

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features nine pages of the latest industry news, including a photo page from **Collette** and our **Business Events News** page, plus full pages from:

- Inspiring Vacations
- Batik Air

## Loyalty battle heats up

**QANTAS** has intensified its attack in the airline loyalty wars, announcing Club Jetstar Extras, a \$199 per year add-on to Club Jetstar membership that allows Frequent Flyer (QFF) members to earn status and miles on any Jetstar fares, including the lowest priced tickets.

Club Jetstar Extras provides a pincer movement for Qantas Group on Virgin and its Velocity frequent flyer program by offering its flyers the opportunity to earn status and miles on everything from top dollar first and business class flights around the world to the cheapest of domestic flights within Australia on its budget arm.



There are limitations, however, on earning through Club Jetstar Extras, with status credits capped at 75 for the year, while the points earn ability is uncapped.

To become part of the Club Jetstar Extras program, flyers first need to be a member of Club Jetstar, which costs \$65.

Virgin Australia made waves in the frequent flyer market announcing a partnership with Myer (**TD** 13 Sep 2022), which is now run by former Qantas Frequent Flyer boss Olivia Wirth.

Velocity members can use their points to pay for Myer purchases in store and online or combine points with other payment.

Meanwhile Qantas recently forged a similar tie-up with David Jones (**TD** 26 Sep). *DF*

## One day left to go

**TIME** is running out to take advantage of Inspiring Vacations' Black Friday flash deals, which end tomorrow.

Travellers can save on a range of Egypt packages, including the 16-day 'Egypt Uncovered' premium tour - more details on **page 10**.



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## Big 10 for Batik Air

**BATIK** Air is celebrating 10 years of operations in Perth - head to the **back page** to see the carrier's message of appreciation to the trade.

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- Experiences that feel authentic and personal
- The chance to disconnect and recharge in nature

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## Webjet meeting scrapped

A **WEBJET** general meeting that was scheduled for tomorrow to decide on two new directors put forward by Portfolio Services has been cancelled.

In a note posted on the ASX this morning, Webjet said it had received correspondence from Portfolio Services confirming its withdrawal of the meeting following a proxy vote yesterday that failed to have the support of shareholders for its resolution to be carried.

Portfolio Services had previously sought to have Daniel Weiss and Andrew Taylor appointed as directors of Webjet in a bid to bolster vocal shareholder Gary Weiss' influence at the OTA, a proposal that Webjet recommended all shareholders should vote against.

While Portfolio Services may have scrapped its bid for now to install allies on the board, the entity increased its stake in



Webjet this morning from 17.10% to 18.26%.

Weiss was earlier in the year part of an unsuccessful takeover bid for Webjet through his business interest BGH Capital.

Yesterday, Helloworld confirmed months of innuendo by making its own tilt at buying Webjet (**TD** 19 Nov), which is now before the board for consideration. **AB**

### World Cup priority

**THE** United States has confirmed it will give visa appointment priority to travellers with tickets to the 2026 World Cup taking place in Jun and Jul.

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## EC targets flights

**THE** European Commission (EC) has laid out its long-term plan to lower the need for short-haul flights across the continent.

In a recent presentation, EC VP Raffaele Fitto said key to the goal will be significantly reducing travel times by train between major European cities by 2040.

Among the goals will be allowing travellers to slash the rail time between Berlin to Copenhagen by three hours using trains that will travel in excess of 200km per hour.

## Love for COMAC

**MALAYSIA** Airlines' parent group and Emirates President Tim Clark have this week both hinted at future purchases of the Chinese-made plane, COMAC.

Malaysia Aviation Group said it was considering COMACs to accelerate fleet expansion, while Clark said the Boeing-Airbus duopoly will "not be permanent".

## Bookings on TAAP

**EXPEDIA** Group's B2B business enjoyed an "exceptional" third quarter, according to CEO Ariane Gorin, with bookings increasing by 26% year-on-year.

"Specifically in our travel agency business [TAAP], we have grown the number of agencies we work with, expanded our agent loyalty program and added features like new payment options - all of which have contributed to over \$3 billion in bookings year to date," he added.

Interestingly, strong US performance was also called out as a factor in the buoyant figures, with Gorin pointing to "the fastest US growth in three years" as fuelling an 11% growth in booked room nights.



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## JAL's jumbo order

**JAPAN** Airlines is considering adding up to 70 new planes in a bid to modernise its fleet, according to *The Japan Times*.

