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THE Travel Junction's (TTJ) crack new team of call centre consultants are now standing by to help travel advisors sort out complex bookings, with the phone sales expert team complementing TTJ's HELiO online platform with 24/7 support.

Travel advisors can register with TTJ by clicking the link on the cover page of today's *TD*.

Cover-More role

RAY Hands has joined Cover-More Group as its new National Strategic Account Manager.

Hands moves into the travel insurance sector after four years with Flight Centre in business development roles across the Travel Partners, Travel Associates & Independent divisions.

Commissions stay for FJ

EXCLUSIVE

FIJI Airways has firmly committed to maintaining the payment of travel agency commissions, with FJ Manager of Global Sales, Marketing and Digital, Akuila Batiweti saying the travel trade will continue to play a key role in the carrier's distribution strategy.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* yesterday at the 2023 Fiji Tourism Exchange, Batiweti emphasised "we're not cutting commissions".

"We love the trade...we support you, because at a time when we needed you, you were there.

"So we will not cut commissions," Batiweti stressed, saying supporting the trade was FJ's "competitive advantage".

"This is how we compete with the bigger guys - we look after our agents, we look after wholesalers, and we make sure that we're not cutting," he said.

The airline reached a significant milestone last week with flights to the newly reopened Kiribati, marking the return of 100% of the markets that Fiji Airways operated pre-pandemic.

Plus, with direct flights from Canberra set to launch twice a week to Nadi starting on 21 Jul, boosted capacity on the new Nadi-Vancouver route (*TD* 08 May), and two new Airbus A350s set to join the fleet in Aug and Sep this year (*TD* 06 Apr), the airline's growth shows no signs of slowing down.

With the additional routes and extra capacity, Fiji Airways' projections for 2023 show the airline is set to not only recover to 2019 levels, but exceed them.

"Our forward bookings on capacity alone - Q1 we flew 113%

more than we did in 2019...Q2 we are about 134%, and we will fly close to 150% of what we did in 2019 by Q4 [of 2023]."

MEANWHILE, with Canberra sales already taking off, Batiweti shared that the airline is already exploring plans to add a third flight from Canberra each week.

"We'd like to add another service to Canberra, and we were exploring when can we do that this year, and at this stage it looks like it possibly could be Oct."

With Australia remaining a top performing market for Fjii, the national carrier is exploring further options to expand its reach.

"Now we've got Sydney Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra, so five cities.

"We are looking at two other airports...right now that could be really any city in Australia," Batiweti confirmed.

VA boosts Canada

VIRGIN Australia is significantly expanding its codeshare partnership with Air Canada to cover a host of new routes between Australia and Canada and onwards across the AC network.

The renewed pact becomes effective tomorrow, and will see the VA code added to Air Canada flights from Vancouver to Brisbane and Sydney.

VA will also codeshare on AC's Vancouver flights to Calgary, Edmonton, Kelowna, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg.

Dusit adds three

DUSIT Hotels and Resorts has welcomed three new hotels to its portfolio, including its first property in Japan.

The additions include ASAI Kyoto Shijo and ASAI Bangkok Sathorn, as well as the DusitD2 Samyan Bangkok, all part of a strong Dusit pipeline seeing nine additional hotels set to open globally by year's end.

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.**

AFTER a successful weekend of business meetings, sharing products, and networking, FTE wrapped up last night with a celebratory dock party.

Today delegates are heading home to destinations around the globe with the event's Platinum sponsor, Fiji Airways, which has in the past week hit the milestone of reopening to 100% of markets that they were in prior to COVID.

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Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news including our **Sustainability** page plus a cover page from **The Travel Junction**.



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New AA logo

THE logo for the new hospitality peak body Accommodation Australia (pictured) has been unveiled by the organisation's inaugural CEO Michael Johnson and President Leanne Harwood.



Accommodation Australia

Oceania welcomes Vista

OCEANIA Cruises now has a seven-ship fleet, after the official naming of its new 1,200 passenger *Vista* in Malta.

