

AFTA INDUSTRY NOTICE

The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) is the cornerstone of the Australian travel industry. It sets standards, future proofs and protects the integrity of our industry.

ATAS is the means by which both consumers and trade can identify trusted, reliable and quality travel businesses.

AFTA and ACS does not take its role lightly and does not make cancellations without good reason!

In the last 6 months, two large scale, non-accredited wholesalers have become insolvent. It is a stark reminder to all industry that if a business is NOT accredited – ask why not?

It is unacceptable that a company can make statements and issue press releases which turn out to be misleading and deceptive. It is a clear demonstration of the lack of integrity of these companies.

AFTA is NOT to blame for the demise of these companies. Poor financial management is the only cause of a company becoming insolvent.

AFTA recommends that travel agency owners only work with reputable accredited wholesalers and tour operators.

All CATO members are required to be ATAS accredited.

AFTA has 63 years of representing, supporting, and innovating for the Australian Travel Industry. In 2020 we will continue to seek new solutions to provide all involved with confidence in the travel value chain and make the payment eco-system in the Australian travel industry more robust.



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Excite Directors take control

EXCLUSIVE

GEORGE Papaioannou and Nicholas Stavropoulos, the Directors of the collapsed Excite Holidays, were yesterday handed back control of four of the five companies involved in the failure - while the fifth one was removed from the Administration because according to KPMG, it was never insolvent (**TD** breaking news).

The outcome of the Second Creditors Meeting saw a Deed of Company Arrangement, proposed by the directors, accepted by creditors present at the meeting, who also voted to allow the parent company, Global Travel Holdings Pty Limited (GTH), to be released from the process.

GTH is the owner of the 71 York St Sydney property bought by

Excite Holidays in 2016, which is now in the process of being sold.

The Administrators say the as-yet undisclosed contract price is at market value, with settlement due on 30 Apr and the proceeds expected to discharge all secured debts owing to NAB.

The now agreed Deed of Company Arrangement will see \$100,000 in surplus funds from this sale contributed to the Administration by the Directors, who in return take control and management of Excite Holidays (Australia), Events NG, Travel Serv Co and Global Travel Specialists, which ceased trading a month ago with debts of over \$30 million.

The Deed of Company Arrangement will be overseen by the Administrators from KPMG.

More on **page three**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news, a front cover page for **AFTA**, a photo page from the Cruise Industry Awards night, plus full pages:

- TMS Talent
- Windstar Cruises
- Qatar product profile page

ATAS reminder

AFTA is today urging the industry to question why non-ATAS accredited entities are not part of the industry scheme, recommending that agencies only deal with reputable, accredited suppliers - see the **cover page**.

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Princess update

PRINCESS Cruises has confirmed the Australian and Canadian govts plan to collect their citizens and permanent residents from *Diamond Princess* via chartered aircraft.

A Qantas charter flight is set to fly the Australian passengers from Japan to Darwin tomorrow, where they will enter a 14-day quarantine period before they can return home.

Princess reported 169 new positive cases of COVID-19 onboard *Diamond Princess* over the past two days, and said it would continue to follow Japanese Ministry of Health guidelines.

Windstar Tahiti '21

WINDSTAR Cruises is currently highlighting its Tahiti 2021 collection, which features a range of seven- to 18-night itineraries.

Prices start from \$3,830 per person - see **page eight** for more.

LeisureCom buys Ecrusing

PRIVATE equity-backed LeisureCom Group is expanding into the cruise sector, with the 100% acquisition of pioneering Australian online cruise seller, Ecrusing (**TD** breaking news).

Founded by tech entrepreneur Brett Dudley in 2000, Ecrusing was the first Australian travel agency to develop direct API connections with major cruise lines, and last year turned over \$30 million across its Ecrusing and Latitude 33 brands.

Dudley and his wife Philippa have sold the company to LeisureCom's backer, South Africa's Skybound Fidelis Investment, part of a \$2 billion global wealth business currently growing its exposure in Australia.

LeisureCom Group CEO Steve Chant said Ecrusing was a well-established cruise travel company which complemented the firm's existing brands.

"It will instantly increase our

product range and distribution opportunities, ultimately delivering a better choice for our customer base and increasing our revenue streams," he said.

