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## Travel Daily First with the news

Dive in to that holiday feeling *Freedom awaits* 

Thursday 25th Jul 2024

### Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news plus a cover wrap from Regent Seven Sea Cruises, a product profile from Norwegian Cruise Line, our Business Events News feature and a full page from Infinity Holidays.

### Alaska feels young

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line has launched its 2026 Alaska season, with ships departing from Seattle, Vancouver and Whittier.

NCL boasts the youngest line of ships sailing the Frozen North find out more in a special Product Profile on **page eight**.

### Sparks fly at Infinity

**SIX** exciting new packages are now on sale from Infinity Holidays to celebrate the launch of its new 3-day 1-Park Per Day pass for Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, with accommodation and airport transfers included.

Find out more on page seven.

## Aussie passport is fifth most powerful

**THE** Australian passport is more powerful than it was earlier in the year, moving from sixth spot to fifth in the Henley Global rankings released this week.

The Aussie passport, while one of the most expensive in the world, performed well with a visa-free access score of 189, equal with Portugal.

Top spot went to Singapore with a score of 195, ahead of historically strong performing countries France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria and Finland.

The biggest mover on the list was the UAE, which for the first time broke into the top 10 after adding 152 destinations since the index's inception in 2006.

The UAE achieved a visa-free score of 185, rising an impressive 53 places in the ranking from 62nd to ninth in the process.

### All NTIA nominees out now

**FLIGHT** Centre, Helloworld Travel, Travel Associates and itravel will battle it out for the honour of the 2024 Most Outstanding Branded Travel Agency Group category at the National Travel Industry Awards.

A further nine agency networks, including multi-time winner Travellers Choice, Magellan Travel and Independent Travel Group, are up for recognition in the Most Outstanding Travel Agency Network category.

In total, 467 nominations were received across 35 categories, a sizeable increase on the 389 received last year, with some highly creative written and video submissions received.

ATIA has today released the full and complete list of nominees for the 23 remaining categories at this year's NTIA gala dinner.

Champagne will likely be on order at B2B bedbank Stuba, with the company securing five nominees in the Most

### Crystal teases 2026

**CRYSTAL** has released the dates for its 2026 itineraries as a prelude to the official launch of the season later this year.

The preview of the 2026 sailings confirm *Crystal Symphony* will return to the US for the first time since 2019 for an Alaska season followed by Canada and East Coast sailings, while *Serenity* will explore S America and more. Outstanding Sales Executive -Wholesaler category.

Some categories were extremely well subscribed, with 31 names nominated for Most Outstanding Sales Executive - Cruise.

Voting remains open as the next stage of the judging process for selected categories until 11:59pm on 09 Aug, with university-led independent assessors now set to score the submissions for quality, with the top five progressing to be decided on 26 Oct.

ATIA Chief Executive Dean Long said the record number of nominations was emblematic of the NTIA's significance and prestige to the travel industry.

"We know how much time and energy has gone into crafting submissions, and I would like to commend each and every person who has lodged a submission on their efforts," Long said. *ML* 

**CLICK HERE** for the full list of nominees on *travelBulletin*.

### Virtuoso in the Black

VIRTUOSO has appointed Black Communication to lead its PR strategy in Australia and NZ.

The agency is charged with implementing a strategy to elevate the Virtuoso profile among high-value travellers for the benefit of its travel agency members and preferred partners. Black said it will work closely with Virtuoso during Virtuoso Travel Week, running 10-16 Aug.



### Europe is glorious

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises has the latest marketing materials via its Digital Toolkit to help agents convey the magic of exploring all of Europe's glory in 2025 - more details on today's **cover page**.

### Eden gets big ships

**EDEN** has received formal planning approval from the NSW Government to press ahead with an expansion of its wharf to accommodate larger cruise ships.

Put forward for review by the Port Authority of NSW last year (*TD* 03 Oct 2023), the wharf expansion will allow cruise ships longer than 100 metres to dock in NSW South Coast town, and lift the 60 cruise ship cap.

More info on the development in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*.



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### Join our new Tribe

**THE** Tourism Tribe Expert Directory has launched this week, pledging to connect tourism businesses with trusted consultants to help transform their digital operations.

Led by Liz Ward and Fabienne Wintle, tourism businesses and DMOs are now able to tap a global directory of digital gurus on a peer-to-peer basis.

Visit directory.tourismtribe.com to learn more about the directory.



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DESPITE a blip last year, the bucket-list appetite of Aussies and Kiwis for travel to Egypt continues to be strong in the face of unrest in the Middle East, according to Uniworld Boutique River Cruises MD, Alice Ager.

