

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Traveltalk

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ROYAL SPECIAL

I WAS THERE TO
FAREWELL THE QUEEN

AUSTRIA

Famil spots
up for grabs

AUSTRALIA

Our top tourism
towns revealed

Plus: Can you name the world's most loved landmark?

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SPECIAL OFFER

FREE Day Tour in Vancouver
Book By 31 October 2022



<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>WHISTLER IN STYLE 3 days from AUD \$940 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 nights in Whistler at Delta Whistler Village Suites • Floatplane from Whistler to Vancouver • Sea to Sky Sights & Whistler Tour with Gondola • Admission to Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre • Peak 2 Peak Gondola Admission 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>VANCOUVER EXPERIENCE 4 days from AUD \$1,535 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a world of taste with Vancouver's fascinating fusion of cuisines • Visit the Granville Island Public Market, the jewel in the Island's crown • Floatplane between Victoria and Vancouver, over the scenic waters of the Strait of Georgia • Explore Vancouver with an included hop-on hop-off sightseeing tour • Admission to the Butchart Gardens 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>PACIFIC RIM WILDLIFE ESCAPE 7 days from AUD \$2,733 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two hour thrilling bear watching expedition from Tofino • Exciting, safe and intimate whale-watching experience onboard a zodiac • Explore the rugged coastline along the network of hiking trails in Tofino • Leisure time in the bustling metropolis of Vancouver • Transfer from Victoria to Tofino 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>WEST COAST AIR ADVENTURE 7 days from AUD \$3,409 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the luxury and opulent decor of the historic Fairmont properties • Experience an unforgettable floatplane trip over the Gulf Islands and the Howe Sound • Enjoy the breathtaking alpine playground of Whistler • Freedom of choice days in both Victoria & Whistler
<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>WILD CANADA - SELF DRIVE 7 days from AUD \$4,280 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Viewing excursion while staying overnight at Knight Inlet Lodge • Cruise through the pristine waters of Clayoquot Sound to view beautiful scenery and wildlife • Return floatplane flights from Campbell River to Knight Inlet Lodge • Meals included as per Itinerary • Freedom of Choice days in both Tofino and Victoria 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>GRIZZLY BEARS OF KNIGHT INLET LODGE 4 days from AUD \$4,624 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full board at Knight Inlet Lodge • Return flights from Vancouver to Campbell River • Return floatplane from Campbell River to Knight Inlet Lodge • Bear viewing tours • Kayak tour of Glendale Cove 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>KLAHOOSE WILDERNESS RESORT 4 days from AUD \$4,737 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 nights at Klahoose Wilderness Resort • Return flights between Vancouver and Powell River • Return Shuttle transfers between Powell River and Lund • Guided adventure tour with naturalist • Return water taxi transfers between Lund and Resort • All meals, beer and wine with dinner 	<p>FREE Day Tour in Vancouver</p> <p>THE COASTAL WAY - SELF DRIVE 12 days from AUD \$5,388 pp twin share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embark on a full day of cruising the sheltered waters of Canada's Inside Passage • Travel through the spine of the Canadian Rockies along the amazing Icefields Parkway • 12 days intermediate size car rental including GPS • Freedom of Choice Days

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Travel tops the Aussie wish list

AUSSIERS ARE prioritising travel despite the rising cost of living, with four in five planning a trip in the next 12 months.

That was the encouraging finding from the Intrepid Travel Index, compiled again after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic.

Other key findings included:

- * 58 per cent of Australians have travelled domestically in 2022 and 79 per cent of Aussies are planning a trip next year
- * For the first time ever, Australia tops the list as the number one destination, with Vietnam, Egypt, Peru and Morocco also in the top five
- * Italy came in first place for bucket list destinations, followed by America and Antarctica
- * Some 89 per cent of respondents said they were likely to choose sustainable travel options for their next trip.

“Our customers have changed and the way they want to travel has changed,” said Sarah Clark, Managing Director ANZ, Intrepid Travel.

According to the survey, almost half (46 per cent) of Aussies have booked a holiday to improve their wellbeing, with one in two (55 per cent) saying travel has positively impacted their mental health.

In terms of other health benefits, 59 per cent say travel has decreased stress and burnout and 46 per cent say travel has broadened their horizons.

Photos courtesy of Intrepid Travel

[intrepidtravel.com](https://www.intrepidtravel.com)



Bringing home the bacon

AN AUSTRALIAN city has beaten off rivals from home and across the Tasman to win a prestigious title at the World Travel Awards (WTA).

Travel industry VIPs from 35 nations attended a gala awards night in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam to celebrate the winners from both Asia and Oceania.

The gong for ‘Oceania’s Leading City Destination 2022’ went to Melbourne, defeating fellow nominees Cairns, Gold Coast, Perth, Sydney and Auckland and Queenstown in New Zealand.

It’s the first time the Victorian capital has captured the award following victories for Queenstown (twice) and Sydney.

Other Aussie winners included The Tasman in Hobart which won ‘Oceania’s Leading New Hotel’ and Hyatt Regency Sydney got the job done as ‘Oceania’s Leading Business Hotel’.

Jacob’s Creek tasted success as ‘Oceania’s Leading Tourism Winery’ and PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport departed with the title of ‘Oceania’s Leading Airport Hotel’.

Daintree EcoLodge & Spa cleaned up as ‘Oceania’s Leading Green Hotel’ while Flight Centre booked their ticket as ‘Oceania’s Leading Travel Agency’.

The WTA were established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the tourism industry.

“As shining examples of tourism excellence, our winners have helped to once again raise the bar,” said Graham Cooke, Founder of WTA.

[worldtravelawards.com](https://www.worldtravelawards.com)



FALLS ARE THE BEST

A NEW study has revealed the world’s most loved landmarks, based on factors including annual visitor numbers, entry prices and Instagram posts.

Research by the travel experts at Bounce discovered that Niagara Falls topped the list, with a score of 9.22 out of 10.

Free to visit, Niagara Falls sees just under 12 million visitors a year and it has a perfect 5/5 rating on *Tripadvisor*, as well as more

than three million Instagram posts.

With more than six million visitors a year, the Taj Mahal came second with the Grand Canyon taking out third spot.

The study also highlighted that the Burj Khalifa in Dubai is likely to generate the highest ticket revenue, with more than \$621 million expected to be made from ticket sales each year. The landmark sees more than 16 million visitors per annum.

THE TOP 10

- 1 Niagara Falls
- 2 Taj Mahal
- 3 Grand Canyon
- 4 Golden Gate Bridge
- 5 Statue of Liberty
- 6 Great Wall of China
- 7 Eiffel Tower
- 8 Burj Khalifa
- 9 Banff National Park
- 10 The Colosseum

[usebounce.com/blog/best-loved-landmarks](https://www.usebounce.com/blog/best-loved-landmarks)

GREEN MEANS GO

TOURISM IRELAND’S Green Button campaign is now live in Australia, targeting audiences who have the highest potential to travel to the island of Ireland.

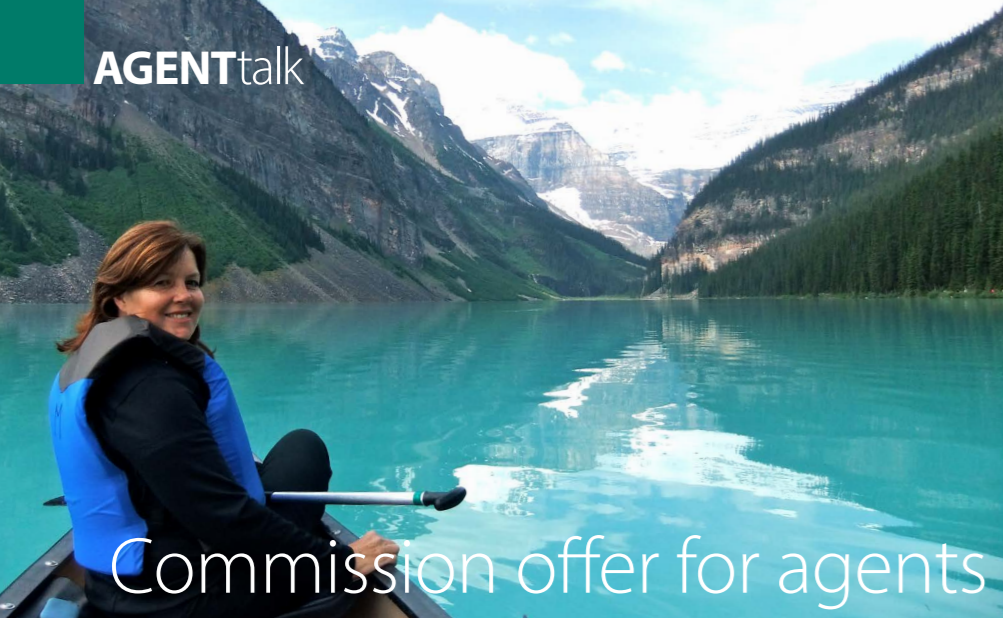
Ads will be rolled out through online and social media channels, with the content expected to reach up to 10.7 million Australians, encouraging bookings for this year and 2023.

