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Brush up on the NT

AGENTS can brush up on their knowledge of the Northern Territory, while also getting a chance to score a free trip to the Top End, when they join Tourism NT's upcoming webinar.

For details on the sessions taking place next week, see **p11**.

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Intrepid's biggest buy ever

INTREPID Travel has bolstered its bid to rapidly expand in Europe, acquiring Dutch tour operator Sawadee Reizen from Travelopia for an undisclosed sum (**TD** breaking news).

The purchase will add \$100 million (€60 million) in revenue and an additional 20,000 customers a year, Intrepid said, boosting its EBITDA by an extra \$5 million a year (€3 million).

Headquartered in Amsterdam, Sawadee is an experiential tour operator that delivers around 250 trips a year across 100 countries, under a global team of 180.

The acquisition makes the Netherlands Intrepid's fourth-largest source market after Australia, the US and the UK, and builds on an existing relationship with Sawadee, with the Aussie business working with the company as a DMC since 2011.

"Intrepid aims to be the world's largest vertically integrated experiential travel company and



bringing our two brands together is a major step towards that," Intrepid Chief Executive Officer James Thornton said.

Sawadee will now work towards becoming a B Corp certified brand, alongside Intrepid. **AB**

Pictured: Thornton with Sawadee Managing Director Berend Simons and Intrepid Travel EMEA MD Zina Bencheikh.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of travel news, including our **Luxury page**, plus full pages from:

- Tourism NT
- Tokyo Tourism

Win a trip to Tokyo

TOKYO Tourism is offering the chance to win a getaway to Tokyo, complete with a luxurious stay at Apartment Hotel Mimaru, for advisors who complete its updated program.

Discover more information on how to enrol on the **back page**.

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VIEW DEAL

CTM welcomes Trafalgar

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has expanded its global network in South America, with Colombian corporate travel and events management agency Trafalgar Tours coming aboard.

An established agency within the Colombian market, Trafalgar Tours provides corporate travel management, MICE and tailor-made travel solutions.

"Trafalgar Tours will enhance CTM's service offering to provide exceptional local support for our customers' specific requirements in Colombia," said Rafael Gonzalez, CTM's VP of Agency Partnerships Program.

"Their expertise and knowledge of local market dynamics align with our strategy of delivering best-in-class solutions to our customers," he added.

Trafalgar Tours Director, Santiago Cervera, stated: "We are honoured to join CTM's global agency

network, enabling [us] to enhance our competitiveness and expand both in Colombia and globally.

"With our local expertise and CTM's global reach, we are positioned to deliver exceptional service to CTM's customers that have travel program needs in Colombia," Cervera said. *JM*

Yui takes on GM role

AUSTRALIAN package holiday company, My Holiday, has appointed Paul Yui to be GM.

The move represents a promotion for Yui, who has worked at the Ignite Travel Group brand for over six years, and is now tasked with overseeing its portfolio of over 15 brands, including flagship divisions such as My Fiji and My Queensland.

Yui's appointment follows My Holiday's most successful year to date, with strong sales figures recorded across the year.



Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

PALAU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Qantas and the Palau Visitors Authority, which are hosting a media group on a famil showcasing the island destination.

TODAY guests check out of the dreamy Palau Pacific Resort, before reuniting with ground operator Paddling Palau for a half-day kayaking trip around Koror and Malakal islands.

Attendees will paddle through mangroves and secluded coves in a trip which also doubles as transport to our accommodation for the next four days - COVE Resort Palau.

The night will see guests invited to dinner at The Penthouse, which offers an undeniably authentic taste of Palauan cuisine.



Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

USHUAIA

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is hosting key trade partners aboard *Viking Polaris*.

TO CELEBRATE our final day aboard *Viking Polaris*, the World Cafe put on quite the feast for our farewell lunch.

With a huge charcuterie spread, expansive dessert selection, and cheese and chocolate fondue, along with the usual wide selection of food, many of our group will be spending the afternoon in a food coma before we gather for a final cocktail party.

This evening we will arrive in Ushuaia, where we will have time to explore the small town before disembarking and flying home tomorrow morning.



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Crystal unveils 2027 sailings

FOLLOWING the launch of Crystal's 2027 World Cruise, the brand has now announced the first half of its 2027 itineraries.

