

# TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

Incorporating Tabs on Travel

Monday 22 August 2016

Issue 3377



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## Vanuatu Rises To Tourism Challenges

Despite being hampered by two major incidents in as many years, Vanuatu is getting back on its feet; and its tourism office is set to convey this message to the Kiwi trade at this week's Tok Tok and its upcoming Auckland roadshow.

Vanuatu was hit by Cyclone Pam in 2015, and earlier this year Air New Zealand suspended its services due to concerns over the airport runway. "It's a really good time now for the industry to come together and see where everything is at... There has been so much work on the ground, with

property upgrades, new infrastructure and new tours," says Vanuatu Tourism Office's local rep Jacquie Carson. "With these two big things that have happened in the last two years, some retailers are struggling, as well as clients, saying, 'I don't know about that, I have seen so many things going wrong', so we will be working with agents to rebuild that confidence."

Carson says while Kiwi visitor numbers were negatively impacted in the wake of Cyclone Pam, and even more so after NZ pulled out, things are on the up. Air Vanuatu is offering a further two services (a total of four) during the peak season; and clients can also fly via New Caledonia with Aircalin. In addition, VTO has recently launched a new series of content videos across its digital channels, and Carson says the response to these has been 'fabulous'. "People have really engaged with it, that's our key, showing our consumers what Vanuatu is all about."

Tok Tok is on this week, and the VTO will host its first New Zealand roadshow in five years in Auckland 14 Sep. Keep an eye on *Travel Today* for the latest coverage from the destination throughout the week.

### A Peedie Wee Flight

Moved traveller Chris Lyons has managed to set the record straight after we last week reported that a new scheduled 12-minute flight in Canada could be the world's shortest scheduled service. The World Journeys executive claims the world's shortest flight is between two Orkney Islands north of Scotland—a distance of 1.7 miles and a flight lasting just 47 seconds operated by Loganair. As they say in the Orkneys, a 'peedie' flight.

### Sunshine Coast Rep

Visit Sunshine Coast has appointed Louise Brooks (Sneddon) as its New Zealand representative, under her Elbe Communications business.

Brooks has a history of promoting Aussie destinations here and has worked with organisations including Tourism Australia and Tourism and Events Queensland. She'll work closely with the trade and partners to drive key marketing strategies and continue to develop the Sunshine Coast 'brand', says VSC head Simon Latchford.

New Zealand is one of the Sunshine Coast's primary markets, and with its attractions, year-round events calendar and accessibility, 'we will be expecting significant growth out of New Zealand', says Latchford.

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\*Sale ends 11.59pm 5 September 2016, unless sold out prior. Selected destinations, departure dates, days and conditions apply.



**Change At CZ**

China Southern Airlines has confirmed that its New Zealand manager, Mike Ma, has resigned and left the company, effective immediately. In the interim, the New Zealand operation is currently being managed by Louis Lu, the carrier's managing director for Australia and New Zealand.

Until a replacement is appointed, Valerie Wang and Blair Haeata are the trade contacts, advises the carrier.

**Win QLD, Asia Trips With QF Incentives**

**Qantas has today launched two new incentives, giving agents the chance to win a three-day trip to Queensland or flights to Asia.**

The carrier yesterday launched a global sale, and agents who sell QF during the sale (21 Aug-05 Sep) will be in to win flights to Singapore, Hong Kong or Bangkok. See p5 for details.

Global sale fares include Asia from

\$949, North America from \$999, South America from \$1299, South Africa from \$1999 and London Heathrow from \$2029.

**... CHC-BNE**

QF's Christchurch-Brisbane flight will move from three times a week to daily from 30 Oct, and has also been re-timed to connect to the carrier's Asia and US network via Brisbane.

Agents who sell the flights from 22 Aug-14 Oct will be in to win a three-day trip including return business class CHC-BNE flights and visits to Brisbane, Tangalooma Island and the Scenic Rim. For details, see p7.

**Carter Leaving AKL**

Auckland Airport's general manager aeronautical commercial, Norris Carter, is leaving at the end of Nov to take up the role of chief executive of North Queensland Airports, in which Auckland Airport has a 24.55% stake.

"Norris has made a great contribution to Auckland Airport since he joined us in 2014. He has played an important role in attracting new airlines and expanding existing routes which has helped fuel the growth in New Zealand's tourism industry over recent years," says AKL chief executive Adrian Littlewood.

