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Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 31st December 2012

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Happy new year!

Travel Daily today has four pages of news & photos.

The next issue of *TD* will be on Wed 02 Jan 2013 due to tomorrow's New Year's Day public holiday.

Etiihad hits target

ETIHAD has carried more than 10.29 million passengers during 2012, a 22% increase on last year's total and surpassing a target of 10 million pax this year.

Sydney was the carrier's fifth busiest global route, behind Bangkok, Manila, London Heathrow and Jeddah.

Other top ten destinations included Paris, Frankfurt, Manchester, Doha and Dublin.

The carrier said its strong performance had been mirrored by its "equity partners" including Airberlin, Aer Lingus, Air Seychelles and Virgin Australia.

CEO James Hogan said the six new destinations added by Etihad in the past year - Tripoli, Nairobi, Shanghai, Basra, Ahmedabad and Lagos - had all contributed to the year's strong performance.

Sydney live camera

A **GLOBAL** network of live video cameras has added a new Sydney streaming view to its repertoire, just in time for tonight's New Year's Eve fireworks.

EarthCam has teamed up with the developers of the Barangaroo precinct on Sydney Harbour to host the camera which is streaming live from the website at www.earthcam.com/world/australia/sydney.

JAL traffic up

JAPAN Airlines has reported its passenger figures for Nov, continuing the carrier's ongoing recovery from last year's tsunami and earthquake catastrophes.

Nov international traffic was up 108% on the previous year, with total carriage of 608,000, while domestic passenger numbers doubled to 2.65 million.

ACCC feedback due next week

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is calling on industry stakeholders to make submissions on the proposed interim authorisation of the Qantas-Emirates alliance, with an official deadline of Thu 10 Jan.

The Commission wrote to a range of interested parties just before Christmas, following the draft approval of the deal and the subsequent application by Qantas for urgent interim authorisation of the pact (*TD* 24 Dec).

Qantas says it's incurring "significant financial harm" because it's currently unable to sell combined fare products with Emirates, and urgently wants to begin promoting a joint offering particularly to corporate clients.

The ACCC says it "endeavours to deal with requests for interim authorisation quickly," and handles them on a case by case basis taking into consideration a range of factors, including "harm to the applicant and other parties if interim is or is not granted."

Other areas looked at include possible benefit and detriment to the public, the urgency of the matter "and whether the market would be able to return to substantially its pre-interim state if the ACCC should later deny authorisation".

When they first flagged the alliance (*TD* 10 Sep) Qantas and Emirates applied for "limited interim authorisation" which would have allowed them to plan and negotiate, but not implement, the proposed deal.

However they later withdrew

KE suspends CAI

KOREAN Air is temporarily suspending its direct flights between Seoul and Cairo, with the twice weekly services not available for reservation between 02 Mar and 31 mar 2013.

The route is currently operating using a 777-200ER but will switch to an A330-300 from 01 Apr.

this application (*TD* 04 Oct), when Qantas released its standalone schedules and fares for flights to London via Dubai.

MEANWHILE the ACCC says it has already received submissions in relation to the initial request for limited interim authorisation and will take these into account in assessing this new application for interim authorisation.

These included a Sep document from Air New Zealand which was strongly opposed to the previous application for interim authorisation, saying this was "not appropriate without a full and considered analysis".

The proposal was also opposed by Virgin Australia, which said that given the complexity of the alliance "the full six month assessment period is required".

And Singapore Airlines joined the chorus, saying that granting interim authorisation could have "far-reaching and difficult to reverse impacts in a number of market segments".

Interim authorisation was also opposed by Malaysia Airlines and union groups.

However a submission in support of the move was made by the federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

AND further submissions on the draft approval of the QF/EK alliance (*TD* 20 Dec) are also being sought by the ACCC, with a deadline of 18 Jan 2013.

Last day for comp

THANKS to the hundreds of people across the industry who entered our Christmas photo competition which is offering a prize of a stay at Melbourne's Fraser Suites.

