# Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 31st August 2022



# Travel Daily

on location aboard Norwegian Prima

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line, which is undertaking the christening voyage of its new Norwegian Prima in the North Atlantic.

NORWEGIAN Prima has arrived in the British Isles, with a brief call at Cork in Ireland providing opportunities for quests to experience a stunning day in the Emerald Isle.

Some headed off on shore excursions to places like Blarney Castle, the local Jameson Distillery and Kinsdale, while others simply took the opportunity to stretch their legs in the picturesque seaside township of Cobh.

Tomorrow Prima heads off to Portland in the UK.

# Webjet back in the black

WEBJET MD John Guscic says all of its three divisions have returned to profitability, with its OTA operation continuing to increase market share (TD breaking news).

The company issued an ASX trading update this morning, with Guscic highlighting the launch next month of the recentlyacquired Trip Ninja technology (TD 24 Nov 2021), which will provide automatic multi-carrier options for multi-stop journeys.

"We are confident it will provide our customers with lower pricing, unique content and greater choice," he said.

The WebBeds accommodation business has seen bookings well ahead of pre-pandemic levels since May, and in Jul recorded its biggest-ever month for TTV which is in turn being surpassed in Aug, Guscic enthused.

"By driving efficiencies and pivoting our focus to target growth wherever we saw

opportunities, we've seen our market share grow and EBITDA margins are forecast to be higher than 50% for the first half of FY23," he added.

"WebBeds has so much opportunity ahead of it...all the things we've done to transform the business mean we are confident growth will continue for the remainder of FY23, despite all current well-documented macro headwinds," Gucsic said.

The rebranding of the former Online Republic business as GoSee is going to plan, he said, with work under way to transform the operation into a business with "the potential to scale in a global playing field" and expectations of a return to pre-pandemic earnings when inbound travel into Australia and NZ returns to historical levels.

"We are excited for the limitless opportunities that lie ahead," Guscic concluded.

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news, including a photo page from Hawai'i Tourism Oceania, plus a full page from United Airlines.

## Azamara points reciprocity ending

**AZAMARA** Cruises has announced that its reciprocity arrangement with Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises is to be phased out after 01 Feb 2023.

Early last year Royal Caribbean Group sold Azamara to private equity firm Sycamore Partners, with the loyalty program retaining all points already accrued through Celebrity and Azamara voyages.

The phase-out to separate independent systems "allows us to more effectively implement your loyalty program suggestions and improve pre- and post-cruise guest experiences," Azamara said.





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# Robertson switches to cruise

FORMER Air New Zealand Country Manager for Australia, Kathryn Robertson, is leaving the carrier having taken a newly created role as Chief Commercial Officer for Carnival Australia (TD 30 Aug).

The senior position reports to recently appointed Carnival President, Marguerite Fitzgerald, and is part of a wider restructure of the Carnival Australia team.

Robertson has most recently been working from Auckland as Air NZ's Group GM of Sales, having spent more than 15 years with the Kiwi flag carrier in roles based in London and North America as well as Australia & NZ.

"Kathryn has achieved so much during her time with the airline," said Air NZ Chief Sales and Customer Officer. Leanne Geraghty in a letter to stakeholders.

"She is an accomplished and highly experienced aviation

professional and has been integral in leading and supporting our global sales teams and their efforts as we've worked to navigate our way through these challenging past few years."

Geraghty said Robertson would be taking up her role in Nov, with a search for a replacement commencing soon, praising her for her "awesome contribution to our airline"

Carnival chief Fitzgerald said Robertson's new role was a reflection of the organisation's "ambitious goals to rebuild and grow the business" as cruising restarts in Australia & NZ.

She will have responsibility for the commercial strategy across Carnival's eight distinctive cruise brands, including marketing, direct and indirect sales and digital capability "with the intent to drive business performance, growth and market share" - more in today's issue of Cruise Weekly.



#### RAILEUROPE

## TC adds two more

TRAVELLERS Choice (TC) has announced two new members have been added to its national network, including Midland Travel in WA and How We Travel in NSW.

After 22 years operating from a central location in Midland, Midland Travel owner Vicky Johnston relocated her agency to a purpose-built office on her property in the Swan Valley.

Meanwhile How We Travel owner Lauren Howard established her agency in 2016 in Port Macquarie after working as an agent for more than 15 years.

