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BOOK a Hong Kong experience with Infinity Holidays and earn up to 15% commission.

The wholesaler offers five curated Hong Kong packages to choose from, with travel advisors also able to win a holiday to the country for themselves - see **page eight** for more information.

Turning Japanese

TAKE off to Japan with luxury cruise line operator Ponant for just \$7,590 per person, including return flights.

The promotion ends on 30 Nov, with a number of cruises on offer - head to **page nine** for more info.

Revenge travel still strong

DESPITE what some media have previously reported, revenge travel for Australians is still alive and well according to Travellers Choice Managing Director Christian Hunter.

Hunter was speaking at the Travellers Choice conference on the weekend, hosted at The Star on the Gold Coast, and was referring to previous news articles from CNBC suggesting that revenge travel "was over".

"Corporates are mobilised, consumer confidence appears strong, and revenge travel is alive and well," Hunter assured delegates at the conference.



He argued that "clawing back the years that the pandemic stole and doubling down on holiday plans, or simply refusing to forego any future trips", is still a major priority of travellers, particularly in Australia.

"All of this, combined with a strong start to FY24 is pointing to another good year for the group," Hunter added.

In early Oct, CNBC had pointed to a report from economic advisory firm Oxford Economics that short-haul and revenge travel was likely to fade in the Asia Pacific region due to the initial flurry of travel calming down, the current global economic situation, and delayed reactions to tightening monetary policies, among other reasons.

While Hunter was adamant revenge travel's day was not done for Australians, he did offer a word of caution.

"I think that this situation could be sustained for a couple of years as the pandemic hangover remains, but I don't believe it to be a long-term proposition."

He added that unless inflationary pressures can be relieved by government, it will start to impact on consumer willingness to continue travel. *DF*

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel news, a special update from **Global Group Travel Services**, a photo page for **Travellers Choice**, plus full pages from:

- Infinity Holidays
- Ponant

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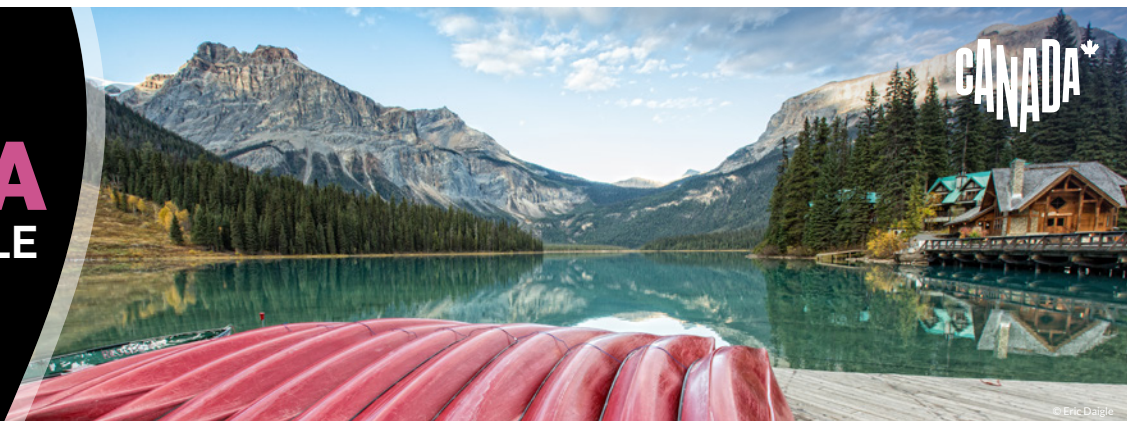
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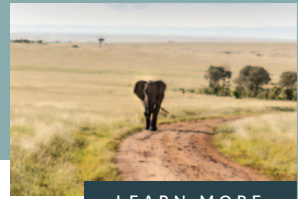


CANADA

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VA's Big Red deal

VIRGIN Australia has announced a new partnership with Big Red Group's domestic brand, Experience Oz, to bring thousands of travel experiences to its customers.

From theme parks and cruises to tours and activities, travellers will be able to book more than 4,000 Experience Oz adventures on the Virgin Australia website.

Velocity Frequent Flyers will also be able to earn (three points per \$1 spent) and redeem Velocity Points on the experiences, with members able to book the new travel options using points to pay for all or part of the booking with Points + Pay.

Red Cat joins SeaLink

SEALINK Marine & Tourism has announced the acquisition of Red Cat Adventures Group, one of the major tourism operators based in the Whitsundays region.

Red Cat operates day tours and private charters to destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef, Mackay, and Airlie Beach, and boasts brands like Whitsunday Jetski Tours and Wildcat Mackay.

