

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Travel *talk*

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BACK *to Bali!*

JAPAN

How to do
Tokyo like
a local

CANADA

The town
that healed
the world

WORLD CUP

Travel tips to
help you follow
the Socceroos

Plus: What will the future of travel look like for Australians?

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COVER IMAGE: Cover picture courtesy istock

Time to party like it's 2020

There's good news, great news and super-doooper Bradley Cooper news.

The latter dropped into my inbox on an otherwise unremarkable Thursday afternoon.

"NTIA 2022 set to be bigger and better than ever!" Without going back over the whole nightmare, it's been a very, very, very long time between champagne and sequins for the travel industry.

For more than two years we've all been dreaming of a time when everything went back to something approaching normality. We're not there just yet – but announcements like this certainly help.

The National Travel Industry Awards Night will be held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney on October 15, with Singapore Airlines named as the major sponsor for the event.

Traveltalk has always provided extensive coverage of travel's "night of nights" and you can be assured that we'll be doing the same this year.

There's no doubt the 2022 incarnation will be seismically different from the past, but just the fact it is happening at all is cause for celebration.

Some familiar faces will no doubt be missing, having left the industry through turn of events, choice or necessity. Those that remain will raise a glass and wish them well.

There will probably be fewer categories, fewer awards and fewer speeches (not a bad thing). But for an industry

that was practically asystolic, this is confirmation that a strong heartbeat remains and the patient is recovering well.

"Following the tumultuous past two years due to COVID-19, it's so important we come together to celebrate and acknowledge the innovation, determination and resilience of our people and our sector," said Dean Long, CEO of Australian Federation of Travel Agents.

"As the industry continues on the long path of recovery, it is exciting to be able to come together and celebrate the resilience of the Australian travel industry," added Greg McJarrow, General Manager Agency Sales, Singapore Airlines.

Hear! Hear! There can be few sectors that have been through the COVID-induced wringer more than the travel industry. Recent NTIA events have welcomed some 1,500 guests and it will be interesting to see just how many have been left standing.

Yet this is a great opportunity to tell the Australian public just what 'Travel Agent 2.0' looks like.

Agents have always cared for their clients. Now they are even more important to help navigate Aussies through the ever-changing rules and regulations governing international travel. Vaccinations, Digital Passenger Declarations, COVID-19 regulations. It's a veritable minefield out there!

So, to paraphrase the words of Ms Madonna Louise Ciccone, we've been beat, incomplete, feeling sad and blue. But we made it through the wilderness. Time to celebrate feeling shiny and new.

What does the future of travel look like?

Here, SARAH CLARK, Managing Director of Intrepid Travel, gives her thoughts on how the pandemic has changed the way we travel.



Q: How is the travel industry rebuilding post COVID-19?

A: Travellers are now more conscious about where they spend their money and the impact of their dollar on both people and planet, so it's critical that we build back smarter, better and more efficient than ever.

Key to this ongoing growth will be drawing workers back into the industry and supporting the sustainable growth of small tourism businesses and feeding back into regional areas and community to spread the wider economic benefits of tourism.

Q: How will the government's \$48 million funding help support our industry?

A: We believe it will play a pivotal role in supporting the travel industry to get back on its feet.

A key part of this funding is a \$10 million package for training and skills development in industry.

During the pandemic, the Australian travel industry lost nearly 40 per cent of our workforce – what we desperately need now is to attract, re-train and up-skill staff that we lost due to COVID.

Q: How long will it take for the economic impact of the travel and tourism industry to be felt in Australia?

A: The pandemic was devastating for tourism – the economic impact on people and jobs around the world has been immense. Estimates are that

it set our industry back by about 30 years, with trillions of dollars of losses in 2020 and 2021.

While we're still in a rebuild phase, there's no doubt the economy is already benefiting from travel being back open. We saw our Northern Hemisphere markets return to pre-COVID levels over 12 months ago and while Australia is lagging, we're quickly catching up.

We're continuing to see strong domestic bookings from our Aussie customers but still need an uptick in inbound travellers before we see a full economic return.

Q: How important to the country is this financial boost?

A: We cannot over emphasise the impact that the return of travel will have on Australia. We all saw the devastating impacts of travel restrictions and border closures on local communities across the country, for whom tourism is a major economic booster.

The tourism industry directly employed more than 600,000 people in 2019-2020, so the number one priority should absolutely be rebuilding and upskilling our workforce so that we can bounce back bigger and better than ever.

Q: Do travel agents still have a role to play in the post-COVID world?

A: Travel agents are a core part of our business and are an absolute

priority for us here at Intrepid.

We know that the industry has drastically changed, which is why we're committed to delivering real time, on the ground support and expert knowledge via our global DMC teams.

Another key focus is looking at how we can better support the digital transformation of the industry from a service perspective.

Q: What does the future of travel look like for Australian travellers?

A: While the pandemic upended the \$8 trillion global travel industry, it has also given us a chance to reflect, rethink and reshape who we are as an industry.

Already we are seeing changes in the way people are choosing to travel, with a real focus on sustainable, purpose led tourism.

Whether that's embarking on a nature-based or active trip, or engaging with and giving back to local communities, we know our customers are hungry for more immersive adventure experiences that are good for them and good for the planet.







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SAVE UP TO \$2,700 PER COUPLE	SAVE UP TO \$3,400 PER COUPLE	SAVE UP TO \$3,600 PER COUPLE	SAVE UP TO \$3,000 PER COUPLE
 <p>CONRAD BORA BORA NUI 8 days from AUD \$5,129 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 nights at Conrad Bora Bora Nui - 5* • 2 nights at Hilton Hotel Tahiti - 3* • Receive €16,70 Resort Credit per room per night in both Bora Bora and Tahiti to use towards food and beverages • Complimentary snorkelling equipment, use of kayaks and paddleboards in Bora Bora 	 <p>INTERCONTINENTAL BORA BORA & THALASSO SPA 8 days from AUD \$6,208 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Nights at InterContinental Bora Bora Resort & Thalasso Spa - 5* • 2 Nights at InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa - 4* • Complimentary kayaks and paddleboards included • Complimentary Snorkelling Gear included • FREE American Breakfast included at InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa 	 <p>FOUR SEASONS RESORT BORA BORA 8 days from AUD \$6,620 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 nights at Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora - 5* • 2 nights at InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa - 4* • 1 FREE Night included at Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora • Complimentary use of snorkelling equipment, kayaks and stand up paddleboards in Bora Bora 	 <p>ST. REGIS BORA BORA 8 days from AUD \$6,744 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 nights at The St Regis Bora Bora Resort - 5* • 2 nights at Hilton Hotel Tahiti - 5* • 1 FREE night included at St Regis Bora Bora • Daily American Breakfast in Bora Bora

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Time for a lei away



SEVERAL AGENTS will be packing their suitcases later this year as the winners of a trade famil to Hawaii.

The incentive was promoted throughout the virtual 'Month of Lei' trade event in May staged by Hawaii Tourism Oceania (HTO) and Hawaiian Airlines.

Agents had to book a ticket with Hawaiian Airlines to Oahu and at least one other Hawaiian Island and write in 50 words or less how they *mālama* (take care for and protect) the environment, the local community or the ocean.

From eliminating single-use plastic to beach clean ups and recycling, the travel trade are doing their fair share to reduce their carbon footprint and protect the environment.

The winners are Deborah Clarke – MTA Travel; Elena Amerikow – italktravel & Cruise The Junction; Rachael Heelan – Ross and Turner Travel Associates; Cristiana Zovi – Ignite Travel; Maha Noore – Out and About Travel.

» gohawaii.com

Agency plugs into network

TRAVELLERS CHOICE has announced the expansion of its national network with the addition of a leading independent travel agency.

Launched in 2006 by directors Andrew Minto and Georgette Southam, Home and Afar Travel is in Newcastle in New South Wales.

Like many travel retailers, Minto and Southam looked for creative ways to unlock new revenue streams during COVID. The answer was to transform half of their agency into a stylish homewares shop, Home and Afar.

"As we emerged from the pandemic, we saw an opportunity to build on the success of our new homewares store and give our travel business a fresh start by rebranding it as Home and Afar Travel," said Minto.

"It was the perfect time to shed our old skin and move on to an exciting new chapter."

As part of the process, the company also decided to look for an agency



Nicola Strudwick, Travellers Choice GM Sales, and Andrew Minto, Director, Home & Afar Travel

network that would best fit its new business model.

"What impressed us about Travellers Choice was how proactively they worked throughout COVID to make sure their members came through the other side.

"Their agents told us they were there for them and that says a lot about the group's culture, as well as its capacity to adapt in order to meet its members' needs."

» travelagentschoice.com.au



MAGNIFICENT SEVEN AT SEA

MSC CRUISES recently hosted a group of travel agents on a seven-night faml onboard *MSC Bellissima*.

Embarking in Dubai, the agents discovered Sir Bani Yas Island, Abu Dhabi and Doha before returning to Dubai.

"It's exceeded my expectations; the ship is a destination in itself. The staff onboard are genuinely friendly and helpful," said Madeline Mcintyre from Ignite.

