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Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 16th December 2013

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FINAL WEEK!

Australia still on Star Alliance radar

THE lack of an Australian airline member of the Star Alliance is still on the agenda but "comes up less often in our conversations," according to alliance ceo Mark Schwab.

Speaking at the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board meeting in Vienna on Fri, Schwab hinted at the possibility of Virgin Australia eventually joining the group - particularly with alliance members Singapore Airlines and Air New Zealand now major shareholders and set to appoint board members to VA in the coming months, along with fellow investor Etihad Airways.

However despite there being no Australian member, the Alliance still has a very strong presence locally with many members operating direct flights such as SQ, NZ, UA, AC, TG, SA and CA.

"I'd say there's no obvious and immediate answer to [a member in] Australia, but I think that over time as we watch the deepening relationship between our members one could predict a possible solution in the future, but not right now," Schwab said.

VA "impressive" - Luxon

AIR New Zealand ceo Christopher Luxon says that the carrier's stake in Virgin Australia is a "great investment," with VA currently in an impressive growth phase as it consolidates its new Sabre reservations system and the acquisitions of Skywest and Tigerair Australia.

Speaking to **TD** in Vienna at the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board meeting on Fri, Luxon said it was key for Air NZ to diversify its business, with the Virgin Australia stake giving it exposure to the domestic market here.

He said the recent controversial \$350 million capital raising, which has led to concerted lobbying efforts by Qantas, was a good move for Virgin Australia.

"Virgin is up against a formidable, well-resourced competitor with huge natural advantages," he said.

Luxon also confirmed that Air

NZ is in discussions with Virgin Australia about taking a seat on the VA board in the coming months, alongside other key shareholders including Etihad Airways and Singapore Airlines.

MEANWHILE, Luxon also said that the appointment of Cam Wallace as Air NZ chief sales and commercial officer, which takes effect on 01 Jan, would give him responsibility for sales across all channels for the carrier.

Luxon said Air NZ has the potential to grow its overall market, rather than just shift share between different methods of distribution.

"We want to work together with our trade partners, who all target slightly different customer segments...we can grow the pie together," he said.

A key focus going forward for Air NZ is looking at inbound markets such as the US, China and Japan, with opportunities abounding for sales and market development.

More from the Star Alliance meeting in Vienna on **page three**.

Six pages of news

Travel Daily today has six pages of news & photos, plus a full page from: ([click](#))

- AA Appointments

Geckos enters Europe and North America

ADVENTURE tour operator Geckos has announced the launch of 2014/15 brochures for Europe, Middle East & Africa and South, Central & North America.

The programs represent Geckos' first foray into Europe and North America and join the firm's recently rolled out Asia brochure.

Itineraries include the \$1,869pp Take a Hike tour in Canada and the Eurotrash that visits dozens of countries over 36-days at \$5,780.

More brochures on **page six**.

Simeone promotion

QANTAS has announced the promotion of John Simeone to the role of Head of Corporate & Industry Sales, Australia.

Simeone was most recently the Head of Sales and Tourism and Development for Qantas Int'l and has previously held senior roles at Qantas including in Domestic Network Planning, Yield Management for NZ, South West Pacific, NE Asia & Japan and Queensland Sales.



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ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Monday 16th December 2013

Canberra lacks appeal

VISITCANBERRA research has identified the Australian Capital as lacking interest as a barrier in terms of visitation over the next two years from Aussies.

Data from BDA Marketing Planning - the firm engaged by VisitCanberra to deliver the ACT Tourism 2020 strategy (**TD Fri**) - found 22% of Aussie respondents to its survey who said they were "not at all" or "not likely" to visit Canberra were "not interested."

Among other key reasons why people shied away from Canberra was that accommodation was costly (12%), didn't see value (21%) or had been before (29%).

However, a whopping 62% of Australian residents said they would "prefer other places."

CLICK HERE to view the ACT's 2020 Tourism Strategy.

Hoffman appoints gm

PHIL Hoffmann Travel has announced the appointment of Michelle McNamara to the role of general manager, responsible for over 170 staff members.

McNamara joined PHT over 16 years ago, during which time she has managed two retail branches for the South Australian retailer in Norwood and Glenelg.

"Her extensive knowledge of the travel industry, ability to attract and nurture positive relationships with staff & clients and strong business leadership skills, will allow her to play an integral role in helping drive PHT," md Phil Hoffmann said on Fri.

Receivers for Brindabella

ADMINISTRATORS & Managers have been called in to handle the demise of Brindabella Airlines after the regional carrier "closed" off all future bookings.

