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First with the news

Wednesday 28th November 2012

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QF splits with Tourism Aust

QANTAS has suspended its \$50m global marketing alliance with Tourism Australia (**TD** breaking news), due to moves by TA chairman Geoff Dixon to destabilise the airline's strategy.

QF confirmed the move this morning, with a spokesperson saying the airline "cannot continue to collaborate with an agency whose Chairman is a member of a syndicate committed to unravelling Qantas' structure and direction."

However the airline said it remains committed to supporting Australian tourism, and that "not one dollar will be removed from tourism marketing as a consequence of this decision".

QF's head of external affairs,

Andrew McGinnes, told **TD** that the suspension includes both Qantas and Jetstar initiatives, but "to avoid penalising the tourism industry" will not include some key activity already under way - including QF's support for ATEC's annual Meeting Place event which takes place in Sydney tomorrow.

Qantas ceo Alan Joyce has today emailed tourism industry stakeholders to assure them that current campaigns will be maintained, with the airline also continuing its commitment to G'day USA and Australian Tourism Exchange.

"This was not a decision that we took lightly," he said, adding that "I have to do everything possible to protect our business".

He said Qantas would begin negotiations to use its marketing funds elsewhere, including via cooperative marketing with State Tourism Organisations.

Tourism Australia wasn't able to comment on the suspension before **TD's** deadline today.

C&K boosts brochure

COX & KINGS has added 24 pages to its Small Group & Private Journeys brochure for 2013, with the 100-page program now including new destinations incl Crete, Ecuador, Andalucia and the Turkish Black Sea - 1300 836 764.

QR 787 showcase

QATAR Airways will demonstrate its 787 Dreamliner product to Perth travel agents in an upcoming breakfast seminar.

QR will become the first airline to commercially operate the 787 to Australia next month, with the session taking place next Wed 05 Dec - to attend email syp@qatarairways.com.

Special fares are also on offer to celebrate increased Perth capacity to daily flights next Sun 02 Dec starting at \$1493 PER-LHR including taxes - details in GDS and on the **front full page** of today's **Travel Daily**.

A bumper issue

Travel Daily today has nine pages of news and photos, a front full page for **Qatar Airways** plus full pages: (**click**)

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Contiki marketing mgr

THE Travel Corporation's youth brand Contiki has named Toni Ambler as its new Head of Marketing.

Ambler moves from the tour operator's office in London where she was Global Brand Manager.

Hawaiian debuts BNE route

HAWAIIAN Airlines ceo Mark Dunkerley says the carrier's new direct flights between Brisbane and Honolulu are likely to appeal to US inbound travellers as well as servicing strong demand for Hawaii travel from Queenslanders.

The thrice weekly service (see p4) kicks off today, and Dunkerley told **TD** the airline was "very pleased with the initial response".

He said such was demand that HA had made the "unprecedented" move of already announcing supplementary services during the Mar-Apr peak (**TD** 25 Oct).

"It's off to as good a start as we could have hoped," he said.

Hawaiian is now the only US carrier to operate flights to the Qld capital, with this afternoon's BNE departure to be accompanied by hula dancers and

the sounds of strumming ukeleles.

"Brisbane is a gateway not only to south east Queensland but to the rest of the Sunshine State, from the Great Barrier Reef to the legendary outback, both of which are iconic and popular drawcards for visitors from the US," he said.

The flights link with onward HA services to nine mainland USA ports including its recently added New York flights.

Hawaiian's existing interline partnership with Virgin Australia includes the ability for Velocity members to earn or redeem points on HA services, with Dunkerley saying he was keen to deepen ties with Virgin, including an eventual codeshare deal.

Toga Qantas.com sale

QANTAS has launched a 72 hour online hotel sale, offering double Qantas Frequent Flyer points and savings of 20-25% on Toga hotels across Australia incl Adina, Vibe, Medina and Travelodge, for stays 14 Dec-11 Feb.

Royal Caribbean INTERNATIONAL

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Sheraton agent deal

SHERATON on the Park in Sydney is offering room rates from \$239 per night for travel trade professionals.

