



Malaysia's new Star

STAR Cruises on the weekend confirmed it will become the first cruise line to resume sailing in Malaysia, from 13 May (**CW** 12 Mar).

The cruise line will offer a one-night Straits of Malacca itinerary and a two-night Langkawi Escape, both sailing from Penang.

The cruises will coincide with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, and will be operated aboard *Star Pisces*.

The Straits of Malacca Cruise will depart from Tue-Thu, with passengers able to spot a range of vessels transiting the narrow stretch of water between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra.

The Langkawi Escape Cruise will depart each Fri and Sun, with passengers to enjoy 10 hours of port time to explore the destination, known as the Jewel of Kedah.

"Like all Malaysians, we have been eagerly looking forward to another vacation alternative during this period when overseas travel is not permitted," said Genting Cruise Lines Vice President Malaysia Cynthia Lee.

Genting said it will continue to work with all relevant local authorities in Malaysia to make further adjustments to its set of protocols to accommodate local guidelines and ensure safety for all.

RCG returns two ships

ROYAL Caribbean Group (RCG) has marked its 2021 return to cruising in North America, with Celebrity Cruises and Royal Caribbean International (RCI) to restart from Jun in the Atlantic.

Celebrity's revolutionised *Celebrity Millennium* will offer a homeport season from St. Maarten, offering seven-night sailings from the Dutch kingdom, while RCI will offer week-long itineraries from the Bahamas and Mexico aboard *Adventure of the Seas*.

Travellers can book a roundtrip RCI cruise as soon as Thu, with sailings starting from 12 Jun, while those eager to book with Celebrity can do so from Fri.

RCI cruises will enjoy island-hopping itineraries, including trips to Perfect Day at CocoCay, Grand Bahama Island and Cozumel.

Celebrity will offer two different itineraries; one exploring the ABC Islands, and another visiting Tortola, St. Lucia and Barbados.

The cruise line will also offer a range of curated tours for all interests and price points at every port of call, with Private Journeys and Small Group Discovery Tours to be available for those guests preferring a more intimate exploration.

Both lines will offer departures through to Aug, which will sail with vaccinated crews, and will be available to adult guests who are fully vaccinated against

coronavirus, as well as those under the age of 18 returning a negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours of embarkation.

In addition to filling out appropriate entry forms, RCI vacationers must meet the travel requirements of the Bahamas, which may include receiving a negative test result before entering the country, and testing upon arrival.

The cruise line is directing travellers to the Bahamas' website, where the most up-to-date policies can be found.

Other details on additional health and safety measures to be implemented by Royal Caribbean Group will be announced at a later date.

Celebrity President & Chief Executive Officer Lisa Lutloff-Perlo hailed the significance of returning to the Caribbean after more than a year away, saying it marks the measured beginning of the end of what has been a uniquely challenging time for all.

"We have been in constant contact with the leadership of St. Maarten these past months to support each other and share learnings and best practices...I am forever grateful for the support and collaboration of the St. Maarten Government," she said.

The kingdom's Minister of Tourism & Transport Ludmila de Weever concurred, adding the significant economic milestone of bringing *Millennium* to its shores.

Onward and upward

AZAMARA has announced the name of its fourth ship, *Azamara Onward* (**CW** 27 Jan), which coincided with the vessel's handover last Mon.

The occasion also concurred with Azamara's transition today into an independent cruise company, with the completion of its sale to Sycamore (**CW** 20 Jan).

Azamara President Carol Cabezas said the occasion reflected the start of a new beginning for the cruise line.

"Our beautiful new ship can access smaller ports and allow us to bring our guests to even more destinations," Cabezas remarked.

The name *Azamara Onward* signifies the moving forward in space or time, and is meant to evoke feelings of resilience, positivity, and the endless possibilities of the future, Azamara said.

"When selecting a unique name, we realized our fourth ship marks the start of a new adventure and we chose a name that celebrates the bright future ahead for the brand, our guests, and the industry as a whole," Cabezas added.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

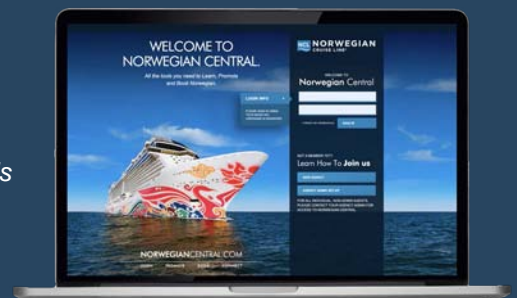


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SAUDI Arabia may be planning an incursion into the cruise market, but fellow Middle East destination Qatar is going for something slightly more extravagant.

The peninsular Arab country is plotting the construction of a floating eco-luxury hotel as soon as 2025.

The circular-shaped design will feature a range of rooms complete with luxury amenities.

It will also generate its own electricity with the help of solar, wind and tidal energy - that's right, not oil, believe it or not.

CLIA LIVE returns for '21

THE CLIA LIVE education series for Australian travel advisors is returning this year, as cruising looks to usher in a new era.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has brought back the program to give its travel advisor members a chance to hear about what guests can expect from the cruise industry as it makes its post-pandemic plans.

Offering a two-day seminar in which representatives from the world's cruise lines gather in the one forum to share product knowledge and insight, the event targets both new-to-cruise travel advisors as well as more experienced sellers looking to update their knowledge.

This year's theme is guest experience, with content aimed

at helping advisors understand how it will change when operations resume.

Topics covered include the introduction of new onboard health & safety measures; the unique selling points of each brand; dining, accommodation, on-board activities and entertainment; and the latest technology and innovative experiences cruise lines are introducing for guests.

Attendees will also be briefed on the new health protocols that will support the future of cruising, with participating cruise lines providing relevant updates on their new policies.

The series begins tomorrow with a sold-out event in Brisbane at Sofitel Brisbane Central, before heading to other major cities throughout the year.

The Gold Coast event will be held at Mantra Southport Sharks on 21 & 22 Apr, and the Sydney event at Rydges World Square Hotel on 28 & 29 Apr.

Tickets are limited and selling fast, costing \$50+GST each.

Other events will be held this year in Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth, as well as Auckland, with dates and other details to be announced later.

Attendees will also earn 30 CLIA points per day.

For further information, visit CLIA's events pages, and for bookings, log in to the CLIA Members Hub at www.cruising.org.au.

The Association continues to seek approval of a pathway to the resumption of domestic cruising (**CW** 15 Mar).

MRPS new depts

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers' (MRPS) *Emmylou*, which is 80% sold for this year, has had two new departures for Oct announced.

Four-fifths of *Emmylou's* two-to-six-night cruise staterooms are sold, with MRPS' longest sailing for the year having just seven cabins left.

The new 15 Oct & 29 Oct departures are three-night sailings leaving on Fri nights, starting at \$1,550 per person, with the price now including wine & beer with dinner service - www.murrayriverpaddlesteamers.com.au.

Fred. joins the fun

FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines has unveiled a series of British Isles sailings as it prepares for a Jul restart with the rest of the British cruise community.

The line's Welcome Back program of cruises will showcase the best of the British Isles this northern summer aboard smaller ships, and a range of scenic-only cruises.

The 11-cruise program includes departures from Dover and Liverpool, with scenic sailings taking in the best of the British Isles, including Shetland and Orkney, and the Isles of Scilly.

New ship *Borealis* will be the first of the fleet to set sail with a three-night scenic maiden voyage from Liverpool on 05 Jul, followed by a three-night maiden voyage for *Bolette*.

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