KordaMentha were appointed on Sun following a CASA directive to ground all aircraft last week due to maintenance concerns (**TD Fri**), with the firm suspending further flights "indefinitely."

There are hopes Brindabella, which has 140 employees, will be sold and expressions of interest in the sale have commenced.

FQ operated services from Canberra, Sydney & Brisbane to Newcastle, Cobar, Coffs Harbour, Moree, Mudgee, Narrabri, Newcastle, Tamworth and until recently, Orange (**TD 04 Dec**).

"The business would not continue to operate whilst the sale process is conducted," KordaMentha said in a statement.

Partner David Winterbottom said the Receivers will be "working very hard to minimise the inconvenience to customers and importantly, enable alternative travel options."

Winterbottom suggested the competitive nature of the airline industry, regulatory and maintenance issues and the financial pressures "would certainly be significant factors" in Brindabella's position.

Qantas said it was looking a options to assist FQ passengers with special fares and relief flights outside its network on routes serviced by Brindabella.

FQ pax in Mudgee and Cobar are being offered discounted fares from QantasLink's nearest port of Dubbo, while Narrabri & Moree customers are eligible for special fares from Armidale or Tamworth, also with QantasLink.

Likewise, Brindabella customers in Brisbane & Tamworth can obtain relief fares via Sydney.

"Urgent discussions" with the NSW Government and regulatory authorities for other replacement services are also being held.

Virgin Australia has no official comment on providing relief flights as yet due to its regional NSW operation having limited reach as routes don't overlap.

Tigerair Australia spokesperson Vanessa Reagan told **TD** the no-frills carrier cannot assist as its all A320 fleet of aircraft are unable to be accommodated at ports serviced by Brindabella.

Further details on QF's policy at www.bit.ly/FQQFpolicy.

EK bail on QF equity

EMIRATES president Tim Clark has confirmed "equity is not on the table" to assist alliance partner Qantas if the Australian flag-carrier is this week permitted to allow foreign ownership.

Clark said Emirates didn't have the "bottomless pit of cash" offered by Virgin Australia's partner Etihad Airways, *The Australian* reported today, citing AirlineRatings.com.

MEANWHILE, Prime Minister Tony Abbott has declared that QF must take responsibility for its own fate and not rely on the Federal Government for salvation.

"No government is going to fight harder for Qantas than Qantas will fight for itself.

"The important thing is that Qantas put its house in order.

"In the end, it won't survive because the government has brought about a survival plan," Abbott commented.

The PM ruled out a "handout from taxpayers" to aid Qantas.

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Star Alliance to welcome AI again

STAR Alliance ceo Mark Schwab is confident that this time around Air India will successfully undergo the changes required to become a full member of the alliance.

He was speaking in Vienna at the Chief Executive Board meeting of the alliance, where Alliance members unanimously agreed to “recommence the integration process” with the Indian carrier (**TD** breaking news).

“Star Alliance has long held the opinion that India is such an important aviation market that it should be fully represented in the Alliance,” he said.

“However the level of change in the domestic market in recent years did not make it easy for an airline to become an alliance member,” he said.

Air India was first invited to join the alliance in 2007 but later had its prospective membership suspended after it “failed to meet contractually agreed joining conditions (**TD** 01 Aug 2011).”

Schwab said that the suspension was a joint decision which allowed AI to focus on completing its merger with Indian Airlines, “without the distraction of the work required for full integration into the Star Alliance network”.

This time, he promised that the process will be successful.

“I’m looking to the very strong management team at Star Alliance to work with the Air India team to integrate it into Star at the earliest occasion possible”.

The action has already

commenced, with senior Star Alliance executives heading to Mumbai as early as today to take the first steps towards full integration.

MEANWHILE at the Vienna meeting, the airline chief executives also agreed to admit Avianca Brazil, sister carrier of existing member Avianca, to broaden the Star Alliance presence in South America.

It’s understood that Avianca Brazil operates under a different IT system to Avianca itself, so the change will require some work.

The Star Alliance has been impacted by recent airline mergers, with former member TAM joining **oneworld** when it combined with LAN, so the expanded presence in Brazil is significant particularly with the upcoming FIFA World Cup and Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

The alliance is also losing a significant chunk of its flights in North America with the merger between US Airways and American Airlines, which will see US also switch to **oneworld**.

Star Alliance chief executive board chairman Calin Rovinescu from Air Canada said that the consolidation in the aviation market is a “natural evolution” which is good for the industry as well as consumers.

He said the AA/US deal meant that there will now be “three very strong alliances in North America, each of which is going to be a strong competitor.”

LHR key for Star

THE next major milestone for the Star Alliance is the planned opening of Terminal 2 at London Heathrow Airport, which is scheduled for 04 Jun next year.