**HA US Fares From \$1299**

Hawaiian Airlines has released sale fares to eight US cites, priced from \$1299 return, for sales to 31 Aug. The levels are for travel SFO/SJC/OAK/LAX/SEA/PDX/PHX & LAS for bookings in K class, and agents can upsell to G and H classes. A stopover in Hawaii is permitted for no extra charge, reminds, HA.

**Canada Famil Space**

World Journeys has a space on its Eastern Canada famil (17-25 Sep), including Air Canada flights and highlights like Toronto, Niagara Falls by helicopter, VIA Rail to Montreal, and Quebec City. Preference will be given to agents with a proven World Journeys sales record, and will be subject to airline approval. Send expressions of interest to meredith@worldjourneys.co.nz

**Mercure WLG Closure**

The Mercure Wellington is closing for a \$10 million refurbishment, which will begin 01 Sep and see guest rooms and public areas upgraded. The hotel is expected to reopen as a four-star hotel late Jan 2017, with 114 modernised rooms and suites, six conference rooms and a restaurant and bar overlooking the city.

"Our guest's comfort is at the centre of the decision to refurbish the hotel and given the extent of the changes required, it was deemed the hotel would not be able to effectively deliver the level of guest comfort required whilst operating during the refurbishment," says AccorHotels senior VP operations Chris Sedgwick. "We are now focused on working with clients and guests to relocate existing reservations to other AccorHotels in Wellington during the refurbishment period."



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<sup>^</sup>Price varies depending on route. T&Cs apply.



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**HAWAIIAN  
AIRLINES**



## Lindblad Deal To Celebrate 50 Years



An AUD1000pp saving and free round-trip charter airfares Buenos Aires/Ushuaia or Santiago/Ushuaia are available to guests who book on Oct departures of Lindblad Expeditions' National Geographic Orion or Explorer vessels.

The two vessels cruise in tandem with an adventure led by Peter Hillary and Jamling Tenzing Norgay to recreate the historic 50km South Georgia traverse. They will be accompanied by Jeremy Lindblad. The adventure will include an historic rendezvous of National Geographic Explorer and National Geographic

### Scenic Sessions

Scenic has announced its second round of Ever Wondered sessions for 2016, running from 19-22 Sep across the North Island. Agents are invited to bring their clients to the sessions to learn more about the 2017 programmes for Europe River Cruising and Canada, Alaska & USA. Guests will be encouraged to book with their local Scenic agent, and experts will be on hand to answer questions and help guests decide which itinerary is right for them. Special offers are also available on the day. All sessions are free but seats are limited, for details and to pre-register see [scenicnz.com](http://scenicnz.com)

Orion for the final 6km stretch of the route where guests of both ships will be invited to hike the final 6km from Fortuna Bay to Stromness Bay. It's possible for accomplished mountaineers to do the full three-day traverse but they must submit their climbing credentials to the company first at [shackletonclimb@expeditions.com](mailto:shackletonclimb@expeditions.com) to learn what's required.

Excursions during the voyages will include the chance to 'get up close and personal' with South Georgia and Falklands wildlife such as king penguins, seals and albatross, while celebratory onboard activities will include an Explorer's Masked Ball.

National Geographic Orion departs 24 Oct for a 19-day cruise while National Geographic Explorer departs 26 Oct for 18 days. Rates range from AUD19,910 - AUD38,540.

Details [HERE](#)

### Princess Image Bank

Princess Cruises has uploaded images to its OneSource trade site in order to make it easier for agents to promote cruising. The line has integrated its Princess Media Library with OneSource, allowing agents to use the images to create customised flyers, banners and other sales materials. See [onesourcecruises.com](http://onesourcecruises.com)

### Blue Lagoon, Traveltek

Fiji's Blue Lagoon Cruises has partnered with Traveltek to allow buyers to access its inventory through the iSell platform. It says the partnership will 'make it that bit easier for agents to sell our cruises', and means agents can access live inventory anytime, access special trade-only deals and provide instant confirmation to clients. For full details e-mail [wendy@bluelagooncruises.com](mailto:wendy@bluelagooncruises.com)

### CLIA MasterClass

CLIA Australasia is set to host a Cruise MasterClass with US-based sales guru and motivational speaker Scott Koepf in Sydney 13 Oct. The two-hour event will feature a keynote presentation focused on the latest developments in sales techniques, aimed specifically at cruise specialists, followed by an open Q&A session.

