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## Princess reinvented

**PRINCESS** Cruises has appointed agency 72andSunny to craft a new local brand positioning and ad campaign that will attract a new generation of Australian consumers. Creating greater brand familiarity is also part of the push.

## BGH seeks to buy Webjet

**WEBJET** Group Limited has received an unbinding offer to sell a controlling stake to BGH Capital (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

The offer has proposed an acquisition value of \$0.80c a share (currently \$0.90c) for an undisclosed percentage of controlling equity.

In a prior notice lodged by BGH on Mon, the equity group outlined a total relevant interest of 10.76% of fully paid ordinary shares in Webjet Group.

That equity is comprised of 5.89% held by BGH and 4.87% held by Portfolio Services Pty Ltd, an entity associated with Ariadne Australia Ltd and Gary Weiss.

BGH Capital said the tilt at buying a controlling interest is subject to assumptions relating to cash levels, no external debt, no dividends, and no acquisitions prior to implementation.

BGH also indicated in its submission that it is open to

“some” existing shareholders retaining equity in the business, and also listed an interest in ongoing liquidity by retaining Webjet Group’s ASX listing.

The latest development follows Helloworld subsidiary Retail Travel Investments purchasing over 5% stake in Webjet over the last month (**TD** 13 May).

The Webjet board said it was assessing the bid and currently makes no recommendation either way, with the company’s shareholders to be updated in due course when appropriate.

UBS Securities has been appointed by Webjet Group as financial adviser and MinterEllison as legal adviser. **AB**

### Today’s issue of **TD**

**Travel Daily** today features eight pages of news, including our **Luxury** page, plus a product profile from **Exoticca**.

## Adventure in Asia

**TRAVELLERS** seeking a Southeast Asian adventure should consider Exoticca’s 16-day guided tour through Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand.

Discover all the exciting highlights of the itinerary by checking out the **back page**.

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## Dine & earn with VA

**ORDERS** made with food delivery service DoorDash will now earn Virgin Australia loyalty members Velocity points.

Linked accounts will earn one point for every dollar spent, and new joiners over the next three-months can earn a bonus 2k pts.



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## Agency specialist joins QF

**QANTAS** has created a new role to spearhead the push of its new NDC trade model flagged last year (**TD** breaking news).

Reporting to Qantas Executive Manager Global Sales & Distribution Kathryn Robertson, Alexandra O'Connor (**pictured**) will join the carrier as Head of Sales Channels in Jul, where she will be responsible for overseeing agency sales and operational



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support, and bringing together key sales functions to strengthen how the airline supports its trade partners across all channels.

The new role coincides with the 01 Jul launch of the airline's new distribution model, which will seek to drive the agenda for greater adoption of IATA's NDC technology among Aussie agents.

"Alex will play a key role in supporting our agency partners through the transition to NDC, as we continue to focus on setting them up for success and making it easier to deliver an even better experience for their customers," Robertson said.

O'Connor has spent the last two years based in Auckland as Qantas Regional General Manager, in which capacity she led the commercial, financial and operational performance for the airline in New Zealand and several key Pacific Island markets.

Further aviation experience includes more than six years with Air NZ, during that time holding the key Head of Agency Sales role for two years from 2009 to 2011.

Subsequent to that, she also spent four years at VA where she rose to become NSW Manager.

O'Connor will be based in Qantas' Mascot office. **AB**

## Alliance downgrades

**ALLIANCE** Aviation has been forced to downgrade its projected net profit before tax due to a range of external factors.

The previous guidance for FY25 indicated the aviation business would post \$92.9 million, but that has been downgraded to a range of between \$80-85 million, with Alliance citing Tropical Cyclone Alfred as a major factor.

The massive storm cell forced the company to cancel 272 flights and relocate its fleet as major hubs like BNE shut for four days.


Fixing damaged planes has also impacted financial performance, as has industrial relations, with hundreds of its pilots who have called for pay to match industry standards & rostering conditions.

The future growth strategy will include further expanding in the charter market using its E190s, investing in more automation, and improving on-time performance by being better at covering unexpected outages.


