

travelbulletin

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Giving agents the edge

AGENT BULLETIN

Incentives and great prizes to be won

USA

Surprising new ways to sell Las Vegas to discerning visitors

SLOVENIA

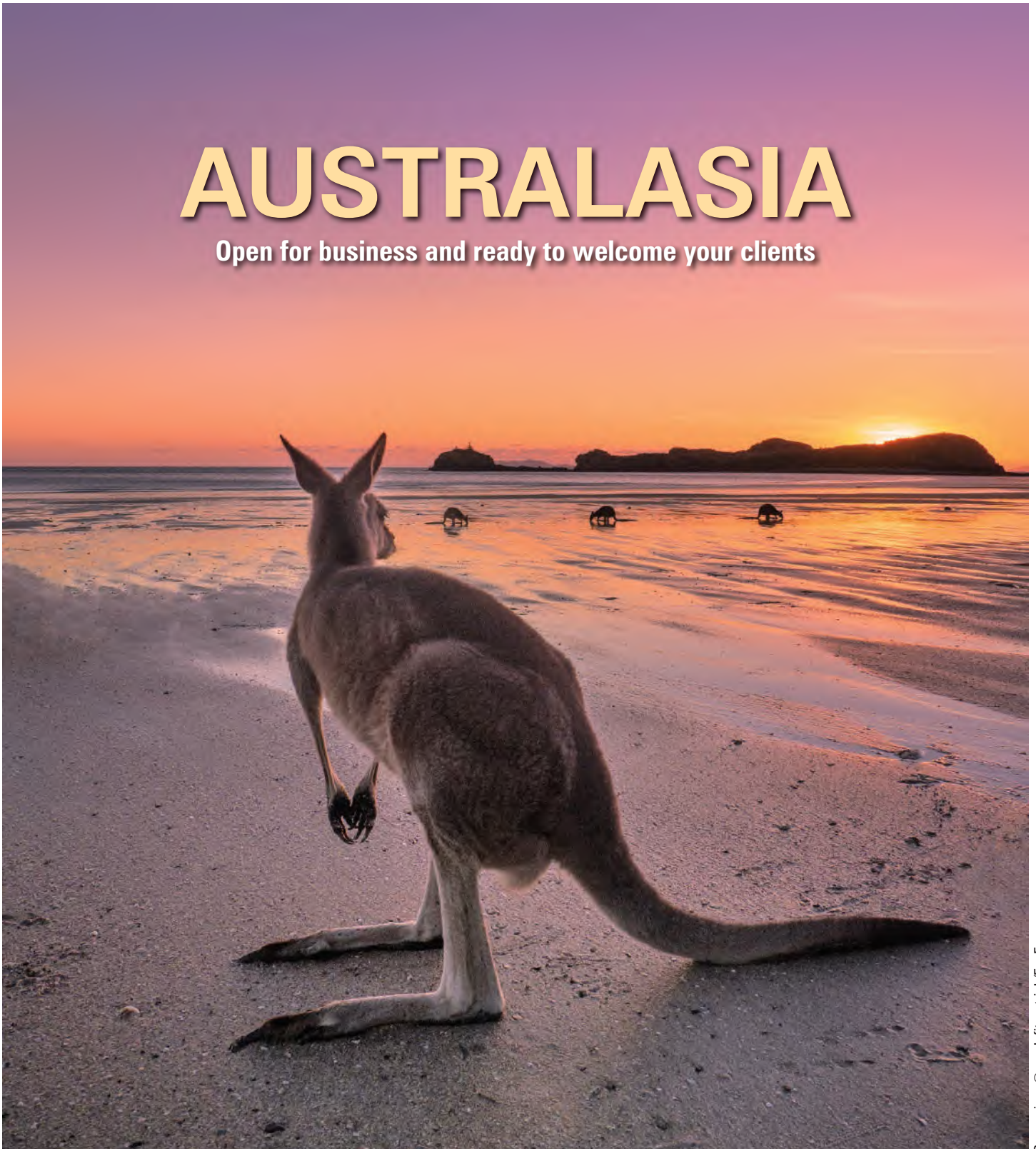
An emerging destination with amazing food and scenery

THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS

Fun family holiday ideas

AUSTRALASIA

Open for business and ready to welcome your clients





Mediterranean Nights

from 23/03/2020
to 26/03/2020

 youtravel.com

Join us to find out about our amazing Mediterranean destinations and properties with the chance to win some brilliant prizes!

If you are up for a night filled with fun activities, food, drinks and prizes, sign up to one of our four UK venues and enjoy getting to know an array of our Mediterranean hotel and destination partners.

Throughout the night, you will discover what each hotel and area has to offer to help you find the best holidays for your clients.

Enjoy the welcoming atmosphere and enter our prize draws for an opportunity to go home with hotel stays, exciting excursions and local goodies!

Visit travelbulletin.co.uk/events to sign up!

23/03 - Belfast - Ten Square Hotel

24/03 - Manchester - Macdonald Manchester Hotel

25/03 - Cambridge - Hilton Cambridge City Centre

26/03 - Central London

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THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS

Family fun for your clients

PRESSING PAUSE ON EUROPE?

According to a survey by Holiday Extras, a fifth of UK holidaymakers are putting off a European holiday because of uncertainty over Brexit – but clients can be reassured.



Confusion over post-Brexit travel plans has led to 5% of people opting for a staycation.

A FIFTH of British holidaymakers admit that uncertainty over Brexit has caused them to change their European holiday plans, with this figure increasing to a third amongst those aged 35-44.

These are the findings of a nationwide study which was conducted by Holiday Extras ahead of Britain's January 31 exit from the European Union.

Reasons for delaying European trips include uncertainty over post-Brexit travel rules (8%) or opting instead for a staycation (5%). In response, Holiday Extras has created a 'Brexit Holiday Checker' to help travellers understand how Brexit would – or in most cases

would not – impact those travel plans.

Brits' biggest concerns regarding post-Brexit travel relate to healthcare abroad, with 25% fearing limited accessibility of medical insurance and a further 20% worried about the availability of reciprocal healthcare in the event of injury or illness.

Other travel worries include the queues at passport control (23%), the exchange rate for Euros (18%) and passport changes (15%). What's more, 14% displayed concerns about the potential negative attitudes to British travellers from our European counterparts.

Holiday Extras' Seamus McCauley commented on the survey findings: "There's still a lot of uncertainty about travelling to Europe after January 31 when we leave the EU.

The good news for travellers is that for the whole of 2020, even after we leave the EU, we'll be in a transition period during which our travel rights will be pretty much the same as before Brexit – so holidays between January 2020 and the end of the year shouldn't really be affected by Brexit.

We decided to launch our Brexit Holiday Checker to give travellers everything they need to know for trips to Europe." www.holidayextras.co.uk

Fred.\River cruises introduces new trips

FRED.\RIVER cruises has announced the launch of new cruises for travellers to experience on their luxury small ships in 2020.

In Europe, AMADEUS River Cruises will keep on exploring the continent's landscapes, from the waterways of Belgium and Holland, the French Savoir-Vivre on Rhône, Saône and Seine to the landscapes adjoining the Danube.

In Asia, PANDAW River Cruises will take guests deep into the heart of the continent to explore the remote, unspoilt rivers of lesser known countries such as Burma and Laos.

One of the highlights of Fred.\River cruises is the 'Beethoven on the Rhine' trip, celebrating the 250th



anniversary of the composer's birth. This will be a cruise from Amsterdam to Basel to mark the anniversary, and highlights include a visit to Beethoven's house in Bonn, a live concert in Amsterdam's Dominicus Church and a performance inside Strasbourg's famous St. Thomas's Church.

There will also be live

concerts held on the ship, with music expert Antonella Placheta joining guests on the sailing.

This trip sails on October 27, and prices are from £2,019 per person.

For more information or to make a booking, call on 0808 115 8312 or email sales@amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk

An Asian adventure with Links Travel & Tours

LINKS TRAVEL & TOURS has announced the addition of a new Sri Lanka and Maldives itinerary.

'Sri Lanka Tour & Maldives', a 13-day, tailor-made journey, gives travellers the chance to watch the elephants at Minneriya National Park, marvel at Sigiriya Rock Fortress, and explore the caves at Dambulla.

Additionally, guests will experience the Pooja ceremony at the Temple of the Tooth, taste tea in Nuwara Eliya and relax in the Maldives.



The company is offering this itinerary with an introductory saving of £300 per person, when booked by March 31. After savings, the price is £2,786 per person. This includes flights, transfers, accommodation, meals and tours.

A 10-day option, without the Maldives, is available for an introductory price of £1,995 per person.

www.linkstravelandtours.co.uk

Aruba Tourism Authority to reduce carbon footprint

IN AN effort to be increasingly eco-conscious, the Aruba Tourism Authority is offsetting the carbon footprint involved in promotional activity and paying CO₂ emission compensation on flights for hosted guests.

This will cover journeys from ATA's main Europe markets to the island on KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, by media on official press trips and for invited travel industry visitors heading to the island for fam trips.

ATA will make use of KLM's 'CO2ZERO' compensation service, under which airline-

calculated financial contributions go towards the 'CO2OL Tropical Mix' reforestation initiative in Panama, where so far at least 7.5 million trees have been planted.

ATA's European director, Tirso Tromp, explained: 'As a destination marketing organisation, we need to walk the walk when it comes to sustainability efforts. Although the changes we are making might appear small, it should lead to bigger things.'

For more information about Aruba, go to www.aruba.com



Get in on all the Orlando fun with Gold Medal

GOLD MEDAL is offering guaranteed prices to Orlando for 2021 holidays.

Available dates include Easter, summer and the October school holidays, some of the major holiday times for families.

Regional departures are flying from Gatwick, Manchester, Edinburgh and Belfast with Virgin Atlantic.

Packages start from £579 per person based on a family of four staying seven nights room at the Rosen Plaza, for departures September 6 to October 12, 2021, flying from Gatwick with Virgin Atlantic.

Disney Resort Hotels and Universal hotels are also on sale throughout the whole of 2021.

www.goldmedal.co.uk

Jet2 boosts summer flights from Glasgow Airport

JET2.COM AND Jet2holidays has announced details of its latest expansion at Glasgow Airport, which means that the package holiday specialist and airline now has 1.3 million seats on sale for the summer, giving local holidaymakers more choice and flexibility.

