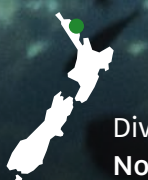


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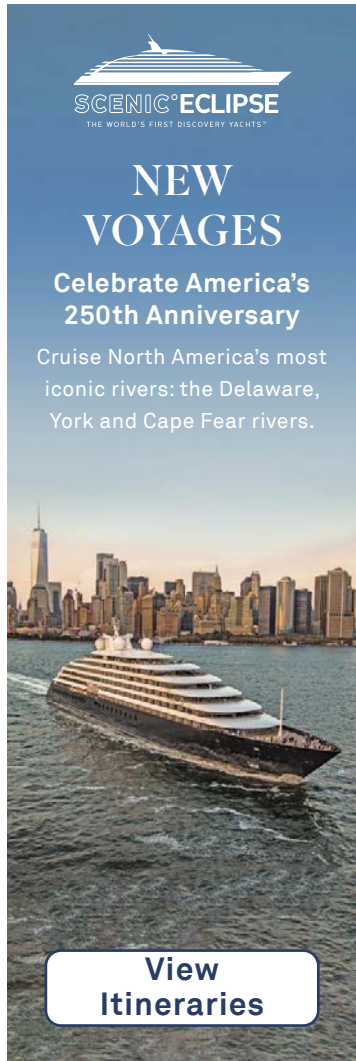
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Cooking with HKTB

HONG Kong's culinary scene, which features nearly 80 Michelin starred restaurants and a plethora of street eats, will be front and centre on upcoming episodes of Channel 10's *Masterchef*.

With the support of Hong Kong Tourism Board, the destination episodes begin this Sun 23 Jun.



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Battle for Vanuatu is on

COMPETITION is set to heat up on flights to Vanuatu, with Qantas to battle with Virgin Australia on the South Pacific route.

The International Air Services Commission has this week granted Qantas 1,798 seats of capacity, equating to up to five services per week between Australia and Vanuatu.

The Flying Kangaroo plans to fly up to three services per week from Brisbane to Port Vila from

Sep 2024, increasing to daily in Dec-Jan and again from mid-2025, with extra capacity utilised by a wet-leased 97-seat plane from Alliance Airlines.

Jetstar will also launch services to Vanuatu with up to four-weekly flights to the South Pacific island beginning from Oct using its 232-seat Airbus A321neo.

The extra allocation follows the IASC's decision late last month (**TD 30 May**) to grant 1,304 seats to Virgin Australia for flights linking both Brisbane and Sydney with the Vanuatu capital, with both decisions valid for five years.

Qantas and Virgin Australia are aiming to fill a void created by the collapsed Air Vanuatu. *ML*

Cambodia e-arrivals

TRAVELLERS entering Cambodia must submit an electronic arrival card a minimum of seven days prior to arrival at Immigration.

The new Cambodia e-arrivals card can be accessed from the official website **HERE**, via official mobile apps or using tablets available in the arrivals hall.

The arrivals card is separate to the e-visa process which permits entry for up to 30 days.

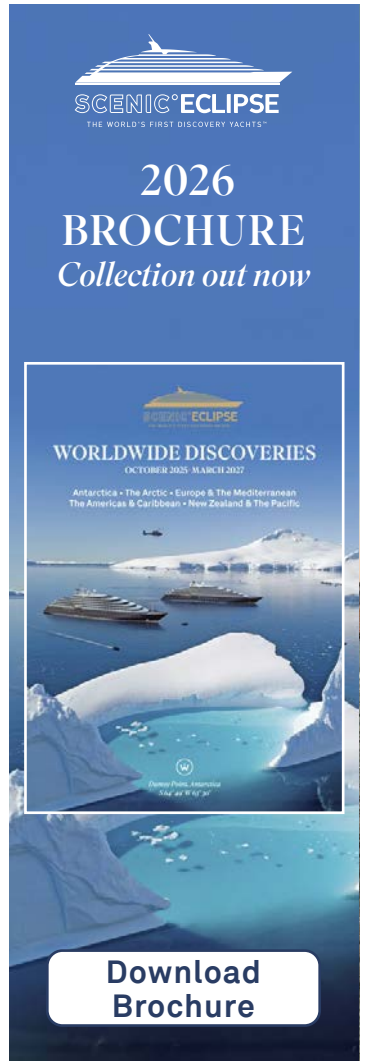
Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, and a cover wrap from **Tourism New Zealand**.

