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NCL doubles up

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line is offering double Partners First Rewards on Alaska and Hawai'i 2022 bookings.

A \$70 gift card is available for each booking to the destinations made this month, while \$35 is on offer for deposited reservations to all other NCL destinations during Mar - for more details see the **cover page** of today's **TD**.

Bonza COO gone

PETER McNally, co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of fledgling domestic carrier Bonza (**TD** 26 Oct 2021) has left the startup airline before it even took to the skies.

A Bonza spokesperson confirmed to **Travel Daily** that the airline and McNally had "parted ways," but added that "he leaves behind a very capable team who have been, and will continue to be, leading our regulatory application process."

Agent call to Qatar action

LIVE broadcasts from Qatar on Channel 7's *Sunrise* all this week (**TD** 04 Mar) will include heavy promotion of a bargain \$19 stopover deal, with the campaign's sole call to action being to book via the travel trade.

The "world's best value stopover" offer will be showcased in each segment presented by *Sunrise* weatherman Sam Mac from various locations across the country, with viewers directed to contact their travel agent to make a booking to stay in Qatar en

LHW webinar Wed

THE Leading Hotels of the World will host a travel advisor webinar this Wed 09 Mar from 1pm AEDT, with updates on recent changes to its Leaders Club loyalty program which expand eligibility and make it easier for agents to extend benefits to their clients - details on the **last page**.

route to Europe and the UK.

Travel advisors who receive enquiries and want to take advantage of the offer for their clients are being urged to register and book on the Discover Qatar portal at discoverqatar.qa, or email info@theinspirecollective.com.au for more details on the program.

The \$19 per person, per night stopover offer can be tailored with upgrades, transfers and a choice of tours, with "premium" and "luxury" offers also available with higher grade accommodation and add-ons.

This week's *Sunrise* broadcasts live from Qatar also include an opportunity for **Travel Daily** readers to win a trip including return QR flights, activities and accommodation on the upcoming Qatar Tourism VIP mega famil which is scheduled for May.

Daily questions will feature in each issue of **TD** this week - for details see **page five**.

QDP WA deal

A **SPECIAL** companion fare offer is currently available for travel agents booking their customers on flights to Perth via the Qantas Distribution Platform (QDP).

The offer is live from today until 11 Mar, offering Economy class return flights to the WA capital from Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane for \$299 per person when two or more passengers are booked to travel together.

All travel agents who are participating in the Qantas Channel and make bookings using QDP content can unlock the offer for their customers, with valid travel periods from 01 May-22 Jun and 19 Jul-15 Sep this year.

See qantasagencyconnect.com.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has five pages of news, a cover page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**, and a full page from **Leading Hotels of the World**.



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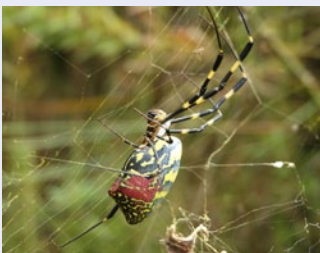
Window Seat

BOOKINGS for travel to the east coast of the United States are starting to spike in Australia, but just a cautionary note for the arachnophobes amongst us, you may be joined by some flying eight-legged friends.

Originally from Japan, the Joro Spider, or parachuting spider as it's referred to by naturalists, is expected to spread out quickly up and down the eastern seaboard from Georgia, where numbers have ballooned in recent months.

"The spider has no predators, it doesn't have anything that's controlling its population size in the new habitat, but it has perfect conditions to spread," warned Benjamin Frick from the University of Georgia.

The arachnids can travel large distances by using their webs like parachutes to ride the wind, in other words, keep your mouths shut when on your next holiday to the States unless you want to sample a strange new colourful delicacy.



Carnival flags its return

NEW Carnival Australia President Marguerite Fitzgerald has revealed the company is targeting the middle of the year for a return to service.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* during a meet-and-greet webinar on Fri, Fitzgerald said the resumption would be a domestic-led reboot.

Australian cruises were a big part of Carnival's business pre-COVID, Fitzgerald emphasised, and ideally that will be no different upon the company's return this year.

"We definitely see that as continuing to be a very important part," she said.

"In the short term, that's probably where we'll be starting, and part of it will be, 'what are the restrictions internationally', but part of it will also be bringing back tourism and tourist dollars to those ports and those regional areas," Fitzgerald added.

Carnival's local chief indicated she was not concerned about the challenges that COVID presents in terms of keeping loyal cruisers from returning.

"I'm actually not worried about the long-term impact on cruising...I think actually cruising is a fantastic way to take a holiday during times like this," she said.