Crystal Serenity and *Crystal Symphony* will offer voyages spanning six continents and more than 170 destinations between Jan and Jun 2027.

Guests will enjoy a range of shore excursions, such as an intimate gastronomic experience in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; uncovering wildlife in Alaska; exploring Japan's storied temples; and participating in wine tastings in Chile.

Other highlights include authentic cultural experiences such as village visits and traditional dance performances; exploring the rainforests of Costa Rica; and visiting Kyoto's centuries-old temples.

"Our 2027 itineraries reflect Crystal's commitment to deliver meaningful travel experiences



across the globe," said Mario Parodi, Vice President of Itinerary Planning and Port & Fuel Operations for Crystal.

"Every voyage has been designed to allow our guests to connect deeply with history, culture and nature." *JM*

V Travel roadshow

AGENTS are encouraged to register for V Travel Network and Fez Travel Turkiye's upcoming roadshow, which is taking place across six cities in Mar and Apr.

Attendees will have a chance to win a spot on a famil to Turkiye - places are filling up fast, so register **HERE** today.

Avalon marks big Jan

AVALON Waterways posted a record-breaking month of sales in Jan, with 32% more bookings in Australia and a 21% increase in spend compared to last year.

To meet demand, the river operator has added six sailings, equating to 33% more capacity.

Internationally, the Globus family of brands-owned business experienced a jump in bookings by more than 50%, with France being the top destination for pax.

Sister brands Cosmos and Globus also reported growth, with booking value up 42% and 27% respectively, versus the same period last year.

"The 11- to 14-day cruises are again proving popular for Australian travellers," said Chris Fundell, Head of Marketing Asia Pacific at Globus family of brands.

Pax can save up to \$6,000 per couple with Avalon Waterways, up to \$1,000 per couple with Globus and up to \$250 per person with Cosmos until 28 Feb.

Nth Qld still open

IT IS still safe for travellers to visit Cairns, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has assured *Travel Daily*, as the state's northern region continues to be affected by severe flooding.

"Cairns and Tropical North Queensland is open for visitors with Cairns Airport and key attractions, experiences and hotels not affected by the high levels of rainfall over the past week," the tourism body said.

The heavy rainfall is mostly affecting destinations farther south, including Cardwell, Ingham and Townsville, cutting access on the Bruce Highway.

TTNQ said rain is expected to ease later this week.

MEANWHILE, TD has received confirmation from Townsville Enterprise that Townsville Airport has reopened this week and is fully operational, after the severe weather conditions forced the hub's closure between 12.30pm 02 Feb and 5.30am the next day.



In Celebration of Australia Day, invite your clients to enjoy a limited time offer of **US\$500 Shipboard Credit*** when you book before 7 February.

In addition they will also receive a **FREE 2-Category Suite Upgrade*** plus up to **40% off** select 2025 and 2026 sailings when they book before 28 February.



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Thomson steps up

ACCOMMODATION specialist Stuba has appointed Alisha Thomson (**pictured**) to the position of Senior BDM.

With nearly two decades of travel industry experience, Thomson was most recently a BDM for Western Australia and South Australia.

"Alisha's dedication and industry knowledge have been instrumental in Stuba's continued success," said Rebecca Day, Head of Sales APAC.

Thomson is currently recruiting for a BDM in SA, while she also steers growth and manages relationships in WA.



Pelican flies to GC

FLYPELICAN will run a new service from Newcastle to Gold Coast Airport from 24 Mar.

The flights will operate on Mon, Wed, Thu and Fri, leaving at 7am and arriving within 1.5 hours, with a 30-minute turnaround before the return flight.

The service will take place on board a Jetstream 32 aircraft with a capacity for 19 pax, and offering free checked baggage allowance.

"FlyPelican is thrilled to expand our network, with our focus on getting local people where they need to go," FlyPelican CEO Marty Hawley said.

"We are now filling a key gap for travellers to and from the Gold Coast that are in need of a morning departure."

Newcastle Airport Interim CEO Andrew Warrender also noted that the morning departure times are ideal for business travellers and align with the business' aim to improve connectivity for the Hunter region.

WA leases to unlock tourism

TOURISM operators with lease agreements signed for land on the Abrolhos Islands in Western Australia have been given a welcome boost, with newly inked deals providing a raft of fresh revenue opportunities.

