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Magellan+Captain's Choice

THE Magellan Travel Group has announced a new preferred partnership with Captain's Choice, with the move marking the first time the tour operator has formally extended its distribution strategy into a retail travel network.

Established 20 years ago as a division of Melbourne travel agency Croydon Travel (and part of APT since 2000), Captain's Choice specialises in group tours, chartering Qantas aircraft to take Australians on all-inclusive adventures across the globe.

For many years the business has sold its tours directly to consumers, with the Magellan move an extension of an initiative launched in 2013 where individual travel agents were able to receive commission if they sold a certain number of tours.

Captain's Choice and Magellan said the new agreement was a "synergy of shared values," fusing Captain's Choice's "unique blend of remote, exotic and inspired" travel with Magellan's 'true spirit' high-end leisure philosophy.

"We are delighted to enter into this partnership and look forward to a great working relationship as preferred product of Magellan," said Captain's Choice md Dan Kotzmann.

Magellan ceo Andrew Macfarlane said the group was delighted to have sealed a preferred deal with "such an iconic brand steeped in both tradition and modern-day innovation".

APT river cruise deals

A SUITE of specials are currently on sale with APT on Europe river cruising in 2016 under its 'Grand Sale' (see **cover**), until 28 Feb.

Seven deals are in market incl 2016 Europe river cruises at the 2015 price, 'fly free' (saving up to \$6,400 per couple), companion fly free, air credits, Business class from \$2,995pp and more.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news & photos, a front cover page for **APT** plus full pages from: (**click**):

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Hotel for Adelaide apt

ADELAIDE Airport's 20-year Master Plan, rubber stamped last week by the Federal Govt (**TD Fri**) includes the development of a 260-room hotel with conference facilities within the next five years, to be built adjacent to Terminal 1.

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AAA reviews TripAdvisor

THE Accommodation Association of Australia is calling on members to provide insight on the value of TripAdvisor reviews, with a survey launched to gauge "some of the challenges associated with it".

The latest request for feedback is a follow-up to a study conducted in 2012 on the global review site.

"Over the ensuing period the Association has had much to say about the service, engaged with TripAdvisor & seen some positive initiatives on their behalf," AAA members participating in the survey are informed.

However, the company said in recent months there has been a rise in the level of "dissatisfaction from operators" and is seeking a response from AAA members on their current opinion.

Members are asked to score the

service, support, quality control & their relationship with TripAdvisor through the 18-question survey.

The AAA is quizzing if members saw a return on investment for paid business listings on the site over the past 12 months, and how TripAdvisor compares to other forms of advertising and marketing.

The organisation also asked if reviews in the past year have resulted from or were based on: "a threat of poor ratings", "a bribe of a good rating", "not staying", "lies", "a malicious attack" or "being vexatious".

Further, the AAA questioned the value of TripAdvisor reviews listed by TripAdvisor, asking industry members: "Do you believe the accommodation sector benefits from consumer rating/review systems reflecting the standard of accommodation provided to consumers?"

Members can access the Survey Monkey poll by **CLICKING HERE**.

Fairmont additions

FAIRMONT Hotels & Resorts has opened its newest property today in the Indonesian capital.

The 380-room Fairmont Jakarta is located in Senayan Square in the CBD - a high-end complex of shops & entertainment outlets.

A soft opening discount rate of 25% is available for stays up until 30 Apr, along with late check-out.

MEANWHILE, the luxury group has revealed it will develop a new property in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province, China.

Fairmont Wuhan will offer 350 rooms & is slated to open in 2017.

Skimax 2015 brox

A BATCH of exclusive earlybird deals on accommodation, car hire & free days ski passes have been rolled out in the newly released Skimax Holidays 2015 Southern Hemisphere ski brochure.

Centred on product in Australia, New Zealand and South America, a seven-night package including a five-day ski pass is priced from \$725 - call TIFS to order brochures.

Scoot \$78.70 airfare

SINGAPORE-BASED carrier Scoot is celebrating the launch of 787 Dreamliner flights to Perth with airfares priced from \$78.70.

Scoot intends to commence its first Boeing 787 services to Perth from 05 Feb (**TD Wed**).

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Ovolo plan \$5.7m BLUE refurb



HIND Hotels & Properties Group has sought approval for the revamp of the BLUE Sydney, a Taj Hotel after acquiring the property mid-last year (**TD** 11 Jul).

