



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Corporate Update** and a photo page from **Ponant**.

APT on the Murray

APT will charter Murray River Paddlesteamers' *Australian Star* vessel to operate three river cruise itineraries in Jun 2025.

Built in partnership with Murray River Paddlesteamers, the unique 19-cabin, 38-pax vessel is the world's only woodfired luxury paddlesteamer, featuring panoramic views, outdoor relaxation spaces and fine dining at the Hopwood Lounge and Bar.

The new itineraries include the eight-day Retreat to the Murray, visiting Echuca, Rochester, Colbinabbin, Perricoota Station and more.

Meanwhile, shorter trips on offer include the four-day Murray River Gateway and the five-day Murray River Escape.

WA surfs new WAVES

TOURISM Western Australia has unveiled a new 10-year plan to grow the state's visitor economy to \$25 billion per annum by 2033.

The *WA Visitor Economy Strategy 2033 (WAVES 2033)* road map aims to position WA as "a world-class destination that immerses people in its unique cultures, communities and environment".

Following visitor spend in Western Australia reaching a record high of \$16.8 billion in 2022-23, Tourism WA Managing Director, Carolyn Turnbull, believes the state's 'dream decade' is off to a great start.

"Tourism WA is committed to taking Western Australia's Visitor Economy to even greater heights," she said.

"WAVES 2033 sets out the future of the Western Australian visitor economy as we move on from the post-pandemic recovery

phase and set our sights on new levels of success."

In collaboration with 14 WA Government agencies, more than 25 tourism stakeholders helped shape the new strategy by offering insights into the challenges and opportunities being faced by the industry.

WAVES 2033 identifies scope to drive sustainable growth across six key areas, including aviation, accommodation and attractions, events, Aboriginal tourism, destination brand, and high performing industry.

Initiatives outlined in the plan include attracting new inbound aviation routes, an area WA has made great inroads in recent months, as well as boosting regional tourism with affordable airfares, and encouraging investment in accommodation, attractions and events.

The WA Govt has committed \$530m to implement WAVES. JM

CTM appoints CFO

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has appointed James Spence (**pictured**) as its new Global CFO, filling the void left by Cale Bennett who departed last year.

Spence previously held CFO roles at other major international businesses over the past 13 years and will join CTM on 27 May.

During his 30-year career, Spence has gained experience in strategy, risk management, M&A and capital markets.

James Patterson, who is currently Acting Global Chief Financial Officer, will continue to support the transition.



FLY DIRECT FROM SYDNEY TO BUSSELTON-MARGARET RIVER

Feel the freedom and experience the flavours of the Margaret River Region, where adventure and indulgence meet. Journey through over 100 cellar doors, along stunning coastline, and through ancient jewel-like caves or tall-timber forests. Encourage your clients to step into a dream when they fly direct from Sydney to Busselton-Margaret River with Jetstar.

DISCOVER MORE

WESTERN
AUSTRALIA
WALKING ON A DREAM

♀ NGILGI CAVE, YALLINGUP

NZ reclaims the crown

NEW Zealand has returned to the top of the list for short-term overseas trips taken by Aussies, with the latest ABS figures for Dec showing our eastern neighbour has toppled long-standing number one, Indonesia.

The month saw 110,000 trips taken across the Tasman, ahead of Indonesia, which thanks largely to Bali, maintained number two spot with 103,570 trips.

When compared to the previous month in Nov, Aussies made around 6,000 more monthly trips to NZ, while Indonesia dropped by roughly 14,000 from 117,000.

Other markets which outperformed pre-pandemic months for Dec included Japan (49,540), India (44,520), Thailand (34,700), Fiji (29,980) and Vietnam (28,300).

A total 739,600 short-term trips were recorded for the month, representing an increase of 209,630 compared with the same



month in 2022, and also saw the outbound travel market edge closer to parity with 2019 - now only 1.3% shy of pre-COVID. *AB*

K'Gari by helicopter

K'GARI Explorer Tours has introduced a new way for travellers to see K'gari, formerly known as Fraser Island, as a one-day adventure from Noosa.

