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Swan Hellenic lives on under G Adventures

G Adventures has bought troubled boutique British cruise line Swan Hellenic.

The 60-year-old company hit the wall in January, alongside sister operation Voyages of Discovery, when its owner All Leisure Holidays Group collapsed on 4 January, reportedly leaving 13,000 passengers in the lurch.



Adrian Piotto

G Adventures' acquisition of the Swan Hellenic brand adds boutique small-shop cruising to its existing adventure travel, adventure cruising and new touring businesses. It follows the company's recent purchases of established British escorting touring brands Travelsphere and Just You.

Adrian Piotto, managing director of G Adventures Australia and New Zealand, advises trade the company is now looking at UK and global distribution of the Swan Hellenic product.

Piotto says Swan Hellenic will be up and running in 2018, and so Kiwi agents can expect to see itineraries for cruises around the UK and Europe by the middle of the year.

He adds that small boutique cruises are a growing trend, and there is room to grow the popularity of this type of

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cruising out of the New Zealand market.

Piotto says although it was early days in the process, G Adventures is aiming to restore the value of the product and 'bring it back to its former glory.'

The purchase was made through All Leisure Holidays Group's administrators Grant Thornton for an undisclosed sum. It covers the brand and intellectual property but not the cruise line's single ship, Minerva, which had been leased.

It is not known how many Kiwis were affected by the demise of All Leisure Holidays Groups, but all those who were are still being advised to go to the UK administrator.



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Village fare at key helloworld store

The growing popularity of village shopping in Christchurch is one of the motivations behind the location of a new helloworld store in the city.

The company opened a new branded store in the busy Fendalton Village this week and owner, Bridget Hanrahan, says it complements the existing store network in an area of town under represented by agencies.

'This centre is up and coming, with a number of new retail businesses and rebuilds taking shape.

Hanrahan started her travel career with GO Holidays in Christchurch in the late 90s before moving to retail travel in Rangiora, where she has worked for the last 12 years. Most recently this was under the guidance

of Wayne Orchard and Liz Ditmer who provided support and encouragement for her step into ownership.

Hanrahan is joined by Angela Blazey, who brings seven years experience in sales and leadership with Flight Centre and Cruiseabout brands, and Carolyn Parker, well known in Christchurch with more than 25 years industry experience, most recently with You Travel.

Helloworld also opened a new Tauranga Crossing store yesterday.

Sally Sutton, recently from helloworld St Heliers, will lead the team having made the escape from Auckland. Sutton has a wealth of experience and expertise plus commitment to the local community.



Hello helloworld... Bridget Hanrahan and Angela Blazey in the new Fendalton Village store

Aus, Pacific update

In less than two-weeks time Rad Marketing and Sunseeker Travel Marketing will host an Australia and South Pacific product update evening at the Copthorne Hotel in Palmerston North. Drinks and canapés will be served at the event, which is happening on Wednesday, 15 February.

Captain Cook Cruises Australia and Fiji will be there, as well as Fiji's Treasure Island Resort.

The Sealink Travel Group – South Australia, Kangaroo Island & Queensland, Tiwi Islands and Western Australia will be represented.

The Royale Takitumu Rarotonga, Samoa Scenic and Taumeasena Island Resort will attend.

Prizes will be up for grabs on the night.

To attend, RSVP anne@radmarketing.co.nz by 8 February.

Space still available on all Melbourne famils

Agents and brokers can still sign up to any of the five Victoria and beyond famils happening this March.

The upcoming trips, open to 40 people, will be the single biggest famil movement of Kiwi agents to Melbourne and Victoria over the last five years.



Melbourne

There are still 20 spaces available.

Joanna Garrie, regional manager New Zealand with Visit Victoria, says the tours are open to all agents and brokers.

'We have had a lot of interest thus far. Interest from the Victorian travel product has also been very high and we will now have about 30 product in attendance at the Workshop Session in Melbourne.'

Some of the trips include road tripping from Melbourne to Sydney, visiting Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula, exploring Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula and Ballarat, and driving along Great Ocean Road.

www.ivvy.com/event/VV2017



Job Opportunity

Reservations Consultant

Due to the amazing growth **Wendy Wu Tours** has enjoyed over the past twelve months, we have created a new *Reservations Consultant* role to join our dynamic and friendly team.

We are looking for:

- a highly motivated, organised individual with sound communication skills and the ability to sell our product effectively;
- destination knowledge of China and/or Asia is preferred but not essential;
- ideally you will have at least twelve months' wholesale reservations or retail experience;
- extensive training in our systems and product will be provided and the position will be located in our North Shore office in Auckland.

Applications and enquiries about the role should be emailed to the General Manager paul.dymond@wendywutours.co.nz or call him directly on 021 0267 6083.

All correspondence will be kept strictly confidential. Applications close at 5pm, 20 February 2017.

www.wendywutours.co.nz



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2017

Singapore Airlines celebrate anniversary with Christchurch trade

Singapore Airlines hosted an agent's function this week to mark the airline's 30th anniversary of flying to the Garden City.

The Chinese New Year function, held at the Sugarhorse on Tuesday, was attended by more than 100 agents, who were welcomed with premium economy class Champagne and Garage Project limited edition Singapore Airlines craft beer.

Chinese lanterns were hung around the venue and, in a nod to the Year of the Rooster, agents were treated to chicken-inspired canapés.

At the end of the night the airline's sales manager South Island, Jessica Cribbens, thanked agents for their support in Christchurch, and played a commemorative video detailing the past 30 years of operations.

Cribbens then welcomed Kate Mayo, manager Wellington and South Island, on stage to draw a business card for the night's prize – two return economy class tickets from Christchurch to anywhere on the Singapore Airlines network. The winner was Amiee Ford from HoT On Victoria.



