

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news.

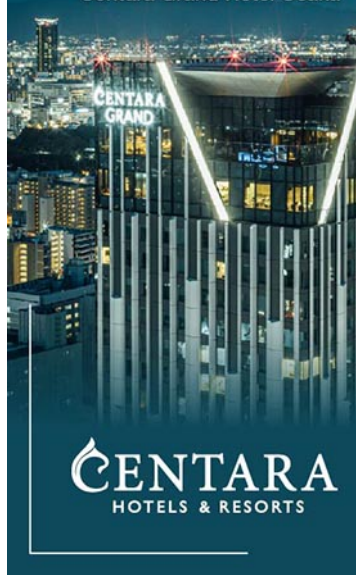
FJ's true blue sale

AUSSIES can take advantage of massive savings on return airfares with Fiji Airways, with flights to the sun-soaked islands available from \$609 return, as well as tickets to the US for under \$1,000.

The sale ends 02 Feb and applies to travel before 05 Dec - more specials on **page five**.

THE PLACE TO BE IN OSAKA

Centara Grand Hotel Osaka



New APT Europe ships

APT has today revealed two sleek new custom-built river cruise ships featuring ultra-luxe staterooms which will sail its flagship 'Magnificent Europe' itinerary along the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers in 2025.

To be known as *APT Solara* and *APT Ostara*, the new vessels were conceived and designed by Melbourne-based Hecker Guthrie and combine inspiration from Europe's waterways with "unpretentious Australian ease".

With 2024 being its last year working in partnership with AmaWaterways, APT last year flagged its intention to design and build its own custom European river ships (**TD 22 Aug 2023**).

Featuring a standout black exterior, *APT Solara* and *APT Ostara* will be slightly smaller than the AmaWaterways ships, catering to 154 guests along with 60 crew members.

Three stateroom categories will lead-in with a stylish Twin Window Suite on Deck 1, featuring wood panelling, while Balcony Suites will offer electric sliding windows that open to a French balcony.

Six dining options will include a main restaurant and another at the rear of the ship, a wine cellar,



conservatory and casual rooftop dining and in-suite options.

Guests can also enjoy a heated pool on the sun deck and a lounge area to admire the views.

Solara and *Ostara* will also prioritise sustainability through saving fuel, energy optimisation and waste reduction onboard.

The two ships feature in APT's 2025 Europe Pre-Release Collection, which also includes three new small-ship expeditions in Northern Europe with *Seabourn Venture*.

APT Chief Executive, David Cox, said the new ships will redefine luxury cruising and have been designed with the Australian guest in mind. *ML*

Intrepid incentive

AGENTS can win one of 10 vouchers worth \$2,000 each in Intrepid Travel's first incentive of the year, launched today.

To take part, agents must submit a 30-second video creatively detailing their 2024 travel goals and which Intrepid trip they would most like to take.

Videos must be filmed in portrait mode and can be sent to partners@intrepidtravel.com.

Entries are open until 29 Feb, with full details available on the Intrepid Agent Hub.

Take 50% off NCL

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has slashed 50% off selected sailings across the fleet on new bookings made until 31 Jan.

The deal also includes US\$200 in onboard credit per stateroom along with a free beverage package, specialty dining, shore excursion credit and wi-fi.

New TEQ campaign

TOURISM and Events Queensland will launch the next phase of its 'Unmissable Holiday Deals' campaign, which will run from 05 Feb to 31 Mar.

The organisation is encouraging partner tourism operators to load "your best and most compelling deals" into ATDW and with trade partners to ensure maximise exposure over the two-month campaign, which will include a major marketing spend.



Brilliant For You

Make me a MerMillionaire



A FIRST MATE REWARDS INCENTIVE

Win up to 1 million Velocity Points and become our very first "MerMillionaire"!

Log your sales today.

LEARN MORE

New Year, Great Fares

2024

Choose Economy Flex or Business Flex for extra baggage and flexibility.

Enjoy 45x weekly flights from Australia to Kuala Lumpur with easy connections to your desired destination.

