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ISSUE  
1039

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## Awards finalists give tips for success, thoughts on trends

Keep your knowledge up, keep training and keep visiting new destinations. That's one of the tips for success from Samantha Johnston of YOU Travel Taupo.

A finalist in the Best Young Travel Agency Executive category at the TAANZ National Travel Industry Awards, Johnston has been to 30 countries in her life (which is more than her age) and in her two years at her current job has been to Brazil, Argentina, USA, Canada, Cook Islands and Australia among others. She is soon heading away (on holiday) to Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

'You've also got to love what you do and be passionate about it,' says Johnston.

She has worked for YOU Travel Taupo for two and a half years in a frontline capacity and says every day brings something different.

'We're doing a lot of UK – Europe and USA, like most agents around the country. But we are also seeing a fair bit of business from the younger market, they've been coming through the door lately and we're promoting to them quite a lot.'

Michelle Malcolm, managing director of Helloworld North

*Continued on page 2*

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## AI influence increases

Chatbots powered by artificial intelligence (AI) are set to drastically change the travel industry, according to a report by travel technology provider Amadeus.

The report titled, 'Embracing airline digital transformation: a spotlight on what travellers value' outlines that travel agents will continue to provide a valued role in the industry, particularly in relation to developing complex travel itineraries and assisting to help refine AI systems.

The report charts a range of other changes taking place as digital is becoming a driving force in the airline industry.

'Competition has changed economy class travel,' says the report. 'Airlines are responding by using data to better upsell products with the base fare. American Airlines recently introduced its Basic Economy fare and British Airways moved to Marks & Spencer food on short routes.' The report also says loyalty is being 'reinvented'.

'An increase in digital offers is challenging brand loyalty. The industry is now securing loyalty with spend-based schemes, retail partnerships and pooling of loyalty points. Travellers can now redeem loyalty points much more easily as a result.'

## Awards finalists give tips for success

*Continued from page 1*

Harbour, is one of the three finalists in the Best Travel Agency Manager – Retail category.

'To me it's all about recruiting well and building trust, as well as creating a clear vision and values. It is also crucial to lead by example – and work bloody hard.'

Malcolm has 32 years experience in the travel industry, with 10 years owning her own company.

'Travellers are becoming more and more travel savvy, with access to so much information online. Travellers will need a more personalised unique experience and service offering from us as agents and we will need to connect and have better, more instant touch points from the creating travel ideas/time of the travel idea through the booking process to connections whilst they travel. Social media and digital marketing will continue to play a critical role especially with the younger generation.

'I see more and more agencies entering into 'niche' markets to ensure we are offering an area of expertise to the target customer – whether it be adventure travel, cruise, weddings etc. Technology will play a part in this but also the type of consultant that stays in the industry, they will have to be customer centric more than ever.'

Retaining a huge database with repeat clients is a key to success, says Billy Ballantine, of Lakers House of Travel Invercargill.

'Also having the ability to sell – I

actually focus on selling myself over selling the products, which builds a relationship between myself and my clients,' says Ballantine, who is in the running for the title of Best Travel Consultant – Retail.

He emphasises time management and being able to adjust to the market as other essential skills.

Ballantine says he enjoys the challenge the travel industry offers. 'It is an industry which is forever changing.

'My success and enjoyment of the travel industry are not just down to me. I have the very best support with the team in our office and Tracey and Tony, the owners here at Lakers, are incredible – continually working on the business to give us all as many opportunities as possible.'

• (This is the first of a series of stories being run by TRAVELinc Memo in the build up to the TAANZ National Travel Industry Awards. Look out for more thoughts and comments from awards finalists over the next three weeks.)



Michelle Malcolm



Samantha Johnston



Billy Ballantine

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## Moves at Millennium

Ken Orr is taking the helm of New Zealand's largest hotel, Grand Millennium Auckland.

The newly appointed general manager of the hotel has 21 years' experience with Millennium Hotels and Resorts, including the last nine as GM of Copthorne Hotel Wellington, Oriental Bay.

