



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news including a photo page from TIME.

More ships coming?

EXCLUSIVE

AZAMARA Cruises has hinted at a significant expansion of its fleet, with CEO Carol Cabezas telling **TD** that the newly independent line's investors are "very supportive" of its ambitious growth plans.

The full details about Azamara's plan is available in **Cruise Weekly**.

Great Southern wine

JOURNEY Beyond has launched the Southern Wines & Wildlife Rail Holiday Package for travellers on board the Great Southern between Brisbane to Adelaide.

The 12-week season runs from 02 Dec until 23 Feb 2023, with the package offering stays on Kangaroo Island, a Northern Barossa Valley tour, flights & three days on the Great Southern.

Livn finds more Things to do

EXCLUSIVE

OPEN Connectivity Hub Livn has launched a dedicated website and expanded its team to meet demand from tour operators looking to register with Google's Things to do program.

The tech giant's initiative is designed to help operators in the tours and experiences space achieve better visibility in online searches, with Livn chosen by Google as a partner in the pilot program (**TD** 17 Aug 2021).

Livn has now added a call centre to support its growing teams across Australia, UK, USA and Canada, with the goal of helping travel businesses better understand the Things to do program and get maximum exposure on the world's most used search engine.

Meanwhile a new dedicated website, go.livn.world, will cater to two core audiences, the first are attractions and ticket

businesses that offer single or multiple locations like zoos and aquariums, while the second are tours and activities operators offering products like wine tasting or guided tours.

"Previously searches involving smaller tour companies would take users off to places like Booking.com and Expedia and when they completed the booking, these smaller operators would lose 30% of their product pricing via commission payments to a large OTA," Livn CEO Mark Rizzuto said.

"By expanding our offering, we're giving operators resources that enable a far better model.

"Through Things to do they will have significantly greater control of their distribution and pricing strategy," he added.

Operators won't pay fees or cost-per-click on sales, instead, they can choose a monthly plan that suits their business's needs.

Travel Daily on location aboard Azamara Onward

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of Azamara Cruises, with the brand new **Azamara Onward** cruising the Mediterranean on a trip from Barcelona to Monaco.

TODAY Azamara Onward visits Marseille, France, a port city more than 2,600 years old.

In keeping with Azamara's strong focus on destination immersion, shore excursions include a Marseille City Sights activity, while guests who want a less structured day can simply wander the charming labyrinth of narrow lanes and shops in La Panier, the city's oldest area.

There's also plenty of action on board, with guests last night treated to shows, fabulous cuisine and impeccable service from the ship's attentive crew.

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Window Seat

TWO Irish octogenarians have been accused of criminal damage allegedly caused at Shannon Airport on St. Patrick's Day three years ago, a court in Ireland has heard.

The pair of American men are blamed for damaging a perimeter fence before allegedly trespassing at SNN.

The pair were wearing high-visibility vests bearing the words "Veterans for Peace", before hobbling onto a taxiway.

An aircraft which was due to land at Shannon was unable to do so for the course of the warning, the court heard.

The men are thought to have been staging a protest, and while you can't doubt their aged spirit, their actions are likely to warrant a punishment.

Greece bears gifts

GREECE has joined Entire Travel Group's European destinations, with the company celebrating by offering \$500 per couple discounts on Greek packages.

Sales & Marketing Director Greg McCallum said Greece was a natural addition to Entire's European portfolio, given the company's expertise in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal.

For more information on the deals & destination, **CLICK HERE**.

Fiji to cut pre-arrival tests from May

FIJI has further relaxed its entry requirements for international visitors, with fully vaccinated travellers to the country no longer required to produce a pre-arrival negative COVID-19 test from next month.

The news comes after the removal of Fiji's existing travel partner entry system earlier this month (**TD** 06 Apr).

Airport pax spike in Feb

AUSTRALIAN airports saw close to 5.2 million passenger movements across its airports for the month of Feb 2022, an increase of 2 million air travellers on the same period last year.

The figures, produced by the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics, predictably showed that Sydney Airport was again the nation's busiest airport, recording 1.22 million passengers for the month, followed by Melbourne Airport close behind with 1.14 million.

Brisbane Airport claimed third spot with 755,000 passenger movement in Feb, ahead of the Gold Coast (303,000), Adelaide (285,000) and Perth (212,000).

The biggest growth was noted for Melbourne Airport which saw passengers jump by a whopping 176% on the previous year, helped along by a 10-fold jump in international airline arrivals.

