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Travel Daily

First with the news

Friday 4th January 2013

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New Wyndham svp

WYNDHAM Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific has recruited Julian Blanchard as its Senior Vice President, heading up the firm's Legal and Compliance division.

Blanchard moves to Wyndham from his previous role at Billabong International, where he was International General Counsel.

BA expands bag drop

BRITISH Airways is expanding self bag-tagging facilities for passengers departing from London City Airport, with the system allowing passengers to check in their luggage in an average time of just 24 seconds.

The move follows a successful trial at LCY last year, with the airport aiming to allow check in as late as 20 min before departure.

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ACCC Virgin-Tiger concern

AUSTRALIAN Competition and Consumer Commission chairman Rod Sims says there are "substantial concerns" about the proposed merger of Tiger Airways into Virgin Australia (**TD** 30 Oct).

In an interview with the **ABC** last night, Sims said the deal was a "very complex equation to weigh up," because if it goes ahead it will help Virgin compete with Jetstar, but will also be removing the third player in the domestic aviation market.

The proposal would see Virgin take a 60% stake in Tiger, and was announced at the same time as VA's acquisition of Skywest, and

Singapore Airlines' purchase of a 10% Virgin Australia stake.

The ACCC has said it will issue its decision on the Virgin Australia-Tiger Airways deal on 31 Jan.

FCm adds Kazakstan

BORAT will now be able to book his corporate travel with FCm Travel Solutions, with the Flight Centre offshoot announcing a new agreement with local partner RBT-Kazakhstan.

The company, which specialises in travel for the oil and gas sectors, is headquartered in Ust-Kamenogorsk and also operates in Aktau, with planned expansion into the capital Astana in 2013.

FCm Europe gm Franziskus Bumm said it was important to have teams on the ground in Kazakhstan given the country has over 200 oil and gas fields.

DL launches LAX-SEA

DELTA Air Lines has announced the debut of non-stop flights between Los Angeles and Seattle.

Three daily flights will operate on the new route from 08 Apr, operated by Delta Connection carrier SkyWest using 76-seat two class CRJ900 regional jets.

DL is developing Seattle as an Asian gateway, currently offering flights from the Washington state city to Beijing and Osaka, as well as the planned addition of Shanghai during 2013.

Avis acquisition

AVIS has announced the purchase of NASDAQ-listed car sharing group Zipcar for about US\$500 million.

Zipcar operates in 20 major metropolitan centres in the US, Canada and Europe, with fleet positioned at more than 300 college and university campuses.

Avis Budget Group ceo Ronald Nelson said the company sees car sharing as "highly complementary" to traditional car rental, with rapid growth potential.

MEANWHILE Avis also overnight confirmed estimates of its full year 2012 results, with revenue up 24% to about \$7.3 billion and a profit of up to US\$465 million.

AAPA Nov up 8.4%

CARRIER members of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines flew 17m international pax in Nov, up 8.4% year on year.

AAPA director general Andrew Herdman said the increase was supported by healthy demand on regional routes, with the load factor improving by 3.1 points to 76.7% for the month.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has four pages of news & photos.

Paul Gauguin debut

FRENCH Polynesia-based luxury cruise operator Paul Gauguin Cruises is spreading its sails, having officially named its new m/v *Tere Moana* at a ceremony held in Marigot, St Martin in the Caribbean on 29 Dec 2012.

The vessel's godmother is Mireille Bailey, who's the wife of the cruise line's chairman, Richard Bailey.

The 90-guest *Tere Moana* is now operating her inaugural 7-night Caribbean voyage to islands in the French West Indies, British Virgin Islands and St Kitts & Nevis.

Later this month the ship will embark on two Panama Canal Cruises, and from Apr-Nov she will operate a variety of 7-night European voyages.

Tere Moana adds to Paul Gauguin's existing vessel, the 332-guest m/s *Paul Gauguin*, which operates in Tahiti, French Polynesia and the South Pacific. See www.wiltrans.com.au.

