



US cruise bill introduced

REPUBLICAN Senators in the United States have introduced legislation which would overrule the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's (CDC) conditional sailing order (CSO), and allow cruising to restart by Jul.

Alaska's Dan Sullivan (pictured) and Florida's Marco Rubio & Rick Scott introduced the Careful Resumption Under Improved Safety Enhancements (CRUISE) Act on Tue, which aims to override the CDC's restrictions.

The legislation would revoke the agency's current order and "require the CDC to provide COVID-19 mitigation guidance for cruise lines to resume safe domestic operations," according to the announcement.

The legislation sets 04 Jul as the date by which a new interagency group should create recommendations for resuming cruise operations, while unilaterally requiring the CDC to revoke its restrictions.

"Unlike the airlines, rail and other modes of transportation - and all other sectors of the hospitality industry for that matter - the cruise lines have been denied clear direction from the CDC on how to resume operations," Sullivan said.

He said that "foot-dragging, mixed messages, and unresponsiveness of CDC leaders" is impacting the lives of Americans who are tied to the industry, including those



residing in his state of Alaska, where cruising is facing additional challenges due to Canada's ban on the industry into next year.

The CDC's CSO is meant to provide guidance that will lead to ships sailing again, but is yet to provide a clear timeline for when cruising can resume.

Earlier this month, the CDC issued additional technical guidance, but offered no concrete timeline to signal when cruising could resume, after the industry pushed it to drop the "outdated" CSO last month.

The Governors of both Alaska and Florida, Mike Dunleavy and Ron DeSantis respectively, have threatened to sue the federal government of the United States if the CDC doesn't allow cruising to resume by the northern summer (**CW** yesterday).

Silversea NYE trip

TO HERALD the trans-Tasman bubble and the much-anticipated resumption of trans-Tasman cruising later in the year, Silversea Cruises has launched a trip to celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Silver Muse will sail for 17 days departing Sydney in Dec, ending in Auckland.

The trip will spend Christmas Day in Milford Sound and New Year's Eve in Picton, Queen Charlotte Sound, and the Marlborough Sounds, before a day at sea on the first day of 2022.

The voyage also offers experiences like a half-day visit to a greenshell mussel farm on a catamaran in the Marlborough Sounds, contrasted with an "urban culture deep dive" into craft brewing and chocolate in Wellington.

Guests can also take a shore excursion to swim with the sea lions in the waters of Kaikoura, while another excursion takes travellers on a helicopter whale watching trip.

This departure currently has a 10% early booking discount, and includes Business class airfares - **CLICK HERE**.

All's Wells that ends Wells

CUNARD Line's *Queen Mary 2* Captain Christopher Wells has retired after 20 years with the cruise line.

Upon his exit, Wells was awarded the rank of Commodore, having led Cunard's flagship since her commissioning in 2004.



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ATLAS Ocean Voyages is allowing couples to exchange vows "at the end of the world" on a once-in-a-lifetime Antarctica expedition with new Happy Ever Atlas destination weddings and vow renewals.

Departing on Valentine's Day 2022, the voyage aboard *World Navigator* will offer couples and their companions "the most adventurous wedding reception venue on earth".

The package is complimentary for guests when registered in advance, and also offers a 50% saving on her stateroom when the wedding party books five or more rooms.

The package includes a legal marriage license (valued at more than US\$650) and many additional inclusions, which ensure a unique, complete and unforgettable nuptial exchange.

Tauck US restart

TAUCK has announced a full restart of its American tours and cruises by Jul.

Chief Executive Officer Dan Mahar revealed the plan in an email to guests and travel advisors, with the Southern Charms: Savannah, Hilton Head & Charleston itinerary having already departed.

A recent survey of more than 5,000 guests booked with Tauck through Sep indicated 95% were vaccinated, and 88% were eager to travel.

Crystal Caribbean restart



CRYSTAL Symphony (pictured) will return to sailing in Aug with new Luxury Caribbean Escapes, Crystal Cruises has announced.

Symphony will be the first ship to ever homeport in Antigua & Barbuda, and will offer 10-night voyages exploring the island locales of Barbados, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, St. Maarten and the British Virgin Islands, beginning 05 Aug.

Travelling through Dec, and including a 23 Dec departure, *Symphony's* return to sailing marks the resumption of service for 97% of Crystal's oceangoing fleet for the northern summer.

"[Antiguan Minister of Tourism and Investment] Charles Fernandez and his team, and the local tourism businesses throughout the islands, have been working to renew travel to the islands safely and we are thrilled to partner with them to support economic growth in the region and to deliver the kind of luxuries and hospitality Crystal guests have been craving for the

past year," said interim President & Chief Executive Officer Jack Anderson.

Fernandez added the country is delighted to welcome *Symphony* and her guests to the Caribbean - an important milestone in reinvigorating the country's tourism industry and economy.

"Together with the local health authorities, we have developed the requisite health and safety protocols to ensure the protection of residents and our guests," he said.

"With the continued commitment of the government of Antigua & Barbuda and our port operator, Global Ports, we are certain that Crystal guests will find themselves at home here, as our local businesses and tourism specialists share Crystal's spirit of hospitality and relish sharing the rich culture and beauty of our islands with travellers."

Best available cruise fares start at \$2,999pp, with a range of savings also currently on offer - reservations open on Tue 20 Apr.



What's next?

THE opening of the trans-Tasman corridor is now in sight and while cruise is not included, we are nonetheless delighted to welcome this first international bubble, and agree with New Zealand's PM Jacinda Ardern's comment that "this will start a new chapter in COVID response and recovery."

Further afield, the media is full of headlines around itinerary launches in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Alaska, the Galapagos and the British Isles by many of the major lines.

It is hard not to feel optimistic when we hear news from the Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of Royal Caribbean, Richard Fain, that the Group's experience in markets where cruising has re-started is "overwhelmingly positive".

He cites the numbers that of 100,000 guests to cruise on 150 voyages, only 10 positive COVID cases have been recorded and all of them were contained with no outbreaks or disruptions to other passengers or communities.

While our vaccination program has unfortunately taken a step backwards in Australia, we must remain focused on the safe return of cruising, first with domestic itineraries as we are starting to see now and then looking further afield to when we can travel offshore.

This will help our industry get back on its feet and support the many related industries that rely on cruise.