

CONGRATULATIONS

TRAVEL DAILY EDITORS' CHOICE AWARDS WINNERS 2022

Travel Daily
Editors' Choice Awards 2022



Best Industry Support
Richard Taylor

Travel Daily
Editors' Choice Awards 2022



Best Destination Representative
Julie King & Associates

Travel Daily
Editors' Choice Awards 2022



Best Wholesaler
Entire Travel Group

Travel Daily
Editors' Choice Awards 2022



Best Tour Operator
Bunnik Tours

Travel Daily
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Best Education and Training
TIME

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Best Air Ticketing Support
CVFR Travel Group

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Best Cruise Marketing
**Princess Cruises for
The Real Love Boat**

Travel Daily
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Best Cruise Industry Support
**Norwegian Cruise Line for
Walk for Wellness**

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Rail Online adds

INTERNATIONAL rail booking platform Rail Online has recently added Eurostar and European high-speed rail services TGV and Thalys to its inventory.

Eurostar operates high-speed trains from London to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam (via Lille and the Channel Tunnel), while TGV offers high-speed rail all over France, along with trans-European services to Switzerland (TGV Lyria), Germany (TGV inOui) and Spain (TGV inOui).

Meanwhile Thalys operates high-speed services from Paris to Brussels, Amsterdam and German cities in the Rhein-Ruhr.

The additions are the result of a deal with French rail company SNCF, offering users all point-to-point services in Aussie dollars.

NCL cleans it up

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) will offer a complimentary beach clean-up shore excursion in Eden on NSW's south coast for guests aboard *Norwegian Spirit* during the ship's inaugural Australian cruise on 23 Dec.

The environmental land trip is the result of a partnership with not-for-profit organisation Take 3 for the Sea, which holds the goal of removing 50 million pieces of plastic by 2025.

Spirit's maiden call to Eden will also be the vessel's first port of call during her 12-day Trans-Tasman Christmas cruise - for more details about the beach clean-up, [CLICK HERE](#).

QF, MU seek China tick

CHINA Eastern Airlines and Qantas have asked for an additional year's authorisation to coordinate the re-start of their operations between Australia and mainland China until 31 Mar 2024.

An application to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) notes that "borders between Australia and China remain closed for foreign tourists, and there is no expectation that they will open in the immediate-term".

"Even when the borders fully open, travel demand is expected to be extremely patchy and slow to return," the submission states.

In Jan 2021 the ACCC granted a two-year reauthorisation of the pair's Extended Joint Coordination Agreement, which

expires on 31 Jan 2023.

The airlines said the alliance will result in significant public benefits including "the faster and more sustainable reinstatement of capacity that has been suspended as a result of the pandemic".

Pre-COVID China Eastern operated more than 40 weekly flights ex Australia, the application notes.

Qantas had previously published a schedule indicating a resumption of its flights from Sydney to Shanghai effective 30 Oct 2022, however these have now been cancelled with the latest update which indicates an expected resumption in Apr 2023 - "assuming the border has fully opened to tourists by then".

The ACCC is now seeking submissions on the proposal, with plans to hand down a draft ruling in Feb or Mar next year.

Azamara Alliance

AZAMARA has launched new tools, a booking platform and expanded contact centre for travel agents via its new Azamara Alliance trade partner program.

The revamped booking engine allows agents to book across channels over one integrated platform, providing access to FIT, back-to-back and combo voyages, including cruise, air, shore excursions and packages.

A more intuitive Azamara Connect trade partner portal has also been introduced by the cruise line, offering better access to imagery, promotions and marketing tools.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news and a cover page showcasing *TD's* Editors' Choice Award winners.

Explora appoints

GILLIAN Seller has been appointed as Explora Journeys' first Sales Manager for Australia and New Zealand, joining the MSC-backed luxury startup from her former role at RSSC.

Seller will report to Nicole Costantin, who became Explora's APAC Head of Sales in Jul.