The newbuild is Oceania's first addition in a decade, and marks a new era of innovation for the brand, according to the line's newly minted CEO Frank A. Del Rio, who is following in the footsteps of his father who founded Oceania 20 years ago. "We're here to celebrate our

spectacular newbuild," he said.

"She's basically the pinnacle of our history to date...she's elegant, she's stunning, contemporary while maintaining the classic Oceania DNA we all know."

Del Rio said the many new features of *Vista* would ensure that the ship "represents the future of Oceania Cruises".

He also paid tribute to Oceania's strong travel trade partnerships, telling the travel agents welcomed from across the world at the ceremony: "without you we wouldn't be here today".

The event also saw incoming Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) CEO Harry Sommer hail the watershed moment for Oceania as an expression of his vision for ongoing innovation.

"I'm a firm believer in product excellence - the best ships, the best amenities, and the best guest experience," he said.

"There is simply no compromise, and we are already experiencing this product excellence and innovation aboard this ship with great service, beautifully appointed spaces and outstanding culinary venues."

Sommer flagged an ongoing focus at NCLH on technological innovation "to accelerate our shift to digital technology, better websites, better booking tools for our travel partners, and better ways for guests to customise their dream vacation".

More from Malta in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

Farewell Swiss Miss

BIRGIT Weingartner has announced her departure from Switzerland Tourism after 11 years as the organisation's ANZ Marketing Manager.

Weingartner leaves on 31 May and will take time out for education in digital marketing before exploring new opportunities.



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- ♦ **Connections & Commissions:** Rail Europe is connected to most countries in Europe. On top of receiving \$10 on your 6th booking onwards for the next two months, qualified agencies will also enjoy a further \$5 for any Eurostar, LNER and Thalys bookings made in May (\$250 cap per agency per month).
- ♦ **Expert tip:** Travel in Business Premier with Eurostar and enjoy their exclusive departure lounges in London, Paris and Brussels.

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Quark's lucky prize winner



QUARK Expeditions has wrapped up a series of seven trade events across Australia and New Zealand, which saw over 500 travel advisors attend the *Shackleton: Greatest Story of Survival* movie nights.

Co-sponsored with LATAM Airlines, the film tells the story of Ernest Shackleton's epic nine-month journey of survival to get his crew rescued, after the ship he

was sailing, *Endurance*, became stranded in Antarctica in 1915.

The trade events also saw one lucky attendee, Karen Searle from Helloworld Spring Hill, Queensland, win the major door prize - a trip to Antarctica in Nov this year onboard Quark Expedition's *World Explorer*.

Pictured: A beaming Searle with Quark Expeditions BDM Sarah-Louise Scales.



Travel Daily
LEARN MORE ABOUT SWITZERLAND WITH TRAVEL DAILY TRAINING ACADEMY

US compo move

AMERICA'S Biden administration has signalled a crackdown on airline passenger compensation due to cancelled or delayed flights.

Transportation Secretary, Pete Buttigieg, has unveiled a proposed rule which would require provision of meals, overnight accommodation, ground transportation to and from hotels and rebooking, along with timely customer service.

The US Transportation Department also released an expanded Airline Customer Service Dashboard that compares and contrasts which carriers currently offer cash compensation, and provide travel credits or vouchers, or award frequent flyer miles.

The White House said the new website "will show that virtually no airlines offer compensation on top of refunds or amenities".

View the dashboard **HERE**.



Window Seat

THE christening of Oceania Cruises' new *Vista* (see [page 2](#)) was a very emotional event, with the debut of the new ship coinciding with the retirement of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings chief Frank J. Del Rio.

Guests seated dockside in Valletta, Malta heard a cavalcade of tributes to the line's founder, and by the time Del Rio Sr took to the stage to express his thanks (**pictured**), there wasn't a dry eye in the house - particularly his.

"You all have Kleenex, I brought a towel," he quipped.



