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TRAVEL DAILY

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EDITOR: Bruce Piper
E-mail: info@traveldaily.com.au



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HRG strengthens in eastern Europe

HOGG Robinson Group has announced the purchase of BTI Czech Republic and BTI Slovakia. The moves give the corporate TMC four wholly-owned businesses in eastern Europe, adding to the existing Hungarian and Russian subsidiaries.

The businesses will now trade under the HRG banner, with ceo David Radcliffe saying there had been strong growth in the region.

He said the number of air tickets issued grew by 17% in Slovakia just last year, and 8% in the Czech Republic, with eastern Europe continuing to be an area of growth for the firm.

Radcliffe said growing levels of direct foreign investment in both countries after they joined the EU in 2005 was expected to see the markets there continue to expand.

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NRMA Thrifty acquisition

THRIFTY Australia has announced that its md John Walker together with NRMA Motoring Services have acquired 100% of the car rental firm from Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited.

The \$30m deal, in which NRMA has achieved a 75% stake in the company and Walker a 25% stake, will see Thrifty become what it claims is the "largest Australian owned Car Rental company in the domestic market".

Walker said the acquisition, which is expected to be completed within two weeks, will also allow for "significant consolidation and

New DJ corp fare

VIRGIN Blue has launched a new "corporate plus" fare which includes access to its new lounge facilities at Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

The fare type also includes priority check-in, a 32kg baggage allowance and is fully flexible, and comes as part of a new \$4.5m national advertising campaign dubbed "Don't follow suit".

A DJ spokesperson said the introduction of the lounge-inclusive offering followed feedback from a number of recently signed new corporate travel clients.

Today's Travel Daily

TD today has five pages of news and photos plus a full page from:
• AA Appointments jobs page

growth opportunities for Thrifty."

This growth includes an expansion of the firm's fleet which is expected to now purchase an extra 5,000 vehicles a year, he said.

Whilst still maintaining its supply contract with Mitsubishi he said the firm will also source vehicles from other suppliers.

The deal will also see growth for Thrifty through licensee buy backs and the launch of the Dollar Rent A Car brand into the Australian market over the next six months, he said.

The Dollar brand launch in particular will see a "great increase in inbound business," he said.

NRMA ceo Tony Stuart said the acquisition is in line with NRMA's strategy to "diversify" its investment portfolio and said the addition of Thrifty will complement the firm's existing services in travel, touring and hospitality.

Walker will remain md of Thrifty and said that there are to be no redundancies at this stage.

Gecko's Africa out

GECKO'S Adventures has announced its 07/08 Africa programs with 6 new tours incl the 33-day, 5 country *Secrets of the South* small group tour - details 1300 854 500.

World Cup ticketing controversy

THE Travel Compensation Fund has not received any claims at this stage related to the alleged supply of 'scalped' World Cup tickets to a number of South Australian clients by an Adelaide-based agency.

It's understood that some groups were denied access to World Cup games despite having travelled to Germany on packages for the event which included tickets supplied by the agency.

The TCF confirmed it was aware that an SA agent hadn't delivered on tickets, and it's believed furious clients are now returning from the tournament demanding satisfaction over the matter.



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AUSTRALIA UPDATE TO ALL OUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The AA Reservations Centre in Sydney is now closed and all calls are being directed to our new regional call centre. The hours of operation for calls from Australia remain unchanged. The toll free number for Reservations is unchanged until further notice (1300 130 757).

The AA SYD Ticket Office and the AUS/NZL Sales and Administration office will remain at our current North Sydney location for a short while before relocating to new premises. New contact details will be advised in the near future.

On behalf of the entire AA Australia team, management would like to offer a sincere "THANK YOU" to our industry partners for the overwhelming response to our request for employment opportunities for our redundant staff.

We look forward to your continued support as we transition to our new regional structure.

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Europcar expands

CAR rental firm Europcar has added two new branches to its network, in Hurstville and Hornsby in the Sydney metropolitan area.

The expansion brings the total number of Europcar outlets across Australia to 117, with almost all owned by the firm.

GM Eoin MacNeill said the new branches would carry trucks, buses, vans and cars across all categories including the luxury Audi brand.

Europcar has partnerships with Virgin Blue and its *Velocity* loyalty program, as well as with Accor Asia Pacific.

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Skywest board says accept

YESTERDAY independent directors of WA-based carrier Skywest urged shareholders to accept the current takeover bid by CaptiveVision Capital (CVC).

Singapore-based CVC is already Skywest's largest shareholder and interests associated with two of the directors have said they'll sell their shares into the offer which will give the predator about 83% of the firm.

