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Coral Top End update

CORAL Expeditions has clarified the impacts of the new regulations in the NT on its Kimberley (pictured) & Northern Australian season this year (**CW** yesterday), confirming the only ship with no scheduling change is *Coral Discoverer*.

With a capacity of 72 passengers and operating with 23 crew members, *Discoverer* will be able to meet the new directives and sail her season across the Kimberley and Cape York as scheduled, between Broome and Darwin.

Unfortunately, *Coral Adventurer* and *Coral Geographer* will not be able to call on Darwin thanks to the capacity limit, which means Apr and May sailings for the two vessels will embark and disembark in Broome.

All published embarkation and disembarkation dates will remain the same, and the itineraries will still be delivered in full.

To facilitate this change, Coral has secured (optional) charter flights to connect guests between the two cities on all relevant dates, which will come at the cost of \$300.

Coral said it will continue its dialogue with authorities in the NT, and is hopeful there will be progress in the coming months that may allow Australian-flagged small vessels to operate with 99 passengers plus crew, as is the case across Australia's states through federal biosecurity



legislations.

"As soon as we are able, we will revert to our usual scheduling pattern once again," Coral remarked.

The cruise line said its reservations team will be communicating these changes with guests and travel partners for departures from Apr to May.

For those travelling from Jun onwards, Coral does not recommend making any changes at this stage, with the cruise line to contact pax at the appropriate time to work through any changes that may be required.

"We hope this assists your understanding and we do apologise for any inconvenience caused by these changes," Coral said.

"Our sales and reservations teams are available to assist you in the event of further queries."

Coral only earlier this month commenced its highly anticipated 45-voyage Western Australian cruise season aboard *Coral Adventurer* (**CW** 10 Mar).

Cruise world reacts to NT cruise ban

PONANT Chairman Asia Pacific Sarina Bratton has told **Cruise Weekly** the cruise principles announced by NT Chief Health Officer Hugh Heggie (**CW** yesterday) "effectively kills the Kimberley operations using Darwin as the homeport of the NT".

The Territory's Govt effectively put paid to cruise operations in the region when on Fri it imposed a new order banning vessels with more than 100 people on board, including crew members, with Bratton and Silversea Cruises Senior Vice President & Managing Director Asia Pacific Adam Radwanski quick to point out the domino effect the edict will have on the travel trade, as well as local suppliers.

"Just across APT and Ponant's bookings alone, some \$6 million of agents commissions are being jeopardised," Bratton warned.

Both cruise lines have committed to dialogue with both the Australian and NT governments in hopes their seasons will not be a total loss.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise news plus a front page from **Paul Gauguin Cruises**.

Gauguin 2022 season

PAUL Gauguin Cruises, which has just completed the refurbishment of *Paul Gauguin*, is offering an overview of its South Pacific voyages for next year.

The season will see 39 voyages undertaken - head to the **front page** for more.



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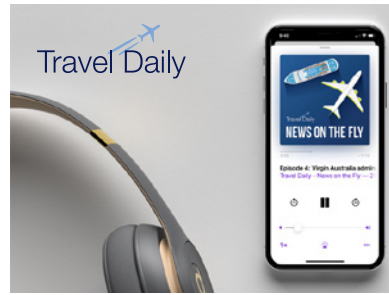
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THE Suez Canal obstruction may have come to an end, but *The Wall Street Journal* has revealed that this is not the only time *Ever Given* has been in a spot of bother.

The ship, its current Captain, and its crew, as well as the Egyptian pilots who boarded the vessel and "helped" guide it through the Canal are all under scrutiny, after she became wedged across the canal, blocking traffic and triggering a round-the-clock rescue effort (**CW** 25 Mar).

However, it has been revealed *Ever Given* had another accident as recently as 2019, in which she collided with a ferry in Germany, prompting a criminal probe.

The country investigated the then-Captain, but he was cleared of any misconduct, with authorities blaming the wind.

Given *Ever Given* is one of the world's largest ships, it's unlikely she'll be retired, but surely she's now on her last chance!

Virtuosa to debut in the UK



MSC Cruises is set to deploy its new flagship *MSC Virtuosa* (**pictured**) to the UK for this year's newly announced northern summer season (**CW** 19 Mar).

The newbuild will make its debut with a range of British domestic voyages.

Virtuosa will undertake her maiden voyage on 20 May from Southampton, the first of a series of three- and four-night mini-cruises before she begins her seven-night itineraries from 12 Jun, embarking from three ports in England and Scotland.

Protected shore excursions will be available in all ports, as well as in Belfast in Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Portland along the Jurassic Coast in the UK.

All departures will be available for both non-vaccinated and vaccinated British guests.

All passengers will be tested before they embark, and non-vaccinated guests will also be required to show proof of a negative test conducted up to 72 hours prior to embarkation, among other pre-boarding and onboard COVID-safe measures.

Total eclipse of P&O

P&O Cruises Australia will take up a prime position for a rare solar eclipse in 2023 on its Ningaloo King of Eclipse cruise.

Sailing from Fremantle on 17 Apr 2023, the five-night cruise on board *Pacific Explorer* will track over Western Australia's North West Cape near Exmouth, which is the only location on the mainland where the total solar eclipse can be viewed.

The celestial event will take place at 11.27am on 20 April 2023, as the moon completely covers the sun for one minute and 16 seconds, ensuring the sun's fainter corona is visible to the naked eye.

There were only five total solar eclipses visible from Australia last century, and it has been almost 50 years since Western Australia has experienced one.

The 2023 total solar eclipse is particularly special as it will occur as part of a rare hybrid eclipse, a kind which has not been visible from Australia for almost a millennium - register your interest **HERE**.

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