



Size really does matter: Steve Odell

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) believes the personal space available across its generously proportioned fleet will resonate strongly with consumers in a post-COVID world, after months of social distancing and concerns about crowded spaces.

RSSC's Senior Vice President & Managing Director Asia-Pacific, Steve Odell told *Cruise Weekly* a new brochure highlighting the cruise line's large balconies, suites & public spaces, as well as small group activities and more, aims to create awareness among cruisers of the "extravagant freedom" on offer with RSSC.

"In this era of COVID we've all started to behave differently.

"It's all about personal space, we feel that the brand is very well positioned even in the luxury set because our ships are bigger, so we can meet the trend of wanting more space," he said.

Odell confirmed with ongoing travel restrictions in place, there was significant pent-up demand, with many top end customers very open to deals.

Australian Govt figures confirm a massive surge in savings through the pandemic, creating opportunities for the industry, "but you have to go out and ask for the business," he said, urging the industry to call customers and "tell the story" rather than waiting for it to come in the door.

Odell said in that context, relationships between travel advisors and their customers are key, with expectations of a significant shift towards home-based distribution and luxury agent networks such as Virtuoso.

RSSC and sister brand Oceania Cruises have shifted resources to follow this trend, with Martine Nunes now dedicated to the home-based sector for Oceania

(*CW* 30 Nov 2020), while Elsa McLean has this week taken up a similar role for RSSC.

He said activity was ramping up, particularly as vaccine rollouts continued across the Northern Hemisphere, with the industry increasingly confident of a return to some semblance of normality heading into 2022.

Odell said last month was a very strong month for sales, as consumers book "bucket list" cruises with long lead times.

Bookings for both the RSSC's and Oceania's world cruises have been unprecedented, Odell said.

"The desire is there, people are ready, they've got cash - they've not spent it through the pandemic," he said.

"If you get out there and ask for it and sow the seed, there's business for everyone".

More from Odell in today's issue of *Travel Daily*.

Emerald release

EMERALD Cruises' 2022 European River Cruise Collection has launched alongside a new website.

Featuring a 130-page brochure, the collection highlights best-sellers from Emerald's program on the Rhine, Danube, Douro and Rhone rivers, plus a special once-in-a-decade visit to Amsterdam's Floriade Horticulture Expo, all of which can be found on emeraldcruiises.com.au, the cruise line's new home.

For more information or to book, call Emerald on 1300 383 747.

Cruise Weekly today

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

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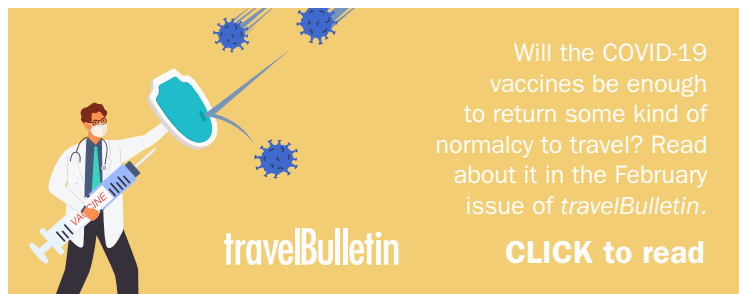
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Will the COVID-19 vaccines be enough to return some kind of normalcy to travel? Read about it in the February issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

NZ Govt slays *Le Laperouse* season

AS HINTED at yesterday by New Zealand Minister of Tourism Stuart Nash (**CW** yesterday), Ponant's NZ cruise season has been terminated, following the Government's shock decision to deny entry to *Le Laperouse* (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

The denial of visas for 61 of the 90 crew members aboard *Le Laperouse* meant Ponant was forced to cancel the entire season of seven fully booked expedition voyages within the country, for New Zealanders only.

The Department of Immigration (INZ) declined to approve the visas, even after a detailed application submitted by Ponant in Oct was approved by the Ministry of Health in mid-Dec.

The application detailed the numbers and nationalities of the crew members to arrive on *Le Laperouse*, but Immigration declined it apparently on the

basis they are non-essential workers, such as hairdressers, bartenders and masseuses, whose onboard jobs could be done by New Zealanders.

Le Laperouse and her crew went through multiple testing protocols, and travelled almost 4,000 nautical miles from her anchorage in Indonesia to New Zealand, where the country's health officials were scheduled to test all crew members upon arrival on 30 Jan.

However, Ponant said it was advised by Immigration three days before reaching New Zealand's shores the visa applications were declined, and that *Le Laperouse* should turn around and go elsewhere.

"This forced cancellation is devastating not only to Ponant, but it will disrupt the travel plans of some 650+ New Zealanders, cause up to NZ\$6 million in direct

economic loss to food, beverage, ground operator SMEs across the country supplying the vessel, eliminate income (again) from the New Zealand travel agency community, and be devastating to 16 Kiwis contracted to work onboard for two months, to lose their income," Ponant said.

"Worryingly, this decision by INZ places great uncertainty about the future for not only the high yielding expedition cruise sector but to the NZ\$670 million economic benefit the cruise industry generates for the country.

"Ponant has invested millions of dollars promoting New Zealand internationally, and operating in NZ seasonally for the past 7 years.

"We hope there is a quick review of the processes for expedition ships to operate in New Zealand and that the 2021-2022 season can be saved."

Silversea launches referral savings

SILVERSEA Cruises has launched a Sail With Us referral program for Venetian Society members.

