

ARTICLE / FEBRUARY 12, 2023

ROUND-UP: Feb. 6-10, 2023



More protests rocked France on the weekend; Crystal cruise line is back and set to sail again this summer; there was more news about NEXUS; a new tourism day gained UN approval; and Sunwing said 'I do' again to its popular annual destination weddings guide.

NEWS

Police were out in force across **France** on Saturday as nearly a million people turned out for a fourth round of nationwide demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron's plans to reform the country's pension system. This time, though, rail worker strikes did not accompany the demonstrations, allowing trains and the Paris Metro to run Saturday, however, an unexpected strike by air traffic controllers meant that up to half of flights to and from Paris' second largest airport, Orly, were cancelled Saturday afternoon. A further strike is planned for Thursday (Feb. 16).

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution to have Feb. 17 officially declared **Global Tourism Resilience Day**, which will be celebrated for the first time next week. Pioneered by Jamaica, the initiative was supported by over 90 countries. The special day will be held each year.

In his **State of the Union** address last week, US president Joe Biden took aim at the travel industry, reiterating that he would stop airlines from charging fees "junk fees," including up to \$50 in order to sit families together, saying that children were being treated like luggage. He also wants to ban hidden resort fees that can cost up to \$90 a night at hotels. "Americans are tired of being played for suckers," he said.

Starting this spring, US border agents will interview **NEXUS** applicants at select Canadian airports before boarding a US-bound flight. That will happen only after applicants take part in a separate, appointment-only interview with Canadian agents at a NEXUS airport enrolment centre. The Canada Border Services Agency and US Customs and Border Protection are urging travellers to allow extra time for the US interview, which will not require an appointment. Eligible airports – where passengers can pre-clear US customs – are in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, and Winnipeg.

RETAIL

To meet considerably increased demand in cruise inquiry and bookings, **Flight Centre** says it has created a dedicated cruise specialist team, and at the same time has launched a major marketing campaign time to coincide with Wave Season. "The demand for cruise travel is clear and definitive," says Brian McLaren, EVP Flight Centre Canada, who notes that more than 60% of cruises are booked through travel agents.

BY THE NUMBERS

Dubai received 14.36 million international overnight visitors in 2022, nearly doubling year over year from the 7.28 million tourist arrivals in 2021, according to the latest data published by Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET). Average occupancy for the hotel sector in 2022 stood at 73%, one of the highest in the world, rising from 67% in 2021. The figure is just short of the 75% occupancy in the pre-pandemic period of 2019.

AIR

Air France is continuing to increase capacity to Canada – the carrier's second largest long-haul market – including new service between Paris and Ottawa (starting June 27); the resumption of seasonal service to Quebec City (May 2), introduced last summer; and increased frequencies to other gateways. In summer 2023, Air France will operate up to 50 weekly flights to five destinations: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (destinations served year-round by Air France), along with new and resumed services to Ottawa and Quebec.

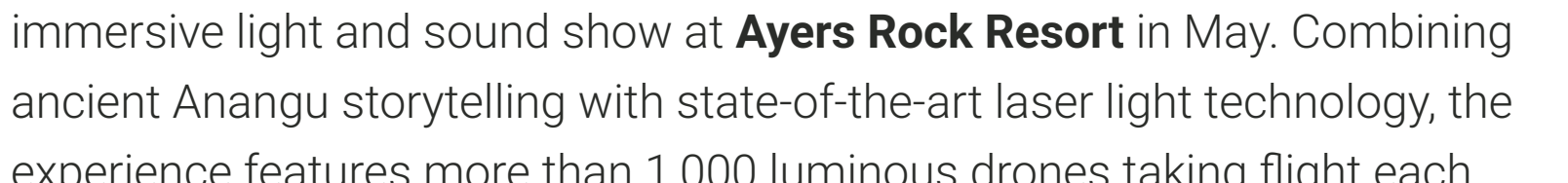
Porter Airlines conducted its first flights between Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) and Vancouver YVR Feb. 8, marking the launch of service to Western Canada for the first time in the company's 16-year history.

Lynx launched its inaugural flight to Phoenix Feb. 7 from Calgary International Airport (YYC) to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX) today. The airline will operate three flights per week between the cities.

DEALS

Special pricing and discount offers are available to Canadians heading to **Myrtle Beach** during the South Carolina destination's upcoming CAN-AM Days, which will run March 11-19. The 62nd annual event allows visitors from Canada to take advantage of an array of exclusive offers, many of which extend beyond the dates of the festival. For additional info and a full listing of deals, visit [HERE](#).

TOURS



Uluru

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia is set to launch a breathtaking, fully immersive light and sound show at **Ayers Rock Resort** in May. Combining ancient Anangu storytelling with state-of-the-art laser light technology, the experience features more than 1,000 luminous drones taking flight each night to lift the ancient images to the sky. Two Wintjiri Wiru sound and light shows will run every night from March until December. The signature experience will be the three-hour Wintjiri Wiru Sunset Dinner (A\$385), followed by a gourmet dinner hamper celebrating native ingredients and paired with premium Australian wines, and includes resort transfers. A second one hour-long experience including light refreshments costs A\$190 p.p.

