

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Traveltalk

WWW.TRAVELTALKMAG.COM.AU SPECIAL EDITION - FEBRUARY 2021

ANIMAL MAGIC

10 tips for
a perfect
pet holiday

SINGAPORE

New celebrity
guide to the
Lion City

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

Your bucket
list trips
revealed!

VANUATU

A must read
love letter
to Australia

Plus: All the latest agent incentives and Traveltease quiz!

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PUBLISHED BY

Pointer Publishing Pty Ltd

ABN 92 150 111 701

PO Box 3104 Kingsley WA 6026

Website: www.traveltalkmag.com.au



Annual CAB audited circulation average: 5,944. Ave G/A annual emag downloads 540.
TOTAL CIRC 6,484 PER ISSUE
Oct 2018 to March 2019



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COVER IMAGE:
Sir Bani Yas Island Resort. Picture courtesy Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism

CAN TRAVEL OVERCOME ITS ROCKY FUTURE?

AS YOU peruse this, dear reader, I should have been motoring along the highways and byways of this glorious country.

A two-week exploration around South Australia in a rented campervan offering the chance to stay and play on both sides of the Spencer Gulf. The food, the wine, the sights: a much-needed break after a “difficult” year.

I should have known, of course, that it wouldn't be that simple. I'd already had to postpone the trip once because of the holiday Scrooge known as COVID-19.

Sadly the recent cluster outbreaks in Sydney and subsequent border closures put paid to my trip and I've had to contact the airline, rental company, accommodation provider, tour operator and several camp sites to deliver the bad news. Again.

To their credit, they've all offered me extended credit without any questions or hassle. Third time lucky, right?

But like a punch-drunk boxer dragging himself off the canvas after one too many blows to the chin, it makes you wonder just how many hits our beleaguered travel industry can take? With Perth going back into lockdown and a fresh case in New Zealand, it seems coronavirus may be here to stay.

Understandably consumer confidence is low and statements from politicians saying international travel is unlikely this year are about as helpful as a concrete parachute. Travel bubbles are often mentioned but remain elusive.

Those of us who work in travel know that domestic tourism alone is not enough to keep the industry afloat. Indeed, Margy Osmond, CEO of Tourism and Transport Forum, labels it a “complete myth” to think increased domestic travel can replace international visitation.

We need tourists to swell local coffers and help this country's bottom line, but even more importantly we need Aussies to book overseas holidays that keep tour companies, cruise lines and travel agencies in business.


Many agents have spent the best part of a year chasing refunds or credits for clients, with no significant personal income on the horizon. Some have jumped ship in order to simply pay the bills, going into real estate, childcare or driving a cab.

In this issue you'll read how industry leaders are calling on the Government to extend the JobKeeper program to save the industry we love. They're asking for a support program specifically tailored for the travel and tourism sector.

Importantly, you'll also find out how to become part of the 'Save The Travel Industry' campaign which has just been launched to put pressure on politicians to listen to our case.

Faced with the potential loss of more than 300,000 jobs should this not happen, we all have to hope that Canberra will listen and take action.

The travel industry is full of hard-working, resilient people – they don't deserve a knockout blow.



The travel industry is full of hard-working, resilient people – they don't deserve a knockout blow.s.



BAG A BIG BONUS

SILVERSEA CRUISES is offering bonus commission for new bookings made on any of 139 voyages across all seven continents.

The special bonus is available until February 28 and applies to voyages departing on or after July 1 through to December 31.

"Our travel partners are extremely important to Silversea, playing a key role for us and our guests," said Roberto Martinoli, Silversea's President and CEO.

"We are therefore delighted to offer this added benefit to express our appreciation for their hard work and make it even more rewarding to partner with us – especially during these challenging times.

"The bonus commission is a great way for travel professionals to earn extra income during these difficult days and know that they will be giving their luxury clients an incomparable vacation, filled with authentic experiences."

■ silversea.com



Earn your just rewards

VIKING IS kicking off 2021 with a bang with the launch of one of its biggest agent incentives yet.

The company is offering more than \$25,000 worth of Rewards by Viking points as part of its Discovery Cruise Sale.

"We are coming into the new year with hopes of change within the travel industry," said Michelle Black, Viking ANZ Managing Director.

"It has been a tough 12 months for the industry and travel agents in particular, but with the hope for a reopening of borders and renewal of international travel in all forms, we foresee a huge amount of pent up demand for cruise product out of Australia."

To enter, all bookings made by registered members in the Discovery Cruise Sale between December 29 last year and March 31 will go in the draw to win dollars to spend in the Rewards by Viking store.

Three prizes will be given away each month from January to March: first prize, \$5,000; second prize, \$2,500; third prize, \$1,000.

■ Rewardsbyviking.com

This incentive is G-Normous

G ADVENTURES IS bringing its agent incentive program to Australia for the first time while also reintroducing a discount scheme.

Live now and running until April 30, the G-Normous incentive program has been expanded this year to involve agents in Australia and New Zealand.

The top-selling Aussie agent each month will take home a \$3,500 G-Normous travel credit. In addition, a random draw will be held in April (from sales across the full incentive period) when one agent will win two \$3,500 travel credits, one each for them and a friend.

G Adventures is also relaunching its

discount program, offering up to 50 per cent off trips to preferred partner agents.

"It's important to have something to look forward to, so even though people are looking to book further ahead we want to incentivise our agents to secure these bookings now," said Dan Coleman, National Sales Manager, G Adventures.

"Despite the odds, last year's G-Normous was incredibly successful in other markets thanks to our hardworking and driven travel advisor community and we hope to replicate that success Down Under in 2021."

■ gadventures.com/gnormous



Maria Pandalai

Telling tales fulfils a lifelong dream

THE GLOBAL pandemic hasn't stopped one intrepid travel consultant from achieving a long-held ambition.

Maria Pandalai has worked in the travel industry for almost 25 years, including the last 11 with TravelManagers. Despite her expertise, the Queensland-based personal travel manager (PTM) has always had dreams of becoming a published travel writer.

Her journey along the journalistic road began back in 2019 during a nine-day family trip to Papua New Guinea. She sat next to a travel writer accompanying the group who offered to help her achieve her ambition.

"It started with me enrolling in a travel writing course run by a well-known and respected Sydney-based travel journalist," explains Maria.

The timing couldn't have been better: Pandalai's business, like those of so many others, was stalled as a result of COVID.

She applied for and received a Government Adaptation Grant, part of which she used to start-up her travel

writing business, Travel Tales By Maria, which included enrolment in the writing course.

"It covered all aspects of becoming a successful travel writer, including travel photography and how to pitch a story.

"We were also given the opportunity to have two of our travel stories critiqued, which proved very insightful when it came to writing subsequent content."

The course also taught her about different story themes, the planning process prior to writing a story, constructing an effective opening and ending, and how to market herself as a writer.

"Within a few weeks of completing the writing course, I responded to a call out from the *New Zealand Herald*.

"They were seeking writers to submit pitches for Kiwi summer holidays and as I had travelled to New Zealand I was able to pitch my idea: 'Tips for Successful Multi-Generational Summer Family Holidays.'"

The paper loved her concept and commissioned it as her very first

travel story, which was published in December.

Pandalai intends that her travel writing will complement her career as a PTM with TravelManagers, using her stories to generate interest and sales for her business, and vice versa.

"My plan is to draw inspiration from my travel experiences to publish 'Travel Tales by Maria'.

"I can then refer clients who are considering visiting the destinations about which I have written to this content.

"Promoting and linking to these stories on social media will serve dual purposes: to generate interest and to demonstrate my expertise."

Although 2020 was a challenging year for the travel industry, Pandalai says she is hopeful that an increase in demand for domestic travel, combined with her fledgling travel writing career, will keep her busy until international border restrictions eventually ease.

