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Travel Daily

First with the news

Monday 30th December 2013



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Silkair trials wi-fi IFE

SINGAPORE Airlines' regional wing SilkAir has announced that it's trialling a wireless inflight entertainment system on one of its Airbus A320 aircraft.

During the trial, passengers will be able to stream a variety of content including movies, TV shows and music directly onto their own personal devices during their flights.

The system will be accessible via laptops, Apple iOS devices and Android tablets/smartphones.

"Access to the inflight content, which will complement SilkAir's existing overhead entertainment system, will be complimentary for customers," the airline said.

SilkAir ceo Leslie Thng said the system was being deployed in partnership with Panasonic Avionics Corporation, using the eXW Wireless IFE solution.

"Upon successful trial, we look forward to introducing this system across our aircraft fleet by next year, providing customers with the complete SilkAir experience," Thng said.

The trial is being undertaken on the aircraft with registration 9V-SLK which has this week operated flights from Singapore to Kolkata, Phuket, Kuala Lumpur, Chiang Mai, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

Sno'n'Ski brochure

SNO'N'SKI Holidays will this month release its new 2014 Ski Southern Hemisphere brochure, featuring a range of ski resorts in Australia, NZ and South America.

The brochure will allow agents to quote lift, lesson and equipment hire along with transport and accommodation, with live prices at snonski.com.au.

See p3 for more brochures.

Four pages of news

Travel Daily today has four pages of news & photos plus a full page promoting the **ACBC's World Youth Day Tour Operator Opportunity**.

Huge 2014 for Silversea

SILVERSEA Cruises is expecting 2014 to be one of its biggest years ever, with exceptionally high levels of forward bookings not only from the Australian market but around the globe.

Speaking on board *Silver Shadow* during a recent port call in Sydney, Silversea Australasian gm and director of sales, Karen Christensen, attributed the strong performance to having the 2014 Silversea program out earlier, along with a "very simplistic pricing policy".

Silversea has also seen a return to consistent sales in the US market, she said, while "the UK is getting its own traction back since we opened the office there.

"So I think for Silversea as a global company each market is doing well and that's why the results are there for 2014 well in advance," she said.

The upmarket cruise operator isn't resting on its laurels, however, with the 2015 Voyage Atlas currently being distributed and final deployments for 2016 set to be announced shortly.

A major event for Silversea in 2014 will be the inaugural voyage of its new *Silver Discoverer*, which will sail out of Broome WA on 02 Apr, marking a significant milestone for the company along with a strong focus on the Asia-Pacific and Australasia region.

The ship will be refitted in Singapore before a naming ceremony on 25 Mar, and then

Brindabella meeting

THE administrators of the grounded Brindabella Airlines (**TD** 16 Dec) will hold a first meeting of creditors at the offices of Rodgers Reidy, 333 George Street, Sydney this Thu 02 Jan 2014 at 12.00 pm.

The meeting will also cover Aeropelican Air Services, Trand Holdings and Business Air Holdings Pty Ltd, all of which are part of the collapsed group.

will sail south without passengers for a final shake-down trip before the Broome maiden voyage.

"For Silversea as a brand to sail a first time voyage on a ship in our fleet out of Australia is unique," Christen said.

"I think for our brand it says a lot about the confidence the company has in the Asia-Pacific market," she added.

Silver Discoverer will be Silversea's eighth vessel (**TD** 10 Sep) and will have capacity for 128 passengers along with 12 Zodiac excursion boats.

And while she couldn't confirm any details, Christensen hinted at further expansion for Silversea, suggesting that there could be "another classic ship in the fleet in the not too distant future".

Major PR GSA deal

PHILIPPINE Airlines has appointed representation network APG as its GSA in 16 countries, with the group to provide full sales and marketing services plus customer support and ticketing in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lebanon, Turkey, Cyprus, Jordan, Turkey, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and Israel.

The deal will also see APG provide IBCS (IATA BSP Consolidator System) services in several markets, which will open up ticketing on Philippine Airlines in a further 20 BSPs globally.

PR recently regained its right to fly to the European Union, and has also resumed its services to the UAE which will "spur tourism and business links".

Double QF hotel pts

QANTAS Hotels is offering 2000 QF frequent flyer points per stay on all international partner hotels, as part of a new year's promotion which launched on Sat.

