

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

# Traveltalk

WWW.TRAVELTALKMAG.COM.AU ISSUE MARCH 2020 TT654/068

## Special report

Why going solo is big business

## EXPEDITION TRAVEL

Where to find the nice ice

## JAPAN

To hell & back in Beppu

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Top tips you need to know

Print Post Approved PP630045/00036 AU\$4.95



**PLUS:** Bali, Malaysia, Thailand and where to find the world's best sunsets!



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Tel: (08) 6406 1358  
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## PUBLISHED BY

**Pointer Publishing Pty Ltd**

ABN 92 150 111 701  
PO Box 3104 Kingsley WA 6026  
Tel: (08) 6406 1358  
Website: www.traveltalkmag.com.au



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



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Cover picture courtesy Quark Expeditions/ David Merron

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Julie Nicholson, Judith Senn, Gay Ring, Paul Buschenhofen and Rob Wiseman are the five lucky winners in our recent competition to win a copy of *The Rough Guide to the 100 Best Places on Earth 2020*. Head to P17 for another great competition.



Introduces



# EMERALD

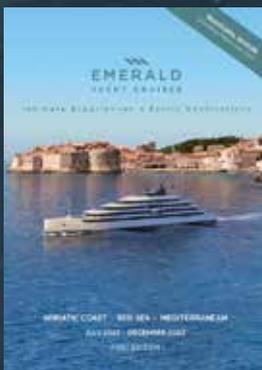
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Evergreen Cruises & Tours introduces Emerald Yacht Cruises, its new sister brand, offering state-of-the-art cruising to ports and harbours only small yachts can reach. With generous inclusions, world-class services and just 50 spacious suites, Emerald Azzurra offers an intimate cruising experience to exotic locations including the Dalmatian Coast, Spain, the French and Italian Rivas, the Greek Islands, Turkey and the Red Sea.

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Introduces

# EMERALD AZZURRA



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# Support tour brings some bushfire relief

THE INAUGURAL 'bushfire relief giveback' trip from AAT Kings, designed to support local tourism communities, has been hailed a complete success.

The company organised the tour in collaboration with the #EmptyEsky movement and regional tourism businesses. The full day tour went from Sydney to the Shoalhaven.

First stop was Kangaroo Valley, where residents greeted guests with signs in their storefront, followed by the Nowra Farmers

Market, an indoor marketplace where producers showcase their goods for locals and tourists.

Here guests heard from farmer John Bennett, who spoke about the devastation to tourism in the Shoalhaven area due to the bushfires, which is one of the primary incomes in the region. Guests collectively spent more than \$1,000 at the markets that they visited.

The final stop was at Bangalay Luxury

Villas, where those on the tour were treated to lunch by owner and general manager Michelle Bishop at her restaurant Bangalay Dining.

She introduced local egg farmer Kristen Provost of Kangaroo Valley Pastured Eggs, who shared her heartbreaking story of having to leave her chickens behind and the downturn in business since the bushfires.

"It's incredible to have companies like AAT Kings stepping up and delivering visitors when we need them the most," said Michelle.

"Most businesses are expecting at least 50 per cent downturn in their annual revenue, so these trips are lifting all our spirits – not just the businesses but the entire community. We feel like people are listening and actually responding. It makes you feel good."

The trips have been developed respectfully and in conjunction with local communities, with more to be announced in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. They will include day tours and short breaks, and opportunities to rebuild communities alongside locals and farmers.

"We are so privileged to be able to take advantage of our experience and network, to facilitate bringing as many visitors as we can back to our most affected townships," said Matthew Cameron-Smith, Managing Director of AAT Kings.

■ [aatkings.com/bushfire-recovery](https://aatkings.com/bushfire-recovery)

# Australia is still open for business

A POSITIVE campaign highlighting that Australia is 'open for business' needs to be at the core of our country's bushfire recovery initiatives.

That's the message from the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC), the peak industry body representing our \$44 billion tourism export sector.

A survey of the inbound tourism industry has revealed that the overall status of forward bookings has softened significantly compared to this time last year with an estimated \$4.5 billion impact on the industry.

ATEC has estimated that tourism will see at least a 10 per cent decline in international visitor numbers.

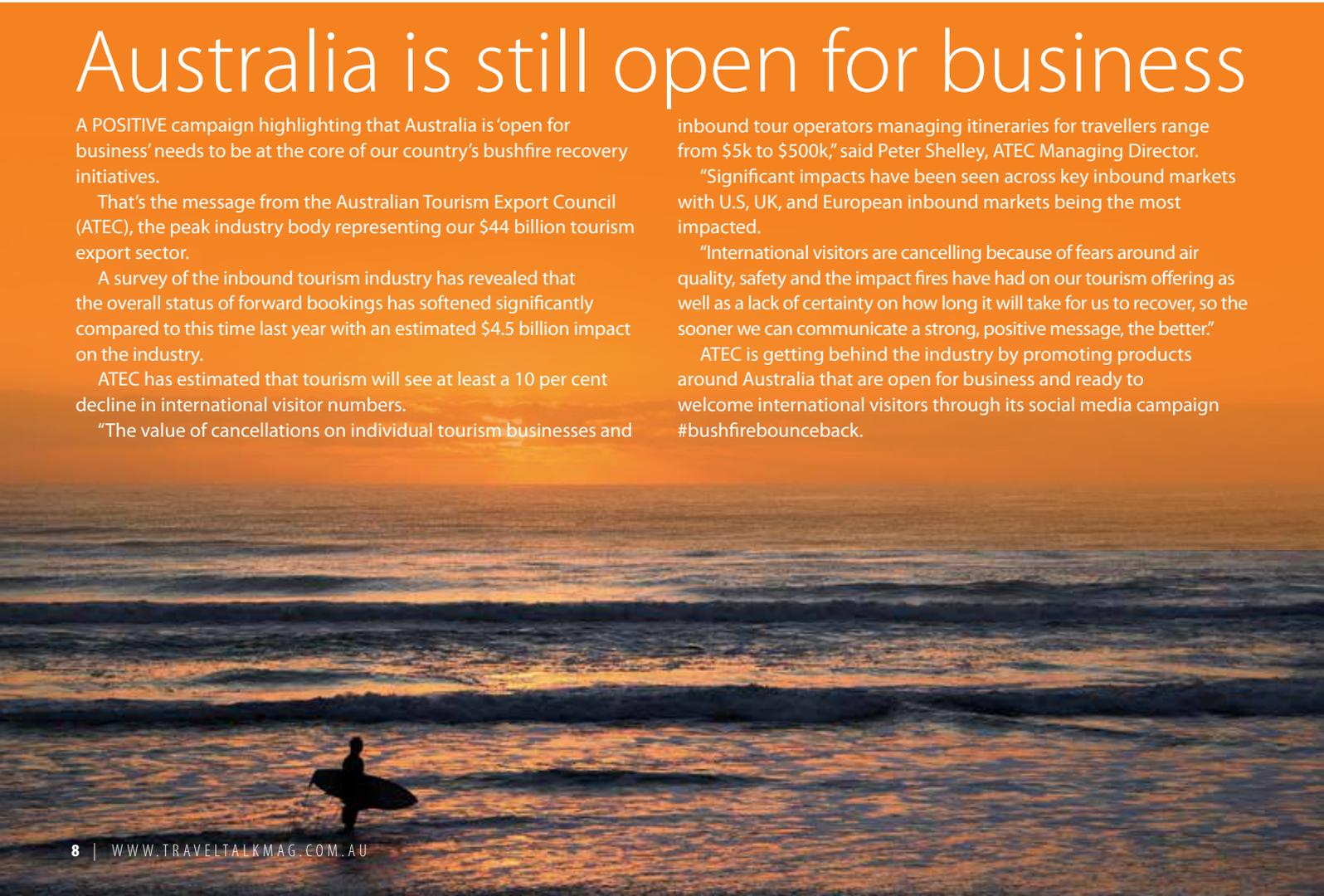
"The value of cancellations on individual tourism businesses and

inbound tour operators managing itineraries for travellers range from \$5k to \$500k," said Peter Shelley, ATEC Managing Director.

"Significant impacts have been seen across key inbound markets with U.S, UK, and European inbound markets being the most impacted.

"International visitors are cancelling because of fears around air quality, safety and the impact fires have had on our tourism offering as well as a lack of certainty on how long it will take for us to recover, so the sooner we can communicate a strong, positive message, the better."

ATEC is getting behind the industry by promoting products around Australia that are open for business and ready to welcome international visitors through its social media campaign #bushfirebounceback.



# A FENIKS RISES FROM THE ASHES

IN FLANDERS Fields, when the Last Post is played each night like a lullaby to those who finally rest there, the tragedy of war is never far from thought, *writes Gaya Avery.*

But as the sun shines on picturesque fields and towns that today, on the surface, seem untouched by the horrors of battle, the true devastation of war can be hard to fathom.

Australian historian Major General Michael O'Brien revealed that Winston Churchill wanted to keep the ruins of Ypres preserved as a memorial to the atrocities that happened there.

Yet nobody could suppress the resilience of the Belgians who, in less than a decade, managed to bring the Westhoek region back to life, a feat that has been compared to the rising of the phoenix from the ashes.

It is under the title of Feniks that in 2020 the municipalities and museums in the Westhoek have joined forces to tell the remarkable story of both the physical and cultural rebuilding of the region and the resilience of its people.

"The events and exhibitions are happening in places that visitors will likely be going anyway," said Sonia Holt from Visit Flanders, so itineraries need not be amended too much.

The many attractions aside (nearby Ghent is celebrating famed Flemish painter Jan van Eyck this year), Australians will soon have more options to get to Brussels with news that Singapore Airlines will start non-stop flights to the Belgian capital from Singapore this October.

■ [flandersfields.be/en/feniks2020](https://flandersfields.be/en/feniks2020)



## WORLD'S BEST STREET FOOD IS REVEALED

STREET DINING provides some of the best experiences travellers can have abroad.

Travel website My Late Deals has gathered data on 30 of the best street food cities in the world, basing its rankings on vendor numbers, affordability, variety of experiences and hygiene standards.

Not unsurprisingly, Asian cities dominated the final rankings, with Hong Kong rated the best place in the world for road-side dining.

In the *Street Food Index*, HK beat Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh, Singapore and Mumbai to the top prize. Rounding out the top 10 best cities were Rome, Tel Aviv, Sydney, Mexico City and Portland.

The inclusion of Australia's largest city is an interesting one, with Sydney beating Asian food capitals Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei, as well as culinary giants Paris and New York, among many others, in the index.

The only Australasian city to appear in the index, Sydney scored well for overall vendor numbers and sanitation, but poorly for affordability.

Hong Kong, where diners can enjoy such dishes as dim sum, curry fishballs and cheung fun, rated highly across all categories, but slightly lower for price.

For the full list of cities, visit:

■ [datawrapper.dwcdn.net/7bljp/2/](https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/7bljp/2/)



## HOW DO YOU TRAVEL?

GOOGLE ASKED more than 7,000 travellers from six countries (including Australia) their thoughts on how and why they plan their trips.

- \* Eight per cent felt they were due for a holiday
- \* Four per cent had wanted to travel to a specific destination for some time
- \* 15 per cent regularly think about trips they want to take
- \* 11 per cent wanted to visit a family friend or member
- \* Nine per cent were going to celebrate a special event

■ [thinkwithgoogle.com](https://thinkwithgoogle.com)

BOOK IT NOW



## BRANSON OPENS LUXURY LODGE FOR WELLNESS

ENJOY A holiday with a difference by heading to the Swiss Alps for a wellness getaway at The Lodge, Sir Richard Branson's mountain retreat.

The four-day experience will be led by Mountain Beach Fitness Retreats, who are highly experienced in delivering tailored fitness and wellbeing retreats in the mountains.

Guests will enjoy a three-night stay at The Lodge, where they'll embark on their own

fitness and wellbeing journey. The wellness retreat is available over two dates in 2020: June 18-21 and September 17-20. Rates are priced in Swiss Francs for three nights and start from CHF 2,637 (approx. \$AU4,025) for single occupancy.

The program is varied, fun and designed to test all aspects of fitness that will challenge the body, change perspectives and refresh the mind.

Guests will start with a pre-arrival consultation where they'll each set personal goals to immerse themselves in a mind and body transformation. Group sizes will be kept small, allowing sessions to be customised to make sure guests keep on track.

The days will be spent immersed in nature, with the Swiss mountains as a picture-perfect backdrop. The altitude of the Alps will test guests physically but balances with daily yoga and delicious food (prepared by The Lodge's award-winning trained chefs), leaving guests feeling revived and energised.

Between working on fitness and wellbeing, whether that's hiking or practicing yoga, guests will be able to retreat back to The Lodge to relax and unwind.

Price includes accommodation as detailed, pre-arrival consultation, daily classes, meals and drinks, daily driver service available at set times, a dedicated team to look after guests and all local taxes.

■ [enquiries@virginlimitededition.com](mailto:enquiries@virginlimitededition.com)

## GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING

THE TRAVEL Concierge Sri Lanka (TTC) has developed exclusive motorhome and car hire packages for the Australian market.

Guests are able to choose from a variety of modern and fully equipped European motorhomes, suitable for couples and small families.

Travelling this way gives visitors a unique perspective while enjoying the diversity and beauty of Sri Lanka through the network of fully equipped caravan parks available island-wide.

Sri Lanka offers a range of camping options, including mist-capped hills, dense jungles and superb beaches.

TTC can provide suggested itineraries, comprehensive information on park facilities and also local guides and experiences (such as a home-cooked meal with a Sri Lankan family) at key locations.

As a value added service, a full-time driver/caretaker can be assigned to take care of the mundane tasks such as cleaning, hygiene, tidying and looking after all onboard appliances.

Not only does this enable guests to fully immerse themselves in their travels, they can also indulge in the country's fine beer and the local brew of arrack.

"Currently popular from the UK, we suggest agents let their local motorhome club know about this new venture and we are able to provide sample packages and customisable flyers to help sell this great product," said Mark Snoxell of Exposure Downunder, TTC's Australian representative.

■ [anz@ttcsrilanka.com](http://anz@ttcsrilanka.com)



# TRAVEL ADVICE WORTH PACKING

Planning a holiday is exciting. At the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) we understand that a travel-related booking can often be a large purchase and so we encourage travellers to take simple steps to protect themselves in the same way they would for any purchase.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BOOKING YOUR NEXT TRIP

## 1. LOOK FOR THE ATAS SYMBOL

In Australia, the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) administers the only accreditation scheme for travel businesses called ATAS (AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme). The ATAS symbol represents that the business has met strict criteria in order to become nationally accredited and that the business is credible, experienced and professional.

### ATAS PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING PROTECTIONS

#### IT'S AN AUSTRALIAN REGISTERED BUSINESS

By booking through an Australian business, you can be certain that your rights under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) will be enforceable. Whilst the ACL also applies to overseas online sellers, it is difficult to obtain a remedy under Australian laws or any other consumer protection laws in that country due to the distance.

Pay particular attention when booking online that the company is an Australian registered business or look for the ATAS symbol.

#### COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

You can be certain that by booking with an ATAS accredited travel agency any complaint that may arise will be managed professionally.

ATAS accreditation means that the business has a robust 3-stage complaint process available to consumers: internal dispute resolution by the agent, escalation to AFTA for review and thirdly, an independent review committee should the matter remain unresolved.

#### ATAS CODE OF CONDUCT

Only ATAS accredited businesses agree to conduct their business pursuant to the ATAS Code of Conduct which sets out the service obligations of the business to you, the consumer.

## 2. PAY FOR TRAVEL BOOKINGS WITH A CREDIT CARD

Travel is a global economy, so there will from time to time, be business failures both domestically and overseas. The best way to protect your travel booking against fraud or a supplier going insolvent, is to pay by credit card. The rules governing credit card purchases generally provide that where a service or good is not provided, the payment may be reversed (this is called a chargeback). Check with your credit card provider as to the rules for your card.

Whilst credit card payments attract a surcharge fee, this fee provides a valuable insurance in the event you don't get what you paid for.

## 3. ALWAYS READ THE BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

You are entering a contract when you purchase your holiday. Pay particular attention to the following:

- Cancellations fees.
- Non-refundable deposits/components.
- Change fees.
- Visa and passport responsibilities.
- Check your itinerary and flight time.  
e.g. 01:00 equates to 1am in the morning.
- Before signing or paying monies, ensure you understand the terms and conditions fully.

If you are unsure of something, ask your travel agent.



# Turkish delights on the menu for 2020

THERE'S NEVER been a better time to explore the myriad delights and ancient attractions of Turkey.

This exotic mixture of East and West is a country of surprises. Spanning two continents and at roughly three times the size of the UK, Turkey offers travellers true diversity, including mountain ranges and sparkling coastline.

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

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

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

walk the cobblestone streets and explore attractions Hagia Sophia and Topkapı Palace, as well as feast in a traditional *meyhane* (tavern).

A spot of shopping at the 4,000-stall Grand Bazaar is a must, before heading west to historic Gallipoli.

Guests will see the beach and cemeteries of ANZAC Cove, where the Allied forces landed on April 25, 1915. Travellers can head up the hill to the poignant memorials of Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair.

It's truly a sombre experience to look down upon the rough hills and gullies that became the graveyard for so many thousands of young men from both sides. Tour the former battlefields and find remnants of trenches used by the Turkish soldiers.

From here the tour heads south, with stops at Canakkale and Kusadasi before

dipping inland for a much-anticipated visit to the travertine terraces of Pamukkale.

Meaning 'cotton castle' in Turkish, these dramatic mineral basins are the country's most popular attraction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

■ [inspiringvacations.com](http://inspiringvacations.com)

## What's included:

- \* Small, personal group experience, with no more than 14 guests
- \* Return international airfares with a full-service airline
- \* Return airport transfers
- \* 11 nights in five-star and boutique accommodation
- \* Including three-nights in a spectacular cave hotel in Cappadocia
- \* Three nights sailing on a traditional Turkish 'gulet'
- \* Daily breakfast, six lunches and five dinners
- \* Fully escorted by professional, English-speaking guide
- \* Dedicated, comfortable air-conditioned coach transportation
- \* 24/7 customer service and your own Dedicated Support Agent

# INSPIRING TURKEY

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NEW 2021 TOUR DATES ADDED

## YOUR 16 DAY INSPIRING TURKEY TOUR INCLUDES:

- Return international airfares with a full-service airline; return transfers
- 11 nights 5 star and boutique accommodation; 3 nights sailing on a traditional Turkish 'gulet'
- Daily breakfast, 6 lunches and 5 dinners
- 24/7 customer service and your own Dedicated Support Agent



## Spectacular experiences including:

Beholding the grandeur of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, traversing the terraces of Pamukkale with a fully escorted, English-speaking guide; sailing along the Turquoise Coast on a traditional Turkish gulet; enjoying dedicated, comfortable coach transportation.

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# INSPIRING VACATIONS



# Get some destination inspiration

THE TRAVEL experts at Abercrombie & Kent have come up with a few suggestions for those looking for destination inspiration in 2020.

Nothing is more fulfilling than taking time out with the family and a holiday provides the perfect opportunity to relax and focus on those around you.

A&K's Luxury Family Journeys are filled with enriching activities, family-friendly hotels and a range of exciting destinations to choose from. They are designed to let guests make the most of every minute and create lifelong memories.

Priced from \$7,805 per person, the six-day 'Family Adventure to Middle Earth' journey delivers the ultimate *Lord of the Rings* experience.

## Make a world of difference

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP)

carries on A&K's social and environmental commitments on a global scale.

Many A&K journeys offer opportunities to personally experience projects AKP supports, from protecting leopards in Sri Lanka to helping build schools, maternity wards and vital communities in East Africa.

## Mamma Mia!

Avoid a drastic New Year's diet and instead make healthy choices, like the Italians, whose respect for fresh produce and simple flavours is to be admired.

Adopt these habits when you visit Italy where white truffles, porcini mushrooms and sea urchin (*ricci di mare*) are counted among the delicacies.

Priced from \$13,760 per person, A&K's eight-day 'Italian Treasures, Rome, Florence & Venice' Luxury Small Group Journey is

the perfect way to savour Italy's gourmet treasures, while revelling in the history, culture, art and architecture of one of Europe's most atmospheric and romantic countries.

Closer to home, A&K's seven-day 'Kiwi Epicurean Adventure' explores the gourmet produce of New Zealand, visiting leading vineyards and cellar doors. It is priced from \$5,370 per person.

## Get fit

Many of us aspire to improve our health in the New Year. If you're ready to commit, consider climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, one of the 'Seven Summits', and Africa's highest peak, standing at an elevation of 5,895 metres.

Priced from \$11,850, the nine-day 'Snows of Kilimanjaro' expedition offers great views, landscapes and a real sense of achievement.

■ [abercrombiekent.com.au](http://abercrombiekent.com.au)

# FLY FREE AS A BIRD TO SEE WILDLIFE HEAVEN

LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS are running a fly free offer to allow travellers to visit the dramatic natural oasis that is the Galapagos.

