



Offer from Silversea

SILVERSEA is highlighting a limited-time offer, which allows travellers to take advantage of up to \$8,000 savings per suite on more than 500 voyages.

To learn out more about the deal, which ends 28 Feb 2025, see **page nine**.

Minor signs a major deal

MANAGEMENT letting rights for Brisbane's landmark Queen's Wharf Residences development has been won by Minor Hotels in a major expansion of its Australasian property portfolio.

Taking effect from early next year, Minor will oversee holiday rental activities of Queen's Wharf Brisbane's privately-owned residences in a 64-storey tower.

Each of the multi-bedroom apartments feature balconies and winter gardens equipped with innovative lift-and-tilt windows.



Exclusive guest amenities on-site will include a pool, spa, steam room, theatre, lounge room, fitness centre and access to a plethora of dining and entertainment options, including river views from the Sky Deck.

While Minor Hotels will oversee management of the booking process, the project will not be managed as one of the company's global accommodation brands.

"We are excited to add such a landmark Brisbane development to our portfolio, offering a product unlike anything the city has seen before with respect to size and scale, and proximity to Brisbane CBD's most exciting dining and entertainment precinct," said Minor Hotels Australasia COO, Craig Hooley. *ML*

EK slings Singapore

EMIRATES will cease flying between Melbourne and Singapore from 30 Mar 2025 after close to 30 years of operation.

The decision is part of a broader restructure of services from the Victorian capital, with a third non-stop daily Emirates flight between Dubai and Melbourne to replace the long-held Melbourne to Dubai via Singapore route.

The service will be operated on a newly retrofitted four-class Boeing 777, which features the carrier's premium economy cabin and latest generation business class seats.

The third daily non-stop flight will offer customers more choice and convenient schedules, with connectivity via Dubai to 27 European cities.

At the beginning of Dec, Emirates also reinstated its second Perth service (**TD 29 Jan**).

HKTB names Karen

THE Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has announced the appointment of Karen Prideaux as Senior Manager, Trade Marketing.

Based in Sydney, Prideaux will lead business development and trade marketing strategies to promote Hong Kong to travellers.

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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news including a photo page from **APT Travel Group**, our **Sustainability** page, plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- Treasures of the South Pacific

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VIEW DEAL

APT revamps booking sites

APT Travel Group has unveiled new websites for its APT Luxury Travel and Travelmarvel brands, offering a faster and more seamless user journey. The updated platforms boast easier navigation experiences and advanced search



and booking capabilities, allowing guests to book directly or connect with a travel expert. Detailed itineraries with day-by-day descriptions are also now available on the new platforms, along with thousands of new images and videos showcasing APT's luxury travel experiences.

"We understand that planning a luxury holiday is a very exciting part of the travel experience," said David Cox, Chief Executive of APT Travel Group.

"The core thing the new sites will do is enable customers to find what they want far faster and really enjoy the booking experience online.

"When you have such a wide and diverse range of products, it's important to us that our customers can discover our stunning fleet and array of destinations faster and easier than ever before.

"It also helps our guests build their perfect holiday in a seamless and easy way and connect with our experienced travel experts."

Explore the refreshed websites at www.aptouring.com.au and www.travelmarvel.com.au. JM

Christmas Treasures

TREASURES of the South Pacific is wishing everyone in the Australian travel sector a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday break - see **page 10** to view its very festive message.

ATIA p'ship ends

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) and the Australian Travel Education Pty Ltd (ATE) have ceased their collaboration on training initiatives for the travel and tourism sector after 17 years.

In revealing the news, ATIA said the changes reflected the evolution of the travel and tourism sector and the need for both ATIA and ATE's owner, Rick Myatt, to focus on their respective strengths in delivering value to the industry.

Myatt will continue to pursue his work at the Australian Travel Careers Council - more updates from ATIA on **page six**.

Jucier points promo

VIRGIN Australia's Velocity program has partnered with Jucy and Star RV to allow members to earn points when they rent a campervan or motorhome.

Velocity members can now earn three points per A\$1 spent on eligible campervans and motorhome rentals across Australia and New Zealand.

