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# The Art of Travel 旅行的艺术

## Newsletter December 2014

SPECIALIST AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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### NEW ZEALAND

#### APP BACK IN TIME

ARTS, Culture and Heritage Minister Maggie Barry has launched a free app to help people explore New Zealand's early history. The Path to Nationhood app has been developed by Heritage New Zealand and includes six tours of historic Northland. It is free to download on smartphones and tablets.

#### LUXURY LODGES OF NZ BOOKLET

The additional 3 luxury lodges to the group are now featured in the latest edition of the brochure.

a) Starting in the south, The Lodge at the Hills joins the group adding a property to the ever popular premium location of Queenstown. This Lodge is located on the world class Hills golf course (home to the New Zealand Golf Open). The lodge is available on an exclusive use basis with capacity for up to 12 guests and includes a private chef, host and concierge services.

b) In North Island [Poronui Lodge](#) is one of New Zealand's iconic high-country properties that truly embrace luxury in a wilderness setting. Situated between Taupo and the Hawkes Bay it is a perfect location to break the drive between these two popular destinations. Those passionate about country pursuits might never want to move on.

c) And we are also delighted to welcome one of New Zealand's original luxury Lodges, [Solitaire Lodge](#) on Lake Tarawera, near Rotorua. Styled with comfort in mind, all 10 luxurious suites feature

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panoramic views of the glassy lake and magnificent volcano through grand picture windows. Skim across the lake in a kayak or enjoy world class trout fishing, or simply chill out in a hot water pool.

#### NEW ZEALAND HAILED AS THE "ULTIMATE DREAM DESTINATION" ONCE AGAIN

At the Lonely Planet Traveller Destination Awards 2014, New Zealand took the coveted prize of "Ultimate Dream Destination", one of only eight awards from the international destinations category, in Thailand. The findings were the result of an online survey conducted amongst the magazine's readers from July to September this year, in order to celebrate the tourism industry and to encourage Thai travellers to visit some of the best tourist destinations.

#### AIR NEW ZEALAND NAMED AIRLINE OF THE YEAR

AirlineRatings.com, the world's only safety and product rating website, has announced the selection of Air New Zealand as its Airline of the Year for 2015.

Air New Zealand is being honored for the second consecutive year for its award winning in-flight innovations, record financial performance, operational safety and motivation of its staff that have stamped the airline an industry trendsetter.

#### NEW DOMESTIC AIRLINE PLANNED FOR NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand could get a new domestic carrier which will plan to serve regional markets being jettisoned by Air New Zealand. Ewan Wilson, founder of the defunct carrier Kiwi Air, plans a new airline startup set to launch in 2016, which will look to "fill the gaps" left in the domestic market by Air New Zealand's recent cutbacks. The so far unnamed new airline would not directly compete with Air NZ on the same routes Wilson said. Air NZ announced

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last month it was cutting several domestic routes including Taupo to Wellington, Whangarei to Wellington, and Palmerston North to Nelson. Wilson said there was a "significant niche opportunity" for airlines to serve regional routes and said the soon to be scrapped Taupo to Wellington route was being "seriously looked at."

### **CROWNE PLAZA PLANNED FOR CHRISTCHURCH**

IHG has signed a management agreement to develop the 200-room Crowne Plaza Christchurch, signalling the company's commitment to the city's economic revival. The property is adjacent to the planned site for the new convention Centre to open in 2017. It will be a conversion of a commercial building owned by a consortium of local investors. The hotel will be one of the tallest buildings in the city and will feature up to five suites and 195 guest rooms.

### **NOT ALL HAPPY CRUISE PASSENGERS "SWAMPING" AKAROA (NZ)**

There are mixed feelings in Akaroa over the booming cruise industry, which critics say can sometimes swamp the small settlement with visitors. Before the Christchurch earthquakes, about six liners a year visited Akaroa. This season more than 70 are expected.

On March 17 next year, the Dawn Princess, Queen Mary 2 and Queen Victoria bring more than 6,500 passengers and 3,750 crewmembers. Residents having been assured Akaroa were only taking ships while Lyttelton repaired its broken berthing facilities. Cafes do well but others complain that passengers occupy tables for hours, drinking a single cup of coffee or tea, thereby keeping patrons away from purchasing meals and drinks. Or they head to Christchurch or the high country for Lord of the Rings tours. Akaroa districts promotions' Hollie Hollander says most of the town loves the income and

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vibrancy. Many visitors would revisit on self-drive tours.

