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MORE INFO

Ground them now

BOEING whistleblower Sam Salehpour, who sounded the alarm about safety issues with the manufacturer's Dreamliner aircraft last week (**TD** 11 Apr) has now called for all of the 787 model jets to be grounded worldwide.

"The entire fleet worldwide, as far as I'm concerned right now, needs attention...and needs gaps checked to make sure that you don't have potential for premature failure," he explained to *NBC News*.

Tropics & Exotics

OCEANIA Cruises is showcasing its 2025-26 'Tropics & Exotics' collection, which includes more than 130 voyages across the South Pacific, the Caribbean, and more - see the **cover page**.

Aussies below the average on eco stays

TWO in five Australians say they are willing to spend more to stay at an eco-friendly hotel, according to a new study compiled by YouGov.

The finding was slightly below the average of the 17 international markets polled.

Aussies were found to be less willing to fork out extra cash than travellers based in the UAE (73%), India (69%), Indonesia and Hong Kong (both 61%).

However, Australians did show more of an appetite for sustainable accommodation than several European nations, including Poland and Denmark (both 38%), Sweden (37%), Britain (36%), Germany (35%) and France (34%).

On the other side of the spectrum, only 28% Americans would be willing to pay more for greener hotels.

"Our local region was also found to be the most receptive, with 28% of guests based in APAC



suggesting a willingness to pay 10% more for an eco-friendly stay, ahead of both Europe/Middle East and the Americas, with both regions only polling 18%.

MEANWHILE, HotelREZ has found that GDS bookings for independent hotels were up by 34.5% in 2023 when compared to

the previous year.

The number was also up by 4.2% on 2019 volumes, showing a global trend towards using travel agents and TMCs. *AB*

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CELESTYAL is offering reduced deposits from as low as \$225 on selected cruises, including the seven-night 'Heavenly Adriatic' sailing, for a limited time only.

See the **back page** for details.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, a cover wrap from **Oceania Cruises**, plus full pages from:

- Titan Travel
- Celestyal

Sales Manager Australia at Rate Hawk



RateHawk (a part of Emerging Travel Group) is looking for ambitious Sales Managers to join our Australian team. Emerging Travel Group is a leading travel-tech company that exploded the industry 12 years ago with its innovative products. RateHawk is our international B2B brand, present in over 40 different countries with a daily developing portfolio of more than 62,000 partners.

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Rex flash promotion

REX is running a flash sale that includes economy flights to Cairns and the Gold Coast from \$99 one way and \$249 for business class.

The promotion needs to be booked by the end of tomorrow and is valid for travel between 29 Apr and 31 Aug.

No blackout dates apply.

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19 APRIL 2024

Australia, Oceania
and East Antarctica
2024 - 2025 Voyages



SHIP ARRIVAL INFORMATION

DXB flooded by delays

EXTENSIVE delays are continuing at Dubai International Airport, with Emirates suspending check-in services yesterday for passengers departing the UAE due to flooding at the usually bone-dry aviation hub.

"[The decision] was made due to operational challenges caused by bad weather and road conditions," the carrier told *Travel Daily* late yesterday.

"Affected customers can contact their booking agent or Emirates contact centre for rebooking, while passengers arriving in Dubai & already in transit will continue to be processed for their flights.

"Customers can expect delays to departures and arrivals, and are advised to check the latest flight schedules on [emirates.com](https://www.emirates.com)."

Flydubai has also confirmed the extended suspension of all departing flights from Dubai until 8pm 17 Apr (Dubai local time).

"While the severe weather conditions in Dubai have improved, logistical challenges on the ground require additional time to restore normal traffic operations, including those at the airport," the budget carrier said.

On social media platform X this morning, Dubai Airport posted that flights continue to be delayed and diverted, adding that it was working hard to recover operations as quickly as possible "in very challenging conditions".

The country has experienced the heaviest rainfall in 75 years, with some areas recording more



than 25cm in 24 hours - more than it sees in a year, according to the UAE state media office.