"For the time being, I plan to pitch more stories based on the domestic trips I have lined up. In an ideal world, I would love to be able to combine travelling, selling travel and writing about my travels – that's the ultimate goal!"

■ travelmanagers.com.au

Arm yourself with the right tools

AUSSIE AGENTS now have access to new resources to better enable them to sell New Zealand once international travel resumes.

The 100% Pure New Zealand Marketing Hub boasts a wealth of professionally designed and customisable free marketing tools created to empower travel agents and convert sales.

Launched by Tourism New Zealand, the resources available include videos, email templates, sharable Facebook posts, Zoom backgrounds, sales flyers and images.

Agents will be able to customise many of the assets with their own sales message, logo and contact information.

"Last year Australians made up more than 40 per cent of international

arrivals to New Zealand," said Sandra Etter, Head of Trade Tourism New Zealand – Australia.

"Australia's close relationship with New Zealand makes it a key market to keep preference high.

"Despite the changes in travel, consideration remains high with 70 per cent of active considerers fully supportive of a trans-Tasman bubble.

"We've developed this new self-service marketing hub for the travel industry to arm them with the right tools to masterfully engage their customers. Now more than ever it's important to support travel agents with around 48 per cent of bookings made through traditional channels."

The hub features 100% Pure New Zealand assets and marketing



campaigns including the current 'Messages from New Zealand' and as requested by advisers, themed travel experiences encompassing luxury, food and wine, wildlife, adventure, Māori culture, great outdoors, family and multi-gen travel, winter and ski, and road trips.

An online introduction to the hub will be held on February 11.

■ marketinghub.newzealand.com/au

POOR CHOICE OF WORDS

A SURVEY of travel cancellations due to COVID-19 has been labelled "misleading and provocative" by a leading industry group.

Consumer advocacy group CHOICE claimed its survey was focused on investigating the state of refund rights in Australia and campaigning for clearer consumer rights when travel arrangements are delayed or cancelled.

The CHOICE survey asks, "Europe currently has stronger refund rights for consumers booking travel than in Australia. Should Australia's laws be changed to make it easier to access refunds or compensation in the event of future events like COVID-19?"

This led Brett Jardine, Managing Director of the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO), to

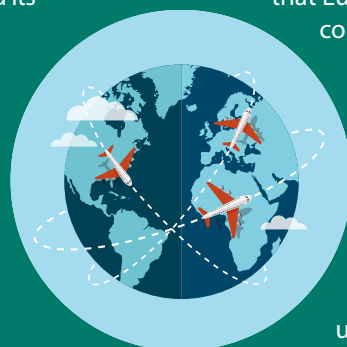
write to CHOICE contending that a number of questions within the survey were misleading and provocative.

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution and by suggesting that European Law is the answer leads to more confusion with consumers," he said.

Mr Jardine further suggested that if CHOICE was serious about participating in industry reform, it would be more productive for them to engage with the industry from the outset to ensure a clear understanding of the complexities involved.

He believes this approach would have been of greater value to consumers in helping them to understand, rather than launching a survey that is more likely to inflame consumer angst.

■ cato.travel





DIG DEEP FOR THE ISLANDS

A RELIEF fund has been set up to provide immediate financial relief for the people of the Galápagos Islands who have been devastated by COVID-19.

The initiative has been organised by Lindblad Expeditions and Island Conservation with the aim to raise \$US500,000 (approx. \$AU650,000).

Donations received by the Galápagos Island Relief Fund will enable Fundación Un Cambio Por La Vida (FUNCAVID), a non-profit organisation, to disseminate micro-loans to locals in need.

Tourism accounts for more than 80 per cent of the Galápagos economy so travel restrictions have caused profound hardship for families, businesses and the community at large.

■ islandconservation.org/galapagos-island-relief-fund



Fiji is sharing the caring

TOURISM FIJI has introduced a new program including enhanced safety, health and hygiene protocols to ensure the safety of visitors in a post COVID-19 world.

The 'Care Fiji Commitment' includes COVID-19 management protocols that follow the World Health Organisation guidelines to ensure that thorough and consistent risk mitigation measures are practiced throughout the islands.

The new program has been developed in consultation with Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services, COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Taskforce, Fijian Government and tourism industry stakeholders.

"The Care Fiji Commitment is our assurance to travellers that the health and safety of everyone who lives and travels here is our number one priority," said Robert Thompson, Acting CEO of Tourism Fiji.

"We have been working together as one across the tourism and health industries to fight COVID-19 and adapt to a new normal to get us ready for when we can welcome international travellers again."

Nearly 200 of Tourism Fiji's industry partners – including resorts, restaurants, tour operators and attractions – have gone through an extensive training process as their first step in making the 'Care Fiji Commitment'.

The process is ongoing and a full list of approved partners will be available once complete.

■ fiji.travel/carefijicommitment

T-REX GETS AN X-TENSION

IN A major boost for local tourism operators, Dinosaur Valley has been extended until the end of February due to popular demand.

The extension until February 28 gives visitors more time to plan a 'dino-sized' summer stay-cation in the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains outside Sydney.

Dinosaur Valley is an all-ages event which brings Scenic World's rainforest to life with dozens of life-sized dinosaurs. The exhibit has been a standout success this summer, attracting more than 30,000 visitors to the region since it launched on November 27.

"Dinosaur Valley has been incredibly well received despite wet weather and border closures, and it's encouraging to see such a strong appetite for authentic tourism experiences in our own backyard," said Anthea Hammon, Managing Director of Scenic World.

"We're thrilled to keep the doors open a little longer so more visitors can experience Dinosaur Valley and support Blue Mountains businesses who are struggling to survive on the back of bushfires, floods and the pandemic."

■ dinosaurvalley.com.au



CAMPAIGN URGES POLLIES TO THINK AGAIN

TRAVELTALK HAS thrown its weight behind a national campaign to encourage the government to extend JobKeeper support to the tourism industry.

The 'Save The Travel Industry' initiative runs until the end of March, with the JobKeeper scheme due to end on March 28.

It calls on the wider travel industry to get involved to lobby government to extend a rescue package to the industry from March 29, 2021 to 2022, when international borders are expected to reopen.

"We know how hard the travel industry has been hit by the effects of COVID-19 and the ongoing impact financial hardship has had on travel agents," said Jenny Rowland, Publisher of *Traveltalk*.

Members of the *Traveltalk* team have downloaded campaign assets to use across social media and have added their names to a petition hoping to raise awareness about the plight of the industry.

The campaign has been organised by Matt Leedham, founder of *KarryOn* and *Travel to Change the World*. It has received widespread support from travel agents and industry leaders.

"Our tourism industry has

been crippled by the closure of international borders with many thousands of jobs lost already," said Dennis Bunnik, Chair of the Council of Australian Tour Operators.

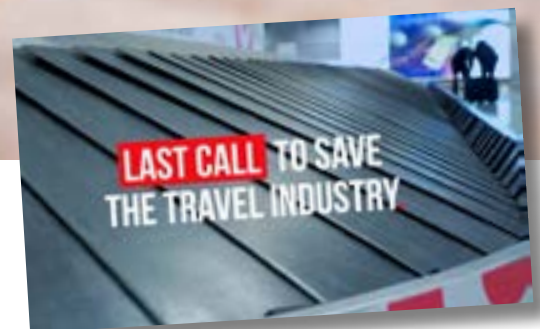
"The jobs that remain are hanging on by a thread and that thread is Jobkeeper. The planned end of Jobkeeper in March will have a catastrophic impact on jobs and businesses in the travel industry.

"Our fear is total collapse of the industry which will not only be devastating for those working in travel but will have a serious impact on Australian's ability to travel and explore the world safely once this crisis is over."

It is estimated that the continued closure of international borders, combined with the uncertainty of last-minute domestic border closures, has had a devastating impact with revenue down between 60 per cent and 99 per cent since March 2020.