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Hurtigruten goes electric

HURTIGRUTEN Expeditions has teamed up with maritime electric motor systems manufacturer, Evoy, to electrify the first ‘ship to shore’ and wildlife-spotting tender boats.

Announced by Hurtigruten Group as part of its 2022 annual *Environmental Social and Governance Report* (ESG) last month (**TD 02** May), the new boats can carry up to 20 guests on excursions from expedition ships in Arctic and Antarctic waters in a sustainable way.

The electric motor systems enable silent and emission-free excursions, and are the most powerful of their kind.

Hurtigruten Expeditions will introduce the first electric tender boats on expedition cruises with *MS Otto Sverdrup* along the Norwegian coast this season.

CAPTAIN COOK’S CORAL CRUISE

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji highlighted its sustainable initiatives and ‘Buy a coral, build a reef’ program at the Fijian Tourism Expo last weekend.

The cruise line has been heavily involved in marine science and sustainability for a number of years, with the Tivua private island forming the base for many of these initiatives, shared Captain Cook Cruises Fiji CEO Allison Haworth West (**pictured**).

“We started our Ocean Ambassador program in 2012 and have always carried marine biologists on board...we pioneered marine biology, and we really have a deep history in the sustainability side.”

During the company’s reduced services brought on by the pandemic, Captain Cook’s marine biologist team took up residence on Tivua Island and invested further time into coral regrowth and reef regeneration, an investment that has paid off with



sea life returning to the reef, and new opportunities for guests to get involved with the sustainable initiatives.

“The sea life and the regrowth during that time has been beautiful.. the diversity at Tivua now, with a variety of marine life, both in coral and fish life, has really greatly expanded,” Haworth West explained.

Noting an increased interest from passengers in conservation efforts on the island, Captain Cook developed the ‘Buy a coral, build a reef’ program.

“Passengers when they go

ashore, they can plant coral, which has been really fun to play along as a pro [marine biologists].

“We formalised it into a program, ‘buy a coral, build a reef’, so when passengers sign up for our day cruises, they can pay \$5 and they can plant coral for that”, Haworth West added, noting that the \$5 payment goes completely towards the materials required to manage the planting program.

MEANWHILE, Captain Cook Cruises Fiji also unveiled a new Tivua Private Paradise product in addition to its current Tivua Private Island Day Cruise.

The Tivua Private Paradise will offer an upscale experience for guests, featuring a maximum of 30 guests, champagne and a picnic brunch.

“It takes our main product, Tivua Private Island day sail, to another level and I think this is very much a niche,” enthused Haworth West.

United triples SAF

UNITED Airlines has taken delivery of 1.5 million gallons of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to use on departing flights from San Francisco Airport, and is also planning to use a SAF blend later this year at London Heathrow Airport.

This puts the airline on track to triple its use of the eco-fuel to around 10 million gallons in 2023 - almost triple compared to 2022.

A&K expands sustainable yacht fleet

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) recently welcomed its third expedition yacht, *Evolve*, to its sustainable fleet in the Galapagos Islands, thanks to a partnership with sustainable tourism leader, Ecoventura.

Sustainable features on each yacht reduce fossil fuel consumption by more than

30%, while a stabilising system and cutting-edge bow design enables smoother, faster sailing.

“The Galapagos Islands are a natural spectacle like nowhere else on earth...we want to take our guests there with the greatest respect for the environment,” A&K Australia MD Debra Fox said.

Solar safari

DESERT & Delta Safaris has launched its fourth solar field at Camp Moremi on Earth Day, bringing Botswana’s total number of solar-powered camps up to five.

The sustainable solar fields supply power to run pumps, provide water and operate the camp’s sanitation plants.

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It's not business, it's personal for Oceania

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Oceania Cruises, which is hosting industry partners on the inaugural voyage of its new *Vista* in the Mediterranean.

ENTERING Valletta Harbour aboard *Vista* this morning, guests could not help but be awed by the massive ancient fortresses, towering walls and other fortifications.