In fact, the destination is set to receive an extra boost in the form of a collaboration with famed Australian designer Camilla Franks, which was unveiled at a major event in Sydney last night. Speaking to hundreds of attendees, including top selling travel advisors from across Australia and NZ, Ager noted that while Egypt had not been immune to the effects of what's happening in the region, the Federal Government's Smartraveller advice for Egypt had not changed since 2018.

"Nothing has changed, you can still get travel insurance," Ager noted, admitting that there was a "wobble" causing lots of cancellations in 2023 which had been cause for concern.

"But now what we see is incredible stability in our bookings, and Egypt is back particularly for groups - we've done eight new Egypt groups just in the last month, thanks to you guys," Ager enthused.

That's certainly set to continue based on enthusiasm for the extensive new collection, which evokes the colours, art, history and culture experienced by Camilla on a 2022 Egypt trip.

Also presenting at the event was Mohammed Khalil, the Consul General of Egypt, who hailed the collection as "perfectly embodying the soul of what Camilla experienced in Egypt".

He noted huge ongoing interest in Egypt among Australians, as evidenced by the more than 500,000 people who attended the recent Ramses exhibition at the Australian Museum in Sydney, sponsored by Uniworld's sister TTC brand, Adventure World.

Khalil and Ager both highlighted the upcoming full opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo, which is expected to further catalyse interest in travel to the destination from Aussies.

More from Camilla & Uniworld in today's Cruise Weekly. BP

### Uniworld 2026 out

**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises will operate a 50-night 'Rivers of the World' itinerary to celebrate the brand's 50th birthday in two years' time.

Details were unveiled last night by Uniworld Global MD, Ellen Bettridge, who said the trip will start in Brussels aboard the brand new SS Emilie, the line's 14th ship.

Guests will then enjoy a "mystery cruise" out of Amsterdam, head across to a Seine voyage and end the trip in Egypt, with expressions of interest now open.

### Sinking cash into Tas

**THE** Federal Government has agreed to allocate \$12.5 million in funding to Tasmania to incentivise more travellers to visit the north west coast of the state.

The aim will be to add an extra 10,000 visitors to the region annually, mainly through the development of the old Dismal Swamp site - the largest sinkhole of its kind in Australia.

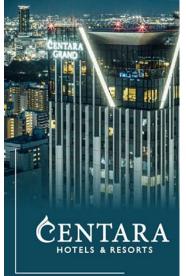
### **Cover-More rebrand**

**COVER-MORE** Travel Insurance has introduced a new brand identity that it hopes will convince travellers that travel insurance should no longer be considered a "grudge purchase".

Engaging brand agency Principals to undertake the change, Cover-More will aim to communicate a more caring brand message through positive brand narratives, and its logo will also boast brighter colour tones.

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Thursday 25th Jul 2024

### 1000MTG focused

**TWO** new agencies have linked up with 1000 Mile Travel Group's new independent self-brand agency network (*TD* 16 Jul).

The new members - Latrove Travel and Magic Happens Here Travel and Cruise - officially joined the 1000MTG network this month, the latter being part of the TravelManagers network.

In further news, 1000MTG also confirmed 1000Access, powered by Sabre, will be rolled out in Australia following a successful launch in North America.

The timeline for the local introduction of the tool, which allows users to search and book air, hotel, and ground services GDS-free, will be announced in the coming months.

1000MTG will keep evolving tools to refine user experiences.



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United States, South Africa, New

Reflecting on being recognised

Travel's Brad Jukes said the nod

considers the honour a measure of the true health of his agency.

"It's our second year in a row

and if last year's Icons experience

was anything to go by, we are

looking forward to the ultimate

luxury getaway and celebrating

our success in true FCTG style,"

The Icons will be treated to a

luxury stay at the Heritance Aarah

Jukes enthused.

Maldives Resort. AB

as an Envoyage Icon, Acland

meant "a great deal" and he

Zealand, and Canada.

Icons on their way to paradise

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) independent travel network Envoyage has announced the top-performers who will head to the Maldives for its global rewards event, Icons.

The successful group of travel advisors to make the cut include: Brad Thomas, Entertainment Travel Partners; Alexander Jeon, Festigo Travel; Brad Rowlands, HBA Travel; Anna Lowe, Anna Lowe Travel; Jenny Tucker, Jenny Tucker Travel; Brad and Debbie Jukes, Acland Travel (**pictured**); Zulfiqar Murtaza, Express Flights; Paul Kelly and Simone Fernon, Sportslink Travel; and Bhim Neupane, Buddah Travel.