In a submission to the City of Sydney, the firm revealed it plans to invest \$5.69 million on the refurbishment as it repositions under the Ovolo Hotels brand.

The project includes the refit of public spaces and guest rooms of the existing dwelling within the Woolloomooloo Finger wharf.

The Hong Kong-based company earmarked "alterations" to the hotel's entrance and concourse areas "to provide updated & new door entry, signage, sculpture/public art, pavilion structures, bar/lounge areas" and more.

New conference spaces are also planned for the property.

Proposed room enhancements include the addition of ethanol fireplaces in loft rooms.

The Level 2 concourse (**pictured**) of Ovolo Sydney will house a new reception desk, bar, lounge and dining areas, along with multiple plant boxes "to create more

intimate spaces".

"The changes are being proposed in order to revitalise the hotel generally and provide patrons with comfortable, more intimate spaces in which to enjoy the public areas," architects told the City of Sydney.

Hind Group's application needs the approval of the NSW Heritage Council under the Heritage Act.

Exhibition of the proposal closes on 09 Feb.

Reinvention for AZ

ALITALIA has outlined a bold plan to reinvent itself following its relaunch with a new 49% equity investment from Etihad Airways.

Newly appointed AZ chairman Luca Di Montezemolo outlined plans for new branding backed by a new cost management strategy.

The carrier also plans to launch new routes, onboard products and service standards.

Montezemolo said the plan will aim to make Alitalia "once again a premium Italian airline recognised worldwide".

New RCI res system

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises Ltd has announced the launch of a new reservations system for travel agents selling cruises on Royal Caribbean Int'l, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises, due to go live from Mar.

Dubbed ESPRESSO, the suite of new booking tools will feature within a more modern interface which reduces the number of clicks required to make a booking.

Highlights of the new system will include side-by-side comparison of selected itineraries which then searches all applicable promotional offers valid to book.

Group bookings can also be compared alongside individual bookings, eliminating the need to switch screens to find best deals.

RCL says the new system has been designed with the feedback of travel agent partners in mind, aimed at simplifying the process.

More information in tomorrow's edition of **Cruise Weekly** - sign up at www.cruiseweekly.com.au.

Canada visits stable

THE number of Aussie travellers heading to Canada in Nov was relatively flat, with the latest data from the Canadian Tourism Commission showing a 1.7% rise compared to the year earlier.

For the 11 months from Jan to Nov, Australian numbers are up 5.5% to 253,580.

Across all markets for the year ending Nov, Canada has achieved a near 10% year-on-year growth.



Window Seat

DEDICATION toward one's football team tends to ramp up towards the end of a season, and like most things, America usually does it bigger and better.

Ahead of last weekend's NFL conference championship game between the Seattle Seahawks and the Green Bay Packers, also known as the "cheese-heads", a city near Seattle decided to ban cheese inside the City Hall.

Passionate Seahawks fan and Bainbridge Island City Manager Douglas Schulze declared the ban on possession of cheese under an Executive Order.

It must have worked, for Seattle won the match and will play the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl on 02 Feb AEST.

A HORROR theme park in New Zealand has been asked to remove a promotional photo of a woman who wet her pants while in its haunted house.

Spookers Park in South Auckland used the photo in an online ad with the words "P**S your pants scary" (**pictured**).

The woman said she has been recognised from her clothing and has asked the park to take the embarrassing advert down.



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Japan arrivals record

JAPAN recorded a 29.4% year-on-year increase in arrivals for 2014, welcoming 13.4 million for the year, according to the Japan National Tourism Organisation.

Chinese arrivals skyrocketed 83% to 2.4 million over the 12 months making it the highest growth market, followed by the Philippines which rose 70%.

Figures show Australian arrivals into Japan increased 23.8% in 2014 to 302,700, following big monthly increases in Nov (which was up 38%) and Dec (up 24%).

'Fly free' cruise deal

ROYAL Caribbean is offering a 'fly free' promo on select Asia, round-Australia & trans-Pacific sailings for bookings by 31 Jan.

The deal applies to select cruise sailings from Mar to Jun that range between 14- & 18-nights duration, on ships including *Radiance of the Seas*, *Rhapsody of the Seas*, *Voyager of the Seas* and *Legend of the Seas*.

Rocky books revamp

ROCKY Mountaineer has signed a contract agreement with CANARAIL to undertake a major revitalisation of its entire fleet of rolling stock from GoldLeaf down.