In response to the continued demand for flights and holidays, the company has introduced two new destinations for summer – Costa del Almeria and Krakow – and is adding another aircraft into its fleet for the peak holiday period, meaning it will have up to eight aircraft based at Glasgow Airport this summer.

This announcement means that Jet2.com and



Krakow in Poland is a new summer destination for Jet2.

Jet2holidays is putting on additional flights to popular destinations in the Balearics, Canaries, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Bulgaria and Portugal between mid-June and mid-July.

Steve Heapy, CEO of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays, said: "Over 300,000

additional seats, additional aircraft, and two brand new destinations represents significant growth at Glasgow Airport, and we are delighted to be offering holidaymakers so much choice and flexibility." www.jet2.com or www.jet2holidays.com

New offerings from Collette Tours

COLLETTE TOURS has announced new escorted tour experiences for travellers in 2020.

Spanning across all seven continents, with a choice of travel styles and activity levels, the fully accompanied tours will allow visitors to explore destinations in a different way with a focus on local traditions, sights, and culture.

One of the highlights for 2020 include the 'Cultural Treasures of Japan' trip, including Tokyo and Kyoto, the cultural capital of Japan.

A 13-day tour is from £3,699 per person – March 7 to March 19. www.gocollette.com

STUBA - THE SUPERPOWER IN BEDBANKS



The Stuba Super heroes will be out in force this peaks period giving our travel agents super powers when you need it the most.



To ensure you don't 'peak' too early we will be dropping in Stuba Survival kits to see you through the long hours.



PLUS as a thank you, you could win 4 x Experience Day vouchers to the value of £100, or one of our extremely popular Stuba Chilly Bottles. Simply make a booking of £250 and over between 13 January and 28 February to be entered into the prize draw.



Puma-seeking & glacier-scaling with Wildfoot Travel

ADVENTURE TRAVEL specialists Wildfoot Travel are offering an adventure to Patagonia which will see travellers searching for pumas, scaling glaciers, exploring national parks and experiencing many exhilarating viewpoints.

The 'Patagonia, Pumas and Glaciers' expedition takes travellers across the varied lands of Patagonia, El Calafate and Buenos Aires in one trip.

Travellers will spend their first couple of days enjoying a thrilling puma-watching experience that sees them venture out into Torres del Paine National Park in search of the rare felines.

Guests will start their day early with an intimate group of up to seven participants. They will be led by an expert in puma-watching, observation and photography to ensure unrivalled puma encounters.

Further into the expedition, travellers will



Torres del Paine National Park is home to 50 pumas.

explore the beauty of Los Glaciares National Park, a UNESCO listed heritage site and an important area for conservation.

The 'Patagonia, Pumas and Glaciers' expedition is priced from £3,295 per

person, including full-board accommodation, domestic flights, all excursions, tours and activities, and transfers between accommodation and airports.

Contact michael@wildfoottravel.com

Footloose and fancy-free with Warner Leisure Hotels

WARNER LEISURE Hotels has launched their new 'Learn to Dance' breaks across selected Warner Gold stays. Offering guests who wish to grasp the basics of dance the chance to improve their skills, these classes give both beginners, and enthusiastic novices, the confidence to take their first steps on the dancefloor.

'Learn to Dance' breaks offer expert tuition with professionally led beginner classes held daily to teach the Waltz, Quickstep and Cha-Cha. Music for Ballroom and Latin dance

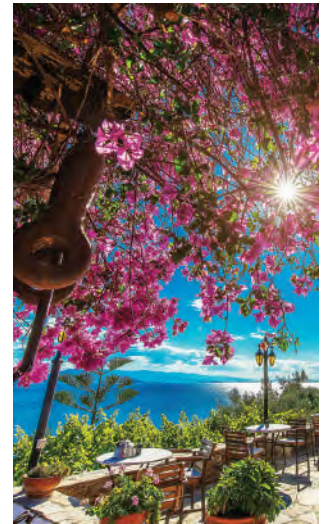
practise is available every evening of the break and there will be a dance-themed cabaret performance on one night of the stay.

Warner's 'Learn to Dance' breaks are available to book now with prices for a four-night break at Bembridge Coast Hotel, Isle of Wight, starting from £200 per person, when arriving on February 3. This price is based on two adults sharing a Standard Room inclusive of the Simply Dine package.

www.warnerleisurehotels.co.uk

Ionian & Aegean Island Holidays release 2020 brochure

IONIAN AND Aegean Island Holidays have released their 2020 brochure, which is packed with client favourite holidays, as well as some new additions on Ithaka, Meganisi and Paxos.



The brochure features villas with pools, waterside apartments, family-run pensions and boutique hotels, for all budgets.

New for 2020 is routes from Gatwick and Manchester, along with three regional airports – Bristol, Bournemouth and Birmingham. These airports will cover holidays to Skiathos, Skopelos, Alonissos and the Pelion Peninsula, operated by TUI from May through to September.

Corfu holidays revert to a Monday departure with flights from Gatwick and Manchester commencing May 4 weekly until October 19.

www.ionianislandholidays.com



CLIA announces Meyer Werft shipyard visit for agents

CLIA WILL host a visit to the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany on March 13, where P&O Cruises' Iona, Royal Caribbean's Odyssey of the Seas and Saga's Spirit of Adventure are under construction. The visit is open to CLIA travel agents in the UK, Ireland and across Europe, with limited spaces available.

As well as a tour of the visitor centre and the opportunity to hear from the shipyard representatives, the visit will include an exclusive guided tour of the building hall where attendees will see the three ships.

Register at www.cruiseexperts.org/clia-agents/uk-ireland-events

Cyplon thanks agents with incentive programme

THANKING TRAVEL agents for their loyalty and support, Cyplon Holidays have released their new incentive programme for 2020.

Exclusive deals for agents include a free, week-long, half-board stay on their Adriatic Cruises and more free stays in top properties across their much-loved destinations, including Cyprus, Greece and Morocco. With these deals, agents get additional discounts for selected hotels when clients book the same hotel, through the same travel agent.

The tour operator will also be challenging agents to win a Greek island cruise for themselves and a partner. To enter the prize draw, agents simply need to make one



booking for two adults on any Celestyal Cruise to win a free stay on a Celestyal Cruise sailing along the Greek islands in October. Winners will be announced on the Cyplon Facebook trade group.

Agents can look forward to existing perks which include,

£10 vouchers per adult booked, free gifts for bookings over £5,999 and £10 vouchers per hotel only booking. Additionally, the 'Brochure Bingo Challenge' will be making a return, with a chance to win up to £3,000. www.cyplon.co.uk/agent-incentives-2020

Banish the January blues with Celebrity Cruises

CELEBRITY CRUISES has announced its 'Payday' January sale event, meaning that agents can start planning for clients' summer getaways.

The sale will cover all Europe 2020 sailings and can be combined with Celebrity Cruises new pricing structure 'Sail Your Way'. Guests will be able to save up to £200 per stateroom on all perk choices including sailings on the newly revolutionised Celebrity Silhouette.

With sailings from Southampton, clients can be one of the first to set sail on the Celebrity Silhouette, following her modernisation.

Book before March 3. www.celebritycruises.co.uk

WIN tickets to see Manchester United

NEW brochure order your copies today!

BELLEAIR 50th ANNIVERSARY HOLIDAYS | **Malta Gozo & Comino**

Belleair Holidays in conjunction with the Malta Tourism Authority would like to offer all our agents the opportunity to win a ticket to a Manchester United home match in 2020!

TWO TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR **MANCHESTER UNITED** VERSUS **MANCHESTER CITY** ON SATURDAY 7TH MARCH 2020

FOUR TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR **MANCHESTER UNITED** VERSUS **WEST HAM UNITED** ON SUNDAY 9TH MAY 2020

HOW TO ENTER

For a chance to win a ticket all you need to do is make a package holiday booking to Malta with Belleair Holidays! Every passenger you book counts – so the more bookings you make, the more chances you get.

MAN CITY DRAW TAKES PLACE ON 15TH FEBRUARY
WEST HAM DRAW TAKES PLACE ON 19TH APRIL

BELLEAIR HOLIDAYS

NOVEMBER 2019 - DECEMBER 2020

ABTA PROTECTED

MALTA'S GOZO | CRETE | LUXURY EXPERIENCES | ALGARVE
 MADEIRA | SPAIN | MALDIVO ISLANDS | CANARY ISLANDS
 GREECE | TURKEY | SYRUS | CROATIA

www.belleair.co.uk/brochure
 or call us on 01753 496 109



TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Only Belleair Holidays package holiday bookings to Malta apply. Each passenger you book will be classed as one entry. Booking period 13th January 2020 until the day before each ticket draw. Manchester City ticket draw date 15th February 2020. West Ham United ticket draw date 19th April 2020. Names will be selected at random and winners will be notified after each draw date. If you have any questions regarding the incentive, please email sales@belleair.co.uk





Agent INSIGHT

EILEEN SAUNDERS TRAVEL COUNSELLORS

HAPPY NEW Year, everyone! I wonder what 2020 will bring our way? Each year, the industry face a whole new set of problems, but we are a such a resilient lot that no matter what happens, we always rise to the challenge.

Tourism is a vital part of many countries' economies so when major events, whether they are political upheavals or natural disasters, hit the headlines, this causes great concern to everyone. It is essential for us to take account of Foreign Office advice but all of us in the trade have our part to play.

The current situation in Australia is a prime example. We need to be positive and reassure customers and potential visitors as much as possible by sharing accurate, up-to-date-information with them.

When we see the extensive news coverage of the devastating bushfires, it could give the impression that the whole country is a no-go area, but this is simply not the case.

Many destinations in Australia remain safe and continue to welcome visitors, with all international airports operating as normal. It's so important that we communicate this information to our customers. My son and his family live in Sydney, so I have been watching the situation closely there and, although the air quality has been poor at times, they've still been enjoying days at the beach.

It's been great to see how supportive the trade has been to the relief effort in Australia, including here at Travel Counsellors. We set up a dedicated fund raising campaign with all donations going to charities and organisations fighting the fires and providing aid to people and animals affected. On January 10, the company made a donation for every booking made across the seven countries we operate in, including Australia.



