

travelBulletin

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE AWARD WINNERS AT THE TRAVELLERS CHOICE 2016 ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS' CONFERENCE IN CANBERRA



WE'RE PROUD TO BE **ATAS** travel accredited

40 YEARS 1977 - 2017

TRAVELLERS CHOICE
A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE

THE LEADING NETWORK FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AGENTS

LEADING...**INNOVATION**

- Website solutions
- Social media support
- Email marketing
- eLearning library



LEADING...**REWARDS**

- 40 years of profits
- Record distributions
- Shareholding
- Low fees
- High returns



LEADING...**PEOPLE**

- National sales team
- Award-winning agents
- NTIA Best Travel Agency Group 2015



Call us or connect with us for a conversation

1800 246 331 | travellerschoice.com.au/agents | find us on LinkedIn

WE'RE
PROUD
TO BE

ATAS
travel accredited

40 YEARS
1977 - 2017

**TRAVELLERS
CHOICE**
A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE



travelBulletin

DECEMBER 2016/JANUARY 2017

USA

FOOD & WINE

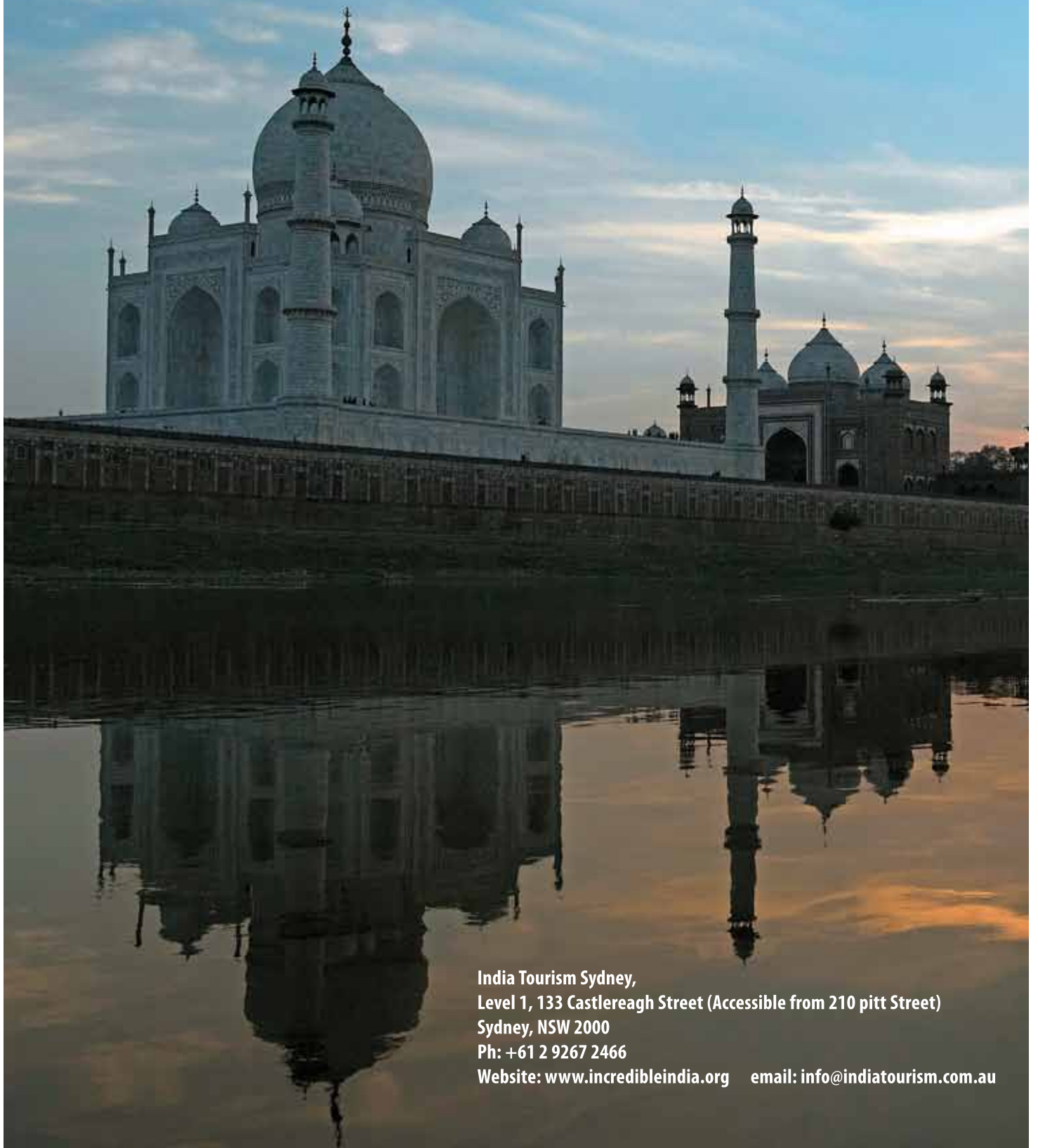
PHILIPPINES

AUSTRALIA

2016

THE GOOD
AND THE BAD
AND THE UGLY

Incredible India



India Tourism Sydney,
Level 1, 133 Castlereagh Street (Accessible from 210 Pitt Street)
Sydney, NSW 2000
Ph: +61 2 9267 2466
Website: www.incredibleindia.org email: info@indiatourism.com.au



FEATURES

- 34** USA
- 40** Food & Wine
- 46** Philippines
- 50** Australia

MONTHLY

- 02** State of the Industry
- 07** Issues and Trends
- 22** Technology
- 24** Business Events News
- 28** Cruise Report
- 32** Industry in Focus
- 53** Brochures
- 54** Last Word

COLUMNS

- 02** Ian McMahon
- 06** Steve Jones
- 08** AFTA View
- 10** ATEC View
- 31** CLIA View



From the publisher Bruce Piper

WHILE seemingly in a completely unrelated sector, the collapse of the Dick Smith Electronics chain earlier this year could have some intriguing ramifications for the travel industry. The high profile retailer, which ran outlets in shopping centres across the country, had a turnover (read TTV) of about \$1.3 billion when it went into voluntary administration, owing creditors a whopping \$260 million.

Reading the creditors' report is instructive, because it shows how much Dick Smith relied on "rebates" from suppliers – bonus payments based on purchase volumes. The rebates gave management an incentive to allegedly buy excess stock, because the revenue was recorded when items were received, rather than when they were actually on-sold to customers. In the end the extra stock had to be sold at a discount – but it was hoped the original rebate would cover the shortfall. That turned out not to be the case, and the business collapsed because it was actually selling items at below cost.

Sound familiar? The contractual arrangements between airlines and travel agents could lead to a similar situation. While agents receive base commission on many airfares, retail groups also negotiate "overrides" and "super-overrides" giving additional payments based on volume targets. As deadlines for achieving these targets approach it is becoming increasingly common for groups to discount prices below cost, in the hope they get to the sales figure required and make an overall profit.

The problem, of course, will occur if this strategy fails and the agent ends up losing money on a large number of tickets – just not quite a large enough number to reach the target and wipe out the losses. The proliferation of sites such as Skyscanner and Cheapflights, which allow easy comparisons of fares, seems to be a factor in driving them ever lower as OTAs search for market share by being just a little bit cheaper than their competitors. The agencies hope their overall result will be a profit because they will hit the targets, but it is potentially a slippery slope and contradicts the fundamental of business that you should always sell something for a higher price than you paid for it.

MEANWHILE in this issue we look back at 2016 which has seen some major developments in the industry. Next year I expect more big changes – particularly in the light of the increasing age of some key players. It will be fascinating to see this play out, with Helloworld's cunning acquisition of MTA having surely prompted thoughts among others about their exit – and perhaps in the process making way for the rise of the next generation of Australian travel entrepreneurs.

This month's contributors

Steve Jones, Brett Jardine, Jayson Westbury, Jon Murrie, Bonnie Tai, Nathalie Craig, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Christian Schweitzer, Jenny Piper, Guy Dundas, Peter Shelley, Brian Johnston, Sheriden Rhodes, Steve Jones.

travelBulletin

www.travelbulletin.com.au

Travel Bulletin is part of the
Travel Daily family of publications



EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
bruce.piper@travelbulletin.com.au

Managing Editor – Jon Murrie
Ph: 1300 799 220 or 02 8007 6760
jon.murrie@traveldaily.com.au

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

ART DIRECTION 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

SKIN IN THE GAME

IN THE cut and thrust of arguments about the business models of competing agency chains, a recurring refrain is that agents do not want – or should not want – to exert themselves to enrich the faceless, anonymous shareholders of public companies franchising their business.

One way of dealing with agent suspicions of faceless, anonymous shareholders is to make those agents shareholders too. Then they need only look in the mirror to see the face of a shareholder and to give a name to someone enriched by their exertions.

That will be part of the fallout for Helloworld agents who take advantage of the public company's planned giveaway of 786,000 shares. Subject to fairly standard escrow provisions plus some loyalty conditions, the scheme will be worth about \$3.3 million to agents on current share values.

Ultimately it could be worth a lot more than that, partly depending on how hard the agents work in the company's interests.

To appreciate this one only has to look at what happened after so many companies went public in the 1990s as their founders sought to realise the wealth they had accumulated in their businesses over the preceding decades.

For example agent members of Bob Steel's Travelscene, which took the option of becoming an unlisted public company, all received shares which translated into

lucrative cash payouts when the company was later taken over in the industry consolidation that ultimately resulted in the formation of JTG (now Helloworld). And those agents who took the option of acquiring additional shares did very well indeed.

Similarly Jetset agents who exercised entitlements to discounted shares when that company listed on the stock exchange initially saw share prices fall but were able to sell their shares to the Alysandratos family – still a major shareholder in Helloworld – for 0.25 cents, a substantial premium over what they had initially paid.

Employees, too, did well. Many Concorde executives who exercised share options as the company morphed into Transonic along the way to becoming part of Helloworld enjoy considerable wealth today.

The release of the "nil consideration" Helloworld shares to its agents has coincided with a co-investment scheme that will see the company buying into the businesses of qualifying franchisees. The company will buy 20-25% of their agencies in exchange for fully paid shares, leaving the running of the business in the agents' hands.

There is an old business dictum that individuals and companies perform better when they have "skin in the game". At Helloworld, both company and agents now have that.

USA blocks Qantas/American Airlines expanded alliance

QANTAS' vision to ramp up an alliance with American Airlines is facing a roadblock after the US Department of Transportation (DOT) flagged concerns the joint venture would harm competition on flights between the United States and Australia. As *travelBulletin* goes to print, Qantas and AA were busy preparing a response to the DOT's tentative decision to deny the expanded joint business and antitrust immunity (ATI) requested after it said the tighter-knit partnership was "likely to increase the already pronounced market concentration" with the combination having a 60%-plus market share.

"By combining the airline with the largest share of traffic in the US-Australasia market with the largest airline in the United States, the proposed alliance would reduce competition and consumer choice," the US regulator said, noting it had found the US-Australia market was about 16% more expensive than other international markets of similar distance and market density for US point-of-sale passengers. It also said Qantas commands a revenue premium over its rivals, charging an average of US\$1,271 on mainland USA to Australia flights, compared to that of United (US\$1,087), Delta (US\$862) and Virgin Australia (US\$824). "We tentatively find that the proposed alliance would substantially reduce or eliminate competition at the network, country-pair, and city-pair levels," the US transport watchdog concluded.

Corporate consolidation

TRAVEL management company CT Connections has purchased Executive Edge

BUSINESS MONITOR

OUTBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, September 2016

Destination	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Aug 16/ Sep 16	Trend Sep 15/ Sep 16
	000	000	000	%	%
USA	87.4	85.8	117.0	-0.3	+1.9
New Zealand	111.7	112.3	116.8	+1.0	+5.0
Indonesia	102.7	96.9	114.3	-2.1	+11.2
UK	47.4	47.3	61.3	-0.1	-8.4
China	36.2	36.1	49.0	-0.8	+1.8
Thailand	43.2	40.7	44.6	-2.3	-7.8
Singapore	32.6	32.8	38.5	+0.5	+5.5
Fiji	28.6	29.9	37.4	+0.8	-2.1
Japan	29.8	30.4	35.0	-0.3	+9.4
Italy	16.7	16.9	34.6	+1.4	+7.1
All outbound	826.7	822.6	957.1	-0.1	+4.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

INBOUND MARKET

Top 10 sources, September 2016

Source	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Aug 16/ Sep 16	Trend Sep 15/ Sep 16
	000	000	000	%	%
New Zealand	115.6	119.5	134.7	+0.6	+5.2
China	99.9	99.8	81.9	-0.9	+7.8
USA	62.8	62.4	46.9	+1.3	+22.0
UK	59.4	58.7	43.9	+0.0	+3.5
Malaysia	34.6	35.5	40.7	+1.8	+20.3
Singapore	38.7	40.4	39.4	+0.0	+12.4
Japan	34.2	34.7	33.9	+0.0	+18.3
South Korea	24.6	25.4	22.2	+1.5	+29.2
India	22.7	22.8	19.5	+1.2	18.6
Germany	16.4	16.5	15.6	+0.1	+2.9
All inbound	702.5	709.7	647.2	+0.4	+11.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs at September 2016

City pair	Passengers YE Sep 15 (000)	Passengers YE Sep 16 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	8,532.2	8,866.1	+3.9
Brisbane-Sydney	4,432.8	4,645.8	+4.8
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,338.4	3,478.6	+4.2
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,602.4	2,713.6	+4.3
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,293.7	2,378.1	+3.7
Melbourne-Perth	2,136.9	2,093.6	-2.0
Gold Coast-Melbourne	1,789.3	1,931.3	+7.9
Adelaide-Sydney	1,822.0	1,873.6	+2.8
Perth-Sydney	1,773.9	1,759.4	-0.8
Hobart-Melbourne	1,468.7	1,540.0	+4.9

Source: BITRE

Travel, with the two companies merging to create what is being billed as “one of Australia’s largest independently owned travel groups”. The combined CT Partners members boast 110 staff across Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, with the business also incorporating CT Connections’ MICE-focused Totem Group. CT Connections director Gary Reichenberg said the group’s bigger buying power thanks to the three combined brands would deliver “enhanced value and service for clients”. Executive Edge will gain access to thousands more CT Connections corporate clients, while CT customers will benefit from Executive Edge’s key partnerships including Virtuoso, Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental and Peninsula.

In other corporate news the Global Business Travel Association has once again set its sights on the Australasian market, after withdrawing some years ago. GBTA will host a conference in May next year in partnership with btTB, and will also form a regional Advisory Board to “act as a voice for travel buyers”. The initiative will see GBTA once again going head to head with the rival Association of Corporate Travel Executives, which has gone from strength to strength locally via a partnership with CAPA Centre for Aviation since GBTA’s withdrawal in 2014.

Webjet sells Zuji

WEBJET has made a \$26 million profit on the sale of its Asia-focused bookings business Zuji to subsidiaries of Hong Kong-travel technology group, Uriel Aviation Holding Limited last month. Shares in Webjet jumped after the \$56 million sale, which was almost double the \$30 million paid for Zuji by Webjet back in March 2013. At the same time as announcing the sale Webjet CEO John Guccic

said the company remained committed to expanding its presence in Asia through B2B hotels, announcing the launch of new start-up FIT Ruums which extends the firm’s WebBeds hotel wholesaling division across key Asian markets – in particular China through a major strategic alliance with Dida Travel Technology.

Guccic highlighted the massive potential of the B2B hotel sector which has also seen offshoot Sunhotels enter into a major

strategic partnership with UK-based Thomas Cook Group. Webjet has a vision to capitalise on the growth in FIT travel, via a combination of direct contracts and partnerships with local DMCs with technology to facilitate connections to XML clients, retail agencies and other wholesalers. WebBeds overall is forecasting in excess of \$450 million in TTV this financial year, with a profit contribution of more than \$11 million.

CATO AGM A SUCCESS

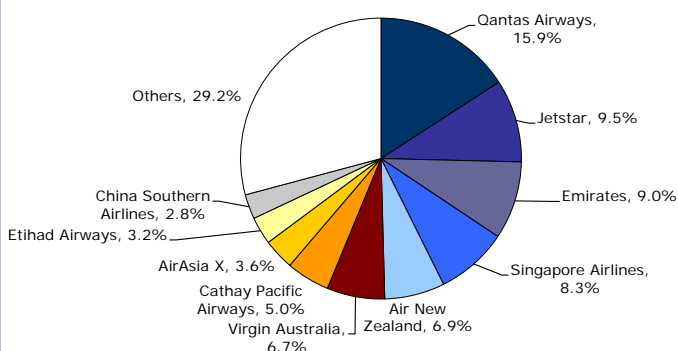


THE Council of Australian Tour Operators held its annual general meeting in Sydney late last month, with the event also including a presentation from *travelBulletin* publisher Bruce Piper. During the AGM, Fred Esteban from Gow-Gates Insurance Brokers unveiled a CATO member exclusive – a new insurance policy providing crisis management cover with an annual premium of \$275 for operators with a turnover of \$15 million or less, or \$500 for larger CATO members. Members were also given a sneak peek at the new agent-focused CATO website which will help consultants navigate their way through the huge array of product available through CATO members. **Pictured** at the event are, from left: Rebecca Fleming, Gow-Gates; Simla Sooboodoo from Hands-On Journeys; CATO chairman Dennis Bunnik of Bunnik Tours; Jo Tralaggan from AFTA; and Teighan Carr from Gow-Gates.

BUSINESS MONITOR

INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended August 2016



Source: BITRE

DOMESTIC AIR MARKET – September 2016

	Sep 15	Sep 16	Growth (%)	Yr to Sep 15	Yr to Sep 16	Growth (%)
Total pax carried	4.90m	5.06m	+3.2	57.33m	58.69m	+2.4
Revenue pax kms (RPK)	5.81bn	6.00bn	+3.2	67.62bn	69.09bn	+2.2
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.56bn	7.64bn	+1.0	88.45bn	88.93bn	+0.5
Load factor (%)	76.9	78.6	+1.6*	76.5	77.7	+1.2*
Aircraft trips (000)	54.0	54.6	+1.1	633.8	638.1	+0.7

Source: BITRE * Percentage points difference

DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE – Oct 2016

	Arrivals on Time		Departures on Time		Cancellations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jetstar	5,377	72.4	5,163	69.5	176	2.3
Qantas	7,763	83.2	7,867	84.6	136	1.4
QantasLink	8,758	84.5	8,871	85.6	303	2.8
REX	5,352	84.0	5,542	86.9	30	0.5
Virgin Australia	10,414	84.3	10,785	87.3	202	1.6
All Airlines	40,084	82.0	40,741	83.4	889	1.8

Source: BITRE

Hans Belle to AAT Kings

THE Travel Corporation has appointed Sabre veteran Hans Belle as the new managing director of AAT Kings, Inspiring Journeys and Aussie Adventures. Taking up the role in January, Belle takes the position vacated by Anthony Hayes, who resigned in September to take up a new role as CEO of Fantasea Cruises. Belle joins TTC after two decades with Sabre Pacific and Sabre Holdings, including time as vice president and general manager Asia Pacific. However his experience is not only related to technology – before joining Sabre he was involved with Australian ski operator The Alpine Group meaning he is familiar with the domestic tourism landscape as well as having extensive expertise in sales and marketing.

TTC CEO Australia John Veitch said Belle's appointment followed an extensive search. "With three decades of travel industry experience, Hans demonstrated excellent credentials for this role with his exceptional leadership skills, strong international expertise and impressive commercial abilities". Belle added that he was delighted to be joining TTC, saying he was looking forward to "working closely with the global AAT Kings team and our valued network of industry partners on a variety of innovative strategies to ensure we continue to represent the very best that Australia and New Zealand have to offer".

New Jet Airways gsa

CVFR Travel Group sealed a coup last month when it was appointed the new Australian and New Zealand general sales agent (passenger) for Indian carrier Jet Airways. The representation will be undertaken by CVFR offshoot Airline Rep Services, which also

counts Malindo Airways as a key client. It's the end of an era for Jet Airways' former gsa, Helloworld's World Aviation Services which has represented the Indian airline since 1993 – almost a quarter of a century. Jet Airways senior VP of sales and marketing, Colin Neubronner, said traffic to India continues to grow rapidly. "Together with our codeshare partner, Qantas, we will re-establish Jet Airways as the airline of choice for travellers flying to India," he promised.

CVFR group managing director Ram Chhabra said he was honoured to be appointed to represent Jet Airways, which he described as "the premium airline of India". Through its partnership with Qantas Jet Airways offers seamless connectivity over Singapore from all major cities in Australia and New Zealand. "We look forward to working with our trade partners in taking Jet Airways to the next level in Australia and New Zealand," commented Airline Rep Services general manager, Roheena Gidwani. Effective 06 December the new Jet Airways number for reservations and sales in Australia is 1300 889 195.

Express Tasman alliance

EXPRESS Travel Group late last month announced a new "strategic partnership" with New Zealand's First Travel Group – the network of independent agencies which saw its numbers significantly boosted earlier this year by a mass movement of former Helloworld members who were part of the disaffected United Travel network. Express CEO Tom Manwaring described the alliance as a "meeting of very similar minds," with both groups owner-operated and having "very close values and business goals which can be garnered to produce real benefits for our

agency members, suppliers, customers and staff". The wide-ranging agreement covers a range of objectives which could see the development of exclusive products, revenue growth opportunities, innovation through technology development and operational process benefits, Manwaring said.

