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QF's Surprise Sale

QANTAS has announced a 72-hour Surprise Sale, which offers reduced fares to more than 60 destinations across Australia, including Hamilton Island, Broome, Cairns, Byron Bay, the Gold Coast, and more.

The sale, which entices Aussies to book their 2024 beach escapes, city breaks and regional retreats, ends 11.59pm AEDT on 24 Nov, unless sold out prior - [CLICK HERE](#) to see the deals.

WebBeds wakes up profits

THE future is looking bright for Webjet, with the online travel brand releasing top-line financials this morning which show its WebBeds division is propelling the business to healthy profitability (**TD** breaking news).

Overall, the company enjoyed a 39% bump in revenue and a 35% boost in TTV for the six months to 30 Sep, rising to \$244.5 million and \$2.89 billion, respectively.

WebBeds accounted for the lion's share of EBITDA during the period, raking in \$89.9 million of the company's total \$102.1 million for the six months, which Webjet said had taken WebBeds to 50% higher booking volumes than it enjoyed pre-pandemic.

The division has been outperforming the market since May 2022, with a large book of new client wins and organic growth spurring strong forecasts moving into the second half.

Historically, WebBeds has found its greatest booking purchase in the European market, however more recently the hotel marketplace has seen healthy growth in other markets - especially the Asia Pacific region

WebBeds

which Webjet stated was its "greatest opportunity" for future sales growth.

Elsewhere in the business, Webjet enjoyed healthy gains in its OTA arm, with EBITDA growing by 24% to \$26.6 million, while bookings also increased by 8% to 692,000 - now only 15% shy of pre-pandemic levels.

The OTA also racked up a 17% gain in TTV, which rose to \$716 million, while revenue surged by 18% to \$61.2 million.

Webjet said its success in growing the OTA arm was partly attributable to a focus on higher margin products and unearthing alternative revenue sources to offset lower air commissions. *AB*

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of the latest news including a photo page from **Viking** and the **NTIAs**, plus our **Luxury** feature page and a front page about **Bon Voyage**.

Bonza enters Tassie

BONZA made its Tasmanian debut yesterday, getting wheels up on its first flight from the Gold Coast to Launceston (**TD** 24 Aug).

The thrice-weekly service is already seeing strong forward-bookings over summer and through to early Mar, according to Bonza chief Tim Jordan.

The new flights will add 1,100 seats between the Gold Coast and Launceston each week, providing a welcome tourism boost.

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MH eyes more Oz capacity

EXCLUSIVE

THE travel trade continues to be Malaysia Airlines' main source of bookings, Chief Commercial Officer Dersensih Aresandiran has revealed, with the carrier set to lean on agents as operations in Australia continue to recover.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* at yesterday's arrival of Malaysia's first Boeing 737-8, Aresandiran said trade incentives remain key as MH attempts to rebuild its Australian network - which could include the reintroduction of flights to Brisbane next year.

"We want to make sure we are trade-friendly...[it] is very important so we don't try to penalise the trade, we want to say how do we work together across the ecosystem," he said.

This attitude will extend to travel advisors who continue to use GDS to book Malaysia fares.

"Rather than give you a restriction if you book it on GDS, we're saying if you come to an NDC, you get an incentive, but if you still continue to book on our normal platform, we're not going to penalise you," he explained.

MH's relationship with the

trade will continue to grow in importance as the airline eyes a growth in Australia next year, which is currently one of its top-three markets.

"Ideally we want to increase all our frequencies into Australia, so we want to go to where we were in pre-COVID," Aresandiran said.

"Some of the destinations could go up to three times a day, we're still doing about two, so the idea is to grow our frequencies."

