# Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 9th July 2025



YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR SCHEDULE **NEVER MISS A MOMENT** THAT matters

#### Today's issue of TD

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

- Tourism LA/LAX Airport
- The 25th btTB Conference

#### Lounge around in LA

LOS Angeles is full of new and cool opportunities, from whiskey to luxury yachts, find out the full picture about what is happening on page seven.

#### Dive deep with btTB

**GET** the inside track on travel at the 25th annual btTB conference, gala dinner, and awards.

Find out more about the program and speakers on p8.

#### Ama gonna win

AGENTS can now join AmaWaterways for an exclusive webinar as the brand explores how best to sell Europe's iconic river journeys, share offers, and unveil a brand-new incentive that's set to make waves.

Register to attend one of two sessions taking place on 17 Jul by clicking **HERE** and be in the running to win a \$100 gift card.

#### Emerald Raiya launch

**EMERALD** Cruises has unveiled the inaugural Mediterranean itineraries for its next generation superyacht Emerald Raiya.

The new season will introduce 25 new Mediterranean voyages.

# Fee for service surges

**TRAVEL** advisors charging fees for services is becoming a global standard, according to a study released by the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) this week.

The reported stated the evolving

#### Disputes alarming rise

TRAVEL providers need to prepare for an "alarming rise" in payment disputes, fuelled by a combination of high demand and escalating service disruptions.

The global warning comes from dispute resolution company Chargebacks911, which said that heightened geopolitical tension and power outrages intersecting with a surge in international tourism numbers is a bad recipe for travel disputes.

"We see an annual pattern where consumer expectations collide with overstretched systems, and this year, that's being amplified by real-world disruptions that business can no longer afford to ignore," Chargebacks911 cautioned.

To mitigate disputes, the company has called on airlines to improve staff training to manage delays, create more real-time tools to report on geopolitical disruptions, and develop a chargeback alert system to identify and resolve disputes before they escalate.

Integrated communication between OTAs and service providers was also suggested.



appetite of travellers who are seeking more complex itineraries, upfront pricing and 24/7 support means they are now more willing than ever to pay a fee.

"[Travellers] want advisors who can dedicate their full expertise to creating the perfect trip, and professional fees enable advisors to be true consultants, not just instruction-takers," said WTAAA Executive Director Otto de Vries.

While Australia was not included in the study, New Zealand agents are leading the world in charging fees, with 95% of agencies adopting the model.

Across the Tasman, this has driven profit margins from under 5% on commission-only bookings to between 12-20%. AB

#### MH A330neo boost

MALAYSIA Airlines' parent company has exercised its right to purchase an extra 20 A330neos, which it said would be used to enhance connectivity across key markets like Australasia.

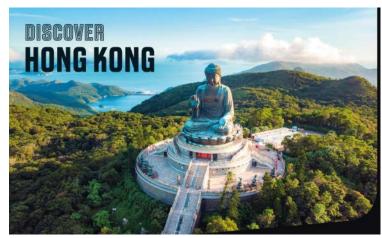
Deliveries from the latest order will join MH's network between 2029 and 2031, and builds on Malaysia Aviation Group's initial commitment for 20 A330neo aircraft in 2022, with the total order book now standing at 40.

#### **EDI lifts liquid ban**

**EDINBURGH** Airport is the first hub in Scotland to lift the 100ml rule for liquids being carried inside hand luggage.

Travellers can now take containers of up to two litres through security, however metal water bottles will still need to be emptied before boarding.

The change has been made possible through a £24 million investment in smart scanners.





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# We need to be like Changi

**INTEGRATING** biometric ID boarding and facial recognition technology in Australia has the potential to reduce check-in and boarding times by up to 30%. according to Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) Chief Experience Officer John Morhous (pictured).

The Journey Pass system, currently under development by the International Civil Aviation Organization, aims to replace traditional boarding passes and check-in procedures with the smart technology.

"[Journey Pass in Australia]

#### **Intrepid Golden Tix**

**AGENTS** can win a place on an Intrepid trip as part of a new 'Golden Ticket' incentive launched by the tour operator, which runs until 31 Jul.