First Travel Group is headed up by Andrew Bowman, who is also vice-president of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand. The organisation operates a number of brands including YOU Travel, First Fares and Lifestyle Holidays. It's also a member of the Virtuoso Travel group, with Bowman saying the alliance with Express "allows for a joint focus on creating customer value whilst maintaining independence and local market flavour". First Travel Group's 65-plus members last year transacted a collective volume in excess of NZ\$500 million.

itravel 'link' affiliate program

STEVE Labroski's itravel network reached the next stage of evolution last month when he formally debuted a new affiliate program. Dubbed 'link' the initiative aims to enable independent agents to take advantage of the buying power of the overall itravel group, which Labroski first established in 2008 and now comprises over 100 consultants nationwide in 18 stores, with a TTV of more than \$100 million. Labroski said key differentiators for itravel are its "sharing of overrides and transparency," with the fledgling link brand the next step in its growth. Agents are able to sign up on one year contracts, he said. "We are really trying to make it as easy as possible for people to



BUSINESS MONITOR

INTERNET AGENCY MARKET SHARES

October 2016, compared with September 2016

Rank	Position	Visits Share	Relative Diff	Rank
Website	Oct 16	Oct to Sep	Sep 16	
Webjet Australia	16.36	-1.29	1	
Expedia Australia	10.32	-2.55	2	
Wotif.com	8.91	-5.67	3	
Skyscanner Australia	8.48	+5.16	5	
Flight Centre	6.99	-3.16	4	
Velocity Frequent Flyer	3.75	+27.58	7	
Luxury Escapes	2.75	-2.12	*	
Lastminute.com.au	2.69	-3.94	6	
Cheap Flights Aus & NZ	1.90	-0.67	9	
FareCompare	1.13	+3.04	*	

Source: Hitwise, a division of Connexity

INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs (at August 2016)

City pair	Passengers	Passengers	% of	% change
	YE Aug 15	YE Aug 16	total	15/16
Auckland-Sydney	1,515,860	1,591,268	4.3	+5.0
Singapore-Sydney	1,414,901	1,472,178	4.0	+4.0
Singapore-Melbourne	1,178,525	1,325,702	3.6	+12.5
Auckland-Melbourne	1,117,742	1,169,967	3.2	+4.7
Singapore-Perth	1,021,678	1,127,883	3.1	+10.4
Hong Kong-Sydney	938,483	1,065,749	2.9	+13.6
Auckland-Brisbane	958,270	961,450	2.6	+0.3
Los Angeles-Sydney	904,049	919,196	2.5	+1.7
Denpasar-Perth	904,687	869,800	2.4	-3.9
Kuala Lumpur-Melb	852,377	803,605	2.2	-5.7
Top 10 city pairs	10,806,572	11,306,798	30.8	+4.6
Other city pairs	23,316,944	25,426,760	69.2	+9.0
ALL CITY PAIRS	34,123,516	36,733,558	100.0	+7.6

Source: BITRE

SHARE PRICES

at 23 November 2016

Flight Centre (FLT)	\$31.555
Helloworld (HLO)	\$4.20
Webjet (WEB)	\$10.39
Qantas (QAN)	\$3.235
Virgin Australia (VAH)	\$0.23
Ardent Leisure (AAD)	\$2.085
Air New Zealand (AIZ)	\$1.925
Auckland International Airport (AIA)	\$5.92
Sydney Airport (SYD)	\$6.25
Corporate Travel Management (CTD)	\$17.62
Cover-More Insurance (CVO)	\$1.26
Regional Express (REX)	\$0.81
Sealink (SLK)	\$4.15
Mantra Group Limited (MTR)	\$3.17

ATOUT FRANCE HONOURS REMEMBRANCE DAY



ATOUT France hosted an exclusive event at Sydney's Sofitel Wentworth Hotel last month, welcoming French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, Marc Todeschini to formally launch the Sir John Monash Centre. Currently under construction near Villers-Bretonneux in France, the centre is set to be a significant tourist drawcard for Australians, promising to "educate a new audience about Australia's early role in international affairs". The Sir John Monash Centre is scheduled to be open by Anzac Day in 2018, and will become the central hub of the existing Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front which links First World War sites of significance including museums, battlefields, memorials and cemeteries. Pictured at the event are, from left: Atout France director Australia, Patrick Benhamou; French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, Marc Todeschini; former Australian Defence Minister and director of the Australian War Memorial, Brendan Nelson; Christophe Lecourtier, French ambassador to Australia; Jean-Robert Lopez, Chef de cabinet and Nicolas Croizer, Consul General of France to Australia.

look at what else is out there in the market."

Labroski told *travelBulletin* he's currently targeting the addition of up to 30 new link members to complement his existing business, with a ceiling of about 100.

However "we don't just want numbers... it's about finding the right individuals to fit our model that we can work with to grow their business and in turn increase our buying strength," he said.

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 21 Oct** MTA sells 50% stake to HLO
- 21 Oct** IHG plots EVEN Aus entry
- 21 Oct** HLO to buy into franchisee businesses
- 24 Oct** Bicton Travel joins Express
- 24 Oct** Helloworld \$30m success
- 25 Oct** QF readying for LHR direct?
- 25 Oct** Aussie Fiji visits plummet
- 26 Oct** FC's biggest store opens
- 26 Oct** Qantas calls in Deliveroo
- 27 Oct** Qantas unveils 787 cabin
- 27 Oct** AFTA battles on all fronts
- 28 Oct** Spirit's 2018 return to Oz
- 28 Oct** QF excess bag fees rise
- 31 Oct** Cunard Europe sales soar
- 31 Oct** QF tips H1 profit decrease
- 01 Nov** Bots minor entry changes
- 01 Nov** CTM affirms \$90m profit
- 02 Nov** itravel affiliate program
- 02 Nov** Virgin \$34.6m loss in Q1
- 03 Nov** Marriott 'Pacific 50' goal
- 03 Nov** New QFFF status choice
- 04 Nov** FCTG forecasts \$20b TTV
- 04 Nov** Cruise1st push for trade
- 07 Nov** Luxury Escapes TV show
- 07 Nov** QF fires up on PNG route
- 08 Nov** Webjet payments move
- 08 Nov** ABC airline travel tender
- 09 Nov** HLO bonus scheme open
- 09 Nov** AVIS' 20th scholar named
- 09 Nov** Webjet sells Zuji HK and Singapore
- 10 Nov** FCTG low-cost sales solid
- 10 Nov** Outrigger take-over plan
- 11 Nov** italktravel cash dividend
- 11 Nov** Webjet FIT Ruums debut
- 14 Nov** Express TTV surges 18%
- 14 Nov** QF trialling agent rewards
- 15 Nov** CT buys Executive Edge
- 15 Nov** OTA duopoly 'detrimental'
- 16 Nov** APT corporate branding
- 16 Nov** TNZ: Don't cancel visits
- 17 Nov** TTC names new AAT chief
- 17 Nov** Virgin expecting growth

AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

International passenger through Australia's major international airports - August 2016

Airport	Passengers YE Aug 15	Passengers YE Aug 16	% of total	% change 16/15
Sydney	13,621,997	14,766,301	40.2	+8.4
Melbourne	8,533,080	9,422,109	25.6	+10.4
Brisbane	5,164,625	5,359,217	14.6	+3.8
Perth	4,191,410	4,294,064	11.7	+2.4
Gold Coast	894,286	1,059,775	2.9	+18.5
Adelaide	904,945	879,004	2.4	-2.9
Cairns	506,335	616,335	1.7	+21.7
Darwin	281,476	262,538	0.7	-6.7
Townsville [^]	n/a	37,885	0.1	n/a
Sunshine Coast*	11,300	17,111	0.0	+51.4
Norfolk Island	11,552	10,556	0.0	-8.6
Port Hedland~	2,510	8,663	0.0	245.1
All Airports	34,123,516	36,733,558	100.0	+7.6

[^] Operated scheduled service from Jul 2012 to Sept 2012, June 2013 to Oct 2013 and Jun 2014 to Oct 2014. ~Scheduled services recommenced Apr 2015. *Scheduled services recommenced Sept 2015.

ATAS ACCREDITED LOCATIONS

at 24 November 2016

New South Wales	989
Victoria	704
Queensland	592
Western Australia	293
South Australia	228
Australian Capital Territory	49
Tasmania	41
Northern Territory	22
TOTAL	2,932

Got something to say?

We're all ears, so share your thoughts at:

haveyoursay@travelbulletin.com.au



Steve Jones' Say

SO WHO SAW THAT COMING?

HELLOWORLD'S acquisition of 50% of Mobile Travel Agents took many by surprise.

Sure, Andrew Burnes appears to be getting the business into better shape after years of upheaval and neglect, but hitting the acquisition trail was somewhat unexpected.

The deal to buy 50% of MTA for \$14m, money provided via a \$30m capital raising, will see Helloworld enter the home-based market, widely regarded as a growth sector of travel retailing.

But was it a shrewd investment? There is no reason to suggest otherwise.

MTA financials certainly look strong. Total transactional value has risen from \$103m in 2013 to almost \$170m this year, with gross profit up from \$5m to \$8.5m over the same period. While the rate of earnings growth did slow from 35% to 25% over the past year – still very healthy growth it should be said – MTA is clearly in robust shape.

That in no small part is down to its

owners, Roy and Karen Merricks, who have spent the best part of 25 years building the home-based network into what it is today.

They have been responsible for both its growth and its culture. And home-grown, family-owned businesses have a culture of their own, which is why it was so important the Merricks remained at the MTA helm.

That may change in five years should Helloworld exercise its option to acquire the remaining 50% of MTA. But for now, the Merricks, and chief executive Don Beattie, continue to run the ship, and for that, MTA's 350 members will be relieved. In the same way footballers 'run through walls' for a coach they respect, so in business staff pull out the stops if they believe in the management and the strategy.

The importance of the Merricks to MTA and its members is not meant as a criticism of Helloworld management, or their ability to grow the network.

But over the years, I have covered the acquisition of many independent and family-run businesses which, despite protestations that it would not happen, lost their entrepreneurial spirit and culture the moment the founders departed.

Business owners can often be the heartbeat of an organisation, so locking them in for as long as possible after an acquisition is often critically important.

For Helloworld, the MTA deal was one of a series of interesting developments.

Key to restoring stability and generating confidence at Helloworld has been reconnecting with agents and bringing them along for the ride. And notwithstanding the recent loss of Bicton Travel, Burnes has achieved that through a canny offer to make every Helloworld franchisee a shareholder.

People want to feel part of something, no matter what it is, so giving agents 'skin in the game' was an astute move.

ICELAND

don't compromise - book with a true Nordic specialist

50° NORTH
NORDIC | DESTINATION SPECIALIST
www.fiftydegreesnorth.com
1300 422 821

Best of Iceland - 12 days self drive
"a premium itinerary"

credit: Moyan Brenn





INDEPENDENT TRAVEL GROUP “IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME”

THE Independent Travel Group Business Forum, which took place in San Francisco last month, saw delegates in the USA at an historic moment, with the group arriving just as Hillary Clinton conceded defeat to President-elect Donald Trump after the bitter US election battle which has fascinated the world. The conference took place at San Francisco's W Hotel, and delegates soaked up the post-election atmosphere as shell-shocked Californians – most of them Clinton supporters – contemplated with dismay the next four years of a Trump presidency.

The serendipitous timing and location of the ITG Business Forum complemented a theme in the opening address by Express Travel Group CEO Tom Manwaring. He urged members to look at the big picture, with outbound travel numbers from Australia continuing to rise. “We’re in a growth industry, with plenty of blue skies in travel,” he said. “We are in the right place at the right time – the future is up to us to grab”. Manwaring highlighted the group's performance over the last year, with 38 new members joining and TTV up 18%. ITG has expanded from just 17 members in 2010 to now comprise a total of 268 agencies, while Express Travel Group's multi-brand strategy which incorporates the Asia-focused Select Travel Group, ITG and italktravel now totals 662 members, making it the “largest independent travel group in Australia by a country mile,” Manwaring said.

Members of the italktravel franchise group also took part in a special closed-door owners session at Sausalito where they were

delighted to hear they would receive a cash dividend after the division recorded a profit after only its second full year of operation. Manwaring told *travelBulletin* the structure of the italktravel franchise model means members each hold a “fully transparent stake” in the brand's operating company and therefore receive a portion of the profits. During his address he also highlighted ITG's Book Safe Agent insurance policy which member Max Najjar from Axis Travel in Adelaide commented was a key competitive advantage for members.

As well as keynote presentations and a supplier product market, the conference included plenty of opportunities for networking. A highlight was a social

‘ITG has expanded from just 17 members in 2010 to now comprise a total of 268 agencies, while Express Travel Group's multi-brand strategy which incorporates the Asia-focused Select Travel Group, ITG and italktravel now totals 662 members’

event on the first evening at the nearby AT&T Park, the baseball field home of the San Francisco Giants. The ITG delegates were treated to a VIP experience at the venue sponsored by The Travel Corporation, including guided tours which took in the player changing rooms, a host of memorabilia including three World Series trophies and a visit to the on-field dugout. The following day attendees were treated to a presentation from Karen Jacobsen – also known as ‘The GPS Girl’ – a New York-based Australian who sounds strangely familiar, because she is the voice of Apple's Siri electronic personal assistant. The conference wrapped up with a gala dinner – courtesy of major sponsor Qantas – which saw top achieving members from both ITG and italktravel showcased for their performance, with a range of state-based categories as well as awards for sales of preferred cruising and touring product.

The growth of ITG has certainly diversified the operations of the Express Travel Group overall, with the USA and UK among the top destinations sold by the Independent Travel Group members – in contrast to the heavy Asia emphasis of the Select Travel Group. It has also significantly expanded the range of product sold by the group, with a host of preferred suppliers including cruise lines, wholesalers and tour operators strongly supporting the conference. But Manwaring is definitely not resting on his laurels, with a vision to grow his group further. He urged attendees to keep their eyes on the big picture, concluding his presentation with “it's a marathon, not a sprint”.

NORTHERN LIGHTS DIMMING NO BIGGIE

DESPITE coming to the end of a solar cycle, the Northern Lights are not about to pack up and disappear.

"If you are speaking to the locals, and I am one of them, I grew up with the Northern Lights, the cycles aren't really that significant in regards to seeing the lights," explains Tietse Stelma, CEO & co-founder of specialist tour operator 50 Degrees North.

"Of course you do see more activity in certain years, but if you wanted to go see the Northern Lights in the next five or six years then there's plenty of opportunities to see them, you just need to have a well-designed tour and make sure that you know the weather patterns of the region."

The Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis, goes through a brightness and dimness cycle dependent on the activity of the sun. It has been suggested the cycle is now moving into a "solar minimum", where less activity means less Northern Light activity.

But Stelma assures it will still be possible to find the lights – with the right direction.

"I think it's important that you speak to someone that really knows what they're talking about," he says.

"If you know the weather patterns and know how to design a good trip by combining coastal climate and inland climate then you get a much better chance of maximising your chances to see the lights."

He recommends spending at least five or six nights in the region to have a "good chance".

The Northern Lights aren't the only reason visitors are flocking to the far north, with the northern Norwegian Coast, Lofoten Island and of course, Iceland, particularly popular - sometimes to the point of saturation.

"We're trying to avoid people going in the peak season, July-August, particularly during the European holidays and look, it's still a beautiful destination but I'd recommend to try to stay away from European holidays," he advises.

Stelma predicts visitors will spread to some of the islands in the North Atlantic, aside from Iceland.

"The Faroe Islands are fantastic, they are really undersold and again a beautiful destination, beautiful islands," he says.

"I also think that large parts of the Norwegian coast and countryside, Finland and Sweden is again very undersold, there's so much wilderness and nature in those regions so it is easy to create really beautiful itineraries, but only if you know the region quite well," Stelma adds.



AFTA VIEW

Jayson Westbury, chief executive AFTA

LOOKING BACK

THE year behind us has been a year of commentary and change. While it did bring several dreadful terrorism events like Paris, Brussels and Turkey, the impact upon travel and travel intent was more influenced by commentary around political situations.

The terrible events in Europe had some impact for the immediate period afterwards, as has happened in the past, but don't appear to have had lasting impacts on Australians' decisions to travel to Europe. This shows to some degree that the world is becoming resilient to these types of tragic events and that people seem to move on quickly.

It was also an Olympic year with the XXXI Olympiad held in Rio, Brazil. From all reports the Games were delivered very successfully and without any significant events that impacted on them. The Olympics did not attract as many

Australians as past games and for the Australian Olympic Team it wasn't perhaps our best on record, but the 2016 Rio Olympics were a success nonetheless.

We also had a Federal election in 2016 which resulted in a nail-biting finish for Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Then there was Brexit and the rise of President-elect Donald Trump.

These political events have had more impact on the travel industry, or at least according to the consumer media they have.

All of these events and changes have meant that consumer confidence has been lagging and, with this lag, the decision by many to travel has been postponed or deferred during the year. This meant the industry has had a patchy year with highs and lows along the way, certainly not our best year on record.

But with all that said, 2016 has still delivered some outstanding results. As a metric of a good travel year, Qantas posted a record profit which shows that if the national carrier is having a good year the industry should also have a good year.

It really does depend on where within the industry a business is as to what sort of 2016 they might have had. Having been in attendance at almost all of the group conferences this year, the message from members is also mixed. Some have had a great year and others an average year.

The one thing that is certain is that travel agents remain relevant and continue to be relevant to consumers and suppliers alike.

For AFTA and ATAS, we have had a terrific year with continued strong support for ATAS accreditation. Plus, we had our biggest NTIA ever with more categories and strong support from sponsors which delivered an outstanding event for the industry.

Looking forward to 2017, I believe that the settings are in place for it to be a very good year for travel and I hope that, wherever you are in the travel value chain, next year is an improvement on the past.

‘...the industry has had a patchy year with highs and lows along the way, certainly not our best year on record’

Lufthansa Mixed Economy & Business Class

Start your customer's journey in Economy class on our partner airlines between Australia and Asia, Africa, North or South America and enjoy the comfort of flat beds in Business class on all long haul flights to Frankfurt or Munich and on to over 170 destinations in Europe.

Fares from
\$3730*

Nonstop
you

eXperts



Lufthansa Business Class

New LATAM domestic travel model

A 'PAY for what you want' fare structure will be phased in across LATAM Airlines Group's domestic services in the six Latin American countries it operates, starting H1 of 2017.

The new travel model has been designed to "respond to changes and high growth in the global aviation industry, modern passenger needs and the development of the digital experience in all aspects of travel".

LATAM says the structure will reduce fares by as much as 20%.

CEO Enrique Cueto said "The new travel model seeks to satisfy the needs of today's passengers, who value fast, convenient and seamless travel, as well as the ability to manage and personalise their travel experience, only paying for the services they require".

Under the revamped fare structure, customers will be able to choose fares based on their journey type and additional services they require, such as hand luggage at no surcharge, a wider range of on-board food, seat selection and options to change or cancel tickets.

"With more options, the new model aims to make fares clearer and more personalised," LATAM said.



IT'S been a busy end of the year at Quest Apartment Hotels with five new properties coming online in Griffith (NSW), Port Adelaide (SA), Dandenong (Vic), Fremantle (WA) and Macquarie Park (NSW).

Speaking at the opening of Quest Port Adelaide in late November, chief executive officer Zed Sanjana said the 103 room property, located near the iconic Fisherman's Wharf Markets and Birkenhead Bridge was part of the city's largest major development in 45 years.

Coinciding with the debut of Quest Port Adelaide, the company broke ground on two further projects - Quest Springfield at Wellness Way in Queensland and Quest 478 St Kilda Road in the Victorian capital.

"Quest continues its commitment to provide adaptable, premium accommodation options where our core customer - the extended stay business traveller - needs to be, in CBD, suburban or regional locations."

At the sod turning of Quest Springfield, from left are Michael Sutherland; developer, Maha Sinnathambay; Ipswich Mayor, Paul Pisasale; Quest Apartment Hotels GM - Growth, James Shields; director Kane Construction, David Rutter; and Chris Mattes, head of commercial development.



ATEC VIEW

Peter Shelley, managing director ATEC

THE RESILIENCY OF TRAVEL

WHILE we seem to live in a world of volatility, where headlines continuously talk of violence, economic and political disruption, social dislocation and personal security threats, the global desire for travel remains unabated.

Rather than hide away from the challenges of an integrated global environment, people are travelling at unprecedented levels and international leisure travel is now seen as a modern life necessity rather than the luxury it once was.

In its latest *Global Travel & Tourism, Global Impact Update*, the World Travel & Tourism Council predicts the travel and tourism sector will remain resilient and continue to grow at a faster rate than the wider global economy.

In particular, our South East Asia region will lead this growth through to 2020 and, while China will continue to be a regional powerhouse of travel growth, India is forecast to become the fastest growing travel and tourism economy closely followed by Vietnam and Indonesia.

While Australia is in the box seat to gain much from this growth, providing a nearby 'western' destination with highly desirable natural assets, our Federal Government still fails to recognise the enormity of our contribution and potential.

As we watch the jobs of the past, in the mining and manufacturing businesses across the country, close up or move off-shore, Australia's economic health will increasingly depend on new sectors and our ability to connect to the demand of new and emerging markets.

It is estimated that Asian airlines and their increasing passenger numbers are driving global aviation markets with our region, accounting for up to half of the total annual increase in air traffic by 2020. This increase is being driven by the expansion of low-cost airlines - with Asian budget airlines now accounting for around one-third of the global low-cost carrier passenger market.

We are also seeing a new generation of aircraft which will lead to an even greater - and much faster - connectivity beyond the Asian region with non-stop destinations bringing Europe and the US east coast much closer.

