

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news, including a photo page from **Entire Travel Group** and our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Signature Travel Club**.

Join the Travel Club

SIGNATURE Media is gearing up to launch a subscription travel club this Oct, which will include a monthly magazine, exclusive deals and prize draws.

Maldives tax concerns

AUSTRALIAN agents and operators selling Maldives holidays are facing new tax and compliance obligations from 01 Oct, after the Maldivian Government agreed to extend its tourism services tax of 17% to overseas businesses without a physical local presence.

The changes apply to the sale of accommodation, transport, meals and tourism activities, and could require Australian advisors to register with the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority to meet the new GST obligations.

Concerns over the changes have been raised from overseas markets, including the UK trade association ABTA, which has appealed directly to Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu for a six-month implementation delay.

The move has echoes of a recent tourism tax in Fiji, which was pushed through with little international consultation. **AB**

VA seeks deeper Kiwi ties

VIRGIN Australia and Air New Zealand are looking to expand their existing codeshare partnership, requesting ACCC and NZ Govt approval to provide customers of both airlines with additional loyalty benefits and seamless connectivity to a broader range of destinations.

A Virgin Australia spokesperson confirmed to **Travel Daily** that if sanctioned, its Velocity members would gain the ability to earn and redeem loyalty points on Air New Zealand's entire network, gaining access to Velocity reward seats on services to destinations such as the Pacific Islands, Tokyo, Hawaii, Houston and New York City, subject to availability.

Under the proposed deeper ties, Air New Zealand Koru members would also gain the ability to earn and redeem Airpoints and status points on Virgin Australia's domestic and short-haul international flights.



Eligible members of both loyalty programs would have access to a range of additional reciprocal benefits as well, including - depending on tier status - lounge access, extra baggage allowance, priority check-in, priority boarding and priority baggage.

Virgin Australia customers would gain access to expanded codeshare services beyond the trans-Tasman corridor on all Air New Zealand-operated services to 20 domestic Kiwi destinations.

Air NZ customers would also enjoy greater connectivity to Australia by travelling on a single itinerary to 30 destinations across Virgin Australia's domestic network, such as the Whitsundays, Byron Bay and Broome. **AB**

Half-price rail trips

INTERRAIL has gone live with its biggest-ever sale, offering 50% off long-duration Global Passes and 15% off all other passes until 30 Sep.

The promotion follows Interrail's recent global rebrand from Eurail (**TD** 11 Sep 2026). **JM**



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Friday 25th Sep 2026

Take Explora to the river

EXPLORA Journeys has confirmed it will be the latest brand to expand its sailings to European waterways.

The MSC Group-owned luxury brand has signed a letter of intent with Dutch shipbuilder Den Breejen Shipyard for the construction of its debut luxury river ship.

River cruise sales for the yet-to-be-named river vessel are set to open in 2027, with further details regarding ship design, onboard experiences, delivery schedules and initial itineraries to be released at a later date.

"Since launching, Explora Journeys has sought to change the way people experience ocean travel through its 'ocean state of mind' philosophy - combining the freedom and discovery of travelling by sea with the elegance and refinement of European hospitality and design," the cruise line said.

"The brand now intends to bring that same approach to Europe's most iconic rivers."

The development follows Royal Caribbean Group's Celebrity Cruises brand gearing up to debut on European rivers next year, and the recent foray of The Travel Corporation's Trafalgar brand.

Demand for river cruising out of Australia has risen sharply in recent years, with Trafalgar revealing it will ramp up hardware on the continent's waterways in 2027-2028. *AB*

Delta ramps up NDC

DELTA Air Lines plans to launch NDC content by Dec, bringing its products to the Sabre, Travelport and Amadeus GDSs, plus select direct connections.

The carrier said it is also collaborating with key industry partners to integrate its NDC tech into corporate booking tools. *JM*

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VJ domestic progress

VIETJET'S mooted plans to become a serious competitor to Qantas and VA in the domestic market have taken another step forward, with the carrier registering its first Boeing 737 Max 8 in Australia.

