

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features eight pages of the latest news, including a photo page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**, our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Ponant Explorations** and a destination spotlight from **Atout France**.

## QF slashes exec bonuses

**QANTAS** Chairman John Mullen has announced a reduction in the short-term bonuses of the CEO Vanessa Hudson and executive management by 15 percentage points in light of the carrier's recent cyber incident (**TD** 02 Jul).

Writing his first Chair's Message in the Qantas Annual Report 2025, Mullen said the decision "demonstrates our commitment to creating a culture of accountability and ownership".

He also acknowledged that the unlawful outsourcing of ground handling during the pandemic had "led to the breakdown of trust amongst stakeholders".

"On behalf of the Board, I want to apologise to the 1,800 employees for the hurt and suffering they experienced as a result," he wrote.

Mullen leaned into the cultural change narrative, stating that management had "continued to reset the company" and that

there was now an "unrelenting" focus on Qantas' customers and its people.

"All of our responses to the recommendations have now been implemented, including changes to executive remuneration, and ensuring the Board receives more detailed reporting on customer metrics and employee engagement," he asserted. **DF**

To read the full Qantas Annual Report 2025, **CLICK HERE**.

## Thanks for the win

**PONANT** is expressing gratitude after being named 'Best Expedition Cruise Experience' by Virtuoso - check out **page nine**.

## The best of France

**AGENTS** can learn more from Atout France about the wonders of the country via a new trade webinar taking place at 4pm on 11 Sep - more details on **page 10**.

## Riverside preferred

**RIVERSIDE** Luxury Cruises is now the newest Virtuoso Travel Preferred Partner, joining a network of priority suppliers.

The company said it is honoured to join this exceptional group and that it cannot wait to showcase its product to Virtuoso advisors.

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## Aussie growth outpaces others for G

### EXCLUSIVE

**BOOKINGS** growth for G Adventures out of Australia is tracking slightly higher than other major markets, the brand's Managing Director for Australia, New Zealand and Asia, Sean Martin, has revealed.

Speaking with **Travel Daily** this week, Martin said the local market has seen 22% growth year-on-year, with a rising interest in Vietnam "leading the way" for Aussie travellers.

"Vietnam is such a great country - especially if you do it in an immersive way where you are visiting local communities, it really is such an enriching transformational experience for the customer," Martin said.

Peru also continues to perform well for the operator, Martin confirmed, a destination that struggled to maintain traction among Aussies coming out of the pandemic as a result of



diminished air connectivity.

Flash forward several years, and the allure of the South American country has returned, fuelled by the brand's ongoing investment in local Peruvian communities.

"Peru is so important to us, we have got over 25 community projects set up in the country that feeds so much of its travel ecosystem now," Martin said.

While Peru has picked up its pace, the brand's regional chief conceded that more air lift is needed out of Australia and New Zealand to keep that growth momentum going.

"We definitely need more air lift to Peru - what is strange though, is that the US carriers have actually become more

competitive, which is a horrible way to do it, but at least that has got things moving the right way.

"We look after New Zealand as well and it is an even bigger challenge from there, so we are crying out for more air connectivity [to Peru] because at the end of the day, that's what drives so much of our businesses is affordable air."

Touching on more developing markets out of Australia for G Adventures this year, Martin revealed that while there has been a rise in interest for destinations like Morocco and Jordan, South Africa is probably the most exciting prospect.

"We have a National Geographic journey in South Africa that is growing at triple digits year-on-year," Martin said.

"It has an NPS score of 86, and when you combine G with a brand like National Geographic, it's pretty hard to beat." **AB**

ON LOCATION

ADELAIDE

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of the **Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC)**, which is hosting day one of its annual conference in South Australia.

**FOLLOWING** a welcome ceremony last night at the Adelaide Oval, ATAC has kicked off its 'Future Focus' conference at the Adelaide Marriott.

Proceedings opened with an address from Chairman Jack Taylor to update members about ATAC's performance, followed by a presentation from the South Australian Tourism Minister Zoe Bettison.

Tonight, guests will head out to Ondeen in the famous Adelaide Hills to sample some of its renowned local produce.

