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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of news, including a special feature from **Qantas**, a photo page from **Collette** and our **Luxury page**, plus a full page from **Viva Holidays**.

Faster passports

TRAVELLERS will soon be able to apply for a new passport online without having to go into a post office, under new changes revealed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Expected to be introduced in the coming year, the change is designed to expedite the process and take the strain away from post offices around the country.

Cruise safety push

US LAWMAKERS are seeking to bolster the rights of cruise pax by introducing new legislation to the Senate, which will also make clearer the ways to respond if rights have been breached.

Cheaper flights sought

A **REVIEW** of government travel policies by the Department of Finance has called for its appointed TMC, Corporate Travel Management (CTM), to offer a broader range of flight options.

The report noted claims of cheaper flights being available on commercial airfare aggregation websites compared to the government's own online booking tool, creating a perception that only panel suppliers are on offer.

Some flights are intentionally removed from the booking tool, such as those with too many stopovers or journeys considered too long given the length of trip.

In the pursuit of further cost savings, the Department of Finance also said it would work with CTM to ensure existing flight credits are used prior to new expenditure, by implementing a new systematic solution.

In further findings, evidence was sourced suggesting some bookings are being influenced by



loyalty programs, citing examples of government staff seeking to achieve life status.

Exclusive lounge access may also be unduly influencing travel patterns in favour of Qantas and Virgin Australia.

Upgrades came in for criticism as well, with the report concluding that they should not be accepted unless required for operational reasons, and if sanctioned in rare circumstances, are consistent with the APSC guidance on gifts and benefits.

The Department recommended government officials do not accept any upgrades to first class.

International tier one carriers such as Qantas, VA, Emirates, Etihad, Qatar and others, may also soon find their booking preferences diluted, with a recommendation to abolish the tier system altogether.

To achieve that, the Department said it will work with tier two carriers to find more efficiencies, with that list including Air NZ, China Eastern, LATAM, Finnair, Fiji Airways, and others. **AB**

Fall in love with VA

VIRGINIA is ready to romance agents with the help of Viva Holidays and a range of special packages - details on **page 10**.

Digital trial expanded

THE digital Incoming Passenger Card trial has been expanded to include Qantas flights from Auckland and Queenstown to Sydney from today, adding to an initial pilot kicked off on select New Zealand routes from Brisbane (**TD** 23 Oct 2024).

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Airline feedback wanted

EXCLUSIVE

THE Federal Department of Finance is now requesting input from the travel sector on the formation of its next airline panel tender, *Travel Daily* can exclusively reveal.

A new industry consultation paper has been released, with the aim of gathering valuable insights from the travel industry to support the proposed retender of the Federal Government airline panel arrangement, covering topics like airfares, airline benefits, sustainability, technology and regional travel.

Following the consultation period, the Department will review the feedback to inform a proposed approach to market.

The current airline panel consists of three domestic and 17 international airlines, and is due to expire on 30 Jun 2026.

Benefits enjoyed by the Federal Government through the existing panel of carriers have included



access to discounted airfares and favourable conditions across an extensive network of routes.

Interested parties seeking to shape the next tender are encouraged to respond to the consultation paper **HERE**.

Responses are needed by 5pm (AEST) on Fri, 22 Aug 2025. **AB**

TTC-NCL ask agents

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) and The Travel Corporation (TTC) are set to hit the road again, with their new Worldwide Rendezvous 2026 - Travel Trivia Series.

Advisors and their clients are invited to join a new series of almost 40 fun-filled trivia events across the country.

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NTIA People's Choice

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (NTIA) has partnered with News Corp Australia for the third year in a row to present to the People's Choice Awards.

Australian travellers are being asked to vote by sharing in 50 words or less who their favourite travel brand is and why.

Those who enter will have the chance to win one of five prizes, including two return tickets to Singapore Airlines to any destination in Europe, the UK or Southeast Asia, and a 12-day Trafalgar tour in Vietnam.

