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CVFR trade support

CVFR Consolidation is continuing to highlight its independence, stability and consistent support for its trade partners via the **cover page** of today's *Travel Daily*.

GF TLV update

GULF Air has released updated ticketing procedures for individual and group passengers impacted by cancelled flights to and from Tel Aviv this week.

Passengers are now able to rebook/reroute their journey to Cairo, Amman and Bahrain for travel on GF services for dates prior to 31 Oct without incurring any penalties.

One fee-free change can be made and passengers are also entitled to an involuntary refund without fees applying.

QF Chairman to deplane

THE Qantas Board says its plans for renewal, including the planned retirement of Chairman Richard Goyder (*TD* breaking news), are "recognition of the reputational issues facing the Group and to support restoration of trust in the company".

Goyder isn't going just yet, but has said he will retire prior to the Qantas Annual General Meeting in just over 12 months' time.

As previously revealed, long-time Non-Executive Director Michael L'Estrange will retire at this year's AGM early next month, while "to facilitate further renewal, Jacqueline Hey and Maxine Brenner will retire at the Qantas half-year results in Feb 2024 after 10 years of service," according to a statement today.

Three new directors will offer themselves for election at next month's AGM - former American Airlines chief Doug Parker; new Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson; and Dr Heather Smith; while existing directors Todd Sampson and Belinda Hutchinson will also be up for a vote.

"Once the new directors are

in place, the Board is expected to have an average tenure of around three years at the 2024 AGM, providing a balance of fresh leadership with necessary continuity," the company said.

Goyder said the Board recognised that accountability was required to restore trust, and once again apologised for "those times where we got it wrong".

"I have always sought to act in the best interests of Qantas...a measured and orderly succession at Board level will support the important work underway led by Vanessa and her new management team," he said.

"Fundamentally, the Group is in a very strong position to overcome its current challenges and deliver for all its stakeholders in the years ahead."

Processes are now underway to appoint new non-executive directors in the coming months as well as a new Chairman.

"The Board has also commenced a process of independently reviewing key governance matters over the past 12 months," the statement concluded. *BP*

Accessible learning

THE trade can join Aussie specialist trainer Caroline Rutherford for an accessible and inclusive webinar at 11am (AEDT) tomorrow for an update on accessible and inclusive operators and accommodation in Australia.

Luxury, adventure, nature and culture will also be discussed in this special Tourism Australia session, plus those who attend live have the chance to win one of four "boxes of goodies", each worth \$200.

Register via the TA learning catalogue on the Aussie Specialist site by **CLICKING HERE**.

Big ticketing deal

UK-BASED theme park and attraction tickets specialist Attraction World Group has been acquired by a private equity consortium, with the new owners aiming to take the business global.

The company's brands include GoSeeDo, FloridaTix and AttractionTix, with the infusion of new capital set to see the business expand into loyalty programs, OTAs, airlines, rail and transportation as well as "fuel growth across new markets".

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features nine pages of the latest news including our **Luxury** feature page, plus a front cover wrap from **CVFR Consolidation Services** and a full page from **Infinity Holidays**.

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Govt plots Israel airlift

THE ongoing escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip has seen the Federal Government draw up contingency plans for an emergency airlift to evacuate Australians from the region.

The move was foreshadowed by the *Australian Financial Review* today, which confirmed that the government is looking at its options in the event that airlines continue to cancel flights.

"The Australian Government is monitoring developments and assessing all options," according to a spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs and

Trade, with the possibility that both military and civilian aircraft could be utilised.

If such an airlift did take place it would likely be similar to the 2006 incident under former Prime Minister John Howard when ships and planes were used to pull thousands of Australian citizens out of Lebanon following an invasion by Israel. *BP*

MSC cruise bonuses

MSC Cruises has released a special Cruise Month offer in which CLIA accredited travel advisors will receive a \$50 e-gift card for every booking of a last minute 2023/24 hot deal.

Passengers will also enjoy a bonus of \$100 in onboard credit per cabin, which can be used on shore excursions, specialty dining, spa treatments and more.

More info and deal details are online at mscbook.com.

