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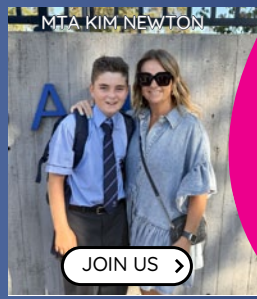
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Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 19th Feb 2025



MTA MOBILE TRAVEL AGENTS

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YOUR SCHEDULE
NEVER MISS A MOMENT
THAT *matters* ♥

Room-Res Island

AGENTS can win a place on a luxury famill to 'Room-Res Island' at the Naka Island Luxury Collection Resort in Phuket, as part of a new agent incentive.

Bonus reward points on every booking made will also be awarded - see **cover** for details.

CTM eyes Euro rebound

HEADWINDS in Europe flagged last year by Corporate Travel Management (CTM) have dented some of its key financial results delivered for the six months to 31 Dec 2024 (**TD** breaking news).

Revenue dipped by 6% to \$342.8 million on the previous corresponding period, while EBITDA also dropped by 23% to \$77.4 million, and statutory net profit after tax attributable to owners also decreased by 42% to \$28.5 million.

While the performance of Europe last year applied a drag effect to CTM's bottom line, due in part to a reduced UK Govt

spend and the winding up of one-off projects, the company said the market is primed to rebound.

The factors expected to drive European performance include a "record amount of corporate business", with new clients to be progressively onboarded in H2 to boost earnings.

CTM also picked up the TMC Govt contract as the sole agent last year (**TD** 31 Oct 2024), business that was previously occupied by three providers.

The company stated "it was difficult to assess the incremental impact to the business", given a reduction in UK Govt spend, but now believes the change will have a net positive impact.

Despite the decline globally, Australia and New Zealand performed better, with revenue of \$96.1 million and underlying EBITDA of \$28.5 million, up 18% and 53% on the same period last year respectively - driven by new and returning clients. **AB**

Two categories up

TRAVELLERS can enjoy a double category suite upgrade and a low 7.5% deposit on select Regent Seven Seas Cruises sailings.

The all-inclusive cruise line has also cut up to 30% on selected itineraries, including Barcelona to Lisbon - see **p10** for details.

Wendy Wu Tours

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ENDS 28 FEB

DISCOVER MORE

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of travel news, a cover wrap from **Room Res**, a photo page from **AmaWaterways**, our **Luxury page**, plus a full page from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

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VIEW DEAL

Del Rio exits Oceania

FRANK Del Rio Jr has exited his role as President of Oceania Cruises earlier than previously reported, departing immediately after two years in the position and more than 20 years with the premium NCLH brand.

Del Rio Jr was set to report to newly appointed Chief Luxury Officer at Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises Jason Montague (**TD** 07 Jan), who only started in the role on Mon, however a change of plans will see the new recruit also take on day-to-day running of the brand.

The leadership change means there will be no member of the Del Rio family involved with cruise line for the first time since the brand was founded.

For the full details, see today's edition of **Cruise Weekly**.

Expedia: TAAP

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Byron caps have failed

BYRON Bay's controversial annual 60-day limit on short-term accommodation is damaging the visitor economy, reducing jobs, and failing to increase long-term housing supply, according to the findings of a new report.

Commissioned by the Australia and New Zealand Short-Term Rental Association (ASTRA) and carried out by JWS Research, the study showed the cap, introduced in Sep 2023 (**TD** 26 Sep 2023), is doing more harm than good.

Findings from the report show

Force '25 sold out

BOTH A Force for Good 2025 events are now sold out, with around 700 industry professionals to come together next month in Sydney on 07 Mar and Auckland on 14 Mar (**TD** 24 Jan).

Topics will include accelerating the rise of women leaders; how to leverage your unique strengths for success; rethinking sustainability; how to be part of the solution in the fight against human trafficking; and the formula for entrepreneurial success.