Explora's local staff numbers will grow to six next month with the additional appointments of former Norwegian Cruise Line BDM James McCullagh, Lauren Bevan who joins the Explora Sales Excellence Team, and Matt Backo who will work in the Customer Experience team led by Wanda Ferrand - more details in *CW*.

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Delays & cost alter habits

CLOSE to one in three Aussie travellers have experienced delays with flights or transport during trips this year, according to new data from [Money.com.au](https://www.money.com.au).

The same report sampling over 1,000 Aussies also found that 12% didn't go ahead with travel plans because of either rising prices or a lack of flights or accommodation options.

Interestingly, delays have appeared to impact the travel plans of younger Aussies more often, with over 30% of 31-50 year-olds reporting issues, compared with only a quarter of those aged over 55.

The picture was much the same when looking at those who chose to opt out of travel plans, with 12% of people aged under 50 knocking trips on the head due to spiralling prices, while only 4% of over 50s followed suit.

The residents most likely to experience disruptions were from

South Australia (38%), followed by Queenslanders (31%), Victorians (30%), NSW (28%), and Western Australians had it the easiest, with only 17% disrupted.

One in five Aussies also indicated they would change travel habits by booking trips outside of peak periods in the future - especially residents from NSW, while 12% said they would elect to take a road trip instead of a flight on their next holiday.

Just under one in 10 travellers also said they would look to take shorter trips to combat rising prices, and 7% stated they would seek out cheaper lower-star, accommodation options.

The findings follow new data released by Cheddar this week, which found that nearly one in two 'younger Aussies' intend to increase spend on travel over the next 12 months, with many preparing to use Christmas sales to source the best deals.

AC/EK up loyalty

AIR Canada and Emirates have deepened their loyalty partnership to allow Aeroplan and Skywards members to earn and redeem miles and points on all flights operated by the airlines.

EK's Skywards members will be able to redeem miles for reward tickets across the AC network, with flight rewards starting from 8,000 miles for a one-way reward ticket in Economy class and 16,000 miles for a one-way reward ticket in Business class.

Meanwhile Aeroplan members can redeem points for EK Economy and Business class flights starting at 15,000 points one-way with no carrier surcharges, with redemption to be introduced for Emirates First class flights to be introduced in early 2023.

Further benefits will include reciprocal airport lounge benefits for top-tier loyalty members, which will come into force in Dubai and Toronto soon.

Travelport: more shopping volume

BOOKING platforms are seeing exceptionally strong demand for fare quotes, with a lack of air deals in the market driving a big jump in shopping volumes, says Travelport CEO Greg Webb.

Webb was in Sydney earlier this week making his first post-pandemic trip Down Under, and told *Travel Daily* currently the company's system is seeing about 120%-140% of volumes compared to pre-pandemic levels.

That's despite airlines running at about 80% of 2019 capacity.


"Deals are harder to come by, so people are shopping more," Webb said - noting that is a strong positive indicator for the industry overall going forward.

"There's no question that there's an appetite for travel, and in a way that feels a little less discretionary in the past," he said.

More from Webb on **page four** of today's *Travel Daily*.

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Viking adds over 80 departure dates

VIKING has released additional river cruise dates for next year, with 81 departures added across the Douro, Rhone, and Rhine.

The new departures are across three of Viking's most popular river voyages, including the newly released 15-day Lyon, Provence & the Rhineland journey from Amsterdam to Avignon, which will now be operating from Apr through to Oct.

Viking's 10-day Portugal's River of Gold sailing season has also been extended to include departures in Nov and Dec, while the eight-day Lyon & Provence journey includes additional departures in Mar and Nov - [CLICK HERE](#) to view the full list of cruises on offer.

Explore's new ship

NEW Zealand tourism operator Explore Group has welcomed a new 300-pax ship to its fleet of tourism offerings today, with the vessel setting out on its maiden voyage in Auckland this morning.

The new *Tuhi-rapa* is part of an ongoing expansion plan for Explore Group following the purchase of Fullers GreatSights in NZ's Bay of Islands in Jul 2021, and similar fleet expansions in Hamilton Island, Queensland.

