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Attracting young people to industry 'remains critical'

The tight labour market continues in the industry, but young people do still see career opportunities in travel, says Jayne Thornley, human resources and retail director at House of Travel.

'It has been a tight market for the last three or four years and that is still the case. I think it is partly due to people moving into brokering and also the longevity of people in the industry. We have a lot of deep knowledge in the sector but there are only so many people in that pool, so attracting young people remains critical.'



Jayne Thornley

Thornley says House of Travel has changed its approach to induction and training, with a move from short industry geared training. 'We are now training over 12 to 24 months to a level four and that gives us people with a higher level of experience.'

She says there is a need for companies to give back to the industry and to recognise that young people are the future.

'I do think young people are still looking for careers in travel, and to some extent it is about managing their expectations. A lot of young people think working in the travel industry means they travel around the world.'

Continued on page 2

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Attracting young people to industry 'remains critical'

Continued from page 1

Thornley says House of Travel is looking for people with 'fantastic personalities'. They may have worked as shop assistants or in a point of sale role for a different industry.

Thornley says that despite the talk that the younger generation is more likely to book online there are people who still see a fantastic future in travel agencies.

'I think a lot of it is how you position your brand. And we are growing – we've opened seven new outlets in two years. That in itself provides opportunities and shows that bricks and mortar are still important to us, and the public sees that as well.

'There will always be people who shop online and there will be others who prefer to go into a bricks and mortar store. It is the same with any sector, be it in travel or high street fashion.'

Extra staff required

Peter Barlow, managing director of BCD Travel and president of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ), says the trade generally is enjoying a positive market.

'That can usually translate into extra staff requirements. This is particularly pleasing as I am a big advocate for attracting young people to our industry and creating training and employment opportunities.'

Barlow says this is a major theme for TAANZ. 'It is one that we are very proud of. Naturally, this underpins our qualifications drive and the overall professionalism of our industry.'

Andrew Olsen, chief executive officer of TAANZ, says the attraction of talent to the industry is a big deal for the industry and for the association.

'Now that tourism is the largest GDP contributor there is more public media coverage about the sector, including a

message from the Prime Minister drawing attention to the need for the sector to solidly position itself for success in the future and within the 2025 tourism plan.'

Olsen says the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) is doing a better job of reaching into schools to promote 'tourism' as a career. 'It is not and should not be considered a transition from school and we are working with them on better promoting the pathway to a career through an apprenticeship type education.

'A lot of focus is appropriately on the entry level however we know, and our members tell us, that there is a need to focus on bringing travel specific management skills into the industry. To that end, we are supporting AUT and its proposal for a travel major within the current Bachelor of International Tourism Management.

'The foundations are being set on both ends of the spectrum to set up the attraction of talent.'

Big NZ growth for Travelport

Travelport says 2015 was its best year of growth in New Zealand for the past decade.

General manager – Pacific at Travelport, Kaylene Shuttlewood, credits the growth on a strengthened team and improved point-of-sale solutions.

'We expanded our account management team, with two additional account managers to call on agents. We also appointed Wendy Stanton as commercial manager and we have been proactive in attending all of our agency customers' conferences. In terms of customer satisfaction levels, the feedback has been strong and we are pleased with how we are tracking.'

Shuttlewood also points to enhancements in Travelport Smartpoint. Agents can see images, comparisons, maps and reviews of hotel properties as well as specific offers based on travellers' loyalty memberships. *(Full story to appear in April – May issue of TRAVELinc Magazine).*



Kaylene Shuttlewood

Switzerland on show

Switzerland Tourism's 2016 Switzerland Travel Experience events will take place on 9 June at The Pullman Hotel in Auckland. Travel agents are invited and will have the opportunity to mingle with the Switzerland Tourism team, Swiss partners and other industry partners. Canapés and drinks will be served. The event is free to attend and all attendees will receive a chance to win a holiday for two to Switzerland.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

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Expect more Inspiring Journeys

The market can expect more emphasis on Inspiring Journeys when the AAT Kings Australian programme is released later this year.

Bruce Gentry, general manager New Zealand with the company, says product development and discussion is going on now for the brochure that be released around November.

‘It is an evolving process but what we do see is a desire from both our customers and our management to grow the Inspiring Journeys portfolio. This is our small group, boutique series that appeals to people who are looking for a more hands-on experience and one on one interaction with the locals.’

Gentry says Inspiring Journeys was launched in 2011 and that feedback has been ‘phenomenal’. He says the itineraries have appealed to a growing niche market.

‘We’ve got it right in New Zealand and



Cradle Mountain is visited on the Tasmanian Harvest Inspiring Journey

in parts of Australia, such as the Top End. Now I think there are opportunities to expand this in Australia and even look at New Zealand and Australian combinations for Inspiring Journeys.