The offer is valid for bookings until 9am tomorrow.

WYD Poland operator

THE Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is once again today inviting expressions of interest for a tour operator to organise approximately 2000 Australian passengers travelling to the 2016 World Youth Day celebrations in Krakow, Poland - see **page five**.

TripAdvisor partners with Microsoft

TRIPADVISOR has confirmed its first ever partnership with an internet search engine, via a new agreement which will see its content embedded into results from Microsoft's Bing search engine results display.

The pact will see TripAdvisor reviews, ratings, photos and other content available in Bing, allowing users to compare hotel prices and availability on the results page, via live pricing information from a "range of global booking partners provided by TripAdvisor's metasearch tool".

TripAdvisor's 125 million reviews and opinions covering over 3.1 million hotels, restaurants and attractions worldwide will also feature in Bing search results.

"We are focused on helping travellers make an informed decision," said TripAdvisor vice president of global mobile partnerships, Nathan Clapton.

"By offering Bing users an easy way to find the best hotel prices and see reviews, ratings and photos from other travellers directly on Bing, we are enhancing the search and planning experience, and hopefully saving them time and money," he said.

The move will also see TripAdvisor introduce a new App for Windows 8.1, which is claimed to be among the first to integrate with Bing Smart Search which enables users to click directly into the app when it is relevant to what they are searching for.

This is described as "Deep Bing Smart Search Integration".

Ponant rolls up the red carpet

COMPAGNIE du Ponant has sold its upmarket tour operator business Tapis Rouge ("Red Carpet") to the French Boiloris group.

Boiloris operates a range of retail travel outlets in France as well as an existing tour operation in Sicily, with annual turnover of about €45 million.

Tapis Rouge was founded in the 1980s and was acquired in 2005 by shipping giant CMA CGM, which formerly owned Ponant before it was acquired by private equity group Bridgepoint in 2012.

The price of the sale was not revealed, with Ponant ceo Jean-Emanuel Sauvee saying the deal "comes within the scope of our strategy, as we decided to refocus on our core business, which is five-star cruising".

More planes for CX

CATHAY Pacific has ordered four additional aircraft from Boeing with the aim of meeting rising demand for long-haul passenger and cargo traffic over the next few years.

The order includes three new 777-300ER planes for delivery in 2015, as well as an additional Boeing 747-8 freighter which will be handed over in 2016.

The 777-300ERs are in addition to the 21 new generation 777-9X jets which CX ordered last week, for delivery from 2021.

SkiJapan busier

NISEKO ski operator SkiJapan says it's about to experience the busiest weeks of winter, with chief operating officer Anthony Trovatello predicting a 15% uplift for Dec and Jan versus last year.

"The next few weeks will be when we'll welcome most of our Aussie friends due to the school holidays and the perfect powder conditions in January," he said, with still good availability and deals available for Feb and Mar.

Tweed targets South Africa

THE advent of low-cost Scoot Airlines services between Singapore and the Gold Coast has intriguingly seen a surge in visitors from South Africa to the Tweed region in northern NSW.

Destination Tweed ceo Bill Tatchell said the organisation had moved to capitalise on the increased affordability of flights due to the budget airline.

"Previously the route from South Africa had no low cost carriers and Australia was priced out of the market for the average South African tourist," he said.

"Now Australia is affordable and accessible via Scoot from Singapore, and their gateway to Australia is right here on the Tweed's doorstep."

He said the region had also seen steady growth in visitors from Malaysia and Singapore, with China also identified as a growing potential market.

"We will continue to do all we can to encourage visitors flying to

the Gold Coast to take a right turn from the airport and discover the wonders of the Tweed."

The approach will be fine-tuned next year to take advantage of international markets, he said.

Figures released on Fri show that the "integrated and strategic approach to tourism marketing during 2013" has paid off, with growth of more than 21% in both domestic and international overnight visitors to the Tweed.

According to Destination Tweed chair Anne Duke, estimated visitor numbers to the region increased to more than 1.4 million, with over 2.5m visitor nights, while the organisation's Visitor Information Centres saw over 1000 weekly visitors.

Successful initiatives during 2013 included a partnership with Sports Marketing Australia which brought around 14,000 people to the region for a range of events which contributed over \$9m to the Tweed economy.

