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### **EK boosts Istanbul**

**EMIRATES** has seen such strong demand on its new flights to Istanbul's Sabiha Gokchen Airport that it will increase capacity by more than 50% later this month with the deployment of a Boeing 777-300ER on the route.



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## MTA quality agent focus

**MTA** - Mobile Travel Agents says retention of existing high quality members is instrumental in the success of the retail group, with expansion not a top priority.

Chief executive officer Don Beattie told **Travel Daily** at last weekend's annual conference on the Gold Coast that selecting highly skilled agents was at the heart of the MTA business.

"I could easily open the doors and bring everybody in - but what value to the brand is that? All it does is dilute the quality," Beattie told **TD** during an exclusive interview on Fri.

The 'original' mobile retail group currently has 350 members in its national network, with just 5% of agents who apply to join the firm making the cut, he revealed.

"Is our business model going to grow? Absolutely, but our focus is on making sure our members are skilled," he said.

Beattie told **TD** education was a "central focus" for MTA.

"It's about quality, it's about expertise and it's about support.

"We encourage people to go & learn because once they learn, they will come back as experts."

### Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has nine pages of news and photos, a front cover page for Sunlover Hols plus full pages from: • Albatross Tours

• AA Appointments jobs

**MEANWHILE**, Beattie revealed a new itinerary building app that will allow members to deliver customised & bespoke itineraries to clients will be rolled out soon.

A global fare sales tool will also be activated within six months, permitting MTA members to view all airfare prices, including LCCs, from any GDS all in one place.

More from MTA in today's issue on **pages five** and **seven**.

## Sunlover expands into South Pacific

**SUNLOVER** Holidays has today announced an "exciting new direction" with the addition of its product range to include New Zealand, Fiji, the Cook Islands and the Pacific Islands (*TD* breaking news).

The wholesaler said the move would provide its retail agency partners an extensive range of product to choose from when choosing these destinations.

Sunlover's new 2016/16 Fiji and New Zealand brochures are available to agents in both Australia and NZ this week, with the Cook Islands and other Pacific product to debut later in Mar.

As well as the product expansion, Sunlover Holidays is also expanding its distribution with the launch of its full product range in the New Zealand market, comprising 16 brochures in total. For more, see the **cover page**.

### Vale Lauris Bryant

THE travel industry is mourning the death of Lauris Bryant, well known as a long-time member of the Sunshine Coast club of Skal International and operator of Top Spot Motel, who lost a long battle with cancer last week.







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## Dalton to be Uniworld md

**FIONA** Dalton, whose extensive industry career includes being general manager sales at Qantas Holidays/Viva! Holidays for the last five years, has been appointed as the new managing director of The Travel Corporation's Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection in Australia, taking up the role in early May.

Helloworld wholesale md Peter Egglestone confirmed Dalton's departure (TD breaking news Fri), saying she had "been presented with a significant opportunity to advance her career".

He thanked Dalton for her "amazing contribution and hard work," with her role in Sydney to be replaced as part of the new structure implemented as the business is integrated with AOT.

Last month The Travel Corporation announced the resignation of former Uniworld gm John Molinaro (TD 17 Feb) after eight years in the role.

Travel Corporation md John Veitch said "after an extensive search I am thrilled to welcome Fiona into the TTC family and wish her well in her new role as md of one of our most prestigious global brands".

Uniworld president Guy Young said Australia continues to be an "incredibly successful growth market for Uniworld, and with Fiona about to take the helm we welcome the opportunity to further strengthen our invaluable relationships with our agent partners".

### **Trafalgar on sale**

**TRAFALGAR** this morning announced a 'one week only' sale on Britain & Ireland itineraries.

The Buy one, get your travel partner 30% off flash sale is valid for bookings made 07-13 Mar, offering savings of up to \$1,665 on twenty 2016 departures.

"With the market still very active we want to support our agency partners...Britain and Ireland continue to be standout destinations for our guests and this sale allows agents to offer their clients the opportunity to see the best of each destination for less," said managing director Matthew Cameron-Smith.





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## Show Group joins helloworld

HELLOWORLD for Business has signed a new long term agreement with Avis Budget group-owned Show Group Enterprises (*TD* breaking news Fri), which becomes the 73rd member of the network.

