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TAANZ awards: finalists' reactions

By Stu Freeman

Putting the customers' needs at the forefront, constantly looking for ways to improve and having dedicated and service-orientated staff are all keys to running a successful travel business. That is just some of the feedback coming from the finalists in the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) National Travel Industry Awards.

Paula Waldeck, owner operator of House of Travel (HOT) Hornby, says the agency has come off an 'incredible first year' in terms of growth – including more staff and more customers.

Waldeck is in the running for the title of best travel agency manager – retail. 'I count myself as extremely lucky to be surrounded by such a fantastic group of people,' she says of her team.

Continued on page 2

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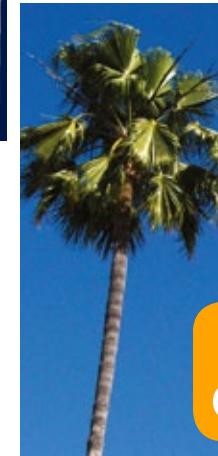
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Daily flights tipped for New Caledonia

By Lisa Bradley

The addition of a five-star hotel in the Loyalty Islands and daily flights from New Zealand are on the cards as New Caledonia ups its efforts to get a bigger slice of the tourism pie.

The developments came to light at last Friday's Rendez-vous in New Caledonia workshop held at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea. The event, in its second year, was attended by a 12-strong group of Kiwi and Australian travel representatives who met with around 60 exhibitors.

Work is expected to get under way on a new Hilton property at Lifou island next year in preparation for its 2019 opening, Nouvelle Calidone Tourism executive general manager, Julie Laronde, says.

The 50-room resort will be complement the hotel chain's property at Noumea. It will also bring the number of five-star hotels to four, including Le Meridien properties in Noumea and Isle of Pines, and Sheraton New Caledonia Deva Resort and Spa in Bourail. Noumea is also home to the four-star Chateau and Royal Resort.

Laronde, says the addition of a leading hotel on the Loyalty Islands will show the country has a lot more to offer than Noumea.

Meanwhile, the tourism board also revealed it is in talks with carriers AirCalin and Air New Zealand to offer daily flights between New Zealand and New Caledonia by 2017. Presently, the carriers provide five flights a week between the two nations. 'Greater

accessibility will increase interest in the country for visitors.'

Workshop exhibitors were united in their belief the country's economic future lies in tourism as New Caledonia's primary industry, nickel, buckles under a slump in prices.

However, some expressed frustration with the speed the industry was tracking, and most were clear there is a lot of work to do in terms of getting the right infrastructure in place and educating the population on the industry.

'We are at the beginning and we have a long way to go. The focus has been on nickel, but this has to change. Tourism is now our top priority.'

Laronde says the industry also faces stiff competition from its Pacific neighbours and needs to debunk impressions that the country is too pricey, especially if it is to achieve its aim of increasing tourism visitor numbers from 114,000 to 200,000 by 2033.

New Caledonia is not cheap, she says, but it has become a far better option in the last 10 years as the exchange rate puts the destination on a par with Australia and New Zealand.

'New Zealanders have tried other islands and we think they should now be ready for something new,' Laronde says.

- *For an indepth look at how New Caledonia is meeting the challenge of shifting its economic future from nickel to tourism, see next month's TRAVELinc magazine. See page 15 for photos of Kiwis in New Caledonia.*

TAANZ awards: finalists' reactions

Continued from page 1

BCD Travel is in the top three for best brand corporate – multi location. Managing director Peter Barlow says he is humbled by the support of supply partners who voted for the company.

'As always, these awards are fiercely competitive and highlight the depth of talent across the wider industry. Naturally we will be giving it a good crack.'

Gilpin Travel is a finalist in the same category. 'We have really focused this past year on business that is not commoditised. We are only adding value and our new partnerships are bearing fruit,' says Gilpin's MD Keith Sumner. 'After 17 years of business our best year is right in front of us – exciting times and lots of new career opportunities. Bring on the big night – win, lose or draw we will be celebrating with all our peers.'

First Travel Group has made the finals of best travel agency brand and First Fares has made the top three in the best agency support category. 'We are looking forward to participating in the process and presenting our credentials. We also send our best wishes to group members who are finalists in their respective categories,' says managing director Andrew Bowman.

Tony Smith, managing director of

Francis Travel Marketing, finalist in the best wholesaler category, says what stands out at FTM is the dedication put into the company by its team. 'They are the most loyal and service orientated people any boss would be happy to have on his staff.'

Andrew Dale, chief executive officer APX travel management says he is excited for the company's finalists to have their moment in front of the judges as it provides time to reflect on their individual and collective contributions and have those efforts acknowledged by suppliers and an independent judging panel.

'Rachael Hampton, who's a finalist for corporate agency manager has made a huge impact to our business and reflects our career development programme. Debbie Mackley, corporate travel consultant finalist, represents loyalty and commitment to the business and her customers and supplier contacts. Michelle Farmer, finalist for rookie of the year supports our faith in the next generation of travel consultants.'

More finalists will have their say in Friday's TRAVELinc Memo.

The full list of finalists was released via the One Minute Memo 9am yesterday. But if you missed it click here:

www.taanz.org.nz/ntia-finalists



Peter Barlow

Filling the Philippines knowledge gap

Travel agents need to get up to speed with one of the potential 'hot' new destinations for New Zealanders in Asia, especially with extra capacity coming on later this year, says Penny Henderson of Pack ya Bags.