Operated in partnership with Noosa helicopter company Salt Air Aviation, the day tour takes guests over the Great Sandy National Park and Double Island Point before landing at Kingfisher Bay Resort or K'gari Beach Resort for a gourmet picnic lunch.

Guests transfer to a 4WD tour to see the island's drawcards.

Vietnam and Cambodia Delight

15 days Hanoi to Siem Reap from only \$4,799*

mwTours



LEARN MORE

Ward joins Wendy

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) Australia has appointed Belinda Ward as its Head of Sales, marking a return to the travel sector after an 18-month hiatus.

Ward's most recent role in travel was Head of Sales for Designer Journeys, and before that she held several key positions with TTC, including as MD of Contiki from Sep 2019 to Nov 2020.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* about the appointment, which formally starts in mid-Mar, Ward said she is "really excited" to join Managing Director Australia Simon Bell and the WWT team as it embarks on a growth trajectory.

"I've admired Wendy and what she has built for a very long time and can't wait to be part of the growth of WWT," she said.

Ward joins WWT during a period of rapid rebound expansion following a traumatic pandemic period for the Asia specialist, with the company ramping up recruitment in Australia.

Helen nabs Nagano

JAPAN'S Nagano Tourism Organization has appointed a representative in Australia for the first time, revealing Helen Wong is now looking after trade engagement for the city.

Sports enthusiasts may recall the city was the host of the 1998 Winter Olympics, with tourist visitation typically fuelled by its hot springs & colourful festivals.

The first step in distinguishing Nagano as a unique destination with Aussies is a trade seminar taking place on 27 Feb - agents can register to attend [HERE](#).



EXPLORER SESSIONS

Boost your sales and earn more this quarter with the new and bigger-than-ever Viking Explorer Sessions.

No matter where your client dreams of travelling, we've got a session tailored to them with 12 unique and themed sessions in each city. Each session will provide your clients with all the information and inspiration they need to plan, and then book, their next journey with you. Think of it as a chance for them to test drive their perfect Viking voyage.

Plus, we'll spoil them with complimentary refreshments and an exclusive offer they can redeem when they book with you. Register your clients today before sessions fill out.

SYDNEY | Tuesday 27 February

MELBOURNE | Thursday 29 February

ADELAIDE | Thursday 7 March

BRISBANE | Tuesday 12 March

GOLD COAST | Thursday 14 March

PERTH | Thursday 21 March

PLACES LIMITED, REGISTER YOUR CLIENTS NOW

For more information contact your Commercial Manager or email agents.anz@viking.com



138 747 VIKING.COM/EXPLORERSESSIONS



Fighting the identity crisis

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has called on the expertise of Platinum Partner, 4Walls Cyber Advisory, to ensure its members are better protected against digital security threats.

Part of a new initiative to combat the increasing risk to businesses from cyber criminals, CATO will launch a webinar exclusive to members addressing the scourge of identity theft.

The session, which will take place on 05 Mar at 10.30am AEDT, will seek to arm travel businesses with the tools to prevent identity theft under the tutelage of 4Walls Cybersecurity.

Four broad pillars of defence will be discussed, including understanding the major risks, getting under the skin of cyber criminals, taking practical steps to secure bookings and payments, as well as adopting the right tools to ensure longer-term defence.

CATO's Managing Director, Brett Jardine, said the initiative demonstrates the importance of understanding the specific online pitfalls facing the travel sector.

"We are delighted to



provide our members with a comprehensive educational opportunity that addresses the unique cybersecurity risks prevalent in the travel industry," Jardine observed.

CATO bolstered its online security ranks last year by adding 4Walls Cyber Advisory as a Platinum member (**TD** 16 Jun 2023), at the time flagging the IT expert would bolster the ongoing cybersecurity needs of tour operators and wholesalers.