EACH YEAR, Althams Travel selects a rising star to be awarded the Vicky Bryant Award, which was created in honour of one of their managers who sadly passed away. The award was designed to encourage young staff members to excel at their jobs with the criteria including the number of passengers booked, profit generated, day-to-day performance and positive attitude, as well as the opinions of their manager and mentors. This year's winner is Bethany Moran who works at the Huddersfield branch, gaining the award for her outstanding performance throughout the year. Kelsey Oakes, a travel adviser at the Accrington branch was the runner-up. Bethany is pictured on the left with Huddersfield branch manager Nicky Lynn.

OTA advice helps high street and home-based agents

ADVICE ON how to be cyber-smart, aimed primarily at OTAs, could benefit agents based in retail outlets and homeworkers. Anthony Hynes, CEO and founder of eNett International, which provides payment solutions to the travel industry, has released four main things for OTAs to have on their agenda for 2020 and they can certainly be applied to all agents.

First, he advises tapping into the experiences market to stay relevant, as this sector is worth billions globally.

For agents that have a website, ensure that it is optimised for mobile phones. A good online experience via a mobile phone can help drive engagement with potential customers.

Especially in the wake of the Thomas Cook collapse, agents should be proactive in protecting themselves and their customers against supplier default. This makes ensuring clients have insurance more important than ever.

Finally, with more business, promotion and transactions being performed online, Hynes advises agents to keep on top of fraud tactics, advising agents to educate themselves and have steps in place to protect themselves against increasingly sophisticated and persistent cyber-criminals.

AGENT INCENTIVES

- AGENTS CAN win one night free for two people for every booking of a minimum five nights made up to May 31 in any Louis Hotel in Cyprus or Greece. Agents can choose their free night at a Louis Hotel at a destination of choice. The more bookings, the more free nights can be claimed. The free nights are valid for materialised bookings only, and can be redeemed from November 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021. For more information, go to www.louishotels.com/incentive2.html
- SHEARINGS HOLIDAYS has launched a Valentine's competition, offering agents the chance to win dinner for two up to the value of £75. To enter the prize draw, agents need to make a booking for any departure date or product, between February 1 and 13. Booking references should then be emailed to win@shearings.com by February 13. The winner will be drawn on Valentine's Day and announced on Facebook page – Shearings Trade Team. The prize will be awarded in gift vouchers for the winner's choice of restaurant. www.shearingsagent.com
- LIME, THE approved supplier of British Airways flights, has 20 team lunches up for grabs and to enter, agents need to make British Airways bookings with Lime before February 28. Agent bookings will be tracked by Lime and 20 operators will be rewarded with a tasty team lunch. Agents who do not have a Lime Flights or Groups account will have to sign up to enter and make British Airways bookings with Lime before February 28. To register, go to www.lime-management.com/20-tb#LunchOnLime
- AGENTS CAN win a place on Virgin Voyages' sneak-a-peek sailings, aboard Scarlet Lady, sailing on March 29. Simply book a Virgin Voyage package through Virgin Atlantic Flightstore before February 29 to be in with a chance of winning. There are two spaces (one winning agent and one accompanying guest) available to win and will be chosen at random at the end of the incentive period. Points accrued as follows: one point per booking, all entries will be entered into a prize draw. This incentive is open to all operators booking Virgin Voyages packages through Virgin Atlantic Flightstore. Bookings made on all Virgin Voyage packages in all booking classes during the incentive period will qualify. Reservations made but then cancelled will not qualify. The winner will stay three nights onboard Virgin Voyages Scarlet Lady in a double occupancy Ltd View Sea Terrace accommodation. The winner will be notified within 15 business days of the final draw. www.vafightstore.com/sneak-a-peek/

AGENT TRAINING

BRAND USA, in partnership with American Airlines and British Airways, has revealed details of the seven new itineraries for its UK & Ireland MegaFam. To be eligible for a place, agents must book travellers on American Airlines and British Airways flights to the US during the entry period till March 15. In addition, they must visit Brand USA's official agent training site and complete the mandatory MegaFam Airlines 2020 badge. It is taking place from April 29-May 7. www.USADiscoveryProgram.co.uk



ANDY HARRIS, key account manager for Gold Medal and Travel 2, congratulates **Leanne Williams**, branch manager at Travelhouse, who made a £62,000 booking at the end of 2019 for Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas, sailing around the Caribbean over Easter.



travelbulletin COMPETITIONS!

NEW: Win a place aboard Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady for you and a friend

Win flights with Air New Zealand and Singapore Airlines!

Seven nights all inclusive stay for two people at the Bahia Principe Sunlight Tenerife up for grabs!

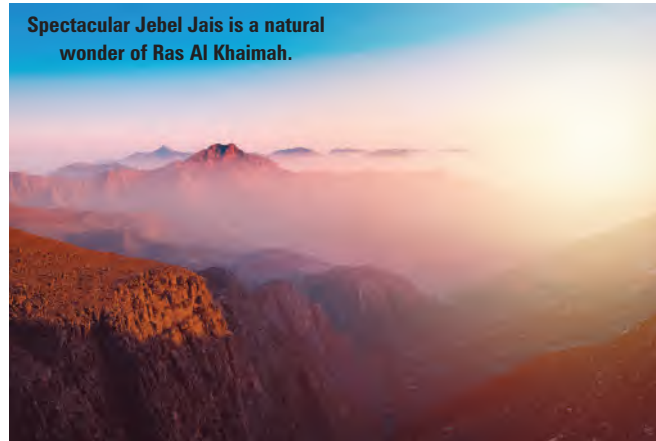
**FOR ALL COMPETITIONS
ON THE SITE VISIT**
travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions

March into the great outdoors in Ras Al Khaimah

MARCH IS an excellent time to visit Ras Al Khaimah, the northernmost emirate of the UAE, with daytime temperatures around 30°, and pleasant, cooler temperatures in the evening.

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority has released a selection of great things to do in the emirate, which agents can recommend to clients seeking a sunny escape in March.

New attractions include the Jais Sky Maze, an obstacle maze on Jebel Jais, the UAE's highest mountain. Thrillseekers can navigate through rope swings, wobbly bridges, swinging loops and more. The Bear Grylls Survival Academy, meanwhile, opened this month and offers half-day, 24- and 48-hour courses in



surviving in the wilderness. These are held at Jebel Jais, so a course could be combined with a Jais Sky Maze experience.

Until the end of March, the Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival is on, taking place in the historic 17th century pearl-fishing town of Al Jazirah Al Hamra. The open-air gallery, which is free of charge and open to the

public, is set to welcome more than 100 international and local artists from 33 countries. Visitors interested in cultural attractions can also go to Suwaidi Pearl Farm, the country's only pearl farm which provides locally sourced pearls to jewellers worldwide.

For more destination information, go to www.visitrasalkhaimah.com

Agents can use word-of-mouth to boost business

MORE THAN half of UK consumers would recommend a travel company to friends and family, according to a survey of consumer behaviour, in which 2,000 people were polled.

Mention Me's third annual report into customer advocacy and referral trends found that 63% of the consumers surveyed recommend holiday and travel companies, with factors such as trustworthiness, great customer service and offering better deals than competitors being important reasons for people to recommend companies to others.

Additionally, companies which are seen to be ethical are likely to be recommended by clients. This includes companies which are committed to hiring people from the local community and paying staff a fair wage.



For the third year running, the survey found friends are the most trusted source, with 28% trusting a friend's referral more than anyone else. Equally, 41% stated they'd be put off recommending a brand if a friend or family member told them not to shop there.

Wales launches five-year plan for the visitor economy

WELCOME TO Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020-25 has been launched by the Welsh government to ensure the tourism sector continues to grow, despite challenges facing the industry, such as Brexit uncertainty.

The plan's main actions for the next five years include product-focused campaigns and a push to attract off-season visitors by Visit Wales; building on the country's Events Strategy to grow the events which already draw in large visitor numbers, such as sporting and cultural fixtures; a £10 million

fund to invest in tourism infrastructure; and a £50 million Wales Tourism Investment Fund to finance capital investment projects.

"We believe the best response is to continue with our core business – to recognise tourism's ongoing potential to act as a bedrock for the Welsh economy in projecting a positive message of and from Wales," commented First Minister Mark Drakeford at the plan's launch last week.

For details about the plan, go to www.visitwales.com



Make a pass at Blackpool for the 2020 season

VISITORS TO Blackpool will again have the opportunity to save money on attractions with the return of the Blackpool Resort Pass and Pass Plus, issued by Visit Blackpool. The passes will give your clients a slew of savings, which can be redeemed at attractions such as Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Nickelodeon Land, The Blackpool Tower Eye, The Blackpool Tower Dungeon, SEA LIFE Blackpool and Madame Tussauds. *To find out more about what the passes offer and to purchase them for your clients, go to www.visitblackpool.com/resort-pass or call 01253 478222.*

SUDOKU

Win a £50 M&S voucher in the **travelbulletin** Su Doku prize puzzle A

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 3 x 3 squares contains the digits 1-9.

Once you have completed the puzzle, simply identify the numbers that relate to the letters, A, B, C and D then e-mail the solution, with your name, company name, and full postal address plus phone and ABTA number if applicable to:

competition@travelbulletin.co.uk

Closing date for entries is Thursday, February 6th. Solution and new puzzle will appear next week.

The winner for January 17th is Clare Convery, Hays Travel in South Shields.

January 17th Solution: A=1 B=2 C=8 D=7

		8				1		5	
	9		6		4	7	8		
6	7			1				9	
B			7	6			1	8	
	6	7				3	2		
C	2	1			3	8			
	9				8			7	2
	2	1	3		5		9		
D	7		6				5		



WHERE AM I?

The Minoan people of the Bronze Age built this palace and archaeologists believe that while it was probably a royal residence, it was also used for storing valuable commodities such as wine and olive oil. It is famous for its colourful frescoes.

CROSSWORD

Fill in the crossword to reveal the mystery location highlighted by the green squares.

