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All aboard Rocky

READERS can learn a lot more about Rocky Mountaineer's new Rockies to the Red Rocks route by visiting the product profile on **page eight** of today's issue.

The two-day journey boasts all of the rail service's usual premium elements.

New GlobalStar connection

EXCLUSIVE

GARY Reichenberg's Connections Group of Companies has today been announced as the new Australian partner of international TMC network GlobalStar, with Reichenberg to also sit on the organisation's London-based Board and take a stake in the organisation.

GlobalStar Travel Management was previously aligned with Helloworld Travel Limited's QBT corporate travel operation, but the pending \$175m sale of that business to Corporate Travel Management has seen GlobalStar seek a new local partner.

The group describes itself as a "truly worldwide travel management organisation," operating in more than 3,500 locations in 85 countries.

Reichenberg, who founded Executive Edge Travel in 2000 and later added Corporate Travel Connections and MICE business Totem Group, has offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth plus a new location in Adelaide and says it's the largest independent TMC in Australia.

He was one of the original co-founders of CT Partners, but Connections is now aligned with

Express Travel Group's Alatus TMC division (**TD** 07 May 2020).

Reichenberg told **TD** that Connections Group was taking up the "tier 1" membership of GlobalStar previously held by QBT, because under its new ownership by CTM the business will be aligned with GlobalStar rival Radius Travel which became part of CTM when the company took over Nebraska-based Travel & Transport (**TD** 29 Sep 2020).

"Joining the GlobalStar network is a further demonstration of our commitment to partnering with values-aligned organisations.


"The strength and breadth of the network has already enabled us to play a part in securing significant new business on a global basis," he said.

GlobalStar CEO James Stevenson welcomed Connections Group to the network, saying "I have no doubt that our newest partner is perfectly placed to be part of the change at our network."

Don't miss Quark

THERE are still spots available for this afternoon's FREE Quark Expeditions **TD** Event.

The Quark team will introduce *Ultramarine* to the industry, with presenters including experienced Antarctic expedition leader Alison Gordon - **CLICK HERE** to register.



Become a Viking Legend

Due to popular demand, Viking's Valhalla Club has returned for 2022 giving you the chance to earn your place on the legendary Viking Valhalla incentive cruise. You could be one of ten agents who can invite a travelling companion of their choice on an eight-day Mediterranean Viking voyage. The grand prize includes return flights with Finnair for the winning agents, a Silver Spirits Beverage package, two optional shore excursions, \$300 shipboard credit per stateroom, plus 8,000 Rewards by Viking points to spend on their catalogue of incredible products.

Learn more here.



Today's issue of TD


Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, a Product Update from **Rocky Mountaineer** plus a full page from **Qatar Tourism**.



Two Viking Ships in Australia

The Vikings are coming to Australia and New Zealand this year. Following the positive news that our local waters will soon welcome cruise ships again, Viking are excited to announce that two of their award-winning ocean ships will be coming to Australia and New Zealand. *Viking Orion* and their newest vessel *Viking Mars* will be here for the 2022-2023 cruise season. With savings up to \$2,000 per couple, there's never been a better time to help your clients explore closer to home The Viking Way.

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Vale Tim Birley

THE Australian hospitality sector is mourning the sudden death of Pan Pacific Hotels Group National BDM Tim Birley.

Birley, an icon of the MICE industry, was known for his “great big smile, sharp sense of humour, his kindness and friendship,” and will be sorely missed.



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Grant applications now open

AFTER a brief delay in getting the site live this morning, Austrade has formally opened applications for the highly anticipated Round 3 of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program (TD yesterday).

Rather than managing the program through Services Australia as per previous rounds of the scheme, this time applications are lodged via the Smarty Grants platform, with a dedicated link now available at ctsp.smartygrants.com.au.

Applications are being processed in order of receipt, with payments calculated on a sliding scale based on turnover, between \$7,500 and \$90,000.

MEANWHILE AFTA has noted that the criteria for the \$75.5 million program, leaves out some applicants who received payments under Round One but were deemed ineligible for Round Two of the scheme.

AFTA CEO Dean Long noted that was a divergence from the methodology recommended in the Federation's Pre-Budget Submission, with AFTA strongly advocating that the use of the remainder of the \$258 million allocation should not be dependent on previous applications - while the Jobkeeper status of businesses, also part of the criteria, is no longer relevant.