As first flagged by *Travel Daily* in Aug last year (*TD* 08 Aug), the deal facilitates the rollout of the "GoldLeaf 2.0" product to further boost the level of luxury onboard.

Sixteen of the bi-level dome roof carriages will be upgraded with new seats along with new lighting, electrical work on heating & overall interior design.

Carriages will be revamped in Quebec and rolled back onto the network gradually by 2018.

Double the Tahiti fun

COUPLES can save \$350 with a new companion fare released by Air Tahiti Nui on sale until 23 Jan.

Under the sale, return Economy fares from SYD, MEL or BNE, via Auckland, start from \$1,370 for the first traveller and \$1,020 for the second for travel until 31 Oct.

Uniworld spices up Asia program

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection has unveiled its Asia program for 2016 featuring sailing on the Ganges in India for the first time.

The portfolio covers voyages on the Yangtze in China and on the Mekong as part of a Vietnam and Cambodia cruisetour however gm Australia John Molinaro was most excited for Uniworld's debut on the subcontinent at a launch function for the Asia program held in Sydney last night.

Molinaro told *TD* India provided a new exciting destination for past passengers & agents alike to promote, on a brand synonymous for its luxury product offering.

Currently under construction, the 56-passenger *River Ganges II*



will form the core of Uniworld's India offering, operating round-trip from Kolkata from Jan to Mar and Sep to Dec (*TD* 04 Sep).

The voyage is packaged into Uniworld's 13-day India's Golden Triangle & Sacred Ganges trip that includes five nights on land in New Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, staying in luxurious Oberoi hotels.

Molinaro is **pictured** last night at Ika's Restaurant in Sydney with Philippa Walker, Uniworld head of marketing, showing off the guide.

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"Gallipoli Centenary 2015":
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Louis Cruises launches a new brand, Celestyal Cruises.

Say Kalimera to Celestyal Cruises!

Celestyal stems from celestial, which means "pertaining to the stars" and "heavenly" or "divine". By launching Celestyal Cruises, Louis Cruises focuses on the real Greek experience, already enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

Celestyal Cruises will include all the Aegean, Ionian and Adriatic Sea destinations and will be addressing a call to the international market promoting classic or new cruises full of Greek gastronomy, Greek culture and entertainment, new themed programs and personalized service that defines Greek hospitality! Celestyal Cruises is here to enhance **the real Greek experience!**

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ecruising turns 15

LAST night cruise specialist agency ecruising celebrated its 15th birthday with a lavish event at Sydney's Sheraton on the Park.

Attended by top clients and key industry partners, the dinner celebrated the achievements of company founder Brett Dudley and his wife Philippa, who were pioneers of online cruise selling in Australia.

CLIA chairman, Gavin Smith of Royal Caribbean, paid tribute to the Dudleys as he recounted the early years of the business and skepticism from some suppliers who asserted that "nobody will ever buy a cruise online".

To the contrary, ecruising's ability to quickly reach consumers saw the company play a key role in the massive growth of the cruise industry in Australia.

"Brett and Philippa single-handedly changed how Australians purchase cruising - they have redefined the cruising landscape," Smith said.

As well as setting up an offshoot in Hong Kong, in recent years ecruising has also seen major success from its suite of Cruise Tours - luxury experiences across the globe combining cruise and

aircraft charters with hotel buy-outs, bespoke sightseeing and activities.

Almost all of the company's 2015 Cruise Tours are 100% sold out, with just a few places remaining on many 2016 trips.

The company has big plans for the next 15 years too, having recently appointed former Harvey's Choice/The Cruise Team gm Alastair Fernie as executive general manager.

The ecruising team are **pictured** above at last night's celebration, just before ceo Brett Dudley launched into song to the accompaniment of a live band.

Check out the video at traveldaily.com.au/videos. 

More details on ecruising's future aspirations in tomorrow's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.



ABOVE: Princess Cruises vice president Australia Stuart Allison, with Brett Dudley.

LEFT: Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines chief Gavin Smith with Australia's cruise queen Sarina Bratton of Ponant.




AFTA UPDATE

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

JUST checking, but I am sure it is 2015 and the internet and communicating using the internet is about the same as expecting that when you turn on the tap, water will come out. And when you open the drapes in your bedroom in the morning (including a hotel) the sun will be shining and that you will be able to take a breath of air. Yes?

