

TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

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Tuesday 07 February 2017

Issue 3475



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80 Kiwi Agents Wanted For QLD Trip

Tourism Events Queensland, in conjunction with Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia, is giving 80 Kiwi agents the chance to experience the destination first-hand at the Queensland on Stage event being held across the state in Jun.

"We're so excited, for the first time and following the success and feedback from last year's event here we are excited to bring the agents to discover Queensland for themselves and upskill on the product available," says TEQ New Zealand manager Sally Holyer.

"Plus it's a huge bonus to escape the Kiwi winter and enjoy the Queensland climate."

The agents will head off on one of a range of famils across regional Queensland, followed by a two-day workshop at the Tangalooma Island Resort on Moreton Island.

To be in the running to attend, consultants must sell five tickets ex New Zealand to the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast or Cairns on Air New Zealand or Virgin Australia for travel sold 07-26 Feb.

Air NZ says it's very pleased to be supporting the Queensland on Stage

event, adding that Queensland is an 'extremely popular destination for New Zealanders' and a key market for the carrier.

... The Details

Agents selected will fly on Air NZ or Virgin ex Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington or Queenstown to their famil 01-04 Jun before heading to Tangalooma for two nights (where agents will have the chance to feed a wild dolphin, take a quad bike tour and sand toboggan down the island's giant sand dunes) and a one and a half day product and destination workshop. There's also a gala dinner.

Consultants travelling from DUD will spend an extra night in BNE 31 May and those from CHC will spend an extra night in BNE 06 Jun, due to aircraft availability. The cost is \$250 per agent, including flights, Australian airport transfers, accommodation and breakfast, lunch and dinner.

For more details see pg 9. Registrations close 1000 on 27 Feb and successful agents will be notified by 03 Mar. Five qualifying tickets sold equals one entry into the draw.

GC: We're Ecstatic

Kiwi travel demand for the Gold Coast shows no sign of slowing down and the region's tourism body is 'ecstatic'. Speaking at a lunch in Auckland today Gold Coast Tourism's Michael Thurston noted that the growth was off an already large base, and he said it was even more impressive given the 'uber-competitive' Kiwi travel market. See tomorrow's issue for details.

US Ban Overturned

Citizens of the seven countries banned from travel to the US are being encouraged to hop on a flight to the US while they can, after President Trump's executive order was overturned.

A Washington district court judge issued an order on 03 Feb barring the country from enforcing certain provisions of the original order, including those related to visas and travel. The visas which had been revoked are now valid for travel to the US, if the holder is otherwise eligible—however Trump's Government is fighting to have the ban reinstated.

Royal Jordanian Airlines is among those having fun with the flip-flopping travel ban, tweeting to its followers that they should 'fly to the US with RJ now that you're allowed to'. Prior to Trump's election, the carrier urged passengers to 'fly to the US while you're still allowed to'.

QR's Alliance Dig

The outspoken boss of Qatar Airways has accused the Star Alliance of putting pressure on Air New Zealand to drop a local agreement around domestic flights.

Speaking at a media conference around the arrival of QR's new direct Auckland flight, Akbar Al Baker said QR and NZ have had a long-standing special prorate agreement (SPA) in the domestic network but that it was cancelled ahead of QR's new flights.

"We always create a lot of nervousness in the market we operate into," Al Baker said, adding that the cancellation was 'proof of this' and that he believes NZ was pressured by its alliance partners. The move 'will not discourage us', he added.

However NZ says it had a 'very limited' agreement with QR since 2013, covering AKL-WLG and AKL-CHC, which was withdrawn last year. "NZ has a number of commercial arrangements with partner airlines and is under no obligation to offer preferred rates to competitors," it says.

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MH Sales Support Back

Malaysia Airlines advises agents that from 08 Feb its agency sales support will move back to Auckland. Nikko Sapo is returning to MH and will manage the support desk for New Zealand. Sapo will be on hand to assist with sales related queries including pricing and product related queries. He can be reached at nz.sale-support@malaysiaairlines.com

For all reservation and ticketing queries e-mail gcc.reservations@malaysiaairlines.com

EK Aussie Fares

Emirates has economy, business and first class saver fares from New Zealand to Australia for sales until 08 Feb. Auckland to Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane and Christchurch to Sydney is from \$189 one-way. Business class fares are from \$599 one-way and first class is from \$899 one-way. Select departure dates apply.

ZA On Sale With QF

Qantas has released special return economy fares from New Zealand to South Africa for sales and ticketing until 17 Feb. Johannesburg is from \$1799 and Cape Town is from \$1825. See qantas.co.nz/agents for full details.

