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Machu Picchu, Peru

Int'l Rail adds ferry bookings

INTERNATIONAL Rail has introduced live ferry bookings to its new travel advisor booking platform, which formally launched last month (**TD** 24 Jul).

The new service, which was teased by the company late last year in an interview with **Travel Daily** (**TD** 06 Dec 2023), complements International Rail's existing live bookings for rail destinations across the Mediterranean and Europe.

"There has been a long-standing demand for ferries to be booked as a stand-alone product and this enables travel agents to do just that, and in real time," said the company's Managing Director, Jonathan Hume.

"Ultimately this means our valued travel agent partners can login to our booking portal and



make ferry bookings, just like trains," he added.

The newly expanded platform offers instant confirmation and the ability to check-in online or at ports, and accepts all major credit cards with no surcharges.

To celebrate the launch, International Rail is giving away six bottles of Moët Champagne to the first travel agent or agency that reaches five bookings.

For more details, **CLICK HERE** or call 1300 387 245. *JM*

Collette turns 107

TO CELEBRATE its 107th birthday, Collette is offering a 10% discount on 2025 tours worldwide for bookings made before 30 Sep and has also introduced 13 new itineraries.

Find out more on **page eight**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Sustainability** page, a photo page from **Liberty Tours** plus a product update from **Destination Webinars Switzerland Tourism** and a full page from **Collette**.

JOURNEY BEYOND

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- Return flights to Auckland
- Two nights' accommodation
- Tickets to Coldplay live in concert
- Spending money for your trip

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Latest NTIA finalists named

FINALISTS in categories 11-20 and 32-35 have been announced by ATIA, almost completing the final piece of puzzle for the 2024 National Travel Industry Awards finalists, taking place on 26 Oct.

The third batch outlines the agency and consortia component of the evening, with many major brands and networks set to contest the honours.

Most Outstanding Travel Agency Group will see itravel, Flight Centre, Helloworld and Travel Associates battle for supremacy.

Other standout names include the recent rebrand of Flight Centre's Independent division, Envoyage, which is punching with established rivals and selected to contest the Most Outstanding Non-Branded Agency Group and Most Outstanding Mobile Advisor Network categories.

Finalists have also now been named to recognise Travel Industry Training Institutions,

Innovation in Travel Support, Marketing Campaigns and Sustainability Awards at both a Business and Supplier level.

Excluding finalists in the Sustainability Award, all finalists must now undertake a formal interview featuring up to three members of the Industry Judging Panel, which will take place over the first few weeks of Sep - see the full finalists list **HERE**. ML

Bonus Hilton points

HILTON is celebrating its recent integration into the Small Luxury Hotels of the World portfolio (**TD** 08 Feb) by launching a new promotion for members of its Hilton Honors loyalty program.

The 'Power Up Promotion' allows members to earn 2,500 bonus points on eligible stays between 03 Sep and 31 Dec 2024 at all Hilton hotels globally - to register for the offer, **CLICK HERE**.

Rail Europe



Rail Journey Inspiration by Janelle Beucker, Travel Managers

Janelle's dream journey involves going on a big loop around Europe from Glasgow to Frankfurt via some of the continent's coolest capitals along the way. Her route goes from Edinburgh > London > Amsterdam > Hamburg > Berlin > Prague > Bratislava > Vienna > Salzburg > Venice > Cinque Terre > Milan > Zermatt > Glacier & Bernina Express trains > Montreux > Interlaken via the GoldenPass Line > Lyon > Dijon > Colmar > Strasbourg > Heidelberg > Bensheim > Frankfurt.

From revisiting her ancestral homeland in the Scottish Highlands to soaking up Europe's scenery, this epic journey covers many of the continent's iconic cities and landscapes.

Read Janelle's full entry on **Rail Europe's FB page**.

The best way to follow Janelle's dream route or explore Europe is with a **Eurail Global Mobile Pass**. With access to unlimited rail travel across 33 countries, this is not only the most flexible, convenient and cost-effective way, but also the most scenic, social and sustainable method of travel.