The Australian contingent will

### SENIOR MANAGER Trade Marketing

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is a dynamic, global marketing organisation whose mission is to promote Hong Kong as a unique, worldclass destination. HKTB requires a Senior Manager - Trade Marketing for its Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific operations.

Based in Sydney, reporting to the Director of Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific, the role is responsible for the planning, development and implementation of Trade, Cruise & MICE projects & campaigns. An understanding of current trade distribution channels and strong relationship management is essential. The position is also responsible for managing budgets, new initiatives, analysing campaign results and market intelligence, providing guidance and support to a small team.

Ideally, candidates will have minimum 10 years' experience in the travel industry with a minimum 5 years in a management role. Tertiary qualifications, in depth understanding of the travel industry and consumer travel behaviour, extensive computer skills, strong presentation and communication skills, together with a working knowledge of Hong Kong.

The position comes with a competitive salary package and health benefits.



Applications to be sent by 5 August 2024 E-mail: anna.chui@hktb.com



24

A "SECRET" button in Virgin Australia's aircraft has been explained in a viral video shared by the airline.

The button, which most fliers are unaware existed, is located on the overhead locker of carrier's aircraft.

The so-called gas spring assist button triggers the airpowered lever which helps a crew member close a locker when it is heavy.

Overhead lockers can hold almost 60 kilograms, so the switches make closing them a lot easier - **CLICK HERE** to view the 'secret' video.

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Thursday 25th Jul 2024

### **Embassy closed**

DUE to heavy rainfall associated with Typhoon Carina and severe flooding, the Australian Embassy in the Philippines will be closed for at least today.

Australian citizens in the affected area are instructed to follow local govt authorities.



JOURNEY Beyond (JB) has launched its first brand-led campaign, which will leverage the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

The marketing push aims to capitalise on the heightened sense of pride Australians feel cheering on our athletes, while at the same time showcasing the country's landscape, driving destination awareness and desire for domestic travel.

The campaign concept is centred on the essence of JB's ethos and guest promise of 'we go further, to take you beyond', across its collection of 16 brands and 200 unique experiences.

A series of television commercials will run across the entire duration of Nine's coverage of the Olympics, leveraging JB's iconic hero brands, including The Ghan, Outback Spirit and Sal Salis.

The TVCs will be supported by campaign extensions across print, social, and digital for all of the company's portfolio.

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"This is an exciting opportunity to cement our position as the leaders in Australian experiential tourism," Executive GM Marketing, Justine Lally, said.

"All eyes will be on Australia's home-grown sporting talent as they take the Olympics worldstage," she added. MS

### Sabre beds NDC HA

**SABRE** has become the first GDS to offer NDC content from Hawaiian Airlines, with advisors now able to book both NDC and traditional ATPCO/EDIFACT content through the Sabre GDS.

"[The deal] broadens access to our unique offers and will greatly enhance the booking experience for travellers," HA said.

MISS OUT!

### Double commission

**INSIDEASIA** has launched a new incentive that doubles travel advisor commissions.

The booking incentive runs from 19 Jul to 31 Aug, and is available to all advisors booking fully tailored cultural adventures to any new destination.



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## business events news

### Thursday 25th Jul 2024

### businesseventsnews.com.au

## **MERLIN'S EVENT CATERING MAGIC**

A BUMPER events season is brewing at Merlin Venues Sydney, the events arm of Merlin Entertainments, which has formed a tasty new partnership with Bespoke Catering.

The Sydney-based culinary experts will be the primary partner of Merlin Venues Sydney, which hosts a range of public and private events across its four leading attractions in the city.

Bespoke Catering will oversee catering for corporate functions, weddings and birthday parties at Sea Life Sydney Aquarium, including the attraction's brandnew Signature Dining offering, as well as Wild Life Sydney Zoo, Madame Tussauds, and the Sydney Tower Eye.

Event planners can take advantage of a dedicated team to help plan their ideal event, including customised menus to

### Marriott's vision

**MARRIOTT** Bonvoy Events has unveiled its new meeting and events campaign, 'Your Vision, Our Commitment'.

The marketing push sees each of the brand's Singapore properties leverage their unique location and services to craft bespoke incentives for event planners.

The offers can be booked by 31 Dec for stays and events through 31 Mar 2025 - for more details, CLICK HERE.



Events hit the deck at MCG's new bar

suite everyone's tastes, featuring the finest locally sourced and seasonal ingredients.

Chris Harvey, Head of Event **Operations at Merlin Venues** Sydney, said he was "very excited" to partner with Bespoke Catering.