## Only a week to go

**THERE** is one week left for the industry to get its nominations in for the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) 2025.

Entries close next week on Wed 21 May, so to ensure you don't miss the nomination window, **CLICK HERE** today.



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## AA connection plan

**AMERICAN** Airlines is trialling a new automated way of ensuring passengers have a better chance of making connecting flights.

New tech identifies travellers with tight connections arriving in the US and sends through an alert to the crew on connecting flights to place a short hold on take-off.

AA will pilot the tech at DFW before rolling it out to Charlotte Douglas International Airport, with additional hubs to follow over the next few months.

## Shape TD's future & win



**TRAVEL Daily** has launched a short five-minute survey to find out what is important to readers as it looks to sharpen the way it delivers the news and analysis from the Australian and New Zealand travel industry.

The short multiple-choice survey will play a significant role in how **Travel Daily** engages with its audience moving forward, as it prepares to build on its strong position serving the industry.

Readers who fill in the survey will also go into the draw to win some great prizes, including a major prize from popular luggage brand July of a stylish Classic Checked Set valued at \$700.

The set includes both the Carry On and Checked cases with a very flexible volume of 122 litres.

There will also be a further 10 lucky winners who will walk away with a \$100 Prezzy gift card, able to be spent on hundreds of different brands.

**Travel Daily's** survey will run for just two weeks, closing on Wed 28 May, so don't delay filling

it out - after all, a cup of coffee would take longer to drink.

The opinions of readers are extremely valuable to the publication - **TAKE PART HERE**. *DF*



## Window Seat

**QATAR Airways** recently launched a pioneering e-sports competition called 'Gaming in the Sky', an event that took place aboard one of its commercial aircraft.

Using Starlink tech on a flight from Doha to London, some of the best gamers from across the globe took part in a range of tournaments at 35,000 feet.

"This competition represents a bold step into the future of passenger engagement and comfort when flying with Qatar Airways," CEO Badr Mohammed Al-Meer said.

It is not yet known if Pac-Man was one of the hotly contest games on offer.

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## What's the point?

**NEW** research has revealed Australians on average hold 73,000 frequent flyer points, but only one in five redeem them.

The study by TravelInsurance.com.au showed a quarter use points for travel "occasionally" and rarely know their balance.

## GFOB to change structure

EXCLUSIVE

**GLOBUS** family of brands' (GFOB) structure is likely to change under Managing Director Chris Hall (pictured), the company's new head has revealed to **Travel Daily**.

Hall, who was appointed to succeed Gai Tyrrell two months ago (**TD** 06 Mar), said his first commitment was to ensure that Globus' structure best serves the travel trade.

He said this will mean GFOB's national sales manager role, recently vacated by Gia Acitelli, is not likely to be replaced.

"Making sure we've got the right people on board in the right seats and all heading in the right direction [is] my kind of approach stepping into something new," Hall said.

"What is the strategic approach, and then determining whether we need to have a different structure, whether we need people in different seats."

There are a number of efficiencies GFOB can explore in this regard, Hall said, adding he thought the company's prior structure "had a lot of chiefs".

Implementing the new local structure does not involve input from GFOB's head office in the United States, he added, saying he is free to tailor the Australian team to the local market.

"I think we've got a few things to do with our structure to make sure it's fit-for-purpose, and that comes down to talking



with our trade partners to make sure that we're meeting their needs in terms of our sales team structure, what we are doing within marketing, and how we are connecting, because trade is just so very critical to what we do," Hall said.

Nailing the model for GFOB is particularly important, as the company attempts to help rebuild industry expertise in touring following the pandemic.

"I think in general, the touring category hasn't recovered from COVID," Hall said.

"We've got an industry that has been depleted of education on the advisor side, and so therefore, we as a category have a job to educate a lot of these new advisors that have come in on the benefits of touring, so they understand how it works, the ease, the convenience, that all-inclusive element.

"We have finite resources in the sales team, so we've got to think about what is the best way of educating [advisors]." *MS*

## Air NZ expands LH

**AIR** New Zealand and Lufthansa plan to expand their codeshare services from 14 May.

The change will see Lufthansa operate the Kiwi carrier's flights from Frankfurt to New York and Shanghai, and Air NZ operate AKL to NY and Shanghai for LH.