When travelling on overnight trains, advisors should note that OBB's Nightjet services can be booked 180 days in advance; and when using a Pass, reservations are mandatory for all seats, couchettes and sleepers. To learn more about the overnight trains, their classes of service, amenities and more, advisors can refer to this **Austrian Railway** product sheet.

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Click **HERE** for more inspiring 4, 7 and 15-day themed itineraries around Europe.



Your travel business where, when, how you want



Rex sheds extra 73

AN ADDITIONAL 73 jobs will be cut from Rex as its administrators, EY, continue to evaluate the business and look for an appropriate buyer (**TD** 12 Aug).

According to an email sent to the airline's employees yesterday afternoon, it is proposed that 73 of 261 current positions will become redundant.

"No decisions have been made about which employees will be retrenched," the email read.

The extra redundancies will see Rex's total employee head count shrink to around 1,200 staff.

Velocity cruise promo

VIRGIN Australia's loyalty program has reintroduced its partnership with CruisePilot, forging a new deal to give Velocity members the ability to earn points with cruise lines.

Velocity members can now accrue 3 points per \$1 spent on cruise fares booked through CruisePilot, a platform owned by Our Vacation Centre which offers cruises around the world.

Silver members will earn 4.5 points per \$1 spent on the cruise fare, Gold members will accrue 5.25 points, and Platinum members will earn 6 points.

Brands Velocity members can earn points with include Virgin Voyages, Royal Caribbean, Princess Cruises, Norwegian Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Disney Cruises, MSC Cruises & Carnival. For more details, see **HERE**.

Switzerland learning

AGENTS can now educate themselves about the latest updates on the Swiss market with a new webinar series.

Prizes and Q&A sessions are also on offer - see the **back page** for the full details.

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Must See Japan

INSIDE Travel Group has launched a fast-paced small group itinerary in Japan designed to combine all the major cities and attractions, mixed with a snapshot of countryside.

Operated by InsideJapan, the 10-night 'Must See Japan' tour begins and ends with three days in Tokyo, with visits to Hakone, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Osaka in between, and an optional day trip to Kamakura.

InsideJapan Senior Japan Tailormade Product Manager, Kate Samuel, said the trip combines the energy of Japan's major cities with its rural regions.

"Despite the fast-paced nature of this itinerary, there is still plenty of time factored in for independent exploration, making it appealing for those who value the freedom of exploring on their own, as well as the expert guidance of a tour leader."

Solo travellers will also enjoy no single surcharge on this itinerary.

Carrier to make Aussie debut

CHINESE carrier Juneyao Airlines will make its Australian debut in Dec when it flies its first Melbourne to Shanghai service.

The Star Alliance member will compete with China Eastern on the route, offering travellers strong connectivity throughout China, and Asia more broadly, from major hubs like Shanghai Pudong and Hongqiao.

The Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) hailed the development yesterday, proudly declaring Juneyao as the fifth int'l airline to choose Melbourne as its Aussie launchpad, following Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Emirates and VietJet.

"This is fantastic news for Victoria as we welcome more international visitors flying into Melbourne Airport, particularly bringing mainland Chinese seat

capacity above pre-pandemic levels," VTIC Chief Executive Officer, Felicia Mariani, said.

Juneyao boasts a modern fleet and competitive price points, and will deploy B787s on its first Australian route.

The move forms part of a wider growth strategy for the carrier, which already includes spreading



its wings into Europe and parts of Asia.

While the news is positive for Victoria,

VTIC's chief cautioned the launch also highlighted the need to progress the third runway at Melbourne Airport.

"This is vital to growing the state's visitor economy because at peak periods, our airport is already running at near capacity."

Juneyao will land in Melbourne for the first time on 19 Dec, flying three times weekly. *AB*

New IE connections

SOLOMON Airlines has adjusted its flight schedule to key international ports to improve connectivity to domestic cities, in response to demand from leisure and business travellers and in an effort to boost inbound tourism.

