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## Coping with COVID-19: Advocacy, working together, passing on accurate info

The Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) is engaging with government to get its short, medium and long term views around the 'sustainable contribution of tourism and travel to the economy.'

'TAANZ is working in the advocacy space, we want to know what the government's vision is,' says chief executive Andrew Olsen. 'What can both sides of the house do to give some sort of confidence for the next four weeks and provide good information around this.'

He says the brands themselves are in various stages of readiness in terms of advising their agents around obligations in terms of people being sick, human resource issues around leave and other health and safety requirements.

Olsen also agrees with those who say agents need to put real facts in front of clients who are wondering whether they should or should not travel – and he has evidence that this is happening.

'In the end it is the customers' choice but I have seen fact sheets and first hand dialogues in a Q and A format that help agents get down to the nitty gritty and give the known facts to their clients.'

*Continued on page 2*

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## Coping with COVID-19: Advocacy, passing on accurate info

Continued from page 1

Olsen says TAANZ wants to see a 'we are all in this together approach', including from suppliers around the handling of cancellations, refunds and credits. 'It is in everyone's interest to take a broad approach to how they want to manage cancellations and ultimately how they manage customers. We have to keep a wide view on keeping the distribution path open.'

Olsen feels that suppliers are stepping up on this to varying degrees.

He says it is also important that insurers ensure their wording is clear.

'If you are (covering certain situations), say you are, if you are not, say you are not. Obviously there will be exclusions

and Ts & Cs, but be clear. Speak like a five year old so everyone can understand.'

Other industry personnel, meantime, are also accentuating the need to pass on accurate, credible information.

'Present clients with information from world health bodies and credible government agencies,' says Rahul Sharma, of Exotic Holidays. 'Help them to not be influenced by social media and other unreliable sources.'

Innovative Travel's Robyn Galloway suggests the travel industry could consider a coordinated public relations effort to put accurate, balanced information in front of the media and public around the coronavirus issue.

Galloway says this is the greatest

challenge to the travel industry since the Global Financial Crisis and, before that, 9/11.

In her own company's case, Innovative Travel has introduced a flexipolicy, and Galloway says her actions are based on past experience of handling unexpected negative events – both locally (such as earthquakes) and internationally (political chaos).

'We have a strategic plan to manage our way through this sort of thing. The key thing is that we need to take a proactive stance – we need to control the things we can control.'

• See also page 3 – *Coronavirus: Information that may help when talking to clients*

## Utah gets tasty – sponsors NZ's Food Shows

By sponsoring the Food Show around New Zealand this year, the Utah Office of Tourism is hoping to give consumers another reason to travel in the state – and trade extra ammunition to sell it.

Utah is well known for its Big 5 National Parks, plus its ski offerings, but Karen McCardle of New Zealand representative Canuckiwi, says it is also a 'surprise' when it comes to food.

'People now want to be active but they also appreciate good food after that. Utah allows them to earn their calories.'

McCardle says a lot of people are moving from other states into Utah and bringing outside influence with them.

'The farm to table movement is starting to shine and we are beginning to talk about food when promoting the destination. I recently travelled on Scenic Byway 12 and the food was good at every stop.'

She says an example of the emerging food scene is Sego in the small 'wild west town' of Kanab.

'It is Michelin rated and some of the best tapas style food you can find.'

Utah is sponsoring the Food Shows in Christchurch, 4 and 5 April; Wellington, 22 to 24 May; and Auckland 30 July to 2 August.

The office has teamed up with Intrepid and United Airlines to offer a prize of a trip for two to Utah.



Utah's foodie scene is evolving and the destination is sponsoring Food Shows in Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland

**Fathom Asia** *Inspired Holidays in Asia* ≈ ADVENTURE

## Fathom Asia into niche areas

Fathom Asia is moving into new niche areas with the launch of its first specialist area, Fathom Asia – Adventure, while retaining its mainstream product.

The move was officially launched at the JAWS Plus event in Christchurch on Wednesday night and is being promoted at the trade road show at every centre it visits.

Reservations manager, Jay Soysa says the company had been seeing increased interest in activities such as cycling and has made a move to further cater for the trend.

'We are working with a company that specialises in adventure and which operates with health and safety as an imperative.'

Soysa says Fathom Asia – Adventure is starting with cycling, hiking, and kayaking-canoeing product in Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Laos and is working on introducing Indonesia, to be followed by Japan.

'We've had a really strong and positive reaction to the launch Fathom Asia – Adventure at JAWS Plus,' says Soysa.



Jay Soysa, Fathom Asia; Amanda Vine, Flight Centre Rangiora at JAWS Plus in Christchurch this week

## News

## Coronavirus: Information that may help when talking to clients

By Stu Freeman

The travel industry is being urged to swot up on the actual facts around the coronavirus, Covid-19, and where possible present information to clients that (while not diminishing the seriousness of this or any other health issue) help them to make an informed decision about their next holiday.

TRAVELinc Memo has sourced helpful links to articles – some scientific information around the disease itself, others pertaining to the panic sometimes seen and urging perspective.

