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Friday 22nd June 2012

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CZ's new SYD home

CHINA Southern Airlines will this weekend move into its own Sydney building, relocating its Australian headquarters from Bligh Street to 120 Clarence Street (corner of King and Clarence) this weekend.

Regional gm Australia and NZ, Henry He, said minimal disruption was expected, with the office to reopen at 9am sharp on Mon.

All contact numbers remain unchanged on 1300 889 628 and interstate and Auckland offices will operate as normal.

He said that CZ's duty manager at Sydney Airport can also be contacted on 02 8338 9808 if required during the relocation.

China Southern's Sydney real estate presence, first flagged in *TD* 19 Sep 2011, confirms its strong focus on the Aussie market.

QF urges SAA extension

QANTAS has lodged a formal application with the International Air Services Commission, asking for interim authorisation to extend its currently expiring codeshare with South African Airways until 31 Mar 2013 (*TD* breaking news).

The saga commenced late last year, when the IASC issued a shock ruling which would see the long-standing codeshare pact finish at the end of this year.

Qantas subsequently lodged legal action seeking a Judicial Review of the decision, but in May this year agreed to withdraw the application following discussions with the government.

A new letter from QF to the IASC unveiled yesterday confirms that Qantas is preparing a new application seeking continuation of the authorisation to codeshare with SAA on the Sydney-Johannesburg services, which will be lodged by 30 Jun.

However, the carriers say that "in order to continue to effectively operate and market seats" they require at least seven months of certainty - a six month booking window plus a month to unwind the arrangements in the event that the IASC once again declines to renew its authorisation for the codeshare.

Accordingly, Qantas is requesting that while the IASC considers its new application, the deadline for the wrap-up of the codeshare be extended by three months to 31 Mar.

The IASC is seeking submissions about the application, with a closing date of 05 Jul.

Scout says sorry

FLEDGLING low-cost long haul carrier Scout has apologised to passengers affected by a six hour departure delay on the Gold Coast earlier this week.

The carrier's Head of Commercial, Steven Greenway, cited technical issues including a cockpit computer warning and a fuel tank seal which needed replacement, and this combined with crew rest requirements created significant uncertainty for passengers waiting for the flight.

In a Facebook update, Greenway also used the incident to highlight the importance of travel insurance as well as ensuring sufficient time for connecting flights "because Scout, just like all other airlines, cannot take responsibility for your ongoing travel plans".

Scout launched the five times weekly Singapore-Gold Coast link just last week (*TD* 13 Jun).

Club Med for couples

CLUB Med is promoting its offerings for couples and honeymooners including four and five-trident resorts, luxury villas, spa treatments and premium sports offerings - for details see the **last page** of *TD* today.

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Now 27 in Star Alliance

THE Star Alliance has once again expanded, with the formal addition yesterday of South American carriers Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines.

The move sees Star boost its presence in Colombia, Peru and Panama - but is seen as confirmation that TAM Airlines will instead switch to oneworld once it finalises its merger with LAN Airlines.

Avianca and TACA serve more than 100 destinations around the world with a 150-strong aircraft fleet and 17,000 staff.

And Panama-based Copa Airlines, which is a long-time partner of United Airlines, operates flights to 64 destinations in 29 countries together with its newly rebranded Colombian offshoot, Copa Airlines Colombia.

Voyages dismay at QF cuts

THE timing of Qantas's decision to trim capacity to the Red Centre has earned the ire of the operators of the iconic Ayers Rock Resort.

Last month, QF announced it would cut one of two daily flights between Cairns & Ayers Rock from 01 Sep & suspend the Perth-Ayers Rock route on 28 Oct (TD 23 May).

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia took over ownership of Ayers Rock Resort in May 2011 and has been refreshing and repositioning the resort since that time, including introducing more indigenous experiences and staff (TD 16 May), the building of a conference centre aimed at the

MICE sector, and the upgrade of the five-star Sails in the Desert.