"Globally there is no denying that there is an insatiable appetite for cruising, and we are excited to be part of this rapidly growing travel sector."

Dudley and his team will continue to run Ecrusing from the company's Sydney CBD base.

"I always wanted to get our business to the 20-year mark...it's been quite a journey and I have loved every minute of it," he said.

Dudley said his team had built Ecrusing "by consistently delivering exceptional product and experiences to the Australian travelling public...I am excited about what the future holds for Ecrusing and Latitude 33, and I am confident that LeisureCom Group is the right partner to help us achieve the next stage of growth".

Youth shift away

THE Travel Corporation Global CEO has called upon travel agents to continue to innovate in order to engage the next generation, with the company witnessing young travellers "unfortunately not engaging sufficiently with travel trade businesses".

Tollman told **Travel Daily** the company has seen a "strong and fast move away from our trade partners in the last couple of years from Contiki and Busabout" travellers.

"I think that's a red flag to everyone on that side of the business that whether it's 10 years from now or more, you know, one has to keep evolving your business," he said, emphasising a need for agencies to have a mobile presence.

He also noted TTC was planning to roll out the ability for Contiki travellers to pre-book optional experiences on the brand's online portal.



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Qantas "phishing" scam

EXCLUSIVE

QANTAS has found itself the victim of a sophisticated email scam in which frequent flyers are being invited to log into a fake Qantas website so their details can be harvested.

Messages purporting to celebrate the Qantas 100th anniversary were sent out yesterday, enticingly offering "100 Free Business class Upgrades" and so-called "Golden Tickets" with fares between Sydney and London starting at just \$205.

The emails have been created using the familiar Qantas template, and are made more realistic by being populated with links taking users to actual QF web pages promoting flights and

insurance.

With stilted language, users are invited to help celebrate the airline's centenary year.

"Within the next 100 hours, we're releasing 100 Golden Tickets at \$205 from London Heathrow airport to Sydney. Economy Return. Every single day we'll be releasing twenty of these amazing tickets from 12.00pm.

"We've only got 100 available so you should definitely be super quick and check the offer on a regular basis," the email urges.

Social media links on the message connect to QF's genuine online channels, and the email also highlights last year's non-stop London-Sydney ultra long-haul Qantas research flight.

Estonia suits Aus

ESTONIAN Ambassador to Australia Kersti Eesmaa told **Travel Daily** her country's proximity to other tourist hotspots, and its variety of experiences, make it a viable growth destination from Australia.

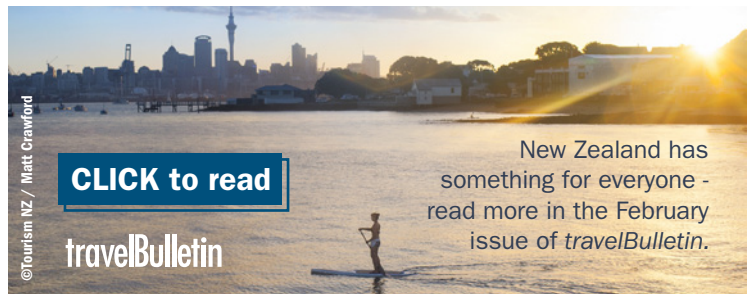
Speaking last week at the inaugural Jones & Co roadshow, Eesmaa said, "It's very easy to sell, it's great to combine with other Baltic countries or the Scandinavian capitals; or St. Petersburg, Russia's cultural capital; it's very easy to make it into a combined trip".

"We do understand that Australians will not travel just for Estonia, but we think in the region there are a lot of opportunities to put it together."

Qatar loves Malta

QATAR Airways is shining the spotlight on Malta as an ideal summer holiday destination, highlighting the unique experiences on offer, including the Blue Grotto.

Read about singer, TV host and former Miss World Australia Erin Holland's experience on the archipelago on **page nine**.



New Zealand has something for everyone - read more in the February issue of *travelBulletin*.

Excite \$\$\$ blunder

THE KPMG Administrators of Excite Holidays yesterday noted significant errors in the figures presented as part of the report into the affairs of the companies involved in the failure.

The original summary of the consolidated Profit & Loss statement indicated that Excite's sales had plummeted from \$148 million during the year to 30 Jun 2019, down to just \$16.7 million for the six months to 31 Dec 2019.