What is clear is that growth in international travel is strong, new markets are opening up thick and fast, and almost everyone wants to get on a plane and go somewhere new. And how we adapt to these new markets and deliver on their expectations is crucial to our success. ATEC believes we must address this challenge collectively, as an industry and with our government partners. There is an amazing opportunity here for every Australian and while the government and industry remain disconnected, in a push-me-pull-you relationship, we risk falling short of our potential.

‘Rather than hide away from the challenges of an integrated global environment, people are travelling at unprecedented levels’



Part of the Travellers Choice team at the Canberra Conference (from left): Justin Michael, general manager finance and administration; Nicola Strudwick, general manager sales; Christian Hunter, managing director; Trish Ridsdale, chairman; and Robyn Mitchell, general manager marketing.

TRAVELLERS CHOICE INCREASES RETURNS

TRAVELLERS Choice heads towards its 40th anniversary in 2017 with much to celebrate, and members seemed more than happy to start festivities early at the group's annual conference in Canberra recently.

Having announced its fourth consecutive record profit of \$2.1 million in 2015/16, the group was able to increase its average returns to members by 15%, giving them a tenfold return on their membership fees.

In all, 94% of the year's profits were returned to members, matching the average paid out over the past ten years.

"To give on average a ten-to-one return on members' investment, that's a really great story," Travellers Choice managing director Christian Hunter said.

"When we look at our philosophy of trying to return as much of our wealth back to members as possible, there's a really strong financial proposition there. I believe our value proposition is the best in the market place."

Hunter attributed the profit to a strong focus on preferred suppliers, with sales of preferred product increasing 9% during 2015/16.

"Despite the plethora of non-preferred product in the marketplace, our members demonstrate an enviable discipline in order to maximise our sales performance," he said.

"It's like a virtuous circle - it all begins with our members making a sale with a preferred supplier, and that obviously

delivers revenue to Travellers Choice that drives our profitability, and our profit goes back to our shareholders.

"Our difference is that our shareholders are our members, so any profit we distribute goes directly back to the travel agencies that make the sales. We don't have external shareholders and we don't have private

‘Our difference is that our shareholders are our members, so any profit we distribute goes directly back to the travel agencies... We don't have external shareholders and we don't have private equity - the only shareholders in the business are our members’

Christian Hunter, managing director
Travellers Choice

equity - the only shareholders in the business are our members."

In all, Travellers Choice now has about 150 members nationally, with Queensland holding the highest concentration, followed by NSW/ACT and Victoria.

The strong eastern presence contrasts sharply with the group's origins as a small buying cooperative in Western Australia, started by a handful of agencies in 1977. The group then rebranded as Travellers Choice in the late 1990s, coinciding with a concerted push into the national sphere.

The coming year will involve a series of events to mark the 40th anniversary, including the 2017 annual conference which will be held in Perth to honour the group's birthplace.

In the meantime, Travellers Choice is pushing ahead with a raft of service initiatives aimed at backing members' operations at the coalface.

Among them is a new digital marketing partnership struck with specialist agency Titan Digital, which will allow Travellers Choice to audit and upgrade its search engine optimisation efforts and online marketing campaigns, both at the group and agency level.

Titan will also assist in social media campaigns and help refine the group's overall digital marketing strategy.

Travellers Choice also used its recent conference to unveil an upgraded online member platform, TC Hub, with an expanded range of services.

The site has replaced the group's existing extranet and uses the same technology platform as the Site Builder facility used by many members for their consumer-facing websites, offering a new preferred supplier directory that allows members to easily search and compare product.

As well as a new look and design, its other features include details on corporate news, member services and links to the TC Excell e-learning library.

"We want it to be the Travellers Choice Google," Hunter said. "So if a member needs to know anything about the organisation - whether it's what's happening from a marketing perspective or information about conferences, or information about suppliers - they go to it as the first point of call."

Held at the National Convention Centre, the Canberra conference was also a platform to reward the group's top performing agencies, with more than 30 members honoured in bronze, silver and gold categories.

Speakers at the event included Google head of new business sales Jacki Wong, former Qantas executive manager of customer service Samantha Taranto, and Australia's world surfing champion Layne Beachley.

CATO'S FUTURE VISION

By Steve Jones

IT'S not often you hear a trade association vocally discouraging membership growth.

But on taking the reins at the Council of Australian Tour Operators a little under 18 months ago, Dennis Bunnik did just that.

"If you're a member of an industry association, that association has to provide value. If it doesn't there is really no purpose to it," he observed, before voicing his unconventional views on recruitment. "I said to tour operators who were not members of CATO that I did not want you to join until we give you a reason to join."

For years, CATO had operated in the manner of a social club where industry players gathered for a beer and an informal natter. Convivial as it was, and it certainly wasn't without merit, it lacked a meaningful vision or clear agenda.

Together with the committee and CATO's stalwart general manager Peter Baily, Bunnik set out to address those issues and drew up a three year strategic plan to bring professionalism and a sense of purpose to the organisation.

Now entering its second year, Bunnik told *travelBulletin* the plan was beginning to take effect, but stressed it remained a "work in progress".

"Those comments about not joining before we gave them a reason were made just after I became chairman and we were still going through the strategic planning process," Bunnik told *travelBulletin*. "Once we launched the new strategic plan it was important that we demonstrate our commitment to implementing it rather than starting with a recruitment drive.

"Our focus has therefore been on providing value to existing members rather than creating recruitment collateral."

The most recent initiative designed to provide value has seen the long overdue development of a new website. Hardly groundbreaking in an increasingly sophisticated digital age, you may think. But it represented a major step forward for CATO.

The site will deliver detailed information on each member, providing agents with a product reference point for the first time, and giving

operators greater exposure to their areas of product speciality.

"We want to move closer to the retail travel network and that involves providing easy access for agents to CATO members and giving members the ability to promote their product to the retail networks," Bunnik said.

"The website is the biggest development in that respect. Until now, there has not been a single source of knowledge, or database that consultants can refer to."

So if forging closer links with consultants is a key ambition, why not create a new class of membership within CATO for agents in the same way it has done for tourism bodies?

‘We need to identify what the broader issues are for our members, where the common links are and how as an association we can help fix those things’

Dennis Bunnik, chairman
Council of Australian Tour Operators

Furthermore, is there an argument to suggest CATO could replicate the UK's Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and establish a network of agents who specialise in selling CATO product?

In AITO's case, it developed AITO Specialist Travel Agents, with turnover now approaching £60m (A\$97m).

Bunnik dismissed any prospect of creating a parallel agency network in the AITO mould, arguing the structure of the market in Australia does not lend itself to such a model.

AITO and its agency arm were designed to combat the dominance of the vertically integrated giants – originally Thomson, Airtours, First Choice and Thomas Cook before they consolidated to two super-heavyweights in Tui and Thomas Cook – which controlled distribution and prevented independent wholesalers and operators from getting a look in.

Flight Centre aside, Australia's networks and franchises are largely a collection of independent agents which CATO members have open access to, Bunnik said.

"The retail consortiums negotiate preferred supplier deals with tour operators but as their travel agency members are independently owned they have the freedom to deal directly with non-preferred tour operators in line with their individual customer needs," Bunnik said. "It would potentially help a very small number of CATO members [if we created an agency arm] but it would duplicate what is already in place."

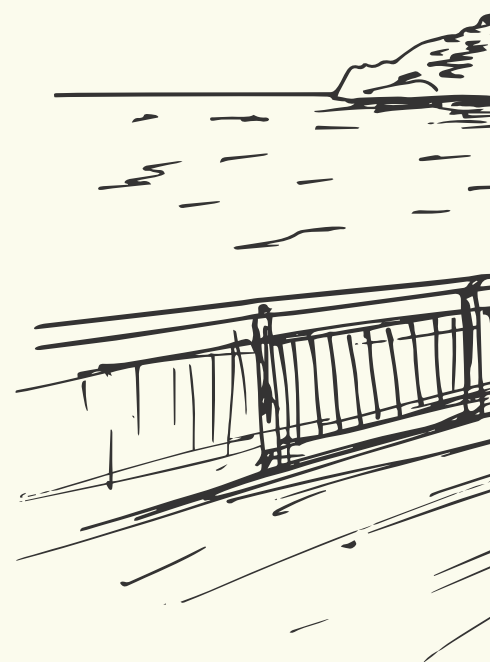
The potential for inviting select travel agents to become affiliate members of CATO was more of a possibility, he suggested, but far from a priority.

"It's probably something we could have a closer look at."

Along with the newly-launched website, two other objectives of CATO's strategic blueprint have been to educate members and to "engage" them.

While guest speakers have addressed CATO meetings on specific issues in the past, more structured forums are now taking place, and open for travel agents to attend.

The first, on crisis management, was held earlier this year with a focus on legal services



and insurance on the cards.

Smaller CATO members, meanwhile, will have access to legal and PR services on a user-pay system “to help them grow their business and increase professionalism.

“We need to identify what the broader issues are for our members, where the common links are and how as an association we can help fix those things,” Bunnik said. “Not everything we do is going to be beneficial for every member, but it’s giving CATO members the confidence to come and say ‘this is something we should be looking at as a collective’”.

One issue CATO is preparing to tackle concerns touring and the indifference with which consumers and the retail trade appear to greet the product.

A show of hands at a recent conference suggested two thirds of agents are selling less touring product than three years ago, a worrying, if not entirely scientific illustration of the challenge facing the sector.

Bunnik said he wants touring to replicate the extraordinary success cruising has

enjoyed, and that means wholesalers putting their competitive differences aside.

“I look at this as an opportunity and if CATO does not do it then who will?,” Bunnik asked. “We need a unified voice on some of the core benefits of touring. One company is not going to be able to do it on their own and I am confident CATO is the right forum for getting some of the touring guys to work together in some aspect.”

Among the problems, he said, was an outdated mindset of what touring represents with too many agents and consumers still believing it constitutes a “standard European coach tour”.

The reality is far different, he said, citing the rise of small group touring, food and gourmet, cycling, walking and immersive tours into regional areas.

“So the issue is not a product one,” Bunnik said. “Just as cruising has done, we need to make people understand there are tours for every traveller.”

It is orchestrating crusades like this which Bunnik hopes will demonstrate the value

CATO can bring – and provide prospective members with that reason to join.

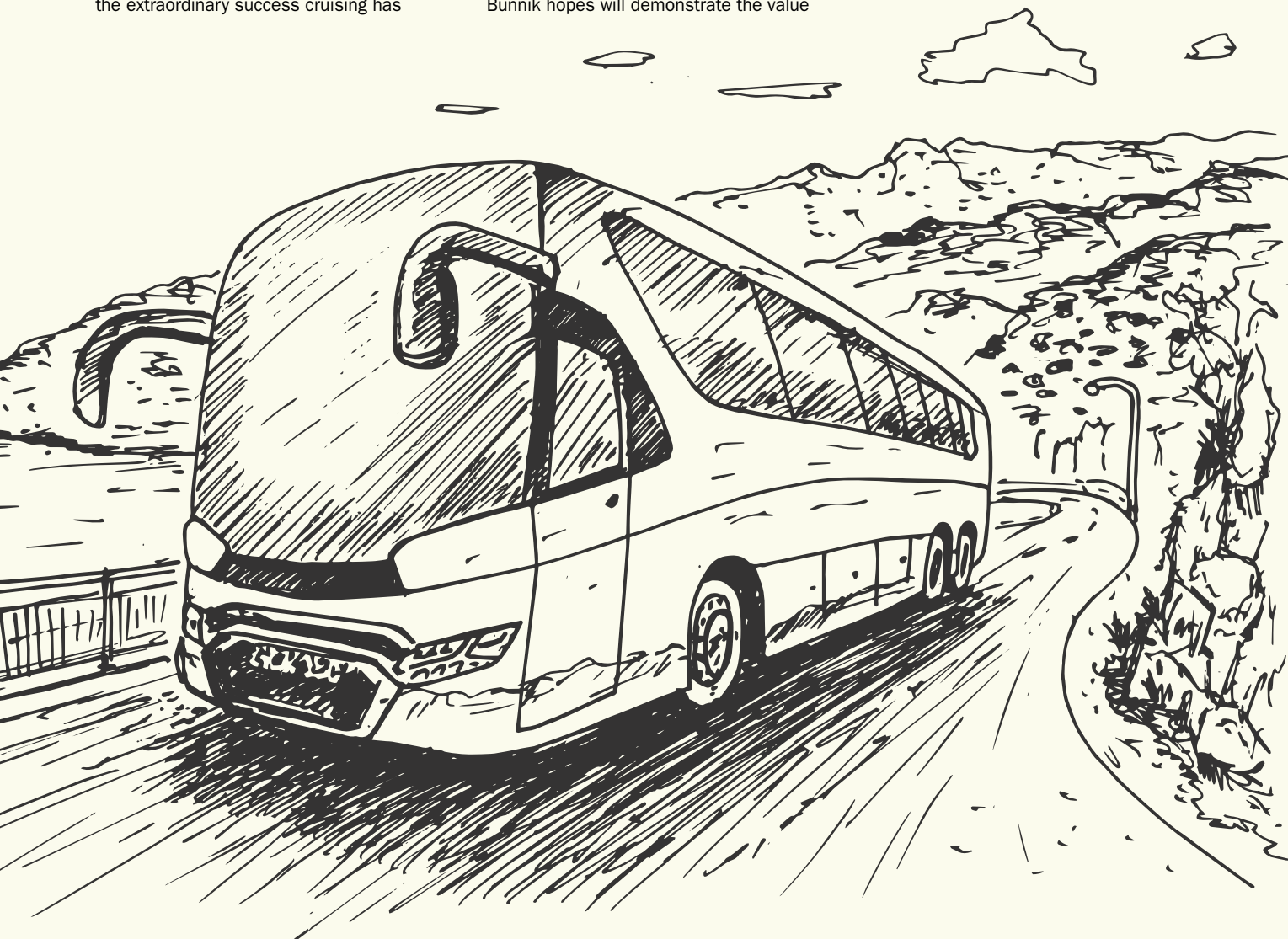
The signs are encouraging, with talks with a number of potential newcomers underway.

“There is no real one point in time that signifies we now have sufficient reasons for tour operators to join,” he said. “Rather through the various initiatives ranging from the educational forums through to the new website, we have demonstrated that the organisation is about creating real value for members over the long term. We also wanted to show that this is a continual process rather than an initial flurry of activity which then dies down.

“The most pleasing thing about taking this approach is that CATO is now being asked to tackle some of the larger issues affecting your operators.

“This shows we are moving in the right direction and I believe this is driving our membership growth.”

It seems the new CATO is well and truly up and running.





Published in
collaboration with the
Travel Industry Exhibition

EXPO EVOLUTION

Aiming for bigger results from a more compact show, the Travel Industry Exhibition has embarked on a new direction.

FRESH from a stand-out show in 2016, organisers of the Travel Industry Exhibition are preparing a return to the stage in 2017 with a newly energised format and a sharpened focus on bringing the best visitors and exhibitors together.

To be held in both Sydney and Melbourne in July, the event has been rebranded as the Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference to reflect the launch of a new seminar program and a stronger emphasis on the interaction of buyers, suppliers and industry leaders.

“We’re making this into something much more than just the regular business-to-business exhibition,” said event director David Paterson of Exhibitions & Trade Fairs. “It won’t be the same old faces and the same old routine - we’re putting in a concerted effort to make this event much more targeted and productive for everyone involved.”

Returning to Sydney’s Luna Park and moving to the Melbourne Convention &

‘It won’t be the same old faces and the same old routine - we’re putting in a concerted effort to make this event much more targeted and productive for everyone involved’

David Paterson, event director
Exhibition & Trade Fairs

Exhibition Centre for the first time, the 2017 exhibition will introduce a new element of business insight through its seminar program, while at the same time moving to boost the quality of interaction on the exhibition floor.

“The insight we’ve gained from the events we’ve already held in Sydney and Melbourne has made it clear people want to go straight to the point and engage with genuine qualified buyers or new and interesting exhibitors,” Paterson said. “We’ve got a

lot of detailed feedback from post-event analysis and so this year our attention is on demonstrating what we’ve learnt on the exhibition floor.”

As a result, an invitation-led qualifying process has been introduced with the aim of ensuring the best buyers are given priority at the 2017 exhibition, a move Paterson says is about reducing overall visitor numbers but increasing the level of business conducted.

Exhibitors, too, will be specially targeted, shifting the focus from well-known event regulars towards a more interesting mix of emerging destinations and new product.

“This is the way the industry is going,” Paterson said. “The move is towards a more agile and more compact event – tighter and results focused.

“We know what people want, so our aim is to evolve our event to ensure we reflect that.”

SEMINAR PROGRAM

The biggest change to the 2017 Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference is the addition of its new seminar program, giving participants an added level of business insight while creating an extra incentive to

attract high-calibre visitors.

Held over two days, it will cover key topics facing the travel industry, with speakers chosen for their insight into the most current issues and future trends.

Sessions will be split with breaks, giving visitors an opportunity to mix with exhibitors and ensuring the seminar program remains integrated with its trade show host. Around 200 paying delegates will be targeted for the seminars.

Conference organiser Peta Moore from Nectar Creative Communications has been engaged to develop the program, working first on a research phase to identify the most topical content.

“We won’t announce the program until closer to the event so that we’re as current and relevant as possible, but we’ll be presenting speakers who can provide real insight into issues like online competition and how travel agents can convince their customers of the service benefit they offer, and other issues like this,” Paterson said.

“The aim is that visitors will leave having gained something tangible they can apply in their own business.”



VIP VISITORS

In another change to the format, attendees in 2017 will be asked to register their interest before tickets are given, with a review panel and invitation process introduced to ensure the most relevant buyers.

Organisers will target retail travel agents, home-based consultants, corporate travel planners, professional conference organisers and others in a more stringent qualifying process.

“People are looking for something new, perhaps out of left field – they want to know what the next hot destination is, so we want to be ahead of the curve and not just present the same old stuff.”

Other exhibitors would include accommodation suppliers, cruise lines, tour operators, airlines, “out of the box experiences” and innovative travel technology vendors.

DETAILS

The 2017 Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference will be held at the Crystal Palace at Luna Park Sydney on Thursday July 20 and Friday July 21, and at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre South Wharf on Tuesday 25 July and Wednesday 26 July.

■ For more information visit www.travelindustryexpo.com.au or email info@travelindustryexpo.com.au



NEW EXHIBITORS

Exhibitors will also come from a targeted cross section, Paterson said, with plans for a more engaging and relevant selection of stands.

“Research we have conducted with our agents has told us the type of suppliers they are aiming for,” he said. “The interest is in having more of a destinational focus, with new and emerging places.”

Sydney | Luna Park 20–21 July 2017

Melbourne | MCEC 25–26 July 2017

THE
**TRAVEL
INDUSTRY
EXHIBITION
& CONFERENCE**



TRAVELINDUSTRYEXPO.COM.AU



IN FLIGHT

Air New Zealand - SYD-AKL-SFO

The route

Sydney to San Francisco via Auckland

The plane

Boeing 777

Class

Business Class, seat 1J

The seat

Seats are arranged in a herringbone layout so all have access to the aisle. There is a separate footrest which can be used not just for your feet but for visitors, as it has a separate seatbelt. The tray table can be used between two people so its possible to share a meal together. Because of the special seat belt and aisle access, seats can be reclined for landing and takeoff. For sleeping the seat folds fully forward to create a comfortable lie flat bed. A mattress, quilt and pillows are provided. There are also plenty of

nooks and crannies to keep personal belongings during the flight.

Entertainment

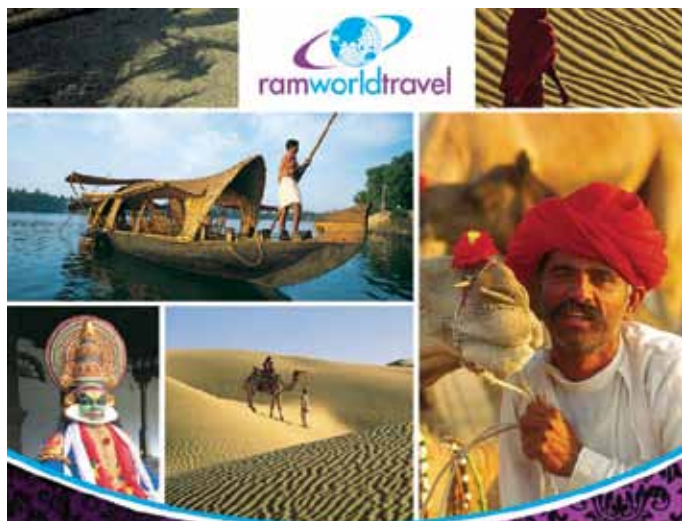
The entertainment screen sits adjacent to the seat on a moving arm so can be positioned according to your needs. The responsive touch screen is live as soon as you board, with a standard range of on-demand movies and TV shows. Wi-fi was not available on board.

Service

The crew were very attentive to passenger needs. Food was of high quality, showcasing fresh NZ produce and was matched with premium Kiwi wines.

Lounge

The lounge in Auckland is spacious and light with a variety of seating options, including a covered outdoor terrace. There are also plenty of showers.



Have a dream holiday of your life in India with Ram World Travel

We are a reputed travel agency, with over 25 years of outstanding service. We provide retail travel worldwide and holiday packages and wholesale tailor-made tours to India.

Daily Departure - Historical or Yoga and Meditation or cultural tours and more...

0424 257 087

ram@ramworldtravel.com.au

www.ramworldtravel.com.au

6 Vernon Street, Turrumurra, NSW 2074



Incredible India

FROM AU
\$575
per person

50 years of tourism data

TOURISM Research Australia (TRA) has taken a nostalgic look over its figures as the organisation celebrates its 50th anniversary year.

