

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Traveltalk

AVELTALKMAG.COM.AU SPECIAL EDITION - AUGUST 2020

Competition
Win a luxury
European
river cruise!

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

We're back on
the road again

REVEALED

What Aussie
travellers
really want

We're all in this

Traveltalk
TOGETHER

PLUS: Your chance to win the 'must-have' travel accessory!

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COVER IMAGE:

A desert camel ride in Abu Dhabi. Cover picture and here both courtesy Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi.

Scratching the old travel itch

THERE'S USUALLY a scene in every prison movie where someone is released and we get to see them enjoy their first moments of freedom.

As the steel doors slam shut, they savour the fresh air and sunlight...then gaze off into the distance, wondering what the future might hold.

Enjoying your first tentative travel experience since the world turned upside down thanks to corona virus is not dissimilar...though thankfully without the need to share a cell with 'Jimmy the Knife'.

After five months of lockdown and isolation, most Aussies are itching to travel. We all realise that domestic is going to be the only flavour on offer for a while, but even that will provide some light relief.

In our Domestic Travel section, *Traveltalk* editor Jon Underwood reports on his first travel experience since COVID-19 raised its ugly head (*The Lure of Leura*, P26-27).

Although just a weekend break, the trip proves extremely revealing in terms of the new procedures we'll all have to go through and the restrictions we'll all face in the future.

Elsewhere in the section we've got some great ideas for those still thinking about a return to travel. These include a new operator running tours showcasing the Indigenous heritage and marine beauty of one of Australia's most popular destinations.

PRIZES GALORE

Our magazine is renowned for its competitions and this issue is no different, offering three great prizes.

First, Riviera Travel and Cruise Traveller are offering an eight-day voyage for two aboard the new five-star river ship, *MS Geoffrey Chaucer*. For agents, AAT Kings have an incentive to win trips to either the Northern Territory, Western Australia or New Zealand.

Finally, we have five SleepKeepers to give away. What's a SleepKeeper I hear you ask? It is a unique, water-resistant travel pillow carrier that allows you to take your own pillow away on trips, something we should all think about in current circumstances.

TALKING TRAVEL

It may seem slightly incongruous to launch a new travel company in the midst of the world's greatest travel crisis.

But as David Mannix explains in our exclusive interview, he believes Arcadia Expeditions offers "never seen before" itineraries and experiences.

Talking of difficult times, Darren Rudd has stepped into the hot seat at AFTA. Not only does the new CEO take over following the controversial and much publicised departure of his predecessor, he also has to deal with the effect of COVID-19 on the travel agents of Australia. Find out how he plans to do it on P10.

We also look at how three agents are changing their business models to suit the current needs of their clients.

That's *Traveltalk*. The magazine for travel agents and everyone who loves travel.



Abu Dhabi
Corniche skyline
and beach

BIG TURNOUT ON PLATFORM

MORE THAN 1,300 agents have participated in an e-learning platform run by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi.

The Abu Dhabi Specialist Program is an online course that provides agents with relevant destination-related information through a series of five modules.

Those who registered and completed at least one module got the chance to win Westfield gift vouchers worth \$250. Additionally, all participants' names were put into a draw to win a five-star trip for two to Abu Dhabi, inclusive of flights, a five-night stay in a five-star hotel and a full program of free activities.

The major prize winner was Rachael Heelan from Ross and Turner Travel Associates in Paradise Point, Queensland.

"What a success our Abu Dhabi Specialist Program has been!" said Jennifer Gaskin, Country Manager.

"To have 1,300 people participate and learn about our amazing Emirate is fantastic."

Agents who would still like to complete the e-learning course should visit: abudhabispecialist.com



No straining with this expert training

AGENTS ARE being encouraged to learn more about selling Sri Lanka as the country prepares to open its borders.

Having had no community transmission of COVID-19 for more than two months, Sri Lanka is being considered a safe destination for travellers and opening of the border is planned from late August.

The Travel Concierge Sri Lanka is offering agents the opportunity to have one-on-one online training with local experts, with all participants going in to monthly prize draws.

"We've moved away from set webinar meetings with multiple attendees," said Laahiru Jayamanne, Executive Director.

"We found it's much better for agents to have a more personalised session where they are completely free to interact, ask as many questions as they like and focus on what is most important to them and their business."

Training covers post COVID-19 entry requirements, health and safety practices while in Sri Lanka, responsible travel (environment/community/wildlife), history, culture, highlights, destinations and general travel information such as climate and best time of year to travel.

Sessions are planned for 90mins (by either Zoom or Google Meet) with the option to extend for a 30min product update. They are being held between 12.30pm and 8.30pm (AEST) from Monday to Friday throughout August.

"This is a golden opportunity for any agent to tap in to local expertise and work out what's best for their clientele," said Mark Snoxell, Australian representative of The Travel Concierge Sri Lanka.

"Too often agents clock in to a 'default' of selling a cliché cultural triangle, when there is so much more, enabling them to create stunning tailor-made itineraries. Their clients will love them for it."

Discussions are being held with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and it is likely that this training will be officially recognised and agents will be able to claim 'Sri Lanka Agent' accreditation status.

■ To register, contact: mark@tcsrilanka.com

Win A LUXURY EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISE

YOU CAN win a luxury European river cruise for two in a joint promotion between Riviera Travel and Cruise Traveller.

The prize is an eight-day voyage for two aboard Riviera's new five-star river ship, *MS Geoffrey Chaucer*.

The winners will be sailing on October 13, 2021, on the 'Amsterdam, Cologne and the Best of Holland and Flanders' itinerary.

It will feature the canals, windmills, palaces and cultural highlights of Holland, the cobbled, medieval streetscapes of Belgium and the Gothic marvels of Cologne in Germany.

Along the way, take in the scenery from a middle deck suite with its own French balcony while enjoying

a relaxing beverage. Gourmet à la carte meals, local dishes – a 2021 innovation – afternoon teas, daily shore excursions and personal, five-star service are included.

Complimentary shore excursions include a cruise along Amsterdam's canals and guided tours of the Belgian medieval gems of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp – each boasting romantic gabled houses and narrow cobbled streets.

You'll also enjoy tours of the Dutch port city of Rotterdam and Cologne in Germany – renowned for the largest Gothic church in northern Europe, a World Heritage treasure which took six centuries to build.

In the heart of The Netherlands, passengers will sail by a row of 19

windmills which rest on the country's famous, pancake-flat marshlands.

At Arnhem, there's a choice between a visit to the renowned Airborne Museum, which recounts the ill-fated Second World War aerial assault that was depicted in the movie *A Bridge Too Far*, or a visit to the exquisite Het Loo Palace, a royal Dutch baroque palace cradled by gardens.

Passengers can also use the complimentary bikes onboard to explore Amsterdam like a local, visiting cafes and marketplaces or riding to Ann Frank's House and the Van Gogh Museum.

Named after the 14th century poet, the 169-guest ship offers a panoramic lounge, two restaurants, gym, plunge pool (heated in winter), tea and coffee-making facilities in each cabin.

Entries for the cruise competition are open until September 30 and both consumers and travel agents can enter.

■ To enter, visit: cruisetraveller.com.au

The special offer that has very few piers

FOLLOWING THE completion of its five-year transformation journey, Pier One Sydney Harbour has a special industry offer for agents.

The hotel, which overlooks Walsh Bay, has undergone a \$15 million design refurbishment of all rooms and suites.

"We are thrilled to invite travel agents and the industry to experience this design transformation of all of our rooms, as well as the iconic Pier and hatted Gantry restaurant," said Kim Mahaffy, General Manager of Pier One Sydney Harbour.

"As Sydney's most historic and pre-eminent lifestyle hotel, we provide a luxurious, yet accessible offering for guests looking for a distinctively Sydney experience right on the Harbour."

The special rate from \$175 will be available for bookings for stays before September 30 to all travel agency staff and includes complimentary early check-in and late check-out.

To take advantage of the special offer, contact Elliott Miller: elliott.miller@autographhotels.com



LOVE THIS NY WEBINAR INFO

A WEBINAR series giving travel agents in-depth and up-to-date information on New York has been launched.

Upcoming sessions will be held on August 6 and August 13, supplying agents with details to best sell the destination once international travel resumes.

Each session takes place at 3.30pm (AEST) with forthcoming topics including The Hamptons and Long Island, and Hudson Valley.

■ iloveny.com

Niagara Falls State Park

ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR AGENTS

PONANT HAS developed an online portal to support travel agents and trade partners around Australia in their sales and marketing efforts.

Training is incorporated as an important and integral part of the platform to ensure agents can access the best and latest resources to provide confidence when responding to clients' needs.

"Our PONANT Pro area is a fabulous one-stop destination resource for our trade partners, providing access to a comprehensive range of marketing

materials including social media assets, videos, brochures and our extensive image library," said Deb Corbett, PONANT Commercial Director Australasia.

"The sales team has also created our new 'PONANT 10s', a series of easy-grab informative 10-minute webinars covering such subjects as the PONANT fleet, life onboard, destinations and partnerships, with more subjects continually being added as we move forward."

Features allow agents to check live availability, make and manage bookings online, access marketing and sales tool kits, download destination assets including maps, videos, brochures and social media tiles.

Special agent rates are also available, along with special announcements, exclusive news, training such as webinars and access to the company's photo library.

"We are so excited about this new development as it provides our trade partners with quick and easy training where they can choose the webinars that suit their needs. Importantly, our partners will also create and access bookings in real time, at any time."

The facility can be accessed via: pro-au.ponant.com

HOW TO GET VIRTUALLY ALL THE ANSWERS

VIKING HAS launched a new series of Virtual Information Sessions, featuring an even broader range of topics and destinations.

Taking place each Wednesday until September 2, the suite of complimentary, interactive webinars has been tailored to suit a broad range of interest areas, complete with personal insights from experts.

"Whether your client is new to Viking or an experienced cruiser, with almost 20 different sessions to choose from, there is sure to be a topic to inspire them to start planning their future holiday," said Erin Kramer, Viking's Trade Marketing Manager.

"We were thrilled with the positive feedback we received from the trade community following our last series, including one client who went on to book a second cruise thanks to an invite extended by their travel agent, effectively doubling their business."

Each session runs for approximately 45 minutes including time for Q&A, and bonus booking offers will be available on the day. Topics in August include 'Christmas Cruising' and 'Cruising Australia and New Zealand'.

■ vikingcruises.com.au/infosessions.html

Win one of three great trips

TO THANK travel agents for their continued support, AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys have launched an incentive to win one of three fantastic trips.

Every new AAT Kings Guided Holiday or Inspiring Journeys booking between now and October 30 secures an entry into the draw. The prize destinations are the Northern Territory, Western Australia or New Zealand.

To help agents with as many chances to win as possible, the companies are offering a 10 per cent early payment discount on 2021/2022 journeys (released earlier than ever before). The discount is also combinable with a \$99 deposit offer on select departures.

"We've remained dedicated to understanding what our travellers are looking for and look forward to showcasing the diversity of Australia and New Zealand," said Jody Grossfeldt, General Manager Guided Holidays and Inspiring Journeys.

"Guests will find more personal space on board and can relax knowing that every step of the way, they are in the hands of our passionate and highly experienced Travel and Journey Directors."

BE IN THE RUNNING FOR:

'Kakadu's Ancient Secrets', a five-day discovery with Inspiring Journeys.

Explore the ancient rock art galleries of Kakadu's Ubirr and Nourlangie, indulge in a three-course dinner made with fresh local produce as you cruise Katherine Gorge, experience Mary River on a safari cruise and relax in the heart of Nitmiluk at the eco-friendly Cicada Lodge.

'Monkey Mia Dolphins & West Coast', a five-day adventure with AAT Kings.

Discover the Batavia Coast and the wildflowers in Kalbarri National Park. Be charmed by the Monkey Mia dolphins and discover Aboriginal culture and traditions at Yanchep National Park.

'Southern Spotlight', a nine-day itinerary covering the highlights of the South Island of New Zealand.

Embark on a scenic cruise in the untouched world of Milford Sound, travel on Lake Wakatipu aboard the *TSS Earnslaw* and visit Walter Peak Station to enjoy a highlight dinner.