The offer is valid until 31 Jan 2013, with director of sales & marketing Daniella Tonetto saying she hoped industry colleagues would rejuvenate themselves as well as enjoying Sydney's sights.

She said the hotel looks forward to "reinforcing our standing both as a leisure as well as a MICE hotel among the trade" - more details on 1800 325 3535.

Sabre Online upgrade

SABRE Online has enhanced its offering with new Google Maps functionality, allowing corporate travellers to view the location of selected preferred hotels, non-preferred hotels and company offices, which are automatically imported from Sabre Agency Manager.

The corporate booking tool also now allows customers to book domestic Air New Zealand Seat Only fares in combination with other offerings.

Sabre Chief Information Officer, Mark Mison, said use of Sabre Online had grown 39% year-on-year in Oct 2012.

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TRAVELSCAPE

QF leads on time, but only just

QANTAS has maintained its hold on being the most reliable major domestic carrier for getting flights away on time in Oct, with latest govt data showing 86.3% of services departed as scheduled.

The Australian flag-carrier was very closely followed by rival, Virgin Australia, on 86.2%.

Tiger Airways proved to be more consistent than Jetstar for on time performance departures, on 79.7% and 76.6% respectively.

With 90.6%, regional carrier Regional Express trumped all the major carriers during the month.

QF achieved the highest on time arrivals among major domestic carriers at 84.6%, followed by DJ at 82.3%, TT (76.9%) & JQ (76.7%).

The Darwin-Sydney route was the best for flights departing on

time at 96.4% and the Sydney-Darwin pairing most likely to see services arrive on time, at 97.3%.

Port Lincoln was the top airport for departures and arrivals.

Flight cancellations, accounting for 1.3% of Oct's planned ops, were at a four month low.

Cancellations were highest on the Perth-Newman return route at 3.8%, with Qantas ditching a total of 14 services.

Over all routes operated by participating airlines, the on time performance average for both departures and arrivals improved on last year, at 83.4% and 80.8%.

Ascott Doha premiere

THE Ascott Limited group has opened its first premier serviced residence in Qatar, boosting its presence in the Middle East to over 1,000 apartments.

The 229-unit Ascott Doha is located in the diplomatic centre of the city at the northern end of the Corniche waterfront precinct.

Capt. Cook kids free

CHILDREN accompanying a paying adult on select dining and sightseeing cruises on Sydney Harbour will cruise for free from now through until 31 Mar 2013.

The Captain Cook Cruises deal is valid on the Weekend Breakfast, Buffet Lunch and Sydney Harbour Coffee cruises, along with the Hop on Hop off Harbour Explorer sailings - phone (02) 9206 1111.

Marvellous 2013 deals

TRAVEL Marvel is offering a companion fly free deal to South America and savings of up to \$700 per couple on select 2013 tours as it releases a batch of new early booking deals today.

Offers apply to trips in South America, Vietnam, Western Australia and Tasmania.

Tourism Technology & Training forum

MUNDUS Education Corporation, Amadeus IT Pacific & Academies Australasia will host the Tourism Educators Forum in Sydney next month at Diamant Hotel.

The forum delves into changing business and training models necessitated by new technologies and recent events.

Partners include Qantas, HWT and Mobile Travel Agents.

The event is on 07 Dec - details at www.mundus.com/forum.

Karen Conlon to O-E

ORIENT-EXPRESS has announced the appointment of Karen Conlon as Director of Sales - Australia & NZ for the group's Trains & Cruises collection.

The newly-created role follows marked growth in Australian revenue for the products, according to global sales and marketing director, Marco Rosa.

Conlon started on 01 Nov, moving from her previous role as State Manager ACT/NSW for Jetset Travelworld Network.



Window Seat

ONLY in Las Vegas.

The latest attraction to be announced in the Nevada casino capital is "SlotZilla" - the world's first powered-launch zipline.

The thrill ride will be created in downtown Las Vegas in the first half of 2013 - and naturally will be fashioned in the form of the world's largest slot machine.

The rider will be the "jackpot," being fired up to 500m into the air before exiting the device via the 'pay table and coin tray'.

SlotZilla will be created as part of the Fremont Street Experience, which is a five block entertainment district which attracts more than 15 million visitors every year.