Additionally, from now until 19 Jan, Velocity members can take up an exclusive offer that allows them to earn 10,000 bonus points when reserving a Jucy campervan or motorhome, or 15,000 bonus Velocity Points on all Star RV motorhome rentals.

See **HERE** for more details.



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Ponant kicks off NZ

PONANT has started its New Zealand season, which will see *Le Soleal* and *Le Jacques Cartier* offer eight departures visiting 23 ports of call until Mar 2025.

The itinerary line-up includes two expeditions exploring New Zealand's remote subantarctic islands; a brand-new 15-night New Year's cruise journeying from the South Island to the North Island; and a 21-night expedition to Antarctica, round trip from Dunedin.

"Our included shore excursions and tours are providing guests with authentic New Zealand experiences and continue to contribute to support local communities and their economies," said Deb Corbett, Ponant CEO Asia Pacific.

"From visiting wineries...to meeting Maori communities and learning about their culture and observation of NZ's superb natural environments, we are excited by what lies ahead for this season."

On the Go in Iceland



ON THE Go Tours (OTG) recently treated a group of five Australian travel agents and one American advisor to a whirlwind tour of southern Iceland.

Hosted by OTG Global Sales Manager, Carl Cross, the group had the chance to experience one of the brand's most popular selling tours, 'Land of the Northern Lights'.

Five action-packed days saw agents marvel at waterfalls, explore the culture of cities and countryside, rejuvenate in the

mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon, and witness the majesty of the Northern Lights.

Participants included Joanne Haine, TravelManagers Australia; Renee McLennan, MTA; Dantae Mirano, Flight Centre; Pippa Vann, Envoyage Australia; Sara Jenkinson, Flight Centre Australia; and Jennifer Verdicchio, Envoyage, USA.

OTG will run more famils in 2025, with agents encouraged to contact their local BDM to learn of upcoming opportunities. *JM*

AAA board refresh

THE Australian Airports Association (AAA) has elected Jonathan Willsher and Chris Mills to its board following director elections by its member base.

Willsher is the Commercial Manager at Ballarat Airport, while Chris Mills is Chief Executive Officer for Sunshine Coast Airport and Coffs Harbour Airport.

AAA Chair Kym Meys said Willsher, a former pilot, and Mills both have extensive experience working with airports.

"Both these appointees have strong backgrounds in aviation and will be passionate advocates for our leading \$105 billion industry," Meys said.

In the other direction, five directors have completed their terms and exited the board, including Tom Ganley, Parafield Airport; Julie Stewart, Ballina Byron Gateway; Matt Cocker, Hobart Airport; Brendan Cook, Townsville Airport; and Mick Bell, Coonamble Airport.

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Thai, Sabre shake

SABRE Corporation and Thai Airways have extended their partnership, with the airline to use Sabre's Fares Manager and Fares Optimizer solutions to enhance its pricing capabilities.

The advanced software will enable the Thai carrier to streamline its fares management processes and respond more effectively to market dynamics.

AA getting Eger

ACCOMMODATION Australia will launch an innovative new portal aimed at facilitating career progression and the workforce needs of the hospitality industry.

Dubbed 'Eger' and launching in Mar 2025, the platform comes on the back of a \$10 million Austrade grant aimed at supporting a 5.7% year-on-year employment jump, a figure which is expected to grow to 12% in the coming decade.

Aimed as a central hub for job seekers and career changers, Eger will match skills to career paths, including across sectors, and provide access to resources for those looking to upskill.

For employers, Eger will be a platform for the latest vacancies to be advertised and will also offer workforce development tools to attract and retain talent.

"This one-stop-shop will help tourism and hospitality workers grow their skill sets to continue to build their careers and help businesses find the employees they need," Federal Trade and Tourism Minister Don Farrell said.

FC crystal clear on biz

FLIGHT Centre Corporate has announced a new partnership with Crystalbrook Collection to offer business travellers an "office away from the office" experience.

The collaboration will connect thousands of FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller customers with Crystalbrook Collection's eight hotels and resorts, which provide fast and free wi-fi, in-room tech, prime accessible locations, stylish yet functional spaces, healthy menu options, and same-day dry-cleaning.