‘This is all about the service element. People like the concept of touring, meeting people and being part of a group. But they also want individual care and attention. If we can achieve that, we’ve nailed it. That comes down to having the right crew, the style of accommodation and the service provided there, and the overall experience.’



AAT Kings – short haul can give good commission

AAT Kings’ strong growth in New Zealand in both its Australian and domestic programmes is giving travel agents more opportunities to make revenue out of short haul travel, the company says.

Bruce Gentry, general manager New Zealand, says the 2015 – 16 season has seen ‘a nice curve’ for travel to Australia. ‘We’re 13% up on passenger numbers, that’s good double digit growth. One million plus Kiwis go there each year, so they are doing something. Of course it is easy for them to buy a cheap package and flop and drop on the Gold Coast – that’s great but there are so many experiences to have in Australia.’

He says that gives the trade unlimited opportunities.

‘Our retail trade partners are understanding that people who travel into Australia and buy a guided holiday also give them the chance to add on some accommodation at each end, plus a pre or post day tour or other experience. The tour itself is the beefy product but there is so much more for them to sell.

‘By the time people have purchased all these products agents realise the commission can be comparable to what they would get selling Europe. And we can help with all of that.’

He says the company has a ‘massive footprint’ in Australia, offering day tours, short breaks, guided holidays, small group – boutique tours (Inspiring Journeys) and more.

Gentry says AAT Kings’ engagement with trade is definitely growing. ‘Our

message is that we are here to work with the trade and we’d like more engagement. If agents have any questions or they’d like to see us, they just need to let us know. We’ve had good engagement over the years, but there is potential to do a lot more.’

Gentry says a number of things are driving New Zealanders’ desire to travel in Australia and their own country. ‘They are relatively safe destinations. A lot of people are hesitant at the moment to go long haul, so they are perhaps more likely to look at opportunities and experiences in this part of the world.’



Bruce Gentry

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Thanks Kiwis, say Samoan suppliers

By Lisa Bradley

Kiwi trade got a loud heartfelt applause for their participation and ongoing support at the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort-hosted closing ceremony of the 9th Samoan Tourism Exchange held on Thursday, 15 April.

The three-day exchange was attended by 60 buyers from New Zealand, Australia, UK, Europe, Canada, Japan, South Korea, USA, Fiji and American Samoa.

They met with about 45 participants, as well as learnt the Samoan industry is gaining momentum as more than 300 rooms come online this year with the entry of Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel and Bungalows, Taumeasina Island Resort and the Saletoga Beach Bungalows and Hotel.

Other key changes are developments at Faleolo International Airport and the port in Apia. There has also been a commitment to deliver a standardised high standard on housekeeping and food and beverage.

The changes met with approval from the Kiwi delegation as they visited the around 44 exhibitors and went on site inspections.

The exchange is the biggest yet. About 50 buyers went in 2015.

'It is a small destination, and that's about a 10% growth, which is really good,' says Dwayne Bentley, Samoa Tourism Board marketing and promotion manager.

Get this month's TRAVELinc magazine for an in-depth look at why confidence is on the rise in Samoa.



The opening night of the Samoan Tourism Exchange 2016 was made special by a rousing cultural performance

Olivia Rogers, Tourism HQ; Samoan Tourism Authority event co-ordinator Kristian Scanlan (Chi Chi) and GTA's Paula Lipscombe



Samoa turns on the heat during the opening night of the exchange



Chris Hamilton from Edventure Tours and GO Holidays' Gareth Waddington



Enjoying the closing ceremony: Sonny Rivers from Samoa Tourism Authority; Air New Zealand's James Leslie and Wendy Graham from Lifestyle Holidays



Edventure Tours' Chris Hamilton with with Ramona and Jim Gilchrist from Return to Paradise



GTA's Paula Lipscombe; Sheraton complex director of sales and marketing Carl Amos and Felina Wright from Virgin Australia



The Kiwi delegation was recognised for their efforts and came up to collect gifts to a rousing applause (from left): House of Travel's Sharma Smith; Wendy Graham from Lifestyle Holidays and Our Pacific's Shelley Gutry



Club upgrade for kids

Planet Trekkers children's club facility at InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa has undergone F\$40,000 refurbishment. Planet Trekkers now has dedicated art room, activity room and a marine room, with murals to inspire the imagination of young children. An outdoor playing area has a mini climbing wall and jungle gym, and a separate games room is extensively stocked.

Child Wise-certified Planet Trekkers attendants have introduced activities that reflect the resort's 'In The Know' philosophy. These include insights into Fijian culture through weaving, dance or song, or cupcake decoration and even their own talent show.

Also rolled out is a fun and informative

mobile app that was recently released by IHG in partnership with National Geographic Kids, to engage and excite children before, during and after their trip.

The app is based on a treasure hunt style game and challenges children to discover indigenous wildlife, take part in local adventures, and taste native dishes to get them excited about their holiday. It also allows children to upload photos and details from their adventures.