Today is the last day to enter, with the winner to be announced in Wed's issue along with details of yet another amazing *Travel Daily* competition.

See today's entry on **page 4**.

TG \$22k incentive

THAI Airways International has today launched an incentive for all international travel agents in Australia, offering a prize pool of \$22,000 in Apple gift vouchers.

Entries can be gained by booking any TG fare through until 28 Feb, for departures up to 31 May 2013.

The top seller will receive a \$3,000 Apple voucher, with other prizes including four \$1,000 vouchers and 20 \$500 vouchers.

There are also instant rewards of \$50 iTunes vouchers for tickets issued on THAI to Europe.

To participate agents should register online at thaiairways.com.au/temptations.

MEANWHILE THAI Airways has also taken delivery of its third A380 aircraft in Toulouse.

TG has a total of six superjumbos on order, with the third aircraft to operate between Bangkok and Narita effective from 01 Jan, while the fourth will be deployed to Paris in upcoming months.

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Big UK Xmas boom

TRAVEL agents in the UK have reported a strong Christmas, with 25 Dec online bookings up 90% on the same day last year, according to Thomson Holidays.

Boxing Day bookings were also strong, with Thomson spokesman Jeremy Ellis saying he thought "people wanted to escape from the misery of floods and transport disruptions".

The most popular destinations were sunny resorts such as Spain's Canary and Balearic Islands, as well as Egypt's Sharm El Sheikh.

Saudi air licenses

THE government of Saudi Arabia has for the first time awarded aviation licenses to foreign airlines, with Gulf Air and Qatar Airways set to be authorised to operate international and domestic flights in the kingdom.

Virgin tops Nov satisfaction

VIRGIN Australia was the Australia's leading domestic carrier in terms of passenger satisfaction during Nov, according to the latest Roy Morgan figures.

VA had a satisfaction rating of 83%, just ahead of Qantas in the survey of just over 2000 travellers.

The monthly satisfaction ratings also saw Singapore Airlines come out on top in terms of international carriers with a 90% rating, ahead of Emirates in

second place.

Air NZ was the third rated international carrier, followed by Thai Airways and then Garuda Indonesia - with these 3 airlines all scoring improved ratings compared to the previous month.

In terms of accommodation the Roy Morgan study rated Sofitel as 'hotel and resort of the month' with an 89% satisfaction rating - ahead of Sheraton, Crowne Plaza, Marriott and InterContinental.

The monthly results feed into the annual Roy Morgan Customer Satisfaction Awards, with the organisation which scores the most monthly wins named the overall victor for the year.

Serbian addition

THE National Association of Serbian Travel Agencies has become a full member of the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators Associations (ECTAA).

Serbia will host the upcoming Belgrade Tourism Fair in Feb to promote the burgeoning market for tourism to the country.

Yet more BER delays

GERMAN transport minister Peter Ramsauer has flagged even more delays in the opening of the long-awaited Berlin Brandenburg International Airport.

The airport's opening has been repeatedly postponed, with a planned debut of 03 Jun this year delayed until 27 Oct 2013 due to construction issues (**TD** 05 Sep).

However internal government documents have now confirmed further problems, with the minister revealing in an interview that the airport may not open until sometime in 2014.

Cost blowouts have also seen the initial €2 billion price for the project balloon to more than €4.3 billion.

Massive expansion for Turkish

2013 looks like being a huge year for Star Alliance member Turkish Airlines, which is set to launch new destinations at the rate of more than one per week in the six months to 30 Jun.

According to information leaked from a carrier briefing earlier this month, the plan includes the addition of long-haul routes to Colombo in Sri Lanka on 15 Feb, as well as the debut of Houston services effective from Apr.

Many of the other additions are in Africa, and include recently added Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Yaounde (Cameroon) as well as the upcoming launch of Libreville (Gabon) on 23 Jan.