Kate Mayo, Singapore Airlines; Aimee Ford, HoT On Victoria and Jessica Cribbens, Singapore Airlines



Barbara-Anne William, Singapore Airlines; Carolyn Parker, YOU Travel Tower Junction and Sandra Toland, YOU Travel Tower Junction



Dianne Foubister, Singapore Airlines; Jess Rogers, HoT Northlands; Brigid Murphy; HoT Northlands and Sarah Bright, HoT Northlands



Liz Hamburger; Laura Mules; Anne-Marie Le Lievre; Melanie Veal; Natasha Kirk, all from Orbit



Alisha Russell, HoT Ferrymead; Melanie Lowen, HoT Ferrymead; Rachel Candy, Singapore Airlines; Melissa Bannister, HoT Ferrymead

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newcaledonia.travel



TAANZ NTIA 2017 ready to roll

TAANZ is gearing up for this year's National Travel Industry Awards, and the industry is being alerted to some important dates ahead.

'Again we've been overwhelmed with sponsors wanting to participate in the 2017 event,' says TAANZ chief executive Andrew Olsen.

'TAANZ is proud to host and have its name on the marquee event for the industry and we promise that this year will be better than the last. That's saying something because last year was pretty unbeatable.'

'We've had some great feedback, which is helping us make some tweaks to the NTIA product to improve the experience and value for guests and sponsors. This year we have six Premium sponsors – Air New Zealand, Expedia TAAP, Helloworld, Qantas, ServiceIQ and Travelport – and almost but not quite a full book of category and event sponsors. We have the new River Cruise Category available for sponsorship and interested

sponsors can contact Emmy@taanz.org.nz to secure the naming rights.

'Nominations will open Monday 27 March and agents and suppliers may self-nominate using the official endorsed nomination form. We'll share that information with the trade mid-March but we urge you to start planning your brand, location and individual award campaigns now,' says Olsen.

KEY DATES

- **Self-Nominations**
Monday, 27 March – Tuesday, 7 April
- **Ticket Sales**
Monday, 24 April
- **Voting**
Monday, 8 – Friday, 19 May (2 weeks)
- **Finalists Public Judging**
Monday, 31 July – 3 August
- **Auckland Event**
Saturday, 30 September



Get a taste for New Caledonia

New Caledonia has launched a new campaign, #TasteNewCaledonia, which focuses on its diverse landscapes and gastronomic offerings.

It celebrates the flavours to be found in each of the destination's regions, highlighting Kiwi Francophiles can feast on the escargot (snails) of the Isle of Pines or enjoy dishes such as gratin of mangrove crab, local venison, dauphine potatoes and croquettes at a traditional French restaurant in Noumea. Meanwhile, local markets boast French cheese, wines, fresh-baked pastries and chocolates.

New Caledonia Tourism New Zealand manager Sally Pepermans says the campaign will strengthen travellers' perceptions of the country as a culinary hotspot.

'Food plays such a large part in any travel experience, so by focusing on gastronomy as our key theme for 2017 we are aiming to show Kiwis the many ways they can immerse themselves in the rich, distinctive melting-pot of cultures that is New Caledonia,' says Pepermans.

New Caledonia will this year host a number of gastronomic events and festivals including the Gastronomy Festival, the Giant Omelette Festival, the Cheese Festival, the Avocado Festival and the Pahatr (fern) and Lobster Festival as well as run cooking classes, demonstrations and tastings.
www.newcaledonia.travel/nz

Maui Brewing Co has opened its first Oahu location



Company brews up new option

Maui Brewing Co cracked open its first Oahu location this week with Maui Brewing Co Waikiki – a 18,000 square foot restaurant on the second floor of Holiday Inn Resort Waikiki Beachcomber.

The menu for Maui Brewing Co's debut Waikiki restaurant includes its flagship line-up of beers –Bikini Blonde Lager, Big Swell IPA, Pineapple Mana Wheat and Coconut Hiwa Porter – as well as limited-release

beers such as Blood Orange Lorenzini Double IPA, Haleakala Sunryes IPA, POG IPA and Lemongrass Saison. Comrade Crafts – beers made by other craft breweries – will also be featured at this location.

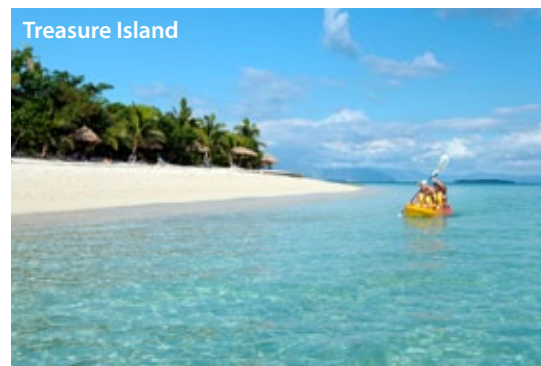
All of the beers offered on tap will be available for purchase in growlers and crowlers, which can be enjoyed responsibly outside of the restaurant.

www.MauiBrewingCo.com

Treasure Island Resort deals for valentines

As of 1 April Treasure Island Resort will change the name and category of the Oceanview room to the Oceanfront and Premium Beachfront Bure.

In this suite children under 16 can stay free when sharing a bure with their parents using existing bedding.



Also on offer are all inclusive food and beverage packages, which start at F\$217 per adult per day and include breakfast, lunch and dinner and all beverages (local beers, local spirits, house wine and soft drinks).

Additionally, guests can save up to 50% on accommodation rates plus upgrade offers from Oceanview to Oceanfront and receive F\$200 food and beverage credit.

Or they can stay at a Beachfront Bure and receive F\$300 food and beverage credit and have children under 12 transfer for free, and up to 30% off Treasure Island adult transfer prices.

The minimum stay for this offer is five nights for sales to 28 February, and the deal only applies to specific travel periods.

