Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 20th Mar 2024



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest industry news including our Luxury page, plus a full page from AAT Kings.

JQ to Busselton

JETSTAR'S new direct service from Sydney to Busselton will take off next week on 26 Mar (TD 16 Nov 2023), with three times weekly flights connecting Sydneysiders with WA's Margaret River wine region.

Western Australia will also welcome two other direct services, with Airnorth flights from Alice Springs to Perth launching on Mon 25 Mar (TD 13 Dec 2023) and Thai Airways' Bangkok-Perth route starting up Sun 31 Mar (TD 10 Jan).

THE BIG **TOUR SALE**

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Intrepid's best year ever

CERTIFIED B-Corp tour operator Intrepid Travel says it has officially completed its pandemic recovery, today posting the "best impact results in its 34-year history" with a 68% spike in booking volumes.

According to its 2023 Integrated Annual Report, Intrepid posted a net profit of \$21.8 million, marking a \$47.7 million reversal, while contributing \$4.6 million to various charitable and community causes around the world through The Intrepid Foundation.

Overall revenues more than doubled to \$536 million, with its EBITDA increasing to \$34.6m from a \$17.4m loss a year earlier.

The company significantly increased its head count over the year, filling 1,129 new roles across the business, while some eligible staff were also paid bonuses.

Reflecting growing confidence in the business, Intrepid's staff shareholder levels also boomed, rising from just 52 last year to 421 across the business now.

Intrepid Group CEO James Thornton said the result is proof that a purpose-led, experiential

QF planned to sack

QANTAS ground staff illegally sacked during the pandemic may have been let go regardless of the pandemic circumstances, the airline has told the Federal Court.

According to Australian Aviation, Qantas' executive team may still have considered outsourcing its ground handling operations as it considered "worst case scenarios" amid various cost-saving efforts.

Delta dinner boost

DELTA Air Lines has expanded its pre-select meal service to Premium Select customers on its Sydney to Los Angeles flights.

Beginning this month, travellers booking the Delta Premium Select product can pre-order their meals from seven days prior to travel, up to 24 hours before departure.



approach was also good for the business bottom line.

"Last year was a phenomenal year of growth and our team demonstrated innovation and determination," Thornton said.

"This has set the foundation for Intrepid to embark on its journey towards its ambitious future targets," he added.

Thornton added Intrepid was now laser-focused on its 2030 strategy titled 'The world needs more Intrepid people' with the company aiming to welcome 600,000 customers and achieve revenue of over \$1.3 billion. ML

THRIVE action plan

AUSTRADE is inviting feedback from travel and tourism industry stakeholders on THRIVE 2030, the national strategy for visitor economy recovery and return to sustainable growth.

As the first phase of the roadmap comes to a close, the feedback gathered will be used to shape the second phase of the strategy - the Consolidation Action Plan for 2025-2027.

"Working together over the past few years we have made significant achievements on many fronts, but we know there is more work to be done," Minister for Trade & Tourism Don Farrell said.

"I invite and encourage you to have your say on the future direction of the THRIVE 2030 strategy and give feedback on the initial Recovery Phase to date by doing the survey in this email, and sharing it with your network."

Australian tourism businesses can **CLICK HERE** to take the survey and share their future challenges.

SQ trade fares

SINGAPORE Airlines has launched its Autumn Take Off Promotional Fares, which offer a range of great value fares between Australia and select destinations for travel in 2024.

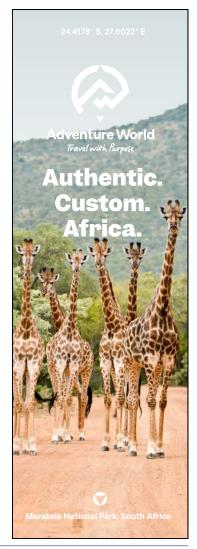
Return economy fares to Beijing start from \$788, while return business fares to Shanghai start from \$3,958.

Agents can access faresheets and a list of destinations on sale via Agent360 HERE, or refer to their preferred booking system.

Go wild with AAT

ADVENTUROUS travellers can save up to 15% on selected Northern Territory Guided Holidays with AAT Kings.

For more information, head to the back page of today's TD.