Sydney Airport also enjoyed a

97% increase on Feb 2021, while the Sunshine Coast Airport saw a similar jump, recording a 91.4% increase in air travellers.

The airport to fare the worst in Feb was Alice Springs, which dropped by 20% on 2021.

A shiner Diamond

A NEW online reservation system for travellers wishing to visit Hawaii's Diamond Head State Monument will help manage tourism impacts, the state's Tourism Authority believes.

The reservation system, applicable to out-of-state visitors to Diamond Head from 12 May, will aim to mitigate environmental impacts sustained by foot traffic, and reduce vehicle congestion at the Monument and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Hawaii's move follows a similar decision made by Venice earlier this month (**TD** 21 Apr).

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Metaverse, friend or foe?

WITH countless businesses flocking to see how they can leverage Mark Zuckerberg's new synthetic world, the Metaverse, a new report released this week believes it could be an asset for the travel sector.

The study from professional services company Accenture stated that virtual travel experiences offered in the Metaverse had the potential to incentivise physical travel, rather than replace it as some outside observers have cautioned.

"It is important to recognise that the Metaverse...can provide a complementary enhancement to an overall experience that, over time, can become an essential part of the travel ecosystem," Accenture's Senior Executive Director and Global Head of Travel Emily Weiss said.

"Giving the option to sit in a virtual First class seat, experience the lounge, or walk through a resort or hotel room opens up opportunities to truly engage and inspire people before they travel.

"Through 'try before you go', recreating landmarks in all their

past glory or allowing travellers to investigate parts of nature they can't explore in a real-life interaction," she added.

The survey of more than 11,000 consumers in 16 countries found 50% of consumers said they either are, or would be interested in purchasing a virtual travel experience, such as a sightseeing tour or a hotel stay.

This figure increased to 55% of millennials, compared with just 29% of baby boomers.

The report added that travel and tourism companies who fail to invest in the Metaverse risk being left behind and unable to compete with other businesses as more people continue to migrate to the new digital world.

"The era of the Metaverse has begun, and so for consumer-facing companies, it's not about deciding if they're going to enter the Metaverse, it's about deciding how," Accenture Retail's Senior GM Jill Standish said.

"The Metaverse can also help build loyalty through personalised experiences that go beyond simply purchasing a product."

To Australia with love



BAMBOO Airways launched its inaugural flight from Melbourne to Hanoi this week, marking the key moment the carrier connected the two cities.

The Vietnam-headquartered airline will initially operate one return flight per week between Melbourne and the Vietnamese capital using a Boeing 787 aircraft, joining a weekly non-stop service between Melbourne and Ho Chi Minh City, which began in Feb and was revealed in Dec last year (**TD** 21 Dec 2021).

Melbourne Airport General Manager of International Recovery Jim Parashos tipped the carrier to enjoy strong demand on the back of close cultural and commercial ties between Australia and Vietnam.

"For the large Vietnamese community here in Australia, it will also provide an essential connection to family and friends

back home, as well as enable international students from Vietnam to come Down Under to study at our world-class higher learning institutions," he said.

"Bamboo Airways has shown its commitment to Australia by developing multiple new routes in quick succession, even in the middle of the pandemic, and we are once again thrilled to be part of their ever-expanding plans."

Hanging its value proposition on offering a convenient, time-saving, and a hassle-free travel experience, Bamboo Airways said it was proud to be the first and only Vietnamese airline to operate the non-stop regular service from Melbourne to Hanoi.

Pictured: Bamboo Airways staff putting their heart and soul into the Australian market.

Educated travel plan

TRAVEL risk platform GOPASS Global has picked up Charlies Sturt University as a client, partnering with the tertiary institution to offer staff travel advice on business trips abroad.

Charles Sturt Manager, Travel & Expense, Paul McLeod, said the university's staff were keen to resume travel but craved a better way to assess personal risk.

"By integrating GOPASS data into our own policy guidelines... we can now offer a much clearer assessment and specific advice to ensure trips are safe," he said.

Club Med Bali reborn

CLUB Med Bali will welcome guests back from 28 May, offering travellers a new line up of experiences & entertainment.

New attractions include a new Digital Colours show and Magic Tribe show, as well as a renovated Beach Bar, a new Makan on Wheels food cart, a refreshed menu at The Deck Gourmet Lounge, and a series of refreshed Balinese cooking classes.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

GBTA sustainability study

THE Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) has released a new research study looking at barriers to achieving more sustainable business travel.