Meantime Sam Horsnell has been named conference and incentives manager at the hotel. Horsnell joined Millennium Hotels and Resorts nine years ago and has advanced through positions in both hotel and national operations, where she most recently held the role of national conference manager.

And Tania Barnes is the conference and incentives business development manager



Sam Horsnell



Tania Barnes

for Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand and global properties, based in Sydney. She was last part of the Millennium Group in 2004 and has experience in hotel sales in Australia. She has also worked in the United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates and is an experienced professional conference organiser.

## TTC extends hours

The Travel Corporation advises that its trade reservations team will now be open until 5.30pm Monday through Thursday to assist agents with booking enquiries.

The Travel Corporation's director of marketing and communications Tony Laskey says the extended hours are in response to agent demand and also timely with the busy Europe and Britain selling season for Trafalgar, Contiki, Insight Vacations and Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

The TTC trade reservations hours are now: Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.30pm; and Friday 8.30am – 5pm. Agents can also book through the respective TTC brand's agent site 24/7.

## Young gets new role



Caryn Young

Adventure World has appointed Caryn Young, who celebrated her 10th year with the company in March, to the newly created role of head of operations.

Auckland-based Young's new management role will see her looking after the day-to-day operations of Adventure World's various departments, with a particular

focus on product and wholesale operations.

She is currently the company's Africa product manager and has enjoyed a wide and varied 27-year career in the travel industry, across both retail and wholesale, before joining Adventure World in 2007.

'Fuelling my passion for Africa in the product team has been fantastic, but I'm looking forward to having a more active role in guiding Adventure World through its next exciting chapter,' Young says.



## WANTED 1 Travel Extraordinaire

Is there a Travel Extraordinaire looking for a temporary position from 20 – 29 September 2017 and from 9 October 2018 for 3 ½ weeks.

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This position would suit a travel broker looking for extra income in the quieter months or a retired consultant interested in a little work.

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## Pacific Islands



Eden Stevenson, World Travellers; Gai Keniry, Tropica Island Resort at the Fiji roadshow wholesalers' lunch at Botswana Butchery in Auckland



Tourism Fiji's Sonya Lawson, Cameron Taylor and Danielle Gregory at the Maritime Room in Auckland for the second to last agents' gig on the roadshow programme



Lauren Minshull, Carrie Walshe, both Flight Centre Ponsonby at the Fiji Roadshow event in central Auckland late last week

### Topical Tropica gets interest at roadshow

Agents were keen to hear about the new look Tropica Island Resort when luxury and couples orientated Fiji properties toured the country last week.

Gai Keniry, director of sales at Tropica, says the resort has seven new sanctuary pool suites and all 24 rooms at the resort now have private outdoor showers. Eighteen of the 24 have large private plunge pools – three metres by two metres.

'So many agents have been there or have had clients who loved it, so they are excited to hear that it is even better now,' says Keniry. 'We had a really good response

during the roadshow, with a lot of agents asking questions.'

Keniry and others involved in the roadshow say they enjoyed the new format of the event – a 'speed dating' type programme that saw the agents rotate around the room in small groups and hear from each supplier.

'We are a private resort and it is our preference to communicate like that.'

The roadshow culminated with a wholesalers' lunch at Botswana Butchery. This year properties such as Savasi Island Resort and Tidal Reach Resort promoted their wares at the event.



At the wholesalers' lunch Kylie Hogan, Paradise Cove; Gareth Waddington, GO Holidays; Lisa Costello, Raffe Hotels

### Conference special at Sofitel Fiji

Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa, in conjunction with Fiji Airways and Rosie Holidays, is offering an all-inclusive conference-flight package in the New Zealand market. The package is for up to 50 delegates and valid from 9 October 2017 to 27 March 2018 (excludes 25 December 2017 to 7 January 2018).

Priced from \$1950 per delegate, it includes return economy flights from Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch and a VIP meet and greet with return airport transfers from Nadi International Airport, three nights accommodation in superior Oceanside king room with full breakfast daily, morning coffee

break, lunch, afternoon coffee break and full conference venue hire for two days plus a number of other features (two-hour welcome cocktail function, themed gala dinner, a corporate social responsibility activity) are also part of the package.