London from	\$1,519
Kuala Lumpur from	\$669
Penang from	\$679
Phuket from	\$669
Seoul from	\$949
Tokyo from	\$969

Travel now until 30 Nov 2024
Get the best fares for your clients with Malaysia Airlines today.



Book by 22 Jan 2024

WA/SA tourism upgrade

WESTERN Australia will commit nearly \$26 million to upgrading a variety of major tourism sites across the state to ensure they remain of world-class standard to attract greater visitor numbers.

Identified as part of a formal Mid-Year Review, the budget will see \$10.9 million spent ensuring safe access to Rottneest Island with a Main Jetty refurbishment.

The popular island, home to the iconic quokkas, welcomed nearly 730,000 visitors in 2022-23, said WA Tourism Minister Rita Saffioti.

Elsewhere, \$5.2m will go to improving road and carpark access at Karijini National Park; \$4.6m to replace the Hamelin Pool Boardwalk in Shark Bay; \$2.7m to repair signage on the Cape to Cape Track and \$2.7m to improve pedestrian access to the Wellington National Park.

"Attractions and infrastructure are a critical part of tourism, and ensuring these facilities and

sites remain world-class is so important," Minister Saffioti said.

"Places like Rottneest Island and regions like the South West, North West and Coral Coast are already tourism hotspots attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, so we need to make sure they remain fit for purpose," she added.

MEANWHILE, South Australia has allocated \$315,000 in funding to 14 tourism businesses along the Murray River affected by recent flooding to repair facilities.

Funds will go to a range of caravan parks, houseboat and tour operators and other businesses for infrastructure and equipment replacement, landscaping, cleaning and recovery marketing campaigns.

The funding comes as Stage 4 of the Santos Tour Down Under begins in Murray Bridge today - the first time the race has visited the region since 2020. *ML*

Vietnam Super Express

10 days Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City from only \$1,899*

mwTours



LEARN MORE

SA Premier happy to wait for Qantas

SOUTH Australia Premier Peter Malinauskas said Adelaide will need to wait for Qantas to bring new aircraft into service before pitching for new int'l routes.

The Premier's comments come after the carrier revealed new flights between Darwin and Singapore will start in Dec (*TD* yesterday), making Adelaide the only major mainland capital without a QF route to Asia.

New Qld hot spring

PENINSULA Hot Springs Group will open a new location overlooking the Warrego River in the outback Queensland town of Cunnamulla, 750km from Brisby.

Opening on 01 Feb, the facility will offer a range of therapeutic activities including several geothermal pools set to various temperatures designed to ease muscle tension and arthritis.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



MIAMI

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Royal Caribbean International which is preparing to launch its first Icon class vessel, the highly anticipated *Icon of the Seas*.

TRAVEL Daily is on the scene for the debut of Royal's first Icon class ship, *Icon of the Seas*, as we fly to Miami today.

She is currently in port awaiting her maiden voyage and *TD* will report back on all of the exciting features on board and latest developments.

Just some of the thrills aboard the mammoth 5,600-guest ship include six waterslides, seven pools, the first neighbourhood designed specifically for young families, and more than 40 restaurants and eateries.

Antarctica all-inclusive with flights

Book by 31 January for a bonus 10% off*

Journey to Antarctica with the leaders in sustainable expeditions

Return international flights

Pre & post expedition accommodation

All on board main meals and beverages

Landings, activities, expedition boat cruising and more

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

Since 1896, we've been the leaders in sustainable expeditions. For a limited time only, sell a selected all-inclusive package and get international return flights included. PLUS, book before January 31 and your clients will get a BONUS 10% off by joining our FREE Ambassador program.

15 days FROM ONLY **\$12,999***

Contact our team to secure the best price. Call 1300 322 062 or visit agentportal.hurtigruten.com



HX HURTIGRUTEN EXPEDITIONS

Change the way you see the world

*T&C's apply. \$12,999 from price is per person twin share and based on lead-in cabin on 'Highlights of Antarctica' 18 November 2024 & 8 March 2025 voyages. Return flights ex. SYD, MLB, BNE or AKL. All-inclusive packages are fixed and may not be altered. Offer available until 31 March 2024 or until sold out. \$12,999 lead-in price not combinable with Ambassador discounts. Visit website for full details.



