

ARTS&LIFESTYLE

Arts Editor **Danny Gocs**
dgocs@jewishnews.net.au

Inside: **Getaways** travel supplement

Summer holiday escapes



Relaxing by the pool at Airlie Beach in Queensland.

Planning a holiday for the end of the year, but not sure where to go? **Danny Gocs** asks Melbourne travel agents for their advice on the best places to holiday.

FROM the beach resorts of Bali, Vietnam and Thailand to a cruise in the Pacific and Mediterranean, or going on safari in Africa, there's plenty of choice when it comes to summer holiday escapes.

Even cities such as New York and London have a winter wonderland appeal for a holiday.

Danny Engelman, director of leisure sales at FBI Travel, Caulfield North, said that Thailand continues to be a favourite getaway for families.

"It is a relatively close destination and offers very good value for money," he said.

"Many travellers are heading to the United States and even though the temperature in New York can be freezing at that time of year, many people are combining NY with a few days in milder Los Angeles or with a cruise to the Caribbean.

"Summer cruises departing from Melbourne and Sydney are great value for money as there are no, or minimal, flights involved and it is wonderful opportunity for multigenerational travel."

Yvonne Verstandig, co-founder and head of leisure at Executive Edge Travel of Caulfield, said that Cape Town is one of South Africa's most popular cities.

"A holiday in Cape Town and its surrounding area is just breathtaking and the harbour, food, beaches and Table Mountain are just the tip of the iceberg," she said.

"Head north to the picturesque wine region of Stellenbosch, and then south to the Cape of Good Hope. The distinctive towns dotted along the way will leave you wanting more."

To see the "Big Five" in the game parks, Verstandig recommended a safari in Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve, where visitors have the opportunity of meeting the Maasai and Samburu tribes.

"This is a trip that you will never forget," she commented.

With the recent introduction of direct flights from Melbourne to Santiago, more people are visiting Chile, the gateway to South America.

"For adventure lovers there's Patagonia and the Atacama Desert, plus beautiful and unique wine regions."

Scandinavia offers unique experiences such as the Northern Lights, dog sledging, snowmobiling, cruising the fjords and ice fishing.

Anthony Goldman, joint managing director of Goldman Travel Group and Travelcall, said many people are choosing a holiday in Sri Lanka.

"There's such a variety of experiences in Sri Lanka, ranging from the old world colonial charm of the tea country to



Dawn Princess sails out of Sydney Harbour on a Pacific cruise.

leopard watching in Yala National Park," he said.

"And you can stay at some of the most luxurious boutique hotels in the world at a reasonable price."

Asia is always popular, and with the opening in Laos of two design focused hotels, the Azerai and Rosewood Luang Prabang, Goldman predicted that Luang Prabang will be the next glamorous destination in Asia.

"Travelling down the Norwegian coast is not new, but exploring Arctic Norway on board Silversea's luxurious 254-passenger Silver Cloud is a new experience. A fleet of zodiacs and sea kayaks allows for up-close wildlife encounters, glacier hikes and visits to fishing villages."

Goldman also recommended a visit to Malta, 2018's European capital of culture

with more than 400 events being held this year.

Wayne Ackerfeld, manager of Travel Associates of Elsternwick, said Israel is busy for members of the community all year round.

"Vietnam is still very popular while Singapore is attracting longer stopovers of up to a week on trips to Europe," he said.

"People are looking for places they can just relax without rushing around, with beach resorts in demand. And for a tropical escape off the beaten track, head to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands.

"Sri Lanka and Japan are popular for a relaxing holiday while learning about the local culture."

More travel news and holiday destinations in the Getaways supplement: **pages 24-27.**



Fruit and drink stall in Tel Aviv.