

Young guns take position



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RIVER CRUISING
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From the managing editor Bruce Piper

THERE'S no doubt the Australian travel industry is going through a quiet period. A plethora of high season not-so-early earlybird offers, tactical deals and creatively packaged product is evidence of a soft market, while both Qantas and Virgin Australia have both issued updates confirming their forward bookings are slower than expected, each citing a dip in consumer confidence in part due to the uncertainty relating to next month's Federal election.

It is cold comfort, but some will be reassured by indicators that the downturn appears to be right across the market. Even the seemingly unstoppable Flight Centre cited a "challenging trading climate that has impacted short-term results" at an investor conference in May. Industry observers have noted a change in Flight Centre's rhetoric, with the company for the first time in memory saying its targeted net profit growth of 4-8% was "not a formality" due to uncertain trading conditions and investments made to drive longer-term returns. The respected John O'Shea, travel and tourism analyst with Bell Potter Securities, has raised the issue of Flight Centre's shop network, which while the biggest contributor to group earnings also has a relatively high fixed cost base. His analysis indicates that the traditional Flight Centre branded stores in Australia "appear to be delivering negative like-for-like TTV growth".

Helloworld is still basking in the afterglow of its merger with the AOT Group about four months ago, with new CEO Andrew Burnes undertaking significant restructuring which should improve the bottom line. There's still lots of work to do, and a soft trading environment certainly won't be helping, but Burnes flagged an increase in TTV to between \$5.3 billion and \$5.4 billion in the next financial year due to the AOT merger and improved trading conditions within QBT. Nevertheless at the recent Helloworld for Business (HFB) conference in Singapore, Helloworld head of associate networks David Padman revealed the HFB division had grown by nine new members to a total of 73 agencies over the last year – an increase of over 10% – while at the same time "in a pretty tough year we have grown our turnover year on year by 2%".

So if business seems to be slow, you're not alone. The good news is that the fundamentals are still good. Outbound departures continue their relentless rise and O'Shea said he "remains confident the current slowdown is likely to prove transitory".

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Ian McMahon's perspective

THE ELECTION: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

IT MUST surely be deemed cruel and unusual punishment to have a 56-day federal election campaign inflicted on us immediately after enduring all the flim-flam, verbiage and "expert" prognostication surrounding the Federal Budget.

However there is one great advantage to the shenanigans associated with the process that enables us lucky Australians to have a say in the way we are governed. By the time all the stunts, picture opportunities, spin-doctoring, posturing and general windbagery have ground to a halt on July 2, no one should be able to legitimately complain they are in any doubt as to where candidates stand on the issues that are important to them.

The "what's in it for me?" test, sometimes described as the hip pocket nerve, is one way of deciding what issues are important for us and already there is clarity on the issue of business tax.

The Coalition is offering progressive tax cuts for small businesses with turnovers of up to \$10 million. The Labor Party, to its credit, has not attempted to fudge the fact that it will confine the lower tax rate to businesses with turnovers of \$2 million or less. For the travel and tourism industry, overwhelmingly comprised of small businesses, the choice is stark.

On the personal taxation front, the

meagre cut offered to those earning over \$80,000 introduced in the Budget seems unlikely to have much impact on voting intentions but it is a sop to stemming bracket creep and will go some way to underpinning disposable incomes and consumer confidence.

On the other hand, yet another round of extensive changes to superannuation – however justified some measures may be – carry the risk of undermining the confidence of retirees, one of the industry's most important market sectors. This is especially true of the startling (for a Coalition Government) decision to introduce an element of retrospectivity.

On wider industry issues, we have entered the election campaign with Tourism Australia funding intact and no increase to departure tax. However the costings of both sides seem to be based on optimistic revenue projections and the industry should be seeking ironclad guarantees that things won't change after the election if (when?) these projections fall short.

And there is one "hot button" issue the industry should be pursuing relentlessly through the hurly burly of the election, and that is the now deferred "backpacker tax". We need to persuade our politicians to drop this "Not Welcome" sign to the lucrative youth market on a permanent basis.

Big win for Danii

THIS month sees Sydney travel industry personalities Donna and Brian Meads-Barlow host the annual Jelly Bean Ball – a massive fundraising effort for type 1 diabetes sufferers which was created following the tragic death of their daughter Danii five years ago at the age of just 17. The Meads-Barlows, who own and manage Helloworld member DBT Corporate/ Cruisescene, have become passionate advocates to prevent similar tragedies in the future, creating the Danii Foundation to support the introduction of Continuous Glucose Monitoring technology which can stop so-called 'dead in bed' syndrome.

After years of intensive lobbying the Foundation had a significant victory last month, with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull committing to a \$54 million election promise which will subsidise the rollout of devices to up to 4,000 Australian children and young people. The Meads-Barlows continue their efforts to improve the lives of type 1 diabetics, and have also welcomed the strong support of the industry including Helloworld which is a major sponsor of the Jelly Bean Ball.

Tickets to the black tie gala event, which is taking place at the Sydney Four Seasons on Saturday 25 June 2016, are available by emailing emily@dani.org.au.

Walshe takes Delta

THE Walshe Group last month confirmed it was taking over the Delta Air Lines gsa account in Australia, with the significant win seeing Delta switch from its long association with the Helloworld-owned Global Aviation Services. The move certainly makes sense, with Walshe having represented Delta in New

BUSINESS MONITOR

OUTBOUND MARKET

Top 10 destinations, March 2016

Destination	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Feb 16/ Mar 16	Trend Mar 15/ Mar 16
	000	000	000	%	%
New Zealand	111.7	112.5	123.6	+0.6	+6.5
Indonesia	103.8	104.0	97.3	+1.3	+10.9
USA	86.8	86.6	74.4	+0.1	+6.2
Thailand	43.6	46.7	47.2	+0.4	-5.7
China	38.6	41.3	47.0	+1.7	+7.9
UK	52.0	51.6	34.9	-0.3	+13.3
Japan	29.6	30.3	34.4	+0.8	+25.2
Singapore	30.7	31.9	31.3	+0.6	+1.1
Fiji	28.8	29.5	25.9	-1.8	+0.9
India	26.6	26.8	24.0	+1.2	+11.3
All outbound	821.4	830.9	773.4	+0.4	+5.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

INBOUND MARKET

Top 10 sources, March 2016

Source	Trend	Seasonally Adjusted	Original	Trend Feb 16/ Mar 16	Trend Mar 15/ Mar 16
	000	000	000	%	%
New Zealand	106.7	104.2	104.9	-1.0	-1.5
China	96.7	99.1	101.6	-0.4	+20.5
UK	59.4	59.3	87.7	+0.3	+4.1
USA	56.3	56.6	72.0	+0.5	+15.6
Japan	33.7	33.9	43.8	+2.3	+26.0
Singapore	34.6	36.0	37.2	+0.3	+10.3
Malaysia	29.4	30.6	30.8	+0.4	+8.9
Hong Kong	20.1	20.8	29.8	+0.8	+14.8
South Korea	24.0	24.0	24.7	+2.0	+30.2
India	19.7	20.1	23.5	+0.8	+0.0
All inbound	658.9	666.0	754.6	+0.3	+8.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

MAIN DOMESTIC ROUTES

Top 10 domestic city pairs at March 2016

City pair	Passengers YE Mar 15 (000)	Passengers YE Mar 16 (000)	% change
Melbourne-Sydney	8,402.3	8,703.4	+3.6
Brisbane-Sydney	4,429.5	4,544.6	+2.6
Brisbane-Melbourne	3,325.3	3,399.8	+2.2
Gold Coast-Sydney	2,569.2	2,680.5	+4.3
Adelaide-Melbourne	2,270.2	2,340.1	+3.1
Melbourne-Perth	2,146.4	2,140.9	-0.3
Gold Coast-Melbourne	1,762.7	1,861.4	+5.6
Adelaide-Sydney	1,818.0	1,855.9	+2.1
Perth-Sydney	1,783.4	1,762.7	-1.2
Hobart-Melbourne	1,433.0	1,499.1	+4.6

Source: BITRE

Zealand for more than 30 years, meaning the company has deep knowledge of the airline's network, product and services. Walshe will base the Delta representative office in Sydney, undertaking reservations, ticketing, sales and marketing, with additional GSA team members in Melbourne and Brisbane along with the existing NZ team in Auckland.

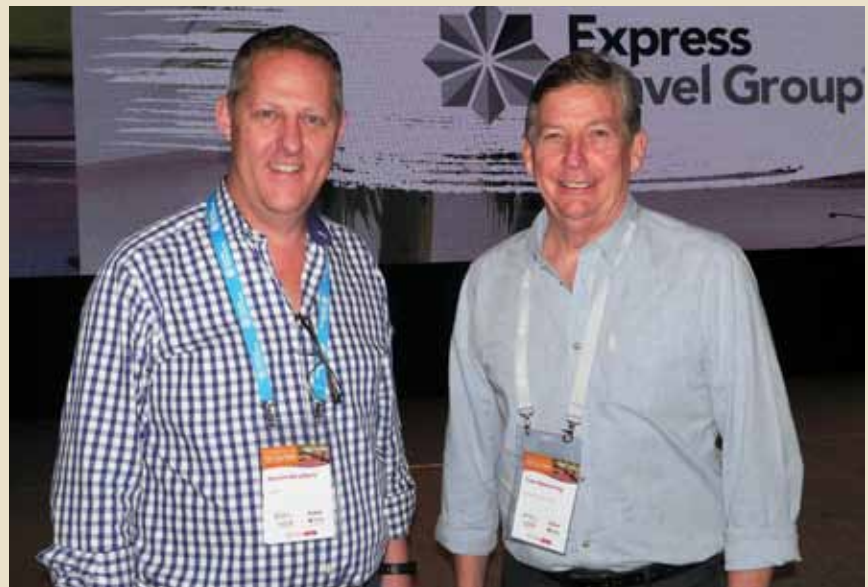
Delta's shift to Walshe looks to have come at a tricky time for the Helloworld representation businesses, World Aviation Systems and Global Aviation Services. Although the company isn't commenting, it's understood there is some sort of legal action under way and senior executives including general manager James Vaile and Gia Acitelli no longer appear on the World Aviation website.

Scenic in court

RIVER cruising gained some unwelcome publicity last month when the class action against Scenic Tours Pty Ltd brought by some aggrieved passengers affected by flooding in Europe in 2013 was heard in the Supreme Court of NSW. North Sydney-based law firm Somerville Legal is leading the charge, alleging Scenic knew its cruises were likely to be disrupted but still allowed passengers to travel all the way from Australia without giving information about the likely impact. Television reports on the hearing cited testimony likened the experience to a "second rate bus tour".

The case is now awaiting a final ruling, with Somerville and Scenic both submitting written arguments. Interestingly part of Scenic's defence is that it is not actually an operator of river cruises in Europe, but instead uses "independent contractors" – namely a German company called Scenic Tours Europe AG and Luftner Cruises AG – which may be true, but certainly creates

EXPRESS ON BOARD WITH AFTA



AFTA Chief Executive Officer Jayson Westbury was one of the keynote speakers at last month's Select Travel Group conference in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Westbury gave an overview of AFTA's recent activity including the strongly growing awareness of the ATAS accreditation scheme as well as ongoing negotiations with IATA in his role as chairman of the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance.

Westbury is **pictured** at the conference with Express Travel Group CEO Tom Manwaring, who is also a member of the Federation's board.

the impression the firm is trying to duck responsibility. The case may also have wider implications for how the industry deals with clients, with Scenic in part basing its defence on terms and conditions in its 2013/14 brochure which "appeared in small font on page 218 of a booklet comprising about 225 pages," according to court documents.

No river cruise stats

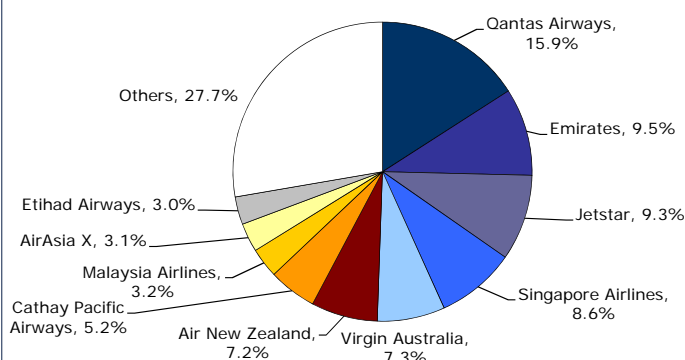
The integration of the former International Cruise Council Australasia into the global CLIA organisation has brought with it many benefits – but some local members of the

Continues over page

BUSINESS MONITOR

INTERNATIONAL AIR MARKET SHARE

International passengers by major airline – year ended February 2016



Source: BITRE

DOMESTIC AIR MARKET – March 2016

	Mar 15	Mar 16	Growth (%)	Yr to Mar 15	Yr to Mar 16	Growth (%)
Total pax carried	4.83m	4.97m	+2.9	57.34m	58.04m	+1.2
Revenue pax kms (RPK)	5.56bn	5.76bn	+3.7	67.59bn	68.50bn	+1.3
Avail seat kms (ASK)	7.31bn	7.49bn	+2.4	88.63bn	89.36bn	+0.8
Load factor (%)	76.0	76.9	+1.0*	76.3	76.7	+0.4*
Aircraft trips (000)	54.0	54.4	+0.8	633.6	638.1	+0.7

Source: BITRE * Percentage points

DOMESTIC ON TIME PERFORMANCE – March 2016

	Departures on Time		Arrivals on Time		Cancellations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jetstar	5,567	79.3	5,400	76.9	38	0.5
Qantas	8,375	87.5	8,521	89.0	95	1.0
QantasLink	8,845	85.8	8,913	86.4	268	2.5
REX	5,346	83.1	5,594	86.9	40	0.6
Virgin Australia	11,153	88.2	11,316	89.5	187	1.5
All Airlines	41,565	85.3	42,047	86.3	653	1.3

Source: BITRE

Continues from previous page

organisation are likely to be very disappointed at one outcome of the merger, which has seen river cruise figures no longer collated as part of the much-anticipated annual CLIA statistics. The change is part of a globalisation of CLIA which wants to have its figures directly comparable across regions – but ignores the huge significance of the river cruise business in Australia.

Last year's CLIA figures reported that about 70,000 Australians travelled to Europe to undertake a river cruise – not far off the 100,000 or so who took a European ocean voyage. While river cruising on a global scale is only a small blip on the radar for the ocean cruise giants, clearly that is not the case in Australia where it enjoys a much more significant market share in terms of both passenger numbers and cruise spending. Omitting river cruising from the figures looks to be short-sighted, impacting the relevance of CLIA to some of its most supportive Australian cruise line members. CLIA says it hopes to release a “more detailed stand-alone river cruise report at a later date” – something that is sure to be keenly awaited by the whole industry.

Value alliance launches

THE global airline business model continued to evolve last month when eight Asian low-cost carriers banded together to offer their products on a single website. Members of the new Value Alliance include Scoot, Tigerair Singapore, Cebu Pacific, Jeju Air, Vanilla Air, Nok Air, NokScoot and Tigerair Australia, with the site allowing customers to view, select and book fares and ancillaries from any of

the carriers in a single transaction. The site is based on new technology developed by a company called Air Black Box, which has filed for NDC certification with IATA.

The Value Alliance carriers collectively operate 176 aircraft across the Asia Pacific region, with the solution offering them stronger distribution in non-home markets, the expansion of networks via interline itineraries and a better one-stop shopping experience for customers.

Meanwhile Jetstar, which notably isn't part of the group, issued a statement touting its network which offers “the same product, level of service and flight experience across any of our airlines”.

TA fishing for visitors

TOURISM Australia launched an enhancement to its ‘Nothing like Australia’ campaign at last month's Australian Tourism Exchange, and this time it's all about fishing. TA managing

‘Fishing is one of Australia's biggest sports and leisure pastimes’

director John O'Sullivan told *travelBulletin* the move followed research which showed it was an area of “untapped tourism potential,” with more than 300,000 international visitors throwing in a line last year, representing 5% of all inbound tourists. “Fishing is one of Australia's biggest sports and leisure pastimes, but international awareness of just how much our country has to offer in this area is something we want to improve,” O'Sullivan said.

The appearance at Australian Tourism

Exchange by Australian Hollywood super-hunk Chris Hemsworth also set many hearts-a-flutter. Hemsworth, whose gravelly tones underscore Tourism Australia's latest campaign collateral, turned up at the official ATE welcome event where he gave a candid presentation about his favourite holiday spots in Australia.

Livn activities vision

TOUR and activity distributor Livn Group almost became listed on the Australian Stock Exchange last month, via a backdoor arrangement with resources minnow Capital Mining. The deal was pulled at the last minute, with Livn CEO Sean Cummins saying the proposal was “not the right fit”. However pundits are keeping a close eye on the company, with Livn expected to seek further opportunities to help fund its rapid expansion.

Livn has just launched a new virtual credit card payment system, which it says makes it the first major wholesaler to pay suppliers after a tour has been booked rather than up to a month after the date of travel. The move is a significant disruption to the tour and activity space, promising to boost the cashflow of the operators of the more than 12,500 instantly bookable tours and activities offered by Livn. Key suppliers include Intrepid, G Adventures, Gray Line and Pro Dive, with Flight Centre and Red Balloon among the company's retail partners.

Mantra heads to Hawaii

MANTRA Group, the accommodation business which grew out of the former Stella Travel & Hospitality, has gone from strength to strength since it became separately listed

BUSINESS MONITOR

INTERNET AGENCY MARKET SHARES

April 2016, compared with March 2016

Rank Position	Visits Share	Relative Diff	Rank
Websites	Apr 16	Apr to Mar	Mar 16
Webjet Australia	16.06	+4.35	1
Expedia Australia	10.34	-3.66	2
Wotif.com	8.48	+1.25	3
Skyscanner Australia	8.27	+5.79	4
Flight Centre	7.60	+2.09	5
Velocity Frequent Flyer	2.64	-5.13	7
Lastminute.com.au	2.64	-18.95	6
Luxury Escapes	1.79	+1.90	9
Cheap Flight Aus & NZ	1.68	-4.09	8
STA Travel Australia	1.37	+19.61	*

Source: Hitwise, a division of Connexity

INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES

Top 10 city pairs (at February 2016)

City pair	Passengers	Passengers	% of	% change
	YE Feb 15	YE Feb 16	total	15/16
Auckland-Sydney	1,492,200	1,554,327	4.4	+4.2
Singapore-Sydney	1,360,442	1,469,405	4.1	+8.0
Singapore-Melbourne	1,145,991	1,244,231	3.5	+8.6
Auckland-Melbourne	1,052,609	1,161,939	3.3	+10.4
Singapore-Perth	1,031,172	1,080,591	3.1	+4.8
Hong Kong-Sydney	912,902	1,002,000	2.9	+12.0
Auckland-Brisbane	924,277	971,069	2.7	+5.1
Los Angeles-Sydney	903,234	926,493	2.6	+2.6
Denpasar-Perth	917,821	852,463	2.4	-7.1
Singapore-Brisbane	795,645	805,365	2.3	+1.2
Top 10 city pairs	10,536,293	11,087,883	31.3	+5.2
Other city pairs	22,839,323	24,325,113	68.7	+6.5
ALL CITY PAIRS	33,375,616	35,412,996	100.0	+6.1

Source: BITRE

SHARE PRICES

at 19 May, 2016

Flight Centre (FLT)	\$35.41
Helloworld (HLO)	\$2.95
Webjet (WEB)	\$5.82
Disruptive Investments (DVI)	\$0.16
Qantas (QAN)	\$3.275
Virgin Australia (VAH)	\$0.282
Ardent Leisure (AAD)	\$2.205
Air New Zealand (AIZ)	\$2.15
Auckland International Airport (AIA)	\$6.10
Sydney Airport (SYD)	\$7.22
Corporate Travel Management (CTD)	\$14.29
Cover-More Insurance (CVO)	\$1.45
Regional Express (REX)	\$0.75
Sealink (SLK)	\$4.49

ICELANDIC IGLOO EXPERIENCE



BENTOURS took this group of Magellan consultants to Iceland last month, with CEO Damian Perry hosting them on an odyssey which included rotten shark tasting, the famous Blue Lagoon, helicopter rides and more. The agent participants included Margaret Ong, Seniors Holiday Travel; Tania White of Bentleigh Travel Centre; Figtree Travel's Claudia Crasnich; Sandra Ponton from Platinum Travel Corporation; Monica Ernst of Cairns Central Travel; Clare Duband of East Burwood Trfavel and Nathan Darke from Andrew Jones Travel.

