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## NTIA: are we in for some surprises?

Some new faces are likely to emerge as industry forces when finalists of the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) are revealed on Monday, 12 June.

Voting closed last Friday and Travel Agents Association of New Zealand chief executive Andrew Olsen says that while he needed to be scant on detail it looked likely the awards would 'bring up new names we haven't seen.'

'It will probably surprise some people in the supply side in terms of emerging brands.'

'What we can say is that NTIA is here to stay and we are pleased with the way some of the agents and suppliers really got into their campaign.'

He says about 1000 travel agents voted for suppliers and about half that number of suppliers voted for travel agents.

'We're happy with the vote.'

He says shortlisted nominees will be contacted from Monday, 29 May, and informed that they have progressed through to being a finalist. Those in judged categories will also be contacted about the judging schedule and their available schedule time and a full list of NTIA finalists will be released publicly on Monday, 12 June. Winners will be announced at the NTIA gala dinner on Saturday 30 September at the SKYCITY Convention Centre.

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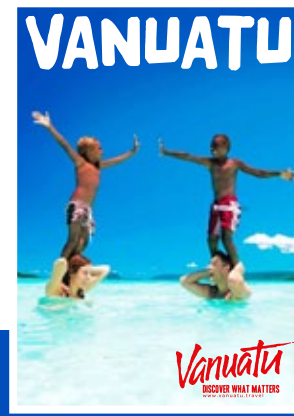
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## Kiwi eyes are smiling

Talk about the luck of the Irish – not one but two Kiwis are in line for the 2017 global famill to Ireland.

Erin Daly from Tempo Holidays in Auckland and Oamaru-based NZ Travel Broker Lynne Sinclair have been selected for the Ireland Specialist Mega Fam, which runs from 20 to 26 August.

Daly and Sinclair will be first-time visitors to Ireland.

Tourism Ireland selected entries among its global Gold Specialist agents. The trip includes flights plus ground travel in Ireland.

## Expedia TAAP rates make agents 'bespoke wholesalers'

New package rates that enable travel agents to be their own 'bespoke wholesalers' have just been launched by Expedia TAAP.

Stu Udy, senior manager travel agent distribution Australia and New Zealand, says agents have always been able to book a combined air and accommodation package, but in the past it needed to be Expedia Air.

'We've unbundled now, so agents can use their own air and combine that with our accommodation rates. We understand that agents are trying to keep



Stu Udy

their numbers up with airlines.' Udy adds that Expedia piloted the rates with agents for three months and the response was strong.

'So now we are in full swing.'

Udy sees really potential for agents who combine TAAP's accommodation rates with early bird specials when they are released later this year.

'The packages apply right across the board and can actually be combined with cruise, car and train – but obviously the biggest take-up is with air.

'The best deals are likely to be found in

the big selling leisure markets, such as Fiji, Hawaii and West Coast USA, and of course for bookings a long time out.'

That said, Udy emphasises agents can use Expedia for anywhere. 'Nearly all hotels have some sort of deals some time.'

In another development, Expedia has released a new transfer navigation path, making it easier for agents to book these services.

'It is more in line with the way other Expedia product is booked and the clients' flight details for arrivals and departures are now entered into the system.'

## New TAANZ logo (mostly) gets a tick of approval

The new look TAANZ logo, with its aeroplane that resembles a tick, has had mainly positive feedback, but a few constructive criticisms as well.

TAANZ chief executive Andrew Olsen says most people who gave feedback agreed the new logo reflected travel better than the previous one and felt it was good to be communicated to about the new branding.

However, TAANZ was far from overwhelmed by feedback – which Olsen also felt meant that people were reasonably happy.

'It is important to emphasise that this is not necessarily the final article.



There could be refinements made to the tick itself.'

He says TAANZ felt it was important to have something that can be used in a 'grand context with all of its moving parts.

'The plane is in silhouette in the logo but as a 15 second cut-away, in a cinema for example, the plane could take off and land.'

An informal survey by the Memo

yesterday revealed a mixed response, though the majority of agents were reasonably positive.

Lee Amor, of Your Travel in Kapiti, couldn't see too much wrong with the previous logo. 'But the new one does look decidedly crisp.'

Catherine Barwood of Premium Incentive & Conference Management says the colour could be stronger but she likes the plane tick. 'It's very relevant.'

Eden Stevenson of World Travellers was more enthusiastic. 'I like it. It's taking off but also gives the tick for approval. It breaks up the name and engages the eye a little more.'

## Marriott Mission – last call for agents

Agents are being advised this is their last chance to register for next week's Marriott Sales Mission, and to be in the draw to win travel prizes.

Air New Zealand flights and accommodation packages are being offered to Saigon, Fiji and Hawaii.

Emirates has flights to Bangkok (via Australia) combined with a seven night hotel offer and Virgin Australia has flights to the Gold Coast, where the winner will have two nights accommodation.

A number of hotel-only prizes are also up for grabs.

Register interest with [marieke.mendez@marriott.com](mailto:marieke.mendez@marriott.com)



## Exotic has tours to Indian film awards



Exotic Holidays and Humm FM are promoting tours to the 2017 IIFA Awards (International Indian Film Academy) in New York on 14 and 15 July.

