

### Travel Daily on the Danube River

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of APT, which will this week christen its brand new *AmaMagna* on the Danube River as it cruises between Budapest and Vienna.

AFTER a morning exploring Budapest, *AmaMagna* set off for some scenic cruising to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia which guests can explore on foot before a transfer to meet the ship as she continues onto Vienna.

A much-anticipated highlight in the Austrian capital is an optional Mozart & Strauss Concert in the Vienna Hburg Palace - but many will also be staying on board to make the most of the four restaurants which include the new Jimmy's Wine Bar, named after AmaWaterways' late co-founder, Jimmy Murphy.

## AmaMagna sets new standard

APT'S new "double-width" *AmaMagna* has taken the European river cruise experience to a new level, according to the company's CEO, Chris Hall.

On board the ship this week for a special christening cruise, Hall told *Travel Daily* he believes the big staterooms, multiple dining experiences and other features such as a spa, pool, cinema, wellness centre and libraries will appeal to new & existing markets, particularly ocean cruisers who are used to larger cabins and more shipboard amenities than traditional river ships.

The 196-passenger *AmaMagna* is too large to traverse the Main-Danube canal, so offers itineraries on the lower Danube, but APT has been cautious in its deployment of the ship, at this stage only offering one almost sold-out departure to the Black Sea in 2020.

*AmaMagna* has been built

in partnership with long-time partner AmaWaterways, which is promoting week-long voyages on three separate itineraries.

Hall said in future years APT's capacity was likely to expand to offer more *AmaMagna* departures, particularly as demand for shorter voyages increased among Aussie clients.

Almost all of the cabins on the ship are suites ranging from 355ft<sup>2</sup> to 710ft<sup>2</sup> with step-out balconies.

The ship offers marble bathrooms, on-demand entertainment systems, generous storage space and the option of connecting staterooms and triple or quad occupancy.

See our photos from on board at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://facebook.com/traveldaily).

### Today's issue of *TD*

*Travel Daily* today has seven pages of news and photos, plus a full page from:

- TMS Talent

## Cairns push Asia link

THE Qld Govt is poised to launch an Expression of Interest process to attract an airline to replace the Cathay Pacific service between Cairns and Hong Kong, which will cease to operate after 26 Oct (*TD* 30 Apr).

According to *The Cairns Post*, the state's multimillion-dollar Attracting Aviation Investment Fund will be tapped to boost its key tourism link between Tropical North Queensland and Asia.

"Improving our tourism and trade links with Asia is crucial when it comes to growing the Cairns economy," said Qld Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed on the frequency, route and duration of the flights the prospective carrier can offer.

Cathay Pacific announced the cancellation of its Hong Kong to Cairns route back in Apr, after marking 25 years of flying the route last Nov (*TD* 02 Nov 2018).



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## AFTA warns on NDC value

**AUSTRALIAN** Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO, Jayson Westbury, says IATA suggestions that current industry technologies are like a "country lane" (**TD** 05 Jul) shows a "total lack of understanding of the business model of a modern travel agency".

Westbury said he believes that universal praise of IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC) is misplaced, adding that it simply provides a new way for airlines to implement their distribution strategy, which may or may not include travel agents.

"The inconvenient truth is that the NDC story has not been a good one at all - demonstrated by the fact that the few airlines that have decided to bring a distribution strategy dressed up as NDC, have not yet demonstrated any real value to travel agents," Westbury said.

"The devil is in the detail," he said, highlighting the controversial implementation of the new Qantas Channel in the local market, where promised new features have not actually been demonstrated at this stage.

"It may well be that in the end the new channel that the travel agency will use to access Qantas products will be amazing, but so far none of it has been enabled."

"Time will tell just how good it may be, but in the end the version of NDC that Qantas is bringing to market is not by any stretch an industry standard - it is the Qantas standard, and that does not mean it will be the same for other airlines," he added.

The Qantas Channel is set to be implemented on 01 Aug, and thereafter agents who do not register to participate may be charged a \$17.50 per sector fee for traditional GDS bookings and also won't have access to the full range of QF fare products.

More from AFTA on **page six**.

## SQ boosts AS pact

**SINGAPORE** Airlines will expand its codeshare agreement with Alaska Airlines from early Sep when it debuts its new non-stop Singapore-Seattle service, adding the SQ code to 31 additional North American routes.