**michael.bell@sofitelfiji.com.fj**



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## Cruising

## Viking Cruises joins Virtuoso's network

The Australian-based arm of international luxury cruise line, Viking Cruises, has been accepted as a Virtuoso partner, which includes a group of more than 1700 suppliers hand picked to provide high-end Virtuoso clients with exclusive benefits with the best products in the luxury travel market.

The inclusion of Viking as a preferred partner for Australia and New Zealand will open new sales and marketing opportunities to the region's luxury travel advisors and their clientele.

Virtuoso's latest trend data, released earlier this month, has identified cruising as the number one trend for Australian luxury travellers across a range of ocean, river and adventure itineraries.



## Seabourn celebrates with specials

To kick off a significant celebration, Seabourn is offering a 30th Anniversary Event promotion. It features a range of savings and value-added enticements. Savings will be available on select voyages departing through 31 March, 2019 for bookings made by 14 November, 2017. Offers may include:

- Complimentary three veranda suite category upgrade.
- Complimentary veranda for ocean view category upgrade
- Complimentary 300-minute internet package per person
- A\$300 per person air credit
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## Americas

### Sale on Sth America

South America Tourism Office is offering a sale of \$500 per person on all of its circuits until 30 September. The circuits include all flights (international & internal flights) ex Auckland, accommodation with private facilities, transfers, comprehensive sightseeing and much more.

'Arguably now the world's most sought-after travel destination, South America will attract any traveller whether it's for the married couple, a family holiday, or retirees,' says Jaime de la Maza – marketing and business development manager of South America Tourism Office.

'Whether it's history and culture, cities, rainforests, beaches or mountains, South America is beautifully diverse and can provide the experience clients are after.'

[reservations@sthamerica.com](mailto:reservations@sthamerica.com)

### Rio Carnival 2018 package



Carnival in Rio de Janeiro

World Journeys has just released its Rio Carnival package for 2018.

The Carnival is held annually in the days leading up to Lent, which for 2018 are 9 to 14 February.

Priced from \$1835 per person share twin, this includes private airport transfers; three nights' accommodation in a four-star hotel in the Copacabana Beach area with breakfast daily; a private half-day guided Rio sightseeing tour including entrance fees; shared return transfers to the Samba Parade and admission to the Sector 9 (Tourist) Grandstands for the parade.

The package is based on arriving into Rio on 9, 10 or 11 February, 2018.

[info@worldjourneys.co.nz](mailto:info@worldjourneys.co.nz)

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## Malaysia Airlines common timing

Malaysia Airlines has announced a move for Auckland to a common timing schedule effective for departures 15 January 2018 with flights MH132 and MH133.

Moving all flights to departing Auckland just after midnight, arriving Kuala Lumpur at 6.55am means daily connections to more than 60 cities and more than 80 MH flights.

The common timing also means long term consistency and sustainability for the route.

For any affected ticketed bookings, normal schedule change policy will apply. For any unticketed bookings that were created on/before 8 September 2017 STPC will be provided if the revised schedule has a misconnection, due to the flight schedule change.

**[nz.sale-support@malaysiaairlines.com](mailto:nz.sale-support@malaysiaairlines.com)**

## Special to New Caledonia

Aircalin New Zealand has a New Caledonia deal flying to the destination from only \$270 one way including taxes.

The sale period is from now until 29 September 2017 and the travel period is through to 31 May 2018. (Black out dates

may apply).

The price, combined with the short flying distance, makes it practical to promote New Caledonia as a long weekend destination to clients as well as a suitable place for extended holidays.

## Qantas short term fares

Qantas is offering one-way economy, business and first class fares from New Zealand to Australia. One-way fares commence from:

- Auckland-Brisbane/Melbourne/Sydney economy \$199
- Christchurch-Brisbane/Melbourne/Sydney economy \$199
- Wellington-Melbourne/Sydney economy \$209
- Christchurch-Brisbane/Melbourne

business \$599

- Auckland Brisbane/Melbourne/Sydney business \$649
  - Christchurch-Sydney business \$649
  - Wellington-Melbourne/Sydney business \$699
  - Auckland-Brisbane/Melbourne first \$999
  - Christchurch-Sydney first \$999
- Fares are valid until midnight 12 September 2017.