Clients can get close and personal with their favourite Bollywood Stars, while they walk on along the red carpet. Exotic can design free and independent (FIT) tours around the awards dates to suit clients' requirements.

**CLICK HERE** for details.

## Royal Palace closure dates

Royal Palace will be closed for the Royal Cremation Ceremony of his majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who passed away in October 2016.

The funeral rites and the cremation will take place from Monday, 23 October, and are expected to last for about one week. During this time there will also be some access restrictions to places located close to the Royal Palace and its temples.

A number of operators will offer alternative tour arrangements for customers who were scheduled to visit the Grand Palace or attractions within the vicinity of the Royal Palace during this period.

The Royal Cremation Ceremony will take place on Thursday, 26 October, and it has been proclaimed as a National Holiday.

Visitors at this time are reminded



Royal Palace, Bangkok

that on this occasion it will be a time of great sadness for the whole nation. The Tourism Authority of Thailand recommends that visitors act and dress in a respectful manner during this period – not just in Bangkok, but throughout the whole Kingdom.

## Exotic promotes Karen visits

Exotic Holidays is promoting visits to Karen Long Neck villages in Thailand.

The Karen are a tribal group who have historically lived in the hills on the Myanmar (formerly Burma) side of the Thai border. Best recognised for their elongated necks, the Karen women wear heavy brass rings around their necks, forearms, and shins. While the Karen men are mainly field workers and farmers, the women have a history of crafting from wood carving to weaving.

The brass rings, which are also around their shins and arms, are made out of one solid pieces of metal making them quite heavy. Each time a woman adds a ring to her neck she is fitted with a new neck piece that coils around and around.

**CLICK HERE** for details.

## Asia sale with agents' bonus

Wendy Wu Tours has just released The Big Asia Sale offering significant savings across a wide range of tours departing from now to December.

Paul Dymond, general manager for Wendy Wu Tours in New Zealand, says more than 100 2017 departure dates are included in The Big Asia Sale, offering savings between \$250 and \$500 per person on a selection of 43 Classic, Deluxe and Discovery tours across the China, India, Indochina and Japan programmes.

'With airline specials out as well, we are able to allow agents to "double dip" with the Big Asia Sale savings. Subject to availability, both Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines have

savings up to \$500 per person on certain routes. Savings on Airfares are applicable to departures not included in the Big Asia Sale as well,' says Dymond.

'This is a record breaking year for Wendy Wu Tours in New Zealand. There is definitely an appetite for travelling to all Asia destinations this year, with all countries showing great growth for us.'

Dymond points out that as an added bonus, agents will receive a \$20 New World gift voucher for every new booking they make until 30 June. The incentive is valid on all group bookings for travel in 2017 and 2018.

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## Indaba 2017

## South African tourism leaders 'frustrated' by NZ visa regime

South African tourism industry leaders are backing attempts to fix New Zealand visitor visa woes. Several operators spoken to at Indaba expressed anger and frustration over the process.

The visa requirement is appalling and uncooperative, says David Frost, SATSA chief executive, representing all inbound tourism operators in southern Africa.

'It is a symptom of an ongoing struggle we have with Department of Home Affairs. Now we have a new Tourism Minister and a new Home Affairs Minister so we're hoping these two heads can deliver something better.'

'We will certainly be looking to see if this can't be resolved, or at least moved to an e-application.'

Lisa Sheard, executive director of Kruger Lowveld Tourism and representing 500 members, believes there is a fundamental lack of understanding among officials.

'The bottom line is if you want to be a fantastic destination, you have no visas, or at least an easily acquired visa.'



Tracey Meaker, African Safari Adventures and Lisa Sheard, Kruger Lowveld Tourism



David Frost, CEO SATSA, describes the visa requirement as appalling

'Perhaps New Zealand numbers aren't big but South Africa has strong ties with New Zealand. Lots of ex South Africans live in New Zealand, they might have become

New Zealanders or be married to New Zealanders, so when they come back to visit family in South Africa they are also tourists and they bring their New Zealand dollars to spend. You have to make it easy for them.'

Kruger tour operator Tracey Meaker, of African Safari Adventures, says she is losing business because of the visa requirement.

'We don't have a lot of New Zealanders but I have one particularly good client who has been bringing a big group here for years. They stay around 17 days and spend a lot of money. He has had to fly from Napier to Wellington to apply for his visa, he has had to pay me upfront for his bookings and he isn't even sure at this stage that everyone will get their visas and the group is due here on May 31st. He has told me that next year they probably won't come to South Africa.'

South African Tourism CEO, Sisa Ntshona, told media at Indaba that he is aware of the problem. 'We are currently in the process of reviewing all the visa requirements with a view to making it much more user friendly for potential visitors.'

## SA gets on board the movie bandwagon

New Zealand knows the value of film tourism. Now South Africa is realising the value of movies in showcasing a country and its culture to the world, says film writer and director Akin Omotoso. In particular, Omotoso told an Indaba media briefing how his internationally acclaimed movie, *Tell Me Sweet Something*, had given a glimpse into the vibrant lifestyle of the new Johannesburg.

'Film has the ability to let you feel you know a place. When that film played at international festivals people would say: "wow, I never knew Johannesburg looked like that".'