The webinar will be the first in a series of educational opportunities for CATO members run in conjunction with 4Walls Cyber Advisory, and arrives at a time of heightened alarm for Australian businesses.

More details about how to register for the webinar will be released soon. **AB**

Basque-ing in growth

THE autonomous Basque Country region on the border of France and Spain is eyeing the Australian market as a major development market.

While only representing a small portion of its current visitor volumes, last year the number of Aussie visitors jumped by 29,300, while overnight stays also climbed by 68,000.

That growth has seen the region seeking to highlight its 'Basque Country Grand Tour' with Aussie agents, an eight-part odyssey traversing the Basque Country's landscapes and cultural heritage, which was unveiled at Entire Travel Group Travel Showcase & Soiree this week.

Recent Turkish Airlines links with Istanbul are also viewed as renewed drivers of growth.

New NDC collab

TWO of the world's largest travel tech companies have this week inked a deal to develop the most advanced NDC platform currently on offer for agents.

Travelpoint and eDreams ODIGEO have flagged incorporating unique retail functionality, a suite of new ancillaries, and enhanced post-booking features as key drivers of the expanded agreement on NDC collaboration.

Earlier this month, World Travel Agents Association Alliance's new Executive Director, Otto de Vries, earmarked NDC reform as a major agenda item for this year.

Marriott promotes

MARRIOTT International has appointed Kelly Russell to the role of Area Director, Sales & Distribution, APAC, and Carsten Siebert as Senior Area Director of Operations, APAC, to solidify growth ambitions in the region.

Explore!

Swap 'so-so' for **solo!**



1000s of **half price** single supplements.

14-26 February 2024.

Find out more



Make Stuba your secret weapon

Have you heard about our fabulous new incentive?

Every week until 29 March, we're giving away 2 x \$250 Prezzy vouchers and 1 x \$200 Stuba accommodation voucher in our awesome prize draw!

Simply make a Stuba booking over \$500 across our curated hotels, to be automatically entered.

Your next Stuba booking could be your ticket to a shopping spree or an unforgettable getaway!

Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.



Multi Skilled Corporate Travel Consultant

We are a Fun, Friendly Boutique TMC looking for a Multi Skilled Consultant. Are you a true team player with the ability to think outside the box? If so, this is the role for you!

Must have Amadeus and Tramada and ideally Serko/Zeno experience. You must have a passion for all things travel and be able to deliver exceptional customer service. Hybrid working options available.

If you are interested in this opportunity email your resume to georgina@sanfordtravel.com.au

NOTES:

- History
- Bouillabaisse



Window Seat

FOR those who can't make it to Tokyo any time soon, never fear, people can now see it from the comfort of home.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau have launched an interactive portal titled "HELLO! TOKYO FRIENDS" in the Metaverse.

Aussies can now wander the streets of the Japanese capital to see what the sights are like before booking their tickets.

No longer lying low

EVENT Hospitality will introduce its LyLo budget accommodation brand to Australia in Apr this year, with Brisbane's Fortitude Valley set to host the highly social label.

LyLo Brisbane will feature a variety of room configurations including six- and four-pod rooms, female-only dorms, private rooms and family and group set-ups with a queen bed and bunk-style pods.

Each pod has been designed as a self-contained retreat in a shared space, and features a king-single bed with individual light, fan and mirror, multiple power outlets, wi-fi, a secure luggage storage locker and acoustic



privacy screens.

At the heart of the LyLo brand is a sense of community, with each property inviting guests to mingle at a rooftop social space complete with a shared kitchen, self-serve beer, wine and cocktails on tap, and a co-working space.

The property will be easily spotted from the street, with the exterior sporting a colourful four-storey First Nations mural.

LyLo is an evolution of the former Jucy Snooze backpacker brand, which operated hostel-style properties in Auckland, Queenstown and Christchurch, prior to Event Hospitality acquiring the youth brand four years ago (*TD* 19 Feb 2020).