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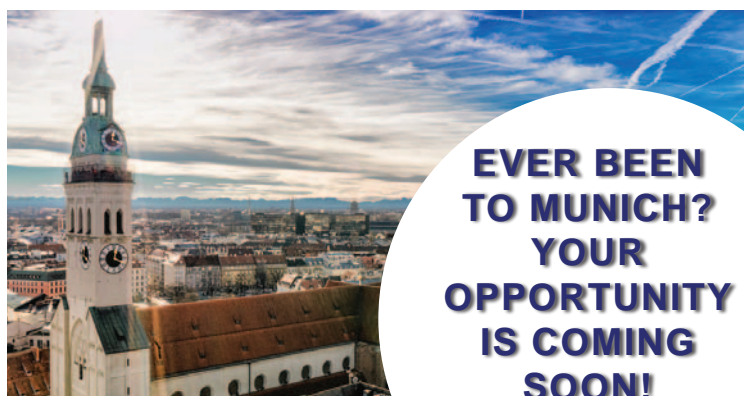


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## Qantas Philippines

**QANTAS** is running a Fly Away Sale to the Philippines, offering return flights from Sydney to Manila from \$599.

Return Business class flights from Brisbane to Manila lead in at \$2,899 and Economy return from Sydney to Cebu is from \$749.



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## Whitsundays blasts Nine

A **SENSATIONAL** "beat-up" story on Channel 9's *60 Minutes* on Sun night about the supposed demise of resorts in Qld's Whitsundays has been blasted as "unethical, unbalanced journalism" by the region's tourism industry.

The story, which saw reporters go "inside eerie abandoned" resorts on Dunk, Lindeman and South Molle islands, ignored the massive investment which has been under way in recent years, and "showed no regard for the people behind the industry and the thousands that work hard to invest and promote this magical part of the world," according

## ETG expands Infinity agreement

**NEW** Zealand's First Travel Group (FTG) will source product from Flight Centre-owned Infinity Holidays, under a new agreement which aligns with a preferred relationship signed by the network's Australian sister company, Express Travel Group.

ETG CEO Tom Manwaring told **TD** that Express had signed with Infinity during 2018/19.

"The Infinity range complements our overall product offering for our customers, providing scale, value and independent choice," he said.

Previously FTG purchased wholesale product under an agreement with Helloworld NZ offshoot Go Holidays.



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to Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer Tash Wheeler.

The report came despite extensive investments in media over the last six months to promote major refurbishments and redevelopments at the just reopened Hayman Island, Elysian Retreat and Daydream Island Resort - not to mention over \$500 million invested in Hamilton Island over the last decade.

"Lacking in Sun night's story was that seven resorts on islands across the region are open and looking incredible," Wheeler said, noting this was more than before Mar 2017's Cyclone Debbie.

Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Andrew Wilcox also blasted the report, saying "our tourism industry deserves better.

"It is basically unAustralian for a media outlet to decide on an agenda that suits their storyline rather than present the true facts," he fumed.

## Window Seat

**THE** Royal Mint has produced a new 50 cent coin which celebrates 90 years of the historic Ghan rail journey.

The famous train line, which travels through Central Australia from Adelaide to Darwin, will now be forever immortalised via 30,000 of the special coins.

Don't expect to see these little gems turning up in your wallet anytime soon as they will not be released into circulation.




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## QF ABC records

**THE** Australian Federal Police (AFP) forced Qantas to hand over the private travel records of an ABC journalist as part of a major investigation into a national security leak, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The national broadcaster is alleged to have published top-secret government material containing allegations of misconduct by Australian troops in Afghanistan including the potential unlawful killings of unarmed civilians.

The carrier said on Sun "like all airlines, Qantas receives numerous requests for information from law enforcement agencies and we comply with these requests in accordance with our legal obligations and privacy legislation."

The AFP accessed QF's internal booking system in Mar in search of flights taken by ABC reporters in Jun and Sep 2016.

## BA card theft fine

**BRITISH** Airways has been fined a record £183 million after a hack last year saw the credit card data of 500,000 customers stolen.

The penalty, imposed on BA owner International Airlines Group by the United Kingdom Information Commissioner's Office, comes in response to the hack in Sep, which saw customers diverted to a spoof website where their details were harvested by attackers.