Framework outdated

EXCLUSIVE

IN RESPONSE to a Senate Committee yesterday recommending the Federal Government "urgently" review the Sydney Airport slot 'use it or lose it' rule (**TD** 10 Oct), Sydney Airport CEO Geoff Culbert agreed the system needed to change.

"The one thing that has become abundantly clear throughout this whole process is that high airfares, cancellations and the misuse of slots at Sydney Airport are all symptoms of an outdated regulatory framework in the aviation sector," Culbert told **TD**.

"The Committee's report gets to the heart of these issues and suggests reforms which will ultimately benefit the travelling public and as a first step, we look forward to the release of the Harris Review recommendations and working constructively with all stakeholders," he added.

Bonza CEO Tim Jordan has also lambasted the issue (**TD** 29 Sep).

Jetstar Asia to Wuxi

A NEW route between Singapore and mainland China is set to debut, with nonstop Jetstar Asia services to Wuxi in the southern Jiangsu province, about 140km from Shanghai.

GDS screens indicate the flights will operate twice weekly from 28 Dec, increasing to four frequencies effective 15 Jan.

VA listing deferred

VIRGIN Australia's parent company Bain Capital has reportedly delayed plans for an initial public listing on the ASX for the Aussie carrier.

Quoting an inside source at the private equity firm with "knowledge of the matter", *Reuters* reported that a listing in 2024 will now be considered after assessing market conditions.

Bain had previously said it would explore relisting VA, which it bought for \$3.5 billion.

More on VA's profits on **p3**.

Qantas summer sale

QANTAS has launched an 'unlock summer magic sale' on flights to the Northern Territory.

Destinations include Darwin, Uluru and Alice Springs, with economy one way deals on offer until 11.59pm AEDT on 15 Oct.

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Collette cans Israel

ALL Collette departures to Israel have been cancelled until the end of the year, in response to the conflict which has erupted in the Gaza Strip late last week.

Over the weekend the tour operator ensured that almost 100 travellers who were on tour in the region were able to fly home safely, after Collette made the early decision to move groups north to Jordan so they could access Amman flights, rather than waiting for Tel Aviv services.

Executive VP Jeff Roy said Collette was closely monitoring developments in Israel and making operating decisions for tours post 01 Jan 2024 at least 60 days in advance of travel.

"We are deeply saddened by the events that transpired in Israel over the weekend," he said.

Collette this week transitioned its leadership to Jaclyn Leibl-Cote (**TD** yesterday), the company's first female CEO in its rich 106-year history.

Virgin Australia profitable

AFTER bleeding red ink for more than a decade, Virgin Australia yesterday reported a \$129 million annual statutory net profit after tax on total revenue of \$5 billion, which was more than double the turnover in the 2022 financial year.

The figures were filed with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, with the result driven by record demand for leisure travel, as well as the return of SME customers to pre-COVID levels.

There was also a "slower but important return of corporate travellers" while the Velocity loyalty business also recorded \$330 million in revenue.

CEO Jayne Hrdlicka said "these results are an important milestone for Virgin Australia... our results signal that the transformation of Virgin Australia is progressing well".

"By creating a systemically lower

cost base and a conservative balance sheet, as well as investing heavily in technology and our frontline, we are well positioned for the future," she said.

"Value and choice are core to our business, and as the continuing rise in cost of living impacts household budgets, we believe we are well positioned to continue to provide customers with the best value in the market."

The last 12 months have seen several key milestones including the commencement of short-haul international routes to Tokyo, Queenstown, Samoa and Vanuatu, while the Velocity frequent flyer program reached 11.5 million members.

The private equity-owned airline also took delivery of its first Boeing 737-MAX8, with a further seven to arrive in the coming 12 months and 25 737-MAX10s planned for delivery from the 2025 financial year. *BP*

VA plots new cabins

VIRGIN Australia will undertake a \$110 million refurbishment program for its existing Boeing 737 fleet, with the move confirmed yesterday by CEO Jayne Hrdlicka.

She said it was part of ongoing investments in customer-facing transformation, with other enhancements including the airline's baggage tracking app and its Rapid Rebook technology.