Show Group md George Proos said the company was attracted

### QF/AA rebut HA claim

**QANTAS** and American Airlines have told the US DOT it should throw out Hawaiian Airlines' bid to railroad their proposal to attain antitrust immunity on the Trans Pacific route (*TD* 25 Feb).

"None of the concerns articulated by Hawaiian justify denying or delaying the grant of immunity here," QF/AA told DOT.

"Hawaiian has failed to carry its burden of proving that the alliance would substantially reduce or eliminate competition". by the strong buying power of Helloworld, with the new partnership "the next step in further expanding our business.

"We look forward to taking advantage of the variety of tools and support we will have access to as a member," Proos said.

Helloworld ceo Andrew Burnes said he was delighted to see Show Group joining the network, while helloworld for business head David Padman said the deal reflected the networks' "unique proposition for independent business travel agencies, delivering the aggregated purchasing advantages of buying together with a range of other critical value adds for members". Show Group Enterprises

specialises in the entertainment, film, corporate & sporting markets, offering a combination of travel management, logistics, freight and tour trucking options.

### Jetstar to Noumea

**THE** International Air Services Commission has indicated Jetstar may commence operations to New Caledonia.

On Fri, the IASC announced a fresh determination of capacity on the New Caledonia route for Qantas for five years for 149 seats per week, effective 13 Dec 2016.

A number of changes were approved in the decision process, with QF seeking permission to allow "another Australian carrier which is wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas" to operate the service.

The IASC said following talks with Qantas "it was confirmed that Jetstar Airways Pty Limited (Jetstar) will be the wholly-owned subsidiary proposed to utilise the capacity (in addtion to Qantas to whom the capacity is allocated)".

Within its ruling, the IASC said Qantas wishes to add Jetstar to the new determination to "provide flexibility in the use of capacity for future operations".



ĈENTARA

**LET'S** hope this is not a new tourism trend.

Two travellers have been arrested in South America after taking naked pictures of themselves at Machu Picchu.

The pair were spotted by Peruvian Culture Ministry guards stripping off for the nude selfies, with officers arresting the 28-year-old Frenchman and 23-year-old Briton and taking them to the local police station while they were still unclad.

After questioning police also released nude photos of the men taken on their cellphones "as a warning to other tourists of the embarrassment along with legal consequences".

The exhibitionists were subsequently charged with "offences against morality".

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Monday 7th March 2016

### Travel to Japan - so hot right now

JAPAN was the fastest growing outbound destination for Australian travellers during Jan, with numbers surging 27.4% over the same period 12 months ago.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released this morning, that saw Japan catapulted into fourth position for outbound travel, behind New Zealand, Indonesia and the USA.

Other fast growing markets included India, up 13.8% and Fiji which rose 11.6%, while the only destination in the top ten to see a decline was Thailand, down 6.3%.

Overall the trend estimate for short term resident departures increased 0.7% for the month to 818,500 movements, with the figure up 6.4% year on year.

The arrivals figures for Jan showed the ongoing boom in travel from China, with 114,300 Chinese visitors during the month - up 35.1% - placing it firmly ahead of New Zealand in second place with 89,100.

There was also a surge in arrivals from South Korea which was up 23.8%, while the flows were also strong inbound from Japan, up 18.3% to 24,600.

Arrivals from the USA increased 14% to 51.800 for the month, while Singapore was a strong inbound market for Australia, up 13.7% to 15,700.

### 33 degrees does a 180

**THE** new "experiential" cruise company announced with a fanfare as 33 Degrees last month by ecruising's Brett Dudley (*TD* 18 Feb) has been rebranded as Latitude 33.

Citing "unforeseen circumstances," the company said today it was also required by law to request all media outlets which had published content on the new venture to change any reference to Latitude 33.



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## Gong for TravelEdge founder

SUE Hollis, who established Sydney-based TMC TravelEdge in 2000, has been recognised for her entrepeneurial flair by being inducted into the Australian Businesswomen's Hall of Fame.

