





# Travel Daily First with the news

www.traveldaily.com.au Friday 21st Mar 2025

#### Silversea savings

FOR two weeks only, save up to A\$7,000 with Silversea, and get US\$1,000 in shipboard credit.

The limited-time offer also provides a 15% reduced deposit and all-inclusive voyages on more than 300 ocean and expedition voyages - see page eight.



# Agents are king: Collette

#### EXCLUSIVE

**AUSTRALIAN** travel advisors "mean everything" and are a crucial part of Collette's success story Down Under, the company's **Executive VP of Global Sales** Christian Leibl-Cote believes.

In an interview with *Travel* Daily, Leibl-Cote said the brand has backed agents in Australia through continued investment. including its local call centre, which now operates six days a week and 24 hours a day.

"[Agents] can call us at midnight here and we will answer in Canada or the United States and take care of them," he said.

"Every country has a team that's been trained on how to make sure they handle Australian bookings and vice versa."

Experiencing Collette's tours directly is another area the brand has worked hard to achieve, ramping up more opportunities through famils and incentives.

"Agents can go on a regular tour and get up to 85% off, and they [can] access tours for free depending on how many passengers they have booked," said Leibl-Cote (pictured).

"If an agent really wants to understand who Collette is, we want them to go on a tour with us and once they get to experience it, they will be able to talk about our unique experiences and tell those stories - so we really want as many agents as possible to go travel with us."

The Collette executive also



revealed that more than 90% of Aussie bookings come through agent bookings in Australia, and that the company has been keen to support the trade - even through the tough COVID period.

"We refunded over \$250 million in cash, no questions asked [during the pandemic], so everyone that asked was automatically refunded.

"That's because we always want to have that great relationship with our partners and protect their clients, and we are always going to do right by them."

Leibl-Cote also noted boots on the ground have grown in Australia in recent years, and that the people investment Down Under will continue to be a key priority for the business.

"We have seven BDMs right now and we are going to make that eight BDMs soon," he noted. AB

#### Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news, including a photo page from Viking and our Corporate Update, plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- Viva Holidays

#### Viva la Disneyland

**DISNEYLAND** Resort is celebrating 70 years with Viva Holidays through a special offer for Australian residents.

There are a number of four-day packages on offer, as well as a five-day package - for full details, head to page nine.





# Win your Supernova Seat to see Oasis live

Enjoy the concert from a corporate box, with return flights and

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Training Academy



#### Ponant rebrand

**PONANT** has updated its name to Ponant Explorations Group. following its recent acquisition of a majority stake in Aqua Expeditions (TD 17 Jan).

The new identity marks a fresh chapter for the luxury cruise line learn more in today's issue of CW.



### Inbound tourism is back

AUSTRALIAN inbound travel is making a comeback, with 84% growth year-on-year, according to a new report from Big Red Group.

The report analyses booking data from the company from over 650,000 experiences taken between 1 Sep 2024 and 28 Feb 2025.

"Australia's tourism and experiences industry is finding its stride again, with inbound travel surging and domestic travellers embracing new ways to explore and intent to spend on the rise," explained David Anderson, CEO and co-founder at Big Red Group.

He described the data in the report as pointing towards "cautious optimism".

The Seasonal Experiences Index for spring and summer revealed key trends, including Sydney being the most popular destination, but Cairns, Surfer's Paradise and Coomera all ranked highly, too.

There was also increased demand from tourists hailing from China, Taiwan and Korea, as they embraced experiences such as scenic and dining cruises, whale and dolphin watching, and reef and island cruises.

Australians are embracing minibreaks over longer holidays with experiences such as sightseeing tour getaways, country getaways and beach getaways.

Sports tourism is also upping the ante, as V8-related purchases accelerated by 32% year-on-year. When F1's Melbourne Grand

Prix took place, 67% more inner-city bookings were made compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, the spa category is up by 125.3% year-on-year.