Window Seat

“DO NOT panic” was the instruction given to a passenger who ended up stuck in the lavatory of an airplane for almost the entire duration of his nearly two-hour flight.

The unfortunate SpiceJet customer discovered he was stuck in the bathroom after unsuccessfully trying to open the door, which wouldn't open due to a lock malfunction.

The ordeal happened shortly after take-off, leaving the traveller isolated in the tiny cubicle for the majority of the one-hour-and-45-minute flight from Mumbai to Bengaluru - despite desperate attempts by the crew and other passengers to free him.

Crew members slipped a note under the door in an attempt to reassure the trapped traveller.

“Sir we tried our best to open the door, however, we could not,” the letter said, urging him to not panic.

“We are landing in a few minutes, so please close the commode lid and sit on it and secure yourself.

“As soon as the main door is open, an engineer will come.”

The pax received immediate medical assistance after two engineers freed him upon landing, and was offered a full refund to help make up for the crappy experience.

Radisson's big year

RADISSON Hotel Group set a new company record for overall room growth in 2023, adding more than 30,000 new keys to its portfolio over the 12 months.

Highlights for the year included the opening of the first Radisson Individuals property in Berlin - the city's fourth largest hotel with 700-plus rooms, along with new openings in Paris and Thailand.

Atlas duo launch TravelCMS



THE co-founders of Tour Atlas, Greg and Alex Obleshchuk, have announced the launch of a new white-label website solution for travel agencies, TravelCMS.

Having established the only online tour directory designed for travel advisors in 2016, the Adelaide-based duo's latest offering aims to meet the needs of the modern-day travel agency.

TravelCMS is a “low-cost, hassle-free, low-maintenance” website with a tour search engine and an inbuilt marketing and promotions system, making it ideal for travel agencies who want to engage tech savvy travellers but don't have the time or budget to hire a web designer.

Marina Bay Sands

MARINA Bay Sands, Singapore's luxury integrated resort, is preparing to pour an additional US\$750 million into the second phase of its transformation.

The renovation will include a reimagined VIP arrival experience, new premium dining and retail offerings, a lobby transformation, and a renewed focus on wellness experiences.

Part of a multi-year reinvestment program totalling US\$1.75 billion, the next phase will also introduce more than 550 redesigned rooms, with works expected to be completed gradually through 2025 (**TD** 09 Feb 2022).

“In my role as Tour Atlas co-founder, marketer and trainer, I've looked at a lot of agency websites that were out of date and didn't have the content to capture today's tech-savvy traveller,” Alex Obleshchuk said.

“We knew we had a proven track record with building and running a white-label tour search engine for travel agencies, so expanding that into a comprehensive content management system is a natural extension of our offering to the industry,” she added.

Agencies using the TravelCMS system can expect to have a fully functional website up and running within days. *JM*

For more information, **CLICK HERE** or contact Greg via greg@tour-atlas.com.

Africa by private jet

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has added a new Private Jet Journey for 2025, which explores the seven countries of Africa on an epic 23-day adventure.

Departing in Feb 2025, 'Africa: Across A Continent by Private Jet' will take a group of 48 guests on an all-inclusive itinerary across Tunisia, where guests can discover Roman ruins at Carthage and Dougga, as well as the winelands of South Africa, and much more - prices start from \$229,500pp, more info **HERE**.

AA salutes Harwood

ACCOMMODATION Australia has paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of its inaugural Chair Leanne Harwood following her resignation from the position.

Harwood is set to relocate to the United States, having been promoted internally within IHG Hotels and Resorts to the role of SVP and Managing Director for IHG's Luxury and Lifestyle Americas portfolio (**TD** yesterday).

Accommodation Australia CEO, Michael Johnson, said Leanne steered the association through “unchartered waters”, including the amalgamation of Tourism Accommodation Australia and the Accommodation Association.

“You could not have asked for a better, more professional leader during what was at times a complicated process,” he said.