The Austrade division was established in 1966 at a time when most tourism came from English-speaking countries and a flight from London involved five or six stops.

Janice Wykes, TRA assistant general manager, said much had changed since then, with tourism now contributing A\$47.5 billion to Australia's GDP, employing 580,800 Australians and accounting for 9.6 per cent of export income.

"Australia's tourism industry is growing three times as fast as the rest of the economy," Wykes said. "This is highlighted by figures released last month which showed Australia had welcomed more than 8 million international visitors (in 2015/16) for the first time ever."

China had become the second largest source of international visitors, after New Zealand, with more than a million visitors in 2015-16, she said.

This was in contrast to past decades when the majority of tourists came from traditional markets including the UK, the US, New Zealand, Japan, Canada and Europe.

Wykes said the need for evidence-based planning was more important than ever as Australia vied for its share of the global tourism dollar, and that TRA's data provided valuable insights.

MORE TO AFRICA THAN THE 'BIG 5'

AFRICA. The word alone immediately conjures up in the mind a dynamic variety of wildlife roaming the plains and bush of Southern and East Africa. The 'Big 5' – elephants, lion, buffalo, leopard and rhinoceros – often crop up first. But the 'Big 5' is a phrase exhaustively used, says the marketing manager of South Africa's Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, Jacques Smit.

Initially coined by big-game hunters as the five most difficult beasts to track down on foot, the 'Big 5' moniker has "nothing to do with how rare they are in sighting. It's an overly marketed phrase", Smit said. "There's so much more to Africa than just five animals".

Speaking with *travelBulletin* in Sydney recently, Smit said he wasn't "anti" the term, but was keen to shift perception that the Big 5 was the be-all-and-end-all for tourists.

Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve (which borders on the world famous Kruger National Park) is part of a boundary-less 5.5 million hectare conservation area encompassing Kruger, Limpopo National Park, Mozambique and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. The wide open spaces means wildlife can come and go from one park to another, unrestricted.

"Our focus is to offer a complete holistic safari experience. Touch on the Big 5, see to that need people want, but expose endangered species such as wild dog and cheetah, stop in the middle of a herd of 500 wildebeest, explain to guests what they are doing.

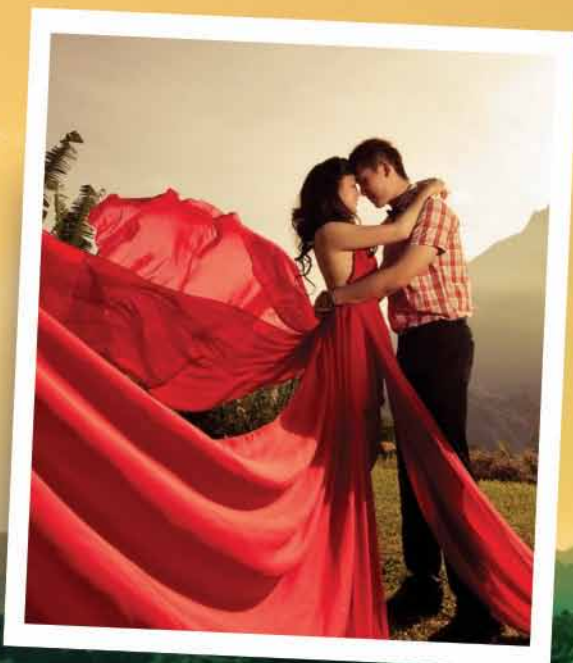
"In Sabi Sabi, we'll often spot hippo, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, water buck, kudu, impala. If you are lucky, pangolin, armadillo, honey badgers and more.

"And the big thing, that is very underestimated, is birding. There's birds everywhere and they change throughout the season. On the first day of a guest's visit, I ask what they want to see and it's always the big stuff. Never birds. By day two, it's birds that are of interest," Smit quipped.

"Even right down to the small detail, a good guide can bring the bush to life. That is what we want. People to leave Sabi Sabi having learnt a bit about the bush but also having understood what they've just witnessed and been part of".

Smit said advantages of being a private reserve is Sabi Sabi can take guests out at night, "opening up a whole nocturnal safari", whereas public parks are required to have guests back in camp by sunset. On safari, Sabi Sabi also ensures guests never see another vehicle in a wildlife sighting by controlling traffic. "Part of our vehicle etiquette when it comes to conservation is how we treat animals and wildlife, and how they react to our presence.

"The moment they start associating our presence with stress, we've crossed the line and we've done something very, very wrong. Keeping their behaviour is our priority and making sure we are operating a pristine wilderness environment for them to thrive in".



Start with #HelloSabah



fb.sabahtourism.com



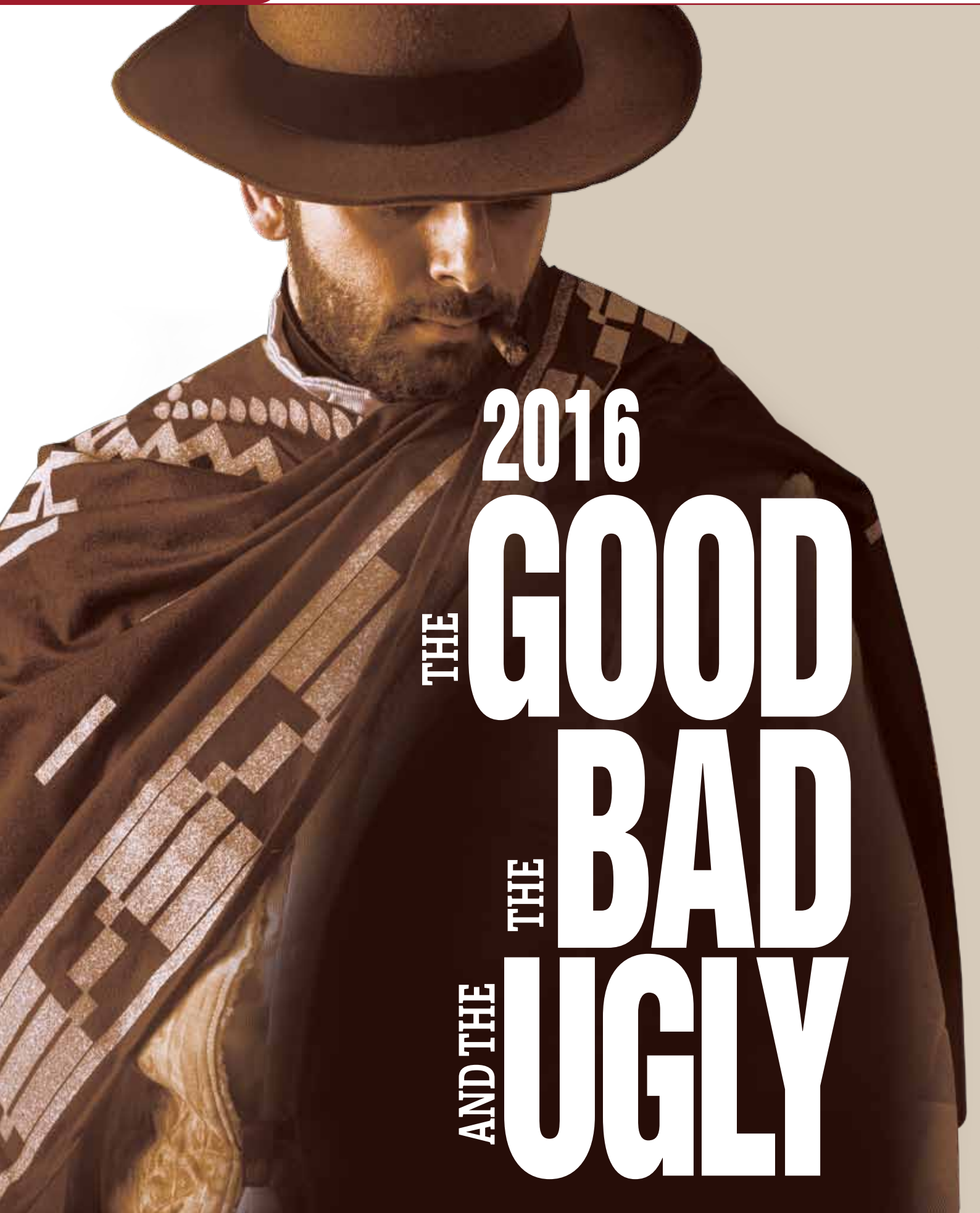
@sabahtourism



@sabahtourism

Get in touch:

Cassie Forsythe | Marketing Manager | cassie@sabahtourism.com



2016
**THE GOOD
AND THE
BAD
AND THE
UGLY**

The past 12 months have seen some big changes in the Australian travel industry, with old players and new jockeying for position in all segments. The Chinese curse “may you live in interesting times” has certainly rung true for travel agents, airlines and other suppliers during 2016. Bruce Piper delves into some of the highs and lows of the year that was.

TRAVEL AGENTS

THE GOOD: Helloworld's merger with AOT, which was finalised in February, has certainly brought big changes to Australia's second biggest travel agency group. After the travails of the previous years, members have welcomed the stability brought by Andrew and Cinzia Burnes – along with executive salary cuts and more recently a share giveaway and an offer to purchase stakes of up to 25% of franchisees. Suppliers have also welcomed a stronger Helloworld as a counterpoint to the dominance of Flight Centre. While there's still a way to go, there's no doubt the organisation has benefited from strong leadership and initial grudging acceptance of the Burnes' vision has turned into widespread acclamation both internally and externally. The shareholders are very happy too, with the HLO share price more than doubling since the beginning of the year.

THE BAD: However there's no doubt it's been a tough year for the sector, with even Flight Centre not immune to market conditions. A profit sneeze issued by FLT last month saw the whole industry catch cold, with the company warning of a “challenging trading climate globally”. Despite volumes and TTV up, Flight Centre said profit-wise it had experienced a “subdued first half” with a result about \$20 million lower than the prior corresponding period. Factors that influenced the drop included slow UK trading after the Brexit currency slump, lower than expected profits in its touring division and of course record low air fares. It should be noted, however, that despite the warning Flight Centre still expects to achieve a record \$20 billion in TTV this year and its forecast full-year underlying result of up to \$355 million means the company is still making almost \$1 million in profit each and every day.

THE UGLY: Despite the doomsayers, a number of agency collapses earlier in the year hasn't resulted in the wholesale denigration of travel agents. However there's no doubt the shonks have seen negative publicity, with the failure of Value World Travel – and its subsequent abortive phoenix-like rise as Yupp Travel – a notable example. As a side note, the same serial offender looks to have emerged from the ashes yet again, this time in the liquor industry, trading as Value Cellars.

AIRLINES

THE GOOD: On the airline side the big success story this year has been the Qantas transformation. After several difficult years Qantas has emerged into the sunshine of profitability. It hasn't come without pain, but the result is impressive – an 80% increase in the carrier's pre-tax profit to \$1.42 billion. Every part of the business contributed to the record figure, including Qantas International which is no longer a drag on the other divisions. The result was good news for Qantas staff too, who received a total of \$75 million in bonuses, or about \$3,000 each. It's also put the airline in good stead for future investment in products and services such as new aircraft and routes as well as in-flight wifi which is expected to start appearing next year.

THE BAD: The aviation sector overall was impacted by heavy overcapacity as global carriers turned their sights on the relatively strong Australian market. Fares have dived to historic lows, which is great news for consumers and hopefully will drive demand. However it also means everyone in the industry is doing more work for less return. Some carriers have reacted by slashing fares and yields to levels many in the industry have called irrational, which has made the trading environment – particularly to Europe – very difficult indeed.

THE UGLY: Relations between Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand reached a low point earlier this year after what was believed to be a failed boardroom coup saw NZ CEO Christopher Luxon abruptly resign and announce the sale of the airline's 25% stake in Virgin. While both parties are all smiles when it comes to their trans-Tasman alliance, the same definitely can't be said for long haul operations where Air NZ's new state-based strategy targeting travel to North and South America sees it competing head to head for Virgin Australia's US passengers.

HOTELS

THE GOOD: The US\$13 billion merger between Marriott and Starwood this year has created the world's biggest hotelier with almost 1.1 million rooms on offer every night, as well as a further 420,000 in the development pipeline. The powerhouse comprises 5,700 properties in 110 countries, leapfrogging Hilton Worldwide which has about 4,700 hotels across the globe.

THE BAD: Traditional travel agents and wholesalers have been collateral damage in an ongoing battle between hoteliers and Online Travel Agents. The Expedia-Priceline duopoly has given the OTAs exceptional power to charge high commissions, and hotels have been pushing back aggressively, particularly targeting direct bookings. This has shown itself in value-adds such as free wi-fi for loyalty club members who book direct, with hotels actively cultivating direct relationships with frequent travellers.

THE UGLY: Disruption is a fact of life these days, but the rise of Airbnb has seen predictable squeals from the accommodation industry at every turn. There was a refreshing new perspective from Mantra CEO Bob East last month, who noted at the company's annual general meeting that he had not seen an impact from Airbnb and suggested any expansion of the visitor economy should be welcomed rather than bemoaned.

TECHNOLOGY AND OTAS

THE GOOD: One of the worst kept secrets in the travel industry this year has been the status of the massive Flight Centre GDS contract. Long the jewel in the crown for Travelport, Flight Centre put the deal up for grabs and it's understood that in almost all cases FLT divisions have opted for alternative providers. While nobody is able to comment formally, and the official statement from Travelport is simply that “we continue to have a multi-year agreement with Flight Centre,” the big winner appears to be Sabre which is believed to be set to switch over Flight Centre in Australia and New Zealand in 2017. Amadeus is also understood to have won the Flight Centre business in Europe. Travelport's reluctance to confirm what's going on seems curious, given that the loss of such a huge

Continues over page

customer – estimated to be more than 24 million segments annually – is surely a material issue that should be disclosed by a public company.

THE BAD: Flight Centre and Helloworld both continue to dabble in the online space but neither seem particularly serious about it. Helloworld terminated its multi-year agreement with Orbitz Worldwide and at this stage does not appear to have re-introduced online booking capability for flights on helloworld.com.au (despite promising a new site would roll out by 31 August).

And Flight Centre's Sean Sutherland admitted in October that the

company's unfortunately named Aunt Betty online venture was very much a "work in progress" at this stage. Both could be missing out on revenue from the growing online segment as a result.

THE UGLY: Webjet's TV advertising campaign, which took a cheap shot at traditional travel agents by incorrectly implying the OTA had access to a wider and more current range of fares, provoked an extremely strong reaction from the trade. The matter escalated, with AFTA lodging a formal complaint with the ACCC about the advertising, as well as claims in the Webjet Exclusives package offers that invalid price comparisons were being used.

CRUISING

THE GOOD: Cruise continued its relentless growth this year, with global cruise lines now well and truly focused on the local market which has shown stunning resilience and potential. The highly anticipated arrival of Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas* is set to boost public awareness of cruising even more, and the ship's advanced features are likely to continue to change perceptions of what it means to take a cruise holiday. The opening of new local offices for Norwegian Cruise Line, Oceania, Regent Seven Seas and Crystal Cruises is also further recognition of the Australian cruise market – and the key role travel agents continue to play in this sector.

THE BAD: Despite the growth of cruise in Australia, Cruise Lines International Association globally does not seem to have recognised the vital role river cruising has in the local market. Key river operators such as APT, Scenic, Avalon Waterways, Uniworld, Aqua, CroisiEurope and more are all members of CLIA and yet the industry scorecard issued by the organisation this year for the first time omitted any river cruising statistics. There was a suggestion these would be compiled in a separate report but it is now December and nothing has been forthcoming – surely a bone of contention given the fees paid by the local river cruise operators to the organisation.

THE UGLY: There also appears to be

‘Webjet’s TV advertising campaign took a cheap shot at traditional travel agents by implying the OTA had access to a wider and more current range of fares...’

significant angst within CLIA about the rise of Cruise Down Under – now known as the Australian Cruise Association – which counts many cruise lines as members along with ports, destinations, ground operators and suppliers. The ACA conference took place just a week before CLIA’s Cruise360 event – and featured Crystal Cruises CEO Edie Rodriguez as a keynote speaker. Both organisations compile almost identical reports about the economic contribution of cruise to the local economy – surely there is a way for to reduce this duplication of effort and combine resources.

LAND PRODUCT

THE GOOD: This year for the first time saw the launch of fly free offers in conjunction with touring product, which by all accounts has been a major success. The Travel Corporation initiative was rolled out across all of its guided holiday brands, starting with Insight but then followed by Trafalgar and even Contiki. Others, such as the Globus family, were late to the party but responded strongly, with air credit offers very well received by agents. With fly free deals in previous years having been a strong driver of river cruise bookings, the land operators will be hoping the initiative could see a rejuvenation of the coach sector which is still a huge part of the global travel industry - and a key revenue source for travel agents.

THE BAD: Repeated terrorist attacks in Europe slammed demand, making 2016 very challenging for the leisure sector. It’s now just over 12 months since the first assault in Paris, which was followed by the bombing at Brussels Airport in April and then the horrific attack in Nice during July – not to mention the tragic situation in Turkey and with Syrian refugees across Europe. The resilience of the

Australian traveller has certainly been tested, with agents and operators having their fingers and toes crossed for a quick recovery in 2017.

THE UGLY: The Globus Family of Brands raised eyebrows earlier this year when the company revealed it had made a “business decision” not to be part of the ATAS accreditation program. That of course had a domino effect meaning it could also no longer be an AFTA member, nor a member of the Council of Australian Travel Agents – and the operator’s staff were also ineligible to enter the National Travel Industry Awards. While no formal announcement has been made, it’s understood that the decision has now been reversed, with Globus back in the AFTA/ATAS/CATO/NTIA fold.

REGULATION

THE GOOD: The ongoing success and professionalism of the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme should be applauded, with the industry as a whole embracing the program which continues to gain traction and exposure via AFTA’s various marketing campaigns. AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury has highlighted the growing awareness of the scheme at the various recent travel agency group conferences, telling delegates “who would have ever thought AFTA would be running TV campaigns promoting the value of travel agents”.

THE BAD: The government’s controversial \$5 increase to the Passenger Movement Charge has attracted strong opposition from the industry. While some have questioned the reaction to such a small hike – about the price of a cup of coffee – it’s true that the government clearly sees tourism and travel as a cash cow and AFTA and the TTF have been united in saying “enough is enough”.

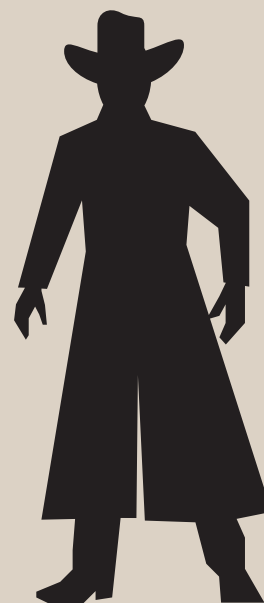
THE UGLY: This year saw the long-awaited final report from the Travel Compensation Fund, which revealed that about \$19 million in TCF moneys – originally contributed by travel agents – had been returned to the states. Tasmania stands alone at this stage in directing these proceeds to marketing travel agents, and it’s understood that other jurisdictions are being lobbied to make similar moves. However some states are believed to be seeing the money as compensation for bailing out travellers after the Ansett collapse in 2002.

REPRESENTATION

THE GOOD: Delta Air Lines shifted its local representation from World Aviation Systems to The Walshe Group this year – bucking the trend by online carriers of setting up their own self-handling offices. Clearly Delta sees the economies of outsourcing its office here as a GSA, and the win by Walshe was a very welcome addition to its premium portfolio.

THE BAD: The destination representation sector continues to grow – particularly from North America where now individual cities and even attractions are signing up representation alongside states and regions. While the attention to the Australian market is welcome, it can also be very confusing for agents and suppliers. A case in point is the dichotomy between Brand USA, the official marketing organisation for America – and Visit USA, a committee of suppliers who band together to promote the USA together. This confusion sometimes gets in the way of a more cohesive message.

THE UGLY: Helloworld’s representation division still exists – just – in the form of World Aviation Systems and Global Aviation Services. However the business, which was notably absent from a graphic depicting the Helloworld brands in the company’s annual report, has lost several key contracts this year. 2016 also saw the departures of senior WAS/GAS executives – allegedly amid legal action – a sad footnote to this once flourishing representation organisation.



LOYALTY, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

THE days of high points earning credit cards will end on July 1, 2017, says Tim Hughes, vice president of business development at Agoda, online accommodation reservation service.

The Reserve Bank of Australia's decision to put a limit on interchange fees is going to have a direct impact on a consumer's points-earning capacity.

"Banks will be restricted on how much they can charge in merchant fee transactions and the consequence of that is the days of mega-points earning credit card ends on the July 1, 2017. It's going to be a dramatic reduction," Hughes says.

Citibank was the first to make a move, advising customers its credit card rewards program would be amended from March next year due to the interchange rate change.

Financial advisory firm Novantas predicts the move will see banks suffer a roughly 35% curtailment in debit interchange fee revenues.

‘I think Australia is going through one of the most dramatic transformations in loyalty since the introduction of the first frequent flyer card’

Tim Hughes
Vice president of business development, Agoda

"That's hundreds of millions of dollars in frequent flyer purchases ripped out of the system, so that is going to change a lot about how consumers can earn points."

Hughes is jokingly dubbing the move the "Cardmageddon" – an Armageddon of loyalty points.