A complete overhaul of the resort's games room sees new games and gaming consoles such as Wii, Playstation, air hockey and a foosball table for teenagers and adult guests.

Expo response shows Fiji interest still high

Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE) to be held in Denarau next month has attracted over 160 international buyers and travel trade media and a number of them will be selling Fiji for the first time.

The recent devastation caused by natural weather events has not deterred quality buyers from Fiji's traditional, new, and non-traditional tourism markets from as far as Italy, Pakistan, Spain and Sweden.

'Buyer confidence in Fiji remains consistently high and this is evident after Tourism Fiji received 148 buyer and 14 international media confirmations to attend Fiji's premier tourism industry event,' Tourism Fiji's global public relations manager, Patricia Mallam says.

'The last two months have been challenging for the tourism industry but

we at Tourism Fiji have continued to work behind the scenes to bring in the best people from all over the world to be part of FTE 2016 for the benefit of our industry and its stakeholders,' she says.

The international buyers and media are qualified by Tourism Fiji's regional directors based in key source markets and in consultation with Fiji Airways, the Platinum Sponsors of FTE 2016.

'The programme for the three-day expo is custom-made and prepared based on the feedback from participants in the first two events. It is kept compact to enhance B2B opportunities, promoting a win-win situation for everyone attending FTE,' Mallam says.

FTE 2016 will be held at the Denarau Island Convention Centre from 3-5 May 2016.

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There's more to NORFOLK ISLAND

Boutique retreats

by Trish Freeman

One of the big surprises in Norfolk Island is the variety of high-end boutique accommodation. From the colonial-style Tintoela Luxury Retreat overlooking rolling farmland and the ocean, to contemporary cliff-top Forester Court or The Tin Sheds – a funky retreat in the middle of Burnt Pine town, all would suit couples or small family / corporate groups.

Tintoela

The oldest luxury accommodation on the island, Tintoela offers fresh fruit on arrival (grown on-property) and will pre-stock the kitchen with wine and supplies on request. Guests are given a quick island-orientation tour on arrival before they pick up their rental car which is included in the rate.



Picture perfect views at luxury retreat, Tintoela

Still owned by the family that built it, the original farmhouse sleeps 12 (a few more at a pinch) and is complemented by two cottages – a two-bedroom and a one-bedroom.

The Tin Sheds

Tucked away in a side street of the only town in Norfolk, Burnt Pine, The Tin Sheds is a three-apartment property offering a small gym; free use of snorkels, tennis racquets and fishing rods; a massage service (can be included in the package) and all the mod cons including a television that slides up from the end of the bed at the push of a button.

The first thing guests lay their eyes on when they arrive are three colourful (yellow, pale blue and red) Fiat 500s for use during their stay. Unless booked for exclusive use, The Tin Sheds does not accept children under 12.

Forester Court

For clients who may not be able to afford to stay at cliff-top Forester Court, the property offers High Tea on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons. Priced at A\$85, it includes five courses as well as locally made liqueurs.

Sholeen Watson, Infinity and Nicole Davies, Flight Centre Birkenhead pay attention during a site inspection of luxury product, The Tin Sheds

New at Aloha

A new onsite café, re-tiled swimming pool, in-room wifi and fully refurbished Deluxe rooms are among the recent developments at Norfolk Island's Aloha Apartments.

Also new is Aloha's departure, along with sister property Tudor Apartments, from the Hibiscus family brand which has retained the Crown and Regal properties.

'The refurbished Deluxe units have taken off,' reports Aloha manager Sue-ellen Quintal. 'The two-bedroom units can sleep five with a fold-out bed. The lead-in Superior rooms, also two-bedroom, are slightly smaller, are tidy but not renovated.'

The new street-side Black Rock Café is open for snacks, breakfast and lunch and provides an onsite alternative to self-catering.

Aloha Apartments is located in the centre of town and the swimming pool (plus playground next door) makes it ideal for families.



Newly re-tiled swimming pool at Aloha Apartments

Norfolk Island deal

Air New Zealand has a special package of \$879 per person twinshare ex AKL for flights, seven nights and transfers. The fare is available from all wholesalers for sales until 26 April and for travel from 8 May to 27 November 2016. Add \$160 for return flights from any other Air New Zealand serviced domestic port.



Adventure World is offering three Dubai stopover options

Dubai stopovers from Adventure World

Adventure World are promoting three stopovers in Dubai.

Dubai Heritage Stopover includes two nights accommodation and a guided walk through the Al Fahidi Historic District where old buildings have been converted into shady cafés, art galleries and quirky little shops.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Essential Abu Dhabi includes two nights accommodation and a tour by 4WD into the desert dunes for an exhilarating ride. It stops by a camel camp for a traditional Arabian evening at a Bedu encampment.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Dubai Stopover Tour includes three accommodation and a taster of the best Dubai has to offer including city tours, 4WD desert dunes trip, camel rides and more. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

These three trips are priced from \$369 per person and include hotel accommodation, some meals, sightseeing as indicated in itineraries, airport transfers and more.

