

travelBulletin

AUGUST 2016



**Winners
are gridders!**

DRIVE

IRELAND

FAMILY
HOLIDAYS

AFRICA

FRANCE

**SPECIAL
NTIA EDITION**

**SALARY SURVEY
WINNERS & LOSERS**



ALL EXCLUSIVE

REINVENTS TRAVEL IN A CLASS BY ITSELF.



CHRISTMAS MARKETS ALONG THE DANUBE - 2016

From the World's Most Awarded Luxury Cruise Line™ comes a new standard of luxury river travel...introducing Crystal River Cruises™. Launched on 13 July, 2016, the maiden voyage of the strikingly reimagined *Crystal Mozart™*, Europe's legendary river yacht, boasts the award-winning service, exquisitely designed space, exceptional quality and seemingly endless choices for which Crystal is renowned. *Crystal Mozart* is set to explore the Danube River in extraordinary style, with butler service for every suite, superb Michelin star-level cuisine, and an unrivalled selection of all-inclusive luxuries and privileges. The engaging experience on board continues ashore with expertly curated complimentary excursions allowing for unprecedented access and uniquely authentic local experiences.

A CHOICE OF THREE DEPARTURES

- 22 NOV TO 02 DEC 2016 | 10 DAYS | ROUND-TRIP VIENNA (V6M15R) | Cruise-only Fares from AU\$4,970* (CAT W2)
- 02 DEC TO 12 DEC 2016 | 10 DAYS | ROUND-TRIP VIENNA (V6M16R) | Cruise-only Fares from AU\$4,965* (CAT W1)
- 12 DEC TO 22 DEC 2016 | 10 DAYS | ROUND-TRIP VIENNA (V6M17R) | Cruise-only Fares from AU\$4,840* (CAT W2)

DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART
Day 1	Vienna, Austria		12 m
Day 2	<i>Cruising the scenic Wachau Valley</i>		
Day 2	Melk, Austria	11 am	5:30 pm
Day 3	Linz, Austria (overnight)	8 am	
Day 4	Linz, Austria		11 pm
Day 5	Passau, Germany (overnight)	8 am	
Day 6	Passau, Germany		4 am
Day 6	Vilshofen an der Donau, Germany	8 am	12 m
Day 7	Passau, Germany	6 am	6 pm
Day 8	<i>Danube scenic cruising</i>		
Day 8	Bratislava, Slovakia	6 pm	12 m
Day 9	Vienna, Austria (overnight)	9 am	
Day 10	Vienna, Austria (overnight)		
Day 10	Vienna, Austria	Disembark am	



THE NEW CRYSTAL®: WHERE ALL INCLUSIVE IS ALL EXCLUSIVE™

Spacious luxury suites with butler service • Unlimited onboard refreshments, from premium beverages, champagne, fine wine and spirits to soft drinks • Included gratuities for all shipboard staff, including butlers and Crystal Adventures staff • Complimentary culinary experiences at Michelin-starred or highly renowned local restaurants • Complimentary curated Crystal Adventures ashore, featuring both cultural and soft/extreme adventures, depending on the port • Complimentary WiFi and internet access (60 minutes per person per day) • 24-hour room service • Complimentary fitness programs and so much more

FOR BROCHURES AND FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

WILTRANS INTERNATIONAL ON 1800 251 174 (AU) OR 0800 446 376 (NZ) | www.wiltrans.com.au

*Terms and Conditions: Cruise-only fares quoted in AU dollars per person, double occupancy, for category as stated. Accommodation subject to availability at time of booking. Fares reviewed 31 August 2016. All itineraries, fares, programs and policies are subject to change. Contact Wiltrans International for full terms and conditions. ©2016 Crystal Cruises, Inc. Issue date: 13 July 2016.



COVER STORY **20**

Money can't buy happiness

FEATURES

- 24** NTIA 2016
- 50** Drive
- 54** Ireland
- 58** Family Holidays
- 64** Africa
- 68** France

MONTHLY

- 02** State of the Industry
- 06** Issues and Trends
- 36** Technology
- 38** Career in Focus
- 39** Your Travel Business
- 40** Business Events News
- 44** Cruise Report
- 48** Industry in Focus
- 63** Brochures
- 72** The Last Word

COLUMNS

- 02** Ian McMahon
- 06** Steve Jones
- 08** AFTA View
- 16** ATEC View
- 43** ACB View
- 47** CLIA View



From the managing editor Bruce Piper

YOU have to admire consumer group CHOICE for their creativity, with the launch last month of the airline complaints campaign which includes the cleverly named www.complane.com.au website. The populist initiative is sure to garner support from disgruntled travellers, who in this connected world take no time at all to vent their online spleen at any sort of delay. We are an impatient lot, and CHOICE is capitalising on this very human tendency by making it easier than ever before to lodge a complaint with the airlines. The end game for the consumer group is to have new laws introduced which would guarantee monetary compensation for disrupted travellers – similar to the arrangements in Europe, the UK & NZ.

It sounds like a good idea – however on closer examination I believe the campaign is somewhat misguided, and erroneously paints the airlines as bad guys who do their best to make the life of travellers miserable. CHOICE has pitched it as a way of making the airlines financially accountable for delays which are in their control, giving them a monetary incentive to do better. But as most people in the travel industry know, the last thing the airlines want is a delay. As well as meaning they are inundated with complaints, the knock-on effect of a late departure can affect the entire network – with the ensuing chaos costing a fortune.

Unlike the situation in Europe, which is frankly punitive because it penalises airlines no matter what the reason for the delay, the CHOICE proposal would only require compensation in the event the problem is due to something within the carriers' control. Although disruptions are common, they are usually due to weather conditions or air traffic control, so the proposed legislation would not apply. Moreover the airlines also now generally offer a travel insurance option during the purchase process, and at least some of the policies include compensation if a delay means the traveller misses an important event such as a wedding or conference.

I suspect a better solution would be a 'user-pays' system where the airlines offer an additional insurance option providing for compensation in the event of any delay. Travellers could select this at their discretion, giving them assurance they are protected, while those who choose not to take up the option also know what they're in for if things go wrong. If the proposed laws cost airlines more, that inevitably will flow through to higher fares, so the net benefit to consumers overall will be zero.

In the end, travel is an adventure and sometimes that adventure includes disruption. If you don't want to be inconvenienced, stay at home!

This month's contributors

Steve Jones, Ian McMahon, Jayson Westbury, Brett Jardine, Peter Shelley, Anna Hayward, Jenny Piper, Guy Dundas, Bonnie Tai, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Sarah Piper, Lisa Maroun.

travelBulletin

www.travelbulletin.com.au

Travel Bulletin is part of the
Travel Daily family of publications



EDITORIAL

Managing Editor – Bruce Piper
bruce.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

Co-ordinating Editor – Sarah Piper
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760
sarah.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

Editor at Large – Ian McMahon
Ph: 03 9568 4464 or 0414 320 321
imcmahon@travelbulletin.com.au

ADVERTISING

National Sales Manager
Lisa Maroun
Ph: 0405 132 575 or 02 8007 6760
lisa.maroun@travelbulletin.com.au

Production Co-ordinator

Sarah Piper
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760
sarah.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

www.travelbulletin.com.au

DESIGN TEAM

Sarah Piper, Wendy St George

CREATIVE INSPIRATION and FINANCE

Jenny Piper
jenny.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie
Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)



Ian McMahon's perspective

ACCC VS FLIGHT CENTRE: THE SHOWDOWN

IT WAS listed as Case B15/2016 in the High Court of Australia. It was scheduled to get under way on July 27 in Brisbane. By the time you read this we may know the learned Judges' verdict – a verdict with far-reaching implications for travel retailing in Australia and, potentially, around the world.

I refer, of course, to the final round of the six year legal stoush between the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Flight Centre.

The ACCC accused Flight Centre of attempted price-fixing because the retailer negotiated to stop three airlines (Singapore Airlines, Malaysian Airlines and Emirates) offering airfares lower than it could viably offer. The initial ruling favoured the ACCC but in 2013 an appeal to the Full Federal Court was successful and the competition body was forced to pay Flight Centre's costs and refund \$11 million in fines.

The High Court granted the ACCC leave to appeal that decision which hinged on the question of whether Flight Centre was competing with the airlines or acting as their agent.

As Clayton Utz partner, Michael Corrigan, has noted: "The ACCC may be the only agency in the world which is trying to apply cartel laws to parity pricing arrangements. If successful the consequences will be very significant for agency arrangements

generally".

Evidence of potential international implications came in the form of a written submission from global airline body, IATA, which pointed out that most airlines used the same sales agency agreement that Flight Centre used in its negotiations.

IATA argued the ACCC's case "would lead to the absurd conclusion that Singapore Airlines would engage in price fixing simply by appointing Flight Centre as its selling agent ... for a fixed price commission".

The irony in all of this is that I have heard many complaints about Flight Centre from its retail travel competitors. Usually these centre on the chain's price-cutting activities. But never, ever – not once – have I heard another agent complain about Flight Centre trying to keep prices up or engage in any form of retail price maintenance.

And irony of ironies, IATA has come to Flight Centre's defence. The Australian travel agency giant was not (as it has sometimes claimed) the original disruptor of IATA's – and the Australian Government's – attempts to impose airfare retail price maintenance. Jetset's Isi Leibler, for one, was doing this years before Flight Centre was born.

But Flight Centre has certainly played a hugely significant role in creating the cut-throat, competitive airfare market enjoyed by Australian consumers today.

Virgin plots wi-fi in the sky

VIRGIN Australia continues to invest in its product, with CEO John Borghetti last month revealing plans to outfit the carrier's entire jet fleet with in-flight internet access. Details are sketchy at this stage – including the business model and technology partners – but it's proposed wi-fi will be available on both domestic and international flights starting from next year. "Inflight wi-fi has the potential to transform air travel as we know it... we are determined to give Virgin Australia customers the best possible combined connectivity and entertainment experience in the air," Borghetti enthused.

‘Inflight wi-fi has the potential to transform air travel as we know it...’

Clearly Virgin has no choice but to add internet access, particularly in the domestic market, with rival Qantas having already announced its own plans for in-flight connectivity earlier this year. There's a little more detail around the QF proposal, which will operate in partnership with satellite provider ViaSat which taps into the government's National Broadband Network. Qantas CEO Alan Joyce has also promised the service will be up to ten times faster than alternative systems – and to top it off will be free "on top of all the other things that are included when you fly Qantas".

Tourism now a cabinet ministry

THE re-election of the Turnbull government saw a ministerial reshuffle, with responsibility for tourism rolled into the Trade and Investment portfolio held by Steven Ciobo since February

BUSINESS MONITOR

OUTBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, May 2016

Destination	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Apr 16/ May 16	Trend May 15/ May 16
	000	000	000	%	%
Indonesia	108.0	108.5	109.1	+1.3	+16.3
USA	85.1	83.2	85.5	-0.5	+2.7
New Zealand	105.1	106.4	70.6	-1.2	-0.6
UK	49.3	48.6	65.5	-0.3	+4.9
Thailand	45.7	45.9	40.1	+1.2	-1.9
China	37.0	35.5	35.0	-0.5	+1.6
Fiji	26.9	27.9	26.5	-1.8	-6.1
Singapore	30.4	29.5	24.1	-0.0	+1.5
Japan	30.7	31.4	23.8	+1.1	+27.9
Italy	15.2	15.5	23.2	-0.2	-2.7
All outbound	809.1	809.7	764.6	-0.1	+3.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

INBOUND MARKET

Top 10 sources, May 2016

Source	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Apr 16/ May 16	Trend May 15/ May 16
	000	000	000	%	%
New Zealand	108.4	109.9	104.9	-0.0	-1.2
China	99.4	100.8	71.4	+0.6	+18.6
USA	58.1	58.2	46.3	+1.0	+18.4
Malaysia	31.8	32.1	37.9	+1.4	+13.5
Singapore	39.6	40.0	36.3	+3.0	+23.9
UK	58.4	58.2	29.8	-0.4	+1.9
India	21.2	21.6	27.4	+1.5	+11.1
Japan	35.1	34.1	23.0	+1.1	+30.6
South Korea	23.3	22.5	19.2	-0.5	+30.8
Hong Kong	19.7	19.9	14.1	+0.2	+6.9
All inbound	677.0	680.3	542.1	+0.7	+10.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs at May 2016

City pair	Passengers YE May 15 (000)	Passengers YE May 16 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	8,435.4	8,768.1	+3.9
Brisbane-Sydney	4,415.7	4,585.4	+3.8
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,317.7	3,420.6	+3.1
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,579.1	2,696.5	+4.6
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,286.3	2,355.0	+3.0
Melbourne-Perth	2,137.3	2,121.2	-0.8
Gold Coast-Melbourne	1,758.8	1,885.5	+7.2
Adelaide-Sydney	1,822.4	1,863.7	+2.3
Perth-Sydney	1,773.0	1,760.6	-0.7
Hobart-Melbourne	1,449.9	1,514.1	+4.4

Source: BITRE

2016. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull also confirmed the appointment of Keith Pitt who was sworn in as Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. Formerly tourism was part of the responsibilities of Tasmanian senator Richard Colbeck, who lost the job after the election saw him hanging onto his seat by just a thread.

Ciobo knows the tourism sector well, having had an active involvement with a range of bodies including the now defunct National Tourism Alliance, TTF, ATEC and the Australian Hotels Association – and he is a former chair of the Friends of Tourism parliamentary body. There are now effectively two ministers with responsibilities for tourism, and Ciobo’s senior role means the sector has a voice in cabinet too, which definitely cannot be a bad thing.

Card fee revamp backfires

EXPECTATIONS that the push to make credit card fees transparent would reduce costs to consumers were dashed when Qantas revealed its response to the recent review of the sector. Rather than a flat fee of \$30 for international flights and \$7 for domestic, Qantas will move to a 1.3% charge for credit card bookings effective from 1 September. The credit card fee for domestic and trans-Tasman fares will be capped at \$11, while fees on international flights will have a \$70 cap.

Qantas has consistently maintained that it doesn’t profit from the card payment fees, and the new arrangements should actually improve the situation for the airline as it recoups more money from the levies.

Although the carrier noted that a “typical” \$400 return domestic fare would incur a \$5.20 fee, less than the current \$7, in many cases domestic and trans-Tasman flights cost significantly more and so the credit card costs will be correspondingly higher. The same applies for international, where a \$2,000 fare will cost \$26 in fees – but a \$10,000

IHG EXCELLENCE CELEBRATED



INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group celebrated a winning evening at the TAA NSW Awards for Excellence held in Sydney late last month. Category wins included a Best Environmental Practices award for InterContinental Sydney, while the property’s Nicole Cheramie was named Meetings & Events Employee of the Year. The hotel was also inducted into the Hall of Fame having won the Workplace Health & Safety Hotel of the Year for the last three years running. Other IHG properties taking home gongs included InterContinental Sydney Double Bay, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley and Crowne Plaza Terrigal. The IHG team is pictured above with Ruwan Peiris, IHG Director of Operations, who told *travelBulletin* “it was great to see our hotels across the full spectrum of brands recognised, and our people awarded for bringing our service culture to life.”

first or business class fare will cost \$70, more than twice the current cost.

PMC now applies to Norfolk Island

ONE of the side effects of the controversial Federal Government move to change the administrative

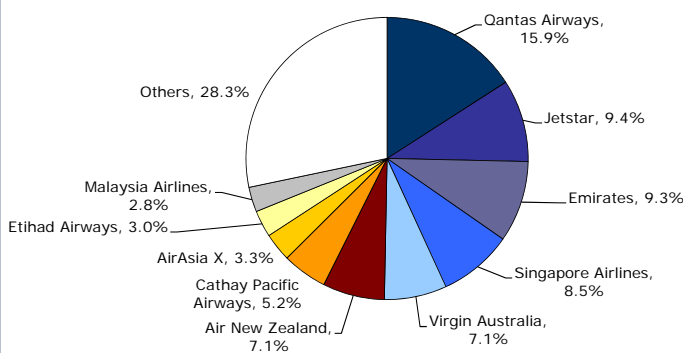
arrangements for Norfolk Island has been that international travellers to the Pacific enclave will now be slugged with the \$55 Passenger Movement Tax, which applies to all gateways in Australia. Previously Norfolk Island was free to manage its own taxation, but now it has become administered

Continues over page

BUSINESS MONITOR

INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended April 2016



Source: BITRE

DOMESTIC AIR MARKET – May 2016

	May 15	May 16	Growth (%)	Yr to May 15	Yr to May 16	Growth (%)
Total pax carried	4.53m	4.67m	+3.0	57.26m	58.25m	+1.7
Revenue pax kms (RPK)	5.27bn	5.40bn	+2.6	67.46bn	68.67bn	+1.8
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.22bn	7.03bn	-2.7	88.24bn	89.12bn	+1.0
Load factor (%)	72.9	76.9	+3.9*	76.4	77.1	+0.6*
Aircraft trips (000)	52.9	52.8	-0.2	632.6	638.2	+0.9

Source: BITRE * Percentage points difference

DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE – June 2016

	Departures on Time		Arrivals on Time		Cancellations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jetstar	4,661	73.4	4,503	70.9	145	2.2
Qantas	7,379	84.8	7,530	86.5	148	1.7
QantasLink	8,403	84.3	8,500	85.3	252	2.5
REX	5,051	81.5	5,252	84.8	94	1.5
Virgin Australia	9,948	85.4	10,216	87.7	307	2.6
All Airlines	37,509	82.5	38,143	83.9	1,003	2.2

Source: BITRE

Continues from previous page

from the mainland. The PMC, which has long been opposed as regressive by the tourism and travel industry, will only affect travellers heading to Norfolk Island from New Zealand, and authorities have pointed out that these travellers already pay the PMC when they come to Australia so the impact should be minimal.

Norfolk Island Tourism downplayed the impact of the PMC, with spokesperson Trina Shepherd telling *travelBulletin* it was likely to be “insignificant compared to the advantages of becoming a domestic port”. Currently more than 80% of visitors to Norfolk are Australian residents who don’t pay the PMC anyway, while for other travellers the effect is the same as when visiting any other Aussie port. Shepherd said the changes in governance had also brought opportunities to work more closely with organisations such as Tourism Australia, which will “boost awareness for Norfolk Island and impact on tourism in a positive way”.

Flight Centre digital push

FLIGHT Centre has appointed a new Chief Digital Officer – the 34-year-old tech wunderkind Atle Skalleberg, who joined the company earlier this year when it acquired Boston-based youth travel specialist StudentUniverse. In addition to his responsibilities running StudentUniverse, Skalleberg will “play a central role in setting FLT’s strategies and improving the group’s digital commerce capabilities – including its online presence, user experiences and booking services – to help the company become the global leader in blending offline and online travel services and meet the demands of tech-savvy leisure travellers,” the company said.

He’ll still be based in Boston but will work with teams in Brisbane, with Flight Centre CEO Graham Turner saying the acquisition of StudentUniverse

had become a catalyst for digital change management. Turner also confirmed that the Aunt Betty virtual travel agency business start-up would officially launch this month, targeting the online holiday package market. He said overall the company expects its new and established leisure travel websites to generate in the order of \$1 billion in TTV during 2016/17.

Lindblad appoints AW

THIS month sees the end of an era after Lindblad Expeditions announced the appointment of The Travel Corporation’s Adventure World as its exclusive General Sales Agent in Australia..

Billed as paving the way for an expansion of the business, the move sees the closure of Lindblad’s existing Australian office which it took over as part of the 2013 acquisition of Orion Cruises.

Global Business Development Director, Jeremy Lindblad, said the appointment of AW would allow for rapid growth, enabling Lindblad to access Adventure World’s “extensive preferred consortia agreements, diverse aligned land product portfolios, wholesale airfare agreements, and expert sales, marketing and reservations teams”.

It also gives Lindblad an immediate presence in New Zealand and allows it to offer extended reservations opening hours.

The appointment of Adventure World is effective from 08 August, with all contact details for Lindblad remaining unchanged and all existing and quoted travel bookings to continue as normal, the company said.

Big passports to be phased out

FREQUENT traveller passports – the 66-page documents popular with Australia’s international road warriors – are set to be phased out, with the move revealed in a presentation by Smartraveller

chief Brek Batley at the Travel Industry Exhibition last month.

Batley also unveiled a number of other changes to passports, including the availability of ten year passports for children aged 16 and 17, while fees no longer apply for lost and stolen passports. He also made the surprising revelation that contrary to expectations the most common countries where passports are stolen are Italy, the USA, the UK, France and Spain, warning travellers to carefully guard the documents wherever they are.

Key issues with passports include validity, with passengers turned back on departure every day because they have less than six months before their passports expire.

Key issues with passports include validity, with passengers turned back on departure every day because they have less than six months before their passports expire. Other reasons for refusal of departure include damaged passports, and he warned that these situations do not entitle travellers to urgent re-issue. Batley noted that despite the discontinuance of the frequent traveller passports, a reduced fee will apply for replacement passports if required because an existing one has run out of pages.

Axis Travel hit by fraud

MAX Najar, the well-known proprietor of Adelaide’s Axis Travel, has stepped in to rescue the travel arrangements of scores of his agency’s clients

BUSINESS MONITOR

MOST POPULAR WEBSITES IN TRAVEL - AGENCIES

June 2016, compared with May 2016

Rank	Position	Visits	% Share	Relative % Diff	Rank
Website	Jun 16	Jun 16	Jun 16	Jun to May	May 16
Webjet Australia	15.96			+0.91	1
Expedia Australia	9.61			+3.31	2
Wotif.com	8.24			+6.12	4
Skyscanner Australia	8.19			+5.98	3
Flight Centre	7.32			+4.25	5
Velocity Frequent Flyer	4.39			+53.19	6
Lastminute.com.au	2.92			+10.02	7
Luxury Escapes	2.12			+6.73	8
Cheap Flights Aus & NZ	1.89			+1.68	9
Helloworld	1.24			+0.09	*

Source: Hitwise, a division of Connexity * denotes not in top 10 previous month

INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs (at April 2016)

City pair	Passengers	Passengers	% of	% change
	YE Apr 15	YE Apr 16	total	15/16
Auckland-Sydney	1,503,401	1,570,095	4.4	+4.4
Singapore-Sydney	1,376,810	1,474,592	4.1	+7.1
Singapore-Melbourne	1,160,739	1,267,436	3.5	+9.2
Auckland-Melbourne	1,075,283	1,165,265	3.3	+8.4
Singapore-Perth	1,011,080	1,109,550	3.1	+9.7
Hong Kong-Sydney	917,718	1,037,121	2.9	+13.0
Auckland-Brisbane	941,481	972,086	2.7	+3.3
Los Angeles-Sydney	902,910	931,530	2.6	+3.2
Denpasar-Perth	914,163	851,618	2.4	-6.8
Singapore-Brisbane	806,466	796,374	2.2	-1.3
Top 10 city pairs	10,610,051	11,175,667	31.2	+5.3
Other city pairs	23,072,583	24,656,717	68.8	+6.9
ALL CITY PAIRS	33,682,634	35,832,384	100.0	+6.4

Source: BITRE

SHARE PRICES

at 21 July, 2016

Flight Centre (FLT)	\$32.79
Helloworld (HLO)	\$3.30
Webjet (WEB)	\$7.35
Disruptive Investments (DVI)	\$0.14
Qantas (QAN)	\$3.10
Virgin Australia (VAH)	\$0.21
Ardent Leisure (AAD)	\$2.06
Air New Zealand (AIZ)	\$2.03
Auckland International Airport (AIA)	\$6.71
Sydney Airport (SYD)	\$7.40
Corporate Travel Management (CTD)	\$14.79
Cover-More Insurance (CVO)	\$1.33
Regional Express (REX)	\$0.78
Sealink (SLK)	\$4.29

FABULOUS FIELD OF LIGHT



VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia hosted an event late last month to thank the industry for its support of the Field of Light art installation at Uluru, which has been an outstanding success. Pictured at the function are Voyages' Ray Stone and Karena Noble.

