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The Travel Junction is now Infinity Holidays, hailing an exciting new era and the return of a renowned brand.

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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news including our **Luxury** feature page, plus a front cover wrap from **Infinity Holidays** and a special update from **MW Tours**.

THE PLACE TO BE

Celebrate 40 years of excellence at your client's favourite destinations in Thailand, Japan, The Maldives & more.

NTIA gets down to business

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has announced the third batch of finalists for its hotly anticipated National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs).

The peak industry body has released the list of finalists in the Business categories, following the announcement of a short list for the Industry Voted and Individual categories last week.

Flight Centre Travel Group appears as a finalist in several categories, including Most Outstanding Travel Agency Group, as does Helloworld and ittravel.

Other travel operators up for a gong on the travel sector's night of nights include Luxury Escapes, Ignite Travel Group, Sno'n'Ski Holidays, AAT Kings, CT Partners, and many more.

In a sharp assessment of local aviation, Virgin Australia is the only Aussie airline up for an award in the 'Most Popular Airline' category, with Air New Zealand, Emirates, and Qatar

Airways also making the cut.

While no Aussie DMOs made it through to the Most Popular Tourism Office category, Tourism NZ managed to make the list, as did the Singapore Tourism Board and Destination Canada.

Meanwhile, Accor, Club Med, Hyatt Hotels, IHG Hotels & Resorts, and The Ascott Limited are all vying for the title of Most Popular Accommodation Group.

ATIA Chief Executive Dean Long shared, "the quality and professionalism of travel businesses in Australia is second to none and the Finalists for this year's NTIAs exemplify that".

See the full list of finalists across all categories **HERE**. *JM*

MW eBrochure offer

MW TOURS is giving away a \$100 gift voucher for every \$10,000 of eBrochure 2023/2024 product booked and deposited between 15 Sep-15 Nov - see **p8**.

Travel times Infinity

THE Travel Junction (TTJ) is ringing in an exciting new era under the name Infinity Holidays, signalling the return of the renowned brand.

Head to the **cover page** to discover why the return of the Infinity Holidays brand will be bigger and better than ever.



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Aussies forking out more

AUSTRALIANS are travelling longer and spending more on their summer holiday bookings than their counterparts in places like Europe and the United States. The finding was contained in

new research commissioned by Europ Assistance, with 1,000 Aussies surveyed in the report indicating an average spend on summer trips of \$4,602.

The figure was higher than the USA (\$4,544), Canada (\$3,633) and Europe (\$3,144), with the larger outlay suggesting that despite inflationary pressures, travel remains a top priority.

Encouragingly, Australians are also taking the longest summer holidays, the study showed, booking a 2.1 week-long trip on average, nicely ahead of the 1.9 weeks for Europeans, 1.8 weeks for Canadians and 1.6 weeks for Americans.

In analysing the trend, InsureandGo Chief Commercial Officer Jonathan Etkind said Aussies are forced to save up more money for holidays to afford expensive air tickets, and the often long-haul flights make Aussies want to stay longer. **AB**

Norwegian sails solo

FOR the first time in its history, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) will offer three solo stateroom categories across its 19 ships.

To be rolled out progressively from 02 Jan 2024, the decision to add more than 1,000 solo rooms across Solo Inside, Solo Oceanview and Solo Balcony categories will see a 144% increase in occupancy potential for solo travellers with NCL.



UA buys 50 787s

UNITED Airlines has ordered 50 more Boeing 787s and purchase rights for up to 40 A321neos to be delivered by 2030.

The orders will afford UA fleet flexibility to phase out older jets.

Cooking up a famil

TRAVEL advisors have the opportunity to snag 10 spaces on an upcoming famil to the Cook Islands thanks to a promotion by Cook Islands Tourism and Jetstar.

Running from 01-06 Dec, the tropical agent adventure will visit Rarotonga and sister island Aitutaki, the latter renowned to have the most beautiful blue lagoon in the world.

Winners will fly on Jetstar's A321neo LR aircraft and be treated to a swathe of aquatic and cultural activities.