Celebrating the release of its new global brochure, Intrepid has placed one golden ticket inside three random copies of the brochure, which can be ordered via the Intrepid agent hub or viewed as a digital download.

Intrepid's new international brochure features 20 pages of the company's most popular and top-selling trip styles and destinations, along with tools agents can use to help match their clients to the right trip.

Opportunities to win an Intrepid Comfort or Original trip can also be won by agents sharing a photo of themselves with the new brochure on social media.



would not just be a win for convenience, but a stride towards cost reduction for airports and airlines," Morhous argued.

"By eliminating manual processing and long queues, air travel becomes more seamless and stress-free for passengers."

The FCTG exec pointed to the benefits being experienced by pax in Changi Airport, where the average clearance time per traveller has reduced by 60%. AB

#### Rail not always cheap

TRAVELLING by rail in France is only cheaper than flying when there is a direct rail link, a new report from French consumer advocacy group UFC-Que Choisir has found.

The study suggested the price of train tickets is 40% less expensive than airfares when direct rail connections are available, but when travellers are forced to undertake at least one transfer, trips become at least 10% more expensive than flying.

France has been at the forefront of encouraging rail trips in exchange for flights to lower travel emissions, banning several flights from Paris to places like Lyon and Bordeaux.



# AC Hotels bound for the GC



**MARRIOTT** International will introduce its AC Hotels brand to the Gold Coast, transforming an existing property and reopening in the middle of 2026.

Currently operating as Vibe Gold Coast, the rebrand will see the property become Australia's second AC Hotels location alongside AC Melbourne.

The signing also means another of Marriott's upscale brands will join a lengthy pipeline on the Gold Coast, with Sheraton, JW Marriott, St Regis, The Luxury Collection and The Ritz-Carlton all either open or under development and opening soon.

A major hotel renovation has now been scheduled to begin later this year to roll out the upscale lifestyle brand's hallmarks to the property, which backs onto the Nerang River (pictured).

Once complete, the property will feature 202 rooms, an all-day restaurant, AC Lounge and Bar, outdoor swimming pool, fitness

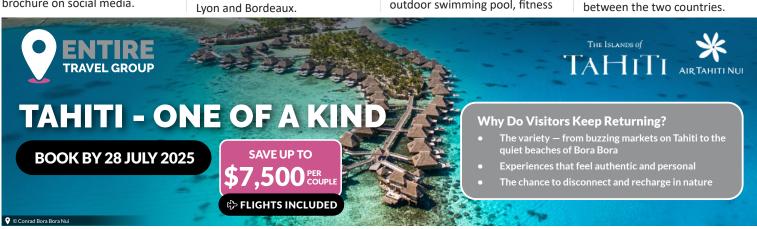
centre and 120-person meeting and function space.

"Importantly, AC Hotel Gold Coast will offer our loyal guests, particularly our 228 million Marriott Bonvoy members, a new price point and product offering," said Marriott International Vice President Hotel Development. Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific, Richard Crawford. ML

#### THL escapes tariffs

**MOTORHOME** rental brand THL has confirmed sales of its vehicles between Canada and the USA will be free of US President Donald Trump's tariffs.

In a statement posted to the ASX yesterday, THL said it is benefiting from an exemption from both the US and Canadian governments, with the latter issuing "an indefinite, broad remission" for the types of recreational vehicles it trades





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AVIATION WEEK



### Window Seat

**SO BAD** is the issue of oversized baggage in the United Kingdom that easyJet has reportedly been paying airport staff bonuses to spot the offending items.

Employees working for Swissport, a company that operates passenger gates at several British airports, are eligible to receive £1.20 for every bag spotted, according to a leaked email to staff.

The unusual incentive scheme is quietly in operation at a range of airports, including Glasgow, Birmingham, Jersey and Newcastle.

For any staff concerned about failing to meet targets, "internal tracking will be used to identify opportunities for further support and training for individual agents, but will not be used negatively".

Separately, it has also emerged that ground handlers employed by DHL Supply Chain at Gatwick, Bristol and Manchester airports are also paid for spotting easyJet bags that don't fit requirements.

