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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our luxury page, plus a full page from HX.

Adventure with HX

TRAVELLERS can enjoy savings of up to \$7,635 on HX's all-inclusive expeditions to Antarctica - find out more on the **back page**.

Princess brings in Star power

PRINCESS Cruises has revealed that movie star Matthew McConaughey and his wife, Brazilian-American model and designer Camila Alves, will serve as godparents of *Star Princess*.

The famous couple - whose Pantalones Organic Tequila products are served across Princess' fleet - will christen the new ship during a naming ceremony in Fort Lauderdale on 06 Nov - see **CW** for details.

TTC boosts sales support

TRAVEL agent partners will now enjoy easier access to TTC Tour Brands' support staff, with the company increasing its on-road sales and senior leadership workforce by 25 percent.

The result will see more frequent face-to-face interactions and relationship support by TTC Tour Brands sales representatives.

The team will be led by SVP Sales Oceania Andy Young (**pictured**).

His expanded team sees Jo Leckie promoted to Field Sales Director Qld, SA and NZ, who will oversee seven sales managers operating in these regions.

Leckie will be joined by new recruit Melinda Wouda, who was recently appointed as Field Sales Director Vic/Tas, NSW/ACT & WA/NT from Globus (**TD** 26 Sep).

Four dedicated strategic account managers will provide further support to dedicated consortia, with Nicole Rodgers overseeing the FCTG Oceania



account, Tomas Malmberg driving key accounts, Marija Tolj focusing on House of Travel, and Ki Williams overseeing home-based and OTA accounts region-wide.

Toli will also spearhead a new sales development team, who will be focused on supporting small and emerging agencies on growth targets, to be supported by long-time Sales Managers Suzy McPhail and Kayla McCarthy.

"By investing in more people, new leadership, and a unique sales development team, we are ensuring that every agency... feels equipped, supported, and inspired to grow their business," Young said. *ML*

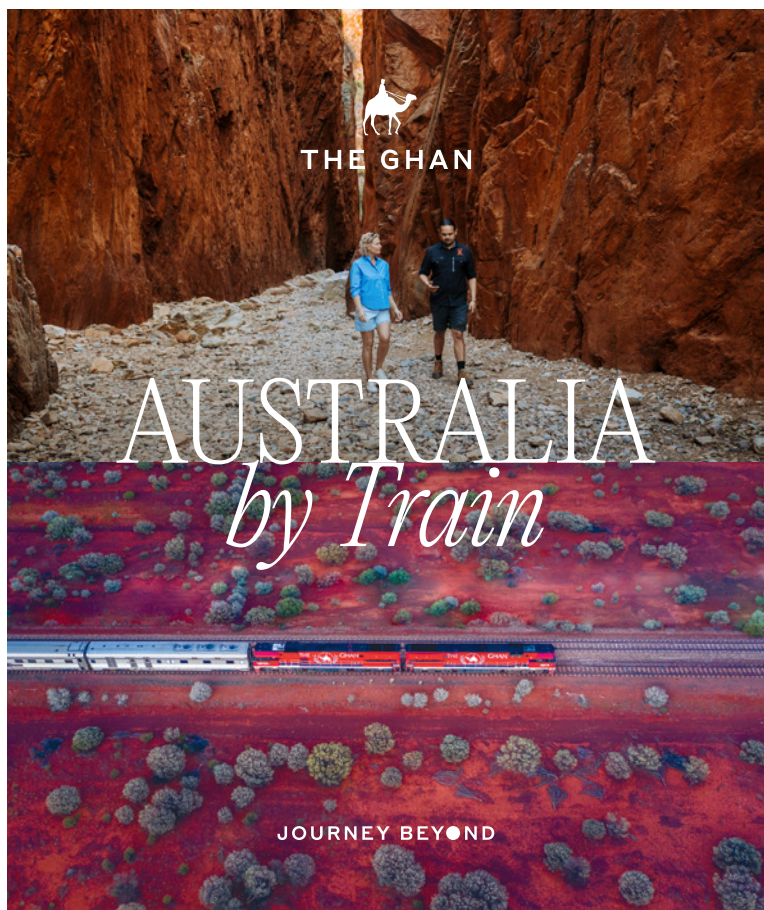
All about cruise

CRUISE Month has kicked off, arming travel agents with information, news and insights about the industry.

Each week focuses on a theme: ocean (5-11 Oct), river (12-18 Oct), expedition (19-25 Oct) and luxury (26 Oct-01 Nov).

