

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 25 May 2017

## Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

## Carnival new gadget

CARNIVAL Corporation has announced a new animated character that guests can create and use with the line's Ocean Medallion technology.

To debut on *Regal Princess* in Nov, the Ocean Tagalong is a "digital companion" that will be part of the OCEAN online platform associated with the Medallion system.

When guests create a profile, they will be able to choose a Tagalong character which will then appear online and in interactive PlayOcean games.

Guests will be able to select from three characters - a sea turtle, a seahorse or a butterfly fish - and customise by body shape, colour and pattern.

## Tauck's small ship boost

TAUCK'S current three to five year plan will see small ship cruising split into two different styles of travelling: expedition and cultural journeys.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* at an event in Sydney on Tue, Steven Spivak, vp global sales said Tauck is leveraging "lessons we learned and our expertise in river cruising" and applying it to small ship cruising.

In the next two to four years the company will double its small ship capacity (*CW* 16 Mar) by growing its partnerships, itineraries and doing more complete charters.

Tauck will utilise all four of Ponant's newbuilds, starting with *La Leperouse* in Iceland 2018.

The brand's cultural itineraries will all be part of its BBC Earth journeys (*CW* 16 Mar), many of which will have naturalists on board the vessels.

Tauck is also revamping its

digital presence, reinventing its website and creating an app guests can use before, during and after travel and focussing on giving its guests more choice and small group activities.

Locally, Tauck had been working to better engage with the trade and customers and as a result had seen a "significant growth" in sales and passenger numbers, Spivak said.

Australia is currently Tauck's strongest market, achieving a 45% year-on-year growth in passenger numbers.

The boost has been achieved by listening to feedback from Tauck's Partner Advisory Board, which was established two years ago, opening a reservations office in Sydney (*CW* 07 Jul), the switch to AUD fixed pricing, bringing the product to the market six to eight months earlier and agent training.

More from Tauck on **page three**.

## Syd booking system

THE Port Authority of NSW has confirmed it is exploring a number of options to address cruise capacity in Sydney, including a new booking policy.

*Cruise Weekly* understands the policy would be a bidding system for covering berthing at the White Bay Terminal as well as the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

This week high level meetings have been taking place, with cruise operators seeking clarity about the proposed system and urgently seeking details from NSW Ports so they can finalise deployments, it's understood.

A spokesperson for the Port Authority of NSW told *CW* a new booking policy "would allow Port Authority to better manage overbookings, cancellations and slot amendments efficiently".

"It would also allow equal opportunity for cruise lines to make slot applications."

A release date is TBA.

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## All smiles at Norwegian



**THE** establishment of a dedicated Australasian office for Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings has been an outstanding success, with the investment leading to significant increases in sales across all three of the company's brands: Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

Previously represented under GSA arrangements, the expanded operation now has 14 people in field sales across the brands, as well as a Sydney-based call centre.

NCLH head of international business development, Harry Sommer, made a sojourn to

Sydney earlier this week (**CW** Tue) to touch base with regional vice president Steve Odell, who told **CW** the biggest growth percentage-wise had been for Regent Seven Seas which has tripled sales since a year ago.

Sales for Oceania are up 30%, while 2018 is seen as a key opportunity with forward bookings for all brands surging.

Norwegian has just debuted its new *Norwegian Joy*, with Odell and Sommer (**pictured**) helping host about 800 key industry partners from across the region at a Singapore event last weekend.



Step on board Uniworld's newest ship in the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

**CLICK HERE** to read **travelBulletin**

## RCL extends hours

**ROYAL** Caribbean Cruises will extend the hours of operation of its Reservation Sales & Service call centre for Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises & Azamara Club Cruises in Australia from 29 May.

The reservations sales and service lines will be available an extra four hours a day, from 8am to 9pm AEST Mon-Fri.

Call 1800 754 500.

**MEANWHILE**, RCI's 2018/19 summer cruise season will open for sale on Tue.

Reservations for the season were originally planned to commence on 16 May, but the line said it needed more time to "finalise deployment details".