Carnival Spirit deals

CARNIVAL Cruise Lines has launched a range of New Year fares leading in at just \$900 per person twin share on a nine day cruise to New Caledonia.

The offers, on sale from 06-27 Jan, include savings of up to \$359pp off brochure fares.

A range of 8-12 day South Pacific cruises start at just \$745 per person quad share.

See www.goccl.com.au. More specials on **page three**.

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SIA reduces Perth

SINGAPORE Airlines is set to temporarily reduce capacity on its four times daily flights between Singapore and Perth.

Between 05 and 20 Mar SQ will operate 26 weekly flights instead of 28, with SQ224/225 on Tue and Wed each week cancelled during the suspension period.

Ibis Townsville sold

SYDNEY-based investment group Centennial Property has purchased the 117-room Ibis Townsville Hotel.

The property will continue to be managed by Accor under existing gm Steve Wellstead.

UA unveils new lounge

UNITED Airlines has launched a new United Club lounge in terminal 2 at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

The fully redesigned lounge is the first of a new "design prototype" which will be rolled out across the globe by UA when building and renovating lounges.

The new United Club has a redesigned interior that "reflects elements of flight and travel".

It has a large bar and lounge area, dynamic lighting and additional workstations and power outlets to enable pax to work or relax with more comfort.

Complimentary snacks, wi-fi and beverages are also on offer.

UA is this year spending over \$50 million to renovate several of its 51 United Club locations.

Velocity offline next week

MEMBERS of Virgin Australia's Velocity loyalty program will be unable to make bookings or redeem points for four days next week, as the carrier implements its transition to the new SabreSonic reservations system.

Velocity members this morning received an update confirming that the site would be offline from 10.30pm AEDT on Wed 09 Jan through to Sun 13 Jan.

During this period most of the Velocity functionality will be unavailable including retrieving bookings using membership numbers, redeeming points for flights or with program partners, upgrading using points, and adding Velocity numbers to new

and existing bookings.

Passengers wanting urgent assistance to change or cancel upcoming flights between Wed 09 and Fri 11 Jan are advised to contact the carrier between 8am and 8pm on 13 18 75.

However VA warned that the Membership Contact Centre will be unable to provide assistance on the weekend of 12-13 Jan due to the system transition.

CCC Fiji special

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji is offering a cruise seven, pay four deal on its Yasawa or Discovery cruise products on the *MV Reef Endeavour* - a saving of \$702 or over 35% off the normal fare.

The seven night Yasawa Islands cruise departs Port Denarau every Tue and Sat at 1pm, while there are also departures across the year of the Discovery Cultural Cruise and the Discovery Heritage Cruise, both of which explore the Northern Fiji islands.

The special deal is valid for sale until 28 Feb 2012, with prices starting at just \$1220ppts incl meals, tours, transfers and more.

Further info 1300 863 454.

DoubleTree to Ireland

HILTON Worldwide has announced that its DoubleTree by Hilton brand will debut in Ireland, with the rebranding of Dublin's Morrison Hotel as 'The Morrison Hotel' next month.

The 138-room property, located close to the city's International Financial Services Centre and a range of tourist attractions and sporting venues, has undergone a \$9.3m refurbishment.

An Xcellent trip to Xian



ABOVE: This group of lucky Aussie travel agents recently experienced the spectacle of Xian in China, courtesy of Consolidated Travel Group, Air China and Helen Wong's Tours.

The trip took in some of the city's fascinating archaeological wonders and cultural shows, with the group pictured above on a stunning day outside the

Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses.

From left: Melissa Scully, ZUIJ; Lin Fan, Air China; Christine Dawson, ABC Travel; Chris Chan, Helen Wong's Tours; Rain Yu Zhang, Sino Travel Services; Ly Le Phuoc, EC Travel Sydney; Linda Ualesi, Travel.com.au; Hemal Bhatt, CVFR; and William Huang, Consolidated Travel Group

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THRIFTY Car Rental is offering an 'NRMA Price Promise,' under which it guarantees to beat any equivalent competitor car rental quote by 10%.