"We must continue to work together to make sure Government at all levels understands that until international travel happens, we need ongoing tailored support," said Darren Rudd, CEO of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents.

"The Government's focus on supporting domestic tourism is great



but it's more a confidence boost for consumers in getting them to travel within Australia rather than having any meaningful financial or revenue benefits for our travel agents, travel wholesalers and tour operators who rely on Australians travelling overseas."

Mr Rudd has already written to key political decision makers including Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Tourism Minister Dan Tehan to reinforce the need for ongoing tailored support for the sector including an evolution of JobKeeper – albeit under a different name.

"In speaking to parliamentarians from a range of parties and independents, we are confident they understand the critical importance of keeping the sector afloat.

"We now need that to be translated into a renamed and repurposed JobKeeper program commencing April 1 specifically for the travel and tourism sector."

■ Industry can head to SaveTheTravelIndustry.com.au to find out how they can help.



average domestic tourist and in the case of Chinese tourists – our biggest market pre-COVID – spending over five and a half times,” said Margy Osmond, CEO of TTF.

“The absence of this high yield market, the continuing uncertainty around domestic borders and the lack of confidence that the constant border changes create makes it impossible for domestic tourism to compensate for the lack of international travellers.

“The prospect of no international travel in 2021 makes the domestic tourism market all the more critical.

“A strong tourism sector is critical to the recovery of the national economy and the Government needs to support our industry over the next 12 months so that we can play our part in the rebuilding of Australia’s bottom line.

“On behalf of tourism operators across the country, TTF urges the Federal and State governments to work together with industry and implement a simple set of uniform rules that allow Australians to undertake domestic travel.

“We will also need further support in the form of something that looks, walks and talks like JobKeeper, even if it does not go by this name, if we are to have any chance of surviving then recovering.”

BILLIONS LOST DURING PEAK SEASON

NEW RESEARCH shows the travel industry lost almost \$7 billion over the peak summer holiday period thanks to new COVID-19 outbreaks and state border closures.

A study commissioned by the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) shows that the Northern Beaches outbreak and the subsequent border restrictions imposed on Sydney and New South Wales residents has spending predicted to be down by \$6.8 billion from December 24 to January 31.

The research also forecasts that the lack of international visitors and

continuing uncertainty over domestic borders during 2021 will lead to potential job losses of almost 320,000 by September 2021, if the JobKeeper subsidy is not extended.

New South Wales is expected to take the biggest hit with 118,000 job losses while Victoria and Queensland will also suffer from the loss of 85,300 and 59,700 jobs respectively.

“Suggestions that increased domestic travel can replace the lack of international visitation is a complete myth with the average international tourist spending three times the



National and state tourism bodies have been united in urging the government to extend the JobKeeper program.

Queensland’s Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, has also echoed the industry’s call for a continuation of tourism business support.

“We welcome the Premier’s support on this issue,” said Daniel Gschwind, Chief Executive of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council.

“The long-term cost of letting businesses fail will far exceed the potential cost of investing in those businesses that will need support beyond the end of JobKeeper.”



The Ccaccacollo women's weaving co-operative in Peru's Sacred Valley

Aussies vow to travel differently

A NEW survey has shown that Aussie travellers are committed to making a difference when travel returns.

The research by G Adventures revealed 73 per cent of people surveyed want their travel dollars to benefit local people.

The survey was designed to reveal travellers' 're-travel resolutions' in terms of why they want to head out into the world again.

Respondents across Australasia were also asked what is most important to them when they do and how they will change their travel behaviours to have a more positive impact on the planet and its people.

When asked the main reason why they wanted to travel again, the top answer from travellers was to immerse themselves in a different culture (66 per cent).

This was followed by a desire to reconnect with the world (49 per cent), with one third of travellers (37 per cent) also looking to connect with nature on their next international trip.

Some 73 per cent stated the most

important factor in their holiday choice to be that their money benefits local people, followed by ensuring wildlife is protected where they go (53 per cent).

Nearly half of travellers (46 per cent) want to avoid overcrowded tourist destinations on their next trip, with 54 per cent stating that they will visit more remote places/less visited areas of a destination.

The respondents were also asked to commit to one 'big small action' they could take to ensure they travel better.

The most common commitment was to support local people and businesses at 37 per cent.

This was closely followed by doing more research before they book their trip at 34 per cent, with a further 17 per cent making a commitment to reduce plastic and/or bring a reusable bottle with them when they go.

Bruce Poon Tip, Founder of G Adventures, said the results gave agents a reason to book their clients now for travel later once restrictions are lifted.

"It is apparent travellers want their holidays to be more meaningful after this forced hiatus for international travel," he said.

"They want their money to support local people in the destinations they go to and the best way for people to show their support now is to make a commitment to travel, so these communities can benefit later.

"We understand there's uncertainty in terms of when people will be able to travel, but with our flexible booking conditions customers can have peace of mind, as well as a trip booked to look forward to when restrictions lift.

"We know there is pent-up demand building, so now is the time to be booking ahead for when we can travel again."

* Survey results are based on responses from G Adventures' global consumer panel, of which two thirds are former travellers and 357 were from Australia and New Zealand. The survey was in-field from December 7 to 10, 2020.

■ gadventures.com



GOOD DAY SUNSHINE

After five years in charge of Fiji Tourism, MATT STOECKEL has returned to Australia to take up the role as CEO of Visit Sunshine Coast. Here, he shares his goals for the 'Sunny' Coast, working with the travel trade and a few sights in the region that can't be missed.

Q: What excites you most about your new role?

A: The Sunshine Coast is seriously special. I know there are hundreds of wonderful beach destinations along Australia's east coast, but few tourism regions have the diversity of attractions that the Sunshine Coast offers.

As one of my team said to me from the start, "there is far more to the region than just sunshine and the coast", and in the month I've been here, that has become abundantly clear.

During my time in Fiji, I was always looking to diversify the image of tourism, and I'm looking forward to building on the work the team has done to expand the visitor base for the Sunshine Coast even further.

Q: What are your short and long term goals for the Sunshine Coast?

A: In 2020, our team proved very agile at targeting the right markets and given that uncertainty will remain about borders for the foreseeable future our short-term strategy will be to continue to target the Queensland drive market, which has shown a real appetite for the holiday product the Sunshine Coast offers and increasingly interstate visitors from NSW and

Victoria when appropriate.

In the longer term we are looking to an expansion of direct air routes, utilising Sunshine Coast Airport's new expanded runway.

Already, the Airport has attracted new routes from Cairns, Canberra and Newcastle, and we see massive potential from the New Zealand market, when international borders reopen.

Q: How do you see Visit Sunshine Coast working with the travel industry?

A: I have long enjoyed a very close and dynamic relationship with the Australian travel industry and believe there is considerable room to grow Visit Sunshine Coast's partnerships with key players in the Australian travel trade.

The Sunshine Coast – with its nature-based, uncrowded environment – offers exactly the product that domestic and international visitors are seeking and we can work with the industry to present the destination via very attractive packages.

Q: Tell us a few things that visitors to the Sunshine Coast shouldn't miss?

A: Even if visitors come for the beaches – and we do have many of



Matt Stoeckel, CEO of Visit Sunshine Coast

Australia's best – some time should be set aside for touring the Hinterland and Glass House Mountains, which are truly spectacular.

It is a haven for adventure lovers: you can be surfing before breakfast and swimming under a waterfall by lunch, which highlights just how accessible the region is.

Another 'must' is tasting the food scene and of course getting up close to the animals at Australia Zoo.

Q: What sort of shape are Sunny Coast tourism businesses in right now?

A: It's an incredibly challenging time for tourism operators across the region.

While some businesses have been fortunate to innovate and capitalise on increased demand for their products and experiences, other operators have been deeply impacted commercially by adjustments to their business operations required through the new regulations and requirements.

