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2023 Euro offers

SCENIC has released a new collection of special deals to celebrate the launch of its European river cruises and luxury land journeys departing in 2023.

A brochure with all of the earlybird promotions has been released, with fly First class deals leading in from \$11,995 per person and fly Business class offers starting from \$3,995pp.

See the **cover page** for further information.

QF promises refund relief?

QANTAS Domestic and International CEO, Andrew David, last night confirmed that a new automated refund system had been put in place, to accelerate the rate at which travellers can retrieve the \$1.4 billion in credits currently being held by the airline.

He told the ABC's 7.30 program that in 80% of cases, where the booking is simple, "we can get them a refund within one week, where currently it is anywhere between six to eight weeks, and at the worst case it actually blew out to 12 weeks".

"For 80%, it will be down to one week," David promised.

However "the other 20% tend to be more complicated itineraries

where they have used part of the itinerary, but not the rest, or it is with multiple airlines, or it is through a travel agent," he said.

"Those are more complex for us to handle...those ones we are still going to have to do offline, but 80% from this week onwards should be able to get a refund within one week," he said.

Qantas wasn't able to respond to David's reference to travel agent refunds prior to **Travel Daily's** deadline today.

Business support

A NEW business support program sponsored by the Vic City of Geelong will assist up to 15 companies, with the program seen as an awesome opportunity for local tourism businesses wanting to grow.

The "Ready, Set Grow" program is heavily subsidised, with the first stage kicking off on 16 May.

Applications are now open - more details by **CLICKING HERE**.

QR donates to kids

QATAR Airways has donated \$80,000 to the Good Friday Appeal, which raises funds for The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

It is the second year running that the airline has donated to the cause and is in line with its global philanthropic plan.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, plus a cover page from **Scenic** and a photo page from **Hawaiian Tourism**.

New Albury flights

QANTAS this morning announced new seasonal flights between Adelaide and Albury.

Two weekly services will operate from 08 Jul through to 25 Sep, using 50-seat Q300 turboprops.

It will be the only direct connection between Albury and South Australia, saving travellers over three hours compared to flights via SYD or MEL.

QF is also boosting Albury-BNE frequencies to 10 weekly.



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AFTA CEO dies

FORMER AFTA Chief Executive Officer, John Dart, died yesterday at the age of 90.

Dart headed the organisation for more than a decade between 1985 and 1995, and after being succeeded by Mike Hatton was named a Life Member of the Federation in May 1996.

AFTA said Dart had made a significant contribution to Australia's travel sector, including establishing the AFTA Travel Insurance Program and driving the creation of AFTA Training Colleges.

"These investments supported AFTA members and established the financial foundation from which the Association has operated since," said current CEO Dean Long, who sent condolences on behalf of the AFTA Board to the Dart family recognising his leadership of the sector.



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Sri Lankan growth

RADISSON Hotel Group has embarked on a multi-brand expansion in Sri Lanka, with an agreement for three properties alongside La Vie Hotels & Resorts. The new Radisson Blu Resort, Galle; Radisson Hotel Colombo; and Radisson Hotel Kandy are all scheduled to open in Q2.



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Hurtigruten weighs anchor

HURTIGRUTEN'S APAC expansion is under way with the hiring of Regional Sales Manager Queensland Jerry Pilgrim.

With more than 25 years of experience in the travel industry, Pilgrim will remain in Brisbane, and focus on building and supporting established relationships across this region.

Working alongside Sydney-based Andrew Eddy, Pilgrim will be joined by two new APAC Sales Manager positions based in Melbourne, and New Zealand.

All APAC Regional Sales Managers will be led by a Regional Sales Director Australia, New Zealand & South East Asia, who is yet to be hired.

Hurtigruten is also seeking a Marketing Director Asia-Pacific to join its regional management team and lead an expanded remit which will include a Trade Marketing Executive, E-Commerce & Web Executive, and Public Relations Manager.

Seniors travel boost

AN EXTRA 10,000 travel vouchers are being provided for Victorian seniors as part of the state's tourism recovery plan.

The Vic State Government yesterday announced eligible seniors who missed out on one of the initial 10,000 vouchers will now get a second chance.