"Cruise Month is about inspiring cruise travellers and directing them towards CLIA travel agents to take advantage of their expert guidance," said CLIA MD for Australasia Joel Katz.

"This year's campaign has been designed to reach greater audiences than ever, so we're encouraging all our members to get involved."

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Wednesday 1st October 2025

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Big Velocity change

CHANGES to Virgin Australia's Velocity Frequent Flyer status credit earn rate take effect from today, as part of the final rollout of amendments unveiled last year (**TD** 17 Oct 2024).

Travellers seeking to earn or retain a certain status tier must now earn at least 50% of their credits from flying Virgin Australia marketed and operated sectors.

The change means status credits received through family pooling, FlyBuys, partner credit cards or flights with partner airlines will only count up to a 50% cap.

However, there has been no change to the number of actual status credits required to reach or remain at each tier.

Members whose annual renewal date occurs on or after today will be subject to the new status requirements.

Velocity will also this week introduce its new Forever Gold tier, for those who have earned 12,000 status credits dating back to 01 Feb 2013, and Platinum Plus for flyers who accrue 2,000 status credits in a membership year.

Star off hook again

AGREEMENT has been reached by Star Entertainment and its various creditors to restructure its debt with a new lender syndicate which will give it access to more funds at cheaper servicing rates.

According to the *Australian Financial Review*, financiers may include an offshore consortium and a vehicle owned by billionaire pub mogul, Bruce Mathieson.

Star Entertainment has been mired in regulatory scandal for several years and currently owes its creditors \$430 million.

Infinity, Ireland team up



INFINITY Holidays has partnered with Tourism Ireland to inspire travellers to explore the Emerald Isle, along with a chance for Aussie agents to score a spot on an exclusive famil trip.

Travellers can take advantage of special packages available this month exclusively through Infinity Holidays, including city breaks in Dublin, Cork and Belfast.

In Dublin, guests will stay at three- or four-star hotels with options such as a walking food tour and a day trip to Guinness Store House.

There is also a 10-day self-drive itinerary combining castles, coastlines and countryside highlights, which journeys through Kilkenny, Killarney, Galway, Donegal, Londonderry, Portrush, and Belfast.

"This campaign highlights the strength of our ongoing partnership with Tourism Ireland," said Ashleigh O'Reilly, Infinity Holidays' Marketing Manager Australia & NZ.

"By working closely together,

we're able to offer travellers curated city experiences and scenic drives that truly showcase the best of Ireland."

Viktoria Albrecht, Trade Marketing Specialist, Tourism Ireland, added: "Our collaboration with Infinity Holidays allows us to inspire Australian and New Zealand travellers with both iconic and hidden Irish experiences, combining culture, food, and scenic beauty."

"Together, we're making Ireland more accessible and appealing than ever."

Infinity Holidays and Tourism Ireland are also rewarding the top seller of Ireland with a place on an exclusive famil trip, with airfares and ground arrangements fully covered.

During the famil, agents will walk in the footsteps of Celtic legends, sip pints in cosy pubs, and explore cliffs and castles.

Agents can secure their golden ticket by selling Ireland products with Infinity Holidays between 29 Sep 2025 and 31 Jan 2026. *JM*

HA sale on now

HAWAIIAN Airlines has launched a flash sale on summer flights from Sydney to Honolulu for \$899 return.

In addition, flights to nearby islands are on sale, such as Kona, Hilo, Kahului and Lihū'e for just \$135 return.

The fares are available for travel from now until 14 Dec, 22 Dec-31 Dec, and 7 Jan-21 June 206.

Hawaiian Airlines' sale is on now until 06 Oct or until sold out.



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A promotional banner for Royal Brunei Airlines. On the left, a smiling woman in a pink hijab and a man in a dark suit stand together. The woman holds a yellow heart-shaped sign with 'RB' on it, and the man holds a small model of a Royal Brunei Airlines aircraft. The background is a light beige gradient. In the center, the text 'EARN Double Commission' is displayed, with 'Double' in a large, bold, yellow font and 'Commission' in a large, bold, black font. Below this, a yellow banner contains the dates '15 September – 10 October 2025'. Underneath the banner, the text 'Royal Brunei Airlines will increase BSP commission to 6%' is written in a black serif font. At the bottom, a line of text reads 'Contact melrba@rba.com.bn or your consolidator for further details. Terms and conditions apply.' On the right side, there is a large yellow diagonal stripe. To the left of the stripe is the Royal Brunei Airlines logo, which includes a crest and the text 'ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES'. To the right of the stripe are three circular award logos: 'ATWORLD' (2019-2020), 'TRAVELERS' CHOICE' (2019-2020), and 'APEX' (2019-2020).