However Administrator Amanda Coneyworth issued updated figures during yesterday's Second Creditors Meeting, saying the original \$16.7 million figure quoted was actually just Excite's sales for Dec 2019, rather than for the full six month period.

The corrected amount was \$65 million in sales for the half year, conducted at effectively zero margin meaning that after hefty expenses Excite lost \$12.5 million in its final six months of operation.



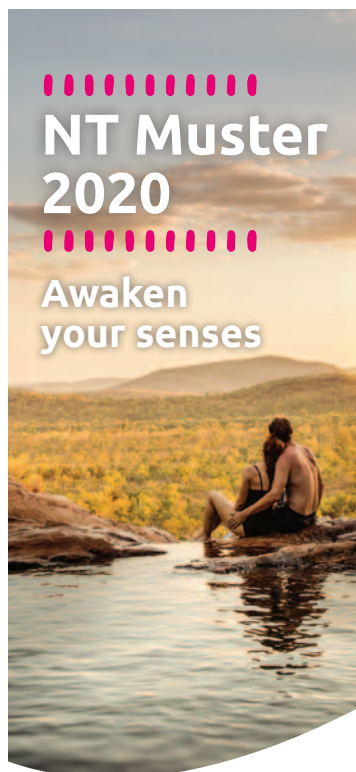
Window Seat

TRAVEL brands love joining in on the fun on Valentine's Day, but **Travel Daily** proudly proclaims Princess Cruises the winner of this year's 14 Feb branding exercise.

The cruise line on Wed set a Guinness world record for the largest multi-location vow renewal, with 1,443 couples reaffirming their love aboard *Crown Princess*, *Regal Princess* and *Royal Princess*, smashing the previous record of 1,201.

Princess Cruises is no stranger to romance, with the original *Sun Princess* having played host to a season of *The Love Boat*.

Some of the participating couples were going for another round of vow renewals, with 76 having previously done so aboard one of the line's cruises.



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Brisbane - Howard Smith Wharves, 11 March
Sydney - GPO Grand, 12 March



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Hotelbeds report

HOTELBEDS has released its first Corporate Responsibility Report, declaring it has been certified as a Carbon Neutral Organization by offsetting its carbon emissions generated in the past two years.

The report also revealed the company has spent more than 6,000 hours on social and environmental causes, including cleaning beaches and conducting leisure activities for children at risk of social exclusion, as part of its Corporate Volunteering Programme.

Hotelbeds said it would update the report periodically - to see the publication, [CLICK HERE](#).

A refreshed Spirit

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's new and improved *Norwegian Spirit* has arrived in Civitavecchia, Italy after completing a 43-day dry dock in Marseille, France, where she underwent a US\$100 million renovation (**TD** 30 Oct 2019).

The ship has 14 new venues, extra and updated staterooms, enhanced public areas and new hull art, plus a larger spa and fitness centre, new dining venues, including all-day dining outlet Garden Cafe, and the adults-only retreat, Spice H2O.

Spirit will sail on a series of 17-, 20-, and 28-day expeditions spanning Italy, the UAE and South Africa between now and Apr.

AFTA UPDATE

from Jayson Westbury



A HEARTFELT congratulations to all of the winning travel agents from the

CLIA awards over the weekend,

which saw the cruise industry on full display at a time when it is definitely feeling the pinch of COVID-19.

Winners are grinders and there is no doubt that the travel industry does love a celebration, and I am sure all those who attended the event enjoyed the evening greatly.

Cruise remains such an important part of the travel industry tapestry and for travel agents in particular, it continues to be a very important part of the staple of products on offer.

For now, it would seem that cruise is in the media for reasons other than the awards on Sat, and we can all hope that the various challenges being faced across the cruise sector will get resolved as quickly as possible.

The Federal Government and, more broadly, governments across the globe, are acutely aware of the challenges being faced by the industry in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, and I have no doubt that once the

situation improves, people will return to cruise as quickly as they left - if, in fact, they left in the first place.

It's important to remember that there are hundreds of cruise ships carrying thousands of passengers who are completed unaffected by COVID-19, although this seems to have missed the breaking news cycle; I am sure that, collectively, the industry will continue to try and get the truth out.

