

## Transformed Terminal 8 opens at JFK: 60+ new dining and retail concessions unveiled at inauguration of JFK Terminal 8's \$125 million commercial program

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, American Airlines, ASUR Airports, and Phoenix Infrastructure Group officially celebrated the completion of John F. Kennedy International Airport's Terminal 8 transformation with the grand opening of a \$125 million commercial program that features more than 60 new dining, retail, Duty Free, and experiential concepts.

The new concepts have been curated to reflect the culture and creative spirit of the airport's home borough and city. With 20 local dining and retail brands operating alongside global favorites, Terminal 8 provides travelers with a world class passenger experience that is also unique to Queens and to New York City.

The debut of the new commercial program makes Terminal 8 the first completed terminal redevelopment project in the Port Authority's \$19 billion transformation of JFK. The commercial redesign follows a \$400 million expansion and modernization of the terminal, completed in 2022 by American Airlines, which included five new widebody gates, four new widebody parking positions, an expanded and upgraded baggage handling



system and 130,000 square feet of new and refurbished space.

"Nearly a decade ago, the Port Authority unveiled its vision plan for the transformation of JFK International Airport into a world class global gateway that would once again be worthy of the city it calls home," said **Port Authority Executive Director Kathryn Garcia**. "With the completion of Terminal 8 and the debut of its diverse, locally inspired commercial program, we are giving passengers their first glimpse into what a new JFK will represent with a best-in-class experience from curb to gate."

"Terminal 8 and its new, locally inspired commercial program will create a unique sense of place that elevates the travel experience to what is now an enjoyable part of the journey," said **Port Authority Chairman Kevin O'Toole**. "As we've done at Newark Liberty International Airport's Terminal A, at LaGuardia Airport and now at JFK, the Port Authority is making historic investments with our private partners to create a passenger experience that will be among the best in the world."

*Continued on page 3.*



*The official ribbon-cutting for the opening of the transformed Terminal 8 at JFK International airport.*

### TFWA Asia Pacific Exhibition & Conference 2026 offers expanded program and new experiences

The 2026 edition of the TFWA Asia Pacific Exhibition & Conference – taking place in Singapore from May 10-14, will present an enhanced program and a strong line-up of confirmed partners, offering fresh insight into the event's evolving format.

Building on the momentum of recent years, the 2026 event introduces new concepts, strengthened collaborations and a more dynamic approach, with a greater emphasis on innovation, experience and industry connection, reflecting the evolving travel retail landscape.

Asia Pacific airports including Airport Authority Hong Kong, Changi Airport Group, Incheon International airport, Sydney Airport Corporation, Japan Airport Terminal and Kansai Airport, GMR airports (operating in Delhi, Hyderabad, Goa, Nagpur) alongside leading global retailers are already pre-registered, under-lining the event's continued importance as a key meeting point for the industry.

Retailer participants include major players such as China Duty Free Group, Avolta, Lagardère Travel Retail, Gebr. Heinemann, King Power Group, Shilla Duty Free, Lotte Duty Free, Ever Rich Duty Free, Hyundai Duty Free, 3Sixty Duty Free, WHSmith and Shinsegae, signaling strong engagement across the region and reinforcing the exhibition's role as a central hub for business development and collaboration within the travel retail sector.

**Sarah Branquinho, TFWA President**, comments: *It's always a pleasure to bring the industry together in Singapore, and in the context of current geopolitical tensions which are impacting our industry, this year's edition provides a welcome half year meeting point for us all.*

*Continued on page 3.*



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**Transformed Terminal 8 opens at JFK: Opening of Terminal 8 commercial program marks completion of first terminal redevelopment of JFK’s \$19 billion transformation** *Continued from page 1.*

“Today marks an exciting milestone for Terminal 8 and for the millions of travelers who pass through JFK each year,” said **ASUR Airports VP, JFK, Ian Carter**. “We are proud to partner with the Port Authority, American Airlines, and our many suppliers, joint-venture partners and entrepreneurs to deliver a dynamic experience rooted in the heart of New York and built to set a new standard for what’s possible in an airport terminal. By elevating local businesses and expanding opportunities for diverse operators, we are transforming the passenger journey and strengthening the neighborhoods and communities that make New York City.”

