



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Luxury page**, plus a full page from **Air Tickets**.

New deal tapped

TRAVELPORT and TAP Air Portugal have signed a new multi-source content distribution agreement that includes both NDC and traditional content for Travelport's agency customers.

The Portuguese airline, which is also a Star Alliance member, said the "pivotal" agreement in its decade-long relationship with Travelport is looking to deliver a solution that makes it easier for agents to access and sell tailored NDC content and offers through the Travelport+ marketplace.

VA boosts Amex benefits

VIRGIN Australia's loyalty program has today relaunched two new-look American Express co-branded Velocity credit cards, both designed to make flying more rewarding with "richer travel perks" and earn potential.

Benefits including airport lounge access, status credits linked to spend, and an increased points earn rate are among the changes made to Velocity Frequent Flyer's refreshed line-up of American Express credit cards.

Holders of the American Express Velocity Platinum Card can now spend their way up Velocity's loyalty ladder, earning 50 status credits once they have spent a total of \$25,000 on the card.

A further 50 status credits are awarded once the card spend reaches \$50,000, on top of status credits earned from flying with



Virgin Australia or partners.

New benefits have also been added to the American Express Velocity Escape Plus Card, with one point earned on the first \$12,000 spent each year before reverting to 0.75 points per dollar.

Cardholders also receive a \$50 credit each year if spending \$50 or more with Virgin Australia. *ML*

FC opens new store

FLIGHT Centre has opened its newest store based in Charlestown in Lake Macquarie.

The moment was shared on LinkedIn by Area Sales Leader Kylie Johnson, who said: "our team and our customers were equally as excited to see our doors open today."

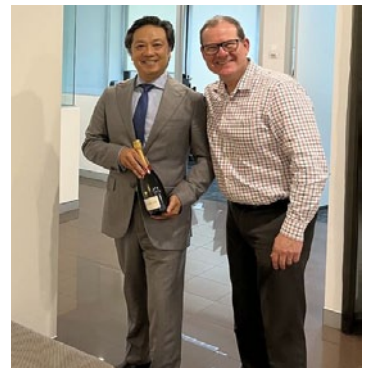
"The shop [was] a buzz from the moment we opened."

Link adds member

MAXQ Consolidation, part of the Maxim's Travel Group, is now a full Link Travel Group member.

Link Travel Group GM Scott Darlow visited MaxQ's GM Hai Duong this week (**pictured**) to induct the brand into the family.

"We look forward to a long and successful partnership with MaxQ," Link Travel Group said.



Wendy Wu Tours

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Air Tickets incentive

AIR Tickets and Singapore Airlines are offering a bonus incentive for travel advisors, offering \$100 per adult ticket - see **page 8** for more information.

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Inspiring webinar

INSPIRING Vacations will host a webinar for agents tomorrow at 2pm AEST to provide insights on the operator's Sri Lanka product range, booking process, and agent partnership opportunities.

There will be gift card giveaways for attendees - register [HERE](#).

Ponant protects agents

PONANT has moved to reassure travel agents their commissions will be protected after its planned partnership with Paspaley Pearl to operate sailings in the Kimberley and surrounding region fell through this week.

A statement issued by the luxury cruise line's Asia-Pacific CEO Deb Corbett confirmed the development, which has now been shared with affected travel agent partners as well.

"Ponant regrets to inform its valued customers and travel partners that the proposed cruise program to operate on Paspaley Pearl is not proceeding with



Ponant as the cruise operator," she said.

Corbett added that impacted agents are being offered the option of a full refund or an additional 15% saving to rebook on another sailing, which is combinable with the Ponant Bonus Savings and Ponant Yacht Club benefits for members.

Affected bookings must be actioned by 31 Dec 2025.

No reason for the split was provided by either party, with Paspaley Pearl telling **TD** it was "very disappointed" the Ponant voyages will not go ahead. **AB**

Preferred adds 24

PREFERRED Hotels & Resorts has expanded its global portfolio with 24 new member properties added in the third quarter.

The independent hotel brand enhanced its offerings across 14 nations, in destinations including Cote D'Azur and London.

Highlights include Palafitos Overwater Bungalows and Bahia Hotel & Beach House in Mexico; AJWA Cappadocia, Dusit Thani Bangkok; Grand Hotel Courmayeur Mont Blanc; Mukul Resort in Nicaragua; Sands Suites Resort & Spa in Mauritius; and Al Habtoor Palce in the UAE.

