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# Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 2nd January 2013

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## Happy 2013 from TD

THE staff of *Travel Daily* would like to wish all of our readers a very happy New Year.

We look forward to a great year in 2013 continuing to inform and entertain you, and would like to thank you for your ongoing support throughout the years.

Today we kick off the new year with a fabulous competition offering a major prize of a holiday in Singapore courtesy of the Park Hotel Group and British Airways - see page four for details.

## Changi hits milestone

SINGAPORE'S Changi Airport handled more than 50 million passengers in 2012, with the milestone reached just two years after hitting 40 million in 2010.

The rapid growth was attributed to the increasing availability of SIN low-cost travel options, along with "booming demand for intra-Asia travel".

Passenger numbers grew more than 10% in both 2011 and 2012.

A special ceremony to celebrate the 50 millionth arrival was held to welcome Garuda flight 824 on 31 Dec, with Indonesia the top market for Changi, comprising 13.4% of total traffic this year.

## Four pages of news

*Travel Daily* today has four pages of news and photos, plus a full page from: (click)

- inPlace Recruitment jobs

## Virgin trialling BYOD IFE

VIRGIN Australia is expected to begin the full roll-out of wireless in-flight entertainment streaming to passengers' personal devices from next month, with an initial month-long trial of the system currently under way.

One 737 has been fitted to the 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) system which supports Apple and Windows devices.

More than 300 hours of content (including movies, TV, CDs, radio programs and a moving map) is available on the system, which works on iPads and iPhones via a special Lufthansa Systems app available on the Apple iTunes store - but this must be downloaded before boarding.

Laptops and tablets with Microsoft's Silverlight software can also display the Virgin streaming IFE content.

## You and I and Gemini

THE former *Norwegian Dream*, now renamed *SuperStar Gemini*, has set sail from Singapore after undergoing a US\$50m overhaul.

The 1500-passenger ship has upgraded navigation and safety systems along with "restyled" cabins, restaurants, recreation and entertainment facilities.

She'll operate 17 voyages from Penang in Malaysia, then relocate to Sanya in China for 26 cruises.

From Apr to Oct the ship will operate from Shanghai to destinations in North Asia.

Virgin Australia says it plans to introduce the technology on all of its 737 and Embraer aircraft, with the system accessible from when the 'fasten seatbelt' sign is turned off after take-off.

According to the carrier's website the system currently doesn't support Android devices, BlackBerrys, Windows Phones or Tablets or Apple MacBooks, with hopes to expand the availability to more gadgets early this year.

## Agent Qantas Club special offer

TRAVEL agents who wish to join the Qantas Club can do so this month without paying the normal \$370 joining fee.

As well as this offer for personal agent memberships, QF is also promoting a separate incentive for consultants to join up their clients to the Club through until 31 Jan.

This promotion gives agents a double Qantas Club Domestic lounge pass to use at their leisure, for each new membership sold between 03 Dec and 31 Jan.

The offer is available for Qantas Club memberships sold to new Australian resident members who join as an Individual or as a Partner of an Individual.

The client memberships sold are available with 10% commission; to register your customers call the Qantas Frequent Flyer Service Centre on 13 11 31 and sign up the client, making payment using VPMD on GDS.

Then register the new membership number together with agent details on the QF site at [qantas.com.au/agents](http://qantas.com.au/agents).

## Conrad Beijing opening

THE new Conrad Beijing hotel is now accepting reservations for arrival from 15 Apr 2013.

The luxury property on Dongsanhuan Rd will have 300 guest rooms, along with a spa and a rooftop bar and restaurant.

## UK wholesale ferries

SYDNEY-based VisitUK is inviting agents to source UK & European ferries from its extensive range, making it a "one-stop ferry shop".

The company sells all operators, has a best market price guarantee and offers immediate quotes and confirmation, along with no booking fees and an instant voucher for confirmed bookings.