Fly to London AUD\$ 1,469 Dept. Date: 06,13,20,27 MAY 03,10 June / 01~30 November)

DRW goes purple

BONZA has finally launched its second route to Darwin, with the inaugural service from the Gold Coast taking off overnight.

The maiden flight touched down in Darwin before midnight and returned to OOL this morning.

The new low-cost route was originally slated to begin 01 Dec but was pushed back multiple times due to delays obtaining regulatory approval for Bonza to fly from its new Gold Coast base.

It's the final piece in Bonza's NT entry, with the new route complementing services between the Sunshine Coast and Darwin and Melbourne to Alice Springs.

To celebrate the new route, Bonza has unlocked 5,000 seats on all flights between the Gold Coast and Darwin from \$89 one way, for travel until the end of May



NZ seeking SAF partners

AIR New Zealand has issued a worldwide call for collaborators eager to work together on its Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) strategy, with a view to becoming a supply partner for the airline.

The call-out featured in a newlylaunched Opportunity Statement, which details Air New Zealand's expected SAF requirements based on its network, fleet and overall sustainability agenda.

NZ is looking to form short-, medium and long-term SAF agreements as it seeks to create a sustained demand for cleaner fuel among producers, investors and potential financiers.

Air New Zealand Chief Sustainability Officer, Kiri Hannifin (pictured), says decarbonisation in aviation is a huge challenge.

Choice ends chase

CHOICE Hotels International has withdrawn its long-running attempt to acquire Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, with the deal falling through amid tense and acrimonious exchanges with Wyndham board members.

In a statement, Choice Hotels said it attempted to engage "in good faith negotiations" with Wyndham in numerous avenues including multiple offer increases and a one-way non-disclosure of confidential information.

"Given Wyndham's refusal to constructively and substantively engage on terms, Choice took the extraordinary step of launching the exchange offer to initiate the regulatory review process and engage with Wyndham stockholders," the statement said.

Wyndham directors repeatedly urged its shareholders to reject Choice's hostile advances, citing onerous regulatory processes and a dilution of share value.

Choice management said it remains enthusiastic about its go-forward strategy, which it expects to deliver "another year of superior growth".



"Air New Zealand plays an essential role in connecting New Zealand's people, tourism, and trade to the world, but we must find a way to do this more sustainably and as quickly as we can," Hannifin said.

"A stable supply of SAF is critical to our ability to reduce carbon emissions and continue to play this role for the long term.

"Air New Zealand is an ideal airline partner for SAF innovators and producers," Hannifin added.

"We have a mature understanding of SAF, a clear roadmap to meet our targets, and the volumes of SAF we need to align with current production capabilities."

Air New Zealand anticipates it will need SAF blends to make up 20% of its fuel usage by 2030, with a longer-term goal of netzero operations by 2050.

Air New Zealand has set itself an interim target of reducing carbon emission intensity by 28.9% by 2030, based on 2019 baselines. *ML*

Pacific Island deals

FLIGHT and accommodation packages across the South Pacific starting from \$1,049pp twin share have been released by Fiji Airways on sale until 05 Apr.

A range of five-night packages include return air with Fiji Airways via Nadi, plus daily breakfast, with some deals also including free wi-fi and use of non-motorised watersport equipment.

Deals also include five nights at Samoa's White House Hotel from \$1,949ppts or five nights in Tonga at Winnies from \$2,299ppts.





ADELAIDE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Journey Beyond, which is showcasing its latest Aussie Outback products and experiences.

OUR stomach is rumbling in anticipation as Journey Beyond serves up details of its latest guest experiences themed on the Australian Outback, which will be accompanied by a delectable lunch.

Hosted by CEO Chris Tallent, the special lunch event will also be attended by South Australia Tourism Minister, Zoe Bettison.





Food demand soars

AN ANALYSIS of the global culinary tourism landscape has projected the sector's market value to hit \$3.5 trillion by 2032, driven by demand for handson unique experiences and an appetite for cultural exploration.

The *Culinary Tourism Market Report 2024-2032* forecasted a growth rate of 15.7% from 2023-2032, with the market size almost reaching \$1 trillion last year.

