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Win a Disney cruise

TRAVEL agents can win a spot on a Disney Cruise Line sailing from Australia, when they participate in the brand's *Magic Ahoy!* virtual cruise.

The competition ends 18 Nov, with prizes to be won throughout - find out more on **page nine**.

A&K's Chianti Collection

COINCIDING with Australian visitation rising to Italy this year, Abercrombie & Kent (A&K) has announced the debut of The Chianti Collection, a range of curated villas in Tuscany that will be available exclusively through the operator for stays next year.

The villas range from restored farmhouses to ancient towers, and are designed to suit the premium market seeking multi-generational family stays or group celebration venues.

Each property is equipped with luxurious amenities such as heated pools, yoga studios, gyms, and wine cellars, as well as round-the-clock concierge service through a dedicated host.

Further premium perks include welcome and farewell dinners prepared by a local chef; wine tasting; private airport transfers; cooking sessions; and Tuscan wine hampers on arrival.

The collection of five villas range



from six to eight rooms and are located in Tavarnuzze, Chianti Radda and Castellina.

A&K said the expansion of its luxury villa offerings will precede plans to introduce more exclusive properties in other destinations.

For more details, see **HERE**. *AB*

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest news including a photo page from **Celeystal Cruises**, our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- Disney Destinations
- Consolidated Travel
- Air Tickets & Express Tickets

Sell SQ tix to earn

CONSOLIDATED Travel has released 2025 earlybird fares for Singapore Airlines, with agents able to earn up to \$100 per ticket.

The savings are available for three weeks, and also comes with the chance for agents to win a trip to Vietnam - see **page 10**.

OFFER EXTENDED

JOURNEY BEYOND

Red Centre Spectacular

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2024 & 2025 GROUP TOURS



ACA heads west

WESTERN Australia has been confirmed as the host of the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Conference and AGM in 2025, which will attract more than 150 industry leaders.

Running from 03-05 Sep, touring activities will be held in Perth, Fremantle, and Rottnest Is.



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FLY BETTER



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Koala breaks its silence

THE well-publicised plans of Koala Airlines to enter the Australian domestic aviation market (**TD** 29 Aug) have been tempered by the company this week, which concedes it has a tall mountain to climb before releasing any firm plans.

Responding to *Travel Daily's* request for further details, Chief Operating Officer Sally Spring admitted Koala was taken by surprise by the level of media interest in its embryonic plan.

"We never anticipated the level of interest it has generated, and we remain committed to keeping our plans under wraps until they are fully developed and finalised," Spring said.

"The enthusiastic response is a testament to the public's eagerness for a fresh approach in the aviation sector," she added.

Spring also confirmed Koala Airlines is in the process of meeting regulatory requirements and finalising aircraft leasing

agreements, and given the complexity of preparations, it is premature to provide additional details beyond its website as it has "considerable work" to do. **AB**

Save on SQ tickets

HELLOWORLD agents are being reminded that applicable marketing collateral will be live on the HLO agent portal from today to take full advantage of the Singapore Airlines earlybirds campaign with Express Tickets & Air Tickets (**TD** 05 Sep) - see **p11**.

"The message is clear, get in quick for these early, earlybird fares with SQ, Air Tickets and Express Tickets, and save money for your clients," HLO said.

The discounted fares for travel in 2025 are also being offered with value-ad items, including 30% bonus KrisFlyer Miles and a \$1 e-sim promotion to over 100 destinations for earlybird bookings via Pelago.

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(Part Time - Melbourne)
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Thomas Cook sold

POLISH travel tech company eSky Group has formally bought Thomas Cook from Chinese owner Fosun Tourism Group.

The deal will see Thomas Cook benefit from eSky's large flight and hotel inventory, and facilitate an expansion push by the new owner in western Europe.

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TRAINING ACADEMY

Cebu goes daily

CEBU Pacific will increase services between Manila and Sydney from 01 Dec.

The Philippine budget carrier will boost frequencies to daily from four times weekly using A330neo aircraft.

Cabins will be configured to offer 459 economy class seats.

Cruising about in SA



FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) retail cruise brand, Cruiseabout has opened its first store in Adelaide at Westfield West Lakes, marking the third

shopfront location after formally relaunching in May (**TD 02 May**).

Cruiseabout General Manager, Brad Kennedy, said the latest opening in the South Australian capital marks an important step in the revitalised journey of the Cruiseabout brand.

"We've seen fantastic success in our existing Gold Coast and Perth stores, and we're keen to see this replicated in our new Adelaide shopfront as we welcome our first customers," he said.

