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Visa proposals could pummel Kiwi visitor numbers to America

By Lisa Bradley

Kiwi visitor numbers to the USA will take a king hit if new border rules are approved under President Donald Trump's administration, say Kiwi travel trade.

The White House is moving to dramatically restrict immigration and travel to the country. The rulings include the possible suspension of the Visa Waiver Programme America has with New Zealand and 37 other countries.

Suspension of the policy means Kiwi travellers may have to undergo interviews with US officials in Auckland if they want to visit the country. Presently, New Zealanders receive a 90-day tourist visa after submitting an application online.

The proposal has been carefully watched by the New Zealand travel industry, particularly House of Travel and Flight Centre, which agree the move will significantly impact on New Zealand travel to the US.

HoT commercial director Brent Thomas says any barrier to getting to a country – such as having to travel to Auckland for visas – makes it too hard for people.

'Even if customers are in Auckland – it will still be costly in

Continued on page 2

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Visa proposals could pummel Kiwi visitor numbers to America

Continued from page 1

terms of time. It just makes it hard, and people will consider alternatives.'

Thomas says more than 150,000 New Zealanders visited the country last year, and the destination is enjoying a growing popularity with Kiwis thanks in part to a hike in new airlines and routes.

'The US government needs to be mindful of this decision,' he says: 'I am sure there will be pressure from the industry there as tourism is a significant earner for them.'

Flight Centre is also monitoring the situation closely, says general manager



Brent Thomas



Jodie Burnard

marketing, Jodie Burnard.

'It's speculation at this time, but if it does go ahead it will have a significant impact,' says Burnard.

'A lot of our stores are selling the US.

It is a large destination for us and it will impact on the business.'

She adds there is speculation the move, if signed off, is more likely to affect New Zealanders who have dual passports with countries such as Iran and Iraq.

The situation comes on the heels of changes to the South Africa visa system, which from 16 January requires all New Zealand visa applicants to visit Wellington.

'Now people have to go to Wellington for these visas, we are going to see an impact there until the ruling is turned back,' says Thomas.

Travel by type

The number one traveller type in Asia Pacific is 'explorer', says Sabre.

In a new report on traveller preferences, the company says explorers are people who seek discovery, while valuing experiences that are spontaneous and flexible.

The report identifies top traveller types across 11 markets, including New Zealand and Australia. After explorers (41%) the top traveller type in those markets is connectors (25%) – well seasoned travellers who see sharing as a critical component of their travel experience, including via social media. Just over 60% of connectors say their sharing has inspired someone else to take the trip.

Laos famil set down for March

Innovative Travel and Singapore Airlines are running a Laos/Singapore Famil, which will depart Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch from 15 March.

There is a trend to seek out new experiences and destinations in Asia, says Innovative Travel's managing director Robyn Galloway.

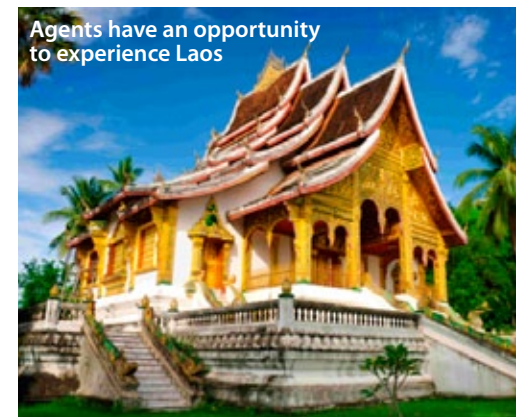
'And with Singapore Airlines now servicing the dual destinations of Vientiane and Luang Prabang in Laos, it is an opportunity for agents to learn more about this emerging destination for Kiwis.'

The famil kicks off in the capital of Vientiane for a two-night stay, and continues to the 2000-year-old site of the Plain of Jars and the heritage city of Luang Prabang. A river cruise, night market tour, ancient

temples, cyclo tour, traditional Buddhist ceremony and dining at local restaurants are amongst other experiences.

The trip goes on to Singapore for a two-night stopover.

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JOURNEYS

Education boost: Travel Management gets its major

By Stuart Freeman

Travel Management is one of two new majors being introduced into Auckland University of Technology's School of Hospitality and Tourism's Bachelor of International Tourism Management (BITM) this year.

Along with a major in Destination Management, the Travel Management major has been designed with industry partners to meet the demand for skilled professionals in the travel and tourism sector.

Megan Roberts, integrated learning leader industry and liaison, says the introduction of a Travel Management major is in response to the increasing travel sector need for specialist management skills.

'The travel sector faces challenges associated with increasing customer numbers, technological disruption to business processes, a shortage of qualified staff and an ageing workforce. However, the importance of the travel sector to New Zealand tourism is often overlooked, as focus tends to be on inbound visitors to the country rather than outbound travellers,' Roberts says.

'Increasing role diversity and career opportunities within the sector make travel a desirable career choice for students and strong industry connections in the travel sector have resulted in rich and rewarding work-integrated learning placements for students. A recent survey of first semester BITM students



Megan Roberts



Andrew Olsen

what do you think?

What do you think this qualification will mean for the industry? We would like to hear your thoughts.

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showed that 61% of the students were looking specifically at a career in the travel industry upon completion of their qualification.

She says the industry has struggled for professional recognition for many years, adding the qualification addresses this by adding a whole new layer to the status of the industry.

Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) chief executive Andrew Olsen says submissions of support for the Travel Management qualification came from the trade and academics overwhelmingly supporting the inclusion of 'travel' in the New Zealand tertiary curriculum. 'We're delighted it has been approved.

Whilst the degree is open to anyone with the desire and prerequisite qualifications, it lends itself to trade staff who are not client facing and that accounts for 50% of our industry as well as selling staff who aspire to management and current owners and future owners who want to take the next step in their career.

