

Uniworld invests millions in Super Ship fleet

EXCLUSIVE

THE Travel Corporation is set to plough tens of millions of dollars on upgrading Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection's fleet of European ships, building on the success of its Super Ship revamp.

Last week Uniworld re-launched the *River Beatrice* as *Super Ship (SS) Beatrice*, the first vessel to be retrofitted with the acclaimed design and fifth in the company's Europe-based flotilla of 12 ships.

Speaking with *Cruise Weekly* on board *SS Beatrice*, Uniworld ceo Ellen Bettridge was reluctant to put a price-tag on the upgrade, conservatively saying "it's been a significant investment".

"It's safe to say it's been a multi-million dollar investment".

Uniworld has already confirmed two further ships, *River Empress* and *River Royale*, would be next in line for the refurbishment and upgrade to Super Ship status.



"We've seen great success with all of our Super Ships and their level of luxury demonstrates the way forward for the brand.

"We're excited to bring all of our ships up to this impeccable standard," Bettridge commented.

The head-to-tail enhancement of *SS Beatrice* took 140 days to complete at the Van Tiem shipyard in Druten, Netherlands.

Repeat pax aboard *Beatrice* on her first sailing from Budapest to Giurgiu told *Cruise Weekly* the new design was much more subtle than other more mature

ships in the company's fleet, with some describing it as "less intense", but still retaining Uniworld's luxury touches, service and amenities.

Bettridge said elements from *SS Beatrice* would be emulated on Uniworld's other conversions, such as additional dining options which have "proven to be a hit".

She said Uniworld was currently talking with shipyards to plan the upgrade for *Empress* and *Royale*.

"Our initial plans are pretty extensive, so it just depends on how much we can accomplish.

"Our ships are not cookie cutter. Every single one is different so it's not like I can say go and do another *Beatrice* - it doesn't work that way for Uniworld," she said.

"It takes a lot of planning as to what we are going to do on each ship and how we are going to make them a 'wow' too."

More on Uniworld on **page 3**.

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

Regent

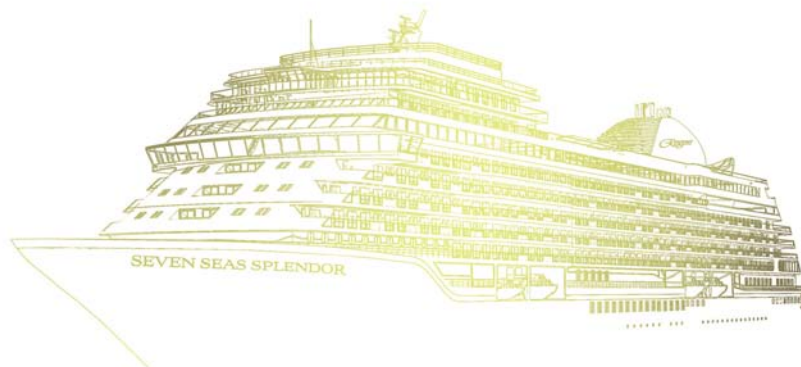
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Fiji cyclone update

A NUMBER of cruise operators have cancelled Fiji itineraries due to Tropical Cyclone Keni.

South Sea Cruises has suspended all day trips and resort connections to the Mamanuca and Yasawa regions for today & tomorrow.

Blue Lagoon Cruises is offering refunds or deferred travel for guests who were set to sail on its cancelled departures on 06 and 09 Apr.

Captain Cook Cruises has cancelled all Tivua Island Day, Lazy Lunch and Sunset Dinner cruises for today.

Guests set to board *Reef Endeavour* for a Discovery Cruise today can access a refund or defer travel, with the ship currently in anchorage off the south coast of Vanua Levu & not expected to return to Port Denarau until 11 or 12 Apr.

Paradise in Cuba

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has added 20 voyages to Cuba aboard *Carnival Paradise* from Tampa in 2019.

The five-day voyages will include a day-long or day and overnight call in Havana, and stops at Key West & Cozumel.