Destination Tweed also cooperated with the Legendary Pacific Coast campaigns and participated in familiarisation programs for regional media as well as a range of trade shows.

Antarctica stranding

THE *Akademik Shokalskiy* remains stuck in an ice pack in Antarctica (**TD** Fri), awaiting the arrival of the *Aurora Australis* icebreaker which was about 11 nautical miles away this morning.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority says it's unknown when a rescue operation will commence but the 74 pax and crew on board the stranded vessel are "reported to remain safe and well with supplies for several weeks".

Best Western Yangon

BEST Western International has announced the opening of its first hotel in Myanmar - the Best Western Green Hill Hotel Yangon.

The move makes Best Western "the first US-based hotel company to establish a presence in this exciting country since it opened up to international investment," the company said.

Celebrity Century to shift to French line

CDF Croisieres de France, the Paris based offshoot of Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, has confirmed that the ship currently sailing as *Celebrity Century* will join its fleet in 2015.

Last week *Celebrity* announced a change to some *Century* Asia itineraries (**TD** Fri), which are being replaced with a 14-night Singapore-Dubai cruise in Mar 2015, followed by a 15-night Dubai-Rome voyage via the Suez Canal to allow the vessel to reposition to Europe.

Although *Celebrity* hasn't made any formal announcement about the switch of lines, CDF said that *Century* would operate in place of its existing *Zenith* which operates cruises out of Marseille over the summer.

Celebrity Century is the cruise line's oldest vessel and sailed in Australasian waters in 2012/13, with plans for a return next summer alongside *Celebrity Solstice*.

The change to the French cruise line will mean that the 2014/15 season will be the last time that Australian cruisers will be able to experience *Celebrity Century* sailing in local waters.

Hawaiian tourism slowing

TOURISM authorities in Hawaii have revealed decreasing visitor numbers and spending for the third consecutive month, with overall arrivals down 5.5% year-on-year in Nov to 620,051.

The biggest decline was in visitors from the US mainland, with Hawaii Tourism Authority ceo Mike McCartney citing a range of factors including "increasingly aggressive competition, adjustments in product pricing and fluctuations in currency exchange rates and fuel costs.

"As a result, many consumers continue to become more price conscious, which has been

affecting visitor length of stay, accommodation preferences and spending," he said.

Despite the downturn from major markets including the US and Japan, arrivals from the Oceania region were up 33.3%.

McCartney said the HTA was working in both core and developing markets to address the issues, including "enhancing marketing programs and airlift support to increase destination market share and balance Hawaii's tourism economy".

He said the HTA was forecasting that the shortfalls in both arrivals and spending would continue through the first half of 2014.

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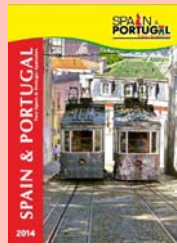


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Brochures of the Week

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.



SPTC - Spain & Portugal Travel Connection 2014

A wide variety of new product has been sourced and added to the 2014 Spain & Portugal Travel Collection range including new hotels and tour options. Highly detailed yet easy-to-read city maps allow travellers to explore whilst clearly identifying hotel locations and major sightseeing in cities including Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon and Porto. Self-drive itineraries have been developed along with cruising on the Douro River and niche touring including specialist food and wine escorted touring.



CIT Holidays - Italy 2014

A massive 196-page comprehensive guide to Italy and many popular parts of Europe features a beautiful shot of Tuscany on the cover and glossy photos throughout. Itineraries range from fully escorted for first-time visitors to self-guided for the more experienced. Italy is thoroughly available including Abruzzo, Limoncello, Cinque Terre and more. New accommodation options on the Amalfi Coast, Sardinia, Rome and Venice are available, along with London and stopover product Dubai and Abu Dhabi.



Cosmos - Asia 2014

Twelve different itineraries in the 2014 Cosmos range in Asia are packed with value, with new tour extensions in beachside resort towns including Phuket, Koh Samui and Goa. Available tours visit Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Japan, Sri Lanka and India, each rich in culture yet enjoying comfortable and stylish hotels. The two new tours include the seven-day China's Cities of Contrast which includes high-speed rail between Beijing and Shanghai, and the 11-day Grand Tour of Sri Lanka.