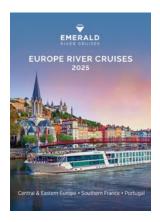
The report said food was "an integral part of the cultural identity, and sampling the local cuisines of a region offers a direct and immersive way to understand & engage with different cultures.

Primary growth was being driven by authentic experiences; the increasing impact of social media; and more destinations offering sustainable experiences.



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HAL up to 30% off

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) is celebrating its 151st anniversary with up to 30% off cruise-only fares for its Australian guests.

The Anniversary Sale runs from 19 Mar to 30 Apr and will see guests booking select cruises and cruisetours between May 2024 and Apr 2025 enjoy up to 30% off fares, as well as up to US\$300 onboard credit per stateroom, and a 50% reduced deposit.

Featured fares are per person, based on double occupancy, and are available for the first and second guest only - **CLICK HERE**.

CP Nadi reopens

CROWNE Plaza Fiji Nadi Bay Resort & Spa, an IHG Hotel, is now open and ready for guests following the completion of the first phase of its multi-milliondollar transformation.

The property is Crowne Plaza's first in the South Pacific, with the first phase of the transformation seeing the completion of 106 guestrooms, now bookable, which showcase the brand's contemporary interiors.



Agents hit top gear with MSC



MSC Cruises, Visit Qatar, and Qatar Airways recently welcomed 12 lucky trade partners on a famil on board *MSC Virtuosa* for a journey through the Persian Gulf.

The famil set sail from Doha, with guests embarking on the seven-night cruise in Aurea balcony staterooms.

The cruise ventured to Bahrain, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi, where trade partners were treated to a visit to the Yas Marina Circuit, the venue for the city's Formula One Grand Prix, where they embraced their competitive spirit racing each other in go-karts (pictured).

MSC Business Development Executives Brenton Reidy and Alka Thapar also hosted guests in *Viurtosa's* specialty restaurants such as Kaito Teppanyaki and The Butchers Cut, and brought out their inner champion on the ship's F1 simulators. *MS*







Book smart and win one of five Easter Hampers

To celebrate Easter, we're giving away x5 Easter Hampers. Simply make a Stuba booking over \$500 across our curated hotels between 18-24 March to be automatically entered in our Easter prize draw. Good luck!

Stuba. Curated hotels for travel agents.



Skal assembles in Perth



THE 109th Skal National Assembly and annual general meeting was hosted in Perth last weekend, with a range of events and member engagement activities taking place.

Pre-assembly site visits and tours were hosted by Skal Perth member businesses, including a walking tour of the city with Two Feet & a Heartbeat, a segway tour of Kings Park & Botanic

Gardens with Segway Tours WA, and more.

These were followed by a tourism panel, business exchange, and a cocktail welcome event at Perth Town Hall, with a gala awards dinner taking place on Sat night at the Western Australian Cricket Association. MS

Pictured: Skal members cut a cake commemorating 60 years of the club in Perth.



Qld Olympics U-turn

THE Queensland Government has made the shock decision to scrap plans to build a dedicated stadium for the 2032 Olympics, and instead upgrade the existing QSAC and Suncorp Stadium.

The bombshell move is set to save billions of dollars, with Premier of Queensland Steven Miles rejecting the Sport Venue Review of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games' proposal to build a \$3.4b, 55,000-seat venue at Victoria Park.

The Government will instead spend \$1.6b renovating QSAC in Mount Gravatt, bringing its capacity to 40,000 for the Games.

Miles also pulled the pin on a hugely controversial knockdown-rebuild proposal for The Gabba, which the review concluded would have also cost \$3.4 billion, up from \$1 billion when the plan was initially floated under former Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk.

The stadium will instead be refurbished, enabling it to host Olympic cricket.



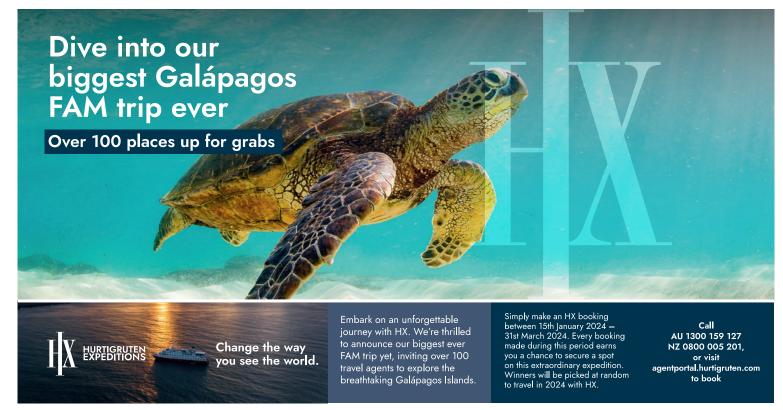
RIO de Janeiro is usually known for its idyllic beachgoing climate.

