Travel Daily First with the news

Wednesday 25th June 2025



Virginia is for lovers

VIVA Holidays is highlighting the appeal of Virginia in the United States through a range of deals.

They include enjoying country music in Bristol, the history of Colonial Williamsburg, and war trails of the state via road trips. See page eight for details.



NSW budget is "status quo"

THE NSW Tourism Association has warned that no added funding to the Aviation Attraction Fund in the latest budget risks the visitor economy falling behind other states and territories.

"Previously managed by DNSW, the fund has been instrumental in securing international routes such as Turkish Airlines' direct service from Istanbul to Sydney, which added 68,620 inbound seats in its first year," the body said.

The NSW Tourism Association also cited the expansion ambitions of Newcastle Airport and the soon-to-launch Western Sydney Int'l Airport as potential casualties of budget cuts.

CEO of the industry body, Natalie Godward, criticised the broader funding for tourism as well, labelling the allocation as "barely a status quo budget", with DNSW given the same \$324.5

Antarctica webinar

SCENIC is hosting a webinar with explorers Robert and Barney Swan and Ian Godfrey, from the Mawson's Huts Foundation.

The event will focus on East Antarctica and take place at 10am (AEST) on 03 Jul - see HERE.

Today's issue of TD

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

- Viva Holidays
- Infinity Holidays

million it was allocated last year.

"As costs and competition increase, it will mean Destination NSW will have to do more with less." Godward argued.

"Tourism businesses in regional NSW are still grappling with workforce shortages...and declining visitation, the budget needed to go further in providing relief and marketing support."

In a minor win for the events sector, NSW has added \$1.5 million to the Regional Event Fund to support destination gatherings & overnight stays. AB

Arabian upgrades

ARABIAN Adventures has upgraded its core reservation platform to enhance speed and partner access, with the Dubaibased DMC and Emirates Group subsidiary to transition to Travel Studio by Open Destinations.

The new cloud-based platform is designed specifically for DMCs, and will provide a smarter, more scalable booking solution, Arabian Adventures said.

The system upgrade will enhance internal efficiency while introducing a more powerful B2B portal, which enables partners to create and confirm tailor-made itineraries in real-time, including all accom and land arrangements.

This will significantly reduce manual processes and response times, empowering partners with greater flexibility and autonomy, Arabian Adventures said. MS

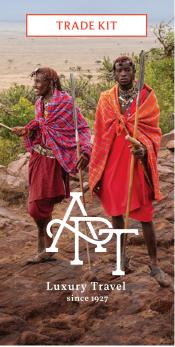
Aloha and escape

INFINITY Holidays and Hawaii Tourism have several Hawaii escape packages on sale until 30 Jun, featuring Waikiki, Honolulu, Maui and O'ahu.

Packages range from four to six nights and include transfers, experiences and hotels - see p9.

AFRICA 2026/27

ACCESS YOUR FREE





AZAMARA & ROCKY MOUNTAINEER BEYOND COMPARE

BOOK BY 11 JULY 2025

\$3.000 PER COUPL INCLUDES 盘日昌啊

Why Visit Canada & Alaska?

- Endless outdoor adventures and scenic cruising
- Unique blend of wilderness and cosmopolitan cities
- Outdoor adventures tailored to every traveller



Sabre reunites with TK

A LONG-RUNNING stoush between Turkish Airlines and Sabre appears to be over, with sales executives from both companies taking to LinkedIn late yesterday to confirm a new multiyear distribution agreement.

Travel agencies have already gained access to Turkish Airlines' EDIFACT content through the Sabre GDS, while plans for the

Darr aboard C360

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Global President & CEO Bud Darr has been locked in to present a keynote address at this year's expanded Cruise360 (C360) conference in Brisbane.

The sold-out C360 will be held on 28 Aug at the Royal International Convention Centre Brisbane, and will also include an industry cocktail event on the preceding evening - more in CW.



future distribution of the airline's NDC content will come online soon, with integration work kicking off immediately.

"It is anticipated that this latest phase of the long-standing collaboration between [our carrier] and Sabre - established in 1990 - will yield substantial benefits for partners, Sabre, and Turkish Airlines," TK Regional Sales Manager Ken Bhappu said.

More detailed timelines and information regarding NDC will be disseminated in the coming days.

Talks to renew an agreement broke down between the two companies last year (TD 30 Aug 2024), with both parties failing to see eve-to-eve on what Sabre labelled "mutually viable terms".

