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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of the latest travel industry news, including a photo page from **Silversea**, our **Luxury** page and a full page from **Ponant**.

Web Travel delays

WEB Travel Group (formerly WebBeds) has delayed its 1H 2025 results, flagging the need to work with its auditor regarding the prior year's results (**TD** breaking news).

"Web Travel Group is working with its auditor Deloitte to finalise the 1H financial statements and expects to be in a position to lodge Appendix 4D for the half-year ended 30 Sep no later than 29 Nov," the company said.



\$200m pumped into SYD

B R E A K I N G

SYDNEY Airport T2 will get a major \$200 million upgrade that will see passengers go from kerbside to airside in less than 15 minutes, Chief Executive Officer Scott Charlton has announced.

Speaking at the Australian Airports Association National Conference in Brisbane, Charlton outlined the major overhaul, which will see significant changes to the heavily-used terminal.

"Today we are announcing the \$200m upgrade to our T2 domestic terminal, which is the first upgrade to that terminal in 30 years," he said.

"It is the terminal which services Jetstar, Virgin and Rex, and is the biggest domestic terminal in the country with more than 17 million passengers every year."

Charlton explained that those numbers make it the fourth largest airport in Australia if it were its own airport, meaning the

upgrades, due to be completed by the end of next year, are a high priority for SYD.

He announced that the makeover would include new, next-generation security screening, new bag drop technology, new kiosks, plus a better layout to improve flow.

"These changes will boost our security screening rates by 113%, increase our hourly baggage processing by 300 bags per hour, and when this upgrade is formally completed by the end of next year, we expect our passengers to go from the kerbside to the airside in less than 15 minutes," Charlton added. *DF*

Make the most of it

PONANT is inviting travellers to make the most of Europe by booking one of the Grand Voyages in its 2025 Europe collection - see the **back page**.

Air NZ to London?

AIR New Zealand has reportedly secured slots at London Gatwick to operate daily long-haul flights from Jul next year.

The carrier is yet to directly confirm the development, however, according to data from Airport Coordination Limited, Air NZ unsuccessfully applied for 420 slots at Heathrow, but was awarded 236 at Gatwick instead.

The Kiwi airline made the call to scrap services to London via Los Angeles in 2019 to free up capacity for Auckland to New York City services (**TD** 23 Oct 2019), operating its final flight Mar 2020.

After flying to London for decades before shuttering the service, Air NZ's slots at Heathrow were sold for around £21 million.



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Japan Kyushu Highlights

Nova Arrives in Oz

SILVERSEA'S *Silver Nova* has arrived in Australia for the first time, marking the first time a ship in the new Nova class will service local itineraries.

The luxury class of vessels are designed to skew to a younger premium demographic.

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Dolphin leaves TA Board

HELLOWORLD agency owner Annabel Dolphin has concluded her term on the Tourism Australia board of directors as part of a regular transition of the organisation's leadership.

Dolphin joins former Chair Michael Issenberg, Jeffery Ellison and John Hart OAM in departing Australia's peak tourism body.

In their place are four new faces appointed to the Board (**TD** breaking news), each tasked with bringing fresh ideas which will drive demand and attract more int'l visitors to Australia's shores.

The new-look board will be led by existing Directors Penny Fowler as Chair and Ian Horne as Deputy Chair.

Also joining to assist Tourism Australia Managing Director Philippa Harrison's during her second five-year term (**TD** 22 Aug) include former Federal Minister for Tourism, Michael Lee; former DFAT Associate Secretary, Tim



Yeend; attraction developer, Peter Laurance; and Accommodation Australia National Policy Director, Jenny Lambert.

Federal Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, expressed his thanks to the departing Board members and said he was looking forward to working with the new appointees beginning their term.

"I welcome the new appointees and look forward to working with them, and Tourism Australia as they continue to drive demand and attract more international travellers to our shores," Minister Farrell said. *ML*

Tracking tourism

THE Federal Government has launched a new data dashboard measuring the progress of the tourism industry across economic, environmental, social and institutional indicators.

The data from Tourism Research Australia can be accessed **HERE**.



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Ignite promotes

IGNITE Travel Group has announced the “well-deserved” promotion of company stalwart Rod Carrington to Chief Commercial Officer.

