

## Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, plus a full page from Entire Travel Group.

## Ponant's Hall of fame

**PONANT** has appointed Chris Hall as regional Chief Executive Officer across Asia-Pacific (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

Hall left his role as APT Travel Group Chief Executive late last year after more than two decades with the company, with his reemergence in the sector to see him charged with managing Ponant's plan to accelerate its range and depth through additional ship deployments in Asia-Pacific, such as the three-masted sailing yacht *Le Ponant*, and the line's newest vessel *Le Commandant Charcot*.

Sarina Bratton will remain as Chair APAC for the expedition cruise line, where she will continue to focus on strategic growth and opportunities.

She described Hall as an "experienced leader in global tour operating and river cruising," while the APAC operation will continue to be led by Deb Corbett.

## Watson takes on Weston

**EXCLUSIVE**

**CANBERRA-BASED** Weston Cruise & Travel has announced a merger with fellow Travellers Choice agency Chris Watson Travel, with the entrepreneurial Chris Watson hinting at further possible expansion for the group.

Weston Cruise and Travel has been operated by Deb Long for more than a decade, building a strong reputation including multiple years as Scenic's top selling agency in Australia.

Tamworth-based Watson said Long had acted as a mentor, providing strategic advice since he joined Travellers Choice.

"I'm delighted that, as a result of our merger, I can continue to learn from her as we work together to grow the combined business," he said.

Long said the merger deal

created a clear succession plan for Weston Cruise & Travel as she contemplates retirement, saying "by combining Chris' youthful energy and resources with my knowledge and experience we will ensure two powerhouse agencies continue to thrive".

Travellers Choice GM of Sales, Nicola Strudwick, said she was pleased that the organisation had played a role in the process, with an internal register of members looking to purchase or sell their businesses helping facilitate conversations between the pair.

Watson continues to be on the lookout for other deals, saying "I wouldn't rule out further expansion, especially if those opportunities arise within the Travellers Choice network".

## Entire free tour

**ENTIRE** Travel Group is offering customers who book an independent package holiday to British Columbia a free day tour of their choice in Vancouver.

Options for the free bonus include a hop on hop off tour, a harbour cruise, city highlights tour or more.

The company's All Aboard 2023 promotion also wraps up this Fri 30 Sep, with savings of \$1,080 per couple on the Rocky Mountaineer - see the **last page**.

## ATL in trading halt

**APOLLO** Tourism and Leisure has entered into a trading halt pending an announcement, and follows news last Fri that its proposed merger with Tourism Holdings Limited had been cleared by the NZ regulator.

## TNZ trade survey

**TOURISM** New Zealand (TNZ) wants agents to complete its quarterly Australia trade survey, with respondents going into the draw to win one of five \$100 Prezzy cards - **CLICK HERE**.

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# Travel Daily

Wednesday 28th Sep 2022

## QF, VA Bali battle heats up

**THE** scrap between Qantas and Virgin Australia over 172 weekly seats on the Indonesia route (TD 12 Sep) has moved to a new level, with the International Air Services Commission (IASC) releasing submissions from both carriers

arguing their cases.

VA had initially lodged an application for the remaining unallocated space - on top of its 4,752 weekly seats - in order to allow it to introduce an extra 737 flight between MEL and DPS.

In accordance with the required procedures the IASC sought other applications for the capacity, with Qantas then seeking 162 seats to allow the upgauge of selected SYD-DPS flights to an A330 during periods of high demand.

Qantas Group holds a combined 20,076 seats out of the current 25,000 weekly major Australian airport seats allowed under the Indonesia bilateral.

In this week's update, VA noted that its plan would see it fully utilise capacity, rather than being "focused on peak periods and upgauging capacity when demand suits".

VA also said the remaining seats had been open for application for a considerable amount of time and that it was the first to apply.

QF argues it has shown its ability to efficiently utilise capacity on the route, recording an average 88.6% Indonesia load factor in 2019, while Jetstar hit 91.7%, "clearly demonstrating that the Qantas Group has been more successful in filling our aircraft with passengers travelling between the two countries than any other carrier".

The Commission is now seeking input from other interested parties, with a deadline of 11 Oct.

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## US wants fairer tax

**THE** US Government is proposing new rules to better protect travellers from the hidden costs of airline tickets.

Revealed in a speech by President Biden yesterday, the changes would require American carriers and OTAs to disclose fees for add-ons such as seat selection and checked baggage.

"You should know the full cost of your ticket, right when you're comparison shopping," Biden reasoned, however aviation lobby Airlines for America (A4A) has already hit back at the notion carriers are gouging travellers for extra "perks".