1		2			3		4		5
				6					
7						8			
				9					
10		11			12			13	
				14					
15									
				16					

Across

- Privately owned independent tour operator, _____ Holidays (7)
- State capital of Maine (7)
- Lively resort in Catalonia, popular with the LGBT community (6)
- American singer, songwriter and actress, Lady _____ (4)
- Diamond Head is a iconic landmark on this island (4)
- Capital of Dominica (6)
- City home of the Alhambra (7)
- Jenny who plays Sister Julienne in Call the Midwife (7)

Down

- Controversial co-presenter of ITV's Good Morning Britain (5,6)
- Popular Israel resort on the Red Sea (8)
- Capital of Latvia (4)
- Italian cruise company (5)
- Capital of Malaysia (5,6)
- Advance purchase fare type (4)
- Capital of Qatar (4)
- Hotel and resort company (5)
- Country linking North East Africa to the Middle East (5)
- Travel group with HQ in Folkestone (4)

Mystery Word : ECUADOR Where am I? - Palace of Knossos, Crete

Across: 1. PREMIER, 6. AUGUSTA, 7. SITGES, 8. GAGA, 10. OAHU, 12. ROSEAU, 15. GRANADA, 16. AGUTTER.
Down: 1. PIERS MORGAN, 2. EILAT, 3. RIGA, 4. COSTA, 5. KUALA LUMPUR, 6. APEX, 9. DOHA, 11. HYATT, 13. EGYPT, 14. SAGA.

British Virgin Islands sets out busy 2020 calendar

AS WELL as a swathe of new accommodation options, the British Virgin Islands tourism board is keen to promote a range of events throughout 2020 to encourage visitors to come all year round.

From March 30 until April 5, the BVI Spring Regatta and Sailing Festival is on, with coastal races and plenty of parties on the agenda.

From July 23 until August 8, the Emancipation Festival celebrates the emancipation of the slaves in 1834 and showcases the culture, history, music and food of the area. The events, including a spectacular parade, take place on the island of Tortola.

Throughout the month of November, BVI Food Fete is spread out across six different islands, including a rum festival on Cooper Island, a gourmet party with



The RMS Rhone is a popular dive site off the British Virgin Islands coast.

jazz entertainment, a Gourmet Soiree, and the popular two-day Lobster Festival on Anegada.

In December, divers will be drawn to the islands for BVI Wreck Week, dedicated to exploring the underwater wrecks which make the area a must-do for scuba enthusiasts. Dive sites include

The Kodiak Queen, a sustainable artificial reef installed in the sea in 2017, the wreck of RMS Rhone, and a British Royal Mail steamship, which sunk in 1867. As well as diving opportunities, the week features beach clean-up events and parties.

For more information, go to www.bvitourism.com

Visionary speakers to examine 2020 travel challenges

THE TOURISM Society will host its Vision 2035 (Prospects) event at London's Trinity House on February 12.

Running from 4pm until 6:30pm, speakers will discuss trends, post-Brexit challenges, disruptions and environmental changes which are affecting the industry.

There will be a session on the outbound industry and the impact of the Thomas Cook collapse, a panel on trends and predictions for 2020, 2019 industry findings on the senior travel market, a presentation from

Visit Britain and a report on the environmental impact of transport.

Speakers will include Gill Haynes, partnerships director, Silver Travel Advisor, and Richard Nicholls, head of research and forecasting, Visit Britain, and Stephen Darke, head of tourism, DMCS.

For more information, programme updates and to book tickets, go to www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tourism-society-prospects-vision-2035-tickets-86110208953?aff=ebdssbeac

Tempt US sports fans with Las Vegas football frenzy

CLIENTS SEEKING a unique Las Vegas holiday or an authentic American football experience might be tempted to book a trip in April. This is when fans and players will come together in Las Vegas for the 85th NFL Draft, with free live events for visitors.

The NFL Draft Red Carpet, NFL Draft Main Stage and NFL Draft Experience will include free immersive activities and live entertainment and performances. Set against the backdrop of the Strip, the NFL Draft Main Stage will be constructed next to the Caesars Forum. Fans will be able to watch the first-round selections every day between April 23-25.



The Main Stage will host daily performances by headlining acts throughout the Draft. There will also be autograph sessions with Las Vegas Raiders players, shopping opportunities and interactive games.

For more information, go to www.lvcva.com



Sample flavours of the Seven Seas at SeaWorld

SEAWORLD ORLANDO'S Seven Seas Food Festival returns for 2020, giving guests the opportunity to taste their way around the world with more than 180 international street food traditions. The Seven Seas Food Festival runs from February 7 to May 5 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. As well as the diverse range of food on offer, there will be concerts held at nearby Bayside Stadium included with the ticket admission on selected nights. Acts will include Boyz II Men, Night Ranger, Walk Off The Earth and Trace Adkins. For more information about dates and prices, go to www.seaworldparks.co.uk

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Quokka, Phillip Island



Elizabeth Quay, Perth

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Book flights and accommodation in Western Australia with Gold Medal for the chance to win a pair of economy flights to Perth. Simply make bookings between 01 January – 29 February 2020 and send your booking references to win@goldmedal.co.uk to enter the prize draw.

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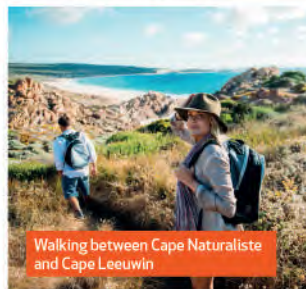
Flights with Singapore Airlines from London Heathrow. Valid for departure 09 Sep 2020.

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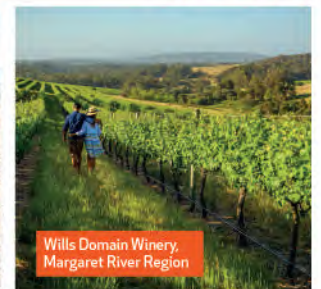
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Cape Leveque



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- Perth 2 NIGHTS ● Indian Pacific rail journey - Perth to Sydney 3 NIGHTS ● Sydney 1 NIGHT

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Indian Pacific

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AUSTRALASIA

HOP ON OVER TO KANGAROO ISLAND

The South Australian Tourism Commission is encouraging visitors to Kangaroo Island to help the recovery after the fierce bushfires.

KANGAROO ISLAND is very much open for business and welcoming visitors, say tourism bosses.

Parts of the island, including the Flinders Chase National Park, remain closed but huge swathes are open and holidaymakers are enjoying many of KI's iconic wildlife experiences, such as swimming with wild dolphins, walking amongst a colony of rare sealions at Seal Bay and relaxing on white sand beaches as rare birds soar overhead and

koalas snooze in trees.

Islanders have come together, demonstrating resilience and mateship in the face of real adversity, to promote the open for business message.

The South Australian Tourism Commission has worked with locals to create the #BookThemOut campaign domestically, encouraging Aussies to visit KI on a holiday as soon as possible.

This launched in Australia on January 19 and will be

followed by activity targeting high value travellers from other strategic markets around the world in February and March.

Rodney Harrex, CEO of South Australian Tourism Commission, said: "There is still more than about 2,500 square kilometres Kangaroo Island community and environment that is untouched – that is five times the size of the Isle of Man not impacted at all by fire. More than 50 per cent of the island is pristine and undamaged by fire, with tens of thousands of hectares of parks, beaches, wildlife and amazing coastal views. More than 150 businesses are open and ready."

To donate, visit southaustralia.com/travel-blog/how-you-can-help-with-the-bushfires-in-south-australia.

FAST facts

CURRENCIES: DOLLAR

£1 is \$1.93 AUD
£1 is \$1.99 NZD

TIME DIFFERENCE WITH CANBERRA:

+11 GMT

TIME DIFFERENCE WITH WELLINGTON:

+13 GMT

FLIGHT TIME NON-STOP TO PERTH FROM THE UK:

Approx 16hrs 35mins

AN E-VISITOR VISA TO AUSTRALIA COSTS

\$20 AUD (approx. £10.50)

An NZeTA to New Zealand costs from \$9 (approx £4.50)

All prices based on exchange rate at time of going to press.



AUSTRALIA IS SAFE:

Here is the latest travel update from the tourist board



FOR ANYONE with trips booked or plans to visit Australia, Tourism Australia has posted practical information and safety tips on Australia.com to give travellers the assurance that they will remain safe on their journey. While some images shared on social media may give the impression that the fires are affecting the whole country, this is not the case with most of the country remaining unaffected, including Australia's most popular tourism destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House and Uluru. The list of affected areas continues to be updated daily should there be any change in circumstances in those locations.

For those considering cancelling or postponing their plans to visit Australia, the board is encouraging them to review the updates on Australia.com as the list of regions popular with visitors indicates whether the area has been affected or not. If it has, a link is provided to the most up-to-date information so that travellers can assess whether they need to tweak their itinerary.

The best way to support Australia is to continue with plans and keep visiting, according to the board. Doing so supports the many Australian businesses that are reliant on tourism, whether in unaffected regions or those that will recover from these bushfires in the months and years to come. Australia.com

Cruising on to boost tourism

AUSTRALIA'S CRUISE industry has confirmed that all major cruise lines are operating as scheduled and continue to visit ports around the country as planned.

Vessels scheduled to visit Kangaroo Island in 2019-2020 have a combined capacity of more than 54,000 passengers and crew, whose spending provides vital economic benefits to the local community.

Cruise Lines International Association managing director Australasia Joel Katz said: "Nationally, cruise tourism is worth more than AUD \$5 billion a year to the Australian economy and will play an important role in supporting local communities as they recover from this summer's fires."



Holidaymakers urged to visit Victoria

WHILE BUSHFIRES have had a significant impact in parts of far east and north-east Victoria, Melbourne and many internationally popular destinations are safe.

These include the Great Ocean Road, Phillip Island, the Mornington Peninsula, Yarra Valley, Ballarat, Bendigo, the Grampians, Daylesford and many others.

Melbourne is hundreds of miles from the fires and offers visitors world-class culinary, cultural and experiences, plentiful museums and galleries and a late night culture considered by many to be the country's most varied and vibrant.

Many of Victoria's well-known attractions, including the iconic Twelve Apostles, Phillip Island Nature Park and Peninsula Hot Springs, are located more than 217 miles from the affected communities – further than London to Paris (approx 213 miles).

In the weeks and months to come, Victorians will continue to rally behind the resilient fire affected communities to help them recover as quickly as possible and encourage visitors to return as soon as it's safe to do so.

Right now, the best way to support the Victorian tourism and communities, is by visiting Melbourne and regional areas that have not been impacted by the bushfires, in which there are many wonderful destinations.