### **NEW APP HAS 500 PLACES TO GO (NZ)**

Canterbury University graduate student Marcia Butterfield has produced a nationwide app listing 500 of the best cafes, bars, restaurants, shops and events in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The Neat Places website and smart phone app has just been launched. Visit: [www.neatplaces.co.nz](http://www.neatplaces.co.nz).

### **INTERCITY (NZ) PUTS THE SPARK INTO WIFI**

InterCity has selected Spark Digital as its partner to launch WIFI across its entire fleet. From this summer travellers and tourists will access seamless 3G and 4G mobile WIFI across the large passenger transport network. InterCity chief executive officer John Thorburn says the company will be the only nationwide long distance bus company to have free WIFI on every route.

### **FAREWELL ARAHURA FERRY (NZ)**

Many of you will be familiar with Arahura as our longest-serving ship currently working Cook Strait. She's been with TranzRail since 1981, and has completed more than 50,000 crossings of the Strait, covering over 4.6 million kilometres.

However, she is due for a special survey in the middle of 2015, and indications are she will require significant investment, to the tune of over \$30 million, in order to maintain her to the required standards. With this in mind, the time has come for her to be retired. Arahuras last day with Interislander will be mid-year 2015.

An agreement with the owners of the "Stena Alegria" to join our fleet from mid-2015 has been signed.

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The Stena is a much larger and newer ship, and was an able replacement for the Aratere earlier this year. She'll be getting a full revamp of her passenger areas, to increase her capacity from 350 to 520, while providing a comparable service to Kaitaki and Aratere.

## AUSTRALIA

### **SYDNEY TO HOST WORLD CONGRESS OF ACCOUNTANTS 2018**

Sydney has again outshone its competitors, winning the right to host 5,000 leading accounting professionals at the next World Congress of Accountants (WCOA) in 2018, an event worth \$18 million to New South Wales (NSW).

"Sydney is recognized globally as an international finance hub and business center. It is home to Australia's strongest corporate, finance and professional services sectors – 16 of the 25 top accounting firms call our Harbour City home. In fact, more than 45 per cent (by revenue) of the top 500 companies in Australia are located in NSW," NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade and Investment Troy Grant said.

### **SYDNEY SECURES ANOTHER SOUGHT-AFTER EVENT FOR ICC SYDNEY IN 2017**

Nineteen events worth a combined \$150 million have now been secured for International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) following the news that Sydney has been selected as the host city for the International Chamber of Commerce World Chambers Federation (ICC WCF) World Chambers Congress in 2017. This will be the first time the conference, which is worth \$3.3 million to the New South Wales (NSW) economy and will bring about 1,000 delegates to Sydney, has been hosted by an Australian city.

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### **TASMANIA'S WEST COAST WILDERNESS RAILWAY ROLLS OUT NEW ITINERARIES**

Tasmania's stunning West Coast Wilderness Railway is moving full steam ahead, launching two new itineraries in time for the holiday season for passengers keen to explore some of the state's historic hidden gems.

From December 15, 2014, visitors will be able to experience the Railway's rich history on the full day 'Queenstown Explorer'. Departing Mondays and Tuesdays from Strahan's original harbourside Regatta Point Station, the tour takes in the King River Gorge, the "rack" section of the railway track, magnificent rainforest and all stations along the way. The journey will return to Strahan around 6pm.

### **VIRGIN AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST SERVICE**

Virgin Australia today announced it will start a direct service between Adelaide and Alice Springs, it is the first full service market for almost ten years. From March 2015, Virgin Australia will operate three direct services a week between Adelaide and Alice Springs, providing an important connection to central Australia. The new schedule will utilize Virgin Australia's 176-seat Boeing 737-800 aircraft, which includes complimentary wireless inflight entertainment for all passengers.

### **ACCOR ANNOUNCES 5-STAR SYDNEY AIRPORT HOTEL**

Accor announced end of NOV that they will be part of a new mixed-use hotel, commercial and retail precinct to be developed in Mascot, near Sydney Airport.

The hotel group has signed a management agreement with Goodman to manage a 5-star hotel to be badged Pullman Sydney Airport as part of a new AUD\$100 million development project that will encompass extensive office and retail facilities.

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Once operational, Pullman Sydney Airport will join Australia's fastest growing 5-star hotel network which has recently expanded to 13 hotels and resorts across nine locations.

#### **LIZARD ISLAND (OZ) IS SET TO RE-OPEN**

Lizard Island in North Queensland looks likely to reopen 1 March next year. This follows 12 months of extensive refurbishment and rebuilding after the impact of Cyclone Ita. There are some new additions to the accommodation, including a new standalone suite, The Villa. It has two bedrooms both with en-suites and the master bathroom a luxury bath, a butler's kitchen, plunge pool and wrap around deck. The villa is on top of a ridge and has views across Sunset Beach and the Coral Sea.