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Hunter's push for a cohesive industry



EXCLUSIVE

NEWLY elected Australian Travel Industry Chairman, Christian Hunter (**TD** yesterday) says his key early objectives for his tenure are to continue to grow the profile of the ATAS accreditation scheme and to work closely with other travel-related associations.

Speaking to **Travel Daily**, Hunter said it was critical that different pillars of the industry are aligned and have a common goal.

"Through the pandemic, there were some lessons learned about how we could be more effective with a more cohesive approach to talking to those in government.

"There's been enhanced dialogue between all of these associations since that time, and I think that it's only natural that will continue and I think it's really important that it does."

Hunter said that with three new Directors - Gai Tyrrell, Rohan

Moss and Brett Mitchell - added yesterday, and others having only a year or so under their belts, there was a great opportunity for some new thinking and ideas.

Ongoing evolution of ATAS and raising its profile among agents and consumers will also be a key concern for the new ATIA Chair.

"I think there are things that we can look at potentially to make ATAS a more robust scheme for both agents themselves and for consumers, so this is an exciting project," Hunter added. **ML**

Hunter is **pictured** back row, third from left, with his fellow Board and ATIA colleagues both present and departing.

Back row: David Hosking, Peter Muller, Christian Hunter, Gai Tyrrell, Matt Masson, Rohan Moss, David Smith and Dean Long.

Front row: Toni Ambler, Cinzia Burnes, Tom Manwaring, Laura Ruffles and Danielle Russom.
Not pictured: Graham Turner

JQ lands in the Bay

DIRECT Jetstar flights between Melbourne and Hervey Bay have begun, with the maiden service taking off from Tullamarine at 12:30pm today.

Launched in partnership with Fraser Coast Tourism, the new three-times weekly route will provide more than 1,100 seats to attractions such as K'Gari, Lady Elliott Island and the southern edges of the Great Barrier Reef.

Marvellous Europe

A NEW land adventure in Morocco headlines the new 2025 Europe cruise and touring range from Travelmarvel.

The 10-day 'Magical Morocco' tour can also be combined with a Douro river cruise with sister brand APT on its soon-to-launch **MS Estrela** (**TD** 15 Aug 2023).

A new land extension to Lucerne and Zurich in Switzerland has also been released, best coupled with a Rhine Christmas markets cruise.

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Window Seat

COULD it be some sort of clever marketing exercise?

Is it some sort of prop for an upcoming movie shoot?

Maybe it's an alien ship?

These are some of the questions doing the rounds online after a mysterious reflective pillar (pictured) appeared randomly in the middle of the Nevada desert?

To make things weirder, this isn't the first one, as similar

objects have been appearing in strange places in recent years, with the first found in the Utah desert back in 2020.



CATO Board move

LIZ Anderson has stepped down from the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) Board, after eight years of leadership.

Anderson announced her decision yesterday, following "the most transformational time in CATO's history", according to CATO Chair, Dennis Bunnik.

"[Anderson] helped shape the CATO that exists today and in the process, has created significant value for both the membership and the broader touring sector," Bunnik added.

Batik boosts Bali

BATIK Air has launched Denpasar-Canberra flights, which are being flown thrice weekly on a Boeing 737-800.

The inaugural flight touched down last week, with passengers warmly welcomed in Canberra with a traditional ceremony and greetings from local reps.

Luxury Escapes for VIPs

EARLY access to top-selling deals, bonus inclusions and extra discounts are now available to members of a new VIP Travel Club launched by Luxury Escapes.

The new LuxPlus+ Travel Club carries a \$249 annual price along with a one-time \$500 joining fee and is aimed at frequent travellers and luxury connoisseurs.

Members will also gain access to special discounts on deals posted across the website, with members advised when the offer will be opened to general sale.

A scan of the website reveals discounts ranging from \$70 for a five-night stay at the Hinode Hills Niseko Village in Japan through to \$240 for five nights at the Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll in the Maldives.

Larger discounts will be available to VIP members on selected guided and independent Luxury Escapes Tours on top of a range of exclusive offers released only for members to book.

Bonus inclusions such as in-house credit, daily breakfast, room upgrades and more are also available for VIP members, along with priority access to a customer support phone line. *ML*

NCL Legends famil

THE countdown is on to win a spot on Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) Legends famil in Europe this year, with 15 high achievers to join a nine-day Mediterranean cruise aboard *Norwegian Escape*.