ACCOUNT MANAGER NEW ZEALAND

Based in our Auckland office we are seeking a highly motivated, confident and experienced travel industry professional to promote a Premium European Airline to the New Zealand travel trade and corporate accounts.

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- In-depth understanding of international airfares, pricing and ticketing
- Highly developed customer sales, communication and presentation skills
- Ability to build strong business relationships and identify areas of growth and revenue opportunities
- An outgoing and friendly personality
- Highly self-motivated and possessing excellent organisation and time management skills
- Proficient in all MS applications
- Must speak fluent English
- The successful applicant must be a Permanent Resident of New Zealand, hold a valid New Zealand Drivers Licence and have their own vehicle. The role will require after hours work and out of town travel.

If you have these attributes and would like to join the Global Aviation Team in New Zealand please forward a current CV to: admin@globalaviation.co.nz

Applications close 6pm Tuesday,
7 February 2017

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Australia

New Sydney hotel to open April 2017

Central Sydney will have a new hotel brand – Veriu Hotels & Suites – when the 64-room serviced apartment hotel, Veriu Broadway, opens in April 2017.

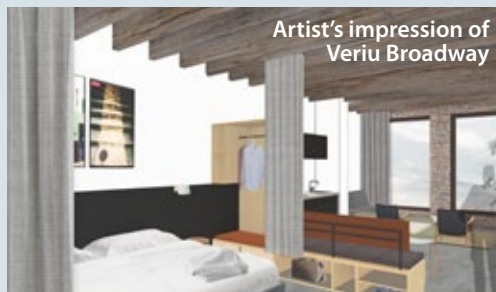
The hotel is one of five set to open under the Veriu brand by the end of 2018.

Veriu Broadway is an A\$18 million conversion of a former warehouse space with self-contained studios, each over 40sq m, and one and two bedroom split level apartments.

Close to the International Convention Centre, the hotel will provide 24-hour reception with staff trained as local area guides plus on-site food and beverage.

Veriu Broadway will be the marquee hotel for the brand following its first foray into the market with the successful opening of Veriu Camperdown – a new build all-suite hotel, which opened in the western suburbs of Sydney in March 2016.

Planned developments to take place under the Veriu brand by the end of 2018 are Veriu Randwick (35 rooms) opening April 2017; Veriu Central (110 rooms) opening early 2018; Veriu Green Square (142 rooms) opening late 2018.



Artist's impression of Veriu Broadway

The recently created Bar36 at the Pullman Cairns has entertainment six nights a week



\$6.5 mill upgrade complete for Pullman

The Pullman Reef Hotel Casino in Cairns has finished an extensive A\$6.5 million refurbishment.

The renovation includes a new-look hotel lobby and an expansion of the Tamarind Restaurant as well as the creation of Bar36 Live Lounge and Merchant café.

As part of the upgrade, the Pullman will now offer guests who book on the Accor Hotels website inclusions, regardless of the room type selected, such as breakfast daily, self-parking, wifi, free national calls, a daily drink in the hotel's new Bar36, and selected mini bar items free of charge that

will be replenished daily. Room rates start from \$305 per night (conditions apply).

Wayne Reynolds, general manager, says the refurbishment comes at an exciting time, as Cairns is experiencing solid tourism growth.

'Pullman Reef Hotel Casino's update shows we are well positioned to welcome a new upscale market that is not always well catered for in Tropical North Queensland,' he says.

Rooms and suites feature upscale décor, amenities and private balconies with views of either the water or city.

Skyrail access

Skyrail Rainforest Cableway in North Queensland is advising agents that the wheelchair ramp at Red Peak will not be accessible for seven days from the week commencing 1 May.

Admittance to the Red Peak boardwalk will be via stair access only. This will affect anyone requiring ramp access, including those in wheelchairs and prams.

Getting to Cape Tribulation by bus

Paddletrek has launched the Cape Tribulation Adventure Bus.

The bus provides daily transport between Port Douglas and Cape Tribulation, departing at 8.30am, arriving about 10am. Return departure is 4.30pm.

Once there, clients can choose

Valentine's Day getaway for couples in NSW

The Old Bank Boutique Hotel in Mittagong (New South Wales) is offering couples a two-night Romance Package, available on Valentine's Day and throughout all of February.

The deal includes a bottle of sparkling wine on arrival, heart-shaped and home-made shortbread biscuits in the room, a two-course breakfast, afternoon tea each day and deluxe accommodation in a former bank, which was built in 1892.

The offer is available from A\$590 per couple midweek or from A\$690 on weekends (subject to availability).

Overnight guests can also enjoy romantic, two-course dinners with wine in the Old Bank Hotel's candlelit dining room from A\$55 per guest.

www.oldbankhotel.com.au

from any adventure tours in the area, including ziplining through the rainforest canopy, snorkelling the Great Barrier Reef, and mountain biking through the Daintree or horse riding along the beaches of Cape Tribulation.

www.capetribadventurebus.com.au

Hemingway's to join Cairns' waterfront

Hemingway's Brewery will open on Cairns' waterfront in the heritage-listed building, Shed 2, in 2018.

Ports North chairman Russell Beer has welcomed the new development, saying it is the perfect 'attractor' for the Cityport entertainment, tourism and leisure precinct.