#### **DOUBLETREE BY HILTON PULLS INTO FLINDERS STREET**

Hilton Worldwide has announced the opening of the new DoubleTree by Hilton Melbourne – Flinders Street, the brand's first property in Melbourne.

Previously known as the Citigate Melbourne, the hotel debuts as a comprehensive multi-million dollar refurbishment to create a modern boutique-style 180 room hotel, taking its design cues from its location in the heart of cool, urban Melbourne and its famous neighbour, Flinders Street Station.

#### **ALL GO FOR SHARK DIVING IN SA**

Australia's shark cage diving industry is set to boom, with the announcement of extended licences for operators at Port Lincoln. The three licenced operators will be offered 10 year licences. Cage diving with Great White Sharks has become a significant tourism drawcard for South Australia, growing by 30 per cent over the past three years.

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#### **CORAL PRINCESS ANNOUNCES 2016 SOLAR ECLIPSE EXPEDITIONS**

Australia's small ship cruise line Coral Princess Cruises has announced details of an expedition to witness the total solar eclipse occurring in Indonesia on the morning of 09 March 2016. Two itineraries are on offer to experience the eclipse; a 24-night New Guinea Circle programme commences in Alotau (Papua New Guinea) on 23 February 2016 and incorporates the Eastern PNG coast, Raja Ampat and the Spice Islands before concluding in Darwin, whilst a shorter 14-night option from Wewak to Darwin departing on 04 April 2016 is also available. Guests will be able to experience the entire three hour transition of the moon, including some three and a half minutes of totality, where 'day turns to night' as the moon completely obscures the sun.

#### **Australia to trial new online Visa process for Chinese travellers**

The National Tourism Alliance (NTA) has announced plans to trial a new program to streamline the visa application process for Chinese tourists.

The modernised, online application process aims to target the increasing number of Chinese travellers who venture overseas each year.

The program will help Australia stay in a strong position amongst other international destinations that compete for the millions of Chinese travellers.

NTA chief executive officer Juliana Payne said that Chinese visitors are a vital market as they top the list for the share of spending in Australia.

"In the year ending September 2014, visitors from China to Australia increased by 10 per cent to 736,000", China is expected to contribute nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) of the increase in inbound visitor arrivals over the next seven years,"

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Ms Payne said.

“Streamlining the visa process for visitors by cutting red tape is one of the many ways that the Federal Government can help Australian tourism to maximise its economic and job creation potential.”

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## SOUTH PACIFIC

### JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU RESORT

Located in Fiji's Northern Island of Vanua Levu, Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort is a five-star eco-resort and spa, where heavenly surroundings combine with an unsurpassed range of luxury hotel activities. For couples and families this is the ultimate resort which is truly reflective of a Fijian holiday.

### FIJI PRINCESS

Blue Lagoon Cruises ship, *Fiji Princess*, is the perfect way to experience the Yasawa Islands. If your clients want to experience a number of the islands in the region then this is an ideal option to recommend.

**MANTARAY ISLAND RESORT** is located in the beautiful Yasawa Islands. In pristine blue waters surrounded by rich coral reefs and marine life, this is the ideal location for the once in a lifetime experience to swim with the Mantarays' (seasonal). The resort suits backpackers and travellers looking for a little more luxury accommodation - it even caters for the family holiday market.

### ARANUI CRUISES WAIVE SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS FOR 2015 TAHITI SAILINGS

Aranui Cruises for the first time will dispense with single supplements on a number of 2015 voyages, offering single travellers a more cost effective way to discover the Tahiti islands.

The standard 50% single supplement fee will be waived representing a saving of nearly \$3000 on a typical cruise.

It is available for six voyages between April and August, including the line's 30th anniversary cruise on April 25. Aranui 3 has a capacity for 200 passengers in suites with private balconies and deluxe and standard twinrooms.

### DOLPHIN ISLAND (FIJI) JOINS VIRTUOSO

Dolphin Island Fiji has been invited to become part of the prestigious Virtuoso Hotels & Resorts Program. A private island retreat accommodating just eight guests, Dolphin Island joins sister property Huka Lodge, New Zealand as a fellow member of the consortia of globally recognised luxury travel agencies. Since its establishment 15 years ago, Virtuoso has evolved into a network of 336 travel agencies in North and South America, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, with a total of 8,900 advisors.

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