Wendy Wu Tours Summer Sale

COUPLES SAVE
UP TO \$1,100

or

SOLOS - ENJOY
50% OFF
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT OR
FREE

Selected Departures



Explore Now →

CORPORATE UPDATE

Corporates flying in style

EXECUTIVE travellers prioritised comfort and wellbeing during their 2023 work trips, with bookings for business and first class soaring by 43%, according to new data from Flight Centre.

In a full year data digest from FCTG's business brands Corporate Traveller and FCM Travel, business class fares made up 5.6% of all corporate bookings in 2023, up from 4% the year prior.

First class also climbed a full percentage point from 2% to 3% in 2023 in a sign that business activity was more than healthy.

While the two premium categories grew significantly, this meant economy and premium

economy bookings fell, although only by a negligible 2.4%.

"Growing popularity at the front end of the plane reflects growth and stability across Australian businesses," said Flight Centre Corporate ANZ Managing Director Melissa Elf.

"This data comes in a period of economic uncertainty, and it goes to show that despite many businesses feeling the pinch of the cost of doing business, travel continues to be a necessity for business success and survival."

Elf said the preference for premium economy fell over an 18-month stretch with business travellers shunning the product in favour of business and first.

"Premium economy made up 6.5% of the cabin class share in the first half of 2022. In the second half of 2023 it was down to 4%." *ML*

Regions for bleisure

HOLIDAY season booking data among business travellers showed a heightened tendency to add a few days of 'bleisure' into an end-of-year corporate trip.

According to Corporate Traveller, Melbourne surpassed Sydney as the top destination for business travellers over summer, with Cairns and Mackay strong among regional centres.

Business travellers headed to the two North Qld cities in higher numbers than both the Gold and Sunshine Coasts combined.

The data shows domestic work trips were getting longer, with six days now preferred over four.

New Zealand also spiked, with trans-Tasman travel up 10% year-on-year for Dec 2023.

Etihad boosts NDC

ETIHAD Airways has expanded its multi-year distribution deal with Travelport to include NDC content and servicing.

The deal means Travelport agencies can access a wider range of NDC customisation products.

"With this renewed deal, we will continue to provide our agency partners access to our complete range of content and fares, as well as upcoming products and services [to] further enhance our guests' travel experience," said Etihad Revenue Officer, Arik De.

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

Hilton unveils SME program



SMALL and medium-sized businesses can now access a full array of digital tools to manage hotel bookings across the Hilton portfolio via a newly launched travel management program.

Known as 'Hilton for Business', the system aims to simplify the travel management process for SMEs while allowing clients and their employees to access Hilton Honors loyalty benefits.

SME clients can also access discounted hotel rates through the Hilton for Business program, with 7,500 bonus Hilton Honors points up for grabs as a promo for members after their first stay.

Further, after every 10 nights stayed, members receive a bonus 5,000 points within the company account which can be distributed among employees at any time.

Business owners have full control at all times and can delegate administrator access as

needed, along with track spend, generate reports and understand accumulated benefits as they go.

Hilton for Business was launched in response to market research that showed 75% of SMEs book and manage travel in-house, with 80% saying it was important to be able to book their entire trip online. *ML*

MSC int'l sales chief

AUSTRALIA will become part of the remit for Antonio Paradiso in his new role as Vice President of International Sales for MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys.

MSC Cruises' Australia Country Manager, Lisa Teiotu, will report to Paradiso, who in turn directly reports to CEO Gianni Onorato.

The line's former UK and Ireland Managing Director will also take on the Scandinavia and South Africa markets in his new role.

Travel & Cruise Weekly

Connect with your clients and ramp up your social media content

CLICK HERE

Looking for ready-made social media content? Travel & Cruise Weekly have ready made agent toolkits featuring email signatures, images, and social media tiles to inspire your clients.

SPECIALS

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

Virgin Australia is offering one-way fares from as low as \$49 until midnight 22 Jan. The offers include one-way tickets between Sydney and Ballina from \$49, Melbourne and Launceston from \$59, Sydney and Sunshine Coast from \$69, and much more. Valid for travel from 29 Jan until 30 Nov - book your tickets [HERE](#).