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## Airbnb's Aussie team

### EXCLUSIVE

**AIRBNB** has bolstered its Australian presence as the brand relaunches its Experiences platform around the world.

In a bid to build a robust suite of experiences locally, former Global Sales Director for Flight Centre Travel Group's Infinity Holidays division, Kevin Looney, has been appointed Supply Lead, APAC, Acquisition - Experiences.

He is joined by previous GTI Tourism Managing Partner Georgia Gregorson; Big Red Group Director of Corporate Partnerships Sally McFadyen; and former Head of Commercial at Rome2Rio Julien Coste.

The local team will lend distribution, destination marketing, corporate engagement, and cross-platform

integration and scalability skills to the local market.

The new high-profile Australian team coincides with a slew of major updates revealed by the accommodation platform today, including the addition of services, experiences, and a revamped app to book it all in the one place.

Airbnb Services allows guests to add in-home chefs, massages, beauty treatments, and more.

Meanwhile the relaunched Experiences offering adds the option of museum tours, wellness facilities, food tours, and sporting activities, to name just a few.

New features of the app include a revamped messaging platform with photo/video sharing and integrated payment capability, as well as a more advanced travel itinerary view that displays new services and experiences in the user schedule. *AB*

## Bunnik Africa 2026

**BUNNIK** Tours has released its Africa program for next year, which will include 49 departures across five journeys.

Highlights of the collection will see guests enjoy lunch with villagers in Tanzania; a scenic cruise in Walvis Bay in search of dolphins, seals, and pelicans; a balloon safari viewing the Maasai Mara; and two nights in a luxury train hotel.

Every tour is capped at 12 people, with departures set to begin in Jan.

Tours range from 13 days through to 23 days.

## APT NZ mega-famil

**THIRTY** high-performing agents will be treated by APT next week to a New Zealand showcase famil featuring the best bits cherry-picked from the tour operator's itineraries across the country.

The nine-day South Island adventure, hosted by APT Tour Director Daniel Gillies, will feature top-selling members of APT's Trade VIP Program.

Signature experiences on offer will include a flight over Franz Josef Glacier, and an overnight stay at Te Waonui Forest Retreat.

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## Viva launches Southeast Asia



**AGENTS** in Sydney and Melbourne were welcomed by Viva Holidays recently to launch Southeast Asia, the newest destination in the ever-growing Viva portfolio (*TD* 24 Apr).

Offered in partnership with on-the-ground DMC Viva Journeys, the range features more than 2,000 hotels along with both independent, group and escorted touring itineraries in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

The range is now on sale, with special earlybird pricing and bonus offers on product priced through to Mar 2027.

Hosted at Pier One Sydney Harbour and Melbourne Marriott Docklands Hotel, special invited guests included Vivu Journeys CEO Kien Tran and Group Head of Commercial, Josh Cliffe. *ML*

Tran is **pictured** above with Helloworld Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director Cinzia Burnes; with Helloworld Group CEO and Managing Director Andrew Burnes.

## UA refines biz class

**UNITED** Airlines has unveiled an elevated Polaris business class, which will be introduced on its new Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft arriving later this year.

The United Polaris Studio will make up the first row of the existing business class cabin and will feature eight lie-flat seats.

Studios feature sliding privacy doors, larger personal TV screens, luxury skincare amenities and access to an exclusive onboard wine and caviar pairing event.

Deliveries of UA's 787 fleet with new business studio will begin later this year, with the carrier expecting 30 to be flying by 2027.

The new product responds to growing demand for premium seats by travellers on both sides of the Pacific, with US travellers buoyed by a strong US dollar.

UA's new aircraft caters to 222 passengers, fewer than chief trans-Pacific competitor Qantas, which carries up to 236 on its 787-9 Dreamliners.

## Discover the all new *River Cruise Special Report*



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## Product buyers receive a warm 'G'day'

THE G'day Group trade team were in full flight last week, proudly showcasing their regional portfolio to domestic and international partners during three unique famils.