In his new role, Carrington will be responsible for leading the group’s My Holiday Brands, wholesale, touring and air divisions - all areas with high growth potential - and will work closely with the product teams.

“This new role will support our growth plans for both domestic and international expansion,” a spokesperson for Ignite said.

Carrington, who is based in Brisbane, has worked for more than 11 years as Director of Product Development, and prior to that was the Product Leader at Flight Centre Travel Group for over two years.

ABEA unveils new board

THE Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has announced its new board, marking the first official appointments since the peak body’s launch last year (TD 03 Jul 2023).

Re-elected board member Matt Pearce, the co-founder and CEO of Talk2Media & Events, joins new directors Gareth Martin and Dan Londero, together with board-appointed Rocky Bruzzano.

They bring a wealth of combined industry experience and diverse expertise to the organisation’s leadership.

Gareth Martin (pictured), who is chief of Business Events Perth, will ensure WA is well-represented, while Dan Londero, CEO and co-founder of Turnkey Event Solutions, will serve as a voice for small businesses and suppliers.

Also joining the ABEA Board is Rocky Bruzzano, who is tasked with leading the Finance Subcommittee.

Bruzzano is the Managing Director of Exponet, bringing two decades of experience as a CFO and extensive knowledge in corporate finance.



Additionally, Amy Saleh, Operations Director at Hannover Fairs Australia and current Chair of the Emerging Leaders Council, will serve as ABEA’s first Emerging Leader Board Observer.

“We had an exceptional number of candidates who all put their hands up to be part of the ABEA Board. The members came out in force to vote, and their voices have been heard,” said ABEA Chair, Peter King.

“We wish to thank everyone who took part.

“The members have chosen highly skilled and dedicated professionals to help lead the organisation into its next phase.”

The new additions join Samantha Glass, Penny Lion, Leo Jago, Nicole Walker and Julia Swanson to form the ABEA Board of Directors. JM

Intrepid US recruits

INTREPID Travel has undertaken another key step in its quest to expand operations in the United States, revealing several key partnership appointments.

Carmen Bishop and Kazundra Brown have been recruited to the US office as Senior Key Partnerships Managers, while Tarah Ellis, Steven Murphy, and David Liotta have also joined the partnerships department.

“We are confident that their contributions will help us forge stronger connections with travel advisors and provide meaningful travel experiences for their clients,” Intrepid said.

The news follows Leigh Barnes being named President of the Americas in Jun (TD 18 Jun), and Christian Wolters being recruited to lead growth in Canada.

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Luxperience '24 kicks off

THIS year's Luxperience will be all about meaningful connections, Event Director Lynn Ormiston (pictured) has told *Travel Daily*.

The linchpin Flight Centre Travel Group luxury event has kicked off this week, with luxury travel partners around the globe descending on Sydney.

This year's event will include luxury cruising & expedition; gastronomical experiences; luxury hotels, exclusive resorts, & boutique lodges; cultural tours & experiences; destination management companies; nature & outdoor adventure; private touring & unique experiences; and health, spa & wellness.

Ormiston said relationship-building is at the heart of the luxury travel market, and that it would once again be key to this year's event.

However, Luxperience 2024 will also feature a Thought Leaders Forum, where industry



heavyweights will discuss the future of the sector.

The Forum will feature a keynote presentation from Roy Morgan's Head of Travel & Tourism Adele Labine-Romain, in addition to two panel discussions featuring a number of panelists, including 'Redefining Luxury: Sustainability and the Next Generation of Elite Travellers' and 'Travel Extremes: The Next Frontier of Luxury Adventures'.

Read more about Luxperience on **page eight**. MS

FJ links to Cairns

FIJI Airways has announced a new direct thrice weekly route between Cairns and Nadi Fiji will take off on 10 Apr next year.

It will mark the first time residents in Northern Qld can fly directly to Fiji with the carrier, with the flight taking approximately 4.5 hours.

MEANWHILE FIJI Airways has launched of a new premium services, enhancing the experience for customers at Nadi International Airport.

The FJ Premier Service offers a personalised meet-and-greet, expedited airport processing, priority check-in, baggage assistance, and exclusive lounge access, with tailored packages available to cater to specific travel requirements.

