

More training from South Africa

THE new Meet South Africa Academy training program from South African Tourism has expanded today with the addition of a new module on Durban.

Featuring wacky personality Urzila Carlson, the program highlights must-do experiences and neighbourhoods across South Africa's key provinces, helping travel advisors plan the perfect trip and impress their clients.

Registration is free, with prizes on offer for those who take part - see meetsouthafrica.academy.

Laura takes \$1m

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) Chief Operating Officer Laura Ruffles, who is also an AFTA Director, last week took advantage of a strong CTM share price to sell 50,000 shares in the company.

The on-market sale at \$20.11 garnered her just over \$1 million.

QF/VA in Japan dogfight

VIRGIN Australia has raised significant concerns about the proposed alliance between Qantas and Japan Airlines (**TD** 06 Jan), warning that the carriers combined hold about 90% of the passenger share for non-stop services on the route.

The QF/JL pact is subject to an application for authorisation by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, with Virgin saying the proposed deal "will make it more difficult for other airlines to establish commercially sustainable operations on routes between Australia and Japan".

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and Virgin Australia being placed into administration, the International Air Services Commission (IASC) had allocated a daily frequency on the Australia-Tokyo Haneda route to VA, sparking a price war. However the inaugural Virgin

Brisbane-Haneda flight never operated because VA suspended all international operations before its 29 Mar 2020 launch.

A new submission to the ACCC from Virgin in relation to the Qantas/JAL pact urges the Commission to carefully review the deal and "thoroughly test the various claims of public benefit".

Qantas and JAL have hit back in a combined response, saying they believe much of Virgin's submission - which was lodged two months after the indicative deadline for comment - is "either not relevant to, or should have no significant bearing on, the Commission's consideration of the application".

The carriers noted that the need for them to cooperate had become "even more acute" given the uncertainty around COVID-19, borders and vaccine rollouts, adding that any failure or further delay in VA's plans to launch Japan flights "would be more likely attributable to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and VA's fleet planning, rather than to the proposed conduct".

The IASC's initial deadline for Virgin to use the Haneda slots was 31 Mar this year, but this has been extended until 31 Oct.

Singapore in view

HEIGHTENED prospects of a possible travel bubble between Australia and Singapore mean it's more important than ever for travel advisors to upskill on the destination via the Singapore Travel Specialist program highlighted on **page 7** of **TD** today.



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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including our **PUZZLE** page plus a **Singapore Travel Specialist** product profile.

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RCI extends credit sailing window

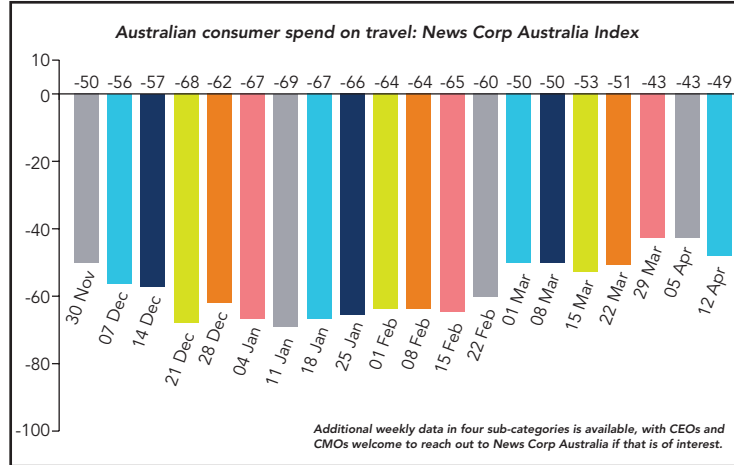
ROYAL Caribbean International today announced that its Future Cruise Credits can now be used on the recently opened 2022/23 Australia, NZ and South Pacific summer season, with the sailing window for the credit validity now extended to 30 Apr 2023.

Future Cruise Credits must be redeemed before 30 Apr 2022 and can be combined with current promotions, while travel partner base commissions continue to be protected.

The credits can also now be easily redeemed via the RCI Espresso and Cruising Power platforms or via the Royal Caribbean call centre.

For more information see rihomeport.com.au.

End of hols drives spend dip



EXCLUSIVE

THE final week of school holidays in most states across Australia saw consumer spending on travel decline by six points in the most recent News Corp Australia index (pictured).