The order is said to consist of 40 single-aisle jets and 30 turboprops, with the exact models not yet revealed.

## WSI is at risk of failure

**A REPORT** released this week has claimed Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport is at risk of failing to attract enough carriers unless more government incentives are added.

In addition to calling for an extra \$100 million in incentives over the next five years, the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue and Business Western Sydney also want to see WSI reclassified as a 'secondary airport' to secure more airline commitment.

Shifting WSI from the designation of 'major airport' would allow airlines to avoid sharing quota capacity limits with Sydney Airport, freeing up seats to dedicate to the city's upcoming airport in the western suburbs.



"It's important we don't tie WSI's hands, so it can operate freely and with minimal red tape," Business Western Sydney Executive Director David Borger told *The Daily Telegraph*.

"London, New York and Tokyo run multiple airports successfully - so can Sydney," he added.

Just Singapore Airlines and Air New Zealand have so far signed up to fly from WSI when it opens in late 2026, with the NSW Govt's \$8 million in incentives for carriers labelled "insufficient" by aerotropolis expert John Kasarda.

"The engine of the new aerotropolis is not the airport but the flight network...without those flights the whole aerotropolis will flop," he warned. **AB**

## JB opens up 2027

**JOURNEY** Beyond Rail has opened bookings for its 2027 season, which will see The Ghan's northbound itinerary extended to a three-night experience, plus the launch of two new Great Southern holiday packages in partnership with Outback Spirit.



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## HAL closer to Oz

**HOLLAND** America Line (HAL) has launched its 2027-28 Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific season.

Sailing from Sep 2027 through Mar 2028, guests can enjoy Legendary Voyages, new overnight stays in Melbourne, Cairns and Lautoka, and over 100 wildlife and nature tours.

A highlight of the season is the 26-day 'Australia, Coral Sea & Fiji Legendary' voyage, which is set to visit 14 ports across Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and beyond.

HAL will also offer a festive roundtrip sailing from Sydney, which will feature a tree-lighting ceremony, a nutcracker-themed tea, and more.

## Ama expands team

**AMAWATERWAYS** has doubled the size of its local team with three appointments, less than two years after the river cruise line established its local presence.

Josefina Luna has joined the team as Marketing Coordinator, and will use her background in tourism marketing to spearhead creative campaigns.

Additionally, Kev Harmalkar and Eddie Chang have both joined as river cruise specialists (reservations).

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## Window Seat

**DANISH** ferry company DFDS has been left red faced after a hardcore porn film was inadvertently shown to guests travelling home to the UK from France after attending the F1 Grand Prix.

One passenger told local media that she was about to inform the crew of her updated travel plans when she suddenly saw multiple kids running out of the recliner lounge area screaming.

"Some parents came out and they were asking the man who worked there to sort the TV out, they were saying 'there's hardcore porn on the TV'.

"I couldn't see it, but it was audible," the shocked passenger recounted, who wished to remain anonymous.

In further awkwardness, witnesses said vexed parents had to explain to their kids what had happened, with one guest stating she heard one dad explaining that "not all adults do that".

The journey from Dieppe to Newhaven was already strained with passengers, with some on board being sent back to France due to a previous technical fault at Newhaven Port in the UK.

The offending channel has since been removed from the list of stations on the ship.

## Intrepid gets active in US

**INTREPID** Travel has inked a major agreement in the United States to expand its reach to American travellers, signing on to co-create adventure itineraries with outdoor retailer REI Co-op.

The deal is the Aussie operator's most significant partnership forged in North America since embarking on a major growth offensive in the region.

Launching in Jan 2026, the collaboration will see two streams of adventures launched for US travellers - REI Exclusive and REI Recommended - exploring 32 countries across 75 trips.

REI Co-op operates a large network of retail stores in the US selling adventure apparel and equipment, and also enjoys a strong online presence.

However, the brand was recently forced to close its adventure travel business earlier this year, leaving the door open for Intrepid to resurrect a new chapter of experiences under the



latest partnership.

"We know REI members are seeking unique, authentic and meaningful travel experiences grounded in community," said Leigh Barnes, Intrepid's President of the Americas.

"By combining REI's deep outdoor expertise with Intrepid's recognised approach to responsible and locally-led tourism, we are making it easier for curious members to seek out the unknown and experience the world," he added.

