



Local RCL head departs after 15 months

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises (RCL) has revealed that Gavin Smith will return to his former role of MD Australia and NZ effective immediately, replacing Susan Bonner who departs after holding the position since Jun 2018 (*CW* breaking news y'day).

Smith first served in the Australian-based role from 2008 to 2013, before moving on to become Senior Vice President of International for Royal Caribbean Cruises, where he looked after the markets of Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East.

In his new position, Smith will be tasked with delivering further growth for Royal Caribbean Int'l (RCI), Celebrity and Azamara.

"No one is more passionate about the Australia and New Zealand markets than Gavin, and we are excited to welcome him back to his home market



after a successful term leading our international team," RCI CEO Michael Bayley said.

Smith's return to Australia sees Bonner move back to Miami to lead a "new strategic project" for the Celebrity Cruises brand.

During her short stint in Australia, Bonner championed the cause of improving Australia's cruise capacity, and was also an

advocate for better preparing the local market for an influx of large-scale ships, referring to the issue as "the big ship challenge" (*CW* 13 Sep 2018).

"I want to thank Susan for her contributions to the ANZ region and we look forward to welcoming her back to our Miami campus," Bayley said.

Pictured: Gavin Smith.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus full page from **Windstar Cruises**.

CLIA noms open

NOMINATIONS are now open for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia's 19th annual Cruise Industry Awards.

Selections can be submitted online before 22 Nov across 11 categories and are open for either self-nomination or peer nomination for both Australian and New Zealand nominees.

Key awards include Cruise Consultant of the Year, Rising Star and Cruise Champion.

The event is scheduled to take place at The Star Sydney on 15 Feb 2020, with tickets now on sale exclusively to CLIA members - more info [HERE](#).

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Ship in clear sight



LINDBLAD Expeditions has celebrated the keel laying of its second polar new-build *National Geographic Resolution* at the CRIST shipyard in Gdynia, Poland this week (pictured). Scheduled for delivery in late 2021, she is a sister ship to the *National Geographic Endurance* which launches in Apr 2020, and boasts a capacity for 126 passengers, and a high ice class rating to navigate Polar regions. The ceremony saw the

traditional laying of a commemorative silver coin, in this case a Hawaii Sesquicentennial half dollar minted in 1928. Attending the milestone moment was Lindblad's Senior VP, New Buildings Nikolaos Doulis and New-Build Site Manager Reed Ameel, while ship designer Ulstein was represented by Project Director Kenneth Pettersen and Manager Hull Department Jarle Asemr.



HURTIGRUTEN has formally introduced the newest members of its fast-growing Australian team, with new faces coming on board across sales, marketing and communications. Hurtigruten plans to offer a wider range of product in Australia off the back of its expanded local team, backed by its home team in Norway. The new recruits include Head of Sales Steve Hona, Head of Marketing Joel Victoria, PR & Communications Lead Justine Costigan, Inside Sales Manager Darren Wakefield; plus the sales team Carissa Crammond,

Sam Manga, Kyle Duffield, Andrew Eddy, Tony McLeod, and Alexandra Morton. "Our Australian sales team will work with strategic partners in Australia and NZ to deliver the most comprehensive knowledge and support for agents and guests booking our premium expeditions," said the cruise line's MD, APAC Damian Perry. "I am proud to introduce a dynamic, passionate and focused team to support the industry." Pictured back row: Sam Manga, Darren Wakefield, and front row Carissa Crammond, Joel Victoria, Justine Costigan.



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A much faster spirit

TT-LINE'S *Spirit of Tasmania* has partnered with Australian satellite internet provider IPSTAR Broadband to offer its passengers access to high-speed internet.

The new NAVA internet service, billed as "the fastest across the Bass Strait", is now available to guests via any wi-fi-enabled device such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones, with the cost for the service leading in at \$20 flat rate or \$12 per hour.

"We're continually looking for ways to improve the on board experience for our passengers and by introducing the NAVA system they can now enjoy a fast seamless service throughout their entire journey," said *Spirit of Tasmania's* Chief Information Officer Simon Pearce.

Technology company IPSTAR's strategy is to improve access to high-speed internet in remote parts of Australia where connectivity is poor.

Homegrown drinks

CRUISE & Maritime Voyages (CMV) has boosted the number of local Australian beer, wine and spirits on board *Vasco da Gama* in preparation for its arrival in Sydney in Dec.

Brands to be added include Wirra Wirra, Jansz, Coopers, Yalumba and Vasse Felix.

Discounts on the new beverages are available through the Premium and VIP CMV Additions Packages, starting at \$43pp per night.

Haycock returns

QUEENSLAND travel veteran Mel Haycock has formed a new company called Luxury Travel & Cruise

Concentrating on the high end of the industry, Haycock will continue to operate as an affiliate through Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel in Noosa.

OCEANIA Cruises has announced the debut of the Aquamar Spa + Vitality Center, a new wellness and spa experience that forms part of the brand's OceaniaNEXT initiative.

The new service is set to launch across all six of its ships this year, and will offer extended health services beyond a traditional spa, such as Himalayan salt stone massages, anti-wrinkle treatments and acupuncture.