ATIA members are being urged to encourage clients to nominate them **HERE**.

JQ reduces PER-SIN

JETSTAR Airways is reducing services on its Perth-Singapore route during the upcoming southern summer season.

The service will be dialled down to thrice weekly from late Nov, down from the current six times a week flight schedule.

Qantas points blitz

QANTAS has released 400,000 new classic reward seats, most on dedicated points planes, for Qantas Frequent Flyer members to book using their points.

Thousands of seats on services to Paris in Nov 2025, Los Angeles in Feb 2026 and Tokyo in May and Jun 2026 are now available, along with flights to Singapore and JQ services within New Zealand.

Flights to Hamilton Island and Cairns are also part of the release.

Qantas Loyalty CEO Andrew Glance said several points planes are planned for coming months.

"The chance to fly in business to incredible cities like Los Angeles and Paris is a highly coveted reward, and we're thrilled to make it more accessible for our loyal members," Glance said.

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TA makes US change

TOURISM Australia has appointed Jonathan Heasman as Distribution Development Manager for the United States, replacing Glen Davis in the role.

Heasman (**pictured**) arrives in the position after serving as VisitBritain's Travel Trade Manager of National Accounts for the US for the last three years.

The experienced tourism executive takes up the post at an important time for Tourism Australia, with US visitor numbers Down Under declining from Jan through to May, ABS stats show.



Designing a new America

UNIQUE ranching experiences and self-drive itineraries are among the hottest sellers from a three-month pilot of USA product recently run by bespoke itinerary planning brand Designer Journeys.

The company has now converted this pilot into its latest full range after spending 12 months developing product and carefully vetting in-market DMCs and expert itinerary builders.

Offerings are now available to more than 7,000 travel advisors across its primary markets of Australia, New Zealand & Canada.

In addition to ranches and self-drive, Designer Journeys CEO Matt McCann told **Travel Daily** the company has seen strong demand for hiking experiences in national parks - just one of several niche or special interests it is now placed to deliver.

"What's exciting is the diversity - our agents aren't just looking for the typical tourist destinations -

they want authentic experiences, behind-the-scenes access and the ability to combine iconic attractions like Disney with more personalised, local experiences."

Further special interests the company is now prepared to field include sports & events tourism, along with art, history and culinary, hiking and outdoor recreation experiences.

Designer Journeys is also seeing strong interest in products typically popular with Australians, such as Disneyland Anaheim and Walt Disney World in Orlando.

McCann added the company is not witnessing the same downturn for US product others in the industry are experiencing.

"When we tested demand with Designer Journeys' Platinum agents about US expansion, the response was overwhelming - there's clear demand for a tailored travel solution for the US market," he added. *ML*

Intrepid dances in NZ

INTREPID now fully owns Kiwi small group operator Haka Tours, following an initial investment in 2021 (**TD** 15 Oct 2021).

Haka Tours is now known as Intrepid DMC New Zealand, reflecting the global business' ambitions to become one of the top three travel brands in NZ.

"After completing the full acquisition, our focus is on strengthening local partnerships, supporting our guiding and operations teams, and delivering exceptional travel experiences that reflect the values of Aotearoa and the communities we work with," explained Simon McKearney, who was hired as Intrepid's first New Zealand Country Manager (**TD** 04 Jun).

Under a new structure, Intrepid has brought together in- and outbound operations under a single leadership position.

Intrepid has also recently fully acquired JOOB's Inspiration Outdoors brand (**TD** 10 Jul).

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Qantas creative with aircraft delays

AS DEBATE rages over where Qantas should send its new A321 XLR long-range narrowbody aircraft, the carrier's Domestic CEO Markus Svensson said the airline is managing delivery delays & ruled out more capital raising.

Speaking at the CAPA Airline Leader Summit, Svensson was quizzed on what new A321 XLR jets coming into the fleet and transferred Jetstar Asia A320s would mean for future fleet renewal and management plans.