LyLo Managing Director and Co-Founder of Jucy Snooze, Tim Alpe, said the brand is designed to flip the concept of the budget hotel on its head.

"Our first EVT property in Australia has been designed for travellers to stay in both an epic and affordable way by providing all the perks of communal and social travel with the privacy of their own comfortable sleeping space," Alpe said.

LyLo plans to open a flagship location on the Gold Coast, with more to come in future years including Fremantle. *ML*

Travel Daily ON LOCATION



AT SEA

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Virgin Voyages as we sail down the east coast on a four-night Tasmanian adventure.

VIRGIN Voyages says it is all about attracting the 'new to cruise' market - those who may not have thought cruising was for them - and made the somewhat controversial decision to limit their traveller demographic to over 18s only.

In a curious twist, more experienced cruisers, like this *Travel Daily* journalist, can actually notice the lack of kids running around the decks.

It's not something we really pay attention to on other ships, as kids are obviously everywhere in everyday society but when you remove them from a public setting, it's actually noticeable.

For an extra quirk, Virgin's Australian-based ship, *Resilient Lady* has a space known as 'The Social Club'.

And just what will you find at almost every table here?

Classic board games, jigsaw puzzles and a video game arcade featuring Super Mario, Donkey Kong, Pac-Man, Tetris, Space Invaders and more.

But hey, isn't that just testament to that fact that we're all somebody's children?

FLIGHT EXECUTIVE, BRISBANE

Imagine Holidays are looking for a Flights Executive to work in our Aviation team. If you have extensive experience working with a GDS (preferably Galileo), a solid understanding of fares and ticketing and are currently employed within the airline or travel industry, then we have the opportunity for you. If you have the following, then we very much want to hear from you:

- Current GDS experience (preferably Galileo)
- Fares and ticketing experience
- Solid understanding of airline fare rules
- High levels of attention to detail
- Well organised and flexibility to adapt.

The company offers its employees a range of fantastic benefits including:

- Competitive remuneration
- Amazing team environment
- Discount travel benefits
- Employee Assistance program
- Paid birthday leave
- Discretionary bonus

TO APPLY, SEND RESUME TO:
Careers@Imagineholidays.com.au

So, if you love travel and have a passion for flights then don't miss this opportunity to apply for this amazing role.

IMAGINE HOLIDAYS
MORE THAN JUST A HOLIDAY.

Feel the sun on your skin. At midnight.

Don't just visit Norway. *Live it.*

No NCFs. Earn in full. Speak with our Regional Sales team to find out more



SAVE UP TO

\$1300*

ON THE SVALBARD EXPRESS

*T&Cs apply

HURTIGRUTEN Live the legend of Norway.

PONANT's *Le Commandant Charcot* returns to NZ

ON SUN 04 Feb, PONANT's *Le Commandant Charcot* made a triumphant return to New Zealand waters for the second consecutive year after completing her 28-night polar expedition.

Arriving from Ushuaia, Argentina, and having crossed three southern seas, she arrived safely in Lyttelton, New Zealand, to hold a special luxury overnight event the next day for key Australian and New Zealand trade partners and VIP guests.

Hosted by PONANT's Group Deputy CEO of Global Business, New Zealand-born Belinda Hindmarsh, General Manager Sales & Marketing APAC Deb Corbett and her team, Captain Patrick Marchesseau, the event was a great success.