Kuala Lumpur hotel gets Platinum status

The Melia Kuala Lumpur has been certified EarthCheck Platinum status in recognition of its commitment to environmentally friendly and sustainable practices. The accolade is the first of its kind in Malaysia.

Melia Kuala Lumpur is located in the 'Golden Triangle' of Kuala Lumpur positioning it close to the city's best attractions and amenities.

The hotel has also just completed a refurbishment programme of its rooms.

In addition to staying in a sustainable and earth friendly hotel, guests can also enjoy The Kitchen@Melia, weekend poolside dining with a steamboat buffet and barbecue.

Melia Kuala Lumpur general manager Jerónimo Molina says that the hotel demonstrates a number of initiatives such as procurement policies, energy saving consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, potable water saving and community



The Kitchen@Melia

contributions as all being designed to maximise the guest experience but also minimise the hotel's environmental footprint.

Tourism Malaysia New Zealand director, Zalina Ahmad says Melia Kuala Lumpur is a shining example of best practices in tourism which can be experienced by visitors to Malaysia.

EarthCheck certification provides an audited, historical record of environmental impacts and rates the effectiveness of industry efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions and conserve natural resources.

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Highlights of Malaysia

Adventure World's 11-day highlights trip of Malaysia is a cultural fusion of the native Malay, South Indian, and Chinese influences. Clients can hike through tea plantations to jungle waterfalls, stroll the white-sand beaches of the Perhentian Islands or explore historical Malacca. They will also spot jungle wildlife from treetop hideouts in Taman Negara National Park, digest Penang's open-air food stall markets or live it up in modern Kuala Lumpur.

Priced from \$2,765 per person it includes 10 nights hotel accommodation, activities and entrance fees as per the itinerary, meals as per the itinerary, services of a private car and driver, local English speaking guides. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.



Thailand Cycle Challenge fundraises for Variety's Bikes for Kids programme

Cycling in Thailand helps Bikes for Kids

Variety – The Children's Charity is calling for keen travellers to join the 2016 Thailand Cycle Challenge in late August, taking the 'paths less travelled' over 13 days to explore the charm and wonders of Thailand at handlebar level.

The trip is a partnership between Variety and World Expeditions. It includes eight days of moderate level cycling, and the chance to experience the delights of the 'land of smiles', with its colourful markets, beautiful temples and ancient ruins.

Apart from the cycling, highlights include sightseeing in Bangkok, a traditional Thai cooking class and visiting the tranquil cities of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai.

The aim of the trip is to fundraise for Variety's 'Bikes for Kids' programme which each year provides around 450 children with the freedom and

independence of owning their very own bike. Some of these children have overcome adverse circumstances, in some situations the family is simply not in a position to purchase a bike and in other cases the programme recognises and rewards children who are role models at their school or in their community.

At \$5,690 per person, the all-inclusive tour includes return airfares with Cathay Pacific, twin-share accommodation, modern bikes and equipment, support crew and back-up vehicle, private transport when not cycling, expert bilingual guides, most meals and a \$500 donation to Variety's 'Bikes for Kids' programme.

A maximum of 20 places are available on the Thailand Cycle Challenge. www.worldexpeditions.co.nz

Tour showcases India's contrasts

Exotic Holidays is giving clients the opportunity to experience the contrasts of East India from the mountainous regions of Darjeeling and Sikkim to Kolkata, the cultural and intellectual capital.

Priced from \$1449 plus internal flights from \$244, this tour explores the history and architecture of Kolkata, once the Capital of British India. Clients fly to Bagdogra and continue onto Darjeeling, which is surrounded by tea plantations and bordered by steep mountain ranges. As well as taking in the major sites the tour explores local industries and monasteries with plenty of time at leisure to soak up the atmosphere.

Ending with a return flight to Kolkata the tour includes nine breakfasts, six dinners, airport transfers, local English speaking guides, entrance fees and transport in air-conditioned vehicles. info@exoticholidays.co.nz

Walking Mumbai

Exotic Holidays is recommending that clients take part in a Heritage Walk in Mumbai to gain insight into the heart and history of the city.

The two hour walk includes architecture displaying the many influences cultures and nationalities have had on the city since the 1800s from Victorian to Art Deco and almost everything in between, the oldest business district and well-known landmarks.

Exotic Holidays has added a number of Heritage Walks to its growing list of travel experiences. The tour is priced from \$60 per person.

info@exoticholidays.co.nz

Australia

New Adina in Fremantle



Rachel Argaman

TFE Hotels will operate a new Adina Apartment Hotel as part of a mixed-use commercial, retail and dining precinct in Fremantle's West End.

