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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, a cover wrap from **Oceania Cruises** plus a full page from • CLIA Australasia

Aussies take to OceanMedallion

THE engagement from the Australian market with Princess Cruises' new OceanMedallion technology has so far been "remarkably high", according to the cruise line's Global Head of Experience and Innovation Pragnesh Shah.

Speaking remotely with *Cruise Weekly* from aboard a *Ruby Princess* coastal sailing out of Sydney, Shah (pictured) noted the local market was exhibiting a stronger initial usage of the OceanMedallion than other markets around the world.

"It's interesting for us because we have five other Medallion Class ships in the fleet that we can compare to and often it takes several weeks to settle in...I can tell you that the crew on *Ruby Princess*, in combination with the demographic and market of Australians and New Zealanders, is just the perfect intersection



because engagement has been really, really high," he said.

Princess Cruises' new wearable tech, the brainchild of Carnival's Chief Experience & Information Officer John Padgett, has only been introduced to the Australian market this year on board *Ruby Princess*, and boasts an array of guest services that Shah believes creates an "holistic guest-centric approach" to cruising.

"I liken it to a bed and breakfast or even a small cruise ship which are very intimate...so what we're doing is that personalisation at

scale with up to 3,000 guests," he said.

Highlighted features of the OceanMedallion noted by Shah include a much smoother embarkation process, the ability to search for loved ones, the option of ordering food and drinks from anywhere, as well as seamless access to staterooms.

"Our OceanMedallion doesn't have to be charged, it's waterproof, there's no configuration," Shah enthused.

The take-up rate since its launch across the fleet stands at 99.7%.

Aurora webinars

AURORA Expeditions will run a number of webinars in the coming months, with the first two on the topics of Antarctica and Ireland & Scotland.

The Antarctica webinars will take place today and 19 Feb, while the Ireland & Scotland sessions will happen on 25 and 27 Feb - [CLICK HERE](#).

Oceania to Europe

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QM2 to Fremantle

CUNARD'S *Queen Mary 2* will call into Fremantle next Tue, after originally being scheduled to call into Singapore.

Currently sailing an 113-day World Cruise roundtrip from New York City, *QM2*, presently docked in Port Klang, Malaysia, will skip her visit to Singapore, scheduled for Wed and Thu, and instead sail straight to Fremantle.

"We are very closely monitoring and assessing the impact of the latest developments and health advisories, as well as various travel and entry restrictions which are increasingly impacting ship itineraries and connecting travel," the cruise line said.

"We are actively seeking to mitigate these risks to our guests and crew, and are making appropriate adjustments to our operations to protect all on board our ships."

As part of the changes, *Queen Elizabeth* will also miss her Hong Kong and Shanghai visits.

Quasar Galapagos

QUASAR Expeditions has released its 2021 Galapagos cruise rates for *MV Evolution* and *M/Y Grace*.

Prices for cruises on *Evolution* lead in at US\$6,700 and *Grace* at US\$7,800, with both prices including all meals and a selected range of drinks, day tours, expert guides, transfers and use of snorkelling equipment.

New for 2020 and 2021 are Photo Safaris aboard *Evolution*, which sail with award-winning photographers.

Among itinerary updates, *Evolution's* Beyond Darwin's Footsteps voyage will now visit Cerro Brujo beach on the first day of the cruise, rather than Isla Lobos, while *Grace's* new seven-night itineraries begin on Tue, as opposed to Sat, commencing 26 May 2020.

For more information on, [CLICK HERE](#).

Coral's revitalisation



CORAL Expeditions has launched its new Revitalise on the Reef wellness program, on the Great Barrier Reef.

The seven-night themed voyage aboard *Coral Discoverer* (pictured) explores remote outer northern reefs and islands with a range of experts on wellness, yoga, meditation, nutrition and qigong experts.

Limited to 72 guests, the program has been curated by "wellness expert" Kris Abbey, with yoga classes conducted by Wendy Jones and Sue Pope from Yoga Soul Sisters.

New destinations include the Daintree Rainforest, Hope Island and Osprey Reef.

Highlights of the cruise include sunrise yoga on the beaches of Sudbury Cay and uninhabited Hope Island; daily qigong and yoga classes onboard; guided meditation classes and expert

Thai yoga massages and one-on-one consultations with Kris Abbey.

Guests will also receive traditional healing explanations from indigenous elders in Cooktown, a Lizard Island hike to Cook's Look and snorkelling over clam gardens.

Coral Expeditions Product Development Manager Tamara Sweeting noted the business plans to establish year-round wellness-themed itineraries.

"Our new Revitalise on the Reef expeditions focus on the lesser seen outer reefs and islands of the northern region," she said.

"Our guests have always felt a strong sense of enrichment from our journeys and the connections that they find with nature and the environment."

Departing Cairns on 15 and 22 Sep, prices start from \$5,590 per person, twin share.



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WHILE the situation aboard *Diamond Princess* continues to be very serious, Australians have, as usual, managed to bring a light-hearted, jovial slant to proceedings.

In their best efforts to take the edge off the situation, as well as possibly their own nerves, a Gold Coast couple has had a drone deliver them wine to their stateroom while they remain quarantined.

Amidst what the couple described to *The Courier Mail* as "Russian roulette" with who would be diagnosed next, the wife is now attempting to heighten her spirits with the delivery of her knitting needles.



Sun rises on Sydney



THE cruise itinerary attempting to break a Guinness World Record - Viking's Ultimate World Cruise - arrived in Sydney yesterday.

The 245-day epic journey, taking place aboard *Viking Sun*, ported on day 163 of her voyage, before she sails out for Brisbane tomorrow.

Attempting the "longest continuous passenger cruise", Sydney is one of seven Australian destinations visited by the ship, which visits 51 countries, 111 ports and six continents, completing a full

circumnavigation of the globe.

56 people have signed on for the full voyage, 12 of who are Australian.

"Since launching our very first ocean ship in 2015, demand to sail to Australia has grown from strength to strength," said Managing Director Australia New Zealand Michelle Black.

"This summer one third of Viking's fleet of six ocean ships will visit our waters, demonstrating...the importance of this region to Viking."

Pictured: *Viking Sun*.

New TD survey

CRUISE Weekly's sister publication *Travel Daily* is conducting a travel industry coronavirus poll to determine the current perceptions the industry has towards the virus.

Results of the survey will be published in coming editions of both **TD** and **CW**.

To complete the survey, **CLICK HERE**.

Diamond refunds

PRINCESS Cruises has told **CRUISE Weekly** it will refund all *Diamond Princess* passengers for the cost of the cruise fare, air travel, hotel, ground transportation, pre-paid shore excursions, gratuities and "other items", nor will they be charged for any onboard incidental charges.

Princess will also provide guests with a future cruise credit equal to the fare paid.

The virus has now been diagnosed in 65 new passengers aboard the ship, including four more Australians, bringing the total to 135.




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