To enter, agents need to answer in 25 words or less what they love about selling the Cook Islands.

Agents can land a spot **HERE**.

King dodges Senate

FEDERAL Transport Minister Catherine King has pushed back on calls to front a Senate Committee regarding her controversial decision to knock back Qatar Airways' request to double capacity Down Under.

Minister King suggested an appearance in the Senate would only be a time-wasting exercise as part of a "political stunt".

"While Senator McKenzie is wasting time...I am spending time doing the hard work the Coalition never did to set our aviation sector up for the future," King said, adding her approach was the same that Opposition Leader Peter Dutton had taken.

Adding to her stringent defence, King also claimed that it was a "long-standing practice" that House of Representatives members do not appear before Senate committees.

Senator Birmingham said it was "the height of evasiveness" and King should be held accountable.

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Travel in a T-swizzle

AUSTRALIAN cities are experiencing a major surge in online search interest from travellers overseas in the wake of Taylor Swift's upcoming tour.

Amadeus data shows the volume of searches for Melbourne and Sydney peaked in week 26 of the year, not surprisingly, only days after tix for Taylor Swift went on sale locally.

The spike in searches resulted in an average week-on-week increase of 44% between weeks 24 and 26, while Kiwis showed even bigger interest in Tay Tay, rising by a whopping 240% week-on-week during the same period.

Clearly the numbers suggest travellers are enjoying an enchanted love story with Swift beyond anyone's wildest dreams.



Strike goes ahead

THE Australian Federation of Air Pilots has accepted an offer to return to the negotiating table with Qantas, but the decision is too late to stop strike action from going ahead today (**TD** 29 Sep).

Qantas said it has been able to protect the plans of 3,500 customers in WA by redeploying Qantas 737 jets for intra-WA flights and utilising aircraft from other charter operators.

Around 75% of customers booked on cancelled flights have been moved to other flights on the same day, the airline said, adding that for any customers not able to travel on the same day, hotel accommodation will be provided at Qantas' cost.

Those caught up in the industrial action can request a full refund if they don't wish to fly.

"The union has finally accepted our offer to negotiate, but it's disappointing that they are continuing with their disruptive strike action," Qantas said.

Team to skipper the future

AUSTRALIAN Cruise

Association CEO Jill Abel believes the diverse backgrounds of the new executives elected to its board this week will hold the association in great stead as it looks to capitalise on a rebounding cruise sector.

Following its AGM, ACA saw Brendan Connell (Port of Brisbane) **pictured** appointed Deputy Chair and James Coughlan (Shorex Australia) as Treasurer.

"We are in a very exciting time for our industry as cruise continues to go from strength to strength," Abel said.

"Our newly formed executive and management teams represent a range of organisations who can provide us with the deep expertise to take us into the future," she added.

The ACA also revealed that the South Australian Tourism Commission's Andrew McKinnon has been added to



the Management Committee, joining Kristy Little (TasPorts), Shayne Murray (Cruise Broome) and Karlie Cavanagh (Inchcape Shipping Services).

The changes also saw former Deputy Chair Scott Lovett (Tourism NT) step down after serving two terms in what Abel described as a "highly challenging time for our industry."

"Scott provided us with excellent counsel and steered us through some particularly stormy waters & we look forward to him continuing as a trusted advisor in the association," she added.

Philip Holliday (Port Authority of NSW) remains as Chair. **AB**

Fill your heart with
Ireland

What
fills my
heart?

The stunning views
- Francis



Going SA's way

SOUTH Australia has enlisted the help of aging rocker Lenny Kravitz to remind travellers that its state is full of tourism gems.

The South Australian Tourism Commission's (SATC) latest 'Travel Our Way' campaign debuted during the broadcast of the AFL Grand Final, and aims to inspire more travel by evoking an 'up for anything' attitude exploring its real stories, raw experiences, and rugged landscapes.

"Over the past nine months, I've been out across the state meeting with operators and seeing first-hand what they have to offer," SATC CEO Emma Terry said.