Expected to open in July 2018, the hotel

will be opposite Fremantle's port and cruise ship terminal.

The development will make the most of the location's uninterrupted panoramic views, with the hotel occupying levels 8-11 of the 11-storey building. Guests will enter the lobby at the ground floor and will find a pool, gym, 235 square metres of meeting space and an onsite car park.

This will be TFE Hotels' first Fremantle hotel, after Adina signed an operating agreement with owners Silverleaf Investments.

TFE Hotels CEO Rachel Argaman says the development will add an exciting design element to Fremantle's architectural landscape, perfect for tourists as it was just 19km from Perth's CBD, 28km from Perth airport and close to the Rottne Ferry terminal.

'Our new Adina Apartment Hotel is strategically placed in Fremantle, which is one of the most desirable places to visit and stay in Western Australia yet has a shortage of quality hotels,' she says. Adina Apartment Hotel, Fremantle will have 141 rooms, consisting of 60 studios, 73 one bedroom apartments and eight two-bedroom apartments.



Photo supplied by Department of Parks and Wildlife WA

The Gap and Natural Bridge at Torndirrup National Park

Bridging the Gap in Western Australia

One of WA's tourist hotspots, the Gap and Natural Bridge in Albany, recently reopened after a \$6.1 million redevelopment.

Located in Torndirrup National Park in the state's south west, the Gap and Natural Bridge has a new lookout structure that extends 10 metres off the cliff face and almost 40 metres above the Southern Ocean, as well as connecting paths, picnic areas and interpretive facilities.

The steel platform is see-through making it easy for visitors to feel the ocean's salty spray as the waves rush through the Gap. Torndirrup National Park is surrounded by windswept coastal heaths giving way to massive granite outcrops, sheer cliffs and steep sandy slopes and dunes. The Southern Ocean has sculpted a Natural Bridge in the coastal granites and formed The Gap, where waves rush in and out.

<https://parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au/park/torndirrup>

Kiwis see the light for Vivid Sydney

Kiwis have seen the light when it comes to Sydney, if the number of New Zealanders looking to travel there during Vivid Sydney 2016 is anything to go by, says Destination NSW chief executive officer and executive producer of Vivid Sydney, Sandra Chipchase.

Last year over 12,000 Kiwis visited the world's largest annual festival of light, music and ideas, which attracted 1.7 million attendees in total during the 2015 event.

Chipchase says that since travel packages have gone on sale in New Zealand, there has been strong interest.

'They can book a holiday to Vivid Sydney and then head to one of NSW's amazing regional locations to see World-Heritage listed national parks, pristine beaches and waterways, Australia's oldest wine growing region or spa resorts and great local markets on the subtropical north coast,' Chipchase says.

Prefab Peppers

Peppers Kings Square in Perth, the first prefabricated Peppers Hotel, is six months from completion.

Hickory Building Systems' patented construction technology utilises elements including modular bathrooms, pre-attached facades and precast concrete panels, increasing not only the speed at which a build can be completed, but also the safety, quality of the workmanship while reducing the environmental impact of construction, according to Tomas Johnsson, chief operating officer of Mantra Group.

Seventeen floors in total, the hotel features 120 Studio Apartments and conferencing facilities. Located opposite Perth Arena, Peppers King Square is ideal for corporate and leisure travellers.

www.mantragroup.com.au



Peppers Kings Square in Perth is expected to open in six months

Cruising

Massive programme on the Seven Seas

Regent Seven Seas Cruises, has new and exotic itineraries as part of its 2017-18 Voyage Collection.

The four-ship fleet – Seven Seas Explorer, Seven Seas Mariner, Seven Seas Navigator and Seven Seas Voyager – will make more than 100 voyages during the 2017-18 season – including a rare summer time excursion through Canada's fabled Northwest Passage.

The 30-night Grand Northwest Passage journey aboard Seven Seas Navigator departs from Seward and explores rarely traversed islands, fjords, ports and passageways in Alaska, Canada and Greenland, before sailing along the St. Lawrence River to historic Quebec City and on to the final destination, Montreal.

Also, 2017-18 includes additional departures from Los Angeles, increasing the number of voyages that visit the Hawaiian Islands, Mexican Riviera and traverse the Panama Canal. Seven Seas

Navigator and Seven Seas Mariner will make a record eight crossings of the Panama Canal as part of this Voyage Collection.

Also of note, Seven Seas Explorer will embark on its inaugural season in Northern Europe, and Seven Seas Voyager will return to the Mediterranean for the summer and fall.