The company's I Prefer Hotel Rewards members can also earn 2,500 bonus points on eligible stays at any of the participating locations for a limited time.

VA pilot made error

A VIRGIN Australia flight took off from a closed section of Brisbane Airport's runway 19L due to flight crew misinterpretation and distraction, according to a new report from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB).

On 30 Nov 2022, the VA flight's captain misinterpreted the dispatcher notes to mean there were no performance requirements for operations on runway 19L, then on review, incorrectly dismissed the Brisbane communication detailing the displaced runway as "not being relevant to their flight".

JQ eyes Toowoomba

TALKS are reportedly being held between Jetstar and Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport to operate flights between the Qld regional hub and Melbourne.

If it comes to pass, it would see the Qantas budget carrier take over from failed carrier Bonza.

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The Chat
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Travel Daily
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It's all about Tokyo

AGENTS can join Alison Roberts-Brown from Tokyo Tourism on a live webinar session tomorrow at 8.30am or 12pm AEDT to learn about the city's new attractions, hotels and projects.

There are also great prizes up for grabs - see [HERE](#) for details.

Cruise spend above \$4k

AUSTRALIAN travellers are spending just north of \$4,000 on average for a cruise holiday in 2024, according to new research from Compare the Market.

The report also found that close to one in four Aussies had either booked, or plan to book, a cruise holiday at some stage over the next 12 months.

Compare the Market's research also concurred with several other recent studies in Australia, which showed younger generations are leading the cruise charge.

Gen Z (27%) and Millennials (27%) were listed as the most likely demographics to have a cruise trip booked this year.

Celebrity cruise expert and regular travel ambassador, Catriona Rowntree, said the report's cruise insights suggest



the industry is successfully broadening its appeal to Australian travellers.

"We are still per capita the biggest cruise lovers in the world, no doubt because regardless of your age or budget when it comes to cruising, there truly is something for everyone," Rowntree said.

"Now there are even more options for the Gen Z and Millennial markets as well - so everyone is looked after."

Compare the Market's survey canvassed the opinions of 1,001 Australian aged over 18. *AB*

Ponant Light Quest

PONANT has unveiled its 'Northern Lights Quest' itineraries for 2025, offering guests the rare opportunity to witness the Northern Lights.

The voyages journey through remote landscapes, such as the Lofoten Islands, North Cape, Reykjavik, and Disko Bay.

Guests can also immerse themselves in the traditions and customs of the Sami people, embark on dog-sledding or snowshoeing adventures, explore local villages, and enjoy birdwatching opportunities to spot puffins, skuas, and more.

Wellness kicks a goal

PURE Health Travel has teamed up with former AFL star David (Zacka) Zaharakis to host a six-night wellness retreat at Gdas Bali Health & Wellness Resort.

With a focus on personal growth, 'The Champions Mindset - The Pursuit of Purpose' retreat in Mar next year will combine Zaharakis' fitness expertise with Gdas Bali's world-class wellness offerings, including the launch of the Bali Eden wellness centre.

Find out more details [HERE](#).

Unseen in Adelaide

VIRTUAL tour platform Stories Unseen has launched its first self-guided tour in Adelaide, which explores the city's "funniest and most surprising historical quirks".

Led by a humorous virtual tour guide 'Dave', travellers can take the journey at their own pace.



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Singapore packages

ENTIRE Travel Group is offering savings of up to \$1,800 per couple on a range of independent holiday packages in Singapore.

The 'Made in Singapore' promotion offers discounted packages ranging from four to nine nights for bookings through to 06 Dec.

Packages under the promotion include a \$1,000 per couple discount on a combination stay at the restored Warehouse Hotel Singapore on Robertson Quay and the Oasia Sentosa, priced at \$3,132 per person.

All packages are available to quote and book 24/7 through Entire's website, and all are supported by the company's Peace of Mind Booking Plan.

CLICK HERE for the full list of packages available.

Voyages connecting cultures



THE Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia team based at Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre recently took part in a cultural youth exchange with like-minded Indigenous tourism operators from New Zealand and Canada.

The meet-up was facilitated by the Native Nations United program, which seeks to connect Indigenous youth from the tri-nations for the purpose of learning, inspiring, and empowering each other. *JM*

Moreton farm stay

A NEW self-contained farm stay has opened in the hinterland of the Moreton Bay region, located an hour's drive from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

Set on 42 hectares of farmland owned by Yajambee Farms, the two-bedroom property offers views out to the Glass House Mountains and Moreton Island.

