



Today's issue of TD

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

- Silversea
- Emerald Cruises and Tours
- Brendan Vacations

Save up to \$15k

CLIENTS can save up to \$10,000 per suite on Silversea's Classic Voyages and up to \$15,000 on its Expedition Voyages.

For more details of the Black Friday sale, see **page seven**.

All about Sicily

ORMINA Tours is inviting agents to join a free 30-minute Sicily webinar, scheduled for Wed 26 Nov at 4pm AEDT.

The session will showcase Sicily's hidden gems, insider selling tips, and Ormina Tours' Sicily Bella Small Group Journey. Agents can register **HERE**.

Creditors tick Rex takeover

AIR T is set to take legal ownership of Rex before mid-Dec, after creditors voted to approve the purchase at the second creditors meeting yesterday (**TD** 23 Oct), ending more than 15 months of uncertainty for the struggling carrier.

Following the signing of a Deed of Company Arrangement (DOCA), Rex will officially exit administration and Air T will take over operational control and legal ownership, once administrators EY Parthenon finalise the legal proceedings needed for the deal.

The DOCA only applies to the regional arm of Rex, which operates Saab 340 aircraft in 54 airports across Australia, not Rex Airlines Pty Ltd, which ran the carrier's 737 capital city network and was voted by creditors to be placed into liquidation.

However, Air T will take over Rex's training school the Australian Airline Pilots Academy,



aviation service provider Australian Aero Propellor Maintenance and loyalty program, Rex Flyer.

The Minneapolis-based company plans to stabilise Rex's operations, address maintenance backlogs, and gradually increase the airline's active fleet from around 30 to 44 aircraft.

Air T also aims to retain Rex's management team and recruit additional pilots and engineers to boost flight capacity.

EY Parthenon Partner Sam Freeman said the deal is the best outcome for staff, customers, and suppliers, allowing Rex's regional flights to continue running. **JM**

Dazzling savings

EMERALD Cruises & Tours is offering savings of up to \$4,250pp, plus a bonus \$500pp discount on a selection of 2026 cruises - details on **page eight**.

Take an Irish escape

TRAVELLERS can enjoy a discount of up to \$3,000 per couple on Brendan Vacations' small group tours to Ireland and Scotland - head to the **back page** to find out how.

ETG treasures Tahiti

ENTIRE Travel Group (ETG) has launched its new 'Tahiti - Feel Treasured' campaign, which offers savings of up to \$4,000 per couple on Tahiti holiday packages until 19 Dec 2025.

The promotion includes a \$100 digital Mastercard for agents with every booking that includes Air Tahiti Nui flights.

Find more information **HERE**.

A large advertisement for Great Southern's Black Friday Sale. The background is a scenic image of a train crossing a bridge over a river at sunset. The Great Southern logo, featuring a kangaroo, is at the top. The text 'BLACK FRIDAY SALE' is in large white letters, with '20% OFF SELECTED DEPARTURES*' in an orange box below it. At the bottom, it says 'BOOK BY 5 DECEMBER' and 'JOURNEY BEYOND'. A small note '*T&Cs APPLY' is in the bottom right corner.

AROUND FORMOSA TAIWAN

FROM

\$3,199

PP

SURCHARGES MAY APPLY

PRICE PER PERSON TWIN SHARE | LAND ONLY

10 DAYS | GROUP

FAMILY FRIENDLY | MIN. GROUP SIZE 2

4 - 5 ★ ACCOMMODATION WITH DAILY BREAKFAST

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FCTG profits fall short, but growth ahead

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Managing Director Graham 'Skroo' Turner has outed FY25 leisure trading conditions as a challenge and highlighted "below expectation" corporate profits in the company's AGM, but shared that FCTG was taking "decisive action".

Turner said that Middle East tensions and a downturn in travel to the United States had "hit our business hard" during the fourth quarter, and that locally there was a shift to shorter-haul international destinations, with Japan and New Zealand the heroes instead of the UK and US.

Despite the headwinds, Turner was buoyant about the progress made in FY25 and the future for the company.

"The business has transformed from a large bricks-and-mortar network (1,500 outlets pre-COVID, 590 now) into a diversified, capital-light ecosystem with



scalable volume growth, access to high-margin categories, and a future blueprint incorporating AI and loyalty," he enthused.