The State of Sustainability in the Global Business Travel Sector has been produced in conjunction with global public affairs and communications consultancy Grayling, and found that much of the sector had already made sustainable business travel an increasing priority.

Measures such as focusing on reducing emissions and the environmental footprint of corporate trips are becoming more mainstream, but “more needs to be done,” GBTA said.

The report highlights barriers such as higher costs, limited data and lack of access to transparent information, but also notes a shift in industry culture and harmonised standards to allow easier tracking of data and reporting are key enablers.

“There’s no longer the debate whether we should engage in sustainable actions for business travel, but how we turn ambition into action,” said GBTA Senior VP of Sustainability, Delphine Millot.

“Investing in sustainable solutions must be part of our game plan today to make sure we can still connect people and travel for business tomorrow,” she said.

“This is only possible if our industry joins forces - across our full value chain and with external stakeholders including governments, to adopt ambitious targets, drive green investments and accelerate the uptake of clean technologies,” Millot added.

Almost 90% of industry respondents said sustainability was already a priority for their company, with a similar proportion viewing addressing climate change as the number



one priority area for action.

The most impactful actions cited by travel managers were prioritising energy efficient accommodations, using suppliers with sustainability certifications, and flights with sustainable aviation fuel.

Interestingly there was a significant dichotomy between suppliers and buyers about the frequency of travel, with 73% of buyers supporting mandates encouraging fewer trips, versus 60% of suppliers who did not support such an initiative.

The full research report can be viewed at gbta.org.au.

GBT carbon move

AMERICAN Express GBT Meetings & Events has announced the launch of a range of new products to help clients measure and reduce the carbon footprints from their events.

Components include the Sustainable Meetings Program advisory, under which an Amex GBT team helps clients develop an end-to-end sustainability strategy for meetings.

There’s also the new Carbon Neutral Events platform, incorporating an event carbon calculator to work out how much offsetting is required for each event to become carbon neutral.

Amex VP of Global Business Development, Milton Rivera, said in the post-pandemic world organisations want smarter travel meetings, “and they want to work with responsible, sustainable and inclusive partners who can help achieve them”.

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New VAT/GST return credit card

ASX-LISTED Way2VAT Limited has announced the launch of what’s said to be “the world’s first Smart Spend Debit Mastercard” which automates VAT/GST returns.

The new facility, developed in partnership with financial institution Railsbank, allows businesses to automatically control spending while at the same time automating the VAT/GST returns from end to end.

The card’s rollout will be initially in the UK, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal & Spain, “with further expansion planned for Australia and North America”.

The new Mastercard option allows companies to submit spend receipts and capture invoices via Way2VAT’s proprietary technology platform, described as “an end-to-end process from the capture of the receipt through to payment that automatically analyses, reconciles, sorts and submits documentation to foreign tax authorities”.

Employees can spend their allocated amounts, with the VAT/GST automatically submitted with all relevant administration completed.

An initial tranche of 5,000 cards will be issued to 150 companies with between 100 and 2,000 employees, with Way2VAT earning revenue via a Software-as-a-Service (SAAS) model comprising monthly charges to card uses, administration licences and a percentage from each successful VAT/GST refund.

Founder Amos Simantov said the new platform was the first of its kind and a “game-changer for finance and management teams”.

He said the new card offered complete control and transparency via an easy-to-use dashboard that ensures payments can be made quickly and efficiently - way2vat.com.

FCM issues green white paper

FCM Travel Solutions has released a new white paper discussing the basics of ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) principles and how they can be applied to a company’s travel program.

“A positive consequence of the COVID-led hiatus on travel has been the elevated focus on sustainability,” the report notes, with corporates interested in the impact of reduced business travel on bottom lines and the environment evaluating a raft of new sustainability solutions.

FCM suggests five key steps to help companies take action, with the full report available for download free at fcmtravel.com.

SQ tops Business



SINGAPORE Airlines has been revealed as the world’s best airline when it comes to Business class amenities, according to a new study by Bounce.

The report took into account factors such as cabin & seat comfort, in-flight service, and in-flight entertainment, with Singapore Airlines narrowly fending off Qatar Airways, which finished in second spot.

Cathay Pacific took out third place, in front of Turkish Airlines, Etihad Airways and Emirates.