Henderson says that travel agents' knowledge is severely lacking when it comes to the Philippines even though Philippine Airlines flies there four times a week and Air New Zealand will be connecting Auckland and Manila direct from December.

'That will give us huge capacity and the traditional holiday periods are pretty much taken care of with VFR (visiting friends and relatives) traffic. But outside those periods there will certainly be availability.'

Henderson has formulated a 40 page book to bridge the knowledge gap and is

making it available to travel agents.

The Philippines already gets the rest of the world – including 70,000 Aussies a year.'

She says the destination is ideal for shopping, weddings, honeymooners and people who want to get off the beaten track. Diving is 'exquisite' and priced from \$30 to \$40 a dive.

Henderson says that even though Manila sometimes gets a bad rap, agents in the know recommend the Makati district, an affluent part of the city about 20 minutes drive from the airport.

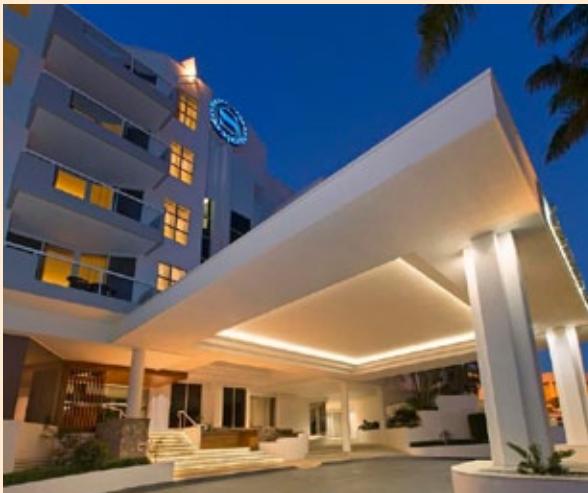
Beyond that, Henderson recommends destinations such as Boracay, Palawan and the Busuangas. She also has a couple of 'favourite' accommodation suppliers right now – La Puerta al Paraizo, Guimeras (owned by a New Zealander and his Filipino wife and costing about



Penny Henderson.. the book is designed to help agents sell the Philippines

\$50 to \$65 a night per person including breakfast) and Coco Grove Siquisor, a four star just off Cebu that will cost about \$500 per person for seven days including transfers and breakfast.

info@packyabags.com



Starwood loses Sheraton Noosa

Starwood Hotels & Resorts will cease management of Sheraton Noosa Resort & Spa, effective 12 June 2016, following 27 years' management of the property under the Sheraton brand.

A statement from Starwood reiterates that the company will 'stand behind its high standards of service and exceptional guest experiences at Sheraton Noosa Resort & Spa until the transition with the owner is complete. All bookings will continue to be honoured.'

The company remains focused on its 'aggressive growth strategy in

Australia and is committed to exploring opportunities to further expand the Sheraton brand, as well as its other brands, in the region,' the statement says.

Starwood currently operates nine hotels in Australia including Sheraton on the Park, Sydney; Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane; Four Points by Sheraton Perth; Sheraton Port Douglas Resort & Spa; and Sheraton Melbourne. In the past three years, Starwood has signed seven new deals including W Brisbane, The Westin Brisbane and Four Points Melbourne Docklands.

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Pacific

Castaway reopens tomorrow

Castaway Island, Fiji Resort reopens 1 June following a three-month island clean-up and property renovation after February's Tropical Cyclone Winston.

Resort general manager Steven Andrews says the reopening of the resort just three months after such a severe storm is 'proof that the Castaway Island village, our family, is so much stronger and more resilient than any storm can be.'

In addition to repairing the significant damage caused by the cyclone, Outrigger Resorts, which owns and manages the property, took advantage of the down time to invest further in the resort with an upgrade and refurbishment of a number of bures and public areas.

Fourteen of the island's 65 bures have either been completely rebuilt or upgraded.

The opportunity was also taken to upgrade the outdoor kitchen servicing



Castaway Island, Fiji Resort

the resort's 1808 'feet in the sand' restaurant.

To celebrate the reopening, executive chef Markus Nufer has created new menus for all of the resort's four restaurants.

In November this year Castaway will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.
enquiries@castawayfiji.com.fj

Games bid win to boost Solomons

Solomon Islands has won a bid to host the 2023 Pacific Games.

Describing the win as 'the biggest ever windfall' for the destination's tourism aspirations, Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau chief executive officer, Josefa (Jo) Tuamoto says the potential the games offers from the perspective of new infrastructure, roads, sporting facilities and

particularly tourism investment is massive.

'We are hopeful this major event will act as a catalyst for new hotel development and related tourism infrastructure projects in and around Honiara,' Tuamoto says.

This, he says, included international hotel brands, none of which currently have a presence in the destination.

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Tanoa refreshes brand

Tanoa Hotel Group has unveiled a refreshed brand to coincide with the upcoming opening of its new four-star hotel in Tonga.

'Our new International Dateline Hotel in Tonga presented us with a chance to align our brand with our core values and point of difference in the marketplace,' says managing director Tanoa Hotel Group, Rohit Reddy.