ISSN 1176-5275

Travel Today (incorporating Tabs on Travel) is published by Tabs on Travel Ltd, New Zealand. Ph +64-9-415 8111.

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Longest Flight Lands In AKL



Qatar Airways has emphasised its commitment to New Zealand with the launch of its new direct Doha-Auckland service yesterday—becoming the longest flight in the world.

Airline boss Akbar Al Baker was on the inaugural flight and said there's 'a lot of business we can tap into' in Australasia. New Zealand is highly sought after from Europe, where QR has a strong presence, and the service is also expected to be popular for Kiwis heading to the UK and Europe.

"The launch of our new service to Auckland is an important milestone for Qatar Airways as we expand both in the region and globally across our network providing more options and better connections to exciting business and leisure destinations in Europe and the Middle East," says Al Baker.

At 17 hours and 30 minutes, or 14,535km, passengers on the AKL-DOH have almost enough time to watch the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy twice over.

"Even though it's such a long flight, we still feel that we provide the shortest travel time," added Al Baker.

The daily service is operated by a 777 in a two class configuration, with 42 seats in business class and 217 in economy. Passengers who transit in Doha can make use of a new transit visa scheme offering a free transit

visa for up to 96 hours to or from passengers' final destination. They can also connect on to one of the 150 destinations QR serves worldwide, including 14 new destinations launched in 2016—and there's more to come in 2017/18, including Canberra.

1 Qatar Airways senior vice president Asia Pacific, Marwan Koleilat; Amba-

sador Nasser bin Hamad Mubarak Al-Khalifa; QR chief executive Akbar Al Baker; Todd McClay, Minister of Trade and State Owned Enterprises; and Adrian Littlewood, Auckland Airport chief executive.

2 Auckland Airport welcomes the first QR flight with a traditional water cannon salute.



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HAWAIIAN
AIRLINES

Ovation A Hit With Kiwi Agents



Royal Caribbean's Ovation of the Seas has made its final New Zealand call of the season—and at least 700 agents across the country were able to get on-board for inspections.

Although the inspections were held over the holiday period, a 'significant' number of agents signed up to walk around the ship, says New Zealand sales manager Mark Kinchley—and the feedback has been 'nothing but wow'.

Flight Centre travel broker Kim Payne, who explored Ovation yesterday, had nothing but praise for the ship, saying it 'felt like a Las Vegas hotel on water'—and already she has had plenty of enquiries from clients. helloworld Waiuku's Christine Rutherford was also impressed, saying the many inclusions on offer would go down well with clients, while the ser-

vice from staff and organised boarding process were also highlights.

And it wasn't just agents that wanted to get a glimpse of Ovation—sight-seers lined the road to Devonport on Auckland's North Shore so they could spot the ship; while in the Bay of Plenty, nearly 2000 locals gathered around Mt Maunganui to watch as she came into port.

"What the ship has significantly done is that it has completely changed the game. . . The New Zealand cruise market is now a completely different animal. The dynamic of cruising in our waters has changed completely," adds Kinchley. And this, he says, is likely to result in a significant uptake in bookings for 2017/18 as the season goes forward.

Pictured onboard Ovation at various ports in New Zealand this summer season is:

1 House of Travel Howick's Emma Wilburn. **2** Flight Centre Travel Broker Kim Payne. **3** World Travellers Best Travel Hastings' Paula Coppel.

G's Latest Purchase

At a time of significant growth across its entire marine programme—expedition, river and sailing—G Adventures has acquired the Swan Hellenic brand (though the ships themselves are being returned to the original owners).

While it is still early days, managing director of G Adventures Australia and New Zealand, Adrian Piotto, says the company hopes to release itineraries this northern summer, and 'hopefully' offer departures in 2018.

"At this stage what we want to do is really bring it [Swan Hellenic] back to its former glory," he says. "Everything is still being assessed around how it's going to be delivered to the market, but we want to continue the legacy of such a strong brand."

Piotto adds that G's cruise product is selling strongly, with its expedition product up to 97% occupancy for its departures, both north and south; while its recently launched river boat product is 'quite successful'; and it has seen strong sales across its sailing product range.

G's acquisition of Swan Hellenic follows the recent purchase of Travel-sphere and Just You.

Best Of Europe Offer

Oceania Cruises advises agents that from now until 31 Mar, clients can take advantage of its Best of Europe 2017 offers. On selected 2017 European voyages, clients will receive 50% off deposit and a USD250 shipboard credit per stateroom. These offers are combinable with Oceania's current OLife Choice amenities that include free unlimited internet and the choice of free shore excursions, a free beverage package or free shipboard credit.