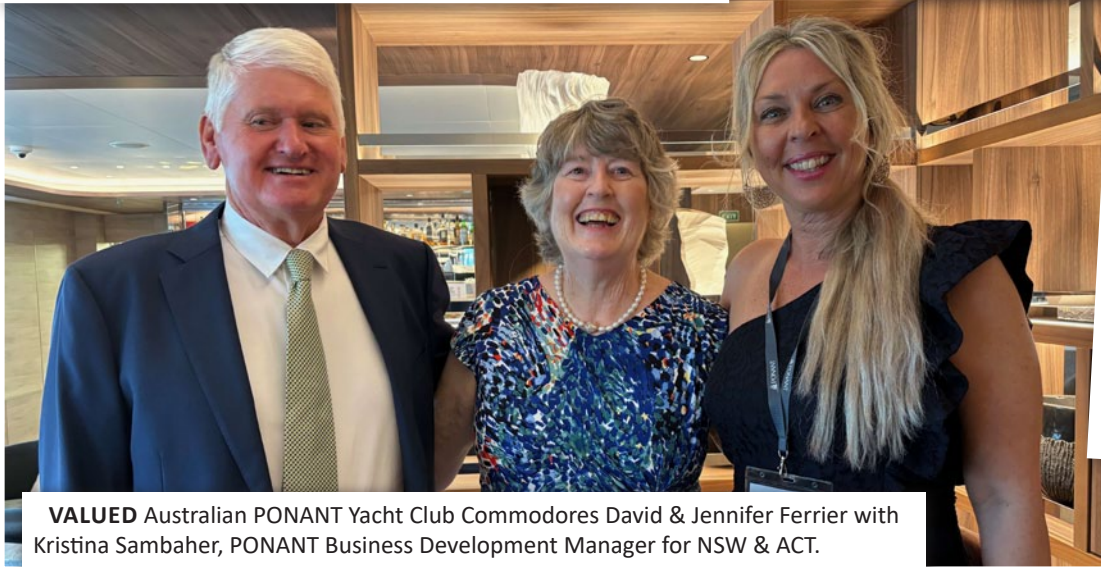
It comprised a ship tour, dinner and an evening of celebration.



BELINDA Hindmarsh, Deputy CEO of Global Business (middle), Captain Marchesseau (left) and Deb Corbett, General Manager Sales & Marketing Asia Pacific for PONANT.



CAPTAIN Patrick Marchesseau warmly welcomes guests by sharing personal highlights of the just-completed 28-night polar expedition and enthusiastically gives the audience an opportunity for Q&A.



VALUED Australian PONANT Yacht Club Commodores David & Jennifer Ferrier with Kristina Sambaher, PONANT Business Development Manager for NSW & ACT.



DEB Corbett, General Manager Sales & Marketing Asia Pacific for PONANT with Australian trade partners Peter Balmer from Cruise & Coach World and Daniel Kotzmann from Constellation Journeys.



BELINDA Hindmarsh (middle), with Janelle Buchanan from YOU Travel Ferrymead (right), Penelope Ahlfeld from Northshore Business Travel (left).



LE COMMANDANT Charcot, docked in Lyttelton, New Zealand before embarking on her final Antarctic voyage of her 2023/2024 season with an all-new 26-night expedition.

GUESTS indulge in flowing Champagne and Kaviar Caviar after an exclusive tour of *Le Commandant Charcot's* staterooms, suites and common areas.



PONANT Business Development Manager for NSW & ACT, Kristina Sambaher, with New Zealand trade Darlene Martin from Helloworld and Australian trade partner Leanne McGovren from MTA.

CORPORATE UPDATE

FCTG corp savings tips

CORPORATE Traveller (CT) has revealed the top cost-cutting measures being taken by Australian businesses to shrink their corporate travel expenses.

Booking flights further in advance was the number one penny-pinching tactic, according to 2023 data from Flight Centre Travel Group's flagship SME travel management business.

Airlines offer the cheapest rates more than 14 days out, according to CT's Australian-based Global MD Tom Walley, who pointed out that "simple but effective hacks such as booking airfares a month

out from the travel date can alone save a company up to \$200 on a single one-way domestic ticket".

Walley said businesses are also selecting flights that offer the best terms and conditions for changes, credits or cancellations, giving them the ability to save thousands of dollars if their corporate travel plans change.

For short domestic work trips, more businesses are encouraging staff to fly with just carry-on luggage, which can lead to savings of up to \$90 per airfare.