"Some of them [Jetstar Asia planes] are going to go to our business in the west, our resource business Network Aviation, and some will go to Jetstar, but it will also help us to retire some aircraft," he revealed.

Svensson admitted that aircraft delivery delays meant that Qantas "had to keep some aircraft a bit longer", and that the airline was getting four extra mid-life B737s to cover for the delays on the



A320s and A321 XLRs.

When asked about whether there were plans for capital raises to boost fleet renewal, Svensson said it was not on the cards.

"There are no plans for that, but obviously we are spending a lot of money on aircraft, which is really important, and we are committed to make sure we can find that [money for fleet renewal]," he said.

With Qantas taking delivery of its first A321 XLR, and another due before the end of the year, Svensson was asked what the benefits will be and what routes they will service.

"There are bigger cabins with 60% more overhead locker space, which means that every customer

can bring a roller bag with them," Svensson explained.

"Obviously, from operational efficiency, the capability of that aircraft, where it can fly, [and] the fuel savings, are definitely a game changer for domestic, and I would say short-haul international."

While Svensson would not be pinned down on confirmed destinations, he did suggest that Brisbane, Perth and Bali had significant internal support. *DF*

Nexus cuts Kimberly

LOW passenger demand is behind Nexus Airlines' decision to suspend flights between Broome, Kununurra and Darwin.

Competition from Air North in the form of additional capacity and aggressive pricing forced its hand to withdraw, Nexus said.

With Air North now the sole operator on the route, there are fears ticket prices will rise.

Carnival promotes

CARNIVAL Australia has promoted Alex Pikardt to the role of Senior Director - Sales, Australia and New Zealand for its Holland America Line and Seabourn brands.

Most recently Director of Sales for the cruise lines, Pikardt (**pictured**) will report directly to Vice President - Sales Rob Coleman, and be charged with deepening trade relationships and using his strategic aptitude to drive a heightened awareness of the brands in the local region.

Since joining Carnival Australia in 2010, he has held several senior positions across national accounts, commercial planning, sales, and operations.





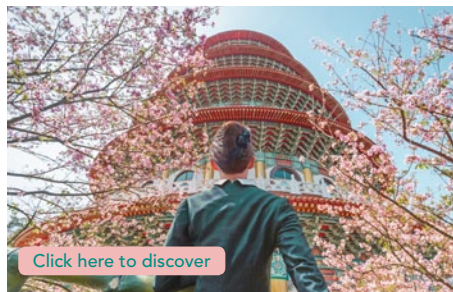
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Welsch appointed

CTM has appointed Rebecca Welsch as its Global Head of Growth Marketing, which will see her tasked with accelerating the company's five-year plan.

Welsch will aim to deepen customer engagement with CTM, and expand the company's presence across key global markets as part of her new role.

The seasoned B2B marketing leader has almost two decades of global experience spanning SAAS, enterprise technology, and corporate travel.

Welsch most recently led global product marketing at Phocas Software, where she helped improve sales alignment.

Aurora names CMO

AURORA expeditions has announced new CMO Katie Malone, former Marketing Director at P&O Cruises.

The Sydney-based exec will lead the line's global marketing strategy, taking over from the Toronto-based Greg Cormier.

Malone has previously worked at Carnival Corp, Marriott International, Singapore Airlines, and Langham Hotel Group.

WFH plan "bats**t' crazy"

LUXURY Escapes co-founder and CEO Adam Schwab (pictured) has blasted the proposed work-from-home legislation mooted by Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan.

Speaking on the *Fear & Greed* podcast with host Sean Aylmer, Schwab was asked what he thought about Allan's plan to enshrine remote working arrangements into law.

"Let's pretend she is being serious and they can get it through, which I don't think they can," Schwab said.

"This is as dumb an idea as I have ever heard in my life and I am 45 now - I have heard some pretty dumb things."