Guests can read a book by the fireplace, soak in the magnesium plunge pool, or barbecue Yajambee beef in the alfresco dining area.

Without venturing far from the property, guests can also explore local walking tracks in the D'Aguiar National Park, indulge in seasonal lunch and dinner menus at Birches Restaurant, and enjoy a tour, tasting and meal at Ocean View Estates winery.

Airports fight slavery

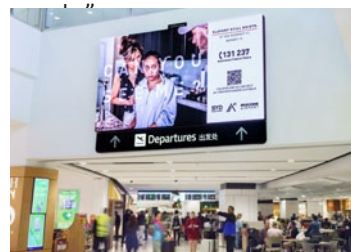
AUSTRALIA'S two largest international airports have teamed up to launch a public awareness campaign to fight human trafficking.

Sydney and Melbourne airports partnered with anti-human trafficking organisation, A21, to run the 'Can You See Me?' campaign, developed with guidance and input from the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

As of this week, digital screens and billboards at both airports will display images and messages educating people on how to recognise and report the signs of human trafficking, along with QR codes linking to videos and further information.

"Airports are key environments where traffickers seek to move victims across borders," said AFP Acting Commander Human Exploitation Frank Rayner.

"Engaging travellers and frontline airport staff to recognise the signs and report suspected cases will help disrupt these crimes and protect vulnerable



Window Seat

FAMILIES and tourists can now enjoy a unique and entertaining way to explore Brisbane, with two of the city's ferries transformed into life-size versions of beloved *Bluey's World* characters, Bluey and her little sister Bingo.

The fun makeover of the CityCats, now dubbed CityDogs, comes just in time for the opening of *Bluey's World* theme park in Brisbane tomorrow (**TD** 15 Oct).

The CityDogs are expected to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors and a huge economic boost to Brisbane.

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CT Partners builds trust



CT PARTNERS has wrapped up its landmark 20th annual conference in Hoi An, which brought together top industry leaders and members.

Sponsored by Singapore Airlines, the event included a 'sponsor speed-dating' session, enabling one-on-one conversations between CT Partners members and key suppliers.

Additionally, attendees enjoyed a team-building exercise through the city's historic Old Town, and a cultural and educational experience at Miss Vy's, a renowned culinary destination.

Frasers N Vietnam

FRASERS Hospitality has launched its first hotel residence in Northern Vietnam, situated in Vinh Phuc.

Modena by Fraser Vinh Yen is centrally located in the heart of the city's old quarters, and features 88 fully furnished serviced apartments comprising studios and one- to three-bedroom apartments.

The conference also celebrated the network's impressive financial results (**TD 31 Oct**).

"This year's conference was a tremendous success, bringing our members together to strategise, align our goals, and engage in open discussions that reinforce our shared purpose while having a whole lot of fun," said CT Partners CEO, Matt Masson.

The network's 2025 conference will take place in the Maldives. *JM*

Oui to EY's A380

ETIHAD Airways' flagship Airbus A380 has made its grand return to Paris, increasing the route's capacity from Abu Dhabi by almost a third.

"This enhanced capacity reflects the rising demand we're seeing in France, with more exciting announcements to come before the end of 2024," Etihad Arik De Chief Revenue & Commercial Officer said.

An additional Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners will join the Paris service from 15 Jan.

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ATIA UPDATE

from Jenny Le, National Manager Events & Corporate Partnerships



THIS year's National Travel Industry Awards recently took place at ICC

Sydney, with 1,306 travel professionals in attendance.

Lehmo returned as the MC, we announced and cheered on 40 winners across 38 categories, honoured Tom Manwaring as an ATIA Life Member Inductee and saw performances from Ratpack Reloaded and Groove Academy.

CLICK HERE to see the action.

Guests then made their way to Darling Pavilion for the after-party, which ended at 2am - but even then, there were energetic partygoers who kept going.

I wasn't one of those people - I'd done my part, which was to plan, organise and execute the NTIA gala dinner and awards presentation - I was ready to call it a night.

For the gala dinner itself, our suppliers were ready to bump in from 6am.

The ATIA team started rolling in from 10am to check off deliveries and lay out the event collateral.