On another note, AFTA will be running a national roadshow series for members - if you have not yet managed to secure your spot, [CLICK HERE](#).

There are so many issues floating around in 2020, the year we had all hoped would be one of our best, and it is time to talk about the challenges ahead and how industry can respond and comprehend the implications.

AFTA will be addressing many of these issues during the national roadshow, and, despite the very high level of negativity that surrounds the travel and tourism industry currently, I remain confident that we will pull through this.

There are still plenty of months ahead in which 2020 can prevail as a good year.

TTC plots 100 more years

THE Travel Corporation (TTC) is busy plotting the next 100 years for the company, as it nears a century of operation in Aug.

Global CEO Brett Tollman told *Travel Daily* he was not taking anything for granted and was focussed on three key areas of being "high touch, high team and high tech".

He said being high touch involved ensuring the company's brands provide the experiences travellers are looking for, including more immersive experiences, personalisation and customisation.

TTC would continue its focus on service, achieved through recruiting, retaining and training "some of the best and brightest in the industry," he said.

Technology would also continue to be front and centre, with TTC working to ensure its tech continues to evolve and serve the customers' needs, and "make life easier" for the travel agent.

TTC will next year launch a new travel agent portal for Trafalgar, Insight, Costsaver, Luxury Gold and Contiki, Global CEO Brett Tollman told *Travel Daily*, with Uniworld to remain on a separate platform.

The ability for flights to be booked within TTC's websites and booking engine is also being tested for Contiki, with the option to be rolled out to other brands by Sep.

TTC would continue to invest

AIME underway

THE Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) officially kicked off yesterday, with around 3,000 suppliers and event planners gathering at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

The leading trade event, which will run for three days, was opened by the Victorian Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula.

"AIME provides a double benefit, serving up an immediate boost to the economy while providing a platform to showcase our undeniable claim as a top-tier event destination," Pakula said.

Overall, business events contribute a direct expenditure of \$11.2 billion and support more than 71,000 jobs in Victoria.

in its sustainability efforts, with Tollman revealing the company has plans to become carbon neutral and invest more of its profits into TreadRight Foundation over the next decade.

The company is currently undergoing internal analysis of its flight miles and expects to release a science-based plan in Jul or Aug this year to become carbon neutral before 2030.

TTC is also investing in a multi-million dollar solar project, which will see offices, buildings and hotels around the world fitted with panels in an effort to reduce reliance on the grid and alleviate pressure on local networks.

"We're doing it here in Sydney at both Alexandria and Bondi Junction offices, we have a number of installations underway in Los Angeles, so we are looking to become electricity-neutral per se within many of our key officers within the next several months," Tollman told *Travel Daily*.

SUPER S RUGBY

SUPER RUGBY R3 WINNER

Congratulations

JOHN VIEGAS

from Helloworld

John is the top point scorer for Round 3 of *Travel Daily's* Super Rugby footy tipping competition. Having won \$100 travel credit courtesy of Expedia.

Expedia TAAP

Travel Daily Super Rugby tipping competition is sponsored by Emirates, with the top tipper for the season winning flights from Sydney to Christchurch.



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

Cruise industry celebrates in style

IT WAS the cruise industry's time to shine on Sat night, at the 19th annual Cruise Industry Awards at The Star Sydney, with over 500 members of the Australasian cruise community gathering for a night of celebration. Held by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia, the awards attracted more than 560 entries spanning 18 categories.

CLIA Chairman Sture Myrmell delivered a video message from Asia saying "tonight we celebrate the success stories of 2019.

"We honour the contribution of the stars of the cruise sector in Australia and New Zealand.

"Our industry achievements are there for all to see, the highest market penetration of any established cruise market in the world," he added.

The evening was peppered with several entertainment acts which thrilled the crowd, including a dance troupe, aerialists dangling from ceiling high drapes, a singing impersonator, plus TV personality Tim Campbell returning to MC the night.

A special highlight was former Carnival CEO Ann Sherry inducted into the Hall of Fame.



THE winners line up for a photo opportunity before celebrating the night away.



ANDREW Millmore, Travel the World; Jennifer Vandekreeke, Carnival Australia and Anton Loeb, Carnival Cruise Line.



JULIANNE Gazal-Rizk, Travelmanagers with Katy Muyt, Ensemble Travel Group.