The new look is still recognisable as Tanoa with a focus on the Tanoa bowl, a significant icon in Pacific culture.



Rohit Reddy



Tanoa Hotel Group has refreshed its logo

Plantation special

Plantation Island Resort is offering a stay for five nights and pay for only three for selected travel dates right through until 31 March 2017.

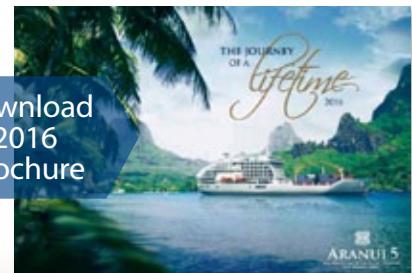
Sales are from 1-30 June 2016 and travel dates are 13 August – 17 September 2016, 24 October – 18 November 2016, 17 – 24 December 2016 and 10 January – 31 March 2017.

Minimum stay is for five nights and the deal can be doubled or tripled.
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Pacific

Vanuatu's Holiday Inn reopens

The Holiday Inn Resort Vanuatu is set to re-open its doors tomorrow (1 June), after a major revitalisation and restoration programme, nearly 15 months after its closure due to the damage inflicted by Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Located just minutes from Port Villa town, the resort has exclusive lagoon frontage.

It also has a spa, tennis court, pool areas, kids' club, golf course and water sports.

Daily experiences on offer for teens and tweens include fish feeding, basket

weaving, beach soccer, cooking classes, stand-up paddleboard lessons and a robust programme of cultural and outdoor experiences - such as lessons on how to shimmy coconut trees, shuck and de-flesh coconuts and how to build a lovo oven.

Holiday Inn Resort Vanuatu has 10 overwater villas on a private island which are perfect for weddings, families and groups. With an increased interest in group bookings, the overwater villas have specially tailored menus, beverage and entertainment offerings.



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EXOTIC HOLIDAYS

Australia

Sheraton's 'welcome return'



Steve Molnar

Professional conference organisers and groups have been quick to embrace the 'return' of Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas Resort, says general manager Steve Molnar.

Although the resort has been operating through its A\$42 million refurbishment, the business events sector has been holding off to a certain extent to see the results of the work.

Molnar say that with the new look 294 room resort back to full operation in two weeks the property has more bookings for the next six months than it had per annum for the last three years.

'Incentive and conference organisers have been asking for this refurbishment and they have been patient. They all said that when we did it they would come back, and they have been true to their word – which we thank them for.'

The New Zealand group of incentive operators and corporate agents who have just spent three days in Tropical North Queensland, visited the Sheraton as part of the Business Events Australia famil.

Catherine Barwood, of Premium Incentive and Conference Management, says her company has a group using the resort in September. 'I am confident the resort will be ready for us. Overall it's gorgeous and the rooms look great. It is good for Port Douglas to have it back.'

Tropical north rates highly with Kiwi incentive operators

A just completed incentive agents' trip to Tropical North Queensland has been rated as one of the 'best familis yet' by the experienced practitioners who took part.

The excursion showcased intimate incentive product such as Lizard Island and Silky Oaks Lodge, but also gave the group a glimpse of the Sheraton Mirage, Port Douglas Resort – an important property for the region's larger groups and one that is nearing the completion of a massive refurbishment.

The Business Events Australia / Tourism Australia, Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, and Air New Zealand famil was also a chance to experience how easy it was to get around the region. Coach transfers with Downunder Tours, return flights from Cairns Airport to Lizard island with East Air, and a surprise helicopter flight between Port Douglas and Cairns were all part of the mix – along with a final dinner at Salt House Cairns and an overnight at Pullman Reef Hotel Casino.

Several of the delegates identified a visit to the Lizard Island Research Station as a highlight.

Gloria Yehia, cievents, says there is often the need for an incentive to deliver more than just a good time. 'There is a need for a more tangible ROI and being able to deliver some education is imperative.' She says the research station was a perfect fit for that.

Suz Baker, Eventionz, agrees. 'Learning



So that's what you call a flying visit... all set for a trip from the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas Resort to Cairns are Catherine Barwood, Premium Incentive and Conference Management; Adair Cameron, Williment Travel; Mark Ferguson, Extra Mile Company; Stuart Jones, Air New Zealand; Jackie Coyne, S2N Events; Suz Baker, Eventionz; Gloria Yehia, cievents; Rosie Douglas, Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef; Keith Sumner, Gilpin Travel

about the challenges we all face and the pressures on our waterways and oceans from (marine biologist) Suz Garrett was a highlight for me.'

Jenny Aitken, New Zealand country manager for Tourism Australia, says the whole point of any Business Events Australia trip is to demonstrate where the country differentiates from other destinations, its capabilities and its diversity. 'In terms of differentiation, while there are beautiful island stays in many countries, there is only one Great Barrier Reef. So Lizard Island is a compelling proposition for Tropical North Queensland and for Australia.'

Aitken says the trip has definitely delivered. 'The feedback from the participants has been sensational.'

NZ: more Cairns capacity

Air New Zealand will offer increased capacity on the Auckland – Cairns route when it introduces B777-200 aircraft on the route for travel between 1 July and 9 October.

With the larger aircraft operating on the route, Air New Zealand can offer new long term premium economy fares to Cairns, effective immediately.

