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Travel Daily First with the news

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Thursday 17th January 2019

Bunnik Small Group launch

E X C L U S I V E BUNNIK Tours CEO Dennis Bunnik says the debut of the company's new Small Group Touring Co. (*TD* breaking news) aims to respond to the growing demand for small group travel.

Bunnik has leveraged longestablished relationships with suppliers for its existing portfolio to develop the new product, which is launching with 30 trips taking in Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe, the Middle East and South America.

Small Group Touring Co. trips are shorter in length, land only and are aimed at a broader global market than Bunnik Tours, which is only sold in Australia.

"We know that more and more people are looking for that small group touring option and the Small Group Touring Co. offers a

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news and photos, a front cover page for **Virgin Australia** plus full pages from: • Windstar

AA Appointments jobs

group size of 12 to 18 travellers so we can ensure that everyone on tour has the best opportunity to connect with the sights, customs and culture of their tour destination," Bunnik told **TD**.

"We believe that the two brands will complement each other well within the Australian market."

The Small Group Touring Co., headed up by Senior Bunnik Executive Kevin Bishop, is a "digital-first" operation based in the company's wholly-owned office in Sri Lanka, which can be contacted toll-free 8.30am-5.30pm AEST on 1800 865 285.

The new venture also has an office in the USA, where the brand soft launched in Q4 of 2018.

Bishop said Small Group Touring Co. clients were people "looking for an active holiday without foregoing the creature comforts, like superior accommodation and delicious food".

Strictly limited launch offers include a 50% discount on several early departures, available on a first come first served basis until 28 Feb - for more details see smallgrouptouringco.com.au. Visit USA Expos 2019 Melbourne Brisbane Sydney Perth

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O M NICHE

Virgin Back to Hols

VIRGIN Australia is running a "Back to Holidays" sale offering up to 30% off selected domestic flights and deals on int'l routes.

There's also the chance to win 25m Velocity points by registering a booking on an eligible flight or Virgin Australia Holidays package.

For more information, see today's **cover page**.

New Sth Pac cruises

WINDSTAR Cruises is today showcasing its new collection of South Pacific itineraries that are available for travel in 2020.

Guests can choose from a range of seven- to 59-night packages, starting from \$2,322 per person, twin share.

A flyer is available for agents to download outlining more details on the new options.

For more information on the itineraries, see **page eight** of today's issue of *Travel Daily*.

BAILLIE Lodges has acted quickly on its major expansion plan and inked a deal for Tropical North Queensland's Silky Oaks Lodge to join its portfolio in Apr.

The move comes weeks after a "substantial investment" in Baillie Lodges by US private equity group KSL Capital Partners, which aimed to allow the company to pursue the purchase of other lodges (*TD* 20 Dec 2018).

Silky Oaks Lodge is located in the Daintree National Park along the Mossman River and will undergo property enhancements and product developments in the coming months to align it with "the trademark Baillie Lodges' guest experience".

The property offers guests experiences including riversnorkelling, driving safaris, Indigenous guided walks, the lodge's Healing Waters Spa and access to Port Douglas and the

Baillie adds Silky Oaks BAILLIE Lodges has acted Great Barrier Reef.

It is a member of the Luxury Lodges of Australia collection, and has been led for the past nine years by its owner managers Paul and Barbara Van Min.

Silky Oak's staff will join the Baillie Lodges team & be provided with future opportunities to work at other lodges in the portfolio while recruitment will begin for a new senior management team at the property.

Baillie Lodges Founder and Exec Chairman James Baillie previously worked as GM of the property when it was first acquired by P&O Resorts and led its continued development while he was MD of P&O Australian Resorts.

"We see great benefits in Silky Oaks Lodge joining Baillie Lodges where there are so many synergies, including our relationship with the travel trade," Baillie said.

Kenya update

BENCH Africa has confirmed that none of its passengers were affected in the hotel attack in Nairobi, Kenya (*TD* yesterday).

The Africa specialist said it does not use the Dusit hotel where the attack occurred, but is keeping in touch with passengers currently in Kenya either directly or through its local office.

Bench Africa has also confirmed it will not be cancelling or amending existing tour programs.

Police in Nairobi have confirmed a death toll of 21 from the attack by Islamist militants from the al-Shabab group, with one Briton, one American, 16 Kenyans and three others of African descent among the victims.

