

Fly free with Viking

TRAVELLERS can fly free up to the value of \$2,400 per person with Viking's new Explorer Sale, available until 31 Mar.

Advisors can promote the offers to their clients with an array of free marketing assets.

See [page six](#) to learn more.

1.6m US trips by 2030

AUSTRALIAN visitation to the United States is forecast to eclipse 2015 highs by 2030, data from Brand USA has shown.

The market profile for Australia predicts outbound travel to the US will pile on an additional 100,000 visitors this year when compared to 2024, with that number to increase annually by similar volumes through to a predicted 1.6 million by 2030.

Brand USA's internal data also showed that 23.7% of Aussies surveyed said they intend to travel to America within the next 12 months, with visiting national parks, shopping, and checking out movie/TV landmarks topping the list of pull factors.

The majority of Aussies added they would like to visit between two to three cities on their next trip (46%), with only one in 10 stating they would restrict a holiday to just one city.

While the current bushfires

ravaging California have not been taken into account, survey figures show the state is the most sought-after destination, ahead of New York (40%), Hawaii (35%), Florida (31%), and DC (18%).

Most Aussie travellers revealed they "had a few US destinations in mind" when researching an American holiday, while one in five said they were willing to be "very flexible" about destinations.

Most people are planning trips between three and six months before departure.

For more analysis on the US, read [TB's](#) latest feature [HERE](#). AB

APT redefines luxury

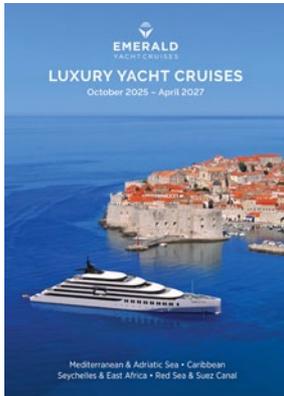
APT Luxury Travel has entered a "new era of excellence", unveiling a fresh look that reflects its nearly 100-year heritage and its commitment to delivering unparalleled travel experiences.

Find out more about the brand refresh on the [back page](#).

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Today's issue of TD

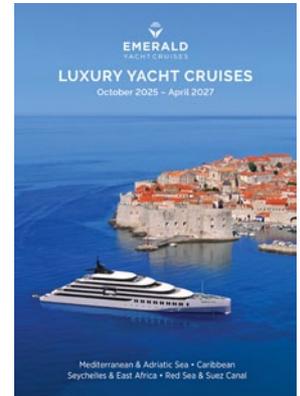
Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest news, plus a Product Profile from Norwegian Cruise Line, and full pages from:

- Viking
- APT Luxury Travel

EMERALD
CRUISES

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Wendy Wu Tours



Betting big on smaller ships

DISNEY Cruise Line (DCL) has confirmed it will add a new class to its fleet from 2029, with a smaller sized alternative to its Dream and Wish variants to offer customers more holiday choices.

First flagged in Aug last year (**TD** 12 Aug 2024), a trio of new ships will join DCL's fleet in 2029, 2030, and 2031 respectively, with the cruise line revealing the vessels will accommodate 3,000 passengers and be able to call at destinations that its larger ships cannot access.

In confirming the news over the weekend, DCL President, New Experiences Portfolio & Disney Signature Experiences, Thomas Mazloum, said it was clear the modern traveller is looking for a more diverse range of cruises.

"As we expand our fleet, it is important that we continue to provide a variety of experiences for our guests," Mazloum said.

"Families enjoy the diversity of vacations we offer, from our classic vessels to our Wish-class ships, but they also expect to explore a broad range of destinations, including those that prefer to host smaller ships."

In a nod to the increasing volume of cruise passengers looking for more sustainable options, DCL said the three new ships will run on a variety of fuels, including hydrotreated vegetable oil and renewable methanol, and will be adaptable to additional fuel options that become available to the cruise industry.



The vessels will also be light for their size, enabling a lower fuel burn and greater energy efficiency at sea, while in port they will be able to shut down engines and use shore power.

In further ship news, DCL has also confirmed it will build a fourth 4,000-passenger LNG-powered Wish-class ship, joining the fleet in 2027.

The expansion of its cruise fleet follows a major investment plan in the segment flagged in 2023 (**TD** 20 Sep 2023), with Disney at the time outlining an ambitious US\$60 billion cash splash on cruise and theme parks over the next decade. *AB*

Giving brands a voice

FORMER Virtuoso General Manager ANZ Fiona Dalton has revealed a secret talent, confirming she has completed a short course in voice artistry at the renowned National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

Armed with the impressive new credential, Dalton is calling on companies in the travel and tourism to use her voiceover services free of charge for a short time to help build her portfolio.