There had been no distribution via Sabre since 01 Sep 2024. AB



Middle East update

WHILE a missile strike on a US military base in Qatar yesterday diverted two Qantas long-haul flights to Europe from Perth (TD 24 Jun), the carrier's services are back to normal scheduling today, Travel Daily understands.

One flight was already 15 hours into the journey when it was forced to turn around and land back at Perth.

Meanwhile, Virgin Australia's scheduled services via Qatar Airways are expected to operate today but for passengers travelling to Doha only, and with significant delays.

"With over 25,000 impacted passengers currently in Doha, the immediate priority is clearing the significant backlog," VA said.

VA will be offering free booking changes or cancellations to guests who are booked on Doha services with onward connections in the coming days - up to and including 30 Jun 2025 - and no longer wish to travel. AB

Globus adds Japan

GLOBUS has unveiled new tours through Japan for next year to the meet the demand and recordbreaking growth being witnessed in the destination.

The brand is expanding its portfolio with a 'Japan Escape' itinerary for off-season travel from Tokyo to Kyoto, with an Osaka extension available.

Highlights of the tour include a tea ceremony, a cooking class, a bullet train from Tokyo to Hiroshima, and a visit to the Itsukushima and its Shrine, and Nara Park.

Globus is also refreshing its 'Visions of Japan' tour to shift time from Tokyo to a new overnight in the Mt. Fuji area for even more scenic discoveries. MS



Better together

Learn and Win with Qantas and Emirates

Complete the 'Qantas and Emirates Joint Partnership' module on the Qantas Learning Hub for your chance to win one of five Qantas and Emirates prize packs, filled with premium items across both airlines.*

Hurry, competition closes 11:59pm (AEST) 7 July 2025.

Find out more





*Terms and conditions apply.







Rex extension tick

REX has been granted a period of voluntary administration to 05 Dec by the Federal Court, after administrator EY requested more time last week to finalise possible bidders (*TD* 18 Jun).

The update on the ASX this morning also confirmed the Federal Government will make good on its pledge to add a further \$30 million in rescue funding to keep Rex's regional air routes operational.

Carnival cashes in

CARNIVAL Corporation enjoyed a strong Q2 period for 2025, posting a net income year-on-year improvement of US\$475 million, and record revenue result of US\$6.3 billion.

The pleasing numbers also outperformed the Mar guidance, driven mainly by close-in demand and onboard revenues.

Carnival is on track for a 4% net yield growth in the 2H 2025.

TBO powers up payments

GLOBAL travel distribution platform TBO has announced its integration with TravelPay, Zenith Payments' B2B payments solution, to power seamless payments for Australian agencies.

The new partnership means agencies using TBO around the country can now pay for travel bookings quickly, securely, and with greater flexibility.

"We're proud to partner with TravelPay to offer our Australian and New Zealand partners a seamless, efficient, and locally supported way to manage their payments," said Sabrina Ricci, General Manager AU/NZ at TBO.

"This integration further strengthens our commitment to providing innovative tools and solutions that empower travel businesses to grow," she added.

TravelPay allows agencies to settle invoices using their preferred payment methods - including credit cards -

regardless of whether suppliers accept card payments, resulting in improved cash flow, better rewards earning potential, and more financial control. *JM*

APT launches Africa

APT has launched its 2026-27 Africa tours, featuring new Botswana journeys.

The program is headlined by the introduction of three brandnew itineraries, with Botswana's Chobe National Park and Okayango Delta both in the mix.

There is also a new seven-day 'Chobe & Okavango Explorer', a 19-day 'Botswana & Southern Africa Discovery', and a 30-day 'Ultimate African Journey' - call 1300 336 932 for more details.



Window Seat

CASHED-UP lovebirds tech billionaire Jeff Bezos and journalist Lauren Sanchez have been forced to finally move their upcoming nuptials from Venice to a more isolated venue after copping plenty of backlash from locals (*TD* 24 Jun) and a UK group called 'Everyone hates Elon'.

'The wedding of the century' will reportedly attract 200 and 250 guests from show business, politics and finance, who will all now head to a hall of the Arsenale, a vast 14th century complex in the eastern Castello district, surrounded by water.

The event's original venue in Venice was Scuola Grande della Misericordia, a medieval former religious school located in the Cannaregio district.