Because the film was made on a low budget, people were also surprised to learn that we had the resources and talent in South Africa to make such a good movie, he added. 'So never underestimate the power of images and the power of the story. Film can be a way of promoting our country and the skills of our people.'

## Check out the edgy, new Johannesburg

Johannesburg is in regeneration mode and tourism operators at Indaba have been full of ideas for stopovers, exploring vibrant new precincts in the former mining centre.

While shopping malls and five-star hotels have risen in nearby Sandton, it's the edgy areas of Braamfontein and Maboneng that have people

talking, says Bheki Dube, of the Maboneng Precinct.

'After 131 years as a city, Johannesburg has finally made me proud. Where there used to be factories and crime, we now have food markets, art galleries, new boutique hotels, and the edgy Curiosity Youth Hostel. Walking tours will show off the warehouses that have been turned into lofts, shops, cinemas and rooftop

bars. Maboneng has become popular for young locals, and it's also a great urban experience for international travellers,' says Dube.

Similarly, university precinct Braamfontein, ten minutes from Maboneng, has emerged from the mining city dregs with galleries, theatres and the bustling Neighbourgoods Market.



Paella chefs at the Braamfontein Neighbourgoods Market



## Indaba 2017

## Soweto, so good – changing the perception

Changing peoples' perceptions about Soweto is something that drives Phineas Zwane, tour guide for Johannesburg's Kgokare Tours.

Hosting a pre-Indaba tour that took in community culture and the gritty history at the heart of modern South Africa, he says every city in the world has bad areas.

'There are four million people in Soweto today. It is very diverse with both rich and poor people. Yes there are areas where you should be careful, just as there are risky areas in every city. For visitors there is so much to see and enjoy in Soweto.'

Included in the day tour was a visit to The Shack, one of Soweto's legendary shebeens where the regulars are happy to explain and share the tradition of drinking millet beer from a calabash.

Lunch was at Chaf Pozi, a traditional African braai restaurant with communal tables and township music, just down the road from the calabash-shaped Orlando Stadium, venue for the 2010 Football World Cup.



A taste of traditional beer in a Soweto shebeen (township bar) for Chrissy Tayfield, South African Tourism

On a more reflective note, the group visited the house where Nelson and Winnie Mandela lived, now restored as a museum. Down the road is the house of Bishop Tutu. 'Soweto has the only street in the world where two Nobel Prize winners once lived,' says Zwane.

There was more reflection at the Hector Pieterse Museum, named after the boy shot by police during a peaceful protest, an event that triggered the Soweto Riots.



Soweto Towers

New options to explore Soweto today include guided walking tours, cycling (rentals from Lebo's Soweto Backpackers) and quad bike tours with Soweto Outdoor Adventures. There's even a bungee jump business, off the colourful Orlando Towers, once power station towers and now the symbols of Soweto.

– Kathy Ombler

## Blue Train to Kruger

A new, overnight luxury train journey to Kruger National Park is building in popularity.

The Blue Train's Hanlie Kotze says the service from Pretoria to Hoedspruit, main entry point to Kruger National Park, leaves Pretoria at 3pm and arrives at Hoedspruit the next morning.

'It's very convenient for travellers flying into Johannesburg. They can sleep overnight on the train and wake up in time for an easy drive into Kruger.'

## Tourism exchange to be rebranded

South Africa's tourism showcase, Indaba, has just ended for 2017 and will emerge next year rebranded as Africa's Travel Indaba.

South African Tourism says the continent-wide focus more fully reflects the ownership of Indaba by the entire African travel industry. Some 21 other African countries took part in this year's event, held in Durban.

Other new initiatives in the evolution

of the show introduced this year included a new luxury pavilion, updated diary system and new show app.

Meanwhile South African Tourism ceo, Sisa Ntshona, explained the commitment they have for Indaba to be staged in Durban and managed by Tourism Kwa-Zulu Natal for the next five years. 'The five year plan will ensure stakeholders can organise their agendas, investments and infrastructure for a guaranteed longer period.'

## Tempo Holidays launches East Africa tours

Tempo Holidays is launching its first tours in East Africa, offering small group and independent departures in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Zanzibar. Travellers will also have the option to create their own itineraries.

The new product range responds to an increasing demand and opportunity within the region, with an emphasis on the wilds of Africa, and will offer travellers different options for the most important aspect of any African adventure – game drives.

Travellers can choose between seat-in-vehicle, private vehicle, air safaris or a combination of both air and road that depart daily or weekly, and the vehicle fleet is one of the largest and most modern in East Africa.

'East Africa as a destination is on the rise as more travellers are opting for an adventure rather than a holiday,' says Damian Perry, CEO of Cox and Kings Australia and New Zealand, including the specialist operator Tempo Holidays.

Tempo Holidays has partnered with local on-ground teams with extensive expertise gained through years of experience to meet client's needs as well as to secure local guides to accompany tours.

[www.tempoholidays.co.nz/our-brochures](http://www.tempoholidays.co.nz/our-brochures)

## Airlines – Cruising

### Air Canada's LAX move

Air Canada's flights and Maple Leaf Lounge at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) are located at the renovated and modernised Terminal 6, following what it describes as a seamless move overnight from Terminal 2.