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Travel Daily  
ON LOCATION



FREMANTLE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of the Australian Cruise Association, which is this week hosting its annual conference.

THIS year's Australian Cruise Association (ACA) conference in Fremantle has been a whirlwind of engaging and informative conference sessions.

The gathering wraps up today with the organisation's annual general meeting and breakfast.

The event will be hosted in the Island Suite at the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle by Rydges.

Guests will then conclude the conference at a member's session, entitled 'Getting the settings right', before attention turns to next year's gathering, now confirmed for Brisbane.

## CATO backs unified voice

EXCLUSIVE

COUNCIL of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) Managing Director Brett Jardine has warned against a fragmented advocacy structure for the travel industry, advising agents to continue to engage with the association most relevant to their business.

Jardine's comments come in the wake of maverick agent Belle Goldie's proposal this week to form a dedicated council to lobby for the needs of travel advisors.

The CATO boss warned against Goldie's idea, saying governments do not tend to listen to individual business owners unless they have very deep pockets.

"Rather than reinventing the wheel, I feel a more effective pathway is constructive and direct engagement with the existing framework of industry bodies most relevant to your business," Jardine told *Travel Daily*.

"Government is typically only



interested in hearing from an industry body, and with the right approach from concerned business owners, there should always be the opportunity to strengthen collective outcomes.

"Starting a new body or council from scratch without dedicated and funded resources requires a very committed group of volunteers - many of whom are already fully occupied with their own business needs."

ATIA responded to Goldie's initiative, with both Chairman Christian Hunter and Chief Executive Dean Long reiterating the key role agents continue to play in the association and what it aims to achieve (*TD* yesterday). *ML*

## APT trade portal

AN ALL-NEW consolidated trade portal has been launched by APT Travel Group, offering access to a variety of resources designed to help agents grow their bookings.

The new Agent Hub allows advisors to secure their bookings and provides tools to help boost product knowledge and access promotional material.

Via the portal, agents can access the existing ATG Connect platform and Tour Personaliser, as well as Deals of the Month & brochures.

APT Travel Group Chief Sales Officer Scott Ellis said the new site cements the company's belief that agents are at the heart of its business.

"The Agent Hub puts everything they need at their fingertips, helping them save time, stay informed, and ultimately increase sales and commissions for their business," Ellis said.

Travelmarvel will soon launch its own Agent Hub, with a more specific launch date still to come.

 Vietnam Airlines   
REACH FURTHER

## Discover Vietnam Son Doong Cave

**Suggest Route:**

Depart from Sydney/Melbourne/Perth - Ho Chi Minh City - Dong Hoi

**Best season to Visit:**

From January to August.

This period typically brings drier weather, making the trails more accessible and river levels safer for cave exploration.



[vietnamairlines.com](http://vietnamairlines.com)



## AKTG's record trade event



**THE** Abercrombie & Kent Travel Group (AKTG) team recently hosted an exclusive, invitation-only event in Sydney for a group of the industry's top ultra-luxury travel advisors.

The hand-picked group of agents were each invited to bring along some of their most valued clients for a decadent high tea at the InterContinental Sydney by IHG, where they were

introduced to AKTG's range of brands: Abercrombie & Kent, A&K Sanctuary, and Crystal Cruises.

More than 100 people attended what was the organisation's largest and most successful event, where agents were invited to bring along their highly-valued VIP clients. *MS*

**Pictured** is the AKTG team: Anoushka Kudav, Lisa Hunt, Fiona Cogar, and Alexa Papoulis.



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## Vietjet in the money

**LOW-COST** carrier Vietjet says it is on track to achieve its financial targets for 2025 after audited half-yearly results reaffirmed its position as one of the fastest growing airlines in the Asia Pacific.

The carrier reported revenues of VND35.6 trillion (A\$2 billion) and a 37% spike in pre-tax profit to VND1.6 trillion (A\$209 million).

Over the half-year, the company operated more than 79,000 flights and carried 14.4 million passengers onboard.

Vietjet has confirmed a network expansion, with a new route between Ho Chi Minh City and Manila to launch in Nov.

The airline also secured the aviation sector's largest aircraft order earlier this year, signing a deal at the Paris Air Show to buy 100 Airbus A321neo jets and options for 50 more.



