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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest news including a photo page from **Adventure World**, our **Luxury** feature page, plus a cover wrap from **Qatar Tourism** and a full page from **Creative Cruising**.

Win tix with Qatar

MOVIE tickets are up for grabs for travel advisors who take part in the new Qatar Specialist agent training program.

Registrations are now open for the free online modules - see the **cover page** for more details.

Disney cruise bonus

CREATIVE Cruising is offering US\$50 in additional onboard credit for the first 50 bookings made under a special offer for the current Disney Cruise Line season in Australia.

Fares under the exclusive offer lead in at \$999 per person - more details on the **last page**.

QF tix deals are gold, Jerry

QANTAS Frequent Flyers will be able to purchase tickets to selected events through Ticketek using loyalty points from Mar next year, thanks to a new tie-up announced this morning.

Rolling out shortly after Mar, the airline's loyalty members will also be able to earn points when buying tickets through Ticketek.

To celebrate the partnership, Qantas has released three entertainment packages that combine tickets with flights and hotel accommodation through its Qantas Experiences arm.

Famous funny man Jerry Seinfeld (**pictured**) forms part of one package, with tickets to the comedian's Jerry Seinfeld Live - Third Sydney Show at Qudos Bank Arena on 16 Jun packaged up with return flights and an overnight stay at a Sydney hotel.

The Australia vs West Indies cricket test series at The Gabba and the Lightscape Melbourne



event taking place at the Royal Botanic Gardens are also included in Qantas' new package deals.

"Making it easier for our QFFs to enjoy special moments and memorable events has always been a key part of [our loyalty] program and this partnership is going to make more of those experiences possible," Qantas Loyalty CEO Olivia Wirth said.

"We know that live events are a big driver of travel...and with more than 20,000 live events each year, partnering with Ticketek opens up significant opportunities for Frequent Flyers to get even more value from their membership," she added. *AB*

VV looks at 25/26

VIRGIN Voyages may deploy its *Valiant Lady* in Australia in 2025/26, with placeholder bookings at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal for a third Down Under season.

Sister ship, the slightly newer *Resilient Lady*, welcomed trade partners, influencers, media and cruise stakeholders aboard yesterday for a lavish preview party in the lead-up to this weekend's formal kick-off of her Melbourne season.

Virgin founder Richard Branson highlighted the line's unique offerings, saying Virgin Voyages aimed to appeal to people who, like him, were not particularly keen on cruising.

"You just look at some of these other cruise ships and they look tired and very unappetising and unexciting to go on, whereas with Virgin it's very, very exciting and so different," he said.

More from the human headline in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

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Rail and ferries made easy

EXCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIAN wholesaler of global rail passes and tickets, International Rail, has enhanced its travel agent booking system.

Speaking with **TD** this week, MD Jonathan Hume said that simplifying often-complex rail itineraries for Aussie agents through International Rail had been a priority for some time, with the fruits of its labour primed to unleash a range of key benefits for advisors.

Among the improvements is the ability for agents to track client bookings from start to finish.

"Agents can now follow bookings online, which they were never able to do before, and we now put notes in for every train service we add informing agents of when they open for sale - which can vary from 30 days out to 11 months," Hume explained.

While previously advisors were forced to rely on manual

emails and phone discussions with the International Rail team to follow up on issues, the new custom-built platform is much more transparent and will free up resources for time-poor sellers.

The company has also just rolled out a live chat feature on its website in a bid to expedite customer service and refocus its back-end resources on improving the overall user experience.

There are also big changes afoot for European ferry services offered via International Rail, with Hume revealing they will soon be available as live bookings to sit alongside flagship rail products.

"Ferries will be ready by early next year in time for the European peak season, previously we had organised these manually through emails but when [the ferry platform] goes live, agents will be able to manage everything from refunds and making changes to itineraries directly," he said. *AB*

Mission Next Gen take-off



AIR New Zealand has progressed its 'Mission Next Gen Aircraft' program, this morning announcing the purchase of Beta Technologies' ALIA five-seat planes (**pictured**) to phase in a new era of electric flight.