The airline confirmed the plane had been leased to an Australian entity seeking regulatory approval to operate in Australia.

According to *The Australian*, VH-T8A has been added to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority's register, with Vietjet Aviation listed as the registration holder and Melbourne-based Cherrie Aviation the registered operator.

Sources had previously stated Vietjet had requested an Air Operator Certificate and permission to start a locally incorporated operation with 10 Boeing 737 aircraft (*TD* 29 Jun).

It has been an active period for Vietjet in Australia, having inked a deal last month with WSI to be its third int'l airline (*TD* 10 Aug). *AB*



Window Seat

VISITORS to New York will soon be able to enjoy a magical winter experience, with The Rink at Rockefeller Center set to dazzle during its 90th anniversary celebrations.

Kicking off on 10 Oct, the special programming will include a refreshed VIP skate program offering priority ice access, exclusive lounge areas, complimentary warm beverages and snacks, as well as "seasonal surprises".

The centre will also debut six new lodges, providing a larger, more celebratory take on the classic chalet experience, as well as holiday chalets overlooking the iconic rink and Christmas tree.

Tickets are on sale now **HERE**, so get your skates on.



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Cruise seasons are shifting

EXCLUSIVE

WINDSTAR Cruises is seeing a shift in traditional cruise seasonality, with travellers increasingly looking beyond peak summer months to avoid heat, crowds and overtourism.

Windstar Cruises MD global commercial Helen Beck (pictured) told *Travel Daily* that Jul and Aug in the Northern Hemisphere were increasingly becoming shoulder periods, while Apr to Jun and Sep to Oct were also strengthening.

"We have seen seasonality start to shift over the past few years," she explained, attributing the change partly to climate change and rising temperatures, particularly across Northern Hemisphere summers.

"Jul and Aug have become shoulder [season] again - very specifically in northern Europe, Apr, May, Jun, Sep, Oct [are] becoming peak," she said.

"I see the Australian traveller doing similar," she said.

Beck also pointed to growing appeal for Mediterranean cruising



during the Northern winter, with Nov to Mar offering cooler temperatures and fewer crowds.

Speaking to sister title *Cruise Weekly* earlier in the week, Beck also revealed that Windstar sees untapped potential in converting river cruisers to ocean sailing with the line acting as "a bridge" between the two products (*CW* 23 Sep 2026). ZH

WSI is Uber ready

WESTERN Sydney International (WSI) has announced a partnership with Uber will feature an exclusive pick-up zone only 100m from the WSI terminal.

"As the countdown continues to the launch of our inaugural passenger services on 25 Oct, it's fantastic to have so many options available for passengers to get to and from WSI," WSI CEO Simon Hickey said.

Uber MD ANZ Emma Foley said Uber is looking forward to partnering with the new airport and "play a role in this next chapter for the West". ZH

TK order 150 Max

TURKISH Airlines has finalised a deal for up to 150 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, comprising 100 firm 737-8 orders and an option for another 50.

The agreement, TK's largest single-aisle order from Boeing, was signed in New York in the presence of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The deal is part of a broader Boeing commitment announced last year following talks between Erdogan and President Trump. ZH



Travel Daily

**SPECIAL REPORT
OUT NOW**

*Luxury on the move:
Welcome to a new era in travel*

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TIME for Canada

TRAVEL Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) has launched in Canada, bringing its cross-industry mentorship program to Toronto (*TD* 09 Jun 2026).

Founded by Penny Spencer in 2009, TIME launched on 23 Sep with its first three Canadian mentor-mentee pairs, while Air New Zealand announced a \$2,000 scholarship for one participant in the March 2027 intake.

Spencer said the expansion was driven by similarities between the two markets.

"The industry is very similar to the Australian industry and so I thought why not bring it to Canada?" she told *PAX News*.

The Canadian program will follow TIME's established six-month mentoring model, with participants completing 24 hours of one-on-one sessions.

