



Cruise Weekly today

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

Azamara retail

AZAMARA has signed an exclusive retail partnership with Starboard Cruise Services.

The LVMH company is now the fleetwide retail partner for Azamara, with the two to design a destination-tailored retail program, offering experiential, cultural and artisanal touchpoints curated specifically for each journey.

The reinvented retail vision is designed to complement Azamara's distinct shoreside evening activities and overnight port stays.

The partnership will offer bespoke experiences onboard and ashore with local artisans and craftsmen in their native studios and shops.

My Cruises expanding into river

FLIGHT Centre-owned Ignite Travel Group has launched My Cruises River Collection, a dedicated river cruise agency of the My Cruises division.

The River Collection aims to tap into the rising popularity of river cruising, one of the fastest-growing segments of the travel industry, and is designed to remove some of the complexity of arranging a river cruise holiday.

My Cruises General Manager, Michael Middleton said the team is excited to provide travellers this specialist offering, having partnered with Avalon Waterways (**pictured**) to bring its first suite of journeys to life.

"There's simply no better way to experience the heart of Europe – sailing from iconic cities past captivating castles into fairy-tale-like villages and vineyards, all in the relaxed luxury of a river ship," he said.



"Unlike ocean ships, a river cruise ship can take you right into the heart of a destination, literally docking in town.

"We hand-select the world's best river cruise lines, then we package inspired itineraries with exclusive inclusions like flights, pre and post-cruise discoveries, rail journeys and more."

Middleton said his team was also keen to dispel misconceptions about river cruising, such as its price point and demographic.

"We're also seeing that river

cruising is now attracting a younger demographic who are keen to experience this immersive style of travel.

"Many river operators, like Avalon Waterways, are catering more for the active traveller with a wide range of more active daily excursions such as walking, cycling, and even kayaking tours.

"Our River Collection features some incredible value holidays, brimming with inclusions like gourmet dining, drinks, locally guided onshore experiences, scenic rail journeys and more."

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PORTHOLE

BRISBANE International Cruise Terminal has received its first call - but sadly, it was not a cruise ship.

The Australian Navy's *Choules* docked in Brisbane just before midday on Fri, and left yesterday.

The first ship into the \$177 million cruise terminal should have been P&O Cruises Australia's *Pacific Dawn*, which was originally scheduled to call on 03 Oct 2020.

Instead of arriving to rapturous fanfare, *Choules* docked to only a small handful of onlookers, including a few family members and a number of slightly bemused security guards.

Speaking of the reception, those there to collect their family members were quizzed on the new terminal.

"Yes, it's quite okay," one patron told *The Brisbane Times*.

"I didn't even know it was here."

A wheely bad year



WHEN cruising in Queensland was on a record growth trajectory, family run Kangaroo Bus Lines acquired 10 luxury coaches to specifically cater for the cruise market.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and cruising was suspended, Kangaroo's business fell by about 30%.

Following the significant hit to his business, Kangaroo Chief Executive Officer Darren Webster (pictured) is backing calls for federal and state governments to engage with cruising and agree to a pathway for domestic sailing to resume.

The coaches, each valued at around \$550,000, were obtained over a three-year period, with Webster saying it was nothing for Kangaroo to have had up to 30 per day devoted to a Brisbane call by a cruise ship.

"It was a substantial investment and included a couple of custom-built stepless vehicles to cater for the elderly and people with disabilities... there was also the investment in ground staff and training to make them seamlessly part of the cruise line's brand," he said.

"The buses did a mixture of shore excursions to places such as Australia Zoo and other attractions in Brisbane and its immediate surrounds, through to shuttle bus services.

"We invested heavily in capital to support cruise operations and even though the ships are no longer here, the capital still is."

Webster said there was often a reference to "we are all in this together" but there was little recognition tourism-connected businesses such as his were haemorrhaging money at an alarming rate each day.

MSC new payment

MSC Cruises has announced two new payment options for travel partners in Australia.

Effective yesterday, MSC is accepting payment from both the TravelPay and Mint platforms, in addition to the option of direct bank transfer.

The move comes due to the closure of the eNett system, which is no longer available.

Meanwhile, MSC's cruise of the month for Sep is a grand voyage from Dubai to Genoa.

MSC is offering savings of up to \$726 per person for this month on the 18-night cruise on board *MSC Europa*, departing Dubai 25 Mar 2023.

The itinerary will sail through the Suez Canal, visiting Abu Dhabi, Sir Bani Yas, Jeddah, Naples, and Rome.

The deal, with included Easy Plus drinks package is priced from \$2,369 per person, and bookings must be made by the end of the month.

Santa says no

SANTA Barbara has suspended cruise ship visits until Mar 2022.

City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Director Mike Wiltshire said the decision was a really tough one, given the big role cruise ships play in the community.

It comes following a COVID-19 outbreak aboard a Carnival cruise out of Texas.

Wiltshire said Monterey is also suspending its visits, but he believes Catalina will continue to allow calls.

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