“Now that the remaining COVID-19 travel restrictions have been lifted and our borders are open, the time is right for Tourism Ireland to restart tourism from Australia to the island of Ireland,” said Sofia Hansson, Manager of Tourism Ireland Australia and New Zealand.

“Australia remains an important market for tourism to the island of Ireland. In 2019, we welcomed 252,000 Australian and New Zealand visitors, whose visits delivered €245 million for the economy.”

[Ireland.com](https://www.Ireland.com)





Commission offer for agents

AUSTRALIAN GOLF tour company Go Golfing is offering the opportunity for agents to enjoy new revenue streams and earn extra commission.

As confidence in international travel returns, Go Golfing is re-introducing bucket list tours to the world's most alluring golf and sightseeing destinations.

Go Golfing has further expanded its offering with tours appealing to wildlife, tennis, horse racing, rugby and even lawn bowls enthusiasts.

This means that for the first time

ever, travel agents will get paid commissions on luxury golf and themed tours.

"We're so excited to partner with travel agents that we are offering a further 20 per cent commission bonus on all bookings until the end of the year," said Peter McCarthy, the Managing Director of Go Golfing.

Mr McCarthy told *Traveltalk* that bookings for Australia and New Zealand have never been stronger and that trips to Japan, Hawaii and Vietnam sold out within a week of release.

"In addition to the Australian events and tours launched through COVID, we've published an expansive schedule of fully hosted international tours," he added.

Mr McCarthy revealed they had set up a company called Global Sport Tour Holdings (GSTH) which would enable travel agents to access market leading tours from multiple operators for their clients.

"All tour operators operating under Global Sports Tour Holdings are making their packages commissionable. This will be a win-win for everyone – with travel agents earning commission and tour operators getting more bookings."

Agents who sign up with GSTH will receive a quarterly newsletter with packages, pricing, commission and bonus offers.

"Through collaboration and aggregation, we're enhancing the quality and value of all travel packages."

➤ gogolfing.net.au/affiliate-area/gg-agents/aff/TravelTalkMag/

CONSULTANTS ENJOY A COMING TOGETHER

THERE WAS a flashback to the Seventies as the TravelManagers annual conference wrapped up with a gala dinner in Sydney recently.

One of the big winners on the night was Ed Bradford, who is TravelManagers' representative for Buninyong in Victoria, who took out the 'Excellence in Marketing' award.

"Throughout the pandemic, I've

kept pushing myself to stay positive and support suppliers and destinations," he said.

"I take pride in how I market TravelManagers and my personal brand, and love having the ability to share my experience on different platforms."

In a break from tradition, there were no sales-based awards this year owing to the impact COVID has had on the travel industry.

Retiring Chairman Barry Mayo was celebrated on the night with the company's prestigious 'Spirit Award' being re-named in his honour.

"In keeping with this year's overall conference theme of 'Together', the awards dinner was a celebration of the spirit of cohesion, cooperation and mutual support that makes TravelManagers' culture so special," said Michael Gazal, Executive General Manager.

➤ travelmanagers.com.au



IN BRIEF///

Anne Bain of MTA Travel has been named as the winner of CLIA's Port of Seattle training incentive, in partnership with NCL.

She wins a seven-day round-trip Alaska cruise for two with NCL, including flights and three nights in Seattle's only over-water hotel, The Edgewater.

Gift card winners included: Liz Christiansen – Helloworld Travel Runaway Bay; Gaury Balayasoderan – Our Vacation Centre; Stephanie Moore – Travel Masters; Darren Leckie – MTA Travel; Lauren Wall – Ecruising.



WIN A TRIP TO AUSTRIA

A NEW resource hub specifically designed for the Australian travel industry has just been launched.

The Austria Resource Hub is a place to learn, be inspired and find the necessary tools to design an itinerary to the popular country.

Four destinations have been released so far by the Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) with more to follow.

Salzburg, Innsbruck, the Wolfgangsee region in the Salzkammergut and the Arlberg region – all located in the western part of the country – are the first feature destinations.

Experiences available include a backpack picnic at 2,200 metres on the Nordkette mountain in Innsbruck,

riding on Austria's steepest cog railway up the Schafberg in St. Wolfgang, multi-day hiking the Arlberg Trail from Lech to St. Anton or discovering the trick fountains in the pleasure palace of Hellbrunn in Salzburg.

To celebrate the launch, agents can win one of six spots on a 'Pre-Christmas in Austria' famil from November 22-30 including flights with Emirates (+ connecting domestic flights if needed).

To go in the draw, agents must watch the short videos of the four feature destinations and answer eight quiz questions correctly by October 17.

➤ to.austria.info/austria-resource-hub

JOIN THE PRIZE GUYS

AGENTS WILL have the chance to win prizes when The Islands of Tahiti hold two roadshow events later this month.

Attendees will enjoy Tahitian-inspired evenings with tropical cocktails and canapés while discovering what's new in the destination.



Among the travel partners attending will be Air Tahiti Nui, Conrad Bora Bora Nui, Hilton Hotel Tahiti, Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa, Paul Gauguin Cruises, Pearl Resorts of Tahiti, Tahiti Nui Travel, Sofitel Kia Ora Moorea Beach Resort, South Pacific Management and Tahiti Travel Services.

The Tahitian soirées will take place at the Pullman Sydney Hyde Park on October 24 and the InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto on

October 25. Both events will run from 6pm to 9pm.

Only Tahiti Specialist Agents will qualify to win the grand prize. To become a Tahiti Specialist, register on TahitiSpecialist.org and complete the e-learning module.

➤ tahititourisme.com.au



SWISS HIT FOR EIGHT

EIGHT AGENTS are now counting down to a pre-Christmas trip overseas after winning prizes at the biennial Switzerland Travel Experience Roadshow.

Nearly 400 advisors across Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Auckland and Christchurch attended the recent events.

They connected with the Switzerland Tourism ANZ team and key Swiss partners to learn about the country's sustainability strategy (aka Swisstainable), be updated with the latest news and product experiences and gather tips for seamless travel.

A major takeaway from the event was that sustainability in Switzerland is more than just a trend, with local people and businesses being fully committed and engaged in the process and leading the way to a greener future with innovative initiatives, experiences and ideas.

As for ANZ visitor numbers, Switzerland Tourism shared that the Australasian market is on track to reach 2019 numbers by 2024.

➤ MySwitzerland.com



DELVE DEEPER AND SAVE BIG

SCENIC HAS unveiled their new 2023 and 2024 South East Asia river cruise and land journeys collection.

The expanded program ventures deeper into Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, with two extra destinations introduced in the latter.

Vientiane is the historical capital of Laos and is famous for its architecture and Buddhist temples, most notably the golden, 16th-century Pha That Luang.

Vang Vieng is globally renowned for its natural scenery, with limestone mountains looming over the town and cave systems below.

Guests will now be able to stay in Vang Vieng and Vientiane for a night, travelling between these two destinations on the new high speed rail service during the 'Grand Indochina & Luxury Mekong' journey.

Other highlights include visiting the Raffles Hotel Le Royal in Phnom Penh in Cambodia, famous for the Femme Fatale cocktail (the signature cocktail created for Jacqueline Kennedy in 1967).

Super Earlybird savings are available for bookings made by March 31, 2023, with savings of up to \$4,000 per person on itineraries which include a nine-night river cruise and up to \$2,500 per person on itineraries which include a seven-night river cruise.

» scenic.com.au



HERE'S WHY WENDY WANTS TO WU YOU

WENDY WU Tours is offering savings on all group tours and departures in 2023 and 2024 to Japan.

The \$250 per person incentive includes dedicated solo departures as well as group tours to South Korea and Taiwan.

All tours are fully escorted and include return international airfares and current taxes, accommodation, meals, sightseeing with an English-speaking guide, entrance fees and transportation.

The operator is also taking care of the entry visa for their customers, as per current entry requirements into Japan.

"We've cherry-picked the absolute best immersive experiences for the new collection, fine-tuning every tour, so that now passengers can be assured of receiving the very best all-inclusive touring experience that Japan has to offer," said Wendy Wu.

The offer is applicable on the operators 18-day flagship 'Japan Uncovered' (now from \$12,640 per person); 12-day 'Jewels of Japan' (now from \$9,940 per person) and 22-day 'Japan by Rail' (from \$14,640 per person).

The \$250 saving applies to all bookings made by October 31.