Free return economy airfares to the Galapagos Islands from Sydney or Melbourne are included when travellers book select 2020 Galapagos itineraries aboard the *National Geographic Endeavour II* and *National Geographic Islander* with Lindblad Expeditions.

Available until June 30, this offer is only valid on select departure dates between August 28 and March 12, 2021. Actual departure dates can be found online.

Guests will explore various islands in the

Galápagos archipelago, renowned for their abundant wildlife with no fear of humans.

Activities include snorkelling with sea turtles, penguins and sea lions, and kayaking, paddleboarding and Zodiac cruises.

Hike over lush green highlands and see stark volcanic landscapes, pristine beaches, mangrove thickets, arid terrain and black lava beaches adorned with emerald seagrasses.

Every expedition sails with a veteran expedition leader, a team of expert naturalists, an undersea specialist, wellness specialist and a Lindblad-National



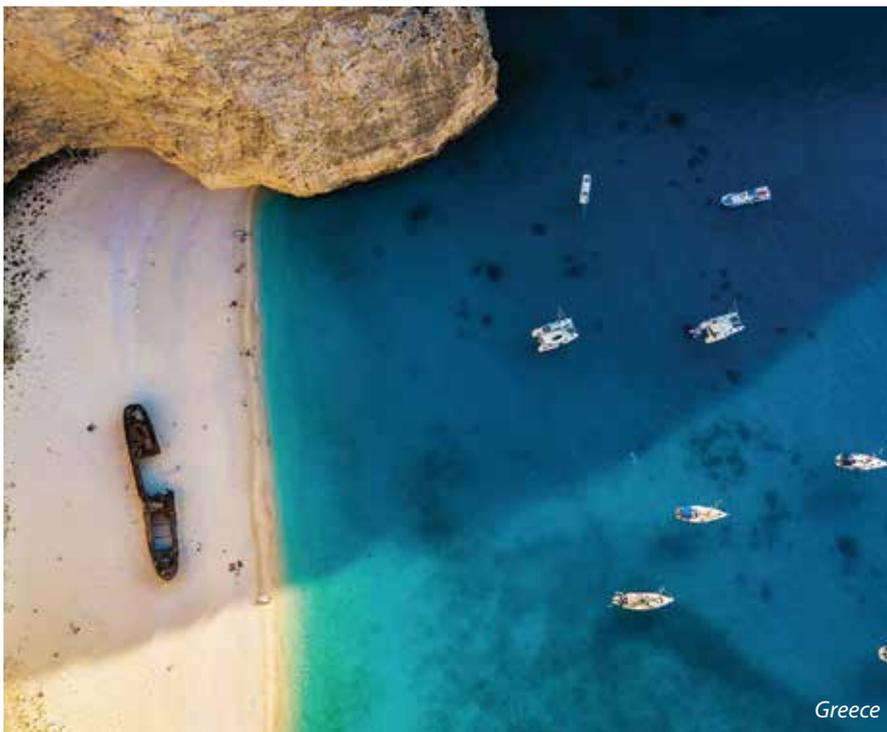
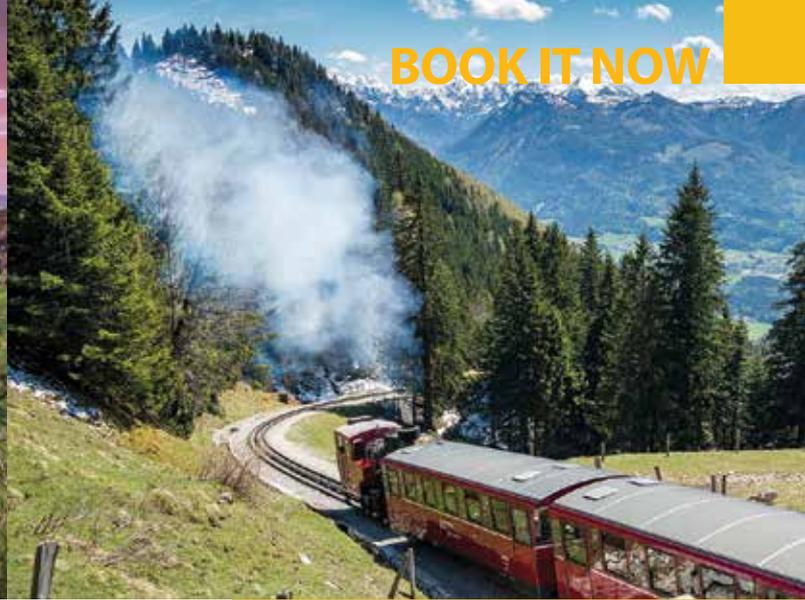
Geographic certified photo instructor.

Together, they provide guests with a greater understanding and appreciation for this exceptional place.

■ [adventureworld.com](http://adventureworld.com)



Ireland. Right: Austria



Greece

## TIME-POOR TRAVELLERS GET THE EDITED VERSION

EXODUS TRAVELS have just launched a range of curated, compact adventure tours specifically created for those in their 30s and 40s.

Entitled Exodus Edits, the itineraries offer the optimum blend of adrenaline and R&R, providing bite-sized holidays between five and 13 days, perfect for the solo traveller, friends and couples.

The new range of tours tick off bucket-list moments and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and are guaranteed to have guests immersed in new places with like-minded people.

The itineraries of the Exodus Edits collection guide travellers away from the tourist trails (without skipping the highlights) and edge people out of their comfort zone.

From a digital detox in Portugal, sleeping under the stars in your own geodesic dome pod in Wadi Rum, an intimate wine tasting on Mount Etna in Sicily, or cycling along the Peljesac Peninsula of Croatia, each itinerary is designed to showcase the best of each location in a personalised and unique way.

"We saw a demand for slightly shorter itineraries that still delivered an exceptional and uniquely Exodus experience," said Louisa Day, Australasia Territory Manager.

"These shorter itineraries make them perfect for the 30s and 40s demographic as they tick off a lot of action-packed experiences, take them to unique places and don't use up their whole annual leave balance."

■ [exodustravels.com/au/exodus-edits](http://exodustravels.com/au/exodus-edits)

## BACKING IN THE SAVINGS

BACK-ROADS TOURING is inviting guests to save up to \$800 per couple on select tours and departures.

Currently on sale until March 31, the deal allows guests to experience the best of Back-Roads' off-the-beaten-track experiences in the ultimate small group setting.

Travellers can choose from the UK's impressive architecture, natural beauty and history, or Europe's fusion of delectable food, diverse cities and alpine landscapes.

"With mouth-watering cuisines, impressive historical sites and one-of-a-kind experiences usually exclusively reserved for locals, Back-Roads' tours have something for history buffs, culture enthusiasts and foodies alike that will excite even the most seasoned travellers," said David Gendle, Back-Roads Touring General Manager-Global Sales.

"Our carefully curated tours are perfectly balanced with exceptional local tour guides and opportunities to explore destinations independently, designed to ensure both loyal and new customers share in an unforgettable travel experience."

The discounted tours are available to book now, with tours departing at various dates throughout 2020 and 2021.

"From taking the back roads through the highlands of Scotland and English countryside, to a leisurely sojourn through Austria's enchanting alpine villages and fascinating castles and the Baltics' lavish baroque palaces and tranquil towns – some of Europe's last remaining hidden gems, there's no better way to mark the beginning of a new decade than with Back-Roads"

■ [backroadstouring.com](http://backroadstouring.com)



*Aimée McGuinness, Chief Underwriting Officer of Allianz Partners*

# The do's and don'ts of travel insurance

Planning that next holiday adventure? Make sure you read these essential tips from AIMÉE MCGUINNESS, Chief Underwriting Officer of Allianz Partners.

GETTING TRAVEL insurance should be an essential part of any overseas trip.

Compared to the overall cost of going away, it's often a minimal investment. No matter your budget or penchant for planning, it certainly pays to be prepared for the unexpected.

From skiing accidents to flight delays, a lot can go wrong between booking a trip and coming home – sometimes incurring significant expenses – so it pays to be prepared.

## **DO choose protection that fits**

Allianz encourages travellers to take stock and choose a policy that provides the right kind of cover for the trip they're taking and their personal circumstances.

Before purchasing a travel insurance policy, it's important to consider the needs of the trip. Is it a skiing holiday? Are you travelling with valuables? Are there pre-existing medical conditions that need to be considered?

Once the traveller has an idea of their requirements, we recommend they look for a policy that suits. An important step is to check the benefit limits and exclusions in the

Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before purchasing to ensure they are covered at the right level.

## **DO consider what will happen if you need to claim**

It is important to choose a travel insurance provider that is a trusted brand and has round-the-clock assistance available, because accidents do not always happen during business hours – especially taking into account time differences.

Allianz has a team of experts, including doctors, nurses and case managers to provide medical assistance and repatriation. These experts are available 24/7 - ready to help travellers when they need it most.

## **Travelling globally?**

### **DO choose a global provider**

If the illness or injury is more serious and a customer needs to be repatriated, the Allianz Group has more than 500 doctors and medically trained employees operating in 34 countries, supported by a global network of multilingual travel and medical assistance specialists, certified service providers and international correspondents.

## **DON'T lose or throw out paperwork**

Each claim and situation is different, however, these are the common types of documents you could be asked to provide as supporting evidence should you need to make a claim:

- \* If claiming for lost, stolen or damaged belongings, you'll often be asked for a police report or information that confirms the details of the event and proof of ownership, which could be a receipt or photo of the item, plus a quote or report from a repairer.
- \* Customers claiming for flight cancellations may need to provide the original travel itinerary, invoices for the portion of the trip the claim relates to and evidence of the flight being cancelled.
- \* If claiming for an injury or illness incurred during a trip, customers need to provide a medical report from the treating doctor, receipts for any out of pocket expenses and a discharge summary if the customer has been admitted to hospital.

## **DO choose a provider that offers simple claiming**

At Allianz, we make every effort to ensure claiming is as simple as possible for customers.

With our online claims system, some claims can be paid in minutes and other small claims could take just a few hours. Claims can be easily lodged online or over the phone and are then reviewed by our specialised team, who will contact customers within 10 business days if additional information is needed.

■ [allianz.com.au/travel-insurance](http://allianz.com.au/travel-insurance)

# Win the most beautiful sleeping bag in the world!

WHEN THE North Wind Blows is an Aussie company owned by avid traveller Nicole Jones, who has been importing homewares and artisan-made products for six years.

Wanting to focus on one product, Nicole set about designing a beautiful range of sleeping bags that reflect Australia's great outdoors, rather than conflict with harsh colours and synthetic fibres.

Nicole will be launching her stunning cotton sleeping bags in three colours to start (blue, mustard and pink). Each oversized sleeping bag opens up to a queen-sized quilt and comes with a compression sack and a canvas duffle bag.

Described as "cool gear for cool campers", the bags are made with naturally sustainable fabrics.

Camp-themed accessories and iron patches to customise each bag will also be coming to market in the near future.

The company is also doing their bit to help Aussie animals affected by the recent bushfires. In a partnership with B1G1, the company will donate a meal to an orphaned

koala joey for every purchase made.

Through these donations, WTNWB is helping to distribute food and medical supplies to wildlife rescuers and carers on the front line across Australia.

We have one of these fantastic sleeping bags to offer as a prize, valued at \$249.

■ [northwindblows.com.au](http://northwindblows.com.au)



**TO WIN**, simply head to our website [www.traveltalkmag.com.au](http://www.traveltalkmag.com.au) and tell us in 25 words or less where you would like to take your new sleeping bag.

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Ken (far right) with one of his solo groups in Italy

# Significantly single

Solo travel is one of the main growth areas of the travel industry. Here, we talk to Ken Morgan, owner and founder of specialist Aussie solo travel company, Two's a Crowd.

**Q: Why did you set up Two's a Crowd in the first place?**

**A:** I operated a suburban retail travel agency for several years and many clients of that business were solos. We really struggled to find good tour options for those clients.

The industry is very couples centric and group touring particularly is set up around couples. Put simply, it's not a great experience for a solo to join a group full of couples and see the world.

So I thought, let's do something about it and in 2012 Two's a Crowd was launched with 100 per cent focus on solo travellers.

**Q: How did you start off?**

**A:** Our first trip was a 14-day tour to Myanmar and we had six people on it – all existing clients of the retail travel agency.

By 2015 the solos business had really taken off, so we closed the old retail business and focused entirely on Two's a Crowd.

We now operate more than 30 group departures a year plus river and ocean cruise charters. We have a team of five in the office plus six tour hosts.

**Q: What kind of growth have you seen in the sector since you started?**

**A:** Our business continues to grow steadily

each year and our clients now come from across Australia and New Zealand.

Over the last few years we've started getting bookings from the U.S. as well. It's a long way from a group of six on our first tour! Some clients have booked their tenth tour with us.

In 2017 we launched the world's first solos-only river cruise by chartering a five-star river cruise ship just for Two's a Crowd clients. Everyone has their own cabin and there are no couples onboard.

This proved very popular and our fourth river cruise charter will sail from Budapest to Amsterdam in August this year. But we have to keep innovating as the industry is more broadly seeing the opportunity in the solos market. So we have some exciting ideas on the go for 2021!

**Q: Solo supplements have always been a bugbear for singles. Are you seeing travel companies being more empathetic to solos these days?**

**A:** The industry is now focusing heavily on the solos market and the winners are solo travellers. From large tour companies down to smaller speciality operators like us, solos have many more options to choose from compared to eight years ago. And that's a great result.

**Q: What kind of speciality services does your company provide?**

**A:** Our mainstay is small group tours with group sizes averaging 15. Our maximum group size is 20. All clients have their own room and every group is escorted by a Two's a Crowd Tour Host.

More recently we've been chartering river cruise vessels and an ocean cruiser in Fiji, a luxury train through India and barges in France.

**Q: Which of your tours are particularly popular?**

**A:** One of our most popular destinations is Vietnam. It's fantastic for first time solos – great value for money, not too far away and seen as a very safe place. Many of our seasoned solo travellers started with Vietnam and went from there.

**Q: Do you think the solo market will continue to grow in the future?**

**A:** Definitely. The solos market is significant. The 2016 Census revealed that around 25 per cent of households in Australia are occupied by a single person – up from 20 per cent in 1991. This equates to more than two million Australians.

■ [twosacrowd.com.au](http://twosacrowd.com.au)



*Christian Hunter, Managing Director  
of Travellers Choice*

## Adding the agent touch to an online booking

NOTHING CAN beat the confidence that comes from working with an expert travel agent.

And nothing can compete with the convenience of booking travel online 24/7. What if you could have the best of both worlds?

That's precisely what Travellers Choice travel agencies are now giving their customers following the launch of a revolutionary new online booking tool.

Using an innovative technology platform available exclusively to members of the award-winning\* network, customers can visit their local travel agency's website to book accommodation at more than 1.5 million properties around the world and at prices that are exceptionally hard to beat.

What's unique is that the customer can stop at any stage and simply pop into the travel agency to finish the process. Alternatively, they can first discuss their

hotel options with an agent and, once they're ready, complete the booking themselves online.

Christian Hunter, Managing Director of Travellers Choice, says the new booking tool delivers unrivalled flexibility, control and peace of mind.

"Not only does this give Australian travellers access to an extraordinary range of hotels and resorts at prices they simply won't find anywhere else online, it also provides them with the full backing of a qualified travel agent in the event that plans change or something goes wrong," he said.

"It means that at any time they can ask their agent to take over the booking, whether to solve a problem or add other travel components to their accommodation booking, such as flights and car hire.

"All of these elements are then housed as a single reservation, which is easily retrieved and managed by your travel professional."

One thing that will appeal to many travellers is the fact that the new booking tool means they can support a local business, rather than a multi-national online Goliath.

"The Travellers Choice network is made up of 150 of the country's leading independent travel agencies and our members are located in cities and towns in every state," added Hunter.

"We know that while travellers love to explore the world, they are just as passionate about helping the small, locally-owned businesses that create jobs and contribute positively to their community."

Travellers also want to know they are dealing with a trusted and professional operator, and Travellers Choice is the only independent travel agency network in Australia that requires its members to be endorsed by the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) – the ultimate credibility test for Australian travel businesses.

For Hunter, what's most exciting about the new online booking tool is what lies ahead.

"Hotels and resorts are just the beginning. Throughout the year we plan to introduce other types of travel products, including international flights, cruises and tours.

"Ultimately, we want travellers to have the option of booking any and every aspect of their holiday through our members' websites, whenever and wherever they wish.

"And of course, their travel agent will be with them every step of the way."

*\* Travellers Choice was named Australia's 'Best Agency Group' at the prestigious 2019 National Travel Industry Awards.*

■ [travellerschoice.com.au](http://travellerschoice.com.au)

# A NEW YEAR'S MUSE



JON UNDERWOOD reports on an emotional three-day sailing on *Silver Muse* that prompted both cheers and tears from those onboard.

I'VE BEEN fortunate enough to celebrate New Year's Eve in some pretty diverse places.

Beneath the Sydney Harbour Bridge, in Trafalgar Square... and under the dining table during a military coup in Ghana (but that's another story!).

Thanks to Silversea, I can now add another first to the list: welcoming in a new year at sea.

My wife and I were invited on a three-day sailing aboard *Silver Muse* as she made her way from Melbourne to Sydney. We boarded the company's flagship vessel on New Year's Eve and settled into our luxurious Superior Veranda suite on Deck 7.

Dressed to impress, we began the celebrations with a delicious meal, some bubbly and wicked cocktails in one of the specialty restaurants before sashaying our way up to the pool deck for a NYE disco.

The captain had sailed *Muse* out into the harbour so we had a good view of the Melbourne skyline and everyone settled in for the big moment. Clearly being at sea did nothing to affect the rhythm of those



onboard and the dance floor was rocking as midnight approached.

Being aboard such a spacious ship meant there were plenty of viewing spots available and no crowds, so when midnight chimed we could clearly see the fireworks exploding above the CBD and surrounds.

We even got to celebrate the big moment twice as the DJ began his countdown a good 10 seconds AFTER midnight, but nobody really cared. This was a special place to enjoy a special moment and a fitting way to see out the decade.

And the best bit was it didn't take us hours to get home!

## INTO THE LAP OF LUXURY

With two full days at sea, there was plenty of time and opportunity to get to know *Muse* really well and to sample the ultra-luxurious lifestyle she offers her guests.

It all starts with your personal butler (in our case, Kanwar), who helps you settle into your suite and can take care of absolute necessities, such as a last-minute pressing of your evening cocktail dress.

A comprehensive activity sheet keeps you abreast of all that's going on during the day. Whether it's a blackjack tournament, teeth whitening service or a foot-tapping Queen tribute show, there's always plenty to keep guests amused.

Then of course, there's the food! *Muse* offers nine dining choices including eight restaurants and 24-hour complimentary room service, including the relaxed atmosphere of La Terrazza, the bespoke French menu at La Dame and the Asian-influence of Indochine.

At the latter I had the Malabar chicken, which was divine, followed by a yummy ginger and kaffir lime crème brûlée. At the seafood-orientated Atlantide, I actually went



“off-theme” with the Argentinian estancia, which was every bit as delicious as our waiter promised it would be.

Quite simply, it was some of the best food I've ever tasted at sea, cooked to perfection and presented with exceptional care and attention.

Which leads me perfectly onto the *Muse* crew. I've found that the best cruises I've been on have involved quality interactions with those onboard who are actually doing all the work.

Even though our stay onboard was brief, we got to know several of the crew during our voyage, which really can make all the difference.

Always friendly and eager to have a chat, they went out of their way to make everyone onboard feel like they were the only ones onboard, which is quite a skill. It helped us enjoy a short but very sweet experience aboard a vessel that will hopefully be a regular fixture in Australian waters for some time to come.

■ [silversea.com](http://silversea.com)



## At a glance

### SILVER MUSE

**BUILT:** 2017

**GUEST CAPACITY:** 596

**CREW CAPACITY:** 411

**SUITES:** From 31m squared to 183m squared. More than 85 per cent have private verandas

**BEVERAGES:** In-suite and throughout the ship – select wines, premium spirits, specialty coffees and soft drinks, plus your own tailored mini-bar

**Entertainment:** Live music, production shows and enrichment lecturers

**TRANSPORT:** Complimentary into town in most ports

**GRATUITIES & WI-FI:** Always included in your fare.

# Ready to help

WAKING ON day two, it was as if we'd sailed into another world.

The blue skies of yesterday had been replaced by an impenetrable cloud of stinking, thick smoke. It reminded me of old pictures of the “pea-souper” fogs in London in the 1800s.

It was eerie, it was surreal and it was heartbreakingly sad, bringing several passengers to tears.

For this was bushfire smoke that had blanketed much of the region over Christmas and had now made its way out to sea. Captain Alessandro Zanello kept us all informed of the situation, explaining that it would take hours to sail through and so precautions would have to be taken.

The outside dining and recreation areas were closed, all doors leading outside were kept shut and both passengers and crew were encouraged not to leave the interior.

Still, light wisps of smoke hung in the corridors and public spaces, giving off that unmistakable bonfire smell. And the ship was unusually quiet, as if collectively we were all holding our breath.