Duchess On Way

American Queen Steamboat Company advises agents that the all-new American Duchess is on schedule for its Jun debut, with construction underway and running to plan.



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CX Blankets For Pups

Cathay Pacific has donated 6000 of its inflight blankets to the Hong Kong SPCA and other animal welfare groups in the region—meaning animals that are sick or waiting adoption will be able to wait out the Hong Kong winter in warmth, says CX.

New Chile-Brazil Service

LATAM is to operate a new non-stop service between Santiago, Chile and Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, with three weekly flights starting 28 Mar.

US Open Skies Debate Reignited

Qatar Airways boss Akbar Al Baker told media he's hopeful President Trump's business brain will win out as the 'big three' US carriers reignite their campaign against Gulf airlines.

American Airlines, Delta and United have previously fought for a revision of the US open skies agreements with Qatar, Emirates and Etihad, saying they have access to unfair advantages in the form of subsidies from their governments. They're now seeking meetings with the new Trump government, which has a well-known focus

on putting American interests first.

Al Baker told media in Auckland today that Trump is 'trying to protect the interests of his country, the same way I try to protect the interests of our country and airline'.

"However I think his business acumen will prevail," he said. The carrier provides jobs, supports the growth of the tourism industry and places large aircraft orders with American companies, Al Baker added.

WWII Tour

Innovative Travel has launched a small group departure that will include the 75th commemorations for the WWII battle at El Alamein in Egypt on 20 Oct. New Zealand's first ambassador to Egypt, Rene Wilson, will lead the 13-day tour, starting in Cairo 10 Oct. Highlights include staying at the historic Cecil Hotel in Alexandria, visits to some of the lesser known Commonwealth war cemeteries in Egypt, attendance at the combined commemorations in El Alamein and a deluxe Nile cruise. E-mail tours@innovative-travel.com for full details.

Accor Private Rentals

AccorHotels has started negotiations to acquire 100% of Travel Keys, a leading player in the private holiday rental market. Travel Keys has a collection of more than 5000 villas across more than 100 destinations throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, Hawaii and the US, Europe, Asia and Africa. Together with onefinestay and Squarebreak, AccorHotels will offer about 8500 addresses in the luxury private rental market.

TT Says No More Bali

Tigerair Australia will permanently stop flying to Bali following an ongoing dispute with Indonesian authorities.

TT was forced to cancel flights to Bali in Jan after new requirements were imposed by the Indonesian Government, but it had been planning to restart services on Fri. However the carrier says it was informed that authorities wouldn't be providing final approval, and they want to see an alternative regulatory solution for TT's operations.

"This solution would take at least six months to implement and would compromise the airline's ability to offer low-cost airfares to travellers to Bali," says TT.

Customers booked to travel to Bali with TT from 03 Feb will be contacted by the carrier and offered full refunds. Customers in Bali will be offered alternative options on Virgin Australia and other airlines.

New Cal Travel Advice

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade advises clients in New Caledonia to be cautious on the RP1 near St Louis as the route has been subject to occasional security incidents, which have caused injury. See safetravel.govt.nz/new-caledonia

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Carnival Travel Advice

The annual Rio Carnival festival is this year scheduled to take place between 24 and 28 Feb, and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has some advice for clients who will be in Brazil during this time.

MFAT says Kiwis should be aware that there is a high level of violent and street crime, particularly in major cities and during festivals, and to be aware of pickpockets and to never leave bags or belongings unattended in public places. Particular care is recommended for those using public transport, it adds, and phones should be kept out of sight.

MFAT also encourages clients to take a variety of means to access money, as a visit to a bank in Brazil can be complicated, it says. Clients should use ATMs during daylight hours — and may need to try several machines — and carry just enough money for daily expenses, adds MFAT.

See safetravel.govt.nz/brazil to see the full travel advisory.

LATAM Appt

LATAM's board of directors has appointed Giles Agutter as director. The position has been vacant since Jun 2016 following the resignation of Ricardo Caballero.

Cairns' Pullman Reef Hotel Refurb



The Pullman Reef Hotel Casino in Cairns has completed an extensive AUD6.5 million refurbishment programme, which includes all level 1 public areas.

The update includes a new-look hotel lobby, expansion of Tamarind Restaurant, new Bar36 Live Lounge and new Merchant café. Hotel room rates will now also include breakfast daily, self-parking, Wi-Fi, free national calls, a daily drink in the hotel's new Bar36 and selected mini bar items free of charge, which will be replenished daily. Room rates start from AUD305pn. "The refurbishment of our public spaces and enhancement of our food and beverage outlets has provided an opportunity for us to embrace and set a new standard in the upper upscale accommodation segment for Cairns," says general manager Wayne Reynolds.

