

# TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

Incorporating Tabs on Travel

Thursday 29 January 2026

Issue 5143

 Fly for business WLG-AKL 7:40am / AKL-WLG 5:30pm weekdays

Flight schedules are subject to change. Check jetstar.com

**Jetstar** 

## Oceania ‘The Lead In To Luxury’

Oceania Cruises is bullish about the year ahead as the cruise line starts 2026 with a new brand positioning, a simplified strategy and a new adults-only policy.



Speaking on board Oceania's Riviera, which made her maiden port call to Auckland at the weekend, Oceania's director of sales ANZ James Sitters (pictured) updated invited agents on its refined offering as 'the lead into luxury' cruising.

With the addition of its Your World inclusion (free gourmet restaurants, wifi, gratuities and non-alcoholic drinks) Sitters says the cruise line has also simplified its proposition for agents to sell. "We are a luxury brand but we're not fully-inclusive so we're giving guests the choice of either the beverage package or the excursion package," Sitters told the agents.

The cruise line has 'seen some incredible growth' from the Kiwi market, adds Sitters as he points out that Oceania is still committed to cruising in New Zealand, as well as the trade distribution.

### ... Cruising Longer

In terms of Kiwi sales trends Sitters says Kiwi cruisers are still 'buying up the ship'; and in terms of hot destinations, Japan and Europe

continue to lead the charge. However, Sitters urges agents with clients considering both destinations to book as early as possible to ensure clients' preferred dates. In Apr Oceania's 2028/29 Japan cruises go on sale, he adds.

The Med continues to be a key seller from the Kiwi market, but the cruise executive says New Zealanders are now cruising longer—with an average cruise length of 21 days 'which is up significantly' on past years.

At the same time, Oceania's new ship Allura is moving to year-round selling out of Europe, offering shoulder season cruise options and even the chance to take in Europe's cruise markets from an ocean cruise, he adds. "It's a new ship, and a new concept for us, so I think it's going to appeal to Kiwis looking to avoid the crowds."

Another change, which is benefitting Oceania sales out of New Zealand, adds Sitters, is the NCL Holdings move to a tri-brand loyalty program. "We are seeing some great results from that," he adds.

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### Ritz Wolgan Valley



Emirates Wolgan Valley, in Australia's Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area, will reopen as a Ritz-Carlton Lodge mid-2026.

The property is set on a nearly 3000ha conservancy, and when it reopens (since closing in 2023) it will offer 40 lodges, each with a pool as well as a main homestead housing the arrival lounge and sitting room, a signature restaurant, a lounge bar and a wine room. Other amenities will include a pool, tennis courts, equestrian stables, a modern fitness centre, and the world-renowned The Ritz-Carlton Spa. See more [HERE](#).

### Tonga Training Portal



The Tongan Tourism Authority has launched an on-line training portal for Kiwi travel agents.

The platform is designed to offer bite-sized, practical modules for agents to build destination knowledge.

To celebrate the launch, the Tonga Tourism Authority is running a trade prize draw. Agents who complete modules by 12 Feb will go into a draw to win a prize hamper valued at over \$100. Every module completed earns one entry. See more details [HERE](#).

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**Solomons CEO**

Matthew Findlay has been named the new ceo of Solomon Airlines. He will step into the role from 16 Feb, following a six-month global search.



Findlay has an extensive career in the aviation industry in Oceania, Europe and North America.

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**AKL: 60 Years Of Connecting Kiwis**

Auckland Airport is today celebrating its 60 years since its doors first opened, and its chief executive Carrie Hurihanganui says New Zealanders' passion for travel remains as strong as ever.

When the doors opened in 1966, 700,000 travellers connected through AKL—and in 2025 that rose to 18.9 million; and further growth is ahead.

As such, AKL is using the anniversary to highlight the importance of its new integrated international and domestic terminal with state-of-the-art check-in and baggage facilities.

“We’re building for the future to serve the needs of travellers, airlines and the wider economy for decades to come,” says Hurihanganui.

The new terminal will boost traveller processing capacity by 44% and add 26% more capacity for domestic airline seats, with a further 10% available through flexible bus lounge operations, she adds.