## New approach to upselling

Identifying upsell opportunities has long been the holy grail of the airline industry. 'Now there are new approaches to truly understand and define what people actually value when they travel,' says Elena Avila, head of airlines strategy at Amadeus IT Group.

'The ability to aggregate customer data, combined with the application of behavioural economics, will help airlines to present their offer in a way

that secures revenue and loyalty,' she says.

The comments follow the release of a report entitled 'Embracing airline digital transformation: a spotlight on what travellers value'.

'In the digital age, it's more important than ever for airlines to make an emotional connection with their travellers,' Avila adds.

**[www.amadeus.com/airline-digital-transformation](http://www.amadeus.com/airline-digital-transformation)**



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## Australia

## Melbourne welcomes direct flights

Air Canada's direct flights between Melbourne and Vancouver will start from June 2018 with three non-stop services a week, adding over 46,000 seats every year from Canada.

Jetstar has also introduced a non-stop service from Zhengzhou – giving Chinese travellers from regional hubs more accessibility to reach Melbourne. The service is the first time an airline has flown from Zhengzhou to Australia. Adding close to 35,000 seats from China per year the two flights per week will commence on 6 December 2017.

The Japan Airlines (JAL) daily non-stop service from Tokyo to Melbourne marks the first time a Japanese carrier has operated out of



Melbourne. The airline is using a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, with 186 seats. The inaugural flight departed Melbourne Airport on Saturday 2 September 2017.

## New Zealand leads way for Sunshine Coast

The International Visitor Statistics by Tourism Research Australia show New Zealand remains the Sunshine Coast's largest inbound market, growing 12.2% to 71,000 visitors.

The region attracted 58,000 visitors from the UK up 6.7%, 36,000 from Germany growing 12% and 19,000 from the US increasing 0.2% year on year. Asian arrivals totalled 21,000 while the region attracted 15,000 visitors from Scandinavia increasing by 38.5% and 13,000 from Canada up 21.5%.

CEO of Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC) Simon Latchford says the region experienced 11.6% growth in international visitors against a backdrop of a state-wide increase of 5.6% and a national increase

of 8.7%. 'This really highlights the commitment by all Sunshine Coast operators and tourism bodies in marketing the region.'



Air New Zealand lands with Mt Cooloom in the background



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## Australia

### Broken Hill resort is Out of the Ordinary

Out of the Ordinary Outback will open its sixth accommodation property in March, 2018 – the Broken Hill Outback Resort.

Overlooking the Barrier Ranges and Sturt desert plains 13km east of Broken Hill, the cabin, caravan and camping park will surround the historic Mt Gipps Hotel, which was built in 1890 but closed in 1987.

Work totalling A\$5 million is now underway to restore the former hotel which will boast a bar, restaurant and reception when the resort opens in late March, 2018.

The popular Outback Astronomy tourist attraction, which offers guided views of the stars at night, is four kilometres away.

News of the resort follows twin announcements in March this year that Out of the Ordinary Outback had bought a Broken Hill motel to rebrand it as The Argent and that it would also build a new A\$750,000 hotel and conference centre at another of its

properties, Copper City Motel, in Cobar.

The Mt Gipps Hotel property was purchased last year by Out of the Ordinary Outback owner, Scott Smith.

'Guests at the Broken Hill Outback Resort will be able to stay amongst the vast frontier country for which the outback is famous, with its big skies and never-ending horizons, with Broken Hill just a 10-minute drive away,' says Smith.

A new website for bookings at the Broken Hill Outback Resort will be launched later this year.

Out of the Ordinary Outback encompasses outback tour company, Tri State Safaris, The Argent Motel in Broken Hill, Warrawong on the Darling tourist camp and cabins at Wilcannia, the iconic White Cliffs Underground Motel, Cobar's Copper City Motel, the Ivanhoe Hotel and an Out of the Ordinary Outback visitor centre in Broken Hill.