Travel Daily Deputy Editor, Matt Lennon, was among thousands of affected travellers passing through DXB at the time, stating that while flight delays quickly concertained, communication from the airline was very regular.

The dramatic images of the flooded tarmac at DXB have grabbed the attention of media networks and social media users around the world. ML/AB

Infinity to Hong Kong

INFINITY Holidays has teamed up with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) to launch six new packages showcasing the best of the vibrant city.

Available to book now, the packages are customisable and offer a range of experiences including fine dining, street food adventures, outdoor adventures, and more - details [HERE](#).

Infinity has also partnered with Harbour Plaza Hotels and Resorts to offer one lucky agent the chance to explore Hong Kong for themselves on a six-night trip.

The incentive is open until 30 Jun 2024 - learn more [HERE](#).

Euro brox reprinted

ENTIRE Travel Group has completed a second print run of its European group touring brochure after agents snapped up all available copies in record time.

The 84-page brochure features 33 itineraries and nine destinations such as Spain, Portugal, and France - view [HERE](#).

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Early Explore results eclipse 2023 sales

EXPLORE Worldwide has already exceeded its 2023 sales result, a feat achieved less than halfway through its financial year.

Australia has taken the lead for the operator ahead of other markets in terms of revenue, managing to record an impressive 73% year-on-year growth rate so far in 2024.

Explore said the strong early results in the Australian market can be attributed to enhanced investments in the local market, including a ramping up of customer service resources.

The brand has also made strides to ensure there is a stronger focus on the trade Down Under.

“We knew 2024 would be a big year for Explore here in Australia and New Zealand,” Explore’s Regional Director for AU/NZ, Ben Ittensohn, said.

“We opened our office here in Australia this time last year and since then have gone from



strength to strength, establishing ourselves in the market, fostering relationships with our trade partners, and expanding our Australian and New Zealand team to help drive this growth.

“It’s been a bumper year so far, and it feels like we’re just getting started - watch this space.”

Strong performing products have been most noticeable in Asia, with Sri Lanka alone up 139% compared to 2023.

Other highlights include its Simply Japan itineraries (up 61%) and Cycle Vietnam tours (up 74%) both making major inroads into the global market, taking

Explore’s total Asian tour volumes to a 51% rise on last year.

Testament to its growing focus on the trade, Explore Worldwide revealed that globally, 19% of bookings are now arriving through travel agents, versus only 11% in 2019.

Global CEO, Michael Edwards (**pictured**), told **TD** in Feb that the focus of the business will continue to shift to int’l markets like Australia (**TD** 20 Feb). **AB**

Titan of discounts

TITAN Travel is currently offering significant savings on all 2024 and 2025 tours priced above \$1,700 per person.

Up to \$1,250 per person discounts are available when bookings are made by 31 Jul, with all adventures offering the added bonus of 100% guaranteed departures across 130 itineraries and six continents - see **page 8**.



Window Seat

EVEN the most grizzled flyer can understand weather is the great leveller in air travel, but that doesn’t stop some from finding a humorous side to it.

While stuck in Dubai watching highly uncharacteristic rain storms pelt the city normally bathed in glorious sun, **Travel Daily** overheard one fellow traveller who figured out why flights were so delayed.

“Clearly, ground crew are searching for the instruction manuals to learn how to work an umbrella,” quipped a man sitting nearby.

The conditions are so rare that much of Dubai, including large parts of its road network and parts of the airport, have no drainage, leaving nowhere for all that water to go.

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with Jenny

Travel Daily
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US chief required

TOURISM marketing agency Gate 7 is currently seeking to appoint a new Director for Brand USA in the Australia and New Zealand markets.

The successful applicant will be charged with spearheading the broader promotion of the United States as a premier travel destination for Aussies and Kiwis.

The incoming Director will succeed Clinton White (pictured), who started with Gate 7 in 2021 and will stay with the team until Jul to ease the transition.

For more Gate 7 appointments, see [page seven](#).