The decline to -49% of the pre-COVID benchmark came despite excitement around the launch of quarantine-free travel between Australia and New Zealand, with the purse-strings clearly tightened as holiday dreaming was swapped for a focus on the return to the school drop-off.

News Corp Head of Travel, Dwayne Birtles, said all categories experienced drops, with the largest decline in accommodation which was down 15 points - but it's still the strongest category by a long shot, being up 27% versus pre-COVID times and running

MCEC retirement

LEIGHTON Wood, the Chief Operating Officer of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), has announced his plans to retire after a decade at the facility.

Helen Fairclough, currently MCEC's Director of Business Relaunch, will take his place, while the organisation's acting Director of People and Culture, Amanda Wilson, has been permanently appointed as Chief People Officer.

Wood will finish up in early Jul.

in the positive for seven weeks straight now.

The cruise industry slumped further to -86%, "illustrating the volatility and reassurance needed for cruisers to hit the open seas/ rivers when the government permits," Birtles noted.

Next week's figures should reflect an upswing in flights and travel agents as the trans-Tasman bubble became a reality, he said.

PAL pilots pass

PHILIPPINE Airlines (PAL) has announced it will trial the IATA Travel Pass on routes from Manila to Los Angeles and Singapore starting from next month.

Passengers on the designated services are being invited to join the trial, with exclusive PAL merchandise to be given to those who participate.

An iPhone 7 or newer is currently required to use the app.

Avalon action

AVALON Waterways is expanding its range of Active and Discovery cruises, with the 2022 program featuring six itineraries and 47 departures on the Danube, Rhine, Moselle, Rhone and Seine Rivers as well as the waterways of Holland & Belgium.

Excursions on the trips include hiking, canoeing and cycling, while the operator has also launched a new Storyteller Series of sailings featuring celebrity hosts such as *Sex & the City* author Candace Bushnell.

See avalonwaterways.com.au.

Tristan is back!

TRISTAN Freedman has taken a new role as Regional Director North America for Australian travel tech platform Vacaay.

Freedman is well known to the industry having recently departed his long-time role as GM at travel representation specialist Gate 7.

Vacaay is described as a "travel inspiration platform," with investors including Anthony Gallagher who previously owned Vacations & Travel Magazine.

Freedman will also be pursuing other projects alongside his work at Vacaay, the company said.

BA adds routes

BRITISH Airways will add flights to Wroclaw and Gdansk in Poland, Riga in Latvia and Cluj-Napoca in Romania as part of an expansion of its upcoming Northern Summer flight schedule.

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TIME meets in Perth



THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) held a face-to-face gathering in Perth last week, with the organisation's WA state representative, Justine Bell-Morris from Garuda Indonesia **pictured** welcoming delegates to the event.

The evening was attended by people from right across the travel industry including representatives from sectors such as aviation, aerospace engineers, airline lawyers and Tourism WA, with plenty of debate from among those present about how to move the state forward.

Ekert steps aside

BUSINESS travel giant CWT has announced the appointment of Michelle McKinney Frymire as its new Chief Executive Officer.

Effective 01 May she will replace incumbent Kurt Ekert, who will step down and become a senior advisor to the company.

Frymire has over 20 years industry experience and joined CWT in 2019 as CFO.

Azamara resumes

AZAMARA Cruises has announced plans to return to the high seas, with *Azamara Quest* to operate a series of voyages in Greece starting 28 Aug.

The return to sail has been backed by the Greek Government, with the cruise line hailing the support of Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis as well as local officials and port authorities.

All sailings aboard *Azamara Journey* and *Azamara Pursuit* remain suspended until Sep amid ongoing uncertainty about requirements elsewhere in Europe. More in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

Disney awakens

DISNEY Parks last night hosted a special event to celebrate the "reawakening of Sleeping Beauty Castle" ahead of the reopening of its California theme parks on Fri after 412 days of closure.

A video commemoration is at traveldaily.com.au/videos.



Six Senses joins IHG loyalty program

IHG Rewards members are now able to earn and redeem points at nine Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas properties globally.

The expansion of the program covers Six Senses properties in Fiji, Thailand, Maldives, Vietnam, Bali, Brazil, Turkey and the Seychelles as well as Six Senses Ibiza which opens in Jul.