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 23 Jun** QF top Aussie travel site
- 23 Jun** Vanuatu 'better than ever'
- 24 Jun** Bali Hotels deplores DFAT
- 24 Jun** USA growth "unabated"
- 27 Jun** SQ aircraft catches fire
- 27 Jun** Brexit to hit aviation – IATA
- 28 Jun** SQ flag lower corp fares
- 28 Jun** Crown Syd planning tick
- 29 Jun** AFTA slams Norfolk PMC
- 29 Jun** Jin Air to Far North Qld
- 30 Jun** FC reshuffling Quickbeds
- 30 Jun** AF/KLM shifts operations
- 01 Jul** Norfolk downplays PMC
- 01 Jul** TA/NZ strengthen alliance
- 04 Jul** IATA FC/ACCC submission
- 04 Jul** WTP rebrands as Orbit
- 05 Jul** Infinity wholesale rejig
- 05 Jul** ATPI acquires TMC Plan B
- 06 Jul** Major restructure for NSW regional tourism
- 06 Jul** Double digit arrivals spike
- 06 Jul** Virgin to raise \$1.01 billion
- 07 Jul** I Love Cruising launches
- 07 Jul** Quest readies for UK entry
- 08 Jul** QF on credit card surcharges
- 08 Jul** *Pacific Explorer* revealed
- 08 Jul** Keeler exits Tourism Aus
- 11 Jul** Aussies keep on travelling
- 11 Jul** Travel consultants happy
- 12 Jul** Tassie tourism scholarship
- 12 Jul** ATAS partners with Google
- 13 Jul** Larger passport fade out
- 13 Jul** Magellan \$10m prediction
- 14 Jul** PNG adds visa for Aussies
- 14 Jul** Bright future for tourism
- 15 Jul** AFTA awaiting TCF report
- 15 Jul** Terror chaos in France
- 16 Jul** 2016 NTIA winners
- 18 Jul** NTIA 2016 off with a bang
- 18 Jul** Swiss-Belhotel Brisbane
- 19 Jul** QF, NSW strike new deal
- 19 Jul** Turnbull Ministry lauded
- 20 Jul** Quintessentially to Melb
- 20 Jul** Lostcostholidays collapse
- 21 Jul** Virgin to offer in-flight wi-fi
- 21 Jul** CHOICE wants delay compo
- 21 Jul** Axis Travel hit by fraud

who have been allegedly defrauded by a contractor who worked with Axis for the last three years.

The 44-year-old consultant has been charged with dishonestly dealing with documents in a case of what police described as an "elaborate scheme," with tickets not issued, false travel documents provided and payments allegedly assigned to other travellers. Najar wrote to his customers confirming the agency had honoured more than \$180,000 worth of travel to ensure client arrangements

were unaffected. However some of the travellers are also believed to have made arrangements directly with the contractor, rather than Axis Travel, and authorities have frozen a bank account which purports to be in the company name but which is not accessible by the agency.

The alleged perpetrator will appear in court early this month, while Najar has urged improvements to systems for employers to be able to verify the bona fides of potential staffers.

AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

International passenger through Australia's major international airports – April 2016

Airport	Passengers YE Apr 15	Passengers YE Apr 16	% of total	% change 16/15
Sydney	13,462,586	14,386,524	40.1	+6.9
Melbourne	8,324,298	9,148,294	25.5	+9.9
Brisbane	5,102,332	5,299,713	14.8	+3.9
Perth	4,175,868	4,249,995	11.9	+1.8
Gold Coast	870,789	985,332	2.7	+13.2
Adelaide	950,296	853,299	2.4	-10.2
Cairns	475,593	592,019	1.7	+24.5
Darwin	298,418	257,338	0.7	-13.8
Townsville^	n/a	23,259	0.1	n/a
Sunshine Coast*	10,248	17,376	0.0	+69.6
Norfolk Island	11,770	11,079	0.0	-5.9
Port Hedland~	436	8,156	0.0	1770.6
All Airports	33,682,634	35,832,384	100.0	+6.4

ACCREDITED AGENTS

22 July 2016

New South Wales	993
Victoria	710
Queensland	596
Western Australia	295
South Australia	227
Australian Capital Territory	52
Tasmania	42
Northern Territory	23
TOTAL	2938

Got something to say?

We're all ears, so share your thoughts at haveyoursay@travelbulletin.com.au



Steve Jones' Say

IT'S now 12 months since Dennis Bunnik took the reins at the Council of Australian Tour Operators and set about transforming its club-style mindset into an industry body with a more strategic, professional edge.

As I said at the time, it was the modernising change the organisation needed. To that end, Bunnik and the CATO committee drew up a three-year strategic plan with the overarching aim of "making CATO membership count".

Initiatives have included the introduction of registration numbers for CATO members, a trade marketing push and education forums, the first, fittingly given our unsettled and uncertain times, on crisis management.

It's a good start. But it's only a start. More can and should be done to ensure CATO enjoys a healthy and closer relationship with its key distribution partners.

For a while now, tourist offices have been welcomed into CATO's ranks, while research, marketing and car hire firms have been admitted as affiliates. Maybe

now is the time to explore a structure that actively encourages and invites like-minded, independent travel agents into the fold.

It's a framework that has worked in the UK through the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), an organisation with a membership base of around 125 specialist wholesalers. Running alongside that is a body called AITO Specialist Travel Agents, which has become AITO's preferred retail

‘ Surely a similar model could be explored by CATO ’

arm. The aim is a simple one; to marry independent tour operators with those agents committed to selling bespoke itineraries and specialist destinations. And it's worked. Annual turnover has reached £53 million.

Surely a similar model could be explored by CATO, with the creation of a membership option for agents a good starting point.

Closer collaboration through membership

of an organisation like CATO would build loyalty between agents and wholesalers, improve product knowledge and create a deeper understanding of each other's issues.

It's a tough market for wholesalers, particularly those – and there are many – which don't have preferred status with the major retail groups. So the ability to get to know, work with and even strike commercial deals with agents they currently have no access to could only be of benefit.

Too often in recent times the relationship between wholesalers and the retail trade has been strained, partly because of the trend for agents to source product directly.

Nevertheless, the vast bulk of agents still need traditional wholesalers, particularly when the product is of the specialist type sold by many CATO members.

Such an initiative may take time to gain traction. But, as has been the case with AITO in the UK, it could lead to something extremely worthwhile for both wholesale and retail sectors of our industry.

flysaa.com.au

THE EASIEST WAY FROM AUSTRALIA TO SOUTH AFRICA AND BEYOND.

With daily flights from Australia* to Johannesburg via Perth and onwards to 29 destinations within Africa, South African Airways is your best option for travels to Africa and beyond.

Stretch out with industry leading leg room in both Business and Economy Class cabins. Relax into your 180 degree lie flat Business Class seat; enjoy meals inspired by the South African celebrity chefs paired with the finest Cape wines. Experience South Africa's world renowned

hospitality and understand why South African Airways has been voted "Best Airline Africa" for 14 consecutive years.

No matter your destination, South African Airways will get you there in style. As a Star Alliance member South African Airways connects you to more than 1300 destinations worldwide.

Go online to flysaa.com.au or visit your preferred travel agent today to book your next African adventure!

*SAA Australian domestic flights are operated by our codeshare partner Virgin Australia



SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER





At the NTIA - Trevor Jones, Andrew Macfarlane, Kevin Dale, Edwin Spencer, Penny Spencer, Spencer Travel winning the Best Travel Agency Corporate – single location at the NTIAs.

MAGELLAN PREPPING FOR GROWTH

MAGELLAN Travel Group is expected to shortly announce a hefty \$10 million plus annual profit for 2015-16 which will be distributed in full to its members – the organisation’s eighth consecutive year of double digit growth. CEO Andrew Macfarlane recently sat down with *travelBulletin* to discuss the state of play in the industry.

TB: How has the last year gone?

AM: I would say that in terms of the market, 2015/16 was a good, not a great year for our member agents. I expect they’ve done better than many, given their experience and expertise and many specialise in niche markets that have held up better than the mass market. Nevertheless, our leisure members too have seen the effect of France, Belgium & Turkey on demand, particularly to Europe. And we are seeing the growth in perceived safe destinations such as Canada.

Our corporate members of course are affected by things like the transitioning economies in Queensland and Western Australia, a lack of business confidence, the election and so on. But many are also winning new business and expanding and we see demand for a ‘return to service’ amongst many SME and mid-market corporate accounts that may have previously chased the bottom line only to be let down on service, which ultimately costs them more.

TB: What do you see as the key challenges for the industry at present?

AM: There are many challenges out there - direct distribution, global online players, you name it - however again, I expect our members are less affected than the mass-market retailers. One thing our members do

talk about is how in the last couple of years it seems agents have to work harder for the same rewards, due to discounting of airfares, cruises & river cruises driven by over-capacity.

That’s also a factor for the whole industry, when remuneration is based on a percentage of revenue and suppliers chase relentless growth targets in dollar terms, despite dropping prices. I agree with recent commentary that suppliers should place greater value on the millions of dollars of business we already deliver and not link that to incessant, often ridiculous growth targets in a flat market.

out of, even if you want to. 2016/17 could be a year of more movement based on that cycle so, for us, it’s been about getting growth-ready.

We’ve made some changes at Magellan Head Office and added some experience and expertise, without changing the low central cost model, so we’re ideally positioned for the next three years. We are owned by our members so they control their own destiny, and we have no shareholders other than our members, so our sole focus is profit for our members, not from them. And because our group does not also operate a branded division there is no distraction and,

‘We are owned by our members so they control their own destiny, and we have no shareholders other than our members, so our sole focus is profit for our members, not from them’

TB: What’s happening in terms of Magellan’s size?

AM: In terms of member growth we’ve been pretty static for the last year or two, after expanding membership by 50% in 2014. We currently have 120 members. Movements between agency groups are now cyclical, with other networks locking agents away in two or three year contracts that are not easy to get

importantly no cross subsidisation of a mass-market brand. There are no territories, no internal competition and therefore a spirit of collaboration and co-operation.

Our niche strategy remains unchanged – premium leisure and corporate agents, own branded and independent – and we believe there are more agents out there that fit the mould and would prosper from our model, so our doors are very much open.

BOOST TO REGIONAL NSW TOURISM

THE NSW Government has revealed it will plough big dollars into broadening the scope of Destination NSW, in a major revamp which sees the previous Regional Tourism Organisations structure disbanded.

Six new Destination Networks (DNs) will be established. They include regional zones – Destination Riverina Murray; Destination Southern NSW (spanning the Snowy Mountains and Far South Coast); Destination North Coast (encompassing the Mid-Coast to Tweed Heads including Lord Howe Island) and Destination Country & Outback NSW. Two Sydney Surrounds DNs will also be formed – Destination Sydney Surrounds North (the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Hunter) and Destination Sydney Surrounds South (including the Southern Highlands, Wollongong and Shoalhaven).

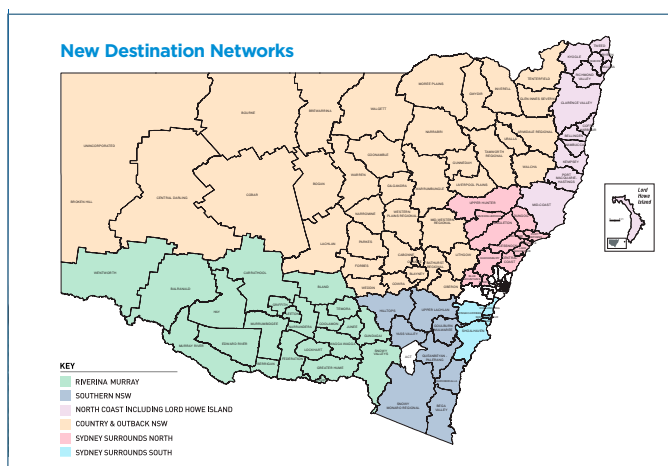
Transitional funding will be provided to assist with completing current projects and winding up existing RTOs as soon as possible. Announcing the \$43m initiative last month, NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres said the new Networks will work hand-in-hand with local government, tourism organisations and operators as well as partnering with DNSW on a variety of campaigns.

Following extensive consultation with more than 90 stakeholders last year, a thorough review determined a new regional tourism model was necessary to increase professional practices of regional tourism entities and better align with consumer experiences, Ayres said.

“I’m pleased that through our agency, Destination NSW, the reforms of regional tourism we are now implementing will ensure six new Destination Networks are established, more funding is guaranteed, governance is improved, and each of the new Networks, and the key destinations and regions they represent, can improve their effectiveness and destination management planning to attract even more visitors,” he added.

Destination Networks will be tasked to develop product, train and educate and engage the industry, with each having a General Manager, Business Development or Marketing Manager/Officer and an Administrative Assistant. Applications are also now sought for a Chair and Board Members of each of the six networks.

Other changes will see a new Regional Division created within Destination NSW – a point of contact for DNs and responsible for developing the state-wide Destination Management Plan. The entity will have its own dedicated resources to promote and develop key sectors, such as Aboriginal tourism, Youth, Cruise and Food & Wine, with NSW also set to ramp up its Flagship Events Program.



AFTA VIEW

Jayson Westbury, chief executive AFTA

WELCOME MINISTER CIOBO

POST the federal election it is very pleasing to see that the Prime Minister has decided to reinstate in a more formal way, the title of Tourism Minister within the portfolio of a cabinet minister. The Hon. Steve Ciobo MP, member for Moncrieff on the Gold Coast has been confirmed as Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment.

In addition to this cabinet ministerial posting, the Prime Minister has also announced an Assistant Minister Trade Tourism & Investment in The Hon Keith Pitt MP member for Hinkler, also from Queensland. So from the industry perspective this new Turnbull Government has well and truly put into place a structure that will allow a solid dialogue and access within the workings of government on all things travel and tourism. Minister Ciobo is well known to AFTA and we have and will continue to enjoy a solid working relationship with him in this next term of government.

‘What is still yet to be decided is the outcome of the Senate and who is in and who is not.’

What is still yet to be decided is the outcome of the Senate. There is no doubt that we will have some new Senators and it is unlikely that either the Liberal/Nationals or Labor will hold any sort of Senate majority. So the fun and games will begin when any serious legislation is being proposed

and until such time as all the dust is settled it is difficult to know exactly who we will be dealing with. A definite space to watch.

On other matters the issue of credit card surcharging is very topical. AFTA has been doing the best it can, given the complexity of the issue, to advise the travel industry of what the changes are. Basically all travel businesses need to start to look at what they are doing when it comes to what amount they are surcharging. While the majority of the travel industry will not need to take any action directly until 1 September 2017, now is the time to make sure that all the detail is understood and that action is taken to begin preparations for the pending changes.

As well as webinars we have attempted to keep relevant information up to date on the www.afta.com.au website on the changes, what is allowed to be surcharged and what is not and the timelines for implementation. Travel is in the spotlight of the regulators in relation to credit card surcharging, so now is the time to look into the issue to ensure you are fully informed.

We continue to work on suitable solutions to ensure the various risks that have been identified in this process can be addressed and I hope to be able to bring good news in the coming months about how to deal with Third Party Credit Card Chargeback, which has caused so much grief over the years when suppliers collapse. This is a subject that AFTA is extremely interested in and we are hopeful that we can find an industry based solution to the challenge. Stay tuned for more on this in the coming months.

On a final note, a very big congratulations to all the NTIA 2016 winners. This year has proven to be another very big success and of course we now turn our attention to planning for NTIA 2017.

CVFR Consolidation Services would like to Congratulate all the Winners and Nominees from the 2016 NTIA Night

Say Hello to a Consolidator that understands it's more than just issuing Air Tickets



CVFR Consolidation Services:

- Market Leading Consolidator with Market Leading Technology
- Ensuring Maximum benefit to the Valued Travel Agent
- On-line Ticket issuance, Re-issues and Re-validation
- Setting High standards of Customer Service
- High Agent Commissions
- 24x7 Ticket Centre Service

CVFR
CONSOLIDATION
SERVICES



Market Leading Consolidator
A proud sponsor of 2016 NTIA

Call 1300 244 777 or Email sales@cvfr.com.au
visit: www.cvfr.com.au

We don't just Talk Travel, we understand it.

Make the change today and experience how a Consolidation Partner should be.

I LOVE CRUISING LAUNCHES



Pictured at the official launch of I Love Cruising are, from left: Paul Millan of TravelTek; Donna Meads-Barlow, DBT; Tim Faircloth, I Love Cruising; and Brian Meads-Barlow, DBT.

SYDNEY-BASED Donna Barlow Travel, which also operates as DBT Corporate and CruiseScene, has launched a major new initiative in the form of I Love Cruising – a home-based network of cruise-loving consultants who receive 100% of the commission on their bookings – and automatic referrals from the ilovecruising.com.au website. It's the brainchild of Brian and Donna

Meads-Barlow who say it's an affordable new option for travel consultants and others who want to ride the cruising wave.

I Love Cruising is also open to people with no prior travel industry experience, who are provided with full training including CLIA accreditation. The new group is powered by TravelTek, which has adapted the booking flow of the website to ensure online reservations also include reference to a preferred cruise

consultant, who can thus receive passive income from the bookings.

The site offers live inventory from a range of cruise lines, as well as individual web pages for each consultant. Ongoing support is provided by the venture's marketing manager and cruising nut Tim Faircloth, who says the only prerequisite to become a Personal Cruise Consultant is a love for cruise.

TAUCK DEDICATED TO AUSTRALIA

TAUCK has established a local call centre in the Sydney offices of its Australian GSA, Travel the World, meaning agents no longer need to contact the USA when enquiring about bookings. The boosted presence also includes the appointment earlier this year of Tauck veteran Nick Coward as National Sales Manager. Coward's experience includes work with a range of brands in the UK and North America including Contiki, Kuoni, Trafalgar and British Airways Holidays – while his most recent role was working as a Tauck Cruise Director, leading a team of guides aboard the company's European river boats. He has relocated from Vancouver with his family to take up the role.

Tauck Vice President for Global Sales, Steve Spivak, said the increased focus on the local market was also reflected in a move earlier in the year to offer Australian dollar pricing, as well as establishing an Australian Partner Advisory Board and undertaking an Australian version of its Tauck Academy certification program for travel consultants, boosting the product expertise of its local trade partners.

Letter to the editor

STEVE Jones' column on the Travel Corporation's Million Dollar Incentive (travelBulletin July) generated lots of feedback, including the contribution below.

Responding to Steve Jones' column in the July issue of travelBulletin, in relation to incentives, he poses the question 'will the allure of thousands of dollars risk this impartiality?' He suggests that travel agents are duty bound to provide impartial guidance. But if you walk into a Flight Centre and ask for a Trans-Siberian rail trip or a group cycling holiday, for example, you will be offered a preferred product. This of course may not be the cheapest or necessarily the best for the client but it gives the consultant extra commission towards his/her daily targets. Surely Steve would have to say this is immoral. A professional travel agent should not be motivated by incentives, whether it be gift cards or extra commission, but by what is best suited to our clients.

**Colin Hood,
Hike Bike Tours.**

Got something to say?

We're all ears, so share your thoughts at haveyoursay@travelbulletin.com.au



Switzerland by train, bus and boat.

Exploring Switzerland has never been so easy!

The Swiss Travel Pass is the all-in-one ticket for international guests to travel by rail, road and waterway throughout the whole of Switzerland.

No matter when and where you wish to travel, standing in line at the ticket machine is a thing of the past. Just come aboard and discover the delightful diversity of Switzerland with a single ticket.

Advantages of a Swiss Travel Pass:

- **Unlimited travel** by rail, road and waterway
- Free travel on most **panorama routes**
- Free travel on **public transport in 75 towns & cities**
- Free admission to more than **490 museums**
- 50% discount off **most mountain railways**
- Children under age 16 travel free of charge when accompanied by at least one parent.



With the **Swiss Mag app** and our **free e-brochures**, exploring your Swiss holiday options is an adventure itself.
MySwitzerland.com/ipad



General information

For more information on Switzerland see:
MySwitzerland.com

Booking information

Be sure to buy your Swiss Travel Pass before you leave at:
MySwitzerland.com/rail

RAILEUROPE



Switzerland.
by train, bus and boat.

OUTBOUND TREND TO CONTINUE

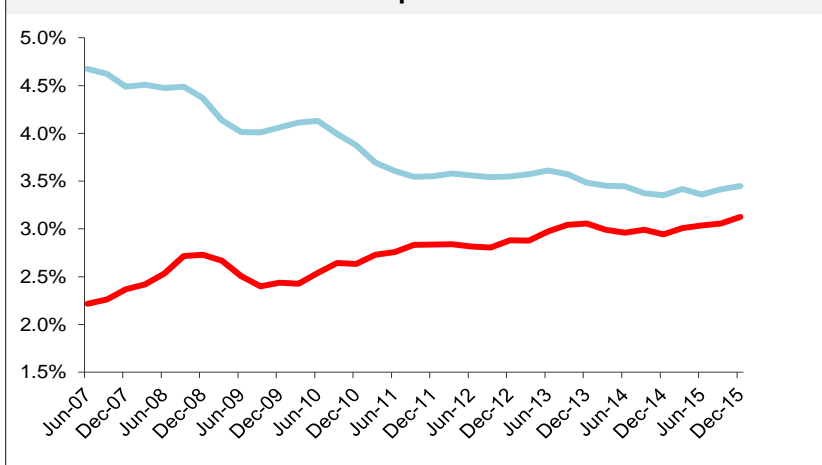
AUSTRALIAN travel patterns are relentlessly shifting towards overseas holidays, with an analysis of the latest figures indicating people are prepared to spend money on vacations regardless of their personal circumstances. That was one of the key findings presented by John O’Shea, travel & tourism analyst from Bell Potter Securities during a session at last month’s Travel Industry Exhibition.

Rather than currency effects, the main driver of outbound demand is household disposable expenditure, with O’Shea insisting that a low Australian dollar hasn’t dampened the seemingly insatiable demand from Australians to holiday abroad. Key factors include very cheap fares, while demographics also have a part to play as “Millennials” have now started their lives travelling and look set to continue the pattern for years to come. At the other end of the spectrum people are staying healthy for much longer, with seniors keen to experience the expanding array of holiday product available overseas.

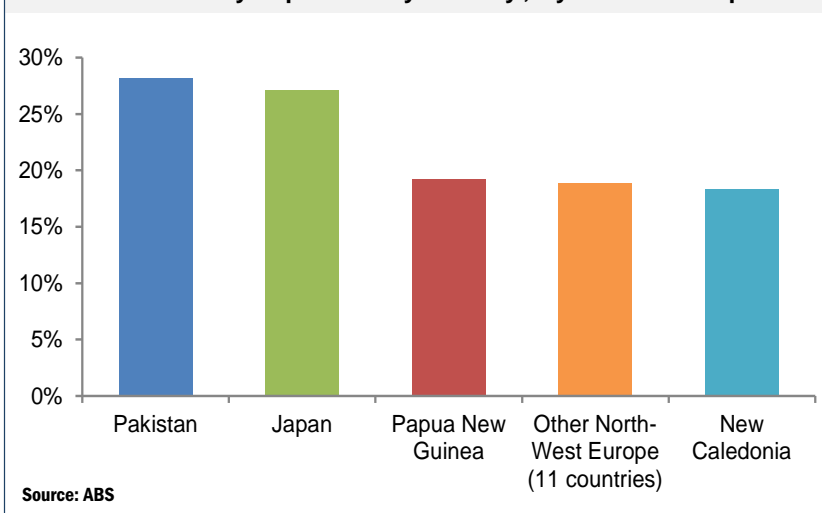
Despite a recent strong increase in domestic holidays, particularly to Queensland, O’Shea noted this was off a very low base. “It’s great news for those destinations, which have been suffering from very low occupancies in recent years,” he said. But the relentless trend of outbound holiday expenditure versus domestic (see top graph) looks set to continue, meaning in the not-too-distant future Australians as a whole will be spending more on outbound than domestic holidays – something which would have been hard to believe just a few years ago.