CLIA agent members who attend will earn 20 accreditation points. Attendance is free for current CLIA Master Accredited agents; while for all other CLIA member it is AUD55pp; and AUD95pp for non-members. See [cruising.org.au](http://cruising.org.au) for further details.

### New MD For CLIA

CLIA Australasia has announced that Joel Katz will join as managing director from 01 Jan, replacing Neil Linwood, who will transition out of the role from 09 Sep.



Katz will oversee strategic direction and government relations for the organisation, and has more than 25 years of international experience in the travel industry. Most recently, he served as executive vice president of Grand Circle Cruise Line in the UK, and has also worked for Orion Expedition Cruises, as well as both Hyatt and Marriott.

"Joel's strong industry and operational experience make him an ideal fit for this position and I look forward to seeing CLIA Australasia thrive under his leadership," says CLIA boss Cindy D'Amour.

### Tempo's Cuba Offer

Tempo Holidays is offering 15% off pp on an eight-day Celestial Cruises Cuba cruise, with prices starting at \$2165pp. The offer is valid for sales to 31 Oct for departures 18 Nov-10 Apr 2017; and for sales to 30 Apr 2017 for departures 14 Apr-29 Dec 2017.



### Star Clippers South East Asia Savings

Adventure World has savings of 25% on Star Clippers tall ships sailing between Singapore and Phuket in Mar and Apr next year. The eight-day adventure hops between the small ports and islands along the Andaman Sea, and includes all accommodation, port charges, ship entertainment, activities and most meals. There's limited spaces remaining on Mar and Apr sailings priced from \$2738 pp t/s if booked and paid by 31 Oct

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### JQ, Helloworld Comp

To launch the new relationship between helloworld and Jetstar—the first for Jetstar here—the carrier is giving away flights to its new agency friends. Each week for the next five weeks, a member of the helloworld New Zealand will be drawn to win tickets for two to Australia, Rarotonga, Phuket or Bali. The first winner is Charles You of Travelmore, who is pictured with Jetstar sales manager Mick Cottrell.

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## London's Museums, Shows Draw Crowds

Tourists have increasingly been drawn to London's museums, galleries and major exhibitions, with an 11% increase from overseas visitors since 2012 to 18.7 million visits.

"Our city's world-class museums, galleries and exhibitions have firmly positioned London as one of the most welcoming and culturally rich cities to visit," says Mayor Sadiq Khan.

"Not only does our unique cultural scene make a substantial and vital contribution to our city's economic

prosperity, but I'm delighted to see that London's creative sector plays such an important role in entertaining tourists from home and across the world."

London & Partners chief executive Gordon Innes added that, "with so many new museum openings this year, a stunning array of world class exhibitions and events, the ability to travel 24 hours on the night tube and the city offering better value than ever for international visitors—there has never been a more exciting time to come to London".

Highlight events and exhibitions include *William Kentridge: Thick Time* at the Whitechapel Gallery; London Fashion Weekend at the Saatchi Gallery; Twilight Tours at the Tower of London; *Wonderlab: The Statoil Gallery* at the Science Museum; and *The Radical Eye: Modernist Photography from the Sir Elton John Collection* at the New Tate Modern.

### Peppers On Sale

Peppers has reduced room rates and extra inclusions at 27 of its locations across Australia, New Zealand and Bali, for sales 21-28 Aug.

Deals include Peppers Beach Club and Spa at Palm Cove from AUD279pn (min. two-night stay), including daily breakfast, 10% off F&B and an extra 30 minutes with any 60-minute spa treatment, for travel to 08 Jan.

In Melbourne, Peppers Docklands has rates from AUD179pn for a balcony room, 20% off dinner at Momami, bottle of wine on arrival and a 1200 checkout, for travel to 31 Mar.

Adelaide's Peppers Waymouth Hotel has rates from AUD159pn including a welcome drink, 20% off dinner at Essay Restaurant and 1200 checkout, for travel to 31 Mar. See peppers.co.nz

### Manava Beach Appt

Manava Beach Resort & Spa—Moorea has appointed Stephane Pons to the role as assistant manager, who brings to the role 20 years of hotel and management experience.