**[www.outoftheordinaryoutback.com.au](http://www.outoftheordinaryoutback.com.au)**



Scott Smith from Out of the Ordinary Outback at the Mt Gipps property

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## Japan for solo female

World Journeys has space for a single lady to share with another on its small group hosted 'Cherry Blossom Japan' journey to Japan in March 2018.

The 17-day journey travels during Cherry Blossom season, starting in Tokyo and travelling to the spa town of Yudanaka in search of the famed Snow Monkeys who bathe in the hot waters. It heads to the Japanese Alps and the historical town of Takayama, followed by the UNESCO World Heritage site of Shirakawa-go with its traditional farmhouses. Kyoto is the cultural centre of Japan, and from there clients travel to Osaka with its castle, the memorials of Hiroshima, the geo-thermal activity of Hakone, and back to Tokyo. Priced from \$12,495 per person share twin, this



includes return flights ex AKL, 4-star hotels, transfers, transport including bullet trains, guided sightseeing and entrance fees, some meals, and a World Journeys host who travels with the group throughout. Airline taxes of \$139 per person are additional, and subject to change. [info@worldjourneys.co.nz](mailto:info@worldjourneys.co.nz)

## Exotic promotes panorama tour

Exotic Holidays is highlighting its China Panorama – eight days deal priced from \$3046 per person.

The itinerary travels Beijing – Xian – Guilin – Yangzhou – Guilin.

Exotic Holidays managing director Rahul Sharma says among the extensive packages Exotic Holidays has to offer in China, this one in particular stands out.

'China Panorama has something for everyone. Besides taking clients to two of the most popular cities of Beijing and Xian, this tour includes the most beautiful part of China with the rural life of China in Guilin and Yanshuo.'



Pandas are among the popular sights in China

[www.exoticholidays.co.nz/destination/packages\\_detail/China-Panorama/54](http://www.exoticholidays.co.nz/destination/packages_detail/China-Panorama/54)



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## Windstar offers land

Windstar offers land tours before or after more than 20 departure dates on 12 itineraries in Asia, for clients to extend their holiday.

They include a three day, two night Kyoto – Osaka land tour visiting a 16th century Osaka Castle, the UNESCO site of Nijo Castle, and a stroll through the gardens of the ancient Golden Pavilion.

Also in the mix is a four day, three night Beijing and Xian Land Tour, where clients can discover thousands of years of culture and art.

**[www.francistravelmarketing.co.nz](http://www.francistravelmarketing.co.nz)**

## Adventure World's new Indian cycling itinerary

Adventure World has added a new cycling and kayaking journey – A Keralan Adventure – to its collection for 2018.

The six-night active adventure explores the mangrove forests and channels of Kerala's backwaters by bike and kayak, starting in Kochi and ending in Kollam. Priced from \$2449 per person, this new itinerary includes accommodation, selected meals, transfers, sightseeing, activities, the services of a private car and driver and equipment hire.

**[CLICK HERE](#)** for details.

## Thai temple re-opens

After almost three years of being covered in scaffolding due to renovations, the renewed Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn) along Bangkok's Chao Phraya River can be viewed again in its full glory, reports Exotic Holidays.

With a special design and colourfully decorated spires, Wat Arun is easily one of the most visually striking and famous landmarks in Bangkok.

Exotic Holidays managing director,

Rahul Sharma, says the star attraction is the central Prang (a Khmer style tower), which stands at 260feet (79m) tall and is intricately decorated with tiny pieces of coloured glass and Chinese porcelain. It's possible to climb the tower although the steps are steep. The view points at the top reveal vistas of the winding river with the Grand Palace and Wat Pho visible on the other side.

**[info@exoticholidays.co.nz](mailto:info@exoticholidays.co.nz)**

## New hotel in Rayong, Thailand

InterContinental Hotels Group has debuted the group's first hotel in Rayong, Thailand, with the opening of a 288-room Holiday Inn & Suites Rayong City Centre in the city.

It is also the first internationally-branded hotel in Rayong.

The hotel is just over 30 minutes from U-Tapao Rayong Pattaya International Airport and easily accessible via major roads. Strategically located close to some of Thailand's major industrial parks and seaports, the hotel offers 64 longer-stay suites in addition to its 224 guest rooms.