Rossi fire update

A PROPERTY tycoon has admitted to his role in a fire that burned down the \$24 million Sydney house once owned by the late luxury travel agency owner Mary Rossi (*TD* 07 Sep 2022).

Steve Nassif, who was arrested in Dec 2022 for intentionally lighting the fire, pled guilty this morning, and will face sentencing on 03 May.

The admission comes as Lane Cove Council knocked back an application to demolish the burnt-out remains of the mansion.

MEL inks Chinese airline

MELBOURNE Airport continues to restore key air links to China, with the hub this week securing services from Beijing Capital Airlines to Hangzhou from Jun.

The latest carrier contract will take the number of nonstop services between the city's largest airport and mainland China to eight - equating to 91% of pre-pandemic air capacity.

Despite the rise in seat volumes, Melbourne Airport has been underwhelmed by Chinese passenger demand to the Victorian capital, which lags behind other Asian markets at just 62% of pre-pandemic levels.

Melbourne Airport CEO, Lorie Argus, said the extra capacity will increase opportunities for Victoria's tourism sector.

"Mainland Chinese travellers have traditionally been one of the highest spending markets, however the slow return of group travel continues to impact visitation numbers," she said.

MEANWHILE Melbourne Airport was named the 'Best Airport' in Australia and the

Pacific at the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards in Frankfurt.

It is the fourth time Melbourne Airport has been the recipient of the award, and is in recognition of excellent pax survey results.

The upgrades at the major Victorian hub have also continued this week, with phase one of a new temporary screening point at the eastern end of the Qantas domestic terminal now underway.

Set to open in Aug, the new body and luggage screening tech will feature six lanes, meaning Qantas domestic passengers no longer have to remove laptops, tablets or aerosols from carry-on bags.

"Introducing the latest security equipment is the next piece of the puzzle and will help transform the Qantas domestic terminal at MEL into one of the best facilities in the world," MEL Chief of Aviation Jim Parashos said. *AB*

Aqua's tasty eats

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has introduced new culinary and beverage experiences aboard its new *Norwegian Aqua*, which is due to set sail in Apr 2025.

The first vessel of the expanded Prima Plus Class will boast three brand-new offerings, including Sukhothai, the NCL's first-ever Thai speciality restaurant.

Guests can also dine at Swirl Wine Bar, a new upscale wine lounge, as well as Planterie, a new eatery offering plant-based bowls and other healthy options.

TNZ's New Ski-Land

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) is launching its 'New Ski-Land' campaign and travel agent competition, which offers up a winter trip valued at over \$10,000.

Learn all about the incentive, as well as tips on selling winter holidays to NZ, by joining the TNZ webinar on Tue 23 Apr, [HERE](#).

Travel Daily ON LOCATION

ROME

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Civitavecchia in Rome, where we have boarded Princess Cruises' exciting new mega-ship, *Sun Princess*.

IFYOU'RE familiar with the 'new car smell', we can confirm there is also such a thing as 'new ship smell' on *Sun Princess*.

Boarding the ship ahead of regular passengers allowed the media group to visit some of the ship's higher-end accommodations, including the Sky Suite and Owner's Suite.

As experienced cruisers, we can often notice the little things that are new, which to begin with, was a lack of heavy, hard-to-navigate stateroom doors.

Corridors are warmly lit and shine off light wood panelling, evoking a comfortable and welcoming first impression.

Technology is naturally dominant across the ship, with the Princess Medallion your key to everything on board, coupled with the new Princess app, your essential cruise companion.

Granted, the app takes some learning but is indispensable once you've mastered it.

The highly advanced wearable even uses Bluetooth geofencing to unlock your stateroom door on approach, meaning there's no more fumbling for a keycard.

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The Northern Territory talks itself up

THE NT Government has announced a \$6 million tourism boost to its 'Talk up the Territory' push in key visitor markets.

Half of that extra funding will go towards international marketing in a bid to lure more overseas visitors to the region, with the Territory Government saying it will "maximise opportunities" from Tourism Australia's global campaigns, including the 'Come and Say G'Day' marketing push.

