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Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 16th July 2014



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IHG returns to Brisbane

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has today signed a new franchise agreement for a 226-room Holiday Inn Express hotel in Brisbane's Spring Hill.

It's the second Holiday Inn Express property to be developed under the \$150m Pro Invest fund (TD 25 Jul 13) and also marks the

return of IHG to Brisbane since the former Holiday Inn became the first Traders Hotel in Australia when it was taken over by Shangri-La in 2012.

IHG is also developing a Holiday Inn Express in Sydney's Macquarie Park, with the group's Australasian head of development, Matthew Tripolone saying the company is actively scouring Australia for further strategic locations for the brand.

Holiday Inn Express is IHG's largest and fastest growing brand, comprising over 2,300 properties across the globe.

The new hotel will offer free and fast Wi-Fi in rooms and public areas as well as free breakfast.

EK 4th daily to JNB

EMIRATES has announced the introduction of a fourth daily flight between Dubai and Johannesburg, with the new 777-300ER service to debut 26 Oct.

South African Airways will codeshare on the new flight, with the expansion seeing EK operate 49 weekly services to South Africa including Durban and Cape Town as well as JNB.

Seven pages of news

Travel Daily today has eight pages of news and photos, a front cover page for **Travel Industry Exhibition** plus full pages from: (**click**):

- AA Appointments jobs
- Catalan Tourist Board

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NTIA "golden ticket"

THE National Travel Industry Awards have been sold out for some time - but one lucky *Travel Daily* reader is set to win a place at the industry's night of nights.

We have reserved a seat at our table for this Sat night for the reader who sends in the most creative short poem or limerick describing why they would like to be there.

The NTIA gala dinner kicks off at 6.30pm sharp at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion, and we'll accept entries until the close of business on Thu 16 Jul.

Get your entries in by email to goldenticket@traveldaily.com.au.

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Air NZ 787-9 video

TRAVEL Daily TV was on the spot in Auckland for the arrival of Air New Zealand's new 787-9 Dreamliner last weekend.

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Escape Lounge checks in

DISRUPTIVE Investments Ltd, the public company which bought the resurrected hotel website Check-in-com.au after its collapse just over a year ago (*TD* 18 Feb), has now acquired 100% of travel deals site Escape Lounge.

Escape Lounge founder Jessica Byrnes remains with the company with Disruptive's board saying that traffic is continuing to grow to the site, increasing from 3,950 visitors in Jan to 16,341 in Jun.

In an ASX update last week, the company said it continues to focus on developing its online travel division, and has terminated a proposed transaction to acquire the Allure Bathrooms business.

Disruptive Investments chair Adir Shiffman said the company is still looking for further acquisitions, and is engaging with "profitable, high growth businesses run by strong teams with a competitive advantage".

In a *Financial Review* opinion piece yesterday, Shiffman bemoaned the Expedia purchase of Wotif, which he said means foreign players will "now completely dominate the local landscape."

Our Airline rebrands

NAURU based carrier Our Airline will change its operating name to Nauru Airlines from 01 Aug, the carrier's ceo has advised.

The move was announced by Nauru President Baron Waqa in line with the impending delivery of new aircraft to the carrier.

QF Sales Act move

THE Federal Govt has proposed to lift all competitive restrictions on the Qantas Sales Act, but limiting foreign ownership by 25% for individuals or 35% for airlines.

Creative Cruising fam

CREATIVE Cruising will host its first ever famil in Sep aboard Royal Caribbean's *Allure of the Seas* to the Caribbean in Sep.

Agents can earn a place on the trip based on sales of Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises or Azamara Cruises made between 11 and 25 Jul with the wholesaler - call 1300 362 599.



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Skytrax awards best in 2014

CATHAY Pacific Airways has taken top honours in the annual Skytrax awards announced late last night, claiming the title of World's Best Airline for 2014.

The **oneworld** carrier jumped five places on its 6th placed Airline of the Year ranking last year, which was won by Emirates.

Qatar Airways retained its place in second this year, as did Singapore Airlines in third, while Emirates fell to fourth.