Air Canada's 19 daily flights arrive and depart from gates 68A, 68B and 69B at Terminal 6, offering a more convenient connecting experience for customers whose onward flights are with Star Alliance partners. A new Maple Leaf Lounge, the airline's third in the USA, is located near Air Canada's gates.

### Cathay Pacific sign with Iberia

Cathay Pacific has signed a new codeshare agreement with oneworld partner Iberia, giving passengers new connections to destinations in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands.

The agreement will see Cathay Pacific place its CX code on selected services operated by Iberia between Madrid and five destinations in Spain: Alicante, Barcelona, Bilbao, Palma and Valencia. The code will also be placed on Iberia's scheduled flights between Madrid and Lisbon.

Cathay Pacific currently operates four weekly flights between Hong Kong and Madrid with its Boeing 777-300ER aircraft.

The airline will launch a new seasonal



Cathay Pacific flies four times a week between Hong Kong and Madrid

summer service to Barcelona with the Airbus A350-900 aircraft from July. Tickets will be available for sale from 24 May at [www.cathaypacific.com](http://www.cathaypacific.com) and [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com) for flights departing from 7 June.

### Etihad's A380s travel to Paris

Etihad Airways will fly Airbus A380 aircraft on the Abu Dhabi to Paris route year round.

The aircraft, which features The Residence (first-class suites), will operate from 1 July on one of its twice-daily services from the UAE capital city to The City of Light.

Paris becomes the airline's latest A380 long-haul destination following London,

Sydney, New York and Melbourne. With the 496-seat aircraft upgrade from a 328-seat Boeing 777, Etihad Airways will offer a daily, all-A380 service from Paris to Melbourne and Sydney via Abu Dhabi.

The aircraft upgauge will also support strong demand to and from many cities across Asia and Australia from Abu Dhabi including Brisbane, Perth, Bangkok, Chengdu, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Manila, Shanghai, Seychelles, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai.

Flight EY31 has a scheduled departure time from Abu Dhabi at 2.15am which arrives at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport at 7.50am local time. The return flight, EY32 takes off from the French capital at 10.40am and arrives in Abu Dhabi at 7.30pm.



Etihad Airbus A380

### Oceania meet vegan needs

Oceania Cruises is debuting an expansive list of vegan menu offerings plus cold-pressed raw juice and vegan smoothie bars.

The juice and smoothie bars are currently available onboard Marina and Riviera and the vegan menus are available fleet wide on the brand's six ships – Regatta, Insignia, Nautica, Marina, Riviera, and Sirena.

The dishes are in addition to the line's selection of vegetarian, gluten-free, and kosher meals.

The vegan menus will be featured in the Grand Dining Room at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There will be a selection of more than 250 dishes.

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## Americas

## Caesars put Flamingo in the pink

Caesars Entertainment Corporation has launched a US\$90 million renovation of 1270 rooms at the 70-year-old Flamingo Las Vegas.

The renovation will begin in August, with the first guest arrivals expected in November 2017. Completion of all rooms is expected in the second quarter of 2018.

Bob Morse, president of hospitality for Caesars Entertainment, says: 'The

renovated rooms pay homage to the property's past, while also giving it a fresh and modern new look.'

Located in the heart of the Las Vegas Strip, Flamingo has a total of more than 3500 guest rooms and suites and is home to a six hectare pool and wildlife habitat complete with waterfalls, mature island vegetation and tropical wildlife, three distinctive pools and several outdoor wedding gardens.



Flamingo – pretty in pink after 70 years

## Here's how to get to Sesame Street

SeaWorld Entertainment and Sesame Street have announced plans to build another theme park by 2021.

SeaWorld will build a second Sesame Place theme park to complement its existing location outside Philadelphia, open a Sesame Street land in its SeaWorld Orlando park by 2022 and possibly build more Sesame Place parks throughout the United States in the future.

SeaWorld is diversify its offerings after ending its controversial orca breeding programme last year after years of declining attendance.



Governors Island is open for festival fun

## Oysters... and all that jazz

Governors Island in New York City has opened for its 2017 season.

The 70-hectare island in New York Harbor, a seven-minute ferry ride from Lower Manhattan, this year features four man-made grassy slopes, a pop-up oyster bar and beer garden, zip lining and biking.

Governors Island will also be the venue for several concerts and arts festivals,

such as the Rite of Summer Music Festival on 27 May. Other events include the 12th Annual Jazz Age Lawn Party on 10 and 11 June, Governors Island Swim on 1 July, Brooklyn Music Festival on 6 August and the Popup Dinner Governors Island picnic on 9 September.

[govisland.com](http://govisland.com)

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## Focus on Spain: Madrid

## Tapas, taverns and history – a city to be devoured

Because the Castilian city of Madrid caters more for the Spanish than tourists, its attractions for visitors are a little less obvious, according to Caitlin Cantor, expat Canadian and tour guide with Devour Madrid.

Cantor reveals the core of Madrid during evening walking tours, throughout central Madrid's network of plazas and neighbourhoods.

Between the 'best Iberian ham in Spain' at the Royal Tavern, (accompanied by red vermouth flavoured with cinnamon, cardamom and orange peel) and the 'best mushroom tapas in Madrid' at Meson del Champinon (eaten with a summer red wine and sweetened soda – Cantor insists it's not sangria), she brings to life an interwoven plot of Muslim, Christian and Jewish history.