'We expect it will also attract new talent from New Zealand and overseas to the sector which will enrich the trade's intelligence and business capability into the future. The AUT team has done an outstanding job in pushing for this approval and our congratulations go to them on this achievement.'

Megan Roberts says the two proposed majors provide a relevant, high quality curriculum that address the strategic themes and goals of AUT and develop knowledge through insightful connections.

'The new structure of the BITM programme offers more choice than ever before, enabling students to choose subjects based on their interests and opening career options. For example, combining Travel Management with a major in Marketing or International Business, or combining Travel Management with a minor in Digital Media and/or Human Resources are all possibilities.'

CLICK HERE for details.

Tuesday Memo on Wednesday

The Tuesday TRAVELinc Memo will be published on Wednesday over the next two weeks, due to Monday public holidays in Auckland (Auckland Anniversary and Waitangi Day). But don't worry, you'll still get all the news through your favourite publication twice a week. And, of course, if there is any urgent breaking news to report we will get it out via our One Minute Memos.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Nadi to Adelaide

Fiji Airways plans to commence direct services to Nadi from Adelaide from 30 June. This marks the fourth Australian leg for the airline after Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. The new route will also be a gateway for flights to the United States, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, via Nadi.

Aeromexico goes to Seoul

Aeromexico is to operate four weekly flights between Mexico City and Seoul from 27 May. The route will be operated with a Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, which has a capacity of 243 passengers.

Emirates launches daily to Newark via Athens

Emirates will launch a new daily service from Dubai to Newark Liberty International Airport, New York, via the Greek capital city of Athens, from 12 March.

The new route complements Emirates' existing four daily flights between Dubai and New York's JFK airport, further boosting accessibility to the area.

This new flight will also provide a year-round non-stop daily service between the United States and Greece – a service that has not existed since 2012.

The airline will operate a wide-body Boeing 777-300ER, offering eight seats in first, 42 seats in business and 304 seats



in economy class, as well as 19 tonnes of cargo capacity.

Emirates also offers connections at Dubai from all five of its New Zealand services to its daily Athens flights.

Air NZ app's cup runneth over

Air New Zealand's mobile app is a hit with customers, clocking up its one millionth download this week.

Meanwhile, the app's coffee ordering function has just registered its two millionth coffee order.

The ability to order a coffee from the app while visiting many of the airline's lounges was added in 2014, and is one of the app's most used features.

Air New Zealand chief digital officer Avi Golan says a million downloads is an important milestone for the airline.

'We first launched our mobile platform in 2008, then relaunched in 2013 with enhanced functionality, and have continued to add new features as

we build up its functionality.'

Air New Zealand's mobile app offers a range of features to enhance the check-in, lounge, and boarding experiences for customers, including the ability to check-in for flights, manage bookings on the go, track Airpoints balances and receive real-time flight information.



In 2015, Air New Zealand also became one of the first airlines in the world to launch an app for the much anticipated Apple Watch.

The airline's app is also now available on Android Wear.

To download the Air New Zealand app for mobile, Apple Watch or Android Wear, visit www.airnewzealand.co.nz/air-nz-app

Air Asia X cleared for US, eyeing London

AirAsia X has received clearance from the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) to fly to the US – the first Asian low-cost carrier to do so.

The approval allows AirAsia's long-haul, low-cost sister airline to operate services to any destination within the US.

AirAsia X is currently considering flights to several US states including Hawaii as part of its route expansion plans.

AirAsia X Group CEO Datuk Kamarudin Meranun says the airline's expansion has to date concentrated on Asia, Australasia and the Middle East.

'We are excited about our first foray into an entirely new market as we look beyond Asia Pacific,' Meranun says.

'As part of our expansion plans, we are also looking to resume our popular London route, and are working towards securing the necessary approvals.'

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Predictions for the New Year of the Rooster from Cathay Pacific

Rat

1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008

Rats will be able to spend a little more with an increase in fortunes. You will be especially persuasive in attracting a sizeable increase to your income. You aren't likely to experience any major health concerns in 2017, but be careful not to over indulge. In terms of relationships and networking, 2017 will be a good year.

Ox

1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009

Oxen should stay away from high risk investments or gambling. Work may be challenging but rewarding - Oxen will be recognized for their hard work and valuable contributions. The Ox will generally have good relationships throughout the Year of the Rooster.

Tiger

1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010

The Tiger will enjoy some luck with money, especially midyear, but try not to lend too much money to others as you may have a difficult time in getting it back. If you're looking for love, it's there but not obvious. You may not be so attracted to the ones who approach.

Rabbit

1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011

Sometimes things at work may seem too good to be true and in most cases they are. Think twice, before making any serious decisions. Take care of your health in 2017. Common illnesses may take longer than usual to heal. Expect changes in your relationships. Expand your collection of social and business connections and overall, you will gain good friends who can become advocates and supporters.

Dragon

1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012

A prosperous year lies ahead for the Dragon - there is possibility of promotion or an increase in salary. Some Dragons will lose some money at the end of the year without warning, but this will only be a minor setback. Those Dragons already in relationships will feel settled, while some singles will need to be persistent. New connections may be found at social gatherings.

Dog

1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006

You should not take your good health for granted and be sure to take rests. Be careful with money, there is a possibility of going into debt if you're not careful. Work obstacles and difficulties may come from several directions at once, but they won't be anything you can't handle. If you meet challenges head-on, this year should turn out well both financially and personally.

Snake

1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013

Changes in wealth for the better are very likely, and you will find success should you acquire new skills. But not without effort - lazy snakes will not reap rewards. Grab opportunities when they arise. Some Snakes will experience health problems associated with heat. Take advantage of invitations in the hope of finding love.

Horse

1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014

Home life is secure and problems are not overwhelming. But, work diligently, be thorough and meticulous, and slow down. There is a chance of unexpected travelling, so set a little money aside - this is a trip you won't want to miss! Married Horses should be careful this year as gossip may add stress to your relationship.