The initiative is aimed at helping travel professionals build key industry skills. ZH

Ready, METT, go

METT Singapore will host a series of poolside celebrations and race-inspired dining from 02-11 Oct, coinciding with the F1 Singapore Grand Prix.

Highlighting the lineup is the Cabana Club event on 10 Oct, the eve of the race, offering a poolside brunch, followed by DJs and drinks in the afternoon.

Tickets for the event start from S\$128 (A\$142.18) and include free-flowing drinks and access to the pool and lawn activations.

Guests can also book The Driver's Table throughout race week at Canning Bar & Lounge, offering dining and cocktails inspired by GP destinations.

The menu includes items such as the Monaco Lobster Roll and Imola Beef Tartare, along with cocktails such as the 5 Lights, Pole Position and Monza.

On 03 and 10 Oct, L'Amo Bistro Del Mare will host its Riviera Race Club Brunch, with premium seafood, champagne and bespoke desserts. JB

Windstar opens '28

BOOKINGS are now open for Windstar Cruises' Summer 2028 Europe season, with five yachts sailing across the Mediterranean and Northern Europe from Mar through to Oct.

The new season features an expanded programme in Germany, with sailings through the Kiel Canal and Elbe River, plus a voyage tied to Hamburg's major maritime festival.

A new Windstar port has been introduced in Ireland's Aran Islands, offering enhanced exploration of the British Isles aboard *Star Explorer*.

Before 31 Oct, clients can make the most of Windstar's early booking offer, giving clients a free all-inclusive package, \$100 shipboard credit and 5% savings on cruise fares. JB

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Going back to school

EXCLUSIVE

AS PART of its push to attract new talent into the industry, Cornerstone Learning and Development delivered its first travel and tourism careers webinar for school students, parents and careers advisors this week.

The session, which attracted participants from 27 schools around Australia, aimed to highlight the wide variety of employment opportunities available in the industry, while dispelling any perception that travel and tourism is a small or uncertain career choice.

Edinburgh expansion

EDINBURGH Airport (EDI) is set to invest over £500 million (A\$943 million) across the next five years, as it looks to expand its terminal.

The five-year plan is the first stage of a multi-year expansion, which will see EDI add gates and aircraft stands to accommodate a greater number of airlines and routes, in addition to an expanded check-in hall, new food and retail offerings, as well as improved international arrival facilities and baggage claim.

Overall, the expansion will see EDI increase its terminal footprint by 60%.

The first part of the investment comes in the form of an expansion to EDI's South East Pier, which is scheduled to fully open to passengers mid-2027. *JB*



Hosted by co-founder Cassandra Tormey and head of strategy and partnerships Monica Godfrey, the webinar also offered advice on how to get started in building a travel career.

"As an industry, we've spent a lot of time talking about the talent shortage," Godfrey said.

"We can't just keep competing for the same experienced people, we need to inspire the next generation to choose travel in the first place.

"That means getting in front of young people early and showing them that a career in travel is much bigger than the handful of roles they may already know."

Cornerstone also launched its New to Travel Industry Foundations Program last month (*TD* 26 Aug 2026). *JM*

MGallery inks NY

MALLERY Collection has signed Ink 48 in New York, which will become its US flagship in 2028 following a renovation.

The Manhattan hotel features 222 rooms, including 17 suites, plus a rooftop bar, restaurant and meeting facilities.

Ink 48 will continue operating independently until the new MGallery opening. *ZH*



Cruise guide OUT NOW
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A taste of Thailand



THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) wrapped up its Amazing Thailand Roadshows in Sydney and Melbourne this week, connecting travel agents with 36 suppliers representing Krabi, Phang Nga, Samui, Khao Sok, Phuket, Bangkok and Pattaya.

During both events, agents heard the latest product updates and destination insights, while also getting to network.

Suppliers showcased Thailand's growing luxury offerings, with TAT's marketing manager Sherly Handjojo sharing with attendees how the country is uniquely positioned to allow travellers to slow down.