Caitlin Cantor

Amid the bricks and mortar of palaces, monasteries and statues are stories of Catholic nuns preparing Jewish cookies, gypsy blues and seedy hotels where patrons shared beds and combs.

And then there's the bustling main square of Plaza Mayor, where bull fights, concerts and public executions provided local entertainment. It was also the site of public shamings, where those charged with heresy had two choices: plead guilty and be burnt alive, or repent and be strangled to death before being torched.

Cantor also tells the story of Charles II, the last of the Hapsburg line, who, as an unfortunate result of interbreeding, was impotent, had an oversized tongue, and couldn't walk or talk until he was 10 years old.

'The buildings have stories and the streets have secrets,' she says. 'It's the melting pot of Spain, and its blend of the traditional and modern makes it more than just a stopover,' she says.

## Tapas: here's how the locals do lunch

Spain's traditional long lunch is the most important time of the day. However, socialising in the evening over tapas is also a Spanish institution.

'Tapas is an action, not a food,' explains Devour Madrid's Caitlin Cantor.

'We don't "eat" tapas; we "do" them.

'Tapas are super simple and cooked to order in an open kitchen. And there's a tradition of garbage on the floor.'

Cantor has a few tips for tourists wanting to do tapas.

- A crowded tapas bar is good. 'The Spanish are happy with a lower personal

space than most people – 15cm of space is OK.'

- Order a small drink.
- Observe what the other people are eating and order that.
- Keep the food orders moving and order dish by dish.
- Payment is based on trust; pay at the end.
- A free tapa to begin with is customary. 'If you don't get some free tapas in Madrid you are entitled to complain.'

Many tapas bars and restaurants in Spain have been owned by the same family for generations.

Tapas originated in the 1600s in taverns overcome with flies. Patrons were encouraged



Mushrooms for the oven at Meson del Champinon, opened in the 1960s and still owned by the same family

to cover their drinks with bread, and, over time, small bites were placed on the bread.

– Trish Freeman

## Nil excess for rentals in Europe

DriveAway Holidays has a new partnership with car rental supplier Rhodium – a premium car hire supplier in France, Italy and Spain.

Daily rental prices start at \$38 per day in Nice, Bordeaux and Toulouse; \$90 per day in Rome, Milan and Florence and \$53 per day in Barcelona and Madrid. These daily prices include nil excess, and if clients pick up before 30 June they receive a free GPS.

France, Italy and Spain are some of DriveAway's biggest destinations worldwide, making up 75% of our European bookings so far for May.

'Our customers have told us that our nil excess prices in the US are competitive and cost effective, so we're adding Rhodium as another premium supplier with similar nil excess options for France, Italy and Spain,' says DriveAway's managing director Chris Hamill.

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## SPTE: sustainable tourism at the helm



Chris Cocker

Sustainable tourism was at the fore at this year's two-day South Pacific Tourism Exchange held at the Sydney International Convention Centre last week.

South Pacific Tourism Organisation chief executive Chris Cocker told attendees at the opening ceremony on Friday the exchange acknowledges the UN World Tourism Organisation's 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism initiative.

'Our greatest assets are our people, environment and culture and we must protect and promote them through sustainable development,' Cocker says.

The annual exchange, now in its fourth year, attracted 79 buyers from New Zealand, Australia, China, Korea, USA and Europe and was attended by 111 sellers.

'We are all here because we love the Pacific. The fact remains we all want our tourism industry to be sustainable – to be here today and here to stay. And not here today and gone tomorrow,' Cocker told delegates.

He also revealed tourism in the Pacific region has averaged a 2.9% growth from 2012 to 2016, reaching two million visitor arrivals last year.

Cocker says SPTE, and the business relationships forged during the exchanges, have helped contribute to the tourism growth.

## Fiji – new cruise and resort product

Fiji's South Sea Cruises Limited has launched a island hopping cruise and resort product – Yasawa Islands Holidays, which provides mid-range and luxury accommodation options for couples and families in the Yasawa Islands.

Yasawa Island Holidays packages (minimum three day/two night) include transfers from Denarau on board the Yasawa Flyer, which will allow guests to choose from a collection of 10 resort options.

Resorts with intimate surroundings appealing to couples include Viwa Island Resort, Navutu Stars Resort, Nanuya Island Resort, Natabe Retreat, Coconut Beach Resort and Mantaray Island Resort. Family-friendly resorts include Blue Lagoon Beach Resort, Octopus Resort, Paradise Cove, and Boitara Beach Resort.

The Yasawa Islands Holiday brand



is complemented by the streamlined Awesome Adventures Fiji.  
[www.yasawaiislandsholidays.com](http://www.yasawaiislandsholidays.com)

## Tanoa Tonga steps into the breach

Tanoa International Dateline Hotel is embarking on a range of all-exclusive packages, sparked by what it sees as a lack of promotional activity in the Kiwi market.

The hotel, which reopened in February under the Tanoa brand, is offering a Four Night and Full Day Whale Swim package for \$595 per person.

The package, which comes with a 15% commission for trade, includes four nights at the hotel in a Superior Room, daily buffet breakfast, airport transfers and a whale-swim package with Blue Water Explorer Tours.