The range on offer includes P&O Ferries, Brittany Ferries, LD Line, SeaFrance, StenaLine, Irish Ferries, Moby, DFDS, Balearia, Corsica Ferries, Sardinia Ferries, Norfolkline, Acciona, Scandlines, Moby and Superfast Ferries.

More info 1300 063 300 or by email on [info@visituk.com.au](mailto:info@visituk.com.au).

## Hotel locks hacked

THOUSANDS of hotel locks around the globe are set to be "fixed" after a hacker posted details of a low-cost device which can open a popular brand of keycard-based room lock.

The locks are made by a company called Onity, which has reportedly sold more than a million of them, installed in thousands of properties across the globe.

The saga started in Jul at the Black Hat hacker conference in Las Vegas, when one of the delegates demonstrated a tool he had created for less than \$50 from parts bought at his local Radio Shack store.

The gadget could be inserted into a data port on the base of the Onity lock, and allowed him to read information from the electronics inside and in turn use this to open the lock in seconds.

The vulnerability, initially just a curiosity, quickly became exploited for criminal purposes after videos showing how it worked were posted online.

Hotels have implemented new security protocols and Onity has developed a fix which it says has been available for some months, and which is gradually being rolled out across affected hotels.

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## My precious TD



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Alita Brydon from Grand Pacific Tours, who has been named as the lucky winner of our Christmas photo competition.

She was among hundreds of people across the industry who sent in Christmas party photos, with her entry above proving that *Travel Daily* is read everywhere - even in Middle Earth.

Alita Brydon is pictured with Rachel Sinclair holding their precious copy of *Travel Daily* - and given that *TD* is usually produced in A4 size it even looks like the pair shrunk themselves to Hobbit-size for their entry.

Brydon has won two nights at the brand new Fraser Place Melbourne in a Studio Deluxe Suite, along with buffet breakfast for two, complimentary internet and midday check-out.

See p4 for another great opportunity to win with *TD*.

## FAA orders 737 probes

**THE** US Federal Aviation Administration has issued an order calling for additional inspections for cracking in the fuselage of about 109 ageing 737 aircraft used by US airlines.

The affected planes are 737-300, -400 and -500s, mostly flown by LCC Southwest Airlines.

The move follows an investigation into a 2009 incident in which a hole about the size of a football was torn in the roof of one of the older 737s en route from Nashville to Baltimore.

## Cyclone bypasses Noumea

**TROPICAL** Cyclone Freda is approaching New Caledonia, but the latest forecasts have reclassified it as a "depression".

The cyclone caused extensive flooding in the Solomon Islands, but has weakened as it moves south, causing heavy rain in Noumea but without the huge winds experienced during Fiji's recent Cyclone Evan which devastated some resorts incl the popular Castaway Is (*TD* 21 Dec).

However Freda has had an impact on cruise ships in the region, including *Radiance of the Seas* which was set to depart Sydney on 30 Dec.

The ship was delayed until yesterday and will skip two of its planned ports in the South Pacific because of expected heavy seas from the storm which passed directly across *Radiance's* route.

*Radiance* will return to Sydney in time for its next sailing 'Fijian Bliss' 12 night trip on 09 Jan.

The delay had some benefits for passengers, because the ship was moored in front of Sydney Harbour's Point Piper - in prime position to view the famous Sydney New Year's Eve fireworks.

## QF shares rising

**QANTAS** shares hit a six month high on New Year's Eve, rising as high as \$1.50 each before dipping slightly to close at \$1.49.

That means they have recovered more than 50% since plummeting to just 96c on 08 Jun after Qantas issued a profit downgrade forecasting its full year loss for 2011/12.

## New Orleans Indigo

**INTERCONTINENTAL** Hotels Group has opened the first Hotel Indigo in New Orleans, with the 132 room property located in the city's historic Garden District.

The hotel ormerly operated under the Clarion brand, but has now reopened under the new banner after a \$17m renovation.

The opening has come just in time for this year's SuperBowl football game in New Orleans later this month.

