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2 VOLUNTEER IN AFRICA AFRICAN safari specialists Bench International have launched a range of new volunteer projects as part of the Sydney-based **company**'s 45th birthday celebrations.

The **company** said the programs will be available from late this year and will be run in conjunction with volunteer tourism operator Camps International.

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Bench general manager Martin Edwards said the programs in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda will offer customers the opportunity to be involved in wildlife research and support programs, as well as assist with community development projects.

The programs will be aimed at school expeditions, gap year participants, older singles and family groups, and participants will be able to undertake trips ranging in length from two weeks to three months.

Visit benchinternational.com.au or phone 1300 AFRICA for more information. 3 EUROPEAN SPECIALS LUXURY tours operator Scenic Tours has marked the release of its 2015 European River Cruising program with a string of earlybird specials.

The luxury tours operator, which specialises in European river cruising, has unveiled a range of new experiences and destinations for next year, including a route through France that takes in the 18th-century architecture, gardens and vineyards of Bordeaux.

Guests who book now will be able to secure the new itineraries at 2014 prices. The new trips have been created as all-inclusive European experiences, including sightseeing activities, entertainment, accommodation, airport transfers, meals and tips included.

"We are thrilled to start this year off with a sneak peek of what will feature in the 2015 program for European River Cruising," general manager of product Aleisha Fittler said. "We have included a variety of new experiences and destinations for next year, which are on **sale** now at a special pre-release rate." Contact your travel agent or Scenic Tours on 1300 SCENIC for more information. 4 **HONG KONG** STOPOVER BRITISH Airways has added **Hong Kong** to its growing list of stopover destinations in Asia, allowing Australians to take a break on the way to or from the airline's London home. Travellers flying with the British carrier or one of its codeshare partners are now eligible to stop over in the **Chinese** territory for a holiday or business. It adds to existing British Airways stopover destinations such as Tokyo, Singapore, Shanghai, Chengdu and Bangkok and follows the announcement the airline will become the sole European carrier to fly to Australia, following Virgin Atlantic's decision to cancel its Sydney service. British Airways South West Pacific regional **commercial** manager Nicole Backo said the airline's stopover destinations provide more flexibility for travellers to explore or do business without the hassle of having to find connecting flights at additional cost. Australians travelling on British Airways services from **Hong Kong** will also be able to travel on the airline's new A380 aircraft, which operate on selected flights to London.

Visit britishairways.com for more information.

5 POINTS FOR LATEST **HOTEL** DOWNTOWN Brisbane's latest major **hotel** development will open its doors on March 3.

Starwood Hotels and Resorts' Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane will become the first internationally branded, new-build **property** to enter the Brisbane CBD market in more than a decade.

The 32-storey **property** will offer 246 rooms catering to business and leisure travellers, with Wi-Fi access in all guest rooms, fully equipped fitness centre and two restaurant options.

It will also boast Altitude, a covered rooftop venue with views across Brisbane's CBD and the river.

Four Points by Sheraton Brisbane is a short stroll from some of the city's most popular attractions, including the Queen Street Mall, the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Treasury Casino and Queensland Art Gallery.

The **hotel** is offering a special opening offer starting from \$149 a room, a night, including complimentary in-room Wi-Fi. Ph 1800 074 545, email: reservations.brisbane@fourpoints.com, or visit fourpoints.com/brisbane for more information.

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