There's also Middle Eastern expansion, with the addition of Isfahan and Kermanshah in Iran plus Luxor and Aswan in Egypt.

Short-haul European expansion will include new flights to Rotterdam in Holland, Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Malta, Salzburg in Vienna, Marseille in France, Constanta in Romania, Tallinn in Estonia, Vilnius in Lithuania and Luxembourg.

That's the program up until Jun, while the documents also flag the later launch of direct flights from Istanbul to Boston, San Francisco,

Montreal, Kuala Lumpur, Havana and Kathmandu, among others.

The rapid growth will see TK serve 210 cities in 93 countries, with the carrier boosting its fleet by 14 additional aircraft in 2013.

In a Turkish stock exchange announcement on Fri the airline also confirmed the launch of scheduled services to Bogota in Colombia, Aqaba in Jordan and Bamako'ya in Mali.

Earlier this month (**TD** 03 Dec) TK president and ceo Temel Kotil flagged the possible launch of flights to Australia by 2014/15, promising that the carrier would offer a superior product to that on offer from other carriers.

Kotil also predicted that the proposed alliance between Qantas and Emirates was likely to reduce any "potential build-up" of further capacity in the market.

Oahu rail proposal

THE US Federal Transit Administration has finalised an agreement with officials in Hawaii which secures more than US\$1.5b in federal funding for a rail transit system in Honolulu.

The project will see the creation a modern public transport system for the city, set to open in 2019.



A HEARTY thanks was the order of the evening recently as the heads of Creative Holidays and New Horizons Holidays travelled to Bali to meet with key suppliers.

Some of the island's best performing hotels and ground operators were invited to a special soiree as thanks and recognition for their dedicated and tireless efforts serving the many passengers visiting Bali as customers of Creative and New Horizons Holidays.

Stylish Seminyak property The Legian was the setting for the occasion, with a number of special certificates & awards celebrating consistently strong growth in the ever-popular destination.

Pictured above at the event from left is Chris Evans, New Horizons Holidays managing director; Noline Dolman and Robert Kelsall from the Bali Dynasty Resort in Tuban with Creative Holidays managing director Paul McGrath on the right.

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Swagman trucking well in Kenya



SWAGMAN Africa recently took this lucky group of agents to Africa for a behind-the-scenes look at one of Kenya's great parks - the Lake Nakuru National Park.

They were joined by the park warden who showcased some rare sights including the Rhino Camp which is dedicated to the endangered Black Rhino.

The trip, which was conducted with the support of South African Airways, also saw the agents experience a hot air balloon safari, a cricket match and some traditional Samburu Dancing - as demonstrated by Swagman's Wayne Hamilton (right).

Pictured above at Lake Nakuru are, from left: Malcolm Hyslop, Travel Associates; Claus Dirnberger, Civic Travel; Wayne Hamilton, Swagman Africa; Chelsea Wood, Jetset Bunbury; John Wambua, Chief Warden Lake Nakuru National Park; Olivia Rabone, Jetset Hutt Street; Keeley Morehead, Harvey World Travel Mandurah; and Meredith Clark, HWT Esperance.

Best Western on strip

THE Best Western hotel group now has a presence on the iconic Las Vegas strip, after the 152-room Casino Royale became part of the Best Western Plus brand.

The property, which caters to "budget gamblers", is located between the Venetian and Harrah's, across the strip from Caesars Palace.

Wayne reaches for the sky...



UK consumer push

THE British Civil Aviation Authority has launched a major campaign to promote the benefits of the country's ATOL consumer protection scheme.

A special website is online at www.packpeaceofmind.co.uk, with the aim of reducing widespread confusion among travellers about whether or not their travel booking is covered.

In the UK travel companies which sell packaged "air holidays" must hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence which offers financial protection - but trips in which air is booked separately from other components are not covered by the scheme.

The CAA recently introduced new arrangements under which consumers receive an "ATOL Certificate" from their travel company as soon as they make any payment.