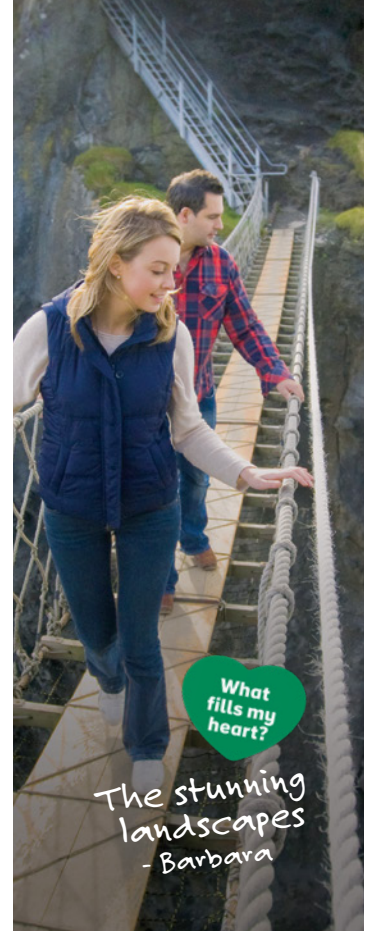
Asked whether or not a return to the route map for Brisbane could be on the cards, Aresandiran said it is "still under review" by Malaysia, particularly as it is a destination which syncs up well with other existing ports.

"The Australian market connects very well to our UK market...we've also got the Indian market, which is up to about nine cities right now...there's a lot of transit between these markets," he said.

"The more we put in Britain in the east, the more frequencies will be required in Australia, so it is a commodity for us to grow."

More developments on Malaysia Airlines on **page 9**. *MS*

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CVFR wins Solomons GSA

CVFR Travel Group's Airline Rep Services has been appointed as Fiji General Sales Agent for Solomon Airlines, with a focus on sales, marketing and support services for the Fijian travel trade.

The carrier's Acting CEO, Napaleon Padabela, said the move would support Solomon Airlines' strategy to strengthen its presence in the South West Pacific region.

"As we continue to rebuild our regional network, we will work closely with the trade in all markets...as a leading airline GSA company with strong working relationships across many trade partners, Airline Rep Services is a good fit for our Fiji requirements and will become an important extension of our own team."

Airline Rep Services VP, Gabrielle Vicari said the company was proud to represent Solomon Airlines, while CVFR Travel Group Chief Operating

Officer, Nidhi Nijhawan noted the ongoing expansion of the Airline Rep Services portfolio, which is "growing from strength to strength" under Vicari's stewardship.

Other clients represented by the division include Batik Air, Qatar Airways, Rwandair, Indigo, Sabre and Gulf Air. *BP*

Air NZ upgrade

MOODYS Investor Services has given a vote of confidence to the finances of Air New Zealand, today upgrading the "issuer rating and senior unsecured debt rating" for the airline one notch, from Baa1 to Baa2.

The carrier's Head of Investor Relations, Kim Cootes, said the move was among several baseline assessment changes, reflecting that Air NZ's "standalone credit profile has returned to pre-pandemic levels".

Highlights of Sri Lanka

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Percy sails to the top

FOLLOWING the recent departure of Jarrod Zurvas as its Sales and Distribution Manager Asia Pacific (*TD* 16 Oct), Coral Expeditions has appointed Gaby Percy (**pictured**) to the key role of Sales Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

Based in the cruise line's Cairns office, Percy has clearly impressed the Coral management with her year spent with the brand, in that time forming strong relationships with key partners and leading campaign initiatives.

Coral Expeditions is now recruiting an additional sales executive to join the team in line with the promotion.



CATO hot Xmas tix

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has revealed its 2023 Christmas Lunch event has sold out, with 420 guests expected to attend.

To be hosted at Doltone House Jones Bay Wharf, the celebration takes place on 07 Dec.

EY adds Nice, Greece

ETIHAD will launch new direct routes to Nice and Santorini from 15 Jun next year as part of an expanded northern summer schedule for 2024.

Both new routes will operate twice a week, and were unveiled alongside seasonal services to Mykonos, Malaga in Greece.

The carrier has also added frequencies to existing routes, including Bangkok (+ three per week), Colombo (+ three per week), and Athens (+ five per week), while Copenhagen services have also been extended to run year-round.

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Travel surviving the pressure test

SPENDING on travel by Aussies continues to be a priority despite the inflationary pressures placed on most households, new figures published in the latest *CommBank iQ Cost of Living Insights* report have shown.