Nicola Strudwick, Travellers Choice General Manager - Sales, believes that the group's three new membership packages have become a driving force in attracting new members.

"Independent businesses need to be flexible and adaptable in the current operating environment, and our new membership packages allow them to be just that," Strudwick said.

## Regent event series

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises is inviting travel agents and their clients to an event series to learn about its 2024/25 Voyage Collection and special offers.

The events will be hosted across the country from Sep to Oct by the RSSC team, including Lisa Pile and Gillian Seller, Director of Sales ANZ - for details, CLICK HERE.

#### Rex's seventh 737

**REX** Airlines took possession of its seventh Boeing 737-800NG last night in Brisbane, allowing the carrier important extra capacity to operate between Australia's big east coast cities.

"Demand for Rex flights is so great that we are urgently looking for another two Boeing 737-800NGs which we hope to deploy by Q2/Q3 of this financial year," Rex said.

The latest plane will enter service in Sep after undergoing interior updates & safety checks.



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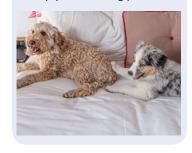




# **Window** Seat

**OVOLO** Hotels has partnered with healthy dog treats brand Waggly for an enhanced 'VIPooch' package.

Available across Ovolo's range of Australian hotels, the deal offers guests staying during next month an exclusive Waggly Club Box in-room pack, which includes a selection of healthy dog treats, premium dog toys, as well as a doggy bed, an eating & drinking mat, and of course, dog-friendly staff there to help your amazing pooch.



# QF promises lower fares

**QANTAS** has pledged that Australian travel agents are set to benefit from lower pricing when booking fares through the carrier's next-generation distribution platform.

From 29 Nov, advisors will be able to take advantage of domestic fares at a lower price via the Qantas Distribution Platform when compared to other indirect booking systems, offering better value and confidence in bookings, Qantas said in an update today.

Qantas Executive Manager of Global Sales and Distribution, Igor Kwiatkowski, said that lowering pricing would be the latest in a line of benefits rolled out to trade partners through the airline's new distribution strategy.

"Through the Qantas Distribution Platform, we have continued to invest in and modernise our distribution capabilities to the highest industry standards and lower pricing means that we can share these benefits and efficiencies with our trade partners," Kwiatkowski said.

"Lower pricing will be a great incentive for our partners in adopting the Qantas Distribution Platform...and the initiative will complement the many capabilities already enabled through our distribution platform from dynamic commission offers to personalisation for customers.

"We know that some of our partners are still in the process of connecting to the platform, so we'll be providing extra support in the three months leading up to the launch," he added.

## KLM adds KL/CGK

**KLM** Royal Dutch Airlines announced it will add services from Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta from 31 Oct, as part of its 2022/23 winter schedule.

The carrier will run four weekly non-stop flights from Kuala Lumpur to Amsterdam, and will also resume four weekly services to Jakarta.

From Jakarta, KLM will also offer four weekly flights to Kuala Lumpur, as well as increase its frequency to four weekly flights to Amsterdam via Kuala Lumpur. Up until Apr 2020, KLM operated daily flights from Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.



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# Anything to keep her quiet!



**GOLDMAN** Travel director Lisa Borowick was all set to kiss the famed Blarney Stone at Blarney Castle near Cork, Ireland yesterday - until her travelling companions decided perhaps she didn't need any additional encouragement to chat!

Of course that's not actually the truth, but it makes a good story behind

the photo above taken by Matt Coyle from Melbourne Travel Project during a shore excursion departing from the new Norwegian Prima as she made her maiden visit to the Emerald Isle during this week's



christening cruise (TD 29 Aug). Others took a more sedate course of action while on shore, including Spencer Travel's Penny Spencer and Jen Pagett from Virtuoso who are newly anointed as "Drinking Consultants" (above) after sampling some Irish hospitality.

Meanwhile Ryan Thomas from Ignite Travel Group (left) made the most of the stunning weather to take some hot laps on the Prima Speedway threestorey go-kart track.



# **ONLINE EVENTS**

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events@traveldaily.com.au

# Nib enjoys sales surge

#### EXCLUSIVE

**NIB** Travel has confirmed that an increasing amount of Aussie travellers have been taking out insurance policies in recent months, with the pandemic initiating a heightened sense of risk in the minds of consumers.

