

VS debuts Phuket

VIRGIN Atlantic's debut flight linking Phuket and London took off overnight, providing another route for Aussies heading to Europe through Asia.

The UK carrier will operate the route three times a week.

Flights on us

Economy airfares included up to \$2,800 per person*

Viking's *Flights on Us* campaign delivers exceptional value for your clients. Their popular 8-day river voyage *Rhine Getaway* is available from only \$4,995 per person, including economy airfares valued up to \$2,800pp. It's an offer worth sharing.

A full suite of marketing assets is ready for you now on their Marketing Centre.

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VV shores up ANZ ops

A 30% rebound in Australia and New Zealand sales for Virgin Voyages (VV) has seen the cruise line formally expand the remit of Matt Lebbern, who has been promoted to market director for Europe, ANZ (**TD** breaking news).

The cruise line said Lebbern was "instrumental" in reshaping how the brand operates Down Under, adding that he had removed any barriers to growth and created the platform needed to set the brand up for the future.

Part of that local investment was the appointment of head of sales, ANZ David Clark in Jun (**TD** 19 Jun), who reports into the UK-based Lebbern.

VV confirmed Lebbern will

oversee sales, trade partnerships, distribution and development across ANZ and Europe in his new role, providing strategic direction for trade engagement, PR and international marketing.

He will continue reporting to senior VP of growth and international sales and marketing Stephen Hopkins.

Virgin Voyages also flagged the recruitment of more boots on the ground in Australia and New Zealand, with at least one new team member to be added before the end of the year. **AB**

Say hola to Spain

WIN a spot on an agent fam to Spain thanks to Bunnik Tours.

Find out all the details of the incentive on **page six**.

EK is in the game

FOR your chance to attend Emirates' ultimate sports encounter next year, issue an EK adult return ticket by the end of Oct - see **page seven** for more.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of industry news and full pages from:

- Bunnik Tours
- Emirates
- Viva Holidays

Unrest in France

THE travel plans for many Aussies in France have been disrupted by protests affecting multiple cities over the rising cost of living and poor public services.

Over the weekend, thousands were arrested and hundreds of shops looted or damaged after demonstrations in Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Bordeaux, and Toulouse, which included Lyon's tourist office being set on fire. **AB**

There's more to Viva

THERE is more to sell, more to explore and more reasons to book with Viva Holidays - learn about the brand on **page eight**.

CX & Scenic promo

CATHAY Pacific loyalty members can earn one Asia Mile for every \$1 spent on eligible Scenic and Emerald Cruises bookings directly via travel agents.



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Vietjet asset freeze

AN ONGOING legal dispute between Vietjet and FW Aviation over lease fees has seen the UK court issue a global order freezing the carrier's assets.

The latest judgement will not ground the airline's global operations or likely affect flying to Australia, however it may impact the company's ability to launch its rumoured domestic operation in Australia (**TD** 29 Jun).

Sources close to the carrier previously suggested it was looking to operate 10 B737s in Australia to take on Qantas and Virgin Australia under the name Cherrie Aviation (**TD** 25 Sep).

Vietjet survived a call to have its assets frozen last year (**TD** 25 Jul 2025) after a UK court rejected FW Aviation's request, but also ruled the carrier owed money. **AB**

Viking chief slams LNG

VIKING founder Torstein Hagen has ridiculed claims by the wider cruise sector that Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is an environmentally-friendly fuel, stating the Viking approach is a much better way to combat greenhouse gases.

Speaking during a briefing at last week's naming ceremony for seven new river ships (**TD** 16 Oct), Hagen (**pictured**) said "we are very concerned about the environment, and we have been operating on diesel fuel with so-called exhaust gas cleaners, and that's a very environmentally-friendly solution."

"In the future, we can operate with hydrogen fuel cells, so the [ocean] ship that we will take delivery of next month will have hydrogen fuel cells, and that's absolutely clean," Hagen added.

"I don't want to spend too much of your time bothering you about how terrible LNG is...but if you do care about greenhouse gases, well, there is nothing 'natural' about LNG."

"It is methane and methane is 30 to 80 times [worse than] CO2 for the environment."

"I can say that as a scientist, but the cruise line industry has



decided, no, LNG it is.