Travel Daily HEADLINES

- 21 Apr** Big fines for drip pricing
- 21 Apr** Philippines tourism boost
- 22 Apr** italktravel adds three more
- 22 Apr** Fares up "substantially"
- 26 Apr** Travel agent passport plan
- 26 Apr** Trans-Tasman visa push
- 27 Apr** AFTA reveals NTIA finalists
- 27 Apr** Scenic class action in court
- 28 Apr** Emirates launches agent API
- 28 Apr** Carlson Hotels acquired
- 29 Apr** Qantas mulls 777X scope
- 29 Apr** *Ovation* extension on sale
- 02 May** Virgin confirms downturn
- 02 May** Scenic cruise guarantee
- 02 May** Virgin to reduce domestic capacity
- 03 May** GOH pushed out by OTAs
- 03 May** Govt names new air panel
- 04 May** Helloworld slashing costs
- 04 May** Agents still key for Hawaii
- 05 May** No limo transfers for QR
- 05 May** Walshe Group now representing Delta Air Lines
- 05 May** Livn withdraw proposed deal
- 05 May** MH adopts Amadeus Altéa
- 06 May** QHols Tango activation
- 06 May** Flight Centre's new IAPs
- 09 May** ABS addresses missing cards
- 09 May** World Journeys 18 pax max
- 10 May** Qantas boosts self-service
- 10 May** Mantra CEO joins TA board
- 11 May** NZ extends tourism vision
- 11 May** Air NZ 787s to Buenos Aires
- 12 May** DNSW review under way
- 12 May** QF/EK fulfil Tasman seats
- 13 May** Helloworld confirms departure of Peter Egglestone
- 13 May** QF VLI c'share off until Nov
- 13 May** HLO to push business brand
- 16 May** Fishing next big TA angle
- 16 May** New LCC alliance forming
- 17 May** "Value Alliance" takes off
- 17 May** Backpacker tax on hold
- 18 May** Ructions at World Aviation?
- 18 May** LATCB advertising blitz
- 18 May** Mantra to purchase the Ala Moana Hotel

on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2014. The company's brands include Mantra, Peppers and Breakfree, with the share price performing well and CEO Bob East enjoying a high profile as a newly appointed director of Tourism Australia. Last month Mantra spread its wings into the US for the first time, with a US\$52.5 million deal to take over the Ala Moana condominium hotel. Boasting more than 1,000 rooms, the property is adjacent to the well known Ala Moana shopping centre in Honolulu.

East said the acquisition was consistent with Mantra Group's strategy to selectively expand its presence in key offshore regions by purchasing properties in destinations favoured by Australian travellers.

Further acquisitions are expected by the group, which raised the funding for the Ala Moana deal via a \$100 million share placement, amounting to just over 10% of its issued capital. That means there's a fair chunk of change in the kitty to fund so-called "pipeline opportunities".

AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

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

Airport	Passengers YE Feb 15	Passengers YE Feb 16	% of total	% change 16/15
Sydney	13,364,367	14,180,820	40.0	+6.1
Melbourne	8,168,123	9,032,309	25.5	+10.6
Brisbane	5,037,910	5,279,837	14.9	+4.8
Perth	4,179,744	4,223,461	11.9	+1.0
Gold Coast	870,620	957,502	2.7	+10.0
Adelaide	962,316	860,431	2.4	-10.6
Cairns	465,524	565,855	1.6	+21.6
Darwin	305,368	259,697	0.7	-15.0
Sunshine Coast*	10,248	17,376	0.0	+69.6
Townsville^	n/a	17,079	0.0	n/a
Norfolk Island	11,396	11,793	0.0	+3.5
Port Hedland~	n/a	6,836	0.0	n/a
All Airports	33,375,616	35,412,996	100.0	+6.1

* 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

19 May 2016

New South Wales	1048
Victoria	751
Queensland	667
Western Australia	325
South Australia	237
Australian Capital Territory	52
Tasmania	40
Northern Territory	22
TOTAL	3142

Got something to say?

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



Steve Jones' say

OH, the challenges of being a wholesaler in today's travel industry. Barely four months ago Creative Holidays closed its doors. And now, another established player, Garuda Orient Holidays (GOH), has brought the curtain down on its 35-year-old operation.

It hardly needed general manager Beanca Daluz to spell out the reasons.

The nature of the industry has changed, she said which, as more people book online, "has made it difficult for travel companies to survive".

Creative – and many others – can testify to that. Yet it's only half the story.

Competition is increasingly tough for everyone, that much is obvious. But what links the demise of Creative and GOH is that both were generalists, selling packages to destinations that consumers are comfortable booking online.

The truth is unpalatable, and however ruthless it sounds, no one needs the likes of Garuda Orient Holidays anymore.

But it's not all doom and gloom for the

more traditional elements of the industry. For those firms who are able to differentiate themselves and offer something new or unique, or specialise in destinations that need the expertise or reassurance of a

‘What links the demise of Creative and GOH is that both were generalists’

wholesaler, the future may not be quite so dispiriting or bleak.

The closure of GOH is regrettable. But it needn't be a cause for too much hand wringing among wholesalers. Just so long as their product remains relevant.

MEANWHILE, flicking through the TV listings on my annual trip back to the Old Dart, I happened across a current affairs program called Dispatches. Titled the *Truth About Cheap Flights*, the 30-minute documentary took Flight Centre to task over

what appeared to be unethical and immoral practices adopted by some of its UK staff. The program alleged the agency quoted higher airfares to older, less informed customers (those who had not researched online) while an undercover reporter recorded staff discussing 'seat blocking', which involves accessing airline booking systems and placing cheap seats on hold so they are no longer available.

These could well be isolated incidents – as Flight Centre insisted they were. We can only hope that's the case.

Weighing up a customer, quizzing them on their knowledge before seeing what mark up they could get away with is clearly unacceptable and does nothing to instill trust in the wider agency community.

The Dispatches program inevitably sparked concern from other agencies that reputations other than Flight Centre were tarnished. I'm not so sure. But even if that is true, it is right to expose unethical practices even if it's inconvenient for those who play fair.

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SELECT GATHERS IN SAIGON

THE Express Travel Group (ETG) last month rolled yet more benefits for its VFR-focused Select Travel Group members at their annual conference at the Asiana Saigon

Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Express said Select members had traditionally survived and thrived via organic growth, but were now recognising the benefits of diversifying. Three major new platforms, some of which were revealed to ETG's Independent Travel Group and italktravel members at their Singapore gathering last year, are now being made available right across the group which describes itself as "Australia's leading independent, integrated travel business".

The new offerings for Select members include the Express Academy consultant training platform, the group's in-house Express Performance business management system, and the Book Safe Agent insolvency insurance



‘Our vision has been to be Australia’s leading independent, integrated travel business’

policy for agents, which Select Travel Group members can now elect to take out alongside their fellow agents in the group's other brands.

The Express Performance system has been a project led by executive general manager Ari Magoutis, and is available at no

cost to members in the first year, with the aim of helping them maximise their bottom line.

Key features include cost-of-seat measurement and transparent reporting of all revenue streams from air, land, insurance and cruise suppliers which promises to provide owners with a visual platform to launch marketing initiatives, training programs and professional development planning.

But it didn't stop there, with Express Travel Group CEO Tom Manwaring also launching a new multilingual TV commercial as part of a multi-channel brand campaign to promote the Select Travel Group. "Our vision has been to be Australia's leading independent, integrated travel business," he told *travelBulletin*.

"The Select Travel Group of agents is unique, not only in its travel markets but also in its customer travel needs. This campaign, as with many we have run across the last 30 years, will drive new business through our members' doors at no cost to them," he added.



AFTA VIEW

Jayson Westbury, chief executive AFTA

TOURISM ON THE AGENDA

WELL it's official, we will be having a Federal Election on the 2nd July and all members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate will have to stand for re-election. So the race for the "Lodge" is on with both leaders starting very quickly to outline what they will do and what they believe they can achieve if elected.

At the time of writing this for *travelBulletin* the polls had both parties neck and neck and by the time you are reading this article it could be anyone's guess as to how things look leading into the election in early July. What is hoped by all is that consumers start to feel more confident with at least now knowing that the election is to be held and from a travel industry perspective, people can plan with this knowledge.

Both parties do appear to have tourism (by association travel) on their agendas as an industry of growth for the future. This is a key and important aspect to how the industry will be treated and hopefully further respected by whichever side forms government in the next parliament.

For years politicians of all flavours have spent their time talking up the resources sector and for good reason. Now they are all looking for the next industry that will drive the Australian economy and without question tourism and travel will be at the forefront of the narrative.

‘Both parties do appear to have tourism (by association travel) on their agendas’

In simple terms the tourism industry is a very big employer and set to be even bigger as more overseas visitors find their way to our shores and with the continued development and investment in assets, such as hotels, tourism really does matter. For the travel industry, this is a good thing as it will continue to push airline and cruise ship capacity, provide improvements in passenger facilitation, improve services in the tourism industry and all this supports the outbound travel industry greatly.

In fact, as I have said many times before and constantly remind politicians and bureaucrats, the travel and tourism industries are interlinked and intertwined. The two need each other to ensure that a robust end-to-end industry is in place in Australia.

As for policy announcements, strangely, given all that I have said already, I am not sure we can expect anything earth shattering or amazing to come from either side as we lead into the election about how they plan on really supporting our industry. The latest budget measures announced by the Turnbull government which include the reduction in the company tax rate still need to be passed into legislation. So the Turnbull government needs to win in order for them to come into effect. It is not completely clear what Labor will do with the budget and so we will have to wait until after the election to see exactly what happens. Such is the cut and trust of federal politics', budgets and federal elections.

No matter which way the election goes, AFTA will continue to make the case to ensure that the travel industry is not forgotten and that the important connection is made between the travel and tourism industry for the future of the Australian economy. Further we will ensure that whoever forms government ensures the tens of thousands of people who work hard every day in travel are not forgotten and that policies are developed that matter and make a difference for us all.

Helping People,

A Rewarding Lifestyle &

The Freedom to Travel



Three very good reasons why MTA - Mobile Travel Agent Maxine Adams chose to join the company. But ask her the biggest thing that makes her life most worthwhile – apart from never having to set an alarm clock - and the answer is always the same... **Making a real difference in someone else's life.**

"That's perhaps the greatest privilege of all," she says.

"It might be booking someone's honeymoon arrangements or that trip of a lifetime - it might even be assisting someone through an insurance claim or even helping with a family tragedy."

"It's hard to single out just one moment but I have come to realise how much I love to help and the little gestures, cards, notes of appreciation and referrals I receive as a result - and the sense of pride it gives me - always brightens my day."

For Port Macquarie-based Maxine the decision to join MTA seven years ago after following a variety of career paths – from TV programming and scheduling and working as a teacher's aide to running her own small business which proved the catalyst for daring to dream about running her own show.

"Running my own business showed me three key things.

It gave me more freedom to spend time with my family and travel, I wanted to work with people who needed and valued my help, I wanted to have my rewards matched to my efforts and I love travel."

And why MTA?

"That's exactly what MTA had to offer.

I like the family feel to the whole business and the transparent nature of the way things operate – and these reasons have not changed even though MTA has grown significantly."

"But I also value the fantastic work/lifestyle balance MTA provides, allowing me to do the job I love while still allowing me to be an individual."

And what has been the biggest change in Maxine's life since making the decision to join MTA?

"Put simply, I have never been happier – and best of all I can't remember the last time I set an alarm clock."

Ready to go mobile with MTA?

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LUKE NGUYEN – “I’M JUST A COOK”

IF THERE’S one thing that makes Luke Nguyen uneasy, it’s the term “celebrity chef”. The softly spoken restaurateur talked to *travelBulletin* during a recent APT river cruise in Europe, and understatedly described the amazing journey he has taken since launching his first restaurant in Sydney about 15 years ago, at the tender age of 23. Red Lantern, now described as “the world’s most awarded Vietnamese restaurant” was created because Nguyen had a passion to share the cuisine of his parents’ native country with Australians. He was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and ended up settling with his family in western Sydney where his passion for cooking was awakened.

Despite the denials of his celebrity status there is no doubt Nguyen is a star. He runs his own television production company which has created shows such as *Luke Nguyen’s Vietnam* and *Luke Nguyen’s France*, which are televised in 150 countries including on SBS in Australia. There’s also a second Red Lantern restaurant, and he has written four best-selling cookbooks. Oh, and by the way, he also runs a cooking school in Ho Chi Minh City and happens to be a judge on the Vietnamese version of *MasterChef*.

Nguyen is also an ambassador for APT – a relationship which grew from his own passion to experience Vietnam on a regular basis. “I used to close down Red Lantern each Christmas so I could travel,” he said. “People said I was mad to not open during the busiest part of the year. But eventually the customers who asked why I was closing wanted to come to Vietnam with me”.

In the early days he had five travelling companions but “every year it got bigger and bigger”. Nguyen eventually sought out a travel partner and the role with APT was born. “I wanted to find a partner to allow me to do what I wanted to do – offer real local



“People said I was mad to not open during the busiest time of the year”

authentic experiences,” Nguyen said.

He still personally escorts APT tours to Vietnam twice a year – taking guests to his favourite spots including a restaurant where insects are the staple food. He also develops menus for APT’s river cruise product in Asia, including its voyages on the Mekong and Myanmar.

His travel connections have also seen Nguyen linked with Etihad, where he is again

an ambassador and passionately spoke about the carrier’s commitment to fine dining in the sky. There’s also a relationship with Singapore’s Tiger Beer, with the portfolio all fitting into his self-description as a “gastronomic traveller”. It’s hard to imagine Luke fitting more into his busy life – but he and his partner are also now the proud parents of two baby twin boys.

What’s next? More travel certainly seems to be on the agenda, with Nguyen enthusing about a trip he conducted to Japan a few years ago where he visited all of the “Iron Chef” restaurants run by the stars of the famous cooking show. “It was just a one-off, but I’d love to do more of that sort of thing,”



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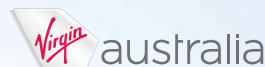
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THERE have been lots of changes to the way Norfolk Island is governed this year, but one thing that hasn't changed is the spectacular destination's appeal. From 1 July the Australian Government is extending Australian social security, immigration, taxation and government services to Norfolk, much to the consternation of some residents who fear the loss of their independence. However tourism remains a mainstay of the Norfolk Island economy, and Air New Zealand has joined with Norfolk Island Tourism to support a new program of "self-famils" for Australian travel agents.

Local operators will be offering complimentary accommodation and experiences, while Air NZ will provide a \$179 plus taxes industry fare and \$319 plus taxes friend fare for return flights ex Sydney through until 26 August 2016, and ex Brisbane up to 23 August 2016. To participate, express interest before 17 June by contacting Marion Belus at The Unique Tourism Collection for an application form.

Lido Group seals HRS deal

THE Lido Group has been a quiet achiever of the Australian accommodation scene, working over the last few years to build a strong network of corporate and government accommodation offerings as well as payment programs. The company, which currently works with more than 9,000 hotels across Australia and New Zealand, is set to launch onto the global stage, with German group HRS late last month announcing it had taken a minority shareholding in the company.

HRS, which offers end-to-end hotel management solutions to more than 3,000 businesses globally with clients such as Google and Alibaba, has more than 1,600 staff in 25 offices worldwide. Effective immediately, Lido and HRS will work together to share hotel content, integrate technology solutions and jointly service global customers, both directly and in partnership with key travel management companies.

Lido CEO Steve Mackenzie told *travelBulletin* the deal had been facilitated by clear cultural and business synergies, with both companies on "strong growth trajectories propelled by their unique hotel content, cutting edge technology and close relationships with valued corporate customers and leading TMCs".

Meanwhile HRS chief executive Tobuias Ragge said the investment in Lido was a major milestone in the company's expansion, allowing it to tap into the Australian market for corporate accommodation which is the seventh largest worldwide.



TTF VIEW

Margy Osmond, CEO,
Tourism & Transport Forum Australia

IT'S TIME TO TALK TOURISM

IT'S election season and the Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) is fighting hard on behalf of the sector to ensure that the visitor economy remains front and centre of the policy debate in the lead up to polling day.

We are, after all, one of the key super-growth sectors that is being called upon to do the heavy lifting of keeping the economy growing and the jobs coming for thousands of Australians as the mining boom ends.

Everyone in our sector can be an advocate for a stronger visitor economy and now is the time to be having that conversation with your local MP/candidates or even a Minister/Shadow Minister if they are popping into town for a photo op.

Politicians will be out in force in shopping centres, train stations, local events and even showing up on your front doorstep. Take the opportunity to tell them they need

‘Everyone in our sector can be an advocate for a stronger visitor economy...’

to be doing more to support the visitor economy – businesses, employees and travellers.

The latest ABS figures show that the tourism sector's direct contribution to the Australian economy was an impressive \$47.5 billion – or 3% of GDP. That is an increase of 5.3% which is

three times the growth of the total economy.

The tourism industry now directly supports 580,800 jobs (up 6.3%) and with related employment we are generating nearly one million jobs across the economy – that's a job for 1 in 10 Australians in the workforce.

Australia is now attracting more than one million Chinese visitors and they are spending \$8.3 billion a year – 25% of the total international visitor spend.

Doesn't that sound like an industry that a Government which wants to transition the economy to a services-based economy, should be backing more?

Our politicians can do that very easily by:

- Investing more money in Tourism Australia and its fantastic international marketing campaigns. Research shows that every dollar invested generates a \$15 return;
- Reducing the cost of visas for key growth markets like China. \$135 for a visa is not the best welcoming message;
- Maintaining the freeze on the \$55 Passenger Movement Charge which has become an almost \$1 billion holiday tax charged on everyone travelling out of Australia – or even better cutting the fee;
- Scrapping the planned 32.5% backpacker tax on working holiday makers and invest in training to help industry meet the 123,000 worker shortfall by 2020;
- Improving the visitor experience at the border with the roll out of biometric technology and automation and a stronger focus on getting the balance right between security and customer service. TTF will fight the good fight on the industry's behalf, but let's work to get the message out there together.

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TRAVEL AGENT AFFILIATE PROGRAM

HELLOWORLD TO PUSH BUSINESS BRAND



From left: David Padman, Head of Associate, Corporate and Affiliate Networks, Helloworld Ltd, Gareth Evans, CEO Qantas International & Freight, Qantas; Andrew Burnes, CEO and md Helloworld Ltd, Vanessa Hudson, Exec Manager - Customer & Commercial Relationships, Qantas and Neil Ager, Senior National Agency Manager, Agency Partnerships Customer & Commercial Relationships, Qantas.

THERE was a palpable energy in the room at last month's Helloworld for Business conference in Singapore, with the group appearing to very much appreciate a full and frank appearance by the company's newly minted CEO Andrew Burnes. Burnes' back-to-basics approach resonated strongly with the business owners and suppliers at the conference, who couldn't fail to be impressed by the strides the operation had already taken in the 100-odd days since he stepped into the role.

Burnes and Helloworld Head of Associate Networks, David Padman, outlined a number of key initiatives including a decision to promote the Helloworld for Business brand in its own right. The plan has already seen a new website launch at www.hwfb.com.au with an agent finder and details about the group, which is now in the process of being expanded to offer individual pages for each member. The site will be the call to action for a range of marketing campaigns, with the first step being full page advertisements taken out in the *Australian Financial Review* on the day after the Federal Budget was handed down, to formally launch the brand into the consciousness of Australian corporates.

The corporate-focused group's 73 members are a key contributor to Helloworld's business, with a \$1 billion plus TTV which

comprises almost 20% of the company's total turnover. The conference also saw the launch of a formal lead referral program, breaking down former "silos" within Helloworld so that, for example, SME connections made by QBT can be leveraged for the benefit of the Helloworld for Business network.

‘We are a value added distribution business that starts where the others stop – our vision is to be Australia’s best corporate travel agent and TMC network’

David Padman, Helloworld Head of Associate Networks

Padman also flagged the development of corporate-focused product, with high-end leisure comprising part of many members' operations. The Melbourne-based Carlton In Business partnership had already produced more than \$14 million in business for members, and Burnes flagged discussions about a similar arrangement with the National Rugby League as well as another unnamed sporting code.

A new alliance with worldwide TMC network GlobalStar was announced, along with a significant partnership with Serko which will see its new technology offering referring new SME clients to Helloworld for Business members. 60% of flights sold by

the group are in premium cabins, with an array of airlines present at the conference to cement relationships, including Qantas which was a major sponsor and had Gareth Evans, CEO of its international operations, as a keynote speaker.

Padman touted the benefits of Helloworld

for Business, comparing them to the offerings of rival groups. "A buying group will buy for you – but our value proposition does that for you and it does so much more. We are a value added distribution business that starts where the others stop – our vision is to be Australia's best corporate travel agent and TMC network," he said.

During the closing session of the conference Burnes inspired delegates with an upbeat assessment that opportunities are everywhere, with the corporate brand truly something to be proud of. "We are committed to making the words 'We're a member of Helloworld for Business' really mean something," he said.

Discover that there's more to NORFOLK ISLAND



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Norfolk Island Tourism are inviting travel agents to discover the wonderful dining experiences, wellbeing, adventure activities and living history in their own time on a short break away alone or with a friend.

AIR NEW ZEALAND 

Air New Zealand is supporting an agent Self Famil Program with special fares from now to end of August.* Local Norfolk Island operators will be offering complimentary accommodation and experiences so guest trade partners can discover "There's More to Norfolk Island."

To apply, contact Marion Belus at The Unique Tourism Collection on: info@uniquetourism.com



To learn more about Norfolk Island please visit: www.norfolkisland.com.au

* Conditions apply, subject to availability. Agents can fly for \$179 (plus taxes) industry fare and \$319 (plus taxes) friend fare for return flights ex-Sydney from 13 May to 26 August 2016 and ex-Brisbane from 14 May to 23 August 2016.

