



Cruise Weekly today

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

RCI test sailings

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) is this week conducting more "simulated" cruises with volunteer passengers on board, in compliance with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirements to demonstrate onboard health protocols work.

Mariner of the Seas sailed from Port Canaveral on Wed for a two-night voyage, while upcoming trial cruises are also scheduled for *Liberty of the Seas* and *Oasis of the Seas*.

Successful test cruises have already been conducted aboard *Freedom*, *Serenade*, *Odyssey* and *Allure*.

MEANWHILE, an official groundbreaking ceremony for a Royal Caribbean Group-backed terminal at the Port of Galveston will be held on Sat.

The new US\$110m facility, scheduled for completion in Nov 2022, will have capacity for Oasis-class vessels.

ADDITIONALLY, the company has announced a US\$1 billion capital raising, comprising "senior unsecured notes" maturing in 2026 which will be used to refinance future debt maturities as well as general corporate purposes.

Gone but not forgotten

FORMER Carnival Australia chief Jennifer Vandekreeke (pictured) has nothing but fond memories of her time in the cruise sector, telling *Cruise Weekly* this week the industry will "always be my baby".

The comments were made during the first week of her new role with NRMA as its new Executive General Manager of Customer at NRMA Expeditions, the company's emerging tourism division specialising in wilderness experiences.

Despite the sea change, Vandekreeke was quick to reassure the cruise sector while she may have moved on from Carnival, she had not left the industry behind entirely.

"I am so glad that I have joined an organisation that is committed to the [cruise] industry and so much so that they have purchased a minority stake in Coral Expeditions - so they believe in the future of the industry as well," she said.

The NRMA's \$800 million tourism portfolio boasts a 46% stake in the Queensland-based cruise line, with the fund tipped to continue on its acquisition spree in the domestic tourism space in Australia, especially with overseas travel mostly off the cards for Aussies for the foreseeable future.

For Vandekreeke, the decision to jump ship to the NRMA was motivated by the opportunity to



nurture another brand from its inception and guide its growth journey in the Australian market.

"I had the opportunity of building Carnival from scratch in this market and now I'm going to turn those exact same skills to building the Expeditions division into a branded experience," she said.

When asked about the plight of cruising in Australia given the challenging conditions currently being faced, Vandekreeke responded with some of her trademark optimism.

"The story of cruise is that it's going to be back and it's going to be back better than ever, there is no doubt in my mind," she said.

Vandekreeke will report into NRMA Expeditions Chief Executive Officer Rachel Wiseman, and will remain based in Sydney.

NZ needs cruise

A PHASED reopening of New Zealand's international borders proposed by the country's government yesterday needs a plan for cruising also, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has said.

Acknowledging the travel revival will be a positive step forward for the tourism sector, CLIA said provisions for a careful resumption of local cruising should be included to help revive New Zealand's jobs and businesses.

CLIA Managing Director Australasia Joel Katz said New Zealand would need an agreed framework to support tightly managed local cruise operations, beginning initially within a domestic or trans-Tasman bubble.

"Cruise lines globally have committed to stringent new testing procedures and health protocols in response to COVID-19 and these measures are already working successfully where cruising has resumed in other countries," Katz said.

"As New Zealand plans for its reopening, we need to discuss how to implement these health protocols locally so that we're ready for a careful revival of cruising as soon as conditions allow."

Cruising ordinarily contributes around NZ\$570 million a year to the economy.

OFFER ENDS 31 AUG

GREAT GETAWAY SALE

RECEIVE
5 FREE OFFERS*

+

US\$ 200

ON 2022 CRUISES

|

ONBOARD CREDIT*

Feel Free™

LEARN MORE

*Conditions apply.



Seychelles return

THE Seychelles will welcome back cruise ships in Nov.

Launching its 2021-2022 cruise season on 14 Nov will be *Island Sky*, the first cruise ship to sail to Seychelles since the closure of the destination to cruise vessels in March 2020.

Island Sky will call at four of the Seychelles' outer islands - Aldabra, Assomption, Farquhar and Cosmoledo - and will be followed by other small cruise ships throughout the season.

The Seychelles will only be welcoming smaller vessels with a maximum of 300 pax.

Principal Secretary for Civil Aviation, Ports & Marine Alan Renaud, said throughout last year, working in collaboration with the health authorities, the tourism department, the port authority, and the tourism industry, his department, has implemented new procedures to allow the safe resumption of cruise ship visits to Seychelles, developing a COVID-19 Company and Cruise Ship Checklist.

Say ola to *Andorinha*



TAUCK on the weekend christened its new *Andorinha* river boat, purpose-built for the Douro River in Portugal.

Inspired by the local culture and climate, Tauck held *Andorinha's* christening ceremony shortly before embarking on the ship's first scheduled cruise.

Andorinha's passengers were the guests of honour for the ceremony, ahead of their 12-day Exploring the Douro plus Lisbon & Madrid itinerary, which began with an initial two-night hotel stay in Spain's capital.

Serving as godmothers are two long-time Tauck employees, Chief Culture Officer Sharyn Cannon and President Jennifer Tombaugh (**pictured**).

Andorinha incorporates *azulejos*, painted tin-glazed ceramic tilework, which adorn areas throughout the ship.

Decorative metalwork is also present all round *Andorinha*, suggestive of the grapevines that invoke the 2,500 years of the Portuguese wine tradition.

The ship's reception area features an oversized domed ceiling light entwined with brass "branches" custom-cast from actual grapevines.

Andorinha, which is also the Portuguese word for the swallow bird, boasts an optimised sun deck, which serves as an ideal platform for savouring the Douro Valley's passing landscapes.

The deck features canopied Balinese daybeds for shaded lounging, plus an infinity-style pool which is five-times the size of the plunge pools featured on Tauck's other river boats.



BOATS are usually meant to float, but I guess no kind of trip is too good for an ancient Egyptian monarch.

A 4,500-year-old boat (**pictured**) belonging to Khufu, who was the second Pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty of Egypt, was on the weekend transferred to the Grand Egyptian Museum by a large, specialised remote-controlled vehicle, over two days.

Khufu ship was formerly located at the Giza Solar boat museum, but thanks to the painstaking task, is now found at the due-to-be-inaugurated museum.

The 20-tonne cedarwood boat has joined 100,000 other artefacts at the soon-to-be-opened museum.



No longer a Virgin

VIRGIN Voyages' first cruise set sail Sat, with *Scarlet Lady* launching over a year late due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scarlet departed Portsmouth for a three-day inaugural sailing around the United Kingdom, the first of her six northern summer staycations, available only to Britain's fully vaccinated adults.



Travel Daily

LEARN MORE ABOUT VIKING WITH THE TRAVEL DAILY TRAINING ACADEMY

Click here to discover