**... Lego Airport**

To mark the milestone, the airport has unveiled a large-scale Lego model showcasing its future terminal and the original 1960s terminal, created by Auckland Lego builder Jon-Paul Hansen. It took more than 25,000 bricks and over 200 hours to complete the model, which can be found in the international terminal. Hansen says it has been a fantastic project to work on, ‘full of nostalgia’. Hurihanganui is also marking the milestone with a message of thanks, to airline and ground handling partners, border agency partners, and the hundreds of companies and thousands of people ‘who make the airport ecosystem hum’.

**Win A Trip To Ireland**



Brendan Vacations’ Australasian launch sale, on bespoke 2026 journeys in Ireland and Scotland, has been extended to 27 Feb.

There’s up to \$3400 per couple off on small group tours, up to \$2000 per couple off on private driver and luxe self-drive tours, and up to \$1400 off on self-drive and rail vacations. “The response to our launch in the ANZ market has been fantastic,” says Adventure World’s Elsa McLean.

**... Incentive**

There’s also still time to enter Brendan’s Green Carpet Sell & Win incentive, offering six spots on a luxury family to Ireland in Oct. The seven-day tour through Dublin, Cork and Kilarney includes a stay at five-star Dromoland Castle. To enter, consultants must book and deposit any new 2026 Brendan Vacations booking by 28 Feb, with a minimum land value of \$5000. The top six agents with the highest sales during the incentive will win. See [HERE](#).

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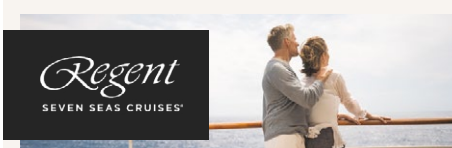
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**Aman At Sea**



The first voyages for Amangati, Aman at Sea's first ocean-going motor yacht, have been revealed. The 180m vessel will sail from the Northern Spring of 2027, offering five- to eight-night Mediterranean journeys with a focus on late departures and overnight stays. Departures will be timed with cultural moments, such as the Cannes Film Festival, along with a program of cultural, artistic and historical experiences on shore. On board, the nine-deck yacht will offer 47 suites each with a terrace, an Aman Spa, numerous dining venues, a jazz club, cinema and youth lounge. Reservations for Amangati are now open. See the brochure [HERE](#), and the website [HERE](#).

# How Travel Plans Are Changing

The way people are planning their travel is changing, with the destination no longer the key consideration for some, but rather crowd levels, cultural connection and opportunities to be active, shows a new report

The European Travel Commission research shows more than 55% of European travellers are actively seeking less popular or off-the-beaten-path destinations, and the commission is not alone in these findings.

Booking.com reports an increasing desire for quieter destinations, with some 43% of travellers saying they would holiday specifically to feel closer to the natural world, and 25% turning to 'quieter' hobbies on vacation.

Skyscanner data also shows travellers are increasingly prioritising trips that reflect personal interests, rather than traditional sightseeing itineraries, stating that in 2026, travellers are curating trips that feel more in tune with who they are and what they love. "With the cost of living still



top of mind, trips in 2026 are being built with purpose," it states. "They're shaped around passions, priorities and a personal sense of 'worth it'."

### ... Destinations

As for what European destinations and what travel styles cater well to these trends, active trips lead the way with tour operator UTracks explaining that the focus of these holidays is not on ticking off landmarks, but on 'how you move through a place and how it makes you feel'.

Regions such as coastal Portugal and rural and alpine Italy are recommended, alongside France and southern Spain.

### WLG Fave Closing



Spruce Goose, a popular Lyall Bay café close to Wellington Airport, is closing its doors after 12 years. The café made a Facebook post on Mon (see [HERE](#)), advising it was unable to secure a new lease. It will close on 08 Feb. The dining venue made for a perfect pre- or post-flight pause for passengers on their way to/from WLG. According to wide-spread reports, a new business is scheduled to take over the site later this year.

### SQ Operating Results

Singapore Airlines ended 2025 on a high, with the group reporting Dec rises in passengers and capacity. The group's combined passenger carriage rose 4.8% year-on-year to 3.8 million (a new monthly record) following a 1.9% rise in passenger traffic and 2.6% rise in passenger capacity. This brings the total passenger carriage for 2025 to 41.6 million, 6.6% higher than the previous record of 39 million in 2024.