O’Shea specialises in slicing and dicing the various statistics available, and also presented an intriguing insight into the fastest growing destinations for Australian outbound travel. These include Pakistan, Japan, Papua New Guinea, north-west Europe and New Caledonia (right).

Domestic and Outbound Holiday Travel Expenditure as a % of Household Disposable Income



Short-term Holiday Departures by Country , 3 yr.. CAGR – Top 5



Start with
#HelloSabah



fb.sabahtourism.com



[@sabahtourism](https://twitter.com/sabahtourism)



[@sabahtourism](https://www.instagram.com/sabahtourism)

Get in touch:
Cassie Forsythe | Marketing Manager | cassie@sabahtourism.com

The new SWISS flagship to Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore in 2016



Brand new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft are now operating daily between Zürich and Hong Kong and will operate daily from 15 Jul 2016 between Zürich and Bangkok. Flights between Zürich and Singapore will commence on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday from 2 Sep 2016. Go to www.lufthansaexperts.com to download the SWISS fare sheets



BREXIT, WHAT NOW?

By Steve Jones

WHEN more than 17 million Britons voted to split from the European Union in late June – enough to see the Leave camp victorious but no less shell shocked than the 16m remainers – you could almost hear the collective gasp in the UK, Europe and beyond.

In the weeks since that extraordinary and spectacularly ill-advised referendum, the angst, hand wringing and regret has been intense, on both sides of the political and EU divide.

What the long term ramifications may be for the economy, business and trade will take months, possibly years, to play out. But what is abundantly clear is that further uncertainty in an already turbulent world is hardly helpful for the travel industry.

Flight Centre already signalled in a recent profit warning that the referendum was among the factors to dampen business and consumer confidence. And managing director Graham Turner told *travelbulletin* the uncertainty was not about to vanish.

“It’s going to be a bit tougher until that uncertainty goes away and that is not going to happen overnight,” he said. “The issue from a business point of view is that with

the pound weakening our UK profits won’t translate well into Australian dollars. That’s a negative for us but you have to take the ups and the downs.

“It also might make it a bit more difficult to run a multinational business out of the UK which is where our European headquarters is.

‘Because of the weaker pound it’s a good incentive to package as much as you can in Australian dollars and I think most people realise that’

That said, I don’t think it will be too bad.”

Turner rejected any notion that Flight Centre would relocate its head office away from UK. “No, never, he said, “not in the next 20 years anyway.”

More positively, Turner doubted the Brexit vote would have any material impact on Australians’ travel plans, noting that most consumers base decisions on airfares, “and

they aren’t going to change much”.

“I don’t think [Brexit] will have much impact in terms of buyer resistance,” he said. “Because of the weaker pound it’s a good incentive to package as much as you can in Australian dollars and I think most people realise that. Hopefully most travel agents know that too.”

Dennis Bunnik, chairman of the Council of Australian Tour Operators, agreed that the weak pound could provide short term benefits. “It will help increase visitor numbers or at least make those visiting spend more,” he said. “I also don’t think the cost of doing business will have a significant impact on visitor numbers. Any increase in costs is likely to be minimal when spread over the number of passengers travelling.

“I also believe there may be a stronger move towards the Commonwealth and this could make it easier for Australians to get working holiday visas.”

Such a move would have a “big impact” in the number of Australians heading to the UK, he said.

Bunnik warned, however, that divides in society exposed by the referendum, both in the UK and Europe, had the potential to damage travel to Europe “in the same way



that terrorism is having an impact”.

Tourism Australia said it was too early to predict the impact on arrivals from the UK, although Carolyn Childs, director of MyTravelResearch.com, suggested it could be arrivals from China to Australia that slow as the Chinese take advantage of favourable exchange rates and head to London.

She added the possibility of more arduous visa regulations once Britain leaves the EU could make the UK less attractive. Furthermore, the business environment for budget airlines could affect aviation, a view shared by the International Air Transport Association.

“When you add in more processing and different security environments it starts to look less attractive to low cost carriers,” Childs said.

Certainly, Easyjet warned that walking away from the EU would not be helpful, and in the immediate aftermath of the vote wrote to the Government and European Commission urging them to “prioritise the UK remaining part of the single EU aviation market, given its importance to trade and consumers”.

Flight Centre’s Turner believed the UK and EU will reach a mutually beneficial agreement on air rights.

“We do a reasonable amount of Europe

‘We do a reasonable amount of Europe out of the UK and the reality is that most of the benefits flow towards Europe so I can’t see the EU tightening up too much’

out of the UK and the reality is that most of the benefits flow towards Europe so I can’t see the EU tightening up too much,” he said. “Most of the low cost carriers go to regions which need the tourist traffic so I don’t think Europe is going to turn away UK airlines.”

As for VisitBritain, the UK tourism agency reiterated its previous statement that it expects a “strong summer holiday season”, on the back of its global #OMGB ‘Home of Amazing Moments’ campaign.

But observers questioned whether the Britain is Great branding that has spearheaded VisitBritain’s marketing for several years has been undermined by the referendum result.

“It’s well-positioned, smart and consistent

branding but the claims that underpin that branding, that Britain is global, connected and powerful, could in some sense have been weakened,” said Childs, herself British. “It’s a challenge for the UK. It’s a different place now. It’s smaller and more divided and I am sure VisitBritain is looking at this.”

Nigel Morgan, professor of tourism and events marketing at the UK’s University of Surrey, told brand insight blog, The Place Brand Observer, that such an impact on VisitBritain was real, but would likely be short-lived.

“I think Brexit might have a short-term impact on the UK’s previously strong reputation as an open and multi-culturally diverse country, where people want to work and study,” he said. “However, I don’t think it will affect its robust reputation as an exporter of quality products and as an attractive and heritage-rich tourism destination.

“Overall I’m hopeful and confident that in the medium term, the UK will prove a resilient brand.”

As the UK’s new political leaders begin the delicate task of negotiating Britain’s exit from the EU, one thing is certain among the mountain of unanswered, and unanswerable questions; the eyes of the world, the Australian travel industry included, will be watching.



PACIFIC EXPLORER'S POLISHED NEW LOOK

GUESTS on the inaugural voyage of P&O's new *Pacific Explorer* next year will have some shiny new features to test out. Two waterslides, a barefoot bowls green and a supper club for evening entertainment are just the start of the vessel's multi-million dollar refurbishment.

The cruise line's first waterpark at sea will be unveiled, boasting two heart-racing waterslides, the first with LED lights and sound effects and the other with rapid twists and turns. A shaded area featuring a dumping bucket and oversized water toys will ensure guests of all ages are kept entertained. After a game at the new barefoot bowls on the back deck or a ride on a flying fox at the P&O Adventure Park, guests can refuel at a range of new dining concepts.

A supper club venue with a side of cabaret-style entertainment will be served up at The Black Circus, while gourmet pizzas and share platters will be on offer at a new pizza restaurant. The Pantry's collection will notch up a ninth member, in the form of "Nic and Toni's" providing Mediterranean cuisine. A poolside Lobster & Burger bar will also be introduced to the dining scene, serving lobster and seafood rolls along with premium beef and pulled pork burgers.

The additions will sit alongside favourites Waterfront restaurant, Angelo's, Dragon Lady and Salt Grill.

P&O Cruises President Sture Myrmell said the team had had a lot of fun designing *Pacific Explorer*.

"We've taken the winning features of our existing ships, then added a whole new layer of excitement with some big wow moments like the waterslides as well as new concepts like the bowling green and a stunning hidden bar, which we think will put a smile on our guests' faces. It really will be a ship that offers something for everyone."

Currently sailing as *Dawn Princess* with Princess Cruises, the vessel will be refitted in May and June next year and sail on her first P&O cruise from Sydney on 22 June 2017.



ATEC VIEW

Peter Shelley, managing director ATEC

INBOUND SURGE CONTINUES

WITH the Federal Election thankfully behind us, we can bring our focus back to the core business of strengthening opportunities to grow international visitation to Australia.

The good news is international visitors continue to flock to our shores, due to a combination of factors including the strength of our destination's attractiveness, marketing effectiveness by Tourism Australia, the state tourism agencies and the industry generally, plus the growth in travellers from our major markets.

In the year ending March 2016, Australia recorded a staggering 9% increase in international visitors, bringing visitor numbers to over seven million and spending \$38 billion annually, up 17%. Clearly tourism is one of our country's strongest export assets with a big future.

As a collective of small to medium businesses, our industry members are simply getting on with the job. Government relies on the continuing positive tourism results which are driving economic contribution and jobs across the country. However,

‘In the year ending March 2016, Australia recorded a staggering 9% increase in international visitors’

when policy settings negatively impact our opportunities we have actively engaged government to communicate our concerns. This includes issues like the recent backpacker tax and, especially, visa

impediments for China, Indonesia and South America where policies limit our ability to compete with other destinations.

The recent surprise Brexit result has also placed a spotlight on the impact this decision may have on travel to Australia by our key UK & European markets. There are now fears that the ease of getting in and out of the UK will be replaced with more barriers. Consumer advocacy group Travelers United says "getting in and out of the UK will be an absolute horror show."

ATEC has implemented a watching brief on the potential Brexit fallout with members saying it is too early to tell if travel volumes will be impacted. With the peak booking period a few months off, many consider the possibility of a weakening pound combined with a widespread sense of uncertainty is giving British holidaymakers pause for thought before they book.

The key take-out from a tourism export perspective is while the industry enjoys many positive factors driving record international visitation – including lower oil prices, increased seat capacity and growing economic confidence across all key markets – there are always forces at play which impact global economies and create additional 'headwinds' that impede growth.

It is therefore critical that we continually work in partnership with governments to strengthen our competitiveness against other destinations and to focus on maximising our collective opportunities during positive times to grow the volume of international visitors to Australia.

TO INFINITY... AND BEYOND

FLIGHT Centre's Infinity Holidays wholesale business underwent some major changes last month, including its amalgamation with the former Quickbeds B2B brand.

This merger saw the formation of The Infinity Group which aims to offer a "broader range of products at more competitive prices". The operation has aligned itself with the internal wholesale businesses of Flight Centre Travel Group and introduced a new

‘Now technology has opened up a whole range of options to allow people to engage with a company in the way they feel most comfortable’

"The Power of Choice" program – allowing retailers to select between i-compare (the new name for Quicksearch), i-build (an upgrade to the Calypsonet InControl booking



platform) and i-consult referring to infinity's call centre.

According to the company, Infinity's non-Flight Centre retail travel agent partners will also benefit from the changes. The structural and technological upgrades were made to offer more ways to connect with the brand.

"Now technology has opened up a whole range of options to allow people to engage with a company in the way they feel most comfortable," Infinity said, with the changes coming about after "carefully listening to retail partners and analysing the business".

Infinity also has a new Pricing and Yield team based in Brisbane to monitor and maintain the best pricing for partners and customers.

New owner for A&K

ABERCROMBIE & Kent will enter a new era later this year, with the proposed acquisition of the iconic brand by Chinese group Zhonghong Holdings.

Abercrombie & Kent currently operates tours to more than 100 countries, and has more than 50 local offices including its Australian headquarters in Melbourne, with the deal expected to be settled in the next couple of months.

A&K CEO and founder, Geoffrey Kent, will continue to run the business and will retain an interest in the business.

"Looking forward, the relationship with Zhonghong and their experience in real estate development and tourism positions A&K to continue to innovate by offering immersive and exhilarating experiences in uncharted destinations," Kent said.

He added that the new ownership would give the business access to capital "to finance new investments in the expanding luxury and adventure travel markets".

Do online booking engines offer you these in Greece?

- Personalised product knowledge, suggestions & comparisons?
- 24/7 local assistance?
- Ferry tickets delivery/amendment/reissue?
- Tours, restaurants & local experiences suggestions?
- One stop shop & peace of mind?

Greece Med Travel do.



You know your clients, We know the hoteliers...

Vangelis Daktylides - Managing Director of Myconian Ambassador
& Halina Kubica - Managing Director of Greece Med Travel



TIE 2016 – A TALE OF TWO



THE Travel Industry Exhibition, now in its third year, was held for the first time in both Melbourne and Sydney last month, giving Victorian agents and wholesalers the opportunity to get the latest updates from suppliers on their doorstep. Both two-day shows included an informative educational program covering key industry trends, social media, recruitment and DFAT's Smartraveller.

Suppliers on show included a range of agency groups such as Travel Counsellors, ATAC, Travel

Partners and Travel Concepts. Wholesalers like Greece and Mediterranean Travel, Experience Croatia, Nexus Holidays, On The Go Tours and Cox & Kings took part. Expedia TAAP and Excite Holidays were there along with CVFR Travel Group, plus destinations such as Indonesia, Japan, Uganda, Sarawak, Sri Lanka, Croatia, India, Tahiti, Italy and even the Indian Ocean idyll of Rodrigues Island which was making its first foray into the Australian market. And technology was on the





CITIES

agenda too, courtesy of exhibitors such as Traveltek, Zooma Works, Jito & more.

It wasn't just about hard work, as well as the 'Travel Daily Christmas in July' networking events which provided an opportunity for lots of connections to be made – along with plenty of frivolity!





The 2016 Travel Daily/travelBulletin industry salary survey has uncovered some intriguing trends across the different sectors of the travel industry – including the perhaps not-so-surprising finding that higher pay doesn't necessarily equate to higher job satisfaction. BRUCE PIPER unpacks the figures.

Money can't buy happiness...



don't care too much for money – money can't buy me love. So sang the Beatles' Paul McCartney more than 50 years ago – but the words still ring true today, particularly when it comes to the Australian travel industry. The nation of Bhutan – certainly not one of the wealthiest countries in the world – bases its performance on a “Gross National Happiness” index rather than traditional economic measures, while the Bible tells us that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”. Whether we like it or not, money makes the world go round – but perhaps, based on the results of our survey, Australian travel consultants have the right perspective.

HOW DID WE MEASURE IT?

In order to measure on-the-job happiness, this year's *Travel Daily/travelBulletin* industry salary survey included a question based on the tried-and-true Net Promoter Score system, which basically measured whether a respondent was likely to recommend their employment situation to someone else. Net Promoter Score (NPS) ratings are used by many major organisations to measure their performance and reputation, including Qantas and Travel Counsellors, just to name a couple. Participants were asked “How likely are you to recommend your workplace to a friend or colleague?” and based on their response on a scale of 0 to 10 are classified as “detractors” (score 0-6), “passives” (score 7-8) or “promoters” (score 9-10). These figures are then collated to form an overall Net Promoter Score which can be between -100 (everybody is a detractor) and +100 (everybody is a promoter). An NPS that is higher than zero is regarded as good, with a number such as +50 being excellent. In our survey the NPS revealed that travel consultants, while the lowest paid, were the most likely to recommend their job to others.

The survey asked the almost 1,000 respondents what they earned, and correlated that with their Net Promoter Score and what segment of the industry they came from – retail, wholesale, aviation, corporate, MICE, cruise, hospitality or travel support, such as currency exchange, consolidation and insurance. Travel consultants came out at the bottom money-wise, with an average income of just under \$55,000 – significantly lower than those in other

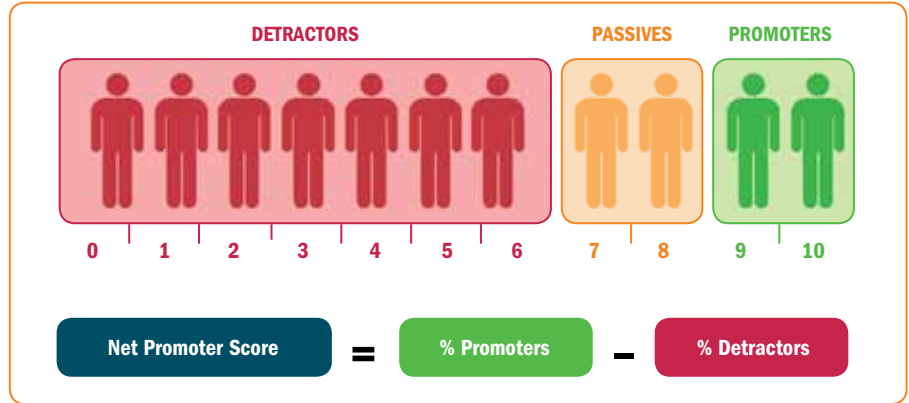
Continues over page

Continues from previous page

sectors (see graph below). However when it came to whether they would recommend their jobs to others, retail consultants rated their roles much more highly than most other sectors. The NPS rating for retail travel was a healthy 23.9 – of a similar order of magnitude to that for Corporate/TMC staffers (NPS = 32.6) and those working in the business events sector (NPS = 24.2). By contrast, respondents who worked in aviation earned an average of \$78,000 but on balance didn't feel great about their jobs, with a Net Promoter Score of minus 11, meaning they were likely to actively discourage others from similar roles – while those in wholesale, cruise and hospitality were pretty much neutral, with low single-digit NPS ratings of around 3 each respectively.

THE GENDER DIVIDE?

As with last year's survey (*travelBulletin* June 2015), despite protestations from across the industry that it is not generally the case, women who responded to our poll earned significantly less than the men. Reflecting the general structure of the industry there were more women working in each sector, with females comprising 81% of the retail travel consultants surveyed. That was slightly higher than the level of women in wholesale (79%), aviation (65%), corporate agencies (56%) and cruise (63%), with only the business events sector – those involved in meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) – having a higher female participation level at 88%.



In a panel discussion at last month's Travel Industry Exhibition in Sydney and Melbourne, a number of prominent recruiters were adamant that gender plays no role in determining the salary for any particular role – but intriguingly across the board the survey found women working in each sector earned less on average than their male counterparts. In retail travel the average for women was \$50,494 versus men who were on \$73,417; in corporate the difference was not as stark, but women were on an average of \$74,209 versus men at \$80,966. Similar patterns appeared in wholesale (women \$58,205 against men with \$67,075), aviation (\$74,023 for females versus \$86,599 for males), and MICE (women averaging \$69,996 versus men with \$82,944). The gender divide was particularly stark in the cruise sector, where men averaged \$109,871 – double the average for women on \$54,672.

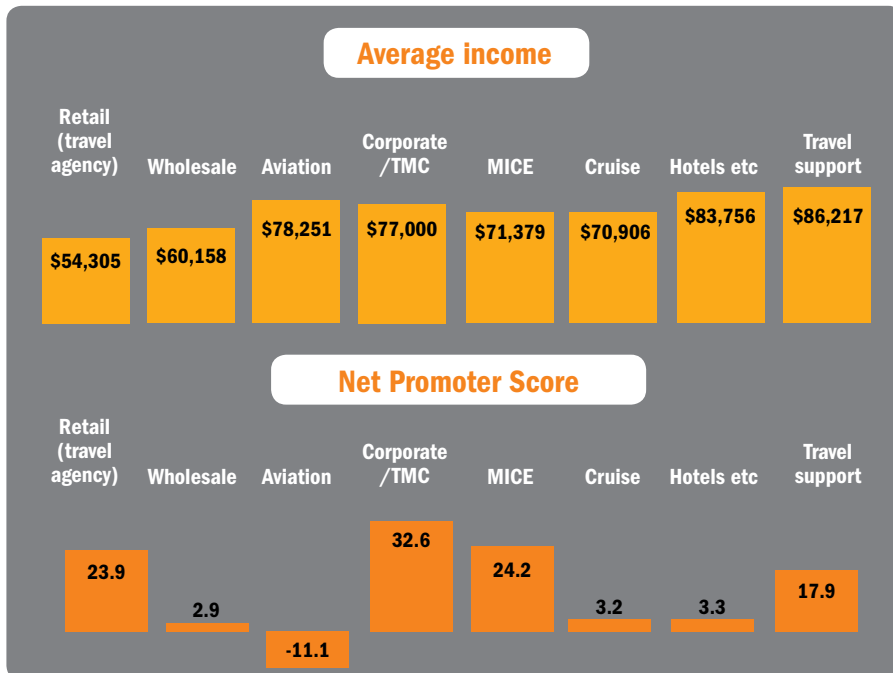
So if there's no difference in pay levels for particular jobs, why the gender disparity?

A few reasons come to mind. As the saying goes, there are "lies, damn lies and statistics" – and the figures could reflect responses from a few more highly paid men versus a large number of women at lower levels. It's also possible that while starting salaries are the same for particular roles, perhaps men are better at bargaining for pay rises when it comes to a review than women. And it may simply be the well-documented phenomenon of the "glass ceiling" where only a minority of women progress to senior roles in the industry – although according to a range of experts (see breakout boxes) this certainly isn't the case.

AVIATION AND CRUISING – NOT SO MUCH FUN?

A job with an airline has long been seen as the holy grail for people in the travel industry. What's not to love? The travel benefits let you see the world for a fraction of the cost, there are all those glamorous uniforms and aviation fuel smells great...! Anecdotally in recent years remuneration in aviation has surged, with Middle Eastern airlines rumoured to be paying top dollar to get the best staff with the largest networks of corporate contacts, particularly when it comes to sales representatives. That may have left their colleagues in other carriers behind, but overall it appears aviation still comes up trumps when it comes to remuneration.

The survey found the average income in aviation was just over \$78,000 – higher than almost all other sectors. Entry level salaries averaged at \$59,613, middle managers had an income of \$74,713 while senior staff averaged \$94,352 in the survey. There was also a lot of industry experience in the aviation sector – 61% of the respondents in the aviation survey had 11 years or more in the travel industry, and the majority (39%) were aged 36-45. But for some reason the Net Promoter Score for those in aviation was a strongly negative 11.1, meaning a significant



number were “detractors” and would not encourage anyone into the job.

Similarly, cruise is enjoying a massive surge in popularity, so you would think it would be equally in demand from the point of view of employment. Salaries of those who responded were quite impressive, particularly at the top end where senior roles attracted an average salary of \$192,779. That pushed up the average to a healthy \$70,906, and reflecting the relative novelty of the industry there's less industry experience in this group, with 36% being in the industry for more than 11 years – almost the same proportion as the 34% of respondents who had been in travel for 6-10 years. However despite the higher pay levels, job satisfaction seemed again to be lower than you might expect in cruising, with a Net Promoter Score of just 3.2 indicating most staff were on average neutral about their roles.

Why could that be? Aviation and cruising surely are the poster children of the industry, yet clearly the reality isn't as rosy as it appears, in a case of “the grass is always greener” – until you get to the other side. Some reasons that come to mind include high pressure, with huge amounts of both cruise and aviation capacity in the market meaning there's lots of competition. Both industries operate on the principle of zero shelf-life – meaning the value of an empty seat or cabin is precisely nothing after departure. Indeed aviation and cruise capacity is the ultimate perishable, of high value when filled but earning the operator nothing at all if it's not sold. Another factor could be the very fact that there is high demand for the coveted jobs in the sector – meaning employers can easily replace those who aren't performing, albeit at a higher salary level. The life of a cruise or aviation representative can be very disjointed, with lots of travel and a work life of constant transition, weekend shows and evening events – enjoyable for some time, but it can potentially result in loneliness and distance from loved ones.

FINAL COMMENTS

There has been little wages growth in Australia in the last few years, and the results from the survey certainly bear that out. Overall 56% of respondents said their salary had not changed in the last year. 39% had seen an increase in their income, while 5% revealed their remuneration had actually dropped. Drilling down into the individual segments of the industry, the only sectors which saw an increase were cruise, where 59% had seen a pay rise, and accommodation with 70% of staffers receiving more money in the last 12 months than the previous year. With interest rates and CPI growth continuing at record lows, don't expect your pay packet to become fatter in the coming year.

As an aside, the survey asked respondents whether they had ever used one of the travel recruitment companies, with almost half (47%) confirming they had used an employment consultant for their own job search. 16% had also used an agency to find suitable candidates for vacant positions, and so there's no doubt that the industry values the experience and expertise of these professionals who know the job market so well.