"Our advisors are seasoned cruisers who are genuinely passionate about helping their customers find the right holiday, so you can expect a service that is tailored to you, and not simply based on the most popular deals.

"Cruising is increasingly becoming a top holiday choice globally and we're continuing to book holidays for both long-time and first-time cruisers."

The new store is located on Level 1, 111 West Lakes Blvd. **AB**

Entire Soirees back

ENTIRE Travel Group will expand the range of exhibitors on show at its Travel Showcase & Summer Soirees next year, which the wholesaler has revealed will be held in Feb 2025.

Following the successful event this year, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane will again be the host cities for the second round of trade gatherings, with Entire encouraging advisors to be quick when registrations open in Dec so they don't miss out.

Melbourne will kick off the tour on 11 Feb at the Sofitel, followed by Sydney on 12 Feb at The Fullerton Hotel, and finishing with Brisbane on 13 Feb at Rydges South Bank Brisbane.

Air India adopts NDC

AIR India has become the first Indian airline to implement NDC, stating the decision was a "significant milestone" for the carrier's distribution strategy.

"Our goal is to provide a seamless booking experience for our travel partners," the carrier told local media.

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ENTIRE
GROUP JOURNEYS



Oceania sees Your World

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled a new value proposition today called 'Your World Included', providing guests with a range of extra inclusions.

Cruise fares for all passengers now feature dining at all gourmet specialty restaurants; soft drinks,

specialty coffees and teas; Vero Water; unlimited Starlink wi-fi; in-room dining; fitness classes; and laundry.

Shipboard gratuities for stateroom attendants, butlers, and dining waitstaff will also be automatically included in cruise fares, having previously only been available in the ticket for select travel partner or loyalty club members in a limited number of regions around the world.

"The change has come following feedback from guests who highlighted they would prefer that we include amenities valued by all versus amenities valued by some," said Frank Del Rio, President of Oceania Cruises.

Based on a 10-day trip, Oceania said pax will receive US\$1,800 in added value per stateroom.

The updated inclusions will apply to all new reservations after 01 Oct on sailings departing on or after 01 Jan 2025. *AB*

SA attracting cruise

THE South Australian Government has revealed the formation of the Cruise Attraction Working Group, a consortium of SA stakeholders that want to attract more cruise ship visitation to the state's shores.

South Australian Tourism Minister, Zoe Bettison, told *TD* the working group will consist of the South Australian Tourism Commission, Flinders Ports, and the Department of Transport & Infrastructure, and will actively court participants from the cruise industry - see today's issue of *CW*.

Trevi Fountain tax?

IN A bid to combat overtourism concerns, authorities in Rome are considering the launch of a ticketing system for visitors to the Trevi Fountain.

While locals would still be able to view the popular tourist attraction for free, under the mooted scheme, overseas visitors would have to pay €1 and pre-book their viewing time.

At this stage, the Municipality of Rome said the idea is only in its infancy and there is nothing concrete to reveal yet, however the proposal follows a similar levy implemented in Venice for day-trip visitors (*TD* 25 Jan).



A FLIGHT safety demo video has gone viral on Youtube - but rather than being a multi-million-dollar production from an airline, it's a fake safety briefing created by travel journalist Doug Lansky.

Titled 'The Honest Pre-flight Safety Demonstration Video That Airlines Are Afraid to Show You', the seven-minute video is inspired by a discussion Lansky had with a pilot after asking, "what would you say if you could say anything?"

The tongue-in-cheek film cites surprising facts, such as the much higher likelihood of pax being injured by their own luggage rather than turbulence, and how often flight attendants bump pax elbows, knees and feet during flights - watch the video [HERE](#).



En gladlaks.

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Why agents should rethink their partnerships

OPINION

Based in the Netherlands, Robin Lawther leads Expedia Group's Travel Agent Affiliate Programme (TAAP) as Vice President.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words at feedback@traveldaily.com.au

THE evolution of traditional commission models is forcing travel agents to rethink their business strategies.

As the industry grapples with increased demand and a shrinking workforce, agents are under pressure to deliver exceptional service while navigating a complex financial landscape.

To maintain profitability and competitiveness, agents must adapt to new revenue streams and optimise their partnerships to help boost their earnings.

Typically, agents earn commissions based on a percentage of the booking value from suppliers, with standard rates usually ranging from 5-15%.

This model has been the backbone of the travel agency business, providing a variable income stream that fluctuates depending on booking volume and market dynamics.

Over the years, many suppliers have reduced or even eliminated their travel agent commission.