For a limited time, if you are part of the Venetian Society, you can enjoy \$650 worth of savings per suite when referring a new-to-Silversea guest who books.

The referee will also enjoy the \$650 saving, with greater discounts of \$2,000 and \$1,300 per suite for both parties when referring to the World Cruises or a Grand Voyages respectively.

The offer is valid for this month and the next, and can be combined with other Silversea offers, including the Early Booking Bonus, which features savings of up to 20%, and special single fares for solo travellers.



SEABOURN



SIGNATURE SAVINGS EVENT

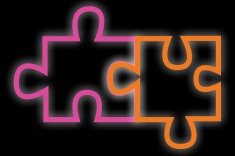
BOOK BY 1 March 2021 to take advantage of special offers including:

- Suite Upgrades*
- Up to \$1,000USD Shipboard Credits*
- Internet Packages*
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*Offers vary per sailing. See Terms & Conditions for details.

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Travel Daily



TRAVELLERS may no longer be hopping aboard cruise ships, but they're certainly still hitting the water.

The Boating Industry Association has reported its industry is going "gangbusters", according to the ABC, with booms in new and used boat sales leaving Australian importers, manufacturers and second-hand brokers scrambling for stock.

"We've experienced record growth in the last six to nine months," said Riviera Brand & Communications Director Stephen Milne, who works for Australia's largest yacht builder.

"People realised that they weren't able to travel overseas, didn't want to travel overseas.

"The dream boat they'd been thinking about for years, and maybe putting it off, they've actually made that decision."

Hopefully the boat boom will result in more Australians developing an affinity for being out on the water.

Scenic hits the Outback



SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has announced a 35th Anniversary Outback Collection.

Part of its 2021 Australia land journeys program, highlights include a Central Australia and the Ghan: 14 days travelling directly through Australia's heart itinerary, which incorporates a cruise on Kakadu's Ngurrungurrudjba wetlands, in search of birdlife and crocodiles.

Departing in Sep, the Darwin-Adelaide itinerary also includes enrichment about bio-dynamic farming at Gemtree Wines in

McLaren Vale, a visit to Kangaroo Island (**pictured**), three nights on The Ghan Expedition in Gold service, and an exploration of Adelaide.

Celestial deals

CELESTYAL Cruises has launched a series of weekly deals, offering discounted rates to the Greek Islands and the Eastern Mediterranean across a range of seven-day flash sales.

Starting from as low as \$949 per person, based on double occupancy, on qualifying 2021 seven-night cruises, the flash sale also features a lower deposit of just \$99 per stateroom.

To provide ultimate flexibility, the flash sale includes the Celestial Promise, allowing guests the freedom to adjust their sailing up to 30 days prior to departure.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

Seabourn Early Bonus savings

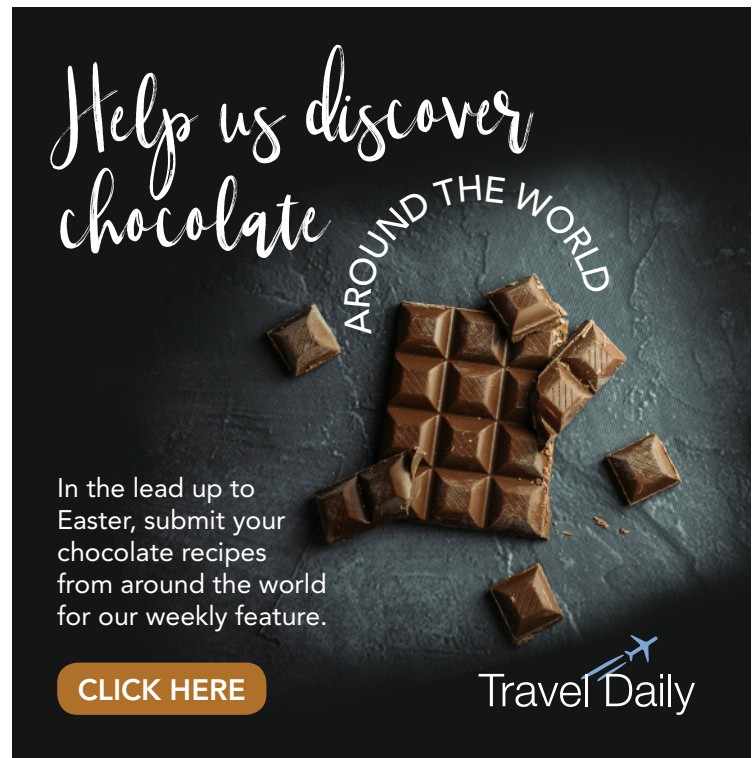
SEABOURN Cruise Line has relaunched its Early Bonus Savings promotion for select voyages this year and next in '22.

Offering travellers additional savings opportunities and travel advisors the option to earn commissions now, guests who pay in full by the end of Mar will receive an additional 10% savings.

Trivia with Honey

CRUISE blogger Cruising With Honey is hosting two trivia cruises with P&O Aus Corporate Entertainment Director Zoltina-J.

Sailing the Sydney Harbour, the 09 Feb Devonshire Tea cruise costs \$65 (**CLICK HERE**), and the 13 Feb Champagne High Tea cruise costs \$79 (**CLICK HERE**).



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In the lead up to Easter, submit your chocolate recipes from around the world for our weekly feature.

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Travel Daily

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Each new year brings new hopes for the future, so which of your clients' travel dreams will you set about to make a reality?

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