While onboard agents were treated to exclusive Yacht Club dining, an additional choice of 12 dining venues and more than 20 bars, shows in the state-of-the-art Carousel Lounge and stayed in Fantastica experience balcony cabins.

» msccruises.com

IN BRIEF///

AVALON WATERWAYS has launched a trade booking incentive for agents and selling consultants.

For agents who book and deposit three Avalon passengers from now until July 29, Avalon is offering a free Suite Rewards cruise for 2022. The incentive applies to new bookings only and excludes groups and charters.

» avalonwaterways.com.au

IN BRIEF///



* SAVE MONEY on a motorbike tour to India's 'Lost World' being offered by Nomadic Knights. The 14-night journey in March next year will see travellers ride Royal Enfield motorbikes alongside remote mountains, waterfalls and 20km underground caves.

Save \$US500 (approx. \$AU720) per person on the tour if booked by August 31.

» nomadicknights.com

* MAT MCLACHLAN Battlefield Tours has launched two new commemorative small group tours as well as a special offer for travellers planning last-minute holidays to Europe for August.

The four-day 'Remembrance Day on the Western Front' tour is available for 2022 and 2023, while the four-day 'Anzac Day in Ypres' itinerary is available now for 2023 bookings.

For passengers travelling on 'Western Front Explorers' tour in August, the company is offering a bonus battlefield book pack valued at more than \$200.

The company has also just launched a special 'Anzac Day at Hellfire Pass' (Thailand) tour for April 2023. It will include key Second World War sites and unique experiences, including the 'Bridge on the River Kwai'.

» battlefields.com.au



Trains, ships, no planes

A CRUISE ship and two historic trains will be showcased in a unique and new six-day 'slow travel' rail and sail escape in November.

Hosted by Cruise Express, the short break begins in Sydney on November 2 and ends in Melbourne.

The tour begins with a two-night cruise between the two cities aboard *Grand Princess*. In Melbourne, guests will spend two nights at the Batman's Hill on Collins Hotel with free time to enjoy the gardens, cafes, boutiques and trams.

Also included is lunch during a mystery tour of Melbourne's suburban rail lines onboard the recently refurbished heritage electric 'Taits'. Known affectionately as 'Red Rattlers', these wooden electric trains were common across suburban Melbourne from the 1910s through until the 1980s.

Day five is aboard the *Spirit of Progress* train for the journey from Melbourne to Albury and an overnight stay. Privately chartered by Cruise Express, this former express train ran from 1937 to 1986.

The final day will see guests board the *Cruise Express* for the last leg of the trip from Albury to Sydney, with lunch inside the heritage-listed Junee railway station en-route.

The tour is priced from \$2,390 per person twin share.

» cruiseexpress.com.au

SLOWLY DOES IT IN EUROPE

EXPLORE WORLDWIDE has launched 11 new adventures with a focus on travelling slowly through lesser-known parts of Europe.

Many of these tours focus on using public transport with opportunities to explore on foot and really get under the skin of popular destinations.

Guests can choose from Italian trips by rail – from Rome to Venice or Venice to Rome – then on to Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast.

Go island hopping in Greece or Croatia, or travel slowly through Spain, Portugal and Morocco, watching the scenery gradually change from Europe to Africa.

The trips have been created specifically with the Australian traveller in mind, often taking time to explore more than one country or to see a European destination in greater depth.

» exploreworldwide.com.au





Swiping right on Rendez-vous Canada+

GAYA AVERY REPORTS

RIGHT NOW buying travel is a bit like shopping on Tinder, you see some pretty pictures, make some gentle enquiries and then swipe on to the next destination.

Canada's the full package. Few can deny she is almost unmatched in beauty, but there's substance here too.

But when the world is fighting for tourism dollars, how do you sell a destination against some pretty fierce competition? It's like being a single cisgender female in Sydney on a Friday night. The odds are not in your favour.

Enter: the 45th edition of Rendez-vous Canada+ (RVC+), the leading international tourism marketplace for Destination Canada.

If any nation could hold a tourism marketplace on the heels of a global pandemic and do it successfully and sensitively, it would be (and indeed was) Canada.

Pre-event, buyers and sellers checked out profiles, made matches and then planned to meet, and it was damn near seamless.

Last year's all-virtual RVC+ was like a soft opening for this year's virtual offerings, offerings which

complemented the in-person experience and provided an alternative for those unable to travel to Toronto.

More than 700 delegates attended the conference, representing 450 organisations selling Canadian products and experiences, with more than 170 sellers participating virtually.

More than 450 buyers also attended (150 of these were virtual) representing international markets including Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Mexico, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"This year's RVC+ was a sell-out show, which was wonderful to see in our post-pandemic world," said Donna Campbell, Managing Director, Destination Canada GSA.

"An incredible 48,000-plus face-to-face appointments took place between buyers, sellers and media throughout the four-day conference, with participants eager to learn more about Canada's legendary experiences and tourism offerings."

After hearing about what's new in Canada, participants were given the chance to explore the country's beauty and engage in the truly meaningful travel experiences on offer across each province and territory.

"Prior to and following the conference, participants had the chance to participate in exciting famils which took place in various regions of Canada, to gain first-hand experience of Canada's unique wildlife, landscapes, diverse communities and outdoor adventures," added Campbell.

RVC is a powerful magnet for international tour operators and wholesalers who seek out the innovative and authentic tourism products, services and packages that may give them a competitive edge as international travel continues to boom post-Covid.

"RVC+ is a valuable tool, now more than ever, providing critical connections that will support the recovery and resilience of the tourism sector in the months and years ahead, ensuring Australian tour operators are ready to sell Canada."

Find out more at the RVC official website:

www.rendezvouscanada.ca



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Thailand has unveiled some very impressive post-COVID strategies to tempt Aussie travellers back to the Kingdom.

IT'S KNOWN as The Land of Smiles but for the past two years there's been little to smile about for the country and its people, writes *Jon Underwood*.

That is all about to change with Tourism Authority of Thailand unveiling a raft of marketing strategies to tempt the tourists back following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their plans were unveiled at the country's leading B2B travel industry show, the Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) 2022, in Phuket.

First held in 2001, the event has been on a hiatus due to COVID-19 but this year's staging attracted 275 buyers from 42 countries (including Australia) and 264 sellers. *Traveltalk* was among 90 domestic and international media invited to attend.

Opening the 19th incarnation of the event, officials were keen to stress the country's change towards stronger, sustainable and more responsible tourism growth in line with the 'Visit Thailand Year 2022 – 2023: Amazing

New Chapters' marketing campaign.

The campaign is designed to highlight the many experiences available in Thailand, focusing largely on the cultural, including an imaginative A-Z list of adventures. Supporting TV ads will highlight six key themes of Nature, Fun, Food, Love, Thainess and Experiences.

"This year's edition of the TTM+ presents an excellent opportunity for buyers and sellers to come together and build on existing business relationships and forge new ones," said Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

"Throughout the three days, TAT together with Thai tourism businesses are ready to showcase the 'Amazing New Chapters' in Thai tourism to inspire travellers from around the world to visit Thailand."

With entry requirements easing from June 1, Thailand is already seeing positive signs that the tourists are returning.

Between January and December 2021, the Kingdom welcomed 427,000 international visitors. For the first five months of this year, that figure has already increased to 1.3 million. The country is hoping that by 2023, tourist numbers will reach 20 million.

"The success of the TTM Plus 2022 should also be regarded as a platform of a good friendship benefitting from the gathering of the partners in the industry who could be competitors or partners on different occasions," said Mr. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sport.

SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY

Australian travellers can expect a different kind of travel experience when they visit Thailand in 2022 and beyond.

The Thai government plans to revive their travel industry with the aim of safe, inclusive and sustainable travel, taking tourism in a new direction in response to changing global trends.

To do this, they are using an environmental model called Bio-Circular-Green, which conforms to sustainable development goals set by the United Nations.

"The pandemic gave us key learning lessons," said Mr. Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT Deputy Governor for Marketing and Communications.

"What Thailand's tourism industry needs to stay competitive and resilient in the long run is sustainability, in order to balance the economic, social and environmental elements."

In an interview with *Traveltalk*, Ms Sukanya Sirikanjanakul, Executive Director, ASEAN South Asia and South Pacific Region, said that Australia remained an extremely important market for her country.

Prior to COVID, some 800,000 Aussies travelled to Thailand each year. Officials are hoping to get at least 200,000 per year by 2023.

"Since January this year, Australia ranks number nine on the number of visitors to Thailand. In a few years I believe we might see the Australian market land at number four or five."

tourismthailand.org



Kimberley here we come

PONANT HAVE opened sales for their inaugural Kimberley program onboard the three-masted sailing yacht *Le Ponant*.

Starting on April 7 next year, the 26 new itineraries cover the Northern and Southern Kimberley and the Rowley Shoals.

The newly refurbished yacht has been transformed to feature the latest technical innovations to reduce emissions and is equipped with state-of-the-art Zodiacs for shore landings and excursions.