The report follows pax in Europe being allowed to carry on a capped number of bags



# Only the best for Brissy



**BRISBANE** and Auckland business flyers on American Airlines are in for a treat, with the US carrier confirming the expansion of its premium flagship suite on those routes soon.

Auckland will see the suites available on its daily services from Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) from 05 Jan to 28 Mar next year, while Brisbane will have availability earlier, from 25 Oct to 28 Mar.

The Flagship Suites feature

private doors, large HD screens, wireless device charging and chaise lounge-style seating that is heavily adjustable.

Passengers will also receive a mattress pad and pyjamas plus a throw blanket and a memory foam lumbar pillow.

American Airlines is the only carrier to connect DFW to Brisbane and Auckland, with the flights being two of the carrier's longest routes on its network.

Passengers will fly on American's Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner featuring 51 Flagship Suites plus premium economy. *DF* 

# Legoland in China

**SHANGHAI** is now home to China's first Legoland theme park and resort, with the doors to the new attraction opening this week.

Located in Fengjing Town in the Jinshan District, the new Legoland is the brand's 10th resort worldwide and its largest, with 75 interactive rides, shows and games over eight zones.

The new park debuts the Brick Street and Bricktopia concepts, which will feature Lego models of famous Shanghai landmarks.

#### Intrepid grows TTV

**FY25** has been a prosperous one for Intrepid, with the business announcing a 21% increase on TTV YoY and a 14% increase in pax numbers across Australia and New Zealand.

The top selling region for Jun was South America, followed by North Africa, while the top-selling country was Morocco.

#### **ILTM** inside out

**FOR** the first time, ILTM Africa will cater to both inbound and outbound luxury travel markets.

The 2026 expo, to be held in Cape Town, will offer curated Middle Eastern products for African buyers while continuing to showcase premium inbound experiences to agents.

African outbound luxury travel spending is likely to hit US\$1.6 billion in 2026.

#### Wendy a trailblazer

**THE** Growth 500 Business Leader Awards has singled out Wendy Wu Tours founder Wendy Wu for her contribution to the travel industry.

At a ceremony in London which also celebrated the achievements of Victoria Beckham and Elizabeth Murdoch, Wu was bestowed with the accolade of Female Trailblazer of the Year before a packed crowd at London's Sky Garden.

"This award is not just a personal honour, it's recognition of every team member, every traveller and every bold idea that's brought Wendy Wu Tours to life," Wu commented.

"I'm proud of what we've built together and even more excited for what lies ahead."







# Qantas cleaning up data

**QANTAS** has begun emailing customers affected by last week's data breach (TD 02 Jul) with details of the personal information hackers may have accessed along with advice and support.

An early forensic analysis of data housed in the system that was accessed found that the compromised data was not enough to gain access to frequent flyer accounts, Qantas said. In total, 5.7 million unique



**WEB** Travel Group non-executive Director Rachel Wiseman has bought into the company, acquiring 11,400 shares in an onmarket transaction.

According to an ASX filing, Wiseman spent \$50,160 through a personal superannuation investment vehicle for the trade.

Wiseman is currently CEO of Member Capital at the NRMA.



customers' data was held in the system, however Qantas reconfirmed no credit card details, passport data or personal financial details were stolen.

Further, there is currently no evidence any of the data has been released on the dark web.

Records that were accessed contained a range of information from names, email addresses, frequent flyer number, with a small set also including points and status credit balances.

A smaller set also had details. such as addresses, dates of birth, phone numbers, genders and meal preferences.

Qantas is advising customers to remain alert to suspicious emails, messages and phone calls. ML



**EVA AIR** 

Travel Daily Training Academy

#### Win an NCL cruise

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line will later this month kick off a sixweek virtual campaign challenging agents to engage with weekly activities to win one of two cabins on a 2026 sailing.

Beginning 14 Jul, the 'Experience More of the World with NCL' promotion features a series of fun, interactive weekly quizzes on key destinations.

Agents will unlock a stamp in a virtual passport on completion, with all six stamps needed to be in the running for the major prize.