The offer, of 22.7c plus 0.4171 'Advent Depositary Interests' is about 10% above an independent valuation of the firm.

Advent Depositary Interests are a financial instrument which allow investors to indirectly hold shares in CVC's parent firm Advent Air

New Canada/Alaska specialist wholesaler

ED Smith has launched a new joint venture with Roger Welling to be known as Canada and Alaska Specialist Holidays.

Smith previously headed up the Canada and Alaska division of Talpacific Holidays and also set up North American programs for Adventure World in 1985.

The new firm will trade out of Welling's existing Sydney-based Pacific Specialist Hols operation. Details 02 9080 6728.

Limited, which is traded on the London Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market.

A report by the independent members concludes that there's unlikely to be a higher offer.

Garuda pilot dies

A MEDICAL emergency on Garuda flight 722 from Denpasar to Adelaide last Tue ended up with the pilot dead from a heart attack.

The carrier said passengers were never in any danger, with the unfortunate incident happening just as the A330-300 aircraft was preparing for takeoff.

Broome Cup rooms

RENDEZVOUS Sanctuary Resort Cable Beach Broome says it has rooms available for the upcoming Ladies Day and Broome Cup.

There's a minimum 1 night stay and the resort's new Pindan Restaurant is also now open.

Bookings 08 9192 8088.

Concorde promotion

S8 subsidiary Concorde Air Tickets Wholesaling has announced that Paul Hollingshead is its new State Manager, NSW.

Hollingshead has been with Transonic/Concorde since 1995, most recently holding the position of National Airline Manager.

WINDOW SEAT

ICON Holidays boss Simon Hills is hoping that travel industry members of the iconic Melbourne Cricket Club will back his bid for election as a committee member of the organisation.

Hills, who's a long-time senior industry executive and CATO committee member said he sees the need for some "new blood" at the famous club, and is standing against three existing MCC committee members.

VISITORS to Hungary may soon be able to visit a new bridge named after American action hero Chuck Norris.

The star of such movie classics as *Lone Wolf McQuade*, *The Octagon* and of course the legendary *Missing in Action 1, 2 and 3*, is leading an online survey the government has set up to choose the bridge's name.

Norris is just ahead of the country's first king, Stephen the Great, in the poll.

MILITARY forces in Brazil are being mobilised to get some sun-loving holidaymakers back to their native habitat.

More than 100 penguins were stranded on Rio de Janeiro beaches after travelling north on melting Antarctic ice floes.

Officials said the flightless birds will travel on an Air Force plane to a southern naval base where they'll be put onto an icebreaker heading south, and they'll be released once they near Antarctica.

BARE buttocks and breasts have been banned on the artificial beaches created on the banks of Paris' Seine River this summer.

Officials say they've issued the decree to encourage people to "behave according to good standards to maintain tranquillity, security and public order."

Police will now issue fines of up to €38 (A\$63) to offenders brazen enough to flout the new rules which ban nude sunbathing, g-strings and toplessness.

The council said inappropriate dress could lead to "temptations and dangerous behaviour on the banks of the river."

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Agencies go premium



ABOVE: Qantas Holidays recently held a celebration of its first NSW and ACT Premium Agency award winners at a cocktail party at the Art Gallery of NSW.

The Premium Agency program rewards top selling agencies for their performance, and was unveiled at last year's QH Global Achievers event in Fiji.

Initial winners announced were:

NSW Premium Agents:

HWT Mosman, HWT Castle Hill, HWT Erina, HWT Winston Hills, Jetset Castle Hill, Jetset Hurstville, Travelworld

Wollongong, Travelscene Belrose, Travelscene Menai Metro, Travelscene Wollongong, Flight Centre Norwest, Flight Centre Burwood, and Peter Milling Travel, Dubbo.

ACT Premium Agents:

Travelscene Canberra City, Queanbeyan City Travel.

The Queanbeyan City Travel team is pictured above with their award, **from left:** Quentin Voss (QH); Caterina Agnello, Sandra Borella, Jim Cooper, Jenny Cooper; Paula Gannon (QH); and Kelly Dwyer.

Win a Melbourne A- LIST guide

THE recently launched on-line planner 'A LIST Guide Melbourne', has just been released as a print edition.

The guide has details of close to 150 Melbourne venues, suppliers and activities to assist in planning events in the city.

To celebrate the launch, *Travel Daily* is giving ten readers the chance to win a copy of the guide, just be one of the first ten to answer the below question correctly;

What was the biggest event held in Melbourne this year?

Answers should be emailed along with your postal address to: Alistcomp@traveldaily.com.au.

