

TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

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Tuesday 24 March 2015

Issue 3038

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Cook Islands Hold Ground; New Brand

Cook Islands Tourism is hopeful its new brand campaign is helping Kiwis understand what it offers as the destination holds steady in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The latest Statistics New Zealand figures show that in the year to Feb Kiwi departures to the Cooks are up 4.8%, while for Feb they spiked 11% to 2940. It's a good sign arrivals are staying steady as consumers are bombarded with deals, says the NTO, but the destination would like to see greater growth and that's where the new #Feel Raro brand campaign comes in.

"We're just managing to keep marginal growth at the moment and hopefully this campaign will help to lift that again," says local Cook Islands Tourism gm Graeme West.

Traditionally Cooks campaigns are mostly tactical and through the trade, so moving towards brand advertising is relatively new—and West says they're hopeful it will help consumers and the trade better understand the destination.

"We're really trying to get the message across of how and why Raro is dif-

#FEEL RARO

ferent to other tropical destinations."

The new brand launched in Jan, and while it's early days the response has been encouraging, says West. "We've had good

feedback from the campaign so far from the trade and from consumers, and people do book reasonably close to travel so we do get to see some reasonably quick results," he says.

... Feel Raro

The campaign plays on Kiwis' affection for what they call 'Raro', and helps them understand what it offers—including 'the feeling of freedom, of relaxation, of romance and love, the ease of everything', says West. Future advertising will focus on topics including dining, couples and activities, as well as promoting other islands like Aitutaki and Atiu.

There's plenty going on in terms of new developments, including the new Nautilus and Crystal Blue Lagoon properties, and activities like nighttime stand-up paddle-boarding, says West.

The campaign is being displayed across press ads, billboards, videos and digital banners, and the NTO is keen to get agents involved too. West wants to see the industry piggyback on the new branding and will be meeting with agents to update them on the campaign.

ASIA NOW 2015

AKL West: Tue 21 Apr
AKL Central: Wed 22 Apr
Wellington: Thu 23 Apr
Tauranga: Tue 05 May
Hamilton: Wed 06 May

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AirAsia X Return?

AirAsia X could be flying to New Zealand from Kuala Lumpur again from as soon as the end of this year, say new reports. Acting ceo Benyamin Ismail told media New Zealand is in his plans, and analysts say it's likely the carrier would opt for Auckland over Christchurch. "I'm just deciding whether I want to do it towards the end of the year—we have the capacity for it—or whether we want to do it at the start of next year," Ismail said. Recently AirAsia boss Tony Fernandes hinted at launching Tasman flights.

Another NZD/AUD High

The Kiwi dollar hit a new record against the AUD overnight, reaching AUD0.9782. It also reached a two-month high of USD0.7663.

Jaws In Tauranga

The Jaws Plus roadshow is on from 1700 at the Tauranga Yacht Club tonight. See industry diary for details.

Asia Now Roadshow

China Southern and Royal Caribbean will join the Asia Now roadshow for the first time this year, and there's plenty of news and updates from existing suppliers too, say organisers. "This is the only independent Asia roadshow in New Zealand and it's a great opportunity for agents to come along and meet with a variety of suppliers," says organiser Julie Rice of Airline Marketing.

As well as the new faces sharing details of their product, there's also updates from suppliers like Insider Journeys who recently rebranded from Travel Indochina, as well as Wendy Wu, which has just opened a dedicated office in New Zealand.

The roadshow is on in Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga and Hamilton, with two Auckland venues so agents from across the city can attend, says Rice. It includes a full sit-down dinner. For details and to RSVP,

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5 Pages This Issue

News.....p1-4
Brand USA & HA Megafam..... p5



Australia on sale.

Flights on sale now departing Auckland or Christchurch from \$179*, Wellington from \$209* or Queenstown from \$199* including all the frills. Visit qantas.co.nz/agents for details.

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SQ Business Class

Singapore Airlines has released business class fares to selected destinations in Asia, South Africa and the Middle East, for sales to 06 Apr and travel outbound 31 Mar-31 Aug. Fares include Singapore from \$4874, Bangkok from \$4904, Shanghai from \$4994, Hong Kong from \$5004, Jakarta from \$5090 and Mumbai from \$5410.

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Direct Air Services To Vietnam?

An air services agreement (ASA) between New Zealand and Vietnam will be amended to allow more code-sharing opportunities—and the government is hopeful it may eventually lure a Vietnamese carrier to operate here.

Air New Zealand currently code-shares on Singapore Airlines to three destinations in Vietnam, and existing rules mean it cannot code-share to other Vietnamese destinations, says Transport Minister Simon Bridges.