"With our new booking inclusions policy, every guest will now receive access to extra amenities similar to what's offered to those who book Executive packages. The hotel has also invested in new in-room soft furnishings including new room lighting and the addition of Nespresso coffee machines in every room."

Reynolds adds that the region is expecting solid growth in tourism this year, and the hotel is well positioned to cater to 'a new upscale market that is not always well catered for in Tropical North Queensland'.



New Yolo From G

G Adventures has released its 2017 Yolo brochure, featuring fast-paced and affordable adventures designed for young travellers.

They include a new trip in Iceland, tipped to be one of the most popular destinations this year. The nine-day Iceland Camping on a Shoestring (from \$3159) was built for travellers who don't want to cut corners on the experience but don't mind camping and travelling a little leaner, says G. They'll witness the geysers, waterfalls, lava formations, and other natural delights of Iceland, as well as get the chance to hike glaciers, search for whales and hang out in the unique city of Reykjavik.

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- a proven passion & track record in customer satisfaction
- good time management, file accounting and documentation skills

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Iran Tourism, Air Capacity Growing

Iran is proving to be an increasingly popular destination with air travellers, experiencing growing passenger numbers from around the world, according to a study by ForwardKeys.

Total international arrivals were up 18.3% last year, sustaining an upward path since 2013 (up 2.7%), 2014 (24.8%) and 2015 (12.7%)—and the pattern is reflected by a consistent year-on-year increase in total scheduled seats. 2014 was up 10.5%, 2015 up 18.3% and 2016 up 17.3%.

“Our findings support the conclusion that political change in Iran is making the country more approachable—an attractive place to visit and potentially do business,” says ForwardKeys chief executive Olivier Jager. “The image of Iran around the world is changing. Its many tourist attractions, historic, religious and spectacular, are once again being emphasised. I expect visitor numbers to increase, so long as Iran’s airport capacity can keep pace.”

ForwardKeys also found that international arrivals to Iran saw positive monthly growth throughout 2016, with the exception of Jun because of the timing of Ramadan.

Looking ahead, forward bookings for the first half of 2017 are ahead 14.8%, based on those issued at the beginning on Jan, suggesting the upward surge of international visitors to Iran is still growing in momentum.

Jager adds that arrivals in Iran during 2017 are being boosted by increased air connectivity from a number of centres. Italy is benefitting from Alitalia and Iran Air tripling their scheduled seats since Nov last year; while The Netherlands is connected by one more daily flight from Amsterdam to Tehran by KLM since Oct 2016; and Austrian Airlines is doubling its scheduled seats during the first half of 2017.

Oregon Top For Wine

Wine Enthusiast has named Oregon’s Willamette Valley as its top Wine Region in the World for 2016, says local Travel Oregon rep Canuckiwi. New and unique ways to experience the region include Tour deVine by Heli, operated by Precision Helicopters, which takes passengers on four-hour wine tasting tours. There’s also a horseback option to experience the valley with Equestrian Wine Tours, which takes guests to several wine stops in the famous Red Hills of Dundee.

Festivities At Ambrym

Vanuatu’s Ambrym Island has plenty of cultural festivals lined up this year, advises Malampa Travel. To kick things off, there will be ‘kastom’ dances, ceremonies, traditional bamboo music, cooking, weaving demonstrations and magic on show at North Ambrym’s Fanla Village 19-20 Jul. Next up is the Yam & Magic Festival which will be held 21-22 Jul, with clients able to hear ancient stories, witness custom dances, watch demonstrations of sand drawing and encounter different kinds of ritual magic.

And during 25-27 Aug is the Back to my Roots festival, which will feature custom dances, tam tam drumming and more. For further details see malampa.travel



Disney Food Festival Dates And Details

Reservations have opened for the Disney California Adventure Food and Wine Festival (10 Mar-16 Apr). There’s hundreds of events, seminars and demonstrations on throughout the festival, says Disney, including In The Kitchen With..., where guests can watch a celebrity chef at work and try a tasting menu. It’s priced from USD99pp plus tax and gratuity. Other options include Sweet Sundays dessert events (from USD79pp plus tax and gratuity), Winemaker Dinners (from USD200pp plus tax and gratuity), and Brewmaster Beer Dinners (from USD150pp plus tax and gratuity). See disneyland.com/foodandwine

Cape Town Art Classes

Cape Town’s Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel has launched its first artist-in-residence programme, in which guests will have the opportunity to have their portrait painted or join a class led by artist Cyril Coetzee, previously Nelson Mandela’s portrait specialist. Guests can opt to have their photograph taken to form the basis of Coetzee’s work or to supply pictures of loved ones to be transformed in oil on canvas. Prices start from ZAR15,000. Coetzee will also offer painting classes for groups of up to six for ZAR900pp or private lessons are available from ZAR3000.

