



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly's packed issue today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news, including a special opinion piece from former New Zealand Cruise Association CEO Kevin O'Sullivan on **page 4**.

The Chat with Jenny



Conversations with Women in Travel

COMING SOON

Ponant unveils zero-carbon ship

PONANT is unveiling details of the cruise line's 14th vessel, which was foreshadowed earlier this year (**CW** 24 May).

The cruise line's research & development team have designed the transoceanic sailing ship, which combines six "groundbreaking" technologies, to aim for zero carbon emissions.

Swap2Zero's sail power system and hull will provide an average of 50% of the propulsion energy using the force of the wind, and will also utilise more than 1,000m² of photovoltaic panels, with new generation organic solar "eco-designed" devices integrated into the structures and sails.

Two sail propulsion systems are being considered: the Ayro Oceanwings technology (render **pictured top**), and the Solid Sail technology (render **pictured below at right**).

Swap2Zero will also feature one low-temperature fuel cell operating on liquid hydrogen for propulsion, with the water and heat produced to be recycled; and one high-temperature fuel cell to meet the hotel load requirements, with the heat emitted being recovered and used to produce hot water.

On-board carbon capture technology and an innovative energy management system will also be used to control and distribute power, free of generators.



Swap2Zero will be ready by 2030, Ponant says, although a shipyard has not yet been selected for her delivery.

With around a hundred staterooms and a length of 181 metres, *Swap2Zero* will be in line with new European and international regulations on greenhouse gas emissions.

The selection of equipment and materials for *Swap2Zero's* construction will be based on an analysis of their life cycle through to the recycling of waste.

Ponant is heading up the *Swap2Zero* project with a focus on the potential for replicability, to speed up the decarbonisation of the shipbuilding industry.

Swap2Zero will also be part of the Ponant Science program, hosting researchers involved in decarbonisation technologies.

"By 2030, our future ship



aims to have zero greenhouse gas emissions when sailing, manoeuvring, in port or at anchor," Chief Executive Officer Herve Gastinel declared.

"Her carbon footprint will be reduced throughout her life cycle...renewable energy supplied by the wind and sun will be combined with low-carbon non-fossil energy associated with fuel cells.

"This is much more than a new ship...we want to offer a new mode of navigation and actively contribute to decarbonisation of the maritime sector."

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Chris Watson buys Unique Cruises

UNIQUE Cruises, the boutique wholesaler founded four years ago by the irrepressible Walter Nand, has been sold to Chris and Gemma Watson's Swish Wish group of companies, and will become part of their Rediscover Travel brand.

Nand, **pictured** after winning the Best Dressed category at last year's National Travel Industry Awards in Sydney, will become General Manager of Rediscover.

Other Swish Wish group brands include Chris Watson Travel, Tamworth Coach Charters, and Weston Cruise & Travel, with the organisation having teams based in Sydney, Tamworth, and Canberra.

Prior to founding Unique, Nand worked in a range of cruise and travel companies including Avalon Waterways, MSC Cruises, Excite Holidays, APT, Flight Centre and



Air Pacific.

He's also a Director of Ride The World Motorcycle Tours, and established Unique to represent and promote niche cruise lines, particularly specialising in luxury hotel barge holidays in Europe.

Nand said he is thrilled to

be taking on his new role with Rediscover, adding "we have great plans as we move forward, and over the coming months we will be showcasing some fantastic and unique travel products".

He paid tribute to colleagues Clarke Pennington and Jacy Tangkpanya, as well as partner Ingrid Botha "who stood by me through the dark days of COVID and who supported my decision to push through with Unique Cruises as the lockdown days turned into weeks, into months, into years".

ATAS and CLIA-accredited Rediscover Travel describes itself as a "destination packages specialist selling getaways at great prices," with the business currently showcasing music cruises plus domestic and international escorted tours - rediscovertravel.com.au.

Tour Amigo debuts new cruise tech

AUSTRALIAN-FOUNDED travel technology provider Tour Amigo has expanded its offering into the cruise sector, with the introduction of a new Cruise Amigo product.

Described as "the very first Software-as-a-Service (SAAS) solution for effortless cruise business management", the platform is an all-encompassing booking, reservation and operations software platform for river and expedition cruise operators.

The cloud-based software allows users to manage ship content, pricing and availability, with distribution via a company's own website as well as B2B portals and with full API connectivity.

Tour Amigo was founded in 2020 by former Flight Centre and The Travel Corporation staffer Murray Decker, with the platform specialising in multi-day tours.

The new Cruise Amigo system is based on the same base technology, allowing users to build cruise programs, create tactical pricing and promotions, manage agent commissions and offer real-time availability.

