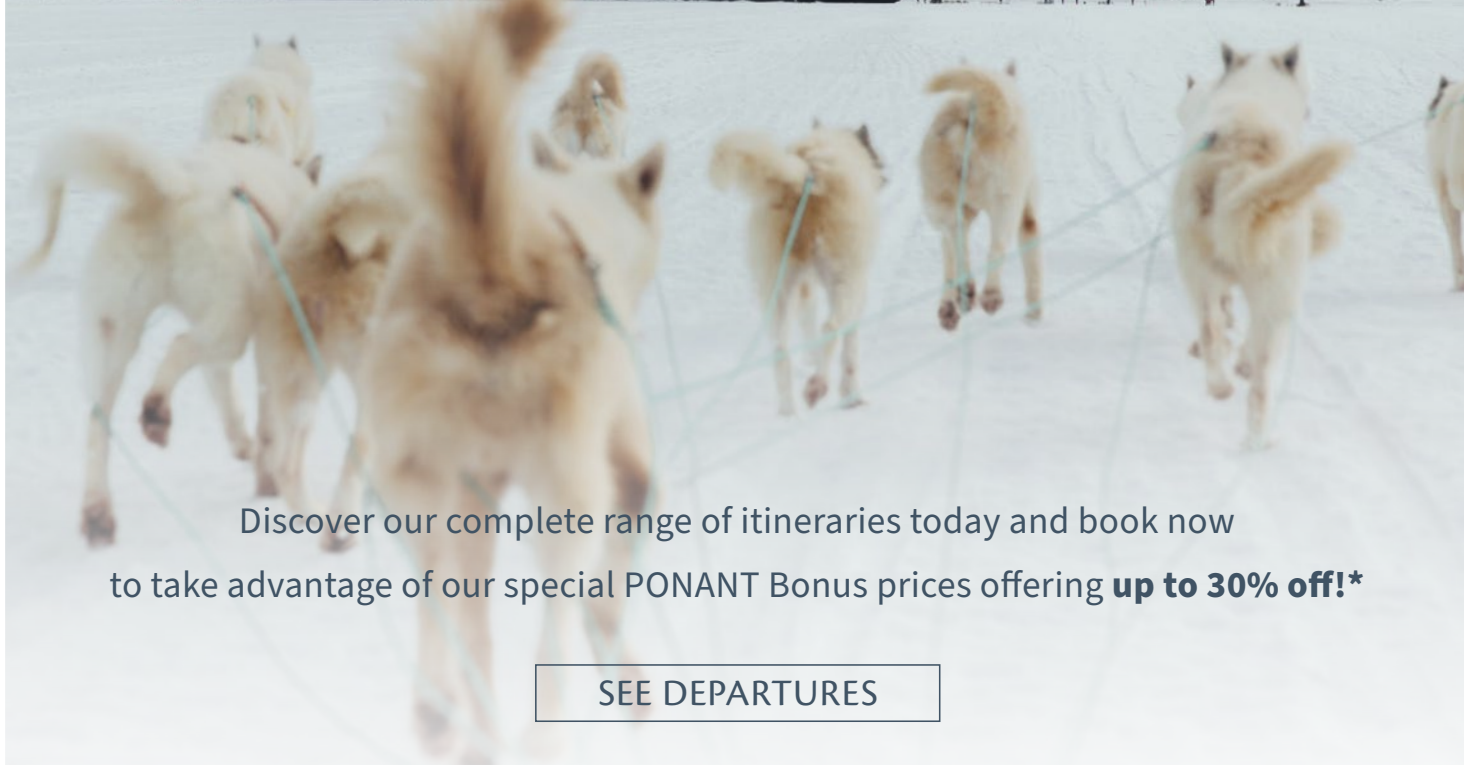


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### The Far North with Ponant - far out!

**PONANT** is today showcasing its Arctic cruise portfolio, with 19 cruises on offer taking in destinations such as Longyearbyen, Kangerlussuaq, Kivitoo and even Grundarfjordur.

Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Canada feature in the trips, such as the Fjords and Glaciers of Spitsbergen aboard *Le Lyréal* which includes return flights to Svalbard from Paris.

*Le Bellot* operates in Iceland, while Ponant's third ship in the region, *Le Boreal*, heads to Greenland and elsewhere - more on the **cover page**.

### Today's issue of CW

*Cruise Weekly* today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a cover page from **Ponant**.

## RCG plots fleetwide Starlink internet

**ROYAL** Caribbean Group (RCG) has announced plans to roll out high-speed internet connectivity across the Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises fleets using Elon Musk's SpaceX Starlink low earth orbit satellite network.

The industry-first move follows a successful trial onboard Royal Caribbean's *Freedom of the Seas*, and will see upgrades for the full fleets as well as implementation on all new vessels for each brand.

"Our purpose as a company is to deliver the best vacation experiences to our guests responsibly, and this new offering, which is the biggest public deployment of Starlink's high-speed internet in the travel industry so far, demonstrates our commitment to that purpose," said RCG President & Chief Executive Officer, Jason Liberty.

"This technology will provide



game-changing internet connectivity aboard our ships, enhancing the cruise experience for guests and crew alike.

"It will improve and enable more high-bandwidth activities like video streaming as well as activities like video calls.

"Using Starlink is one more example of our continued focus

on innovation and excellence for our guests, our crew, the communities we visit and our shareholders," he enthused.

The constellation of Starlink satellites (**pictured**) launched by Musk's SpaceX rockets, are closer to the earth's surface than geostationary satellites, meaning internet connectivity has much less delay as data is transferred back and forth.

So far more than 2,030 Starlink satellites have been deployed, with plans to have the network ultimately cover the entire globe, with each launch of a SpaceX Falcon 9 spacecraft deploying another 50 or so Starlink nodes to further increase coverage.

Liberty said RCG's work with SpaceX "is another example of how it continues to lead the cruise industry in innovation and adoption of cutting-edge technology".

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## Events at Sea launches

**FORMER** CruiseCo staffer Laura Clarke has established a new business called “Events at Sea”, offering a comprehensive service for meeting and event planners and special interest groups wanting to “float” their gathering.

A full suite of expertise is on offer, from ship selection through to contract negotiation, professional cruise booking platform management, logistics support for groups of all sizes and full ship charters.

“We’re for event planners, special interest groups or corporations who would like to charter a full or partial ship to elevate their next event with unparalleled privacy, exclusivity and event customisation options.

“Our team has the knowledge, expert skills and market-leading experience that covers all disciplines required to successfully deliver an event at

sea,” Clarke said.

Her extensive expertise is what lay behind the successful charter program at CruiseCo, including popular music festivals, corporate events, conferences and upmarket incentives.

She came up with the concept for Events at Sea during the depths of the pandemic, with the business poised to make the most of the cruise recovery.

“I see a real gap in the market, it’s where my experience lies and there’s huge pent-up demand in this area,” she said.

Personalised service includes optimising contracts and the use of included entertainment and activities, meals, accommodation and meeting and event space.

“As cruising offers all-inclusive pricing on board, it can provide significant cost savings compared to a similar land-based resort,” she said - [eventsatsea.com.au](http://eventsatsea.com.au).

## New Regent record

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises has once again surpassed its single-day booking record for the third year in a row, with last week’s debut of its 2024-25 Voyage Collection eclipsing the high water mark set twelve months ago when the 2023-24 season launched.

CEO Jason Montague noted several interesting trends from this year’s program launch, with an increase in reservations made by travel advisors compared to 2021, and a “large upsurge of sales” from past passengers.

There was strong demand for far-flung destinations, with 70% of the most popular itineraries featuring ports in Africa, Asia and South America, while demand was at an all-time high for the line’s larger accommodations including the massive Regent Suite.



