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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 26th August 2011

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Get those photos in!
 WE have received lots of fabulous entries in this month's competition, in which **TD** readers have the opportunity to win a trip to Mauritius (see **page six**). The competition closes next Wed 31 Aug - for entries so far see traveldaily.com.au/competitions.

VTO's new Vanuatu campaign

THE Vanuatu Tourism Office has launched a campaign to boost arrival figures during the low season that occurs outside of Australian school holiday periods. The three year destination marketing promotion was announced yesterday in Port Vila by Vanuatu Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Industry, Ham Lini Vanuararua, at the 10th annual Tok Tok tradeshow being held at the Warwick Le Lagon Resort in Port Vila.

Flight Centre will be the first group to roll out the dedicated Vanuatu national campaign which kicks off tomorrow.

Other agencies and wholesalers will also take part in the promo, offering packages in conjunction

with major Vanuatu properties across the next few years. FC will display window signs in store and also advertise the deals in print publications with special deals available for stays in Oct - Nov and again in Feb-Mar. It's four months since the VTO relaunched its branding but officials weren't able to give any statistics on its success.

VTO Chairman, Charles Lini, said that in the future "factors will be put in place" to obtain this info. More from Tok Tok on **p4**.

Six pages of news
Travel Daily today has six pages of news and photos, plus a full page from: **(click)**

- AA Appointments

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Tiger capital raising
TIGER Airways has launched a share rights issue to raise S\$158.6 million in additional funding. The carrier's major shareholders including Singapore Airlines have agreed to take part in the issue, which will help fund payments for already ordered aircraft.

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THL loses NZ\$27.3m

NEW Zealand-listed Tourism Holdings Limited yesterday reported an after-tax loss of \$27.3m for the year to 30 Jun, after writing down \$26.1m due to the impacts of the Christchurch earthquakes and Qld floods.

The firm, which operates several tourism brands incl Britz and Maui Campervans, said the global market is "still very sensitive to both consumer confidence and exchange rate movements".

Velocity revamp key for DJ

VIRGIN Australia's relaunched Velocity loyalty program (*TD* yesterday) is a key milestone in the carrier's "strategy to become the airline of choice in Australia," according to ceo John Borghetti.

The changes follow an extensive review of the program as well as research from frequent flyers which had shown that Reward Seats were becoming harder to find and more expensive.

"Our new Velocity program will change this, charging fewer points for Reward seats and allowing members to redeem their points for any seat with Virgin Australia, our international airline partners & other airlines around the world".

Redemptions will be offered on more than 600 flights around the world (including the proposed alliance with SIA awaiting regulatory approval) while points will also be able to be earned on over 380 program partners, incl credit cards and retailers such as Westfield.com "meaning Velocity will have the widest retail offering".

Shortly new benefits to support families will also be introduced, allowing family members to pool

points and status credits, as well as "pause" membership for up to six months without losing status.

Eligible members will also be able to earn free companion membership for partners, along with complimentary lounge passes.

Also new is a Platinum level of membership, with a range of benefits including guaranteed Reward Seats for international travel, complimentary upgrades and platinum membership with car hire and accom partners.

"We introduced the Platinum tier to recognise those members who travel with us frequently and to reward their loyalty with the ultimate travel experience and extra benefits," Borghetti said.

The launch of the new tier follows the QF' launch earlier this year of its new top level 'Platinum One' membership (*TD* 17 May).

Jetabroad Booking deal

SYDNEY based "global online flight specialist and travel agency" Jetabroad has launched a new accom partnership with online hotel giant Booking.com.

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AA rebrands seats

AMERICAN Airlines has launched a new "Preferred Seats" offering which replaces its former Express Seats product.

The new Preferred Seats product allow pax to "select and reserve more desirable seats" priced from US\$4 per segment.

Preferred Seats are also complimentary for full fare customers and top level frequent flyers and their companions travelling on the same reservation.

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Travel Daily
 on location in
Kona, Hawaii

TD is coming to you today from Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii, courtesy of Hawaii Tourism Oceania and Hawaiian Airlines

40 AGENTS & wholesalers, along with **Travel Daily**, yesterday arrived in Hawaii for the 2011 eight-night Experience Aloha Famil.

Participants have been split into 4 groups of 10, with each setting out to explore three of Hawaii's main islands - Kauai, Maui and two groups to the Big Island.

Over the next few days Hawaii Tourism Oceania will showcase experiences on offer and hotel options available on each island, making it easier for consultants to promote the destination.

Hawaiian Airlines operates five times weekly to Honolulu from Sydney, with the service moving to a daily departure from 14 Dec.

HA's mid-morning arrival into Honolulu allows for hassle-free connections to the outer islands.

