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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of industry news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a full page from **Infinity Holidays** and a product update from **Bunnik**.

## Great Chimu comp

**CHIMU** Adventures will take eight top-selling agents to South America on an educational trip in Sep 2024, while there are two extra spots up for grabs for the "best dressed stores".

The operator is also offering up to 30% savings with exclusive trade offers on over 400 Polar and Latin America itineraries.

The incentive period covers 15 Jan-15 Mar - for more info, email [agents@chimuadventures.com](mailto:agents@chimuadventures.com).

## OTP remains in sad state

**REX** has not missed its latest opportunity to take a swing at the Qantas Group following the latest official on-time performance data from Australia's measured airlines.

On-time punctuality and reliability data from the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) for the month of Dec showed Australia's overall performance rate was 63.6% for on-time arrivals, with departures marginally better at 65.2%.

Cancellation rates across all airlines closed at 5%, worse than the 3.4% rate one year earlier, however figures included heavy disruptions experienced in Cairns which closed for several days due to the impact of Cyclone Jasper.

Rex claimed the crown as Australia's most reliable airline with a cancellation rate of only 0.6% across 5,500 sectors flown.

Comparatively, there were 18,110 QF-designated domestic flights that took off in Dec, with a cancellation rate of 3.7%.

Virgin Australia had another poor month, operating 11,266 services, of which it axed 7.5%.

## Small Bunnik groups

**MORE** one-on-one time with tour guides is one of the many highlights of a small group Bunnik Tours itinerary.

Learn more benefits of travelling in a small group on Bunnik Tours' Product Profile on **page seven**.

"The Qantas Group could take consolation from the fact that while its cancellation rate is a disgraceful 700% higher than Rex's, it could still boast that it is not at the bottom of the barrel since the Virgin Group's cancellation rate is 1,250% higher than Rex's," the airline said.

Qantas on the other hand said that while Dec was its 16th consecutive month leading the on-time running figures, the data "still shows significant room for improvement in absolute terms".

At the other end of the scale, Bonza endured a woeful month, with nearly one in every five of its 701 scheduled flights cancelled.

Bonza's score was more than double that of the second-worst carrier, Queensland-based FIFO airline, Skytrans.

Results remain well below the long-term average performance for all routes, with historical averages at 81.1% for arrivals and 82.2% for departures. *ML*

## Jetstar kids fly free

**JETSTAR** has relaunched its popular Kids Fly and Stay Free Sale on a variety of destinations across the airline's network.

For each paid adult, one child up to the age of 11 can fly and stay for free, with packages available to Cairns, Uluru and Queensland from Jul to Dec 2024.

The sale ends at 11:59pm 30 Jan unless sold out prior.

## QF Tokyo codeshare

**QANTAS** is seeking permission from the International Air Services Commission (IASC) to expand its codeshare with LATAM Airlines to a second daily frequency between Sydney and Tokyo Haneda.

The Chilean carrier has been offering codeshare services on Qantas-operated flights on the Japan route for more than four years, including prior to QF's move from Tokyo Narita (*TD 02* Nov 2018).

## Anaheim to Infinity

**INFINITY** Holidays is reminding agents about its six-night curated itineraries available in Anaheim, with a range of 'AtlasHotels' all paying bonus commission.

More details on **page six**.

**Wendy Wu Tours.**  
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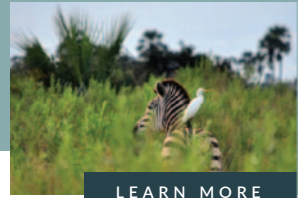
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## Air Canada Aus sale

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The offer ends on Sat, and is available for travel between 19 Jan and 15 Dec - more info [HERE](#).

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## Int'l airfares are dropping

**AFTER** reaching an all-time high amid a surge in travel demand following the pandemic, international airfare prices are finally falling.

New data from Flight Centre's flagship corporate divisions, FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller, shows that average international outbound economy airfares dropped by 12.9% in the second half of 2023, compared to the same period in 2022.

The welcome decline means travellers are now enjoying an average saving of \$280 per ticket, with business class and first class fares also seeing a decent drop, both decreasing around 8% during the same period.

Economy flights into Hong Kong from Australia recorded the biggest price decrease at -35.8%, followed by New Zealand (-23.6%), Singapore (-15.7%) and the US (-16.1%).

## Ormina Sicily session

**ORMNIA** Tours is running a free Sicily webinar, which will take place on 08 Feb at 4pm AEDT.

Attendees will be able to access the half-hour webinar via Microsoft Teams, and will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Agents can **CLICK HERE** to register for the webinar, and to find out more information.

