



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news, including a full page from **Windstar Cruises**.

Villa Vie purchase

“**FLOATING** home” Villa Vie Residences has purchased *Braemar* from Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, which will be renamed *Villa Vie Odyssey*.

The 924-passenger vessel will enter service in May following the completion of its multimillion-dollar transformation into a residential cruise ship, with staterooms which can be owned or rented.

“*Odyssey* will be customised for her immersive, 3.5-year global circumnavigations, ensuring all the comforts and amenities of home,” Chief Exec Mikael Petterson said.

Trade sole focus for AmaWaterways

EXCLUSIVE

THERE is a “huge amount of interest” in AmaWaterways already, following the cruise line’s announcement two months ago that it will enter the Australian market (**CW** 22 Sep), new local Managing Director Steve Richards has told **Cruise Weekly**.

AmaWaterways is already taking bookings for 2025, the first year it will be free of its current GSA agreement with APT (**CW** 17 Aug), from when it will be able to offer its full product range to Aussies.

“By launching directly into this market, we’re going to be able to sell the full range of AmaWaterways product, all 29 ships across all destinations,” Richards enthused.

“[Next year], we’re still under the GSA with APT, and that’s been a fantastic relationship for many years, and we’re thrilled with what APT has been able to deliver

for AmaWaterways, but they were only really focusing on the 14-night Amsterdam to Budapest type of product.”

The new arrangement will see Australians able to book AmaWaterways’ voyages in Africa, Asia, and more, with a dedicated local website featuring prices in AUD to go live by the end of the year.

“It’s quite expansive, so more opportunity, more inventory, and more product range,” he added.

One of the cruises Australians will be able to book is AmaWaterways’ new voyage aboard the new *AmaMagdalena* on her namesake Magdalena River in Colombia.

The voyage, which will depart from Nov, is not currently offered by any other line in Australia.

Richards’ goal is for locals to book through the trade, which will be AmaWaterways’ “sole

focus”, as it is with its United States and UK-based offices.

“We’re not interested in talking to direct customers, we’re solely focused on the trade...most of the business out of the US comes from the trade and that’s going to be the same case with Australia,” he enthused.

“We’re going to be easy to do business with, and lucrative to the business with.”

Travel advisors will not be the only beneficiaries of AmaWaterways’ attractive business propositions, with Richards saying the cruise line will look to import its global trade relationships to Australia and cultivate new ones exclusive to the local market.

Richards’ two weeks on the job has so far seen him build out roughly half of AmaWaterways’ local office, which he described as a “dream team”. *MS*



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PORThOLE

CARNIVAL Cruise Line will serve around 1.5 tonnes of turkey this Christmas, which will be accompanied by around one tonne of potatoes.

Cruisers aboard *Carnival Splendor* and *Carnival Luminosa* will also enjoy around 300 kilograms of ham, and in a special seasonal tradition, the senior officers aboard the latter ship will serve Christmas dinner to the crew, as a sign of respect.

Carnival has also claimed with no chimney on board either ship, Santa will come down each vessel's funnel to deliver presents while cruisers are sleeping, although **Cruise Weekly** finds this claim to be highly dubious.

RCI scores goal with Messi



ARGENTINE soccer player Lionel Messi (**pictured**) will become the 'Icon' of Royal Caribbean International's (RCI) *Icon of the Seas*, when he christens the new ship in Miami at an exclusive naming ceremony next month.

Messi will take part in the "iconic" naming celebration for *Icon* in the city of his new club, Inter Miami.

The Argentina national team captain will have the honour of bestowing safekeeping onto the new ship, her crew, and the millions of cruisers who will sail on her.

"I'm thrilled and honoured to join the Royal Caribbean family to celebrate the arrival of the game-changing *Icon*," Messi said.

"[The ship] is beyond anything else that's out there for family vacations, with incredible never-before-seen features, all designed for making memories together."

Messi's new role follows the recent announcement of Royal Caribbean and Inter Miami's

partnership, in which the cruise line has become the club's main partner (**CW** 29 Aug).

"*Icon of the Seas* is the culmination of more than 50 years of delivering memorable vacations, and it's set to live up to its name in more ways than one when it changes the vacation industry in Jan," RCI President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley said.

"It's that ability to make such a widespread impact and change the status quo that the 'Icon of *Icon*' must personify, and Lionel Messi has proven to be the perfect example of that for years in the world of sports and most recently in introducing a new era of excitement and passion for "futbol" in Miami."

Icon officially joined RCI's fleet late last month, with a celebration symbolising the end of construction (**CW** 28 Nov).

Meyer Turku shipyard is now putting the finishing touches on *Icon*, which is RCI's first ship powered by LNG. *MS*

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	15 Dec
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	15 Dec
<i>Crystal Symphony</i>	15 Dec
<i>Star Breeze</i>	16 Dec
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	17 Dec
<i>Star Breeze</i>	17 Dec
MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	15 Dec
<i>Resilient Lady</i>	16 Dec
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	17 Dec
<i>Regatta</i>	17 Dec
PORT ADELAIDE	
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	15 Dec
<i>Grand Princess</i>	16 Dec
PENNESHAW	
<i>Regatta</i>	15 Dec
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	17 Dec
BRISBANE	
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	15 Dec
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	16 Dec
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	17 Dec
CAIRNS	
<i>Seven Seas Explorer</i>	15 Dec
<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	16 Dec
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	16 Dec
TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Seven Seas Explorer</i>	16 Dec
AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Seven Seas Explorer</i>	17 Dec
HOBART	
<i>Silver Whisper</i>	15 Dec
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	16 Dec
CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>Noordam</i>	15 Dec
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	16 Dec
WELLINGTON	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	15 Dec
<i>Noordam</i>	16 Dec
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	17 Dec

Ponant powers up

TWO of Ponant's ships, *L'Austral* and *Le Boreal*, are scheduled to be fitted with shorepower next year, which will see the entire fleet equipped with the technology by 2026.

"We are exploring numerous options to achieve the goal of cutting our CO2-per-sailing-day emissions by 30% by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2040," General Secretary Patrick Augier declared.

Ponant's commitment to shorepower involves an investment of €1m per ship.

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