Security forces ended the incident after a 20-hour operation which left all five assailants dead and hundreds of people rescued.

The overall Smartraveller advice for Kenya remains at "exercise a high degree of caution".



t 1300 799 220



Find out where luxury and romance go hand in hand. Read more in the December issue of *travelBulletin*.

> CLICK to read traveBulletin

Qantas CX lounge

ELIGIBLE passengers departing San Francisco on Qantas can now enjoy access to the Cathay Pacific Lounge as part of their travel.

Customers holding Business class tickets, or who have Qantas Platinum One, Platinum or Gold Frequent Flyer status will be able to enjoy the lounge's selection of complimentary food and beverages, comfortable lounge seating and shower suites before their flights.

Qantas operates a daily service from San Francisco to SYD on board a Boeing 747, plus four weekly flights direct to MEL on a Boeing 787-9 *Dreamliner*.

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NOW OPEN

MARRIOTT International has announced the launch of a new rewards program that will replace existing loyalty brands Marriott Rewards, The Ritz-Carlton Rewards and Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG).

Marriott unifies rewards

The updated program, called Marriott Bonvoy, unifies previous incarnations of the company's membership and reflects the "unmatched benefits, single loyalty portfolio and experiences" announced last year (**TD** 30 Jul).

"Marriott Bonvoy marks an evolution in travel because it represents more than a loyalty



"Marriott Bonvoy is a travel program designed to bring to life our extraordinary portfolio of global brands in 129 countries and territories, while also providing endless inspiration for members to keep travelling and pursuing their passions."

The new program kicks off on 13 Feb and will also introduce two new names for previous Elite status tiers; Marriott Bonvoy Titanium Elite for members who surpass 75 nights, and Marriott Bonvoy Ambassador Elite, which recognises members who surpass 100 nights and more than US\$20,000 annually.

Members are encouraged to download the current Marriott app which will automatically update from 13 Feb.

For more information on the program, **CLICK HERE**.

Win with Vloggi

THE weather is hot and so is the latest *Travel Daily* competition! Escape the heat with video blogging platform Vloggi, which is giving agents the chance to win a range of Westfield shopping vouchers, including \$500, and two \$250 vouchers, plus one of 10 movie vouchers.

To enter, simply create a 10-second video blog that captures the spirit of summer see **page five** for all the details.



IS IT a bird? Is it a plane? For passengers on board a recent Singapore Airlines flight bound for London it was both, after a myna bird made a surprise appearance in the Business class cabin of the aircraft 12 hours into the long-haul flight.

The winged stowaway is believed to have entered the plane in Singapore, lying low in an overhead bin before high altitudes and low cabin pressure forced it out of its hiding spot.

The bird was eventually captured by cabin crew and taken to quarantine - without ruffling too many feathers.

OL orders MAX-9

SAMOA Airways has signed a memorandum of understanding with Air Lease Corporation for the lease placement of one new Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft.

Scheduled for delivery in late Mar, the plane will replace the carrier's existing 737-800, making it the first carrier in the South Pacific to operate the new metal.

The aircraft will be configured with 16 Business class seats and 173 seats in Economy class, and will operate between Apia, Auckland, Sydney and Brisbane.

The plane will feature the new Boeing Sky Interior and provide the airline with increased range and flexibility.

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Thursday 17th January 2019

Aurora 2020/21 program

POLAR exploration operator Aurora Expeditions has launched the 2020/21 program for its new ship *Greg Mortimer*, which will join the fleet in Oct 2019.

The itineraries visit destinations such as Iceland, West Greenland and Costa Rica and will be led by on-board experts.

"We're thrilled to launch our new program which embodies our 27-year long legacy of offering small group expeditions that allow passengers to experience and access these otherwise extremely difficult to reach destinations," said Aurora Expeditions Managing Director Robert Halfpenny.

"Our sales have grown exponentially over the past year; with 95% of our Antarctica



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Lots of new Canadian Partners
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MEL	06 Feb
ADL	11 Feb
SYD	12 Feb



Register NOW for the roadshow of the year!!

CLICK HERE registrations close 25 Jan 2019 2019/20 season and 75% of our Arctic 2020 season already sold," he added.