"Our objective was to capture some of these world-class offerings...whether you are soaking up the atmosphere at an event or festival, discovering wildlife in their natural habitat, enjoying incredible food, or just relaxing with family and friends."

Watch a 60 second version of the campaign push **HERE**.

FC welcomes back Mark

FCTG Independent's growing sales team just got a little bigger this week, with the thriving division appointing Mark Robertson as its newest Business Development Partner.

Based in Sydney and bringing with him more than 12 years of retail travel experience to the role, Robertson rejoins the Flight Centre business after a two-year stint with Jorbens Luxury Hotel Guides as its National Business Development Manager.

Prior to that, Robertson was with Flight Centre in various positions for close to a decade.

"Mark's career in the travel industry has been marked by his commitment to excellence, a passion for learning and development, and a keen understanding of the travel landscape," Flight Centre said.

"His dedication to nurturing talent has been a cornerstone of his leadership, fostering an



environment where individuals can reach their full potential."

FCTG Independent boasts Travel Partners, Travel Associates at Home, Travel Associates franchise and Flight Centre Independent advisors, with the expanding arm of Flight Centre now operating 1,700 independent agencies across Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and South Africa.

"This division...has experienced tremendous growth in the last few years - both in network size and TTV growth," FC noted.

Pictured: Robertson with Fiona Batten and Lydwina Nio. **AB**

Green symposium

HOW to mitigate carbon emissions globally in the aviation sector was the focus of the opening day of the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) inaugural World Sustainability Symposium (WSS) in Madrid.

Recommendations raised at the gathering included better ways to track the progress of carbon reduction, more govt incentives, improved SAF development strategies, and globally aligned policies to support aviation's transition to renewables.

Sabre adds some spice to Cinnamon

CINNAMON Hotels & Resorts has adopted Sabre Hospitality's Central Reservations System (CRS) to help drive growth and scale.

The hotelier has properties located in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, with the software to assist in its expansion plans by providing greater data accuracy.

Storytellers,
business owners,
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We're personal travel managers. Join us.





Window Seat

WE'RE sure there are plenty of parents out there who have casually thought about packing up their kids and sending them away, but one father it seems had the confidence to try it out in real life at Canberra Airport.

A Queensland man has avoided a massive fine this week after daring his teenage son to ride a baggage carousel into a restricted area in the nation's capital in Jul.

The 58-year-old pleaded guilty in court to aiding and abetting his teenage son to enter a restricted area, with the prosecution highlighting the importance of airport security.

Initially, the daring father-son duo got away with their caper, but when they returned to the airport days later they were arrested by airport security. *AB*

A style of things to come



JAPAN Airlines (JAL) has unveiled more details of its new Airbus A350-1000 aircraft cabin interiors, which will become the airline's new flagship for its international service.

Due to be introduced on JAL flights before the end of the year, the new interiors boast redesigned seats across all classes and more spacious and private First and Business class cabins.

First class seating (**pictured top**) will offer six suites on each flight, providing premium passengers



with more overhead space (overhead storage has been removed), and new individual doors for enhanced privacy.

Meanwhile, despite the increased number of 54 Business class seats (**inset**), designs have prioritised the feeling of space, comfort and individuality. *AB*

Hotel in the fast lane

SUPERCARS and Marriott Bonvoy have teamed up to provide racegoers the ultimate experience at Boost Mobile Gold Coast 500 later this month.

A new premium package offers many premium resort and race day perks as part of its Marriott Bonvoy Moments program.



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6pm at the historic "The
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Melbourne Roadshow](#)

VISIT BERLIN

Photo: Chris Martin Scholl



Madagascar alert

TRAVELLERS are being advised to exercise a high degree of caution if travelling to Madagascar in Nov, with the country holding presidential elections during the month.

Political protests in the country have been known to turn violent and security forces may respond with aggressive reprisals.

DFAT suggests avoiding protests and all public gatherings.

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Ponant on the road

LUXURY cruise line Ponant is giving travel agents the opportunity to mingle with its expedition leaders and experts at its 35th anniversary roadshow series.