### Zika In Florida

Pregnant women are being advised by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid part of Miami Beach due to concerns around the Zika virus. An additional area of active Zika transmission has been identified in a section of Miami Beach, in addition to the area of active Zika transmission near Wynwood, says the CDC. "We're in the midst of mosquito season and expect more Zika infections in the days and months to come," says CDC director Tom Frieden. "It's difficult but important that pregnant women make every effort to avoid mosquito bites and avoid going to areas where Zika is spreading." See cdc.gov/zika/

### Epic Cycle Guide

Lonely Planet has this month published its *Epic Bikes Rides of the World* book which features tales of 50 cycling routes in 30 countries, from Australia to Bhutan, as well as 200 ideas for bike rides, ranging from family-friendly jaunts to backcountry expeditions, via city tours and classic circuits.

"We've sought out some of the most entertaining experiences you can have on a bicycle, whether you're a casual rider or a cyclist with a stable of carbon-fibre machines. The settings of these experiences range from some of the world's most remote places—Mongolia, Bhutan and the Outer Hebrides—to its hippest cities and dreamiest islands. Some of these rides take just a couple of hours, others a day or two, a week, or more than a month," says Lonely Planet. *Travel Today* offers Lonely Planet titles at 20% off. See [traveltoday.co.nz/lonely-planet](http://traveltoday.co.nz/lonely-planet)



### Holiday For Fiji As Olympians Return

Nadi came to a standstill yesterday and similar scenes are expected in Suva today as the country welcomes home its Olympic heroes, including the gold-winning sevens team. A public holiday was declared for today to honour the sevens team, and tens of thousands of Fijians lined the streets from Nadi Airport to Prince Charles park yesterday, where the sevens team was officially welcomed and congratulated. Fiji Airways was among those celebrating, and announced it would only be serving FijiGold beer on board all of its flights.

# The world awaits you.

**Sell Qantas during our Global Sale (21 Aug – 5 Sep) for the chance to win return Economy flights to Singapore, Hong Kong or Bangkok.**

To record your entries, ensure you insert the following codes into your booking. The agency code is your agency IATA/TIDS/DAPA number (only 7 digits required).

**Amadeus:** OS QF GLOBALSALEINCENTIVE/AGENCY CODE/CONSULTANT NAME

**Sabre:** 30SI QF GLOBALSALEINCENTIVE/AGENCY CODE/CONSULTANT NAME

**Galileo:** SI.QF\* GLOBALSALEINCENTIVE/AGENCYCODE/CONSULTANT NAME

## Runner-Up Prizes

15 x \$200 Visa Prezzy Cards



**Important Information:** 1. There is one flight prize package to be won including Economy cabin flights for two people from Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch or Queenstown to Singapore, Bangkok or Hong Kong subject to availability in N, O or Q class. 2. Eligible entries: All Qantas bookings, including group bookings, made and ticketed from 21st August to 5 September, 2016 on Qantas (081) ticket stock to be deemed eligible. Each PNR is one entry. Prize draw is random. 3. Eligibility: All New Zealand IATA travel consultants who are customer facing sales consultants actively selling to consumers. Prize can be pooled across eligible travel consultants within one office. 4. The prize draw for the flights and Visa Prezzy Cards will occur on the 13th of September 2016. 5. Competition closes 11.59pm Monday 5 September 2016. 6. Prize is non-transferrable. 7. The prize does not include travel insurance, applicable travel Visa's or any other expenses of a personal nature including transportation to or from the Qantas departure airports.





## Major Expansion For Graceland

### Sheraton For Palau

Sheraton has signed an agreement to open the Sheraton Palau Resort in Koro, Palau's largest city. The new-build property will be located in the heart of the city, and will be the island's first international hotel brand. It's expected to open Mar 2019, and will feature 114 guest-rooms and nine suites, including a selection of dining options, function space, swimming pool, fitness centre and spa.

Proving the world's love for Elvis hasn't dimmed in the decades since his death, Graceland announced plans for its largest expansion since it opened to the public in 1982.

As fans gathered at the estate for Elvis Week, commemorating the 39th anniversary of the singer's death, plans and artist renderings were unveiled for Elvis: Past, Present & Future, an 18,580m<sup>2</sup>, USD45 million entertainment complex being built across the road from the Graceland Mansion. The facility, set to open in the northern spring of 2017, will be five times the size of the cur-



rent visitor centre, say planners. It will present the life, career and legacy of Elvis, including what he loved and 'would have loved today', while the Graceland Mansion tour will continue to present the personal and family side of Elvis' life.

