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Travel Daily

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Tuesday 15th January 2019

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Agents from across Australia will visit NZ courtesy of Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand - more info on the **cover page**.

Intrepid's record growth

INTREPID Group has recorded a 17% increase in revenue for 2018, taking the company to a total of \$397m and notching up a third consecutive year of record growth.

The Melbourne-headquartered company delivered an earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) result of just under \$15m in 2018, driven largely by a 25% increase in underlying profitability.

Intrepid CEO James Thornton said he believed the tour operator's recent financial results were fuelled by a strategy of diversification.

"Over the past 30 years we've seen many of our favourite places suffer through the lows of natural disasters and we've learnt how important it is to diversify not only where we go, but also our brands, products and sales regions," Thornton said.

Intrepid Group currently offers more than 2,700 trips in 120 countries operated by its four

tour major brands; Intrepid Travel, Peregrine Adventures, Urban Adventures and Adventure Tours Australia.

During the period, Intrepid Group also achieved a record employee engagement score of 82% and a record customer feedback score of 4.7 out of 5, which Thornton said was recognition of the company's ongoing commitment to sustainability.

"We're as committed to sustainable travel as we were in the beginning...customers really are looking for businesses to be a force for good," he said.

Today's issue of TD

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

- TMS Talent

CX plots Paris boost

CATHAY Pacific is expanding capacity between Hong Kong and Paris, with GDS screens indicating an extra two weekly flights on the route effective 03 Jul 2019.

The extra A350-900XWB services will boost frequencies to a double daily operation.

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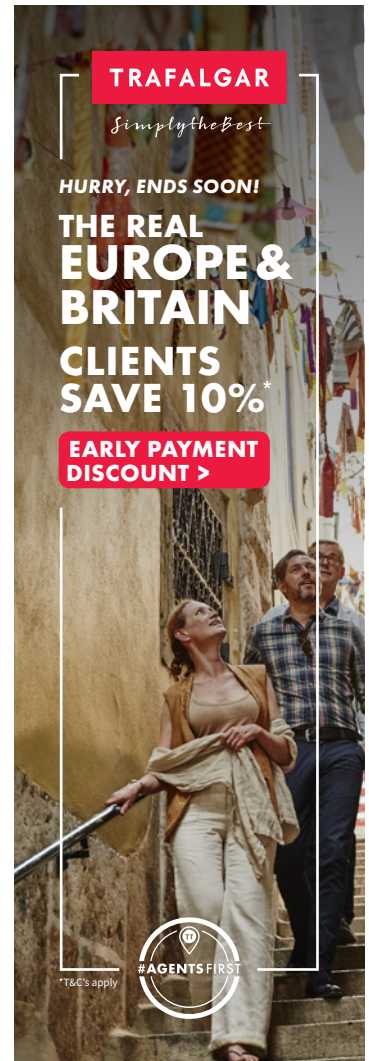
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UK hotel expansion

BRITISH hospitality group Village Hotels has flagged a £480m expansion plan, boosting its portfolio to 50 hotels by 2026.

In the next two years new Village Hotels are planned for Cambridge, Slough, Basingstoke, Milton Keynes & Southampton.

Tramada AFTA pact

TRAMADA Systems has become an Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) Allied Member.

The company has been a long-time supporter of AFTA, is a Preferred Mid-Office Partner in the AFTA Chargeback Scheme (ACS) and has been a regular National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) finalist since 2013.

Jayson Westbury, Chief Exec of AFTA said "AFTA's success is built on the expertise and participation of its members, and we are very grateful to Tramada for working together with AFTA to promote our NTIA initiatives".

Swiss winner reveal

SWISS Tourism has announced the remaining 2018 winners of its Switzerland Travel Academy.

The winners are Amanda McAllister from House of Travel St. Heliers Auckland, who took home a Victorinox INOX Watch; Krystal Rouge from Tempo Holidays Melbourne who won a Victorinox carry-on suitcase; and Liz Light from Top Snow Travel Newport, who claimed a Westfield gift card - more **HERE**.

Wide Eyed opens in BKK

WIDE Eyed Tours has announced the opening of a new office in Bangkok, expanding its presence into Thailand.

It's the fifth dedicated Wide Eyed Tours operation in South East Asia, complementing the operator's existing presence in Hanoi, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam as well as Siem Reap in Cambodia.