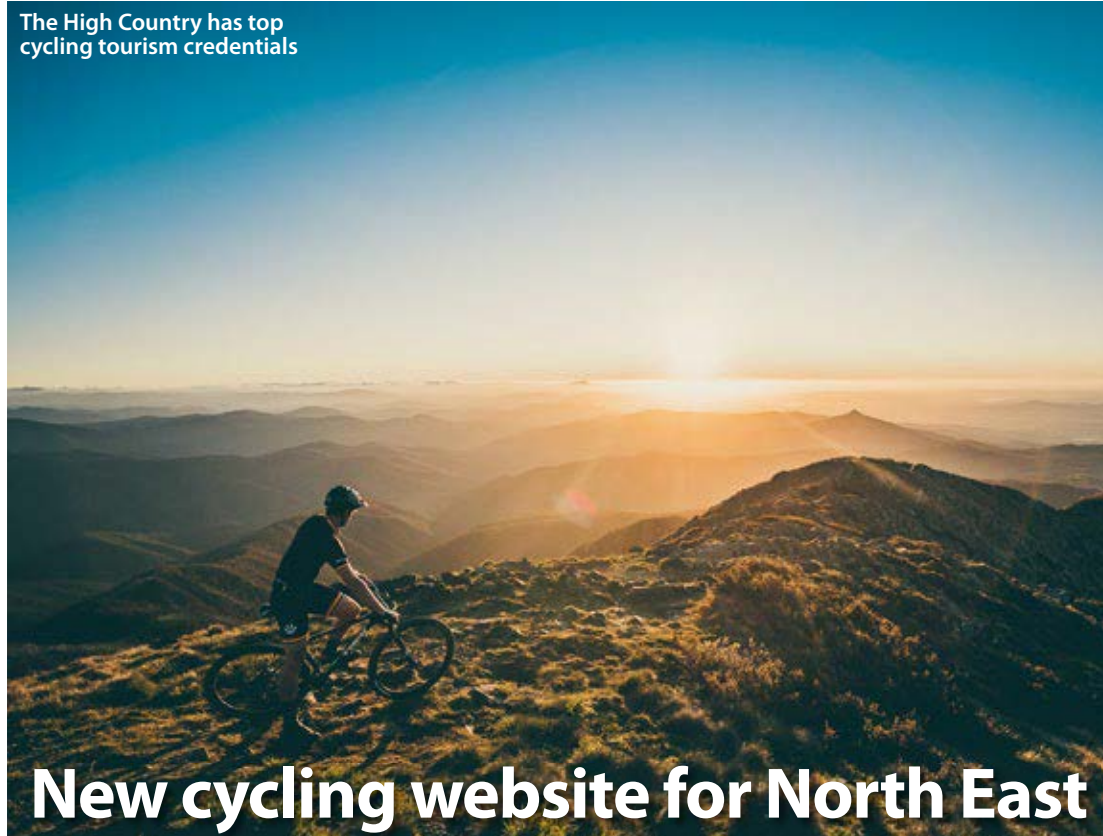
'The quality of the Hemingway's Brewery product coupled with the popularity of craft beer, an iconic waterfront location and innovative design concepts will create a unique destination for locals and tourists alike,' says Beer.

Owners Tony Fyfe and Craig Parsell say Hemingway's serves quality beer and food, all with a local focus in mind.

'With consumers trading up to authentic and better quality beers, the world is currently experiencing a craft beer revolution. We cannot wait to bring it to Cairns,' says Fyfe.

Designs for the 1400sq m space integrate a Canadian micro-brewing system, stainless steel tanks, a restaurant serving food made from locally-sourced ingredients, a provider showcasing FNQ craft produce and a dedicated event space for the MICE industry and weddings.

The High Country has top cycling tourism credentials



New cycling website for North East

Tourism North East (Australia) has launched a website, ridehighcountry.com.au, designed to provide a one-stop information shop for bikers to the region.

The site aims to inspire riders to travel to the High Country, while also providing information to aid trip planning. It covers cycle routes, trail maps, cycle-friendly accommodation options, transport providers, bike hire, and cycle touring companies.

Amber Gardner, CEO of Tourism North East, says the organisation is looking to establish the High Country as the

premier bike destination in Victoria.

'The High Country has long been acknowledged as having the strongest cycle tourism credentials in the state, featuring three signature rail trails, the only internationally recognised mountain bike trails in the Southern Hemisphere, and the toughest and most popular road cycling rides in the country,' says Gardner.

The region offers more than 250km of safe, off-road trails through vineyards, farmland and villages, with difficulty levels catering to beginners and experienced riders.

Crystalbrook invests \$100 mill into property

Crystalbrook Collection, operating under the parent company G.A Group Australia, is announcing the combined acquisition of the Bellview Motel and adjoining three-level office building, Virginia House.

This buy up is in line with Crystalbrook Collection's bid to develop three premier properties within Cairns over the next three years.

G.A Group Australia chief executive Mark Davie says the company plans to invest A\$100 million dollars into the new complex.

'We are still in the planning stages. However, we do know we want to maximise the site's potential and deliver a premium product to Cairns and visitors – one that is built according to what is suitable for the location,' says Davie.

Construction on the development will start towards the end of the year after the design and approvals stage, with work expected to take two years.

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December breaks Auckland Airport's passenger records

Auckland Airport's December 2016 international passengers (excluding transit passengers) were the highest ever for a single month in the airport's history.

There were 960,861 passengers – 67,000 more than the previous record set in January 2016, and 13.1% higher than December 2015.

The result was driven by capacity increases on North American and Asian routes, which boosted visitor arrivals over summer, as well as by the number of people visiting friends and relatives during the holidays.

International passenger numbers increased to 9.3 million in the year ending 31 December, 2016. This 10.4% increase on the previous 12 months was primarily due to additional capacity on flights from the United States, the Middle East, Japan, China, Thailand and Australia, and as a result of nine new airlines launching Auckland services in the past 18 months.

Meanwhile, domestic passengers were up 10.9% (75,000 more people) compared with December 2015. The record 761,581 passengers was due to a hike in regional services.

Auckland Airport also recorded a new daily international passenger record on Friday, 23 December. On that day, 36,403 passengers came through the international terminal.

Etihad and Lufthansa sign catering deal

Etihad Aviation Group and Lufthansa German Airlines have signed a US\$100 million global catering agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul.