Highlights of the program include the new 22-day Solar Eclipse in Antarctica journey, 16-day Franz Josef Land Explorer, 11-day Iceland Circumnavigation trip, and 11-day West Greenland Explorer expedition.

Aurora has also announced an earlybird deal to mark the launch, with savings of up to 25% on offer for new voyages booked by 31 Mar 2019, or until sold out. For more information, contact 02 9252 1033.

MH Perth changes

MALAYSIA Airlines (MH) will introduce an Airbus A330-200 aircraft on its Kuala Lumpur to Perth service from 31 Mar. The move will see the 737-800 aircraft replaced.

Qld accommodation

THE latest Queensland Accommodation Report shows occupancy rates in the state fell to 72% in Nov 2018, a decrease of 1.3% when compared to the previous corresponding period.

The Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased to \$175.28 in the same month, a rise of \$2.62 when compared to Nov 2017, while Revenue Per Available Room (RevPar) remained relatively steady at \$126.15, a slight dip of \$0.39 when compared to the Nov 2017 period.

The report also showed that the supply of rooms in Queensland increased by 3.2%, outpacing the increase in demand which clocked in at a 1.3% bump.

The best performing regions in the Sunshine State were the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Southern Great Barrier Reef, which all produced growth in each of the key metrics. Brisbane struggled in Nov 2018, down across all key data points.

Virgin goes full RockStar



VIRGIN Voyages has released several preview images (pictured) of its upcoming RockStar Suites, a move its founder Richard Branson said moved away from "stuffy formalities".

"With these glamorous suites, Virgin Voyages is bringing rock and roll to the high seas and spoiling our sailors like the rockstars they are," Branson added.

Highlights from the Massive Suite, one of the RockStar Suites aboard *Scarlet Lady*, include a guitar-clad music room, views of the ocean from every corner of the suite, a large terrace furnished with a "Peek-a-View" outdoor shower, a hot tub, hammocks and a runway outdoor dining table.

The company's Chief Executive



Officer Tom McAlpin said he believed the new suite offerings would create an important pointof-difference with competitors.

"We have combined brilliant design and Virgin Voyages' epic sailor experience vision to create a completely new version of luxury - Rebellious Luxe, which is at the intersection of luxury and a rebellious attitude," he said.

Virgin Voyages' inaugural season starts in 2020, with *Scarlet Lady* scheduled to sail from Miami.

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Thursday 17th January 2019

LA smashes records

LOS Angeles reached a "historic milestone" in 2018, welcoming 50m visitors for the first time and achieving its tourism goal two years early, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board has announced.

The new record is 1.5 million visitors higher than 2017's total, a 3.1% increase, and marks the eighth-consecutive year of tourism growth for LA.

Australia remains LA's number two overseas market with 426,000 visitors in 2018, a 2% increase on 2017.

LA set new records for domestic and int'l visitation, hosting 42.5m domestic visitors (3%) and 7.5m int'l visitors (3.6%).



WIN UP TO \$1000 by vlogging

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 <u>summervlogs.com</u> to learn more and for T&Cs.

VLOGGING TIP 4 - Combine: Each Vloggi is a 10-second building block. Merge multiple Vloggis together to create video stories as you travel.

MSC Ocean Cay

MSC Cruises has revealed details of its new Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve experience set to be unveiled on 09 Nov.

The former sand extraction site in the Bahamas is being transformed into a marine reserve and private island, which MSC said would offer travellers a chance to "connect with nature" and learn about the environment.

Rail Europe winners

RAIL Europe has named Ben Hurth-Gye of Flight Centre Young NSW and Cat Parker from House of Travel Remuera NZ as winners of the Rocky Mountaineer incentive program.

The winners had the most points from Rocky Mountaineer bookings between Apr and Nov 2018, earning seats for themselves and a buddy to experience the GoldLeaf Service and \$1,000 towards their airfares.

Entire webinars

ENTIRE Travel Group is inviting agents to register for its upcoming webinars.

Agents can tune in on 24 Jan to learn about small escorted tours in France, on 31 Jan for New Caledonia and 07 Feb for Canada and Alaska.

CLICK HERE for more details.

A hotel & hospital

ESSENCE Apartments and Suites has opened Essence Suites Taringa above the new Westside Private Hospital in Brisbane's western suburbs.

The building marks the first Australian hotel in a hospital in one building & offers 63 studios, one and two-bedroom suites.