However, one thing that all the operators on the Sunshine Coast can take away is that their commitment to the health and safety standards has ensured the Sunshine Coast has been regarded as a safe and desirable destination to visit and something that will hold us in good standing for 2021.



ROO BEAUTY AUSSIE TRIP

CONSTELLATION JOURNEYS have unveiled their first Australian domestic air tour, offering travel by privately chartered aircraft.

'Destination Australia' departs Sydney on April 23 for an eight-day experience covering Tasmania, South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland.

The fully inclusive tour is onboard a Qantas 737-800: the 'Retro Roo' painted in 1970s livery.

Guests will experience Hobart and surrounds, Hahndorf, Barossa Valley, Kata Tjuta, Uluru and Longreach. They

will also enjoy exclusive gala dinners, after-hours access and private events including at Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Peter Lehmann Wines, Field of Light Uluru and the Qantas Founders Museum, Longreach.

"After the worst period Australian tourism has ever encountered, we are delighted with the response to our domestic tour and especially pleased to be working with dozens of small and medium businesses as they get back on their feet," said Dan Kotzmann, Managing Director of Constellation Journeys.

"By engaging with regional tourism centres and operators, we have been able to create many exceptional travel experiences for our guests."

The tour is priced from \$9,450 per person and includes tour flights, premium accommodation, meals and beverages, gala dinners, VIP travel experiences and the services of expert tour hosts, a concierge and a doctor.

The total package price is also commissionable to travel agents at a level of 10 per cent.

■ constellationjourneys.com.au

Dreaming tour becomes reality

ARCADIA EXPEDITONS have launched a new Australian air safari that explores the ancient wisdom of the world's oldest living culture.

'Indigenous Immersion: The Art of Storytelling' is a 15-day tour travelling to rarely-visited parts of the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Through rock art and stories of The Dreaming, it takes a deep dive into Australia's extraordinary Indigenous culture.

The safari will be led by Professor Jo McDonald, one of Australia's most distinguished rock art experts and a specialist in Indigenous archaeology.

Guests will spend time with Indigenous custodians, meeting Indigenous guides, elders and artists, hearing their stories and looking at the history and culture of Aboriginal Australia through their eyes.

Highlights include Groote Eylandt, Arnhem Land and a flight on the Paspaley Pearling's meticulously restored Mallard flying boat to the Kimberley Coast.

There will be a behind the scenes visit to Darwin's Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory with the museum's curator and a trip to the remote Aboriginal communities of Maningrida and Elcho Island, where clients meet with local artists to learn more about their craft and how rock art and Dreaming stories inspire their work.

"Aboriginal Australians remain one of the most misunderstood Indigenous populations in the world," said David Adams, Co-Founder of Arcadia Expeditions.

"This expedition is aimed at people who are curious to learn about the



Rock art at Mount Borradaile, NT

complexity and spiritual depth of Indigenous Australia and discover more about this remarkable culture."

The 15-day tour travels exclusively by private aircraft and is available for private departures only with a flexible range of dates available in 2021 and 2022. Prices start from \$35,000 per person.

■ arcadiaexpeditions.com

Say hello to savings over here

AAT KINGS and Inspiring Journeys have launched their 'Hello From Here' sale offering savings of up to \$600 per couple.

Guests can cruise along the coast of the Freycinet Peninsula and past the towering pink granite cliffs to Wineglass Bay on AAT Kings' 13-day 'Perfect Tasmania' guided holiday.

Alternatively, stop and smell the lavender at Bridestowe Lavender Estate and wander the fields while tasting their homemade lavender ice cream (scouting for that perfect selfie spot) on the seven-day 'Tassie Getaway' guided holiday.

With Inspiring Journeys, guests have the opportunity to embark on a



trip to the haunt of the Lightning Man, Aboriginal clans and crocodiles that roam Kakadu's floodplains on the five-day 'Kakadu's Ancient Secrets' itinerary.

Or, on the five-day 'Outback Australia: The Colour of Red' trip, travellers get to enjoy an 'Under a Desert Moon' local dining experience

– a degustation dinner with matching wines under the canopy of a starry southern hemisphere sky.

The sale runs until March 1 for selected departure dates from April 1 to March 31, 2022. Terms and conditions apply.

■ inspiringjourneys.com; aatkings.com



Demand leads to new date

GLOBUS FAMILY of brands (GFOB) has added a new date for one of its popular Aussie tours due to overwhelming demand.

The 10-day 'Contrasts of the Kimberley' itinerary in the Top End is close to selling out on all dates in 2021. A new departure date for the Globus trip beginning in Darwin and ending in Broome has now been added on September 19.

This itinerary is part of GFOB's new collection of Australia and New Zealand tours, launched last October and created specifically with local travellers in mind.

The collection showcases the best the two countries have to offer, from the famous sites to the lesser known regions, giving Aussies the opportunity

to explore closer to home.

All of the newly launched tours have been selling well and Chris Fundell, Head of Marketing Australasia for Globus family of brands, said that it's been fantastic to see the positive response from the trade so far.

"It's been so encouraging to see strong bookings coming from our trade partners for our newly launched Australia and New Zealand product," he said.

"While Australians can't travel overseas right now, there's plenty to explore in our own backyard in 2021. We're delighted to have this solid start to the New Year and to be driving some business to our trade partners at this time."

■ globus.com.au

* TRAFALGAR ARE also offering savings on 2021 and 2022 trips as part of their 'Break Out & Break Free' sale.

Travellers can save up to 12.5 per cent (T&C's apply) on a collection of Trafalgar experiences across Europe, the UK, the U.S. and Canada.

Experienced Travel Directors and local specialists take care of all the details as guests travel on any of the company's trips, such as the 'Treasure of Spain and Portugal' or 'Best of Britain'.

With enhanced COVID-19 related protocols, such as smaller group sizes, social distancing measures and additional stringent sanitisation procedures, guests can travel with confidence.

■ trafalgar.com



10 tips to animal holiday magic

PREPARING FOR a long road trip can be hectic at the best of times, but including your pet doesn't need to add to the stress.

Here are 10 top tips from PetSafe Australia to make sure both you and your furry friend arrive in perfect shape.

1. ASSESS YOUR PET

Make sure your pet is up for the journey. Travel can be a stressful proposition for humans and even more so for our pawed pals if they lack the temperament or health to make a successful trek.

Before deciding to take Fido, best to do a health check with your vet,

especially if you plan on traveling a long distance.

2. PREPARE THEM FIRST

Your first big road trip with your pet should not be their first road trip ever! Make sure that before your departure date, you take them on short drives first.

Start with just sitting in the car in the driveway and then gradually extend the time and distance; until they start to get in easily and out of the car without fear. Please make sure you put them in their care crate or seat each time.

3. GET ORGANISED

Before you depart on the journey make sure you have all of your pets' vaccination documents and other health records.

Don't forget toys, bedding, food and water, bowls and waste bags. A car cuddler bed, for example, can double as a sleeping pad in hotel rooms or the home of a friend or relative.

4. SAFETY FIRST

If a car is your primary transportation, make sure your dog is secured in a booster seat or dog safety seat or behind a dog barrier. You never know when he might move in for a front seat kiss...and that might not end well.

“Nobody wants to stay at the heartbreak hotel, so if you pine for your pets while traveling, consider options for either upscale or low-cost lodging with your dog.”



*PetSafe
ambassador Tania
Zaetta and Charlie*

A pet vehicle ramp can help a dog enter and exit your vehicle with ease and save wear and tear on his – and your – joints during potty breaks. Car seat covers can help keep your car clean for the duration of the journey.

5. UPDATE THEIR ID

Ensure you have updated your dogs' microchip details and identification tags with your contact details before leaving. There can be a higher risk of your pet getting lost when you travel to an unfamiliar area.