Greek tourism scandal

THE government of Greece has launched a probe into "irregularities" at the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNT0), which has recorded a €12m hole in its accounts.

Five people were this week arrested under suspicion of fraud after a former adviser to the body attempted to cash a forged cheque for €147,000 which had been made out to a hotel on one of the Greek islands - and that's reported to just be the tip of the corruption iceberg.

A separate investigation has been launched into the €12m in disparities found in the GNT0 books, with the organisation's general secretary, Panos Livadas, conceding there were "a few gaps in the accounts".

QM2 hygiene enhanced

CUNARD'S *Queen Mary 2* is the latest cruise liner to experience an outbreak of gastric disease, with the dreaded norovirus affecting passengers on its current cruise in the Caribbean.

Cunard downplayed the drama, saying that just 19 passengers were currently affected, but some of those on board complained that they were not allowed to shake hands with their shipmates on Christmas Day due to the possibility of transmission, and a range of other measures undertaken to minimise the spread of the ailment.

QM2 is now heading to Southampton in the UK, where her next voyage is a 72-day world cruise to Australia departing on 10 Jan.

Fourth PEK runway

OFFICIALS at Beijing Capital Airport are investigating the construction of a fourth runway, with the airport hitting the 80 million passenger milestone for 2012 late last week.

PEK is now the world's second busiest airport after Atlanta, and has grown its traffic from just 10 million passengers in 2000.



Window Seat

AS PART of preparations for the upcoming Superbowl 47, to be held in New Orleans, also known as "The Big Easy", US beer company Budweiser will brand a local hotel in its Bud Light brand.

The branding will see a succession of parties in line with the big football game from 31 Jan until 03 Feb, the day the Superbowl is due to take place.

An adjacent parking lot will be converted into a concert tent, with every little detail such as hand towels, pillows and even shampoos rebranded into Bud Light style merchandise.

For more info on the Bud Light Hotel see budlighthotel.com.

A NEW York bakery is set to become a tourist attraction after being named the best donut shop in America by the *USA Today* newspaper.

The store, simply named *Dough*, is located in Brooklyn, and its range includes such esoteric donut flavours as blood orange, passionfruit, hibiscus and even Earl Grey.

THIS bridge is right up Indiana Jones' alley.

Positioned at 3,200m over a glacier in the Swiss Alps, the world's highest suspension bridge - a pedestrian walkway no less - has opened, following a five-month construction process by daring engineers.

Entitled the Titlis Cliff Walk, the technical feat cost €1m to build, is just 1m wide and 110m long, and was built to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of a cableway linking the towns of Engelberg and Gerschnialp.





Brochures of the Week

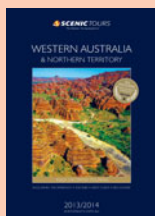
WELCOME to *Brochures of the Week*, *Travel Daily's* Mon feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



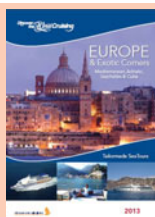
Explore Holidays - Britain & Ireland 2013
Spread across 200 detailed pages, Infinity Holidays has released a significant program with a brand new look and feel. Designed in the form of a coffee table book, the guide goes into more detail than ever before on the UK's regional offerings. Also included are highlights an extensive range of recommended experiences focusing on the customer experience. Chapters include details on the region's culinary offerings, cultural highlights, fashion / shopping, history, nature, spiritual, sports and product aimed at re-energising.



Norwegian Cruise Line - Hawaii 2013/14
NCL's *Pride of America* vessel continues its weekly circumnavigation of the Hawaiian Islands through 2014 and has released its first ever standalone brochure detailing ports-of-call and the highlights of the POA's onboard luxuries. Full deck plans, accommodation options and facilities, available itineraries and details on ports visited across Oahu, Maui, Kauai and Hawai'i.