The latter projects are expected to be completed in mid-Oct.

MD Koos Klein told *Travel Daily* at ATE this week the Qantas move had appeared to not take into account the efforts Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia had invested in the Red Centre.

"We think that especially now, in the second half of the year, many of the new initiatives we have launched were just starting to gain traction.

"Maybe that decision from Qantas has not taken all of those new developments properly into consideration," Klein said.

However, the optimistic Klein added he believes "we have a good opportunity in the next 6 to 12 months to give Qantas a very good opportunity, based on sound principles, to reverse that decision."

He said the repositioning of Ayers Rock Resort as an Indigenous centre of excellence and tourism had gained renewed interest from buyers attending ATE in Perth, with some inbound markets, like the USA and China, showing signs of growth in the past year.

EY offering Dusseldorf

ETIHAD and its German partner Air Berlin are now both operating daily services on the Abu Dhabi to Dusseldorf route, according to an update provided by EY to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission yesterday.

EY was responding to a request for more information from the ACCC about overlapping routes, as the regulator considers the proposed cooperation agreement between Etihad and Air Berlin flagged last month (TD 10 May).

The ACCC has already granted interim approval for the carriers to begin joint marketing, with the document saying that since entering into their commercial cooperation deal, EY and Air Berlin now operate combined double daily services to Dusseldorf.

This "provides a platform to better compete with Emirates' double daily service, and maximises connections over Etihad and Air Berlin's respective hubs, providing both airlines' customers with greater choice and flexibility," Etihad said.

The Dusseldorf route is the only one where Air Berlin overlaps operations with Etihad.

The ACCC is continuing to consider the final approval of the Etihad/Airberlin agreement.

Directions 2013 conf

THE third annual Australian Tourism Directions Conference is to take place at Parliament House in Canberra on 01 Nov 2012.

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Travel Daily
on location in
Hamburg, Germany

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from the Airbus factory in Hamburg, Germany, where THAI Airways International will tomorrow unveil its first A380.

ANTICIPATION is at fever pitch within THAI Airways in the lead-up to the emergence of its first A380 superjumbo from the Airbus paint shop in Hamburg, Germany.

The aircraft has been here undergoing its final fitout, including cabin installation and painting, and once unveiled will be added to the TG fleet.

THAI will become the ninth A380 operator, and says it plans to deploy the aircraft on its "premier routes from Bangkok to Europe" - understood to include flights to Frankfurt and Paris after a bedding-in period which will see the A380 also operating to Hong Kong and Singapore.

TG has six A380s on order, and is expecting that three of these will be in service before the end of the year with the other three to follow during 2013.

The seating configuration in THAI's A380s is expected to comprise 507 seats - 12 in Royal First Class, 60 in Royal Silk (business) Class, and 435 in Economy.

Interestingly, TG will also fit out its A380s with seven galleys and food service stations - more than any other A380 operator.

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Outrigger: Hawaii still underserved

HAWAIIAN hotelier Outrigger Enterprise Group has welcomed new extra Hawaiian Airlines capacity announced this week between Australia and the Aloha State, saying its a 'win-win' for inbound and outbound tourism.

On Wed, HA confirmed it would inaugurate new thrice weekly services between Brisbane and Honolulu, starting 28 Nov 2012.

Speaking with **Travel Daily** from Honolulu, Outriggers' exec vice president of Hospitality Services Barry Wallace said Outrigger

Hotels & Resorts "is sure to benefit" from the new Hawaiian flights."

HA's Brisbane route is "excellent news for Hawaii," and supports exponential growth from this market in recent years, but, "by historic standards and based on current market feedback, Hawaii is still underserved from Australia."

"Hawaiian's new service to Brisbane should also provide a nice return benefit, making Surfers Paradise & Tropical North Queensland more accessible to our Hawaii residents who want to explore 'down under'," he added.