However those perceptions were smashed this week, when the city recorded a heat index of 62 degrees - the highest since records began.

The high of 62.3 degrees celsius was recorded in the Guaratiba neighbourhood, in Rio's West Zone, which prompted local authorities to issue a health warning.

Heat index measures what a temperature feels like, taking into account humidity, with the actual maximum temperature in the city a similarly unpleasant 42 celsius.

The temperature certainly didn't dampen enthusiasm at Rio's famous Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, which were both packed on the day.



*Eligible bookings are on new 6+ day FIT Hurtigruten Expedition voyages only. Bookings must be made and deposited during the incentive period of 15th January 2024 – 31st March 2024. Prize cannot be exchanged for cash, transferred or sold by winning agency. Retail bookings are only eligible. Prize winner must be an active advisor at time of FAM trip. Winning places based on global FAM trips available. Incentive can be withdrawn at any time. Winners will be drawn at random and contacted by the Hurtigruten Expeditions sales team. Images: © Subtuerstock/Ashton Ray Hansathon Ray Hansathon



Frenzy for Thailand

MALAYSIA Airlines has released its Click Frenzy special, slashing 15% off fares to more than 50 destinations in Asia and the UK.

On the table are return economy class fares from Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide starting from \$689.

These include Sydney to London Heathrow from \$1,859 or Adelaide to Seoul from \$1,049.

Fares are on sale until 31 Mar and valid for travel to 30 Nov - use code 'MHFRENZY' to book.

Hungry for Scotland

SCOTLAND is currently enjoying a boom period in international tourism, with visitor numbers currently rebounding faster than any other UK nation or region.

According to new International Passenger Survey figures from VisitScotland, the Jun-Sep quarter saw more than 1.4 million arrivals - up 6% year-on-year and a 19% jump on pre-pandemic 2019.

Singapore Sky Orb

SINGAPORE'S Sky Orb cable car has introduced what it claims to be the world's first chromefinished spherical cabin as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations.

Cabins feature glass-bottom floors and panoramic windows along with enhanced ventilation.

Seven cabins have been added to the line and are available as an upgrade to regular ticket prices.

Women owning up

WYNDHAM Hotels and Resorts is celebrating a milestone in its 'Women Own The Room' initiative to foster greater female representation among hotel owners, with 50 signings in the program's first 24 months.

The initiative is designed to help women to feel more comfortable investing in hotels, offering personalised operational support, networking and financial services.

Wyndham is expecting another 10 hotels to open in the next year.



The '12 days of Easter'

TRAVELLERS can potentially save hundreds of dollars by flying during short windows either side of Easter, according to a new study by Compare The Market.

The aggregation giant has crunched the numbers on Easter holiday travel, identifying a fiveday window from 18-22 Mar and one week from 04-12 Apr when the difference in flight prices from

UA safety training

UNITED Airlines CEO Scott Kirby has said the airline will revamp its training curriculum for pilots and new mechanics following a spate of recent incidents.

"While they are all unrelated, I want you to know that these incidents have our attention and have sharpened our focus."

In separate incidents, United has seen a piece of aluminium skin break off, a wheel lost on take-off and a cracked windshield.



Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne can amount to nearly \$350.

Deals can still be obtained, including Sydney to Melbourne on 26 Mar from \$46 or Melbourne to Hobart on 13 Apr from \$62.

Compare the Market celebrity travel expert, Catriona Rowntree, said there are still plenty of ways to travel on the cheap.

"While Easter is a time for indulgence, the last thing you want is financial strife to ruin the whole experience," Rowntree said.