Goat/Sheep

1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015

Goats should be careful not to let others lead them astray this year. It is not worth creating instability in your life because of peers who wish to break the rules. Longstanding interpersonal relationships will prove their importance. Your hard work may be slow to reap rewards but Goats can be assured that they will arrive by the second half of the year.

Monkey

1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016

Monkeys are passionate and tend to fall in love easily. Be wary of affairs that may present this year whether elicited or not. Single Monkeys may have difficulty settling down with long term partners. It could be wise instead to concentrate on self-improvement and your career. You will find it easy to pick up new skills and techniques but be aware of being too competitive as it could hinder goals.release activities.

Rooster

1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005

There is no limit to what a Rooster can achieve this year if they are able to harness the well of determination that exists within them. You can expect to have made progress in a particular area of your life by mid-year but you ought to think over what is most important. Peripheral problems may have unexpected consequences if left unchecked. Your restlessness may also impact personal relationships so try to take the time to understand your partner's wishes.

Pig

1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007

Your health will improve and more money may come your way. Prospects in employment look good - your options are expanding. Expect to travel on work-related trips which may bring you to someone new which may develop into a relationship.

Revenue up as Thailand shifts tourism focus

Thailand's tourism revenue was up 12% to US\$46 billion last year compared to 2015, and is predicted to continue rising.

The increase was helped by the American and European markets which rose more than 13% and 10%, respectively.

Tourism Authority of Thailand Sydney director Rujiras Chatchalermkit says the country's marketing focus is continuing to move away from being a budget hotspot for party-goers to become a destination renowned for wellness and eco-tourism experiences.

'This focus on quality tourism has seen a move from simply counting visitor numbers to measuring tourism revenue.'

The country has returned to normal following the October 2016 death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and festivities have resumed.

The first big event of the year, Thailand Tourism Festival, at Bangkok's Lumpini Park is under way until Sunday and is expected to attract 650,000 people – 90% of whom are predicted to travel on

throughout Thailand. These trips could generate up to 400 million baht in revenue.

However, the King's death has brought world attention to the achievements during his reign, and growing interest in the nation's Royal Projects, which fits with TAT's focus for 2017 on promoting the Unique Thai Local Experiences.

During his reign, King Bhumibol Adulyadej initiated many Royal Projects around the country with an aim to look after Thailand's poorest people, share the country's wealth, and look after its natural resources.

'These projects offer tourists a new way of experiencing Thailand and of making a real grassroots connection with the kingdom's people. All the projects welcome visitors, be it for a few hours or several days, and there is a range of things to do such as learning how to make a local dish, releasing fish into the Thai seas, feeding cattle or teaching the village children before spending a night under the roof of a local family.



Thailand puts the focus on quality travel

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Chinese New Year Parade in Macao

Date : 30th January and 4th February 2017

The "Parade for Celebration" features a colourful array of lights, costumes, extravagant floats and spectacular fireworks along the streets of Macao with more than 1,500 entertainers showcasing a display of mixed cultural performances from across the globe. With 14 floats, 28 local groups 9 performance groups from different countries including Australia.

Macao International Dragon Boat Races

Date : 27th, 28th & 30th May 2017

Each year, Nam Van Lake is awash with colour as rowers from around the globe challenge the best from Macao in the annual international dragon boat races. The program is more like a festival than a series of races, oars in unison across of number race categories, teams of women against women, men against men, juniors against juniors.

29th Macao International Fireworks Display Contest

Dates: September - October 2017

Universally acclaimed as one of the best of its kind and takes place on the shorefront of the Macao Tower each weekend from September to October each year. More than 16 teams from around the world compete in what's known as a world-class pyrotechnic shoot-out. Many visitors choose this time of year to come to Macao to enjoy a holiday illuminated by the spectacular displays in the night.

For more information about the events of Macao, visit our website : <http://en.macaotourism.gov.mo>

17th Macao Food Festival

Date : 10th - 22nd November 2017

With the 338-metre-high Macao Tower as a backdrop, 120 local restaurants merge with 26 invited food and beverage merchants to put on its Macao Food Festival, the many colours from the maze of stalls mirrored in the waters of nearby Sai Van Lake. The aroma of freshly cooked dishes soon has mouths watering in a square filled with additional entertainment over the 17 days in November.

64th Macao Grand Prix

Dates: 16th - 19th November 2017

This Formula 3 event is internationally recognised as the longest running event of its kind and most prestigious on the local calendar. The Macao Grand Prix in the motorsports world is called - the proving ground of new legends.

36th Macao International Marathon

Date : 3rd December 2017

First hosted by Macao in 1981, this event continues to attract large numbers of local and international runners from across the globe. The full course includes the Peninsula, Taipa and Coloane, whilst the Half and Mini Marathon have been created to attract not only professional athletes but budding amateurs seeking to test their endurance on the course.

Parade through Macao, Latin City

Date : 3rd December 2017

This event marks the anniversary of Macao's Handover to China. The parade highlights Macao's unique cultural features and the City's multicultural atmosphere in which the artists present dazzlingly colourful performances, bringing the celebration to a vivid climax.

Macao Government Tourism Office New Zealand is represented by Richard Froggatt. To order Guide Books, Maps and Itineraries go to www.travelxpress.co.nz OR for more information contact our office on +64 (0) 21 750944 or email: macao@regencytourism.com

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Raffles celebrates 130th anniversary

Raffles Hotel Singapore will host a series of events as well as offer attractive stay packages and dining specials for visitors to mark its 130th anniversary.

These include Walk of Fame history tours, taking place each Saturday from February to August at 10am, 2pm and 5pm, and priced from S\$20. Conducted by guides from the Preservation of Sites and Monuments Division of the National Heritage Board, the 45-minute tours will explore the hotel and give a glimpse of its many famous guests. The tour will also highlight locations where films such as *Pretty Polly* and *Hawaii Five-O* were shot.