While the figures showed there had been a dip in overall discretionary spending, travel was one of only two categories to rise above the inflationary growth rate, recording an 8.2% increase on the previous corresponding quarter in 2022.

The growth in spend was highest in the cruise sector, with Aussies forking out 55.3% more in the latest quarter than they did last year, while online travel bookings also performed well, increasing by 34.4%.

Households in South Australia and Western Australia were found to have increased discretionary spending at the fastest rate.

Travel pain for mortgagors

BUDGET pressures are expected to affect travel intentions in the near future as consumers feel the squeeze from the latest rate hikes.

That's according to Pearman Media using data from Roy Morgan Research.

Pearman's Director of Strategy & Research, Steve Allen, wrote in his latest newsletter that while the market for travel had "fully recovered" for those intending to travel on a 'long holiday' (more than three nights away from their principle place of residence), the data specifically around mortgage holders isn't as positive.

"Based on modelling, we have computed over the next two quarters there is likely to be a 37% fall in long holiday intention by mortgage holders, such is the likely squeeze on household budgets," Allen said.

He also predicted that Dec figures would suggest there are

2.57 million mortgage holders with intentions to have a long holiday, by comparison to 4.11 million in Jun this year.

The good news is, though, that overall long holiday travel intention still remains high.

Allen informed *Travel Daily* that "supporting overall long travel intentions, the actual number whom have travelled in past 12 months, is now only 19% down on pre-pandemic highs and is still trending upwards on a quarter-by-quarter basis".

He also observed that it was particularly positive in light of airfares remaining "stubbornly high" and that by the Jun quarter for 2023, over 43% of the total population over the age of 14 had the intention to participate in long travel.

Allen noted that package discounters like Luxury Escapes are stimulating marketing through advertising campaigns. *DF*



Window Seat

WHEN cricket great Glenn Maxwell was recently asked what's the one thing he couldn't travel without, his answer was his passport.

Yes, the mercurial Maxwell admitted to Booking.com that he had once travelled for a cricket tour without taking his important travel credentials with him, showing that even one of the world's best fielders can drop the ball at times.

Maxwell also suggested his golf clubs need to accompany him on any trip, as does his VPN so he can watch Aussie sports.



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VA nudges ahead of QF

AFTER months of trailing the pack, Virgin Australia has avoided the dubious honour of making the most domestic cancellations, with the Oct figures from BITRE showing that Qantas performed the worst of the major carriers.

However the margin was only small, with Qantas cancelling 4.3% of its services for the month, while VA scrapped 4.1%.

Rex Airlines was again a strong performer, only forced to cancel 2.3% of flights, well ahead of the monthly industry average of 3.8%, or 1,771 flights.

While VA may have improved slightly on the cancellation front, the same could not be said for on-time performance, with the carrier only managing to take off and touch down on schedule 68.85% of the time.

The low hit rate still managed to fare better than Qantas and its budget carrier Jetstar, which recorded sluggish rates of 65.85%



and 67.2% respectively.

Monthly figures showed that Rex also won the punctuality race for the month, with 75% of its flights keeping to schedule.

Overall, the 45,205 flights flown during Oct saw 71.1% arrive and depart as per program.

Of the 62 routes which met the criteria for on-time performance, the Townsville-Cairns route had the highest percentage of on time arrivals (92.4%) and on time departures (92.4%), while the Hamilton Island-Sydney route had the lowest percentage of on time arrivals (46.9%), & Cairns-Melbourne the on time departures rating (40.4%). AB

ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



THE 2023 National Travel Industry Awards was the beginning of the next phase for Australia's leading travel awards program.

This year we started by kicking off on Fri night with two welcome functions.

We knew being in Melbourne would be an opportunity to do things differently and we wanted to find ways to increase the opportunities to bring finalists and past winners together.

The feedback from the 150 people in attendance was incredible and the vibe across the networking drinks and Holey Moley was electric.

We heard from last years winners on what NTIA meant to them; and why the recognition from our great industry was important to their teams and their own professional goals.

Things were different on Sat. It was not just because we were in a new venue and a city that we had not hosted the event in for close

to 20 years.

There are many hard jobs in the travel industry, but I think the hardest one by far is the emcee of the NTIAs.