Travellers coming to Victoria are advised to seek the most up to date information prior to departure from their accommodation and tourism providers, and to check Visit Victoria's website for areas not impacted by bushfires. www.visitmelbourne.com/uk



Ecosanctuary opens at nature reserve Farewell Spit

NEW ZEALAND'S nature reserve Farewell Spit has seen a boost to help secure the future of the regions wildlife. The conservation minister Eugenie Sage has opened the Wharariki Eco-sanctuary and predator-proof fence on January 18. She said the sanctuary was crucial to providing safe havens for threatened plants and wildlife on mainland New Zealand. The reserve is a bird sanctuary and wetland on a 35km long spit of land that is restricted to the first 4km with vehicle access only allowed for supervised tours. A Farewell Spit Tour costs NZD\$160 (approx £80). <https://www.farewellspit.com>

Pearls of the Pacific in the Cook Islands

NEW ON the 2020 product list for Turama Pacific Travel Group is the Northern Atolls Experience.

This is a five-days/four-nights expedition to the Cook Islands' remote Northern Group atolls Pukapuka, Manihiki and Penrhyn, accompanied by an experienced local guide. This tour caters for a minimum of four people, and a maximum of six.

Prices are packaged at NZD \$8,895 (£5,017 at the time of going to press) per person and they are commissionable at 10%.

Pukapuka, formerly Danger Island, is a coral atoll situated about 1,140 kilometres northwest of Rarotonga. Accommodation is simple and provided by the Island council.

Manihiki is known informally as the "Island of Pearls" approximately 1,299 kilometres north of Rarotonga.

Accommodation is at Manihiki Lagoon Villas, which sit perched on the edge of the lagoon.

There are several tour options available, including fishing, snorkelling, diving, coconut crab hunting, night crayfish hunting, and a visit to a pearl farm.

Penrhyn is the most northerly of the Cook Islands located 1,365 km north-north-east of Rarotonga and is famous for its beautiful lagoon and black pearls. Accommodation here is in a private house that overlooks a sand bank, which is good for bone fishing.

The 2020 confirmed dates are: March 23-27, June 22-26, August 17-21 and October 19-23. vacation@islandhopper.co.uk or Tours@tipani.co.uk

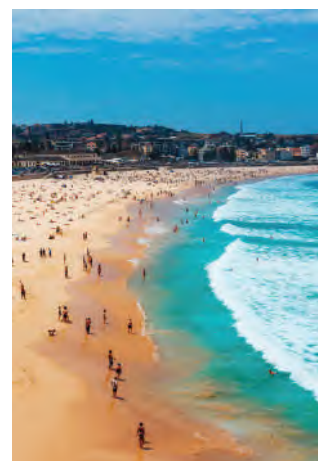


Best foot forward on iconic beach trek

WALKING BETWEEN two of the world's most iconic beaches, Bondi and Manly, has become a reality with the opening of a new 80km urban walking track around Sydney's breathtaking Harbour foreshore linking the two.

The trail, which is rich in Indigenous heritage, passes through some of the city's most spectacular coastal and Harbourside suburbs and features the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House.

Marked with more than 350 distinctive Aboriginal Whale Symbol signs, the urban walkway is easy to follow with a walking app available for download.



Highlights of the walk include Bondi, Parsley Bay, Hermitage Foreshore Walk, the Historic Houses, Sydney Harbour, Kirribilli, author May Gibbs' Nutcote house, significant Aboriginal sites, Georges Head and Manly. www.sydney.com



Calling all agents to win a trip to New Zealand

ONE LUCKY travel agent and a friend will win a trip of a lifetime to New Zealand courtesy of Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand.

The winner will receive a uniquely Kiwi experience on their journey, with flights from Air New Zealand and a choice of ten activities which are featured in Tourism New Zealand's 'Good Morning World' campaign.

Entering is easy. Agents simply need to watch two short videos and answer a few simple questions.

To meet some of the local guides that could be showing the agents around New Zealand, visit the 'Good Morning World' hub on the travel trade website.

Full competition T&C's and link to

enter: <https://traveltrade.newzealand.com/en-gb/campaign/win-a-trip>

Cook Islands have the recipe for a perfect wedding

THE COOK Islands are a jewel in the South Pacific and a perfect romantic setting to exchange wedding vows or as a honeymoon destination.

The main island of Rarotonga offers an interior dominated by volcanic peaks, cloaked in dense vegetation. To get that spectacular wedding shot couples can exchange vows on the mountains, with a view of the reef encircled lagoon below. Equally idyllic photo locations include tropical gardens where you'll be surrounded by the beautiful and fragrant local plants, flowers and endless greenery.

There's even the option to take the plunge quite literally by diving beneath the sea to wed amongst the dazzling aquatic environment.

Many Cook Islanders have a strong Christian faith and couples can have a

religious wedding ceremony in one of the picturesque white limestone churches.

There is a wide range of romantic accommodation choices throughout the Cook Islands, from ultra-luxurious and secluded, to natural and simple, or something in between. Many of the resorts are adult-only, ensuring a relaxing and quiet getaway to enjoy as husband and wife.

A sample package from Cox and Kings offers five nights at Te Manava Luxury Villas and four nights at Pacific Resort Aitutaki (Premium Beachfront Bungalow) from £4,195 per person (two sharing) including economy return flights from London to Rarotonga and private return transfers on Aitutaki and Rarotonga.

www.cookislands.travel and www.coxandkings.co.uk

Qantas flies back to Ballina for the first time in 15 years

QANTAS WILL make it even easier to travel to Byron Bay and the New South Wales far north coast, with the launch of flights from Sydney to Ballina for the first time in 15 years.

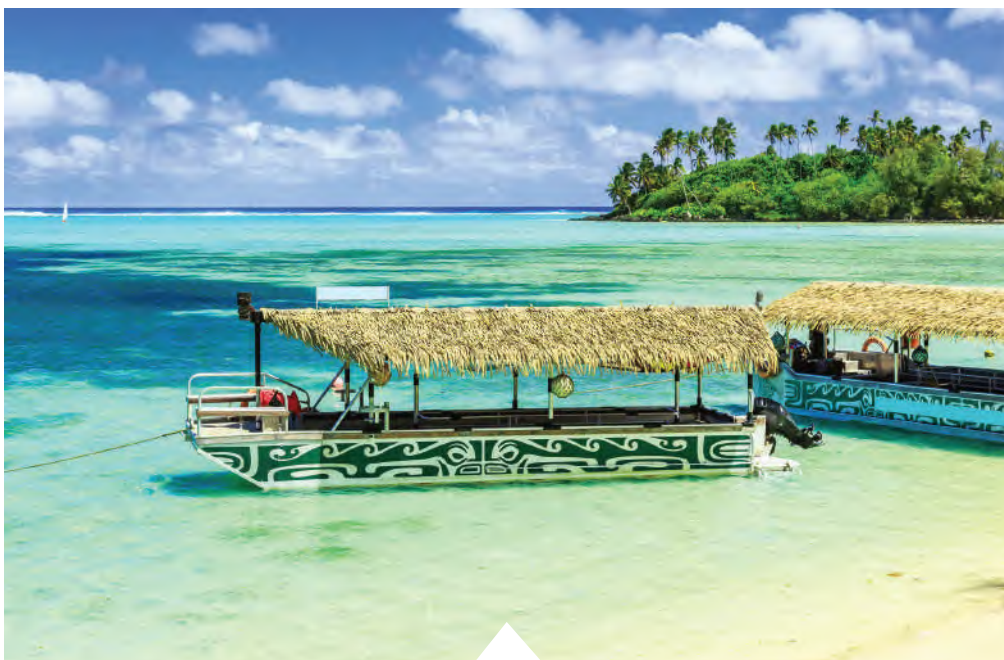
A daily return flight will commence from March 29 adding more than 36,000 seats on the route each year.

NSW Minister for Tourism Stuart Ayres said this was a fantastic opportunity for visitors to enjoy one of the State's most popular regions.

He said: "Now is the perfect time to escape the city and support regional NSW by staying local and buying local, giving the tourism industry in these communities a welcome boost."



Ballina is Qantas' 12th destination in NSW after Sydney, Albury, Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Lord Howe Island, Moree, Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, and Wagga Wagga. *Fares can be booked through travel agents and qantas.com.*





WHAT'S NEW IN VEGAS?

Now an oasis of art galleries and foodie hangouts, Natalie Chalk discovers how the Nevada city has changed.

WELCOME TO fabulous Las Vegas and how times have changed. There's much more to it than just casinos. The desert city is now filled with art galleries, world-class restaurants, luxury shops, glitzy shows, and live sports experiences.

With the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority keen to showcase its changing image, I joined a three-night trip to seek out some of these new experiences.

It was December and the Nevada sun had cooled and the Boulevard was transformed into a winter wonderland.

There was an ice rink at the Cosmopolitan, an ICEBAR on the LINQ Promenade, a life-size edible Gingerbread House at the Aria and even the Bellagio had turned into a walk-in advent calendar. I stayed at the Flamingo, one of the original hotels, built in 1946. It has everything you want from a mega resort: more than 3,000 rooms, a big casino, a headline residency – currently drag queen RuPaul – and a flamboyance of flamingos living in a tropical wildlife habitat.

You can't beat the location in the centre of the Boulevard close to all the action. We kicked off our trip visiting as many resorts as possible. In a few hours we'd covered the Vdara hotel, one of the few not to have a casino; the

Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in the Bellagio, to see the festive fairytale fantasy florals, plus we caught the famous dancing fountains. We headed to the Waldorf Astoria for its views straight down the Boulevard from its Sky Lobby.

We dined at Scarpetta in the Cosmopolitan on tagliatelle with lamb bolognese and truffle burrata. It's paradise on a plate.

Another recommendation is NoMad, which specialises in American classics, and whose star dish is spectacular roast chicken.

Where to go from here? Ice skating, of course, on the hotel's rooftop.



On Day two, we got sporty and arty with an hour-long indoor hike at Aria. Not only did we see its \$40 million art collection, we burnt calories doing press ups and lunges along the way.

Later, at showtime, we went to an ice hockey game to see the Vegas Golden Knights take on the Chicago Blackhawks. Even if you're not a sports fan, the showmanship, "ice girls" and half-time entertainment make it a must-see.

On Day three, we left the Strip for the Fremont Street Experience in Downtown Las Vegas to see the largest digital display in the world and then strap in for a zip-line ride with SlotZilla.

Our last night was spent sampling more of the creative and hip restaurants that are central to the new Vegas experience. With so many options, finding your way around can be tricky so we join a Lip Smacking Foodie Tour.

We tried the roast chicken sandwich at Bardot, the paella at Julian Serrano Tapas and the Greek salad at Milos. The four desserts at Cucina are my favourites. I still dream about them.