Window Seat

THERE are some loved-up couples who enjoy doing and seeing everything together.

Most of the time, this does not involve the toilet.

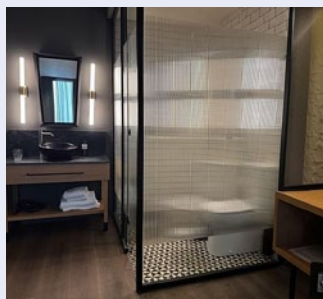
But for one couple who planned a romantic hotel getaway with an oddly designed bathroom, it did.

As they explain in a Reddit post (where else?), when the pair entered their room, they realised that the toilet was made entirely of glass, with only the middle section frosted for rather limited privacy (pictured).

The post attracted over 2,500 comments, such as, "Ooh, nothing sexier than your spouse getting to see you wipe your butt!"

Apparently hotels often use glass walls to create a feeling of more space and light, although some offer privacy options like opaque panels or electrochromic glass that can go from transparent to opaque at the flick of a switch

Not a bad idea - after all, as one honest Reddit user said of the original post: "I love my wife - I have no desire to see my wife poop."



Club Med safari requisite

BOOKINGS for Club Med's upcoming dual-concept resort in South Africa will only be available over the phone to ensure a minimum three-night stay requirement is met.

The new Club Med South Africa Beach and Safari Resort near Durban (**TD** 04 Aug) will consist of a 411-room beach resort and the 75-tent Mpilo safari lodge within a private game reserve, located around 4.5 hours away by road.

The company told **TD** the phone requirement will ensure the three-night criteria is met and to ensure all aspects of the safari lodge experience are explained.

There will be no minimum stay at the safari lodge, however two to three nights is recommended.

Bookings for the all-inclusive safari experience open for sale



later this month ahead of the resort's launch in Jul 2026.

Lead-in prices for a seven-night package (two at the safari lodge) will start at \$3,351 per person.

A Club Med spokesperson said there will be seven-, eight-, nine- and 10-night packages available initially that include both the beach resort and the safari lodge, with other longer combinations also available via the call centre.

"It is advised to book as early as possible to guarantee a stay at the Mpilo lodge," Club Med said.

Find out more about the new resort in **travelBulletin** **HERE**. **ML**

A&K acquisition

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has announced the acquisition of Crillon Tours, which includes DMC operations and unique properties across Bolivia.

"Bolivia represents one of South America's most extraordinary frontiers, with landscapes and experiences that are truly irreplaceable," said Cristina Levis, CEO of AKTG.

Crillon Tours will continue to operate and grow its current business with the same Bolivian leadership and team, while A&K will build its own dedicated DMC team in the country over the coming months.

A&K also revealed plans to develop new products and experiences, including luxury camping in the Uyuni Salt Flats.

Quark streamlines

QUARK Expeditions has added a self-serving payment tool to its Partner Portal, allowing agents to make payments online at their leisure, without needing to call a Polar Travel Advisor to process the payment.

The new feature also allows agents to update their guest details and purchase add-ons.

"We're thrilled with the updates as they have helped streamline agency-client transactions and reduce dependency on internal sales support," said Quark Expedition's Senior Director of the Americas, Groups and Charters, David Marathakis.

TokyoTokyo Old meets New

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Rail Online adds Italo

RAIL Online has expanded its European product range with the addition of private high-speed rail operator, Italo.

Italo's network runs from Italy's north to south, encompassing 59 stations in 51 cities, including hotspots like Milan, Florence, Torino, Venice and Naples.

Passengers have a choice of three classes of travel, including Club Executive, which offers access to Club Italo lounges in major stations.

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MTA toasts success

MTA has reported 6.4% growth in TTV as it celebrates more than 160 of its high achievers at lunches across Australia.

Advisors were celebrated across five cities around the country over the past month, at venues such as The Ritz-Carlton, Perth, Farmer's Daughters in Melbourne, Shangri-La Sydney, QT Gold Coast, and The Greek on Halifax in Adelaide.