As I looked out of the suite window, it was hard to imagine how those poor people stranded on the beach at Mallacoota (just a couple of hundred kilometres directly to the west of us) could be coping in such conditions.

Little did I know that *Muse* would later be placed on standby to rescue some of those



Mallacoota residents – which all onboard wholeheartedly supported – but in the end the authorities decided those on the beach weren't quite ready to be evacuated and we sailed on.

But those few hours provided a very graphic reality into just what our beautiful country was going through. It's something I'm sure no-one aboard will ever forget.



# SEVEN FROM SEVEN FOR 22

REGENT SEVEN Seas have opened reservations for several new luxury voyages that will be added to its 2022 offerings.

The seven-voyage collection, called *Marvels of the Pacific Rim*, will sail aboard the world's first all-suite, all-balcony ship, *Seven Seas Mariner*.

Guests will enjoy free unlimited shore excursions, multiple overnights in exciting ports, access to dozens of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and free pre- or post-cruise land programs on select voyages.

There will be multiple overnight stays in ports like Auckland, Sydney, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo. This will allow those onboard to explore these destinations further, with free land programs such as 'Sydney Icons', 'Jewels of Hong Kong' and 'Vibrant Tokyo'.

Guests can also extend their time ashore and explore even deeper with an optional overland program to experience the Great Wall of China or Angkor Wat.

"South Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and Asia continue to be among the most popular and compelling ports for luxury travellers," said Jason Montague, President and Chief Executive Officer of Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

"Our new collection delivers an unrivalled experience, allowing guests to immerse themselves and fully discover the best of this marvellous part of our world, while returning home to the exquisite comfort and care onboard with every luxury included."

Itineraries featured among the new collection include the 14-night 'Natural Marvels & Maori Culture', a voyage from Auckland to Sydney. Departing on February 8, 2022, it takes in Lake Rotorua, the cultural insights found in the Waitangi estuary and the majesty of Milford Sound.

■ [RSSC.com](http://RSSC.com)



English author and lyricist Sir Tim Rice

# TALENTED LINE-UP OF CELEBRITY CONVERSATIONS

SEABOURN HAS announced a line-up of distinguished speakers in 2020 as part of its popular Conversations program.

The complementary onboard enrichment program includes personalities from a variety of fields including entertainment,

adventure, government, journalism and the arts.

In addition to sharing their expertise with guests, the speakers will also participate in the daily social scene, sharing meals, adventures ashore and casual conversations

throughout the voyage.

"We are always thrilled to bring such accomplished experts and engaging personalities to enlighten our guests through Seabourn Conversations," said Chris Austin, Seabourn's Senior Vice President of Global Marketing & Sales.

"Our guests have interesting backgrounds themselves and they truly enjoy hearing about and learning diverse insights, stories and perspectives on a variety of global topics from speakers all over the world."

The star-studded line-up includes English author and lyricist Sir Tim Rice, whose talent has earned him awards at the Oscars, Golden Globes, Tonys and Grammys.

He is perhaps most renowned for his collaborations with Andrew Lloyd Webber on such shows as *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*. His production show, *An Evening with Tim Rice*, is currently playing fleet-wide on all Seabourn ships.

Knighted by the Queen in 1994, Sir Tim will be aboard *Seabourn Odyssey* when she sails on April 8.

Other speakers include Academy Award-winning film director, producer, author and playwright Bryan Fogel, respected American music critic Ted Libbey and award-winning documentary photographer Alison Wright.

■ [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)



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Between 14 February and 31 March 2020, make any new expedition cruise booking on voyages departing between 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2021 and be eligible for **BONUS COMMISSION** and our **SELL 3, SAIL FREE** promotion.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SILVERSEA ON 02 9255 0600**

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Highly qualified team and nearly 1:1 staff-to-guest ratio

Elegantly appointed ocean-view suites, all with butler service

World-class cuisine and alcoholic beverages included

Complimentary Wi-Fi and gratuities

# Offers are the real deal



EVERGREEN CRUISES & TOURS has released its latest *European River Cruising* brochure offering deals on 2021 sailings.

The preview brochure offers deals on Evergreen's most popular river cruises and also features remaining cruise dates from its 2020 program.

"Now it is the time to secure the best rates for clients on our early release 2021 departures with savings of up to \$5,100 per couple," said Angus Crichton, Director of Sales, Marketing and Product for Evergreen Cruises & Tours.

"Best prices combined with our reputation for quality, value and professional service make this the ideal time to book an Evergreen European departure. Prices are set to increase with the launch of the main 2021 program later this year."

Preview offers valid for bookings by May 29 for 2021 trips include:

**FLIGHTS INCLUDED** Book and deposit on the 'Splendours of Europe' river cruise with flights included to Europe, starting from \$7,215 per person

**DOLLAR DISCOUNTS** Save up to \$5,900 per couple based on the cruise selected and combined with early full payment discount

**BEST DEAL** 15-day 'Splendours of Europe' river cruise from just \$5,085 per person (cruise only).

## GOING SOLO

Recent statistics show there is a growing trend for solo travellers, with more of us going it alone to experience the world than ever before.

A recent survey by British Airways of almost 9,000 18-64 year olds across the UK, U.S., Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, India and China revealed that more than 50 per cent of women had travelled by themselves in the past, while 74 per cent of respondents were planning a solo trip in the future.

One of the major advantages of travelling solo is that you can choose the type of holiday you want and the destination that you really want to visit, without having to compromise.

You get to see the world the way you want to at a pace that suits you, whether you travel independently from country to country or join other like-minded travellers in a group

and make new friends along the way.

Travelling on your own is a confidence booster and will help you get out of your comfort zone with the opportunity to try new things and tackle obstacles along the way.

Solo travel also allows you to enjoy your own company and get to know yourself better. It can also help you overcome your fears as well as give you time to reflect on your new experiences.

Evergreen Cruises & Tours has stepped up to cater for this growing market, launching the Evergreen Solo Explorer Club, offering a number of solo-only incentives.

The latest offer is for single travellers who book and deposit on selected 2021 Europe or France river cruises in an Emerald Stateroom will pay no single supplement.

[evergreentours.com.au](http://evergreentours.com.au)

\* Evergreen have also revealed plans to extend their fleet in 2021 with the launch of *Emerald Luna*.

"Built to the same high standards of our current fleet, *Emerald Luna* is the eighth Star Ship to join the Emerald Waterways/Evergreen fleet and is our sixth vessel cruising the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers," said Mr. Crichton.



# New super yacht is the star of the show

JON UNDERWOOD reports on some big news in the cruise industry, including the launch of a new brand.



2019  
Diamond  
Status Awards:

America Express Travel Centurion  
Bicton Travel  
Flight Centre First & Business  
Queen St Mall  
Helloworld Miranda  
Helloworld Strathpine  
Helloworld Winston Hills  
Our Vacation Centre  
Sorrento Key Travel & Cruise Centre  
Travel Associates Toronto  
Weston Cruise & Travel

SCENIC'S ANNUAL 'Night of Stars' event usually provides some big surprises... and this year's incarnation definitely didn't disappoint.

Apart from recognising top-selling agents across Australia, the evening also saw the company make two big announcements.

Chairman and Founder Glen Moroney, making his first appearance at the annual event in four years, revealed plans to build *Emerald Azzurra*, a new 100-guest, 50-cabin 'super yacht'.

The ship will be launched under a new Emerald Yacht Cruises brand, part of the Emerald Cruises portfolio.

"The steel-cutting ceremony was on December 7 last year, the ship is already in full production and it will sail in July 2021," he told the 260-strong audience at The Ivy in Sydney.

"It's been designed specifically for warm water cruising – it's been designed for the Mediterranean – and to provide all the public space, safety, stability and amenities that our guests would enjoy."

Suites on the 110-metre *Emerald Azzurra* have been designed with a modern feel, ensuite bathrooms and quality finishes. More than 88 per cent of the suites, which start at 28 square metres, also feature a balcony.

Guests will have access to a special marina platform for a variety of activities, including paddleboards and snorkelling equipment. The ship also features three tenders and two Zodiacs for shore landings.

*Azzurra* (pictured above) will cruise the Adriatic Coast, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, offering guests an intimate, boutique yachting experience. As well as exploring the major highlights in these regions, travellers will also have access to smaller ports and harbours which can only be reached by small yachts, giving them the freedom to explore authentic local towns and villages off the beaten tourist track.

Mr Moroney also revealed that Scenic will be setting up their own shipyard in Croatia, where they intend to build *Scenic Eclipse II*, due for delivery in 2022. He said the move was to circumvent the build issues the company experienced with the first *Scenic Eclipse*.

"We've decided to jump out of the boiling water and into the fire," he said.

The eighth annual Night of Stars event saw 10 travel agents awarded Diamond status for 2019. Seven national honours were presented along with awards for the top offices in each state for both the Scenic and Evergreen brands. Sara Puglia was announced as Sales Development Manager of the Year.

"The Night of Stars event is our opportunity to acknowledge and recognise the outstanding achievements of our consortia, agency partners and consultants during 2019," said Anthony Laver, Group General Manager, Sales & Marketing Australasia.

"With the guest at the core of everything we do and innovation in our DNA, tonight we celebrate over 30 years of delivering the best luxury products and experiences across ocean, river and land journeys."

■ [scenic.com.au](http://scenic.com.au)



## New wellness tours offer reef relief

CORAL EXPEDITIONS have launched new 'Revitalise on the Reef' wellness expeditions on the Outer Great Barrier Reef commencing in 2021.

Travelling onboard small ship *Coral Discoverer*, the sailings feature a customised wellness program against the backdrop of marine life and the natural heritage of Australia's UNESCO World Heritage sites, the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest.

Kris Abbey (pictured above), the expert who has curated the program, says it makes sense to combine a wellness program with natural attractions to enhance overall health and vitality for the mind, body and soul.

"There is no better destination than the Great Barrier Reef to immerse yourself into the wonderful world of wellness," she said. "To wake up with the sun, enjoy clean fresh food, explore nature's stunning island playground and return home healthier for the experience."

A specially developed program draws on the latest wellness practices alongside ancient Indigenous traditions.

Wendy Jones and Sue Pope from Yoga Soul Sisters conduct yoga classes in unique locations on the islands and cays of the Great Barrier Reef.

Additionally, Qi Gong classes, relaxation sessions and fitness, nutrition or wellness workshops are held each day, with guests taking home life skills to adopt into daily living.

Health-oriented cuisine is offered along with opportunities to swim, snorkel and scuba dive on the Reef.

Tamara Sweeting, Product Development Manager at Coral Expeditions, says the business has plans to establish a year-round series of wellness-themed itineraries to cater to the needs of current and future guests.

"Exploring the Great Barrier Reef is in our DNA and we aim to create experiences beyond imagination in this new era."

The seven-night 'Revitalise on the Reef' expeditions depart Cairns on September 15 and 22, 2021, and are priced from \$5,590 per person twin share.

[coralexpeditions.com/au](http://coralexpeditions.com/au)



## An extended return to Eden

P&O CRUISES has added three more calls to Eden on the Sapphire Coast this season in response to the recent bushfire crisis.

*Pacific Explorer* will arrive on March 29, May 10 and May 16 representing an additional 6,000 guests to help boost the region's economic recovery and sending a message that the destination is open for business.

Last month *Pacific Aria* (pictured) became the first Carnival Australia-brand cruise ship to return to the Sapphire Coast following the bushfire emergency.

"The people of Eden and surrounding communities have endured a terrible period with the impact of the bushfires," said Sture Myrmell, President of Carnival Australia and P&O Cruises Australia.

"*Pacific Aria's* arrival sends a powerful message that the local community is resilient, courageous and ready to welcome visitors."

The three visits represent a significant increase in cruise calls to Eden in 2020 by Carnival Australia-brand ships effectively extending the region's summer cruise season. Carnival Australia has also pledged \$1.9 million to a number of bushfire relief efforts in Australia.

"The impact that the horrific fires have had on our tourist economy has been almost as disastrous as the fires themselves," said Peter Whiter, President of the Eden Chamber of Commerce.

"It's going to be a long road to recovery and these visits will help establish the recovery in Eden and the region."

[carnival.com.au](http://carnival.com.au)

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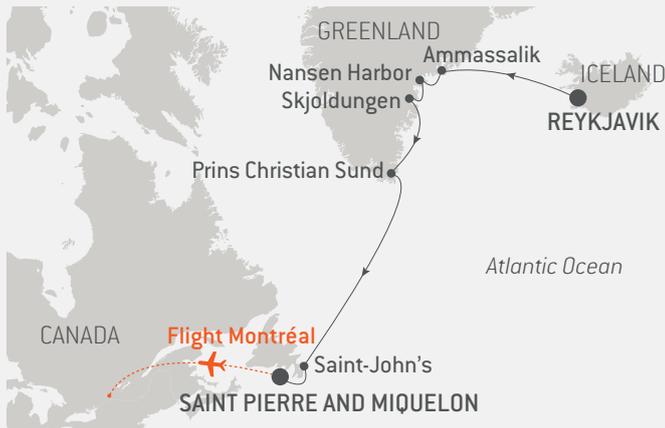
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**DAN WESTERGREN, Photographer**

As the long time photo editor for National Geographic Traveler magazine, Dan Westergren was responsible for the magazine's photographic vision. He's been lucky to photograph amazing places for Traveler, such as the summits of Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn, and Kilimanjaro as well as the North Pole.



**M JACKSON, Expert**

Geographer, glaciologist, National Geographic Emerging Explorer, and TED Fellow, M Jackson studies and writes about glaciers, people, and climate change. She has worked for more than ten years across the Arctic guiding backcountry trips and has served as an Expert for National Geographic in Alaska, Iceland, and Antarctica.



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# Why ANA is flying high

All Nippon Airways (ANA) have big plans for Australians travelling to and beyond Japan. We asked Brett Walsh, Country Manager for ANA, about the future of this innovative airline.

**Q: Why is the Australian market so important to ANA?**

**A:** Japan has been named the fastest growing international destination for Australian travellers. With each additional service that ANA launches, it creates additional visitor traffic and revenue for both Australia and Japan.

In the 12 months to September 2019, Australian resident departures to Japan grew by 14 per cent.

**Q: Tell us about the expansion plans you have for our market?**

**A:** ANA relaunched Sydney services in 2015 after a long absence in the Australian market. This successful service was followed by the launch of our daily Perth services in September 2019, which has been well received by the Western Australia market.

ANA also just announced we are doubling our Sydney services with a daily daytime flight to complement our night-time flights from Sydney – Tokyo (Haneda Airport) from March 29 this year.

**Q: Why is Haneda becoming such an important transit point for Aussie travellers?**

**A:** The ANA double daily departures from Sydney to Tokyo (Haneda) will enable us to provide greater scheduling options for our customers from Australia, given the growing popularity of Japan among Australian travellers.

Haneda Airport is also key to building a comprehensive network of domestic connections and ANA's increased presence at the airport will aid inbound tourism and business travel beyond Tokyo itself.

The Sydney to Haneda double daily operations will generate more options in terms of international connections at that airport, particularly to and from the USA and Europe.

ANA will also expand our international network in 2020 by adding five new cities with the introduction of flights to Istanbul, Milan, Moscow, Stockholm and Shenzhen. This will be a part of 12 new routes that ANA will serve out of Haneda starting this year.

Haneda Airport is also located about 18kms from downtown Tokyo, making the journey much quicker and cheaper for those planning to visit the city.

**Q: You've announced a code share with Virgin Australia. What will this mean for Aussie flyers?**

**A:** ANA's partnership agreement with Virgin Australia will provide many benefits to passengers from both Australia and Japan.

It will enhance connectivity between the two nations with the implementation of code share flights within Japan and Australia, and reciprocal frequent flyer benefits for our members.

Virgin Australia's daily services from Brisbane to Tokyo (Haneda Airport)

launching on March 29 will allow ANA to code share from this city.

The partnership will increase convenience and comfort for passengers travelling between Australia and Japan, and increase their ability to explore both countries through our large domestic networks.

**Q: Competition among airlines is extremely fierce. What is the ANA difference?**

**A:** ANA offer the ultimate experience through their Japanese hospitality, both in the air and on the ground. We live by the motto of 'Trustworthy, Heartwarming & Energetic!'

It is our goal to be the world's leading airline group in customer satisfaction and value creation.

**Q: It must be working because ANA has received impressive recognition.**

**A:** Last year ANA was again awarded the prestigious five-star rating by SKYTRAX, the only Japanese airline to win this prestigious title for seven consecutive years since 2013.

Currently only 10 airlines globally hold this five-star rating, which recognises very high standards of both airport and onboard product provided by an airline to their customers, consistent and high standards of front-line staff service across both airport and onboard service environments.

■ [anaskyweb.com](http://anaskyweb.com)



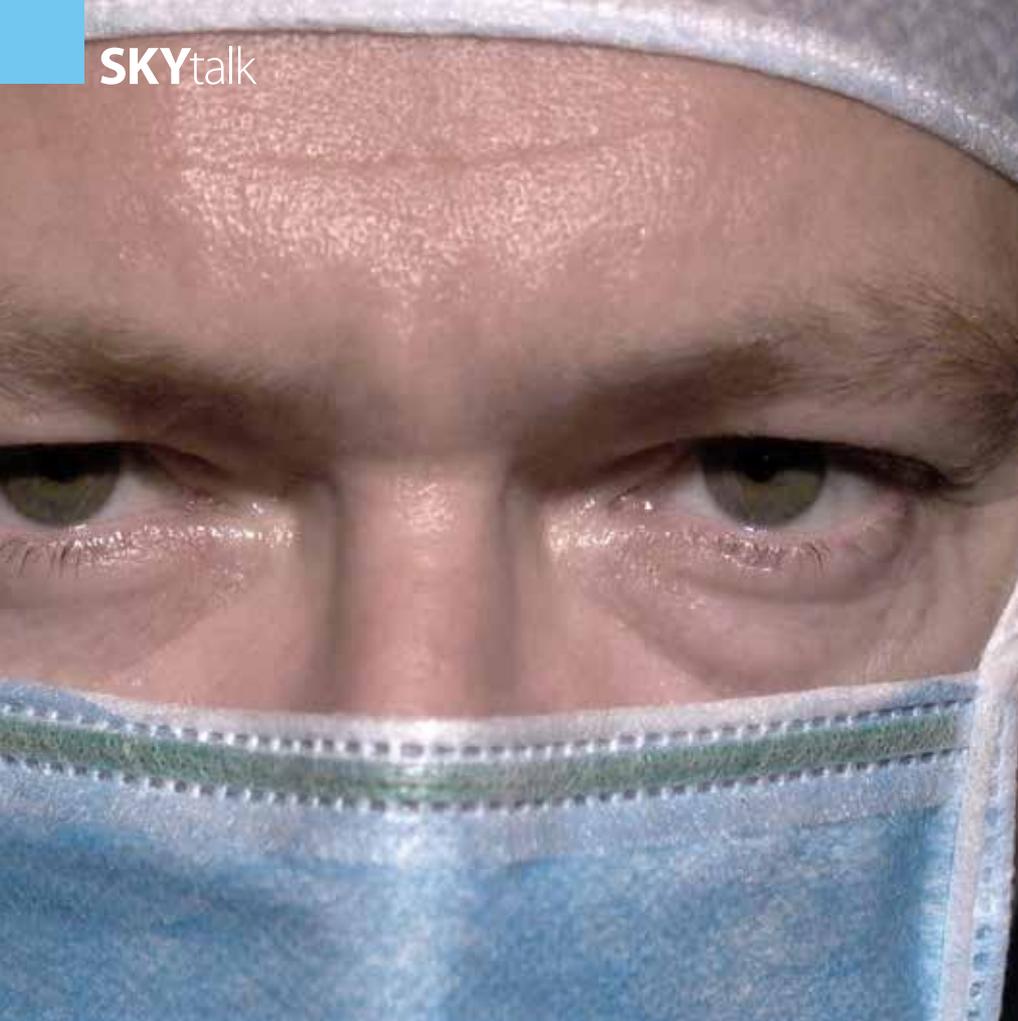
SYDNEY ➤ TOKYO

# DOUBLE DAILY FLIGHTS

Day and night from Sydney to Haneda

Day flight departs from  
29 March 2020 onwards.

<https://www.ana.co.jp/en/au/>



# Keeping it clean

GAYA AVERY offers some sage advice on how to keep germs at bay on airplanes...even putting it to music!

CONSIDERED RELATIVELY normal on the ground, I transform into a full germophobe on planes.

Yep, I'm the one wiping down the surfaces of pretty much anything I touch and proudly. Because while I may get some odd stares from others, I'd really rather not waste my holiday being sick.

So, if you'd prefer to be on the beach than staring down a questionably clean toilet bowl, do as I do.

## Wash those hands

When my daughter washes her hands, she sings a little song to the tune of *Frère Jacques* (thanks to the local library for this one):

*Tops and bottoms, tops and bottoms  
In between, in between  
Scrub them all around,  
Scrub them all around  
Now they're clean, nice and clean*

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) claims washing your hands is the single most important infection control measure and it lists it first among the guidelines for preventing the spread of disease on commercial aircraft.