2016

NATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARDS FINALISTS



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

- Flight Centre
- Helloworld Limited
- Student Flights
- Travellers Choice

Category 2 | Best Non Branded Travel Agency Group

- Express Travel Group
- helloworld for business
- Magellan Group

Category 3 | Best Travel Agency Retail – Single Location

- Bicton Travel
- FBI Travel
- Gippsland Travel Centre
- helloworld Lane Cove
- italktravel Hillarys

Category 4 | Best Travel Agency Retail – Multi Location

- Escape Travel Toronto, Charlestown, Kotara, Glendale and Mt Hutton
- helloworld Hunter Travel Group / RACT Travel
- helloworld Mackay and Mt. Pleasant
- MTA – Mobile Travel Agents
- TravelManagers Australia

Category 5 | Best Travel Agency Corporate – Single Location

- Goldman Travel Corporation
- helloworld Newcastle Corporate
- Sanford International Travel
- Spencer Travel
- The Journeymasters

Category 6 | Best Travel Agency Corporate – Multi Location

- Platinum Travel Corporation
- Reho Travel
- Stage & Screen Travel Services
- Travel Beyond Group
- World Travel Professionals

Category 7 | Best National Travel Management Company

- American Express Global Business Travel
- BCD Travel Australia
- Corporate Travel Management
- FCM Travel Solutions
- QBT

Category 8 | Best Online Travel Agency (OTA)

- Cruise Guru – www.cruiseguru.com.au
- Luxury Escapes – www.luxuryescapes.com
- TripADeal – www.tripadeal.com.au

Category 9 | Best Business Events Travel Agency

- All Occasions Travel
- American Express Global Business Travel
- cievents
- Event Travel Management
- Platinum Event Solutions

Category 10 | Best Travel Consultant – Retail

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| • Deryk Neighbour | Flight Centre MET Centre | NSW |
| • Hollie McCann | Bicton Travel | WA |
| • James Jang | Where2Travel | VIC |
| • Jane Gannon | Allure Travel by CTM | QLD |
| • Lena Nielson | Flight Centre Bondi Junction | NSW |

Category 11 | Best Travel Consultant – Corporate

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| • Britta Gileno | Corporate Travel Management | VIC |
| • Mo Hosea | Carlson Wagonlit Travel | WA |
| • Sam La Rosa | Show Group Enterprises | NSW |
| • Tracy Dodsworth | Travel Counsellors Coffs Harbour | NSW |

Category 12 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Retail Single Location

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| • Debbi Ashes | helloworld Lane Cove | NSW |
| • Kobi Henderson | Flight Centre Sydney Airport | NSW |
| • Lindsay Doctor | My Adventure Store Randwick | NSW |
| • Maria Slater | Maria Slater Travel | ACT |
| • Melinda Leenman | italktravel Hillarys | WA |

Category 13 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Retail Multi Location

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------|
| • Bridie Clarke | italktravel Doncaster,
italktravel Glen Waverley,
italktravel East Doncaster,
italktravel Mt Waverley,
italktravel Fountain Gate and
italktravel & Cruise | VIC
NSW |
| • Louise Dann | helloworld Hunter Travel Group | NSW |
| • Mark van Huisstede | italktravel Maitland,
italktravel Rutherford,
italktravel Newcastle West and
italktravel The Junction | NSW |
| • Natalie Cherry | Noosa Cruise and Travel and
Cooroy Cruise and Travel | QLD |
| • Steve Bouyer | Where2Travel | VIC |

Category 14 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Corporate Single Location

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| • Cherie Drummond | Corporate Travel Management | NSW |
| • Digby Warren | Journeymasters | NSW |
| • Sean Simmons | Sean Simmons Travel | VIC |
| • Simone O'Malley | Carlson Wagonlit Travel | SA |
| • Tina Killen | Spencer Travel | NSW |

Category 15 | Best Travel Agency Manager – Corporate Multi Location

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| • Andre Moten | Corporate Travel Management | QLD |
| • Andrew Kemp | Corporate Traveller | SA |
| • Natalie Gulacsi | Carlson Wagonlit Travel | SA |

Category 16 | Young Agent of the Year

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • Brendan Ma | Carlson Wagonlit Travel | VIC |
| • Louis Teng | Ashmore and James Travel Associates | VIC |
| • Melissa Bevilacqua | Jetsetter Travel | QLD |
| • Samantha Lang | Escape Travel Hurstville | NSW |
| • Stephanie Hannaford | Show Group Enterprises Ltd | NSW |

Category 17 | Best Specialty Wholesaler

- DriveAway Holidays
- Infinity Cruises
- Insider Journeys
- The Africa Safari Co
- Wendy Wu Tours

Category 18 | Best Domestic Airline

- Qantas Airways
- Virgin Australia

Category 19 | Best International Airline – OnLine

- Air New Zealand
- Emirates
- Etihad Airways
- Qantas Airways
- Singapore Airlines

Category 20 | Best International Airline – Offline

- Air Serbia
- Finnair
- Lufthansa
- Swiss International Airlines
- Turkish Airlines

Category 21 | Best Cruise Operator – Domestic Deployment

- Carnival Cruise Line
- Celebrity Cruises
- P&O Cruises Australia
- Princess Cruises
- Royal Caribbean International

Category 22 | Best Cruise Operator – International Deployment

- Celebrity Cruises
- Princess Cruises
- Royal Caribbean International
- Seabourn
- Silversea

Category 23 | Best River Cruise Operator

- APT
- Avalon Waterways
- Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours
- Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection
- Viking Cruises

Category 24 | Best Tour Operator – Domestic

- AAT Kings
- APT
- Contiki
- Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours
- Topdeck Travel

Category 25 | Best Tour Operator – International

- APT
- Insight Vacations
- Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours
- Topdeck Travel
- Trafalgar

Category 26 | Best Car/Campervan Rental Operator

- Avis
- Britz Campervan Rentals
- Europcar
- Hertz
- Thrifty Car Rental

Category 27 | Best Tourist Office – International

- Dubai Tourism
- Hawaii Tourism Oceania
- Singapore Tourism Board
- Tourism Fiji
- Tourism New Zealand

Category 28 | Best Wholesaler – Australian Product

- Excite Holidays
- Infinity Holidays
- Qantas Holidays & Viva! Holidays
- Sunlover Holidays
- TravelCube

Category 29 | Best Wholesaler – International Product

- Excite Holidays
- Infinity Holidays
- Intrepid Travel
- Qantas Holidays & Viva! Holidays
- TravelCube

Category 30 | Best Agency Support Service

- AirTickets
- Cover-More Travel Insurance
- Express Ticketing
- Qantas QIC
- Travelport

Category 31 | Best Sales Executive – Industry Supplier

• Amy Gumbleton	Infinity Cruise	QLD
• Elizabeth Hutchinson	Air New Zealand	NSW
• Gareth Jarrett	Infinity Holidays	VIC
• Kelsey Martin	Infinity Holidays	NSW
• Michelle Nickelson	Finnair	QLD

Category 32 | Young Sales Executive – Industry Supplier

• Carla Troisi	Trafalgar	NSW
• Donna Reed	Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours	QLD
• Jonathan Chaparro-Zarate	South America Tourism Office	VIC
• Sarah Hoskin	Topdeck Travel	NSW
• Tom Heffernan	Topdeck Travel	QLD

Category 33 | Best Hotel/Resort Group

- AccorHotels
- Club Med
- Outrigger Resorts
- Starwood Hotels & Resorts
- The Leading Hotels of the World

Category 34 | Best Registered Travel Industry Training Institution

- Australian Pacific College (APC)
- Franklyn Scholar
- TAFE Queensland Brisbane (TQB)
- TAFE Sydney Travel & Tourism
- The Learning Collaborative (Travel Training Australia)

Category 35 | Best Travel Writer

- Alison Rooke
- Allan Leibowitz
- Bev Malzard
- Christine Retschlag
- Lee Tulloch
- Susan Henly

Category 36 | Best Travel Agent Technology Innovation

• Booking Engine	Excite Holidays
• Qantas Groups Website	Qantas Airways
• Sabre Red Apps	Sabre
• SureSave Travel Safety App	SureSave Pty Ltd
• Travelport Smartpoint	Travelport

Category 37 | Emirates Travel Consultant Scholarship

• Breeanna Perez	Globenet Travel/Clean Cruising	QLD
• Brett Kappler	Sean Simmons Travel	VIC
• Carly Lloyd	helloworld Old Reynella	SA
• George Hedley	Events Worldwide Travel	VIC
• James McHugh	Student Flights Barrack St	WA

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

• Discover Travel & Cruise	QLD
• Home Travel Company	TAS
• italktravel Hillarys	WA
• Kingscote Travel	SA
• Meridian Travel	ACT
• Weston Cruise & Travel	VIC
• Queanbeyan City Travel and Cruise	NSW



Katrina Barry



Anton Loeb



Rane Reguson

Young guns take position

You may have met them, heard of them or seen their brand and you're about to hear and see a lot more from these go-getters. JASMINE O'DONOGHUE zones in on the industry's young guns.





Julia van Huisstede

KATRINA BARRY

Managing Director at Contiki Holidays

STARTING out as a lawyer, the travel industry was not on Katrina Barry's radar.

"Thanks but no thanks" are the words she initially told a recruiter for Contiki.

"Isn't Contiki just a bunch of 20-year-olds on a bus going around Europe drinking?"

Later on, the recruiter called back and talked her into having coffee with the head of the company on the basis of "he's a Kiwi, you're a Kiwi and he wants you to know you are absolutely right. 25 years ago that's exactly what it was but it's not like that today and the reason why Contiki's still number one is they innovate every year. It's your generation that were the drinkers, Generation Y don't drink as much".

Still not entirely convinced, she took a trip to road-test the company for herself and one very skilled, culturally and historically sensitive tour manager later she was on board.

"I thought not only is this trip manager so skilled at bringing together this group of diverse people, he's made them all gel and bond in three days, that's really impressive. Secondly they're having the time of their lives and then for me, the meaning came in when he started to teach them about history and culture and social impact and that's when I went 'oh, okay, this is much more robust and well-mannered than I thought' and I went 'okay, travel industry here we go'."

Katrina's career prior to the travel industry – which she entered just over two years ago – spanned from a management consultant, to co-founding Virgin Active Australia.

Jumping between time zones can be a struggle for even the most practiced, and for Katrina, the biggest challenge of her role is jetlag. "My life looks really glamorous on Facebook and Instagram and my entire family and friends say 'do you ever work?' and I'm like 'darling I left the office last night at 11:30pm, I wasn't Instagramming that.'"

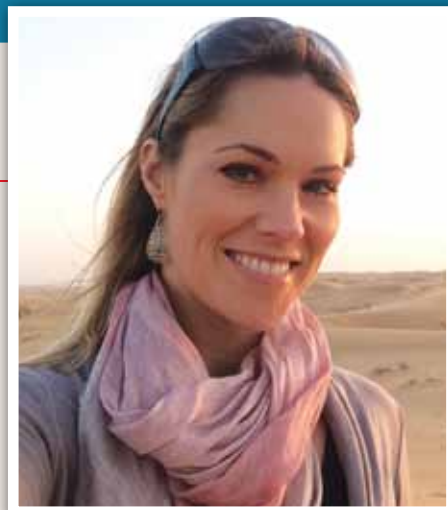
Katrina's trick to staying switched on while travelling is melatonin and Red Bull and her rule is to start adjusting to the new time zone the moment she's on board a plane.

Once she arrives in the country, it's straight to the hotel to freshen up, and then off to the office and about 3pm it's time for a Red Bull.

Aside from energy drinks, Katrina says she gets her kick out of watching her team grow and hearing customer stories.

"I hire for DNA and attitude. I don't really care about experience," she tells *tB*.

"Experience is useful but I have zero



interest in you if you've been in travel before and if you've done the role before. DNA and attitude for me is all about ethic and values so that's what I value... are you a Contiki person? And are you a curious, young at heart, energetic person?"

For those who yearn for success in the travel industry, Katrina has three tips.

"My key advice for anyone in any career is to find good soil," she says. "You can't grow and you can't blossom unless you're in a great environment.

‘I hire for DNA and attitude. I don't really care about experience’

"Two, greatness doesn't happen between 8:30 and 5:30 and I find that's a really challenging concept for Generation Y. I would say the strides I've made have been extra projects I've done outside of my hours or the little stuff like putting your hands up for things that's not part of your job.

"The third thing is you get paid in two ways in this world, with money and with experiences. The second is more important."

As for what's on her radar now, Katrina is firmly focused on keeping the 54-year old Contiki business strong. "I want to make sure Contiki's around for the next 54 years."

■ **First thing you do when you get into work:** I dump my handbag and grab my coffee cup, I get my cup of tea and walk around the office and say hi to everybody.

■ **Biggest challenge for the industry:** How to ensure that we evolve to meet customer needs, The customer has the technology and power now, and anyone can be a player in the value chain.

■ **How you unwind:** In all honesty, far too much red wine on Friday night and then I start the penance of yoga on the weekend.





JULIA VAN HUISSTEDE

Owner/manager of italktravel Newcastle West, The Junction, Maitland & Rutherford

A SELF-CONFESSED people person, ask Julia van Huisstede about her career and she will rattle off the names of those who taught her the ropes.

When she started out in travel 17 years ago, things were a little different. Julia spent her first six months volunteering at Harvey World Travel Castle Hill on weekends as “the junior with no seat”, writing bus and domestic tickets, sorting faxes, putting brochures away and typing confirmation letters for other staff.

Her hard work paid off, and she spent seven years at the agency, during which she was a multiple Qantas Holidays Achiever, a top insight Vacations seller and won numerous gold, silver and bronze HWT Sales awards.

She then spent time with Travelex and Jetset Travelworld, and in 2008 made the move to Newcastle to join her then-fiancé in his business, Hunter World Travel and soon opened the HWT Rutherford store.

Together with Mark (Julia’s now husband) and Karen (sister-in-law), the trio operate four retail outlets, now trading as italktravel.

“Hang in there” is Julia’s advice for other young guns. “This is such a rewarding career but you need to slog it out for a few years and get a repeat client base if you’re in retail travel and the only way to do that is to stay committed. If you’re in wholesale, learn from the more experienced retail agents and your superiors - they can, and will teach you a lot.

“Take on all the advice you can get, go on all the famils you get offered and attend all the training and supplier nights as you can never learn enough in this industry – the networking is great, the food and bubbles on offer are an awesome incentive and you sometimes get the chance to win a holiday!”

Julia has seen a lot of change in the industry and is certain things will continue to evolve. “When I started there was no internet, we hand-wrote tickets...and every morning I picked up a pile of paper off the floor as the fax had worked overtime during the night to print out all the early bird specials!”

In Julia’s eyes, the explosion of the internet has opened up the world.

“I haven’t really known a long career without the internet and to me, it’s an amazing tool,” Julia tells *travelBulletin*.

“There is more competition and we are now working with better systems, state-of-the-art platforms and all of this is a positive.”

Despite its challenges, Julia is confident travel retailing will continue from strength to strength. “People still come back to their local agency at some point,” she says.

“The internet was the biggest game changer, I am not sure what will top that but I know with technology it will continue to get better, easier and quicker in all aspects.”

The most challenging aspects of her role include dealing with things out of her control, such as world issues, the logistics of staffing

‘This is such a rewarding career but you need to slog it out for a few years and get a repeat client base if you’re in retail...’

and trying to know more than what clients learn off the internet - but she says harder (and more rewarding) by far is juggling work with motherhood.

■ **Most memorable moment:** working with Travelex when I was called in to attend the HWT Conference on the Gold Coast in December 2006, where I met my husband – I thank Kristie Raymond for being sick that day!

■ **Favourite part of the job:** Dealing with people, with my staff, my clients, our suppliers, our amazing franchise teams, the community and everyone else in between.

■ **First thing you do when you get into work:** Have a coffee! I also spend a moment to talk to the girls in the office.

SUE JOHNSON

Head of Retail Marketing for Flight Centre Europe

SUE Johnson is Flight Centre through and through. Having started out with Flight Centre’s Shopper Travel brand 11 years ago, she’s been climbing the ranks (minus a couple of short stints) ever since.

“What could be better than talking about travel all day?” is the mantra which led her to the industry and she’s certainly had a few career highlights since.

The Global Gathering in Las Vegas tops the list, followed by seeing Machu Picchu, but the stand out so far is her move to London in July last year to become head of retail marketing for Flight Centre Europe.

Having made a leap of her own, Sue’s advice to other up and comers is to “go for

that promotion, even if you aren’t 100% sure. Far too often we under-estimate ourselves”.

“And spend time with people you admire so you can learn as much as possible from them and they understand what you’re trying to achieve. I wouldn’t be where I am without the people that took a chance on me,” she adds.

After more than a decade in the industry, Sue says she’s yet to feel bored.

“Flight Centre is constantly evolving... and it’s also an environment where trying new things and challenging the status quo is encouraged. Those are the two things that keep me motivated.”

In her role, Sue says matching together a lot of moving parts can be challenging – but fun.

“There are a lot of moving parts. Lots of different media channels, different customer types and literally a world of destinations to promote,” she says.

Her biggest lesson yet is “done is better than perfect”.

“I’ve been guilty of spending too much time trying to get something ‘just right’ but by the time you get it out there you’ve missed the opportunity and it was all for nothing.”

Sue envisions the biggest change the industry is yet to come to grips with is the sharing economy.

“The trend towards share economy is already having a massive impact and it’s only in its infancy,” she says. “Things like AirBnB,

STEVE FARRELLY

Manager, trade sales at Rocky Mountaineer

ONCE an aspiring professional sportsman, Steve Farrelly's team mentality has crossed over into his everyday life.

"I strongly believe that business is a team sport, so I don't want to be the guy that lets my colleagues down. Family aside, that's a big motivation for me," Steve says.

Starting out as a tour director for Contiki, he took some time off to experience a ski season in Banff before returning to Contiki to lead tours up and down the East Coast of Australia and throughout the NT.

During his time with Contiki, the "boy meets girl" story kicks in and Steve moved to Canada as a Contiki sales rep, but after agreeing "Alberta winters were just too damn cold", Steve and his fiancé moved back to Australia in 2010, jumping over to another Travel Corporation brand, Insight Vacations.

Getting involved in many additional training courses and mentoring programs led him to complete an MBA at the University of Wollongong, and in August 2013, Steve became the national sales manager for Rocky Mountaineer (Asia Pacific). Steve has just relocated to Rocky Mountaineer's head office in Vancouver as manager of trade sales.

Over the years, the biggest lesson he has learned he admits he stole from Virgin CEO John Borghetti, who says the most important person for him is the parking attendant who opens the gates to his office each day.

"Without that guy turning up to work, nothing gets done, so be humble and grateful

to all involved in making your day a success".

In his 12 years in the industry, he has seen it become "obsessed with cruising" and businesses cut back funding for sales reps.

"I believe tourism is still a 'people industry' so it amazes me to see cuts to travel budgets, training budgets, conference attendance etc. There is a theory that you can host a webinar, or pre-record a training

‘Without that guy turning up to work, nothing gets done, so be humble and grateful to all involved in making your day a success’

module, but the companies that excel have a very comprehensive and robust sales team out on the road speaking to both the trade and front line consumer on a daily basis. I believe (product aside) that is their secret to success," Farrelly told *travelBulletin*.

Steve predicts social tourism – the ability to connect, share, and comment live from a destination, tour or cruise – will continue to expand throughout the rest of his career.

"This is a pro and a con. I would like to see people more engaged in their experience and living the moment, rather than being on their iPhone streaming the event, but I do see



the flip side that it's a fun thing to share with loved ones back home."

The most valuable trait in the travel industry is a passion for people and the desire to provide the best possible experience for the guest. "I think people who work in travel also have a unique ability to adapt to change," he says.

One thing Steve would like to see is recognition for the role travel and tourism plays in the economy and the multiplier effects that flow into local communities.

"It would be nice for tourism to receive the same level of national interest that mining or agriculture receives."

■ **Most memorable moment:** Winning the NTIA Best Sales Executive in 2012 was a very proud moment, but graduating with an MBA is something that I will cherish.

■ **First thing you do when you get into work:** Buy a coffee, greet the team, and look at the numbers.

while not for everyone, have definitely met a need in the market. Traditional travel retailers will need to find a way to embrace this – it's what customers want."

With all her experience, she still managed to face a few challenges of her own on her first overseas holiday to Thailand with her now-husband.

"For years I'd been telling clients not to get in unlicensed cabs, not to go into unmarked shops and to generally be wary," Sue says

"Within the first 24 hours I'd fallen for every trick in the book. We'd been given a tuk tuk 'temple tour' that happened to end at the driver's cousin's suit shop, ended up on the outskirts of town at some dodgy restaurant

that an (unlicensed) cab driver dumped us at and purchased some 'authentic' Thai art pieces that fell apart before we even got home!"

■ **Most memorable**

moment: Global Gathering in Las Vegas, getting to see Machu Picchu and moving to London.

■ **Favourite part of the job:** Apart from the fact that I get to talk about travel all day, I love the people I work with.

