

## Eclipse II breaks new waves in Sydney

**CRUISE** history was made in Sydney Harbour early this morning, as *Scenic Eclipse II* became the first Scenic Group ship to visit Australia.

Docking at the International Overseas Passenger Terminal to show off her impressive look before hosting media tomorrow, *Eclipse II* will then depart to arrive in Newcastle on 22 Apr, where she will kickstart sailing a collection of Aussie departures over the next two years.

The 228-passenger vessel is designed to push the boundaries of ultra luxury cruising, boasting a close-to 1:1 crew-to-passenger ratio, two helicopters, a cutting-edge submersible, plus a range of premium dining and bar options.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* on



the eve of *Eclipse II*'s historic arrival, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours Group GM, Anthony Laver, said after 38 years of operation, the Australian-owned company is bringing "something very special"

to local shores.

"The Scenic product is way above anything that is comparative globally, and to have [*Eclipse II*] in Australia where it will be only a domestic flight away...and accessible in Aussies' own backyard means there is no longer an excuse," Laver said.

"The level of interest will go through the roof," he added.

Destinations on offer include the Kimberley, the Top End and Antarctica's Ross Sea. **AB**

See **page 10** for more details.

### Goyder exit change?

**UNDER** fire Qantas Chairman Richard Goyder may relinquish his role at the carrier earlier than anticipated, with an update this morning confirming his replacement, John Mullen, will be appointed to the board on 22 Apr instead of 01 Jul.

Mullen will assume the Chairman-elect and Non-Executive Director roles earlier than previously flagged, however at this stage Goyder will stay on with the airline until the next AGM in Oct.

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of news including our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- Abercrombie & Kent
- Scenic

## Air NZ eyes Tassie

**AIR** New Zealand will return to Hobart in Oct, the carrier shared in its summer schedule update.

The seasonal Auckland-Hobart route will see the carrier operate three direct flights a week to Hobart over the summer months between Oct and Mar.

Air New Zealand's capacity and network update also noted the return of the carrier's seasonal route to Seoul from Oct, flying to the capital of South Korea from Auckland three times per week.

However Air New Zealand has been forced to extend the pause to its Chicago service due to aircraft availability limitations and ongoing engine challenges, the carrier said.

Air NZ will also look to ramp up be capacity to the Asian hubs of Singapore, Tokyo, and Taipei.

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## TCF protection worth a million bucks

**THE** TravelManagers Customer Fund (TCF) has marked a major milestone in consumer protection this week, with the fund now containing more than \$1 million since its soft launch in 2019.

The scheme, which was formally introduced to the market in 2022 (**TD** 11 Aug 2022), refunds eligible customers up to \$25,000 per person in the event that an 'Approved Supplier' fails financially, and the client is unable to obtain a refund through their travel insurance or bank.

TravelManagers' Chief Operating Officer, Grant Campbell (**pictured**), said the benefits of its TCF are two-fold, ensuring the highest level of customer care for travellers, as well as bolstering the confidence of its growing travel agent network.

"The payments that have been claimed to date have ensured that customers have not been left out of pocket," Campbell said.



"At the same time, PTMs have been spared any awkward conversations with clients about funds lost due to the insolvency of an Approved Supplier.

"It can be easy to forget when things are good as they are now, but anyone who's been in the industry for a while will know that things can and do go wrong, often with little or no warning.

"While we are happy to reap the rewards of the travel industry's current, buoyant state, TravelManagers believes in being

prepared for future risk."

For many of TravelManagers' skilled advisors, the TCF has been the "deal-breaker" in choosing to join the company's network.

"I joined TravelManagers during the pandemic, and it was really, really important that I could offer my long-term client base a high level of security," said advisor Joanne Miller, who is based in Greystanes in NSW.

The surpassing of the \$1 million mark in the protection fund coincides with the business adding 7% in total sales for Q1 this year, when compared to the same period in 2023.

TravelManagers has not only managed to pile on growth in its total number of bookings, but has also improved the average value per booking during the period.

The company said the result is testament to member dedication and the broader resilience of its business model. **AB**

## Viking goes Platinum

**VIKING** has unveiled its new Viking Platinum Club, hailed as a major evolution of its top advisors incentive program.

Entry into the exclusive Club will be reserved for the top 10 travel advisors with the greatest number of Viking bookings per year, while the agency they represent will also be welcomed as a Viking Platinum Agency.

Platinum Club members will enjoy a range of perks, including being able to board an eight-day voyage on the Venice, the Adriatic & Greece itinerary in 2025.