Hollis (**pictured**) is among 20 new members of the Hall of Fame which is an initiative established by networking group HerBusiness, formerly known as the Australian Businesswomen's Network.

Other inductees include Jude Turner from Spicer's Retreats, whose husband Graham is Flight Centre managing director.

Over the last 16 years TravelEdge has grown to have about 120 staff and describes itself as "Australia's largest privately owned corporate travel management provider". TravelEdge is also the largest



shareholder in CT Partners. As part of the induction, Hollis has given advice to other entrepeneurs, telling them to "scale up to rather than into your business...although it might be challenging financially, put in the people, the structure and the framework you need to enable your business to grow before you actually need it - rather than put it in when you can afford it".

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### Falls Ck Ride-stay-ski

FALLSBUS has released a range of multi-night 'ride-stay-ski' packages to Falls Creek for the 2016 ski season.

Packages start at \$599pp for five nights at the Snow Ski Apartments based on quad share, with other options including five nights at Astra Lodge priced from \$799pp twin share or KOKI Alpine Resort from \$819pp twin share.

Single prices start at \$1,449 for five nights at Feathertop Lodge.

Offers include coach transfers from Melbourne, Adelaide and Albury - see fallsbus.com.au.

### **Great Wolf Cali open**

**GREAT** Wolf Resorts, operator of North America's largest family of indoor water parks, has opened its first location in California.

Great Wolf Lodge Southern California is located in Garden Grove and features 105,000ft<sup>2</sup> of indoor facilities, including a wave pool, lazy river and water slides such as the six-storey Howlin' Tornado - **CLICK HERE** for more.

### SAA up closing time

**SOUTH** African Airways will increase closing time for domestic flights from Johannesburg to Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Durban & East London by 10 minutes, to 40 minutes effective 01 Apr.

The move is due to "significantly increased passenger traffic" on the routes to ensure all passenger baggage can be checked in and loaded," said country manager for Australia, Tim Clyde-Smith.

"Boarding times have not changed and we are confident with the additional time we will see a much smoother passenger experience at Johannesburg," Clyde-Smith added.

Agents holding domestic SAA flight bookings are urged to communicate the increased flight closure times to their clients.

### Jordan DFAT update

**THE** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has reissued its travel advice for Jordan, downgrading the alert level for the Zaatari refugee camp.

The new Smartraveller advice also suggests travellers visiting the country may wish to contact their airline regarding proposed flight paths, with Australian officials having been warned against travelling on flights which cross over Syrian airspace.

### MTA with the stars



MTA - Mobile Travel Agents had the biggest turn out to date at its annual conference held at The Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort on the Gold Coast last weekend with close to 400 members, suppliers and special guests attending.

The aim of the conference themed 'Power of Community' was to inspire and educate MTA members, providing them with valuable takeaways to weave into their day-to-day work.

"Our members want to learn because they know it's going to change the way they do business," md and co-founder of MTA, Karen Merricks said.

The conference was emceeded

by ABC *Gruen Planet* regular Dan Gregory while inspirational key note speaker and author of bestselling novel *Mao's Last Dancer*, Li Cunxin, wowed the audience with his life story which highlighted the rich rewards of hard work.

Members enjoyed a bbq hosted by Fijian chef Lance Seeto, assisted by MTA ambassador & sailing star Jessica Watson on Sun. See images from the pool party

& supplier event on page seven. Pictured above from left are md

and co-founder of MTA, Karen Merricks together with Li Cunxin, Li's travel agent and MTA member Jonica Gilbert, and md and cofounder of MTA Roy Merricks.

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**CANBERRA-BASED** Active Travel attended a UN Women Australia 1,200-person charity lunch on Fri to mark International Women's Day on 08 Mar.

Held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra, the event was held to promote gender equality and combat violence against women and girls.

### Samsonite acquisition

**SAMSONITE** International has agreed to acquire Tumi Holdings in a move to expand its presence in the premium segment of the global business bags, travel luggage and accessories market.

Tumi shareholders will receive US\$26.75 in cash per share, for a total value of approx US\$1.8b. Active Travel hosted a table of guests at the luncheon, with funds raised directed to programs across the Pacific region to fight systemic violence against women. **Pictured** are: Active Travel

Directors Beck and Nick Carter.