Effective 16 Sep, the carrier will shift its weekly flight to Brisbane from Sat to Fri to allow through connections to Munda, a large settlement on the island of New Georgia in the country's west.

The change will enable guests connecting to the popular island city to reach their destination with one stop in Honiara and without changing aircraft.

A similar change is being made to flights from Honiara to Auckland via Port Vila, with the new Mon and Tue services re-timed to allow easier domestic connections in New Zealand.

Solomon Airlines will also begin a weekly loop service connecting Brisbane with Santo and Port Vila, returning to BNE on the same day.

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Heathrow delays

HEATHROW Airport is facing the prospect of disruptions due to a planned strike by border agents between 31 Aug and 03 Sep.

Members of the Public and Commercial Services Union will then also take action over the following fortnight, due to a lack of flexibility around shift changes.

Vale Glenn Cusack

THE Australian travel industry is this week mourning the passing of well-known sales executive Glenn Cusack (pictured).

Cusack started his travel career with Qantas in 1988 as Manager of Retail in Bondi Junction, before working his way up over the next 20 years to become Manager of Industry and Leisure for NSW.

He then spent two years as General Manager at Harvey World Travel Australia prior to jumping across to Sabre for the next six years, where he became Head of New Business Sales ANZ.

A former colleague reached out to **TD** to pay her respects to Cusack, describing him as being known for his kindness, talent, and sense of good fun.

"Glenn leaves behind a legacy that will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him," she said.

"Our thoughts are with his family - his wife Susan and their daughters, Charlotte and Isabella.

"His dedication and passion for the industry will be deeply missed, and his memory will forever remain in our hearts.

"Rest in peace dear friend".



Creative Cruising snags a rock



AUSTRALIA'S dusty Red Centre, where there isn't an ocean for thousands of kilometres, might be the most unlikely place to host a cruising conference, but that's where Creative Cruising recently invited agents for its highly anticipated Cruise Spirit Retreat.

Over three days, with Uluru as the backdrop, agents enjoyed a variety of masterclasses on expedition, Antarctic and luxury cruising, with seminars hosted by Quark Expeditions, Ponant, Silversea, Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Tauck.

Sessions were also held on

current cruise and market trends to help agents identify emerging opportunities, while Cover-More also conducted a workshop to help the group enhance their knowledge of travel insurance.

But it wasn't all work and no play, with the group immersed in the outback with pre-dawn access to Field of Light, a walk to the Mutijulu waterhole and a spellbinding performance of the Wintjiri Wiru drone show. *ML*

The group is **pictured** above after the Wintjiri Wiru event.

Yacht sinks in the Med

A LUXURY superyacht carrying tourists has sunk off the Italian island of Sicily in bad weather, with one passenger confirmed dead and six others missing.

No Australians were reported to be on board the yacht, which included high-profile technology businessman Mike Lynch among its passenger manifest.

Lynch is the founder of enterprise software company Autonomy Corporation, which he sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011, and is one of the passengers still missing after the incident.

The Bayesian vessel was built by Italian shipyard Perini Navi in 2008, and was one of the world's largest sailing yachts.

Canada loses carrier

AUSTRALIA is not the only market struggling to keep its domestic airlines solvent, with Canada losing its third carrier in the last 12 months.

Canada Jetlines has grounded all flights and confirmed a "temporary" cessation of all operations, citing an inability to source financing to keep its Toronto routes going.

The shutdown follows the resignation of four executives, including CEO Brigitte Goersch, and sees Canada Jetlines likely to follow the closures of Lynx Air and budget carrier Swoop.

Launched in Sep 2022, the airline operated flights from Toronto to destinations throughout North America and the Caribbean.

100 years of Tauck

FOUR new land tours in France, Italy, Switzerland and England will be introduced by Tauck in 2025 as part of celebrations marking the tour operator's 100th birthday and 35th anniversary in Europe.