Despite SeaLink's purchase of the tourism business, management of Red Cat will remain in the hands of Asher and Julie Telford, with the purchase intended to accelerate SeaLink's already-expanding presence in



the Whitsundays region.

"SeaLink commenced operations in the Whitsundays in 2021, providing ferry transfer services to Hayman Island before expanding our offerings to include day tour experiences around the Whitsunday Islands and Whitehaven Beach, and Red Cat Adventures further expands our...reach," SeaLink Marine & Tourism CEO Donna Gauci said.

Founded in 2015, Red Cat employs 75 staff and operates five custom-built vessels along with a fleet of 22 jet skis offering guided tours of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Pictured: Asher and Julie Telford flank SeaLink Whitsundays GM Rob Mitchell. *AB*

GGTS new platform

GLOBAL Group Travel Services (GGTS) has launched its 'Hybrid Wholesale Travel' platform, which seamlessly connects travel professionals with a vast network of more than 150 destination management companies - read more on **page 10**.



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Albatross guarantees

ALBATROSS Tours has confirmed that 70% of its Europe and UK tour departures next year are now guaranteed to depart.

Tours that will 100% depart between Apr and Oct 2024 are marked with a green tick on the Albatross Tours website, with the operator keen to deliver additional confidence to travel agents in an increasingly volatile international environment.

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Bon Voyage to 2023

SIGN off the year in style with *Travel Daily's* end-of-year celebration, Bon Voyage 2023.

The event will be held on 06 Dec at Marble Bar, Hilton Sydney.

To purchase your tickets and for more information on the big night of celebration, [CLICK HERE](#).

Travel Daily
Bon Voyage 2023
Signing off 2023 in style!



◆ Wed 6 Dec ◆
◆ 6pm ◆
◆ Marble Bar, Syd ◆

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Talking up WSI tourism boom



WESTERN Sydney tourism was under the spotlight during the second Talking Tourism combined networking event last Wed, held at the Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley in Windsor.

Hosted by Blue Mountains Tourism (BMT) in partnership with Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, the event urged businesses to prepare for the opening of Western Sydney International (WSI) airport at the end of 2026.

"With only three years until the airport is finished, it's a defining time for tourism," WSI External Affairs and Communication, Corporate Affairs Manager Catherine Payne (**pictured**) said.

"It takes the people in this room and your colleagues and competitors and tourism across Western Sydney to come together and make it happen."

The new aviation hub is expected to service an initial 4 million passengers in its first year and 80 million a year by 2060, acting as a gateway to the nation for leisure, medical, education and business travellers.

"We need to all work together to ensure that our region becomes an exceptional region where they can land here, stay here, play here and do more things for more people more often," BMT President Jason Cronshaw said.

Around 50 people attended on the night, including reps from Scenic World, Carrington Hotel, Mercure Penrith, Narrow Escape Rooms, Wild Cat Conservation Centre, and Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association, as well as representatives from Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith and Wollondilly councils. *JM*

Airline accepts \$2 tax

A GROUP of lucky travellers will be flying to China for only US\$2 thanks to a computer glitch that China Southern Airlines said it has decided to honour.

The issue on the carrier's app occurred last Wed for flights to and from Chengdu, with travellers having a full two hours to buy the mistakenly discounted fares.

Passengers can use the tickets so long as they were already paid for and issued, CZ said.

Long's massive News

ATIA CEO Dean Long has lauded the organisation's expanded partnership with News Corp Australia, revealing that "this year we had 13,000 nominations and 12,000 unique nominations" for the NTIA People's Choice Award.

Long, speaking at the Travellers Choice conference on the Gold Coast on Sat, revealed the increase on the 11,000 nominations for 2022.

"That was 11,000 stories of why an agent was amazing in a hundred words or less," Long enthused to the delegates.

He continued that ATIA "wouldn't have got those stories without that relationship."

In a talk where he admitted that he and the team wanted to work on boosting the engagement of ATIA, Long said "it's really exciting to be able to talk about the power of ATAS businesses in that [main media] forum".

The NTIA Awards are set to take place on Sat night in Melbourne.

The HEART of EXPLORING

Receive up to \$2,500 flight credit per couple for your clients when you book a new 2024 or 2025 ocean voyage.

But hurry, this offer must end 30 November 2023.

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Window Seat

WHILE you don't typically expect to hear about a company instructing its employees to lower their standards of customer service, American Airlines (AA) has done just that.

As revealed on X by aviation watchdog JonNYC, the carrier issued a reminder to flight attendants to avoid going above and beyond for Economy passengers, for the sake of "consistency".