### SQ new metal arrives

**SINGAPORE** Airline's welcomed the arrival of its first A350-900 to Singapore on Fri with a water cannon salute and a ceremony. Singapore Airlines ceo, Mr Goh Choon Phong said the plane's efficiency will allow the airline to open up more new routes.

The plane is the first of 67 on order and will be deployed on long-haul services to Amsterdam from May & Dusseldorf from Jul.

### **Design SPG burning**

**MEMBERS** of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide's loyalty scheme SPG (Starwood Preferred Guest) are now able to redeem points at participating Design Hotels member properties.

The expansion of the pact between the hotel groups follows the integration of 32 (of over 290 Design Hotels) since Nov and the activation of SPG Starpoints earnings on every stay.

More than 30 additional hotels will join the SPG pipeline in coming weeks.

### Sweden downgrade

**SWEDEN** has wound back its national terrorism threat from level four to level three (on a fivelevel scale) based on an overall assessment of current conditions.

Level three still indicates an elevated threat level remains.

The country increased the terror alert level due to terrorist attacks in Paris last Nov.

In a fresh update by Australia's Dept of Foreign Affairs & Trade for Sweden on Fri, Smartraveller said identification checks will remain at the point of departure for all passengers on trains, buses and ferries from Denmark to Sweden.

Australian travellers are advised to "exercise normal safety precautions in Sweden".

### QR DOH-AKL by Dec

**QATAR** Airways has vowed to commence mooted direct flights between Doha and Auckland by the end of the calendar year.

CEO Akbar Al Baker confirmed the service would begin operation by Dec at a media conference in Sydney last week at the launch of QR's new Doha-Sydney service.

Al Baker took a swipe at rival Gulf carrier Emirates which last week inaugurated a daily nonstop flight to Auckland - the world's longest commercial route.

The airline boss revealed plans for the Qatar-New Zealand direct route in Jan (*TD* 27 Jan).

"You already saw the reaction from my competition that they immediately put their flight directly there. We are not going to chicken out. We will definitely fly to Auckland," Al Baker stated.

### **Encore floated out**

**ULTRA-LUXURY** liner Seabourn "floated out" the new *Seabourn Encore* during a traditional ceremony at Fincantieri's Marghera shipyard in Italy on Fri.

It's the first time the *Seabourn Encore* has touched water.

*Encore* will undergo final construction at the shipyard until the 40,350 gross tonne ship is delivered at the end of 2016.

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## Wu to S Africa & S America

WENDY Wu has expanded into South Africa and South America with the launch of a 17- and 18-day fully escorted group tour, each with one departure in 2016 and a second in 2017.

"It was a natural progression to offer the Wendy Wu Tours group touring expertise and experience to our loyal customers in two of the world's most intriguing and exciting destinations," Wendy Wu md Alan Alcock said.

Available options include The 17-day South African Trails spends two-nights in Johannesburg before heading on to Kruger National Park, Swaziland, KwaZulu Natal, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Plettenberg Bay and Cape Town.

Highlights include exploring Kruger National Park in an openair safari vehicle, the coastal scenery of the Garden Route and a Cape Winelands Tour and the tour departs 26 Nov 2016 and 18 Mar 2017.

The 18-day South American Trails explores Lima, Cusco, Puno, Lake Titicaca, La Paz, Buenos Aires, Iguazu and Rio de Janeiro.

Stopping off at Machu Picchu, Iguazu, the tour includes a visit to the Moon Valley, Rio's beaches and tasting the "world's best steak" in Buenos Aires and dep 20 Nov 2016 & 19 Mar 2017.

The tours were created due to demand from repeat customers, especially those in active senior market who wanted to explore beyond Asia, Alcock said.

Both holiday packages are inclusive of return airfares from Australia, all accommodation and all meals, domestic transportation and sightseeing with guides.