Speaking with TD this week, nib Travel CEO Anna Gladman said COVID-19, and its associated impact on travel, had resulted in a higher proportion of travellers purchasing travel protection.

"COVID, with all of its issues, has helped people become far more aware of the risks and what we are seeing is a significant number of extra customers choosing travel insurance," she said.

"So while travel hasn't recovered fully yet, and we're not seeing the same number of people travelling that were pre-COVID, what we're seeing is a higher proportion of customers taking travel insurance out and those that are taking higher levels of cover," Gladman added.

Offering various forms of COVID-19 coverage has also

been "absolutely critical" in getting travellers to commit to purchasing travel protection.

"Insurance is all about covering fears and doubts...and the demand for insurance is often driven by an awareness of risk and with all the media coverage of COVID and what would happen if I got COVID while away, if we didn't have some form of cover to help with that fear then people would ask 'is it even worth me travelling'," Gladman explained.

Travel agents are also seen as a major pillar of distribution for nib Travel, with Gladman heaping praise on the travel trade for helping to inform travellers about maintaining protection.

"One thing that we did which I I'm really proud of is we retained a support team through COVID for a lot of our travel partners so that we had people available... and while they weren't selling many overseas products they were selling plenty of domestic."

Nib Travel enjoyed a strong sales surge in Q4 of the 2021/22 financial year (TD 25 Aug).

#### Travel Daily On Board: Norwegian Prima



#### Metropolitan

A unique venue, this "zero-waste cocktail lounge" offers sustainably focused drinks made with food items on their last legs, left over from the ship's many eateries. Some of the tipples are created with items such as overripe bananas and their peels, strawberries on their last legs and even stale croissants which are processed into delightful flavour extracts adding depth and intrigue to the drinks on offer.



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## Woven at Coworth

THE Dorchester Collection's Coworth Park luxury country house hotel and spa in the UK countryside has announced the opening of Woven by Adam Smith, a new restaurant promising guests an "unforgettable culinary experience".

To be unveiled on 08 Sep, the eatery's concepts will be deeply rooted in the idyllic Berkshire countryside which surrounds the property, located 45 min from London.

Open for dinner Wed-Sat and lunch on weekends, the restaurant will serve a set-priced menu and will take the place of the existing flagship dining destination, Restaurant Coworth Park.

## Regent record

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has once again topped its own single-day booking record, with last week's opening of sales for the new 2024-2025 Voyage Collection.

The performance topped the previous record day, 18 Aug 2021, when the 2023-2024 itineraries launched.

CEO Jason Montague said trends indicated a desire among clients to book exotic destinations and longer trips, along with strong demand for bigger suites including the palatial Regent Suite.

# NORWEGIAN ELEVATES THE HAVEN

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's new *Norwegian Prima* takes its exclusive The Haven concept to an even higher level, with the upmarket "ship within a ship" precinct located at the rear of the ship across decks nine to 17.

**TD** was lucky enough this week to tour the enclave, which is fully booked with VIPs taking part in the ship's christening cruise in the North Atlantic.

As well as singer Katy Perry and her entourage, senior executives from Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings are staying in the Haven along with a phalanx of bankers and investors keen to experience the highly anticipated product.

There are 107 Haven suites across five decks, plus two levels of exclusive facilities which can only be accessed with special keycards - including dedicated private elevators for Haven guests.

As well as a dedicated restaurant and bar, there's an exclusive Haven sundeck featuring an infinity pool overlooking the ship's wake

## Four Seasons brand

**FOUR** Seasons has announced a portfolio-wide rebrand, centred on a new "Luxury Is Our Love" creative platform and campaign.

The update will roll out across the group's hotels, resorts, bars, restaurants and private jet over the next year.



(**pictured**) along with an outdoor spa with a sauna and cold room.

Haven suites include 24-hour butlers as well as concierge services to assist with bookings for shows, specialty restaurants, shore excursions, spa treatments and any other special requests.

Stateroom categories here include The Haven Premium Owner's Suite, accommodating eight guests with a huge balcony, three king bedrooms plus a double sofa bed, three bathrooms

and a private outdoor hot tub.

Other Haven suites accommodate six, four or two guests, and include a two-bedroom Family Villa sleeping six with one king, one queen and a double sofa bed.

