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TOURISM New Zealand and Air New Zealand are giving agents the chance to win a ski experience in Ruapehu, Christchurch, Wanaka or Queenstown by booking and ticketing return Air NZ flights by 12 May - see the **cover page**.



Agents key to travel spend

TRAVELLERS who consult travel agents for their trips spend almost twice as much as those who book their trips themselves, according to new research unveiled in Melbourne yesterday.

The independent study by British pollster YouGov surveyed travellers in the US, UK and Australia, finding the average annual spend of a self-booker was US\$7,076, versus US\$12,220 for

those who used a travel agent.

The research was commissioned by luxury travel network Virtuoso, with the difference even more stark when it came to those who used Virtuoso advisors, spending US\$21,534 annually on average - three times the value of those who didn't use an agent.

Virtuoso Senior Vice President, Marketing, Terrie Hansen, said "putting it another way, the study found Virtuoso travellers spend 76% more than those who used other travel agents".

The figures also asked about hotel stays, with an average 9.1 nights annually for non-advised travellers; 11 nights for those using agents; jumping to 15.7 nights for Virtuoso clients.

In cruise, the traveller segment who did not use a travel agent only averaged one night on board each year, indicating "they really aren't cruisers," Hansen said.

Travel agent users spent 2.9 nights on average on a cruise, compared to Virtuoso-advised travellers who spent 7.8 nights cruising annually on average.

More from Virtuoso on **page 5**.

Nelson leaving ETG

JONATHAN Nelson has announced his departure from the Express Travel Group, 11 years after joining the group.

He's taking up a new Perth-based role with Corporate Travel Management as Head of Client Management WA from 01 Jul.

Nelson held a range of positions at ETG over the years, including the group's General Manager of Sales before switching to a regional role last year when he relocated to WA (**TD** 31 Oct 18).

More appointments on **page 5**.

Coral UK expansion

QLD-BASED Coral Expeditions has announced the expansion of its international distribution team with the establishment of a UK sales office in London.

The cruise line has appointed Amy Sharpe to the role of UK Sales Manager, commencing in the position this month, with the new office reflecting a growing appetite for Coral Expedition's cruises in the European market.

"We have identified the UK as a key international market for FIT, group and charter expeditions and we are thrilled to have Amy on the ground to lead our sales efforts," said International Sales Manager Elizabeth Webb.

Sharpe has spent the past eight years working in the expedition cruising sector in the United Kingdom, and will be charged with leading ongoing expansion into global markets for the Coral brand via both trade and consumer channels.

EVA BNE service

EVA Air has revealed plans to up its Taipei Taoyuan to Brisbane service from five times weekly to seven, between 02 Dec & 31 Jan.

The new daily service will also operate between 01 Jul and 31 Aug 2020 to coincide with the northern summer season.

EVA will also increase its service to Brisbane to five flights weekly between 01 Feb & 30 Jun 2020.

Cruiseco Americas

CRUISECO is today promoting its Collections range of holiday packages to the Americas, which will be available for agents soon.

The Collections brochure, which is on offer exclusively to Cruiseco members, provides travellers the chance to choose from contemporary through to all-inclusive luxury adventures.

For more info, see **page seven**.

Today's issue of TD

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

- Cruiseco
- AA Appointments jobs

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Micro-cruising tool

MICRO-CRUIISING has launched its new online booking tool (OBT) for agents.

The platform enables agents to click-to-book small ship cruising products.

"There is no search/filter function like it that I've seen in the industry," said Managing Director, Nicola Caygill.

"At launch, we have 32 itineraries and hundreds of departures for 2019 and 2020."

The OBT allows agents to view up-to-date availability, rates and discounts in currencies including AUD and NZD.

The site offers only deluxe level and above ships with applicable solo rates, triple rates, quad rates and children rates on multiple cabin types.

Once an order is placed, Micro-Cruising will send an invoice within one business day with optional hold confirmation.

"We've tried to put lots of cruise details online in order to be a resource for agents to find options for their clients quickly and easily," said Caygill.

For more information on the online booking tool, [CLICK HERE](#).

QF selling MEL terminal

MELBOURNE Airport is considering the operation of some international services by other carriers from its Terminal One, after Qantas agreed to sell the facility back to the airport for \$355 million (**TD** breaking news).