At El Questro Homestead, ATE Luxe guests experienced the Kimberley in all its glory with a sunset welcome, a Chamberlain Gorge cruise, & a breathtaking helicopter flight to Amaroo Falls.

The itinerary also featured 'Injiid Marlabu Calls Us', a powerful cultural experience led by Traditional Owners that recognises El Questro as a place of deep connection.

TEQ's post-ATE Atherton Tablelands to Outback famil welcomed product managers on a self-drive journey from lush rainforest to open outback.

A highlight was an immersive stay at Discovery Resorts - Undara, where guests explored ancient lava tubes, spotted wildlife at sunset and experienced an authentic bush breakfast.

Meanwhile in the Red Centre, the group proudly hosted the annual Trailfinders Academy Famil at Discovery Resorts - Kings Canyon.

Guests enjoyed the iconic Rim Walk, sensory immersion of 'Light Towers at Sunset' and an 'Under a Desert Moon' dinner, creating a lasting and emotional connection to the region.

To learn more about the G'day Group portfolio, [CLICK HERE](#).

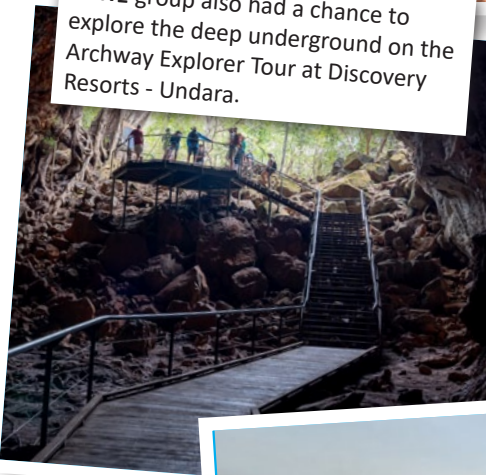


**A SUNSET** drinks experience at El Questro Homestead.

**THE** Rim Walk at Discovery Resorts - Kings Canyon is always a popular adventure.



**THE** group also had a chance to explore the deep underground on the Archway Explorer Tour at Discovery Resorts - Undara.



**CHAMBERLAIN** Gorge Cruise at El Questro Homestead was another iconic moment.



**BRANCO'S** Lookout at El Questro provided plenty of photo opportunities for the group.

**WILDLIFE** at Sunset Tour at Discovery Resorts - Undara.



**SUNSET** drinks at Discovery Resorts - Kings Canyon - it's hard to find a better view in the world.



**BUSH** Breakfast at Discovery Resorts - Undara was a great way to start the day.



## Marina Bay Sands completes refurb

**MARINA** Bay Sands has completed the transformation of its hotel rooms, launching a full inventory of 1,850 refreshed rooms.

It marks a major milestone in the property's multi-year, US\$1.75 billion makeover, and sees its number of suites rise from 180 to 775.

The announcement also follows the iconic Singapore property's recent 15th anniversary and its 500 millionth visitor.

"Our reinvestment program represents our highest ambitions to usher in a new era of luxury hospitality," said Marina Bay Sands Chief Operating Officer, Paul Town.

"With the program reaching substantial completion and the hotel room transformation crossing the finishing line, the stage is set for us to build on last year's record earnings and soar towards greater heights."

The renovation program will now focus on the launch of Jin Ting Wan, the property's fully owned and operated authentic Cantonese restaurant, in Jul this year.

Other upcoming refurbishments include LAVO Italian Restaurant & Rooftop Bar, lobby enhancements, and a new spa, with more details to be revealed later.

## ALL ABOARD FOR VIP VATICAN ACCESS

**RAILBOOKERS** has launched its first-ever VIP experience, offering travellers privileged access to the Vatican Museums in Rome.

On the evening of 08 Sep 2025, 'Railbookers Exclusive Event: After Hours at the Vatican' will take a limited number of guests to the Vatican Museums after they have closed to the public.

For two hours, guests can freely explore the Vatican's grand halls and galleries, taking in masterpieces of art, architecture, and centuries of history, free from the usual crowds.