The remaining \$3 million will fund cooperative marketing with airlines that have brought more routes and capacity to the NT through the Territory Aviation Attraction Scheme.

"We want our tourism sector to shine and that's why we're investing in marketing campaigns that get people excited," NT



Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Joel Bowden, said.

"The latest tourism visitation figures are showing an upward trend and we want to keep the momentum going with this funding boost," he added.

The \$6 million cash injection is part of the Northern Territory's 2024-25 Budget, which will see a total \$68 million poured into various tourism projects.

The NT Government has also allocated another \$6 million to strategic Indigenous tourism projects within the region.

Aboriginal tourism contributes \$383 million to the NT's economy every year, with the Govt saying it wants to "increase this investment through strategic programs that grow and diversify our local Aboriginal tourism product and offerings". *JM*

An authentic Chilean adventure



ADVENTURE World recently treated eight travel advisors to an incredible journey around Chile on its 'Authentic Chile Educational' famil.

Hosted by Adventure World's Performance Leader, Julie Gerrard and Destination Specialist, Sharee Fox, the 11-day trip explored the country's diverse landscapes and rich cultures, complete with unforgettable wildlife encounters.

The group was able enjoy an overnight stay at a traditional

and sustainable Estancia (Patagonian ranch) in the heart of Torres del Paine National Park, as well as participate in a puma conservation safari and visit Fundacion Origen, a non-profit organisation committed to community development.

Adventure World said the famil was a great opportunity for agents to see first-hand how it curates unique and sustainable experiences in fascinating destinations around the world. *JM*

Pictured appreciating the street art in Cerro Alegre: Bailey Campbell, Travel Associates Toronto; Georgia Best, Panorama Cruise and Travel; Esther Lee, Low & James Travel Associates, Neutral Bay; Amanda King, Travel Managers Group Rotorua; Nancy Smith, Helloworld Travel Cootamundra; Fox; Lia Dean, Flight Centre Broadway; Jenna Lewis, Jamison Plaza Travel Associates; Gerrard; and Emma Smith, Back Track Adventures Fortitude Valley.

Travel Daily FEATURE

100 days on the job

TD chats with Karen Deveson, MD Collette, about her first 100 days in the role.



The first 100 days: In a new role, it is all about asking questions, observing, and

learning. Whilst it's been a whirlwind, I've focused on getting to know the Collette business - spending time in our head office in Rhode Island, travelling with Collette in Sicily, connecting with our partners and customers, and understanding what sets us apart. I think I have a good feel for the values on which the business exists.

A reputation as a strong family business. It is about people and it is personable at every step. I love the fact our agents know our CEO, Chairman and VP, and can contact them directly if they choose. We focus on one brand, one team and have each other's back to support our advisors and travellers.

Surprises? The commitment to innovation in touring - we are leading the way in small group explorations. These are purpose-built itineraries for small groups, not just a downsized version of a classic tour.

Expectations? Growth - Australia is a key market. We are committed to expanding our team and visibility.

Recommendations? Yes! Sicily and its Isles in Apr - it's a must do!

Check out Collette's 170+ classic and small-group tours to all seven continents [HERE](#).

collette



NT events boost

THE already-packed Northern Territory events calendar has just got bigger, after the NT Government announced an extra \$4 million of funding for the Northern Territory Major Events Company (NTMEC).

The additional cash injection brings the organisation's total funding allocation for 2024 up to \$41 million, allowing it to continue delivering "world-class major events", and attract new event delegates.

"Major events deliver big benefits to local businesses and they help provide work opportunities for thousands of Territorians - that's why we are delivering this budget boost to the industry," said NT Minister for Major Events, Brent Potter.

THIS IS THE GOLD COAST 2024

EXPERIENCE Gold Coast is gearing up for the 10th year of its signature business events famil, This is Gold Coast 2024 (TIGC24), which will showcase the best of the Queensland city's venues, culture, and experiences.