95% of short-term rental owners surveyed would not convert their properties to long-term leases - a key objective of the cap.

At the same time, the limit has translated to a downturn in visitor spend as reported by local businesses, with more than 90% of owners hinting they may need to let staff go or cut other costs.

The ASTRA report showed owners are only listing their properties during peak periods, removing their use at other times as emergency housing.

This drop in supply is leading to higher prices among available supply for tourists visiting the area, with families hardest hit.

"It is now clear the 60-day cap will not work as intended and that no meaningful increase to the long term or affordable market will result from this misguided initiative," said ASTRA Chairman Yoav Tourel. *ML*

All-inclusive luxury

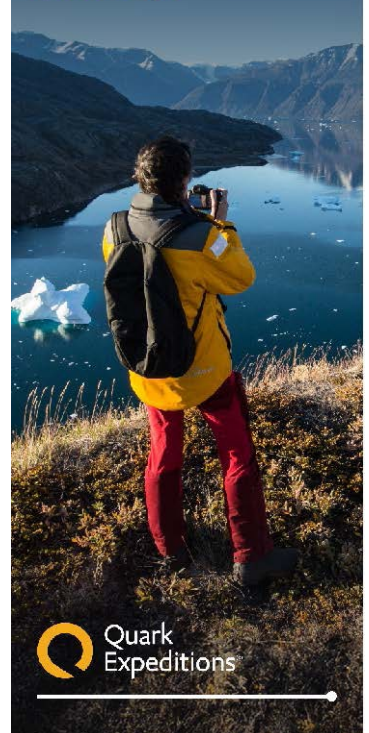
JOURNEY Beyond's Horizontal Falls Seaplane Adventures has announced its luxury houseboat, *Jetwave Pearl*, is now an all-inclusive Kimberley experience.

In addition to overnight accommodation on board the two-level vessel, the new package includes fine dining meals and premium Western Australian wines and beverages at dinner; a low-level scenic seaplane flight; and numerous powerboat cruises through Horizontal Falls.

Guests will also enjoy a guided fishing tour with an onboard chef to prepare their catch; swimming or snorkelling in a marine viewing enclosure and a shark show; sunset welcome drinks; and a gourmet breakfast.

Prices start from \$1,965 per person - more details [HERE](#).

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AW appoints Favaro

ADVENTURE World has appointed Hayley Favaro as its new Content Marketing Manager.

The new role will see her based in Sydney, reporting to Head of Marketing Liz Glover.

Favaro will craft content championing sustainable travel.

CX welcomes comp

CATHAY Pacific has welcomed competition on air routes from Australia after smaller rival Hong Kong Airlines announced plans to launch services to Sydney from 20 Jun (**TD** 12 Feb).

“[The new service] will help more people discover the magic of Hong Kong,” Cathay Pacific Regional General Manager Southwest Pacific, Frosti Lau told *Travel Daily*.

While Lau was hospitable to friendly rivalry, he also expressed Cathay Pacific’s edge in the market because of its more-than 50 years of experience operating commercial flights between Hong Kong and Australia.

“We currently operate more than 70 return flights a week from five Australian cities - connecting family and friends and facilitating business growth for both regions through its cargo operations,” Lau said.

“Connecting our customers to Hong Kong and beyond is central to what we do, and Cathay Group aims to reach 100 destinations in 2025, with new routes already announced in India, Europe and the Americas for this year.”

Caravan platform launches

AUSTRALIA’S first independent travel platform for holiday parks, ParkBooker.com, will officially launch to travellers this week, after raising \$600,000 in funding.

Led by Founder Josh Volk, the former Global Head of Product at fitness app Sweat, ParkBooker aims to fill a gap in the market by focusing exclusively on caravan and camping parks.

Volk believes the platform, which will feature detailed park content and streamlined booking options, will revolutionise how holiday parks are marketed and booked across the country.