Both brands have customised their trips according to extensive consumer research.

This showed that 59 per cent seek

cultural experiences, 46 per cent want to connect with locals, 37 per cent want a food and wine experience, 38 per cent dream of bush and nature walks and 27 per cent want to immerse themselves in museums and art galleries.

PROGRAM LAUNCH

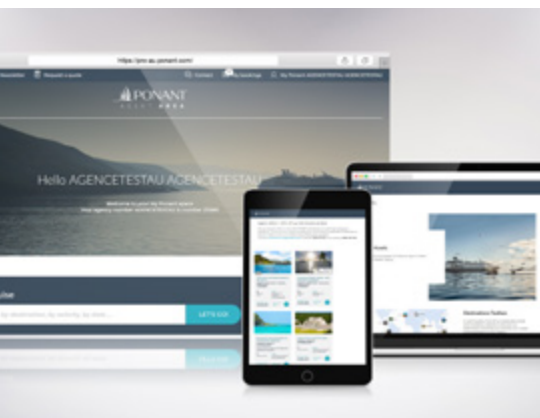
In addition to the new incentive, AAT Kings have also just launched their 2021/22 program, with significant discounts offered for early bookings.

The program includes two new itineraries, a host of exclusive experiences and stringent new wellbeing protocols.

Early bird savings give travellers the opportunity to save 10 per cent on selected First Choice Guided Holidays in Australia when booked and paid in full by November 16.

This offer is valid for travel from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022. The 10 per cent savings are combinable with applicable brochure discounts and \$99 deposit for travel departures from April 1, 2021, to October 31, 2021 (must book by September 1).

■ trade.aatkings.com



Femmes focusing on the future

Here, we find out how agents are successfully re-shaping their business despite the disruption of COVID-19.

A QUIET chat over a glass of wine has taken two agents down a new and very exciting path.

Linda Power and Julie Marchese had been offering women-only tours to their clients separately for several years before deciding to join forces in 2019.

"It was one night over a glass of wine at last year's TravelManagers Conference that we realised we had incredibly similar interests in common," said Linda, who is the TM representative for Aubin Grove in Perth.

"We had comparable ideas, values and clientele so decided to collaborate, combining our strengths to create the 'Travelling Femmes' concept."

The recent pandemic forced the duo to refocus the brand. They are now offering tailored itineraries that explore their own backyard: Western Australia's southwest region.

"A lot of women love to travel with other women – it's a great way to meet other women who may differ in age or circumstance but nonetheless have in common an open mind, a sense of adventure and an appetite for joyous experiences," said Julie, TM rep for Australind near Bunbury.

The pair are now liaising with a local

Margaret River-based operator to offer small group tours in August and September. They have also teamed up with a local day tour operator for a 'Sunset Hike, Wine & Dine Experience'.

"We have found that, like us, our clients are itching to explore their own Western Australia backyard. Under the current circumstances, it's nice to have something special to look forward to, so we've designed small group tours that give them just that," added Julie.

As small business operators themselves, the couple say they are passionate about supporting and collaborating with other small local businesses wherever possible.

"We've made some great relationships with local suppliers over the past year and will continue to support them as much as possible going forward," said Julie.

"As state borders eventually reopen and clients begin to feel more comfortable with venturing further from home, we will look to expand our tour offerings to include more amazing

Australian travel experiences, but for now, we're happy to focus on the incredible destination we have on our doorstep."

To spread the word about their tours, Julie and Linda have created their own website and are promoting Travelling Femmes through social media.

Past participants act as enthusiastic advocates, meaning that the tours tend to sell themselves by word of mouth.

"Having wondered at the outset, 'what if it's only us', we have been blown away by the demand for our tours," said Julie.

"Our September departure sold out within half an hour, so we had to create another departure in August, which also sold out in record time!"

Future events in the pipeline include a weekend cruise aboard the *Sun Princess* from Fremantle in December and a four-night Adelaide indulgence getaway planned for early in 2021. New Zealand and Vietnam are also on the girls' radar.

■ travelmanagers.com.au



Linda Power



Julie Marchese

Win YOUR VERY OWN SLEEPKEEPER!

THE USE of communal pillows will become particularly problematic in a post COVID-19 world.

That's because they are known to harbour allergens, dead skin, hair and residual saliva.

Reports about the length of time that the COVID-19 virus remains active on clothing are mixed and while deep cleaning of rooms may take place, the easiest solution will be to BYO pillow.

SLEEPKEEPER is an innovative way to bundle your own comfy pillow for your next holiday.

The SleepKeeper will give many travellers peace of mind and comfort as they move out of COVID-19.

It is a unique, water-resistant travel pillow carrier for a person's own pillow. It substantially reduces the size of a pillow and keeps it clean, compact, and very portable while on the move.

The SleepKeeper will compact a pillow to a third of its original size and easily slides onto luggage or clips to a backpack.

It fits all standard pillows including

latex and memory foam and is the perfect solution to have your own pillow anywhere. At a low retail price of \$29, it is a great affordable accessory.

As we take those first nervous steps out of lockdown, what better way to travel than to take your own pillow for comfort, hygiene and peace of mind?

You can't take your bed, but you can take your pillow!

■ For more information, visit:

■ sleepkeeper.com.au

THE SECRET IS OUT

WITH INTERNATIONAL travel temporarily ruled out, many agents are instead focusing on the experiences available within their own state borders.

Melissa Loynes, who is TravelManagers' representative for Carrum Downs in Victoria, is using the current situation as an opportunity to launch 'Secret Stays', a range of mystery weekends that match her clients with unique, immersive experiences in different regions of her home state.

"We all need something to look forward to in these crazy times," said Melissa.

"I wanted to create something special and surprising that would deliver that amazing, refreshing, recharged and inspired feeling you get when you arrive home from a great time away."

The concept behind Secret Stays is simple: Loynes' clients specify their preferred dates and approximate budget, how far they are preferred to

travel and how inclusive they would like their stay to be.

They can choose from a range of themes including beach, bush, high country, lakes & rivers, wine regions or food, or they can opt for a surprise.

Loynes then uses that information to design a unique holiday experience that is tailored to their individual choices.

"All the decision-making, researching and stress are removed from the experience. The result is a unique, immersive time away that's filled with personal touches I know my clients will enjoy."

■ travelmanagers.com.au

The man in the hot seat

Darren Rudd is the new CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents. He takes up the role during a time of unprecedented crisis and concern for the travel industry.

In his first major interview since taking the job, he reveals AFTA's role in securing an extension to the JobKeeper scheme, his hopes for the future of the industry and issues a message of hope for Australia's travel agents.

Q: Will JobKeeper 2.0 be enough to sustain the industry?

A: We are extremely thankful to government for their support. They are committed to protecting lives and livelihoods and we congratulate the Morrison Government – they have done a tremendous job.

There are many businesses and people in other countries who are not as fortunate as we are here in Australia.

AFTA has been lobbying government since as early as January and JobKeeper 2.0 was born out of the collective efforts of industry associations and stakeholder groups working together.

Treasury's review of JobKeeper Payment phase 1 found that the JobKeeper Payment met its initial objectives: to support business and job survival, preserve employment relationships and provide needed income support.

However, the review also identified that there was continued need for macro-economic support and that an



Darren Rudd, CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents

appropriately targeted extension of JobKeeper would continue to provide assistance to the most affected businesses and support recovery.

This report also found that some sectors, such as [travel and] tourism and arts and recreation, may remain distressed throughout the remainder of this year and beyond, largely due to the health restrictions that will remain

in place, including border controls.

JobKeeper will go some way in sustaining businesses however it will be up to the individual travel agency owner to make the necessary commercial arrangements to ensure their long-term survival.

AFTA is doing all that it can to support members at this difficult time.

Q: How many travel agencies have closed since the start of COVID-19?

A: AFTA has always had honest and frank conversations with members about the reality and challenges of COVID-19.

That is why we brought in insolvency and legal experts, created toolkits to assist with temporary and permanent business closure, and developed communications tools to help businesses contemplate the scenarios and understand the steps that they many need to take in managing the financial health of their business.

In fact, very early on the team had the discussion about how, and the right to time, to discuss with members the reality that unfortunately some businesses will close.

Fortunately very few businesses have closed, largely thanks to the government's various economic support packages, but we do expect there to be closures. It is inevitable.

However, there are many ATAS accredited agents who have their overheads under control, don't have

debt, have operated a proper client account and have a loyal customer base ready to travel as soon as restrictions are lifted.

These businesses will ride the wave of COVID-19 and be ready to help Australians travel again when possible.

Q: What is the overall mood of AFTA members? Is despondency drowning out hope?

A: If there is one thing that has stood out to me upon taking up the helm at AFTA, it is that this is an industry filled with passionate people.

Despite the majority of travel businesses losing 90 per cent or more of their income, they remain committed, hopeful and resilient.

In fact, even when they have little to no income, our member agents have been going above and beyond to support consumers.

They have repatriated them when borders were shutting, they were working for free to cancel bookings and spending countless hours on the phone to suppliers to negotiate for a refund on behalf of their client.

It is an extremely challenging time for all – in and out of the travel industry – and AFTA recognises that members do and will continue to need support and so as part of our commitment to supporting members through COVID-19, we have been running a series of webinars on mental wellbeing and this will continue.

We acknowledge that each member is facing unique circumstances and these vary by state and territory, and we are working with members to support them and their needs.

Q: Are you confident about the sector's future? What sort of timeline have you placed on a recovery?

A: Absolutely. COVID-19 and international travel restrictions will not last forever. People are itching to travel and when borders open we anticipate the sector will flourish.

AFTA strongly believes that ongoing collaboration between Federal, State and Territory Governments and industry bodies is key to successfully restarting tourism and the wider economy.

The government has a responsibility to protect lives and so the economy needs to re-start in a sensible way.

AFTA was represented on the



“ If there is one thing that has stood out to me upon taking up the helm at AFTA, it is that this is an industry filled with passionate people. ”

Tourism Recovery Taskforce through Director Graham “Skroo” Turner, which outlined a roadmap for recovery.

The plan identifies a number of realistic steps that government can take to unlock real and immediate benefits for travel agents and travel businesses as well as across tourism, hospitality and events. This includes the need to establish travel bubbles.

Q: So you're confident these bubbles will happen?

A: Australia is uniquely and perfectly poised to deliver travel bubbles. The Asia-Pacific zone is seen as one of two large travel bubbles that could occur, with Europe being the other.

Our Asia-Pacific bubble would, thanks to China and Japan, account for 27 per cent of global GDP.

Travel bubbles between states and countries that are already low risk is a common sense solution to re-opening our borders in a controlled and responsible way. There is a compelling economic imperative to do so.

While the easing of border restrictions in most states is good news, the reality is that until

international borders open, the travel and tourism sector as a whole will continue to struggle and ongoing tailored support is key.

ATAS accredited travel agents are experts in travel and AFTA is working hard to push this message through strategic communication processes so that travel agents are top of mind when consumers look to travel next.

Q: How will COVID-19 change the way travel agencies operate?

A: There are very few industries that can claim to be unaffected by COVID-19. The outbreak of the COVID-19 disease has posed great challenges to the worldwide economy and people's daily lives and will have far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease.

The reality is that such an external force will inevitably drive innovation and change in the travel industry, just as it will across many sectors.

Our industry has been in survival mode, so I say keep watching this space to see what creativity and innovation results from this crisis hereon.

■ afta.com.au



GREAT CATCH FOR FEMALE ANGLERS

FEMALE FISHING enthusiasts are being invited to a women's-only angling holiday in New Zealand.

The tour is a six-night/five-day fly-fishing luxury stay in the South Island. It has been organised by Sue Farley, a Luxury Travel Specialist with NZ Travel Brokers.

Sue is aware that some women don't feel very confident fishing with men. As such, this exclusive retreat has been created to enable women to fish

at their own pace and level.

The focus might be on fishing but this will also be a week of luxury and relaxation. Owen River Lodge (pictured above) holds New Zealand's highest accreditation for luxury and environmental responsibility.

The guest cottages and the main lodge building are bright, stylish and elegant, and offer views across the valley to Kahurangi National Park.