Holiday Inn & Suites Rayong City Centre caters to business travellers working at or near industrial areas such as the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Park or Map Ta Phut Industrial Park but with Rayong – the gateway to island destination Koh Samet, leisure guests will also benefit from the hotel's convenience.

## St Regis in Kazakhstan

The St. Regis Astana has opened, marking the debut of the brand in Kazakhstan, parent company Marriott says.

Lisa Holladay, Global Brand Leader, St. Regis Hotels & Resorts, says Astana is a destination that continues to grow in popularity with growing ranks of business and leisure travellers visiting the capital city.

Located inside Astana's Central Park, The St. Regis Astana is close to landmarks such as the Bayterek Tower and Independence Square, as well as the Khan Shatyr Entertainment Center, Astana Opera and foreign embassies.

The St. Regis Astana has 120 including 23 suites with private Juliette terraces presenting views of the Astana Park and Ishim River.

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## New Zealand

## All hail Haka – supreme winner

The brainchild of Ryan Sanders and a business that has achieved exceptional growth over the past 10 years, Haka Tourism Group has won the tourism industry's highest accolade, the Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award.

The Awards Programme is owned and organised by Tourism Industry Aotearoa with the awards night put on with the assistance of partners Air New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. The winners were announced at a black-tie dinner in Christchurch last week attended by more than 350 industry leaders and supporters.

In just over 10 years, Haka Tourism Group has expanded to include small group, adventure, snow and mountain bike tours, upmarket hostels, a specialist educational brand and high-end snow tours. This year it is opening its first two hotels to support the tourism industry's strong visitor growth. (See TravelincMemo Tuesday 22 August).

Driven by cutting edge digital marketing and brand positioning, the business is growing at an average of 80% year on year, with revenues for the next

12 months on track to exceed \$17 million.

As part of their Supreme Award prize, Haka Tourism Group receives international air travel to any Air New Zealand destination valued at \$10,000 (+GST) to help them grow their tourism business.

Haka Tourism Group also won the JLT & AIG Business Excellence Award – more than \$6 million annual turnover, and the epay NZ Tourism Marketing Award.

Founder and sole shareholder Ryan Sanders was recognised for his visionary and influential leadership, winning the Auckland Airport Tourism Industry Champion Award.

Tourism's most prestigious individual award, the Crowe Horwath International Sir Jack Newman Award, went to the late Earl Hagaman for his outstanding contribution to the industry.

Hagaman co-founded Scenic Circle Hotels in the 1980s. The business rebranded as Scenic Hotel Group in 2009. At the time of Hagaman's death in May this year, he'd built a portfolio of 18 accommodation properties worth around \$200 million.

The New Zealand Tourism Award 2017 winners:



Ryan Sanders and the Haka Tours team at the awards

- **Air New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award**
- **JLT & AIG Business Excellence Award – more than \$6 million annual turnover**
- **epay NZ Tourism Marketing Award:** Haka Tourism Group
- **Auckland Airport Tourism Industry Champion Award:** Ryan Sanders – Haka Tourism Group
- **Crowe Horwath International Sir Jack Newman Award (outstanding industry leader):** Earl Hagaman
- **PATA New Zealand Trust Emerging Tourism Leader Award:** Shayne Forrest – Hobbiton Movie Set
- **Sudima Hotels & Resorts Tourism**

- 2025 Enabler Award:** Queenstown Resort College
- **Westpac Business Excellence Award – less than \$6 million annual turnover:** Auckland Seaplanes
- **Department of Conservation Environmental Tourism Award:** Sudima Hotels & Resorts
- **Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment Industry Alignment Award:** Tourism West Coast
- **He kai kei aku ringa Māori Tourism Award:** Kapiti Island Nature Tours
- **ServiceIQ Visitor Experience Award:** Waitangi Treaty Grounds
- **NZME People's Choice Award:** Real Journeys



Joanna Norris

## ChristchurchNZ appoints chief executive

ChristchurchNZ has announced Joanna Norris as the new chief executive. She is well known through her current

role as editor of the Press and South Island editor in chief for Fairfax Media.

