



Farewell Freds

FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines is retiring *Black Watch* and *Boudicca* after purchasing two ships from Holland America Line last month (**CW** 20 Jul).

The new ships, *Bolette* and *Borealis*, will take over the itineraries of the departing vessels when cruising resumes.

The changes will increase Fred. Olsen's capacity by about 30%.

Cunard local sailings off

CARNIVAL Corporation's Cunard Line overnight announced it would not resume cruising until the northern spring, meaning the 2020/21 deployment of *Queen Elizabeth* in Australasian waters will not proceed (**CW** breaking news).

According to Cunard President Simon Palethorpe, "*Queen Elizabeth* has returned to the UK and with ongoing uncertainty over the re-opening of many ports and countries it is sadly not practical to continue her planned itineraries for 2021".

In addition to the pause in operations, all the ship's currently planned sailings between 26 Mar 2021 and 13 Dec 2021 in Australia, Alaska and Japan will be cancelled, he said.

"These voyages will be replaced with a program of shorter duration European holidays ranging from three to 14 nights departing from Southampton.

"These will start at the end of Mar 2021, with a series of scenic voyages around the coast of Cornwall, the west coast of Ireland and the Scottish Isles," Palethorpe said, with voyages also including short breaks to Amsterdam and voyages to the Iberian coast and Norway.

Operations for *Queen Mary 2* will pause until 18 Apr 2021, and through to 16 May 2021 for *Queen Victoria*, Palethorpe added.

The Cunard chief also announced that *Queen Mary 2* would sail a "classic World Voyage" in 2022, replacing currently scheduled sailings between 03 Jan and 03 Apr 2022, including her voyage to South America.

The switch is in response to the "immense disappointment" of those aboard *Queen Mary 2's* curtailed world cruise this year, and the cancellation of her World Voyage in 2021.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Spirit certified

SILVERSEA Cruises' *Silver Spirit* has gained a formal three-year certification in infection prevention from Norwegian registrar and classification society DNV GL.



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Cruiseco charter's Ovation changes

ROYAL Caribbean International says it is currently working through changes to two Nov 2021 *Ovation of the Seas* sailings out of Sydney.

Changes are being made to the nine-night South Pacific sailing, departing 17 Nov next year, and the 10-night New Zealand voyage, departing 26 Nov.

Once changes are finalised impacted guests will be contacted and advised of their options, the company said.

It's understood the alterations are the result of the recently announced Cruiseco/Choose

Your Cruise "Super Music Cruise" (**CW** 31 Jul) which will see the popular Cruisin' Country and Rock the Boat music cruises combined in a seven-night voyage departing 23 Sep 2021, also aboard *Ovation of the Seas*.

The dates for the music cruise overlap with two previously announced voyages, necessitating the re-accommodation of already booked passengers.

Royal Caribbean International apologised for "any confusion or uncertainty this may have caused".

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Discover NSW's food and wine offerings (and which are ready to work with the trade) in the August issue of *travelBulletin*.

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MSC delays *Magnifica*



MSC Cruises has postponed the restart of voyages aboard *MSC Magnifica* (pictured) until 26 Sep, citing softening demand after the introduction of new coronavirus testing measures for Italians who have visited Greece.

The four-week delay means departures from 29 Aug through to 19 Sep have been cancelled, with the first voyage to now depart Bari on 26 Sep.

The planned itinerary includes three Greek ports.

Several Italian regional authorities have also recently

imposed self-isolation requirements for travellers upon re-entry if they had visited Greece, Malta or Spain after a spate of infections in those countries.

The Government of Italy has also ordered mandatory COVID-19 PCR testing for inbound passengers from Greece.

MSC said it believes reservations will start to pick up again in the coming weeks "due to the appeal of the itinerary".

The voyages are open to residents of any Schengen country in Europe, but at this early phase of its restart, MSC said it expects the majority of guests to be Italian residents.

Travellers affected by this week's cancellations will either be re-accommodated onto another cruise or receive a future cruise credit.

MSC Grandiosa continues to operate seven-night western Mediterranean voyages departing from Genoa and visiting Civitavecchia, Naples and Palermo, with an additional call at Valletta.

Nera-ly ready

AQUA Expeditions recently unveiled its newest ship, *Aqua Nera*, in a ceremonial ship launching.

Set to sail the Amazon River, the ship is currently at district 2 of Hai Minh Shipyard in Ho Chi Minh City, and is the sister to *Aqua Mekong*.

It will leave Vietnam on 31 Aug to be delivered in Belem, Brazil.

WHEN many of us think about a golf ball in the ocean, we think about the *Seinfeld* episode where George extracts Kramer's Titleist from the blowhole of a whale.

16-year-old freediver Alex Weber recently went 49,999 better than George, extracting 50,000 golf balls from the ocean floor of Carmel Bay, California.

The golf balls mostly originated from the tees and greens of the nearby golf courses in Pebble Beach, and with eight courses in the vicinity of the Bay, balls from less-talented golfers will continue to head into the drink, which has spurred Weber to start a petition to compel the coastal courses to clean up their messes.

Hunting 110,000 signatures, Weber is currently just 5,000 off her target.

For more on the petition, **CLICK HERE**.

Ponant's big five

PONANT is hosting an online event to spotlight the Kimberley's "big five" next month.

Travel agents will be able to tune in on 01 Sep and listen to a panel of Ponant's Kimberley experts as they spotlight the region's big five experiences.

The event will also include a live Q&A session at the conclusion of the presentation.

CLICK HERE to register.



Our focus continues

THIS week, our industry had planned to unite for the biggest event on the CLIA calendar, the Cruise360 Australasia conference.

For the first time, we had planned to meet in Brisbane to recognise the city's growing importance as a cruise gateway. We had planned a packed program of speakers, creating a forum for sharing ideas and tackling key issues.

Instead, borders are closed, ships are at anchor, and our COVID-19 battle continues. Sadly we can't gather as a cruise community, but despite this we've never been more focused on the challenges we need to confront.

There's a huge amount of work going on to create measures that will uphold the health of guests, crew and communities when the time is right to sail again. We're also working with governments to ensure they understand this work, and to discuss a pathway towards a carefully managed regional resumption.

It is still too soon to say when cruising might return to our region, but we will be ready with the best-possible health protocols.

Though we can't meet for Cruise360, our travel agent members are still foremost in our minds. The health of our travel agent community is critical, and we continue to advocate for your needs in all our work.