“Holiday parks are a cornerstone of Australian travel, but they’ve

been underserved by existing online platforms,” Volk said.

The platform’s launch comes as Australia’s holiday park sector continues to grow, with more travellers seeking affordable holiday options while grappling with cost-of-living pressures. *JM*

VA takes top spot

VIRGIN Australia has pulled ahead of its rival Qantas as the airline carrying the most domestic passenger traffic, a new report from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has showed.

The competition watchdog’s latest airline monitoring study indicated VA had increased its market share by 3.1% in Dec to 35%, pipping The Flying Kangaroo, which enjoyed roughly 34% of domestic bookings.

The scales were tipped in favour of VA for the month due a few reasons, but namely the addition of three Boeing 737s previously leased by Rex until its sensational collapse in Jul last year, which bolstered capacity.

SYD slots in ACL

THE role formerly controlled by Qantas and Virgin in determining slot allocation at Sydney Airport has been awarded to UK-based Airport Coordination Limited (ACL) after a government tender.

ACL will replace the Qantas and VA joint-venture Airport Coordination Australia, which had held the key position since 1997.

The change is expected to see a fairer playing field for new competitors wanting to access the country’s largest airport, which had historically locked out a significant swathe of interest.

Australian Travel Industry Association CEO Dean Long previously stated the change in slot management would make it easier for new airlines to get a foothold in the market, and signal a move “towards a more transparent and fair system that will benefit all airlines and, ultimately, consumers”.

The reform was part of a raft of recommendations put forward by the Aviation White Paper last year (**TD** 26 Aug 2024), which was very critical of the sector’s approach to fair competition.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



NEWCASTLE

Today’s issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Princess, which is this week hosting us on a trip to Sydney aboard *Diamond Princess*.

IT’S set to be a fabulous day on our trade marketing famill with Princess Cruises, as we’re pulling into Newcastle, where we have the opportunity to explore city for the day.

There is plenty to see and do in Newcastle, known as the gateway to the beautiful Hunter Valley wine region.

From its rich history and spectacular beaches to its vibrant cafe and restaurant destinations, there is lots to explore in the city.

Tonight, we’ll gather over dinner and share our experiences and highlights of the day.

Greyhound appoints

TILLY Loughborough has been appointed Greyhound’s Chief Operating Officer.

She will take up her role effective 20 Mar, bringing nearly two decades of leadership in the public transport industry.

She most recently served as National Transport Research Organisation Executive Director.

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experience MORE at sea™

Lekker's African escape

MORE than 100 Australian and New Zealand travel agents have fanned out across South Africa this week on the second annual 'Mega Lekker Escape'.

Hosted by South African Tourism in partnership with 10 Australian wholesalers, groups are travelling with the intention of venturing beyond the major attractions to engage with 35 SMMEs - small, medium and micro enterprises.

Across seven provinces, groups are exploring major cities, small communities and game reserves to learn about the culture and hospitality South Africa can offer.

Groups are also participating in conservation-themed missions, including providing school supplies to underprivileged students, assisting injured and rescued wildlife and donating to home-based care services.

Advisors will then converge at Sun City in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve for a two-day training



event and debrief sessions.

At Sun City, agents will be able to network with 31 local suppliers including South African Airways, which provided seats from Perth.

The Mega Lekker experience has already proven successful at instilling confidence in selling Africa to clients, with 90% of agents on last year's trip booking a return visit within 12 months.

"This initiative is critical to our ongoing post-COVID recovery, as the pandemic resulted in a significant turnover of travel agents in the market, and among that we lost agents with destination expertise," said South African Tourism's Chief Operating Officer, Darryl Erasmus. *ML*

Royal hails third Icon

ROYAL Caribbean will take delivery of its third Icon-class ship in Aug 2026, which will be named *Legend of the Seas*.

After an initial season sailing the Mediterranean from Barcelona, the LNG-powered mega-ship will reposition to its new home port of Fort Lauderdale in Nov 2026.