Norris says she is looking forward to leading an organisation that aims to enhance the prosperity and lives of Christchurch and Canterbury people.

ChristchurchNZ has got off to a good start, under the leadership of former Canterbury Economic Development Corporation chief executive Tom Hooper. 'Tom has made a significant contribution to the organisation and the board has

appreciated his dedication in staying on until Joanna begins in the role,' says ChristchurchNZ chair Therese Arseneau.

Norris will take up her new role on 16 October.



## Europe – Africa



## Elephants and more at Botswana a highlight

Located in the northwest of Botswana, close to the Namibian border, the Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero provides a riverside retreat in the heart of the bush on the edge of Botswana's Chobe National Park.

The park is home to the world's largest remaining population of elephants as well as other wildlife including buffalo, bushbuck and Puku antelope, and more

than 400 species of birds, while lion, leopard and wild dog roam the plains.

High above the Chobe River, the lodge has views across the islands and floodplains as far as Namibia. The lodge has 15 cottages, each with its own en suite bathroom, private garden and private balcony. Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero also contains the only full spa on the Botswana

safari circuit, offering treatments using environmentally friendly African spa products from Africology.

Priced from US\$530 pp twin share for one to three nights, savings of up to 35% for stays of eight or more nights at any combination of Sanctuary Retreats' African camps and lodges including Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero Camp.

## Scotland sees Outlandish growth

VisitScotland chief executive Malcolm Roughead has hailed TV show Outlander as the new 'Braveheart' of tourism with visitors from around the world heading to Scotland to experience the landscape that inspired the series.

Roughead says this is the same as when thousands travelled to the country after the release of Braveheart in 1995. Outlander returns to screens this month for its much-anticipated third season.

Latest figures from the Moffat Centre's Visitor Attraction Monitor show the tangible effect the series,

which is based on Diana Gabaldon's famous novels, has had on attractions in Scotland with many reporting as much as a 92% rise in visitors.

Between 2014, when the series first aired and 2016, Doune Castle – which doubles as Castle Leoch in the popular show – has had an 91.8% increase in visitors from 47,069 to 90,279. Blackness Castle, which provides the setting for malicious Black Jack Randall's headquarters has welcomed 85.5% more visitors since 2014, rising from 16,559 visitors per year to 30,053 in 2016.

Other key attractions that have seen a growth in numbers attributed to the series include Glencoe Visitor Centre (+53%), Glasgow Cathedral (+35%) and Preston Mill (+18%).

Recent VisitScotland research has also shown the profound impact the series has had on visitors with Outlander being the most mentioned TV or film inspiration for people wanting to come to the country, above Braveheart, Harry Potter and Highlander.

**VisitScotland.com**

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## News

## HOT appoints GM for new broker business

House of Travel has appointed Mike Southcombe as general manager of its new personal travel management business. He will join the Auckland-based Holdings team on 18 September 2017.

Southcombe will set up and implement the new personal travel manager channel within the House of Travel Group.

Mark O'Donnell, House of Travel's chief executive officer says the company feels Southcombe is the perfect fit for House of Travel and brings with him great experience and strong networks within the personal travel management area, to help with the development of the channel.

'We have great experience in developing a compelling offer for this part of the industry as our business in Australia is now in excess of 500 PTMs and is continuing to attract new PTMs to its ranks. We will apply these learnings to the NZ market to provide a new model for this part of the industry.'

Southcombe's involvement within the industry has been extensive with 12 years spent as one of the founding partners of Travel Managers Group New Zealand before selling his shares in early 2014. He then moved to the Far North with his family for 12 months before rejoining the industry. Southcombe has been travel and tourism sector advisor with Service IQ since 2015.

Although a niche part of the overall industry, the past 10 years has seen personal travel management nearly double in size with approximately 600 PTMs in New Zealand today.



## Trips to Emperor Penguins return

Quark Expeditions has announced it will be returning to the Emperor penguins on Snow Hill starting in October 2018.

Clients can tour the waters of the Antarctic Sound and Drake Passage

aboard the Kapitan Khlebnikov. The 14-day voyage witnesses thousands of regal Emperor penguins caring for their newly hatched chicks.