While the new itineraries can be booked by anyone, REI members will receive a 15% discount on the Exclusive trips and will receive a 20% off coupon for the retail store when booking a Recommended journey. AB

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## DCL executive retires

**LONG-TIME** Disney Cruise Line (DCL) senior executive Sharon Siskie has announced plans to retire at the end of Jan next year.

The cruise line's VP and GM has been in her current role for four years, and with the line for over 30, recently overseeing three new ships in the new Wish class.

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## Australian Government Airline Tender

The Department of Finance has released an Approach to Market to establish a new Australian Government Air Travel Services arrangement. We encourage all airlines to visit AusTender and search for **FIN-25-AirTravel-RFT** for more information.



Australian Government  
Department of Finance



READ MORE

## Europe's hot summer

**EUROPE'S** tourism sector performed strongly over the northern summer months, with international arrivals rising 3% year-on-year, the European Travel Commission's (ETC) Q3 2025 report has showed.

Additionally, overnight arrivals to the continent were up 2.7%, with travellers undeterred by rising costs and the record number of heatwaves to afflict the continent.

The upward trajectory is expected to continue as well, with travel expenditure projected to account for 3.1% of total

consumer spending, exceeding both last year's share and the 2010-19 average.

Total visitor spending is forecasted to grow by 9.9% in 2025, the ETC report revealed.

Most European destinations enjoyed strong visitation, with 30 out of 34 reporting countries recording increases in arrivals and/or overnight stays compared to last year.

Southern Mediterranean destinations like Malta (up 12%) showed positive results, as well as northern Europe - particularly Norway, which rose by 14%.

"This summer once again confirmed a strong appetite for travel to and within Europe, even amid higher costs and shifting conditions," said Miguel Sanz, President of the ETC.

"The continued recovery from Asia and stable demand from the United States highlight Europe's enduring global appeal." JM

### Blue Islands gonski

**BLUE** Islands, the regional airline of the Channel Islands, has entered liquidation after facing financial difficulties.

The carrier reportedly owes Jersey's government £9.1m (A\$18m) - including £500,000 lent a week before it ceased trading.



**MORE** than 200 suppliers, agents, trade partners and association representatives came together to celebrate the end of 2025 at **Travel Daily's** annual Bon Voyage party last night in Sydney.

Held at the glamorous Zephyr rooftop bar at the Hyatt Regency, guests enjoyed cocktails and delicious canapes while admiring the views of Darling Harbour and catching up with industry friends and colleagues.

"Bon Voyage is our way of thanking the industry for all of your support throughout the year," said Business Publishing Group General Manager, Matthew Vince.

"Thank you for reading **Travel Daily** and we look forward to

working with you in 2026."

Prizes were given away to lucky attendees, including a three-night stay at Arkaba Homestead in South Australia thanks to Wild Bush Luxury, a \$1,000 tailoring experience from InStitchu and two customised wine journeys from Good Pair Days.

Special thanks to sponsors CVFR and Azamara Cruises.

Stay tuned to **Travel Daily** for more photos tomorrow.

**Pictured:** Julie Primmer, Ascend Travel Group; Dean Long, Australian Travel Industry Association; Karen Deveson, Collette; Damian Borg, Norwegian Cruise Line; and Janene Pendleton, Envoyage Drummoine.

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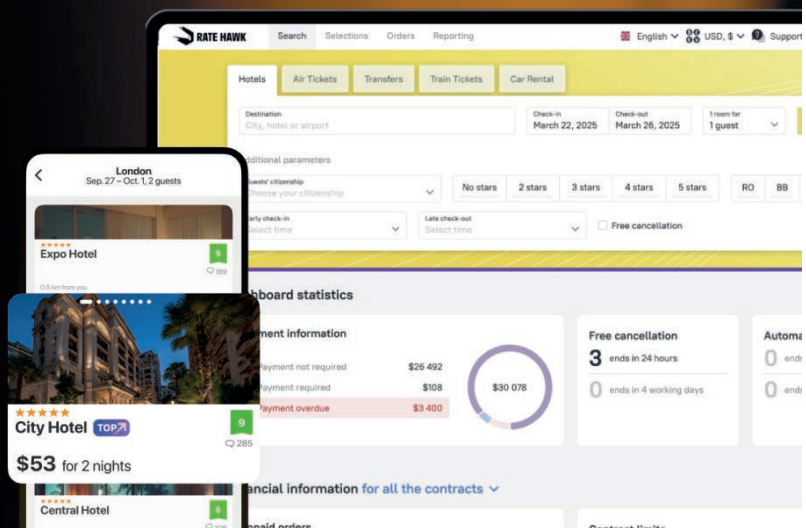
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### EY, EK Airbus orders

**ETIHAD** is expanding its widebody fleet with 32 additional Airbus aircraft, a mix of A350-1000s, A350F freighters, and A330-900s through both direct orders and lease commitments.