"From wellness retreats and island escapes to authentic cultural encounters, Thailand offers travellers the opportunity to slow down, reconnect and return home feeling refreshed and renewed," she said.

In addition to the formalities, there was also a Muay Thai performance and an interactive boxing lesson. *JB*

Aman into Maldives

AMAN will make its Maldives debut with the planned 2028 opening of Amanolu, a 52-key resort and 16 branded residences in the secluded Vaavu Atoll.

The resort's name combines Aman - Sanskrit for peace - with Olu, inspired by the water lily and its associations with serenity, renewal and nature.

Devised by long-time Aman collaborator Kerry Hill Architects, Amanolu's design will draw on the Maldives' white coral beaches, turquoise lagoons and surrounding seascape.

The resort will incorporate Aman's global culinary concepts, alongside social gathering spaces, a 25-metre pool, and a dedicated wellness island featuring Expansive Aman Spa and signature Spa Houses.

Guests can also enjoy an array of activities, including diving, snorkelling, watersports and marine exploration, along with personalised service. *ZH*



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ENTER TODAY



Friday 25th Sep 2026

An Entire night of luxury in Mel

ENTIRE Travel Group brought together 120 travel professionals and some of the world's leading rail and cruise brands for a night of great food, industry connections and travel inspiration at Elara Melbourne.

Star Clippers, Rocky Mountaineer, Golden Eagle Luxury Trains, Switzerland Tourism, Le Boat, VIA Rail and Rovos Rail joined the event, giving advisors the opportunity to hear the latest updates and connect directly with the brands behind some of the world's most memorable journeys.

Guests enjoyed cocktails and canapes overlooking the city before a three-course dinner and partner presentations, with an impressive prize draw adding to the night.

Among the prizes were journeys aboard Rovos Rail, Canyon Spirit and VIA Rail, giving lucky advisors the chance to experience the product firsthand.

The event also put the spotlight on Entire Travel Group's specialist Entire Rail Journeys and Entire Cruise Journeys brands, highlighting the breadth of rail and cruise experiences available to Australian travellers.



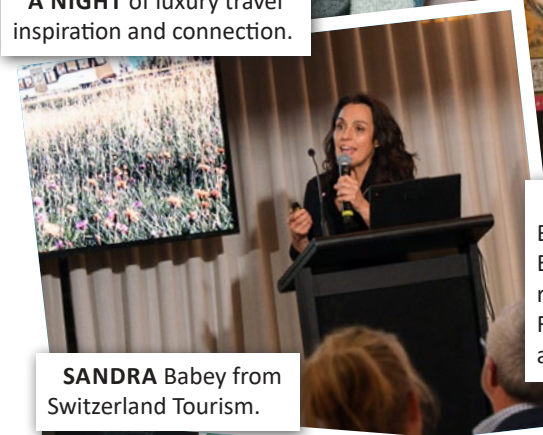
A NIGHT of luxury travel inspiration and connection.



BACK row from left: John Saporito, Rovos Rail; James Bird, Rocky Mountaineer; Megan Bardsley, Golden Eagle; and Greg McCallum, Entire Travel Group. Front row from left: Brad McDonnell, Entire Travel Group; Ray Lane, VIA Rail; Sandra Babey, Switzerland Tourism; and Roger Condon, Star Clippers.



JAMES Bird from Rocky Mountaineer.



SANDRA Babey from Switzerland Tourism.



MEGAN Bardsley from Golden Eagle.



GREG McCallum, Entire Travel Group; Cathy Sullivan, Eastern Hill Travel; and Megan Bardsley, Golden Eagle.



TRAVEL advisors enjoyed canapes and a three-course dinner while hearing presentations from event partners.



ROGER Condon from Star Clippers.



ENTIRE Travel Group's Brad McDonnell and Greg McCallum inspired attendees with their personal Le Boat experiences in France and Canada.

CORPORATE UPDATE

NDC locks down FCTG corp

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has confirmed that 92% of its corporate customers have now opted in to Qantas NDC (TD 18 Feb 2026).