GM Tracey Johnston said expanding into Bangkok was a natural progression for the

Turkish HKG pact

HONG Kong Airlines and Turkish Airlines have kicked off a new codeshare partnership, which sees TK offer tickets from Istanbul to New Zealand.

The TK code is being placed on Hong Kong Airlines flights to Auckland, Bangkok and Osaka, while HX is codesharing on Turkish metal from Istanbul to Amsterdam, Frankfurt and HKG.

Vale Montague

THE Australian travel industry is today mourning the sudden death of aviation and tourism veteran Andrew Montague.

Montague retired in 2008 after an extensive career including more than 20 years as Manager Australia Marketing & Sales with Thai Airways International.

He was also a former Chief Executive Officer of Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism.

company "as we continue to get recognition and support from agents across Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the UK".

She said Wide Eyed Tours had always assisted the industry with limited pre- and post-tour product in Thailand, with the new office meaning the company could now offer "100% comprehensive Thai FIT product to our agent partners".

The new operation is headed up by Country Manager Masha Preslitskaya, who has more than a decade of experience assisting inbound travellers to Thailand.

1000 Mile appoints

1000 Mile Travel has announced the appointment of Christina Atkin as its new Head of Sales and Partnerships for Vic, Tas, SA & WA.

Atkin joins 1000 Mile from her former role as Regional Sales Manager with Flight Centre Business Travel.

1000 Mile Travel Group currently has more than 40 independent mobile travel experts across Australia specialising in tailor-made corporate and leisure travel experiences, supported by 13 dedicated team members.

The mobile travel agency group is a member of the Helloworld Business Travel network.

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Marriott lawsuit

GLOBAL hotel operator Marriott has been served with a class-action lawsuit after a data breach, believed to have affected more than 300 million people by making personal info accessible without authorisation (**TD** 03 Dec).

The suit, brought on by more than 150 of the hotel's past guests, is the second to hit since the breach was revealed in Nov.

According to reports, the suit is seeking compensatory damages and "other forms of relief deemed appropriate by the court", and remains ongoing.

Sichuan MEL A350

SICHUAN Airlines plans to introduce its A350 aircraft to the Australian market on the Chengdu to Melbourne route from 04 Feb 2019.

The A350 will replace the A330 which currently operates the route three times a week.

Flybe rescued by Connect

STRUGGLING European regional airline Flybe is set to receive a funding boost following receipt of a recommended cash offer made by Connect Airways members Virgin Atlantic, Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital.

The acquisition will see Connect Airways take on the share capital of Flybe, with Cyrus, Stobart Group and Virgin Atlantic committing to making a £20m bridge loan available to support the airline's ongoing work capital and operational requirements.

In addition, following completion of the acquisition, the members have stated they intend to provide up to £80m of further funding to the Combined Group to invest in its business and support its growth.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to partner with Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital to bring Virgin Atlantic service

excellence to Flybe's customers," said Shai Weiss, Chief Executive Officer of Virgin Atlantic.

"Together, we can provide greater connectivity to our extensive long haul network and that of our joint venture partners Delta Air Lines, at Manchester Airport and London Heathrow," he added.

The new Combined Group arrangement aims to deliver improved connectivity and presence for travellers at Manchester Airport and London Heathrow, as well as an enhanced customer experience "in keeping with Virgin Atlantic's heritage".

The Group will operate independently to Virgin Atlantic under one management team, owned 40% by Cyrus Capital Partners, 30% by Stobart Aviation, and 30% by Virgin Atlantic Limited, the holding company of Virgin Atlantic Airways.



Window Seat

IT'S often said that the way to someone's heart is through their stomach - so when a group of Canadian air traffic controllers decided to buy pizzas for their US counterparts across the border to keep them full during the partial US Government shutdown, we're sure hearts were beating at maximum capacity.

The gesture, which began on Thu when a group of employees at Edmonton's control centre started a collection for controllers in Anchorage, Alaska, has now snowballed across the country, with an estimated 300 pizzas delivered since last week.

We're sure that even after the shutdown concludes, US workers will always carry a "pizza" Canada's heart.

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Oceania applauds Connoisseurs



OCEANIA Cruises recently hosted an event on Sydney Harbour to induct its newest Top Producers into the brand's Connoisseur Club.