**A new era of dining and retail at Terminal 8**

The centerpiece of the redevelopment is The Boroughs Food Hall by MERA, featuring a mix of New York institutions and emerging local concepts, including Cobblestones, Black Star Bakery & Café, Mito, Naya, Flavortown Kitchen by Guy Fieri, BKLYN BLEND, Bagel Boss, and Le Petit Gourmet.

The newly launched program features the first U.S. airport locations of Eataly and Peach Palace by Momofuku.

Terminal 8 also introduces recognizable New York dining names, including Bowery Meat Company and the Black Tap portfolio of brands. Local staples such as Black Tap Singles & Doubles, Black Tap Bar, Tender Crush, Zaro’s Family Bakery, Alidoro, Dos Toros Taqueria, Neir’s Tavern and Golden Krust further strengthen its New York identity. Travelers will also find global favorites including Pret a Manger, Shake Shack, Starbucks, Dunkin’, and Jimmy John’s.

Alongside the food hall, Avolta’s Dufry team has created a completely reimagined Duty Free environment. New retail destinations include W. 12th St. Market, Beauty on 5th, The Park @ T8, BKLYN Shopping, and an expanded collection of luxury boutiques featuring Longchamp, Marc Jacobs, Lacoste, BOSS, TAG Heuer, Breitling, Montblanc, premium designer sunglasses through Avolta’s Suncatcher concept plus Pre Loved Luxury offering jewelry, watches, and upcycled high-end leather goods.

The Connoisseur Collection introduces a curated selection of fine spirits, tobacco, and the terminal’s new hidden speakeasy, Blinded Tiger while Bubbles on 5th weaves together fragrances with Champagne and wine.

Retail offerings include I Love NY, Dear NYC, iPorte, five Hudson stores, MAC and M&Ms.

The new LEGO store features an extensive selection of LEGO sets and exclusive airport products, along with demonstration tables for hands-on play.

Natchie and alchemy, operated by small, local, women- and

minority-owned entrepreneurs, opened as part of the small business accelerator program which now includes THE COLLECTIVE, a curated retail concept bringing together independent New York brands. Terminal 8 also features Gameway’s immersive video lounge, private workspace suites from Minute Suites and three local, woman-owned Currency Exchange locations.

“Being part of the commercial redevelopment of Terminal 8 is a significant opportunity to help shape the next era of the JFK passenger experience,” said **North America, Avolta President & CEO, Steve Johnson**. “This project reflects a bold vision for modern travel, and we’re proud to contribute through a retail and dining program that elevates local businesses, showcases New York’s culture, and delivers world-class hospitality.

“Working alongside the Port Authority, American Airlines, ASUR Airports, and our local partners, we’re committed to creating a terminal that brings lasting value and pride to the community it serves,” he says.



**TFWA Asia Pacific Exhibition & Conference 2026**

*Continued from page 1.*

Branquinho continues: “It also marks an important step in the evolution of TFWA Asia Pacific.

“In 2026, we will begin to introduce new concepts and a segmentation of categories across the exhibition floors, designed to enhance navigation, discovery and engagement. While some of these initiatives will be presented in a preview form, they reflect a broader vision that will continue to expand in 2027.

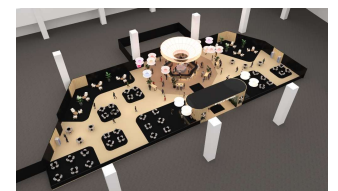
“Beyond the business opportunities, TFWA Asia Pacific is a key moment for the community to reconnect, exchange ideas and look ahead together. With new spaces and an enriched program, we aim to foster meaningful conversations and collaborations that will help shape the future of travel retail.”

