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Traveltalk

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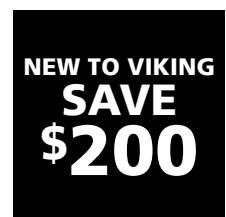
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Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Travel *talk*

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

How to make
travel matter

THAILAND

The secret
surprises on
Koh Samet

IRELAND

Rave reviews
from the
Michelin men

Special report

The travel industry
responds to the
bushfire crisis

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AFTA INDUSTRY NOTICE

The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) is the cornerstone of the Australian travel industry. It sets standards, future proofs and protects the integrity of our industry.

ATAS is the means by which both consumers and trade can identify trusted, reliable and quality travel businesses.

AFTA and ACS does not take its role lightly and does not make cancellations without good reason!

In the last 6 months, two large scale, non-accredited wholesalers have become insolvent. It is a stark reminder to all industry that if a business is NOT accredited – ask why not?

It is unacceptable that a company can make statements and issue press releases which turn out to be misleading and deceptive. It is a clear demonstration of the lack of integrity of these companies.

AFTA is NOT to blame for the demise of these companies. Poor financial management is the only cause of a company becoming insolvent.

AFTA recommends that travel agency owners only work with reputable accredited wholesalers and tour operators.

All CATO members are required to be ATAS accredited.

AFTA has 63 years of representing, supporting, and innovating for the Australian Travel Industry. In 2020 we will continue to seek new solutions to provide all involved with confidence in the travel value chain and make the payment eco-system in the Australian travel industry more robust.



EDITORIAL

Jon Underwood

Managing Editor (print)

Email: jon@traveltalkmag.com.au

Gaya Avery

Managing Editor (digital)

Email: editorial@traveltalkmag.com.au

Rebecca Lawson

Sub Editor

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Gaya Avery, Andrew Cannington,
Janette Wall, Jo Rea, Mark Harada

ART DIRECTOR

Vanessa Pribil

Email: production@traveltalkmag.com.au

ADVERTISING

Sydney: **Mal Jenkins**

Advertising Sales Manager

Mobile: 0434 377 432

Email: mal@traveltalkmag.com.au

Sydney: **Jenny Rowland**

Mobile: 0414 746 146

Fax: (02) 9969 3390

Email: jenny@traveltalkmag.com.au

Perth: **Debbie Sproule**

Tel: (08) 6406 1358

Mobile: 0403 833 295

Email: debbie@traveltalkmag.com.au

DIRECTORS AND ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS

Jenny Rowland (Sydney)

Debbie Sproule (Perth)

Perth Office:

PO Box 3104 Kingsley WA 6026

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Email: distribution@traveltalkmag.com.au

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Our competitions are legendary in the travel industry and we've got TWO lucky winners this month. Jason Hillier from the Travel Industry Club picked up the top prize in our Mantarays Ningaloo Beach Resort contest and Tess Wilcox from World Resorts of Distinction is off to New Zealand for a stay at the Rees Hotel Queenstown! Look out for more great prizes coming soon.



Cover image courtesy Wendy Wu.

TRAVELTALK SPECIAL REPORT: Bushfire crisis

PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

ALONG WITH the rest of Australia, we at *Traveltalk* have been deeply affected by the devastation caused by the bushfires sweeping our beautiful country.

The loss of life, property and wildlife is truly heartbreaking and we are doing whatever we can to support those who have lost so much in the current crisis.

As usual, the wonderful people working within the Australian travel industry have been quick to lend their support. On the following pages you will find some of the appeals and projects designed to get those affected and our country back on track.

Whether you can donate money, clothing, food or other forms of support, we urge everyone to get involved. Aussies are renowned for their 'mate-ship' and now is the time for everyone to once again show this amazing quality.

To donate, head to redcross.org.au

Our fires to benefit from your tour bookings

MAT MCLACHLAN Battlefield Tours has donated \$100 from every passenger booking during January to the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS).

"As a business originally founded in West Wyalong (regional NSW) and one which has several volunteer firefighters among its passengers and one of our staff, we're committed to supporting these incredible heroes during this terrible time," said Mat McLachlan, founder of the company.

The NSW RFS is the world's largest volunteer fire service, with its members providing fire and emergency services to approximately 95 per cent of the state.

"We would like to extend our deep thanks and support to the firefighters who make up the frontline in this battle, including a special thank you to one of our passengers who has travelled with us five times in three years, Adam Blum, a volunteer firefighter with Hazelbrook RFS whose family has been impacted by fires in both the Blue Mountains and Port Macquarie."



Dollar for dollar donations

HELLOWORLD TRAVEL has pledged to match every dollar donated to an appeal to provide much needed assistance to victims of the bushfire crisis.

The GOFUNDME page raised almost \$10,000 in 24 hours for the Australian Red Cross and now totals almost \$30,000. All donations made during January will go directly to the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund.

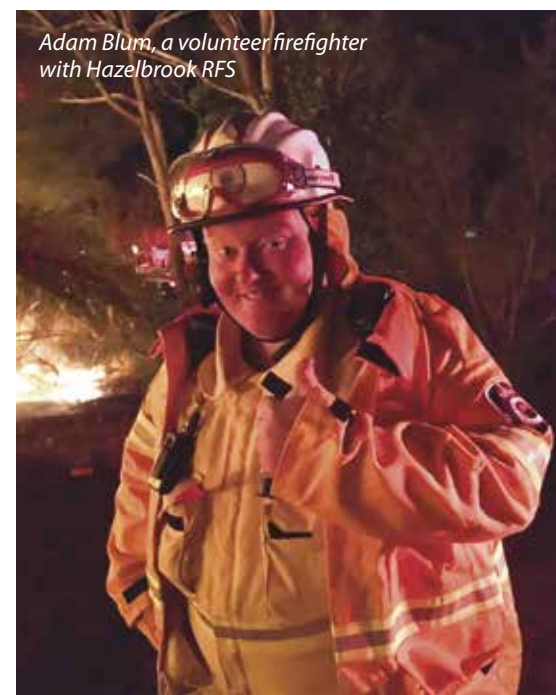
"From all at Helloworld Travel, our thoughts are with all the families who have lost their properties and stock, as well as all the small and medium businesses, particularly those in tourism who have been affected at their busiest time of their year," said Cinzia Burnes, Executive Director and Head of Wholesale and Inbound.

The company has also donated 10 truckloads of hay (2,000 bales) and 575,000 litres of water through the Buy a Bale campaign helping farmers impacted by the drought and now the bushfires.

The campaign is part of the charity Rural Aid, formed to expand services and support to rural communities not only suffering through natural disasters, but communities that need help remaining in existence.

Helloworld and Sunlover Holidays will also donate \$50 for each booking made during the 'Australia on Sale' campaign (until Feb 21) to the Red Cross.

Adam Blum, a volunteer firefighter with Hazelbrook RFS





Get all the latest intel

TOURISM AUSTRALIA has developed a resource showing which popular international tourism areas have been affected by bushfires.

The web page has been developed to ensure that industry and travellers have the most accurate and up to date information.

Tourism Australia is also working with Federal, State and Territory governments to develop and implement a whole range of strategic response to the fires.

Head to australia.com/en/travel-alerts to get all the latest information

How you can help our wildlife

THE WORLD Wide Fund For Nature is running an appeal to help Australia's wildlife recover from the country's devastating bushfires.

It is estimated that thousands of koalas have already perished in the fires across New South Wales and Queensland. Many others will have been left homeless and likely suffering from smoke inhalation or burns.

Koalas on our east coast are now at very real risk of being wiped out forever, with just five per cent of the original population remaining.

All donations help plant and nurture trees for koalas to live in as well as support efforts to expand national protections for existing forests. The WWF will also urge our government to stop excessive tree-clearing, protecting wildlife for the long term.

Money can also go towards:

- * Koala hospitals in southeast Queensland and NSW
- * Koala habitat restoration projects in Greater Sydney
- * Landholder engagement in habitat protection and restoration

■ To make a donation, visit: donate.wwf.org.au/adopt

Seeing the trees for the good

TRAFALGAR HAS donated 10,000 trees to support the regeneration of lands devastated by the recent bushfires that have raged across the country.

"Reforestation has been a core part of our business for a number of years with multiple initiatives alongside our longstanding partner One Tree Planted," said Gavin Tollman, CEO of Trafalgar.

"This includes planting a tree for every customer that chooses to travel paper free, with 89 hectares of trees being planted so far across Northern California and Tanzania."

For the past four years in lieu of Christmas gifts, Trafalgar has made an annual contribution as a thank you for the support that it has received throughout the year, from the brand's staff, partners and guests.

Previous gifts have included working alongside another longstanding partner, social enterprise *ME to WE* to build schools in underprivileged communities as a place to support learning, development and growth in places that need it most.

■ trafalgar.com





Steve Byrne, CEO of Travel Counsellors

P&O Cruises

and its guests have made a \$50,000 contribution to the St Vincent de Paul Society charity to support relief efforts for bushfire victims.

The contribution is comprised of \$25,000 from the P&O Pacific Partnership, which is funded by guests from a one dollar contribution to their onboard cruise accounts, matched in full by the cruise line.

"Everyone's hearts were heavy onboard *Pacific Explorer* as we made our way through dense smoke," said Zoltina-J Medwik-Daley, Entertainment Director on *Pacific Explorer*.

"The ship's fog horn was sounding all day as we cruised through the plumes of smoke. It was eerie. Never in my 20 years at sea have I ever experienced anything like this."

■ bushfireappeal.com.au

The Scenic Group

has donated \$500,000 to provide bushfire support and relief to communities across Australia.

The donation will be allocated to several charities and state organisations, including the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Appeal, the Salvation Army Emergency Services, state Country / Rural Fire Services and WIRES.

Volunteer firefighters

can look forward to a well deserved free holiday thanks to a donation from Wyndham Destinations Asia Pacific

The company has donated \$30,000 to the Australian Red Cross bushfire appeal and is offering free stays to local firefighters who have been battling blazes in the Victorian High Country.

"The courage and tenacity shown by the firefighters and emergency services personnel during these fires has been nothing short of heroic," said Barry Robinson, President and Managing Director, International Operations, Wyndham Vacation Clubs.

"Many of these volunteers missed Christmas and New Year's Eve with their families and we hope that a much deserved resort stay, with the date and destination of their choosing, will give the firefighters and their families something special to look forward to, along with a well-deserved break."



Travel Counsellors

have raised nearly \$7,000 for the bushfire appeal from a global promotion.

The business made a donation for every booking made across the globe on January 10. They have also set up their own fundraising page for staff and customers who want to contribute.

"As a company that places care for its people, customers and communities at its heart, Travel Counsellors are committed to help support rescue efforts and those affected by the fires in Australia," said Steve Byrne, CEO at Travel Counsellors.

Singapore Airlines

will donate \$100,000 to the Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery appeal to support affected communities across Australia.

"Australians have supported us for the past 53 years and we hope that this donation will go some way to supporting the people and communities affected by these bushfires," said Philip Goh, Regional Vice President, Singapore Airlines.

"It is difficult to fathom the scale of the fires across Australia as it has now affected an area more than 140 times the size of Singapore."

Mr Goh said the airline would continue to work with its alliance partner Virgin Australia as well as key stakeholders across the country to lend further support to bushfire appeals where possible.

The Fullerton Hotels and Resorts

have pledged to donate \$60,000 to the New South Wales (NSW) Rural Fire Service and St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies).

The donation will benefit volunteer firefighters who have risked their lives to alleviate the bushfire crisis and support families affected by the bushfires.

The Fullerton Hotel Sydney will also donate a portion of the sales proceeds from various stay and dining packages to the Salvation Army Disaster Appeal which supports communities affected by the devastating bushfires in New South Wales and Queensland.

Norwegian Cruise Lines

have committed \$250,000 to the Australian Red Cross Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund.

Since July last year, Australian Red Cross teams have responded to 30 bushfire related emergencies and supported more than 18,600 people, through the efforts of more than 1,590 volunteers and staff.

The organisation has provided support to displaced people in more than 69 evacuation and recovery centres and is also providing emergency grants to help people who have lost homes in the fires cover immediate needs.

"While these bushfires are devastating and unprecedented, the support from people and organisations around the world to help Australia is truly heartening," said Felicity Calvert, Head of Partnerships at Australia Red Cross.

The Intrepid Foundation

has launched an appeal to support the Red Cross during the current bushfire crisis.

Funds donated by travellers and industry will be matched dollar-for-dollar by Intrepid up to \$200,000.

All money raised will go directly to the Red Cross Bushfire Emergency Appeal, which is currently supporting thousands of people in evacuation centres in Victoria and New South Wales.

"Like the rest of the country, Intrepid stands in solidarity with communities who are being directly affected and we encourage people to donate to the fund so their dollars are matched by us," said James Thornton, CEO of Intrepid Group.

To donate, head to: theintrepidfoundation.org/australian-bushfire-appeal

Taking the big plunge

TWO CARNIVAL cruise directors have taken an unusual plunge to raise money for the Red Cross bushfire appeal.

Lee Mason (*Carnival Splendor*) and Chloe Loddo (*Carnival Spirit*) rode down the Green Lightning and Green Thunder waterslides after guests were challenged to raise \$5,000.

The pair pledged to plummet down the slides dressed in ballgowns if guests rose to the challenge. Before the week's end, passengers onboard both ships were able to raise more than \$15,000.

In partnership with sister brands P&O Cruises Australia, Princess Cruises, Cunard and Holland America Line, Carnival has already pledged \$350,000 to the appeal. The cruise company will continue to facilitate donations from guests in the coming weeks through onboard donations.

Micky Arison, chairman of Carnival Corporation, has pledged \$1.5 million through his family foundation to focus on the specific back-to-school needs of children badly affected by the bushfires.

Above left: Lee Mason on Green Lightning. Below: Chloe Loddo after the Green Thunder challenge



YOUR CHANCE TO BE A LEGEND



AUSSIE AGENTS can be among the first to experience *Norwegian Spirit's* \$US100 million (approx. \$AU144 million) revitalisation on her inaugural sailing.

The incentive is part of the company's trade recognition program, NCL Legends.

Norwegian Spirit entered dry dock last month for her 40 day renovation, the most expensive undertaken in NCL history. She emerged featuring 14 new venues, additional staterooms and an expanded Mandara Spa.

She resumes sailing this month, including 10 new ports of call. She will be the first in the company's fleet to visit destinations such as Bali, Jakarta, Nagoya, Tokyo, Taipei and Yangon.

To be in the running, agencies need to book and deposit \$30,000 or more of NCL worldwide product – either directly with NCL or via any eligible wholesale partner – by February 28.

The top 12 agencies with the highest Net Ticket Revenue (NTR) in worldwide products and the top three agencies with the highest percentage NTR growth vs same booking period last year will win a spot.

The top 15 individual travel agencies will have the opportunity to send one of their consultants aboard *Norwegian Spirit's* five-day inaugural Asia sailing from Singapore to Hong Kong on April 15 with return economy flights, pre-cruise accommodation and more included.

The winning travel agencies will receive a single stateroom aboard *Norwegian Spirit's* inaugural Asia sailing, for which they can nominate one of their consultants to sail.

■ ncl.com

Fly away to Asia with Wendy

AGENTS ARE being invited to turn their hard work into a holiday through the 'Sell Your Way to Asia' incentive from Wendy Wu Tours.

Consultants who make eight bookings can choose from a land-only tour to Vietnam, China or India. With 16 bookings they will qualify for the 'A Week in Japan' tour (land only).

For agents who are feeling really generous they can take a friend on one of the tours at mates' rates. The incentive runs until June 30, 2021.

"We're excited to launch an updated version of our incentive for agents, which now gives agents the opportunity to include tailor-made bookings towards their tally, as well as an extension of reward destinations including Japan," said Tamba Lebbie, Head of Sales, Wendy Wu Tours.

"Agents spend so much time booking travel for other people, this is a great way



for them to be rewarded for their hard work with a holiday."

All group bookings and tailor-made holidays over \$2,500 per person will be included towards the tally. International flights, taxes, visas, tipping, drinks and travel insurance are additional.

"A holiday in China, India and Vietnam are

all so unique, we really want our customers and agents to not just discover Asia, but to really experience the extraordinary through one of our tours.

"There's so much to see and do, the hard part is going to be choosing which country they want to visit."

■ salesupport@wendywutours.com.au

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CHARITY MEALS ARE SERVED STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

FIFTEEN EAGER volunteers from TravelManagers have taken part in the charitable initiative 'Meals from the Heart'.

The program sees participants prepare and serve food to the families staying at Ronald McDonald House.

The volunteers included members of NPO's support team and NSW-based PTMs, who donned hats and aprons and were put to work in the kitchen, preparing and serving dinner for a full house – an estimated 200 people.

"It's an amazing place and I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to help prepare a meal, providing care for these families at a time when they most need support," said Louise McCarthy, TravelManagers' representative for Castle Hill, NSW.

Ronald McDonald House Charities has been supporting the families of sick children in Australia since 1981. The organisation now has premises in 18

locations across the country, including its longest established in Sydney's Westmead, which provides services to around 1,360 families per year.

"It was a great experience," said Kristina Acevski, representative for Merewether Heights, NSW.

"It was my pleasure to be there and be a part of the evening, and I'd love to do it again – it's such a great feeling to do something positive for these wonderfully brave children and their families."

Michael Gazal, Executive General Manager, said TravelManagers are intending to undertake similar events around the country, starting with Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne.

"TravelManagers has a strong family culture and 'Meals from the Heart' is a wonderful opportunity for our family to come together and provide support to families going through tough times," he said.

■ travelmanagers.com.au



CLIA EXPANDS ITS TRAINING DAYS IN 2020

CRUISE LINES International Association (CLIA) Australasia is expanding its successful CLIA LIVE training program in 2020.

Dates include a two-day event on the Gold Coast in addition to five other cities in Australia.

The event's debut on the Gold Coast follows the sell-out success of CLIA LIVE in 2019, with more than 650 tickets booked for events held in Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Auckland, Brisbane and Melbourne.

CLIA LIVE offers a packed seminar program in which representatives from the world's ocean, river and expedition cruise lines gather in the one forum to share product knowledge and insight.

The events suit both agents who are new to cruise as well as more experienced sellers looking to update on the latest developments.

Marita Nasic, CLIA Australasia Director of Membership & Events, said the theme of CLIA LIVE 2020 would be 'The Guest Experience'.

"CLIA LIVE gives agents a rare opportunity to learn about multiple cruise lines in the one place at the one time," she said.

"It's an excellent way to develop a detailed understanding of the different lines and learn how to match clients with the experience that will suit them best."

CLIA LIVE 2020 is now available to book in the following cities:

Perth: March 17 & 18, Duxton Hotel Perth

Adelaide: April 1 & 2, Pullman Adelaide

Sydney: April 7 & 8, Rydges World Square

Brisbane: April 22 & 23, Mercure Brisbane North Quay

Gold Coast: May 19 & 20, Mantra at Sharks

Melbourne: June 17 & 18, Rydges Melbourne

Tickets are available to CLIA members only and cost \$50+GST per day, with the option to attend one or both days. CLIA will award 30 accreditation points per day to all attendees.