"[Our] member airlines... already offer transparency to consumers...and includes clarity regarding prices, fees and ticket terms," A4A said.

## Ovolo appoints two

**OVOLO** Hotels has announced the appointment of Jessica Fornito as its new Group Marketing Communications Manager in Australia.

Emily Tsui has also joined the Ovolo team as the Group Brand Marketing Manager.

## Fourth Queen nears

**CUNARD** Line has celebrated the keel-laying of its latest newbuild *Queen Anne* with a traditional ceremony in Venice.

The formality was attended by the Cunard team, as well as British members of Carnival Corporation, along with representatives of Fincantieri and its Marghera shipyard, while *Queen Anne's* Captain, Inger Thorhaug, embedded the coin.

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## Window Seat

A RECENT American Airlines flight was plagued by strange intercom noises that one passenger described as being a cross between “explosive diarrhoea, vomiting, and a weird, vaguely sexual moan”.

The flight from LAX to DFW was apparently the victim of a technical mix-up with its speakers, with the haunting guttural moans of someone, or something, continuing unabated during the flight for hours.

Another passenger posted online that the noise was more like “a bad impression of Boris Karloff as Frankenstein’s Monster”, with the carrier still no closer to explaining what caused the interference, with a prank hack or a cross-wire among the possible causes.

## Domestic down by 25%

DOMESTIC overnight trips taken in the year to 30 Jun 2022 was down by close to a quarter when compared to the same period in 2019, the latest annual report from Tourism Research Australia has shown.

Just shy of 86 million trips were taken in total during the year, resulting in an overnight spend of \$69 billion, which was down by 11% on 2019.

The average domestic traveller spent around four days on a trip, spending \$211 a night and just over \$800 in total, with the vast majority booking a trip to enjoy a leisure holiday (38.5 million).

Visiting friends and relatives was the next most popular reason to travel around Australia (28.2 million), followed by business trips (15.9 million).

Leisure holidays also topped the spending list for the year with \$987 per trip, contrasted with \$631 from corporate travellers.

The demographic showing the largest jump in spend was the 30 to 35 group, which rose by 55% to \$380 per trip, followed by 40-44 (up 49%) and 45-49 (up 45%).

Encouragingly, the Jun quarter 2022 saw domestic travellers embark on a greater number of holiday trips and for a longer time, with the period eclipsing the corresponding quarter in 2019 spend on holidays by 60%.

The latest quarter also saw the biggest increase in spend for holiday purposes since the start of the pandemic, recording an increase of \$5.2 billion on 2019.

While leisure holidays surged back to popularity, the same couldn’t be said for business trips, which plunged by 23% on pre-pandemic levels, a trend fuelled by employers embracing remote working, as well as investing more in infrastructure to enable working from home and collaboration across sites.

## ANA surcharge up


ALL Nippon Airways has announced its one-way Australia to Japan fuel surcharge will increase from US\$363 (A\$563) to US\$434 (A\$674) from 01 Oct.

## Billboards hacked

AIRLINES are being lambasted through billboards across Europe as part of an environmental activist push to draw attention to aviation’s role in climate change.

Targets of the satirical advertising, which often hijack the slogan and look of the brand, have included KLM, Air France, Lufthansa, British Airways, and Ryanair, the latter of which been restyled as ‘Ruinair’ on multiple posters by the activists.

The visual protests are the handywork of a group called Brandalism, who are using the push to convince media companies like Ogilvy and Dentsu to stop taking advertising dollars from “high-carbon clients”.



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## Laneways by Ovolo

**THE** 42-Memphis inspired Laneways By Ovolo will open its doors in Melbourne in mid Nov, offering guests “a big personality; an eclectic inner-city stay infused with rebel spirit that beats to a different drum”.

The funky boutique hotel will cater to corporate and weekend travellers looking for some Memphis 80s aesthetic combined with a sophisticated yet fun set of amenities, including a 120-seat Amphlett House, serving up elevated pub classics.

Other features of the hotel include a modern bar area, gymnasium, complimentary wi-fi, a cafe in the lobby, laundry services and meeting areas.

“Laneways by Ovolo will be the perfect spot for travellers to kick off their heels or slip on some sneakers and hit the cobblestones, or even catch a show in the city’s thriving theatre district,” a release from The Ovolo Group stated.

## COVID boosts eco

**NEW** data from Trip.com suggests travellers have become more acutely aware of sustainable travel as a direct result of the pandemic.

Just over two-thirds (67.8%) of respondents said that COVID-19 had been a catalyst for their increased appetite for sustainable options, while about 38.3% said travel restrictions had enhanced their appreciation for nature.