AND while we're on the subject of Las Vegas, it turns out that Aussies really love another new attraction.

Machine Guns Vegas, which opened earlier this year (**TD** 08 Mar), has recorded record visitation from Down Under, with 10% of guests being from Australia.

The attraction allows rental of a range of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, which can be fired on a 10,000 square foot indoor shooting range.

Ironically the founder of the attraction is the militarily-named Genghis Cohen.

VISITORS to Tokyo this Christmas should check out a jewellery store in the upmarket Ginza district, which is selling a solid gold festive tree for around \$4 million.

The Ginza Tanaka outlet created the "ornament" using 40kg of pure gold, with the tree decorated with gold plate cutouts of 50 Disney characters.

If the price is a little steep, the shop offers a smaller version, about 25cm high with 20 Disney characters, for just \$250,000.

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Travel Daily

on location in
Phuket, Thailand

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from the inaugural "Experience Asia" Jetstar family trip, attended by six top-selling JQ agents from Australia & NZ

TO SAY that Phuket has a unique party & nightlife scene is probably putting it mildly.

Those who have experienced it may have other words for it, and for those who haven't, it may be fair to say there are no words that can do it adequate justice.

Last night's partying was preceded with an amazing visit to the Phuket Fantasea dinner and show experience, which truly left the group spellbound throughout.

After a free day today, the group met with their hosts from Accor for a farewell dinner ahead of the tour's next stop - Kuala Lumpur.

More coverage on **page six**.

Suspected pirates follow ship

THE Azamara Journey had a brief encounter with pirates off the coast of Oman on Friday after it was "aggressively approached" by several small boats, according to a report in the *Muscat Daily*.

When crew spotted the vessels, the captain engaged evasive action and directed passengers to move away from the exteriors areas of the ship.

The skiffs withdrew within 15 minutes and *Journey* resumed its itinerary.

Amtrak Hols boost

US rail operator Amtrak has more than doubled departures in 2013 for its escorted journey program, as well as significantly boosting availability for its FIT packages.

Amtrak has also launched a new Celebrity Cruises partnership offering two rail/sail itineraries.

HA says aloha to BNE ohana



HAWAIIAN Airlines will this week take flight on its newest Australian route, with direct services between Honolulu and Brisbane commencing from Wed.

With the anticipation building, the carrier joined with Hawaii Tourism Oceania to give Brisbane Airport staff a taste of things to come, decorating BNE crew with a variety of colourful flower leis.

The carrier conducted a fun, yet informative presentation on the wonders of the islands of Aloha over coffee and afternoon tea.

Details on the wide variety of attractions available across the islands were delivered, leaving the attendees eager to greet the waves of Hawaiian passengers arriving from HNL from this week.

In addition to three services per week to the Queensland capital, Hawaiian will cater to what has been overwhelming demand from passengers by flying an additional 18 services between Mar & May.

Brisbane Airport's staff are **pictured** above enjoying the pre-celebrations thrown by Hawaiian.



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St Arnaud clients love safaris

STEPHEN Greenall of St Arnaud's Travel Centre in north-west Melbourne knows his clients love African safaris.

He sold the most across Australia during Sep & Oct as part of an exclusive Travellers Choice incentive run by The Africa Safari Co.

Over the two months, Greenall sold the most land-based product through the African specialist wholesaler, and for his efforts picked up a \$1000 Coles Myer Gift Card, and is pictured above being presented with his prize by The Africa Safari Co ceo Susie Potter.



GA boosts Amsterdam

GARUDA Indonesia will boost flights on its Jakarta-Abu Dhabi-Amsterdam route from four to six per week effective 22 Jun.

The route was previously operated daily, but then reduced to four weekly in Mar this year.

easyJet allocates

EUROPEAN low-cost carrier easyJet has today introduced allocated seating on all of its flights, with the significant move touted as the "single biggest change the airline has undertaken in its history".

The carrier trialled allocated seating in Apr, and in response to very positive feedback has decided to roll it out across the network.

According to easyJet it's responding to passenger research which "showed that the boarding process could be a source of stress for some customers, and in some case, a barrier to them flying with easyJet".