"The delicious, fresh, and personalised catering they provide perfectly complements our iconic venues in Sydney."

announced as the Melbourne

Cricket Ground's (MCG) newest

event space, set to open in Sep.

The undercover terrace bar

is located in the Olympic Stand

on level four, and will offer two

\$49pp, including a BBQ option

Event guests can indulge in

the smoky aromas and flavours

of BBQ sausages, wagyu flank

skewers, juicy lamb cutlets, or

menu concepts priced from

and an Italian selection.

THE Deck has been

Fabio Funai, Bespoke Catering Company Director, added "from intimate gatherings to grand celebrations, together with the talented Merlin Venues team, we are committed to delivering bespoke menus and events that reflect your style and preferences at world-class locations".

To learn more about the new packages, CLICK HERE. JM

### **AV** appointments

**AUSTRALIAN** event audiovisual service provider AVPartners has announced the promotion of Stephen White at its Perth branch to the role of Associate.

White, who began his career with AVPartners in 2014 as a casual technician at Crown Perth, was most recently Senior Technical **Event Manager.** 

**AVPartners' Area Partner** for Western Australia, Steve Rowe, said White's "hard work and dedication over the years is truly inspiring", adding that his promotion was "well-deserved".

The announcement comes just two weeks after Rowe's own promotion, which saw him step up from the role of Partner after working with AVPartners since 2012.

### Sprintr's world-first

AUSTRALIAN event technology company Sprintr has launched a 100% recyclable kiosk for delegate registration.

Dubbed a world-first, Sprintr said the innovation will help the nation's events industry reduce its carbon footprint.

The sustainable kiosk option is customisable, reusable, and portable, with a modular function allowing for free standing or desk sitting designs.

Sprintr also revealed it currently developing additional ecofriendly innovations.



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## **APPOINTMENTS**

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Luxury Escapes has new boots on the ground in Southeast Asia, with Ben McKeon taking on the role of Country Manager for Thailand and Vietnam at the online travel giant. McKeon has been with Luxury Escapes for nearly eight years in a variety of roles, most recently as the company's Senior Partnership and Contracting Manager.

Tilley and Wills Hotels has promoted Georgia Bounds to the role of Area Marketing Manager and Partnerships. The company operates a range of venues in major cities including The Greenwood in Sydney, Cabana Bar in Martin Place and The Prince in Brisbane. Bounds has been with the company for two years, prior to which she held a senior marketing role with Ovolo Hotels.

Ready to hit the road again is Julia Taylor, who is back behind the wheel at DriveAway in the role of Business Development Manager for South Australia and Western Australia. Taylor brings more than two decades in the travel sector to her role and first joined DriveAway in 2010, breaking her tenure only due to the pandemic.

W Melbourne has bolstered its promotional team with the arrival of Andrea Brown as the hotel's new Director of Marketing. Brown is highly experienced in the luxury and lifestyle hotel segment and brings an inherent passion for connecting with the Millennial and Gen Z consumer base. Brown joins the Marriott International property from her previous role at InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto.

Australian hotel managers are making their mark all over the world, with the latest example being Judd Rabbidge, who has taken charge at Avani+ Fares Maldives Resort, located in the Baa Atoll. For Rabbidge, it's his first GM appointment, elevating his career from his last post as Hotel Manager at W Sydney. Prior experience has also seen Rabbidge plying his trade at W Bali - Seminyak between 2018 and 2022.

Live Nation Entertainment has welcomed Lucy Morris to its stable as Sales Enablement Director. Morris joins after nearly a decade with Secret Sounds Connects, where she held a variety of senior roles.

Luxury accommodation brand Capella Hotel Group has added two accommodation heavyweights to its executive ranks to help spearhead its expansion into Japan. Former Capella Bangkok General Manager, John Blanco, will relocate to Japan to take charge as Cluster General Manager for both Capella Kyoto and Patina Osaka. He will be joined by Ellen Franke, who brings 25 years of hospitality experience around the world to her new role as General Manager of Patina Osaka.

Aussie travel agents will soon be seeing more of Jarrod Zurvas, recently named the new Head of Sales at SeaDream Yacht Club. Zurvas joins Julie Denovan to add to the boutique line's sales presence in the APAC market and brings 15 years of experience in the sector to his new role.



### **Discover** our **River Cruise Special Report**

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## FCTG planting for the planet



**SENIOR** executives from Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) got their hands dirty recently during a visit to Morocco to witness firsthand the impact of the company's partnership with Reforest.

FCTG CEO Graham 'Skroo' Turner and Global MD Andrew Stark joined Reforest CEO Daniel Walsh and COO Tim Stainlay on the 'Planting for the Planet' visit to the Atlas Mountains where 800,000 trees will be planted.