See pg 5 for more famil info and view our exclusive famil photos at www.traveldaily.com.au/photos.

PR to pay fuel comm

PHILIPPINE Airlines has become the latest carrier operating in the Australian market to announce it will pay base travel agent commission on fuel surcharges.

The change is effective 05 Sep, with the 5% commission applying to eligible international published commissionable fares sold in Australia by IATA accredited agents who hold PR plates.

Fuel surcharges on Philippine Airlines services will continue to be collected as a YQ tax, with the applicable commissions claimable via the BSP system.

SYD security boost

THE federal government has announced a \$2.6 million project to expand Explosive Trace Detection at Sydney Airport, with one ETD machine to be provided for every passenger screening lane at both the domestic and international terminals by the end of 2011.

TAM SAO-MEX flight

TAM Airlines has launched sales for a new non-stop service between Sao Paulo and Mexico City, which debuts 30 Oct 2011.

Tourism Aust welcomes CCC deal

TOURISM Australia says the sale of Captain Cook Cruises to the SeaLink Travel Group (**TD** breaking news yesterday) is a "collective vote of confidence and new capital investment in Australian tourism product".

The deal sees SeaLink for the first time establish a Sydney-based operation, taking over 15 of Captain Cook's vessels operating on Sydney Harbour and the Murray River in SA as well as infrastructure, marina berths and

licenses - but not CCC's operations in Fiji.

CCC has an annual turnover of \$30 million, and founder Captain Trevor Haworth said the undisclosed sale price reflected the strong performance of the business through the recent challenging period for tourism, as well as the company's "strong future prospects".

Tourism Australia ceo Andrew McEvoy congratulated Haworth and his family for their passion for tourism over the last 40 years.

He said SeaLink had an "exciting platform of planned future growth" for CCC which will see it deliver new, enhanced tourism experiences in Sydney and on the River Murray.

"This is a win-win outcome, particularly for NSW tourism, and a great positive for the future of Captain Cook Cruises and its team of around 300 people, that will continue to complement the outstanding water-based product we now offer visitors to Sydney Harbour," McEvoy said.



Window Seat

A BRITISH man who likes to travel around the country in the nude has been arrested for indecent exposure - just minutes after being released from prison for a previous offence.

52-year-old Stephen Gough is better known as the "Naked Rambler" after some years ago making an historic walk in the nude from one end of the UK to the other.

Following his most recent arrest he was imprisoned for contempt of court, after turning up for a hearing without any clothes on - with the hearing delayed slightly while court staff found a sheet of paper for him to sit on "for hygiene reasons".

Cruising Sun night

CHANNEL 7's Sunday Night program at 6.30pm this Sun 28 Aug is set to broadcast a special report on "Cruising mega liners" visiting Australia, including *Voyager of the Seas* which will debut down under next year.

New SIA Hols 'Affairs'

SINGAPORE Airlines Holidays is relaunching its 'Affair' brand of value package holidays, with a bargain "Weekly Affair" to be emailed to agents each Thu.

Asian, European and Island Affairs will combine fantastic fares for SIA flights coupled with exceptional land deals, value added products and stopovers.

To be added to the distribution for the Weekly Affair email craig.herbert@au.pinpoint.biz.

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Big tick for Tok Tok 2011



THE 10th annual Tok Tok Vanuatu trade show was officially opened yesterday by Vanuatu Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Industry, Ham Lini Vanuararoa.

This year's event has attracted 70 sellers from across the island group, along with 41 buyers - over half from Australia.

Representatives of Blue Holidays, Discover Vanuatu, Flight Centre Global Product, NRMA Tourism & Leisure,

Omniche Holidays, Pinpoint Travel Group and Jetset Travelworld Wholesale are all in Vanuatu this week to find out the latest on local product.

Pictured above at the Tok Tok official opening with the Malekula Small Nambas group are George Thompson, VTO director; Linda Kalpoi, VTO gm; George Borugu, Director of Tourism; Edna Paolo, Tourism Officer for Malampa; and Bill Dobbie, NZ High Commissioner.

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VTO to expand brand

THE Vanuatu Tourism Office says the new 'Discover What Matters' brand which launched earlier this year (*TD* 15 Apr) is a "good base" for the promotion of the Pacific island nation.

VTO gm Linda Kalpoi said the organisation was "committed to the brand" and additional material and images are expected to be released in Aug to Dec to "reflect what Vanuatu is all about".

She said the VTO needs to "invest more" to get the word out to the market.

Aussies creep up

AUSTRALIAN visitor numbers to Vanuatu are up just 1.6% for the six months to 30 Jun - but that's a stark contrast to overall visitor numbers which were down 20% in the first quarter and 7% in the second quarter of the year.