This year's host (sponsored by Gow Gates Insurance Brokers), Lehmo was a smashing success.

He engaged the room and ensured the 36 winners from the night were celebrated by the 1,300 people in attendance.

To finish the evening, the famous NTIA afterparty was back with Viking, making it truly special.

We recorded 950 people making their way from the Crown ballroom to the Palms, where most danced and celebrated until well past 3am.

When I reflect, last year the NTIAs marked a fitting return following years of heartache caused by COVID.

This year felt like we were back! A fun energy was felt across the three days. Importantly, we all remembered why we were in travel, and we celebrated as one. All of this would not be possible without our incredible and supportive partners led by Singapore Airlines, Viking and CVFR. On behalf of the industry, I say a heartfelt thank you.

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Airbus grounded by Boeing

AFTER an unremarkable performance at the Paris Air Show 2023 in Jun, Boeing has bounced back to experience its best selling day in years at the Dubai Airshow, which wrapped up earlier this week.

The aircraft manufacturer secured a whopping 271 orders from various airlines, including Emirates and FlyDubai, on the first day of the show alone, while Airbus only announced a single deal with airBaltic for 30 Airbus A220 planes.

The figures out of the Dubai aviation event show a significant turning of the tables when compared to the Paris Airshow, where its European competitor Airbus secured more than twice



as many orders as Boeing, including a record order from IndiGo (*TD* 21 Jun).

The opening day of the Dubai Airshow saw Boeing unveil a US\$52 billion order from Emirates for 125 widebody aircraft, including 90 777X variants, while sister carrier FlyDubai purchased 30 B787 Dreamliners for US\$11 billion.

Performance was lackluster for Airbus however, with the manufacturer failing to attract any orders for its A320 series, which approaches its 40th anniversary in 2024.

Overall, the 10th edition of the Dubai Airshow was considered a massive success, attracting more than 100,000 visitors and 1,400 exhibitors, with a total of 397 aircraft orders placed by airlines from around the world. *JM*

More Nat Geo tours

AZAMARA is expanding its shore day tour program through an extended agreement with National Geographic.

Nine new Nat Geo tours have been made available in partnership with InterCruises Shoreside & Port Services, including a new day trip in Amsterdam that takes guests to hear stories from some of the city's immigrants and refugee population and sample meals from noted chefs.

Also on offer is the chance to uncover the legacy behind the Dominican Republic's gastronomy led by local cooks.

Bonza turbulence

SEVERAL Bonza crew members were hospitalised due to severe turbulence suffered on a flight from Rockhampton to the Sunshine Coast yesterday.

A scheduled flight between the Sunshine Coast and Mildura was cancelled as a result, with passengers offered a full refund.

VA colours the skies with pride



VIRGIN Australia is bringing back its Pride Flight, with more than 500 seats now available to be booked across three services departing Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide to Sydney ahead of the 2024 Mardi Gras Parade.

Now in its fourth year, Pride Flight will be hosted by RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under stars and drag performers, with one-way Economy seats available to book now from \$269 **HERE**, departing on 01 Mar.

Guests will also enjoy access to a departure gate party and the official Landing Party at The Beresford in Surry Hills, complete with beverages, special entertainment by local LGBTQIA+ venues, celebrity appearances, DJ tunes, plus merch giveaways.

All Pride Flight services will be operated by LGBTQIA+ people and allies, with VA to donate 30% from the sale of every domestic ticket to LGBTQIA+ youth charity Minus18. *JM*

VietJet takes off

VIETJET launched its inaugural flight from Adelaide to Ho Chi Minh City yesterday, marking the first time a Vietnamese carrier has taken off on the route.

The flight took to the air following a ceremony yesterday to welcome Vietjet's first non-stop service connecting Ho Chi Minh City and Perth.

VietJet's latest expansion to two more Aussie cities will more than double its weekly flight frequency to Australia to 58 a week.

No impact for QF

QANTAS is keeping a close eye on a volcano currently erupting in Papua New Guinea in case it needs to divert routes.

Mount Ulawun blew its top yesterday on the northeastern island of New Britain, spewing ash more than 15km into the air.