■ **How you unwind:** I've only been in London



for eight months so we're still exploring this amazing city. Each weekend we try to do something we haven't done yet.

■ **The next hot destination:** Cuba. We're seeing a surge in enquiry for this destination now that the sanctions are being lifted.

RANE REGUSON

Owner/manager of Jetsetter Travel

AT THE ripe old age of 19, on 7 January, 2013, Rane Reguson opened his own travel agency.

"Most people thought it was a crazy idea but now they see what a successful business I have created," Rane says. But his passion for travel started much earlier than that.

"Still to this day, my parents remind me I was organising our travel arrangements at the young age of 12 years old."

However travel wasn't Rane's first pick. "My dream was to become a news reporter. When I finished school I was accepted into university to study Journalism & Communication. That didn't work out so I returned home, spent a few months working in my parents' business, saved some money and gained my travel agency licence. Before I knew it the doors of Jetsetter Travel were open to the public."

He launched into the industry head on, and it seems he's showing no signs of slowing down, telling *travelBulletin* he's the first in the office and works most weekends catching up on emails, doing website design, planning marketing campaigns, tidying up from the past week and planning for the week ahead.

"I like to spend time with my family and

friends and chat about our week over a nice dinner and a glass or two of wine. If we aren't discussing business, we are talking travel – we live and breathe it," he says.

Rane speaks highly of his preferred partners' BDMs and highly recommends building strong relations with reps. "You never

‘I have been my own teacher from day one and I learn something new every day’

know when you might need them. It helps in a crisis but it also helps grow business."

He also recommends up-and-comers "stay focused, positive and most importantly organised" and embrace social media.

"Most of us are on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn etc and it is one of the greatest selling tools. Get yourself and your business a hashtag and leverage from this on all posts. It will help grow your business. It's

a good tip for being one step ahead!"

Rane is confident that dedicated, honest and genuine travel specialists will keep retail travel strong – pointing to the internet as the biggest challenge for the industry as a whole.

"It's all about personalised service – all clients need to be treated like VIPs – from the moment of first contact, throughout the booking process right through to the documentation delivery and *bon voyage* message," Rane says.

■ **Most memorable moment:** Winning the inaugural Emirates Travel Consultant Scholarship at the 2014 NTIAs.

■ **Favourite part of the job:** Creating people's dreams and learning new things every day.

■ **First thing you do when you get to work:** I check my emails, clear up the to-do-list for the day ahead and check on sales reports.



ANTON LOEB

Carnival Cruise Line Australia director of sales

"NEVER, ever, allow anyone to convince you to try a "tequila omelette," is Anton Loeb's words of advice for up-and-comers.

For those who aren't clued in, a tequila omelette involves placing a raw egg, complete with its shell in your mouth and chewing, before adding a shot of tequila.

This rocker started out with a plan to go into advertising but like many, a holiday – for Anton, a backpacking trip to Australia – changed it all. "I decided I wanted to work in the world of travel and I've never looked back," he told *travelBulletin*.

The journey began with Contiki in South Africa as a BDM and after "a couple of insanely fun-filled years," he moved into the national sales manager role.

Opportunity then saw Anton temporarily out of the travel industry and to Australia, where he soon returned to his roots as a BDM with the Globus Family of Brands.

Across a five year period he jumped to a state manager role and then onto national

sales manager before deciding to venture into the mystical world of travel insurance with Cover-More, first as a national account manager and then head of sales.

In 2013 Anton says he found his "long lost family of fun at Carnival Cruise Line", where he joined as director of sales. In his 16 years in the industry, the biggest lesson he has learned is "listen more than you talk. And to not fly to London with a one year old!"

He has seen constant advances with technology and social media adding exciting new dimensions to the industry. "Everyone now has far more information easily available and accessible at any time of the day and the ability to share experiences across a wide number of platforms," he says.

Aside from the ability to forecast the future and advise if the sun will be shining on a specific date in two years' time, Anton believes the most valuable trait in the industry is having a genuine passion for what you do.

"This is something that can't be taught,

faked or done in half measures."

Another handy hint is to "have clear goals on what you want your teams to achieve and communicate them openly and regularly and don't sweat the small stuff or get distracted by things you can't control".

■ **First thing you do when you get into work:** In the interest of public safety and for the benefit of those around me, I drink my coffee.

■ **The next hot destination:** Anywhere that's in *Game of Thrones* or the *Walking Dead*.

■ **How you unwind:** Catching up with friends, listening to music (preferably heavy and loud)

■ **Most memorable moment:** Being called a young gun after all this time in the industry!



AMADEUS EXPENSES SOLUTION



AMADEUS has announced the planned release of “breakthrough travel and expense technology” for the Australian market. Dubbed Amadeus cytric Travel & Expense, the system promises to allow corporations

to manage their travel programs more easily, offering trip planning, booking, accounting and reimbursement in a Software as a Service model. To launch in Australia later in 2016, cytric will be available alongside

the Amadeus eTravel Management booking tool, with Amadeus IT Pacific managing director Tony Carter saying “we’re going to put corporations in the driving seat by giving them control and visibility over their travel spend, as well as flexibility to their travellers”.

In a big month for the IT company, Amadeus also confirmed a deal with Malaysia Airlines, which will see the carrier adopt the Altéa Passenger Service System. The carrier’s outgoing group chief executive officer, Christoph Mueller, said “we are determined to give Malaysia Airlines the technology platform it needs to provide the world’s best services to our customers”. The suite will offer inventory control, reservations, passenger self service check-in, departure control and e-commerce. And with a number of MH oneworld partner airlines also utilising the Amadeus system – including Qantas – the agreement will also enable a streamlined customer experience between member airlines.

SERKO SME REVOLUTION

SERKO CEO Darrin Grafton is a man with a mission. With an extensive pedigree in travel technology, he is aiming to empower corporate travellers to make their own bookings, and believes there is a massive opportunity in the Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) market for travel agents. Later this year the company plans to launch serko.travel – an app-based platform which allows users to simply research and book travel and accommodation – and that’s just the beginning. He told *travelBulletin* that currently in the SME market about 80% of bookings are made by executive assistants, and believes this can be completely reversed once

‘Serko app is revolutionary in that it takes content from key domestic suppliers’

users switch to the Serko system, providing improved compliance, satisfaction and control as well as huge efficiency enhancements for businesses.

During the Helloworld for Business conference

in Singapore last month a major deal was unveiled which will see the group highlighted within the app as a fulfilment partner. The Serko app is revolutionary in that it takes content from key domestic suppliers such as Qantas, Jetstar, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand as well as Expedia, Wotif and Booking.com. The intention is that the platform provides a convenient, reliable and comprehensive travel booking solution, empowering individual travellers to select from a full range of content while at the same time having their activity captured within the TMC channel. That means companies know what their staff are booking and can ensure they stay “within policy” while also giving TMCs the opportunity to participate in the full travel value chain.

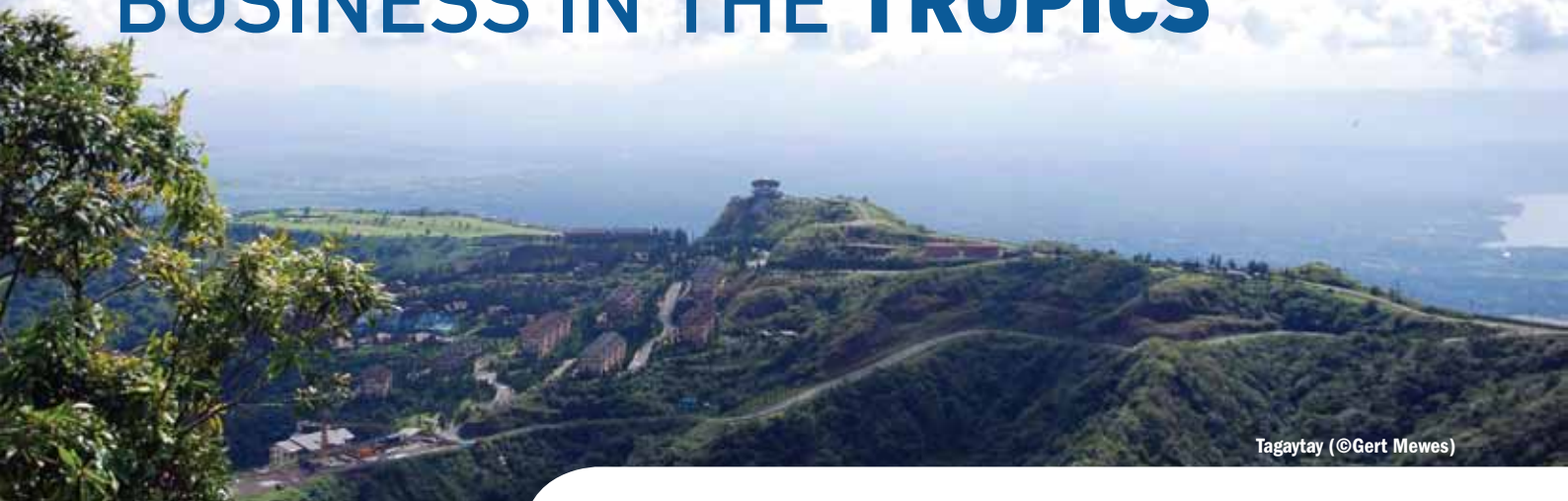
Grafton envisions a future for the app where it is an intrinsic

part of the working day of any road warrior. He spoke about “app in app” technology – where as soon as a meeting finishes it automatically orders a vehicle to take the traveller to the next location. Other Serko technology offerings include a group booking system which can sell out a flight in a matter of seconds, booking 300 seats “faster than 60 consultants can do it”. There’s bag tracking, where a device is placed inside luggage to give a traveller a notification automatically via the app when it appears on the carousel.

When serko.travel formally launches in the coming months it is likely to gain significant publicity via an alliance with online accounting innovator Xero, exposing the offering to Xero’s 730,000 strong SME customer base. Grafton told *travelBulletin* he is also hoping to accelerate the company’s growth by listing on the Australian Stock Exchange in the coming months.



BUSINESS IN THE TROPICS



Tagaytay (©Gert Mewes)



Hyatt, City of Dreams



Sinulog festival (©Constantine Augustine)



Boracay

By Nathalie Craig

THINKING of taking your business event somewhere warmer? For something unique, try the Philippines. The archipelago of more than 7,000 islands is equipped with meeting spaces, luxury hotels and a lush, tropical environment.

The country's capital, Manila, is home to the country's convention showpiece, The Philippine International Convention Center, and is no stranger to hosting significant international events. Business events are by no means restricted to the capital with many other cities, towns and islands providing beautiful and engaging settings.

Delegates will no doubt feel comfortable in the Philippines with the locals renowned for their warm and welcoming nature and sense of fun. If you time your trip right, you can even catch one of the nation's famous festivals.

Some top picks on where to host your event follow. They feature some great meeting spaces and accommodation for those attending along with the opportunity for ample recreational activities.

CEBU

Experience a conference in The Philippines oldest city, Cebu, in one of the area's luxurious resorts. The Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino is a good option with a ballroom that seats 3,200 guests. Cebu is a city that loves to celebrate so look out for the annual itinerary of fiestas. January when the colourful Sinulog Festival takes place is one of the best months to organise an event in the city. The celebrations incorporate street dancing, bands, fireworks and a Mardi Gras parade. Year round Cebu is great for soaking up some of country's iconic heritage spots or taking a day trip to one of the surrounding waterfalls.

MANILA

Manila's luxury resort and casino complex City of Dreams has put the city on the world stage as a business events location. Sprawling across more than six hectares near the shores of Manila Bay, the complex is made up of The Hyatt, Nobu Hotel and The Crown Towers branded hotels offering 1,000 luxury guest rooms between them. The Hyatt is ideal for business incentives with meeting facilities for up to 500 people along with an interactive show-kitchen restaurant open 24 hours. The complex offers live entertainment, night clubs and a high class shopping mall.

BORACAY ISLAND

For blissful surroundings try Boracay Island. It may only be 10 square kilometres but there's plenty of space for events. One option is the Shangri-La's Boracay Resort and Spa with its elegant 400 square metre ballroom and several function rooms. Get the attendees' blood pumping with a parasailing experience flying high above a speed boat or bring out the inner child and hop on top of a giant inflatable fish and get pulled along by a speed boat, hold on, it can get bumpy!

TAGAYTAY

Host your event 2,000 feet above ground level taking in scenic views and misty mountain peaks. The Tagaytay International Convention Center is an ideal base for events, while the area offers ample choice in leisure activities. Experience Tagaytay on horseback-riding or by hiking the mountains. A day tour of the famous Taal volcano can be organised starting at the Palace in the Sky – the unfinished mansion of former President Ferdinand Marcos. Also known as 'The People's Park in the Sky' this spot is an absolute must to drink up the best views of the Taal Lake and volcano.



2016 AUSTRALIAN TOURISM EXCHANGE RUN-DOWN

MORE than 2,300 travel industry delegates descended on the Gold Coast in May for the annual Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE), the country's largest business-to-business tourism event.

The event, which ran from the 16-19 of May, connected more than 840 travel wholesalers and buyers from Asia, the Americas, Continental Europe and the UK with 1,500 Australian tourism seller delegates from 532 companies.

It was the first time in the event's 37-year long history that it was hosted on the Gold Coast, with Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan describing it as a boon for the Australian inbound tourism sector.

"Given it's the first time that ATE has been held on the Gold Coast there is a high level of excitement around the event, with the number of Australian travel businesses participating reaching its highest level in eight years as well as 98 new buyers from nine markets attending for the first time," commented O'Sullivan.

On the Monday, delegates attending the official ATE welcome event hosted at the Gold Coast Turf Club, were greeted by Australian Tourism Celebrity Advocate Chris Hemsworth, who surprisingly stepped up on stage following the playing of the iconic Tourism Australia clip in which he features.

Hemsworth, who grew up in Melbourne, shared candidly with the audience his favourite Aussie hot-spots and his love for surfing, whilst excited attendees vied for just the right moment to snap a quick selfie with the god of thunder.

On the closing day of the

event, ATE organisers announced Sydney will be next in line to play host to the annual tourism trade show.

NSW Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres said ATE 2017 will "provide the perfect opportunity to showcase the newly constructed International Convention Centre (ICC)".

"This five-day event will generate significant economic benefits to the state while highlighting our iconic attractions, beautiful beaches, outstanding food and wine scene and provide delegates from overseas and across Australia with the chance to explore Sydney and the breathtaking surrounding regions of NSW.

"We look forward to showcasing our incredible state during ATE 2017, set to provide delegates with a forum for Australian tourism businesses to display their products, make overseas contacts and negotiate deals."

The 2017 Australian Tourism Exchange was held from 14-18 May.



Perth business events backflip

TOURISM authorities in Western Australia have recognised the growing importance of business events to the state economy, reversing a previous decision which had proposed slashing funding to the Perth Convention Bureau by 30%. The move followed a reshuffle which saw Premier Colin Barnett also become Minister for Tourism. Barnett said the additional funding was critical, given the considerably expanded accommodation and venue space currently under development.

Perth Convention Bureau CEO Paul Beeson said the decision was an "acknowledgement of the high return on investment PCB offers, and recognition of the role of business tourism in the economy and fabric of the state".

ICC's new dawn

THE excitement around the pending opening of Sydney's new International Convention Centre was palpable at an event at NSW Parliament House last month, where the state's Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Stuart Ayres, spoke about his recent visit to IMEX in Frankfurt. Ayres admitted the construction period of the new venue had been a "challenging period" for the industry.

Ayres said the ICC will be a "fantastic addition to the landscape and a significant enhancement to our capacity to support business events in this city," with feedback at IMEX reflecting a genuine buzz around the globe. Such is the interest in the new centre's debut that Ayres said he's now becoming concerned about accommodation supply, with the centre's opening set to further boost the already high occupancy levels experienced during the construction period.

Massive win for NZ

TEN thousand people will descend in waves on New Zealand's South Island in 2018, after Destination Queenstown along with its bid partners Tourism NZ and Air New Zealand secured the huge Amway China incentive for the region. Groups of 500 at a time will visit for five days each throughout the off-peak autumn season, with the deal estimated to bring a minimum of NZ\$50 million into the economy. That figure is based on Amway's spending alone, with the actual economic impact likely to be much higher based on delegate personal spending while in NZ.

Tourism NZ CEO Kevin Bowler said the win "sends a clear message that NZ is a significant player in the incentive business sector."

headlines business events news

21 Apr MEA Awards winners

21 Apr Cvent acquired by Vista

28 Apr \$50m incentive for NZ

02 May APT seeing groups success

02 May BEA promotes Australia at IMEX

05 May ICC expands exec team

05 May Carlson Rezidor

09 May PCB backing reinstated

12 May ICC heralds a "new dawn"

12 May Holiday Inn Express debuts

16 May ATE attracts record crowd

16 May Leisure Online debuts

CAREER IN FOCUS

CHRIS HAMILL

Managing director of DriveAway Holidays



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

I have been in the MD role for five years. Self-Drive is a quick business so my role is very diverse. I have a sign on my door that says: When people ask: "What do you do?" I say: "Whatever it takes."

My job involves setting the strategic direction for DriveAway Holidays in Australia/NZ and then ensuring that strategy is implemented with success. Along the way I work very closely with my team as well as deal with suppliers, travel agency partners, ad agencies, marketing companies and the end customer. My role involves "getting my hands dirty" and I would not have it any other way.

2. How did you start out in your career? Were you always destined to work in the travel industry?

My first business card said "Office Junior" and that was with DriveAway Holidays. I was 18. My dad was an accountant so I was destined to work in finance, however I am glad I missed that boat!

3. Did you complete formal qualifications, and do you think they are important?

After completing high school I completed an Assoc Dip in Tourism Management and Marketing. This was important as a

‘My dad was an accountant so I was destined to work in finance, however I am glad I missed that boat’

‘Being in a reasonably senior role at a young age presented some challenges, particularly around the time of September 11, the Bali Bombings etc...’

starting point, however 25 years of industry experience has given me what I refer to as "Street Knowledge". "Street Knowledge" about the industry, business and life!

4. What do you love about your job?

Driving to work each day I never know exactly what lies in the day ahead. That is what I love!

5. What were some of the greatest challenges you've had in your career?

Being in a reasonably senior role at a young age presented some challenges, particularly around the time of September 11, the Bali Bombings etc. Tough times when tough decisions had to be made.

‘In my business, good business comes from great service. Service is very important to our team at DriveAway’

6. What factors were central to your success?

- 1) Being myself. Being upfront and honest.
- 2) Respecting those above and below me.
- 3) Understanding priorities and the importance of balance.

7. Did you have mentors, and if so, how did you find them?

My dad and my uncle continue to be my mentors. My dad and I talk most days. Dad was a very successful accountant working 57 years with one company that he ended up owning. My uncle left school at 14 and went on to run Australia's largest agency. Without their guidance and support I would not be in this position today.

8. What are the keys to good business?

In my business, good business comes from great service. Service is very important to our team at DriveAway.

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

Talk to as many senior people as possible and learn from their experiences. Read, listen, and ask questions. Respect those above you and below you.



HOW TO SURVIVE A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

LET'S face it; interviews have become boring both for the interviewer and for the interviewee. Time and time again we hear the same questions being asked and all too often the answers are well rehearsed which never really gets to the crux of assessing job suitability and fit.

Is it any wonder that some interviewers are now turning to more creative, less traditional questions and scenarios in order to separate the wheat from the chaff? If you're an interviewer looking to break the mould or if you're an interviewee and find yourself served a curve ball of a question, take note of the following as we discover some of the more unique scenarios presented from interview rooms across the globe.

USE OF IMAGINATION –How would you survive the zombie apocalypse? What superpower would you choose and why? All non-standard questions designed to test imagination, reaction and creative thinking.

THAT'S AWKWARD? What's your favourite song and can you

perform it for me now? No, not an audition for X-factor, but one that pushes the boundaries of comfort. Have you got nerves of steel to ask this of a candidate? Let alone, as an interviewee, belt out a rendition of Sweet Child O' Mine?

BRAIN TEASERS – How many cows in Canada? If you could be remembered for one sentence, what would it be? There's no right answer here, but it's the approach you take to answering that determines whether you pass or fail.

Undoubtedly there will always remain a place for stock standard questions, but to get a real spark from a candidate, why not deviate from the norm and see where the interview takes you? Who knows, the best candidate might just be the one that can tell you how they'd get an elephant into a refrigerator? And for the interviewee, when faced with an unusual question, demonstrate lateral thinking and embrace the unexpected.

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APT EVOLVES ITS EUROPE PRODUCT

THERE'S no doubt about the impact Australia has had on global river cruising. Twenty years ago nobody would have imagined that companies based here, like Scenic and APT, would end up owning and operating their own vessels plying the rivers of Europe – but now they are well established and along with other operators carry upwards of 70,000 Australians every year. With the unprecedented growth has also come lots of competition – and that in turn has led to massive innovation, both in the river cruise ships themselves and in the products offered by the lines.