Just over a week ago, I posted on LinkedIn and Facebook a piece that generated considerable comment, pointing out that according to Google, Wuhan has a population of 11.08 million. 'The latest figures I have seen indicate

that the whole of main land China has had 77,660 confirmed cases of Coronavirus. Unless my maths are bad that is the equivalent of about 0.8% of Wuhan alone – including everything from deaths to slight sniffles. When you take into account the 27,878 people reported to have recovered in Wuhan that leaves about half of one per cent of the population with it.'

A few, not many, commentators are starting to point out that recovery figures seem to be missed out of general reporting of this disease. The number of confirmed cases keep going up but clients may be surprised to know that when people who have recovered are taken into account the reported number of people in the whole world with the disease is less than 45,000.

The same applies to the growing list of

countries 'the disease has spread to'. A large number of these places have had one to five cases, all as a result of people arriving there with the disease, all of which recovered and left the country and have not had a case for weeks since. Yet our clients may still see them on a list of affected countries and make a decision not to travel there.

Here are a few dot points and links to the original articles they come from:

- Science Media Centre report: 'The virus seems to be spread through the respiratory system, mainly through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air.'

[www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2020/03/04/latest-information-on-covid-19-expert-reaction/](http://www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2020/03/04/latest-information-on-covid-19-expert-reaction/)

- An example of how blatantly wrong information can stick with people and continue to do the rounds – BBC. [www.bbc.com/news/world-51504512](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-51504512)
- Psychology Today: How COVID-19 is infecting our minds, not our lungs. [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culture-mind-and-brain/202002/the-coronavirus-is-much-worse-you-think](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culture-mind-and-brain/202002/the-coronavirus-is-much-worse-you-think)
- The Spectator: The most dangerous thing about coronavirus is the hysteria. [beta.spectator.co.uk/article/the-most-dangerous-thing-about-coronavirus-is-the-hysteria](http://beta.spectator.co.uk/article/the-most-dangerous-thing-about-coronavirus-is-the-hysteria)
- New Zealand Herald: Why children aren't getting sick. [www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?\\_id=6&objectid=12313293](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?_id=6&objectid=12313293)

## Final World On A Plate winners revealed

The final two winners of the World on a Plate global degustation are flighties Brittany McCrystal from Sylvia Park and Sam Goold from St Lukes. They'll be joining the group of six agents previously announced, on a round the world foodie trip, flying with Air New Zealand and travelling with TTC's travel brands.

The full list of winning agents is Brittany McCrystal, Sylvia Park Flight Centre; Sam Goold, St Lukes Flight Centre; Tanya Aitken, House of Travel

Papamoa; Alicia Sutton, House of Travel Hamilton; Wiremu Jerry, Flight Centre Whakatane; Tanya Cross, YOU Travel Ferrymead; Anne Millard, House of Travel Whangarei; Nicola Mitchell, Travel Managers and Damon Schmidt of TTC.

The World On A Plate itinerary begins in early May, with the winning agents collected by helicopter in Queenstown to have breakfast among the Southern Alps. The two week-long series of dining experiences around the world

then heads to lunch – a progressive local degustation through Singapore, finishing with drinks overlooking Marina Bay. High tea will be in London at one of the Red Carnation Hotels – the five-star Reubens, overlooking Buckingham Palace. Dinner reservations have been made at one of city's top restaurants and dessert will be a daily affair during seven days cruising from Brussels to Amsterdam on board with U River Cruises. The final meal will be in Buenos Aires.

## \$1 Singapore stopover promo

Singapore Airlines has released a 'Tropical Travels \$1 Singapore Stopover Holiday' promotion. Accommodation packages are available with all fares sold until 18 March 2020, for travel until 30 September 2020.

The Singapore Stopover Holiday (tour code: SSHRCV19) starts from \$1pp per night twin-share and is available for the first two nights, in category A or B hotels with attractions.

Refer to TB026/20 at [krisport.co.nz](http://krisport.co.nz) for full details.

**Login:** sqagent, **password:** 2012Kris



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Australia



## Chance for clients to go wild in Australia

Australian Wildlife Journeys gives agents a range of close to home experiences to sell to clients who may typically be attracted to destinations such as Africa and the Galapagos, says executive officer John Daw.

‘We focus on observation in the wild, no zoos or sanctuaries. They are all safari type experiences,’ says Daw.

Australia Wildlife Experiences has been one of Australia’s Signature Experiences for three years. It has 10 members from all around Australia and at the moment, along with regular offerings, is offering a number of bushfire recovery activities. These include planting trees to restore koala habitat west of Melbourne, as well as regeneration work on Kangaroo Island.

Daw says consistent features of

the experiences are premium guides and the availability of high quality accommodation.

Popular with Kiwis and offering agents a high yield product to sell is Lords Kakadu and Arnhem Land Safaris, which teams up with other accommodation providers to give flexibility when it comes to budget.

Daw says a ‘hidden gem’ is Australia Coastal Safaris in Eyre Peninsula, South Australia.

‘A lot of New Zealanders have done the Murray but Eyre Peninsula gives people a range of aquatic activities in a lesser known region.’

