Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 29th Jan 2025



YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR SCHEDULE **NEVER MISS A MOMENT** THAT matters

MOBILE TRAVEL AGENTS'

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including a photo page from Journey Beyond and our Luxury page, plus a product profile from Exoticca and a full page from Silversea.





AT SEA

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Viking Cruises, which is this week hosting us on a leg of its Grand Australia Navigation.

TODAY we are sailing north of the Gulf of Carpentaria en route to calling at Darwin tomorrow.

Before disembarking in the Top End, there are plenty of activities to enjoy on board Viking Venus, from attending a lecture about Australian ecology with Wendy Jennings, to a baggo tournament, pitting guests against the crew.

Passengers can also find their inner dancing queen through ABBA-themed dancing lessons, while the Star Theatre will be showing a documentary on the Red Kangaroo this afternoon.

Discounts with SQ

SINGAPORE Airlines has released a range of discounted fares with distribution exclusively for Aussie agents to sell for Mar.

Sales and ticketing are open until 05 Mar, valid for economy and business class and are available for selected SQ flights from all Australian cities served.

Celebrity heads upriver

CELEBRITY Cruises will embark on a new venture, with the brand unveiling a river cruise division to set sail from 2027.

The Royal Caribbean brand has placed an order for 10 river cruise ships inspired by design elements from its Edge ocean ship class.

The brand will initially launch its new venture in Europe, with bookings to open later this year.

Royal Caribbean Group President and CEO, Jason Liberty, said he is thrilled to announce the brand's expansion into the river cruise market.

"With about half of our guests having experienced or intending to vacation on a river cruise, we know they will enjoy Celebrity's elevated offering on the river," Liberty commented.

"By leveraging our valuable loyalty programs across our three brands, we will deepen customer engagement and further our ability to keep guests within our ecosystem of vacation offerings."

Celebrity Cruises President Laura Hodges Bethge said the new venture will see the quality

Fly Jetstar for free

JETSTAR is offering 25,000 free return fares to Japan and South Korea in the latest iteration of its Return For Free sale.

Available for 72 hours only, travellers who book an outbound Starter fare to Tokyo. Osaka or Seoul can secure their passage home for free, with travel dates ranging from May to Nov 2025.

Members of Club Jetstar will enjoy a 12-hour head start, with the sale ending 11:59pm on 31 Jan unless sold out prior.



and sophistication of Celebrity's Edge ocean ships come to the iconic rivers of Europe.

"We've redefined travel on the ocean with our best-in-class hospitality, award-winning food and beverage experiences, and elevated design and style," Hodges Bethge said.

"We are thrilled to bring these experiences to the river and combine them with authentic. destination-rich itineraries that will give our guests an experience unlike any other."

More details on ship design, excursions and destinations will be unveiled in coming months. ML

SE Asia showcase

EXPLORE Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia the Exoticca way, on a 16-day adventure that explores some of the region's most captivating landscapes.

Learn more via Exoticca's special Product Profile on page nine.

Savings up to \$8k

YOUR clients can enjoy heavy savings on their next Silversea luxury voyage, plus a suite category upgrade with the line's latest promotion, valid for the next two weeks only.

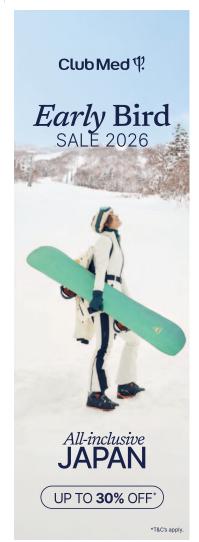
See page eight for details.

LA wildfire webinar

AGENTS wishing to learn more about the current state of tourism in California in the wake of the state's devastating wildfires can join a webinar hosted by Visit California CEO, Caroline Beteta.

The session will focus on which areas are open for business and how tourism can respectfully help affected areas to recover.

CLICK HERE to register for the session, which will take place at 9:30am AEDT on 31 Jan.









VA axes ADL-DRW

VIRGIN Australia has suspended direct flights between Darwin and Adelaide, in a reshuffle which will see more flights added from the NT capital to east coast cities.

The seasonal route was set to return from 22 Jun, in time for the NT's tourist influx.

The move has been described as "awful" by Lia Finocchiaro, NT Chief Minister, who called for more accountability from airlines.