Through Feb. 28, **Goway** is offering savings of \$470 p.p. on its "Australia & New Zealand Combo" tour. Ideal for first-timers to the destinations, the 11-day tour includes Sydney and Auckland, first-class accommodation throughout, and Air Zealand flights from Vancouver.

HOTELS

The newly reimagined and revitalized **124 on Queen Hotel & Spa** in the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. has unveiled The Spa at Q, a 1,100-sq.-m. environment with extensive amenities and treatment options, including a wellness hydrotherapy circuit unique to the Niagara region, the "star attraction" of the facility allows guests to follow a self-guided circuit with stops at a hot plunge pool, sensory shower, cedar-lined sauna, warm pool, eucalyptus steam room and concluding in a "snow room" (a first in Canada). For bookings made by Feb. 18 for stays through April 6, guests receive a \$124 resort credit that can be used at the spa, or on food and beverage.

Now open is **Hilton Santa Marta**, the brand's second hotel in **Colombia's** oldest Hispanic city. Overlooking the Caribbean Sea, the contemporary 261-room property is within walking distance from the beach and conveniently located near the mountains of Sierra Nevada and the ancient ruins of Tayrona National Natural Park. It is 13 km from the Old Town and 6 km from the airport. The newly constructed hotel features five unique dining experiences, meeting and event space and an array of amenities.

RESORTS

The 10th anniversary edition of **Wedding Vacations by Sunwing**, an artistic compilation of tips, tricks and destination insights for couples planning their upcoming weddings in the tropics, has been released. The guide reveals "breathtaking" destinations to say "I do," along with in-depth interviews with industry pros, including Sunwing Weddings' expert consultants; wedding-week swimwear picks and other style advice; destination wedding trends, including lighting and décor; wedding favours; eco-friendly ideas for a green destination wedding; VIP bachelor and bachelorette party ideas; and much more. Check it out [HERE](#).

Now open is the new 330-all-suite **Embassy Suites by Hilton Aruba Resort**, situated between top-rated Eagle Beach and the scenic lagoon of the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The opening marks the first Embassy Suites by Hilton property in Aruba and second Hilton hotel on the island. Located 10 km. from the Queen Beatrix International Airport, the resort is also a short ride from the nightlife of Palm Beach.

CRUISE

Crystal Cruises has officially relaunched under new ownership with the Crystal Serenity and Crystal Symphony vessels set to sail again beginning this summer. The high-end cruise line ceased operations in early 2022, but now Crystal is back with a new vision – dubbed 'Exceptional at Sea' – and itineraries for 2023 and 2024, under the ownership of Abercrombie & Kent (the A&K Travel Group), which acquired the Serenity and Symphony in 2022. The first sailings (bookings open this month) will be a Mediterranean cruise on Crystal Serenity on July 31 from Marseille, while Crystal Symphony is scheduled to depart Sept. 1 from Athens.

The second annual "Rivers of the World" cruise for 2024 from **Uniworld Boutique River Cruises** will depart Oct. 3, 2024, from Lima, Peru. The 55-day journey will take 68 guests to 10 countries across three continents aboard four different Super Ships. The trip begins in the Peruvian Amazon, continues through the rivers of Europe, and concludes in Southeast on the Mekong River. Prices start at US\$49,399 p.p.

ATTRACTIONS & THEME PARKS

'Journey of Water,' inspired by Moana, will open in late-2023 within World Nature, the **EPCOT** neighbourhood dedicated to understanding and preserving the beauty, awe, and balance of the natural world. The all-ages attraction at Walt Disney World in Orlando will allow guests to explore and engage with water as it travels from the skies to the oceans and back again.

By March 31, all **LEGOLAND** Resorts in North America will receive Certified Autism Centre (CAC) distinction. As part of this certification, all employees will be highly trained to ensure any visitors on the autism spectrum or with other sensory disorders can enjoy the best possible visit. Specially designed on-site offerings include quiet rooms, sensory guides, and low sensory areas.

FAMS & INCENTIVES

To celebrate the release of its new planner, **Air Canada Vacations'** 'Europe Toolkit – Travel Agent Contest' gives agents booking a Flight & Hotel package, tour, or Epackage to Europe by April 20 a chance to win one of two prizes for two: A 9-day 'Italy Express Europe Tour' package departing on Oct. 15, 2023 from Toronto, and Oct. 19, from Montreal. Winners will be announced on May 15, 2023. More bookings (made between Feb. 1 and April 30 for travel through Dec. 31) mean more chances to win. Register bookings [HERE](#).

EVENTS

VISIT FLORIDA has announced that **Florida Huddle** and Encounter 2024 will take place July 29-31, 2024, at the Miami Beach Convention Centre, hosted in partnership with the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

PEOPLE/APPOINTMENTS

VisitBritain has promoted **Gavin Landry** to International Director, leading the strategic direction of global teams working alongside a group of C-suite executives based in London. He will remain based in New York City. **Paul Gauger** now steps into the role of Executive VP, The Americas, Australia and