**Taste of the World**

One of the new concepts for 2026 is a curated Taste of the World event, which introduces a more immersive approach to food and beverage within the exhibition. Conceived as a flexible, content-led environment, the space will feature a strong Kitchen Theatre, a signature bar concept and the full integration of the Asia Pacific Lounge, alongside high-level masterclasses and curated F&B conversations.

Moving away from a traditional exhibitor model, it is designed to encourage discovery, exchange, and informal networking. The 2026 edition will focus on thought leadership and experiential moments, while the concept will evolve towards a more focused exhibitor format in 2027.

The inaugural session on Monday, May 11, features a live cooking show by world-renowned chef Akira Back.



## International Shoppes and Ben Crump Enterprises launch community-driven retail program at Honolulu International Airport

International Shoppes, in partnership with Ben Crump Enterprises (BCE), has introduced a new, community-focused retail program at Honolulu’s Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL).

The joint venture is focused on strengthening Hawaii’s local business ecosystem while enhancing the traveler experience. The new stores are built on a shared commitment to equity, inclusion, and economic empowerment, say the companies.

International Shoppes will open 29 stores in Honolulu, a mixture of lightly renovated shops, completely redesigned spaces, as well as areas that have never been used for retail before.

“We have some stores that are going to open in May and June, and some stores will take a little longer. We have a staggered approach,” International Shoppes Co-CEO Scott Halpern tells *TMI*.

“There are 13 spaces in Honolulu that remain the way they are. We’ll be doing some light touch ups to these, but for the most part, the footprints will stay as is. We have 14 spaces that will undergo complete renovations. We will open them up over the next several months and should be finished by the end of the year. These locations will be retrofitted and brought in as new brands and new concepts.

“We also have two new locations that have never been occupied and are going to come to life for the first time,” Halpern explains.

The HNL retail program blends globally recognized brands with iconic local businesses, creating a uniquely Hawaiian sense of place.

The stores will offer products from iconic local brands such as Honolulu Cookie Company, Hawaiian King and Ko Hana Rum, offering authentic, high-quality goods that allow visitors to take a lasting piece of Hawaii home with them.

At the core of the program is a deep commitment to community partnership. International Shoppes and BCE have worked closely with local organizations and are especially proud of their collaboration with Mana Up, a leading champion of Hawaii-based entrepreneurs. In partnership with the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT), a dedicated Mana Up retail space will be prominently positioned within HNL. This space will provide emerging local brands with a global stage to showcase their products and craftsmanship at the airport.

“We are incredibly excited and grateful for the opportunity to become part of HNL,” says Matthew Greenbaum, Co-CEO of International Shoppes.

“We want to thank Director Ed Sniffen and the entire HDOT team for their leadership and partnership throughout this process. From the accelerated transition to the shared vision of introducing new brands and elevating local businesses, HDOT has been an exceptional partner. From day one, our focus has been on building a strong local team and creating a retail environment that reflects the unique energy and diversity of Honolulu. We are proud to welcome so many new team members into our organization and look forward to growing together.”

International Shoppes opened with 173 employees, most of them former DFS workers. Halpern said retaining experienced local staff, who have the experience and knowledge of working in Hawaii for years, was a priority from the start.

“We took on the DFS team, who have a fantastic organization there. It is really exciting having a team that’s well trusted, especially coming from organization that’s as strong as DFS has been for so many years,” says Halpern. “We’re not making Hawaii International Shoppes. International Shoppes is becoming Hawaii.”