The revelation is in addition to the 11 cruises to the destination already scheduled for next year.

"Our Cuba cruises have been met with phenomenal guest response since we began sailing to the island last year and we're thrilled to add yet another 20 voyages to this fascinating and sought-after destination," said Christine Duffy, president of CCL.

Paradise will join *Carnival Sensation*, which the cruise line announced would operate 17 sailings to Cuba from Miami in 2019.

SMALL ship expedition specialist One Ocean Expeditions has revealed it will be venturing to the Chilean Fjords in 2019.

Best known for its polar cruises, the line has this year expanded its fleet to include the 146-passenger *RCGS Resolute*.

The inaugural non-polar expedition on board *RCGS Resolute* will depart on 31 Mar 2019, immediately after the last

cruise of the Antarctic season.

The 13-night Chilean adventure from Ushuaia, Argentina, to Valparaiso, Chile, is priced from US\$6,995 (AU\$9,087) per person twin share.

RCGS Resolute will then embark on two 10-day Central America itineraries followed by an 11-night Scotland, the Faroe Islands & Iceland cruise.

RCGS Resolute is pictured.

Royal Caribbean 2019/20 bookings open

BOOKINGS are now open for Royal Caribbean International's 2019/20 local season, which will see three ships sail down under (CW Thu).

Radiance of the Seas will be the first to debut for the season, arriving into Sydney on 09 Oct 2019, followed by *Ovation of the Seas* on 20 Oct and *Voyager of the Seas* on 30 Nov.

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CRUISE

WEEKLY

Tuesday 10th April 2018

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WEEKLY

On location in the Danube

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Uniworld Boutique Cruise Collection.

OVER the past few days, guests on the first sailing of SS *Beatrice* since her relaunch as a Super Ship have visited some of the lesser visited ports south of Budapest, Hungary.

The itinerary has included port calls in Vukovar, Croatia where guests could visit a fisherman's house for a home-hosted lunch, a winery or an organic farm.

Onward to Belgrade, there were options for a city tour by coach to discover Old Belgrade, or a bike tour to discover parts of New Belgrade.

See CW's social pages for pics.

U by U like Moxy, W

UNIWORLD'S new U by Uniworld river cruise ships, *The A* and *The B*, are being likened by travel agents to Marriott International's hip hotel brands, W and Moxy.

The cruise company's boss Ellen Bettridge told CW front line sellers from the Virtuoso luxury travel group recently had a chance to sample the product in Amsterdam before its official launch next week.

She said the overwhelming response from the Virtuoso agents was *The A's* design and style was like a "funky brand".

Bettridge admitted the design was not going to appeal to all tastes, but it had found its own slice of the market.

"Just like the W and Moxy hotel brands, not everyone wants that funky style...[and] we've created a different brand for a different style of vacation," Bettridge added.

Dine-In Theatre on Uni

UNIWORLD is set to offer a Gold Class-like cinema experience on some of its ships, ceo Ellen Bettridge revealed to **Cruise Weekly** in Europe last week.

Dubbed 'Dine-in Theatre', the experience will be offered aboard three of the line's ships which are equipped with private screening rooms - *SS Joie de Vivre*, *SS Antoinette* and *SS Maria Theresa*.

"Guests will be able to select some food from a menu before they sit down and the treats will be brought to them during the movie," Bettridge (right) said.

"They'll be able to select from a choice of burgers and fun stuff that you'd eat in a movie theatre, possibly nachos, popcorn, candy and champagne or if you want a glass of wine, and Uniworld crew will serve guests their food as they watch the movie."

"It's brand new and we're trying something different," she added.

Dine-in Theatre will be available during the 2018 season.

Another new dining experience which commenced last year and is now offered on *SS Beatrice* is a progressive dinner.

It will vary from ship to ship, but will see guests pay to dine in a number of unique stations spread around a Uniworld vessel.



In each location, pax will hear from the head of a department, such as in the wheelhouse where they'll chat with the Captain for one course, then the engineer in the engine room for another, and then the laundry room.