Chief Executive Officer Don Beattie, who attended most of the events, said the lunches were an opportunity to acknowledge the dedication, expertise and exceptional results of MTA's most successful advisors.

Pictured in Sydney are Caroline Moit, Karen King, Katrina Carichini, and Lauren Ryan.



Aussies crave some R&R

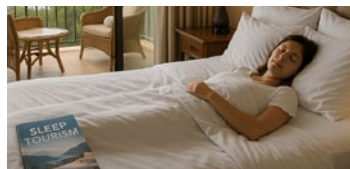
REST, relaxation and recharging have been cited by one in three Australians as their primary travel motivators in 2025, building on similar sentiments from last year.

According to the latest *Travel Redefined* APAC survey conducted by Traveloka, which generated more than 12,000 responses, wellness remains a factor shaping travel habits, with resorts and isolated villas ranking highly among search traffic on the site.

Wellness hotspots in Southeast Asia such as Bali, Bangkok and Hanoi were also among the most searched destinations in 2025.

Travellers are also increasingly seeking traditional Japanese onsens, massages, reflexology and aesthetic treatments, placing the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan as hot-spot destinations.

Also popular are emerging towns such as Yogyakarta in Indonesia and Da Nang in Vietnam for their cultural immersion and sleep-



focused retreats.

The survey results also coincide with the launch of Traveloka's 10-day 'Spring Travel Sale', which kicks off on Wed with deals on airfares, resorts and attractions.

"Travel is no longer just about sightseeing - it is increasingly a way to nurture well-being, build meaningful connections, and support local communities," said Traveloka VP Commercial, Baidi Li.

"Through our Spring Travel Sale, we want to make these restorative travel experiences more accessible and affordable, while also contributing to the growth of the tourism ecosystem across Asia Pacific," Li said.

CLICK HERE for more details on Traveloka's Spring Sale. *ML*

Carnival sales sailing

CARNIVAL Corporation has increased its full year earnings outlook for the third time this year after reporting record high net income for the third quarter.

Improved net yields and lower cost management now see the cruising giant expecting a 55% year-on-year jump in earnings for the full year, while total revenues for Q3 closed at US\$8.2 billion.

"This was a phenomenal quarter delivering all-time high net income and our tenth consecutive quarter of record revenues," said Carnival Corporation Chief Executive, Josh Weinstein.

Among the cost savings was a 5.2% decrease in fuel consumption across the fleet on the back of ongoing investments in energy efficiency.

Weinstein said a standout highlight of the quarter was the opening of Celebration Key, which is tipped to welcome 2.6 million travellers next year, with 20 ships arriving from 12 home ports.



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Over-55s hit the road

EXCLUSIVE

REGIONAL destinations are benefiting from a fast-growing travel trend that sees Aussies over the age of 55 hitting the road in search of cultural and music-focused experiences.

More than 60% in this demographic said live music and local arts were a key part of what made a road trip memorable, new research from East Coast Car Rentals (ECCR) has shown.

Empty nesters are increasingly building self-drive itineraries around regional music festivals, pop-up performances and art trails, according to ECCR CMO Ben Whitmore.

"We're seeing a real shift in how Aussies over 55 want to travel," he told **Travel Daily**.

"Instead of ticking off tourist attractions, they're looking for experiences that feel authentic and memorable."

Regional towns like Tamworth, known for its country music scene, are hot spots for this cohort, as well as Bundaberg, which is making a name for itself with community arts and live gigs, and regional Victoria, sought out for its art trails and local festivals.

"What stands out is how these communities make culture accessible and welcoming, it doesn't have to be a huge headline act, sometimes it's the local pub playing emerging artists on a Saturday night that leaves the biggest impression."

When asked how small towns



can take advantage of this trend, Whitmore emphasised that it "doesn't always have to be about big budgets - it's often about visibility, and storytelling".

The key is to make it easy for travellers to know what is on when they are in town, so they can plan their trip around local gigs, markets, or gallery openings.

"It's also important to align events and experiences with the seasons, whether that's a summer music series, autumn food festivals, or winter art exhibitions, to give travellers a reason to return year-round," Whitmore told **TD**.

"The other big one is making it easy and comfortable - good parking, accessible venues, and a friendly welcome go a long way."

Australians are embracing road trips more than ever, with 91.9% of respondents in a 2024 Budget Direct survey saying they took a road trip - up 88.4% on 2022.