The additional capacity is expected to help open up the destination for corporate and incentive groups and allow clients the choice of business premier, premium economy and economy on the route.

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Santa Cruz II

Right royal ship christening

Seven Seas Explorer will enter service in royal fashion with Princess Charlene of Monaco to become the ship's godmother at a gala christening



Princess Charlene of Monaco

event in Monte Carlo on 13 July, 2016.

Steve Odell, senior vice president and managing director Asia Pacific for Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings says. 'Her Serene Highness' stature, her career as a world class athlete and her charitable endeavours via the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation are inspiring achievements.'

Joining H.S.H. Princess Charlene at the christening ceremony for Seven Seas Explorer is Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, who will take to the stage for a 40-minute performance during the event.



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Africa



Zambezi Queen Exterior

Cruising Chobe River in luxury

World Journeys recommends that clients build in a luxury Chobe River Safari for clients as a relaxing option within a longer Southern Africa itinerary.

Bookings are now open for 2017 departures of the luxury Zambezi Queen, a boutique floating hotel with 14 suites, along with the smaller more intimate option of the three Chobe Princess vessels which are ideal for small groups or families. Unlike a land-based lodge, these vessels navigate roughly 25km of the Chobe River, allowing customers to explore different vantage points

and enjoy unparalleled game viewing. The banks of the Chobe National Park have one of the densest populations of elephant on the African continent - estimated at approximately 120,000. The park is also home to a large number of buffalo, leopard and lion, along with a variety of antelope and abundant birdlife. World Journeys says agents should encourage clients to book well in advance to secure the desired departure, then build other arrangements around that.

info@worldjourneys.co.nz

SAA: more flights to Mauritius

South African Airways (SAA) has further strengthened its route to Mauritius to meet growing demand from international visitors.

According to SAA's country manager for Australasia, Tim Clyde-Smith, the airline will add an additional flight on Wednesday, bringing the route to double dailies from Johannesburg four days of the week on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday and growing the route to eleven flights in total a week.

'We have experienced significant growth in demand by people wanting to travel to Mauritius with passengers increasing by 9.5% last year to

more than 100,000 passengers a year,' Clyde-Smith says.

'With Mauritius a top three destination from South Africa and for an increasing number of international tourists, the country holds strategic commercial value for the airline,' he says.

The route is operated by the Airbus A320, the latest arrival in the SAA fleet. Business class customers can also make use of on-board Samsung tablets for in-flight entertainment on regional flights. Customers may take two bags of 23 kgs in economy class and two bags of 32 kgs in business class. www.flysaa.co.nz

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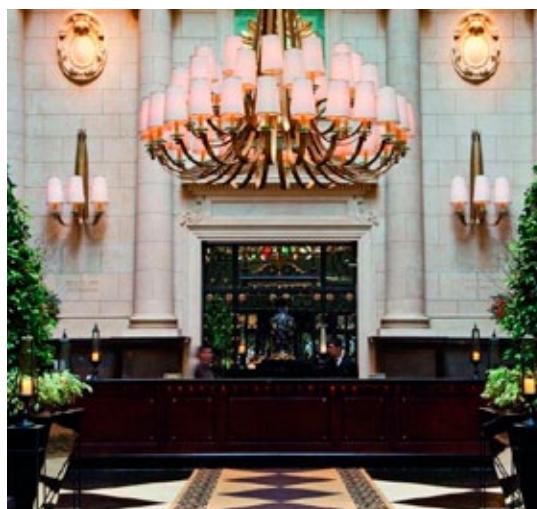
Buenos Aires stay-pays

World Journeys has stay/pay deals on two top five-star hotels in Buenos Aires valid for stays until 30 April 2017.

The Brick hotel in the Recoleta district offers stay four - pay three nights and one VIP treatment, applicable to all room categories; or stay three - pay two nights, and applicable to luxury category and up.

The Sofitel Buenos Aires in the traditional arts district of Retiro offers stay four - pay three nights and one VIP treatment, applicable to all room categories; or stay three - pay two nights, also in all rooms. At both hotels the stay four - pay three nights can be split over two stays, whereas the stay three - pay two nights must be used consecutively. All offers are subject to availability.

info@worldjourneys.co.nz



Sofitel Buenos Aires



Isla Magdalena

Free night in Patagonia

World Journeys is offering one free hotel night in Punta Arenas when clients book an Australis Cruise in Patagonia by 31 July 2016.

The offer applies to specific departures in October and December 2016, and January or March 2017, applies to all cabin categories, and is subject to availability.

Operating expedition style cruising in one of the most remote regions of the world, Australis operates the 136 passenger 'M/V Via Australis' and 210

passenger 'M/V Stella Australis'.

These cruises complement land-based Patagonia tours as they take clients to beautiful destinations only reachable by sea, says World Journeys.

Expert naturalist guides conduct lectures and take passengers ashore for excursions. The cruise offers a combination of wildlife, fantastic scenery and the opportunity to 'round the horn', and weather permitting, to step foot on Cape Horn.

info@worldjourneys.co.nz

Winter Canada brochure out now

Adventure World has released a new Winter Canada catalogue.

The new five-day Monashee Snowmobile Adventure, priced from \$3940pp twin share, includes four snowmobile trips and a candlelight BBQ dinner in the 'Glacier Station' cabin at 1890 metres. A natural hot spring dip completes the stay.