The first deliveries of the aircraft will kick off in 2027.

Ethiad recently announced the addition of 28 Boeing widebody aircraft to its fleet, bringing its total widebody order to 60.

The combination of Boeing and Airbus additional aircraft will offer Etihad more flexibility across medium-haul, long-haul and cargo.

Meanwhile, Emirates has also ordered eight additional Airbus A350-900s this week worth US\$3.4 billion, boosting the airline's fleet of the aircraft to a total of 73 units.

### Viva lets loose in LA



**VIVA** Holidays teamed up with Los Angeles Tourism, United Airlines, Air Tickets and MyWay Travel & Events to treat 10 top-selling agents to a famil in the City of Angels.

The group experienced LA's iconic attractions and luxury hospitality, with a stay at W Hollywood, a full day at Universal Studios Hollywood with Express Pass access, and a shopping spree at Citadel Outlets.

Agents also explored cultural landmarks like the Dolby Theatre, hiked to the Hollywood Sign, and enjoyed VIP dining at some of LA's hottest spots.

Standout moments included attending a Dua Lipa concert at the Kia Foun, and experiencing an NFL game at SoFi Stadium.

"LA is huge and has so much to do, you can easily spend a week or two there and still not see everything," one agent enthused.

**Pictured:** Tiara Hade, Lisa Bechly, Sam Harrison, Tara Cahill, Michelle Fleet, Amy Muratovic, Stacey Daley, Scott McGlynn, Krystal O'Brien, Paris Pullen, Amy Rowe, and Dominic Wolten.

### Courtney exits FCTG

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) New Zealand Managing Director and Supply Leader Victoria Courtney's (**pictured**) role has been made redundant.

The Kiwi-based executive will exit the business in the coming weeks, with the move described by FCTG as an evolution into a brand-based leadership structure over a country-based approach.

FCTG's new structure will see the FCTG brand leaders in NZ - Heidi Walker, Jason Buckley, Kelly de Graaf, Angie Forsyth, Kelly Thomas and Stephan Venter - play a more prominent role in day-to-day management.

"[Courtney's] leadership, vision and unwavering commitment have helped guide the business through some of the most challenging times in recent history," said FCTG Managing Director Graham Turner.

Courtney added that working in the New Zealand travel industry has been one of the "greatest privileges" of her career.



### Emirates expands AC

**AIR** Canada and Emirates have launched a major, multi-year expansion agreement, building on its existing strategic partnership.

Both carriers signed an MoU to extend the reciprocal codeshare and loyalty partnership until 31 Dec 2032.

The tie-up will boost passenger choice and enhance the customer experience through improved operational coordination and new benefits for passengers.

"This agreement strengthens our international strategy by supporting our daily, year-round service between Toronto and Dubai and providing customers and shippers seamless connections," said Mark Galardo, Executive Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer and President, Cargo at Air Canada.

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### What's brewin', BNE?

**TRAVELLERS** at Brisbane Airport can dine at the new 4 Pines Brewery and Never Never gin distillery, which features an 800-capacity venue, beer garden, pub dining, and function spaces.



## Collette famil goes to new heights

**COLLETTE** recently hosted an unforgettable 12-day 'Peaks of Europe' famil, giving 21 selected travel agents the chance to experience the magic behind one of its most iconic Explorations small group itineraries.

Crafted by travellers, for travellers, the famil was a perfect example of an itinerary that included ideal pacing, authentic experiences, and flexible time to make the journey their own.

Starting in Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, the agents explored alpine wonders across France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy - wandering Annecy's canals, riding the cogwheel train to Jungfrauoch, and savouring Swiss raclette before finishing in the stunning Dolomites.

This famil highlighted Collette's commitment to authentic travel experiences through small-group explorations, giving agents firsthand insights to inspire clients seeking culture, local flavours, and impactful connections.

"From Mont Blanc to the Dolomites, every stop was a postcard come to life, a true celebration of Europe's breathtaking landscapes and the magic of travel that is designed with the modern traveller in mind," said an agent.