Le Ponant offers an intimate setting with only 16 staterooms for a maximum of 32 guests being looked after by 32 crew members.

The Northern and Southern Kimberley itineraries include an exclusive charter flight between Kununurra and Kuri Bay or Broome and Kuri Bay onboard one of Paspaley's vintage Grumman Mallard flying boats.

These will take guests from or to their embarkation point, as well as an exclusive guided visit of Paspaley's pearl farms in Kuri Bay.

» au.ponant.com



Left to right: Dan Russell and Martine Hero, Clean Cruising Jessica and Marty Ansen

Loving the sea life

ONE AUSSIE couple are taking their love of life at sea to extreme lengths with two years of back-to-back cruising.

Brisbane couple Jessica and Marty Ansen joined those aboard *Coral Princess* as it began its first season following the restart of the Australian cruise industry.

This is the first voyage the couple are taking among 53 separate cruises between now and August 2024.

"Cruising offers the ultimate holiday experience," said Marty. "You go onboard, you only unpack once and you have all this amazing entertainment, exceptional food, great company and you can see the world. And the crew deliver incredible service – that's why we cruise."

The Ansens booked their cruises (795 sea days) – including two round world cruises in 2023 and 2024 – with Brisbane-based, family-owned travel agency Clean Cruising, which has specialised in booking cruise holidays since 2007.

» princess.com » cleancruising.com.au

Make a date on popular picks

VIKING HAS released new ocean voyages and 2024 departure dates on some of their most popular itineraries.

New voyages include the 36-day 'Grand Fjords & Iconic Viking Shores' taking in the natural beauty of Iceland, Greenland and the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

There are also two new itineraries combining the West Indies with the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula.

In addition to new 2024 departure dates, Viking has also announced they will be re-opening two Hawaiian voyages exploring the islands of Hawaii, Oahu, Maui and Kauai and traversing the South Pacific to Moorea, Bora

Bora and the secluded Marquesas Island.

"People are still making up for lost time, so they are booking longer experiences and planning further ahead," said Michelle Black, Managing Director Viking ANZ.

"Many guests are choosing to travel now, but they are also locking in their future plans well ahead of time to secure their preferred travel dates and stateroom category.

"These new itineraries and additional departure dates provide even more options for our travel agents and loyal guests."

» viking.com



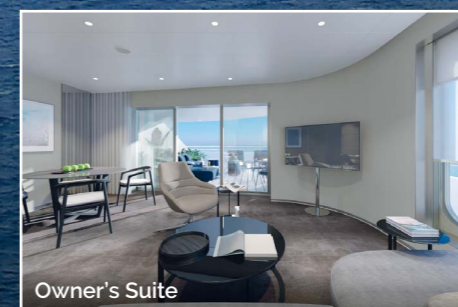
EMERALD CRUISES



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*Conditions apply. For FULL conditions refer to emeraldcruses.com.au. All prices based on per person twin share, cruise only. Valid on new bookings only. Cruise from \$5,694pp based on E08D 23/9/23 departure in a Category D Oceanview Stateroom including Earlybird Fare. Prices, Dates, Price, Availability subject to change and correct as of 23/3/22. A fuel surcharge may apply at final payment. Emerald Cruises (a division of Scenic Tours Pty Ltd). Booking code EVMA112.



A new era in luxury yacht cruising

THE MEDITERRANEAN is an ever-popular cruise destination for Australians.

They are drawn to the diversity of fascinating cultures, delicious cuisines, spectacular landscapes and of course the proud histories of the many countries lining its shores.

Until recently, the cruising options ranged from tiny, gulet-style vessels to mid-sized cruise ships to mega liners carrying thousands of guests.

Now there's a unique and exciting alternative.

Emerald Azzurra, the first luxury yacht from Emerald Cruises, known for their award-winning river cruises, welcomed her first guests in March.

The dazzling white yacht looks more like a billionaire's private superyacht, turning heads in every port.

With just 100 guests and at 110m in length, the yacht – the first of two – easily navigates island harbours to dock at small ports, where a stroll into the Old Town is just the start of the next adventure.



Oozing contemporary luxury, the superyacht lifestyle is now well within reach, without the need to reach into deep pockets.

The cruise itineraries onboard *Emerald Azzurra* range from eight to more than 20 days and many can be linked.

One of the most popular combinations is the 15-day 'Discover the Mediterranean' cruise, made up of the eight-day 'Croatia in Depth from Venice to Dubrovnik' and the eight-day 'Mediterranean Enchantment' cruise from Dubrovnik to Athens. Or vice versa.

Over 15 days, guests enjoy eight included excursions, discovering Split, Sibenik, Korcula, Krk, Corfu Town, plus Kotor in Montenegro, and World-Heritage listed Butrint in Albania.

EmeraldPLUS cultural experiences are also included, such as a delightful Klapa performance in the cellars of Diocletian's Palace in Split, a classical guitar performance in a medieval church in Kotor and a cooking demonstration and tasting of delicious fresh local mussels in Albania.

Also popular with Aussie guests is the eight-day 'Greek Islands & Turkish



Mykonos, Greece

Coastlines' cruise where the sparkling azure waters of the south-eastern Aegean Sea is your playground.

Explore the stunning Greek islands of lush Patmos, the untouched hideaway of Amorgos, the spectacular beaches and windmills of Mykonos, and Rhodes, the 'Island of the Knights'.

The Turkish town of Kusadasi is your gateway for an included excursion to fascinating Ephesus, while Bodrum is home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus.

Further west, the eight-day 'French & Italian Rivas' cruise from Nice to Rome via Portofino, Porto Ercole and Corsica, seamlessly combines with the eight-day 'Ionian Sea Adventure' from Rome to Athens via Capri, Sorrento, Amalfi and Sardinia, then Cephalonia Island and Delphi, to make the 15-day 'Discover the Highlights of the Mediterranean' cruise.

On a yacht cruise with Emerald Cruises, you are invited to explore as

much, or as little, as you choose.

Several excursions are included on each cruise and there is free time to be as active – or as chilled – as you choose.

Soaking up the sun by the Aqua pool might beckon one day. Another, the eBikes could be your calling to explore the town.

Or perhaps one of the DiscoverMORE options will be just the ticket, like scuba diving in Bodrum, kayaking around the Pakleni Islands in Hvar or Dubrovnik, a Jeep tour of Corfu, or specialty cooking classes, just for starters.

For those looking for an escape this December or January on the way to or from Europe, the new 11-day 'Gems of the Arabian Peninsula' with Doha cruise is the perfect way to break the long journey, with pricing from just \$6,550 per person.

This superb journey starts with three nights in Doha, before exploring

the cultural highlights from Qatar to Dubai on an eight-day luxury cruise, including a guided tour of the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Sheikh Zayed mosque.

Dip your toes in Zighy Bay surrounded by the mountainous Musandam Peninsula and uncover the Fujairah Fort. Beach breaks on Sir Baniyas Island and Khasab in Oman round off this spectacular cruise.

Style, substance and adventure are the hallmarks of a luxury yacht cruise with Emerald Cruises.

2023 itineraries with enticing Super Earlybird offers are selling fast. Eight-day Mediterranean cruises in 2023 start from just \$5,500 per person so choose your dream journey and book now!

For more information visit emeraldcruses.com.au or call 1300 286 110.



Emerald Azzurra in Hvar



Doha city, Qatar



Photo courtesy Jeremy Austin

TRAIN HOTEL IS THE RAIL DEAL

JON UNDERWOOD visits a unique hotel that's making headlines around the world.

WITHOUT GETTING too Sheldon Cooper, I love trains.

There's just something incredibly exciting about them. It's like getting on a magic carpet and hurtling off on an adventure as you sit back and watch the world go by.

So, when I heard about a luxury hotel fashioned from old train carriages, I was all aboard.

Pleased to report that Shalati, the Train on the Bridge, is one of the most ingenious and memorable hotels I've had the privilege of staying in.

It's situated in the Kruger National Park in South Africa, set some 20 metres above the Sabie River.

Trains haven't rattled down these tracks since the 1970s, but an enterprising group of local businesspeople spotted an opportunity and spent four years getting it, quite literally, off the ground.

It opened in 2020 and has earned

rave reviews from visitors all around the world.

"To finally see it come alive and to see how proud the staff are to be here gives me goosebumps," said Judiet Barnes, who came up with the idea originally.

There are 12 carriages on the bridge and Judiet tells me they were looking for something authentic.

"These are old South African Rail carriages from the 1950s. We found them in a yard where old trains go to die and stripped and refurbished them."

It took nine months to complete the first carriage, thanks to a COVID delay. But the wait was certainly worth it because the craftsmanship and detail is remarkable.

The rooms are extremely comfortable and, despite being train carriage size, spacious. Occasionally they will sway with the wind and you



can imagine you're actually moving.

The highlight is the massive bed, which you could easily share with an elephant and from which you can gaze out of the window at the abundant wildlife frolicking below.

You'll see crocodiles, hippos, elephants, buffalo and all manner of critters, safe from your perch in the sky.

There's a modern bathroom with a power shower, minibar, Wi-Fi and all the comforts you'd expect from a five-star city hotel.