The deal includes a 10-year exclusive access agreement for Qantas, including lounges for domestic services.

Any international flights would operate "outside of peak domestic times," according to a Qantas update today.

The carrier also detailed its performance for the three months to 31 Mar, with revenue up 2.3% to \$4.4 billion despite the shift of Easter into the fourth quarter which moved a significant amount of revenue and drove "very strong leisure demand".

The strengthening resources market offset weakening demand in other parts of the corporate market, with group domestic unit revenue increasing by 1.1% in line with the Easter shift.

In addition, market share of corporate travel revenue increased by 2.5 percentage

points in the first quarter, the highest level in three years despite a net reduction in capacity, the report stated.

Qantas CEO Alan Joyce said the third quarter FY19 figures showed the carrier remained in a "fundamentally strong" position.

"The Group continues to perform well, with strength in key parts of our portfolio helping to hedge against headwinds in other areas," he said.

"Overall, we expect the Group to achieve a record level of revenue this financial year and strong cash flow as we continue to deliver for shareholders, customers and our people."

VA cancels parking

VIRGIN Velocity members will no longer be able to earn points through "Book a Bay" or Wilson One memberships with Wilson One Parking from 30 May, after the carrier ended its partnership with the parking business.

"Velocity members can still earn with hundreds of partners, including flybuys, BP, & Autobarn," Virgin said.

Aqua's new ships

AQUA Expeditions has announced plans for its first coastal ship, and the first long-range expedition-class yacht to be permanently based in the East Indonesian Archipelago with year-round departures, *Aqua Blu*, and a river ship, *Aqua Nera*.

The coastal vessel is a refurbished former British Naval Explorer, *HMS Beagle*, and will be renamed *Aqua Blu* when it begins service on 16 Nov.

Aqua Blu will operate seven-night itineraries from Raja Ampat, Bali-Komodo National Park and Ambon & Spice Islands, along with limited 12-night journeys.

The vessel will offer 15 suites in three categories, a sun deck, indoor lounge and bar, outdoor Jacuzzi, spa and non-motorised watersports equipment.

Aqua Nera will be designed and constructed in Vietnam to begin sailing in the Peruvian Amazon from 01 Aug 2020.

The newbuild will offer three-, four- and seven-night river cruise itineraries and be equipped with 20 river-facing suites, a restaurant, lounge, spa, plunge pool and gym.

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HLO wraps-up in Saigon

THE 2019 Helloworld Travel Owner Managers Conference and Helloworld Business Travel Summit in Vietnam has wrapped up, concluding three days of updates and entertainment in Ho Chi Minh City.

The events saw 700 attendees, made up of agents, supplier partners and staff from Australia and New Zealand, gather at multiple locations across the city to learn about the evolving story of Helloworld Travel, embracing the theme of "Our Evolution Continues".

Included in the schedule was an awards event that saw branded and associate agents recognised for excellence across numerous categories, a business travel networking dinner at Xu Restaurant, as well as a range of presentations delivered by senior company executives including CEO Andrew Burnes.

The awards night was hosted by Aussie diva Kate Ceberano who kept everyone entertained with her wit and musical talent.

The mega conference concluded at the Gem Centre for a Farewell Party Night, sponsored by Air New Zealand.

With the room decorated in traditional Vietnamese style, guests partied the night away to the classic rock'n'roll vocal styling of Australian music icon Jimmy Barnes, who at one stage was joined by fellow performer Kate Ceberano.

The formal conference proceedings closed with the announcement that Helloworld will hold its annual summit in Perth next year from 14 to 16 May 2020.

Sponsors included Singapore Airlines, Etihad Airways, Air New Zealand, and World's Leading Cruise Lines.

Russia jet update

REPORTS have emerged that the Russian plane that was forced to make an emergency landing just 28 minutes into its scheduled flight had not dumped its fuel prior to the landing.

The plane, which burst into flames when it hit the runway, was "still heavy with unburned fuel", with *The Associated Press* reporting that it was not yet clear why crew did not carry out the common procedure.

The aircraft's black box has been handed over to investigators.