However what was intriguing was a very low Net Promoter Score level across the board for the various recruiters. In every case the NPS rating for the different travel employment agencies was heavily negative, both from jobseekers and companies seeking staff – indicating that despite the invaluable services they provide, perhaps businesses in this sector need to work on improving their image.

INDUSTRY COMMENT

MELISSA SCHEMBRI – C&M TRAVEL RECRUITMENT

We are told from our first job in the travel sector that we don't join the travel industry for the money but for the love of it. We spend most of our time at work, so choosing the right role and environment are big factors to employees decisions in choosing their next company.

When it comes to employee satisfaction, other factors could be more meaningful than salary. We have found a company culture, career opportunities, direct manager, work/life balance and company benefits are all taken into account.

In my experience in the current job market there is no gender divide at any level. From entry level to senior manager, the salaries are reflective of their skills and experiences, not their gender. In our generation there is a lot more support for working mothers and also women having children later in life, so they are able to concentrate on their career.

HELENE TAYLOR – JITO.CO

There are now more female leaders at the top of the travel industry than ever before, so the survey findings are a surprise. However, it is not the first survey alerting us to an unbalanced playing field. In general, when applying for a new job, a male applicant who knows they fulfil six out of 10 criteria will fake it until he makes it. Most women, on the other hand, will openly admit they can do just six of the 10.

Furthermore, when asked about salary expectations, men will simply ask for more while many women will just be happy to have the job. So how do we change things for the better?

Women must know their worth and negotiate, even when it doesn't feel comfortable to do so. They must have more confidence and belief in themselves.

Come on girls. It is time to, as Facebook's Sheryl Landbert writes, “lean in”. Step up, negotiate and command your worth.

BEN CARNEGIE – INPLACE RECRUITMENT

The results from the survey this year are interesting as always. No huge surprises but it's true that more people are driven to find new jobs by happiness rather than purely financial reasons. While everyone wants to be paid well, most candidates I meet will consider taking a lower salary if they know the environment is going to be positive, supportive and can offer personal development. The number one reason people leave their current jobs is still to get away from their managers.

In regard to the gender debate, I acknowledge the results of the survey indicate that females are earning less than males for the same positions. Personally this has not been my experience at all - across the whole spectrum of tourism and travel the salary packages offered are based on the role itself, not gender.

Money can't buy happiness, but for those who negotiate harder on salary, at least they can be miserable in comfort!

The full travelBulletin/Travel Daily 2016 Travel Industry Salary Survey is available for purchase – for details email Christian Schweitzer on research@travelbulletin.com.au

2016

NATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARDS WINNERS



Category 1 | Best Travel Agency Group (50 outlets or more)

Sponsored by Qantas Airways

Helloworld Limited

Category 2 | Best Non Branded Travel Agency Group

Sponsored by Star Alliance

Helloworld for Business

Category 3 | Best Travel Agency Retail – Single Location

Sponsored by Singapore Airlines

Bicton Travel

Category 4 | Best Travel Agency Retail – Multi Location

Sponsored by Qantas Airways

helloworld Hunter Travel Group / RACT Travel

Category 5 | Best Travel Agency Corporate – Single Location

Sponsored by Qantas Airways

Spencer Travel

Category 6 | Best Travel Agency Corporate – Multi Location

Sponsored by Avis

Stage & Screen Travel Services

Category 7 | Best National Travel Management Company

Sponsored by Qantas Airways

Corporate Travel Management

Category 8 | Best Online Travel Agency (OTA)

Sponsored by Amadeus IT Pacific

Cruise Guru – www.cruiseguru.com.au

Category 9 | Best Business Events Travel Agency

Sponsored by Sabre

Event Travel Management

Category 10 | Best Travel Consultant – Retail

Sponsored by Royal Caribbean International

Deryk Neighbour Flight Centre MET Centre NSW

Category 11 | Best Travel Consultant – Corporate

Sponsored by Avis

Sam La Rosa Show Group Enterprises NSW

Category 12 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Retail Single Location

Sponsored by Virgin Australia

Kobi Henderson Flight Centre Sydney Airport NSW

Category 13 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Retail Multi Location

Sponsored by World's Leading Cruise Lines

Louise Dann helloworld Hunter Travel Group NSW

Category 14 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Corporate Single Location

Sponsored by Virgin Australia

Cherie Drummond Corporate Travel Management NSW

Category 15 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Corporate Multi Location

Sponsored by Travelport

Andre Moten Corporate Travel Management QLD

Category 16 | Young Agent of the Year

Sponsored by Travelport

Brendan Ma Carlson Wagonlit Travel VIC

Category 17 | Best Specialty Wholesaler

Sponsored by South African Tourism

The Africa Safari Co

Category 18 | Best Domestic Airline

Sponsored by Air Tickets

Virgin Australia

Category 19 | Best International Airline – OnLine

Sponsored by The Travel Corporation

Emirates

Category 20 | Best International Airline – Offline

Sponsored by Consolidated Travel

Finnair

**Category 21 | Best Cruise Operator
– Domestic Deployment**

Sponsored by Travellers Choice

Royal Caribbean International

**Category 22 | Best Cruise Operator
– International Deployment**

Sponsored by Gow-Gates Insurance Brokers

Royal Caribbean International

Category 23 | Best River Cruise Operator

Sponsored by Vienna Tourist Board

APT

Category 24 | Best Tour Operator – Domestic

Sponsored by Travel Trade Recruitment

APT

Category 25 | Best Tour Operator – International

Sponsored by Dubai Tourism

Trafalgar

Category 26 | Best Car/Campervan Rental Operator

Sponsored by Expedia

Hertz

Category 27 | Best Tourist Office – International

Sponsored by Global Blue

Tourism Fiji

Category 28 | Best Wholesaler – Australian Product

Sponsored by CHI Travel Insurance

Sunlover Holidays

Category 29 | Best Wholesaler – International Product

Sponsored by Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

Excite Holidays

Category 30 | Best Agency Support Service

Sponsored by Tourism Fiji

Cover-More Travel Insurance

Category 31 | Best Sales Executive – Industry Supplier

Sponsored by Royal Caribbean International

Elizabeth Hutchinson Air New Zealand NSW

Category 32 | Young Sales Executive – Industry Supplier

Sponsored by Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre

Sarah Hoskin Topdeck Travel NSW

Category 33 | Best Hotel/Resort Group

Sponsored by Expedia

Outrigger Resorts

**Category 34 | Best Registered Travel Industry Training
Institution**

Sponsored by The Travel Industry Exhibition

TAFE Sydney Travel & Tourism

Category 35 | Best Travel Writer

Sponsored by World's Leading Cruise Lines

Allan Leibowitz

Category 36 | Best Travel Agent Technology Innovation

Sponsored by Qudos Bank

Qantas Groups Travel Website Qantas Airways

Category 37 | Emirates Travel Consultant Scholarship

Sponsored by Emirates

George Hedley Events Worldwide Travel VIC

**Category 38 | People's Choice:
Retail Travel Agency of the Year**

Sponsored by International Traveller

Queanbeyan City Travel and Cruise NSW

AFTA NTIA 2016





NTIA 2016 BEST EVER



ONCE again the National Travel Industry Awards were a night to remember. With awards in 38 categories up for grabs, it promised to be a great night for all. As the official media sponsor, *Travel Daily* and *travelBulletin* were on hand to capture all the snaps on the night, as well as talking to the winners, fresh off the podium, about what the award meant to each of them. These next couple of pages include just a selection of the grinning winners. There are also plenty more photos from the night on Facebook, so make sure to check them out.



PEOPLE'S CHOICE RETAIL TRAVEL AGENCY OF THE YEAR: QUEANBEYAN CITY TRAVEL & CRUISE

AN ELATED Jenny Cooper of Queanbeyan City Travel & Cruise accepted the coveted People's Choice Travel Agency of the Year Award at the Industry night of nights last month, beating finalists Discover Travel & Cruise, italktravel Hillarys and Meridien Travel for the top honour.

"It's a vindication of what we have done for the last 28 years," Cooper said to *travelBulletin*. "It vindicates the fact that we put our heart and soul into the job and we treat our customers and clients as though they're part of our family."



The Outrigger team with their award

“I think it’s a win for the little guys. We’re not Accor and we’re not Starwood but we’re a hotel company that really values the travel agent. It’s just a great achievement.”

Andrew Gee, Director of Sales and Marketing, Outrigger Hotels & Resorts, winner in category 33: Best Hotel/Resort Group.

HELLOWORLD & HELLOWORLD FOR BUSINESS

HELLOWORLD and its members have a lot to celebrate this year, after taking home a full trophy case at the prestigious National Travel Industry Awards in Sydney.

Both Helloworld and Helloworld for Business received top honours in their categories, having been crowned Best Travel Agency Group and Best Non Branded Travel Agency Group, respectively.

Chief Executive Officer Andrew Burnes remarked he was delighted with the recognition, thanking his teams for the “tireless efforts they put into the business”.

Helloworld Head of Associate Networks, David Padman, was on-hand to accept the two accolades, telling *travelBulletin* from behind the scenes that he had “never been so nervous” before. “I’ve been a part of this in the past and we’ve even won before but for some reason this was one of the more suspenseful ones,” he laughed.

He said it had been “an amazing ride so far with Andrew and Cinzia taking over the business some three or four months ago”, and that the awards were testament the group is moving forward.



Sydney
TAFE NSW

afta
NATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARDS
WINNER 2016

Best Registered Travel Industry Training Institution

A huge thank you to our industry supporters and partners for voting for us.

We are passionately committed to working in industry, with industry and partnering with you to grow your business and success.

We customise training to be delivered onsite, offsite and online.

Call Steve Ferreira or Cathy Dimon on 1300 360 601

SydneyTAFE.tourism@tafensw.edu.au

CATEGORY: BEST BUSINESS EVENTS TRAVEL AGENCY

“It was such a nerve-racking week. We work so hard and we’re so excited to be recognised by our suppliers and our industry.”

Tracey Edwards, General Manager, Event Travel Management



‘To be able to tell our story to people who probably didn’t know it in the past was really quite exciting. These are the creme de la creme of awards for our industry, so to take one home is really exciting.’

Matt Cameron-Smith, Managing Director, Trafalgar. Best Tour Operator - International.

SUNLOVER HOLIDAYS: BEST WHOLESALER - AUSTRALIAN PRODUCT

SUNLOVER Holidays eclipsed the other finalists Excite, Infinity and TravelCube this year, with the group taking home top honours in the Best Wholesaler of Australian Product category. “We’ve been nominated so many times before that we weren’t really expecting to hear our names,” general manager Lisa Harrison told *travelBulletin*.

Harrison said the award was recognition of the service Sunlover provides to its industry partners, regional partners and customers. “It’s just so nice to be recognised for your hard work as a business by your peers,” she said.

Helloworld CEO Andrew Burnes extended a personal congratulations to the team.

“We acquired Sunlover from Tourism Queensland over a decade ago and it continues to deliver to our agency partners and supplier partners around the country.”



Amanda Belcastro, CHI Travel Insurance with Sunlover's Kate Doncaster and Lisa Harrison.



Best Wholesaler Australian Product

THANK YOU!



The team at Sunlover Holidays are honoured and proud to receive this award. A huge thank you to our retail and supplier partners for your ongoing support.



UNFORGETTABLE

.....

THANK YOU!

- Best Tour Operator - Domestic
- Best River Cruise Operator

We are overwhelmed to be recognised as the Best Tour Operator - Domestic and the Best River Cruise Operator. It is an outstanding achievement and we are all very proud. We would like to thank you, our valued travel industry partners for your ongoing support.



‘The wholesaler awards are always towards the end so it’s a whole night of anticipation. To see Excite as a finalist was amazing and then to actually get called up as a winner was very exciting for the team.’

Andrew Yell, GM Global Sales, Excite Holidays
Best Wholesaler - International Product



APT: BEST TOUR OPERATOR DOMESTIC & BEST RIVER CRUISE OPERATOR



APT has done it again, this year dominating the Best Tour operator Domestic and Best River Cruise operator categories.

The Australian operator has won both categories in the past, with the latest being their fifth consecutive win in the Domestic category, and the second as Best River Cruise operator.

“Both categories are very hotly contested,” said group director Rob McGeary.

“There are a lot of very credible operators there that have a lot of presence and experience.”

“So it’s a great honour to be chosen and to be voted by our travel agents.”

McGeary said he plans on proudly displaying the shiny new accolades on the front of the company’s new brochure ranges.



helloworld for business was recognised as Australia’s Best Non-Branded Travel Agency Group at the prestigious National Travel Industry Awards.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!





BEST REGISTERED TRAVEL INDUSTRY TRAINING INSTITUTION: SYDNEY TAFE

‘The award was a validation of the work and commitment the travel and tourism teams and their supporters have done to ensure that our work is aligned with industry.’

Anne Cazar, Faculty Director, Sydney TAFE



‘This award means a lot to us. It says that our travel partners - who are central to our success - are satisfied and that we’re meeting their expectations and delivering.’

Maria Pantazis, Regional Travel Industry Sales Manager, Hertz Best Car/Campervan Rental Operator

THANK YOU!

Thank you agents and industry partners for voting for us and for your confidence in Finnair.

We are delighted to be recognized for the fourth successive year as

Best International Airline - Offline



We will continue to serve and support you in the years to come.



THANK YOU!

Thank you to our valued travel industry partners and agents for voting us 'Best Car/Campervan Rental Operator'.

We are delighted to be recognised for the ninth time in ten years.

Travelling at the Speed of Hertz™
hertz.com.au

‘When you’re awarded for something like this, you realise that you are being recognised by your peers for what you’re doing despite being all the way in WA.’

Carole Smethurst, Owner, Bicton Travel
Best Travel Agency Retail - Single Location.



‘We have fantastic competition in this category and they are all wonderful airlines in their own right! It is always very satisfying to win against such a high calibre of competition’

Geoff Stone, Country Manager, Finnair
Best International Airline - Offline.

WINNER!
BEST WHOLESALER INTERNATIONAL PRODUCT
Thank you for making our dreams come true!

exc!te
HOLIDAYS

afta
NATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARDS
WINNER 2016

To our members, teams,
suppliers and industry partners

THANK YOU!



afta

**NATIONAL TRAVEL
INDUSTRY AWARDS**

WINNER 2016

**HELLOWORLD
LIMITED**
BEST TRAVEL
AGENCY GROUP

HELLOWORLD FOR BUSINESS
BEST NON-BRANDED TRAVEL
AGENCY GROUP

BICTON TRAVEL
BEST TRAVEL AGENCY RETAIL SINGLE LOCATION

SUNLOVER HOLIDAYS
BEST WHOLESALER AUSTRALIAN PRODUCT

**HELLOWORLD
HUNTER TRAVEL
GROUP/RACT TRAVEL**
BEST TRAVEL AGENCY
RETAIL MULTI LOCATION

**LOUISE DANN, HELLOWORLD
HUNTER TRAVEL GROUP NSW**
BEST TRAVEL AGENCY MANAGER RETAIL
MULTI LOCATION

**SAM LA ROSA, SHOW GROUP
ENTERPRISES NSW**
BEST TRAVEL CONSULTANT CORPORATE



helloworld

THE RISE OF POKEMON GO

Unsure what the difference between a Pikachu or a Snorlax is? Hazy about what a true gym battle entails? And why are so many kids taking up long-distance walking all of a sudden? BONNIE TAI gives you a quick rundown on the new Pokemon GO app and how one travel operator created a tour based upon it.

JUST what is Pokemon GO? It's a free-to-play location-based mobile game which uses augmented reality technology and is inspired by the hugely popular animated series Pokemon, which first aired in 1996.

In the show, monsters freely roam the land and it's a Pokemon Trainer's job to find, capture and train them for battle. Once a Pokemon is caught, your Pokedex (a hand-held database which is carried around) will be updated with the new find – with the aim of the game to “catch them all”.

Downloadable via iOS and Google Play, the highly-addictive game has already gathered an estimate of 7.5 million active users in the US alone since it first launched in July - at the same time boosting the value of Pokemon developer Nintendo by billions of dollars.

The game works by utilising your phone's GPS to place you in real-world locations, where wild Pokemon are hiding and waiting to be caught. But if you think this is a typical video game for couch potatoes – think again! The only way to catch these elusive little creatures is by physically walking to specific points and battling them in person.



Pokemon are rife at *travelBulletin*

Adventure specialists Geckos Adventures saw an opportunity and went for it, last month revealing an all-new world trip dubbed 'Pokemon: Let's Go!'.

The world tour leads would-be Trainers to different corners of the globe in a bid to be one of the first to collect and catch all the virtual creatures.

“Catch Pikachu at Machu Picchu, spot Snorlax in San Cristobal, get Gabite at the Grey Pyramids of Giza and capture Cloyster at Cambodia's Angkor war,” reads the Geckos Adventures website.

Group managing director James Thornton told *travelBulletin* that the new journey was originally inspired by a poll which surveyed 1,500 American holidaymakers on their mobile use while travelling.

“The results were pretty alarming,” remarked Thornton.

“We found that people spend over an hour a day of their holiday trying to find Wi-Fi. Many people even said they would prefer to give up sex than miss Wi-Fi on a trip which is a crazy thing.”

“We all know that technology is changing the world and this is obviously changing the way in which we shop, live and purchase travel,” he explained. “It is also changing the way in which people are experiencing trips themselves, and as tour operators that's a very important trend that we need to be aware of.”

“So when the Pokemon piece blew up one of our analysts looked at it and said this is going to be huge.”

Thornton said that the game is already



“We all know that technology is changing the world and this is obviously changing the way in which we shop, live and purchase travel”

James Thornton, managing director, Intrepid Group

prompting people to explore new areas of their own cities in which they wouldn't normally venture to, “and now we're able to give people a chance to take the game to new places, while simultaneously opening their eyes to the rest of the world”.

The six-week Pokemon tour combines four of Geckos' already popular itineraries: Peru at a Glance, A Taste of Galapagos, Egypt Unearthed and Essential Cambodia.

The first trip, from Lima to Bangkok, will depart at the end of this month.



Image courtesy Gecko's Adventures.

NEW AMADEUS “DUTY OF CARE” TOOL

AMADEUS has launched a new product which aims to help employers and TMCs better manage and comply with their Duty of Care obligations for travelling staff. Dubbed ‘Mobile Messenger’, the system allows travellers to be easily located and assisted in the event of an incident, with features including interactive mapping and a GPS locator.

Traveller data is automated and updated in real-time, with the system allowing users to filter by airline or company to quickly identify travellers who may be impacted. Travellers can be contacted via a range of means including a smartphone app, SMS or e-mail, with both one-way messaging (to provide updates for passengers in the field) and two-way messaging (to confirm traveller status) available as part of the system. Other optional features include risk intelligence as well as live flight status and tracking, with Mobile Messenger powered by Charter Solutions International with risk intelligence provided by Riskline.

Amadeus IT Pacific MD Tony Carter said the product not only enables companies to meet their legal and ethical responsibilities, but also enhances the travel experience for staff by keeping them well informed and providing fast and efficient assistance when needed. Mobile Messenger has already been implemented by Helloworld’s NZ-based TMC operation APX Travel Management.

European rail content
is now included in
the Concur system



Concur enhances corporate offering

TRAVEL and expense specialist Concur has announced a number of new features and partner integrations, as it pursues its vision to deliver a “fully connected travel and expense ecosystem”. The latest enhancements include the availability of ancillary fees and branded fares in the Concur Travel app, as well as a new partnership with Silver Rail which brings European rail content into the system. Concur has also partnered with Ctrip to help Chinese business travellers book travel by combining pre-trip approval, booking and expense management into a streamlined, integrated workflow.

Also new is “Request on Mobile,” a service which helps users approve, create and submit travel requests on the go. Personalised Hotel Search on Mobile provides recommendations to travellers by highlighting their previous bookings as well as hotels preferred by their colleagues. And the new Fixed Travel Allowance on Mobile option allows staff to create an itinerary on their mobile device, in order to receive a report with a set of fixed-amount expenses for meals and lodging, based on the location and length of travel within the itinerary.



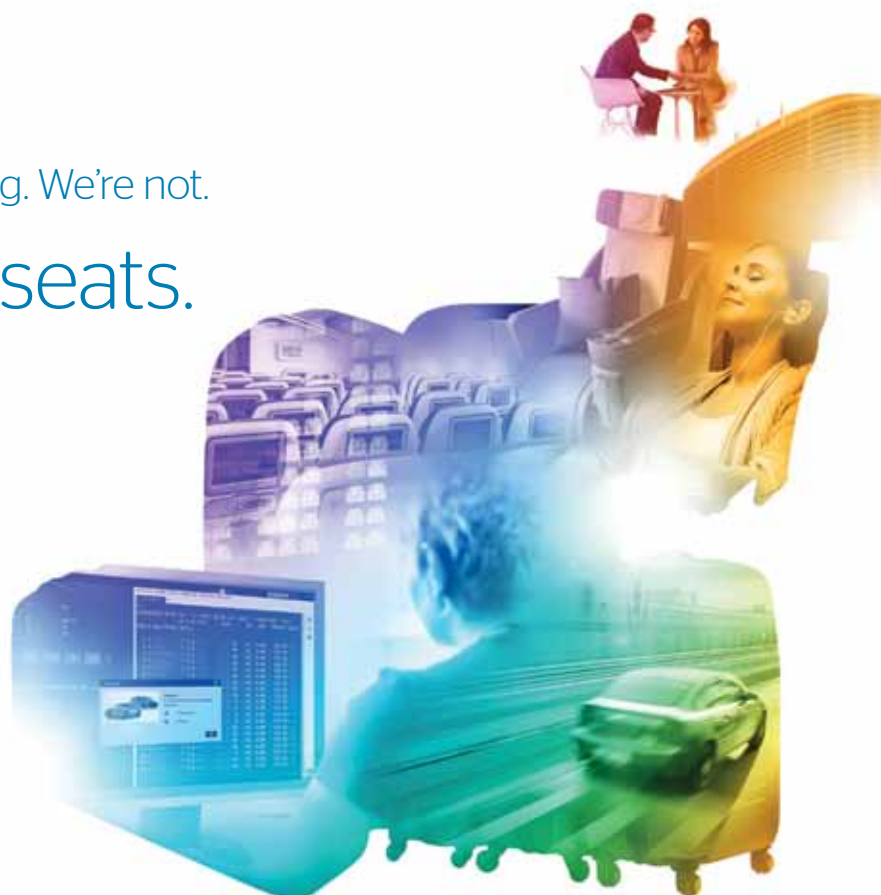
Don't be distracted by airline hosting. We're not.

You don't just sell seats.
You sell journeys.

Because we're focused on distribution we understand you need to capture every sales opportunity within a single workflow.

With Travelport Smartpoint we're redefining your selling experience by creating a world-leading shop window that incorporates images, descriptions and options to upsell airline ancillaries, as well as the hotel room and car hire your customers may need.

To learn more, please contact your
Travelport Account Manager or email
au@travelport.com



CAREER IN FOCUS

JOANA BONTO

Excite Holidays, Director of HR,
Customer Experience & Operations

What does your role involve and how long have you been in your current position?

I started at Excite almost five years ago now as the Director of HR and after a couple of years I took over the sales, marketing and operation divisions in the company however that was not sustainable and have since passed my hats on. I now just look after HR, Operations and Customer Experience globally.

How did you start out in your career? Why the travel industry?

I had recently come back from a three year stint in London and ended up at Circuit Travel (Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways brand) under the direction and leadership of Stewart Williams. I started my career there as his EA/Office Manager and then became the HR/Admin Exec for both Australia and New Zealand where I remained for five and half years. I was extremely fortunate that I was able to take on and learn HR and that Stewart was so supportive. Without that start, I would not have been able to go to Stamford Hotels and Resorts and become HR Manager for one of their properties, working my way up to an Area HR role then later becoming the National Director of HR & OHS.

Did you complete formal qualifications and how have they helped you in your career?