He says the trade should also mention Naturaliste Charters, near Margaret River Western Australia to nature loving clients. It is based around Bremer

Canyon, one of the most sought after whale watching expeditions across the globe, with over 100 killer whales returning each year from January to April. Other species seen include dolphins, pilot whales, sperm whales, Australian sea-lions, giant squid and albatross.

In Queensland, FNQ Nature Tours provides expertly led small group tours across the Daintree Rainforest National Park, Atherton Tablelands, Crater Lakes and Cape Tribulation regions. The area boasts the highest diversity of rainforest mammals in Australia, including tree kangaroos, flying-fox, possum and bandicoot.

[www.australia.com/en/things-to-do/wildlife/australian-wildlife-journeys.html](http://www.australia.com/en/things-to-do/wildlife/australian-wildlife-journeys.html)

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## Australia – New Zealand

## Southern GBR to return for QOT

Queensland's Southern Great Barrier Reef is hoping to build on its 16,000 Kiwi visitors a year when it participates in Queensland on Tour in Auckland on 1 April.

'We'll be sharing our trade manual with agents at Queensland on Tour,' says Mary Carroll, CEO of the regional tourism organisation (RTO). 'We now have 65 trade-ready products – up from about five products 10 years ago.'

After a 'fantastic' Flight Centre Travel Expo in Auckland last month, Carroll says there is strong interest from Kiwis wanting to explore more of Queensland as well as the 'flip and drop' market.

Carroll also sees an opportunity to sell the destination to 'new Kiwis' who want to see the Great Barrier Reef.

'At the Travel Expo I met a South African family of four who booked a July holiday worth more than \$6000,' she says. 'They are flying into Rockhampton (AKL-BNE-ROK) and staying four nights in Yeppoon and three at Great Keppel Island. They wanted a relaxing holiday with enough activities for the kids and Dad wanted to go on a fishing charter.'



Mary Carroll, Southern Great Barrier Reef, in action at Auckland's Flight Centre Travel Expo last month

Travellers to the Sunshine and Fraser Coasts can easily visit the Bundaberg region (of Bundaberg Rum fame), enjoy the reef on a Lady Musgrave Experience and/or fly to the eco-resort of Lady Elliot Island for a few days of relaxation. Another option is to fly one way to Rockhampton and drive down (or up) the coast to (or from) Brisbane.

While attracting predominantly domestic holiday-makers (90% of its visitors), many of the emerging destination's 160,000 international visitors are from long-haul markets – nature-lovers and people wanting to escape the crowds. **CLICK HERE** to register for Queensland on Tour.

## Save on Kangaroo Island Adventure Tour

Clients can save up to A\$54pp on the two-day Kangaroo Island Adventure Tour, available until 31 August 2020, with travel valid from 1 June to 31 August 2020.

The two-day, one-night small group tour heads off the beaten track, hosted by a local guide. Priced from A\$415pp, normally A\$469pp, it includes return SeaLink Coach transfers from selected Adelaide hotels and hostels to Cape Jervis, return SeaLink ferry

transfers from Cape Jervis to Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island, two days coach touring, all entry and guided tour fees to attractions and overnight dormitory accommodation, breakfast, two lunches and dinner at Penneshaw Beach Stay. Upgrades are available to private rooms which also use share bathrooms. Guests can upgrade to fly one way or return between Adelaide and Kangaroo Island. **www.kiadventuretours.com.au**

## New NZ area manager for Booking.com

Booking.com has appointed Todd Lacey as the company's new area manager for New Zealand.

Lacey has been part of the Booking.com team since 2015 when he started as an account co-ordinator in the organisation's Auckland office. He moved up the ranks to senior account manager, spending three-and-a-half years in the Melbourne office between 2016 and 2019. There he oversaw the Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia markets.

The appointment as area manager means he returns to New Zealand.



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## Pacific Islands

## Treasure names new DOS

Treasure Island Resort Fiji has appointed Mike Hogan as director of sales and marketing.

Hogan says this has deepened his relationship with Treasure, which was already a client of Hogan & Associates. He remains in Auckland and the company retains its current clients and continues to work closely with trade here.

Treasure Island general manager, Jim Saukuru says Hogan has a long relationship with the resort. 'Since upgrading our bures last year we have embarked on a major upgrade of all public areas throughout the resort and Mike's appointment has come at a perfect time to take our new look to the world.'

Hogan says Treasure was his start-up client when he started his representation business in the early 90s.

## SB to CHC

Aircalin will operate two direct flights from Christchurch to Noumea on Sunday 9 August and Sunday 23 August. Published fares are now available for sale and combinable with all other Aircalin published fares.

## Matamanoa special

Matamanoa Island Resort has extended its stay seven, pay five and stay five, pay four (including full American breakfast) deal for travel until 30 June.

The offer is valid for new bookings sold by close of business 31 March.



Lily Giles, Flight Centre High Street; Debbie Ware, Travelsmart Meadowbank; Tasi Afitu-Hill, My Wanderlust



Samoa Tourism Authority's Sonny Rivers with Samantha Parkin and Katherine Burns, both Flight Centre Ellerslie/Pakuranga

## 'Put Samoa in the mix' for weddings

Agents specialising in weddings are being asked to 'put Samoa in the mix' when suggesting destination weddings to their clients.