The seven-day top seller Yukon's Aurora Borealis package, priced from \$1041pp twin share, takes in one of nature's most spectacular wonders. During the cold and clear nights, the Aurora Borealis spans across the skies. A stay in the Northwest Territories' wilderness near Yellowknife offers superior viewing opportunities of the skies.

Also new to the collection this year is a four-day Jasper Winter Adventure, priced from \$1028pp twin share and a four-day Coastal Storm Watching package, priced from \$968pp twin share, where clients can experience the elements at their most extreme off the coast of Vancouver Island – with the rain, sun, wind and tides all combining to put on an amazing show.

For ski and snowboarding fans, the Ski Plus packages in Whistler, Sun Peaks, Big White and Silver Star offer the best of the mountain trails and runs along with must-try winter activities such as snowshoeing excursions.

adventureworld.com



National Parks are a highlight of tours with Grand American Adventures

Adventure World's GAA special

Clients who are booked on any Grand American Adventures (GAA) journey with Adventure World by 10 June, 2016 will save up to 20% for journeys departing from now until 31 December 2016.

Customers will explore the coastlines, mountains, prairies, deserts and canyons of America as well as the national parks, cities and charms of smaller communities.

Popular holidays include the 12-night Western Dream from Las Vegas to San Francisco priced from \$2944pp twin share and the 12-day National Parks Walk to and from Las Vegas priced from \$3631pp twin share. adventureworld.com



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 Yuzyt

Early booking bonus on river cruising

Tempo Holidays has early booking bonuses on a range of Lueftner 2017 Cruises with a saving of 50% for the second passenger and no single supplement for solo travellers.

Clients who book and deposit their 2017 Europe River Cruise before 31 August 2016 will save up to \$1947 per couple with 50% off the second traveller. Solo travellers save up to 30% with no single supplement.

Included in this deal is Tempo Holidays' eight day cruise 'French Savoir Vivre' in which guests discover famous wine-growing regions such as Cote d' Or, historic villages, fine cuisine and landscapes that inspired painters and poets for centuries.

Operating throughout April to October

2017 for select departure dates, this tour includes seven nights on the MS Amadeus Provence. Prices start from \$2504 per person twin share. With the early booking discount, clients can save \$1250 for a travel companion.

Tempo Holidays' epic 15-day cruise Across Europe takes clients along Europe's most important waterways, passing through the Rhine-Main-Danube canal and distinctive landscapes of the Loreley and Wachau Valley.

Prices start from \$3893 per person twin share. All prices are based on C-4 Cabin category. Savings are for cruise only. Shore excursions are optional and available at an additional charge.

res@tempoholidays.co.nz

Discounts on rail

Rail Europe GSAs have announced point-to-point discounts on selected Lyria routes.

From 31 May to 13 June 2016, agents booking clients on Lyria routes between Paris and Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchatel, Vallorbe, Bern, Zurich and Basel can pass on one way ticket costs from NZ\$60, upgradable to first class from NZ\$16. Travel is valid between 1 July and 28 August 2016. Agents are reminded that Rail Europe tickets are distributed by Rail Plus and GO Holidays in New Zealand.

Terms and conditions apply and agents need to allow for forex fluctuations.

www.raileurope.fr/wheretobuy



Lyria is offering discounts on some routes



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www.railplus.co.nz



Airlines

Air Nauru eyes expansion

Nauru's national carrier will look at further expanding into the central Pacific. The small operator has increased services since 2005 and now operates five aircraft on a number of routes, reports Islands Business/PACNEWS.

Geoff Bowmaker, CEO of Air Nauru, says the airline had extended services in the region and would conduct further studies before making decisions on further expansion.

'Our (market) research will continue and we're looking at extending services in the central Pacific,' Bowman says.

'There are still some bottlenecks which make it difficult for people to move from the north to the south.'

Bowman says people want to travel to the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia for fishing and diving holidays.

Air Nauru is currently the only service provider to the Marshalls with flights beginning in Brisbane and flying on through Nadi or Honiara to Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Using Nauru as its hub, the airline moves passengers from Brisbane, Nadi and Honiara using four Boeing 737-300 aircraft. It also operates a Boeing 737 freighter.

IATA welcomes Airways NZ decision

The international Air Transport Association (IATA) has welcomed the announcement by Airways New Zealand to reduce charges by 4.7% for the 2016 to 2019 pricing period following consultations with the industry.

Airways New Zealand is the air traffic service provider in New Zealand.

Conrad Clifford, IATA's regional vice president for Asia Pacific says this is a major improvement from the initial proposal in January of an overall 3.6% increase over the same period. 'In particular, the 9.8% decrease in 2016/2017 will go a long way to offset the increases in the subsequent two years.'

He says Airways' efforts to engage the

industry in effective consultations is commendable.

'The reduction shows that they have listened to and accepted the feedback from airlines during the consultation process. We recognise that over the last three years, Airways has done a lot to manage its costs, while maintaining a robust ATC system and at the same time planning ahead to prepare for future growth.'

'The reductions by Airways also demonstrate an understanding of the importance that aviation plays in supporting economic growth and jobs in New Zealand, which is expected to increase by 50% by 2035.'