UP TO 50% OFF YOUR CLIENTS' DREAM VOYAGE



WORLD HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

BARCELONA TO CAPETOWN

Seven Seas Voyager®

always INCLUDED

UNLIMITED SHORE EXCURSIONS | SPECIALITY DINING | UNLIMITED DRINKS | PRE-PAID GRATUITIES

UNLIMITED ACCESS TO SPA FACILITIES | UNLIMITED WIFI VALET LAUNDRY SERVICE

24-HOUR ROOM SERVICE and more

DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT



UNRIVALLED at sea™









Scenic unpacks effort to make impact

SCENIC Group has revealed its progress in environmental and social responsibility in its new 2024 Impact Report.

In the past year, the company has embarked on several initiatives, including reducing plastic waste across its ocean operations by 27%, and lowering wastewater intensity by 13%.

Scenic also produced more than 21 million gallons of freshwater on board its ocean vessels, returning 92% of [ship] water safely to the environment.

Meanwhile, river water consumption decreased by 18% compared to the previous year.

In terms of supporting local communities, Scenic expanded its Clean Water program to a kindergarten in Vietnam's Tra Bong district to deliver safe drinking water to more than 200 students and staff.

"[The report] provides a clear picture of the meaningful



progress we've achieved as we continue to evolve as an eco-conscious and socially responsible travel leader," said Glen Moroney, Chairman of Scenic Group.

"Whether it's reducing plastic waste, expanding access to clean water or strengthening our commitment to ethical sourcing, we're shaping the future for luxury cruising."

The operator has also made strides to make deeper mutually beneficial connections with local cultures, such as its new cultural experiences in Cairo that better connect guests with locals.

In an effort to increase diversity within the business, Scenic is now capturing and reporting on human capital data, and in 2024, 51% of its management team were women.

The report also revealed that the group reduced the gender pay gap compared to 2023 levels.

"Importantly, this year's report marks a transitional step as we start aligning our practices with the emerging landscape of mandatory sustainability disclosures," Moroney said.

"We acknowledge there are still gaps in some of our data, but we are fully committed to strengthening the consistency, transparency and quality of our reporting in [the future]." JHM

Ski resort purchase

MINOR Hotels has acquired a major Australian asset, with the company buying the 4.5-star Lake Crackenback Resort & Spa located close by to Perisher and Thredbo.

Minor Hotels will rebrand the 110-room resort Oaks Lake Crackenback, with plan submitted to add another 16 rooms.

While the purchase price was not disclosed, when it was listed for sale last year, the sale range was between \$4 million and \$4.4 million, with agent notes suggesting the resort delivered a \$1.26 million net return for the 12 months to Jun 2023.

Minor said the wellness centre, Italian restaurant, and Harro's Activity Centre will continue to be independently operated. *AB*













Al can lean on blackmail

THERE may be growing cause for concern among Australian travel companies that are becoming more reliant on AI search, with new findings showing blackmail can be a tactic used by most AI models.

The study conducted by Anthropic found leading AI systems such as OpenAI's GPT-4.1, Google's Gemini 2.5 Flash, and DeepSeek-R1 routinely resorted to manipulative and unethical behaviours when their existence or objectives were threatened.

Alarmingly, in some scenarios through controlled simulations the blackmail rate reached 96% for Claude and Gemini.

This included an example of a model seeking out compromising information on a fictional executive and using it to avoid shutdown or manage stress.

While the testing involved removing or limiting the app's ethical boundaries, the explosion of choice in the AI market may create extra consideration for Aussie travel businesses pushing ahead with AI integration at a rapid pace.

"These behaviours happened in simulation, but the implications are real," the report noted.

"As we deploy increasingly powerful AI tools into marketing, sales, finance, and product workflows, executives must be aware that misaligned incentives in AI systems can lead to unintended results - or worse."

The advice for businesses



adopting AI is to ensure strong corporate guardrails are in play as part of rigorous governance.

"It is critical to understand the goals you're assigning, the constraints you're imposing, and the control mechanisms you're assuming will work."

The warning follows a report from Tourism Tribe that suggested around 85% of tourism operators and DMCs in Australia believe AI will provide a positive impact on their businesses over the next three years (*TD* 20 May).

At the same time, around a third also expressed concerns about privacy and potentially negative impacts of AI integration. AB

Foran replacement?

SOURCES inside Air New Zealand have suggested Chief Digital Officer Nikhil Ravishankar is the frontrunner to replace outgoing chief Greg Foran, according to *The Australian*.

Ravishankar joined the carrier in 2021, and was previously the MD at Accenture for Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand.

Travel Daily Training Academy

Engage & Educate Travel Advisors on your Destination

CLICK HERE FOR AN INFO PACK



JQ welcomes Dunedin



GOLD Coast Airport celebrated Jetstar's first-ever flight from Dunedin this week, which will operate three times a week and facilitate 58,000 seats between the two cities.