Other Platinum benefits include free stateroom upgrades and a Silver Spirits Beverage package.

## A&K luxe portfolio

**ABERCORMBIE & Kent** has unveiled its 2025-26 luxury expedition cruise portfolio, featuring a range of remote destinations such as Antarctica and The Seychelles - see **p9**.



## eRoam, gives travel agents the gift of time!

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## Accounts get a good Walshe



**THE** Walshe Group has made a double appointment to bolster the management of its blue chip destination client roster.

Effective this week, Anna Riedel has taken on the role of PR & Trade Account Manager, Australia & New Zealand for Hawai'i Tourism Oceania, while Antonio Khattar has stepped into the position of Trade Account Manager, Australia & New Zealand, for New York City

Tourism + Conventions.

Riedel brings 15 years of travel industry experience to the newly-created role, moving across from her previous remit as PR Executive for HTO and Trade Account Manager for New York City Tourism + Conventions.

Meanwhile, Khattar has been an Account Manager for Walshe for the last four years, and possesses over 20 years of travel industry knowledge, including time spent in the inbound, online, retail and the corporate travel sectors. **AB**

## WA epic road trips

**AGENTS** are invited to register for a 30-minute webinar with Christine Poole from Tourism Western Australia and Kelly Leonard from Australia's Golden Outback, to discover how to make the most out of WA road trips.

The session will be held on 23 Apr and covers the romance of the open road across the state over varying time periods.

Agents who attend one of the live sessions at 12pm or 3pm AEST also have the chance to win a \$100 gift card - register **HERE**.

## Seat shift to blame?

**THE** mid-air plummet on a LATAM Airlines flight last month that injured 50 passengers (**TD** 18 Mar) has been linked to an "involuntary movement forward" of the captain's seat, according to a preliminary report from Chile's Aviation Authority.

The crew that worked on the Boeing 787 during and before the Mar 11 flight from Australia to NZ were interviewed, including maintenance staff who "verified the condition of the captain's seat", while authorities continue to look into the matter.

The exact cause of the plunge, however, is yet to be determined.

## Sell three, sail free

**TO RECOGNISE** and reward the dedication of its travel sellers, Tauck is offering a free spot on river cruises departing in 2025 to agents who make three new bookings on any of the brand's 2024 European river sailings between 15 Apr and 13 Jul.

To be eligible for the offer, clients must travel between now and 31 Dec 2024 - for more info, agents can contact their local Tauck account manager.



**Travel Daily**  
ON LOCATION

**AT SEA**

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you due west on the Mediterranean Sea on board Princess Cruises' exciting new mega-ship, *Sun Princess*.

**TRAVELLERS** enjoying a Zumba class in *Sun Princess'* main atrium this morning may have appreciated the help provided by a rather angry swell and a howling wind outside.

The conditions are still no match for the amazingly stable *Sun Princess*, which today meanders west bound for Spain, with some passengers enjoying down time, others hitting the gym and some even bravely holding court poolside.

Highlights of today's agenda included an inside look at *Sun Princess'* popular Good Spirits cocktail bar with celebrity "liquid chef" Rob Floyd.

Tonight, we were fortunate to secure passage into the world of the magical unknown as we stepped inside the mysterious *Spellbound* by *Magic Castle*.

The famed Gothic Victorian house in Los Angeles enjoys a cult following as a haunt for members of the Academy of Magic Arts, with an exciting themed experience adapted for Princess Cruises.

And while *Spellbound* is well promoted on board, little information is provided as to its precise whereabouts, with no signs to any entrance doors.

All we know is that guests will be "escorted from dinner" - see today's **Cruise Weekly** for more.

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## Aussie innovator launches VIP travel club

A NEW first-of-its-kind members-only travel club, FAWC House, has formally launched to offer exclusive access to the best hotel perks, entertainment, and experiences worldwide.

Club members will enjoy VIP status across 2,000 hotel chains globally, including Four Seasons, Marriott and Sofitel, complete with complimentary upgrades, food and drink credits, and much more, as well as access to a dedicated concierge team.

FAWC House claims to also unlock exclusive events around the world, including group travel opportunities, wellness retreats, and music and art events.

The club is the brainchild of Amanda Archer, an Australian based in LA, who described it as “a seamless fusion” between the travel industry and Web3 culture, a term used to describe the next iteration of the internet, which is built on blockchain technology.