Norwegian Cruise Line CEO Harry Sommer said the expanded Haven aboard *Prima* was already proving extremely popular, with heavy forward bookings indicating a strong desire for the luxury experience.

## Nobu Hotels announces Thai expansion plans

NOBU Hospitality this week announced a major Thailand-wide agreement with local real estate group Asset World Corp, described as "an exclusive collaboration to develop multiple Nobu Hotels and restaurants in Thailand".

The pact will kick off with

the new Nobu Hotel Bangkok and Nobu Empire Restaurant, which will occupy the top floor and rooftop of the new Empire Tower project in the city centre.

The location of the Nobu Hotel Bangkok will soon be announced, along with plans for other sites across Thailand.





**APRIL 2024 THROUGH MAY 2025** 



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# Aloha Down Under 2022 roadshow

LAST week, Hawai'i Tourism Oceania (HTO) kicked off its annual roadshow, Aloha Down Under, in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, with the final event in Auckland last Mon. Along with hundreds of travel advisors, HTO celebrated the 10th anniversary of the popular Hawaii roadshow that connects partners from the Hawaiian Islands with the travel 'ohana' (family) in Australia and New Zealand.

> Around 150 travel advisors attended the events in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, and approximately 140 joined the Auckland roadshow on Monday.

Participating partners included Castle Resorts and Hotels; Norwegian Cruise Line; Marriott International; Aulani - a Disney Resort and Spa; Prince Resorts Hawaii; Courtyard Marriott Oahu Northshore: Aqua-Aston Hospitality: Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa; Highgate Hawaii; Kaanapali Beach Hotel: Outrigger Hotels & Resort; Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club; Kailani Tours; Hawaiian Airlines; The Kahala Hotel & Resort and Go City. HTO extends a big mahalo nui (thank you) to its partners and

everyone who attended. ANDREW Stanbury, Hawaiian Airlines Regional Director AU & NZ; Andrew Gee, Outrigger Resorts VP Sales Marketing, Asia Pacific; & Maria Alaveras, Outrigger Resorts

Director of Sales Oceania, at Sydney's Botanic House.



ALOHA! The partners from the Hawaiian Islands are excited to be back in Australia and New Zealand.

ALOHA Down Under attendees at the Ivy Ballroom in Sydney.





ATTENDEES in Melbourne feeling the aloha spirit.



KELLY Strickland, Kahala Hotel & Resort Assistant Director of Sales educating travel

advisors about the property.



RHONDA Khabir, Aqua-Aston Hospitality VP Sales & Amanda McCoy, Linkd Tourism Account Manager at the Sydney event.



TEAM Hawai'i Tourism Oceania: Kris Phadungkiatipong, Trade, MICE & Partnerships Manager; Anna Riedel, PR Executive; Jennifer Gaskin, Account Director; Melanie Lambert, Marketing & Campaigns Executive



**HAWAIIAN** performers Kuki

Image credits: David Li & Ben McKay



**JENNIFER** Gaskin, Hawai'i Tourism Oceania Account Director with one of the lucky prize winners.



THOUGHTFUL gift bags with local products from the Hawaiian Islands.



# Travel Daily

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# **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.



The brand-new Wall Street Hotel has opened its doors in Manhattan's Financial District, housed in the historic Tontine building. The property features 180 uniquely designed guest rooms and suites, each with plush custom furnishings, curated libraries,

a handcrafted bar cart with premium spirits, and original artworks, as well as a rooftop ballroom, 24-hour fitness centre, and soon-to-beannounced restaurant and bar concepts.



Following renovations, beachside luxury resort, Ponte Vedra Inn & Club in Florida, has revealed 64 reimagined guest rooms and suites at Summer House and St John's House, all overlooking the ocean. The rooms now feature bespoke furnishings

throughout, including eco-friendly touches like tabletops eatched with seashells, as well as extra indoor/outdoor living areas, including new ground-level patios and private terraces on higher-level rooms.



Pink Shell Beach Resort in Florida has begun an extensive \$7.4 million renovation project, which will see all of its windows tinted in order to reduce light transmittal to the Gulf of Mexico during the sea turtle nesting season, along with the installation

of new turtle-friendly outdoor lighting fixtures. Kitchens, bathrooms and flooring in all of the hotel's 195 will also be overhauled, with renovations expected to finish up in Feb.

## VV launches loyalty

VIRGIN Voyages has unveiled the details of its first loyalty program called The Sailing Club.