Only the freshest local produce is

used for meals and the lodge's large organic garden supplies the kitchen with produce every day. This is backed up by daily deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables grown in the Nelson region.

The retreat also offers full access to the lodge amenities, including the Jacuzzi and a complimentary one-hour pamper massage delivered by a skilled local masseuse.

The six-night tour takes place from April 8 to 14, 2021, and the all inclusive price is \$NZ5,990 (approx. \$AU5,669) per person based on twin share (single rate available).

■ For further information or bookings, e-mail Sue at: sue.farley@nztravelbrokers.co.nz

Australian tour that keeps it personal

TRAVELLERS VISITING South Australia on the first domestic itinerary offered by Bunnik Tours may notice a familiar name among their fellow guests.

Launching in September, the 11-day tour will kick off with welcome drinks at Bunnik House in Adelaide, taking guests behind the scenes of the tour company.

"It was really important for us, in creating these domestic itineraries, that we offered something that was still uniquely Bunnik so I have decided to lead them," said Dennis Bunnik, CEO.

"What could be more personalised than having an actual Bunnik on a Bunnik tour showcasing the highlights



Yalumba winery in the Barossa

of our wonderful home state?"

From Adelaide, the tour will take in some of the state's best known destinations including Kangaroo Island, the Flinders Ranges and the wine-making regions of Adelaide Hills, Clare Valley and the Barossa.

An exclusive visit to the Penfolds Magill Estate will offer a tour of the old winery and a tasting of renowned Penfolds Grange.

Group sizes are limited to no more

than 20 travellers with all sightseeing, accommodation and many meals included in the price of \$4,395.

"Since the company was founded, we have helped to make travel dreams come true offering tours to incredible overseas destinations so while our wings are clipped, we decided to use this expertise to take our guests to some wonderful Australian locations instead."

■ bunniktours.com.au



Cruising through Alaska's Inside Passage with Holland America Line

SO MUCH MORE TO EXPLORE



TRAVELMARVEL HAS expanded the range of tours available to book for its 2021 holidays to North America.

The Rocky Mountaineer train, Holland America Line cruises, Canadian lodge experiences, rail journeys and the chance to spot polar bears, beluga whales, or view the northern lights are just a few of the highlights.

Earlybird offers are available across all itineraries and include fly free and '2-for-1 Airfares', \$1,000 discount for solo travellers, premium economy airfares for \$1,495 and business class flights from \$5,295 per person.

"Travel agents have always been so supportive of our Canada & Alaska program and we're excited to once again offer the perfect combination of all the highlights with exceptional quality and value for money," said David Cox, TravelMarvel CEO.

"We can't wait to get back to travelling again and we are ready to make 2021 the best year to visit North America."

Returning due to overwhelming demand, the 17-day 'Highlights of the Rockies & Alaska Cruise' journey reveals the Canadian Rockies before a Holland America Line Cruise through Alaska's Inside Passage.

It is priced from \$7,695 per person twin share including return economy class airfare from Australia. Guests can also take advantage of an early payment discount of \$400 per person when paying in full 10 months prior to departure.

Guests will cruise for seven nights aboard Holland America Line's *Volendam* in a guaranteed ocean view stateroom and spend nine nights in premium accommodation in Canada.

Also back for 2021 is the 21-day 'Reflections of the Rockies and Alaska' cruise, which has a starting price from \$10,195 per person twin share. TravelMarvel is offering a free economy class airfare for one person when two passengers travel together on the same flights.

Key highlights include experiencing the natural wonders of Banff and Jasper national parks, such as Mt Robson, Moraine Lake and Lake Louise, and spending two nights at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise.

There is plenty of time to absorb the glacial scenery of the Icefields Parkway, stopping to explore Athabasca Glacier, before boarding the Rocky Mountaineer to travel through the Rockies to Vancouver.

On Canada's East Coast, the 20-day

'Eastern Delights' tour offers some of the best-known sights, including Toronto and Niagara Falls. In addition, visitors spend a night at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Cape Cod, which in years gone by has hosted the likes of Henry Fonda and Jimmy Stewart.

Guests can also choose to extend their holiday with a range of touring extensions. A Lazy Bear Lodge extension offers guests the opportunity to see polar bears and beluga whales.

Exclusive Great Bear Lodge is accessible only by seaplane and is home to grizzly bears and other wildlife. The northern lights and Calgary Stampede are also available for extended touring.

TravelMarvel has responded to the COVID-19 era by implementing 'Safe Travel' protocols, including an extensive range of new measures to elevate its hygiene standards.

■ travelmarvel.com.au



MAKE SAVINGS ON SCANDINAVIA

Bergen, Norway

BEYOND TRAVEL has launched its 2021 Scandinavia product with savings of up to \$1,000 per couple on offer.

Numerous selected tours are now covered by the company's "\$49 risk free deposit" and COVID-19 guarantee when booked by August 31.

New options for 2021 include the eight-night 'Intimate Norway', which is available to book daily between May 1 and September 25, 2021, and can be tailored to suit individual travel style.

The itinerary features scenic highlights from Oslo to Bergen, such as a cruise along the Sognefjord, the fjord-side village of Balestrand,

Bryggen Harbour and the old Hanseatic Quarter and discovering Bergen – the capital of the fjords.

This tailor-made private tour is now \$2,950 per person twin share (save \$900 per couple). It also includes local four-star hotel accommodation with breakfast, daily sightseeing, some local dinners and ground transportation including the Flam Railway and Fjord ferry.

Travellers can book with confidence when they view the COVID-19 Guarantee symbol on specific tours featured on the dedicated Scandinavia & Beyond website.

The deposit will be refunded should guests be unable to travel due to government restrictions such as travel bans, either at the point of origin or the destination, up to 61 days prior to the service start date, for reasons specific to COVID-19.

The 'Risk Free' deposit is also fully refundable on selected 2021 services should travellers change their minds for any reason prior to COB on August 31. Options featuring the guarantee and \$49 deposit offer include both winter and summer 2021 Scandinavian tours.

■ scandinavia-and-beyond.com.au



New survey reveals what Aussies want

39 per cent hoping to travel to, or within, New South Wales.

THE PLANE TRUTH

Although current guidelines suggest in-flight face masks should be optional, the majority of respondents (65 per cent) believe face masks should be mandatory on flights.

They also believe there should be mandatory temperature checks before boarding (73 per cent), spaced seating (68 per cent) and hand sanitiser available for all passengers (82 per cent).

A large number of respondents (63 per cent) also believe any passengers showing COVID-19 symptoms should be prevented from travelling until they return a negative test.

"Our research shows that COVID-19 remains a very real concern for Australians and travellers expect strict hygiene protocols to be adhered to," added Mr Walker.

"We would encourage airline carriers, hotels and any businesses in the travel industry to really drive home that safety messaging and to ensure guests you are doing everything you can to keep them safe and follow Government health guidelines."

(*) Survey completed before Victoria went back into lockdown

■ tolunacorporate.com

AUSSIES ARE keen to support local tourism but are demanding stricter hygiene measures on flights and would abandon travel to COVID-19 hotspots.

Those were the major findings from a recent survey of more than 1,000 Australians by technology company Toluna.

The results revealed that the majority (70 per cent) would cancel their travel plans if a second wave of COVID-19 hit Australia (*) and 56 per cent would cancel travel to a destination reporting a high number of COVID-19 cases.

Quarantine is also off-putting for travellers, with 56 per cent stating they'd cancel plans if their destination imposed a 14-day quarantine. A total of 44 per cent would cancel if they had to quarantine upon returning to their own state.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Australia's tourism industry hard, with many tourism operators, hotels and

key destinations left wondering what the next 12 months might look like," said Stephen Walker, Business Director, Toluna, Australia & New Zealand.

"Our research shows a strong appetite for domestic travel, which will hopefully help to sustain the tourism industry as well as supporting local related businesses such as restaurants and bars, while international borders remain closed."

For respondents planning to travel within Australia this year, the key motivator for most (79 per cent) was to support local tourism, while 59 per cent plan to take advantage of anticipated travel deals.

Half of the respondents surveyed had had their international travel plans cancelled due to COVID-19, so they decided to holiday within Australia instead.

Queensland was listed as the top travel destination, with 40 per cent of respondents looking to visit the Sunshine State this year, followed by

SELL BIG TO WIN BIG

BACK-ROADS TOURING has launched its 2021 program including an incentive for travel agents.

Among the new itineraries is 'A Taste of the Camino: Porto to Bilbao' which takes guests on a seven-day discovery via Santiago, exploring the Gothic architecture of Leon, Picos de Europa National Park and sampling Spanish wine along the way.

For travellers looking for rich countryside views, the eight-day 'English Country Gardens' tour offers flower shows and botanical gardens.

Other changes for 2021 include:

- * Pre-night accommodation is now included on all tours
- * Tour dates have been scheduled to allow easier multi-tour bookings. Popular combos have less than two days between tours
- * All Back-Roads Tour Leaders and drivers will undergo additional training to ensure the health and safety of customers
- * Added flexibility allows for changes to bookings (dates or tours) up to 40 days before departure with no penalties.

Agents who rebook or sell 12 passengers on a Back-Roads tour will travel for free (terms and conditions apply). For more details, contact: tradesales@backroadstouring.com.au



Porto



Madain Saleh in Saudi Arabia

Meet the new kids on the travel block

There's an exciting new player in the Australian travel industry, offering "never seen before" itineraries and experiences.

In this exclusive interview with *Traveltalk*, co-founder David Mannix explains why he's launched Arcadia Expeditions during a global pandemic and the vital role travel agents will play in the company's future.

Q: What led you to set up Arcadia Expeditions?

A: I've been in the adventure travel industry for more than 15 years now (Travel Indochina, Aurora Expeditions, Intrepid) and I felt it was time to use what I have learned to create something that has never been seen before.

Shortly after I returned to Australia from nine years living overseas running DMC's, I was lucky enough to meet and become friends with the renowned documentary filmmaker David Adams.

Every time we would catch up we kept talking about how our vastly different skill sets could be combined to create a totally new travel concept. This is where the documentary-style

storytelling idea for our expeditions was born.

We felt there was a gap at the high end of the market for people who wanted to immerse themselves in a destination and at the same time have an intellectual component to their holiday in the company of world-leading experts.

Q: What is your point of difference to other tour businesses?

A: Our expeditions are different because they are based on immersive storytelling. We want our clients to feel that when they are travelling with Arcadia, it's like they are joining the making of a documentary, but without the film crew.

We decided from the outset that, unlike other travel companies, who



David Mannix, co-founder, Arcadia Expeditions

choose a destination first and then create the itinerary, we would instead start and lead with the story.

Everything else would follow from that. Above all, we were determined to tell stories that had never been told in this type of travel format before – stories that fascinated us and that we felt needed and deserved to be told.

For example, our expedition to Turkey tells the story of the ancient poet Rumi and the mystical world of Sufism – a trip that has never been crafted before and one that offers a fresh perspective on a country that suffers from a staggering lack of imagination in most itineraries I have seen there.

Our expedition to Sudan explores the story of the Three Niles. While most people have heard of the White and Blue Niles, there was in fact a



The Omo tribes of Ethiopia

Yellow Nile that gave life to some extraordinary history and civilisations.

The site of this lost river is where we begin our expedition and along the way we have exclusive access to archaeological dig sites and local historians.

Q: You've also spent a lot of time getting the right personnel in place.

A: Of course, we need a narrator on the ground to tell that story, which is why we have taken the time to interview dozens of subject-matter experts and have eventually chosen a team of academics, authors and historians that I believe is unmatched in the industry.

We want the expedition to feel like it's a travelling dinner party, with our expert storytellers being the host, so we've kept the maximum group size down to 12 for some expeditions and 16 for others.

Importantly, our storytellers aren't passing on their wealth of knowledge through formal lectures. Rather, they will enlighten and expand the understanding of our travellers in a more informal way – through fireside chats, leading a discussion over a meal, or one-on-one over a cocktail.

Q: How important will travel agents be in getting your message out there?

A: Travel agents will be a key part of our sales strategy. Because our entire concept is new to the market, in a funny way, travellers aren't looking for us because they are unaware this type of small group travel exists.