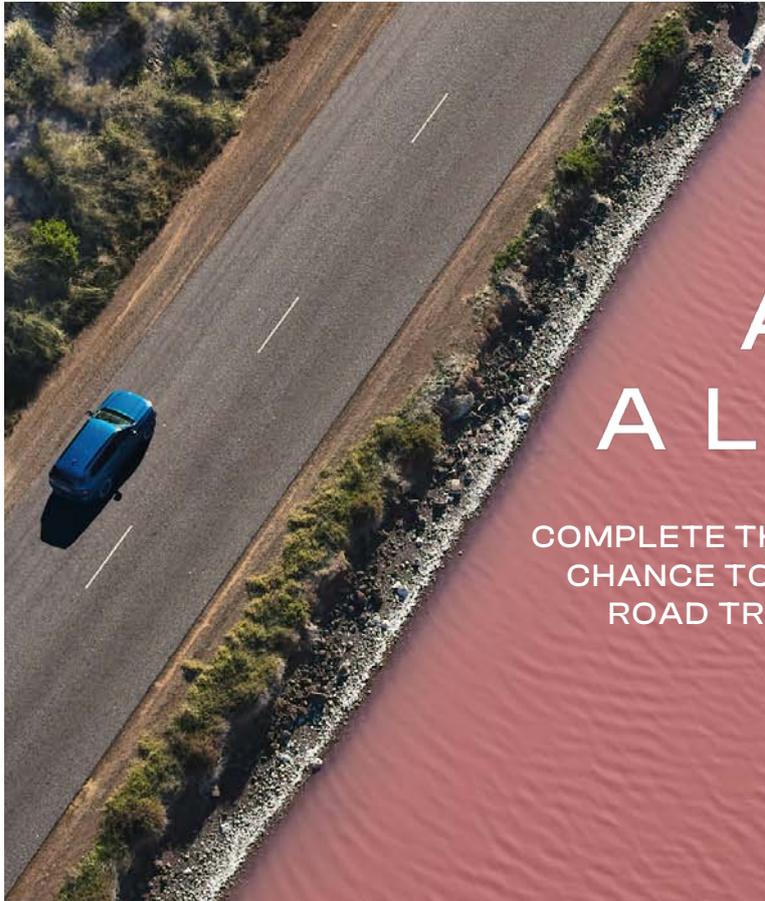
The innovations "help us to create experiences our guests love," Hrdlicka enthused.

Lots more Virgins

THE headcount at Virgin Australia reached 7,340 over the last 12 months including the recruitment of more than 1,800 frontline staff during the year.

Eligible staff received 6.5% of their salary in additional bonuses in 2022/23, totalling \$26 million.

In 2023/24 a further 1,500 employees will join the VA team.

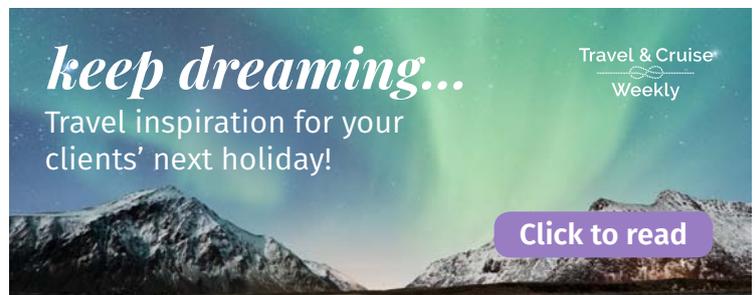


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Social media advising Gen Z

A NEW *Multigenerational Report* from The Travel Corporation's Trafalgar brand has revealed that an increasing volume of younger travellers are abandoning recommendations from friends and relatives in exchange for social media influencers and posts.

More than 40% of those aged between 18 and 29 said that they now primarily turn to social media for travel advice, a stark contrast to older demographics who still rely on trusted human advice to plan their trips.

All three generations (18-29, 30-50 and 50+) indicated that 'cost' and 'things to do' while on holiday were the biggest priorities when planning an itinerary, however food is more important to the youngest demographic.