A 130th anniversary vacation package (priced from S\$130 on top of the room rate) will allow guests to choose from a number of add-ons, including lunch, afternoon tea or dinner for two at Tiffin Room, 30-minute foot or back massage with 50% reduction for a second treatment, complimentary bottle of Billecart-Salmon Brut Reserve, or late check-out at 3pm.

The package also includes welcome Singapore Slings upon check-in, a history tour with a local historian, 24-hours. Raffles butler service, and complimentary wifi. The package is available for booking now and must be redeemed by 31 August.



Hotel restoration

Raffles Hotel Singapore will embark on a restoration programme, carried out in three phases, this year.

Phase one begins in the middle of February and will see the Raffles Hotel Arcade undergo restoration works. This includes the Long Bar, the banqueting facilities and the retail arcade. The Singapore Sling will continue to be served at the hotel's Bar and Billiard Room and the other areas of the hotel will operate as normal.

Phase two will commence in August, involving restoration of some of the hotel suites. Phase three will start at the end of 2017, with the hotel fully closed. A grand opening is planned for the middle of 2018.

Celebrate Chinese New Year in Phuket

Sala Phuket Resort and Spa is celebrating the Year of the Rooster on 28 January with a night that will showcase the long history of Chinese influence on the island of Phuket.

Celebrations will kick off with cocktails at the bar followed by Chinese themed food markets. Some food on offer includes crackling pork, roast duck and a variety of Chinese regional dishes.

After guests have eaten they can watch traditional lion dancing and a fireworks show – customs that warn off evil spirits.

Then they can sit back and relax as the resort will turn into an outdoor 'Kung Fu Theatre', complete with reclining beach chairs and a special screening of the retro Bruce Lee classic *Enter the Dragon*.

Explore: save on more than 27 itineraries

Explore Worldwide is offering a \$185 per person saving on its Vietnam holidays.

The deal is available on more than 27 itineraries and valid for all



departure dates on bookings made before 6 February.

Included in the deal is Explore's 13-day Simply Vietnam, which travels the coast from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi.

Prices for this small group journey now start from \$1349 per person.

Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are also covered by the promotion under Explore's Jewels of Indochina itinerary.

Prices for this 27-day trip start from \$4068 per person.

www.exploreworldwide.co.nz

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Qatar's coming – so here's what to do in Doha

With Qatar Airways flying direct into Auckland from 6 February, Exotic Holidays is urging agents and clients take advantage of the new service and combine it with a Doha Stopover Tour en route to Europe.

Highlights of the programme include Katara, a cultural village that brings together performance spaces, galleries, restaurants, cafes; the Museum of Islamic Art; traditional and falcon (national bird) shops; Pearl Qatar, rated as the Middle East's most glamorous artificial island; and an inland sea safari.

The programme also has a desert safari that includes dune bashing, a rollercoaster ride over massive dunes, and a traditional barbecue dinner at a Bedouin-style camp.

CLICK HERE for details.



Dune busting is one of the activities involved in the Qatar stopover



Some HK events showcase traditional and modern-style performances

What's on, Hong Kong?

Hong Kong's summer calendar is highlighted by four major events.

The 45th Hong Kong Arts Festival runs from 16 February to 18 March, and will showcase a large selection of music, opera, dance and drama in traditional and contemporary styles.

The Beerfest Asia Hong Kong will then be staged over four days from 2 March. Local and international bands and DJs will play as people sample craft beer from across the globe.

Meanwhile, the Taste of Hong Kong

Agent deal on HK rail

Hong Kong's integrated attractions/city pass, iVenture Card, is offering travel related employees 20% off for cards purchased for personal use.

<http://tinyurl.com/hnwkn5v>

is happening from 16 to 19 March and Art Basel (a contemporary art show) will run from 23 to 25 March.

Set sail on the Yangtze for less

Sanctuary Retreats is offering special early bird prices for accommodation on its Sanctuary Yangzi Explorer, a boat that sails down China's Yangtze River.

If clients pay in full three months before any shoulder or high season booking they can receive a 25% discount and free cabin upgrade. And for the peak season, a 10% discount is on offer.

The shoulder season runs from 1 June to 7 September, the high season from 2 to 27 April and 2 to 16 November, and the peak season goes from 30 April to 28 May and 10 September to 29 October 2017.

www.sanctuaryretreats.com

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Cruising

Celebrate Anzac Day on Murray Princess

Captain Cook Cruises is embarking on a seven-night cruise to honour Anzac Day.

The Anzac Cruise departs 21 April onboard Paddlewheeler Murray Princess. It combines the Upper Murraylands itinerary with Anzac Day festivities and entertainment, including a dawn service, traditional Gun Fire Breakfast and a game of Two-Up.

The cruise visits the northern area of the Murray River from Mannum to Morgan, exploring Australia's riverlands history.

It calls on the towns of Waikerie, Morgan and Swan Reach.

There is also a lunch and wine tasting at Banrock Station Wine and Wetland Centre as well as a vineyard tour and cellar door tastings at Burk Salter Boutique Winery and Caudo Vineyard.

Passengers can also learn about Aboriginal cultural at Ngaut Ngaut Aboriginal Reserve.

The cruise sets out on 21 April, and early booking fares start from A\$2014 per person twin share (based on an inside cabin with two single beds).

www.murrayprincess.com.au

Paddlewheeler Murray Princess – an Anzac Day cruise will include a dawn service



Seabourn's newest vessel heading Down Under

Seabourn Encore was welcomed into the cruising world at a ceremony in Singapore this month.

International recording artist Sarah Brightman presided over the naming ceremony as godmother of the new 600-guest ship.

Directors of Cruise World and Seabourn's New Zealand representative, Joseph and Donal O'Sullivan attended. They say Encore will be the newest luxurious vessel to visit New Zealand when it arrives next month. It will offer a Kiwi programme followed by a voyage back to the Mediterranean for the northern summer.