Tanoa's Nick Ridling says a lack of promotional might has prompted the hotel to come to the Kiwi market with the offer.

'There has been a lack of activity from Tourism Tonga in the New Zealand market,' he says.

## Sinalei launches boutique visitor product

Sinalei Reef Resort and Spa in Samoa are in the throes of launching a range of bespoke experienced-based visitor activities.

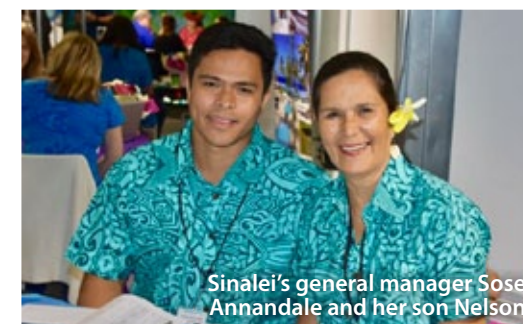
The experiences, called Signature Samoa, are being trialled now, but the product will be officially launched on 1 January, 2018.

Nelson Annandale, who will be running the venture, says the experiences will be delivered with input from Poutasi village locals.

Activities include an around six-

hour cooking experience that includes gathering the food; eco trekking in search of blow holes and hidden caves as well as tree planting and a Hook and Cook nautical adventure. There will also be opportunities for visitors to visit local schools as well as learn about the art of playing – and making – ukuleles.

'We want to put the focus on authentic experiences and to provide people with something more than a run-of-the-mill tour as we know our guests like to get offsite to experience something over



Sinalei's general manager Sose Annandale and her son Nelson

and above the normal cultural tours,' Annandale says.

The experiences are being trialled with Sinalei guests, but will be available to all visitors after the launch.

*There's more to do in Vanuatu*



*Air Vanuatu*



## Australian Tourism Exchange

## Hobart gains confidence of top hotel names

A luxury themed-room hotel celebrating more than 100 characters from Tasmania's historic past is set to open in Hobart next month.

MACq01, opening on the waterfront on Macquarie Wharf on 1 June, will comprise 114 rooms that each reference local characters – from convicts to explorers as well as local heroes. The hotel, owned by the Federal Group, has employed a master storyteller, Justin Johnston, to enhance the experience for guests. Prices run from A\$400 to A\$1400.

The hotel is just one of several new options opening in Hobart in the next few years, which will deliver around



Tourism Tasmania chief marketing officer Emma Terry – fostering growth in the Kiwi market

1200 rooms to the city.

Among them, the Singaporean Fragrance Group is to open a four to four-and-a-half star, 296-room Ibis Styles in September. This will be followed next year by Luxury Collection 128-room hotel by Marriott International as well as a five-star, twin-tower Hyatt Centric Hotel in 2019.

Tourism Tasmania chief marketing officer Emma Terry says the developments will go a long way to resolving a shortage of peak season hotel options for the city, which has been experiencing robust tourism growth.

'This shows Tasmania is truly coming into its own,' Terry says.

Visitors to the state increased 7% in



A drawing of Tasmania's latest hotel offering which tells the story of a vast range of the state's historic characters

the year to December 2016 to 1.24 million (domestic and international), which represents an economic cash injection of A\$2.14 billion. American travellers, numbering 32,000, are the destination's largest international market, while the French stay longest at 22 days.

Kiwi visitors, totalling 15,443 to December 2016, are a relatively small market for Tasmania, but Terry believes



MACq01 storyteller Justin Johnston Photo: Adam Gibson

New Zealander travellers are a natural fit for the state.

'There are shared environmental and vibe similarities between us, but our history is something different New Zealanders can experience plus we have a rich food and wine offering,' she says.

Terry advises there are presently 16 flights a day between Melbourne and Hobart as well as 12 daily from Launceston.



A rising star in South Australia's boutique wine industry

## The d'Arenberg Cube – it's one out of the box

Kiwi wine lovers are sure to relish what will be growing out of the vines at the d'Arenberg vineyard in McLaren Vale, South Australia.

But it's not grapes that will have them cheering, but a five-storey Cube that will house a tasting room, bars, a restaurant, premium food and wine testing stations and a 'wine fog' room.

The A\$14 million d'Arenberg Cube has been designed by the vineyard's fourth generation family member and current

chief winemaker, Chester Osborn.

He considers winemaking to be a puzzle, and so his reasons for creating the cube are simple: 'the D'Arenberg Cube is yet another puzzle to solve, with a complex external pattern, and inside, a plethora of sensory experiences designed to excite and engage the senses.'

One such experience is the 'wine fog' room room, where flagons are connected to horns so visitors can breathe in the product.

The cube's luxury restaurant will take pressure of the winery's current 50-seat dining facility, which is booked weeks in advance.

d'Arenberg Cube, promoted to trade last week during the vineyard's inaugural appearance at the Australian Tourism Exchange, will open at the end of the year.

The development is illustrative of South Adelaide's fast growing and popular artisan food and wine sector.

## Australian Tourism Exchange

## Rising from the ruin of Cyclone Debbie

Cyclone-battered Whitsundays made a triumphant return to the tourism fold with a well-attended presentation at ATE 2017 late week.