Exodus 25% off

TRAVELLERS heading to Antarctica on selected 2020/21 departures with Exodus Travel can save up to 25% off when paying in full before 15 Jun.

Guests can choose from more than 30 departure dates between Nov 2020 and Mar 2021

For more info, **CLICK HERE**.



Window Seat

EAT your hearts out budget airlines, a Pakistani popcorn merchant has managed to build his own plane using only sackcloth and bits of a rickshaw for the meagre cost of £500.

Muhammad Fayyaz saved everything he could to realise his childhood dream of building his own plane using only online video clips and episodes of *Air Crash Investigation* as his muse.

"I was literally in the air, I couldn't feel anything else," he said of his first flight.

Needless to say, the next time he flies and hears a popping sound, we hope it's only his popcorn cooking in the back.



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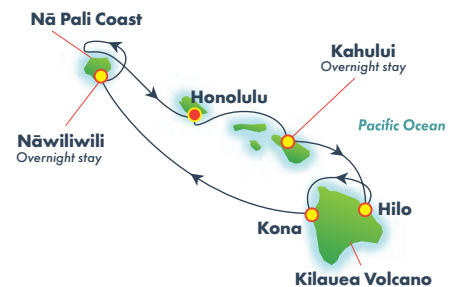
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Ponant Antarctic

SALES are now open for Ponant's 2020/2021 Antarctica season, offering 22 sailings on board its small luxury expedition ships *L'Austral*, *Le Boreal*, *Le Soleal* and *Le Lyréal*.

Select voyages will be conducted in conjunction with National Geographic Expeditions, with destinations available to visit in the region including Neko Harbour, Port Charcot, Port Lockroy, Petermann Island and Deception Island.

Airlines get chatty

CUSTOMERS of Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines can now access new chatbot services via Facebook's Messenger App to answer basic flight questions.

The trio of new chatbots will respond to queries ranging from: Is my flight on time? What gate does my plane leave from? And how heavy is my hand luggage allowed to be?

Whitsundays push

A MAJOR marketing push has been launched by Tourism Whitsundays and partners including Tourism and Events Qld to help promote the Whitsunday Islands (**TD** 20 Dec 2018).

The campaign will target key domestic markets such as Melbourne, Sydney and throughout Queensland.

Railbookers world

RAILBOOKERS has launched a new Around the World by Rail holiday package, allowing travellers the opportunity to discover a host of destinations all in one trip.

The new 57-day itinerary traverses four continents, 15 countries and over 20 cities, with highlights along the journey including stops at New York, London, Paris, Geneva, Moscow and Beijing.

The trip is priced at \$21,059pp - for more info, **CLICK HERE**.

Wunderbar times in Germany



EIGHT Aussie Flight Centre agents recently travelled on a famil to Germany courtesy of the German National Tourist Office and Lufthansa.

Among the variety of German activities to enjoy was the opportunity to test their pretzel baking skills in the Hofbrauhaus Kunstmuhle (**pictured**).

The bakery, tucked behind a famous beer hall, is over 200 years old and still produces 35 tonnes of flour daily.

"These are the best pretzels I have ever tasted," one agent noted, with the group consuming their baked goods along with some cold wheat beer and white sausage in the traditional Munich breakfast style.

Other stops along the way saw agents visit Rabenstein Castle, the Maisel brewery in Bayreuth, and the Bach museum in Leipzig.

Accommodation on the famil included a stay at the luxurious Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich.

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Melbourne welcomes Virtuoso



VICTORIA'S capital has pulled out all stops to welcome the annual Virtuoso Symposium this week, with 508 attendees from 41 countries taking part in the luxury travel event.

As well as plenary sessions and networking events, delegates are undertaking a total of 26 activities and excursions in and around Melbourne, with Virtuoso CEO Matthew Upchurch telling **TD** that over the last decade the Virtuoso network had increased hotel bookings into the city tenfold.

Yesterday presenters at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre included Tourism Australia (TA) MD John O'Sullivan, VisitVictoria CEO Peter Bingeman and keynote speaker Fred Dust, who spoke about creativity, design and dialogue.

Also on stage during the QF-sponsored lunch session was Qantas Airways North America Sales Chief David Thomas, who extolled the virtues of the Qantas Channel which sees the carrier shift its "content agreement" from GDS to individual agencies.

