

Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant insurance

PONANT now offers insurance, allowing travellers even more peace of mind.

The new Ponant Repatriation COVID Insurance policy covers guests while travelling with the cruise line, and is available at a cost of \$45 per person.

The cover is commissionable for travel advisors, and covers COVID-19 related medical fees and repatriation.

The policy will be provided with a passenger's travel documents, and covers only the portion booked with Ponant, meaning it excludes international flights.

For the Antarctic 2021/2022 season (until Mar 2022), insurance will be offered free.

Pandaw is now back from the dead

PANDAW has announced it has secured funding to continue through to Sep, when it anticipates restarting operations on Asian waterways, just two months after it announced it would close due to a lack of finance (**CW** 27 Oct).

Following the announcement of its closure as a result of COVID-19, Pandaw was inundated with hundreds of goodwill messages from its passengers, with several even emerging as keen to acquire the brand.

Pandaw owners, the Strachan family, has managed to secure further finance to cover the lay-up and vessel refurbishment costs through to its projected restart date.

The Strachans plan to keep the business in the family and relaunch marketing activity as soon as all remaining travel restrictions have been lifted.



Bookings for the 2022/23 season have been strong, with many departures sold out.

Numerous new bookers have taken advantage of the USD\$100 deposit scheme that reassures against the risk of further cancellations.

"If it were not for the incredible support from the members of the Pandaw community, with so many kind words evoking memories of incredible experiences with us, I think we

would have thrown in the towel," founder Paul Strachan admitted.

"A big thank you to all our supporters for raising morale after nearly two years of hell".

Pandaw's destinations are also slowly reopening, with Cambodia, India, and Thailand now open to vaccinated travellers.

Parts of Laos and Vietnam will be accessible next month as a first step towards fully reopening later in the year.

Pictured: Angkor Pandaw.

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A BEACHED vessel is rarely a welcome sight, but one recently grounded barge in Vancouver has become just the opposite: a local celebrity.

The stranded barge broke free of its tethers last month during the Pacific Northwest floods, and after she ran aground on a nearby beach, she has seemingly become one of the most popular members of the community, with t-shirts, and even her own Twitter account ([CLICK HERE](#)).

Earlier this week, Vancouver further elevated the barge's prestige, temporarily naming the park where she lies as 'Barge Chilling Beach' ([pictured](#)), while residents have proposed her to be the site of a future nightclub.

Removing the barge will require a feat of engineering neither the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada nor the owners have yet solved, with a previous attempt to refloat her earlier this month having failed.

However as of now, that seems to have bothered nobody.



Caribbean dream for RCI



2023 will be a summer of firsts for Royal Caribbean International, (RCI) as the cruise line goes all-in on Caribbean sailings.

Wonder of the Seas, which will debut in Mar, headlines the line-up with its first American summer, sailing to the Caribbean from Port Canaveral.

The new ship will be joined by the amplified *Mariner of the Seas*, while *Harmony of the Seas* will call Miami its northern summer home for the first time.

Galveston will see its first Oasis-class summer, with *Allure of the Seas* slated for a full season at RCI's new USD\$125 million terminal.

Families and travellers of all ages can have their pick of short, five-night cruises and seven- to eight-night sailings that feature idyllic destinations in Bermuda and the Eastern, Western and Southern Caribbean.

Destinations visited from Apr through Oct 2023 include Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Mexico, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts, and RCI's private island destination, Perfect Day at

CocoCay ([pictured](#)).

Northern summer 2023 Caribbean cruises are now open, with more getaways to be revealed early next year.

Crystal new cruises

CRYSTAL Cruises has added new 10-15-night expedition voyages to *Crystal Endeavor's* schedule for next year's northern spring.

Currently available for sale, the new cruises sail to Antarctica, South America and Europe, visiting 31 ports across nine countries.

The new voyages will take place from 01 Mar to 29 Apr, with extended stays and several overnight calls in cities including Málaga and Seville in Spain, as well as Monaco, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Puerto Del Rosario.

The new voyages replace four cruises to West Africa that have been cancelled due to COVID-19's Omicron variant.

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