GREG McJarow of Singapore Airlines addresses the audience.



FORMER Carnival Chair Ann Sherry AO receives the prestigious Hall of Fame award from Joel Katz, MD CLIA Australasia.

GAVIN Smith, Royal Caribbean Cruises and Steve Odell, Regent Seven Seas & Oceania Cruises.



THE team from Celestyal Cruises together with Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre reps.



SHIRLEY Bassey impersonator, Trevor Ashley, belted out a number of hit songs.



TIM Campbell returned as MC and encouraged attendees onto the dance floor at the conclusion of the awards.



THE photo booth proved popular with the crowd.

Finger Lakes push

THE Finger Lakes in New York State has launched a new tourism campaign called Brave Women, celebrating the inspiring women of the region's history and featuring areas where women have made history.

Marketing support includes a new dedicated microsite, bravewomenflx.com, featuring women-owned attractions such as breweries and shops.

The campaign has been activated by the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council and I Love New York.

MSC Athens open

MSC Cruises has opened bookings in Australia for its first ever season from the Athenian port of Piraeus in 2021.

The season will include two new eastern Mediterranean itineraries, a return to Istanbul, as well as maiden calls to the Turkish beach resort town of Kusadasi as part of two new eastern itineraries.

MSC Lirica will service 23 seven-night cruises between May and Sep 2021.

For details about bookings and earlybird deals, [CLICK HERE](#).

WIN A TRIP TO GREECE

This month The Luxury Greece Collection, a division of Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre is joining *Travel Daily* to give agents the chance to win a luxurious Greek trip! The 8-night escape explores the must see destinations of Greece. Start in the ancient city of Athens and then relax and unwind on the scenic Greek Islands of Mykonos and Santorini in 5-star accommodation.

To win all you'll need to do is correctly submit BOTH an image and a short description (100 word max limit) to each of the 4 questions asked weekly over February.

Send your answers to grecemed@traveldaily.com.au

LGC
LUXURY GREECE COLLECTION

Q3 - We all know clients want the best of the best! Let us know which of our destinations they've been after lately.

Full prize details here



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Uniworld's agent soiree



UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection thanked its agent partners with a "Night of Nights" soiree last Fri at the Deckhouse in Woolwich.

The evening saw guests board a vintage Sydney ferry, which transported them to the venue, where they were greeted and thanked by President and Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bettridge, who was at the conclusion of a visit to Australia.

"We're so proud of how Uniworld has continuously elevated our experience to deliver our guests the best...we truly thank you, our travel partners for

allowing us to continue to do so," Bettridge gushed, listing Australia as the company's second-largest market.

"Tonight we're here to celebrate you, and how we can continue to support you selling Uniworld Boutique River Cruises."

Pictured is the Uniworld executive team: Zoe Dean, Ellen Bettridge, Renee Rowland and Alice Ager.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US0.671

THE Australian dollar continues to exhibit fragility against most of the majors in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

Travellers to the United Kingdom will find it harder to stretch their budgets as the British pound continues to be well supported against the Aussie, although a stimulus package released by China to contain the virus has seen it stabilise slightly.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.671
UK	£0.516
NZ	\$1.042
Euro	€0.619
Japan	¥73.73
Thailand	฿20.93
China	¥4.680
South Africa	10.063
Canada	\$0.888
Crude oil	US\$57.32

Voyager to Eden

ROYAL Caribbean International's *Voyager of the Seas* has made her maiden visit to the Port of Eden, NSW today, providing a much needed shot in the arm for the region's local economy.

The cruise line's Managing Director Australia and New Zealand Gavin Smith said the ship's visit represented an important restorative marker in the town's economy.

"The people of Eden and surrounding communities have been deeply impacted by the recent bushfire crisis and as a region that relies heavily on tourism, we wanted to support the message that Eden is open for business," he said.

Voyager of the Seas will depart Eden at 5.00pm today before arriving in Sydney on Wed 19 Feb.



SEARCH JOBS



TRAVEL & CRUISE EXPERT

Adelaide - up to \$60k + super

Calling on experienced travel experts looking for better work-life balance, a career boost or to become a specialist. This global leader in the travel industry offers a wealth of amazing products and services to suit all travel styles. GDS system knowledge is a must. Fantastic incentives, travel perks and uncapped commission.