He continued to blast the proposal, suggesting it was crazy.

"To think a government can legislate this is as bats**t crazy an idea as I have ever heard in my lifetime," he exclaimed.

Schwab asserted that it was the younger employees that this proposal would do the most damage to, costing them significant learning opportunities.

"People who suffer are the 25-year-olds who aren't getting taught like we all did 20 years ago



by the people who have been there before," he explained.

"What annoys me more is when you have a team of 25-year-olds who are desperate to come into the office for the mentoring and the learning and the selfish 45-year-old manager can't be stuffed coming in - that is the worst situation," he continued. DF

Celebrity unpacks 33

CELEBRITY Cruises has revealed it will sail to 33 destinations across Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific as part of its 2027-2028 season.

Celebrity Edge and the refurbished *Celebrity Solstice* will both be in local waters as part of the latest collection of itineraries, including the Great Barrier Reef and Kangaroo Island.

There will also be overnights in Adelaide and Cairns on offer to give guests more time to explore culinary, arts and culture tours in the two cities.

In total, there are 175 sailings to choose from globally across Europe, Japan, Alaska, and more.

Sales will open for Australian sailings on 01 Oct, while bookings open for Europe, Japan, Canada and New England on 06 Aug.



Window Seat

STAR Wars AV geeks shed a tear this morning as the devastating news circulated that the force was no longer with Japanese carrier All Nippon Airways (ANA).

Famous for having a licensing deal with Disney for its *Star Wars* franchise, the tie-up saw multiple jets painted as robots from the film franchise.

While some have already been repainted, two are still currently in the air keeping the earth safe from invasion.

The domestic C-3PO (Boeing 777-200, registration: JA743A) will end operations in the first week of Jan 2026, while the arguably more famous R2-D2 (Boeing 787-9, aircraft registration: JA873A) will cease operations this week.

For those who would like to feel the ANA force one more time, you can still visit the micro-site **HERE**.

Window Seat understands that *Travel Daily* Editor Adam Bishop is not one of those people, asking this writer when the story was pitched, "Which one is C-3PO? It's all just muppets in space."



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A **NEW** way to book and service Qantas fares has officially arrived.

On 01 Jul 2025, Qantas launched its New Distribution Capability (NDC), making it easier than ever to support your customers, with enhanced tools, faster bookings, and better support, all in one place.

Focusing on three core areas - smarter shopping, smoother servicing, and personalised offers - Qantas NDC empowers agents with the tools to unlock greater value for your customers.

Just weeks after the launch, several major partners are

already reporting increases in NDC bookings, indicating strong early momentum and industry confidence.

Through Qantas NDC, agents can offer enhanced ancillaries,

access dynamic commissions, better pricing, and richer content directly at the point of sale.

The five-day Price Guarantee allows fares (including taxes and surcharges) to be locked in for up to five days, giving customers flexibility and peace of mind.

Agents will also unlock more personalised offers, such as bonus Qantas Frequent Flyer Points, Status Credits, companion fares, and seat upgrades, helping them deliver added value and a more tailored travel experience for their customers.



Support when you need it

QANTAS NDC also offers faster and more efficient servicing.

New automation assists in reducing the risk of Agency Debit Memos (ADMs), including automated changes, refund calculations and processing, not available in EDIFACT.

Qantas has strengthened its servicing and support model with new tools like Live Assist, a real-time chat feature, in addition to more resourcing and

faster issue resolution.

The airline has extended agency its agent support hours through Jul and Aug, with local teams available from 7am to 7pm (AEST), and 24/7 global support for imminent travel.

Qantas remains committed to working closely with agency and technology partners to unlock more benefits and deliver greater value to their customers, now and into the future.

Qantas NDC: A new era of distribution has arrived

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NEW DISTRIBUTION
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Collette Australia celebrates team spirit in the Hunter Valley

THE Collette Australia team recently gathered for their annual national conference, held in the stunning surrounds of the Hunter Valley, NSW.