APT's recent release of its 2017 Europe River Cruise brochure continues this process, and in particular looks to expand the target demographic for the product. Just as ocean cruising is no longer perceived as being for the “nearly dead or newly wed,” APT is among several operators adding more active options to their portfolio which are likely to appeal to younger cruisers. The 2017 APT program includes new dedicated cycling itineraries in France and central Europe, where guests can optionally ride the on-board bikes on shore excursions almost every day of their voyage. APT Executive General Manager of Global Sales and Marketing, Debra Fox, told *travelBulletin* each vessel would have enough bicycles on board for all passengers to undertake the rides – but there are also alternative options for those who are less

active or feel like having an easier day.

Cycling Magnificent Europe allows passengers to make the most of the extensive bike paths alongside the Rhine and Danube rivers on the popular itinerary between Amsterdam and Budapest, while Bordeaux by Bicycle takes in the French countryside, with both options offering trails of varying intensity escorted by expert cyclists and an on-road support vehicle.

‘Guests can optionally ride the on-board bikes on shore excursions almost every day of their voyage’

That's not all that's new at APT. Special interest wine cruises also feature, and the family-owned company which next year celebrates its 90th anniversary is tying in the “family” theme with its on-board wine ambassadors who accompany these departures. They include Scott McWilliam of McWilliam's Family Winemakers, Peter Barry of Jim Barry Wines, Cherry Stowman who is Senior Brand Ambassador for Taylors Wines, and Bruce Tyrrell of Tyrrell's Wines. These voyages include winery visits, on-board tastings and of course wine paired with gourmet cuisine.

APT's product development has also seen the expansion of its Royal Experiences.

The company has for some years had a relationship with Princess Heide von Hollenzohern who welcomes APT groups into her castle at Burg Namedy for an intimate peek behind the scenes of European aristocracy. This program has been expanded into France with the addition of a visit to Chateau de Cazeneuve on the Bordeaux River programs. This stately castle was once the residence of the Kings of Navarre and later King Henri IV of France and his wife Margot. Currently occupied by the Sabran-Pontevès family, descendants of the original owners, who have restored it to its former glory. APT's guests will enjoy a private tour before sitting down to dinner in the Grand Salon. Also in France, the Seine programs for 2017 will include a stop in Vernon with an exclusive visit to Chateau de Bizy, the private home of the descendants of Prince Jerome Napoleon.

Interestingly APT's 2017 Europe River Cruise brochure also includes a wide range of land content – including the introduction of seven small group tour itineraries which have a maximum of 20 passengers but still use full-sized coaches. This concept was first launched with a fanfare by Bunnik Tours a couple of years ago, with APT's offering which includes several shorter trips already proving very popular. Fox said a pre-release to past passengers of one of these itineraries, a 12 day trip taking in the Greek Islands, had sold out in just three days. “We believe there's a gap in the market and these tours look to fill that void,” she told *travelBulletin*.



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18 days from **\$5,570*** per person twin share



MEDITERRANEAN ODYSSEY

LISBON TO ROME
 17 DAYS – 1 SEP 2017

Highlights: Lisbon, Cadiz, Malaga, Valencia, Barcelona, Carcassonne, Marseilles, Monte Carlo, Portofino, Florence/Pisa, Rome

- **2 night hotel stay in Lisbon**
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*TERMS & CONDITIONS: All fares in Australian dollars, per person, twin share based on lowest available category & include all promotional savings & offers, onboard gratuities & port taxes (correct as of 6 May 16). Cruise only voyages based on Cat L cabin for 24 Jul 17 sailing, Cat L for 1 Sep 17 sailing. Fly Free Grand Voyage based on Cat L for 24 Jul 17 sailing. Valid for new bookings only. All EBD Offers, including any % discount offered at time of booking, are capacity controlled and can be withdrawn or modified at any time without notice. All fly free offers are capacity controlled and can be withdrawn or modified at any time without notice. Offers are capacity controlled & may be withdrawn at any time without notice & can't be combined with other offers. Cancellation penalties & conditions apply. Cruise & accommodation prices based on specified booking classes & departure dates. Solo occupancy is subject to availability and one selected cabin categories, details and fare available on request. Pre & post hotel accommodation & transfers from airport/port/hotel offered on dates specified on itinerary only, ask for details. Prices based on payment by cash or cheque only. Travel agent service fees not included. Voyages to Antiquity reserve the right to change, correct errors, withdraw from sale any or all fares, itineraries, excursions & fees. For full terms & conditions visit www.voyagestoantiquity.com.au or visit your local preferred Travel Agent.

NSW TOURISM MINISTER A 'GARDEN ISLAND SCEPTIC'



Stuart Ayres, NSW Tourism Minister (centre) with Walter Nand and Sue Francis.

SYDNEY is undeniably the cruise gateway for Australia, with an arrival into the iconic harbour featuring the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge being on the bucket list for cruisers from across the globe. NSW Tourism Minister, Stuart Ayres, is acutely aware of the need to boost cruise ship capacity in order to continue the growth of the sector, but interestingly doesn't believe that the naval facility at Garden Island is going to be the answer.

Speaking at an industry function last month Ayres gave a frank assessment of Garden Island, saying it is clear the Navy has long term plans for the facility there which make it unlikely it will be able to fill the cruising gap. "I look out my window and see new big Navy ships tied up there, along with a long list of military infrastructure development, and I'm sceptical about the cruise industry using it on a regular basis," he said. Ayres also noted

that military operations tend to be by their very nature unpredictable. "We can't plan our cruise ship arrivals around a Cyclone in Fiji, for example," he said. Ayres isn't dismissing Garden Island out of hand, and believes it will continue to be used on an occasional basis as at present. However it's not looking likely it will provide the total solution.

'I look out my window and see new big Navy ships tied up there... I'm sceptical about the cruise industry using it on a regular basis'

He confirmed his department is currently finalising a long-awaited cruise industry plan which aims to provide strategic direction for cruise operators – and that includes an evaluation of a variety of alternative docking sites around the harbour. "Some of these we haven't looked at in a very long time," he said, and once a shortlist is developed he will be speaking to the cruise companies about the development of infrastructure at each location. There's no doubt the demand is strong, with a significant number of cruise operators already sending ships with capacity for 4000-plus passengers down under – none of which have any chance of getting underneath the Harbour Bridge.

YEAR-ROUND CARNIVAL IS OVER

CARNIVAL Cruise Line shocked the industry last month when it announced the withdrawal of its *Carnival Spirit* from Australasian waters during winter of 2018. The move is a rare hiccup in Australia's ever-increasing cruise capacity, and means the operator will no longer have a year-round deployment here.

Instead *Spirit* is being sent to China, with the company saying it was the logical option based on "availability and proximity" after a planned dry dock in Singapore in autumn 2018.

Carnival Cruise Line president Christine Duffy said it was important for the Carnival brand to establish a presence in the Asia cruise market. She said the decision was taken after evaluating many different options, with *Carnival Spirit* replacing the previously planned 2018 China deployment



of *Carnival Miracle* which will remain cruising in North America. Despite the winter pullout she insisted that *Carnival Spirit* had performed strongly in the Australian market since debuting here in 2012, with the ship returning along with *Carnival Legend* for the

2017-18 and 2018-19 Australian summers. "The two ships have proven extremely popular and we look forward to continuing to deliver Carnival's fun holiday experience to existing and new Australasian guests over the coming years," she said.



CLIA VIEW

Brett Jardine, general manager
CLIA Australasia

AUSTRALIANS CRUISING AROUND

I'M PROBABLY not the only one whose eyes glaze over at the word report. Too often reports are dull and tedious documents, offering very little excitement to the reader.

Fortunately that's not the case for CLIA Australasia's Australian source market report.

The annual report looks at how many Australians are cruising around the world, where, when and for how long they are cruising and then compares our place against other major source markets.

It plays an important role in creating awareness and interest in cruising which is good for all of us. Interest leads to demand, demand leads to more ships being deployed to the region, which means more choice. And with a well-educated chain of travel consultants, cruise passengers can be sure their needs will be met. And it's a great read!

This time last year we reported that the Australian market had cracked one million passengers for the first time which is an achievement that was delivered many years earlier than we once thought possible. Whilst this was an impressive result, the total included both ocean and river cruise passengers.

Our 2015 source market report was published on May 26 and this year we have kept the focus on ocean cruise passenger numbers only, with a view to releasing a more detailed stand-alone river cruise report at a later date.

The good news is that we can report that we have once again broken through the one million passenger mark - however this time we recorded 1,058,781 ocean

cruise passengers - without any river cruising numbers.

In achieving one million ocean cruise passengers last year, the Australian market

'Cruising attracted almost as many Australians as Indonesia'

experienced a growth rate of 14.6 per cent which is the equivalent of 4.5 per cent of the Australian population taking a cruise - the highest market penetration rate ever achieved by a major cruise region.

We often talk about cruise ships being a destination in their own right. So it's interesting to note that if you compare the number of Australians travelling on a cruise last year with Australia's short term departure statistics, you find that cruising attracted almost as many Australians as Indonesia. Of course cruising is both an international and a domestic tourism destination, but it's interesting to see how the numbers compare.

Our Kiwi cousins also recorded double digit growth with 66,152 New Zealanders taking an ocean cruise, representing 10% growth, albeit from a relatively small base.

Cruise passengers from all over the world now exceed 23 million, with Australia ranked fourth (equal with China) in terms of actual market size behind the USA, Germany and the United Kingdom.

If you'd like to find out more, head to our website www.cruising.org.au to download a copy of our new 2015 report.



COMMUNIQUÉ FROM...

KAREN CHRISTENSEN

General Manager & Director
Sales/Marketing, Australasia

FROM DREAMTIME TO TANA TORAJA

Set off on a thrilling exploration of Australia and Indonesia. Explore exotic islands and little known reefs teeming with underwater life. Experience local village life in Pare Pare and get a chance to see the mysterious "Stonehenge of Indonesia". See a unique culture centered on life after death; houses, tombs and ceremonial sites unique to Sulawesi (UNESCO World Heritage).

Cairns to Balikpapan

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Silver Privilege fares from **\$18,450pp**



CRUISE WEEKLY

HEADLINES APRIL & MAY 2016

- 26 Apr** Expedition "next big thing"
- 28 Apr** Cruise industry to grow
- 28 Apr** Scenic class action heard
- 03 May** Fathom sails into Cuba
- 03 May** *Ovation* sailings on sale
- 05 May** Princess' Mini-Suite class

- 05 May** Cruise survey in *travelBulletin*
- 10 May** Hurtigruten pricing rejig
- 10 May** *Viking Sea* christened
- 12 May** Sydney Harbour cruise plan
- 12 May** APT adds cycling, small groups
- 17 May** CLIA committee expands

2016 SILVERSEA EXPEDITIONS

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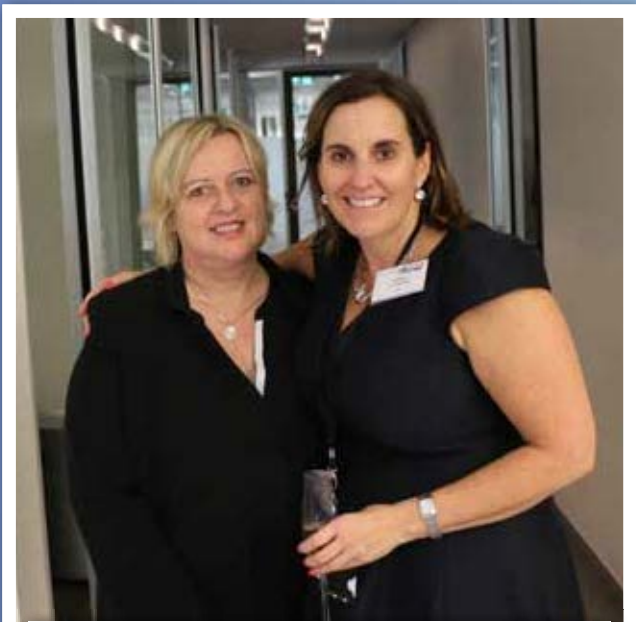
INDUSTRY IN FOCUS



Cruise Marketing Group and Croisi Europe hosted these lucky agents on a famil exploring the rivers of France last month.



These agents got to kick back and enjoy an African safari famil with Bench International. The group started in Botswana and travelled through to Zimbabwe spotting wildlife and experiencing luxurious lodges.



Shirley Field from Virgin Australia, Kaylene Shuttlewood, were snapped at the Travelport exclusive airline event showcasing their Rich Content and Branding air merchandising solution.



Bunnik Tours hosted a famil recently which covered the highlights of Kenya including Mt Kenya, Samburu National Reserve, Lake Nakuru and the Maasai Mara.



These first-time travellers to India soaked up the scenery, culture and wildlife of the fascinating country on a recent famil hosted by Swagman Tours.



This glamorous bunch of Traveller's Choice agents got to experience the South Pacific from the deck of *Celebrity Solstice*.



LATAM hosted these staff from Consolidated Travel, Expedia, APT, STA Travel, Flight Centre, Adventure World and Bunnik Tours on a tour of Peru, Brazil and Chile recently.



Hamilton Island played host to a group of NSW-based Flight Centre agents on a three night famil last week.



Neil Ager from Qantas with Donna Meads-Barlow of DBT Corporate/Cruisescene were snapped at the Helloworld for Business summit in Singapore last month.



These Melbourne-based agents and owners were treated to the sights and sounds of Sri Lanka on a recent India Unbound famil.



These AccorHotel representatives from the Vic and SA properties and regional office were all smiles at the intimate showcase put on by AccorHotels for Adelaide's business and travel industry professionals at the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel Adelaide.

SIX WAYS TO ENJOY MYSTICAL MYANMAR

One of the best ways to experience Myanmar is by cruising the Irrawaddy River, but that's only part of the adventure, writes **KERRY VAN DER JAGT**.

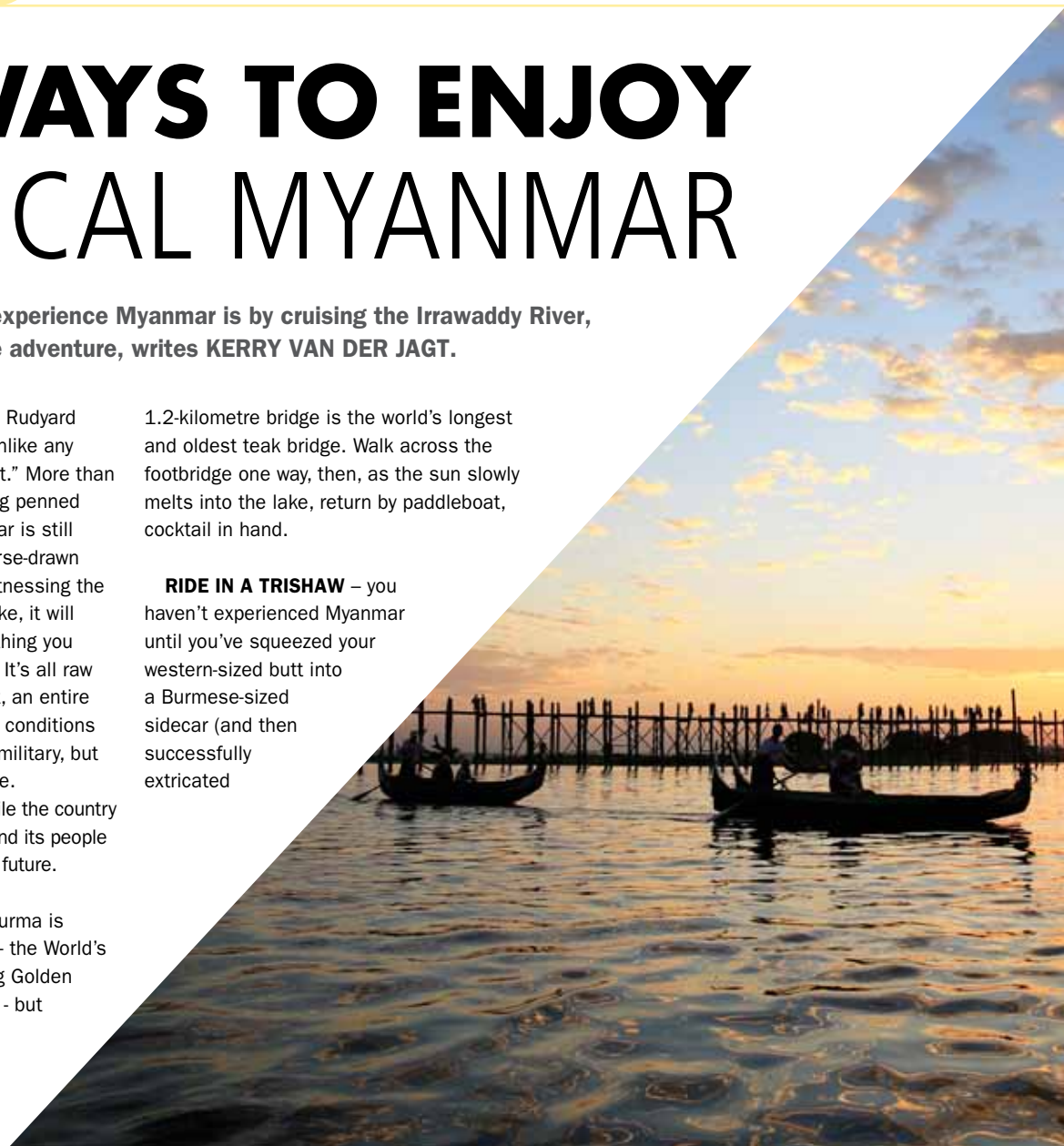
THIS is Burma", wrote Rudyard Kipling. "It is quite unlike any place you know about." More than a century after Kipling penned these words, Myanmar is still astonishing, from riding in a horse-drawn cart past ancient temples to witnessing the one-legged fishermen of Inle Lake, it will spin you around and turn everything you thought you knew upside down. It's all raw and real and delightfully offbeat, an entire nation emerging from the harsh conditions imposed by the previous ruling military, but now on the cusp of great change.

So now is the time to visit, while the country still wears its time warp charm and its people are buoyed and confident for the future.

PADDLE INTO A SUNSET – Burma is home to some really big things - the World's Biggest Book, the gravity-defying Golden Rock, the 90-tonne Mingun Bell - but it's the U Bein Bridge that will test the panorama function on your smart phone. Spanning Taungthaman Lake near Amarapura, the

1.2-kilometre bridge is the world's longest and oldest teak bridge. Walk across the footbridge one way, then, as the sun slowly melts into the lake, return by paddleboat, cocktail in hand.

RIDE IN A TRISHAW – you haven't experienced Myanmar until you've squeezed your western-sized butt into a Burmese-sized sidecar (and then successfully extricated





All photos courtesy of Scenic

the holiest site in the land. Guests of Scenic have the opportunity to learn about the ritual of 'oil lamp lighting' before joining in with this local tradition.

ENTER A NUNNERY – while it is expected that most males in Myanmar will spend some time in a monastery, less than four per cent of girls are given the equal opportunity. Those that do are generally escaping poverty or trying to get some education. As part of Scenic's cruise between Mandalay and Pyay, guests are invited inside one of the nunneries that Scenic supports, not simply for a visit, but to join the pink-robed women and girls for their midday meal.

EXPLORE BY HORSE-DRAWN CART – Between 1365 and 1842 Inwa (Ava) served as Burma's royal capital - not once, not twice, but five times. Today, this rural backwater is best enjoyed by pony trap, the open-sided carts and plodding pace the perfect way for viewing the crumbling stupas and monastic ruins spread across the countryside.

TAKE TO THE SKIES – Bagan has long been synonymous with hot-air balloons, as that really is the best way to appreciate the World Heritage-listed site of more than 2,000 religious monuments spread across the dusty plains. While hot air balloon flights are an optional tour for Scenic cruise passengers, all guests are invited for sunset drinks at Clay Pot Mountain, a little-known hilltop location far away from the crowds.

yourself back out again).

A cheap and cheerful form of local transport trishaws are now being used to ferry visitors around some of the quieter neighbourhoods. One of the best tours is to Dala, a multicultural township across the river from Yangon.

HIT THE STREETS – YANGON – the former colonial capital once called Rangoon – is the perfect walking city. Stroll past elegant buildings, some beautifully restored, others crumbling and awaiting their next reincarnation. Pause at the former government offices where Aung San Suu Kyi's father was assassinated in 1947, pick up a book at an open-air stall and salute Rudyard Kipling with a G&T at The Strand Hotel. For jade, textiles and antiques head to the Bogyoke Aung San Markets and finish the evening at the Shwedagon Pagoda,



CAMBODIA “STAR” OF INDOCHINA

AUSSIE travel operator, Insider Journeys, has highlighted Cambodia as a “star attraction” within Indochina, with the group observing an uptick in enquiries for the Southeast Asian destination.

“We’ve seen an excellent increase in small group journey enquiry levels, up 54%, and a 23% increase in private travel enquiries year-on-year,” said Insider Journeys managing director Paul Hole to *travelBulletin*.

“Laos is also trending well overall, with small group journey enquiries increasing 18%, and private travel growing,” he said.

Hole attributes the upward trend to boosted air capacity along with the destination’s “stunning natural beauty”.