Kicking off on Mon 09 Oct at the Four Seasons Sydney, Ponant will teach attendees all they need to know about its fleet of luxury vessels, stateroom and suite categories, gastronomy, life on board, and more.

The roadshow will then make its way to Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Noosa and the Gold Coast - for details, [CLICK HERE](#).

London's 1st Raffles

LONDON has welcomed its first Raffles hotel, The OWO, bringing a new luxury offering to the city's Westminster area.

The property houses 120 rooms and suites, a spa, and a collection of restaurants and bars, including renowned chef Mauro Colagreco's signature restaurant, plus entertainment spaces including a grand ballroom.

Guests will enjoy lavish features throughout the hotel, including a grand staircase, a huge chandelier, mosaic-tiled floors and oak-panelled walls.

LUXURY LODGES REVAMPS PORTAL

LUXURY Lodges of Australia has launched a new trade portal designed to offer agents a wider list of selling points for its portfolio of premium properties.

The new platform from the network of luxury properties offers advisors a more comprehensive online resource than its predecessor, providing access to high-quality marketing assets, media resources, planning and training materials.

Marketing assets on the portal include links to images and video libraries, YouTube and Vimeo channels, white label brochures, social media connections, maps and logos.

Meanwhile the revamped media resources section offers access to a set of evolving media backgrounders filled with bite-sized news and story angles, details on the 'halo effect', as well as the collective impact its lodges



have on the regional communities in which they operate.

The portal also offers users a suite of useful planning tools such as suggested itineraries and what to do at what time, experiences on offer at its lodges, and a live availability calendar, in addition to ideas for small group travel.

Agents looking to brush up on their knowledge of the Luxury Lodges portfolio can now participate in newly crafted interactive training sessions, as well as directly access Tourism Australia's Aussie Specialist Program, which provides foreign

information on Australia as a tourist destination more broadly.

"This portal is the culmination of years developing a comprehensive set of resources needed by our valued trade partners in navigating the complexities of planning experiential luxury travel in Australia," Luxury Lodges of Australia Executive Chair Penny Rafferty said.

Lodges represented by the premium network include Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley in NSW and El Questro Homestead in WA (pictured). AB

Anantara in Koh Yao

ANANTARA Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas has opened in Thailand's Phang Nga Bay to offer 148 luxurious suites, villas and penthouses.

With a range of unique activities available, from sidecar tours to tie-dye classes and mountain climbing, as well as unspoiled beaches and jungles to explore, there is something for every premium guest.

LUX Belle Mare reopens doors in Mauritius

A NEW level of decadence has arrived on the east coast of Mauritius, with the highly anticipated reopening of LUX Belle Mare following more than a year of renovations.

The reimagined property now boasts a minimalist design that is sleek and contemporary, without straying from its traditional feel.

Natural lighting has been enhanced, while guests will

also notice fresh touches of luxury, including an entry pathway bordered by tropical greens and the Riyad-style lobby with arches covered in hand-glazed tiles.

Also new are the natural dye-painted frescoes inspired by traditional Indian folk art inside the upscale restaurant, Amari by Vineet, and a ceiling centrepiece of hanging red ribbons and lanterns at Duck Laundry.

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Slated for a return to full operation in Dec, **Amora Hotel Brisbane** is undergoing a property-wide refurbishment, where its guest rooms and facilities will be transformed into "Brisbane's next luxury hotel". After a financial takeover from the

Thailand-based hotelier, the 295-key property is aiming to transform into a five-star hotel to better align the group's goal of positioning itself as a five-star hospitality group in Australia and Thailand.

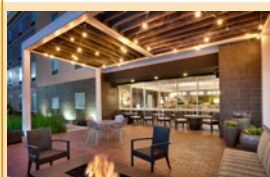


Making the brand's debut in New Zealand's largest city, **La Quinta by Wyndham Ellerslie Auckland** has now opened. The 246-room urban getaway is in close proximity to several landmark destinations, including Ellerslie Events Centre, Mount

Smart Stadium and the ASB Showgrounds. Guests are able to utilise its two meeting rooms and fitness centre, as well as access free wi-fi and enjoy flat-screen TVs and more in each room.



