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Uniworld appoints

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection has appointed Bianca Robertson as its new Sales Manager for Vic, Tas and SA.

Robertson joins the Travel Corporation from her former role at Escape Travel in Malvern, Vic.

Goldman SmartFlyer JV

YET another player has moved into the home-based agency market, with Goldman Travel Corporation this morning announcing a new joint venture with New York-based travel agent SmartFlyer (TD breaking news).

Aiming to attract "next generation travel consultants," the new Australian JV will formally launch on 01 May 2015.

Goldman executive chairman Tom Goldman OAM said "creating an independent contractor home-based model in Australia

has been on our agenda for a few years now.

"We are delighted to establish this joint venture with the best in the business, SmartFlyer," he said.

Goldman and SmartFlyer are both members of the Virtuoso luxury travel network.

SmartFlyer's US website says it's an "award-winning full-service travel firm catering to both the leisure and corporate traveller".

The site lists about 90 affiliated consultants across the USA as well as in Canada, Hungary, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Two Aussies are also listed on the site - Brent Wallace of Fairflights/Riche Luxury Travel and GG Inspired's Gloria Gammo.

TI Exhibition call out

INDUSTRY professionals are reminded to register for this year's Travel Industry Exhibition that is being held on 16 & 17 Jul.

The show precedes the NTIA at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island - see page 11.

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BW World Vision gift

BEST Western Australasia gm of sales and marketing Steve Richards has handed over a whopping \$30,000 cheque to World Vision Australia to support a project in rural Laos.

The money was raised from a World Vision promotional rate plan, auctions at previous Best Western conventions and donations made by Best Western member director Paul Hodda and president Phil Hatley.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has eight pages of news, a front cover wrap for the National Travel Industry Awards plus full pages from: (click)

- AA Appointments jobs
- South African Tourism
- Travel Industry Exhibition

NTIA nominations

AFTA is reminding the industry that nominations for the 2015 National Travel Industry Awards close at 5pm AEDST this Fri.

There are 37 categories in the awards, including the Emirates Travel Consultant Scholarship which recognises an individual with up to three years experience "who personifies excellence in their role as a retail or corporate travel consultant".

For more information, see the cover page of today's TD, and to nominate click below.

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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 17th February 2015

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Jetstar Hong Kong

JETSTAR and Cathay Pacific are now awaiting the outcome of a just-completed public hearing to decide whether Jetstar Hong Kong meets the "Basic Law" requirement of having its principal place of business in the city.

Chile capacity to double

A NEW air services agreement between Australia and Chile has doubled allowable capacity between the countries to a total of up to 8,000 seats per week.

Infrastructure Minister Warren Truss said the negotiations had also removed all restrictions on codeshares, "allowing Australian and Chilean airlines to build their networks and serve new markets through joint services".

Qantas will be able to build on its existing relationship with LAN Airlines to link Australia with more destinations across South America via Santiago, Truss said.

"Open code share is a key objective for Australian airlines, as it enables them to build networks that support their

investment in key hubs," he said.

Qantas currently operates four weekly 747-400 flights between Sydney and Santiago, while LAN operates daily A340-300 flights across the Pacific via Auckland.

LAN also plans to switch to its new, slightly smaller 787 aircraft on the route from 18 Apr.

The existing codeshare pact between the airlines sees the QF code on flights to six destinations across South America, while LAN codeshares on a range of Qantas Tasman and domestic routes.

Platinum in the Circle

PLATINUM Travel Corporation has once again been awarded UNIGLOBE Chairman's Circle membership for 2015, designating it as among the top performing TMCs in the UNIGLOBE system worldwide.

Owners Carl Buerckner and Greg McCarthy have been welcomed into the Circle for the group's exceptional performance, meaning they attended an annual meeting to discuss trends and issues in the travel industry with UNIGLOBE founder U. Gary Charwood and Martin Charwood.

The event took place at the Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with Buerckner telling **TD** it was the fifth year running that PTC had been part of it.

"We are as enthusiastic as ever of our relationship with UNIGLOBE," he said.