Features include The Grill by Thomas Keller and a new restaurant called Sushi; a spa and wellness centre and an evening with Tim Rice.

Encore's inaugural season brings with it savings such as complimentary three veranda suite category upgrade; US\$400



Seabourn credit on Alaska voyages; US\$1000 per suite shipboard credit for penthouse and premium suites.

Meanwhile, journeys include 10-day Gems of the Java Sea II, Bali to Singapore, 22 March, A\$5499 per person; 16-day Jewels of India & Arabia, Singapore to Dubai, 1 April, A\$5799 per person and seven-day Riviera Allure, Rome to Barcelona, 13 and 27 May 13, from A\$4299 per person. info@cruiseworld.co.nz

Windstar is setting sail for Alaska

Windstar Cruises plans to sail to Alaska in spring/summer 2018.

The itineraries, which start at 11 days, are aboard the 212-passenger yacht Star Legend.

Highlights of the inaugural season include Trace Arm and Misty Fjords; kayaking and Zodiac scenic trips; glacier experiences and full immersion at about eight Alaskan and British Columbian ports.

Windstar president John Delaney says work is also under way to arrange customised experiences such as a chance to hike the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau

or a private flight over Glacier Bay.

Windstar also recently announced its return to Asia in 2017/18. Star Legend is sailing from Tokyo to Seward (Anchorage), Alaska, over a 14-day trans-Pacific cruise, which also stops in Japan.

Once in Alaska, it embarks on three new itineraries with eight sailing dates, departing May to August, including a 14-day Seward (Anchorage) to Vancouver option; 12-day Vancouver round trip itinerary, and 11 or 12-day Vancouver to Seward (Anchorage) voyages.

At sea with Aussie history

Princess Cruises has set up an onboard exhibition showcasing major moments from Australia's past.

The exhibition, Defining Moments in Australian History, has been developed in partnership with the National Museum of Australia and will feature onboard the cruise line's fleet of five Australian-based ships until 2021.

The initial programme at the museum in Canberra identified 100 key defining moments in Australian history, including the opening of the Sydney Opera House, evidence of Indigenous Australians on the continent more than 50,000 years ago and the formation of the children's entertainment group The Wiggles.

Oceania releases Europe deals

Oceania Cruises has launched a Best of Europe 2017 campaign, which offers deals on 36 voyages calling in on more than 200 different ports across Europe.

The deals, valid until 31 March, include free internet, shore excursions and beverage packages.

Passengers will also receive US\$250 to spend onboard and 50% reduced deposits on 36 select European itineraries departing from March to December 2017.

www.oceaniacruises.com/special-offers

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Australia

Multi-million dollar upgrades to Daydream

Daydream Island Resort and Spa will have a more than \$50 million-dollar redevelopment which will see significant infrastructure upgrades to the popular Whitsundays resort.

The works will see the resort closing in early 2018 for a period of time to ensure renovations can occur in the shortest possible time and with minimal disruptions.

Daydream Island Resort and Spa general manager Dawson Tang says the major redevelopment covers accommodation refurbishments as well as renovations to existing attractions and installation of new features, which will transform Daydream into a four-and-a-half star resort.

Major works will include redevelopment of the arrivals pavilion, reception, main atrium area, Waterfalls restaurant, Lagoons bar, all room types and Mermaids



Artist's impression of the redeveloped atrium area at Daydream Island Resort and Spa

Restaurant. Additionally, the Lovers Cove function area will be expanded and a new Asian-inspired restaurant will be built.

One of Daydream Island's signature attractions, the Living Reef lagoons, will also be upgraded with some new features.

The resort's conference facilities will be significantly revamped and expanded.
www.daydreamisland.com

Mantra's new man in Australia

Mantra Group has appointed Andrew McTaggart as development manager to facilitate the company's ongoing expansion.

McTaggart, to be based in Australia, is well credentialed in hotel operations, finance, development and acquisitions after many years in senior executive positions with Accor and Accor Premier Vacation Club in roles including hotel general manager, general manager of acquisitions and chief financial officer.

McTaggart says he's excited to join Mantra Group's development



Andrew McTaggart

team, who in the past two years has added 22 new properties to the Group's portfolio.

'As the industry is in a significant growth phase in terms of product development, I look forward to promoting the attributes and advantages of the Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree brands

and working alongside the group's experienced team of more than 5500.'

Andrew.McTaggart@mantragroup.com.au

THE MELBOURNE AND BEYOND EXPERIENCE 2017



New Zealand Travel Trade Workshop and Familiarisations

Dates: 19 March – 25 March 2017

Location: Melbourne and Victoria

No cost for agents – all-inclusive trip – open to all New Zealand based travel agents.

Visit Victoria invites New Zealand travel agents and brokers to participate in The Melbourne and Beyond Experience 2017. This will be your personal introduction to the best of Melbourne and Victoria. The program includes a one-day trade training workshop plus Melbourne and Regional Victoria Familiarisations.

REGISTER HERE

Australia

Gold Coast monorail closing

The monorail service between Jupiters Gold Coast and Oasis Shopping Centre will cease operation from Monday.

After nearly 30 years of service the rail is shutting down as its day-to-day reliability diminished over time and the maintenance and infrastructure costs had risen significantly.

The Oasis Shopping Centre's decision to remove the monorail has been supported by Jupiters Gold Coast, which is well advanced with its own A\$850 million development plans.

These plans include the construction of a six-star tower in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, and a joint venture with its Hong Kong-based partners Chow Tai Fook and Far East Consortium to build an additional hotel and apartment tower on Broadbeach Island site.

BIG4 makes a splash

BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort is building one of Australia's largest resort waterslide parks.

The facility will have 13 different water slides, and is designed for young families.

Owner Greg McKinnon says: 'We've had great fun putting all the elements together. The slides come off two-metre-high elevated platforms, which are linked by bridges.'

