



Cruise Weekly today

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

Myrmell optimistic

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Chair Sture Myrmell joined the Cruise Industry Awards from "on the ground in Asia", where he voiced his optimism for the sector despite the impact caused by the coronavirus.

"Our industry is facing significant operational challenges as the world deals with the impact of the coronavirus and that is what prevented me from celebrating with you," Myrmell said.

"I remain optimistic for the future, as we know from experience, cruising is resilient and cruise guests are fiercely loyal to cruising," he added.

Ecrusing to become part of LeisureCom

ECRUSING founders Brett and Philippa Dudley (pictured) have announced the sale of the pioneering online cruise company which was established two decades ago (CW breaking news).

The purchaser of their shares is private equity firm Skybound Fidelis Investment Limited, the owner of Gold Coast-based LeisureCom Group which operates brands such as Discover Queensland, Hightide Holidays and Global Explorer.

Ecrusing was the first Australian travel agency to develop direct API connections with major cruise lines, and has been credited with changing the way Australians purchase cruise holidays online.

The company generated more than \$30 million in sales during the last financial year, with its portfolio also including the high-end luxury travel brand Latitude 33, created in 2016.



Dudley and his team will continue to run the business from their Sydney office, working alongside LeisureCom Group to grow the operations.

"I always wanted to get our business to the 20-year mark, a real milestone achievement," Dudley said.

"I am excited about what the future holds for Ecrusing and

Latitude 33, and I am confident that LeisureCom Group is the right partner to help us achieve the next stage of growth."

LeisureCom Group Chief Executive Officer Steve Chant said the Ecrusing acquisition was part of a strategy to aggressively grow the firm's leisure, travel and lifestyle footprint in the Australian market.

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DATE	CITY
4 th Mar 20	Newcastle
4 th Mar 20	Melbourne
11 th Mar 20	Sydney
16 th Mar 20	Brisbane
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24 th Mar 20	Perth
1 st Apr 20	Tauranga
2 nd Apr 20	Auckland

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Diamond evac

THE Australian Government will step in to help evacuate Aussies aboard the quarantined *Diamond Princess*. More than 200 Australians are aboard the ship, which is docked off the coast of Japan, 26 of who have tested positive for coronavirus.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday said a Qantas flight would be chartered to bring the passengers to Darwin tomorrow, where they will enter a 14-day quarantine. "We cannot be absolutely sure that any of the currently well people on the ship who are coming home on Wed are not carrying the virus," said Chief Medical Officer of Australia Brendan Murphy.

Princess Cruises also confirmed the Canadian Government would be bringing its citizens home.

Uniworld Amazon sellout

THE inaugural season of *Aria Amazon* charters by Uniworld Boutique River Cruises (**CW** 06 Dec 2019) has been such a success that in 2021 the company will almost double its South American departures.

In Sydney last week to launch Uniworld's programs for next year, CEO Ellen Bettridge (**pictured**) told **Cruise Weekly** the initial six cruises from Sep 2020 were almost completely sold out within days, due to strong demand from Uniworld's past passengers, so in 2021 she plans even more trips.

Bettridge noted that the partnership with Aqua Expeditions was complemented by other Travel Corporation South America land content, making the packages particularly popular.

She also announced other innovations in the Uniworld program, including a rail add-on with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains for the company's Venice voyages



taking passengers from Zurich or Milan to join the company's new Super Ship, *S.S. La Venezia*.

The new program, unveiled to agents last Fri night during a special pre-CLIA awards event, features two new itineraries in Europe and additional departures in Egypt on the new *S.S. Sphinx*.

Deals include several air offers such as free economy flights.

Bettridge also hailed the development of the youth-focused U River Cruises brand, which will this year once again have both of its ships sailing on the Danube River.

To help celebrate the 100th Anniversary of The Travel Corporation, Uniworld is currently offering agents a \$500 booking bonus for every passenger booked before 31 Mar, and Bettridge also announced the rollout of a new trade partnership program called Alchemy.

Sea Cloud Captain

GERALD Schober has been named Captain of Sea Cloud Cruises' *Sea Cloud Spirit*. The German national has many years of windjammer experience, with his first voyage to be 29 Aug.



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New Heritage brox

HERITAGE Line's new 2020-21 Conservation & Adventure Expedition Cruising brochure is out now.

The season sees the cruise line welcome back *Akademik Shokalskiy*, sister ship to the *Spirit of Enderby*, the latter of which will also embark on a new birdwatching adventure, the 10-day Chatham Islands: A Land Apart - see the brochure [HERE](#).

NCL's renewed *Spirit*



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has introduced the new *Norwegian Spirit* (pictured), following its US\$100 million revitalisation through the Norwegian Edge program.

Spirit, which was previously scheduled to sail Asia in 2020 until the coronavirus outbreak (**CW** 12 Feb) will now homeport in Athens for the first time, offering seven-day voyages to the Greek Isles, Turkey and Israel, beginning 19 Apr.

All public areas, staterooms and dining areas were touched during the revitalisation, with the ship emerging from her 43-day dry dock also boasting 14 new venues, additional staterooms and new hull art.

Spirit, which underwent the company's "most extensive bow-to-stern renovation" in its history, will also offer a series of sailings from Civitavecchia on 14 Feb, Dubai on 02 Mar, and Cape Town on 22 Mar.

Elements of the revitalisation include a double-sized Mandara

Spa with a new thermal suite and relaxation area, an expanded Pulse Fitness Center, a daytime lounge featuring two new hot tubs, and an additional main dining room.

The ship now also features the second Onda by Scarpetta restaurant at sea, after the venue first appeared on *Norwegian Jewel*, as well as additional complimentary dining venues, such as 24-hour eatery Taste; The Local Bar and Grill; all-day outlet Garden Cafe; the Great Outdoors Bar; Waves Pool Bar; Bliss Ultra Lounge; Spinnaker Lounge; adults-only Spice H2O; and a daytime lounge featuring two new hot tubs and a dedicated bar.

The ship is now also free of single-use plastic bottles, which sees NCL as the first cruise line to eliminate them from across its fleet, through its partnership with JUST Goods.

Spirit will be the line's seventh ship in Europe in 2020, including *Dawn*, *Epic*, *Escape*, *Getaway*, *Jade* and *Star*.

Silversea's solo

SILVERSEA has launched a new "solo promo", offering zero single supplement fares for solo travellers.

Available across nine voyages in 2020 and 2021, the promotion is valid on bookings made until 28 Feb.

View all voyages covered by the promotion [HERE](#), and read the full terms and conditions of the promotion [HERE](#).



THE illustrious list of winners were not the only announcements to be made during Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) Australasia Cruise Industry Awards over the weekend, with headline sponsor Singapore Airlines unveiling an ad campaign with an unusual beat to promote its nonstop services to Seattle.

The carrier has created a new jingle using only the sounds of an Airbus A350, such as its roaring jet engines, mechanical whirrs, clacking seatbelts and clinking silverware.

The sound of passengers complaining about flight times were not included in the track.

Watch the commercial [HERE](#).



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