The challenge for us is to get on the radar for weddings, says Samoa Tourism Authority's NZ market representative, Sonny Rivers. Ex-pat Samoans are heading home regularly for their weddings – both traditional and Western-style, and this is helping in a small way to drive demand.

'We already have the infrastructure, plus our suppliers make it easy,' he says. 'People have seen the beautiful island canoes that can transport the bridal party, they have seen the arches on the beach. But we can do much

more than that. For example, couples can have a reception at Robert Louis Stevenson Museum, and they can use traditional Samoan buses to transport their guests.'

Exhibitors at Samoa's annual wedding road show at Auckland's Maritime Room on Wednesday included event coordinator, Nalei Paul from Heads & Hearts Events.

'Samoa has the nice hotels and good food – we can cater for vegans, vegetarians and gluten free. We can make special 'favours' for guests such as a range of coconut jams, we can source photographers and we can do weddings on the beach right through to black tie affairs.'



Tonia Timmins, Bon Voyage; Nalei Paul, Heads & Hearts Events; Anita Gattley, Wedding Travel; Jodi van de Wydeven, NZ Travel Brokers



Archie and Den Camacho, Travel Managers are flanked by Taumeasina Island Resort's Cecilia Frost-Nasau and Laura Wadsworth

## Solomons – 'we'll rebound'

Like other destinations, Solomon Islands is hurting from reduced travel due to the Covid-19 scare, journalists in Auckland were told yesterday. However, Tourism Solomons is expecting to bounce back quickly when the issue is resolved, says Tourism Solomons CEO Josefa 'Jo' Tuamoto.

'Travel restrictions are not good for tourism but the priority now is to ensure the safety of our people and also of the guests who do still come. We expect a bit of a slowdown, but hopefully this region will continue to function.'

'In a couple of months we are likely to have pent up demand and we are ready to roll out activities,' says Tuamoto.

He says the destination had a strong year in 2019, despite a dip around elections in April. 'We still had a 3.8% increase of inbound.'

He says Solomon Islands will have a new Airbus beginning next week, which will improve presentation for both the carrier and the country's tourism in general.



Josefa 'Jo' Tuamoto, Tourism Solomons CEO; Julie Rice, Solomon Airlines; Dana Avram, New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade; Chris Happa, chair of Tourism Solomons

*Air Vanuatu*

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## Europe

## Madrid and beyond

Madrid, Avila, Salamanca, Caceres and Toledo are among the highlights of a seven-day Madrid and World Heritage Cities self-drive tour being offered by Exotic Holidays.

The tour includes sights such as Segovia with its Gothic cathedral and the Alcazar.

Guests will get inside Salamanca University, the third oldest in the world, and delve into the ancient streets of Toledo, with a visit to Santo Tome Church.

Clients spend the first and last night in Madrid. The tour is priced from \$1094 per person twin share.

[www.feztravel.com/Marmaris\\_and\\_Greek\\_Islands.asp](http://www.feztravel.com/Marmaris_and_Greek_Islands.asp)



Toledo Spain

The vast majority of Kiwis visiting Switzerland are booked by travel agents



## Switzerland – numbers up, new campaign

Switzerland Tourism reports a 2.4% increase in Australian and New Zealander stays in 2019.

Recording 349,705 Aussie and 48,241 Kiwi overnights throughout 2019, the annual report shows that cities and mountains continue to win the hearts and interests of the region's travellers.

Livio Goetz, director of Switzerland Tourism Australia and New Zealand, says while the major cities showed a steady 4.1% growth in overnights, travellers are still mainly drawn to the

peaks and valleys of the country, with a 6.3% increase in overnight stays in the mountainous regions.

'With close to 400k overnights, it is evident Switzerland remains high on many travellers' list,' says Goetz.

More than 65% of travel to Switzerland from Australia and New Zealand is booked via a travel agent.

Switzerland Tourism will be launching its new 2020 summer campaign in May, titled 'I Need Switzerland'.

[www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com)

## Utracks' new vessel

Next month UTracks is launching Magnifique IV, a deluxe 67 metre vessel, that will sail the canals of the Netherlands and Belgium, offering daily cycling excursions between historic towns.

The vessel will accommodate up to 36 passengers with eight cabins on the lower deck and ten suites on the upper deck. Each cabin and suite has an ensuite bathroom, air conditioning, flat screen satellite TV, mini safe and hair dryer. The upper deck suites are 16m<sup>2</sup> with double beds, a sitting area and a French balcony with floor-to-ceiling glass doors. The 12m<sup>2</sup> lower deck cabins have twin beds and offer natural light through large portholes.

The Magnifique IV will operate Amsterdam to Bruges – Deluxe, an eight-day guided cycle departing April to October priced from A\$2790pp and a reverse journey Bruges to Amsterdam – Deluxe. The Best of Holland Bike and Barge is an eight-day guided cycle departing on selected dates from May to September and priced from A\$2990pp.