IHG Rewards also now covers more than 400 handpicked hotels in the Mr & Mrs Smith program which was integrated into the program under a new partnership last year.

Carbon neutral ANA

JAPANESE carrier ANA has flagged its intention to "reduce carbon emission levels from aircraft operations to net zero by 2050," by utilising new technology, emissions trading, developing more efficient planes and sustainable aviation fuel.



THERE'S no doubt that canines can be man's best friend, and the feeling is clearly reciprocated in Turkmenistan where President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov has announced a new national holiday devoted to Turkmen shepherd dogs.

The Alabai breed are among the world's largest dogs and are traditionally used to guard herds of livestock, with the new annual celebration following last year's erection of a 15m golden statue of an Alabai in the Turkmenistani capital Ashgabat.

A special ceremony last weekend included a "best in show" competition where 10 Alabai were judged on their appearance and agility.

Whatever the reason, we say any holiday's a good holiday!



ONCE UPON A RIVER...

Check out Avalon's new Storyteller cruises hosted by famous authors and artists.

The line-up includes sailings with *Sex & The City's* Candace Bushnell, *Gone Girls'* Gillian Flynn & more.



[READ MORE](#)



The April issue of *travelBulletin* is out now. Read about how Qatar Airways has continued flying during COVID and discover the new destination of AIUa.

CLICK to read

An account from the WA border debacle coalface

OPINION

Adrienne Witteman is the owner of Sydney-based Trendsetter Travel.

Like the rest of the industry she is attempting to pivot to domestic - and together with her husband David took a group of 40 to Western Australia on a golfing trip last week - meaning they were caught slap bang in the middle of the snap border lockdown over a single case of COVID-19 community transmission. Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.



attempt to contain any outbreak (duh!) and it was funny watching the local news on Sat seeing Margaret River locals complaining about how they were at risk, and WA Premier Mark McGowan suggesting that Perth escapees should be locking down and wearing a mask if travelling outside of Perth. As if!

Both QF and VA, when we got through, advised us that you needed police permission to leave Western Australia.

This was actually not true – you needed the “permission” of your state, either by way of a statement online, or perhaps

“
Why would you ask someone coming from a COVID-free place to compulsorily enter a supposed COVID hotspot, and then travel to a COVID-free WA destination?”

formal approval in some cases, that you would be accepted once you got back.

However we did not have this confirmed until Sat morning when the WA Government’s COVID hotline opened up at 0800 and I waited 45 mins before being able to speak to anyone.

It would have been possible to ascertain this on the Friday night but the COVID hotline office closes (in)conveniently at 6.00pm and the website had no useful information about exiting the state.

Nor did the WA Police site. There was a contact number but after 10 min of pressing various buttons you effectively ended up back where you started, and were none the wiser.

Once we had the confirmation

from the WA COVID hotline, we notified our group and another 14 were able to change plans and fly out Sat. The rest of us changed our flights for Sun departures, or decided to stick with Monday.

Bars and restaurants were closed but you could still have a wedding of up to 100 guests... we figured that meant we could similarly enjoy drinks together in our hotel room and did so.

Oh and the one hour of exercise permitted? My husband and I went to Kings Park and enjoyed a three hour walk mask free, as did plenty of others.

At the airport, four people from Canberra asked if we minded their joining our bench table.

We learned that on Fri they had flown from Canberra to Perth and were transiting to Exmouth with a one hour connection time.

All perfectly correct per the rules that they had checked PRIOR to this holiday in case there was an issue.

Only, at the police checkpoint on arrival they were told this was not possible...after several discussions higher up the line, they were proved to be correct but by that time the last flight had gone so they had to “enter into COVID Perth” to stay the night, and then fly to Exmouth next morning.

Why would you ask someone coming from a COVID free place (Canberra) to compulsorily enter a supposed COVID hotspot, to then travel to a COVID free Western Australia destination?

The QF lounge was closed. Apparently it is classified as a restaurant/bar and therefore could not open. Did nobody think to just cut the food and drink service and open the lounge?

None of our group of 40 has any intention of returning to WA in the foreseeable future as a result of all of this. There must be many others thinking similarly.

Thank God for Gladys.

Fullerton restoration



SYDNEY’S Fullerton Hotel has completed a project to remediate the facade of the former Sydney GPO building which houses the luxury property.