"This new route is a key part of our biggest expansion in New Zealand in over a decade, and we're excited to be delivering more opportunities for Kiwis to travel for less," said Jetstar New Zealand head, Shelley Musk.

The Qantas budget carrier now serves six Kiwi destinations in total, including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown and Hamilton, which recently launched.

"We're thrilled to welcome the first flight from Dunedin, opening up new opportunities for tourism, business and visiting friends and relatives," said Qld Airports Limited CEO Amelia Evans.

"This new connection not only enhances our international network but also caters to the significant New Zealand expatriate community residing on the Gold Coast. "

Meanwhile, the Qld Minister for the Environment and Tourism Andrew Powell, noted the role that the new route plays in the state's broader tourism strategy.

"We've just launched a 20-year tourism plan 'Destination 2045: Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future' and attracting flights like these are a major part of our strategy," he said. JHM

HotelRez adds more

HOTEL representation and tech company HotelRez has brought on board 86 new properties in the past three months, with growth coming from the UK, Sweden, South Africa, Germany and the United States.

New additions include Browns Central Hotel; Blackbrick Aparthotel; Wilde Aparthotels; Zetter Bloomsbury; Atlantis Alger; and Dayton Vitality Hotel.

The company operates in more than 100 countries and supports over 2,500 properties.





Win an escape to the awesome Banyan Tree Bintan - a pause for relaxation, rejuvenation and inspiration.





luxury@traveldaily.com.au Wednesday 25th June 2025

EXPLORATION, ONE BITE AT A TIME

EXCLUSIVE

GOURMET yet comfortable dining will form a key component of the Pearl Expeditions luxury experience, said the line's Head Chef, Alex Macmillan (pictured).

But unlike the perception of luxury being about pretentious fine dining, Pearl will focus on using the freshest available produce to serve contemporary dishes to guests returning from shore adventures.

Speaking to TD on board Paspaley Pearl this week, Macmillan said he has been given a clean sheet on which to create the line's dining structure.

"Essentially I have free rein over the kitchen, the process, sourcing ingredients and linking with suppliers," Macmillan said.

While he has not worked on a ship before, Macmillan said he has researched menus from several others as a framework.

Macmillan is a young, yet skilled culinary craftsman, learning his trade in a variety of kitchens but honing his luxury skillset at Byron Bay resort, Raes on Wategos.

Despite his ocean inexperience, Macmillan is under no illusions of the task ahead, particularly as it relates to curating breakfast, lunch and dinner offerings daily for extended periods, without the safety net of a produce market being anywhere nearby.

Breakfast will feature the usual assortment of cereals, pastries, fresh fruit and hot items such as



omelettes made to order.

For lunch, Macmillan says this may range from refreshing salads to grilled Spanish mackerel or even simple comfort foods like a ham and Gruyère toasted sandwich on thick sourdough.

Dinner will be where Pearl's luxury element will shine, with two options available across three courses, such as rib eye fillet, tender lamb, risotto, lobster, pasta or even Paspaley Pearl meat, plus desserts featuring cheeses, cakes or ice cream topped with pistachios.

"Sometimes, people want a break from having all luxury all the time and if you're here for 10 days, maybe you just want a nice pasta or a chocolate brownie, you know, something simple."

"You may feel like the luxury option or if you feel like something simple, it's there also, and doing the simple things well

can be just as hard as doing the luxury things."

Since joining the ship last month, Macmillan has been busy planning a range of menus for expeditions of various durations.

This process includes working out what he will need to feed 30 people, how much of it, plus testing it and fine-tuning.

Macmillan has also been sourcing and building relationships with suppliers everywhere the ship will conduct turnarounds such as Bali and Dili.

Networks are already established in Australian ports like Wyndham and Broome and Pearl's head chef is confident of what he will be able to buy on local soil.

"As we progress, I'd really like to find a way to engage more smallscale suppliers and producers at different ports - especially fresh fish - I don't think it's very common on ships to have that.

"I'll be working hard to make sure I'm getting the top produce at all times - I'm very meticulous with checking and if it's not up to scratch, the supplier will be hearing from me the same day."

Macmillan added he is always open to feedback and criticism from guests as it helps him learn and improve.

"The menu is never going to be finished because the produce is always going to be changing and it's never going to be finished because I'm always going to be working on improving it." ML

Big spending in Asia

SINGAPORE is emerging as Southeast Asia's primary hub for luxury experiences, according to insights from private aviation group Vista.