Meanwhile, caravan and camping data from TRA showed that in the year ending Dec 2024, Australians made 15.2 million domestic overnight caravan/camping trips - the second-highest on record - and spend \$14 billion in total. **JM**

HLO owner nabs another



HELLOWORLD Travel has grown its presence in Western Australia with a multi-store expansion within its branded network.

Experienced travel professional Cassie Perry (**pictured**) has taken ownership of Helloworld Travel Kingsway, north of Perth in the suburb of Madeley, in addition to being at the helm of Helloworld Travel Karratha, which she has operated since 1994.

Nick Sutherland, Group General Manager Retail Networks at Helloworld Travel, congratulated Perry on her achievement.

"It's fantastic to see this kind of momentum, positive energy and growth continuing across Western Australia," he commented.

"Cassie's expansion into a second store is a testament to her dedication and professionalism,

as well as the strength of the Helloworld network.

"Cassie's success story highlights how our network empowers local business owners to thrive and grow, while maintaining their strong connections to communities."

Perry enthused: "I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to grow within the Helloworld Travel network."

"The support I've received throughout this journey has been outstanding, and I'm excited to bring my passion and experience to a new location." **JM**

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Red Sea's hole-in-one

SHURA Links, Saudi Arabia's first inland golf course, has officially opened.

Based on Shura Island at The Red Sea, the course was designed by well-known greens creator Brian Curley and managed by Golf Saudi.

It is a par-72, 7,400-yard course that offers a coastal links experience leveraging the island's natural topography and position.

Eighteen holes wind through native mangroves and sweeping dunes before drifting along the Red Sea shoreline to create a unique golfing experience.

The beachfront clubhouse is inspired by native flora and fauna and offers panoramic views across the green.

Travel Associates has youth on its side

TRAVEL Associates (TA) clients are getting younger, as the brand further emphasises the importance of using an agent for Generation X and Y travellers.

The brand has witnessed its average client age of 60 slowly migrate downward to the 30-50 age bracket, said Flight Centre Travel Group Managing Director Luxury, Danielle Galloway (pictured), while speaking at an event hosted by Travel Associates last week.

Younger customers entering Travel Associates stores are commonly referred to as a "HENRYs", Galloway said, or "high earner, but not rich yet".

"What we're seeing is a younger audience that is really enticed by luxury travel and overall the luxury market," she said at the launch of Travel Associates' new



brand campaign, 'The art of the moment' (TD 26 Sep).

"This transfer of wealth that is about to happen, they are an audience that we all need to stop and watch because they are investing in travel heavily.

"What we're seeing in these individuals is that they are time-poor, so they value a financial advisor, they value a travel advisor, because what's critically

important to them when they take that trip is that it has to be seamless," she explained.

Some new Travel Associates clients are even coming to the brand through their parents, Galloway added.

These younger luxury travellers are described by TA as diverse, with interests such as urban travel in destinations including Tokyo and Los Angeles, as well as private islands and safaris.

"Destinations that we're seeing as really popular are Morocco, Egypt...Kenya is actually up 75% on last year," Galloway said.

"We're seeing real popularity around guided touring."

In rapid decline, Galloway added, is the package holiday, as luxury travellers continue to seek out travel which is more bespoke and 'haute couture'. MS

Home Travel grows

Robyn and Murray Sinfield of luxury advisory Home Travel Company in Tasmania have announced that Cathi Burnett-Cosgrove will join the team as a travel designer.

Based in Hobart, Burnett-Cosgrove is the owner and designer of the Compass Society Group Travel and was previously with AJ Travel Hobart.

She joins with over 40 years of experience, making Home Travel Company a travel business with more than 220 years of combined industry experience.

Australia's only freehold island resort for sale

LUXURY establishment Bedarra Island Resort and the adjoining Hideaway parcel, the only freehold island resort in Australia, will soon be available on the market.

The offering encompasses two distinct components, the award-winning luxury resort that occupies 45 hectares on the eastern side of the island and the nearby Hideaway parcel with 35 hectares that has been described as "clean-slate" and ready for expansion.



The property was opened in 1986, contains 12 private villas, and has previously won awards including Condé Nast Traveler's 'The Best All-Inclusive Resort in the World' and Five Star Alliances' 'Best Island Luxury All-Inclusive Award'.

EOIs close Friday 31 Oct.

The lodge to watch

SOUTHERN Ocean Lodge, James and Hayley Baillie's ultra-luxury hotel on Kangaroo Island, was named as American Express Travel's 'One To Watch' during The World's 50 Best Hotels 2025 awards yesterday.

