



## Melhus: private tours still integral

**TOURSBYLOCALS** Chief Executive Officer & Founder Paul Melhus (pictured) has told *Cruise Weekly* he believes the trend of lines instituting shoreside bubbles during port calls will not be sustainable.

Melhus said ToursByLocals was seeing customers booking further into the future than it had ever seen before, and as such, has extended its Find Your Cruise function's calendar availability out from 13 to 24 months.

However, Melhus said the propensity for cruise lines to keep port calls as a sheltered, bubble-type experience would irk consumers.

"I think it's going to be a problem for us short-term, but longer-term I don't think it'll be," he said.

"The kind of tours we offer are private and our customers are not interested in going out with a



group which is your typical shore excursion offering.

"[Cruise lines] will face too much negative pressure to maintain that because a lot of people just want to go and walk around in ports, they don't want to go on an organised tour and be herded about.

"We perceive that as a real

threat, but I don't think it's going to be something that will be sustainable over the long term."

With ToursByLocals having recently extended its push in the Australian market through the appointment of a dedicated public relations agency for the first time in Gate 7, the tour operator has also set plans to engage the travel trade in the future, Melhus said.

"Right now most of our bookings in Australia are direct, a very small percentage are through travel agents, so we haven't figured out the secret sauce to being successful with travel agents," he said.

"It's not enough to just give them a commission, you need to have a lot more face time with them, so we do have a plan to put more energy into developing the travel agent channel, but I think that's going to be a future plan."

### Vaccines for crews?

**ROYAL** Caribbean Group may require crew members to get the coronavirus vaccine, according to a letter received by shipboard employees.

"We expect vaccinations will be required for our crew as part of our plan for your return to working on our ships," the letter read.

Royal Caribbean told *Cruise Weekly* the COVID-19 vaccines presented a new opportunity to keep guests, crew and communities safe.

"The vaccines are a way to build protection for everyone involved and we continue to look into all options that will assist in keeping people safe."

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**MARINE** debris is a large issue, which is why there were many hearts in mouths as champion Tampa Bay quarterback Tom Brady made his latest throw. But no, it was not an on-field pass, rather a toss made of the five-figure Lombardi Trophy, handed out to the Super Bowl winner each year.

During the Super Bowl LV boat parade celebrations - Brady's seventh time celebrating such a win - the champion quarterback attempted to pass the trophy from one boat to another - check out the pass' result **HERE**.

## Seabourn doubles pleasure



**SEABOURN** Cruise Line has launched its 2023 World Cruise: Extraordinary Discoveries and 2023 Grand Voyage: Grand Americas, Amazon (**pictured**) & Antarctica.

Travellers who book and pay in full by 15 Apr can receive 6% early bonus savings for either the 140-day World Cruise on *Seabourn Sojourn* or the 79-day Grand Voyage aboard *Quest*.

The World Cruise will see *Sojourn* cross both the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and traverse the Atlantic along the coast of Africa, stopping at ports including Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth, as well as a number of small Western Australian destinations.

Departing on 06 Jan 2023, *Sojourn* will also visit Papeete, Mombasa, Cape Town, Durban, Dakar, Casablanca, Easter Island, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Cape Verde and more.

The Grand Voyage will see *Quest* sail to Central America, the coast of South America, and Antarctica, South Georgia & the Falkland Islands, before making her way back to the Amazon and through the Caribbean.

Also departing on 06 Jan 2023, the voyage will round-trip from Miami, and visit a total of 37 destinations and 15 countries.

## SeaDream Aus head

**SEADREAM** Yacht Club has hired Rune Grenager (**pictured**) as Vice President of Sales - Europe & Australia.

Bringing over 20 years of travel experience, Grenager will oversee sales growth for SeaDream's yachts, and will report directly to Andreas Brynstad, Executive Vice President.

"We are most excited to welcome Rune onboard," commented Brynstad.

"His great standing in the travel agent community and his extensive experience in the travel industry will be a great asset to our SeaDream family."

Prior to joining SeaDream, Grenager worked as Radisson Hotel Group's Director of Sales in Norway.



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## NZ Conf postponed

**THE** New Zealand Cruise Association's (NZCA) conference has been postponed, "in light of the well-documented state of the global cruise industry".

The next Cruise Conference will now take place in mid-2022, NZCA said, adding "this year has proven very much that we are still in a time of flux and change and the board felt it is better to wait".