In less than a year since its launch in Aug 2023, FCTG's support for Reforest has helped the organisation commit to planting 1.3 million trees in various reforestation projects.

"I was overwhelmed seeing the many social and economic benefits the planting of a single tree can foster in communities, and humbled to meet with the locals of the Atlas Mountains who were incredibly welcoming and hospitable," Stark said.

Support comes from travellers purchasing a Flight Centre Captain's Pack with their holiday, which along with a tree, includes perks such as baggage tracking, price drop protection and waiving of a range of fees.

Morocco is just one nation

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benefiting from the planting, with other sites including Wimmera Habitat Corridor in Australia, Patui in New Zealand and Vancouver Island in Canada.

The Reforest initiative is also set to expand to ocean projects such as mangrove planting in line with cruise holiday purchases. ML

Stark is pictured above with his sapling while Skroo (inset) turns some sods for Reforest.

### Virgin open to 'kids'

VIRGIN Voyages has opened the door to multi-generational cruises, inviting adult children aged 18-26 to enjoy a free cruise with their parents.

"'If you're old enough to vote, you're old enough to sail," the line said in its latest promotion, which is eligible on all global itineraries until the end of the year, if booked by 23 Aug.

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# Sell the magic with exclusive packages

In celebration of the new 3-Day 1-Park Per Day Disneyland Resort ticket offer, Infinity Holidays is launching 6 incredible packages, giving travellers a magical experience, and a great way to save to enjoy three days to explore the wonder of The Happiest Place on Earth.

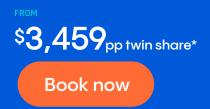
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Visit the Disneyland Resort theme parks for as little as \$75 per child, per day (ages 3-9) and \$125 per adult, per day, for admission Monday through Thursday - available now on Helio.

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### Stay minutes from the magic.

6 Nights

#### **PACKAGE INCLUDES:**

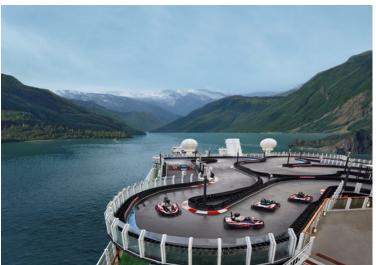
6 nights at Best Westerns Plus Stovall's Inn, 3-Day 1-Park per day Disneyland Resort Ticket with airport transfers.

HELIO PACKAGE CODE: AU46990



\*Price per person based on twin share, and based on 3 Day 1 Park Per Day Disneyland Ticket Monday to Thursday Park Entrance Only - upgrade options available to Monday to Sunday Entrance, Park Hopper Passes, and with Genie+ Service.. Subject to availability. 'From' prices can change without notice and maybe removed at anytime. Refer to Helio for availability and commission levels. Terms and conditions and blockout dates apply, see infinityholidays.com.au/campaigns/disneyland-special-offer for more details.







## DISCOVER NCL'S 2026 ALASKA ITINERARIES

As the youngest fleet to sail Alaska, NCL is thrilled to introduce its 2026 Alaska season which will commence in late April and deliver breathtaking voyages through October from Seattle (Washington), Whittier (Alaska) and Vancouver (British Columbia).

Your clients can enjoy a variety of experiences with some of the newest ships in the region, Norwegian Encore®, Norwegian Bliss® and Norwegian Joy®, all of which feature unmatched onboard activities, including the cruise industry's only racetracks at sea.

Embarking from Seattle's Pier 66, Norwegian Encore and Norwegian Bliss will sail seven-day voyages, while Norwegian Joy will offer longer and more immersive nine- to 10-day itineraries. Norwegian Jade<sup>®</sup> will cruise a series of seven-day open-jaw sailings between Vancouver and Whittier with no days at sea.

Custom-built for the Alaska experience, these ships also feature expansive outdoor and indoor spaces to marvel at the iconic beauty of the destination. Guests aiming to immerse themselves even more in "The Last Frontier" can also add an NCL Cruisetour for an unforgettable holiday both on land and at sea.

Phone: 1300 255 200 to book today or for more information visit www.ncl.com NCL has also released new 2026 itineraries to the Caribbean, Bahamas, Bermuda, and Canada and New England, as well as a new season of voyages from the Port of Philadelphia.

### **REAP THE REWARDS**

Partners First Rewards members can earn DOUBLE DOLLARS\* on any Americas sailing from 1 July -31 August 2024. If you haven't already, start your rewards journey with NCL today and experience how fast and simple it is to earn and redeem points! \*T&Cs apply.