Opening Ceremony (Left to Right) – Kahu, HDOT director Ed Sniffen, Ben Crump, Matthew Greenbaum, Scott Halpern, Hawaii State Senate President Kouchi

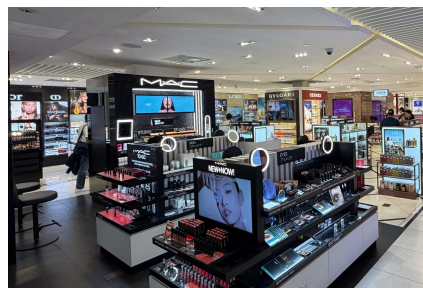
The partners say that their vision is a commitment to strengthening local businesses and supporting the Hawaii economy.

“We are incredibly grateful for the trust and partnership the HDOT team has demonstrated in this once in a lifetime transition at HNL. We are excited to helping travelers take home more than just a product—we are giving them a connection to the islands that lives on long after their visit,” says Halpern.

“Community is the foundation of this partnership,” says Ben Crump. “We are committed to

creating real opportunities for small, family-owned businesses and ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared across the community. When we invest in local entrepreneurs, we uplift the entire ecosystem.”

Through its partnership-driven approach, International Shoppes and BCE say that they are committed to creating a retail experience at HNL that reflects the spirit of Hawaii—one that celebrates culture, supports local entrepreneurs, and inspires travelers to return.



Clockwise from top left: members of the HNL retail team; the first airport location for local Hawaii brand Aloha Collection; and the main duty free beauty store at Honolulu International Airport.

**F&B@Sea delivers a standout edition, highlighting cruise food and beverage trends**



*Flor de Cana's Rodrigo Bazan (right) and his team enjoying their successful showing at the 2026 F&B@Sea event in Miami.*



*The Bistro was one of numerous tasting destinations throughout the F&B venue.*

F&B@Sea, dedicated to the cruise food and beverage community, welcomed cruise lines, suppliers, and hospitality leaders from around the world for a highly successful 2026 edition at the Mana Wynwood Convention Center in Miami.

Featuring more than 230 vendors – including many familiar duty free and travel retail brands – the 2026 edition of the growing event attracted upwards of 3,000 attendees, marking the largest iteration of the conference to date.

Across two days, the program offered a forward-looking view of the future of dining at sea, brought to life through immersive experiences, expert-led sessions, and curated networking opportunities. The program concluded with the 2026 F&B@Sea Awards, presented by Rémy Cointreau, celebrating the innovators redefining dining at sea.

Content sessions focused on how cruise food and beverage is evolving in real time, with a clear emphasis on experience, transparency and innovation. These themes were also reflected across The Marketplace, where suppliers showcased a growing range of plant-forward and alternative ingredients, alongside solutions designed to deliver convenience without sacrificing flavor.

Beverage programming emerged as one of the most dynamic areas of innovation. “Fifty percent of people want to see the non-alcoholic options next to the menu with the regular cocktail items. Who would have thought that three to four years ago?” asked Phillip Jarrell, Vice President Travel Retail, Cruise & Key Accounts at Southern Glazers Travel, pointing to the rapid rise of mindful drinking. Jarrell spoke on a panel looking at beverage trends on F&B@Sea’s popular Main Stage.

Panelists also noted that “drinking with purpose will continue to expand,” driven in particular by Generation Z and overall beverage consumption patterns.



*Virgin Voyages Charles Steadman, left, Ken Taylor of MarkeTeam, Southern Glazer's Travel Retail's Phillip Jarrell, and Rob Floyd of Rob Floyd Entertainment, discuss beverage trends onboard before a packed audience.*

Insights from the Seatrade Cruise F&B Trends Report 2026 underscored experiential dining and global flavor exploration. “The cruise food and beverage industry is undergoing a remarkable transformation. The beverage sector is equally dynamic,” noted Holly Payne, Editor, Seatrade Cruise Review & Deputy Editor.

**Event highlights**

F&B@Sea introduced new show floor concepts, including the Match-making Café, a café-style lounge designed for buyers and suppliers to connect, and the Lido Deck, a chic, beach club-inspired retreat reimagining last year’s Speakeasy.