This shift creates a challenge for travel agents, who must navigate a more complex commission

environment while trying to maintain their earning potential.

Many agents are frustrated with how often they have to chase their commissions, and are seeking models that guarantee timely payments.

The complexity of collecting commissions from multiple suppliers is another pain point.

Booking directly with hotels can be beneficial in certain cases, such as with high booking volumes,

but it becomes a hassle when dealing with numerous properties.

The time and resources spent chasing down individual payments can be substantial.

Several industry sources estimate that many commissions involve discrepancies or outright non-payment, creating significant financial uncertainty.

Commission models that streamline this process, like ensuring full payment for all completed stays, allow agents to focus on providing exceptional service to their clients rather than chasing overdue payments.

Another key factor in commission structures revolves around how they're calculated.

Companies often quote a higher

headline commission rate, but it typically excludes taxes and fees - which can make a big difference to the travel agent's paycheck.

Platforms like Expedia TAAP pay commissions to travel agents based on the total gross booking value, including taxes and fees.

Here, travel agents receive a fairer share of the total revenue from each booking with taxes and fees included in the commissionable amount.

“ Agents must navigate a more complex commission environment while trying to maintain their earning potential ”

Since the platform isn't marking up prices to fund higher commissions, agents benefit from a larger payout and their clients get better prices.

To top it off, Expedia TAAP offers agents peace of mind

with guaranteed paid commission on all completed stays.

Travel agents that use Expedia TAAP are guaranteed timely payments, as Expedia ensures that payments are sent to agencies the month after the booking is completed.

A common question among agents is how to boost earnings and secure higher commissions.

The answer lies in understanding booking platforms and the commission models they're using.

In many cases, booking

platforms offer tools to optimise commission potential.

Tiered commission structures, for instance, allow agents to prioritise higher-paying bookings.

These platforms also facilitate "apples-to-apples" supplier comparisons based on commission rates, incentives, and overall value.

This empowers agents to select the most lucrative options while considering the effort required to collect commissions.

Leveraging platform loyalty programs, bundling services (like car rentals or package deals), and cultivating strong relationships with host agencies can further enhance earnings.

Preferred partnerships often include exclusive perks and improved commission structures.

For agents working with or considering a host agency, they should seek to fully understand the preferred partnerships and their benefits, as these partnerships often come with exclusive perks and better commission structures.

For agency owners, it's crucial to regularly check in with their suppliers to ensure their benefits are being fully optimised.

As the industry continues to evolve, a reliable and profitable commission structure is essential.

By seeking out and adapting to modern, competitive commission models, agents can better manage their income, provide top-notch service to their clients, and thrive in a competitive market.

Discover the all new *River Cruise Special Report*



Celestyal Cruises savours Sydney flavours

CELESTYAL Cruises executives, including Chief Commercial Officer, Lee Haslett, and Vice President Business Development, Janet Parton, have spent the past week in the Sydney sunshine wining and dining Australian travel agents, distribution partners and industry leaders.

During their visit, the Celestyal executives climbed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, explored the beautiful Hunter Valley, and hosted a 'Taste of Celestyal' tour with Gourmet Safaris in Sydney.

Similar to Celestyal's authentic excursions, which are led by knowledgeable 'insider' guides, the local food tour visited family-run businesses, offering a taste of Greece, Italy and the Middle East - a celebration of the cruise line's new year-round program showcasing the Aegean, Adriatic and Arabian Gulfs.

With ambitious growth plans for the Australian market, Haslett and Parton, along with Celestyal Regional Manager Stewart Williams and Australian Business Development Manager, Mary Williams, hosted more than 20 trade partners at a lavish dinner at Crown Sydney's Woodcut restaurant.

To top off their Sydney visit, the Celestyal team spent a final evening at the Sydney Opera House, toasting top selling travel agents at Opera Bar before treating them to a breathtaking performance of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* in the Joan Sutherland theatre.



CELESTYAL Cruises hosts travel agents at the Sydney Opera House for a performance of *Sunset Boulevard*.



LEE Haslett, **MARY** Williams, **JANET** Parton, **STEWART** Williams from Celestyal at Opera Bar.



AVYA Katsikas and **MARIA** Xylas from Travella Travel with **BRITT** Berning and **YVETTE** Gallen from Sun Island Tours.



TRAVELMANAGERS agents with **MARY** Williams from Celestyal Cruises.



ALFINA Maugeri and **ELLEN** Goodwin, Flight Centre.



STEWART Williams, Celestyal Cruises with **PAUL** Polyviou, Sun Island Tours.