"I think Australia is going through one of the most dramatic transformations in loyalty since the introduction of the first frequent flyer card," he says.

Interchange fees come into play when a consumer uses a credit card at a store which has a payment system set up by another bank. An interchange fee is paid from the store's bank back to the bank that issued the credit card. The money raised from interchange fees is used to pay for the features of the credit card, including the reward points. As banks collect a smaller cut



Tim Hughes

from transaction surcharges, there will be less money to purchase frequent flyer points.

As the consumer's ability to earn points easily through regular day-to-day transactions such as paying a bill decreases, Hughes says consumers will no longer be able to sit back and let their credit card do the work.

He predicts it will shift the balance back between points and product and more of an emphasis will be placed on the quality of the items or services being purchased.

"You're not going to buy a product 100% just because of points and you're not going to abandon points just for a product," Hughes explains.

As points become harder to come by, Hughes says consumers will need to find different ways to earn points, likely by selecting particular vendors and stores.

Agoda has recently partnered with 32 programs on PointsMAX, which allows users to earn points toward their favourite loyalty program for every booking made through the website. Loyalty programs for which points can be earned include Velocity Frequent Flyer, Etihad Guest, Hawaiian

Airlines, Delta Skymiles, American Airlines AAdvantage and more.

The other element driving the transformation of loyalty is the intensification of the battle amongst the supermarkets and their affiliation to frequent flyer programs.

"That battle has divided along very clear lines, with Qantas and Woolworths on one side and Coles/Flybuys and Velocity on the other," Hughes says.

"This battleground is going to dominate the loyalty scheme for the next few years to come, I think you're going to see enormous amounts of TV advertising and I expect to see all sorts of in-store activity as the world is divided along those two lines."

Looking into his crystal ball, Hughes forecasts banks will be forced to come up with new programs, airlines will think about new partnerships and he would like to believe loyalty would be seen to be more about the consumption and relationship with the product and less about the marketing channel a consumer came to.

"This Cardmageddon is going to change a lot."

BLOCKCHAINS FOR HOTEL DISTRIBUTION

WEBJET last month announced details of a major project it has been undertaking in partnership with Microsoft, aimed at using so-called blockchain technology to solve what it called the hotel distribution industry's "dirty little secret". Webjet CEO John Guscic revealed that the sector is rampant with inefficiencies. According to a presentation he gave at an investor conference, about one in three bookings are amended in some way, 10% require some sort of manual intervention, while one in 25 experience "breakage" – where a service is provided but never invoiced. That amounts to millions in lost revenue.

The complexity comes because in many instances there are up to five participants in the sale, with a series of wholesalers contracting DMCs who in turn book the actual hotel. Each participant stores their bookings in their own technology platform, and there is no 'single source of truth' as to the status of a booking or its details. This results in high costs of reconciliation – hordes of accounts receivable staff - and financial losses due to disputes.

The Webjet solution aims to use blockchains – internet-based technology which records transactions in multiple locations automatically updated to provide this single reference point – to store hotel bookings. A 'Smart Contract' matches up bookings and stores them on the blockchain, instantly notifying any discrepancies so data mismatches can be resolved straight away, rather than months later when unpaid invoices are being chased.

It's a novel solution, with Webjet currently rolling it out internally between its Lots of Hotels and Sunhotels operations, and planning to "invite selected external parties to use the platform to demonstrate the benefits it delivers to the industry".



Travelport Business Insights

Introducing Travelport Business Insights

Designed to help you make key business decisions that can improve revenue, enhance customer service and reduce operational costs so you can spend time acting on insights rather than creating them.

With Travelport Business Insights, you can view internal business operational metrics and deliver an online reporting solution to your external customers, all within one portal. What's more, you'll have the ability to create your own custom reports and choose a package to suit your agency profile, so you only invest in what you need for your business growth.

If you would like to transform your agency's data into actionable insights that can help drive continuous improvements to your business, please email Travelportbusinessinsights@travelport.com

ICC SYDNEY PUTS DARLING HARBOUR BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT



The new ICC Sydney, and inset: an artists impression of the Exhibition Centre



IT'S taken three years and \$1.5 billion, but Sydney this month reclaims its place on the world stage with the opening of its new convention and exhibition facilities at Darling Harbour.

The International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) opens for its first event on December 20, giving the harbour city a new flagship venue and restoring its place among the world's key event destinations.

Its construction has been part of a wider \$3.4 billion plan to transform the entire precinct, representing the biggest development at Darling Harbour since Australia's bicentenary in 1988.

First announced in 2012 by then-Premier Barry O'Farrell, the new facility sent shockwaves through the industry with news it would involve the complete closure of the iconic existing convention centre.

Instead of a partial shut-down and phased redevelopment, the government opted for "short-term pain for long-term gain", allowing a faster construction but leaving Sydney without a venue for at least three years.

Whatever pain has been suffered in the interim, the city now boasts among the most modern and extensive facilities in the country, improving on both the scale and flexibility of its earlier centre.

"Sydney is Australia's global city and it has been treading water for three years, but we are now ready to launch the city back on the world stage," said Geoff Donaghy, AEG Ogden director of convention centres and CEO of ICC Sydney.

"We've been entrusted with what is truly a world class venue, offering the ultimate in quality and choice for the world's leaders and thinkers to meet, collaborate, innovate and simply to enjoy fantastic entertainment," he said.

Sectioned into three linked buildings hosting conventions, exhibitions and entertainment, ICC Sydney has been built on the sites of the previous Darling Harbour

venues while also incorporating a new 8,000-seat theatre to replace the demolished Sydney Entertainment Centre.

Its convention facilities are capable of hosting up to three separate events concurrently, with plenary options for up to 8,000 people when utilising the ICC Sydney Theatre.

Other plenary spaces include the 2,500-seat tiered Darling Harbour Theatre, a 1,000-seat tiered Pyrmont Theatre and the 800-seat flat-floored Cockle Bay Room.

For banquets, the ICC Sydney Grand Ballroom is the largest purpose-built facility



in Australia with space to seat more than 2,000 people and 270-degree views of the city from its pre-function areas and balconies. It is backed by a second banqueting space, the 740-seat Parkside Ballroom, one of the few structures to be incorporated from the previous buildings.

In all there are 70 meeting rooms, plus 2400m² of multi-purpose event space and other facilities including purpose-built registration areas, speaker preparation rooms, business suites and a VIP suite.

For exhibitions, ICC Sydney has a total of 35,000m² of floor space over two levels – equal to about 26 Olympic swimming pools.

It also features a 5000m² outside event deck overlooking the city skyline, enabling organisers to extend exhibitions into the open air or stage outdoor events with a city view.

Alongside, and linked to the exhibition and conference areas, the ICC Sydney Theatre doubles as a concert venue and grand-scale conference space. Its tiered seating for 8,000 can be reconfigured to suit different capacities upwards of 5,000, or boosted to a total capacity of 9,000 by removing seating for general admission standing room.

Like its neighbours, the theatre offers city views from glass walls in its foyer areas and



Artist impression of the ICC Sydney Theatre

has been designed for interaction with the surrounding area and Tumbalong Park.

Over the next 25 years ICC Sydney is forecast to generate about \$5 billion in economic benefit for NSW.

More than 400 events have already been scheduled at the centre, due between 2017 and 2022.

They include super-groups like the

10,000-delegate Amway China incentive due next year, as well as major conferences such as the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) conference for 7,000 medical specialists in 2012, the SIBOS technology event for 6,000 delegates in 2018 and the World Congress of Accountants for 5,000 delegates in 2018.




LUNA PARK
VENUES

Sydney's iconic Luna Park Venues is home to thirteen CBD waterfront venues custom built for exhibitions, conferences, cocktails and banquets from 50 to 10,000 guests.

Experience the magic of sweeping Sydney Harbour views capturing the Bridge, Opera House and city lights; award winning executive chef catering; world-class audio visual; easy access and on-site parking; and an award-winning venue management team. Experience the magic of Luna Park Venues.

+612 9033 7540

sales@lunaparksydney.com

www.lunaparkvenues.com

Arts NSW reveals new space

DESIGNS for a new outdoor function space at Sydney's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct have been unveiled by Arts NSW.

Dubbed Waterfront Square, initial plans filed with NSW Planning & Environment outlined the shaded outdoor area would be capable of hosting special events, arts festivals, open air cinemas, food, wine and product showcases as well as commercial events.

Cost-effective and flexible, the proposal for Waterfront Square states the event space could potentially host a maximum of four one-day major events annually for up to 10,000 people, as well as a combination of arts and cultural festivals for up to 7,500 people.

The project is currently on public exhibition until 16 December.

Gold Coast secures \$50 million business event

MORE than 8,000 delegates from Chinese health care company Infinitus will convene on the Gold Coast in May 2018, for a six-day incentive program.

The mammoth business event is one of the largest ever secured for Australia, with Queensland Minister for Tourism and Major Events Kate Jones predicting it would inject around \$50 million worth of economic benefit into the state.

"This is a great example of collaboration between Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia and Gold Coast Tourism to secure a major business event for Queensland and grow our tourism industry," Jones said.

Perth Convention Bureau announces new chairman

THE Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) has named Kevin Skipworth CVO as its new chairman.

Prior to his appointment with the PCB, Skipworth was the agent general for Western Australia in London, and also served the last five governors of the state as official secretary and chief executive officer of the Governor's Establishment.

Commenting on his latest role, Skipworth said he was "pleased to be joining PCB at a time when the business events sector is seen by governments as a key economic driver for their destinations, particularly in developing strong global trading, cultural and social links".

Skipworth replaces outgoing chairman Ian Laurance AM who elected to retire after seven years of service.

'Space Olympics' secured for Sydney

THE world's largest space conference will come to Australian shores after a successful bid led by the Australian Academy of Science and the University of NSW, supported by Business Events Sydney.

Awarded to the NSW capital over bidding rivals Shanghai, Prague, Valencia and Lausanne, the 2020 Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) – nicknamed the Space Olympics - will be hosted at the International Convention Centre Sydney, bringing with it up to 3,000 delegates and injecting \$10 million of direct expenditure into the state's economy.

Business Events Sydney Chief Executive Lyn Lewis-Smith credited Australia's record as a "safe destination", as well the country's clear dark skies "which are perfect for stargazing" as major drawcards which helped to push the bid over the line.



LUNA Park Sydney was able to demonstrate its event hosting skills in front of the travel industry in November when it hosted the 2016 NSW Tourism Awards.

The event took place across two Luna Park venues, with the award ceremony held in the Big Top and a cocktail celebration following in the beautiful Crystal Palace.

Guests were able to ride on the ferris wheel and carousel as they arrived, before joining a black-tie affair where they were treated to delicious canapés, a specially curated beverage selection, live entertainment and more.

General manager of sales at Luna Park James Granter said the event was "a fantastic opportunity to really show off our event and catering services to friends and peers in the industry".

Other key events held recently at Luna Park have included the National HR Summit, the Restaurant & Catering Awards and conferences for Microsoft and Vodafone.



headlines business events news

20 Oct	42K delegates bound for Syd	31 Oct	BESydney's \$360m MICE pipeline
24 Oct	ICESAP accreditation program	03 Nov	New InterContinental Syd ballroom
24 Oct	Top biz events CEOs discuss state of play	03 Nov	CWT trend forecast
27 Oct	Crown pyramid set to debut	07 Nov	Marriott APAC meetings offer
		10 Nov	ICC Sydney steps into the spotlight
		14 Nov	Space conference for Sydney
		17 Nov	Quake can't shake Kiwi capital events
		21 Nov	Gold Coast scores Infinitus

AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER CONVENTION, EXHIBITION AND ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

IT'S SHOW TIME



BOOK TODAY

Email sales@iccsydney.com
or call +61 2 9215 7100

ICCSYDNEY.COM

MANAGED BY AEG OGDEN

The wait is over. The curtain has finally risen and it's showtime for International Convention Centre Sydney. We're immensely proud to open our city's vibrant new events precinct to the world.

As Australia's first fully integrated convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct, ICC Sydney aims to inspire your imagination with internationally recognised business and entertainment events. Whether you're hosting an international conference, launching a product, working the trade show floor or attending a banquet, ICC Sydney will be sure to make it a show to remember.



ICC Sydney is being delivered by the NSW Government in partnership with Darling Harbour Live, comprising Lendlease, Hostplus, First State Super, Capella Capital, AEG Ogden and Spotless FM, as part of Darling Harbour's most exciting renewal in 25 years.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PURE GOLD
23 DECEMBER 2016

FAST4 SHOWDOWN
9 JANUARY 2017

ANH DO -
THE HAPPIEST REFUGEE
4 FEBRUARY 2017

RTX SYDNEY 2017
4-5 FEBRUARY 2017

WHAT'S NEW IN AUSTRALIA?

Cruise season is well and truly upon us, and has already seen a couple of not-so-familiar vessels pull into to Australian cities for the first time, with many more to come. A record 41 cruise ships from CLIA member cruise lines will spend time locally this summer, compared to 38 last year. These vessels will make a total of almost 900 calls to Australian ports, representing a 10% increase on last year's figures and more than half the ships will offer return trips from our shores. Jasmine O'Donoghue has lined up the new ships gracing Australian waters through to 30 April 2017.



Ovation of the Seas

Royal Caribbean International

Length: 347m

Passengers: 4,180

Crew: 1,500

One crew member to 1.4 passengers

Style: Family-friendly

Arrives: 06 December in Fremantle

Itineraries: During her local season, *Ovation of the Seas* will operate nine itineraries, five of which will visit New Zealand. Also in the mix are cruises to the South Pacific, Tasmania, a three-night sampler and a repositioning to Singapore.



OVATION of the Seas will be the newest, biggest and most technologically advanced ship to call Australia home when it arrives in the country. It has a long list of shiny new activities and spaces to debut in the Australian market, including the first skydiving simulator on a ship, Ripcord by iFly, and the North Star viewing observation capsule, which will raise guests more than 90m above the sea.

Passengers can afford to be choosy, with 18 different dining venues on board, such as Jamie's Italian, Wonderland imaginative cuisine and Michael's Genuine Pub. Mixologists will be given a run for their money by the Bionic Bar, where two robotic arms will skillfully mix the perfect cocktail in minutes.

Ovation of the Seas will also bring the largest indoor play area at sea, SeaPlex, to local waters. The sporting and entertainment venue boasts bumper cars, a circus school with flying trapeze, roller skating, a full size sports court and a floating DJ booth "to keep the energy and fun at an all-time high".

The entertainment doesn't end there, with Two70, a panoramic, multimedia entertainment venue blending live performance and experiential cinema. The arena features six dancing Roboscreens and Vistarama, expansive floor-to-ceiling windows that are transformed into giant screens. The colossal vessel also lays claim to the fastest internet at sea, Voom.

Emerald Princess

Princess Cruises

Length: 290m

Passengers: 3,082

Crew: 1,200

One crew member to 2.6 passengers

Style: Couples, friends and families travelling together

Arrived: 08 November in Fremantle

Itineraries: *Emerald Princess* debuted in her new homeport of Sydney on 15 November, where she will be based until April 2017. During her Australian season *Emerald Princess* will sail to Fiji and the South Pacific, Tasmania, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Vanuatu.



THE 113,561-tonne *Emerald Princess* will be the largest Princess Cruises' ship to be based in Australia this summer. She is one of three ships in the fleet to feature Aussie chef Curtis Stone's new SHARE restaurant, while guests can also dine at the new Salty Dog Pub – a first for Australian waters – or sample a drink from the Vines wine bar. *Emerald's* arrival will also see the Australian debut

of Stephen Schwarz's Broadway-style production *Magic to Do*, and the cruise line's 'The Voice of the Ocean' talent show. There are new Princess Luxury Beds on board, a child-free Sanctuary retreat, a Movies Under the Stars outdoor movie screen, duty-free shops, seven bars and lounges, the Lotus Spa and Fitness centre, four swimming pools and seven whirlpool spas.

Ms Maasdam

Holland America Line

Length: 219m

Passengers: 1,258

Crew: 580 crew

One crew member to 2.2 passengers

Style: Mid-sized luxury, family friendly and couples

Arrived: 20 October in Sydney

Itineraries: *Ms Maasdam's* first Aussie departure was a 43-day circumnavigation of Australia and New Zealand. Starting in Sydney, the vessel cruised north to Brisbane, Cairns and Bali, then headed south to Fremantle, Albany, Burnie, back to Sydney and across to New Zealand, concluding in Auckland on 18 November. Next *ms Maasdam* will embark on a number of 13-, 14- and 17-day sailings between Auckland and Sydney until 15 Jan, when she will reposition to San Diego.



MS MAASDAM is making her maiden call in Australia and will remain in the region until the end of January. The ship is the fifth vessel in Holland America Line's history to bear the name and is consistently named by Holland America Line Mariners as one

of their favourites. The vessel offers all of the line's enrichment, entertainment and culinary initiatives including the Culinary Arts Center, Pinnacle Grill, Canaletto Restaurant, Explorations Café and Rembrandt Show Lounge.



Seabourn Encore

Seabourn

Length: 210.5m

Passengers: 600

Crew: 400

One crew member to 1.5 passengers

Style: Ultra-luxury

Arrives: 22 January 2017 in Darwin

Itineraries: *Seabourn Encore* will visit Australia as part of a 16-day cruise from Bali to Sydney. On 02 February she will sail from Sydney on a 16-day cruise to Auckland then on 18 February will depart Auckland on a 16-day cruise to Sydney. She will set sail from Sydney on 06 March on a 16-day cruise north to Bali.



HAVING only been christened at a gala ceremony in Singapore planned for 07 January 2017, *Seabourn Encore* will be the newest ship to visit Australia. Taking the claim for the most luxurious ship, *Seabourn Encore* boasts three-star Michelin Chef Thomas Keller's restaurant, The Grill by Thomas Keller. The ship will debut

The Retreat, a relaxation space on the top deck wrapped around a whirlpool and an on board show featuring the work of musical theatre lyricist Andrew Rice. The 40,350-GRT vessel will be configured with one more deck than the rest of the line's fleet, new expanded public areas and every suite will feature a private veranda.

Ms Europa 2

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises

Length: 225m

Passengers: 500

Crew: 370

One crew member to 1.4 passengers

Style: Casual luxury

Arrives: 23 December in Hobart

Itineraries: *Europa 2* will stop by Australian cities on three itineraries this season. Making her debut in Hobart on 23 Dec, the vessel will sail into Port Arthur, Burnie, Adelaide, Penneshaw, Portland, Melbourne and Sydney. The next itinerary will head straight to New Zealand, followed by a cruise from Auckland to Bali via Brisbane, Middle Island, Hamilton Island, Cairns and Lizard Island.



EUROPA 2 sports "casual luxury", as opposed to the traditional luxury of *Europa*. This ship will introduce seven restaurants, including Weltmeere, Tarragon, Elements, Serenissima, Yacht Club, Sakura and

Grande Reserve. Guests can relax in the 800m² Ocean Spa, offering massages to manicures with a view of the open sea, catch a show in the theatre or kick back at Jazzclub or Sansibar.



Norwegian Star

Norwegian Cruise Line

Length: 294m

Passengers: 2,348

Crew: 1,031

One crew member to 2.3 passengers

Style: Contemporary

Arrives: 29 January 2017 in Darwin

Itineraries: *Norwegian Star* will operate three local voyages between January and March 2017. Arriving as part of her 21-day Hong Kong to Sydney sailing, she will visit Darwin, Cairns, Airlie Beach, Brisbane and conclude in Sydney. Next is a 12-day Australian and New Zealand cruise from Sydney before she spends a 19-day cruise backtracking through major east coast ports up to Kuala Lumpur.



NORWEGIAN STAR will be the first Norwegian Cruise Line vessel to arrive in Australia in 15 years. She will introduce Norwegian Cruise Line's Feel Free concept, which delivers greater freedom and flexibility

of choice. The line has with the widest choice of accommodation, dining and bars, and entertainment at sea and guests are invited to wear what they want; eat what they want and do what they want.

Azamara Journey

Azamara Club Cruises

Length: 180m

Passengers: 690

Crew: 408

One crew member to 1.7 passengers

Style: Boutique, luxury small ship with a focus on destinations

Arrives: 08 February 2017 in Darwin

Itineraries: *Azamara Journey* will operate four cruises during her first Australian season. Arriving in Darwin from Thailand and Vietnam in February, she will continue on to Port Douglas, Cairns, Townsville and Hamilton Island before concluding in Sydney. From there she will spend 15 nights on an Australia and New Zealand Voyage, followed by a New Zealand Explorer cruise and then repositioning to Singapore via Australia's east coast.



WHEN *Azamara Journey* sails into Aussie waters in 2017, she will be completely different to the *Quest* that visited at the beginning of 2016. *Journey* and *Quest* have both undergone a multimillion dollar makeover which left no space untouched. In line with Azamara Club

Cruises' practice, *Azamara Journey* makes the destinations the hero by offering longer stays, more overnight calls and night touring. More than half of all of *Azamara Journey*'s maiden season calls stay longer than other cruise lines' ships or overnight in port.



Oceania Sirena

Oceania Cruises

Length: 181 metres

Passenger: 684

Crew: 400

One crew member to 1.7 passengers

Style: Upper-premium medium sized ship, specialising in culinary cruising

Arrives: 04 March 2017 in Brisbane

Itineraries: Three of *Sirena*'s 2017 itineraries will see the vessel grace Australian ports, the first a 17-day repositioning from Papeete which passes by Brisbane on the way to Sydney. Next is a whopping 34-day roundtrip from Sydney, circumnavigating Australia. *Sirena* will then embark on a one-way trip to Auckland, stopping in on Eden, Melbourne and Burnie on the way.