Sometimes water isn't readily accessible, but hand sanitiser is easily portable. Look for ones that are at least 60 per cent alcohol.

## Clean those surfaces

In Australia, we live a long way from pretty much anywhere so chances are you'll be travelling for a long time with people whose hygiene practices may be somewhat questionable (and apparently men cannot hit the target in the lavatory no matter how big the bowl).

So, wipe down what you're likely to touch at your seat and in the loo with disinfectant wipes (good to use in your hotel and at various spots on your travels).

## Choose your seat wisely

When sick people walk down the aisle of a plane, they touch the aisle seats. Go the window seat.

And don't be afraid to ask to move if someone is hacking and sneezing (a study published in March 2018 found that passengers within two seats or a row of a passenger with a respiratory illness have an 80 per cent or greater possibility of getting sick, *CNN* reported).



## THAT'S QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT!

A GOOD onboard entertainment system can make or break a flight, especially on a long-haul journey, where flyers are becoming increasingly spoiled with options.

Globehunters did a study of in-flight entertainment systems across 20 of the world's largest long-haul airlines.

According to the UK travel site's research, the world's best in-flight entertainment is that belonging to Turkish Airlines, which offers "everything you could possibly wish for, from live TV to in-flight movies and low-cost Wi-Fi."

Emirates and American Airlines finished in second and third places respectively, followed by Air New Zealand and Etihad. The only Australian carrier studied, Qantas, finished in 15th position, offering free Wi-Fi but not live TV or music streaming.

■ [globehunters.com/best-in-flight-entertainment](http://globehunters.com/best-in-flight-entertainment)



## NEWS FLASH!!

QANTAS HAVE suspended its two direct services to mainland China (Sydney-Beijing and Sydney-Shanghai) until March 29.

This follows entry restrictions imposed by countries including Singapore and the United States, which impact the movement of crew who work across the Qantas International network.

The airline says these entry restrictions pose significant logistical challenges for rostering crew to operate mainland China services, leading to the need to temporarily suspend these flights.

# 2020/2021 NORTHERN LIGHTS

Northern Lights in Lapland  
Helsinki to Kittila  
7 days tailor made tour  
From \$3,599

Land of the Northern Lights  
Stockholm to Rovaniemi  
17 days fully escorted tour  
From \$11,165



# ESCAPE TO SUNNY QUEENSLAND WITH MERITON SUITES

MERITON SUITES is Australia's largest owner-operator of hotel suites in Australia and is the perfect accommodation option for those wanting to escape and head to sunny Queensland.

With four stunning properties to choose from – two in Brisbane's CBD and two on the sunny Gold Coast – travellers will be spoilt for choice.

Thinking about an urban getaway or

something with a little adventure? Brisbane is a great option.

The city has so much to offer travellers with amazing bushwalks in and around the area where they can visit waterfalls and maybe even spot a snoozing koala, or kayak through the city's waterways while taking in the scenery.

If shopping is high on the radar, then Queens Plaza and Queen Street Mall are the

perfect places to find all the high-end labels, plus 700 retailers with everything from fashion to tech products.

A stay in Brisbane's CBD overlooking the Brisbane River from two of the city's tallest buildings, standing 74 levels high, is sure to offer guests an experience to remember.

Meriton Suites Herschel Street and Meriton Suites Adelaide Street offer the best in modern living in a central location with studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom suites available, perfect for both couples and larger families.

Conveniently placed just minutes away from Brisbane's entertainment and lifestyle precincts, guests can enjoy all the culinary and cultural stylings that Brisbane has to offer right on your doorstep, with the added bonus of the best views from any hotel in the city.

With a thriving nightlife, world-class dining, beautiful beaches and a shopper's paradise, the Gold Coast is the perfect option for a beachside escape that guarantees to not disappoint with famously pleasant weather all year round.

Boasting nearly 70 kilometres of pristine beaches and natural wonders, beautiful hinterland and subtropical rainforest cloaks, it's not just the theme-parks, shimmering sky-rises and glitter strip that demand travellers' attention.

Whether they wish to get their adrenaline junkie fix with adventure activities or are more inclined to have a relaxed visit among nature – there is so much to see and do.

The brand new Studio Street Suites at Meriton Suites Broadbeach is perfect for a beach getaway.

With the spacious, open plan design, this suite type offers the ultimate convenience with its location on the ground floor and unique street access onto Elizabeth Avenue.

Each suite showcases a stylish design with contemporary furnishings, a king size bed, plus a HD Miracast TV offering the ability for guests to stream their own content direct to the TV.

With additional studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom suites available, each with the option of a guaranteed ocean view, Meriton Suites Broadbeach has something for every traveller.

A stay at Meriton Suites Southport, Southport's tallest building standing 55 levels tall, means guests will be treated to magnificent views of the stunning hinterland and glistening scenes of pristine surf beaches. Offering one-, two- and three-bedroom suites, there is plenty of space for the whole family to enjoy.

Meriton Suites currently operates 19 properties across Sydney, Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, with seven new locations in the pipeline including Eastgardens, Melbourne and Canberra.

■ [meritonsuites.com.au](http://meritonsuites.com.au)





*\*Actual view from Meriton Suites Southport*



*escape*  
TO SUNNY  
QUEENSLAND WITH  
**MERITON SUITES**

WITH 4 LOCATIONS SPREAD ACROSS THE GOLD COAST AND BRISBANE, PERFECT FOR YOUR NEXT ESCAPE TO THE SUNSHINE STATE.

Perfect for both short weekend getaways and extended holidays, our suites are designed for living, not just sleeping. With 4 hotels across Brisbane and the Gold Coast, each suite offers more space than a typical hotel room. With a selection of studio, one, two, three and four bedroom layouts available, all suites feature a residential-sized kitchen along with the essential utensils for a home cooked meal, a separate living and dining space, TV's in each bedroom, plus an internal laundry complete with a washing machine and dryer for a home away from home experience. Experience some of the best views in Brisbane from two of tallest hotels in the city, both standing at 74 levels high or experience the refreshing coastal breeze from our two Gold Coast hotels, both offering suites with guaranteed ocean views.

*Herschel Street, Brisbane • Adelaide Street, Brisbane • Broadbeach • Southport*  
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# Partners hope to bring books to life

A NEW partnership between Intrepid Travel and Lonely Planet is tipped to bring the travel publisher's popular guidebooks to life for the first time.

The new range of carbon neutral tours will offer an innovative new product that is authentic, immersive and sustainable.

Lonely Planet Experiences (LPE) will comprise 200 day-tours (operated by Intrepid Travel's day-tour company, Urban Adventures) and more than 130 multi-day trips including walking, cycling, food, festivals, family and marine adventures.

All LPE itineraries have been designed with a low environmental footprint while ensuring a positive impact on local communities.

True to Intrepid Travel's style, all tour groups will be small with a maximum of 16 travellers led by a local leader.

The tours will use local transportation, support locally owned businesses and, like all Intrepid Travel trips since 2010, be 100 per cent carbon neutral – also reflective of Lonely Planet's commitment to responsible travel as part of this partnership.

In addition, all tours will include exclusive discounts on Lonely Planet's guidebooks, free access to the company's flagship Guides app and supplementary Lonely Planet insight throughout.

"For over four decades, travellers have

looked to Lonely Planet for trusted travel advice," says Luis Cabrera, CEO of Lonely Planet.

"Now, global explorers looking for the inside track can journey along with us on this new range of tours. This is an exciting innovation and evolution for the Lonely Planet brand."

The tours will offer travellers a once-in-a-lifetime experience of what it's like to truly know a place, through explorations of local food and drink, behind-the-scenes access to hidden gems, interactions with locals and insights from trusted travel experts.

Travellers will gain a deeper understanding of and connection to destinations by getting to the very heart of the place they are visiting.

Delight in the sights, smells and tastes of some of the world's most exciting and original experiences from an evening stroll through Sydney's small bar scene to an insider's trip through the most famous fish market in Tokyo, or an exploration of Rome's iconic monuments and movie locations.

The tours will run in six continents, across 65 countries and range in duration from two hours to 22 days.

"Lonely Planet helped pioneer access to more authentic and grassroots experiences for independent travellers," said James Thornton, CEO of Intrepid Travel.

"That's why we're thrilled to be part of the

## FEATURE TOURS INCLUDE:

### DAY TOURS

*Lonely Planet Experiences*  
– Powered by Urban Adventures

- \* A Tour Through Tokyo's Kitchen (incl. Tsukiji Fish Market), two-and-a-half hours, starting at \$109
- \* Vintage Las Vegas Arts Tour, two hours, starting at \$65

### MULTI-DAY TOURS

*Lonely Planet Experiences*  
– Powered by Intrepid Travel

- \* Galapagos Experience (seven days), starting at \$1,320
- \* Explore Egypt (15 days), starting at \$1,645.

next phase of their growth and helping to make sustainable experience-rich travel a mainstay for travellers everywhere."

"The two brands share an unmatched passion for travel and a genuine commitment to responsible travel, and we're proud to combine our expertise to deliver amazing adventures for like-minded travellers around the world," added Cabrera.

# PROTECTIVE TOURS ARE A REAL BEAUTY

MSC CRUISES has unveiled a series of carefully selected shore excursions specifically designed to help protect and preserve the planet's natural beauty.

The cruise line has also set specific objectives for local tour operator partners to become internationally certified under the Global Sustainable Tourism Council certification program.

The new PROTECTOURS program has more than 25 options offering guests a chance to discover destinations like never before, while making a positive contribution to the planet through activities aimed to help protect and preserve.

These include the ultimate forest hike with rescued dogs in Jamaica to meeting urban honey bees in Corfu or helping to keep Croatia's bays and beaches clean during a snorkelling experience.

These excursions are an integral part of MSC Cruises' mission to offer guests an environmentally conscious holiday. They are the first in what MSC Cruises hopes will



Montego Bay, Jamaica

be a long line of PROTECTOURS, therefore developing not only the choice for travellers but a growing positive impact on the environment.

More than half of Generation Z consumers (54 per cent) say that the environmental impact of travelling on destinations is an important factor when deciding where to travel and offering opportunities for civic engagement, such as PROTECTOURS, will not only help the destination in question, but help eliminate the guilt that guests may feel when travelling.

The PROTECTOURS will be offered across multiple regions around the world, with

highlights including Iceland on horseback with tree planting in Reykjavik.

Guests will have a chance to discover the countryside as they saddle up on a Viking-age Icelandic horse and trek into the scenic wilderness of lava fields and green hillsides, rich with birdlife.

Following the trek, guests journey to Guðmundarlundur forest where they will be met by a forester from the Kópavogur Forestry Association, who will guide them in planting a tree, aiding the forestry service's efforts to help conserve this unique area and simultaneously contributing to lowering carbon emissions.

■ [msccruises.com.au](https://msccruises.com.au)

# NEW RESORT IS BORN IN BORNEO

CLUB MED have unveiled ambitious plans to pioneer a new sustainable resort in Borneo.

Opening in Sabah in late 2022, Club Med Borneo Kota Kinabalu will merge the best of Borneo's greenery and beachfront vistas. The property will be located at Kuala Penyu Beach, just a 90-minute drive from Kota Kinabalu International Airport.

The resort will be Club Med's second in Malaysia, after Club Med Cherating Beach, an eco-nature getaway located in Pahang.

Set on 16 hectares, the property will be located next to a mangrove reserve and will offer a plethora of activities that encourage guests to preserve the location's natural beauty and discover local gems.

These will include island hopping to Pulau Tiga, a river ride that showcases

Sabah's diverse wildlife and ecosystem as well as an adrenaline-pumping white water river rafting adventure.

Guests can also immerse themselves in Borneo's rich heritage through activities like evening dance shows, traditional rug and jewellery making, and interactive culinary classes and coffee tastings.

Boasting 400 rooms, the resort's design will be inspired by numerous traditional Borneo ethnic cultures while seamlessly integrating its structures with the surrounding rainforest. Plenty of public spaces will interconnect with nature, using local and sustainably sourced natural materials.

Facilities will include an all-day buffet restaurant serving international cuisines, free-flow bar with integrated entertainment space

showcasing Club Med's signature circus and musical shows, and a children's club.

"The Club Med spirit has always been to create new resorts that seamlessly blend in to naturally beautiful locations and become discoverable bucket list destinations in their own right," said Henri Giscard d'Estaing, President of Club Med.

"Opening in Kuala Penyu allows us to showcase Sabah's beautiful surroundings in a relatively undiscovered part of the world. This will be our second resort in Malaysia in a destination that is seeing increased airlift and interest from travellers across globe including China, Korea, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand."

■ [clubmed.com.au](https://clubmed.com.au)

# Hot off the paradise press

Tanaman restaurant at Potato Head Suites

Feel like you can't keep up with all that's new in Bali? We've done the leg work for you, rounding up the latest property openings, new bars, environmentally sustainable attractions and tours across the island. By JESSICA ZOITI.

## BALI'S NEW ECO-WARRIORS

WHEN SEMINYAK icon, Desa Potato Head, opened a decade ago, it was conceived as a multi-dimensional experience where music, art, design, food, sustainability and wellness collide.

Already home to its famous beach club and the boutique, 57-room Katamama Suites, the project's final attractions are only now being unveiled.

Softly launched in January alongside the beach club, the new OMA-designed Potato Head Studios is built from recycled brick, reclaimed driftwood and poured concrete, and features 168 glamorous guest rooms.

Furniture and amenities are made from recycled plastics and planet-friendly materials conceptualised by celebrated British designers Max Lamb and Faye Toogood, and created by Balinese artisans using indigenous materials and techniques.

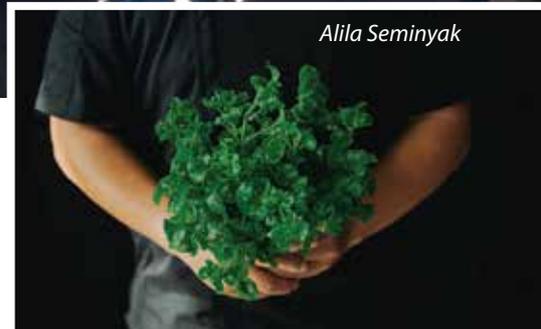
Guests who check in to Potato Head Studios and Katamama receive a zero-waste kit including a water bottle, bamboo straws and refillable amenities like sunscreen, after-sun care and insect repellent.

Also new at Potato Head Suites is Tanaman restaurant, which comes hot on the heels of the opening of Ljen, Indonesia's first zero-waste restaurant.

The neon-lit eatery is wholly plant-based and dishes up local flavours using only native flora sourced directly from small, spray-free farms. The multi-course tasting menu reflects Bali's most loved classics – think jackfruit rending, mushroom sate and bajagor (fried field mushroom dumplings).

Additional new bars, a multi-functional gallery, environmentally-driven kids' club, several rooftop spaces, an amphitheatre, beachfront pool with day beds, music recording studio and disco will officially open in May, finally completing the project.

■ [potatohead.co/seminyak](http://potatohead.co/seminyak)



Alila Seminyak

## PLANTING THE SEEDS OF SUSTAINABILITY

AS PART of Alila Seminyak's ongoing commitment to the environment, it has introduced a hydroponic garden to the property, growing its own organic ingredients for use in dishes offered at the resort's main restaurant, Seasalt.

Hand-selected green goodies are also plucked from the garden to concoct the venue's sustainable, ocean-inspired cocktails.

Hydroponic systems allow plants to grow in a porous, nutrient-rich solution that allows a better distribution of oxygen and food.

Nutrients and water are fed directly to the roots enabling the plant to spend its energy growing, rather than seeking food in the ground. The system gives greater control over pests, diseases and growth rate, and eliminates the need for pesticides and herbicides.

■ [alilahotels.com/se](http://alilahotels.com/se)



## GRAB A BEACH BREAK

FOR A family-friendly break away from the frenetic energy of Kuta, head to Prama Sanur Beach on the eastern side of the island.

The environmentally friendly five-star resort is located five kilometres outside the Sanur town centre on the white sandy Mertasari Beach.

Its 428 rooms (including connecting rooms for families) are surrounded by almost eight hectares of lush tropical gardens that house an extensive range of facilities.

These include the new Splash Zone pool for families, a lagoon pool with a swim-up bar, a water sport centre, kids' club, cycling, spa, private beach and a range of restaurants, bars and lounges serving everything from authentic Indonesian and Asian cuisine to Italian and other international flavours.

Early bird rates at Prama Sanur Beach (including breakfast) start from just \$190 per room per night.

■ [pramahotels.com/hotels/detail/prama-sanur-beach](http://pramahotels.com/hotels/detail/prama-sanur-beach)



## Your Bali Experience

A beachfront family resort with the warm-hearted authentic Indonesian hospitality

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[www.pramahotels.com](http://www.pramahotels.com)

[@pramasanurbeach](https://www.instagram.com/pramasanurbeach)

[Prama Sanur Beach Bali](https://www.facebook.com/PramaSanurBeachBali)





Above and below: Bali Dynasty Resort

## EXPERIENCE A NEW DYNASTY

BALI DYNASTY Resort – one of Bali’s best and most awarded family-friendly properties – is also experimenting with hydroponic farming.

It now supplies its kitchen with a healthy supply of fresh, organic, hydroponically-grown products from an onsite farm that doubles as an educational tool for staff and the wider community.

Located within the resort’s duck pond garden, the farm currently provides the property with fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs that are totally free from chemicals. It uses 90 per cent less water than a traditional garden, 70 per cent less land and 50 per cent less fertiliser.

In addition to its new environmental programs, Bali Dynasty Resort has also unveiled a range of upgrades that are sure to make family holidays even more memorable.

In March last year the ever-popular Gracie Kelly’s Irish Pub received a fresh new look and location within the resort. Then in June, the resort began welcoming guests with late departures into its new Premier Lounge.

Sure to be a hit with guests is the new 109-metre lagoon swimming pool. A true oasis, the pool is surrounded by exotic palms and water features, and has a casual pool bar that serves cold drinks, lunches and dinner.

The resort’s 17 family rooms have direct access to the new lagoon pool, which is tucked behind the property’s south wing.

Families can currently take advantage of a ‘Holiday Package’ which offers 15 per cent off accommodation plus free children’s entrance to the kids and teens’ club, free kids’ dining at the Theme Buffet Dinner when accompanied by one paying adult per child, and savings of up to 50 per cent on cocktails at the resort’s twice-daily happy hour.

■ [bdr.pphotels.com](http://bdr.pphotels.com)



## TRAVELTALK EXCLUSIVE:

*Traveltalk* readers will receive 15 per cent off Bali Dynasty Resort’s best available online rate plus free return airport transfers when you book a minimum five-night stay.

Alternatively, book a minimum seven nights and in addition to the 15 per cent discount and airport transfers you’ll also receive a free Themed Night Buffet Dinner (for room occupants only), a free 15-minute spa at Ashoka Spa, 20 per cent off dining at Golden Lotus, SENSES and Gracie Kelly’s Irish Pub.

To take advantage of this deal, enter the promo code TRAVELTALK when booking. This offer is valid for direct bookings made at [bdr.pphotels.com](http://bdr.pphotels.com) before March 31, 2020, for stays until June 30, 2020.



## A PRIVATE OCEAN-SIDE OASIS

NESTLED AMONG tropical gardens on the clifftops of Nusa Dua, The Apurva Kempinski Bali is now fully operational following the launch of its final rooms.

The 43 one-, two- and three-bedroom, two-storey pool villas range in size from 200sqm of living space to a generous

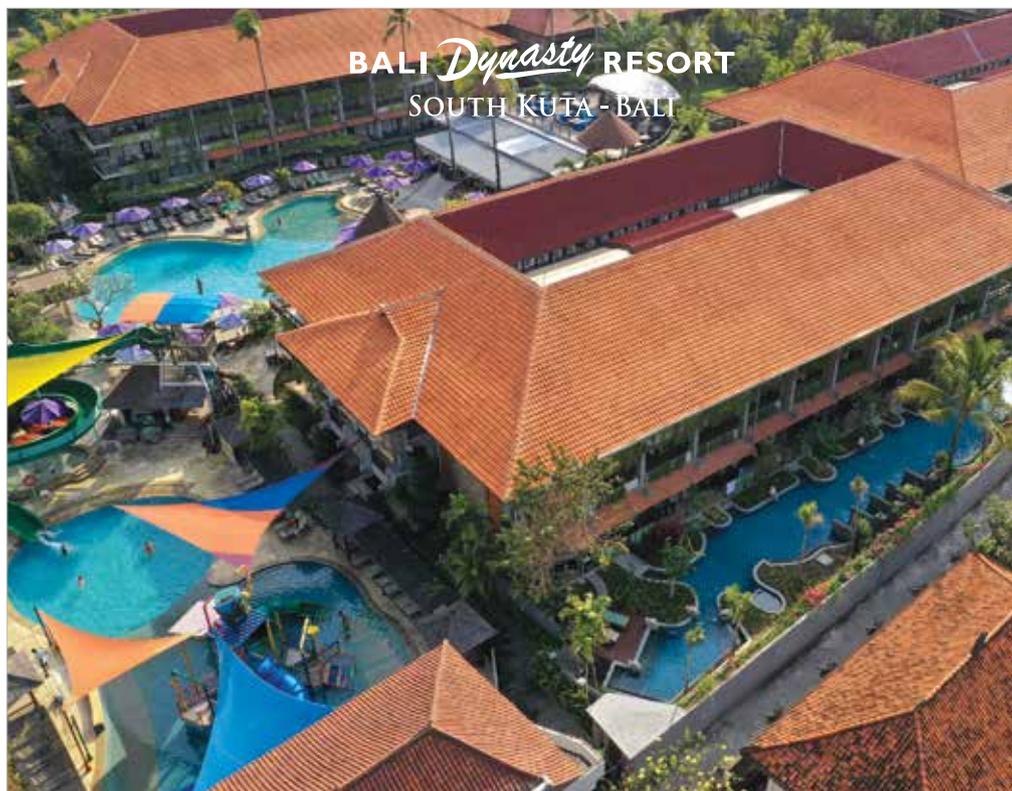
1,379sqm, and promise complete privacy.