Two new SeBELs

ACCOR has breathed new life into the SeBEL brand, today announcing two new properties under the name which came into the group as part of the Mirvac acquisition in 2012.

Both are "apartment-style" projects and include the new SeBEL South Brisbane which is Accor's first property on the south side of the Brisbane River.

A new \$35 million resort-style development in regional Victoria will include a 120-room hotel/serviced apartment facility to be named The SeBEL Yarrowonga.

There are currently 23 SeBEL properties across Australia & NZ.

Aircalin special fares

AIRCALIN is offering "huge savings" for travel to New Caledonia ex SYD, BNE and MEL.

On sale until 28 Feb for travel to 31 Jul, deals include all school holidays and long weekends, from \$499 return - aircalin.com.

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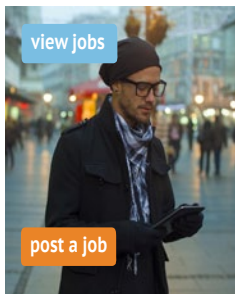
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Travel Daily

First with the news

Tuesday 17th February 2015

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Innstant targeting Australia

IRISH technology firm Innstant Group is ramping up operations in Australia, with ceo Daryl Ismail confirming the company is currently in discussions with a number of local players.

“We feel there’s a good opportunity in this market,” he told **TD**, with the Innstant online hotel wholesale platform having been customised following feedback from Australian clients including the addition of payment gateways such as eNett.

Technology is a key differentiator for Innstant, which provides inventory and XML solutions to retailers, tour operators, airlines and corporate clients across the globe.

The Innstant wholesale platform powers the Express Hotels system offered by the Express Travel Group, and Ismail said he hopes this relationship can be expanded with further technology solutions. “We’re not just a wholesaler

- we offer technology solutions because one size does not fit all,” he said.

The innovative wholesale platform incorporates a real-time comparison tool giving rates from over 50 competitor websites.

Innstant technology also works on the provider side, with properties across the globe using the company’s software to manage reservations via channel manager software which in turn feeds live rates and availability into a number of systems including the Innstant platform.

Vivid Gold cruises

BOOKINGS are now open for Captain Cook Cruises’ 2015 Vivid Gold Cruise on Sydney Harbour run during the Vivid Lights festival running from 22 May to 08 Jun.

Dinner cruises on *Sydney 2000* or *John Cadman 2* range from \$77-\$209pp - **CLICK HERE** for info.

Daydream sale date

THE \$30m sale of Daydream Island Resort & Spa to the China Capital Investment Group (**TD** 10 Feb) will settle in mid-Mar.

In a statement released on Mon, owner of the Whitsundays resort Vaughan Bullivant confirmed the new owners intend to invest money into the gradual refurb of the family-friendly resort.

“I’m delighted that we’ve found an investor that can continue to operate Daydream with the current management team and take it securely forward,” Bullivant said this week.

CCIG chairman Chuanyou Zhou said: “We look forward to improving the property and providing domestic & int’l guests with a continued high level of quality service and enhancing their holiday experience”.

For now, as was the case when the property went on the market last year, “it’s business as usual,” Daydream Island Resort & Spa ceo Scott Wilkinson added.



Window Seat

WE just couldn’t resist the temptation.

Checking out the website of Goldman Travel’s new joint venture partner, US-based SmartFlyer (see page 1) we spotted an unusual menu item.

Among the normal ‘About Us’, ‘Our Team’ and ‘Contact’ buttons there’s a tauntingly titled “Do Not Click” link.

Unable to help ourselves, we selected the mysterious option which of course was bait to highlight the fact that SmartFlyer also likes to think outside the square and “break a few rules” from time to time.

Clicking on another menu item, cryptically just titled SF Travel Labs, just takes you to a contact form page which intriguingly asks “Well, wouldn’t you like to know... We’re mixing up some very cool things.”

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700K Aussies 'Canada keen'

CANADA is beckoning Aussie travellers & the travel trade is the key selling tool, Canadian Tourism Commission senior vice president Rupert Peters believes.