[www.UTracks.com](http://www.UTracks.com)



Artist's impression of the Magnifique-iv suite



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## Africa – Middle East

## Kiwis head back to South Africa

New Zealand visitor numbers to South Africa have quickly shown a recovery after the removal of restrictive visa requirements, according to Yana Shvarts, marketing and communications manager at South African Tourism.

Speaking at the International Media Market in Sydney recently, Shvarts said the enforcement of visas had seen a drop of 25% in the Kiwi market. While it is too early to give exact figures on the rebound, it is enough to warrant a 're-igniting' of marketing activities by South African Tourism in New Zealand.

'We were a bit more hands off than usual because we do need to make it logistically easy for people. So now we are re-introducing the destination as a whole.'

Shvarts says that while New Zealanders are well aware of safaris and wildlife, plus the attraction of Cape Town there is an ongoing push to emphasise the destination's diversity.

'Our pillars include cultural roots, city lifestyle, scenic beauty, active adventure, coastal beaches and the marine offering.'

Shvarts concedes that some people still have misconceptions around safety and security in South Africa, much of it from an historical perspective.

'People need to go there and see for themselves – and that includes the trade.'

Part of addressing concerns is being met by tapping into advocacy, she adds.

'Our research shows that 90% of people who have travelled to South Africa would recommend it.'



One of Egypt's icons – The Sphinx

## Egypt and Jordan solo travellers' tour

Two's a Crowd has released final seats for its 16-day Egypt and Jordan Discovery group tour, departing 1 April 2020. The escorted tour is for solo travellers, all with separate accommodation, in a group of 15.

The tour visits Egypt's capital – Cairo; Aswan, Egypt's southernmost city and gateway to Africa; Luxor; Jordan's capital, Amman; the beach resort of Aqaba; Wadi Rum and its desert scenery; and the city of Petra. From the Valley of the Kings to digging for treasure in ancient marketplaces, this tour is packed with experiences.

Accommodation includes 11 nights in a range of 3,5 to four-star hotels, one night in a luxury desert tent,

three nights in a cabin onboard the MS Nile Dolphin and one night in a cabin onboard the Luxor to Cairo sleeper train.

The tour is A\$7597 per person and includes a Two's a Crowd tour host from Australia, English speaking local leader in Egypt and Jordan, all accommodation in own room/cabin/tent, all meals included as per itinerary, all transport, all tour activities and tour entrance/admission fees, group arrival and departure transfers, tips and gratuities and comprehensive travel insurance.

[twosacrowd.com.au/group\\_tours/egypt-and-jordan-discovery-3/](https://twosacrowd.com.au/group_tours/egypt-and-jordan-discovery-3/)

## Highlights of Egypt

A classic tour from Exotic Holidays introduces clients to the main sights of Egypt in a short span of time. It includes sights such as the pyramids and sphinx, the antiquities of the Egyptian museum, Abu Simbel, and Philae Temple.

Sailing in a traditional felucca is also included in the programme, as is time in Cairo including a free afternoon to explore the back streets and bazaars of the old city.

The eight-day Egyptian Highlights Tour is priced from \$2729 per person twin share.

[www.exoticholidays.co.nz/destination/packages\\_detail/Egyptian-Highlights/87](https://www.exoticholidays.co.nz/destination/packages_detail/Egyptian-Highlights/87)

## Airlink appoints The Walshe Group

Southern Africa airline, Airlink has appointed The Walshe Group as its GSA in Australia and New Zealand.

Airlink will commence selling under its own 4Z flight code to develop its network on an independent basis, having previously operated under a franchise agreement with SAA. While SAA will remain as an Interline partner under a new commercial agreement, this change represents a milestone in extending the commercial reach of Airlink.

The appointment of The Walshe Group will enhance the Airlink brand awareness and sales distribution as well as offering a local point of contact to the trade in Australia and New Zealand for all sales, reservations and ticketing enquiries.

## Americas

## South and Central America on sale

Dragoman Overland is currently offering 15% off trips in South & Central America, excluding Rio Carnival (RCS), Inca Trail only trips (ZIC), Machu Picchu standalone (ZMP) and Family trips (FAS).

Dragoman's Central American journeys traverse beaches, volcanos, wildlife and Mayan ruins from Belize and Guatemala through to Panama, from 15 to 55 days.

It also offers journeys to Patagonia's national parks, Incan ruins, colonial cities, beaches and off-the-beaten-track destinations such as the Guayanas.

The 15% off sale to Central and South America runs until 31 March 2020 for departures by 31 December 2020.

Book direct: [agents@dragoman.com.au](mailto:agents@dragoman.com.au)

## In tune with Chicago

Clients have an extra reason to get in tune with Chicago in 2020, with the city marking 'The Year of Chicago Music'.

Ann Tok, special projects – media relations Asia Pacific and marketing with Choose Chicago, says the 'signature part' of the year long celebration is from 21 May to 7 June.

'This is when we will have three legacy music events – festival of house music, gospel and blues.'

