



Cruise Weekly today

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

Cruise Traveller + ATAC

EXCLUSIVE

CRUISE Traveller has partnered with the Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC) for packaged product.

The preferred deal will see Cruise Traveller package up exclusive, unique and competitively priced small ship cruise product for ATAC members, helping them meet the pent-up and rapidly growing demand in Australia for boutique and expedition cruise experiences across the world.

Cruise Traveller Managing Director Craig Bowen said the collaboration would also bolster its own recovery plan.

Aurora appoints Heath as new CEO

EXCLUSIVE

AURORA Expeditions has today confirmed the appointment of Michael Heath (pictured) as its new Chief Executive Officer (CW breaking news).

Heath has been CEO of Surf Hardware International, one of the world's leading suppliers of surfing hardware and accessories, since 2014, and will join Aurora effective from next month.

He has also previously held leadership and top management positions for global active outdoor brands including O'Neill, Hurley, and Nike.

Having recently returned from his first trip to Antarctica, Heath said it was a privilege to take on the role at such an important time in Aurora's history, and lead the cruise line into the future.

"My passion for the outdoors, the environment and the ocean is very well aligned with Aurora



Expeditions as a brand and a cultural fit, and I believe that my global experience marketing to adventure focused consumers fits well with what the company is trying to achieve moving

forward – setting itself apart as an industry leading expedition and adventure travel company and continuing to build upon its pioneering legacy," he told *Cruise Weekly*.

"I have experienced first-hand the Aurora Expeditions difference and was incredibly impressed - not just by the awe of Antarctica, but by Aurora's outstanding expedition experience and highly talented expedition team.

"I'm looking forward to joining the Aurora family, building on Aurora Expeditions' pioneering heritage, actively pursuing growth with purpose and capturing the expanding opportunities ahead".

The announcement of Heath's appointment comes just over two months since Aurora's outgoing Chief Executive Officer Monique Ponfoort announced her departure from the cruise line (CW 24 Feb).



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CLIA flags a better future

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) said the future of the cruise industry is bright, forecasting strong growth expectations which will see passenger volumes recover and surpass 2019 levels by the end of 2023.

CLIA President & CEO Kelly Craighead said traffic was also predicted to reach 12% above pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2026, which will see more than 34 million people cruising every year.

New consumer research conducted by CLIA has found intent to cruise is rebounding, with 63% of cruisers or potential cruisers indicating they are “likely” or “very likely” to cruise in the next two years.

Interestingly, there’s also an improved attitude towards the sector by respondents who have never cruised, with 69% saying they are open to taking a cruise holiday - exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Millennial cruisers are the most enthusiastic about returning to the water, with 87% indicating they will take a cruise in the next few years, followed by Gen X at 85%.

Baltic addition

THE Swedish Port of Lysekil has become the latest new partner in the Cruise Baltic network, bringing the group’s total number of cruise ports and destinations to 32.

Lysekil, a small fishing town with about 8,000 residents, is located in the Bohuslan archipelago between Gothenburg and Oslo.

The pier there allows cruise vessels of up to 240m in length to dock, with the town offering a range of activities such as cycling, hiking and kayaking.

Virgin coming Down Under



VIRGIN Voyages is set to call Australia home, with its third ship, *Resilient Lady* (pictured) to be based at Station Pier in Port Melbourne over the 2023/24 summer cruise season.

Resilient will first make her way to Australia on a 44-night trans-continental voyage from Athens to Sydney, which was originally made public earlier this year (**CW** 28 Feb), after which she will travel to destinations across the country, including Hobart, Burnie, and Sydney.

The overall season will consist of 12 cruises from two to 14 nights in duration, with *Resilient Lady* to also visit a number of ports in New Zealand, such as Picton, Napier, Tauranga, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin.

The adults-only *Resilient* will be in Australian waters from Dec 2023 to Mar 2024, with reservations now open alongside a launch sale of up to 30% off voyage fares.

Virgin Group founder Richard Branson described the Australian debut as an exciting milestone, with the destination holding a “special place” in his heart.

“For more than 50 years, Virgin companies have been innovating and making industries better for

our customers,” he explained.

“Virgin Voyages is very much charting its own path, offering a fresh perspective on cruise travel with all the elements of the Virgin experience that people love.”

President & Chief Experience Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu, said there would be a number of unique Aussie touches on board.

“We’ve got fairy bread, and Razzle Dazzle, our vegetarian restaurant, we’ve got outdoor grills on board, including a classic grill,” he explained.

“We are committed to delivering a holiday experience you will love and memories that will last a lifetime.”

Resilient Lady, which carries 2,770 passengers, recently completed her final sea trial from Sestri Shipyard in Genoa (**CW** 05 Apr), ahead of her inaugural season out of the United Kingdom later this year.

MEANWHILE Virgin also this week announced that its fourth ship will be named *Brilliant Lady*, with the company saying the choice “aimed to highlight the powerful intelligence of women across the globe”.

Brilliant will launch next year, with deployment plans to be revealed in the coming months.

Today’s issue of **CW** is coming to you courtesy of Azamara, which today kicks off the first voyage of its brand new *Azamara Onward*.