The latest leases relate to North Island, the Wallabi Group, Easter Group, and the Southern Group of islands, allowing for new eco-tourism ventures to get underway, including the opportunity for overnight stays and access to infrastructure such as jetties and moorings.

WA Tourism Minister Rita Saffioti said, "We know the Houtman Abrolhos Islands are so popular for local and out-of-state visitors, and making it more accessible and bringing on more tourism opportunities is fantastic - particularly for local industry".

The announcement is in addition to the previously announced \$8.1 million in



upgrades to infrastructure, including a new public jetty, rest area for tourists, tour operators on Rat Island, & public moorings.

MEANWHILE, regional airports in WA have not been left behind, with State Government allocating \$3.6 million in funding to be shared amongst 12 hubs as part of the latest round of grants through the Regional Airports Development Scheme.

The airports have received grants of between \$34,079 to \$650,000 for important works ranging from lighting upgrades to runway resurfacing.

Since 2009, more than \$56 million of funding has been allocated via the scheme. *DF*

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ALBATROSS TOURS





NCLH schools ittravel

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) recently hosted ittravel agents from NSW on a training day at its Sydney office.

The group was given an immersive WAVE season brand experience, with the session led by Angela Middleton, NCL's Director of Field Sales AU/NZ.

Participants gained in-depth insights into each of the cruise company's brands: Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Oceania Cruises, and Norwegian Cruise Line.

The day also included detailed presentations on the latest special offers from each brand, followed by a casual lunch and a fun trivia session.



Artist to lead Red Centre tour

BRUCE Munro, the globally renowned artist behind the Light-Towers installation at Discovery Resorts - King Canyon, will host an exclusive departure of APT's seven-day 'Central Australia Escape' on 18 Feb.

The itinerary will see Munro retrace steps from his first visit to the Red Centre more than 30 years ago, as he gives guests exclusive insights into his art installations, as well as his deep connection to Australia.

Munro will guide the tour through the Northern Territory from Uluru to Alice Springs, exploring the Field of Light, listening to Indigenous Dreamtime stories, and walking along the rim of the Kings Canyon.

"We're privileged to have Bruce Munro host our guests and give them exclusive insight behind his art installations, as well as his deep connection to Australia," said Cher Lontok, Head of Product



& Operations at APT.

The acclaimed artist's Light-Towers installation continues to captivate visitors, with three ticketed sessions available, including a premium sunset viewing, which includes native-inspired canapes and beverages.

"Our first trip was memorable because the road was unmade and we wondered if we had been sent on a wild goose chase, but thankfully it was just as it had been described," Munro recalled.

"I was astounded to see fossils of a seabed at the top of the gorge - the notion that Australia was under the sea was and still is mind blowing."

Find out more about the special departure **HERE**. JM



Window Seat

HERE is a seriously spicy travel story for you - South Korea's Incheon International Airport has revealed it confiscated a mouth-watering 10.7 tonnes of kimchi last year.

The large volume of contraband is due to strict liquid restrictions on carry-on bags in South Korea, with kimchi often soaked in spicy sauce and stored in bottles.

South Korea takes air safety more seriously than most, with figures also showing in 2023 that airport officials confiscated 10.5 tonnes of traditional fermented sauces.

Last year, Korean Air also said it would no longer serve noodles in economy on long-haul flights, citing the risk of burns amid rising turbulence.

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Jetstar agrees to trial better comms

JETSTAR is trialling an enhanced communications process for travellers with disabilities in the wake of a high-profile complaint against the budget carrier.

In a joint statement released today with complainant Emma Bennison (**pictured**), Jetstar said it has improved its communications at Australian domestic airports in the event that customers are unable to locate staff for help.

Bennison is vision-impaired, and on 20 Feb last year was left in a seated waiting area after disembarking at Melbourne Airport for a significant period of time, leaving her distressed and substantially delayed.

Jetstar has since issued an apology for the impact the experience had on Bennison, conceding a staff member made a mistake in not assisting in a timely way, exacerbated by building works at Melbourne Airport.

In response to the incident,



Jetstar has launched a new escalation process to aid customers with disabilities at all Australian domestic airports.

The Qantas subsidiary noted that customers can now contact Jetstar on 131 538, or use the Livechat feature at www.jetstar.com/au/en/contact-us to request urgent assistance.