While travellers aged 18-29 listed food (32%) as the most important factor on trips, the 30-50 group listed weather as their



third biggest priority, while the oldest cohort surveyed suggested accommodation was key.

When asked what was most important when planning trips for the whole family, the younger demographic was the only group to list budget as a key factor, with 43% suggesting the costing of a trip should be fully budgeted for ahead of time.

The 30-50s on the other hand were the only age group to suggest choosing accommodation that meet everyone's needs in their top three key factors.

All generations agreed that booking destinations and activities to suit all ages are key elements of holiday planning. AB

Record Jayride trips

AIRPORT transfer company Jayride has reported a record level of passenger bookings globally in Q1 2024, growing more than 50% on the previous corresponding period.

At the same time, net revenue increased by 24% while fixed costs across the company have also dropped by 15%.

Jayride revealed it has managed to raise more than \$1.5 million of a possible \$2.6 million share placement offer, with the injection of capital designed to strengthen the balance sheet and fuel future growth plans.

Initial traction of agents using the company's new trade portal was also listed as "promising".



Weight loss drug could lift airlines

ANALYSTS for investment bank Jefferies in the United States has claimed that appetite suppressant Ozempic could lead to positive financial outcomes for airlines.

The bank theorised that if enough overweight adults lost a significant volume of kilos using the medication, the reduction of weight in travellers on planes would save on fuel charges.

Assuming the average passenger's weight dropped by five kilos, the bank estimated a weight reduction of 811 kilos per flight, which would result in a saving of US\$80 million in annual fuel costs per airline.

The popular use of the diabetes-turned-weight loss drug has taken the world by storm, with many American celebrities endorsing its effectiveness as a way to lose weight, despite a litany of side effects such as vomiting, diarrhoea, and constipation.

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Overseas agents make a splash



MORE than 300 international travel agents recently sampled the best of Tropical North Queensland as part of Tourism Australia’s ongoing G’day Australia international tourism recovery program.

Predicted to generate at least \$2 million for TNQ’s visitor economy, the week-long famil saw travel advisors take a rapid ride down a rainforest river with Back Country Bliss, jump aboard scenic flights over the Great Barrier Reef with

Nautilus Aviation, snorkel with Calypso Reef Cruises, as well as dine with Outback Tasting Tours, to name just a few.

“We know right now international tourism is highly competitive...we want to make this week in the Tropical North an unforgettable experience for the travel agents who sell our world-class visitor experiences to international holidaymakers,” Queensland Assistant Tourism Minister Michael Healy said.

Europe bookings surge in '24

EUROPE is poised to be a hit among travellers in 2024, according to the latest insights from operator Topdeck.

General Manager David Gendle revealed that over two-thirds of the tour operator’s customers are booking trips to Europe, which is consistently its most in-demand destination.

More than half of its booked trips to Europe are set to depart in Jun-Sep, during the Northern Hemisphere summer period, while there is also a trend emerging for longer, multi-destination trips to the continent.

Topdeck revealed its customers are favouring European tours that are between 19 and 49 days in length for 2024, with the 36-day Play & Pause: Epic European itinerary the most booked trip.

While Greece continues to be the company’s most in-demand country for 10 years running, Turkiye is also a burgeoning

favourite, with Gendle revealing the new Sail & Swim: Turkey itinerary, announced just a few weeks ago, is already proving to be one of Topdeck’s most successful product launches to date. *JM*

Great Xmas gift: VA

VIRGIN Australia believes a reversal of a decision to block Qatar Airways expanding in Australia “could deliver benefits as early as Christmas” for Australians travelling to Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* this morning, the carrier said it welcomed the Committee’s recommendation to review the controversial call, adding that it is in the process of reviewing the report in full and will respond in more detail once it has had the chance to consider the findings.

More on VA’s profits on p3.