"If you do some research you can avoid sky-high airfares and even snag some early-bird discounts on activities." *ML*

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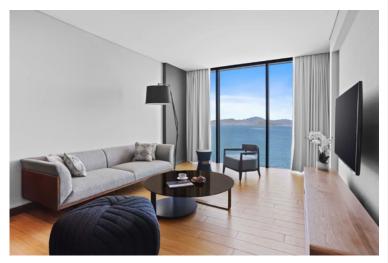
Applications close 29 March 2024

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Marriott debuts in PNG



MARRIOTT Executive
Apartments has announced
its debut in the Australia, New
Zealand and Pacific Region with
the opening of a new waterside
property in Port Moresby.

Set within the mixed-use development of 'Harbourside South', Marriott Executive Apartments Port Moresby offers luxury apartments with hotel services for extended stays.

The property comprises of 88 modern residential apartments, including one- and two-bedroom suites, and one- and two-bedroom penthouses.

Each apartment features upscale furnishings, separate sleeping, living, dining and working spaces, and a fully equipped kitchen, as well as a

Vietnam to Munich

VIETNAM Airlines is preparing to launch its Munich service from 02 Oct, flying from the Bavarian capital twice a week to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The new flights make Munich Airport the fourth European destination in Vietnam Airlines' network, alongside Frankfurt, London-Heathrow, and Paris Charles de Gaulle.

The additional routes also highlight Vietnam as one of the most important travel destinations in Southeast Asia for the German and Bavarian markets.

Marshall Bluetooth sound system, complimentary wi-fi, an in-room washer and dryer, cleaning service and parking.

Residents and guests can convene in the stylish Executive Lounge for light meals and evening cocktails, as well as enjoy access to a gym, three spa treatment rooms, a recreation zone for children, and more.

"We are thrilled to establish our inaugural foothold in Papua New Guinea with this milestone opening," said Sean Hunt, Area Vice President, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific for Marriott International. JM

LH green fares a hit

MORE than one million passengers have opted for Lufthansa Group's Green Fares since they became available one year ago (TD 14 Feb 2023).

The sustainable travel option was most popular on routes such as Hamburg-Munich, Zurich-London and Frankfurt-Berlin, with demand steadily rising across all booking classes.

Lufthansa Group customers have offset a total of more than 77,000 tonnes of CO2 since the launch of the Green Fares, which are available on more than 730,000 flights per year with Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, SWISS, Edelweiss, Discover Airlines and Air Dolomiti.



Travel Daily Training Academy



SAA deal collapses

A DEAL to sell a majority stake in South African Airways (SAA) has reached a dead end after three years of negotiations between the South African government and the Takatso Consortium.

The government had first announced the planned deal to sell a 51% stake in the carrier in 2021, due to serious challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Following a new business and asset valuation, however, the government and Takatso have now conceded there is no path forward for the transaction.

SAA will continue to be fully state-owned, according to Minister of Public Enterprises Pravin Gordhan, who said the troubled airline will be able to sustain itself for the next year to 18 months, and won't need to rely on government bailouts.

Celestyal adds

CELESTYAL Cruises has added a further five departures to its 2025 program due to a rise in demand and positive guest feedback.

The cruise line has announced two additional seven-night 'Heavenly Adriatic' cruises departing round trip from Athens on 22 and 29 Mar, as well as three extra seven-night 'Desert Day' voyages departing round trip from Doha on 15 and 22 Feb and 01 Mar 2025.

Celestyal has also introduced three- and four-night options to its existing 'Desert Days' itinerary.

Fly cheap to Hawaii

AUSTRALIANS can plan their next island adventure with Hawaiian Airlines' new sale, which offers discounted airfares to Honolulu and onto the neighbour island ports of Kona, Kahului and Lihue.

Fares start from \$999 return from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Cairns or Gold Coast, for travel between 16 Apr-30 Jul - sale ends 23 Mar, **HERE**.

Rottnest upgrades

OVERNIGHT visitors to Rottnest Island are set to benefit from upgraded accommodation, with improvements in Geordie Bay to commence following the Apr school holidays.

Fifty-one apartments will be refurbished internally, with modernised kitchens and bathrooms, balconies, and courtyards, as part of the second phase of the Rottnest Island Authority's upgrade program.