Ormina has also released a Sicily Sales Guide for travel advisors, which can be accessed [HERE](#).

Flight Centre Corporate Managing Director for ANZ/Global FCM Chief Operating Officer Melissa Elf said regions that have added airline capacity have seen the biggest positive effect.

"Our data shows that Southeast Asia is back to 107% capacity on pre-2019 levels, and it's clear that more flights and more competition has led to the significant drop in airfares that we're seeing into countries like Hong Kong and Singapore.

"There's more room for prices to drop to destinations like the Middle East, New Zealand, and North America, for example, which are at pre-2019 capacity levels of 81%, 86% and 91% respectively," she added. *JM*

## FAA ups scrutiny

**THE** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has extended its Boeing investigation beyond the troubled 737 MAX 9 planes to the more widely used 737-900ER.

The US regulator said some airlines have carried out checks on the 737-900ER mid-exit door plugs and have noted "findings with bolts during the maintenance inspections".

**MEANWHILE**, Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian has reaffirmed his confidence in Boeing, asserting that the airline remained committed to its order of 100 Boeing 737 MAX 10 jets as the aircraft awaits certification.

**Travel Daily**  
ON LOCATION



**PERFECT DAY AT COCOCAY**

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Royal Caribbean Group which is hosting us aboard its new *Icon of the Seas* vessel.

**TODAY** we are enjoying the final day of a three-day preview cruise aboard Royal Caribbean's *Icon of the Seas* and what a sunny note to end on.

After the final immersion sessions learning about ship development and experiences, agents and media from all over the world will enjoy the private island treatment.

Perfect Day at CocoCay is one of the major drawcards in Royal's suite of land experiences, and boasts overwater cabanas, a 500-metre zip line, as well as the tallest waterslide in North America.

## HLC appoints LTM

**GERMAN** Cruise Line Hapag-Lloyd Cruises (HLC) has expanded its presence in Australia, with Luxury Travel Marketing (LTM) now responsible for its sales and marketing in the country.

LTM Managing Director Margi Jansma said her company is "extremely proud and humbled" to be appointed to showcase HLC.

The cruise line conducts cruises in both English and German.

## Business Development Manager



DriveAway is searching for an accomplished **Business Development Manager (BDM)** to represent our company to existing travel agencies in **NSW and ACT**, whilst pursuing the development of new business opportunities.

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## NEED HELP WITH YOUR MARKETING?

With extensive experience in the industry, we can work with you to optimise your email marketing, social media, database, content strategy, advertising and more.

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## UK tourism to ease in '24

VISITBRITAIN says it expects recent meteoric inbound tourism growth rates to ease slightly in 2024 as many major markets complete pandemic recoveries.

According to the organisation's 2024 inbound tourism forecast, the UK is anticipating a modest 5% rise in overall visitor numbers which will take it to 97% of pre-pandemic figures.

Overall, VisitBritain's forecast shows a total inbound spend by international visitors of £34.1b (A\$60.1b), up 7% year-on-year, taking it to 96% of 2019 figures.

The forecast paints a picture that the UK will be able to declare its inbound tourism industry fully recovered from the pandemic by early 2025.

"International visitors spend tens of billions of pounds in the UK with the money generated supporting local economies and jobs, so it has been great to see the overall growth forecast



for this year on 2023," said VisitBritain CEO Patricia Yates.

"We have however seen a slow-down in the overall pace of recovery compared to the strong start seen in the first half of 2023 and we face fierce competition from our European neighbours."

Once full results from 2023 are known, VisitBritain is anticipating the Australia and NZ markets to have not only recovered in full but surpassed 2019 levels.

The Australian market has recorded 25% nominal growth to now be worth £1.5 billion to the UK economy, while spending from New Zealand arrivals has exceeded 2019 levels by 84%. *ML*

The Chat

with Jenny

Travel Daily

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## TAT travel app push

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is set to promote TAGTHai as a "must-have", all-in-one app for tourists exploring the country, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with its developer, Thai Digital Platform Social Enterprise.

The agreement will see the digital tool, which was launched in 2019, showcased via TAT's marketing activities, while TAGTHai will provide the DMO with data on tourists' travel preferences in Thailand.

Local businesses use the app as a platform to promote their products and services to visitors.

## Win a trip to Fiji

CROWNE Plaza Sydney Coogee Beach is giving event organisers the chance to win a luxurious three-night Fiji getaway for two when they book a conference or meeting space at the hotel before 31 Mar - [CLICK HERE](#) for T&Cs.



## Window Seat

IF YOU'RE a cruise enthusiast *and* a Swiftie, you're in luck, because there's a new voyage designed exactly with you in mind.