The scheme sees voucher-holders able to claim a \$200 rebate when spending \$400 or more at select travel businesses.

QF takes four more E190s

ALLIANCE Aviation Services this morning confirmed that Qantas had exercised the remaining four options on its Embraer E190 regional jet fleet.

Previously 14 of the 18 total available options had been announced, with QF today taking the rest of the allocation.

Start dates for 14 of the 18 available aircraft have already been committed, with Alliance today announcing a "further material increase in E190 flying activities pursuant to the Wet Lease Agreement with Qantas Airways".

Boracay breached

TOURIST arrivals on Boracay in the Philippines surpassed a limit set by local authorities over the busy Easter weekend, the country's Department of Tourism has confirmed.

Local data shows 24,939 tourists visited Boracay between 13-15 Apr, including 12,266 visitors on 14 Apr alone, surpassing caps put in place after the island reopened following a sewage crisis identified in 2018 (*TD* 28 Jun 2018).

This month is traditionally the peak for visitors to Boracay and was the highest level of visitation since Jan 2020.

Philippines Tourism Secretary, Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, said local government dep[artments "must address this concern and prevent similar incidents".

The effective dates of deployment of the additional aircraft are 01 Nov 2022, 01 Dec 2022 and two on 01 Jan 2023, Alliance said.

The exercise of each option is for a period of at least three years from the effective date.

The Alliance jets are operating under the QantasLink banner and continue an agreement inked early last year (*TD* 04 Feb 2021) with bases including Adelaide and Darwin.

RSSC luxury promos

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has unveiled two new luxury travel offers.

The Upgrade & Explore More and Free Extended Explorations deals are available on select voyages booked from Apr to Jun.

Upgrade & Explore More provides travellers with a free two-category suite upgrade, up to a Penthouse suite, in addition to US\$1,000 of shipboard credit per suite.

Meanwhile, Free Extended Explorations provides free pre- and post-land voyages.

No more isolation

COVID-19 rules in Vic and NSW will be wound back significantly from this weekend, with both state Governments announcing the removal of check-ins, most mask requirements and isolation for close contacts, who will still need to take regular RATs.

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UNESCO World Heritage Sites and their economic implications, cruise is coming back, travel's surprise win and more in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin

Travel spend is stronger

THERE has been a strong rebound in consumer confidence and sentiment noted for the travel and tourism industries during the first quarter of 2022, according to new data published by Citi Australia.

Feb saw significant spend increase on travel, with airline spend up by almost 70%, while travel and cruise bookings increased by more than 30% on the previous month.

"A holiday has been at the top of the to do list for many Australians, after a long two-years of lockdowns, and this spend trend shows us consumers now have the confidence to plan longer-term travel, like international and domestic getaways or cruises," Citi Australia's Head of Cards and Loans Choong-Yu Lum said.

"It's pleasing to see strong spend in travel and leisure categories, including airlines,

cruise lines, hotels and resorts, dining, and retail, with Feb seeing significant spend increase in the travel category," he added.

A spokesperson for Citi Australia said that over the last couple of years during the travel shutdown, the company had pivoted away from offering its customers travel rewards, however customer feedback had clearly shown a rekindled interest in the option of earning travel rewards again.

The report was also optimistic about future travel spend from Aussie consumers, predicting that as the world continues to open up, travel and leisure spend will continue to experience strong growth and cardholders will be maximising travel related rewards such as discounts and insurance.

"Despite rising costs of living, consumers have amassed record savings during COVID, so we believe confidence will remain strong," Lum concluded.

Ocean talk series

PRINCESS Cruises has launched a new digital series called Ocean Treks Conservation Connections, with 28 episodes discussing environmental issues.

Topics covered will include recycling, food waste reduction, leveraging shore power and energy efficiency, advanced wastewater treatment system, and green fuel sources.

The first episode airs today and can be accessed on the cruise line's YouTube channel **HERE**.

Tivoli opens in China

MINOR Hotels has opened the Tivoli Chengdu at Cultural Heritage Park hotel in the International Intangible Cultural Heritage Park in Chengdu, the thriving commercial capital of Sichuan Province in China.