Each features a spacious indoor-outdoor living area, outdoor terrace, plunge pool and hand-crafted Balinese-inspired furnishings. The larger villas also boast a kitchen and rooftop dining area.

The five-star resort now offers a total of

475 rooms, suites and villas (60 per cent with a private pool), six dining outlets, a dedicated villa lounge with around-the-clock refreshments, a spa and collection of versatile meeting and event spaces including an ocean-side wedding chapel.

■ [kempinski.com/bali](http://kempinski.com/bali)



**BALI** *Dynasty* RESORT  
SOUTH KUTA - BALI



New Lagoon Pool



Gracie Kelly's Irish Pub



New Departure Lounge

Experience all the latest upgrades at the Popular Family Resort in Bali.  
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# BALI



Ulu Cliffhouse

## WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

ULU CLIFFHOUSE is offering discerning travellers the ultimate spot to drink in both incredible cocktails and Bali's famous sunsets.

Opened at the end of 2019, the new Clubhouse Bar is a sophisticated venue perched on the edge of Uluwatu's cliffs.

It is part of the Ulu Cliffhouse experience, a multi-venue attraction comprising The Clubhouse (a collection of seven luxury suites), a 25-metre infinity pool, open-air restaurant and cliff-side ocean deck that hangs precariously over the waves below.

Inspired by mid-century modern design, the new Clubhouse Bar has attracted award-winning bartenders from around the globe, who are expertly creating experimental and classic cocktails.

The Midnight Express(o), for example, takes the ever-popular espresso martini and warms it up with a generous dash of cinnamon. The tequila-based Fresca Platina pays homage to Uluwatu's surfside location by blending vibrant lime and mint with sea salt water and cooling cucumber.

Beyond the beverages, the Clubhouse Bar is also offering a late-night food menu with bites including rustic fries to gooey grilled cheese sambos.

The Clubhouse is open daily from 5pm to midnight.

■ [uluciffhouse.com](http://uluciffhouse.com)



## GET GRILL'D

HUNGRY FOR a quality burger fix in Seminyak? Then follow the crowds to the new Grill'd.

The Australian brand opened its first Bali operation in December and is now offering signature dishes such as the Almighty Burger (tasty cheese, crispy bacon, egg, beetroot and herbed mayo), alongside exclusive Bali-inspired sides and cocktails.

In a first for Bali, the Grill'd menu also includes its famous Beyond Meat burgers – made from plant-based patties, they taste as 'beefy' and delicious as their real meat counterparts.

Grill'd is open daily from 10am to 2am on Jl Kayu Jati, No. 3x.

## BECOME A DJOURNALIST

IF YOU agree that life's too short for bad coffee, skip the hotel breakfast buffet and head for the new Djournal Coffee in Petitenget.

Opened in January, the outlet is the award-winning Indonesian company's second in Bali and serves a variety of Indonesian-origin blends such as Bali, Mandheling, Papua, Aceh, Toraja and the signature house blend, Djakarta Roast.

The menu fuses local and western flavours and features all-day breakfast, small bites like a crispy pork belly bowl, and a dedicated vegetarian menu with wholesome choices including tempeh spring rolls and a couscous quinoa salad.

Find Djournal Coffee at Jl Petitenget No. 19 near the corner of Jl. Batu Belig.



## DISCOVER THE REAL BALI

LOOKING FOR experiences beyond Seminyak and Kuta's thrumming clubs, restaurants and boutiques?

There's so much more to Bali than its over-crowded tourism hot spots and Intrepid Travel wants to show you them.

While new tours can take you deep into the mountainous heart of Suluwesi to trek through bamboo and evergreen forests, or to Kalimantan in Indonesian Borneo in search of orangutans, those looking to unearth Bali's untouched countryside, clean beaches and authentic cuisine should consider the 'Spirit of Bali and Nusa Lembangan' experience. Starting in Ubud and ending in Canggu,

highlights of this nine-day small group tour include a visit to a traditional village to take an in-depth cooking class, sourcing ingredients from local markets and an on-site farm.

Participate in a water purification ceremony at the Tirta Sudamala temple, discover secluded rice fields and terraces during a local village walk, learn about the medicinal and health properties of the Javanese jamu drink and take a day trip to Nusa Penida, known for its vistas, beaches and sapphire waters.

The tour departs on April 4 and prices start from \$1,460 per adult in twin share.

■ [intrepidtravel.com/au](http://intrepidtravel.com/au)



## Give plastic waste a Goby-full

WHILE THE world rallies towards a ban on plastics, one forward-thinking fish is already doing his bit to save the oceans.

Goby the Fish (pictured) was installed in February 2018 on the beach outside the W Bali – Seminyak resort as part of their sustainability initiatives. The aluminium sculpture was designed to raise awareness and help reduce plastic in the ocean and has already been emptied three times.

“We saw a similar installation on social media and began researching it,” said Craig Seaward, General Manager of W Bali – Seminyak.

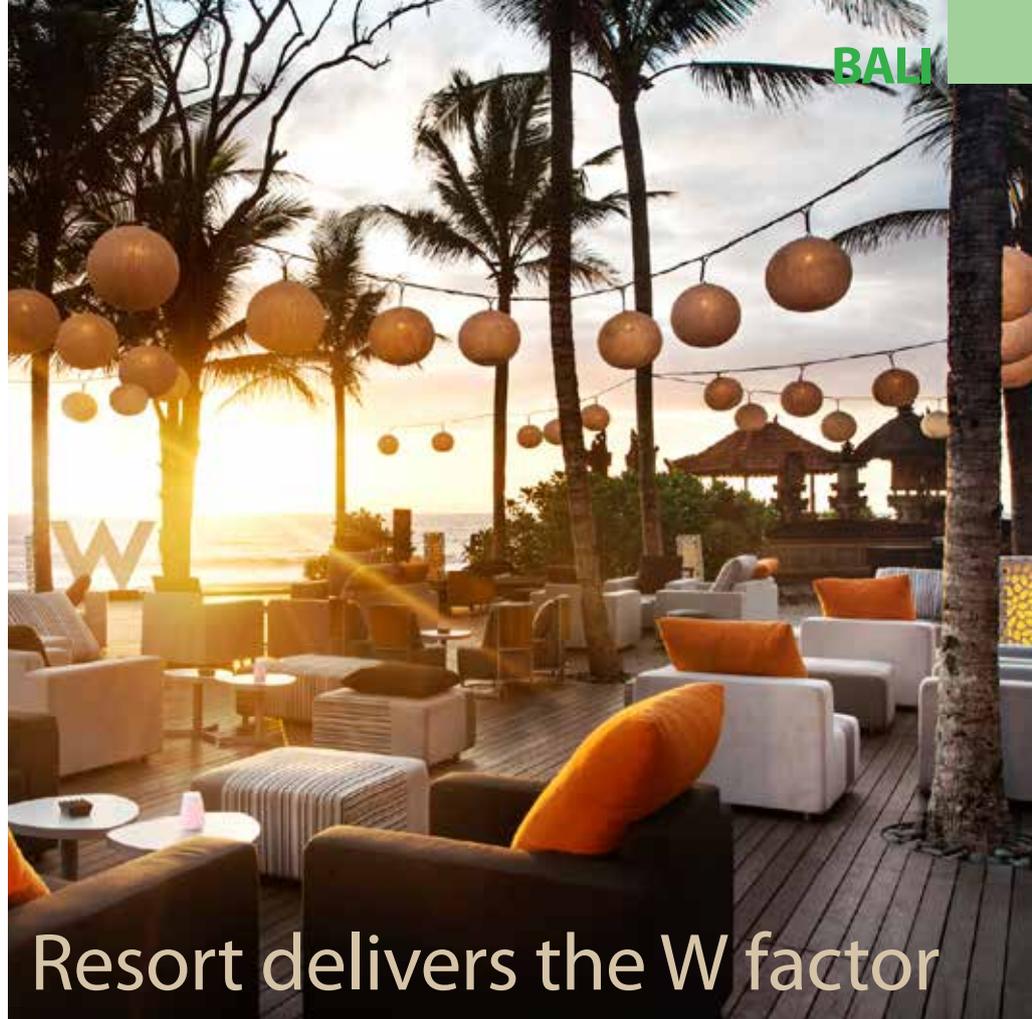
“We found out the fish was installed on a beach with a sign saying, ‘Goby loves plastic, please feed him,’ and we embraced the idea!”

W Bali – Seminyak has been working for more than five years to be Earthcheck certified every year, working on reducing waste, energy and water consumption and engaging in strict recycling practices.

The hotel team is constantly engaged in intense beach cleaning sessions, ensuring the garbage is collected and sent to recycling.

In other news, the resort has raised funds for Australia’s bushfire recovery effort through an online silent auction, donating a five-night stay for two guests.

■ [wbaliseminyak.com](http://wbaliseminyak.com)



## Resort delivers the W factor

DEBBIE SPROULE reviews the W Bali – Seminyak.

IF YOU’RE looking for a luxurious resort with an upbeat, chilled vibe, fabulous five-star dining and all the amenities, you can’t go past the five-star W Bali – Seminyak. It’s ideal for the young and young at heart.

We were lucky enough to enjoy a short stay here and we certainly experienced the ‘W’ factor.

The room was extremely comfortable, with a vibrant décor and 180 degree views of the beach and rice field-inspired pool.

We made full use of the fabulous FIT gym, which was one of the best laid-out and equipped gyms I’ve been to in a hotel. There are also other choices of outdoor workouts

and activities such as circuits and ABT.

Then, of course, there’s the 24-hour AWAY Spa if you need a detox, scrub, massage, or a makeup service.

Dining at the W is a delight with a choice of casual at the Woobar, with cocktails and tasty bites while enjoying the sunset, or the Ice Bar or the Starfish Bloo beachside restaurant which has so many irresistible seafood choices.

Then there’s Fire, a grill restaurant with bistro classics and more. We finished our evening back at the Woobar with the “Mat. Joe late night DJ session”, a perfect end to a perfect day.

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# Visiting Hell in Beppu

MARK HARADA checks out one of Japan's most famous onsen towns where, thankfully, the only demons he encounters are of the cardboard cut-out variety.



Above and right: Umi Jigoku

I'VE COME to hell ... and I had to walk through a souvenir shop to get here.

No, I haven't sold my soul for the endless sweets I've come across in Kyushu, or gone loony from a local *zaru* (monkey) bite. This place, in name at least, is hell.

Actually, as my guide Atsuko Oda points out, there are numerous hells around here. Seven, in fact, and you can visit them all quite quickly with a booklet of tickets.

What I'm talking about, as I'm sure you're wondering, are the hot springs of arguably the most famous onsen city in Japan and one that produces more hot spring water than any other resort in the country: Beppu.

The Jigoku (Hells) of Beppu are steaming ponds whose names derived from their volcanic water, bubbling mud and gas expulsions. And each has its own unique feature. But these aren't the onsen you bathe in – although many of the more than 2,000 onsen in Beppu offer that too.

For centuries, it was feared the land here was cursed, so people stayed away. Now, the Jigoku are popular tourist attractions.

At Umi Jigoku (Ocean Hell), a small crowd gathers around a large steaming spring with the kind of azure water you would expect to find in the tropics. Though snorkelling here is inadvisable.

If your camera lens doesn't fog up, it's a



Yufuin Floral Village



Chinoike Jigoku

highly photogenic place made even prettier by the neighbouring Hakuryu Shrine and its red *tori* (gates). A quick prayer here is said to bring families luck – in health, wealth and supposedly on the roads.

A short walk from the shrine, there's an outdoor footbath whose water comes straight from the springs. It's nice and hot, but you certainly wouldn't want it any warmer.

Elsewhere at Umi Jigoku, there are outdoor and indoor lily ponds, a gallery dedicated to the hells and Restaurant Umi, whose specialty is *udon* and *champon* noodles.

More food, of the souvenir and sweet variety, can be found at Shop Ren, while Gokuraku Manju serves delicious bite-sized cakes steamed by the hot springs.

But other hells await, like Chinoike Jigoku. Here, steaming clay turns the water red, giving it the most demonic look of all the hells. Check out the renowned Chinoike Ointment here too, which is made from the local clay and apparently awesome for your skin.

Next door to this, a geyser attracts a sizeable crowd as it regularly sprays up boiling water at Tatsumaki Jigoku, while Shiraike Jigoku's 'White Pond Hell' boasts almost colourless water in another beautiful setting.

Over at Oniishibozu Jigoku, bubbles of hot grey mud resemble the shaven heads of monks. But possibly the most unusual hell is that of Oniyama Jigoku, where crocodiles have been bred since 1923 using the high temperature of the hot spring water here.

As I'm driven around the outskirts of downtown Beppu – or even just look outside the window of my room at Hotel Sansuikan – I see numerous plumes of steam rising up around the city. It's a mesmerizing, almost surreal sight. But in a place where seven hells exist, you would expect that.

## HERE'S TO YUFUIN

Located 30 kilometres inland from Beppu, charming Yufuin sits in the shadow of Mount Yufu.

On the boardwalks around the town's Kinrin Lake, visitors snap pictures of leaves turning autumn red, pink, orange and yellow. But the lake is beautiful in its own right, especially in its reflections of the nearby trees, mountains and buildings.

From the lake's northern shore, I pass persimmon trees, fried *manju* (local cakes) shops, soba restaurants and even a Chagall Museum on my way to Yunotsubo Street, where the bulk of activity in Yufuin takes place.

On this seemingly busy day, tourists meander up and down the long pedestrianised lane wearing smiles and carrying sweets, or souvenirs, or a combination of the two.

And of course, it wouldn't be Japan if there weren't countless eateries around, from French and German-themed cafes to

straight-up beer and fried chicken.

Halfway along the street, one of the more popular places is a takeaway kiosk, where patrons watch vendors light up rows of crab legs with a blowtorch.

But there's more to this place than just food. Boutiques and curio shops aside, one of the highlights of Yufuin is the Floral Village, where visitors can interact with animals like rabbits, goats and owls, mingle among anime characters in the Heidi corner and walk through a storybook-style village.

Amid this, it would be easy to overlook the fact that Yufuin is an onsen town above almost anything else, with hot spring hotels offering vistas of Mount Yufu through traditional baths.

Luckily, we've had our own great views of the mountains, which Atsuko tells me are usually obscured by mist. Fog or no fog, I will be back.

*All photos courtesy Mark Harada.*

■ *Traveltalk was a guest of Japan National Tourism Organization.*

Beppu sunrise





*Khan Toke Dinner, a set of local dishes from the north of Thailand*

# Food, glorious food

THAILAND HAS become synonymous with good food and the country's cuisine has an international reputation that's as good as it gets.

From humble street food to upmarket restaurants, from tried and tested to trendy and new, from common and convenient *kuai tiao* (noodle soup) to popular *khao man kai* (chicken and rice) to spicy *som tam* (papaya salad), and other dishes too many to list, Thai streets and restaurants are teaming with food famous the world over.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has been playing a significant role in getting the Kingdom's gastronomy word out.

Their priority efforts to increase awareness and appreciation for gastronomy tourism is partly driven to build bridges with the agricultural sector, which remains the country's biggest employer and largest industry overall.

The Thai economy has revolved around agriculture for centuries – well before tourists were arriving in measurable numbers. TAT wants to highlight that and blend the two.

Many Thai dishes also place great emphasis on nutritional ingredients, including high-value herbs, which helps TAT focus on health and general wellness.

Promoting gastronomy tourism makes economic sense, too. Food tourism can generate billions of dollars in revenue, according to the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), with international visitors to Thailand spending about 20 per cent of their travel budget on food.

In a significant move in recent years, TAT teamed up with Michelin, renowned the world over for their restaurant star rating system.

The partnership produced the first *Michelin Guide Bangkok*, which highlights 98 restaurants including international, Asian and mostly Thai with 28 Thai street food

stalls. A first for Michelin.

The 2020 *Michelin Guide Thailand* covers Bangkok, Phuket, Phang-Nga and Chiang Mai.

It increased the Bangkok section to include cities surrounding the capital and introduced Phuket island off the west coast, Phang-Nga, the province on the mainland next to Phuket and Chiang Mai in the far north.

The latest edition includes 282 dining and 74 lodging establishments – with a total of five two-star, 24 one-star and 94 Bib Gourmand eateries.

Some 29 eateries in Thailand earned Michelin stars in 2020, with Sorn and R-Haan

*Pomelo salad with chargrilled prawns by Michelin-starred Paste Bangkok Thai Restaurant*



the world's first traditional Thai restaurants to earn a two-star rating. Both restaurants have been promoted from their previous one-star rating.

Three two-star restaurants – namely, Le Normandie, Mezzaluna, and Sühning – have retained their distinction.

The Michelin Guide Thailand project will run until 2021 and guidebooks similar to one about Bangkok, Phuket, Phang-Nga and Chiang Mai will cover other popular Thai destinations.

TAT's gastronomy tourism efforts put the spotlight on how regionally diverse Thai cuisine is, with each of the Kingdom's five regions having distinct cuisines, and in some cases small areas and even individual towns within an area being known for their specialty.

For example, if you are passing through Phetchaburi, south of Bangkok, Thais will suggest you pick up some *khanom mo kaeng* (egg custard), while the coastal areas each have their special seafood dishes.

The variety of cuisine in Thailand is mind boggling. Thai food is famous all over the world – it is rare if a major city in any country does not have a Thai restaurant. It could be a small simple takeout establishment or fine-dining, they are all helping brand Thai cuisine as world famous. But the best way to know about one of the world's most identifiable cuisines is by word of mouth.

■ [amazingthailand.com.au](http://amazingthailand.com.au)

## WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Here are some of the 'must-eat' dishes from different regions of the Kingdom.

### The North

Continuing a dining tradition of old Chiang Mai and the Lanna Kingdom, a *khan toke* dinner features a small round table upon which is served a variety of dishes in individual bowls.

People sit on mats or cushions around the table and choose from the dishes as they like. The dishes typically include such delights as sticky rice, chicken or pork curry, fried chicken, vegetables, soup, fried pork skin and chilli dips.

During the dinner, there are traditional dance, music and sword performances to entertain diners.

### Central Thailand

Usually eaten with rice, massaman is a rich, relatively mild curry in



which spices not frequently used in Thai curries, such as cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, cardamom, cloves, cumin, bay leaves and star anise are combined with local produce like dried chilli peppers, cilantro seeds, lemongrass, galangal, white pepper, shallots and garlic.

Due to its Muslim roots, massaman is most commonly made with chicken, although there are beef, mutton and duck variations. Potatoes and onions are added in, as well as coconut milk and peanuts.

### The South

Few dishes say 'Southern

Thai cuisine' more than *khao yam paktai*, a tart and salty rice salad that contains an array of ingredients including carrots and long beans, sour mango, pomelo, ground dried shrimp or fish, roasted coconut, kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass and chillies.

A main component of this dish is a distinctive salad dressing called *nam budu* made from fish or prawns fermented with salt. The rice eaten with *khao yam paktai* is typically cooked with Morinda leaves or butterfly pea flower juice, for colour and aroma.

[www.amazingthailand.com.au](http://www.amazingthailand.com.au)  
f hugthailand

### MANGO WITH STICKY RICE

Mango and sticky rice is addictive. Bites of sweet, slightly salty sticky rice drenched in coconut cream with fragrant slices of tender yellow-ripe mango make an incomparable absolute indulgence. This delectable dessert can be found pretty much in all-year round in Thailand.

amazing THAILAND



# Man on a mission

Sustainable fishing, religious tolerance... and Mickey Mouse. It seems nothing is off the agenda when JON UNDERWOOD visits Pangkor Island.

RAVINDREN IS a man with many hats. Dive master, boat captain, water sports guru and tour guide.

But today he's occupying perhaps his most important role: environmental warrior.

We meet Ravi, as he prefers to be known, on a rainy morning as he prepares to take our group on a guided tour of Pangkor Island, which lies off the west coast of Malaysia.