Events At Sea has announced 'Karmia is a Cruise' - a fan-led, Taylor Swift-themed celebration aboard Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas*, which sets sail from Sydney on 20 Feb 2025.

Swift fans of all ages can shake it off during the three-night cruise, which includes dance parties, a door decorating contest, a friendship bracelet making party, a scavenger hunt, karaoke, and trivia - all Tay Tay themed, of course.

Packages start from \$632pp, including cruise fare, fees and taxes, meals, and more.

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## LOWER RATE OF ENERGY BURN FOR *ICON* DESPITE SIZE

**ROYAL** Caribbean's new *Icon of the Seas* mega-ship is the largest cruise ship that has ever sailed, but a surprising twist is that its rate of energy consumption is actually lower than any of the line's ships that came before her, the cruise line's Senior Vice President for Marine Operations, Greg Purdy, revealed this week.

Speaking aboard a preview sailing from Miami, Purdy said the design of the vessel was careful to consider the need to lower Royal's carbon footprint through smarter technology, fuels and shape.

"*Icon* is the culmination of everything we've learned about energy management over the last 50 years," Purdy said.

Among the milestone firsts for *Icon* is the mantle of being Royal Caribbean's first ship that can conduct waste-to-energy conversion directly on board.



"Our microwave-assisted pyrolysis machine allows us to directly convert waste into usable energy directly on board the ship via steam," Purdy explained.

Royal's senior marine executive also confirmed the shape of *Icon's* hull was conceived as an additional way to increase her overall energy efficiency, which Purdy said stands at 24% better

than the average of all vessels being designed today.

President and Chief Executive Officer for Royal Caribbean International, Michael Bayley, added that *Icon* represents an important chapter in the line's eco story.

"When you think about the journey that we have been on over the years with all of our

ships and all our classes, there is a constant improvement in almost every element of tech connected to energy and fuel consumption," Bayley said.

"As Greg [Purdy] said, this ship is more than 20% better in terms of energy consumption than *Wonder of the Seas*, which was also 20% better than *Symphony of the Seas*, so the journey we are on is really moving us towards our corporate goal in 2035 of having a net zero ship," he added.

Bayley also pointed to a need for technology to catch up with ship design for further progress to be accelerated.

"There is a lot of work going on with fuel cells...and for a ship of our size there is not yet sufficient technology in place and we are working with the best in the world on fuel cell technology and they are still working on what we need," Bayley added. *AB*

### Tropic Wings BEVs

**NORTH** Queensland-based coach tour operator Tropic Wings has received its first three Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), bringing it closer to its goal of becoming 80% electric by 2028.

The coaches will be used for trips to popular destinations in the region, including the Daintree Rainforest, Mossman Gorge, and Kuranda.

### Hydrogen electric flights a step closer

**HYDROGEN** electric aircraft manufacturer Stralis has completed its first successful on-aircraft spin of an electric motor during a landmark test at Brisbane Airport.

The trial brings Stralis closer to its goal of conducting an inaugural test flight later this year, which will operate with zero carbon emissions and pave the way for Australia's first

hydrogen electric aircraft route.

Brisbane and Gladstone are expected to be the launch points for the route, as the two Queensland cities are leaders in green hydrogen development.

"This test represents a significant leap towards cleaner, more cost-effective, and quieter aviation," said Brisbane Airport Executive General Manager of Aviation, Ryan Both.

### Intrepid Rivertree

**INTREPID** Travel has sponsored a documentary which raises awareness of environmental concerns in the Clarence River in northeastern NSW.

*Rivertree*, which premiered over the weekend in Yamba, highlights the threat of mining in the region to the river's local communities and ecosystems.



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## MONEY

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

### AU\$1 = US\$0.657

**THE** Asian FX market is bracing ahead of key decisions by the Bank of Japan today, where pundits see a slim chance of rate hikes given slower inflation and wage growth, but could weigh on the Japanese yen.

The AUD however is off to a slower start this week, dropping slightly against the greenback, which is backed by strong US equities that have reached new all-time highs again overnight.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.657
UK	£0.517
NZ	\$1.081
Euro	€0.604
Japan	¥97.30
Thailand	฿23.39
China	¥4.727
South Africa	12.62
Canada	\$0.886
Crude oil	US\$78.56

## Spirit saga not over

**JETBLUE** Airways and hopeful partner Spirit Airlines will appeal a decision by a US Federal Judge (*TD* Wed) to block its proposed US\$3.8 billion merger attempt.

Spirit Airlines said its acquisition contract with JetBlue requires the ruling to be contested and that all legal options must be exhausted.

Should the appeal not be heard or decided by Jul, the airlines can vote to go their separate ways.

The US Justice Department declined to comment.