The historic building’s intricate stonework and carvings were cleaned in a “laborious, chemical-free process” continuing Fullerton Hotels & Resorts’ extensive experience in preservation of properties in The Fullerton precinct in Singapore.

The hotel is also targeting local visitation with a luxury weekend package including a private guided heritage tour, a signature Fullerton Afternoon Tea and an overnight Tower Premium guest room from \$410.

A new video showcasing the property’s history is online at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

US agent alliance

A GROUP of senior US travel advisors has launched an organisation called the Travel A.L.L.I.E.S. Society, with the aim of creating “a network of travel agency leaders who lead with integrity, support each other, inspire others and strive to transform those who lead”.

The acronym stands for Aligned Loyal Leaders Inspire Education Support, with members - who are “recommended and invited” - required to have at least five years in an industry leadership role, lead or manage a team of at least three staff or independent contractors, and be in good standing with all travel brands.

More at www.allies.travel.



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Travel Daily

Pub quiz

1. FDR Drive is found in which city?
2. If you were attending the Schauspielhaus Zurich, you would be visiting what sort of institution?
3. The Cocos Islands are located halfway between Australia and which other country?
4. The Taoiseach is the head of government of which country?
5. The yucca palm plant is also known by what other name, made famous by the band U2?
6. Which zoo is older: Perth Zoo or Taronga Zoo?
7. Russian is the official language of which four countries?
8. 'Pompey' refers to which British city, as well as its Naval Base and soccer team?
 - a) Portsmouth
 - b) Clyde
 - c) Devonport
9. The Indian Pacific first ran in which decade, after gauge conversion projects in South Australia and Western Australia?
10. Marrakesh is located at the foothills of which mountain range?

Sudoku

MEDIUM

THE aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Numbers can only be used once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

		7	3					
	1	8				6		
9	6		2	5				7
8	3	2				9		
		9				8	1	4
3				1	9		5	6
		5				7	8	
					5	4		

Seen it at the movies



THIS New York suburb fire house was selected as the base for these workers, after an early draft of the script envisioned them as public servants similar to a fire department.

Instead of a fire truck, the station housed the team members' homemade proton packs and special Ecto-1 car. Can you name the movie that was filmed here?

Funnies Flashback



WE'VE trawled through the **TD** Window Seat archives to give you a blast from the past. Here's some gems from 14 Jul 2014:

AMERICAN ultra-low-cost carrier Spirit Airlines has come up with a unique way to engage its disenchanted customers - get them to vent their spleens.

The carrier has launched the 'Hate Thousand Miles Giveaway' in which it is encouraging its pax to slam and criticise the carrier on all its social media channels.

From an inventory of 1 billion miles, it is giving away eight thousand to all passengers who dish out some public vitriol.

A special website - www.hatethousandmiles.com (no longer active) allows pax to air their dirty laundry and bad flying experiences. They can submit their gripes in 140 characters or less to earn 8,000 miles to use on a future Spirit flight, which the carrier's CEO says will give it a chance to redeem itself.

ANSWERS 27 APR

Unscramble: adept, adopt, adult, alto, atop, auto, date, dealt, delta, depot, dolt, dote, duet, lappet, laptop, late, leapt, lout, lute, opted, outed, pate, peat, pelota, pelt, petal, plat, plate, plated, pleat, plot, poet, populate, POPULATED, poult, pout, pouted, tadpole, tale, tape, taped, tapped, taupe, teal, toad, toed, told, tolu, tope, topped, topple, toppled, tupelo, update

Celebrity faces: Eyes - Vin Diesel, Nose - Mariah Carey, Mouth - Phil Hoffmann, Phil Hoffmann Travel

Crown Melb fine

CROWN Melbourne has been fined \$1 million for failing to comply with Victoria's gaming travel junket regulations.

The penalty is the maximum possible, with Crown Melbourne found to have not adequately assessed the conduct of junkets.

Concerns arose after the release of the NSW Government's Bergin report, which found junket operations were linked to criminal influence, and could have been used for money laundering.

Master of the House

OTAHUNA Lodge in New Zealand has launched a Lord of the Manor package, where a group of up to 10 can take over the property in its entirety.

Guests at the luxury lodge can enjoy an array of activities including dolphin swimming, harbour cruises, wine tasting, helicopter tours, hiking, horse-riding, golf, and garden tours.