Customers need to provide their location in the airport and contact details, with Jetstar to then triage the request and reach out directly to Jetstar airport staff to provide the assistance required.

"I'm really pleased Jetstar has listened to my feedback and is taking active steps to make

its services more accessible," Bennison said.

"It seems like a small change but it will make Jetstar an Australian industry leader and set the standard for other airlines to follow," she added.

When Bennison was left stranded at the airport last year, it was a call to her travel agent that eventually brought the help she required.

"[My travel agent] called the airport, and the airport then called the airline," she said.

Bennison was also keen to point out that her experience was not localised to Jetstar.

"People with a disability are treated poorly across the board when they travel by air," she said.

"Every time I go to an airport, I brace myself for something to go wrong, and I leave extra time to deal with problems with my booking or requests, which makes travel days long & exhausting." **AB**

Sell three & go free

TRUTRAVELS has launched its 'Book 3, Go For Free' incentive, offering agents a free spot on one of the youth travel specialist's tours when they book three clients on any of its itineraries.

"This incentive is a celebration of our travel agent partners and the amazing work they do in sending young adventurers on life-changing journeys," said James Lavin, Head of Commercial and Business Development.

The incentive period runs from 28 Jan-30 Mar, with the top three sellers to receive a voucher to use for a tour of their choice, along with free flights.

There will also be weekly prizes, with top-selling teams receiving goodies to "fill up their store's fridge" - learn more **HERE**.



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Tough Dec for Air NZ

AIR New Zealand has recorded soft Dec figures compared to the same period the year prior, with reduced aircraft availability put forward as one of the reasons for the poorer results.

Group capacity was down 1.2% YoY, while the carrier's long- and short-haul available seat kilometres both dropped by 3.8% and 1.1% respectively.

YTD underlying revenue per available seat kilometre also declined for long (-0.2%) and short-haul flights (-2.1%).

The airline suggested that some Asian routes had notched up improved yields in the current financial year, but increased competition in Q1 for North America had negative impacts.

Air New Zealand will announce interim results on 20 Feb.

BNE wants aviation top-up



BRISBANE Airport is hopeful the Queensland Government will continue its support for the Attracting Aviation Fund, which to date has secured more than 30 new or returned routes into the state's international airports since Feb 2022 (*TD* 11 Feb 2022).

Executive General Manager Aviation Ryan Both told *Travel Daily* that Brisbane Airport had been a major beneficiary of the fund, and he is now hoping the \$200m of reserves will be added.

"We're well through that journey now, in the first iteration of that fund, it's been highly successful, and we're looking forward to the government making more announcements soon, hopefully for a continuation of that support," he said.

"It has given carriers a lot of confidence to invest in Queensland, and they know that the government, the tourism industry, and the airport are all behind it."

Speaking on the sidelines of the launch of the 'Palau Paradise Express' from Brisbane to Koror (*TD* 03 Feb), Both also revealed more international flights are on BNE's wish list for the future.

"If we can have more frequencies to Europe, connecting the regions through Doha - that will be fantastic," Both explained.

"We would love to see a few more places reconnected in Southeast Asia, and we'd love to see flights from India.

"There's still many dots on the map to go after, we've got a few routes that we still don't have back since the pandemic."

Connecting passengers is also key to Brisbane's prosperity, Both added, with routes like Palau, which is only reachable on a direct flight from Australia from BNE, key to this strategy.

"We've seen a number of passengers connecting domestically to go internationally to where they want to fly, drop significantly since we've launched destinations like Palau, Honiara, Christchurch, Queenstown, and Dallas," he added. *MS*

Both is **pictured** at the launch with President of Palau Surangel Whipps Jr.

Visit the USA soon

THE Visit USA Expos 2025 are just two weeks away, kicking off in Sydney on 17 Feb.

This year, the roadshow will boast a new marketplace-style format, bringing together more than 60 exhibitors and range of fun activities for attending trade, including hot sauce tasting.

Melbourne (20 Feb) & Brisbane (18 Feb) are also host cities.

Cheap WA flights

THE Western Australian Government has announced discounted airfares to Geraldton, with the aim of encouraging visitors to the region's annual event, the Shore Leave Festival.