Under the new arrangements passengers are able to pay to select a particular seat, but also "thanks to a sophisticated algorithm" those who don't pay to select a seat will in most cases be seated with the other passengers in their booking.

Prices for seat selection range from £12 for extra leg room, £8 for emergency exits and the first few rows, to £3 for any other seat.

IATA links with ARC

THE International Air Transport Association has formalised its links with US-based Airlines Reporting Corp, with IATA senior vice president Alex Popovich appointed to ARC's Travel Executive Council, which works to maintain dialogue with the travel agency community.

EK ramps up Glasgow

EMIRATES has added a second daily Boeing 777-300ER on the Dubai-Glasgow route from 01 Jan.

Replacing an Airbus A340-300 on Flights EK25/26, the capacity boost will add over 650 seats a week in each direction to GLA.

Mekong short cruises

PANDAW River Cruisers is offering new four day cruises aboard *RV Mekong Pandaw*, with departures from Dec 2012-Mar 2013 - details 1300 302 068.

Strong growth for Back-Roads

FLIGHT Centre-owned Back-Roads Touring has recorded its best ever year, with revenue up 83% and a 62% increase in passenger numbers from Australia so far in 2012.

"2012 has been our best year on record with our key programs in France and Italy, *La Belle France* and *Italian Indulgence*, being particularly successful," said gm Brad John-Davis.

He said the operator was expecting an even stronger year ahead, with a range of exciting developments and additions now in place.

"We have branched out into new destinations, upgraded our accommodation, placed greater emphasis on food, drink and local produce and introduced more local experiences," he said.

The Back-Roads programs are capitalising on strong demand for small group touring, with additions for 2013 including the 8-day *Discover Portugal & Galicia* and the 7-day *Croatia & the*

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Dalmatian Coast.

Dining experiences include lunch at Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant in Cornwall, as well as a vineyard lunch in Provence and a cooking class with a local chef in Tuscany, Italy.

John-Davis said that people were "increasingly being put off by large group tours featuring flag-waving guides, big buses, chain hotels, bad food and touristy experiences".

He said Back-Roads accom offerings now included rustic rural retreats, traditional inns, old country hotels and castles such as the Chateau de la Bourdaisiere in France's Loire Valley.

VA expands ANA pact

VIRGIN Atlantic has boosted its codeshare agreement with Japanese Star Alliance member ANA, with the VA code now available on flights from Tokyo Narita to Fukuoka, Osaka Itami, Sapporo and Sendai airports.



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Dubai theme park

THE first phase of Dubai's new entertainment development at Jebel Ali will be completed in 2014, according to the developer Meraas Holding.

The precinct will include five movie-based theme parks including Dubai Adventure Studios and Bollywood Parks.

Tourico adds Accor

GLOBAL accommodation wholesaler Tourico has signed an agreement with Accor which will see the French hospitality giant distribute its portfolio through Tourico's customers.

Initially 400 Accor properties will be available on Tourico's Direct Connect program, with a total of 1200 hotels across 92 countries to be added by the end of 2014.

The Direct Connect link offers dynamic inventory and real-time rates and availability, and already features partnerships a range of suppliers incl Hilton Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels, Choice Hotels and Best Western.

Royal Princess unveils new cabanas

PRINCESS Cruises has revealed enhancements to its two most popular areas on *Royal Princess*, debuting in June 2013.

The Sanctuary and the adults-only pool will offer private cabanas for the first time and be larger than those on its other ships, the company said.

Royal Princess' Sanctuary will also have rock gardens and atmospheric lighting leading to a new central pavilion.

Private spaces comes at a cost: US\$15 for a half day, \$25 for a full day, per person; \$80 for half a day in a cabana.

Guests who book the Lotus Spa cabanas can enjoy alfresco massages, a television and ocean views.

The Retreat Pool's cabana rental starts at US\$50.

Centara Mauritius

THE new Centara Poste Lafayette Resort & Spa in Mauritius will officially open on 10 Dec, five days ahead of schedule.

The 100 room property is located on the coast road on the eastern side of the island, about an hour's drive from Mauritius International Airport and offers a spa, kids club and much more.