Fishing is the primary industry here and some 200 boats call Pangkor home. Ravi proudly boasts that they bring in the best anchovies in Asia.

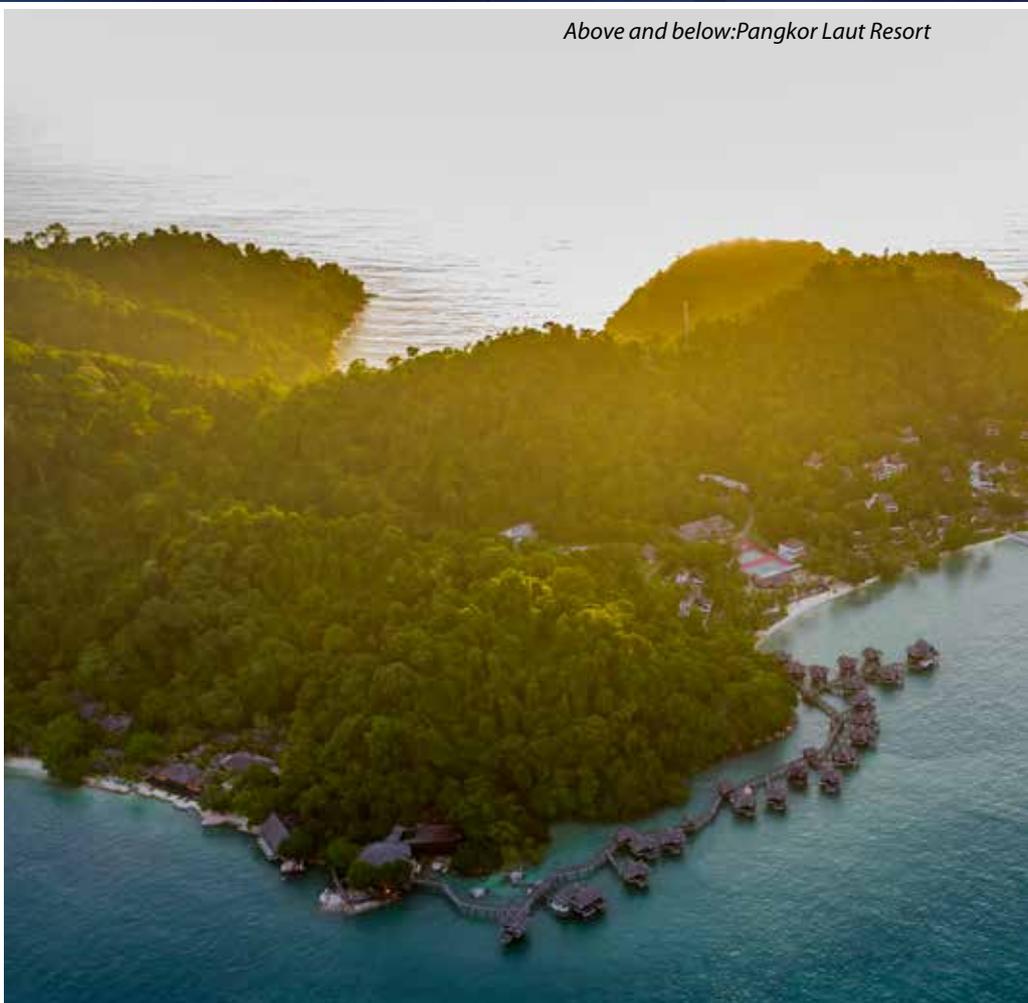
Tourism is slowly making its mark on the area, but the local economy is still largely dependent on the ocean for its survival. Yet Ravi sees storms on the horizon.

"There are no controls on the fishing here so there are less and less fish," he explains.

"Also, the boats drag their anchors through the coral beds, which causes tremendous damage. We have to protect the ocean for our children and our children's children."

As he speaks, a nearby fisherman tips a bucket of suspicious-looking brown liquid overboard, joining numerous plastic bottles bobbing around on the surface. Ravi clearly has a tough job ahead.

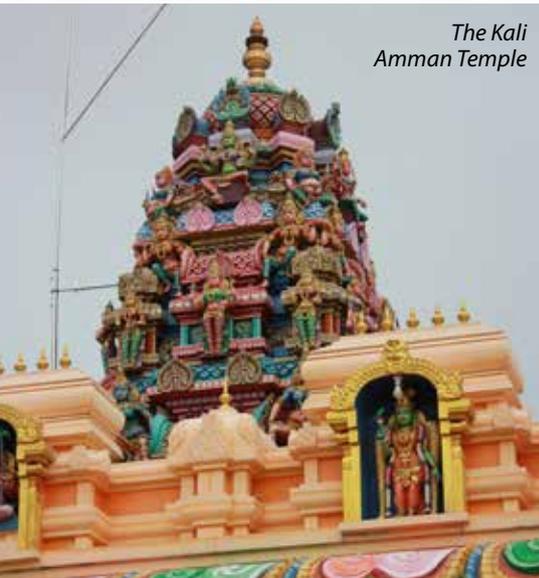
Some 25,000 people live in the village and our tour begins at the old, ruined Dutch fort



*Above and below: Pangkor Laut Resort*



The Kali Amman Temple



that was built in 1670. The foreigners made a deal with the local Sultan that allowed them to mine for tin. It was a shaky alliance and after a few years the Dutch abandoned the fort and sailed home.

Religious tolerance is a celebrated feature of village life so it's no surprise to find a mosque and plenty of temples on the tour.

The Masjid Al-Badr mosque is only three years old and even under today's leaden skies the colourful exterior shines through. As this is a 'floating' mosque, access is via a long boardwalk and we sprint through the rain to find shelter within.

The interior is equally impressive, with the domed ceiling in brilliant blue and gold a particular highlight. Easy to see why it cost RM11.7million and two-and-a-half years to build. Apparently there are 1,000 prayers or pieces of scripture engraved into the walls and 1,500 worshippers can fit inside at one time.

At the other end of the scale is the Lin Ye Kong Temple, where visitors are greeted with statues of giant mushrooms, a turtle, a mermaid and, of course, Mickey Mouse! Apparently there also used to be an effigy of Donald Duck but he's since been removed.

Cartoon characters aren't a usual feature of religious establishments but as Lin Ye literally means "temple of the friendly spirits" it seems totally apposite.

The Kali Amman Temple is the only Hindu temple on Pangkor and, apparently, one of only two in Malaysia that face the sea. According to Ravi, an annual festival takes place here every March in which both Indian and Chinese communities participate.

Our tour ends at Fu Lin Kong, the largest Taoist temple on the island. It is more than 100 years old, features a mini Great Wall of China and all 12 signs of the Zodiac on the roof. Like Lin Ye Kong, this is a temple that doesn't take itself too seriously and has an innate sense of fun about it.

As tourism to Malaysia continues to grow following some turbulent years, it has to be hoped that places like Pangkor Island retain their authenticity and charm. I have a feeling that with people like Ravi on the scene, this won't be an issue.

## WHERE TO STAY

Heard the one about the Englishman, the Frenchman and the Italian?

No? Well, they are an unlikely group but apparently former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, eccentric soccer star Eric Cantona and opera star Luciano Pavarotti were all previous guests at Pangkor Laut Resort.

Indeed, Luciano was so taken with the place he described it as "paradise".

While that may be a little bit of artistic license, there's no doubting the quality of the five-star resort, voted 'Number One in the World' by *Condé Nast Traveller*.

Arriving at a resort by boat is always a special thrill and as we pull into the private harbour, there's a real sense of anticipation among our group. The island covers some 120 hectares, but only a small portion of this has been developed, ensuring peace and tranquility among the ancient rainforest.

There are 140 villas in various categories and I'm shown to my Garden Villa, which is large, extremely comfortable and tastefully decorated. Guests can also opt for accommodation set into the hillside, close to the beach, or the Sea Villas, which are perched on stilts above the water. High-rollers can opt for the Pavarotti Suite, all 242-square-metres of it!

As you would expect from such a luxury resort, there's a Spa Village at Pangkor Laut which promises a cornucopia of treatments using traditional practices from Malaysia, China, India and Bali, to name but a few. It features eight treatment pavilions and 22 spa villas for those who just can't get enough pampering.

A variety of quality dining options are available, including Uncle Lim's Kitchen, which specialises in Nyonya and Hockchew Chinese-style home cooking. Aussies will be particularly taken with Chapman's Bar, which serves delicious Asian and Western dishes in the shadow of a glorious white sand beach.

With such a range of quality food on offer, it's easy to see why Signor Pavarotti loved the place so much. And I'm betting he probably didn't have to sing for his supper.

■ [pangkorlautresort.com](http://pangkorlautresort.com)

The Masjid Al-Badr mosque





Inle Princess Resort

## Where to catch the best sunsets

There are few holiday experiences more romantic than a glorious sunset. Here, Secret Retreats presents some of the best places to get that warm, fuzzy feeling.

### **Koh Jum Beach Villas,**

Krabi, Thailand

A hidden gem on a delightful island, Koh Jum Beach Villas is where nature meets relaxation. It is the ideal place to explore Krabi's natural beauty.

This boutique resort offers 19 individually designed villas with tropical gardens. Whether strolling along the beach or lying by your private pool, it offers beautiful sunset views overlooking the Phi Phi National Marine Park.

### **Vat Phou Cruise,**

Champasak-Pakse, Laos

Take a leisurely three-day journey down the Mekong River in southern Laos to witness one of the region's most remarkable treasures, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Vat Phou, considered the birthplace of Khmer architecture.

Enjoy magnificent sunset views from the deck as this boutique river-borne hotel takes you through timeless landscapes, accentuated by the stunning Si Phun Don, the "4,000 Islands", and Southeast Asia's largest waterfalls at Pha Pheng.

### **Inle Princess Resort,**

Myanmar

Set on a peaceful inlet of Inle Lake and facing the Blue Mountains, this resort offers one of the best positions to watch a sunset, either from the balcony of the Lake House Villa or on a boat out on the lake.

### **Chakrabongse Villas,**

Bangkok, Thailand

Built in 1908 by HRH Prince Chakrabongse on the bank of the Chao Phraya River, the villas provide a tranquil haven away from the hustle and bustle of modern Bangkok.

The sight of the sun setting behind Wat Arun (the Temple of Dawn) on the opposite bank is spectacular. Take a trip on the Riva Classic speedboat to enjoy a unique sunset experience.

### **Yandabo Home, Mandalay, Myanmar**

Nestled between Mandalay and Bagan on the bank of the Irrawaddy River, this peaceful lodge features spacious and comfortable modern rooms in a rural riverside setting.

Witness traditional village life unchanged in centuries, walk amid potters busy at work with their clay, spot buffalos bathing in the distance and unwind with delightful Asian cuisine served on a large and inviting wooden deck overlooking the river.

### **Neeleshwar Hermitage, Kerala, India**

The property features delightful cottages, a quiet unspoiled beach, secluded verandahs which catch the sea breeze and far reaching views of the deserted golden coastline.

Spot dolphins diving in the sea while reclining by the infinity pool and re-align your chakras at the yoga pavilion lulled by the sounds of the surf.

Enjoy seafood from the local fishermen's daily catch and dine on authentic home-style specialities flavoured with spices from Kerala's Malabar Hills as you watch the sun slip into the Arabian Sea.

*These boutique hotels are members of Secret Retreats, a curated collection of properties in Asia.*

■ [secret-retreats.com](http://secret-retreats.com)

### **Reverie Siam,**

Pai, Thailand

This boutique hotel offers an intimate and fresh interpretation of luxury hospitality. Cosy and quiet, Reverie Siam provides a nostalgic trip back to a bygone era of romance and elegance.

The hotel was inspired by the colonial architecture and cultural fusion of Southeast Asia in the early 20th century. The sunset picnic is a 'must-do' experience for all.



Reverie Siam

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\*Savings shown here are based on the 8-day 'African Waterways' journey, twin share, for travel in July-August 2020.  
Terms & Conditions apply. Visit the website for more details on this and other journeys, dates, prices and offers.



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# ESCAPE TO WAKATOBI

GETTING AWAY from it all means leaving the crowds and trappings of civilisation behind.

But for most of us, there are still some elements of civilised life worth keeping when we make that welcome escape. Things like great food, comfortable accommodation and attentive service.

It is this ideal combination of nature and nurture that makes Wakatobi Resort in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, one of the world's most celebrated small-island getaways.

Wakatobi is one of the world's premier diving and snorkelling destinations, and the resort sits within a private marine preserve that teems with a colourful menagerie of marine life. But this luxurious tropical outpost isn't just for underwater enthusiasts.

Couples seeking an intimate and romantic getaway that combines indulgent personal service, first-class amenities and unrivalled natural beauty are drawn to this quiet and scenic corner of Indonesia.

The setting couldn't be more idyllic. The resort is made up of a collection of traditional Indonesian-style bungalows and waterfront villas nestled into a palm grove along a white sand beach.

Just metres offshore lies one of the most pristine coral reefs in the Indian Ocean. Guests arrive from Bali via Wakatobi's private flights to their own airstrip and from that point on they are pampered like favourite family members returning home.

Each private residence is finished with rich natural wood interiors that create a warm ambiance. Barefoot-friendly sand pathways lead through a garden-like setting to the water and to the resort's oceanfront dining room and full-service spa.

Adding to the intimate atmosphere are amenities such as Asian-style outdoor showers, private verandas and waterfront decks.

Impeccable service and gourmet dining are hallmarks of Wakatobi Resort and couples can experience these indulgences in a number of ways.

Days might begin with breakfast on a veranda or deck. For pure relaxation, massages can be enjoyed on the beach or in the privacy of a bungalow or villa. Special memories are made with candle-lit dinners on the beach and evening socials at the Jetty Bar, which perches at the far end of the resort jetty, overlooking azure water and the setting sun.

Couples enjoying Wakatobi's snorkelling or diving activities can begin their explorations right from the beach, or aboard one of the resort's custom-built boats for a cruise to one of more than 40 world-class sites.

For the ultimate shared experience, private guide services and private boat charters are also offered. Guests staying ashore can enjoy beach time, nature walks and other water sports. On request, resort chefs will assemble a picnic lunch on a remote section of the beach.

Other shared experiences can include cultural activities such as Indonesian cooking classes and village tours.

Special attentions aren't confined to resort stays, as Wakatobi also operates the luxury yacht *Pelagian*, which makes week-long cruises through the Wakatobi islands.

Guests can also extend their romantic holiday with layovers in Bali either before or after their time at Wakatobi. The resort's Bali-based concierge team arranges details of a layover, creating custom itineraries that can include island tours, special dinners, shopping trips, spa visits and more.

Wakatobi's international team of representatives is available to assist in customised holiday planning. The resort also offers a number of incentives such as extended stay, early pay and loyalty benefits.

■ To learn more contact: Linda Cash, Guest Experience Representative.  
Email: [linda@wakatobi.com](mailto:linda@wakatobi.com)  
[wakatobi.com](http://wakatobi.com)



# An experience without equal

*"The reef systems here are some of the most pristine I have seen anywhere in my dive travels around the globe, and Wakatobi resort and liveaboard are second to none. The diversity of species here is brilliant if you love photography." ~ Simon Bowen*



[www.wakatobi.com](http://www.wakatobi.com)



# The A-Z of A-ROSA

There's a new name about to come sailing over the horizon and into the Australian cruise market. We spoke to Birgit Eisbrenner, the newly appointed Regional Director Australia & New Zealand, to find out more about A-ROSA

**Q: For those unfamiliar with A-ROSA, what's the background of the company?**

**A:** A-ROSA is a European river cruise company that was established in 2001 as a subsidiary of P&O Princess Cruises and is currently owned by UK-based Duke Street and A-ROSA's CEO and COO. With growth in demand for river cruising, A-ROSA expanded and became the premium-quality market leader in Germany and beyond.

A-ROSA is very popular in Europe, the UK and increasingly in long-haul markets like Australasia, to name a few.

**Q: How big is your fleet and where do you sail?**

**A:** A-ROSA currently operates 12 ships across the Danube, Rhine (incl. Main&Moselle), Seine, Rhône/Saône and Douro, offering city and nature tours as well as curated themed itineraries.

A-ROSA's 13th, and yet to be named vessel, dubbed the 'E-Motion' ship, is scheduled for delivery in 2021. Sailing on the Rhine, the ship is equipped with an innovative battery storage system and air-bubble technology, which drastically lowers emissions.

**Q: You've decided to target the Australasian market, but why now?**

**A:** In recent years, A-ROSA has experienced an increase in bookings and enquiries from Australia and New Zealand, even without a locally based team. Opening an office in Sydney was the logical next step to provide more support to our current and new agency partners.

**Q: River cruising is quite a competitive market. What's the A-ROSA difference?**

**A:** Our Premium-All-Inclusive concept is unique and designed to offer our guests the highest degree of choice and flexibility. Some of the key inclusions are:

- \* Gourmet buffet meals, with live cooking stations and no set mealtimes or assigned tables.
- \* High-quality drinks throughout the day (including speciality coffees and alcoholic beverages).
- \* Kids travel for free\*. \*At least one parent or adult with parental consent in the cabin & only valid for the cruise portion of the journey. Except Douro sailings where a 25 per cent discount for children applies.

We are also the only river cruise line that offers a huge range of short itineraries starting at three-nights and long departures, up to 16-nights. This makes A-ROSA the perfect choice for guests looking for short breaks, as an add-on to any European holiday and for river cruising enthusiasts interested in comprehensive itineraries.

Another point-of-difference is that A-ROSA does not include shore excursions in the cruise tariff. Guests may choose to partake in guided excursions but are also invited to explore destinations by themselves. It's entirely their choice.

**Q: Is your product range suitable for all travellers?**

**A:** A-ROSA is an ideal fit for active minded people of all ages. Independent travellers, who enjoy an informal environment where they can do as much or as little as they please, feel right at home onboard our ships.

Our 'kids travel for free' (see above) policy also makes A-ROSA a perfect choice for multi-generational travellers.

This is a great proposition for Australians seeking to explore Europe and to connect with friends and family. I recently received a request from a British couple living in Australia keen to organise a family reunion onboard one of our ships.

**Q: Will travel agents be an integral part of your development plans?**

**A:** Most definitely. We are thrilled and encouraged by the strong interest we have received from the trade in Australia and New Zealand so far. As a new member of CLIA Australasia, we have the perfect platform to engage with the very best cruise agents this region has to offer, allowing us to showcase our superb product offering and establish further Preferred Partner agreements.

■ [arosa-cruises.com](http://arosa-cruises.com)



# GOING THE EXTRA NILE

VIKING HAS released its *2021 River Cruise* brochure with itineraries sailing the rivers of Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Asia and Egypt.

There are also details on the company's new ship, itineraries and shore excursions as well as two new pre/post-cruise extensions.

"While our elegant Longships feel like home and our crew are like family wherever you sail, we are always listening and updating our offering," said Michelle Black, Viking's Managing Director ANZ.

"If your clients have been considering a river cruise or are returning to Viking, our new brochure will make planning their next adventure a joy."

The new 82-guest *Viking Osiris* has been purpose-built for comfort in one of the world's most intriguing destinations. It will sail the 12-day 'Pharaohs & Pyramids' itinerary.

Marking the line's third ship on the Nile, *Viking Osiris* is already proving incredibly popular, with very limited availability for 2021. It is priced from \$6,995 per person.

The new brochure also showcases a cruise-only Portugal itinerary, the eight-day



*Viking Osiris*

'Douro's Valley & Vineyards' from Porto to Porto. Almost identical to the 'Portugal's River of Gold' cruise, this itinerary does provide an option for guests who prefer to skip the two-night land portion in Lisbon.

'Douro's Valley & Vineyards' is priced from

\$5,395 per person, including free economy flights for one guest and flights from \$1,695 for the second, or business class flights from \$6,495 per person, as part of Viking's Explorer Sale, which runs until March 31.

■ [vikingcruises.com.au](http://vikingcruises.com.au)



## ENJOY A TASTY BBQ CRUISE

THE AMERICAN Queen Steamboat Company is offering savings on an eight-night 'American BBQ Challenge' cruise.

Couples can save up to \$US2,000 (approx. \$AU2,900) on the deal, which is valid for bookings made before March 31. Beginning in Memphis, the itinerary includes various ports along the mighty Mississippi in the states of Missouri, Kentucky and Illinois.

Travel is aboard the historic all-suite paddle wheeler *American Duchess* for a culinary experience with a difference. There are two departure dates available – September 27 and October 18.

■ [cruisetraveller.com.au](http://cruisetraveller.com.au)

## A-ROSA NOT JUST ANOTHER CRUISE LINE

A-ROSA's twelve ships explore a wide variety of destinations on the **Danube, Rhine, Rhône, Seine** and **Douro**. Voyages range from 3 to 16 nights, making it the perfect choice for guests seeking short breaks, as an add-on to any European holiday, and for river cruise enthusiasts looking for comprehensive itineraries.