Brand USA winners

THREE Flight Centre travel advisors are among the winners of Brand USA's famil incentive (TD

Flight Centre's Jasvinder Singh, Alana Pilcher, and Cornnie Heveldt will be joined by James Mallett from Travel Associates; Treena Moore, Galaxy Travel World Travellers; Krystal Cooke, Helloworld Charlestown; Brian Caddle, Reho Travel; and Fiona Gent, MTA Travel.

Lights, camera, UK action

VISITBRITAIN has launched its blockbuster 'Starring Great Britain' promotion in Australia today, designed to inspire greater visitation to the British Isles.

The campaign goes live supported by a cinematic film showcasing national icons edited into well-known movies and TV shows - CLICK HERE.

Iconic TV and movie franchises feature in the campaign film, drawing on scenes shot in the cinematic release, include Bridget Jones, Mission Impossible, Mary Poppins Returns, Spider Man, Harry Potter, Succession, House of the Dragon and more.

Directed by Academy Awardwinning Director Tom Hooper, the film features collaborations from major studios including Disney, Netflix, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, Studiocanal, Universal and Warner Bros, Discovery.

Australia is the fifth market to premiere the campaign, which



will be supported in Australia by advertising in locations such as cinemas in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

VisitBritain CEO Patricia Yates said film, TV and tourism have a lot in common.

"Britain's destinations are the star of the show as we harness the powerful draw of screen tourism to attract international visitors and drive their spending across our nations and regions, boosting local economies.

"Using film and TV as the hook, we're telling the story of Britain today, showcasing our dynamic and diverse destinations and putting our welcome centrestage," Yates said. ML





PORT LOCKROY

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is this week hosting us on an Antarctic expedition aboard Viking Polaris.

THIS morning Viking Polaris is docked near Port Lockroy, famous for being the most southerly operating post office in the world.

Surrounded by a colony of Gentoo penguins, this small research station houses four scientists each summer season.

With the arrival of Polaris, the scientists came aboard for a warm shower, a meal, and to share a fascinating talk about living and working in Antarctica.

This afternoon, we will relocate to Damoy Point for our first Antarctic landing.





Travel Daily
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New ATIA members

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) welcomed five new members in Nov and Dec 2024, according to its latest published accreditation update.

New members include Helloworld Travel Ascot Vale, Helloworld Travel Highton, Let's Travel Jindabyne, Snowsea Cruises and Travellers Lounge.

Conversely, one business had its accreditation revoked, while three others withdrew their participation from the scheme.

In addition, 19 members are now accredited under monitoring agreements and are required to provide quarterly financial and operational disclosures.

A supporting statement from ATIA said "the figures reflect the stringent criteria that ATIA Accredited businesses must meet, ensuring the highest level of trust and excellence for consumers".

The association reiterated its stringent qualifying criteria, which sees 25% of applicants rejected.

Domestic reigns supreme

AUSTRALIANS are outpacing the rest of the world when it comes to domestic travel, with a new report from SiteMinder showing 86% of the country's hotel bookings in 2024 were made by local travellers.

This figure surpasses the United States, where domestic bookings accounted for 75% last year, according to SiteMinder's *Hotel Booking Trends* report, based on over 125 million reservations.

The research shows that direct bookings via hotel websites are among the top three preferred ways Aussies book their accommodation, generating an average of \$778 per booking last year - 8.5% higher than 2023.

The rise in direct booking value saw hotel websites in Australia maintain their position as the country's third-highest driver of total revenue in Australia and New Zealand, with Booking.com the number one source, followed

by Expedia Group.

The annual report also found that, on average, hotel room rates in Australia saw a modest year-on-year increase from \$297 to \$299, on par with global trends where room rates rose in around 65% of global markets.

Also mirroring global trends, 80% of Australia's hotel bookings were for one-night stays, with just 10% of bookings extending three nights or more.

"The rise in direct bookings reflects a broader shift towards valuing personalisation, value, and a more seamless connection between hotels and their guests," said Bradley Haines, SiteMinder's Regional VP of Asia Pacific.

"As we look ahead, these trends will not only drive continued growth in local markets, but also play a pivotal role in fostering customer loyalty and ensuring the long-term resilience of the global tourism ecosystem." JM

ATAC brand refresh

THE Australian Travel Agents Cooperative (ATAC) has a renewed focus on independence and collaboration since unveiling its new brand identity at its recent conference (*TD* 11 Nov 2024).

The refresh will see ATAC position itself for continued growth, greater member support, and enhanced visibility across the industry, ATAC said.