The offer is available to NRMA members, who are also able to access free weekend vehicle upgrades and a range of deals including rent 7, pay 6 and rent 12, pay 10 - thrifty.com.au/NRMA

QR Warsaw boost

QATAR Airways is set to increase flights between Doha and Warsaw from 4 weekly to daily effective 01 Feb - just a few days before EK debuts Warsaw service.

Putting the fizz into US travel

RIGHT: This intrepid group of Aussies were recently spotted attending a function at the World of Coca Cola in Atlanta, USA as part of the first ever Travel South International Showcase.

More than 275 delegates from 17 countries attended the event, meeting with southern US travel suppliers over three days in late Nov.



The event was sponsored by the Georgia Dept of Economic Development, Atlanta Convention and Visitor Bureau and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Int'l Airport, in conjunction with Rhythms of the South and Brand USA.

Aussie attendees included Meagan Maynard from Infinity Holidays (above left) and Jacqui Browne from The Travel Corporation (right), who are pictured with Geoffrey Hutton of Kent Marketing who attended as an observer for the Visit USA Organisation in Australia.

Also present was Andrew Hutchison from Pinpoint Travel.

CZ hosts US famil

CHINA Southern Airlines is clearly setting its sights on the US market, with a group of top travel agents from China's Fujian province this week visiting the US West Coast.

The trip is focused on luxury travel and hospitality experiences and will see participants visit Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Monterey and Carmel during the visit.

Last year Chinese visitation to the USA soared by more than 70%, with the increase attributed to changed visa policies which significantly reduce wait times.

CZ currently operates daily A380 flights between Guangzhou and Los Angeles, and "is considering expanding its US service," according to a statement.

Window Seat

COULD this wacky wine feature in the Cellars in the Sky?

A Chilean winery has produced a tippie with a truly out-of-this-world flavour, by submerging a meteorite particle into a barrel of wine while it aged.

The extra-terrestrial Cabernet is appropriately named Meteorito, and comes from Chile's Tremonte winery.

Winemaker Ian Hutcheon, who's also a passionate astronomer, placed the 10cm piece of 4.5 billion year old meteorite into the wine for a year, and claims that a blind tasting found that the special wine had a "livelier and fresher taste with a curious twist".

Another space-age drink is set to be produced by the Ardbeg whisky distillery in Scotland, which sent vials of single malt to the International Space Station, in an effort to see how the spirit aged in the absence of gravity.

VISITORS to California should keep their eyes to the skies, on the lookout for what could be a bird, a plane...no it's Superman.

An enterprising inventor has created a life-sized remote controlled model superman, who has been spotted flying above the beaches in Carlsbad along the Pacific Coast Highway.

A video of the man of steel has gone viral and can be viewed on **Travel Daily TV** by clicking the logo or at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

SECURITY screeners at US airports intercepted more than 1500 guns in 2012 - a staggering four weapons per day.

The most trigger-happy pax were at Atlanta International Airport, where TSA staff found 80 guns during the year which were inadvertently left in carry-on bags - followed by DFW with 75, Phoenix Airport with 50 and then Houston airport with 48.

Travel Specials

**TRAVEL
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Travel, for
travel people

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

Travel Industry Club is offering a 12 day tour through Cambodia and Vietnam from just \$1299 per person. Explore the ancient cities of Asia at industry rates - more details on 02 9700 8711.

The new year is a great time to travel to Fiji, and **Air Pacific** is making it easy with special prices up to 60% off for Australian travellers. But your clients will have to be quick, with the special prices valid only until 09 Jan. Adult fares lead in at \$422 return ex Sydney and just \$229 return for children aged under 12, with the prices valid for travel Jan-Mar. Special Air Pacific fares are also available ex Brisbane and Melbourne to Nadi.

Steamboat Mountain in the US Rocky Mountains is offering up to five nights free for Australian travellers, valid from tomorrow through until the end of the season. Packages include a stay 10, pay 7 deal at Steamboat Grand from \$1355 including a 9 day lift pass; and stay 10, pay 5 from \$1615pp at Eagle Ridge - more info from SKIMAX on 1300 136 997.