The night ended with cocktails at pop-up bar Miracle on Spring Mountain.

With experiences like these, this is why you should come to Vegas.

For more information visit <https://www.lvcva.com/>

THE UNITED EIGHTS

Visit The USA highlights eight emerging destinations for 2020



BEYOND AMERICA'S most visited cities are some hotspots which look forward to welcoming European travellers in 2020.

From low-key beach breaks to culinary-focused city stays, these eight alternative destinations are waiting to be explored.

For modern art and an award-winning food there's **Baltimore**, Maryland, where Charm City offers a thriving food, drink and art scene. Art lovers should head to the Baltimore Museum of Art, home to the largest collection of Henri Matisse in the world.

Most visitors to California make a beeline for SoCal beaches, but those looking for an outdoor adventure combining picturesque scenery with excellent culinary options should make time for **Mammoth Lakes**, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

For arts districts and craft beer, Dallas, Texas has a flourishing arts scene, as well as some of the state's best bars and restaurants. The **Dallas** Museum of Modern Art features 22,000 works of art stretching over 5,000 years of history.

For jazz and art deco architecture there's **Tulsa**, Oklahoma,

with its beautiful Art Deco downtown. Meanwhile, music lovers should head to the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame at Union Station to learn about music legends.

For history and seafood visit **Portland**, Maine, which has a rich maritime heritage as well as seafood shacks serving up lobster roll.

For gastronomy and the great outdoors there's Tucson, Arizona, which was designated as the US' first Unesco City of Gastronomy in 2016. It also offers hiking through the Sabino Canyon and Saguaro National Park.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is home to the world's first LGBTQ+ Visitor Centre, which showcases the attractions and bars that may interest visitors.

For dining and distilleries in **Louisville**, Kentucky the food scene ranges from city-skyline views at the rooftop restaurant 8UP, to thick and cheesy Louisville-style pizza at Impellizzeri.

VisitTheUSA.co.uk



Gold Medal's Vegas agent incentive

NOW YOU have read our Las Vegas feature on page 19, here is a further incentive for booking clients to this fabulous city (or other amazing high-end destinations) – Gold Medal brand PURE LUXURY is offering agents the chance to win a luxury trip for two to Las Vegas. Agents who book any PURE LUXURY package before February 29 will be entered in a prize draw. The trip includes five-nights at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas and Upper Class flights with Virgin Atlantic, plus resort credit and experiences. As well as Las Vegas, Orlando is proving popular for PURE LUXURY – there is a family offer available with seven nights at Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando, from £979 per person, from Gatwick, travelling from September 6-21, 2021. For more information, go to www.goldmedal.co.uk

Portland and Plymouth breaks with Funway

JUNE 2020 sees the launch of the new direct flight service between the UK and Portland plus the annual Portland Pride Festival June 13-14.

This LGBT celebration is one of the largest donation-based Pride events in the country, taking place at Tom McCall Waterfront Park overlooking Portland's Willamette River.

A sample Funway Holidays offers seven nights staying at Double-tree Hilton in Portland. Prices from £1,170 per person include return flights from the UK (London Heathrow) with British Airways. Travel is based on two adults sharing, departing June 12.

Also, Funway Holidays are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Mayflowers sailing from



Plymouth to its namesake Plymouth Bay in Massachusetts, an occasion marked every year at Thanksgiving in the US. The Plymouth 400 celebrations kick off on April 24 and continue across New England, until the anniversary of the ships arrival in November. This destination should appeal to

history lovers and clients interested in genealogy.

A sample: 'Brush Up On US History' Funway Holiday offers five nights in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Prices from £895 per person include return flights from the UK. Travel is based on two adults sharing, departing September 14. Funway4agents.co.uk

Give your Valentine a thrill in Philly

LOVE BIRDS looking to fly abroad this Valentine's Day should head to Philadelphia for a long weekend of romantic pursuits in the city, including strolls and selfies in the iconic LOVE Park and an excursion to see 50 romantic public murals during the Mural Arts' Love Letter Train Tour.

Couples can enjoy a cocktail at the new Four Seasons Philadelphia JG SkyHigh bar or an intimate dining experience at the aptly named restaurant The Love, a cosy American bar and restaurant situated just steps from the upmarket and picturesque neighbourhood of Rittenhouse Square. www.discoverPHL.com

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travelbulletin
SHOWCASES

INVITES YOU TO A

LGBT + TRAVEL SHOWCASE

AGENT NETWORKING EVENING

MONDAY 24TH FEB 2020

HILTON BRIGHTON METROPOLE

Agents, you are invited to our LGBT+ Travel Showcase taking place in Brighton. Join us to increase your knowledge and understanding of this important sector of the travel industry and meet suppliers that are promoting diversity and inclusion. The evening will involve a combination of presentations, networking with exhibitors and other agents, a delicious hot dinner and the chance of winning some fantastic prizes in a free prize draw.

Registration: 18:00 hours

Networking & Presentations: 18:20 hours

Hot Dinner, Entertainment & Prizes: 20:30 hours

Carriages: 21:45 hours

To confirm your places at one of these amazing events, email the names and job titles of up to 5 staff members by

Friday 14th February to: events@travelbulletin.co.uk

or telephone: **020 7834 6661** For more information.

This event is by invitation only and will be booked on a first come first served basis.

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SLOVENIA



SPECTACULAR SLOVENIA

In a single day, you can have an Alpine adventure, taste Mediterranean food, explore the underground karst world, and experience a luxury wellness treatment. Here's a quick look around.

SLOVENIA IS a small green country in central Europe at the crossroads of the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pannonian Plains and the Karst. The diversity of its landscape is reflected in its culture and gastronomy.

The country is committed to sustainable development and is known for being one of the safest countries in the world.

Alpine Slovenia is a world surrounded by tall mountains and wild waters, which offers an abundance of outdoor

activities such as canyoning. The Julian Alps are the highest mountain range in the country where visitors can find the largest protected area – Triglav National Park.

In the east, the Alpine world transitions into the rounded summits of the Pohorje Hills covered with vast forests and peat ponds. These hills gradually descend towards the city of Maribor, home to the oldest grapevine in the world.

The karst world hides numerous natural wonders

on the surface and beneath it; the most famous is Postojna Cave, the most-visited tourist cave in the world.

Central Slovenia is a mix of towns, cities and nature. Its heart is in the capital city Ljubljana, known for the architectural masterpieces of Jože Plečnik, large green areas, and a thousand faces of urban culture and art.

Thermal Pannonian Slovenia is the ideal wellness destination to pamper body, spirit, and taste buds.

www.slovenia.info

FAST facts

CURRENCY: EURO
£1 is €1.17

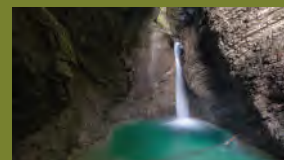
TIME DIFFERENCE TO THE UK
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THERE ARE
more than 10,000 caves in Slovenia.

MOST VISITED IS
Postojna Cave in Slovenia.

SLOVENIA HAS
14 certified natural spas

THE LARGEST THERMAL DESTINATION
is Čatež Thermal Spa



A FOODIE OASIS

Slovenia has been named the European Region of Gastronomy 2021 so this year the country celebrates with culinary adventures.



SLOVENIA COMBINES a rich natural larder and historic food traditions with influences spanning Italy to the west, and Austria and Hungary to the east.

Pair this with world-class chefs and a calendar full of culinary events, and it is easy to understand why Slovenia is the new star in the world's culinary map.

The diversity of Slovenia's natural landscapes is reflected in the distinctive dishes that champion seasonal produce. This focus on quality has led to Slovenia producing some of the world's top-quality chefs.

Perhaps most famous is Ana Roš, who heads up Hisa Franko in the picturesque Soca Valley, which was named amongst the World's 50 Best Restaurants this year. Roš's approach is to combine traditional dishes with modern methods, and those ingredients not sourced directly from her own vegetable and herb garden come from a network of local producers.

In the capital, chef Janez Bratovž serves an ambitious modern Slovenia menu at JB Restaurant. At Pri Lojzetu in the Vipava Valley, chef Tomaž Kavčič (Gault & Millau Best Restaurant for 2020) is a pioneer of the slow food movement & creates dishes from traditional 'poor man's' ingredients.

Slovenia's culinary heavyweights also include Vila Podvin's Uroš Štefelin, Igor Jagodic and avant-garde chef David Vračko.

There are also plenty of quality restaurants in all corners of the country, from Hisa Franko and Restauracija Mak in the Alpine region and Gostilna pri Lojzetu in the Vipava Valley to Ošterija Debeluh & Hiša Denk in thermal Panonian Slovenia. Perched high up in Archer's Tower in Ljubljana Castle there's the award-winning Strelec. At the new boutique Villa Planinka hotel, chefs rely heavily on the unspoilt natural surroundings and use organic, seasonal and locally-sourced ingredients to create inspired dishes.

Slovenia goes sustainable

SLOVENIA IS boosting its commitment to sustainability with a travel industry-wide event scheduled for May. The Travel Foundation will be get together with its partners in May to bring together private travel companies as well as public sector representatives to drive forward their plan to eliminate or reuse plastics across the Slovenian tourism industry.

This is part of the foundation's worldwide plan to make tourism cleaner and greener across all markets. Developed by the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the One Planet network, a multi-stakeholder partnership to implement the sustainable development goal on Sustainable Consumption and Production, the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative acts as the tourism sector interface of the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, which unites more than 450 businesses, governments, and other organisations behind a common vision and targets to address plastic waste and pollution at its source. As such, the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative will implement the New Plastics Economy vision, framework and definitions to mobilise the global tourism industry towards concerted action against plastic pollution. www.thetravelfoundation.co.uk



Make tracks in the Julian Alps with new hiking trail

SLOVENIA HAS unveiled a new 270km hiking trail through the mighty Julian Alps. The circular route promises some of Europe's most magnificent scenery and will be divided into various stages with daily stages planned so hikers have numerous options for overnight accommodation. The route has been specifically chosen to highlight local food and drink producers along the way.

The route will lead walkers from the state border between Italy and Slovenia via numerous natural wonders including the Kranjska Gora region, the Sava River and the Soca Valley. It will also encompass the shores of Lake Bled before a challenging ascent into the Triglav National Park under the shadow of the impressive Mt Triglav.

julian-alps.com

I FEEL
SLOVENIA

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Getting up-close and personal with nature doesn't get any better than this. Everywhere you go, green forests, charming meadows, pure waters or pristine mountains are just a few steps away. And from May 2020, Slovenia is even closer with direct flight London Heathrow – Ljubljana with British Airways. What will be your way of feeling Slovenia?