Supported by the state's Regional Airfare Zone Cap scheme, which has just received a \$4 million funding boost, Nexus Airlines will offer 300 discounted one-way airfares between Perth and Geraldton, exclusively for Shore Leave attendees.

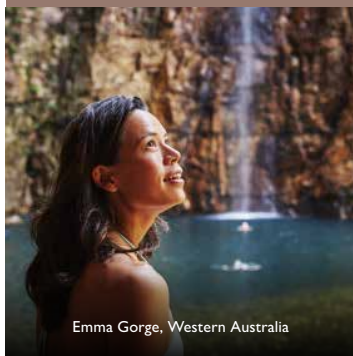
The multi-day event takes place from 23-27 Apr, and attracts tens of thousands of attendees each year who generate millions for the local economy.

Tickets to the festival go on sale 13 Feb, and come with a booking code to access the \$150 one-way airfares (until sold out).



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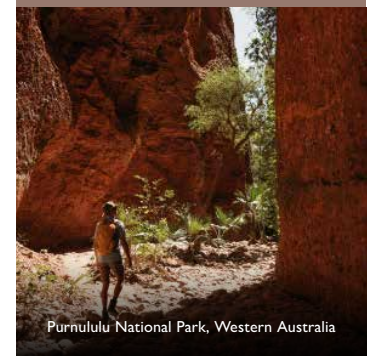


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Purnululu National Park, Western Australia

A&K TO OPEN LUXURY WILDERNESS RESORT IN WA

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has announced plans for its first luxury wilderness lodge in APAC, offering guests an authentic First Nations experience in WA.

Created in close collaboration with the Billingjul Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), the new resort within the UNESCO-listed World Heritage site, Purnululu National Park, will open in 2027-2028.

According to A&K's Senior Vice President APAC Graham Wood, when the team first saw the park, they were "blown away" by the natural beauty of the region.

The BAC also holds a living land lease in the area, allowing the community to traverse the area, which currently holds 300-400 First Nations works of art.

"For me, when you combine the natural beauty of the park, alongside what I think will



be a fantastic and authentic First Nations experience, it just delivers a whole package experience for the international luxury traveller," Wood told **TD**.

Wood hopes that all guides at the resort will be trained by the BAC in conjunction with A&K, and ideally, come from the local area.

There are also plans underway to offer the local Indigenous people opportunities to work in hospitality within the resort, too.

"Tourism has to be sustainable and for it to be sustainable, the

local communities have to benefit from it," he explained.

"To be 100% honest, if we didn't have this relationship with the BAC, we probably wouldn't have proceeded with [the project], as wonderful as the Bungle Bungles and the park is."

Each of the 16 tents within the resort will feature inside and outdoor showers, and will offer views of the Bungle Bungles.

Guests will also be able to see the stars while lying in bed.

Other features include a

storytelling area, restaurant, bar, pool and outdoor firepit.

"One thing we love is dinners under the stars and drinks around the campfire - it's a beautiful way to end the day," Wood enthused.

A&K currently has wilderness lodges all around the world, including Africa (pictured), Asia and South America.

"Luxury means different things for different people, where A&K excels is we provide luxury authentic experiences in wilderness locations," Wood said.

"They're hard to get to - and they should be - because the experiences we have out there are not for the mass market.

"[Our wilderness lodges] are geared to providing people with a real sense of place and an experience and I think Purnululu ticks a lot of those boxes." *JHM*

Exploring the Med

EXPLORA Journeys has launched more itineraries in the Mediterranean for 2025.

Guests can celebrate Easter as part of Explora's Rituals & Traditions series on board *Explora I*, departing from Barcelona in Apr, visiting destinations like Tunisia, Sicily, Casablanca, Naples, Crete, Athens, and Malta.

Explora has also released its Spring Med sailing aboard *Explora II*, visiting Spain, Morocco, Greece, and more.

Virtuoso announces finalists for its upcoming regional awards

VIRTUOSO has unveiled the finalists for its 2025 Australia & New Zealand Member and Partner Awards, set to take place at a gala dinner during the luxury network's Forum event in Perth from 24-26 Feb.

There are 18 award categories this year, including 'Most Engaged Member', 'Highest Annual Growth Member', 'Top Producing Member' and more.

MTA - Mobile Travel Agents has appeared in five categories, while Travel Associates,



Goldman Travel Corporation, Abercrombie & Kent, Silversea, and Savenio have also been named as finalists in more than one category.