Cruise Abroad is offering a 27-night European holiday from just \$6999 per person including flights from Australia, two CroisiEurope river cruises and hotel stays in Budapest and Paris. The package is for a 21 Sep 2013 departure and features a 12 night Danube, Rhine and Main river voyage between Budapest and Strasbourg, as well as seven nights on the Seine roundtrip from Paris. More information 1300 669 369.

Rendezvous Hotels has launched a range of getaway packages with inclusions such as breakfasts, late check-outs and car parking. Deals include \$139 per night at Rendezvous Grand Adelaide incl 24 hours of internet and late check-out until noon, with similar bonus offers at Rendezvous properties in Brisbane, Sydney, Singapore, Auckland, Perth, Shanghai and Port Douglas - see www.rendezvoushotels.com.

Whitsundays flotillas

SUNSAIL has launched new north and south Whitsundays flotilla itineraries, in which travellers enjoy the sights of the stunning islands as part of a group of up to ten yachts.

The North Flotilla takes in Border Island, Double Bay, Funnel Bay and Cape Gloucester and departs 31 Mar and 30 Jun.

And the South Flotilla explores the Sir James Smith Island Group along with Brampton, Goldsmith and Long Islands, departing 22 Sep and 10 Nov 2013.

The trips are accompanied by a lead boat with experienced crew - more info 1800 803 988.

Hertz mobile upgrades

HERTZ has launched an enhanced 'Carfirmations' service which allows Hertz Gold Plus Rewards members to select an upgraded or different rental vehicle via their smartphone.

Using the system members are presented with available options before pick-up, and can swap to a different vehicle in three simple clicks without talking to a Hertz rental agent.

The new option was trialed last month at Los Angeles and Washington DC, with the new Mobile Gold Alert upgrade option now available at the top 50 airport locations in the USA.

Double Hilton points

HILTON'S HHonors loyalty scheme has launched a promotion offering double points for stays between 07-31 Jan at any of its ten brands worldwide.

An infinity of thankys



ABOVE: Flight Centre Global Product recently hosted a special celebration at the Sukosol Hotel in Bangkok, with FCGP thanking its key supplier partners for their support during 2012..

Some of the guests at the event, including Flight Centre's Thailand, Japan and South Korea product manager Popo Hartopo, are pictured above with the Sukosol's Kulrisa, Marisa and Songsri.

What an Amazon deal

SEADREAM Yacht Club is offering a seven day Amazon River adventure from US\$6426 - down from the originally advertised price of \$8827.

The deal is valid for the 03 Mar sailing which will see guests meet Amazonian tribes, hand-feed monkeys in Colombia and optionally experience a canoe trip by night with naturalists in search of crocodiles, snakes and other nocturnal creatures.

More info 02 9958 4444.

LATCB appointment

ERNEST Wooden Jr has been named President and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board.

Wooden is well known to the industry, having worked for a range of hoteliers including Hilton and Sheraton and also operating a hotel consulting practice.

Wooden takes up the role vacated by Mark Liberman who announced his retirement in May.

The LA Tourism and Convention Board was founded in 1977 as a non-profit business association and is the official branding, sales and marketing organisation for Los Angeles, responsible for developing leisure and meetings business for the economic benefit of the community.

Freestyle Hawaii NFL

HAWAII Tourism Oceania is encouraging Aussies to "discover American football in paradise," via a Freestyle Holidays NFL Pro Bowl 2013 package.

Deals are priced from \$450pp including transfers and tickets to the game on Sun 27 Jan 2013, admittance to the Pro Bowl All Stars Block Party on 26 Jan and attendance at the "Official NFL Pro Bowl Tailgate Party" before the game.

Freestyle Hols also has a range of accommodation offers starting at \$315pp for four nights and return airport transfers.

See freestyleholidays.com.au.

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



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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.

Q1: In 25 words or less tell us what Chinese Zodiac animal best represents the Park Hotel Hong Kong and why?

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