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The Art of Travel
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Newsletter February 2015

SPECIALIST AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand hotel sector posts record year

The Average Daily Rate (ADR) sat at NZD\$144, up almost NZD\$5, thus bringing Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) to NZD\$109, an NZD\$8 improvement on 2013. "The 2014 hotel results reflect both the improvement in New Zealand's economy and the increase in international visitor arrivals we saw during the year. Almost every region is seeing record results, with the exception of Christchurch where a significant recovery in the supply of available rooms due to hotel openings and re-openings has affected the statistics," Ms Attfield, TIA hotel sector manager, said. The high national occupancy level puts New Zealand on a par with Australian hotels, where the December occupancy was 76 per cent, according to STR Global data. Overview of latest international travel trends four weeks ended 21 December 2014 International visitor arrivals

Total visitor arrivals are up 3% compared to the same four-week period last year.

UP: China 42%, Korea 19%, India 14%, Singapore 13%, Germany 10%, Canada 8%, Japan 7%, USA

DOWN: Australia 3%, UK 4%

DID YOU KNOW? International tourism (travel and passenger transport) accounts for 29% of the world's exports of services and 6% of overall exports of goods and services. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks fifth after fuels, chemicals, food and automotive products, while ranking first in many developing countries. Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer

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NYT highlights NZ's shrinking assets (glaciers)

NEW Zealand's retreating glaciers have been given high profile in the New York Times. An article by Mike Ives shows global warming is having uneven economic effects on tour operators around the globe whose businesses depend on snow and ice. Guided glacier hiking began at Fox in 1928 and is a main reason for the area's popularity as a destination for international travelers, he says. But Fox Glacier Guiding has been unable to take visitors onto the ice on foot since April, when glacial retreat caused a river to change course, blocking access to a popular hiking trail. Franz Josef Glacier Guides lost hiking access in 2012, also because of retreating ice. Now air landings by helicopter are the only way to set foot on the glaciers.

Choice Hotels Teeing Off 2015 With New Zealand Golf

With Golf holding the mantle as the highest participation sport in the country with over 482,000 Kiwis playing the game, Choice Hotels Australasia (Choice) is driving into 2015 as the official accommodation provider of New Zealand Golf (NZ Golf). New Zealand Golf, the governing body of golf in New Zealand, represents 395 clubs across the country and runs over 20 national golf events with a total of 2,800 event participants and over 130,000 registered members. The new partnership will enable Choice Hotels to provide exclusive accommodation offers to the golfing community and really cements Choice Hotels as the golfing industry's accommodation partner across Australasia, following last year's resigning with the PGA of Australia.

An update from the team at Volcanic Air

We have some fantastic news and are delighted to have been afforded a concession to land on Mount Tarawera! This is without question one of New Zealand's most iconic landmarks and it is a real

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privilege for the team to be able to share this stunning experience with our valued clients. As the site of the largest eruption in New Zealand's living memory Mount Tarawera is not only stunning and dramatic in term of its visual beauty it is also shrouded in a rich culture and diverse history. Combined with White Island the contrast of these two iconic New Zealand landmarks offer a lifetime experience!

Update Tramway Christchurch (NZ)

We are very pleased to announce that the extension to the Christchurch Tramway opened mid February. The full journey on the Tram will take 50 minutes and will include 17 stops. Trams will run approximately every 15 minutes. Tickets are valid all day and customers are able to embark and disembark at each stop as they wish. The Trams will run in a figure-8 pattern, passing twice through Cathedral Square in completing one full circuit.

Mantra Group joins the Christchurch revitalisation

April 2015 will see the BreakFree Hotel reopen on Cashel street, with a fully reconstructed 263 room hotel, managed by The Mantra Group. A total investment of over \$30m has been committed to the project, which will also see the hotel reach a Grade A seismic rating, and be the largest 3-4 star rated hotel in Christchurch.

Ramada Suites Christchurch city opens its doors

The recent opening of the Ramada Suites had been perfectly timed to help support the city in one of the busiest times of the year, adding an additional 44 rooms in this boutique-style hotel in the city centre. The four-star hotel offers a mix of studios, one and two-bedroom apartments and will also feature an onsite Columbus Café.

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TNZ engages with luxury

Luxury trade exhibition, Luxperience is continuing its partnership with Tourism New Zealand as a Diamond Partner at this year's event for a fourth year. The business exchange, taking place at Australian Technology Park in Sydney from 6-9 September 2015, will see Tourism New Zealand increase its presence at the exhibition. This year, in addition to partnering in the Luxperience New York City Pop Up event in April, Tourism New Zealand will also host the popular buyers and media lounge within its customized space at Luxperience, surrounded by a large contingent of New Zealand's luxury tourism operators.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's top walking & hiking hotspots

With the rise of numerous award-winning adventure films over the last 12 months – think *Tracks* and *Wild* – a leading travel experience provider has reported a 35% increase in walking and hiking tour bookings. With hundreds of epic hiking trails to choose from, Experience Oz has released a shortlist of Australia's must-experience walking and hiking hotspots for 2015. Experience Oz offers a range of walking experiences, including multi-day and single-day tours, guided or non-guided, and some with food, beverage and accommodation options or inclusions. For more information, please visit <http://www.experienceoz.com.au/australias-walking-hotspots>.