The battery-powered aircraft will initially operate in the cargo arm of the business, with the carrier holding aspirations the models may be able to join its passenger division from 2030.

A target date of 2026 has been identified for operating the first passenger demonstrator flights, and if successful, the electric jets will be one of several candidates to replace Air NZ's 50-seat De

Havilland Canada Dash 8 Q300 turboprops, which currently fly short domestic routes.

Air New Zealand placed a firm order for one aircraft, options for an additional two more, as well as the purchase rights for a further 20 aircraft.

"This is a small but important step in a much larger journey for Air New Zealand," the airline's Chief Executive Greg Foran said.

"Decarbonising aviation isn't easy, and we have a lot of work to do...we need to accelerate the pace of change in the technology, infrastructure, operations & regulation," the carrier's chief added. *JM*

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NOTES:

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Window Seat

AN AMERICAN YouTuber has been sentenced to six months in prison after he deliberately crashed his single-engine plane in a Californian forest, in a ridiculous attempt to get views on his channel (**TD** 16 May).

After being ordered by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to preserve the wreckage, 30-year-old Trevor Jacob told officials he didn't know where the plane had gone down, and then secretly retrieved and discarded its remains.

The disgraced former pilot also lied in an aircraft accident incident report, falsely claiming that the plane experienced a full loss of power - however, Jacob neglected to take even basic steps to restart the aircraft's supposedly troubled engine.

QF asks wine not?

CHRISTMAS has come early for Qantas customers, with the national carrier bringing forward 'wine time' on all its domestic and regional flights.

From this month, Economy travellers will be able to enjoy complimentary premium Australian wine and beer on board from midday, instead of 4pm, on an ongoing basis.

There will be a selection of red or white wine available, plus One Fifty Lashes Premium Pale Ale.

SYD slams QF, GA tie-up

SYDNEY Airport has raised concerns about the impact that the proposed codeshare agreement between Qantas and Garuda Indonesia (**TD** 26 Sep) will have on competition and traveller choice, according to a new submission to the International Air Services Commission (IASC).

Karen Halbert, SYD's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, noted that during the 2023/24 Northern Winter scheduling period, QF, JQ and GA will together operate 63.7% of seats on the Australia-Indonesia route, with the trio also the only airlines operating to Jakarta from SYD and MEL.

The Jakarta flights fully utilise all capacity to the Indonesian capital under the existing bilateral, and "if approved, Qantas' proposal will also enable these three airlines to further extend their dominance on the busy and significant Denpasar-Australia route," Halbert noted.

She also highlighted that talks on the Australia-Indonesia bilateral are likely to take place

next year, while Virgin Australia has also indicated in its own submission that it would like to expand its services to better compete with Qantas.

Halbert highlighted GA's current significant fleet expansion, adding that given Indonesia was the second-largest destination country for Aussies in 2022/23, "increased market dominance on this route is likely to result in poor consumer outcomes".

She said SYD does not support the QF application given that a codeshare with GA will "lessen competition on a popular and important market".

The IASC continues to consider the application. *BP*

JQ touches down on Bonza issues

JETSTAR has immediately jumped into action following Bonza's move this morning to scrap flights between the Gold Coast and Melbourne ahead of the holiday season.

The new carrier, which was due to launch the service this week, said the "regrettable decision" was due to aircraft unavailability.

Spying an opportunity, Jetstar was quick to announce special fares of \$117 one-way until 31 Dec for the 400 Bonza customers who've had their flight cancelled.

The news arrives only days after Bonza dropped all Dec flights on its planned Darwin-Gold Coast route (**TD** yesterday).

Tassie Irwin tie-up

TOURISM Tasmania has partnered with TV personality Robert Irwin to create new content focusing on the state's nature and wildlife.

Irwin visited Cradle Mountain, Launceston, Hobart, Maria Island and the Tasman Peninsula - see some of the output at discovertasmania.com.au.

Coral's adventure

CORAL Expeditions will offer a 60-night circumnavigation of Australia in Oct 2025, aboard *Coral Adventurer*.

Themed 'Australia's Coastal Legend', the all-inclusive new voyage features 48 excursion experiences - more info **HERE**.