Fellow Gulf carrier Etihad Airways, which in Jun said it did not wish to be part of the Skytrax awards (**TD** 10 Jun), slipped from seventh to ninth.

Australian flag-carrier Qantas fell outside the Top 10 on the global stage, from its 10th place in 2014 to 11th.

Qantas was declared Best Airline in Australia/Pacific, then Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand, Jetstar Airways and Fiji Airways.

The tables were turned in the

Best Airline Staff Service category for this region, with Virgin Australia top, followed by Qantas.

Garuda Indonesia's cabin crew were rated the world's best, then Cathay Pacific & Singapore Air.

Best First Class cabin went to Singapore Airlines, Best Business to Qatar Airways, Best Premium Economy to Air New Zealand & Best Economy to Asiana Airlines.

AirAsia and long-haul offshoot AirAsia X claimed the top two places for Best Low-Cost Airlines, with Jetstar Airways in fourth.

Best First Class Lounge was awarded to Air France (Qantas was ninth) and Best Business Class Lounge to Qatar Airways, (Qantas in fourth).

The accolade for Best In-Flight Entertainment went to Emirates' ice, which was followed by SQ's Krisworld, Turkish Airlines' The Planet and then Qantas Inflight Entertainment.

View the full winners lists **HERE**.

Kit out with Catalan

AGENTS are being encouraged to become an expert in the Barcelona and Catalan region of Spain via a new online training course by Catalan Tourist Board.

The course comprises five short modules and can be completed from start to finish in around two hours, the organisation said.

Modules cover content such as local highlights and places of interest, where to stay and how to get there, with a swag of prizes available to successful graduates.

For more details, see the **last page** of today's *Travel Daily*.

eSky joins ITP group

ROMANIAN online travel agent network eSky has expanded its participation in the International Travel Partnership group from Poland to now include Romania.

ITP is a global network of aligned independent TMC firms, with its Australian partner agency being Maxim's Travel in Sydney.



Window Seat

BANYAN Tree has released a unique travel package designed both for travellers who can't sit still and those who enjoy living in the lap of luxury.

Celebrating its 20th birthday, the hotel group has devised its 'Around the World in 20 Ways' package, a once-in-a-lifetime trip priced at US\$50,000 per couple.

The 40-night package allows couples to stay at 20 different Banyan Tree and Angsana properties around the world for two nights each and trying a unique experience at each.

The trip covers six time zones and 11 countries on three different continents.

Guests taking the tour can enjoy activities such as a thrill-seeking flight over Mauritius, a falconry lesson in the UAE and adopting a turtle in Maldives.

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Bespoke safari firm to launch

AUSTRALIA'S newest luxury safari tour operator - Nomads Safaris - has announced it will launch in Oct with an initial range of just over 12 bespoke tours.

Claiming to "uncover the real world in luxury", the inaugural itineraries will be photography themed tours to Tibet and India, hosted by *National Geographic Magazine* snapper Robert W

Madden and *New York Times* shutterbug Tony Sernack.

Each Nomads Safaris group will consist of no more than 12 pax, with Madden leading a group on a 14-day Photographic Safari Masterclass in Tibet, while Sernack will escort pax on a 17-day journey of India.

Nomads Safaris director Lucia O'Connell has designed & trialed each itinerary, with logistical travel agency services and client booking services to be carried out by Platinum Travel Corporation.

Based in Sydney, the company's mission says it aspires to provide authentic and meaningful insight and life-enriching experiences.

"Our personalised and intimate journeys are crafted specifically for couples, families and friends who wish to travel together into the heart of the destinations from our portfolio to give adventurers total immersion," O'Connell said.

Qld Forum in Sydney

FORTY Queensland businesses were on show to inbound tour operators and online travel agents from China, UK, USA and Europe yesterday as ATEC hosted its Best of Queensland tourism workshop at Luna Park in Sydney.

The event was supported by Tourism & Events Queensland and Qantas and featured north and south Queensland suppliers together for the first time.

Bench International - the Africa Experts

Part-Time Sales Representative - WA

Bench International, the founder of African holidays in Australia, has a unique opportunity for a highly motivated and energetic Sales Representative in WA.