6. MEAL TIMES

On the day you leave, feed them only a very light meal around four hours before your departure.

It is usually advisable to keep their stomach empty during the travel

hours, feeding them only once you have arrived at your destination, or feed them a small cup of dry food every four to six hours. Please do not give them human food.

7. HYDRATION

Ensure your pet has access to fresh water at least every two hours throughout the journey. Dogs need more water than we do and this is especially important on long summer road trips.

Your pet needs to drink at least 90mls of water for every kilogram they weigh – every day. A dog that weighs 20kg (for example) will require almost two litres of water. Ensure you bring along large containers of water that is just for your pet.

8. BATHROOM BREAKS

Depending on your dog's age will depend on how regularly you will need a bathroom stop. For example, an older dog could go for hours without stopping while a puppy will

need to toilet every hour.

A rule of thumb is to time it with your stops every two hours.

9. NEVER LEAVE THEIR SIDE

Never leave a dog alone in a car, even for just a short period. Not only can they suffer from heat exhaustion, which can be life-threatening, but also leaving them alone in the car in an unfamiliar environment could cause them severe anxiety. So always keep them near you.

10. ROOM AT THE INN

Nobody wants to stay at the heartbreak hotel, so if you pine for your pets while travelling, consider options for either upscale or low-cost lodging with your dog.

Several websites maintain lists of pet-friendly hotels, but it is best to contact the front desk before arrival. Additional fees may apply.

Make sure you travel with all the pet essentials, including disposable litter boxes for your feline friend.

■ petsafe.com/AU

Pick a perfect polar passage



A RECORD numbers of bookings for its Arctic and Global 2022 season have led Aurora Expeditions to open pre-registration for its Antarctica 2022-2023 itineraries.

The 22/23 season marks the highest number of trips the company has operated in one Antarctic season, with 26 departures running across its two purpose-built expedition ships, *Greg Mortimer* and *Sylvia Earle*.

The program will open for bookings in mid-February as the company prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary. Highlights include:

ANTARCTIC EXPLORER

Experience the immensity of Antarctica and immerse yourself in the beauty of the Peninsula, where glaciers tumble into the sea, penguins are dwarfed by soaring peaks and humpback and minke whales feast on abundant krill.

WILD ANTARCTICA

Famed for its tabular icebergs, year-round sea ice, ancient fossils and the pivotal role it played in Shackleton's Endurance expedition, the Weddell Sea offers great opportunities for exploration.

SUBANTARCTIC SAFARI

The Falklands~Malvinas is a beacon for bird lovers, with the diversity of penguin species, including king, macaroni, rockhopper, magellanic and gentoo.

In South Georgia, jagged peaks and glaciers create a backdrop for beaches crowded with elephant and fur seals, and countless penguins.

Other voyages include 'South Georgia and Antarctic Odyssey', 'Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula' and 'Antarctica Complete'.

■ auroraexpeditions.com.au

Aussies benefit from this Carnival atmosphere

CARNIVAL HAS announced its latest round of sailings, offering more Australian voyages than ever before.

Departing from Sydney, the cruise line has 56 itineraries scheduled from July 2022 through to June 2023.

Carnival Splendor will be making more than 130 port calls to 17 destinations across five different island nations (Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji) including calls to three Australian states – Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria.

"We have refined our sailing schedule to provide more visits to the stunning Australian destinations our guests love with twice as many visits to the Great Barrier Reef and Tasmania, and 25 per cent more cruises to Moreton Island," said Jennifer Vandekreeke, Vice President and General Manager

Australia, Carnival Cruise Line.

"We have also increased our New Zealand trips by 50 per cent. Guests sailing from Sydney on Carnival will have more options than ever to discover our beautiful country."

Meanwhile the first steel for Carnival's next Excel-class ship was cut in a traditional maritime ceremony in Finland recently.

A sister ship to Carnival Mardi Gras, *Carnival Celebration* will debut next year and is scheduled to begin sailing from PortMiami in November 2022, part of the cruise line's 50th birthday festivities.

The new ship will include BOLT, the first roller coaster at sea, along with design features and new signature venues created specifically for this vessel.

■ carnival.com.au



Check out this really novel nine

PONANT HAS announced nine new Australia and New Zealand itineraries for 2021.

The news follows recent confirmation of an additional three Kimberley voyages scheduled for this season.

The new range of small ship itineraries has been developed to introduce guests to more of Australasia's outstanding yet often rarely visited regions.

Highlights include Ningaloo Reef and Rowley Shoals, Ulva Island, the Antipodes and Macquarie Island, as well as accessing some spotlight food and wine destinations such as King Island and the Tamar Valley.



Le Soléal. Picture courtesy PONANT

Some of the nine itineraries include:

- * **Jewels of the West Coast:** Broome to Fremantle, departing September 22 with 10-nights onboard *Le Soléal*. Highlights include Rowley Shoals, Montebello Islands, Ningaloo and Shark Bay.
- * **Along Australia's South Coast:** Fremantle to Hobart, departing October 17 with 13 nights onboard *Le Soléal*. Highlights include Esperance, Recherche Archipelago, King Island and Port Lincoln.
- * **Tasmania Circumnavigation:** Hobart to Hobart, departing October 30 and November 8 with nine nights onboard *Le Soléal*. Highlights include Port Davey, Maria Island, Tamar Valley and Albatross Island.
- * **New Zealand's Fiordlands & the Snares:** Dunedin to Wellington, departing November 21 & 30 with nine nights on board *Le Soléal*. Highlights include Ulva Island, the Snares and Dusky Sound.

■ au.ponant.com



DIAMOND IS CRUISE LINE'S LATEST JEWEL

VETERAN JOURNALIST and broadcaster Anne Diamond has been announced as godmother of Viking's seventh ocean ship.

The 930-guest *Viking Venus* was 'floated out' last June and is scheduled to debut this year.

Diamond is best known for her pioneering work on morning shows in the UK during the 1980s along with a career in frontline television that has lasted for more than 40 years.

"I am thrilled and honoured to be entrusted as godmother to the *Viking Venus* and cannot wait until we can celebrate her inaugural cruise in a safer and happier 2021," said Ms Diamond.

■ vikingcruises.com.au



FRESH GLIMPSE OF A NEW DAWN

THE LATEST ship in the Silversea fleet has touched water for the first time following her float-out at a shipyard in Italy.

Silver Dawn will become the luxury cruise line's 10th ship when she is delivered in November. The company welcomed the arrival of *Silver Origin* and *Silver Moon* last year.

Accommodating 596 guests in 298 ocean-view suites – 96 per cent of which have a private veranda – *Silver Dawn* will deliver small ship intimacy with spacious accommodation.

Part of a long-term plan to grow and enhance the fleet, *Silver Dawn* is a sister ship to *Silver Muse*, built in 2017, and *Silver Moon*.

"We proudly celebrate this major milestone in the build of our beautiful new *Silver Dawn*," said Roberto Martinoli, President and CEO of Silversea Cruises.

"Our guests will benefit from many pioneering enhancements aboard the 10th ship in our fleet. We look forward to revealing these in the coming months."

■ silversea.com



Second chance to enjoy the Passion

UNIWORLD HAVE announced a pre-cruise extension in celebration of Oberammergau and a new itinerary for 2022.

"We're ready to bounce back and bring our guests the experiences they deserve in 2022," said Ellen Bettridge, President & CEO of Uniworld.

"With last year's Oberammergau being postponed, we've been working behind the scenes to ensure our pre-cruise extension offers our guests

even more VIP access and inclusions than ever before."

Due to the coronavirus, the much-anticipated 2020 Oberammergau *Passion Play* performance in the Bavarian Alps was postponed until 2022.