In my earlier years I studied Business Marketing. My dream was to always get into marketing however I ended up in HR and apparently I was good at it. My entire HR methodology is actually built from marketing principles. However, as I started to build my career in HR it was extremely important to me to educate and develop myself within this field, so I slowly did that through smaller certifications and courses. My goal is to finish my Masters in HR Management this year and then complete an MBA within the next few years before I hit 40.



‘I think it’s important to be a strong leader, have a clear strategy and utilise the resources around you to get things done’

What do you love about your job?

I work for a company that has an exclamation mark in their name and the name says it all. What I love most about my job is just how different each and every single day is and that I get to make a difference and be that driving force. My job is dynamic, fun, innovative and it allows me to be creative, strategic and analytical at the same time. I also love the fact that I get to collaborate with the greatest of minds. There’s never a dull moment at Excite Holidays.

What were some of the greatest challenges you’ve had in your career?

As a young female executive I have had the privilege and honour of sitting in board and executive level meetings, however it has also been challenging because as a woman and

a single mother, I have had to work twice as hard to prove myself to others and myself. I remember after giving birth to my daughter, I got on a teleconference the next day as I was negotiating a national enterprise agreement with the unions for Stamford Hotels. I didn’t want being a mother to stop me from also having a career, so it’s been a very tough and challenging balancing act. One that thankfully, I have managed to conquer. Luckily for me, my daughter absolutely understands and I get to take her with me when I travel, which she loves.

What factors are key to a successful career?

It is through sheer perseverance, passion and just sticking to your vision and purpose and being absolutely passionate. I have always set high expectations for myself, as well as others around me. I think it’s also important to be a strong leader, have a clear strategy and utilise the resources around you to get things done.

Is having a mentor an essential part of getting ahead in a career? Do you have one?

Absolutely. I have always had the greatest of mentors. When I was in London working for Credit Suisse, I was fortunate enough to work with the smartest and most incredible people who shaped my thinking at an early age. At Excite Holidays, we have a leadership coach, Peter Cox, who comes in once a month and mentors our leaders. I also have a male and female mentor who are both very different, one is very business and entrepreneurial, the other is more about personal development, philanthropy and giving back. I am also hoping to join the TIME mentoring program this year because I also believe in learning from the best of the best in the industry.

What advice would you give to others in the industry who would like to follow in your footsteps?

Follow your dreams, just be yourself but also be ready to listen, learn and adapt. Always be transparent, open and honest. Having thick skin also goes a long way. Lastly, always have the courage to stand by your values and what you believe is right.

THE POWER OF EVENTS

THAT old cliché of ‘one man’s meat is another man’s poison’ has never been as apt as when referring to the habits of travellers. Whether dozing on a deserted beach or trekking through the Annapurna foothills, the nuances of man and his desires continues to grow the travel industry exponentially.

This diversity, along with the instantaneity of the World Wide Web has increased the pressure on travel advisors to continue creating authentic experiences time and again. Expectations are high and options endless and whilst that carries increased responsibility, it offers opportunity too.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Sir Francis Bacon’s most poignant phrase remains true to this day. Consultants must be armed with the latest and greatest in new destinations, cultural insight, restaurant openings and more just to stay ahead of the curve. The better informed and connected the agent, the better their clients’ experience.

Finding the right forum to access this information however can be tricky...

HOW? WHEN? WHERE?

Industry events have long been proven to be the most effective medium for relationship building and networking. There is still no substitute for placing people under one roof and facilitating meaningful interaction on both

an intellectual and emotional level.

Like the travel industry, the events landscape has changed in recent years. Gone are the days of trade shows offering staff a day out of the office or a glass of free champagne; event organizers must now match qualified buyers and sellers, with return on investment paramount.

The benefit of exhibiting looks clear. After all, where else can you influence so many

‘Where else can you influence so many potential buyers in one place?’

potential buyers in one place? There are also numerous intangible advantages to consider – elevating one’s brand alongside or above its competitors, initiating positive PR, demonstrating thought leadership and soft launching new products to market.

Education and development is the heartbeat of all successful events. In an industry that evolves daily, it’s crucial that seminar content guides attendees on real life issues that will allow them to shape and improve their businesses. The greatest events are seen as the voice of the industry; putting themselves in the shoes of their stakeholders and asking “what would I want to hear?”

The truth of the matter is that events should serve their industry and have a hand in dictating the future direction. Whether start-up or multinational, student or CEO, attendance should deliver value to all involved.

PREPARATION

With so much on offer, how can you take full advantage of your participation?

Planning is key. Outline exactly what you are looking to achieve and map out your time accordingly.

Keep an open mind. Sometimes opportunities arise where you least expect it so try to keep the preconceptions to a minimum.

Listen and learn. Sounds obvious but you have a small window of time to achieve your goals. Attend the relevant seminars, enquire about new products and services and network with colleague and peers. In this ever changing industry we love to call our own, it really can make a difference.

David Paterson, Portfolio Director at Exhibitions & Trade Fairs has worked in travel, tourism and exhibitions for his whole career, including roles in Europe, Asia & Australia.



BUSINESS EVENTS

Auckland



Auckland (©Chris McLennan)



Sky Tower (©Kesara Rathnayake)

By Nathalie Craig

AUCKLAND is a top pick for anyone looking to host a business events function in the land of the long white cloud.

Framed by two harbours, this well positioned city is also New Zealand's largest with a population of around 1.4 million. It is renowned for its beautiful harbours, stunning natural scenery and delicious dining options. It has successfully played host to major international events and offers venues with theatre capacity for up to 5,000 people.

From intimate to major events there are plenty of unique spaces around the city to host it including: The Viaduct Events Centre, the city-central Aotea Centre, Auckland Town Hall, The Civic, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland

Zoo and the QBE Stadium Function Centre.

Once the hard work is done, there are a range of great activities on offer and sights to see. Below are our picks of some of the best ways to for delegates to enjoy downtime and team bonding in the city of Auckland:

MOUNT EDEN

Climbing this ancient volcanic cone to discover some of the best views in Auckland is certainly not an experience you can have in any other city. Mount Eden is one of the most prominent volcanic cones left in region. Erupting about 15,000 years ago from three overlapping cinder cones it formed a huge mound with a central crater. Peering into the volcanic crater itself which is now covered in tufts of vibrant green grass is also a unique experience.

View of Auckland from Mt Eden (©Dennis Stenbjerg)





KELLY TARLTON'S SEALIFE AQUARIUM

Pay a visit to this underground water world where you can come face to face with New Zealand's marine life including sharks, stingrays and seahorses. The brainchild behind the place is marine archaeologist and diver Kelly Tarlton with her displays showcasing over 30 live animal exhibits, including the world's largest Antarctic penguin colony. Head out onto the ice to get up close to the penguins and even feed them with the Penguin Discovery option. Those willing to get wet can try the Shark Dive Xtreme and the Shark Cage experience with nothing but a cage between you and these giant creatures of the sea.

WAIHEKE ISLAND

Just a 35-minute ferry ride away from Auckland city centre lies an island full of vineyards, olive groves and pristine beaches. Kick back and enjoy a tasting at one of the Island's 30 boutique wineries known for their great Bordeaux reds and roses. If a luxury outing is on the cards take a helicopter ride straight from Auckland into Stonyridge Vineyard then enjoy some gourmet produce



Waiheke Island (@Miles Holden)

and a few glasses of wine on their expansive yoga deck overlooking the vines. The galleries and craft boutiques are definitely worth a look too on this boho-style island.

SKY TOWER

Towering 328 metres above the ground Auckland's Sky Tower is the tallest man-made structure in New Zealand. Visiting this Auckland city skyline icon is a must for delegates with incredible views stretching up to 80 kilometres. Three different viewing platforms can be reached via a glass lift. For an extra thrill try the SkyWalk around the

ledge or go one level further and base jump by wire off the tower.

VIADUCT HARBOUR

A visit to this waterfront precinct is a must. The area, lined with trendy bars and gourmet restaurants has hosted major events including Louis Vuitton Regattas and New Zealand Fashion Week. Take a stroll past the many luxury yachts bobbing the harbour, enjoy a gelato by the water or a long lunch with great views. A look inside New Zealand's Voyager Maritime Museum is worthwhile or book a chartered cruise on the harbour.

Experience the real Middle-earth™



The perfect ambient setting for a range of customised events for both incentive and corporate occasions. Experience the real Middle-earth™ with a tour of the Hobbiton™ Movie Set as seen in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* Trilogies, finishing the evening with a delicious feast on-set.

With two stunning, authentic venues to choose from – The Green Dragon™ Inn and the Party Marquee, Hobbiton Movie Set has all the resources required to create a successful event to remember.

501 Buckland Road, Hinuera | 07 888 1505 | 0508 4 HOBBITON | www.hobbitontours.com

NZ TO RIVAL AUSTRALIA FOR EVENTS

NEW ZEALAND is gearing up to aggressively compete with Australia for future events, with several developments and initiatives underway.

Speaking at Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) MEETINGS in June, chief executive Sue Sullivan said this year's show involved a strong contingent of overseas buyers and media.

"They were very interested in New Zealand's growing potential for large events, as well as bespoke incentive travel," Sullivan said.

The NZICC will be situated in the heart of Auckland city and is five times larger than the current largest convention facilities in NZ.

Featuring 24 meeting rooms, the NZICC will have the capability to host conferences of over 3,100 people, and one-off events for up to 4,000 people. When open, the NZICC is expected to attract 33,000 new international visitors, generate 101,000 additional visitor nights and \$90 million in economic benefits to New Zealand annually.

"We're taking New Zealand to the market for that larger end convention, the ones that don't presently come here", said group general manager NZICC development and tourism Simon Jamieson.

"Infrastructure is also key to our success and our future growth," said Sullivan.

Updating the industry on developments in the sector, she revealed that Queenstown's revised conference centre at Remarkable Park is expected to open in 2018, while Wellington is also in the final stages of signing off on a combined convention centre and movie museum site set to open in 2019.

Construction on the new Christchurch Convention Centre accommodating up to 1,500 guests is also earmarked for completion in 2019.



The delightful Krystal, Maxine and Melanie from The Langham Auckland

‘We are committed to further growing incentive and convention travel, and to ensuring that all of NZ shares in the benefits...’

"With the New Zealand International Convention Centre in Auckland and this premium boutique centre in Christchurch we can now compete on the world stage, challenging Australia and South East Asia for high-value convention business," said Sullivan.

Furthermore, Air New Zealand announced their new partnership with the New Zealand Convention Bureau to enable convention bureaux across the country to work with the airline and boost conference business to regional NZ centres.

Air New Zealand will invest over NZD\$100,000 to regional convention bureaux in 2016, that will allow them to invite key decision makers to their regions for site inspections and explore event hosting opportunities. "We are committed to further growing incentive and convention travel, and to ensuring that all of New Zealand shares in the benefits this growth brings", commented Air New Zealand regional general manager for distribution and corporate, Leanne Geraghty at CINZ MEETINGS.

Additionally, facilities targeting conference groups such as the new Vector Wero Whitewater Park in South Auckland, and most recently news that Tourism New Zealand is on the hunt for a Business Events Bid Manager in Sydney, are key to New Zealand's strategy to acquiring larger events.

"We can offer the whole package, with great venues, exciting activities, unique culture, service, food and wine," said Sullivan.



Getting ready to party at the Pasifika-themed Gala Dinner



Hosted buyers Julia Whitney from The Conference Room and Rebecca Clarke from The Collective Events Management Group



Regional MICE focus

THE new structure of regional tourism in NSW has allowed for the creation of a new Conferencing Unit, to help the state's regions capitalise on MICE opportunities.

The unit will work to develop a client database of associations and corporations who would be likely to consider meeting in regional NSW.

Along with the new team, there are also plans for a new conferencing website and portal. The Conferencing Unit will also work alongside the six new Destination Networks to improve the visibility and information for business conference infrastructure and the service capabilities of the regions.

Tourism Accommodation Association CEO Carol Giuseppi hailed the move, saying "while weekend and holidays tourism has remained strong many regional centres, other areas have seen downturns in business travel and conferencing due to the depressed mining, manufacturing and agriculture sectors".

DMS adds new partners

DESTINATION Marketing Services has always had an innovative business model, representing a global network of on-the-ground DMCs to event, incentive and meeting buyers in Australia and New Zealand. Last month the DMS range expanded, with two new partnerships in Germany and Argentina.

In Germany DMS has added Compass Tours Incoming, which has been in business since 1974 and is ranked among the top 25 DMCs in the world with offices in Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin and Hamburg. Argentina is also becoming increasingly popular with Australasian meeting planners with the new direct Air New Zealand flights from Auckland to Buenos Aires, and DMS will help service demand for South American business events via its pact with Passion for Events, which has more than 15 years of MICE industry experience.

Gaunt calls it a day

LINDA Gaunt, long-time ceo of Meetings & Events Australia, has resigned after 11 years in the role. MEA chairman Simon Baggs paid tribute to Gaunt, saying she had "been instrumental in placing MEA on the national stage for meetings and events" as well as establishing the organisation as a knowledge hub for the sector through the Australian Events Academy.

Gaunt will leave the organisation in September, shortly after MEA's upcoming Event Show in Sydney.



ACB VIEW

Anna Hayward
Auckland Convention Bureau Manager

AUCKLAND: A CITY ON THE MOVE

AUCKLAND'S role as a host city for the Rugby World Cup in 2011 is a classic example of how major events can be catalysts for the development of MICE facilities. The legacy of this event helped kick off the growth of the city's business events sector which has seen it reach the tremendous level it's at now.

RWC2011 gave Auckland more confidence. We started to see the development of new infrastructure, beautiful old venues were refurbished, and we could suddenly provide delegates with a world class city experience once their conference was over. Auckland was able to offer a diverse range of high quality restaurants, accommodation and facilities; there were places to network and make new connections, new precincts to walk around and discover, and scenery and attractions to experience all within a short travelling distance.

The Auckland region began realising the value of a world-class business events sector: how they help attract more visitors, foster new ideas and networks, bring more investment, and create new jobs.

The business events industry is going from strength-to-strength and is continuing to play a role in fuelling the ongoing transformation of Auckland today.

Around 14,000 business events were held in Auckland last year, the equivalent to 1.5 million delegate days. The region hosted 30% of all multi-day events held in New Zealand in 2015, meaning Auckland had an average of 8.4 events a day.

Auckland is a city on the move. This rapidly growing economy and change that's happening is being recognised globally. Auckland was included for the first time in JLL's top 20 City Momentum Index in

2016, and the city consistently ranks high internationally for quality of living.

Major transformational projects like the City Rail Link, cycling network and the expanded SH1 corridor, will significantly improve transport and accessibility and there is more to come. Auckland already has a number of the world's leading international hotel brands and a number of others have made announcements of their intention to build in Auckland.

‘The NZD\$471 million, international convention centre will be a global hub of innovation and knowledge exchange...’

Currently there are more than 6,000 hotel rooms available in the central city alone and these new additions will provide more options for conference and incentive groups as they come on stream.

We are excited about the opportunities the development of the New Zealand International Convention Centre will bring. The NZD\$471 million, international convention centre will be a global hub of innovation and knowledge exchange in the heart of Auckland city. It will have 32,000 square metres of flexible functional spaces for a wide range of events including intimate meeting spaces on all levels, a convention capacity for up to 2,850 delegates. It will be a game changer for Auckland and New Zealand's business events industry.

The face of Auckland is rapidly changing making it an exciting place to be.

headlines business events news

- 20 Jun Air NZ ups incentive trips
- 20 Jun Dhata buys DMC stake
- 23 Jun Sheraton grows MICE biz
- 23 Jun \$175m for major events

- 27 Jun MEA chief calls it a day
- 30 Jun CHCH conv centre shake up
- 30 Jun Four Points to Parramatta
- 04 Jul SITE responds to Brexit
- 07 Jul Regional MICE shake up
- 11 Jul DMS's new partnership
- 14 Jul TNZ: wanted MICE bid mgr
- 17 Jul ETM's big NTIA honour

CRYSTAL MAKES WAVES

By Nathalie Craig

IT HAS been an exhilarating year for luxury cruise line Crystal Cruises: from expanding its presence in Australia with its first dedicated office in the country opening in Sydney to debuting *Crystal Mozart*, the line's inaugural riverboat.

Crystal's new regional branch down under, which opened its doors on August 1, is headed up by industry veteran Karen Christensen, most recently of Silversea Cruises where she worked as general manager and director of sales during her decade of work there.

The office represents Crystal Cruises, Crystal Yacht Cruises and Crystal River Cruises with staff responsible for sales, marketing, finance and reservations for all of Australia and New Zealand.

Crystal's CEO and president Edie Rodriguez said she was thrilled to further solidify the company's presence in Australia and New Zealand as it "grows and offers more options for travellers throughout the world".

"Karen's depth of knowledge of the Pacific market and its travellers' wishes, habits and preferences will help ensure that our vast portfolio of luxury travel offerings is effectively communicated and expertly sold," Rodriguez continued.

The move winds up Crystal's partnership with Wiltrans International, which had represented the line in the region for the past 26 years.

Just prior to the office opening, Crystal Cruise Line officially welcomed Europe's largest and most luxurious river cruise ship *Crystal Mozart* as the first vessel in its Crystal River Cruises fleet. A ceremony was held at Vienna's Millennium Tower Dock in mid-July where Godmother Elisabeth Gurtler christened the 120 metre, 158-guest ship which had just emerged from its impressive stem-to-stern redesign.

"This is an extraordinary time for our company, as our expansion from the world's oceans to its rivers and air allows for numerous new opportunities and ways for travellers to explore the world with us," Rodriguez said of the new addition.

The vessel, which now operates a series of 10 and 11-day Danube River roundtrips from Vienna, is the height of luxury with its wrap-around promenade deck, spa, indoor pool, butler service and rooftop bar and four dining venues.

Last month also saw the line release further details on its first four newbuild river yachts *Crystal Ravel*, *Crystal Bach*, *Crystal Debussy* and *Crystal Mahler* which are set to join Crystal River Cruises' fleet in spring and summer next year.

Sailing on the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers, *Crystal Mahler* and *Crystal Bach* will be 135 metres in length with 53 suites for 106 guests while the 110 metre *Crystal Debussy* and *Crystal Ravel* which takes 78 guests between its 39 suites will sail voyages on the Seine, Garonne, Dordogne and Gironde Rivers.

The company has also announced new summer incentives including 'Crystal Clear Choices' with savings and perks for bookings made on their ocean ships *Crystal Symphony* and *Crystal Serenity* before August 31.

Guests booking select voyages this year and next will be able to choose from three key offerings: cruise fare savings of up to \$1,000, up to \$1,500 off air credits for air travel booked through Crystal's air department or up to \$2,000 in shipboard credits.

"The added incentives available to travellers for an already value-packed, all-inclusive luxury vacation makes Crystal the clear choice for guests seeking an enriching adventure in some of the world's most coveted destinations," Rodriguez said.

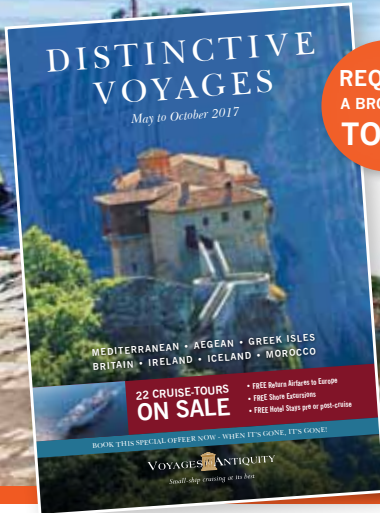
The Crystal Clear bonuses are available on sailings leaving from Oct 2016 through to Dec 2017 including voyages to The Caribbean and Panama Canal, Alaska, Canada, the Baltic and Northern Europe, Mediterranean, South America and Africa.



Image courtesy of Crystal Cruises

2017 VOYAGES ON SALE NOW!

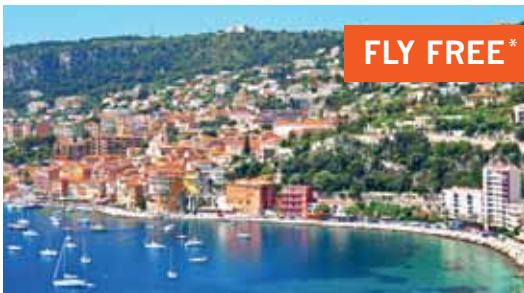
22 GRAND VOYAGES & 16 SINGLE SAILINGS



REQUEST
A BROCHURE
TODAY



INCLUDES: Pre- & post-cruise hotel stays* • All meals onboard • Complimentary wine, beer or soft drinks with dinner onboard • Sightseeing excursions • Experienced guest speakers on each cruise • Gratuities & port fees • Transfers & baggage handling between overseas airports hotels and the ship



FLY FREE*

GRAND RIVIERA, IBERIA & ENGLAND NICE TO LONDON 26 DAYS – 6 JUNE 2017

Changing sceneries feature on this voyage from the French Riviera to the rocky shores of England's West Country. Plus visit the Portuguese capital of Lisbon, the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and enjoy a wine tasting in Bordeaux.

- FREE economy airfare from Australia[†] to Nice, returning from London
- 23 night cruise aboard Aegean Odyssey
 - 2 night hotel stay in London
 - 17 included tours in 5 countries

Standard Outside Cabin from
\$12,650* per person
twin share



CRUISE TOUR[^]

HISTORIC SPAIN, SICILY & ITALY SEVILLE TO ROME 19 DAYS - 11 MAY 2017

Highlights: Seville, Cadiz, Malaga, Cartagne, Trapani, Valletta, Syracuse, Taormina, Palermo, Sorrento, **Rome**

- 2 night hotel stay in Seville
- 14 night cruise aboard Aegean Odyssey
- 2 night hotel stay in Rome
- 11 included tours in 3 countries

Premium Inside Cabin
\$4,595* per person
twin share



CRUISE TOUR[^]

ENGLAND, IRELAND & SCOTLAND LONDON TO EDINBURGH 18 DAYS – 11 JULY 2017

Highlights: London, Guernsey, Falmouth, Isles of Scilly, Dublin, Liverpool, Douglas, Isle of Arran, Stornoway, Kirkwall, Scrabster, Oban, **Greenock/Edinburgh**

- 2 night hotel stay in London
 - 13 night cruise aboard Aegean Odyssey
- 2 night hotel stay in Edinburgh
 - 2 included tours

Premium Inside Cabin
\$5,986* per person
twin share

*TERMS & CONDITIONS: All fares in Australian dollars, per person, twin share based on lowest available category & include all promotional savings & offers, onboard gratuities, air & port taxes (correct as of 7 Jul 2017). Cruise only voyages based on Cat L Premium Inside cabins for 11 May 16 & Cat K Premium Inside Cabin for 11 July 16 sailings. Fly Free Grand Voyage based on Standard Outside cabin Cat J. Valid for new bookings only. ^ All EBD Offers, including any % discount offered based on Single Sailings only at time of booking, are capacity controlled and can be withdrawn or modified at any time without notice. All fly free offers are capacity controlled and can be withdrawn or modified at any time without notice. Offers are capacity controlled & may be withdrawn at any time without notice & can't be combined with other offers. Cancellation penalties & conditions apply. *FLY FREE offer is subject to availability. Airfares, cruise & accommodation prices based on specified booking classes, airlines, routings & departure dates. Valid for flights to/from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide & Perth. Solo occupancy is subject to availability and one selected cabin categories, details and fare available on request. Pre & post hotel accommodation & transfers from airport/port/hotel offered on dates specified on itinerary only, ask for details. Prices based on payment by cash or cheque only. Travel agent service fees not included. Voyages to Antiquity reserve the right to change, correct errors, withdraw from sale any or all fares, itineraries, excursions & fees. For full terms & conditions visit www.voyagestoantiquity.com.au or visit your local preferred Travel Agent.