■ cruising.org.au

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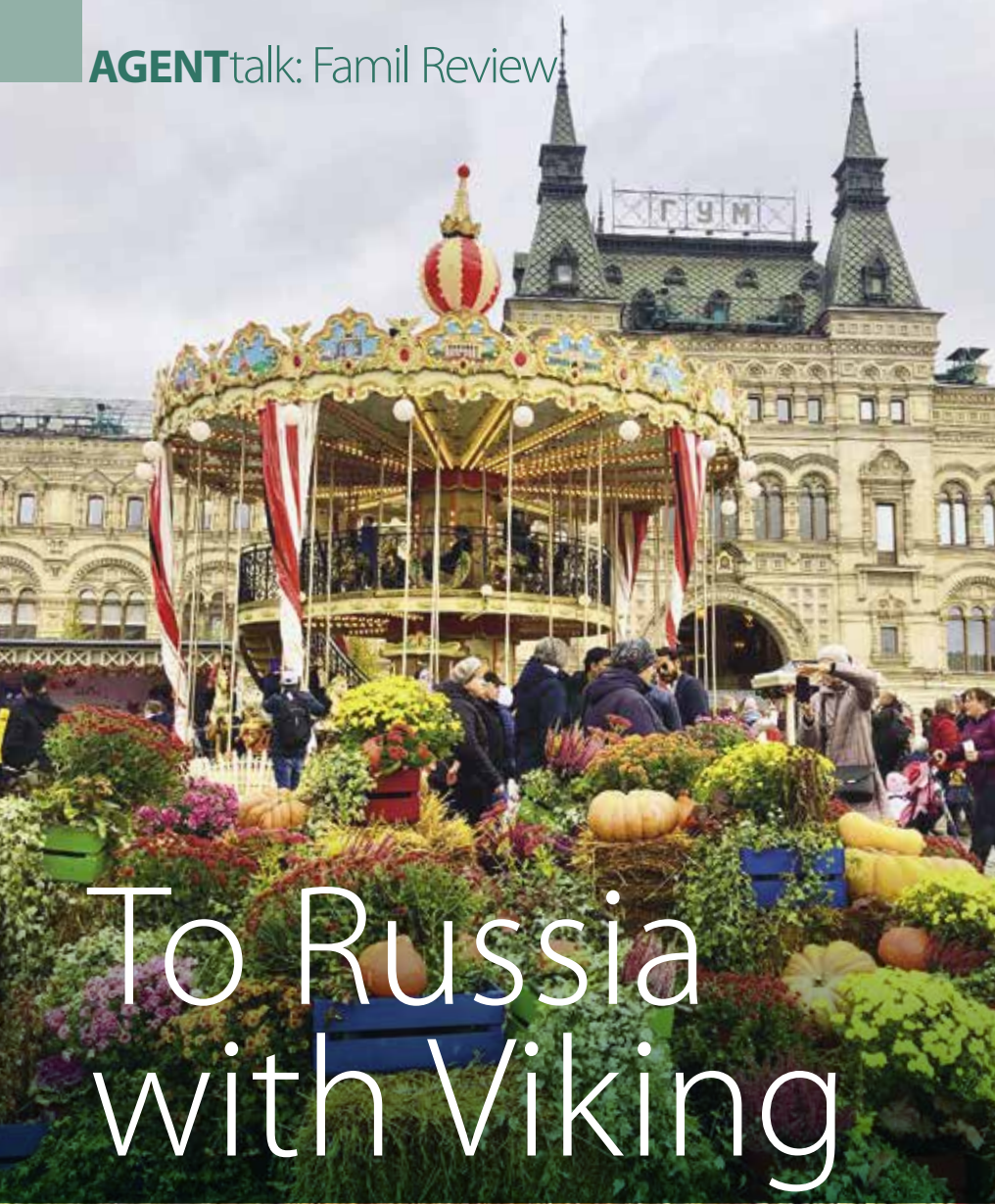
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Left: The Autumn Festival in Red Square. Above: Vodka and caviar tasting onboard

To Russia with Viking

JANETTE WALL, Team Leader and Cruise Specialist at Travel Associates, Balgowlah in New South Wales fulfils a lifelong dream to cruise through Russia.

RUSSIA HAS been on my bucket list since high school – rest assured that’s a very long time – so I was thrilled to be invited on Viking’s VIP travel partners river famil, sailing the ‘Waterways of the Tsars’ itinerary.

It’s safe to say I had incredibly high expectations!

I like to think I’m fairly well travelled – particularly on river cruises. This cruise is billed as a journey into the ‘real Russia’ and I’m pleased to say the experience both on the ground and on the ship was exceptional.

Before we even set foot in Russia, Viking set the tone with a gift of a beautiful, hard-cover coffee table book dedicated to The Hermitage in St Petersburg – the aim being to better acquaint guests with the subject matter before we arrived, so that we were able to really make the most of the museum.

The learning opportunities at The Hermitage were just incredible. I came away with a new-found appreciation for art and our ‘Privileged Access’ visit meant that we were able to explore treasure troves of art and artefacts with no other guests around us. We had the place all to ourselves – an experience I will be recommending to my clients.

Though St Petersburg is stunning,

Moscow was definitely my favourite destination – even the railway stations are beautiful. At the Red Square, I simply didn’t know where to look and I was trying not to do cartwheels on the spot.

Then that evening, we had dinner at a fabulous little restaurant on the square, which we never would have found but for a recommendation from one of the crew members.

I was particularly surprised at how beautiful Russia is in autumn – the golden colours blew me away and opened up my eyes to shoulder-season travel. Previously I wouldn’t have considered sending my clients to Russia outside of the summer months.

The Viking experience was excellent. The ship was very well appointed; the cabins large and the service impeccable, so we wanted for nothing.

Dining onboard was regionally inspired, which meant my first opportunity to truly try caviar (I’ve never been very interested before) – and now, I’m a convert. When served with the right condiments, it tastes divine.

I’m gluten intolerant which can be tricky in certain parts of the world (sadly no vodka for me), however the ship provided me with my own special menu to choose from throughout, which meant I didn’t need to miss out on the regional Russian dishes.

Once you cruise with Viking, it becomes obvious why they’re known as ‘The Thinking Person’s Cruise’. The port talks each evening were unmissable – again, another surprise!

My travel companions and I looked forward to these seminars with subject matter experts, which then enhanced the experience on the ground in such a special way, having a deeper understanding and



knowledge of the politics, history, culture and art of the country and its individual regions. The speakers weren't so much lecturing as sharing their stories with us.

One of the special things about travelling with Viking is the emphasis on local guides, who made sure to introduce us to plenty of local people and were only too happy to share their stories.

They were incredibly knowledgeable and passionate about the destinations we visited and on many excursions we were very small groups of six and seven, so they got to know our individual areas of interest and knew just what to point out to each of us.

Two other experiences stood out as really special. We visited the home of a local family in Uglich, where we met the couple who live there and enjoyed a meal with them in their dining room.

I particularly enjoyed seeing all the fresh produce they grew in their garden, including a pot of garlic I think I would very much enjoy cooking with at home!

The other experience I highly recommend is seeing a ballet performance in St Petersburg. We enjoyed box seats in the stunning theatre and of course the incredible performers



Janette visiting the home of a local family in Uglich

dancing *Swan Lake* – a must in Russia!

The 13-day 'Waterways of the Tsars' tour is priced from \$7,995 and runs from Moscow to St Petersburg (or vice versa). There are sailings from May through to September.

■ vikingcruises.com.au



The Hermitage

MY TOP TIPS

MUST-DO: Behind the Scenes at The Hermitage. This is an optional Privileged Access shore excursion

AGENT ADVICE: When booking this itinerary, try and encourage your client to consider a land extension at either end. There is simply so much to see and do. And don't arrive in St Petersburg on Sunday/Monday/Tuesday – some of the main attractions are closed early in the week.

PACKING TIPS: If travelling in autumn as I did, a good quality coat, hat, pair of gloves and boots are essential. 10 degrees is considered balmy.

CELEBRATING A STERLING SILVER ANNIVERSARY

AN AUDIENCE of more than 2,000 helped Travel Counsellors celebrate their 25th anniversary at the annual global conference in Manchester.

Several agents, officials and support team members from Australia joined their colleagues, business leaders and supplier partners from around the world. The conference theme was '25 years of Moments that Matter'.

Sessions included speakers from across the business and also high profile guests, including wildlife filmmaker Dr Chadden Hunter, boxing champion Nicola Adams, coffee entrepreneur Sahar Hashimi and adventure man Bear Grylls.

Delegates also heard from various supplier partners on relevant topics including sustainable travel, social selling, premium travel and entrepreneurship.

The PowWow is always an important part of the conference weekend and more than 250 supplier partners took part, giving attendees the opportunity to discover new product and meet with them face-to-face.

"We are constantly progressing our tools and support through increased



investment in our technology platform, commitments to better sustainability and bringing our talented community of travel business owners together to share their expertise," said Steve Byrne, CEO at Travel Counsellors.

"An extremely special community spanning seven countries has been created at Travel Counsellors for 25 years and we are committed to supporting the continued growth of our leisure and corporate travel business owners for years to come."

Delegates were entertained by world-class acts including Vernon Kay, Dara O'Briain, Only Men Aloud, Belle Voce, Paloma

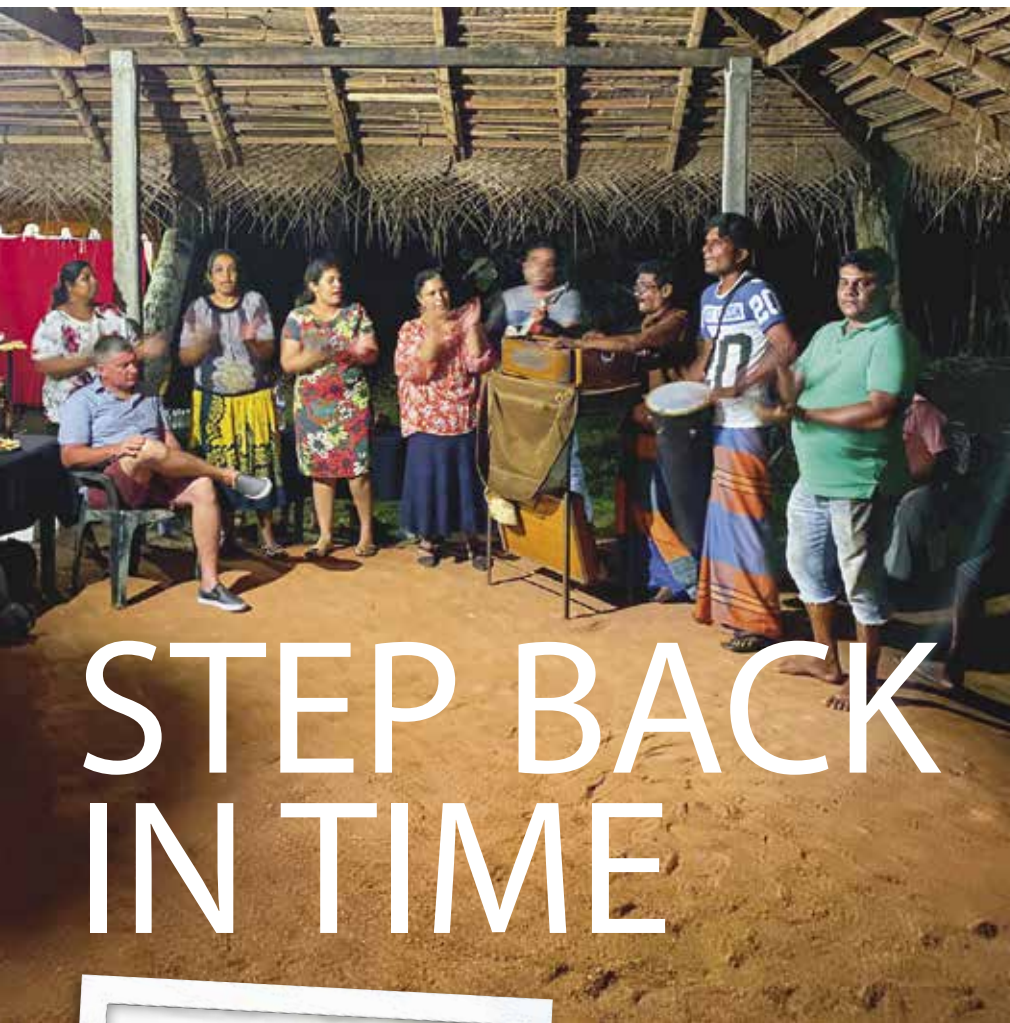
Faith and Gary Barlow.

"It was a real privilege to have spent time in Manchester to attend this conference with the Aussie TC's," said Kaylene Shuttlewood, Regional Managing Director, Travel Counsellors.

"By providing the platform that enables travel entrepreneurs to run their business wherever they are in the world, Travel Counsellors can travel without disrupting their business.

"The scale of the global conference is a real reminder of the global community we are all proud to be part of"

■ travelcounsellors.com.au



STEP BACK IN TIME

JO REA from Escape Travel in Brisbane reports on the first mega famil to Sri Lanka organised by Bunnik Tours.

UPON ARRIVING in Sri Lanka you can't help but be swept up by the infectious smiles and unbridled laughter that is everywhere, even after the long and exhausting journey from Australia.

It's almost like taking a step back in time, before tourism became big business. Sri Lanka is now what the rest of Asia was 20 years ago.

From seemingly endless beaches to timeless ruins steeped in history and

amazing food packed full of flavour, Sri Lanka should be on every traveller's bucket list.

For me, climbing the 1,234 steps of Sigiriya Rock, the fifth century 'Fortress in the Sky', and trailing behind a sea of bright orange robes worn by the local monks was as much a highlight as it was a struggle. The view at the top was remarkable, well worth the effort and a definite must-do.

We packed a lot into our 11-day tour and only covered a small portion of what Sri Lanka has to offer.

We visited a local school and its surrounding village, truly experiencing the local culture. We climbed Pidurangala Rock for a memorable sunrise and breakfast carried up by our local guides.

We went on a jeep safari through Minneriya National Park in search of elephants and were not disappointed. The dirt road through the park suddenly opened to what seemed like an endless green field and around the next corner we came face-to-face with an entire herd!

We stopped in Kandy, a city of 125,000 people and home to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. The temple was busy, but everyone seemed unfazed by the group of Aussie travel agents in matching elephant print shirts.

Our final stop was the capital, Colombo, but along the way we visited the Tsunami Museum, which houses displays and newspaper clippings from the 2004 natural disaster.

It was a truly moving experience with not a dry eye to be seen, but a great testament to a country that has bounced back from such tragedy.

Arriving in Colombo I was unsure of exactly what to expect. What we did get was a city bustling with people and chaotic traffic, but somehow it works and everybody still smiles.

Although busy, the city still manages to have its charms, including a complex assortment of tree-lined boulevards, colonial buildings, parks, open-air markets, temples, lakes and churches.

No visit to Colombo is complete without staying at the Galle Face Hotel, a testimony to both Sri Lanka's colonial past and its independent present.

Opened in 1864 and proudly overlooking the Indian Ocean, the property offers not only outstanding accommodation and facilities but the chance to step back in time and immerse yourself in its history.

The hotel also boasts a museum and I found myself wandering aimlessly through the corridors and up and down staircases wondering what was around the next corner.

Don't underestimate how much time can be spent in this wonderful country. I can't wait to return.



Fill your heart with the stuff that keeps it beating.

Ireland is more than just a destination. It's a feeling. Help your clients discover the warmth and wonder of this epic land. With so much on offer in 2020, there's never been a better time to visit.

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture

Beginning with a week-long festival of fire, culminating in a spectacular Opening Ceremony on February 8th, kicking off a year of theatre, literature, visual arts, music, dance, film, architecture, heritage, sport and food events.

Taste the Island

From September to November, we're throwing open the doors to a food and drink celebration throughout the island of Ireland! Taste the Island will showcase the very best of Ireland's food and drink culture. That means everything from restaurants and local craft food and drink producers to festivals and food trails and everything in between!

For more information on Ireland
visit trade.ireland.com

Fill your heart with **Ireland** 



Amiens Cathedral

GETTING THE ENTIRE PICTURE

Entire Travel Group has opened its first Melbourne office. Here, new European specialist JAMES WYATT shares his top travel tip and two things clients may not know about the company.

Q: What is the last place you visited and where are you going next?

A: Belgium and France to discover the World War One battlefields. It was an amazing experience and I was able to pay homage to our fallen soldiers. I visited Bruges, Ypres, Perrone and Amiens, then flew back from Paris.

Not sure where I'm travelling to next – there are so many places I'd like to visit; however, it will be in Europe.

Q: Apart from your passport what's one thing you always take with you on your travels?

A: Besides a toothbrush and clean underwear, take a good shirt, slacks and shoes, in case you end up going to a venue that requires them (smart casual wear). Best to be prepared.

Q: Why did you take up the role at Entire Travel Group?

A: It was just a really good opportunity and being close to home has been an added bonus! The culture and environment Entire Travel

Group have created also appealed to me and being part of such a growing, dynamic company simply ticked all the boxes I was looking for.

I also bring over a wealth of European knowledge, which was an important factor in gaining the role, and I was told I would be a good fit, which was great to hear.

Q: Tell us something people might not know about the company?

A: Entire Travel Group now offers a client friendly (gross pricing) invoice for agents to hand directly to their clients to save them time – and have recently consolidated all their websites to entiretravel.com.au

Q: What's the key to being a successful tour operator/travel wholesaler?

A: Being able to change and grow with the times and also listening to what your clientele is asking for. Also having quick response times to enquiries and bookings, and having unique travel experiences on offer.



Q: What's your top travel tip?

A: When you set out on your trip/holiday just be ready for anything and keep an open mind; remember "it's not right, it's not wrong, it's different" – this way you can really get a true local experience, which you'll enjoy and remember for the rest of your life.

Check and be aware of local traditions where you are going as you don't want to offend anyone. Also, take lots of photos and share with everyone.

■ entiretravel.com.au

TOUR EAST RAMPS UP OFFERING TO AGENTS

TOUR EAST has added The Philippines to the list of destinations now available via their WebConnect online agents portal.

WebConnect allows agents to make real time bookings for transfers, accommodation and touring options across a wide range of Asian destinations.

In addition, Tour East Vietnam has released

packages for the 2020 Formula One Grand Prix to be held for the first time in the capital, Hanoi. Several package options are available and include transfers, accommodation, tickets to the practice and race days.