"International experience says we shouldn't be worried about this, the support that we received locally from so many of our guests, and people saying actually this feels like something I should

be trying."

Fitzgerald added that Carnival is already making "tentative plans" for the day cruising resumes, in what will likely be a staged restart.

While Carnival's crews around the world are required to wear masks all the time, and the company currently "recommends" guests use higher-grade masks indoors with two or more layers, she stopped short of suggesting guests would be required to do so also.

Instead, Fitzgerald said she welcomed whatever rules and/or norms were applicable on land.

"What's going to make people confident, broadly available research says that it's actually vaccinations that's making people confident," she said

"This is why we're so confident in our ability to bring back cruise in a really successful way in Australia and we just have such high rates of vaccination here.

"I think whilst you see masking in on land, you'll probably see masking on ships," Fitzgerald added.

Qantas Xeros in

QANTAS has signed an agreement with software company Xero that will see the airline's SME clients able to earn loyalty points while using the Xero App Store.

Under the deal with Qantas Business Rewards, members can earn between 7,000 and 21,000 Qantas Points when signing up for selected Xero certified app partners, including ServiceM8, ApprovalMax, Chaser, Syft, EzzyBills, Finlert and Deputy, for longer than 90 days.

Points earned can be used on flights, hotels, Qantas Wine, as well as more than 8,000 products from the Qantas Rewards Store.

"In partnership with Xero, we're giving business owners new ways to grow their points balances when using business apps in the Xero App Store," CEO Qantas Loyalty Olivia Wirth said.

"It's now easier for businesses to manage their travel with Qantas, with invoices flowing directly into Xero accounting software," she added.

This is the first deal between the two brands, with more certified partners to be added soon.

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Bamboo plants another MEL flight



BAMBOO Airways has added a Melbourne-Hanoi service, after last week announcing its twice-weekly Sydney-Ho Chi Minh City flight (**TD** 01 Mar).

Direct flights between Hanoi and Melbourne will begin on 27 Apr, a month after the takeoff of SYD-SGN, with initial plans for one flight per week.

The service, which will use a Boeing 787, is the first direct flight between the two cities, after Bamboo launched a MEL-SGN flight last month (**TD** 27 Jan).

Deputy General Director Truong Phuoc Thanh (**pictured** with Melbourne Airport Chief of Aviation Lorie Angus) said the regular non-stop HAN-MEL route is a testament to Bamboo's resilience and strategic vision.

"We believe our new non-stop service will create favourable conditions for the travellers of both countries," he said.

AFTA rallies support

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is recommending the travel sector support the Lions Foundation National Disaster Appeal.

AFTA said it had been overwhelmed with calls from members this week, and is recommending anyone interested in helping those impacted by the floods to support the Appeal.

"The generosity of the travel sector is legendary...AFTA has been overwhelmed by calls with members wanting to do something to help support their friends and their communities impacted by floods," said Chief Executive Officer Dean Long.

"Like travel agents, in every community there are Lions volunteers who go above and beyond to make a difference."

Tax-deductible donations can be made online **HERE**.

keep dreaming...

Travel inspiration for your clients' next holiday!

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Travel & Cruise Weekly

Vanuatu plots reopening

AUTHORITIES in Vanuatu will reduce quarantine stays to seven days from later this month, as part of a cautious reopening plan in line with achieving a 70% vaccination rate on 20 Mar.

Fully vaccinated international travellers aged 18-plus will be able to enter the country, although arrival caps will apply.

Once 80% of the population is fully vaccinated the next phase of the plan will allow arrivals 12-plus, with three days of hotel quarantine and a further four days with movement restricted to the main island of Efate.

The third phase, which will be implemented at a 90% citizen vaccination rate, will see Vanuatu fully reopen its borders, with no quarantine requirement and all provinces open for travel.

Visitors will still be required to have a pre-travel PCR test and appropriate COVID-19 travel

insurance, and will have a PCR swab on arrival.

Vanuatu Tourism Office CEO Adela Issachar Aru said unveiling the border reopening plan was a milestone for the nation's tourism industry, with the vaccine rollout now well under way.

Vanuatu has only recorded 18 cases of COVID-19 among about 8,000 repatriated citizens, and has not experienced any community transmission of the virus at this stage.

AY reroutes Tokyo

FINNAIR will this week resume its Helsinki flights to Tokyo Narita, with a new routing avoiding Russian airspace adding more than three hours to the journey.

The hostilities in the Ukraine saw AY forced to cancel services to Seoul, Osaka, Shanghai, Tokyo & Guangzhou to avoid Russia.