“At FAWC House, we pride ourselves on being able to cater to everyone’s travel needs and ensuring we provide the best VIP experience imaginable,” she said.

“Our founding members can look forward to unlocking special surprise perks and securing our launch rate for the duration of their membership.”

International supermodel, Alessandra Ambrosio (pictured left with Archer) became the first

member to join FAWC House.

“As one of the most successful and glamorous women in the world, Alessandra Ambrosio totally embodies the spirit of our brand, and we couldn’t ask for a better way to launch FAWC House than having her as our first member,” Archer said.

Membership options start from \$12.99 per month for the Platinum Pass, which grants access to the hotel online booking platform with priority upgrade status above other black card programs.

The next tier is the Black Pass for a monthly fee of \$24.99, which provides access to world-class concierge services and VIP travel agents.

There is also an NFT Digital Access Pass up for grabs, which offers lifetime access to the online platform, along with concierge and Web3 benefits - learn more [HERE](#). JM

## Booking.com in pole position on brand

**BOOKING.COM** was crowned Australia’s ‘Biggest Brand Mover’ for Mar, according to YouGov’s latest monthly report.

The online travel agency made gains in 10 out of 13 Brand Index data points in the ‘Media and Communication’ category, driven largely by the 2024 Australia Grand Prix, which was held in Melbourne from 22-24 Mar.

Booking.com’s top ranking was guided by factors such as brand awareness, ad traction, buzz, general impression, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, as well as recommendations.

The Australian Grand Prix saw a record crowd attendance of 440,000 and a surge in accommodation bookings.



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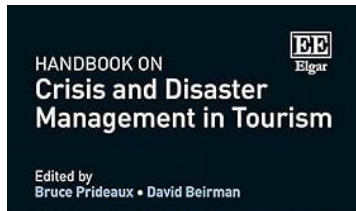
## Tourism crises guide

A **NEW** handbook has been launched by Edward Elgar Publishers, covering how to handle the impacts of disasters on the global tourism sector. *Crisis and Disaster Management in Tourism* was compiled using contributions from 42 authors, including Global Strategy Manager for Tourism Australia, Rob Harding Smith.

The 25-chapter publication also saw CEO of Japan Tourism Resilience Masato Takamatsu, and Director of Bournemouth University's Centre for Disaster Management Resilience, Richard Gordon, pen their thoughts on how the industry can better tackle major crises in the future.

Central Queensland University academic Bruce Prideaux and University of Technology Sydney, Australia's David Beirman edited the handbook.

A 40% discount offer is in place until 30 Jun - more details [HERE](#).



## A Mauritian trip to remember



**MW TOURS** recently linked with Air Mauritius and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority to host a group of Aussie agents on an eight-day famil trip to Mauritius.

The tour kicked off with a traditional Mauritian welcome, as the group toasted celebratory champagne while surrounded by vibrant floral displays.

They enjoyed a two-night stay at the elegant Heritage Le Telfair, before heading west to Hilton Mauritius, where agents savoured the hotel's luxurious amenities, cocktails, and scenic vistas.

Next on the itinerary was a visit to La Vallee Des Couleurs Nature Park, which offers plenty of adventure thanks to its numerous trails, abundance of wildlife, ziplines, and much more.

Other stand-out moments on the trip included rum-tasting at

the Chamarel distillery, and visits to the picturesque Bois Cheri tea factory and the historic Chateau de Labourdonnais.

Navy Wang, Managing Director at MW Tours, said he was thrilled to host the famil, which showcased Mauritius' finest.

"Such experiences play a pivotal role in positioning Mauritius as a premier travel destination, heralding a future brimming with eager visitors to this paradise island," he described. *JM*

**Pictured:** Danny Lao, Atlas Travel; Wang; Angela Jenkins, Travel Associates Toronto; Lisa Ahearn, Destination HQ; Mary-Anne Spring, Helloworld Travel Bunbury; Nicole Campbell, Best 4 Travel; Hannah Henry Flight Centre Shepparton; Bisha Balan, RAC Travel & Cruise WA; Sonja Jones, Helloworld Drysdale and Kate Narracott, MTA Travel.

## TTC gets tactical

**TTC** Tour Brands is highlighting a range of new tactical offers on its 2024 trips, including 15% off more than 250 worldwide tours across its Trafalgar, Insight Vacations and Costsaver brands.

Couples can save up to \$4,000 on Insight Vacations, up to \$3,800 on Trafalgar, and \$1,400 on Costsaver, when they lock in their bookings before 30 May with a \$200 deposit.