According to the CTC's annual global research, some 700,000 Australians are wanting to visit Canada over the next two years.

"Our research indicates Aussies have Canada on their radar. The challenge is turning the 'dreamers' into 'doers', Peters told **TD** in an exclusive interview on Fri.

Scenic NZ cruise tour

A **14-NIGHT** Holland America Line cruise on *MS Noordam* from Sydney to Auckland has been paired with an eight-night land tour in Scenic Tours just-rolled-out New Zealand 2015/16 brochure.

The 23-day NZ Splendour and cruise departs on 30 Jan & 27 Feb and is priced from \$8,295ppts. See www.scenictours.com.au.

"The way we do that is through the travel trade & making sure we have the right product at the right time," he commented.

In Sydney last week on a brief visit, Peters paid homage to local agents and tour operators, telling **Travel Daily** that the CTC's strategy is "very much about relationships with the trade".

"We know there is a lot of demand for Canada out there but the country is quite a complex destination to get around - it is huge and has a diverse variety of product," the CTC executive said.

Peters said the trade is "very important in promoting and selling Canada effectively".

He said Canada is witnessing "good growth" to the Eastern and Maritime provinces by Australian travellers and welcomed Qantas' new seasonal nonstop services between Sydney and Vancouver that will deliver 33 return flights in Jun/Jul & Dec/Jan (**TD** 04 Feb).

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Masterclass at the Opera House



PRODUCT training rarely comes with inclusions such as a Sydney Symphony performance, however this group of itravel consultants were treated to the show after a day with APT and Travelmarvel.

Held at the Sydney Opera House, the training also included a private tour of the famed Sydney harbourside landmark.

Formalities of the day though saw APT state manager NSW/ACT

Ryan Montgomery first conduct his sessions, imparting plenty of the tour operator's latest updates and information to the group.

itravel described the day as a "great opportunity for APT to spend quality time with our agents in a unique environment".

Montgomery is **pictured** above back row fifth from left with the group and Janine Harris from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

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Fiji call centre takes the cake



FIJI Airways formally opened its Global Reservations Centre in Suva last month, with the operation run as a joint venture with the Cassar family's CentreCom Pacific Pty Ltd.

CentreCom takes over FJ's call centre operations from former provider Mindpearl, with the new facility handling FJ calls from across the globe.

The launch event was one of the final functions undertaken by former FJ ceo Stefan Pichler, now head of airberlin (**TD** 02 Dec), who said the new call centre followed a global tender process.

"Our vision is to turn the centre into a profit-making part of our business, and we ultimately decided that the airline needed

to have control in the ownership in the venture to deliver this," Pichler said.

Managing director Anthony Cassar of Centrecom Pacific, told **TD** the business can support 24/7 operations for up to 400 consultants, with scope for services to be provided to other businesses in the near future.

CentreCom also operates a large call centre in Malta which provides services to airlines as well as financial, government, e-commerce and gaming clients.

Pictured above at the launch from left are CenterCom gm Pacific Shane Collins; FJ exec gm of sales Otto Gergye; FJ head of passenger reservations Sharon Lang and Stefan Pichler.

SIVB back Melan pact

AN 'IN principle' agreement struck between Solomon Airlines, Air Nuigini and Air Vanuatu (**TD** yest) has won support from the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau.

CEO Josefa Tuamoto said the air pact has "massive potential" for seamless intra-Melanesian travel for potential visitors & tourists.

The aviation alliance between the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu is slated to commence from Jun.

NZ ICC ambassador

NEW Zealand cricket great Stephen Fleming has signed on again as Tourism New Zealand's tourism ambassador in India.

Timed to coincide with the ICC 2015 Cricket World Cup, currently underway in ANZ, Fleming will use his position with TNZ to endorse New Zealand as a holiday destination to Indian cricket fans.

TNZ regional manager South & Southeast Asia Steven Dixon said in the role, Fleming will leverage his profile in India to promote New Zealand long after the CWC.