Why then has the internet become such a commodity for hotels?

I see that the various hotel groups are now using the internet as some "new" and "exciting" thing that you can either have or not have depending on who you are, what your status is, if you pay, or if you don't. As if travel agents don't already have enough to decipher to make a hotel booking. **Travel Daily** should consider doing a "Hotel Guide" for internet access in hotels like they do for Business Class on airlines. I mean honestly, it is 2015 and enough is enough.

As a hotelier by training myself, I know well how much money hotels have made over the years when guests have taken the plunge and pressed 'zero' to make an outside call. It was reasonable therefore for a hotel to make an investment in a PABX telephone system and all the billing interface software. But when it comes to the internet, the cost of a wi-fi modem on the floor of the hotel surely in 2015 is a basic one in setting up any international standard hotel. Added to this mystery, it appears the investment return varies from country to country as some countries offer free wi-fi as a matter of course in the hotel while other countries seem to take a lovely cut of profit in sticking an outrageous charge on the bill in order for the guest to connect to post a nice "TripAdvisor" comment or update their Facebook profile to tell the world which hotel they are staying at. I have first hand experience of being asked to do this at check-in and then being sent an email to follow me up, but to do it, I had to buy an expensive internet connection from the hotel as I was overseas. That is a bit rich in my book. I am amazed at how the hotel industry has fallen behind the reality of the world and not yet worked out that wi-fi should be free. Full stop. Everything else comes with a charge and as I said at the start, in 2015 I think it is as expected as water from the tap. Just my view, having experienced so many different options, charges, connections and frustrations over my many travels last year and already this year.




Asia Pacific Travel Marketing Services is the Australian and New Zealand sales and marketing office for leading travel and touring products across North America. We are expanding our sales team and looking for talent to help increase market share for each of our principals.

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Unified River guide

MARGARET River Busselton Tourism Association has merged with the Augusta Margaret River and Geopaphe Bay Tourism Association to release a unified visitor guide to the region.

The guide offers self-drive tours, F&B spots, events guide & more.

New TravelEdge ceo

SYDNEY-BASED travel management firm TravelEdge has appointed Kim Wethmar to a newly established role as ceo.

In her new post, Wethmar will work with TravelEdge co-founder and joint md Grant Wilson, while Sue Hollis will remain onboard as consulting director until Jun.

Hollis said she also plans to spend more time pursuing a personal commitment overseas and joining the TravelEdge board.

MH Aus Open airfares

MALAYSIA Airlines is offering airfares starting from \$533 return in celebration of the Australian Open tennis Grand Slam and the first round win by the carrier's new partner, Nick Kyrgios.

Fares are on sale from all Aussie MH ports, valid for sale to 16 Feb and travel until 30 Nov.

Luxury on Seattle lake

DEVELOPMENT of a new four-star luxury hotel has been signed for the booming Lake Washington region near Seattle in the US.

The 12-storey property will offer 350 rooms located near to Seattle Tacoma Int'l Airport and is due for official opening in early 2017.

Local CIE inbound rep

BRITISH inbound tourism firm CIE Tours International, which specialises in travel to the four UK nations, has hired an Australian rep to oversee local growth.

Nadine Jones, from Melbourne, will work as the company's new local bdm to build industry links.



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.



Two years and \$65 million in the making, the brand new **Empire Apartment Hotel** in Rockhampton has been opened for business. Offering 98 one-bedroom apartments and a mix of two and three-bed dwellings, the property aims to cater for the resource sector and as a gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef tourism region. The facility is located in the central CBD and offers daily servicing, free wi-fi, pool, gym and three onsite restaurants.



For guests seeking a clifftop view overlooking the ocean, the **NRMA Merimbula Beach Holiday Park** has added a new category of elevated Beachcomber Villas to the property. Each villa offers an oversized verandah with a BBQ, self-contained kitchen & air-conditioned living and dining areas. Villas can comfortably sleep up to four people in two bedrooms and offers undercover parking for a car or boat. The resort also offers a large pool, go-karts and games room.



Ayana Resort and Spa Bali has relaunched with 24 newly renovated and gleaming Ocean View Pool Villas. Each has been redesigned & decorated in Balinese style and to maximise positioning near to the cliff's edge. Living areas have been increased in size by 15% with new furniture and technology installed including canopy-style beds. Larger marble bathrooms also feature, designed around a hand-carved Roman marble bath centrepiece.