It also offers live payment processing via multiple gateways, generates manifests, and allows full booking management - **MORE HERE**.

Handover, naming delayed for *Explora I*

EXPLORA Journeys has confirmed a new delivery date for its highly anticipated *Explora I* which was initially due to be handed over by manufacturer Fincantieri today.

Parent company MSC Cruises confirmed the delay, citing a need for "further enhancements in the final stages" of the build.

"Unfortunately the time required for the work will extend the vessel's stay at the shipyard by a few weeks,"

MSC said, confirming a naming ceremony scheduled for 08 Jul in Civitavecchia had also been cancelled.

Several Australians are among those who had been planning to experience the newbuild on an imminent shakedown voyage which is now not expected to go ahead, while there's also uncertainty about the inaugural passenger departure which had been scheduled to depart from the United Kingdom on 17 Jul.

Swan sales comp

SWAN Hellenic is offering trade partners the opportunity to win an Antarctic cruise.

Agencies that book at least three staterooms on the line's 2023/24 Antarctic departures will be entered into a draw, with a total of 10 double-occupancy Ocean-view staterooms on a nine-day cruise up for grabs.

Only one winner is allowed per agency, with winners to be announced in Jan 2024.

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Travel Daily

Cruise pioneer Herrod passes

RECENTLY departed cruise magnate Gerry Herrod has been praised as a “true visionary” by the industry this week.

Cruise Lines International Association Managing Director Joel Katz commended Herrod for anticipating the growing desire for experiential and authentic cruise travel in pioneering the modern expedition sector.

Herrod founded Orient Lines in 1993, which specialised in exotic destinations, and was purchased by Norwegian Cruise Line five years later.

Katz told LinkedIn followers of his time working for Orient in the 1990s, both ashore in London and on board *Marco Polo*.

Herrod died last week in Switzerland at the age of 96.

Brewery for Adora

ADORA Cruises, the newly renamed Chinese joint venture formerly known as CSSC Carnival Cruise Shipping, has announced that its first ship will feature an onboard German brewery.

The line's first ship, *Adora Magic City*, is currently under construction in Shanghai, with the aptly-named 1508 Brewery (nodding to the shipyard's build number for the vessel) set to create unique recipes providing passengers with “a varied assortment of exceptional, freshly brewed craft beers”.

The brews will be served on Deck 5 in an area which sounds a bit like an Oktoberfest beer hall, with bars named Munich Square and the Bavarian Lounge.

As well as craft beers tailored to the preference of Chinese brew aficionados, a signature tippale will also be offered created by blending spices from countries along the historic Silk Road.

Toorak cruise mansion



A FIVE-STOREY “mega mansion” which resembles a cruise ship is set to be constructed in the wealthy Melbourne suburb of Toorak.

Businessman and investor Howard Armitage has lodged plans for the landmark home at 100 St Georges Rd (**pictured**) which involves the demolition of the existing property on the site he bought in 2017 for \$6.2m.

The local council has approved the project, which just like any self-respecting cruise ship, includes a rooftop spa and bar, overlooking the Yarra River.

Plans indicate five “staterooms”, as well as spa facilities including a gym, steam room and sauna.

Unlike the ocean-going alternative, the home will also feature a six-car garage.

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Kevin O'Sullivan - no holds barred

OPINION

KEVIN O'Sullivan has stepped down as CEO of the New Zealand Cruise Association, and after seven years



of holding his tongue, says "I don't have to be diplomatic any more".

He penned this full and frank opinion piece upon his departure for New Zealand-based industry publication *Tourism Ticker*, and has given us permission to republish it.

I LOVE cruise, those beautiful ships with the allure of faraway places and the sheer vibrancy and excitement they bring to our regions and cities.

The cruise industry in New Zealand is full of people completely committed to making everybody happy, and they have put their economic lives on the line to make their businesses successful and cruise friendly.

So, why do we still see so much negativity toward cruise from the officials that should be helping us?

There are a few examples (there are lots more) from the last few days, months and years that have really got up my nose; now that I've left I can vent my anger and maybe burn a few bridges.

I'm getting grumpier every day, and I don't have to be diplomatic any more.

The first is the Milford Opportunities Project (MOP) group, funded by government.

One of this group's aims, without any consultation or even warning, was to decide to ban cruise ships from Milford Sound (in addition to some of the other daft things they came up with).

Banning anything from anywhere is never a great idea, but taking away one of the reasons why visitors want to come to our beautiful country is just silly.

Now the cruise industry is

forced to justify why it should be in Fiordland, a place where ships are very well managed by the Southland Regional Council, and where it helps fund coastal science in a place mostly devoid of ratepayers.

This has to be sorted as MOP is putting at risk a cornerstone of our tourism industry.