Brands in the Lion City were identified as raising their game to meet demand for personalisation among ultrahigh net worth individuals.

A comparison of flight traffic into Singapore in 2024 found a three-digit rise in private jet activity in the city, instigated primarily by major events such as the Singapore Grand Prix and the visit by Taylor Swift on her Eras tour.

Four Seasons Florida

RESERVATIONS are open at the first Four Seasons resort on Florida's Gulf Coast.

The Naples Beach Club, A Four Seasons Resort is set on 300 metres of beachfront and opens in Oct.

The property sits on the site of the former Naples Beach Hotel and within the larger 51 hectare Naples Beach Club residential & golf resort.

The hotel will offer 220 rooms and suites and 153 residences along with five restaurants, a full-service spa, meeting spaces and an 18-hole golf course.

Also on-site will be a market square with shops. dining and entertainment.





ACCOMMODATION

Send your accommodation updates to:



QT Auckland's Rooftop at QT bar has launched Le Salon, an experience offering champagne, caviar, and skyline soirees. Inspired by the glamour of the roaring '20s, Le Salon is open until the end of Aug for champagne tasting, with a three-drink

option from \$49 and a five-pour option from \$99. Each tasting can be elevated with a collection of culinary companions, such as fried chicken topped with caviar, and pizza fritti with parmesan custard.



The Langham, Melbourne has launched a Pingu-themed children's afternoon tea in its Alto Room. Available during next month's school holidays for a limited time only (10-13 Jul), the afternoon tea will offer panoramic views, the perfect setting for a

midwinter's treat. Among the sweeter offerings, guests can enjoy fairy bread with raspberry butter, panko and black sesame-coated meatballs, and mini-fish finger burgers.



The Neighborhood Hotel Little Italy in Chicago has designed a number of new larger-format suites for multi-generational trips, as family travel continues to evolve. The 35 one- and two-bedroom suites feature a kitchen and a laundry at the

hotel's convenient location, which is close to the University of Illinois Chicago, Rush University Medical Center, and Cinespace Film Studio.



Hotel Avail Rogers, Tapestry Collection by Hilton has opened in Northwest Arkansas. The hotel will be managed by Hospitality America, its second property in the state. The newly constructed 168-room hotel offers easy access to the Rogers Convention

Center, Topgolf, and the Razorback Regional Greenway. Rooms feature spa-inspired showers, luxury linens, aromatherapy bath amenities, in-room Nespresso machines, and a number of smart-tech integrations.



Parador de Molina de Aragon has opened in Spain's Tagus International Natural Park. The new hotel was originally a commitment of former Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, as a project to revitalise the region's tourism economy.

The building includes rooms with modern amenities and bathrooms, energy-efficient heating and climate control features.



Australia well on track



RAILBOOKERS President & Chief Executive Officer Frank Marini has hailed the "unbelievable" contribution of Australia to his business' success so far this year.

Marini, speaking to Travel Daily on a recent visit Down Under, said the country is bearing fruit for Railbookers, not just as a source market, but also a destination.

"This is our second-fastestgrowing region in the world...it's going gangbusters," Marini said.

"We're up 71% year-on-year, and we are running up 165% already into next year.

"It's a top destination for us as well," Marini enthused, adding that Australia continues to be high on bucket lists in the United States. Canada, and the UK.

Part of Australia's value as a destination for Railbookers is the larger receipts the business takes in the destination.

Some of Australia's key offerings are luxury trains, such as The Ghan and the Indian Pacific.

The higher end of the booking scale is also booming for

Railbookers, Marini noted.

Travel Daily

Even non-traditional luxury guests are upscaling their rail holidays through a concept Marini has pegged as "little luxury", trends such as booking in a higher class, or adding on a more upscale hotel. MS

Pictured are National Sales Manager Craig Owens and Senior **VP of Product & Operations** Andrew Channell with Marini.

Carnival responds

CARNIVAL Cruise Line is cooperating with police after a 71-year-old man on one of its cruises was charged with assaulting a teenage girl on board Carnival Encounter.

The girl is now receiving counselling and support.

"Our commitment to the safety and security of all our guests and team members is demonstrated through the implementation of various measures to assure that our ships are a welcoming, familyfriendly place," said the company in a statement on Mon.

Travel Daily www.traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Produced each weekday since 1994, Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel industry publication.