Heading off track in Phuket



ABOVE: All smiles with their time in Phuket, the group were presented with special visors to show their appreciation to Jetstar, which were happily donned for this group portrait.

RIGHT: Undoubtedly the highlight of the famil, engines revved as Jetstar and Accor hosted a quad-bike adventure through dense jungle & deep puddles - universally praised by all who took part in the activity.

Jane Reece from Accor is pictured right with Jaclyn Snell and Mick Cottrell of Jetstar aboard their all-terrain vehicles.



Dinner was just down the road at the Novotel Phuket Vintage Park, the city's newest Accor property, which boasts the largest pool in the Patong area.

Both properties more than met the group's high standards, leaving them eager to sell upon returning to Australia.

The day began with a treat for *Travel Daily*, enjoying an amazing quad-biking experience thanks to Exotissimo, available via Adventure World.



ABOVE: BobbyLea MacDonald, House of Travel and Zoe Byrne from FCm Travel Solutions Darwin preparing for a big night ahead.



So, as the sun went down over the back of Patong Beach, it was then time to pack bags, with the group's next stop being a daytime stopover in Singapore before the journey continues in Kuala Lumpur.



ABOVE: Jetstar's new perpetual motion ambassadors in Bryan Wu, Student Flights Richmond and Daniel Johnson from Snowscene.

Hello Tomorrow



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Telephone and postal applications will not be entertained.

Applications close 9 December 2012.

Where could you be tomorrow?

Plaza New York sale

THE iconic Plaza Hotel in New York has been purchased by Indian firm Sahara India Pariwar, with the deal finalised today.

The \$575m purchase of 75% of the property includes 230 hotel rooms and retail space.

Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal's Kingdom Holding Co. will retain its 25% stake in the Plaza.

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Brindabella to Moree

BRINDABELLA Airlines has opened sales for its new service between Sydney and Moree, after being awarded the licence to operate on the regulated route.

Prices lead in at \$150 per person including inflight snacks and refreshments and a 19kg luggage allowance.

From 30 Mar 2013 the airline will fly to Moree three times a day on weekdays, once on Sat and twice on Sun.

The enhanced schedule presents a "viable proposition for those seeking a weekend getaway from the city to experience Australia's Artesian Spa Capital, explore the locality's scenic plains, or take advantage of truly affordable golfing," according to Brindabella's Chief Commercial Officer, Fabrice Binet.

Brindabella Airlines is affiliated with Qantas Frequent Flyer, allowing points earning and redemption on selected fares.

\$7.8b business jet buy

CANADIAN aircraft maker Bombardier is celebrating after receiving an order for 56 Global Series business jets from Swiss private aviation firm VistaJet.

The deal includes options for a further 86 aircraft, with VistaJet saying it plans to serve growth markets incl Russia, China, the Middle East, Africa and the USA.

Cruising in APT's luxurious lap

FACED with the tough task of spending eight days meandering Europe's waterways, this group of WA agents lived in the lap of luxury courtesy of APT.

The group were on their way between the ports of Amsterdam & Nuremburg aboard the Concerto Class *MS AmaVerde*, and enjoyed the suite of APT features during the trip.

APT's all-inclusive style means passengers need to unpack only once during their voyage, and all shore excursions in port are included in the fare,



along with meals, drinks, transfers and much more.

Pictured above boarding the vessel at the beginning of their voyage is, from left, Jacinta Gresham, FC Livingston; Bianca Zurzolo, Travel Key Leederville; Samantha Swinbourne, Singapore Airlines; Raelene Caltsounis, Travel Focus International; Julie Barns, Travelworks Cruise and Travel; Maria Faria, Motive Travel; Kate Bellies, RAC Joondalup; Kristen Jarrard, APT Marketing; Brooke Reynolds, Jetset Midland and Hannah Flaherty from City Beach Travel and Cruise.

JetBlue cans Pittsburgh

US carrier JetBlue, which codeshares with several other airlines including Emirates, has confirmed the cancellation of its current twice daily service from New York JFK to Pittsburgh.

Insight India 2013

INSIGHT Vacations has released its 2013/14 India & Nepal escorted touring collection, with two luxury Gold itineraries, three Premium escorted journeys and eight new 'mini tours'.