"Elvis: Past Present & Future will enable our visitors to live a day in the life of Elvis Presley. Whether you've been to Graceland multiple times or have yet to make the trip, we know that you will be entertained, educated and inspired like never before, here at the world's greatest music landmark," says Graceland managing partner Joel Weinschanker.

The cornerstone of the new complex will be an Elvis: The Entertainer museum; a new Elvis Presley Automobile Museum will showcase over 20 of Elvis' famous vehicles, including the iconic Pink Cadillac; and there will be a new Graceland Soundstage venue. There will be Discovery exhibit spaces and a signature exhibition presenting the story of legendary producer Sam Phillips.

Elvis' two custom airplanes will re-

main for visitors to view, and there will be two themed restaurants named for Elvis' parents, where visitors can sample his favourite grilled peanut butter and banana sandwiches.



### Epitome Of Raffles

Raffles Singapore has launched an 'Epitome of Raffles' package, with luxury inclusions like limo transfers, Singapore Slings on arrival, monogrammed bathrobes, aromatherapy massages, a degustation dinner and a one-hour tour with Leslie Danker, Raffles Singapore's resident historian.

Packages start from SGD6750 in a Grand Hotel Suite and SGD8500 in a Presidential Suite for two people, valid through to 30 Jun 2017.

### Outrigger Samui Appt

Outrigger Enterprises Group has appointed Mar Landgraf as the general manager of the Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort in Thailand, effective 18 Aug. The 52-key all-suite and villa beachfront property has just completed major renovations following Outrigger's purchase in mid-2015. Landgraf has over 30 years' hotel experience, most recently as general manager at the Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort and Villas and the former Outrigger Phi Phi Island Resort and Spa.



## Industry Diary

### AUGUST

#### Lindblad Expeditions Agent Breakfasts

**Auckland North:** Tue 23, Takapuna Boating Club, 0715. **Auckland South:** Wed 24, Urban Soul Cafe, 0715. **Wellington:** Thu 25, Amora Hotel, 0715.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Bula Marau Fiji Roadshow - Couples & Luxury

**Tauranga:** Mon 05, Mills Reef Winery, 0700-0930.  
**Hamilton:** Mon 05, Ferrybank Reception Centre, 1730-2015.  
**Christchurch:** Tue 06, Peppers Clearwater Resort, 1730-2015.  
**Wellington:** Wed 07, InterContinental Hotel, 1730-2015.  
**Auckland:** Thu 08, Pullman Hotel, 1730-2015.  
**Auckland North Shore:** Fri 09, QBE Stadium, 0700-0930.

#### AccorHotels Showcase

**Auckland:** Tue 06, Pullman Auckland's Princes Ballroom, 1600-2000.

#### TAANZ NTIA 2016 Gala Dinner

**Auckland:** Sat 10, New Zealand Room, Level 5, SKYCITY Convention Centre, 1730.

#### Discover Amadeus

**Auckland:** Tue 13, Rydges, 59 Federal Street, Cnr Kingston Street, 0800-1115.

#### Scenic Ever Wondered Sessions

**Hamilton:** Mon 19, Ferrybank Function Rooms.  
**Tauranga:** Tue 20, Mills Reef Winery, Bethlehem.  
**Auckland:** Wed 21, Waipuna Hotel, Mt Wellington.  
**Auckland North:** Thu 22, Bruce Mason Centre Takapuna.

#### Globus & Cosmos Europe/UK Launch 2017

**Dunedin:** Thu 15, The Savoy, 1745.  
**Christchurch:** Mon 19, Dux Central,

1745. **Petone:** Mon 19, La Bella Italia, 1745.