MARY Williams and **JANET** Parton from Celestyal Cruises at Sydney Opera House.



KAREN Koop and **ANTONIA** Vrdolkak, CLIA Australasia.



SUE Kuti and **LANA** Kanchick, TravelManagers with **STEWART** Williams, Celestyal Cruises.



DIANNE Martin and **AMANDA** Cameron, I Love Cruising.

CORPORATE UPDATE

FCM appoints M&E lead

HENRY Jones has been tasked with leading the global marketing effort and brand strategy for Flight Centre Travel Group's FCM's meetings and events division.

In his new role with FCM M&E, Jones will drive the overall brand strategy for FCM as it looks to accelerate its growth objectives and bring the brand's full product suite to market.

FCM M&E Global General Manager, Simone Seiler, described Jones as a shining example of FCTG's 'Brightness of Future' leaders looking to develop their career progression.

"We believe the meetings, events, conferences, and event travel markets are ripe for disruption worldwide and have invested heavily in technology and people.

"This ensures we have best-in-

class technology and people to service the meetings and events industry," Seiler said.

Jones has spent the past eight years with Flight Centre Travel Group, working to launch and fine-tune the Melon software product for the company's Corporate Traveller brand.

He shifts into the Global Marketing Lead role with FCM M&E from his most recent role based in Singapore, where he led marketing for FCM Travel Asia, expanded the brand into Japan, launched FCM Platform China & integrated India into the region.

VIP lounge at HKG

PLAZA Premium Group has introduced Infinity Room, a new VIP passenger lounge at Hong Kong International Airport offering a "sanctuary-like space for a selected class of elite travellers".

Located opposite gate one within the existing Plaza Premium First lounge, the new space boasts cosy seating, stylish furnishings, and contemporary artworks.

Guests can savour an all-day, ever-changing menu featuring various global cuisines, as well as a refined beverage selection of single-malt whiskeys, brandy cognac, wines, spirits, Chinese & Western teas, and juices.

Infinity Room also offers round-the-clock personalised service, shower room facilities, a complimentary 10-minute neck and shoulder massage, and more.


Oman biz studio

OMAN Air will replace its first class product with a new business studio cabin in response to demand for more affordable fares.

Business Studio will sit above the carrier's existing business class product and will retain the 1-2-1 layout across the cabin with two rows of lie-flat studios.

Each studio will feature privacy walls, 58cm personal screens, free wi-fi connectivity and access to an a la carte dining menu.




Business Studio will be available to book from 09 Sep on LHR and BKK flights.



Stay Updated

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FCM India unveils new office



FCM India has moved into a new office space in Noida, in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh, Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has announced.

The team shared pictures of its spacious new digs to colleagues and industry friends on LinkedIn. "This new space not only gives us the room to collaborate more effectively but also sets the stage

for even greater achievements ahead," said Anshu Mordia, FCM India's Country HR Leader.

"Looking forward to all that we will accomplish together in this fresh, inspiring environment." JM

Pictured: The team at FCM India getting acquainted with their new work space. JM

Reflecting the Knights

REFLECTIONS Holidays has inked a new three-year sponsorship with the Newcastle Knights, which will see it collaborate on membership activations, co-branded social content, and more.

The hospitality brand will celebrate the new partnership on Sun as Match Day Partner with a special half-time activation, giving fans the chance to win a stay at any of Reflections' 40 destinations.

Gateway cuts 25%

DISCOUNTS of 25% are currently available on Gateway Travel's 'Essential Australia' tour as part of a limited-time promo.

The eight-night FIT adventure travels includes deluxe accommodation throughout, daily breakfast, private transfers, a wilderness cruise, guided tours and a domestic flight from Sydney to Melbourne.

"This small group tour is the perfect way to explore Australia's iconic destinations with significant savings," the company said.



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Return airfares starting from just \$632 are on offer now from **Singapore Airlines** with its 'Soar into 2025' earlybird deals. Discounts to more than 90 destinations are on sale now departing from seven Australian cities and four more on the Virgin Australia partner network. To sweeten the deal further, KrisFlyer members can enjoy a 30% bonus on miles with eligible bookings. Fares are available until 25 Sep and valid for travel between 13 Jan to 10 Sep 2025. **CLICK HERE** for further information.

Since when do you need an excuse to go on a holiday? That's the idea behind the latest promotion by **Oaks Hotels, Resorts and Suites** and its 'Any Excuse Will Do' campaign. Travellers can save up to 30% on a two-night stay minimum at the group's national network of properties if booked by 27 Sep for travel by 31 Jan 2025. **CLICK HERE** for more info.