Uniworld will offer its new four-day pre-cruise extension on select sailings of S.S. *Beatrice's* 'Delightful Danube' itinerary in conjunction with Oberammergau's 42nd production,

running from May 25 to September 14, 2022.

Guests who book the extension will experience a morning of leisure in Oberammergau, followed by the *Passion Play*. The package also includes a three-course dinner during the show, hotel transfer from Munich Airport, a one-night stay in Munich, a two-night stay in Oberammergau, premium reserved seating to the *Passion Play* and transportation to and from the show.

Rates start at \$5,399 per person based on double occupancy.

On the new eight-day 'Dutch Delight' sailing, guests will visit popular cities like Amsterdam, the port town of Harlingen known for its beaches and Nijmegen, the oldest city in the Netherlands.

The itinerary will also include access to the seventh International Horticultural Expo Floriade Expo 2022 on select dates, a decennial living laboratory with inspirational exhibitions by countries, cities and innovative businesses sharing ideas for a greener, healthier way of life.

■ uniworld.com

THE SKY ISN'T THE LIMIT

APT has launched its 2021/22 Australia small ship expedition cruises featuring the *MS Caledonian Sky*.

Overwhelming demand for its Kimberley Coastal Cruising program and a new Cape York and Great Barrier Reef Expedition cruise has seen APT plan eight new cruises around Australia.

Itineraries cover the Great Barrier Reef, Kangaroo Island, King Island, the Abrolhos Islands and the rugged east coast of Tasmania. Bookings made prior to March 31 will save up to \$2,000 per couple.

"It is exciting to be offering a new range of cruises in Australian waters," said Mladen Vukic, General Manager Product.

"This has led us to expand our small ship expedition cruising range to include even more diverse and isolated destinations across Australia."

Selected itineraries include:

- * 15-day 'Great Bight Coastal Discovery': Adelaide to Perth, including 14 nights on the *MS Caledonian Sky*, 41 meals and onboard beverages from \$15,995 per person twin share, including saving of \$2,000 per couple.
- * 12-day 'Tasmania & South Australia Expedition': Hobart to Adelaide, including 11 nights on the *MS Caledonian Sky*, 32 meals and onboard beverages from \$11,995 per person twin share, including saving of \$2,000 per couple.
- * 15-day 'Colours of the Coral Coast': Perth to Broome, including 14 nights on the *MS Caledonian Sky*, 41 meals and onboard beverages from \$15,395 per person twin share, including saving of \$2,000 per couple.

■ aptouring.com.au/calsky



This airline is your flexible friend

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA has become the first Aussie airline to offer booking flexibility for travel until June 30 under a revised customer policy.

The extended flexibility, part of the airline's 'Passenger Promise', will see Australian travellers able to make unlimited date changes to their bookings, without incurring any change fees, for bookings made by March 31 for travel until June 30.

A spokesman for Virgin Australia Group said the initiative was all about giving customers peace of mind when making new bookings or changing an existing booking.

"We're committed to our guests during these uncertain times and

we're proud to offer flexibility for travel until June 30," he said.

"We've seen many travellers' plans impacted by domestic border restrictions and so we're here to give them comfort when booking a Virgin Australia flight that they'll be able to change their travel date if they need to.

"With a vaccine on the way, coupled with the fantastic way Australians have managed the pandemic, we're optimistic that border restrictions will

be lifted in the not-too-distant future.

"Our extended flexibility will help to give travellers the confidence they need to make a booking and plan that long-awaited holiday or family reunion, knowing that the booking is protected."

In addition to the new flexibility, the airline has committed to continuing weekly 'Happy Hour' sales offering a selection of one-way domestic fares under \$100.

■ virginaustralia.com



Qantas backs early take-off

QANTAS HAS brought forward potential flights to the UK and USA amid optimism surrounding the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

Despite the current escalation of cases in both countries, Qantas believes flights to the two pivotal destinations could take place from July 1.

According to a report by the ABC, Qantas flights from Australia to Asian destinations like Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore have been pushed back from March to July 1 to provide more time for safe travel bubbles to be created.

A Qantas spokesperson told the ABC that the airline's international schedule was continuing to be updated "in response to the developing COVID-19 situation."

"Recently we have aligned the selling of our international services to reflect our expectation that international travel will begin to restart from July 2021," the spokesperson said.

"This is consistent with what we said last December in our trading update, that we don't believe at this stage there will be any material international flying up until the end of June 2021."

■ qantas.com





Artist Impression, Sofitel Adelaide



25Hours Hotel Zurich West. Picture courtesy Stephan Lenke

IT'S NOW 25HOURS FROM SYDNEY

ACCOR HAVE announced plans to open the second 25hours Hotel in Australia, revitalising a major event and hospitality landmark.

25hours Hotel Sydney will be located in a heritage building in Oxford Street in Paddington. The property first opened in 1911 as the West's Olympia Theatre and is in an area renowned for its diverse culture and creative scene, close to world famous retailers, restaurants and parklands.

The new hotel will have 105

guestrooms and a rooftop bar overlooking Oxford Street, Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and harbour. Other amenities will include a restaurant, cafe, fitness centre and conference facilities.

"The building itself is in an incredible location and has enormous potential, and the open areas such as the rooftop bar and the central courtyard will allow us to truly bring our new hospitality concept to life," said Simon McGrath, CEO Accor Pacific.

The hotel is scheduled to open at the end of 2022 and will follow 25hours Melbourne, the plans for which were revealed last year.

It is going to be a busy year across the Accor portfolio with the launch of the Mövenpick brand in Australia, the first internationally recognised five-star hotel to be built in Adelaide in 30 years and two new The Sebel properties.

Mövenpick Hotel Hobart has just opened, The Sebel Melbourne Ringwood should welcome its first guests this month and Sofitel Adelaide is on track to open in mid-2021.

Accor will also open a new luxury boutique MGallery hotel, The Porter House Hotel Sydney, on Castlereagh Street in late 2021.

■ 25hours-hotels.com; group.accor.com

Aussie debut for sky high hotel

PLANS FOR the first Wyndham Grand hotel to be built in Australia have been revealed.

Wyndham Grand Adelaide will become one of the tallest hotels in South Australia when it opens in 2024.

The \$150 million skyscraper will rise 120 metres from King William Street in the city's CBD. It will feature some 347 contemporary rooms and suites and an extensive array of facilities.

These will include an infinity pool with a sun deck and bar offering panoramic city views, a day spa with sauna and treatment rooms, and a fitness centre. The five-star property will also feature an upscale restaurant, wine bar, sky bar with alfresco seating and a rooftop restaurant.

"This new hotel will represent the pinnacle of hospitality available in Adelaide and we are proud to have the opportunity to provide an incomparable experience to guests and showcase Adelaide to the world," said Warren Cullum, Senior Vice President, Operations at Wyndham Destinations Asia Pacific.

■ wyndhamhotels.com





Woodcut. Picture courtesy James D. Morgan/Getty Images

What a Crowning achievement

AFTER FOUR years of construction, venues at Crown Sydney have opened to the public for the first time.

These include the six-star luxury hotel Crown Towers and restaurant line-up, featuring a'Mare, Woodcut, Nobu and Yoshii's Omakase.

"Sydney is one of the world's great cities and it deserves a great hotel," said Peter Crinis, Chief Executive Officer of Crown Sydney.

"A lot of time has been spent getting the offer right. Our chef line up reflects some of the most exciting names in the culinary food scene – we hope this becomes a destination people want to visit time and time again."

Situated in the Barangaroo Precinct, Crown Towers offers sophisticated, modern rooms that capture the essence of the hotel's harbourside setting.

Crown Spa Sydney includes terraces for yoga and meditation, relaxation rooms, vitality pools, experience showers and infrared saunas.

■ crownsydney.com.au



City icon reopens after refurb

PARMELIA HILTON Perth has undergone a major \$45 million transformation as it prepares to welcome visitors this month.