"And you know why? It is cheaper, it is cheaper in Miami so they decided that was good for the environment."

"Okay, I can't fight that, but it is not true," he said.

Viking's pioneering new hybrid hydrogen solution has both a liquefied hydrogen fuel cell and diesel engines, with the 6MW fuel cell able to provide power for the vessel's hotel load as well as low-speed propulsion.

It will feature movable cryogenic tank containers to ease the start-up of the hydrogen supply chain.

While hydrogen is still expensive, it is expected to become more competitive, and hydrogen and other 'true zero' fuels also give credits in the EU fuel regulations. **BP**

Aussies go wider

AUSTRALIAN travellers plan on visiting an average 3.3 countries in Europe between Sep and Dec, new figures from the European Travel Commission have shown.

Of the seven markets surveyed by the body, Australian residents are planning the widest European trips, comfortably ahead of the 2.7 nation average.

While demand for the region has softened across the board, southern and Mediterranean Europe remains the most resilient, with 67% of travellers planning to visit the region.

Meanwhile, France is the most popular option for this northern autumn, recording 52% of travel intention, ahead of Italy (35%) and Spain (25%), while rail is closing in on air as a preferred method of inter-Europe travel. **AB**

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Window Seat

UK BUS and coach operator The Big Lemon may need to change its name to The Big Stink after one of its drivers ended up in court due to a farting incident.

Stephanie Bryan was driving one of the company's electric buses when she allegedly produced flatulence that was so bad it clung to the next bus driver, Samantha Bingham, who complained that she felt compelled to wash her uniform and "immediately" take a shower upon returning home.

Bingham raised the hygiene concern with Bryan, who told her "everyone needs to fart and let out gases", but allegedly reacted "negatively" to the accusations and displayed "personal hostility".

The concern was raised with Bryan during a performance review and ultimately led to her dismissal.

Clearly sour over the issue, Bryan attempted to sue The Big Lemon for disability discrimination and harassment, on the basis that her employer had discriminated against her for having bladder issues.

"The actions of [Ms Bingham] were unrelated to disability and were not motivated by disability," the judge declared.

WSI leans into premium

WESTERN Sydney International Airport (WSI) has unveiled its new international lounge, which will open in Nov ahead of the peak holiday travel period.

Operated by dnata, the Rayleigh Lounge will cater to eligible passengers flying with Singapore Airlines when it launches daily non-stop flights on 23 Nov.

Customers of WSI's other international airline partners will also have access to the signature lounge experience as their respective services kick off over the months ahead.

Located on the terminal's mezzanine level, the facility will



offer premium hospitality and views across the airfield to the Blue Mountains, with a capacity of 80 seats and the potential to eventually expand to 130.

Different spaces will support the needs of solo travellers, families and groups, including dedicated lounge and dining areas, a bar and an open kitchen, with travellers able to access fast wi-fi, integrated charging and three private shower suites.

"The Rayleigh Lounge will give travellers a welcoming place to dine, work or unwind before their flight, with thoughtful design, top-tier hospitality and views across the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains," WSI CEO Simon Hickey said. *JM*

Trafalgar TAP and go

TRAFALGAR has upgraded its Travel Agent Portal (TAP) for 2027, giving advisors a streamlined way to find and book journeys across new travel categories and value tiers.

The platform now offers refined search functions and redesigned result cards showing key details such as travel category, value tier, route, group size, hotel and dining information, inclusions, pricing and applicable promotions.

Additionally, refreshed trip pages consolidate everything agents need in one place, including trip length, available trip types, maps, daily itineraries, highlights, FAQs and reviews.

Advisors can now explore and sell Trafalgar's 2027 journeys via the portal **HERE**. *JM*

TD TRAVELDAILY
ON LOCATION



VIRGINIA

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of **Virginia Travel Corporation**, where we are ready to report on the **Virginia Global Travel Forum**.

WE ARE on the ground in the United States preparing for the Virginia Global Travel Forum commencing tomorrow.

The three-day conference will be an opportunity to hear from suppliers and key stakeholders in the US state, and why Virginia deserves a stronger place on East Coast US itineraries.

While it may not be as immediately familiar as destinations like California, Virginia offers a mix of history, coastline, mountains, and vibrant cities that can add value to US touring programs.