The 204-room property features six dining venues, a giant kids garden area, a fully-equipped health centre and spa facilities.



Window Seat

GAMERS take note - an old Sony PlayStation has triggered a major bomb scare and evacuation at Boston Logan International Airport in the USA, over the weekend.

Massachusetts State Police confirmed that Transportation Security Agents found a mysterious item inside the bag of a passenger during screening as he entered the terminal for a Delta Air Lines flight.

Abnormalities in the X-ray image led to concerns by screeners, who called the bomb squad and evacuated passengers from Terminal A.

The suspicious gadget turned out to be a PlayStation console in a "degraded condition due to damage and old age," according to a police spokesperson.



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Great British rail sale

RAIL Online is offering more than one million half-price tickets for travel in Apr and May as part of its Great British Rail sale which kicks off today.

The promotion applies to travel from London to Edinburgh from only \$39, with availability strictly limited for rail journeys between 25 Apr and 27 May.

Half price offers only apply to advance tickets, which requires committing in advance to a specific train - more details [HERE](#).

Fishing for tourists

LAKE Kununurra barramundi fishing in WA is now on show to the world, with a new website to exhibit the attraction of the destination.

The man-made stretch of water is being promoted around the world to entice travellers to enjoy the thrill of a world-class barramundi fishery.

Click [HERE](#) to view the website.

Qatar links with IndiGo

QATAR Airways and Indian carrier IndiGo have expanded their codeshare agreement following the resumption of air travel from India.

The renewed partnership will see Qatar Airways place its code on IndiGo operated flights between Doha and Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, from 25 Apr, and Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Kozhikode, from 09 May.

Qatar Airways and IndiGo will offer over 340 flights per week to 13 destinations in India as a result of the latest collaboration, enabling travellers to access more convenient travel options between seven cities in India and up to 150 destinations on Qatar Airways' network via Doha.

"Never before has our partnership with IndiGo been stronger and the resumption of our strategic cooperation demonstrates the resilience, agility and commitment

both partners have shown in overcoming the challenges of the pandemic," Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Al Baker said.

Part of the closer ties will also see members of Qatar Airways' loyalty program, Privilege Club, soon be able to earn Avios points on all codeshare flights operated by IndiGo, as well as the use of QR's generous baggage rules.

Meanwhile IndiGo's CEO Ronojoy Dutta added that the agreement would provide a significant boost to both carriers as air travel demand begins to pick up around the world.

"With the easing of restrictions, we believe that this will create economic growth through IndiGo's seamless nationwide connectivity," he said.

Qantas also recently announced a major codeshare agreement with IndiGo, in conjunction with its new non-stop Sydney-Bengaluru flights (**TD** 08 Apr).

Flights in good taste

FIJI Airways has launched its inaugural in-flight Business class menu crafted by respected chef Richard Cross, with new meal options inspired by molecular gastronomy and house-smoked produce.

Highlights of the new culinary line-up includes sweet desserts such as kava and cinnamon ice cream, cookies and cream banoffee parfait, and bittersweet chocolate panna cotta.

More savoury meals include grilled tiger prawn cutlets with sriracha mayo and crispy noodles on a caramelised pineapple bed, grilled aged tenderloin in a creamy peppercorn sauce and mashed potato, as well as herb-crusted chicken breast stuffed with feta and creamy spinach, mashed potato, broccoli and grilled carrot ribbonettes.

Fiji Airways operates twice daily flights from SYD, five flights per week from MEL and five weekly services from BNE to Nadi.



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Newcastle eyes global push



NEWCASTLE Airport's international passenger terminal will benefit from \$55 million in new Federal upgrade funding to cater for wide-body aircraft as the hub moves towards being a truly global gateway.

The development will see Newcastle start pitching for connections to a number of international destinations, with Singapore and other major hubs in the Middle East firmly in its sights moving forward.

Newcastle Airport Chair Kirby Clark said the upgraded infrastructure would see the hub gain access to destinations that current single aisle aircraft currently do not offer.

"The new terminal offers opportunities for both local community fly outs, but more importantly it's the flying in for additional tourists," he said.