"Aussies are continuing to seek out activities that deliver quality over quantity - with short-stay getaways and spa treatments enjoying considerable growth and they are even planning their travels around unmissable iconic events like the NRL Grand Final or long-running Bathurst 1000," said Anderson. JHM

#### Vale Richard Beere

**RICHARD** Beere, MD at Fastrak Asian Solutions, has sadly passed away after battling cancer.

Known for his passion for bridging cultures, markets and industries, Beere led an extensive career expanding Australia's tourism into Asia.

Peter Shelley, Managing Director at Australian Tourism Export Council, shared his condolences on LinkedIn:

"His unwavering support in helping hundreds of Australian tourism businesses successfully position their products in the Eastern market is an incredible legacy in itself that is well worth celebrating. RIP mate."



#### TD correction

TRAVEL Daily wrote yesterday (TD 20 Mar) that Mosman Travel was owned by Spencer Travel Group - this is not correct.

While Penny Spencer personally is a part-owner, Spencer Travel does not own Mosman Travel: the story has been amended.











STEP ASIDE Jeb Brooks, Noel Phillips, Trek Trendy, Emma Cruises, DownieLive, Dennis Bunnik Travels and all of those other well-known YouTube travel vloggers.

There is a new star in town and the industry is missing out if they don't 'like', subscribe, and ring that bell icon.

Actually, to be honest, the star is not so new - perhaps it is best to let them explain.

When asked at the Bunnik Tours 30th birthday celebration what YouTube channel he would create if he could emulate the popularity of his brother's channel, Sacha Bunnik said, "Well, I've actually had a channel for three years, it's very unpopular and I am very jealous of his subscriber rate, so please subscribe, and you media people here, please promote it - keep in mind, I hold the marketing budget."

Sacha, you make an impressive argument, so consider this a promotion of your YouTube channel.



# 30 years young for Bunnik



ADELAIDE-BASED company Bunnik Tours celebrated its 30th birthday with a packed house of industry colleagues at the The Tea Room in the QVB, Sydney, last night.

Guests from around the industry including advisors, airline partners, industry association leaders and more gathered to celebrate with Marion, Dennis and Sacha Bunnik plus the rest of the team.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* during the night, Dennis Bunnik revealed how emotional the moment was for him and the family.

"I've been collecting all this stuff over the years...and the girls in the office...laid all of it out down in the basement.

"When you see 30 years of your life out in front of you it's actually quite an emotional moment, because as an industry, we have gone through so much, when you look at SARS, September 11, the Bali bombings...we turned 25 the

day that Scomo shut the borders! "That's why we're celebrating

"That's why we're celebrating 30 and it's been incredible."

Bunnik took the opportunity to speak about the refreshed brand and new brand video (keep an eye out for the well-known YouTube travel vlogger that features), as well as soft-launching the business' "biggest ever agent incentives - Bunnik's big birthday giveway".

The prizes include four trips for two on Bunnik tours with the incentive running from 01 Apr to the end of Nov.

The top two sellers of Bunnik tours between Apr and Nov will be able to choose which trip of the four they would like to take, while the other two will be randomly drawn, with every advisor who sells a Bunnik tour in that period gaining one entry per sale.

Advisors will receive official information in their inboxes over the coming days. *DF* 

#### MH370 search on

**THE** Malaysian Govt has given the green light for Ocean Infinity, a US-based marine robotics company, to renew the search for MH370 (*TD* 05 Dec 2023).

The search for the plane, which vanished in 2014, will be conducted over a new 15,000km<sup>2</sup> site in the Southern Indian Ocean.







# Inside a hidden Japan

**INSIDE** Travel Group is focusing its itineraries on five under-visited regions in Japan to combat the scourge of over-tourism, which continues to plague the hugely popular outbound Asian market.

Yamaguchi, Nagasaki, Toyama, Nagoya and Aomori form the sustainability focus of 2025 trips for the company's InsideJapan division, spread across the north, central and south of mainland Honshu, and the island of Kyushu.

The brand's newly unveiled 'under-tourism' initiative follows previous informal efforts to direct more Aussie travellers to a diverse spread of Japanese destinations in 2024.