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MOTIVATIONAL talks, breakout sessions and workshops were all part of last weekend's MTA - Mobile Travel Agents' annual conference on the Gold Coast. Along with a number of new initiatives (see **page one**), MTA members were provided with updates from suppliers, while there were more than 50 prizes,

including cruises, flights & accom. Socialising and down time were tied into the

**RIGHT:** Lara Vale, MTA; Neil Robertson, Virgin Australia & Julie Evans, MTA at the supplier event. conference with a casual pool party on Fri evening, a fun run, and celebration gala dinner on Sat night.

**Pictured** here are images from the weekend.

**ABOVE:** MTA members Sandy Mulcahy, Katrina Casey, Margy Stimson and Lesley Kempf.





**ABOVE:** Julia McLean, MTA; Remus Gheorghiu MTA; Suzana Blazevska, MTA; Jordan Pearce, guest and Sara Pearce MTA at Fri's pool party.

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### CA plots CKG/DXB

AIR China will add a second route between mainland China and the Middle East from 02 Apr with new thrice weekly services between Chongqing and Dubai.

Services will be operated by Airbus A330-200s.

Air China already operates flights from Beijing to Dubai.

### **Hotel Zeppelin SF**

**HOTEL** Zeppelin officially opened its doors in San Francisco last week.

The 196-room property offers a street level cafe, bar and lounge, a gameroom complete with shuffleboard, oversized electronic bingo and a quick-shot basketball wall as well as a digital concierge service putting guests in touch with staff from anywhere.

Keeping in line with the eclectic theme, furnishings such as vintage record players have been placed in select rooms.

The property is owned by Pebblebrook Hotel Trust and operated by Viceroy Hotel Group.

### **DNQ/YBWW MOU**

**DENILIQUIN** Council and Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the intention of providing regional air freight transport between Deniliquin Airport and YBWW.

Wellcamp Airport general mgr Phil Gregory said the Queensland airport was also in "ongoing discussions" with several airlines to secure regular international freight services.

### **NSW-Air China deal**

THE NSW government this morning revealed its first cooperative marketing agreement with Air China and Destination NSW aiming to bring more Chinese visitors to Sydney and the state's regional areas.

Stuart Ayres, NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, said last year NSW welcomed almost 567,000 Chinese visitors who spent \$2.3 billion in total.

"This agreement demonstrates the NSW government is focussed on increasing visitation from China which is our number one inbound tourism market.

"We look forward to welcoming many more Chinese visitors to

our state," Ayres added. Destination NSW ceo Sandra Chipchase said the agreement would see the state promoted via key Air China travel trade partners, endorsing Sydney and regional NSW itineraries.

NSW travel offers will also be highlighted through Air China's Phoenix Miles frequent flyer program, which has more than 36 million members.

"There are many wonderful regional destinations within a short drive or flight from Sydney for Chinese visitors to explore such as our world-class food and wine, golf courses, nature experiences, attractions and local festivals and events," Chipchase enthused.

### **MU adds PVG/ORD**

**CHINA** Eastern has announced plans to add a daily direct service between the Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Shanghai Pudong International Airport, with services to commence 18 Mar.

The new route will be operated using a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft.

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## **Brochures**

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, Travel Daily's Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



EvergreenTours - '17 preview Europe River Cruising This new brochure comes complete with new itineraries exploring France and Portugal. The expanded trips for next year include the 15-Day Amsterdam to Avignon, which takes travellers on a journey to historic cities including Cologne, Koblenz, Rudesheim and disembarking at Arles; as well as the 8-day Secrets of the Douro itinerary which departs Porto and journeys through Pinhao, Vega Teron,

Salamanca, Pocinho and Regua.



Wendy Wu Tours Asia River Cruising 2016-17 Destinations covered in this new brochure include China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and India. Highlights include the 14-day Majestic Yangtze River itinerary, which gives travellers a taste of Shanghai, Yichang, Chengdu and Beijing; as well as the 12-day Irrawaddy Voyager showcases destinations including Yangon, Mandalay, Mingun, Amarapura, Yandabo, Pakokku and Bagan.



World Journeys - WORLD 2016 Tailor-Made A range of trips that span Africa, Europe, North Africa & the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Asia, Canada & Alaska, Antarctica & the Arctic as well as Central and South America are included in

this latest edition. Itineraries have been split into different travel styles which include group journeys, hosted journeys and special interest journeys with accommodation in three, four, five and six star properties. A feature of the brochure is the six-day Al Andalus luxury train journey which gives travellers the opportunity to experience the history and lush scenery of Spain.