For 2017-18, Regent Seven Seas Cruises will call on more than 335 ports in 98 countries around the globe – including 35 ports not previously visited by a Regent ship. Nearly one-third of the new ports are found on Seven Seas Navigator's 30 night Northwest Passage voyage which departs 19 July 2017 and includes new destinations such as Homer, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Nome, Alaska; Herschel Island, Yukon; Tuktoyaktuk; Northwest Territories; Cambridge Bay,



Seven Seas Voyager in Norway

Gjoa Haven, Nunavut; Upernavik and Uummannaq, Greenland; Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises' all-inclusive experience includes free unlimited

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Cruising

Two more Suite Ships

Avalon Waterways has added two more Suite Ships to its European fleet, christening its newest Suite Ship Avalon Passion on the Danube, one week after launching Avalon Imagery II on the Rhine.

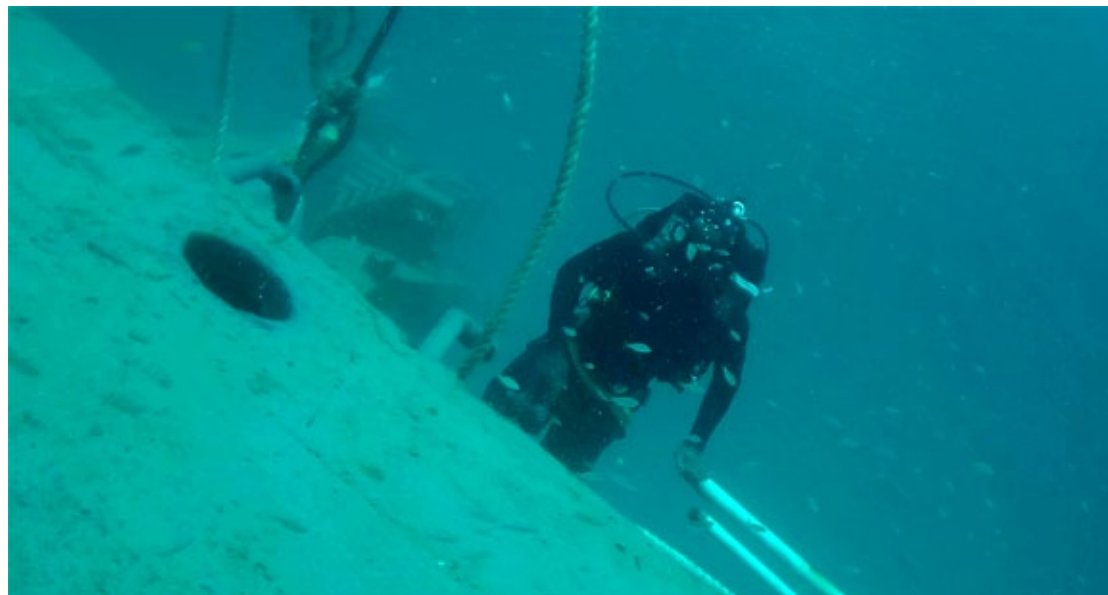
The 83-cabin Avalon Passion was launched by godmother Jill Ellis, head coach of the championship US Women's National Soccer Team, during a ceremony in the Austrian city of Linz.

The two newly built ships are the latest examples of Avalon Waterways' Suite Ship concept, which offers two decks of all-suite accommodation and 30% more cabin space than the industry average.

The launch of Avalon Imagery II and Avalon Passion gives Avalon a total of 12 Suite Ships in an overall European fleet of 16 superb vessels. Avalon's ships average just over three years in age.



Avalon Passion's godmother Jill Ellis at the launch



Captain Cook launches new dive wreck in Fiji

Captain Cook Cruises Fiji has launched a new dive wreck, Raiyawa, situated off the island of Tivua. Raiyawa can be explored as part of the company's popular Tivua Island Day cruise.

Raiyawa was built in 1982 in Fiji and was a government vessel deployed in placing and maintaining navigational marks around Fiji and carrying passengers interisland.

In 2014 Raiyawa was decommissioned and Captain Cook Cruises Fiji took her from government shipping with the intention of sinking her as a wreck.

Extensive work was done on Raiyawa to ensure she was safe for diving.

Jackie Charlton, managing director of Captain Cook Cruises Fiji, says Raiyawa has been turned into a wreck diver's dream.

The Tivua Island Day cruise departs

Denarau Marina daily at 10am returning 5pm and includes return transfers from Denarau and Nadi hotels, three hours sailing on tall ship Ra Marama, morning and afternoon tea, four hours on Tivua Island, BBQ lunch, beer, wine and soft drink, guided snorkelling tour, volleyball, kayaks, medicine walk, kava ceremony, kids club and Fijian entertainment.

The Tivua Island Day Cruise is priced at F\$209 per adult and F\$138 per child. A special is available where one child aged 3-9 years is F\$27 with each paying adult.