Lhasa flight takeoff

CHINA Southern Airlines has launched a new service to Lhasa in Tibet from Guangzhou.

The daily flights will operate during the peak summer period, with a stopover at Shangri-La.

Starwood addition

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts has announced the addition of *Killeen Castle* in Ireland to its luxury portfolio.

The property is the firm's third in Ireland and is set to open in 2009.

BA IFE upgrade

BRITISH Airways has announced details of its new interactive inflight entertainment system which will be rolled out across the fleet over the next two years.

The Audio and Video on Demand system will offer 100 films and TV programmes, 70 CDs and 20 games.

BA said it would also offer an on-screen retail outlet called "Highlife Shop!" which will offer tax-free shopping promotions to passengers.

MEANWHILE, the carrier has also announced the extension of its new online check-in facility to now cover children and infants.

The change allows families to select their seats and print boarding passes from home up to 24 hours before departure.

New CHBSA rep

CORPORATE Hotels Booking Services Asia has appointed Donna Xuereb as its new NSW/ACT sales manager, effective immediately.

Marketing dr Lewis Bloom said the move followed recent expansion of the firm's Asian portfolio with new top-end properties in Japan, India and Taiwan.

Xuereb will also represent CHBSA's sister company, group travel specialist Best of Asia Travel Marketing.

See www.hotelbookings.net.au.



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Ho Ho Ho it's a Travel Corp Christmas...



Pictured above are The Travel Corporation staff at the recent Flight Centre NSW Southern Ball.

The theme of the night was Christmas in July with Walter Delorie from Insight Vacations dressing up as Santa Claus, telling all the boys and girls about the relationship between Flight Centre and The Travel Corp.

Santa was also accompanied by a 12 piece Travel Corporation choir who sang their own version of 'Travel Corp is Coming to Town' to the Santa Claus is Coming to Town tune.

A highlight of the night included a one metre tall chocolate fountain with marshmallows and strawberries for fondue with the entire 15kg of chocolate gone by the end of the night!

Shown above **back row from**

left; Rebecca Yutzuss, Insight Vacations; Wayowa Telfer, AAT Kings; Claire Decarne, Contiki; Scott Graham, Trafalgar; Steve Richards and Sarah Pollard, Creative; **front row;** Sam Davies, Busabout; Ros Keenan, Contiki; Santa Claus (Walter Delorie, Insight); and Adrian Piotto, Busabout.

Europe Travel comp

EUROPE Travel Centre has announced that the winner of its agents incentive which has been running over the past two months was Tracey Emmerton, who receives a \$500 Accor Hotels Giftplus card.

There were also nine runners up each of whom win a \$200 Accor Giftplus card: Barry Gorringer, Michele Italiano, Danielle Fink, Janet Elmsly, Linda Fraser, Penny Meallin, Jane Busch, Jenny Gorrie and Trish Greene.

Air Botswana on track

AIR Botswana said it is continuing with moves towards privatisation, with the Gov't of Botswana currently considering eight prospective strategic partners.

The airline operates four southern African routes plus three domestic ones, with annual revenues in excess of \$20m and it said privatisation will see new aircraft, routes and opportunities for the carrier.

Portable hotel room

UK'S Travelodge hotel chain has developed a new mobile hotel room which can be delivered to events such as music festivals.

Dubbed the Travelpod, the room includes a double bed and private toilet, with its own generator but no hot water.

Travelodge said it hopes the new concept will be popular with campers sick of sleepless nights in tents, and will be trialled at an event in Reading this weekend.

A spokesperson said the concept allows guests to "enjoy the festival, dance through the night and then climb into a nice comfy bed."

New Disney suites

WALT Disney World in Florida has unveiled new family suites sleeping up to six people at its All-Star Music Resort.

The new rooms were created by combining two existing rooms and follow increased demand from families wanting to stay together rather than rent separate rooms.

Suites incorporate two full bathrooms as well as a kitchenette, refrigerator, two TVs and high speed internet service.

Deilmann out early

PETER Deilmann's 2007 river cruise programs in Europe went on sale this week, two months earlier than in previous years.

Seatrade Insider reports the line will operate 250 sailings next year with eight vessels including special interest cruises featuring hiking, cycling, garden, music and golf themes.

Cendant spinoff

CENDANT Corp has completed the separation of its Wyndham Worldwide accommodation offshoot, which yesterday began trading in its own right on the New York Stock Exchange.

The firm includes the Wyndham Hotel Group, RCI Global Vacation Network and Wyndham Vacation Ownership and is described as "one of the world's largest publicly traded hospitality companies".