Travellers can also score a discount of up to 25% on Contiki's Europe trips until 30 Apr, including its popular 'European Inspiration', as well as itineraries throughout Asia, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Contiki has added more than 100 European departures for the Northern Hemisphere summer, with selected dates now up to 30% off for a limited time.

More info on the deals [HERE](#), and more specials on [page eight](#).

## Bali's rabies defence

**IN A** move to support its tourism sector, authorities in Bali have announced mass vaccination drives to protect local people and tourists against rabies.

The Denpasar City Government is aiming to vaccinate over 70,000 - 90% of the population - of its stray, community-owned, and pet dogs across the region this year.

It is predicted that in 2024, the number of dogs in the Denpasar City jurisdiction of Bali will reach 82,000, according to the Denpasar City Agriculture Service.



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### Tell me a good story

AUSSIE tourism operators are invited to attend a new annual Visitor Economy Summit hosted by Destination Country and Outback NSW, with the first iteration of the event to take place on 08 May in Armidale.

The one-day gathering is designed to help tourism operators build their brand and bottom line through the power of storytelling, and will feature a line-up of 14 guest speakers from regional and international businesses, including artists, retailers, accommodation, venues and cultural attractions.

Industry experts from Tourism Australia, Destination NSW and Destination Marketing Store will also take to the stage to share their insights, expertise and latest data on tourism trends.

“This year’s theme is the ‘Power of Storytelling’ as stories are the most vital tool to help businesses connect with an audience,” said Chair of Destination Country and Outback NSW, Andrea Plawutsky.

“This Summit is designed to help our industry tell more stories and build a vibrant tourism economy.”

Tickets are \$110pp - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.



### Canada partners with DJs



**DESTINATION** Canada is expanding its shoulder seasons and seasonality within the Australian market, partnering with David Jones for an autumn/winter campaign.

The country is very popular with Australian travellers in the summer months, and the launch of the tourism body’s collaboration with David Jones at the flagship Sydney store on Elizabeth St offers customers an insight into the landscapes, people, and narratives available during the slower seasons.

Canada is also popular with Australians for skiing during the winter, which the destination is attempting to expand through to the end of Mar, the DMO’s Managing Director Julie King said.

“Autumn is a beautiful time to go, to showcase wildlife, the beautiful fall colours, and all those beautiful landscapes as well,” she said.

“That whole period of Sep to

Nov is really stunning across Canada,” King added.

The David Jones initiative commenced last month with the unveiling of three Canada-themed windows along Castlereagh Street, which members of the travel trade were invited to view during a special event earlier this week.

**Pictured** attending the event are MC Edwina Bartholomew, Destination Canada Media Director Janaya Birse, King, Sea Wolf Adventures owner Mike Willie, and Destination Canada Travel Trade Director Nathan McLoughlin.

**MEANWHILE**, Travel Manitoba has appointed a new general sales agent, Global Tourism Solutions, to execute travel trade and media relations in Australia.

The new GSA will support Manitoba’s branding, ‘Canada’s Heart is Calling’, and will work to engage more Australian interest in the province. *MS*



### Window Seat

AUSTRALIA has made it onto a rather un-exciting list, ranking as the third country in the world to have the most “boring tourism attractions”.

Compiled by Solitaired, the ‘Top 100 Most Boring Attractions Worldwide’ analysed 66.7 million Google reviews of 3,290 attractions across 71 countries.

The WA Museum Boola Bardip in Perth (**pictured**) was deemed the 16th most boring attraction, while the top 15 were all claimed by the US and Canada, with the Branson Scenic Railway in Missouri taking the undesirable crown.

Australia appeared on the list six more times, with Melbourne taking the cake with three ‘tedious’ attractions, including Legoland Discovery Centre, Immigration Museum, and Luna Park.

Perth appeared once more due to its Bell Tower, while Sydney received a dishonourable mention on account of its apparently dull Museum of Sydney.

Perplexingly, Tassie’s Mona museum made the list - we demand a recount!



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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### CWT grows Nordic reach

CWT has announced it will further expand access to Finnair NDC content in the Nordics to ensure its customers have continued access to the airline's offers through their preferred booking channels.

The corporate travel company plans to grow its NDC coverage in the Nordics over the next three months to include additional routes, airlines, and points-of-sale.