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Avoid Saudi Arabia

FOLLOWING multiple fatal missile strikes on Saudi Arabia's largest airport in recent weeks, Smartraveller has moved its advice to 'do not travel'.

The latest government advisory encouraged Aussies to postpone any planned travel to Saudi Arabia and avoid King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh due to "security incidents that have disrupted operations".

"The Houthis have threatened to target Saudi airports and airspace and air travel is significantly disrupted at all major airports, with regular airspace closures, flight cancellations and delays," Smartraveller said. *AB*

Bad Singapore air

CHILDREN, older people, pregnant women and those with heart or lung conditions are being advised by Smartraveller to take extra precautions and limit outdoor activity in Singapore due to a thick smoke haze created by regional fires. *AB*

777 Partners fraud

THE co-founder of the company that backed Bonza's operations in Australia has pleaded guilty to wire fraud and securities fraud in a New York court.

US prosecutors said Joshua Wander had defrauded lenders and investors at Bonza's parent group 777 Partners by channelling money into airline expansion and sporting clubs without disclosing the details of the investments.

"As he has now admitted, Josh Wander used his company, 777 Partners, to steal hundreds of millions of dollars from private creditors and investors," US Attorney Jamie McDonald said.

Wander has agreed to pay around \$720 million in proceeds linked to the scheme.

Financial failures at 777 Partners were linked to the downfall of the Bonza business in Australia, which had planes repossessed amid failed payments. *AB*

FCTG rewards its VIPs



PRIZES, deals and customer connections were in full swing at Flight Centre's VIPs on Fri night in Sydney for the start of the company's travel expo.

Marking the beginning of the consumer event that continued over the weekend, Flight Centre awarded 10,000 World360 Rewards loyalty points for its key customers invited to the VIP gathering, in addition to many other prizes given away during the course of the evening.

Flight Centre global managing director Andrew Stark (**pictured inset**) welcomed attendees with a short history of his own career and the company, as well as the growth story of Flight Centre.

However, front and centre of his message to customers was that Flight Centre is a "people brand".



"As a company, we talk about modernisation a lot and what we are doing as a brand, and part of that is investing significant amounts of money in making sure that we give you a better service," Stark said.

"But more importantly, we back our people."

While Stark said that Flight Centre now has fewer bricks-and-mortar stores and staff than seven years ago, the business is now "wiser and more productive than ever before". *AB*

JQ invests in Perth

THE Qantas Group has opened a new Jetstar cabin base and emergency procedures training centre in Perth as the carrier continues to grow its footprint in Western Australia.

The new base launched with 40 crew members and is expected to grow to 90 local roles, supporting Jetstar's newest route out of Perth to Christchurch, which will take off for the first time on 27 Oct (*TD* 04 Mar 2026).

Meanwhile, the training centre will cater to more than 1,200 Qantas, QantasLink and Jetstar employees each year, including current crew and future recruits.

Oman codeshare

OMAN Air and Finnair have launched a codeshare partnership, expanding connectivity between Australia, Europe and the Middle East.

The partnership extends to Melbourne via Bangkok, where Oman Air operates twice-daily services, creating another option for Aussies heading to Europe.

Finnair's tie-up with Oman Air marks the Middle Eastern carrier's first new codeshare since joining the oneworld alliance in Jun 2025. *AB*

WA wears the Crown

WESTERN Australia's 2026-27 cruise season set sail yesterday, with Princess Cruises' *Crown Princess* arriving at Fremantle.

Crown Princess is carrying 3,080 pax on her 28-day 'Round Australia' voyage, which includes scheduled calls to Albany, Adelaide, Busselton, Broome, the Kimberley, Darwin and Brisbane, before returning to Sydney.

The ship entered the city's waters one year ahead of *Sapphire Princess*, which will begin homeporting in Fremantle this time next year for the cruise line's 2027-28 season.

Sapphire Princess will make 41 port calls across WA, generating \$142 million for the economy.