Tok says international visitors are also being attracted by events such as the new Monet and Chicago exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago and works by poet and photojournalist Jun Funjita presented by the Newbery Library and Poetry Foundation.



Ann Tok, of Choose Chicago, at the recent International Media Market (IMM) in Sydney

She adds that the city's appeal is enhanced by O'Hare International Airport's status as being the most connected in the United States (and from a Kiwi point of view being served by Air New Zealand out of AKL).

## Great American road trip

GO Holidays has a 22-day self drive USA Coast to Coast Road Trip from \$5099pp twin share, starting in New York and ending in San Francisco.

On sale until 30 April 2020 the trip includes 21 nights accommodation, 20-day Alamo rental car and welcome kit including maps and driving instructions.

Highlights include New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Niagara Falls, Chicago, Rapid City, Yellowstone, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, California Pacific Coast and more.

A detailed itinerary is available via GONet or from GO USA experts and can be tailor-made to meet specific requirements.

This is a land-only deal with daily departures from 13 April to 31 October 2020, add on best available airfares to the USA. **CLICK HERE** for details.



## HAL's Panama Canal season

Commencing in October 2021, Holland America Line's Panama Canal programme features five ships sailing a variety of 14 to 22-day voyages completing a full transit of the Panama Canal with 20 different ports of call throughout Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Some of the highlights of the 2021-2022 Panama Canal programme include a full eight-hour, daylight transit of the Panama Canal; additional 14-day Panama Canal sailings with Friday and Saturday departures and more port calls in historic Cartagena, Colombia.

Volendam and Zaandam will feature updates and new music venues from their dry docks in November 2019 and April 2020, respectively. Both ships will now have live music at Lincoln Center Stage and Billboard Onboard.

Reservations are now open for bookings, contact: [reservations@francistravelmarketing.co.nz](mailto:reservations@francistravelmarketing.co.nz)



**New Zealand's Leading South America Specialist** 0800 131 900



## Cruising – Airlines

## PONANT doubles welcome offer on 2020 cruises

PONANT has doubled its welcome offer – from A\$400 to A\$800pp – for new bookings of 2020 itineraries, including Kimberley and Antarctica.

The offer is valid for new bookings made between 2 and 21 March 2020, is subject to availability and may be changed or withdrawn without prior notice, and is only available for a first cruise with PONANT. It is not retroactive and not combinable with other offers unless specified.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the list of PONANT cruises relevant to this offer.

## Fourth MOU for NZ and DNSW

Air New Zealand has signed a fourth consecutive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Destination New South Wales.

The three previous MOUs between 2014 and 2019 are estimated to have delivered A\$56.8m in overnight visitor expenditure to the NSW economy, says the Minister for jobs, investment, tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres.

The 2020-2021 MoU will include joint consumer advertising campaigns, trade partner campaigns promoting packages to Sydney and regional NSW, sharing of digital assets including promotion on websites, database marketing and trade and media familiarisations.

## Triple Set Sail Consultant Rewards points

Royal Caribbean is offering triple points on Hero Sailings throughout March to celebrate the final month of its reward programme, Set Sail Consultant Rewards.

The three Hero Sailings include the 12-night Sydney to New Zealand cruise on Ovation of the Seas, departing 8 November 2020; the 10-night Brisbane to South Pacific cruise on Radiance of the Seas, departing 1 December 2020 and the seven-night Brisbane to South Pacific Cruise on Radiance of the Seas, departing 11 December 2020.

Set Sail Consultant Rewards has been running since October 2019, giving agents the chance to

redeem points on all Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara bookings.

Agents have 30 days from making the booking to redeem their points at the Set Sail Consultant Rewards website where there is a range of e-gift cards from major retailers, including Farmers, Bunnings, Hoyts, JB Hi-Fi and more.

The Hero Sailings reflect a key change in the upcoming 2020-2021 season, with Royal Caribbean homeporting Radiance of the Seas in Brisbane's new International Cruise Terminal at Luggage Point.

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

## PAL'S countdown to 80 sale

PAL has released special airfares to the Philippines, selected destinations around Asia and to London/Heathrow to celebrate its 80th year of operation, on sale now until 15 March.

PAL economy airfares from AKL to MNL start from \$680 return, premium economy \$1180 return or business \$2180 return. Travel is for 1 August to 10 December 2020.

Return economy flights to London departing between 1 April and 10 December 2020 from AKL are \$1459 all up including taxes and surcharges. Premium economy is

from \$3439 or business class is from \$4979.

PAL recently changed the schedules between AKL and LHR effective from the end of March to provide one of the fastest trips to London. Departing Auckland at 11.25pm every Monday, Thursday and Friday, it arrives at London/Heathrow at 3.10pm the next day with a short two-hour stopover at MNL.

PAL is reminding agents that the Philippines does not currently have any active cases of the Covid-19 coronavirus so passengers should feel confident travelling via MNL to their chosen destination.

## SilkAir to suspend ops to HIJ

SilkAir, the regional wing of Singapore Airlines, will indefinitely suspend operations to Hiroshima (HIJ) from 27 March 2020 due to weak demand, which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The last SilkAir flight on this route will be MI867, which will operate from HIJ to SIN on 26 March 2020. Affected customers will be contacted to re-accommodate them on to

other flights.