The company said the convenient location of the \$65m development would appeal to "any conventional purpose whilst also allowing unprecedented convenience for medical stays". The company will be managed by UniLodge Australia.

Hilton launches Vegan Suite



HILTON London Bankside has launched a new Vegan Suite designed in collaboration with Bompas & Parr.

The suite (**pictured**) has undergone a complete refurbishment in consultation with The Vegan Society, who provided input on vegan-friendly materials and design elements.

The suite features veganfriendly carpets, pillows and minibar offerings to appeal to the ethically-conscious traveller.

"Here at Hilton London Bankside, we're always looking at ways to innovate and bring new experiences to our guests," said the hotel's General Manager James Clarke.

"Our OXBO restaurant offering is already expansive, catering to many different dietary requirements so we thought, why not apply the same concept to our rooms.

"Veganism is not just a dining trend, it has become a lifestyle choice for many and in turn, we want to be the first hotel to be able to offer those who follow the plant-based lifestyle," he said.

The hotel features 292 rooms including executive rooms, suites and a luxury penthouse, a distillery bar, and fitness studio.

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To apply, send your resume and covering letter to **hr@globus.com.au** by Friday, 25 January 2019.

GLOBUS COSMOS

MONOGRAMS



Thursday 17th January 2019

NT walking special

AUSTRALIAN Walking Holidays is offering travellers a \$500 Wild Earth gear voucher and a 5% discount on selected 2019 Northern Territory walking adventures, for bookings made before 17 Feb.

Savings include more than \$100 off the six-day Jatbula Trail, which joins Katherine Gorge and Edith Falls in Nitmiluk National Park.

CLICK HERE for more - quote code NTGEAR19 to save.

Intrepid \$1 deposit

INTREPID is marking the New Year with \$1 deposits until 14 Feb. "Overspending at Christmas may have left travellers strapped for cash in Jan and our dollar deposits allow people returning to work the chance to lock in a trip," said Regional Director, Asia Pacific Brett Mitchell.

SeaDream voyages

SEADREAM Yacht Club has released a program of Grand Voyages, which combine two, three or more week-long sailings in the Caribbean or the Mediterranean in 2019 and 2020.

The collection includes four Grand Voyages scheduled in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic in May and Oct/Nov of this year and 18 throughout 2020.

MU SYD A350-900

CHINA Eastern Airlines has confirmed it will use A350-900 aircraft on its Sydney-Shanghai route from 01 Apr.

The aircraft features 35 of the airline's new Business class suites, along with four First class seats, 32 Premium Economy and 215 in Economy class.

The change is on sale now.

Aussies dominate YVR



THERE has recently been massive growth in the number of Australians travelling through Canada's Vancouver Int'l Airport (YVR) - and that could be because of the key roles held by two expatriate Australians.

Carl Jones, YVR's Director of Air Service Development and his colleague Trevor Campbell who is the airport's Manager, Marketing, both originally hail from Australia, with Jones relocating to Vancouver in 2014 after almost eight years at Melbourne Airport.

The pair, **pictured** above with Air Canada GM Australia/NZ, Vic Naughton, are currently enjoying the Australian summer heat, meeting with key partners to continue driving growth at Vancouver, which Jones said is now the second largest airport in North America after LAX.

Overall traffic through YVR has grown a whopping 44% in just the last five years, from 18 million in 2013 to 26 million last year.

2018 was particularly strong, with an additional 1.7 million passengers welcomed at Vancouver, a 7.4% increase.

The airport works closely with Air Canada to develop the business, and AC's Australian

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flights from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne have been an outstanding success - particularly in terms of smoothing the journey to onward destinations such as New York.

Vancouver is curfew-free, with all connections under a single roof making connections easy, and unlike transits at US airports, baggage can be checked through to the final destination such as JFK.

"It's a really attractive experience," Jones told **TD**.

Currently the focus is on building demand for the new AC Melbourne-Vancouver route which is going year-round from 03 Jun, with the strong "partnership approach" seeing YVR support airlines by cutting costs and locking in long-term agreements to give carriers ongoing certainty on pricing.

Aligned cooperative marketing is also key, and it certainly seems to be working, with YVR seeing 34% growth in traffic out of Australia for the past two years.