Itineraries available on the new ship include sailings to Tiritiri Matangi Island and whale and dolphin cruises.

On board *Tuhi-rapa*, passengers have enough space to carry bikes and large outdoor spaces and windows for cruising and wildlife viewing, as well as authentic cultural elements thanks to a deal with Ngai Tai ki Tamaki.

"We know this new boat will not disappoint," Explore Managing Director William Goodfellow said, adding "on the Tiritiri Matangi run, visitors can expect to see and experience the bird life on the island as well as breath-taking coastal walks."

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

More accessibility needed

SPARROWLY Group is urging the Australian tourism industry to address a shortfall in the provision of services for people with disability.

The Sydney-based business consulting agency recently released *Creating Real Inclusion: A call to arms to the tourism industry*, a discussion paper highlighting the value of the accessible tourism market.

The research shows that visitation by people with disability injects \$10.8 billion into the Australian economy - more than the Chinese inbound market, which currently contributes \$10.4 billion.

The paper identified barriers faced by travellers with a disability, and provides recommendations on how the industry can do better, such as by taking a more holistic design approach when it comes to tourism and hospitality facilities.

While many hotels do provide large and accessible rooms and bathrooms, some fail to consider accessibility when it comes to other design aspects such as lighting, lifts, pool and spa access, and flooring.

Vista casts off early

OCEANIA Cruises has accelerated the debut of its new ship *Vista* with the introduction of a new Founder's Cruise, which will depart from Rome on 13 May, sailing to Venice.

Vista had been scheduled to debut on 20 May, but unprecedented demand for her inaugural season has seen the maiden voyage brought forward by a week.

The Founder's Cruise will be hosted by Oceania's founder Frank Del Rio in celebration of *Vista* and to commemorate the brand's 20th anniversary.

The Cruise will visit ports such as Sorrento, Messina, Argostoli, Corfu, Dubrovnik, and Zadar - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Training staff on assisting people with a disability and taking into consideration hidden disabilities, such as sensory disorders, were also major recommendations made in the paper.

"Tourism has an opportunity right now to lead a change in the way many industries address this important segment and offer true accessibility rather than a cursory solution," Sparrowly Group Founder and Managing Director, Giovanna Lever, said.

For the full paper, [CLICK HERE](#).

MEANWHILE, Tourism and Events Queensland is inviting tourism operators to attend a free virtual accessible tourism training session at 12pm AEST on Wed 14 Dec - for details, [CLICK HERE](#).

Maleny Lodge sold

SUNSHINE Coast's Maleny Lodge Boutique Accommodation has been sold for \$3.7 million.

Located in the growing Sunshine Coast hinterland town of Maleny, the newly opened property is an adults-only retreat.

The hotel opened in Jun after a comprehensive restoration, which retained its original 1905 heritage charm, while incorporating modern interior designs, luxury finishes, modern comforts and curated furniture.

Embedded desire

A NEW survey looking at the insurance needs of Airbnb and other holiday rental owners has revealed that 99% of Australian short-term rental hosts want embedded protection directly from their rental listing provider.

Convenience was identified as the primary reason for wanting embedded insurance, as well as helping cut the costs associated with purchasing both host and landlord insurance.

Despite the clear demand, 68% of those surveyed said they were not offered insurance during their application process.



Window Seat

SMALL accommodation options are rarely sought after by travellers, but for fans of the famous *Lord of the Rings* film franchise, the love of smaller digs has never been quite so large.

The real-life film location of Bilbo Baggins' home is now available to rent, thanks to a new deal between Airbnb and the owners of 'Hobbiton'.

Accommodation packages for Middle Earth fans include an evening banquet at the hobbit watering hole, the Green Dragon Inn, as well as a dinner with plenty of ale, breakfast, and, of course, a behind-the-scenes VIP tour.



TripTech Experience Oz partnership

TRIPTECH has signed a deal with Experience Oz to be its experience booking partner exclusively in Australia.