The SIA Group regularly reviews its flight network and says it will remain flexible in adjusting capacity to demand. The group also serves six points in Japan including Fukuoka, Nagoya, Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo-Haneda and Tokyo-Narita and says it remains committed to the Japanese market.

## IATA – January hit 'tip of iceberg'

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) reports global passenger traffic data for January 2020 shows that demand (measured in total revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) climbed 2.4% compared to January 2019.

This was down from 4.6% year-over-year growth for the prior month and is the lowest monthly increase since April 2010, at the time of the volcanic ash cloud crisis in Europe that led to massive airspace closures and flight cancellations. January capacity (available seat kilometers or ASKs) increased by 1.7%. Load factor climbed 0.6 percentage point to 80.3%.

'January was just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the traffic impacts we are seeing owing to the Covid-19 outbreak, given that major travel restrictions in China did not begin until 23 January. Nevertheless, it was still enough to cause our slowest traffic growth in nearly a decade,' says Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director general and CEO.

Asia-Pacific airlines' January traffic climbed 2.5% compared to the year-ago period, which was the slowest outcome since early 2013 and a decline from the 3.9% increase in December. Softer GDP growth in several of the region's key economies was compounded by Covid-19 impacts on the international China market. Capacity rose 3.0% and load factor slid 0.4 percentage point to 81.6%.

## Bali bliss with Emirates

GO Holidays has Bali packages on sale with return flights on Emirates on sale until 8 March 2020.

Seven nights plus flights ex Auckland are from \$1119 per person twin share including breakfast daily.

Clients can upgrade to four-star from an additional \$380 per person and receive value adds including lunch, dinner, massage and more.

Travel dates are 28 April to 24 September 2020, closeouts apply. [goflyers.gogogo.co.nz/classic/goflyerpopupmvc.asp?id=20239&enc=119715095828158CVU](http://goflyers.gogogo.co.nz/classic/goflyerpopupmvc.asp?id=20239&enc=119715095828158CVU)

## New rules in Vanuatu and Tahiti for Covid-19

Non-Vanuatu nationals travelling from or through South Korea, Japan and Singapore are now unable to enter Vanuatu.

Vanuatu nationals can transit through Hong Kong and Singapore, but only if they don't leave the airport terminal, otherwise they are required to self-quarantine outside of Vanuatu for 14 days.

And from 10 March 2020, all passengers, regardless of their nationality, traveling to Tahiti must carry a medical certificate no older than five days certifying their health condition, regardless of their port of departure.

Air New Zealand is advising agents to consult the Ministry of Health for French Polynesia directly for further detail on its new measures, as the policy can be updated at any time.

In the case of a customer being declined travel to Tahiti as a result of the newly imposed travel restrictions NZ will offer flexibility at time of check-in.

## World Journeys Covid-19 advice

World Journeys has issued the following advice to agents regarding the Covid-19 situation. 'We understand the concern coronavirus is generating for travellers, particularly those scheduled to depart New Zealand within the next 60 days, or those planning trips in the future. We have therefore been working closely with our suppliers worldwide to provide a policy relaxing current terms and conditions.

'Most of our overseas partners are

supporting this initiative for FIT bookings and we are waiting for further suppliers to confirm their participation, which we expect to receive soon. We will be able to confirm conditions for existing files on a case-by-case basis. When quoting new bookings, we will outline what the position is regarding deferring the booking, should it later be necessary to do so. This policy came into effect on Tuesday and will be updated as necessary.'

For more info phone 0800 117 311.



Single Spa Suite The St. Regis Bangkok

## Medical spa for Bangkok hotel

Minor Hotels has entered into partnership with Clinique La Prairie to operate the Swiss health clinic's first aesthetics and medical spa outside of Europe.

Due to launch later this year, the Clinique La Prairie Aesthetics & Medical Spa will operate at The St. Regis Bangkok under MSpa

International, the corporate division of spa and wellness with Minor Hotels.

The partnership represents the growth of Thailand as an international medical tourism destination, recognising the global demand for personalised wellness offerings beyond traditional health and spa services.

## DID YOU KNOW?

That you can **WIN a \$50 voucher** with Exotic Holidays?

Each week Exotic Holidays is giving the first 20 correct entries into its Did You Know? competition the chance to win a \$50 voucher. **Just answer the question below and send it to [yogi@exotic.net.nz](mailto:yogi@exotic.net.nz)**

**This week's question:**

**Which country was the place where the cherry was first found by the Romans?**

If you don't know the answer you will find it in Exotic Holidays' weekly TRAVELBug newsletter, distributed by email every Tuesday. And if you don't currently receive the newsletter you can subscribe by emailing [yogi@exotic.net.nz](mailto:yogi@exotic.net.nz)

**Congratulations to last week's winner:**

**Jade Hall,  
House of Travel  
Whangarei**



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Mixing and mingling before the workshop sessions at Distinction Christchurch... Rachel O'Neill, Flight Centre Palms; Elizabeth Patterson, Flight Centre Hornby; Cullan Dreaver, Travel 2U



Kellie Worters, House of Travel Upper Riccarton; Rosemary McNoe, Eclipse; Karon McGarr, HOT Merivale



Yogi Batra, Rahul Sharma, both Exotic Holidays; Michelle van Noorden, Orbit World Travel; Tanya Cross, YOU Travel Ferrymead



Josie Dickerson, Flight Centre The Crossing; Toby Chow, Philippine Airlines; Olivia Narbey, Flight Centre, South City

## JAWS Plus kicks off 'down south'

JAWS Plus started with strong attendance in the South Island this week, with close to 30 attendees in Dunedin, 50 in Christchurch and another 30 expected in Nelson last night.