"This partnership represents the great synergies between Flight Centre Corporate and Crystalbrook Collection," said Flight Centre Corporate Managing Director ANZ, Melissa Elf.

"We're combining business with luxury, sustainability, and a bit of relaxation and fun.

"Crystalbrook Collection is the ideal choice for those who want more than just a shower and bed on their next work trip, and we know that's just what the modern-day corporate traveller is looking for."

The partnership follows a recent independent survey commissioned by Flight Centre Corporate, which found that business travellers highly value in-room office amenities.

According to the survey of 1,001 Australian business travellers, 73% want free and fast wi-fi; 41% seek free printing facilities; 37% desire more electrical outlets and USB ports; and 35%



request larger or better-equipped workspaces, including phone chargers and charging banks.

"These preferences highlight a significant demand for accommodations that support efficient workspaces within hotel rooms, over communal business centres or separate meeting rooms," Elf said.

Additionally, 44% of respondents said healthy breakfast options are essential, 25% favour well-equipped fitness facilities, and 36% seek relaxation amenities beyond their rooms, indicating that wellness is important to corporate travellers during their stays. JM

Rousseau in the Chair

MICHAEL Rousseau, President and CEO of Air Canada, has been elected as the new Chairperson of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board (CEB).

In his new role, Rousseau will lead the two annual board meetings and serve as the spokesperson for the board, guiding the strategic direction of the Alliance, which comprises 25 global airline members.

Rousseau takes over from United boss Scott Kirby, who has held the post since Dec 2020.



Window Seat

MOST of us only bungy jump once in our lives, if at all, but for one New Zealander, the thrill-seeking activity isn't just a bucket-list item - it's part of her daily life.

Shai Baller, who has a whopping 200-300 bungy jumps under her belt, recently became Australia's first female jump master after dedicating two years to studying safety manuals and emergency procedures and overseeing 1,250 people jump.

Once terrified of heights, the 25-year-old Kiwi turned her fear into passion at age 18 when she did her first-ever bungy jump while studying at the Adventure Tourism College in Queenstown.

In 2022, she moved to Northern Queensland to work at Australia's only bungy jumping site, Skypark Cairns by AJ Hackett.

Fast forward to this year, and Baller found herself welcoming bungy jumping pioneer, AJ Hackett himself, as her first client after achieving her 'master' status.

"I love my job so much and it's fun and it's fulfilling and I get to meet so many people," Baller told NZ media, adding that the thrill of jumping never goes away, despite doing it hundreds of times.

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APT celebrates incredible VIP agents

APT and Travelmarvel are thrilled to celebrate the agents who have achieved upgrades to Diamond and Platinum VIP status this year.

The company said their dedication and partnership have been nothing short of exceptional, with APT expressing its gratitude to key partners who aligned with its growth plans and rode the exciting wave with the brand in 2024.

With record numbers of VIPs in its program, APT is exploring the possibility of introducing a new tier for 2025's highest performers - a reflection of just how successful the program has become.

Looking ahead, the future promises even more incredible growth, and APT said it can't wait to continue the journey alongside its valued partners.

"We're so proud to partner with agents who share our vision and passion," says APT Travel Group Chief Sales Officer, Scott Ellis.

"Your success is our success, and together, we're building something extraordinary for 2025 and beyond."

NEW agency Helloworld Travel Stanhope Gardens celebrating reaching Platinum status.



CELEBRATING Toowoomba Cruise & Travel's hard earned Diamond status.



TRAVEL Associates Norwood in South Australia - first time as Platinum agents.



MILLION Dollar Diamonds - Flight Centre Cranbourne in Vic.

APT Business Development Manager Barbara Baron with the first Canberra Diamond agency - Jamison Travel.



FLIGHT Centre Ocean Keys in Western Australia celebrating Platinum status.



RAA Travel Colonnades in South Australia - first time as VIP Diamond.

FLIGHT Centre West Lakes in South Australia make it to Diamond status.



APT Business Development Manager Sandy Allan with the team at Flight Centre The Junction - first time as Platinum.



IT'S a Diamond Christmas for Queensland's Flight Centre Warwick.

Ayers Rock Resort rocks awards



VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia has rounded off a stellar awards year, with 18 global and local titles in 2024.