Experience in sales together with first-hand travel knowledge of Africa is a must. The successful candidate will be responsible for managing existing relationships with key travel agents, as well as developing new ones within Western Australia.

Participation at travel shows and consumer nights are some of the aspects of the role.

To apply to join the pride, email your CV to jobs@benchinternational.com.au with the position title in the subject header by 18 July 2014.



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Geckos 'Nam bike tour

GECKOS Adventures has rolled out a new 15-day cycling trip in between Ho Chi Minh City & Hanoi in partnership with Reid Cycles.

Wheeling out on 22 Nov, the Vietnam itinerary is designed for recreational riders & incl six days of cycling over gentle terrain.

The 'Tour du Pho' departs on 22 Nov & is priced from \$1,186ppts.

EK Europe mixed fare

NEWLY released mixed class fares are available with Emirates, priced from \$5,755 to Europe.

The mixed fares are based on flights from Australia to Dubai in Business Class and onwards to select points across UK/Europe in Economy class.

Free stopovers in Dubai are also available on flights to Europe ex Sydney on EK415, ex Melbourne on EK409, ex Brisbane on EK433 and ex Perth on EK423 departing before 31 Jul.

Options include \$5,755 to Istanbul, \$5,773 to Barcelona, \$5,794 to Rome, \$5,833 to Paris and \$6,295 to London.

The promo is available for sales & ticketing until 28 Nov for travel on select dates thru to 24 Mar.

Lawn bowls coach-ing

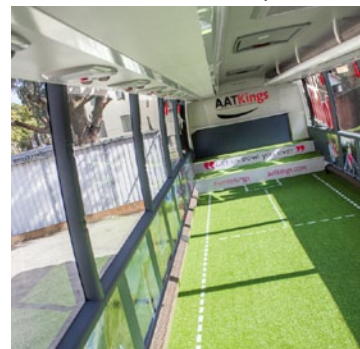
AAT Kings has created the world's first mobile indoor lawn bowls green, with a Scania coach converted (**below**) to drive business and in an effort to create a new Guinness World Record.

The guided holiday company has partnered with Bowls Australia & Grassman to produce a state-of-the-art lawn bowls green, having stripped out the majority of seats on one of its luxury vehicles.

It will tour the country over six weeks, engaging with community organisations and trade partners in more than 60 regional towns, providing locals with holiday offers & discounts for having a bowl.

In Aug, AAT Kings will attempt the title of the "longest marathon playing indoor bowls" in Sydney.

CLICK HERE for itinerary details.



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STA cooks up a Malaysian storm



LEARNING a host of new cooking skills proved an enjoyable team building day for this group of high-achieving STA Travel consultants from Perth recently.

The group were welcomed by Malaysia Airlines to take part in the exclusive cooking class as a thank you for ongoing support and strong MH ticket sales.

Helped along by experts in Malaysian cuisine, the agents learned how to make Chicken Rendang, Fish Curry, Sambal

Cuttle Fish, Loh Bak, Vegetable Curry and Bubur Cha Cha.

Ivy Tan, Malaysia Airlines; Jade Prince, STA Murdoch Uni; Sarah Guarch, STA Murdoch Uni; Daniel Giffney, STA Carousel; Danielle Patterson, STA Fremantle and Carlie Germs, STA Carousel.

Malaysia take a swing

GOLFERS are being encouraged to come and "play Malaysia", with the Malaysia Golf Tourism Association launching a new website and corporate identity promoting the destination.

The new portal comes as part of a five-year plan to increase the number of travellers visiting the country for a golfing holiday.

Courses near major cities, on tropical islands and in hinterland regions all feature on the new www.playmalaysiagolf.com site.

First-time golfing visitors are also being targeted as part of a concerted campaign starring well-known professional golfers endorsing the country's facilities.

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AAX sign \$13.8b A330neo deal

AIRBUS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with low-cost long-haul carrier AirAsia X for 50 units of its brand new A330neo aircraft (**TD** yest).

The deal makes AAX the first carrier globally to commit to a purchase of the new model launched this week at the Farnborough Air Show in the UK. The order is valued at US\$13.8 billion at list prices, with aircraft expected to be delivered between 2018 and 2024.