## Win a luxe Bali trip

**STUBA** is giving agents the chance to win a spot on a fam trip to Bali, which departs 10 Nov.

Seven winners will enjoy a three-night stay at the five-star Ayodya Resort Bali in Nusa Dua, with visits to the destination's cultural highlights as well as exclusive hotel tours.

Agents can qualify by making a Bali booking between 01-21 Sep, with every booking gaining an entry into the prize draw.

Bookings at Ayodya Resort Bali will earn a double entry.

## Club Med aims high

**ALL-INCLUSIVE** resort operator Club Med will construct its newest ski destination resort in Quebec's Mont-Tremblant region.

Group Deputy CEO Gregory Lanter said Mont-Tremblant provides an equally appealing spot for both summer and winter visitors, with construction slated to begin next year.

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- Chase the Northern Lights with expert aurora hunters.
- Set sail on an icebreaker cruise through the icy wonders of the Bothnian Bay.
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## Window Seat

**AN AUSSIE** tourist may have some bad karma coming his way after callously chugging a canned alcoholic drink left beside a grave site in Japan as an offering for the deceased.

A video uploaded to social media shows the man, who was visiting the town of Fujikawaguchiko in Yamanashi Prefecture, approaching a grave site, putting a coin on top of it and downing a can of chu-hai canned cocktail that was sitting beside it.

As a final insult, the man then tapped the empty can against the tombstone before tossing it onto the ground.

Offerings of food and drinks - alcoholic or not - to the dead are common in Japanese culture as a gesture of fond memories of loved ones.

A police investigation is now underway to identify the man and consider whether to ban him from returning.

## Cruise links with TA

**THE** Australian Cruise Association (ACA) and CLIA Australasia have jointly renewed an MoU with Tourism Australia to collaborate on growing visitation from international travellers.

First initiated in 2023, the pact will see the three associations work to make Australia a premier cruise destination and to grow overnight visitor expenditure.

"We are excited to be continuing our partnership with ACA and CLIA and collaborating on industry opportunities to capitalise on international cruising to Australia, particularly for dispersing international visitors to regional parts of the country," said Tourism Australia Executive General Manager Industry, Sally Cope.

Australia welcomed 250,000 cruise visitors to its shores in 2024.

## Canada, oh so naturally



**DESTINATION** Canada revealed its new global brand platform this week to the travel trade industry, called 'Canada, naturally'.

The initiative aims to highlight the diversity of the country from its landscapes, communities and cultures, like the Churchill region, which offers the Northern Lights, beluga whales, polar bears and a thriving Indigenous culture.

"In Canada, travel sustains cultures, protects nature, supports livelihoods, and creates opportunities, from Indigenous-owned experiences to family-run businesses, in small towns and big cities alike," Destination Canada MD Julie King said.

The organisation's Focus Canada events took place this week, connecting Canadian partners with 335 travel trade

professionals over three days.

A special keynote address was delivered by visiting filmmaker and adventurer Dianne Whelan, who spent six years crossing the longest trail in the world across Canada, while filming her journey.

**Pictured:** Liz Glover, Adventure World; Whelan; host Edwina Bartholomew; King; and Elsa McLean, Adventure World. *JHM*

## Vintage 2026 opens

**THREE** distinctive itineraries across NSW are now open from Vintage Rail Journeys as part of its newly unveiled 2026 season.

Options include five-day rail tours of the Riverina region or the state's 'Golden West' through Orange, Bathurst and Mudgee and the north coast line, which runs as far north as Byron Bay.

Each itinerary takes place onboard the restored classic Southern Aurora passenger train and includes accommodation, off-train excursions, and all meals and beverages onboard.

## Qatar seeing Red

**QATAR** Airways will add Saudi Arabia's Red Sea as the 12th destination served by the carrier, with three weekly flights kicking off from 21 Oct.

The emerging luxury destination is home to one of the world's largest barrier reef systems and is aimed at travellers seeking wellness, adventure and history.

## No alcohol package

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line has introduced a new alcohol-free drinks package onboard its ships.

The 'Cheers Zero Proof' package is now available for guests to purchase prior to embarkation for \$39.99 per person per day or onboard for \$44.99 per day.