The new appointment will expand Experience Oz's current offerings, and will extend across TripTech's white label partner applications, including Visitor Centres for Australia and Tourism Holding Limited.

Leading the charge among Experience Oz's new offerings will be the popular CamperMate application and its highly engaged user base, which has increased by more than a third this year.

It marks an exciting time for the CamperMate community with the launch of the CamperMate 'Take Back Summer' campaign, which offers up inspirational summer tips and Experience Oz prizes.

CORPORATE UPDATE

Demand to continue: Webb

TRAVELPORT CEO Greg Webb believes that gathering storm clouds around the global economy are unlikely to impact business travel volumes significantly, with airlines likely to react to any downturn with lower fares and more availability.

Speaking exclusively with *Travel Daily* in Sydney earlier this week, Webb (pictured) said while it was difficult to provide certain forecasts in the current environment, "all of the conversations that we've been having tend to point to the fact that corporate will continue to grow and rebound".

"We are seeing some pre-recessionary trends in the marketplace and that could have a ripple effect if operations decide to tighten their belts, but as of right now demand seems pretty strong," he said.

Like the rest of the industry, Travelport has noted trends towards premium leisure destinations, while the ongoing closure of China is continuing to impact the global sector.

However, when restrictions on travel for China ease "you have to believe that we'll see the same thing that we saw everywhere else, the floodgates will open and there will be a significant amount of outbound demand from China, which will again just provide such a boost to the travel economy".

MEANWHILE Travelport continues to drive innovation in airline retailing, Webb said, with about 80% of the company's customers worldwide migrating to the new Travelport+ platform by the end of the year.

The company has worked hard to address industry issues which became apparent during the pandemic, such as "the airlines making wholesale changes to the way that they deal with refunds and exchanges".

"So we've been enhancing our refunds and exchange package to make it fully automated," he said.



"They're not simple transactions, there was such a deluge of cancellations, so we've tried to simplify that and make it as easy as possible".

Webb noted that Travelport had for some time been talking about the need for the industry to move towards "true modern retailing".

"Travel hasn't kept up with that, and so we've been focused on trying to make sure that we're providing true retail capability, whether it's to a corporate seller, an OTA or TMC - and we feel good about where we are," he said.

In the local market Travelport continues to make progress on its industry partnerships.

"We continue to feel like we're in a great place to advance here," he concluded.

R&M to Abu Dhabi

REED & Mackay has opened a new office in Abu Dhabi, with the expansion marking a second UAE presence for the TMC alongside its Dubai operation which was established in 2016.

Group Chief Executive Officer Fered Stratford said "as our global footprint continues to expand we are focused on delivering consistency in service, product and data to our clients worldwide".

"We are seeing real momentum in the Middle East as COVID-19 restrictions relax and demand continues to grow...our team in Dubai has done an excellent job in nurturing our growing client base in the region, and we are thrilled to be able to expand that service through our new Abu Dhabi office," he said.



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Fares rising: GBT

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (GBT) is forecasting "widespread airfare prices around the world", with a new report from the firm's consulting team citing inflation, rising fuel costs and capacity issues for the expected increases.

The report particularly calls out Australian domestic flights which are predicted to rise by a whopping 19.4% in the Business cabin, while Asia will also be impacted with Economy flights to and from Europe up 12%.

Europe-North America routes are expected to see more modest rises of 3.7%, while intra-European operations will see price rises of about 5.5% as airline capacity recovery continues to lag behind the resurgence of demand.

The volatile economic environment makes it challenging for travel teams to plan ahead, noted GBT's Julie Avenel, VP of Global Business Consulting.

Sustainability report

CAPA Centre for Aviation has released the second edition of its annual *Airline Sustainability Benchmarking Report*, aiming to provide a clearer understanding of the status of carbon emissions in the aviation sector.

The report, developed in partnership with Envest Global, provides an independently evaluated "airline sustainability rating system" based on a range of key emissions metrics and publicly available data points.