Each week's activity will begin with a short Facebook Live session hosted by Director Sales AU/NZ Angela Middleton, who will spotlight the featured destination for the week and provide a special code word.

Entry of this code word will also unlock 200 Partners First Rewards points each week.

The major prize will be drawn from eligible entries on 29 Aug. **CLICK HERE** to register.

#### eRoam signs Limn

TRAVEL booking portal eRoam has welcomed Isabel Limn as its new Regional Sales Manager.

Holding more than a decade of experience in travel, Limn was most recently in sales roles at Intrepid Travel and Travelport.

eRoam's Global Head of Commercial, Maxine Wiggs, said Limn's deep understanding of travel tech will make her a major asset to the team.

## Casa Angelina offer

**BOUTIQUE** Italian resort Casa Angelina has launched a special 20th birthday offer for guests staying a minimum of two nights from 15 Jul to 31 Oct.

Bookings for all room types made before 15 Sep will earn a 10% discount.

The Amalfi Coast property is well known to Australian travellers, frequently playing host to visitors exploring the idyllic region in the country's south.









luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 9th July 2025

#### Britain on the rails

BRITAIN'S first luxury sleeper train will welcome its inaugural passengers on 21 Jul, when it makes its maiden journey from London Victoria Station (*TD* 20 Nov 2024).

The Britannic Explorer, a Belmond train, will offer three-night itineraries to Britain's most iconic regions, including Cornwall, the Lake District, and Wales.

With a design that blends tradition and luxury, the train features 18 cabins, including three grand suites, elegant restaurant cars, and an onboard spa.

Each journey includes a program of off-board experiences, including scenic valley hikes, lavender farm visits, wood-fired saunas, art classes, and yoga by the sea.

# AUSSIES LEADING THE LUXURY PACK

AFFLUENT travellers are spending more and expecting more, with 72% planning to boost their outlay on high-end travel in the coming year, according to new research from The Luxury Group by Marriott.

The Intentional Traveler report, which surveyed 1,750 highnet-worth travellers across the Asia Pacific region, found that travellers in Australia (85%) have the strongest intent to invest more in premium experiences.

Among all travel types, family travel stood out as the top priority for spending, with 47% of premium travellers most willing to splurge when journeying with their immediate families.

Wealthy travellers are prioritising wellness experiences that go beyond traditional spa retreats, with 90% citing wellness



as a key factor in their booking decisions, up from 80% last year.

Additionally, nature-driven experiences are emerging as a pillar of luxury travel, with 92% of respondents saying being close to nature is a key travel priority.

Rural escapes are gaining traction in particular, with 28% of respondents planning a countryside getaway - up from 19% last year - while 30% are booking wildlife safaris.

When it comes to luxury travel destinations, 93% of high-networth travellers in the region prefer to return to destinations they already love, with 89%

Intentional Traveler

saying they are more likely to revisit places where they feel a meaningful connection.

New markets, particularly those with easy regional access, are also drawing in big spender travellers, including Bangladesh (26%) and New Zealand (24%).

"Luxury travellers are now more intentional than ever before," said Oriol Montal, Regional Vice President, Luxury, Asia Pacific (excluding China), for Marriott International.

"They are seeking journeys that align with their values, enhance wellbeing, and deliver deep personal meaning." *JM* 

#### Etihad's Parisian luxury

**ETIHAD** Airways' new A321 aircraft is set to become its first narrowbody to operate an enclosed first class suite and all lie-flat business studio cabin.

The aircraft will operate an additional four weekly services from 2026 on the Abu Dhabi to Paris route.

To celebrate, Etihad took over the new Chanel flagship boutique in Sydney, inviting VIPs along to enjoy Louis Roederer champagne and the opportunity to sample Le Grand Parfum, a very limited Chanel fragrance.

#### Travellers can soak in first-class Roman luxury

A NEWLY renovated luxury hotel in Italy, Hotel d'Inghilterra Roma - Starhotels Collezion, has unveiled its exclusive spa suite.

Opening this month, the new offering is designed as a wellness sanctuary, where guests can indulge in relaxation.

The Spa Suite encompasses three unique areas, including a gym with advanced Technogym machines and a dedicated zone for yoga and pilates.