The event stressed experiential learning opportunities through the updated Taste & Learn Lounge, featuring a curated program of live culinary masterclasses and mixology showcases sponsored by Coca-Cola. Of note was a demonstration reimagining Caribbean food for cruise ships from Chef Norman Van Aken, James Beard Foundation “Who’s Who in American Food and Beverage” inductee.

The very popular The Bistro returned as F&B@Sea’s tasting destination, where 80+ vendor products were transformed into elevated menu items demonstrating real-world onboard applications.

The Bistro Showcase featured curated tasting moments and highlighted featured brands, ingredients, and beverage innovations across the program.

F&B@Sea will return to Mana Wynwood Convention Center, Miami in 2027 from April 7-8. Find details about F&B@Sea at [www.seatradecruiseevents.com/fnbsea](http://www.seatradecruiseevents.com/fnbsea)

*See photo gallery on next page.*

## Seatrade Cruse Global and F&B@Sea 2026 in review photo gallery



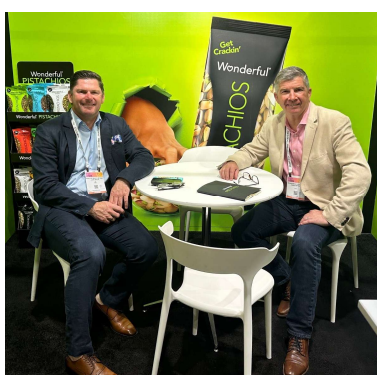
*Iggy Melero, Sarah King and Alexis Wallace at Alexander James; Diana Menendez & Roberto Mangia, Campari; Natalia Kuldyeva and Christian Klimpke, Heineken; and Carisam's Kevin Borroso with Christoph Henkel and Michael Gebrael of Blue Caterpillar.*



*Geoff Biggs & the Bacardi team; Deborah Golden with Stefano Toschi & Alessandra Piccin, of Toschi; Cathy Roland and the Osborne team; Earl Myers & Ben Jones of Spiribam.*



*Claudius v Hagen & Simon Weber, Teremana; a Mionetto welcome; Catherine Restrepo & Hans Hopner for Thomas Henry mixers; Susana Colarte, Byron Rocha & Martina Limonge of William Grant & Sons; Ramon Olive, Henkell Freixenet*



*John Devine of Michael Devine wines; Luke Maga (B&S) with James Kfourri, Wonderful Pistachios; The Flor de Caña team, Geoffrey Markle and Robert de Monchy, MONARQ Group; Drew Foulk & Emma Ciciriello of Holland America Lines.*

## Seatrade Cruise Global 2026: 12,500+ attendees gathered for four days of collaboration, innovation, and dialogue

By the time that Seatrade Cruise Global 2026 concluded at the Miami Beach Convention Center on April 17, it had brought together more than 12,500 attendees from 125 countries, including cruise line executives, suppliers, and industry stakeholders from around the world—as well as over 85 cruise line brands.

Featuring more than 650 exhibitors and 92 conference sessions over four days, the event highlighted Seatrade Cruise Global's theme “*Beyond the Horizon: Leveraging Cruising's Strength and Scale to Drive Innovation.*”

Held from April 13–16, 2026 as the cruise industry's leading annual gathering, the event once again served as a platform for advancing key conversations shaping the future of cruise travel, including onboard retail and food & beverage opportunities, representing the global cruise ecosystem.

“Seatrade Cruise Global raised the bar: 2026 is officially the biggest event we've ever had in our 41-year history. It really speaks to the energy, resilience, and momentum we're seeing across the global cruise community,” said Chiara Giorgi, outgoing Global Brand & Event Director, Seatrade Cruise, who will be stepping into a new role at CLIA.

### A future-focused conference program

Held under the theme “*Beyond the Horizon: Leveraging Cruising's Strength and Scale to Drive Innovation,*” the 2026 conference program explored the technologies, trends, and strategies driving the industry forward, offering a comprehensive look at the innovations redefining the cruise experience.