REQUEST A BROCHURE

02 9959 1333

info@vta.net.au

www.voyagestoantiquity.com.au

AQUA AMAZON LOST



Aqua Amazon Cruiser

A FIRE and explosion aboard Aqua Expeditions' river vessel the *Aqua Amazon* in mid-July resulted in the sinking of the six-year-old ship and the tragic loss of life. *Aqua Amazon* operated a series of three-, four- and seven-night voyages on the Ucayali, Marañon and Amazon in Peru.

The boutique 24-passenger *Aqua Amazon* was moored in Iquitos for re-stocking at the time of the incident on Saturday 16 July, 2016.

Although there were no passengers on board the high-end river craft at the time of the incident, five crew and two external suppliers were unaccounted for. Eight crew members were also injured as a result of

the explosion, with three in intensive care.

Aqua Expeditions Founder and CEO Francesco Galli Zugaro said the families of the victims have been kept abreast of the latest developments.

"Many of the crew have been with me from 2007 when we started. I considered them dear friends, not just employees," Zugaro remarked.

Preliminary investigations are underway to find the source of the fire and explosion.

Amazon was a favourite among travel companies around the world and was utilised by the likes of Scenic and Avalon Waterways in the past. The product was also showcased on Channel Nine's travel

program *Getaway* a number of years ago.

Guests with future bookings on *Aqua Amazon* have either been re-accommodated onto other Aqua Expeditions' other South American ship, *Aria Amazon*, or reassigned to other river cruisers.

Earlier this year, Aqua Expeditions announced it would launch a new 20-suite Amazon River cruise ship next year, which was set to inherit the name *Aqua Amazon*. Construction on what was to be the line's third vessel in the region is slated to commence in December.

Aqua Expeditions is the smallest cruise line member of Cruise Lines International Association.

TTC relaunches Cruise Spirit

THE Travel Corporation has reinvigorated the consumer-facing Cruise Spirit brand, which it acquired when it purchased the Adventure World and Creative Cruising wholesale operations from NRMA in 2013. Still in fledgling form, the company began running Cruise Spirit advertisements in mainstream newspapers last month, highlighting a number of ocean cruise itineraries packaged together with Travel Corporation land product from AAT Kings, Trafalgar and Insight as well as Uniworld river voyages.

The call to action for the advertisements highlighted the contact details of participating travel agencies, who look to have become Cruise Spirit partners in a model which seems to have similarities with other groups such as CruiseCo, The Cruise Team and Worldwide Cruise Centres. Cruise Spirit is "powered by Creative Cruising," with the Creative Cruising website also now revamped to have a consumer face in addition to its previous travel agent login facility.

NORWEGIAN LIFTS LOCAL ONLINE PRESENCE

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line is continuing its intensive focus on the Australian market, with the launch last month of a dedicated website displaying fares in Aussie dollars. The move follows last year's establishment of an Australian office – headed up by industry veteran Steve Odell – representing Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas, with the company seeing strong potential in growing business out of the local market.

The site is part of a new globalised web platform launched by NCL, with the US and

Brazil also sharing the system which has a responsive mobile-optimised design and a new 'Find a Holiday' search tool. Live now at www.ncl.com.au the launch coincided with the opening of sales for *Norwegian Jewel's* inaugural Australasian season which kicks off in October next year. Norwegian has also updated its travel agent portal at www.norwegiancentral.com with new brochures, images, videos and information.





CLIA VIEW

Brett Jardine, commercial director
CLIA Australasia

BECOMING A CRUISE MASTER

SINCE 1998 CLIA Australasia (formerly ICCA) has been hosting an annual "Masters Conference" at sea. This event is a great opportunity for travel agents to advance their sales and marketing skills – all referenced back to the cruise industry – and earn the right to promote yourself as a "Cruise Master", the ultimate industry accolade.

■ **Who should attend?** The topics covered at our Masters Conference are not just aimed at owners and managers. Something that can't be 'taught' but can be 'caught' at Masters is enthusiasm - if you have the right attitude, CLIA (Australasia) Masters will benefit your career regardless of your role within the cruise industry.

■ **Who is eligible?** Participation at the CLIA (Australasia) Masters Conference is open to consultants who have achieved CLIA (Australasia) Ambassador status and are currently employed by a CLIA (Australasia) Member Travel Agency or are a CLIA Individual Member.

■ **What is the format?** The Masters Conference includes six 3-hour conference sessions. It is not run as a structured family as partners are welcome to join participants when not attending sessions. We aim to set aside ample time at leisure to enjoy ports of call and spend time with your partner and/or other members of the group.

■ **What topics are covered?** Topics covered are designed to inspire all levels of participation from front line consultants through to owners and managers.

■ **Who is the conference facilitator?**

Scott Koepf is CLIA's USA based Masters Conference facilitator. Bringing close to four decades of industry knowledge, Scott has worked for cruise lines, worked as a retail travel franchisee (and a cruise specialist franchisor), he has an extraordinary style that leaves participants captivated and wanting more from this high energy event that is not only inspirational but also very motivational – what more could you ask for?

■ **Where is the 2016 Masters Conference?**

Onboard P&O's *Pacific Eden* with a 15 October embarkation from Cairns, travelling to Papua New Guinea to discover a region that is so close but relatively untouched by Australian and New Zealand travellers.

■ **Can I still attend in 2016?** Yes. We have just a few cabins remaining for our 2016 event and with all training required to reach Ambassador Status now available online for CLIA Members you still have time to fast track your learning to join us at this year's conference.

■ **Reactions from past participants**

Attendees at the CLIA Masters Conference are always full of praise and comments such as these are not unusual. "Exceeded my expectations, I can't wait to go back to the office and start working on what I have learned"; "A great experience which is really helping my business"; "Loved every moment of the Masters, it was one of the highlights of my 34 year travel career".

■ **Register online now at www.cruising.org.au/CLIA-Events/Masters-Conference**

FLAVOUR OF THE TROPICS

THE SPICE OF LIFE IN ALL-INCLUSIVE LUXURY

Complementing several of the Caribbean's most amazing beaches, the Island of Spice, the Paris of the Tropics, and deep explorations into the Amazon jungle's rare wildlife, this voyage aboard *Silver Spirit* promises to be filled with a delightful array of subtle flavours.

Savour daily coffee tastings by Illy's Università del Caffè, single origin chocolate presentations from Domori accompanied by coffee and chocolate tastings pairing tastings of local Neapolitan cakes, desserts and gelatos.

Departing **21 November 2016**, enjoy **17 days** on a journey of culinary discovery from Barbados to some of South America's most breathtaking destinations.

Silver Privilege fares from **AU\$10,850pp**.



CHOCOLATE, COFFEE AND SILVER SPIRIT

For a copy of the Silversea 2016 brochure, visit tifs.com.au. For more information or to book call **1300 306 872**.

Terms & Conditions apply.

SILVERSEA®

CRUISE WEEKLY

- 23 Jun** P&O suspends operator
- 23 Jun** Cruising in Europe stats
- 28 Jun** Celebrity newbie details
- 30 Jun** Crystal to open Syd HQ
- 30 Jun** Lines pull out of Istanbul
- 05 Jul** Norwegian's Aussie site
- 05 Jul** Petite Crystal river yachts

HEADLINES JULY 2016

- 07 Jul** Tauck Australia expands
- 07 Jul** I Love Cruising debit
- 12 Jul** Uniworld ups sales team
- 12 Jul** P&O's Explorer preview
- 14 Jul** ecruising.travel success
- 14 Jul** Scenic opens Newcastle HQ
- 19 Jul** RCL, APT win big at NTIA
- 19 Jul** Aqua Amazon accident

INDUSTRY IN FOCUS



These agents were part of a group of 100 Australian travel industry members who ventured to Tianjin, China for the naming ceremony of *Ovation of the Seas*.



Grace Timbs and Sophie Woodman from AccorHotels toasted to the opening of the Pullman Sydney Airport at the hotel's opening Art Night.



A jam-packed famil to Tropical North Queensland was on the cards for these twelve agents who white water rafted, scuba dived and experienced Tjapukai by Night.



Travellers Choice agents experienced the South of France onboard *Scenic Sapphire* as part of their reward for winning a Gold Award.



Simon McGrath, Jacqui Felgate and Clive Scott celebrated the 20th anniversary of Sofitel Melbourne On Collins with a French-themed cocktail party.



Air NZ's Taste USA famil wrap-up included presentations from a number of top US tourism executives, such as these folk pictured.



Travellers Choice Frontliners Conference events have been happening across the country over the last month. Here are some members at the Melbourne session.



John Barilaro and Rick Myatt were snapped together at the Tourism Hospitality and Catering Institute's award function, hosted at the Grace Hotel in Sydney.



SWISS International Airlines and Switzerland Tourism hosted ten Tempo agents in Europe to experience selected highlights from 'The Grand Tour of Switzerland' recently.



Members of the Kiwi travel trade experienced American Express' 42nd Queenstown Winter Festival, as well as a lake cruise, snow-shoeing and hang gliding.

Agents from Flight Centre, Escape Travel and Cruiseabout stores all enjoyed a recent Infinity educational onboard *Voyager of the Seas* as it sailed from Hong Kong to Vietnam.



These sweet treats were delivered to top selling agents by Qantas and American Airlines staff to celebrate 4th of July.

TRAILING THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

By Jasmine O'Donoghue

“IT'S impossible to take a bad photo in New Zealand,” a friend remarked, after quickly snapping the South Island's Tasman Glacier. We stood in awe, overlooking the bright turquoise lake which stretched out in front of us, dotted with spectacular jagged icebergs.

The lake was met with chocolate-brown mounds of earth, linking gigantic slopes to the shore. Tufts of shrubs and greenery crept up the slopes to meet the low-lying cloud. Every now and again we would catch a glimpse of brown through the cloud, proving that what we were seeing was only close to a third of the true size.

New Zealand is a place

where you want to linger. Around every bend on the road (of which there are many), there is something to gawk at, a café to savour or a trail to wander.

Christchurch is a great place to fly in to and start a road trip. Its location provides the option to head up or down the South Island's scenic east coast or take the inland route to Queenstown.

Five years on from the Christchurch earthquake and the city is still rebuilding, but don't let that deter you. This funky city is speckled with pop up bars and tasty cafes. In the centre sits the Re:START Container

Mall, a colourful temporary shopping destination housing everything from fashion, to food and banks in converted shipping containers. Before you depart, make sure you head up the gondola for sweeping views over the city.

On our way to Queenstown, our group opted to use Lake Tekapo as a handy halfway

point for a two-night stop off. Impossible to miss, the sleepy town of less than 400 people gently rises on a hill overlooking the magnificent lake.

Aspiring astronomers, trekkers and anyone who enjoys a good view won't be disappointed by this stunning little spot.

“Around every bend on the road (of which there are many), there is something to gawk at, a café to savour or a trail to wander”

Located in a UNESCO Dark Sky Reserve, the town boasts exceptional stargazing. Those seeking an adrenalin rush can take a flight around Mt Cook and Westland National Parks or go snowshoeing in the Southern Alps. Afterwards, soak up the views of the Two Thumb mountain range in the hot pools at Tekapo Springs, nestled on the base of Mount John. Take the time to swing by Mt Cook to take in the highest mountains and the longest glaciers in New Zealand.

The drive through to Queenstown can be completed in around three and a half hours, but it'd recommended you take your time in case you miss out on the number of quaint little towns and wineries along the way.

It's easy to see why Queenstown is one of New Zealand's top visitor destinations.

It's an activity mecca. People line the streets with their snow gear in winter and activewear in summer. From skiing, bungy jumping, sky diving, jet boating, river rafting, scenic walks and treks, this city - set on the gorgeous Lake Wakatipu - has a lot to offer.

If throwing yourself off ledges isn't your thing, there are plenty of slower-paced activities on offer. Zip to the top of the gondola for a ride (or three) on the Luge or

try your hand at Frisbee golf. It's impossible to miss the hordes of people loitering outside Fergburger and once you get your hands on one, you'll understand why. If you haven't got time to line up for a juicy burger, the Fergbaker next door offers equally as spectacular pies, without the wait. Once your food has settled, relax with a massage at one of the city's many spas or book in the Onsen Hot Pools, which come complete with a retractable wall and roof.

Milford Sound is an unmissable and breathtaking experience. While some opt to make the trip all the way from Queenstown, it's much more comfortable to leave Queenstown behind and use Te Anau as a base. Two hours from Queenstown, Te Anau acts as a mirror to the lush hills which form a backdrop for this town. Knock off a river cruise by visiting the glow worms, which are hidden deep inside an underground cave accessible by boat. Inside the caves, the total silence and darkness is only broken up by the serene illumination of these insects.

Start out early from Te Anau and dedicate an entire day to Milford Sound. The road to Milford is absolutely striking but it can be easy to zoom past some of the features,

such as the Eglinton Valley, the Mirror Lakes or Lake Gunn. It is narrow and windy and in winter black ice can cause a hazard to inexperienced drivers. Particularly between May and September, it's worth leaving the car in Te Anau and taking a tour bus. There's the added bonus of a tour guide, who will schedule in the chance to grab some snaps of the scenic and historical highlights along the way.

Carved by glaciers during the ice ages, Milford Sound is spectacular in any weather and is a local hangout for playful seals, dolphins and penguins. Many cruises will get up close to the cliffs which rise out of the water to magnificent heights, the seals sunning themselves on rocks and cascading waterfalls. Some cruises offer the chance to visit the observatory floating 10m underwater at Harrison Cove, where rare black coral - usually found at depths of more than 500m - can be sighted amongst the sealife.

New Zealand has a strange sense of familiarity. The magnificent scenery, heart-stopping adventure, quaint towns and laid back lifestyle is brought home by the friendly locals. To a group of first-time visitors, the country felt like an old friend we had just met.

TIPS FOR DRIVING IN NZ

FOR an Aussie driving on New Zealand roads, the conditions can seem quite familiar, but there are some key differences to look out for.

- The driving conditions change as frequently as the scenery. Be aware and slow down for narrow, windy roads.
- Be wary of signs indicating slippery surfaces and drive slowly, particularly in winter. Watch out for black ice, do not brake suddenly and ask your car rental provider for chains if you will be travelling through snow and ice.
- The maximum speed on any open road is 100km/h and 50km/h in urban roads.
- Double yellow lines in the centre of the road must not be crossed. They indicate it's too dangerous to overtake.
- Check for oncoming traffic on one-lane bridges.

DRIVEAWAY HITS THE US ROADS

DRIVEAWAY Holidays is offering special deals for travel agents renting vehicles in the USA, with a 10% saving on Avis and Budget vehicles, while on Dollar rentals there's a 10% discount plus a choice of included GPS, fuel or additional drivers.

And it's not just about cars - DriveAway's US portfolio also includes motorhomes, with US\$100 off Cruise America rentals. Motorcycles are on offer too, with a free one-way rental for bookings of 10 days or more with EagleRider. EagleRider motorbike tours feature in the range, including a custom riding jacket, unlimited kilometres, hotel accommodation, professional tour leaders and helmets for all passengers. Details on 1300 363 500.



AccorHotels partners Hertz

THE Le Club AccorHotels loyalty scheme has announced a new alliance with car rental giant Hertz, offering members the opportunity to earn points with every Hertz booking globally. Interestingly, the pact also includes recognition of elite status, with top tier Le Club AccorHotels Gold and Platinum members gaining similar levels at Hertz, with perks including upgrades and guaranteed vehicle availability.

All Le Club AccorHotels members will earn three points per US\$1 normally, but a launch offer valid until the end of August offers five points per dollar, and a 10% discount on worldwide Hertz rentals.

BUCKETLIST DRIVES

HERE'S our selection of some of the great drives that you can do in this wide world

THIS road is officially the third highest in the Alps, crossing over the border between Italy and Switzerland. What makes it remarkable is the huge number of switchbacks – 48 in all, marching up the side of the pass. Your best bet is to tackle the pass not during July and August when it's popularity is clear (in the amount of traffic on the road). The road before/after the switchbacks is also beautiful, travelling through Stelvio National Park with its stretches of alpine forest.



STELVIO PASS, ITALY

Dodge Challenger SRT8 at the Stelvio Pass



ICEFIELDS PARKWAY, CANADA

Icefields Parkway, Michael Choi

THE 232km journey from Banff to Jasper offers the most incredible scenery. Traversing the Rockies, the trip passes mountain lakes, ancient glaciers and sweeping valleys, and crosses through two national parks. Apart from the jaw-dropping scenery, there's also a chance to spot big horn sheep, deer, black bears and coyotes, as well as the very occasional wolf, grizzly bear or goat.

THE road from Queenstown to Gormanston in Tasmania is both beautifully scenic and exciting to drive, with over 90 bends along a spiralling road. This section of the highway is used in the Targa Tasmania, so you can taste a little of what the rally car drivers experience, albeit at a much safer speed. Queenstown was once the world's richest mining town and the industry created the rocky 'moonscape' that the road winds its way through.



QUEENSTOWN, TASMANIA

Gormanton Hills, Tourism Tasmania

ROAD TRIPS ON THE RISE

THE latest Tourism Australia Research forecast has noted the positive influence that the low dollar is having on increasing domestic tourism as well as inbound travel, particularly from markets in Asia. China is predicted to overtake New Zealand as our largest inbound source market by 2017.

This is great news for the caravanning industry, with many Chinese tourists embracing the "grand old Australian pastime", as TTF CEO Margy Osmond noted (*travelBulletin* Sep 2014).

Caravanning and camping is the fastest growing commercial accommodation type apart from private rental accommodation, and is expected to grow at a greater rate than other accommodation types for domestic travel.

Low fuel prices and low interest rates, coupled with the declining value of our dollar, means more and more Australians are also looking at taking domestic holidays, another boon for the caravanning industry.

All in all, road tripping around Australia is seeing a strong increase in uptake.



"We are witnessing a new and robust era in domestic tourism that has the potential to introduce new consumers to the caravan and camping experience. There is also a

reconnect with existing markets who in the past, may have holidayed internationally," says Stuart Lamont, CEO of Caravan Industry association of Australia.

Freedom to Roam

EXPLORE EUROPE WITH PEUGEOT LEASING

**DriveAway
Holidays**
Your road to freedom

- › Brand NEW tax free vehicle
- › Zero excess insurance
- › Unlimited kilometres

- › FREE additional drivers*
 - › FREE delivery & return in France
- *Conditions apply



Call 1300 363 500 visit www.driveaway.com.au

ATAS
travel accredited

LAND of LEGENDS



Cliffs of Moher in County Clare ©Tourism Ireland



Baronial castles, lively pubs, friendly people and wild landscapes make a drive along Ireland's west coast a journey to remember, says BRIAN JOHNSTON.

A PERFECT day on Ireland's west coast is spent tramping across moors, or along the shores of lakes set like gems among folds of green hills. The afternoon is finished off on a cliff top watching the sun set over the Atlantic Ocean. That – and the village pub – are what passes for nightlife in these parts. If it's life in the fast lane you're after, you should have been born a greyhound, as I'm told by a local in a Galway pub.

You hear plenty in pubs, since the Irish happily regale visitors with sagas of giants,

fairies, shrieking banshees and errant relatives. The west is a place of breathtaking landscapes, grim romantic ruins, stirring tales of Celtic legend and an astonishingly hospitable people. It's also the most Irish part of the country, where the Gaelic language, traditional music and slow ways of life survive.

Start exploring at the Cliffs of Moher, an eight-kilometre wall of limestone buffeted by huge Atlantic waves. In the high season there are as many tourists on the paths as puffins nesting on the rock face. Still, the crowds are outweighed by a magnificent seascape. Not far away lies the tiny village of Doolin, renowned for its traditional Irish music and three of the best pubs in all of Ireland in which to hear it.

Nearby is The Burren, which simply means 'great rock'. The eerie lunar landscape of grey limestone slabs appears a barren place, but in May and June wildflowers and butterflies

are everywhere, making for enjoyable walking. The Burren is also dotted with the ruins of churches, castles and monuments, some dating back to the Bronze Age. The archaeology, history and wildlife of the region are well presented at the Burren Centre at Kilfenora.

Further on, Galway might be Ireland's best small city. Despite its modest size, it has a cosmopolitan air, two fine theatre companies and a lively university. A walk around 500-year-old alleys and lanes leads past fine churches, craft and antique shops and plenty of eateries. Evenings can be whiled away in pubs. Someone may produce a bodhran (traditional drum) and fiddle, and singing will ensue.

Galway is a departure point for the Aran Islands. The melancholy and desolate limestone islands are surrounded by pounding waves and covered with dry-stone walls that encircle tiny fields, the only soil for cultivation



Village of Ennistymon in County Clare



©Tourism Ireland



Walking track near Ballyvaughan in County Clare ©Tourism Ireland



Kylemore Abbey in County Connaught ©Tourism Ireland

provided by mixing sand and seaweed. Not surprisingly, Aran Islanders are noted for their dogged perseverance and self-sufficiency, and still seem to live in a world apart. Inishmore, the largest and nearest island, is the most commercialised, though far from crowded. As well as blowholes and fine views of the Irish coast, there are lighthouses, holy wells, and dozens of ruins best explored by bicycle, which can be rented on the pier. The 4,000-year-old fortress of Dun Aengus on the edge of a cliff is one of Europe's most impressive prehistoric monuments.

The island of Inishmaan is for walkers only as there are no roads; paths along the cliffs are splendid. There's also a prehistoric fort, as well as several ruined early-Christian churches and ancient tombs. The final and smallest island is Inisheer, with just 300 inhabitants and a few wandering donkeys. Fields are so small they only hold one cow or

two sheep. In summer the grass is covered in wild flowers; walking along the network of tiny lanes is pure delight.

Back on the mainland, just north of Galway you'll pass the pretty village of Oughterard, a leading centre for fishing that lies close to the shores of Lough Corrib. This westernmost part of County Galway is Connemara. Irish culture, language and literary heritage are much in evidence in these remote communities. The coast here is deeply indented; inland there are moors, bogs, forests and mountains. This might be the most beautiful part of Ireland. From Oughterard the road skirts many small lakes which (on a good day) reflect the sky and hilltops. The green moors, dark hills and extraordinary quality of the light is unforgettable, and in summer the sun lingers in the sky until eleven o'clock.

Clifden, perched between bay and

mountains, is considered Connemara's most picturesque village, but the surrounding scenery is better than the town itself. Still, take advantage of its good accommodation, small restaurants and lively bars as a base for exploration – with 1,300 residents, Clifden is considered something of a swinging place in these parts. For views over the town, follow the circuit of the Sky Road, with its splendid views over whitewashed cottages, green fields and a sparkling sea.

A little further on, in the equally beautiful Kylemore Valley, stands Kylemore Abbey, a fantastic turreted mock-Tudor castle perched on the edge of a lake. The Benedictine nuns who live here run a cafeteria and crafts centres, worth stopping at for its beautiful location. The solitude and sense of peace that is so typical of Ireland's west is particularly strong here: another perfect day on the edge of Europe.



VISITBRITAIN RENEWS FOCUS ON AUSTRALIA

TOURISM authorities in the UK appear to have switched their strategy in relation to the Australian market, showing the love to local travel agents and wholesalers by running the first VisitBritain travel trade mission to Australia in ten years. The move follows years of declining budgets for the organisation's operations here, which have been gradually downgraded over the last decade as part of a focus on perceived emerging markets.

The 2016 VisitBritain mission visited Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne with regional marketing manager Mark Haynes saying it was a "bit of a tester" to see how things were received. "The enthusiasm from travel agents has been superb, the energy levels from suppliers have been wonderful... in a few months' time we'll evaluate, see how much business has been generated and we'd love to do more," Haynes told *travelBulletin*.

He said Australia had now been designated as one of seven "GREAT tourism markets" after significant growth, as well as recognition that as with most destinations Australian travellers stay longer and spend more than those from many other countries. Of course, the slumping British currency following the shock Brexit vote will also help, with Aussies in Britain already getting significantly more bang for their buck.