When it announced its 2018/19 program in Apr (**CW** 27 Apr), RCI revealed it was scaling back its ships in local waters to three.

## HAL Cuba approval

**HOLLAND** America Line has become the third Carnival Corp cruise line to receive the green light to begin sailing to Cuba.

*Ms Veendam* will sail from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, starting with a 12-day sailing on 22 Dec visiting both Havana and Cienfuegos.

The new itineraries include nine seven-day sailings which stop at Havana and three of which visit Cienfuegos and an 11-day departure on 17 Mar.

Cruises will include a combination of Caribbean ports in the Dominican Republic, Belize, Mexico, Jamaica, Cayman Island, with the final departure scheduled for 18 Apr 2018.

Bookings open 26 May & guests booked on *Veendam's* previous deployment will be fully refunded.

Fares lead in at \$1,199ppts, incl taxes, fees and port expenses.

## Seabourn upgrades

**SEABOURN** *Odyssey* has emerged from drydock sporting The Grill by Thomas Keller restaurant and a new mindful living program.

The ship is the second in the fleet to introduce the Spa and Wellness with Dr Andrew Weil program, which integrates physical, social, environmental and spiritual well-being.

During the refurb, *Odyssey's* spa and fitness centre was refreshed, all suites were recarpeted and some received new furniture.

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## Crystal excursions

**CRYSTAL** has added new Crystal Wilderness Adventures to its 2017 Northwest Passage Voyage on *Crystal Serenity* on 15 Aug.

New additions include Arctic scuba diving, three nights on the northernmost tip of Canada/Ellesmere/Greenland, a trip to Iglooplik, a chartered aircraft to the hamlet of Gjoa Haven and fly fishing for Arctic Char.

The 32-day Northwest Passage voyage sails from Seward to New York, calling in Kodiak, Dutch Harbor and Nome, Alaska; Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories & more - **CLICK HERE** for details.

## CCL host more laughs

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line will host a record 25,000 shows at its Punchliner Comedy Clubs in 2017 on its 25-ship fleet and more than 1,000 on sailings out of Sydney.

The company lays claim to hosting more comedians and performances than any land-based comedy club.

## Tauck slams rebating

**TAUCK** vp global sales Steven Spivak this week reaffirmed the company's strong stance on discounting, which he said "undermines the integrity of our industry" and destroys the livelihood of travel agents.

Spivak told **CW** Tauck used to see people from the Australian market booking in the US through agencies that would offer a rebate in 2014, but now agencies found to be rebating were banned from selling the product.

"We take a very firm stand and we say 'no more' and what that says to agents is 'I'm protected if I sell Tauck,'" he said.

"The difference between that and some other companies is when they say 'we don't want agents discounting' what they really mean is 'we want to be the only ones discounting.'"

Spivak said because Tauck took the time to plan experiences, and priced them fairly, they were never in a position to offer two-for-one, free air or discounts.

## Tauck focuses on space



**RIVER** cruise passengers are "hungry for something different and something better", Steven Spivak, vp global sales told **CW** at an event in Sydney on Tue.

Tauck is in the process of reconfiguring half its European river fleet and recently dialled back pax number on *ms Treasures* and *ms Esprit* from 118 to 98.

"The size of this ship that we have 98 people on, Scenic or APT will have 150 or 160 people and that's a very different experience," Spivak said.

"While most river cruise lines are focussing on hardware, that's not what river cruising is about... River cruising is about destination

experience," Spivak explained.

"We're not putting our focus on swimming pools and movie theatres. None of that gets used and so instead of trying to recreate an ocean liner experience, we try to give people what they really need, which is comfort, space & time to enjoy."

During his Sydney visit, Spivak also helped plan the next Tauck Academy event, which will be held in Nov at the InterContinental Double Bay.

The event will educate agents & treat them to "a flavour of what travelling with Tauck is about".