To register for WebConnect or enquire about the Hanoi 2020 Formula One Grand Prix packages, contact: salesau@toureast.net

Abercrombie & Kent

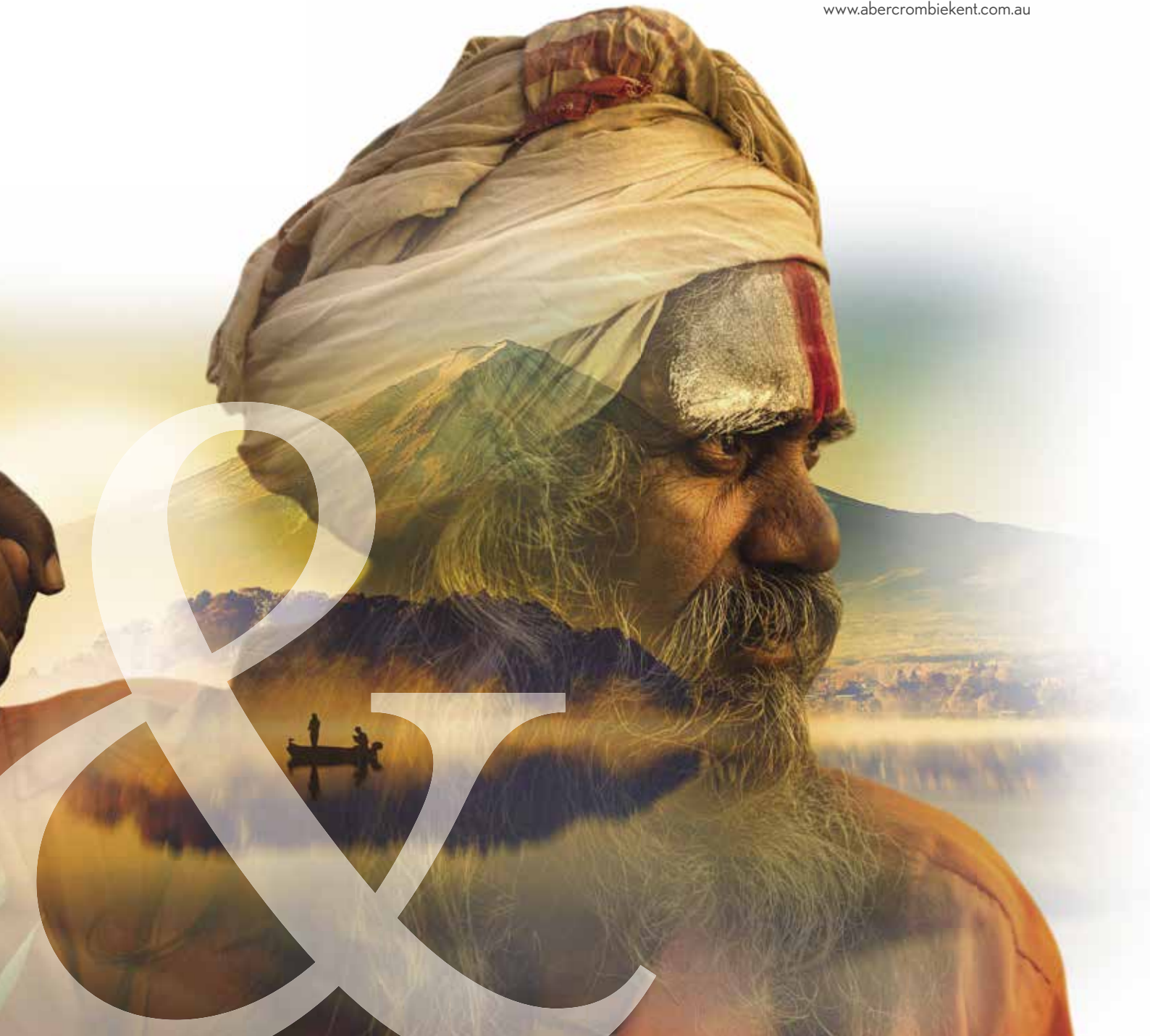
SHARED ADVENTURES IN EXTRAORDINARY PLACES

HANDCRAFTED LUXURY SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

Abercrombie & Kent's Small Group Journeys portfolio includes all the eternal luxury travel favourites – sub-Saharan African safari camps, Nile cruises, the European capitals of the Grand Tour, the temples and palace hotels of India, the mysterious ruins of pre-Columbian empires in Latin America, the Northern Lights. It also includes journeys to more challenging, emerging and re-emerging destinations that are fast becoming favourites: Mongolia, Madagascar, Patagonia, the Caucasus, Arabia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan. If your clients are looking for a shared adventure in true A&K luxury – exquisite accommodation, perfectly-paced itineraries, curated cultural experiences, exclusive access and privileges, expert resident tour directors, and unforgettable encounters with local people and wildlife – help them find somewhere amazing on an A&K Small Group Journey.

Call Abercrombie & Kent on 1300 851 800.

www.abercrombiekent.com.au



COUNTING THE COSTA COSTSAVER

COSTSAVER HAVE announced their top achievers trip is back for a second year, with the highest selling agents heading to Costa Rica (pictured).

The success of the inaugural top achievers trip to Asia has seen the incentive, now labelled Crew, expanded for 2020.

The eco-tourism hotspot of Costa Rica was a natural fit to showcase what the brand stands for: *Essentials by us, Tailored by you.*

On Crew 2020, Cost saver is set to showcase the ultimate itinerary, whether it's looking for monkeys, sloths and iguanas along a river with a local specialist or walking through lava fields and forest land for views of Arenal volcano and lake.

Agents can also enjoy chilled activities like hot springs and palm plantation visits through to thrill seeker favourites like white water rafting and zip lining.

"Costa Rica provides the perfect place to showcase why everyone's talking about Cost saver," said Gavin Tollman, Cost saver CEO.

"Volcanos, beaches, fantastic food, adventure activities, wildlife – it portrays everything we love about travel and more."

To join the Crew and qualify for a place on the trip, agents have to be among the top performing sellers in the country.

■ costsaver.com



Acclaimed PNG artist Lesley Wengembo

VIP'S LEARN ABOUT PNG

MEDIA, INFLUENCERS and TV personalities have attended an event in Sydney hosted by the Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority.

The evening showcased the unique highlands culture and the region's untouched offering for true travellers; a place that is often regarded as the last frontier on earth.

Acclaimed PNG artist Lesley Wengembo painted a portrait of two Huli Wigmen during the event, with Alesha Bradford the winner of the painting as well as return flights courtesy of Air Niugini.

■ papuanewguinea.travel



Left: Wineglass Bay in Freycinet, Tasmania.
Right: Sunset at Uluru



MAKE SAVINGS ON YOUR NEXT TRIP

AAT KINGS ARE offering agents the opportunity to travel and save up to 50 per cent on Guided Holidays, Short Breaks and Day Tours.

Inspiring Journeys, purveyors of small group journeys in Australia & New Zealand, are also available at up to 50 per cent off. Agents and industry staff will need to book and travel by March 31, 2020.

This offer gives agents the opportunity to save up to 50 per cent on a variety of flexible holidays. These include:

Hunter Valley Harvest Wine Experience (one day)

Enjoy private vineyard inspections and learn

about the winemaking process. Spend time strolling in the vineyards, purchase some wine or simply enjoy the countryside.

Outback Wanderer (four days)

Taking in the many sights of the Red Centre, guests will discover Uluru, the Field of Light sunrise and a sunset. Travellers will traverse the domes of Kata Tjuta on the Valley of the Winds walk and discover Kings Canyon on a rim climb or canyon creek bed walk.

Perfect Tasmania (12 days)

Visit Hobart's bustling Salamanca Market, witness the natural beauty of Cradle Mountain

and Freycinet National Park, see King George III's personal horse stable at colonial-style Shene Estate and indulge the taste buds with fresh Tasmanian artisan cheeses.

The Endless Shores (eight days)

Uncover geothermal hotspots, discover vibrant cities and be immersed in Maori heritage in New Zealand. Travellers will embrace the Hongi touch of Māori hosts and experience the luminous glow worms of the Footwhistle Cave, the native forests' redwood giants and the fantasy-land of *The Lord of the Rings*.

■ aatkings.com.au



DEMAND LEADS TO DEDICATED BROCHURE

THE FIRST designated brochure for narrowboat hire in the UK ever to be released in Australia is now available.

The 2020 self-drive canal boat holiday brochure has been released by Australian-based Outdoor Travel in response to intense agent demand.

Working with a host of fleet operators across England, Scotland and Wales, inland cruise specialists Outdoor Travel offer a network of bases and a range of cruising routes with a substantial fleet of fully-equipped, high quality, self-drive narrowboats for hire.

With no experience or licence required, a traditional narrowboat canal holiday offers the very best boating holiday experiences. Boats are ideal for couples or families and are available for two to 12 passengers.

Outdoor Travel offer narrowboat hire on all the most popular British cruising rings. Some of the options available include:

- Cruise to Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon to watch a play or Worcester to see its magnificent cathedral.
- * Explore the Midlands, Black Country and the industrial history of Birmingham, Coventry and the North.
- * Visit Bath, the Pontcysyllte viaduct on the Llangollen Canal, or the Brecon canal in Wales.
- * Cruise between the historic Scottish cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow to see the Falkirk Lift.

■ outdoortravel.com.au



MARATHON EFFORT FROM AUSSIE DOZEN

TWELVE AUSSIE agents have experienced the 'Entertainment Capital of the World' from a whole new perspective.

As part of the annual Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in Las Vegas, eight agents from Flight Centre hit the #StripAtNight in the world's largest evening race as they participated in the 10K, half or full marathon, with the other four agents representing the cheer squad.

Of the 35,000 runners from across the globe, Australia was the sixth most represented country in this year's event, with the youngest Aussie runner being 23 and the oldest, 67.

It wasn't all hard work though, with the group treated to some of Vegas' renowned live entertainment offerings. These included the Aussie quartet Human Nature, Spiegelworld's new Atomic Saloon Show and the Blue Man Group, featuring a VIP Behind-the-Blue meet and greet.

ALASKAN DREAMS COME TRUE

TRAVELMANAGER DEB Hanley has fulfilled a lifelong dream by taking part in a 10-night famil to Alaska with Holland America.

"I have always wanted to visit Alaska and cruise the Inside Passage," said Deb, who is based in South Australia.

"The famil did not disappoint to deliver on this and much more – fascinating, historic towns like Dawson City, beautiful accommodation in unique locations and a glimpse into the distinctive culture and heritage of the First Nation people."

The itinerary included a cruise aboard *Nieuw Amsterdam* through the Inside Passage in North America's Pacific Northwest to a wilderness tour of Alaska's Denali National Park.

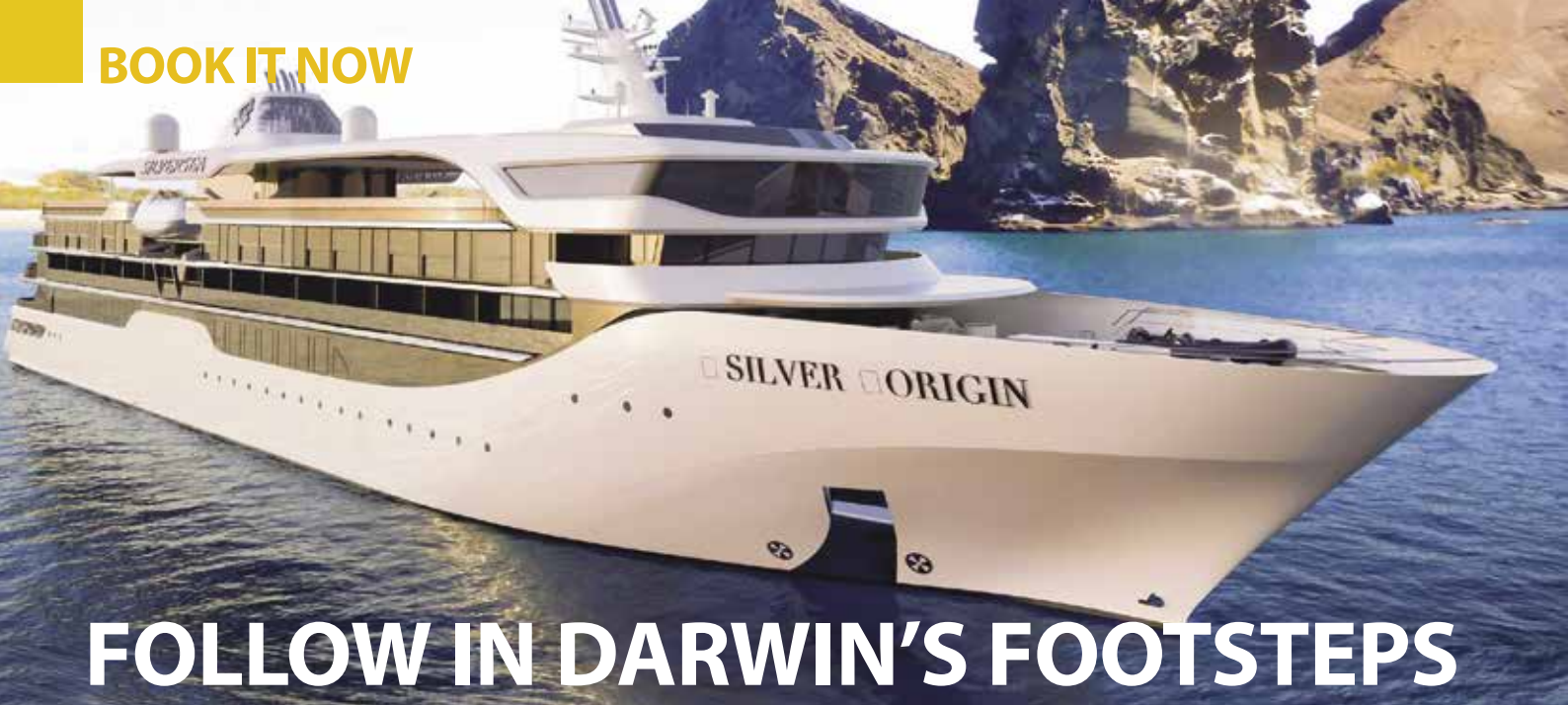
Meanwhile, 11 PTM's have enjoyed a seven-day famil of India's Golden Triangle, which is renowned for its collection of palaces, forts, mosques and mausoleums.

The itinerary included an early morning visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra, which left the group with plenty of memories.

"To watch the sun's rays reflecting off the marble façade and know that I had finally seen this magical place with my own eyes was something that will stay with me forever," said Tanya Patterson.

Deb Hanley
in Ketchikan





FOLLOW IN DARWIN'S FOOTSTEPS

LATITUDE 33 is offering travellers the chance to explore the Galapagos in style aboard Silversea's new ship, *Silver Origin*.

Limited to just 20 guests, the itinerary takes in some of South America's most popular destinations, including Santiago in Chile, the Ecuadorian city of Quito and the Mashpi Reserve in the upper Amazon, culminating in a seven-night Galapagos cruise.

The trip begins with two nights in Santiago, famous for its rich cultural history,

museums, shopping and restaurant scene. Guests then fly to Quito for a night at boutique luxury hotel, Casa Gangotena, and a three-night stay at Mashpi Lodge.

Deep in the heart of the Ecuadorian Choco rainforest, this is the perfect place to spot rare species of flora and fauna from the open-air Dragonfly Canopy Gondola.

The 'Hidden Wonders of Life & Galapagos' tour is priced from \$21,699 per person twin share and departs in March 2021.

Price includes return international economy class airfares from Australia, accommodation, return airport transfers in Australia, all flights within Chile and Ecuador, all tours and meals at Mashpi Lodge.

It also includes all cuisine and select fine wines, champagnes and premium spirits and specialty coffees onboard *Silver Origin*, all transfers and baggage handling and a Latitude 33 Tour host.

■ latitude33.travel

Aussie holiday plans offer big surprises

HOSTELWORLD HAS unveiled its top 20 destinations for Australians in 2020 with several surprises contained within the list.

The global hostel-focused online booking platform used booking data from 2019 to compile the list.

Cultural hubs and picturesque islands dominate the findings. European cities are still popular but it is off-the-beaten-track locations that are on the rise.

Heading the list is Siargao Island, the 'home of surfing' in the Philippines, with a significant year-on-year growth of 109 per cent. Another Philippine island, Coron, is listed at number five.

Asian destinations are seemingly increasingly popular, with Phong Nha and Ninh Binh in Vietnam, and Canggu and Gili Trawangan in Indonesia, also featuring.

One Aussie destination made the 2020 list, with Broome replacing Sydney at number 20 on the back of a four per cent annual rise in bookings.

The *Evolution of the Hostel Traveller* report showed that 33 per cent of those surveyed are expecting once-in-a-lifetime

experiences through travel. Destinations like Shkoder, the most historic town in Albania, offer experiences such as exploring Skadar Lake, the largest lake in the Balkans that forms a natural boundary between Albania and Montenegro, or visiting the infamous fortress of Grmozur – Montenegro's own Alcatraz.

Cities such as La Spezia in Italy that offer traditional cultural and food experiences are also seeing a significant increase in bookings.

■ hostelworld.com



The top 20 destinations are:

- 1 **SIARGAO ISLAND** Philippines
- 2 **LA SPEZIA** Italy
- 3 **PHONG NHA** Vietnam
- 4 **SHKODER** Albania
- 5 **CORON** Philippines
- 6 **CATANIA** Italy
- 7 **PALMA DE MALLORCA** Spain
- 8 **TIRANA** Albania
- 9 **ERICEIRA** Portugal
- 10 **PALMERO** Italy
- 11 **NINH BINH** Vietnam
- 12 **CANGGU** Indonesia
- 13 **JASPER** Canada
- 14 **TAROMINA** Italy
- 15 **IBIZA** Spain
- 16 **CORFU** Greece
- 17 **VERONA** Italy
- 18 **TURIN** Italy
- 19 **GILI TRAWANGAN** Indonesia
- 20 **BROOME** Australia



KIWI EXPERIENCE

SMALL GROUP TOURS IN NEW ZEALAND

WHATEVER ONE wants to get out of a trip to New Zealand, the award-winning Kiwi Experience can fulfil those dreams.

Join a tribe of adventurers for instant connection and authentic cultural experiences across the mind-boggling wonderland called Aotearoa.

After 30 years as an award-winning big bus tour operator in New Zealand, Kiwi Experience

launched Small Group Tours in 2019 to meet demand for a more intimate travel style that customers are demanding from operators.

After almost selling out the summer season, Kiwi Experience made the decision to add additional tour dates and expand their timetable across the Southern Hemisphere winter months to meet the overwhelming demand for this incredible product.

A Kiwi Driver Guide, brimming with local knowledge and expert experience, is on hand to take care of all the details while passengers experience New Zealand across a fixed itinerary where you stay with the same group of travellers as you experience New Zealand.

The Small Group Tours include more activities than you'd expect and the partner network developed across New Zealand over the past 30+ years means they can offer best price guarantees on optional activities as well.

Travelling in a comfortable private vehicle with no more than 16 passengers on board, these tours provide accommodation at every overnight stop, as well as the night before the tour begins, in hostels and offers a great opportunity to get to know your fellow travellers.

With breakfast included and foodie experiences along the way, these tours also provide amazing adventures to surprise and delight travellers from all parts of the globe.

There's a choice of tours in the North Island, the South Island as well as some combo tours, so when you're thinking about a trip to New Zealand, with an open heart and an open mind allowing you to play your part in curating a unique atmosphere with your fellow travellers, consider a Kiwi Experience Small Group Tour.

Prices start from \$1,155 for seven days.

■ kiwiexperience.com/small-group-tours or freephone 1800 058 361.

BOOK IT NOW



AROUND THE WORLD IN 23 DAYS

ABERCROMBIE & KENT has released information on the 2021 departure of its globe-spanning safari by private jet.

Just 48 guests will be able to make the journey, which has already sold out for its inaugural incarnation in 2020.

Encounters with rare animals are the central theme of A&K's 'Wildlife Safari: Around the World by Private Jet' experience. Guests will see Madagascar's playful lemurs, the whale sharks of the Philippines, endangered mountain gorilla, honey bears and tigers.

Guests will discover little-known species like Japan's snow monkey and the tiny

Philippine tarsier, and go behind-the-scenes to feed orphaned orangutans. Experts who have spent their lives studying these remarkable animals will share their insights.

The journey ends with a safari in East Africa, with panoramas in every direction, a vast range of wildlife and a rich cultural heritage to explore.

Travellers can also personalise the journey with a choice of Design Your Day activities, including active outdoor excursions, enriching cultural encounters and wellness experiences.

In Rwanda, guests may choose to hike to

Bisoke Volcano, visit Dian Fossey's research centre, search for golden monkeys in the jungle or simply relax in camp with a massage.

In India, choices include a tour of historic Ranthambore Fort, a cultural encounter in a local village, the chance to savour the complex spices of Indian cuisine during a private cooking lesson or pampering at a world-class spa.

Accommodation throughout the tour reflects the distinctive character of each destination and offers authentic hospitality.