Ending on 15 Feb, **Rocky Mountaineer's** Explore in 2024 promotion has begun, offering travellers savings on a wide range of itineraries in North America. A discount of up to \$1,150 per couple is available when booking select Canadian routes, and up to \$1,650 per couple on the American Southwest route and the Rockies to the Red Rocks itinerary. Call 1800 821 531 to learn more.

Enjoy big savings on **Hutigruten Expeditions'** all-inclusive sailings this wave season. The offer applies to itineraries with flights to Antarctica, Iceland and Greenland, for bookings made before 31 Mar. Travellers can score the Highlights of Antarctica from \$12,999ppts, or the Circumnavigating Iceland - The Land of Elves, Sagas and Volcanoes from \$11,999ppts, as well as the East Greenland and Svalbard - A True Arctic Expedition from \$15,999ppts. Call on 1300 159 127 to book.

Scoop up "irresistible" airfares from \$195 for select travel periods in 2024 with low-cost carrier **Scoot** to over 55 destinations. The Singapore Airlines subsidiary is offering Aussie travellers discounted tickets to Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, China, India, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam from various points, including Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth. Purchase your ticket by 22 Jan to take advantage of the deal - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Set sail with **Star Clippers** with earlybird savings of up to 30% on select voyages for bookings made by 31 Jan. Coinciding with the line's launch of a new brochure showcasing its 2025 itineraries, the sale includes the six- and seven-night Western Mediterranean journey, the three-, seven-, and 11-night Adriatic Enchantment sailings, and more. Call 1300 295 191 for further information about the deal.

AirAsia is celebrating the new year in style, offering two weeks of sales for Aussies who are keen to snatch up low airfares. The first sale is already underway until 21 Jan, and the second one will commence on 22 Jan and run until 28 Jan. Tickets purchased during the sale periods are valid for travel between now and 16 Jun 2024. Prices start as low as \$135 one way - [CLICK HERE](#) to book your next getaway.

Qatar Airways is inviting Aussie travellers to "make their 2024 adventure exceptional" by taking advantage of its discounted airfares to Europe, America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Available until 23 Jan, the offer includes return fares from Melbourne to Rome in economy class for only \$1,879. More deals are available to book [HERE](#).

Help Travel Advisors
discover your destination

Travel Daily Training Academy

Travel Daily

[CLICK HERE FOR AN INFO PACK](#)

Skal cruises into the new year



MEMBERS of Skal International Sydney gathered together for a Captain Cook harbour cruise on Wed this week to kick off the year and announce the calendar of upcoming events.

More than 30 members boarded the lunch cruise that sailed around Darling Harbour, under the Harbour Bridge, and docked at Circular Quay for a while before heading out towards Rose Bay and back to Darling Harbour via the Harbour Bridge.

Special guests included Skal

International Port Vila secretary Mark Stafford and life member Martin Mitchell.

During the lunch, Skal International Sydney President Melinda Brown shared the calendar of events for 2024 including the AGM on 19 Mar. *DF*

Pictured enjoying the harbour breeze: Karen Gibson, Robyn Duffy, Melinda Brown, Walter Nand, Rebecca Fleming, Verniece Irvine, Timo Lorenzen & Silvia Munoz.

Get to know Berrima

VISITORS to NSW's Southern Highlands will soon be able to immerse themselves in the heritage town of Berrima with a new guided walking tour.

Led by local resident Lynn Watson, Berrima Walking Tours will launch tomorrow, offering an hour-long walking experience that will give guests a fascinating insight into the history of the Georgian town.

The small group tour will run every Sat and Sun at 10am - find out more [HERE](#).

FRINGE Festival '24

FRINGE World, which has kicked off in WA today, is shaping up to be the third-largest Fringe Festival in the world when it comes to ticket sales.

The month-long carnival is set to draw in hundreds of thousands of people to around 550 events at more than 100 venues across the state.

The WA Govt has also secured the festival for another three years with a \$2.9m investment.