The top 15 selling agencies will be invited, with all bookings to be confirmed by the end of Jun.

Upshall new role

CRAIG Upshall has joined Albatros Expeditions as its new Sales Director for Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Upshall will assume the role from 08 Jul.



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TIME mentorship celebrated



THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) celebrated the graduation of its 54th intake and welcomed a new cohort of mentees last night at the offices of The Travel Corporation in Bondi Junction.

Guest speaker on the night, Flight Centre Travel Group Global MD - Luxury and Independent

Brands, Danielle Galloway, shared insights gained from her career.

She discussed the importance of 'surprise mentorship', which she defined as "stopping at an industry event and giving somebody a compliment or noticing something that they've done in the industry".

The latest crop of mentors and mentees are pictured above. JM

Westin in Vietnam

WESTIN Hotels & Resorts has marked its debut in Vietnam with the opening of The Westin Resort and Spa Cam Ranh.

Offering spacious guest rooms, suites and pool villas, the 207-key resort is positioned along a beach on the country's south-central coast, just a 10-minute drive from Cam Ranh International Airport.

Feast with Air NZ

AIR New Zealand will serve up special dishes across its lounges to celebrate Matariki, the Maori New Year.

Customers can enjoy menu items inspired by Matariki from 27 Jun to 03 Jul in the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown lounges.

In addition, the carrier will also offer seasonal flavours in its new winter lounge menu, with highlights including pork belly with spiced plum sauce, as well as an expanded breakfast line-up.

Reviews are read

AN OVERWHELMING 97% of hotel guests have checked guest reviews before booking a stay in a hotel or resort, a new report from Accor has revealed.

Based on the responses of 5,000 travellers from five European countries, around four in 10 (38%) guests scour reviews every time they book a stay, while a further 38% do so most of the time.

Guest reviews and ratings were ranked as the second most important factor in the booking decision process, ahead of food and dining options, wi-fi, and health and hygiene standards, while rooms and amenities were the top determining factor.

The study showed that guests, on average, read nine reviews for each hotel or resort they are considering staying at, with more than half (52%) saying cleanliness was the most important factor.

A majority (63%) said they take both positive and negative reviews into consideration.

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Sell & win with ITA

ITA Airways has launched a new incentive, which will see agents rewarded with one economy class return ticket on any ITA-operated flight in Europe when they sell nine return business class fares.

There are also five A\$100 gift cards up for grabs - details [HERE](#).

Ama double wide

AMAWATERWAYS is planning to introduce a second double-width ship to its fleet, co-founder and Executive VP Kristin Karst revealed during an address at the Travel Leaders Network Edge conference in Washington, DC.

With details to emerge "in due course", the newbuild will be a predecessor to *AmaMagna*, which launched in 2019.

With a capacity to accommodate around 20% more guests, *AmaMagna* is almost double the width of a standard river ship.

Heritage season ready to sail



HERITAGE Expeditions hosted an exclusive media lunch yesterday to celebrate its 2025/2026 launch.

Co-owner and Commercial Director Aaron Russ, who has led more than 100 remote expeditions, travelled from New Zealand to join the event, where he discussed the voyages on offer and shared his childhood experiences of sailing to the subantarctic with his brother Nathan and his parents.

Both the brothers took over the family business just before Covid. Russ explained that while there are some travellers who want short trips, Heritage offers longer itineraries for guests to fully appreciate the wilderness.

This includes the 28-day Ross Sea Antarctica itinerary, which sets sail in January in 2025.

The voyage follows the footsteps of explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton from his hut at Cape Royds to Enderby Island in sea

lion breeding season, seeing the royal penguins on Macquarie Island and plenty more.

"We don't follow the schedule of the restaurant, we don't follow the schedule of anything other than nature."

"So if it's two o'clock in the morning, you're in the Ross Sea, the sun's shining, and the ice is clear, we will get in the Zodiac and go on shore," explained Russ.

"Increasingly, I think expedition cruising is hybridising with cruising, and the restaurants are becoming more important than nature - [but] for us, nature is most important."

"We'll make sure you're exceptionally well-fed and looked after, but nature waits for nobody and the restaurant can wait an hour or two [to open]."

Russ is **pictured** above left with Heritage Expeditions' Head of Global Sales, Robert Halfpenny and Sales Manager Australia, Chris Le Roux.