Treatment menus include Thai-inspired massages, an



Indonesian beauty ritual, facials, and much more.

The centrepiece of the Spa Suite is the large whirlpool bath, reminiscent of ancient Roman fountains, featuring glass and golden metal accents.

#### Anderson at Atlas

**ATLAS** Ocean Voyages has appointed Kristian Anderson as Executive Vice President of Global Sales.

Well known in the luxury cruise space, Anderson has worked with brands such as Silversea Cruises, Uniworld, and The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, where he was most recently SVP of Global Sales for four years.

Anderson joins the company at "an exciting time of growth", Atlas stated.





# Travel agents say 'aloha'

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Travel Daily



IT MAY have been grey and cold in Sydney yesterday, but at Aloha Affair at the cosy Charlie Bar, travel agents were enjoying mai tai cocktails as they heard updates from Hawaii travel industry representatives.

Attendees at the event included advisors from businesses like TravelManagers, MTA, Helloworld and more.

Hawaiian Airlines Sales **Executive Celeste Arthur** discussed the airline's Sydney-Honolulu service, while Anna Riedel, PR and Trade Account Manager at Hawaii Tourism Oceania, took guests on a trip through the islands and their new offerings, from Kauai and Maui to Oahu and Molokai.

She also chatted about her favourite experiences, including the new Cirque du Soleil show in Waikiki, specialty tours and concert performances at Iolani Palace and manta ray snorkelling.

Millie Browne, Linkd Business Development Manager and Trade Director, gave attendees a breakdown of the different properties at Aqua Aston Hospitality and the support that the business offers agents.

Meanwhile, Ratehawk Sales Manager Teena Hollwey shared the benefits of using the global online travel booking tool which entered the Australian market several months ago.

Hollwey also discussed Ratehawk's loyalty program for its users and its new Aloha incentive for the month, where all bookings to Hawaii made and paid up until 31 July will receive an entry into the draw to win a \$500 RateHawk accommodation voucher. JHM

Pictured: Danielle Leckenby, Ratehawk; Millie Browne, Aqua Aston Hospitality; Celeste Arthur, Hawaiian Airlines; Anna Riedel, Hawaii Tourism Oceania; and Teena Hollwey, Ratehawk.

# **ACCOMMODATION**

Send your accommodation updates to:



Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge is warming up its guests with a new menu of signature hot chocolates, which can be enhanced with a chosen spirit. Available at the Tavern Bar, the limited edition blends invite travellers to embrace the winter chill.

Creations include 'The Wombat Burrow' featuring dark chocolate and coconut cream, & 'The Highland Spirit' with caramel and brulee sugar perfect for unwinding in the resort's contemporary timber cabins.



Soft opening this month, Dusit Hotels and Resorts has unveiled its first all-inclusive lifestyle resort in the Maldives and second in the country. The new dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives is located seven minutes by boat from Male Airport and features 127 villas

across seven categories, from beachfront to overwater. Each villa features a private deck, while most villas also offer plunge pools.



Set within the private Ngala Reserve near Kruger National Park in South Africa, the new family villa at AndBeyond Ngala Safari Lodge has been fully refurbished to present a homely retreat for families and small groups from which to enjoy Africa. Each

features two bedrooms, outdoor showers, a wood-burning fireplace in an indoor lounge and dining area, plus a private swimming pool.



Inspired by 1970s Mykonos, the new-look Sunrise Relais & Chateaux, Agrari Beach from the Myconian Collection is being heralded as a soulful sanctuary. Overlooking either the sea or garden, each room has been reimagined with timber accents and

whitewashed exteriors to reflect a classic family home. The resort also now features Almiriki, an elegant new beachfront culinary destination.