New itineraries will include the expansion of Tauck's popular 'A Week in' series, with eight-day journeys in the Piedmont region of Italy and a journey between Geneva and Zurich now available.

In England, a new 11-day 'England and the West Country' trip takes travellers from Eynsham in the Cotswolds down to the southwest coast in Cornwall and ending back in London.

Finally, the 14-day 'Paris, Dordogne and Bordeaux' crosses the country from Biarritz to Lyon before a TGV journey concludes the adventure back in Paris.

COMO hits hard

COMO Hotels & Resorts guests can explore the world through sport, wellness, and creativity via its brand-new COMO Journeys experiences for this year.

Highlights include Boxing with the Pros in Bali at COMO Uma Canggu, which will see world-class boxers Darren Barker and Ryan Pickard host a series of retreats in Oct.

Guests can also seek power from within with Kelly Brooks Yoga at COMO Metropolitan London, with Brooks to lead daily yoga classes in Hyde Park.

The new collection also includes training sessions with the Rafa Nadal Academy, space camps with astronauts, and a Leica photographic retreat.



Liberty Tours lands in Sydney

TRAVEL agents gathered in Sydney last week to hear about the benefits of sourcing products from travel operator Liberty Tours.

They were very receptive to the quality of holidays combined with innovative and flexible packaging.

Advisors also clearly rejoiced in seeing a rebound in the supplier market, and long-term clients testified to the positive reports from travellers returning from abroad.

When Managing Director, Steven Cairns, announced that all departures are guaranteed, applause rippled around the room, giving a clear signal to larger suppliers.

For more information or to find a BDM, call 1300 221 550.

PRESENTER Penny Brand is joined by Liberty Tours' legend, Alex Lee, to present bottles of fine bourbon.



HELEN Nguyen from Your Holidays in Haymarket won first prize for a trip to Scandinavia to see the Northern Lights.



BRONWYN Knight was given a temporary promotion to the rank of 'Captain' as she set out the stall for MSC cruises.



CAIRNS, Suzanne Ng, CVFR; and Owen Huang from Alpha Tours.

RAEHAM Dassenaike engrossed in a movie showing Sri Lankan fishing practices.



IVETTE Velasco and Helen He from Travelfast, and Alex Lee.



SUZANNE Ng, CVFR gives away a cash prize to delighted Dian Ma, Asian Traveller.



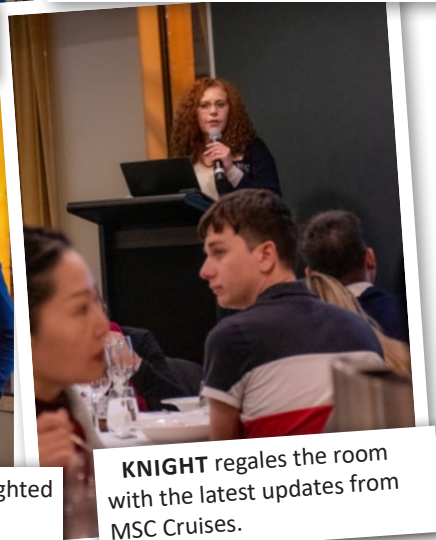
SRI Lanka expert Raeham Dassenaike with Cairns.



EMIRATES BDM, Ivette Velasco, is impressed with the 20-fold increase in bookings from Liberty Tours over the past year.



AGNES Tye from itravel is delighted with her prize from Emirates.



KNIGHT regales the room with the latest updates from MSC Cruises.



Eco certified wine

FIRES CREEK Botanical Winery on the NSW Central Coast has been recognised by Ecotourism Australia as the country's first Eco certified winery experience.

The certification was achieved due to its practice of organic farming, avoidance of synthetic chemicals and creation of an agriculture system that enhances soil fertility, conserves water and supports local wildlife.

Guided tours are also conducted at the site, which educate visitors about sustainable farming and organic agriculture.

Winery owner Nadia O'Connell said she was proud to receive the eco nod.

"This achievement reflects our unwavering commitment to sustainability and our passion for protecting the environment," O'Connell said.

