



Traveltek to release cruise application

EXCLUSIVE

TRAVELTEK will release a brand new dedicated cruise application next year, Head of APAC Rebecca Esterhuizen has told *Cruise Weekly*.

Having last week announced an expanded cruise partnership with Flight Centre (**CW** 16 Dec), Esterhuizen said Traveltek is currently speaking with a number of its partners regarding the application, which will also include the ability to book hotels, flights, transfers, insurance, and more, to bring together every part of the booking.

"What we're looking at is for price and everything that's coming through that API is 100% accurate and matching the cruise line system, preventing the travel agent needing to go through and log into the cruise line system at all, really helping them aggregate that information all in one spot,"

she said.

"It's going to be market specific, agent specific, we'll be looking at all the different promotional fares and military rights that you get in the Americas.

"We're looking at around Aug 2022, for that prototype to be out, and out to the market around Oct 2022."

Post-booking and -departure management, such as cancellations and revisions, will also feature heavily in the application, Esterhuizen said.

"Live cancellations & amendments, mass itinerary updates, and being able to have the agents efficiently manage those bookings post-, because that's just as important as the sales," she added.

"When you've got a consumer calling up and saying, 'I want to upgrade my cabin', you'll just be able to pop into the

Traveltek system and have that live connection to the cruise line without having to log into the portal and make those changes".

Live changes will also offer agents the ability to quickly and effectively upsell post-sale with hotels, a pre- and/or post-day, flights, transfer, and more, Esterhuizen said.

All features of the new application will be geared toward making an agent's life easier.

"At the moment, we know that there's seven touch points per booking, we want to reduce that," she enthused.

"We want to reduce the amount of times that somebody is having to touch and manage the booking."

Traveltek is currently undergoing agent and supplier interviews to ensure the application supports the company's clients on a global scale.

Cruise Weekly today

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

CCL domestic pivot

CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) has implemented itinerary changes for next year, converting its international cruises from Apr-Jun to domestic sailings.

The new itineraries will visit the Great Barrier Reef, as well as the beaches of the Whitsunday Islands, and the rainforests of Far North Queensland.

CCL has made the decision in recognition of ongoing international travel and cruise restrictions.

Booked guests and travel advisors are being notified directly of the changes.

Guests can also contact Carnival at 13 31 94.



Wishing all our readers...

A VERY MERRY

Christmas

AND A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE NEW YEAR

We look forward to bringing you all the news that matters from Tuesday Jan 4, 2022



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MEDIA personality Sophie Monk had to be rescued off the Central Coast yesterday, after her new fiancé's boat ran out of fuel.

The couple had to be carted back to dry land by Marine Rescue NSW after making the error during the boat trip, which was presumably intended to be romantic.

It is an excellent Christmastime reminder for all water enthusiasts to use their heads during the holiday season!

Lirica to sing in the Med



MSC Cruises' *MSC Lirica* (pictured) will homeport in Piraeus for next year's northern summer - the first time embarkation in Greece will be available with the line.

The company will debut a new seven-night Eastern Mediterranean itinerary, which will feature three other embarkation ports, in Turkey, Israel and Cyprus.

Lirica will offer 28 sailings between Apr and Oct calling on Kusadasi, Haifa, and Limassol, all of which passengers can choose as an embarkation port.

The new itinerary will also visit Rhodes and Santorini, before returning to Piraeus.

Crete will also be a port of call in four 11-night sailings in the Eastern Mediterranean during Nov and Dec, which will include visits to Heraklion.

"Greece will be a major player in our Eastern Mediterranean cruise program next summer

with guests embarking at Piraeus for the first time, the port being a base for *MSC Lirica*, and calls by three of our other ships to different parts of the country's beautiful destinations," said Executive Director Angelo Capurro.

"Athens Airport will also play an important role with many guests flying from throughout Europe and North America to join *MSC Lirica* and enjoy one of the safest holiday options out there whilst having a memorable time.

"With embarkation during *MSC Lirica's* seven-night itinerary also available in Turkey, Israel and Cyprus this cruise promises to showcase a truly rich blend of different nationalities on board, but where our approach is local and everyone feels at home, relaxed and above all, safe."

Voyages on board *Lirica* will only be open to guests who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as they are for all of MSC's ships.



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with Jill Abel - CEO

Buoyant spirits

THE past two years have been the most challenging of times for the cruise industry and yet still there remains a spirit of optimism in our industry.

Just recently, ACA ran the first of a series of workshops, in conjunction with CLIA Australasia and supported by Tourism Australia, across five locations in Queensland including Cairns, Townsville, Airlie Beach, Gladstone and Brisbane (**CW** 24 Nov).

We were delighted with the turnout which saw around 250 industry representatives from tourism authorities, ports, ground suppliers, tour operators and local businesses coming together to discuss building a framework for cruise restart.

Despite no firm commitment having been received from government yet, there remains much enthusiasm for the return of cruise and an acceptance that things will build slowly with new protocols on the horizon.

I also want to congratulate Coral Expeditions and APT for their successful voyages in 2021 run with the greatest concern for the health and safety of their passengers and crew.

We remain uncertain about the new Omicron variant but many of the state and territory borders are now open and Australians are on the move to celebrate the festive season with loved ones.

As I write this final column, I would like to wish everyone in the cruise industry a happy and healthy holiday – together let's look forward to a brighter year in 2022.

AIDA's new ship

CARNIVAL Corporation's AIDA Cruises has taken delivery of its new cruise ship *AIDAcosma*.

The new vessel's first voyage will depart 26 Feb, with an inauguration ceremony to take place in Hamburg on 09 Apr, when former German track cyclist Kristina Vogel will christen her.

The two-week christening voyage can now be booked, taking pax to either Mallorca or Barcelona, with visits to Lisbon, Cadiz and Malaga.

Delivered in Bremerhaven from the Meyer shipyard, *AIDAcosma* is AIDA's second newbuild powered by liquefied natural gas.

In the northern autumn, *AIDAcosma* will set a course for her seasonal home of Dubai.