Qantas carer fares

QANTAS Airways has expanded its Carer Concession Card program, to increase support for people with a disability, and give them and their carers greater opportunity to fly.

Cardholders and their carer will now receive a 30% discount of all domestic and regional base fares (excluding carrier charges, fees, and taxes), across all cabins, including on sale fares.

International base fares will be discounted by 10%.









CTM into Sweden

CORPORATE Travel

Management (CTM) has signed Travel Support as the newest member of its global agency network for customers in Sweden.

Travel Support provides product and booking services for corporate clients based in Sweden, with CTM describing the partnership as an excellent fit for its clients both present and future.

Evans changes roles

DARREN Evans has taken up a new role with tour operator The Africa Safari Co as Director of Business Development.

The long-time Helloworld sales executive started in the role this week, and brings with him a wealth of experience in trade relations, having previously spent 18 years as a state sales manager with Viva Holidays.

Most recently he was the GM at Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre (TD 09 Dec 2024).

An 'Iconic' first year for Rover



ROYAL Caribbean's most popular crew member has just marked her first full year, with the line paying tribute to Rover, its Chief Dog Officer.

The two-year-old golden retriever (pictured) has lived onboard Icon of the Seas, exploring the ship to greet passengers and provide no shortage of memorable moments with Maya Margues Trindade, her specially trained caretaker.

Travellers can find Rover as she conducts meet-and-greet sessions at various points during week-long Caribbean sailings, or at the line's private island Perfect Day by CocoCay in the Bahamas.

In partnership with the American Humane Society, Royal Caribbean will soon introduce its second Chief Dog Officer, Sailor, on its next Icon-class ship Star of the Seas, when it debuts from Port Canaveral in Aug. ML



IT MAY take a decade to be completed, but the legendary Louvre Museum in Paris is about to embark on a major renovation and expansion which will yield major benefits for one particular resident.

French President Emmanuel Macron says the project is aimed at giving the fabled Mona Lisa a dedicated room inside the iconic gallery.

I mean, every woman needs her own room, right?

The project is aimed at increasing space for visitors to see the Leonardo Da Vinci masterpiece and avoid the crowds that jostle to see the artwork most of the day.

The new-look Louvre will also get a sparkling new entrance near the Seine, open by 2031.



*For Full Terms & Conditions, please refer to your local accredited travel agent or visit singaporeair.com

Travel Daily

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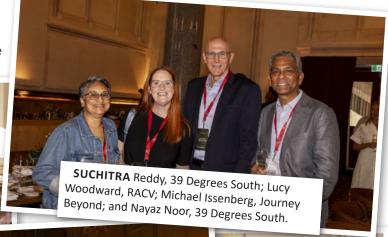
LAST week, Journey Beyond hosted Australia's top travel media and trade in Melbourne to unveil its 2026 program.

The event showcased exciting new additions, including the **luxurious Aurora and Australis** Platinum suites aboard their world-renowned rail journeys and the management of the highly anticipated Monarto Safari Resort.

Journey Beyond welcomed new board members and highlighted fresh partnerships with Tasting Australia and Nine Summer of Tennis, along with launching their inaugural coffee table book, The Journey.



Guests enjoyed a sumptuous lunch at Reine & La Rue and an immersive tour of the pop-up Ghan Experience at Queensbridge Square.







Myrmell, Journey Beyond; and Phil Hoffmann, Phil Hoffmann Travel.





BEN Hall, AAT Kings; Andrew McEvoy, Journey Beyond; and Rosina Di Maria, Woods Bagot.





DAVID Donald, Journey Beyond; Gerry Ryan, Monarto



KRISTY Malapa, Tourism Australia; Matt Cameron-Smith, Voyages; Giselle Collins, Journey Beyond; and Mark Seatree, Journey Beyond.

luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 29th Jan 2025

Four Seasons expand

FOUR Seasons has revealed plans to build its portfolio of luxury villa and residence rentals in iconic destinations around the world.

This year, the hospitality giant will introduce new Villa & Residence Rentals in historic Cartagena, Colombia within a collection of revitalised landmarks dating to the 16th century.

Four Seasons will also debut Villa & Residence Rentals on Florida's Gulf Coast in 2026, as well as a beachfront resort in Naples, and a sustainable luxury property in the Dominican Republic.

In 2027, Belize will be added to the Four Seasons portfolio on the private island of Caye Chapel, next to the Belize Barrier Reef.

"With an ever-expanding luxury rental market, Four Seasons Villa & Residence Rentals perfectly meet the growing demand for personalised, flexible accommodations," said Marc Speichert, Executive VP and CCO Four Seasons.