Scenic Tours - Western Australia 2013/14
Many of the most picturesque and popular attractions and iconic sights such as Kakadu, Uluru, Kings Canyon and the Kimberleys are visited as part of the new range of all-inclusive journeys featured in the new guide to Australia's top-end with Scenic Tours. Accommodation offerings include luxury top-end lodges to a wide range of stylish hotels, itineraries include encounters with many different species of birds and animals in their natural habitats.



Discover the World Cruising - Europe & Exotic Corners
The range of small ship and yacht cruising available aboard Variety Cruises has been expanded for 2013 with a larger range of pre- and post-cruise land touring options aimed at enhancing any voyage in Latin America, the Seychelles and the Mediterranean. Some of the highlights in the guide include dynamically priced fares on Louis Cruises and a variety of special guest lecturers delivering informative seminars on multi-night journeys.

Cuba targeting 3m

THE Cuban Ministry of Tourism says the country is expecting to hit a target of 3 million foreign visitors in 2013.

Tourism minister Manuel Marrero said figures for 2012 to mid-Dec had reached 2.85 million, up about 5% on 2011.

Canada is Cuba's top source of visitation, while the UK is the country's biggest European market.

Tourism is the second biggest industry in Cuba.

Steamboat on sale

THE STEAMBOAT ski resort in the US Rocky Mountains is offering Australian skiers some special deals, including up to five nights free valid from 05 Jan through to the end of the season.

The resort has so far received more than 3m of snow and has a base of more than 1.2m across its 165 trails.

Offers include stay 10, pay 5 from \$1475pp including accom and lift passes - 1300 136 997.

Concordia removal

ITALIAN officials overseeing the removal of the *Costa Concordia* off the coast of the island of Giglio say they believe the wreck will be gone by around Sep 2013.

In a briefing to the local community this week a revised timeline was tentatively detailed, but is subject to significant uncertainty due to the "dynamic and unprecedented nature of this complex project".

The Titan-Miocoperi consortium now estimates the removal could be complete by the end of the Northern summer, but cannot fix a precise date for the completion.

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SAS seasonal Bangkok

SCANDINAVIAN Airlines is set to suspend year-round service from Copenhagen to Bangkok after almost 60 years of operation.

GDS displays show that flights will not operate on the route between 07 Apr and 21 Nov 2013, and will then resume three times weekly over the Northern Winter scheduling period.

WIN TWO NIGHTS IN AT FRASER PLACE MELBOURNE!



LEFT: Imelda Gunawan from Travelport's IT department has sent in this festive photo of the staff Christmas party.

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas."

Travel Daily's popular Christmas photo competition is back!



Fraser Place has arrived in Melbourne with the launch of the brand new studio suite accommodation in a quintessential Melbourne city laneway.

Our good friends at **Fraser Place Melbourne** want to celebrate the festive season with the travel industry, and are asking you to send in your work Christmas party photos throughout December.

At the end of the month, the judges will select their favourite photo and the person who submitted this will win two nights accommodation for two guests in a brand new Studio Deluxe Suite, buffet breakfast for two on both mornings, complimentary internet and midday check-out.

Bonus points will be awarded for photos that include a copy of the *Travel Daily* issue.

So get into the spirit and start snapping, then email your festive photos (including names of the people pictured) to:

xmasphotos@traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication. Produced each weekday since 1994, the newsletter is first with the latest industry news and is available by paid subscription to people within the travel industry. Sign up for a free 14 day trial subscription at www.traveldaily.com.au.

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Phone: 1300 799 220 Fax: 1300 799 221

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Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper
Editor: Guy Dundas
Contributors: Matt Lennon, Chantel Housler, Jenny Piper and Barry Matheson
Email: info@traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily Group:



Advertising and Marketing: Christie-Lee Lachance, Lisa Martin and Magda Herdzik
Email: advertising@traveldaily.com.au
Business Manager: Jenny Piper
Email: accounts@traveldaily.com.au