Network Services Coordinator

A vacancy exists for a **Network Services Coordinator** with Helloworld Limited.

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Inflight wi-fi on VN

VIETNAM Airlines will roll out wi-fi capabilities on its domestic and int'l services from May this year, the carrier has announced.

UA improve amenities

COLLECTOR edition amenity tins are now available on United Airlines long-haul flights to pax in premium cabins under a promo running until the end of Mar.

The kit tins showcase a city skyline image from London, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, Beijing, Frankfurt, Dubai, Honolulu and Sydney.

Kits will be distributed to pax on flights departing from the US, while arriving flights will feature the traditional amenity packs.

On the conclusion of the promo, United will introduce kits themed on the PGA professional golf tour due to the carrier's status as the official airline of the PGA Tour.

Dubai online city tour

AN ONLINE interactive city tour of Dubai has been launched, allowing users to explore "every inch" of the city from their home.

Dubbed Dubai 360, the portal is the largest online city tour in the world, developed over 18 months.

Major events at Uluru

VOYAGES Ayers Rock Resort has announced its lineup of major events and festivals to be conducted on-site across the year.

Events will begin from 23-26 Apr with the Tjungu Festival, with the Uluru Camel Cup from 29-30 May, the Australian Outback Marathon on 25 Jul and the Uluru Astronomy Weekend to take place from 14-16 Aug.

Accommodation packages will be designed to coincide with each event, with more information at www.ayersrockresort.com.au.

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This award winning, cruise wholesaler specializing in organizing luxury cruise itineraries around the world, is currently booming. They are looking for a talented consultant to join their friendly team. So this is your chance to be part of the action where you will enjoy working in a bright and social team environment. If you have a minimum of 1 years experience in the travel industry and a passion for the sevens seas this is the role for you. Call AA today!

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- ▶ Maintain your retail relationships on a part time basis!

Our client is an award-winning travel wholesaler. They are currently seeking an experienced Sales Representative to assist managing their NSW portfolio of agencies whilst also growing the existing territory. This position is sure to offer the work / life balance you have been seeking!

This position will see you out on the road calling on travel agencies, so a current drivers licence is essential as well as a self-motivated attitude. You will be reporting remotely into your manager who is based interstate, so a dedicated home office is will also be required for this position.

If you have a natural ability to develop relationships quickly, are able to present confidently and train effectively on new products and are looking for a part time role - then this is the time to act now before this fantastic opportunity is snapped up!

Call Ben or [click here](#) for more details

Airfares Manager- Groups - Sydney

- ▶ Monday to Friday only!
- ▶ Lower North Shore
- ▶ Excellent salary and fun work environment

Work with student groups, booking flights and negotiating airfares. Great modern office with a dynamic team. Bring your attention to detail, flexible outlook & ability to prioritise.

Call Sandra or [click here](#) for more details

Snr Leisure Travel Consultant - West Sydney

- ▶ Work/life balance
- ▶ Lots of walk in business to ensure you a stable income
- ▶ Well respected agency with professional management

Our client is looking for someone who enjoys customer service, sales & building customer rapport for a long term client base. Must have a strong leisure background.

Call Sandra or [click here](#) for more details

Senior Account Mgr Corporate - Sydney

- ▶ Salary from \$90K + super + incentives
- ▶ 100% Client relationship management
- ▶ Clients located across the country

As a Senior Account Manager your objective is to retain all existing clients whilst developing ongoing travel mgt programs that are financially beneficial to both parties.

Call Ben or [click here](#) for more details

Wholesale & Retail Consultants - Melbourne

- ▶ 1x Retail Cons and 1x Wholesale Cons
- ▶ North Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne
- ▶ Salaries from \$40K + super + incentives

Fancy yourself as a bit of an expert on the Mediterranean, Middle East, North Africa or Arabia? Or working in a Retail role with dream hours from 10am-4pm Monday to Friday?

Call Ben or [click here](#) for more details

Global Online Tour Agent - Night Shift - Syd

- ▶ Night shift role working only every 2nd week!
- ▶ A perfect balance to a busy life schedule with no hard sales
- ▶ Sydney CBD Salary \$46K pkg (7 Nights on/7 Night off)

Forget booking Flights and Accommodation, this role deals only with the best part of any holiday - the tours! Which is often the reason people visit certain regions in the first place!

Call Ben or [click here](#) for more details