Since Jan, over 500,000 Qantas NDC segments have been booked, with a case study revealing that the average customer will save over \$140,000 per year.

The NDC allows for corporate travel managers to access personalised fares, bundles and ancillary options unavailable with legacy booking channels.

In mid-Jun, international NDC usage doubled month-on-month, following online connectivity going live.

Australia and New Zealand remain the most-booked destinations on the channel.

Moving forward, Nikki Ping, global manager of travel distribution at FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller, said that both



FCTG and Qantas are looking to adopt greater personalisation and AI-enabled self-service.

"By pairing order-level data with AI virtual assistants and agent-assist tools, we can automate routine changes and keep consultants focused on complex cases," Ping said. JB

Rough being remote

NEW data from eSIM provider Holafly has revealed the challenges of working remotely when travelling abroad.

According to Holafly's research, 46.8% of remote workers said that travel disruptions have cost them billable hours or income, and 89.1% said they have experienced overwhelm due to tedious admin tasks, which take time out of their main work.

Some of the key issues that remote workers face include navigation, address registration, varied tax requirements and residency rules, which affected their ability to settle in.

The report identified Colombia, Mexico and Germany as the three toughest countries to be a remote worker. JB

TBG gets certified

TRAVEL Beyond Group (TBG) has received ISO 27001 certification, recognising the company's investment in information security, technology and governance.

The certification comes after an independent audit of TBG's information security management system (ISMS), covering the protection of customers, employees, suppliers as well as the company's finance and business information. JB



Travel Daily

**SPECIAL REPORT
OUT NOW**
River Cruising
starts a new chapter

➡ **CLICK HERE TO CHECK IT OUT**

PPG's big Taiwan refurb



PLAZA Premium Group (PPG) has completed a five-month refurbishment of its four lounges at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, across Terminals 1 and 2.

The upgrades saw the lounges receive refreshed interiors, and enhanced dining, relaxation facilities and cultural experiences.

Each lounge has a unique Taiwanese-inspired thematic concept: The Blossom, The Jade, The Terroir and The Crest.

Despite this, each lounge takes inspiration from the island's heritage, jade craftsmanship, tea culture and mountain landscapes.

In addition, the lounges now have reconfigured layouts, optimised seating arrangements and new furnishings.

For culinary options, the lounges will take part in PPG's Flavours in Transit global campaign, with Taiwanese dishes such as sha cha beef noodles,

shredded chicken rice with fried shallots and sticky rice, as well as a range of vegetarian options.

For beverages, PPG has partnered with local tea brand Chappii for an exclusive lineup of tea beverages.

Guests can also opt for a selection of cocktails, made in collaboration with another local brand Drink Sport.

Selected lounges will feature a DIY cocktail bar where travellers are able to create their own bespoke beverages.

Exclusive to The Terroir in Terminal 2, guests can enjoy private rest suites, available in both single and double-occupancy configurations.

Additionally, PPG has partnered with Acme+Art Gallery to install 15 curated artworks across both terminals, showcasing the works of Taiwanese artists such as Wu Chia Hua. JB



SPECIALS

Send your special deals to:
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Rail Europe is now offering up to 50% off Interrail Passes between now and 30 Sep. Half-priced continuous global passes are valid for one-, two- or three-month periods. Global and one-country passes are discounted by 15%. The passes work in 33 countries across Europe and can be activated at any time. Click **HERE** to see more.

Aurora Expeditions is offering guests savings of up to 30% and air credit of up to \$2,850pp on selected photography voyages. Itineraries available on the deal include the 11-day 'Iceland & East Greenland: Through the Lens Photography' tour and the 12-day 'Antarctic Explorer' tour. Call 1800 637 688 to book before the offer ends on 30 Sep.

APT Luxury Travel has savings of up to \$5,000 per couple on small ship cruises. Through the deal, guests can explore the Norwegian Fjords with *Seabourn Venture*, Ha Long Bay aboard *Lyra Grandeur* and the Kimberley Coast on *Seabourn Pursuit*. Call 1300 336 932 to make a booking.