"We are taking decisive action to manage short-term challenges while positioning the business for sustainable, long-term success."

Turner also pointed out that "additional benefits are expected in the FY26 second half from Global Business Services efficiency programs, which aim to reduce costs across support areas with a combined monthly cost base of approximately \$20 million".

FCTG is targeting underlying profit before tax of \$305

million-\$340 million, a 5.5%-17.6% increase on FY25, with earnings for the first half tracking to be "broadly in line" with last year, implying a second half profit skew that reflects traditional seasonality.

Turner suggested a more significant turnaround in Asia given the FY25 struggles, tailwinds from cost-out initiatives, and the likelihood of more stable trading during key periods.

He also flagged a margin improvement if strong TTV growth in core brands continued, which would also help boost the second half skew. *DF*

A rockin' cyber sale

AYERS Rock Resort is offering up to 50% off select accommodation for its cyber sale, which includes complimentary guest activities.

The offer ends 03 Dec **HERE**, for travel from 01 Dec-17 Mar.

US air staff return

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has demanded air traffic controllers return to work immediately, although another few days of cancellations and delays nationwide may continue.

"Anyone who doesn't [return] will be substantially 'docked'," posted Trump on Truth Social.

"For those Air Traffic Controllers who were GREAT PATRIOTS, and didn't take ANY TIME OFF for the 'Democrat Shutdown Hoax,' I will be recommending a BONUS of \$10,000 per person for distinguished service to our Country," he continued.

Last Fri, the Federal Aviation Administration instructed airlines to cut 4% of daily flights at 40 major airports nationwide due to air traffic control safety concerns (**TD** 07 Nov).

Reductions are mandated to hit 10% by Fri, although this could reach 15% to 20% if the US government shutdown does not end soon.

BLACK FRIDAY SALE

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for every
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Receive a
Bonus \$500*
for every 3 bookings.

That's \$1,100* for every 3 bookings!

STARTS TOMORROW 13 NOV

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*Conditions Apply



Window Seat

THE *Wicked* hype is continuing and with *Wicked: For Good* landing in cinemas this month, Airbnb is inviting a few select guests to Elphaba's Retreat in the Ozian Forest (also known as 'Los Angeles') - with the talented award-winning actress Cynthia Erivo herself.

Both an experience and an overnight stay are up for grabs, giving guests the opportunity to enjoy a fireside tea with Erivo and a sommelier, a guided exploration to uncover hidden surprises from the film, a multi-sensory sing-along and a creative workshop to weave a witch's broom with flowers and plants.

Princess 2027-28

PRINCESS Cruises will deploy three ships Down Under for its 2027-28 summer season, with *Royal Princess*, *Grand Princess*, and *Sapphire Princess* to offer voyages to 57 destinations across 13 countries.

The ships will sail from Sydney, Brisbane, Perth (Fremantle), and Auckland, with additional departures from Melbourne and Adelaide, including full circumnavigations of Australia.

The season will mark the line's return to WA, with *Sapphire Princess* cruising from Fremantle.

WWT unpacks Aussie trends



WENDY Wu Tours has launched its first-ever annual report, *The Journey Ahead*, which highlights a growing shift among Aussie travellers towards meaningful and slow-paced experiences across Asia and beyond.

Unveiled at a trade event in Sydney yesterday, the report challenges common perceptions about Asia, revealing nearly half of travellers are pleasantly surprised by the friendliness of locals (49%), affordability (47%), and stunning landscapes (43%).

Japan remains Australia's number one travel destination, attracting over one million visitors between Jul 2024 and Jun 2025, while China, Vietnam, India, South America, South Korea, Africa and the Middle East are also expected to be popular destinations for 2026.

According to the report, connecting with loved ones is becoming a top priority for Australians, with key motivators including spending quality time together (66%) and making

shared memories (57%).

Solo travel is also continuing to gather pace, with 73% of Australians considering exploring alone, drawn to food and market explorations (55%), cultural experiences (50%), off-the-beaten-path experiences (41%), and adventure activities (38%).

The report also highlights a generational shift, with over-55s increasingly investing in meaningful travel experiences, favouring longer stays, small group tours, cultural immersion, and off-peak travel.