Seatrade held 92 sessions with 283 speakers, and attendees engaged in discussions spanning digital transformation, sustainability, evolving guest expectations, and operational innovation – **including two-days of special sessions dedicated to onboard retail, coordinated in association with *The Moodie Davitt Report.***

### World Cruise Tourism Summit

The 2026 program opened with the World Cruise Tourism Summit, a full day dedicated to the evolving role of destinations in shaping the future of cruise and global travel. The day's keynote, moderated by Anne Kalosh, Editor at *Seatrade Cruise News*, featured Jason Montague, Chief Luxury Officer at Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, who emphasized the growing importance of destination strategy as a core driver of demand and differentiation.

### Industry innovation

The “*State of the Global Cruise Industry*” keynote session, sponsored by the Hong Kong Tourism Board and moderated by CNBC correspondent Contessa Brewer, offered the views of industry leaders Bud Darr, President & Chief Executive Officer at Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA); John Chidsey, President & Chief Executive Officer at Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd.; Jason Liberty, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer at Royal Caribbean Group; Josh Weinstein, Chief Executive Officer at Carnival Corporation & plc; and Pierfrancesco Vago, Executive Chairman at MSC Group's Cruise Division.

The panel discussed the industry's key issues in 2026 and beyond including opportunities and challenges, supply and demand, and reaching new markets, as well as thoughts on infrastructure investments, including how private destinations are expanding guest experiences, and an update on important sustainability topics.

### Dynamic programming

Specialty programming throughout the week including Tech Day, The Retail Days, and the Entertainment Showcase, each

spotlighting key sectors shaping the onboard guest experience.

Sustainability remained a key focus throughout the event, with initiatives including partnerships aimed at supporting ocean health and reducing environmental impact.

### Tech Day

Throughout the program, AI emerged as a central theme, with a session moderated on Wednesday by Jacob Passy of *The Wall Street Journal* bringing together leaders from MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, Holland America Line and Amazon Alexa to examine both the potential and the limitations of AI in cruise operations.

In addition, **The Retail Days** program included a thought-provoking keynote session by AI advisor Tarja Stephens, reflecting on the power and influence of AI on the world, managing change in business, a new playbook for leadership, and how the cruise sector and those we employ can adapt to create a new future.

Seatrade Cruise Global 2026 also featured a multi-sensory Wellness Oasis and numerous networking opportunities.

Seatrade Cruise Global will return to the Miami Beach Convention Center from April 5-8, 2027.



It was standing room only as thousands of delegates attended the Seatrade Cruise Global keynote *State of the Global Cruise Industry* session; moderated by CNBC correspondent Contessa Brewer, the session offered the views of industry leaders (from left) Josh Weinstein, Chief Executive Officer at Carnival Corporation & plc; Jason Liberty, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer at Royal Caribbean Group; Pierfrancesco Vago, Executive Chairman at MSC Group's Cruise Division, John Chidsey, President & Chief Executive Officer at Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd.; and Bud Darr, President & Chief Executive Officer at Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

## Seatrade Cruise Global: The Retail Days

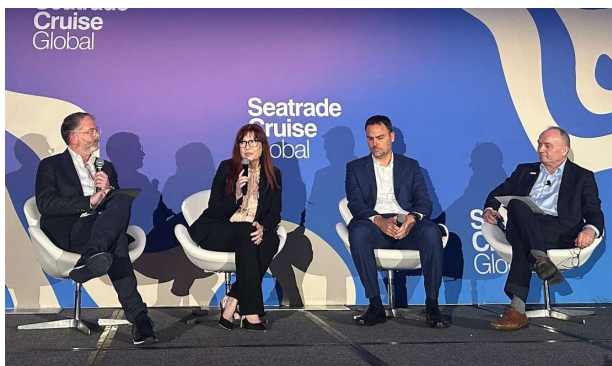
The Retail Days, co-organized by Seatrade Cruise Global and *The Moodie Davitt Report*, took place on Tuesday, April 14 and Wednesday, April 15 during Seatrade Cruise Global at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Over two days of discussions, industry experts from all sectors of the cruise channel provided “actionable insights” on engaging the next generation of shoppers, key retail categories, technology and much more.