Agents are in a far better position than us to identify and educate their clients about the Arcadia style - once agents learn more about our program they are going to know straight away which of their clients would suit an Arcadia expedition.

Furthermore, given that our expeditions are in some of the world's most far-flung places, agent assistance in helping with the complex logistics of getting to and from our start and finishing points will be vital for our clients.

We have consciously chosen not to organise client flights so that we can focus solely on our expeditions.

Q: You've launched Arcadia during a period of great uncertainty for the travel industry. Does this mean you are confident it will make a full recovery?



A historian at work in the Sudan

A: While there is no doubt this is the worst crisis the travel industry has faced in living memory, we at Arcadia do not believe this is the end of travel.

Certainly it will be a good few years until a full recovery eventuates, but that urge to discover and the innate wanderlust that Australians have will not suddenly disappear.

Perhaps we are bit idealistic, but we genuinely believe that travel plays a central role in life's journey and that once this crisis passes, travellers will be more eager than ever to get back on the road to continue this journey.

Some of the early feedback we have received from travel agents is that our type of traveller will be among those boarding the first planes once the floodgates open. We hope that is true!

Q: What are your hopes for the future of the new company?

A: Above all, I want Arcadia Expeditions to remain true to our twin founding principles of innovation and acting responsibly as a business.

There's a great quote from Rudyard Kipling I found that I put on our website: "If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten."

We want to keep telling stories, bring history and culture to life through these stories and to do so by continuing to create ground-breaking itineraries that no one else offers.

I'm a big believer that travel can serve as a force for good in the lives of travellers and in the lives of the people we meet on our expeditions.

That's why my other great hope for Arcadia is that we can make a tangible difference to the places we visit by reducing our negative environmental impacts while increasing our positive social and economic impacts.

■ arcadiaexpeditions.com



Muscat, Oman



Todd Arthur, Vice President, Asia Pacific, Agency Sales Travel Solutions, Sabre

Charity walk is no stroll in the park

HIS FEET will undoubtedly be sore but his spirits will be lifted.

James McAlloon is well on his way to raising the \$30,000 he set out to achieve with his 'Footsteps for Food' charity walk across Australia.

It was on July 1 that James, Chimu Adventure's Relationship Manager to Queensland, set off on his quest to raise money for communities in Latin America stricken by the effects of COVID-19.

By July 24, he had already covered more than 1,000 kilometres of his 4,000 kilometre pledge, adding close to \$20,000 to the appeal fund. This has been achieved through a raffle draw and general donations.

"When I decided to do undertake this walk, I thought that raising 30k would be hard. It's a tough environment to fundraise in. The worst," said James.

"But knowing full well that the communities that I once sent people to visit were now suffering incredibly because travellers had to stay home, I set my sights high.

"I can't begin to tell you what it means to know that already we have helped close to 500 families. This is the global community at its best!"

Border restrictions remain an issue. With the ever-developing situation in Australia due to our own COVID-19 outbreak, what initially looked hopeful as a clear passage is now foggy.

The South Australian border, once poised to open on July 20, has

remained closed to NSW and Western Australia shows no sign of opening as it once hinted. Crossing into South Australia will be met with two weeks of quarantine at the very least.

"If I need to redirect, I will do exactly that, this whole journey is about footsteps, these obstacles I face are nothing in comparison to starvation.

"Walking across Australia, thus far, has been nothing short of heart-warming, I have met the most incredible people in the middle of nowhere, locals have showered me with sandwiches, coffee and biscuits, offered me places to stay and kept me entertained with conversation.

"The standout was on my walk to Brewarrina, I was given an emu egg

to cook up for breakfast, one egg was enough for my entire meal. My love for Australia right now is about as big as it gets. I'm so proud to call this country home."

When James reached Bourke in north-west New South Wales, he was joined by Greg Carter, Chimu's co-founder, who said he was extremely proud of the effort his colleague was making.

"This week we sent our first donations out to South America, Medi Life Movement in Peru will be distributing food packages in on our behalf, whilst in Brazil we are supporting Santa Santa Marta Appeal & Project Hub who also offer care packages to those most in need," said Greg.

"We have announced a new raffle where the lucky recipient will win a free berth on a trip to Antarctica in November next year. \$40 dollars offers 10 entries and feeds a family for a week."

■ chimuadventures.com/en-au/footstepsforfood



Rattling the travel Sabre

The future of travel and the vital role travel agents will play in restoring consumer confidence. These are just some of the topics covered in our exclusive chat with Todd Arthur, Vice President, Asia Pacific, Agency Sales Travel Solutions, Sabre.

Q: You've visited 117 countries so far. What are some of your favourites?

A: My wife and I love to go back to our favourite cities as often as we can, including Paris, where we got married, Cape Town and New York.

But some of the best experiences are those that are unique. North Korea was an eye-opener, Beirut was more beautiful than I had expected and Oman was the friendliest country I have been to.

Q: What is your best travel tip?

A: Be open to new destinations or new experiences. The entire travel industry is adapting with new cleanliness, health and safety measures to safeguard the traveller and put the trust back into travel.

So, talk to your travel agent about the hotels, transport methods or destinations which have measures in place to help you to feel comfortable about travelling and open yourself

up to trying new ways of travelling or new destinations.

Q: How will travel change in the future?

A: None of us will ever take travel for granted again so make sure that each part of your trip is perfectly personalised for you and what you want to do.

It may be that you would prefer room service to a buffet, you want to opt for a more rural destination, or you want a private tour just for your family. Add those ancillaries to your itinerary so you can really make the most of your next trip. I think we all deserve that after so long at home.

Q: How has COVID-19 impacted Sabre's business?

A: Sabre is mission critical to the travel ecosystem across the globe and we're facing the impact of the pandemic alongside our travel partners.

We've revamped our own strategy

to ensure we can best serve and enable our clients to recover and grow as we move through this "new normal" together.

Our vision to create a personalised, interconnected travel marketplace by 2025 remains our focus and we will continue to invest in technological innovation, as demonstrated by our partnerships with Accor and Google.

Q: Will the travel industry recover from this crisis?

A: There's no doubt the travel industry is going through the biggest challenge in its history. However, the industry and those who work within it are resilient and have already shown that they can pivot and adapt so travel can happen again.

We're seeing green shoots in many markets already and there is definitely pent-up demand for travel. What led guest decisions previously may not be what drives them now.

However, by planning for each stage of recovery and embracing the technological solutions which have a key role to play in enabling and accelerating recovery, the travel industry can combine the trust and innovation needed for future growth.

Q: How do you see the role of travel agents going forward?

A: The role of the travel agent is likely to grow and develop as we move forward. Travellers who previously booked independently will turn to travel agents for expertise and advice and this will help put the trust back into travel.

■ sabre.com

SIX OF THE BEST

The Blue Eye lounge

PONANT HAVE taken delivery of the sixth new ship in their Explorer series, consolidating the company's position as having the youngest fleet in the world.

The arrival of *Le Jacques Cartier* concludes the collection of latest-generation ships flying the French flag and built in just 24 months.

"The delivery of *Le Jacques Cartier* is a success," said Jean Emmanuel Sauvée, CEO of PONANT.

"These six vessels combining cutting-edge technology and respect for the environment are the symbol of a new generation of ships flying the French flag."

The latest ship combines a lesser capacity (92 staterooms and suites, all with a balcony or private terrace), state-of-the-art technology, respect for the environment and sleek design.

As with all Explorer ships it is fitted with 'Blue Eye', a multi-sensory underwater lounge that allows guests to discover and experience the subaquatic universe. Two portholes, shaped like the eyes of a cetacean, look out into the marine world.

Its non-intrusive underwater projectors, hydrophones integrated into the keel retransmitting the sound of the ocean depths and the Body Listening sofas offer a unique opportunity to listen to and experience the surrounding maritime environment.

Meanwhile the company is set to resume cruising, featuring inaugural voyages circumnavigating Iceland for the recently launched *Le Bellot*. The 180-guest ship will sail seven-night

itineraries throughout August.

Highlights include Vatnajökull National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and crossing the Arctic Circle to observe whales, orcas, seals and Atlantic puffins.

With 12 ships now in its fleet,

PONANT is maintaining its development trajectory and will shortly welcome *Le Commandant Charcot*, its luxury polar exploration vessel, a hybrid electric ship scheduled for 2021.

■ au.ponant.com



COUNTING THE COUNTLESS COST

SAVINGS ARE being offered on a journey along the Mississippi River next year onboard a new paddle wheeler.

Guests can make savings of up to \$US1,800 (approx. \$AU2,500) per couple for bookings made by September 30 for a trip on the *American Countess* in October 2021.

This new 245-passenger vessel is a riverboat replica with a sleek and contemporary design, grand dining room, elegant lounges, library, theatre, gym, sun deck and modern staterooms with plush bedding and flat screen TVs.

The eight-night 'Autumn on the River' cruise and stay package begins in Red Wing, Minnesota on October 9, 2021.

Journeying along the upper reaches of the Mississippi River, the tour continues to the city of Hannibal. Made famous by the father of American literature, Mark Twain, Hannibal was the setting for the novel, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The cruise ends in St. Louis, Missouri.

Prices start from \$US2,635 (approx. \$AU3,790) per person twin share, for an interior stateroom

■ cruisetraveller.com.au/aqsc-australia

The brand with a plan

Last month *Traveltalk* revealed the launch of the Emerald Waterways brand in Australia. Here, we talk to Angus Crichton, Director – Sales, Marketing & Product, Australia & New Zealand, to find out more.

Q: Why have you decided to launch Emerald Waterways in Australia now?

A: This is an exciting time for the Scenic Group and in particular what we call the "E brands", that is Evergreen Tours, Emerald Waterways and Emerald Yacht Cruises.

This recent growth phase started in 2019 with the launch of our eighth ship and our first Star-Ship outside of Europe, *Emerald Harmony*, on the Mekong River.

We then announced a new concept and brand, Emerald Yacht Cruises, on February 1 this year with a preview of stylish super-yacht *Emerald Azzurra* who will welcome just 100 guests to the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Red Sea; and we announced our ninth Star-Ship was being built for the 2021 season in Europe.

This combined with the worldwide success of the Emerald Waterways brand means it is now time for the brand to become as known and loved in Australia too.

Q: What will this mean for the cruise-loving travellers of Australia?

A: Despite the temporary impact COVID-19 has had on our market, we know Aussies are starting to plan their

2021 and beyond trips now and are seeing very encouraging signs.

When they are ready to travel again we want Emerald Waterways to be their first river cruise brand of choice for value-conscious guests.

Q: Is this a testament to the ever-growing popularity of small ship cruising?

A: Absolutely. And we have both river and ocean cruises covered with the Emerald Waterways and Emerald Yacht Cruises brands.

We have a maximum of just 180 guests on our Rhine, Main and Danube Star-Ships and only 100 guests on brand new super yacht *Emerald Azzurra*. Most of our cabins enjoy a balcony space, so there is abundant fresh air.

Q: Tell us more about your new ship coming online in 2021.

A: *Emerald Azzurra* is a new concept in boutique, small-ship cruising from sister brand Emerald Yacht Cruises. With just 100 guests on board, you'll feel like a millionaire on your own super-yacht.

At just 110metres long, you'll dock in the heart of small Mediterranean and Adriatic ports for an uncrowded

and truly magical authentic travel experience

Q: How do you think cruising will rebound from COVID-19?

A: We're already seeing bookings for 2021 and beyond, with *Emerald Azzurra* open for 2022 bookings right now. As borders start to open and guests feel confident that their health, wellbeing and safety is the number one priority, we'll start to see the industry rebound.

Q: How important will travel agents be in spreading the Emerald message?

A: Our travel agent partners are critical! They are already familiar with the award-winning Evergreen river cruise program which has been operated by sister brand Emerald Waterways since its launch in 2014.

Having won the *Cruise Critic* "Best River Line for Value" award for the past five consecutive years, agents can be confident the quality of the river cruise is the same, as it the promise of exceptional value – it's just the name that is changing to Emerald Waterways.