"We all know through COVID how important travel is, we've all missed our holidays, but more important than that we've missed our family and friends...two years ago nobody would have thought about flying directly between Newcastle and Singapore or Dubai but this upgrade moves Newcastle from being a regional centre to being a global city."

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce, (pictured announcing the move this week), added the rejuvenated terminal would see

an additional 850,000 tourists visit the NSW city, injecting close to \$13 billion into the local economy over the next 20 years.

The current arrivals areas will be converted to departures under the plan, with international departures to go upstairs where passengers will enter aircraft through a series of air bridges.

NZ tourism recovery

NEW Zealand's travel industry could take "years" to recover from its COVID shutdown, the country's tourism chief Rene de Monchy has indicated in an interview in Singapore.

The Chief Executive Officer of Tourism New Zealand said "the whole world needs to restart" for the country's travel industry to recover to pre-COVID levels, which he feared could take more than three years.

New Zealand will focus on attracting "high-quality visitors", de Monchy said, in order to recover previous levels.

"Those that not only have the financial means to visit, but also enjoy nature and cultural experiences and want to come back," he said.

"When I'm talking about a high quality visitor, it's not one profile, but it means we really look well beyond just targeting financially rich people."

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



TODAY I am in Brisbane meeting with the Federal Opposition Leader and Shadow Treasurer to discuss our

skills and workforce policy.

While the entire economy is facing an acute worker shortage, ensuring Australia's travel sector is embedded in greater government and opposition workforce strategies is essential.

Our policy will seek to engage specifically with people under the age of 25 and those classified as mature age, these two segments typically have a higher unemployment level even prior to COVID-19.

It is clear the existing system is letting these people down and as employers, we haven't developed an appropriate pathway for them.

As we continue to evolve this policy to influence each party's election platforms I am encouraged by the commitment to reform this space.

Today also marks the final day

for Round 3 apps of the CTSP.

Encouragingly we know payments are being made and most applicants have been contacted as their assessments are finalised.

While it is not everything we asked for, I know thousands of travel agents will be provided support.

AFTA's ongoing leadership through our political engagement strategy for our members is a core reason for joining and maintaining your membership.

As conversations transverse about the role of associations, remember we are here for our members ensuring we protect their interests.

If you're not a member, just in the last six months those that have maintained their membership have supported reducing regulation on terms and conditions which would have crippled travel agents, wholesalers and tour operators.

There also wouldn't have been a Round 3 of the CTSP nor would we be leading the discussion on how to solve our long-standing workforce issues.

DQ chief dies

GRAHAM Budd, the highly respected former CEO of Destination Queenstown and the Southland Regional Development Agency, Great South, is being mourned after dying suddenly last weekend.

Budd was a "highly respected and much-admired part of the Queenstown community, and a highly skilled and passionate advocate for the tourism sector," according to Destination Queenstown.

The Jury is out

BRITAIN'S longstanding Jurys Inn hotel brand name will disappear after almost 30 years, with the 35-strong portfolio in the UK and Ireland to be rebranded as Leonardo Hotels.

Jurys Inn became part of Israel-based Fattal Hotel Group in 2017, which also operates the Leonardo Hotels brand which has 16 UK properties currently.

Fattal said it was better for all its hotels to operate under a single banner as the group expands.

New airports chief

LORIE Argus has been named as the new Chief Executive Officer of Australia Pacific Airports Corporation (APAC), the company which manages and operates Launceston and Melbourne Airports.

She'll take over from Lyell Strambi who is stepping down after "successfully steering Melbourne Airport through the most challenging period in its history," the company said.

Argus, who is being promoted from her current role as Melbourne Airports Chief of Aviation, said "Lyell leaves an incredible legacy, and my goal is to build on that to make Melbourne Airport the Australian destination of choice for international carriers, and an airport our city can be proud of".

Strambi, whose resignation is effective from 30 Jun, joined APAC in 2015 after an extensive aviation career including six years at Qantas, ending up as CEO of Qantas Domestic, as well as eight years in London with Virgin Atlantic.