Long said he and the AFTA Board would be “advocating for a change to the criteria.”

Intrepid heading for \$1b

INTREPID Travel has reiterated its aim of becoming “the world’s first \$1 billion purpose-led adventure company,” today releasing its 2021 annual report.

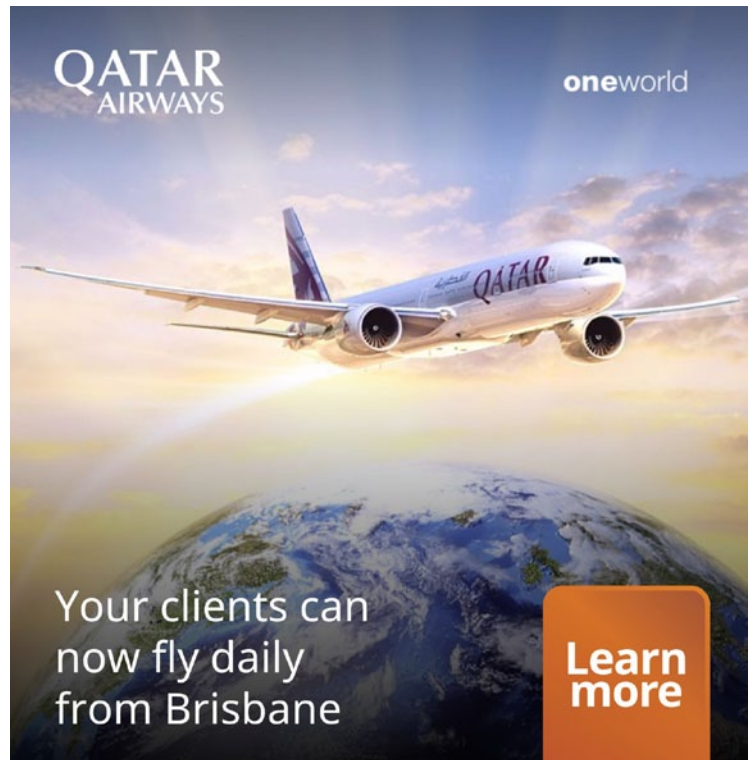
The firm said it had protected its core assets, within the period including the new strategic partnership with French family business Genairgy, which took a minority stake (TD 11 Mar 2021), while \$30 million secured through the Federal Govt’s Export Finance Australia (TD 08 Jun 2021) is helping Intrepid accelerate growth and support investment.

At the end of 2021 the firm had

\$91 million in cash and undrawn bank facilities, almost double the \$48 million in Dec 2020.

However the pandemic means the \$1b target will be achieved later than the previously planned 2025 date, with Intrepid aiming to match its 2019 results in 2023/24 and “accelerate from there”.

The company, which also re-certified as a B Corp during 2021 and raised over \$500,000 via The Intrepid Foundation, boosted its Chimu Adventures stake to 67.5%, and acquired NZ’s Haka Tours and ANZ Nature Tours as well as US-based Wildland Trekking.



Jul - Dec 2022

TREND FORECAST

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News Corp Australia



Vail's Swiss resort

VAIL Resorts has announced the acquisition of a majority stake in the Andermatt-Sedrun ski resort in Switzerland.

The destination is less than 90 minutes from each of Zurich, Lucerne and Lugarno, and about two hours from Milan.

Vail is acquiring a 55% ownership stake in the company which controls and operates all of the resort's mountain and ski-related assets, including lifts, a ski school and most restaurants.

Properties include The Chedi Andermatt, the Radisson Blue Reussen, luxury condos, studios and apartments an 18-hole championship golf course and a concert hall.

Vail Resorts CEO Kirsten Lynch said "entering the European ski market has been a long-term strategic priority for Vail Resorts".

The deal will see 2022-23 Epic Pass holders able to access the Swiss property, along with existing deals offering skiing at Verbier4Vallees, Les 3 Vallees, Skirama Dolomiti and Ski Arlberg.

In Australia Vail Resorts owns the Perisher, Falls Creek and Mt Hotham resorts.

Lew Pulbrook's final trip

THE travel industry gathered on the NSW Central Coast yesterday to farewell industry veteran, the late Lew Pulbrook, whose extensive career most recently saw him operate South American specialist Amigos Travel.