Hosted by Managing Director Karen Deveson, the multi-day event brought together team members from marketing, sales, and reservations across the country for a dynamic blend of learning, connection, and celebration.

The conference focused on deepening brand knowledge, strengthening internal collaboration, and recognising outstanding achievements - including Collette's prestigious NTIA nominations.

"Bringing our national team together is essential," said Karen Deveson.

"We prioritise building strong internal relationships, improving how we work together, and having fun along the way."

"We are super excited about the line-up of new tours for 2026 - there is no better way to learn than in person, in a fabulous destination."

Reflecting Collette's premium positioning, attendees stayed at the Lane Retreat and enjoyed a curated wine tasting experience hosted by Collette's own Nathan Thomas from the reservations team.



BIMBADGEN Winery Estate.

MARISA Galante, Karen Deveson, and Amanda McCann Wilson.



CLAIRE Pillans, Karen Deveson, Samantha Tamba, Nathan Thomas and Nancy Pappalardo.



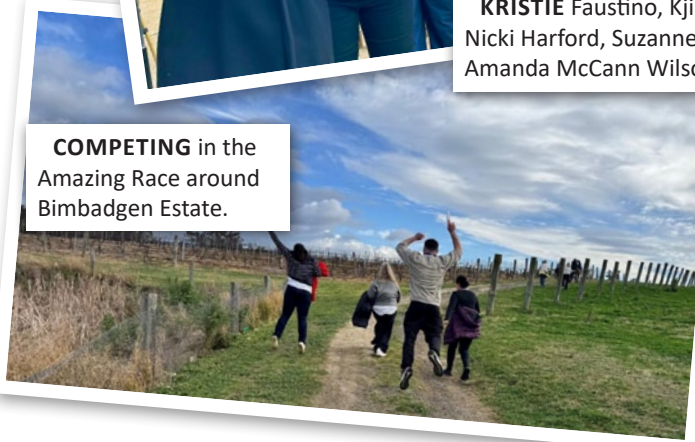
CHEERS to the Collette Australia team.



KRISTIE Faustino, Kjirsten Trundle, Nicki Harford, Suzanne Clements and Amanda McCann Wilson.



SOPHIA Rehman, Kellie Petersen, Patricia Ricciuti, Marianne Santos and Jessica Banovic.



COMPETING in the Amazing Race around Bimbadgen Estate.



THE Collette reservations team.

Noosa on the up

GLOBAL appetite is growing for Noosa's nature-led luxury offerings, with the destination seeing a surge in international visitation and traveller spend.

Noosa has broken a number of records across key global source markets, with New Zealand leading the way.

Kiwis are spending 33% more in the destination year-on-year, while the UK is also setting records, with spend almost doubling since 2019.

In total, the latest data reveals international visitor spend in Noosa has reached a record \$131 million - up 11% on last year, and 35% above pre-COVID levels.

Visitor nights also hit new highs, with more than 1.1 million int'l travellers staying longer - a 20.1% increase on the pre-pandemic total.

Tourism Noosa Chief Executive Officer Sharon Raguse said the results are a testament to the organisation's consistent international strategy.

"We've maintained strong global relationships and trade activity through challenging times, and it's now paying off," she said.

"Noosa's appeal as a premium, nature-led destination with real sustainability credentials continues to grow."

LTC TO RECOGNISE TOP PERFORMERS

A NEW reward and recognition program designed to honour high achievements of its members and partners has been introduced by The Luxury Travel Collection (LTC).

Known as 'Pinnacles', the program will celebrate members and suppliers within its network who exemplify innovation and elite performance in their work over a 12-month period.

Already live and active, Pinnacles will honour both individual and business performance across six categories, culminating with a major celebration in Sep 2026.