Industry Diary

FEBRUARY

2017 Adventure World USA

Roadshow

Auckland: Tue 07, Grid AKL, 17.30. **Wellington:** Wed 08, Macs Brew Bar – Cable Room, 1730. **Christchurch:** Thu 09, Christchurch RSA, 1730.

Gold Coast Tourism Roadshow

Auckland: Tue 07, The Roxy, 1730.

Wellington: Wed 08, Macs Function Centre, 1730. **Christchurch:** Thu 09, Dux Central, 1730.

Wendy Wu Tours Movie Night

Christchurch: Thu 16, Hoyts Northlands, 1815. **Wellington:** Thu 23, Embassy Cinemas, 1800.

Canada Roadshow 2016: Adventure World, Rocky Mountaineer, Air New Zealand & Francis Travel Marketing

Auckland, North Shore: Mon 20, The Postman’s Leg, Glenfield, 1800. **Tauranga:** Wed 22, Alimento Café, 0730. **Hamilton:** Wed 22 Feb, Joe’s Garage, 1600. **Palmerston North:** Thu 23, Joe’s Garage, 1800.

Brand USA’s Discover America

Trade Expos

Wellington: Mon 27, Shed 6, Queens Wharf, 1700-2130. **Auckland:** Tue 28, ANZ Viaduct Events Centre, 1700-2130.

MARCH

2017 Adventure World Roadshow

Auckland: Mon 06. **Bay of Plenty:** Tue 07. **Wellington:** Wed 08. **Christchurch:** Thu 09. Venues, times tba.

JAWS Roadshow 2017

Dunedin: Mon 06, Kingsgate Hotel, 1700-2000. **Christchurch:** Tue 07, Rydges Latimer Hotel, 1700-2000. **Nelson:** Wed 08, Rutherford Hotel, 1700-2000. **Whangarei:** Tue 14, Forum North, 1700-2000. **Auckland North:** Wed 15, Spencer on Byron, Takapuna, 1700-2000. **Napier:** Mon 20, Napier Sailing Club, 1700-2000. **Wellington:** Tue 21, Rydges

Wellington, 1700-2000.

Palmerston North: Wed 22, Distinction Hotel, 1700-2000.

New Plymouth: Thu 23, Novotel Hotel, 1700-2000.

Tauranga: Tue 28, Tauranga Yacht Club, 1700-2000.

Hamilton: Wed 29, Novotel Tainui, 1700-2000.

Tourism Fiji Roadshow

Nelson: Mon 27, Grand Mercure Monaco Hotel, breakfast.

Wellington: Mon 27, Rydges Wellington, evening.

Christchurch: Tue 28, Addington Raceway & Events Centre, evening.

Auckland, CBD: Wed 29, Pullman Hotel, evening.

Hamilton: Thu 30, Ferrybank Reception & Conference Centre, evening.

Auckland, North Shore: Fri 31, QBE Stadium Albany, breakfast.

APRIL

Tourism Fiji Roadshow

Tauranga: Mon 03, Club Mt Maunganui, 1730-1930.

Rotorua: Tue 04, Novotel Rotorua, 0700-0845.

Taupo: Tue 04, Lonestar Taupo, anytime between 1200-1400.

Napier: Tue 04, Crowne Hotel, 1730-1930.

Palmerston North: Wed 05, Distinction Hotel, 1730-1930.

Wanganui: Thu 06, Stellar Restaurant and Bar, anytime between 1200-1400.

New Plymouth: Thu 06, Novotel New Plymouth, 1730-1930.

MAY

2017 Amazing Thailand Roadshow

Auckland: Mon 08, Sky City Convention Centre.

Asia Now Roadshow

Wellington: Wed 10. **Christchurch:** Thu 11.

Tauranga: Mon 15. **Hamilton:** Tue 16.

Auckland Central: Wed 17. **Auckland North Shore:** Thu 18.

Venues, times tba.



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This is your chance to not only hear all about the amazing experiences of Queensland directly from the experts, but to enjoy the destination first hand too.

A series of famils will take place across the regions of Queensland, followed by a 2 day island workshop at the beautiful Tangalooma Island Resort located on Moreton Island, just outside Brisbane.

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