“The soporific pace of life along the Mekong River is being recognised to drive strong sales, especially for tours to the south,” remarked Hole.

Authentic Asian cuisine is also seducing crowds to Vietnam, with Hole citing cooking classes with celebrity chefs such as Ms Vy in Hoi An as a major drawcard for the destination.

Another travel trend observed by Insider Journeys is the growth in number of cross border trips.

“People are booking more complicated cross border arrangements

that include several countries, such as our Highlights of Indochina small group journey, covering Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos on the one trip.

“We’re also seeing an increase in interest in multi-style journeys, mixing a small group journey with a small river boat cruise, such as Mekong and Beyond, which includes both modes of travel within Cambodia and Vietnam.”

Hole says that demand for smaller cruise boats on the Mekong is also on the rise, highlighting the 14-cabin timber vessel Mekong Eyes as a popular option.

Insiders’ strongest growing tour in Vietnam was identified as the Trails of Vietnam trip, which ventures into lesser-visited areas such as the demilitarized zone and the Ho Chi Mong Trail through the remote Central Highlands.

The itinerary, which is the longest small group journey in Vietnam, is also

popular among second time visitors to the region as it allows travellers to delve deeper into the destination, revealing “hidden treasures”.

‘The soporific pace of life along the Mekong River is being recognised to drive strong sales, especially for tours to the south’

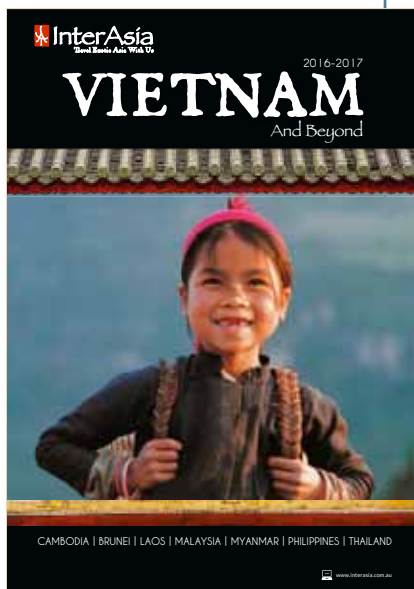


INTERASIA VENTURE TO VIETNAM & BEYOND

DIVE into Vietnam and beyond with InterAsia's small group and independent tours. The 2016/17 brochure boasts eight new trips, including the 12-day Cambodia and Vietnam Family Adventure, 8-day Laos Explorer and 13-day Borneo Adventure.

A favourite is the 21-day Vietnam & Cambodia Explorer, a small group tour from Hanoi to Siem Reap. Cruise among the picturesque limestone islands of Halong Bay, zip to Phnom Penh on a speed boat and spend a night in Mai Chau in northern Vietnam, a lush landscape home to hill tribes. The in-depth tour explores the length of Vietnam and the heart of Cambodia and has a mix of heritage visits, plenty of time in natural surroundings, a variety of cruises and a Hoi An cooking class.

If the published dates don't suit a client, the Australian-owned and operated company can operate the 21-day adventure with a minimum of two people, for \$160pp more than the usual \$4,258pp price.



APT launches 2017/18 Myanmar

APT has recently launched their Myanmar river cruises for 2017/18, with agents able to book departures for the season between September 2017 and April 2018.

With the launch has come a new brochure, showcasing the choice of four itineraries which the cruise and tour operator is offering.

Two of the itineraries focus solely on Myanmar and the other two offer combinations with other neighbouring countries including, for the first time, an itinerary featuring Myanmar and India.

The cruises will be on APT's custom-built new ship, *RV Samantha*, which set sail on the Irrawaddy River for the first time at the beginning of this year.

The ship offers accommodation for just 60 guests, making it a more intimate experience than other European itineraries which travel on a larger vessel, whilst still providing all the features of a luxury cruiser.

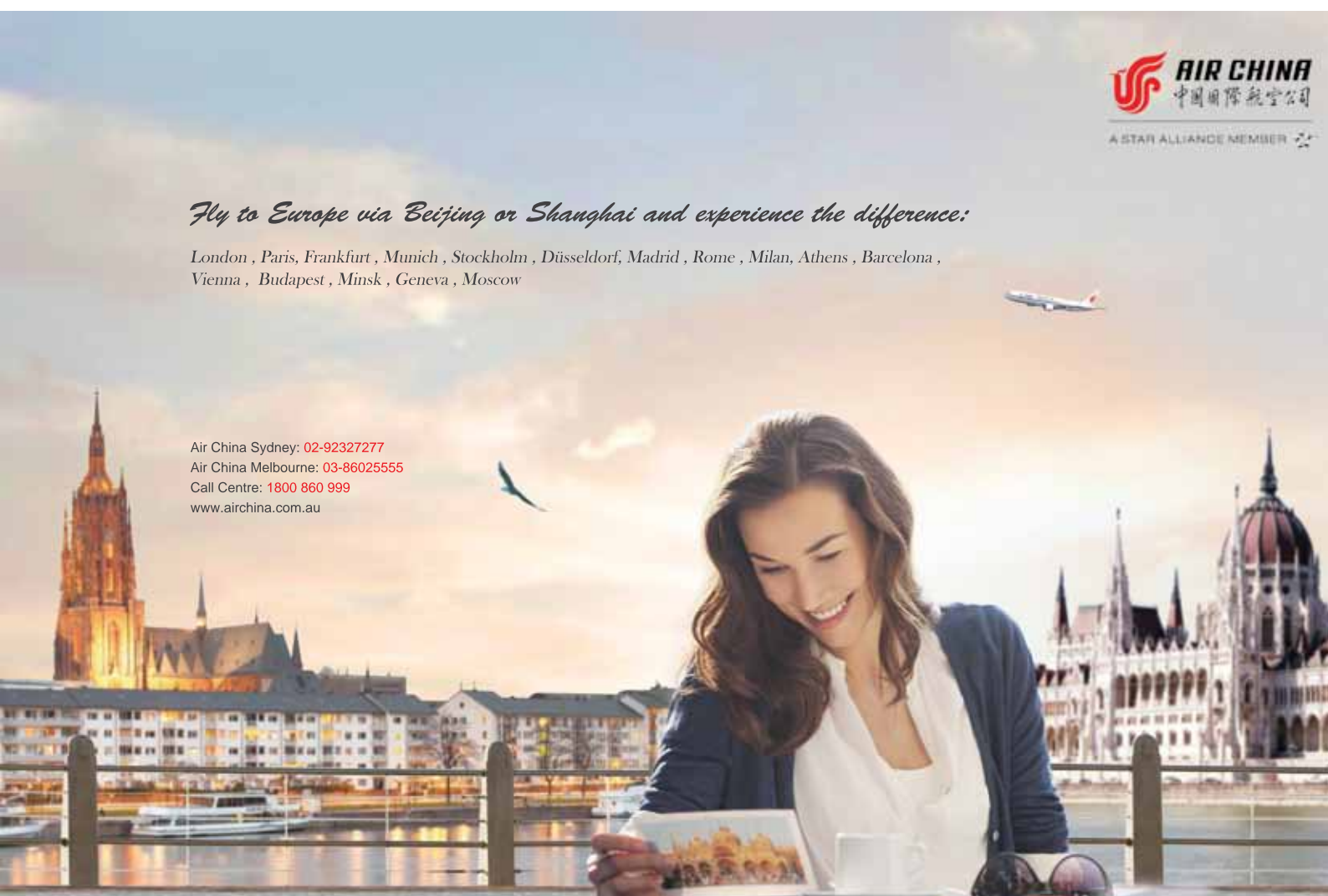


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INSIDE INDOCHINA WITH INSIDER JOURNEYS' PRIVATE TRAVEL COLLECTION

INSIDER Journeys has launched the first of its Private Travel Collection brochures spanning Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Designed for independent travellers, the 76-page brochure offers a selection of new 7-14 day private touring packages showcasing some of the team's favourite Indochina experiences such as local walking and food tours, spectacular river and bay cruises and historic town visits.

Tours of note include the Mekong Eyes which explores scenic waterways, plantations and rural villages, as well as the Laos Magical Kingdom which gives travellers the opportunity to soak in the charming riverside atmosphere and rural scenery.

General Manager, Customer Experience and Marketing, Emily Hill, says the focus of the guide is to articulate the new style of travel in an inspiring way for prospective travellers and to demonstrate the range of experiences and itineraries available across these vibrant locations.

"Our newest brochure includes 'design your

own' tours, offering clients more control and flexibility over their itineraries," says Hill.

"These content rich authentic Asian experiences provide our guests with the

ability to truly customise their holidays to best suit their interests and those of their travel companions, making them suitable for couples, families and groups.



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InterAsia

Travel Exotic Asia With Us

Bangkok Airways boost

BANGKOK Airways will introduce new services this year, travelling between Chiang Mai – Mae Hong Son and Bangkok to Danang in Vietnam.

Services between Bangkok (BKK) and Danang (DAD) will take off four times per week on board an Airbus 319 from 25 May, with 138 Economy class seats configured in a 3-3 formation.

BKK – DAD and the return DAD – BKK will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, on flight PG 947 and PG 948, respectively.

First commenced in April, The CNX – HGN PG 237 service will run daily, whilst the late afternoon service PG239 will depart Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays on an ATR 72 propeller plane.

The return CNX - HGN service will operate on flight PG 238 daily, with the early evening flight running on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Bangkok Airways has also boosted frequencies on its Bangkok to Phnom Peng services from five to six flights per day, and its Samui to Singapore to two flights per day.



ALONG THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL

EXPLORE an ancient Indochina trade route once used as a critical line for military support during the American War in Vietnam with Wendy Wu Tours.

Departing Australia mid October this year, the Along Ho Chi Minh Trail tour, will traverse remote areas of Vietnam and Laos, giving travellers the opportunity to witness significant landmarks and sites in Hanoi, Dong Hoi and Hue in Vietnam; as well as the many countryside areas that were influenced by the encompassing war- regions such as Sapa, Dien Bien and Vinh in Vietnam and Nong Khiaw, Phonsavan and Xam Neua.

The tour ends with two days in the town of Hoi An to relax both the feet and the mind with beautiful beaches, fresh seafood and plenty of shopping.

Priced from AU\$6290 per person twin share from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth and from AU\$6590 per person twin share from Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra, the deal includes return economy airfares, 22 nights' accommodation including a night on a Junk boat on Halong Bay and a sleeping berth on an overnight train to Sapa, most meals, return airport transfers, touring with local guides and entrance fees, visas for Australian passport holders, as well as airline fuel surcharges and taxes.



HOT PRODUCT

G ADVENTURES is offering 30% off select river cruise tours this year including trips travelling the Mekong from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap or in reverse. The journey includes eight days sailing on a classic riverboat, discovering the famous floating markets of Cai Bei and exploring the stilt village of Chnok Tru. Priced from \$1,679, the special offer is available to book until the end of July.

■ www.gadventures.com.au

Experience luxury in Vietnam, staying at the Six Senses Ninh Van Bay, and save big. **WORLD JOURNEYS** is offering a special deal where you can stay for 7 days and only pay for 5. The offer applies to all villa categories, including the secluded Hill Top Villa which features a plunge pool and views of the mountain ranges of Nha Trang and the South China Sea.

■ worldjourneys.com.au

The earlybird catches the worm, or the great deal when it comes to **BHAYA CRUISES**. Regular rates are discounted as much as 15% when booked 30 days or more ahead of the scheduled departure. Enjoy the beauty of Halong Bay for less. The offer applies to 3 day 2 night Halong Bay Cruise on the Bhaya Classic, which includes meals, use of kayaks, and exploration of Halong Bay including Dark and Bright Lagoon, Cat Ba Island and Sung Sot Cave.

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Rio de Janeiro

Seductive and spirited, must-see Rio de Janeiro kicks into even higher gear this August when the Olympic Games come to town, says BRIAN JOHNSTON.

WELCOME to the new Rio, and let the Games begin. The city has been transformed over the past decade, following a booming (though now stumbling)

Brazilian economy and the hosting of the FIFA (soccer) World Cup in 2014. The Olympic Games, which take place in August this year, also encouraged waterfront transformations, public works projects and the renovation of landmark buildings such as the Municipal Theatre. Crime has been vastly reduced, the city buzzes with newfound energy and optimism, and life has returned to its streets. Rio is shaking its tail feathers once more.

For any visitor, the highlight of Rio de Janeiro is the city's fabulous natural setting in which humped mountains collide with the ocean. You could choose one of several particularly gorgeous viewpoints, though many

people are seduced by all of them. The first is Sugarloaf Mountain, whose peak, reached by cable-car, leaves you almost surrounded by water. Rio's coastline unfolds below in golden sands and sparkling bays backed by jungle-draped mountains. Incidentally, the Art Deco neighbourhood of Urca below Sugarloaf is curiously overlooked but lovely; its sea wall is stunning at sunset.

Alternatively, a ride by rack railway up Corcovado Mountain provides an equally splendid outlook (though from an inland angle), plus a close-up encounter with the famous statue of Christ the Redeemer, arms outspread in welcome. Go early in the morning before the crowds, and just as the mist lifts to reveal the entire city at your feet. If queues for the railway get too much, consider a taxi to Mirante do Pasmado, a park hardly known to tourists with a very similar (though less iconic) panorama.

Behind Corcovado lies the world's largest urban forest, Tijuca Forest National Park, studded with waterfalls and limestone caves. A guided eco-walk here brings you face to face with toucans, parakeets and monkeys. Adrenaline enthusiasts – and visitors who dare to go along for a tandem ride – use one of its rocky outcrops, Pedro Bonita, as a launching spot for hang-gliders, which drift over the city to land on Rio's beaches far below.

At upmarket beach suburbs Copacabana and Ipanema, Rio's bold and the beautiful cavort on the beach in skimpy swimwear, roller-blade along the promenades, and enjoy cold beer and barbecued prawns from street stalls. Surfing, beach volleyball and strutting are quite the pastimes here but, beyond the sands, you'll also find excellent dining and shopping. Ipanema is notable for fashion boutiques, while Copacabana has chic jewellery stores and a weekend crafts market.

city of marv

After admiring beautiful Rio, head to the city centre to get to grips with the city's history and modern dynamism. Avenida Rio Branco is Rio's version of the Champs-Élysées and cuts through Centro, best visited on weekdays; it's practically dead on Sundays. Centro is interesting for colonial-era squares, winding streets and Portuguese-style churches whose interiors are a riot of gilded baroque. Browse fancy boutiques, plunder bargain street markets, and enjoy cream cakes and coffee in grand cafés flaunting marble-topped tables and chandeliers. You'll also find art museums and evening concerts and ballet in this district.

In the evenings, head to adjacent Lapa, where you'll find a combination of gritty pubs, sophisticated bars and live-music venues, many in elegantly restored heritage buildings. Locals come late – dinner may not be until eleven – and stay late, with the partying and

caipirinha drinking often continuing until dawn breaks over the Atlantic Ocean.

Santa Teresa is another city-centre district worth visiting. Once, an infamously rickety tram hauled visitors up into this hillside neighbourhood, but now you'll have to be content with bus or taxi. Santa Teresa was home to the city's elite in the nineteenth century; now its mansions crumble and its tropical gardens are overgrown. An arty crowd has moved in, opening galleries and quirky restaurants, and the vibe is especially lively on weekends. As you walk down towards Centro, you're rewarded with great views over the ocean.

For something unusual, join a tour to a favela or shantytown. Although Rio's shantytowns are a shocking urban blight, they've given rise to much of Rio's music and samba, and provide a fascinating glimpse into Rio's alter ego. Garden lovers,

meanwhile, should visit the Botanical Gardens, particularly fine for their water lilies and avenues of palm trees; you'll also spot parrots and monkeys. Art aficionados could head to the Niterói Contemporary Art Museum for Brazilian art exhibited in a spectacular flying saucer of a building perched on the coast. A match at fabled Maracanã stadium among soccer-mad Brazilians is another brilliant experience.

So too is a visit to a samba school or samba club for a spectacle of sequins and feathers. Rio's passion with samba culminates in its February carnival, a four-day fantasy of dancing and drumming, and a truly glorious experience that culminates in the Passarela do Samba, the grandstand parade that will leave you bedazzled. A city of passion and many pleasures, it's no wonder locals refer to Rio as La Ciudad Marvelosa, the marvellous city.

vels



LATAM ROLLS OUT REBRAND

LAN Airlines, TAM Airlines and affiliates in Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador marked a milestone in their consolidation under the LATAM brand last month, unveiling a new global corporate identity for its aircraft, uniforms and airport operations.

LAN and TAM merged four years ago to become the biggest carrier in South America, but have been operating as separate units, run by the LATAM Airlines holding group.

The spruced up livery represents the best of Latin America, incorporating elements that symbolise and represent the region under a global brand.

LATAM enlisted Brazilian fashion designer

Pedro Lourenço to create new uniforms for its 23,000 cabin crew, sales office and airport staff, featuring the signature indigo and coral of the LATAM logo. The new threads will begin being phased in before December.

Changes, including airport signage and counter designs, will be rolled out steadily over the next six months. Passengers will start to notice the new corporate ID in 13 locations where the group's airlines operate, including LATAM Airlines' hub of Santiago, São Paulo, Lima, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Miami, Madrid and New York.

Before the end 2016, more than 50 of

LATAM's 321 aircraft fleet will be rebranded. The fleet-wide process is expected to be finalised by 2018.

CEO of LATAM Airlines Group Enrique Cueto said it the change would be gradual "with the principal objective of simplifying and improving the travel experience for our passengers".

"We will continue to optimise the most extensive route network in Latin America, the most modern fleet in the region and invest in digital solutions to offer our passengers a more personalised travel experience,"

A new integrated website at latam.com has already been rolled out enabling passengers to seamlessly purchase tickets, check-in, review real-time flight statuses, create alerts and access other useful travel information.

An integrated marketing campaign to promote the new brand is planned locally.

LATAM Airlines is aligned to the **oneworld** global alliance. TAM Airlines ditched its membership with Star Alliance back in 2014 as part of the merger between LAN and TAM.

When the consolidation is complete, the LAN and TAM brands, established in 1929 and 1976 respectively, will become defunct.

INSIGHT INTO THE INCAS



Floating Islands, Titicaca Lake (©Emmanuel Dyan)

SOUTH America is so hot right now, and the addition of the continent to Insight Vacation's Americas programs for the 2016/17 season has enabled clients to undertake an exploration of Peru in typical Insight comfort and style. The twelve day 'Treasures of the Incas' tour is available as part of Insight's Luxury Gold collection, and promises to captivate travellers with experiences of the local culture and Peru's stunning scenery.

The trip takes in the mysterious world of the Inca Empire, starting out with a couple of days in Lima followed by included internal flights to explore icons such as the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu. Travellers will also evoke the romance of a bygone era as they enjoy a luxury rail journey aboard the Andean Explorer train to Puno and Lake Titicaca. Here they can cruise the sacred waters to the floating islands of Uros where they will

meet the "lake people" as one of Insight's Signature Experiences.

Treasures of the Incas is part of the Insight 2016 USA, Canada and South America brochure, and includes meals at some of Peru's top restaurants, luxury accommodation, one-of-a-kind experiences and much more. Departures are scheduled on a monthly basis across most of the year.

■ Insightvacations.com/au




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 TRAVEL AGENTS

Contours celebrates 40 years

THERE'S no substitute for experience, and South American specialist wholesaler Contours Travel has that in spades after celebrating 40 years of taking Australians abroad. Director Ted Dziadkewicz has developed a strong reputation with the trade and consumers, specialising in tailor-made small group itineraries and special interest tours in Mexico, Cuba, Antarctica, South America, Central America and the Caribbean.



The company launched its first ever brochure in 1981, and has gone from strength to strength. Earlier this year Dziadkewicz told *travelBulletin* the secret of his success was "great relationships built over the years from ground operators and suppliers to agents, customers, staff and my family and friends".

BRAZILIAN BOOST FOR ACCOR

ACCORHOTELS' upmarket MGallery by Sofitel collection of properties has expanded into Brazil, with the opening of the new Hotel Santa Teresa Rio de Janeiro (**pictured**). This year's Olympics are expected to boost demand for the destination, with the addition located in the trendy, bohemian Santa Teresa district near such iconic attractions as the Christ The Redeemer statue, Sugarloaf Mountain, Copacabana beach and the Ipanema Coast.

Each of the 43 rooms boasts a "super-size" king bed, and the Hotel Santa Teresa also offers a spa, swimming pool and Jacuzzi along with the iconic Tereze restaurant where Argentine chef Pablo Ferreyra offers an array of local cuisine which can be enjoyed with a stunning panoramic backdrop of the Guanabara Bay. It's the second MGallery property in South America, joining the Brick Hotel Buenos Aires which joined the collection in 2013.



Buenos Aires goes off for Air NZ

AIR New Zealand has seen such strong demand for its new non-stop Auckland-Buenos Aires flights that it will expand frequencies during the upcoming summer peak season to four per week. Speaking at the TRENZ trade show in Rotorua last month, CEO Christopher Luxon said the growth would see the fourth weekly rotation operate from 12 December 2016 through to 27 February 2017. He also announced the deployment of Air NZ's Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft on the South American route from 30 October this year.