**New Plymouth:** Tue 20, Novotel Hotel, 1745.

**Kerikeri:** Tue 20, Fishbone Cafe, 1745.

**Whangarei:** Wed 21, Killer Prawn, 1745.

**Timaru:** Thu 22, Mocca Cafe, 1745.

**Invercargill:** Mon 26, Kelvin Hotel, 1745.

**Hamilton:** Mon 26, Hamilton Gardens Cafe, 1745.

**Auckland, West:** Mon 26, Black Salt, 1745.

**Auckland, North:** Tue 27, Takapuna Boating Club, 1745.

**Tauranga:** Tue 27, Macau Restaurant, 1745.

**Queenstown:** Tue 27, Prime Waterfront Restaurant, 1745.

**Auckland, East:** Wed 28, Celsius Gastrobar, Botany Junction, 1745.

**Napier:** Wed 28, Crown Hotel, 1745.

**Nelson:** Wed 28, Cafe Affair, 1745.

**Blenheim:** Thu 29, Raupo Cafe, 1745.

#### The Travel Corporation 2017 Launch Event

**Auckland:** Wed 21, venue tbc.

#### Destination NSW Agent Quiz Nights

**Auckland:** Tue 27, Albion, 119 Hobson Street, CBD, 1730-1900.  
**Christchurch:** Wed 28, Lonestar Riccarton, 364 Riccarton Road, 1730-1900.

#### New Zealand Travel Has Talent grand final

**Auckland:** Fri 30, The Great Room, Langham Hotel, 1900.

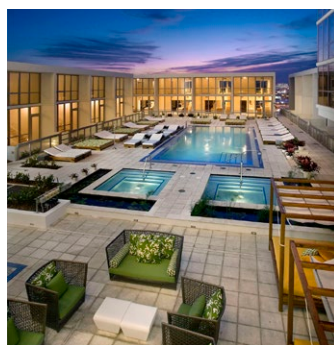
### OCTOBER

#### Globus & Cosmos

#### Europe/UK Launch 2017

**Wellington:** Mon 03, Shed 5, 1745.  
**Pukekohe:** Tue 04, Town & Mouse Cafe, 1745.

**Palmerston North:** Wed 05, Distinction Palmerston North, 1745.



### More Beds For MIA

Melia Hotels International has opened its first US property in Miami. The 129-room ME Miami resort also has more than 304m<sup>2</sup> of meeting space. Facilities include 14th floor sundeck with Sunrise and Sunset pools, pool-side bar and lounge and an STK Miami family steakhouse. Details and rates, melia.com



# Soak up everything Queensland has to offer

## Sell Qantas and you could win 3 days of bliss and adventure in sunny Queensland.

To go into the draw, simply sell Qantas flights from Christchurch to Queensland from 22 August – 14 October 2016 and email your ticketed booking PNR to [flyqf@qantas.com.au](mailto:flyqf@qantas.com.au)

### Major prize includes:

- Return Business Class flights from Christchurch to Brisbane.
- 3 days and 3 nights exploring Brisbane, the hinterland and the islands.



### What you'll experience:

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#### DAY 1

Explore Brisbane's best alfresco dining, world-class arts and cultural precinct and local favourites like Eat Street Markets.

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#### DAY 2

Grab your snorkel and experience island life at Tangalooma Island Resort, a short boat trip from Brisbane city. Enjoy quad biking, tobogganing and snorkelling by day and dolphin feeding in the evening.

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#### DAY 3

Escape the big smoke and discover the Scenic Rim, known for its World Heritage listed rainforest and six National Parks.

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*Please note: Itinerary order and activities are subject to change according to availability.*

**Important Information:** **1.** Ticketed booking information must be sent to [flyqf@qantas.com.au](mailto:flyqf@qantas.com.au) with the PNR in the subject line and a screen shot of the PNR. **2.** Only applicable to New Zealand based IATA Travel Agents. **3.** Flights must be booked and ticketed on Qantas flight number and 081 paper only and must feature Christchurch-Brisbane return sectors, however can be part of a long-haul Qantas journey. **4.** Judges decision is final. Winners will be announced by 21 October 2016. **5.** There is one prize package to be won. The prize package includes Business cabin flights from Christchurch to Brisbane on Qantas operated services only for two people and is subject to availability in I class and a 3 night package courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland. **6.** Group bookings must be booked and ticketed between 22 August and 14 October 2016 to be deemed eligible. **7.** Competition closes 11.59pm Friday 14 October 2016. **8.** Prize is non-transferrable. **9.** The prize does not include travel insurance, applicable travel Visa's or any other expenses of a personal nature including travel to and from Christchurch airport. **10.** Travel dates: 11-14 November 2016





# Qantas/American Airlines VIP Famil

## Find The Hipster Vibe In Anaheim



Pic: The Blind Rabbit

Anaheim is revered for its family-friendly offering, surrounded by theme parks, shops and a wide range of restaurants—but the city's edgy Packing House precinct is proving a hit for those looking for a different Anaheim experience.