Wildlife Journeys

AUSTRALIAN Wildlife Journeys has boosted its offering with the addition of Sydney Bespoke Tours and Perth Wildlife Encounters.

The group's CEO, John Daw, said both organisations were key to expanding the collective's experiences across key international gateways.

South West wellness

AUSTRALIA'S South West Regional Tourism Organisation has announced the launch of its Wellness Tourism Strategy.

Supported by Tourism WA, the strategy sets out a roadmap for the region to "become Australia's premier destination for nature-based wellness tourism by 2034".

Key areas of focus include encouraging eco-friendly practices, supporting local Aboriginal tourism, bringing wellness into destination marketing, and more.

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Boosting Darwin

ALMOST 40,000 motorsport fans flocked to the Northern Territory last weekend to witness the high-octane action of Betr's Darwin Triple Crown.

Delivered by the Northern Territory Major Events Company, the event consisted of three days of non-stop racing from the Supercars, Porsche Carrera Cup, and many more.

Visitors from interstate made up 36% of the crowd, with many taking the opportunity to check out Darwin and surrounds.

Away from the track, racing teams explored Litchfield and Kakadu National Parks and joined a fishing tour during their Top End experience.

The Betr Darwin Triple Crown will return to the Northern Territory in 2025.

MEA SALUTES SYDNEY VENUE

FOR the second year in a row, Sydney Showground took home the coveted 'Best Event Venue' accolade at the Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) National Awards last week.

Following MEA's annual conference, more than 200 guests gathered at the Rydges Resort Hunter Valley to witness 32 awards be presented to the country's top event professionals.

Sydney Showground celebrated a record-breaking year in 2023, during which it delivered more than 250 events and launched a three-year ESG strategy, including a commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The venue's Director of Sales & Marketing, Andrew Roberts, said "it's been an incredible 12 months for our team; we welcomed a range of new clients, hosted world tours, and supported countless consumer and corporate expos,



all the while delivering an international broadcast centre for a world-class sporting event".

ICMS Australasia was another big winner on the night, receiving 'Platinum Event of the Year' for Meeting of the Mines 2023, as well as seeing one of its team members, Tiffany Lo, crowned 'Platinum Event Professional of the Year'.

MEA CEO Peter McDonald said, "last night we were able

to showcase performances of distinction across the breadth of the Australian events industry during 2023".

"It's my hope that every...finalist and winner will use their peer-determined acknowledgement to champion and leverage themselves as they conduct business," he added. JM

The Sydney Showground Sales team are pictured: Brialey Davis-White, Roberts, and Meg Hooton.

Acquiring adventure

MULPHA Events, the owner-operator of Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, has acquired the Australian Adventure Expo from Brooks Events.

The expo services the \$11 billion outdoor recreation sector, which is projected to see an annual growth rate of 5.74% between 2024 and 2028.

Mulpha Events said it plans to make the event an "even bigger success", and will host the 2025 edition in Brisbane on 05-06 Mar.

Royal Botanic unveils new event spaces

THE Royal Botanic Garden of Sydney has announced the opening of two new, nature-inspired events spaces.

Situated within the Robert Brown Building, the Garden Gallery and Gadi Seminar Rooms are ideal for corporate events, workshops, seminars and team-building activities.

Both venues feature natural light, lush greenery and state-of-the-art facilities.

Event organisers can also add catering, a tour of the gardens, or a relaxing breakout session beneath the trees.

"The Garden Gallery and Gadi Seminar Rooms are a welcomed addition to Sydney's business event scene, meeting the growing demand for spaces that foster positive wellbeing and a collaborative culture," said Holly McDougall, Venue Sales Manager.

Get agri-cultured

BUSINESS Events Tasmania is expecting around 2,000 visitors from Australia and New Zealand to attend the Agri-Food Festival, which will be held across Launceston from 01-04 Aug.

Under the 'Cultivating Change' theme, the four-day program will showcase the region's "gastronomic landscape, agricultural sector and culinary heritage".



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Albatross' Christmas promise



EUROPEAN touring specialist Albatross Tours is ready for a bumper festive season, after guaranteeing remaining places on its Christmas 2024 tours.

Travellers who book a spot on the 11-day 'German & Austrian Christmas Markets' itinerary, which departs 04 or 07 Dec, can rest assured that their journey will go ahead.