Pullman and Novotel Sydney Olympic Park have a range of dining packages for reservations on the day of sporting events. Dining for the NRL Grand Final on 04 Oct starts from \$90pp, Bledisloe Cup on 17 Oct starts from \$125pp, and the NBL Christmas Day match starts from \$199pp. For more on these packages, call 02 8762 1700.

Travelmarvel's Big Rail Sale is now on until 06 Oct, with savings on a range of 2027 rail tours on offer. Travellers can save up to \$2,200 per couple on the 13-day 'Alpine Discovery by Rail', the 10-day 'Scotland by Rail' trip and the 13-day 'Imperial China' journey. To make the most of this offer, call 1300 208 712.

Oceania Cruises is offering savings of up to 50% on voyages booked before 04 Nov. Standout itineraries include the 17-day 'Cosmopolitan Crossing' aboard *Oceania Marina* and the 18-day 'Far East to Alaska Fjord' journey aboard *Oceania Riviera*. Call 1300 355 200 to book.

There is still time to make the most of **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau's** five-day sale, ending on Sun. Travellers can save up to 60% on resort stays city-wide, as well as receive deals on dining, entertainment, attractions, nightlife and wedding packages - call 877 847 4858.

National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions is offering travellers air credit of up to \$2,000 on select 2027 expeditions, available on bookings made before 04 Nov. Travellers can save on airfares for trips to Svalbard, Antarctica, Japan, Greenland, the South Pacific, Europe and Patagonia. Call 1300 361 012 for details.

Hurtigruten's 1893 Ambassador Loyalty Program is now on until 15 Oct, where members can earn an extra 5-10% off new bookings on select departures between now and 31 Mar 2029. Level 1 1893 Ambassadors will receive a 5% discount, while Level 2 Ambassadors will receive a 10% discount. Call 1300 489 872 for more.



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Lights, camera, Princess



TRAVEL agents in Sydney were the first to see Princess Cruises' new TV series *Chefs Ahoy*, with an exclusive screening this week.

Hosted at Moore Park's Entertainment Quarter, agents got to see the opening episode, taking place aboard *Sun Princess* in Greece, as celebrity chefs Courtney Roulston and Minoli De Silva compete to see who can serve the best dish at The Captain's Dinner.

The four-part, brand-funded

series will include episodes across Japan, Spain and South Korea, featuring other chefs including Miguel Maestre, Dan Hong, Mark LaBrooy, Khanh Ong, Vincent Yeow Lim and Alice Zaslavsky.

Chefs Ahoy will air on *Channel 9* on Wed 30 Sep at 8.45pm. *JB*

Pictured: Nick Ferguson, senior director, sales & marketing - Asia Pacific, Princess; chef Courtney Roulston; and Chloe Jones, head of marketing, Princess.

NT makes the Hotlist

ART experiences in the Northern Territory's Red Centre have been named in the World's Top 25 Experience Hotlist by Lonely Planet's *Best in Travel 2027*, and was the only Australian activity to make the list.