New Virgin Australia routes could feed into UK

VIRGIN Australia's shifting shareholdings, which have seen the carrier extend its focus on Asia, could have an unexpected side effect in that travellers to the UK may soon once again be able to travel all the way to the UK on Virgin-branded product. Following the proposed Virgin Australia alliance with China's HNA Group, VA has applied for and been granted an allocation of seven frequencies per week on the Hong Kong route.

Intended to be operated from 1 June 2017, the new A330 service will dovetail neatly with Virgin Atlantic, which previously operated its own metal all the way to Sydney but closed its Australian operations in 2014. The Virgin Upper Class product is popular with the corporate market and offering it in connection with VA could be a welcome option. A recent restructure of VS operations in Hong Kong has seen the airline's HKG reservations and ticketing operated by 49% shareholder Delta Air Lines.

AGENT KNOW HOW

We asked VisitBritain for their top tips on how agents can maximise their skills for selling the UK.

How can travel agents improve their knowledge of Great Britain?

VisitBritain offers all agents access to our dedicated travel trade site <http://trade.visitbritain.com>. Here you will find detailed itineraries for regional Britain exploring our vibrant, cultural cities; delving into the Great British countryside; showcasing adventure activities as well as those highlighting the history of Royal Britain.

What kind of training is available for Australian agents wanting to sell Great Britain, and how can they sign up?

VisitBritain operates an online BritAgent training program www.britagent.com to allow the travel trade to build and improve their product knowledge of Britain. The website has modules featuring the latest British products to help you stay ahead of the competition and sell more. It offers tips on how to increase commission, where to find the best value for your customers, and exclusive discounts and offers only available to our BritAgent graduates. You can learn in your own time and at your own pace. If you stop during a lesson, when you next login you'll be able to pick up where you left off. The BritAgent certification is a recognised qualification overseas agents can use to display their knowledge and skills.

Any recommendations for first time travellers?

- Explore London's cultural side such as taking in a West End Show or visiting the free, world-class museums, historic houses and stunning art galleries.
- Shopping along London's most famous shopping streets in the West End – Oxford Street, Regent Street and Carnaby Street.
- Explore London by Tube to such iconic places as The Royal Botanic Gardens beside the River Thames in Kew, or Notting Hill, Piccadilly Circus, Covent Garden or even Kensington Palace.
- Take a guided tour of historic London pubs with your very own Blue Badge Tourist Guide. It's a great way to experience traditional London pubs and get an insight into London's history.
- Consider trips around London such as the Cotswolds and Bath, the seaside village of Brighton, and historic sites of Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral or the university towns of Cambridge and Oxford.

What makes Great Britain a unique destination?

From London's iconic landmarks to enjoying a traditional afternoon tea or uncovering centuries of history and culture in one of the many castles and museums, the possibilities are endless.



3 THINGS TO DO IN EDINBURGH

WALK



Edinburgh (© Moyan Brenn)

PUT your comfy shoes on and walk around this small city to discover its charm. Divided into two sections the Old Town and the New Town, both are part of the UNESCO World Heritage site, there is plenty to explore on foot. Wander down the Royal Mile, the Old Town's main thoroughfare with its array of boutiques. Get your kilt and tartan accessories here or call in to one of the many whiskey tasting shops for a wee dram. Call in at historic St Giles Cathedral as well as the original Scottish Parliament Hall. In the New Town walk down Princes St, the main shopping area, visit the Princes St Gardens, then stroll back a few blocks to appreciate this masterpiece of city planning with its Georgian architecture. For enthusiasts of Alexander McCall-Smith's 44 Scotland Kit series, follow your map to Drummond Place and Scotland Street, or discover the tasty delights of Valvona and Crolla.

EDINBURGH CASTLE

A STAY to Edinburgh would not be complete without a visit to historic Edinburgh Castle. Perched above the city, this national icon gives visitors a chance to discover Scotland's rich history as they explore the castle precincts. See the nation's crown jewels, the Royal Palace, home of Mary Queen of Scots, as well as much more. Free short guided tours are available as well as audio tours. Pre purchase of tickets on line is recommended to avoid the queues during busy times. You can also enjoy magnificent views over the New Town from the castle ramparts.



SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY

ART lovers will appreciate one of the best collections of art in the world when they visit. The gallery has an extensive collection of Dutch masters, renaissance pieces, 18th and 19th Century works as well as an impressive showcase of Scottish artists. Located on The Mound in the heart of the city, admission is free, and with Edinburgh's slightly unpredictable weather it is a good place to head to on a damp day.



2017 BROCHURE OUT NOW
GREAT NEW ITINERARIES • GREAT NEW SAVINGS

Back-Roads
TOURING CO.
EST. 1990



Ireland - The Emerald Isle
Belfast Galway Dingle

THE BACK-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- ✔ Sit down for lunch at historic private country house, Ballyscullion Park
- ✔ Enjoy a traditional Irish evening sipping whiskeys, and perhaps a pint with the locals.

12 UP TO **18** FROM **\$4,049**
DAYS GUESTS PP



A Scottish Journey
The Highlands & Isle of Skye Mull

THE BACK-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- ✔ Tour Scotland's most enigmatic castles, from Glamis to Stirling
- ✔ Become an islander with two nights on the stunning Isle of Skye and the striking Isle of Mull.

8 UP TO **15** FROM **\$3,599**
DAYS GUESTS PP



Cornwalls of Cornwall
Dartmoor Falmouth St Ives

THE BACK-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- ✔ Savour lunch at Rick Stein's signature 'The Seafood Restaurant' in Padstow
- ✔ Get the inside story on Cornwall's largest private estate on a private guided tour of the grounds

7 UP TO **18** FROM **\$2,969**
DAYS GUESTS PP

Experience the road less travelled.

WITH THE EXPERTS IN UK & EUROPE SMALL GROUP TOURING

SMALL GROUPS OF UP TO 18 • SCENIC BACK ROADS, AVOIDING MOTORWAYS • BOUTIQUE HOTELS
AUTHENTIC LOCAL EXPERIENCES • LEISURELY PACED ITINERARIES • CULINARY DISCOVERIES

SAVE UP TO **\$899*** on all 2017 tours booked by **31st August 2016**
PER COUPLE

*Conditions apply.

1300 100 410

backroadstouring.com

HOLIDAYS WITH KIDS

BONNIE TAI explores emerging family-friendly destinations which offer the chance to discover a new culture and way of life, as well as a few Aussie classics which promise the creation of unforgettable memories.

DISCOVERING different cultures and drinking in all-new surroundings can be a rich bonding experience for all members of the family alike. And with the world becoming increasingly more accessible and affordable, it has never been a better time than now to grab your passport, pack a suitcase and embark on an adventure of a lifetime with your loved ones.

According to Virtuoso's 2016 Luxe Report, multigenerational travel is predicted to be a key trend this year, with the top two travel motivations listed as exploring new destinations and seeking authentic experiences.



THE PEARL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN: SRI LANKA

HIDING in plain sight, the island paradise of Sri Lanka has been recognised in recent years as an emerging destination for intrepid family adventurers.

Since the cessation of the 30-year long civil war in 2009 and the rebuild following the devastating tsunami in 2004; Sri Lanka's captivating beaches, bountiful tea plantations and its wealth of wildlife have lured scores of curious travellers ready to discover and learn about its fascinating ancient history.

Set in the middle of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka offers the perfect chance for kids to get up close to wild elephants, turtles, water buffaloes and even leopards. To experience this, an abundance of big game safari tours are available, with many taking place within the country's national parks – several of which are recognised as World Heritage Sites.

TROPICAL BALI GETAWAY

RECOGNISED by consumer group CHOICE as Australia's most visited overseas tropical destination, Bali offers an array of good value experiences including beaches, islands, jungles and temples just waiting to be ventured. Striking spectacles are just the norm on this Indonesian Island and it isn't uncommon to see wild monkeys swinging through the treetops.

Traditional Balinese cooking classes have also become an increasingly popular activity among families, with an array of immersive courses available that are suited to a wide range of age groups. Classes typically start in the morning with a tour of the local farmer's markets to gather fresh ingredients, before heading to the kitchen to recreate delicious age-old dishes.





EXPLORING AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

JUST a hop, skip and a jump away, New Zealand is a destination sure to please the young and old. From hot air ballooning to hot pools; rafting to skiing, the land of the long white cloud offers plenty for the whole family to experience together.

Known for its untouched natural landscapes and stunning scenery, New Zealand is a hot-spot for safe outdoor adventures with an added thrill factor. Jetboating is suitable for youngsters and even bungy jumping is open to those aged 10 and over. Other recommended adrenaline-inducing activities include zorbing (hurtling around in a giant transparent ball), zip-lining, go-karting and lugging.

Exploring on foot is also highly recommended, as the Aussie neighbour boasts countless walking tracks that are suitable for all ages. Whether heading into the dense Kiwi bush for a bit of light hiking or embarking on a one-day track, each option promises an awe-inspiring experience to remember.

TREK THROUGH THE HIMALAYAN WONDERLAND OF NEPAL

HOME to lowland jungles and the highest mountain in the world, Nepal promises an adventurous and bonding family getaway.

Its luscious national parks are filled with rare and exotic wildlife, whilst its villages reveal vibrant social communities living and preserving an ancient way of life.

Hiking expeditions are amongst one of the most popular activities for visitors to embark on, with many operators offering experienced porters, horses and child carriers to help make it easier for families wanting to experience the mountainous region.



ESCAPE TO THE COOK ISLANDS

DISCOVER the paradise that is the Cook Islands – one of the South Pacific's best kept secrets. Recently named in TripAdvisor's Traveller's Choice Awards Top 10 Islands in the South Pacific, Aussie visitors to the Cook Islands are steadily increasing, with its tourism bureau recording an uptick of 14% this financial year and 31% for the calendar year.

Despite sitting at a compact 32 kilometres in circumference, there's plenty to do. From snorkelling to bike riding; scuba diving to just plain old lazing about on the white-sand beaches, this slice of island paradise is a haven for both the young and old.

Make sure a trip to the Muri Beach night market is placed on the agenda, as it's a great chance to get amongst the locals and sample some of the island's fresh ocean cuisine.



FAMILIES DITCH TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY SPOTS

BOOKINGS for multi-generational getaways have doubled each year since 2013 revealed Intrepid Travel's family product manager Tim Winkworth, with more and more families ditching traditional Aussie getaways for more exotic locales.

"The older traditional Gold Coast holiday is now becoming Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and Borneo," remarked Winkworth, and "what we do notice is different about multi-generation travel is that they are keen to visit destinations which combine history and culture."

And it's not just the parents and children embarking on these trips, it's the grandparent's too.

"The feedback we get from families is that grandparents see travel as a great way to spend quality time with their families, and learn about the history and culture of new places together," he said. "We also recently had an Australian family of 16 travelling to Ecuador and the Galapagos – with the grandparents covering the bill".

Winkworth highlights Sri Lanka as a great emerging destination for multi-generational travel.

"With food, culture, history wildlife and beaches, Sri Lanka has it all.

"It's also an easy destination for Australians to explore in two to three weeks, offers great value for money and is relatively easy to get around," he adds.

When planning a trip to the South Asian country, Winkworth recommends a visit to

the Udawalawe National Park to see the elephants and a drop-by to the Elephant Transit Home to learn more about the organisations work with orphaned or abandoned baby elephants.

Intrepid Travel offers a number of family-friendly Sri Lanka get-aways, visit intrepidtravel.com to learn more.



TRAFALGAR



Josh and Jacob exploring Paris near the Eiffel Tower, France

*Holidays for the young,
and the young at heart*

Ziplining above the Costa Rican jungle. Taiko drumming lesson in Tokyo. Pizza cooking classes in Rome.

Discover a world of experiences the whole family will love.

And the fun doesn't stop when the sun goes down. Stay in a medieval castle in Wales, or an 1800's dude ranch in Montana.

Trafalgar offers a family holiday like no other.

'It was breathtaking to see the last rays of summer sunshine beaming down on the Eiffel Tower to perfectly match Josh and Jacob's beaming smiles...'

Esther from Australia, 2014

Download Trafalgar's Family Experiences brochure today www.trafalgar.com.au

Club Med expands in Japan

HOPING to take advantage of the huge 173% increase in Australians travelling to Asian mountain resorts, Club Med has announced plans to open a second snow resort in Tomamu, Japan.

Young affluent families are one of the key markets that Club Med is looking to engage, by providing bountiful sports and activities and a hassle-free holiday experience, said Henri Giscard d'Estaing, Club Med CEO.

The new resort will include a luxury 5 trident space with dedicated concierge, with the rest of the resort most likely to be 4 tridents.

Club Med Tomamu Hokkaido is only 30 minutes from the existing resort Club Med Sahoro Hokkaido, and a 90 minute bus ride or 50 minute train ride from New Chitose Airport.

The resort will offer access to 28 ski slopes of varying difficulty, with brand new facilities including lifts and gondolas. Free lessons will also be available to resort guests.



A DEDICATED collection of trips to ensure both adults and children are entertained and educated while travelling the world is the concept behind Trafagar's selection of Family Holidays.

The range of Family Holiday packages include ample free time in destinations, as well as Trafalgar favourites – Insider Experiences, VIP entry to attractions, services of an expert Travel Director, hand-picked 4- and 5-star accommodation, breakfast daily and the now essential, wi-fi equipped luxury coaches.

Itineraries in 2017 include the Gladiators, Gondolas and Gold guided holiday through Italy. Over 10 days, families will tour from Rome to Venice, hearing tales of ancient Rome's gruesome battles, before feeling the weight of a sword during an expert led combat session at a Gladiator training school! There's an authentic Italian pizza making experience and a Be My Guest dinner in a Tuscan villa.

Families can also immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of the Costa Rican jungle during the Monkeys, Jungles and Volcanoes trip. For the youngsters, there's wild animal and bird spotting in some of the county's most spectacular National Parks, including Braulio Carrillo, or join a specialist from the Sea Turtle Conservancy Foundation to learn about the turtles nests in Tortuguero. For the thrill-seekers in the family, there's tree top zip-lining too.

CRUISING WITH MSC CRUISES IN 2017

MEDITERRANEAN | NORTHERN EUROPE | CARIBBEAN | CUBA | WEST INDIES | SOUTH AMERICA | SOUTH AFRICA | ARABIAN PENINSULA

Family FUN 

Cruise with your family and save!

Children cruise free under 12 years when sharing a cabin with mum and dad. Larger families can enjoy our family fares for connecting cabins. 5 dedicated kids clubs, exclusive areas, partnerships with Lego and special dining and menu options, makes cruising a great time together.

WEST MEDITERRANEAN
7 nights
from \$2,756 per family

EAST MEDITERRANEAN
7 nights
from \$1,348 per family



CALL 1300 028 502 or visit www.msccruises.com.au or see your travel agent



*Conditions apply, prices are per family of 2 adults and 2 children under 12 years sharing one cabin in \$AU for departure date and cruise as follows, surcharges apply for other departure dates and combinations. MSC Meraviglia departing 29Oct17 Inside Fantastica cabin. MSC Musica departing 05Nov17 Inside Fantastica cabin. Combine the two cruises and free one way transfer between Venice and Genoa or visa versa for AU\$350 can be added dependent on date of departure. MSC Meraviglia does not commence cruising until 11 June 2017. Combination cruises may have repeat meals and entertainment. Prices, details, inclusions and maps are all subject to availability at time of booking and can be removed or withdrawn at any time without prior notice. For more information please visit www.msccruises.com.au. E&OE MSC Cruises (Australia) Pty Limited ABN 55 003 526 725. General Sales Agent for MSC Cruises S.A | ATAS Accredited No. A10954.

HOT PRODUCT

INTREPID'S 8-day Summer Pyrenees Family Holiday is a great option for family's looking to get off the beaten track and explore the less well known areas of Andorra and Spain. The trip includes hiking, cycling and an afternoon of whitewater rafting. There's a good mix of adventure activities and time to explore as a family. The 28 Aug departure is available from \$926 per person twin share.

EXPLORE! is offering great savings on select departures and destinations of their family style trips. This hot deal is available on the Family Rock the Kasbah, for 8-days in Morocco. The trip includes riding mules in the High Atlas mountains, and camels in the desert, to cycling to a film studio and visiting the Berber people in their villages. Prices start from \$1,040 for adults and \$930 for children.

TAUCK offers a variety of special family river cruise departures. Designed specifically for families, there is also no single supplement in category 1 staterooms, meaning a multi-generational trip is much more inexpensive. Children 12 and under will also save \$630 on the Blue Danube: Family Riverboat Adventure. The 8-day itinerary travels from Budapest to Vilshofen, Germany, with family friendly activities along the way including bike tours, guided tours with commentary for kids and marzipan making. 2017 departures start from \$4,990 for a category 1 stateroom.

HAVE A FAMILY HOLIDAY AT SEA



MSC Cruises offers a range of different options and deals to make travelling together as a family even easier.

Family accommodation in adjacent cabins with a connecting door can be booked on a selection of itineraries and ships for families with children under 12. For families with children under 12 who will share a cabin with their parents, those kids will cruise free all year round.

Also available are a range of activities to keep littlies to teens entertained at meal times, late at night and during shore excursions.

"...Kids-dedicated activities and other family related services have always been at the very core of our guest offering and are strengthened on an ongoing basis by further additions - thus making this element of our offering one of the richest at sea," said Gianni Onorato, CEO of MSC Cruises.



Fly to Europe via Beijing or Shanghai and experience the difference:

Paris (Double Daily), London (Double Daily), Frankfurt (Double Daily), Munich, Stockholm, Düsseldorf, Madrid, Rome, Milan, Athens, Barcelona, Vienna, Budapest, Minsk, Geneva, Moscow

Air China Sydney: 02-92327277

Air China Melbourne: 03-86025555

Australia Call Centre: 1800860999

Website: www.airchina.com.au



THE release of Princess Cruises 2017-2018 summer program sees departures from Adelaide for the first time, with *Golden Princess* departing on a roundtrip voyage to New Zealand in January 2018. Ports of call will include Melbourne, Dunedin, and Auckland as well as cruising the magnificent Fiordland National Park. Princess will also make maiden visits to Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln as part of a six-night cruise from Melbourne and a four-night cruise from Adelaide to Melbourne.



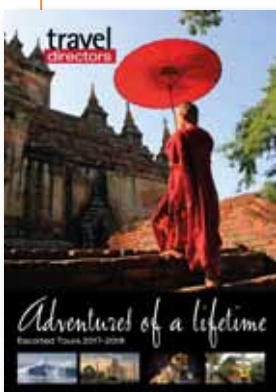
ABERCROMBIE & Kent has released its newest brochure on hosted small group journeys. Destinations for the 26 journeys include exotic places such as Columbia, Madagascar and Central Asia as well as favourites Iceland, Japan, India and Italy. Accommodation is in luxury lodgings with group sizes of between 14 and 24 guests allowing travellers to have memorable insider experiences.



HITTING agency shelves this month is the all new TravelMarvel Japan 2017 brochure. This is the first time TravelMarvel has offered a comprehensive program to Japan. With three core itineraries, rail enthusiast will enjoy the 12 day Discovering Japan tour which includes travelling extensively on Bullet trains as well as the Hida train across the Japanese Alps. Guests will also get the opportunity to experience traditional Japanese culture as part of the itinerary.



2017 holidays at 2016 prices is just one of the features of Trafalgar's 2017 Europe and Britain Preview brochure. Also on offer is 10% early bird discount for bookings and payments made by 15th December 2016, with past guests receiving an additional 5% loyalty discount. The brochure contains a huge range of guided holidays to destinations such as Italy, France, Spain and Portugal as well as always popular Britain and Ireland.



TRAVEL Directors 2017/2018 Adventures of a lifetime – escorted tour brochure is out now. Featuring five new tours such as Moscow to Singapore by rail, South America – visiting French Guiana, Suriname, Venezuela and Columbia and the Gateway to the Balkans tour, with destinations including Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia as well a 12-night small ship cruise.



EXPLORATIONS 2016-2017, the latest brochure from Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic has 10 new exciting itineraries for the adventurous traveller. These include two great new immersive programs in Patagonia, new Alaskan experiences as well as great offerings in the 'North' all including visits to Iceland. With the addition of new ships to the fleet in 2017, there will be more expedition options in Alaska including an 11 day photo expedition.

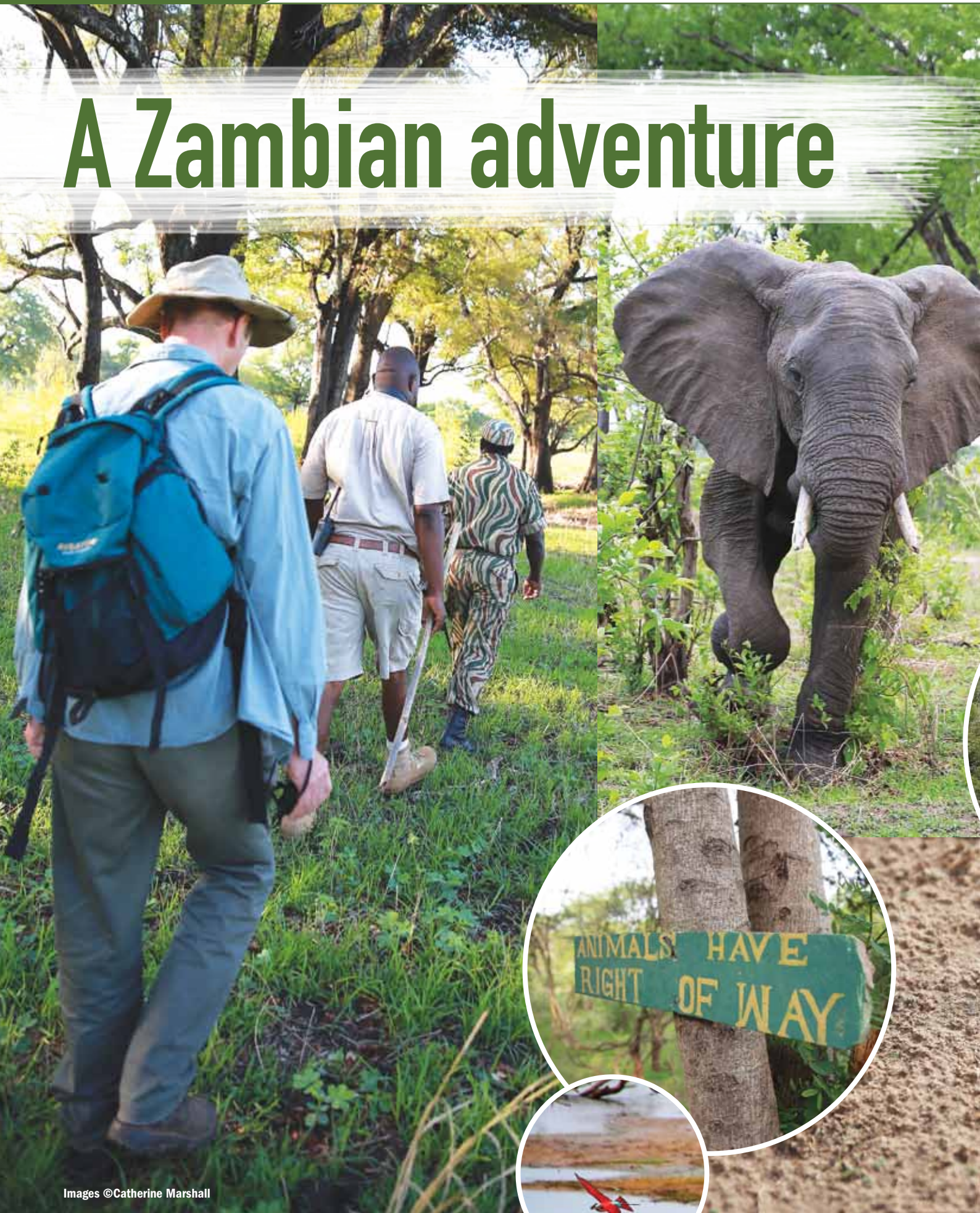


GLOBUS'S 2017 South & Central America brochure sees their biggest ever range of Latin America holidays. Some of the new itineraries on offer include Brazilian Getaway, a seven-day tour visiting Rio de Janeiro and Iguassa Falls. The brochure includes eight tours from Cosmos such as the Costa Rica Escape taking in jungles, volcanoes and hot springs. Discounts apply to tours booked early.