"We are witnessing an exciting evolution in Australian travel," said Simon Bell, WWT Australia Managing Director.

"People are slowing down, connecting more deeply, and prioritising experiences over checklists," he emphasised. *JM*

Pictured during a panel discussion at the Sydney event: Patrice Pandeleos, Seven Communications founder and MD; Bell; and Sonia Orrego, Head of Product at WWT Aus.

VA's fresh menus

VIRGIN Australia has unveiled its new business class and buy-on-board economy menus ahead of the summer travel season.

Part of the airline's continued investment in customer experience, the business class menu offers a rotating selection of dishes across breakfast, lunch and dinner, such as Belgian waffles, peri peri marinated chicken and mixed berry cheesecake.

Meanwhile, economy guests can enjoy items such as Arnott's Tim Tams, a new grazing snack box, Byron Bay Cookies, Bundaberg sparkling drinks and Batched Strawberry Gin Sour cocktails.

Strict smoking ban

AS OF this month, it is no longer legal for tourists or residents to smoke in the Maldives, which has banned the sale and use of tobacco products for anyone born after 01 Jan 2007.

Shops, resorts and airport duty-free outlets are all banned from selling tobacco to younger adults.

People born before the date can still purchase cigarettes, but smoking in certain public places is forbidden, including workplaces, cinemas, restaurants, cafes and public transport vehicles.

Tourists above the age limit may still smoke in private areas or designated zones within resorts.

Those found with vapes or e-cigarettes face fines up to \$500 and may have their devices confiscated at Male's Velana International Airport.



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TAHITI AIR TAHITI NUI

What Sets Tahiti Apart from Other Pacific Islands

- Distinct volcanic peaks and vibrant coral atolls
- Deep cultural traditions
- A long-standing reputation for luxury and romance

when experience matters

Alice gets a leg up

ALICE Springs is set to get a \$1 million tourism boost thanks to a new Revival and Resilience grant program delivered by the federal government.

Part of an \$8.5 million total package of support, the grant aims to revitalise the region's economy which has faced challenges over recent years, including a downturn in visitation.

Now open for applications, the grants will help tourism businesses with fewer than 19 employees and an annual turnover of less than \$5 million - see the criteria **HERE**.

Two more grant programs will launch shortly to assist with the development of new experiences, as well as promotion of the Red Centre to attract more domestic and international visitors.

"These grants honour our commitment to keep the Red Centre at the heart of Australia's tourism offerings," said Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell.

Oz enjoys a taste of HK



HONG Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) has wrapped up a three-month Australian campaign promoting the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival.

HKTb, alongside Linkd Tourism, created experiences and events with Time Out Sydney and sent celebrity chef Andy Allen to experience a foodie's dream itinerary, as well as a content campaign through *Good Food*.

Experiences included a disco yum cha brunch takeover at Chin Chin in Sydney, giving more than

600 locals and influencers a taste of Hong Kong's culinary offerings.

"We invite everyone to explore the diverse flavours and culinary adventures that Hong Kong has to offer - there's something delicious waiting for you," said Karen Macmillan, HKTb Director, ANZ and South Pacific.

Australian visitation to Hong Kong is up 28% year on year. *JHM*

Pictured: HKTb's Cindy Gilbert, Olivia Zeaiter, Andy Allen and Karen Macmillan at Atlas Dining in Melbourne.

Dining out at BNE

BRISBANE Airport's international terminal will welcome a dining precinct with 13 new and refurbished food and beverage outlets to open soon.

Spanning almost 1,000sqm, the space will feature a mix of new and favourite brands, including an artisan bakery, gourmet deli, coffee shop, all-day bar and restaurant and full-service cocktail and raw bar.

Fast food giants McDonald's, Hungry Jacks and KFC will all make their debut at the airport, joined by local coffee brand Bellissimo, the return of Windmill & Co, and plenty more.

Whitsundays site

TOURISM Whitsundays has launched the first phase of its new destination website, offering improved accessibility.

Next year, the site will offer an AI-powered trip planning tool.

Click **HERE** to check it out.



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Wellness at sea

CRYSTAL has unveiled its third annual Wellness at Sea retreat voyages aboard *Crystal Symphony*, sailing Aug 2026 during National Wellness Month.