Last year, InsideJapan sent guests to 219 different locations across all 47 prefectures on selfguided cultural adventures and small group tours.

"With ever-growing visitor numbers, we believe part of the solution to over-tourism lies in dispersing travel to lesser-known parts of the country," Inside Travel Group co-founder Simon King explained.

"We know that 80% of travellers visit only 10% of destinations - we want to change that.

"Japan was once a niche destination with just 4 million visitors when InsideJapan started in the year 2000, and has since seen a 600% increase in tourism... and that number is projected to rise to 60 million by 2030."

In selecting its under-tourism destinations, InsideJapan used



several key factors in making its decision, such as a need to be located outside of Japan's top five prefectures: Tokyo; Osaka; Kyoto; Hokkaido; and Fukuoka.

The operator has also chosen destinations with fewer than 10% of visitors with ample room night availability and access to public transport, as well as operating well below its perceived carrying capacity.

As part of the initiative, InsideJapan has also reduced prices for off-peak and shoulderseason small group tours, offering up to 15% discounts to help disperse visitors seasonally. AB

#### Uniworld expands

**UNIWORLD** has welcomed business development manager for Queensland and Western Australia, Claire Simon, who has joined from AAT Kings and previously worked for Trafalgar.

Meanwhile, the cruise line is also looking for a BDM to oversee its New Zealand market, reporting to Managing Director, Alice Ager.

To find out more, click HERE.





#### Love GC campaign

A NEW nationwide tourism campaign called Experience Gold Coast has launched this week to lure visitors back to the city in the wake of the cyclone.

The campaign will be followed by discounted flights and accommodation and a 'spend and get' voucher reward program to hopefully attract tourists back in the lead up to the Easter and April school holidays.

The initiative will roll out in three parts, kicking off with a callout to all locals and tourists to spread word that the city is open and ready for visitors to return, by sharing the news on social media channels and using the hashtag #loveGC.

The second part will focus on protecting upcoming bookings over the school holidays and after that, the aim will be to reinforce the Gold Coast as a year-round destination beyond summer.

"Visitors inject more than \$7 billion annually into the Gold Coast economy, creating jobs and opportunities for our community, and we all need to come together and protect this industry and show the rest of Queensland and Australia that we are back in business," said Experience Gold Coast Chief Executive Officer, John Warn.



# TravelDailv



#### At sea

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line, which is hosting us aboard *Norwegian Aqua* for its inaugural cruise.

**DAY** two on board *Aquα* will see us enjoy a panel session to learn more about the vessel's enhanced Prima experiences.

Moderated by Chief International Sales & Marketing Officer Jason Krimmel, panellists include: Mark Kansley, Senior Vice President, Hotel Operations, Christian Pratsch, Vice President, Food & Beverage Operations; Bryan A. White, Vice President, Entertainment Production; and Angela Stark, Vice President, Assistant General Counsel, Securities, ESG & Compliance.

#### Afterpay Day is here

**AFTERPAY** Day has kicked off, with the highly anticipated shopping event offering major travel deals until Sun, including \$150 off international flights on Webjet for those who check out with Afterpay.

Other offers include discounted Jetstar airfares; Booking.com discounts of 15% and up; 20% off RedBalloon gift vouchers; 10% when you spend \$350 at Experience Oz; Ticketek deals; and more - further details HERE.





**CLICK TO VIEW** THEIR BOOTH



# Viking's ship inspections make waves

AS WAVE season comes to a close, Viking celebrated its shared moments with valued travel advisors. From ship inspections to famil voyages, advisors stepped aboard Viking Orion and Viking Venus to experience the cruise line's award-winning ships firsthand.

While Venus made history completing Viking's first circumnavigation of Australia, the real milestone was the

opportunity to share 'The Viking Way' of exploration with advisors for the first time.



THE only thing shining brighter than this Melbourne day were the smiles from advisors after seeing Viking.



seven-day mini-fam from Perth to Adelaide.