OHR operates 24 Ohana and Outrigger branded properties in the Hawaiian Islands, and has Outrigger hotels scattered across Thailand, China, Bali, Vietnam, Guam, Fiji and Australia.

"Australia has embraced the Outrigger brand over the years, and the affection is mutual.

"We currently operate four hotels in Queensland, so there is familiarity with our brand, which we expect will translate into extra bookings by Aussies's flying out of Brisbane," Wallace told **TD**.

Orion discount

ORION Expedition Cruises is reminding agents its guaranteed savings for all sailing dates between 16 Feb 2013 and 28 Feb 2014 will cease next Fri 29 Jun 2012, with the inventory then becoming yield managed.

From that date onwards the savings and specific stateroom category availability will change by destination and departure.

Current deals on offer include 25% of 2013 Kimberley cruises, starting at 10 nights from \$7035.

GlobalStar ups Sweden

THE GlobalStar Travel Management group has added two new partners in Sweden, further expanding its worldwide reach which includes Australian-listed TMC Corporate Travel Management.

The new Swedish partners are Koch & Ljungberg as well as Foretagsresor, lifting GlobalStar's locations in the country to three.

EK A380 Gatwick 1-off

EMIRATES will become the first carrier to fly an A380 superjumbo to London Gatwick Airport, when it operates a one-off service from Dubai to the hub on 06 Jul.

The special flights, EK015 inbound and EK016 outbound, will replace one of Emirates' three daily Gatwick services on the day.

HBA waterfront rejig

THE Federal govt has today announced the signing of a \$50m deal with the Tasmanian govt to transform the Macquarie Points Railyard on Hobart's waterfront, to "capture its economic, cultural and tourism potential."



Window Seat

SPACE tourists wanting to go further than just a low earth orbit are being invited to submit expressions of interest for the first ever tours to the moon.

A company curiously named Excalibur Almaz, based in the Isle of Man, has acquired two Soviet-era 'Almaz' space stations which he plans to convert into spaceships complete with re-entry capsules.

Fares are expected to amount to about £100m (A\$154m) for the round trip to the moon which could launch by 2015.

Founder Art Dula says he's conducted market research which estimates that the company could sell about 30 tickets between 2015 and 2025 which he said is "enough for one mission a year".

He said that unlike Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic space "sightseeing tours" the Excalibur trips would be more of a "private expedition".

Korea 2012 VISIT KOREA YEAR

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ABOVE: Worldmark Travel was the winner of \$10,000 courtesy of Consolidated Travel and Etihad in their recent joint incentive.

Steve Alysandratos from Consolidated Travel and Georgina Davies of Etihad Airways are **pictured** above handing over the giant novelty cheque to Joe

Khoury from Worldmark Travel.

Worldmark's 25 word entry in the competition was:

Etihad - Great airline, exceptional service, outstanding fares, fantastic rewards program.

Our guests love Etihad and always refer other pax, giving great feedback and ease to book!

CATO agt sympathies

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators has extended its condolences to the family and friends of Perth-based agent Michelle Smith who was killed in Phuket while on an Asia Escape Holiday famil (**TD** yesterday).

GM Peter Bailey said CATO condemned the "criminal act", but believes due to its randomness, it should not deter Australians from continuing to travel to Phuket.

Asia Escape Holidays is an active member of CATO.

DFAT on Phuket

THE Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has not changed its travel advice for Thailand, despite the tragic murder of an Australian travel agent in Phuket this week.

A Smartraveller spokesperson told **Travel Daily** yesterday that "as with all advisories, Thailand is kept under constant review".

Tiger toppled by QF

TIGER Airways' nine-month long reign as the leading major domestic carrier for best on time performance for both arrivals and departures has come to an end.

While Tiger maintained its top spot for departures in May at 90.1%, the no-frills airline was pipped by Qantas for arrivals - which had 88.1% arrive on time - according to government on time performance stats revealed today.