Dinners at the adjacent restaurant are resplendent affairs. The night we arrived a group of local singers entertained the diners and your correspondent was invited onto the dance floor to participate. Truth be told, John Travolta has nothing to worry about...

Probably the most photographed section of Shalati is the central pool. You can cool off after your three-hour game drive and just gaze out over the African bush and the muddy brown river below, which apparently flows all the way to Mozambique.

Guests can also enjoy game drives in the neighbouring park with experienced guides.

During one memorable excursion, we stop for sundowners on a bridge and just moments after we've packed up and re-boarded our vehicles, a lioness calmly walks across said bridge. Wildlife encounters don't get much more authentic.

Africa is memorable for many reasons. With Kruger Shalati, the Train on the Bridge, there's now even more reason to go there.

➤ krugershalati.com.au

➤ southafrica.net

BALI FLIGHTS GET THE GOLD LIGHT

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA will become the first Australian carrier to offer direct flights between the Gold Coast and Bali.

Starting on March 29 next year, services between the Gold Coast Airport's new International Terminal and Bali will operate daily, with more than 2,200 seats available each week.

The airline has already recommenced flights to Bali from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

"With the addition of the Gold Coast Airport terminal expansion and demand for Bali rising, the time is right to connect these two famous holiday destinations as well as the surf breaks, wellness activities and nightlife that comes with them," said Jayne Hrdlicka, CEO Virgin Australia Group.

"We are currently seeing continued growth in travel demand for Gold Coast services and are operating up to 180 domestic flights outbound each week."

Meanwhile the airline is also planning to resume services to both Vanuatu and Samoa next year alongside its services to Fiji and New Zealand.



Direct services from Brisbane to Port Vila will begin on March 10 with up to five flights a week. Services to Apia will start from Sydney on March 21 with up to three flights per week and from Brisbane on March 23 with up to two flights per week.

"Vanuatu stands ready to welcome Australians back to our shores from July 1 and the Virgin Australia scheduled flights from Brisbane to Port Vila provide even more choice for Australians answering the call of Vanuatu," said Adela Issachar Aru, Chief Executive Officer, Vanuatu Tourism Office.

"This is a very positive step towards re-establishing international aviation access to Vanuatu and getting capacity back to pre-COVID levels by the end of 2023 is key for us in achieving our tourism roadmap."

➤ virginaustralia.com

➤ vanuatu.travel/au

From the runway to the catwalk



FORGET PRIM and proper. These guys have gone for hip with plenty of street cred.

Bonza have just unveiled the uniform that Australia's only independent low-cost airline will be wearing when it takes off later this year.

The 'wear it your way' range features on-trend white custom sneakers and cotton T-shirts with various mix and match options.

"We won't dictate what lipstick to wear – or whether you have to wear lipstick at all," said Carly Povey, Chief Commercial Officer at Bonza.

"We won't ask crew to cover up their tattoos and just because you're female, that doesn't mean you have to wear a skirt.

"If you're non-binary, pregnant, work in the office or onboard, we have options for you. Bonza is for the many not the few and that's what you'll see with our first-ever uniforms."

The looks include tailored shorts which can be worn with the white cotton T-shirt and blazer which features purple trim and the Bonza values stitched inside on the lining.

There's also a pant option, shirt dress and sleeveless coat. Accessories include a Bonza thumbs up pin, branded custom socks and a purple scarf that can be worn as a hair, neck or pocket accessory.

➤ flybonza.com



BIG BIRD BACK IN OUR SKIES

MOUNTING TRAVEL demand in Australia has seen Qatar Airways resume flights Down Under with their A380s.

The airline began operating a daily schedule from Doha to Sydney last month, connecting Australians to its global network of more than 150 destinations.

Sydney is the first southern hemisphere destination to see Qatar Airways' Airbus A380 since November 2021.

The state-of-the-art, double decker aircraft offers passengers the choice of eight First Class suites, 48 fully flat beds in business class and 461 economy class seats.

First and business class passengers can also unwind in the Sanctuary Lounge Bar on the upper deck.

"Not only do we continue to rebuild our network after the pandemic, we are also actively expanding network capacity as global travel restrictions ease," said Jared Lee, Qatar Airways Vice President of Sales for Southeast Asia, Southwest Pacific & Indian Subcontinent.

"The Australian market continues to be an area of strong growth for Qatar Airways as we see robust travel demand.

"This is the latest in a series of enhancements to our Australian network this year, following a recent increase in frequency."

These enhancements include launching a new route from Adelaide to Auckland in April.

Operated by a B777-300ER, the new route is an extension of the current service between Doha and Adelaide, which from July 1 has just been increased from three to five times weekly.

The flight is currently scheduled to be operated five times per week. With the addition of this new route, the carrier will operate 38 weekly flights to Australia.

"The strong outbound bookings show there's plenty of interest in this service and it's another positive step as the world opens up to travel," said Brenton Cox, Managing Director Adelaide Airport.

"It's also great news for our local exporters seeking direct aviation freight links with one of our major trading partners."

Currently celebrating its 25-year anniversary, Qatar Airways has maintained its Australian routes throughout the pandemic, while



launching services to Brisbane to provide essential global connectivity.

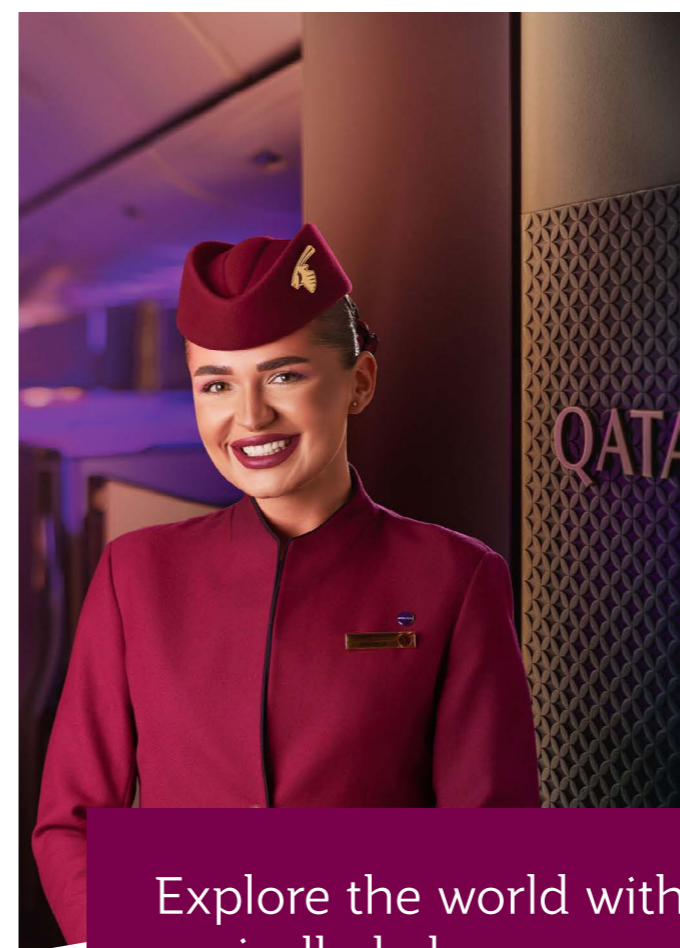
It has carried more than 330,000 passengers in and out of Australia since March 2020 via both commercial flights and special chartered services.

Earlier this year, the airline doubled its Brisbane service, now operating seven flights per week, as well as expanding its Perth service to include daily flights to and from Doha. It's now 10 years since Qatar began flying to Perth.

Qatar Airways was announced by Skytrax as the 'Airline of the Year' at the 2021 World Airline Awards, taking out the major award for an unprecedented sixth time.

It was also named 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Seat', 'World's Best Business Class Onboard Catering' and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.