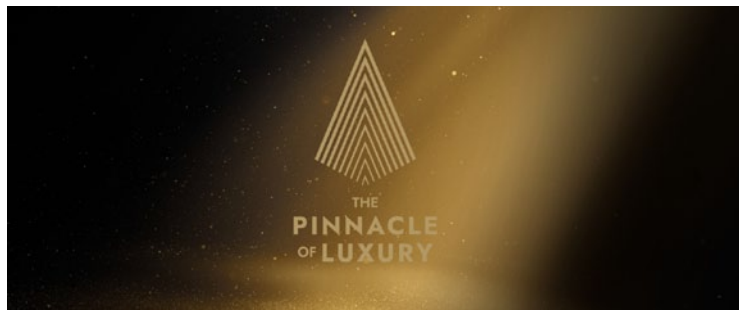
Leading categories include Advisor of the Year and Business of the Year, which will be judged based on total sales with eligible Galleries de Luxe (**TD** 23 Feb 2024) partners prior to 30 Jun 2026.

Products will also be recognised based on total sales transacted by individual agents and businesses across preferred partners.

A separate Pinnacle of Cruise award will recognise an advisor who demonstrates exceptional sales in luxury cruising from the Galleries de Luxe and Cruises de Luxe divisions.

Lastly, one preferred partner that demonstrates outstanding engagement and collaboration with the network will also be honoured for their achievement.

The Luxury Travel Collection General Manager, Nikki Glading, said Pinnacles is "more than an award, it's a legacy" - and that



anticipation is already building.

"It honours not just performance but deep brand alignment, meaningful engagement and the enduring relationships that fuel our success as a luxury house," Glading said.

The Luxury Travel Collection Head of Events, Lisa Wright, said the inaugural program celebrates success in all its forms.

"It acknowledges product sales across our full luxury range,

including dedicated recognition for Galleries de Luxe and Cruises de Luxe, as well as the invaluable contribution of our supporting Pinnacle partners," Wright said.

LTC members are eligible for recognition based both on performance excellence, as well as engagement and partner acknowledgment, which the network said sets a new benchmark in how success within the community is celebrated. *ML*

Resplendent contest brews up major publicity

SRI Lankan hospitality brand Resplendent Ceylon said its recent 'Dilmah's Dream Escape' competition generated the largest entry pool ever seen across Australian morning TV.

The campaign ran in partnership with Dilmah, Sri Lankan Airlines and Channel 7's *Sunrise*, *Weekend Sunrise* and *The Morning Show* to celebrate 40 years of the tea brand in Australia, with more than 60,000 entries received.

The comp saw 20 winners



receive a variety of prizes including three nights at two of Resplendent Ceylon's resorts.

The campaign also saw presenter Kylie Gillies present a special content series on the story behind Dilmah's storied Sri Lankan legacy.

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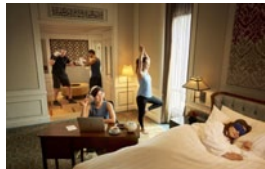
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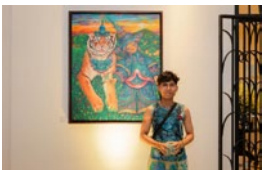
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InterContinental Singapore has partnered with NuCalm, a pioneering neuroscience-based wellness technology. This exclusive collaboration transforms every guestroom into a personalised sanctuary for deep rest, stress recovery, and peak mental performance. A highlight of the partnership is NuCalm's DeepSleep program, which offers a full suite of wellness tracks designed to combat jet lag, boost focus, and promote holistic wellbeing.



Venice's **Hotel Gabrielli** is reopening on 25 Aug, with a new culinary offering set to be one of the highlights of the property. All of Hotel Gabrielli's new dining options have been conceived as open, fluid spaces, designed for all-day dining. One of the hotel's flagship restaurants will be Felice al Gabrielli, offering an a la carte menu with dishes by Executive Chef Mirko Pistorello. Plates will be served in an intimate setting that opens onto an internal courtyard.



Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor has launched a new exhibition of leading Khmer artists, which are being displayed in the property's public spaces. The show, titled *Harmony*, is "a homage to the balance of Cambodia's natural world", featuring works by two artists who were born and raised in Siem Reap. The hotel will also offer private tours of the collection led by resident artists.



Bawah Reserve has introduced its refreshed Ubud Aura Wellness Sanctuary, highlighted by the new Aura Spa. The space now features a traditional sauna, a steam room, a polar room, and an ice plunge pool - treatments that aim to improve circulation, detoxify the body, restore energy, and support mental clarity. The Aura Spa, set within the jungle, is included in the resort's daily rate.



The Datai Langkawi has partnered with LUX Tennis to launch the destination's first-ever padel experience, and elevate its tennis offerings. Guests can hone their skills in both padel and tennis through programs curated by the resort's resident tennis professionals, led by coach David Rodriguez. Guests can enjoy one-on-one or small group coaching sessions.

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Brand USA parks tour



AFTER three big nights meeting more than 200 agents in three cities, Brand USA and United Airlines has turned off the engine and parked its Great USA Road Trip agent roadshow for 2025.

Each event began with a look at America's iconic highways and legendary road trips as part of a 'Beyond the Map' panel, featuring reps from the Arizona Office of Tourism, Visit California, Travel Oregon, and the New York State Division of Tourism.

Elsewhere, agents were able to connect with and learn more from Colorado Tourism Office, Discover Flagstaff, Memphis Tourism, Universal Studios Hollywood, El Monte, Visit Grapevine, Visit Phoenix, Experience Scottsdale and more.

Key learnings included self-drive itineraries and trade training tools courtesy of Brand USA.

Each event then turned the spotlight back on the agents to see how much they had learned, challenging attendees to a pop quiz on US destinations to be in with a chance to win two return economy class tickets to the USA from United Airlines.

"We thoroughly enjoyed engaging with so many agents in Perth, Adelaide and the Gold Coast who share our passion and enthusiasm on offering customers the most comfortable and convenient way to travel to the United States," said United Airlines Regional Sales Manager for Australia, New Zealand and Tahiti, Tim Wallis.

The exhibiting contingent from the United States is pictured on the Gold Coast. *ML*

CX back to Brussels

CATHAY Pacific's non-stop Hong Kong-Brussels flights are back, flying four times weekly between the two destinations.

The services will be operated with CX's A350-900s, which offer fully lie-flat beds in business class and high-speed wi-fi.

CX's return to Brussels and increased frequencies on other routes will see the airline operate almost 100 return flights to Europe during the peak season.

This includes five daily services to London, and daily flights to Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Manchester, Milan, and Paris.

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In the heart of Bristol, this boutique hotel blends music history and modern style with curated art, live performances, and rustic-chic rooms inspired by the legendary 1927 Sessions.

INCLUDES:

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FROM **\$635*** PER PERSON
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The serene Marriott Manor Club offers easy access to nearby Colonial Williamsburg, Historic Jamestowne and the rest of Virginia's Historic Triangle, the Birthplace of America, plus family adventure at Busch Gardens Williamsburg.

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- 3 nights at Marriott's Manor Club at Ford's Colony ★★★★★ in a Two Bedroom Villa
- Complimentary Wi-Fi

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6 DAY CIVIL WAR BATTLEGROUND SELF-DRIVE

Discover the rich history and vibrant culture of Virginia as you journey from Washington through Richmond & the scenic Shenandoah Valley, offering a powerful and unforgettable window in to America's Civil War past.

📍 WASHINGTON D.C. - RICHMOND - SHENANDOAH - GETTYSBURG - WASHINGTON D.C.

INCLUDES:

- 5 nights in hand-picked, comfortable hotel accommodation
- Digital documentation including maps and driving instructions, with suggested stops and things to see
- 6 Day Alamo in a Toyota Corolla or similar

FROM **\$1,915*** PER PERSON
TWIN SHARE

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