The four-year catering contract will see Lufthansa's LSG Sky Chefs provide catering services to Etihad Airways in 16 cities in Europe, Asia and the Americas. This makes LSG the largest provider of catering services to the UAE's national airline, outside its Abu Dhabi home base.

Etihad Airways and Lufthansa are also exploring further cooperation in areas such as freight operations, procurement and passenger services to improve their competitive offerings globally and in the European market.

Meanwhile, the previously announced codeshare between the two airline groups went on sale this week for flights between Abu Dhabi and Germany.

Lufthansa will place its LH code on Etihad Airways' twice-daily flights between its Abu Dhabi hub and Frankfurt and Munich. And Etihad will put its EY code on Lufthansa's long-haul intercontinental services between its home base of Frankfurt and Rio de Janeiro and Bogota as soon as government approval is gained.

The codeshare agreement will grow both carriers' global networks, giving Lufthansa increased access to important feeder markets throughout the Indian subcontinent via Abu Dhabi, while Etihad will gain access into South America through Germany.

Aircalin's Noumea special

Aircalin has a We Love New Caledonia sale to Noumea on sale until 24 February.

The \$599 return fare ex-Auckland is applicable to all flights displaying an SB flight number. The SB sectors are to be booked in W Class, the airline's protected inventory booking class for the New Zealand market.

It is valid for travel from 28 February to 30 June, 2017, and agents are advised to check for closeouts.

Increased choice as Delta buddies up with Virgin Australia

Delta and Virgin Australia have partnered to bring agents and their clients in this part of the world more choice with new services between Melbourne and Los Angeles (flights operated by Virgin Australia) starting 4 April.

On the Delta domestic network from Los Angeles travellers can access 49 cities in the US, Canada and Mexico, including 15 times daily to San Francisco and a flight to New York JFK every 90 minutes.

Meantime, Delta SkyMiles is making improvements for Diamond Medallion Members' Choice Benefits – a loyalty programme feature that Delta provides



its elite members.

Choice Benefits are designed to give Delta's most loyal members the power to self-select options to customise their travel experience and gain the greatest value for their status.

When qualifying for 2018 status, Diamond Medallion members will be able to make three Choice Benefits selections instead of the current two. In addition, members will have added flexibility with a new feature that enables selecting the three Choice Benefits at different times throughout the Medallion year versus being restricted to selecting all at once.

Choice Benefits options include upgrade certificates, Delta Sky Club individual or executive memberships, Delta Sky Club guest pass, the ability to gift status, bonus miles, travel or retail gift cards and global entry application vouchers.

Airlines

Meet Oscar, Air New Zealand's little helper

Air New Zealand has made its first foray into the field of artificial intelligence (AI) with its new chatbot, Bravo Oscar Tango or Oscar for short.

Oscar will initially assist customers with commonly asked queries, saving them time and offering a more personalised experience than searching a traditional Frequently Asked Questions section online.

As with other AI technology, Oscar will learn based on the conversations people have with him, becoming more user friendly and more helpful the more he interacts.

Air New Zealand chief digital officer Avi Golan says Oscar has been launched as a beta product allowing customers to play an active role in training him.

'This is a new approach for us, getting Oscar out fast and in the early-



Oscar is looking to passengers for training

development stages so that we can build and co-create with our customers. Given Oscar learns natural language it makes sense he learns directly from our customers the types of information they want to know and the language they use, rather than airline jargon. 'The world's best digital companies foster a culture of

customer-led design and collaboration and for the airline to meet its big digital ambitions we must embed this culture of thinking, acting and doing as leading digital companies do.'

Oscar has initially been launched as a help chatbot to assist with Air New Zealand Lounge, Airpoints and baggage queries but the airline has big plans for him, including integration with the Air New Zealand Mobile app, via both voice and text, and with other chat platforms and in-home digital assistants.

Discover the World's new representation

European airline bmi regional has partnered with Discover the World to provide sales coverage in 36 key source markets across the Discover the World network, including New Zealand.

Discover the World is also representing Brazilian low-cost airline GOL in New Zealand. GOL was founded in 2001 to offer air travel in Brazil and throughout South America at competitive fares.

The representation announcement follows GOL's joining of BSP (IATA

approved ticketing system) in New Zealand.

In the case of bmi regional, Discover the World intends growing the airline's presence in these markets by supporting its regional sales and marketing activity. As well as business and leisure travellers, the company will aim to capture a greater share of the group market, particularly concentrating on its main hubs such as Munich and Bristol.

discovertheworld.com

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Phone: 021 420 227



Cruising

Expeditions with Cousteau

Aqua Expeditions, a luxury river cruise company, has announced a new collaboration with champion of ocean conservation and environmental protection, Jean-Michel Cousteau.

Launching with a series of special luxury cruises in 2017 and 2018 featuring five seven-night departures, these new Cousteau-hosted itineraries will offer guests insider access to the famed explorer on both the Aria Amazon and Aqua Mekong vessels.

The son of ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau, Jean-Michel founded the Ocean Futures Society in 1999 to carry on this pioneering work and to honour his father's heritage.

During these exclusive departures, travellers will experience the environmentally rich Amazon and Mekong rivers from the perspective of a conservationist and will get to know Jean-Michel in the intimacy of a small group of fellow travellers (the Aria Amazon's maximum capacity is 32 passengers, while the Aqua Mekong's is 40).

Guests will learn first-hand about Cousteau's deep experience exploring the Amazon and other remote areas around the world as he champions the cause of environmental conservation and protection. Each voyage will include evening talks with Cousteau, and screenings of several of his award-winning films.

reservations@ftmcruise.co.nz

New in Halong Bay

The Paradise Group has launched a new line of cruise ships for the Halong Bay market.

The line, Paradise Elegance, positions itself between the existing Paradise Peak and Paradise Luxury vessels.