Valletta is a stunning destination, offering guests a glimpse into history along with some fabulous local cuisine, handicrafts and more.

Today prior to the ship's naming ceremony guests were able to explore the island on a host of shore excursions, taking in such fascinations as Roman catacombs, the walled city of Mdina, Rabat and the picturesque Dinghli Cliffs.

After more Maltese exploration tomorrow, *Vista* continues her sojourn with an overnight voyage to Naples.

LAST night's christening ceremony for Oceania Cruises' *Vista* also became an emotional farewell for the cruise line's founder, Frank J. Del Rio, who is retiring from his role as Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings CEO on 01 Jul.

Del Rio's son, Frank Junior, who is taking on the CEO role for the Oceania brand, was among many speakers during the event to pay tribute to Del Rio, in turn evoking the key role that relationships play within the company.

"There's the old adage, 'it's not personal, it's just business' - well this work isn't just business, it's personal," Del Rio Jr said.

"We're all a family in every way.

"Our crew, our travel trade partners, our valued guests, and the many vendors that help us deliver such an amazing product," he added.

"These are relationships that have evolved over the years, visiting each other's houses, celebrating each other's victories, and picking each other up in times of difficulty.

"There's a reason people return to Oceania again and again," he added, saying family would continue to be the "beating heart" of how Oceania operates, "how we define ourselves in a market where guests and their travel advisors have many choices.

"And for all of that we have one man to thank, Frank Del Rio," he said.

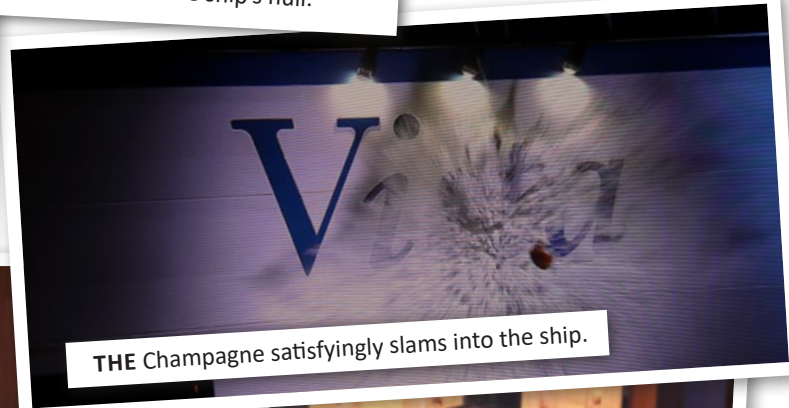


THE Del Rios share a fond father and son moment.

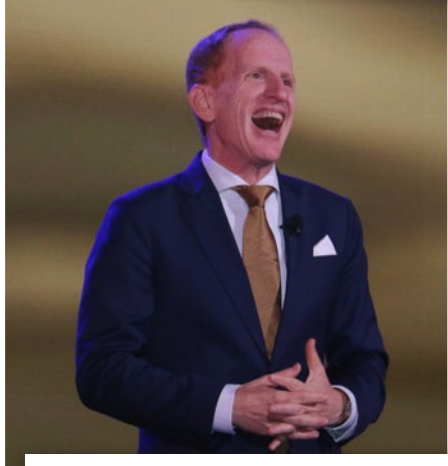


CONTINUING the family feel, Frank Del Rio Sr. named former Regent Seven Seas Cruises chief Jason Montague and Oceania Cruises head Bob Binder as Commodores of the Fleet.

VISTA'S godmother, Emmy award-winning and New York Times bestseller-writing celebrity chef Giada de Laurentiis prepares to pull the lever to smash a giant bottle of bubbly onto the ship's hull.



THE Champagne satisfyingly slams into the ship.



INCOMING NCLH CEO Harry Sommer regales the crowd with tales of his mentor, Frank Del Rio Sr.



THE iconic Frank Del Rio bids the industry a final fond farewell.



HARRY Connick Jr. entertained the *Vista* christening crowd.



