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# NCL seeing trade-fuelled comeback

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's (NCL) reimagined *Norwegian Spirit* (**CW** 18 Feb) recently enjoyed a record booking day, with the cruise line having witnessed unprecedented demand in Australasia of late.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly**, Norwegian Vice President & Managing Director APAC Ben Angell (pictured) said the cruise line knew there was likely to be enhanced demand for close-to-home sailings, but had certainly been surprised by the initial reaction in terms of booking momentum, adding NCL had never seen domestic product being booked so quickly so far in advance.

While it was known *Norwegian Spirit* would be booked further out with the cancellation of *Norwegian Jewel's* sailings this coming season (**CW** 11 Jun), Angell said the cruise line was still



seeing three times the volume it saw on *Jewel* for the equivalent period last year.

Angell said large parts of this resurgence had come through travel agents, with Norwegian having doubled-down on supporting its trade partners.

"Once we were through the weight of our cancellations and started to see improving guest confidence we got together as a group and asked ourselves how we can better support our travel partners," he said.

"Our direct business saw a little bit of an uplift over recent

months but trade is coming back really strongly...we're striving to support them in more meaningful ways.

"One of them is communication, obviously peace of mind, recommencing advertising and working with partners one-on-one.

"We think guests are connecting with the ship...its all new, it's a smaller ship, it's modernised from bow to stern, it's a very different product to anything else that's down here, based on size, based on the demographic we're trying to attract.

"Laid-back luxury is the term we're using...it's an experience designed with the adult cruisers in mind."

Angell added Norwegian was seeing an uplift in past guests thanks to advertising and sales campaigns, but was also seeing a lot of new-to-brand clients.

## Cunard upgrade

**CUNARD** is currently hosting a big balcony event, offering a complimentary double-upgrade from an Inside Stateroom - see **cover page**.

## MSC gets grand

**MSC Cruises** has launched a range of 2021 Grand Mediterranean itineraries.

Weekly departures every Sat or Sun will be offered from Genoa or Venice, with each cruise combining two or three seven-night cruises to create 14- or 21 day-voyage.

For details call 1300 028 502.

## Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news and a full page from **Cunard**.

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## More Costa cruises

**COSTA** Cruises has announced more 2021 itineraries, following the introduction of its upcoming winter season (**CW** 15 Sep).

From Apr through Nov, Costa will further expand its Mediterranean offerings, as well as the return of cruising in Northern Europe.

From Mar 2021, *Costa Deliziosa*, *Costa Luminosa* and *Costa Magica* will operate in the Eastern Mediterranean, while *Costa Pacifica*, *Costa Smeralda*, and the upcoming *Costa Firenze* will be deployed in the Western Mediterranean.

*Costa Diadema*, *Costa Fascinosa*, *Costa Favolosa* and *Costa Fortuna* will operate in Northern Europe during the summer, before they join the others in the Mediterranean for spring and fall.

## Pence saves US cruise?

**VICE** President of the United States Mike Pence has seemingly come to the rescue of the country's cruise industry, blocking the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's attempt to keep cruise ships docked until Feb.

The national public health institute recently issued a new no-sail order for the month of Oct, but according to *Axios*, Director Robert Redfield wanted to push the ban, which was set to expire at the end of last month, all the way back to Feb, before he was overruled by Pence.

The federal government of the United States hopes between now and the end of the ban, the cruise industry can demonstrate it has a plan to ensure "ships can sail in a safe and responsible manner and that the companies assume the burden of dealing with any possible outbreaks," a

task force member told *Axios*.

The decision precedes a meeting tomorrow between the government, cruise company executives and Cruise Lines International Association, with the expiration of the new ban coinciding with the voluntary suspension announced by the trade group (**CW** 06 Aug).

The meeting will see a discussion and decision about whether or not the cruise ban needs to be extended further.

Cruise Lines International Association said it is confident in the industry's ability to resume operations from American ports in a responsible, phased-in manner.

"Our actions will build off of the continued success the cruise industry has experienced with recent sailings in Europe and other parts of the world".

## Crystal CEO out

**CRYSTAL** Cruises Vice Chairman & Senior Vice President Marketing & Sales Jack Anderson has stepped in as Interim President & Chief Executive Officer after Tom Wolber stepped down following the completion of his three-year contract.

Wolber said he would be spending more time with his family and pursuing other interests, after he oversaw Crystal's expansion, with the cruise line now boasting four new river ships, and its first expedition ship, *Crystal Endeavor*, to launch in 2021.

"It is an honour to be entrusted with Crystal's stewardship during this transitional time in our industry," said Anderson, who added his pleasure at working with Wolbers.



  
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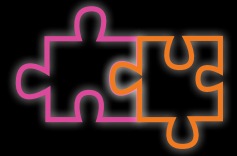
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**THE Stanley Cup**, hockey's greatest prize, has been won for 2020, and by a team from scorching-hot Florida.

The Tampa Bay Lightning is just the second team from a warm-weather city to win the Cup in 12 years, and as they know how to do so well, the people of the Bay celebrated with a boat parade, not the first of the kind in the region we've reported on in this column (**CW 04 May**).

Fans gathered on their boats and lined the foreshore to celebrate with their team, which preceded the traditional hoisting of the Cup by the winning team's captain, Steven Stamkos (**pictured**).



## San Diego losses

**CRUISE-RELATED** losses in San Diego have currently amounted to more than US\$100 million, according to the city's Port.

It said that since Mar, 75 cruises have been cancelled, meaning a US\$116 million loss in retail, restaurant, lodging and related shipping services.

The 2020-2021 season, which was supposed to start 13 Sep, has already seen 49 canx.

## OOE plan approved



**ONE Ocean Expeditions'** (OOE) proposal to creditors has been approved, amid an investigation into the collapsed cruise line's finances.

The cruise line's trustee PricewaterhouseCoopers said One Ocean's proposal, which includes offering pre-paid customers voyages at discounted rates, presented a better deal for unsecured creditors than bankruptcy, as OOE founder Andrew Prossin is said to be attempting to launch a cruise comeback (**CW 01 Jul**).

Creditors also asked for an account of what happened to One Ocean's money, including an investigation into the company's financial affairs, but PricewaterhouseCoopers said that it was not able to carry out such a review due to challenges in obtaining records from the cruise line's previous accountant, WM. J. Trotter & Associates.

"As at the date of this report, OOE was not able to provide the information requested due to time constraints, limited availability of information, and IT issues," PricewaterhouseCoopers

said.

"The trustee lacks the funds and the company is unable to pay for the trustee to carry out further investigations into the company's historical financial information."

**Pictured: RCGS Resolute.**

## Bergen for more

**VIKING** is inviting travellers to explore the British Isles with its currently on-sale, 15-day Explorer trip from Bergen to London or vice versa.

Now priced from \$7,995 per person, the deal includes savings of up to \$1,000 per couple when booked before the end of next month.

The cruise visits Scotland's Highlands and Western Isles, as well as Edinburgh, the Shetland and Orkney Islands, Belfast, Dublin, Snowdonia, Liverpool and Dover.

The fare includes 12 guided shore excursions, all on-board meals, wine and beer with lunch and dinner, unlimited wi-fi and more - **CLICK HERE**.



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