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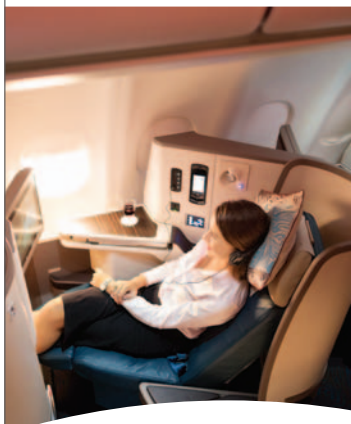


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ETG expands across Tasman

EXCLUSIVE

EXPRESS Travel Group has today confirmed it is in exclusive discussions regarding a majority investment in First Travel Group NZ (**TD** breaking news).

Express Travel Group CEO Tom Manwaring said the companies had been in talks for some time, and last week signed a "Term Agreement" with a 90-day exclusivity period.

He said the investment would see both organisations continue with business as usual, however shared technology and systems would allow operations on both sides of the Tasman to "progress with enhancements to their customer experience in both retail and corporate".

Manwaring said Express Travel Group and First Travel Group

were both strong, fully integrated, independent businesses, having had a close relationship for many years including a strategic alliance entered into in 2015.

"We look forward to finalising the deal within 90 days to the satisfaction of both parties," Manwaring said, with multiple commonalities including strong local management, shared preferred partners, technology, customer segments and complementary values.

First Travel Group NZ CEO Malcolm MacLeod said the potential deal was an exciting opportunity giving members the chance to enhance their businesses and give the group the tools to further grow membership.

TNZ specialist famil

TOURISM New Zealand is urging members to register their interest in taking a spot on next year's 100% Pure New Zealand Specialist Famil.

A total of 100 Australian agents will be hosted on 10 itineraries across the country in partnership with Air NZ - see the **cover page**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news and photos, a front cover wrap for **Tourism New Zealand** plus full pages from:

- Travel Trade Recruitment
- FAN+

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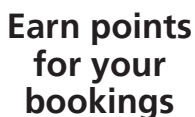
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Eurail pass changes

RAIL Plus has announced a series of changes to the company for 01 Jan, following the announcement that it will take on the name of its parent company, Rail Europe, in 2019 (**TD** 14 Dec).

From next year, all Global Pass prices will be permanently slashed by up to 37% and will enable travel to and across 31 countries, including Great Britain.

It will also remove Select Passes and Eurail Saver Passes in a move the company said would simplify its product portfolio.

A new three-day Global Pass will also be added for shorter itineraries, a 10% saving will be available with senior discounts for travellers aged 60+ and there will be the choice of a cheaper second class travel on all passes.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Europe's disrupted

AIRHELP has released its list of "Europe's 50 Most Disrupted Flight Routes", with the Mykonos to London Gatwick route ranking number one after 75% of its flights suffered delays between 01 Jan and 09 Oct.

Lisbon to Rome Ciampino came in close second, with 74.26% of its flights experiencing disruption.

Lisbon to Brussels S Charleroi placed third, followed by London Gatwick to Bucharest Henri Colanda, and Frankfurt International to Pristina Int'l.

Pax travelling via the UK were more likely to experience delays.

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Bestjet into administration

THE International Air Transport Association has confirmed the suspension of online travel agency Bestjet from its Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) in Australia, saying the company had defaulted on its most recent payment to the platform.

The move follows the appointment of administrators to the company (**TD** breaking news) which was last month sold by Rachel James to the McVicker Investment Group (**TD** 06 Nov).

No information on the reason for the collapse is available at this stage, with the administrators appointed including Nigel Markey and Bradley Hellen from Brisbane-based Pilot Partners.

Bestjet was founded by Rachel James in 2012, not long after her husband Michael was banned from managing companies by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission following the collapse of Air Australia owing

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creditors close to \$100 million.