The same report also suggested over half of travellers are seeking more sustainable options because they want to lower their carbon footprint, while 27% of people claimed it would enhance their travel experience, and 13.2% cited following current trends.

Interestingly, 8.4% of respondents said peer pressure was their primary factor in travelling more sustainably, while the definition has also broadened beyond the environment to include economic, cultural and biodiversity considerations.

## Indonesia made smoother

**VFS** Global is rolling out Indonesia’s first-ever fast-track on-arrival visa service for Australian passport holders, enabling travellers to Jakarta and Bali to enjoy a smoother immigration clearance and exit from the airport upon arrival.

Offering pre-departure online application, VFS Global’s service was made possible through an exclusive agreement with the Immigration Department for the Republic of Indonesia and the Bank Mandiri for the Visa on Arrival, with travellers able to submit their documents and pay the fees online **HERE**.

A confirmation will be sent to the registered e-mail, and the visa will be stamped upon arrival at new specially designated priority immigration lanes.

“Indonesia is a popular destination for travellers across the globe, and we are excited to unveil a service that will make

their visa application journey quicker and simpler,” VFS Global’s Chief Commercial Officer Jiten Vyas said.

“With tech-led Do It Yourself solutions becoming increasingly popular, this first-ever fast-track Visa on Arrival service is sure to offer applicants a more relaxed on-arrival experience.”

VFS Global offer Standard and Express options, with Standard services to be submitted no less than 72 hours prior to departure, while those opting for the Express service will be able to submit their applications no less than 24 hours prior to departure.

## Polaris delivered

**VIKING** has announced it has taken delivery of its second purpose-built expedition ship, *Viking Polaris*, yesterday at Fincantieri’s VARD shipyard in Soviknes, Norway.

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### New Sofitel spa

**SOFITEL** Sydney Darling Harbour has announced the Jan 2023 launch of its in-house Sofitel Spa, with the two-level facility featuring seven spacious treatment rooms and a “multi-layered wellness experience”.

GM Greg Brady said wellness continues to be the “new luxury”, with the new facility headed up by Director of Spa & Wellness Cecilia Ferreyra and featuring personalised cosmetic treatments from French brand Biologique Recherche.

### Moskito club

**VIRGIN** Limited Edition is adding The Village to its Moskito Island property in the Caribbean, officially launching on 30 Sep.

Rates start from US\$19,000 per night based on a four-night minimum stay for up to 18 guests, including a private chef, staff, all meals, drinks and non-motorised watersports.

Described as “the ultimate social hub for the young-at-heart”, The Village includes seven standalone guest houses dotted on the cliff top along with two more guest rooms in the Main Pavilion.

It will operate alongside the island’s existing The Point Estate, The Oasis Estate and The Branson Estate.

## REGENT LOOKS TO CELEBRATIONS

**CELEBRATING** important life milestones on a Regent Seven Seas cruise is set to be a key focus for the line going forward, with the luxury brand’s Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Andrea DeMarco telling **TD** “we really want to own that market”.

During a visit to Sydney this week (**TD** yesterday), DeMarco said special occasions were an ideal opportunity to get “new-to-Regent” customers on board.

“They’re going to treat themselves right, whether it’s an anniversary, or birthday or retirement, you name it, there’s no better place to have a celebration than on Regent,” DeMarco said.

She also highlighted other potential growth areas, including the ability to “take people who have cruised on premium lines in the upper suites, and move them into luxury”, with Regent’s all-inclusive offering resonating strongly particularly when the overall value is compared with the offerings of other brands.



**MEANWHILE** with the new *Regent Seven Seas Grandeur* (pictured) joining the fleet late next year as the third and final in a series of Explorer-class newbuilds, DeMarco hinted at further developments of potential next-generation ships.

With the cruise sector generally sailing with occupancies of over 100%, “in order to bring more people in, you have to have more ships, because without more ships there’s no room to grow.

“So I think at some point you’ll see us continue to look at what that next evolution is for this

brand,” DeMarco said.

However she also stressed that there was still a strong position for the line’s older vessels, such as *Regent Seven Seas Navigator*, which is producing record yields in Alaska due to very strong demand for the destination.

Going forward Regent will be focusing strongly on particular customer personas, with culinary and destination immersion seen as key client brand attributes.

“Regent Seven Seas Cruises delivers an unrivalled experience that goes beyond all-inclusive luxury,” DeMarco enthused.

### UK tax-free shopping set to return in 2024/25

**A MINI-BUDGET** from new UK PM Liz Truss is set to make high-value retail therapy more attractive for visitors to Great Britain, with the return of VAT-free shopping from 2024/25.