OCEANIA Sirena is the newest ship in Oceania Cruises' fleet and will arrive in Australia before she reaches her first birthday. *Sirena* is sister ship to *Regatta*, *Insignia* and *Nautica* and will introduce Oceania Cruises' new restaurant, Tuscan Steak. The new addition serves

up steaks and seafood such as the Tuscan porterhouse and Maine lobster fra diavolo. Additionally, guests will be able to dine at Oceania Cruises' fine dining French restaurant, Jacques Bistro for lunch. *Sirena* also features the all new custom-designed Ultra Tranquility Bed.

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



CLIA VIEW

Brett Jardine, commercial director
CLIA Australasia

THE VALUE OF RECOGNITION

WITH the annual cruise industry awards looming, it is timely to consider the value of industry recognition and what winning awards can bring to your organisation.

The soul of every organisation's success stems from its staff and there is no bigger thrill than sharing the accolades with your team when they come your way.

Over the years we have experienced many recipients doing this very well whilst others remain focussed on the belief that "this is for me". For those organisations that make the finals this year, bring your team with you to share the spotlight. Winner or not on the night, the cruise industry awards are where the who's who of cruising get together to celebrate the continued success of our segment of the travel industry.

The objective of the Cruise Industry Awards is for the cruise lines to be able to recognise and reward the many outstanding achievements from within the travel industry over the previous 12 months.

Most of the award categories are determined through a process where the cruise lines are voting for the top achievers so there is no need for agents to be putting forward submissions – except for the Cruise Promotion of the Year awards.

This does not mean that the office with the highest volume of sales each year wins the award – far from it.

Each cruise line member of CLIA is asked to submit its top five offices in each category. Nominations are based not only on sales volume, but also sales growth, marketing efforts, attendance at training and overall product support throughout the year.

Nominations from the cruise lines are collated with the top nomination earning five points, second nomination four points, third nomination three points, fourth nomination two points and fifth nomination one point. Winners are then determined from total points earned across all cruise line member nominations.

Strong support of multiple cruise lines over the year would give nominees a greater chance of award recognition than an office that was selling one product exclusively.

There are also three award categories open for submissions - Agent Promotion of the Year, Network Promotion of the Year and our new category of "Best Plan a Cruise Month Promotion". These categories are now open for self-nomination by any Travel Agent or Retail Network member of CLIA Australasia.

Submissions must be based on consumer cruise promotions undertaken during the 12-month period to 30 November 2016 that feature CLIA Cruise Line Member product. Potential finalists will be judged on the efforts and success of a specific FIT or Group Travel campaign as well as overall strategy of the campaign in any form of media.

Submissions will be judged by an independent panel. Your campaign doesn't have to be the biggest to be the winner. Judges are very keen on seeing your Return on Investment (ROI) and submissions must be received by Friday 18th December.

■ To download an application form, click on the Awards tab at the CLIA website www.cruising.org.au

SUPREME COMFORT AND THRILLING VIEWS – WITNESS THE RARE AND UNIQUE ABOARD SILVER CLOUD

Silver Cloud will offer more gilt-edged refinements than you would ever expect on an ice-clad Expedition ship in Antarctica. Along with five dining options, her service and space ratios are the highest in expedition cruising. She is superbly designed to capture the magnificent scenery with panoramic public rooms, broad decks, and verandas in most suites so that breaching whales or cavorting penguins are never far from view.

Ask about our Early Booking Bonus and SAVE 10%.



INTIMATE 200-GUEST EXPEDITION SHIP

For a copy of the Silver Cloud 2017 brochure, visit tifs.com.au. For more information or to book call **1300 306 872**. Terms & Conditions apply.



CRUISE

WEEKLY

- 20 Oct** Virgin Voyages' reveal
- 20 Oct** GC pinpoints Philip Park
- 25 Oct** Hurtigruten goes hybrid
- 27 Oct** Eclipse lures new market
- 01 Nov** Spirit back to Australia
- 01 Nov** Princess' biggest cruise

HEADLINES OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2016

- 03 Nov** Aussie homeports grow
- 08 Nov** Scenic sees Euro pick-up
- 08 Nov** OPT plan a wet blanket
- 10 Nov** Evergreen "revisited" brox
- 15 Nov** Polar class ship for who?
- 17 Nov** Eden's \$44m extension

INDUSTRY IN FOCUS



This group of smiling agents represented Australia on the recent *Genting Dream* inaugural cruise from Singapore to Hong Kong, experiencing all the new ship has to offer including the Penfold's Wine Vault.



Radiance of the Seas called into Wollongong for the first time recently, and these local agents got the chance to check out the ship's attractions.



These agents spent six days exploring Walt Disney World Resort in Florida recently, as well as savouring delicious food and shopping in the new Disney Springs precinct.



Fiji turned on the charm, showing these PCOs the range of activities on offer, as well as the versatility of the Sheraton Fiji Resort, Sheraton Denarau Villas and The Westin Denarau Island Resort & Spa's meetings and function venues.

Air Canada's Dreamliner was on show to these select Brisbane travel agents who hopped on board to investigate the newest way to fly to North America.



Texas Tourism and American Airlines took these cowgirls on a seven day classic American road trip last month, exploring places like Grapevine, Wildcatter Range, Fredericksburg, San Antonio, Austin, Fort Worth & Dallas.



These agents survived the famous Devil's Nose train ride ascending 4,800m up the Chimborazo Volcano recently on a Bunnik and LATAM famil to Ecuador.



Celebrity spotting, shopping and the seaside city of Huntington Beach were all on the agenda for these Travellers Choice agents visiting California on famil.

These agents scored a spot on a Jetstar hosted famil to Vietnam and Singapore recently. The trip included a visit to the majestic Khai Dinh Tomb in Hue, Vietnam.



Eclipse Travel and explora Valle Sagrado took these lucky Aussie and Kiwi agents on a famil to Peru last month.



Europe turned on the charm for these agents visiting London and Tuscany recently. The group enjoyed luxury accommodation courtesy of The Hotel Connection and relaxing flights with British Airways.



This recent famil trip visited Thailand where participants experienced the hustle and bustle of Bangkok and the tropical paradise of Krabi and Khao Lak.



COASTS with the MOST NEW ENGLAND, USA

Wedged between New York and Canada, the six states that form New England provide beautiful countryside and an 800km coastline ideal for a driving holiday. Brian Johnston reports.



© Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism

© Rhode Island Tourism

Cape Cod © Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism / Michel Setboun

THERE are plenty of things to like about New England: red barns, fishing villages and wave-beaten lighthouses, a convoluted coastline and a rolling inland where white church steeples are slender exclamation marks against verdant forest. In autumn, maples turn scarlet on the hillsides, red ivy creeps up old walls and you can kick fallen leaves along rambling country tracks. But this diverse destination isn't just about landscapes. New England is a snug and wealthy region with some of America's oldest cities, a vibrant urban culture, maritime history and chic seaside resorts. Locals crack seafood and jokes as they pass pleasant weekend afternoons in breeze-cooled lobster shacks.

New England is comprised of six states in the USA's northeast corner: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. If you're heading north from New York, your first stop might be Rhode Island, a compact state with just 163km of coastline and a scattering of offshore islands. Newport on Aquidneck Island has a rich colonial history and architecture that reflects its golden age as a fashionable nineteenth-century resort town and sailing centre. The summer 'cottages' of this bygone era look more like European mansions, matched only by the sleek yachts on the harbour, which embraces the town on three sides. The 6km Cliff Walk is exhilarating for its rocky outlooks and colossal seaside mansions. After that, join well-heeled locals for a sashay past the boutiques and restaurants along Thames Street and America's Cup Avenue.

A pebble's skip across the water lies Martha's Vineyard, an island of gorgeous, windblown beaches and villages of white picket-fenced houses. Oak Bluffs is a busy harbour overlooked by quaint cottages and inns. Relive your childhood on Circuit Avenue by riding the Flying Horses Carousel – the country's oldest merry-go-round – before tucking into buttered lobster at a posh restaurant. You're now in Massachusetts, a state characterised by forest, lakes, granite hills and valley farms that finally give way to the ocean in places such as Cape Cod, which is a kaleidoscope of shimmering ponds and beaches decorated with driftwood.

A visit to Massachusetts, however, is also the chance to enjoy one of America's most attractive cities, Boston. Follow the Freedom Trail and learn about the significant role Boston played in the fight for American independence, then explore the attractive and easily-walked North End and Beacon Hill neighbourhoods. The city also has great shopping, excellent museums and cultural life and, with all its university students, has a vibrant nightlife too. Boston is also home to

the Red Sox baseball team. A game at Fenway Park stadium, complete with razzmatazz, star-spangled banners and hotdogs, provides a great American sporting experience.

Just up the Massachusetts coast, Gloucester is a no-nonsense working town, yet made interesting by its Portuguese immigrant population and large artists' colony. Cape Ann Historical Association, with ship models, paintings and absorbing historical photographs, provides a good insight into America's oldest seaport.

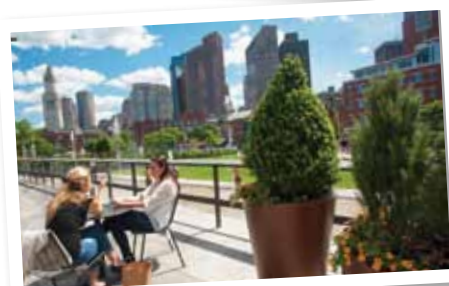
Set your sights next on New Hampshire, a state of granite outcrops and country lanes, rivers and broad beaches. In autumn, pumpkins fatten and dahlias nod in friendly fashion from cottage gardens. New Hampshire only has 30 kilometres of coast, but there are dramatic views towards the distant White Mountains, which sailors once mistook for clouds. Turn inland and you'll find tough, independent-minded but friendly folk, keen to talk about hunting, fishing and their dislike of big government. They live in a place of spectacular mountain scenery, which you can admire by walking sections of the Appalachian Trail.

Further to the west, Vermont is the only New England state without a coastline, but instead you get the rolling Green Mountains that run towards the Canadian border; Route 100 is a beautiful drive, especially in autumn. Towns such as Plymouth, the state capital at Montpelier, and old-money, nineteenth-century Woodstock are delightful.

Finish your exploration of New England in forest-dense Maine, whose long coastline, gazing towards strings of islands, is the best of the lot. The old port of Portland is a charming example of the coast's pleasures: wander out along Eastern Prom Trail for fine bay views, or head to Portland Head Light, an historic 1790 lighthouse commissioned by George Washington. Rockland on Penobscot Bay is also highly scenic. The former fishing town has a new arty lease on life, with quite a reputation for its jazz and lobster festivals. It's certainly the place to try traditional lobster bake or Maine mussels if you haven't already been tempted.

Last stop before Canada should be Bar Harbor, a once-grand Victorian-era resort whose old-fashioned stores along meandering streets retain an air of yesteryear in spite of the increasing encroachment of souvenir shops. Enormous nineteenth-century villas nestle among the town's trees.

Bar Harbor is the access point for the jagged coastline and granite cliffs of Acadia National Park, the only national park in New England. You might spot whales blowing in the Atlantic and eagles drifting overhead in a fitting finale to America's beautiful northeast corner.



Images above © Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism



© Maine Office of Tourism



© State of Vermont

AIRBNB EXPANDS OUTSIDE THE HOME



SEEMINGLY not content with having disrupted the accommodation sector alone, Airbnb has branched outside people's houses and into the sightseeing and touring arena.

Billed as the "most significant" development in Airbnb's eight-year history, Trips is a "people-powered platform designed to make travel both easy and magical," the US-based company declared.

"Until now, Airbnb has been about homes," Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky said in late November when launching the Trips portfolio which spans three key areas – Experiences, Places and Homes.

Trips aspires to "make travel magical again", Chesky said. The Experiences element encompasses around 500

handcrafted activities in a dozen cities around the globe, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami and Detroit in the US.

Experiences are designed and led by local experts, and vary from a single activity to immersive multi-day activities, such as learning about and driving classic cars in Malibu. There are numerous other options focused on sports, food and wine, entertainment, fashion, wellness, nature and other areas.

Under Places are a range of hundreds of thousands of locations that Airbnb's "community of trusted insiders" recommends as hidden gems within their city described as "an alternative to aggregated tourist lists that funnel people to the same places".

Complementing the collection are Airbnb's

Insider Guidebooks, listing 100 suggestions for experiences such as the perfect route for a marathoner and the locations of up-and-coming chefs. Initially, there are six Insider Guidebooks for Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit, Havana, Nairobi and Seoul, with more to come.

Also being rolled out in L.A. and San Francisco (as well as Paris, London, Tokyo and Seoul), Airbnb has also partnered with Detour to offer a selection of experiential audio walking tours enabling house-sharers to "discover neighbourhoods in a totally unique and authentic way".

So where to next for Airbnb? Watch this space for the company's expansion into Flights and Services in the future.

New way to L.A.?

FLIGHTS from Australia to Los Angeles via Vietnam are on the radar, with Vietnam Airlines plotting to introduce a new service from Ho Chi Minh City starting 30 October 2018. According to papers lodged with the US Government, Vietnam Airlines is seeking permission to commence a daily non-stop service from the Vietnamese

city using new state-of-the-art Airbus A350-900 aircraft.

Los Angeles is one of a number of destinations in the US that the SkyTeam member carrier is hoping to add, with San Francisco, New York, Seattle and Dallas/Fort Worth also being considered for the future, along with Vancouver,

Montreal and Toronto in Canada.

Vietnam Airlines' A350s will be configured with 305 seats spread across a three class cabin (29 in Business, 36 in Premium Economy and 240 in Economy).

Currently, Vietnam Airlines operates from Sydney and Melbourne to Ho Chi Minh City and the capital, Hanoi.

SUNSET BOULEVARD COMES TO LA AIRPORT

THE newly unveiled Terminal 6 at Los Angeles International Airport has brought elements of Sunset Boulevard to the world's seventh busiest airport. Activated in late-October, the redesign of the 40-year-old structure has seen more than 6,705m² of space transformed into 21 new retail and dining destinations and common area improvements.

Los Angeles World Airports, Westfield and six operating partners injected US\$70.5million into the T6 project, which complements the remodelled T2 which opened in February.

Inspired by the iconic Sunset Boulevard that weaves its way through Los Angeles County from the coast to downtown, the Terminal 6 experience is spread across the existing terminal components, with its winding hallways and varying elevations, in a design that mirrors the landmark route.

The concrete walls and metal finishes after the TSA checkpoint are similar to Downtown L.A., while a new ribbon ceiling and terrazzo floor leads travellers into the 'Sunset Plaza', flowing into the 'Sunset Strip' and 'Garden Terrace' zones, home to high-end retail and



local dining akin to West Hollywood.

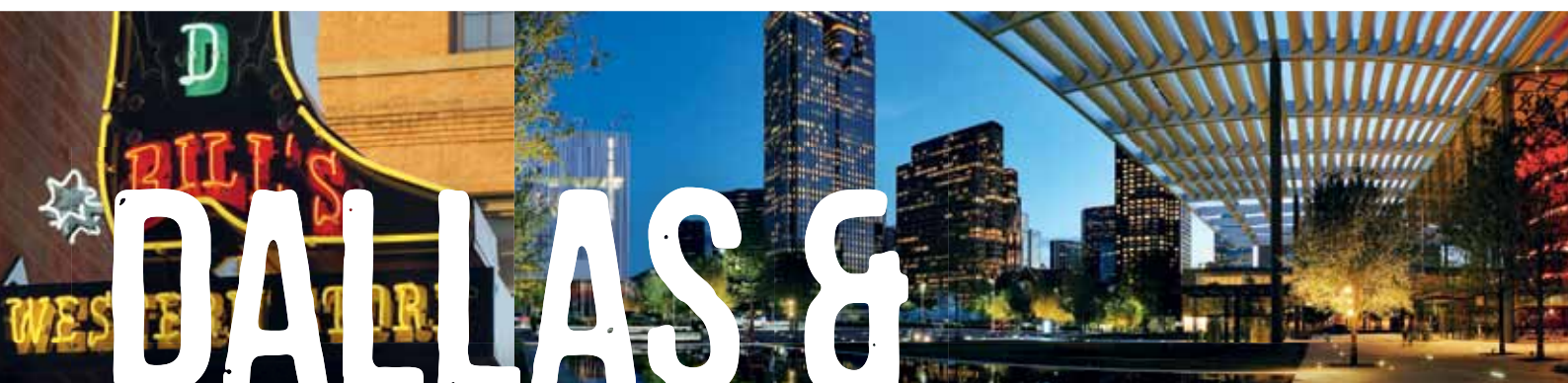
"We're infusing the culture and spirit of Los Angeles into LAX," Westfield's Vice President Keith Kaplan commented.

New eateries include Californian inspired earthbar, Blu2o and The Habit Burger Grill, complemented by The Marketplace by Wolfgang Puck, Osteria by Fabio Viviani and Wahoo's Fish Taco. Sample craft beers

from a local brewery at Point the Way Café, a hot beverage from Peet's Coffee & Tea or order a favourite from either of the two Starbucks locations.

For last minute retail therapy, there's M.Fredric, TUMI and Belkin outlets, along with a number of small retailers.

■ Keep abreast of changes at LAX by visiting www.LAXisHappening.com.



GATEWAY TO TEXAS AND THE SOUTH - RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE USA



Experience Texas hospitality, great food and music plus some of the best museums and galleries in America.

DALLAS
BIG THINGS HAPPEN HERE

FW FORT WORTH
City of Cowboys and Culture

USA Visit
TheUSA
.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION www.visitdallas.com www.fortworth.com

ENTERTAIN THE FAMILY IN LA

There's no shortage of attractions and experiences to keep the family on their toes when in Los Angeles. The obvious drawcard is Disneyland Resort in Anaheim. It's been entertaining people of all ages from all corners of the world for more than 70 years and is still labelled the 'Happiest Place on Earth'. But beyond Disneyland, what are some of the top family destinations to take in?



MEDIEVAL TIMES

ENJOY an evening of entertainment and frivolity at Medieval Times' Castle in Buena Park. The family-friendly dinner attraction is inspired by an 11th century feast and tournament, taking place in an indoor arena surrounded by stadium-like seating. Guests are assigned one of six colours which corresponds with a knight and his steed, allowing them to cheer him on as he competes in jousting and hand-to-hand combat. Knights put their sword and horse skills to the test as the audience watches on, gorging (with hands only!) on a four-course meal fit for royalty.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

THE world's newest Wizarding World of Harry Potter opened in April. It's a scaled down version of what's on offer at Universal Orlando Resort, with the 3D Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey the stand out thrill ride within Hogwarts Castle. For a tamer option, try the Flight of the Hippogriff coaster which ends as quickly as it begins. If you've come this far and want to experience every ride in one day, purchase the Front of Line pass to fast-track queues. Don't miss Despicable Me Minion Mayhem, The Simpsons Ride and Shrek 4D. For the courageous kids, the 25m drop on Jurassic Park – The Ride river raft adventure won't disappoint.



GOOFY'S KITCHEN



OKAY, admittedly you haven't ventured far from Disneyland Resort yet, but the Disneyland Character breakfast is a must do for families. Food, glorious food! This isn't your traditional breakfast buffet. All the usual fare is here, but you'll also find Blueberry Cobbler, Banana Foster Crepes, Macaroni & Cheese, the stick-to-the-roof-of-your-mouth Peanut Butter & Jelly Pizza and much more. Food aside, the banter and giggles generated by characters (Goofy, Minnie, Chip & Dale and Pluto) in their interactions with children over the breakfast table is priceless.

SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN

FOR the family that thrives on thrills, the drive north through L.A.'s infamous traffic to get to Santa Clarita, the home of Six Flags Magic Mountain, is worth the trip. Dubbed the 'Thrill Capital of the World', the theme park has more than 100 rides and attractions to raise the adrenaline, including 19 world-class roller coasters. With ride names like Scream, Ninja, Goliath, Viper and Apocalypse in the line-up, guests know before they enter the gates they'll need to dose up on motion sickness tablets... or at the least have their brave pants on. There's



a stack of tamer rides for the youngsters too, including the gentle Magic Flyer, flying planes, pint-sized trucks & trains and the Grand American Carousel.

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER

NOT all of Los Angeles' big ticket attractions come with a hefty entry fee. The California Science Center offers free general admission to its permanent exhibit galleries – World of Life, Creative World, Ecosystems and Air & Space Exhibits, the latter being the home for the space shuttle *Endeavour*. Learn about human inventions and innovations, the life process of living things or immerse the kids (under 7) in hands-on experiences in the Discovery Rooms. Budding scientists can also get involved in 'Science Saturdays' (for a charge), held throughout the year and covering a suite of topics such as Light & Sound and Forensic Science.



Welcome to LAXtraordinary.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Airport is being reimagined with extraordinary architecture, world-class shopping, top L.A. chef owned restaurants, and passenger amenities with the traveller in mind—like free WiFi and charging stations throughout the airport.

Upon arrival at LAX Airport, electronic immigration kiosks now allow you to self-process your entry into the USA, so you can start enjoying your L.A. holiday even sooner!

For more information on LAX airport go to www.LAXishappening.com

DISCOVER
Los Angeles[™]



LAX
Los Angeles
World Airports



ISLE

Hoppers, Kiribath and Watalappan aren't words commonly heard in Australia, because many of us are yet to uncover the culinary delights of Sri Lanka. That looks set to change though, with an increasing number of food-lovers becoming privy to the country's rich food culture. Journeys centred around the island's vibrant epicurean experiences are now being offered by many touring companies such as Abercrombie & Kent, World Expeditions and Intrepid. Nathalie Craig reveals some of the food experiences not to miss when travelling in Sri Lanka.