The evening concludes with a traditional Italian apericena, a social experience that blends the relaxed atmosphere of aperitivo with a light meal.

"We're thrilled to offer our guests this extraordinary event, exploring one of the world's most



iconic sites in a serene, intimate environment," said Frank Marini, President and Chief Executive Officer of Railbookers Group.

"By offering an exclusive event like this, we are breaking the mould for independent travel.

"The chance to enjoy the Vatican after hours, away from the crowds, is a rare, unforgettable experience that is not to be missed."

Guests wanting to take part in the one-time special event can do so by booking one of three of Railbooker's new itineraries, including the eight-day 'Rome, Naples & Sorrento with Exclusive Vatican Experience'.

Each customisable itinerary includes luxury accommodation, private sightseeing activities, first-class rail travel, and more.

**CLICK HERE** for details. *JM*

## RSSC unveils first look at Seven Seas Prestige

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises has offered an initial look at its new ship, *Seven Seas Prestige*, releasing detailed renderings and a 'fly-through' video of select public spaces on board.

Due to launch in late 2026, the 822-capacity, ultra-luxury vessel's design draws on inspiration from classical and Renaissance architecture.

The visuals showcase the two-storey Starlight Atrium (pictured), which features twin spiral staircases and a



glass-enclosed ceiling that allows sunlight and starlight to illuminate the space.

The cruise line also provides a first look at *Prestige's* Galileo's Bar, which is characterised by a ceiling displaying a contemporary masterpiece styled like an oil painting.

## Aman Bahamas

**AMAN** has announced Amancaya, a new island sanctuary in the Bahamas.

Amancaya will span two secluded private cays in Exuma, featuring a 36-pavillion Aman Hotel alongside fully-serviced Aman Residences, a marina, beach club, spa and dining venues.

Now under construction, Amancaya will mark Aman's debut in the Bahamas and its third property in the Caribbean region.

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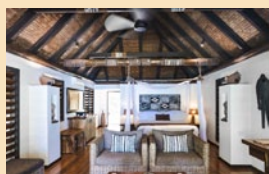
## ACCOMMODATION

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accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au



Nestled in the Gold Coast Hinterland, the new **EcoView Retreat** has opened its doors. Tailored for fitness, wellness and corporate getaways, the 70-acre facility can be booked for exclusive use of 15 villas for stays of three-, four- or seven nights.

On-site is a large conference room, semi-commercial kitchen, 30-seat dining area, lounge and gas fireplace. Guests can also provide their own caterers or select from a list of recommended local professionals.



Fiji's **Tokoriki Island Resort** recently closed for two weeks, during which time a variety of upgrades were rolled out. Work included updates to the beachfront pool bures with new bamboo flooring, bathroom tiles, luxury soft furnishings and a bottle of Veuve

Cliquot for honeymooners staying five nights. Elsewhere in the resort, air-conditioning and new fitness equipment was installed in the gym, while the resort retained its popular outdoor TRX Fitness Platform.



A stylish new event space featuring an LED blue-sky skylight has been unveiled at **Wafaifo Resort Hoi An**, which itself opened its doors in late 2024. The 270sqm space features wood panelled walls and wave-patterned carpets and has been designed for focus and flow. The space can accommodate parties of up to 200 people in various seating formats, with hi-speed wi-fi readily available.

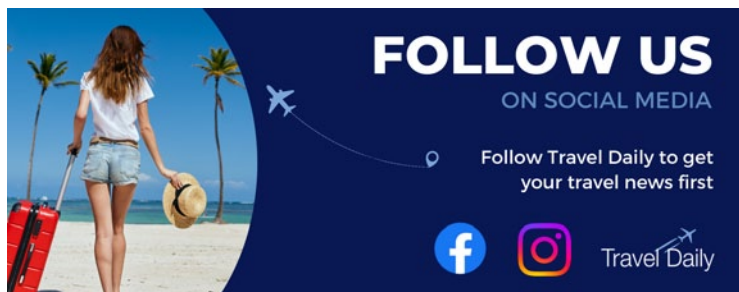


Families and larger groups exploring Africa can take advantage of new Stable Suites to ensure everyone stays together. Available at **Cape Cadogan Boutique Hotel** in Cape Town, Stable Suites is the largest room type at the property and features generous living spaces with two- & three-bedroom options. Each suite features a separate lounge and dining area, with some offering private courtyards.