Later a formal media event saw O'Sullivan hail the opportunity afforded by the luxury sector - reflected by Tourism Australia's successful strategy to attract high yield visitors, making Australia first in the world when it comes to daily visitor spending.

TA has an ongoing partnership with Virtuoso, with the aim of educating luxury travel advisors

about Australia.

Upchurch highlighted the growth of Virtuoso, which last year transacted more than US\$26.4 billion in sales - including 28% growth in Australia where the network's 81 member locations grew Virtuoso revenue to A\$1.7 billion for the year.

Pictured at the event yesterday are Matthew Upchurch, Virtuoso CEO; John O'Sullivan, outgoing Tourism Australia MD; Peter Bingeman, VisitVictoria CEO; and Michael Londregan, Virtuoso APAC MD.

More pics from Virtuoso at [facebook.com/traveldaily](https://www.facebook.com/traveldaily).

LA Hopper Express

STARLINE Tours in Los Angeles has launched a new "Hopper Express" service which simplifies theme park visits, connecting directly from the company's Hollywood Boulevard terminal to Disneyland, Universal Studios and Knott's Berry Farm.

The trip costs \$25pp round trip, with scheduled morning and afternoon departures in each direction so those staying in Anaheim can also use it to get to Hollywood or Universal Studios.

Travelling for about an hour, the Hopper costs about the same as theme park parking and much less than a ride share vehicle.

Starline's Hopper is an air conditioned coach with free wi-fi - more info at starlinetours.com.

APPOINTMENTS



WELCOME to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Kerrie Mulholland has been appointed as Director of Sales and Marketing at the **W Melbourne**, which will open in 2020. Mulholland arrives with 21 years of experience, and was instrumental in establishing the Melbourne Sales Complex team four years ago.

Travel technology provider **Sabre Corporation** has appointed **Jaya Kumar K** as its Vice President & Managing Director for Sabre Global Development Centre in Bangalore. He will be responsible for attracting key talent to deliver technology solutions.

Edgewater-Lake Wanaka has appointed **Catherine Bone** as the new General Manager from 21 May. Bone has been a Senior Lecturer at the Pacific International Hotel Management School in New Plymouth, and holds an MBA from the University of Cumbria.

Digital Strategist and Senior Executive, **Simon Carson** has been appointed Chief Commercial Officer of **Jayride**. Carson has previously held high-level management, strategy and revenue generating roles with a number of online marketplace and e-commerce businesses.

Lufthansa has appointed Executive Board member **Thorsten Dirks** for another term of three years as CEO. Dirks will continue his task of turning around the financial fortune of Eurowings.

Windstar All-In pkg

SMALL ship cruise line, Windstar Cruises is offering guests the chance to go all-in, with unlimited wi-fi, laundry and access to the top-shelf Captain's Exclusive Beverage Package for \$131pp per day, available on more than 550 cruises into 2021.

The line said the All-In Package has proven popular with guests, allowing them to share their voyages with friends on social media.

Windstar said unlimited laundry service also allowed passengers to minimise their luggage.

Guests sharing a suite or stateroom can save \$273pp over the course of a seven-day cruise.

Stuba turns one

TRAVEL wholesaler, Stuba, has reported significant growth as it marks its first birthday.

The group formed after the merger of roomsXML and getabed, said it would be announcing "radical changes and investments" to its technology division designed to help agents to sell more effectively.

Stuba reported the Australian and New Zealand arm of the business has seen 58% year-on-year growth in Q1 2019, while the UK and Ireland business was up 52% for the same period.

Stuba said it expected "healthy double-digit growth" this year.

NoVacancy return

NOVACANCY Hotel + Hospitality Business Expo will return to the ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre on 24-25 Jul following the success of last year's event.

The tradeshow has already surpassed last year's exhibitor count and is tracking towards a sell-out, with 200 companies expected to be on display.

LATAM Brasilia

LATAM Airlines will launch its first non-stop Santiago-Brasilia route on 15 Oct, operating three flights a week between the Chilean and Brazilian capitals.

The airline will launch another two direct flights from Brasilia to Lima and Asuncion in Q4 2019.