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NORMANDY



DAYS OF *wine* AND ROSES

A luxury cruise along the Seine reveals some of France's most memorable highlights from a unique point of view, writes KRISTIE KELLAHAN.

BEAUTIFUL Paris, that most magnificently romantic of all cities, is always a visual feast. The Eiffel Tower, dazzling at midnight, ducks on the pond in Luxembourg Gardens, the imposing grandeur of Notre-Dame cathedral, a colourful display of cakes in the window of a patisserie in Le Marais.

I thought I knew well the sights of Paris, until I saw them from a river cruise. What a pleasant surprise to see the city's iconic landmarks through fresh eyes as I sailed along the Seine River aboard *Tapestry II*, one of Avalon Waterways' Suite Ships.

Travelling on Avalon's eight-day Paris to Normandy's Landing Beaches cruise, we spent the first and last day in France's magnificent capital, with an included city sightseeing package and plenty of free time for shopping and patisserie-hopping.

Tapestry II's journey along the Seine covers

some charming French village landscapes and landmark destinations. Guests are well-advised to have smartphones and video cameras at the ready to capture the rural idyll of centuries-old stone farmhouses, grazing cows and village churches where generations of life events have been pondered.

Monet's gardens at Giverny are visited, as well as the historic footsteps of Joan of Arc in Rouen, the capital of Upper Normandy. In Conflans, cruisers have the choice of following the trail of Van Gogh's last days to Auvers-sur-Oise or marvelling at the lavishly restored luxe of Napoleon and Josephine's Chateau de Malmaison.

Certainly one of the unforgettable highlights of the cruise itinerary is the day spent discovering Normandy's Landing Beaches.

Standing on the windswept sands of Omaha Beach, we listened wide-eyed and rapt as our guide described the events of 6 June 1944: D-Day, the largest seaborne

invasion in history. An unstoppable flotilla of 5,000 warships charging towards the Germans who had been occupying Normandy. The landing of 24,000 airborne troops in the dead of night. At least 10,000 Allied casualties in one day. A battle that would last 80 days, claim 425,000 lives and ultimately give France its freedom.

At the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, more than 9,000 American soldiers are buried. The simple, striking design of rows and rows and rows of white crosses and Stars of David on the lawns heading down to the ocean is sobering and dignified. Local staff handed out roses for us to place on graves.

Expertly handled shore excursions are one of the hallmarks of Avalon river cruises, whether in France, Germany, Cambodia or beyond. Avalon employs the services of multilingual guides, carefully selected for their expert local knowledge. The Local Favourites

ROUEN



Photos courtesy of Avalon Waterways



GIVERNY

cabin into an open-air balcony by opening wide the wall-to-wall glass doors. It also gives them the option not to do that - remember, the weather in northern France and other parts of Europe during the shoulder seasons of March and September is often not warm enough to let the outside in, and balconies often sit empty during those times.

On the *Tapestry II* ship, launched last year, the beds face the view, instead of the wall. So simple, yet such a big change for the holidaymaker's vantage point.

Travellers more accustomed to ocean cruising will notice other differences when taking to the rivers. With fewer than 200

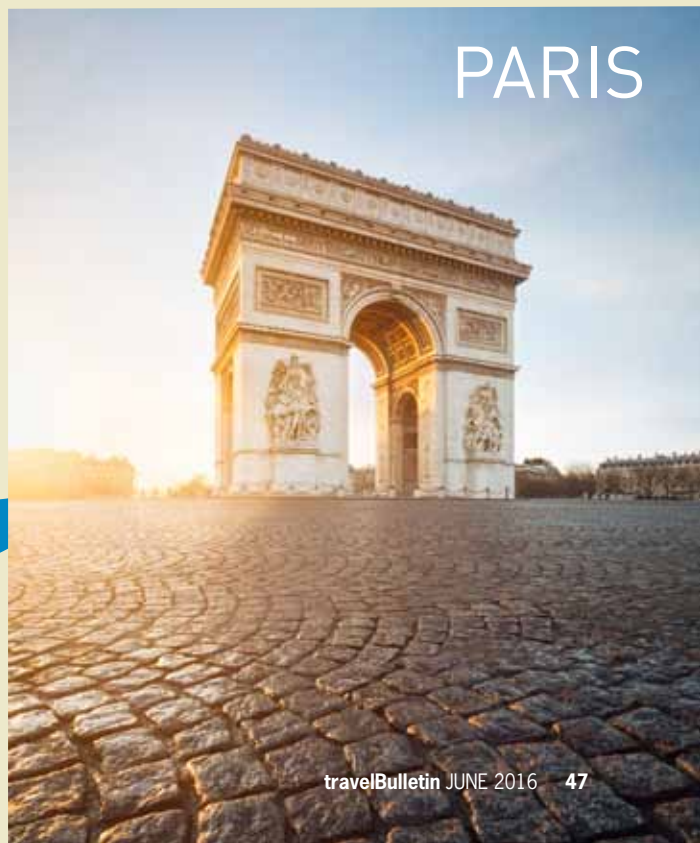
passengers, there's a relaxed ease to getting on and off the ship, a manageable line at the breakfast buffet and never a crowd on the sun deck. Personalised, attentive service from the cruise director and operations staff makes every guest feel like a VIP, while the luxury inclusions of the ship and the spacious cabins are a pleasant indulgence. On-board casinos? Forget about it.

Meandering along Europe's waterways, close enough to practically peek into the windows of riverfront homes, is a delightful way to get up close and memorable with historic villages and delightful waterfront cities. Vive la France!

program dishes up authentic experiences in each destination that go beyond what is normally available to independent tourists. Forget a standard group outing to the Louvre: on a day trip to Chateau de Bizy near Giverny, we were personally welcomed by the nonagenarian lady of the manor, a direct descendant of the Bonapartes. In preparation for our day at the Normandy beaches, we were lectured by one of the foremost WWII scholars living in France.

Another notable selling point of Avalon Waterways' cruises is their Panorama Suites. The unique design of the suites gives cruisers the option of turning their entire

PARIS



SCENIC NOW INCLUDES INSURANCE



SCENIC is claiming a world first, with the launch last month of a new “River Cruise Guarantee”. Negotiated in conjunction with Ace Insurance, the river cruising travel insurance arrangements are included at no extra cost on every Scenic river cruise. Once passengers commence their voyage they are covered for any delays or cancellations that occur due to weather, natural disasters, mechanical breakdowns or strikes.

“Our river cruising guarantee is designed to give you comfort and assurance for certain events which prevent you from cruising and are not considered typical or usual to river cruising,” the company said – and in the

event that a claim is required clients will be refunded in cash, rather than in the “industry standard” of future cruise credits. The policy wording says clients will be paid up to \$1,000 for each full 24 hour period from the start of the delay or cancellation, up to a maximum of \$7,000 (or seven consecutive 24 hour periods) or the originally scheduled end date of the Scenic cruise, whichever is the lesser.

Unforeseen events covered by the policy include a complete halt to an itinerary where the ship is unable to sail and passengers are unable to do on-shore excursions except by way of coach transfers of greater than three hours each way; mechanical breakdowns

which result in the cruise being suspended and no alternative ships available; industrial action which would mean a ship cannot pass through a lock and the cruise cannot continue; and where Scenic is able to accommodate passengers on an alternative Space-Ship due to high or low water but the itinerary is delayed by over 24 hours.

Normal disruptions are not included – such as ship swaps which take less than six hours, or if alternate arrangements of similar quality are made for any itinerary activities. The company said the addition of the river cruise guarantee is an example of “staying true to our commitment of being all-inclusive”.

Q&A

River cruising has taken off in a big way for Australians, with thousands joining ships plying the waters of Europe and Asia. It’s clearly a lucrative market to tap in to so *travelBulletin* got some hot selling tips from MTA travel expert Leon Bruggemann.



What are the main drawcards for Australians travelling on a river cruise?

The main drawcard is that travellers can experience a country in a relaxing mode of travel whether it be in Europe, Asia, China, or Egypt. We have large choices of itineraries and durations to choose from and a river cruise can easily be combined with land content such as car rental, coach touring and rail.

What kinds of travellers take river cruises?

Travellers in the 40+ age group, mainly couples who want a stress free experience. Unpack once and have an all-inclusive holiday with meals, with major sightseeing included.

Which destinations are the most popular?

Europe is still the most popular especially the Amsterdam-Budapest route followed closely by France and the Moselle into Switzerland. Asia is also very popular, China, Cambodia, Burma and India.

Are there any routes that you consider must-do’s for river cruisers?

Europe is a must-do. Danube through to the Rhine followed by other alternative river cruises in Europe such as France and Spain.

What should an agent consider when selling river cruises?

It is important to know your clients’ needs and expectations and match them to the

correct product. We now have such large choice of cruises and cruise companies and product training is freely available to learn about these different products.

What are the biggest challenges for agents in selling river cruise holidays?

The product choice we have and getting up to speed with each product. The Early Bird promotions with fly free can be confusing to the consumer especially, in the fine print.

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Even more river ships for Crystal

CRYSTAL River Cruises will be operating seven vessels on the waterways of Europe by 2019, with CEO Edie Rodriguez announcing two more newbuilds during a ceremony in Germany last month. The *Crystal Debussy*, *Crystal Bach*, *Crystal Ravel* and *Crystal Mahler* are currently under construction, and at the steel cutting Rodriguez revealed two additional ships on order from the Lloyd Werft yard.

The six new ships will join *Crystal Mozart*, the line's first river ship which is currently being refurbished and will debut on next month from Vienna. Features aboard *Mozart* will include a pop-up bar area and a retractable movie screen, with capacity for up to 158 passengers. "I think these river cruises will deliver the Crystal elegance and style like nobody else is doing it on the river. They will be really different, everything from our shore excursion options to our exclusive dining venues," Rodriguez said.



PANDAW PLIES MYANMAR WATERS

THIS group of Australian travel people recently experienced a Pandaw river cruise which journeyed from Mandalay to Yangon on the Irrawaddy River, exploring remote destinations such as Danabyu, Zalon, Thayetmo and Pagan. Myanmar is a key focus for Pandaw which will later this year expand its offerings in the country with two new itineraries on the Salween River and the Irrawaddy Delta, which can be combined with voyages on the Irrawaddy or the Chindwin.

Pictured in front of the *RV Pandaw II* are Bob Rickey from *The Australian*, John Boyd from Pandaw's Australian office, Cunard's Ken Triffitt and Philippine Airlines country manager Ian Robertson.

AVALON CHRISTENS TWO MORE

AVALON Waterways has added two more Suite Ships to its fleet in Europe this season, with the new *Avalon Passion* now sailing on the Danube and the *Avalon Imagery II* on the Rhine River. Jill Ellis, head coach of the US Women's National Soccer Team is the godmother of the 83-cabin *Passion*, christening the vessel in a ceremony in the Austrian city of Linz. Avalon Waterways managing director Patrick Clark said Ellis was chosen because she "epitomises how passion coupled with hard work can make dreams come true".

The *Imagery II* debuted in the German city of Engers in an event attended by the Globus Family of Brands team from Australia and New Zealand along with more than 70 Kiwi travel industry guests. The ship's godmother is New Zealand broadcaster Judy Bailey, who fronted the country's prime time news for more than 26 years. Bailey is **pictured** with Patrick Clark, the ship's captain Nico van den Boom, Globus GM New Zealand Troy Ackerman and Globus managing director Australasia, Stewart Williams. The two newbuilds take Avalon to a total of 16 vessels in Europe, 12 of them utilising the Suite Ship concept which offers two full decks of all-suite accommodation.



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LUXURY

Boasting the finest fleet of river ships in France, our Space-Ships will be completely rebuilt for the 2017 cruising season to include larger suites and beautiful interiors. We'll open up public spaces and reduce the number of guests – but not our staff numbers – for an even more personalised level of service than ever before. Additionally we'll introduce a vitality pool, gym and spa. A highlight of these ships will be the two new one-bedroom Royal Owner's Suites, at a huge 47 square metres.

CULINAIRE

An exclusive new culinary experience will be available on our 2017 Bordeaux and Rhône River Cruises. Scenic Culinaire will allow guests to participate in a series of on board cooking classes, taught by experts. The dedicated space will feature cooking stations, a cheese and wine cellar and fresh ingredients sourced from local markets. Our cooking instructors will introduce guests to regional recipes based on the regions they're cruising through.

ENRICH

Our signature Enrich experiences will take guests behind the scenes for special encounters inaccessible to the ordinary traveller. New for 2017, is our stage spectacular, Scenic Rouge – inspired by the finest French cabaret traditions and featuring classics such as the can-can, it's held under the big top, on the banks of the Rhône River in Lyon. Guest can also enjoy an exclusive four-course dining experience with matched vintages at the acclaimed Mumm Champagne house in Riems.

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*Conditions apply. Price is based on per person twin share in AUD ex SYD/MEL/BNE/ADL/PER are strictly limited and subject to availability. Pricing correct as of 3 May 2016 and based on FRAC141017.1 departure. For new bookings only. For full terms and conditions refer to 2017 Europe River Cruise brochure and Earlybird flyer or visit scenic.com.au/ terms. Scenic ABN 85 002 715 602. SNTRD345

GOLDEN DEAL IN PORTUGAL



Douro Valley, Aires Almeida

PORTUGAL is the latest hot destination for river cruising, and Viking Cruises has a great deal to take advantage of. The Portugal's River of Gold 10-day itinerary is on offer from \$5,149 per person (based on 8 December 2017 departure from Lisbon) and includes return economy class airfare to Europe.

The journey travels through Portugal and Spain, starting with two days and two nights in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon.

Guests will then board one of Viking Cruises' custom built Douro ships. These vessels are smaller than their Longship cousins plying other European waters, meaning they make for a more intimate experience.

The cruise then follows the Douro River past steeply terraced vineyards, ports of call with colourful castles, baroque mansions and historic monasteries.

Passengers will also visit the medieval Spanish city of Salamanca and sample Portuguese specialties like salt cod, hearty soups and the area's sensational port and tawny wines.



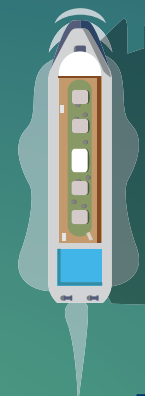
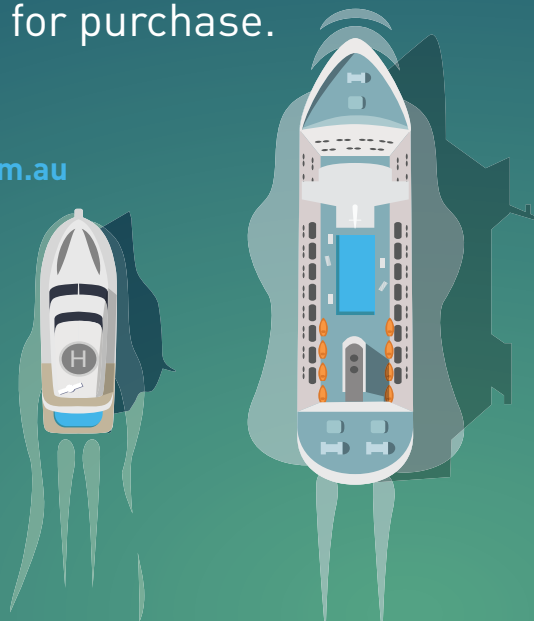
New bikes for Avalon

AVALON Waterways has added bicycles to its entire European fleet of river ships, with the light-weight foldable cycles able to be quickly deployed to allow guests to explore local villages and riverside scenery under their own steam. Manufactured by Tern, the innovative design incorporates recycled aluminium and environmentally friendly materials. Six bikes are carried on the larger 135m vessels, and five on the 110m ships, and they are made available for guests to reserve at no charge along with maps, helmets and drinking water.

The onboard bikes complement a range of regular cycling excursions already available on many itineraries. Avalon's 2017 European programs also include a range of Active Discovery cruises which feature opportunities to bike, hike and canoe along the Danube, according to Globus Family of Brands marketing manager Chris Fundell.

The full results of the StollzNow travelBulletin/Cruise Weekly cruise agent survey are available for purchase.

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TREASURES OF MACAO



Macao's futuristic cityscape and World Heritage sites melds into a fusion of treasures that will enthral visitors of all ages, writes CHRISTINA PFEIFFER.

THERE'S a buzz of excitement in the air on Macau Tower's Adventure Deck, as the bungy jumpers are ushered onto the tower's outdoor deck. One by one, the men and women kitted up in special jump suits, take the plunge off the tower from a dizzying height of 233m.

The bird's-eye view of Macao from the tower highlights the changing skyline of the former Portuguese enclave. After exploring Macao, I'm sure it's this rapidly changing landscape coupled with a well-maintained collection of World Heritage attractions that

makes Macao a compelling place to visit.

Over the past two decades, the changes in Macao have been as dizzying as a bungy jump. Ever since the former Portuguese enclave was handed back to China in 1999, Macao has been on an exciting trajectory of growth.

Back then, according to Helen Wong, General Manager of the Macao Government Tourism Office Australia and New Zealand, there were 9469 hotel rooms. Last year there were 32,608 rooms in Macao and this figure is expected to grow to over 50,000 within two years.

HISTORIC WONDERS

While gaming used to be the main attraction for punters and weekend visitors, in recent times, the former Portuguese enclave has matured into a fully-fledged city destination with plenty of attractions for everyone,

from visiting charming heritage buildings, Chinese temples and European-style paved squares to sampling Macanese cuisine, sipping Portuguese wine in sleek bars and discovering quirky galleries.

It has been 10 years since my last visit to Macao, when most of my exploring was of Macao's World Heritage centre. When I last visited, I was impressed with Macao's clean streets and well-kept historic attractions.

During this visit, a quick whip around the main heritage sights confirms that Macao's historic spots are as well patronised as the city's casinos. The aroma of Portuguese tarts and almond cookies wafts through air as I stroll past the traditional bakeries in Senado Square. The Ruins of St Paul's, Macao's famous historic landmark, and A Ma Temple, which built by fishermen in the 16th century in honour of the sea goddess, bustle with activity.



FUTURISTIC BRIDGE

After reacquainting myself with Macao's historic landmarks, I focus most of my exploring on the new glitzy mega resorts that have mushroomed on the Cotai strip. This is an area of reclaimed land that links the islands of Taipa and Coloane; Cotai is a futuristic bridge between two old sections of the city.

This glittering new section has earned Macao the label of the Las Vegas of Asia but I soon discover there are plenty of delights beyond the gaming tables.

I'm chatting to a friend on my smartphone as I walk into The Venetian's Grand Canal. The sight of the clouds painted on the ceiling stops me in mid-sentence and I stare

‘The aroma of Portuguese tarts and almond cookies wafts through air as I stroll past the traditional bakeries in Senado Square’

in awe at the painted “sky”. The Grand Canal's streetscape is a picturesque version of Venice. A gondola floats past and the harmonious baritone of the gondolier is a soothing melody to my ears.

Later, I marvel at the view of the city from Asia's highest Ferris wheel. The Golden Reel - which is the first figure-8 Ferris wheel in the world - is located in Studio City Macao. Other exciting attractions at Studio City are the 4D Universal Studios Batman Dark Flight, vibrant shopping streets, themed nightclubs and creative shopping streets.

DRAGONS AND FOUNTAINS

Even though many of Macao's newer attractions are free, they are worth a look. I'm mesmerized by Wynn Macao's Dragon of Fortune. The giant sculptured dragon rises from the floor and fills the atrium accompanied by spectacular multimedia effects.

Outside Wynn, I'm captivated by the shimmering display of the nightly water show at Performance Lake. The colourful show of special effects lighting coordinated with the shooting water fountains and background music is worth making the effort to see.

Another impressive spot in Macao is Galaxy's Grand Resort Deck, which has a massive waterpark with tropical gardens, waterslides, lagoons and the world's largest Skytop Wave Pool. Five hotels have access to this attraction (JW Marriott, Ritz Carlton, Hotel Okura, Banyan Tree and Galaxy Hotel).

At the House of Dancing Water in the City of Dreams, I'm awestruck by the breathtaking scale of the production. During the show the “floor” transforms into a lake that holds the equivalent of five Olympic-sized swimming pools of water. I'm at the edge of my seat the entire time as the acrobatic displays offer many “wow” moments.

After thoroughly exploring Macao, I've come to the conclusion that compared to other Asian cities, Macao is unique. The combination of historical treasures and a flood of exciting new developments packed into a compact area puts Macao on the map as an Asian city on the rise.

**Photos previous page: Studio City
This page clockwise from top left: Macau Tower Adventure Deck (MGTO); House of Dancing Water; the Venetian; Wynn Macao's Dragon of Fortune; Ruins of St Paul's (MGTO)**



New for Macao

MACAO continues to grow as an action-packed holiday destination with every new hotel and attraction built across the city-state. Recent months have seen the expansion of the Galaxy precinct along with the debut of the lavish 400-room St Regis Macao hotel with its exclusive Iridium day spa and spectacular views of the Cotai Strip.

Later this year Macao will see some major new developments including the Parisian hotel boasting more than 2,900 rooms and a replica half-size Eiffel Tower which will sit at the hotel's entrance. The tower is tipped to become a huge drawcard for the peninsula featuring observation decks with views to China's mainland and a gourmet restaurant.