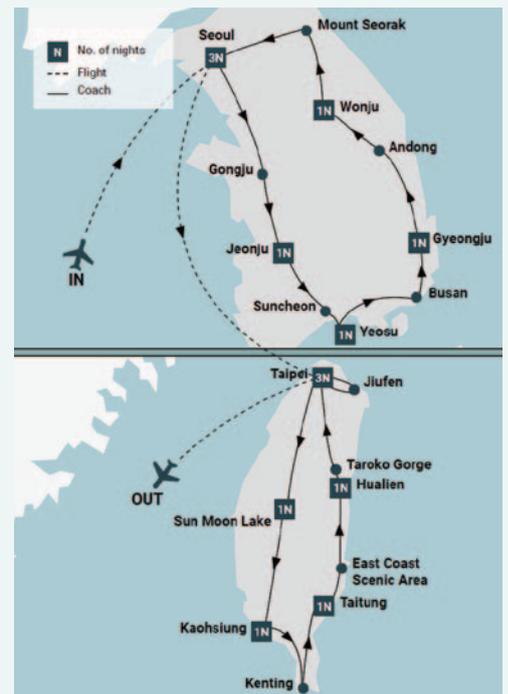


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Board Reflections

THE NSW Department of Planning and Environment is seeking to fill three board positions, including a new chair for Reflections Holiday Parks.

A Crown land manager of 37 holiday parks across NSW, the organisation will preference candidates with tourism and sustainability experience.

Guatemala update

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade yesterday reissued its travel advisory for Guatemala, warning of ongoing demonstrations which are disrupting road transport and affecting travel across the country.

Smartraveller urges Australians to avoid protests and public gatherings, and leave affected areas as soon as it is safe to do so.

The overall level of advice is “exercise a high degree of caution in Guatemala due to high levels of violent crime”.

Walking for milestones



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line’s (NCL) fourth annual Walk for Wellness event has racked up 90,000km and donated \$6,000 to Sydney-based charity Mood Active in its first week.

Participants have achieved seven milestones (Auckland, Papeete, Honolulu, Juneau, Athens and Rome and Reykjavik) on their quest to reach NCL’s key destinations via an interactive

map, with top trekkers having clocked up more than 300km.

The first challenge asked walkers to share a photo of something that makes them “Think NCL”, with Samantha Lang from Travel Associates Gungahlin NSW claiming the top prize, and Anna Powell, Pursers Travel Group Qld declared as runner-up (**pictured**).

See today’s issue of **Cruise Weekly** for more. *JM*

Fiji tourism appeal

TOURISM to Fiji has surpassed post-pandemic expectations, the small Pacific island nation has revealed, with its tourism industry earning \$1.7 billion between Apr and Dec 2022.

“Tourism is crucial to the Fijian economy with the industry contributing about 40% of GDP,” Tourism Fiji said, adding that roughly 345,000 Australian travellers are arriving each year.

QF Indo changes

THE International Air Services Commission has received a request from Qantas to expand its codeshare relationship with Garuda Indonesia on Indonesian routes from 29 Oct.

Qantas said the proposal to increase the number of shared flights that can be marketed independently by Garuda Indonesia will give Aussies more options and choice when travelling to Bali or Jakarta.

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The Hyde to be different



THE first Hyde hotel will open its doors in Australia next year, with Perth chosen as the debut city to receive the brand.

Parent company Ennismore made the announcement this morning, revealing The Hyde Perth property will be located on Pier Street in the CBD, offering 120 rooms, including 18 spacious suites, as well as two meetings and events spaces, a 'destination restaurant', and a bar that opens up onto an outdoor pool area.

The marquee dining attraction will draw on fresh Western Australian produce to deliver a "lively dining experience that evolves throughout the day, including a trend-setting bar with innovative cocktails."

Hyde branding is intended to be synonymous with intimate music and nightlife, with Managing Director of Tourism Western Australia Carolyn Turnbull

welcoming the news of another premium accommodation draw card opening up in the state's growing capital.

"[The Hyde Perth] will reflect Perth's cosmopolitan urban culture and create an unforgettable visitor experience for Western Australians and travellers to enjoy," she noted.

"It's a wonderful time to be joining WA's thriving hospitality and tourism industry, as we continue to see increased visitation to Western Australia."