Prices for the premium service start at FJ\$170 (A\$115) per guest without lounge access, FJ\$270 (A\$183) per guest with lounge access included, and FJ\$810 (A\$548) for a family pass.



TOKYO

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of **Inspiring Vacations**, which is hosting us in Japan alongside valued trade partners.

ON OUR final full day in Japan, we are today heading back to the country's energetic capital.

On arrival in Tokyo, we will step back in time with a tour of the charming Askusa village.

Askusa is home to the seventh-century Senso-ji Temple, the oldest and most important Buddhist temple in Tokyo, while also being known for its imposing entrance gate, Kaminarimon, with its iconic red lantern.

This evening, we will celebrate our time together with a traditional Japanese dinner.



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BRISBANE

Today's issue of *TD* comes from The Australian Airports Association National Conference in Queensland.

DAY two of the conference kicks off today after a big group of sessions yesterday, which saw Virgin Australia Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka take the stage in the morning, as sustainability won the talking point tussle in the afternoon.

Today the topics of accessibility, seamless passenger journey, capacity and more will take centre stage.

Over 650 industry professionals are expected to attend the conference over the three days - stay tuned to *TD* for all the news.

Virgin tips hat to Etihad

THE Virgin Australia Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka has thanked Etihad Airways for its contribution to the local airline's history at the Australian Airports Association National Conference in Brisbane yesterday.

Hrdlicka (pictured) admitted that in the announcement of VA's plan to partner with Qatar Airways, "not everyone was a winner", alluding to Etihad, which recently publicly cut its deal with Virgin Australia, effective 01 Jun.

She praised Etihad for being a "fantastic partner" but was steadfast in the decision to link up with Qatar, despite the previous challenging press the carrier and the country has received.

"It's tough to lose a partnership with Etihad," she conceded.

"The decision is a decision on what is best for our business - Qatar has been voted the best airline in the world eight times.

"We have such a great portfolio



of partners...best in class; we're really proud of our partners."

Hrdlicka suggested the deal was a "milestone for the industry", and that there was no doubt Virgin Australia returning to strength is what the Australian aviation industry needs.

"The relationship with Qatar is going to go from strength to strength, pending approval, and we have a very clear roadmap of where we need to be in the future...our margin structure is going to be very competitive over time," she concluded. *DF*

Image credit: Australian Airports Association/Yme Tulleners.



Window Seat

ENTERPRISING travel agents looking for new clients may wish to look to single women as a lucrative new market.

Now trending on TikTok are videos of women single and ready to mingle who are complaining about the dating scene in Australia and how different it is overseas.

In a now-viral video, one user labelled Aussie blokes as too often playing "hard to get" and wanting to be chased, whereas men overseas are more likely to make a move.

One commenter said she was never approached by men in Australia but that it "always happens" in other countries.

Some men have fired back, saying it was high expectations that left them too nervous.

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National Park fees

NEW Zealand is reportedly considering introducing a charge for visitors to enter its national parks and conservation areas.

According to a Department of Conservation proposal now open for public consultation, feedback is being sought on whether visitors should pay to enter national parks and how the revenue should be used.

New Zealand Conservation Minister Tama Potaka compared the proposal to Australia, where a charge exists to visit Uluru.

The proposed change would also unlock new opportunities for private businesses to operate in national parks and cut red tape holding up the approvals process.

Policy documents are open for public feedback until 28 Feb before any changes are made.

CVFR recognised by PAL



THIS week, CVFR Consolidation Services (CCS) was awarded by Philippine Airlines for its strong sales growth and partnership with the carrier.

The accolade was presented at an official dinner ceremony held in Manila. *JM*

Pictured: Krystle Ramirez-Gastrock, Country Manager for Australia, NZ and Papua New Guinea, Philippine Airlines; Lenny

Padowitz, General Manager at CVFR Travel Group; and Arthur Angelopoulos, National Sales Manager at Philippine Airlines.

Travelex in Hobart

GLOBAL foreign exchange giant Travelex has opened its first store in Hobart and second in Tasmania, which can be found in the Eastlands Shopping Centre in Rosny Park.

The kiosk allows Tasmanians to obtain foreign cash and purchase its prepaid Travel Money Card.

Hobart marks the company's second store in Tasmania, adding to its Launceston outlet which has been open for 20 years.