On-site facilities include swimming, croquet, tennis, cooking classes, and more.

Accor puts some Pepin its step



Qld eco recognition

ECOTOURISM Australia (EA) has announced a new agreement with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) to mutually recognise each other's certification programs.

EA certifies Australian nature-based tourism operators and destinations via its ECO, Respecting Our Culture, Climate Action and destination certification schemes, while QTIC utilises the national Quality Tourism Accreditation program.

Under the new agreement Ecotourism Australia's more than 200 certified operators in Qld will receive all benefits of the Quality Tourism Accreditation scheme, including branding, access to their own ReviewPro reputation management dashboard and eligibility for the Qld Tourism Awards.

Even better, fees are unchanged and operators will still only be subject to a single triennial audit.

Event conferences

EVENT Cinemas has unveiled a range of conference and events packages, offering unique venue hire options from \$80 per person including F&B and AV support.

The company has over 50 virtually connectable venues nationwide - for more details see eventcinemas.com.au.

ACCOR'S Peppers brand has arrived in the Yarra Valley with Peppers Marysville (**pictured**).

Opening in 2015 as Vibe Hotel Marysville, and developed in collaboration with the Victorian State Government following the 2009 Black Sat bushfires, the property features 101 modern guestrooms including five suites.

It also includes a conference centre catering for up to 350 guests, with five meeting and conferencing spaces, a restaurant & bar, a gymnasium, a tennis court, a heated outdoor swimming pool, a sauna, a wellness centre and a day spa.

The hotel has joined the Accor portfolio following its sale to The Shakespeare Property Group, the fourth Australian hotel on which it has partnered with Accor.

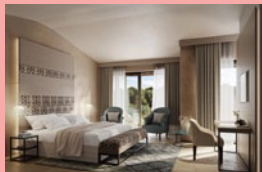
"Peppers Marysville is a unique addition to our collection of hotels, resorts and apartments across Australia," said Accor Pacific Chief Executive Officer Simon McGrath.

McGrath said Accor was seeing strong visitor numbers at its rural properties, especially those located within easy driving distance of major cities.

Accor is forecasting greater growth with travellers now mostly able to travel freely across all Australian states and territories and the introduction of the trans-Tasman bubble.

ACCOMMODATION

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Launching in Jun, the **Baglioni Resort Sardinia** will be located to the north of San Teodoro's white-sand beaches and shallow waters. With 78 rooms and suites, Baglioni Resort Sardinia is set within the protected marine area Tavolara - Punta Coda Cavallo.

It will also feature a signature restaurant, Gusto by Sadler, which will be created in collaboration with the Michelin-starred Claudio Sadler, and a second restaurant, Sunset Terrace Bar.