The 10-month renovation has seen the property introduce touchless technology and a new thoroughfare to the cultural, shopping and dining precinct of Brookfield Place.

The hotel is also participating in the Hilton CleanStay Program and Hilton EventReady with CleanStay to enhance the guest experience during their stay.

"This fabulous renovation of the iconic Parmelia Hilton Perth – 53 years young – truly makes it the city's best connected hotel," said Heidi Kunkel, Vice President, Operations, Australasia, Hilton.

Works carried out include a complete revitalisation of the lobby, 32 new rooms, the addition of an executive lounge and refurbishment to its restaurant. Opening rates are from \$225 per night.

■ perth.hilton.com



Mulgrave



Courtyard by Marriott
Brisbane, South Bank



JW Marriott Gold Coast
Resort & Spa

TIME TO GO A COURTING

TWO NEW hotel developments are coming to Melbourne's outer suburbs following a recent announcement from Courtyard by Marriott.

Mulgrave (212 rooms) and Truganina (141 rooms) are expected to open in December 2023 and December 2024 respectively.

A classic, moderately priced option for business and leisure travellers, the hotels will be the first for the brand outside of the Victorian capital, with Marriott's first Courtyard hotel due to open in West Melbourne later this year.

"Despite the challenges faced by our industry, 2020 was a record year of hotel signings for Marriott International in the Australia Pacific region," said Richard Crawford, Senior Director of Hotel Development for Marriott International.

"We know that our guest profile will change and we are already seeing the rewards of pivoting our focus to local markets."

As evidence of this, Courtyard by Marriott Brisbane, South Bank opens for business this month.

The hotel has 134 guest rooms, all-day dining restaurant, gym, indoor heated pool and meeting space overlooking the Brisbane River and

local parklands. "This will be our fifth Brisbane hotel and cements our market dominance in the city as we expand our portfolio south of the river for the first time," said Sean Hunt, Area Vice President for Marriott International.

Meanwhile the JW Marriott brand has made its debut in Australia with the opening of the 223-room JW Marriott Gold Coast Resort & Spa.

It features six restaurants, a saltwater lagoon and a freshwater pool, Spa by JW, Family by JW programs and function space.

■ courtyard.marriott.com;
jwmarriottgoldcoast.com



Concertmaster, Andrew Haveron



Spicer's Vineyard Estate



WHY THIS ESCAPE IS JUST SO GREAT

INSIGHT VACATIONS have celebrated a major milestone with the inaugural departure of one of their 'Local Escapes' trips in Australia.

The Tasmanian adventure was also the first holiday operating globally for the brand since the pandemic and the company's debut tour in this country.

Starting in Hobart and over six days guests experienced the wilderness of Tasmania and enjoyed behind the scenes discoveries in historic locations.

Travelling on the company's 'Tasmania's Food, Wine & Whiskey' itinerary, visitors took VIP winery tours and enjoyed local dining experiences, such as the Agrarian Kitchen Eatery and a gourmet day tour of Bruny Island.

Just as importantly, they also gave back to local communities in a bid to kick-start tourism in the state.

Insight Vacations created the selection of carefully curated itineraries across Australasia in response to international travel restrictions brought on by the global pandemic.

The 'Local Escapes' collection was specifically designed to give guests an alternative to the overseas holiday they may have had planned.

"We're thrilled we have been able to provide our Australian guests the opportunity to still experience all that they love from an Insight Vacations journey, a little closer to home," said Ulla Hefel Böhler, Global CEO of

Insight Vacations. "I congratulate our Australian team for working endlessly to ensure our guests are able to enjoy such unique and exclusive experiences across the country."

The collection includes five itineraries across Australia and New Zealand with departures continuing throughout 2021.

Other trips include 'Flavours of Adelaide and the Barossa Valley', 'Perth and The Margaret River Explorer', 'Taste of New Zealand's North Island' and 'Scenic Roads of the South Island'.

"Recent research showed us that our guests were ready to start travelling domestically, so we're glad we can provide an opportunity for our travellers to take a holiday and connect with local communities who really appreciate the support," said Karen Deveson, Managing Director Insight Vacations Australia.

"Until we're able to travel internationally again, we hope our Local Escapes can be the break that many of us have been looking forward to."

The company has also reviewed its health and safety protocols to ensure the wellbeing of all guests.

Coaches now seat a maximum of 22 passengers and all trips will now follow enhanced hygiene measures on and off the vehicle.

■ insightvacations.com/au

WEEKEND OF WINE IS MUSIC TO THE EARS

ABERCROMBIE & KENT and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have collaborated on an exclusive weekend away.

Guests will be hosted by Concertmaster Andrew Haveron, who leads a musical journey across two nights, introducing the musicians who share their stories behind the music.

Based at Spicer's Vineyard Estate in the Hunter Valley north of Sydney, the event runs from April 16 to 18 and is priced at \$2,200 per person twin share (waitlist only).

Highlights include:

- * Two nights at Spicer's Vineyards Estate with breakfast daily
- * Five-course gala dinner with paired wines
- * Exclusive wine master class
- * Two intimate ensemble performances by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

■ abercrombiekent.com.au



REVEALING YOUR AUSSIE BUCKET LIST

CAMPLIFY HAS collated their top travel predictions for Australians wanting to explore their own country in 2021.

Highlights include travelling with pets, booking retro caravans and a much younger generation of campers.

"2020 changed how Australians travel and much of this is reflected in travel trends we predict to see in 2021," said Justin Hales, CEO of Camplify.

"We're seeing such a vast increase in demand for caravan, campervan and motorhome rentals in 2021 already."

1. PET FRIENDLY HOLIDAYS

Pet holiday bookings have increased by 193 per cent from 2019 to 2020, with a notable 200 per cent increase in guests taking their pet birds with them.

This trend meant that 42 per cent of new van owners on the Camplify platform listed their vans as pet friendly with 39 per cent of the vans on the entire platform listed as such.

2. YOUNG 'VAN-TREPRENUERS'

Camplify's van owner community is getting younger each year, with 2020 seeing a 41 per cent increase in people aged 21-30 renting their caravans, motorhomes and campervans on the

platform. This shared economy has attracted a number of savvy young entrepreneurs, with this demographic making up 26 per cent of the top 100 campervans on the platform.

Many are turning Camplify into their own small businesses, as 13 per cent of 'van-trepreneurs' aged 21 - 30 own multiple vans that are leased on Camplify for short term rentals.

3. VINTAGE CARAVANS

Retro chic is back and everything old is new again, with 10 per cent of Camplify's vans built before the 2000s and the platform continues to see increased demand for renovated retro vans, some as old as the 1960s.

From retro kombis to fully renovated caravans with full kitchens and a gin bar, there's something for everyone.

Last December, Camplify saw a 154 per cent increase in vintage van bookings (i.e. vans built before the 1980s) compared to December 2019.

With many vintage van owners charging \$80 - \$150 per night, there's the potential to earn \$4,800 - \$9,000 over the summer months alone.

4. SOLO TRAVEL

Prior to Christmas the number of bookings for solo travel in the New

Year was 67 per cent higher when compared to the same period in 2019.

5. THE GROWTH OF OFF-PEAK TRAVEL

With more and more travellers choosing to hit the road, many savvy explorers are hoping to avoid the crowds and save some money by travelling in the off-peak months of February and March.

Prior to Christmas, bookings for February and March were 88 per cent and 65 per cent higher respectively when compared to the same period the previous year.

6. EVENTS ON THE ROAD

Government restrictions on events had a noticeable impact on event-related bookings in 2020. Wedding bookings saw a minor decrease of six per cent with bookings for festivals decreasing 40 per cent compared to 2019.

Conversely, the boom in travel led to a surge in bookings for birthdays (60 per cent) and anniversaries (126 per cent). The largest increase was for honeymoon bookings, which increased by 265 per cent compared to 2019.