Our guests then began turning up from 5.30pm for the arrivals

hour, clearly eager to reconnect with their industry peers.

Behind the scenes though, there was a show caller, content programmer, stage manager, autotcue, lighting, audio and camera operators all working in unison for the onstage spectacle.

We also had the ATIA team and volunteers from My First Job, who were responsible for greeting our sponsors, making sure they had the correct winner's envelope, serving as trophy attendants, and directing the winners from the stage to the media wall and down to the media room.

In total, there were almost 40 people working together to ensure the event runs smoothly.

Now that this year's NTIA event has concluded successfully, nominees and finalists will have access to their submission scores and the marking rubric that was used to make the decisions.

We're also putting together a summary of what entrants did well and areas of improvement.

This information will be emailed to nominees directly and expected to be released within the next week.

If you missed out on this year's festivities, save the date for next year as we'll be in Bris-Vegas on Fri 17 Oct for Beyond Borders and Saturday 18 Oct for the NTIAs.

Discover the all new *River Cruise Special Report*



CRUISE WEEKLY

Click here to view the issue

VIRTUOSO GEARS FOR INNOVATION

ENHANCING growth and product innovation are at the heart of recent leadership changes made by global luxury travel network Virtuoso.

Virtuoso has named Thatcher Brown as its Senior Vice President, Global Products, part of a new global product division encompassing consumer, digital, design and network products.

The network said that by consolidating all products under one unified team, it can better capitalise on synergies and efficiencies, as well as develop more products to serve its diverse and rapidly growing network.

Brown was most recently the Chief Commercial Officer and head of joint operations for Marc-Henry Cruise Holdings, and in his new remit will call upon previous successes in the cruise sector, which saw him grow market



share in new markets like Asia.

Virtuoso has also appointed Jennifer Campbell to focus on growing the organisation's roster of events.

As Senior Vice President, Global Events, Campbell will build teams globally and add value to the more than 50 gatherings planned for 2025.

Describing the move as a "strategic realignment" of



priorities, Virtuoso said the changes reflect its commitment to "shape the future of luxury travel" by optimising operations and accelerating the delivery of products, services and events for its member agencies, advisors, preferred partners and travellers.

The structural changes have also seen the exit of Travis McElfresh, who was SVP, Digital and Consumer Products. *AB*

LC DMC division

LA COLLECTION has launched a new division called LC DMC, which will represent a select group starting with Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Italy, and the UAE.

This expansion marks a significant milestone for La Collection, offering partners a comprehensive range of luxury travel solutions from experts in their respective destinations, including bespoke itineraries and exclusive experiences.

The initial portfolio includes Tempo VIP, a leading luxury DMC specialising in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco, offering a wide range of bespoke services, including private jet charters, luxury accommodations, exclusive dining experiences, and personalised itineraries.

Also joining the fold will be Your Private Italy, a highly regarded DMC which provides a range of services, including luxury villa rentals, private tours, culinary experiences, and more.

Finally, La Collection will represent Level UP Travel & Lifestyle, a DMC that specialises in creating extraordinary experiences in the United Arab Emirates, including a wide range of services such as luxury hotel bookings, private jet charters, bespoke stopovers, and more.

Seabourn back to Australia for 2026/27 season

SEABOURN Cruise Line has unveiled its new 2026-2027 expedition itineraries, which will see the company return to Australia & the Kimberley Coast between May and Sep.

The cruise line's *Seabourn Pursuit* will offer guests eight 10-day sailings between Darwin and Broome.

Itineraries include a cultural visit to Ngula, where guests will discover intricate Bradshaw/Gwion art hosted

by the Wunambal Gaambera traditional owners and godparents of *Pursuit*.

Passengers will also visit Kuri Bay, home to Paspaley's only land-based pearl farm operation, offering a rare insight into the world of pearling in the South Sea.

Other destinations include Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands; Arctic, Greenland, Iceland & British Isles, and more.

Cordis Shanghai

LANGHAM Hospitality Group has opened a new hotel under its Cordis Hotels brand as part of the new Shanghai Seaworld complex.

The new property is the second Cordis in China and Langham's third in China.

Cordis Shanghai Seaworld is attached to the city's cruise terminal and features 274 rooms and suites, designed to reflect Shanghai's culture & confluence of three rivers.