The notice read: "as part of our commitment to ensuring a consistent customer experience, please refrain from offering Premium Cabin amenities/service items (i.e. pillows, blankets, amenity kits, and certain food items) to customers who are not seated in a Premium Cabin".

The unusual instruction follows a similar theme to AA's advice to flight attendants last year, when it asked them to prevent passengers from moving to otherwise-empty seats that have legroom.



BNE's Golden Arches

CHEESEBURGER-LOVERS will be happy to learn that Brisbane Airport (BNE) is getting its very own McDonald's this summer as part of the hub's terminal redevelopment (TD 30 Oct).

The iconic fast food restaurant, which will also feature a McCafe and user-friendly kiosks, will be located in the Food Court opposite Gate 41.

BNE Executive GM of Commercial, Martin Ryan, said Maccas "has consistently remained the most requested retailer and we couldn't be more delighted to deliver".

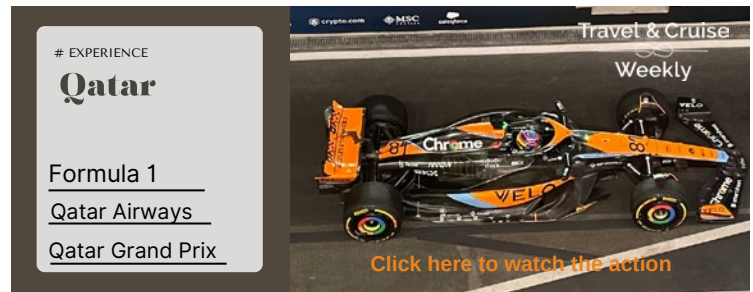
It just one of 10 new food and beverage destinations set to open in the hub in the coming months.

Top End gets chatty

TOURISM Northern Territory has pulled into the star power of media personality Abbie Chatfield to help launch ChatNT, an Australian-first AI innovation.

Named as the DMO's 'Chief Sensory Officer for Summer in the NT', Chatfield has injected her bold and adventurous personality and her knowledge of the NT into the AI tool, which offers inspiration and advice for Aussies who are planning a summer holiday in the Top End.

Users can expect "Abbie-like" responses when they interact with the ChatGPT-inspired tool, which uses GPT-3.5's advanced natural language processing capabilities via the Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service.



EXPERIENCE
Qatar

Formula 1

Qatar Airways

Qatar Grand Prix

Click here to watch the action

Gold for 10 agents in return

TEN agents were awarded with Gold Choice Awards as the Travellers Choice Awards returned after four years.

Hosted by media personality Christina Morrissy, the awards took place at The Star on the Gold Coast in front of a packed house.

The Gold Award winners (pictured) were Select World Travel, QLD; Jamison Travel, ACT; Oliver Travel, SA; Windsong Travel, NSW; Endeavour Travel & Cruise, QLD; Everywhere Travel, WA, Chris Watson Travel, NSW; Panorama Cruise & Travel, NSW; Capricorn Travel, WA; and Ballina Cruise & Travel, NSW.

Winning agents got to choose their prize, between travelling with a purpose in Vietnam thanks to Adventure World, discovering the grand landscapes of New Zealand's Bay of Plenty courtesy of ANZCRO, or relaxing on a private atoll in the Maldives as guests of Club Med.



Launched back in 2007, the Choice Awards recognise Travellers Choice members for their support of the network's preferred suppliers.

Travellers Choice Managing Director Christian Hunter said, "It marks the success our members have been able to deliver as the industry recovers and, this year, we have seen the return of some outstanding sales performances despite a few lingering challenges". DF

G'day to packages

G'DAY Group has unveiled a collection of new multi-night packages for the 2024-25 season.

The fully commissionable range includes three- and two-night experiences at Discovery Resorts properties Kings Canyon, Undara and Lake Argyle, as well as extended four-day experiences at El Questro in Western Australia.

Packages are available to book now for travel commencing 01 Apr, and agents who book on behalf of their clients between 09 Nov and 31 Jan 2024 will also save up to \$400pp under G'day's Book Ahead & Save campaign.

Thai advice lowered

THE Australian Government has lowered its travel safety warning for the Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Songkhla provinces of Thailand, scaling down its 'do not travel' edict to be replaced by 'reconsider the need to travel'.

Ongoing risks of low-level insurgent activity still exist in the aforementioned areas, DFAT said, reaffirming a high degree of caution is still needed for Thailand more broadly.



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Travellers Choice shines bright on the GC

THE Travellers Choice 2023 conference took place over the weekend, under the theme 'Shine'. It was the second Travellers Choice conference to be held in the post-pandemic era, with well over 200 delegates from all over Australia descending on The Star on the Gold Coast. Attendees were treated to a luxurious welcome reception on Fri night at the YOT Club with an all white dress theme, before the conference officially kicked off on Sat.