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QF, KLM Hong Kong deal

QANTAS and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines have won approval for codeshare operations on the Hong Kong route from Australia.

The move sees QF's existing HKG approvals varied to permit the utilisation of capacity by KLM to market seats on Qantas-operated services under a free-sale arrangement from 01 Jan 2024.

Qantas said it believes the proposed pact will provide "additional customer choice and enhanced one-stop connectivity between Australia and the Netherlands", with the final renewal determination released this week allowing the variation.

Other carriers which also codeshare on the Qantas flights include British Airways, Finnair, Air France, LATAM Airlines and El Al Airlines, and the capacity is also able to be used by Jetstar.

The International Air Services Commission has added a condition requiring the airlines to "take all reasonable steps to ensure that passengers are informed of the carrier that is actually operating the flights".

The move is an extension of the existing QF/KL c'share pact which became effective in 2018. *BP*

AA and Aeronology

AERONOLOGY is in the final stages of implementing full self-service NDC bookings for American Airlines, allowing travel advisors to search, book, issue, reshop, reissue and refund tickets as well as add ancillaries and make special service requests.

Gateway to Egypt

TRAVEL agent famil rates leading in at US\$899ppts for a seven-day trip are on offer from Gateway Travel, including hotels, tours and ground transport - more via gatewaytravel.com.au.

Viking adds 10 more

VIKING has announced it will add 10 new river ships to its fleet over the coming years, an expansion decision made so it can cater to strong demand for European river voyages.

Eight of the vessels will sail itineraries on the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers, while the other two will operate on the Seine River - including one that was already announced earlier this year (*TD* 02 Feb).

The cruise line expects to receive five of the new ships in 2025, with the remaining half to be delivered in 2026.

To mark the start of construction, a keel laying ceremony took place today at Neptun Werft shipyard in Rostock, Germany, where all Viking Longships have been built since their debut in 2012.

The new ships will feature a hybrid propulsion system with batteries, onboard solar panels, and will also be equipped for shorepower to reduce fuel use.

Bonza pays off

BONZA now offers surcharge-free flight bookings, with digital payments firm Monoova providing PayTo to the airline's customers from this week.

The partnership signals a shift toward more seamless, budget-friendly travel experiences using Monoova's suite of digital payment options.

Customers also do not have to share bank login details, significantly reducing the risk of fraud and chargebacks.

Heinemann in SYD

A SECOND Heinemann located in an Australian domestic airport has opened at Sydney Airport. The T2 and T3 retail experience spans over 2,270m², and has the largest beauty brand line-up of any domestic airport in Australia.

The store opens just a fortnight after Gold Coast Airport unveiled its own domestic Heinemann store (*TD* 22 Nov).



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EY TAPs more routes

ETIHAD Airways has teamed up with TAP Air Portugal to offer seamless travel to destinations across North and South America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East via a new codeshare.

The partnership will provide Etihad customers with one-stop access to destinations across the TAP network, including Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in Brazil, San Francisco and Miami in the United States, as well as the African resort island of Sao Tome.

Additionally, the codeshare will offer travellers the option of booking a single ticket with only one check-in process at the start.

All ready at Rotty

IN ANTICIPATION of a busy summer season, WA's Rottnest Island has announced six new visitor services.

Travellers to the iconic holiday spot can now enjoy parasailing through Cicerello's Jet Adventures, kids holiday care run by MBA Rottnest Kids Club, and in-house massages by Mobile Massage Rottnest Island.

Also among the new offerings are scenic flights by Major Blue Air, a water taxi service by Rottnest Water Taxi, and Simmos and Havza, as well as a pop-up venue at The Basin offering ice-creams, tapas and cocktails.

Tourism heats up on GC

SUMMER is heating up on the Gold Coast in more ways than one, with the coastal city bracing for a \$1.3 billion tourism boom.

"Summer is traditionally our peak period for visitation and this year we anticipate the season will inject more than \$1.3 billion into the local economy - on par with pre-pandemic levels," Experience Gold Coast CEO John Warn said.

Interstate visitors are driving the resurgence, contributing a projected 42% of economic impact this summer, compared to a quarter from international.