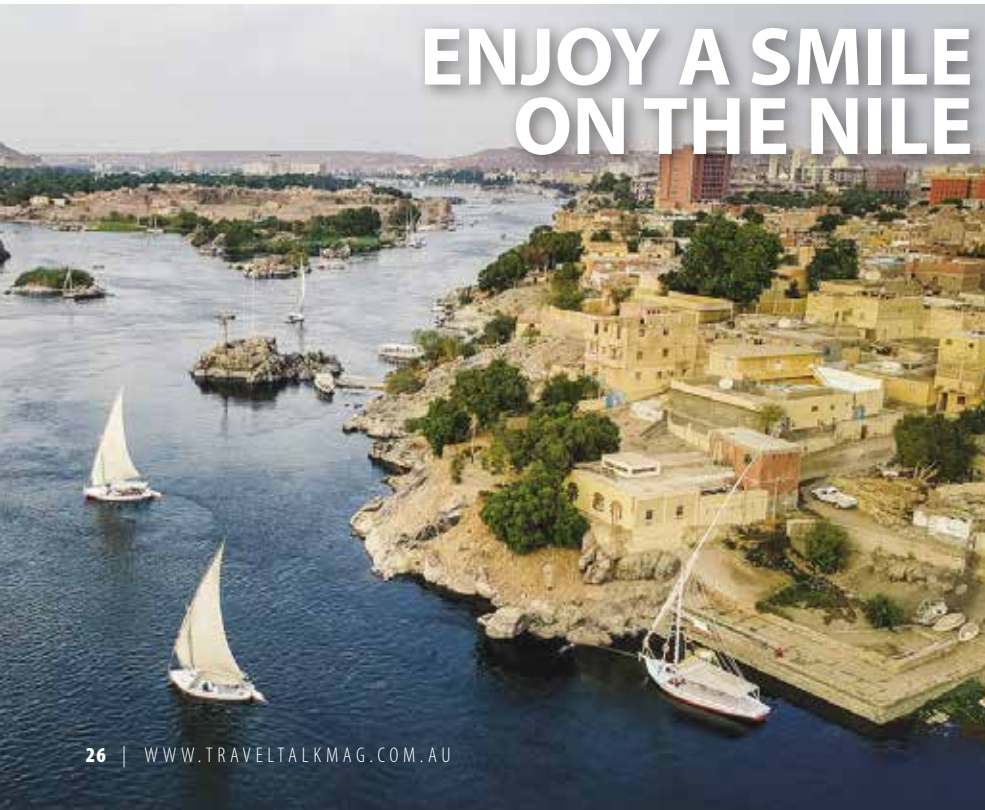
These include not only the classic luxury of The Peninsula Tokyo and The Oberoi Vanyavilas in Ranthambore, but also lesser-known gems such as the boutique Angama Mara, perched on the edge of the Great Rift Valley overlooking the Masai Mara, and an array of luxury lodges in Rwanda, reserved exclusively for A&K private jet guests.

Onboard the company's privately-chartered Boeing 757 are 50 custom-designed Italian leather seats equipped with personal massage system, four-way adjustable headrests and lumbar support, that open to fully lie-flat beds.

The 23-day 'Wildlife Safari: Around the World by Private Jet' journey takes place from January 10 to February 2, 2021, and is priced from \$216,665 per person twin share, with the single supplement priced from \$28,915.

■ abercrombiekent.com.au

ENJOY A SMILE ON THE NILE



GUESTS WHO book A&K's luxury small group journey, 'Egypt & the Nile', before March 31 can save \$1,085 per person. The offer is for select departures between April and September.

This 10-day journey follows in the footsteps of pharaohs, emperors and conquerors from Cairo to Luxor and along the Nile to Aswan.

Travellers cruise aboard A&K's own award-winning *Sanctuary Sun Boat IV* and explore the country's myriad archaeological treasures and ancient monuments with a leading Egyptologist, bringing both ancient and modern Egypt to life.

The 10-day 'Egypt & the Nile' small group journey is priced from \$10,915 per person twin share (was from \$12,000), with the single supplement starting from \$3,325.

Valid for departures: April 22 to May 1; April 26 to May 5; September 1 to 10; September 5 to 15; September 9 to 18 and September 29 to October 4.

■ abercrombiekent.com.au

Tick Turkey off your bucket list in 2020



FROM THE grand architecture of Istanbul to the milky terraces of Pamukkale, Turkey is a country of delights.

Thanks to its enormous size – roughly three times the UK – the country spans two continents and encompasses a diverse geography, from mountain ranges to sparkling coastline.

If the sights and history of this ancient country are calling your name, 2020 is the year to do it.

Inspiring Vacations' 16-day 'Inspiring Turkey' tour takes customers around this astonishing nation, ticking off major attractions and providing the opportunity to discover hidden gems.

The small group itinerary traverses the country by land and sea, with guests encouraged to immerse themselves in Turkish culture and indulge in plenty of local cuisine.

First stop is cosmopolitan Istanbul – Turkey's cultural heart. Customers will walk the

cobblestone streets and explore attractions Hagia Sophia and Topkapı Palace, as well as feast in a traditional *meyhane* (tavern). A spot of shopping at the 4,000-stall Grand Bazaar is a must, before heading west to historic Gallipoli.

From here the tour heads south, with stops at Canakkale and Kusadasi before dipping inland for a much-anticipated visit to the travertine terraces of Pamukkale. Meaning 'cotton castle' in Turkish, these dramatic mineral basins are the country's most popular attraction.

For sun-seekers, the tour includes a sailing trip along the spectacular Turkish Riviera, while those interested in history can look forward to Troy and Ephesus.

No trip to Anatolia is complete without a visit to fabled Cappadocia – 'Inspiring Turkey' includes a three-night stop, ample time to wander the famous rock formations, attend cultural shows and even take that once-in-a-

lifetime hot air balloon flight above the Rose Valley.

Fully escorted by an English-speaking guide, 'Inspiring Turkey' includes 11 nights in five-star and boutique accommodation, three-nights aboard a traditional gulet sailing boat, return flights with a full-service airline, airport transfers, daily breakfast and sightseeing.

The tour is priced from \$3,999 per person twin share and runs throughout the year.

Together with a worldwide network of travel experts, Australian-owned Inspiring Vacations offer culturally unique and unforgettable flight-inclusive packages to the world's best destinations – all at value-for-money prices.

Being an online company offers customers the opportunity to browse and purchase tours at their own convenience, with the backing of 24/7 customer service.

■ inspiringvacations.com

INSPIRING TURKEY

UNFORGETTABLE 16 DAY SMALL GROUP TOUR WITH RETURN AIRFARES

ISTANBUL • CANAKKALE • KUSADASI • ANTALYA • CAPPADOCIA • ANKARA



WE WORK WITH ALL TRAVEL AGENTS

16 days per person twin share from just

\$3,999*

DEPOSIT ONLY \$100PP
PAY BALANCE BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

TRAVEL FROM MAY 2020 TO MAY 2021. SEE ONLINE FOR FULL ITINERARY DETAILS.

Return international airfares with a full-service airline; return transfers

11 nights 5 star accommodation; 3 nights sailing on a traditional 'gulet'

24/7 customer service and your own Dedicated Support Agent



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inspiringvacations.com

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VACATIONS

*Offers available for a limited time or unless sold out. See our website for full terms and conditions.



How to hit a home run

Here are a few top tips from home-based agents on how to stay motivated and grow your business with the support of a host agency.

It's about who you know

With Australians taking more than 10 million overseas trips each year, chances are you know a few people planning a holiday.

"Don't be afraid to stick your hand up and offer to help," says 62-year-old John Cola, who runs his Global Getaways business from his home with the support of Your Travel & Cruise.

"I'm at an age where most of my friends have stopped working or are easing into retirement and they are doing a lot of travel so it's handy for them to have a travel agent in the group who they can trust to organise everything and take the stress out of booking a holiday.

"I even go with them on some of the trips, so it's a win-win. I'm also picking up referrals, which is really pleasing."

A little something on the side

Side interests have become the norm in

our busy modern world and it's no exception in the travel industry.

While many host agencies require a full time commitment from their members, Your Travel & Cruise offers a more flexible arrangement so members can start their business as something on the side and then dive in when it takes off.

Tina Lockwood is an accountant who loves travel and has been searching for a way to segue from her office job to something in the travel industry.

"My kids are all grown up and I was ready for something different so I started running a travel agency – Inspired by Travel – on the side.

"As the business grows, I'm looking forward to quitting my job and spending more time immersed in my passion while also getting to spend more time at home."

Travel = work experience

While many host agencies require some experience in the travel industry, Your Travel & Cruise opens the door to people from all walks of life and doesn't require any prior agency experience – only a Certificate III in Travel.

Stephanie Dent, who runs her My Time Travel home-based business through Your

Travel & Cruise, has been a flight attendant for the better part of a decade and has visited around 50 countries during her travels.

"After nine years in the air, I have built up a lot of knowledge and insight about overseas travel and I'm looking forward to sharing this experience with my clients."

Home is where the heart is

Home-based doesn't always have to mean based at home. Some home-based agents, like Julie Redmond from JR Travel, want to be at the heart of the community.

"I'm from a small town where there are no travel agencies so I thought it would be good to find a spot with some foot traffic so locals would know I'm there," said Julie.

"Business has doubled since I set up a table in The Oaks post office and I love feeling like part of the community. I even help out at the counter when it gets busy – that's just what you do in a small town."

Your Travel & Cruise provides insurance, software, websites, marketing, accounting and business development support to all its members so they can set up their business wherever they like and know that they have the backing of a host agency.

■ join.yourtravelcentre.com.au



Your Travel & Cruise is a **Host Agency** providing you with the tools you need to reach your full potential as a **Home Based Travel Professional**, operating under your own business name, not ours



Your own website - editable by you, updated for you

Your fully personalised website using your own domain and featuring information on all travel segments, with the advantage of regular updates done for you. Refreshed banner adverts and exciting new products changed regularly without you having to lift a finger. You can edit almost every detail of your site, and even add brand new pages. It's flexible, functional and most importantly up to date and relevant to your customers.



Marketing done for you

Your most valued asset is your customer database. We help you maintain this important relationship through regular communication delivered for you with fresh and exciting travel products to inform and entice your customers. Every newsletter features your own logo, contact details and links back to your website. This combination of website, newsletter and CRM system is a powerful marketing program, and best of all, it's done for you. All you have to do is concentrate on building your database, and we'll do the rest.



Cruise, Airfare & Hotel - Live Booking Capability

Along with your own website you will have a comprehensive cruise, airfare and hotel search with live pricing and real time booking capability. This unique and incredibly powerful tool will give you the edge against your competitors and allow your customers to research all the major cruise lines of the world, compare pricing and reserve a cabin, all from your website. Hotels and airfares are also included and of course, any online bookings originating from your site are directed straight back to you.

Look What's Included

- Your own customisable website fully maintained with updated travel products and live cruise, airfare and hotel booking engine
- Email newsletter delivered to your database with your branding, call to action and links back to your website
- Client accounting done for you
- Mid Office, CRM and Booking Management System
- Choice of GDS
- Technical, accounting and product support
- National Business Development Manager
- Holiday leave support



The future of travel will be conversational

ANDREW CANNINGTON, GM, APAC, LivePerson, discusses why agents need to evolve to keep pace with the modern traveller.

ADVANCES IN technology are fundamentally reshaping the world as we know it – and the travel industry is no different.

With increasing competition from digital platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com, travel agents need to evolve to meet the needs of the modern traveller.

Underlying the new wave of digital innovations is the technology that allows travel agents to create personalised, seamless experiences for their customers, otherwise known as conversational commerce.

Our research found two-thirds of consumers globally would like the ability to message directly with brands. What's more, 49 per cent reported a higher likelihood of spending more with a brand that offers messaging as a contact option.

Conversational commerce enables travel agents to sell tickets and help travellers make reservations directly in the messaging channels they use every day with friends and family, such as Apple's Messages app, Messenger, SMS and WhatsApp.

On one side, consumers get control of the conversation with either virtual or human agents – or a mix of both –, leading to a better customer experience.

On the other, travel agents can increase direct-to-consumer touch points. This can be achieved at scale through the integration of AI and bots to achieve increase in

conversions, decrease in customer care costs and peak in customer satisfaction.

One good example of a brand capitalising on conversational commerce in the travel industry is Spirit Airlines. Spirit Airlines recently introduced a new texting and messaging solution for its customers on WhatsApp, opening a new direct line of communication between their English and Spanish-speaking guest relations and reservations teams and their customers, who already use WhatsApp daily.

As a result, Spirit Airlines can better connect with guests, both domestically and abroad, through messaging.

From travel updates to adding a bag to a reservation, guests can easily message with both an AI-powered assistant or human agent to ask questions, add products or get immediate help without the wait, in the messaging channels they prefer.

Unlike traditional live chat, messaging allows Spirit's customers to return to existing conversations, regardless of where they left off. This leaves customers free to focus on their journey they are having instead of worrying about the details.

Since the earliest days of the web, the travel industry has topped the list of the fastest growing e-commerce markets, much to the dismay of some.

Consumers and business travellers alike



are hooked on the utter convenience and cost advantages of researching travel options and booking online. But the ease with which travellers can find the lowest possible fare or rate has forced commoditisation of the industry and cut deeply into industry profits.

Ultimately, the travel agents and brands that win in the long-term will be those that prioritise and compete on customer experience, not price. At the end of the day, good customer experience drills down to how consumers feel when they interact with a brand.

In 2020 and beyond, consumers will demand that travel brands and agents meet them where they are, in already reliant mobile channels that give them control of the experience and bring them joy - all of which is made possible by conversational commerce.

■ [liveperson.com](https://www.liveperson.com)

LivePerson has been innovating digital connections between brands and consumers for more than 20 years. The company drives consumer communication technology through the evolution of predictive intelligence and customer transcript insights.



Travel's night of nights is announced

THE 2020 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) will be held on July 18 in the Grand Ballroom at the International Convention Centre in Sydney.

Organised by The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA), the NTIA have been recognising and rewarding excellence across the travel industry for 13 years.

"The NTIA has industry-wide representation and a strong history of recognising and celebrating businesses and personnel who demonstrate outstanding service, marketing excellence and business acumen within the travel industry," said Jayson Westbury, CEO of AFTA.

"Whilst the Award format will remain largely unchanged, AFTA has some truly tremendous surprises in store for Industry.

"AFTA conducted a survey following the 2019 NTIA which revealed that 90 per cent of NTIA award participants believe the judging process to be a fair and ethical one.

"We are also using the survey feedback to give guests more of what they want and amplify the things they like most about the event."

Qantas continues to demonstrate their firm commitment to AFTA and travel agents through the valued Platinum Partnership with AFTA and as the major sponsor of the NTIA.

"The awards recognise the great achievements of agents across Australia and we encourage everyone to get involved in the nomination process," said Igor Kwiatkowski, Qantas Executive Manager Global Sales and Distribution.

Nominations for the awards are now open and will remain so until February 14.

"On behalf of the AFTA, I want to thank the many sponsors who remain committed to the industry's only true awards program," added Westbury.

"They are your awards, so I invite you to take part once again and help us celebrate excellence within our industry,"

■ afta.com.au

2020 NTIA KEY DATES

Nominations Close: February 14

Category Nomination Submissions Due: March 13 (Selected categories)

Nominees Announced: March 23

Voting Opens: March 24

Ticket Sales: April 27

Finalists Announced: May 18

Judging Period: June 10 to June 19 (Judged categories only)

Gala Dinner: July 18

Traveltalk

is proud to be an official
media supporter of the

2020 NTIA AWARDS





THE VIKING WAY OF EXPLORATION

FOR TRAVELLERS with curious minds and explorer spirits, a voyage of discovery is the ultimate way to open the doorway to cultural insight and personal enrichment.

Just like the original Vikings, Viking Cruises is a true innovator when it comes to exploring the world.

The line's range of Local Life, Working World and Privileged Access experiences allow guests to immerse themselves in the unique history and culture of the destinations they visit.

The Viking Way takes guests deeper into a destination, offering behind-the-scenes insights and opportunities.

While the expected and iconic sights are included, of course, such as visits to renowned museums and notable landmarks, Viking works hard to offer experiences that allow travellers to immerse themselves in the cultures they're visiting.

The Viking Way is Local Life, Working World and Privileged Access experiences in places otherwise difficult to visit.

To explore the rhythms of daily life, such as a visit to a Russian home on the Volga River or a school in China, a Local Life excursion is the ideal way to live like a local.

Working World lets you witness the inner workings of a historic Dutch windmill, visit a working vineyard in the Wachau Valley or learn the intricate art of truffle hunting from a local Périgord farmer and his dog.

Meanwhile, Privileged Access really is privileged.

Viking opens doors to places that otherwise aren't open, sharing the homes, palaces and castles of friends around the world that otherwise wouldn't be open, as well as museum visits before and after closing hours, and access to seldom-seen collections – providing priceless experiences that are not available to anyone else.

The Viking Way of Exploration – Local Life, Working World and Privileged Access – sets Viking apart from other cruise lines. It is the line's commitment to offer real experiences that let travellers explore more deeply.

The Viking Explorer Sale is now on, featuring savings of up to \$4,000 per couple on voyages designed for discerning travellers with curious minds and true explorer spirits.

■ vikingcruises.com.au

Here is a small sample of Viking's range of incredible Privileged Access shore excursions:

A Taste of Cognac: Camus, Bourg and Blaye, France

Witness the blending of a prized brandy

Walk through the historic town of Blaye and learn the history of Cognac during a Privileged Access visit to a distillery.

Blaye rests on the Gironde River and boasts an extraordinary 17th-century ruins and take in its beautiful setting.

Next, drive with your guide through the scenic countryside to the town of Cognac and Camus, where a historic distillery awaits.

"Located in the heart of Cognac is the historic Camus distillery, where we had a beautiful three-course lunch, paired with cognac and followed by a blending workshop with Camus' Cellar Master," said Alister Burn, NSW Commercial Manager, Viking.

"I was able to blend my own bottle of cognac to my personal taste, then take the bottle home as a souvenir – a very memorable day."





BACKING FROM THE BRINKLEY

WORLD-FAMOUS supermodel, actress and successful entrepreneur Christie Brinkley (pictured) has been named Godmother of *Seven Seas Splendor*.

Brinkley will christen the new 750-guest vessel at a special ceremony in Miami this month.

"We learn best about the beautiful world around us by exploring new cities, immersing ourselves in different cultures and interacting with the gracious people who live there," said Brinkley.

"We cherish and remember these moments more when we experience them with the people we love. The absolute most invigorating and luxurious way to travel the world is by cruising the seas.

"As a woman who strives to inspire other females to achieve their career and personal aspirations, I'm especially proud to be Godmother of the first new cruise ship in maritime history to be captained by a female, the trailblazing Captain Serena Melani."

Splendor will feature a multi-million-dollar

art collection, a Culinary Arts Kitchen with 18 stations for hands-on gourmet cooking demonstrations presented by master chef instructors and Serene Spa & Wellness.

"Christie Brinkley is a universally beloved icon who is synonymous worldwide for her beauty, style and commitment to health and happiness," said Jason Montague, President and CEO of Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

"It's fitting that the Godmother of *Seven Seas Splendor* reflects timeless elegance, vitality and sophistication, as Regent has perfected all the details of luxury onboard *Seven Seas Splendor*."

■ RSSC.com



Waddling in the Weddell

SCENIC ECLIPSE has provided guests with a rare sighting of Emperor Penguins on her inaugural voyage to Antarctica.

The animal encounter came in the Weddell Sea, spending around 12 hours in the area around Snow Hill Island.

"Snow Hill Island is home to a large rookery of Emperor Penguins," said Lisa Bolton, General Manager Product for Scenic Group.

"However it is very rare that we get to see them, particularly at this time of year when the sea ice limits access. This really was a

once-in-a-lifetime experience for our guests onboard."

"*Scenic Eclipse* was originally only scheduled for a single stop at the northern part of the Weddell, but on examining the ice charts we realised that we had the opportunity to push south towards Snow Hill Island," said Captain James Griffiths.

"I am genuinely excited to see what other amazing opportunities this exceptional ship will give us to show Antarctica to our guests."

■ scenic.com.au



TWO OPTIONS ON DEBUT

UNIWORLD WILL set sail in South America for the first time with two new itineraries throughout the Peruvian Amazon set to debut in September.

The new itineraries include the 15-day 'Peruvian Amazon & Machu Picchu Exploration' that starts off with a land portion in Lima staying at a five-star hotel.

This is followed by a seven-night cruise through the Amazon rainforest aboard the *Aria Amazon* and ends in the heartland of the Inca Empire with trips to the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu and Cusco.

The 11-day 'Peruvian Rivers & Rainforest Discovery' takes guests to Lima, the pristine Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve and sails through the Amazon River roundtrip from Iquitos.

Prices start at \$18,799 per person and maiden voyages will depart on September 23.

■ uniworld.com/peru



TRAVELLERS HAVE embarked on a 140-day world cruise encompassing all seven continents for the first time in history.

Silver Whisper set sail from Fort Lauderdale on the 'Legends of Cruising 2020' tour on January 6. She will arrive in Amsterdam on May 25 having circumnavigated the world.