The 25sq m cabins all have balconies and are divided into four categories: Deluxe Balcony (14 cabins), Executive Balcony (13), Captain's View Terrace Suite (two), and Elegance Suite (two).

The cruise ships also feature a spa,



Paradise Elegance ships offer all guests balcony cabins

dining room, sun deck and two bars, which are spread over five decks.

www.paradisecruise.com

Chimu Adventures Antarctica sale

Chimu Adventures is offering significant savings on 2017 / 2018 Antarctica Cruises on board the G.

Clients can save 20% off certain departures and cabin categories on trips to the Antarctica Peninsular, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

These Include the Antarctica Classic Indepth programme, departing 12 November 2017, category three from \$10,655 per person gross. That is a saving of \$2,664 per person.

CLICK HERE for details.

Packaged escapes

Island Escape has released packages for its Tahitian Affair excursions, bundling transfers, hotels and domestic flights with the actual cruise.

All agents need to do for their clients is add the return international flight to and from Papeete (PPT) in Tahiti.

A seven night Bora Bora to Bora Bora cruise from \$5950 includes airport – hotel arrival transfer in Papeete, complimentary one night pre-cruise at the Manava Suites Resort in a Lagoon View Studio (or similar (breakfast included), and domestic Air Tahiti flights from Papeete to Bora Bora return.

Ten night packages are also available.

www.islandescape.co.nz

Take your sweetie to Tahiti

Paul Gauguin Cruises is offering a Valentine's Day gift package to guests on select 2017 and 2018 sailings aboard The Gauguin.

The deal is valid for those who book between 30 January and 18 February 2017.

The gift package called Take Your Sweetie to Tahiti includes a \$200 per-stateroom credit at the ship's Deep Nature Spa by Algothorm, a box of chocolates and a bottle of sparkling wine (total package valued at \$250).

The bundle is available on voyages departing 26 August, 2017, through to 29 December, 2018, excluding the 7 October, 2017, sailing.

As with all 2017 and 2018 sailings aboard The Gauguin, guests also receive 50% off standard all-inclusive cruise

fares and an included round-trip airfare from Los Angeles.

In addition, Paul Gauguin Cruises now offers wedding ceremony and renewal of vows packages that allow couples to celebrate their love in a romantic setting amid the exotic islands of French Polynesia.



Maldives resort offers wine experience

Soneva Fushi, in the Maldives, has partnered with a Bordeaux wine estates to create the Château Angélus Wine Dinner and Tastings experience for its guests from 15 to 22 April.

The getaway features five nights accommodation at the private island resort, together with a special wine dinner and series of tastings with Stéphanie de Boüard-Rivoal, the co-owner and general manager of Château Angélus, and eighth-generation member of the de Boüard de Laforest family.

The five-night package is priced from US\$14,000 (inclusive of taxes and fees), based on two guests sharing one of the resort's Crusoe Villas.

The package can be upgraded with additional nights in a Crusoe Villa with pool or the Soneva Fushi Villa Suite with pool, at an extra cost.

CLICK HERE for details.



The Soneva Fushi

Temple of Heaven, Beiling



Wendy Wu offers savings to China

Wendy Wu Tours is offering up to \$350 off per person on 2017 China group tours when flying Cathay Pacific.

Clients can access the specials on a vast array of Wendy Wu Tours' 2017 China group tours, but the company advises these have limited availability and are only on sale until 27 February 2017 (unless sold out prior).

General manager NZ, Paul Dymond, says Wendy Wu has seen a huge increase in the amount of people travelling to China in 2017 already.

The most popular tour for Kiwis this year is the Majestic Yangtze – 15 Day Classic Fully Inclusive Tour. Starting in Shanghai the tour heads down the Yangtze River on a multi-day cruise. Chengdu and the Giant Pandas come next, followed by the Terracotta Army near Xian. The tour ends with three nights in Beijing, with a visit to the Great

Wall. Prices are now on sale from \$4630 per person, fully inclusive, departing Auckland on Cathay Pacific (additional charge of RMB600 is paid on arrival for tipping).

Wendy Wu's tours feature a range of inclusions – sightseeing with English speaking guides, international economy class airfares flying Cathay Pacific, local transportation, accommodation, meals during the fully inclusive classic tours and most meals in the Deluxe and Discovery Group Tour range.

Wendy Wu obtains visa (fees included in group tour cost) for New Zealand, Australian and UK passport holders.

Travel must be on a Wendy Wu Group Tour departing from 14 February, with all travel having departed by 31 October. A \$2000 deposit is required at the time of booking, no later than 27 February.

www.wendywutours.co.nz

Pahang is where it's app for Malaysia

The Malaysian government has officially designated 2017 as Visit Pahang Year.

To honour the occasion, the state's tourism authority, Tourism Pahang, has launched its own mobile app.

The Visit Pahang Malaysia app, free to download from the Apple App Store or Google Play, is an online directory promoting various destinations, sights and places of interest across the state.

It includes a list of transportation services including airlines (Malaysia Airlines), Malayan Railway (Keretapi Tanah Melayu) and express buses. There are also sections on events, things to do, places to go and shopping.

One of the largest states in Peninsular Malaysia, Pahang is dominated by the Titiwangsa Mountain Range, rainforests and beaches.

Its capital, Kuantan, is flanked on by coastline including the resort laden Beserah and Batu Hitam beaches. To the west, is the Cameron Highlands and further south lays the Genting Highlands Resort, home to Casino de Genting, Chin Swee Caves Temple and the Genting Skyway cable car.

Pahang last year received 12 million visitors who spent US\$1.46 billion in the state. This year's target is 15 million visitors and RM10 billion US\$2.24 billion in revenue.