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**New Cosmos Tours**



Cosmos has bolstered its North America, Canada and Alaska portfolio with two new tours for 2027 as it reports strong demand for Canada and affordable cruise tours in 2026.

New additions include the 13-day *America's Greatest Treasures with Denver Start & Rocky Mountaineer Canyon Spirit Extension*, which explores the American West with a highlight being three days aboard Rocky Mountaineer's Canyon Spirit train. Prices start from \$10,289 per person.

Also new is the 18-day *Western Canada by Rail with Calgary Stampede & Alaska Cruise*, from \$12,766pp, with this tour including the Calgary Stampede, a two-day Rocky Mountaineer rail journey and a cruise.

The full 2027 line-up is open for bookings; see more [HERE](#).

**Atlas Ocean Luxury Sailing Yacht**

Atlas Ocean Voyages is building its first luxury expedition sailing yacht, the *Atlas Adventurer* (render pictured), which Cruise World says will be ideal for the Kiwi explorer.

The new 400-passenger ship will have seven dining venues, five lounges and cocktail bar social spaces, and two outdoor bars.

A fitness and wellness centre, large pool and purpose-built expedition capabilities like Zodiacs, luxury motorboats and a marina platform with an ocean pool will be available to guests. It will be eco-friendly with hybrid propulsion and solid sails, and feature advanced marine systems and is equipped with three carbon masts.

*Adventurer* will offer 200 suites, increased space and amenities and a broader range of dining, wellness and social offerings.

**... Great Kiwi Fit**

Cruise World, the New Zealand gsa for Atlas Ocean Voyages, is excited about the opportunity. "It fits really well for Kiwis, it's almost cruising for non-cruisers, and for boating Kiwis, a sailing ship allows them to be connected with the water in ways they are familiar with," says Cruise World gm Cheryl Browne. The upcoming eco-friendly luxury



expedition sailing ship also opens cruising up to a new demographic, adds Browne.

Plus, she says, the new announcement solidifies Atlas Ocean Voyages place in the expedition market and creates a new niche expedition style of cruise. "It's exceptional, we're really excited about it. Agents can be confident offering Atlas Ocean Voyages, and putting it in the mix, and we have had great guest feedback."

Mystic Invest Holding, Atlas' parent company chairman, founder and owner Mario Ferreira says Atlas Ocean Voyages has always been driven by innovation. "With Atlas Adventurer, we are introducing a new generation of luxury expedition sailing yachts."

"These advancements highlight our ongoing commitment to sustainable and innovative tourism, while also expanding the destinations we can explore and enhancing the onboard experiences our guests have come to expect. Atlas Adventurer represents the next evolution in responsible highly technological, comfortable and safe yacht design."

Scheduled to debut late 2028, the Atlas Adventurer will explore destinations in Asia and Africa. Additional details will be announced in the coming months. Atlas Ocean Voyages has opened Early Access Priority reservations, so clients can secure a place on the inaugural voyage with a USD2000 deposit and also register their interest. See more [HERE](#).

**Elysium Noosa**



Sofitel Noosa has undergone a multi-million-dollar upgrade and is now Elysium Noosa Resort.

The upgrade, says Visit Sunshine Coast, included a redesign of all rooms and suites, a new Italian dining experience *Cibaria* and a coastal-inspired *Bar Capri*. See more details [HERE](#).



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**Events In Kakadu**



Kakadu National Park is set to host a collection of events in 2026. The Taste of Kakadu food festival on 23 May features a program of hands-on workshops, live entertainment and indigenous cuisine. Over the dry season, 01 Jun-18 Sep, Tourism and Events Northern Territory says clients will find a program of free seasonal activities including guided experiences, talks and workshops. Highlighted is NAIDOC Week in Jul, which includes a series of events offering Kiwis the opportunity to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations. Rounding out the season is the Kakadu Bird Week 23-27 Sep, offering expert-led walks, bird-watching cruises, engaging talks and cultural demonstrations. See the full calendar [HERE](#).

**Tauck New Solo Traveller Savings**

Tauck has reduced or eliminated the single supplement across a range of its 2026 river cruises and land itineraries.