**NEARLY** cocktail time, Ramon Drew from Viking shows agents his favourite spot on the ship - The Aquavit Bar.

PROVING there's nothing better than a late-night cocktail in Torshaven.



A PRIVATE tour of the Bridge.



Cruiseabout team members were at The Pool Bar.



THE team from FBI Travel join in the fun.



Watson, Silvi Pereira, Emma Newton, Viking.





moment in the Atrium.

# **CORPORATE UPDATE**

# Budgets grow, tools lag

WHILE almost half of Australian and New Zealand businesses plan to increase their travel budgets this financial year, four in five believe they need better tools to track and manage expenses, according to new research from Corporate Traveller.

The survey of 562 business decision-makers, travel managers and authorised travel bookers across the Americas, EMEA and ANZ found that 48% believe automated expense tracking would be the most transformative tool in their travel program.

The finding indicates that poor expense tracking, delayed reporting and inefficiencies are a real problem, but despite this, only 9% of ANZ businesses are considering reducing their budgets this financial year.

In fact, the survey reflected a global trend towards greater spend and intention to travel, with the survey showing 46% of

#### Asia's big biz show

THE inaugural Business Travel Show Asia Pacific has released a preview of its program ahead of its launch at the Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, on 16 and 17 Apr 2025.

The event will feature the firstever Business Travel Innovation Faceoff in APAC, a showcase of innovative solutions set to revolutionise corporate travel, plus the APAC Travel Buyer of the Year Award - learn more HERE.

businesses in the Americas and 50% in EMEA have increased their travel spend.

According to the Flight Centre Travel Group division, ANZ businesses are most in need of automated expense tracking tools (chosen by nearly half of the region's respondents), compared to automated risk assessments (23%), predictive analytics (45%) and virtual assistants (34%), with similiar results for businesses in the Americas and EMEA.

"Business travel may be back in full swing, but our findings suggest that many businesses are losing value and efficiencies through poor expense tracking and delayed reporting," said Tom Walley, Australian-based Global MD at Corporate Traveller. JM

#### Syd makes the cut

SYDNEY has been crowned one of the most visited cities in the Asia-Pacific region by business travellers, with the harbour city ranking 10th in a list from BCD Travel's new Cities & Trends 2025 Asia Pacific report.

Ahead of Sydney was Singapore, which topped the list, followed by Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei and Jakarta also appeared in the list.

Frankfurt was in first place on the intercontinental list, followed by London, San Francisco, Amsterdam, and New York City, respectively.

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## Air New Zealand gets techy



AIR New Zealand and Tata Consultancy Services have signed a five-year partnership, which will bring digital transformation to the Kiwi flag carrier.

"Leveraging TCS' expertise in cutting-edge technologies will help us enhance the customer experience, streamline operations, and reinforce our commitment to cybersecurity and data protection," said Air New Zealand CEO Greg Foran.

"This collaboration aligns with our vision to be a digitally enabled airline of the future."

The agreement was signed yesterday in Mumbai, setting the framework between the two businesses, focusing on key areas from cloud computing and AI to data analytics and automation.

According to Foran, Air NZ began working with Tata in Sep 2024 and within a few months. the airline could see the benefits of the consultancy's depth and breadth of expertise when it

came to digital solutions.

"By leveraging AI, automation, and cloud technologies, we aim to reimagine operations, enhance passenger experiences, and build a more agile and resilient airline," said TCS CEO and Managing Director, K. Krithivasan. JHM

#### Sabre inks new deals

SABRE has signed a new distribution agreement with Vietjet Air, providing agents with access to the carrier's content through the Sabre travel marketplace for the first time.

The deal will see Vietjet distribute its fares and offers globally through Sabre's Global Distribution System (GDS).

MEANWHILE, British Airways' NDC content is also now live on Sabre's platform, with Sabreconnected agencies worldwide able to shop, book, and service NDC offers alongside traditional ATPCO/EDIFACT options.