AZAMARA Cruises CEO Carol Cabezas will be welcoming the first guests aboard *Onward*, which is packed with key industry partners for her pre-inaugural voyage from Barcelona to Monte Carlo.

“Following a challenging time for everyone in our industry, we are truly delighted to be together for this time of great celebration as we introduce our newest ship to the world,” Cabezas said.

The trip will see guests able to explore a variety of ports and immerse themselves in each destination, including an exclusively created AzAmazing day in Porto Venere on the coast of Liguria, Italy.

A signature White Night Party will see passengers enjoy a poolside feast served by Azamara’s officers, while the voyage will wrap up in Monaco with an official christening ceremony by *Onward* godmother Beth Santos.

New ship concept

A NEW ship design concept from Ulstein is believed to be able to “solve the zero emission problem”.

Named ‘Ulstein Thor’, the 149-metre 3R (replenishment, research, and rescue) design will feature a Thorium Molten Salt Reactor to generate vast amounts of clean, safe electricity.

This will enable battery-driven cruise ships to operate as a mobile power/charging station.

Sunset Bar

Internationally renowned designer Nate Berkus was given free rein on *Celebrity Beyond* to enhance the Sunset Bar, which is almost twice as big as on other Edge-class vessels.

Offering an international beach club ambience at the rear of the ship, guests enter the funky Sunset Bar through a pergola-covered entrance to enjoy "one of the hottest spots at sea," with cascading terraces, conversation nooks and intimate covered enclaves overlooking the ocean 16 decks below.



Rule, Britannia!

CUNARD Line has responded to increasing demand for its Britannia Club accommodation experience on *Queen Anne*, with the new ship to offer a more-than-twofold increase of the stateroom type.

Guests staying in Britannia Club will be able to dine in a dedicated restaurant, which is positioned at the heart of the ship next to the Grand Lobby.

Boasting panoramic sea views, guests will have their own dedicated table, reserved exclusively for the duration of their voyage, at which they can dine for breakfast, lunch and dinner at whichever time they choose.

The table will be attended to by Cunard's White Star Service-trained crew.

Each of the 162 Britannia Club staterooms are designed by Sybille de Margerie, whose portfolio includes the Mandarin Oriental and The Royal Atlantis Resort & Residences.

They all offer a balcony, a blue colour palette, bespoke bedside lights, built-in USB ports, and paper-cut frame artwork inspired by Cunard's heritage.

Meanwhile, the cruise line is currently offering a 5% Bonus Commission Offer for travel advisors.

The deal is available on selected domestic Short Breaks itineraries when booking guests between 26 Apr and 09 May.

The Short Voyages promotion includes the sailings "Q234", "Q302", "Q306" and "Q308".



A **CRUISE** ship passenger's awful meal has gone viral, after they shared a photo of it on Reddit.

The passenger shared their disappointment of their macaroni & cheese, which appeared to be a bowl of mac, with a slice of cheese slapped on top and melted after the fact.

Many Redditors came to the passenger's defence, lambasting the quality of the food compared to the cruise's price of admission.

However, others noted the potentially questionable decision to pay so much to board a cruise with so many excellent dining choices, and then order a dish as uninspired as macaroni & cheese.

AIDA season begins

AIDA Cruises opened its season in Kiel on Mon with *AIDAluna* sailing the 17-day 'Highlights at the Arctic Circle' voyage.

A total of four ships in the AIDA fleet will depart from Kiel on 15 different routes for Northern Europe, including three- and four-day short trips to Norway and Denmark in Sep.

Meanwhile, starting 15 May, *AIDAbella* will embark on 14-day voyages to Norway, and will also call at the UK and Iceland.

In addition to numerous voyages from Kiel, AIDA is also offering cruises from Warnemunde and Hamburg again this year.

Scenic '23 Euro season



SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has unveiled its 2023 Europe River Cruising program.

There is a range of new itineraries and experiences available, including a discovery of castles and vineyards along the Rhine, sailing from Frankfurt to Basel, visiting Koblenz, Bernkastel, Cochem, Rudesheim, Rastatt, and Breisach.

Guests will enjoy an exclusive private classical concert set within the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Liebfrauenkirche, located in the heart of Switzerland's Roman city of Trier.

Prices for the eight-day river cruise start from \$5,245 per person, departing 26 Apr 2023.

There is also a cruise extension taking in Ljubljana and Zagreb; and a visit to the family home of renowned French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

For next year, Scenic has also

further enhanced its range of Freechoice excursions included in its river cruises, with 12 new options, including a locally guided hike through the vineyards of Rudesheim am Rhein on the 15-day Jewels of Europe itinerary.

Travellers can also paddle along the Gardon toward the impressive and well-preserved Pont du Gard aqueduct on the 11-day South of France itinerary.

Demand for small-ship river cruising is on the rise, and Scenic is encouraging Australians to book now, with those who do so before the end of Sep able to secure exclusive flight offers, such as Economy included, Business from \$3,995 per person, and First for \$11,995 per person.

Travellers who choose to pay 12 months in advance can also secure a Super Earlybird saving of \$1,000 per person on their suite.

For more info call 138 128.