The scale of the failure is unclear, but it's understood Bestjet was transacting several million dollars each day in airfare sales, with the holiday plans of thousands of consumers likely to be impacted.

Bestjet was not part of the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), having engaged in extensive legal action against AFTA in 2016 over its refusal to renew Bestjet's participation in the scheme due to "fit and proper person" provisions of the ATAS charter.

The administrator wasn't able to respond to requests for comment before **TD's** deadline today.

Jewel to return

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has confirmed *Norwegian Jewel* will return for a fourth Australian and New Zealand summer season as part of the 2020/21 program.

Jewel will homeport in Sydney and will begin her down under season on 09 Oct.

Other highlights of the program include sister ships, *Norwegian Joy* and *Norwegian Encore*, to sail from Miami to the Caribbean; *Norwegian Escape's* debut in Port Canaveral; and *Norwegian Epic's* return to San Juan.

All itineraries are now open for sale with the exception of those on *Norwegian Jewel*, *Norwegian Pearl* and *Norwegian Star*, which will open on 21 Dec.

FAN+ Mavericks

FAN+ is offering sports-mad travellers heading to the USA the chance to book a Home Game package to see the Dallas Mavericks play.

The FAN+ "Mav's Package" includes two VIP game tickets, two Patron lounge passes including food and beverages, plus a VIP tour of the players' locker room and practice court and photo opp - see **page seven**.

SAA fare update

SOUTH African Airlines (SAA) has advised that passengers booking tickets departing Perth to Africa from 20 Dec will be subject to changes in the carrier's fare structure.

All existing unticketed bookings must be issued on or before 19 Dec, with new bookings made from 20 Dec to be repriced according to the new levels.

The changes apply on all bookings for Business and Economy class, and will affect all retail, corporate and wholesale IT airfare levels.

The carrier has already applied the changes to Business and Economy airfares from Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney - for more information on the changes, call 1300 435 972.



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Travel Daily on location on board Norwegian Jewel

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line.

TODAY *Travel Daily* visited the watering holes on board the freshly refurbished *Norwegian Jewel*, while sailing towards Sydney.

What's your pleasure? Is it a frosty malty beer, choice wine, Black Russian, Manhattan, classic dry martini or absolutely whatever - it's all there for the tasting on *Norwegian Jewel*.

The totally new O'Sheehan's Neighborhood Bar & Grill is a favourite but for the evening hour perhaps the Sake Bar, Maltings Beer & Whiskey Bar, Shaker's Wine & Cocktail Bar or one of nine others - it's the spoilt-for-choice sail away.

Coaches hit by Rome ban

TOUR coaches will be banned from central Rome from 01 Jan after a last-ditch court challenge to new restrictions failed.

An Italian court has ruled there are insufficient grounds to overturn the ban, allowing the city to proceed with new rules which exclude coaches from the historic centre and increase fees for operating in other areas.

The European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) has criticised the ban, saying it will do little to

ease pollution and congestion.

"The practical consequences to the visitor economy are already dramatic," ETOA said in a response to the court ruling.

"Coach transport providers have, at a stroke, had their businesses seriously compromised," it said.

Orient Express to debut in Bangkok

ACCORHOTELS has revealed plans for its first Orient Express Hotel, to open late next year in a high-rise tower in Bangkok.

The property will be the first in Accor's joint venture with the French rail operator SNCF, from which it has purchased a 50% stake in the Orient Express brand.

The 78-storey Orient Express Mahanakorn Bangkok will feature 154 rooms including nine suites and two penthouses.

UK air assurance

THE UK's Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has been forced to issue an assurance that flights will continue operating between Britain and Europe after Brexit.

Grayling issued an open letter to the aviation industry after reports that British residents had been advised not to travel after 29 Mar (*TD* yesterday).



Window Seat

AS THE busiest time of the year for travel reaches its peak, American fast food chain POPEYES is taking control of the situation by offering stressed travellers passing through Philadelphia International Airport a little piece of fried chicken zen in a box.