Set to make its formal debut in 2023, the program aims to offer its passengers a range of benefits and exclusive offers, as well as ways to benefit in 2022 before its official launch.

The line will offer perks in the coming months, including Champagne on arrival, access to cocktail parties, fast wi-fi, and laundry services.

# **QR** links with Finnair

FINNAIR has launched three routes to Doha, alongside a partnership and codeshare agreement with fellow oneworld member, Qatar Airways.

The new routes will utilise Finnair's recently refurbished Airbus A330 jets, and will launch between Nov and Dec, ahead of the FIFA World Cup.

The daily service from Doha will fly to Finnair's Helsinki hub, as well as to Stockholm and Copenhagen.

# Air NZ's new shining Star



AIR New Zealand unveiled its new jet-black Star Alliance livery yesterday, showcased on the airline's newest A321neo jet (pictured), which will be one of three to join the carrier's fleet in the coming months.

The one-of-a-kind design inverses the standard Star Alliance livery, which is white with a black tail fin - a decision Air New Zealand's Chief Transformation and Alliances Officer Mike Williams said is a "celebration of how important black is to Air New Zealand and New Zealand".

"Black is an iconic Kiwi colour," Williams added, "from sports

jerseys to gumboots, black is embedded in New Zealand's national identity and worn with pride, so it's fantastic to welcome this aircraft with its special black livery into our fleet".

Air New Zealand's iconic Maori symbol of the mangopare features on the wing tips of the one-off livery design, instead of its usual placement on the tail.

The new A321 aircraft, which can seat up to 217 customers, will leave the Airbus factory in Hamburg, Germany and will touch down in Auckland in Nov in time for the busy Christmas and holiday period.



# Win an eco luxury stay.

Elysian Retreat, Long Island Whitsundays is giving one Travel Daily reader the opportunity to experience first-hand their eco luxury resort with a 3 nights stay for two adults. Included with this amazing prize is return helicopter transfers, three gourmet meals daily, complimentary hot & cold drinks, unlimited use of all water sports equipment plus lots more.

Winner will need to make their own way to Hamilton Island. Full list of inclusions here with the terms and conditions.

To enter please tell us in 25 words or less what makes Elysian Retreat the ideal holiday experience?

Entries to be sent to competitions@traveldaily.com.au



Travel Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Produced each weekday since 1994. Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

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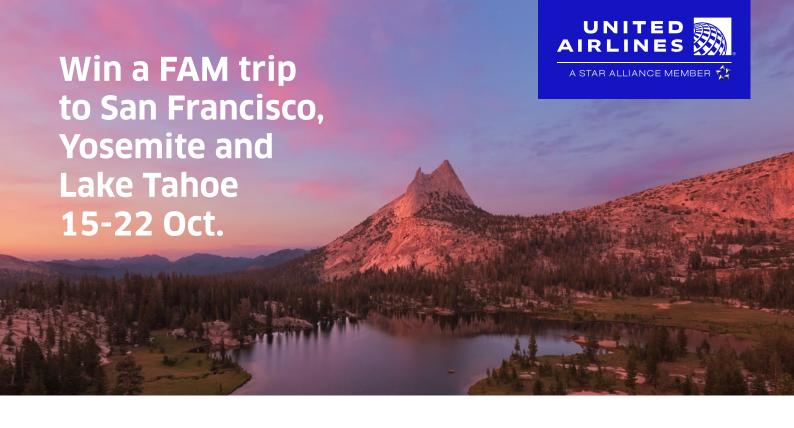
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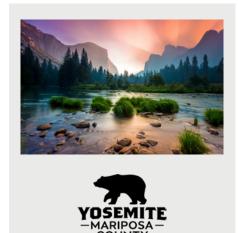


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#### Terms and Conditions

Entrants must be free and available to travel to the USA Saturday 15th Oct, returning to Australia Monday 24th October. The prize winners will be responsible for all expenses not outlined in the prize description including but not limited to food and beverage, gratuities, activities, souvenirs, and the securing of and payment for any Visa expenses required for entry into the US. The prize cannot be changed or deferred to another date. No cash alternative. By participating, the entrant agrees to be bound to these terms & conditions and the decisions of United, and agrees to waive any right to claim ambiguity in regard to the contest mechanics and/or the interpretation of these terms & conditions.