Following on from the growth in 2020, honeymoon bookings continue to be the fastest growing category for event related travel in 2021 when compared to the same period the previous year, growing by 171 per cent. Anniversary (116 per cent) and birthday (80 per cent) bookings also saw healthy increases.

■ camplify.com.au



Love letter comes from the heart

A NEW campaign has just been launched designed to inspire Aussies to put Vanuatu at the top of their bucket list once international travel resumes.

The six-week initiative is by the Vanuatu Tourism Office (VTO) and showcases 10 reasons to visit the destination in 2021.

Spanning YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, the campaign highlights the South Pacific nation's natural beauty, ancient cultures and traditions and the relaxed 'Ni-Vanuatu' way of life.

It also focuses on the range of experiences available in Vanuatu, like hiking active volcanos and diving Second World War shipwrecks.

To launch the campaign, VTO published an open letter inviting Aussies back with welcome arms when international travel is deemed safe for all parties. The letter begins:

"We've all missed sharing good times with friends and family. Nothing makes us happier than sharing our beautiful country with friends.

"So please keep us on your list when international travel is deemed safe for both you and us.

"We know a thing or two about how to let your hair down and throw yourself headlong in to the moment –

something we are all longing to do."

For consumers looking for more information, the campaign landing page (vanuatu.travel/au/10reasons) includes links to itineraries, guides and deals to help Aussies plan their dream holiday in Vanuatu.

"As we move into 2021, people are beginning to feel more optimistic about the future of travel and starting to plan their first holiday abroad," said Ms Adela Issachar Aru, CEO, Vanuatu Tourism Office.

"Researching and planning will take on a different form this year as plans will need to be flexible, but we hope

this campaign will keep Vanuatu on people's holiday shopping list.

"There are thousands of great reasons to visit Vanuatu and as we look positively to the new year, we've homed in on 10 reasons that will resonate with everyone and provided lots of additional information and special deals to help make people's 2021 travel plans a reality."

A short flight from Australia's east coast, Vanuatu's 83 islands offer romantic retreats, adventure or simply an idyllic location to relax and unwind.

■ vanuatu.travel/au/10reasons;
vanuatu.travel/au

IN BRIEF///

WENDY WU Tours is offering travellers the opportunity to secure a single room on more than 50 overseas tours at no additional cost, saving up to \$2,715.

Choose from tours to Japan, China, Myanmar, Borneo, India, South America, Central Asia and Oman for travel in late 2021 and 2022.

Tours are fully-inclusive with prices including international flights and taxes, accommodation, all or most meals, transport, English speaking guide, visas (if required for Australian passports), touring and entrance fees.

This exclusive offer is on sale until February 19 and is subject to availability.

■ wendywutours.com.au



Celebrity guide shows what this Lion's about

A NEW content campaign has just been launched to Aussie audiences showcasing hidden gems and unexpected experiences in Singapore.

With overseas travel still on hold, the series of engaging short-form videos aims to keep the wanderlust alive for the Lion City.

Titled *SingapoRevealed*, the three-part series follows Singapore actress Fiona Xie – famous for her role as Kitty Pong in the Hollywood blockbuster *Crazy Rich Asians* – as she explores the city-state with Australasian expatriates.

To shine a spotlight on the diverse range of 'only in Singapore' experiences on offer and to reinforce this as a must-visit destination, the content focuses on three distinct themes:

1. SINGAPORE'S BEST KEPT SECRETS

Showcasing lesser-known spots to eat, explore and get creative.

These include Changi Village, the Peranakan Tiles Gallery and a sunset sail on *The Royal Albatross*, the largest yacht in Singapore.

2. SINGAPORE – THE GARDEN CITY

Bringing to life why the destination is known as a 'City in A Garden' and

tapping into Australia's love of the outdoors.

Among the locations featured are the MacRitchie Nature Trail & Reservoir Park, the Seletar Aerospace Park and the Funan Urban Farm by Edible Garden City.

3. SEVEN THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SINGAPORE'S FOOD SCENE

Celebrating a shared love of food and the exciting and diverse dishes to be found here.

You'll discover the Old Airport Road Food Centre, one of Singapore's best hawker locations, New Ubin Seafood @ CHIJMES and Labyrinth, a one-Michelin starred restaurant.

"I'm so incredibly proud to call Singapore my home," said Fiona Xie.

"While there are awesome well-known attractions to enjoy when you visit the Lion City, this campaign was the perfect excuse for me to explore the lesser-known experiences of my backyard and encourage our Australian and New Zealand friends to do the same when the time is right!

"It was also so exciting to meet and work with these passionate expats and to hear their insider tips of Singapore."

STB chose to harness expat talent for this content campaign in order

to bring authentic local voices and insider knowledge that would resonate with the relevant markets.

They were selected for their range of careers and passions – from an MMA fighter to a marine/yacht consultant.

Among those featured in the videos are:

✳ **Dr. Donna Brunero** – Senior Lecturer at the National University of Singapore

✳ **Rebecca Assice** – Founder of the Virtual Room Asia Pacific

✳ **Kirstie Gannaway** – Professional MMA fighter & Martial Arts Instructor

✳ **Wade Pearce** – Marine and Yachting Consultant & Founder of SG Marine Guide

✳ **Shaun McEwan** – MC & Charity Auctioneer

"As Australian travellers are not able to visit Singapore, we thought it would be nice to remind them of the possibilities and experiences that are on offer," said Stephanie Yong, Singapore Tourism Board's Area Director for Oceania.

"Singapore is a much loved destination for many Aussies, so while we hope to surprise and delight those who are already fans of Singapore with places they may not have had on their radar, we also want to inspire those who haven't visited us before to add Singapore to their must visit list too."

■ visitsingapore.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. On which continent will you find the Kalahari Desert?

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

2. The first manned hot-air balloon flight took place in which country?

- a. France
- b. Belgium
- c. America
- d. England

3. In which country will you find Suvarnabhumi Airport?

- a. Vietnam
- b. Cambodia
- c. Thailand
- d. Malaysia

4. Cooladdi is said to be Australia's smallest town. Which state is it in?

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

5. Wabash in Indiana holds what unique record?

- a. First city to have a subway
- b. First city to use electric street lights
- c. First city to legalise cannabis
- d. First city to elect a female mayor

6. Which country hosted the 2006 World Cup finals?

- a. Germany
- b. Argentina
- c. South Korea
- d. South Africa

7. Which of these is the largest port in the world?

- a. Shanghai
- b. Singapore
- c. Guangzhou
- d. Rotterdam

8. What is the name given to the solid, outer part of the Earth?

- a. Abyssal plain
- b. Lithosphere
- c. Neogene
- d. Palagonite

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9. The quetzal is the national currency of which country?

- a. Nicaragua
- b. Mozambique
- c. Ghana
- d. Guatemala

10. Which of these cities is nearest to the Hobbiton movie set in New Zealand?

- a. Wellington
- b. Christchurch
- c. Hamilton
- d. Auckland



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11. By what name was Sri Lanka formerly known?

- a. Persia
- b. Kampuchea
- c. Abyssinia
- d. Ceylon

12. Where would you find the Rideau Canal?

- a. Cuba
- b. Egypt
- c. Canada
- d. The Netherlands



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13. According to Guinness World Records, what is the longest driveable road in the world?

- a. Pan American Highway
- b. Highway 1, Australia
- c. Trans-Siberian Highway
- d. Trans-Canada Highway

14. Port Louis is the capital of which country?

- a. Mauritius
- b. Trinidad and Tobago
- c. Haiti
- d. Papua New Guinea

15. According to The Times Higher Education, what is the best university in the world?

- a. Stanford
- b. Cambridge
- c. Oxford
- d. Harvard

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

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