Intrepid Travel - North America 2014

Travellers wishing to immerse themselves in American lifestyle will love the revitalised North America Original Intrepid trips, which incorporate public transport to get travellers between cities on over 20 itineraries such as the Canadian Rockies, Seattle to Alaska and New York to New Orleans trips. Brand new for the company in 2014 is Hawaii, with a Hawaiian Highlights tour allowing guests to hike in Kauai to check out active volcanoes or to spot local wildlife such as humpback whales off the coast.



Infinity Holidays - Fiji 2014

Among the new products featured in Infinity's latest Fiji brochure is a private heli-tour with lunch, a new sunset cruise and a Flavours of Fiji cooking school. The range of available accom options has also been expanded, with the addition of the 4-star Tropica Island Resort and a new stopover resort located very close to Nadi Airport. Small ship cruising and car hire allows guests to customise their own experiences of Fiji.

SIA targets Japan

SINGAPORE Airlines has signed its first ever Memorandum of Understanding with the Japan National Tourism Organization, with the aim of boosting tourist arrivals into Japan from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Currently SQ operates 56 weekly flights to Japan, with ports including Tokyo Narita, Osaka, Fukuoka, Nagoya and Haneda.

And from 30 Mar Singapore Airlines will add a third daily flight to Tokyo Haneda, bringing total frequencies to 63 per week.

Although SIA has previously worked in several markets with the JNTO, this is the first time an overarching MoU has been signed on an international level.

The pact is valued at about S\$1 million, with both parties committing funds to support advertising and promotional campaigns as well as familiarisation programs for travel trade and media.

MSC fleet upgrades

MSC Cruises has announced plans to invest more than US\$270 million on a "renaissance program" for all four of its Lirica-class vessels.

The major works program will see the ships lengthened by about 30m, with the addition of almost 200 cabins boosting capacity from the current 2069 passengers to almost 2700.

59 new crew cabins will also be added, along with new entertainment and shopping options including a family 'spray park' attraction and an on-board perfumery.

Armonia, *Lirica*, *Sinfonia* and *Opera* will each require 38 weeks in dry dock for the works to be carried out by Italian ship-builder Fincantieri.

Armonia will be the first ship to undergo works, commencing 31 Aug 2014, while the project will be completed with the *Lirica* on 09 Nov 2015.



Window Seat

AUTHORITIES in the US city of San Diego are under fire from hospitality establishments in an area called La Jolla Cove, because of the smell of sea lion excrement.

The La Valencia Hotel and nearby restaurant George's at the Cove claim the unpleasant odour is driving away tourists, and have filed a lawsuit asking the city to do something about the problem.

"We consider this to be a potential health hazard and a serious public nuisance, and we have faced the resulting financial hardships for too long," said one of the plaintiffs.

It's not the first time that an issue like this has arisen, with businesses in the same area last year complaining about the stink from pelican and seagull poo which they said was also causing problems.

Environmental laws prohibit any possibility of capturing, killing or interfering with wildlife at the cove.

BEACHGOERS in Argentina got an unexpected surprise when they tried to cool off on Christmas Day, after a swarm of carnivorous fish attacked, injuring more than 70 bathers.

The so-called 'palometas' are a relative of the piranha, with a number of the victims reportedly losing fingers and toes in the incident.

The attack occurred on the Parana River near Rosario, which is about 300km north of Buenos Aires.

Scientists attributed the rare incident to scorching temperatures, which can lead some species of fish to gather near the surface of the water.

Beaches were closed after the incident, but it was so hot that people went back into the water within 30 minutes.

Rocking the Red Centre



ABOVE: AAT Kings recently hosted this group of lucky travel consultants on a seven day Short Break and Rail package, as part of a *Surf and Turf* incentive.

To qualify for the prize agents received points if they booked any AAT Kings guided holiday or short break with a Great Southern Rail product during Sep and Oct this year.

The winners were taken on an educational led by AAT Kings sales managers Daniel Toby and Simon Vincent, during which they explored the natural beauty of Kangaroo Island as well as the stunning Red Centre.

They also travelled on board the *Indian Pacific* and *The Ghan* from Sydney to Adelaide and then onto Alice Springs.

Chongqing visa free

CHONGQING will today become the fifth Chinese city to offer 72-hour visa-free stays for international transit passengers.