The Chief Executive Board of the alliance will hold its next meeting in London to coincide with the opening of the purpose-built facility which will be the home for 22 Star Alliance member carriers serving Heathrow, who together represent more than 20% of the airport’s traffic (**TD** 06 Jun).

Star Alliance ceo Mark Schwab said synergies achieved by co-locating in a common terminal created significant savings as well as providing improved service, with the LHR minimum connecting time expected to be slashed.

Similar “move under one roof” initiatives are under way at Sao Paulo Airport, where Star Alliance’s Terminal 3 will open just before the Brazil World Cup.

The new Air NZ-managed Star Alliance lounge at LAX’s Tom Bradley International Terminal is also an example of what can be achieved, Schwab said.

Alliance “data hub”

THE Star Alliance is set to make it easier for member carriers to exchange information via the implementation of an “intelligent data hub” which each airline’s systems can feed into.

This will make sure information is transparently available across the network to facilitate seamless customer recognition and service.

Finnair Changi dollars

FINNAIR has launched a new promotion for the first 400 AY pax travelling from Australia to Europe via Singapore, offering a SGD\$40 transit privileges voucher.

Vouchers can be used on dining, shopping, lounge access & more between outbound flights connecting with AY082 to Helsinki - details at www.bit.ly/AYrewards.



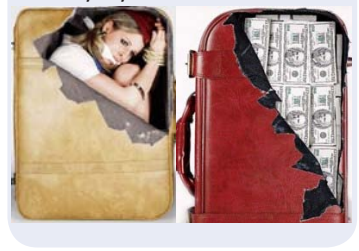
Window Seat

AIRPORTS make no secret that jokes about security are not welcome or wise, but a new range of suitcase stickers would make even the most hardened officer chuckle.

The team at Off Track Planet have released a range of clever bag coverings (**pictured**) they have classified as “Guaranteed to get you arrested at airports”.

One of the bag coverings hints at it being stuffed with cash, another carrying human traffic, while others include a parcel of drugs, live snakes and a bomb.

The stickers are available for sale however the jokers seriously warn users not to actually try them in real life.



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Huntington to the Gold Coast



STAFF from Ignite Travel on the Gold Coast donned a different type of suit recently for a promotional surfing day hosted by Visit Huntington Beach.

The Marketing, Reservations and Sales teams all participated in a 20-minute learn-to-surf lesson on the sand by Gold Coast Surf Academy instructors before being let loose in the waves.

More than one wipeout was witnessed over the next 45 mins before participants took their boards & headed for a sumptuous

breakfast and some training on the Californian beach destination.

The team from Ignite and Visit Huntington Beach are **pictured** above preparing to hang ten.

SQ/BR codesharing

SINGAPORE Airlines will begin codesharing on EVA Air's daily service between Singapore and Taipei, effective immediately.

BR will add its code on Singapore Airlines twice daily flights between the two cities.

Design pops-up in Rio

A NEW "pop-up" style six-room hotel is opening in Rio de Janeiro over 12 months from Jan in time for the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Located in Maria Santa Teresa, the Design Hotels project will not only serve as an accommodation venue but a venue for intimate dinners and World Cup parties.

The latest venture builds on Design Hotels' success with the "pop-up" concept in Tulum, Mexico and Mykonos, Greece.

Details at www.bit.ly/DHpopup.

Crown in Govt talks

DISCUSSIONS concerning tax restructuring, licensing and a proposed electronic gaming machine tax have been held between Crown Resorts and the Victorian Government.

Chairman James Packer said the talks are aimed at "positioning the facility for long-term growth" and to continue to compete for international inbound tourists.

Smartraveller for biz

BUSINESS travellers can now access detailed DFAT travel advice via a new web page launched by Smartraveller aimed at corporate and company travel.

DFAT says it recognises the importance to keep businesses of all sizes informed on matters on the ground around the world but stresses the new page does not directly replace information on its main country-by-country portal.

The site features illustrated case studies to be considered for short term business travel, long-term deployments and any travel involving high-risk remote places.

Potential threats, health, security in transit and evacuation options are all detailed, along with issues concerning cyber crime, extortion, bribery and commercial disputes.

Smartraveller says there are over \$1 trillion in Australian investments overseas ranging from large-scale operations in Singapore through to miners working in remote African cities.

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Your clients can escape the Australian summer with flights to a winter wonderland in one of 35 European destinations. Other travel dates in 2014 also on offer.