In addition to soft drink, juices, bottled water, coffee, tea and more, the new 'Cheers Zero Proof' package unlocks access to a wide variety of premium drinks including mocktails and alcohol-free wine and beer.

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# NCLH toasts to 10 years in APAC

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) marked a major milestone - 10 years in the Asia Pacific region - with a vibrant cocktail celebration at its newly opened Sydney office located in Barangaroo this week.

The momentous occasion brought together 90 travel agent partners, industry colleagues, media and staff, and showcased the strength of collaboration across Norwegian Cruise Line®, Oceania Cruises®, and Regent Seven Seas Cruises®. Guests enjoyed sumptuous canapes and cocktails, a celebratory toast, anniversary cake and a ribbon-cutting ceremony that symbolised the beginning of a new chapter.

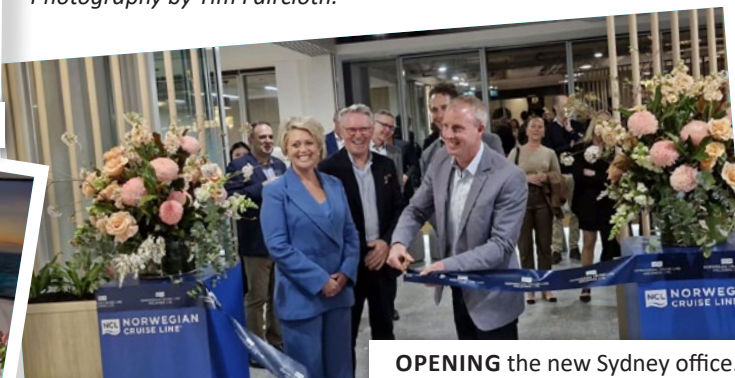
The evening honoured the team effort behind NCLH's regional growth from 20 employees in 2015 to almost 200 in 2025, underscoring its long-term commitment to the Asia Pacific region, and the unwavering support of valued trade partners.

The celebration concluded with guests raising a glass for the next chapter of NCLH's journey in the region.

*Photography by Tim Faircloth.*



**HAPPY** anniversary NCLH.



**OPENING** the new Sydney office.

**A GLIMPSE** of the office water views.



**THE CLIA** team: Jon Murrie, Joel Katz, Marita Nasic and Peter Kollar.



**MEG** Hill, Cruise Express; Megan Catterall, Luxe by itravel; Steve Odell; Nikki Glading, Luxury Travel Collection; and Justine Sealey, Ramsgate Travel Service.



**PEITA** Lord, Cruise Guru; Jan Harrington, Helloworld; Angela Middleton; Norwegian Cruise Line; and Michael Bettridge, Cruise Guru.



**DAMIAN** Borg, Angela Middleton and Ben Angell, NCL.



**THE** NCLH exec team in their new office reception.



## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Signature votes to share

**KARRYN** Christopher has been named as the new President of the Signature Travel Network as part of a new dual-leadership structure at the luxury consortia.

Christopher (**pictured**), has been with the network for 24 years and will take on a role as a key liaison with members and suppliers, while existing CEO Alex Sharpe will continue to lead and develop the group's long-term strategy.

The promotion was formalised this week at the group's annual Owners Meeting in San Diego, with Christopher's appointment effective immediately.

Speaking of her new role, Christopher said the company's mission and outlook is simple and has not changed.

"We are here to serve members, and in our areas of focus: marketing, technology, training and strong preferred partnerships, [and] we will continue to deliver on that," she said.

**MEANWHILE**, Signature Travel Network has named Tasmania in its 'Where to go in 2026' list of



top travel destinations - the only Australian presence in the list.

Tasmanian Minister for Tourism and Events Jane Howlett said the nod is a huge achievement for Tasmania's tourism industry.

"Signature Travel network is one of the most trusted voices in luxury travel and we are extremely proud to be the only Australian destination on the list," Minister Howlett said.

Tourism Tasmania CEO Sarah Kingston-Clark said the list will inspire many luxury specialist agents to recommend Tasmania to their clients over the next year.

