



Partnership key to Singapore restart

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises (RCL) Managing Director Asia Pacific Angie Stephen (**pictured**) has told **Cruise Weekly** the company's relationship with the Singapore Tourism Board has been key in restarting cruise operations in the Lion City.

Since Royal Caribbean International resumed sailings in Dec (**CW** 04 Dec 2020), more than 35,000 guests have sailed on almost 30 sailings, with no positive coronavirus cases, which Stephen said is in large part thanks to the support of Singapore's destination management organisation.

"Keeping communication lines open with the local authorities and the Singapore Tourism Board has been vital," Stephen told **Cruise Weekly**.

"The Singapore authorities have been incredibly supportive of these sailings, and that comes



down to a mix of transparent communication and a responsible approach, guided by science."

"Our work with them has provided an aspirational model for similar partnerships in other countries."

Stephen said RCL is "definitely" exploring how it can emulate the success of its collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board

with others around the world as it pushes for restarts across the globe.

In addition to RCL's Healthy Sail Panel, she also paid tribute to Singapore's tourism industry for helping tempt travellers back onto the company's ships.

"The local travel trade do a spectacular job of communicating the cruise experience to guests," she said.

"The education and insight they offer is so important at this time, especially for new cruisers who might be filled with a bit of trepidation.

"They have been instrumental in our return, and we are incredibly grateful for their commitment and expertise."

Stephen added although some of RCL's Singapore measures will translate into other markets, each region - such as Australia - has different needs.

MSC serves up

MSC Cruises is set to introduce two new specialty dining concepts on board soon-to-debut flagship *MSC Virtuosa*.

Amid a wide choice of restaurants and bars, Cantina & Indochine Restaurant and HOLA! Tacos will launch.

Offering a "fusion of fine culinary heritages", Indochine will offer guests Vietnamese classics with a French twist, while HOLA will provide laid-back, Latin-flavoured dining.

"These new restaurants build on the success of our existing popular specialty dining concepts," said Chief Executive Officer Gianni Onorato.

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DESPITE being reduced to one day, the famous high-altitude marine event, the New Zealand Antique & Classic Boat Show took place over the weekend.

Having been held annually since 1999, the geriatric boats took to Lake Rotoiti, which is at 640 metres above sea level.

Initial entries indicated around 120 boats on display, but another 30 registrations on the day saw the total approach last year's record of 155.

The dinner and prize-giving may have been cancelled, but at an event like this, everyone is a winner.

Cayman cruise rethink



WESTERN Caribbean nation the Cayman Islands (**pictured**) is considering cutting the amount of inbound cruise tourism, according to local media, including banning ships from the islands for the

remainder of the year.

The Caymans will be looking to cap the number of visitors able to arrive by cruise ship, with the COVID-19 pandemic having proved the country can survive without the sector.

The Islands have also announced they will not be proceeding with the construction of a cruise port in the capital Georgetown - a facility Carnival Cruise Line, Disney Cruise Line, MSC Cruises and Royal Caribbean had committed to financing.

The cruise port had initially been met with enthusiasm by the local government, with Premier Alden McLaughlin saying the cruise lines' money would be welcome, with no public funds to be spent.

However, residents have recently petitioned against the cruise port.

"We cap the numbers so that our current system can accommodate them in a better way, and the experience for those who do visit can be better," McLaughlin told the *Cayman Compass*.

Bono takes stage

SWAN Hellenic has appointed Adria Bono as Destination Management Director.

Bono will work closely with Director of Expedition Operations Pierre Thomas to ensure the expert lecture, expedition and excursion facets of Swan Hellenic's cruises both complement and enhance one another.

"We're absolutely delighted to welcome Adria to the team," enthused Swan Hellenic Chief Executive Andrea Zito.

"With her tremendous focus on quality of guest experience and strong relationships with leading excursion partners worldwide, nobody could be better placed to ensure our guests enjoy unforgettably insightful explorations ashore, fully in tune with Swan Hellenic's pioneering heritage."

Bono was most recently Silversea Senior Director Destination Experiences.

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Odyssey complete

ROYAL Caribbean International's *Odyssey of the Seas* has completed her conveyance out to sea from her German shipyard Meyer Werft.

Hot on the heels of the announcement she'll be sailing the first fully vaccinated cruise in the world from Israel in May (*CW* 02 Mar), *Odyssey* has completed her 10-plus-hour, 32-kilometre conveyance along the Ems River to the North Sea.