



### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

### Virgin at Cruise360

#### EXCLUSIVE

**CRUISE360** will explore the “new cruising mindset” later this year, with Virgin Voyages President & Chief Experience Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu to offer his insight at the conference.

Saverimuttu will discuss the increasing diversity of experiences offered in cruising, and what this means for travel advisors.

He will join Avalon Waterways President Pam Hoffee, who was announced as Cruise360’s first speaker last week (**CW** 19 Jul).

## MSC appoints Devries, will pay trade more

**MSC** Cruises has introduced an enhanced Future Cruise Programme, which is set to benefit both travel advisors and the line’s guests (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

When a customer books their next sailing while on board, the original booking advisor will receive full commission, with guests able to make an “onboard-only deposit” starting from \$100.

Greater flexibility will also allow a reservation to be changed to suit a customer’s needs prior to final payment, while MSC has also extended its “best price guarantee” time frame.

The announcement was part of a double proclamation from MSC yesterday, with Brigita Devries (**pictured**) also appointed Senior Sales Manager.

She will assume the newly created position, based in Sydney, from Swan Hellenic, where she



was most recently the cruise line’s General Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

Senior Vice President Global Achille Staiano said MSC believes the amplified Future Cruise Programme will be a win-win for both the trade and cruisers.

“Guests of our ‘ship-within-a-ship’ premium concept MSC Yacht Club have a strong propensity to

book their next cruise while on board, and benefit greatly from the Future Cruise Programme, and looking ahead I can see the scheme’s enhancements being of even wider appeal to agents and consumers alike,” he said.

Every new booking will generate an email confirmation which will send to the travel advisor to help them continue to manage the relationship with their customers when they return home.

Local MD Lisa Teiotu said MSC is very pleased to have Devries join the cruise line, bringing her wealth of knowledge from her career, which includes appointments at Genting Hong Kong and Norwegian Cruise Line.

**MEANWHILE** Swan Hellenic didn’t comment on Devries’ departure apart from confirming that a revised structure will be announced soon, along with a “new expansion plan”.

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## Crystal Cruises sets sail once again

A **MOMENTOUS** milestone was achieved overnight by the reborn Crystal Cruises, with its first departure since the iconic brand was acquired by the A&K Travel Group last year (**CW** 23 Jun 2022).

*Crystal Serenity* set sail from Venice with a contingent of travel partners and media along with senior A&K/Crystal executives from across the globe, including CEO Cristina Levis and co-founder Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio.

It was an emotional moment for many who feared that Crystal would never return from the depths of the pandemic, when then owner Genting Hong Kong ceased trading and put Crystal's

operations into a hiatus, along with sister brands Dream Cruises and Star Cruises.

Under its new ownership Crystal has emerged with big plans, including the significant makeover of both of its ocean-going ships.

*Crystal Serenity's* passenger capacity has reduced from 1,070 to just 740 guests, with suites enlarged along with new wellness facilities, a revitalised spa and new culinary experiences.

*Crystal Symphony* will carry 606 guests, down from 960, when she emerges from her current drydock in Trieste, Italy in the coming weeks.

At a sailaway party in Venice last night

guests were welcomed aboard the inaugural voyage by the line's brand ambassador, Fernando Barroso de Oliveira (pictured at right), who said "we are starting a new company, but a company with a spectacular name in the business".

The new *Serenity* will cruise to Dubrovnik, Naples and Livorno over the next week before ending her maiden voyage in Marseille.



**ABOVE**, Aussies on board enjoyed an impromptu sax serenade: Michelle Mickan, A&K/Crystal; Robyn and Murray Sinfield, Home Travel Company; Debra Fox, A&K MD Australia and Crystal Executive VP of Trade Sales APAC; David Brandon, Savenio; Melinda Gregor, Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel; Tony Archbold, Crystal VP of Sales Asia-Pacific; and Martine Hero from Clean Cruising.



**ABOVE**: Some of the senior Crystal Cruises execs on board include Paul Girouard, Senior Director of Sales North America; Melissa Nightingale, Regional Sales Director US and Canada West; Chief Sales Officer Marett Taylor; Brandon Townsley, VP Sales & Trade Partnerships; Tony Archbold, VP Sales APAC; Andrew Magowan, VP Sales UK & EMEA; Alfredo Schmulson, Director of Business Development; Matthew Boutwell, Senior Director of Charter Sales; and Oscar Dunn, A&K Expeditions and Experiences Ambassador.




### On Board: *Crystal Serenity* Osteria D'Ovidio

This new eponymous eatery aboard *Crystal Serenity* is named for the cruise line's co-owner, Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio. The fine-dining specialty restaurant offers a modern twist on traditional fine Italian cuisine - think Osso Buco, lobster pasta, insalata Caprese Burrata and more.