Spivak is **pictured** with Andrew Millmore, md Travel the World.

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## INTRODUCING ms NIEUW STATENDAM

Holland America Line's newest Pinnacle-class ship, *Nieuw Statendam* is preparing to make her debut!

A sister ship to *ms Koningsdam*, this spectacular new vessel combines classic style with contemporary appointments, engaging new experiences and carefully crafted itineraries.

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## Norwegian Bliss keel laying



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line and Meyer Werft yesterday held a ceremony to mark the keel laying of *Norwegian Bliss* in Papenburg.

During the ceremony in Germany, a keel block was lifted into the building hall.

*Bliss* is due for delivery in Apr 2018 and will be custom built with features and amenities for Alaskan cruise itineraries.

Andy Stuart, president and ceo of NCL laid a 'lucky coin' during the ceremony and said the line's 16th ship was their most innovative vessel to date.

"We have seen overwhelming anticipation and excitement from

our guests and travel partners for *Norwegian Bliss*," he said.

**Pictured** above are: Andy Stuart, NCLH; and Tim Meyer, Meyer Werft.

**MEANWHILE** the Port of Seattle and NCLH opened the new Bell Street Cruise Terminal at the Port's Pier 66 building.

The US\$30m terminal upgrade was custom designed to handle 4,000 pax *Norwegian Bliss*, plus other NCLH cruise lines.

This follows NCLH signing a 15 year lease of Pier 66 in Aug 2015.

VIPs at the grand opening of Port of Seattle's Pier 66 cruise terminal and **pictured** below.



## Windstar new sailings

**WINDSTAR** Cruises has announced eight new itineraries in Northern Europe and 12 new Mediterranean offerings for 2018.

The new additions feature stops at the Faroe, Shetland and Orkney islands, Norwegian Fjords, Marseille, Venice and more.

Cruises range from week-long voyages to multi-week trips.

## MSC Theme park

**MSC** Cruises will debut its Super Amusement Park on board *MSC Meraviglia*, which will be christened on 03 Jun.

Inside the amusement park is a multi-purpose sports arena, bowling alley, two F1 simulators, a flight simulator, arcade games and a 5D cinema.

After the christening *Meraviglia* will sail Mediterranean itineraries.

## Sea Spirit refurb

**POSEIDON** Expeditions' *Sea Spirit* has completed a \$3.3m refurbishment of guest suites in time for the 2017 Arctic season.

The overhaul sees new fittings, colour schemes and facilities fitted to each cabin including beds, bath modules, flat screen TVs, carpeting and upholstery.

The *Sea Spirit* has repositioned to Greenland to begin her Arctic season from 17 Jun.

## Ama appointment

**AMAWATERWAYS** has expanded its sales team with Alex Pinelo appointed to the newly created position of director of Latin American sales.

Effective immediately, Pinelo will be responsible for growing the Latin American market and working with travel agents.

## Viking marks 20 years

**VIKING** Cruises marked 20 years of service with a video featuring founder and chairman Torstein Hagen reflecting on the company's history, from its start in Russia to Viking Ocean Cruises.

Hagen said 20 years ago, river cruising was unknown to most North Americans, and now Viking is a household name.

Viking is celebrating the milestone by offering a fly free to Russia promotion, the destination where it all began.

Valid for new 2018 Russian river cruise sailings, the deal represents a saving of \$2,000 per couple and is available until 30 Jun.

**CLICK HERE** to watch the video.

## Star Clippers air credit

**CLIENTS** booking select tall ship Mediterranean cruises with Star Clippers before 31 Jul will receive \$800 towards the cost of flights.

The credit is applicable to all cabin categories & is combinable with past passenger discounts if using the code 'SCAIROFF0517'.

## Lindblad South Pacific

**LINDBLAD** Expeditions' *National Geographic Orion* will sail around French Polynesia and the South Pacific in 2018.

The 102-pax ship will offer five new one- & two-week itineraries scheduled between Mar and Aug 2018- prices start at \$9,620ppts.