Hello Kitty themed rooms
at Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour



Hello Kitty

The Shangri-La Group's Hotel Jen Puteri Harbour in Johor has launched 12 Hello Kitty-themed rooms.

The first of their kind within the Southeast Asian region and designed in partnership with Sanrio, the rooms are designed to elevate the experience of Hello Kitty enthusiasts staying at the waterfront hotel.

The rooms revolve around three themes: the swashbuckling Sailor, the romantic Pink Series and the magical Hello Kitty in OZ.

Mud, glorious mud

Exotic Holidays is advising agents that the Boryeong Mud Festival in Korea is being held 21 to 30 July this year.

The mineral-rich mud found on nearby Daecheon Beach is given celebrity status for a weekend and visitors are invited to lather up and get messy.

Exotic managing director Rahul Sharma says normal activities or sports become more hilarious when mud is added, which it is to almost everything.

Mud skiing and slides, a 44-metre wide mud pool for wrestling, mud-coated raves on the beach, muddy amusement parks, bouncy castles



The Boryeong Mud Festival is on from July 21 to 30

and even a mud-ridden 10 kilometre running race are all on offer.

The Korean Institute of Standards and Science continually tests the quality, finding high levels of germanium and bentonite. **CLICK HERE** for details.

Uncovering Laos

Clients wanting an in-depth look at Laos should consider the Phu Khao Khouay Experience and include it in an Uncover Southern Laos Itinerary, according to Exotic Holidays.

The company's managing director, Rahul Sharma says the

day tour from Vientiane highlights the beauty of Laos through its diverse forest landscapes and its beautiful waterways. 'Participants trek through the National Protected Area of Phou Khao Khouay, see tropical butterflies and wild orchids and visit a traditional Laos village,' says Sharma.

'They also ride on a long-tail boat up scenic rivers and view the incredible waterfalls, Tad Xay and Pha Xay.'

CLICK HERE for details.

Outrigger serves up love on a plate

Outrigger resorts in Phuket, the Maldives and Mauritius have created special Valentine's romance offers for guests.

At Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort executive chef Roberto Conrad has created a five-course menu for two at the Edgewater bistro beside the beach, which will be available on 14 February for US\$212.

And, at Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort, couples can have a candlelit sunset barbecue on the beach for US\$159. There is also a private beach table BBQ with private chef and waiter on offer for US\$366.

Meanwhile, the Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort has created three dining options and a spa special for Valentine's Day. On the beach there will be a champagne breakfast for US\$146 and, at Willie's Rum & Crab Shack, couples can opt for dinner by the sea for US\$148. At the colonial-style Plantation Club, there is a four-course menu option for US\$248 per couple.

Outrigger Mauritius is also offering a 70-minute couples massage for US\$376.

- fbco.phuketbeach@outrigger.co.th
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Innovative to honour Battle at El Alamein

Innovative Travel is running a special small group trip to Egypt that will take in the 75th commemorations for the WWII Battle at El Alamein in Egypt on 20 October.

New Zealand's first ambassador to Egypt and Innovative Tour Host, Rene Wilson, will lead the 13-day tour, which starts in Cairo on 10 October.

Trip highlights include staying at the historic Cecil Hotel in Alexandria (a one-time base for General Montgomery during WWII), visits to some of the lesser known Commonwealth war cemeteries in Egypt, attendance at the combined commemorations in El Alamein and a deluxe Nile cruise.

Touring with Wilson, who has in-depth experience and knowledge of Egypt, will be a bonus for those interested in WWII history and who have Egypt on their bucket list, says Innovative Travel managing director Robyn Galloway.

The El Alamein commemoration will be a combined service, so clients from other commonwealth countries are welcomed to join the tour.

tours@innovative-travel.com



Big events planned for Zimbabwe

The Sanganai / Hlanganani World Tourism Expo from 8 to 10 June in Bulawayo, often referred to as the City of the Kings, is among the major events being promoted by Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) in 2017.

A number of activities this year take place near the borders with Zambia. The ZTA points out UniVisa, aka KAZA Visa, is available on arrival at Harare and Victoria Falls international airports at a cost of \$US50. This visa allows cross border visits into Zambia.

The same visa also allows for national park visits across the border with Botswana, permitting tourists to make the most of their presence in



Victoria Falls, Zambia and Zimbabwe border

Zimbabwe for any of the 2017 events.

Some dates to note include: Zimbabwe Independence Day, 18 April, Bulawayo; Harare International Festival of Arts, 25 to 30 April, Harare; Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, 25 to 29 April, Bulawayo; Victoria Falls Marathon, 18 June, Victoria Falls Lake.

Kick back at Richard Branson's

World Journeys has a stay four/pay three nights offer at Richard Branson's South African Hotel and Vineyard in the Winelands.

Just under an hour's drive from Cape Town, Mont Rochelle is a 26-bedroom hotel in the town of Franschhoek, featuring casual and gourmet dining options.

Leisure options include wine tastings, a swimming pool, spa treatments or hammam, gym, biking or hiking, horse riding, exploring the town of Franschhoek, and the Franschhoek Wine Tram which takes you around the local wine estates.

A stay is worth \$744 per person (share twin) including breakfast. The offer is valid on stays from 1 May to 31 August, subject to availability.

info@worldjourneys.co.nz

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Europe

Three villas added to Italian collection

World Journeys has three new Italian villas on its website for the 2017 season.

In Tuscany, Villa Florence – a converted mill – is sited near the villages of the Chianti, Lucca and the beaches of the Versilia Coast.

The second Tuscany villa is San Gimignano, which had been built by a noble family on the ruins of an ancient castle. Local attractions range from woodland walks to village excursions.

In the Sorrento region, the villa overlooks the gulfs of Napoli and Salerno, the perfect base from which to explore nearby Positano, Amalfi and Pompeii.