Guests will travel deep into 62 destinations in 32 countries, including the Antarctic Peninsula over three days.

Silversea will welcome guests aboard two pioneering world cruises in 2021, including the world's first-ever Expedition World Cruise.

Offering distinct sets of experiences and differing ways to discover the planet, the 'Finest World Tour' and the 'Uncharted World Tour' will enable those onboard to travel the world on their own terms.



Some golden moments mark Silver anniversary

SILVERSEA CRUISES has marked its 25th anniversary with one of its biggest years to date.

An increasing number of guests from Australasia chose to sail with the ultra-luxury cruise line in 2019.

The company was also recognised with four major award wins in Australia, welcomed its newest flagship vessel to the region for the first time and continued to reinforce its commitment to the trade.

"We are committed to the Australian and New Zealand markets and are thrilled to see an increasing number of cruisers from both countries choosing to sail with us," said Adam Armstrong, Managing Director Australia and New Zealand, Silversea Cruises.

From just one ship in 1994, Silversea's guests today enjoy a fleet of nine ultra-luxury, intimate vessels – with five new ships on order.

As part of Project Invictus, the largest investment in the company's history, the new builds will significantly raise the bar in the ultra-luxury segment while extensive refurbishments to the existing fleet, inspired by the design of Silversea's flagship *Silver Muse*, will further enhance the cruising experience for guests.



Silver Origin and *Silver Moon* will be the first of the new ships to be welcomed to the fleet, scheduled for July and August this year.

Silversea's new culinary program, S.A.L.T. will launch onboard *Silver Moon* in August and is set to revolutionise culinary travel by enabling travellers to use food to dive deep into the world's richest cultures and to truly understand the soul of a destination.

Silver Shadow

recently emerged from the dry dock with redesigned interior spaces and an elegant new livery.

"Silversea has evolved in recent times and we felt the need to reflect this evolution in *Silver Shadow's* livery," said Jose Vuolo, Silversea's Global Creative Director.

"Elegant, understated, recognisable, *Silver Shadow's* new aesthetic echoes our cruise line's character, placing emphasis on the destination and our guests' experiences."

In another first for the ultra-luxury cruise line, decorative crystal artworks from renowned lifestyle brand Lalique have been installed in the ship's La Dame Restaurant to enrich the dining experience for guests.



Silversea is offering guests savings of up to \$1,000 per suite when booked by February 28.

Combinable with the company's Early Booking Bonus and air offers, the bonus savings promotion is for Wave Season and is available on 144 sailings in 2020/21, encompassing all seven continents.

■ silversea.com



DISCOVER

UNINTERRUPTED BEAUTY

LIMITED TIME OFFER

BUSINESS CLASS FLIGHTS INCLUDED ON SELECT ARCTIC & RUSSIAN FAR EAST VOYAGES

CRUISE TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

An expedition with Silversea luxury cruises is unlike any other form of travel – thrilling, awe-inspiring and humbling all at the same time. Experience beauty in the extreme with the incredible ice landscapes and abundant wildlife of the Arctic or the stunning volcanic terrain and spectacular populations of seabirds, whales and walrus in the Russian Far East.

We invite you to explore some of the most remote regions of the planet in all-inclusive luxury, with included Business Class Air, international transfers and luggage handling on select voyages.

Plus, for a limited time, a selection of these voyages are available as part of our **Bonus Savings summer sale - save up to \$1,000 or \$500** per dbl suite on select voyages. Offer available until 28 February, 2020.



Veranda Suite, Silver Cloud

ARCTIC & RUSSIAN FAR EAST BUSINESS CLASS AIR OFFER



NEW – BUSINESS CLASS AIR
AVAILABLE ON SELECT VOYAGES



INCLUDED TRANSFERS
AND LUGGAGE HANDLING.



INCLUDED IN-COUNTRY CHARTER FLIGHTS
WHERE REQUIRED BY ITINERARY



INCLUDED HOTEL STAY
1 NIGHT PRE + 1 DAY-USE POST USE

SILVERSEA ALL-INCLUSIVE EXPEDITION

Complimentary field expeditions, Zodiac® tours, and activities

Highly qualified Expeditions Team

Intimate, purpose-built expedition ships

Staff to guest ratio of nearly 1:1

Spacious elegantly appointed ocean-view suites, all with butler service

Open seating, diverse cuisine and up to four onboard restaurants

Complimentary caviar, Champagnes, wines, beers and spirits served throughout the ship

Complimentary in-suite dining

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK, CONTACT SILVERSEA RESERVATIONS ON +61 2 9255 0600 | SILVERSEA.COM

Terms and Conditions: Bonus Savings offer amounts are per suite based on twin share maximum savings and single occupancy bookings will only be eligible for half of the displayed amount, offer is valid on new, individual bookings made between 4 January, 2020 and 28 February, 2020. Guest benefits from an extra savings per suite, valid on all categories, on select cruises 2020 and 2021. Guest is eligible for up to AU\$500 savings per suite with a maximum of AU\$1,000 savings per suite. Savings amount varies by voyage. Savings applied to cruise fare at checkout. Cancel and re-books do not qualify. All fares, savings, offers, programmes and itineraries are subject to change without notice. Additional restrictions may apply. Silversea reserves the right to correct any errors or omissions. Visit www.silversea.com/terms-and-conditions.html for full offer details and complete Terms and Conditions.



Plane sailing as Fiji expands

FIJI AIRWAYS has accepted delivery of the first of two Airbus A350 XWB aircraft as part of the airline's wide-body expansion plans.

The new luxury aircraft touched down in Nadi and received a traditional Fijian welcome.

The aircraft, 'Island of Viti Levu', went into commercial service in December, flying the Nadi to Sydney and Nadi to Los Angeles routes. The second A350 XWB arrived mid-December and began flying the same routes in January.

"Welcoming the Island Viti Levu represents more than just an addition to our fleet: it represents a future of opportunities, our commitment to quality service and a more luxurious flight experience for our guests and crew," said Andre Viljoen, Fiji Airways Managing Director & CEO.

"A luxury, world-class destination, like Fiji, deserves a luxury, world-class travel experience and that's exactly what our A350-900 will deliver. The A350 will allow us to continue on a journey of excellence."

The A350-900 features 33 fully lie-flat beds in the business cabin and 301 economy seats that are among the most comfortable in the market. The first few rows of economy allow guests to have extra legroom for additional comfort.

■ fijairways.com



NEW LOUNGE PUTS THE CUSTOMER FIRST

QANTAS HAS officially opened its newest First Lounge, a luxury space spread over 1,000 square metres at Singapore's Changi Airport.

The new facility will operate in tandem alongside the airline's existing International Business Lounge, providing capacity for 240 customers and a bespoke offering for Qantas' first class passengers and top tier frequent flyers.

"Since our A380 flights have returned to Singapore, we've seen an increase in demand for premium travel which has also translated to an increase in the number of travellers enjoying our lounge hospitality," said Alan Joyce, Qantas Group CEO.

"This is our fourth Qantas First Lounge, and each time we build an entire new lounge facility from scratch, we speak to our frequent flyers to get a better understanding of how customers like to spend their time in the lounge and tailor it accordingly.

"Our customers told us their key priorities when travelling through or from Singapore is space to relax and do some last-minute work, a quick shower, and a meal before departure so they can maximise their sleep onboard."

An open kitchen will serve an a la carte seasonal menu designed with Singapore's vibrant dining culture in mind, while the cocktail bar features lounge seating.

There's a faux 'skylight' in the shower suites and lounge area to replicate natural daylight and help adjust the body clock as customers transition through multiple time zones.

The new lounge joins those in Sydney, Melbourne and Los Angeles.

■ qantas.com

CUP OF CHEERS

AIR NEW Zealand has begun trialling edible coffee cups as it explores new and innovative ways to meet its sustainability challenges.

Niki Chave, Air New Zealand Senior Manager Customer Experience, says that while the airline's current cups are compostable, the ultimate goal would be to remove these totally from landfills.

The 'twice' edible cup trial backs up the airline's recent switch to plant-based coffee cups onboard all aircraft and in lounges. The airline currently serves more than eight million cups of coffee each year.

■ airnewzealand.com.au





Adam Radwanski addresses guests at the 10th anniversary dinner



WHY QATAR AIRWAYS VALUES AUSSIE AGENTS

AUSTRALIAN UNEMPLOYMENT was at a five year high, the global financial crisis was just winding down and the the swine flu pandemic was at its height.

This all set the scene for Qatar Airways entry into the Australian market 10 years ago, almost to the day, *writes Gaya Avery.*

“I remember that moment very well,” said Adam Radwanski, Country Manager Australasia Qatar Airways, at the airline’s anniversary celebrations in Melbourne recently.

“I was working at Qatar Airways’ regional office in London and trying to sell Melbourne flights – not Sydney – just after one of the biggest global financial crises we had witnessed over the last few decades.

“So it was tough. But we made it and we made it very, very successful.”

Since 2009, Qatar Airways’ footprint in Australia has increased eight-fold, Radwanski added. The airline now operates 35 flights

per week to and from Australia with services from Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra.

Since the commencement of services to Australia, Qatar Airways has carried more than 5.2 million passengers on its Australian flights, supporting this country’s \$57 billion tourism industry.

These services also help connect Australian exporters to the world with trade between the two countries valued at \$1.313 billion in 2018 to 2019.

But it was the airline’s relationships with the Australian trade which helped it get to where it is today, Radwanski told *Traveltalk*, saying agents are “critical” to their continued growth.

“Travel agents are becoming even more important to Qatar Airways because we open a number of new destinations a year.

“Some of those destinations are not known so we rely on the expertise of

travel agents to help us to showcase the destinations to customers to build that demand,” he said.

“A good example is Mykonos. We launched flights to Mykonos just over a year ago. Nobody flies to Mykonos from Australia with one stop. Usually you have to fly to Athens.

“How do you communicate that to the customer and change their behaviour? Well, you cannot really do that via an online agent. It’s not easy because the behaviour is set. So we worked very hard with the trade and that really worked extremely well.

“The Australian agents are extremely passionate, they are professional. They are very close to the customer and we can very easily convey the critical messages of our business through them.”

To celebrate the 10-year milestone, the airline hosted a pop-up restaurant in Melbourne, with a specially curated menu to showcase Australian produce, highlighting its commitment to local growers and suppliers.

The pop-up restaurant attracted celebrities including Australian television royalty Kerri-Anne Kennerley, models Erin Holland and Kris Smith, and Sydney Swans Co-Captains Dane Ramepe and Luke Parker.

Guests enjoyed the airline’s award-winning in-flight dining experience and were treated to an all-Australian menu that is available on all flights from Australia to Doha.

“We’re looking forward to the next 10 years and beyond, working more closely with farmers, growers and winemakers to share Australian produce with the world through our in-flight dining and export cargo,” said Radwanski.

■ qatarairways.com



Kerri-Anne Kennerley



Jerusalem

New face set for Aussie skies

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL carrier is to launch its first non-stop flights to Melbourne in April.

The direct El Al service is part of a test the airline is conducting on ultra long-haul operations and will involve three return flights between Melbourne and Tel Aviv (TLV).

Flights will be operated by the airline's new Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, with business, premium economy and economy services available. It will take approximately

16 hours and 45 minutes eastwards and an hour longer westwards.

The first service will depart Tel Aviv at 11.15am on April 2 and arrive in Melbourne at 11.30am the following day. The return leg departs on April 4 at 23.15pm and touches down in TLV at 9am the next morning.

Economy class fares are available from \$1,766 (including taxes), premium fares from \$3,997 and business fares from \$7,809.

"Direct flights are game changers in bilateral relationships," said Mark Sofer, Ambassador of Israel to Australia, on Twitter.

"They greatly enhance trade and tourism and, in general, bring peoples closer to one another. Here's hoping that the project 'takes off'"

Chris Cannan, Australian Ambassador to Israel, told *The Jerusalem Post* the flights are a "great opportunity for more Australians and Israelis to explore each other's beautiful countries.

"Direct flights would also be a game changer for increasing our trade, investment and innovation links," he added.

Along with its Melbourne service, El Al plans to launch new flights to Tokyo, Chicago, Dublin and Dusseldorf in 2020.

■ elal.com



KANGAROO IS TURNING JAPANESE

QANTAS WILL become the first airline to launch non-stop flights between Melbourne and Tokyo's Haneda International Airport.

Launching on March 29, the new route will replace the current service from Melbourne to Tokyo Narita.

The announcement came as the national carrier launched new, seasonal direct flights from Sydney to Sapporo to coincide with the ski season in Japan.

Qantas will fly three times per week to Sapporo's New Chitose Airport between now and March 28. The flights will be operated with upgraded Airbus A330

aircraft, offering more than 10,000 seats on the route over this period.

"Travel between Australia and Japan is booming," said Naren Kumar, Qantas International Acting CEO.

"The number of Australians travelling to Japan has more than doubled over the past five years, with almost 500,000 Australians visiting Japan in the last 12 months alone.

"We expect Japan's popularity to continue with the country hosting a number of major international sporting events in the next two years."

■ qantas.com

CANADA CONNECTS WITH THE KIWIS

AIR CANADA is operating a four-times a week service to Auckland from now until the end of March.

The inaugural 787 Dreamliner service touched down before Christmas, marking the carrier's launch of its seasonal service between Canada and New Zealand.

"Our Auckland flights are timed to conveniently connect at our extensive Vancouver trans-Pacific hub to and from a multitude of non-stop destinations throughout North America including New York-Newark," said Mark Galardo, Vice President, Network Planning at Air Canada.

Air Canada's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliners feature 20 signature class lie-flat seats, 21 premium economy and 214 economy class seats with upgraded in-flight entertainment at every seat throughout the aircraft.

■ aircanada.com



Movie stars enjoy a travel role

HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTARS Gwyneth Paltrow (right), Kate Hudson and Zoe Saldana have appeared in a new collaboration with Dubai Tourism.

The project centred around the short film *A Story Takes Flight*, which stars the actors as themselves embarking on three journeys of exploration through Dubai, filled with inspiration, discovery and human connections.

The movie was filmed by Emmy and Director's Guild award-winning director, Reed Morano, who is known for her immersive, natural and cinematic style. It was shot over eight days with a crew from more than 30 nationalities.

The film aimed to capture the essence of each actress and the intimate relationships between them, while also showcasing the beauty of Dubai.

"One of my favourite parts of travelling is to truly connect with a city, its people and the local culture," said Gwyneth Paltrow.

"Dubai is special because it's a melting pot. Both the ones born here, who are so proud of their heritage, and those who are recent transplants, bringing with them their own values and traditions, contribute to writing the future story of the city.

"My time in Dubai was beyond anything I expected and there's still so much more to see."

■ astorytakesflight.com



NEW WEBSITE PROVIDES THE ENTIRE PICTURE

ENTIRE TRAVEL Group has launched a new brand and a one-stop-shop website that unites all of its specialist wholesale programs.

Agents can now quickly and easily access each of the company's nine specialist programs through tabs on a single website.

The new site also offers agents a number of new features, including the ability to search for a selection of popular activities or themes across the group's full range of destinations and experiences.

"That means that if an agent is searching for honeymoon options, for instance, they can with one click call up honeymoon experiences across all of our destinations," said Brad McDonnell, Chief Executive.

"They can do the same with other themes such as cycling, nature, wellness, cultural and battlefields."

As part of the image overhaul, Entire is retiring the 'Travel Connection' signature previously used to identify each of its nine individual brands.

Instead the group's wholesale programs will now highlight their key destination or product and combine it with the shared phrase, 'brought to you by Entire Travel Group'.

The new brand also incorporates the company's first tagline – 'When experience matters' – which McDonnell says was added following industry research.

"When we spoke to agents it became clear that what they value most about Entire Travel Group is the first-hand experience offered by our consultants, more than half of whom were born in the country's they represent.

"They recognise that when dealing with complex and sophisticated destinations, the level of product familiarity we offer is simply priceless."

McDonnell says the changes will drive greater brand recognition and save agents time by providing easier access to the company's expanding product suite.

"As we prepare for further growth, we recognise the need to establish a clear and

simplified platform that ensures agents know we are not only Australia's most knowledgeable wholesaler but also the easiest to work with.

"Our new branding and consolidated website reflects our transformation and heralds the arrival of an exciting new era for Entire Travel Group."

■ entiretravel.com.au



Brad McDonnell (left) and the team at Entire Travel Group celebrate their brand revamp



The Aussie expansion continues for Avani

AVANI HOTELS and Resorts have continued their expansion plans in Australia with the opening of two new properties in Adelaide and Melbourne.

Both properties fully embrace the Avani commitment to welcoming travellers with fully-equipped residences for the whole family.

Avani Adelaide Residences has a central location within South Australia's cosmopolitan coastal capital, close to markets, cafes and museums.

Avani Melbourne Box Hill Residences, located just outside Melbourne's city centre, is an upcoming area renowned for its culinary, sporting and cultural scenes.

Other features include a heated pool, cinema, library and state-of-the-art golf simulator and an elegant rooftop terrace lounge and outdoor barbecue area.

■ avanihotels.com/press



NEW CAIRNS HOTEL IS CRYSTAL CLEAR

CRYSTALBROOK COLLECTION'S second five-star Cairns hotel has opened, showcasing a strong passion for art, gastronomy and sustainability.

Located in the heart of the city's cultural precinct and just a stone's throw from the Esplanade boardwalk and lagoon, Bailey is adorned with Australian artwork.

The property features 255 guest rooms and residences, three restaurants and bars, meeting spaces for up to 150 people, a rooftop mezzanine plunge pool and a 24-hour fitness centre.

Crystalbrook Collection is an independent Australian tourism and hospitality company with a focus on innovation and sustainability. Each of the group's six hotels and resorts draw inspiration from interiors, art, design, music, food and technology to create distinct and tailored experiences for its guests.

Creating a new cultural hub, Bailey will play host to an ever-evolving array of art forms across music, dance, painting, sculpture, literature and film to make art accessible, inclusive and empowering.

The hotel will also host quarterly art programs from evening work-shops, poetry recitals, dance performances or live graffiti session, no area of the hotel is off limits.

■ crystalbrookcollection.com/bailey

NO EXPENSE SPARED WAY OUT WEST



MARSDEN HOTEL has added a new venture to its growing portfolio with the opening of a second boutique property.

Marsden Hotel Burwood is the first luxury hotel to open in the inner Western Sydney suburb in more than a decade. It follows the successful launch of the first Marsden Hotel in Parramatta.

The construction of the hotel has introduced an impressive and elegant mainstay to the inner-city neighbourhood.

"We've spared no expense with this latest venture, to create a hotel to rival the best in the CBD, where the genuine care and comfort of our guests is our highest priority," said David Johnston, General Manager.

"Guests can expect the best in personal service and facilities, from our meticulously crafted rooms, to impeccable dining experiences."

The hotel features 90 spacious rooms equipped with bespoke furnishings and fixtures. Bedrooms come complete with Sleepmaker Latex award-winning beds, hypoallergenic linens, Egyptian cotton towels and locally-sourced, luxury amenities.

There's a rooftop pool and bar, restaurant and artisan patisserie, all of which are open to the public. Guests can also take full advantage of the fitness centre, function spaces and conference rooms.

"The hotel encapsulates our vision to bring an air of indulgence and grandeur to an unexpected destination, creating new experiences for guests and locals to marvel at every turn," added Johnston.

■ marsdenhotel.com.au



MERITON SUITES SET TO OPEN 16th SYDNEY HOTEL IN 2020

OPENING IN September, Meriton Suites Eastgardens will be a thriving hub surrounded by shopping, restaurants, public transport and located within close proximity to the best of Sydney's beaches.

Created with both the corporate and leisure guests in mind, the new hotel will feature 200 new oversized suites, with some comfortably sleeping up to six adults from its selection of spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom layouts. Perfect for both solo travellers and larger groups wanting to stay together.

Boasting a chic and modern design, Meriton Suites Eastgardens will treat guests to a refined living experience with residential-sized gourmet kitchens, a separate lounge and dining area with modern furnishings, flat screen HD TV's in all living rooms and bedrooms, plus an internal laundry with washing machine and dryer, promising all the comforts of a home-away-from-home.