Contact Priyanka

[VIEW JOB](#)

PRODUCT MANAGER - INDIA

Melbourne - \$70k incl super (pro rata)

Part time product manager wanted for an award winning boutique travel company in Melbourne, specialising in the Indian subcontinent region. This travel company pride themselves on being a destination specialist in the areas of India and Sri Lanka. Experience in a product travel related role is essential. Famil opportunities included.

Contact Matt

[VIEW JOB](#)

DOMESTIC CORPORATE CONSULTANT

Sydney - \$60k - \$65k + super

Looking for a domestic corporate travel expert with experience in Sabre to join a boutique and modern corporate agency in Sydney. This company is a market leader, specialising in high end domestic and international destinations. Minimum of 2 years' experience in corporate travel is required. Excellent staff travel discounts.

Contact Natasha

[VIEW JOB](#)

TRAVEL CONSULTANT

Sydney - \$50k - \$60k + super

An exciting opportunity to work part-time or full-time as a travel consultant in a well-established brand. Multiple roles available across many retail agencies specialising in the high-end leisure market. At least 3 years' travel consulting experience is required. A great opportunity to work near home and receive fantastic commission.

Contact Leanne

[VIEW JOB](#)

TEAM LEADER

Sydney - \$55k - \$65k + super (pro rata)

A rare and exciting opportunity to work part-time or full-time leading a team in an already successful travel business. You will be working in a niche groups market, consulting as well as leading a team. Previous leadership experience is required. Hours can be flexible for the right candidate but will be within Mon - Fri 9am-5pm.

Contact Leanne

[VIEW JOB](#)

PRODUCT & SALES SPECIALIST

Melbourne - \$70k + super (pro rata)

A fantastic role where you would be the important representative between the wholesale team and travel suppliers. Your role will be to negotiate rates, design and select product for programs and to liaise with suppliers. This role offers plenty of opportunity for travel with great hours to allow a better work/life balance.

Contact Priyanka

[VIEW JOB](#)

TICKETING CONSULTANT

Sydney / Perth - \$50k - \$55k + super

Join an established company as an experienced ticketing consultant in either Perth or Sydney CBD. You will need a thorough understanding of fares, being able to interpret rules and process refunds and reissues. The company is one of Australia's largest travel consolidation businesses, therefore can offer progression opportunities.

Contact Susan

[VIEW JOB](#)

CORPORATE SALES MANAGER

Melbourne - \$90k - \$110k + super

Using your network of travel connections, you will thrive on building new client relationships and maintaining existing client relationships through strong representation of this TMC. This global TMC operates in over 100 countries offering a premium travel product. Ongoing training and development with flexible working hours.