The single supplement has been waived on all Category 1 riverboat cabins on more than 250 departures, including the new 11-day *Bordeaux, Paris & The Seine* priced from approx AUD10,990pp for departures 30 Jul and 02 Nov. On certain other cabin categories, typically Categories 4 and 5, the supplement will be reduced by AUD1000 on select European river cruises departures in 2026. For land itineraries, single supplements are reduced by up to AUD600 for 105 departures on 27 itineraries across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. In North America, Tauck will reduce the single supplement up to AUD300 for 34 departures on 12 itineraries, including the eight-day *A Week In... Nova Scotia* priced from approx AUD8198pp



for departures 20 Jun and 25 Jul. European land itineraries have up to AUD400 off for solo travellers for 52 departures on 18 itineraries, across Italy and France to Spain, Great Britain, Scandinavia and Central Europe. The single supplement will be reduced by AUD600 on seven departures for seven trips across Asia, Africa and Latin America. "For many solo travellers, the true value of travelling with Tauck is the sense of ease, confidence and connection they feel from the very beginning," says Tauck ceo Jennifer Tombaugh. With limited places, the offer lasts until these are sold out.

**News & Product**

**Viking Explorer Sale**

Viking's 2026 Explorer Sale has deals on its 2026-2028 river, ocean and expedition cruises, for sales to 31 Mar and varying departure dates. It includes voyages on Viking's five new Europe river ships, and more itineraries across the Rhine, Main and Danube. The Viking Mira is debuting for ocean itineraries, as is the world's first hydrogen-powered cruise ship Viking Libra. River voyages have up to AUD5000 per couple off, and ocean and expedition voyages offer companion flies free for up to AUD2500. Bookings for cruise-only will get a discount on river cruises of AUD5000 per couple, and for ocean and expedition cruises AUD2500 per couple. River itineraries include the 12-day *Pharaohs & Pyramids* ex Cairo now from AUD11,395pp, and the eight-day *Rhine Getaway* ex Basel to Amsterdam or vv priced from AUD5495pp. Ocean itineraries include the 15-day *Ancient Adriatic Treasures* ex Venice to Istanbul or vv, priced from AUD12,795 in a veranda stateroom. Expeditions include the 13-day *Antarctic Explorer* ex Buenos Aires to Ushuaia priced from AUD19,895 in a nordic balcony cabin. See more details [HERE](#).

**INDUSTRY DIARY**

**FEBRUARY 2026**

**JAWS+ Roadshow 2026**  
*Times: 1730/1800. Tauranga/BOP:* Mon 02, Club Mount Maunganui, 1730. **Rotorua:** Tue 03, Arawa Park Hotel. **Hamilton:** Wed 04, Hamilton Old Boys Rugby Club. **Napier:** Thu 10, East Pier Hotel. **Palmerston North:** Wed 11, Distinction Coachman Hotel. **Wellington:** Thu 12, Lower Hutt Events Centre. **Whangarei:** Mon 16, Northland Rugby Club. **Queenstown:** Tue 24, Sudima Five Mile. **Christchurch:** Wed 25, Hotel Elms. **Nelson:** Thu 26, Beachside Nelson.

**Regent Seven Seas Cruises:**  
**WAVE 2026**  
**Auckland:** Tue 10, Orakei Bay, 0730-0930, 1000-1200, 1300-1500, 1600-1800.

**Tourism NT New Zealand 2026**  
**Auckland:** Tue 10, Maritime Room, 5pm for 1730. **Wellington:** Wed 11, Wharewaka Function Centre, Matiu Room, 1700 for 1730. **Christchurch:** Thu 12, Chateau on the Park, 1700 for 1730.

**GFOB Showcase**  
**Christchurch:** Mon 16, George Hotel, 1800-2000. **Wellington:** Wed 18, Naumi Hotel Wellington CBD, 1800-

2000. **Tauranga:** Thu 19, The Tauranga Club, 1800-2000. **Hamilton:** Mon 23, Zender's Cafe, 1800-2000. **Whangarei:** Mon 23, Semenoff Stadium East Lounge, 1800-2000. **Auckland:** Tue 24, Remuera Golf Club, 1800-2000. **New Plymouth:** Tue 24, Novotel Hotel, 1800-2000.

