

Cruise Weekly today

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

U open-age dep

TRAVEL agents of all ages can jump on board eight U by Uniworld departures at up to 60% off the published fare.

The select sailings have been removed from the regular U cruise 2018 lineup and made available to travel agents.

The millennial river cruise operator said the move was designed to meet growing demand from the travel agent community following on from its "Sneak Peek" cruise on *The B* in Oct last year.

Itineraries are along the Seine, Danube and Rhine rivers on *The A* and *The B* in Apr, May, Aug & Oct.

For more call 1300 730 010.

Finalists for the CLIAs announced

THE finalists for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia's 17th Cruise Industry Awards have been revealed (CW breaking news).

A total of 20 awards will be presented at the sold-out event on 24 Feb at the Star Event Centre Sydney, with nominations both submitted by CLIA member agencies and nominated by member cruise lines.

The coveted category of Cruise Agency of the Year - Australia has seen last year's gold winner of Bicton Travel WA return to the list of finalists, alongside Cruiseabout Kew Vic; Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel Qld; Phil Hoffmann Travel SA and Travelrite International Balwyn Vic.

In the Cruise Consultant of the Year - Australia category, agents in the running are two Cruiseabout Kew agents Kathy Pavlidis and Rohan Ford, along

with Melinda Gregor, Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel and Martine Hero, Clean Cruising.

CLIA Australasia & Asia md, Joel Katz said the judges had their work cut out for them, with a record number of submissions.

"The CLIAs are all about recognising and rewarding the outstanding achievements of member agents who have had a stellar year in the industry and we're thrilled to reveal the hard-

working finalists who helped to make 2017 an especially big year for cruise down under," he said.

"I'd like to congratulate all the finalists & also recognise all those who entered or were nominated.

"With so much great work right across the Australasian cruise industry in 2017, our expert panel had an especially tough time judging these awards."

The event will be hosted by *Sunrise* newsreader Natalie Barr.



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Aurora's big reveal



APT deploys new ship



APT will charter the newly-constructed *Queen Eleganza* to sail in Croatia in 2019.

In partnership with Noble Caledonia, the operator will use the new small ship to embark on Croatian adventures which incorporate coastline cruising with evening land trips.

With a maximum capacity of 36 passengers, the *Queen*

Eleganza was designed specifically to sail the Adriatic Sea and visit the small islands and coves that larger ships cannot reach.

The vessel is due to set sail on her maiden voyage with Noble Caledonia in the spring of 2018 before being deployed on a full 2019 APT season.

Queen Eleganza is pictured.

AURORA Expeditions' new ship will "put an Australian stamp on an entire industry as a world-first" when it debuts in Oct 2019, co-founder Greg Mortimer told media in Sydney this week.

The vessel will be designed "by expeditioners for expeditioners" and be the first passenger vessel to debut Ulstein's X-bow, which will provide greater stability and speed in rough seas - including the Drake Passage.

Passengers who still can't face the passage will for the first time be able to opt for a fly-fly option, flying from Punta Arenas to King George Island to join their cruise.

To be named the *Greg Mortimer*, the ship will be able to accommodate more than double the number of guests than the 50-pax *Polar Pioneer* which Aurora Expeditions currently charters for its polar cruises.

Mortimer admitted building a vessel for more people was an

economic choice, but assured a lot of work has gone into making sure Aurora's principals were inherent in the ship.

"Building a new ship, the first of its type as passenger vessel in the world, is a big deal for a little Australian company and so that's inordinately exciting," he said.

The ship will have 80 cabins, over 30% of which will be interconnecting to cater to the trend of more extended families travelling to the polar regions.

MD Robert Halfpenny recommended agents target clients who had an "adventurous spirit", noting the ship would allow pax to immerse themselves in nature to whatever degree they were comfortable with.

The new vessel will also introduce four new itineraries, the 11 or 12-day Antarctic Explorer, 15-day Franz Josef Land Explorer, 21-day Arctic Discovery & 25-day High Arctic Adventure.

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Ovation's biggest yet



ROYAL Caribbean International has today revealed an extended *Ovation of the Seas* 2018/19 season by two sailings, making the down under deployment of the megaliner its biggest yet.

The adjusted schedule will occur during *Ovation's* third season in Australia and the cruise line said the expansion was in response to "incredible demand for the ship".

The new additions include a 10-night New Zealand roundtrip departing Sydney on 30 Mar 2019, calling at Dunedin, Wellington, Napier and Picton, with a day of scenic cruising

through Milford, Doubtful and Dusky sounds.

Also new is an eight-night South Pacific roundtrip, departing Sydney on 09 Apr 2019 & visiting Noumea and Mystery Island.

Ovation of the Seas will then sail a 16-night Transpacific cruise to Hawaii on its way to Alaska on 17 Apr.

The fresh additions are due to *Ovation of the Seas* being deployed to Alaska in 2019 for the first time, instead of Asia.

The line was initially scheduled to depart on a repositioning cruise to Asia on 30 Mar 2019.

Viking's new 2019 departures

VIKING Cruises has released new departure dates for 2019 for its North Pacific Passage and Far Eastern Horizons itineraries due to "unprecedented demand" for the routes.