The "Emotional Support Chicken" carrier, **pictured**, allows stressed travellers to take their meals on board their flight with the added bonus of offering "comforting emotional support...without any restrictions" - no fowl play here.



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TravelManagers wrap up 2018



TRAVELMANAGERS has completed its final series of state meetings for the year, bringing together personal travel managers (PTMs) from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth to mark the end of the year.

Tasmania-based PTMs had a different format and instead enjoyed a one-on-one catch-up with their Business Partnership Manager during Nov, followed by a Christmas get-together.

Executive General Manager,

Michael Gazal, said the meetings were attended by more than 20 partner suppliers, along with a record number of PTMs.

"Across the five meetings, we had nearly 300 PTMs in attendance, which represents more than half the entire network, and many of whom travelled significant distances to participate," he said.

"It's such a busy time of year for everyone, so to achieve such strong attendance is a great

reflection of the value placed on these meetings by our members."

PTM's pictured above are enjoying lunch at Sydney's Baia The Italian in Darling Harbour.

Pictured left is TravelManagers'

recent South Australia state meeting which enjoyed record attendance from PTMs, many of whom were new PTMs attending their first state meeting.

Air NZ Xmas spirit

AIR New Zealand will tomorrow add festive touches to its lounges, including the chance for children to decorate gingerbread Christmas trees at its Auckland facilities and Wellington and Christchurch domestic lounges.

ExpressJet for sale

SKYWEST has agreed to sell ExpressJet Airlines to United Airlines joint venture ManaAir, LLC, with the deal set to close in 2019.

The transaction includes certain protections around existing SkyWest Airlines flights, as well as plans to add 25 new dual-cabin aircraft with United.

As part of the transaction, SkyWest would also lease 20 CRJ200s to ExpressJet for up to five years.

ACCOMMODATION

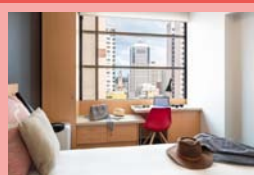
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



A new night club, teens club, adults-only bar and cooking lessons have been added to **Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort**. The Onyx night club has space for 200 guests, with a dance floor, DJ console & bar sitting area. The resort has also unveiled The Garden Pool adults-only bar in the resort's quiet pool zone and all-day Teens Club with music, wi-fi, pool and soccer tables and air hockey.



Banyan Tree Bangkok has reopened its rooftop venue Moon Bar following completion of extensive renovations. The bar has been re-positioned to the opposite side of its rooftop and now features a diamond-form bar and a glass platform called "Moon walk" where couples can enjoy the city views.



A \$4 million new look has been unveiled at **ibis Sydney World Square**. All 166 guestrooms at the property have been completely refurbished with ambient lighting, earthy colours and modern bathrooms. All public areas, including the lobby and restaurant have also been redone.

Celeb Nth America

CELEBRITY Cruises has released its 2020-21 deployment plans for North America, featuring destinations such as Greenland, Charleston and South Carolina.

Celebrity Summit will visit 19 destinations and seven countries including Greenland for the first time, along with a Statue of Liberty experience.

New 10-night cruises will also operate and bring travellers south to Charleston, South Carolina and Bermuda, and the seven-night itinerary to Bermuda will include a new stop in Newport, Rhode Island, and an up-close look at the Statue of Liberty.

In Aug, she will also travel between North America and Europe with two 14-night sailings from Cape Liberty to Dublin and then from Dublin to Boston.

Radisson Indo JV

RADISSON Hotel Group and Panorama Group have confirmed plans to end their Indonesian joint venture partnership, PT Carlson Panorama Hospitality, and pursue independent growth.

Radisson Hotel Group President Asia Pacific Katerina Giannouka said the "partnership has seen the expansion of our footprint across the Indonesian archipelago, establishing our brands in important markets".

Panorama Group CEO Budi Tirtawisata said the five-year partnership provided mutual success and as the companies move forward independently "all signs indicate accelerated growth and expansion for both parties".