Pulbrook (pictured) had an early association with Flight Centre, having started the Sydney Travel Group with Skroo Turner and Bill James in the 1980s after working as a Topdeck Tours driver.

His early years also saw him work with Goway Travel in South America, before buying his own bus and fitting it out as an expedition vehicle which he ran under the Inca Tours brand - the first foreign vehicle to cross from Southeast Bolivia into Paraguay.

Returning to Australia to set up the shops alongside the Flight Centre founders, he famously took credit for choosing the iconic red and white colours that the brand continues to use today.

He later sold his share of Flight Centre to concentrate on building up Inca Tours which he successfully ran for 24 years before selling it in 2005.



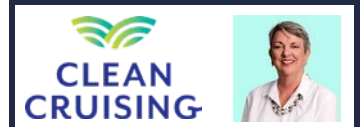
Several other business ventures eventually led him back to travel, with Amigos Travel set up in 2017. "Having been shot at in Pakistan, surviving the Revolution in Iran, meeting the Shining Path Terrorists in Peru, chased on a cliff road at night by the Colombian Cartel, catching alligators by hand in Amazon swamps, bitten by an anaconda and confronted by army tanks whilst escaping the 1982 coup d'etat in Bolivia, it's ironic that lung cancer was the one foe that got him, particularly as he had never smoked a day in his life," a tribute written by Top Deck Tours colleague Trevor Carroll notes.

Flight Centre CEO Graham Turner said he'd been in touch with Pulbrook ever since founding the Sydney Travel Group in the 1980s, and "as you can see from Lew's career it's colourful and wide-ranging".

"He's been a great person and influence within the travel industry for so many years and will be sorely missed," he said.

WorldHotels chief

BWH Hotel Group has announced the promotion of Ron Pohl to become President of WorldHotels, which the company acquired three years ago (TD 19 Feb 2019), with a brief to increase scale, drive revenue to hoteliers and enhance the brand's image.



"I've been with Clean Cruising nearly 12 years and there have been so many highlights. I was awarded CLIA Consultant of the Year in 2014, I've escorted a fabulous group of people through the French Rivers with Avalon Waterways. Every year I've had incredible travel opportunities including game watching in Africa, exploring the Inside Passage, Yukon and Alaska and visiting every continent. Just this week, I've returned from the trip of a lifetime, exploring Antarctica onboard the Greg Mortimer. I cannot recommend this industry or Clean Cruising more highly."

Martine Hero,
Senior Consultant



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The travel industry's long and winding road to recovery, cautiously optimistic financial results from the first half of the year and more in the March issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

CLICK to read



Window Seat

THERE'S been quite a buzz around the *Travel Daily* office in recent weeks, with our Sales and Marketing Manager Sean Harrigan (pictured below) seeming to be in a particularly good mood.

The reason for his upbeat attitude became clear at 5pm yesterday, when he appeared as a contestant on Channel 7's *The Chase Australia*, having taken a mysterious day of personal leave some months ago to film the show with host Larry Emdur.

Sean and his co-competitors took on Cheryl "Tiger Mum" Toh as the Chaser, and in a thrilling finale managed to take home the winnings after Sean's inspirational answer confirming that 80s/90s musician Vangelis was of Greek extraction created a "push-back" in the final seconds of the show.

He also impressed the Tiger Mum, who said she "loved the energy that Sean showed on the buzzer, great stuff!"



Independent division hails new path



FCTG Independent recently hosted 110 guests at its "wildly successful" first annual conference since Mar 2020 at Hilton Surfers Paradise Hotel.

The event included 18 industry sponsors, and attendees from all brands which make up the division, including Travel Partners, Flight Centre Independent, Travel Associates at Home, and Travel Associates Franchise.

The conference included a "Master Your Mindset" session with Cherie Canning, former Flight Centre employee and Founder of Luminare Leadership, as well as breakout sessions designed to help independent travel advisors and agency owners drive growth in their businesses.

This included sessions such as "An Entrepreneur's Journey", "Marketing Events & Networking

for Your Business", "How to Pitch, Win & Service Corporate Customers", and many more.

With guests also keen to let their hair down, the event opened with a poolside "Sail Away" Party hosted by World's Leading Cruise Lines' brands Carnival Cruise Lines, Cunard Line, Holland America Line, P&O Cruises Australia, and Princess Cruises.