### 50 Degrees partner

**NORDIC** tour operator 50 Degrees North has joined forces with Nordic Tours A/S to create a combined travel platform showcasing a wide range of tour options across Scandinavia, including small-group adventures and independent itineraries.

Backed by funding from Equip Capital, the partnership will look to expand the joint DMC's reach, enhance digital capabilities and meet demand for nature-based experiences across the Nordics.

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### AAT announces A-Listers



**AAT** Kings has announced the 20 top-achieving agents who have won a place on its A-Listers On Location five-day trip, which heads to New Zealand's South Island later this month (**TD** 02 Apr).

Hosted in partnership with Air New Zealand, the incentive tour features a range of experiences, including jet boat rides through rapids and an exclusive wine-tasting tour at one of the South Island's premier vineyards.

The group will also enjoy a luxurious overnight stay in a rainforest eco-sanctuary, before a glitzy A-Listers Awards presentation event.

"We appreciate and value the ongoing support and expert knowledge of our top-achieving agents whose hard work and dedication make it all possible, so we're thrilled to be able to reward them with this unforgettable trip to New Zealand's South Island," said AAT Kings Group CEO, Ben Hall.

One of the incentive winners, Kellie Byrnes, Travel Consultant

at Flight Centre North Lakes, said she was thrilled to be selected.

"Although I've been to the South Island before, I'm really looking forward to exploring Queenstown and Franz Josef, as I haven't visited these destinations before, and sharing the experience with my clients," Byrnes enthused. *JM*

Byrnes is **pictured** above right with AAT Kings Sales Manager Qld, Janeen Harris.

### NJE orders two jets

**NATIONAL** Jet Express has inked a letter of intent for a further two Q400 turboprop planes to join its fleet in 2025.

The new additions will join the Australian charter airline's existing eight Embraer E190 jets, bringing its total number of aircraft up to 13.

Supporting NJE's services in the mining, resources and construction industries, the first of the Q400 planes is set to be delivered in Perth this month, with the second due in Dec.

### WestJet orders up

**CANADIAN** airline WestJet has placed the largest order in its history, signing with Boeing for 67 new aircraft, taking its total order book to 123 new planes.

The order consists of 60 Boeing 737-10 jets and options for 25 more along with seven 787-9 Dreamliner planes, with options for a further four.



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## SPECIALS

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specials@traveldaily.com.au

In acknowledgement of its 130th anniversary next year, **HX Expeditions** is inviting guests to celebrate the milestone with a new offer. Those who book by 30 Sep 2025 will save up to \$8,000, including a \$900 early booking bonus. The offer applies to selected voyages during the 2026/27 anniversary season, as well as on some departures between Jan and Mar 2026. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

**Qatar Airways** has announced special fares for Australian travellers, available until 22 Sep 2025. The discounted seats are available for travel between 21 Sep 2025 until 15 Aug 2026, with a range of popular international destinations on offer. Prices start from \$1,829 for a return economy flight from Melbourne and Amsterdam - learn more [HERE](#).

Cruise lovers can jump on **Viking's Deal of the Week**, with companions able to fly free on the line's new 12-day 'Iberia, France & England Explorer' voyage from London to Lisbon, or vice versa. The cruise is priced from \$9,195 per person, departing 06 Apr 2028. Companions can fly free up to \$2,500 per booking, for spots secured by 01 Dec 2025 - more details can be found [HERE](#).

**International Rail** is offering travel agents a 20% discount on the popular Eurail Global Pass, which encompasses 33 countries across Europe. Advisors can lock in the special rate for clients until 09 Sep, with the flexibility to activate travel anytime up until 20 May 2026. Passes included in the offer span a range of travel durations, including the Flexi with seven, 10 or 15 days of travel within a two-month period and the Continuous pass for 15 or 22 days, or one, two of three months of unlimited travel. Conditions apply - find out more [HERE](#).

Perfect for romantic getaways, **The Lane Retreat** in the Hunter Valley has launched a 'Spring Escape' package, priced from \$322 per night when staying a minimum of two nights in a premium studio. The package includes a bottle of sparkling rose on arrival, breakfast provisions for two people, a wood-fired pizza at Bimbardgen Pizzeria for two, tickets to Hunter Valley Gardens, and a complimentary wine tasting at Alter Wines for couples. Valid for stays until 30 Nov - book [HERE](#).