Qantas is one of many airlines which fly northwards using PNG's air space, but confirmed no services have been impacted.

Local volcanologists suggest the eruption is subsiding, despite a large ash cloud remaining.

Mapping Swiss rail

RAIL Europe has released its new digital map for Swiss Panoramic Trains, hailed as a useful tool for travel agents when planning itineraries.

Benefits of using the map include obtaining the full view of all Swiss train itineraries, advanced booking dates, seat reservations, onboard meal requirements, and seasonal themed rides, off-the-beaten track tours, to name just a few.

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Viking rewards TA's top performers

VIKING recently rolled out the red carpet for some of Travel Associates' top-performing advisors, whisking them away on an eight-day odyssey on the Venice, the Adriatic and Greece itinerary.

This wasn't just any cruise, it was a specially curated reward for winning an exclusive Flight Centre Travel Group Travel Associate's incentive run earlier in the year.

Understanding that the best way to sell a dream is to live it first, the lucky advisors, along with their plus-ones, traced the historic shores of empires past, soaking in the romance of Ravenna and the timeless beauty of Athens.

The journey was peppered with gems like Croatia's Dalmatian Coast, an ancient palace at Split, and the storied streets of Dubrovnik.

Montenegro's Kotor showcased its scenic fjords, while Greece offered the charming Old Town of Corfu and the gateway to Olympia in Katakolon.

It was a trip that blended the best of 'The Viking Difference' with the joy of discovery - something these advisors can now share first-hand with their clients.



SHAUN Kavanagh, Viking; Daniel Rottenburg, partner; Cat Williams, partner; Simon Treloar, Viking; Tammy Houston, Houston & Turner TA; and Roland Kautzky, TA @ Home.



MALCOLM Hyslop, Wye & James TA; Roland Kautzky; Daniel Rottenburg; Amanda Hyslop, partner; Adam Johnson, Viking Guest Entertainer; Tammy Houston; Cat Williams, Partner; Simon Treloar and Shaun Kavanagh,



POST-CRUISE cocktails in Athens.



DINNER is served The Viking Way.



VIKING Venus atrium.



ROLAND rollin' - Greek Cooking Class Shore excursion.



GALLEY tour with Viking Venus Executive Chef.



AMANDA George, partner; Marlena Holden, partner; Cat Williams, partner; Daneil Rottenberg, partner; Adam Crane, TA Belconnen; and Jonathan House, TA Runaway Bay.



GROUP Shore excursion, Syrtaki, Greek Food & Ancient Olympia.

VIPs gather for pre-NTIA networking

SENIOR travel industry leaders got together before the main National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) event in Melbourne last Sat evening, with ATIA hosting pre-dinner drinks in the Crown Palladium's River Room.

Dean Long, CEO of the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA), welcomed guests, noting the return of the awards to Victoria for the first time in almost two decades as well as the first-time involvement of the NTIA Custodians who have "done a stellar job in setting the most comprehensive criteria we've ever had for these awards".

"So for the winners that we've had tonight, they can be truly proud of their achievements, and the same for the finalists," Long enthused.



ATIA Chairman Tom Manwaring with wife Julie alongside John and Karen O'Shea, Ord Minnett.

ATIA Chairman Tom Manwaring from Express Travel Group also spoke, saying the excitement in the prestigious ballroom was confirmation that "travel's never been in a better place".



DAVE Hosking, Travel Corporation MD with Toni Ambler, TTC Tour Brands and Scott Ellis, APT.



THE Viking exec team: Lee Siefken, Keira Smith, Jane Moggridge and Michelle Black.



FIONA Dalton Virtuoso, Dani Galloway, FCTG, and Webjet director Katrina Barry.

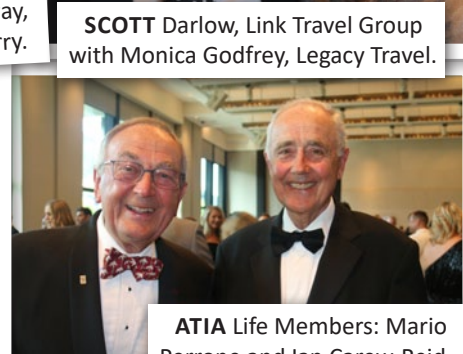


SCOTT Darlow, Link Travel Group with Monica Godfrey, Legacy Travel.