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Paris	AUD 1,532*	Munich	AUD 1,606*
St Petersburg	AUD 1,536*	London	AUD 1,695*



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Monday 16th December 2013

Wet Kakadu touring

WA-BASED firm Global Gypsies has created a small group six-day 'Kakadu in the Wet Tour' for 10 passengers, operating round-trip from Darwin & departing 16 Feb.

The itinerary includes cruises, a scenic joy flight over Kakadu, a visit to Arnhem Land, cultural experiences, bushwalks, art viewing and an air-boat ride (conditions permitting).

It's priced at \$3,995ppts - more info phone (08) 9341 6727.

TTF laud EY PER route

TOURISM & Transport Forum boss Ken Morrison has welcomed the addition of Etihad Airways' services to Perth starting 15 Jul (**TD** Fri), remarking that the new international capacity will see some traffic pushed onto domestic & regional hubs through its pact with Virgin Australia.

EY plan to operate A330-200 aircraft on the route from Abu Dhabi, adding 95,000+ inbound seats per year to the WA capital.



Sabre Pacific kicks up its heels



CELEBRATING another year of success in 2013, Sabre Pacific invited its key clients and industry partners to partake in the spirit of the season at its Christmas party late last week.

The event took place at the swanky Manta Bar and Lounge in Woolloomooloo in Sydney's east.

Pictured above at the event from left is Brett Henry, Abacus

International; Mike Thompson, Helloworld; David Reimer, American Express & Phil Hoffman from Phil Hoffman Travel.

More Sabre Pacific Xmas Party pics at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://www.facebook.com/traveldaily).

**All I want for Christmas is...
A stay at Fraser Suites Perth**

Travel Daily's popular Christmas photo competition is back! **Fraser Suites Perth** 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 the most creative photo and the person who submitted this will win two nights accommodation for two guests at Fraser Suites Perth, including daily breakfast and complimentary Wi-Fi.



Pictured: Travelrite International get into the Christmas spirit at their office Christmas party.



Pictured: Amanda Sloan, Shawn Wallis, Emma

Philpot, Kylie Knights, Madeleine Coyle, Leanne Girling and Michelle Lyssenkoff.

Email your festive photos (including names of the people pictured) to: xmasphotos@traveldaily.com.au.

[Click here for terms & conditions](#)

Holiday Inn Mauritius

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has opened the Holiday Inn Mauritius Airport, located on the island's south east coast.

The property consists of 140 rooms and sits 700 metres from the terminal, with meeting space and landscaped gardens.

Strong JQ HKT sales

JETSTAR Australia/NZ ceo David Hall has revealed forward bookings for its new Melbourne-Phuket (HKT) service "remain strong" after announcing the new route's launch in Sep.

Non-stop flights to Phuket commenced on Sat using Airbus A330 aircraft, with JQ advising its intention is to operate 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft on all long-haul routes by the end of 2015.

MEANWHILE, the inaugural JQ service between Adelaide and Auckland will take off from the SA capital at 4:25pm today.

It marks the addition of Adelaide to JQ's route map ex New Zealand.

Jetstar head of New Zealand Grant Kerr said he expected the route to be popular with both leisure and VFR travellers.

"We believe our entry on this route will encourage more Kiwis to discover South Australia".

TravelRez fires up

EASTERN Eurotours is heralding the launch of its new online reservation system TravelRez as a breakthrough for travel agents.

Initially launched with hoards of hotel accommodation, the Gold Coast-based firm says it will continue to add product such as airport transfers and day tours.

MD Chip Popescu says among TravelRez's great innovations is a dragging function whereby users can drag existing or past clients onto selected services, eliminating the chance of duplication and saving agents valuable time.

Developers say the system works at its best in Mozilla or Google Chrome - more details at system.easterneurotours.com.au.

Omniche discovers local Samoa



OMNICHE Holidays recently hosted a group of Aussie agents on the direct service to Samoa with Virgin Australia for a few days of fun in the Samoan sun.

Joined by Samoa Tourism, a range of authentic cultural experiences awaited including a visit to Savai'i, swimming in the To Sua Trench and enjoying the beaches, with a few resort site inspections thrown in to take some information on the destination back with them.

Each agent left brimming with positive feedback, firm in the belief of the destination's appeal to all types of travellers.

The group is **pictured** above with

a group of locals, and consisted of Beth Paton, Discover Travel & Cruise; Kristy Hill, Omniche Holidays; Andrea Farrow, Omniche Holidays; Lana Dillon, Flight Centre Carindale; Penny Hickey and Sonia Williams, MTA.

Ambrym Is online

A **NEW** website for Vanuatu's Ambrym Island has been launched at www.ambrym.travel, offering info on tours & accommodation.