"I'd love to collaborate and bring your project to life," she said.

Ram dines with Djokovic



QATAR Airways hosted a 'Dinner with Novak Djokovic' event for its trade and corporate partners last Fri to celebrate its new partnership with the tennis star (**TD** 03 Dec 2024).

The 10-time Australian Open champion was at the Botanical Hotel in Melbourne for an exclusive meet-and-greet experience, which included a three-course dinner, speech and Q&A session with Djokovic, as well as plenty of photo ops. As Qatar's Global Brand Ambassador, Djokovic will team up with the carrier to further elevate the Qatar ExxonMobil Open, now an ATP 500 event, which will take place in Feb at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex in Doha.

"Novak has had an extraordinary career, particularly here at the Australian Open, and despite all of his achievements in tennis, his continual strive for excellence

aligns well with Qatar Airways as a brand," said Matt Raos, Senior Vice President of Global Sales of Qatar Airways.

"His experience, drive and the respect his achievements command will be an invaluable asset to us - we look forward to working with him for many years to come and will be watching closely and rooting for him to reclaim the Australian Open crown this month."

The agreement with Djokovic marks another milestone in Qatar's portfolio of high-profile global sports partnerships, including FIFA, Formula 1, Paris-Saint Germain, MotoGP, The British and Irish Lions Tour of Australia 2025, and more.

Stay tuned for more on the VIP event on Wed's edition of **TD**. *JM*

Pictured: CVFR Travel Group CEO Ram Chhabra rubbing shoulders with the most successful men's singles player of all time.

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APT redefines luxury

APT Travel Group has unveiled a new rebrand and supporting campaign that it believes will reinforce its position as a leader in the luxury travel market (**TD** breaking news).

The family-owned tour company has replaced its logo with a new luxury monogram as a part of the brand revamp, in addition to a new marketing campaign heralding the tagline 'Everything to a T', designed to better reflect APT's commitment to premium service and attention to detail.

APT Travel Group Chief Marketing Officer Jason Shugg said the rebrand is designed to reflect a celebration of both legacy and progression.

"With the new monogram, enhanced digital presence,



and refined new look, we're reinforcing our position as a leader in the luxury travel market," Shugg noted.

"Although APT may look a little different, this is not just a fresh look; it's a celebration of APT's rich heritage and a reflection of our...commitment to delivering unparalleled travel experiences. "The essence of APT remains unchanged," Shugg added.

The landmark rebrand coincides with a period of innovation and investment for APT, including in the cruise world through the debut of *APT Ostara* and *Solara*.

The duo of next-generation river ships represent the fruits of APT's labour after it sought to create a unique appeal for Australians who want to sail Europe in luxury.

Last year, the company also sealed a global partnership with Seabourn to broaden its appeal in luxury expedition through charters (**TD** 22 Feb 2024).

Check out the debut launch video **HERE** and see more details on the rebrand on **page seven**. **AB**

1000MTG milestone

1000 Mile Travel Group (1000MTG) will hold its first-ever joint Australia and United Kingdom conference in Hong Kong from 13-16 Feb.

To be held at the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong, the Australian-headquartered company will embrace the theme of 'evolve fearlessly' at the conference, which also marks its 10-year anniversary.

Former Special Forces officer Maria Witchall will also speak about overcoming fears of failure.

NT cooks up new plan



AUSTRALIAN cook, artist, author and TV presenter Poh Ling Yeow has been named as the Northern Territory's newest ambassador, promoting the tagline 'different in every sense'.

In her new role, Poh (**pictured**) will call out the Territory's natural beauty, culture, food scene, and artistic heritage, which Tourism NT believes will inspire more travellers to book Top End trips.

Part of the first campaign for the newest ambassador will be a social media push showcasing Poh's trips around the NT, giving audiences a front-row seat to various destination insights.

"Poh's passion for food, art, culture, the outdoors and exploration perfectly capture the essence of the Territory," Tourism NT Chief Marketing Officer Tony Quarumby said.

"Everywhere she went, she connected effortlessly with visitors and locals alike, with fans from Australia and around the

world flocking to meet her.