The British Government had previously scrapped VAT refunds from 01 Jan 2021 amid claims it cost more than £1

billion annually in lost revenue.

Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng said the reintroduction of the measure - albeit in a digital format now subject to a consultation process - would help break the “cycle of stagnation” in the UK economy and benefit high streets, ports, airports and shopping centres.

### Lost baggage pact

**VIRTUOSO** member supplier Blue Ribbon Bags has announced a partnership with Travel Insured International, under which clients of large tour operators working with Travel Insured will be able to expedite lost baggage claims through any major airline in the world.

## The Kimberley Expedition Cruises

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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](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).

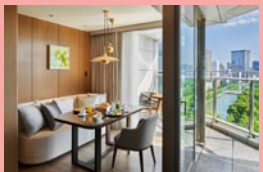


**Tivoli La Caleta Resort** is gearing up to open in spring 2023 in Spain. The resort, which is currently closed and undergoing renovations before it joins the Tivoli brand, will offer 284 guest rooms including 20 suites, four restaurants, two bars, three swimming pools and a complete fitness and sports area, including tennis and table tennis courts. The property will also house the luxurious Anantara Spa as well as 10 meeting rooms.



From Jan 2023, guests staying at the **Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour** can enjoy the upcoming addition of a Sofitel Spa, which will be spread over two levels overlooking Darling Harbour and positioned close to the hotel's infinity edge pool. The spa will have

seven treatment rooms including two suites, and will feature an infrared sauna, relaxation deck and meditation zone. Traditional treatments will be offered, including massages, facials, and body wraps.



**Palace Hotel Tokyo** has launched six Premier Suites, adding a new mid-range category to the hotel's offerings. The new 90m<sup>2</sup> suites are targeted at business and leisure travellers who are seeking more space, offering a spacious lounge with

ample seating, and a separate, multi-purpose space to dine or work. The rooms feature a walk-through closet, en suite bathroom, rain shower, soaking tub, and two separate balconies.

## Babies love Aussies

**AUSTRALIA** is the fifth-best baby-friendly destination in the world, according to an analysis by Airport Parking Reservations, which give it a score of seven out of 10, while Greece topped the list followed by Turkey, Portugal and Spain.

The study ranked the top 10 countries based on factors like the percentage of hotels with family rooms, the number of child-friendly activities, and the country's overall safety index.

## Really Loving Chimu

**ANDREW** Loving has joined Chimu Adventures as its Relationship Manager, a role which will see him help handle strong demand for the brand's Latin America signature product and growing Antarctica enquiries.

Loving will be based in the Sydney office, and brings over 10 years' experience in trade, cruising, and Latin American sales, including roles with Holland America, Seabourn Cruise Line, and Crystal Cruises.

## Let's ear it for Disney Cruise Line!

**THE** industry turned out in force last night for a glittering Disney-themed event at the Sydney Opera House, in the lead up to tomorrow morning's highly anticipated opening of sales for the 2023 Disney Cruise Line Australia/NZ season (*TD* 12 Sep).



Creative Cruising's Caroline Hitchen and Carina Mullen are **pictured** above, while at left are the Captain Cook Cruises Fiji team of Jackie Haworth-Charlton and CEO Alison Haworth West.

Disney goes on sale at 8am tomorrow morning, with the season widely expected to be an instant sellout..

Mickey and Minnie were there too, with guests enjoying the opportunity to make their dreams come true with a character selfie, while Ricki-Lee Coulter belted out some Disney favourites which really got the crowd singing along.

*Disney Wonder* is set to arrive in Sydney in just under 13 months time - more details from the night in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

## YHA on silver screen

**NOT-FOR-PROFIT** accommodation network YHA Australia has teamed up with Sustainable Travel International to create a short film to celebrate World Tourism Day 2022.

The eight-minute film takes a look at the sustainability efforts of two YHA properties in NSW - **CLICK HERE** to watch the video.

## TWU makes its case

**THE** Transport Workers Union (TWU) has submitted a strongly worded letter to the ACCC regarding Qantas' plan to acquire Alliance Airlines (*TD* 05 May).

In his submission, National Secretary Michael Kaine slammed the carrier for having "a long history of undermining competition by deploying its market dominance to overwhelm its competitors, influencing the government of the day to bend to its will and pressuring suppliers to reduce costs".

Alliance currently provides wet lease services for rival Virgin Australia, a point Kaine said would risk a rise in regional air fares if the purchase were to be given the green light by the consumer watchdog.



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