Expedia sued

GLOBAL travel company Expedia has been sued for "misleading & deceptive statements", according to *The Canberra Times*.

The newspaper reported that when Canberra man Hugh Selby arrived at his Hawaiian holiday accom, which he booked through Expedia's company Wotif, the hotel did not look like the descriptions posted online.

Expedia has been ordered to pay \$628 in damages, the cost of the tribunal filing fee and an ASIC fee for a total of \$709.

PRTO chair named

PERTH Regional Tourism Organisation, trading as Destination Perth, has named Michael Meade as its new Chair.

He replaces the outgoing Chair John Longley, who has held the position for 14 years.

Meade has worked across the Asia-Pacific in senior marketing and management roles with major hotel companies and tourism organisations, including as Acting CEO of Tourism Fiji.

Aussie travel alert

RESEARCH conducted by InsureandGo has found that 60% of Australian travellers are unaware of govt travel warnings.

The survey presented a list of destinations and asked respondents if any were "safe" for travel, with Belgium considered the lowest risk by the group.

However, the Australian Government advises travellers to "exercise a high degree of caution" in Belgium due to the threat of a terrorist attack.

Thailand was listed the next safest by respondents, followed by the Philippines and then India.

NT target on track

THE Northern Territory Government's \$103 million Turbocharging Tourism initiative is over two thirds of the way to achieving its target of 53,000 extra holiday visitors.

An additional 36,000 holiday bookings have already been made, with an anticipated extra injection of \$45 million into the territory's economy.

"Turbocharging Tourism is providing a critical boost to the Territory economy – supporting thousands of local businesses," said NT Minister for Tourism and Culture Lauren Moss.

Adelaide welcomes SQ A350



ADELAIDE has welcomed its first Singapore Airlines A350-900 aircraft to the city, with the aircraft touching down on the tarmac yesterday morning.

The plane was greeted by a water canon salute, while customers flying on the inaugural return service from Adelaide

to Singapore were treated to a traditional lion dance, drinks, canapes and a small gift to commemorate the event.

The A350-900 medium haul plane features new regional Business and Economy class product, and is the first in the fleet to offer the Thales AVANT in-flight entertainment system.

Pictured: the A350-900 lands.

Vantage options

VANTAGE Helicopters has started up operations in New Zealand, providing visitors with scenic rides above popular tourist spots such as Ka Roimata-a-Hinehukatore (Franz Josef Glacier), Te Moeka-o-Tuawe (Fox Glacier) and Ka Tiritiri o te Moana (the Southern Alps).

Three scenic flight options are on offer ranging from 25-45 mins, each including a snow landing.

Japan Rugby flights

AIR New Zealand has announced the introduction of 10 extra return services to Japan in 2019 to cater for increased demand during the Rugby Union World Cup.

The additional services will operate between Auckland and Tokyo Narita International Airport from mid-Sep through to early Nov using the airline's Boeing 777 aircraft.

Blue Train refurb

SOUTH Africa's Blue Train is undertaking a complete refurbishment which is due to be completed by the end of 2019.

The refresh will include replacing the brake system and septic toilet system, as well as new carpeting, upholstery, air conditioning system, wooden panels and brass showers.

For future schedules and rates in 2020, [CLICK HERE](#).

Digital ski assistant

VAIL Resorts has unveiled a new digital assistant called Emma which will respond to guests' enquiries at nine of its mountain properties.

"I am the collective knowledge of every lift operator, groomer, snowmaker, ski school instructor, ticket counter attendant and ski patroller," Emma boasts.

countdown to christmas with Club Med



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For more information please call Jacqueline on
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For more information please call Serena on
(07) 3123 6107 or click [APPLY](#) now.

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For more information please call Antony on
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For more information please call Courtney on
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Groups & Incentive Travel Consultant

Melbourne, \$55-\$60k + Super, Ref: 3812HC1

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