Next up: why does ECan (Environment Canterbury) think it will cost a million dollars to run coaches to take cruise passengers from Lyttelton to Christchurch and return?

“
Banning anything from anywhere is never a great idea, but taking away one of the reasons why visitors want to come to our beautiful country is just silly
”

Who is dreaming up these numbers? Why do they want to fuel anti-cruise sentiment in their community?

Cruise lines are already providing coaches to take passengers into the city at a reasonable cost without any need for a subsidy from the Christchurch City Council.

I hope that this is still under investigation, and will reach a reasonable solution before the next cruise season begins.

The last one (for now anyhow) and this is a biggie.

Stats NZ and the Ministry of Business, Innovation &

Employment (MBIE) have decided cruise statistics will no longer be analysed!

I had my head in my hands when we were told that one.

I don't particularly subscribe to any conspiracy theories, but really if you want to ignore the economic benefits that cruise brings to New Zealand just don't measure it - pretend it doesn't exist.

Did someone in MBIE decide that would be a good idea?

It certainly takes the 'Innovation' out of that government department's name.

Numbers matter and measurement is very important for our regions and for the many small businesses reliant on cruise to pull them through.

Without those numbers, how will we know how successful we are?

Dropping out now after having come so far will leave a massive hole in a data trail that has been analysed since 2015.

The data is there, it just needs a willingness to do the work that Stats and MBIE must do.

I don't like to keep reinforcing negativity so a bouquet to the good people in government that I have worked with through dark and difficult times.

It was a struggle to get cruise back after COVID and the opposition from some officials was magnified as we faced continual obstruction.

Several individuals in Wellington went above and beyond to be helpful and worked with us because they knew it was the right thing to do, even if it might diminish career opportunities.

Without them, we might still be waiting to see cruise ships return to New Zealand waters.

These views are my own and the new stars in NZCA will overcome these obstacles I'm sure, but please government be helpful, not hindering.

MSC turbo promo

MSC Cruises has launched a new "Turbo Incentive", offering Australian travel partners the opportunity to earn a \$25 gift card for every deposited booking on MSC voyages departing from 05 Jul through to 30 Apr 2024.

All guests booked will also receive \$100 onboard credit per cabin.

Participating travel advisors will have an opportunity to become a Wild Card entry for a spot on the upcoming Northern Europe *MSC Euribia* famil, and MSC Master Graduates will receive a bonus \$25 gift card and a bonus entry into the draw.

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PORThOLE

IT APPEARS that even aquatic mammals need a shore excursion now and then, with an adolescent seal apparently visiting a KFC restaurant in Auckland last week.

A local tradesman working near the fast food outlet in the Papakura area spotted the creature in the parking lot.

"We thought it was a wet dog running past, but when we turned around saw it was a fully grown seal," he said.

Officials from the Department of Conservation joined with police to coax the seal back into the ocean, ultimately capturing it before setting the sea-going visitor free at nearby Muriwai Beach.

Obviously relieved at returning to more familiar surroundings after its urban adventure, the seal "took off straight into the ocean" according to a local biodiversity ranger.

Viking celebrates Virtuoso



VIKING last week hosted some of its top Virtuoso agents at the very appropriate Mjolner restaurant in Sydney, celebrating their partnership and "incredible collective growth" for the year to date in true Nordic style.

A three-course feast included Rotisserie corn-fed chicken, pork cutlets, whole grilled fish - and roast bone marrow whisky luge for the non-fainthearted.

Pictured above are Viking's Lee Siefken, Michelle Black and Keira Smith with Michael Londregan and Fiona Dalton of Virtuoso.



FRONTIER Travel's Roland Howlett with Natalie Fagan, Viking Commercial Manager.



KAREN Majsay, Low & James Travel Associates; Michael Sing from Discerning Traveller and Luxe by itravel's Cherie Bowman.

Coral whale trip

CORAL Expeditions has launched a new "Whales & Trails of WA" itinerary exploring the coastline of South West Australia.

The 10-night *Coral Adventurer* trip will follow the migratory trail of humpback, southern right and blue whales along with expert-led coastal explorations and a signature winemakers dinner at Leeuwin Estate - more details [HERE](#).

Cruise Traveller adds Explora

EXPLORA Journeys is the latest cruise line to join the Cruise Traveller portfolio.

The wholesaler has released an exclusive fly, rail, sail and stay package for guests to cruise from Hawaii to Canada aboard *Explora 1*.

The 20-night Aloha Canada deal leads in at \$19,995 per person including flights, accommodation in Honolulu, Vancouver, Banff and Calgary and a two-day Rocky Mountaineer rail journey - details on 1800 507 777.

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