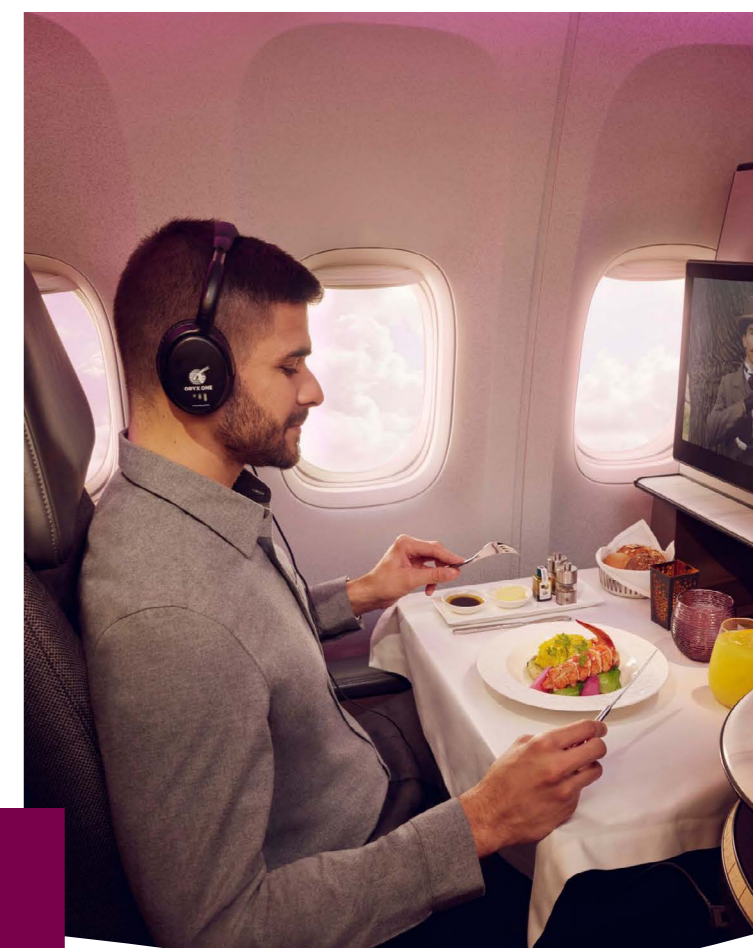
qatarairways.com/au



Explore the world with unrivalled elegance

Wherever you go in the world, one airline goes further to make it feel unforgettable. Fly with the World's Best Airline and experience the exceptional.

qatarairways.com



GOING PLACES TOGETHER



Bell Gorge Wilderness Lodge

Take control of the remote

TRAVELMARVEL HAS released its all-new *Kimberley & Outback Queensland* by 4WD 2023 holiday program.

The launch includes a comprehensive range of small group journeys to remote locations in the company's custom designed 4WD vehicles accompanied by an expert driver-guide.

Multiple itineraries are being offered, ranging from seven to 12 days in length, with the option to extend the tour with pre- and post-accommodation at Oaks Broome.

Key tour is the new 12-day 'Wonders of the Kimberley by 4WD', priced from \$6,995 per person twin share, inclusive of a \$1,000 per couple saving for early bookings.

The journey includes a cruise along the Fitzroy River through Geikie Gorge, a hike to the tiered Mitchell Falls with a swim in the natural pools above the falls and a walk to Emma Gorge.

The trip also includes stays at the Bungle Bungle, Mitchell Falls and Bell Gorge Wilderness Lodges and a visit to the ancient Wandjina and Gwion Gwion (Bradshaw) rock art at the Mitchell Plateau.

"We have 50 years of experience touring the Australian outback and we continue to enhance our product range to explore the best remote locations our country has to offer," said Cher Lontok, Travelmarvel Product Manager.

travelmarvel.com.au

Serving up this unique food tour

FOOD LOVERS will be salivating at the thought of a new tour that claims to be the first of its kind in Australia.

The Sapphire Coast Oyster Trail was officially launched last month, firmly placing oysters front and centre as a major drawcard for visitors to the New South Wales region.

"The Trail is a collection of amazing oyster experiences on offer in the region, including farm gates, tours, tasting experiences and restaurants," said Anthony Osborne, Sapphire Coast Destination Marketing Managing Director.

"It celebrates the quality of the region's world-renowned oysters, which undoubtedly come from some of the cleanest waters in Australia."

Visitors to the region can create their own bespoke oyster trail itinerary from the recently designed Sapphire Coast website, which showcases tourism-ready oyster experiences on offer in the Bega Valley Shire.

"Not all visitors have to be a fan of eating oysters, but we know oysters are such great evidence of our untouched, pristine coastal landscape, that everyone can enjoy."

sapphirecoast.com.au



Captain Sponge's Magical Oyster Tour, Pambula Lake. Photo courtesy Destination NSW

How to save on summer

COMPREHENSIVE SAVINGS are being offered on a luxurious summer voyage tracing Australia's wild southern coastline from Sydney to Perth in 2024.

The package features a 14-night voyage between the two cities aboard the 710-guest boutique ship, *Azamara Journey*. She boasts a pool, two Jacuzzis, six restaurants and cafes, martini bar, cabaret lounge, observation lounge, spa sanctuary and gym.

Seven destinations are featured on the itinerary, including Melbourne, Portland near the famous Twelve Apostles, wildlife-rich Kangaroo Island, Adelaide, the beaches and coastal scenery of Esperance and Albany and the renowned Margaret River wine region.

Including pre- or post-stays, selected onboard beverages and gratuities, the luxury package is available from \$5,845 per person twin share in an oceanview stateroom. This represents a saving of \$1,035 each if booked by July 31.

CruiseTraveller.com.au/AzaJourney2024



JOURNEY BEYOND
GREAT SOUTHERN

AN EPIC FEW DAYS

Brisbane to Adelaide

There's a whole lot of adventure packed into the Great Southern. From the moment your clients step on board, they'll get the sense that something special is about to unfold. From the spacious lounges, all-inclusive fine dining, immersive Off Train Experiences and great company, it makes for an unforgettable rail holiday between Adelaide and Brisbane.



Giving you the inside story



Travel advisor DANA BROWN is currently living in Bali and reports first-hand on what Aussies can expect when they finally return to the Island of the Gods.

IT'S PROBABLY easier than you think to get back and enjoy one of Australia's most loved destinations.

There is no PCR/RAT needed (if you don't have symptoms and haven't tested positive within 30 days of travel – in that case, you'll need one on arrival).

There is no quarantine required for vaccinated Aussies. If you're not vaccinated, you're still subject to five days quarantine.

Everything else can be done quickly online. There is a mandatory health form and separate customs declaration. You'll also need to download the PeduliLindungi contact tracing app, which is a mandatory requirement, but I haven't had to use it once in the past two months.

On arrival, you'll show your

international vaccination certificate, insurance that includes COVID cover and then pay for your visa, which costs IDR500,000 (approx. \$AU50) for 30 days.

As restrictions continue to ease, it's still best to double check requirements before you travel. The easiest place to do this is on Sherpa and you'll also find a wealth of information at welcomebacktobali.com

HAS BALI CHANGED POST-COVID?

It was pretty quiet when I first arrived back in May. But as we move into the peak season of Aussie's escaping winter, tourists are flocking back to soak up the sunshine.

There have been new hotels opening and restaurants re-opening every day and you can visibly notice

the influx of travellers by the traffic volume. As a tourist, it's feeling like a pre-COVID world on the ground over here.

My driver 'Ketut' was so excited when we came to a standstill last week. A huge smile spread across his face as he voiced that more traffic means money is coming. It actually made me happy to sit in gridlock to know that these people who have done it so tough over the past two years can see the light at the end of the tourist tunnel.

General traffic aside, it's been easy to get around the island by using a mix of private drivers: Gojek (like Uber for taxis or scooters) and Bluebird taxis (the most trustworthy).

WHERE TO GO

Even the higher end places are still a lot cheaper than Australia. You can also get a good deal by visiting warungs (local eateries) and getting out of the tourist hotspots.

Do yourself and your wallet a favour and add a few nights in an area you haven't been to before.

A few of my favourites are Bingin for the beautiful beaches, surfing and laidback vibe. Pererenan, Seseh and Cemagi, which are still close to Canggu for their bars, restaurants and shopping, but with a more relaxed feel (and without the traffic).

It's also important to remember to have a trusted travel advisor on your side when it comes to accommodation. With most places being closed for two years, you want to make sure they have been maintained and are up to standard. Mould in the tropics is real!

Lastly, no trip to Bali is complete without adding a side trip within Indonesia. The Gili Islands and Lombok are an easy boat ride away (Captain Coconuts Gili on Gili Air is my hidden gem). Or spend a few nights on a liveaboard sailing through Komodo.

indonesia.travel

Apart from being a travel advisor, Dana Brown is also a digital influencer through her website, *Wild Hearted World*. Visit: wildheartedworld.com or contact her at hello@wildheartedworld.com



Let's get this party started

A MAJOR four-day festival is about to kick-off in Bali, described as the most anticipated party of the year.

Sponsored by Marriott Bonvoy and created in association with Moët Hennessy, Dissolve Weekend will take place from July 14 to 17.

Festivalgoers can look forward to top performers from around the world, food from the best restaurants on the island and some of the most talented F&B personalities in the country.

ROSÉ AFTERNOON TEA AT AMBAR

In collaboration with Moët Hennessy, Ambar at Mandapa, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve, has brought together some of the island's best culinary minds for a rosé-themed afternoon tea.

Foodies can expect savory picks of salmon gravlax, seafood arancini, crab tartlet to sweet treats such as guava mousse and pink pavlova, with entertainment by DJ Nanda from Bali.

LIQUID BEATS AT ATOMIC 17

Bali's newest event venue, Renaissance Bali Nusa Dua Resort's Atomic 17, is slated to be the backdrop for this fun sundowner event featuring the island's best bartenders.

Nosh on juicy kebabs and springy

noodles brought to you by Chef Alit and dance to the beats of DJ E Nick, DJ Wilson and DJ Anastasia, REN's Sound Navigator.

HOOKED ON AT STARFISH BLOO

Chef Fernando Sindu of Cork & Crew Jakarta teams up with sustainable fish monger and Chef Ryan Thejasukmana of Empak Locale, a premium local seafood provedore working with a collective of fishermen focusing on sustainable line-caught fish.