For departures, Qantas flights departed 89.5% of the time as scheduled, then Virgin Australia at 87.5%, and Jetstar (79.6%).

For arrivals, TT followed QF at 87.6%, then DJ (85.9%) & JQ (79.4%).

Nothing like New York

HOLLYWOOD mega-star Hugh Jackman will preview a screening of Tourism Australia's new phase of its *There's Nothing like Australia* campaign in The Big Apple on Sat when he hosts Tropfest New York.

Escape winter from \$2328 business class to Asia

[Click here for more details](#)



Going Beyond love

BEYOND Travel has released a new selection of special romance and honeymoon packages in Prague and Vienna, which it says are perfect for Europe stopovers or pre/post river cruise holidays.

Five night packages start at \$580pp in Prague - more info on 1300 363 554.

AF/KL to slash staff

AIR France/KLM has announced plans to reduce AF staff numbers by more than 5,000 (**TD** 22 May) by the end of 2013 as it battles the ongoing European downturn.

CEO Alexandre de Juniac said the carrier "is facing a fundamental choice about its future," with labour contracts a significant impediment to being able to compete with low cost rivals and soaring fuel prices.

Brand USA defence

BRAND USA, formed last year as the peak body to market the US as a tourism destination, has been forced to defend itself against allegations of "waste and misuse of funds" by several US senators.

Six Republican senators wrote to the US Commerce Department seeking a "clearer understanding of the operations of the corporation and its oversight by the department," amid claims that organisation's entire board had held a meeting in London which coincided with World Travel Market late last year.

Brand USA chair, Caroline Beteta, said that the board members did not travel at the company's expense, and pledged to provide any requested financial information to the senators on the operation of the corporation.

Advertising Assistant - Temp 3 month contract

Travel Daily, Australia's favourite travel industry publication and its associated titles **Cruise Weekly**, **Pharmacy Daily** and **Business Events News** are looking for an advertising assistant on a short-term basis to fill in for an annual leave position on a three month contract.

The role will involve liaising with our extensive client base, using desktop publishing programs to help with daily production of our newsletters, coordinating advertising and competitions for our various titles.

Requirements:

- Desktop publishing experience is essential, preferably with Adobe Indesign.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Sound knowledge of Microsoft Office also essential.
- Ability to work to deadlines, with a keen eye for detail.
- Friendly, well presented and outgoing team player.

Join the fun and friendly team at our office in Epping NSW from July 2012. This is a chance to get valuable experience in the dynamic publishing industry.

Applications, which will be treated in strict confidence, should be made in writing to jobs@traveldaily.com.au by Mon 2nd July.



Technology Update

Today's Technology Update is brought to you by Tramada Systems Pty Ltd.

Giant leap forward for leisure clients



Technology companies can't be all things to all people; great technology requires experience, focus and commitment. The choice of technology shouldn't involve compromising on one product area at the expense of another. To do this partnerships and integrations are the way to go.

We have been working with Tourism Technology, the owners of Calypso Travel System to integrate CalypsoNet with tramada®next gen. Calypso clients include Qantas Holidays, Creative Holidays, Infinity Holidays and many more; it is the travel industry's clear choice for online wholesaler access. Graeme Hunter, Tourism Technology's CEO is as excited as we are about the initiative and supporting retail agents by providing a seamless booking and processing solution.

We are thrilled to have developed the 'proof of concept' with the **first successful booking downloading to the Tramada system.** We are working with our clients on this project and are targeting process improvements that will save consultants at least one hour per day.

This work goes to the core of the tramada value proposition of process improvement and data integrity. We offer multiple credit card feeds, multiple reporting solution integrations, multiple booking engines and much, much more.

The Calypso Travel System integration represents our continual effort to deliver a more rounded Tramada Solution and we believe it is the single biggest step forward for leisure agents in a decade.