Meanwhile, a Gala Dinner sponsored by Qatar Airways was held at SkyPoint Observation Deck, where attendees enjoyed the 360-degree views of the Gold Coast.

Pictured are FCTG General Manager Premium Brands Danielle Galloway, Travel Associates Townsville and Travel Associates Townsville owner Debbie Rains, FCTG Independent GM Astrid Richardson.

Linking to Tamworth

LINK Airways will commence direct flights between Tamworth and Sydney from 27 Jun, utilising a 34-seat Saab 340B Plus aircraft.

The carrier will operate 29 return services a week to the country music capital, with prices starting from \$159 one way.

Travel Daily Events

PRESENTS

AN ONLINE EVENT WITH

TODAY

Quark Expeditions

Robert Halfpenny and the new APAC sales team will talk about the launch of 'Explorers Wanted', the 23/24 Antarctica season, unique experiences, and an update on 'Ultramarine' including video of its maiden season... and much more.

TUESDAY 29 MARCH

4pm (AEDT)

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AA celebrates 23 years!



THE team at travel industry specialist recruitment firm AA Appointments got together in Sydney last weekend to celebrate the company's 23rd birthday.

The company had originally planned a big 21st bash two years ago, but instead found itself saying goodbye to much loved clients, candidates and fellow team members under the devastation wrought by COVID.

"Two years on, thankfully the future seems brighter," said

MD Adriana d'Angelis, adding: "we have shared a spectacular journey from winning the Virgin contract only six months after opening to surviving 9/11, SARS, the GFC and now a pandemic... looking forward to hitting that 25th milestone together".

Pictured at the iconic Park Hyatt Hotel on the shores of Sydney Harbour are Sandra Camporeale, Carmen Pugh, Adriana d'Angelis, Greg Kilroe-Smith and Samantha Grandioso.

South African change

INTERNATIONAL travellers entering South Africa will no longer need to conduct a PCR test on arrival, with loosened requirements instead mandating proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test not older than 72 hours.

Attendance at gatherings has also increased by 50%, a major boost the business events sector.

The news follows an updated Australian Department of Foreign Affairs advisory this week which downgraded its advice for travellers bound for important outbound market of South Africa, lowering the risk level to "reconsider your need to travel" from "do not travel".

While the decision represents an improvement in travel disruption conditions on the ground, DFAT warns that several destinations in South Africa continue to restrict entry or transit to travellers, and that restrictions in the country could change at short notice.

BA back to Sydney

BRITISH Airways has this week returned to Sydney for the first time in close to two years, a move revealed in Jan (**TD** 10 Jan).

Flights are being serviced by Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft and operates between London's Heathrow Airport via Singapore and onward to Sydney.

"We will be honoured to play our part in reuniting families and friends with their loved ones after such a long time apart," BA's Head of Sales, Asia-Pacific Noella Ferns said.

MEANWHILE the carrier has declared it will power "a number of flights" with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) as it receives its first shipment of green fuel from Phillips 66 (**TD** 06 Dec 2021).

International Airlines Group, BA's parent company, is investing US\$400 million over the next 20 years into developing SAF, establishing deals with several companies to develop plants and purchase the sustainable fuel.

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Thumbs up for Thai travel



AMAZING Thailand recently held an exclusive luxury event, in collaboration with the Luxperience team, at the Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour.

The exclusive gathering, which took place late last week, saw travel advisors entertained with an amazing Thai classical music performance.

Guests were also treated to a cooking demonstration by Michelin-starred Chef Bee Satongun of Paste Thai Restaurant Australia in Mittagong.

Also in attendance was the Thai Ambassador Busadee Santipitaks,

who delivered an opening remark on the importance of diplomatic relations between Australia and Thailand, and most importantly, the lifting of pre-travel testing requirement for international arrivals, beginning next month.

The relaxing of rules will see Thailand slowly prepare its four-phase plan to downgrade the COVID-19 pandemic to an endemic disease.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Deputy Governor for International Marketing Asia & South Pacific Tanes Petsuwan also introduced attendees to TAT's new marketing theme called "Visit Thailand Year 2022: Amazing New Chapters".

New TripTech app

TRIPTECH has launched a new travel app for Australia's Visitor Centres, with its newest partner, The Tourism Group, to bring a digital presence to the iconic tourist information services.

