



Cruise Weekly today

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

Ritz happening!

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will finally start cruising in Jul, with the 298-guest *Evrima* to set sail on 24 Jul from Venice to Athens.

“Due to the ongoing safety concerns and travel restrictions due to COVID-19, we have decided to proactively reschedule our first sailing to later in the summer,” said Chief Exec Douglas Prothero.

“Knowing that our guests are eager to travel to the Mediterranean, we have also adjusted our fall itinerary schedule to include additional voyages in the Mediterranean.”

Azamara revealed as Pacific buyer

NEW owner of Azamara, Sycamore Partners (CW 20 Jan), has announced plans to add a fourth ship to its cruise line's fleet.

The ship, thought to be the recently sold *Pacific Princess* (pictured) (CW 22 Jan) will undergo a full renovation similar to that which recently took place aboard *Azamara Pursuit*.

She will then debut in Europe next year, with other deployment and itinerary details to be available soon.

To be named at a later date, Azamara said the ship is comparable in size to the rest of its fleet, and would expand its overall capacity by 33%.

“We are thrilled to be expanding our fleet with a fourth ship, allowing us to visit even more regions of the world and better serve our guests,” said Azamara President Carol Cabezas.



“We look forward to launching even more unique and immersive itineraries and feel this is just the beginning of an exciting growth phase for Azamara.”

Royal Caribbean Group's sale of Azamara last week to Sycamore

is worth US\$210 million, with the transaction expected to close later in the first quarter.

Azamara recently expanded its local sales team (CW 16 Oct 2020), all of whom are expected to be retained under Sycamore.

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A taste of Chile

FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines is inviting travellers to explore Latin America and the Chilean Fjords on a 79-night sailing aboard *Bolette*.

Departing next Jan, travellers can currently score up to £400 per person to spend on board, with highlights of the cruise including days ashore in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil, with overnight stays in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires.

Guests can also experience tours to an Argentinian cattle ranch, a Chilean vineyard and a call into Robinson Crusoe Island.

Sailing from Southampton return, prices start from £8,299 per person.

Other highlights of Fred. Olsen's 2022 program include Canada and Spitsbergen visits (*CW* 25 Nov 2020).

Saga says get the job

SAGA Cruises will require everyone travelling on its ships to be fully vaccinated against coronavirus, the cruise line has announced.

To allow for vaccinations, Saga is moving its restart date to May, with *Spirit of Discovery* to return to service on 02 Jun, and *Spirit of Adventure's* inaugural voyage to continue as planned on 04 May (*CW* 04 Sep 2020).

Travellers must be vaccinated at least 14 days before cruising, with the new policy in addition to coronavirus arrangements in place for May and Jun sailings, such as pre-departure coronavirus testing in the cruise terminal, full medical screenings, and a maximum capacity of 800.

Saga will also increase crew member to traveller ratios, enhance cleaning regimes, introduce a doubly large medical

team, and institute frequent communication with travellers detailing destination-specific coronavirus requirements ahead of departure.

The measures come in addition to ship enhancements, such as air conditioning that provides 100% fresh air in all public areas & cabins, and improved and expanded medical facilities, including a new dedicated isolation area.

Saga's measures have been awarded Shield+ accreditation by business services organisation Lloyds' Register.

"The health and safety of our customers has always been our number one priority at Saga," a spokesperson said.

"Our customers want the reassurance of the vaccine and to know others travelling with them will be vaccinated."

Disney mini-cruise

DISNEY Cruise Line is offering two-day sailings between Vancouver and Seattle beginning Jul.

The cruise line recently announced the continued suspension of all cruises through to Mar, but *Disney Wonder* is now set to sail between the two cities across two days.

Disney said the cruise would include live shows, deck parties, adult-exclusive activities and more.

Meanwhile, Disney has continued its community efforts in the Bahamas, donating 230 tablets to the country's students.

"Community leaders have shared their desire for students to continue to adapt to a technology-based learning environment," said VP Public Affairs Kim Prunty.

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WHAT happens on the boat, stays on the boat - unless you also happen to be in the view of those not on the vessel.

A New South Wales Police Force spokesperson reminded skippers of this rule earlier this week, after a Sydney party boat with a number of naked revellers on board recently pulled slightly too close to the shore, leaving one family with more than they bargained for.

"We found a public mooring up towards South West Arm, we had already been there for a couple of nights," the family's matriarch commented.

"There was a group of guys and one girl, and we thought, she doesn't look like she's got much on."

"They were just loud, they were drawing attention to themselves, she was shaking her bits at anyone who went past."

In NSW, the maximum penalty for obscene exposure is six months imprisonment.

CCC seniors deals

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises (CCC) is celebrating the NSW Seniors Festival by offering special cruises and savings of up to 35% on Sydney Harbour.

The cruise deals are valid on Captain Cook Cruises' Seniors Festival Lunch, Sunset Dinner and Top Deck Lunch for all seniors card holders.

For further information and bookings call 9206 1111.

Whale you support us?



THE Ponant Foundation is supporting whale research in Antarctica, with General Manager Sales & Marketing Asia Pacific Deb Corbett witnessing the work firsthand, aboard *Le Boreal* early last year.

The ship hosted a research group from non-governmental organisation Conservation International, which was studying the behaviour of humpback whales in Antarctica.

The goal of the research was to assess the impact of climate change and tourism on humpback whale feeding and migratory patterns in the Antarctic.

Key questions included the effect of sea ice variability on whales, the state of whale population distribution and connectivity in the region, and

the impact of ship noise on whales in the Antarctic.

The research effort resulted in 60 whales being listed and 16 hours of underwater recordings being made in order to help develop a better understanding of their songs and the significance to their feeding behaviour.

The results obtained will be analysed and will inform follow-up research during future voyages aboard the Ponant fleet this year and next.

"Being on a small ship like *Le Boreal*, we met and talked with them at regular daily expedition team updates," Corbett said.

"We had discussions about the oceans, the land, government policies – it was an intellectual connection which stimulated you in a completely different way – looking at these people thinking they have dedicated their life to research and we are now a part of it.

"Being onboard and talking with the researchers created an educated environmental perspective and insight, deepened our understanding and really did enrich us all."

MSC new CFO

MSC Cruises has named Alfonso Piccirillo as Chief Financial Officer.

Joining MSC in 2004, he has for the past five years been the cruise line's Head of Financial Planning & Controlling.



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Looking beyond JobKeeper

WITH the JobKeeper program due to end soon, CLIA has been supporting the lobbying efforts for a replacement scheme that will recognise the crippling effects the pandemic is having on tourism and provide ongoing support for travel agents.

The past year has been the most challenging trading period in our industry's history, and while the suspension of international travel has been the right initial response to COVID-19, thousands of Australian businesses that rely on travel have been devastated by the govt policies introduced to contain the virus.

Many have already closed or laid off staff, and there will be further pressure once JobKeeper ends in Mar.

At the same time, there is no clear timeline for Australia's international borders to reopen.

This month CLIA has joined other industry associations and businesses in calling for continued support for travel agents and other travel industry workers.

In particular, we support the wage subsidy program proposed by the Australian Chamber - Tourism committee, which would provide ongoing support for travel and tourism industry personnel beyond the end of JobKeeper.

Though Australia has made great progress in combatting COVID-19, the battle is still far from over for our travel industry workers.

We need certainty and support for those whose futures are most at risk.



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