



CRUISE

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Cruise on high alert in the Middle East

THE global cruise sector is in a heightened state of vigilance in the Middle East following a dramatic rise in tensions after an American airstrike killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in Iraq last week.

Cruise Weekly can confirm that a number of cruise lines who operate in the region have reassessed their current security arrangements, with some stating they will consider changes to their itineraries should the situation escalate in the future.

MSC Cruises said they had not yet made any scheduling changes but had taken the necessary precautions following the incident last week.

"In recent days we have further heightened our vigilance for the Gulf region and are closely monitoring the situation," the line said in a statement.

"So far, we have not received



any intelligence suggesting that there is reason for our itineraries to be altered, or shore excursions to be cancelled, and our cruise ships will sail as planned as per schedule," MSC added.

Royal Caribbean also informed **CW** that it continues "to monitor the situation" and is working closely with authorities to ensure the safety of its guests.

"We are communicating directly with our guests and will advise them if any schedule changes become necessary," the cruise line said.

Cunard stated it is "taking into

account the latest advice" and that *Queen Mary 2's* itinerary currently remains as per schedule, while Regent Seven Seas Cruises said it "had the flexibility to alter itineraries, as needed, to avoid areas of potential risk", but had not yet made any such changes.

Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours said all of its itineraries in the region remained as per program as the Australian Govt advice had not yet changed, but is "monitoring the situation closely" with its team in Egypt.

Pictured: Petra, Jordan.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Jalesh doubles up

INDIAN-BASED cruise line Jalesh Cruises has revealed it will introduce a second ship to the market in Oct this year.

Speaking with *The Economic Times* this week, the cruise line's Strategic Advisor Rajiv Duggal said the move was in line with a steep rise in demand for its product since launching its first ship *Karnika* to the market last year.

"In this calendar year, we expect a minimum 35-40% growth in bookings from last year," he noted.

In the long-term, the company is planning to introduce four to five ships over the next five years.

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Princess projected

PRINCESS Cruises has signed an agreement with technology company Panasonic to install the PT-RQ50KU laser projector on board its ships.

The new tech will be used to enhance onboard productions, such as the gaming-inspired *5-SKIES* (**CW** 30 Sep 2019).

Sailing Europe in style



RIVIERA Travel River Cruises recently treated its Australian communications representative Andrew Mevissen to a European Christmas Markets cruise.

Mevissen (**pictured**) enjoyed a six-day trip sailing on board the line's luxury *Thomas Hardy* vessel, which cruised round-trip on the

Danube River from Budapest to Bratislava and Vienna, taking in many of the Yuletide markets in each city along the way.

Cruise differently

CRUISE ship passengers want to experience entertainment that is "out of the ordinary", Australian director Scott Maidment told **Cruise Weekly**.

Maidment, the brains behind the burlesque show *Blanc de Blanc* which will soon be available to enjoy on board P&O Cruises' *Pacific Adventure* vessel (**CW** 20 Dec 2019), said the latest version of the production will be a more polished version of any incarnation that preceded it.

"It will be a hybrid of both the original *Blanc de Blanc* show and its follow-on *Blanc de Blanc Encore*, so the show audiences will see on board will be the best of the best from four years of *Blanc de Blanc* world touring," he said.

Maidment also revealed that P&O Cruises Director Entertainment Brett Annable was the driving force behind the show's introduction on *Adventure*, claiming that he had seen the production numerous times on land and felt it would be perfect to introduce at sea.



TWO very large sea lions decided to sun themselves on a very small boat in Olympia, Washington last month, causing quite the spectacle.

Luckily, YouTuber Sam L was there to capture the strange sight, showing the boat almost sinking under the weight of the mer-dogs, um, sea lions, with one of them draped across the top of the boat's little cabin and the other perched on the stern.

Another sea lion is seen in the water circling the boat, as if looking for a way to hop aboard and join his mates - alas, three would definitely have made a crowd ... and some poor chap would have lost his boat!

CLICK HERE to see the video.



Increase in Greece

THE demand for cruises in Greece is on track to increase by more than 19% in 2020 when compared to sales in 2019, according to pre-booking data released by the Hellenic Ports Association.

The figures continue a strong growth trend for cruises in the Mediterranean country last year, with the number of tourists arriving on cruise ships rising to more than 5.5 million people, up from the 4.8 million people recorded in 2018.

Greece saw a total of 3,899 cruise ships arrive in 2018.

The future is you

A NEW report commissioned by MSC Cruises has found that future entertainment on board cruise ships will need to be increasingly more "human-centric" to cater for guests' evolving appetites.

Conducted in conjunction with The Future Laboratory, *The Future of the Guest Experience* report suggests "Anthro-painment" will be a major future trend, whereby productions place people at the heart of the show and is accessible to all ages, genders and nationalities.

The report also found that entertainment will need to be more "elastic", and incorporate technologies that respond to real-world environments.

No break for Blake

TROPICAL Cyclone Blake, which has formed more than 200km north of Broome, is not expected to affect any cruise itineraries taking place off Western Australia's coast this week.

Coral Expeditions confirmed they would not be impacted, while *Sun Princess* will also sail as per schedule, Princess Cruises told **Cruise Weekly**.