Effective 30 Dec passengers from about 50 countries who have a valid passport and an outbound plane ticket will be able to stay in Chongqing without a visa for 72 hours.

Chongqing joins Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu in the initiative which covers most countries in Europe, the USA and Canada, six countries in Asia as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Romantic Outrigger

OUTRIGGER Hotels & Resorts has announced special Valentine's Day offers at two properties in Hawaii and Fiji.

Couples staying at Outrigger Reef on the Beach or Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach in Hawaii can participate in a free traditional Hawaiian vow renewal ceremony on the Waikiki shore.

And those staying at Outrigger on the Lagoon in Fiji can enjoy a Vakavouvi Vows and Romance Package, offered throughout Feb, which includes a vow renewal ceremony, romantic dinner for two and seven nights' accom in a deluxe ocean view room.

See www.outrigger.com.

EK A330s to Warsaw

EMIRATES will continue to operate A330-200 aircraft on its new daily Dubai-Warsaw route after 01 Jan 2014, rather than replacing them with a 777-300 as previously planned.

AA to boost DFW-LHR

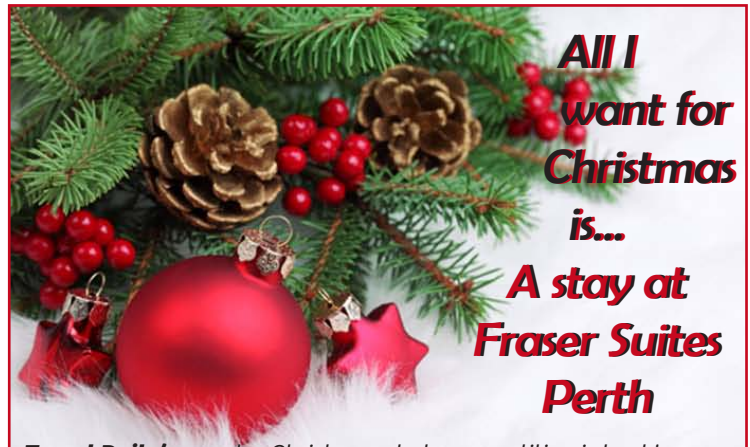
AMERICAN Airlines will increase capacity on the Dallas-London Heathrow route from Aug 2014, with GDS displays showing the introduction of a second daily Boeing 777-300ER service.

Effective 01 Aug 14 AA will operate the route with two daily 777-300ER and one daily 767-300ER rotation.

MU Beijing-Bali

CHINA Eastern Airlines is operating seasonal thrice weekly non-stop flights from Beijing to Bali from 21 Dec 2013-27 Jan 2014, using A330-300 aircraft.

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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: Amanda Pigott from the Creative Holidays Star Performer team sent in the above awesome photo of her colleagues really getting into the festive spirit.

For your chance to be featured in **Travel Daily**, email your festive photos (including names of the people pictured) to: ymasphotos@traveldaily.com.au.

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

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Calling for Expressions of Interest

World Youth Day 2016 Official Tour Operator

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) is seeking to appoint an Official Tour Operator to coordinate travel and accommodation logistics for World Youth Day 2016.

The Official Tour Operator will enhance and support the Australian World Youth Day Committee's co-ordination of pilgrims to WYD, to be held in Krakow, Poland, from 25 to 31 July 2016.

The Australian World Youth Day pilgrimage will provide pilgrims with opportunities to experience WYD, visit the attractions and sights of Poland and greater Europe as well as share the spiritual experience with other pilgrims.

It is anticipated that Australia's Pilgrims, Leaders, Clergy and Bishops will total approximately 2000.

The ability to effectively manage the varying requirements of a range of key stakeholders is essential.

IMPORTANT

Interested parties should attend a Briefing Session in early 2014.

Date: Monday 13 January 2014.

Time: 10am to noon.

Address: Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Diocesan Office,
12 Victoria Road, North Parramatta.

To register for the Briefing Session and to request an Application Pack send an email to Mr Malcolm C Hart, Senior Youth Ministry Projects Officer: youthministry@catholic.org.au

Expressions of Interest close at 4pm on Friday 28 February 2014.

Send Expressions of Interest on email to:
Mr Malcolm C Hart, Senior Youth Ministry Projects Officer
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariat for Pastoral Life
Email: youthministry@catholic.org.au