Around 70 event professionals from Australia and New Zealand will convene on the Gold Coast in Jul for either a three- or four-day program, which will involve networking, meetings, and checking out the destination's premier business events products.

"Over 10 years, TIGC has connected hundreds of conference and event organisers and key decision-makers with the city's most inspiring venues, extensive range of accommodation and unique once in a lifetime experiences," Experience Gold Coast CEO, John Warn, said.

"Last year, this event generated more than \$59 million in business



event leads, which is a testament to our team, our tourism partners and our city's business event offerings," he added.

Warn also pointed out that prior to the pandemic, the Gold Coast's business events sector generated \$70 million in economic benefit, making it a vital part of the destination's weekday visitor economy. Applications are now open for

conference and event organisers - find out more **HERE**.

Experience Gold Coast also recently launched the first of three videos designed to entice international meetings, conferences and incentive travel programs to the city.

The first video is available to watch on YouTube **HERE**, with an additional two videos to be released in coming weeks. *JM*

The Cup brings it in

LAST year's Melbourne Cup delivered more economic impact nationally than any other event in Australia, according to new figures released by Victoria Racing Club.

The horse race generated \$468.3 million in economic impact for Victoria and \$605.7 million in direct expenditure across Australia.

Visitor numbers from interstate and overseas were up 10.9% compared to 2022, with a 22% year-on-year increase in accommodation spend.

New Star venue

NEW entertainment precinct The Star Brisbane has announced its latest venue, LiveWire, which will host live entertainment in an open space with panoramic views of the river.

Set to launch later this year as part of the \$3.4b precinct's phased opening, the venue will offer a cocktail menu with a selection of booth packages for special events and occasions.

ICC projections

INTERNATIONAL Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney has launched an audiovisual projection service exclusive to its Darling Harbour Theatre.

Event planners can utilise the venue's developed immersive content, which includes a digital animation and projection of Aboriginal artwork, or work with the in-house audio-visual team to create customised content.

Pan Pacific offer

PAN Pacific Hotels Group has introduced new bespoke meeting experiences, with distinct offerings available across its three brands - Pan Pacific, Parkroyal and Parkroyal Collection.

The packages, which include personalised menu offerings and luxury accommodations, are available for bookings made by 31 Dec 2024 - **CLICK HERE** for more information.



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The first **25hours Hotel** in Australia has announced the appointment of **Silvia Kypriotis** as its General Manager. Scheduled for a first-quarter opening in 2025, Kypriotis will help better prepare for the launch of the 109-key property. She brings over 20 years of experience to the role, and was named HM Australian General Manager of the Year in 2021 in recognition of her contributions at Accor.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises has welcomed **Stacey Hill** to its Australian and New Zealand sales team. She has taken on the role of Business Development Manager for Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, where she will be responsible for developing and executing local sales strategies. Hill's previous experience includes a year-long stint as Sales Manager at Eldorado Resort and seven years at Fairmont Banff Springs.

Gate 7, a tourism marketing agency based in Sydney, has welcomed two new members to bolster marketing operations for Visit California and Brand USA. **Daniel Gervais**, who enjoyed a seven-year stint with Airbnb, has joined as Director for Visit California, while **Lexie Miliatis** has become the new Training and Events Manager for Brand USA. She joins from Flight Centre Travel Group, where she worked for 11 years.

Emma Mumford will continue her four-year tenure at **Celebrity Cruises** as its new Senior Director in Global Public Relations and Communications. She initially joined the brand as its Head of Marketing, Australia & New Zealand and was promoted to Marketing Director before stepping up into her new role. Prior to joining Celebrity Cruises, Mumford was the Marketing and Communications Manager at Cruise.co.

URBNSURF has announced the appointment of a new CEO, **Jennifer Vandekreeke**. She will take the reigns in May from Damon Tudor, who is stepping down from the position after leading the business for five years. Vandekreeke is well-regarded in the industry, having worked as the strategic advisor at Captain Cook Cruises Fiji, as well as spending almost 13 years at Carnival Cruise Line.