Wyndham operates over 6,300 franchised hotels and 525,000 hotel rooms across the globe.

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Crystal Cruises value

CRYSTAL Cruises has launched its 2007 "Value Collection" of six sailings which offer up to 52% off the normal prices.

The sailings on *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony* include voyages through the Panama Canal, Western Europe, Caribbean, Eastern Mediterranean and a trans-Pacific trip from LA to Hong Kong.

See www.crystalcruises.com.

Coral Seas adds net

AIRLIE Beach's Coral Sea Resort has announced the installation of high speed internet access in all guest rooms as well as offering wireless internet in its 200-seat conference facility.

Virus hits Mariner

MORE than 230 people on Royal Caribbean's *Mariner of the Seas* have been struck down by gastric illnesses as Norovirus hit a seven day Caribbean cruise.

A passenger is being blamed for bringing the illness on board, and it's the second time this year the ship has had an outbreak.

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Funniest Family Holiday Competition

THIS month's comp is being sponsored by Creative Holidays and will see one lucky subscriber win a trip for two to Los Angeles.

Creative's giving away the prize in celebration of its soon to be released family holiday options program in Vietnam.

The new itineraries will visit the north and south of Vietnam and will package accom, some meals, transport and sightseeing to provide hassle-free holidays for families.

To enter just send us a brief version of your funniest family holiday story or send a photo to creativecomp@traveldaily.com.au with full terms and conditions at www.traveldaily.com.au.

The prize includes rtn economy class airfares from either SYD, MEL, BNE, ADL or PER to L.A with Air NZ, four nights accom at Howard Johnson Hotel in Anaheim, airport shuttle transfers, a three day Disneyland Resort Park Hopper Ticket plus a Resort Character Breakfast and a Macy's International Savings Card.

Today's entry was sent in by Gaynor Vantsant from Travel Focus International;

Travelling with my two daughters on the Virgo last year, we decided to have a break and get off in Malacca and meet it in Kuala Lumpur. We managed to get a car and driver after some delay and our first stop was shopping of course and I decided to treat my girls to their first reflexology treatment. They were a little scared when

the guys doing the treatment were blind but after reassuring them that it was fine we preceeded to be tortured via the feet.

We could hear torrential rain outside but thought nothing of it as we lay there getting the worries massaged away.

We then rang our driver on the mobile who was in a state of panic as the roads had started to flood and he as anxious to get us out of the city to our waiting ship so we left and got to the freeway to find we were in a 5 pm traffic jam.

After five hrs sitting in crawling traffic our driver then admitted he didn't know where the cruise left from.

Lucky for us we had the phone no of the cruise port and called them to let them know we were having problems finding the ship.

The driver then took a wrong turn and we ended up in a dark suburb nowhere near the port.

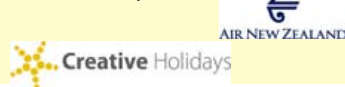
Much to my daughters horror I jumped out of the taxi and offered a local guy who could speak English \$50 to help find the port.

Eventually we screamed up to port with all crew waiting at the gang plank with looks to kill.

We collapsed in our cabin and didn't dare show are faces for a day.

On returning to the office there was a note from Star Cruises banning any own arrangements in Malacca for future cruises.

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- have excellent written & verbal communication skills along with immaculate presentation
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Albatross groups out

ALBATROSS Travel has released its 2007 groups brochure, aimed at helping agents market to prospective group clientele.

The brochure promotes Albatross' experience in designing, creating contracting and operating custom tours, ranging from simple sightseeing itineraries through to first class detailed specialist programs in UK, Europe, Turkey, Australia and New Zealand.

More info 1300 135 015.

New Canada guides

CITY Passports in Canada has released two new Self-Drive Roadbook editions featuring both Western and Eastern Canada.

The guides include a history of each destination, maps and detailed driving directions along with a suggested itinerary and driving tips.

The guides are also available for several other Canadian cities, see www.citypassports.com

Qld security upgrades

THE Australian Govt yesterday announced that almost \$352,000 from its Airport Funding Program will be used to upgrade basic security systems at another two regional Qld airports.

These include Mer (Murray) Island Airport and Palm Island Airport which will receive basic improvements to signage and fencing, plus installation of CCTV.

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Happy bday Sydney!

SYDNEY Tower will next month celebrate its 25th birthday.

To celebrate, visitors will receive 25% off the cost of entry during Sep and can participate in its Skywalk attraction for \$79 per adult.

The icon will also be hosting a Tower-Run-Up race and Walk-up event on Fri 1 Sep with athletes set to sprint up the 1504 steps of the building in less than eight minutes.