■ evergreentours.com.au/emerald-waterways



The Sun Terrace and Infinity Pool aboard Viking Mississippi

Viking Mississippi voyages in 2022-2023:

- * 15-day 'America's Great River' from New Orleans, Louisiana to St Paul, Minnesota'. Priced from \$16,995 per person
- * Eight-day 'Heart of the Delta' from New Orleans, Louisiana to Memphis, Tennessee'. Priced from \$5,695 per person
- * Eight-day 'Southern Celebration' roundtrip from New Orleans, Louisiana. Priced from \$5,795 per person
- * Eight-day 'America's Heartland' from St Louis, Missouri to St Paul, Minnesota'. Priced from \$6,695 per person.

Aussie demand leads to an early opening

STRONG DEMAND has prompted Viking to open its 2023 sailings of the Mississippi River for sale earlier than expected.

The inaugural 2022 cruises were announced in April and already several sailings have completely sold out.

The company's first custom vessel, *Viking Mississippi* will debut in August 2022, sailing voyages on the Lower and Upper Mississippi River between New Orleans and St. Paul.

The new cruises are expected to bring more than 5,800 guests to the region in 2022 and more than 17,600 during the first full sailing season in 2023.

Michelle Black, Viking's Managing Director ANZ, said that Viking has seen a remarkable level of interest and bookings from Australian travellers.

"Though we can't travel overseas right now, exploring this part of America has captured the attention of our guests and clearly *Viking Mississippi* is hitting all the right notes.

"We couldn't achieve this without the support of our travel trade partners. The importance of the trade during this time can't be understated, particularly when it comes to providing confidence and peace of mind to book future travels."

The five-deck *Viking Mississippi* will

host 386 guests in 193 all-outside staterooms, with seven stateroom categories to choose from. Dining options will include The Restaurant as well as the River Café, a casual al fresco setting serving Norwegian specialties.

VIKING SAIGON

Meanwhile the company has also announced it will launch a new ship for its popular 'Magnificent Mekong' cruise-tour.

Currently under construction, the 80-guest *Viking Saigon* is scheduled to debut for the August 30, 2021, cruise-tour departure; the river cruise portion of the itinerary sails between Kampong Cham, Cambodia and Ho

Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam.

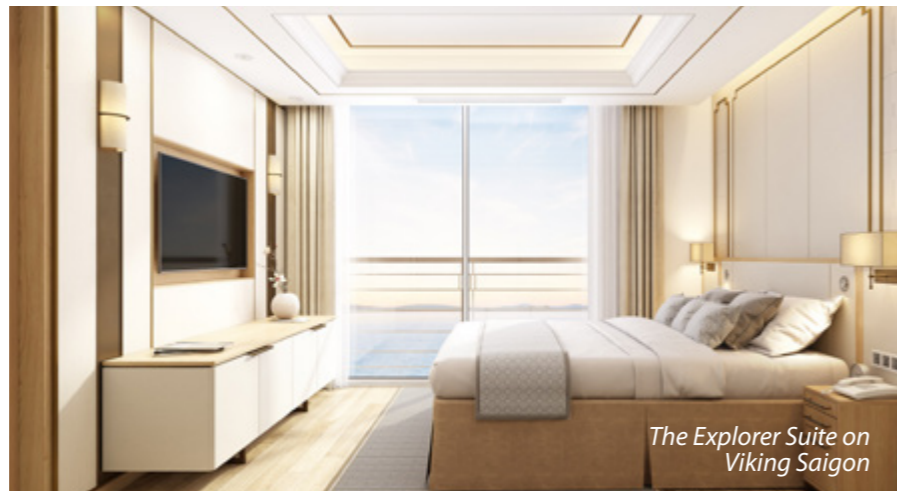
"For many of our guests, Vietnam and Cambodia remain top destinations because of their significance in world history," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking.

"This will be the most modern vessel on the Mekong and will feel like 'home' to our loyal Viking guests who are familiar with the comfortable design of our ships."

Purpose-built for the Mekong, the new vessel will host 80 guests in 40 outside staterooms. All will feature hotel-style beds and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors with a veranda or French balcony.

Guests on the three-deck *Viking Saigon* will also enjoy a spa and fitness centre, infinity pool and open-air sky bar on the upper deck. Prices for the 15-day tour start from \$8,695 per person.

■ vikingcruises.com.au



The Explorer Suite on Viking Saigon

Here's one Jumbo we'll never forget

IT'S BEEN a favourite among fliers for more than 50 years but the jumbo jet has taken its final bow in Australian skies.

The last Boeing 747-400 in the Qantas fleet made its farewell flight from Sydney on July 22, ending five decades of proud service.

First appearing in August 1971, the plane was at the forefront of a number of important milestones for the airline, including the first business class cabin of any airline in the world.

Its arrival – and its economics – made international travel possible for millions of people for the first time.

"It's hard to overstate the impact that the 747 had on aviation and a country as far away as Australia," said Alan Joyce, Qantas Group CEO.

"This aircraft was well ahead of its time and extremely capable. Engineers and cabin crew loved working on them and pilots loved flying them. So did passengers."

Mr Joyce added that the jumbo jet ushered in a new era of lower fares and non-stop flights.

"They have carved out a very special place in aviation history and I know they'll be greatly missed by a lot of people, including me."

■ qantas.com



Andrew Brodie, Sunshine Coast Airport CEO (left) with Steve Padgett, Alliance Airlines Chair and Co-Founder

HELLO SUNSHINE

THE SUNSHINE Coast has received a tourism boost with the debut of direct flights from Cairns.

The new three-per-week service with Alliance Airlines provides a key connection between two of Queensland's high value tourist locations in line with the current push for domestic travel.

"It's anticipated this service will facilitate around 40,000 passengers every year and inject \$2.8 million of tourism spend into our region, undoubtedly providing welcome relief for local operators," said Andrew Brodie, CEO Sunshine Coast Airport.

Providing 300 seats each way per week, the new service has fares starting at \$125 one-way including taxes.

"Tourism is crucial to rebuilding our economy and supporting local jobs," said Kate Jones, Tourism Minister. "That's why we're backing new flights direct to the Sunshine Coast – to pump cash back into local businesses."

■ AllianceAirlines.com.au

EXTRA FLIGHTS FOR AUSSIES



EMIRATES HAVE announced extra services for Aussie travellers, with additional weekly flights from Dubai to Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

Services between Sydney and Dubai will increase to four times weekly, while flights to Perth and Brisbane will both increase to twice weekly services from August 1.

By mid-August, Emirates will have increased its network to 63 destinations, facilitating travel between the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Asia Pacific.

Premium customers can enjoy the airline's chauffeur-driven service and business class lounge at Dubai International airport, with the restart of these facilities coming last month after a full health and safety review.

■ emirates.com



AUSSIE LODGE WITH LOFTY AMBITIONS

A NEW \$15 million luxury lodge will open in November at the award-winning Mount Lofty House in the Adelaide Hills.

Sequoia will offer guest reception and lounge, breakfast room, gardens, sundeck and natural spring-fed hot pools which will form a secluded sanctuary with uninterrupted panoramic views across the patchwork Piccadilly Valley.

Locally owned and operated, Mount Lofty House is located within an hour of wine country and features Hardy's Verandah restaurant, Arthur Waterhouse lounge and Stables day spa.

■ mtloftyhouse.com.au



THE LITTLE HOTEL THAT COULD

AN INNOVATIVE luxury hotel concept will be opening in Sydney's CBD next month.

The Little National Hotel Sydney is set among Barangaroo, Bridge Street and Martin Place, encouraging guests to explore and enjoy the best that the city has to offer.

Targeted at the five-star guest who spends most of their time outside their room, the property boasts a fusion of low-cost, yet high value, for those willing to forgo traditional hotel frills, without compromising on style and comfort.

Set above the Wynyard Station

entry on Clarence Street, the hotel has 230 high-tech rooms, gym, library and a rooftop garden bar. It is one of three Little National Hotels from the DOMA group, with a property in Newcastle in New South Wales expected to start construction this year.

"Our approach has always been to provide guests with a convenient, contemporary hotel experience, without the cost of five-star accommodation, so they can enjoy more of the city around them," said Jure Domazet, Managing Director, DOMA.

■ domagroup.com.au

RAFFLES IS JUST THE TICKET

ONE OF the most famous names in the hotel industry now has a second home in Indonesia with the opening of the Raffles Bali.

The 15th Raffles property to be unveiled, the new hotel offers views over the Indian Ocean and the famous Jimbaran Bay sunsets.

With just 32 private pool villas, Raffles Bali delivers charm for well-travelled connoisseurs seeking elegant spaces, privacy and cultural discovery.

"Whether you are looking for a romantic getaway or an intimate oasis of emotional wellbeing, Raffles Bali offers unparalleled panoramic ocean views and captivating sunsets from every villa," said Katya Herting, General Manager, Raffles Bali.

"Our beachfront resort is surrounded by lush tropical gardens, providing utmost relaxation due to its generosity of space."

All villas include private pools and gardens, indoor and outdoor showers, yoga mats, bespoke beach accessories and an indulgent soaking tub.

Loloan Beach Bar and Grill is located on the resort's secluded beach, overlooking a 25-metre infinity pool, while romantic, elegant and intimate dining experiences can be arranged at The Secret Cave, illuminated with flickering torches and candlelight.

Raffles Bali has a 'Bespoke Opening Offer' of two nights' stay, inclusive of return limousine transfer, daily à la carte breakfast and selections of wellbeing and cultural experiences. Prices start from \$US2,660 (approx. \$AU3,800) for three days and two nights.

■ raffles.com



LUXURY WITH A CAPITAL W



DUBBED THE city's first luxury lifestyle hotel, W Melbourne is set to open its doors in December.

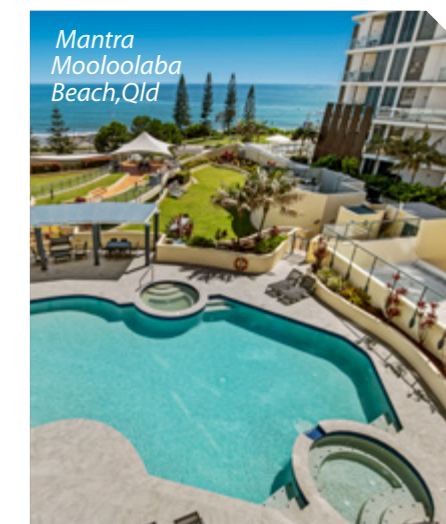
The 294-room property in Flinders Lane will play host to four restaurants and bars, making it an ideal destination for both travellers and locals.

To mark the opening, the property has launched two guest packages. The first is called 24/7 REBELS and includes a \$100 credit to spend when booking a Fabulous room, Mega room or Spectacular studio. The credit doubles when booking one of the suites.

With any accommodation booking guests can also enjoy valet car parking and two cocktails at Curious bar, the pulse of the hotel.

Guests can detox in the FIT gym then re-tox with a dip and a sip in the WET pool, all while soaking up the city skyline views.

■ wmelbourne.com



DEMAND LEADS TO DEBUT

JW MARRIOTT will make its debut in Australia this December with the opening of a \$35million rebranded property in Queensland.

The JW Marriott Gold Coast Resort & Spa will offer luxury to the discerning traveller seeking a tropical retreat near the region's popular beaches.

"The opening will signal the continued expansion of our luxury footprint in Australia as we continue to see strong demand within the luxury travel segment here," said Sean Hunt, Area Vice President, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific, Marriott International.

"The JW Marriott brand, with its distinctive luxury philosophy, will resonate with these travellers, who seek exceptional, thoughtfully-crafted services and experiences."

Featuring 223 rooms and suites, the property has been designed and inspired by its natural surroundings to promote and reflect the beauty and relaxed mood of coastal Queensland.

The property's six food and beverage venues, including two feature restaurants, lobby lounge and bar, pool bar, a new Japanese whisky bar and a signature JW Marketplace, will ensure guests have access to a refined yet relaxing dining experience throughout their stay.

The outdoor pools include a saltwater lagoon featuring more than 300 tropical fish.

■ jw-marriott.marriott.com

IN BRIEF///

A SELECTION of three- and seven-night deals at a selection of Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree properties across Queensland and New South Wales are now available.