The property, which first launched in 2008, reopened at the end of 2023 after it was destroyed by the 2020 bushfires, which were the largest fires ever recorded on the island (TD 23 Aug 2024).

NEXT ISSUE: Southeast Asia special report

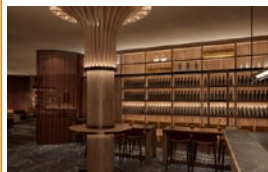
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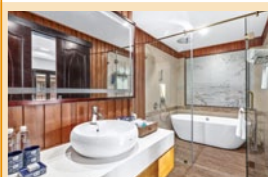
Construction is now underway on **Crown Perth's** newest venue - a premium wine bar showcasing WA's rich wine heritage. Located between Crown Towers and Crown Metropol, Gladstones will offer an intimate and luxurious space with seating for up to 50 people. Guests will be able to enjoy drops from Western Australia's award-winning producers alongside a selection of globally acclaimed wines. The venue will also serve exclusive vintages by the glass.



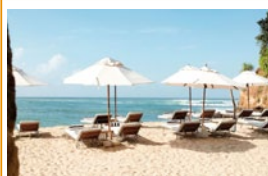
Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort has unveiled spacious new Beach Family Villas and a whimsical Treehouse Kids Retreat. The new villas have room for up to five people and open onto a wide terrace that offers direct beach access. Meanwhile, beneath the canopy of a Banyan tree, the new kids retreat inspires play with secret doors, lookout windows, and hidden corners, along with zones for soft play, arts and crafts, Lego creations, and games.



Visitors and guests of **DoubleTree by Hilton Cairns** will soon be able to savour a taste of the Mediterranean at The Vine Room, which opens this month. The vibrant new venue features al fresco seating for 140 diners with capacity to also seat go under the roof, and will serve Mediterranean-inspired dishes using fresh produce from across Tropical North Queensland. Patrons will enjoy live entertainment on Fri and Sat afternoons.



Wafaifo Resort Hoi An has announced the opening of Royal Garden, a luxury enclave featuring 16 suites across three distinctive categories, including the expansive Seagull Suite - a private sanctuary complete with its own infrared sauna, steam facilities, and clawfoot bathtub. All suites offer panoramic garden views and their own in-room private bar with a fully stocked wine fridge.



Located in Sri Lanka's southern province, **Cape Weligama** - a Relais & Chateaux property and part of the Resplendent Ceylon portfolio - has introduced The Cove Beach Club. The new oceanfront sanctuary features rustic-chic thatched pavilions and an open-air bar, with guests able to enjoy signature cocktails, oysters, ceviche, tapas and tacos, alongside beach tennis and petanque.

Agents join the Club



CLUB Med recently brought together 42 advisors from across Australia for its first Mega Fam since 2023, with agency owners, senior advisors, and novice consultants gathering at Club Med Bintan.

The group were given a full resort site inspection, where agents previewed upcoming enhancements, including a mock-up of the newly renovated rooms, the family-focused Splash Park, and the refreshed Panorama Bar featuring a new barista element.

Participants, who were selected through a sales incentive with Singapore Airlines, also enjoyed hands-on workshops covering topics like photography, and were introduced to the new Club Med South Africa Beach & Safari resort, set to open in Jul 2026.

Other highlights included a tour of the Ria Bintan Golf Course and a range of activities through the Sports Passport initiative, including tennis, aerial yoga, snorkelling, and more.

"The Mega Fam 2025 was designed to be more than a hotel inspection," explained Lisa

Bacon, Head of Trade Sales for Club Med Pacific.

"The program balanced business education sessions with leisure, so attendees were able to walk away not only with valuable insights but also with incredible memories - just like our guests do."

The Mega Fam 2025 took place ahead of the launch of Club Med's Endless Summer Sale 2026, which offers travellers up to 20% off their next summer escape to Bintan, Bali, and the Maldives.

The promotion ends 27 Apr 2026, and applies to travel between 29 May and 27 Nov 2026 - find out more via the Club Med for Travel Agents Portal, **HERE**. JM

Follow the bison

ADVENTURE World has expanded its Canada portfolio with a new 15-day self-drive itinerary, 'Trail of the Bison'.

The road trip journeys from Winnipeg, Manitoba through Saskatchewan, before finishing in Edmonton, Alberta, and combines wildlife encounters with Indigenous-led experiences.

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