"What we've achieved in Finland exemplifies how NDC can be deployed quickly, at scale, and without disruption to customers," said Erik Magnuson, CWT's Vice

President of Product Management, Travel Content & Connectivity. "We are now using this as a blueprint to

expand our NDC capabilities with other airlines around the world."

The Nordic expansion follows CWT's swift rollout of NDC capabilities in Finland since May last year, with more airlines and markets also in the pipeline. *JM*

### Biz drives Alaska

THE parent company for Alaska Airlines is forecasting "better-than-expected" earnings in the current quarter on the back of a surge in business travel demand.

Alaska Air Group's Chief Financial Officer, Shane Tackett, said in a financial update yesterday that corporate travel is finally picking up steam, alongside continued strong demand for leisure tourism.

As a result, it is expected that Alaska Airlines will enjoy a more stable bookings trajectory for the remainder of the year.

The timing of the positive prediction is as a relief for the carrier, which is still weathering negative publicity after a hole blew out in a Boeing 737 Max-9 plane it was operating in Jan this year (*TD* 08 Jan).

### Bills get streamlined

MASTERCARD has launched a new mobile virtual card app that it claims will help streamline corporate travel expenses.

The first financial partners to offer the wallet are Australian banks HSBC Australia and Westpac, a strategic play according to Mastercard, because more than half of the world's digital wallets are based in APAC.

"A lot of those consumers in this region on their regular consumer card are using tap-to-pay in order to transact, so we thought that that was a great location in order for us to first get started," the company's Executive VP - Global Head of Commercial Solutions, Chad Wallace, said.

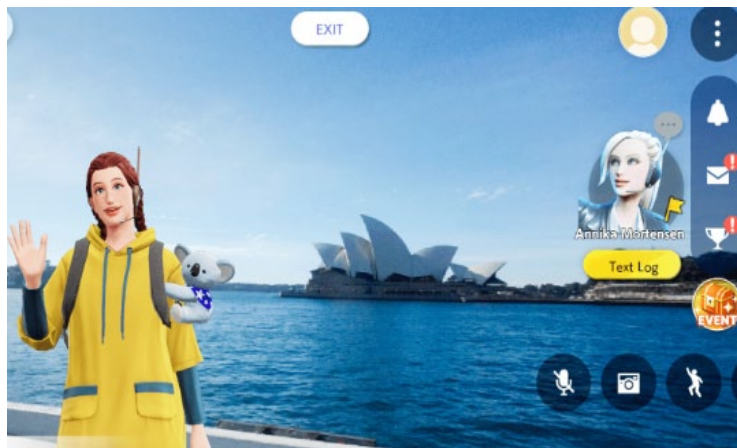
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### TA entices Japanese travel



**TOURISM** Australia has teamed up with All Nippon Airways to showcase historic Sydney neighbourhood The Rocks via a virtual tour on the Japanese carrier's travel platform application, ANA GranWhale.

Japanese travellers can embark on the new virtual trip to explore "the birthplace of Sydney", which features historic laneways, open-air markets, some the city's oldest pubs, and upscale restaurants with harbour views.

ANA GranWhale launched in Jan as a "new travel experience app that connects real and virtual worlds", featuring V-TRIP (Virtual Travel Space) and Sky Mall (Shopping Space) services.

Customers can collect 'Gran Chips' while they immerse themselves in destinations and cultures around the world from the comfort of their smartphone, which they can then exchange for Miles when they link their ANA Mileage Club account.

To celebrate the launch of the new Sydney V-TRIP, ANA is offering a pair of round-trip airfares between Tokyo and Sydney for one lucky winner, when they answer the quiz on the entry form before 01 May.

For more information on the campaign, **CLICK HERE**. *JM*

### LH debuts Allegris

TRAVELLERS flying with Lufthansa can soon enjoy the airline's new long-haul business class experience, with Lufthansa Allegris set to launch on 01 May (*TD* 22 Sep 2023).

The first Airbus A350 equipped with the new cabin will fly from Munich to Vancouver, with the service also available on flights to Toronto, Chicago and Montreal later in the year.

The Allegris business class cabin will offer eight types of seats, based on factors such as space and privacy.



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Book from now until 12 Jun to save up to \$600 per person on select Christmas getaways with **Wendy Wu Tours**. The offer can be applied to Wendy Wu's China, India and Japan itineraries, including the 15-day 'China: Winter Wonderland', which encompasses the best of Shanghai, priced from \$8,380ppts. Call 1300 727 998 for more details.

