



Azamara seeing guests returning

AZAMARA customers are beginning to develop confidence as the year progresses, newly minted President Carol Cabezas (*CW* 20 Jan) has revealed to *Cruise Weekly*.

Promoted from Chief Operating Officer to President last month following Azamara's sale to Sycamore Partners, Cabezas said the cruise line had witnessed a "very noticeable shift" in the timing of when cruisers are interested in sailing.

Cabezas said the tentativeness witnessed in the earlier parts of this year were being displaced by robust activity beginning in the northern fall, culminating in the best winter booking position Azamara has ever seen.

"People haven't been able to cruise for two years once they're able to get back onto a ship... you're taking all that pent-up demand for nearly two years and

putting it into the winter of 2021-22," she explained.

With Sycamore having already purchased an additional ship for Azamara (*CW* 27 Jan), the line will hope to see some of this demand spill over onto its new vessel, for which Cabezas hinted at potential itineraries.

"From a destination standpoint, we have a tremendous presence within the Mediterranean, but we also cover Northern Europe," she said.

"With the addition of the fourth vessel, we'll be able to have an even greater presence in some of those most attractive destinations within Northern Europe that we might not be able to spend as much time in right now.

"In terms of the destinations that have been most attractive, and I think this has probably been consistent across the different markets, are Greece and Italy...

those two destinations seem to have an appeal that never wanes," she explained.

Although Cabezas admitted she could not say for sure when exactly Azamara would return to sailing, she acknowledged it would primarily be related to the approval of sailing within each of its destinations, and whether or not its guests could get there.

Cabezas also said Azamara would look to guidance from its destinations on what sort of requirements visitors would be asked of when it comes to vaccinations and other health & safety protocols.

"We're talking with them, we're making sure we're aligned in understanding how they're viewing any sort of protocols related to COVID up to and including vacation, and we'll take our cues from our destinations," she said.

Aurora webinars

AURORA Expeditions is hosting two webinars ahead of the official launch of its Antarctica 2022/23 program.

Travellers are invited to join Aurora's Asia Pacific Sales Team to learn about the program, which will see the return of some of the cruise line's most popular expeditions travelling to the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, the Falklands Islands and the Weddell Sea.

The team will deliver a comprehensive overview of the new 2022/23 Antarctica season including itineraries and more - session one **HERE** and session two **HERE**.

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THE 2021 Parkes Elvis Festival may have been cancelled, but that didn't stop another deceased American from making their appearance in Australia.

More than 300 Marilyn Monroe impersonators have paraded along Brighton Beach in Adelaide for a cancer fundraiser.

The group paraded down Jetty Road before venturing onto the beach and into the water for the eighth Marilyn Jetty Swim.

It is the largest amount of Monroes to ever take part in the event, setting an unofficial world record.



That's not the Spirit



SPIRIT of Tasmania operator TT-Line has been accused of hiking its fares, despite recently receiving a \$6 million federal government subsidy designed to make trips more affordable.

Passenger vehicles on the Spirit of Tasmania are subsidised under an equalisation scheme designed to even the cost of taking a car across Bass Strait to driving the same distance on the national highway network, and last month, a funding agreement was struck to allow tourists to bring a car or motorbike to Tasmania aboard the ferry free of charge in a bid to encourage visitation to the state.

However, some passengers have told the ABC those savings are not being passed onto travellers, and that fare prices are being hiked by TT-Line.

In question time on Thu, MP for Clark Andrew Wilkie asked Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack to investigate the claims, saying it would be "state sanctioned misuse of federal

funding, a rip-off, and another blow to the Tasmanian economy and tourism sector".

TT-Line told the ABC it had not increased its pricing structure since the introduction of the Government's passenger vehicle rebate, saying fares fluctuate on each sailing depending on demand and availability, and that prices were not guaranteed until payment is processed.

Still Dreaming

DREAM Cruises has extended its Singapore cruises to nowhere until 27 Jun (**CW** 09 Nov 2020).

The three-night Super Seacation itineraries have been an enormous success, according to President Michael Goh, with Dream to sail Rhythm of Korea sailings until the end of next month, featuring Hanbok fashion shows, Korean movie screenings and Korean food and K-beauty demonstrations.

Come have Mumm

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises has partnered with champagne producers G.H. Mumm on a new Harbour Bar in Sydney.

From 12 Feb, Captain Cook will serve Mumm in an ultimate French champagne extravaganza on the recently refurbished *Sydney 2000's* Ocean Deck, kicking off at 3pm each afternoon.

For more, call 9206 1111.

Scenic Showcase

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours will debut its new Virtual Travel Showcase next week.

Beginning Wed, operator will showcase its range of all-inclusive luxury river & ocean cruises, along with the rest of its product, via a program of presentations.

The sessions have been designed to provide insider travel knowledge, and will be hosted by the Scenic sales team.

See the full list of times and sessions on offer **HERE**.



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