China is proving to be a growing source market for the Gold Coast



as well, spurred by the return of China Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines ahead of the Lunar New Year.

"The Gold Coast is the second most sought after Australian destination for Chinese travellers behind Sydney, so that tells us we have a huge advantage to capitalise on now that the connectivity has been established," Warn said.

The Queensland hotspot has seen a steady increase in overall visitor numbers to 12.6 million, including record domestic visitors, which Warn believes is testament to the Gold Coast's "allure as a sought-after destination" for all types of travellers. *JM*

The Reef's drawcard

THE Whitsundays plays a key role in attracting tourists to the Great Barrier Reef, with new data showing that it contributed 44% of Reef visitation in FY23.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Visitation data shows around 620,000 of a total of 1.38 million full day visitors to the Reef visited The Whitsundays marine park during FY23 - almost double that of FY22 at 346,000.

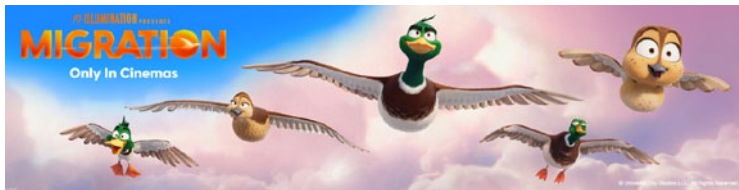
Scenic flight visitation also rose significantly, increasing from under 8,900 pax in FY22 to more than 17,660 in FY23.

The tourism boom is supporting the health of the Reef, with operators charging a small fee per booking that goes towards protecting the Heritage-listed site.

United in Houston

UNITED Airlines has announced expansion plans in Houston, Texas, including a US\$2.6 billion renovation and expansion of Terminal B at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH).

The project includes the expansion of 40 gates at IAH to accommodate larger aircraft, plus the opening of the largest United Club in the nation, an Early Bag Storage (EBS) facility, and a new sensory room for pax with disabilities.



Win 1 of 50 family passes to see Migration

With thanks to Universal Pictures & Solomon Airlines, *Travel Daily* is giving 50 readers who answer the below question a family pass to see the new Illumination film, *Migration*.

Solomon Airlines in collaboration with the film's release have just launched new livery on their A320 - keep a look out in the skies!

To enter tell us what is the newest Solomon Islands destination that Solomon Airlines flies direct to from Brisbane?

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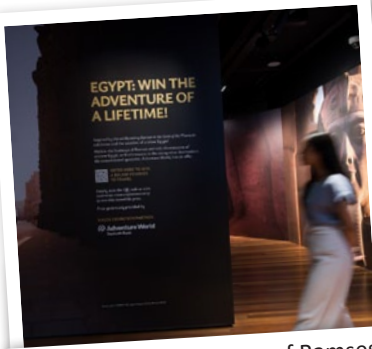
Los Angeles DELTA UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

Getting intimate with ancient Egypt

ADVENTURE World has collaborated with its long-standing partner, the Australian Museum, inviting keen Australians to come and see a Sydney-exclusive exhibition, *RAMSES & the Gold of the Pharaohs*.

Running until 15 May 2024, this blockbuster exhibition showcases 182 ancient Egyptian artefacts, including the "awe-inspiring" coffin of Ramses the Great, as well as various timeless treasures and priceless relics - book your ticket [HERE](#).

As the major sponsor of this exhibition, Adventure World is offering one lucky winner the chance to receive a \$20,000 voucher to design their own trip to Egypt or any of their destinations - more information [HERE](#).



WALK in the footsteps of Ramses and visit the treasure of ancient Egypt.



SOME of the above included: Mostafa Waziry, Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities; Nevine El-Aref, Media Advisor to the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities; Mohamed El Seaidy, Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities; Kim McKay, Australian Museum; Brian Hartzler, Australian Museum Trust; Ron Tan, Neon Global; Bryn Powell, Neon Global; Troy Collins, World Heritage Exhibitions and Major Exhibition Partner; and Neil Rodgers, Adventure World.



ANDREA Morgan, National Accounts Manager of Adventure World with Neil Rodgers, Managing Director of Adventure World.



THE Adventure World team with Australian Museum partners.