## Uber nears taxis

**UBER** is set to overtake taxicabs as the country's preferred private transportation service, with over 4.4 million Australians using the ridesharing app in an average three-month period, according to research from Roy Morgan.

Over the same period, 4.5 million Aussies used a taxi, with customers taking an average of 4.1 Uber trips compared to 3.8 cab rides.

## OWT's 25th year in orbit



**ORBIT** World Travel (OWT) recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, with each office around the country marking the milestone with a party.

Formerly known as World Travel Professionals, OWT began in 1994 with a single office operating from Sydney's Double Bay, when founding Partner and Director Lisa Story bought what was then a Westpac Travel office.

"We identified an opportunity in the market for high-quality, professional travel agency services, including the areas of corporate, group and event travel," Story said.

"We have been fortunate to

find the right people to join us on this journey...people who are passionate, committed and always ready for change and with a will to succeed."

In 2016 Orbit Travel in New Zealand and World Travel Professionals rebranded to form Orbit World Travel, becoming the largest privately owned corporate travel company in Australasia, now with 15 locations.

A national celebration is planned for the end of Aug.

**Pictured** are: Lisa Story, Orbit World Travel; Gena Signorini, Amadeus; Wayne Swaysland, Orbit World Travel and Nicole Hague, CT Partners.

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

## Return to Pakistan

**DRAGOMAN** is returning to Pakistan from Jun 2020, releasing a new 15-day adventure visiting the cities of Lahore & Islamabad, & a drive through the Himalayas. Prices start from \$3,700pp. For more info call 1800 951 060.

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## SC Airport appoints

**THE** Sunshine Coast Airport has made three new appointments aimed at driving its expansion plans, which includes the introduction of a new runway next year.

Brett Adams will take on the role of Head of People and Culture, Natasha Hall joins as Head of Legal & Corporate Affairs, while Ayllie White has been tasked with the Head of Corporate Relations position.

## AirAsia now on Zip

**LOW-COST** airline AirAsia has partnered with financial technology company Zip to offer its customers the ability to purchase tickets and pay later.

Under the partnership, AirAsia clients can buy tickets to more than 140 destinations across the Asia Pacific region using Zip and pay the total off on an interest-free and installment basis.

## G community proj

**G ADVENTURES** has increased its commitment to community tourism with the addition of 25 Planeterra projects by 2020.

The tour operator's non-profit partner supports conservation projects for women, children, and Indigenous cultures in destinations it visits.

A total of 100 sustainable projects are now in place for G Adventures globally - see more about its commitment **HERE**.

## Croatia courts Australia



**THE** Croatian National Tourist Board was in Sydney last week alongside the Slovenian Tourist Board to help promote the destinations to Aussie agents (**TD** yesterday).

The workshops aimed to strengthen the exchange of knowledge with the local travel trade and build on the current growth trend which saw 217,000 Aussie tourists flock to Croatia in 2018, a 17% rise over 2017.

Speaking with **Travel Daily** at the recent workshop in Sydney, Croatian Tourist Board spokesperson Kristina Mamic (**pictured**) said the reason for its big B2B marketing push in Australia is because of the country's unlocked potential as a strong long-haul market.

"Australia is still a pretty small market but it has great potential for growth," Mamic said.

"Australians really love our coast, our beautiful islands and our nature, but why we like Australian guests in particular is because they are not visiting in our summer so you are coming during the whole year and that

distribution is very good for us," she added.

The rationale for combining efforts with The Slovenian Tourist Board, Mamic said, was attributable to a great brand alignment between the two neighbouring European nations.

"Slovenia is a very green country, it offers a different experience to us so the tourist product is quite different - we have a beautiful coast and beautiful islands and they have amazing green spaces and forest," she said.

While Croatia has enjoyed growth from source markets such as Australia, as well as globally (up 7% in 2018), the country's tourism efforts also incorporate a strong sustainability ethos.

"We know that tourism is working well when the tourists are happy and the locals are happy too so we are doing a lot of education around sustainable tourism," Mamic said.

"We have problems with crowds in places like Dubrovnik and Split, so we are working to keep Croatia beautiful and not devastate that."



## TRADE MARKETING ASSISTANT

MSC Cruises Australia is looking for a Trade Marketing Assistant based at the Sydney CBD head office.