» wendywutours.com.au



BEST TOWNS IN THE COUNTRY

THE WINNER of the award for Australia's Top Tourism Town has been announced at a ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra.

For the second year in a row, it was Mudgee in New South Wales who took out the major national award.

Winners are determined by a state and national level voting process combining people's choice votes and an industry judging panel.

"Mudgee, in the Central West of NSW, is renowned for its strong food and wine scene, and continues to lead regional tourism recovery across Australia," said Evan Hall, Chair of Australian Tourism Industry Council.

Exmouth in Western Australia won gold in the Small Tourism Town category while Strahan in Tasmania topped the list in the Tiny Tourism Town standings.

» toptourismtowns.com.au



Bike tours take to the bottle

AUSTRALIAN CYCLE Tours has expanded its range and launched four self-guided adventures in one of the country's oldest wine regions.

Each of the new tours features visits to highly awarded vineyards and cellar doors, cosmopolitan cafes, creative galleries and museums.

They also offer views of classic Australian scenery and atmospheric heritage villages.

The four new itineraries in South Australia's Clare Valley feature the Riesling Trail, a 35km bike route that links the towns of Barinia in the north to Auburn via Clare.

The two longer 'Explorer' tours also take in the lesser known 45km Rattler Rail Trail from Auburn to Riverton in the south.

The 'Clare Valley Cycle Short Break' and the 'Clare Valley Cycle Premium Short Break' feature two days of cycling and follow the same four-day flexible itinerary that includes return transfers (the premium with a private transfer) between Adelaide and the Clare Valley, navigational App and route maps, bike hire and luggage transfers.

The former costs \$850 per person and includes two-nights motel and one-night hotel accommodation, while the latter costs \$1,320 per person and includes two-nights private self-contained cottage and one-night hotel accommodation.

» australiencycletours.com.au

Trains, boats and hotels



A LUXURY cruise, five-star hotels and a ride on an iconic train are all contained in a package from Australian small ship cruise specialist, Cruise Traveller.

The adventure begins on July 7, 2023, with two-nights in a five-star hotel in Athens before boarding the 300-suite *Seabourn Encore* for a seven-

night journey through the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas from Piraeus to Venice.

Guests will visit seven destinations including the Greek medieval fortress town of Monemvassia, Katakolon near the birthplace of the Olympics, Olympia, the beaches of Lefkada

Island, the Italian beach city of Brindisi, the famous walled city of Dubrovnik, the Croatian coastal town of Zadar and Venice.

A three-night stay in a five-star hotel will allow travellers to explore the city's canals before boarding the world-famous *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* train for an overnight trip to London.

Lavish meals, lounges and sleeper cabins can be enjoyed along the way before a two-night stay in a five-star London hotel provides a fitting finale to the European holiday.

The 15-night 'Golden Greats of Europe' rail, sail and stay package is priced at \$13,980 per person twin share, a saving of \$1,300 per person if booked by November 30.

» CruiseTraveller.com.au

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Traveltalk



James Dunne, Chief Executive,
Rail Online

AUSSIE START-UP IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Not even a worldwide pandemic can stop the success of Rail Online, a company aiming to become the number one stop for rail tickets.

Here we speak to JAMES DUNNE, Chief Executive of Rail Online, about the boom in rail travel and the company's expansion plans.

Q: How have Aussie travel agents responded to Rail Online's launch?

A: We've received an exceptionally warm welcome, which I guess is not surprising given our focus is on making the process of booking rail sectors easier for agents.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of launching a start-up is that you have great flexibility and adaptability.

Since we launched, agents have provided us with continual feedback, which we've used to help shape the products and services we offer. In that sense it's been a genuine partnership.

Q: Why did you launch a start-up travel venture in the middle of a global pandemic?

A: The pandemic did result in some adjustments to the timing of our launch.

But it had no impact on our vision – to alleviate the frustrations travel agents have long had with the rail sector by launching a website that delivers more competitive pricing, reduces booking fees and makes it easier for consultants to process refunds and exchanges.

The pandemic has also done little to slow the growth in popularity of high-speed rail travel. Australians increasingly understand the benefits rail travel offers in terms of efficiency, comfort and

reduced environmental impact.

At the same time, high-speed networks are expanding, competition is increasing and operators are investing in products that offer an even better passenger experience.

Q: What new high-speed rail projects are in the pipeline?

A: The European Union recently unveiled plans to double high-speed rail use by 2030 and triple current levels by 2050.

More than 130 transport infrastructure projects – including major rail initiatives – have already been selected for EU grants totalling in excess of €5.4 billion.

One project, for example, will see the Czech Republic introduce new 350 km/h rail lines that will dramatically cut travel times between Prague and cities across Austria, Slovakia, Poland and Germany.

Another major rail infrastructure project is the Fehmarn Belt tunnel, which will provide an undersea link between Denmark and Germany.

When completed it will become the world's longest road and rail tunnel, reducing an hour-long ferry voyage (at least) to a seven-minute, high-speed journey on trains capable of reaching 200 km/h.

Q: How is high-speed rail competition increasing?

A: Recent EU legislation removed barriers to competition between national passenger rail systems and that is already bearing fruit.

In December 2021, for instance, we saw Trenitalia launch a high-speed service between Milan and Paris, offering a journey time of less than seven hours.

In doing so, Trenitalia became the first foreign company to operate in the French high-speed market, competing directly with France's National Railway Company (SNCF).

As always, that kind of competition will inevitably benefit travellers.

Q: You recently added live Amtrak inventory. What's next?

A: In North America, VIA Rail will be our next addition. VIA Rail has always been popular, but I think it will become even more in demand as Australians increasingly venture beyond Canada's west coast ski fields and explore eastern Canada. Corridors such as Toronto-Montreal-Quebec will be particularly attractive.

In Europe we also expect to add Eurostar, along with high-speed rail journeys in France and Italy, in time for next season's peak booking period.

On a side note, we believe Rail Online is now the only online rail specialist in our region offering live connections to both European and North American train journeys on a single website.



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www.rail.online

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Big fun on the big Sun

PRINCESS CRUISES have unveiled plans for the largest ship the company has ever built.

Accommodating more than 4,000 guests, *Sun Princess* will offer expansive venues, innovative entertainment venues, multi-storey dining rooms and next level stateroom accommodations.

The ship is currently under construction in Italy and is scheduled to debut in early 2024.

"*Sun Princess* is a new and bespoke ship platform, designed to simultaneously embrace Princess heritage while boldly pressing into the future with iconic, elegant and pure lines unique to our brand," said John Padgett, President, Princess Cruises.

"A show-stopping, first-of-its-kind Dome on the top deck and suspended glass Piazza in the center of *Sun Princess* offer innovative designs showcasing expansive ocean views for incredible opportunities to connect with the sea."

The 21-deck ship will feature 2,157 staterooms, including 50 suites and 100 connecting rooms.

princess.com



EMERALD SHINES BRIGHT IN ASIA

A NEW 2023 & 2024 Vietnam, Cambodia and the Mekong River Cruising brochure has just been launched by Emerald Cruises.

With the river re-opening to cruising this month, guests can enjoy the luxury onboard *Emerald Harmony*.

Custom-built to sail into the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, the ship was launched in 2019 and provides a boutique river cruise experience for a maximum of 84 guests.

"Our local team are looking forward to welcoming guests on to our beautiful, as-new, *Emerald Harmony* for an unforgettable river cruise through Vietnam and Cambodia," said Angus Crichton, Emerald Cruises Director of Sales, Marketing & Product.

Harmony has a sun deck and pool deck, the Horizon Bar & Lounge and serves regionally inspired dishes at the Reflections Restaurant. Also onboard is a fitness and wellness area where guests can enjoy a range of spa treatments.

Itineraries in the 2023 & 2024 Southeast Asia collection include the eight-day 'Majestic Mekong River Cruise', 13-day 'Wonders of Vietnam, Cambodia & the Mekong' and 21-day 'Grand Tour of Vietnam & Cambodia'.

Early bird offers are available with savings of up to \$1,750 per person.

emeraldcruises.com.au



Take a walk on the wellness side

NORWEGIAN CRUISE Line is running its third annual wellbeing initiative with new challenges and its highest value prize pool yet at \$16,000.

Walk for Wellness 2022 will run from October 1-31, coinciding with National Mental Health Month and WHO World Mental Health Day on October 10.

Travel agents will join NCL staff and track their steps towards a collective goal of 140,000 kilometres, building on 2021's achievement of 139,435.

"We realise the issues confronting agents have changed," said Damian Borg, Director of Sales, NCL AUNZ.