Party attendees are in for a remix of tastes – featuring the freshest catch from around Bali, seasoned with Pan-Asian flavours with a Western twist.

TURN UP THE HEAT, ASADO-STYLE, AT FIRE

Crank up the fire as two flame experts – Chef Vallian Gunawan of Canggu's Skool Kitchen and Chef Norberto Palacios of W Bali Seminyak – turn up the heat to create a feast of grilled meat Asado-style, a barbecue technique beloved in South America.

Then amp up the fun at Fire's alfresco terrace, where dinner will be accompanied by a fire-themed show.

DANCE INTO THE NIGHT, ALL NIGHT LONG

As the sun sets and night calls, dissolve in dance when international headliners such as DJ Erik Vilar, DJ Nick

Nolte, DJ Dani Brasil and DJ Femme A take centre stage and cap-off the four-day weekend.

The party will kick-off early in the afternoon to the fresh sounds of W Bali Seminyak's resident DJ Point85 and epic Bali beats of Damian Saint.

Set to be the hottest party of the year, be sure to order some of Bali's favourite tipples and chow down on some eats from the food stations.

» bali.com/dissolve

DISSOLVE WEEKEND

July 14 Rosé Afternoon Tea at Ambar Mandapa
a Ritz-Carlton Reserve

July 15 Liquid Beats at Atomic 17
Renaissance Bali Nusa Dua Resort

July 15 Hooked on at Starfish Bloo
W Bali – Seminyak

July 16 Power and Revive at W Bali beach
W Bali – Seminyak

July 16 Asado at Fire
W Bali – Seminyak

July 17 DISSOLVE Party
W Bali – Seminyak





PEACEFUL OASIS IN THE HEART OF SEMINYAK

AMADEA RESORT & Villas is a tropical oasis in the heart of hip and happening Seminyak.

Located on the fashionable 'Eat Street' – just minutes from the beach – this award-winning resort is perfect for those who want to be in the heart of the action as it is within walking distance of a staggering array of designer boutiques, fine dining restaurants, day spas, beach bars and pulsating night spots.

With 86 rooms, seven suites and seven villas, there are luxury accommodation choices to suit everyone.

The villas (six two-bedroom pool villas and one four-bedroom pool villa) are fully equipped and include their own private pool and garden. A perfect place to celebrate that special occasion with family or friends.

Or stay in one of the 93 spacious rooms and suites – all tastefully furnished with flat screen TV, DVD players, in-room safes, fridges and most

with views onto one of the lap pools.

Complete with restaurant, rooftop spa facility, two lap pools and a meeting room, Amadea Resort & Villas is a restful sanctuary.

This makes it the ideal choice for honeymooners and couples who want to enjoy a romantic escape, or a small group of friends and family looking to combine the vibrant side of Seminyak with the peaceful lifestyle of Bali.

Located on the bustling street front, Asparagus Restaurant and Bar provides a casual dining experience for guests of Amadea and is also open to the public.

Breakfast is served daily from 7am and an extensive a la carte menu of both Asian and Western cuisine (including snacks) is available for lunch and dinner.

An in-room dining menu is available 24 hours a day, as well as an in-villa catering service for any occasion, including romantic dinners, formal dinner parties and barbecues.

Pool Bar is also available for light

meals, cold beers and favourite cocktails for guests to enjoy while relaxing poolside.

Ambiente Spa at Amadea is an indulgent facility that includes a rooftop spa featuring two single and two double treatment rooms and an enticing menu of pampering therapies.

These include the famous Balinese traditional massage, aromatherapy and many more. It is open from 9am to 10pm for in-house guests and the public.

Resort guests can enjoy a wide array of activities including twice weekly Garden Cinema, complimentary yoga classes, or book an excursion to tour the island, visiting ancient temples and traditional Balinese villages.

Enjoy cocktails on beautiful beaches at sunset, go white water rafting or take a day cruise to an idyllic tropical island just 30 minutes off the main island.

Guests of Amadea will also love what is available in the surrounding area, including some famous names like Kudeta, Potato Head, La Favela, Revolver, Sisterfield and Ultimo.

Amadea Resort & Villas is a proud recipient of a *Certificate of Excellence Award* from *Tripadvisor* every year from 2012 to 2021.

The resort is only 25 minutes from Bali International Airport, 15 minutes from Kuta and 10 minutes from Legian.

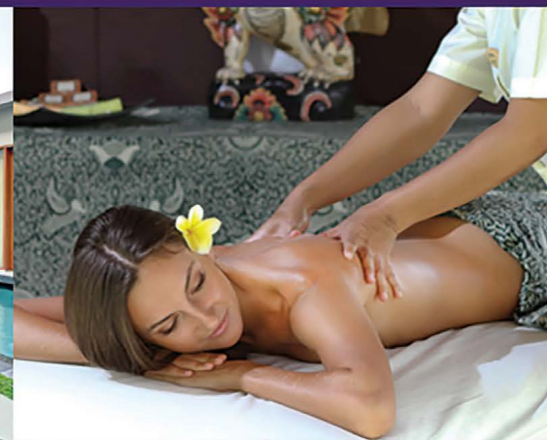
arvs.pphotels.com



Amadea RESORT & VILLAS
SEMINYAK - BALI

A Peaceful Oasis in the Heart of Seminyak

Located on the fashionable 'Eat Street' with its many boutiques and famous restaurants the resort is perfect for those who want to be in the heart of the action and within walking distance to Seminyak Beach



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Why it's nicer in Newfoundland



You're a visitor to Newfoundland only once, GAYA AVERY discovers on her first night there. On your return, you've no longer 'come from away', instead, you're simply coming home.

"I'LL F——IN' deck you!"

We'd been waiting a little over 20 minutes to deplane before this was shouted, one passenger to another, in Sydney. All because a poor woman needed to exit the loo and squeeze past people already lining up to disembark.

The pandemic, I fear, has made us meaner. Especially, it seems, after long-haul flights.

Two weeks in Canada (and perhaps, more particularly, a week in Newfoundland and Labrador) had made me suddenly sensitive to selfishness, to expect apologies instead of aggression.

For more than two terrible pandemic years, we watched as the globalisation experiment came under assault from unexpected borders closing against an enemy we couldn't see. We were so caught up in the very, very local that most of us didn't notice what was happening interstate or

overseas unless it impacted us. It was like we were suddenly limiting our relationships with other countries and other people in order to keep IT out. But IT can very quickly become THEM.

Travel used to be a conduit through US v THEM. It was a means of practicing empathy. It was through travel, away from our at-home routines, that we could live, even for a short time, another way, with other people. And then travel just stopped. And the world became the worse for it.

When the U.S. closed its airspace soon after the attacks of 9/11, some 7,000 people were stuck waiting in 38 planes rerouted and parked in the airport of the little town of Gander, Newfoundland, for upwards of 20 hours. Many of those on the planes were unaware of the fall of the Twin Towers or the Pentagon, or the selfless people of Flight 93.

If you've already seen the award-winning musical *Come From Away*,

you'll know where this is going. If not, prepare yourself for a story, a people and a setting that will remind you that there is real kindness out there. And icebergs too.

In the days following 9/11, the population of Gander grew by almost 7,000. Over the course of five days, those scared, tired 'plane people' from more than 95 different countries were housed and fed, entertained and cared for by locals. "They became family," we're simply told by those who took them in.

Allowing complete strangers to sleep in your homes and to borrow your cars is not a normal ask. Doing so when one of those people could be a terrorist and when, let's face it, the planes were sent to a place with no high rises and a small population just in case, is almost incomprehensible.

But when I asked the locals how it felt to be considered expendable, they told me they simply were too busy caring for the plane people to really notice.

We're sitting around the dining table of Derm and Dianne Flynn (both of whom are represented in the *Come From Away* musical), wiping away crumbs from Dianne's

moreish homemade bakeapple and blueberry tarts. Derm, the then mayor of Appleton, a little town just outside of Gander, doesn't so much shrug off praise for the actions of his community as he does suggest that anyone would and should do the same.

"What we did in 9/11 is really nothing compared to what other countries are doing now with the displaced Ukrainians fleeing the war," he says, almost by way of introduction.

There are so many truly incredible stories about what the people of Newfoundland did in the days following 9/11 (a four-metre long cake for a birthday party for 350 people? Done!), but to Derm and Dianne it was just what you do.

"Our people were all doing the same thing," Derm says. "Nobody told them what to do, they just did what they thought was right when a stranger comes to your house, when a stranger comes to your town: welcome them as best you can."

"It didn't matter what colour you were. Everybody was treated the same. And everybody all of a sudden realised: in this whole big world, we're all one."

HOW TO BECOME AN HONORARY NEWFOUNDLANDER

When you come to Newfoundland the first time, the locals will say you've come from away. But sometime during your stay, you may wander into a pub, or inevitably make friends with a local, and then before you know it, you're kissing a cod and have been formally 'screeched in' (it's a whole kind of secret process that I thoroughly recommend).