It builds on this year's inaugural India program which md Joost Timmer said had been a "great success" with sales exceeding expectations.

US carriers shielded from EU carbon scheme

US President Barack Obama has signed a new law which prevents US carriers from contributing to a European carbon trading program.

The controversial EU ETS has been suspended (**TD** 12 Nov) pending further negotiations, after receiving strong opposition from carriers across the globe.

Chinese airlines refused to contribute, while a US senator who sponsored the legislation said "American sovereignty will no longer be threatened by the EU's illegitimate and disingenuous environmental tax".

A White House statement said the administration is committed to reducing carbon pollution, but that the application of an EU program on non-European carriers was "the wrong way to achieve that objective".

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Easyjet SITA solution

EUROPEAN low-cost carrier easyJet has signed a deal with SITA to enable the airline to roll out its software on mobile devices across its entire routing network.

Laid back with NHH in Thailand



LUSH surroundings, cooking classes and time in the spa were some of many highlights enjoyed by this group of New Horizons Holidays agents during a recent famil trip to Thailand.

While on the island, the group learnt some tricks to Thai cooking at an authentic cuisine class, as well as seeing another side to the island during a guided tour.

After a few days basking in the sunshine & dipping in the ocean, Samui's serenity was replaced with the energy of Bangkok, but equally popular with the group.

Pictured above while inspecting the Centara Grand Beach Samui, from left, are Elizabeth Wuehrl, Magic Travel; Gail Wangler, Our Travel Agent; Jacqueline Brasse, New Horizons Holidays; Karina Brough, New Horizons Holidays; Vicki Gordon, New Horizons Holidays Sales Manager; Malcolm Sinclair; Pinjarra Travel & Cruise; Claire Worsdell, Outlook Travel and Chelsea Sofield from Attadale Travel.

Philippines' pax goals

A TARGET of 10m international visitors annually by the year 2016 has been set by The Philippines.

The plan involves strengthening ties with the travel industry via famils and training, according to tourism secretary Ramon Jimenez.

APAC air still climbing

PASSENGER carriage in Oct among Asia-Pacific airlines was 2.7% higher in Oct 2012 than one year ago, according to new data released yesterday by the Association of Asia-Pacific airlines.

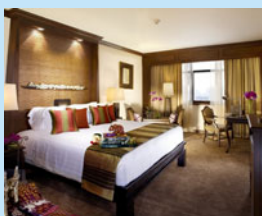
Over the month, a total of 17m pax were carried, outperforming capacity increases, which resulted in a 0.9% jump in load factors, closing at 76.6% for the month.

Accommodation Updates

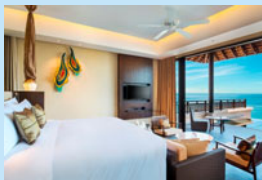
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wednesday feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Quest has opened its latest serviced apartment complex in the Brisbane suburb of Breakfast Creek, also a milestone as it is the company's 150th property. Situated near to Brisbane Airport and only 5 mins from the CBD, the property consists of a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, along with a variety of Quest services such as free wi-fi & conferencing.



Newly renovated and launching later this month in Bangkok is **The Sukosol**, fresh off a multi-million baht transformation. On show for guests is a brand new lobby, public gallery, chic Sapphire bar and six restaurants. Formerly known as the Siam City Hotel, The Sukosol has become a sophisticated cultural hub that is as much an experience to stay at in its own right as it is to enjoy as a quality hotel.



The Luxury Collection hotel representation group is set to open its newest property on the popular Thailand holiday island of Koh Samui in the form of the **Vana Belle**. Located within a private cove close to Chaweng Beach, the resort consists of 80 pool suites and pool villas, each overlooking the Gulf of Siam. The property is set to open for business from Jan next year.



Outrigger Phi Phi Island has this month opened its doors for the first time since the hotel group took over the former Phi Phi Island Village Resort. After an extensive renovation throughout the resort, which included the addition of Deluxe Garden Bungalows, the 156-room resort is welcoming guests to enjoy the improved facilities including a new gym and new restaurants.

Samsonite Disney deal

LUGGAGE brand Samsonite has entered into a multi-year alliance with Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, making American Tourister in the USA the "official luggage" of the Disney properties.