The hotel will also feature new Staycast TV's in every suite (including all bedrooms) which will allow guests to stream content from more than 1,000 mobile apps using their own device.

With the added benefit of complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel and no need to enter any personal details, the feature is free and easy to use. Pair your device to the TV using the on-screen instructions and you're ready to start streaming your favourite TV shows and movies.

This apartment-style accommodation will be designed for living and not just sleeping, with resort-style facilities including an onsite fitness centre, plus an indoor heated pool, spa and sauna.

The hotel will showcase unrivalled views of the beautiful Sydney skyline and a variety of expansive views over the newly-created Central Park and Bonnie Doon Golf Club from selected suites.

Guests will find greater choice with a variety of dining options on the ground floor, as well as a convenience store. Westfield Eastgardens is also located just across the road and is filled with fashion outlets and a vibrant café and bar culture throughout, meaning guests will have everything they need right at their doorstep.

Additionally, guests will find easy connectivity to an array of Sydney lifestyle destinations with multiple public transport

options available close by. It is within close proximity to some of Sydney's most pristine coastlines, like Maroubra Beach and Coogee Beach, the University of New South Wales, and both Sydney Domestic and International Airports.

It is also just a short five-minute bus trip to the upcoming Nine Ways station at Kingsford located at the start of Sydney's Light Rail with direct routes to the Sydney CBD.

"It is clear that Sydney's inner suburbs are very popular destinations for families, groups and also corporate travellers, who want to be close to the beaches and shopping but also have access to an easy commute into the CBD," said Matthew Thomas, Group General Manager of Meriton Suites.

"As we continue to grow our portfolio throughout Australia, we are proud to have a strong brand presence especially in and around Sydney which will be home to 16 Meriton Suites hotels once Eastgardens opens."

Meriton Suites currently operates 19 properties across Sydney, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, with six new locations in the pipeline including Melbourne and Canberra. ■ meritonsuites.com.au



ENJOY A LUXURY STAY AT MERITON SUITES

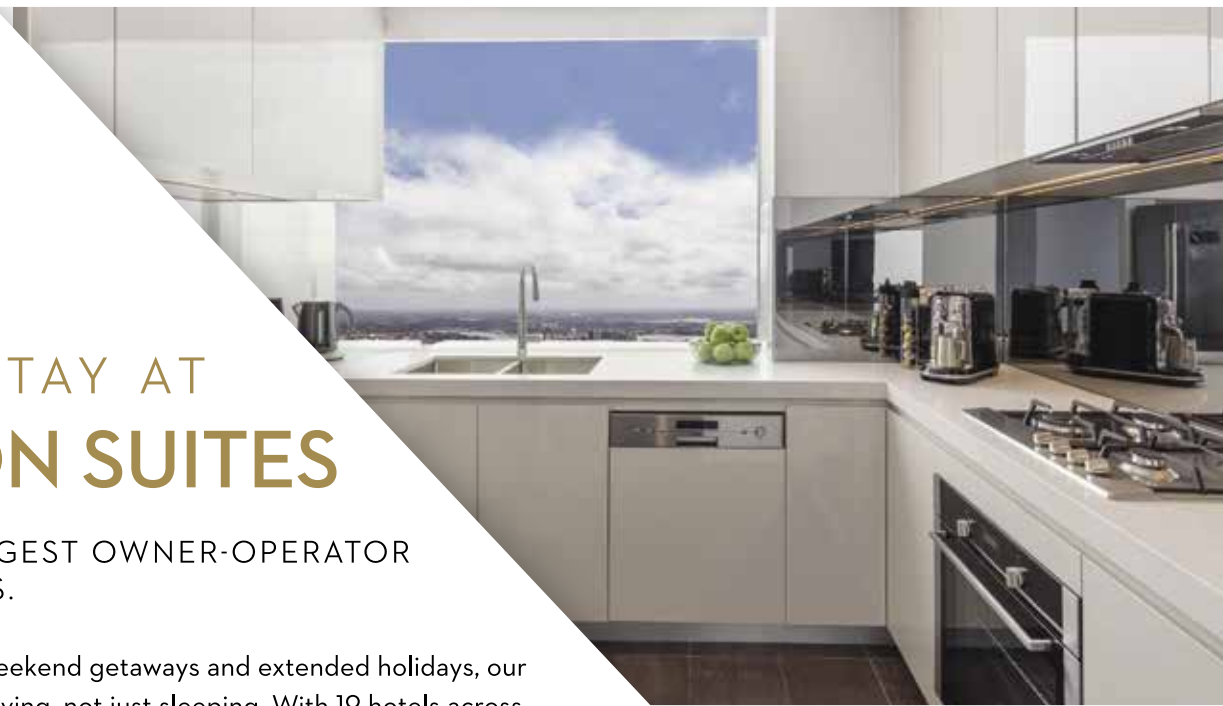
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OF HOTEL SUITES.

Perfect for both short weekend getaways and extended holidays, our suites are designed for living, not just sleeping. With 19 hotels across Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, each suite offers more space than a typical hotel room. With a selection of studio, one, two, three and four bedroom layouts available, all suites feature a residential-sized kitchen along with the essential utensils for a home cooked meal, a separate living and dining space, TV's in each bedroom, plus an internal laundry complete with a washing machine and dryer for a home away from home experience.

Strategically positioned in the heart of Australia's most popular destinations, all of our locations have been built with comfort and convenience in mind, with shops, restaurants, bars and public transport all close by. Each of our hotels feature an indoor heated swimming pool, spa and sauna, plus a state of the art fitness centre equipped with cardio equipment and weight machines.

Discover why millions of travellers are choosing to stay at Meriton Suites.

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LET'S MAKE TRAVEL MATTER

In this exclusive interview, we talk to JOHN VEITCH, CEO of The Travel Corporation (TTC), about sustainability, the importance of growing 'under' tourism and how we can all make a difference when travelling.

Q: How important is sustainable travel to the many brands under the TTC umbrella?

A: We're incredibly passionate about sustainable tourism. It's something which is deep within the DNA of TTC and the people who work for TTC. It's also incredibly important for us just because it's the right thing to do.

It's one of the reasons TTC founded The TreadRight Foundation some 11 years ago. Through this we run a number of projects around the world supporting people, our planet and wildlife.

Some of the work TreadRight does is amazingly impactful, including the Make Travel Matter Pledge (see break out box). I truly believe we can make travel matter.

Q: So promoting sustainable tourism clearly isn't a new thing for TTC?

A: Brett Tolman, our Global CEO, is incredibly passionate about this area. He started TreadRight with David Hoskins and they've been driving it ever since. They recognised the importance way before the rest of us did.

It's amazing when these projects come to life and you see the good they do, the benefits they produce, along with the sustainable element to both planet and wildlife, you realise just how important it is.

Q: Do you think sustainability is just a generational thing?

A: Years ago it may have been stronger in the younger generation, but now I see it across the whole travel market and across all realms of society.



As Australians we have such a beautiful country and environment we live in that I think we are biased towards this subject. We recognise how lucky we are in Australia and how precious it is.

Q: 'Over' tourism has been a hot topic recently. You believe the travel industry needs to start promoting 'under' tourism.

A: Obviously there are very strong benefits economically from tourism, with a lot of employment coming through for hotels and tour operators. But we're also talking about the local shops, cafes, restaurants, ice-cream vendors, so all that infrastructure gets a massive boost.

'Under' tourism is recognising that there are places in the world which would benefit

and need further support from tourism. We've got to support these destinations socially, culturally, economically and environmentally. The list of places that need more tourism is enormous.

Q: Do you have any examples?

A: We're starting to go into Columbia with Luxury Gold. A few years back this destination had very low tourist numbers, but now we're putting it on the map and on the radar for our guests and it will benefit from increased tourism.

Northern Ireland is another example. They are looking to double tourist numbers by 2030. They are not sitting there thinking they've got too many tourists. They really want more people and there are a lot of untapped places like that out there.

Q: Is this something that also applies to domestic tourism?

A: Regional Australia has had such a tough period, with bushfires in a number of areas and drought. Whatever we can do to help tourism in regional Australia will add economic benefit to those areas.

Australians love to travel and giving them a holiday experience that they deserve makes us all happy. That's why I love working with Australian travellers.

Q: So will all TTC brands be actively promoting 'under' tourism now?

A: We're always looking for new destinations, which our guests will enjoy and where we can offer them very special, exciting, in-depth experiences. We're finding that a lot of those opportunities are in areas where there is 'under' tourism.

We are passionate about 'under' tourism. The economic benefits that we can bring to different societies and areas of the world with tourism – we can do the right thing.

Q: Are there any other travel trends that you are noticing?

A: We're seeing different group size travel across the industry and our role is to produce the perfect size group for the itinerary. That varies by the different itinerary and geography, but we have to create the best possible experience for our guests. We take that responsibility very seriously.

Q: Solo travel also seems to be expanding?

A: I think it is one of the emerging sectors of the market and I think travel agents are feeling it too. We are seeing people more willing to travel on their own and maybe that's because we are becoming a much more well-travelled global community.

We're seeing demand for solos increasing across a lot of our brands, both around the world and in Australia. We'll need to adapt and make sure we're creating the right holidays for solos, but if they come with us there's a great opportunity for them to travel with like-minded people.

■ ttc.com



TAKE THE PLEDGE

The Travel Corporation has launched its *Make Travel Matter Pledge*, encouraging travellers to make a long-standing commitment to sustainable tourism and conscious travel.

"I will make my travel matter – for our planet, for people and for wildlife.

When I explore this planet, I will do my best to tread right. I will refuse single use plastics when I can and recycle what I cannot avoid. When possible, I will offset my travels.

When I meet new people, I will honour their home as I do my own and do so in the spirit of diversity and inclusion. I will purchase locally made items wherever possible and pay a fair price.

When I experience wildlife, I will do so in nature. I will not ride animals that ought not be ridden, nor support animal cruelty in any way.

Together, we will tread right upon the earth – and we will make our travel matter."

■ treadright.org/pledge





*Le Commandant-Charcot.
Picture courtesy PONANT/
Stirling Design International*

Oceans ahead in planet protection

FAR FROM being a new concept to PONANT, sustainability has been ingrained as part of the company's credo since its inception in 1988.

Eco-responsibility and sustainability are core commitments, from the design of the ships to remote area shore landings and operational procedures. Here's a look at some of the company's many initiatives.

Minimising Pollution

A year ahead of international maritime regulations, the PONANT fleet exclusively uses low sulphur marine gasoil, resulting in more than a 90 per cent reduction in sulphur oxide emissions – equivalent to just one-fifth of the new requirement – and a 15 per cent reduction of nitrogen oxides.

Protecting the Marine Environment

All PONANT ships are fitted with a dynamic positioning system so they are not required to drop anchor in sensitive marine environs.

"Clean Ship" Certification

This has been awarded to all PONANT ships internationally, recognising their reduced environmental impact.

Environmental and Social Impact Assessments

PONANT collaborates with local populations to limit environmental and social impact, creating guidelines specific to each sensitive region, as well as briefings and a code of conduct for guests.

Zero Impact Landings

Every shore landing is subject to a strict protocol with dedicated PONANT teams ensuring that all landings have zero impact

on the ecosystem visited, helping protect the fauna, flora and local populations.

Reducing & Recycling Waste

Efforts are taken to minimise single-use plastics onboard, while a state-of-the-art waste processing system ultimately helps ensure 70 per cent of waste is recycled or transformed into energy.

The PONANT Foundation

The Foundation was established in 2018 to preserve the oceans and polar regions, encourage exchange and collaboration with local communities and support projects focused on research, awareness-raising and conservation.

Examples include PONANT's support of the Aldabra Clean Up, a project in conjunction with the Seychelles Islands Foundation and Oxford University, which aims to fight marine plastic pollution.



Le Laperouse in the Kimberley. Picture courtesy STUDIO PONANT/Laure Patricot

The Foundation also supports initiatives to recycle plastic waste in conjunction with Plastic Odyssey and applied research projects run by Pure Ocean to protect the oceans and peoples who depend on them.

Australia is just one of the beneficiaries of the latest environmental technology inherent in PONANT's modern fleet.

Le Laperouse operates in Australian and regional waters, with voyages that include environmentally sensitive regions including the Kimberley, Great Barrier Reef and Sub Antarctic Islands.

■ au.ponant.com/sustainable-development



Le Commandant-Charcot

PONANT'S new hybrid electric ship will be the first to bring passengers to the Geographic North Pole in comfort and luxury.

Powered by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), the ship incorporates all the latest innovations in environmental protection.

These include an energy recovery system, consumption optimisation with latest-generation electric batteries that make it possible to stop the engines for two- to three-hours and an energy optimisation system with precise consumption measurement and optimisation of ship sailing methods.

The new ship will also host a scientific research laboratory equipped to study the ecosystems and the biodiversity of these polar settings in perpetual change.

Itineraries will include the Geographic North Pole, the eastern coast of Greenland, the Northwest Passage, the Ross Sea, the Charcot and Peter I islands.

Le Commandant-Charcot will be launched later this year with sailings beginning in 2021.



AWAKEN

YOUR SENSE OF WONDER



POLAR ENRICHMENT. PONANT LUXURY.

Nimble, intimate, luxurious ships from the world's most modern and experienced polar expedition fleet make PONANT the only choice for those who want to experience wild adventure in unprecedented French luxury. Return from each enlightening, expert-led Zodiac® expedition to your own luxurious floating base with French ambience and service aboard, supplemented with refined cuisine and wines.

In the Antarctic, set sail from the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia, across the Drake Passage and on to the great white continent. Air so breathable in a place so breathtaking! Discover the land of the midnight sun in the Arctic. Your long days begin at Longyearben, on Norway's largest island — Spitsbergen. Travel further north and have your ship nudge the ice floes of the Pole. At our globe's top, majestic wildlife: polar bears; gregarious walruses, whales, orcas galore; sea otters and lions; the musk ox and Arctic fox. At its bottom, penguins-a-plenty: the Adélie, gentoo and chinstrap; and seals and humpbacks. Whichever poles-apart choice you make, its replenishing remoteness will have your spirit soaring while its wild, wild wildlife will humble your soul.

Book your Luxury Polar Expedition early and save up to 30%* PLUS, receive \$800^ off your first PONANT cruise.

WILDLIFE & FORESTS OF ALASKA: 23 August 2021. 12 nights **from \$11,910 pp**

THE BEST OF SPITSBERGEN: May to July 2020 & 2021. 7 nights **from \$12,120 pp**

EMBLEMATIC ANTARCTICA: November 2020 to February 2021. 10 nights **from \$12,670 pp**

GREENLAND OF GREAT EXPLORERS: 25 June 2020 & 3 July 2021. 14 nights **from \$16,430 pp**

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All advertised prices are based on the Ponant Bonus fare per person, in Australian Dollars, based on a double occupancy, including port taxes, yield managed, correct at time of writing - 20/01/2020. Prices are subject to availability and can be changed at any time. Terms and Conditions apply, refer to au.ponant.com for more information. * Ponant Bonus discount subject to change based on availability. ^ Welcome Offer is in AUD, per stateroom based on double occupancy, \$5400 savings per stateroom for single occupancy. Offer valid for guests travelling with PONANT for the first time. Offer is not redeemable for cash, not retroactive, and not combinable with any other offers, except the Ponant Bonus and Single Traveller Offers. Valid for new bookings only and can change or be withdrawn at any time. Visit au.ponant.com for more details. Photographs © Studio PONANT: Morgane Monneret, Olivier Blaud, Sylvain Adenot / PONANT Francois Lefebvre. ABN: 35 166 676 517





The secret surprises of Koh Samet

Sustainability, style and a few surprises come together in Koh Samet and at Sai Kaew Resort to make this island and hotel unmissable, as MARK HARADA reports.

GAZING DOWN the beach from Sai Kaew Resort, it's hard to believe that just a few hours ago a good part of the shoreline was covered in dining tables.

Hungry holidaymakers feasted on seafood and Singhas, live bands played, there was dancing and karaoke (good and bad), not to mention the fire-wielding acrobats who performed with little regard for their own safety, though did so unscathed.

But that's the sort of place the Thai island of Koh Samet – and particularly this stretch of beach – seems to be: a haven by

day, where warm water laps gently onto white sands, and by night a place to wine, dine, sing and dance to your heart's (and stomach's) content.

Koh Samet surprises in many ways, however. Its beauty, though envisaged, still exceeds my expectations as we arrive from our short speedboat ride from the Thai mainland near Rayong.

Coming in to the opposite side of the small island, we get a good look at the amazing properties that hug Ao Phrao Beach – namely Samed Resorts' luxury Ao Prao

Resort and Le Vimarn Cottages & Spa - and are suitably impressed.

As evidenced by its 'no plastic bag and foam packaging' rule, Koh Samet is also committed to sustainability.

Apparently, those who even bring plastic bags onto the island are open to fines - so if you have one for your laundry, shoes or shopping, be sure to keep it out of sight (or better still, bring a tote bag).

Though there is tourism, which explains the quality and quantity of resorts, restaurants and experiences dotted around the island, it isn't what you'd call a mass tourism destination in the vein of Phuket or Pattaya, for instance.

Surprisingly, few Australians get here too, so bragging rights await those Aussies who



do visit. Perhaps most surprising about the island is its proximity to Bangkok. From the metropolis's Suvarnabhumi Airport, the pier from which our boat departs for Koh Samet is just a two hour drive, so there's no need to connect to any domestic flights from the capital.

The splendour and surprises continue at Sai Kaew Resort where I'm staying. In an open-air reception and lounge area set amid lush forest, a delicious lychee/mint iced welcome drink, cold towel and warm 'sawadee ka' set the scene.

A short walk to my deluxe premier room, which sits among tree-lined walkways in the resort's Hip Zone, and the wonder continues.

Contemporary in design, my abode features sea-inspired touches and beautifully lit timbers, along with an equally stunning bathroom that boasts a floor to ceiling window through to the main room. Other in-room features include a large TV, work space, free Wi-Fi, espresso coffee and mini bar.

Outside, I'm just metres away from the Hip Zone's 15-metre luxury infinity pool. But there are also swimming spots in the Hub Zone, which boasts a swim-up bar, and in the leafier Hide Zone.

“ As evidenced by its ‘no plastic bag and foam packaging’ rule, Koh Samet is also committed to sustainability. ”





Breakfast, which is taken in the open-air, ocean-side Zea Restaurant, features a range of Thai dishes like yellow noodles with minced pork, or fried chicken with garlic and pepper.

But a range of delicious Thai sweets largely made from sticky rice are the highlight for me – along with the ever-obliging staff. Right next to Zea, Z Bar looks to be the perfect place for a pre-dinner cocktail too.

Elsewhere in the resort, there's a cafe and gift shop, gymnasium, Saikaew Wellness Center and even free yoga classes for guests. And on its doorstep, all sorts of aquatic activities can be arranged, including spectacular diving and snorkelling trips to nearby islands.

Surprisingly, Koh Samet and Sai Kaew Resort offer something for everyone, from infants to the big kids at heart, from the revellers to the relaxed. Unsurprisingly, I'm loathe to leave.

■ *The writer was a guest of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.
All photos by Mark Harada.*



MARK HARADA pulls up a chair with royalty of a different kind in Rayong.

Thailand loves its royal family; it loves its royal fruit too.

Durian and mangosteen are known throughout the country as the king and queen of fruits.

The king, durian is a (literally) prickly character, with a smell that often renders it unwelcome in hotels, planes and other parts, but whose taste is savoured by most locals.

Slightly sour but delicious, mangosteen is supposed to be consumed to 'cool' the body after the heat of the durian and is considered the queen of fruits.

A couple of hours south of Bangkok in the Rayong region, I've come to Suan Lung Thongbai, a working fruit farm where visitors can take a tour of the orchards as well as enjoy a smorgasbord of the local favourites.

