

TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

Incorporating Tabs on Travel

Tuesday 16 October 2012

Issue 2481

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Calls For A Sth Pac Rating Scheme

As new accommodation rating systems are implemented in the Pacific Islands, local wholesalers are supporting calls for a region-wide grading system.

The Cook Islands announced last week it will revive the country's quality assurance programme. Cooks tourism operators will reportedly grade themselves in categories including safety, cleanliness and if marketing campaigns are an accurate representation of the property, then e-mail their answers to an accreditation council administrator, who will have the final say. Operators will also have their property accessed three times a year. Other islands have their own systems, including Tonga which in Jul launched Tonga Mark, but wholesalers contacted by *Travel Today* say standards

vary widely from island to island. "What's four-star in one destination is not four-star in another," says one South Pacific specialist. "It can cause confusion and negative feedback." The issue is also said to create an annual battle with hotels during brochure production time, as the wholesaler's own star ratings may not match those of the hotels'. "A region-wide system would certainly make life a lot easier—for us and the consumer," says one wholesaler.

Another welcomes moves to encourage accommodation providers to raise standards and ensure consistency. "At the moment there are some quite big inconsistencies, there are some challenges comparing destinations with a mature product offering with those emerging destinations," he says. "A grading system would give those that are emerging a target to aim for if they can compare themselves to others."

... SPTO Aware

The concern is something the South Pacific Tourism Organisation is aware of, but SPTO's Petero Manufolau says the RTO lacks the budget at present to undertake what would be a very ambitious project. "This is something that the SPTO is not committed to at the moment however it is definitely something that has been discussed and is something that may be worth pursuing provided that funding is available," he says.



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Popular 101 Must-Dos

The popularity of AA Tourism's 101 Must-Dos campaign shows that interest in domestic tourism among Kiwis is high, the association says. Eight days in to the six-week campaign to find the 101 must-dos in New Zealand, 107,000 votes have been cast—more than half the 200,000 cast over the entire campaign last year. South Island destinations dominate the top 10 so far.

Ice In Anaheim?

An ice-skating rink has opened at the Disneyland's Downtown Disney in the lead-up to the 23 Oct release of Tinkerbell's new movie. The rink will be hosted by Tink and her sister Periwinkle; and from 12 Nov a festive-themed village will surround it.

Aussie Needs An X-Man?

Australia needs a new public face and the perfect person for the job is Hugh Jackman, says G Adventures founder Bruce Poon Tip. Australia's golden days were when Paul Hogan helped define the country's identity in the infamous 'slip another shrimp on the barbie' campaign, he told those at the Global Eco Asia Pacific Tourism Conference. Jackman would be the perfect replacement, he added.

Oxygen Canisters On NZ

Air New Zealand has contacted the Royal New Zealand Air Force today following the revelation it illegally and unknowingly shipped oxygen generator canisters from Vancouver to Auckland for the air force. The highly flammable canisters caused an aircraft in the US to crash in 1995, killing 100 passengers. NZ says it is still awaiting a response from the air force.

4 Pages This Issue
News..... p1, p2, p4
Cruising Today..... p3



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Webjet Packages

On-line travel agent Webjet has entered the holiday packages market in Australia and has plans to do the same in New Zealand.

Aussie customers can now select their travel dates and destination or type of holiday (such as beach or family) and Webjet will return 'the best packaged flight and accommodation options available'.

Holiday packaging is planned for the New Zealand market in the 'near future', a Webjet spokesperson told *Travel Today*—but added that no other details are available.

The OTA claims to have brought 'almost limitless' potential air and hotel combinations to the market, including LCCs, full service carriers and around one million hotel rooms around the world on sale every day.

Aussies have already shown a 'high level of consumer acceptance and enthusiasm' in the product, says managing director John Guscic.

"For the first time the full flexibility and spectrum of packaging is being delivered without the restrictions imposed by traditional wholesaling and bricks and mortar package offerings," he says.

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More Corporates Travel At The Back

Using travel agencies is no longer one of the three most important aspects in managing corporate travel costs, shows a new survey, which also found that more business travellers are being relegated to economy.

The Ascend corporate travel survey questioned 624 aviation professionals around the world (14% from Asia Pacific), and found that companies are now more inclined to reconsider employee travel requirements as a way of reducing travel budgets.

Whereas last year the three most

important ways to manage corporate travel costs were searching for cheap fares on the internet, considering a choice of hotels and using agencies to achieve deals, this year they were searching for fares on the internet, reducing the number of staff travelling and reducing conference/exhibition travel.

Agencies were still seen as important by 61% of respondents, but this was lower than any other option.