The next phase, featuring a refurbishment of Fay's Bay and Longreach Bay apartments, is scheduled for 2025-26.

The program of work planned for Geordie Bay follows the upgrades to 48 apartments in South Thomson, which were completed in Sep 2022.



luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 20th Mar 2024

LC goes Private

LA COLLECTION has introduced LC Private, a new collection of exclusive-use homes in Europe for travellers seeking "the ultimate in privacy and luxury".

The new branch features properties in eight key locations across France and Greece, such as a traditional farmhouse in Provence, all of which offer bespoke private experiences and the services of a luxury hotel.

"These properties are among the best private homes and villas in some of the most sought-after locations in Europe, and our aim is to make it as easy as possible for Australian and New Zealand advisors to book them on behalf of their clients," MD Craig Farrell said. Learn more HERE.

SILVERSEA GIVES THE LUXURY OF CHOICE

SILVERSEA has revamped its pricing structure to include three fare options, designed to cater for different traveller preferences.

Referred to as the 'Luxury of Choice', the brand's new pricing structure includes a new voyage-only Essential fare, which offers guests the flexibility to choose their own air, transfers, and shore experiences according to their schedule.

With stricter terms and conditions, the new fare category does not include shore excursions on ocean-going voyages, however it does include shore excursions, expedition gear, and charter flights when booked for expedition voyages.

In addition to its popular Doorto-Door all-inclusive fare, the ultra-luxury cruise line has also made its Port-to-Port all-inclusive fare available on all voyages.



This fare option is ideal for travellers who prefer to make independent pre- and post-cruise travel arrangements but still want shore excursions included.

Additionally, the Port-to-Port fare category, now included in Silversea's Fare Guarantee program, will be eligible for the same promotions and savings as the Door-to-Door fare.

Guests can also continue to enjoy the Door-to-Door allinclusive fare, which encompasses private executive transfers between home and airport, international flights with business class upgrades available at reduced rates, shore excursions, and more.

"We are delighted to offer our guests a broadened pricing structure to accommodate a more diverse array of preferences, providing the luxury of choice," said Roberto Verdino, Silversea's SVP of Revenue Management.

"Enjoying a more customised range of pricing options, guests can tailor their experience by opting for our Door-to-Door, Port-to-Port or Essential fare while still benefiting from the superlative service and the other hallmarks of luxury that they have come to expect from Silversea."

CLICK HERE to find out more information on Silversea's new pricing structure. *JM*

The Reef takes top title

THE Reef House Boutique Hotel and Spa, an adults-only wellness resort in Tropical North Queensland, has won the title of the best 'Five Star Luxury Accommodation in Australia'.

The property, which overlooks Palm Cove, took home the accolade at the Australian Tourism Awards in Darwin last week.

The Reef's repeat visitation has risen to 25%, spurred by the great value offered by its 21 Signature Inclusions, such as beachfront yoga and cocktail-making classes.

Four Seasons' AMAALA Triple Bay is on the way

RED Sea Global and Four Seasons have announced the development of a new luxury wellness resort and Private Residences at Triple Bay AMAALA, along Saudi Arabia's northwestern coast.

Slated to open in 2025, the property will feature 220 rooms and suites, as well as villas with their own private pools, and 26 branded residential villas, all with bay and sea views.



Four Seasons Resort and Residences AMAALA at Triple Bay will include a luxury spa set within a garden, and will also offer highly personalised wellness itineraries.

Belle Vite Tuscany

BELLE Vite, a new destination management company specialising in highend bespoke gastronomic journeys in Tuscany, has officially launched.

The new DMC offers personalised itineraries featuring exclusive wine tastings hosted by the winemakers themselves, as a well as authentic local cuisine and luxury accommodation.





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ACCOMMODATION

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To celebrate the upcoming Autumn season, W Brisbane has unveiled a "New York experience" menu. Available at the urban getaway's signature restaurant The Lex, the main dish across the new Autumn Menu will feature a Dry-Aged Warwick MB3+

omahawk Steak, paired with herb and green leaf salad, and other options such as the Scallops Rockefeller, Local Reef Fish of the Day, Tater Tots and Hiramada Kingfish are also available.