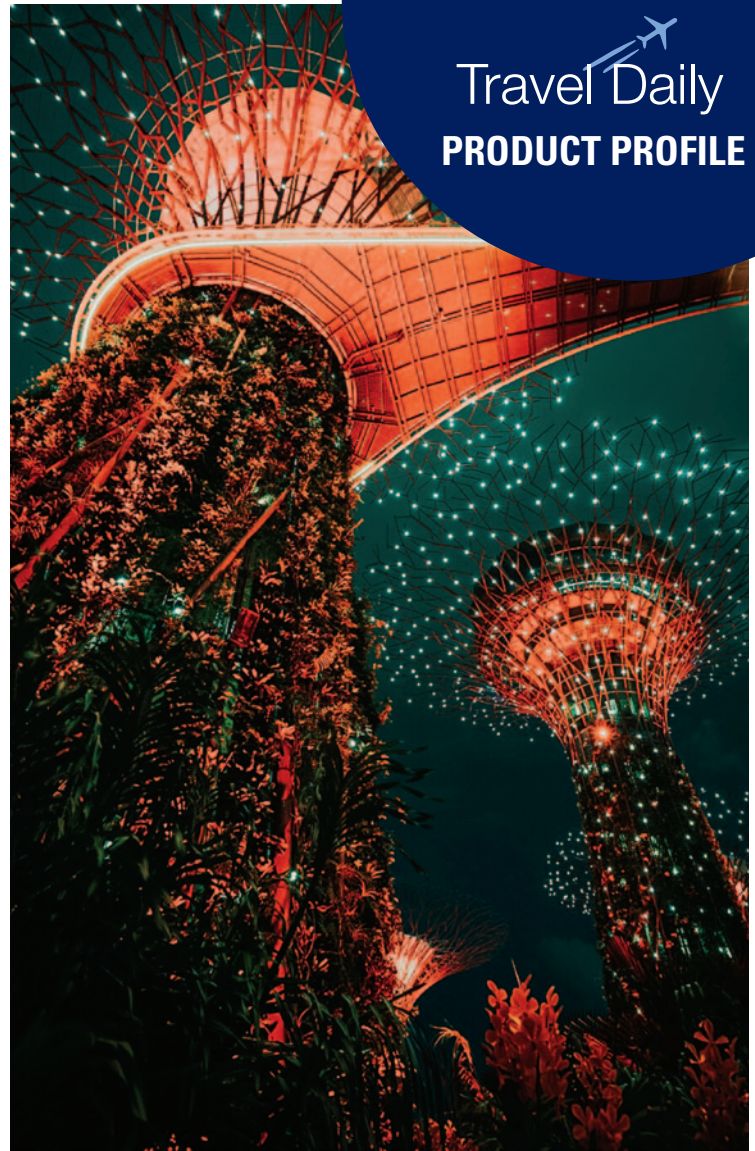
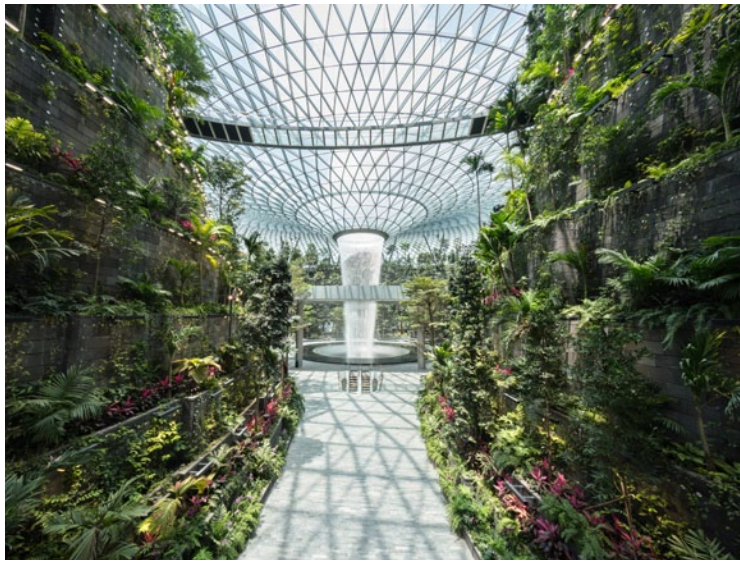


Two restaurants, two bars, two lounges, and 260 rooms and suites are set to open at **Melia Chiang Mai**. The resort will also be home to a spa, a fitness centre, a swimming pool, a ballroom and four meeting spaces, as well as a 12-metre private pool, perfect

for couples seeking space or a family. Melia Chiang Mai's design pays tribute to the city's history and culture in a contemporary manner, as it towers over the Ping River and Chiang Mai Night Bazaar.



The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore has unveiled its new east wing, showcasing a library reception, a lounge, and a new bar. The reimagining also includes floor-to-ceiling partitions, which may be opened or closed depending on the mood or time of day, and a new food and beverage concept, Republic. The 608-room Ritz-Carlton Millenia is located along Singapore's Marina Bay, nearby to local attractions such as Gardens by the Bay.



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destination.

When you become a Singapore Travel Specialist, you'll be ready to take your customers to the skies once again as CAG & SIA also continue to lead in the new world with advancements across the traveller journey including: **FAST** check-in kiosks and bag-drop machines fitted with proximity sensors; Enhanced features on the **SIA mobile app** enabling all booking management and in-flight entertainment on personal devices; **Auto-clearance immigration lanes** upgraded with a new biometric system using facial and iris recognition technology; **Refreshed in-flight meal** preparation, service, and presentation to reduce handling and interactions; **Autonomous cleaning equipment** deployment throughout Changi Airport to clean floors and

carpets daily, also fitted with a misting attachment; and **increased cleaning and disinfection** frequencies in cabin and lavatories where HEPA filters, hospital grade cleaning solutions, and personal protective equipment (PPE) is used.

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