The Vanuatu Tourism Office said things started to turn around in Jun, which was up 4%.

Malekula call centre

A NEW call centre for nine tourism products in the Vanuatu province of Malampa was officially launched at Tok Tok yesterday.

It's initially launching with operators on Malekula, Vanuatu's second biggest island, and will extend to other areas including Ambrym and Paama next year.

It aims to offer booking support for local tourism entrepreneurs, and is an "important step towards facilitating international visitor enquiries and bookings".

Speaking to *TD* in Port Vila, Howard Iseli from the new centre said the island caters to the "traveller that wants to get off the beaten track".

Of the nine products launched yesterday, five are island bungalows and the rest are tours including small village visits and a five day circuit of the island.

The NZ govt supported the Malampa Tourism Association with start-up capital for the project.

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*ezRez Reward Seat Availability Survey 2011.

WIN A BOTTLE OF FRENCH CHAMPAGNE

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Therese Oliver** from **Jetset Travel Naracoorte**.

This week **Travel Daily** has teamed up with **Aircalin** and **New Caledonia Tourism** and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a bottle of Piper Heidsieck champagne.

New Caledonia the "Pacific Heart" is so close, less than 3 hours from Australia. Aircalin flies to Noumea from Australia 12 times per week. For more information go to: www.visitnewcaledonia.com.

To win, be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to: newcal@traveldaily.com.au.

Name the International airline of New Caledonia



YourSingapore Apps

THE Singapore Tourism Board has rolled out the *YourSingapore Guide* App that provides users with details on attractions, dining options, shopping deals & events.

The App has been developed in partnership with American Express, Singapore Airlines and StarHub, and is available on both iPhone and Android platforms.

It also enables users to share holiday experiences via social media platforms, or design their own desired journey prior to arriving in the country.

Crowne still on top

CUSTOMER satisfaction was highest among guests staying at Crowne Plaza hotels in Australia for the year ending Jun 2011, Roy Morgan Research shows.

According to the latest survey, 90% of guests rated their stay at Crowne Plaza either 'very' or 'fairly' satisfying.

But only five percentage points separates Crowne Plaza from the next top four of 27 accom providers, with Mantra next at 89%, then Sheraton (88%), Hilton (87%) and Westin (86%).

The average satisfaction level for all hotels & resorts was 79%.

Pac Blue/Delta ext.

VIRGIN Australia's Pacific Blue Australia and Pacific Blue New Zealand operations are seeking a minimum two year extension to continue codesharing with Delta Air Lines on Australia-NZ and on New Zealand domestic services.

Pacific Blue told the US Dept of Transportation this week that "nothing has occurred since the grant of the initial approval which would in any way affect findings."

Jumeirah MICE rate

JUMEIRAH at Etihad Towers Abu Dhabi is preparing for a soft opening next month with a special MICE rate valid for groups staying at the property until 31 Dec 2012.

Group Room Rates are being offered from AED1,050 (AU\$275) and Day Delegate Rates from AED320pp (AU\$85), when booked before 31 Dec this year.

Blackout dates apply - email JADgroups@jumeirah.com.

Tiger back to Goldie

TIGER Airways has announced it will relaunch flights between Melbourne and the Gold Coast from 31 Aug, initially with a daily service between the city pairs.

The budget carrier said it was "earmarking" other routes that it plans to re-introduce shortly, likely to be to Perth and Adelaide, based on details on its website.

Agents lava-ing Kona Coast



ABOVE: Participants on the 2011 Experience Aloha Famil (see pg 3), hosted by Hawaii Tourism Oceania and Hawaiian Airlines, bypassed the main island of Oahu yesterday, to explore the outer islands and experience 'true' Hawaiian culture and lifestyle.

Travel Daily is travelling with a group of 10 agents & wholesalers who are discovering the Big Island, which earns its name for being around 1.5 times larger in size than all the other Hawaiian islands combined together.

Hawaii Island (as it's officially known) is the island of Adventure, with visitors able to experience ziplining, manta ray night diving, swimming with dolphins, ATV tours, volcano tours, star-gazing, horseback riding and golfing.

It's also the most southern of the islands, and a regular stop for Norwegian Cruise Line's *Pride of America* which sails year-round

through the US island chain.

Hawaii Island is home to five volcanoes, three of which are dormant, but they have left behind a lunar-like landscape that makes for some spectacular and unique coastal scenery.

Pictured at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay alongside the island's spectacular lava coastlines, from left are: Emma Harding, Gilpin Travel Mgt; Leisel Donnelly, Infinity Holidays; Siobhan Foley, Holidays on Location; Michelle Lucey, Travelworld Mt Annan; Ashlee Galea, Hawaii Tourism Oceania; Rebekah Femia, Flight Centre North Sydney; Tom McMenemie, My Hawaii; Jenna Tyrrell, Ambassador Travel (back); Krystal van Someren; STA Travel and Ally Casey, Travel Managers.