The new club, which will officially launch in Sydney on 01 Feb, aims to provide benefits to individual top selling travel agents across Australia and New Zealand while pooling their advice for

"continuous improvements across the Oceania brand".

The club launch follows the cruise line's announcement it had purchased two new Allura-class ships (*TD* 09 Jan).

Pictured at the event is Oceania Cruises CEO Bob Binder, left, with members of Oceania Cruises and the selected Oceania Top Producer travel agents.

Machu Picchu policy

VISITORS to Peru's iconic Machu Picchu must now select one of three daily time slots for access to the World Heritage site, under new rules implemented this month.

Ticketed access is available between 6am and 9am, 9am and noon, or noon-3pm, and further restrictions will also revolve around hourly time slots.

Authorities are aiming to boost off-peak visitation, with morning and afternoon visitors given access to the on-site museum.

Those who visit after noon are also given free entry to the Raqch'i archaeological site, reports the *Peru Telegraph*.

FR ditches holidays

IRISH low-cost carrier Ryanair (FR) has announced the discontinuation of its Ryanair Holidays packaging operation.

The business launched two years ago (*TD* 02 Dec 2016), at the time promising to shake up the market by offering the "unbeatable combination" of low fares plus a wide range of accommodation and transfers.

The carrier hasn't commented on the closure, which was revealed on the Ryanair website along with confirmation that existing bookings are unaffected.

MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US0.719

ALL financial eyes will be on the UK tonight, with widespread uncertainty about Britain's economic future ahead of a Parliamentary vote on PM Theresa May's Brexit plans.

Some analysts predict that Brexit may be delayed until later in the year, while there's also a potential vote to shift the process into parliamentary hands, with the speculation leading to significant volatility in currency markets.

On other fronts, the Australian dollar reached a one month high against the US greenback on Fri.

That's been also reflected in other markets, with the AU\$ also edging higher against the Euro and the Japanese yen.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.719
UK	£0.559
NZ	\$1.048
Euro	€0.628
Japan	¥78.16
Thailand	฿22.86
China	¥4.785
South Africa	9.897
Canada	\$0.949
Crude oil	US\$59.48



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Kempinski in Bali

TRAVELLERS to Bali will have access to a new property in Nusa Dua when the Apurva Kempinski Bali hotel opens on 01 Feb.

Offering 475-guestrooms, suites and villas, the hotel is located on the Balinese beachfront and features six restaurants and bars, an ocean-facing spa and fitness centre, a 60m swimming pool with separate kids' pool, an "innovative family club" and a 1,076m² ballroom is for events.

Cunard restaurant

CUNARD has announced a new dining concept, Steakhouse at The Verandah, on board its three Queens - *Queen Mary 2*, *Queen Victoria* and *Queen Elizabeth*.

The menu showcases prime USDA grain finished New York strip steak, Maine lobster and Alaskan king crab alongside Scotch grass-fed, dry-aged beef and Salt Marsh lamb rack.

Wagyu beef from Australia also features on the menu.

In addition, passengers will also be able to indulge in a new selection of craft cocktails at The Verandah bar.

Bundaberg aero

THE first sod has been turned for Bundaberg Regional Aviation and Aerospace Precinct's \$5.2m stage three.

It will see delivery of eight fully serviced lots, including three with direct airside access, taxiways and aircraft aprons, road extensions and a sewerage pump station.

Evergreen 100%

EVERGREEN Cruises & Tours has confirmed 100% of its 2019 Canada, Alaska, and USA departures are guaranteed to operate, following "a record year of double digit growth on its Canada and Alaska departures".

"Canada continues to be safe and desirable destination for Australians", said Evergreen Director of Sales, Marketing and Product Angus Crichton.

The company is currently running a Your Time to Travel campaign, offering the 17-day Canadian Rockies and Alaskan Inside passage cruise from \$5,995 per person twin share.

Adina Coogee reveals refresh



THE Adina Apartment Hotel Coogee in Sydney's eastern beaches has completed a multi-million dollar update of its premises as part of parent company Toga Far East (TFE) Hotels' mission to "offer homely comfort to modern explorers".

The 86-room property offers guests a range of freshly renovated studios and one- & two-bedroom apartments, each featuring free wi-fi & fully equipped kitchen laundry facilities.

