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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, with a cover wrap from **Holland America Line** plus a full page from **Travel Daily's** Sustainability Summit.

Ryndam open in Oz

BOOKINGS for Holland America Line's *Ryndam* opens to the market today, with the 2,668-passenger vessel set to debut in 2021.

Earlybird deals are also currently available, with reservations on a European cruise earning up to A\$800 of air credit per person, a complimentary signature beverage package, up to US\$250 of onboard spending money per person, and pre-paid stateroom gratuities. See **front cover** for details.

Aussies caught up in cruise health scare

MORE than 6,000 cruise passengers were reportedly quarantined, including 27 Australians, on Costa Cruises' *Costa Smeralda* ship in Italy, amid fears a guest may have contracted the deadly coronavirus.

A spokesperson for Italian cruise line told *CNN* that a 54-year-old woman had exhibited symptoms consistent with the virus, and had recently travelled from Hong Kong with her husband.

All passengers and crew were held until the woman and her husband both underwent further testing, with the Italian Ministry of Health telling local media mid morning today that the results had come back negative.

The timing of the health scare is not ideal for Costa Cruises, whose LNG-powered *Costa Smeralda* vessel (**pictured**) only launched to the market last month.

MEANWHILE the World Health



Organization (WHO) officially declared a global emergency overnight in regards to the coronavirus spreading beyond the borders of China, prompting MSC Cruises to scale up its precautionary measures on all of its ships globally.

The cruise line has stressed that there have been no cases of coronavirus on any of its ships to date, however, it is undertaking additional steps to secure the health and well-being of its guests and crew.

These include: all nationalities being required to fill out a pre-

embarkation questionnaire to ensure no passenger boards who has travelled from mainland China in the past 30 days, mandatory non-touch thermal scans for all guests and crew prior to embarkation for every cruise globally, elevated deep-sanitation procedures, and stricter isolation protocols for any guest showing signs of the virus.

MSC Cruises has also redeployed the first embarkation point for *MSC Splendida's* Grand Voyage due to the virus, moving the start of the 27-night sailing from Shanghai to Singapore.

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EXCLUSIVE

TRAVELMARVEL'S upcoming trio of Contemporary Class river ships (**CW** 09 Jan) have been designed to create a unique experience on European rivers, the company's CEO David Cox told **Cruise Weekly**.

Polaris (2020), *Vega* (2021) and *Capella* (2021) will boast features which are anticipated to resonate with Australian customers in particular, Cox contends.

"The ships have been more than two years in the making and it has been a really exciting project for our team," Cox said.

"One unique point for Australia is that we have stuck an Irish pub at the back of the ship called McGeary's Pub, named after the owner, with the idea that most operators have a formal in-house dining space...we thought that people after a few days of having the formal dining wouldn't mind having a pub meal so it should have a wide appeal," he added.

Another aspect that the APT Travel Group-owned brand believes will attract Aussie cruisers will be the coffee.

"I'm not a coffee drinker myself, but I'm surrounded by people telling me I need to focus on coffee...so with that in mind we thought let's get a trained barista on board," Cox said.

"At breakfast time, the concept

is if you don't want to sit down and have a full breakfast, you can go into the lounge and there will be a barista there to make the coffee to meet your particular needs," he added.

Further features on board include a bar on the top deck with a nearby whirlpool, three dining options, and a sun deck on the lower terrace area.

Travelmarvel has also been demonstrating strong sales in the local market, with Cox revealing the brand had been "selling out" in recent seasons.

"We know why we have been selling out, it is down to great price, great deals, & the hardware is leading edge," he said.

"For 2020, we are also on track to sell out and the Australian market has performed exceptionally well for us so we feel our product and marketing mix is on the money," Cox added.

Polaris will set off on her first voyage from Amsterdam to Budapest on 03 Apr this year, with identical sister ships *Vega* and *Capella* due to join the fleet from Mar and Apr 2021.

Travelmarvel has released its 2021 Europe Pre-Release Brochure which contains itineraries for all of the new ships, including a boost in the number of seven-night trips available.

Pictured: Sundeck rendering.

Viking 2021 brox out



VIKING Cruises has released its 2021 River Cruise Brochure, featuring more than 200 pages of itineraries sailing the rivers of Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Asia and Egypt.

Highlights of the latest brochure include the cruise line's new 82-guest *Viking Osiris*, offering 12-day Pharaohs & Pyramids itineraries that bring an "unprecedented luxury to the Nile" in Egypt.

The sailings are priced from \$6,995 per person, with the availability of spots limited.