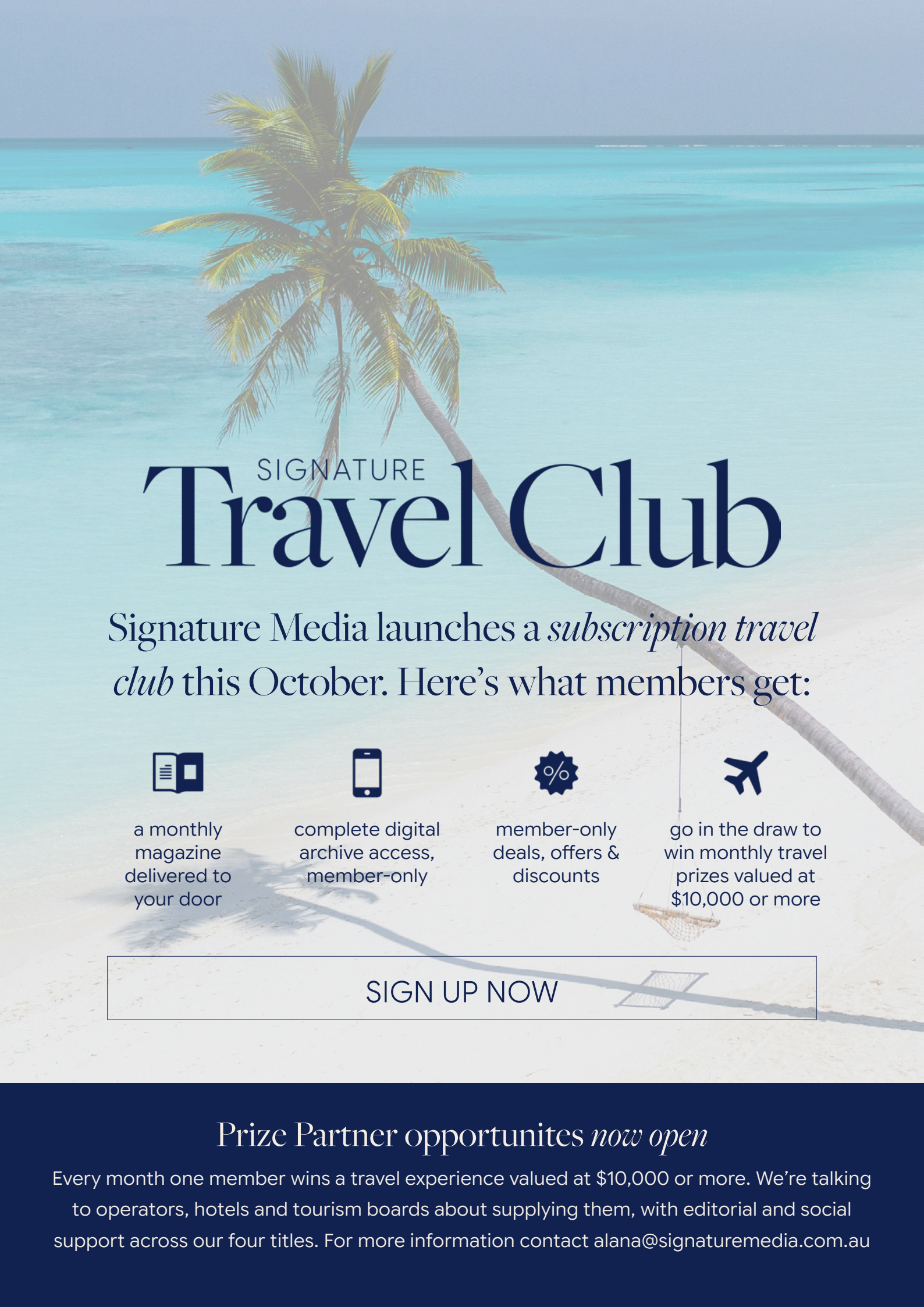
Titled 'Immerse yourself in art in the Red Centre', the feature showcases Aboriginal artists and art centres, outdoor paintings and large-scale desert light installations, including Parrrtjima in Alice Springs. *JB*

France skis ahead

FRANCE has been named the world's top skiing destination during the 2025/26 Northern Hemisphere winter, recording 56.1 million skier days.

The number also represented the third-best season ever for the country, beating out Austria (53.7 million) and the US (52.6 million).

Across the season, there was strong snowfall in both the Alps and the Pyrenees, first recording snowfall in Nov and seeing strong visitor numbers through to the Easter weekend. *JB*



SIGNATURE Travel Club

Signature Media launches a *subscription travel club* this October. Here's what members get:



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prizes valued at
\$10,000 or more

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Prize Partner opportunities *now open*

Every month one member wins a travel experience valued at \$10,000 or more. We're talking to operators, hotels and tourism boards about supplying them, with editorial and social support across our four titles. For more information contact alana@signaturemedia.com.au