"Offering privacy, the comfort of a home-away-from-home, and the freedom for longer, immersive stays - all with the unmatched service of Four Seasons - our luxury rentals provide an ideal balance of seclusion and connection."

STARWOOD HOTELS IS COMING BACK

AN ICONIC name in the accommodation sector is making a comeback, with the Starwood Hotels and Resorts brand to be resurrected after nearly a decade.

According to the *New York Times* and effective from next month, the luxury SH Hotels and Resorts label will change its overarching name to Starwood Hotels.

The change is being driven by current SH Hotels & Resorts Chairman, Barry Sternlicht, as part of a global expansion for the company into new destinations.

Sternlicht was the original founder of Starwood Hotels in 1991 and served as the company's Chief Executive until 2004.

In its original incarnation, Starwood Hotels featured brands such as Westin Hotels, W Hotels, Le Meridien, Sheraton and St Regis before it merged with



Marriott International in a hyper competitive landmark deal worth US\$13 billion back in 2016.

Confirmed by Starwood Capital Group - owners of SH Hotels and Resorts - the resurrected Starwood Hotels will feature 1 Hotels, Baccarat Hotels, and Treehouse Hotels within its portfolio.

The three brands have more

than 30 hotels either open or in the pipeline, among which is 1 Hotel Melbourne, which opens on the Yarra waterfront in May.

"Our vision is expansive and precise," said SH Hotels & Resorts CEO, Raul Leal.

"We're growing in markets where our guests seek out the experiences we excel at providing."

Mandarin Oriental adds luxe Puerto Rican resort

MANDARIN Oriental Hotel Group has expanded its portfolio with a new luxury resort and branded residences on Puerto Rico's southwestern coast, due to open in 2028.

Located at Boqueron Bay in Cabo Rojo, the property will be part of a new cosmopolitan coastal community owned and developed by Reuben Brothers and Three Rules Capital.

The resort will feature 106 rooms and suites with a balcony, terrace or private



garden, while select suites will feature plunge pools and all villas will include private pools.

Mandarin Oriental Esencia, Puerto Rico, which marks the group's third property in the Caibbean, will also boast an extensive wellness sanctuary and a golf course.

JetBlue offers more

US CARRIER JetBlue has ramped up its premium offering with a new 'EvenMore' experience, which debuted this week.

Passengers in the new premium cabin will enjoy additional travel perks, including extra legroom seats, dedicated overhead bin space, complimentary alcoholic beverages and a new premium snack.

The airline is also upgrading its lounges in Boston and NY.

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itravel opens in Ryde Eastwood



ITRAVEL celebrated the opening of its newest shop yesterday, itravel Ryde Eastwood.

The new store, owned by itravel Carlingford's Emily Kadinski and her mother Sue, is located inside Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club at West Ryde.

The team will split its time between the two locations, with some staff to be permanently based at the new shop.

The opening was attended by suppliers from around the travel industry, as well as a large number of itravel Carlingford's loyal customers, and travellers

from the former agency located inside the club.

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"Thank you to the team at itravel for your support throughout this whole time," Kadinski told attendees.

"Thank you to each and every one of you, whether you're new to our itravel family, or have been with us for this whole journey we couldn't have done it without vou." Kadinski added. MS

Pictured is the itravel Carlingord/Ryde Eastwood team: Maria, Emily, Sue, Jodi, and Rozelle, with itravel Managing Director Steve Labroski.

ACCOMMODATION

Send your accommodation updates to:



Bali has welcomed its newest private beachfront estate, The Seed. The ultraluxury property is located on the island's picturesque east coast, just 63km from Bali International Airport. Inspired by traditional Indonesian villages, The Seed comprises of

four one- and two-bedroom villas, a fitness and wellness centre, and a restaurant showcasing traditional flavours. Guests can also enjoy the games room and a movie under the stars at the poolside cinema.



EVT Hotels & Resorts has transformed the former Tank Stream Hotel into the Rydges Australia Square, now open. Located in the heart of Sydney's CBD, the revamped property now boasts 280 revitalised guest rooms and ground-floor lobby areas, as well

as upgraded facilities, including a contemporary wine bar, a newly built boardroom, and Le Petit Flot restaurant, which offers French cuisine open for breakfast and dinner.