Sydney Tower was one of the world's tallest buildings when it opened on 27 Sep 1981 and has since seen a staggering 16m visitors.

Ski Express launch

SKI Express has released its 2006/7 Northern Hemisphere ski program which includes ski options in Japan, Canada and the USA.

The brochure features over 120 properties in 30 ski resorts, valid for bookings from 01 Nov 06- 30 Apr 07.

Earlybird specials and bonus offers are also available with prices from \$594 pp t/s for a 7 night accom and lift pass deal in Canada.

See www.skiexpress.com.au.

NSW Sales Manager & Sales Representative – NSW

Want to work with a dynamic team promoting Northern Territory holiday packages that you've only ever dreamed about?

Territory Discoveries (TD), the wholesale division of Tourism NT, is recruiting two positions in Sydney and are seeking energetic, committed people to join their team.

Key responsibilities include

- **Achieve** monthly and annual sales targets
- **Developing & maintaining** relationships with key industry stakeholders
- Provide destination and product training to varying audiences
- **Stimulate visitation** to the Northern Territory
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- **Proactively** seek new business from niche markets

If you are a committed team member who has outstanding sales skills and enjoys working in a results driven team – **APPLY NOW**.

The successful applicants will have exceptional sales skills, be committed and self-motivated team members who are focused on achieving the company's goals. Base salary plus incentive scheme and company vehicle is included in the package.

Applications close: 8th August

For a copy of the Position Statement and Selection Criteria

Visit - www.territorydiscoveries.com/careers or call Kim Holt on 02 8281 9640





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BRISBANE – 13/97 Creek St – (07) 3229 9600 – employment@aaappointments.com.au

ADELAIDE & PERTH – (03) 9670 2577 – recruitsa@aaappointments.com.au & recruitwa@aaappointments.com.au

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HELP ME RHONDA - HELP HELP ME RHONDA!

CRS HELP DESK 6 MONTH CONTRACT

SYDNEY BASED – SALARY PKG TO \$47K

Tired of consulting? Want to use your skills in a different way? Come join this globally diverse and fast paced travel technology company. You will be liaising with travel agents on a daily basis and assisting with GDS queries. This is an attractive package including discounted travel benefits and superb training opportunities. To be successful you need a min 2 years experience and an excellent phone manner.

STEP UP THE CAREER LADDER TODAY!

WILL TRAIN INTO CORPORATE CONSULTANT

ADELAIDE BASED - SAL PKG TO \$43K + EXTRAS

Do you have a bubbly personality with a desire to progress your career into corporate travel and work your way up the ladder? Now you can.

This amazing travel company boasts a great team, fantastic clients and the opportunity to move into a management role rapidly. If you have a min 12 mths international consultant experience – apply today!

ARE YOU AN EAGER BEAVER?

CORPORATE CONSULTANT

PERTH BASED - PKG TO \$42K

Are you a top achiever? Do you thrive on producing exceptional results in your work? If you are a busy bee and an eager beaver – it's time to set your sights on a new and exciting challenge. If you are an experienced travel consultant with fabulous fares and ticketing, CRS, destination knowledge and customer service skills – you could move in to a new role TODAY!

BLOW THE COMPETITION AWAY!

CORPORATE MULTI-SKILLED CONSULTANT

MELBOURNE BASED - SALARY PKG TO \$45K+

You'll be moving ahead in your career so fast with this role your competition will be left for dust! Join a leading corporate travel management company and their ever expanding team today. You will be rewarded with excellent staff perks, a competitive salary and fun working environment! Take that step today and reap the rewards in the future – it's time to move up and up!

FOLLOW THE BRIGHT LIGHTS!

DOMESTIC WHOLESALE RESERVATIONS

BRISBANE CITY BASED - SALARY \$40K+

Do you love the big city lights? Does the thought of being the centre of attention excite you? Then join this industry leader and be in the spotlight. Stop being taken for granted in your current role and go where you will be appreciated. If you are an Australian expert and you love to sell the land you live in then why not lighten up your career. If you have a minimum 12 months travel industry experience and you are looking for the light at the end of the tunnel-this is it!

SUGAR & SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE!

MULTI-SKILLED CORPORATE CONSULTANT

BRISBANE CITY BASED – SALARY PKG \$38K+

Throw into the mixture a little bit of domestic travel, a touch of international, working for a global organisation and remaining part of a small team! You will need to have a minimum of 12 months recent experience as a multi-skilled travel consultant and be CRS proficient. A passion to be in corporate travel is also a must. This is a really unique opportunity to join a company who is experiencing a massive growth period!