Contact Matt

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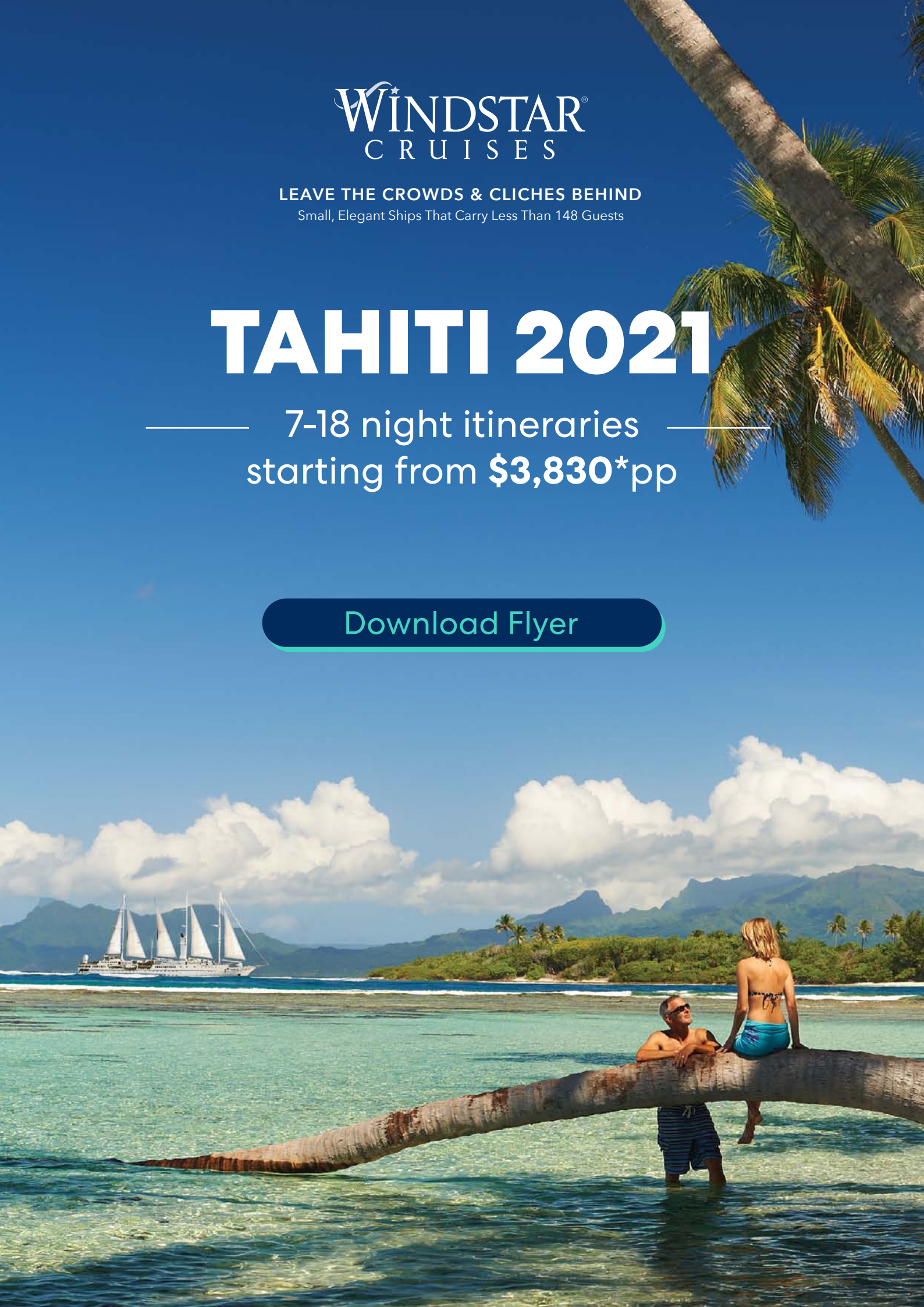
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Why you should visit Malta

Erin Holland is a singer, TV host, model, dancer, charity worker and former Miss World Australia. Qatar Airways sent her to Malta to experience this unique Mediterranean island.

Tell us about the highlights of your trip to Malta, must-see places to eat, drink and explore?

Where to begin! It was one of those trips where everything felt like a highlight. I highly recommend making time for the Blue Lagoon - short boat ride from the main island that has an amazing, yet relaxed party vibe! The Blue Grotto is one of the most stunning landmarks I've ever seen in my life, and I could get lost for hours exploring the streets of Valletta.

How would you say Malta compares to some of the popular European Summer destinations you've been to in Italy, Spain, UK and so on?

I firmly believe Malta will be the hottest European destination this year. A place not yet explored for many travellers, I just couldn't recommend this beautiful island enough as there is truly something for everyone. Gorgeous architecture, historical sites, stunning beaches and landmarks, and DELICIOUS food. Plus, you can thoroughly explore the entire island in about a week! I hate feeling like I've travelled all the way somewhere and not seen everything there is to see. Besides, who doesn't love exploring a destination not everyone has been to before? Malta is such an untapped resource for an incredible travel experience - I say get in quickly before the world cottons on.

What are some tips you'd pass onto other travellers, when planning their holiday to Malta?

Malta has incredibly varied landscape for such a small island, so take the time to explore! I suggest hiring a car and really checking out the entire island. Make sure you set aside a full day for the Blue Lagoon - a couple of hours just wasn't enough for me! The local cuisine is incredible too - rabbit is a staple dish in Malta and it was sensational! The locals are so friendly and proud of their beautiful country. An experience I'll never forget.

IT'S SO EASY TO VISIT!

Qatar Airways offers daily connections out of Australia to Malta, via Doha.

Find out more **HERE**.