RICE AND CURRY

A staple item you will see on menus across the country is 'rice and curry'. A description which greatly underplays what you're about to be served. Get ready for a heaped plate of rice with up to 15 accompaniments. These usually include an assortment of intensely flavoured meat, fish and vegetable curries along with dahl, pickles, sambols and pappadums. Sri Lankan curries are largely coconut based, brought to life with fresh curry leaves, coriander, cumin, fennel seeds, fenugreek, cardamom and generous amounts of fiery chilli. Traditionally these dishes are eaten by hand, with locals taking a ball of rice with their fingertips then gently mixing it with the spiced accompaniments. The technique is efficient, clean and looks deceptively easy. When travelling through Sri Lanka I tried it for myself in a local curry house, and my attempt came off rather ungracefully. While I strove to eat by hand throughout my journey, the locals are always more than happy to give foreigners cutlery.

■ **Where to try:** In a buzzing Colombo cafe while watching the life of island's capital go by.



of SPICE



EGG HOPPERS

These bowl-shaped pancakes made from a mixture of fermented rice flour, coconut milk and coconut water are a breakfast staple in Sri Lanka. At each hotel and resort I stayed in throughout the island, my first move at breakfast was to join the 'hopper line'. It's fascinating just watching the local chefs expertly ladle the batter into a small purpose-designed wok, swirling it to coat the sides of the pan before a fresh egg is cracked in the centre. The lid is then briefly placed over the top to lightly steam the hopper. Then it emerges, crispy around the edges, thicker at the base with a runny egg yolk in the centre. To tie the whole dish together a sambal of onions, chillies, lemon juice and salt is sprinkled over the top as a flavoursome garnish. They can also be served plain or with a range of different toppings such as dessert hoppers filled with fresh buffalo curd and treacle.

■ **Where to try:** For breakfast by the tropical coastline in Galle.

WATALAPPAN

Spiced Sri Lankan custard pudding known as Watalappan is one of my favourite traditional desserts. The sweet, which I learnt to make during a cooking school at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, is made by dissolving jaggery - a type of sugar - into water then adding coconut milk, cardamom, mace, cloves, rosewater, cream and eggs. The creamy, spice-rich mixture is then set in ramekins and topped with a handful of cashew nuts for crunch.

■ **Where to try:** Reward yourself with this classic dessert after a day hiking Sigiriya.

KIRIBATH

Kiribath is deeply seated in Sri Lankan culture. In fact, these creamy, diamond

shaped wedges of pressed rice soaked in coconut milk are often one of the first solid foods fed to babies. It is a staple dish at major ceremonial occasions like wedding ceremonies, New Year's Eve and religious festivals. Kiribath can be eaten any time of the day from breakfast buffets accompanied with sambal and curries to dessert time dished up with jaggery or delicious tropical bananas.

■ **Where to try:** At a traditional Sri Lankan celebration, such as Sinhalese New Year.

CEYLON TEA

Formerly known as Ceylon, Sri Lanka is one of the world's leading producers of tea. The lush mountains of the central highlands provide the perfect climate for growing the aromatic leaves. Arriving in Nuwara Eliya, one of the island's top tea growing areas, you will be greeted with incredible sights of the lush, panoramic tea plantations where you can spot workers expertly plucking the leaves by hand. We visited one of the tea processing plants where you can discover the process behind making tea from picking to packaging, and sample some of the country's finest brews. We learn that the loose-leaf teas contain the highest quality ingredients while lower grade leftovers referred to as the 'dust' are put inside tea bags. Sri Lanka's famous black Ceylon tea with its golden hue and delicate, fragrant flavour is essential to try during a visit to the region; as is the rare white Ceylon tea which is harvested once a year then rolled by hand and dried in the sun.

■ **Where to try:** Sip a cup of Ceylon tea overlooking the vibrant green tea fields of Nuwara Eliya.

Sri Lanka is a true delight for adventurous food lovers who are open to experiencing myriad bold and exciting flavours and textures which will no doubt awaken their senses.



NEIL PERRY MERGER

QANTAS food and wine consultant Neil Perry has merged his Rockpool Group of restaurants and burger bars with Urban Purveyor Group (UPG) to create The Rockpool Dining Group. The \$100 million deal has resulted in one Australia's largest restaurant collections with 47 venues under one umbrella.

UPG's 32 venues, including Sake, Fratelli Fresh and the Bavarian Bier Café, have now joined Perry's Rockpool, Spice Temple and Rosetta restaurants plus his Burger Project stores.

The amalgamation does not affect or include Perry's consultancy with Qantas or his flagship Sydney restaurant 11 Bridge Street (previously Rockpool 1989).

"After almost 30 years at the forefront of Australia's dining scene, this new partnership will give us the opportunity to grow into one of the world's largest, most recognised and most sustainable hospitality businesses," Perry announced on his blog.

"Our dining portfolio has bloomed overnight to encompass 15 incredible brands over 47 venues, and our family has grown from 1,000

to 3,000 – and counting".

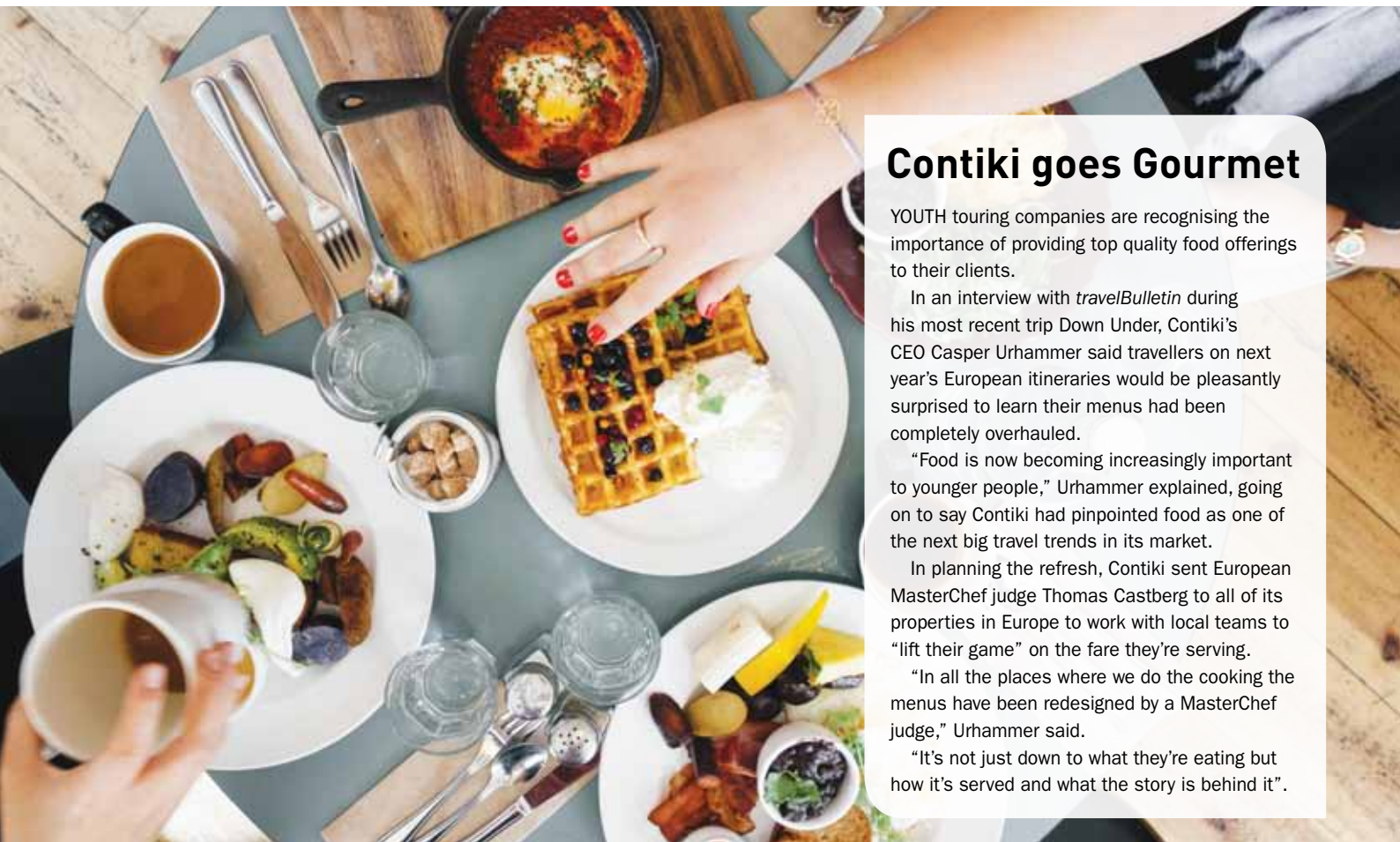
Perry has taken on the role of Head of Culinary, his business partner Trish Richards has joined the group's finance team while UPG's CEO Tom Pash continues as head of the new company.

Pash said the new hospitality group would grow from 47 venues to 80 within the next year. The team is already mulling opening its first overseas restaurant, with Perry noting he had wanted to open a restaurant in London for a long time

Within Australia there are plans in the pipeline for a Rockpool Bar & Grill in Brisbane, a new Rosetta at Grosvenor Place in Sydney as well as multiple new locations for fast-casual eateries: Burger Project, Fratelli Famous and Sake Jr.

Perry assured his customers that while there were "many exciting changes on the horizon, the heart of what we do each and every day will not waver".

"Rockpool Dining Group will continue to offer the same progressive approach to dining that we have forged," he said.



Contiki goes Gourmet

YOUTH touring companies are recognising the importance of providing top quality food offerings to their clients.

In an interview with *travelBulletin* during his most recent trip Down Under, Contiki's CEO Casper Urhammer said travellers on next year's European itineraries would be pleasantly surprised to learn their menus had been completely overhauled.

"Food is now becoming increasingly important to younger people," Urhammer explained, going on to say Contiki had pinpointed food as one of the next big travel trends in its market.

In planning the refresh, Contiki sent European MasterChef judge Thomas Castberg to all of its properties in Europe to work with local teams to "lift their game" on the fare they're serving.

"In all the places where we do the cooking the menus have been redesigned by a MasterChef judge," Urhammer said.

"It's not just down to what they're eating but how it's served and what the story is behind it".

MACAO A MICHELIN-RATED DINING DESTINATION

MACAO has increased its standing as one of the world's top dining destinations, with 19 restaurants earning Michelin Stars in the hot-off-the-press 2017 edition of the Michelin Guide to Hong Kong and Macau.

The Grand Lisboa's two premier restaurants Robuschon au Dome and The Eight retained their three-star status while Feng Wei Ju and Mizumi rose from one to two-star standings. Feng Wei Ju specialises in Chuan-Xiang fare, a spice-laden cuisine from Sichuan and Hunan, while Mizumi is headed up by three revered Japanese chefs who have their produce flown in fresh each day from Japan.

The region's one-star rating list grew to 12 with Cantonese restaurants Lai Heen, Ying and Pearl Dragon each earning a star for the first time. They joined restaurants King, 8 1/2 Otto e Mezzo, Shinji, Terrazza, The Golden Peacock, The Kitchen, Tim's Kitchen, Zi Yat Heen and Cantonese fine dining eatery Wing Lei, located inside the Wynn Macau.

Macao's quality and affordable street food was also recognised in the guide with 12 eateries scoring Bib Gourmand Michelin ratings. Those awarded include Lord Stow's Bakery, which is renowned for its Portuguese-tarts, Fong Kei Pastelaria and Mok Yee Kei where durian ice cream is said to have originated.

General manager of the Macao Government Tourism Office Australia and New Zealand, Helen Wong, told *travelBulletin* that with the imminent opening of new international hotels such as The Wynn Palace and Studio City there would soon be even more Macao restaurants aiming for stars.



MELBOURNE TO HOST 50 BEST

MELBOURNE has been named as the host city for next year's World's 50 Best Restaurants awards.

It is only the second time the event has been held outside of London, with New York the only other city to have the honour of hosting the highly esteemed event.

The night of nights, where the best restaurants in the world for 2017 are revealed, will be held at Melbourne's historic Royal Exhibition Building on Wednesday, 05 April.

‘The elite of the culinary world will descend on the Victorian capital for the celebrations’

The elite of the culinary world will descend on the Victorian capital for the celebrations.

The week from 31 March to 09 April will be a buzzing time for the city with a plethora of epicurean activities

and events being held such as once-in-a-lifetime masterclasses featuring some of the 50 best chefs.

The awards tie in neatly with Tourism Australia's global focus on promoting the country's exceptional culinary experiences, through its Restaurant Australia campaign.



Colchagua Valley, Chile

Let your clients get a real taste of South America.



CONTOURS TRAVEL
Since 1975

1300 135 391
contourstravel.com.au

WILL TRAVEL FOR FOOD

Now, more than ever, people will travel for food. Restaurant bookings are becoming almost as integral to trip planning as securing accommodation and transport. We have selected five of the most unique and forward thinking restaurants in the world which are worth planning your journey around.

OSTERIA FRANCESCANA, MODENA, ITALY

VOTED as the World's Best Restaurant this year by a panel of almost 1,000 gastronomic experts, a dining experience at Osteria Francescana is reason enough to jump on board a long-haul flight to Italy. Head chef Massimo Bottura uses his creativity, passion and fine culinary skills to reinvent traditional Italian food. Signature dishes include the renowned Five Ages of Parmigiano Reggiano featuring parmesan of five ages and textures as well as his subversive, deconstructed Oops I've dropped the lemon tart dessert (pictured). The restaurant itself has three elegant dining rooms decorated with contemporary artworks.



EL CELLER DE CAN ROCA, GIRONA, SPAIN

THE three brothers behind this world-renowned restaurant bring their talents as chef, sommelier and patissier together to create a truly special dining experience. El Celler is off the beaten track in Girona, over an hour out of Barcelona. The custom-built restaurant is a wine lovers dream boasting some 60,000 bottles in the cellar. The cuisine is traditional Catalan with local ingredients combined with molecular gastronomy techniques. Some of the most talked about courses include the amuse bouche which arrives in the form of a Bonsai tree (pictured), langoustine with cocoa bean sauce and a marinated red mullet with figs and prickly pear foam.



NOMA, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

YOU'LL find Rene Redzepi's gastronomic mecca tucked away inside an old whaling warehouse in Copenhagen. It is here that Nordic cuisine has been revived using contemporary cooking methods. Foraged produce is the star of the menu where deceptively simple sounding dishes will blow you away with their incredible textures and flavours. Noma will only remain in its current location until the end of 2016 before the team moves to a new space in the city with room to build an urban farm.



NARISAWA, TOKYO

NARISAWA'S head chef Yoshihiro Narisawa combines classical French techniques with fresh, sustainable Japanese ingredients at his sleek Tokyo restaurant. A set menu comes printed on a small booklet made from rice paper and explains the philosophy behind Narisawa's food. Some of the restaurant's creative offerings include Bread of the Forest in which the uncooked bread rises at the table over several courses before being baked tableside in a stone pot. Another unique experience is the Essence of the Forest course (pictured) where the forest floor is created with Japanese herb tempura, the bark is the skin of the Jerusalem artichoke, while the orange is a kumquat.

ELEVEN MADISON PARK, NEW YORK, USA

HOUSED inside an art deco building, Eleven Madison Park offers a seasonal tasting menu celebrating local ingredients. Diners can expect eight to 10 courses of creative fine dining which puts a New York twist on modern European fare. Co-owners Will Guidara and chef Daniel Humm say their restaurant is about creating amazing experiences for people both through the food and service. Favourites on the menu include the honey and lavender roast duck and butter poached lobster.





LATAM Airlines debuts new menu and wine list for its Premium Business class showcasing **Latin American produce**

The new inflight menu incorporates local ingredients from each country where **LATAM** operates and features special dishes for each route. Attention has been paid to ensure that the quality and origin of the ingredients are respected, so that passengers can enjoy the best representation of the produce during their flight.

The new menu and wine can be enjoyed in the Premium Business cabin on the LATAM's 787-9 from Sydney to Santiago, via Auckland seven days a week.

 latam.com  1800 212 572

 Like us on facebook.com/LATAMAustralia

LAN  is now  **LATAM**

THE UNSUNG PHILIPPINES

Its 7,000 islands are home to some of the most spectacular locations in Asia, yet somehow the Philippines often seems overshadowed by some of its neighbours, writes Jon Murrie.

IT WAS once among the most popular destinations in the region – boosted by its big English-speaking population and close ties to the United States – but in more recent decades the Philippines has been overtaken by the rise of holiday spots like Bali and Thailand.

Whatever the reasons, the Philippines still offers all the ingredients that make for an idyllic Asian getaway - white beaches, lush rainforests, bargain shopping and bustling street life.

And if you scratch the surface, you soon find the Philippines offers perhaps more than many of its counterparts - an extraordinary diversity in landscapes and traditions, a centuries-old Spanish legacy in architecture and religion, remote locations untouched by mass tourism, and a gregarious culture that at times seems more akin to Latin America than Asia.

This sprawling archipelago could easily rank among the most varied and fascinating destinations in Asia. The big question is: where to start?



If there's one location in the Philippines that already has a well-established international profile, it's the tiny island of Boracay, about an hour's flight from Manila.

Its vivid blue waters and powdery sands are among the most beautiful in the Philippines, often earning the island a place on lists of the world's best beaches and top tropical isles.

The epicentre is a 4km stretch of sand known simply as White Beach, fringed by a lively throng of bars, restaurants and nightclubs that give Boracay its reputation as a party town (though compared to other places in Asia, Boracay still has a relatively laid-back vibe).

Scattered around the coast are the colourful wooden 'banca' boats familiar in fishing ports throughout the Philippines. Some still ply local waters gathering seafood, while others take visitors on excursions to swim, snorkel or dive on nearby reefs.

Swirling clouds of fireflies, strange alien-looking primates and cartoonish landscapes make Bohol one of the most distinct islands in south-east Asia.

Located near the centre of the Philippine archipelago, Bohol is a more rustic alternative to other islands, but what it lacks in glamour is made up for in other charms.

The island's best-known resident is a primitive primate, the tarsier, a tiny mammal with owl-like eyes and alien features. Endangered and almost impossible to spot in the wild, they can be seen at a sanctuary and research centre near the town of Corella.

Bohol is also known for its Chocolate Hills (pictured), a range of grassy domes looking like a cartoon backdrop, lush and green through the wetter months but brown (and almost chocolatey) during the dry.

Another natural phenomenon is the island's swarming population of fireflies, found along several rivers where they turn on a night-time show of swirling lights. Boats depart from locations including Loboc to cruise among the best viewing points.



The towering limestone peaks that rise abruptly from turquoise waters around El Nido make this one of the most breathtaking locations in the Philippines.

Its dramatic geology is similar to places like Vietnam's Ha Long Bay, but in this uncrowded island location the air and water are refreshingly clear and the chance of having entire bays or beaches to yourself is high.

Located at the northern tip of the island province of Palawan, El Nido is positioned alongside Bacuit Bay whose waters form the largest marine sanctuary in the Philippines.

Sea creatures like turtles, dolphins and tropical fish are prolific and the diving around scattered coral reefs is superb.

From just a handful of eco-resorts, visitors set out aboard wooden banca boats to explore the intricate coastline with its lush green mountains, soaring cliffs, limestone karst outcrops and hidden lagoons.



Image courtesy G Adventures



Jeepneys in Intramuros, Robin Zebrowski

At first glance Manila shows little of the glitz of cities like Hong Kong or Bangkok, but amid its jumble of high-rise buildings is a character unlike most other Asian centres.

Shaped by war, uprising and colonial powers, it has a history spanning centuries and is one of the few places in Asia where Baroque architecture can be found amid modern towers.

Its old town Intramuros (meaning 'within the walls') dates back to the first Spanish settlement of 1571 and still retains its defensive walls, fortress and narrow cobbled streets, despite being extensively damaged during World War II.

Museums like Casa Manila provide an insight into the architecture, décor and lifestyle of the colonial era, while old churches like the Baroque San Agustin look as if they've been transplanted from Europe or South America.

Elsewhere Manila takes on a more modern face, like the shopping and business district of Makati where many of the city's five-star hotels and international boutiques are located.

OTHER DESTINATIONS

BANAUÉ – In the central north of the main island of Luzon, Banaue is known for its superb vistas of steep mountain rice terraces, listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

CEBU – A central island province and home to the Philippine's second metropolis Cebu City. It is best known for its beach resorts, handy to a major air hub.

VIGAN – Another World Heritage site on the west coast of Luzon, this city dates from 1572 and retains magnificent Spanish colonial streetscapes.

MOUNT PINATUBO – A cataclysmic eruption here in 1991 dominated world news, but today this volcano draws hikers to explore its ash plains and breath-taking crater lake.



Vigan, Philippines, Hectorio

PHILIPPINES BANKS ON UNESCO HERITAGE

THE Philippines is laying claim to the title of South-East Asia's centre of UNESCO World Heritage sites, with more listed locations than any other country in the region.

Six UNESCO sites are located in the Philippines, including three cultural sites and three in the category for natural significance.

The country's Tourism Attaché to Australia and New Zealand Norjamin Delos Reyes highlighted the sites as alternatives to resort destinations.

"Most people now know that our islands in the Philippines offer some of the most stunning beaches on the planet," she said. "However, in many ways the Philippines is still a largely mythical and undiscovered mystery."