Along with the sessions, Seatrade Cruise Global and *The Moodie Davitt Report* jointly published the Cruise Retail Trends Survey 2026, which underlines how the cruise retail sector is undergoing rapid transformation as it adapts to evolving consumer preferences, operational challenges and technological advancements. Readers may download a copy of the report from the link on the cover letter of this newsletter.



*The Moodie Davitt Report's Dermot Davitt opened the 2-day Retail Days sessions with an overview of findings from the Trends Report: Spotlight on Cruise Retail.*



*Chris Matthews, CEO, Harding+; Claudia King-McWilliams VP/GM, Starboard Group; Andres Villalerver VP, Retail & Ancillary Revenue, Global Ports Holding; Dermot Davitt discusses consumers in the spotlight.*



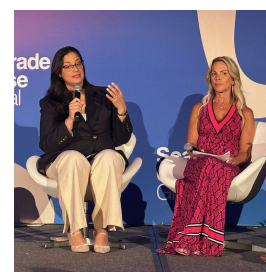
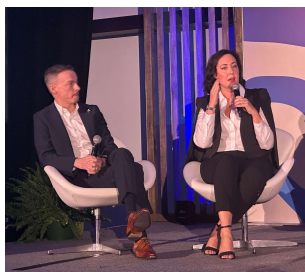
*Onboard revenue experts Claudio Sammartano, Azamara Cruises, and Georg Schmickler, MSC Cruises, discuss opportunities and the vision for their portfolios.*



*Jennifer Patience, Effy Jewelry; Nicolas Hoeborn, Heinemann Americas; Gian Botteri, Avolta; and Craig Steyn, Norwegian Cruise Line, discuss how to take cruise retail to the next level.*



*What does a great partnership look like between cruise line, retailer and brand owner? Retail Days featured three case studies of best practices. See further details below.*



*Jeff Dunaway, Retail Director, Harding+ and Amy Del Gatto, Diageo, discuss premium spirits opportunities citing the Johnnie Walker Black Ruby campaign. Starboard's Karla Nedeski and Essence Corp.'s Yennifer Abreu, presented the multi-touch point launch of niche fragrance brand Parfums de Marly and the importance of alignment, strategy, and synergy in partnerships. Priscila Gonzalez, Commercial Director Caribbean & Cruises, Avolta, and Laura Swan of LePrix, Inc., presented a pre-loved luxury program, noting a 124% program growth and 46% category growth in 2025. The sessions underscored the importance of alignment, data-driven strategies, and guest experience in successful partnerships. AI Advisor Tarja Stephens gave a thought-provoking keynote on the future workplace under AI.*



## Duty Free Americas & the LEGO Group open new store at JFK T8

As part of the official inauguration of the commercial offer at John F. Kennedy International Airport Terminal 8 last week, Duty Free Americas (DFA) announced the opening of its new LEGO specialty store.

This JFK T8 opening follows the success of DFA's LEGO stores at Dallas Fort Worth and Miami International Airports. DFA has also acquired the LEGO store at San Francisco International Airport (subject to closing in Q2 2026), further strengthening DFA's partnership with the LEGO Group while delivering an interactive and engaging retail experience for travelers.

The opening was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony including Joseph Falic, Vice President and Elida Espinosa, Regional General Manager at DFA, Anthony Tello, Global Retail Training Manager Americas at LEGO and Ashley Hari, Director of Leasing - JFK, Rich Singer, Director, Marketing - JFK, and Joshua R Mandel, Vice President - Development at ASUR Airports, marking the official launch of this exciting new retail destination. To celebrate the opening, travelers received a special gift with purchase, highlighting DFA's commitment to creating a fun and memorable shopping experience.