"They are busier than ever but the need to look after their physical and mental wellbeing remains paramount."

ncl.com



25TH ANNIVERSARY SALE

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MEDITERRANEAN ODYSSEY

BARCELONA – VENICE or vice versa
13 DAYS | 10 GUIDED TOURS | 6 COUNTRIES
 SET SAIL MAR – OCT 2023; APR – AUG 2024
From \$6,995pp in Veranda stateroom
SAVE \$3,400 per couple



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*Conditions apply. Prices are per person, in Australian dollars, based on double occupancy, subject to availability, includes all advertised discounts and correct at time of printing. Guests are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at time of travel. Venice, the Adriatic & Greece based on 21 October 2023 departure. Mediterranean's Iconic Shores based on 14 February 2024 departure. Mediterranean Odyssey based on 11 August 2023 departure. These offers are valid on new bookings made between 05 August 2022 and 31 October 2022 unless sold out prior. For full terms and conditions visit viking.com



This is how to really holiday

Summer is about to get a whole lot bolder

IT'S TIME to cue the memory-making when two of the world's most innovative ships sail from Australia this summer.

Thought you knew cruising? Get ready Queensland. As the largest and boldest ship to ever come to Australian shores, *Quantum of the Seas* will officiate Royal Caribbean's Brisbane debut.

Offering sailings from November and homeporting at the new cruise terminal, Queensland will welcome a new gateway to the South Pacific.



Let's not forget Sydney. Sister ship, *Ovation of the Seas*, will make its stunning return, kicking off sailings in October.

So, whether you're looking to make up for lost bonding time with the whole family, including nan and grandad, an adventure at sea for the kids (and the parents!) or to explore the best on board and on shore with your significant other, there's no better time to book that summer 2022 sailing you've been dreaming of than now

with Royal Caribbean.

Embracing your inner foodie at more than 15 dining venues and seeing showstopping entertainment is merely the humble beginnings of what awaits from your ticket with Royal Caribbean.

It's only on these Quantum Class ships you can discover a plethora of first-at-sea innovations like skydiving in the middle of the ocean with RipCord® by iFLY – your chance to fly while taking in stunning ocean views.

Talking about views, you'll also get to experience the best one possible at sea. Holding the Guinness World Record winner for tallest viewing deck on a cruise ship at 100m above sea level, North Star® will elevate you high above the ship for unrivalled 360-degree views.

Once you're done in the air, it's time to take it back to the waves in true Australian style.

If you're looking for thrills, beginners and experienced surfers can hang ten by boogie boarding or stand-up surfing on the FlowRider without ever having to leave the ship!

The fun doesn't stop there. As you head inside from the pool deck after enjoying a day in the sun, you'll be able to marvel at mind-blowing Broadway Style shows.

Unparalleled technology means shows at Two70° are multidimensional and immerse you in live performers, aerialists and breathtaking video and digital scenery.

Imagine that against a backdrop

of 270-degree panoramic sea views through vast, floor-to-ceiling glass walls spanning almost three decks at the stern of the ship.

Then there's SeaPlex, the largest indoor active space at sea. A distinctive and flexible sporting and entertainment venue with thrilling new features including basketball on a full-size regulation basketball court or the first-ever bumper car and roller skating at sea.

While the kids are entertained, experience mixology meeting technology at Royal's Bionic Bar, where you can have your favourite cocktail mixed by a robot in a ballet-like performance. The robot arms can produce two drinks per minute for a total of 1000 drinks per day.

But that's enough about the journey.

You can visit us at www.royalcaribbean.com to find out more about everything else that you'll have included on board.

Now imagine everything you'll also get on land too. From October 2022 – April 2023, Royal Caribbean offers a raft of two–13-night sailings calling at locations showcasing the best of what Australia has to offer, across the South Pacific islands and throughout New Zealand.

Journey the best at sea as you visit the best on land.

 royalcaribbean.com



SAVE ON 2022-2023 SUMMER SAILINGS

UP TO **\$600** INSTANT SAVINGS*

+ FREE BALCONY UPGRADE*



 + UP TO **30% OFF** EVERY GUEST*

LEARN MORE

HURRY, SALE ENDS 11 OCTOBER!

Polaris joins the family

VIKING HAS taken delivery of the company's second purpose-built expedition ship.

The delivery ceremony of the *Viking Polaris* took place in Norway where the company's first expedition ship, the *Viking Octantis*, was delivered in December 2021.

The *Viking Polaris* immediately set sail toward Amsterdam, where she was named by her ceremonial godmother, Ann Bancroft, one of the world's pre-eminent polar explorers.

Currently sailing in the Great Lakes, the *Viking Octantis* has also been named by her ceremonial godmother, Liv Arnesen, the world-renowned Norwegian explorer, lecturer, author and educator.

From Amsterdam, the *Viking Polaris* will make her way to South America and both ships will spend the Austral summer in Antarctica, before travelling north to the Great Lakes for a series of voyages during spring and summer.

The new Polar Class ships host 378 guests in 189 staterooms and provide more indoor and outdoor viewing areas than other expedition vessels.

"Today is a proud day for the Viking family as we welcome the *Viking Polaris* to our fleet," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking.

"These are phenomenal ships and we are very pleased with the positive reception from guests during the first season of our new expeditions.

"The great explorer, Ann Bancroft, has honoured us by serving as godmother to the *Viking Polaris*, and we look forward to welcoming her first guests onboard later this week."

* There's still time left to take advantage of Viking's 25th Anniversary Sale offers on all 2023 and 2024 river cruises and a selection of their most popular 2023 and 2024 ocean and expedition voyages.

The company is offering savings of up to \$8,000 per couple. Offers are valid for new bookings until October 31.

 viking.com



Ocean highlights include:

- 23-day 'Secrets of Southeast Asia from Bali to Singapore' or v.v. and priced from \$5,295 per person in a Veranda Stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$8,000 per couple.
- 15-day 'Viking Homelands from Stockholm to Bergen' or v.v. and priced from \$8,595 per person in a Deluxe Veranda Stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$1,400 per couple.
- 15-day 'Australia & New Zealand' from Sydney to Auckland or v.v. and priced from \$7,995 per person in a Veranda Stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$4,000 per couple.

River highlights include:

- 15-day 'Grand European Cruise' from Amsterdam to Budapest or v.v. and priced from \$3,995 per person cruise only in a Standard stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$5,600 per couple.
- 15-day 'France's Finest' from Paris to Avignon or v.v. and priced from \$4,695 per person cruise only in a Standard stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$4,600 per couple.
- 10-day 'Portugal's River of Gold' from Lisbon to Porto and priced from \$5,495 per person cruise only in a Standard stateroom. Includes savings of up to \$2,000 per couple.

Expedition highlights include:

- 13-day 'Antarctic Explorer' from Buenos Aires - Ushuaia - Buenos Aires and priced from \$16,995 per person in a Nordic Balcony. Save up to \$5,000 per couple.
- Eight-day 'Niagara & the Great Lakes' from Toronto to Milwaukee or v.v. and priced from \$7,295 per person in a Nordic Balcony. Includes savings of up to \$3,000 per couple.

Terms and conditions apply. Prices are per person, based on double occupancy.



STARS ALIGN FOR ORION'S RETURN

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC *Orion* will make its return to Australian waters in 2023 with two new itineraries.

The 12-day 'Australia's Wild Northwest' expedition explores the landscapes of the Kimberley, from gorges and waterfalls to caves, rainforests and wildlife.

Highlights include a journey along the King George River to explore its red rock canyon walls and the Horizontal Waterfalls in the Buccaneer Archipelago, which are created by the rapid tidal fall on the ocean side of the cliffs.

There's also a visit to the world's largest inshore reef, Montgomery Reef, which is transformed by some of the biggest tidal changes on Earth.

With only 53 outside cabins, the *National Geographic Orion* allows access to the region's wildlife, including octopuses, turtles, reef sharks, dugongs, manta rays, dolphins and migrating humpback whales.

The 16-day 'Northwest Australia & Indonesia' tour guides guests through the Kimberley and remote island villages.

Visitors will also have a rare opportunity to visit world-renowned Komodo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to go in search of the Komodo dragon.

Prices start from \$13,940 per person for 'Australia's Wild Northwest' and \$19,520 per person for 'Northwest Australia & Indonesia'.

 au.expeditions.com

I saw three ships come sailing in

THE ENTIRE P&O Cruises Australia fleet of three ships has returned home to resume cruising Down Under.

Pacific Adventure became one of the tallest ships to sail under the Sydney Harbour Bridge when she joined *Pacific Explorer* and *Pacific Encounter* here in Australia.

Celebrations surrounding her arrival were scaled back as a mark of respect following the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

The 2,600-guest ship will be based year-round in Sydney to sail itineraries to Australian destinations and to the South Pacific where cruising is vital to island economies. She will commence operations on October 22.