The hotel's lobby and conference rooms have also been updated and now feature a grey and caramel colour palette, with navy and teal accents.

Back-Roads Asia

BACK-ROADS Touring has launched its 2019/20 Asia brochure, featuring four of the company's popular tours across Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Each journey includes updated itineraries, new culinary experiences and a range of new accommodation options, with highlights including the revised 13-day Wonders of Thailand seeing guests staying at the Sibsan Resort in northern Chiang Mai, and the 12-day Flavours of Vietnam tour group heading to the Pilgrimage Village Boutique Resort & Spa.

For more information on the new brochure, [CLICK HERE](#).

Guests also have access to a modernised gym, pool, plus a hidden courtyard garden area.

Pictured: lounge & dining area inside a one-bedroom apartment.

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Thai rail fund boost

THE Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) has approved two new measures designed to develop the country's rail industry and enhance tourist destinations in a selection of its second-tier provinces.

The national infrastructure plan will aim to build more than 6,000km of rail network nationwide, including a dual-track train, electric train, and high speed train, while also addressing future demand for rail networks and "significantly bringing down logistic costs" and "increasing trade and investment opportunities".

Travel writing class

TRAVEL writer Rob McFarland will host a workshop for travel writers in Melbourne on 17 Feb.

The course covers a specialised toolkit of storytelling and pitching techniques and includes a detailed post-course review.

Limited to 12 people, the session costs \$399.

See www.robmcfarland.org for more information.

Germany air delays

DOMESTIC and international air travel in Germany is set to be disrupted due to security guard strikes on 15 Jan, according to Smartraveller.

The delays will affect passenger operations at airports including Frankfurt, Leipzig, Bremen, Hanover and Hamburg.

Smartraveller advised it may take more than a day for schedules to normalise and travellers should contact their airline for the latest information.

Odyssey Diamond

SMALL group tour operator Odyssey Traveller has introduced a Diamond tier to its rewards scheme, in addition to its Bronze, Silver & Gold membership.

Clients who are eligible will have completed at least nine international tours with Odyssey.

Diamond travellers will be entitled to a 9% discount of the twin share tour price list, discounted travel insurance rates and their nominated companion will also be able to save 7% on twin share.



MUDGE Travel & Cruise's Glenn Box dispatched two trucks full of Christmas presents to farmers in late Dec, thanks to donations from fellow Travellers Choice members and the retail group's industry partners.

Almost \$12,000 was raised during the Travellers Choice Shareholders' Conference in Cairns in early Dec for Box's charity 200BALES.

The charity was founded by Box, who set it up to buy stock feed for drought-affected farmers in the NSW mid-west region.

"By creating 200BALES we were able to forge a connection between local farmers and Mudgee Travel & Cruise, which then connected with the wider Travellers Choice network and ultimately with the broader travel industry to provide real assistance," said Box.

"This charity hasn't just saved livestock; we know that it's saved people's livelihoods and in some cases saved lives," he said.

To date 200BALES has raised almost \$500,000.

Box is **pictured** with his son.

Chimu on sale

LATIN America and Polar specialists Chimu Adventures has launched its 2019 Great Chimu Sale, running until 28 Feb.

Travellers can save up to 40% on expeditions to Antarctica; 35% off Latin America small ship cruises and group tours; and 30% off Arctic voyages.

The full product range on offer for The Great Chimu Sale can be viewed **HERE**.

Bunnik 2019 trends

FOOD experiences abroad will continue its popularity into the new year, according to Bunnik Tours' top travel trends for 2019.

Travellers are also moving away from "touristy" activities in search of genuine experiences with local people, such as the Rail Tracks of Hanoi, and the Namibia, Botswana and Victoria Falls small group tour, where passengers sleep among the animals at a basic camp site in the middle of Moremi Game Reserve.

Bunnik said small group touring is also becoming a more popular option rather than the traditional large group coach tours.

Canada Corroboree 2019

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QF measles alert

NSW Health has issued a warning to passengers who travelled on QF20 from Manila to Sydney on 11 Jan, after one of their fellow travellers was diagnosed with a case of measles.

People who were at Sydney Int'l Airport on Fri morning are also urged to be on the lookout for symptoms - health.nsw.gov.au.