Here, you'll only find organic farming and not fruit grown en masse. So whether you try the longan, rambutan or other local delicacy, you'll know you're getting top notch produce.

As far as attractions go, the operation is rustic; the buffet is set up in stalls by a quiet stretch of road while the tour takes place on a carriage pulled by a tractor. And don't even try to find a website for it. But all of this is part of its charm and superfluous to the main reason for visiting here - trying its fruit.

Following the tour, which takes us through a landscape more muddled than manicured, we sample some of the durian and mangosteen that in Australia fetches somewhere between \$20 and \$30 a kilo (if you take away its thick skin). You won't pay that here and it won't have travelled thousands of kilometres, or even that many metres, to reach you. And by sample, I mean all the mangosteen and durian you can eat.

This turns out to be a king and queen fit for a meal.

Open to the New Shades

amazing
THAILAND

BE IN THE MIDDLE OF BLUE EXPANSE,
OR THE CENTRE OF IT ALL.



Spark your Arctic curiosity

QUARK EXPEDITIONS have launched their Arctic 2021 expedition season, featuring a range of new itineraries designed to create unique adventures.

Travellers can now book to sail for the first time on *Ultramarine*, Quark's newest expedition vessel, and take advantage of unique helicopter-based excursions.

New itineraries in this pioneering season include the remote Canadian Arctic, Western Greenland, the Russian Arctic and shortened Spitsbergen expedition options. New adventure options include alpine kayaking, mountain biking and Greenland camping.

A range of early bird discounts offering savings of up to 30 per cent are on offer until June for clients to reserve their dream Arctic expedition.

One of the highlight of this new season is an all new 'Greenland Adventure Program', offering a week-long exploration based in and around southeast Greenland's spectacular fjords.

In a first in polar adventure travel, Quark Expeditions has teamed up with municipal, regional and national partners in Greenland to offer guests the most extensive array of adventure activities, enabling them to curate an authentic active adventure that best suits their interests.

On the trip, *Ultramarine's* twin-engine helicopters will take small groups to remote areas other ships simply can't reach, enabling guests to enjoy exceptional wildlife viewing as part of the onboard experience.

Travel by helicopter to glacial lakes high in the upper alpine zones, ascend cascading coastal glaciers and step onto the vast polar plateau of the Greenland Ice Sheet. Roam the tundra with a resident chef and enjoy an unforgettable meal made from local



ingredients. Quark offers the largest portfolio of adventure options in the polar regions. Guests can try alpine kayaking, camping, heli-hiking, an ice-sheet experience, or mountain-biking for the ultimate Arctic wilderness journey.

The company's new 'Canada High Arctic Express' program offers the opportunity to see the famous Northwest Passage in only nine days.

Starting from Resolute in the heart of the Canadian Arctic, guests will fully immerse themselves in the region and enjoy the scenery from on high with included heli-flightseeing.

Longer Canadian Arctic itineraries are also available, enabling guests to become true explorers; visiting deeper into the Franklin Passage and even following the ice all the way up to the rarely visited Axel Heiberg Island.

On these expeditions, guests may encounter the magnificent wildlife that

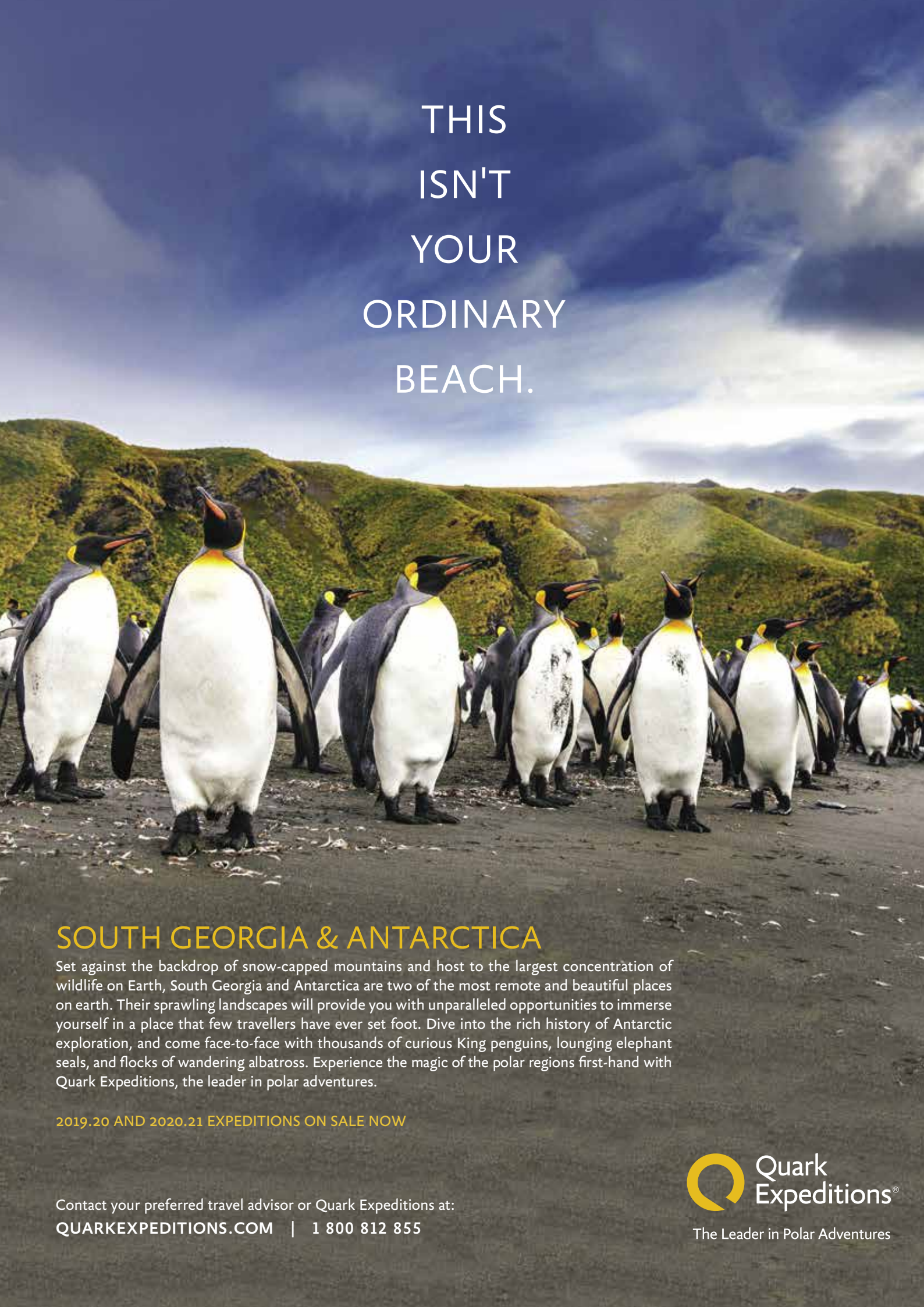
makes its home in this forbidding region: sea mammals, polar bears, muskox and possibly even the elusive arctic wolf.

From soaring cliffs to mummified forests, spectacular glacial formations to alpine vistas, expansive waterways to sheltered shores, Canada's Remote Arctic provides the definitive experience of a mysterious, magical region few ever get to see.

A popular feature of Quark's 2020 season also returns next year, inviting guests to join a true expedition in the High Russian Arctic.

One of the last regions on Earth to be discovered, the High Russian Arctic is a place of mystery, beauty and wonder. From the glaciers of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land to the stark, secluded islands of the icy Kara Sea, the remarkable features of this isolated wilderness will leave visitors awed and inspired.

■ quarkexpeditions.com



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The Leader in Polar Adventures



LIVING OFF THE WALL

The luxury Wakatobi Resort provides ample opportunities for those looking for an action-packed holiday.

WALL DIVING is as close as most humans can get to space flight.

You drift weightless on the cliff-faced edge of a dark abyss, suspended in silence and sustained by a mechanical life support system.

And wall dives become even more spectacular when made in clear, sunlit waters, which reveal the full size and scope of the underwater rampart.

Descending the face of a towering underwater wall washed by bright tropical waters is just one of the aquatic adventures that attract divers to Wakatobi Resort.

The pristine reefs that surround the resort lie at the world epicentre of coral reef biodiversity.

An unrivalled wealth of marine life keeps underwater photographers and critter spotters busy with thousands of unique finds, while dramatic seamounts rise from the depths to thrill underwater explorers.

The same waters that bring adventurous divers from around the world are equally kind to novices and snorkellers.

This universal appeal is a result of reef profiles that begin on coral-covered ledges that rise to less than a metre from the surface, then drop to depths below 100 metres.

Whether diving deeper or staying in the bright shallows, there's never a shortage of unique and intriguing subjects to discover.

Scuba and snorkelling activities at Wakatobi are supported by a full-service dive centre that provides a full range of equipment, professional instruction, concierge-level assistance with gear and expert in-water guide services.

A fleet of custom-built boats make daily trips to more than 40 sites within a private marine preserve. This preserve, which was established by Wakatobi's founder, is funded by a portion of guest revenue, which is in turn shared with local communities.

Wakatobi is both a world-class diving outpost and an away-from-it-all indulgent tropical escape.

Set on a small island in Indonesia's Banda Sea, guests relax in bungalows and villas tucked into a beachfront palm grove. Each of these private residences is hand-crafted by local craftsmen using sustainable natural materials, with elements such as rich woodwork and regional decors, along with a range of modern comforts and amenities.

Wakatobi is known for world-class personal service and gourmet-level dining. Their culinary team delivers chef-prepared menus that showcase both regional and

international favourites, along with special requests and diets.

The resort also offers additional water sports and land activities, including special services such as private boat excursions, romantic beachside dining and in-room massages.

Despite its remote location, Wakatobi is easy to reach via private guest flights that bring travellers from Bali's airport to the resort's own airstrip in two-and-a-half hours.

When arriving in Bali, guests are met by Wakatobi's concierge team, who take care of all details of arrival and can assist with Bali layovers.

Wakatobi also operates a 35-metre dive yacht, the *Pelagian*, which makes week-long cruises into a wider area of the Wakatobi Regency.

Carrying a maximum of just 10 guests, *Pelagian* delivers the same high levels of personal service and fine dining as the resort. The yacht's itinerary allows for up to four dives a day on sites ranging from dramatic seamounts to intriguing macro dives in hidden bays.

For all these reasons and more, Wakatobi is the perfect setting for an adventurous escape that blends natural beauty, attentive service and nourishment for both body and soul.

For more information: contact Linda Cash, Guest Experience Representative. Email: linda@wakatobi.com

■ wakatobi.com



An experience without equal

At Wakatobi, we take great pride in providing the ultimate in exclusive and personalised service. Our dive staff and private guides ensure your in-water experiences are perfectly matched to your abilities and interests. While at the resort, or on board our luxury dive yacht Pelagian, you need only ask and we will gladly provide any service or facility within our power. For all these reasons and more, Wakatobi takes top honors among discerning divers and snorkellers.

"Simply put you can't have a better experience! Everything is about service and maximizing your diving and snorkelling. The dives were amazing, and all the staff are first class. At Wakatobi they will accommodate any request, but you hardly need to make any since they have thought of essentially everything."

Dr. Jim and Laurie Benjamin



www.wakatobi.com



Iguazu Falls

Turning the puma rumour into fact

ADVENTURE WORLD (AWT) Travel has unveiled its 2020 *South America* brochure, incorporating Mexico, Central America and Antarctica.

The collection of itineraries also expands upon its existing portfolio with an increased focus on unique wildlife, cultural and eco-conscious experiences.

The continent offers a wide array of wildlife observational experiences, but the ultimate on many travellers wish list is to view the puma.

New for 2020, AWT has developed a five-day 'Puma Encounter in Patagonia' that offers daily excursions run by

knowledgeable local guides teamed up with experienced trackers, who together provide travellers the best chance to spot these elusive creatures.

"We have carefully selected our puma tracking and wildlife spotting partners in Torres del Paine in order to ensure that we are doing the best we can to protect the wildlife whilst enabling people to encounter it," said Neil Rodgers, Managing Director of Adventure World Travel.

With Patagonia increasing in popularity, the company has significantly expanded

its offering in both Chile and Argentina for travellers wishing to explore in-depth and beyond the traditional itineraries in Torres del Paine.

Located in Argentinian Patagonia, El Chalten is known as the 'National Capital of Trekking' and offers the perfect base for explorers with its pristine and protected natural environment.

Adventure World Travel offers a range of boutique eco-lodges in the region with hiking trail itineraries suitable for all fitness levels.

■ adventureworld.com.au

Benin



The hot five places to explore

EXPLORE HAVE unveiled their top five adventure destinations for 2020, reflecting a shift in the way Australians are travelling.

The company has noticed an increased demand for undiscovered destinations, as well as travellers seeking life enriching experiences. The five 'hot' countries are Benin, Lebanon, Albania, Japan and Botswana.

Bookings for Explore's 'Benin and Togo Voodoo Discovery' trip rose 110 per cent year-on-year in 2019, with bookings for 2020 already 90 per cent ahead of those for last year.

Since travel restrictions were lifted, Explore's 'Highlights of Lebanon' trip sold out in 2019, with 60 per cent of 2020 departures fully booked.

Highlights include the impressive Roman ruins at Baalbek, a 1,000-year-old cedar forest and a 12th century castle at Byblos.

Dubbed 'the new Croatia', Albania is fast becoming one of Eastern Europe's travel hotspots, growing on average 20 per cent over the last four years. Explore's trip visits Lake Ohrid, Llogara National Park and Butrint, one of the most impressive archaeological sites in the Balkans.

Japan has been growing in popularity, thanks in part to last year's Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Summer Olympics.

Explore's 'Simply Japan' itinerary is one of their most popular, taking customers on a journey through the country from Tokyo to Hiroshima. Guests will stay overnight in a Buddhist temple, attend the morning fire service at Fudo-do Temple and try green tea popcorn at Nishiki Food Market.

Following in the wake of last year's *Lion King* remake, interest in wildlife safari trips has increased for 2020. Travellers are keen to see wildlife and one of the most popular destinations is Botswana, which grew 30 per cent for Explore in 2019.

■ exploreworldwide.com.au

2021
PAUL GAUGUIN CRUISES
TAHITI
FRENCH POLYNESIA
FIJI
SOUTH PACIFIC



South Sea mix of old and new

PAUL GAUGUIN Cruises has announced its 2021 voyages, featuring a number of popular favourites along with some new sailings.

A new 11-night 'Tuamotus & Society Islands' itinerary features two visits to Paul Gauguin Cruises' renowned private island Motu Mahana, where guests can enjoy a day of water sports, Polynesian activities, a barbecue feast and cocktails from full and floating bars.

Voyages depart Papeete on January 23, 2021, and December 4, 2021, and sail to Huahine, Taha'a (Motu Mahana), Bora Bora, Rangiroa, Fakarava, Taha'a (Motu Mahana), Moorea and Papeete.

In 2021, the *Paul Gauguin* returns to Fiji on two voyages that also feature Tonga, the Cook Islands and the Society Islands.

The 13-night voyage departs Papeete, Tahiti, on May 22, 2021, and visits Moorea, Taha'a (Motu Mahana), Bora Bora, Aitutaki, Vava'u, Savusavu, Suva, Beqa Island and Lautoka.

The 12-night reverse itinerary departs June 5, 2021, and calls at the same ports except Beqa Island, Fiji.

The *Gauguin* will also be showcasing its most sought-after itineraries: the seven-night 'Tahiti & the Society Islands'; the seven-night 'Society Islands & Tahiti Iti'; the 10-night 'Society Islands & Tuamotus'; the 11-night 'Cook Islands & Society Islands'; and the 14-night 'Marquesas, Tuamotus & Society Islands'.

■ wiltrans.com.au

GET SET FOR ANOTHER DOSE OF HAPPINESS

TOURISM FIJI has launched the next phase of its Bulanaires campaign, following its successful launch last year to mark the International Day of Happiness.

The campaign was created to acknowledge richness in a different way; not through wealth, but through happiness.

Aligned with Tourism Fiji's strapline "where happiness finds you", the initiative focuses on what sets the country apart from other destinations; its people and their Bula spirit.

The inaugural Bulanaires list featured a selection of local and international personalities who embody the Bula spirit and are rich in happiness. Australian Bulanaires included youth advocate, Kate Fitzsimons, and self-proclaimed "happiest man in the world", holocaust survivor, Eddie Jaku.

The campaign generated 39 million engagements across international markets, demonstrating the effectiveness of its unique messaging.

This year, Tourism Fiji is building upon this success by expanding the program across its tourism sector to find more Bulanaires and

develop more content for the destination that will inspire more people to visit.

"We believe our Bulanaires program provides a unique, ownable position for Fiji that represents the true character of the destination," said Matthew Stoeckel, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Fiji.

"Importantly, it profiles the incredible warm hospitality of our tourism industry which makes us such an appealing destination to visit.

"We are confident that the next phase of the campaign will continue to go a long way in attracting more people to come and visit Fiji to experience the place where happiness finds you for themselves."

For the next phase of this program, the organisation has extended an invitation to Fiji's tourism operators to nominate a member of their team to be Bulanaires and participate directly in the campaign.

The selected Bulanaires will then work with Tourism Fiji to help share the 'Bula Spirit' with the world and reinforce the country's appeal.

■ fiji.travel/bulanaires

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- Locavore Gourmet Dinner
- Norfolk Language Class
- The World of Norfolk Exhibit
- Bounty Pass

*Terms & Conditions: Prices are per person, twin share, inclusive of pre-payable taxes and subject to availability at time of booking for new bookings only. All prices are subject to change at any time without notice. Valid for sales until 31 March. Check our website for travel dates. Blackout dates & seasonal surcharges do apply during peak periods as availability becomes limited. All prices are subject to change at any time without notice. Conditions, amendment and cancellation fees apply. Free nights & discounts are already included in costs. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. AIN 61 087 521 105.



Kicking goals in the Kimberley

Wilderness Lodge redevelopments, fly free offers, a special Mermaid Boab Tree milestone and new direct flights. Here, APT reveal why 2020 is sure to be 'the Year of the Kimberley'.

Fly Free to the Kimberley

Guests who book selected Kimberley Wilderness Adventures departing in 2020 can fly free, including air taxes of up to \$200 per person. Travellers will also receive a pre- or post-tour night stay at the Cable Beach Club or Kununurra Country Club Resort.

Leaders in Indigenous Tourism

Last year, APT signed two new leases at the Bell Gorge and Mitchell Fall Wilderness Lodges that are on Indigenous owned land. The 20-year leases are the longest of their kind in the region, securing the future of APT's lodges.

The agreement benefits both the Indigenous communities and APT guests who are lucky enough to travel to this unique region. This is a testament to the people involved and the leadership that is demonstrated by the company in working with remote outback communities.

Mermaid Boab Tree Bicentenary Celebrations

This year marks 200 years since the carpenter aboard Philip Parker King's *HMC Mermaid* carved the ship's name into the bark of a boab tree.

Today, it is one of the Kimberley Coast's most important historical symbols and is one of many highlights on APT's 10-day 'Grand Kimberley Coast' cruise.



*Mermaid Boab Tree
Top: Sunrise at Lake Argyle Resort*

"We are so excited to be celebrating 200 years of this iconic Kimberley landmark and hope you can join us in 2020 to see the Mermaid Boab Tree for yourself," said Angus Tandy, Head of APT Kimberley & Outback Wilderness Adventures.

Direct Flights to Kununurra

Virgin Australia will operate regular scheduled flights between Melbourne and Kununurra for the first time in 2020.

These flights will depart three times a week and have been designed to fit in with the departure schedule of APT's new 'Grand Kimberley Coast' cruise itinerary between Broome and Wyndham.

Kununurra: Gateway to the East Kimberley

As the gateway to many of the region's wonders including the Bungle Bungle Range and El Questro, Kununurra is the perfect base to start or end an APT Kimberley cruise.

The company's range of Short Breaks provides the perfect pre- or post-extension to an expedition cruise along the Kimberley Coast.