Examples include three-nights in a one bedroom apartment at Mantra Amphora, Palm Cove, Tropical North Queensland from \$399 for two people.

Or stay seven-nights in a two bedroom spa suite at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa, Kingscliff, NSW from \$1,890 for four people.

All deals are on sale until September 20 for travel up until mid-2021.

■ mantrahotels.com/deals/explore

The lure of Leura

Traveltalk's JON UNDERWOOD takes his first trip since the beginning of COVID-19 and discovers that travel as we knew it may have changed forever.

THE LITTLE girl jumped onto the low dry stone wall and yelled excitedly: "look! I'm on the Great Wall of China."

Her older sister, pausing only momentarily to look up from her phone, gave her a look of haughty derision and told her to stop being so childish.

As she sprinted along the wall, the girl replied over her shoulder: "we're not allowed to travel overseas anymore. I'm just using my imagination."

This fleeting moment on what was immediately christened the 'Great Wall of Katoomba' proved once again how resilient children can be in a crisis. As we adults try to come to terms with an indefinite break from overseas travel, using our imagination might just be the best advice going around.

Like most people I've spent the last five months at home, venturing sporadically to the shops, garden centre or DIY store. While my baking has vastly improved, the garden is immaculate and the house spotless, it has become increasingly frustrating not "getting out there".

So the chance to just pack a bag,

jump in the car and head...well, anywhere basically was a blessed relief.

The Blue Mountains have always been a particular favourite of my wife and I for a weekend break, given they are only an hour's drive from our house in Western Sydney.

Arriving into Leura on a Friday morning, the first thing that stuck me was how many people seemed to have the same idea. The main street was buzzing with families, couples and young people, all trying to shake off the COVID blues.

Our first encounter with 'Travel 2020' came when we tried to get a table for lunch in one of the many great cafés dotted along Leura Mall.

The server patiently explained that due to social distancing regulations they were operating under reduced capacity. We weren't able to stand and wait for a table so we had to give our details and he'd call us when we could be seated.

Fortunately it only took 10 minutes, but once safely ensconced we discovered yet another new facet of post-corona travel.

We had to scan a QR barcode with our phones so they could record our details in case a patron subsequently tested positive.

This process was repeated at every new dining or drinking establishment we frequented: no scan, no entry, with a COVID marshal often on the door to make sure rules were obeyed, even in the local pub. It was both comforting and slightly concerning in equal measure.

TRUE BLUE

One of the main reasons the Blue Mountains are so popular are the fantastic views that can be enjoyed, particularly at Katoomba where they have the famous Three Sisters and the Scenic Skyway cable car across the Jamison Valley.

The vistas up here are absolutely mesmerising, giving you a real sense of the scale and feel of the Australian landscape. What's more, there are plenty of easy walks to enjoy, particularly at this moment in time.

With borders closed to international travellers, there are no buses disgorging hordes of camera-toting

tourists, jostling for the best spot to get that all-important selfie.

Our economy may be the poorer for it, but at least Aussies are getting to enjoy their own country in relative peace and comfort.

From our base at the clean and comfortable Nesuto Leura Gardens Hotel we also managed to find a slightly less popular beauty spot that delivered big time on the scenery.

Sublime Point Lookout is an easy half hour walk from the hotel but is well worth it for the expansive views and smaller crowds.

Another good reason to visit Leura in particular is the shopping. The streets are packed with an enticing mix of great stores: antique jewellery, homewares, candles, craft supplies, homemade chocolates...there's even a man cave at Teddy Sinclair.

And then there's the food, which in the mountains is always hale and hearty. We enjoyed the rustic ambience of the Alexandra Hotel, whose eclectic clientele included students, locals, honeymooners and families. It was also good to see live music in the pub on the Friday night we visited.

On our final evening we dined at The Bunker Café Bar and Restaurant, which is set within an historic old house on the hill above Leura Station.

Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the Bunker delivered one of the yummiest salads I have ever tasted, an Asian Slaw containing edamame, mint, coriander, peanuts and a wicked shallot and soy dressing.

It's not often you get to rave about a salad but I came down from the mountain just longing to give it a try. A memorable end to a truly cathartic weekend.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Everyone says that travel will recover eventually, particularly when an effective vaccine is discovered.

In the meantime, while it may be George Orwell's worst nightmare come true, I for one feel quite comforted knowing that the COVID-safe measures are in place and someone, somewhere is watching over me.

visitbluemountains.com.au

Top tips for travel in 2020

1. Be patient. Restaurants, bars and hotels are adapting to social distancing regulations and this means less tables and sometimes fewer staff. Your food and drinks may take a little longer to arrive than usual.

2. Be understanding. The hospitality industry has been decimated by corona virus and is still trying to recover. Workers are probably trying to make ends meet just like the rest of us so be thoughtful and polite.

3. Be flexible. You'll probably have to book well in advance if you want a table at your favourite restaurant so plan ahead. Until travel returns to something approaching normality, this is likely to be the norm for some time to come.

4. Be supportive. Spending your money in local stores helps give back to communities who have been doing it tough during the lockdown months.



The *Spray of the Coral Coast*.
Picture courtesy Daniel Barker



Simon Thornalley

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Larapinta camp at night.
Picture courtesy Caroline Crick

Discover the real salt of the earth

A NEW cruise operator has just launched aiming to showcase the Indigenous heritage and marine beauty of one of Australia's most popular destinations.

Saltwater Eco Tours is using a century-old historic timber sailing vessel, *Spray of the Coral Coast*, to highlight Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Each tour will have an Indigenous storyteller onboard to share the stories, traditions and culture of the region's original inhabitants and first eco custodians, the Kabi Kabi people (who were originally known as the 'Saltwater People').

Saltwater Eco Tours is the brainchild of Simon Thornalley, a young Indigenous man of Torres Strait Island descent, who was recently appointed as a Young Indigenous Tourism Leader.

Simon spent his life sailing through the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Straits as a child, honing his skills before gaining his Commercial Master Class 5 licence, which took him across many oceans, including six cruises to Antarctica as First Officer on a charter vessel.

"I am honoured and proud to launch a business that encompasses my passion for culture, as well as maritime history and sailing," said Simon.

"Sustainable tourism plays a crucial role in today's society and in the year

of Indigenous tourism I am excited to launch Saltwater Eco Tours on the Sunshine Coast."

CULTURAL TOUR – the signature cruise takes passengers to sites of cultural significance and places where Dreamtime stories and songs originated. Large numbers of sea birds, turtles and dolphins can be spotted along the way.

During the two-hour cruise there will be storytelling, didgeridoo and entertainment provided by Indigenous guides, along with bush-tucker inspired catering, accompanied by local craft beer or sparkling wine.

Operating three times daily each weekend, adult tickets cost \$120, children (five-16) \$79.

SUNSET ACOUSTIC TOUR – the two-hour cruise operates on weekends and combines sunset, a selection of grazing platters and local craft beer as the vessel cruises the waterways, taking in nocturnal wildlife and fishing vessels. Adult prices are \$55 per person.

PRIVATE CHARTERS – available for exclusive hire for cruises of two-to four-hours, Saltwater Eco Tours can accommodate a wide range of requirements including custom catering, live music and storytelling.

The historic *Spray of the Coral Coast* is a beautifully-restored, classic 58ft gaff-rigged Huon-pine ketch with a fascinating history of its own.

The vessel has the same design as the *Spray*, which Joshua Slocum skippered in the late 19th century to become the first person to circumnavigate the world singlehanded.

It can cater for 35 passengers, but is restricting numbers to 20 currently to adhere to its COVID safety plan.

"There's more demand than ever for authentic ecotourism and Indigenous cultural experiences in Queensland," said Kate Jones, Queensland Tourism Minister.

"COVID-19 has had a huge impact on our tourism industry. We need new experiences like Saltwater Eco Tours to entice visitors back to the Sunny Coast and share the message that we're Good To Go in Queensland."

■ saltwaterecotours.com.au



WORLD EXPEDITIONS is resuming a sector of its domestic travel offerings with guided and self-guided walks.

From August 1, the company will be running walks on the Larapinta Trail in the Red Centre and a guided experience along the Jatbula Trail in the Top End.

Sue Badyari, World Expeditions CEO, said the company was being cognisant of safety factors by introducing a range of COVID-safe operational measures, accepting no deposit bookings and delaying timeframes for the payment of trip balances.

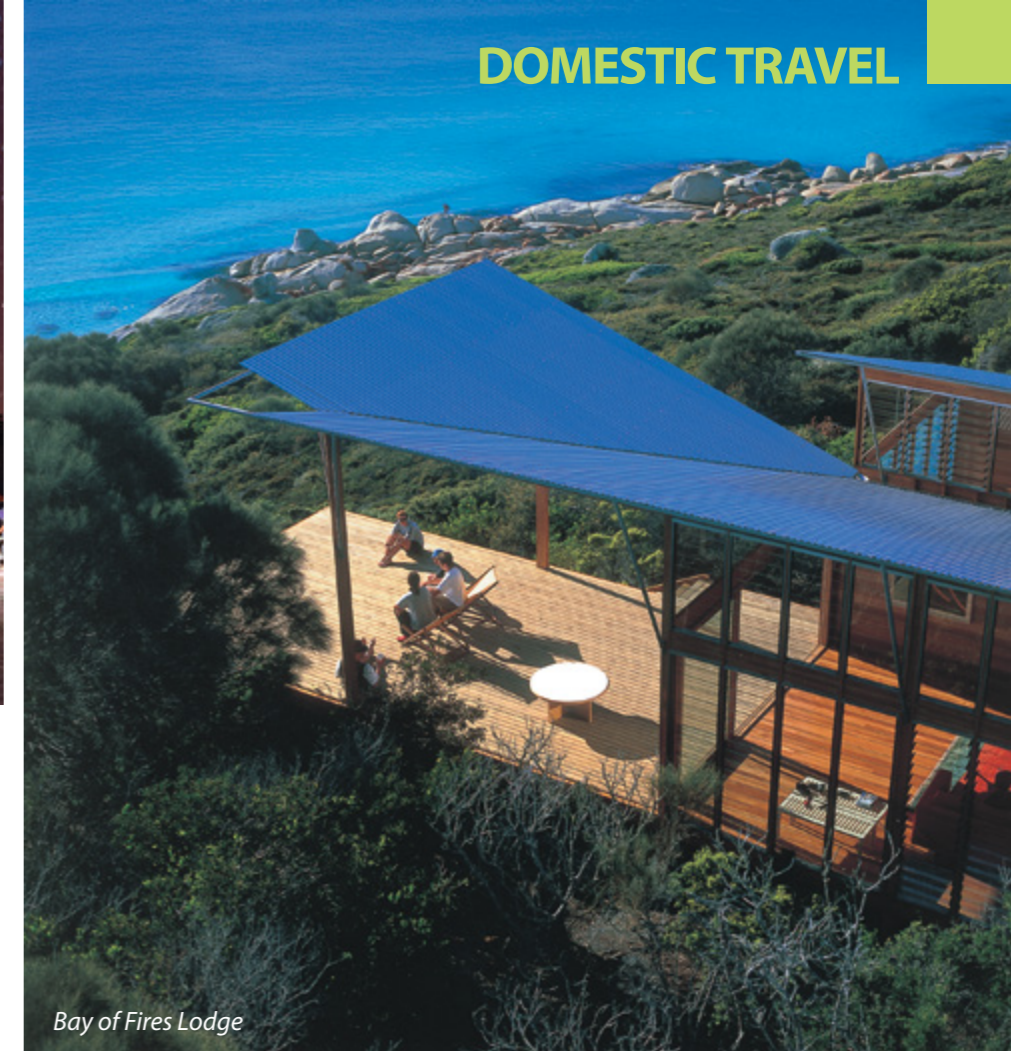
"It'll be a short season but we're acutely aware of the pent-up demand from travellers and for the opportunity to support our local partners and employees in the NT, particularly our dedicated guiding team, many of whom did not qualify for JobKeeper," she said.

"Obviously, there's a huge investment in setting up for the season after the false start in March but the early response to our \$0 deposit offer tells us travellers are raring to get back to immersive travel experiences in our natural landscapes."