"Poh's genuine warmth, authenticity and deep connection to the landscapes and stories of the Territory make her the perfect inspiration for others to explore our incredible destination." **AB**

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Jones to lead DNSW for six months

DESTINATION NSW has confirmed its new acting CEO Karen Jones will serve in the position for at least six months.

Jones (**pictured**) formally replaces Steve Cox from today, a departure revealed by *Travel Daily* last year (*TD* 18 Dec 2024).

She brings with her 27 years of leadership experience in state and local government, most recently serving as CEO of the Office of Sport, where she spearheaded the '10 World Cups in 10 Years' campaign.

Jones also led the Office of Sport's strategic plan, where she helped to develop the 'Play Her Way' strategy, pioneering the state's aims of building a stronger sport sector for women and girls.

The commencement has also seen Stephen Mahoney, who has been acting CEO since Steve Cox's departure, return to his role as GM, Policy, Product, and Engagement at Destination NSW.



Destination NSW Chair Sally Loane said Jones is a proven leader who will assist the tourism body achieve key targets during the transitional phase.

"Under Karen's leadership, Destination NSW will continue to attract record numbers of visitors and deliver iconic events like Australia Day and Vivid Sydney," Loane said.

"This is an exciting new chapter for the organisation,

with a sharper focus on experience-led tourism and a new Visitor Economy Strategy in development," she added.

Reflecting on her own appointment, Jones said she was honoured to champion world-class visitor experiences in NSW.

"Together, we will continue delivering the NSW visitor economy strategy to ensure the state remains Australia's top destination and events capital," Jones enthused.

"Destination NSW has a remarkable legacy of showcasing our state to the world, and I look forward to working with our industry partners to achieve the NSW Government's goal of \$91 billion in annual visitor expenditure by 2035," she added.

DNSW has confirmed the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport has started recruiting for a permanent CEO. *AB*



Window Seat

A FAMILY in the UK have lambasted Travelodge Hotels after they were forced to sleep in the laundry room when the door to their room broke.

With no spare rooms available, the family claims they were "shocked" to be offered a make-shift bed in the laundry, after declining the offer of moving to a hotel located many kilometres away.

Among the many drawbacks of the emergency accommodation was a "broken mattress" the family were forced to sleep on.

Travelodge has apologised and offered a full refund.



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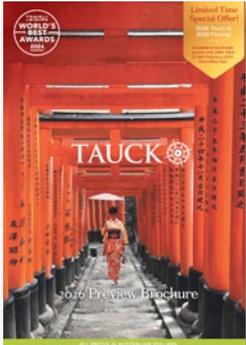
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Tauck - 2026 Preview Brochure

Tauck is teasing its 2026 collection with a new brochure offering a first look at an array of exciting departures across small group land tours, river cruises, and small ship ocean voyages. The 16-page booklet highlights a limited-time offer from the operator, which allows customers to book in 2026 tours at the more affordable 2025 pricing. Readers will find a summary of curated global journeys, safaris and cruises, including European river cruising along the Danube, Rhine, Douro and French Waterways. Tauck's 2026 collection also

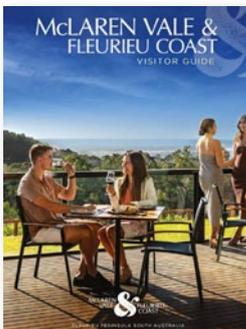
includes classic land journeys and small group cultural immersion on all seven continents - check out the brochure [HERE](#).



BKB Holidays - Thailand 2025/26

BKB Holidays presents its inaugural Thailand brochure. With its rich culture, stunning landscapes and incredible cuisine, Thailand caters to everyone and promises unforgettable experiences. The brochure showcases a range of stunning resorts, cultural and nature-based tours, island hopping adventures and luxury tented wilderness camps. The guide details tours and accommodation based on region, showcasing the best of Bangkok, Phuket, Khao Lak, and

more. Agents can download a copy of the brochure [HERE](#) or contact the BKB sales team at sales@bkbholidays.com.



McLaren Vale & Fleurieu Coast Visitor Guide

Highlighting new experiences and attractions in the picturesque South Australian region, the McLaren Vale & Fleurieu Coast Visitor Guide's 10th edition has been unveiled. Readers will be inspired by valley views, architecturally designed taphouses, distilleries and cellar doors, spectacular beaches and coastal villages, and more. The visitor guide is available from visitor information centres and visitor hot spots, including hotel foyers, car hire locations and

Adelaide Airport, as well as locations throughout Victoria's Great Ocean Road. It can also be viewed online [HERE](#).