“NZ will no longer face those restrictions, once both countries have completed necessary official processes,” says Bridges, who has signed a protocol to amend the ASA. “Travel

HA Sees Arrival Boost

Hawaiian Airlines celebrates two years in the New Zealand market today and says its arrival has helped lead to a more than 150% boost in the number of Kiwis heading to Hawaii.

Some 63,000 Kiwis landed in Hawaii in 2014, up 26% on 2013 and more than 150% on 2012, says HA. It’s also helped contribute to a 24% increase in Kiwi arrivals to North America since the end of 2012.

DXB Teems With A380s

Dubai International Airport was the world’s leading hub for A380s in 2014, driven unsurprisingly by growth in Emirates’ A380 fleet. Both EK and Qantas operate A380s to the airport, which saw a total of 15,098 A380 flights to 39 destinations worldwide—a sharp increase on 2013’s 10,608 flights to 26 destinations. The next busiest A380 airports were London Heathrow, with 5434 flights; and Singapore Changi, with 5398.

between New Zealand and Vietnam is on the rise and this new arrangement could bring further growth—Vietnamese visitors to New Zealand have already grown by 33% between 2009 and 2014 and, during the same period, Kiwis travelling to Vietnam grew by 81%.”

Vietnam is one of New Zealand’s key partners in South East Asia, says Bridges. “I hope a Vietnamese carrier will consider operating to New Zealand, to further grow tourism, trade and personal ties between our two countries,” he says.

QF Fare Changes

Qantas, which said earlier this year it would review its tariff structures including a gradual absorption of fuel surcharges into base fares, is ready to begin its first phase of the transition. From 31 Mar, for travel commencing from New Zealand across the joint QF and EK network, the absorption of fuel surcharges into the base fare will be effective for all bookings on/after 31 Mar, for travel on/after 01 Sep. Any existing international bookings for travel originating in New Zealand must be ticketed on or before 30 Mar otherwise un-ticketed bookings will be reassessed and the new tariff structures and fare levels will apply. QF says it will keep its travel agency partners updated as the process progresses.

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Vanuatu Update

All Air Vanuatu domestic flights have returned to normal, the carrier has advised as it urges Kiwis to continue booking holidays in Vanuatu.

Espiritu Santo is open for business and while Efate and the southern islands will take some time to recover, rebuilding work so far has been 'phenomenal', says NF boss Joseph Laloyer. "We are asking passengers with existing bookings for the next couple of weeks to consider Santo as a holiday destination, rather than cancelling their trip altogether," he says. The carrier is waiving change fees through to 31 May.

Most shops and restaurants in Port Vila are operating today, says Vanuatu Tourism, and the country is 'slowly but surely' getting there. Resorts are starting to reopen, including Vila Chaumieres, while White Grass Ocean Resort in Tanna has advised it will be operational again on 07 Apr, says the NTO.

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ACCC: Too Much Risk From QF/MU

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has proposed saying no to Qantas and China Eastern's plans to coordinate operations between Australia and China, saying it would allow the carriers to limit capacity and/or increase airfares on the Sydney-Shanghai route.

The carriers' proposed Joint Coordination Agreement would likely result in a 'significant public detriment', says the ACCC in a draft decision. "The

Gallipoli App

A free smartphone and tablet app has been launched to offer Kiwis a new way to explore the Gallipoli campaign. The Nga Tapuwae Gallipoli app features diary entries from the First World War, facts, imagery and audio tours narrated by leading historians. It's designed to be used offline to avoid roaming charges and is free to download. Meanwhile Prime Minister John Key has confirmed he will be attending the 100th anniversary commemoration services in Gallipoli in Apr. See ngatapuwa.govt.nz

Vibe Hotels, Sydney

TFE Hotels is set to build a Vibe Hotel in North Sydney, as part of Cromwell Property Group's redevelopment of Northpoint Tower. Due for completion in 2017, the 188-room hotel will become one of the next generation of Vibe Hotels, joining the newly-opened Vibe Hotel Marysville in Victoria and Vibe Hotel Canberra Airport, another new-build hotel due to open in quarter four 2015.

ACCC understands QF's desire to form an alliance with a Chinese airline to establish a gateway to North East Asia. However, the ACCC's concern is that they have chosen to do so with their main competitor on the one route between Australia and China on which QF operates direct flights," says ACCC chairman Rod Sims.