"All of our ship arrivals since the cruise ban was lifted in mid-April have been emotional moments but it is particularly significant to now have all three P&O Cruises Australia ships back

home," said Marguerite Fitzgerald, President of Carnival Australia and P&O Cruises Australia.

Pacific Encounter is based in Brisbane for year-round cruising while *Pacific Explorer* will do cruise seasons from Adelaide, Melbourne, Fremantle and Cairns.

 pocruires.com.au



Take an expert journey

PONANT has announced a sailing collaboration with Smithsonian Journeys, the travel program of the Smithsonian Institution.

Drawing on Smithsonian's resources dating back 175 years, the sailings will feature notable experts and experiences that embrace local cultures and dive deeper into a destination's history, cuisine, language, environment and wildlife.

The sailings will provide opportunities to engage with a variety of Smithsonian Journeys experts, ranging from archaeologists and scientists to anthropologists and historians.

As part of the itineraries, PONANT will sail to ports of call never previously visited including Ploče in Croatia, Charlottetown and Prince Edward Island.

A total of 21 departures are on offer, exploring the Scottish Isles and Norwegian Fjords, the Hebrides and Irish Sea, Southern Spain, Canada and the North American coast, Central America, the Caribbean and Sicily.

 au.ponant.com



Manly makeovers & major milestones



A RENOWNED Aussie hotel will be re-opening next month following a \$30 million transformation.

The refurbished Manly Pacific Hotel in Sydney will feature 213 rooms, an exclusive residence and nine suites with bespoke wellness experiences centred around the ocean and a rooftop pool.

The property is now part of Accor's MGallery Hotel Collection, joining more than 100 boutique hotels around the world.

"Whether you're here after work, or on a weekend getaway, from the moment you step into our hotel, you'll feel calm, rejuvenated and connected to the ocean," said Dylan Cole, General



Manager of the Manly Pacific.

Guests will be encouraged to explore the area's rich surfing history and discover what Manly and the Northern Beaches have to offer, from a thriving local arts scene to refined dining and boutique shopping.

✳️ Meanwhile Accor has added its 400th hotel in Australia and the Pacific with the launch of the heritage-listed The Porter House Hotel – MGallery in Sydney.

Accor's first hotel in the region – Novotel Sydney Darling Harbour (1991) – was a catalyst for the redevelopment of Darling Harbour into Sydney's premier tourism,

entertainment and events precinct.

Now the transformation of the Porter House building into a luxury hotel is set to boost Sydney's CBD revival.

Located on Castlereagh Street, the property offers 122 rooms and suites, which occupy the first 10 floors of a 36-storey mixed-use tower.

A residential component comprising 131 apartments, with private entry via Bathurst Street, sits above the new MGallery hotel, while a multi-level food and bar destination has been created within the restored 1870s heritage-listed building.

Guests have access to all the hotel's restaurants and leisure facilities – including a fitness centre and heated pool – via the exclusive Digit Valet walking, talking iPad concierge, the only one of its kind in Australia.

➤ manlypacific.com.au

➤ all.accor.com

WHAM, BAM, AREN'T WE JUST SO GLAM

FRESH FROM a \$3million 'glamover', Baillie Lodges' new-look The Louise has opened in one of Australia's top wine regions.

Sweeping curved walls cleverly open up the main lodge and draw the eye to the rolling hills, vineyards and patchwork of small farms that characterise the Barossa Valley landscape in South Australia.

Executive Chef Asher Blackford will helm the kitchen, fresh from a stint at sister property Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge on Vancouver Island and formerly from flagship property Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island.

The property's 15 suites have had a significant refurbishment, with contemporary furnishings, king beds, luxury ensuite bathrooms and plenty of space.

The suites boast private courtyards and French doors opening onto vineyard views, while the two-bedroom Bethany Suite is ideal for families or friends travelling together.

"We're just thrilled to see the results of the intricate

planning and investment in this iconic property and we're so excited to embark on the delivery of a new experience of the Barossa for our guests with The Louise as luxury base," said Craig Bradbery, Chief Operating Officer, Baillie Lodges.

➤ baillielodges.com.au



Picture courtesy Stepney Studios

YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS YOU

The travel industry is working hard to cope with the employees lost to other professions during COVID. Many agencies and travel companies are under-manned and finding new staff is proving difficult.

In this exclusive article for *Traveltalk*, JOHN HART, Chair of Tourism Training Australia, says it is vital to Australia that the industry makes a full recovery.



John Hart, Chair of Tourism Training Australia

Q: Why is there a skills shortage in the travel industry?

A: There has been a skills shortage in the travel industry for many years, most certainly pre-COVID. The shortage was made significantly worse during the period of pandemic restrictions when many staff left the industry and have not returned.

A large number of agency staff were attracted to higher paying roles in sectors of industry that were not affected by restrictions because of their very usable, generic skills base.

Many of these staff will not return as they have been absorbed into their new roles and are performing well.

Q: What does this mean in terms of delivery of services?

A: The shortage has certainly made the period of ramping up outbound travel a real challenge.

The relatively short notice of the opening of the international border and the proximity of the reopening to the European summer meant that the period between February and May were very busy in most agencies.

The workload was increased by the fact that many of the bookings being made were re-bookings of cancelled or deferred travel.

But there was also new business being written and margins and commissions have been healthy as the recovery continues.

Q: How long will it take to see employment levels pick up?

A: It will be some time before these



economy-wide skills shortages are relieved, most likely well into 2023.

For this to happen skilled migration and unskilled migration such as Working holidaymakers (WHMs) need to resume to pre-COVID levels.

Skilled migration is currently operating on a nine-to-12-month delay to bring in workers and there are 70,000 WHMs off-shore without a flight to come to Australia. There is some way to go yet.

Q: Is travel still seen as an enjoyable and worthwhile career?

A: Working in travel is still a great job. It is satisfying work, with significant benefits for those that perform.

We have always been competitive in the labour market but when the shortages across the economy run so deep, there is no escaping the pressure on our workforce.

There has also been some brand damage to the industry during the COVID restriction period. Having been shut down by Government imposed restrictions, the industry was seen as more of a risk than those that were able to be productive during this period.

We will fill the gaps in our workforce because, in the end, it is rewarding work and many people are engaged and fascinated by travel. It will just take some time.

Q: How important is it to the country that the travel industry recovers?

A: The travel, tourism, hospitality, accommodation and events workforce numbers more than one million Australians. This workforce is mobile between the sectors and requires a significant skills base to operate.

While we are viewed as the 'fun' sectors, we have serious careers and hundreds of thousands of people have built their livelihoods in our sector.

The job losses in COVID-19 showed how deeply our industries were woven into the fabric of Australia's society.

Now that the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, let's hope that policy makers remember how important our industry is to the national economy.

➤ tourismtraining.com.au



SELECT AND CONNECT

CHINA AIRLINES are encouraging Aussies to connect with the world through their hub in Taipei.

From here, fliers can connect seamlessly with destinations such as London, Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka, Tokyo and Seoul.

Flights are available from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, all aboard the airline's fleet of Airbus A350-900, which are both modern and comfortable.

The high ceiling cabin fuses classic and contemporary décor with natural and mood lighting for an exceptionally comfortable flight experience.

Premium business class guests will enjoy ergonomically designed seats that transform into an extra wide bed. Seats in premium economy have a fixed-back shell design boasting 39 inches of pitch. In economy, extra legroom offers more resting space.

China Airlines flies Sydney-Taipei and Melbourne-Taipei three times a week in October and November, increasing to four flights a week in December, and Brisbane-Taipei three flights a week in October to December.

china-airlines.com

WESTWARD EXPANSION

QATAR AIRWAYS will be increasing passenger capacity on its flights to and from Perth from December 6.

Previously operated by the Boeing B777-300ER, passengers can now fly on the A380, featuring a three-class configuration of seating over two decks with a dedicated onboard premium lounge.



The aircraft will accommodate an additional 163 passengers daily adding up to 517 seats spread across the three cabins: eight first class seats, 48 business class seats and 461 economy class seats.

The update is part of the recent strategic partnership between Qatar Airways and Virgin Australia. The expanded codeshare significantly expands the networks, lounges and loyalty programs of both airlines.

* Meanwhile Emirates is also bringing forward its Perth A380 services to November 1 as it celebrates 20 years flying to the city.

The service will be available a month earlier than planned, expanding on the current capacity available to customers with the addition of more than 160 seats per day.