**CLICK HERE** for details.

## Viva's visitors safe in Mexico

Viva reports all of its clients in Mexico and Guatemala are well and safe after the recent major earthquake in southern Mexico.

Rachel Williams, managing director of Viva / Chimu in New Zealand says all airports, including in Chiapas (Tuxtla Gutierrez) and Oaxaca (Oaxaca, Huatulco, Puerto Escondido) are operating normally.

'In San Cristobal de Las Casas (Chiapas) there was minor damage reported at some churches and Na Bolom museum and in the city of Oaxaca, Santo Domingo church has been temporarily closed to visitors for precautionary checks. It is expected to reopen tomorrow.

'All the most important hotels in the impacted areas, including those in the coast of Oaxaca (Huatulco and Puerto Escondido) did not report any damage and they are working normally.

'All ground arrangements yesterday were operated normally with the exception of the Sumidero Canyon, in Tuxtla Gutierrez, which has been temporarily closed for checks to the walls of the canyon and the Chicoasén dam. It is expected to reopen today.'

Williams says should there be any relevant news directly related with services for clients, the trade will be informed accordingly, but at present are no reasons to cancel any future arrangements in Chiapas and Oaxaca.



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## MYSTERY SPOT



## Can you solve the latest mystery?

This week's Mystery Spot...pretty high above sea level. Maybe you've trekked this UNESCO world heritage spot, or know someone who has.

If you know the answer, email it to [competitions@promag.co.nz](mailto:competitions@promag.co.nz) with Mystery Spot in the subject line. And congratulations to Joanna Corbett, World Travellers who correctly identified last week's Mystery Spot as Brazil. A really special *National Geographic* is heading your way.

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## Agents' incentive with Excite's Abu Dhabi push

Excite Holidays, in conjunction with Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture, has launched a new campaign 'Abu Dhabi: One City. Endless Possibilities.'. This includes a prize and rewards point incentive.

For two weeks, Excite will showcase experiences in this Arabian destination, whilst giving agents the chance to win a trip to Abu Dhabi.

A city where history meets luxurious modernity, Abu Dhabi has the world's largest chandelier, 24K gold-flake cappuccinos and a vending machine that dispenses gold bullion.

Clients can explore Arabian culture at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, get the adrenaline pumping on Yas Island, 'live like the other half' at the Emirates Palace, kick back poolside on Nurai Island or shop at the malls and souks.

The curated itineraries aim to showcase

Abu Dhabi as more than just a stopover destination, and inspire agents to create a getaway for their clients, from luxury to action and adventure, island hopping, art and culture and urban escape.

Excite Holidays is also offering agents the opportunity to earn 500 rewards points for every night booked in Abu Dhabi, between Monday 11 September and Sunday 24 September, 2017.

The itineraries can be found at [engage.exciteholidays.com/abudhabi](http://engage.exciteholidays.com/abudhabi)



## Lower Mississippi River cruise savings

American Queen Steamboat Company is offering savings of \$1000 per couple on staterooms when beginning 2018 with a lower Mississippi river cruise onboard the all-new, American Duchess™.

Fares start at US\$1499 per person with this limited time offer.

• New Orleans to Memphis (and reverse): New Orleans, LA – Nottoway, LA – Baton Rouge, LA – St. Francisville, LA – Natchez, MS – Vicksburg, MS – Greenville, MS – Memphis, TN (ports may vary by cruise).

## Beijing – Athens

Air China will launch a new non-stop route between Beijing and Athens on 30 September 2017. The service will be operated twice a week with Airbus 330-200 aircraft, reducing the journey time between Beijing and Athens to 10.5 hours. Passengers travelling to Athens will find convenient connections to Santorini, Zakynthos and other popular Greek tourist destinations.

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Editorial:

[stu@promag.co.nz](mailto:stu@promag.co.nz)

Journalists: Stu Freeman, Sam Worthington  
and Kathy Ombler

Graphics: Andrew Denton

PO Box 60154 Titirangi, Auckland 0642

Ph: + 64 9 818 7807 Mob + 0274 842 863

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

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