Icon Egypt special

ICON Holidays is offering a half price deal on a second traveller for any Egypt itinerary booked by 31 Dec, including its 12 day Nile Heritage package - for details see www.iconjourneys.com.

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Natalie Blackmore** of Flight Centre Plaza Parade.

Wednesday 28th Nov 2012

Crystal ups Med ports

CRYSTAL Cruises will introduce a range of new Mediterranean ports in 2013, overnight naming Canakkale in Turkey, La Spezia in Italy and Castellon de la Plana in Spain as brand new destinations.

Canakkale will be offered on an 09 May and 25 Jul *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony* nine-day sailings, departing from Rome & Istanbul respectively.

"After sailing for more than two decades, we're thrilled to still be finding novel destinations for our guests to discover," said Crystal sales chief Jack Anderson.



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EMIRATES is celebrating its one millionth Facebook fan with a specially decorated A380.

The aircraft now includes a special Facebook 'Like' decal, with users of the social media site urged to take pictures of the superjumbo as it travels to EK ports around the globe.

The airline launched its Facebook page in Mar this year, and has reached the one million milestone in just eight months.

"Owning a space in social media was a natural progression for Emirates on its global trajectory," said EK divisional senior vp Corporate Communications, Boutros Boutros.

SiteMinder signs ONYX

ONYX Hospitality Group will distribute its 22 Thailand properties via a new partnership with SiteMinder's global distribution platform.

Onyx brands include Amari, Saffron and Shama.

VX \$49k charter sellout

MOVE over Click Frenzy.

Virgin America participated in a similar online sales push in the US this week called Cyber Monday, offering an A320 charter from San Francisco to Las Vegas for the princely sum of US\$49,000.

According to a VX spokesman the deal sold out in "minutes," with over 180 bidders.

The successful charterer will fill the wifi-equipped plane with attendees heading to next Jan's International Computer Electronics Show in Vegas.

Regional Express downgrades profit

LISTED turboprop carrier Regional Express yesterday said it was "well poised to face the many challenges ahead," despite announcing expectations of a profit slump of up to 35% for 2012/13 (**TD** breaking news).

Deputy chairman John Sharp attributed the decline to the combined effect of the carbon tax scheme, the cessation of the en-route rebate scheme, additional security costs and the general economic slowdown.

A 35% profit drop would still see the carrier well in the black, after reporting a record \$35m result for 2011/12 which saw shareholders receive a healthy 9c per share dividend, up 27%.

Sharp said that Rex's Australian Airline Pilot Academy was likely to contribute "strong earning streams" to the group in the coming years, with world-wide

demand for new pilots estimated at 20,000 a year.

Last year's record figures, which included a 45% profit jump on the previous year, came despite a 2.6% decline in pax numbers.

Recent developments include strong growth in the Pel-Air charter subsidiary, including a contract extension of its fly-in/fly-out deal with Ivanhoe's Mount Dore and Osborne mines.

AirAsia X up 41%

MALAYSIAN low-cost long haul carrier AirAsia X has recorded strong growth for the three months to 30 Sep, with overall passenger numbers of 640,000, a year-on-year increase of 40.7%.

The overall load factor was 83%, up 3.3 points, with ceo Azran Osman-Rani saying the airline would continue to focus on core markets incl Australia and China.

GROW A MO AND WIN A CRUISE

Cunard in conjunction with **Travel Daily** is supporting Movember and is urging the industry to take part in the charity event.

The Movember event raises awareness and funds for men's health issues, such as prostate cancer & male depression, by encouraging people to sport a moustache and get sponsored.

Guys can take part as a Mo' Bro by grabbing some colleagues and registering a team and girls can help out as a Mo' Sis and posing with a mo (see the website for more details).

WIN THE MAJOR PRIZE:

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1. Register your details at <http://au.movember.com/>
2. Email your individual or team name to: mocomp@traveldaily.com.au
3. Grow some impressive facial hair or buy/make a fake mo.
4. Send in photos to feature on the **Travel Daily** website, with the link to your mo' page.

Click here for more details and Terms & Conditions of the competition



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