"It also highlights the numerous challenges presented in the post-COVID-19 recovery and seeks to provide a clear and consistent set of fact-based metrics to assist stakeholders in their industry engagement and decision making," CAPA said.

The world's 100 largest airlines are ranked according to their carbon-focused sustainability performance - more in next Tue's *Travel Daily* Sustainability feature.

Alatus marks a strong season



MEMBERS of Express Travel Group's (ETG) corporate and premium leisure buying network Alatus met up last week at Melbourne's Ging Thai restaurant to celebrate a year of recovery.

Sponsored by Air New Zealand, the lunch acted as an opportunity for the members to share their war stories and strategise about the year ahead regarding issues such as entrepreneurial thinking, shared experiences & innovation.

The group now totals nine members across Australia, helped along by the recent additions of

Adria International Travel, JBR Travel, WOW! Travel and The Departure Lounge.

Pictured at the event are Francesca Labbozzetta, Marconi Travel; Kylie Luttrell, The Travel Notebook; Svemir Fazlic, Adria International Travel; Michael Krywyn, ETG; Jason Aghan, ETG; Kirilly Plum, Destination HQ; Tom Manwaring, ETG; Jane Robinson, JBR Travel; Mel Van Twest, Air NZ; Melissa Train, Air NZ; Emma Whiting, Emma Whiting Travel; Karina Hill, ETG; and author Robyn Davies.

LATAM frames Aussie growth



LATAM passengers were welcomed with branded red velvet & vanilla cupcakes earlier this week to celebrate the airline's increase of services from Sydney to Santiago (**TD 05 Dec**).

Passengers took photos with LATAM's Instagram frames, before taking off to their South American destination.

Daily flights from Sydney via Auckland started on Tue, making LATAM the only airline operating one service per day between

Australia and South America. LATAM recommenced flights from Sydney in Mar with three weekly services after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic (**TD 30 Mar**).

Since restarting flights, LATAM has experienced significant demand and the airline has been working to increase its services.

Pictured: Antonio Martos, Sandra Gutierrez, Chris Ellis, Daniela Yopez, Juan Pablo, and Shalina Sabar.

Seven years of Sydney for ANA



ALL Nippon Airways (ANA) has celebrated the seventh anniversary of continuous flights between Sydney and Tokyo, as well as its 70th anniversary of airline operations.

Originally started as 'Nippon Helicopter & Aeroplane' in 1952, ANA is now the world's largest Boeing 787 Dreamliner operator.

An event was held at the Kingsford Smith Suite at Sydney Airport on Wed, which was attended by the Consul General of Japan Sydney Tokuda Shuichi, Executive Vice President of Asia & Oceania Shinya Kanda, Managing Director of Australia & Oceania Maki Matsuzaki and the entire Australian ANA team.

FCTG Independent training days



FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) Independent has recently concluded its second instalment of post-pandemic supplier training days, which saw it host 68 advisors across Sydney, Brisbane (**pictured**) and Melbourne.

Over the last two weeks, travel agents heard updates from a range of suppliers, including APT, Back-Roads Touring, G Adventures, Royal Caribbean International, Topdeck, Intrepid and more, as well as the latest from the FCTG Independent

support team.

At the end of each day, the agents also had the opportunity to catch up with their peers and suppliers during networking sessions.

FCTG Independent Australia Product Leader Paul Murrell said, "I had the pleasure of running this day and it was great to see how engaged our independent agents were with each supplier".

MEANWHILE, Blake Newell was recently appointed as the new Marketing Manager for FCTG Independent Australia.

A truly unique famil



THE Unique Tourism Collection treated several lucky travel advisors to a Thailand famil this month, hosted in partnership with Pimalai Resort & Spa, RAKxa Wellness & Medical Retreat and COMO Metropolitan Bangkok.

The group enjoyed a Thai dinner and drinks at Rak Talay Beach Bar and Restaurant, along with wellness treatments and delicious food, including onsite baked bread, at the RAKxa Wellness and Medical Retreat.