Velocity boss going

VIRGIN Australia has confirmed Velocity Frequent Flyer ceo Neil Thompson will stand down from the role he took on in 2012.

Anzac Centre touring

TRAVEL packages to visit the National Anzac Centre in Albany are on offer through Broome & The Kimberley Holidays.

In partnership with Australia's South West and Tourism WA, the wholesaler has a three day Tastemaster package priced from \$260ppts which includes car hire and two nights in Albany, along with entry to the Centre.

Also on offer is the South West WA Wine Trail package of eight nights, from \$1,219ppts, which includes car hire from Perth and accom in Perth, Margaret River, Denmark and Albany.

Phone 1300 357 057.

Langham recruits

ANDRE Jacques has been hired as director of sales & marketing at The Langham, Melbourne.

Jacques has more than a dozen years experience in DOSM roles, locally and internationally (Doha, Washington DC and Melbourne).

Most recently, Jacques worked for the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas, based in Sydney.

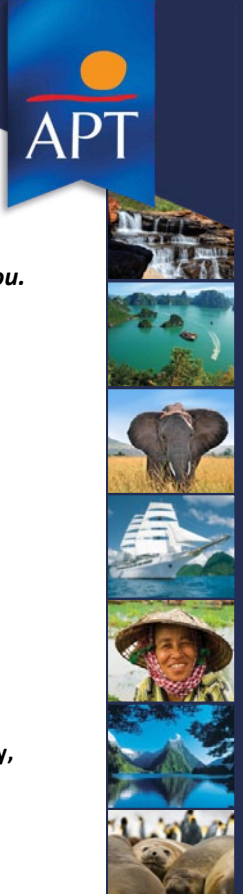
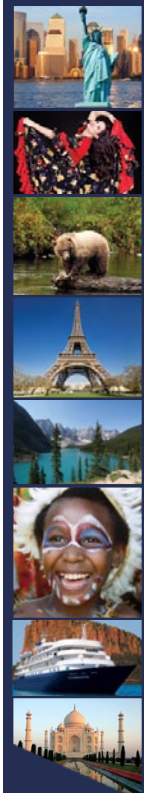
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BA pre-order routes

BRITISH Airways has extended the number of routes on which customers can pre-order meals from an initial six to 21.

Starting this month, BA's First, Club World and World Traveller Plus customers can choose their meals to guarantee their first choice of main course on routes from London Heathrow to Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Austin, Houston and San Diego.

Effective 01 Mar, the service will be broadened to BA's flights from LHR to Atlanta, Denver, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Toronto, Montreal and Calgary.

HBA \$3m extension

PLANNING and development stages for the intended extension of Hobart International Airport have stepped up a gear after the Federal Govt granted the project \$3.035 million as part of its \$38 million commitment package.

"Upgrading the airport's infrastructure will help lure more visitors from major markets such as Asia," Deputy PM & Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said.

"Extending the runway by 500 metres will mean the airport can operate direct flights to China and other emerging markets in Asia," Truss commented yesterday.

Regional NSW on top

SEVEN regional NSW towns have featured in a top 10 list of Australia's best value travel destinations.

Compiled by Trivago from more than 120 million traveller reviews, the list rated destinations by price and reputation of accommodation, with Yamba on the North Coast coming in first and Merimbula second, Destination NSW said.

Fourth to seventh place were all NSW destinations, while Halls Gap in Victoria came in third.

Minister for Regional Tourism John Barilaro said the list showed regional NSW led the way in affordable holiday destinations, with the state "second to none" for value and quality accommodation.

Barilaro said it was "vital" that regional tourism was supported to contribute to the economy, with 50.4m international and domestic overnight and day trip visitors in regional NSW in 2014.

\$400K SA F&W grants

THE South Australia Govt is offering culinary tourism industry suppliers in the state a chance to apply for a share of \$400,000 in grants to promote food & wine.

Individual grants of up to \$40,000 are offered to approved projects.

Tuesday 17th Feb 2015

Travel Daily
First with the news



THE entire team at Tahiti Travel Connection immersed themselves in the destination on a recent trip to Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora, organised by the firm's management to provide staff with hands-on training and knowledge.