"We believe that by practicing sustainable agriculture and following permaculture principles, we can create a positive impact on our community and inspire others to do the same."

Ecotourism Australia CEO, Elissa Keenan, congratulated Firescreek for the recognition, saying achieving global standard certification is a testament to its dedication to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

FAR EAST COMPLETES CLEAN GREEN SWEEP

SINGAPOREAN hotel brand Far East Hospitality now holds the city's largest portfolio of hotels that have achieved the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Industry Criteria for Hotels Certification.

All of the company's properties in the Lion City have been recognised for standards in hospitality and sustainability.

A variety of sustainability initiatives have been key to Far East's certification success, including monitoring energy usage along with water, waste and carbon emissions data.

The hotel network has removed all single-use plastic bottles, switched to refillable bottles and actively encourages guests to reuse towels and linen.

Far East Hospitality CEO Arthur Kiong said the globally recognised certification underscores

the company's dedication to environmental stewardship.

"Achieving the GSTC certification is a significant milestone for our company," Kiong said.

"It reinforces our dedication to sustainability and demonstrates to our guests and clients that we are committed to upholding the highest standards of environmental stewardship and positive social impact."

Far East's latest certification comes in advance of the 2025 deadline set by the Singapore Hotel Association and the Singapore Tourism Board as part of its 2025 Hotel Industry Transformation strategy.

The strategy, first unveiled in 2022, aims to create and nurture a sustainable hotel industry across Singapore through novel and attractive concepts, backed by a strong local workforce. *ML*



AS pushes innovative aircraft design

ALASKA Airlines has made an investment in JetZero, a company developing a blended-wing body (BWB) aircraft which is expected to burn 50% less fuel and lower emissions.

The airline's investment was made through its Alaska Star Ventures arm, which is tasked with identifying key projects to influence the future of the aviation industry.

JetZero's concept integrates the wings and fuselage into

a single shape to reduce aerodynamic drag.

The company said a spacious interior will allow airlines to experiment with innovative seat layouts, which can make the passenger experience quieter and more comfortable.

Along with the financial boost, the investment carries a binding option for future aircraft orders.

Alaska Airlines is working to a target of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

Conscious Datai

MALAYSIAN rainforest retreat, The Datai Langkawi, has launched a package inviting guests to participate in local regeneration projects.

Guests can contribute to the local ecosystem by planting a sapling from the resort's Native Tree Nursery into the rainforest surrounding the resort and take behind-the-scenes tours to learn about the property's waste management facilities.

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Sweating it out in Cambodia



CAMBODIA'S sweltering wet season didn't dampen the spirits for this group of nine agents from Australia and New Zealand during a six-day famil trip to the Southeast Asian hotspot.

The group was hosted from 12-17 Aug by On The Go Tours on its 'Classic Cambodia' itinerary, led by South Island BDM, Jo Lill.

Exploring the highlights of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, the group took in the majesty of the Royal Palace in the capital and numerous temples and markets dotted throughout the two cities.

Agents also learned more about the devastation of the Khmer Rouge regime through visits to the killing fields and S21 prison, along with the serenity of Angkor Wat at sunrise.

Other highlights included a visit to the Angkor Museum, a cruise on Tonle Sap, and an afternoon at a butterfly sanctuary.

Bona fide agents wishing to organise their own adventures to Cambodia with On The Go Tours can enjoy a 50% discount on standard group departures. *ML*

Pictured above at the Royal

Palace in Phnom Penh is Jo Lill, On The Go Tours; Liam Radburn, FC Robina; Chris Atkinson, House of Travel Hornby; Lyndal Woodham, World Travellers Christchurch; Justine Pielli, Travel Associates Belconnen; Kennedy Braxton, FC Riccarton; Vicki Wong, House of Travel Ashburton; Laura Watt, FC Cleveland; Nicole Trueman, Red Dragonfly Tours and Barbara Biggs, FC Nelson.