From there, *Legend* will operate alternating six- and eight-night itineraries to the Caribbean, visiting ports including Aruba, Falmouth and Willemstad.

Sister ship *Icon of the Seas* will continue to be based in Miami, while RCI will take delivery of its second Icon ship - *Star of the Seas* - in Aug, positioning the ship in Port Canaveral, near Orlando.



Trump purges FAA

THE US Government has fired hundreds of staff from the FAA under a wider cull of government employees by the Department of Government Efficiency.

Positions at the FAA impacted by the major cuts are mainly probationary staff members, such as maintenance mechanics, aeronautical information specialists, environmental protection specialists, aviation safety assistants, and management administrators.

Layoffs at the FAA have come under heavy criticism in the wake of American carriers' involvement in a string of serious incidents in recent weeks, including a deadly mid-air collision in Washington DC last month (*TD* 31 Jan).

While the sackings have so far not included air traffic controllers, the US has struggled to recruit for roles across the country, with only one controller on duty during the fatal crash in Washington, initial reports suggest.

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A&K solo savings

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has reduced its solo supplement by 50% on select 2025 expedition cruises in stateroom categories one through to three.

For instance, clients can save up to \$5,278 on the 15-day 'Arctic Cruise Adventure: In Search of the Polar Bear', departing 25 Jul 2025.

Additionally, travellers will pay no single supplement on the 'European Coastal Cruise: Portugal, Spain & France' - find out more about the offer [HERE](#).

Travelport adds AY

AGENTS can now access Finnair NDC content and servicing solutions through the Travelport+ booking system.

Advisors can view, compare and book dynamic NDC offers from the Helsinki-based carrier.

Retail options now available include seat selection, baggage options and PrioFlex for the carrier's corporate customers.

TC embraces niches

SPORTS and spirituality evoke different levels of worship, but both are now part of Travellers Choice, with the group this week welcoming two new specialist member agents to its ranks.

Led by 40-year industry veteran Lisa Tarzia, Victorian agency Selah has turned to Travellers Choice to help continue its growth providing pilgrimage tours to Christians.

While previously specialising in Israel and Palestine, the conflict forced the business to broaden its horizons, introducing products along the Camino pilgrimage in Spain and Antarctica.

"I want to be part of a network that can support me as I grow, but which also sees me as more than just a number," Tarzia said.

Also joining Travellers Choice this month is Victorian agency Sports Travel Australia, which specialises in organising group tours for school groups to take part in overseas athletics events.



The agency is run by former sports coach and fitness professional Karen Morham, who acquired the business in 2022.

Morham plans to expand the company's range beyond sports to traditional leisure product including FIT and cruise holidays.

"I'm moving beyond the specialist area that I know really well, and I need to know I can call on business development and marketing support when I need it, especially given my grounding has not been in travel," Morham said.

Tarzia is **pictured** above outside her agency with Travellers Choice BDM Graham Smith. *ML*



WHILE there are many romantic ways to spend Valentine's Day, we'd argue that renewing your vows at sea alongside other loved-up couples just about takes the cake, so to speak.

Carnival Cruise Line can now boast that it hosted the largest fleetwide vow renewal at sea, with couples onboard all 27 of its ships reaffirming their love on 14 Dec.

What's even cooler, is that the ceremonies were virtually officiated by Chief Fun Officer and American basketball icon, Shaquille O'Neal.

Add in champagne toasts, cake-cutting moments, and a DJ spinning wedding classics, and you have a recipe for one pretty extraordinary V-Day - bit hard to top that one!



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 Travel More

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Two positions available assisting the relevant Product Team in developing competitive products that meet sales and profitability growth targets while providing best practice product administration and planning services.

PRODUCT EXECUTIVE

Two positions available supporting the relevant Product Team in developing competitive travel products that drive sales, profitability, and business growth. Your responsibilities will include ensuring best practices in product administration and planning while managing key product functions. This role is a 12-month fixed-term contract to cover parental leave.