A canoe and dolphin excursion on the stunning lagoon near Le Meridien Tahiti and a Bora Bora lagoon tour including snorkeling with stingrays were enjoyed by the group on the five-day famil.

Other highlights included a night out sampling fare from Tahiti's popular food trucks, known locally as les roulottes.

The journey also gave agents

the opportunity to better familiarise themselves with some of the top selling properties in Moorea and Bora Bora.

Pictured at the Four Seasons in Bora Bora with Tahiti Tourisme regional director Robert Thompson from left are TTC's staff left: Lea Granado, product and marketing manager; Camilla MacInnes, business development manager; Emilie Genton, Tahiti Travel specialist; Robert Thompson; Tina Heyer, sales manager; Cassandra Nee, Tahiti Travel specialist; Brad McDonnell, md and Goran Dragicevic, Tahiti Travel specialist.

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Starwood Dubai push

THE Aloft and Element hotel brands of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide are set to launch in Dubai, the hotelier said.

Starwood has teamed with wasl hospitality & leisure to develop the 165-room Aloft Dubai Raffa and 96-room Element Dubai Raffa located near Dubai Maritime City, slated to open in 2018.

Roy Morgan QF gongs

QANTAS achieved the 'one, two' for customer feedback on its domestic product based on Roy Morgan's Customer Satisfaction survey for Nov 2014.

The carrier was recognised by survey respondents as being the number one Domestic Airline for the month with an approval rating of 83%, ahead of QantasLink, Virgin Aust, Tigerair and Jetstar.

Qantas was also rated the more favoured Domestic Business Travel Airline of the month.

On the international front, Singapore Airlines scored 89%, trumping Emirates, Cathay Pacific, Qantas Int'l and Qatar Airways.

Perth Socceroo goal

PERTH'S nib Stadium will host the Socceroo's 2018 FIFA World Cup campaign opening match in Jun or Sep, the West Australian Government revealed yesterday.

WA Tourism Minister Kim Hames said securing the match for Perth was a drawcard for interstate and overseas visitors, as well as fans across the state.

Hames said international events are "vital" for the state's economy and attracting visitors.

The Socceroo's opponents and match details will be determined after the qualifying draw in Apr.

Seven destination sale

AIRASIA yesterday kicked off a seven-day promo in which it is discounting fares to one city every day until Sun 22 Feb.

Fares are priced from \$199 to Phuket ex Perth, \$229 ex Melbourne and the Gold Coast and \$289 ex Sydney.

The remaining destinations on sale include Langkawi (today), Ho Chi Minh City (18 Feb), Bangkok (19 Feb), Tokyo Narita (20 Feb), Penang (21 Feb) & Kochi (22 Feb).

TTF defends Sandstones project

THE Tourism & Transport Forum has leapt to the defence of the 'Sandstones' buildings in Sydney which have been earmarked for a potential high-end hotel project.

Chief executive Margy Osmond said an "ill considered" move by the Greens to oppose the proposal would be detrimental to the NSW visitor economy.

Located on Bridge Street, the Planning & Education buildings have caught the eye of a number of developers, including The Travel Corporations's upmarket Red Carnation, which has since walked away from the venture.

Late last month, the Greens led a crusade to ditch the proposal in favour of an urgently needed new public high school for the Inner City and Inner East.

"If concept approval is granted for this site to be used as a private facility for wealthy tourists, NSW will lose a critical facility built for the purposes of supporting public education since 1915," Greens NSW MP John Kaye argued.

Kaye's comments drew a response from Osmond yesterday who said tourism supports more than 267,000 jobs in NSW.

'Nin Hao' Park Hyatt

PARK Hyatt Melbourne has this week unveiled a tailor-made service to welcome an increasing number of Chinese guests.

Dubbed the 'Nin Hao' program, the initiative provides guests with a welcome letter, maps and information brochure in Chinese, a Chinese TV channel and direct access to a Mandarin-speaking guest services associate.