Property development specialists Kyko Group and Ark Capital Partners are investors for the soon-to-launch property.

In 2023, Ennismore is set to open nearly 20 hotels, including Maison Delano Paris in France, 21C Museum Hotel in St. Louis, and The Hoxton in Charlottenburg, Germany. *AB*

The Hyde Perth render pictured.

MU adds Sydney

CHINA Eastern Airlines has announced a new route linking Sydney and Hangzhou from 07 Nov, China's capital of the Zhejiang province which is home to more than 12 million people.

The expansion by the Chinese carrier is part of a push on the Oceania region, with the service part of a new triangular route map linking Hangzhou, Sydney, and Auckland.

Services will operate twice a week using A330-200 aircraft.

P&O winter 25/26

P&O Cruises' *Aurora* will embark on a 100-night Eastern Circumnavigation World Cruise in Jan 2026, for the first time in nine years, as part of the Carnival brand's winter 2025/26 season.

The voyage will visit 28 destinations, including Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Adelaide, with shore excursions including a trip to the Barossa Valley wine region and a Sydney Harbour Bridge climb.

Other highlights of the new collection, which goes on sale from 18 Oct include a 75-night Grand Tour around South America, Caribbean fly-cruise holidays, an extended northern lights cruise, special Christmas sailings, and more.



Window Seat

FUND manager Angus Murray says he will spend millions of dollars to construct a new tourist attraction comprised from a secret network of tunnels underneath the English capital of London.

The billionaire investor insists travellers will flock to the dank labyrinth once he is finished jazzing them up, having recently bought the tunnels from the British telecommunications company BT Group.

"Where can you get 8,000m² of historic novelty in London that's got a billion-dollar reconstruction valuation," Murray enthused to Bloomberg.

"Would I compare this to be as iconic as the London Eye? Yes, yes I would," he added.

His website is also drumming up interest from tourists by asking them to "imagine feeling the London Underground thundering directly above you, where 'shaken, not stirred' Vesper Martinis could be served 40 metres below ground."

The tunnels were built in 1940 and are located about 100 feet under central London.



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Grand Azamara

AZAMARA Cruises has unveiled 11 Grand Voyages for 2024 and 2025, with the extended itineraries ranging from 35 to 70 nights.

The longer sailings spend more time in port and include added amenities such as airfares and up to \$1,200 in shore excursion credits.

President Carol Cabezas said the move followed a trend observed in recent years where more guests opt for back-to-back sailings.

Grand Voyages are available on itineraries such as South Africa to Portugal, Japan to Greece, Denmark to Spain, Canada to the UK, New Zealand to Japan and more.

Weekly laundry service, internet access for two devices and an upgraded premium beverage package are also included - more details at azamara.com.

Virtuoso appoints

VIRTUOSO has expanded its senior ranks with the appointment of Sean Murphy as Vice President of Product Marketing and Strategy.

Also joining the team are former Tauck and Uniworld staffer Rakesh Dewan who is Virtuoso's new VP of Global Partner Relations, and Michael Moten who is VP of Finance and Accounting.

INTERCONTINENTAL'S NEW VISION

IHG Hotels & Resorts has unveiled a comprehensive transformation of its iconic InterContinental brand, with the move "ensuring we stay at the forefront of crafting a luxury experience for the modern luxury traveller", according to IHG VP of Luxury Brands, Tom Rowntree.

The global brand evolution is being undertaken in collaboration with the 215 InterContinental Hotels worldwide, with Rowntree saying the brand is "committed to delivering precisely what today's and tomorrow's guests, owners and colleagues require".

Key elements of the platform include a range of programs aimed at attracting and retaining the finest talent in the hospitality industry, Rowntree noted.

Guest-facing changes will reflect the desires of modern travellers and their diverse lives, with a range of science-based initiatives to reduce jetlag such as special F&B options and optimised guest room and public spaces.

InterContinental will showcase



its expertise as a "cultural connector" with the launch of Concierge Galleries in hotel lobbies offering unrivalled local knowledge in the form of an inhouse luxury boutique (**pictured**), rather than a traditional desk.