Master of Ceremonies Christina Morrissy kept the crowd entertained during both the conference and the awards gala, which took place later that night.

The conference speaker line-up included the likes of Travellers Choice Managing Director Christian Hunter, ATIA CEO Dean Long, Group General Manager - Consolidation at Air Tickets Rohan Moss, and international keynote speaker Geoff Ram, who flew in from the UK courtesy of Singapore Airlines.

Delegates then checked out a packed exhibition hall, before heading back home on Sun afternoon.



THE Travellers Choice team.



GETTING into the party atmosphere at the first Traveller Choice Awards in four years.



ATIA'S Richard Taylor and Dean Long soak up the night.



CHRISTIAN Hunter points to his money maker.



THE Travellers Choice Gold Award winners take to the stage.



GEOFF Ram had no trouble capturing the audience's attention.



CUNARD'S Lauren Togher with P&O's Erin King.



MC CHRISTINA Morrissy kicks off the conference proceedings.



SINGAPORE Airlines' Hal Balderstone introducing keynote speaker Geoff Ram.



DONNING their finest white garb, delegates dance away at the YOT Club.



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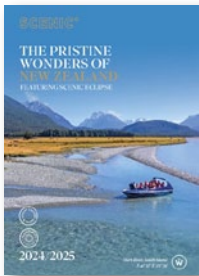
Wendy Wu Tours - China 2024 - 2025

Wendy Wu Tours says 'Ni Hao' to China as it unveils a new brochure, catering for explorers to discover the breathtaking destination featuring some of its best-selling tours. The travel guide also boasts new itineraries including the China by Rail journey, as well as so much more in the surrounding regions and nations like Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Tibet. The tour operator also offers the option of fully inclusive touring on select itineraries, where travellers can rest easy knowing the entire holiday will be handled by an expert tour guide. For travellers seeking a more intimate experience, there is also a new range of new private tours available.



Trafalgar - Europe & Britain 2024 - 2025

Travellers do not need to look further to plan their holidays in Europe and Britain, as they can embark on a selection of over 100 tours in Trafalgar's latest release contained in its 184-page brochure. The detailed travel guide showcases the best of Europe and Britain "unlocked for you", with a tonne of must-see destinations, local secrets, and one-of-a-kind experiences detailed throughout. Guests can choose a perfect tour out of the 126 available across 50 countries in the booklet. To allow keen travellers to make more informed decisions, each itinerary has a highlights and ratings section to provide authentic feedback on specific tours.



Scenic - The Pristine Wonders of New Zealand

Unearth the pristine wonders of New Zealand with Scenic's new guide to our Pacific neighbour in the 24/25 travel season. To fully immerse its travellers to explore New Zealand's various landscapes and rich culture, the luxury cruise and tour company has also included a handpicked selection of iconic hotel stays and exclusive exotic experiences.

Travellers can personalise their journeys with the options of a range of Scenic Freechoice activities,

including savouring gourmet food and wine, as well as premium therapeutic experiences and more.

Wintiji Wiru - what a winner!



THE Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia's Wintiji Wiru was recognised as a standout performer at the 36th Brolga Northern Territory Tourism Awards on Sat night.

The desert light show won best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experience as well as being named the Chair's Choice for Tourism Excellence during the ceremony at the Darwin Convention Centre.

A total of 28 Northern Territory-businesses, organisations and individuals were crowned winners on the night, including Art Tours of Australia, which topped the New Tourism Business category.

The Brolga Awards also saw Katherine Outback Experience declared the Best Tourism Attraction for the fifth year in a row, with the operator also taking out the new category, Excellence in Accessible Tourism. *JM*

Pictured: Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia Board member, Trish Angus, proudly showing off the two trophies.

Bankstown boosted

BANKSTOWN Airport in Sydney's southwest has received a \$130 million investment from Aeria Management Group to upgrade its facilities and services.

Announced at the City of Canterbury Bankstown's CB Evolve event at the airport last week, the cash injection will fund two new infrastructure projects at the Aeria precinct, with the plans to be released in early 2024.

One of the projects is a \$50 million central aviation precinct, which will include up to nine new hangars with priority VIP aircraft access, while the other is an \$80 million new-mixed use retail and industrial precinct.