Guests also receive slippers, robes, a Chinese tea service and more, "making luxury personal whilst providing authentic hospitality," the hotel said today.

"If we support significant developments such as these, we will continue to see those jobs supported and new jobs created."

She cited the InterContinental Sydney, itself a sandstone building, as an example of how redevelopments can be carried out in a respect of the building original heritage.

Osmond suggested the Greens "rethink their opposition."

"It is ill-considered headline-grabbing to reject a use for these cultural buildings that is all about jobs," she remarked.



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DESTINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

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Hearts beat for Conchita



OUR latest Conchita entry (above) has certainly gotten to the heart of the matter, with Ed Rudloff from Pinpoint Travel Group pulling off a stunning transformation which puts him in the running to win a trip to Eurovision 2015.

Thanks to Austrian Airlines and the Vienna Tourist Board, a lucky **TD** reader will get to participate in a global mega-famil during May which will take in the massive event won by Austrian songstress

Conchita last year.

The competition closes at the end of the month, so get your glam on to be in with a chance.

For more details, see the competition box **below**.

New chief at EI

IRISH flag carrier Aer Lingus has announced the appointment of Steven Kavanagh as its new ceo, replacing Christoph Mueller who is set to head up Malaysia Airlines.

Quest appointment

FORMER Flight Centre staffer Daryl Webb has joined Quest Serviced Apartments as the new business development manager at its Quest Albury property.



AFTA UPDATE

The latest updates from AFTA's Chief Executive, Jayson Westbury

ENCOURAGING people to believe they can have a career in the travel industry has been something that AFTA has always engaged in and I am pleased to report that yesterday (Monday 16th February) I joined many tourism and travel industry colleagues in meeting the Minister for Trade and Investment (aka Tourism Minister) Andrew Robb in Canberra to discuss this issue.

The forum discussed the many challenges faced by the travel and tourism industry in encouraging young people and in some case parents to believe that there is a long term career to be enjoyed in our industry.

It is pleasing to see the federal government engaged in such an important issue. For the travel industry, finding new talent and keeping the wonderful talent that we already have is a never-ending challenge.

As was outlined to the Minister, once people find their way into the travel industry, they do tend to stay as the diversification and career opportunities do genuinely exist.

More broadly, the tourism industry does have a challenge as it is a complex web of interdependent industries and explaining this to people in the context of a potential career can present difficulties.

The fact the federal government has taken the initiative to commence dialogue on this subject is newsworthy and encouraging. There are many programs and funded initiatives that the government announces over the years and it will be important for the travel industry to be at the table to ensure we are encapsulated in any new ideas that might stem from these discussion.

Those of us in the travel industry know only too well just how exciting and interesting this industry is. We are in fact the best advocates to spread this message broadly and I am also pleased to report that this subject was the basis of discussions at a recent AFTA board meeting. We all know how hard it can be to find good staff and this will be something that moves into focus for AFTA in the year ahead.





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To
Conchita –
Can you do it?




Eurovision 2015

Agency competition

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Shanghai tourist ban

OFFICIALS in Shanghai will conduct lectures on appropriate behaviour for residents travelling overseas for the Spring Festival, the *Shanghai Morning Post* says.

China has previously flagged the creation of a national register of misbehaving tourists (**TD 22 Jan**), however Shanghai is the first city to implement policing measures.

Under new guidelines, tour guides will be suspended or demoted if their passengers misbehave while on tour.

Conversely, travellers who return home with a blemish-free record will be praised.

Dublin Pass relaunch

SIGHTSEEING in Dublin has been simplified with the relaunch of The Dublin Pass, a single ticket designed to make the Irish capital more visitor-friendly to tourists.

The pass can be purchased online or on a mobile-optimised website and is priced from €39 per adult for a one-day pass.

Cardholders receive a one-way transfer from Dublin Airport into the city centre, free guidebook, expedited entry at 33 attractions and discounts at a further 20.

Valid attractions include the Guinness Storehouse, National Wax Museum and the Dublin Zoo.

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