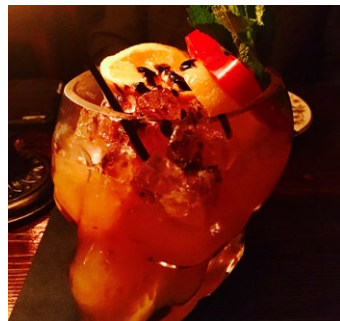
The Packing House is essentially a gourmet food hall and has earned a cult following with locals and visitors alike. It's well-established and the cuisine on offer ranges from contemporary Indian to hearty southern fare. Popular eateries in the two level historic orange packing house include The Kroft (well-known for its Canadian-style Poutine fries), while the Iron Press offers a wide selection of local beers, and the homemade gelato and yoghurt on a stick at PopBar is a hit with all ages. There's also a selection of outdoor restaurants such as Ecco.

### ... The Blind Rabbit

For clients looking for a departure from the traditional Anaheim experience, urge them to search out the Blind Rabbit (pictured), an almost secret speakeasy bar hidden within the Packing House. There's no signage and no advertising, so clients need to book ahead—but it's well worth the effort for the cocktails alone.

The ambience is incredible, it's like stepping back in time to an old school

secret speakeasy bar—swathed in golden light. There's a strict code of conduct (which includes no flash photography, no PDA and you must exit through the book case) and the menu is small but perfectly formed. Traditional comfort food is given a contemporary twist and the duck confit mac and cheese is as good as all the hype. But the real stars are the on-site mixologists which take cocktails to the next level. There's a cocktail



menu, but just mention a style or base flavour and the mixologists will whip up a bespoke cocktail. The Annexation of Montenegro (pictured in the giant glass skull above) can be highly recommended.

The Packing House is opening daily from 0900, and while individual restaurant hours vary—the bars are open until midnight. Details, see [anaheimpackingdistrict.com](http://anaheimpackingdistrict.com) To book at the Blind Rabbit, see [theblindrabbit.com](http://theblindrabbit.com)

### Disney Character Dining

Never underestimate the draw of a Disney character dining experience for park guests of all ages, was the message from agents on the recent American Airline/Qantas VIP famil.

The experience was the surprise hit for the agents on the trip—including those who've been before.

Urge clients to pre-book their preferred dining experience in the lead-up to departure, or to book as soon as they arrive to avoid disappointment. It's also important to match the character dining to the characters and friends the clients want to see.

Plaza Inn on Main Street in Disneyland is the place to see Minnie over breakfast, but clients must also have park entry. There's dining inside and out and it's open until 1030 daily.

Over at Disney California Adventure, Ariel's Disney Princess Celebration at Ariel's Grotto is the dining experience for those looking to meet some of Disney's favorite princesses (such as Ariel, Snow White, Belle, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella). It's open daily for breakfast and lunch (and dinner without characters). Park admission is also required.

The Storytellers Cafe experience at Disney's Grand Californian offers the chance to meet Chip and Dale and friends and is open 0700-1139 daily.

Goofy's Kitchen at the Disneyland Hotel is our pick for the widest variety of characters—and it's open for breakfast and dinner. It's also home to Goofy's signature peanut butter and jelly pizza. The dinner buffet features dishes such as carved prime rib and fish.

For those looking for a little fun and Mickey with their waffles, then Surf's Up! Breakfast with Mickey and Friends at Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel is a lively character dining experience that gives diners the option to hula hoop and hang 10 with some of their favourite characters. For more details, see [disneyland.disney.go.com/faq/dining/character-dining/](http://disneyland.disney.go.com/faq/dining/character-dining/)

### The Make Building

Adjacent to Anaheim's Packing House is the new Make Building. A re-purposed marmalade factory, the first phase of the development includes the opening of the Unsung boutique brewery—and there a plans for a whiskey distillery and winery (each with tasting rooms) to also open on-site. For details see [anaheimmake.com](http://anaheimmake.com)

### Anaheim Brewery

Rounding off the experience, the Anaheim Brewery is located adjacent to the Packing House offering local beers which can be enjoyed in its tasting room and beer garden. Open Tue-Sun the brewery is located next to Umami Burger for those looking for some burgers with their brew. See [anaheimbrew.com](http://anaheimbrew.com)

**For Pip's Anaheim travel tips**

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