Wintjiri Wiru, the world's largest permanent drone show, recently won the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experience category at the Brolga Northern Territory Tourism Awards in Alice Springs, putting it in the running for the national Australian Tourism Awards.

The experience also took out an Honourable Mention in the Luxury Travel Gold List's Indigenous Experience category last week.

Aussie travel warning

AN AMERICAN Jewish human rights organisation is preparing to issue a global travel warning about visiting Australia.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre is expected to inform Jewish citizens globally to reconsider non-essential travel to Australia in the wake of a terror attack on a synagogue in Melbourne.

When formally updated, the advisory will mark the first time the organisation has issued a travel warning against Australia.

The centre's Associate Dean, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, said a letter had been sent to the Australian Ambassador to the US confirming the decision.

Additionally, Wintjiri Wiru was listed in *Time Out's* Recommends 2024 - the title's pick of 150 venues and experiences around Australia, joining Ayers Rock Resort and Sails in the Desert, as well as Tali Wiru restaurant, and the Outback BBQ & Bar.

"We're laser focused on our commitment to sustainable and culturally respectful tourism, and our approach is clearly resonating, with consumer demand at pre-COVID levels," Voyages CEO Matt Cameron-Smith said. *MS*

Reho Stars on 45

REHO Travel has shared a first look at its new celebratory video, 'Reho Stars on 45'.

The clip ([CLICK HERE](#)) celebrates 45 years of Reho's journey, taking viewers through the company's early years, as it evolved as a travel management company, finding its purpose, navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, and embracing the recovery.

The video also celebrates Reho's resilience and success, with the support of its industry partners, showcasing the team's gathering at a 145-year-old mansion in the Tasmanian wilderness.

The clip is a nearly 20-year-old Christmas tradition carried on by Reho, which began with the team sending out hand-drawn cards.

ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



ACCORDING

to the pundits, the next federal election is anticipated to be held on 08 Mar. If this is the case, it will mark 122 years and 21 days since the first-ever federal election was held in Australia.

For the travel industry, we will be rolling out key campaign requests for all aspiring and current members of parliament to consider.

Central to this will be a continuation of new investment into support programs for our smaller members and improving how people are trained to join our sector.

When I rejoined the Association over three years ago, I spoke to *travelBulletin* about the need to not lose the important gains we had made in Canberra through the dark days of COVID.

Since then, we have significantly improved our networks and capabilities.

But our most formidable advocacy asset, is you!

There is nothing more powerful than a travel professional who is informed about our issues and can discuss them with their member

of parliament or candidate.

As we finalise these items with the Board, I look forward to sharing these with you and how you can become involved.

Today also marks a new era for ATIA and the Australian Travel Careers Council (ATCC).

After 17 years of collaboration, ATIA and Rick Myatt's Australian Travel Education Pty Ltd (ATE) will be pursuing separate but complementary paths to advance the sector.

This partnership has delivered significant value for our industry.

ATIA will focus on delivering our commitments in Project A30, as well as the GapYear Program and the Travel Career Kickstart Training Program, which is aimed at providing new starters with the skills they need to enter the workforce.

ATCC will operate all programs independently of ATIA, focusing on the Travel Ambassador Program, and Overseas Technical Study Tours.

Finally, and importantly, I want to thank the Board and the team at ATIA for what has been a wonderful 12 months.

Thank you also to our great members and wider industry.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year!

See you in 2025.

Holiday prep time

AUSTRALIANS have spent an average of 27 hours planning their next trip, adding up to 540 million hours nationwide, new Microsoft research reveals.

The study was conducted for the tech giant by YouGov, which polled 1,119 Aussies 18 years and over in late Nov.

Younger generations spend nearly three times longer putting together their next trip compared to older generations, with 77% of those surveyed admitting they find the whole process stressful.

Nearly half of the respondents said they were open to AI taking on time-consuming tasks for them including ensuring their holiday stays on budget and finding interesting things to do.

With the time saved, two in five respondents said they would use it to catch up on sleep.

Unforgettable year

UNFORGETTABLE Croatia marked a record-breaking year in 2024, achieving its highest-ever occupancy rate of 99.21% and revealing that bookings through the trade have increased by 24%.