The A380 is scheduled to operate on a daily basis to Perth and will offer more than 500 seats each way.

qatarairways.com emirates.com



WINTER WARMER

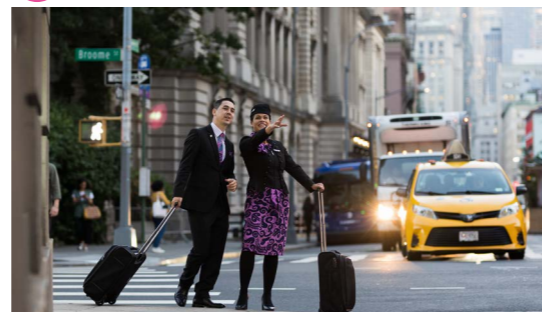
UNITED AIRLINES will add more capacity between Australia and America for the coming U.S. winter.

The airline's Sydney-Houston service will be relaunched on October 28. It will start three-times weekly at first but will be increased to daily beginning on December 15.

The Melbourne-Los Angeles service will also be relaunched on October 28 and will start three-times weekly, increasing to daily beginning on December 1.

The current three-times weekly Melbourne-San Francisco service will be increased to daily service from October 28.

united.com



BIG NEWS IN THE BIG APPLE

NEW YORK has become the latest international destination covered by Air New Zealand.

The inaugural flight touched down recently after it's non-stop journey from Auckland.

The Kiwi carrier now serves seven destinations in North America – Chicago (from October 31), Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver and New York City.

"As one of the world's greatest cities, Air New Zealand is proud to add the Big Apple to its list of 29 international destinations," said Greg Foran, Chief Executive Officer, Air New Zealand.

airnewzealand.com.au

Now flying Sydney to Taipei and beyond...



Enjoy our seamless Taipei connection!

China Airlines flies to London (LHR), Sapporo (CTS), Nagoya (NGO), Osaka (KIX), Fukuoka (FUK), Tokyo (NRT) and Seoul (ICN).

www.china-airlines.com/au/en





Picture courtesy IR Stone/Shutterstock



Picture courtesy Turgut Cetinkaya/Shutterstock



The Londoner Hotel



The eyes of the world were fixed on London recently for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. *Traveltalk* publisher JENNY ROWLAND was in the city for this sad yet historic moment in history and gives this eye-witness report on a truly extraordinary day.

BEING THERE

FOMO REALLY is a terrible affliction. I have been suffering greatly on my trip to London.

With only three days in the capital and so much to do, it's driving me crazy! Added to this the Queen's funeral takes up a day of it and everything of course is closed.

It's tricky but we opt for a four-hour bicycle ride around central London, a West End show, a Shard visit and a day at Hyde Park watching the funeral on the big screen.

I have a Go City London Explorer pass which is absolutely brilliant. After you decide how many attractions you want (from two to seven, priced accordingly), you simply download the app and you get a huge selection of attractions/tours to choose from.

The discounts make it very

worthwhile investing in. Ghost tours, Brit movie tours, music tours and of course all the usual suspects: Tower of London, Thames cruise, museums and the hop on hop off bus.

Of course, we don't have time to use all seven, but the best thing is it's valid for a year.

The view from The Shard (London's tallest building) is quite remarkable. We do this straight after a bike tour where we get to see so much. City bike tours are such a fantastic way to check out the highlights while getting a bit of exercise.

London is one of my all-time favourite cities. Being British I am obviously biased, but you cannot get bored here. It is great to see the crowds are back – the death of Queen Elizabeth has brought the capital to a standstill.

The queues to sign the condolence book are unprecedented and, unbelievably, stretch for more than 16 kilometres.

The day of the funeral we set off for Hyde Park. It's a hard decision as we are not sure we will get a spot as the crowds outside our hotel in Leicester Square are surging but we join the throng and make the two-kilometre walk to the park.

It seems surreal that the last time I was here I was attending the annual 'Party in the Park' with Sir Rod Stewart headlining. It's a slightly different gig this time.

The torrent of grief is palpable and as we make our way into the park, I'm struck by the subdued calmness that pervades this massive crowd.

There's a strong police presence but this is mainly to direct everyone – there is no sign of any anti-social behaviour. It's just a country mourning their beloved monarch.

Everyone stands in silence and respect as the funeral is played on the many massive screens erected around the park. I am filled with admiration and pride as well as sadness. This is what Britain does best. Pomp and majesty.

The gun shots and the haunting bell tolling are sounds that will stay with me forever as the day we farewelled our Queen...and I was lucky enough to be in London to say goodbye. gocity.com; visitbritain.com/au

Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner

I'M SO glad to be back in my favourite city in such historic times and in one of my all-time favourite hotels that always makes staying in London very special.

The Londoner hotel – slap bang in the middle of everything that's happening in the city – is quintessentially upmarket British, with a dollop of luxurious eccentricity and a generous portion of comfort, style and functionality thrown in.

This is my second stay here and I can't think of a better place to be when in the capital.

The king room is generous in size and with the automatic bottom washing toilet has everything you need including a Samsung extra smart TV. You can pretty much do anything with this TV as it's totally interactive - shame it wouldn't make my morning cuppa...

The view of Leicester Square reminds me that outside this sexy sanctuary with the sultry mood lighting and subtle colour palette there's a mind-blowing West End world of entertainment right there.

In the room there is a Dyson hairdryer, so you never have a bad hair day. There's also a clothes steamer and an espresso machine along with ample tea bags and delicious marmalade flavoured cookies

restocked daily (The Queen would approve!).

A well-stocked mini bar, two snugly dressing gowns to go with (I'm excited to say) the full bathtub, with the icing on the cake being the uber-comfy king size bed.

If there wasn't so much going on right outside your door you would be tempted to lay-in and order room service breakfast.

Talking of breakfast, you don't want to miss it in Whitcomb's, the Londoner's signature restaurant.

The creamiest scrambled eggs served with the sweetest cherry tomatoes and flavoursome mushrooms - and this is all on the buffet menu. There's also a full a la carte menu with such delicacies as crab omelette, which I am saving till my next visit.

The standout feature of the breakfast must be the luscious strawberry and blackberry platter on the fruit buffet. They are to die for, along with the best almond croissants outside of Paris!

Dinner is equally triumphant and my first experience at Whitcomb's did not disappoint.

My partner rather predictably always orders calamari and he informed me that the Whitcomb's

version was GOAT (Greatest Of All Time!)

Being mainly pescatarian I only ever order steak if I'm in a fancy restaurant and having spent the day pounding the London pavements in search of a good vantage point to see the Queen's funeral procession, I felt the need for a juicy steak.

The rib-eye was just that – tender and tasty and served with twice baked chippies. However, the crispy skinned sea bass was on another level and for me was GOAT.

A special mention must go to Bryan our lovely waiter who assisted us with our wine and food choices (the Chablis was divine)

He also explained the delicious and unique butter made from roasted chicken skin that we started with on crusty bread. A standout Whitcomb's speciality.

There is so much to see and do (and eat) right here in The Londoner, the world's first super boutique five-star luxury hotel. I never even got round to the wellness centre.

Luckily there's always a next time!

thelondoner.com



Picture courtesy Alexey Fedorenko (left) /Fred Duval/Shutterstock



Photo courtesy Monique Ceccato

Animal tales from the riverbank

The area around the Kinabatangan River is said to have the greatest concentration of wildlife in all Southeast Asia. JENNY EVANS reports on her wildlife encounters.

THERE IS a feeling of excitement and anticipation that comes over you when out looking for animals 'in the wild'.

Whether you are whale watching, bird spotting or on a safari, the sensation is the same.

I experienced this recently travelling in a boat along the Kinabatangan River on the search for the Pygmy elephant.

The Kinabatangan is Sabah's longest river, flowing 560km from the mountainous interior to the Sulu Sea. The Lower Kinabatangan is said

to have the greatest concentration of wildlife in all Southeast Asia.

We set off on the hunt late in the day following a monsoon storm. The river is 30m wide, murky brown with a strong current. Thick forest looms over the riverbanks with mangroves rising out of the mud.

After 20 minutes, we turn down a tributary and slow. A few metres away, a patch of water hyacinth moves erratically. The plant slowly rises out of the water on the back of what looks like a large grey boulder.

It quickly morphs into a Pygmy

elephant splashing around in the shallows, seemingly oblivious to the four boatloads of tourists watching.

I had never seen an elephant in the wild; it seems miraculous that they can co-exist with humans in today's world.

We then get word that there are more elephants further downstream and speed off with the other guide boats.

There is evidence of elephants on the riverbank, thick mud with footprints sliding down to the water. Just beyond the bank on one side, the land has been cleared for a palm oil plantation. The elephants are spotted in the distance.

The light is now starting to dim, so we head back towards our lodge and spot a group of Proboscis monkeys at the top of a tree, next to a family of Rhinoceros hornbills.

Proboscis monkeys are truly unique and only found in Borneo. The males have the large droopy nose: it is thought that the larger the nose, the better resonance effect when the male

makes mating calls.

All Proboscis monkeys have a huge stomach. Their diet of mainly mangrove leaves is toxic and their stomach is full of fermentative bacteria which enables digestion. The monkeys also have webbed feet. They mostly travel by swinging from tree to tree but do swim when they must.