BayviewTravel

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Nevada back in Oz

TRAVEL Nevada has announced its intentions to reconnect with the Australian trade after a period of suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The timing of the announcement coincides with the resumption of international flights to the United States, with the state's key attractions such as road trips set to take centre stage in marketing efforts.

"COVID has been incredibly challenging to navigate, but after our short hiatus we are thrilled to welcome Nevada back to the Australian market, and excited to re-introduce the Silver State to wanderlust seekers looking for transformative travel experiences," Travel Nevada Regional Director - Australia at Canuckiwi, Corey Marshall said.

Natalie Brown has also been appointed as Media Director at Canuckiwi to oversee the national media strategy.

Kiwis jet off to Fiji

KIWIS have started travelling to Fiji for leisure for the first time in two years after the two nations recently agreed to quarantine-free entry protocols.

In response, Fiji Airways is operating four flights a week from Auckland, with daily flights scheduled to launch from 14 Apr.

The airline will also operate up to three flights a week from Christchurch from 14 Apr, and up to two flights a week from Wellington from 13 Apr.

Seabourn modifies

SEABOURN Cruise Line has cancelled its scheduled visits to St. Petersburg due to the military conflict in the region, resulting in the modification of a number of Baltic itineraries.

Replacement ports will vary by voyage, and will include stops in the Norwegian fjords, Gothenburg, Helsingborg, Ulvik, Sandness, Farsund and Aalborg.

VA celebrates Pride Flight



VIRGIN Australia recently took equality to new heights, operating special Mardi Gras Pride Flights from Melbourne and Brisbane to Sydney.

On board, passengers were treated to the company of special guests Dannii Minogue (pictured), Danielle Laidley, Sophia Cachia, Grace Hyland and Emily Seebohm, while entertainment came in the form of Coco Jumbo and Tora Hymen of *RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under* fame.

Shifting to solo trips

MANDINGALBAY Ancient Indigenous Tours has introduced its first scheduled tours for independent travellers in Cairns, marking a shift from offering tours exclusively for groups.

Adventures start at the Cairns Marina taking visitors by boat across Trinity Inlet to view the mountains on Mandingalbay Yidinji Country, followed by an overnight camping trip and a Dinner on Country experience.

The 100% Indigenous-owned company has been growing steadily since 2015 and is now ready to cater to more travellers with the arrival of a purpose-built 42-seat boat and construction of infrastructure for visitors.

The carrier said that \$30 from each Pride Flight ticket sale will be donated to Minus 18, which champions social inclusion for young LGBTQIA+ people.

Mulpha on the hunt

PROPERTY and hospitality group Mulpha is continuing its Hunter expansion with the new Lane Retreat, Bimbadgen.

Construction has commenced on 60 architect-designed eco studio retreats in the grounds of its Bimbadgen winery, with the Lane Retreat designed by Mulpha to provide a unique accommodation option to complement its Palmer Lane wedding and events venue, as well as Bimbadgen's home vineyard on McDonalds Road.

The property boasts three gathering sites for ceremonies and celebrations, with Mulpha to construct a new luxury swimming pool and amenities, along with a bespoke store & pantry, and VIP access to all of Bimbadgen.

Construction is expected to be completed by the end of the winter, ready for guests by the spring of this year

Mulpha also recently acquired the nearby Emma's Cottage Vineyard (**TD** 15 Nov 2021).

Double features

PONANT is set to host a special two-part online event on 17 Mar to highlight the cruise line's range of new luxury expedition itineraries for 2023.

The virtual sessions will be hosted by Ponant's National Business Manager Craig Farrell, along with guest speakers Mick Fogg, the company's Director of Expeditions and Destination Development, as well as Ryo Ijichi, a Ponant expedition guide.

Participants will have a chance to win a cruise for two in Indonesia aboard *Le Laperouse*.

Register for the first session about tropical expeditions taking place at 3pm AEDT **HERE**, and for the webinar on polar cruise options at 5pm AEDT **HERE**.

Daydream appoints

DAYDREAM Island Resort has announced Brenden van Blerk has been appointed as its new General Manager of the Island.

He brings with him more than 16 years of experience in the accommodation sector, including his most recent stint at IHG where he was Director, New Hotels for Australasia & Japan.

In his new role, van Blerk will be charged with developing a distinct new brand identity for the island in the Aussie market.

Garden Inn rollout

HILTON has signed on to build the Hilton Garden Inn Brisbane City Centre North, marking the fifth Hilton Garden Inn hotel earmarked for Australasia.

The 129-room property will open in early 2024 and feature a full-service restaurant and bar, meeting facilities, a fitness room, as well as The Shop, a 24-hour retail store that will stock local beverages and snack treats.