Jo O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer
Tramada Systems Pty Ltd



Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 15th Jun 2012

LM secret celebration

ONLINE accommodation seller LastMinute.com.au is celebrating the sixth birthday of its Secret Hotel concept by releasing a sale from \$100pn on Australia/NZ hotels and from \$50pn in Asia.

The company's gm Kirsty Harrison said the idea has grown in popularity in recent years.

"A Secret Hotel room sells every four minutes on lastminute.com.au and they continue to be our most popular product," Harrison said.

VisitBritain sport stars

FORMER heavyweight boxing champion Lennox Lewis is among a host of sporting stars tasked by VisitBritain as the countdown to the London Olympics nears its end.

Ryder Cup golf winning captain Colin Montgomerie and three-time Wimbledon tennis champ Boris Becker are others recruited to promote the cause, with Becker humourously quipping: "I've been called Britain's favourite German, but quite honestly I don't think the list is very long."

Destination Flavour

MASTERCHEF winner Adam Liaw will headline a new gourmet food and travel TV program titled *Destination Flavour*, to debut on SBS ONE at 8pm on 16 Aug.

The ten-part series will focus on varieties of cooking, dining and overall "culinary compass" in the Australian food world.

SBS *Food Investigators* host Renee Lim and *Letters & Numbers* compere Lily Serna will join Liaw in fronting the new program.

Keith Prowse's kings of KE



KEITH Prowse celebrated its new partnership with the Jetset Travelworld Group by running an incentive in conjunction with Korean Air to send one lucky agent to the Wimbledon Tennis Championships later this month.

The winning agent was Tina Pizzoni from HWT Roma Street in

Brisbane, who was unable to attend and gave her prize to her overjoyed boss Tom Fischer.

Flying to London with KE, Tom and his wife will be in Reserved seats for a day of tennis action.

Tina is **pictured** receiving her prize from John Godwin of Keith Prowse and Cameron Brown, KE.

Irish appeal to the Gathering

TOURISM Ireland has highlighted sightseers, culture-seekers, people in the 25-34 and +55 age ranges, and the Irish diaspora as its key marketing targets for the 2013 Irish Gathering event.

The segments are a result of an increased focus on the Australian market, encouraging Aussie travellers to holiday in Ireland.

Capable of catering to a huge variety of tastes and interests, Ireland is focusing on these core markets as it looks to further stimulate already impressive growth figures from Australia.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, Tourism Ireland Ambassador Noel White said the numbers arriving into Ireland were already strong.

"Australia is the seventh largest market for holidaymakers to the island of Ireland - in 2010, the figure (of Australians visiting Ireland) was around 120,000".

"Final figures for 2011 aren't available yet but we're looking at a growth rate of 7-8% and we're expecting a final figure of at least 5-7%," Ambassador White said.

Despite a continued awareness operating across Australia, White said the core focus at the moment was NSW and Victoria due to a 60% majority of Australian visitors originating from the two states.

Ambassador White said interest levels in the 2013 Gathering were strong, but exact results wouldn't be clear for some time yet.

"Certainly at an anecdotal level at this point, we're getting very good engagement across our embassy network and across the Tourism Ireland network and their offices around the world".

"If tourists are going as far as to England or Wales, it makes sense at that point to go the rest of the way across to Ireland and we think tourists will be pleasantly surprised when they get there".

"We think it's an idea whose time has come," White concluded.

WestJet/MU codeshare

CANADIAN carrier WestJet will carry the China Eastern Airlines MU code on services in the US from 01 Jul under a new pact confirmed overnight.

The partnership will see China Eastern become the sixth carrier to codeshare on WestJet services.



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Evergreen's Silver quizmaster

WITH a luxurious stateroom on the line, it was Darren Llewellyn from Gympie Getaway Travel who had all the answers in Evergreen Tours' Europe River Cruising product online competition, successfully completing a 30-minute webinar to win.