Sure to be a hit with cruisers, reservations are required and places limited per sailing.



On location in  
the Mediterranean

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Crystal Cruises, aboard *Crystal Serenity* as she sails from Venice to Dubrovnik.

**LAST** night *Crystal Serenity* departed Venice's Port of Fusina with a full complement of travel partners aboard, after emerging from an extensive drydock under its new A&K Travel Group ownership.

The crew are espousing a new "Crystal - Exceptional at Sea" tagline, and that's certainly what the brand is aiming to deliver, including outstanding onboard service, culinary experiences, entertainment, activities and much more.

Tomorrow we will undertake our first shore excursions in Croatia, with guests offered a choice of an old town tour in Dubrovnik or a more active cycling experience in Konavle.



**THE** increasing prevalence of drug packages dumped in the water off the Florida coast in the USA has led to fears that illicit substances may be sending the local sharks crazy.

A documentary called *Cocaine Shark* highlights the issue on the Discovery Channel, as part of its annual Shark Week showcase.

The program has been made by marine scientists, with the *Guardian* reporting that the catchy title aims to illuminate what is becoming a potentially serious issue.

Apparently seaborne traffickers regularly dump bales of cocaine over the side if they fear they are about to be caught by the coastguard - meaning high concentrations of drugs end up in the water.

Erratic behaviour has been observed among some of the huge predators, with one of the program makers, Dr Tracy Fanara, noting that anything humans manufacture ultimately ends up in wastewater streams and natural bodies of water.

"If these cocaine bales are a point source of pollution, it's very plausible sharks can be affected by this chemical... cocaine is so soluble that if any of those packages open just a little, the structural integrity is destroyed and the drug is in the water," she said.

## Aurora switches Arctic ships

**AURORA** Expeditions' *Greg Mortimer* has sustained propeller damage, with the remainder of the vessel's current Arctic season to be operated by sister ship *Ocean Explorer*, which was previously operated under a charter by collapsed US travel company Vantage Deluxe World Travel (**CW** 03 Jul).

*Ocean Explorer* is part of the Sunstone Maritim Group series of Infinity vessels which also includes Aurora's *Sylvia Earle*, with Sunstone owed almost US\$7 million in Vantage charter payments, according to

bankruptcy court documents.

There are four voyages remaining in the Aurora Arctic program for the year, with *Greg Mortimer* believed to be undergoing a drydock in France prior to resuming service in Nov.

Aurora had previously expressed interest in acquiring assets from Vantage, including its client list, although initial reports indicated a deal had been done with Christchurch-based Heritage Expeditions.

Aurora CEO Michael Heath is believed to be travelling aboard one of the ships in the Arctic.

### UnCruise offers

**SMALL** ship adventure cruise line UnCruise Adventures has announced savings on trips to Alaska as well as the firm's new Canadian Coastal & Olympic Peninsula Adventure.

Early booking savings are on offer until 31 Oct, as well as early final payment savings for those who pay the balance in full - for more details see [www.uncruise.com](http://www.uncruise.com).

### Quark HLO pact

**QUARK** Expeditions has signed a new preferred partnership deal with Helloworld Travel Limited.

The agreement has kicked off with a multimedia cooperative advertising campaign featuring savings of up to 30% on select polar expeditions in 2023, 2024 and 2025, meaning prices start at \$13,489 per person twin share.



## CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz  
MD, CLIA Australasia

### WA's vision for cruise

THE spotlight has been on WA this past week as cruise line representatives gathered to explore new possibilities within the state's rich tourism offering.

Through the state government's annual WA Cruise Exchange initiative, a host of leading cruise lines converged in Perth to meet with representatives of the state's ports, destinations and tourism operators, all focused on creating new opportunities for cruising.

Hosted by Tourism WA, they were joined by ground handlers, shipping agents and representatives from CLIA, the Australian Cruise Association, and Tourism Australia.

WA's Deputy Premier and Tourism Minister Rita Saffioti launched WA's new Cruise Tourism Strategic Plan, which aims to boost the state's presence in the global cruise sector.

Delegates then joined a series of business sessions and a ports round-table discussion, before heading to Geraldton where they explored the extraordinary Houtman Abrolhos islands and other highlights in the region.

Tourism WA is a vocal champion of cruising and this initiative is a great example of the collaborative approach that makes cruising stronger in destinations around the world.

By bringing together the many partners who make up our cruise community, we can help deliver real benefits and work towards future prosperity.



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