ATAC GM Michelle Emerton with Jack Taylor from Performance Travel.



RAM Chhabra from CVFR with Greg McJarrow from Singapore Airlines.



ATIA Life Members: Mario Perrone and Ian Carew-Reid.



ATIA CEO Dean Long with Cinzia Burnes, Helloworld Travel Executive Director.

DEB Fox, A&K with Christian Hunter, Travellers Choice.



Luxperience wraps up

MORE than 120 elite travel professionals and 75 travel suppliers from around the world took part in Australia's leading luxury trade showcase last week.

Signalling a strong comeback after a three-year pause, Luxperience orchestrated more than 4,300 one-on-one appointments over the three days, helping to drive strong luxury sales.

The luxury-focused event incorporated four networking functions and social events, including a cocktail party at Shell House Sky Bar.

Next year's event is set to get even bigger, with the addition of a one-day Development Summit, which will see high profile panellists discuss key luxury topics.

MALAYSIA PLOTS PREMIUM POSITIONING

EXCLUSIVE

MALAYSIA Airlines wants to position itself as "leisure premium", Chief Commercial Officer Dersenish Aresandiran told *Travel Daily*, with its goal to become one of the top 10 airlines in the world by 2030 in the Skytrax yearly rankings.

The ambitious aim was stated yesterday by Executive Director, Izhah Ismail, and reinforced by Aresandiran, who said Malaysia hopes to have "one of the best Business classes", the likes of which will compete with the other premium carriers.

He added Malaysia will not be unbundling its Business fares in the same way top-10 Skytrax airlines Qatar Airways and Emirates have done.

"As we grow, what Malaysia Airlines wants to do in the premium segment is actually



improve its offerings, so rather unbundling the high-end premium, what if we charge you the fare, but give you something better," he suggested.

"We don't want to take you down the funnel, we want to drive you up the funnel, which means improving our offerings."

This objective includes better meals and free wi-fi across its entire fleet, which Malaysia took another step towards earlier this week when it took receipt of its highly anticipated first Boeing 737-8 (pictured) (TD yesterday).

"If you say if you're unbundling,

give you no wi-fi, no baggage, maybe no lunch, that's also similar to somebody who's buying a high Economy fare - how would you differentiate that?"

Australia, which Malaysia has stated is one of its most important markets (see page 2), will be a beneficiary of the airline's luxury repositioning, with Aresandiran committing its new Airbus A330neos (TD 16 Aug 2022) to the local market.

"I think that will definitely fly to Australia and UK, the high-end, premium sectors...we're really looking forward to that." MS

Heinemann now at GC

TRAVELLERS passing through Gold Coast Airport can now enjoy a newly opened Heinemann Tax & Duty free store, which offers 22 new brands including Frank Green, P.E Nation, Allkinds, and The Upside, as well as luxury resort wear brand, CAMILLA.

Located in the domestic terminal and spanning 200m², the new store will introduce a line-up of international luxury beauty brands early next year, and is part of the airport's ongoing \$500 million transformation.

Seabourn offers around-the-world luxury

SEABOURN has opened up sales for its 2026 World Cruise - Ring of Fire: Hidden Gems, which promises opulence, indulgence and discovery as it traverses 68 destinations across 14 countries.

Taking place over 129 days, guests will be able to enjoy enhanced amenities and privileges aboard *Seabourn Sojourn*, which departs on the ultra-luxury voyage from Los Angeles on 06 Jan 2026.

Cruisers will benefit from an array of exclusive additions, including private dining experiences, tasting menus, advanced internet packages, a medical services package, an extended two-night pre-cruise hotel stay, and a 30% boost in shipboard credit of up to US\$10,000 per suite.

The sailing will feature five maiden calls plus visits to marquee ports, cosmopolitan cities and smaller hidden gems.

IHG's two in Thailand

IHG Hotels & Resorts is set to open two new luxury properties in Thailand's Chiang Rai region, including the 68-key InterContinental Chiang Rai Golden Triangle Resort, due to open in 2025.