Darren's prize was a free stateroom on a 2013 sailing onboard the new *ms Amadeus Silver* river vessel.

Pictured right presenting Darren with his fantastic prize is Evergreen Tours bdm Leanne Willmot.



Wyndham milestone

WYNDHAM Hotel Group has opened its 500th property in the Asia-Pacific region following the launch of the Super 8 Nanjing Shan Xi Lu in China Jiangsu region.

VX adjusts FLL

VIRGIN America will add a third daily Los Angeles-Fort Lauderdale flight from 15 Nov this year, with the seasonal expansion of the route coming about a month earlier than initially planned.

Hertz Smart in Italy

HERTZ has announced the addition of Smart Fortwo electric vehicles which will be available for rental from the Rome Tiburtina and Rome Ostiense train stations, in partnership with European private high speed railway operator Italo-NTV.

The electric vehicles can be booked from €8 per hour online at www.hertzitaitalo.it and will be powered by charging units provided by Italian energy utility firm Enel.

Orbitz roll out iUpdate

ORBITZ have relaunched its app for the iPad/iPhone following improvements to search speed, sort and filtering in addition to discounts only for mobile bookings.



Travel Specials

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Travel, for
travel people

THIS week's *Travel Specials* is brought to you by **Travel Industry Club**. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au.

Asia is on special through the **Travel Industry Club**, with a special sale on **Emirates** seats to Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok starting at \$599 plus tax from MEL to KUL. Great Business-class fares starting at \$2749 are also available. To book, contact TIC on (02) 9700 8711.

With the sun shining, fish biting and warm waters, now is the time to head to Tropical North Queensland. Savings of up to 20% are available on stays of 3-nights or more via a **Tropical Winter Sun Getaway** at any of the three **Rydges** properties in Cairns - Rydges Esplanade, Rydges Tradewinds or Rydges Plaza. Valid for stays from 01 Jul to 30 Sep. Rates start at \$136 per room per night, and to book, visit www.rydges.com.

Norway's glorious autumn conditions just became more attractive with special half-board fares available with **Hurtigruten**. Available on selected voyages in Aug, Sep and Oct this year, cruises start from £631 for an inside cabin on a **6-day Kirkenes to Bergen voyage**, with outside cabins starting at £704. To book, email hurtigruten@discovertheworld.com.au.

WIN A TRIP TO GREECE

Throughout June, **Travel Daily** is giving one lucky travel consultant reader the chance to win an amazing 7-day escorted "Highlights of Greece" tour, courtesy of **Sun Island Tours** and **Etihad Airways**.

The prize includes two return economy airfares to Athens with Etihad, airport transfers, six nights' accommodation, six breakfasts, three dinners, tours with licensed guide as per itinerary, entrance fees and local taxes.

Every day **Travel Daily** will be featuring a photo of a Sun Island Tours' staff member enjoying a different destination from their brochures. You just have to identify the city or landmark and email us your answer. There will be 20 questions in total, which will also be posted on our website. In the final (20th) day you will be asked a creative question.

At the end of the month the subscriber with the most correct answers and the most creative response to the final question will win.



Where is Karen today?

Email your answers to: sunislandcomp@traveldaily.com.au

Hint! Go to Sun Island Tours' Facebook page or visit www.sunislandtours.com.au

Click here for more information



Getaway goes Troppo

TOMORROW'S episode of Channel 9's *Getaway* travel show, screening at 5:30pm, will feature sun-drenched destinations such as Bali, Phuket, Fiji, Hawaii and Queensland's Great Barrier Reef.

British bus chaos

VISITORS to London are expected to be significantly disrupted tomorrow by bus driver strike action announced by the activist union Unite, which is seeking a £500 "Olympic bonus" for drivers.

QR to Mozambique

QATAR Airways will expand its reach in Africa with the launch of services to Maputo, Mozambique (via Johannesburg), from 31 Oct.