**MSC Cruises** is highlighting several offers in its Save & Sail promotion, available for bookings made before 30 Sep. Those who book a voyage departing between 01 Nov 2024 and 20 Apr 2025 can enjoy up to 20% off their cruise fare and up to 60% off the onboard drinks package. Call MSC on 1300 028 502 to book.

**Railbookers** has announced some unmissable discounts via its Deal of the Week, which offers up to \$800 in savings on some of its most popular itineraries. The offer is applicable on any 15-night or more rail holiday, with travellers able to snatch up an additional \$600 discount on select luxury rail getaways. Learn more by buzzing 1300 938 534.

Savings of up to 70% are available with **Swan Hellenic** on selected 2024 departures, with prices starting from \$4,635 per person. Available until 30 Apr, the discounts are available on the 10-night voyage from Lisbon to Portsmouth aboard *Vega*, departing on 14 May, and plenty more. Call the cruise line on 1300 722 499 for details.

Guests can enjoy the new 'Freesome' offer with **Ovolo Hotels**, where they will receive a complimentary third night when they book a two-night stay at one of the brand's Melbourne properties: Ovolo South Yarra or Laneways by Ovolo. Guests use their complimentary stay immediately, or at anytime within the promotion period, which lasts until 31 Dec. Make your booking [HERE](#).

Available to book until 15 May, **Club Med** is offering its all-inclusive Bali package from only \$983pp for bookings with 10 or more guests. Valid for travel dates between now and 30 Nov, guests can also take advantage of various offers including return resort transfers, three gourmet meals per day, an open bar, all-day snacking, and more. Lock in your group getaway by calling 0451 630 584.

**InterContinental Wellington** is now offering a special rate of just \$429 per night for stays throughout Jun and Jul if visitors make their booking by 30 Apr. The deal includes a complimentary upgrade to a premium room (subject to availability) plus daily breakfast for two and access to Club InterContinental's Twilight offerings. [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

Escape to the winter sun in Queensland and the Northern Territory with **Fun Over 50 Holidays'** latest earlybird promotion. Book before 30 Apr and enjoy \$150pp off selected tours. Embark on the 13-day 'Outback Queensland, Gulf & Savannah Safari' itinerary from \$8,300ppts, or \$9,500 for solo travellers. More offers are available - view them [HERE](#).

## Keeping spirits high



**CELEBRITY** mixologist Rob Floyd is one of the world's foremost authorities in the cocktail industry and is the host of the hit TV show *Bar Rescue* in the United States.

For eight years, Floyd has partnered with Princess Cruises on its Good Spirits bar concept - available on a variety of Princess ships - and has been dazzling travellers with creative cocktail recipes that send taste buds wild.

Known as a "liquid chef", Floyd searches the world for the best flavours on offer, inspiring him to create exciting new cocktails which can be enjoyed both with or without alcohol.

Speaking on board *Sun Princess* yesterday, Floyd said the ethos behind Good Spirits is to tell secrets, not stories.

"People hear stories all the time, we tell secrets across a bar because people can't wait to repeat a secret," he said.

Floyd added that he wants travellers visiting Good Spirits on Princess Cruises ships to create an unforgettable experience by enjoying a cocktail.

"I love infusing culture into a cocktail because I feel like you bring the world together, closer, sip by sip, and you get to celebrate the best of everywhere," Floyd told *TD*.

"To be able to think 'wow I've tasted my way all around the world' is a neat thing for me."

Floyd reiterated that his menus can be enjoyed equally by non-drinkers who just want to enjoy a great taste.

"Most of the cocktails on my menus can be done with zero proof - no alcohol. Being able to do a zero-proof program has been really important for me.

Floyd's latest project is called 'Whipshots' - a 10% vodka-infused whipped cream now available nationwide in the United States and created in partnership with US rap music star, Cardi B.

Whipshots is a dairy-free shelf stable that Floyd says is designed to help people "become their own favourite bartender. *ML*

Floyd is **pictured** above centre with Sun Princess mixology team Manju, Fatima, Cherry and Aljay.



# Abercrombie & Kent

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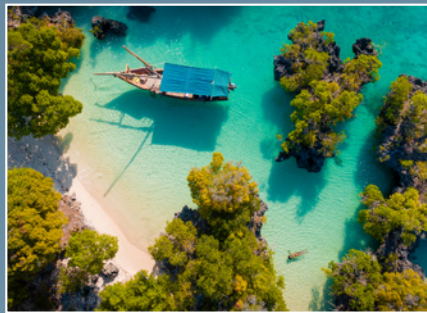
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