"QF and MU together account for more than 80% of capacity (seats flown) on direct services on the Sydney - Shanghai route. They are the two major airlines on the route and the only airlines offering daily flights, and so the major competitive constraint on each other. Competition between them will be greatly reduced under the proposed agreement."

While the move would result in some public benefits—particularly with QF co-locating at MU's terminal in Shanghai—they don't outweigh the 'significant public detriment', says Sims.

The ACCC is seeking submissions from interested parties in relation to its draft determination, before making a final decision. Submissions are due by 08 Apr.

Lizard Hit Again

Queensland's Lizard Island Resort has reportedly been left damaged by Cyclone Nathan—having only just held its soft reopening following an AUD45 million refurbishment to repair destruction from Cyclone Ita last year. Local news reports suggest landscaping was stripped by the cyclone, and some newly constructed buildings flattened.

A note on the resort's website says it is currently assessing the status of the resort and will provide information on its reopening early next week.

Thailand's 1111 Hotline

The Royal Thai Government has launched a new 1111 hotline to receive complaints from foreigners in Thailand, in addition to the existing 1155 Tourist Police Call Centre. In case of emergency, foreigners are advised to dial 1155, however, for non-emergency matters foreigners are advised to call 1111. Both centres are staffed 24 hours daily. The government plans to expand the 1111 centre's coverage to Thai embassies in the ASEAN countries. The move is part of the government's effort to review all safety measures and standards, as well as to offer prompt assistance to foreigners who may need help while in Thailand.

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Walshe Rocky Rep

The Walshe Group has been appointed as the Rocky Mountaineer GSA in China. "We are proud to be associated with Rocky Mountaineer in Greater China as it is a fabulous and unique product which has enjoyed great success internationally for 25 years," says Walshe Group MD Jacqui Walshe.

Industry Diary

MARCH

Jaws 2015

Tauranga: Tue 24, Tauranga Yacht Club, 1700-2000. **Hamilton:** Wed 25, Hamilton City Oaks, 1700-2000.

Tourism Fiji's Mamanuca & Nadi Roadshow 2015

Christchurch: Mon 23, Peppers Clearwater, 1730-2030.

Wellington: Tue 24, InterContinental, 1730-2030. **Hamilton:** Wed 25, Novotel Tainui, 1730-2030. **Auckland:** Thu 26, Stamford Plaza, 1730-2045.

APRIL

Avalon 2016 Launch

Hamilton: Mon 13, Waikato Stadium, Gate 5, 128 Seddon Road, 1745, drinks & canapes. **Timaru:** Tue 14, Mocca Café, 0715, breakfast.

Christchurch: Tue 14, Christchurch Casino, 1730, drinks & canapes.

Tauranga: Wed 15, Trinity Wharf, 1745, drinks & canapes.

Nelson: Wed 15, Grand Mercure Nelson Monaco, 1730, drinks & canapes.

Blenheim: Thu 16, Watery Mouth Café, 1730, drinks & canapes. **Napier:** Mon 20, Globe Theatre, Ahuriri, 1800, presentation & movie. **Palmerston North:** Tue 21, Distinction Hotel & Conference Centre, 1745, drinks & canapes. **New Plymouth:** Wed 22, Devon Hotel, 1745, drinks & canapes.

Auckland East: Thu 23 Apr, Pakuranga Golf Club, 0715, breakfast.

Pukekohe: Tue 28, Sugar Shed, 1745, drinks & canapes. **Wellington Lower Hutt:** Wed 29, The Dowse Art Museum, 1745, drinks & canapes. **Auckland West:** Tue 28, Quality Inn Lincoln Green, 0715, breakfast. **Auckland Central:** Wed 29, Maison Vauron, 0715, breakfast. **Auckland North Shore:** Thu 30, Bruce Mason Centre, 0715, breakfast.

Destination NSW Sydney Agent Pub Quiz Nights

Auckland: Tue 21, Atticus, 63 Fort St, CBD, 1730-1900. **Wellington:** Wed 22, The Establishment, 14-16 Courtenay Place, 1730-1900.

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Meetings 2015 Spots Filling Fast

Hosted buyer spots are filling up fast for CINZ MEETINGS 2015, with buyer applications closing on 10 Apr.