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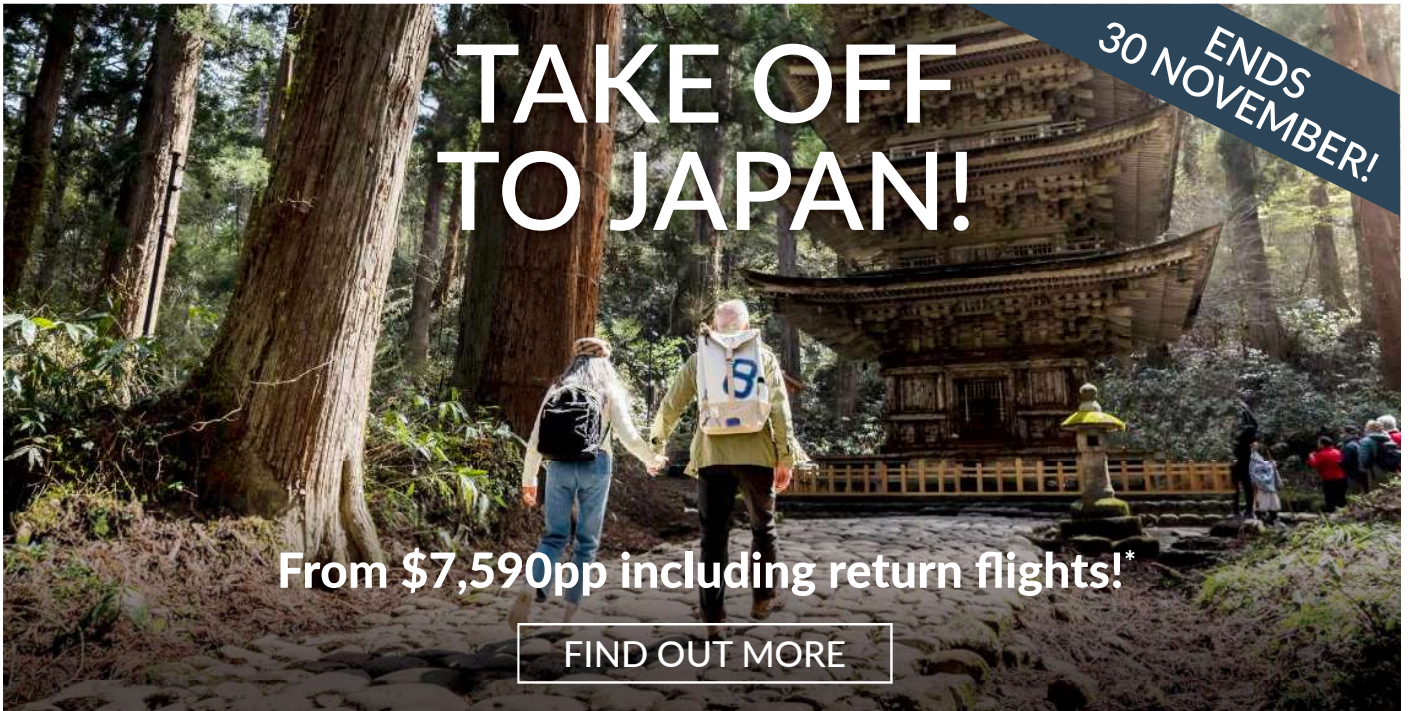


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GGTS launches 'Hybrid Wholesale Travel' platform

Australian-owned and operated Global Group Travel Services (GGTS) offers unparalleled opportunities to travel consultants via its unique one-click 'Hybrid Wholesale Travel' business model which seamlessly connects travel professionals with a vast network of 150+ Destination Management Companies (DMCs) spanning the globe.

Operating exclusively in Australian dollar pricing, the 'Hybrid Wholesale Travel' platform provides instant access to an extensive array of products and services, including over 1000 private touring options and a diverse selection of regular departure touring experiences.

Setting GGTS apart is its commitment to customisation with its local destination partners, armed with over 30 years of experience, possessing unmatched passion

and expertise and in position to craft tailor-made FIT and Group Travel experiences, ensuring every journey is as unique as the client.

At the core of the innovative product is GGTS' unique 'Travel Brain' technology which streamlines the entire process, from product discovery to real-time invoicing. Travel Brain's' one-click digital marketing capabilities facilitate effortless promotion, reaching potential customers on a 24/7 basis, not only 'selling' for agents but also building their consumer databases and reach.

With convenient credit card payment options via Travel Pay and Mint Payments, GGTS simplifies real-time financial transactions with its platform thriving on inclusivity, welcoming travel agents exclusively.

In essence, GGTS is a unique, comprehensive travel solution, empowering travel agents with a vast selection of unique touring experiences, cutting-edge digital marketing tools, all backed up with access to a team of seasoned professionals.

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