**Brand US Expo 2026**  
**Auckland:** Wed 18, Cordis Auckland 1730. **Christchurch:** Thu 19, Rydges Latimer Christchurch 1730.

**Viking Explorer 2026**  
**Hibiscus Coast:** Tue 24, Wainui Golf Course, 1030 & 1830. **North Shore:** Thu 26, Fairway Event Centre, 1030 & 1830.

**MARCH**

**JAWS+ Roadshow 2026**  
**Whangarei:** Tue 03, Northland Rugby Club, 1730. **Hamilton:** Tue 10, Hamilton Old Boys Rugby Club, 1730. **Rotorua:** Wed 11, Arawa Park Hotel, 1730. **Tauranga/BOP:** Thu 12, Club Mount Maunganui, 1730. **Wellington:** Tue 17, Lower Hutt Events Centre, 1730. **Palmerston North:** Wed 18, Distinction Coachman Hotel, 1730. **Napier:** Thu 19, East Pier Hotel, 1730. **Nelson:** Tue 24, Beachside Nelson, 1730. **Christchurch:** Wed 25, Hotel Elms, 1730. **Queenstown:** Thu 26, Sudima Five Mile, 1730.

**Viking Explorer 2026**  
**Napier,** Tue 03, The Mission Estate, 1030 & 1830. **Christchurch:** Thu 12, Chateau on the Park, 1030 & 1830. **Tauranga:** Tue 17, Mercury Bay Park Arena Suites. **Auckland:** Thu 19, Event Cinemas Newmarket, 1030 & 1830. **South Auckland:** Tue 24, Double Tree by Hilton Karaka, 1030 & 1830.

**APT & Travelmarvel Consumer**  
**North Shore:** Tue 03, Fairway Events Centre. **Whangarei:** Thu 05, TOLL Stadium. **Christchurch:** Tue 10, Christchurch Art Gallery. **Kapiti Coast:** Wed 11, Paraparaumu Golf Club. **Palmerston North:** Thu 12, Silky Otter Cinema. **Tauranga:** Tue 17, Trinity Wharf. **Auckland:** Wed 18, Sorrento in the Park.

**Beautiful Samoa Roadshow**  
**Christchurch:** Tue 09, Chateau on the Park, DoubleTree by Hilton, 1730-2030. **Wellington:** Wed 10, James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor 1730-2030. **Tauranga:** Thu 11, Cargo Shed 1730-2030. **Auckland:** Thu 12, Pullman Hotel 1730-2030.

**TEQ: Queensland Is Calling**  
**Auckland:** Mon 23, Royal Akarana Yacht Club, 1600-2030. **Wellington:** Tue 24, Harbourside Function Venue, 1600-2030. **Christchurch:** Wed 25, Christchurch Town Hall, 1600-2030.

**Dunedin:** Thu 26, Dunedin Town Hall, 1600-2030.

**APRIL**

**Land, Rail, & Sea: Wendy Wu, Journey Beyond, Viking**  
**Palmerston North:** Mon 13, Event Cinemas, 1030 & 18:30. **Whanganui:** Wed 15, Whanganui Golf Course, 1830. **New Plymouth:** Thu 16, Novotel, 1430 & 1830. **Kapiti:** Wed 22, Coastlands Event Cinemas, 1030. **Lower Hutt:** Thu 23, Boulcotts Heritage Farm Golf Course, 1030. **Wellington:** Thu 23, Grand Chancellor James Cook Hotel, 1830.

**MAY**

**Wendy Wu, Journey Beyond, Viking**  
**Warkworth:** Tue 05, The Stables Matakana, 1030. **Kerikeri:** Wed 06, The Turner Center, 1030. **Whangarei:** Thu 07, Event Cinemas, 1030 & 1830. **Hamilton:** Tue 26, The Veranda, 1430 & 1830. **Rotorua:** Wed 27, Venue TBC, 1830. **Taupo:** Thu 28, The Lakeview Hotel & Convention Center, 1030 & 1830.

**Want To Add Your Event?**  
e-mail [news@traveltoday.co.nz](mailto:news@traveltoday.co.nz)