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Be at the forefront of customer satisfaction, leading a team that handles complaint resolution, proactive communication, and crisis management. Your expertise will ensure seamless solutions, turning challenges into opportunities to delight our customers.

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As a 'people person' and a critical thinker, you enjoy researching, responding and resolving complaints for all customer related issues while on tour and post-tour. You are engaging, empathetic and conciliatory. You are able to process complaints objectively and aim to reach a mutually suitable outcome for ATG and our customers. You are collaborative and enjoy working as part of a team.

GUEST RELATIONS CONSULTANT

Manage pre-tour bookings, working with travel agents and passengers to handle sales, flights, accommodation, transfers, and upsells. You thrive in a fast-paced environment while delivering exceptional service.

ATG-371

Weston debuts fresh look



CHRIS Watson Travel Group has announced the grand reopening of Weston Cruise & Travel in Canberra, which aims to deliver a fresh approach to the traditional travel agency experience.

The newly revamped headquarters moves away from conventional office setup, with clients to meet with travel experts using iPads in a laidback

setting, complete with a bar area, comfortable lounge space, and amenities such as a drinks station and coffee machines.

Under the leadership of Manager Sonaii Witchard, Weston Cruise & Travel joined the Chris Watson Travel Group in 2021.

"This is a proud milestone for our team," commented Chris Watson, the travel group's eponymous owner.

"Canberra is leading the way with our fresh new look, setting the standard for future transformations," he added.

The company will roll out similar redesigns at its Tamworth location in late 2025 or early 2026. *JM*

Pictured: The Weston team.

Goway goes new way

AUSTRALIAN inbound tour operator Goway inbound has renamed to 'Across Australia', bringing its three brands - Goway, Across and Pacific Destinations - under a single identity.

The name change brings renewed momentum in North America, as well as in Europe where Across has been a recognised brand for over two decades, particularly in French-speaking markets.

"This unified identity reflects our growth and global presence, while retaining our strong connection to our parent company Goway Travel in Canada," said Kathy Turner, GM of Goway Inbound.

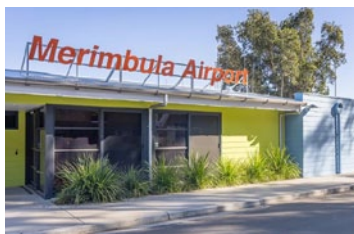
NSW airport plan

THE Federal Government has formally detailed its \$12 million regional airport upgrade plan across NSW.

Provided under Round four of the Regional Airports Program, hubs will have runways resurfaced, improved fencing, and updated lighting and drainage installed.

Among the beneficiaries will be Merimbula Airport, which has snared \$3.8 million of the pot to deliver stage two of its runway extension project.

Other airports to receive funding are Moruya Airport; Albury Airport; Moree Regional Airport; Griffith Regional Airport; and Mudgee Regional Airport.



ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



WELL news just in, the ACCC has approved the Qatar and Virgin Australia codeshare using a wet lease.

Regular readers of this column

will know that over the last three years, ATIA has ramped up its engagement with these applications to ensure our members and clients' interests are centrally considered.

ATIA took a position of 'do not oppose' for this submission.

While this is a legal position, there is no doubt that increasing the number of seats between Australia and Europe will lead to lower fares and motivate more people to travel.

By all accounts, forward sales have been strong, and this outcome will lead to greater choice for Australians.

While overall this decision will deliver some genuine benefits, it was disappointing that the ACCC allowed Virgin Australia and Qatar to cooperate on all pricing, including joint pricing (in relation to public and private fares, rebates, incentives and discounts) for passengers and agents.

As we detailed in our submissions, we firmly believe that both parties should be able to advise the public price

they have settled and should be prevented from sharing details on the creation of airfare prices and agent commissions.