Viking's new Med

VIKING Cruises has launched six new ocean cruise itineraries highlighting the best of the Mediterranean, including a maiden call at Istanbul.

The new offerings include a 22-day Atlantic Crossing & Mediterranean; 15-day Ancient Adriatic Treasures; 22-day Adriatic & Mediterranean Sojourn; 29-day Mediterranean's Iconic Shores; 15-day Ancient Mediterranean Antiquities; and the 22-day Iconic Mediterranean Treasures.

Full steam ahead for agents



ROCKY Mountaineer recently hosted its annual learning journey program, where agents were able to experience a train adventure first-hand.

The company said participating in a learning journey helps trade partners to “understand the awe and wonder of a journey on Rocky Mountaineer”.

The guests got to experience both levels of service - GoldLeaf and SilverLeaf Service.

The learning journey program followed a specialised tour, modelled after one of its “most popular packages,” the First Passage to the West Excursion.

The itinerary is seven days,

including two days on the train, and one day in Vancouver, Banff and Calgary.

This year Rocky Mountaineer is set to host four learning journeys, welcoming close to 400 trade partners across the journeys.

Pictured above on this year’s Learning Journey are Helen Hersom, Sales Manager Australia and New Zealand, Rocky Mountaineer; Evelyn Cassar, Retail Travel Consultant Mosman Travel; Millie Browne, Sales Manager Australia and New Zealand, Rocky Mountaineer and Kelly Gainsford, Retail Travel Agent, House of Travel New Zealand.

Livn partnership

GIFTING and booking platform Gifting Owl has partnered up with travel technology company, Livn.

The deal allows Gifting Owl to expand its range of experiences and availability, and bookings can now be made in real time.

Airbnb diversity

AIRBNB has appointed Melissa Thomas-Hunt as Head of Global Diversity and Belonging.

She will serve on the executive team and lead the strategy and execution of global internal diversity and equity programs.



WIN A TRIP TO THAILAND

This month Centara and *Travel Daily* are teaming up to offer readers the chance to win a seven-night stay for two in a Deluxe Room at Thailand’s Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas Hua Hin with daily breakfast.

Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas Hua Hin is one of Thailand’s most famous hotels – originally built as the King’s guesthouse in the 1920’s it has been lovingly restored and extended over the years to a luxurious five-star resort. It is a short walk to the famous markets of Hua Hin with fabulous seafood, shopping and entertainment.

To be in the running, correctly answer each of the weekly questions across the month and have the most creative answer to the final question. Send your responses to centara@traveldaily.com.au

Q1. Which sport does Hua Hin and Centara host the annual championship of, which is considered the biggest in Asia with hundreds of players from all over the world attending?

CENTARA GRAND
BEACH RESORT & VILLAS
HUA HIN

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Delta status reclaim

DELTA has launched “Reclaim My Status”, allowing Delta SkyMiles Medallion Members to reclaim their status after a major life event impacts travel patterns.

For more information on how Reclaim My Status works, visit delta.com/reclaimmystatus.

The Star new foyer

THE Star Sydney has unveiled a \$65 million transformation of the property’s Pyrmont entrance.

The layout includes a new bar, luxury retailers and a refreshed arrival experience.

The Star Sydney is also preparing to open its first stand-alone off-property venue in Jul, Chuuka, an Asian fusion restaurant headed up by Chefs Chase Kojima and Victor Liong.

IATA Mar results

GLOBAL passenger traffic rose 3.1% in Mar, compared to the same month a year ago, which was the “slowest pace for any month in nine years”, according to the Int’l Air Transport Association (IATA) global pax traffic results.

This was attributed to the timing of the Easter holiday, which fell nearly a month later than in 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the growth rate has been steady since Oct 2018 at a 4.1% annualised pace.

Capacity for Mar grew 4.2% and load factor dropped 0.9 percentage points to 81.7%.

“Despite Mar’s slowdown, the outlook for air travel remains solid,” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

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If you're well connected within the travel market and looking for a first class product to represent - don't miss out on this challenging BDM opportunity. Along with managing and growing existing leisure accounts you'll be confident in identifying and building new business opportunities to increase revenue, experienced in presenting and have strong negotiation skills. Previous experience in a similar industry sales role is preferred. Top package, car & benefits on offer.

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