## C&K Indonesia tour

**COX & KINGS** is promoting a 12 day Highlights of Indonesia tour which departs from Surabaya and explores a range of destinations including Mount Bromo, Bali, Yogyakarta, Borobodur and more.

Priced from \$3790ppts, the trip operates between Apr and Sep 2013 and includes a local tour manager, private transfers, air conditioned land transport, daily breakfast, a flight to Denpasar and some meals - 1300 836 764.

## Contiki's Cousteau adventure

**LEADING** environmentalist, adventurer and explorer Celine Cousteau recently paid a visit to Travel House at Bondi Junction in Sydney to meet with and speak about her adventures with staff from Contiki.

Following in the footsteps of her famous grandfather Jacques, Contiki's Sustainability Ambassador spoke to a packed audience to educate the touring firm's staff on a variety of issues affecting the environment and the Contiki community.

Celine spoke about a push to protect the Mesoamerican Reef, which runs 1,000kms along the length of Mexico, Belize, Guatamala and Honduras.

## Thai-Cambodia buses

**THE** first ever direct bus services linking Thailand and Cambodia launched this week.

Two routes are available, including the 424km Bangkok-Siem Reap trip which takes about seven hours and will operate twice per day with a fare of 750 baht (about \$24).

The Bangkok-Phnom Penh service will run once daily and takes about 11 hours to traverse the 719km route, costing 900 baht or roughly \$30 one way.

Buses used on both routes are air conditioned, with the operators planning significant expansion including new routes such as Pattaya, Sihanoukville and the addition of trips to Myanmar and Vietnam in 2014.



Contiki, with the help of Celine, has embarked on a long-term project to educate its travelling customers on initiatives to help protect Earth and its oceans.

Celine is **pictured** above centre at the morning presentation alongside Contiki marketing head Toni Ambler and md Fiona Hunt.



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## TravelManagers corporate trip



**ABOVE:** This group of personal travel managers recently experienced Auckland courtesy of Emirates, as part of the first ever dedicated TravelManagers corporate famil to NZ.

They travelled on the new EK A380 flight between Melbourne and Auckland and stayed overnight at the Langham Hotel in the city's heart.

Participants also checked out other properties including the Hilton and the Novotel Auckland Airport before enjoying a fabulous hosted dinner at the Langham's *Eight* restaurant which has eight "world kitchens taking diners on an unforgettable

culinary journey".

The trip was led by TravelManagers Corporate Operations Executive, Aimee Fautleroy, who said the group's relationships with key suppliers across various sectors were "just as strong for corporate and business travel".

**Pictured** above at Auckland Harbour are, from left: Julianne Gazal-Rizk, Fiona Perry, Natalie Demirgellis, Tania Garipoli, Aimee Fautleroy, Samantha Cox, John Lengacher and John Cangia, with Jeremy Ferguson in front.

## Vail digs deep at Tahoe

**VAIL** Resorts is enjoying a strong season of snow, with good winter falls at its resorts at Vail Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone in Colorado, as well as Heavenly, Northstar and Kirkwood in California's Lake Tahoe.

More than 2 metres of snow fell in Lake Tahoe last week, and the company is reminding travellers of significant savings on lift tickets when purchased online at least seven days in advance.

See [www.snow.com/lifttickets](http://www.snow.com/lifttickets).

## AI 787s to Paris

**AIR** India has opened reservations for Boeing 787 flights between Delhi and Paris CDG, with GDS screens currently showing the new Dreamliner route to debut 31 Mar 2013.

## Kuoni shuts down loss-making operations

**SWISS** travel giant Kuoni has confirmed the sale of a number of businesses in the Netherlands, Spain and Russia as part of a previously announced restructuring plan (**TD** 22 Sep) under which it wants to exit from loss-making activities.

Tour operations in Spain and Holland were sold to local management, while Russia's Megapolis Tours was sold to rival operator Russian Express.

Kuoni said that "no sustainable solution" had been found for its Belgian Best Tours operation or the Octopustravel B2C online hotel platform.

"Therefore closure of these operations has been initiated," the company said, with activities in the businesses to cease during the first half of 2013.