El Al chooses Max

ISRAELI carrier El Al has signed its largest-ever deal with Boeing, which will see the carrier acquire up to 31 737 Max aircraft.

The landmark purchase will support the expansion of the airline's network, as well as enable it to increase flight frequencies to existing destinations, and offer an advanced flight experience, while also prioritising sustainability.

"We're moving forward, stronger and more determined, towards a brighter future for Israeli aviation," said El Al Chief Executive Officer Dina Ben Tal Ganancia.

Window Seat

TRAVELLERS can spend a weekend living like the rich and famous, thanks to a new collaboration between Booking.com and Ludacris.

The American rapper and actor is hosting the ultimate family getaway at his Atlanta mansion, which sits on a sprawling 22 acreage, and includes a private lake, theatre, and basketball court.

The star's luxurious home will become bookable on a first-come, first-served basis for one user and three guests on 28 Aug for a two-night stay in Sep, priced at only US\$4.04 - a nod to the renowned Atlanta area code.

The lucky family will enjoy a jam-packed itinerary designed by Ludacris himself, including a special 30-minute meet-and-greet with the *Get Back* singer.

Also on the cards is a backyard BBQ and a gourmet dinner at one of Ludacris' favourite French restaurants, and guests will get to take home signed copies of the artist's chart-topping albums.

Check out 'The Ludacris Welcome To Atlanta Summer Send-Off' listing [HERE](#).



MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.673

THERE'S never been a better time for Aussies to visit Japan, with the AUD at a decade-long high against the Japanese Yen.

The Australian dollar is also gaining strength against the USD, spurred by growing expectation the US Federal Reserve may cut its Federal Funds Rate as early as Sep.

Ultimately, the Aussie firmed against most majors following a mixed set of inflation data.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.673
UK	£0.519
NZ	\$1.101
Euro	€0.607
Japan	¥98.88
Thailand	฿23.16
China	¥4.807
South Africa	11.94
Canada	\$0.918
Crude oil	US\$76.00

Extra time in JNB

SOUTH African Airways is asking travellers passing through Tambo Int'l Airport in Johannesburg to allow extra travel time due to new biometric immigration technology being introduced.

The South African Department of Home Affairs and Border Management Agency are installing the new biometric movement control systems, which will extend processing time and may also affect baggage collection times for incoming pax.

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2025-2026
WORLDWIDE GUIDE



LEARN AND WIN

With a NEW Switzerland Webinar Series

Agents are invited to join Switzerland Tourism's Sandra Babey and some special guests for a new live monthly webinar series covering rail, regions and Christmas in Switzerland.

Gain insights to create exceptional and unique itineraries for your clients, ensuring they experience the very best of Switzerland.

Kicking off on Wednesday 21 August, the first session is 'All About Trains' to help you sell rail in Switzerland with more confidence. Learn the difference between a panoramic train and a regular service, when to recommend a Swiss Travel Pass, and when a rail route is actually part train and part boat!

Session #2 takes you off the beaten track to journey through three distinct

language regions of Switzerland, linked by some hidden gems on the panoramic train network. Starting in Montreux, on the shores of Lake Geneva, to charming Lucerne, the gateway to the Alps, then descend to the picturesque Italian-speaking region of Ticino.

Adventures in the mountains are calling for session #3 covering the Jungfrau Region. Dominated by majestic peaks, this area offers breathtaking alpine meadows and picturesque mountain villages such as Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen, and Mürren.

The fourth and final session sets the scene for a magical white Christmas. With snow-capped peaks and over one hundred Christmas markets and experiences, Switzerland is the most

magical place to enjoy the festive season. From Zurich to Basel and many locations in between, hear some favourite Christmas experiences and tips on travelling in winter.

REGISTER NOW

Each session runs at 4pm AEST for 30 minutes plus live Q&A.

Win some prizes along the way!
21 Aug: All About Trains
18 Sep: A Panoramic Journey
9 Oct: The Jungfrau Region
13 Nov: Winter Experiences and Christmas Markets