*The official ribbon cutting of the new Lego store at JFK Terminal 8 on April 20. Duty Free Americas Vice President Joseph Falic is center.*

"We are delighted to officially open the doors to this new specialty store, offering travelers an interactive and engaging shopping experience at JFK Terminal 8. The LEGO Group has chosen DFA once again to bring their iconic brand to a key U.S. airport, and we are proud to continue our long-term partnership with both the airport and the LEGO Group," said Joseph Falic, Vice President of Duty Free Americas.

"Together, we share a commitment to delivering the best possible experience for our traveling customers. LEGO is a globally recognized brand, beloved by millions of families, and we are confident that this store will become a must-visit destination for travelers."

"We are excited to welcome the LEGO Store to JFK's Terminal 8 and congratulate our partner, Duty Free Americas, on the official opening. We are pleased to have the opportunity to offer the passengers of JFK's largest terminal a fun and memorable experience in the LEGO store. Our mission is to inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow and this fantastic LEGO store offers an immersive brand experience that allows JFK travelers to engage with their passions through our brand," said the LEGO Group.

Strategically located in Terminal 8, the new LEGO store offers a vibrant, interactive shopping environment. The store features an extensive selection of LEGO sets and exclusive airport products, along with demonstration tables for hands-on play and iconic brand elements throughout. Designed for both gift buyers and families traveling with children, the store delivers a fun, engaging LEGO experience that brings creativity and play to the airport.

"The LEGO Store is a great addition to JFK T8 and reflects the innovation guiding the terminal's ongoing commercial transformation," said Ian Carter, ASUR Airports VP, JFK. "As we continue to elevate the retail and dining experience across T8, this opening showcases the type of dynamic, high-quality offerings that bring more energy, creativity, and choice to our passengers. We are proud to partner with Duty Free Americas and the LEGO Group on a store that not only enhances the terminal today but also supports the broader vision for a more engaging, future-focused T8 experience."

The LEGO store is part of a \$125 million commercial redevelopment of the terminal in partnership with terminal commercial operator ASUR Airports and American Airlines.

### Sarah Genest takes top role at Essential Communications; Row Holland moves to director

Global Travel Retail PR and communications specialist Essential Communications (EC), part of The Bluedog Group, has appointed Sarah Genest as Managing Director, effective immediately. Founder Rowena (Row) Holland, who established the agency more than three decades ago and has led it alongside Ben Holland, will move into the role of Editorial & Key Accounts Director. In this position, she will focus on EC's editorial voice and its long-standing heritage client relationships.

The very respected Genest joined The Bluedog Group in January 2025 as Global Business Development Director, bringing nearly 20 years of travel retail industry experience, including an 18-year career at *The Moodie Davitt Report*. Her deep sector knowledge, extensive industry network, and strategic perspective make her a natural fit to lead EC into its next chapter, says the company.

"Sarah's appointment marks an exciting next step for Essential Communications as we continue to build on the exceptional platform that Rowena has created over more than 30 years," commented Nick King, Group CEO of The Bluedog Group.

"Sarah has already demonstrated the leadership, insight and industry understanding needed to take EC forward. At the same time, Rowena's transition into a more focused role ensures that her experience, relationships and editorial vision remain central to the agency's success."

In her role as Managing Director, Genest is responsible for EC's operations, client portfolio, and strategic direction. The agency represents clients across spirits, food & confectionery, beauty, fragrance, and fashion & accessories categories, and works with leading brands including Suntory Global Spirits, William Grant & Sons, Nestlé International Travel Retail, Mars Wrigley, Proximo Spirits, Rémy Cointreau, Thélios, Joseph Ribkoff, Whyte & Mackay, Kellanova, Ricola, and Osborne, among others.