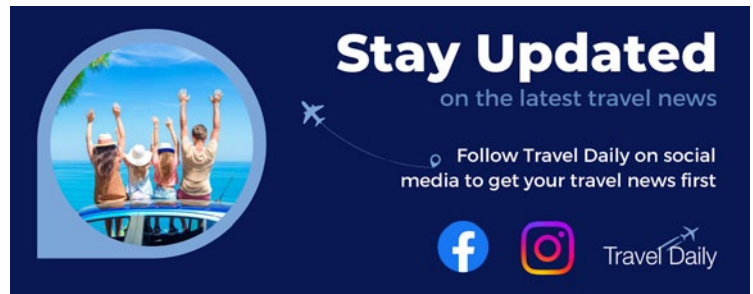
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Regent Santa Monica Beach has just opened its doors, becoming the IHG Hotels & Resorts' brand's first flagship property in America. Just steps from the iconic Santa Monica Pier, the elegant resort features 167 spacious rooms and suites with spa-like bathrooms, a designated dining and work station, and a complimentary Refreshment Gallery stocked with beverages and snacks. Guests can relax on the elevated pool deck overlooking the Pacific Ocean.



Guests and visitors at **A by Adina Sydney** can now enjoy a new signature cocktail menu at the hotel's bar, Dean & Nancy on 22. The 'World of Dreams' menu features 14 creative cocktails, including an interactive beverage which comes with 3D glasses to create a sensory experience. The new selection is complemented by an overnight package, with guests to receive a \$100 credit to spend at the venue and a take-home cocktail pack when they book by 31 Dec, **HERE**.



Part of its multi-million dollar refurbishment, **Crowne Plaza Fiji** has announced the grand opening of its new ballroom and event place, which will begin welcoming guests on 01 Mar 2025. The ballroom and conference centre will span 16,576m², making it the largest of its kind in Fiji, and will boast cutting-edge technology and world-class facilities. The centre will offer six versatile function spaces, as well as an outdoor space overlooking Wailoaloa Beach.



Lomani Island Resort & Spa, an adults-only sanctuary in Fiji's Mamanuca Islands, is preparing to unveil its new Lomani Spa retreat next month. Set in a secluded jungle oasis, the spa will offer a sauna, plunge pool, ice bath, and relaxation deck, in addition to three private treatment burees. Each bure has its own private outdoor shower, and a mixture of couples and singles rooms.



Situated on Antigua's west coast, **Hermitage Bay** has opened its doors again following a multi-million dollar transformation. The luxury resort boasts 30 fully redesigned guest villa suites, now featuring brighter interiors and al fresco living. Guests will also notice the property's increased number of private pools, refreshed spa and newly landscaped gardens.

Cheers to 50 Fantastic years



FANTASTIC Aussie Tours (FAT), which operates the iconic red double-decker Blue Mountains Explorer bus, is celebrating its 50th birthday this month.

The oldest transport company in the Blue Mountains, FAT first came onto the scene in 1976 as Golden West Tours, when Oberon high school teacher John Cronshaw and his wife Lorraine took over Katoomba Scenic Tours.

Initially, the company only operated its hop-on/hop-off sightseeing service on weekends and public holidays, but kicked things up a gear when the bus was painted red.

The service operated 365 days a year and carried 65,000 passengers at its peak, and Golden West Tours eventually became Fantastic Aussie Tours and Blue Mountains Sightseeing, with Cronshaw's son Jason at the helm as Managing Director.

In 2017, it became the first certified 100% carbon neutral bus charter transport service in Australia under the Federal Government's Carbon Neutral Program (**TD 03 May 2017**).

The year after saw FAT partner with Great Southern Rail to offer a Blue Mountains excursion for Indian Pacific guests taking an optional off-train sightseeing tour (**TD 12 Apr 2018**).

Despite the combined force of the pandemic and devastating bushfires and floods forcing FAT to close for business and sell half its bus fleet to stay afloat (**TD 13 Jul 2021**), the company is thriving once more.

Today, the Explorer Bus fleet is back on the road 365 days a year, and the retro Ansett Clipper bus sold during the pandemic is back in the FAT fold (**TD 15 Nov 2022**).

"Fantastic Aussie Tours has been part of my whole life, and what a blessed ride it has been," Jason Cronshaw said.

"We have had challenges and obstacles, but we have worked through them together as a business and as a family.

"We have built on what my parents started and look forward to whatever the future holds for the next 50 years when the third generation has the opportunity to have a go." *JM*



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