... Down The Back

Lowering the class of travel was seen as an important way to manage costs by 66% of respondents, says Ascend.

The number of travellers in first or business class is now 61% and there has been a shift from premium economy to economy—25% have sat in economy on long-haul flights and 14% in premium economy, compared to 20% and 19% last year.

Int'l Avalon Flights?

Victoria's Avalon Airport is a step closer to welcoming international flights, following the announcement the Australian Government will back a proposal to amend the airport's lease. Described as 'long overdue', the amendment will be followed by an AUD50 million investment in planning and preliminary construction of a rail link to the airport, says Minister for Aviation Gordon Rich-Phillips.

QF Aussie Fares

Qantas has tactical Australia fares for sales to 17 Oct, including Auckland-Sydney/Melbourne/Brisbane from \$179, Wellington-Sydney/Melbourne from \$189 and Auckland/Wellington/Christchurch-Adelaide/Cairns from \$279. Travel dates vary, and QF Walkabout Passes are from \$90 within the same zone and \$220 between zones.

UK/Europe Land Deals

GO Holidays has UK/Europe land packages including three nights in London from \$189pp s/t for sales to 15 Dec. GO's earlybird offers also include destinations in France, Italy and Spain and both Hertz and Peugeot Eurolease early booking prices. The land-only deals are valid for travel 15 Jan-31 Oct.

QF For Cure Kids

A team of Qantas' Auckland employees is taking part in the Peugeot Walk on the Wild Side to Cure Kids on Sun 11 Nov. The team has to raise at least \$300 for each entrant, and there are 19 on board for the challenge. "Cure Kids is Qantas New Zealand's chosen charity and by competing in this event, we are helping Cure Kids fund vital medical research into children's life-threatening illness, such as leukaemia and cystic fibrosis," says QF's Lisa Bradbury. To donate to the cause, see fundraisingonline.co.nz/teamqantas

LH Earlybirds

The LH Group Airlines (Lufthansa, Swiss and Austrian Airlines) have launched UK/Europe earlybirds, starting from \$1957 flying Swiss to Zurich. The earlybirds are on sale until 08 Nov, for departures 01 Nov-31 Aug with a three-month maximum stay. See lufthansaexperts.com

Innstant's NZD Move

On-line wholesaler Innstant Travel now has a New Zealand dollar account for payments. The wholesaler says this allows transactions to be concluded in the one currency. The on-line wholesaler launched in the Kiwi market last month, and 'opened' in India this week.

Trafalgar's 10% Off

Trafalgar is urging agents to book clients' Europe trips now to take advantage of their early payment offer and new earlybird fares in the market. Trafalgar is offering 10% off all 2013 departures featuring 'early payment discount' in the price panel when booked and paid in full by 27 Dec. Clients can also save \$300 per couple off UK and Europe airfares with Singapore Airlines for land and air bookings by 17 Dec.

HA Best US OTP For Aug

Hawaiian Airlines has ranked first for on-time performance and fewest flight cancellations in the US in Aug, according to Department of Transportation figures. HA's OTP was 92.8%, 13.7 points above the industry average.

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Silversea Tech Focus

Silversea Cruises will look at introducing new technology for guests over the next few years, including the possibility of iPads and onboard Wi-Fi across its fleet.

"It's going to be an important development for us, if you're going to stay a market leader then you have to attract new customers, and move with the times," says Silversea gm and director of sales Australasia Karen Christensen. "The next thing of course is teaching our customers who are not as savvy as our younger demographic to use the technology—and that will come along with the technology itself," she adds.

River Tosca Wins

Uniworld's River Tosca has been named Best Cruise Ship by the Egypt Ministry of Tourism. The ministry celebrates World Tourism Day with an awards ceremony, and River Tosca beat nearly 300 cruise ships that sail on the Nile to win the award.

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TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY Instant Poll

Are more clients securing 2013 UK/Euro cruises before airfares?

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Lueftner Rides River Cruise Growth Wake



Lueftner Cruises local GSA says the river cruise line's 2013 product has been 'received exceptionally well' by the trade as it looks forward to a positive year of sales from New Zealand.

"The pricing within the brochure is very competitive against what other river cruising options are in the market," says Francis Travel Marketing md Tony Smith.

"Sales since the brochure was distributed into the market have started to increase and we are definitely looking at a good year

with the Luftner product," he adds. Agents can earn an additional 5% commission on 2013 Lueftner cruises booked by 30 Oct. Lead-in fares include a four-day Magic of Advent Frankfurt return sailing on the Rhine priced from \$450pp s/t. For copies of the brochure e-mail: enquiries@francistravelmarketing.co.nz

Costa Pre-Trial Begins

The pre-trial court hearing in the Costa Concordia case begins today in Italy, and the ship's black box recordings and conversations between Captain Schettino and operations manager Roberto Ferrarini in the aftermath of the grounding are expected to be of particular focus, say reports.