Construction has begun and the project is expected to be completed by April.

www.adventurewhitsunday.com.au

Big weekend ahead for AccorHotels in Aussie cities

AccorHotels is reporting strong demand in hotel occupancy ahead of a bumper weekend, with both Australia Day and Chinese New Year revellers driving demand into core markets of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

AccorHotels chief operating officer, Simon McGrath attributes the bumper weekend to those making the most of Australia Day by making it a four-day long weekend and the start of the two week Chinese New Year festival to celebrate the Year of the Rooster.

'With many Australian's planning to enjoy four days off this coming weekend, it's pleasing to see so many making the most of the Australia Day public holiday and taking advantage of the warm weather we are currently experiencing around the country.'

'Our Sydney CBD and Melbourne CBD hotels are highly constrained this coming weekend, currently sitting at over 90% occupancy, with limited rooms still available for revellers looking to book a hotel stay. Novotel Sydney on Darling

Harbour for example, is forecasting to be 100% full this coming weekend, with only a handful of rooms still available to book.'

'Even Brisbane, which is a softer market at the moment, is reporting over 70% occupancy across the board, a significant uplift of 30% compared to the same weekend last year, which is extremely positive,' concludes McGrath.

The Year of the Rooster will be celebrated at over 50 AccorHotels across the country from 28 January, 2017.

Indigo a goer in 2020

A 140-room Hotel Indigo is expected to open in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley district in 2020.

This is the result of a recent management agreement between InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) and Pointcorp.

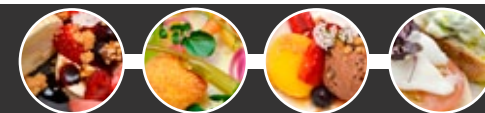
Hotel Indigo is IHG's boutique hotel brand and no two Hotel Indigo properties are alike, each designed to reflect the culture, history and heritage of its local neighbourhood.

The location on 458 Brunswick Street will allow guests to explore the many art galleries, laneway restaurants and boutique stores during their stay.

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Europe

The Aegean is highlighted on a 'treasures' tour



Treasures of the Aegean

Exotic Holidays is highlighting an Aegean Treasures Tour – 11 days travelling Istanbul to Athens priced from \$2839 per person.

The Greece part of the trip involves island hopping with a local tour leader to help clients out along the way and explain the history of the destination when the travellers reach Athens.

Exotic managing director Rahul Sharma says trade can also recommend the

Meteora and Delphi short break as an add-on to any tour starting or finishing in Athens. The tours are operated by Fez Travel, which Exotic represents in the New Zealand market.

Clients who book by 31 January will receive the early bird discount of 20%, those who book and pay in full by 31 March receive a 15% discount.

www.feztravel.com/Aegean_Treasures_Tour.asp

More history and culture with Mir

MIR Corporation is offering a 16-day tour exploring the history and cultures of Bulgaria and Romania.

Guests will view frescoes of painted monasteries, the Valley of the Roses, and Bran Castle in Transylvania (Bram

Stoker's model for Dracula's ancestral home).

The tour will run from 30 May to 14 June, and costs from US\$6195.

www.mircorp.com/trip/bulgaria-romania-frescoes-fortresses/

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The hotel is a favourite with fans of the royals

Get the inside story on Kensington

The Milestone Hotel, sited next to Kensington Palace and Gardens, has launched a Kensington Uncovered package to introduce travellers to the area.

Until 30 April, guests will be taken behind the scenes of the royal neighbourhood and offered insider tours.

The package includes a two-night stay in a Deluxe King room, breakfast, private walking tour for two, choice of a private walking tour of the palace or The Royal Albert Hall and afternoon tea for two.

It is priced from £430 (based on two adults) and can be upgraded with a discounted Bentley transfer from London Heathrow or City Airport at an additional charge of £200 each way or one-way complimentary transfer when upgrading to a suite.

www.milestonehotel.com

Road trip! Motorhome adventurers in the US and Europe

Self-drive specialists DriveAway Holidays has released a select number of one-way specials for new motorhomes coming off Cruise America's production line and from Just Go in Europe.

They will be available on a first-in basis from Cruise America's Chicago and Los Angeles stations in the US and Toronto in Canada.

The specials are being offered to help facilitate relocations to rental stations throughout the US and western Canada.

These include from Chicago to Boston, Seattle, Las Vegas, Los Angeles,

Philadelphia, San Francisco or Salt Lake City and from Los Angeles to Denver, Seattle, Las Vegas or Salt Lake City.

In Canada they can be booked from Toronto to Montreal, Vancouver or Calgary.

Rates from Chicago to Los Angeles in April start from about \$52 per day on a minimum seven-day rental in a three-berth motorhome.

US and Canada rentals include about 320 kilometres per night.

Also on offer are last minute all-inclusive relocation specials from



DriveAway Holidays give Kiwis freedom to roam

Italy to London in a brand new Just Go motorhome. Ten free days are available on bookings made in March, April and May.

Europe in the frame with Uniworld

Uniworld Boutique River Cruises is offering complimentary floating photo workshops to guests on two of its all-inclusive, luxury Europe river journeys in 2017.

Designed for beginner to



The workshops include daily photo assignments and opportunities to shot the sights of Europe with a professional photographer

intermediate photographers, the workshops will feature a dedicated photography instructor throughout the cruise, daily photo assignments, opportunities for guests to shoot side-by-side with the instructor during shore excursions, tips and one-on-one critiques, and lectures.

The workshops will be available on the 10-day Gems of Northern Italy trip leaving on 16 June (\$4459 per person twin share) and the 28 June departure of Highlights of Eastern Europe, which runs for 10 days from \$4195 per person twin share.

Space on the photography workshops is limited and the promo code 1FPW17 must be used when booking.

www.uniworld.com

Empire elevated

A new elevator experience is available for visitors to the Empire State Building in New York.