In the warmth of Derm and Dianne's house, the pair gleefully screech in a newcomer while we watch on with the kind of satisfaction that only comes from having already gone through it.

I was lucky enough to be screeched in by Brian Mosher, Oz Fudge and Beulah Cooper (also all represented in the musical) on my first night in a little RSL-like club called the Legion in Gander. It was a raucous affair that ended with most of us in tears (of laughter) having been taught how to talk and eat like a Newfoundlander.

It's been almost 21 years since 9/11, I say to Brian later. And *Come From Away* is opening on the Gold Coast this month, returning to Melbourne the next and Sydney in November. Places so far away from both Gander and New York City. Why is the story still relevant?

"Even 21 years later, *Come From Away* is the ultimate feel good story that reaffirms for all of us that there truly are good people in the world," he says. "People who will give every ounce of energy and whatever they can share to help another human being."

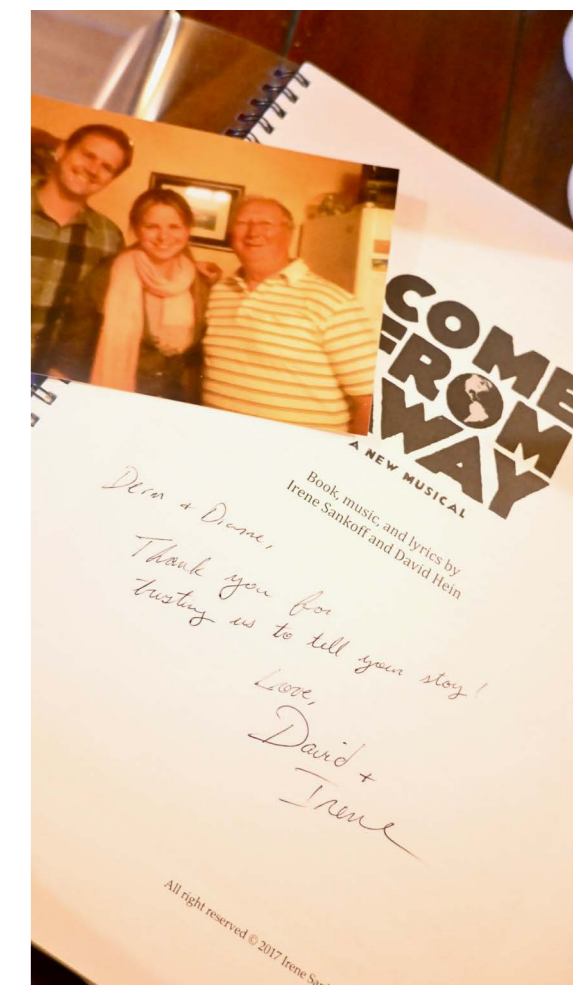
"It's the backbone of Newfoundland but the story that the world wants and needs to hear."

"Truly, it's the Newfoundland way that's part of our being. Even in times when we are shown the worst of humanity, we are able to show the best of humanity. It's why I'm so proud to call this place home."

I'll kiss a cod for that any day.



Derm Flynn welcomes visitors who have come from away





ICEBERGS, PUFFINS AND ALL THE PRETTY PLACES IN BETWEEN

There's an icy corridor that runs from Greenland to the southeast coast of the island of Newfoundland. It's been dubbed Iceberg Alley and the picturesque town of Twillingate, just a 90-minute drive from Gander, is known as the Iceberg Capital of the World.

These ancient leviathans originate from the glaciers of western Greenland and make their journey south. In fact, it was likely one of these icebergs that struck the *Titanic*, some 600 kilometres from the shores of Newfoundland.

The best time of year to see the icebergs is from mid-May to mid-July. The day before our arrival and boat journey out to search for it, an iceberg has been spotted (there's an app for that) and our captain was there to see it calve in a dramatic show.

We see two icebergs in two days and manage to nab a 'bergie bit' before hitting up Auk Island Winery to try local berry wines made with pure iceberg water (at this point we are already well-versed in the Quidi Vidi iceberg beer).

There are whales too, some 22 species of them. And puffins, improbability after improbability of them (that's what a group of puffins is called). Elliston's Puffin Viewing site offers the closest view of puffins from the land in all of North America. It is also the Root Cellar Capital of the World and if you're there in September, Elliston hosts the hiking-inspired food festival Roots, Rants and Roars.

I came to Newfoundland for the icebergs and the puffins, but in the colourful town of Trinity, still jet-lagged and up before sunrise, I wander along the water's edge and remember the old cliché of people being like icebergs and how we only see what's on the surface.

Back in Sydney, it turns out the woman who shouted profanities as we waited to deplane had missed her connection and was travelling with her elderly parents. The person she was shouting at had also missed her connection, was also travelling with her elderly parents.

I silently wished them both a trip to Newfoundland. Because as the pandemic does its best to divide us, now more than ever the whole world needs to be screeched in, to learn how to talk like a Newfoundlander, where everyone's my darlin' and kindness first is the best shot for humanity.

The author of this article travelled as a guest of Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism; however, the tourism board did not review or approve the content before publishing.



Newfoundland and Labrador is the most easterly province in Canada – where the sun rises first; where Vikings landed more than 1,000 years ago. This place is home to the oldest European settlement and one of the oldest cities in North America, but has been a province of Canada for barely 65 years. A vast land, with a relatively small population, Newfoundland and Labrador has some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet. Here, you can experience a solitary wilderness one day and immerse yourself in a vibrant culture the next. This is a land of rich history and natural wonders: stunning coastlines, breaching whales, icebergs, and some of the most incredible skylines you'll ever see.



Nakamaguro River.
Picture courtesy 7maru/
Shutterstock

Tour Tokyo like a local

Japan's capital is a vast, vibrant metropolis which can appear daunting until you get to know its districts and neighbourhoods and discover that each has its very own style and atmosphere. Here are five areas much loved by locals.

1. ASAKUSA & KAPPABASHI

Looking for true Japanese traditions, arts and crafts with a local downtown atmosphere?

Welcome to Asakusa where the Sensoji Temple is the oldest Buddhist temple in the capital. The temple entrance Kaminarimon Gate (Thunder Gate) with its giant red lantern is unmissable.

Asakusa is on the Sumida River and can be accessed by water bus ferries which operate from Asakusa to Hamarikyu Garden, Odaiba and Toyosu.

One of the best views of the city's tallest landmark, TOKYO SKYTREE, can be enjoyed from the Asakusa side of Sumida River.

Neighbouring Kappabashi, Tokyo's famous kitchenware town, is within walking distance of Asakusa. Most stores specialise in cooking and catering goods as well as traditional and modern hospitality items such as pots, pans and knives.

2. YANAKA & NEZU

These areas escaped major damage during the World Wars and Tokyo's natural disasters and thus have preserved a sense of history of a bygone era.

Often referred to as Tokyo's

downtown (shitamachi), the general vibe is friendly, retro and charming.

Historic sites of Yanaka Cemetery and Nezu Shrine (one of Japan's oldest) are tucked away among narrow back alleys and traditional wooden houses.

Yanaka Ginza, the retro shopping street, has around 70 stores. Enjoy street food and Japanese snacks such as pork cutlets, grilled squid and freshly baked rice crackers (senbei).

Yanaka and Nezu are also home to a thriving art scene. HAGISO is a renovated wooden apartment building transformed into a hip café and gallery. SCAI the Bathhouse, formerly a public bathhouse (senjo), has been turned into a contemporary art gallery.

3. NAKAMEGURO

Centered around the Meguro River and within walking distance of the fashionable districts of Daikanyama and Ebisu, Nakameguro holds its own in the sophistication stakes.

The area is home to a range of cool cafes and restaurants, hip interior and accessory shops and the newly developed Nakameguro Koukashita – 700 metres of bars and stores anchored by uber-modern Nakameguro Tsutaya Books.

You'll find the crowds swell in late March and early April when the

densely packed riverside cherry trees bud and blossom, creating an ultra-photogenic tunnel of pink.

4. KAGURAZAKA

This is a small, stylish neighbourhood close to Shinjuku which was once a lively geisha district. You may even catch a glimpse of the few remaining geisha going to their appointments.

Stroll the quiet backstreets and you'll still find signs of the area's geisha heritage: elegant traditional ryotei restaurants and kimono stores are flanked by modern Michelin-starred establishments and minimalist galleries.

These days, with cobbled streets, chic shops, French schools and French restaurants, Kagurazaka is better known as Tokyo's little Paris.

Kagurazaka is now a relaxing place where you can explore the mix of shrines, cafes and fashionable new stores.

5. KICHIJOJI

The Kichijoji area often tops Tokyo's 'most desirable place to live' list, primarily because Inokashira Park is just minutes away from Kichijoji Station, and Shibuya and Shinjuku are both relatively close by.

Head out for a day of recreation on boats and under trees, followed by an evening of authentic Japanese food and drink as you tour the standing bars of Harmonica Yokocho Alley.

 gotokyo.org/en



HOW TO DO DOHA

The Socceroos' thrilling qualification for the World Cup in November has put Qatar firmly on the radar of Aussie travellers. Here we look at various ways to explore the capital city, Doha.