A five-strong group of tourism and resort representatives from the popular Queensland destination presented a united front, outlining to trade the Whitsundays is not only back in business after damage caused by devastating Cyclone Debbie on March 29, but it is returning with revitalised product.

Among the panel, Tourism Whitsundays CEO Craig Turner revealed occupancy on the mainland is already sitting at around 50 to 60% on average since the cyclone, adding numbers were tracking back quickly.

He says 13 weekly flights had been

added to the Whitsundays before the disaster, bringing the total number of flights to 65. The load factor has fallen from around 89% prior to the Cyclone to about 65%, but Turner expects numbers to quickly return.

‘We will see those numbers back in two to three months. It’s ambitious but we need to be ambitious, and we will go hard to achieve that.’

Hamilton Island CEO Glenn Bourke revealed occupancy bounced back last week to around 85% from 25%, acknowledging the work of its 1200 staff in getting the destination back on its feet.

Meanwhile, a number of resorts are coming back with improved product, including Hamilton Island’s Qualia Resort, which reopens on 1 July, and Hayman Island has its sights on a



Back in the game (from left): Jane Hermann from Daydream Island; Jane Hermann from Daydream Island; Hayman Island’s Anna Guillan Hamilton Island CEO Glenn Bourke and Tourism Whitsundays CEO Craig Turner

mid-2018 return to the market.

Jane Hermann from Daydream Island revealed an A\$50 million refurbishment of the complex has been brought forward. It will be a much more contemporary offering for visitors, she says, and will open its doors during mid-2018.

## The rebirth of Perth – and Fremantle

The big news in Perth is a multi-billion dollar revitalisation programme, says Western Australia manager Kate Wright.

Elizabeth Quay, which opened in January, was designed to reconnect the city with the Swan River. The A\$2.6 billion dollar development is reportedly a drawcard for international visitors.

Wright says the city is playing ‘catch-up’ with hotels, and is aiming to plug an accommodation shortage with an additional 2000 rooms by the end of 2018.

Meanwhile, Perth Airport is up for an upgrade to pave the way for Qantas’ direct flights from the city to London, which start in March 2018, and A\$1 billion is earmarked for a Scarborough Beach spruce-up.

Nearby Fremantle is also undergoing a significant revitalisation, adds Wright.

‘The key thing for trade though is the prospect of having a lot more hotels available in the city,’ Wright says.

## This just in from SeaLink... Flinders Ranges and more

Visitors to Adelaide can now take in a trip to Flinders Ranges with a new SeaLink tour kicking off from September.

The three-night trip, the first to the area from Adelaide, was unveiled last week at ATE 2017.

It is to run once a fortnight for groups numbering between four to eight people, says general manager at Sealink Travel Group general manager Donna Gauci.

Two nights are spent at luxury eco-resort Rawnsley Park Station, from where

guests can enjoy walking tours and see wildlife such as camels and kangaroos.

The cost of the tour is yet to be finalised, but it will include meals, accommodation, transport and tours.

SeaLink has also created new two and three-day Kangaroo Island packages, which feature stays at the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Retreat and include one or two-day Kangaroo Island Wilderness trail walks.

Gauci says these itineraries cater for five to seven people, and cost A\$1180 for the two-day

offering and A\$1786 for the three-day trip.

Also new is a combined food and wine plus wilderness tour, which has been created with the New Zealand and Australian market in mind.

Tour guests stay at Kangaroo Island Wilderness Retreat, where they can enjoy Champagne at sunset at Remarkable Rocks as visits to the KI Spirits Gin Distillery, wine tasting and cheese tasting as well as the iconic Kangaroo Island hotspots such as Raptor Domain where birds of prey are on display.

The tour runs for two days from 1



Kiwis can now get to Flinders Ranges from Adelaide with SeaLink

September and costs from A\$725 per person. Lunch and dinner are included.

[www.sealink.com.au](http://www.sealink.com.au)



## Living the Dreamtime with Aboriginal trip

Intrepid Travel, Working in partnership with the Yolngu people, is launching a community-based trip in the remote East Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory.

The seven-day trip will focus on the Yolngu culture, customs and way of life. It will visit the remote coastal communities of Nyinyikay, Bremer Island and Nhulunbuy (also known as Gove), where travellers will camp with the traditional owners, hear Dreamtime stories, be taught how to hunt, fish and forage, and learn about art in the region.

'This is a new day for us. We want to be able to use tourism as a vehicle for connecting with other people. Come here, sit with us, walk with us, eat with us. This is the real Aboriginal Australia,' says Marcus Lacey, a leader of Yolngu Customary and Ngärra Law who lives with his family on the homeland community of Nyinyikay.

Brett Mitchell, Intrepid's regional director for Australia and New Zealand describes the trip as an enriching cultural experience.

'We're incredibly proud to be able to work with the Yolngu people to bring travellers to this truly remote part of Australia. It is an absolute privilege to camp under the star-filled skies in the same untouched wilderness that the Yolngu people's ancestors walked.'

The inaugural trip takes place on 31 August and the second departs on 10 September. It costs \$6445 per person.

[www.intrepidtravel.com/nz/australia](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/nz/australia)

## Calling all foodies

Maryborough's portside precinct sets the scene for The Relish Food and Wine Festival on Saturday, 3 June.