Mini-shows with sound, created by design studio Imaginary Forces, will play on the ceiling of the elevator cars both on the ascent to and descent from the world-famous 86th Floor Observatory.



Pacific Islands

Cooks hotel postpones expansion project

The Islander Hotel located on the waterfront at Rarotonga International Airport, Cook Islands, has postponed its planned rooms expansion project until the end of 2017.

It was to have taken place from mid-February until September this year.

Managing director Rohan Ellis says the hotel is not ready to begin the programme. 'We are still holding solid group bookings through to June 2017 and are unable to offload them. There is so much to do to wind-down our rooms business and we feel that we are better aimed at November and December 2017.'

The Islander Hotel completed two expansion projects in 2016 – its new outdoor dining pavilion Tiki Terrace and



The Islander Hotel

the all day happy hour Hula Bar.

Once negotiations are finalised, paperwork completed and timelines set in contract, the Islander Hotel will announce final dates for the room expansion project.

Pearl awards – get with the programme

The three-property Pacific Resort Hotel Group is showing its appreciation of agents by launching the 2017 Pacific Pearls programme.

The programme benefits include rewards for room nights booked, monthly achiever rewards and a supreme annual achiever reward and much more.

To join, agents need to make a booking at Pacific Resort Rarotonga, Pacific Resort Aitutaki, Te Manava Luxury Villas & Spa, Little Polynesian Resort (PRHG) or Moana Sands Beachfront Hotel & Villas.

Benefits include a box of chocolates for a 10-night booking; Bvlgari gift pack for 20 nights and black pearl gift

for 50 nights.

There is also 50% discount on room rates year-round at Pacific Resort Aitutaki, Pacific Resort Rarotonga, Little Polynesian Resort and Moana Sands Beachfront Hotel & Villas (subject to availability) as well as a monthly \$100 voucher for the highest room-night achiever.

The annual supreme prize, for highest annual room-night achiever, is nine nights accommodation, consisting of two nights at Pacific Resort Rarotonga, two at Moana Sands Beachfront Hotel, two at Little Polynesian Resort and three at Pacific Resort Aitutaki. Airfares are not included.



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Pacific Islands

Little Polynesian member of SLH

Little Polynesian Resort is now branded as a Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH).

The resort is the newest member of the Pacific Resort Hotel Group (PRHG) portfolio.

Until now PRHG's Pacific Resort Aitutaki has been the only SLH resort in the Cook Islands. With its newest property on Rarotonga joining the group, SLH Club members and other independent travellers have the option to experience two full service resorts in the Cook Islands.

PRHG chief executive officer Greg Stanaway says branding Little Polynesian Resort under the SLH banner will not only amplify global visibility and marketing opportunities for the resort, but also help build further awareness for the Cook Islands as a destination in numerous key markets.

Small Luxury Hotels of the World caters to guests seeking one-of-a-kind experiences at independently spirited hotels. Receiving over 1,000 applications from international hotels annually, SLH accepts a small fraction of those meeting



Little Polynesian Resort now a member of Small Luxury Hotels

strict criteria to become part of the SLH brand.

Little Polynesian Resort is among 20 other SLH properties located in the South Pacific region. Beyond that, the brand includes more than 500 other small, independent hotels across 80 different countries around the world.

occupancy in the room.

The change is in line with the resort's sister property, Saletoga Sands Resort and Spa.

Meanwhile, the New Year specials for both properties have been extended for sales until 28 February.

Saletoga amends child policy

Saletoga Beach Bungalows & Hotel has amended its child policy, allowing up to two children aged under 12 to stay free when sharing with parents up to the maximum room occupancy.

Cots for infants under two years is free of charge, but subject to maximum

Training in Tonga

The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) is holding a series of short, innovative tourism business training workshops aimed at micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Tonga next month.

The series of six, hour-long workshops are being offered in conjunction with the Tongan Ministry of Tourism and New Zealand-based Learn.fast Centre on 1 February in Nuku'alofa.

Topics to be covered include branding and marketability, Pacific tourism trends, increasing business profits, tourism marketing on small budgets, sustainable 'best practices' for small business; and crisis and risk management.

The next day, 2 February, the trainer will be available to provide individual business coaching to trainees who require further assistance.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Apia shuttle

Return to Paradise Resort in Samoa is running a shuttle bus into Apia every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This gives guests a chance to take in some shopping and sightseeing. The cost is T\$20 per person for the round trip. Details from Hogan and Associates. susie@hoganreps.co.nz

Niue famils

Hogan and Associates, which represents Niue to the trade in New Zealand, is reporting a big response to its launch of self-famils to the destination for 2017. The famils were promoted in a special Memo yesterday and Mike Hogan says interested agents should get in quickly. www.niueselfamil.com, password: TakeMeToNiue or call Hogan & Associates on 09 4897844

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newcaledonia.travel

New Zealand

InterCity begins gold run from Auckland to Wellington

Two new InterCity double-decker buses have hit the road, offering a new level of luxury for long-distance bus passengers.

Each Scania K440 vehicle offers 18 gold-standard seats on the upper level – large soft leather recliners with individual charge ports and power outlets.

The 65-seater InterCity Gold buses will travel daily between Auckland and Wellington, stopping at Hamilton, Cambridge, Tokoroa, Taupo, Bulls and Palmerston North.

‘We’re committed to providing quality travel experiences for our passengers, and InterCity Gold offers the highest level of comfort in long distance bus travel,’ says Sam Peate, InterCity Group general manager coachlines and Auckland tourism.

Standard seating will also be available on both levels. These also feature USB charge ports.

InterCity launched its popular gold service in 2014 and has been expanding its availability ever since, with gold buses now available in both the North and South Islands.

Built at a cost of more than \$1.5m, the 15-tonne double-decker buses stand 4.3m high and 13.5m in length.