Exhibitors had plenty of news to impart. Dan Khanna, of Taiwanese carrier China Airlines, says he was promoting the expansion of fares into Europe through relationships with Lufthansa, Alitalia, Air France and KLM.

'In Christchurch we are also promoting the connectivity we have working with Qantas on a codeshare, and out of Wellington working with both QF and Virgin Australia trans Tasman.'

Jay Soysa promoted an increased commission rate (12%) on all Fathom Asia and Orton International tours to coincide with the JAWS road trip. The offer will run through to 13 June.

Rahul Sharma, Exotic Holidays, says he is registering plenty of interest in Europe and the Middle East, including

programmes through operator Fez, at the JAWS events.

'Oman is popular, while Spain and Morocco are top of the list.'

Vanessa Tjemplon, Aircalin, was specifically pushing two Christchurch to Noumea flights at the South Island events. (See also Pacific Islands page 6). 'So far the response has been positive, so we will see where it goes from here,' she says.

JAWS Plus heads to the North Island over the next fortnight and agents can register at [jawsnz20@gmail.com](mailto:jawsnz20@gmail.com)



Cathy Gibson, Air Canada; Claire Thomas, Flight Centre Barrington



Vanessa Tjemplon, Aircalin; flanked by Howie Yee and Katrina Vowles, Orbit Travel Christchurch



Sam Moore, travel&co; Sophie Holt, Alisha Hunt, both STA



We're with NZ Travel Brokers... Megan Oakes, Jo Lindores, Michelle Moore, Charlotte Ensor



Debra Carnahan, HOT Upper Riccarton; Tony Smith, Francis Travel Marketing

## MYSTERY PERSON



## Who is this mystery person?

We caught up with this lot at JAWS Plus in Christchurch and immediately recognised locals Melanie Peacock and Lindsay Ashton-Smith, both from helloworld Rolleston. But who is the mystery man in the middle? Our Canterbury correspondent couldn't place him, which makes us think he may be from somewhere to the north. If you can help, send the answer to [competitions@promag.co.nz](mailto:competitions@promag.co.nz) with Mystery Person in the subject line.

And congratulations to Ana Oommen, helloworld, who correctly guessed last week's Mystery Person Nikki Andrew, World Travellers. A prize courtesy of Lonely Planet will be sent out to you.

## Rail Europe simplifies bookings, amplifies rewards

Rail Europe has four new features that make rail booking more intuitive and seamless for agents, as well rewarding.

In addition to 'save for later', 'link booking fee', multi-city search functions along with the FAQ section, Agent Tool enables agents to instantly issue e-tickets for last minute departures, request for quotes, keep tabs on currently unavailable trains and refer to the after sales portal for further support. More features will be added to its suite of booking solutions over the year.

Rail Wizard is a new virtual assistant on hand 24/7 to assist agents with queries on bookings, quotes, payments, shipping and documentation, after sales support, agent discounts and more. Based on information collected over the years from the most common queries, Rail Wizard provides



simple, comprehensive answers via a few clicks.

Marketing Grant is where agents can submit requests for marketing funds to implement B2B2C activations. These include information nights, newsletter mail outs, window decals, social media promotions, co-branded merchandise and other activities.

The Once Upon a Train year long incentive programme uses interactive storytelling to educate agents about the company's core products and offers. It requires participating

agents to solve the mystery of the missing Golden Ticket by December 2020. Along the way, agents are rewarded with incentives including cash vouchers, rail passes, spot prizes, Rail Expert certificates and ultimately, winning a place on one of three famils.

General manager APAC, Richard Leonard, says given the large volume of queries received and bookings transacting each day, it is imperative that Rail Europe stays ahead in assisting agents. **CLICK HERE** for details.

## Viva sponsors Antarctica initiative

Viva Expeditions is sponsoring an initiative that invites primary schools to participate in the Australian Antarctic Festival being held in Hobart from 29 July to 3 August this year.

Each school will be allocated 50 small penguins cut from fibreboard, to paint in any way they wish. Once painted, the penguins are returned to Australia and will be displayed throughout the festival, a biennial event aimed at promoting awareness of Antarctica, particularly to school children.

## TRAVELinc MEMO

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## TODAY'S PEARLER

"The only people who never tumble are those who never mount the wire."  
*Oprah Winfrey*

**CLICK HERE** to view the 2019 TAANZ Book – this is the book that gives you the contacts you need

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