The 23-day North Pacific Passage new departure leaves Vancouver for Tokyo on 14 Aug 2019 and is priced from \$9,995pp.

The 15-day Far Eastern Horizons new dates are 06 Sep, 18 Oct and 01 Nov, sailing from Hong Kong to Tokyo & priced from \$8,495pp.

Book by 31 Mar 2018 to access savings of up to \$1,200 per couple.

Celebrity Edge floated



THE first new class of ship for Celebrity Cruises in more than a decade is another step closer to completion with *Celebrity Edge* being floated out of her dry dock this week.

The exterior construction of the 2,918-pax vessel is complete and workers at the STX France shipyard are now fitting out the many "meticulously designed venues and transformational

staterooms" on board the ship.

Celebrity Edge is due to debut 21 Nov this year and will navigate the waters of the western Caribbean before sailing on to service Mediterranean itineraries in 2019 (CW 09 Jan).

Celebrity Cruises will roll out three sister ships to *Edge* in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Edge is pictured leaving her mounting dock in France.

Ponant update

CONSTRUCTION of the first ship in Ponant's new Ponant Explorers series, *Le Laperouse*, has entered the home straight.

The vessel has arrived in the Norwegian shipyard of Vard, after being transferred by rail, lowered into the water in Dec in Romania and towed through the Med and across the English Channel.

The ship will debut in Jun.

Regent expands

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has expanded its sales team, naming Linda Seiersen as its new business development manager for NSW & ACT.

Seiersen brings over six years' experience of working as bdm and customer services manager for Viking Cruises.

She replaces Alice Ager, who is moving into a newly created sales operations role.

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RCL US\$80m bonus

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises employees will receive equity awards equal to 5% of their 2017 salaries in an \$80m "Thank You, Thank You Bonus".

The move follows RCL's full-year 2017 results, with the line achieving its three-year "Double-Double" goal of doubling earnings per share and recording a double-digit return on invested capital.

Coral Adventurer brox



NEW details on Coral Expeditions' new expedition cruise vessel, *Coral Adventurer* and its itineraries have been revealed in the first brochure for the ship.

Coral Adventurer will embark on its maiden voyage on 24 Apr 2019, an 18-night cruise from Singapore to Darwin which will trace the route of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman.

The vessel will then undertake a 10-night In the Trail of Tasman II itinerary which will sail from Darwin and loop through the remote islands of West Papua.

Coral Adventurer will then

commence Coral Expeditions' regular Kimberley season between Broome and Darwin before offering cruises into the Gulf of Carpentaria in Cape York & Arnhem Land, New Guinea and the Spice Islands & Raja Ampat.

The brochure also debuts a 17-night Komodo Dragons & Krakatoa itinerary in Jan 2020 from Darwin to Singapore.

Coral Adventurer will have capacity for 120 guests, indoor and outdoor bars and a guest observation lounge in the bridge.

Staterooms are priced from \$9,690 per person twin share.

CLICK HERE for the online brox.

ecruising.travel Asia trip

ECRUISING.TRAVEL will launch a new 25-night Beauties of South-East Asia & the Golden Triangle expedition available from Mar.

The trip includes time exploring Singapore before cruising on Silversea's *Silver Shadow* with overnight stops in locations such as Phuket, Colombo and Cochin.

The package is priced at \$11,999 per person and is inclusive of Economy return flights, accom and transfers.

MEANWHILE, *ecruising.travel* has received two accolades in the 2018 LUX Tourism Awards, run by UK lifestyle magazine LUX.

The company secured the award for Australia's Best Cruise Booking Platform and its POSH Club received the LUX Excellence Award for the Best Loyalty Program.



WHEN an annual Blockchain Cruise set sail from Singapore recently, 600 Bitcoin investors on board were full of vigour and frivolity as they partied hard on the back of the cryptocurrency's healthy price of \$US13,500.

The sangria and Red Bull was flowing as bitcoin-themed rap music blared and drones buzzed by filming the event.

However, by the time the ship pulled into its destination in Thailand the bottom had fallen out of Bitcoin, crashing below US\$10,000.

Collectively the ship's passengers had lost millions in personal wealth, making for one very expensive cruise and a sinking feeling you simply just don't want at sea.



CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Not yet a 2018 member?

AS THE world's largest cruise association, CLIA is dedicated to the promotion and growth of the cruise industry. CLIA is composed of more than 60 of the world's major cruise lines. More than 25,000 travel agencies are affiliated with CLIA around the world.

We leverage our relationships with our Cruise Line Members, Executive Partners and the travel community to support our travel agent members with access to CLIA's world-leading training and accreditation, providing our members with the best benefits, tools and resources to navigate the cruise industry, attract more clients and increase your sales.

A CLIA accredited Travel Agent embodies the highest standards of cruise knowledge and competence; and CLIA membership advances the profile of your company and professional networks, and demonstrates your commitment to champion the cruise industry.

These are all reasons to renew your CLIA membership, or to join up if you are not yet a member – just like any profession the more you learn about the product you are selling and how to sell it well, the more successful you will be. CLIA membership provides this at a reasonable cost.

To stay current, connected and effective, visit www.cruising.org.au to renew your membership or join.

Congratulations to all the finalists for the 17th annual Cruise Industry Awards announced today.



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