**MEETING** an Austrian ski jump Olympic champion in Innsbruck.



**RAIN** or shine, authentic connections await at the foot of Mount Blanc, outside Chamonix.



**SNOW**, peaks, and pure magic: the group at Jungfrauoch, Switzerland at the top of Europe.



**LAURA** Chandler, Flight Centre Baldvis and Manuela Palucci, Flight Centre Castle Hill in Annecy, France.



**A SCENIC** cogwheel journey leads to Jungfrauoch, a UNESCO wonder at the roof of Europe.

**KIRK** Walpole Travelmanagers Vic; Frances Curran, HLO Mackay; Leanne Downs, Travel by Wyndham; and Suni Ahuja, RAC Travel West Perth.



**AN UNFORGETTABLE** afternoon aboard the GoldenPass, winding through pastoral Swiss landscapes to Gstaad.



**THE** Olympic Rings stand proud in Cortina d'Ampezzo, framed by the majestic Dolomite peak.



**ALLY** McQuade, Gem Tours & Travel, Vic is ready for an adventure in the Dolomites.





## TEG in the Cloud

**TICKETEK** Entertainment Group (TEG) has signed a strategic partnership with Google Cloud to enhance fan experiences by harnessing the power of AI.

The first innovation launched by the pair is Stella - Ticketek's AI-powered fan assistant, which simplifies event discovery and ticket purchasing through conversational AI and enhanced search technology.

The duo will work together to develop a suite of AI tools designed to improve every stage of the event lifecycle, from planning and ticketing to fan engagement and operational insight.

Key focus areas include hyper-personalised recommendations, smarter crowd management, accessibility tools, and more.

## FRESH FACES FOR ABEA BOARD

**THE** Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has welcomed two new directors to its board - Cindy-Lee Bakos from MCI Australia and Nick Jeffrey from the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

They will join Angie Becker from Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), who was also re-elected.

Additionally, Peter King's term as Chair has been extended for a further two years, with Vice Chair Matt Pearce from Talk2 Media also continuing in his role.

The Board also confirmed Andrew Crook from AV1 as the latest Emerging Leader Board Observer, reflecting ABEA's commitment to developing up-and-coming leaders.

"Cindy-Lee and Nick represent two crucial pillars of our sector: sophisticated event strategy and advisory, and world-class venue



leadership," said King.

"Their insight into how business events operate on the ground, as well as how they create value nationally, will be instrumental for us moving forward.

"Their appointment ensures our Board continues to reflect the breadth of the industry and positions us strongly to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities," King added.

**MEANWHILE**, ABEA announced the finalists this week for the upcoming Australian Business Events Awards 2025.

The winners will be revealed on 04 Dec at the MCEC during the three-day Australian Business Events Association Conference (**TD** 18 Sep).

"Our finalists highlight the ambition and skill that drives the business events industry forward," King said.

"Their achievements strengthen the foundations for long-term growth, talent development and global competitiveness." *JM*

See the full list of finalists **HERE**.

**Pictured:** ABEA's new directors, Bakos, Jeffrey and Crook.

## Events driving travel

**NEARLY** half of US travellers aged 18-34 and two in five in Europe said a live event was a major factor in choosing their destination, according to a new report from Arival.

The *Event-Driven Traveler* report, which surveyed 2,400 US and European tourists, found that 73% of the former cohort and 60% of the latter attended an event in 2024.

American travellers aged 35-54 spent nearly US\$400 (A\$617) per event - the highest of any group.

## Fiji's new "game-changing" event venue

**CROWNE** Plaza Fiji Nadi Bay Resort & Spa has opened a new convention centre and event precinct, marking the completion of the resort's multi-million dollar transformation.

Spanning 16,572m<sup>2</sup>, the convention centre is one of Fiji's largest purpose-built venues, featuring a pillarless 925m<sup>2</sup> ballroom for up to 1,500 guests, dedicated pre-function areas, private entrances, and full in-house AV services.



The precinct also includes three identical event spaces, a smaller ballroom with two subdivisions, and two 59m<sup>2</sup> executive boardrooms.

## GCCEC's eco tick

**THE** Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) has achieved EarthCheck Master Certification, marking the venue's 17th year of sustained benchmarking through EarthCheck.

Phase two of GCCEC's five-year sustainability strategy is now underway, focusing on initiatives that reduce waste and improve efficiency, said General Manager Nick Jeffrey.