The six-day 'Classic Larapinta Trek in Comfort' is the company's flagship guided walking experience and offers access to the facilities of campsites, as well as the opportunity to walk with only a day pack, with luggage transferred between camps in company vehicles.

Often described as the Top End's must-do walk, the Jatbula Trail provides fitter trekkers with an exploration of Nitmiluk National Park's waterfalls and Jawoyn Aboriginal rock art.

■ worldexpeditions.com



Bay of Fires Lodge

TAKE A WALK ON THE LUXURY SIDE

APT HAVE added a new range to their portfolio, designed for those who wish to experience guided walking with a touch of luxury.

'Walking Holidays' provide guests with the freedom to fully immerse themselves in sought-after locations including Tasmania's Bay of Fires and Lake St Clair National Parks, South-east Queensland's Scenic Rim and New Zealand's Marlborough Sounds.

Travellers will walk with ease, carrying day packs only, and will be accompanied by a knowledgeable APT Walking Leader as well as local walking guides.

The length of day walks and terrain varies but once the exercise is completed, guests can relax in luxury accommodation, dining on gourmet food and wine. Ample free days are also included for those who want to explore the area at their own leisure.

"Our travel agent partners have told us they value our new initiatives and we in turn appreciate and value their continued support," said Chris Hall, APT Managing Director.

Sample itineraries include the nine-day 'Tasmania's Bay of Fires, Lake St Clair & Hobart Walking Holiday'. This includes four walking days, boutique accommodation and gourmet dining. It is priced from \$6,695 per person twin share, with three departures in December, and February and March 2021.

"Our new APT Walking Holidays complement our newly released Luxury Short Breaks and both feature the best accommodation in spectacular locations with a focus on relaxation, food and wine."

■ aptouring.com.au



Rabbit Island

YOU CAN VISIT HOWE NOW

AUSSIERS WILL be able to visit Lord Howe Island this month following the lifting of travel restrictions.

Lord Howe Island has announced it will once again welcome travellers to the island from August 3.

A Public Health Order restricting travel to Lord Howe has been in place since March 22, designed to protect around 350 residents on the tiny World Heritage-listed island from the corona virus pandemic.

Situated some 600 kilometres off the New South Wales coast, Lord Howe Island's isolated location has placed it in a unique position in the current pandemic and no cases of COVID-19 have been reported to date.

The Lord Howe Island Tourism Association (LHITA) is currently working with the island's tourism operators on developing COVID-safe measures ahead of the reopening to protect both residents and visitors.

"Lord Howe never feels crowded with its cap on visitor numbers to just 400 at any one time, but it's been especially quiet over the past few

months," said Trina Shepherd, LHITA Executive Officer.

"There are already strong bookings for the island for September onwards, many of which are for travellers who transferred their bookings from earlier in the year.

"We think Lord Howe will be extra appealing for Aussies who are keen to travel to extraordinary places again – with no passport required."

Qantas offers a regular service to Lord Howe on its 32-seat Dash-8 aircraft from Sydney and from Brisbane at the weekend. Flights are available to book from August 3.

"For many who've not yet visited Lord Howe, now's the time to enjoy a tropical island holiday and explore white-sanded beaches, incredible hikes and the world's southernmost coral reef by snorkel or scuba, right on the doorstep.

"And with no mobile coverage and relaxed Wi-Fi, it's an ideal escape for anyone who's been working from home and is now experiencing 'Zoom-fatigue'!"

■ lordhoweisland.info

NEWS UPDATE

AUTHORITIES ON Norfolk Island decided to exercise caution and postponed reopening to visitors from NSW and ACT until July 24.

This was in response to the increase in COVID-19 cases in Victoria and uncertainty about the level of community transmission in NSW and ACT.

Visitors coming from Victoria are not permitted to travel to Norfolk Island until further notice.

Persons travelling from any other state will be free to enter Norfolk Island without quarantine if they do not overnight in NSW or ACT during transit.

Any person travelling from NSW or ACT who choose to travel to Norfolk Island will be required to quarantine at their own cost for 14 days.



Bunya Hike

WELCOME HOME GRASSHOPPER

AFTER FIFTEEN years exploring Asia, Grasshopper Adventures is launching active tours in Australia.

The current halt to international tourism has led the Aussie-owned company to release tours in Tasmania, Queensland and other, soon to be announced destinations.

These tours all feature a mix of activities that include biking, hiking and kayaking.

"To really experience the natural environment in a meaningful way, we had to go beyond biking," said Adam Platt-Hepworth, Grasshopper Owner.

"We also regard it as crucial to avoid lots of vehicle time and packing/

unpacking. The tours are designed so that you spend maximum time outdoors, in nature and with like-minded people."

Designed with a view to maximising community involvement, the tours feature visits to wineries, artisan's studios and local farms with accommodations that include small-scale, family-owned properties.

"We learned this from our work in Asia. You need to ensure that the conduct of tours benefits and works in harmony with local communities in order to earn the legitimacy and authenticity that travellers expect."

■ grasshopperadventures.com

Tour highlights include:

- * Riding through the rustic landscape of the Brisbane Valley and hanging out in a tiny country pub for an evening
- * Hiking the trails of the Bunya Mountains and learning about the major Aboriginal corroborees that took place there, centred around the sacred tree by the same name
- * Kayaking the Noosa Everglades
- * Biking the northeast Tasmanian countryside then hiking the coast at Freycinet
- * Kayaking the dramatic coast of the Tasman Peninsula in the sheltered waters of Fortescue Bay.

Scheme goes by the book

AN INCENTIVE to encourage Aussies to rebook domestic accommodation affected by the corona virus pandemic has just been launched.

The scheme by Booking.com seeks to bring business back to Australian partners, inspire travellers and drive support for local businesses.

Encouraging customers to rebook their original property, Booking.com will offer them a 15 per cent reward (up to \$170) after their stay, valid for bookings made until December 31, 2020, with checkout date until April 30, 2021.

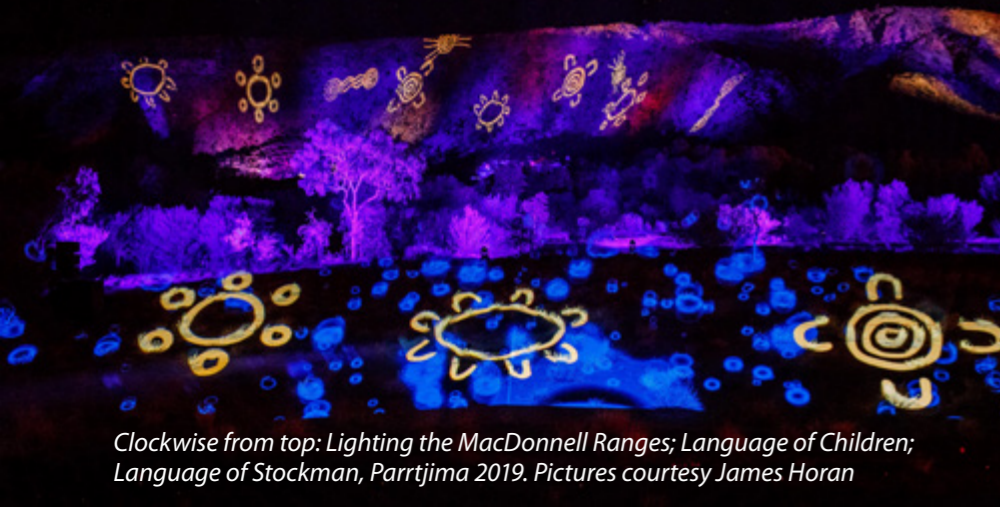
To help further support its accommodation partners, Booking.com is also waiving commissions on reservations made as part of this campaign.

"All of us in travel share one common interest: for the travel industry to survive this crisis," said Tracey Foxall, Regional Manager Oceania at Booking.com.

"We're working tirelessly to bring domestic demand back to our partners, inspire Aussies to travel safely when ready and reward them for supporting local businesses so that we can continue to make it easier for everyone to experience the world."

■ booking.com





Clockwise from top: Lighting the MacDonnell Ranges; Language of Children; Language of Stockman, Parrtjima 2019. Pictures courtesy James Horan

ALL THE FUN OF THE FESTIVAL

THE ONLY Aboriginal light festival of its kind in the world, *Parrtjima – A Festival in Light* has announced its new program.

Light installations, live music, workshops, meaningful talks and film favourites will all be on the agenda for the festival in Alice Springs (Mparntwe), home of Arrernte people, from September 11 to 20.

The free festival is themed 'Lifting Our Spirits' and showcases the oldest continuous culture on Earth, bringing stories and ideas to life through engaging, creative, fun and moving performances and installations.

"We couldn't be happier with

our new program and everyone involved is so thrilled to be able to host Parrtjima this year after having to postpone due to COVID-19 earlier in April," said Rhoda Roberts, First Nations Adviser.

"Now is the perfect time for Australians to connect with each other, enjoy themselves, and immerse themselves in wonderful stories, art and performances."

As always, the must-see two-kilometre illumination of MacDonnell Ranges will be a highlight. This year's light show is called *Ebb and Flow of Sky and Country* and will be accompanied by a dynamic soundscape and narration by traditional owner Benedict Kngwarraye Stevens and Roberts.

The light installation showcase, *Werte*, has been inspired by an artwork by Kumalie Kngwarraye Riley, which takes as its central motif Werte (pronounced Woord-da), the concentric lineal work that speaks of meeting places and is so relevant to the Central Desert art styles.

Among the other highlights are artist Greg McAdam's enormous glowing sphere, *Grass Seed*, which measures seven metres in diameter and is suspended three metres in the air.

There's also Rachel Wallace's *Alatye* (Bush Yam), reinterpreted into a four metre-high flower, and Lachlan



Dodds-Watson's representation of the next generation of artists, *Emu Laying Eggs at Night*, a towering eight metre-high emu.

Spearheading the Deep Listening talks program are renowned journalist, film maker, author and Wiradjuri man Stan Grant, who will discuss 'Race, Identity and Belonging', and journalist, author and educator Tracey Holmes on 'Sydney 2000 – Representing Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Globally'.

In a first for Parrtjima, there will be two nights of cooking demonstrations with high-profile chef Mark Olive and Rayleen Brown, co-founder of Kungkas Can Cook.

Rayleen is recognised throughout Australia and internationally for shining the spotlight on Central Australian bush foods.

Hosted by Paul Ah Chee, the 'Sounds of the Centre' music program is a unique mix of locally sourced Territory talent.

Artists include Stuart Nuggett, a finalist in the 2020 Indigenous Language Award at the 2020 National Indigenous Music Awards, Leah Flanagan's string quartet and the world's most remote metal band, Southeast Desert Metal.

Other popular acts include Kirra Voller, Jessie K and Paul Ah Chee and Friends.

Cinema in Todd Mall will feature free feature films and documentaries including Aussie favourites *Top End Wedding*, *The Sapphires* and *Bran Nue Dae*, plus a number of groundbreaking documentaries, including *The Australian Dream* and *In My Blood It Runs*.

As part of the festival's COVID-19 Safety Plan, this year guests are required to register their attendance at Parrtjima with tickets free of charge.

■ parrtjimaaustralia.com.au/program



Mount Gnomon Farm

Tune in to this local program

TRAFALGAR HAS launched its 2021 Australia & New Zealand program including home grown experiences and hidden gems.

The company's 17 trips through Australasia will also provide guests with the chance to encounter local people and hear their stories, supporting them in these difficult times.

"It's never been more important to open clients' eyes to the incredible beauty that is situated right here on our doorstep and introduce them to and sustain the wonderful locals that bring these amazing places to life with their rich stories," said Jason Wolff, Managing Director, Trafalgar.

On 'Perfect Tasmania', travellers will connect with and support locals such as fifth-generation farmer, Guy Robertson, as he takes them into his free-range farm, cider orchard and gardens at Mount Gnomon Farm.

The property is hidden high in the

hills overlooking the picturesque seaside village of Penguin. Here, guests will enjoy a farm to fork Be My Guest lunch with Guy in his barn.