The progressive dinner is limited to between 10-12 passengers and only available on select nights when the ship isn't sailing.

Bettridge said the food in each location would be hors d'oeuvres, with the sit down element of the meal served in Schubert's cafe or Max's restaurant on *SS Beatrice*.

MEANWHILE, Uniworld has launched a Fly Free to Europe offer which includes complimentary Economy fares with every 2019 European voyage departing before 15 Nov.

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Discover Silversea's splitting of *Silver Spirit* in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read **travelBulletin**

APT Tasmania

APT has just released its 2018/19 brochure for Tasmania, featuring the new *Spirit of the Wild* ship on the Gordon River.

The ship uses a combination of diesel engines and electric motors to offer passengers quiet cruises.

To view the brochure online, **CLICK HERE**.

Mariner's renovation

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has unveiled a renovated *Seven Seas Mariner*, which has just completed a 20-day drydock (**CW** 13 Feb).

The vessel has emerged with new culinary offerings, having replaced Signatures with Chartreuse and redesigned Compass Rose and Prime 7.

Mariner's pool deck has been refreshed and all public spaces have received new carpeting, art, furniture and decor.

The library has been relocated to make way for expanded seating at Coffee Connection (**pictured** above), deck 6 has new decking and loungers and Canyon



Ranch Spa has a fresh design.

All guest suites have been redesigned with new beds, furniture and artwork.

Seven Seas Mariner is repositioning to the Pacific Northwest for 15 seven, 10- and 11-night Alaska itineraries, with alternate departures from Vancouver and Seward.

For photos, see **FACEBOOK**.

Carnival court

A PASSENGER who claims he was wrongly accused of sexual assault on a cruise from Sydney in 2016 is taking legal action against Carnival Australia.

John Sun, who is seeking over \$100,000 in damages, says he was attacked by the father of one of the alleged assault victims.

Carnival Australia told **Cruise Weekly** in a statement it could not comment on legal proceedings, but advised its legal documents "neither acknowledge nor admit that a guest was 'beaten' or 'bashed' by another guest".

Cruise Calendar

This week's port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY

<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	11 Apr
<i>Sun Princess</i>	12 Apr
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	12 Apr
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	13 Apr
<i>Noordam</i>	13 Apr
<i>Pacific Eden</i>	13 Apr
<i>Explorer of the Seas</i>	15 Apr
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	16 Apr
<i>Pacific Eden</i>	16 Apr
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	16 Apr

MELBOURNE

<i>Pacific Eden</i>	11 Apr
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BRISBANE

<i>Pacific Aria</i>	13 Apr
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	14 Apr
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	14 Apr

CAIRNS

<i>Sea Princess</i>	14 Apr
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DARWIN

<i>Sea Princess</i>	11 Apr
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AUCKLAND

<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	16 Apr
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Radiance repairs in Newcastle

THE Port of Newcastle has confirmed *Radiance of the Seas* arrived to undergo repairs over the weekend.

Royal Caribbean International last week cancelled the ship's 06 Apr departure from Sydney due to issues with its Azipod propulsion system (**CW** 03 Apr).

Radiance of the Seas is expected to depart on 17 Apr.



MSC CRUISES CRUISE CONSULTANT

Due to further expansion MSC Cruises Australia is looking for a Cruise Consultant, located at King St Wharf, Sydney.

The successful candidate must have a minimum four years experience in the retail or wholesale travel sector, exceptional cruise and sales knowledge, strong airfare and ticketing skills with GDS and system knowledge, excellent attention to detail and a good work ethic.

The successful candidate will work in our reservation team and liaise closely with our marketing, sales and product departments.

For further information and to submit your resume

hr@msccruises.com.au



IT WAS panda-monium at the **Cruise Weekly** office this morning when these super cute pastries landed on our desks, courtesy of Wendy Wu Tours.

While we're happy to share the news that the company is now offering a massive touring Asia sale - including savings of up to \$2,200 per couple on departures up to Dec 2018 - we're not so happy to share the delicious sweet treats...

CLICK HERE for more info on available packages.



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