NEW family product in Dubai is a key feature in Tempo's Dubai, Egypt & Morocco 2017 brochure. New theme parks and their activities encourage longer stays and the brochure introduces a range of new hotels. New group tours to Egypt, four new independent tours in Jordan and new ways to explore Israel are on offer. Also featured are a range of multi-country packages allowing travellers to explore the Middle East.

A Zambian adventure



Images ©Catherine Marshall

By Catherine Marshall

AS NIGHT begins to fall, the elephants gather in great big herds and start the slow march towards the edge of South Luangwa National Park. They return at first light, as weak rays of morning sun break through the fog that's settled upon the bush like a blanket. They tramp silently through the forest, just the occasional crunch of leaves heard beneath their feet; their stomachs don't growl, either, for they're filled with mangoes stolen from villagers' orchards on the park's unfenced perimeter.

Such is life in this Zambian valley, where lives and livelihoods are juggled in an intricate, daily dance. In the early morning, as we cross the Luangwa River, we spy a group of children setting up their fishing rods. Danger

lurks all around them: crocodiles are already staking their claim on wedges of sun-warmed riverbank; hippo pods are so plentiful we can barely see the water for their bulbous, pink-

brown flanks. Further along, village women disappear into the forest, risking encounters with lions and buffalos and elephants as they search for firewood.

We're about to face this exhilarating wilderness from ground level ourselves. My Robin Pope Safaris guide, Jacob Shawa, parks below a wild mango tree. The river lies below us: hippos wallow, birds swoop, the jaws of a crocodile appear on the surface, snapping a bream. We're on a morning game walk, accompanied by a guard dressed in camouflage and armed with a powerful rifle: a reminder that while Africa's wildlife is magnificent to behold, its strength and unpredictability should never be underestimated.

We're not the only humans encroaching on the animals' habitat: smoke rises from a fisherman's camp on an islet in the middle of the river, and the fisherman himself sits beside the water – so vulnerable to crocodiles, to hippos! – gutting fish. He's been up all night, Shawa tells me, laying his nets, collecting the fish trapped within them. A friend will take his catch to the market, and he will retreat to his makeshift tent to sleep.

Shawa leads me along the river with its crumbling, pocked banks. A malachite – royal blue feathers, ruby red beak – perches almost

indiscernible on a log down by the river.

"He's a little jewel," Shawa says.

A cloud of Lilian's love birds rises and falls in a perfectly-timed dance, their orange faces and green wings blurring into a bright, feathery mirage. Nearby, in a whirl of turquoise and red and rust, carmine bee-eaters dart in and out of the nests they've carved into the riverbank. Tucked inside are eggs that haven't yet hatched; when the chicks are strong enough, these inter-African migrants will depart for more enticing climes: South Africa, Zimbabwe, elsewhere in Zambia.

It's hard to imagine they might discover a place quite as tranquil, as soul-stirring as this. But the quiet is misleading: beyond the river, clues alert us to other creatures that live here, to the activities they engage in while we're asleep. Shawa points to the bruised bark of a rain tree, where some animal has rubbed itself in hope of accessing the antibiotic properties contained within.

"I wonder how animals have evolved to know what use plants have?" he asks rhetorically.

'A noise startles us; we stand rigid, our blood freezing at the thought it might be a lion...'

As we walk through the thickets, our footprints soft and considered, we pass tamarind trees curling from the top of abandoned termite mounds. Who knows what lurks inside these

embankments? Genets, mongooses, snakes – they all make their homes in structures such as these.

A noise startles us; we stand rigid, our blood freezing at the thought it might be a lion, or one of those mammoth elephants we've seen lumbering homewards in the morning fog. But relief: it's a herd of zebra, grazing in a clearing. We know too well that life and death are closely entwined in this wild and magnificent place. As if to reinforce this fact, Shawa picks up the bleached jawbone of a hippo, and points out its extraordinarily large and dangerous teeth. Alive, he was something to fear; dead, he is a harmless fossil we can hold in our hands.

We return to Robin Pope's Safari's Nkwali Camp, an oasis of thatched chalets centred on an ebony tree, tucked away from the wilderness fanning out all around it. But as I approach the dining pavilion I see something that reinforces what the people of the Luangwa Valley have known for eons: though the camp sits in a clearing, it is still the animals' domain. For right there, so close I could almost touch it, is a magnificent elephant, wading through a lagoon, eating watergrass as it goes, disappearing into the enfolding bush as though it were never here.





BENCH PARTNERS WITH NAT GEO LIVE

BENCH International are teaming up with Nat Geo Live to give people a chance to experience Thomas Peschak's award winning photography. Peschak will be presenting some of his work in a series of talks around Australia, focusing on the ocean's charismatic creatures such as sharks and manta rays.

Peschak is an assignment photographer for *National Geographic Magazine*, and the Director

of Conservation for the Save our Seas Foundation (SOSF).

He has also been named one of the 40 most influential nature photographers in the world.

These talks are a chance for you or your clients to experience with fantastic imagery what wonderful opportunities there are in Africa to spot aquatic creatures. Paddle alongside great white

sharks off the coast of South Africa, swim with manta rays in the Maldives and keep up with whale sharks in the Arabian Sea.

Tickets are on sale now for the show at Sydney Opera House on 13 October, State Theatre Perth on 16 October, Adelaide Festival Centre on 19 October and Arts Centre Melbourne on 27 October.

■ To book tickets, visit <http://www.benchinternational.com.au/blog/item/book-your-tickets-now-wild-seas-secret-shores/>

THOMAS PESCHAK

Loisaba Tented Camp opens

KENYA'S newest tented camp is now open. Loisaba Tented Camp, located in the Loisaba Conservancy offers views over the Laikipia Plains to Mount Kenya.

The camp is operated by the Elewana Collection and situated on the site of the former Loisaba Lodge. It features eight safari suites, including a family residence with three ensuite rooms and exclusive access to a private infinity pool.

Guests can enjoy spectacular views with floor to ceiling doors and windows and wide verandahs. The main area of the camp includes a large open dining, separate open lounge and bar, a large deck and an infinity pool.



HOT PRODUCT

■ **&BEYOND** has an excellent rate on their Fly Me Around East Africa Safari. Pick any combination of &Beyond's lodges (restrictions apply) to stay at for seven nights and the flights between the camps are free.

If your clients travel between 01 November and 20 December, the price is US\$6,050 and includes seven-night's accommodation at a combination of &Beyond lodges in Kenya and Tanzania, and the flights in between the camps.

■ **EXPERIENCE** the amazing scenery of Namibia for less with **ON THE GO TOURS**. There is a 15% discount on the 13 Oct departure of the 11-day Namibia Lodge Safari trip.

The itinerary starts and finishes in Windhoek and travels through Etosha National Park for a chance to spot the Big 4 (no buffalos), visits the Petrified Forest, and the high red sand dunes of Soussusvlei. Travel is escorted by a guide/driver and in a group of 12 at the most.

■ **YOUR** clients can save up to \$760 on **A&K's** Tanzanian Safari Private Journey when booking before 31 December. The eight-day itinerary takes visitors through Tarangire National Park, with its famous large herds of elephants, over to Ngorongoro Crater and across to Serengeti National Park. Stays are in luxurious camps, including the new mobile Sanctuary Seregeti Migration Camp which moves depending on the movement of the migration. Priced from \$7,940 pp twin share.

NEW VAT FOR TANZANIA



TANZANIA has introduced a new VAT tax of 18%, which came into effect at the beginning of July. The tax is imposed on all tourism services including tourist guides, game driving, water safaris, animal or bird watching, park fees and ground transport services.

The Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) slammed the tax, saying that the new charges will absolutely hamper growth in the tourism sector. A similar tax was proposed in 2015, which the association was able to fight off, but they were not able to persevere this time.

Tourism is hugely important to the Tanzanian economy, with the industry contributing nearly 17% of their GDP, and TATO expressed concerns over the negative impact the tax may have on the goal of reaching 2 million visitors in 2017.

World Expeditions have also warned passengers that the VAT will inevitably, and unfortunately result in tour cost increases, with such a significant charge being added to so many aspects of their itineraries in the country. Tour operators will most likely be forced to pass on the tax.

Victoria Falls flights direct from Johannesburg

EAST African low-cost carrier Fastjet is now offering direct flights between Johannesburg and Victoria Falls. The flights began operating in March this year, and depart twice weekly, on a Thursday and a Sunday. Operated using an Airbus A319, they are available from US\$50 (not including taxes and charges).

Fastjet began operations in 2012, with international standards of safety and reliability, including an on-time arrival rate of 90%. They also offer flights from Johannesburg to Zanzibar, along with five airports in Tanzania and Harare in Zimbabwe.



©Marek Patzer

Victoria Falls

Why not make 'One Day' today...
Africa Awaits!



BENCH INTERNATIONAL
The Africa travel experts since 1969
We set the benchmark for African safaris

CALL 1300 AFRICA (237 422)

visit benchinternational.com.au
or contact your travel agent

SULTRY SOUTH OF FRANCE

By Donna Demaio

“IT HARDLY ever rains in Montpellier,” apologised tour guide Celine Dupin, as our shiny, black umbrellas sheltered us from a downpour. While the persistent rain threatened to discredit Ms Dupin, the personable guide distracted us with intriguing insights into the sprawling city, a mere ten kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea.

Montpellier is the capital of the Languedoc-Roussillon region and the eighth largest city in France. An enormous city square welcomed us, as colourful trams trundled by and a brightly painted carousel took youngsters for a ride. The expansive visitor's centre was heaving with tourists, eagerly collecting ideas for their stay.

The walking tour was fascinating. We peered into the waters of a 13th century Mikveh (Jewish ritual bath) discovered by an inquisitive archaeologist centuries after a multi-storey residence had hidden it. We watched a resident drape his wet laundry over a stone balcony overlooking the inner courtyard of a so-called private mansion, learning of the city's rich history and the everyday life of a local. Nearby, the bustling central market offered a standard collection of wares: from tacky souvenir caps to saucy lingerie and silly key rings, through to chunky socks, stylish shoes and practical belts.

Jutting from the city square, modern shopping centre La Galeries Lafayette (multi-level department store) and dozens of chain stores were satisfactory but it was the beguiling boutiques peppering the cobblestone streets that really impressed. Delicate handicrafts, designer jewellery and pretty scarves took our fancy.

A visit to the art gallery, Musée Fabre de Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, just metres from the city square, left the group spellbound. The eclectic collection of old and new was a credit to the curators. There were many more galleries but a shortage of time to investigate.

Stepping out of Montpellier, we didn't have to look far for towns steeped in history and natural beauty. In Castries, a fifteen minute drive from Montpellier, we toured the stunning fields of a bull ranch (Manade Vitou) in a horse-drawn open carriage. A group of men, and a five year old boy, showcased

the traditional “rounding up of the bulls”, watching us tremble as the largest, most intimidating beast (named Stefan) stopped a few metres short of us - just to glare at the group. Meanwhile, and thankfully, the long-standing myth that the colour red angers bulls was dispelled, as I wore in my new blood-red jumper.

The town of Uzès, about an hour from Montpellier, was postcard perfect – a combination of cobblestones, cafes and classic buildings. We even chanced upon a local woman draped in medieval garb on her way to “carnival.”

‘Stepping out of Montpellier, we didn't have to look far for towns steeped in history and natural beauty’

Clambering across the top of the Pont du Gard - a stunning example of a Roman aqueduct built around 50 AD and a classified UNESCO World Heritage Site that crosses the Gardon River - we were gobsmacked with the spectacular view, while savouring the serenity of the riverside forest.

Accommodation was at nearby La Bégude Saint Pierre in Vers Pont du Gard - a stone-walled, seventeenth century former coach house, with its 23 rooms and suites boasting original, exposed wooden beams, modern bathrooms and large balconies - surrounded by 14 hectares of pristine countryside. It was easy to while away the evening on a terrace overlooking century-old olive trees and a good-sized swimming pool.

Two hours from Montpellier appeared the beachside town of Collioure with its Catalan-influenced architecture, cuisine and style. The imposing Chateau Royal cast a shadow over the handful of bathers frolicking in the aqua sea. The lighthouse and pebble beach perfected the view, as a leisurely stroll was enjoyed under blue skies.

The city of Pézenas, untouched by the industrial revolution and a 45 minute drive from Montpellier, was home to playwright Moliere for more than a decade in the 1600s. We meandered past the barber shop the

writer had frequented, wondering if he'd picked up gossip for his comedic writings as he sat for a trim. A short walk from the centre we found La Distillerie de Pézenas, where an incredible meal was served (including a wonderful Confit rib of Pata Negra pork and olive crumble), excellent wine poured and magnificent spa and lodgings admired.

Our amazing guide, Ms Dupin, had proudly showcased her adopted city and surrounds, still insisting that for at least 300 days of the year, visitors are greeted by sunshine - not pesky dark clouds and rain. By the end of the trip, we were very nearly convinced.

NEED TO KNOW

Guided visits of Montpellier and surrounds can be booked at the Montpellier Méditerranée Tourism & Conventions Tourist Office
 ■ Call +33 (0)4 67 60 1919 or visit groupes@ot-montpellier.fr

Getting there

From Australia, your best bet is a flight to Paris. From there you can fly, drive or catch a high speed train to the region.

Places to stay

Here are some suggestion of good spots to stay in the region:

Marriott 105 Place Georges Freche (Rue du Chelia) 34000 Montpellier
 ■ Call +33 (0) 4 99 54 74 00

La Bégude Saint-Pierre 295 Chemin des Begudes 30210 Vers-Pont-du-Gard
 ■ Call +33 (0) 4 66 026360 or visit www.hotel-begude-saint-pierre.com

Grand Hotel du Golfe Route de Collioure 66700 Argeles-sur-Mer
 ■ Call +33 (0) 4 68 81 14 7 or visit www.hoteldugolfe-argeles.com

La Distillerie de Pézenas 6 Rue Calquieres Hautes 34120 Pézenas
 ■ Call +33 (0) 4 67 11 51 10 or visit www.distillerie-de-pezenas.garrigae-resorts.fr



Above: Montpellier city scape;
Bottom left: Collioure; Bottom
right: Moliere's barber shop in
Pézenas; photos courtesy of
Donna Demaio





New Paris property

Visitors to Paris can really do it in style by staying at the newly opened Le Roch Hotel & Spa. Located in Saint Honoré in the 1st arrondissement, the 37-room boutique property offers a “unique five-star Parisian experience” in the finest of style. It’s been created by famous French interior designer Sarah Lavoine – who happens to live just around the corner.

Part of the Design Hotels collection, Le Roch is in a 19th century building which has been recreated courtesy of award winning architect Vincent Bastie. Guests will feel particularly pampered, with each suite featuring a private hammam steam bath complemented by a range of specially commissioned Codage cosmetics – and there’s also a signature house spa treatment featuring a “blissed-out 75 minutes of top-to-toe facial and body massage”. And of course the hotel offers fabulous cuisine, with the in-house restaurant operated by rising culinary star Arnaud Faye.

Scenic Diamond, Bordeaux courtesy of Scenic



SCENIC AGENT PROMO

SCENIC is highlighting its France river cruising program with an incentive in which agents can go into a draw to win an all-inclusive France river cruise worth over \$15,000. Every Scenic France river cruise booked and deposited between 1 July and 31 August 2016 gives the consultant an entry, with Scenic also offering a marketing toolkit including Facebook tiles, web banners, a flyer and press release to help agencies target their local areas.

Cruise only pricing is also available on selected 2017 France departures, which combined with early payment discounts mean guests can cruise the rivers of France from \$4,195 per person twin share.

AGENT KNOW-HOW

Atout France lets us in on some insider knowledge on how to sell this popular, diverse country.

How can agents improve their knowledge of France?

We have a website, france.fr, which covers all the different regions in France, practical information, events, and festivals. It’s a great source of information. Additionally, every two years the French Tourist Office organises the French Travel Workshop which offers you a great opportunity to discover new French products and services, especially from our guest destination Paris and to make or renew contact with Principals and major suppliers. Also, every year, the South of France Languedoc-Roussillon organises a webinar on this beautiful destination where so many Australians travel every year and enables the travel agents to gain some more specialised knowledge on the products, events and new trends! We will look at extending this to other regions in the future. For any further information on France and to subscribe to receive our regular travel trade newsletter, agents can send their requests to: trade.au@atout-france.fr

What kind of training is available to Australian agents wanting to sell France and how can they sign up for it?

On our website, and there is also a tutorial website to get all the features of the French regions and cities.

Any recommendations for first time travellers?

It’s really important to soak in the French culture. That’s why we would recommend visiting all monuments/cities/places that make France famous. By this, I mean visiting the world war memorials in Normandy or in the North of France, visiting the wine and Champagne regions, and walking around the beautiful towns in the South of France. It’s really important to have time to experience everything you can. And of course, take a break for coffee on a cafe terrace.

What makes France a unique destination?

There are so many different landscapes only two hours drive by car. You can have lunch on a terrace in the south of France and go skiing in the same afternoon! Be in the most beautiful city in the world in the afternoon and have a drink for sunset in Normandy, in front of the world war memorial. And then there’s the culture: food, history, wines and all those small town bistros.





SKYTEAM®

SKYPRIORITY.

THE ONLY WORD YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR SEAMLESS TRAVEL.



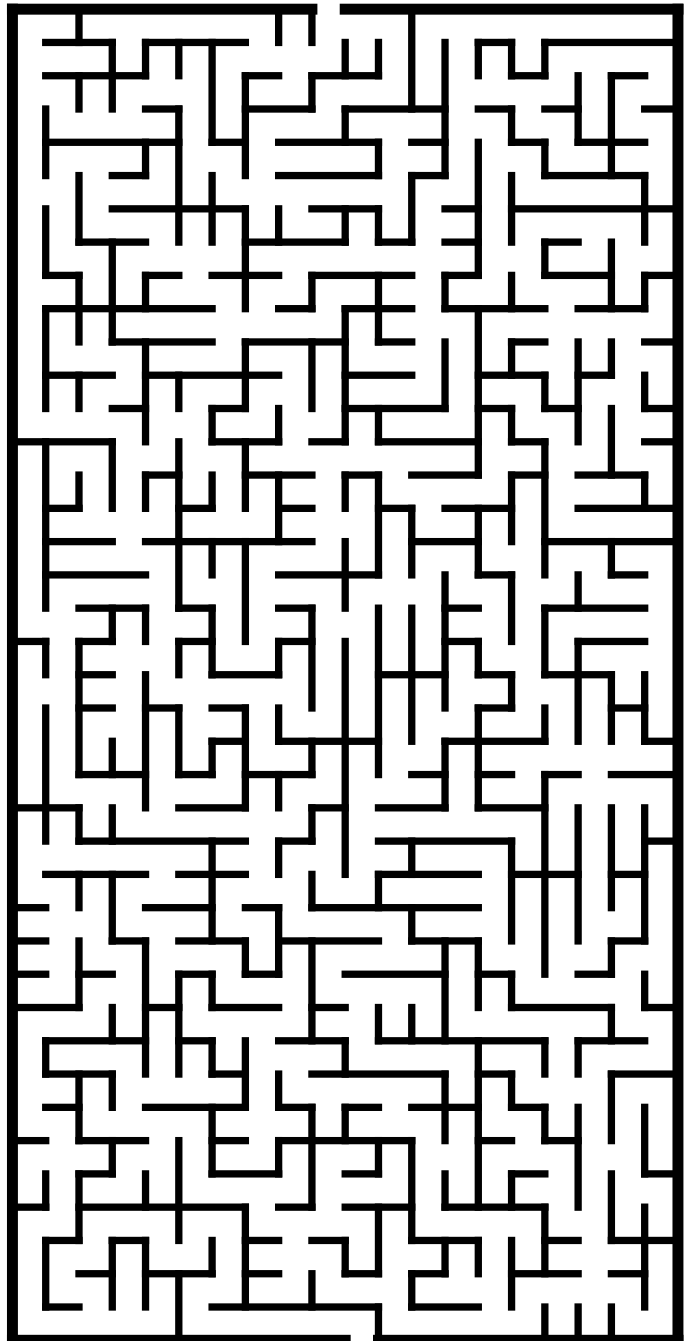
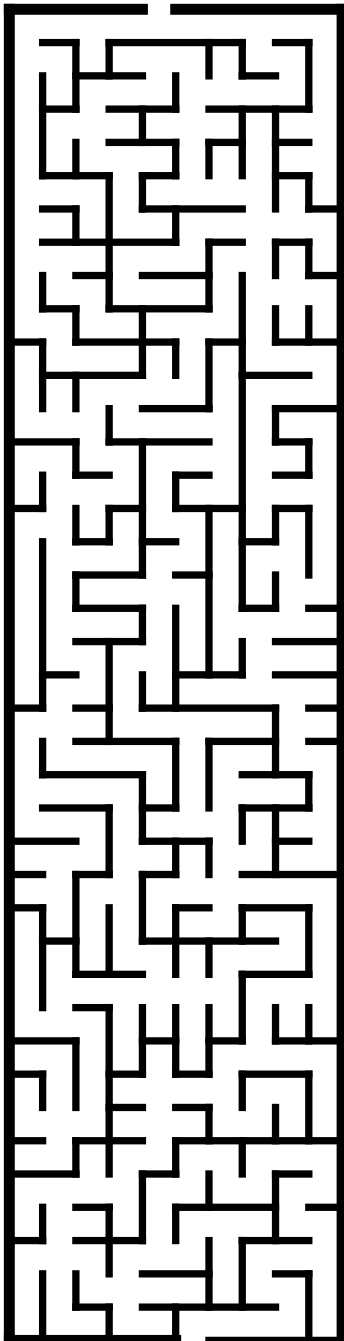
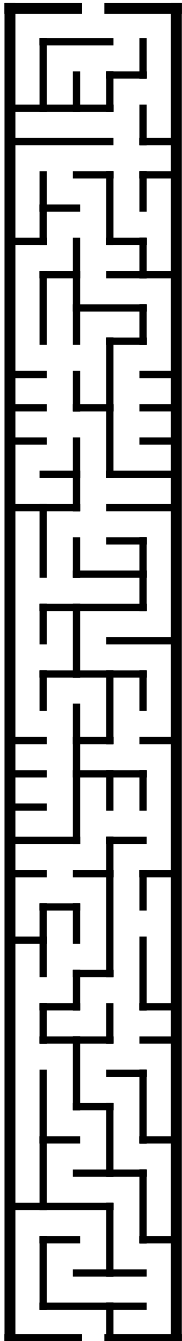
SkyTeam's iconic red SkyPriority signs guide you through airports across the globe with speed and ease. From priority check-in, boarding and baggage handling to priority lanes at ticket offices, transfer desks, security and immigration – it's all seamless. And it's all automatic for SkyTeam Elite Plus, First and Business Class travelers. Discover the services available for your next trip with the SkyPriority Finder on our app or [skyteam.com](https://www.skyteam.com)

Caring more about you™



SIMPLY AMAZING

WE'RE really testing your skills this month. There's an easy, medium and hard maze, for however much time you have to just take a break. Good luck and enjoy!



Business Publishing Group

*Connecting the industry via the most
comprehensive and respected journalism
and news coverage*

OFFICIAL MEDIA SPONSORS OF THE NATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARDS





Take your
customers way
beyond infinity.



JOIN TODAY AT

website
[www.expedia.com.au/
taap](http://www.expedia.com.au/taap)

telephone
1800 726 618

email
[expedia-au@
discovertheworld.com.au](mailto:expedia-au@discovertheworld.com.au)