Joseph Khairallah has been appointed as **Hilton's** new Area Vice President and Head of Japan, Korea & Micronesia. Based in Tokyo, Khairallah will oversee the hotelier's 32 trading hotels and future pipeline in the region. The industry veteran brings extensive knowledge gained over 40 years of experience, which includes his previous role at Hilton as Vice President of Operations for North China.

Jin Kim has been named the new Executive Assistant Manager of Rooms at **The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore**. Kim arrives with plenty of experience across the luxury space, having most recently served as Director of Rooms at Grand Hyatt Jeju. Before joining The Regent Singapore in 2011, he was the Training Manager at the Four Seasons Maldives Kuda Huraa.

Leading IHG by Example



INTERCONTINENTAL Sydney has selected PR agency Example to expand its brand presence in Australia and overseas through new targeted influencer initiatives and partnerships.

The Sydney-based agency, which also represents QT Hotels and The Star Entertainment Group, landed the prestigious retainer following a competitive pitch.

"We are delighted to partner with Example to further elevate InterContinental Sydney's presence in both domestic and international markets," said Katie Schenken, Director of Marketing at InterContinental Sydney.

"Example's astute understanding of cultural trends, coupled with their innovative approach to media relations and influencer partnerships, aligns perfectly with our objectives," she added.

Located in Circular Quay, the five-star luxury hotel underwent a \$120 million refurbishment in 2022 to enhance its accommodations, revamp its public spaces, and revitalise its hospitality experiences, including

the rooftop bar, Aster, and the new Pont Dining Room.

Example's co-founder and MD Rebecca Jarvie-Gibbs said "we are excited to draw upon our extensive expertise in luxury hospitality to showcase the hotel's unique identity through impactful earned strategies across the year". JM

Pricey withdrawals

NEW research from Wise has revealed which countries are costing Aussies the most when it comes to withdrawing cash, with Argentina taking the top spot.

Travellers can expect to slug 24.15% in ATM fees while holidaying in Argentina - which equates to \$169.05 in fees if they were to withdraw \$100 per day for seven days.

Other pricey destinations include Nigeria, Turkey, Chile, Pakistan and Peru, while on the opposite end of the scale, Malaysia, New Caledonia, China, Estonia and Moncao charge among the lowest ATM fees.

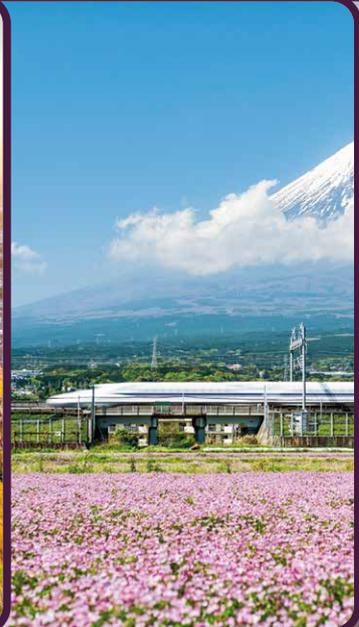
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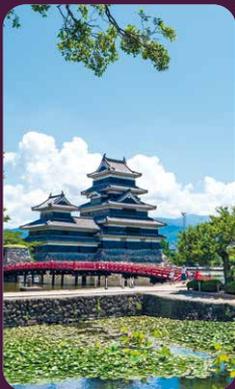
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- 18 excursions & visits
- 35 meals included

Price based on 15 August 2024.
Other dates available.



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- 18 excursions & visits
- 32 meals included

Price based on 8 September 2024.
Other dates available.