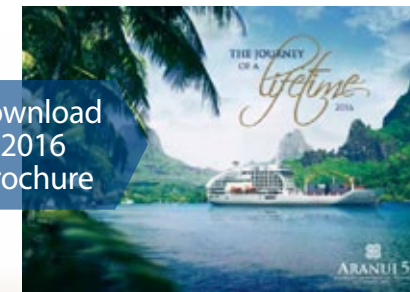
PADI diving at Raiyawa and Senikai Spa treatments are available to all passengers at additional cost.

Captain Cook Cruises' accommodated cruise ship, MV Reef Endeavour also stops at Tivua Island every Tuesday as part of its four and seven night cruises.

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New Zealand

Discussing dispersal: IBOs look regionally at event

Regional dispersal and seasonality were top of the agenda when some 180 inbound tour operator (IBO) staff and operational team members met with regional tourism office (RTO) representatives late last week.

Charlie Ives, executive officer of the Regional Tourism Offices of New Zealand (RTONZ) says this year's event attracted more interest than usual in an environment of booking tourism but challenges such as high season capacity crunches in key destinations.

'I think inbounders are looking for new and innovative product right across New Zealand,' says Ives.

The RTONZ days took place at the Rendezvous Hotel Auckland on Wednesday and Thursday last week, with the Friday set aside for RTO meetings with Tourism New Zealand and other key organisations, such as leading hotel groups, rental car companies, the AA, and media.

'The secondary regions tell us they were getting a lot more interest this year, certainly more than usual. That is a combination of inbounders' clients looking for new options and the keenness for regional dispersal. It can be a challenge to get



Catching up at the Rendezvous Auckland during the RTONZ presentations... Jason Henry, Destination Marlborough; Mary Dair, Tourism New Zealand; Tracy Johnston, Destination Marlborough; Tony Rogers, Tourism New Zealand

into places like Queenstown and Auckland at certain times of the year.'

Ives and RTONZ communications officer Trish May say the consumer has to realise that if they want to get into key locations at peak season they have to plan well in advance.

'However, we're not trying to send out a message that New Zealand is full. Talking to the IBOs it is obvious that New Zealand is still open and there are regions where there continues to be capacity.'

New Hospitality New Zealand CEO

Vicki Lee has been appointed chief executive officer of Hospitality New Zealand, replacing Bruce Robertson who stood down at the end of 2015.

Lee has a background in not-for-profit, marketing and advertising, advocacy and leadership and joins the organisation having been the chief executive for Cure Kids for the last six years.

Hospitality New Zealand national president, Adam Cunningham says the association is going through a period of strong growth, with the recent

launch of AccommodationNZ.

Lee was a finalist in the NZ Women of Influence Awards 2014 for her contribution to social enterprises in New Zealand and, since stepping down from her Cure Kids role, has undertaken a number of consulting and director roles. She will join the Hospitality New Zealand team from 26 April, 2016.



Vicki Lee

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New at World Travellers



Eden Stevenson

World Travellers has appointed Eden Stevenson as sales and marketing manager, effective 2 May.

The role is heavily focused on results for the member businesses. Local marketing

cohesion with group-wide promotion features prominently in the new job scope.

'World Travellers approaches everything a bit differently, so the investment in this new role is purely an exercise in return on investment,' says chief executive officer Wendy van Lieshout.

Stevenson has a strong background in sales, along with many years of travel industry experience. He will be based at the Generator business hub in Britomart, Auckland.

Agents' commission deal

Your Travel has launched a special consultants' deal of 11% commission on its 22 day three-country tour Through Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. It is priced at \$6990pp town share, including air fares from WLG, AKL or CHC and most meals. The price also includes all tips. The tour departs 12 May 2017.

Thailand takes in Bangkok and then glamping at The Hintok Camp and The Jungle River Rafts in Kanchanaburi. The Vietnam sector includes Hanoi, (including a luxury junk overnight stay in Halong Bay) Hue, Danang, Hoi An and Saigon. In Cambodia, participants visit Phnom Penh and Angkor Wat. An optional extra of a seven-night Mekong River cruise can be added.

www.yourtravel.co.nz



In Fiordland... the domestic market in New Zealand is growing for AAT Kings

More emphasis on domestic travel

The trade should not underestimate New Zealanders' desire for domestic travel and the scope they have to sell tours in their own country, says Bruce Gentry, general manager – New Zealand AAT Kings.

'The last 12 months have seen strong growth for us in domestic travel. It tends to be the mature market, often ex-pat families returning from overseas and even repeat domestic travellers who want to do things differently.'

Gentry says the company obviously has an outbound focus, to Australia, from this country, and the growth in Kiwis seeing NZ with AAT Kings has come without any specific promotion.

'A lot of it is general awareness, the profile of AAT Kings has been lifted in New Zealand. We are even working with trade partners and getting domestic bookings through the New Zealand

agents and there is definitely more potential there.'

Gentry adds that the 2015 – 16 season has had the biggest growth in AAT Kings' domestic travel in the country's history.