I was happy to not find out until we were out of the (very low sitting) boat that the main predator of the Proboscis monkey is the saltwater crocodile, of which there is a significant population in the Kinabatangan River!

The area we're staying in is part of Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, a region of 26,000 hectares along the river that has been under conservation laws since 1997.

The surrounding forest is one of only two known places in the world where 10 species of primates can be found.

WHERE TO STAY

The lodges on the river are approximately two-and-a-half hour's drive southeast from Sandakan, although some tours offer transit from Sandakan via boat (my preferred way of transport!).

We stayed at Kinabatangan Riverside Lodge, travelling with SI Tours. The lodge has a laidback atmosphere with plenty of seating on the decking overlooking the river.

The rooms are large, wood panelled and clean. All rooms are en-suite with air conditioning and a fan. There is limited Wi-Fi in the outdoor lobby area only.

Travel tip: Bring mosquito repellent and a pair of binoculars.

➤ sitoursborneo.com/web/accommodations/kinabatangan-riverside-lodge/

Traveltalk travelled courtesy of Tourism Malaysia

➤ malaysia.travel

Malaysia
Truly Asia



Chinatown

CHINATOWN REVIVAL

THE NEXT time you are visiting Kuala Lumpur, I recommend a visit to Chinatown.

The area is one of the oldest in KL and much of the original architecture remains and many buildings have now been tastefully restored.

The shophouses host lively bars and cafes, while the alleyways display street art and colourful lanterns. The night market on Petaling Street is open, although still missing the pre-COVID throngs of international tourists.

If you're looking for somewhere to stay, nowhere is more convenient than the Four Points by Sheraton. This stylish new hotel (opened in Dec. 2019) offers a rooftop bar, outdoor pool and authentic design.

They also host a Chinatown Cultural Walk each Saturday morning which is open to locals and guests alike.



AIRPORT FLYING AUSSIES INTO THE FUTURE

From seamless transfers to cutting edge technology and impressive sustainability goals, Vancouver Airport is regarded as one of the best in the world.

Here we look at some of the advancements that are helping to give Aussies an unrivalled travel experience.

NEW LINK MAKES TRANSFERS EVEN EASIER

One of the reasons Vancouver Airport (YVR) is an unrivalled gateway to North America is the ease with which passengers can transfer to and from connecting flights.

That process became even more streamlined recently thanks to the opening of a new facility that ensures international-to-domestic (ITD) transfers now take place within a single terminal.

As part of a wider \$CA9billion (\$AU10billion) terminal upgrade strategy, the airport opened a new

Satellite Primary Inspection Line (SPIL) – a facility that not only shortens the ITD connection but eliminates the need for passengers to pick up and re-check bags.

This further simplifies the transit process, given ITD passengers also bypass airport security (unlike in U.S. airports).

The enhancements – available exclusively to Air Canada passengers transferring to Air Canada domestic flights – make it even easier for Australian travellers to hit the slopes at any one of British Columbia’s many great ski resorts on the same day they arrive.

As always, Air Canada’s U.S.-bound customers enjoy the same seamless transfer experience, with the added benefit of passing through U.S. customs and immigration at YVR.

That means once they touch down at their U.S. destination, they simply pick up their bags and make a quick exit.

YVR’s continual investment in ensuring it offers one of the world’s smoothest transfer systems is just one of the reasons it has consistently been named by Skytrax as the best airport in North America.

YVR UNVEILS ITS “DIGITAL TWIN”

YVR has always been at the cutting edge of technology – in fact in 2009 the airport developed the world’s first automated passport control kiosk, which have since been used by millions of passengers at 45 airports and seaports across the globe.

During COVID, YVR’s Innovative Travel Solutions (ITS) team also set a new benchmark for safe passenger processing by using gesture-based technology to create a touchless border control kiosk.

Passengers using the kiosks now control a cursor from up to 30cm away from the screen, while a UV cleaning light also bathes the machine, killing any microbes.

YVR also recently unveiled its own

“digital twin” – a virtual, real-time interactive representation of the airport’s terminal and airfield, which it claims will help transform the passenger experience by facilitating simulations, training and future planning.

Lynette DuJohn, YVR Vice President, Innovation, says the digital twin technology can solve many airport-related challenges.

“For example, if there’s congestion at any check-in point, an alert is generated which we can click into to see live information about what is going on,” she said.

“This allows our operations and security team to address potential issues with corrective action, allowing our employees to find efficiencies through technology, creating a better experience for travellers.”

The digital twin can also be used to model aircraft movements and activity on the airfield to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ENHANCING THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

YVR is further burnishing its reputation as one of the world’s friendliest airports by introducing a new Guest Experience program that sees newly trained staff welcoming passengers and supporting their journey through the airport.

More than 80 people – who speak a combined 30 languages – have been recruited to become Guest Experience representatives.

As well as being experts on YVR’s facilities and operations, the team can also speak to passengers about the knowledge and history of the area’s local Musqueam culture, elements of which are integrated across the airport.



Air Canada is now flying four times a week out of Brisbane and 10 times a week from Sydney

In addition, the Guest Experience program is designed to ensure universal access and inclusion by ensuring people with disabilities, as well as their friends and families, can visit YVR without barriers.

Meanwhile, YVR is transforming its food and beverage program to offer guests more fresh options that better reflect British Columbia’s culinary scene.

In August, this saw the introduction of five innovative SmartVending machines, which now provide guests with healthy ready-to-eat meals at all hours of the day.

Each machine is stocked with up to 30 different options for fresh meals, healthy snacks and beverages, such as cold-pressed juices.

The machines also include a meal exclusive to the airport – the YVR Signature Bowl, which features iconic Vancouver flavours and ingredients, like BC smoked salmon, tomatoes, avocado, cucumber, nori and pickled ginger on a bed of steamed sushi rice.

» www.yvr.ca

» aircanada.com

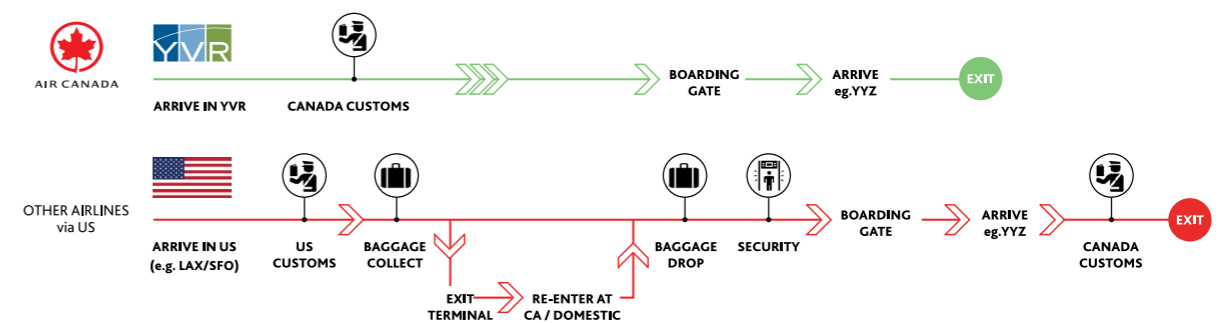
IN BRIEF///

* As part of its vision to become one of the world’s greenest airports, YVR has set itself the bold goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 – 20 years ahead of the target outlined by Airports Council International. The airport has committed to investing \$CA135million (\$AU151million) over the next 10 years to achieve its net zero target.

* In June this year, YVR unveiled its largest international terminal expansion in 25 years, with the addition of eight aircraft gates, a glassed-in island forest, an immersive digital experience and a range of new shopping and dining options. The new space also uses a heat recovery system that circulates air and reduces heating and cooling demands, maximising energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

AUSTRALIA TO CANADA (DOMESTIC TRANSIT VIA YVR)

SYD/BNE - (YVR), YUL, YYC, etc. CUSTOMER JOURNEY COMPARISON





Globus and Cosmos undiscovered tours: North America spotlight

Between North America's breathtaking national parks, cool emerging cities and tiny historic towns, there's a surplus of sights that even repeat travellers to the U.S. are yet to discover.

Enter Globus and Cosmos Undiscovered Tours.

Launched in 2021, the series of 10 'Undiscovered North America' tours allows guests to explore down less-travelled highways, legendary lanes and scenic country roads, to visit hidden gems that other tour companies don't offer.

With two new Undiscovered Tours launching in 2023, including National Parks of the American Southwest and Enchanted New Mexico, there's never been a better time to explore off the beaten path, as so many travellers are looking to do post-COVID.

Led by expert Globus and Cosmos Tour Directors, and Local Guides for even more unforgettable discoveries, travellers will get up close with unspoiled and uncrowded treasures, with all escorted tour logistics taken care of.