Visitors will also be whisked away to Bridestowe lavender fields for a taste of lavender ice cream at this agri-tourism farm.

Adventure aficionados will enjoy the sunrise that overlooks the deep chasm at the edge of Kings Canyon in the Northern Territory, embarking on one of the best walks in the country on 'The Colour Of Red'.

As they take in the domed 'Lost City' and 'Garden of Eden', their local guide will entertain them with Creation Stories.

A truly special meal awaits guests that evening as they connect with locals at an open-air Be My Guest experience, enjoying dinner with their hosts around a campfire under the Southern Hemisphere's Milky Way.

'Untamed Kimberley' sees travellers stay at El Questro Wilderness Park. They'll also enjoy a privately hosted Be My Guest dinner at the world's largest distiller of sandalwood oil, learning how they support local and global communities through their commitment to quality, sustainability and ethical business.

There are also exciting itineraries in New Zealand to choose from. 'Contrasts of New Zealand' offers an immersion in Maori culture in the north while 'Southern Spectacular' gives participants the chance to plant trees in bushfire ravaged areas around Christchurch, along with Lake Wanaka, the Franz Josef Glacier and the eco-friendly Punakaiki Resort.

Trafalgar are offering a 10 per cent early payment discount on selected trips and a \$99 per person deposit offer, allowing clients to change their travel plans up to 30 days prior to departure.

"With the added peace of mind that comes with our new flexible booking conditions and rigorous wellbeing measures, we have never been better prepared to reconnect clients with the joy of travel and support the people and places that need us most."

■ trafalgar.com





Serengeti



Cusco, Peru



GET CRACKING ON AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE

When small is beautiful

GLOBUS AND Cosmos are making their group experiences even smaller on all departures through Central and South America, Asia and Africa in 2021.

In Africa, travellers with both tour companies will enjoy a custom-designed, four-wheel drive safari vehicle as they search for Cape buffalo, cheetah, zebra, elephant, lion and giraffe while on safari.

Destinations covered include Serengeti National Park, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Amboseli National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Chobe National Park and Kruger National Park.

Thanks to 'Local Favourites' experiences, travellers with Globus can enjoy spending time with Jane Goodall's beloved animals at Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary.

Guests can also sip mimosas at a bush breakfast, enjoy a sundowner drink in the Maasai Mara, or watch a traditional Maasai dance performance in the Serengeti.

Available tours include 'Splendors of South Africa & Victoria Falls' and 'Kenya & Tanzania: The Safari Experience'

(both Globus) and 'South Africa: From Cape to Kruger' (Cosmos).

HEADING SOUTH

Incan ruins, Iguassu Falls, Amazonian rain forests, Andean mountain ranges, Patagonian glaciers and Peruvian mysteries.

With more than 30 South America itineraries for 2021, Globus and Cosmos allow travellers to experience all the sights and sounds of Latin America through a range of once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

In Peru, guests can explore Machu Picchu, the world's most famous forgotten city, enjoy encounters with llamas and alpacas, sample bold multicultural cuisine in Lima and enjoy warm welcomes in local homes.

Sample holidays include the eight-day 'Peru Splendors' (Globus) priced from \$3,849 or the 11-day 'Mysteries of the Inca Empire' (Cosmos) priced from \$3,799.

In Brazil and Argentina, learn to samba or tango, sip sweet caipirinhas or try dry Argentine wines. Sample

the local culture through cooking classes and go horseback riding, before witnessing the thundering Iguassu Falls.

Tours include the 15-day 'South American Odyssey' (Globus) priced from \$8,340 and the 12-day 'Brazil, Argentina & Chile Unveiled' (Cosmos) priced from \$3,975.

"With an average of 20 guests per departure, travellers will enjoy a Small Group Discovery that promises room to roam, while getting up-close and personal to fascinating places," said Gai Tyrrell, Managing Director Australasia of Globus family of brands.

"Whether they're traversing the trails of Machu Picchu, taking a game-drive through Kenya, walking the Great Wall in China or strolling under canopies of orange blossoms in Japan, travellers will be in good company, thanks to our Small Group Discoveries."

KEEPING IT PRIVATE

In 2018, Globus unveiled a 'European Private Touring' program that invites travellers to experience all of the attractions, sights and highlights of Europe for travelling parties of two to 24.

With Private Touring, travellers have their own dedicated tour director, private transportation and private guides on published itineraries, updated and priced to accommodate private groups.

■ globusfamily.com.au

G ADVENTURES HAS released its 2022 program of Arctic and Norway departures ahead of schedule.

The 12 new departures aboard the 134-passenger *G Expedition* will run from May to September 2022 and are available to book now.

Tours will allow guests to explore the Norwegian Fjords and the diverse wildlife of the Arctic peninsula.

"The early release of our 2022 Arctic and Norway Expedition program allows us to offer the best availability and flexibility to our travellers," said Adrian Piotto, Managing Director of G Adventures.

"With prices remaining fixed from our 2021 program, the new trips will offer those looking to re-book expedition tours affected by COVID-19 additional choice in departure dates and cabin styles, while supporting traveller desire to book new trips further in advance."

Expedition departures in 2022 include:

Cruise the Norwegian Fjords

This 13-day trip from Tromsø to Edinburgh sees participants journeying down the Norwegian coastline to the Scottish Isles, visiting UNESCO World Heritage sites, quaint fishing villages and venturing into fjords.

Passing glaciers, eating at local restaurants and taking guided nature walks, there is plenty of time to explore and learn more about

Norway's rich history and local customs.

Active travellers can opt for mountain hikes in Geiranger fjord, offering memorable views, while the culture lovers can visit folk museums and Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. Prices are from \$5,999 for departure on May 17, 2022.

Realm of the Polar Bear

As part of the Jane Goodall Collection, this eight-day Arctic tour starts and ends in Longyearbyen in Norway.

Expect close-up encounters with icebergs, glaciers and some of the region's most hard to spot wildlife.

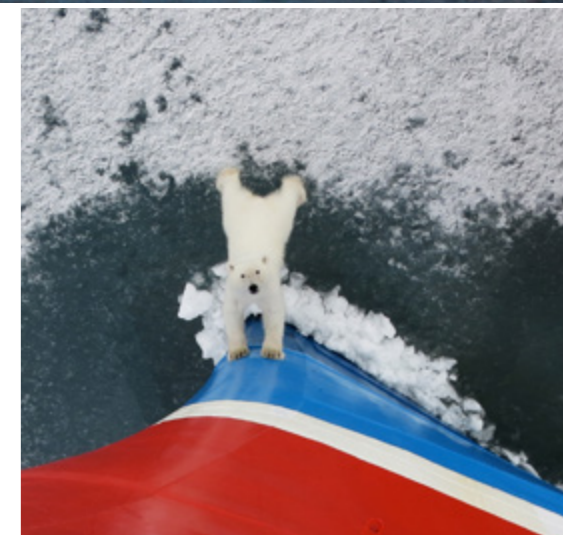
Exploring not only onboard, but also on zodiacs and foot, accompanied by G Adventures' experts, travellers can spot seals, reindeer, colonies of birds and, if they're lucky, the remarkable polar bear.

Prices start from \$5,599 excluding flights for departure on June 12, 2022.

Arctic Highlights

From the landscapes and history of Northwest Spitsbergen National Park to the waters of the Greenland Sea – home to minke whales, orcas and humpbacks – this 15-day expedition travels from Longyearbyen to Reykjavik.

Exploring the vast fjord system in Northeast Greenland National Park, travellers will also visit the tiny settlement of Ittoqqortoormiit,



where they will learn how this remote community lives.

Daily lectures onboard with specialists, covering everything from bird and whale watching to marine biology, educate participants about the many incredible sites and species they will see along the way.

Prices start from \$9,499 (excluding flights) for departure on August 19, 2022.

Having seen an increase in demand from travellers looking to book both a Norwegian and an Arctic Expedition, G Adventures has also introduced a new 22-day 'Norwegian Fjords and Realm of the Polar Bear' tour.

It departs from Edinburgh and takes in the Norwegian Fjords before journeying on to the Arctic regions of Svalbard, Spitsbergen and Longyearbyen.

■ gadventures.com



HOW SMART ARE YOU?

Our popular *Traveltease* quiz runs every week on our website, but we thought we'd give everyone a chance to see how much they know about travel. Can you get the correct answers without Google?

1. Prince William and Kate Middleton married in which famous church?

- a. St Paul's Cathedral
- b. Canterbury Cathedral
- c. Westminster Abbey
- d. St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

2. Nasi Goreng is a dish traditionally associated with which part of the world?

- a. Nepal
- b. Mexico
- c. Guatemala
- d. Indonesia

3. Balhannah is a town in which Australian state?

- a. South Australia
- b. Western Australia
- c. Victoria
- d. Tasmania

4. Where is the world's widest highway?

- a. Texas
- b. California
- c. Shanghai
- d. Dubai



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5. Which cruise line has ships with the names *Muse*, *Spirit* and *Wind*?

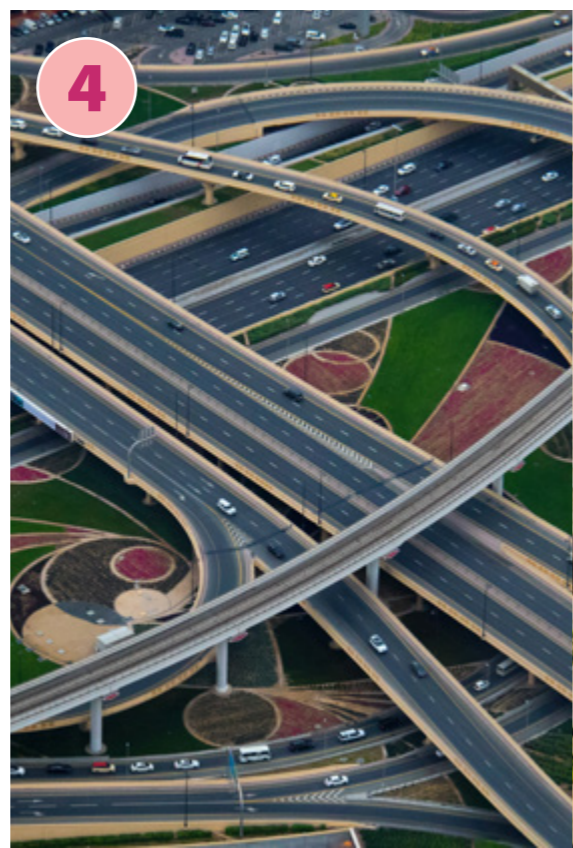
- a. Viking
- b. Royal Caribbean
- c. Silversea
- d. Avalon Waterways

6. The Atlas Mountains are on which continent?

- a. Asia
- b. Africa
- c. Europe
- d. North America

7. The world's largest children's museum is in which American state?

- a. California
- b. Florida
- c. New York
- d. Indiana



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8. The county of Cumbria is in which part of England?

- a. North
- b. South
- c. East
- d. West

9. If you were on holiday on the island of Kauai, where would you be?

- a. New Caledonia
- b. The Maldives
- c. Hawaii
- d. The Seychelles

10. Which airport has the code FLR?

- a. Fort Lauderdale
- b. Florence
- c. Freetown
- d. Fukuoka

11. According to the United Nations, how many countries are there in Asia?

- a. 48
- b. 50
- c. 52
- d. 54



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12. What is Barynya?

- a. Arabian coffee
- b. Turkish football team
- c. Russian folk dance
- d. Welsh town

13. *Jurassic Park* star Sam Neill was born where?

- a. Germany
- b. New Zealand
- c. Australia
- d. Northern Ireland

14. What is the most common colour found on national flags?

- a. White
- b. Blue
- c. Red
- d. Green

15. In which country will you find Namadgi National Park?

- a. Australia
- b. New Zealand
- c. Canada
- d. Bolivia



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For more quiz action, head to our website www.traveltalkmag.com.au or look out for *Traveltease* every Thursday.

ANSWERS: 1c, 2d, 3a, 4a, 5c, 6b, 7d, 8a, 9c, 10b, 11a, 12c, 13d, 14c, 15a

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*Lake Louise, Canada.
Photo courtesy Travel Marvel.*