Open for bookings now, the retreat offers guests "a holistic journey of movement, mindfulness and culinary nourishment".

Led by Crystal's wellness ambassador and registered nutritionist Dalila Roglieri, the program includes yoga and meditation, sound baths and functional training, as well as breathwork and mind-reset classes.

The retreats will include an educational focus on longevity science, with lectures exploring key topics such as aging well, maintaining a sharp mind and a strong body, and understanding how emotions effect health.

Culinary offerings will focus on plant-rich dishes, with guests to enjoy hands-on wellness cuisine workshops.

The first sailing runs 17-24 Aug from Vancouver to San Diego, followed immediately by a second voyage, from 25 Aug-05 Sep from San Diego to Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Guests may book either individually or combine both back-to-back for a continuous Pacific wellness journey.

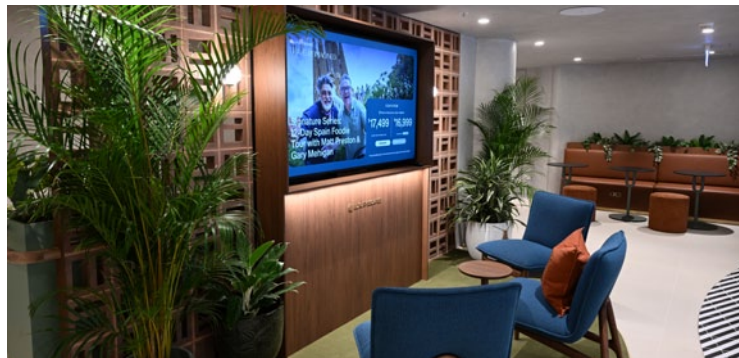
LUXURY ESCAPES LANDS IN BONDI

LUXURY Escapes has today unveiled "the ultimate travel retail experience" in Westfield Bondi, with people queueing up as early as 4am for the opportunity to win \$100,000 worth of prizes.

Inspired by a premium airline lounge and some of the operator's most popular tropical destinations, the store features immersive LCD screens, an in-boutique bar, and a palm tree oasis feature.

The space will be staffed by 15 full-time consultants and is open for a public preview and a giveaway today, with regular trading beginning tomorrow.

"It's a pretty spectacular space, it feels like you're going on holiday when you walk in the store," founder Adam Schwab told *Travel Daily*.



"We want to capture people's imagination when they come into the store."

According to a recent Luxury Escapes survey, 80% of travellers book through the website, but 15% prefer to book in person and 5% over the phone.

Luxury Escapes is now looking at sites for its next store, Schwab revealed to *Travel Daily*.

"The type of site and centre [we

get] will make the decision for us," he said.

"If it's in a prime location, Brisbane will likely be the next cab off the rank, but that can change," he added.

Meanwhile, Luxury Escapes' Chadstone store has gone onto become "one of the world's highest grossing travel stores" since it opened two years ago, said Schwab. *JHM*

Atlantis the Royal Maldives to arrive in 2029

ATLANTIS The Royal Maldives will open in 2029, bringing a new era of luxury experiences to the destination.

Located in South Male Atoll in the Maldives Archipelago, the resort will feature two islands, one with a focus on family and the other centred on luxury.

Combined, they will offer 493 keys, including 270 hotel rooms and 223 villas and mansions.

Guests will enjoy 20 dining venues, two beach clubs, and the expansive 70,000m²



Aquaventure, which features up to 15 rides anchored by the Neptune and Poseidon Towers.

Accessible by seaplane or speedboat, Atlantis The Royal, Maldives will also offer sports academies, entertainment zones, and wellness facilities.

Taste Lantau inflight

HONG Kong Airlines has introduced a new Lantau Island-inspired dining experience for business class passengers, in partnership with YUE, the Cantonese restaurant at Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung Hotel.

The menu showcases distinctive local ingredients, including dried shrimp, honey, dried squid and fish maw, with dishes like steamed pork patty with dried squid and mushrooms.