'That's admittedly off a small base, but there is obviously demand, so we will be focusing on that more later on this year.'

'We get into our Tasmania – New Zealand selling period around August and for the first time we'll be putting domestic campaigns into the market to support that. We're also talking about it more in our sales calls.'

He says the demand is predominantly for the South Island on the company's First Choice and Best Buy programmes, though there is scope for growth in the boutique Inspiring Journeys itineraries.

'It is amazing how many Kiwis have seen the world but not see their backyard.'

Blue Train takes the honours

The Blue Train was named as Africa's Leading Luxury Train by the World Travel Awards for the eighth consecutive year.

The World Travel Awards, 'the Oscars of the travel industry', celebrated its 23rd anniversary at the Africa & Indian Ocean Gala Ceremony held at Diamonds La Gemma dell'Est in Zanzibar, Tanzania last week.

Clients can experience The Blue Train on Adventure World's two-day itinerary travelling from Pretoria to Cape Town. Priced from \$1,472 per person it includes one night's accommodation in a deluxe suite on board The Blue Train, all meals and beverages on board (except French champagne and caviar) and scheduled excursions.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.



CPI: airfares show big drop Agents: we're not surprised

The sharp drop in both international and domestic airfares, as shown in the just released consumers price index (CPI) has not come as a surprise to the trade.

Released yesterday, the index showed that international airfares were down 12% and domestic fares fell by 4.8%. The index credited low oil prices along with competition in the market for the falls.

Sue Matson, Flight Centre NZ general manager, says the figures are reflective of what Flight Centre has been seeing within the industry in the last six months.

'International travel in particular has seen some of the most competitive airfares we've ever seen come through. This is amazing news for our customers and yet another reason why there has never been a better time to be a traveller.

Matson says it is hard to know how long this 'golden era' of travel will continue. 'My advice would be for Kiwis to make the most of these record lows and get out far and wide to see the world. We already know a lot of Kiwis are doing this - at Flight Centre we've seen the lower fares driving an increased appetite for travel, reflected in our results so far this year which have seen good growth in bookings compared to the same period last year.

'The accessibility and affordability has also seen us notice a slight shift in the type of trips our customers are making. While Australia is still a number one destination Kiwis are definitely looking further afield.

'Families in particular are taking more long-haul trips, if we look at the popular Auckland - Los Angeles route, with fare prices in line with travel to Asia it's now a viable option for a family holiday, likewise the Auckland - Hawaii route.

'Air New Zealand's route into Houston has also been popular with our cruising customers who can now affordably get up to the Caribbean.

'With the cost of getting to the destination so much more affordable we're also seeing our customers treat themselves more once on holiday. Some are staying longer, going for higher grades of accommodation or treating themselves to something special while there.'

Other comments

Retailer Lee Amor, of YOURTravel in Kapiti, had his tongue in cheek when asked for a comment. 'Show how much you appreciate the oil producers cutting their prices by booking YOURTravel holiday now.'

Ken Freer, marketing director at House of Travel, says the company is seeing the continued increase in capacity into and within New Zealand put downward pressure on airfares. 'With additional seats comes a desire for airlines to fill them. So the relatively strong New Zealand economy, combined with these lower airfares, is driving strong demand from Kiwis who are also looking further afield for their holidays this year than they may have done previously.'

AIRLINES IN BRIEF

New route for HX

Hong Kong Airlines (HX) is launching seasonal flights between Narita and Hong Kong from 1 July. Return fares NRT- HKG start from \$557, incl taxes, for travel 1 - 14 July, 1 - 15 September, 18 September - 6 October, 9 October - 21 December, 24 - 28 December. World Aviation advises the fares have been loaded in the GDS.

Ex India fares

Jet Airways (9W) has fares from India to New Zealand travelling DEL - 9W - SIN - QF - MEL - QF - AKL. Fares start from \$1064ow, incl taxes. Refer to GDS or contact World Aviation Systems.

Hawaiians are coming

A record number of Hawai'i industry partners are travelling to New Zealand as part of Hawai'i Tourism's annual Aloha Down Under (ADU) roadshow.

'The 26-strong delegation reflects the increased impact of our Kiwi visitor numbers to Hawai'i which last year surpassed 60,000 arrivals,' says Darragh Walshe, Hawaii Tourism Oceania. 'Of these, over 18,000 visited a neighbor island and we are pleased that each of the islands of Hawai'i are also well represented within the delegation.'

The New Zealand portion of the Aloha Down Under itinerary includes two travel agent events on Monday 9 May: a breakfast seminar in Wellington, and an evening workshop in Auckland.



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MEMO

Editor: Lisa Bradley
editor@travelmemo.co.nz

Journalists: Stu Freeman, Ruth Scott
and Aleisha Moore

Graphics: Julie Wadman
PO Box 60154 Titirangi, Auckland 0642

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