The 'Australian Visitor Centres - Explore Australia' platform is now live in the App Store and Google Play store, and features every accredited centre located throughout the country.

The app also brings curated content from local Explore Visitor Centres, as well as the latest information on regional events, news, accommodation, and interesting things to do.

Discovery debuts

PRINCESS Cruises' newest MedallionClass ship, *Discovery Princess*, has set sail on her maiden voyage.

Discovery is currently celebrating her first cruise to the Mexican Riviera, which departed from the Port of Los Angeles.

The ship expands Princess' fleet to 15 vessels, and offers elegantly appointed accommodations, world-class entertainment, gourmet dining & cocktails, extensive alfresco dining areas, and expansive views from the cruise line's largest balconies at sea in the Sky Suites.

A traditional naming ceremony celebration will take place in Los Angeles on 29 Apr, with more details to follow soon.

AFTA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



LAST Fri the Federal Govt released the guidelines for the \$75.5 million Round Three of the COVID-19 Consumer Travel

sector are aware of our activity we make these submissions publicly available.

On pages eight and nine of AFTA's PBS ([CLICK HERE](#)), we provided a clear pathway for businesses that correctly reported their revenue and business activity as per the original guidelines.

Support Program.

While it is welcome news for many businesses who were eligible for Round Two, it does leave some areas for improvement.

In AFTA's continuing dialogue and advocacy with the government, the criteria released did not fully embrace the recommended criteria AFTA requested in our pre-budget submission.

AFTA has been lobbying for a package that would support the entire travel sector, detailing clear criteria that would be fair, equitable, and defensible for the government in regards to Rd 3.

Since the announcement of the \$75.5 million two weeks ago, AFTA has been contacted by many members of the industry seeking clarification on exactly what AFTA has advocated for.

The AFTA pre-budget submission (PBS) details criteria that would allow as many agents as possible to receive funding through this program.

To ensure all members of the

While the ultimate decision on the criteria is a decision for government, AFTA has been in constant dialogue and discussion with Austrade on the development of Round Three.

We strongly advocated that Round Three should not be dependent on any application for either previous round, while businesses' Jobkeeper status is no longer relevant.

However if these two eligibility requirements are removed, the government would be required to allocate additional funding of \$115 million.

AFTA's pre-budget submission articulated the total budget allocation for a successful Round Three would be approximately \$190 million.

This would have ensured all travel businesses who are still impacted by COVID 19 would have received funding in Round 3.

I and the Board of AFTA are in Canberra this week and you can be assured that we will be advocating for a change to this criteria.

We want a "new normal"

NEW Zealand's Tourism Minister Stuart Nash has conceded that the country's visitor sector is unlikely to return to pre-COVID levels any time soon.

Addressing the University Of Otago, Tourism Policy School this week, Nash said that while reopening to Australia on 13 Apr would be "huge" for the country's tourism operators, New Zealand is unlikely to see an immediate return to 2019 levels.

Interestingly, Nash also outlined a strategy to lure what he described as "high value" travellers, distinct from high net worth visitors, tourists who he describes as "having an interest in the environment and who want to engage with our culture".

"We want people who will go off the beaten track and seek

out new experiences and be thoughtful about the ways that they interact with our land and communities," Nash said.

"Visitors will become advocates for travelling here because they had wonderful, rich experiences that contributed to our regenerative goals, to attract these visitors, we will need to make a concerted effort to live our brand," he added.

Nash concluded his remarks by calling on all NZ tourism operators to form part of a "rejuvenated tourism brand" and start channelling marketing efforts toward attracting these "high value" visitors.

Prior to COVID-19, Australia was New Zealand's largest international visitor market, accounting for 40% of all arrivals.



Runway work starts

CONSTRUCTION got officially underway on the Western Sydney International Nancy-Bird Walton Airport runway this week, which when completed will boast an innovative design and advanced aviation technology.

“Not only are we building Australia’s best airport terminal - we’re building Australia’s best runway, delivering a travel experience that will be unrivalled in this country,” Western Sydney Airport CEO Simon Hickey said.

Airport management has been vocal about its ambitions to be the most efficient hub in the country when it opens in 2026.