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## APPOINTMENTS

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**G Adventures** has expanded its G Travel Community team with two new appointments. **Leah Shelly** has joined as Chief Community Officer, GTC alongside **Michelle Hudema**, who has taken on the role of Chief Operating Officer, GTC. Shelly has been with the tour operator for 14 years, most recently serving as VP People and Community Operations, while Hudema has been with the company since 2008, with her latest role being VP Strategic Operations.

**James Bermingham**, **Virgin Hotels Collection** Chief Executive Officer, has announced his departure after nearly five years at the helm of the hospitality company. Bermingham became CEO of Virgin Hotels in 2021, then oversaw the birth of the new parent brand, Virgin Hotels Collection. **Joe Margison**, formerly Chief Commercial Officer, has replaced Bermingham as interim CEO and will remain in the position for the next 12 months.

**Los Angeles Tourism** has welcomed **Myfanwy McGregor** as its new Director Global Communications, Asia Pacific. Based in Sydney, McGregor will lead communications strategy across Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea and emerging Southeast Asian markets. Additionally, **Craig Gibbons** has been promoted to Regional VP, Asia Pacific. Gibbons, who established the organisation's APAC office in 2014, now oversees the region's marketing, PR, aviation development and travel trade strategy.

**Pan Pacific Hotels Group (PPHG)** has announced the appointment of **Celine Du** as Chief Commercial and Marketing Officer. Drawing on more than 30 years' experience across top luxury hotel brands, including senior roles at Mandarin Oriental and Shangri-La, Du will lead commercial strategy and performance across the Pan Pacific, Parkroyal Collection and Parkroyal brands.

**The UN Tourism General Assembly** has confirmed the appointment of **Professor Marina Novelli** as the new Chair of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. Professor Novelli is an acknowledged expert in tourism and international development and serves as the Director of the Sustainable Travel and Tourism Advanced Research Centre at Nottingham University Business School. She will complete a four-year term as Chair.

**Millennium Hotels and Resorts, New Zealand** has made two new hires for its sales and marketing team. **Rachael Findlay** has been selected for the role of Director of Sales - Corporate, Conference & Incentives and **Angelique van der Merwe** has been named Head of Marketing and Brand. Findlay brings more than two decades of senior sales and leadership experience in the hospitality industry across Australia and New Zealand, while van der Merwe has more than 22 years' experience in hospitality sales and marketing, with a career spanning luxury hotels.

## Universal takes a ride



**DETAILS** have been revealed this week about the upcoming Universal Kids Resort opening in Frisco, Texas.

The theme park will be separated into seven different lands, such as DreamWorks' Shrek's Swamp, Jurassic World Adventure Camp, Nickelodeon's SpongeBob SquarePants Bikini Bottom, Illumination's Minions versus Minions: Bello Bay Club and others.

Within the regions, attractions like the Isle of Curiosity will invite guests to have fun at Gabby's Cat-Tastic Dance Party or enjoy cupcakes at Cakey's Cupcakes.

At Shrek's Swamp, attendees can enjoy Shrek & Fiona's Happily Ogre After attraction, as well as meet the two monsters and enjoy two play areas including Shrek's Swamp Rompin' Stomp and Shrek's Swamp Splash & Smash.

Meanwhile, visitors will love the Cretaceous Coaster at Jurassic World Adventure Camp, as well as Mr. DNA's Double Helix Spin and the Pteranodrop, and play areas like Jurassic World Lookout Towers and Paddock Play. **JHM**

## Four Seasons Insider

**FOUR** Seasons has released its first multi-property Insider Itineraries at its luxurious hotels in Bali, Spain and Mexico, offering guests an exploration into each of the destinations.

The eight-day 'Bali: Unplugged and Unscripted' itinerary offers guests an in-depth cultural adventure into the Indonesian island and is available 01-08 Dec and 08-15 Dec, with additional dates to be added next year.

The journey begins at a luxurious private villa in the Four Seasons property at Jimbaran Bay for four days, where guests will receive a Balinese blessing with a local priest, a Baru Detox Treatment and a chef-curated lunch at restaurant Alu Pool.

Visitors will then move to the Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan, where they will embark on a private rafting journey along the Ayung River, visit temples and private homes and indulge at the Sacred River Spa, followed by afternoon tea at the Lotus Pond and a farm-to-table cooking class.



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