Princess Cruises will unveil its 28/29 Australia season on 28 Oct, with sales opening on 11 Nov. *AB*

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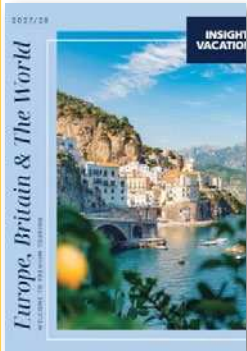


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Insight Vacations - Europe, Britain & The World
The new brochure from Insight Vacations is highlighting its 2027/28 journeys, with the collection encompassing Europe, the UK and North Africa, as well as North and South America and Asia. There are also 10 women-only tours available across 12 countries. The 236-page brochure is packed with information, with highlights including a northern lights experience at Aurora Village on the 'Northern Lights of Scandinavia' itinerary, a Bonsai masterclass as part of the 'Wonders of Japan' tour and the opportunity to savour a farm-to-table meal in Saltash on the 'Best of Britain' journey. Agents can request a digital copy of the brochure [HERE](#).



Costsaver - World 2027/28
Costsaver has launched a brochure showcasing its worldwide tours for 2027/28, with itineraries available across Europe and Britain, the US and Canada, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Featuring over 100 pages, the guide provides a day-by-day breakdown of each itinerary, including the seven-day 'Glimpse of Europe' tour, the 13-day 'Iberian Explorer' adventure and the eight-day 'Essence of Eastern Canada' journey. Readers will find a QR code for every trip, conveniently linking them to the booking page. The brochure, which can be found [HERE](#), also highlights a selection of Make Travel Matter experiences.



Wendy Wu Tours - Latin America 2027/28
Wendy Wu Tours' Latin America 2027/28 collection is its biggest yet, with all the details to be found in its latest brochure. Travellers can discover brand-new group tours, nine new private tours and a fresh selection of cruise & tour holidays, taking them from Chile and the Galapagos to the Amazon, the Andes and beyond. New offerings include the 16-day 'Pure Patagonia: Chile & Argentina' itinerary, the 18-day 'Natural Wonders of Ecuador & Galapagos' tour and the 25-day 'Grand Impressions of Mexico' journey. There is also a limited-time launch offer available, with savings of up to \$3,500 per person or 50% off single supplement. Click [HERE](#) to check out the brochure.

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Tasty bites on the Nile



ABERCROMBIE & Kent Travel Group has announced the culinary vision for its new Egypt riverboat, *Nile Seray*, which will be a part of its A&K Sanctuary luxury hospitality collection.

Launching in Nov, the food and beverage program will be inspired by Egypt's culinary heritage, integrating regional ingredients, and will draw inspiration from Egypt's position at the crossroads of Africa, Arabia, and the Med.

The menus blend regional heritage with refined techniques, creating an experience that celebrates the flavours, ingredients and traditions of the Nile Valley through a contemporary lens.

Menus will feature classic Egyptian dishes such as fava bean bissara, hawawshi, and rozz me'amar, alongside regional favourites including Lebanese kibbeh, Levantine muhammara, and Persian sambousek.

Other highlights of the onboard culinary experience will include live cooking stations, elegant tasting menus, handcrafted botanical beverages and vibrant

street food evenings.

Everything including the bread is made on board by the team using ancient grains, fresh seasonal vegetables, herbs and spices sourced from the Nile Valley. *MS*

Aviation Aus chair

A NEW chair will lead Queensland-based training organisation Aviation Australia, with Mark Xavier to bring experience to the role from his career across aviation technology and specialist training.

Xavier is currently managing director of Brisbane-based V-TOL Aerospace and Australian Unmanned Systems Academy, and is an existing member of the organisation's board.

The appointment, announced by Premier of Queensland David Crisafulli, will support the development of the skilled workforce of the state's growing aviation and aerospace industries.

Aviation Australia works with employers to prepare people for careers in aircraft maintenance, cabin crew & remote aviation. *MS*



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Singapore Airlines and its low-cost subsidiary Scoot operate over 180 weekly services from seven Australian cities, connecting travellers to a global network spanning over 120 destinations across 35 countries.

Service Excellence

Singapore Airlines continues to garner prestigious accolades worldwide, reaffirming its status as a global aviation leader.

Product Leadership

Singapore Airlines continues to invest in new products and services to enhance customer experience around the world.

Network Connectivity

The SIA group currently operates over 180 weekly flights from 7 cities across Australia.

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