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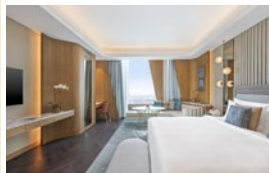
Send your accommodation updates to:
accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au



Marriott Hotels has unveiled **Pattaya Marriott Resort and Spa**, a new destination on Jomtien Beach in Thailand. Easily accessible via three international airports, the property features 289 rooms and suites, including family rooms with bunk beds. Every room is equipped with a full range of modern amenities, functional spaces, comfortable bedding, and a spa-style bathroom with a rain shower.



Le Beauvallon, an exclusive-use private estate overlooking the Gulf of Saint-Tropez, has been transformed by COMO Hotels and Resorts. Now called **COMO Le Beauvallon**, the Cote d'Azur landmark will open in Apr 2026 and features 42 individually designed rooms and suites, a bayside pool, restaurant, beach club, gym and wellness rooms. Guests can enjoy a complimentary eight-minute speedboat ride to explore the fishing village of Saint-Tropez.



Mandarin Oriental has announced the opening of **Mandarin Oriental Downtown, Dubai**, marking its second property in the city. The hotel offers 259 guestrooms and suites, 224 private residences, 10 dining venues, and a rooftop helipad designed for discreet VIP arrivals. There is also a wellness zone spanning two floors, complete with nine treatment rooms, two couples' suites, and a VIP suite, plus saunas, a fitness centre, pools, and much more.



Coogee Bay Hotel has launched Beach Bar & Dining, a new seaside restaurant led by Executive Chef Justin Schott. Ideal for long lunches, small gatherings and sunset dinners by the sea, the venue offers a selection of seafood, with dishes like crab and mussel rigatoni with white wine. At the bar, guests can order summery cocktails and spritzes.



Accor's hybrid hospitality brand JO&JOE has made its Asia-Pacific debut, with the opening of **JO&JOE Auckland**. Aiming to combine the comfort of a hotel with the social atmosphere of a hostel, the property offers 293 beds across 75 rooms, with options ranging from shared dormitories to private rooms with bathrooms. There is also a rooftop bar and restaurant, plus a common area.

MW Tours has Seoul



EIGHT Australian travel agents have recently returned from an immersive seven-day family to Korea, hosted by MW Tours, T'way Air and the Korea Tourism Organization Sydney Office.

Led by MW Tours Marketing Manager Harley Young, the advisors visited Seoul, Busan and Gyeongju during their trip, where they admired the country's natural landscapes and participated in interactive cultural experiences.

"Hosting the South Korea Famil was a rewarding experience, not just in showcasing this incredible destination, but in seeing how the agents genuinely connected with it," said Young.

"South Korea impressed everyone with its organisation, culture, and culinary scene, and its clear to see why South Korea is so popular for Australian travellers," he added.

In Seoul, the agents visited Changdeokgung Palace while dressed in traditional hanbok, then enjoyed a hands-on kimchi-

making class, an interactive K-pop immersion at HiKR Ground and admired panoramic views from N Seoul Tower, before walking past traditional homes in Bukchon Hanok Village.

Following that, the group caught the high-speed KTX train south to Busan, where they explored the Gamcheon Culture Village, the Haedong Yonggung Temple and rode the Haeundae Blueline Park Sky Capsule along the coast.

In the ancient capital of Gyeongju, agents visited the UNESCO World-Heritage listed Bulguska Temple and the Daereungwon Tomb Complex.

The group also enjoyed a walk through the picturesque Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond, before returning to Seoul, where they visited the Demilitarised Zone, and learnt about Korea's modern history. *JHM*

Pictured: The agents dressed in traditional hanbok in front of Changdeokgung Palace.

Photography: Korea Tourism Organization Sydney Office.



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*Terms & conditions apply

EMERALD[◇]

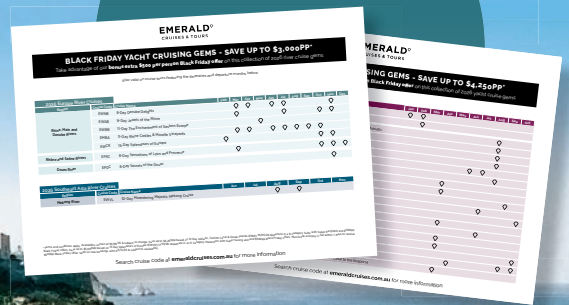
CRUISES & TOURS

BLACK FRIDAY [◇] GEMS [◇]

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