"We are thrilled to announce the finalists for the 2025 Virtuoso Australia & New

Zealand Member and Partner Awards," said Greg Treasure, Virtuoso's General Manager Australia & New Zealand.

"We eagerly anticipate revealing the winners at our Forum in Perth this month.

"These awards showcase the best of the best, highlight the outstanding calibre and performance that our network is renowned for."

Finalists are based on partner-reported data collected between 01 Oct 2023 to 30 Sep 2024. *JM*

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Viking's latest Antarctic Explorers

OVER the past two weeks, Viking has hosted key trade partners aboard *Viking Polaris* on its 'Antarctic Explorer' itinerary. Throughout the 13-day journey, the group has experienced every aspect on offer on a Viking expedition cruise while exploring the Antarctic peninsula. The perfect blend of expedition and Nordic luxury, *Viking Polaris* provided a relaxing home for the exciting adventure and the ultimate viewing platform

from which to take in the breathtaking landscape and beautiful wildlife.

The group spotted whales from their very first day on board, a taster of the wildlife interactions that would follow.

Utilising Viking's expedition equipment, guests on board participated in shore landings and Zodiac excursions amongst the dramatic glaciers and icebergs, visiting colonies of gentoo penguins, and Antarctic fur seals.

Adventuring out on the special operations boats, humpback whales were spotted just metres away from the vessel, with the group also enjoying kayaking amongst ice flows.

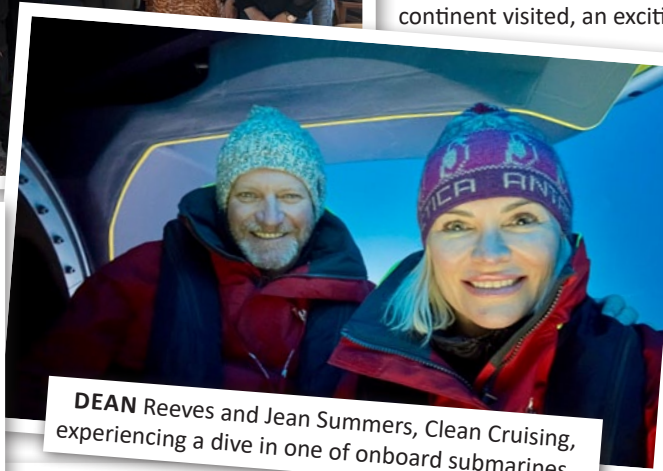
For many of the group, Antarctica marked their seventh continent visited, an exciting achievement to tick off.



THE whole group celebrating the trip with a final cocktail party in The Hide.



ONE of many Zodiac expeditions, each one as incredible as the next.



DEAN Reeves and Jean Summers, Clean Cruising, experiencing a dive in one of onboard submarines.



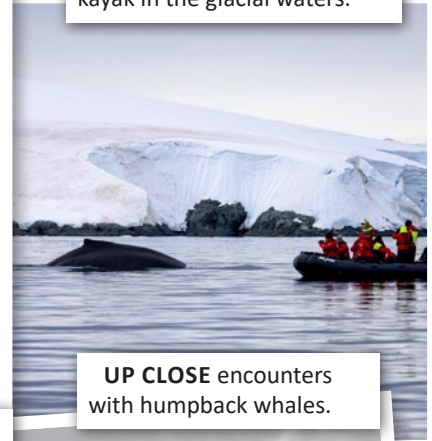
ITALKTRAVEL The Junction's Karen Van Huisstede, ready to kayak in the glacial waters.



CHECKING out the special operations boat loading ramp on a tour of the Hangar.



ENJOYING an open-air BBQ lunch on Deck 6, taking in the views of Chiriguano Bay.



UP CLOSE encounters with humpback whales.



MICHELLE and Grant Everson, Jamison Travel, ready for action.