Swan's Sri Lanka

Swan Hellenic has Sri Lanka cruises onboard the refurbished Minerva taking in the island nation's UNESCO World Heritage sites and temples in 2013. The 15-day sailing out of Singapore also explores Malaysia, the Andaman Islands and Chennai, India and is priced from \$4235pp s/t based on 13 Feb departure. Cruise Holidays has details.

Expanded Alaska ASC

Innersea Discoveries and American Safari Cruises have increased their presence in Alaska for the northern summer of 2013, with three expedition boats and four up-scale yachts deployed in the region, including the newly acquired Safari Legacy. Clients can choose from 11 different 'un-cruise' itineraries from seven to 21 nights long May-Sep from home-ports Ketchikan, Juneau and Sitka. The 88-guest Safari Legacy will sail two 11-night cruises from Seattle to Juneau, incorporating heritage ports with a focus on the region's gold rush history and the culture of Alaska's Inside Passage.

New Brit P&O Ship

P&O Cruises UK will welcome its largest cruise ship in time for the northern spring 2015. Construction of the 141,000 ton 3611-passenger liner began in Italy this week, and when complete the ship will offer 'timeless Britishness', says P&O. Details of her onboard offerings will be revealed 'at a later date'.

Dalmation Highlights

Croatia Times Travel has 10% off the advertised price on the Dalmation Highlights Cruise on the MS Eden or MS Afrodita from Split. Prices start from \$1121pp s/t for bookings paid in full by 20 Dec. See croatiatimestravel.travel

Halong Bay Luxury

Bhaya Cruises now offers luxury Halong Bay and Gulf of Tonkin sailings onboard the 70-passenger Au Co, and the company has agent rates for Kiwi consultants to try the new product. Onboard the vessel clients are offered a culinary experience inspired by five cuisine elements (earth, fire, metal, wood and water) and there are a range of onboard and enroute experiences for the active traveller or a client who wants rest and relaxation, says local rep Anna Friend. Agent rates for the three-day sailing are from USD690 per cabin. There are also one-night cruises on the Bhaya Classic from USD246 per cabin, two nights from USD419. Single occupancy rates are also available.

SE Asia In Depth

GO Holidays has an Azamara Club Cruises South East Asia sailing departing Hong Kong 03 Feb and priced from \$6669pp s/t for sales to 31 Oct. The 17-night cruise takes in ports in Vietnam and Thailand, with stays or two nights or more to give clients the chance to explore destinations. Clients receive USD1000 onboard credit when they book oceanview stateroom or above on select Azamara voyages.

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Heritage's Hero Hunt

Heritage Hotel management is giving away \$1600 Heritage Escape vouchers to 20 unsung heroes in communities throughout New Zealand. Kiwis can nominate anyone who quietly does good for their community, see heritagehotels.co.nz/heroes

**Industry
Diary**

OCTOBER

Globus Roadshow

Auckland: Tue 16, Event Cinemas Newmarket, 1800 sharp, movie ticket, drink, popcorn and choc top is provided.
Invercargill: Thu 18, Shop 5 at The Rocks, 101 Dee Street, 1745 canapes and presentation.
Nelson: Tue 30, Rutherford Hotel Trafalgar Square, 0730 breakfast and presentation.

Albatross Tours 2013 Summer brochure launch (NZ Edition)
Christchurch: Mon 29, Peppers Clearwater Resort, 1730-1930pm.
Wellington: Tue 30, Rydges Wellington, 1730-1930.
Taupo: Wed 31, Hilton Taupo, 1730-1930pm.

NOVEMBER

Globus Roadshow

Blenheim: Thu 01, Marlborough Conference Centre, 42a Alfred Street, 0730 breakfast and presentation.

Albatross Tours 2013 Summer brochure launch (NZ Edition)
Auckland: Fri 02, Rendezvous Grand Hotel, 0745-0830 (breakfast).

Hogan's Product Update

Napier: Mon 26, Mission Estate Winery Church Rd, 1730 for a 1800 start, drinks and canapes.
Mt Maunganui: Tue 27, Armazem Brazilian Restaurant 305 Mt Maunganui Rd, 1730 for a 1800 start, followed by Armazem Burgers, etc.