Other confirmed tours include the 11-day 'A Swiss Christmas in Grindelwald', which sets off on 17 Dec; the 12-day 'Christmas in the Slovenian Alps'; and the nine-day 'New Year in an Italian Villa & Tuscany', scheduled for 28 Dec.

"The Albatross festive program has established itself as a real favourite for Australian travellers," Managing Director Shelley Poten said.

"We have a fabulous choice of Christmas market locations - Berlin, Dresden, Prague and Ljubljana are just a few.

"We slow it down and maximise time in fabulous locations - for example staying five nights at

Lake Bled ('Christmas in the Slovenian Alps') or five nights in Grindelwald ('Swiss Christmas in Grindelwald')," she added.

More details on the 2024 Christmas tours **HERE**. *JM*

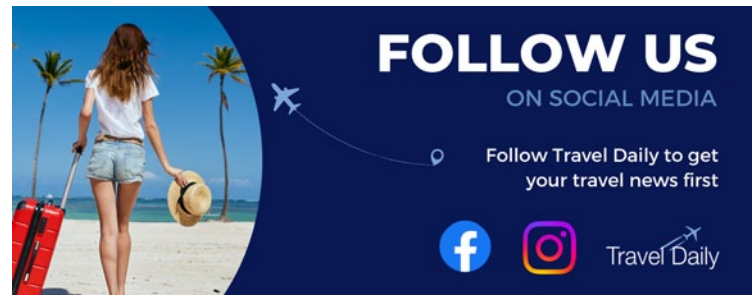
Pictured with Poten is Roslyn Wyatt and Jessica Taylor, Travel Associates Hawthorne.

'I Do' honeymoons

MORE Aussies would rather spend their hard-earned cash on a bigger and better honeymoon compared to a wedding celebration, according to new research from Insure&Go.

Nine in 10 said they would, or wish they did, spend less on their wedding, with 65% saying they'd prefer to prioritise travel by splashing more cash on a romantic trip.

Respondents aged under 30 were the most honeymoon-focused, with 84% saying they'd prefer to use their savings on a memorable holiday, with half wanting to head overseas.



APPOINTMENTS

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appointments@traveldaily.com.au

Mandy Dunbier is set to depart her post at Hertz after a fulfilling career at the car rental company for almost 17 years. She will join **Flight Centre Travel Group** as its Global Supply Partnerships Manager, leading the ground transport segment across car rental, door to door and on-demand services. Based in Brisbane, she will draw on her expertise to develop and execute strategies to drive revenue growth.

Marriott International has promoted **Deb McDiarmid** to the role of Area Director of Marketing - Australia, New Zealand and Pacific. McDiarmid first joined the hospitality company in 2021 as Marketing Director. In her new role, which sees her relocate from Port Douglas to Sydney, she will focus on raising brand awareness and enhancing hotel performance across a portfolio of 46 hotels and 19 brands.

With over two decades of hospitality and travel technology experience under his belt, **Mark Haywood** has taken on the role of Chief Commercial Officer, EMEA & APAC at **BirchStreet Systems**, which will see him based in Barcelona. Throughout his career, Haywood has held several e-commerce and SaaS technology company management, leadership and commercial positions in organisations such as The Ascott Group and Melia Hotels.

Hahnair, a German executive charter airline, has announced the appointment of **Rachel Pascall** as its Vice President New Distribution. She is tasked with leading an international team of developers, IT specialists, and account managers, as well as supporting the acquisition of new partners.

Sara Siyam has been named the Director of Marketing at **Sun Siyam Resorts** in the Maldives. Promoted from her previous role at the company as Creative Director, Siyam will now be responsible for elevating brand awareness through integrated marketing campaigns. She will also spearhead experiential events across all properties, with the goal of driving growth and revenue for the company.

Centara Hotels & Resorts has named **Ron Cusiter** as its new Executive Vice President, Commercial, and **Percy P. Muncherji** as Vice President, Design & Technical Services. The appointment of the two highly experienced hospitality professionals will play a key role in boosting the Thailand-based hotel operator's success when it comes to achieving commercial objectives and creating exceptional guest experiences.

Tourism WA has added five new commissioners to its Board. The state tourism organisation has welcomed **Rosanna Angus, Kristy Bailey, Andrew Lane, Caroline Taylor** and **Jason Waters**, increasing the board number to 10 members. The newcomers will bring fresh perspectives and extensive expertise across the fields of tourism, travel, transport and hospitality.