Special moments will also be a focus for InterContinental, which will work to "elevate micro-occasions" for guests via a new Incredible Occasions program that will signpost bookable spaces around the hotel for group celebrations.

Celebration Suites will also be unveiled across the global portfolio to help guests elevate life's most special moments.

Quality design and timeless elegance will be elevated under the umbrella of "Cultivated Elegance," IHG said.

"InterContinental Hotels & Resorts' global brand evolution embraces modernity, diversity and the desire for meaningful experiences, ensuring that guests can continue to explore the world while feeling right at home." *BP*

Regent has PBS

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises will be the first line to sail with dedicated content from America's PBS International.

Twelve documentaries will feature on a dedicated PBS channel on the new *Seven Seas Grandeur*.

Virgin Limited Edition celebrates achievements

VIRGIN Limited Edition is commemorating the 10th birthday of its Mahali Mzuri luxury tented camp in Kenya with a new "Creating a Better Future" video series dedicated to the property's achievements in lifting local living standards.

The series features members of the Mahali Mzuri team who lead life-enhancing projects to enrich and safeguard the nearby Maasai communities.

The first episode features GM Wilson Odhiambo - view it at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

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Situated among the thriving vineyards and natural bushlands of Hunter Valley, **The Lane Retreat** has opened in the heart of the region. The 60-key resort features premium studios with outdoor decks offering views across the Broken Back Range or Bimbaden's home vineyard. Each studio has a king-sized bed, double rain head shower, coffee maker, toaster, microwave and mini bar, as well as breakfast provisions supplied daily.



Following an extensive refurbishment, **Conrad Singapore Orchard** is now accepting reservations for stays from 01 Jan 2024. The highly-anticipated urban oasis will reopen with "a new conscientious luxury experience", offering 445 rooms including 46 suites. Each room is sized at 36m², while suite categories range from 81 to 210m². The hotel also boasts a pet-friendly program, an executive lounge, fitness centre and an outdoor pool.



Slated for completion in early 2025 following a multi-phased transformation, **Mauna Kea Beach Hotel** will commence work in Q2 2024. Considered to be one of Hawaii's most iconic resorts, the hotel will redesign all of its 242 guest rooms and suites and four dining venues, including Manta, which overlooks the Kauna'oa Bay. The renovations will also include the addition of a new spa facility with an infinity pool and 11 treatment rooms.



The family-oriented **Great Wolf Lodge Water Park** located in the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania has completed a US\$125m resort-wide transformation. The property now features 202 new suites and 30 new villas, as well as seven new slides in the recently opened indoor water park, which spans over 3,700m², two new restaurants, and a new toddler area.



Movenpick Hotel Tallinn in Estonia, Europe has opened after rebranding from the former L'Embitu Hotel. The 125-key modern hotel will offer Swiss hospitality, including indulgent cuisine and mouth-watering chocolate. Guests are invited to dine at ROOF Restaurant, which serves Mediterranean dishes and presents breathtaking views over the city.

Fusion of the future and past



A NEW heritage boutique hotel, 21 Carpenter, is slated to open later this year in Singapore between the vibrant Clarke Quay and Chinatown.

Developed by 8M Real Estate, the former Remittance House, Chye Hua Seng Wee Kee (**pictured**), has been restored to house 48 rooms across two distinct sections.

The Heritage Wing features 26 rooms in the conserved building, while The Urban Wing comprises 22 rooms in a contemporary five-storey extension.

The heritage hotel combines the building's original features with modern design, and is adorned with local art.

Guests can relax in the rooftop

infinity pool and lounge, which overlooks the city and Marina Bay, as well as enjoy the lush scenery at the garden terrace on the third level.

From Q1 2024, the hotel will also offer an independent neo-bistro and bar located at street level, boasting Michelin-starred chef Andrew Walsh at the helm, with timeless classics to feature on the menu.

The hotel is also a proud member of the Marriott Bonvoy-affiliated Design Hotels.

"21 Carpenter is more than just a place to stay; it is a place to experience Singapore's true history and past, while creating new stories for the future," GM Tarun Kalra said. *MW*



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