SriLankan Airlines names NZ GSA

SriLankan Airlines has appointed Airline Marketing New Zealand as general sales agent in this market.

The appointment, with immediate effect, was made as the national airline of Sri Lanka seeks to firmly establish and strengthen its brand and sales reach among New Zealand industry partners.

Launched in 1979, SriLankan is currently expanding and further diversifying its wide range of products and services in order to drive the country's ongoing boom in tourism and economic development.

The airline's hub at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo provides convenient connections to its global route network of 94 destinations in 44 countries (including codeshare operations) in Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Far East, North America, Australia and Africa.

SriLankan Airlines is part of the oneworld Alliance.

www.srilankan.com

srilankan@airlinemarketing.co.nz

Use KrisFlyer miles to shop

KrisFlyer miles can now be used for purchases on KrisShop.com, the online portal of Singapore Airlines' inflight retail store.

KrisFlyer miles can be used to pay for KrisShop items in full, or in part alongside cash, subject to a minimum of 3,000 miles per transaction. Members can also earn KrisFlyer miles when they make payment with a mix of miles and cash, on the amount paid with their credit or debit card. To mark the launch, a range of exclusive offers will be available for KrisFlyer members who redeem their miles on KrisShop.com from now until 15 June.



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New Zealand

New Zealand Hotel Conference sold out

The 2016 New Zealand Hotel Industry Conference is sold out with almost 350 delegates signed up to attend the 2 June event at The Langham, Auckland.

'This is a great result and the second consecutive year we have reached maximum registrations for the conference,' says Sally Attfield, hotel sector manager, Tourism Industry Aotearoa which co-hosts the conference with Horwath HTL.

'We have a strong conference programme which focuses on how to capitalise on the sector's growth momentum and exceed guest expectations.'

Attfield says the conference will discuss and debate the big issues that can stimulate or stymie New Zealand hotel sector growth, including understanding and engaging with the ever-changing customer, and people and skills.

Keynote international speakers include Australia's Mark McCrindle, an expert demographer, futurist and social commentators on the world stage today, and IHG's Karin Sheppard who oversees the performance of around 70 hotels in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Japan.

Stephen Hamilton, director, Horwath HTL, says there will be a big focus on hotel investment and infrastructure, with comment from hotel owners, investors and developers.

A gala dinner will be held in the evening, with the presentation of the 2016 New Zealand Hotel Industry Awards.

The co-hosts acknowledge the support of the conference platinum sponsor, AccorHotels.

www.nzhotelconference.com

Signing for success

The efforts of Wellington's CQ Hotels, which aims to 'be accessible' for all people, were recognised at the 2016 New Zealand Sign Language Awards recently. The dual hotel properties won the Employer Award and Accessible Service Award, two out of 11 categories at the event, held by Deaf Aotearoa.

At the same time the hotel received kudos from the World Federation of the Deaf, after hosting a board meeting for the Finland-based organisation last week. Nine board members jointly signed a letter of appreciation for the efforts made to communicate in sign language with hearing impaired guests.

'The way in which the hotel has embraced sign language thoroughly throughout the hotel, from menus in



Katie Fellows and Arnaud Corbier, CQ Hotels Wellington, receive the New Zealand Sign language Awards

sign language, quick tip guides on how to sign common greetings in NZ Sign language (NZSL), and even with staff who tried at all times to communicate clearly with us in NZSL has left an indelible mark on each and every one of us,' the letter stated.



St Moritz change

Hotel St Moritz will join the Sofitel 'brand universe'.

This property is now positioned within the newly badged MGallery by Sofitel collection by parent company AccorHotels. As a result of the repositioning, Hotel St Moritz will commence a three million dollar investment in its room inventory for renovation.

www.stmoritz.co.nz

General manager Jo Finnigan selects fabrics for the renovation

New Zealand suspends two services

Air New Zealand is suspending its Whanganui to Auckland and Blenheim to Christchurch services from 31 July this year.

General manager of networks, Richard Thomson, says Air New Zealand looked closely at the Whanganui – Auckland service when the regional network was reviewed in 2014.

'While the service was marginal at the time we believed it was worth taking a chance on Whanganui and working with the local community in an effort to stimulate demand. Unfortunately the market dynamics have changed markedly since then as a result of the competition entering nearby Palmerston North just 70 kilometres away.'

The loss-making Blenheim to Christchurch is being suspended because of lack of demand. Blenheim's services to Auckland and Wellington, however, will be strengthened in the coming year, with increased frequency and 35,000 additional seats in FY17.

Customers booked to travel on suspended services past 31 July will be offered the choice of a full refund or travelling via an alternative port.

In other regional news, Air New Zealand is adjusting departure times for flights from Whangarei to Auckland, Kerikeri to Auckland and from Tauranga to Christchurch.



New Vietnam self-famil dates

Adventure World has released new travel dates for its popular agent self-famil to Saigon flying with Air New Zealand. Frontliners can gain a first-hand knowledge of the destination as direct Auckland flights start in June.

The new travel dates are from now until 28 June, 2016 and also between 12 July and 20 September 2016 for bookings prior to 30 June 2016.

Priced from \$1,079 per agent (plus taxes), the deal is also applicable for

Vietnam on sale extended

Active Asia has extended the product available on its current Vietnam on sale, to include all its small group tours.