## New Aus consulates

**THE** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is now offering consular assistance to Australians in Slovenia and Bosnia at two newly opened consulates.

The two new sites are headed by an Honorary Consul to provide consular assistance, with full services including emergency passports available at the nearest embassy in Vienna.

## NCL back to Africa

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line has kicked off its latest African cruise season, with the 2,340-guest *Norwegian Dawn* calling Port Louis, Mauritius its new home.

The season of 12-day open-jaw itineraries between Port Louis and Cape Town, South Africa will unlock a variety of new ports for NCL including Luanda, Angola; Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Banjul, Gambia and Dakar, Senegal.

In addition, a pair of 12-day roundtrip voyages to South Africa and Namibia will precede *Dawn's* repositioning back to Barcelona, a 21-day voyage departing 20 Mar.

## New Rottneest ferry

**ROTTNEEST** Fast Ferries has begun construction on a new 32-metre catamaran which will soon take over its Hillarys Boat Harbour service to the island.

Designed by Incat Crowther and built by Austal Australasia, the new vessel will feature three decks and cater for up to 400 pax and five crew for the 40-min trip.

The as-yet-unnamed catamaran will replace *MV Seaflyte*, which has been in service since 1995 and carried four million visitors to Rottneest across 30,000 journeys.

## Intrepid's local helping hand



**HUMANITARIAN** help for underprivileged communities is part of Intrepid Travel's modus operandi and in 2024, the B-Corp Certified firm will go even further.

The company has pledged to donate \$1 million to communities around the world this year via its not-for-profit division, The Intrepid Foundation.

Intrepid is encouraging agents and the travelling public to pitch in too, with the company adding it will match public contributions up to a further \$1 million,

ensuring the generosity of people goes twice as far.

Donations will go to 45 non-government organisations (NGOs) identified by its local teams in the destinations its tours visit.

The Intrepid Foundation chalked up its most successful year of fundraising in 2023, the company said, with more than \$2.7m going to a range of disaster relief and community projects.

These included the Morocco Earthquake Appeal, with funds used on emergency supplies, safe drinking water, schooling needs and rebuilding of homes.

In addition, Intrepid travellers raised \$328,000 to fight human trafficking through a number of global marathon events in Melbourne, London, Toronto, Osaka and Vietnam (*pictured*). *ML*

## Hilton ramps up

**HILTON** is anticipating strong growth this year, after it opened more new rooms in the final quarter of 2023 than during any other quarter.

The accommodation giant added 132 hotels and around 24,000 rooms to its portfolio between Oct and Dec, with record 2023 signings of nearly 1,000 hotels - up 45% from the previous year and above pre-pandemic levels.

Hilton now boasts its largest-ever development pipeline, which includes nearly 3,300 hotels.

## UA boosts Canada

**UNITED** Airlines will resume flights between Vancouver and Washington Dulles with a new daily summer service.

In a boost to its Canadian network, the carrier will also restore a twice-daily connection between NYC Newark and Halifax.

### EDITORIAL

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In partnership with Visit Anaheim, Infinity Holidays is delighted to showcase the best Anaheim has to offer. All our itineraries are 6 nights, giving your customers time to enjoy their favourite theme parks and still have time to explore more of Anaheim.



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# Small groups are the better way to tour Europe!

Take equal parts of Europe's greatest destinations, specially crafted local experiences and a small group of like-minded travellers sharing the joy of being on holiday. Mix them together and the result? An unforgettable holiday experience shared amongst new friends.

Bunnik Tours small group tours to Europe of 20 people or less make for a better holiday experience! In a smaller group clients have more one-on-one time with guides and plenty of opportunity to ask questions and take advantage of their wealth of local knowledge.

Small groups mean less time waiting and more time enjoying! Getting on and off the coach, hotel check-ins, comfort stops, meals - with a small group everything is

easier and quicker. With all the logistics taken care of, clients can sit back and enjoy every moment of their holiday, while making great friends along the way.

Having a small group means Bunnik Tours can select smaller boutique properties with character. In Italy they stay two nights in the Sassi Caves in Matera or in the traditional Trulli houses in Alberobello.

As well as visiting the major attractions, they take time to meet the locals and share some experiences that will be remembered forever. On a Bunnik Tour clients will immerse in local life with a cooking class in a local family home, sip on delicious food and wine in ancient wineries, and journey up the breathtaking

Alps in a cable car.

With an ever-growing range of tours and departure dates, there's a Europe tour to suit everyone.

## CONTACT US

Contact one of Bunnik Tours' friendly Travel Specialists to find out more about their Europe Tours. With over 25 years' experience, Bunnik Tours is an Australian family owned, multi award-winning small group tour operator.