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# **SPECIALS**

Send your special deals to: specials@traveldaily.com.au

APT Luxury Travel is reminding Aussies of its Last Chance 2025 Worldwide Sale, which offers extra savings of \$1,000 per couple on 2025 trips of eight days or more. Journeys include the Kimberley, New Zealand, and more - book by 02 Apr. Call 1300 672 534.

Australian travellers can take advantage of Air Tahiti Nui's flight and hotel packages. For example, the Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa package includes return international and domestic economy airfares, return shared airport transfers, five nights in Rangiora and two nights in Papeete, and daily breakfast. Available until 31 Mar, the offer applies to travel dates between now and 20 Dec 2025. Learn more HERE.

Wendy Wu Tours is promoting a free business class upgrade on select Japan tours departing through to 30 Nov 2025. Prices for the business class deal, which ends 24 Mar, start from \$599 per person one way or \$1,999 return, and is available for departures from Sydney and Melbourne. To learn more, call 1300 727 998.

From now until 30 Jun 2025, travellers who book three consecutive nights at participating Centara Hotels & Resorts properties will pay for only two nights. The deal is available in destinations across Thailand, Asia, the Maldives, UAE, Qatar and more, for stays until 30 Nov 2025. **CLICK HERE** to discover more about the offer.

HX Expeditions is offering no solo supplements on a variety of departures in 2025/26, from the tropics to polar waters. Learn more about the promotion HERE.

Now is the time for travellers to lock in their next adventure, with Chimu's biggest sale of the year ending on 28 Mar. The Great Chimu sale includes deals on its Antarctic and South American journeys, including a 25% discount on the 'Whale Season in Antarctica' itinerary on selected 2025/26 dates. See all the deals HERE.

Laguna Lang Co, a luxury resort on the Vietnam Golf Coast, has launched a 'Play, Stay, Dine & Unwind' package aimed at high-end travellers. The package includes six nights in a one-bedroom villa at Banyan Tree Lang Co with daily breakfast, unlimited golf at Laguna Golf Lang Co - a Sir Nick Faldo Signature Design course - and one round of 18 holes at either Ba Na Hills Golf Club or Montgomerie Links in Da Nang. Guests will also enjoy five private dining experiences. The offer is priced at US\$2,990 pp twin share - more details HERE.

In celebration of its 10-year anniversary, Celestyal has launched a special two-for-one offer across 88 sailings departing from Apr 2025 through to early 2027. Among the cruises included in the promotion are 29 of Celestyal's new three- and four-night 'Iconic Arabia' cruises. The offer can be combined with a 'kids go free' fare and a 'two-for-one shore excursion' promotion - call 1800 648 737 for details.



# Globetrotter's golden night



**THE** Globetrotter Travel team recently gathered in Perth for the brand's annual Golden Globetrotter Awards, a celebration to recognise the achievements and contributions of the past year.

Held at Moana Hall, the event saw team members from across the country come together to celebrate excellence, teamwork and innovation.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on successes, strengthen connections and enjoy an evening filled with laughter, inspiration and well-deserved recognition," the company said. JM

#### JB on the table

JOURNEY Beyond has published a coffee table book, The Journey, showcasing the rich history of Australia's rail network.

Filled with imagery and interviews, the keepsake tells the story of the Australian outback, its people, and the pioneers of the rail industry - it is available HERE for \$79.

#### **VA** inspires students

VIRGIN Australia has launched its inaugural Future Aviators program, which aims to inspire the next generation of young girls to pursue aviation careers.

Almost 60 year seven and eight students from across South East Queensland participated in an exclusive tour of the airline's aircraft maintenance hangar, head office and training centres.

During a panel event, female team members shared with the students their experiences of working at the carrier.

"Aviation certainly faces challenges in gender diversity, however we don't shy away from them - we're leaning in with a determined focus, not only to inspire students to consider a career in aviation, but to actively support them on that path," said Virgin Australia Chief People Officer, Lisa Burquest.

"This is a small but important step in increasing the visibility of some lesser-known roles in aviation," she added.

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