An exclusive new club lounge will open later this year at **Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina** in Hawaii. Found near the resort's club rooms on the fourth floor, the residential-style lounge will feature stylish Hawaiian decorations and panoramic views

of the Pacific. Staffed by a dedicated concierge offering personalised service, the lounge will serve breakfast along with a rotating menu of grab-and-go snacks, afternoon canapes and an evening cocktail menu.



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## Qantas brings SAF Down Under



**QANTAS** has teamed up with Sydney Airport and Ampol to secure the largest-ever commercial importation of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) into Australia.

Nearly two million litres of unblended SAF will arrive in the country this week, and will be blended with conventional jet fuel before testing and certification so that it can be used on flights departing from SYD over the coming weeks.

Once blended at a ratio of around 18%, the fuel could power the equivalent of 900 flights from Sydney to Auckland on Qantas and Jetstar's 737 aircraft, reducing the resulting carbon emissions from those flights by a total estimated 3,400 tonnes.

"Today's announcement is a proud moment for Qantas and demonstrates the demand that exists for more sustainable travel," Qantas Group CEO Vanessa Hudson said.

The Flying Kangaroo is targeting 10% of its fuel use to come from SAF by 2030 and approximately 60% by 2025. *JM*

## New Euro cruises

**TWO** eight-day itineraries have been revealed by National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions, as the cruise line gears up to debut its new European river voyages (**TD 07 May**).

There will be a 'Rhine River: Castles, Culture and Culinary Delights' voyage, sailing between Cologne and Basel; and a 'Holland and Belgium: Medieval History and Scenic Waterways' cruise, which will visit Antwerp, Delft, and the Dutch countryside.

## Germain expansion

**GERMAIN** Hotels has announced a C\$160 million (A\$177.4m) investment to accelerate its expansion, led by CDPQ, Fonds de solidarite FTQ, and Investissement Quebec.

The extra funding will enable Germain to accelerate its development across Canada, and consolidate its network.

Germain Hotels is also simplifying its structure by merging Groupe Germain and Alt Canada Investment Corporation.





# Exoticca's definitive Southeast Asian adventure

This in-depth 16-day adventure through Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand offers your customers a guided experience across epic landscapes, timeless temples and vibrant cities, while making it effortless for you to sell.

Designed to captivate travellers and easy for you to present, this tour showcases the best of Southeast Asia, a bucket-list favourite for adventurers and culture enthusiasts alike.

## **Vietnam: A Land of timeless charm**

The adventure begins with a tour of Hanoi's most treasured landmarks. Your travellers will visit the iconic One Pillar Pagoda, the Temple of Literature, and the bustling Old Quarter before embarking on an overnight cruise through the tranquil waters of Ha Long Bay aboard a traditional junk boat.

From Hanoi, they'll fly to vibrant Ho Chi Minh City. Highlights include Notre Dame Cathedral, Thien Hau Temple, and the bustling Ben Thanh Market. For added value, they can enhance their experience with an optional full-day Mekong Delta excursion aboard a motorboat.

## **Cambodia: Ancient wonders reimagined**

Cambodia offers a fascinating blend of history, culture, and natural beauty. Travellers will explore the poignant Killing Fields of Choeung Ek, the architectural marvels and bustling energy of Phnom Penh, and the wonders of Angkor's temples, from the serene faces of Bayon to the overgrown beauty of Ta Prohm. An optional tuk-tuk street-food night tour adds a flavourful and immersive touch to their Cambodian adventure.

## **Thailand: Bangkok's vibrant soul**

The journey concludes in Bangkok, where the city's dynamic energy promises an unforgettable finale. Your customers will explore the iconic Temple of the Reclining Buddha, wander through the lively streets of Chinatown, and enjoy free time to uncover hidden gems in the buzzing capital.

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