The accommodation giant is also preparing to open Kimpton Chiang Rai Golden Triangle, currently operating as The Imperial Golden Triangle Resort, after it undergoes a renovation.

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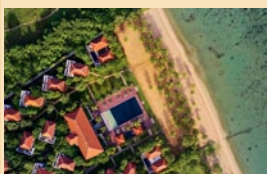
Melbourne Marriott Hotel has undergone an extensive refurbishment encompassing its ground floor and guestrooms, as well as technology upgrades across the property. The \$3.1 million project, which began 18 months ago, also saw the opening of the M Bar and M Club lounge in Sep 2022 as part of the first phase of the transformation. All of the 188 rooms now boast new carpets and technology, which the hotel said will help elevate the guest experience.



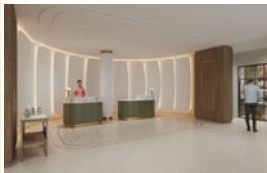
The mega 513-room **Four Points By Sheraton Kuala Lumpur, City Centre** has opened just in time for end-of-year festivities. The urban getaway boasts close proximity to the city's urban entertainment, business and shopping districts including Suria KLCCM the Bukit Bintang Golden Triangle. The guestrooms are designed to offer "uncompromised" comfort, while the property also features one of the largest outdoor pools in Kuala Lumpur, complete with water slides and a splash play area. There's also a 24-hour fitness centre, Mandara Spa, and indoor Kids Club.



Renaissance Boca Raton Hotel, situated in the heart of the Floridian city, has announced the completion of its property-wide renovation. The 189-key resort-style hotel has unveiled modernised guestrooms, facilities and public spaces, along with introducing a new pool deck, tiki bar, and Meat Market restaurant.



After undergoing an extensive refresh, **Sun Siyam Pasikuda** in Sri Lanka has opened its doors once again. The tropical oasis offers an affordable stay for guests who want to experience the luxury and cultural richness of the city. Everything within the resort has been transformed, including its colour concept, equipment and various offerings, while preserving the original structure of the property.



Slated for completion in early 2024, **Autograph La Concha Key West** on Duval Street in Florida has begun a comprehensive transformation of its facilities, guestrooms and exterior. Guests staying at the hotel will soon be able to enjoy revamped bathrooms, new aesthetics in the lobby, bar, and restaurant, as well as a rejuvenated pool and fitness centre.

Livin' it up in Los Cabos



LOS Cabos showcased its tourism offerings during the 17th edition of the destination's VIP Summit 2023, which took place from 13-16 Nov at Hacienda del Mar Los Cabos Resort.

The event attracted 69 tourism business partners from the Mexican region's key source markets, including Australia, which was listed as a key emerging market for the popular tourist hot spot.

Flying the flag for Australia during the VIP summit were Luxury Escapes' Alexis Cunningham, ID Travel Group's Belinda Layt, Travel Associates' Christina Kerr, and Travel Managers' Troy Coelho.

The group (**pictured**) was able to discover the destination's tourism offerings first-hand during the three days of the event, including its luxury accommodation and a variety of wellness, gastronomic and adventure experiences.

There were plenty of business meetings on the agenda too, along with an advisory board session which detailed Los Cabos' strategy

for 2024 to attract more visitation.

"The VIP Summit was the perfect opportunity to meet face to face with the best of the best Los Cabos has to offer," Coelho shared, adding "the towns, culture, hotels and food scene took my breath away".

So far this year, despite some negative headlines for Mexican tourism, Los Cabos has seen an 11.5% increase in visitor numbers compared to 2022, attracting 3.2 tourists from Jan to Oct 2023. *JM*

Thompson Seville

HYATT has announced it will open its first hotel in Seville, Spain's fourth-largest city, marking the brand's fourth Thompson Hotels property in Europe and its 19th in the world.

The luxury-lifestyle property will offer 101 rooms, a restaurant, a rooftop bar with a pool, dedicated meeting rooms, co-working space, and a gym.

Due to open in 2026, Thompson Seville will help propel Hyatt's brand expansion plans in Europe.

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