Among the most spectacular of the UNESCO sites are the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, an ancient system of sculpted mountain landscapes older than the Colosseum of Rome.

Created by the Ifugao people between 2,000 and 6,000 years ago, they rise to an altitude of 1,500m and would span more than 22,000km if laid end to end.

On the same island of Luzon, another UNESCO listing covers the superbly preserved city of Vigan with its concentration of Spanish colonial architecture dating from the 16th century.

From a similar period, four of the Philippines' baroque churches share a joint UNESCO listing and date from the Spanish era between the 16th and 18th centuries, including the San Agustin Church in Manila built in 1586.

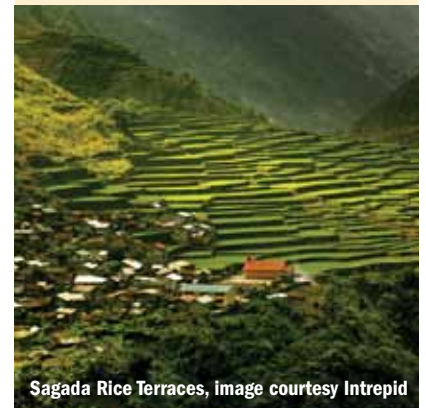
The natural UNESCO sites include the Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park, an intricate cave system with an underground river that emerges directly into the sea.

Also in a marine environment is the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Sulu Sea, a home to sealife including whales, dolphins, sharks, turtles and more than 350 species of coral.

The sixth listed site is the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in the east of Mindanao, home to endangered plant and animal species including the Philippine eagle and Philippine Cockatoo.

The unseen Philippines

INTREPID'S 11-day Philippine Discovery itinerary traverses the spectacular mountains and picturesque rice terraces. Setting out from the lively city of Manila, travellers will spend three days trekking through rice fields, forests and villages, staying in local communities. There's the chance to wind down along the way with a swim in a river, enjoy a massage from one of the locals and learn about traditional customs and culture. Next the tour heads into the scenic alpine mountains by jeepney, pausing in Bontoc, the capital of the Mountain Province before reaching Sagada. A three-hour walk will take visitors to the unique Hanging Coffins in Echo Valley, past a coffee plantation and to the Sagada weaving factory. During the tour travellers will also trek to the stunning Mt Pinatubo and spend a night camping by the summit crater lake. The 11 day trip is priced from \$2,265 per person.



Sagada Rice Terraces, image courtesy Intrepid

G Adventures calls into Port Barton

G ADVENTURES has added the village of Port Barton to its Southern Philippines Palawan Adventure itinerary. Travellers spend two-nights in the isolated paradise of White Beach, a 10-minute boat ride from the centre of Port Barton. There's the option to snorkel, hike through the lush rainforest to a waterfall or simply relax on the pristine beach and soak up the surrounds. The nine-day adventure operates as a round trip from Manila and starts with

a flight to Puerto Princesa for a tour around the town visiting Bakers Hill and the Iwahig Penal Colony. Travellers can explore the underwater cave of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park on an included tour. Later, the itinerary includes the chance to sight the large limestone karsts which emerge from the turquoise ocean at El Nido. The tour is priced from \$1,999 and has departures open for booking through to December 2018.





Fly farther with Cebu Pacific!

The widest network in the Philippines
with over 100 routes and 66 destinations!

36

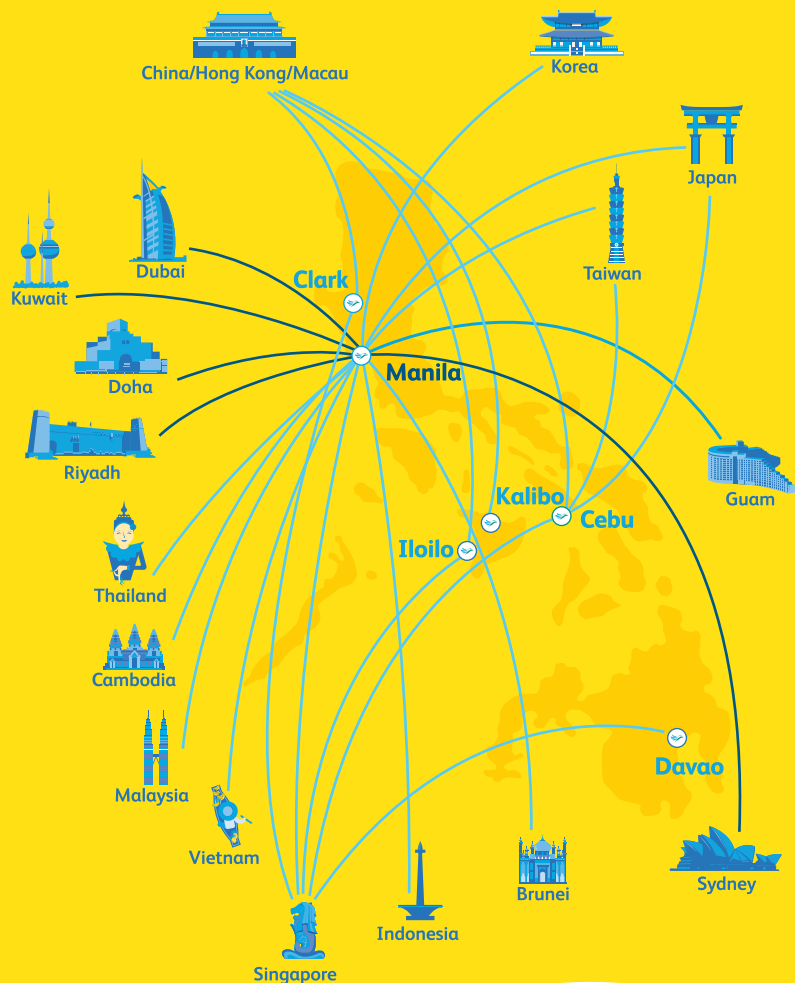
Philippine Destinations

Bacolod, Boracay (Caticlan), Busuanga (Coron), Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Calbayog, Camiguin, Cauayan (Isabela), Cebu, Clark, Cotabato, Davao, Dipolog, Dumaguete, General Santos, Iloilo, Kalibo, Laoag, Legazpi, Manila, Naga, Ormoc, Ozamiz, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, Roxas, San Jose (Mindoro), Siargao, Surigao, Tacloban, Tagbilaran, Tandag, Tawi-Tawi, Tuguegarao, Virac, and Zamboanga

30

International Destinations

Bali, Bangkok, Beijing, Brunei, Busan, Doha, Dubai, Fukuoka, Guam, Guangzhou, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, Incheon, Jakarta, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Macau, Nagoya, Osaka, Phuket, Riyadh, Shanghai, Siem Reap, Singapore, Sydney, Taipei, Tokyo, and Xiamen



Book now!

cebupacificair.com

Cebu Pacific Air

Just go!





LUXURIOUS LIZARD GETAWAY

The most far flung resort on the Great Barrier Reef and long the island of choice for celebrities and A-listers, the reborn Lizard Island is once again the pinnacle of barefoot luxury, as Sheriden Rhodes experiences.

ITS natural beauty with a sweep of fringing reefs circling a turquoise lagoon has long made Lizard Island a firm favorite with guests who return again and again. Add 40 decadent new villas boasting superlative beach views, attentive service, and the best of modern Australian cuisine, and the iconic island is once more the jewel in far north Queensland's crown.

Fresh from a \$45 million post cyclone makeover, we experience the best of Lizard's reincarnation, over a four-day stay. Our vast Anchor Bay Suite, decked out in beachy pale

blue and neutral tones is mere steps from the beach. Beyond the deck with its huge beanbag and oversized day bed, lush lawn rolls down to meet powder soft sand.

Later we wade through Lizard's languid waters, which lap Casuarina Beach. A private picnic has been set up in the shade so we can play castaway on one of the most exquisite beaches on earth. We're joined by fellow guests from the UK, who gape at our idyllic surrounds in disbelief. "This is pretty special, even for Australians, surely?" they say to me: more as a statement than a question.

One of Lizard's boats dropped us off at the secluded beach, which also goes by the name of "Turtle Highway", for a snorkel followed by lunch of sushi, seafood and fresh fruit. Sure enough, within minutes off donning mask and fins, I see my first green sea turtle feeding on sea grass, completely unfazed by my presence. Minutes later a second smaller turtle is seen cruising the shallows while

further along the beach at least another 10 are spotted. "Yes, this is pretty special, even for Aussies," I say, rejoining the English family.

The rebirth of Lizard Island, which first opened in 1975, was unfortunately fraught with setback after heartbreaking setback.

“A private picnic has been set up in the shade so we can play castaway on one of the most exquisite beaches on earth. We're joined by fellow guests from the UK, who gape at our idyllic surrounds in disbelief”



All photos courtesy Delaware North



It was weeks from unveiling its multi-million dollar rebuild after Cyclone Ita when, in a cruel twist of fate, it was battered yet again by Cyclone Nathan. The second cyclone delayed the reopening until June last year. Since the reopening, Lizard's new and expanded spa has debuted, along with the redeveloped Marlin Bar, completing a 16-month makeover. Work on the iconic Pavilion, with its spectacular 270-degree panorama of Anchor Bay, Osprey Island and Sunset Beach, is also complete. It's where Kate Hudson stayed, the actress famously referring to Lizard Island as "the most romantic place on earth".

One of the upsides of the cyclone is that every room now has a view of either Anchor Bay or Sunset Beach. It also allowed Delaware North, owners of Australian resorts including Heron Island, El Questro Wilderness Park and Kings Canyon Resort, to rebuild and relaunch the iconic Lizard Island as a completely new product.

The newly refurbished and redesigned villas and suites by Hecker Guthrie have a contemporary beach chic feel rather than opulent luxury. Designed in collaboration with OVP Architects, all rooms feature B&O sound systems, plush beach towels, Parisian La Biosthetique amenities and artwork by Melbourne artist Sally Ross. Set atop a ridge are the new Sunset Villas, some of which come with plunge pools overlooking the Coral Sea, while the newly finished Villa has two bedrooms, a butler's kitchen, luxurious deep bath, a spacious deck and a private infinity plunge pool overlooking two beaches. There's simply no bad room to be found on Lizard Island.

Lizard remains primarily an adult's only island, with kids (six and over) allowed only during school holidays and a minimum age of ten at other times. But whenever you stay, it's easy to lose the crowds, given Lizard boasts 24 private beaches. Staff will pack you off

with a picnic hamper and your own motorised dinghy for private exploration above and below the Coral Sea.

During our short time there, we take a ride on a glass bottomed boat to see the giant clam garden, snorkel, collect shells along the beach and spend an inordinate amount of time in the water. Days start with a glorious pre-breakfast swim, are followed by incredible a la carte meals in Saltwater Restaurant by executive chef Mark Jensen, and end with sunset drinks at the Driftwood Bar where guests gather to share the day's adventures.

As we lap up the last of the golden rays spilling across Anchor Bay, extracting every possible moment from our short but sweet stay, we stroll the beach admiring another glorious Lizard sunset. A couple from the US recline on sun loungers with a glass of wine. "It doesn't get better than this," they say raising their glasses as we walk by. Seriously, it really doesn't.

STA pushes Western Aust

TOURISM WA is zoning in on youth in the UK, US and German markets through a \$1.2 million partnership with STA Travel.

The marketing campaign will promote Western Australia to 25-35 year-olds in key markets and see STA travel agents trained on the state.

“Traditionally, we have targeted an older demographic through our marketing activities but we have seen potential for growth in the youth and working holiday maker sectors,” Tourism WA Acting CEO Gwyn Dolphin said.

The push will also include bloggers writing about their travel experiences in WA; extra content in the STA consumer brochure; use of the Just Another Day in WA assets; presence on the STA website and point of sale material in STA shops in the UK, US and Germany.



AN INCREASING number of Aussies are opting to leave their passport at home and explore their sunburnt country.

“We’re having a great year for Australian tours – we released our brochure for 2017/18 in Sep and our bookings year-on-year are up significantly,” Liz Crowley, Scenic Journey Designer for Australia told *travelBulletin*.

“[Australians] still want the big overseas adventure but they don’t want to do that every year,” she said.

South Australia has seen a spike in

popularity lately, as a focus on food and wine entices travellers to visit the likes of the Barossa Valley.

“Everyone wants to see our icons, but for Australians who can see the Opera house every day, it’s the other things we have that they want to go and discover,” Crowley explained.

The safety factor also comes into play, Crowley said, noting overseas events may play a part in travellers delaying overseas travel in favor of domestic.



Senior Marriott International officials visit W Brisbane site.

MORE W’S TO AUSTRALIA

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts’ boutique W Hotel & Resort brand – now operating under parent company Marriott International - is set for expansion in Australia beyond its Brisbane

property, currently under development and scheduled for opening in 12 months.

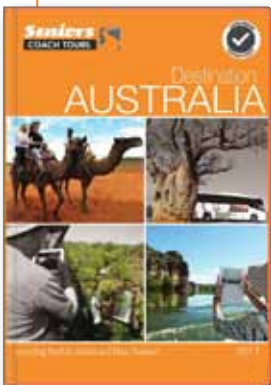
Letters of intent have been signed in two Australian “gateway” cities for additional W

properties, Marriott International’s area vp Australia/NZ & Pacific Sean Hunt confirmed to *travelBulletin*. Unable to specify the locations, Sydney and Melbourne are clear favourites, with the ‘Ribbon Hotel’ at the site of IMAX Darling Harbour already rumoured to be on the cards.

The ‘W’ hotel brand isn’t new to Sydney, having adorned the finger wharf landmark location at Woolloomooloo for a number of years before then rebranding as Taj Blue Sydney and now Ovolo.

Marriott International’s president and managing director Asia Pacific, Craig Smith is very bullish about growth for the group in this area. The hotel heavyweight now has 24 properties in its portfolio in this region and has deals in place for an additional 18 properties. Growth falls under Marriott’s ‘Pacific 50’ goal, targeting 50 hotels in Australia/NZ/Pacific by 2020.

Other new developments already “coming out of the ground” include Ritz Carlton in Melbourne, The Westin Brisbane and the Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Central Park. The Marriott Fiji at Momi Bay, south of Nadi, is also slated to open by April 2017.



RECENTLY released is the Seniors Coach Tours massive 148 page Destination Australia brochure, featuring a fantastic range of 'Stayputs' around Australia including Norfolk Island, Hobart, Port Stephens, Port Douglas and more. The brochure also includes special event holidays such as 'Opera in the Alps', Canberra Floriade, Floral Festivals of Spring and Christmas in the Blue Mountains. There is a great selection of outback adventures as well as a section on New Zealand touring options.



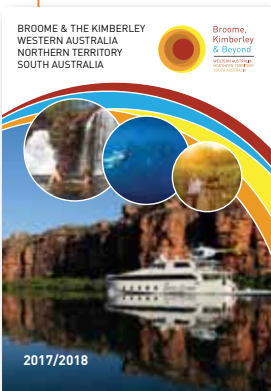
THE Contiki Asia 2017 brochure covers 10 countries with 14 itineraries and sees five new programs added for the young traveller. New itineraries for 2017 include 'Laos & Cambodia Uncovered' – a nine-day discovery trip visiting amazing sites such as Angkor Wat temple at sunrise. And the 12-day 'Japan – City to Slopes' tour visits Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto finishing with three days skiing at the Hakuba mountain resort area. Tours stay in 3-4 star hotels with Wi-Fi and pools.



HOT off the presses is the Busabout Asia 2017 program. New for 2017 is the Thai Island Moon Party itinerary, where travellers will enjoy boat trips to secluded beaches before heading to the renowned Moon Parties. The brochure sees the re-introduction of Burma, visiting jungles and temples in this unique destination. Busabout trips have group sizes no larger than 28, they use private air conditioned transport and stay in 2-3 star hotels.



THE latest offering from World expeditions is its 2017-18 Polar brochure showcasing voyages to the polar regions of Antarctica, the Arctic and the Russian Far East. A range of new voyages are on offer including a remote cruise across the Arctic Circle taking in the Scottish Isles and the Norwegian coastline. The active itineraries give travellers an immersive experience with the chance to observe polar wildlife in their natural habitat as well as spectacular wilderness scenery.



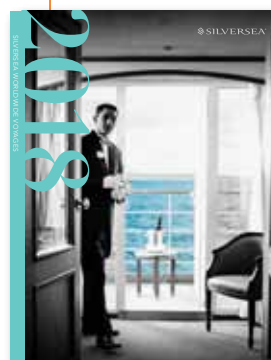
BROOME, Kimberley & Beyond's 2017/18 brochure has just hit the stands packed with cruising, touring and accommodation options for Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia. Featured in the brochure is a section dedicated to self-drive packages for destinations such as the Gibb River Road, Uluru and Kangaroo Island. To celebrate the new brochure, Broome, Kimberley & Beyond is giving away Coles Myer gift cards to agents who book from now until 31 December 2016.



GRAND Pacific Tours has just released its combination Cruise and Coach Tours brochure for 2017-18. The 16-page brochure once again sees GPT partnering with Celebrity Cruises to offer exclusive itineraries combining a cruise on *Celebrity Solstice* with a scenic coach tour. Tours range from 19 to 27 days with guaranteed departure dates between November 2017 and February 2018 and offer excellent value for money with an extensive range of inclusions - such as most meals and 4 star hotels.



THE NEW Europe's Finest brochure, a collaboration between Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, contains eight luxury itineraries including two new journeys to France and along the Dalmatian Riviera. New for 2017 is the 19-day Elegance of England & France tour visiting rural Dorset, the Channel Island of Guernsey and then a Seine River cruise on Uniworld's new S.S. *Joie de Vivre*.



SILVERSEA Cruises has unveiled its 2018 Voyage Collection brochures. With over 850 destinations covered in the extensive array of itineraries passengers can discover any part of the world from iconic cities to uncharted territories. Silversea Expeditions visit places such as the Arctic Circle, Antarctica and the Galapagos Islands. Smaller ships get guests closer to shore and allow them to explore destinations while maintaining the Silversea luxury standards.



How do you solve a problem like Marica?

MARICA Salpietro from italktravel Kensington was singing from the mountaintops when she found out she was the winner of the Austrian National Tourism Organisation and Emirates competition run in *travelBulletin* last month. Marica's well researched Austrian rail itinerary earned her a trip to Austria herself, flying Emirates. She will get the chance to explore Vienna, Salzburg and Tirol, staying in the Austria Collection Hotels which Marica picked in her competition entry.

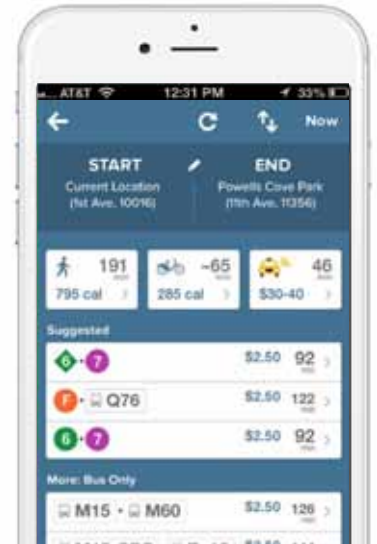
APP HAPPY



NAVIGATING our own home cities can be challenging, so imagine how much harder it is in a foreign one! Nobody likes to seem like a tourist, but inevitably, travellers will spend precious moments of their trip poring over train timetables and maps, when they could be out exploring a fantastic new city.

Citymapper is here to solve this.

The nifty app offers a more detailed journey planner than even Google Maps, including real time departures and disruption alerts, as well as Uber integration and cycle routes, along with the price of each option. So now you can seem like a local and navigate New York's subway system like a pro. Citymapper is free on the iOS and Android app stores.



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle is provided by www.sudokuoftheday.com

		7	4			6		
			7					9
2		4	3					
3			8					2
7	4						8	3
	6				4			1
					1	3		9
	7				9			
		8			3	1		

Funnies Flashback



We love trawling through the *Travel Daily* Window Seat archives, because we always seem to come across some crackers. Here are some gems from 2005:

TRAVELLERS to Austria can now take advantage of new one day ironing courses for men. The courses are being offered across Austria with the theme 'A real man knows how to iron.' Organisers say three types of men have enrolled in the courses so far: bachelors, men wanting to impress their girlfriends or wives, and men who have just split up from their partners. The course includes breakfast, ironing lessons and wine tasting and to make it more challenging students compete in timed events to see who can beat the buzzer and still have a perfectly ironed shirt.

A RUSSIAN hotel has come up with a novel way of attracting guests – free reindeer parking. The hotel is situated in the northern city of Nadym where the main industry is reindeer farming. The parking lot additions come just in time for the major Northern Sports competition which includes the fabled Reindeer Cup.

Run your travel business your way, with our unique national and local support

We're looking for passionate, experienced travel professionals who want their customers to have the ultimate travel experience.

Join Australia's premium travel network and receive unrivalled support from a national partnership office and state based business managers.

TravelManagers provides the latest tools, comprehensive training, and extensive financial incentives to help you make your business a success.

If you're looking for a brighter future and want to run your own business, have a chat with us, and find out why we lead the way.



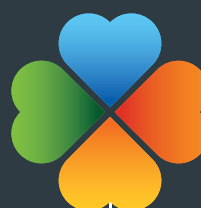
TravelManagers Australia's premium travel network

Have a confidential chat with us today.

Email graciela.craig@travelmanagers.com.au

Call **1800 019 599**

Visit join.travelmanagers.com.au



Travel
Managers
As individual
as you are



**Congratulations to all of the 2016 ITG Forum award winners!
And a big thank you to all those who attended
& helped to make this year a great one.**



To view all winners visit:
www.independentagents.com.au