It is also the brand's 18th new Australian store to open this year, taking its tally to 93 nationwide.

Laos drink spiking

DFAT has updated its advisory for Laos, warning Australians to be alert to the risks of consuming spirits due to the potential for methanol poisoning and spiking.

The warning follows an incident involving two Melbourne teens who remain on life support.

Air Tickets EK live

HELLOWORLD consolidator brand Air Tickets has formally established a direct NDC API connection with Emirates, initially flagged earlier this month (**TD 11** Nov), allowing agents to book and ticket fully customised EK fares.

Using the Air Tickets 'Shop, Book and Ticket' function, agents can now access a wider range of booking classes and lower SmartNDC airfares, with seat maps and selection still to come.

A pilot phase is now underway with a small group of agencies before the connection is gradually expanded across all Air Tickets customers and Helloworld agents.

Helloworld Group General Manager Consolidation, Rohan Moss, said he was pleased Air Tickets is the first NDC API certified by Emirates in Australia.

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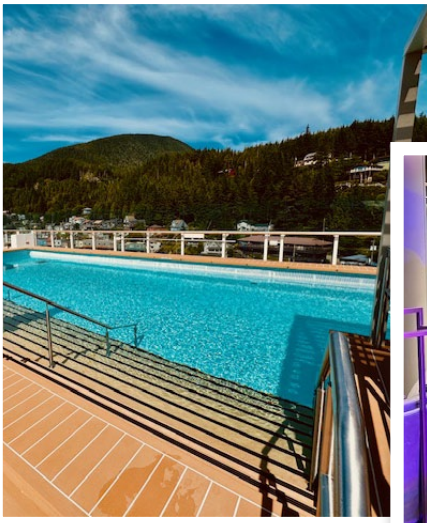
Agents get a taste of *Silver Nova*

SILVERSEA was delighted to host a group of valued travel partners aboard *Silver Nova* on its inaugural sailing in Australia, travelling from Darwin to Cairns.

Hosted by Silversea's Sara Puglia, the journey showcased *Silver Nova* as the first ship of its size in Silversea's fleet, with a 728-guest capacity and the first in the innovative Nova class.

Guests were among the first in Australia to experience Silversea's S.A.L.T. (Sea and Land Taste) culinary programme, enjoying exclusive dining and immersive activities while exploring the ship's stunning, light-filled design, particularly the beautiful Atrium.

Throughout the summer, Silversea will continue hosting key stakeholders aboard *Silver Nova*, providing further opportunities to showcase this remarkable ship's exceptional features and offerings.



SILVERSEA Darwin to Cairns famil.



AMY Cook from Flight Centre Gateway Palmerston with Tony Bennet.



NICOLA Judge (Myers) & David Myers from Unley Park Travel.



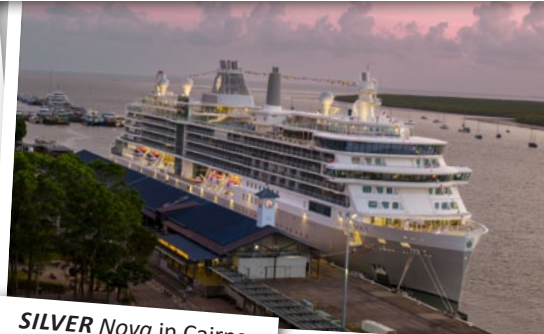
CAPTAIN Cosimo Pontillo pictured with Silversea officers and crew welcoming guests aboard *Silver Nova*.



KYLE Wright & Michael Harris from Ignite Travel.



KERRIE Macritchie and Suzie Bailey from Clean Cruising.



SILVER Nova in Cairns.



KATIE and Simon Bramley from Enhance Travel.



FLUER Naughton from Imagine Holidays.



RACHEL Turner from Helloworld Darwin, with Dean Turner and Sara Puglia.

SLOW TRAVEL IN FASHION FOR YOUNG TRAVELLERS

ABERCROMBIE & Kent Australia MD Debra Fox believes a major evolution of the luxury consumer is now underway, with a desire to travel slow now a hot ticket trend that Australians are leading.

Speaking during a Thought Leaders forum at Luxperience 2024 in Sydney, Fox (pictured far left) urged agents to not just seek as much information as possible on new destinations and products but to “be brave” by introducing new experiences to clients, armed with detail and ready to inspire.