Want to find out more? Visit our website and register as travel agency partner: [www.rosa-cruises.com/au](http://www.rosa-cruises.com/au)

A-ROSA PREMIUM: THE PRODUCT WITH UNMATCHED INCLUSIONS.



**aROSA**   
Cruising differently



# Rolling on the river

River cruising has become as accessible as it is fascinating, with its popularity growing among all categories of traveller. GATE 1 TRAVEL spoke with one devotee who has been on more than 40 trips in five years.

GARY AND his wife have retired but this couple has no intention of slowing down, unless you're talking about the pace at which they cruise past castles and villages in Europe.

Travelling in June last year, Gary says that he and his wife took it pretty easy during their Amsterdam to Budapest cruise with Gate 1 Travel.

His wife is disabled so they took it day by day in terms of what she felt up to doing. Gary says this didn't detract from the couple's travel experiences.

"I always book airport assistance for my wife so getting to the ship is a straight forward process," he said.

"Once you're onboard, you unpack and then you don't have to worry about it until you disembark. River cruising is a lovely, relaxed way to travel and I love that you don't have to worry about seasickness."

But being at the whim of nature and the outdoors, things can go wrong. During their cruise, the ship encountered a broken lock (as in the river system, not a door!), so the cruise company jumped in quickly to help.

"Another ship had damaged a lock. We were transferred from our original ship to her sister ship on the other side of the damaged lock.

"The crew transferred our luggage to our matching cabins on the new boat and we continued our cruise to Budapest, albeit with complimentary drinks that night!"

But Gary's favourite part of cruising is that pricing is mostly all-inclusive of meals, dinner, drinks and lots of the tours. He also prefers the smaller numbers of guests onboard, usually between 100 to 160 people, as opposed to the thousands you can get on an ocean liner.

"When you are in your 60's you want to slow the pace a little, so river cruising suits us best," he explained.

"There's always lots to do onboard, like

when a group of entertainers joined the boat in Bratislava, singing and performing regional dances on one evening, and there's also shows, live music and karaoke nights, usually straight after cocktail hour."

The food is another highlight as the cuisine reflects the area you are cruising through.

"There are always regional specialties like Sachertorte in Vienna and local wines and beers, and there is usually an option to have a meal at a local's house during the cruise."

When asked about his lasting impressions of the Amsterdam to Budapest cruise, Gary says he loved the canals in Amsterdam, the night cruise through Budapest and the hill castles along the Rhine.

"The trip is just so peaceful. You can cut yourself off for 14 days. I don't even take a phone anymore."

■ [gate1travel.com.au](http://gate1travel.com.au)





Above: Amsterdam  
Right and below: Budapest



# MORE OF THE WORLD FOR LESS

Here, we talk to Kim Erskine, General Manager, Gate 1 Australia, about the company's ongoing success and the continuing boom in river cruising.

**Q: What is the principal goal of Gate 1 Travel?**

**A:** Gate 1 Australia aims to help travellers over 50 achieve their travel dreams. We provide them with value for money premium tours in destinations all over the world. Embarking on adventures and meeting new people isn't just for the young – it's for the young at heart!

Gate 1 Travel began as a tour operator offering escorted tour experiences primarily throughout Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Greece and Turkey. We have since expanded globally, now offering hundreds of tours and cruises across all seven continents.

As Gate 1 continues to grow, we have stayed true to our commitment to live up to our motto and continually offer 'More of the World for Less'.

**Q: What is included on one of your cruises?**

**A:** Our European river cruises usually sail with 100 to 160 people onboard as opposed to the 3,000 you get on an ocean cruise.

With the majority of food and drink provided and endless options for things to do onboard, clients can do as much or as little as they choose.

Passengers can expect a well-balanced experience between free time and group

touring at each port. While on the ship there is regular entertainment with regional dance performances, live music and karaoke nights.

**Q: For those who haven't travelled with you before, what's the Gate 1 difference?**

**A:** When our clients return home from one of our tours or cruises, many take away unique memories of food, art, culture and history.

However, they all tell us how much they appreciated their Tour Manager. It's not by accident. Each Gate 1 Travel Tour Manager is selected for their knowledge, and moreover, for their 'people skills'.

Travellers are also constantly expressing their surprise at the value for money we offer. Gate 1 Travel truly provides 'More of the World for Less' to our clients.

**Q: How important are travel agents to Gate 1?**

**A:** Travel agents are a vital part of our growth here at Gate 1 Australia. We strive to work alongside our agents to ensure we are both on the right track towards mutual success.

With product and booking system training, as well as providing ongoing

marketing support, our aim is to ensure our registered agents are looked after and in turn are able to provide their clients with the best service possible.

**Q: What river cruise is proving most popular for Gate 1 Travel?**

**A:** Year after year, we see interest grow in our range of European river cruising. Our most popular cruise by far is our 16-day 'Classic European River Cruise' which travels between Amsterdam and Budapest. On this cruise clients will experience the wonder of both the Rhine and Danube rivers.

Cruising has become one of the most sought-after methods of travel due to the ease of boarding and unpacking only once for the entire duration of the journey.

This is seen as a huge benefit for our targeted clientele, who are past the hustle and bustle, and just want a relaxing travel experience.

**Q: You started in 1981 with only three employees and now have more than 400 worldwide. What's the secret to your success?**

**A:** We take our customers reviews and feedback very seriously, using their comments to help us continually improve our products and services.

By choosing Gate 1 Travel, you are choosing a company that works hard to bring you the lowest price, most inclusive tours, best guides and the all-around best experience.





# 16 Day Classic European River Cruise

Save \$1500 per couple

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- Tour romantic Vienna with its legendary opulence and elegance
- Marvel at the beautiful churches and ancient stone bridges in Regensburg
- Cruise the Main-Danube Canal, considered a marvel of modern engineering
- Walk in Bamberg's medieval center with its 11th century Romanesque cathedral



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\*Promotion valid until 1 April 2020. Offer valid on new bookings only and cannot be used in conjunction with other offers. Quote the promo code TTCRU1500A at the time of booking to receive this offer. Terms and conditions apply, see [www.gate1travel.com.au](http://www.gate1travel.com.au) or call 1300 762 222



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*Diamond Hill and seafood in Galway*



## Future plans get the green light

TOURISM IRELAND has unveiled its new three-year strategy for 2020-2022 and the plans to promote the island of Ireland to international visitors.

The aim is to grow overseas tourism revenue by 13 per cent to €6.54 billion (approx. \$AU10.4 billion) and visitor numbers to 12 million (up seven per cent) by 2022.

For Northern Ireland, the goal is to grow overseas tourism revenue by 15 per cent to £658 million (approx. \$AU1.2 billion) and visitor numbers to 2.57 million (up 13 per cent) by 2022.

The strategy has been designed to be both flexible and sustainable while delivering further growth in overseas tourism and supporting the industry across the island of Ireland.

Tourism Ireland also aims to address the issues of capacity, ensuring the visitor experience continues to be world-class.

*The National Botanic Gardens in Dublin. All pictures courtesy Tourism Ireland*



The new strategy is built on a set of sustainable destination marketing principles, including:

- \* Aligning promotional activity with capacity i.e. increasing the focus on locations and attractions that have capacity at peak visitor times. This is embodied in the 'Fill Your Heart With Ireland' global campaign.
- \* Highlighting those less well-known attractions and events that appeal to international visitors and have the capacity to cater for increased numbers.
- \* Driving more business to the regions: activity will include prioritising regional messages in global campaigns, working with airports and carriers to stimulate regional air access routes and a new 'twinning' initiative (where each overseas market will 'twin with' or place a greater focus on a specific region in Ireland).
- \* Increasing focus on season extension: this will involve leveraging festivals and events such as Taste the Island, Púca, St Patrick's Festival, Galway 2020, TradFest and Wexford Festival Opera to drive more non-peak travel. Urban centres will be promoted as great off-season, city break destinations.
- \* Prioritising co-operative marketing activity that is sure to drive regional and Northern Ireland growth or season extension.
- \* Heightened collaboration with stakeholders and sister agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland, on sustainability.

## FOCUS IN 2020

Tourism Ireland has identified a number of other strategic areas to underpin its promotional activity in 2020.

These include continuing promotions in both established and key emerging markets to mitigate risk and ensure long-term market diversification.

This year the organisation will also review its core segments – 'culturally curious' and 'social energisers' – and assess the future potential of special niche segments and special interest groups.

It will continue to leverage its strength in digital and social media while also growing Ireland's share of luxury travel from key markets.

Tourism Ireland will also increase the number of face-to-face sales platforms on offer for overseas trade partners, with an increased number of digital sales leads available to industry and trade.

Finally, 2020 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Global Greening initiative – when more than 500 landmarks and sites around the world will be illuminated in green to celebrate Ireland's national day.

This month, Tourism Ireland is also developing a new 'Green is the new Black' St Patrick's Day promotion – a time-limited 'mega' event linked to the Global Greening campaign, encouraging carriers, industry and trade to provide off-peak special offers.

■ [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)



Wine tasting in One Pery Square, Limerick.  
Picture courtesy Tourism Ireland

# SELLING THE ISLAND

Here, we speak to Alison Metcalfe, Head of North America, Australia & New Zealand, Tourism Ireland, to find out more about their marketing strategy and the importance of the Australian market.

**Q: What are the aims of the new marketing strategy?**

**A:** We are looking to build on the success of Irish tourism internationally and globally and to do that we believe we need to deliver sustainable growth. It's not just about the numbers – it's making sure we do that in a sustainable way so that every part of the island of Ireland feels the benefit.

**Q: What are the key messages you're trying to deliver?**

**A:** Our priorities remain to drive regional growth, extend the visitor season to include off-peak periods, to build more demand for Northern Ireland and to make sure we tell a bigger story to consumers about all the things there are to see and do in Ireland.

It is all about managing demand and doing it in a way that maintains the quality of the experience for visitors.

**Q: So what are the regional experiences that Aussies can enjoy?**

**A:** We have five really strong regional brand experiences. The Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Hidden Heartlands, Dublin and Northern Ireland's new brand, Embrace the Giant Spirit.

The new brand will allow Northern Ireland to compete more robustly on an international level with lots of new experiences being developed. At the end of the day we know it is experiences that really differentiate a destination. People want to go local and immerse themselves in the culture and try new things.

**Q: How will you drive demand into the off-season?**

**A:** I think the smart traveller realises the benefits of travelling in the off-season. It's less crowded, less expensive and a lot of experiences are more authentic because people have a lot more time for you.

So we'll be talking about events such as the 2020 Taste the Island Festival, a celebration of Ireland's food culture, which will run through September to November. There's also the Puca Halloween festival in late October, St Patrick's Day, TradFest and the Global Greening promotion.

**Q: For those who haven't been yet, what is the Irish difference?**

**A:** It's a relatively compact destination but what many people don't realise is we have a huge amount to see and do. You have history and culture, great landscapes and great people.

The people aren't necessarily the reason to go but they leave the lasting impression. They are the glue that brings all of the experiences together.

**Q: How important is the Australian market?**

**A:** This has always been a good market for us and we've seen really good growth over the years. Australians come for quite a long time and you spend, so you are in our top 10 markets for both holidaymaker numbers and visitor spend. Australia is also very important to Northern Ireland – it is the number three market in terms of visitor numbers.



Alison Metcalfe, Head of North America, Australia & New Zealand, Tourism Ireland

**Q: What role do travel agents play in your thinking?**

**A:** They are very important, particularly in Australia, because it's a big time commitment and financial investment for consumers to travel to Ireland. We have a fairly extensive B2B program working with the travel trade in terms of famil trips, webinars, partnership programs and sales missions.

Tourism Ireland is committed to the Australasian market. We are investing in this market, we have a strategy and by everyone in the travel industry aligning behind the strategy it's a win-win situation for everyone.

■ [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)



Park Güell in Barcelona

# Making Lite work of travel planning

WHETHER YOU'RE a seasoned traveller looking to tick another destination off your list, or trying to make that once-in-a-lifetime holiday happen, Cosmos Lite can help you get there.

Bundling freedom, flexibility and affordability like never before, Cosmos Lite presents the world's first à la carte touring style.

While offering all the hassle-free features of a Cosmos holiday, Cosmos Lite provides a blank canvas at each destination for custom tailoring; leaving the itinerary, pace and budget up to you.

All Cosmos Lite holidays include city to city transportation, comfortable hotels, daily breakfast and a Tour Director. What your days include, however, is completely up to you!

Book an optional excursion via MyAccount; ask your Tour Director for dining and entertainment suggestions; or wander and wonder at your own pace with the CosmosGO app.

## Spanish City Explorer

Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid are spectacular Spanish cities – Barcelona, home

of great artists Gaudi, Picasso and Miro; Valencia with its contemporary architecture matched only by its fantastic food, fun and beach life; and Madrid, the elegant city of sophistication and lively atmosphere.

Your guided tour of Spain is yours to shape each day with Cosmos Lite optional excursions, bookable on MyAccount.

You'll find the perfect way to experience Spain's legendary cities just the way you like – from museums and markets to cathedrals, coastlines and fantastic Spanish cuisine. Explore the treasures of Espana your way, every day!

## England Explorer

On this escorted tour of England, we'll introduce you to some of the country's most iconic destinations, including London, Oxford, Bristol, Liverpool and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Along the way, you'll have the opportunity to discover England's legends and lore through à la carte optional excursions, ample free time and Cosmos' guided assistance.

## Portugal Explorer

Home to many of history's great explorers, Portugal is the perfect destination for an à la carte escorted holiday! With so much to see and do in this beautiful country, it's hard to imagine why anyone would leave to discover the world!

From the international flair of Lisbon, to the cobblestone charm of Obidos, to the history of Coimbra, and the wine cellars of Porto, your Tour Director will point you in the right direction to discover a new world of your own.

## Italian Explorer

Experience the Italian icons you've always wanted to see. With Cosmos Lite, you can set out with the activities and pace just perfect for you to explore the eternal city of Rome, picturesque Tuscany, spectacular Cinque Terre, intriguing Genoa and the fashionable mecca of Milan.

Your Tour Director can point you in the right direction to discover the best eateries, sights and museums, plus you can reserve your excursions in advance on MyAccount, or tap your CosmosGO mobile app for a wealth of information on various destinations.

Wherever your wanderlust takes you, a trip with Cosmos Lite means endless possibilities. With seamless travel and accommodation arrangements taken care of, you'll love the freedom of planning each day to do as much or as little as you like.

■ [cosmostours.com.au](http://cosmostours.com.au)



# Cruising Croatia

LEADING CROATIAN cruise specialist, Sun Island Tours, reports a whopping 30 per cent YOY growth in what is becoming a “must do” when in Europe as more and more travellers are learning about and appreciating Croatia’s 2,000km stretch of coastline.

With ancient Roman remains standing guard over sheltered harbours, olive groves rising above the winding backstreets of tumble-down villages and sleek resorts backing palm-fringed bays, Croatia lures thousands of visitors to its shores every year.

General Manager John Polyviou says a cruise in Croatia is especially great for first-time visitors looking for the perfect introduction to the country, as it gives them

a chance to explore the country both by sea and by land (day tours). Repeat visitors often opt for different itineraries each time to experience different parts of the country while soaking up the Dalmatian sun.

To meet the rapidly growing demand, Sun Island Tours not only offers the largest range of Croatia cruising itineraries in the market, but agents should note that in addition to the seven-night itineraries departing on a Saturday, additional departures have been added on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays as well.

Also, while most cruises start and end in either Split or Dubrovnik, Sun Island Tours is also now operating departures from Opatija, Omis, Porec, Rijeka and Zadar. This

complements the cruise and stay packages which have the value-added coach touring component in nearby countries including Slovenia, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania, thus allowing travellers to experience even more of the region.

Agents are reminded that all of Sun Island’s cruise itineraries offer various levels of comfort to suit every budget, from traditional and deluxe to premium superior cruises. Vessels feature up to 19 twin/double cabins including balcony cabins.

Celebrating 30 years this year as Australia’s leading specialist in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern travel, Sun Island Tours offers a wide range of escorted and independent tour packages across cruise, coach, rail and combination options in Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Croatia, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Mediterranean.

■ [sunislandtours.com.au](http://sunislandtours.com.au)



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# Ice ice baby

We are launching an exciting new section looking at the expanding area of expedition travel. We begin with an interview with Dr M Jackson, a glaciologist and National Geographic expert, about her life's work and her role educating and informing travellers onboard PONANT's expedition vessels.



**Q: What was it about glaciers that first attracted you?**

**A:** I did not intentionally pursue a career focusing on glaciology, but regardless of whatever I was studying in school, glaciers kept popping up – they became an organising point for my career.

**Q: What do you like most about being a glaciologist?**

**A:** Whether I'm researching landscape change or writing a novel, painting or exploring, glaciers are there in the front of my mind. What I love the most about glaciers is that they're incredibly wild and free – and I feel my most alive when I am with them.

As a glaciologist, I love that I get to shape my own career and pursue my own areas of interest in whatever form they take. There is so much to understand and study about ice that the field is incredibly wide and open.

**Q: Why are glaciers so important?**

**A:** Glaciers are natural wonders. To me, they're shape-shifters, wild and alive. They hold the keys to the secrets of both humanity's past and future.

They're our global libraries, for millions of years recording the very air we breathe. Glaciers regulate our global water budget, store and release water on a planetary scale. To live on planet Earth is to live on a planet with vibrant, dynamic ice.

## Q: What impact has climate change had?

**A:** At times, it is completely shattering to witness the glaciers I've dedicated my life to understanding and protecting dissolve away at rates never before seen in human history.

In many ways, I'm friends with glaciers that I've returned to year after year after year and I care about what happens to them.

Too often now, when I return to glaciers in Alaska, in Iceland, in Antarctica, I barely recognise the ice – it's deteriorated so much, so fast. I fluctuate between such sadness and anger.

The scale of glacier loss today is unprecedented and it is deeply intertwined with ongoing climatic changes.

This is what I think about and this is what drives me to work harder, to travel on National Geographic Society expeditions and educate people about the ice they're seeing.

We need to learn about ice now and learn to care about ice, because we are running out of time.

## Q: Is the situation irreversible?

**A:** Too many people dismiss glaciers as un-savable – permanent victims of climatic changes. I don't. I think we can save our world's ice and I work each day doing original research, advocacy and communication.

I lecture all over the world, write books, give interviews, do whatever I can to keep people talking about glaciers and thinking about a future that includes ice.

## Q: How did you come to work with National Geographic and how long have you been working with them?

**A:** I have been working with the National Geographic Society for around a decade and it has consistently been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

## Q: What does being a NG expert mean and what type of projects do you work on with them?

**A:** Expeditions that have a National Geographic expert are unique – guests have continual trip-long access to some of the world's leading experts in topics unique to each trip.

I'm a glaciologist and have been working with ice worldwide for over a decade now and I bring an enormous body of knowledge to these expeditions.

As an expert, I've also been trained by



*Le Champlain. Picture courtesy PONANT/Mindelo*

the Geographic in science communication: how to share my knowledge in a way that transcends disciplines, backgrounds and languages.

## Q: You have already been on two PONANT and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Expeditions to Alaska and Antarctica. What did you like most about these expeditions and what was your role onboard?

**A:** The two other expeditions I've been on in Alaska and Antarctica were simply amazing. My role was to give both formal lectures and many, many informal field talks.

I got to talk to passengers about places where I was doing firsthand research, explain what we were seeing and what forces were at play and answer questions.

It was great on my end to interact with passengers, learn from them and share my specialised knowledge of these remote places we visited.

## Q: You're joining another expedition to Greenland and Newfoundland in August. What can guests onboard expect to learn from you?

**A:** I've been working with glaciers worldwide for well over a decade and I'm looking forward to teaching passengers everything they need to know to be able to understand the glaciers they're seeing on this expedition.

I'll be giving passengers a series of talks walking them through the basics of glaciers, what is happening to glaciers in the places we're visiting and how people everywhere

are connected to glaciers.

And, of course, I'll be ashore each day with passengers answering questions and sharing my knowledge!

## Q: What are you looking forward to most on this journey?

**A:** I have travelled to Greenland before and I am looking forward to this trip because much of my work has involved being in the centre of the island where the landscape is often entirely white: white ice, white sky, white tents.

I'm looking forward to seeing colourful Greenland – the vivid fjords, bright blue tidewater glaciers, green mosses and lichens, and so much more. I always come away from Greenland feeling awed by the fierce tenacity of life.

## Q: What can guests look forward to on this expedition?

**A:** I'm excited for this upcoming cruise because we'll get to see glaciers big and small – coastal tidewater glaciers cascading off some of the most remote landscapes on this planet.

We'll get to see land shaped each day by ice, see forces creating (and destroying) before our very eyes. Itineraries like this are once-in-a-lifetime.

M Jackson will be travelling on PONANT's *Le Champlain* to Greenland and Newfoundland during August 2020.

■ [au.ponant.com/national-geographic](http://au.ponant.com/national-geographic)



**MS JACKSON** (pictured right) is an example of the quality of National Geographic experts typical of those onboard all voyages designated PONANT and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Expeditions.