This is because a healthy market is set when all parties have the ability to generate market tension to drive increased value.

Finally, the team and I have had the opportunity to be out on the road over the last two weeks - including catching up with members at the Entire Travel Group Soiree and yesterday at the first Australian Visit USA networking event.

I always enjoy seeing agencies and suppliers come together across brands, for fun nights where they can exchange ideas and win some amazing prizes.

There is a significant cost borne by those holding the events and it is paramount that everyone in the travel ecosystem respects the investments made, by ensuring that if they RSVP to attend, that they do.

While we have all missed an event because of legitimate purposes, it is critical that, if you have RSVP'd, you make every effort to attend.

If you can't, a message to the organiser as early as possible means those on the waitlist have an opportunity to attend.

When the travel industry is thriving, it is doing so out of mutual respect and that is what makes our industry unique.

MSC backs F1 team

MSC Cruises has joined forces with BWT Alpine Formula One Team as a Premium Partner for 2025 and beyond.

Marking an expansion of the cruise line's existing partnership with Formula One, the new tie-up will see MSC Cruises feature prominently on the 2025 car, the A525, which was unveiled at the F175 Launch at the O2 Arena in London today.

"Formula 1 continues to grow in popularity around the world and as a Global Partner we have achieved exceptional results, so it is only natural for us to further develop our presence at the world-class races by joining forces with a team," stated

Pierfrancesco Vago, MSC Cruises Executive Chairman.

MEANWHILE, prices on selected 2025 and 2026 sailings with MSC Cruises have been slashed by up to 60% as part of a short-term flash sale launched by the line.

As a further bonus, onboard credit of up to \$500 per person has been added, valid on departures from 05 Apr 2025 to 16 Apr 2026.

Eligible cruises include the seven-night 'Mediterranean Grand Voyage' on *MSC Orchestra*, sailing round-trip from Rome.

Port calls on this itinerary include Valencia, Barcelona, Marseille, Portofino and Florence.

The deal is valid to 21 Feb.

AmaWaterways shares the love with a tender Valentine's Day blitz

Wednesday 19th Feb 2025

LUXURY river cruise line AmaWaterways' sales team hit the road last week in a travel advisor blitz, hosting several events across many states and regions.

Regional Sales Managers Christine Oliver (Qld, WA, NT), Kylie Chapman (NSW, ACT, NZ), and Kim Vaughan (Vic, SA, Tas) took the opportunity to deliver the brand's new 2025 and 2026 brochure, along with sweet treats and fun photo opportunities.

"Ama' means 'love' and love is at the heart of everything we do, including our name," said Steve Richards, MD AU/NZ.

"We deeply value the partnerships we have with the trade and love showing our appreciation - what better time than Valentine's Day?"

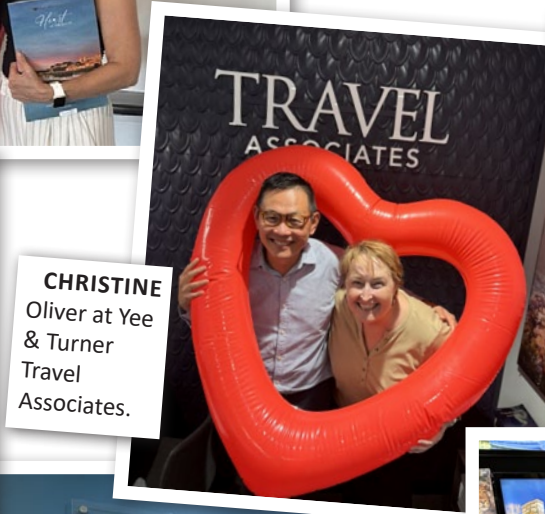
The Valentine's blitz comes as AmaWaterways prepares to run its 'An Evening with AmaWaterways' events in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Auckland later this month and into March - find out more and register [HERE](#).



KIM Vaughan, Jane Robinson, JBR Travel; and Lauren Ashworth, The Departure Lounge.