In attendance for the formal signing of the order was AirAsia X founder Tony Fernandes and carrier ceo Azran Osman-Rani.

Fernandes said he was sure the new model would be "unbeatable" in its size category. "I am pleased that they are

offering this choice and bringing us the aircraft we truly need to develop further our low cost long haul model," Fernandes said.

"We have been encouraging Airbus to launch this new version of the A330 for some time now".

MEANWHILE, the Farnborough show has also seen International Airlines Group (IAG) convert an existing contracted option with Airbus for a further 20 A320neo aircraft for delivery over 2018/19.

The US\$1 billion option is part of a 100-jet option which applied to a massive order placed by IAG last year (**TD** 15 Aug) for 220 short-haul aircraft.

IAG said the additional aircraft will replace part of the British Airways fleet but may be sent to Iberia or Vueling if required.

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Flying Blue expands

MEMBERS of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines' Flying Blue frequent flyer program can now burn points when booking flights with Dutch low-cost carrier transavia.com.

The offer applies to flights operated by transavia.com from Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Groningent and Rotterdam.

Karma hotel GDS code

BALI'S 5-star Karma Kandara & Karma Jimbaran are now able to be booked live via the global distribution system.

The hotels can be sold under the 'YX' chain code in Sabre, Amadeus, Galileo and Worldspan. **CLICK HERE** for more details.

UA, 4U plot c'share

LUFTHANSA low-cost offshoot Germanwings has sought approval from US regulators to commence a new codeshare agreement with United Airlines, as soon as feasible.

Dental tour insurance

BRISBANE based travel insurer Go Insurance has launched the first policy designed for Australian travellers heading overseas to seek dental treatment.

The product is an add-on on top of its comprehensive policy and covers holders for complications experienced overseas up to a value of \$25,000.

Claimants are also covered for return transport and accom if remedial treatment is required to fix an unsuccessful procedure.

CX Good Food backer

CATHAY Pacific has confirmed its support of Good Food Month in Australia, currently underway in Brisbane and moving to Sydney in Oct and Melbourne in Nov.

The Hong Kong-based carrier will use the event to promote a range of activities and specials over coming months, including a \$786 return Economy Class fare ex Brisbane if booked by 25 Jul.



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Swagman dons Dolly for Hamilton



IT IS perhaps no secret that Swagman Tours founder Wayne Hamilton is perhaps the No 1 card-carrying fan of country music songstress Dolly Parton.

As a random gesture, the team decided to surprise their charismatic director by donning Dolly wigs (which are likely kept and used in the office regularly). To cap it off, the team subjected themselves to enjoyed listening

to Dolly Parton music all day long. **Pictured** above behind Hamilton are Swagman Tours staff members Treacey, Pat, Lindsey, Michelle, Soula, Mark, Nikki and Karen.

SA camping changes

EFFECTIVE 01 Aug, visitors to South Australia's Innes or Mount Remarkable National Parks will be required to book their campsites online before arrival.

Bookings can be processed up to 12 months in advance on the National Parks South Australia website, the South Australia Tourism Commission advises - see environments.sa.gov.au/parks.

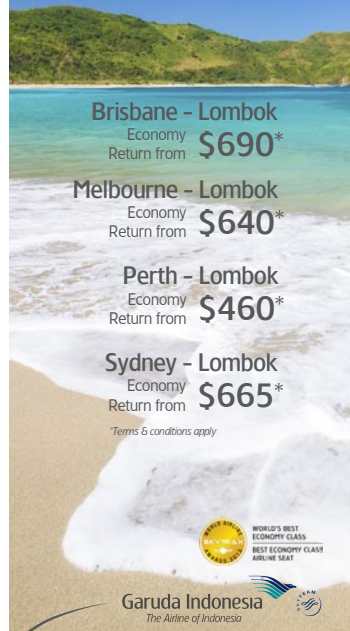
Vanuatu island touring

A COLLECTION of soft adventure activities on the less-travelled Vanuatu outer islands of Malekula and Ambrym have been released by Malampa Travel.