Viking has also introduced a

cruise-only Portugal itinerary, offering eight-day Douro's Valleys & Vineyards cruises from Porto to Porto.

The itinerary is identical to Viking's Portugal's River of Gold, except it provides an option for guests to skip the two-night land portion of the trip in the capital Lisbon.

The Viking Explorer Sale is applicable to a select number of 2021 river itineraries when bookings are made before 31 Mar, providing savings of up to \$4,000 per couple.

Pictured: Luxor, Egypt.

Gemini suspended

STAR Cruises has confirmed it has suspended the operation of *SuperStar Gemini* in Xiamen, China until further notice in the wake of the coronavirus threat.

Guests have been offered the option of a full refund or to change the date of a cancelled 27 Jan cruise, with the line reiterating it upholds the highest hygiene standards on its ships.

Scenic roadshows

SCENIC Cruises & Tours has unveiled the details of an upcoming nationwide roadshow kicking off 04 Feb.

The events will cover the features on board *Scenic Eclipse*, as well as river cruises in Europe and Asia for both the Scenic & Evergreen brands. Book a place **HERE**.



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Muse in Wellington

SILVERSEA Cruises has celebrated the maiden port of call for its flagship Silver Muse in Wellington, New Zealand.

The ship was welcomed by a host of local dignitaries including The Mayor of Wellington Andy Foster, and forms part of the ship's second extended season in the region.

Slide behind the curtain



BEYOND taking the high adrenalin plunge down its tubes, cruise passengers probably spare little thought as to how much planning goes into the design of waterslides on board cruise ships.

Cruise Weekly recently touched base with Carnival's master waterslide guru (what a job!) Hampton Dixon on what preparation is needed to design an onboard attraction like the Splash Zone or Green Lightning.

"We start by reviewing the design parameters; how tall can we make the start of the slides, how much area do we have for the landings...for our Australian guests it was clear we needed bigger and bolder slides than on *Carnival Spirit* and *Carnival Legend*, fortunately, *Carnival Splendor* provided a great platform to install two of the tallest slides in the fleet," he said.

Dixon added that he tries to create fully-fledged waterparks, as opposed to separate slides and splash areas, with Carnival's

attractions providing plenty of seating around the waterparks so that parents can watch their kids.

But it's not all hard work, with Dixon conceding his job is possibly the envy of the world.

"I'm pretty sure next to the Captain, I have the coolest and most fun job at Carnival, going down the Green Lightning for the first time was exhilarating and the two dozen rides after that were just as incredible," he jibed.

When asked what innovations the cruise line is likely to roll out in the future, Dixon hinted that the high-octane aquatic features on board the upcoming *Carnival Mardi Gras* will aim at taking things to a new level.

"I can't give away all of the secrets, but I will say that *Mardi Gras* will debut a massive Carnival WaterWorks when she enters service in Europe," Dixon said.

"Drop slides and different types of ride vehicles like mats and tubes are always interesting to us, we're looking for new thrills".

Hola from Mexico

PUERTO Vallarta in Mexico has finished construction of its new cruise pax welcome centre and shopping centre.

The new US\$16 million facilities will be fully accessible to the public from May 2020.

Officials estimate that more than 4.8 million people visit the port in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico annually.

Cruise Calendar

The next few port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	31 Jan
<i>Noordam</i>	01 Feb
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	02 Feb
BRISBANE	
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	31 Jan
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	01 Feb
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	01 Feb
<i>Sea Princess</i>	02 Feb
MELBOURNE	
<i>Regatta</i>	31 Jan
<i>Seabourn Encore</i>	01 Feb
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	02 Feb
FREMANTLE	
<i>Vasco da Gama</i>	01 Feb
EDEN	
<i>Regatta</i>	02 Feb
AUCKLAND	
<i>Silver Muse</i>	01 Feb
<i>Explorer Dream</i>	02 Feb
WELLINGTON	
<i>Explorer Dream</i>	31 Jan
<i>Viking Sun</i>	01 Feb
<i>Azamara Journey</i>	02 Feb
<i>Ruby Princess</i>	02 Feb



ANGLING is a popular pastime in ports of call for cruise ship passengers, but here is a story that might make you think twice before you next cast your rod.

A fisherman dangling his line in the waters near Coney Island in New York City carried off a bizarre catch recently, pulling in an unidentified species of marine life that looked like it was half fish, half squid.

The video of the catch has already received millions of hits online, with one user suggesting the odd creature looked a bit like "a snake in the process of devouring a squirrel", weirdly, we tend to agree.





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