Choice AWS move

CHOICE Hotels International has announced it is moving its infrastructure to AWS Amazon Web Services, migrating over 1,000 applications to the new storage base.

The decision was made in a bid to help improve performance, scalability and reliability.

Emirates recruiting

EMIRATES has announced it will be holding Cabin Crew recruitment days in Perth and Adelaide this week.

The recruitment drive will take place at the Duxton Hotel in Perth on Wed 16 Jan and at the Mayfair Hotel on Fri 18 Jan in Adelaide.

HomeExch refresh

A NEW website and brand identity has been unveiled by accommodation disrupter HomeExchange.

The service offers users a platform to exchange accommodation with other users without money changing hands.

"Staying in paid accommodation is increasingly perceived as cold and impersonal...HomeExchange offers a whole new experience," said the company's Chief Executive Emmanuel Arnaud.

Air NZ Boxing Day

AIR New Zealand is adding close to 1,000 extra seats to Melbourne across 25-26 Dec to accommodate Kiwi cricket fans heading to this year's Boxing Day test match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The additional seat capacity is on sale now.

AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



AS MANY in the travel industry start to find their way back to work - of course many travel agents and others have

been working every day during these summer holidays, and the industry thanks you for your efforts - it is hard for me not to make mention of the fiasco that is Bestjet.com.

The question on my lips, and perhaps on everyone's lips "Where is all the money?"

As readers of *Travel Daily* would know, AFTA undertook a very significant process to have Bestjet.com kicked out of AFTA and ATAS accreditation back in 2017 and as it turns out, for very good reason.

The consumer media are understandably all over this story and while I have managed a short break over Christmas, I think my phone rang more times than when I am in normal work mode.

The big issue for the industry is that the behaviour of this company and its principals, both past and recent, need to be put to question.

How can a company of this size just go down with all the money gone? As I said, "Where is the money?"

Someone must have done something with it - surely it has not just escaped the clutches of the bank accounts without a person pressing some buttons.

Fortunately, 95% of consumers will be able to get their money back via credit card chargeback

as the majority of the tickets were paid for with a credit card.

While this will no doubt cause grief for the merchant services provider, it does again demonstrate that credit cards continue to be the cheapest form of consumer protection against these problems.

This will advance even more as new and different forms of payments become part of the payments landscape.

A special mention to all the airlines that have been trapped in this mess, many of whom have gone above and beyond to support consumers over this Christmas season.

As more details of this drama unfold and the liquidators undertake what we hope will be a deep forensic approach to establish the cause of the Bestjet collapse, we are all left to wonder why?

For my money there is much more to this story than meets the eye and it is still only early days in this process. It is just not acceptable that this goes unchecked and AFTA will be looking further into this matter to ensure that the integrity of travel agents is upheld, that the reputation of travel agents does not get caught in the middle of this and that if there are avenues to pursue the truth then I think we all want to know what that is.

So welcome to 2019.

I am still, regardless of this mess, confident that the year ahead is set to be a good one for the industry and I wish everyone who reads this column a very happy, safe and prosperous 2019.

Great Sandy review

THE Great Sandy Marine Park located along Qld's Bundaberg-Fraser Coast is undergoing a zoning review.

The Qld Govt is currently seeking community views on a new zoning plan which aims "to balance conservation, recreation and commercial activities".

PR departs Top End

TOURISM NT's Domestic PR and Media Manager Jodi Clark has resigned from her role.

She joined the tourism body in Oct 2017 and was previously the Director of PR and Communications at Per Aquum Hotels and Resorts in the Maldives.

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To celebrate the Aussie summer, *Travel Daily* is joining Vloggi, the world's simplest video blogging platform to give readers Westfield shopping vouchers valued at \$1000 (1x \$500 and 2x \$250) and 10 movie vouchers.

Simply create 10-second video blogs using the Vloggi app. The videos that best encapsulate the summer spirit win. The content is up to you - a funky place, a great place to eat or stunning views.

Download the Vloggi app, which automatically compiles video clips into 10-second microvlogs. Or join multiple vlogs together into longer stories via the Vloggi website. Visit summervlogs.com to learn more and for T&Cs.

VLOGGING TIP 2 - Caption: What makes a great video blog is the combination of a caption and video. Tell the viewer what is going on.

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Produced each weekday since 1994, *Travel Daily* is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

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