## B&R river cruise

**BUTTERFIELD & Robinson** has added a Rhine River Cruise Biking 2018 tour in partnership with Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

Departing from Basel in May, Jun and Sep, the eight-day trip is priced from US\$6,995ppts.



### NZ cruise conference

REGISTRATIONS are now open for Cruise New Zealand's annual conference at Auckland Museum on 28-29 Aug.

The event will be opened by New Zealand's Deputy PM and Minister for Tourism, Paula Bennett, with guest speakers from Carnival Australia, Royal Caribbean, Princess Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Ponant and Seabourn.

**CLICK HERE** to register.

### Debussy and Ravel keels laid



CRYSTAL River Cruises has laid the keels for its next two newbuilds, *Crystal Debussy* and *Crystal Ravel* at a ceremony at MV Werften shipyard in Germany.

Tan Sri Lim, chairman and chief executive of Genting Hong Kong and Harry Glawe, Economics Minister, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern placed the traditional lucky coins on the keel blocks before the first two sections were ceremoniously lowered into position.

The two new all-balcony, all-suite vessels will be approx 135m in length and carry 106 guests.

"This ceremonial act represents a tremendous achievement for Crystal River Cruises and the entire Crystal fleet, as we introduce the next chapter of the continuing story of Crystal innovations throughout the travel and hospitality industry," said Crystal chief exec officer and president, Edie Rodriguez.

Originally designed to sail on the Seine between Paris and Normandy and the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers from Jun and Aug this year, the two vessels

were pulled from the region (CW 02 Aug) and redesigned.

They will embark on their maiden voyages along the Rhine, Main and Danube in 2018.

**Pictured** are: Colin Au, president, Genting Hong Kong; Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay, chairman and chief executive of Genting Hong Kong; Harry Glawe, Economics Minister, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Josef Lumetsberger, gm operations, Crystal River Cruises.

### Majestic Silk Road

PRINCESS Cruises' *Majestic Princess* has embarked on her journey to China from Rome along the Silk Road sea route.

During the 37-day voyage, different Chinese musical groups will perform to more than 6,500 people in 40 different countries.

### Port of Brisbane cfo

THE Port of Brisbane has appointed Karen Wells as cfo.

Wells has experience in finance and strategy across a range of global infrastructure businesses.

### CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz  
MD, CLIA Australasia

#### Another bumper year

LAST week CLIA announced that the global cruise industry has surpassed 2016 ocean cruise passenger projections, reaching 24.7 million cruise passengers. For 2017, based on new vessels and expected regional deployment, CLIA is projecting another positive year of growth for the industry with a passenger forecast of 25.8 million.

Our release last week of the 2016 Australian Ocean Source Market Report showed that Australia maintained its place as the number one nation in the world for market penetration with the equivalent of more than 5% or 1 in 19 of the Australian population cruising.

With almost 20% average growth over the past 10 years, cruise has changed what makes up the profit margin of the most successful retail travel agents.

So if you are one of the very few who haven't yet started selling cruise, join up now and become a CLIA accredited agent.

If you are already selling cruise and aren't seeing your sales keep up with the industry growth, think about improving your skills to maximise your income.

There are still cabins available on CLIA's Masters Conference in Sep, which is aimed at advancing cruise marketing and sales skills further. Course topics include advanced marketing and sales skills, customer service, & time management.

Visit [www.cruising.org.au](http://www.cruising.org.au).



CRUISE pax will be able to take holiday bragging to new depths with Biki - a drone in the form of a bionic fish!

The product was developed in China and is being touted as being able to dive to 61m as it flaps its bionic fin.



The device will be controlled by a smartphone and can swim for two hours before the battery drains.

There's a built in GPS module which makes Biki return to base and a 150 degree wide angle to capture close details.

Pre-order price is \$549 and will be \$1,024 once it goes on sale to the wider public in Aug.

Videos will be shareable via live transmission to devices.

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