Virgin Limited Edition, Sir Richard Branson's collection of hotels and retreats, has announced a full interior refurbishment of its luxury tented safari camp, Mahali Mzuri, in Kenya's Maasai Mara. Due to reopen in Jun 2025, the camp will include 12

refreshed luxury tents featuring spacious, open-plan living, large wrap-around windows and terraces. The redesign will also encompass common areas including the firepit and bar, and the swimming pool.



A five-star heritage hotel in Scotland has offered a first look at its \$15 million dollar renovation, ahead of its reopening later this year. Mar Hall Golf and Spa Resort, Glasgow, is undergoing a complete overhaul of its guest rooms, suites and

apartments, as well as all public spaces. The makeover also includes the addition of a 24-person private cinema, gaming room and billiards room.



Lujo Bodrum, a luxurious hotel in Turkiye, is preparing to reopen in Apr with seven brand-new villa types. Blending luxury, service and comfort, the Sunset Villas range from one-bedroom all the way up to four-bedroom, offering uninterrupted views

of the Aegean Sea. The new accommodations feature a minimal and modern architectural style, and offer access to a private pool.

MSC commitment

MSC Cruises will offer more itineraries from Port Canaveral, confirming plans to deploy its fourth World Class ship from the Florida port from winter 2027/28.

The unnamed ship will become the line's second ship to offer year-round sailings in the USA.

Park Gstaad hotel

LUXURY hotel brand Four Seasons will take on management duties for The Park Gstaad Hotel in Switzerland once the property completes major renovations.

The alpine property will reopen under its new branding in time for the 2026-27 winter season.

EDITORIAL

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TERMS & CONDITIONS: Reasons to Sail + Suite Upgrade offer is valid on new individual bookings made between January 14, 2025, and January 31, 2025, on select voyages. The Suite Upgrade offer is already reflected as a price downgrade and is only available in select categories. Full World Cruise and full Grand Voyages are excluded. Offer available only on Door-to-Door and Port-to-Port fares (fare code: 03). Offer not available on Special Combination voyages, Grand Voyages, and World Cruises. This offer is subject to suite availability. Offer combinable with Event Certificates, National Account Amenities, Referral Savings, Onboard Savings, Combination Savings, promotional pre/post land programs, Kids Savings and Venetian Society Savings. Offer is combinable with groups. Cancel and re-books do not qualify. The promotion is capacity controlled and can be removed at any time without prior notice. Single supplements apply and vary by voyage. Other restrictions may apply see silversea.com for more details.







Exoticca's definitive Southeast Asian adventure

This in-depth 16-day adventure through Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand offers your customers a guided experience across some of the world's most fascinating landscapes while making it effortless for you to sell. Designed to captivate travellers and easy for you to present, this tour showcases the best of Southeast Asia, a bucket-list favourite for adventurers and culture enthusiasts alike.

Vietnam: A Land of timeless charm

The adventure begins with a tour of Hanoi's most treasured landmarks. Your travellers will visit the iconic One Pillar Pagoda, the Temple of Literature and the bustling Old Quarter before embarking on an overnight cruise through the tranquil waters of Ha Long Bay aboard a traditional junk boat. From Hanoi, they'll fly to vibrant Ho Chi Minh City. Highlights include Notre Dame Cathedral, Thien Hau Temple and the bustling Ben Thanh Market. For added value, they can enhance their experience with an optional full-day

Mekong Delta excursion aboard a motorboat. Cambodia: Ancient wonders reimagined Cambodia offers a fascinating blend of history, culture and natural beauty. Travellers will explore the poignant Killing Fields of Choeung Ek, the architectural marvels and bustling energy of Phnom Penh and the wonders of Angkor's temples, from the serene faces of Bayon to the overgrown beauty of Ta Prohm. An optional tuk-tuk street-food night tour adds a flavourful and immersive touch to their Cambodian adventure.

Thailand: Bangkok's vibrant soul

The journey concludes in Bangkok, where the city's dynamic energy promises an unforgettable finale. Your customers will explore the iconic Temple of the Reclining Buddha, wander through the lively streets of Chinatown and enjoy free time to uncover hidden gems in the buzzing capital.

A journey designed for success

This seamless itinerary is more than just a

trip; it's an expertly crafted journey through Southeast Asia's most iconic destinations, designed to delight your customers and make your job easier. Complete with flights, hotels, and expert-led tours, Exoticca has thought of everything your customers could ever want from a Southeast Asian adventure. A dream to sell and a joy to experience, this tour promises memories that will last a lifetime while bringing in handsome rewards for you.

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