There are 90 spots each for both Australian and New Zealand buyers. Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand are bringing more than 35 international buyers, and are reporting a surge of interest from

North American incentive buyers this year. Australian hosted buyers have also been quick to sign up for eight pre-tours of the regions. Hamilton and Waikato, Rotorua, Taupo, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Canterbury, Queenstown, and Dunedin convention bureaux are all hosting special weekend experiences for Australian buyers from 06-08 Jun, while Auckland is hosting a choice of two special tours on 09 Jun. MEETINGS starts with a welcome function on 09 Jun, followed by a gala dinner on 11 Jun. The event runs from 10-11 Jun at ASB Showgrounds. See meetings.co.nz

Caesars On Sale

Caesars Entertainment's Caesars Palace, Paris, Planet Hollywood, The LINQ Hotel, Bally's Rio, Flamingo and Harrah's properties are on sale until 15 Apr, for travel through until 31 Dec. Clients can save 25% on stays of one night, and 30% off stays of two nights or more, plus receive a daily food and beverage credit. Wholesalers have details.

Agents Saving Time

Sabre Pacific's development which automatically imports Calypso bookings into Sabre Agency Manager is saving agents over 20 minutes for large itineraries. By the click of a button, agents can import passenger details, including all segments, types and costings, into Sabre Agency Manager, rather than having to manually re-enter this information. The functionality, which has been in extensive testing, has a near perfect first time import success rate and will notify agents if unsuccessful, allowing them to re-import the Calypso data. Sabre Pacific says the ability to transfer information from Calypso to Sabre Agency Manager increases the accuracy of data and client documentation, while reducing errors inserting costing amounts. The Sabre Agency Manager/Calypso import functionality is available now to all Sabre customers in NZ free of charge.

Mantra Expands, TAS

Mantra has acquired two new hotels in Tasmania, the Hotel Collins in Hobart and the Hotel Charles in Launceston. The hotels will rebrand as Mantra Collins Hotel Hobart and Mantra Charles Hotel Launceston on 30 Apr.

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BRAND USA AND HAWAIIAN AIRLINES MEGAFAM 2015

Modern Mahalo And Mai Tais



After squeezing in a little more shopping, swimming and sight-seeing on Oahu the megafam group came together for one last night before heading home—at Waikiki’s swanky The Modern Hotel.

The group indulged in sunset cocktails and pupus (canapes), before heading to the ballroom for a gala dinner.

A surprise guest at the event was celebrity chef Roy Yamaguchi, also a Brand USA board member, who helped to judge the hotly-contested best trip video award.

Rivalry was fierce between the teams, who took footage of their trip highlights, which was compiled into short videos. Team Portland and Seattle took out the title, with the team members each winning a USD100 Cash Passport.

1 Team Portland and Seattle (which was made up mostly of Kiwis) won the best promotional video for their trip. The team included (left to right)

honorary Kiwis Deborah Nicholson of Brisbane, and Matt Niederer, Melbourne with Stu McKay, World Travellers-Fuzion; Charmaine Hawke, The Travel Brokers, Wellington; Penny Pickett, HoT Cambridge; Jessica Willett, Flight Centre, St Luke’s; and *Travel Today* publisher Tony Dominicy. **2** Celebrating in style after a busy week is House of Travel Papamoa’s Debra Duke and Wayne Mitcham from Brand USA. **3** Lindsey Morgan from Hawaiian Airlines is pictured on left with Kelly Hoen, the general manager of The Modern and Hawaii Tourism’s Darragh Walshe. **4** Wayne Mitcham from Brand USA and The Walshe Group’s Jane Wilson celebrate a hugely successful megafam with a well-deserved drink. **5** Carol Kirkup from United Travel Manly and Craig Martin from Flight Centre Ponsonby take in the ambience at Wakiki’s Modern Hotel. **6** The mischievous Kainoa Daines from the Oahu Visitors Bureau and Fuzion Travel’s Stu McKay catch-up poolside at The

Modern Hotel before the finale dinner. **7** It was a trip of two halves for House of Travel Newmarket’s Antony Myers, who went from the snow and sights of New York, to sunset cocktails. Myers, pictured on left with Hawaii Tourism New Zealand manager Darragh Walshe, said he was ‘blown away’ by the experience that was the HA Brand USA Megafam.

Nature To Culture

Agents were able to pick from one of five tours for their day exploring Hawaii, covering nature, history, culture and hiking. Some opted for an Adventures of Hidden Hawaii nature lovers tour, including hiking, snorkelling, and relaxing on Waimanalo Beach (pictured), one of Oahu’s top spots and just 20 minutes from Waikiki.

Pearl Harbor and downtown Honolulu were highlights of a historic Hawaii tour, while those keen to see the sites and spend some cash headed out on a hike and shop tour to Diamond Head and the Waikole Outlets.

An adventure at the Kualoa Ranch was a stand-out for agents on the Circle the Island tour; and others picked out cultural highlights on an Oahu eco adventure.



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