Learning the art of anticipation



AGRICULTURAL tour operator and travel agent Quadrant Australia recently welcomed its first group tour in more than two years (**pictured**), a moment the business described as a “turning point” in its recovery.

Prior to the pandemic, inbound group tourism made up around 50% of Quadrant’s total business, so naturally the prolonged border closure created a challenging trading environment for Quadrant, but this week it was all smiles as students from Europe explored regional New South Wales and Queensland.

After arriving in Sydney and checking out some of the key attractions of the country’s most popular city, the group of 40 student tourists then travelled through some major regional areas such as Bathurst, Dubbo, Moree, Goondiwindi and Toowoomba.

Tropical North Qld formed the final leg of the 13-day tour, with the trip serving to shed more light on Australia’s diverse and

productive agricultural systems.

“Our valuable business and farm hosts have proudly and willingly shared their knowledge and expertise with this group, and these European students will now take home an abundance of information and some very special memories of their time in Australia,” Quadrant said.

“The group has also been given the chance to taste delicious regional produce and experience some of the processes which form an important part of the paddock to plate pathway.”

Oakwood S Korea

OAKWOOD has announced it will be managing the 250-room Oakwood Hotel Cheongju in South Korea, scheduled to open its doors in 2026.

The property will be located in the country’s North Chungcheong province, an area that is popular with travellers for its walking trails, mountain biking routes, and rich temple history.

MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD*’s Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.747

THE Australian dollar has turned from four-month highs, as oil plunged almost 10%.

The previously booming commodity, which had jumped to 14-year highs earlier this year, was hit after new COVID lockdowns were announced in China, as Shanghai faces a snap nine-day lockdown.

Crude is now down 21% from earlier highs.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.747
UK	£0.570
NZ	\$1.078
Euro	€0.679
Japan	¥92.65
Thailand	฿25.11
China	¥4.723
South Africa	10.91
Canada	\$0.931
Crude oil	US\$120.7

Travel Daily Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

TD Events is the new way to showcase your product or service to the travel industry.

Tue 29 Mar 2022 (TODAY!)
Meet the Quark Expeditions team and their new *Ultramarine* - 4pm session still available, to register **CLICK HERE**.

Fri 08 Apr 2022 1pm AEDT
Norwegian Cruise Line Executive Interview - to register **CLICK HERE**.

Wed 13 Apr 2022
Executive Interview with CLIA MD Joel Katz and ACA CEO Jill Abel - details coming soon

Tue 03 May 2022
Silversea Cruises - more details coming soon

Thu 12 May 2022
Executive interview with Livn Group - more details soon.

Other events - date TBA

- Abercrombie & Kent
- Switzerland Tourism - more details coming soon.

RECENT EVENTS

Missed an event? Watch the recordings via the links below.

AFTA CEO Dean Long Executive Interview - CLICK HERE.

Entire Travel Group with Brad McDonnell and Greg McCallum - CLICK HERE.

To organise an event for your company, enquire at traveldaily.com.au/events



Introducing Rocky Mountaineer's New US Route: Rockies to the Red Rocks

The Rockies to the Red Rocks route is a two-day rail journey boasting all the premium elements that make up the unparalleled Rocky Mountaineer experience. A true feast for the senses, guests can expect spacious glass-domed train coaches, incredible scenery, onboard storytelling, delicious cuisine, friendly service, and a social atmosphere.

Like Rocky Mountaineer's three rail routes in Western Canada that we've known to love, their two-day Rockies to the Red Rocks route is steeped in history and full of opportunities to explore the ever-changing scenery and iconic destinations of the region. Breathtaking plains, mountain vistas and chromatic deserts are just the beginning. The train winds alongside

towering canyons that have been carved away by the Colorado River as it travels between the mile-high city of Denver, Colorado and the red sandstone mountains of Moab, Utah in the American Southwest.

The stunning landscapes never cease - between Denver and Glenwood Springs, guests journey alongside the Colorado River and through a series of canyons with steep rugged rock walls, while the route between Glenwood Springs and Moab highlights mountain vistas, desert cliffs and rock formations. The onboard culinary experience features cuisine prepared using ingredients local to the Southwestern U.S., which is complemented with beverage service and served directly to guests' seats, so they can enjoy

the scenery as they dine. Onboard SilverLeaf Service on this all-daylight rail journey, guests get front row seats to one of the most spectacular settings on the planet.

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