The Brisbane property joins 12 properties for the brand in the pipeline for our region, including the Hilton Garden Inn Sydney Kingswood which will open its doors in 2023.

NCL discounts

TRAVELLERS are being invited to enjoy the best of both worlds, with Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) Great Value Offers.

Australian cruisers can take advantage of the cruise line's new offer, available until 24 Mar, with savings of up to 35% on cruise fares, together with US\$200 of onboard credit, and all five of the brand's Free at Sea offers.

This offer is available for sailings in Australia, as well as Alaska, Asia, Europe, Hawai'i, New Zealand and more.

CLICK HERE for further info.

Sabre drops Aeroflot

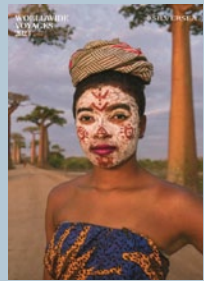
SABRE Corporation has terminated its distribution agreement with Russian airline Aeroflot in response to Russia's continuing invasion of Ukraine.

"We are taking a stand against this military conflict and we are complying, and will continue to comply, with sanctions imposed against Russia," Sabre said.

The company added that it would monitor the situation and evaluate whether additional actions are appropriate, and if any extra counter measures should be enacted in response.

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



Silversea Cruises - 2023 Worldwide Voyages

In 2023/2024, Silversea Cruises' guests will visit almost 1,000 destinations across all seven continents. From iconic cities to remote islands, from the tropical equator to the polar extremes, the season will feature more than 60 maiden calls. The new collection is Silversea's largest ever, with guests invited to delve into the history of the Indian Ocean and Arabian Peninsula. Highlights include all-new expeditions to Greenland exploring Baffin Bay, and more. Also launching next year is Silversea's Evolution class, the first two ships of which are currently under construction.



TTNQ - Deeper into Dreamtime

Tourism Tropical North Queensland's Deeper into Dreamtime brochure highlights the region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts centres, events, tours and accommodation including new products operated by Traditional Owners. The new experiences connect visitors with the world's oldest culture, and showcase the Great Barrier Reef, the rainforest, and the outback of Far North Queensland. Among the 21 touring options

is Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours, which launches its first schedule of bookable tours this month.

Saudis unveil ski paradise

SAUDI Arabia is continuing to ride the slopes of major tourism development, with the Middle Eastern nation revealing a plan to create a new outdoor snow skiing destination.

Trojena will offer travellers the option of an all-year ski village, a man-made freshwater lake, a luxury property called The Bow Hotel, as well as a vertical village within the mountain area that will combine technology, entertainment and hospitality facilities for guests.

The major ski development will also include the Slope Residences, located near the ski slope overlooking the lake, in addition to six districts that will offer various tourist activities to meet the tastes of multiple travellers.

These will include the villages of Gateway, Discover, Valley, Explore, Relax and Fun, with further details about each to be

revealed in the coming months.

The project will be spearheaded by the board of Neom, a future planned city in the country's northwest region on the Red Sea.

"This new development is a major contribution to achieving Neom's long-term ambitions by adhering to the principles of sustainability and utilising state-of-the-art technology and engineering, across various disciplines, to make Neom an all-round and attractive world-class destination," Neom CEO Nadhmi Al-Nasr said.

Further highlights of the tourism development will include ultra-luxury family and wellness resorts, a wide range of retail stores and restaurants, in addition to sports activities, such as watersports and mountain biking, as well as an interactive nature reserve.

The project is anticipated to be completed by 2026.

The Seven Network and Sunrise is broadcasting to Australian viewers live from Qatar this week, thanks to Qatar Tourism. Sunrises' Sam Mac's weather segments will be live from various key locations around Qatar.

Want to experience Qatar firsthand?

Travel Daily will be giving a lucky reader the opportunity to win a spot on Qatar Tourism's VIP mega famil departing May 2022.



Win

Tune into Sunrise 7-11 March and answer these questions to enter.

Every day you watch and enter gives you an additional entry:

1. Which location in Qatar was Sam Mac broadcasting from?
2. Name one activity they did that day.
3. Which day of the week were you watching?

Email answers to competitions@traveldaily.com.au

to be in the running to win yourself a trip to Qatar.



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To learn about our traveller loyalty program, Leaders Club and how we've enhanced the program, we invite you to join us for our informational webinar.

WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH
1:00PM - 1:45PM AEST

To register to attend,
please RSVP to Renee Fowler rfowler@lhw.com

We hope you can join our Leading Hotels Australia team.