In North America, the Undiscovered Tours portfolio includes bucket-list holidays from Canada to Cali and Yakima to the Yukon for guests to 'discover the undiscovered':

GLOBAL QUÉBEC IN DEPTH WITH THE GASPÉ PENINSULA

On this 11-day tour travellers will visit famed Montréal and quaint Québec City in the province of Québec, before following the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic exploring the Gaspé Peninsula's vast and stunning scenery.

Sweeping cliff views, rugged landscapes and tiny fishing villages await, as well as up close nature encounters led by specialist naturalist guides.

Tour highlights include cruising in Percé Rock and Bonaventure Island National Park, home to the world's largest northern gannet colony, as well as beluga whale watching at Saguenay.

Back on land, guests can enjoy untouched parklands and fossil finds in Forillon National Park and Miguasha National Parks.

11-days from \$4,069 per person for 2023 departures.

Have clients who would rather check out Western Canada or hit the historic trails around Washington D.C.? View the full portfolio here:

➤ globus.com.au/experiences/undiscovered

➤ cosmostours.com.au/experiences/undiscovered

GLOBAL BOURBON, BRIDLES & BLUEGRASS

Travellers can sip sweet tea and soak in the sights of the South, as never seen before, on this eight-day adventure.

Starting in Kentucky – the land of mares, mint juleps and mandolins – guests will enjoy evenings of bluegrass, and visits to bourbon distilleries and a Lexington thoroughbred horse farm.

Travelling through the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains to Asheville, North Carolina guests will take in a guided tour of George Vanderbilt's opulent Biltmore Estate, before experiencing a taste of the new South in Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Riverfront city sights, foodie feasts, and music await at every turn, including a visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame to see iconic memorabilia from the greats up close, like Elvis' solid gold Cadillac.

Eight-days from \$3,889 per person for 2023 departures.

COSMOS EXPLORING THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Venture through the natural wonders, lush wilderness and picturesque wineries of scenic Washington and Oregon on this nine-day tour.

In addition to the sights of Seattle's 'Emerald City' and Portland's 'City of Roses,' guests can experience the alpine architecture and German beer in the Bavarian village of Leavenworth; wake up to the coastal city of Astoria and its Victorian-era hillside homes, and savour malt and hops at any number of Bend's two dozen breweries.

Other highlights include a dune buggy ride along the Oregon Coast; Mt. Hood's 611-foot-tall Multnomah Falls and Crater Lake National Park.

Nine-days from \$2,669 per person for 2023 departures.

Globus prices are inclusive of savings of up to \$500 per person

The Lure of the Less Travelled.

While it might be the iconic sights of the world that first entice us to pack our bags for adventure, it's often the tucked-away towns, lesser-known nooks, and secluded seafronts that beckon us to return. On an Undiscovered tour with Globus, we trade the overcrowded cities of North America for the smaller, crowd-pleasing gems across the United States and Canada. Join us and discover off-the-beaten-path experiences on the road less travelled!



BOOK NOW & SAVE UP TO \$1,000 PER COUPLE ON 2023 NORTH AMERICA TOURS.

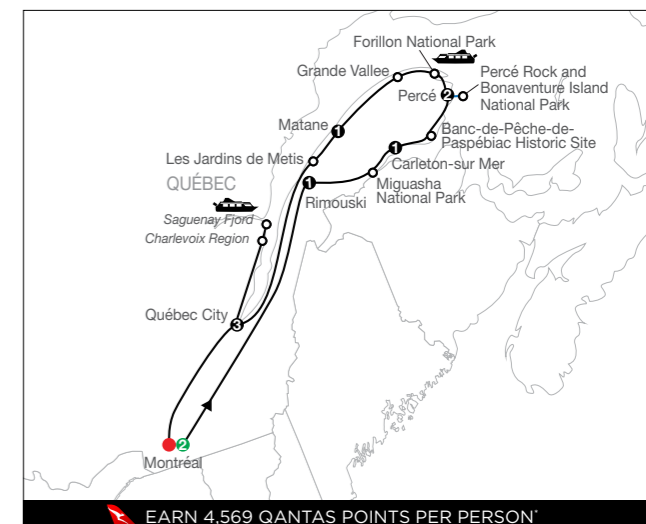


EARN 4,339 QANTAS POINTS PER PERSON*

Lost Canyons of the Southwest

9 Days | Phoenix to Las Vegas
From \$4,039* pp twin share, departing 01/05/23

This fascinating tour of Arizona will leave you spellbound with its ancient cliff dwellings, towering spires, the deepest of canyons, and the deepest of mysteries.



EARN 4,569 QANTAS POINTS PER PERSON*

Québec in Depth with Gaspé Peninsula

11 Days | Montréal return
From \$4,069* pp twin share, departing 19/06/23

Venture to lesser known ports of French Canada and witness charming fishing villages, dramatic coastlines and the grandest of views as you cruise around the imposing Percé Rock.

Call 1300 230 234, visit globus.com.au or see your travel agent

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*Prices correct as of 28/09/22. Prices are per person, twin share and include applicable savings. Save up to \$1,000 per couple valid to 31 Oct 22. Qantas Frequent Flyer members can earn 1 Qantas Points per \$1 spent on eligible bookings with Globus. Eligible bookings include Globus packages purchased using Australian Dollars, sold either through Globus directly or via one of their booking agents. Members will not earn points if a booking is cancelled prior to departure. To earn Qantas Points, a member must add their Qantas Frequent Flyer number to their booking prior to departure. If a member adds multiple Qantas Frequent Flyer members to the booking, the total amount of points earned will be split equally between passengers under the same Reference number found on your invoice. Points will be credited to the relevant Frequent Flyer account within 60 days of departure. Qantas Points will be awarded to you based on the final amount of the eligible travelled booking. Globus Terms and Conditions apply.



Remote reserve ready to return

THE REMOTE Bawah Reserve eco-resort has reopened, welcoming guests back to the Anambas Islands for the first time in more than two years.

Accessible via private seaplane, the reserve is a group of six tropical islands in the Riau Archipelago, located 160 nautical miles from Singapore.

The reopening has seen the introduction of a new island and accommodation offerings, a considered transformation to its villas, as well as an extensive enhancement to its sustainability program.

Set on a previously untouched island, Bawah Reserve will launch six new cliffside lodges on November 1. The Elang Private Residences will offer the ultimate exclusive take-over for groups of family and friends of up to 20 people.

Guests will have the run of the island and exclusive access to a private beach, a two-storey restaurant and bar, beach house, Kayu Spa, dedicated activities lawn as well as a saltwater infinity pool, refreshed with every tide.

On the main island, Bawah Reserve has two new accommodation categories, the two-bedroom Infinity Pool Villa and the two-bedroom Garden Pool Villa.

One of the only resorts in Indonesia with overwater bungalows, the 11 lodges have undergone a redesign and boast new furnishings, layout and art.

Rates at Bawah Reserve start from \$US1,780 (approx. \$AU2,665) per night for two people on a full board basis including daily spa treatments, laundry, in-room minibar and a host of land and water-based activities.

» bawahreserve.com

IN BRIEF///

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA is relaunching flights from Adelaide to Bali from December 12.

The year-round service will initially operate daily, offering up to an additional 2,464 seats between the two destinations every week.

The airline is set to operate up to 41 return flights per week to Bali, when the first-ever direct services between the Gold Coast and Denpasar commence in March 2023.

» virginaustralia.com

Five-star dining is always on the menu

IT'S BEEN said that a good meal is a feast for both the tongue and the eyes.

This philosophy is well understood by the culinary team at Wakatobi Resort, who elevate the dining experience to an art form that earns praise and five-star reviews.

When guests arrive at the resort's oceanfront dining space they are greeted by name and invited to a favourite table where sea breezes bring hints of what is to come.

Each day a diversity of menu options is crafted by a team of talented professionals who have worked internationally at a variety of fine dining establishments.

They bring their experiences with world cuisines to Wakatobi, where they also embrace regional flavours and recipes.

The culinary team is equally adept at fulfilling special dietary requirements and is always willing to custom-craft bespoke menus on request.

Many dishes are based on locally sourced ingredients that include a range of fresh produce, fruit and seafood. These local resources are complemented by provisions delivered fresh to the resort's airstrip from points around the globe.

The kitchen is known for serving premium meats – including exceptional steaks and roasts – and guests can enjoy cheeses from Europe and wines from Chile, France, Italy, Australia and South Africa.

To cap off the dining experience, a dedicated team of pastry chefs creates a tempting array of confections that make dessert difficult to pass up.

» wakatobi.com



An experience without equal

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

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

Dr. Jim and Laurie Benjamin



www.wakatobi.com