MICHAEL and Kellie Londregan.



WENDY McColl from Uniworld Boutique River Cruises with Adventure World's Emi Weir.



NEIL Rodgers, Adventure World; Kim McKay, Australian Museum; Brian Hartzler, Australian Museum Trust; and Andrea Morgan, Adventure World.



ADVENTURE World Rameses Gold of the Pharaohs Gala opening event at Long Gallery Museum.

Aman's Janu Tokyo

AMAN Resorts will open the first hotel under its Janu "spirited sibling hotel brand" in Tokyo next Mar.

The property is part of the new Azabudai Hills neighbourhood which features Japan's tallest skyscraper and 24,000m² of green space alongside offices, residences, galleries and over 150 luxury retail and dining outlets.

The property is now accepting reservations, with rates leading in at US\$944.

Explora 2026 is out

EXPLORA Journeys has unveiled revised sailings for its new *Explora I* and *II* through until Apr 2026, rejigging programs to offer shorter voyages and more convenient homeports including Miami, Barcelona, Rome and Bridgetown.

The fledgling MSC Cruises offshoot now offers regular seven-night journeys which MSC Executive Chairman, Pierfrancesco Vago, noted were "convenient for those who have limited time".

The ships will operate in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula, with full details of the newly launched journeys available at explorajourneys.com.

CRYSTAL PLAYS TO AUSSIE TASTES

THE arrival of *Crystal Symphony* into Fremantle this morning marks a triumphant return for the luxury brand under its new A&K Travel Group ownership.

The ship has undergone a multimillion dollar makeover, with Crystal VP of Sales APAC, Tony Archbold, saying Crystal and Abercrombie & Kent have "combined two of the most respected brands in travel".

"The market is responding as we offer guests the best of land and sea," he enthused, with five local itineraries on offer as the vessel makes stops at Busselton, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, before making her way to NZ's Auckland and Bay of Islands.



"We knew that Crystal had a loyal following from agents and guests in Australia and New Zealand, and the reception we have received so far has confirmed it," Archbold said.

The reimagined ship boasts a much larger proportion of suites as well as enhanced wellness offerings and famed restaurateur

Nobu's UMI UMA eatery.

Limited spaces are still available on the vessel's Australasian deployment, including a four-night Sydney-Auckland sailing leading in at \$2,800 per person and a 17-night Sydney roundtrip to New Zealand and back priced from \$13,600, departing 04 Jan. More info on 1300 503 640. BP

Silversea releases full 2026 Polynesia season

SILVERSEA Cruises this morning launched its first-ever full summer season in French Polynesia, with the extended deployment of *Silver Whisper* in the region from Apr-Sep 2026.

A total of 17 voyages are on offer, covering two itineraries in rotation to offer experiences of some of the world's most remote destinations in the Society, Tuamotu and Marquesas islands.

"Silversea's rapid increase in capacity has opened opportunities for even deeper immersion into the world's most enriching regions, such as French Polynesia," enthused

Silversea SVP of Expeditions, Conrad Combrink.

"There is no better way to experience these idyllic islands and atolls than by ship."

Combrink said *Whisper* would be the most spacious vessel deployed to French Polynesia, with a 1:1.3 crew-to-guest ratio and butler service for every suite aboard the ship.

Cruises will homeport out of Papeete, with seven- or 14-night options as well as a 21-day Easter Island sailing and combination voyages on offer.

For a video on the deployment see cruiseweekly.com.au/videos, with pre-sale open now.

Georgian into LHW

SANTA Monica's The Georgian Hotel has joined The Leading Hotels of the World (LHW), becoming the group's second member in the Los Angeles area.

The famed oceanfront property has just emerged from a massive restoration, with a 90-plus year heritage of West Coast hospitality.

The Art Deco landmark boasts 56 classic rooms and 28 one-bedroom suites with sweeping ocean views, while there's also the immersive Georgian Room in-house steakhouse and jazz bar, evoking a bygone era.

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Novotel & Mercure Darwin Airport has reopened after the two existing airport hotels at Darwin Airport were transformed and merged into one property. The \$30 million project included a refurbishment of the hotels' existing rooms along with new villas, suites and bungalows. The two separate receptions have also been transformed into a combined area, while a new 60-metre swimming pool has also opened.