Ultra-luxury resort brand Aman has unveiled the design of its new Aman Residences in Bodrum, Turkiye. Co-located with the existing Amanruya Resort, the change will see the addition of residential villas, along with an expansion of hotel

amenities including a new spa, beach club, restaurants and retail options. Perched along the coast, each villa exudes an aura of calm, with spacious courtyard terraces and a seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

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#### WHISKY HOTEL OPENING:

#### **Discover the New Hollywood Retreat**



Introducing the Whisky Hotel, an exciting new addition to Hollywood's landscape. This striking seven-story boutique hotel, boasting 132 elegantly designed rooms, is a captivating whisky-inspired escape right in the heart of the city. With its bold character and a nostalgic homage to the glamour of 1960s Hollywood, this hotel promises an unforgettable experience. From the moment you arrive,

a complimentary whisky shot awaits, setting the tone for your stay. As twilight descends, gather with friends on the stunning rooftop to soak in the breathtaking views while celebrating the night ahead. Designed exclusively for adults, the Whisky Hotel is poised to become a must-visit destination in Los Angeles. Don't miss out on this unique experience.

More HERE.

# NEW LA STOPOVER ITINERARY

Introducing the LA Stopover itinerary – your secret trade tool for turning layovers into unforgettable mini-adventures! Perfectly crafted for short stays, this new addition to our LA Sales Kit showcases the best of Los Angeles, blending iconic landmarks with the allure of the California coastline. The itinerary can be **downloaded HERE**. Best of all; this complete itinerary is readily bookable through Infinity Holidays. "LA Stopover" joins our collection of four curated itineraries, all designed to streamline your planning process. Ready to explore the full suite of resources? Click HERE to access

#### DELTA EXPANDS AUSSIE ACCESS

Fly nonstop to Los Angeles from Sydney (daily), Brisbane (returning Nov 2), and Melbourne (launching Dec 5). Travellers will enjoy the state-of-the-art Airbus A350-900 and Delta's premium facilities at LAX—including the world-class Delta One Lounge.

#### **WATCH & WIN**

Discover the LA Stopover itinerary by watching our informative supporting webinar **HERE**. After that, answer this simple question for a chance to WIN a \$50 gift card: Where does Kat recommend your clients have dinner on day two? Send your answer to oceania@latourism.org by July 7th to enter!

#### **AC HOTEL DEBUT**

Marriott's AC Hotel brand premiered April 1, 2025, in Pasadena. The 194-room property, situated adjacent to Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena's Playhouse Village District, features a rooftop lounge and introduces a refined blend of European sophistication and contemporary design to the heart of Pasadena's vibrant Playhouse Village. Learn more HERE.

# GET COURTSIDE WITH THE LAKERS

Located in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles, Crypto.com Arena is excited to announce the launch of new behind-the-scenes arena and game day tours. These exclusive tours offer a unique glimpse into one of the world's most iconic sports and entertainment venues. As the home of the Lakers. Kings, and Sparks, the arena now provides guests with a 90-minute VIP tour experience, guided by expert guides. Visitors will explore spaces that have hosted legendary sports championships, world-renowned concerts, and epic award shows. Additionally, guests will have the opportunity to check out the venue's VIP areas and see the latest renovations. Learn more HERE.



#### **TIME TO reLAX:**

Elevate your clients' journey before they even take off! The brand-new Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse at LAX offers a stylish and relaxing haven, featuring à la carte dining, a cocktail bar, and dedicated work areas. It's the perfect space for Upper Class and eligible Flying Club members to unwind. Located in the Tom Bradley International Terminal, the Clubhouse is a multi-sensory experience with exclusive amenities and spaces that soothe the senses. Expect chic design, exceptional service, and a touch of Virgin Atlantic flair. Learn more HERE.



#### **SAIL IN STYLE**

Naos Yachts, located in Marina del Rey, offers a premier yachting experience for guests looking to relax in style along LA's stunning coastline. Naos's fleet of yachts includes sailing yachts, catamarans, and powerboats. Book a bareboat charter for the day or longer, or even take a beginner sailing course. In addition, Naos provides marina harbor tours, coastline cruises up to the famous Santa Monica Pier and Malibu, spectacular sunset cruises, trips to beautiful Catalina Island, plus much more. Read more HERE.



# NONSTOP: AUSTRALIA TO LOS ANGELES. SYD to LAX operates daily, year-round. BNE to LAX returns 2 November 2025. MEL to LAX launches 5 December 2025.



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