Clients can now save \$250 on all valid departures for four of Active Asia's small group tours, including the six-day Mekong Explorer, which is now priced from \$1200pp.

one companion per agent, and includes return economy flights to Saigon, four nights at the four star Grand Hotel Saigon, half day Cu Chi tunnels tour, full day Mekong Delta tour, plus some meals and airport transfers.

Add-ons to Hoi An and Hanoi are available from \$759pp and include three nights' accommodation and internal flights. Agents can register at bit.ly/Vietnam16. [CLICK HERE](#) for details. asia@adventureworld.co.nz

The Discover Vietnam tour, staying in four star hotels, is an 11-day tour now from only \$3200pp and the three-star Ultimate Vietnam, 13 day tour is \$2500pp/twin.

The long life sales period (on sale until the end of July) gives agents time to email or advertise the special to their clients. www.activeasia.co.nz/agents/fliers

EXPERIENCE MACAO

Your Own Style

Your Travel Tips ... eating out in Macao..

Macanese food, which is a fusion of Portuguese, African, Southeast Asian and Chinese cooking, has gained international recognition after being enjoyed by travellers for decades. In recent years, Macao has become firmly planted on the map as one of the world's culinary destinations - following an influx of internationally renowned restaurant brands from around the world and celebrity chefs that take Macao's gastronomic scene to new heights. Among the popular Macanese and Portuguese restaurants are the following;

1. LONG WA – MACAO PENINSULA

Said to be among the last of the traditional tea house restaurants in Macao, Long Wa has been serving dim sum delicacies for brunch continuously for the past four decades. It is well worth a visit to sample the food and tea, admire the art and rub shoulders with the local regulars.

3. LITORAL – MACAO PENINSULA AND TAIPA VILLAGE

For a taste of Macao's famous African chicken or the dessert Serradura, head to one of the two Litoral eateries for a truly memorable Macanese feast, the world's first fusion cuisine.

4. CAFE SAB 8 – MACAO PENINSULA

Down a narrow side street, a short stroll from the iconic Ruins of St Paul's, is a new addition to the former Portuguese enclave's dining experiences - Cafe SAB 8. Owner and chef Sandra Niza Barros has taken note of her mother's home recipes and created a contemporary style of Macanese (fusion) cuisine.

8. O MANEL'S – TAIPA VILLAGE

On any given night, you can expect to see owner Manuel welcoming guests to his tiny Portuguese restaurant. The atmosphere is casual and friendly, with walls of the eatery decorated in Portuguese football memorabilia.

2. LORD STOW'S BAKERY – COLOANE

Perhaps the most sought-after mouth watering dessert in Macao is the Macanese egg tart, which looks like a Portuguese egg tart but is a hybrid with the Chinese egg tart. And the best place to sample one or two is from the tiny Lord Stow's bakery on Coloane.

5. ANTONIO'S – TAIPA VILLAGE

For an authentic taste of Portugal in romantic surrounds, head to Macao's historic Taipa Village to sample the Michelin quality cuisine served at Antonio's restaurant. Order the crepe Suzette and Antonio will prepare the dessert at your table.

6. CASA DE TAPAS – TAIPA VILLAGE

Across the lane from Antonio Restaurant is another gem of the Spanish variety - Casa de Tapas. And the food is as tasty as it sounds. A popular spot to book a table is on the top-floor outdoor balcony overlooking the narrow streets of Taipa Village.

9. TAI LEI LOI KEI – TAIPA VILLAGE

Head to Taipa village and the Tai Lei Loi Kei eatery to sample the Macao pork chop bun, one of the most popular and famous snacks in the Asian centre. The Macanese specialty is made to order and has been described as "the Macanese version of a hamburger."



"Long Wa Restaurant"



"Litoral African Chicken"

FOR MORE INFO AND THE LATEST SPECIALS TO MACAO
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"Antonio Coelho & his Crepe Suzette"



Vive la famil!

The second Rendez-vous in New Caledonia workshop, held last Friday at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea, has been called a success.

Nouvelle Calidone Tourism executive general manager, Julie Laronde, says although the industry has yet to discuss the event, the initial reaction from the around 60 exhibitors has been positive.

'They were happy to have meet with new wholesalers and made a lot of new contracts. We realise there is still a lot of education to do, but this has been a good opportunity to showcase what we have.'

A group of 12 wholesalers, agents and media from New Zealand and Australia attended the event, and enjoyed post and pre-workshop famils.

Wendy Graham, from Lifestyle Holidays, says the trip was worthwhile as it showcased how much diversity the country had. 'It's got everything... it's not a flop-and-drop destination.'