A window to Australia – flightseeing adventures

Australian Air Holidays has just launched its first annual 124 page brochure of over 30 enticing tours. From Birdsville Races to the Kimberley Flightseeing Adventure, the brochure is packed with fresh and unique Aussie bucket list experiences.

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SeaLink grows in Sydney Harbour

SeaLink Travel Group have announced the expansion of its Sydney Harbour fleet, after the acquisition of two 300 passenger, high speed vessels this week. The ferries will be used by SeaLink's Captain Cook Cruises to supply new routes and to create a flexible response to meet growing market demand for services on Sydney Harbour. SeaLink managing director Jeff Ellison said the ferries were ideal for Sydney Harbour and have already been proven on the Circular Quay to Manly service. The purchase of the two vessels follows the recent delivery of 4 new 200 passenger ferries built by the company. This takes the total number of high speed passenger and commuter ferries to 9 vessels on Sydney Harbour, and the total number of the fleet is now 28 vessels.

Solomon Airlines announces Sydney service

Solomon Airlines announced today that it will commence operation of a direct Sydney-Honiara service from 02 June, 2015. Scheduled to operate ex-Honiara on Mondays and ex-Sydney on Tuesdays, the airline will herald the new service with 30 kilogram baggage allowance. The possible connections include Canberra, Melbourne and Perth and internationally, for passengers connecting to and from New Zealand, the US, Asia, the Middle East, the UK and Europe. The new flight schedule will depart Honiara on Monday afternoon at 1515, then arrive in Sydney at 1830 that night. Solomon Airlines will continue its existing Brisbane to Honiara service, however from June 1st it will operate four times a week back and forth from the two cities.

Singapore Airlines to launch new Premium Economy Class

Singapore Airlines, the flag carrier of the country, will launch its new Premium Economy cabin class on

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select flights from Singapore to Sydney, Australia, starting August 9. The new cabin class will be progressively introduced to other sectors, including Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong (China), Delhi and Mumbai (India), Frankfurt (Germany), London (UK), New York (US), Tokyo (Japan) and Zurich (Switzerland) in the latter part of 2015 and early 2016

New major sporting event for Brisbane, Australia

English Premier League giants, Liverpool FC, have announced they will tour Australia in July, kicking off their campaign in Queensland against the Brisbane Roar at Suncorp Stadium. Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) Chief Executive, Leanne Coddington, said Liverpool FC is one of the world's greatest football institutions and securing the match further built on Brisbane's reputation as a premier events destination. "High profile events such as this play an important role in enhancing Queensland's tourism profile and TEQ is proud to support Liverpool FC's tour," Ms Coddington said beginning of February.

Virtuoso makes Australia its regional headquarters

Virtuoso has announced plans to make Australia its regional headquarters in a move that will spearhead expansion into the Asia Pacific region this year. With more than 9,000 travel advisors around the globe, Virtuoso has a turnover of more than USD 4 billion in annual travel sales and has announced the Australian move as part of a global expansion. "Australia and New Zealand's travel agency elite have been Virtuoso members for the past 10 years and this strong foundation in the luxury market continues to drive growth for our brand and allows Virtuoso Australia to be perfectly placed to support our Asia expansion," Virtuoso Asia Pacific managing director Mr Londregan said.

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Major upgrade to Australia.com

In an attempt to boost travel in Australia, Tourism Australia has implemented a major upgrade to Australia.com. As part of a major digital transformation, Tourism Australia is upgrading www.australia.com aimed at improving the site for users. The first phase of changes are now live and have been timed to align with a cooperative campaign Tourism Australia is running with airline partner Virgin Australia. The new-look site includes more than 700 pages of tourism information and works across all devices, and be available in 11 languages. It will also feature content and conversations from Tourism Australia's popular social media channels, giving content a sense of authenticity by showing potential travellers what others have experienced.

SOUTH PACIFIC

More ships to call – Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is set to see an increase of cruise ships in the harbour this year as Tourism Cook Islands targets the potential wealth they can bring to the islands. A total of 36 ships are expected to call this year, compared to 25 in 2014, says Tourism Cook Island director of destination development, Metua Vaiimene.

Sport Fishing PNG & Boat Charters'

introduces a brand new 'mothership' vessel to its fleet - the K2O (Kikori to Oro). Sport Fishing PNG & Boat Charters offers four packages that can be enjoyed by all – from beginners through to expert anglers. Papua New Guinea (PNG) tour operator Sport Fishing PNG & Boat Charters introduces a stunning new addition to their fleet, the K2O (Kikori to Oro). As a live aboard, K2O offers lodgers comfort and style with four twin-share deluxe cabins, two staterooms with suites to accommodate a maximum of 10 people. The six-member crew have

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over two decades of experience in navigation, angling, tour guiding and hospitality in PNG.

Free Wifi compliments the New App Launch at The Warwick Fiji

The Warwick Fiji is now extending FREE Wifi to all their in-house guests for an hour every day. The guests can now connect for free and share their experience via the strong social media platform. This also allows the guests to download the new Warwick App, an innovative mobile app that will equip guests with useful and practical information during their stay at the resort.

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