The National Geographic expert and photographer on each of these voyages will be in addition to the specialist PONANT expedition team onboard. Together, these experts will provide added insight for guests to better understand the nuances of the regions visited.

Depending on the itinerary, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC will be providing presenters with backgrounds drawn from such areas as anthropology, geology, science, environmental science, marine biology and geography. More information at [au.ponant.com](http://au.ponant.com)



Greenland. Picture courtesy Quark Expeditions/Acacia Johnson

# How Quark makes its polar mark

FOR NEARLY three decades, Quark Expeditions has been journeying exclusively to the polar regions.

With a diverse fleet of small expedition vessels and icebreakers, the company has brought passengers from across the globe to the farthest reaches of the Arctic and Antarctic.

The guest experience is enhanced by lectures from, and interactions with, onboard historians, glaciologists, biologists, naturalists and researchers, along with the top expedition leaders and most diverse field staff in the industry.

Quark travellers seek immersive experiences in unique places. Off-ship adventures are designed to deliver authentic and unforgettable moments, not only to provide indelible experiences but also to build a community of lifelong polar ambassadors.

Quark ships carry less than 200 passengers, allowing for unfettered exploration of fjords and other areas larger ships can't reach.

This superior maneuverability into shallower and narrower waters allows guests to explore further, observe wildlife more closely and disembark faster to maximize the industry's widest range of off-ship experiences, including paddling, kayaking, camping and hiking.

With the launch of new ship *Ultramarine* in 2021, this range will extend even further to include heli-hiking, flight-seeing and even heli-mountain biking.

Quark Expeditions' first purpose-built polar expedition ship, *Ultramarine* is

designed to go beyond the familiar in polar exploration and to provide guests with the very best the region has to offer, in areas thought previously inaccessible, in ways thought previously impossible.

*Ultramarine* will take passengers deeper into the polar regions than ever before and also let them experience these places in brand new ways.

The ship's two helipads and helicopters allow more passengers to simultaneously experience new destinations accessible only by air and to choose from among new adventure options that broaden the ways in which they can experience the wonders of these remote areas.

*Ultramarine* allows Quark Expeditions' guests to experience the polar regions from all three perspectives - land, sea and air - in ways that they will never forget.

Finally, *Ultramarine's* pioneering mix of advanced sustainability features reduces its environmental impact to an extent unseen for a polar vessel of comparable size, altering the view of what is possible in environmentally responsible polar exploration.

With these and other technological innovations, *Ultramarine* represents a prime example of the type of ship that will eventually come to replace some of the older vessels in the Quark fleet as the company forges ahead into a new chapter of sustainability and environmental consciousness.

■ [quarkexpeditions.com](http://quarkexpeditions.com)



Ultramarine

## POLAR PROMISE

Last year Quark launched Polar Promise, a new sustainability strategy containing four key pillars and outlining specific goals to meet by 2025:

- \* **PRINCIPLES** – Embedding responsible business practices and building a culture of sustainability
- \* **PLANET** – Reducing our brand footprint and building industry resilience
- \* **PARTNERSHIP** – Making a positive impact in the polar environments through collaboration in training and employment and investment in research and science
- \* **POSITIVE IMPACT** – Upholding our polar legacy by building advocacy within our guests and welcoming them into our family of lifelong polar ambassadors.

# GO BEYOND

WITH THE LEADERS IN POLAR TRAVEL.



*World Explorer*



*Ultramarine*

## GO BEYOND, WITH TWO NEW SHIPS.

Quark Expeditions has been taking travellers beyond the polar seas for three decades—to places no human has ever set foot. Our experienced expedition team and our fleet of small polar vessels enable us to take you places no one else can. And we've just added two new ships to our fleet: the 5-star luxury ship *World Explorer* and the purpose-built *Ultramarine*.

**IS IT YOUR TIME TO GO BEYOND  
IN THE POLAR REGIONS?**



The Leader in Polar Adventures

Contact your travel professional or  
Quark Expeditions today for more information:  
[QUARKEXPEDITIONS.COM](http://QUARKEXPEDITIONS.COM) | 1.800.812.855



Relaxing around the campfire at Larapinta

## Take a walk on the red side

AUSTRALIAN WALKING Holidays has launched a new Central Australian experience that combines three unmissable highlights of the Red Centre.

The itinerary includes the Larapinta Trail, Kings Canyon and Uluru. It is designed to show off what makes Central Australia such a sought after destination.

Professionally guided and fully supported throughout, guests will stay in multi award-winning, exclusive eco-

campsites on the Larapinta Trail near Alice Springs, and at permanent campsites at Kings Canyon Resort and Uluru.

"The itinerary has been crafted to cater to those people who want to go further than the main tourist stops and see some of the Red Centre's most stunning landscapes," said Michael Buggy, General Manager, AWH.

"We combine guided day walks on some of our favourite sections of the Larapinta Trail, a sunrise walk around the base of Uluru and

the Kings Canyon rim walk with a visit to Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and opportunities to learn about Indigenous history, to deliver an itinerary that goes well beyond what a regular road tripper sees."

The seven-day 'Larapinta, Kings Canyon and Uluru in Comfort' trip costs \$3,395 per person twin share. It includes airport transfers, meals, services of professional wilderness guide and support staff, fees to Aboriginal Traditional Owners and National Parks and all transport during the tour. It departs June 2 and July 28.

■ [australianwalkingholidays.com](http://australianwalkingholidays.com)

## GET A FAIR DEAL ON AIR FARES

AAT KINGS are offering travellers a seamless and stress-free travel experience with the launch of their newest air deals.

Guests can either fly free or receive up to \$800 per couple on selected bestselling First Choice and Best Buys holidays to Tasmania and New Zealand.

Flying with Qantas, Virgin and Air New Zealand, these offers are available to book from now until April 30 for departures up until March 31, 2021.

All bookings made before May 31 will put travel agents into the running to win one of 13 places on the Wilderness Achievers Escape incentive.

"It's no secret that Australia and New Zealand offer some of the most incredible experiences and extraordinary landscapes," said Matthew Cameron-Smith, Managing Director of AAT Kings.

"As close-to-home departures require



less lead time, agents can offer their clients an incentive to visit some of these must-see sights for a hassle free and seamless staycation."

Meanwhile, AAT Kings have also released their new *Short Breaks* brochure for 2020/2021, offering 35 getaways showcasing Australia.

Guests are escorted by expert regional guides and will enjoy full flexibility to choose their own level of accommodation and dining options.

Visitors can explore Bruce Munro's *Field of Light* installation, which has been extended indefinitely thanks to ongoing demand. AAT

Kings are the only operators to give guests exclusive dawn access to this popular Uluru attraction on the three-day 'Uluru & Kata Tjuta Experience'.

Ending in April is Munro's most recent *Tropical Light* installation in Darwin.

Travellers should book now to experience the beauty of Darwin during the quiet wet season, explore our largest national park, Kakadu, and enjoy Australian art with the five-day 'Kakadu, City Sights & Tropical Light' Short Breaks.

■ [aatkings.com](http://aatkings.com)

# Time to visit your own backyard

WHILE THERE are many options of where to holiday in the world, this year more than ever seems like the right time to holiday in Australia.

With the recent fires across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, we all know that getting back into the regions is the best thing we can do to help those affected to rebuild.

At Britz and maui, we are doing our best to support travel in Australia. We're providing great deals and road trip itineraries, to help customers have an amazing road trip experience, while supporting these impacted communities.

So think about #roadtripforgood and do what you can to help.

Whether it's stopping for a coffee in local towns, riding camels along the beach at Lakes Entrance in Victoria, getting the ferry across to Kangaroo Island, or just stopping at local restaurants and shops that are open for business, every dollar spent will be worth it. And chances are, you never knew it existed.

To help with the planning of a roadtrip



check out these sites:

- \* Roadtrip For Good – [roadtripforgood.org.au/locale/roadtrip-for-good](http://roadtripforgood.org.au/locale/roadtrip-for-good)
- \* Empty Esky – [emptyesky.com.au](http://emptyesky.com.au)
- \* Keep On Camping – [keeponcamping.com.au](http://keeponcamping.com.au)

Britz and maui motorhomes have 10 locations around Australia and have been living and breathing campervans for more than 30 years.

With this experience, we know what's important and customer safety is a large priority. That's why all vehicles are equipped with the Roadlink X1 in-dash media units, which is not only a GPS, but this intelligent device is the ultimate in smartphone connectivity.

The onboard telematics provide road

hazard notifications and through the built in the Apps CamperHelp and CamperMate, you can watch operational videos, book campgrounds, locate fuel stops as well as using it as a Wi-Fi hotspot.

So if you're unsure where to go for a holiday this year, hit the Australian countryside, check out the road trip itineraries on the Britz and maui websites and travel in the luxury of a motorhome and do your bit to help rebuild.

Choose from a range of vehicles ranging in all sizes suitable for one to six people across all budgets. It's the ultimate way to travel.

■ For further information on deals, see [maui-rentals.com.au](http://maui-rentals.com.au) or [britz.com.au](http://britz.com.au) or contact your preferred travel agent.



The NT  
There's nowhere  
like it.



## Head to the Northern Territory for an amazing camper holiday

Whether you're a family looking for variety, a young couple looking for adventure or an older couple looking to travel at your own pace, the Northern Territory will give you lasting memories you won't find anywhere else.

Not only is it amazingly vibrant, but also incredibly diverse with experiences to suit every age and budget.

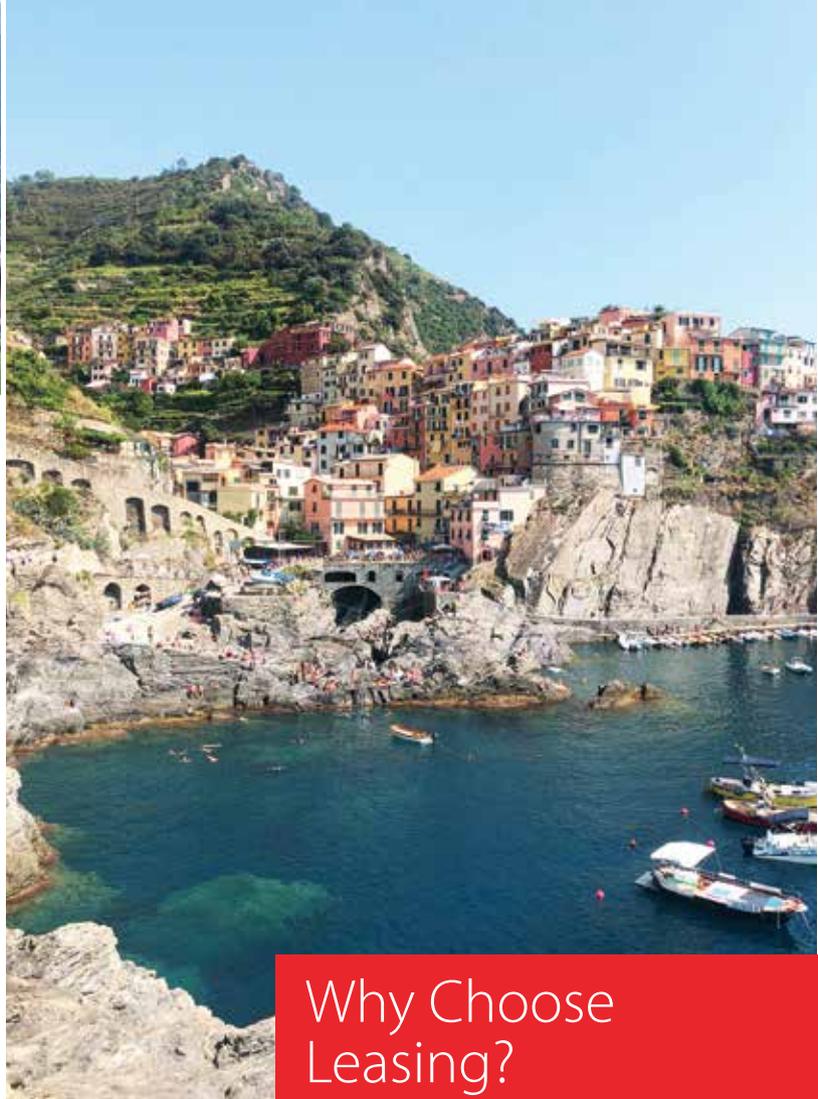
Britz has a range of 2WD and 4WD campers giving you freedom to explore the magical top end.

Britz branches are in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Contact us or your travel agent for our latest specials on 1800 331 454 or [britz.com.au](http://britz.com.au)



Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Google+ icons and #GoByCamper



# The great Fran-talian road-trip...

Euro-Leasing is the best way to get out and see the highlights of what the continent has to offer.

In 2020, the appeal of a self-drive holiday in Europe is back, with many travellers looking to explore countries such as Spain, Italy and France.

Why not combine the scenery and the cuisine on a journey throughout the various countries of Europe?

Find out what the local specialities are, where to find the best shopping and immerse yourself in memorable sights.

Euro-Leasing is designed exclusively for all non-European residents who are planning to travel around Europe for at least 21 days and up to 175 days.

Leasing will allow you to drive freely throughout more than 40 European countries as well as travel into Eastern Europe without the added one-way fees, cross border fee's or any other driving restrictions.

## Euro-Leasing 2020 Sale

Why not take advantage of DriveAway's Euro-Leasing 2020 sale by booking your Peugeot, Citroën or DS vehicle early and receive:

- \* 10 FREE days on all petrol vehicles (incl Hybrid) in France.
- \* 6 FREE days on all diesel vehicles in France.
- \* 3 FREE days on all petrol vehicles outside of France.
- \* NO delivery & return fees for all locations.

Valid for travel between now and 31 December 2020, on all Peugeot, Citroën and DS vehicles.

This offer won't last forever, book and pay by 31 March 2020.

See [driveaway.com.au/euro-leasing](http://driveaway.com.au/euro-leasing) for full terms and conditions, or contact your local travel agent.

## Why Choose Leasing?

- \* The smell of a brand-new car.
- \* Pick from four famous French brands – Peugeot, Citroën, Renault or Ds, where the model is guaranteed.
- \* Peace of mind with full comprehensive insurance & 24/7 roadside assistance.
- \* Freedom to rack up unlimited kilometres through 40+ European countries.
- \* Pick up & drop off in more than 25 convenient locations near Europe's main airports.
- \* FREE additional drivers for immediate family members – take a break and let someone else take the wheel.
- \* Don't get lost with a built-in GPS



## Fun fact

2019 results showed that the top two destinations for Leasing were France and Italy, making up 67% of total Euro-Leasing bookings.

### Suggested European road-trip:

*French Riviera & Italy – 21+ days in a Peugeot.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>STOP 1:</b> MARSEILLE, FRANCE       | <b>STOP 11:</b> LA SPEZIA, ITALY<br>– FEATURING CINQUE TERRE |
| <b>STOP 2:</b> SAINT TROPEZ, FRANCE    | <b>STOP 12:</b> PISA, ITALY                                  |
| <b>STOP 3:</b> CANNES, FRANCE          | <b>STOP 13:</b> MILAN, ITALY                                 |
| <b>STOP 4:</b> NICE, FRANCE            | <b>STOP 14:</b> VERONA, ITALY                                |
| <b>STOP 5:</b> ÈZE, FRANCE             | <b>STOP 15:</b> VENICE, ITALY                                |
| <b>STOP 6:</b> MONACO                  | <b>STOP 16:</b> FLORENCE, ITALY                              |
| <b>STOP 7:</b> SANREMO, ITALY          | <b>STOP 17:</b> SIENA, ITALY                                 |
| <b>STOP 8:</b> GENOA, ITALY            | <b>STOP 18:</b> CORTONA, ITALY                               |
| <b>STOP 9:</b> SANTA MARGHERITA, ITALY | <b>STOP 19:</b> ROME, ITALY                                  |
| <b>STOP 10:</b> PORTOFINO, ITALY       |  |

### Advice from the experts

**\* DRIVING ZONES**

Some cities in Italy may have restrictions on vehicles, these are called 'Limited Traffic Zones'. More information can be found here:  
[driveaway.com.au/drivingtips/italy](http://driveaway.com.au/drivingtips/italy)

**\* TOLLS**

All autostrade require a toll. Since Italian motorways form a network, toll prices are determined on distance travelled. Tolls can be paid by cash or credit card.

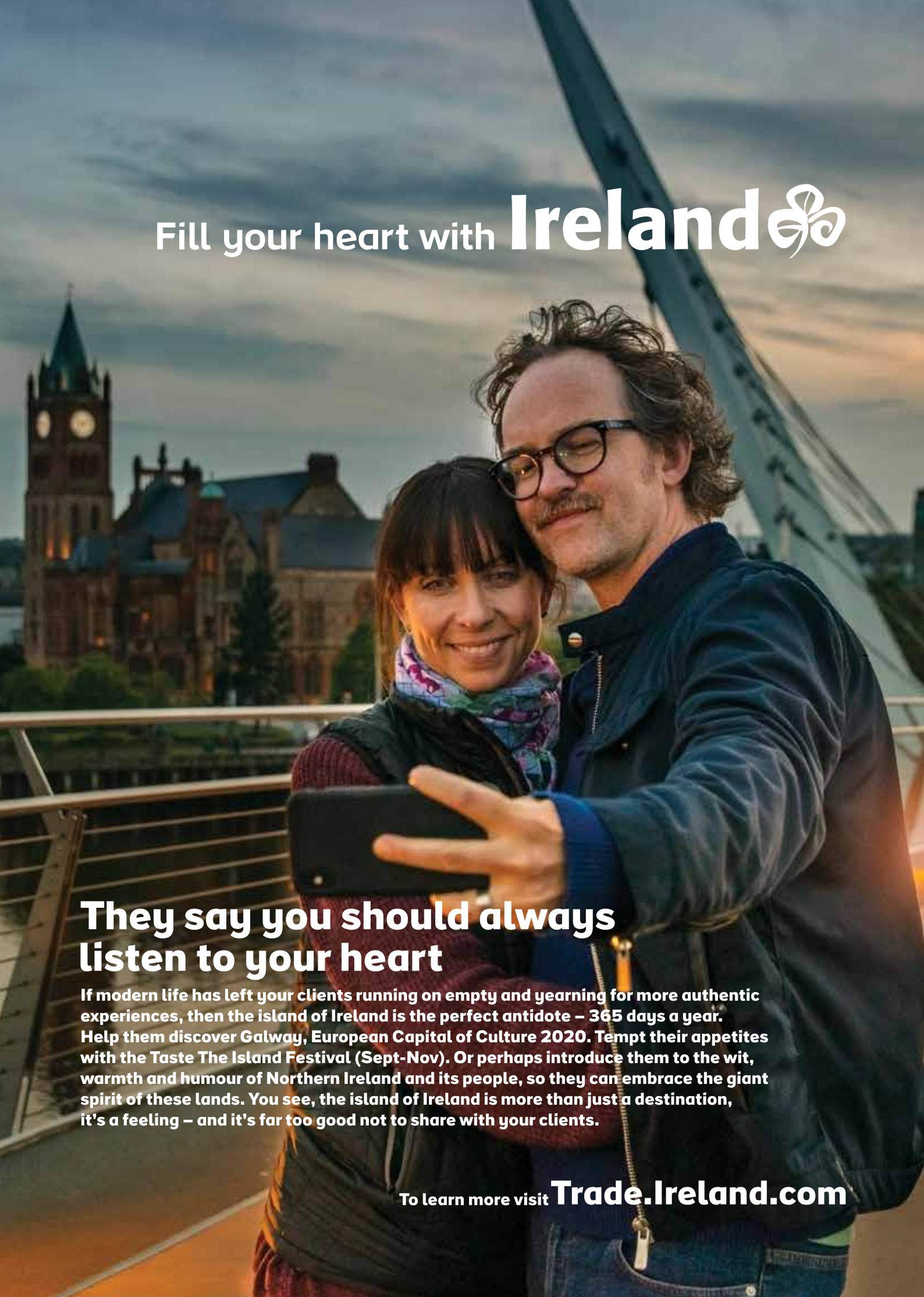
**\* INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT (IDP)**

It is mandatory to carry an IDP in addition to your home license when driving in France or Italy.

# EURO-LEASING 2020 SALE

- ✓ 10 FREE days on all Petrol vehicles (incl Hybrid) in France
- ✓ 3 FREE days on all Petrol vehicles outside of France
- ✓ 6 FREE days on all Diesel vehicles in France
- ✓ NO delivery & return fees for all locations





Fill your heart with **Ireland** 

## **They say you should always listen to your heart**

If modern life has left your clients running on empty and yearning for more authentic experiences, then the island of Ireland is the perfect antidote – 365 days a year. Help them discover Galway, European Capital of Culture 2020. Tempt their appetites with the Taste The Island Festival (Sept-Nov). Or perhaps introduce them to the wit, warmth and humour of Northern Ireland and its people, so they can embrace the giant spirit of these lands. You see, the island of Ireland is more than just a destination, it's a feeling – and it's far too good not to share with your clients.

To learn more visit **Trade.Ireland.com**