Touring options endorsed by the Vanuatu Tourism Office include jungle treks, outrigger canoe & snorkeling tours and traditional festivals opened up to tourists for the first time, all of which can be booked at www.malampa.travel.

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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 with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Facilities and equipment to cater for a range of team-building activities are available as part of a new conferencing space at the revitalised **Mercure Sydney**. Activities include cooking stations, cocktail-making classes and a lolly bar. The refreshed area offers eight spacious meeting rooms, many offering abundant natural light, and an outdoor balcony for entertaining guests.



Following a \$2 million spend, **Best Western The Stirling Rockhampton** is now boasting a total new look and feel for its 32 rooms and lobby. The self-contained twin & deluxe rooms offer a full kitchen, queen beds and family rooms. Other works carried out include an extension to its alfresco dining area to cater for larger events and refreshing the outlay of its 30-seat conference room.



Popular Vanuatu property **The Grand Hotel and Casino** has concluded major renovation work, now offering a new look entrance and lobby area, pool facilities, restaurant and conference space. The pool area now offers bean bag seating, bar chairs and cafe style seating. The property is now aiming to position itself as a destination for MICE travellers in Australia and NZ.

Belmond London deal

LUXURY London property The Cadogan will join the Belmond range under a new management deal signed between Belmond and Cadogan Estates Limited.

Following a major US\$48 million renovation and refurbishment, the 64-key property will reopen as Belmond Cadogan in approx two years time.

The 127-year old hotel is located in the Chelsea region of London.

New Beaver for Fiji

FIJIAN inter-island air transfer operator Pacific Island Air has taken delivery of a brand new six-passenger Beaver aircraft, taking its total fleet to three.

The craft will allow the firm to increase capacity between Nadi Airport and the more distant island holiday resorts with more frequent services.

Red adoption record

SABRE Corporation has reported more than 500,000 downloads of its Sabre Red App Centre among 70,000 users in 112 countries since rolling out the system over two years ago (*TD* 09 Mar 2012).

The company said it is expecting to surge past the one-million downloads mark by the end of the year, with app developers rapidly launching travel trade related programs, including Low Fare Calendar and Red Eva apps.

Milestone for Guru

ONLINE accom aggregator Accommodation Guru has loaded its one-millionth property, with the firm's range now spanning 190 countries worldwide.

The company's range includes hostels, motels and independent villas through to holiday rentals and luxury five star resorts.

Explore Iberian guide

EXPLORE Holidays has released a new e-brochure for the regional areas of the Iberian Peninsula countries of Spain and Portugal.

The 17-page guide covers accom, transfers, attractions and fully escorted multi-day itineraries of northern and southern regions.

Regions covered include Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Porto, Algarve and more, along with maps and recommended things to see & do.

To view the guide, **CLICK HERE**.

Group deals on Tibet

HELEN Wong's Tours is offering \$400 per couple off the price of all group tours to China booked by the end of Aug, valid for travel until the end of Jun next year.

Highlighted itineraries include the 19-day Jewels of China, which visits a Tibetan family home and is priced from \$6,170ppts.

AA links with islands

AMERICAN Airlines has signed a reciprocal interline agreement with small Hawaiian inter-island carrier Island Air, which is majority owned by billionaire Larry Ellison.

The deal permits travellers connecting between the carriers to receive all boarding passes at the point of origin and activates baggage transfer through to the customer's final destination.

According to Island Air, the deal went live for booking "in all major computer reservations systems" on 27 Jun, however a check of the carrier's website shows flights operated by AA are currently not available to sell.

WIN A TRIP TO MAURITIUS

In July, *TD* is giving readers the chance to win a holiday to Mauritius, courtesy of **Club Med and Air Mauritius**.

The prize includes return economy class fares to Mauritius with Air Mauritius, airport transfers and six nights accommodation at either Club Med Albion or La Pointe aux Canonnières, for two.

Every day this month *TD* will ask a different question about Club Med or Air Mauritius. The subscriber with the most correct entries and the most creative response to the final question will win this holiday.

Email answers to: clubmedcomp@traveldaily.com.au

Q12: Which Club Med Resort would you find near the Li River?

Hint: www.clubmedta.com.au



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