Corporate Traveller also revealed that asking for last room availability when booking hotel rooms can also result in savings for budget-conscious business travellers, as well as selecting accommodation within walking distance to the CBD and meeting locations in order to cut down on transport expenses. *JM*

Is this the new Vision for air travel?

A CORPORATE Vice President from Microsoft has demonstrated how the hottest new gadget to hit the market, the Apple Vision Pro, could be used by airlines to enhance the pax experience.

While in business class on a recent Emirates flight from Seattle to Dubai, tech exec Omar Shahine posted screen recordings of the Apple Vision Pro on social media platform Threads, showing how he could work and relax using in-flight wi-fi connected to the mixed-reality headset.

"I am watching movies and browsing the Web using the entire cabin as my screen," Shahine wrote, showcasing what could well be the future of the first and business class flight experiences.

Construction ahead

INFRASTRUCTURE investment across Australia is driving growth in construction travel, which was up 89% in 2023 compared to 2022, according to new data from Flight Centre's flagship corporate divisions, FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller.

The data also showed that one in every six construction travellers are leaving from Brisbane, putting the Queensland capital ahead of Sydney and Melbourne, which usually take the largest share of corporate travel in other sectors.

The Chat
with Jenny
Travel Daily

Conversations with women in travel

Click here to listen to our latest episodes!

PROUDLY SPONSORED by
Regent
SEVEN SEAS CRUISES
AN UNRIVALLED EXPERIENCE™

Delta's star-spangled sojourn



A GROUP of agents from Flight Centre Travel Group's corporate brands were recently whisked away by Delta Air Lines on a fabulous famil to the US.

The incentive winners flew from Sydney in Delta Premium Select and upon arrival at LAX were treated to the carrier's hyped VIP Select service.

Standout moments of the itinerary included a money-can't buy experience in Delta's private suite at Madison Square Garden watching a nail-biting New York Knicks basketball game and a visit to SUMMIT One Vanderbilt.

Agents then headed to Washington DC, to explore the city, taking in the US capital's rich history, culture, monuments and memorials, before settling in to watch a Washington Wizards basketball game. *JM*

Pictured enjoying their time in front of Washington's Capitol

Building: Caroline Drew, FCM; Michael Condon, Corporate Traveller (CT); Aaron Constantinou, FCBT; Harriett Scott, FCBT; Rylie Heathfield, CT; Elle Collins, Stage & Screen; Monica Zagrodny, CT; Joe Khouangrasvonsy, FCBT; Nicole Laurie, Delta Air Lines; Tamara Patterson FCM.

New Era for MEL

MELBOURNE Airport has set a new post-pandemic record today, with more than 117,000 passengers expected to arrive ahead of Taylor Swift's first Australian concert on her highly anticipated Eras Tour.

"This is a significant milestone for Victoria, as a vibrant arrivals hall means a thriving tourism industry for Melbourne's hotels, restaurants, bars, and attractions," a spokesperson for the airport said.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR DYNAMIC MENTEES

TIME is a Career Advancement Path for all Employees in Travel, Tourism, Hospitality, Cruise and Aviation Industry including Regional, and Rural Areas across Australia

- Further develop your management and leadership potential
- Develop confidence and networking opportunities

- Strategic career planning & access to new networks
- Increase your knowledge of organisational culture, and processes

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT - www.travelindustrymentor.com.au



Come wig us and help out



GUESTS who visit Madame Tausauds Sydney over the next few days will notice their favourite celebrity wax figures are looking a little different.

The life-like doppelgangers of Aussie icons like Jimmy Barnes, Dannii Minogue, Amanda Keller, Curtis Stone, and Dylan Alcott are now sporting unique new 'dos' to help raise money and awareness for the World's Greatest Shave, on from today until Sun 18 Feb.

The initiative, which is run by the Leukaemia Foundation, supports the thousands of Australians who are living with blood cancer.