Aussie TTF: More Investment Needed

Australia needs to invest in new tourism attractions and infrastructure if the country is to reach expenditure targets set for 2020, says the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF).

The Tourism Forecasting Committee expects inbound visitor numbers to grow around 3.2% a year over the

next decade and tourism expenditure is forecast to grow 1.6% a year to AUD110 billion by 2020—short of the AUD160b target, says the TTF.

The country needs to invest in 'demand-driving attractions' and new infrastructure to increase length of stay and expenditure, says TTF head John Lee.

"We have seen strong growth in aviation capacity—both international and domestic—over recent years, but accommodation development has failed to keep pace," says Lee.

"This is pricing some travellers out of the market, with a scarcity of accommodation in gateway cities reducing regional dispersal and reducing Australia's competitiveness relative to our regional rivals."

NZ To Samoa, Tonga

Air New Zealand has released new fares to Samoa and Tonga, for sales to 21 Oct. Seat + Bag fares to Tonga are from \$184 ow, and to Samoa \$244 ow. The fares are valid for travel 20 Jan-25 Jun, blackouts apply.

Internet Travel Site Visits — Monthly Stats

Travel agency website usage, "visits" by New Zealand residents, as measured by Experian Hitwise, for the month of Sep 2012.

1	expedia.co.nz	10.96%
2	webjet.co.nz	10.38%
3	houseoftravel.co.nz	9.25%
4	wotif.com	8.84%
5	flightcentre.co.nz	7.13%
6	jetabroad.co.nz	3.09%
7	skyscanner.co.nz	1.76%
8	agoda.co.nz	1.73%
9	orbitz.com	1.71%
10	statravel.co.nz	1.65%
11	kayak.com	1.44%
12	webjet.com.au	1.36%
13	farecompare.com	1.17%
14	harveyworld.co.nz	1.14%
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17	bookingbuddy.com	1.02%
18	ctrip.com	1.02%
19	cheapflights.com.au	0.95%
20	makemytrip.com	0.90%

Outback Christmas Train

Irish singer and Australia's Got Talent judge Brian McFadden will join the Indian Pacific on its annual Outback Christmas journey from Sydney to Perth this 05-08 Dec, stopping at remote communities to perform free concerts along the way. The train will stop for concerts in Bathurst Broken Hill, Watson, Rawlinna and Kalgoorlie.

New Cal Gypsy Jazz

Concerts celebrating Balkans music, electro swing and gypsy music will be held all over New Caledonia 14-17 Nov as part of the Gypsy Jazz Festival. The festival is devoted to the music of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, and brings together international artists showcasing the gypsy style. It is attracting a growing number of visitors from Australasia, says New Caledonia Tourism.

Plantation Stay, Pay

Plantation Island Resort has a stay five, pay three offer valid for hotel room stays, advises Coconuts Travel Marketing. Kids under 12 stay, play, eat and transfer free, and clients can upgrade to studio garden, pool-side room or one-bedroom garden terrace and receive FJD100 food voucher per room. Offer is valid for sales to 31 Oct and travel until 30 Jun, blackouts apply. Wholesalers have details.

NZ Drops Fiji Fare

Air New Zealand has dropped the price of its shortlife Fiji fare, on sale to 21 Oct, by \$20 ow, and slightly amended the travel period. See airnzagent.co.nz



Hilary Anniversary Trek

Exodus has two special departures of its 18-day Everest Base Camp trek to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Sir Edmund Hilary and Tenzing Norgay's expedition to the summit. Priced from \$3090pp s/t and departing 29 Mar and 23 Apr, the treks include two extra nights with a climbing team at Base Camp Base at the foot of the Khumbu Ice Fall and dinner with Ang Phurba, the last surviving Nepali from the Hilary trek. Price includes full portage, hotel and teahouse accommodation, all breakfasts and an Exodus tour guide. Adventure World has details.

Early Snow Guarantee

Colorado's Winter Park Resort has an Early Snow Guarantee that allows clients to re-schedule their stay if early season snow isn't up to scratch when they first book stays between 14 Nov-20 Dec. Clients must pay the difference in cost and the rescheduled trips must be used by 21 Apr. The resort also has a stay four, pay three deal and winter rates start from USD52pp pn. Details see winterparkresort.com

Diwali Lights Up Fiji

Shows, entertainment, shopping, rides, fireworks and plenty of lights will illuminate Nadi at this year's Indian Diwali Festival of Lights (19 Oct-12 Nov), says Tourism Fiji. A highlight of the festival is the ornate light and candle decorations, Indian snacks and sweets, and traditional performances, says the NTO. The festival is on at RB Patel Jetpoint Martintar, Nadi.

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