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## italktravel Ballarat launch



**EXPRESS** Travel Group has welcomed another italktravel & cruise store to its family, with the launch of a Ballarat location last week.

Previously known as Ballarat

Travel & Cruise, Owner-Operator Alan Valpied first opened his doors in 1983.

Having been an Independent Travel Group member for several years, Valpied made the decision earlier this year to move to italktravel and cruise.

"It only seemed a natural progression to join the growing tier of Express Travel Group, which was made more attractive once I knew I would have exclusive territory rights," he said.

"Representatives of airlines, tour companies and the like had spoken very highly of the group."

"We are delighted Alan made the decision to move across to our fully branded franchise solution," said Express Travel Group Executive General Manager Ari Magoutis.

The Ballarat staff pictured are: Tim Hickingbotham, Marita Cogle, Ann Bridgewater, Leanne Drummond and Alan Valpied.

## SAA, GOL c'share

**SOUTH** African Airways has entered into a codeshare deal with Gol Linhas Aereas, allowing SA to add its code on flights operated by Gol in Brazil.

SA codes will be added to 20 connecting flights in the country operated by G3, including Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, and Florianopolis.

The agreement will also see Gol customers accrue frequent flyer miles on certain SA flights, and vice versa.

## AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



**I THINK** it is reasonable to suggest that the New Distribution Capability (NDC) which has been

danced around the travel industry both globally and here in Australia for the last eight years has come to the "stage", but I'm not sure everyone is singing from the same hymn book.

There have been all kinds of wild and desirable things said about what NDC can, might, can't, should and would do, but to date as with most things that bring change, the devil is in the detail.

It is important to make a few points, which I believe have been made before, but I would like to make them in any event as over the past three months, NDC has by far become the vexed issue of the Australian travel agency community and sadly I am not sure it will be unvexed (if that is actually a thing) any time soon.

The NDC is a standard that IATA issued, which IATA members and other airlines may choose to use as they develop their distribution strategy which may include travel agents. That's it.

It is not a system, it is not the same for all airlines and it definitely is not something you can touch, feel or use unless an airline invests hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring their strategy to life.

Recently, some points were made about what NDC can do or is (**TD** 05 Jul). It was suggested that the airline and agency community had been driving down a country road for the last 40 years and now everyone has moved to a multi-lane highway.

That is ridiculous to say the least, and disrespectful to all involved in the indirect distribution channel – who have not been asleep at the wheel rolling down some old country road.

Millions of dollars have been invested in ensuring that travel agents can book airlines quickly and efficiently, so the old country road thing is incoherent at best.

To suggest that the agency community has been driving down a country lane is like

suggesting that Boeing have been double parked outside a primary school for the past 40 years.

It shows a total lack of understanding of the business model of a modern travel agency and confuses the issue.

The simple point is that we can no longer accept a reference to NDC as a generically good thing – for it is not.

Each airline will bring to market their distribution strategy which works for them, the way they want to do it in the timeframe they feel is best for them, so generic comments about what an airline's distribution strategy will or will not do could be a misrepresentation of the facts.

While it is never great to let the facts get in the way of a good story, that is to suggest that you need a good story in the first place and unfortunately the inconvenient truth is that the NDC story has not really been a good one at all – demonstrated by the fact that the few airlines that have decided to bring a distribution strategy dressed up as NDC, have not yet demonstrated any real value to travel agents.

In our own market NDC has manifested itself in the form of the Qantas Channel and while the devil is in the detail, the fact remains that so far the features that have been indicated are yet to be actually demonstrated.

It may well be that in the end the new channel that the travel agency will use to access Qantas products will be amazing, but so far none of this has been enabled.

Time will tell just how good it may be, but in the end the version of NDC that Qantas is bringing to market is not by any stretch an industry standard – it is the Qantas standard and that does not mean it will be the same for other airlines – each may do as they wish.

And I suggest they will.

My hope is that in the end the relationship between airlines and agents prevail and that the multi-lane highway suggested does not end up with a 2000 car pile-up covered in snow.

I would strongly recommend the use of seat belts for all NDC conversations going forward.

## SUPER RUGBY SUPER RUGBY TOP TIPPER

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Jamie is the top tipper for *Travel Daily's* 2019 Super Rugby footy tipping competition. He's won two return economy class airfares from Sydney to Christchurch flying with Emirates.



Thank you to Emirates and Expedia TAAP for your continued support.