#ifeelsLOVEnia
#myway

www.slovenia.info

Balkan Holidays increase their flight routes to Slovenia



BALKAN HOLIDAYS has added flights and two hotels to their package holiday programme to Slovenia.

The flights have been added via Salzburg, Austria, with the company now providing flights from 11 airports for winter.

Whilst transfers will be longer than via Slovenia's main gateway of Ljubljana, they will be 2.5 hours to Kranjska Gora via Salzburg.

Airports served for winter are: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Leeds Bradford, Liverpool, London Gatwick, Luton, Manchester, and Stansted. A range of scheduled airline partners will be used.

Seven nights skiing at the four-star Best Western Hotel Kranjska Gora costs from £645 per person departing on February 22 and includes return flights from Luton, transfers and seven nights half board, based on two sharing.

Balkan Holidays intends to offer summer 2020 and summer 2021 holidays to Slovenia

via Salzburg from five UK airports.

Meanwhile responding to demand for environmentally aware properties, Balkan Holidays has added a new eco hotel, the Bohinj ECO Hotel, at Lake Bohinj. This is the only Green Globe certified hotel in Slovenia and it is placed amongst the best of the sustainable hotels in the world.

Found in the heart of the Julian Alps, this hotel is the ideal base for walkers, and those looking for stunning Lakes and Mountains scenery. Guests can enjoy the onsite Aqua Park or dip in the panoramic swimming pool, which boasts breathtaking views of the Alps.

Prices start from £509 per person, departing on October 16 and includes return flights from London Gatwick, transfers and seven nights' half board.

Balkan Holidays has a dedicated Trade Sales Team on hand to arrange training, incentives and marketing support.

www.balkanholidays.co.uk/agents

Mix it up in Slovenia with Classic Collection

CLASSIC COLLECTION Holidays is offers an eight-day multicentre holiday in Slovenia from £1,190 per person. Travellers can spend four nights at one of the operator's hotels, Grand Hotel Toplice on Lake Bled, followed by three nights at the Grand Hotel Union, in the capital Ljubljana.

The price is based on two adults and includes return flights, private transfers and accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis.

Alternatively there are three nights on offer at Grand Hotel Toplice on Lake Bled, Slovenia and four nights on the Kvarner Riviera in the Croatian resort of Opatija at the Remisens Premium Hotel Ambassador from £1,214 per person.



The company says that two- and multicentre-itineraries are a good way for agents to work alongside operators to demonstrate their expertise to prospective clients, add value and benefit from the increased commission of these higher value holidays.

www.classic-collection.co.uk



Leap into a high altitude spa

TERME SNOVIK is the highest altitude spa in Slovenia, located 30 km from Ljubljana and 56 km from Bled. It has a pool complex with healing thermal water, four-star apartments (apartments and double rooms, total 371 beds), a daily activity programme, local and eco buffet meals (breakfast and dinner), wellness and physiotherapy, Kneipp treatments, barefoot paths, outdoor fitness and a vegetable and herb garden.

Guests can also explore the outdoor amenities including a fitness trail with several exercise stations situated along the marked path. There's also the option to head out on a walking or cycling path to explore more of the area.

www.terme-snovik.si

THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS



GARDALAND FUN

The Italian amusement park is coming up with a range of exciting experiences for kids

GARDALAND RESORT will officially kick off its new season on March 28 with the opening of the Amusement Park, the three themed hotels and Gardaland SEA LIFE Aquarium.

A special pre-opening event called Prezzemolo & Friends, designed exclusively for the younger ones, will offer access to selected areas of the park on the weekends of March 14-15 and 21-22. The park will be tailor-made for children, with the opportunity to access 15 different rides dedicated to little guests and, lest we forget about older siblings, there are four Adventure rides: Magic House, Jungle Rapids, Mammut and Blue Tornado.

The new season will bring about new additions, ranging from the Meet&Greet sessions with characters such as the 44 GATTI Rock Show (an all-cat rock band), to large-scale attractions such as the spectacular cinematic effects of Wonder Woman – The 4D experience and the dazzling water tricks of Aqua Fantasia –

Storie di acqua, luci e colori (Stories of water, lights and colours).

Another new attraction is LEGOLAND Water park, opening on May 28. It is the first LEGOLAND Water Park in Europe, as well as the first in the world.

The park will extend over a 15,000 square metre area and will be located near the Peppa Pig Land and Fantasy Kingdom areas.

This year's new addition at Gardaland SEA LIFE Aquarium will instead be Oceano Interattivo (Interactive Ocean), a completely renovated room that will offer its little guests an original, creative experience. After observing the marine creatures of the Aquarium's tanks the children will get a chance to draw and colour fish on paper, position their creations in a scanner and then see the bright drawings in a virtual aquarium projected on the wall.

Notti all'Acquario (Nights at the Aquarium) will return, an evocative event that allows children between the

age of eight and 12 to spend the night inside the aquarium.

The resort is open on the weekends of March 14-15 and 21-22 and then from March 28 to November 1.

Gardaland offers different season pass options, starting from €49. Those renewing their pass by April 19 will enjoy a €5 discount on the price of the pass (Junior passes excluded) and will be able to enter a competition called "Abbonato rinnovato" (Renewed Passholder) with prizes such as a one LEGO set every week and one stay for four people at Gardaland Magic Hotel.

Starting from this year, the resort has introduced Gardaland Club, an exclusive membership – available from February 2020 – with offers such as access to other LEGOLAND parks across Europe.

During the Prezzemolo & Friends weekend, the price of the ticket, which includes Gardaland Park and Gardaland SEA LIFE Aquarium, will be €20 (single fare). www.gardaland.it

Gear up for the adrenaline rush

CANADA'S WONDERLAND in Vaughan has announced a thrilling new waterpark attraction set to open in summer 2020. Mountain Bay Cliffs – a multi-level cliff jumping activity – is sure to provide thrills, with the highest diving point standing 25 metres high. The 2020 season pass is on sale now. It will give unlimited visits to Canada's Wonderland and Splash Works all season long along with bring-a-friend discounts, early ride times and more. It costs \$75.99. www.canadaswonderland.com



TEXAS THRILLS

SEAWORLD San Antonio has announced exciting details about Texas Stingray, set to become the tallest, fastest and longest wooden roller coaster in the state of Texas, opening in spring 2020.

This coaster will reach a top speed of 55 mph and will be located across from the new Turtle Reef exhibit between Orca Stadium and the Rio Loco river rapids ride.

Scott Bacon, vice president of General Services for SeaWorld San Antonio, said: "Texas Stingray marks a new wave of excitement for SeaWorld. We continue to provide new reasons to visit SeaWorld and offer exciting new adventures for our guests with a blend of thrilling rides, family attractions and

incredible animal and educational experiences."

The riders will experience a hundred-foot drop, a hundred-foot tunnel and much more.

Texas Stingray marks a major addition to the theme park's roller coaster portfolio. The park will now be home to five coaster experiences, spanning a range of ages.

The best way for guests to enjoy this coaster, and all of SeaWorld, is with a Fun Card or Annual Pass. A SeaWorld Fun Card is \$67.50, or guests can enjoy the entire 2020 SeaWorld season with a Two Park Fun Card with access to SeaWorld and Aquatica for the full 2020 season priced at \$89.99. *For more information, including how to save up to 30% on*

FAST facts

FEATURES:

57° first drop, 76° high turn

RIDE LENGTH:

3,379 feet of track

DROP HEIGHT:

100-ft. drop

MAXIMUM SPEED:

55 mph

MAXIMUM HEIGHT:

96 feet

TUNNEL:

100 feet

AIRTIME HILLS:

16

SeaWorld Silver, Gold, and Platinum Annual Passes, visit www.SeaWorldSanAntonio.com

'Free fall' in California

SEAWORLD San Diego is constructing Emperor, a new dive coaster, slated to open this summer.

Emperor will be tallest, fastest and longest dive coaster in California, as well as the only floorless dive coaster in the state. Climbing to 153 feet with feet dangling in the air, riders on Emperor will be suspended on a 45-degree angle at the crown of the ride before plunging down a 143-foot facedown vertical drop, accelerating to more than 60 miles per hour.

This exciting new attraction will highlight an important new animal-conservation partnership between SeaWorld and Penguins International, an organisation dedicated to penguin conservation and research, which will focus on penguin awareness and the conservation needs of this special aquatic bird. A portion of the proceeds from sales of penguin merchandise at the Emperor retail store will be donated to Penguins International to support their important conservation, education and research efforts.

The best value ticket for visiting SeaWorld San Diego is the SeaWorld California One Day Ticket with Six Days Free, which gives ticket holders unlimited access to the park for. Tickets start at £57 per person.

www.seaworldcalifornia.co.uk



ALL PLAY, NO WORK

Kids and parents can immerse themselves in Haven's fresh line of entertainment for 2020



HAVEN IS inviting families to its 36 parks nationwide and immerse themselves in entertainment courtesy of the Seaside Squad, the fun-loving, mischief-making characters.

The park operator has introduced several new shows for 2020 including: Bamboozle: Children can enjoy this treasure hunt-style game where the kids have to beat the pirates of Haven Bay to hidden goodies at the park, before the pirates add it to their stash.

Higher Love is a summer concert comprising chart hits from the '90s to the present day. Families can dance the night away to the soulful sounds of Whitney Houston, Stevie Wonder, Bruno Mars, Beyoncé and many more.

At night, families are invited to the Royal Rumble as the kings of pop take on the queens in a showdown, including Prince versus Madonna, Michael Jackson versus Whitney Houston and Ed Sheeran versus Beyoncé, with guests deciding the winners.

Haven Scientist offers coastal

experiments galore for kids and their parents, such as creating an underwater volcano, exploring waves and tides, creating a whirlpool and making your very own lava lamp.

The operator offers a packed activity programme that allows families to enjoy quality time. With rugged coastline and plenty of flora, fauna and wildlife on the doorstep, the Nature Rockz programme offers adventurers the chance to explore the great outdoors with expert Park Rangers guiding their way.

Families can also experience the Haven Vision of the Future at a choice of five parks including: Craig Tara, Hafan y Môr, Seashore, Haggerston Castle and Hopton.