Hawai'i Tourism says Aloha to Aussies

HAWAI'I Tourism Oceania has hosted their first trade fam since the pandemic began. The group visited the islands of O'ahu and Kaua'i staying at Koloa Landing Resort on Kaua'i and Marriott Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa on O'ahu. Taking part in classic Hawaiian experiences like surfing on Waikiki Beach, the group also had the chance to drive ATVs through Kipu Ranch on Kaua'i, cruise the Napali Coast, take part in a native tree reforestation program at Gunstock Ranch on O'ahu, explore the iconic Kualoa Ranch and find out about Hawaii's history at The Bishop Museum.



TAKING a trip to Secret Beach at Kualoa Ranch on O'ahu. Julie Wilson (Fusion Holidays), Jitka Vondrousova (MyHawaii), James Whiting (The Travel Junction), Kimberly Tallon (Travel Associates), Jennifer Gaskin (Hawai'i Tourism Oceania), Darren Evans (Viva Holidays).



JITKA takes a wild ride at Kipu Ranch on Kaua'i.

HELPING to reforest Gunstock Ranch with native trees as part of the Mālama Hawai'i program.



MADE in Hawai'i! Taking part in a Rum Safari on Kaua'i.



DARREN and James enjoying the ride across an ancient fishpond at Kualoa Ranch.



SURF'S up! Is there anywhere more iconic for a surf lesson than Waikiki Beach?



EXPLORING Allerton Gardens on Kaua'i.



THE group enjoys a sunset dinner at Turtle Bay Resort.

HAVING a taste of local Hawaiian cuisine at Highway Inn Kaka'ako'.





Rising tide continues

MORE than 80% of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) members' ocean cruise fleet is now back in service, with the industry body predicting the number to reach 95% by the end of Jul this year.

CLIA added that as part of this global recovery, Australia's recent move to join the rest of the world by allowing large ships to service its waters would propel the resumption to move even quicker - more details from CLIA on the Aussie sector in **CW**.

Mask mandate goes

THE United States will no longer enforce a mask mandate on all forms of domestic transportation, including plane travel, after a federal judge in Florida ruled the directive was "unlawful" and must be withdrawn.

The decision has already seen major carriers such as American Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Air Lines relax the restrictions effective immediately, and follows a surge in unruly behaviour in the air, chiefly due to passenger refusals to wear masks on flights.

Things are tops in the Top End



TRAVELLERS visiting the Northern Territory's park areas must now book and pay for their campsite or multi-day walk via a recently launched online booking portal available **HERE**.

The site also offers travellers the option of purchasing gift cards, which can be used multiple times up to its total value, and are valid for 36 months from date of issue.

MEANWHILE a number of new evening tourism attractions in Alice Springs, the Katherine region, Kakadu National Park and the great Darwin region have gone live.

These include a new twilight tour of the Old Gaol's dark history at the Women's Museum of Australia, overnight stays in Lake View Huts at Bullo River Station, and an Outdoor Cinema for Batchelor Holiday Park.

These attractions were made possible via \$170,000 worth of funding from the NT Govt.

Upgrades have also taken place at a number of accommodation sites in the Top End, such as the Glen Helen Lodge (**pictured**), which reopens in Jun, as well as Kings Canyon Resort, which has refreshed its restaurant & rooms.

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.



Downtown Bozeman's newest development, **AC Hotel by Marriott Bozeman Downtown**, opened its doors on Fri. The six-floor development will allow guests to connect to Montana's *Yellowstone* country, while offering the AC Hotel thoughtful service and modern mindset. The hotel's ideal location offers views of the Bridger Range, as well as easy access to Yellowstone National Park, Big Sky Resort, and more.



Rosewood Hotels & Resorts has announced the upcoming opening of **Rosewood Vienna** has been set for Jul. The luxury property is situated in Petersplatz, one of the most famous squares in Vienna's Old Town, near many of the city's most

important cultural and historic sites. The opening will also mark Rosewood's first flag in Vienna, and the brand's fifth property in Europe, joining a collection with properties in London, Siena, Paris, and more.



The **Marriott San Antonio Airport** reopened to guests on Thu, after a massive reimagining that took the original building down to its studs, completely reconfiguring the space. The new "urban oasis" now includes an expansive 'Great Room', with

ample space to mingle & network; a trendy indoor-outdoor bar, and an outdoor pool with unique water features.

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