pipeline of both internal and external expressions of interest.

Virtuoso GM, Fiona Dalton, said she and Fellowes were thrilled to welcome LUXE by itravel and to meet the founding advisors.

"This group collectively represents many years of luxury travel advisory...their enthusiasm for Virtuoso and its potential for positive impact on their careers and clients' experience was both inspirational and infectious.

"We're excited to support their future success," she added.

Pictured at the event are, from left: Dee Jaswal, itravel Head of Digital Media & Marketing; itravel CFO Louie Apostolovski; LUXE by itravel advisor Geoff Currie; itravel Head of Product & LUXE by itravel, Cherie Bowman; LUXE advisors Garry McLaughlin and Roslyn Ranse; itravel CEO Steve Labroski; Virtuoso GM APAC, Fiona Dalton; Virtuoso Account Manager Kerrie Fellowes; LUXE by itravel advisors Lucy Bellamy; Pamela Goldsbro, Nina Moussalli and Megan Catterall; and newly appointed itravel Chief Operating Officer, Joe Karbo.

VA's Tas Mania sale

GET onto Virgin Australia's triple 72-hour 'Tas Mania' special, which offers 30% off selected flights to and from Tasmania.

Travellers can purchase a one way Economy Lite class fare from Sydney to Hobart from just \$109, or travel from Hobart to Melbourne from \$89, as well as enjoy savings of 10% on Economy X upgrades on eligible flights to and from Tasmania.

The sale ends midnight AEST 10 May 2023 - **CLICK HERE** for details and to book.

Radisson Philippines

RADISSON Hotel Group has signed a Master Development Agreement with SM Hotels & Conventions Corp for the Park Inn by Radisson brand, which will see it open 14 new hotels in the Philippines by 2028.

A 516-room dual-branded property under the Radisson and Park Inn by Radisson brands is currently in the works, set to open in 2027 in Cebu City, and will be part of an integrated property development adjacent to the SMX convention centre.

Kakadu in style

YELLOW Water Villas is preparing to open this month, billed as "the most luxurious, eco sensitive accommodation" in Kakadu National Park.

Built on stilts within the grounds of Cooina Lodge, the five air-conditioned villas are next to the famous Yellow Water Billabong (Ngurrungurrudjba) and have a BBQ, bathtub on veranda, ensuite bathroom, dining area and lounge with daybeds, with an introductory offer of \$750 per villa per night until 31 May.