The latest service will also provide Oceania's guests with the chance to undertake lifestyle seminars and wellness discovery tours by Aquamar, including a reflexologist on a rice barge in Bangkok Thailand, a yoga/

gourmet lunch event in Santiago, Chile, and Apitherapy sessions in Seville Spain which promotes the health benefits of honeybee products such as raw honey, pollen, royal jelly and bee venom.

"Our guests love balance - they're active, they're leading rich and fulfilled lives, for them wellness is not a pursuit, it's a lifestyle," said Oceania Cruises President and CEO Bob Binder.

"People are not just living longer, they are living healthier and better and that's why Aquamar Spa + Vitality Center is the perfect fit for the Oceania Cruises guest," he added.

Further services include fitness classes and healthy meals.

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Evolving the Galapagos



GALAPAGOS Islands cruise operator Ecoventura has announced plans to launch a third luxury Mega-Yacht in 2021.

The 20-passenger *Evolve* will feature 10 premium cabins, panoramic views from all corners of the vessel, a full-time concierge, fitness centre, a sundeck with loungers and daybeds, and a Jacuzzi.

Joining sister ships *Origin* and

Theory, the upcoming vessel will operate on Ecoventura's current schedule, servicing seven-night itineraries that can be combined with two-week excursions.

"With *Evolve*, we continue to combine luxury and sustainability while providing intimate access to some of the most breathtaking corners of the archipelago," said Ecoventura CEO Santiago Dunn.

Pictured: A render of the cabins.

Radiant start to season



ROYAL Caribbean Cruises (RCL) has officially marked the start of its 2019/2020 Australian season with its 2,501-passenger *Radiance of the Seas* returning to Sydney Harbour this morning (pictured).

The ship returns for her ninth season Down Under, offering 21 South Pacific and New Zealand sailings calling to destinations such as Noumea, Mystery Island and Port Vila, as well as three-night Sampler cruises and an

18-night Bottom End itinerary from Fremantle to Sydney.

Meanwhile Royal Caribbean will offer 61 sailings across three ships in Australia, while Celebrity will deliver 20 itineraries, and *Azamara Journey* will mark the line's fifth local season exploring New Zealand, Australia and Asia.

RCL's three brands are projected to inject \$160 million of value into the Australian economy.

Evergreen information sessions filling fast

THERE are still a few spots left for Evergreen Cruises & Tours' information sessions running through Oct and Nov, which focus on the operator's product offered through South East Asia, Canada and Alaska in 2020/21.

Attendees will receive discounts on their next Evergreen booking, as well as a chance to win \$2,000 credit with Evergreen in 2020.

Sessions are held in Syd, Mel, Brisbane & Adelaide - register **HERE**.

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The cruise survey results are in and the industry is still strong – read more in the October issue of *travelBulletin*.

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This is must sea TV

VIKING Cruises' *Viking Sea* is set to be featured on Australian TV when Channel Nine's *Explore TV* kicks off this Sun 13 Oct at 4.30pm (AEDT).

Presented by Trevor Cochrane, the series will introduce viewers to Viking's ocean cruising appeal and its most popular itineraries, such as the 15-day Into the Midnight Sun voyage.

Coming to America



MSC Cruises' first Meraviglia Class smart ship *MSC Meraviglia* has made her inaugural visit to North America, arriving in New York earlier this week.

Meraviglia will now continue to sail along the east coast of the United States, calling at Boston Massachusetts, as well as Portland and Bar Harbor, Maine.

"We are so thrilled to welcome *MSC Meraviglia*...to the United States as she marks another major milestone for MSC Cruises in the North American market," said MSC Cruises (USA) Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Ken Muskat.

"Due to significant demand, for the first time in MSC Cruises history we now have four distinct ships sailing in the region as *MSC Meraviglia* joins *MSC Seaside*, *MSC Armonia* and *MSC Divina*.

The vessel's arrival in North America will see trips feature a range of new culinary offerings resulting from a new partnership with TV cooking icon Martha Stewart, including celebration surprise gift packages, onboard special holiday dinner menus and recipes, and specially curated shore excursions featuring some of Stewart's favourite activities.

Pictured: MSC Meraviglia in NY.



MANY cruise lines provide its guests with the opportunity to rest and relax on many of the world's most beautiful beaches.

But just a friendly reminder that beach experiences don't always follow your mental script, with *TieBreaker.com* recently posting some images of relaxing gone awry.



The photos include an unfortunate case of sunburn, as well as a tribe of monkeys chasing a swimmer for her bananas.

We hope your next cruise stop has far less excitement!




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CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

It's showtime for cruise

CLIA'S annual Cruise Industry Awards are more than just a chance for us to let our hair down, cruising's big night is also an important way of honouring and encouraging the fantastic levels of innovation we see within our travel agent community.

Cruise industry figures from overseas are always blown away by the scale and impact of our Australasian awards night.

Not only is it the biggest event of its type in the Southern Hemisphere, it also rivals those of our counterparts in Europe and North America.

Part of the reason for this is the incredible engagement and enthusiasm we see among our travel agent members in Australia and New Zealand.

The levels of experience and education among our cruise specialists are very high, and this is reflected in their success and the creativity they show in developing their business.

By staging these awards, we hope to maintain and further develop this level of engagement, which is one of the key reasons the cruise industry has been so prosperous in Australasia.

We encourage all our members to get involved now that the nomination process has begun, and look forward to seeing you at the 19th Annual Cruise Industry Awards on 15 Feb - **CLICK HERE** for more.





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