Another highlight for the agents was dining at Nahm, COMO Metropolitan Bangkok's Michelin-starred contemporary Thai restaurant, where the award-winning head chef, Pim Techamuanvith, cooked up a delicious dinner for the group.

Pictured on a transfer ferry to Pimalai: Sarah Cleaver, MTA; Svetlana Jovanovic, The Unique Tourism Collection; Lina Maddalena, Travelcall; and Laura Peut, Travel Associates.



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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

Captain Cook Cruises is offering 30% off full adult fares on three-, four-, and seven-night small ship expedition cruises departing from 01 Jan to the end of Mar 2023, such as the Yasawa & Mamanuca Island Cruise, as well as free upgrades to C and B staterooms - for further information, contact fiji@captaincookcruisesfiji.com.

Australian and New Zealand adventurers can enjoy 10% savings on the cheaper option when they book two self-guided walks with **On Foot Holidays**. A recommended pairing is the six-night Amalfi Coast route and the seven-night Southern Tuscany hike - visit onfootholidays.co.uk.

APT has extended its 95-year anniversary sale until 15 Dec, giving travellers more time to take advantage of its most popular Europe river cruise departures in 2023 with flights included and up to 50% off cabin upgrades. Call 1300 278 278 for further details.

Cruise-goers can save up to \$2,000 per couple on 2023 departures for **Viking's** eight-day Lyon & Provence river journey, now on sale and priced from \$2,995pp twin share. To take advantage of the deal, go to vikingcruises.com.au to book before 16 Dec.

Off to a cool start

UNTRAVELLED Paths' Hotel of Ice is on track to open on 20 Dec after construction began last week - marking the hotel's earliest development start date since its launch in 2006.

Located 2,000 metres high in Romania's Carpathian Mountains close to the glacial Balea Lake, the impressive, remote Hotel of Ice is only reachable by cable car.

The igloo-like structure will offer guests at least eight bedrooms, as well as an Ice Restaurant & Bar where clients can enjoy a four-course meal for around US\$95.

Untravelled Paths will also offer four- and seven-night Ice Hotel ski experience packages for the northern winter season, which is expected to run until around 16 Apr 2023.

Resilient Lady here

VIRGIN Voyages has formally welcomed its third vessel *Resilient Lady* to its growing fleet.

The cruise line's highly anticipated ship has been built by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri at its Sestri Ponente shipyard in Geno, with *Resilient* marking Virgin's Voyages third completed vessel to enter service in the span of just two years.

IHG Amadeus tie-up

IHG Hotels & Resorts has renewed its long-standing partnership with Amadeus' business intelligence solutions.

The company will use Demand360, Agency360, and RevenueStrategy360 across its portfolio for corporate insights.

TravelManagers' Market Day



TRAVELMANAGERS recently hosted more than 50 key suppliers along with 175 personal travel managers (PTM) at a series of Market Day workshops in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

The four-hour business sessions included product updates and post-COVID enhancements, as well as discussions about future marketing opportunities, before wrapping up with a sit-down Christmas celebration.

There was also a Signature Travel Network booth showcasing the brand's luxury products.

"The Market Days presented a great opportunity to bring people together in person after two years of maintaining relationships mostly online and via email or phone," TravelManagers Executive General Manager Michael Gazal enthused.

Pictured: Travel advisors and suppliers gather to mark the official kick off of TravelManagers' Market Day at the Sydney Masonic Centre.

Shama adds 10

ONYX Hospitality Group's Shama brand will add 10 new properties by 2025.

Nine of the new locations set to be added by the serviced apartment company will be located in Thailand, while another will be in Malaysia.

The properties will add to Shama's six existing Thai locations and 10 Hong Kong locations.

Pax to switch on

THE European Union has announced that airlines operating in Europe can now provide 5G technology to passengers on board their planes, paving the way for travellers to be able to use their smart devices without having to select Airplane Mode.

Airlines have long requested that customers switch devices to the Airplane Mode out of concern that mobile data may interfere with the plane's flight systems, however the EU said the risk of signal intrusion is very small.

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