About 50% of Aussie passengers through the airport travel beyond Vancouver to destinations across Canada and Air Canada's US network, Jones noted.



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- At least two year's experience in a sales and marketing environment (in Travel or Tourism)
- Comprehensive knowledge of using a CRM System
- Well-developed verbal and written communication skills

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Call 1800 507 777 for more.



STEFANIE DUDZIAK

from Flight Centre Penrith

Stefanie is the top tipper for R13 of *Travel Daily*'s A-League footy tipping competition. She's won a \$250 travel voucher from Keith Prowse Travel.



A-League tipping competition is sponsored by Etihad Airways and Excite Holidays, with the top tipper for the season winning a trip to Manchester to see Manchester City play.

Qatar campaign

Thursday 17th January 2019

QATAR Airways has today launched a new Hollywood-style campaign, "A World Like Never Before" to show "how flying with Qatar Airways transforms the entire experience of travel".

"This campaign embodies everything at the heart of Qatar Airways' brand values, as well as the pride we share in providing exceptional service to our passengers across the globe," said Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker.

Watch the new Hollywood-style campaign **HERE**.

Oman codeshare

OMAN Air has expanded its codeshare partnership with Malaysia Airlines, covering additional routes to Australia.

The new codeshare routes from 07 Jan include Kuala Lumpur to Adelaide; Kuala Lumpur to Brisbane; Kuala Lumpur to Perth and Kuala Lumpur to Sydney.

Malindo smugglers

A NUMBER of cabin crew working for Malindo Air are believed to be among eight people arrested in Melbourne this month in connection with a major drug smuggling ring.

The bust follows "Operation Sunrise," a five-month joint Border Force, Federal Police and Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission initiative, with a spokesperson confirming it had targeted an alleged Vietnamese organised crime syndicate which may have been operating for several years.

APPOINTMENTS



Benjamin Brown has stepped into the role of General Manager at **Cooinda Lodge** in Kakadu. Brown previously worked across Qld and NSW for Oaks Hotels and the Mantra Group.

Aurora Expeditions has welcomed Victoria Primrose as its Global Head of Marketing. Primrose will be tasked with leading the company's marketing strategy, & brings more than 13 years' experience to the role.

TravelTek has appointed **Phil Astall** to the role of Chief Operating Officer. He brings a wealth of experience in operational delivery to the position, including business performance, revenue & customer success.

Darren Chigwedden has joined **Cruise & Maritime Voyages** in the position of National Sales Manager AU/NZ. Chigwedden has previously worked with Royal Caribbean, Princess and Cunard.

Mercure Alice Springs Resort is set to farewell Jeff Huyben, who will hand the General Manager baton over to **Emma Todd** on o1 Feb. Todd was previously the General Manager of Quest Palmerston.

Mieke De Schepper has been appointed to lead the Online Travel segment at **Amadeus**. She was previously Senior Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer at Egencia, the travel management company of Expedia Group.

Oceania Perignon

OCEANIA Cruises has announced the introduction of a new Dom Perignon Experience at La Reserve dining service.

The new offering pairs six meal courses with a different expression and vintage from Dom Perignon's collection.

"We worked with the team at Dom Perignon to pair the perfect champagnes with the perfect flavours and the outcome is spectacular," said Oceania Cruises CEO Bob Binder.

New crypto portal

TRAVEL technology company SBC Travel has launched a new online booking platform that allows travellers to pay for travel using cryptocurrency.

The new site provides instant access to redeem the crypto Global Travel Coin GTX, allowing payment with credit cards on travel bookings to access exclusive member-only perks.

SIA Dec results

SIA Group has recorded an overall improved passenger load factor of 85% for Dec 2018, an increase of 0.3% on the previous corresponding period.

Singapore Airlines' passenger load factor came in at 85.5%, a 1.1 percentage point nudge up on the 84.% recorded in Dec 2017.

SIA Group's low-cost carrier Scoot also logged a 85.5% passenger load factor for the month, down 3.2% on Dec 2017.

Brussels Africa adds

BRUSSELS Airlines has added new travel options on its routes to and from Africa.

The new offer includes a one-bag Standard fare, with the class featuring two checked bags and advanced regular seat reservation.

Also new is the Economy class flex fare, ideal for passengers who want extra legroom and flexibility, as changes and refunds are free.

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