### Canopy London City

HILTON Worldwide has announced plans to bring Canopy by Hilton to the UK.

Slated to open in early 2018, Canopy by Hilton London City will be situated adjacent to historic Roman and medieval city walls, all within walking distance of the city's East End.

The new property will offer a range of dining options as well as meeting rooms and a fitness centre.

### France advisory

AUSTRALIANS travelling to France have been reminded that a state of emergency will remain in place in the country until 26 May 2016.

Visitors should remain vigilant, follow the instructions of local authorities and follow the media for the latest information on security.

The overall level of advice for France remains at the 'high degree of caution' category.



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North Sydney



### EW new pax jets

**EUROWINGS** has acquired two new Airbus A320 passenger jets as part of its plan to replace its existing fleet with Airbus A320s by Apr 2017.

The jets offer 180 seats, with the first three rows reserved for BEST fare customers and the first 12 rows have additional spacing between seats.

Eurowings' new metal will fly routes the airline will launch as part of its summer flight schedule beginning 27 Mar.



### SUE **HENDERSON**

from Flight Centre

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economy class airfares to Dubai flying with **EMIRATES** 

### **RCL shore excursions**

**ROYAL** Caribbean has launched 18 new shore excursions for Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific cruises, providing a "new and improved" offering, with "something for everyone". New excursions include: fishing at Airlie Beach, jet boating in Cairns, mountain biking in Hobart, a craft brewery tour in Wellington, a mining experience and historical town tour of Port Hedland, the Suva Kila Eco trek in Fiji & and a volcanic walking tour and glow worm cave experience in New Zealand.

### Bentours 2-for-1

BENTOURS two-for-one special on its Symphony River Cruise and Essence of Scandinavia itineraries have been extended until 30 Mar. Cruises depart from both Moscow and St Petersburg and prices start from \$2,500 for two people and \$5,013 for an eightday cruise.

For more information contact res@bentours.com.au.

### **Qantas refund calcs**

**QANTAS** has highlighted its Refund Calculation service for travel agents, which provides consultants with "accurate and timely refund information".

The service aims to help weigh up the best options for customers, to determine whether to proceed with the refund or retain a ticket in credit for future travel with Qantas.

To obtain a refund calculation agents can use BSP Link to submit a "refund application" and in the Reason field enter "refund calculation request only".

The calculation will be provided within three business days and is valid for 90 days; it can be viewed via BSP Link using the ticket number via a "Document enquiry".

If accepted, the agent can then re-submit the refund via BSP Link, but if the client decides not to proceed with the refund no further action is required.



This month Travel Daily, Tempo Holidays and Taj Hotels are giving readers the chance to win a trip from two to India, on Tempo Holiday's 8 day Incredible Royal Escape - with Taj Hotels. The prize includes 7 nights accommodation, transfers and comprehensive sightseeing throughout, valued at up to \$8,400.

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To win, have the most correct answers and the most creative answer to the final question. Send your entries to tempo@traveldaily.com.au

Q5. Tempo Holidays' Golden Triangle Tour includes which three Indian cities? Hint: Too easy!



### **Hilton Garden Inn**

HILTON Worldwide has penned a franchise agreement with SC Apex Alliance to present the new Hilton Garden Inn Bucharest Old Town, located within a historic building in the city centre.

The 201-room property will offer contemporary dining options & a 24 hour fitness centre. Hilton Garden Inn is slated to open in 2017.

Business Manager: Jenny Piper - accounts@traveldaily.com.au

**VISIT** Flanders hosted trade buyers from Australia for the first time at the bi-annual Flanders Brussels Travel Forum held on 22 Feb in Ghent.

Pictured visiting the Menin Gate in Ypres are: Peter Smith, McLachlan Tours; Ben Hayes, Boronia Travel; Vicko Bacic, Scenic; Robyn Brown, Insight; Kim Vaughan, Tempo Holidays and Tiffany Watters, Scenic.

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achieving targets. OTE Over \$100k in first year.

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