Kuoni ceo Peter Rothwell said that the withdrawals meant that the company was "eliminating operational losses and concentrating on strategically relevant areas of business as a global, broad-based travel services provider".

As exclusively revealed by **Travel Daily** the Octopustravel closure only affects the consumer facing [octopustravel.com](http://octopustravel.com) sites (**TD** 21 Nov), with its Australian and NZ trade operations continuing to take bookings for its wholesale portfolio of more than 45,000 hotels, 6,000 tours and 5,000 transfer options.

## New FAA chief

**THE** US Senate has confirmed the appointment of Michael P. Huerta as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Huerta has been acting in the role since taking over from former chief, Randy Babbitt, who resigned in Dec 2011 over a drunk driving charge.

US president Barack Obama nominated Huerta for the position, with the move now confirmed by the Senate vote.

## Window Seat

**HOW** many times did you see midnight on New Years Eve?

A small group of celebrities, including Hollywood heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio, flew into Sydney last weekend to be among the first in the world to ring in the new year, courtesy of Australia's UTC+10 timezone.

Not content with doing it once however, the troupe quickly departed their Sydney party digs after midnight on 31 Dec to be whisked to the national capital.

Evading Sydney Airport's curfew restrictions by departing from Canberra, the group boarded a chartered Boeing 747 flight to Las Vegas - 17 hours behind Sydney - with the intention of celebrating New Years Eve in 2012 once again.

Only for the rich and famous.

**WITH** Christmas done & dusted for another year, Travelodge Hotels in the UK have released a list of the weirdest and most bizarre special requests received by guests over the holidays.

Take Travelodge in Tiverton, where a guest asked for a room with a big window so he could clearly see Santa's arrival, to a family staying at the York Central Travelodge, who asked if the giant Christmas tree in the lobby could be moved to their room.

While Christmas is usually a time for spending with family, one customer asked if a hotel employee could help him escape by faking an emergency.

**MOVES** are afoot to have the UK's Birmingham International Airport named after Black Sabbath frontman and reality TV star Ozzy Osbourne.

Osbourne hails from the Midlands city, with one report saying flights operating from Birmingham "aren't the kind of trips Osbourne was once known for," given his well-documented battles with drugs and alcohol.

## Zumba for Celebrity

**CELEBRITY** Cruises will be shaking to the Latin beat, after announcing the fleetwide roll-out of Zumba fitness classes.

The move is effective for all sailings from 16 Jan, and reflects the rising popularity of Zumba which Celebrity previously only offered on transatlantic voyages.

## QR sues German firm

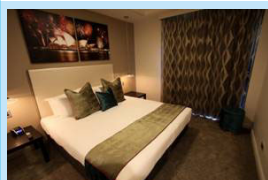
**QATAR** Airways has confirmed a massive \$600m lawsuit against German company Lindner Depa Interiors, over delays in the construction of the new Doha International Airport.

The move was flagged by QR ceo Akbar Al Baker (**TD** 22 Nov), who said the problems would see the airport open up to a year late.

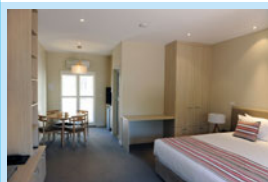
The company held a \$250m contract to build 19 airport lounges, but this has now been terminated due to the delays which have affected QR's revenue and rapid expansion plans.

## Accommodation Updates

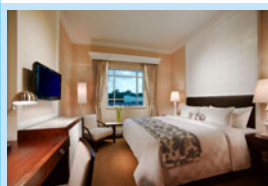
**WELCOME** to *Accommodation Updates*, **Travel Daily's** Wednesday feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



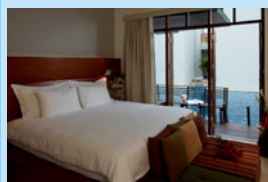
Sydney's **Grand Mercure Pinnacle Apartments** has rolled out its "Urban Chic" revamp at its Darling Harbour location, recently unveiling new look rooms, suites and public areas. In addition to extra thick, lavish drapes, each room now also boasts new bedding, furnishings, new colour patterns and state of the art media connectivity for business travellers.