KERRY of Flight Centre Caloundra and Christine Oliver.



CHRISTINE Oliver at Yee & Turner Travel Associates.



FEELING the love at the Melbourne cruise masterclass.



SYDNEY ETG event - Jasmina Durovic, itravel Eastern Creek; Vicki Hope, TravelManagers, Julie Sebalj, itravel Eastern Creek; and Kylie Chapman.



JESSE and Morgan at Caboolture Cruise & Travel.



THE Flight Centre Aspley team.



THE Figtree Travel team of Craig, Brad, Leisel and Elvi.



THE team at Helloworld Shellharbour.



CHRISTINE Oliver at Helloworld Kenmore.



KIM Vaughan and Janeene Lewis of Helloworld Travel.

SILVERSEA TO OFFER A WHISPER OF ASIA ON NEW CRUISE

SILVERSEA'S *Silver Whisper* has departed Singapore on her 70-day Grand Voyage through Asia, which will visit 34 destinations in nine countries.

Whisper will call in destinations including Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Singapore, with the cruise to include six overnights.

The cruise will include a circumnavigation of Japan, calling in destinations such as Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kanazawa, Hakodate, Kobe, and more.

Three exclusive events will enhance the experience for guests, including a bon voyage reception in The Glasshouse



in Singapore, an immersive overnight in Bangkok, and a geisha-hosted luncheon in Kyoto.

Guests will also be able to discover the region's authentic culinary cultures during experiences ashore through

Silversea's Sea and Land Taste (S.A.L.T.) culinary program, for the first time on a Grand Voyage through Asia.

Special culinary experiences will include a deep dive into Thailand's healthy diet and

lifestyle with a Michelin-starred chef in Bangkok; an exploration of the local culinary traditions in Aomori; and, in Hakodate, the chance to learn about the art of Japanese kaiseki dining.

Other experiences will see guests discover the cultural heritage of Kuala Lumpur, test their Thai cooking skills at Koh Samui's Nora Beach Resort & Spa, gain insight into the history of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, cruise Ha Long Bay on a traditional junk boat, ride on the wheelless Maglev train in Shanghai, bathe in the hot springs of Kagoshima, admire Tokyo by night with a Teppanyaki dinner, and much more. *MS*

Bonus Crystal cruise

TRAVELLERS booking a seat on a 25-day Abercrombie & Kent private jet journey will be rewarded with a free voyage on sister brand Crystal Cruises.

The offer applies to the 'Ancient Kingdoms & Dynasties: A Journey by Private Jet', which departs from Lisbon on 04 Oct 2025.

Prior to this, travellers will enjoy a nine-night voyage on board *Crystal Symphony* departing from Barcelona on 25 Sep and visiting Spain, Morocco and Portugal, after which they will transfer to A&K's private jet.

Mandarin Oriental expands in China with Suzhou hotel to open in 2026

MANDARIN Oriental Hotel Group has further strengthened its China portfolio with a new luxury hotel (**pictured**) planned for Suzhou.

The hotel will open next year, complementing the company's growing portfolio in the Yangtze River Delta.

Mandarin Oriental, Suzhou will be ideally located on the east bank of the city's famous Jinji Lake, with panoramic views of the iconic architectural skyline to the west.

The hotel will be designed as a low-rise, serene sanctuary, and will be a core component of downtown Suzhou, surrounded



by expansive gardens, parks, and lakeside walkways.

Guests will also enjoy direct access to the adjacent commercial and retail centre as well as to the city's historic cultural heartland, and its many UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The hotel will comprise 146 guestrooms and suites, many

with balconies, as well as three restaurants featuring al fresco dining, a lounge, bar, and more.

There will also be extensive spa and wellness facilities, a well-equipped fitness centre and indoor swimming pool, significant meeting & event space, and an extensive Children's Club.