BY METRO

Doha Metro is one of the most advanced train systems in the world. The state-of-the-art network has been operational since 2019 and features 100 km/h trains, driverless carriages and a Gold Class for premium passengers.

Football fans will find the metro

provides a practical and inexpensive means to attend matches. The system links Hamad International Airport (HIA) with five of the eight stadiums.

A journey costs as little as two Qatari Rial for a one-way trip (less than one Aussie dollar) after a reusable travel card (valid for five years) has been purchased for QAR10 (\$AU3).

Stops on the red line include Katara, Doha's go-to destination for arts, culture and cuisine; West Bay, the city's skyscraper-laden central district, and Msheireb, the downtown sustainable revival of the old commercial district with a fleet of al fresco dining options.

The gold line takes passengers to the National Museum of Qatar and Souq Waqif's bustling marketplace. It then ventures on to Aspire Zone, a large green area featuring parks, the Khalifa International Stadium, the 300m-tall The Torch Doha, Villaggio Mall and the new 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic

and Sports Museum.

The museum displays objects such as Muhammad Ali's boxing gloves, Pelé's World Cup winning football boots and Michael Schumacher's title winning F1 car from 2000.

Finally, the green line stretches from the centre of Doha out to Education City, the country's hub for learning and education, with university campuses, parks, the Education City Mosque and the Qatar National Library. The line then extends out to the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium and Mall of Qatar.

BY TRAM

Accompanying the Doha Metro is a series of tram services that operate in specific city districts.

Both the Education City tram and Msheireb tram offer a convenient free-of-charge service that circles around their respective areas.

Lusail tram, which launched at the



Lusail Tram



Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum

start of 2022, provides an extensive route around Lusail – Qatar's sustainable city of the future and the heart of the World Cup.

Sights include Lusail Stadium (which will host the tournament's final) and Place Vendôme – a new luxury shopping mall with a central canal, dancing water fountains and more than 500 high-end and mid-range stores.

Ticket costs for the Lusail tram are in line with Doha Metro's at two Qatari Rial for a one-way trip.

BY BIKE

Cycling in Qatar has never been easier with new tracks constantly opening as the government increases the emphasis on healthy and active lifestyles.

Most notable of all the routes is the Olympic cycling track, which opened in 2020. At 33 kilometres, this track holds the Guinness World Record for the longest continuous cycle path in the world. Five bridges and nearly 30 underpasses facilitate non-stop riding.

While the Lusail International Circuit

usually plays host to F1 cars and MotoGP bikes, it also opens its five-kilometre track to cyclists, runners, walkers and skaters for three hours of free training every Wednesday evening. Bicycles can be hired at the track for a small fee.

For something a little less intense, cyclists can visit Al Bidda Park, which offers five kilometres of smooth riding surrounded by lush natural greenery.

Another five-kilometre track lies in Aspire Zone Park, where special helmets are provided and a Learn to Ride initiative encourages children to hop onto two wheels.

BY FOOT

A walk around Doha's Corniche and downtown area is arguably the best way for first-time visitors to see and soak up Qatari culture in a short time.

Starting at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), visitors should stroll around the large park outside the museum, to the nearly 25 metre high '7' sculpture by the acclaimed American artist Richard Serra.

His tallest ever creation, '7' is made from seven steel plates in reference to the significance of the number in Islamic culture.

Nearby MIA Park is Doha Harbour, featuring hundreds of dhows. These are traditional wooden boats and they were the backbone of Qatar's economy when pearl diving was the country's main industry.

After the corniche it's easy to spend a couple of hours immersed in the ambiance of the Souq Waqif, Qatar's traditional marketplace.

Originally a weekend market for Bedouins, the souq underwent a complete restoration in the mid-Noughties and offers a maze of narrow alleyways lined with small shops, cafes and restaurants.

At the souq's exit, a series of staircases and escalators take visitors up into Msheireb Downtown Doha, a walk that blends Qatar's heritage into its future.

Msheireb is the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration project and comprises more than 100 buildings housing art galleries, shops and cafes.

Spread across the district are the Msheireb Museums, celebrating the history of Qatar's heritage houses: Bin Jelmoos House, Company House, Mohammed Bin Jassim House and Radwani House.

» visitqatar.qa

Above: Souq Waqif. Below: Doha Corniche. Right: Doha Metro Station



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THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

Cameron Highlands

Malaysia offers the perfect opportunity for those who love escaping city life and reconnecting with nature. Here we look at three top hill getaways across the country.

CAMERON HIGHLANDS

Pahang is the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia with almost two-thirds of the region enveloped in rainforest, making it an enclave of greenery, wildlife and natural treasures.

Cameron Highlands, situated about 150 kilometres north of Kuala Lumpur and 20 kms east of Ipoh, offers a cool climate, endless terraced tea plantations, strawberry farms, colourful flower gardens, Tudor-style buildings, Devonshire tea and English charm – a perfect setting for a short rendezvous.

One of the most popular plantations is Sungei Palas, which has more than 75 years of experience in the tea industry. The Tea Centre offers visitors a magnificent view of the plantation from its six-metre overhanging platform.

Activities here are generally nature and agrotourism-based. Markets, farms and nurseries make up most

of the attractions. Nature lovers also have a wide choice of trails to explore the jungle of the Highlands.

While plucking strawberries and eating scones with tea are the main activities on every visitor's to-do list, guests can also visit the Time Tunnel to learn more about the background and history of Cameron Highlands. The museum in Brinchang houses more than 1,000 artifacts besides a gallery of monochrome pictures depicting the Highlands' development since the early days.

The Cameron Highlands is home to one of the oldest forests in Malaysia. The Mossy Forest is said to be around 220 million years old. It is located near the summit of Mount Brinchang, which, at 2,031 metres above sea level, is the highest point in Malaysia accessible by road. On a clear day, a part of the Straits of Melaka can be seen from its observation tower.

The moist and misty ambience of the surrounding forest creates an ideal biotope for moss, ferns, lichens and orchids, apart from already being

home to various faunas that are endemic to the unique environment.

A 200-metre-long elevated boardwalk just before the peak of Mount Brinchang provides a series of wooden platforms through the forest. However, visitors are advised to take an experienced local guide as the forest covers a huge area and can be testing for inexperienced trekkers.

At the end of the boardwalk is a trail towards Mount Irau, the highest peak of Cameron Highlands. The best time to visit is early in the morning.

FRASER'S HILL

Apart from the Cameron Highlands, Pahang's attractions include Taman Negara, a 130-million-year-old rainforest, as well as animal sanctuaries, parks, lakes and waterfalls.

Nestled amid the Pahang rainforest is the hamlet of Fraser's Hill, which is reminiscent of a little Scottish village. It is characterised by granite coloured mock-Tudor houses and colonial-style buildings.

At 1,524m above sea level, the highland resort is a naturalists' paradise, boasting a wide range of plants, birds and animals. Fraser's Hill



Fraser Hill

is ideal for visitors who are interested in a relaxing, quiet holiday.

It is also particularly popular with 'twitchers', who are drawn to the area because it is a birdwatching haven (Malaysia is home to more than 795 species).

With the increase in nature and environmental awareness, more and more sites have been identified where birds can be observed and there are also bird sanctuaries designated around the country.

For recreational activities, Allan's Water provides paddle boating across a lake, the Paddock offers horse-riding and archery, Jeriau waterfall is a popular nature attraction, while there's also a Sports Complex and nine-hole golf course.

GENTING HIGHLANDS

Established in 1965, Genting Highlands is one of the most popular destinations in the country for locals and tourists alike.

Perched some 1,800m above sea level, the destination is easily accessible from Kuala Lumpur via the Karak Highway. The journey takes about one hour, so you can either do it as a day trip or stay and enjoy the multiple entertainment options.

The area is popular for its outdoor and indoor theme parks, particularly Resorts World Genting.

It features more than 10,300 rooms spread across seven hotels, theme parks and entertainment attractions, dining and retail outlets, international shows and business convention facilities.

A recent addition has been Genting SkyWorlds, described as Southeast Asia's most anticipated theme park. It features nine themed worlds, with 26 rides and attractions spread across 10 hectares.

There's also the Skytropolis indoor theme park, with more than 20 rides inside the Skytropolis Funland. Other attractions include the SkyWay cable car ride, live performances, casino and shopping at Genting Highlands Premier Outlet.



Genting Skyworlds

Apart from the resort, visitors can enjoy the crisp mountain air of the Genting Highlands on a 10-minute gondola cable car ride aboard the Awana SkyWay. Fly up in style to the SkyAvenue Station and revel in the views of the 130-million-year-old rainforest.

Disembark at the midway point and explore the Chin Swee Caves Temple and its scenic surroundings on top of the Highlands.

Other outdoor activities such as mountain climbing, or rainforest hiking trips are available from most hotels. A trek through the park is a great way to discover nature and learn more about the local flora and fauna.

There are many different treks available, each with a different level of difficulty and duration. There are some shorter, more leisurely walks like Gunung Rawang Mata Hari.

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Mossy Forest,
Cameron Highlands