**Cathay Pacific** is offering an earlybird deal for Australian and New Zealand travellers, available to book until 15 Sep 2025 for travel until 30 Jun 2026. Prices start from \$1,770 for a return flight to London in economy class. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

There are four weeks left for travellers to save on **Outback Spirit's** 2026 season. The tour agency is offering earlybird discounts of up to \$2,600 per person for bookings made by 30 Sep 2025, with the promotion applying to 22 all-inclusive outback adventure tours. Clients can save \$2,300 per person on the 16-day 'Exquisite Kimberley Adventure' or \$1,440 per person on the 12-day 'Tasmanian Wilderness Explorer'. See what else is on offer [HERE](#).



## Stay Updated

on the latest travel news

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Travel Daily

## Eden goes (micro) green



**THIS** is Eden, the vital South-East Asian-based NGO that is trying to stamp out human trafficking in the region, has recently gone into micro-green powder production to provide both jobs and nutrition for people in need.

Run by former travel industry executive Michelle Kerr, the Eden team held a lunch at Spencer Travel Group yesterday with a collection of senior travel industry

leaders who have previously supported the cause.

Southeast Asia accounts for more than half of the global total of human trafficking, and the Eden team's micro-green product joins its jewellery products that aim to head this off by breaking the cycle of poverty.

**Travel Daily** will continue to follow and report on the 'This is Eden' story.

To get behind the organisation, [CLICK HERE](#). **DF**

**Pictured:** The Eden team of Isaac Agostino, Michelle Kerr, Jacob Watts and Israel Samuelson with Penny Spencer (second).

## Skyscanner adds cars

**SKYSCANNER** has announced a global partnership with car rental marketplace Turo to offer an expanded selection of cars to travellers in Australia, the UK, the US and Canada.

Turo vehicle inventory will be offered directly to Skyscanner users via its site, with a selection of more than 1,600 makes and models from a network of hosts in over 16,000 cities.

The partnership aims to make trip planning more convenient by allowing users to compare flight and car options in one place.

The most popular car hire bookings for Aussies this winter were the Kia Carnival and Mitsubishi Outlander, which offer plenty of space for road trips.

## Acela back on track

**AMTRAK** has launched its ultra-modern Acela train model on routes in the US Northeast after years of testing and delays.

As part of a phased rollout, five of the initial 28 sets ordered have hit the track, with more expected to enter service through 2027.

Acela trains feature top speeds of 250kph with improved wi-fi capability and modern amenities including 'grab and go' kiosks and exposed luggage racks.

First class cabins also offer more spacious 1-2-1 seat arrangements favouring solo travellers.





*Thank you for the win!*  
*xoxo*





# Experience the best of France: Exclusive webinar for travel agents

**SAVE THE DATE:** Thurs 11 Sep  
at 4pm (AEST)

**Atout France** invites you to an exclusive **France webinar**, designed to inspire your next French travel itineraries.

Explore the essence of the French Riviera and Provence, with highlights from the cities of **Cannes, Marseille, Nice, Antibes Juan-les-Pins**, and the stunning coastline of the **Côte d'Azur**.

From vibrant markets and historic old towns to sun-soaked beaches and cultural treasures, each destination offers a unique perspective on Southern France's legendary art de vivre.

You will also discover inspiring mountain escapes with **Les 2 Alpes**, and **l'Alpe d'Huez** in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and gain fresh insights into **Amiens**, a northern gem, one-hour from Paris by train and full of history and architectural beauty.

The webinar will also feature highlights from **Disneyland Paris**, **CroisiEurope**, **Ophorus** (DMC, tailor-made guided tours), **Li-Colibri** (DMC, luxury custom travel), **Orea Hotels Management** (27 hotels in Paris), and **Rail Europe**, offering insights and products to enrich your France offering.

Whether you are looking to update your knowledge or uncover

fresh inspiration for your clients, this webinar is not to be missed.

Register **HERE** to join us live.

If you are unable to attend, pas de problème - register anyway to receive the recording.

**À bientôt!**

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