“We find that by introducing different styles or experiences and really challenging what a holiday would look like to someone, we can move the basket price up by nearly 100% or between 50% and 100%, so be brave,” Fox enthused.



In turn, luxury travel brands are being encouraged to share their market research and the trends driving booking patterns for young, emerging luxury travellers.

“You need to be able to bring them in on that inspiration,

whether it’s social media and the knowledge learners, so we share as much as we can,” Fox said.

Joining Fox on the panel was Helm Marketing co-founder, Andrew Cavallaro, who said young people are increasingly

inspired by the mindset of slow travel, and in doing so, venturing away from overcrowded hotspots to discover secret areas.

“Travel was very much about going and embracing and really getting under the skin of a destination, finding out what the culture is, learning the language, bringing back inspiration and ideas you can apply to your everyday life.

“I think after the past few decades of mass tourism, we’ve kind of forgotten a little bit of that,” Cavallaro said.

“Travel is obviously still a transformative experience for many of us, but we’re a little more obsessed about country counting and selfie snapping, so for the clients we work with, it’s about bringing it back to simplicity and bringing back the core reasons of why we travel.”

Space Perspective Global Sales VP Edyta Teper said space tourism is the industry’s fastest growing sector and is on track to be a \$28 billion industry by 2030.

Teper said a key misconception about space travel was the automatic association with rockets, with Space Perspective specialising in a six-hour balloon adventure that ascends 30 kilometres at a gentle 12km/h for a view of the edge of space.

Fox said younger travellers are hunting for “edgy yet safe” travel experiences outside of the traditional norms. *ML*

Monte-Carlo at sea

CRYSTAL Cruises has launched a new onboard casino in partnership with Monte-Carlo Societe des Bains de Mer (SBM).

Now available on *Crystal Symphony* and coming soon to sister ship *Crystal Serenity*, the new gaming venue features slot machines, blackjack, American roulette and ultimate Texas hold’em.

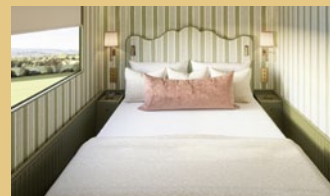
SBM has led the design of the new casinos, replicating the experience of the Casino de Monte-Carlo in detail.

Wales on rails as Belmond adds new UK train

GREAT Britain will introduce its first luxury sleeper train experience, with travellers able to explore the countryside of England and Wales on the rails.

Debuting in Jul 2025, the Britannic Explorer will be operated by Belmond and will feature a selection of three routes passing through Cornwall, the Lake District and Wales, each over three nights.

The train will feature 18 cabins with 15 suites and three grand suites, along with fine dining that celebrates British



cuisine and local produce.

Off-train experiences include opportunities to hike the Welsh countryside or tour the Hauser and Wirth Gallery in Somerset.

The Britannic Explorer joins Belmond’s growing stable of trains alongside the British Pullman and Royal Scotsman.



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ACCOMMODATION

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Tanah Gajah, a resort in Bali's Ubud, has unveiled four new pool villas, available for stays from Jan next year. Each Balinese-style villa features a 14-metre-long private plunge pool, an outdoor dining pavilion, and deep soaking tub, which overlook the rice paddies and Mt Agung in the distance. The premium one-bedroom villas also feature a fully stocked complimentary mini-bar, which is restocked daily.



Hobart's heritage-listed **Islington Hotel** has undergone a refurbishment, resulting in a revamp of its 11 suites, as well as its guest areas and restaurant. Located in South Hobart, the luxury boutique hotel now features thoughtful modern touches while also retaining its heritage, which dates back to 1847. Suites are decorated by original art and rich fabrics, with bathrooms boasting heated flooring, marble rain showers, and deep bathtubs.



Introducing a barefoot luxury experience, **Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort** has opened Lonubo, a private island retreat accessible only by boat. Located just 200 metres from the resort, the sanctuary is perfect for guests seeking a daytime escape or evening under the stars. Awaiting them on Lonubo are plush sun loungers, beanbags, sunshades, towels and refreshing beverages, all set amid a backdrop of palm trees and turquoise waters.