To view photo highlights from the Big Island, including a visit to the Sheraton Keauhou Bay, go to www.traveldaily.com.au/photos.



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WIN A HOLIDAY TO MAURITIUS

The latest entry into our Mauritius comp comes from **Kylie Inglis** (pictured right) from **Executive Travel Management, VIC.**

She says: "Au Revoir... I am a great French artist just like Picasso!!!" Kylie is now in the running to win a sensational Mauritius holiday package for two, courtesy of **Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, Air Mauritius and Beachcomber Tours.**



To enter this fabulous competition, simply send in a picture of yourself dressed in a French theme and showing how you imagine yourself escaping winter for the warmth of Mauritius.

The prize includes: Air Mauritius return economy flights for two from Sydney, Melbourne or Perth to Mauritius; five nights twin share accommodation in a luxurious Junior Suite at the 5-star Trou aux Biches Resort & Spa and daily breakfast & dinner for two.

Email your entries to: mauritiustourism@traveldaily.com.au

CLICK HERE for terms & conditions and to view other photos for entry into the competition.



New SkyTrain stations

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand is advising Aussie travellers of five new stations on the Bangkok SkyTrain rail service. The expansion of the Sukhumvit line opened earlier this month, and "further opens up the city for easier exploration," according to TAT marketing mgr Peter Power.

Star iPhone app

STAR Alliance has launched a new fare finder mobile application, allowing travellers to search for one-way or return fares for flights by member carriers between any two points on its global network. The app is powered by Google subsidiary ITA Software.

DL confirms 737 order

DELTA Air Lines this morning confirmed rumours about a big fleet upgrade (**TD Tue**), with plans to buy 100 Boeing 737-900ERs for delivery between 2013 and 2018.

Travel Daily
First with the news

Friday 26th Aug 2011

eCruising wins Hong Kong gong

ABOVE: The Hong Kong office of eCruising was recently named "Best Interactive Business in Hong Kong" by MSC Cruises.

Founder Brett Dudley said the award was an endorsement of the group's "proven track record and methodology of doing business," and coincided with particularly competitive pricing available for MSC voyages between Sep and Nov this year.

Ingrid Leung, eCruising's ceo Hong Kong is pictured receiving the award from Stephen van Wormer, md of MSC Cruises South East Asia.



Scenic's Russia ship

SCENIC Tours has announced that its 2012 Russia River Cruises will be operated by the newly refurbished *Scenic Tsar* (**Cruise Weekly** yesterday), which will be the first small ship in the Scenic Tours European fleet.

The company will invest more than €3m to "completely refurbish and deliver the premier first class luxury river cruising vessel on Russia's waterways".

Construction commences next month, with the luxuriously upgraded vessel to debut in May.

MEANWHILE Scenic Tours is set for some major TV exposure next week, with *Mornings with Kerri-Anne* featuring Jamie Malcolm reporting from on board the *Scenic Pearl* each day Mon-Sat on Channel nine between 9-11am.

TG fined \$70k in USA

THAI Airways International has been fined US\$70,000 by the US Department of Transportation for violating laws prohibiting "deceptive price advertising".

The DoT found that consumers searching the TG US website for international round-trip tickets originating in the USA "were not provided with information that would allow them to determine the full price to be paid at the first point fares were displayed in the booking process".

Taxes, fuel surcharges and other fees weren't disclosed until the final stage of booking.

New rules recently adopted by the Department will require all government taxes and fees to be included in every advertised fare from 24 Jan 2012.

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PO Box 428, West Ryde, NSW 1685
Phone: 1300 799 220 Fax: 1300 799 221

Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper
Editor: Guy Dundas
Contributors: Chantel Long, Lisa Maroun, Jenny Piper and Barry Matheson
Email: info@traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily Group:

CRUISE
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Advertising and Marketing: Lisa Maroun (Manager), Lisa Martin and Magda Herdzik
Email: advertising@traveldaily.com.au
Business Manager: Jenny Piper
Email: accounts@traveldaily.com.au



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IT’S A NUMBERS GAME GROUPS CONSULTANT

BRISBANE CBD – SALARY PACKAGE TO \$47K + BONUSES

Are you a specialist in groups? Love the South Pacific? Then this role had been made especially for you! Located in Brisbane CBD this growing travel company is looking for an experienced groups consultant to join them. Handling enquiries from travel agents and direct passengers you will be responsible for sourcing group business, creating itineraries and managing the booking process. A strong salary package + bonuses are offer along with sensational famils.