The foundation's CEO, Chris Tanti, said: "we're very excited to partner with Madame Tausauds Sydney as they create something very special for this year's World's Greatest Shave.

"This attraction, featuring inspiring and well-known Australians...will be unlike anything we've ever seen in the 26 years of the campaign.

"It's incredible to have the support of Madame Tausauds

in this unique way, and we can't wait to see the public's reaction to the massive hair makeovers given to each celebrity."

Professional hair stylists will be onsite at Madame Tausauds' from 11am-2pm over the four days to shave, cut, or colour (with spray) the public's hair for a minimum donation of \$20.

Those who are brave enough to change their look will enjoy a 25% discount on their entry ticket. *JM*

Pictured: Dylan Alcott's waxy doppelganger sporting his colourful new 'do'.

EY spreads its wings

ETIHAD Airways has announced a key milestone in its pilot training and flight operations, with its flight crew now authorised to fly both Airbus A350 and A380 aircraft interchangeably.

As airline pilots are typically restricted to flying only one aircraft type, the new authorisation makes Etihad one of the first carriers to achieve this versatility in its pilot capabilities.

SPECIALS

Send your special deals to:
specials@traveldaily.com.au

Holland America line has announced its 'Time of Your Life' sale, which allows cruisers to receive a stateroom upgrade, up to 30% off launch fares, and a 50% reduced deposit. The offer is applicable on itineraries across Europe, Alaska, Australia & New Zealand, Asia, Caribbean, Canada & New England until 29 Feb. Call 1300 987 321 for more info.

Travellers who are planning their Easter holiday can take advantage of cheaper accommodation at the newly refurbished **PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport** between 01 Mar-28 Apr, which is offering up to 25% off stays as well as an Easter-themed welcome treat. Bookings must be made by 31 Mar - **CLICK HERE** for further details.

Adventurers can save up to \$2,000 per couple on **APT's 'Rockies Odyssey and Alaska Cruise'**, which includes a journey aboard the Rocky Mountaineer in GoldLeaf service and two nights in a Lakeview Room at Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise before embarking on a cruise across the Inside Passage. The 22-day itinerary, which offers departures between May-Sep 2024, is available at the discounted rate until 31 Mar.

Your next Aussie road trip is covered, with **Out of the Ordinary Outback** offering a free night at its properties in NSW's Broken Hill and Wilcannia. Caravanners can stay on a site for four nights but just pay for three at Warramong on the Darling property or at the Broken Hill Outback Resort. Use code S34N when booking **HERE**.

Cruise Traveller has announced a raft of bonuses on its new luxury cruise and safari package in Africa. Travellers can enjoy US\$1,400 worth of free excursions and US\$200 shipboard spending credit per twin stateroom when they secure their spot on the 41-night 'From Safari to Singapore' package before 31 Mar. For more details, call 1800 507 777.

Families who are planning an island getaway to Noumea can take advantage of a new deal from **Hilton Noumea La Promenade**, which offers spacious modern apartments overlooking the Anse Vata Bay. Guests will enjoy a bonus complimentary buffet breakfast for two adults and two children throughout their stay when they make a booking prior to 31 Mar - to learn more about the property, **CLICK HERE**.

Travellers booking a **Viking** 2025 or 2026 river journey to Europe before 28 Mar will enjoy included economy flights. The offer includes the new 11-day Rhine & Mine Explorer from Nuremberg to Basel, priced from \$6,995pp, which sails through southern Germany, explores the neighbouring regions in Switzerland and France, and much more.

Sea Life Sydney Aquarium has extended its annual pass sale, which is available for up to 20% off until 18 Feb. The Merlin Annual Pass provides unlimited access to 10 attractions in NSW, Vic, Qld and Auckland, including Madame Tausauds Sydney, Wild Life Sydney Zoo, four Sea Life aquariums, the Otway Fly Treetop Adventures and more - **CLICK HERE**.