All villas have swimming pools, outdoor dining settings, and five bedrooms accommodating from nine to 11 people. Villa hire starts from \$2550 for a seven-night stay (Florence). Prices vary seasonally.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Villa Florence; Villa li Galli



Avani debuts in Europe

The Avani brand debuts in Europe with the launch of the Avani Avenida Liberdade Lisbon Hotel on 1 April.

The 119-key property, formerly the Tivoli Jardim Lisboa Hotel, is undergoing a \$2.2 million refurbishment that includes the redesign of the façade, guestrooms, lobby and reception as well as installation of a gym.

Minor Hotels acquired Tivoli Hotels & Resorts a year ago providing the group

with an operating platform in Europe. The company's plan was to invest in its assets and introduce some of the group's other brands to the region.

In addition to the Portugal launch, the Anantara Vilamoura Algarve Resort will also soon debut in the country, giving the opportunity to drive growth in the European market.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Coach tours for US \$560

Bentours has announced savings of up to \$560 per person off a range of 2017 exclusive and guaranteed coach tours to mark the beginning of expo season.

The deals cover bookings made, and deposited, by 28 February.

They include Scenes of the North, which has itineraries running from six to 22 days.

The 22-day module goes to Scandinavia, Finland, Estonia and Russia by coach, ferry and high-speed train.

It includes a guaranteed fjord view room and five star hotels in the capital cities. The saving price is from \$10,185 per person.

www.bentours.co.nz/coach-tour-sale

UTracks celebrates a decade of European adventures

UTracks is running a 10th anniversary sale, offering a 10% discount on selected classic European trips during February.

UTracks New Zealand general manager Natalie Tambolash says the 10 trips featured in UTracks' first active European brochure include trips that are still best sellers today such as a cycle trip along the Blue Danube, a bike-and-barge trip in France's Loire Valley, walking along the famous Camino, and a guided walk around Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Europe.

'When we first launched UTracks in 2007, we set out to provide the most affordable, comprehensive range of European walking and cycling experiences for the Australasian market,' Tambolash says.

'Since then, our offering has grown from 60 itineraries in 10 countries to more than 400 itineraries in 35 countries.'

Tambolash says the itineraries have remained affordable.

'A number of our popular trips have increased in price very little over the last 10 years. For example our eight-day Blue

Danube Cycle trip has increased by as little as \$180 per person since its debut 10 years ago. And the eight-day Crossing Corsica Walk has not increased by one cent between 2007 and 2017.'

Tambolash says travelling to Europe has never been more affordable. 'And while some European rail products have increased in price by less than 10% on average over the last 10 years, many of the point-to-point tickets have decreased in price.'

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

MYSTERY PERSON



It's a mystery

This week's mystery person was photographed at a Ponant function in Wellington and it seems that our caption writer there broke her pencil at a crucial time. As a result we have the names of Annabel Young, NZ Shipping Federation; and Bhagavan Srinivasa, Travel Managers. But who is the mystery lady on the right. If you know the answer, please send it to competitions@promag.co.nz, with mystery person in the subject line.

Seems that we really did make a mess of the Mystery Person last week... apparently we inadvertently named her, thinking she was someone else in the photo. Do you follow that? No neither do we. But amongst the mayhem we did manage to find a winner. Sally Pepermans, from New Caledonia Tourism, correctly guessed that the mystery person was Debbie Ware from Travelsmart Meadowbank. A copy of National Geographic Traveller, courtesy of Adventure World, is on its way.

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Agents ROCK in Portugal with Contiki

Contiki has announced the destination for its annual ROCK Around the World top sellers trip.

Five Contiki-loving New Zealand travel agents will soon be heading to Nos Primavera Sound in Porto, Portugal.

Bon Iver, Aphex Twin and Justice are headliners for the festival in June, making it one of the hippest festivals on the planet, in an absolutely stunning location.

Top-sellers can expect to make a

bunch of new friends as they eat, see and party their way through Barcelona, San Sebastian, Burgos, Porto, Salamanca and Madrid with 50 other agents from around the world.

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.

www.facebook.com/groups/ContikiAgentsNZ

Newest affiliate with helloworld

Dream, Travel & Cruise, located in Bayfair, is the latest agency to join My Travel Group, helloworld's affiliate network.

The news follows a busy couple of months of MTG spreading the word since the brand launched in Auckland late last year.

Jess Allan, national manager affiliate network, says MTG held functions in

Napier and Wellington in December, while business development manager Brett Simon and air ticket manager Siwan Nadan presented to the group's Fiji agents in January.

And yesterday, MTG hosted some of its VFR (visiting friend and relatives) Chinese agents to lunch to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Accor joins forces with Qatar

AccorHotels and Qatar Airways have joined forces to offer more advantages to members of their respective loyalty programmes Le Club AccorHotels and Qatar Airways Privilege Club.

Members of Privilege Club can now convert their Qmiles into Le Club AccorHotels points at the conversion rate of 4500 Qmiles for 1000 LCAH points. This will allow them to purchase free nights and discounts on their next stay in over 3400 hotels, from luxury to economy, and to access the multiple rewards – Elite Experiences, Dream Stays, La Collection e-boutique – offered by the Le Club AccorHotels loyalty programme.

The more than 30 million Le Club AccorHotels loyalty programme members who have already notched up 2000 points can convert them into Qmiles and access a network of over 150 destinations.

Privilege Club members can convert their Qmiles to Le Club AccorHotels points by logging in to their account and from the My Dashboard page, clicking the Redeem Qmiles tab.

www.qmiles.com

Crocodile crawl

WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo at Sydney's Darling Harbour has launched a new Crocodile Encounter, allowing guests to come eye-to-eye with one of Australia's most well-known reptiles.

Guests can crawl through the display and stand-up in an acrylic pop-up viewing dome, so they can safely discover what it's like to be in the water with the animals.

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MEMO

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