Another exciting development for both kids and kids at heart is the world's first player-centric "Live Action Role Play" theme park. Set to open this month, Planet J theme park at Sands Cotai Central is an indoor fantasy world where players can physically act out fantasy characters in a virtual setting. Everyone who plays is armed with a 'magic scroll'; a personalised mobile app connecting to over 200 games across the park.

HOP OVER TO MACAO

MACAO is an ideal day trip from Hong Kong with high speed jetfoils and catamarans making the one-hour trip between the destinations a great option. Next time your clients have a stopover in Hong Kong, why not suggest a pre- or post-cruise stay in Macao? TurboJet and CotaiJet provide regular services seven-days a week. Turbojet departs every 15 minutes while CotaiJet has several sailings throughout the day and night. Both services leave from the Hong Kong Macao Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan and the China Ferry Terminal in Kowloon. The main stop is Macao's Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal which is close to many of the peninsula's key attractions. CotaiJet mainly serves the Cotai Strip.

Once on the island be sure to check out the UNESCO World Heritage listed Historic City Centre of Macao with its unique mix of Portuguese and Chinese cultures. The Cotai area of reclaimed land linking the islands of Taipa and Coloane is also a great to visit with new ritzy themed precincts complete with luxury international hotels, a diverse range of restaurants, cafes and designer label shops.

AGENT KNOW-HOW

Ben Zaubzer from Macao Government Tourism Office let's us in on all the insider knowledge on how to sell this great city.

How can agents improve their knowledge of Macao?

Agents can be at the forefront of "Need to Knows" and "How to better sell Macao" by downloading the latest version of the Macao Bulletin from our www.visitmacao.com.au site under Travel Tips. This six page Fact File provides a large variety of information like, Simple Facts and Need to Knows, Attractions and Family Fun, Cuisine and eating out, Getting around Macao and most important Somewhere to Stay.

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

If you want to know more about Macao it's pretty simple. We have representative offices in both Sydney and Melbourne. All you need to do is send me an email on bzaubzer@worldtradetravel.com with a date and time and we can make it happen.

Any recommendations for first time travellers?

If you have never been to Macao before I definitely would start with a minimum three night stay. I would definitely try all the new attractions like DreamWorks, Warner Bros and the amazing shows like House of Dancing Water, Taboo and House of Magic. But, the old side to Macao is where the charm lies, the Historic Centre, its old and new, local family run Macanese restaurants, this is what makes Macao a unique destination for me.

What makes Macao a unique destination?

Macao's uniqueness lies with its historic east meets west characteristics where the Chinese and the Portuguese have lived in harmony for five centuries. Where the marriage of cultures, cuisine and traditions live side by side. Now it offers a perfect blend of contemporary and historic, modern resorts sharing the same address as UNESCO World Heritage listed architecture and parks. A piece of Portugal in Asia.

And finally, how can travel agents join a famil?

Let me know how you are or could actively promote and sell the destination, or what tools you need to better sell Macao. But to be honest, each famil is different and tailored to the needs of the agent, the business or campaign/incentive we have run.





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MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

FOUR MACAO MUST-DOS

It's not all just gambling and designer shopping in Macao. **BONNIE TAI** looks beneath the surface and discovers five must-dos if given the chance to explore the former Portuguese enclave.

Explore the Ruins of St Paul

AS A former Portuguese colony, Macao still boasts monuments remnant of its rich history. One such historical site that must be explored is the Ruins of St Paul.

Built in the 16th century, the complex in Macao was originally the site of St Paul's College and the Church of St Paul (also known as Mater Dei). Today the mammoth structure is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is listed as part of the Historic Centre of Macao.



Ruínas de São Paulo, Travis

Embark on a walking tour through Taipa Village

SET off on foot on a walking adventure through Taipa Village, exploring narrow streets and lanes that offer a glimpse of Macao's old-time village life.

The leisure walk-through showcases excellent restaurants, historic colonial villas, churches and temples, with a variety of different routes to choose from.

Popular trails explore areas such as the Tin Hau Temple, Museum of Taipa and Coloane History, Pak Tai Temple and the Our Lady of Carmo Church



Lord Stow Bakery, Aaron J Farr

Sample egg tarts at Lord Stow Bakery, Coloane

A YUMCHA favourite, the humble egg tart (or dan tat) is actually a Macanese invention and should absolutely be sampled in its homeland. Invented by pastry chef Andrew 'Lord' Stow in the late 80s the Asian fusion treat combines flaky pastry filled with delicious egg custard.

Lord Stow's Bakery in Coloane still stands today and is a popular foodie hot spot for both locals and tourists alike.

Hike up to the Guia Light House and Fortress

FOR fitness fanatics or holiday-makers that like to get the blood pumping, a hike up to the summit of Guia Hill to see the light house and fortress is a must-do.

Built in 1865 as a chief observation post during colonial times, the fort is well preserved and still contains within barracks, a water cistern, an ammunition cache and a chapel.

The lighthouse within is the oldest on the Chinese coast and towers 91 metres high, with its beam able to be seen from up to 30 kilometres away.



Guia Hill Fortress and Light house, Adrian F



AN EXTRA seven Small Group Journeys catering to 20 guests have been added to APT's latest brochure. The tours explore Croatia, Montenegro, France, Italy and Great Britain at a more leisurely pace. The land tours also offer Signature Experiences ranging from a cooking class with a Michelin Star chef at their apartment in Lyon to dinner at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens. APT will continue its popular Wine Cruises with four expert APT Wine Ambassadors.



CONTIKI'S 2016/17 winter Europe program features Iceland after the Nordic Island's successful debut in the 2016 summer program. The four-day journey visits Reykjavik and includes a bucket-list worthy Northern Lights experience. Itineraries range from the three-day London Explorer to the 25-day European Quest. A total of 18 countries are featured in the new brochure.



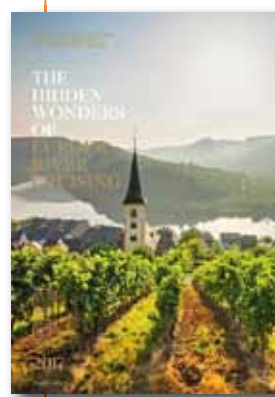
SKIMAX's Whistler brochure is hot off the press and has everything you need to know about booking the North American ski destination. It contains information on the best times to visit Whistler, tours, lessons and a large accommodation map. Hotels highlighted inside include Westin Resort & Spa in Whistler Village, Delta Whistler Village Suites, the luxury Four Seasons Resort & Residences Whistler and the family-friendly Pan Pacific Village Centre.



SWAN Hellenic's new brochure details over 30 cruises on board *Minerva*. Throughout the 2017 European spring, summer and autumn, guests will have the opportunity to search for the Northern Lights, venture into the Gulf of Bothnia, or circumnavigate Ireland. *Minerva* will then head to the Mediterranean for the late summer and autumn to spend time exploring the French Riviera, Adriatic and Greek Isles.



TOPDECK Travel's refreshed European brochure was launched a month earlier than last year. It boasts six new trips including a four-day Iceland Adventure, 24-day Western Compass, seven-day Southern Runner, 16-day Western Corners, 10-day Western Runner and the nine-day Northern Directions. Activities have also been revamped with a new stop-off at Disneyland on the Paris Christmas trip.



A REBUILD of three Scenic Space-Ships in France and the launch of on board cooking school - Scenic Culinaire are two exciting new aspects of the line's new 2017 Europe River Cruising Program. Six new combination cruises include the 19-day Eastern European Endeavour travelling from Prague to Bucharest along the Danube and the 27-day European Sojourn which begins in Budapest cruising the popular Rhine-Main-Danube rivers and connecting with the Rhône in Lyon, ending in Nice.



TRAFALGAR has released its biggest ever Autumn, Winter and Spring program made up 33 trips. New for this year is the eight-day Britain and Ireland Delight, which stops by Stratford upon Avon, York, Edinburgh and Dublin. Hot trips also include the six-day Northern Lights of Iceland including the Blue Lagoon, the eight-day London Explorer and the eight-day Paris Explorer.



ASIA Escape Holiday's latest brochure lays out the range of hotels and tours across Singapore and Malaysia. In Singapore, visit Sentosa Island or head on a tour of the city, with options including the Gardens by the Bay tour, Tiger Brewery Tour and the Night Safari at Singapore Zoo. In Malaysia, there's accommodation and tours in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Langkawi, Sabah, Sarawak, Pangkor Laut and Kuala Terengganu. In Kuala Lumpur, highlights include the Kuala Lumpur by Night Tour and Cameron Highlands Penang Tour.

By Amanda Woods

THE sun is on my face, the wind in my hair, a glass of sparkling wine is in my hand and spectacular scenery is unfolding around me.

Visiting Machu Picchu had always been a travel dream of mine but I had never imagined getting there would look like this.

While some hike the Inca trail to Machu Picchu, a train from Poroy on the outskirts of Cusco to Machu Picchu Pueblo, the small town in the valley below the world famous citadel, is a popular alternative for those who either prefer not to do the hike or are unable to due to time constraints or health reasons.

Various trains run along the route but one stands out from the rest.

The Hiram Bingham is one of the great train journeys of the world. Part of the Belmond family, formerly known as the Orient Express Group, this train is all about luxury and the romance of rail.

The experience begins with colourful traditional dancers twirling to live musicians on the Poroy station platform where rows of welcoming champagne flutes await.

The sight of the gleaming navy and gold 1920s Pullman style carriages fills my heart with glee, and I feel like I've stepped back in time as I explore the two dining cars, observation car and bar car, all featuring polished brass and wood.

While most people take a seat in the dining car when it is time to leave I head straight for the open-air platform at the end of the observation car.

Here I have uninterrupted 180 degree views, I can breathe in the fresh air, hear children laughing as they wave at the passing train and smile at them as I wave back.

From here I can also smell the Peruvian countryside change, from the slightly dusty townships, through the earthy farmland areas, the familiar smells of home during stretches of eucalyptus trees and finally a scent I've never smelt before – the lush cloud forest and jungle around Machu Picchu.

A three-piece band of two guitars and a box drum provide the perfect soundtrack as we travel along, mixing traditional songs with their own special twists on Elvis tracks and other golden oldies.

We may be travelling to one of the most famous mountains in the world but we are travelling down to reach it, with Poroy station at 3,486m (11,437ft) compared to Machu Picchu at 2,430m (7,972ft), and the train is equipped with oxygen to help those suffering from altitude sickness.

While some people sip teas and coffees I'm amongst those who don't say no to the friendly waiter who moves through the car with a bottle





Photos courtesy of Belmond



of the Peruvian sparkling wine, Intipalka Extra Brut.

The Hiram Bingham carries up to 84 passengers and everyone has a pre-assigned seat in the dining cars for the three-course meal on the way down in the morning and the four-course one on the way back.

All of the food comes from small organic family farms on the land the train travels through, and our delicious dishes included Wayllabamba smoked trout with mashed fava beans, quinoa tabbouleh, Andean mint oil and airampo (Andean prickly purple pear) emulsion and a Sacred Valley corn cheesecake with purple corn and elderberry sauce for dessert.

The menu is set, although you can make some changes if you have dietary requirements, and a selection of wine, cocktails, beer, soft drinks and hot drinks are included, although you can order a special bottle from the wine list if you prefer.

The journey takes around three and a half hours each way, and the Hiram Bingham day trip includes private bus transfers from the train station to Machu Picchu, entrance to the citadel, a tour guide and afternoon tea before making your way back to Cusco.

But it is possible to do things another way.

After our morning train we chose to spend the afternoon and night in the town, staying at the charming Inkaterra Machu Picchu eco resort, before going up to Machu Picchu in the morning, and boarding the Hiram Bingham again that afternoon.

Keep in mind if you break up the journey the return trip is subject to availability and you will need to make your own way up and down the mountain. If you opt to do this, make sure you leave plenty of time to return as the bus queues can be very long and some people have missed their trains because of them.

It is also possible to spoil yourself on one hand and save some money on the other by buying a one-way Hiram Bingham ticket, which includes entrance to the citadel and the tour, and then catching a normal train service back.

This costs around half the usual package price, and if you were to do it make sure you opt for the way down. While the return journey includes dinner, drinks and entertainment, the outside deck is closed at night and you can't see those views.

Besides, wouldn't you prefer to arrive at one of the wonders of the world in style? I know it's one experience I'll never forget.

NEED TO KNOW

Where

The Hiram Bingham departs from Poroy, a 20 minute drive from the centre of Cusco, through the Sacred Valley to Machu Picchu everyday except for Sundays.

Getting there

The easiest way to get to Cusco is by plane. A number of airlines offer flights from Lima (the closest major international airport).

Cost

A round trip journey costs around US\$400 and includes brunch and dinner, transfers to Machu Picchu, entrance fee and guided tour of the citadel and afternoon tea at Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge.



STAY CONNECTED ON BOARD

THE rise of the internet has led to demands from travellers across the globe for connectivity, and rail operators have taken on the challenge with the availability of on-board wi-fi on many train routes, allowing passengers to keep in touch 24/7 no matter where they are in the world. Internet connections on trains are naturally popular with the corporate market who can keep working door to door, while leisure travellers also enjoy the ability to use social networks, surf the internet and even plan their next trip.

US rail operator Amtrak offers free onboard wi-fi to its guests on many services, with a major upgrade of its systems announced earlier this year which offers internet access to more than 90% of customers. The AmtrakConnect service is now available on

long-distance services such as the Cardinal (New York - Washington D.C. - Cincinnati - Indianapolis - Chicago), the Crescent (New York - Atlanta - New Orleans), the Lake Shore Limited (New York - Boston - Albany - Chicago) and the Silver Service (New York - Washington D.C. - Charleston - Savannah - Jacksonville - Orlando - Tampa/Miami).

The Eurostar train between London and Paris and onwards into Europe also keeps customers connected along the route – even in the Channel Tunnel – as it speeds across borders and timezones. Free onboard wi-fi is available between London and Paris, and is progressing to other routes as new and refurbished carriages roll out. Some TGV services in France also offer broadband connections for a fee.

In Japan the JR-West rail service which journeys from Kyoto to Hakata launched a free hotspot service in March this year. International travellers must present their passport at the station in order to obtain an access code which is valid for 8 days, and provides access at most stations on the network. The Haruka airport express train to Kansai also offers wi-fi throughout the cabin.

Another option to stay connected during rail travel is to use a wi-fi “dongle” or a tethered smartphone. The proliferation of 4G connectivity means this is likely to be the way of the future, and there are many providers who will sell or rent a SIM card suitable for travellers. And of course, on a train wherever there is a signal available, these devices will provide access.



NEW CARRIAGES FOR ROCKY

CANADA'S Rocky Mountaineer rail operator has ordered ten brand new custom-made GoldLeaf railcars, with the rolling stock “completely re-engineered with efficiency and guest comfort in mind”. The new bi-level glass-domed carriages are the first to be added in more than a decade, with Rocky Mountaineer president Steve Sammut saying “we are constantly looking for ways to improve our guest experience, which is the core of our business. The care and attention that has gone into every detail of this car build is remarkable...we are focused on redefining comfort for our guests”.

The new railcars will be constructed in Switzerland and Germany by the Stadler Rail Group, with the order being part of a major investment program which is seeing Rocky Mountaineer revitalise its entire fleet of GoldLeaf and SilverLeaf railcars. Earlier this year the company also announced a partnership with French manufacturer Alstom which will see a full rejuvenation of the SilverLeaf fleet, requiring the Rocky Mountaineer railcars to be stripped to the frame and completely re-engineered. The upgraded carriages will be custom built by Alstom with “signature oversized windows, luxurious seating and state-of-the-art mechanical systems”. So far three of the SilverLeaf carriages have been upgraded, with six scheduled for completion by the commencement of the 2017 season.

High speed France to Spain

THE European high speed rail network continues to develop, with a key link now available for travel directly between France and Spain. Previously only available as a somewhat uncomfortable overnight journey, the new France-Spain TGV Duplex operates between Paris and Barcelona, with 17 stations along the way allowing daytime travel through spectacular scenery.

Route options include Paris-Barcelona (6 hours 15 minutes), Lyon-Barcelona (4 hours 58 minutes), Montpellier-Barcelona (2 hours 53 minutes) and Marseille-Barcelona (4 hours 30 minutes). The Paris-Barcelona sector can be booked up to 143 days in advance while all other services can be booked 119 days in advance, with reservations compulsory for all bookings.

THREE UNIQUE RAIL JOURNEYS



New Zealand – Northern Explorer

New Zealand offers an extraordinary range of scenery and what better way to see it than by train, on the Northern Explorer. The line travels from Wellington at the bottom of the North Island, all the way to Auckland towards the top. The journey can be done in one day, or alternatively you can break it at a number of points. A highlight is the portion of the trip that travels through Tongariro National Park, showcasing snow-blanketed fields, ancient lava flows and volcanic mountains all side by side.

Mexico – El Chepe train

This scenic rail journey travels from Los Mochis to Chihuahua. Also known as the Copper Canyon train, it takes 14 hours to travel in one hit, but the best way to truly appreciate this trip is to break up your journey over a few days. The route stretches over 408 miles of railroad tracks, going through 86 tunnels and crossing 37 bridges. Take in everything from flat desert to scenic mountains and valleys. Make sure you stop at Divisadero and take in the view of the Copper Canyon, four times larger than the Grand Canyon.



Australia – Gulflander

Admire a part of Australia that many people never get the chance to see on the Gulflander train. Traversing wetlands and grasslands to the arid Savannah of north Queensland, the heritage-listed train line stretches from Normanton to Croydon. Normanton was the port for the gold rush town of Croydon, and was never connected to the state rail network. The train itself only carries a small number of passengers, and you can enjoy morning tea en route as Savannah Guides onboard keep you entertained with trivia and amusing stories of colourful characters.

See the best of New Zealand by train

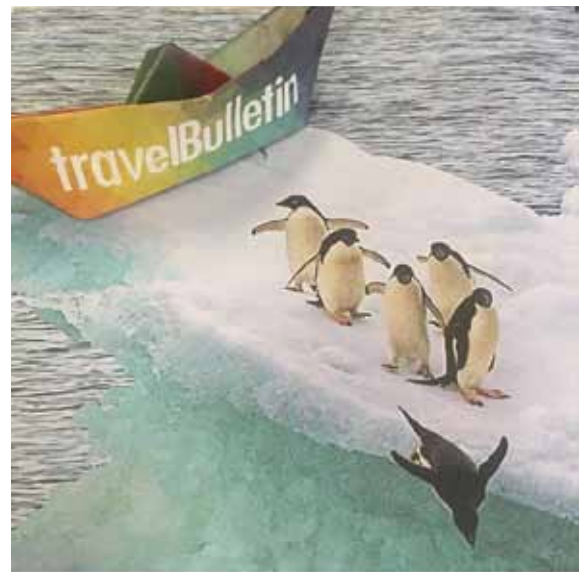


You'll see so much more of New Zealand if you travel by train. There's a spectacular range of scenery waiting for you – rugged coastlines, winding rivers, towering mountains, and untouched alpine landscapes. Sit back in comfort and watch all this roll by in world class carriages, with enormous panoramic windows, GPS triggered commentary and an on-board licensed café.

For more information visit kiwirailscenic.co.nz

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CONGRATULATIONS

A BIG congratulations to Jenna Veness from Discover the World who is taking home a double movie pass. She had the most creative entry in the origami boat competition which featured in the April special cruise edition of *travelBulletin*.

Where in the World?



✓ WIN A DOUBLE MOVIE PASS

YOU sometime have to wonder what architects were thinking when they designed a building, because there are certainly and few weird and wonderful shaped buildings out there. Where is this one? If you think you know, send your answer to comp@travelbulletin.com.au. The first person to answer correctly will win themselves a double movie pass. Good luck!



CELEBRATE

20 YEARS OF EMIRATES FLYING TO AUSTRALIA FOR THE CHANCE TO WIN 2 BUSINESS CLASS FLIGHTS TO EUROPE

To celebrate 20 years since Emirates first began flying to Australia, travelBulletin and Emirates are giving one lucky reader the chance to win two Business Class tickets to their choice of one of 39 European destinations on the Emirates network via their hub in Dubai.

To enter, simply share a photo of your best experience or memory working with Emirates over the last 20 years or a photo showcasing why you love working with Emirates, with 50 words or less describing the photo.

This could be anything from a fantastic trade famil with Emirates, working with the Emirates team, going to Emirates sponsored events such as the Emirates Melbourne Cup or Emirates Australian Open, or simply why you love Emirates.

Email your entry to comp@travelbulletin.com.au

Emirates first launched in Australia in June 1996, with four flights a week from Melbourne to Dubai. Today, the airline operates 105 flights a week from Australia. This includes 77 flights to Dubai per week from five capital cities – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, and four daily flights to New Zealand. www.emirates.com/au



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* Pictures shown are Premium Economy Class on Air Canada's B787 Dreamliner. Other configurations available. Air Canada starts non-stop Brisbane-Vancouver service from June 3, 2016, complementing its daily non-stop Sydney-Vancouver service.