Hotel course change

OUTRIGGER Hotels and Resorts has renamed its travel agent specialist training program to Outrigger Expert Agent in order to place greater emphasis on the expertise of program graduates.

Two new promotions have been launched in line with the rebrand, available to certified Outrigger Expert Agents - for details, see www.outriggeragent.com.

Quest Liverpool

CONSTRUCTION of the 88-room Quest Serviced Apartments property at Liverpool in Sydney's west has commenced.

More BA 787 routes

BRITISH Airways has announced it will deploy its Boeing 787 *Dreamliner* aircraft on flights to Hyderabad, Calgary, Chengdu and Philadelphia as deliveries arrive.

The carrier has currently taken possession of four of the 24 *Dreamliners* ordered so far.

Services to Tokyo Haneda and Mexico City will see increased operations, with Cape Town being boosted from daily to ten weekly.

Gift from Finnair & Changi



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Brochures of the Week

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday 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.



Tempo Holidays - Britain and Ireland 2014

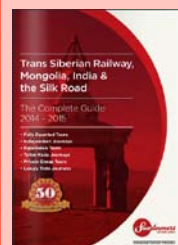
Brand new London Experiences packages have been designed and released in Tempo's latest UK brochure. These include a four-day Royal Experience which takes guests to key regal castles and popular royal haunts such as Kew Gardens and Kensington Gardens. Welsh Experience itineraries have also been designed taking in Pembrokeshire, Snowdonia & more. Also featuring are new dedicated sections on Northern Ireland, Wales and coach tours, along with a wide range of FIT hotels, transfers & tours.



Lake Tahoe - South Lake guide 2014

This special brochure release to the Australian market focuses on the Lake Tahoe region in north California and covers the range of activities available in both the summer and winter seasons. Both times of year offer such a variation in activities, from boating on the lake to skiing the many trails and downhill runs. Featuring a plethora of inspiring and provocative imagery, the 60-page guide showcases the many hotels and resorts

in the region and can be downloaded from www.bit.ly/tahoeguide.



Sundowners Overland - Trans Siberian Railway

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2014, Sundowners Overland has launched a brand new journey from Singapore to London. The 55-day adventure covers 17,500kms through countries including Malaysia, China, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Belgium and France to London. The latest guide remains true to form in comprehensively covering the firm's offering of Asian land explorations across India, Mongolia and the signature Trans-Siberian railway from China to Russia.



DriveAway Holidays - Worldwide Rentals 2014/15

Essential reading for any holiday incorporating a drive or motorhome component is the newest guide from DriveAway Holidays. The worldwide guide, as per its name, covers the entire range, from the US & Canada, to USA campervan and motorcycle rentals, Peugeot Leasing in the UK and Europe and options in Australia and New Zealand. Specialist products including self-drive guides are also featured, with distance tables and highlights to look out for while on the road also included.

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Part of the Travel Daily group of publications.

Travel Daily CRUISE PHARMACY
WEEKLY DAILY

Publisher/Managing Editor: Bruce Piper
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On behalf of Adriana D'Angelis and the AA Team, we would like to thank all of our clients and candidates for your great support in 2013. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to assisting you in 2014.

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Our client is a leading brand with a clear vision for excellence in client satisfaction and business performance. This outstanding executive opportunity is available now based in Melbourne. This position heads up a thriving leisure business that is looking for inspirational leadership and a clear path for future success. Ring for a confidential chat today as this position won't be around long.

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This award winning Corporate travel management company is looking for an experienced Call Centre Manager with travel experience to oversee their key operations. Key responsibilities will include human resources planning, increasing efficiencies and staff productivity, as well as profitable growth and financial accountability. Essentially you will come from a strong travel management background with leadership and people management skills.

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Our client, one of the largest travel organizations within the Australian market has a rare vacancy for a Travel Consultancy Manager to progress the business ensuring an even stronger position within the market place moving forward. If you have proven client relationship experience combined with strong management, analytical and strategic thinking skills and the ability to proactively provide future planning and project management services apply now!

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Key responsibilities will include understanding client needs within the online space and determine what solutions will provide value along with retaining and growing an existing client base. You will build and deliver detailed and high level product demonstrations, train and execute implementation plans and be the primary escalation point to support technical enquiries. You will come from a strong corporate travel management background

PASSION FOR PRODUCT

**SUPPLIER RELATIONS MANAGER
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Are you a hotel wiz, dedicated to exceeding targets and technically savvy? You will be responsible for managing product and ensuring this market leader remains at the top of their game. You will be communicating initiatives along with maintaining relationships. To be successful you will be experienced in supplier relations, competitor analysis with strong contracting and negotiation skills.