The precinct incorporates Queens Park, Mary River Parklands, heritage streetscapes and the Mary River.

The festival includes cooking demonstrations, boat rides along the Mary River and stalls from some of the region's top restaurants, cafes and food producers.



Grub's up at Maryborough

There are also camembert and brie making workshops and a Bush Tucker Talk and Taste workshop.

## Have you got what it takes to cook for this man?



Celebrity chef Simon Gault will be putting Food Show audience to the test this weekend

Foodies will be able to get a taste of what it is like to compete in MasterChef without having to front up on television, thanks to the Food Show Wellington from 26 to 28 May.

Celebrity chef Simon Gault is hosting a cooking demo, during which six volunteers will be selected to come on stage to cook. Each participant will follow Gault's instructions as he cooks from a mystery box of ingredients.

Meanwhile, six more audience members will act as a 'phone a friend' lifeline to help the cooks over the finish line. Others from the crowd will be chosen to sit at the chef's table, sip a glass of wine and wait for the meals to arrive.

The Food Show Wellington is on at Westpac Stadium.

[www.foodshow.co.nz](http://www.foodshow.co.nz)

## Sunshine Coast helps Kiwis put winter on hold

Winter-weary Kiwis can escape to sun with seasonal direct services from Auckland to the Sunshine Coast with Air New Zealand.

Visit Sunshine Coast and Tourism & Events Queensland and Air New Zealand this week launched its Sunshine by Lunchtime campaign.

The carrier will run up to four weekly non-stop flights from 7 July to until 29 October from Auckland to Maroochydore. It is the sixth year the service has run.

Sunshine Coast Airport general manager Peter Pallot says the flights have gone from strength to strength with passenger numbers increasing year on year as visitor awareness grows.

Air New Zealand chief revenue officer Cam Wallace agrees Sunshine Coast's popularity as a tourist destination is growing steadily among Kiwis.

'By timing our services to depart Auckland at 9.30am, Kiwis can arrive at lunchtime ready to kick off their winter break and enjoy the very best Sunshine Coast has to offer.'

Sunshine by Lunchtime is in line with the tourism body's recently launched Come to Life on Queensland's Sunshine Coast campaign.

Add to this the accessibility message offered by the direct services and you have a 'hugely attractive winter sun proposition for New Zealanders,' says Visit Sunshine Coast CEO Simon Latchford.

## MYSTERY SHOP



## Can you solve this latest mystery?

Do you recognise this shop? Once again, we don't need the brand but we are looking for a location. Here's a clue, it is in the North Island. If you know the answer, email it to [competitions@promag.co.nz](mailto:competitions@promag.co.nz) with Mystery Shop in the subject line.

And congratulations to Katie Williamson of helloworld in Warkworth who correctly identified last week's Mystery Shop as Flight Centre Kaitia. A really special prize of a pair of Maui Jim sunglasses is on its way –and we have another pair to give away this week too.

## Fin-tastic offer for wannabe mermaids

Kiwis are being invited to sign up for Mermaid Instructors Training Courses on Boracay Island, Philippines, from 15 to 19 June, and Bad Wiessee in Germany from 23 to 27 August.

And while clients are becoming 'mermaids', agents can receive 10% commission.

Due to the global demand for the programme, the Philippine Mermaid Swimming Academy has created International Mermaid Swimming

Instructors Association.

Pack ya Bags' Penny Henderson, who can book the programme from New Zealand, says the association is designed to establish standards and regulations, geared towards instructors and schools, and will ensure quality service and a safe environment for students and clients.

The instructor course fee is \$1327 per instructor. It includes a five-day training workshop, four hours a day. There



Wave your fins in the air...

is a minimum of five to a class and a maximum of 10.

[info@packyabags.com](mailto:info@packyabags.com)

## Freer steps down



Ken Freer

Ken Freer has stepped down from House of Travel's marketing director role, CEO Mark O'Donnell says.

'As part of a review of the structure and focus of the wider

marketing team going forward, Ken has decided that it may be appropriate to redefine the marketing director role and seek someone new to lead the marketing team through its next phase,' O'Donnell says.

'This was by no means an easy decision for Ken and we are working with him on a transition plan to reposition the focus of the marketing team. He will play an active role in identifying the future structure and focus areas.'

## Damian joins Heritage

Damian Oehlrich has joined Heritage Collection Marlborough Vintners Hotel as the new executive chef.

Oehlrich started his career as a chef working at Lawson's Dry Hills winery. Since then, he has worked for a variety of restaurants and lodges around New Zealand, England and Scotland, but says Marlborough will always be home.

'It's a great place to live, we have everything for an outdoors lifestyle and to work with the best in the hospitality business at the historic Marlborough Vintners Hotel is an exciting prospect,' he says.



Damian Oehlrich

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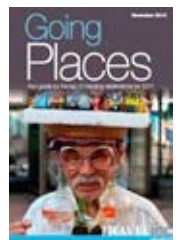
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## PEARL's PEARLER

'You know it's going to be a bad day when you jump out of bed and miss the floor.'

[CLICK HERE](#) to read TRAVELinc digital's latest supplement: Going Places

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**3U fares to domestic China are coming soon...**