Lifestyle Holiday's Wendy Graham; Sharma Smith from the House of Travel; helloworld's Ruzanne Keresoma; Paula Lipscombe from GTA and New Caledonia Tourism Australia's Claire Kaletka-Neil tour New Caledonia



Ruzanne Keresoma; Air New Zealand's James Leslie and Mark Ehlers, Luxury Escapes, regroup during the workshop



Paula Lipscombe delights in the cheese section of the local supermarket before the group leave the French-speaking nation for home



Sharma Smith; Wendy Graham and Shaun Busuttil raise their glasses to a French-style picnic, part of a pre-workshop famil that took in a trip to the south

Cheers New Caledonia – New Zealand and Australia workshop participants toast a successful visit to the islands (front, from left): Penina Momoisea from Coconuts Marketing; Sharma Smith; Ruzanne Keresoma and KarryOn's Shaun Busuttil. Back, from left: Wendy Graham; Mark Ehlers; Paula Lipscombe and James Leslie

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News

Soooo South America

They braved the Auckland weather last week for the final of World Journeys Soooo South America NZ roadshow. The contingent of exhibitors, many making the longer journey from their respective homes in South America, had spent the week meeting with agents in Tauranga, Napier and Christchurch before Auckland's wrap up evening. Exhibitor Bruno Teixeira from Blumar Brazil says they were impressed with the numbers at each event – full house every night – and about the level of interest there is in the destination. 'The agents want to know everything. They ask questions and in Napier many brought their clients along, which was great as these people are serious about visiting. With the additional flights and South America receiving so much exposure in the press, the time was right for us to all be here.'



Nicky B from Ponsonby Central serves traditional tapas to Anna Gillan, World Journeys; Raelene O'Loughlin, NZ Travel Brokers and Meredith Free, World Journeys



Michael Shallcross and Emily Norman, Flight Centre Downtown are welcomed by Sue Barnaby from World Journeys



South America smiles all round from Pierina Carranza Ramos, Rainforest Expeditions; Caroline Clegg, World Journeys; Katharine Mason, LATAM; Bruno Teixeira, Blumar Brazil and Chrissy Ashby, The Travel Brokers



Jillian Brodie HOT Ellerslie and Amanda McAllister, HOT St Heliers



John Byrne, World Journeys greets Michele Murphy, Bon Voyage Cruises & Travel



Shelley Bunce and Bianca Ratima, HOT Ponsonby



Quay Travel's Michelle Malcolm and Tasi Afitu Hill catch up with one of the evening's hosts from World Journeys, Brett Barclay



Sasha Skerrett and Gray Gibson, Mondo Travel Takapuna and Peter Blundell, YOU Travel Takapuna



Shane Ogg, HOT Mt Eden and Geri Cornelius, Mondo Travel



World Journeys' Chris Lyons loves talking all things South America to Jan Millner, BWT

News

Young Skal on the way

Around \$2700 has been raised to kick off New Zealand's first Young Skal Club. Christchurch's Commodore Hotel helped out as Platinum sponsor of a Trivial Pursuit night organised by Skal International Christchurch.

Quiz-goers were entertained by Kevin Gough (Goughie) as Quiz Master, and Victoria Wales from HOT Events as his lovely assistant (Hilary Timmins, Lana Coc-Kroft and Judith Kirk all in one).

Questions were tough with categories ranging from tourism and politics to entertainment and geography. Competition was tight throughout the eight rounds – but there was a definite winner in the end with Avonmore Tertiary institute. House of Travel on Victoria came in second and Selling Innovation third.

The lowest scoring team didn't miss out with Mantra Hotel Group winning



Goughie (ex Mitchell Corp) and his lovely assistant, Victoria Wales, HOT Events

a Ballooning Trip for six provided by Ballooning Canterbury. Other prizes included food and beverage vouchers from hotel supporters – delicacies such as whitebait and preserved feijoas and plenty of bottles of wine.

Innovative launches small group tours in the USA

Innovative Travel this week launches small group tours in the USA. Managing director Robyn Galloway says the company's small group tours have been selling well in its selected Asian and Mediterranean destinations and demand is growing from the repeat client base, says Galloway.

Tour groups will have a maximum of 16 and depart from Los Angeles to San Francisco, with a second tour ex Los Angeles focusing on the National Parks and the tour ex New York will include a visit to Niagara Falls. 'These well priced first class tours will appeal to a more discerning traveller,' says Galloway.

www.innovative-travel.com

Anaheim famil spot up for grabs

Agents have a chance to secure a place in a famil to Anaheim flying NZ from 18 to 24 November.

'Our Visit Anaheim partners were down in New Zealand recently for a one night industry workshop/trade show,' says Anaheim representative Pip Ashford. 'Sadly due to time constraints they weren't able to travel throughout the country, so we devised a plan whereby all Kiwi consultants can view the presentations online.'

The presentations are short and can be stopped at any time and resumed. At the end of each presentation is a short quiz – agents simply submit the quiz then go into the draw.'

Agents have two months to complete and submit the quiz.
[CLICK HERE](#) for quiz.

Kiwis to be selected soon for Ireland famil

'Members of the Ireland Specialist online training programme will be selected to participate in a global fam trip to Ireland in a couple of weeks,' says Darragh Walshe, New Zealand representative, Tourism Ireland.

Thus we need travel agents to either register and complete the programme now, or if already completed to double check their status,' he says.

Those that have competed Gold status will be selected first.

www.irelandspecialists.com

Still time for Samoa

Last spaces are still available for the Beautiful Samoa Roadshow being held in New Zealand this week. Dates and times are:

- Wellington: tonight (31 May) 5.30-7.30pm, The Boatshed.
- Auckland: 1 June, 5.30-7.30pm, Hagley Oval.
- Auckland: 2 June, 5.30-7.30pm, Aotea Centre (Lower NZI Room).

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

TRAVELinc MEMO

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