On location aboard  
**Norwegian Prima**

Today’s issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line aboard its newest flagship, **Norwegian Prima**.

**NORWEGIAN** Prima continued her inaugural European odyssey today by making her first call at the UK’s Portland near Weymouth on the country’s southern coast.

Guests wanting to explore the region have headed off on shore excursions to places such as Stonehenge, the Abbotsbury Swannery or the spectacular nearby Jurassic Coast.

There’s also huge anticipation for onboard concerts tonight featuring the one and only Kool & The Gang playing all their hits from the 1970s and 1980s.

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**WHAT'S** better than mini-golf on a ship? How about mini-golf combined with archery, soccer, horse racing, Formula 1, pool, surfing, cricket and even basketball (pictured)?

That's the vision of a company called Adventure Gold and Sports, which has announced the creation of a nine-hole "360GOLF" sports-themed course which can be installed indoors or outdoors on cruise ships.

The high-tech course includes automatic scoring using a so-called Holotrac golf ball which interacts with sensors throughout the course.

The company says it's working with several prospective cruise line clients to create a "signature branded model for their exclusive use".



## Silversea easing

**SILVERSEA** Cruises has adjusted its COVID-19 protocols and is now welcoming all guests on board regardless of vaccination status, where local regulations permit.

## Azamara 15% off

**AZAMARA** has today launched a new promotion for European sailings in 2023, with savings of up to 15% on select departures for any new bookings through to 09 Dec.

A special CLIA Cruise Month offer is also available offering all CLIA Member agents 5% bonus commission on any new Azamara sailing booked during Sep 2022.

Details and marketing collateral available at [aus.azamaraconnect.com](http://aus.azamaraconnect.com), and for more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Crystal appoints Sales & Trade VP

**BRANDON** Townsley has been appointed as Vice President of Sales and Trade Partnerships at the newly reborn Crystal Cruises, run by Abercrombie & Kent (**CW** 23 Jun).

Miami-based Townsley will report to Chief Executive Jack Anderson, who said "Brandon is a well-respected cruise industry veteran who built an incredible reputation with travel advisors, agencies and national accounts".

Townsley was Crystal's Director of Strategic Partnerships and Key Accounts prior to the line's closure following the demise of parent company Genting Hong Kong earlier this year, with his career also including senior roles with Atlas Ocean Voyages, Virgin Voyages, MSC Cruises and about 16 years with Norwegian Cruise Line.

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## The man behind the NCLH magic



**THE** Australian contingent on board *Norwegian Prima* this week has been making the most of the ship's huge array of innovations - many of them the brainchild of fellow Aussie Simon Murray, who is Vice President of Guest Experience and Innovation for NCL's parent company, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings.

That means he also has strategic oversight of Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises as well - but this week his focus has well and truly been on seeing his team's vision for *Prima* literally come to life.

One of his pet projects has been the ship's three-storey Prima Speedway - an evolution of the facility offered aboard other NCL vessels, providing an exhilarating race experience high above the ocean in electric-powered go-karts which seem to stick like glue to the special track.

Murray, who's **pictured** on board the ship with Norwegian Cruise Line VP APAC Ben Angell, told **Cruise Weekly** he was particularly pleased with the multi-generational appeal of the

racetrack - for example with a viewing platform close to the action for perhaps cruisers who don't want to actually drive but are keen to watch their families compete.

Similarly younger children who are too short to ride the high-tech, Formula 1-sounding karts, can cheer their siblings on, and get in on the action using special laser guns which they can shoot at the cars to give individual competitors a speed boost if they hit the target.

The VR-inspired Galaxy Pavilion is also a Murray brainchild, along with the mini-golf course on *Prima* which uses technology to enhance the experience so individual putter performance is tracked along with interactive experiences and gamification to encourage guests to come back for more.

Melbourne-born Murray has been with the company for more than two decades, including about 10 years as a cruise director before moving shoreside to Miami to spearhead innovation for the organisation.