Cardamom Tented Camp, set within the wilderness of Cambodia's Botum Sakor National Park, has announced the addition of three premium river view tents. The new eco-conscious tents feature larger balconies designed for relaxation and wildlife-spotting. Perched on an elevated frame, the tents also contain fan-cooled double or twin beds and hot water bathrooms.



In a bid to elevate its luxury offering, Vietnam's **Villa Le Corail, a Gran Melia Hotel** has introduced new Grand Ocean Villas, with furnishings by some of Europe's most renowned luxury brands including Roberto Cavalli Home Interiors and Minotti. Each of the spacious oceanfront villas boast high ceilings, floating terraces, floor-to-ceiling windows, infinity pools, and marble bathrooms.

New LA park takes shape



LOS ANGELES' burgeoning waterfront tourism destination, West Harbor, has announced the second phase of its expansion, which will see 11,612m² of new attractions added, including Southern California's largest coastal observation wheel.

Planned to be between 30-45 metres, guests riding the wheel will enjoy panoramic views of the working port, the Battleship *USS Iowa*, the Vincent Thomas Bridge, the Pacific Ocean and passing cruise ships - all from the comfort of enclosed modern gondolas.

The park, which will begin its phased opening in late 2025, will also feature a seaside carousel and several fun rides and attractions for families and visitors of all ages, including outdoor pickleball and padel courts.

Guests will be able to dine at a range of food and drink venues, including a woodfired pizza restaurant and fish market.

"Leasing interest catapulted once Phase 1 came to life," said Valerie James, Senior Vice President for Jerico Development, which is collaborating with The Ratkovich Company on West Harbor.

He explained, "the addition of these attractions underscores our dedication to developing a dynamic space that blends recreation, dining, and entertainment along the Los Angeles Waterfront.

"West Harbor is leading the transformation of San Pedro and the Port of Los Angeles into a major visitor-serving destination."

The additions join the previously announced off-leash membership dog park Bark Social, as well as Harbor Breeze Cruises, Wheel Fun Rentals and Catalina Tea Bar, which are currently open along West Harbor's Promenade. *JM*

Revered writer dies

WELL-KNOWN travel writer and founder of FrommerMedia, Arthur Frommer, has died at the age of 95 this week.

Throughout his long career, the US writer released a series of travel guidebooks, as well as online content, newsletters, podcasts, and more.

His is survived by his daughter Pauline Frommer, who is the co-President of FrommerMedia.



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*All pricing and savings amounts are in Australian Dollars (AUD). Information and price is correct as of 27 September 2024 but may fluctuate due to changes in surcharges, taxes or currency. (1) Itinerary is a combination of three back to back cruises including B0030525, B0140525 and B0220525; (2) itinerary is a combination of two back to back cruises including B0140525 and B0220525; (3) itinerary is a combination of two back to back cruises including EC150425 and EC240425. A discount of AU\$800 per person off the cruise fare is applicable on the following cruises B0030525-B0140525-B0220525-BO140525-BO220525-EC240425 when combined as a 'Grand Voyage' back-to-back itinerary on one of the selected itineraries: Offer price is based on Deluxe stateroom Deck 3 category. Offers are subject to availability, not combinable unless specified, available on new bookings only and may be withdrawn at any time. Price is subject to change without notice at any time; First cruise is inclusive of any applicable PONANT Bonus discount rate at time of publication and is subject to change; Second cruise attracts back-to-back 10% discount; third cruise attracts back-to-back 10% discount excluding port charges and taxes; Standard payment and cancellation conditions apply; Offers are available for travellers departing from Australia and New Zealand. To redeem your credit, quote code GRANDVOY, when speaking to your preferred travel agent or PONANT Consultant. Not redeemable for cash. A strictly limited number of offers are available on selected itineraries and departure dates in selected suites/staterooms/cabins/room categories; Offer is combinable with PONANT's free solo supplement offer, PONANT bonus savings, PONANT Join the club offer, PONANT yacht club benefits. Not combinable with any other offer. More terms and conditions may apply. Your booking contract is with Compagnie Du Ponant Pty Ltd (PONANT) and incorporates all the terms and conditions shown on au.ponant.com unless specified in these conditions; PONANT recommends that you read and understand your contract and ask PONANT or your travel agent if you require any clarification. Visit au.ponant.com for full terms and conditions. Photograph: © Adobestock.