More than 1,300 guests booked via a travel agent, the luxury small-ship operator confirmed, following the conclusion of its May-Oct sailing season.

In Australia alone, revenue and bookings were both up almost 50% for the 2024 season, with Aussie travellers now accounting for 15% of all guests on board the luxury operator's small ship Croatia cruises.

The upswing in local bookings coincided with the arrival of Unforgettable Croatia European Travel Specialist Aurore Bertomeu, based in Melbourne, earlier this year (*TD* 19 Sep).



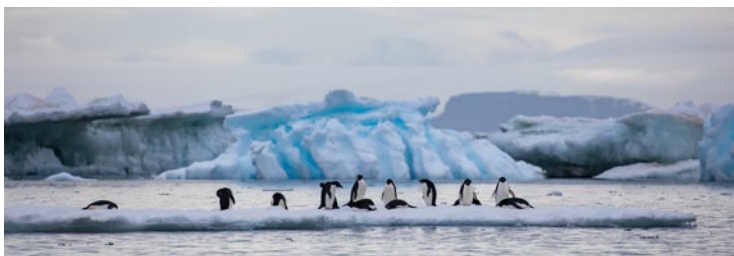
TRAVELLERS EAGER TO SUPPORT GREEN BRANDS

TRAVELLERS are increasingly shaping their holidays around weather and mitigating climate change, a new survey from luxury agent network Virtuoso has found.

The network's *2025 Luxe Report* polled more than 2,200 of its agent community, including more than 200 in Australia and New Zealand, with the majority suggesting climate change plays a major role in holiday planning.

A key finding from the study was that 38% of agents reported their clients adjusting travel plans to factor in climate change.

According to Virtuoso's *2024 Brand and Travel Tracker*, which surveyed travellers across 17 countries in collaboration with YouGov, weather and climate was the most searched information travellers conducted during the



travel planning stage, with 70% seeking out more details.

This was followed by safety in the destination (64%) and ease of reaching the destination (63%).

Furthermore, the study found 45% of travellers are willing to pay more to support companies that preserve natural and cultural heritage, and 42% for those that benefit local communities.

Virtuoso Vice President Sustainability, Javier Arredondo, said travellers are more conscious

of the impact their activities and choices have on the world.

"We have partners doing extraordinary things to serve the areas where they operate, ensuring that trips can benefit both travellers and the communities they visit," Arredondo said.

"Virtuoso advisors are there to help guide clients in choosing experiences that align with their values, so that doing good and doing well are not mutually

exclusive," he added.

For the agent network more broadly, sustainability sits across three key pillars Virtuoso supports alongside hundreds of preferred partners worldwide.

These include working with suppliers such as Aurora Expeditions, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions and Adventure World on efforts to preserve environment, cultures and livelihoods for communities.

For example, Aurora Expeditions offsets 100% of its emissions by funding blue carbon initiatives, with the company achieving B-Corp status earlier this year.

Meanwhile, Lindblad Expeditions and Adventure World work to ensure local economies benefit from activities supported by locally owned businesses. *ML*

Masterful Reef

DAYDREAM Island Resort Living Reef Manager, Lisa McMullen, has been granted the status of Master Reef Guide by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

McMullen will now work to introduce more education sessions and tours for resort guests to see many of the conservation projects being undertaken at the property.

These include reef restoration at Lover's Cove and creating a species list for guests to sight.

Spicers Retreats earns Ecotourism Australia accreditation

ECOTOURISM Australia has bestowed its prestigious Sustainable Tourism Certification to four Spicers Retreats resorts in Southeast Queensland.

The properties - Spicers Tamarind Retreat, Spicers Clovelly Estate, Spicers Peak Lodge and Spicers Hidden Vale (pictured) - were all judged to have implemented best-practice sustainable tourism standards to achieve certification.

These include repurposing food waste and sourcing locally grown produce, providing



accessible rooms for disabled travellers and partnering with local community organisations.

One such partnership sees Spicers Peak Lodge sourcing its linen from socially responsible linen supplier Vanguard Laundry and eco-friendly and plant-based bathroom amenities from Leif. Spicers Retreats CEO Tash

Tobias said the recognition was testament to its commitment to responsible tourism.