NSW permit LTPS/19/31793 / ACT permit TP 19/02664

Tuesday 9th July 2019

## Marriott scam note

**MARRIOTT** International has warned that fraudulent calls are being made around the world, in which the scammer offers a complimentary stay at a Marriott hotel in exchange for listening to an unrelated sales pitch.

The company is urging those who receive suspicious calls to not provide any personal details, especially credit card info, and to end and report the call.

In a statement, Marriott reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the privacy of personal information that is entrusted to the company.

## Escarpment action

**ESCARPMENT** Group is being investigated by the Department of Home Affairs and the Fair Work Ombudsman surrounding alleged exploitation of migrant workers, *SMH* has reported.

Staff at the Blue Mountains-based hotel group have also been reportedly warned against talking to the media through the threat of legal action.

The investigation includes Lilianfels and Echoes in Katoomba, the Hydro Majestic in Medlow Bath, the Parklands Country Garden and Lodges in Blackheath and the Convent Hunter Valley.

Escarpment Group has denied the allegations, and is cooperating with investigations.

## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US0.697**

**THE** Australian Dollar has fallen against the USD, buying 69 cents.

Thu saw two-month highs for the local currency against the US Dollar, but the rally appeared to run out of steam at the end of last week, with the Aussie unable to maintain its hold above 70 US cents.

However, some analysts predict the falls to be only temporary.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.697
UK	£0.557
NZ	\$1.052
Euro	€0.622
Japan	¥75.80
Thailand	฿21.48
China	¥4.800
South Africa	9.889
Canada	\$0.913
Crude oil	US\$64.23

## Matty J on Lux Esc

**NETWORK** 10 has announced former *Bachelor* star Matty J as co-host with Sophie Falkiner on its show, *Luxury Escapes: The World's Best Holidays*.

Airing at 6pm on Sat from 13 Jul, the show explores destinations around the world.

## Bentours giveaway

**BENTOURS** is giving away one double pass to the Volvo Scandinavian Film Festival, presented by Palace Cinemas.

To be eligible to win, like Bentours' Facebook or LinkedIn post about the giveaway and tag a friend.

Entries close Wed at 11.59pm, with the winner informed via private message on Thu.

The festival runs from 09 Jul to 07 Aug.

**CLICK HERE** for details.

## WIN A TRIP TO morocco

This month Gate 1 Travel is joining Travel Daily to give agents the chance to win a trip to Morocco for two. The 11-night Kaleidoscope of Morocco trip takes in ancient wonders such as the UNESCO-listed Roman ruins of Volubilis, the ancient desert city of Ait Benhaddou, the imperial city of Fez and the bustling medina of Marrakesh. Click here for more trip details.

To win you need to correctly answer one question each week in July, and at the end of the month tell us in 25 words or less why you should be the person to win this prize. Send your answers to [gate1@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:gate1@traveldaily.com.au).

Q2. Arabic is one of the official languages of Morocco. What is the other one?

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## Qatar Qmiles shift

**QATAR** Airways is advertising an exclusive offer for members of its Privilege Club Frequent Flyer program.

Members can now enjoy savings of up to 30% when using their Qmiles on select products at Qatar Duty Free at Hamad International Airport and Oryx Galleria in Doha.

## Costa in control

**COSTA** Cruises has said in a statement the Captain of *Costa Deliziosa* was always in control of the ship yesterday during a "violent, extraordinary & sudden meteorological event" in Venice.

Vision has emerged online of *Deliziosa* coming close to a yacht in a lagoon.

The incident comes a month after *River Countess* and *MSC Opera* collided in Venice's Giudecca Canal (*TD* 03 Jun).

## Najah, MH plan

**NAJAH** Air boss Pahamin Abdul Rajab promised there would be no job cuts or name change for Malaysia Airlines if his group's proposed turnaround plan for MH is accepted by the Malaysian Government.

"We have assured the Prime Minister we will not sack anybody at Malaysia Airlines," the former AirAsia Chair Pahamin Abdul Rajab told Malaysian media on Thu.

"The airline will have the same national branding and will not change its name."

## SeaLink appoints

**SEALINK** Travel Group has appointed Phillip Boyle as its new General Manager Marketing.

Boyle brings almost 25 years of marketing and communications experience in both the private and public sectors across Australia and the UK.





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