A three-night break starts from £120 for the whole family. This price is based on a family of up to four sharing a Standard two-bedroom Caravan at Golden Sands, Lincolnshire, when arriving on April 24.

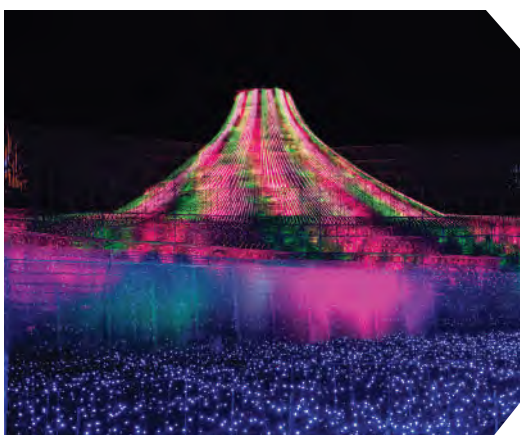
Spring into Efteling's new family coaster

FROM THIS spring, guests can join in the pranks of the naughty schoolboys Max and Moritz when they first experience the family roller coaster at Efteling as the fairytale theme park in the Netherlands added the last two track sections for the new dual-tracked, family roller coaster.

After attaching nearly 5,000 nuts and bolts, the 59th and 60th track sections have been installed. This completes the two different track courses of the new ride, which includes the Max and the Moritz course. Located on the spot where the Efteling classic Bob the bobsleigh ride once stood, two different tracks of 300 metres each now stand. Now that the courses are complete, work will begin on the Alpine landscape around the family roller coaster.



The ride and the station building will be heated without using gas. For renovation, sustainable FSC wood type Accoya has been used as the woodwork on the outside of the building. When the trains slow down, the energy released is fed back into the electricity grid. This is used to drive the roller coaster.



Witness Naba no Sato's 'Niagara Falls' in lights

NABANA NO Sato theme park dedicated to flowers is one of the biggest and best illumination displays in Japan. Throughout the winter months from October through to the end of March, the park is illuminated with around eight million LED lights creating a fairy tale winter wonderland. The theme changes from year to year. This year's theme is 'Niagara Falls', and the light display will create the falls 20 metres in height and a 120 metres in width. Each year the world-famous light tunnel is installed, which is 200 metres in length and uses around 1.2 million light bulbs creating remarkable views. In recent years a slightly shorter tunnel called Kawazu Sakura tunnel has been introduced. This is 100 metres long, using 700,000 pink LED lights to resemble cherry blossoms. www.japan.travel/en/uk/

Japan's first Moominvalley park

MOOMINVALLEY THEME park, northwest of Tokyo, is the second Moomin theme park in the world with the original being situated in Finland. The hippo-like characters have been a huge hit in Japan since they were dreamt up in Finland back in the 1900s. The Metsä Village, a Nordic-themed complex, is laden with trees hosting a huge lake with a Finnish-themed twist enabling visitors to get a taste of Finland during their visit.

Unlike most Japanese theme parks, this park does not offer a plethora of amusement rides as it focuses on living the life of a Moomin, in harmony with nature. Guests can enjoy Moomin-themed foods, live theatre shows, and learn about the Moomin history in a three-storey exhibition facility with fascinating displays of rare merchandise including Moomin figures from the 1950s. There is a zipline taking guests from one Moomin area to another. From here, guests head to Hemulen's playground where a large treehouse shaped playground stands on top of a small hill.
www.japan.travel/en/uk/

Dubai discounts with free theme park access

GUESTS STAYING at the four star Lapita Hotel in Dubai will get complimentary access to all Dubai Parks and Resorts where they can have interactive fun at Legoland Dubai, splash their way at Legoland Waterpark or immerse themselves in three motion picture studios – DreamWorks Animation, Columbia Pictures and Lionsgate. Additionally, they can explore the five zones inspired by the Bollywood blockbusters or head to Riverland, a fun dining and retail destination. The Lapita Hotel is located within the parks for easy access and boasts a selection of premium facilities including two pools, a river and a signature spa.

Prices start from £685 per person for a three-night stay, in a Deluxe King Resort View with complimentary upgrade from breakfast to half board and return economy Emirates flights. It includes complimentary access to all Dubai Parks and Resorts parks for each night booked. It is valid for travel on selected dates from May 27 to June 26 for bookings made by March 31. Price is based on flights from London Gatwick.

Guests staying at the five-star Caesars Palace Bluewaters Dubai, can enjoy complimentary access to Mattel Playtown. They can relax, splash, slide or surf at the Laguna Waterpark. Those looking for adventure can go for the Free Fall where they can step inside the glass capsule skybox and allow the floor to drop from under them. Jump aboard the circular raft and experience surprising twists and turns before dropping onto the massive manta wing and



experiencing zero-gravity. Other facilities include Gordon Ramsay Hell's Kitchen, royal pampering at Qua Spa, an upscale party atmosphere at Cove Beach, vibrant nightlife and a thrilling line up of live entertainment at The Rotunda.

The package is priced from £825 per person for a three-night stay, with a complimentary room upgrade from Palace Deluxe Room with Resort View to Palace Deluxe King Room with Partial Ocean View on a half board basis and return economy Emirates flights. Complimentary access to Laguna Waterpark or Green Park or Mattel Playtown per room per night. Six complimentary drinks per room per day on selected drinks. Price is valid for travel on selected dates from June 1 to 26 and is based on flights from London Gatwick. Bookings must be made by March 31.

What is the best reason to visit Australia?



Jeanette Ratcliffe

Publisher
jeanette.ratcliffe@travelbulletin.co.uk
Visit relatives and see koalas!



Matt Gill

Senior Account Manager
matt.gill@travelbulletin.co.uk
I can visit my best friend from uni!



Ashweenee Beerjeraz

Events Assistant
ashweenee.beerjeraz@travelbulletin.co.uk
Bondi Beach with Liam Hemsworth!



Georgia Lewis

Managing Editor - News
news@travelbulletin.co.uk
My family - and my old local pub!



Tim Podger

Account Manager - Far East
tim.podger@travelbulletin.co.uk
Diverse habitat.



Alice Tully

Events Assistant
alice.tully@travelbulletin.co.uk
Eating, beaching and live music.



Mariam Ahmad

Staff Writer - News
news@travelbulletin.co.uk
Hug a (non-aggressive) koala.



Bill Coad

Account Manager
bill.coad@travelbulletin.co.uk
Because there is lots to Didgeridoo!



Vidwan Reddy

Online Editorial Assistant
vidwan.reddy@travelbulletin.co.uk
Kangaroos.



Sarah Terry

Account Manager
sarah.terry@travelbulletin.co.uk
Stunning beaches and Aussie wit.



Simon Eddolls

Sales Director
simon.eddolls@travelbulletin.co.uk
It's only a short hop to New Zealand!



Hannah Carter

Events Coordinator
hannah.carter@travelbulletin.co.uk
The Great Barrier Reef.

EVENTS

events@travelbulletin.co.uk

PRODUCTION

production@travelbulletin.co.uk

CIRCULATION

circulation@travelbulletin.co.uk



Win a #SagaVIP day this January and February!

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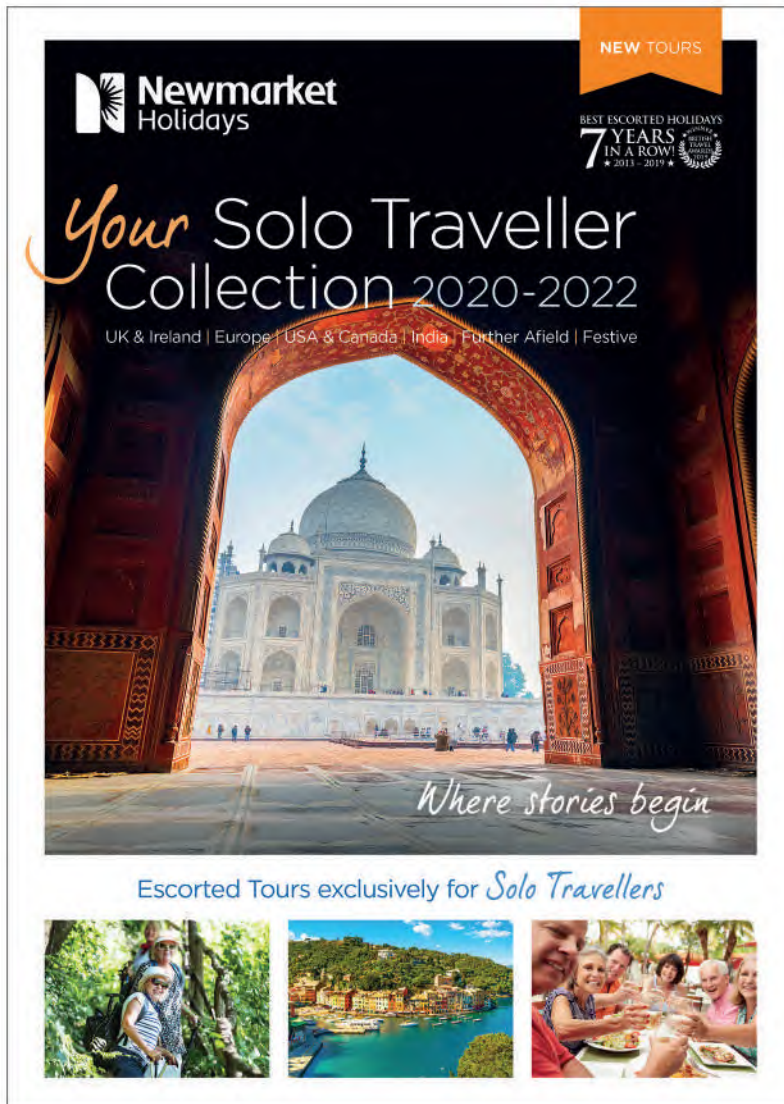
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W8164 / W8179

January incentive terms and conditions: Every booking you make from December 30, 2019 to February 29, 2020 will automatically be entered into a weekly prize draw to win one of 8 VIP days for four people. One winner will be drawn per week for 9 weeks. Prize includes chauffeur service up to 250 miles each way. For terms and conditions visit sagaagents.co.uk/trade/incentives. Saga holidays are for anyone aged 50+. A travel companion may be 40+. NTA-AP6252

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