Virtual hop to Kangaroo Is



SEALINK South Australia has unveiled the new Kangaroo Island ferry service with a virtual fly-through of its new vessels, *Wanggami* and *Ruwi*.

Due to launch this year, the two ferries are part of a multi-million-dollar investment to enhance the comfort, accessibility, safety and reliability of the transport connection to Kangaroo Island.

The bigger vessels will boast improved passenger amenities, including a large cafe, free wi-fi, and a secure dedicated pet lounge; advanced sustainability features; more vehicle capacity; and increased daily departures.

"Our new ferries are more than just vessels; they represent a significant multi-million-dollar investment in the ferry service for both Kangaroo Island residents and visitors alike," said Tracy Croft, GM for SeaLink SA.

"These ferries are designed for extra capacity, safety, convenience, comfort, and greater accessibility, meeting the future needs of the community while also enhancing the passenger and visitor experience."

Experience the virtual fly-through [HERE](#). JM

Pax demand up 8.1%

GLOBAL passenger demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometres, rose by 8.1% in Nov 2024 compared to Nov 2023, according to new data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Total capacity, based on available seat kilometres, was up 5.7% year-on-year in Nov, while the load factor reached 83.4% - an all-time high for Nov.

Additionally, international demand rose 11.6% compared to Nov 2023, while domestic demand saw a 3.1% increase, with Asia-Pacific airlines leading on growth, seeing a 19.9% year-on-year expansion in demand.

While acknowledging the strong results, IATA Director General Willie Walsh said "the month was also another reminder of the supply chain issues that are preventing airlines from getting the aircraft they need to meet growing demand".

"The 2025 New Year's resolution for the aerospace manufacturing sector must be finding a fast and durable solution for their supply chain issue," he emphasised.

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VIKING

Viking's new Explorer Sale is here with **Fly Free*** offers until 31 March 2025. Leverage the offers with a library of free marketing assets available on the Marketing Centre.

Call 138 747 to book or visit viking.com/travel-advisor to book online and download assets.

See website for T&Cs

VIKING EXPLORER SESSIONS



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44 FREE CLIENT EVENTS

Viking's popular Explorer Sessions are hitting the road, coming to 44 regions across Australia from February to April.

Don't miss this chance to engage your clients and let Viking inspire them to book their next voyage with you.

Sessions fill up fast and registration is necessary.

REDEFINING LUXURY: A NEW ERA OF EXCELLENCE

For nearly a century, APT Luxury Travel has redefined the art of exploration, setting the standard for curated cruising and touring worldwide.

You may notice that we look a little different. This is not just a fresh look; it is a celebration of APT's rich heritage and a reflection of our unwavering commitment to delivering unparalleled travel experiences.

The essence of APT remains unchanged. It lies in our promise to take guests beyond the ordinary and into the extraordinary, driven by a passion for creating unforgettable travel moments that are at the heart of every journey.



Luxury Travel
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There's MORE to a holiday in Europe with NCL

Cruising is one of the most convenient and captivating ways to explore MORE of Europe, and now is the best time for your clients to plan their next holiday overseas with Norwegian Cruise Line.

With a choice of 11 ships, 14 departure ports and more than 250 voyages across Northern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Greek Isles during the 2025/26 seasons, your clients have an abundance of choice when designing their dream European escape.

NCL's itineraries range from seven to 14 days, visiting 28 countries. Many sailings visit a new port every single

day, offer an average of 10 hours to explore on shore and include overnight stays in cities such as Reykjavik, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Livorno, Honningsvåg and Istanbul.

For the ultimate in-depth exploration, NCL has also expanded its range of multi-day pre- or post-Europe Cruise Tours in 11 ports such as Athens, Barcelona, Istanbul, Venice and Tromsø.

Book before 21 January to save your clients up to 50% off their cruise fare* as well as a bonus \$500 off*. Plus, your clients can enjoy the best value at sea with NCL's More at Sea™, including

unlimited premium beverages*, specialty dining*, Wi-Fi* and more.

*Conditions apply.

STOCK YOUR SHELVES

Inspire your clients to embark on their next unforgettable European adventure with NCL's new Europe Cruising Guide and discover an extensive selection of immersive sailings in 2025 and 2026. E-brochure and hard copies are available to order.

Visit <https://trade.ncl.com/wave-2025-aunz>