"By protecting and honouring our natural surroundings, we're able to create experiences that not only inspire our guests but also safeguard these precious environments for generations to come," Tobias said.

Ecotourism Australia CEO Elissa Keenan praised the sustainability commitment by Spicers Retreats, which now joins a collective of more than 100 certified hotels and resorts across Australia.



MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.644

THE Australian dollar bounced sharply during overnight trading, bottoming out near US\$0.638, before finishing at US\$0.644.

Helping the AUD was a multi-week high for key Australian exports, such as copper.

All attention is on the Reserve Bank of Australia, with speculation it might deliver a hold on interest rates at its gathering today.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.644
UK	£0.563
NZ	\$1.085
Euro	€0.632
Japan	¥82.25
Thailand	฿24.66
China	¥5.049
South Africa	9.748
Canada	\$0.965
Crude oil	US\$68.69

QF spritzes up menu

BEVERAGE brands Four Pillars and Curatif have teamed up with Qantas to create the new Aviation Spritz cocktail.

The new alcoholic drink is has launched exclusively on Qantas international flights from Australia, and will be available across premium economy and economy cabins.

The combo features Four Pillars' gin and Curatif's vermouth, for a drink with "citrus notes, a savoury edge, and a sweet violet finish".

Feeling at home in France



THE Home Travel Company (HTC) was well represented at ILTM Cannes last week, with the Tassie agency's entire selling team travelling to France for the invitation-only travel trade show.

HTC owner Robyn Sinfield and her team participated in four days of pre-scheduled appointments, educational sessions, networking, and parties, rubbing shoulders

with a wide breadth of iconic luxury brands and experiences.

Pictured: Karen Flood, Kyle Duffield, Stacey Lyons, and Robyn Sinfield soaking up the sunshine on the French Riviera. *JM*

Mexico delays fees

MEXICO has postponed the implementation of a US\$42 cruise fee for at least six months, with a review expected 01 Jul 2025.

The delay follows concerns from the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) about the tax's potentially "devastating impact on cruise tourism, Mexico's economy, and the livelihoods of its coastal communities".

The fee is 213% more than the average cost at Caribbean ports, the FCCA told local media, which raises "serious questions" about the competitiveness of Mexico as a cruise destination.

Lindblad takes off

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has successfully completed its first round-trip Antarctica flights between Puerto Natales and King George Island.

Guests on the inaugural 'Antarctica Direct: Fly the Drake Passage' skipped the Drake Passage entirely, instead flying to and from the White Continent.

Passengers then sailed to various destinations on the Antarctic Peninsula aboard *National Geographic Explorer*.

The company has also launched its first 'Antarctica Direct: Sail and Fly the Drake Passage' voyage, which included one-way flights.

The new fly-cruise packages are on offer in eight-, nine-, and 10-days trips, as opposed to the standard 12 days.

Protests in S.Korea

SMARTTRAVELLER has warned travellers to avoid protests and demonstrations in South Korea, which could disrupt transport and other essential services.

The political action is mainly taking place in Seoul, particularly in the vicinity of the National Assembly (Yeouido) and Gwanghwamun Square, near the Presidential Office (Samgakji) and on university campuses.

Feel better in Perth

PAN Pacific Perth has announced the launch of its Wellness Program.

Curated exclusively in collaboration with Wellness Concierge Todd Brodie, the program caters to guests at every stage of their fitness journey.

Available through the in-room wellness channel, the program delivers workouts, guided meditation, and pilates sessions, which require no special equipment or attire.

Guests can also enjoy the Sleep Experience Menu, featuring sleep-supportive teas, nourishing late-night snacks, and wind-down options designed to promote deep rest.

Wellness dining options will include juices, snacks, and meals available throughout the day.



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Silver Nova in Hong Kong

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To take advantage of this limited-time offer, book your suite with our industry-leading all-inclusive fares by **February 28, 2025**.

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On behalf of all of the Treasures of the South Pacific, along with our incredible partners, we wish you an amazing holiday season, and look forward to seeing you on our friendly shores in 2025.