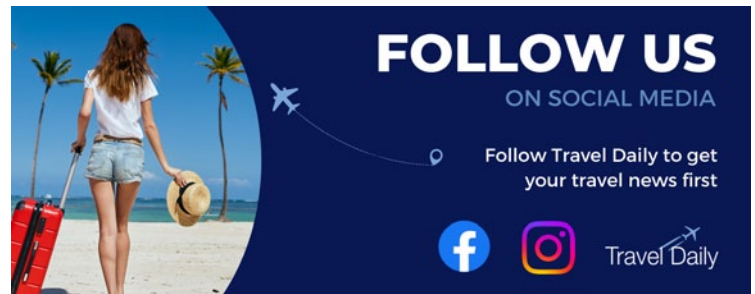
TAKING in the windy and wonderful view.



VIKING'S Toby lemma with some Antarctic ice.



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Little Valley Summerhouse has opened in the remote Wollombi Valley, which is nestled in the 'wild side' of the NSW Hunter Valley. The new retreat is a modern, stylish home with open-plan living, surrounded by a 50-acre working alpaca farm and native bushland. The property operates entirely off-grid, and features floor-to-ceiling windows that bath the interior in natural light, a French cast-iron fireplace, and 100% alpaca wool duvets.



Marriott International brand, Autograph Collection Hotels, has announced its debut in Phuket. Situated on the secluded Cape Panwa peninsula, **Veranda Resort Phuket, Autograph Collection** overlooks the Andaman Sea and is just a short distance from Phuket's Old Town. The hotel offers 159 guestrooms, suites and pool villas, featuring private terraces, natural material finishes, and custom pieces by local artists.



Manly Pacific Hotel has introduced a new all-day dining venue, led by Sydney restaurateurs Alessandro and Anna Pavoni. Cibaria Manly offers diners a sharing-style menu featuring a variety of Italian dishes, created from open kitchens dotted throughout the beachfront restaurant. The new venue also comprises a rooftop terrazzo events space, a gelato shop, and a cocktail bar, and can seat 130 indoors, with outside seating also available.



Part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio, **Aloft Bangkok Sukhumvit 11** has reopened following a significant transformation. The property sports an eye-catching, vibrant new look, with guests able to enjoy the newly enhanced signature wxyz bar, a revamped lobby, a brand-new meeting room, and updated guestrooms featuring a loft-style aesthetic and bold graffiti art.



The St. Regis Downtown Dubai has unveiled a reimagined dining space overlooking the canal waterfront, in collaboration with porcelain brand Ginori 1735. The Ginori Terrace features select pieces from Ginori 1735's Domus home decor collection, creating an atmosphere of luxury and elegance, and offers an all-day Italian-inspired menu, and an afternoon tea experience.

Accor adds five stars to Gladstone



ACCOR has announced the opening of Peppers Gladstone, signalling the only new-build hotel to open in the region in over a decade, and the first five-star accommodation.

The experiential 32-room hotel adjoins the existing Mantra Gladstone at the Yaralla Sports Club, operating as a dual-branded hotel concept.

Situated on Capricorn Coast and just minutes from the CBD, the new property offers a range of accommodation options, from king studio rooms to superior two bedroom apartments.

All guestrooms featured fully equipped kitchens, king-sized beds, large TVs with Chromecast capabilities, and a complimentary non-alcoholic mini bar.

Guests can enjoy access to the hotel's heated outdoor swimming pool, the eight-seater cinema room, gym, wi-fi, undercover park, and two onsite restaurants.

"The debut of Peppers Gladstone is a proud moment for Accor as it brings a new level of hospitality to Central Queensland," said Accor Pacific COO PM&E, Adrian Williams.

"This hotel is a unique addition to our premium brand portfolio

and exemplifies our commitment to creating extraordinary guest experiences, blending Peppers' signature style with the charm of Gladstone," he added.

The new-build joins a network of more than 20 Peppers retreats, resorts, and hotels across Australia, NZ and Indonesia.

To celebrate its opening, Peppers Gladstone is offering savings of 15%, with rates starting from \$200 per night. *JM*

A&K's smaller Italy

ABERCROMBIE & Kent has launched three new small group journeys, allowing guests to immerse themselves in Italy in comfort and style.

An eight-day trip to Venice and the Dolomites in Sep is available, combining the old-world charm of Italy with its natural wonders.

Southern Italy can also be explored on a 12-day tour showcasing the Amalfi Coast visiting Sicily, Puglia and Sorrento, with departures taking place between May and Oct.

Lastly, there is also an 11-day tour in Oct, focusing on Northern Italy, featuring the Cinque Terre, Liguria and beyond.

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