Qantas did not make the top ten but Air New Zealand did manage to clinch equal tenth position.

On the flip side of the coin, Egyptair was ranked the worst Business class service in the air, with Air China, Kenya Airways, Royal Jordanian, LOT - Polish Airlines and AA all making the unenviable list.

TIME for a face-to-face graduation

THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) held its first Sydney post-pandemic graduation and induction event earlier this week, in a gathering generously hosted courtesy of Accor at the Sofitel Wentworth Hotel in the CBD. For the first time in 18 months TIME mentors, mentees, sponsors and supporters got together IRL to celebrate, reflect and network, and enjoy a presentation from special guest speaker, AFTA CEO Dean Long.

TIME founder Penny Spencer from Spencer Travel said "it was a great evening and without doubt one of the best we've had, especially following a very difficult period for the industry". Each graduate of the program made a speech, with Spencer saying their contributions on this occasion were "particularly entertaining, meaningful and memorable". To view the evening's presentations, which were live streamed by the Travel Community Hub, [CLICK HERE](#).



AFTA CEO Dean Long regaled the crowd with an update on the latest industry developments.



CONGRATULATIONS to the latest cohort of TIME graduates, pictured with founder Penny Spencer: Louise Saisau from Qantas; Holly Goder of The Events Authority; Kathy Labbozzetta from Relax Travel & Cruise; 50 Degrees North's Mari Rasanen; Monica Moruzzi from Unordinary Italy; Jacinta Baker from Norwegian Cruise Line; and Jacqueline Tulafa of Silversea Cruises.





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No longer out of Africa

ADVENTURE World is back in Africa, with General Manager Caryn Young (pictured) reconnecting with suppliers face-to-face, and sourcing new sustainable product.

Following her touchdown in South Africa, one of Young's main remits is to find new product which better reflects the company's new positioning of 'Travel With Purpose'.

"At Adventure World, we always aim to leave a positive impact on the destinations that we travel to," the company enthused.

"It has never been so important than it is today to support lodges who are contributing to the surrounding communities.

"Marataba Safari Lodge,



located at the foot of the Waterberg Mountains in South Africa's Limpopo Province, is committed to driving a financial solution that both supports the long-term conservation of the park and maximises economic opportunities for the surrounding communities."

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily's* Friday feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Australis Patagonia Cruises is offering US\$1,000 discounts on select South American sailings to celebrate the line's return to Chilean waters. The deal applies to four-night cruises departing from the ports of Punta Arenas in Chile or Ushuaia in Argentina for bookings made until 31 May. Prices start at US\$4,840 plus taxes for two people in one A cabin travelling in low season. **CLICK HERE** for more details.

Several **InterContinental** properties in Bora Bora are offering 35% off stays. InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa, InterContinental Bora Bora Resort Thalasso Spa and InterContinental Le Moana Bora Bora have all unveiled the discount for stays longer than seven nights in length. The promotion is available from now to the end of the year. See www.ihg.com for further booking information.

Contiki has released its Europe Summer Sale in celebration of its 60th anniversary. Travellers can save up to 20% off the youth operator's top-selling 2022 Europe summer trips when they book and deposit by 04 May. For more information, call 0800 266 8454 or contact your The Travel Corporation sales manager.

Changi kiosks back

JETSTAR Asia customers at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 1 will once again be able to check-in using the self-service kiosks and automated bag drops, after the services were finally reinstated after being suspended during the pandemic.

Ten check-in kiosks and four automated bag-drops will be available for pax, with around three quarters of its customers using kiosks pre-COVID.

SA woos backpackers

A **TOURISM** campaign to bring British backpackers back to South Australia is aiming to fill post-pandemic job vacancies.

Only 200 young travellers will be able to apply, but they will need a \$495 working holiday visa first, as well as a package from tour operator Trailfinders.

The promotion aims to be a modern-day twist on the £10 pom immigration scheme which spiked visitation after WW2.

Where in WA?



BELIEVED to be 350 million years in the making, these sandstone domes tower up to 300 metres above the grass-covered plains that surround them.

Explore the range on foot and

discover long, narrow chasms and hidden gorges large enough to hold a full-scale concert. Or for a bird's eye view you can take a helicopter tour.

Do you know where in Western Australia this is?

Answer: Bungle Bungle Range, Purnululu National Park, WA

Got a confidential tip? Contact *Travel Daily* via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)