Adventure travel brand **Explore Worldwide** has launched its earlybird campaign for travellers hungry for Europe in 2025. Discounts of up to 15% are on sale now, valid on hundreds of eligible itineraries booked by 26 Sep. Take your pick among Classic Discovery Tours, Walking Tours, Cycling Tours, Food and Drink Tours and Family Adventures. For the first time, Explore is also including its Upgraded Collection in the offer, **HERE**.

To celebrate the arrival of spring, **Pan Pacific Melbourne** is inviting travellers to explore the capital with its City Escape Deal, saving visitors up to \$130 per booking, including breakfast in the hotel's Dock 37 Bar and Kitchen and parking. Guests can secure their stay any time until 31 Dec 2025 - **CLICK HERE** for details.

Travellers can tick that African safari off the bucket list in 2025 with **South African Airways'** new earlybird promotional fare. Valid for booking until 16 Sep and travel between 01 Feb and 31 Aug 2025, the published fare is \$838 from PER and \$1,020 from ADL/BNE/MEL/SYD using fare basis GAUSPCL, excluding taxes.

Celebrate the essence of Italy by taking a self-guided walking holiday in Campania with **On Foot Holidays**, which is offering 2025 departures at 2024 prices on bookings made by 30 Sep. Located just south of Rome, the company has launched its new route through the Cilento National Park, which overlooks medieval villages, ruins, fishing villages and rolling green countryside. Prices include accommodation, daily breakfast, three dinners, all luggage transfers and the On Foot app for navigation and information. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Fans of the musical *Chicago* can catch the award-winning production during its Canberra run from 07-29 Sep and couple it with a stay at **Ovolo Nishi**, the show's official accommodation partner. Guests can enjoy a stay in a premium room, daily breakfast, a *Chicago*-themed amenity kit and access to discounted A-Reserve tickets to the show. Lead-in rates for the package start at \$305- **CLICK HERE** to book.

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Cocky Guides smashes an ace



MULTI-SENSORY adventure company Cocky Guides delivered an immersive post-tournament experience for athletes taking part in the recent Northern Territory Blind and Low Vision Open in Darwin.

Engaged by Tennis Australia to put together the itinerary, players were whisked off to Litchfield, Kakadu and Nitmiluk National Parks on a three-day adventure, which highlighted the sensory elements of the Top End.

Tennis Australia's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pathways & Event Specialist, Ben Dew, said the post-event touring is a major benefit for players as well as the local economy.

"It's a real benefit to encourage tournament participation in new events around Australia by engaging Cocky Guides who have connections to the blind and low-vision community, plus many visitor economy businesses across Australia," Dew said.

"An athlete can now participate in our tournament and experience the destination with

Cocky Guides beyond the game."

Tennis Australia has asked Cocky Guides to put together a similar post-tournament program after the 2024 South Australian Blind & Low Vision Open, with the company eyeing Kangaroo Island as the destination. *ML*

Workday at WSI

WESTERN Sydney International Airport will scale up its use of Workday's human capital management and finance platform as it moves into the latter stages of development.

Workday allows the facility to manage its HR, finance and operations, avoiding duplication of data and confusion generated by using multiple systems.

The system also helps manage procurement and management of contracted suppliers, ensuring budgets are adhered to and reporting duties maintained.

Users can also automate repetitive tasks through integrated AI and verify employee credentials and capabilities.

THE *MAGIC AHOY!* VIRTUAL CRUISE IS NOW SAILING AND IT HOLDS YOUR CHANCE TO **WIN** A STATEROOM ONBOARD A DISNEY WONDER VOYAGE IN 2025!



What is *Magic Ahoy!* all about? This virtual cruise gives you the opportunity to explore Disney Cruise Line at your leisure. You can dip in, have a break, come back later, or complete all the training in one go – it is completely up to you. You'll learn all about our infamous Rotational Dining, onboard entertainment, Disney's Private Island, and more! This training covers all five ships in our fleet, including *Disney Wonder*, the ship sailing from Australia and New Zealand.

There are 3 Levels to complete – once you have reached Level 3, you'll be entered into the draw to win a Stateroom for you and a Guest onboard a Disney Cruise Line sailing from Sydney!

The competition runs between 26 August and 18 November 2024, with spot prizes to be won throughout the incentive, and an **exclusive *Magic Ahoy!* pin*** once you collect all the Mickey Stamps.

Don't delay and **download *Magic Ahoy!* from the app store today!** *Magic Ahoy!* has launched, and with this mega prize up for grabs, you won't want to miss out!

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