They include a two-night stay at Lake Argyle Resort with its impressive infinity pool, an in-depth discovery of Kununurra and the Ord River area, and a luxurious stay at the Homestead within El Questro.

Bell Gorge Wilderness Lodge Upgrade

With a major redevelopment underway for 2020, APT's exclusive Bell Gorge Wilderness Lodge is raising the bar for accommodation in the Kimberley.

Located just off the Gibb River Road, the lodge will feature a new open-air dining area, lounge and bar. New tented cabins are another exciting addition, complete with enhanced front decks, interior-designed en suites and a new layout overlooking the King Leopold Ranges.

The project is due for completion in time for the first tour departure at the end of April and will be the most luxurious of its kind in the Kimberley.

■ aptouring.com.au/discover/kimberley-2020



LUXURY TRAVEL

A WORLD OF WAYS TO LIVE FULLY.

Whether it's unpacking once and joining in on the river ship fun, getting up close to unique wildlife on adventures in nature, venturing to remote parts of the world during journeys of discovery or your choice of a bike ride or cocktails on another perfect day, there's a world of ways to Live Fully with APT.

Live Fully Campaign Deals end 15 March 2020

Marketing Toolkit

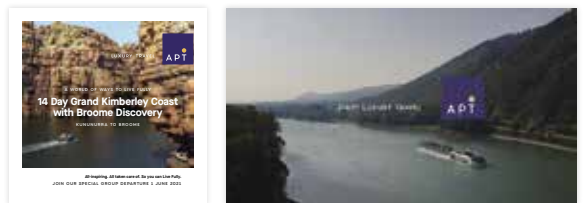
Catalogue

This has a summary of some of our best APT Live Fully deals!



Social Media

Use these Facebook tiles and videos with suggested posts on your social media



Flyer

Add your call to action to this double-sided flyer and print



Posters

Download and print the new Live Fully posters



REGISTER WITH ATG CONNECT HERE TO DOWNLOAD ASSETS



After and before. The owners have vowed to rebuild Southern Ocean Lodge



WE WILL BE BACK

THE OWNERS of a popular luxury lodge have vowed to rebuild the property after it was destroyed in the bushfires that swept Kangaroo Island in South Australia.

Many tourism businesses on the island have been affected after the fires tore through more than 200,000 hectares.

James and Hayley Baillie said they were extremely grateful to the South Australia Country Fire Service for trying to protect both lives and landscape.

"While it's currently too early to estimate a date for the re-opening, we'd like to re-assure everyone that the recreation of Southern Ocean Lodge is our next focus,"

the couple said in a statement.

Some of the major tourist attractions on the island remain open and the Baillie's added that it was vital that prospective visitors didn't change their plans.

"Kangaroo Island is still very much open for business and with around 250,000 hectares in the east unaffected by the fires, now is the time more than ever that the KI community needs support from visitors from Australia and overseas.

"Your generous, ongoing support for Australian tourism is vital for the industry's future and for it to best recover from these challenging times."

* BLUE MOUNTAINS Tourism (BMT), together with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service are encouraging tourists to return to the region.

"We have incredible experiences on offer to cater for everyone, and many local businesses who really need your support right now, so please make a day trip or take along weekend and head back to the Blue Mountains where you will be welcomed with open arms," said Jason Cronshaw, President of BMT.

■ southernoceanlodge.com.au
visitbluemountains.com.au

CALL TO SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBOURS



AUSTRALIANS HAVE been urged to support their regional neighbours this year following the devastating bushfires and ongoing drought.

That was the message from Graham Perry, Managing Director of BWH Hotel Group, which incorporates Best Western Hotels & Resorts, Sure Stay and World Hotels. The group has a strong regional presence within its portfolio of 100 hotels across Australia.

"If there were ever a year when we should be making the effort to holiday at home, this is it," said Perry.

"Tourism plays a critical role in assisting a town's economy recovery following natural disasters.

"Travelling to affected areas, but only once the danger has passed, provides much needed moral support and income into local businesses and assists with the rebuilding efforts."

Mr Perry said group properties in areas such as Coffs Harbour and Batemans Bay in New South Wales had been severely impacted.

"The value of return visitation to these regions cannot be underestimated. What better way to donate your much-needed funds to regional Australia than to visit.

"Not only will you be donating your funds, but you will be helping rebuild the morale of the region you visit whilst having a world class tourism experience along the way. Now that's what I call a win, win, win."



Enjoy some Scarborough fare

JUST 20 minutes from the Perth CBD, Scarborough Beach is a vibrant and idyllic destination that epitomises Western Australia's famous beach culture.

The vast expanse of white sandy beaches and crystal clear water are just the beginning as the coast can also be explored by bike or foot, thanks to easily accessible pathways.

Visitors can relax on Sunset Hill, indulge in beach activities, view art installations and enjoy spectacular views of the Indian Ocean

from one of Scarborough's many cafes and restaurants.

Adding to its must visit destination status, it now features pedestrian promenades, a huge children's playground, a variety of skate bowls for all ages and levels of ability, climbing wall and half-court basketball area.

Scarborough is home to Western Australia's only beachside pool, which is geothermally heated so it can be enjoyed all year round.

The lap pool is a perfect 27 degrees and there is also a separate warmer leisure pool ideal for children and relaxing.

Whether you spend a day or a week, a range of accommodation is available from budget backpacker rooms, to world-class hotels with breathtaking ocean views.

There are always lots of exciting events happening in the area – there truly is something for everyone at Scarborough!

■ stirling.wa.gov.au/events

100%
SUMMER
 100%
**SUNSET
 COAST**

Just a short drive from Perth City, the Sunset Coast's buzzing outdoor culture includes beach front esplanades and marinas with alfresco cafes and restaurants, extensive walking and cycling trails with stunning ocean views and plenty of adventure sports on offer.

Spectacular sunsets over the Indian Ocean await you!

Plan your trip to Perth's Sunset Coast today, visit experienceperth.com/destination/sunset-coast

DESTINATION
Perth



Muddler's Club

SIX OF THE MICHELIN BEST

THE 2020 *Michelin Guide* has proven to be a bumper edition for Irish gastronomy.

Ireland and Northern Ireland racked up a combined total of six new entries into the must-read guide.

The new additions include the elegant Aimsir in County Kildare, which completed the rare feat of entering the fine-dining bible with two Michelin stars on its debut, less than five months after opening.

The Greenhouse in Dublin is elevated from one star to two in the 2020 guide, while the much lauded Muddler's Club in Belfast secures a star for the first time.

Also gaining a star for 2020 are Variety Jones in Dublin, Bastion in Kinsale, County Cork, and The Oak Room at Adare Manor in County Limerick.

With no Irish restaurants losing their stars, eateries that continue to hold Michelin stars from previous years include the two-star Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud and the one-starred Chapter One and L'Ecrivain, both in Dublin, and Deanes EIPIC and OX, both in Belfast.

Around the island, further one-star establishments include Aniar and Loam in Galway city, Campagne in Kilkenny and Lady Helen at Mount Juliet Hotel in Thomastown, County Kilkenny.

Liath, in the seaside town of Blackrock, County Dublin retains the star that Chef Damien Grey had at Heron & Grey.

Wild Honey Inn in Lisdoonvarna, County Clare, House Restaurant at the Cliff House Hotel in County Waterford, Ichigo Ichie in Cork city and two West Cork restaurants – Mews in Baltimore and Chestnut in nearby Ballydehob – complete the list of one-star eateries on the island of Ireland.

In addition to the Michelin stars, a total of 26 restaurants across the country retained or were awarded the coveted Bib Gourmand status in the 2020 Michelin Guide.

Among five new eateries gaining the Bib

Gourmand recognition for exceptionally good food at moderate prices are Balloo House in Killinchy, County Down, Land to Sea in Dingle, County Kerry, and Thyme in Athlone, County Westmeath.

The bumper crop of eateries welcomed into the Michelin family follows the success of the countrywide 'Taste the Island' celebration of food and drink.

More than 500 food and drink-related experiences were featured in the eight-week showcase late last year, including food festivals, craft beer, whiskey trails, wild food foraging and cookery classes.

■ ireland.com

TOURISM IRELAND

has unveiled a new online film showcasing the local scenery and encouraging visitors to explore it on foot.

Entitled 'Walking around the island of Ireland', the video shows how everyone can get outdoors and active, with walks, trails and hikes to suit every ability.

The message is that walking in Ireland lets visitors take in the sights, sounds and landscapes as nature intended: at their own pace.

They can take their pick from Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, national parks, serene beach walks and coastal trails or interesting historical sites.

Or they can meet new friends on one of the island of Ireland's walking festivals, held throughout the year.



Taxi, sir? Below: Liverpool is home to The Beatles, Old Trafford to Manchester United. Pictures courtesy VisitBritain

GET BACK IN BLACK

Want a unique way to see more of Britain? Black cab tours provide a fresh perspective on the nation's cities, monuments and history, from sites that inspired The Beatles to the home of The Queen.

BEATLES TAXI TOURS

Explore the birthplace of The Beatles from the luxury of a themed black cab with Fab 4 Tours or Mad Day Out Beatles Taxi Tours.

Travel around Liverpool on a bespoke tour lasting several hours or a full day, offering everything from a quick introduction to the band to a more intimate journey into their formative years.

See the homes where John, Paul, George and Ringo grew up, the schools where they honed their musical knowledge and the sites that inspired their classic songs, with knowledgeable drivers who know everything about the band.

FOOTBALL TAXI TOURS

Clamber into John Consterdine's black cab for a bespoke trip through the history of Manchester's top football clubs.

Venture back to Newton Heath where United were formed, explore the Busby Babes housing estate, bearing streets named after the players who tragically lost their lives in the Munich air disaster in 1958, and see the clubs modern home, the imposing Old Trafford.

You'll also have the chance to see major sights linked to rival club Manchester City, including the Etihad Stadium.

MINI COOPER AND HERITAGE BLACK CAB TOURS

Discover London from a new perspective

from the back seat of a British Mini, accompanied by a groovy retro soundtrack.

Run by smallcarBIGCITY, the tours offer tales of the royal family and a local insight into world-renowned London attractions.

Alternatively, take a Black Cab Heritage Tour to explore the city's streets with charismatic cabbies who reveal the history of local landmarks.

Are you a fan of Harry Potter or *Downton Abbey*? Discover the London filming locations used in the hit movies, from Gringotts to Grantham House!



WINDSOR TAXI TOUR

Find out more about the world's oldest inhabited castle, home to The Queen, and delve into 900 years of history at the castle.

Visit Runnymede where King John signed the Magna Carta or embrace the life of King Henry VIII at Hampton Court Palace.

Expert guide Andrew Tapaszto also runs tours to destinations including Stonehenge, Bath, Brighton and Cliveden for a unique and wide-ranging glimpse into England's past.

BLUE BADGE TAXI TOUR

From quaint Cotswold villages to historical monuments including Leeds Castle and Hever Castle, guide Bryan Gorin tailors every tour to suit the interests and passions of the visitor, sharing unique insights and stories about historical buildings and locations throughout.

With full and half day tours of London available too, guests can discover the city's royal parks and palaces, its galleries, theatres and cultural hubs.

SCOTLAND TAXI TOUR

With tailored tours to everything from castles and cathedrals to battlefields, stately homes and other attractions across the Black Isle peninsula, visitors can explore the highlights of Scotland from the comfort of four wheels.

Embark on a dedicated whisky tour to learn about the origins of Scotland's renowned drink, with visits to various distilleries to sample a dram or two, or putt your way around the region's famous courses on an extensive golf tour.

■ visitbritain.com



Beds with the best view in river cruising

WHO SAYS dreaming only happens with your eyes closed? Avalon Waterways invite guests to live the dream, with the widest stateroom views and the space to soak it up from their window-facing bed. Avalon's fleet of Suite Ships® proudly present their unique Open-Air BalconySM – cruising's only bed with a view. 30% larger than the industry standard stateroom, their wall-to-wall floor-to-ceiling windows open wider than any other.

Step outside of the luxurious suites and you can expect all of this on an Avalon Waterways river cruise.

From View to Table

From breakfast to elegant dinners, Avalon frees taste buds from the ordinary.

Using only the freshest local ingredients, their talented chefs prepare mouth-watering recipes from the passing regions and present them in a variety of inspiring settings.

The FlexDining approach to onboard dining dispenses with strict seating times and limited restaurant options. Guests can choose the onboard dining venue that suits their mood – from a breezy al fresco lunch at the Sky Grill to an elegant four-course dinner in the glass-walled dining room.

Fuel your adventures with Avalon Fresh

Who says healthy can't be inspiring? On an Avalon Waterways river cruise, guests can enjoy an indulgent holiday without drifting from their healthy habits.

With onboard Avalon Fresh options, guests have the choice to eat healthy at every meal. These exclusive meals have been created in collaboration with Austrian chefs



Leo and Karl Wrenkh, leaders in the healthy dining movement.

Whether guests are looking for an energising juice for breakfast, an artfully crafted salad for lunch or a high-protein plate for dinner, Avalon Fresh allows them to fuel their ventures (and nutritional values) both day and night!

Experience your cruise, your way

With Avalon Choice, guests can cruise their way with included excursions and activities designed for a wide variety of experiences both onboard and on shore.

Guests can choose from classic guided sightseeing with an expert local guide, participate in authentic local cultures and traditions or explore local destinations under their own steam with active excursions that immerse them in their surroundings. Every day is an adventure and that adventure is up to them!

A Host of Adventures

Watching centuries of history slowly pass by is an adventure within itself, but what if elevating the heart rate a few extra beats is more their speed?

Whether they're looking for an optional kayak excursion or a complimentary yoga class on the Sky Deck, the Avalon Adventure Host can make it happen.

In addition to included active excursions, the Adventure Host holds the gear, maps and guidance for optional and free-time pursuits both onboard the ship and off.

Guests can visit the Adventure Centre where they can take a bike for a scenic ride through town, grab a pair of Nordic walking sticks and hike to a hillside vineyard or castle, or join a jog or active walk through the great cities and great outdoors.

■ Visit avalonwaterways.com.au to view the exciting range of cruises on offer.

HERE COMES THE SUN



SUN ISLAND Tours has released a new standalone *Spain, Portugal with Morocco Extensions* brochure for 2020.

Produced in response to a massive demand for Iberian product, the brochure features a range of new touring experiences.

“We have chosen to expand our options in Spain – offering new coach tour experiences as well as packages for more independent travellers,” said John Polyviou, General Manager, Sun Island Tours.

“For the first time we are offering the Camino de Santiago, one of the most renowned pilgrimage walks, as a seven-day or

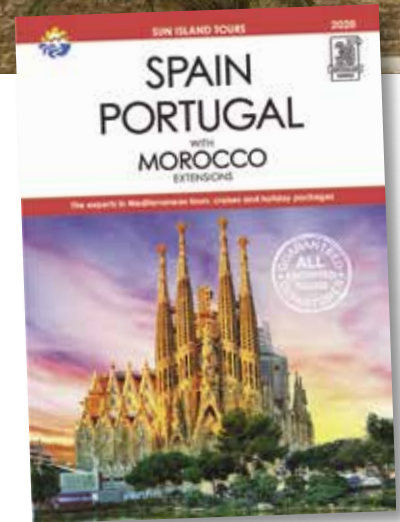
16-day accommodation package.”

The new brochure also introduces more tours featuring rail components—given it is a more efficient way to traverse some of Spain’s considerable distances between cities and regions, while providing excellent value.

The ever-popular combination tours of Spain, Portugal and Morocco are back, giving clients more opportunities to experience both the best of the Iberian Peninsula, along with a taste of the exotic in Morocco.

Early bird savings of up to five per cent on select tours can be found throughout the new brochure.

■ sunislandtours.com.au



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Myconian villas

THE MAGIC OF MYKONOS

Here, the Myconian Collection reveals why the popular Greek island should be on everyone's holiday bucket list for 2020.

Getting there is easy

Thanks to new direct flights from Sydney to Mykonos (via Doha) with Qatar Airways, Australian travellers can now start their Greek getaway in record time.

Trade the Australian winter for a Greek summer between June and August, or visit during May or September to 'live like a local' and avoid the crowds.

Food, glorious (Greek) food

The farm-to-table philosophy is alive and well in Mykonos and so food is a serious business at the Myconian Collection Hotels & Resorts.

Hotel chefs are committed to encouraging guests to experience authentic Mykonos through its cuisine, including hand-reared lamb and pork, locally-grown herbs and vegetables, and the island's best octopus.

Heaps of history

Offering a fascinating contrast to Mykonos' cosmopolitan vibe, the nearby island of Delos – feted as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site – was once at the heart of ancient Greek life as a hub for religious pilgrims, trade and multiculturalism.

Experience laidback luxury

Having evolved from its 'party-island' past, Mykonos today attracts couples, families and groups of friends drawn by its beaches, crystal clear waters, sunsets, hospitality, dining and boutique hotels.

Join the jet-set

Live like the rich and famous on Mykonos' south coast, home to a chic, cosmopolitan crowd, luxury yachts galore, fabulous five-star dining and people watching on the famous beaches of Psarou and Scorpios.

Stay at the Myconian Ambassador Relais & Châteaux for panoramic views and easy access to the best-known beaches.

Get lost in the laneways

Designed to be chaotic in order to confuse pillaging pirates, the labyrinth-like cobbled streets of Mykonos Town are just made for getting lost.

It's easy to lose a day or two meandering through boutiques, discovering tiny churches, lingering at local cafes, dining at traditional tavernas, exploring Little Venice and watching the fishing boats come and go at Alefkandra harbour.

Boutique hotels for those who like to be closer to the action include: Myconian Kyma, a member of Design Hotels; Myconian Naia Luxury Suites, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, LXV Collection and the Myconian Korali Relais & Châteaux.

Feel the hospitality

Authentic Greek hospitality is at the heart of the Myconian Collection, where guests are often personally welcomed by members of the founding Daktylides family in a tradition which began with the family's first hotel back in 1979.

Staff at the Myconian Collection's nine boutique properties provide warm, discreet, attentive service and take the time to discover your preferences and personal experiences.

Sensational sunsets

It is little wonder guests flock to the water's edge to experience the island's renowned sunsets and the Myconian Avaton enjoys a prime position.

The hotel's two-tier infinity pool lights up when the sun goes down, creating an alluring ambience for sharing post-sunset cocktails and canapes in serious style.

Serious specials

Book a Mykonos getaway to stay between May and October to enjoy a complimentary buffet breakfast, one complimentary Thalassotherapy spa treatment per person per stay, complimentary shared transfers and free Wi-Fi.

■ myconiancollection.com



IS YOUR CLIENT A VIKING CLIENT?

At Viking, we believe travel is more than just a holiday — it should be a doorway to cultural insight and personal enrichment.

We could tell you about all of the things you will find on board a Viking cruise, but we think that it's what you *won't* find that truly sets us apart from other cruise lines...

- ⊗ No kids
- ⊗ No art auctions or professional photographers
- ⊗ No extra costs for alternative dining options
- ⊗ No casinos
- ⊗ No charges for specialty coffees, teas or bottled water
- ⊗ No extra port charges, onboard tipping or gratuities
- ⊗ No charge for wine or beer with lunch and dinner
- ⊗ No charge for Wi-Fi
- ⊗ No formal nights or butlers
- ⊗ No inside staterooms

Viking isn't for everyone — and that's precisely the point. But those who do choose to travel with us keep coming back, time and time again.

WE LOOK AFTER YOUR CLIENTS, AND WE LOOK AFTER YOU TOO

Viking has no NCFs, meaning we pay commission on all parts of your cruise booking.





PERFECTING EXPEDITION VOYAGES

First, we invented modern river cruising.

Next, we redefined ocean cruising.

Now, we are breaking the boundaries
of expedition cruising.



FINSE TERRACE



VIKING NORDIC BALCONY



EXPLORERS' LOUNGE

INTRODUCING VIKING EXPEDITIONS —
JOURNEYS ACROSS THE ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC.
2022 INAUGURAL SEASON ON SALE NOW.