The service, Qatar Airways' 20th African destination, will be operated thrice weekly utilising long-haul Boeing 777 aircraft.

Maputo continues QR's recent expanded operations, with flights to Perth commencing in early Jul, along with Kilimanjaro, Tanzania and followed by Mombasa, Kenya, from 15 Aug.

Snow conditions

WELCOME to TD's regular snow conditions update, providing info on the latest snow falls, depths and lifts in operation across key Australia and New Zealand ski-fields.

Here's the latest snow reports:

- Falls Creek - 50cm / 5 lifts
- Perisher - 46.4cm / 16 lifts
- Thredbo - 46.4cm / 6 lifts
- Charlotte Pass - 46.4cm / 4 lifts
- Mt Hotham - 75cm / 5 lifts
- Mt Baw Baw - 12cm / 3 lifts
- Mt Buller - 20cm / 4 lifts
- Coronet Peak - 30cm / 5 lifts
- The Remarkables - 20cm / 6 lifts
- Mt Hutt - 75cm / 4 lifts

Transaero firms A380s

RUSSIAN carrier Transaero has finalised its order with Airbus for a fleet of four A380 aircraft.

The deal follows the signing of an MoU last year (**TD** 31 Oct).

The confirmed order will see Transaero Airlines become the first A380 customer in Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe.

The curtain comes down for Get Swissed

Thursday 21st Jun 2012

RIGHT: One final send-off cheer from the Get Swissed group, certain to recommend Switzerland to their clients once they return to Australia.



BELOW: Jessica Halliday, Bree Sarkies and Breanna Ewen admire the numerous historical and cultural landmarks that border the Seine River, such as the National Assembly building and the Grand Palais.



BELOW: Lisa Koskinen, Amanda Seymour-Munn, Leanne Mackenzie and Kylie Dunn had a bucket list of monuments to visit following the Seine river cruise including the Arc de Triomphe and the Louvre.



Swiss Pass sales soar

SWISS Travel System has reported a record 21% year-on-year growth in retail sales of the Swiss travel pass in 2011.

The pass, available in 4, 8, 15, 22 or 30 days duration, allows travel with 300 different public transport operators including train, bus and boat as well as a range of discounts on attractions.



LEFT: The famous Champs Elysee avenue, chestnut tree lined as viewed from the top of the Arc de Triomphe, it is often called the world's most beautiful street.



ABOVE: After cruising the Seine, a crème brûlée was next on order with lunch off the Champs Elysee.

WHILE the weather was not spectacular, the mood and the spirits of the Get Swissed agents was far from dampened as their last day in Europe (for most anyway) was spent in a variety of ways, no less exciting than others.

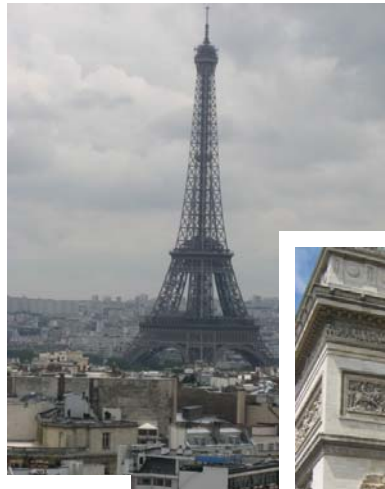
The day started with a sights cruise on the Seine, past famous monuments such as the Notre Dame cathedral, Eiffel Tower and Pont Neuf, the oldest bridge in France, which dates back to the 16th century.

The rest of the day was entirely at leisure, with many choosing to go shopping, while others dined in French restaurants and some went to explore monuments in greater depth at their own pace.

All in all, the entire journey was an extraordinary experience, with lots of photos, many new friends and many lasting memories.

LEFT: Viewed from the top of the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower is as impressive as if one was standing directly underneath.

BELOW: The famous Arc is a monument to French soldiers fallen in World War 1, and is an impressive one at that.



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