Ramada Resort by Wyndham Golden Beach has completed its \$5.8 million refurbishment on all 60 Club Wyndham South Pacific apartments, as well as some common areas throughout the property. The upgrade includes the bathrooms with

walk-in showers, brand-new kitchens, revamped flooring, and installation of external shutters on the balconies. The resort also boasts a revamped pool area with new astroturf, umbrellas, and furniture.



Hilton Toronto has unveiled its renovated accommodations and introduced an all-new lobby bar, Frenchy. Located in the heart of the city, the property has now upgraded all of its rooms, bringing a sense of "belonging and ease" for guests

travelling away from home. The design of their stays embodies a fusion of timelessness and elegance with contemporary comfort, complemented by a natural and light palette throughout.



Following an extensive US\$45 million revamp, The Westin Los Angeles Airport has reopened its doors. The transformation, unveiled earlier this year, includes upgraded amenities such as the reimagined lobby and lounge area, a new Topgolf Swing Suite, 45

newly installed EV charging stations, enhanced meeting space, and the "sunset finder" for guests to enjoy sunset.



Hotel Bristol Berlin in Germany has unearthed its modern elegance with the revelation of the first 50 freshly renovated rooms, with the rest to follow suit in the coming months. The 301-key property will encompass contemporary comfort and

timeless grace across its accommodations - inspired by British Roaring 20s - with the interior designs also paying homage to the hotel's history.

Welcome to Sydney, Darling



CELEBRITIES from stage, screen and sports were among the guests at a glittering opening party last week for W Sydney the city's newest landmark hotel.

High-profile invitees included Channel 7 personality Larry **Emdur, Destination NSW CEO** Steve Cox, and Aussie cricketer David Warner and wife Candice.

Attendees enjoyed a high-energy check-in at Level One, followed by decadent cocktails, canapes and interactive desserts on Level

MSC opens UK 2026

MSC Cruises has become the first line to open its 2026 season of sailings from Southampton, with itineraries ranging from two to 14 nights on MSC Virtuosa.

Highlights of the season, which runs from Apr-Sep 2026, include a 14-night adventure to Iceland and Norway, featuring an overnight stay in Reykjavík.

Guests can also select from a nine-night Mediterranean sailing calling in Lisbon, Gibraltar, Malaga and Cadiz.

Five, with electric dance artist Synthony taking centre stage for a captivating 45-minute DJ set.

At the conclusion of the night, guests were given an opportunity to venture up to the hotel's stylish rooftop pool to enjoy world class views over Darling Harbour.

The Warners are pictured above centre, with Marriott International President, Asia Pacific, Raj Menon and Aaryan Menon. MW

Baccarat Maldives

SH HOTELS and Resorts will open the ultra-luxe Baccarat Hotel and Residences Maldives in 2027, with the resort spanning 111 acres in the South Male Atoll.

Located around a 30-minute boat ride from Male, the luxury resort will offer 50 hotel villas, each with private pools and encircling a shallow-water lagoon and reef system.

Guests can enjoy amenities including specialty restaurants, an outdoor cinema garden, art gallery and meticulously curated wellness spa programs.

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TOP 5 OF OUR UNIQUE NORTHERN TERRITORY EXPERIENCES



Kakadu National Park

Only four sites in Australia appear on the World Heritage List for both their natural and cultural significance and Kakadu is one of them. On the **Top End Highlights** 6-day tour, you'll cruise Kakadu's Yellow Water Billabong spotting an endless array of wildlife.



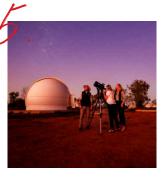
Mataranka Thermal Pools

You'll never, never find a place as beautiful as Mataranka. Explore, or soak in the palmfringed thermal springs before heading up to Katherine on the 11-day **Outback Safari** tour.



Tiwi Islands

The Wurrumiyanga Aboriginal community will take you on an unforgettable journey through a rich history and culture. Discover bush tucker, world-class art and their love for footy, on the **Kakadu, Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge & Tiwi Islands Explorer** 4-day tour.



Earth Sanctuary

Become a guest of an astronomer's family on the **Outback Adventure** 15-day tour. The Alice Springs night sky will not disappoint, as the Falzon brothers entertain you with an outback barbecue and campfire sing-along while the Milky Way slowly appears.