"Alongside our existing property in Shanghai, and our upcoming openings in Hangzhou and Nanjing, Mandarin Oriental, Suzhou will further introduce our fans to exceptional experiences throughout the Yangtze River Delta," Chief Executive Laurent Kleitman said.

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As part of its ongoing revitalisation of first-generation Adina Hotels, TFE Hotels has officially reopened **Adina Town Hall**, which now boasts a new look. The newly refurbished 144-room hotel blends elegance with comfort, using a "less is more" approach. The interior designer, Bates Smart Interior Design, said it opted for simple solutions, like removing walls and joinery and adding portals to create height and visual focal points.



Le Dune Piscinas, eco-conscious five-star boutique hotel located on Sardinia - the second-largest island in the Mediterranean Sea - will reopen on 18 Apr for its second season, after its successful debut in Apr 2024. This season brings the arrival of new chef Angelo Biscotti, who will highlight the island's finest local ingredients. For 2025, the property will offer exclusive experiences to immerse guests in the region's nature, history and traditions.



Sydney's newest boutique luxury hotel, **The EVE**, began welcoming guests last week, bringing a bold new design vision and elevated hospitality to the vibrant Wunderlich Lane lifestyle precinct. The 102 guest rooms showcase an Australian palette of either eucalyptus or red clay tones, with in-room amenities and glassware by Australian brand, Saarde. Guests can take advantage of the rooftop garden, 20-metre swimming pool, and bar.



Japan is preparing to welcome its first Dorsett hotel, with **Dorsett by Agora Osaka Sakai** opening on 25 Mar. Overlooking Sakai harbour, the 321-key hotel is ideally located just three train stops from the shopping district of Namba and a 30-minute ride from the airport. The property offers a meeting room for up to 42 seated guests, and an all-day dining restaurant.



Fusion Resort & Villas Da Nang has introduced a new healing retreat - a four-day package designed to nurture emotional and physical wellbeing. The luxury Vietnamese property's new offering includes personalised spa treatments, private wellness coaching, guided meditation, and detox meal plans, utilising the resort's 3,000m² spa, indoor heated pool, infrared saunas, and more.

NCL gets in on boat-loads of fun



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) recently teamed up with The Travel Corporation (TTC) to host key partners at Australia Sail Grand Prix (SailGP).

Hosted by NCL's Senior Director of Sales Strategy & Operations for Asia Pacific, Damian Borg, the group enjoyed premium hospitality on Shark Island, taking in the nail-biting final session as the Aussies secured third place behind Team UK. *JM*

Guests included Michael Gazal and Tanyu Cilek from

TravelManagers Australia; Josh Gordon from itravel; Rachel Kingswell from Travel Associates; Danni Newman from FCTG; Andrew Young from TTC Tour Brands; Carina Mullen from Cruise HQ; and Flight Centre's Toni Francis and Bhavna Thapar.

Experience Raffles

A **COMPLIMENTARY** 'Sentosa Sling' - an adaptation on the much-loved Singapore Sling - is among the benefits available to guests checking in to the brand new Raffles Sentosa Singapore.

The beverage is part of a new 'Welcome Home' package released by the new resort ahead of its grand opening on 01 Mar.

Raffles Sentosa Singapore will be the city state's first all-villa resort, set within a transformed heritage building and offering a private pool and outdoor terrace across each of its 62 villas.

The Welcome Home package also includes return airport transfers and daily breakfast and is available for stays from 01 Mar to 30 Sep, with villas priced from A\$2,000 per night.

Records fall in Tassie

LAUNCESTON Airport has recorded its highest-ever monthly passenger total, with the number of travellers passing through the gates in Jan eclipsing the previous mantle of 150,189 set in 2019.

"We are investing more than \$100 million over the next five years to upgrade infrastructure in the terminals and on the airfield to accommodate our growing passenger numbers at the same time as enabling our airlines partners to expand," Launceston Airport CEO Shane O'Hare said.

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