[CLICK HERE FOR AN INFO PACK](#)

MONEY

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.678

THE AUD has gained 0.8% against the USD, scoring near a two-month high, while also performing strong against the EUR and JPY on Fri, up 0.8% and 1.3% respectively.

Meanwhile, the budget for 2023/2024 will be revealed at 7:30pm AEST tonight, with the expectation of the Govt to centre \$14.6b as a cost-of-living relief package, including an energy bill relief of up to \$500.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.678
UK	£0.538
NZ	\$1.069
Euro	€0.616
Japan	¥91.57
Thailand	฿22.93
China	¥4.688
South Africa	12.42
Canada	\$0.907
Crude oil	US\$75.30

Sail free with Tauck

FOR the rest of the year, agents will earn a free cabin on a Tauck cruise when they make three new bookings on any of the line's 2023 European river cruises.

The incentive is valid for cruises departing before 31 Dec 2024, based on availability, and does not include airfare, land accom before or after the cruise, taxes, fees, gratuities or fuel surcharge.

"To thank our valued travel partners for their hard work, we are thrilled to offer this...incentive so that agents can enjoy some well-deserved time off," Managing Director David Clark said.

Cold snap to Syd

SYDNEY has emerged as Australia's most popular destination this winter, knocking Melbourne off the top spot from 2022, according to Booking.com.

The latest search data trends for winter 2023 also reveal the next three destinations on the list are all cities in Qld (Gold Coast, Brisbane and Cairns, with Port Douglas in seventh place and Hamilton Island in ninth place), proving Aussies' keenness to flee the cooler weather down south.

But the coldest snow regions, such as Jindabyne, Mount Buller and Thredbo, have made their way into the top 20 just in time for a ski season preview as NSW received its first sprinkle of snow over the weekend.

International data reveals plenty of Aussies will be heading to Europe in the next few months, with London, Paris and Rome taking out the top three overseas destinations, replacing Bali.

Dubai's beauty hub

EMIRATES has partnered up with beauty brand Dior and hair care brand Davines to provide a beauty hub exclusively for Emirates cabin crew in its headquarters in Dubai.

The Emirates Beauty Hub is open seven days a week, and offers some of the brands' products such as the Dior Hydra Life Intense Sorbet Creme, Dior Forever Skin Glow, and more, along with the Dior Sauvage range and Davines' essential items for men.

The beauty hub also offers personalised appointments for over 18,000 cabin crew to get expert beauty advice.

Double dinner a winner



OUTRIGGER Fiji and Castaway Island Fiji co-hosted a progressive dinner for 11 key partners and nine staff last Fri to celebrate strong bookings for 2023, ahead of the Fijian Tourism Expo.

Industry partners across wholesale, OTA and weddings, Fiji Airways and other suppliers were also treated to a preview of the renovated rooms and bures at Outrigger, part of the resort's US\$14m refurbishment, scheduled to be completed by Dec.

After a welcome by Fijian warriors and a serenade by Vou Entertainment Group, guests enjoyed drinks at the Bebe Spa Sanctuary, followed by an

outdoor dinner next to the Beachfront Bures, and dessert at a pop-up Beach Club with music by Sundowner Duo.

Ben Johnson, Area Director of Sales and Marketing, Fiji Islands said, "it was a wonderful evening spent with colleagues, key partners and friends, together with the 'Bula Spirit' evident throughout the night.

"Both Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort and Castaway Island Fiji, co-hosted yesterday evening's event with a purpose on saying 'Vinaka Vakalevu' to our supportive industry partners for a successful 2022 and for an already very promising 2023 ahead."



Travel Daily

On Board: Oceania Vista Ember

This sophisticated new concept restaurant features classic American dishes with influence from across the world. Open for dinner, starters such as New England Lobster Roll and Spinach & Artichoke dip complement mains including succulent steaks and Lobster Mac & Cheese. Try dessert such as Key Lime Pie or ice cream from Humphry Slocombe, the makers of gourmet ice cream for adults.