



Cruise Weekly today

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

Grand works begin

WORK has started in Fincantieri's Ancona shipyard on Regent Seven Seas Cruises' *Seven Seas Grandeur*.

The keel laying ceremony for the third luxury cruise ship that Fincantieri is building for Regent Seven Seas was held earlier this week, with delivery scheduled for next year.

During the ceremony, three custom-minted coins were placed onto the keel, each one representing one of the sister ships: *Grandeur*, *Seven Seas Explorer*, and *Seven Seas Splendor*.

Grandeur will have capacity for 732 passengers, and among the highest staff-to-guest ratios in the industry.

Health authorities confident

OPINION

Joel Katz is the local Managing Director of Cruise Lines International Association, the world's leading trade association.

Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.



THIS week we're all feeling the effects of renewed attention on cruising, but years of hard work and planning means our industry is prepared.

As we've seen all over the world, cruise line health protocols have shown to be effective in mitigating the risks of COVID-19 and have allowed lines and health authorities to respond swiftly when cases arise.

Other countries are well ahead of us on the curve.

Millions of people have sailed

successfully in more than 100 other countries where ships have resumed sailing, and the effectiveness of the cruise industry's pandemic response

“
Health protocols have shown to be effective
”

means more than 90% of the world fleet is back in operation.

Though we are again in the headlines in Australia, our most important message holds true – no setting is immune to COVID-19, but we have processes in place for dealing responsibly with the virus, which is exactly what is underway.

Importantly, health authorities and political leaders have shown confidence in the protocols and have spoken publicly this week about their role in the new environment we all live with, now that COVID-19 is endemic in our communities.

On land in Australia we are seeing many tens of thousands of cases each day, but we have extensive measures in place to respond to any cases identified at sea.

Our testing and vaccination requirements – together with on board measures, enhanced medical facilities and detailed response plans – are still the most extensive to be found anywhere in tourism and go much further than those you will find in most settings on land.

It has been great to hear the positive comments from so many cruise passengers.

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New Heritage trips

HERITAGE Expeditions has announced three new luxury cruises through the remote tropical islands of Asia and the South Pacific aboard flagship *Heritage Adventurer*.

Undiscovered Philippines & Indonesia, departing 27 Jun 2023, visits the "whale shark capital of the world", giving guests the incredible opportunity to swim with these sharks.

Guests will also discover the "eighth wonder of the world" on Bohol, delve into the fascinating history of the Spice Islands, and more during the 14-day voyage.

Those joining 27-day expedition Asian Island Odyssey, departing 14 Jun 2023, will sail from Osaka through the Philippines and Indonesia before arriving in Darwin.

In addition to incredible wildlife encounters and cultural exchanges, there is the opportunity to explore the eco-paradise of Yakushima, the white sand beaches and coral gardens of Amami Oshima, Hualien Taroko National Park & Marble Gorge, Batan Island's WWII history, Vigan's fascinating architecture, the idyllic isles of Hundred Islands National Park and more.

Guests aboard the 29-day Grand Pacific Odyssey will explore reef-fringed tropical islands, visit historic sites and experience forgotten cultures and incredible wildlife encounters cruising from New Zealand to Japan from 20 Mar 2023 - for more, [CLICK HERE](#).

P&O international again



P&O Cruises Australia is widening its horizons in the region, with *Pacific Explorer* (pictured) to become the first ship to visit Auckland, as well as two Fijian ports, following the resumption of cruise operations in the Pacific (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

Guests on P&O Australia's 'Fiji Adventure' cruise, departing Sydney on 08 Aug, will be part of not one but two moments in cruising history, when they are also the first of the line's passengers to visit an int'l port since the pandemic.

Until now, the restart of cruising in Australia has been limited to domestic itineraries, but under a revised route, *Explorer* will now visit Auckland on 12 Aug, Lautoka on 15 Aug, and Dravuni on 16 Aug.

"Our guests have been looking forward to again being able to visit magical destinations in the Pacific," Carnival Corporation President Australia Marguerite Fitzgerald said.

"We now see the pathway back to cruising in our beautiful part of the world and I am sure our guests on this cruise will enjoy

being part of cruising's return to New Zealand and Fiji."

Unfortunately, scheduled calls to Mystery Island and Noumea will not proceed, with P&O noting it looks forward to returning to Vanuatu and New Caledonia when the situation allows.



UNDERWATER nuclear bomb detectors have picked up an increasing flurry of the songs of the elusive pygmy blue whale, revealing their numbers are on the rebound.

The whale was hunted into near-extinction in the 20th century, but bomb detectors in the Indian Ocean indicate their numbers are returning.

However, it is not all good news, with marine researchers warning warming ocean temperatures could deplete the whales' food supply of krill.

The Indian Ocean has warmed faster than the global average.



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