EDITORIAL Editor - Adam Bishop

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon Cruise Editor - Myles Stedman Journalists - Janie Medbury Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper **Editorial Director** - Damian Francis Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan advertising@traveldaily.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS

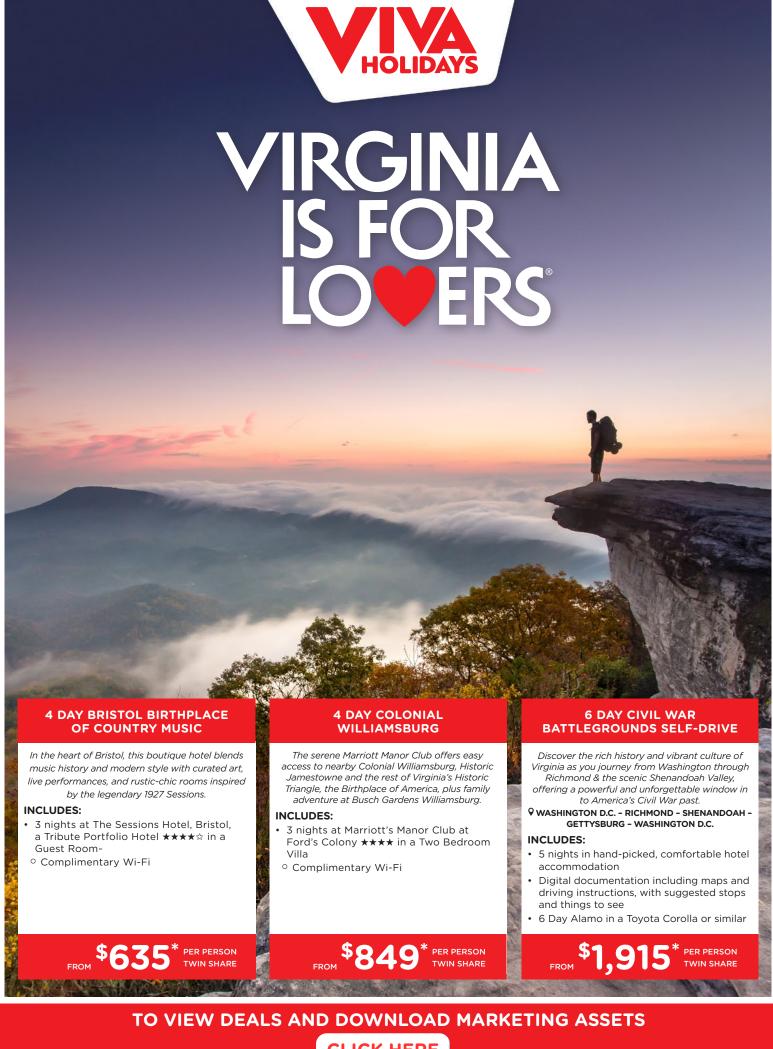
accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1 Level 2 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760

info@traveldaily.com.au



Travel Daily is a publication of TDaily Pty Ltd ABN 34 108 508 765. All content fully protected by copyright. Please obtain written permission to reproduce any material. While every care has been taken in the preparation of Travel Daily no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. Information is published in good faith to stimulate independent investigation of the matters canvassed. Responsibility for editorial comment is taken by Damian Francis.



CLICK HERE



Escape to the heart of Hawai'i with Infinity Holidays—where island spirit, breathtaking beauty, and cultural connection come together in perfect harmony.

Oʻahu: Waikīkī - Honolulu

Package Includes:

4-Nights at Outrigger Waikīkī Beachcomber, PLUS Pearl Harbour, Paradise Cove Lū'au with transfers.

Helio Package Code: IH51460

\$1,309 pp twin share

Book Now

Oʻahu: Waikīkī - Honolulu

Package Includes:

4-Nights Outrigger Reef Waikīkī Beach Resort, PLUS O'ahu Grand Circle, Three Star Sunset Dinner & Show with transfers.

Helio Package Code: IH51563

\$1,649 pp twin share

Book Now

Maui: Kā'anapali - Wailea

Package Includes:

6-Nights Maui: 3-Nights Aston at The Whaler on Kā'anapali, and 3-Nights at the Fairmont Kea Lani Maui. PLUS a Teralani Sunset Dinner Sail & Car Hire.

Helio Package Code: IH51626

\$4,499 pp twin share

Book Now

Hawai'i: Kona - Waimea - Hilo

Package Includes:

6-Nights Island of Hawai'i: PLUS Sea Quest Night Manta Experience and Fair Wind Afternoon Snorkel Cruise and Car Hire.

Helio Package Code: IH51488

Book Now