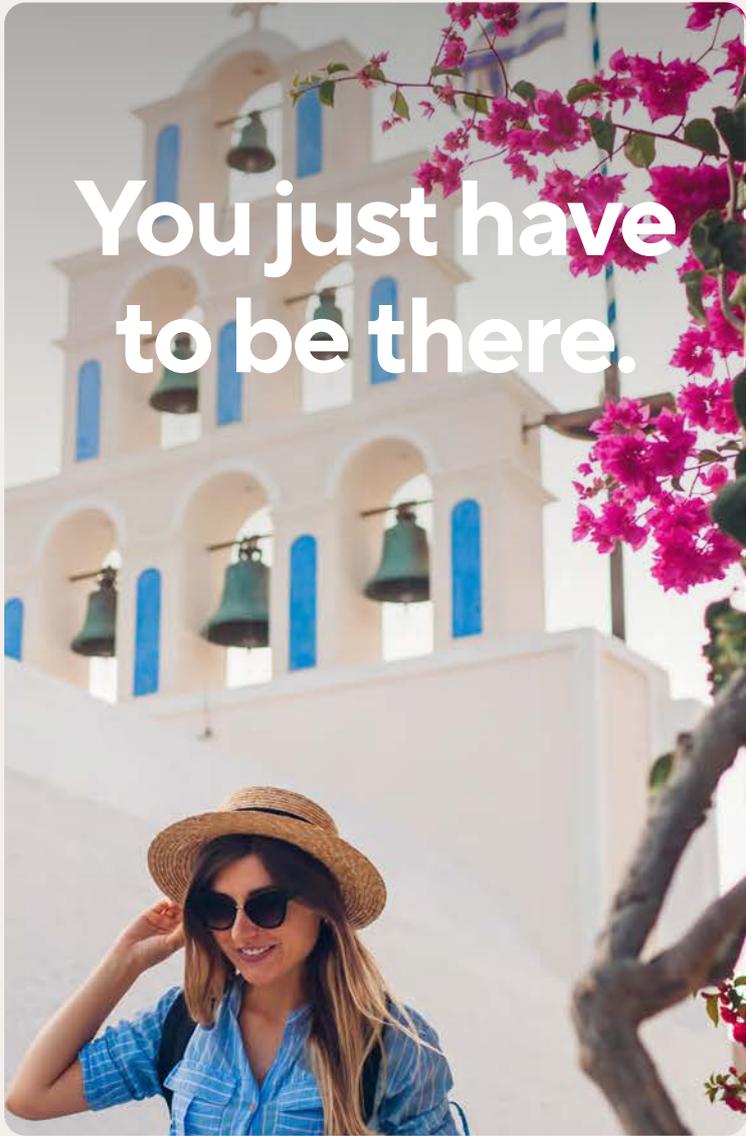
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**Heavenly Adriatic
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Itinerary

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Thessaloniki - Kusadasi - Crete - Santorini
Mykonos - Milos - Athens

Departure 2025

Aug 9, 23

From **\$2129**

Contact your travel advisor for more details

*All prices are per-person, based on a double occupancy of the stateroom and are quoted in Australian Dollars (AU\$-AUD). Celestyal Experience Fares are based on the published Full Brochure Fares and the discount is already reflected. Celestyal Experience fares include accommodation on board in the booked category, on-board dining and complimentary select drinks and beverages during food service hours, all port and service charges and entertainment program on board. Moreover a AU\$120 discount for pre-booked shore excursions is included. Booking window is March 1st, 2024 to May 31st, 2024 for the selected cruises. Offer is valid for new, individual bookings. It is not valid for groups and cannot be held as group block. Reduced rates space is capacity controlled and may be withdrawn at any time with, or without notice. Celestyal Cruises reserves the right to add, change or modify reduced rate conditions at any time, without notification. Port and service charges and any other surcharges are not commissionable even if indicated as included in the cruise rate. Celestyal's Deposit and Cancellation standard policies apply based on the booking/sailing date. Celestyal reserves the right to correct any incorrect information due to a human error, typographical error, or technical error. In the event of any discrepancies between the rates stated herein and the rates displayed in the Reservation System, the rates provided by the Reservation System shall prevail and be deemed as the correct and binding rates for all purpose. Other restrictions may apply. The general terms and conditions of Celestyal apply.