Opened last month in Hahndorf, in the Adelaide hills, **The Haus Studio Apartments** offer new self-contained apartments in landscaped surroundings to provide a new option for regional and business tourism. Each dwelling offers kitchen facilities, with local attraction the Barossa Valley nearby. The energy efficient property also offers modern amenities including wireless internet, a heated pool, sauna and spa facilities.



In what it described as an effort to emerge as a brand new player in the hospitality industry, the **Rendezvous Grand Hotel Singapore** has spent S\$25m on refurbishment works to give the property a totally new identity. Upgrades include a newly designed ballroom, meeting rooms, reception, concierge pavilion, as well as all 298 guest rooms and suites.



Thailand's **Let's Sea Hua Hin Resort** has last month unveiled the final product of a four-month renovation, offering new looks and heightened comfort levels. New lighting throughout the lobby and rooms, as well as the "re-lighting" of the canal pool have given the feature a new image. The Moon Deck Duplex Suites have also undergone new landscaping to enhance privacy.

## WIN A HOLIDAY TO SINGAPORE

### WIN THIS MONTH'S MAJOR PRIZE

- Four nights at **Grand Park City Hall, Singapore**
- Two return economy flights from Sydney to Singapore on **British Airways**
- Airport transfers



**GRAND PARK**  
CITY HALL

**BRITISH AIRWAYS**

### WIN THIS WEEK'S PRIZE

- Three nights at **Park Hotel Hong Kong**



**PARK HOTEL**  
HONG KONG

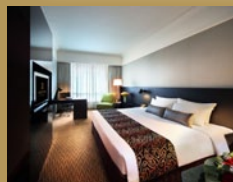
Throughout January, **Travel Daily** is giving readers the chance to win an incredible major prize of a trip for two to Singapore, including flights, courtesy of **Park Hotel Group** and **British Airways**.

Park Hotel Group is also giving away three weekly prizes of hotel stays in Singapore and Hong Kong.

To win the first weekly prize, simply answer Question 1 (below) by close of business on Friday 11th Jan 2013. The subscriber with the most creative answer will be the weekly winner.

There will be three questions throughout the month. At the end of January the **TD** reader with the most creative responses to **all three** questions will win the major prize of a holiday for two people to Singapore, flying British Airways.

**Qr: In 25 words or less tell us what Chinese Zodiac animal best represents the Park Hotel Hong Kong and why?**



Send your entries to: [parkhotelcomp@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:parkhotelcomp@traveldaily.com.au)

[CLICK HERE](#) for terms & conditions



**PARK HOTEL GROUP**

**BRITISH AIRWAYS**

## Big Apple sets record

**NEW** York City welcomed a record 52 million visitors in 2012, according to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, with the figure up 2.1% on 2011.

Bloomberg said visitors spent a hefty \$36.9 billion, contributing to a total estimated economic benefit of \$55.3 billion.

Overseas visitors comprised a hefty 21% of the total, with 29 million hotel room nights sold overall generating more than half a billion dollars in hotel taxes.

The figures show New York is well on the way to its 2015 target of 55 million visitors and \$70 billion in economic impact.

## US inflight internet

**AMERICAN** regulators have slashed red tape for new in-flight internet services, under a framework which simplifies licensing procedures with the aim of halving the time needed for approvals for new installations.

The Federal Communications Commission said the changed procedures would "promote the widespread availability of internet access to aircraft passengers".

The procedures will allow airlines to test systems to ensure they don't interfere with aircraft electronics, and then simply apply for approval from the Federal Aviation Administration.

**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](http://www.traveldaily.com.au).

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Product Management roles don't come around every day and this role needs to be filled by the end of January 2013. Apply today for more information.

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## Ski Specialists - Reservations - Sydney

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- ▶ Located on the Northern Beaches
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