Travel in luxury between Auckland and Wellington



Tourism industry recovers in Kaikoura

Kaikoura appears to back on its feet just two months after the town bore the brunt of the 14 November earthquake.

Ninety per cent of Kaikoura’s tourism businesses, including whale watching, dolphin and albatross-watching operators, have reopened.

And 78% of accommodation providers are back in business.

René de Monchy, director trade, PR and major events at Tourism New Zealand, says the organisation is working to ensure travel sellers

continue to recommend the destination.

‘We are encouraging trade agents to come to Kaikoura and see for themselves that Kaikoura is up and running and some are taking this opportunity,’ de Monchy says.

‘Understandably there has been a drop off in travel to Kaikoura in the wake of the earthquake. As access improves, more tourists are arriving but it will take some time to get back to the way it was.’

Wellington hotel takes on QT name

The Museum Art Hotel, following a \$12 million makeover, this week changes its name to QT Museum Wellington.

This is the first New Zealand location for boutique design-driven hotel collection QT Hotels & Resorts. Each QT Hotel and Resort is inspired by and embodies the unique culture of its location.

Embracing the creative culture of the capital, QT Museum Wellington is described as a blend of ‘art, design and a dash of the absurd, resulting in cool luxury’.

QT Managing director, David Seargeant, says the refurbishment revolutionises the hotel while paying homage its history.

The hotel’s original eccentric and eclectic art collection will be displayed throughout the public spaces alongside new pieces. The Hippopotamus

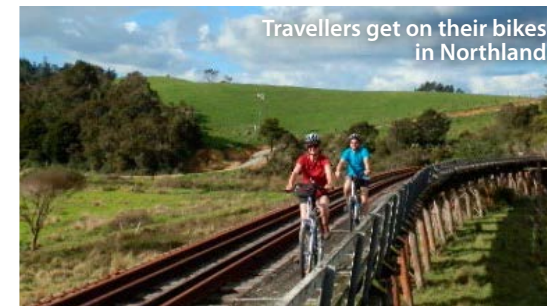
QT Wellington – where art meets luxury surrounds



Restaurant & Bar will continue to serve French-inspired fare under the direction of executive chef Laurent Loudeac.

Wellington can also expect a new eatery in mid-2017 when the Japanese/Korean street food-inspired bar, Hot Sauce, opens.

QT holds seven boutique properties across Australia and New Zealand, QT Queenstown will be next instalment of the boutique design-driven collection of hotels.



Travellers get on their bikes in Northland

Top Trail sees hike in bike bookings

It’s only been a month since the opening of New Zealand’s newest cycle trail, Twin Coast Cycle Trail Pou Herenga Tai, and Northland bike operators are experiencing a surge in business.

Kaikohe-based Top Trail Hire & Tours has reported a 200% increase in enquiries, a 150% increase in shuttle bookings and a 120% increase in booking for bed and breakfast since the trail opened on 23 December, compared to the same time last year.

Top Trail’s owner and operator Ray Clarke is elated with the results.

‘This has been a fantastic season so far with high-quality bookings and enquiries. These are often for two-day tours rather than just the one-day tours we used to receive. Plus we’re getting lots more business for transfers to and from Kaikohe. This is great news for local businesses and accommodation in places that will really benefit from visitors,’ says Clarke.

The new trail runs for 87kms from the Hokianga Harbour on the west coast to the Bay of Islands on the east coast of Northland.

MYSTERY PERSON



It's a mystery

We spotted Brenda Nash, Alila Hotels and Resorts (centre) with Debbie Ware (left) from TravelSmart Meadowbank at the Exotic Holidays *Lion* movie night last week. Our caption writer's pen ran out of ink before she could name the woman on the right.

If you know the mystery person send her name to competitions@promag.co.nz and remember to put 'Mystery Person' in the subject line.

Kelvin Chak from EventSmart identified last weeks mystery person – Blair Haeata, marketing and commercial manager for CZ. A copy of National Geographic Traveller, courtesy of Adventure World is on the way.

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Sustainable tourism launch

The official launch of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 took place at the International Tourism Fair of Spain, FITUR.

It started 12 months of global actions aimed at advancing sustainable tourism contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

'The world can and must harness the

power of tourism as we strive to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,' says United Nations secretary-general, Antonio Guterres.

The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 was declared in December 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly.

www.tourism4development2017.org/

New face at Naisoso Fiji

Chauntelle Leung is the new guest relations manager at Naisoso Fiji. Leung has worked at luxury resort Vatulele Island Resort and local inbound operator Pacific Destinations.

She joins Naisoso as it expands its villa portfolio in 2017 with three new villas set to become available throughout the year, including a five bedroom riverfront villa with entrance water features, three pools (including two

private plunge pools), kids games/media room, four bedrooms with outdoor showers, large kitchen and living spaces and large pool overlooking the private river and mountain views. This will be available from June 2017.



Chanutelle Leung

Passport power: Germany tops

Passport Index, which ranks the power of the world's passports, has updated its key players – and Germany takes the lead.

Germany has a visa-free score of 157. In second place, Singapore overtakes South Korea to become the highest ranked Asian passport, with a visa free score of 156.

The score represents the number of countries a passport holder can visit visa-free or with visa on arrival.

Deadline rocking up

Contiki is reminding agents there are only two months left to secure their 2017 ROCK Around the World spot.

Five ROCKstars – New Zealand's top selling consultants – will travel to one of the world's hottest festivals with Contiki and other top sellers from around the world later this year. Agents can get a teaser of this year's ROCK destination on the Contiki Agents (NZ) Facebook page from this Friday and all will be revealed soon.

In 2016 the top selling Contiki agents went to Fuji Rock in Japan, with acts such as the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Years and Years, Disclosure and James Blake taking the stage.

Bookings made from 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017, for trips of any length to any region, count towards ROCK and bring agents closer to becoming part of this year's action.

CLICK HERE for details or **CLICK HERE** for the facebook page.

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