BAR45 at 45 Park Lane in London has introduced a new cocktail menu which includes eight brand-new additions. Drawing inspiration from various artists around the world, including Japanese artist Yayoi Kusuma's multi-coloured polka dots to the artworks of the painter Magritte, the three-part menu aims to take guests on a fruitful journey with its new flavourful beverages. The venue opens daily from 12pm to 12am.



The 92-room **Home2 Suites by Hilton Houston/Katy** has completed a property-wide revamp. Located in Houston in the United States, the pet-friendly property now offers all-suite accommodations with kitchenettes and modular furniture. Guests can enjoy complimentary wi-fi, free breakfast every morning and a fitness centre, as well as car park spaces, digital check-in and more.



Hox Chalet, located in the middle of Morzine in the French Alps, is preparing a return as early as Jan 2024. Partnering with Grey Goose Vodka and Treeline Chalets, the mountain retreat houses six ensuite bedrooms with space for up to 12 guests, a sound-proofed cinema room, a huge communal kitchen and a vodka cocktail bar complemented by an outdoor hot tub for stargazing.

keep dreaming...

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Airports through AI's eyes



AI TECHNOLOGY has taken the world by storm in recent years, and the flag carrier of Iceland, Icelandair, has decided to use the tech to formulate what some US airports may look like in more than 20 years' time.

With an increasing number of conversations surrounding sustainability in air travel, the AI designs draw heavily on aspects of reusable energy.

The future according to AI for Denver International Airport for example (render **pictured**) depicts its most prominent feature on its rooftop, which includes Teflon-coated fibreglass and steel and solar power capability.

Denver's air hub of the future will boast an expansive space of over 135km², and include multiple green spaces throughout a bio-focused setting.

Meanwhile John F. Kennedy International in the 2050s (**inset** top right), incorporates a glossy aesthetic with the introduction of two glass domes floating atop water around the hub, furnished with an abundance of green spaces as part of its surroundings. Multiple channels of roads pass



through the JFK Airport of the future, a statement AI suggests is attributed to the city's vibrancy.

Infusing a blend of tropical and contemporary aesthetics, Orlando International Airport in the future (**inset** below) boasts an artificial river in the middle, segregating the site into two grand sections.

With AI envisioning future aircraft with wingless designs, the hub has a backdrop of extravagant features that resemble the city's landmark of an expanded Disneyland. *MW*





2024 Japan, South Korea & Taiwan

MW Tours' Japan, South Korea & Taiwan Digital eBrochure has proven to include their most sought-after product, with Northeast Asia continuing in popularity with the Australian market. Each of these destinations has a rich culture and history, filled with beautiful sights and local scenery. Your clients can enjoy wandering through temples and museums, delicious cuisine, and unique modes of transport (from high-speed bullet trains to cable cars).

This year they have refined their product offerings to include more unique experiences, including traditional tea ceremonies and local cooking classes. MW Tours have also taken on board client feedback to include more free time to explore Tokyo on their Modular Tours, as well as additional time in Hiroshima

on their best-selling Cherry Blossom & Garden Tour. You can also assure your clients of their guaranteed weekly departures for all Combination Tours throughout Northeast Asia.

Why choose MW Tours? A family-owned Australian company, they are small enough to be personal, yet big enough to provide the best value for their unique and niche product. Their bespoke range of destinations include Northeast and Southeast Asia, Southern and Eastern Africa, and the Indian Subcontinent. All tours include experienced guides, authentic highlights, 4-5* accommodation, and more to ensure your clients enjoy an unforgettable experience.

To celebrate MW Tours' new 2024 eBrochures, they have a range of

Special Offers available for your clients throughout each destination, including Welcome Gifts, Accommodation Upgrades, and more!*

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*Conditions apply, excludes Excursions. New bookings only, for travel during 2024. Minimum numbers apply to tours.