After a \$20 million refurb, the 283-room **Novotel Sydney City Centre** has unveiled significant hospitality upgrades after reopening last week. The urban oasis, located on York Street, says "sustainability is built into the DNA" of its design, which focuses on the ethos of creating a hotel with less waste, as well as comfort and functionality. The property also offers an exciting new dining concept and a new fitness centre set to open in 2024.



The curtains have been pulled back on the highly-anticipated \$30 million revitalisation of **Amora Hotel Brisbane**, with all 296 rooms featuring a new "tradition-meets-contemporary" look complete with greenery, and natural light and tones. The outdoor rooftop pool and deck areas have also been upgraded. Additionally, the five-star property has integrated the latest technology across its 11 conference and event spaces.



The multi-million dollar makeover at **Radisson Hotel Salt Lake City Downtown** will introduce new aesthetics to its rooms, dining outlets, lobby, fitness centre and swimming pool, once completed in 2024. Guests will be able to enjoy the upgraded facilities in time for the winter sports season, with the renovation aligning with the hotel's goal to become one of the top hotels in the market.



Riu Palace Pacifico in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico has reopened as an adult-only resort following an extensive revamp. The RIU Hotels & Resorts property, which offers RIU's popular 24-hour all-inclusive service, has added number of culinary experiences, as well as a new package, Elite Club by RIU service, aimed at guests looking to "take their holiday to the next level".

Cocky makes debut in WA



ACCESSIBLE tour operator Cocky Guides hosted its first-ever tour in Western Australia (**TD 06 Nov**), guiding 12 blind and low-vision travellers on an eight-day adventure through the state's capital city and South West.

Accompanied by two guide dogs, the group was able to explore Perth and Busselton through Cocky's "uniquely curated itineraries" which "focus on our guests' senses beyond sight and the West's best tour operators", according to founder James McFarlane.

The travellers were treated to an abundance of multi-sensory activities, including a trip to Rottnest Island, wildlife encounters, visits to national parks including Nambung and Yanchep, and a cultural tour at Koomal Dreaming.

They were also able to savour fresh seafood at the Lobster Shack, indulge in handmade chocolate at the Yanchep Lakeview Tea Rooms, and quench their thirst with a cold beer at Shelter Brewing Co.

Cocky Guides has returned over one million dollars to the Australian visitor economy since its establishment in 2018.

To book a tour, [CLICK HERE](#). **MW**

QF pet policy change

QANTAS has updated its animal freight policy in response to pleas from animal rescue groups and pet owners after it announced a ban on the transport of pets on days where the temperature exceeds 35°C.

Saving Animals from Euthanasia, which is based in WA's Karratha where the temperature regularly exceeds 35°C, said the blanket rule meant they would be unable to rehome pets for around six months of the year.

The carrier said that while its Extreme Weather Policy will remain in place, the update will allow animals to fly at cooler times of the day during the morning and evening.

EK serves up 10 yrs

EMIRATES has returned as the official airline of the Australian Open tennis for the 10th year.

EK will contribute by hosting experiences such as the Kids Tennis Day and Emirates Day, and will also bring back the popular Emirates' hospitality suite.

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- All port charges and government fees

Cruise departs: 24 December 2024, 06* January 2025 & 10 January 2025

INSIDE STATEROOM	
TWIN SHARE	QUAD SHARE
\$2,169*	\$1,819*
FROM PRICE BASED ON PER PERSON TWIN SHARE	FROM PRICE BASED ON 2 ADULTS & 2 CHILDREN*



6 NIGHT NOUMEA CRUISE SYDNEY | NOUMEA | SYDNEY

INCLUDES:

- 6 night cruise from Sydney return aboard *Disney Wonder*
- Most meals~ & entertainment on board the ship
- Select non-alcoholic beverages on board the ship
- All port charges and government fees

Cruise departs: 28 December 2024 & 16* January 2025

INSIDE STATEROOM	
TWIN SHARE	QUAD SHARE
\$2,869*	\$2,389*
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