



## A&K CEO: Crystal addition is just the start

**LAST** year's acquisition of Crystal Cruises by A&K Travel Group provides significant opportunities for both brands, according to A&K's global CEO Cristina Levis.

The value and strength of the Crystal name is "undeniable", Levis told **CW** on board *Crystal Serenity* overnight, and paves the way for major ambitions upon which A&K aims to capitalise by investing heavily in markets around the world, including Australasia (**CW** yesterday).

However "only a fool would believe that we could survive with Crystal with just two ships," Levis said, confirming expectations that the company's Executive Chairman, Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio (pictured), is



likely to announce more capacity in the coming days.

Levis has a strong background in expedition cruising, having formerly headed up Silversea Expeditions when it was owned by Lefebvre, and she said for A&K the synergies with Crystal's customer base were strong.

Alongside any plans for growing the fleet, A&K will also continue to operate its own expeditions in

partnership with Ponant "for the foreseeable future," Levis told **CW**.

She said that while the collapse of Crystal's former owner Genting Hong Kong had impacted the Crystal brand, "we never even thought about rebranding" because of its strong goodwill.

Levis said Crystal's "Exceptional Initiative" under which the line's new owners compensated guests and their travel advisors who had lost money in the line's collapse (**CW** 27 Mar) had been highly successful, with almost 1,500 credit certificates issued so far and thousands more in the offing.

"This was a very positive reaction to something we didn't have to do, but we wanted to do it," Levis added.

## Cunard's big offer

**CUNARD** has announced its Big Balcony deal, allowing cruisers to enjoy a balcony stateroom for the price of an Inside stateroom on selected voyages between 26 Jul-15 Sep - for details, **CLICK HERE**.

## Primmer is back!

**FORMER** senior Helloworld Travel executive Julie Primmer has announced the formation of Ascend Travel Group, in partnership with former HLO colleague Lynda Wallace.

The travel representation venture will offer a "highly curated and personalised approach to representation for both suppliers and agencies", they said - more details at [ascendtravelgroup.com.au](http://ascendtravelgroup.com.au).

## Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

## AQV launches US Christmas Market cruises

**AMERICAN Queen Voyages** (AQV) has announced a partnership with the Mississippi River township of Natchez to create European-style Christmas Markets in America.

The special Christmas Markets Experiential Voyages will be offered on select holiday season voyages in 2023 and 2024, with AQV CEO Cindy D'Aoust saying "Natchez is the quintessential Christmas town, making it the perfect place for our guests to enjoy this festive fusion of European yuletide nostalgia and authentic Southern charm".

The line's *American Countess*



and *American Queen* will offer extended port calls to allow guests to stroll festive market stalls while sampling traditional delicacies such as eggnog, fruitcake and gingerbread and shop for "hand-crafted treasures by local artisans, surrounded by the magic of the holidays".

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On location in  
Naples, Italy

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Crystal Cruises, aboard *Crystal Serenity* during her first voyage under new ownership.

**WE'RE** now just over half-way through our Mediterranean odyssey, split into two sectors meaning some of our shipmates will depart in Naples.

The Aussie contingent remains on board, and are getting prepped for a White Night party tomorrow after our journey's second sea day.

On Sun our final port is Livorno, Italy before the revamped *Serenity* arrives at Marseille, the starting point for her first commercial voyage.

## Aurora releases inaugural impact report

**AURORA** Expeditions has confirmed it is working towards B Corp Certification, as part of its ongoing sustainability efforts.

The company yesterday launched its first-ever Impact report, saying it is "about transparency and accountability for us as a business, and acknowledging where we are on our sustainability journey".

Titled *Protecting the world's wild places*, the new report comes 32 years after the cruise line was founded, under the guiding principles of discovery and exploration.

CEO Michael Heath said "we are acutely aware of the planet's rapidly evolving climate crisis and the urgency with which we must all work together to help protect & regenerate our shared planet".

Key initiatives outlined in the new report include Aurora's support of seven of the UN's



Sustainable Development Goals, its 100% Climate Neutral status, and a range of emission reduction strategies, renewable energy and biodiversity conservation projects.

The cruise operator also utilises practices to reduce plastics and waste and conserve water, while a focus on passenger education including Citizen Science projects (*travelBulletin* 12 Jul) is also key.

Aurora said its portfolio of sustainability programs, actions and measures "have the overarching goal of reducing negative impacts on the environment and communities, contributing to building a more sustainable world for future generations".

The full report is available at [auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://auroraexpeditions.com.au).



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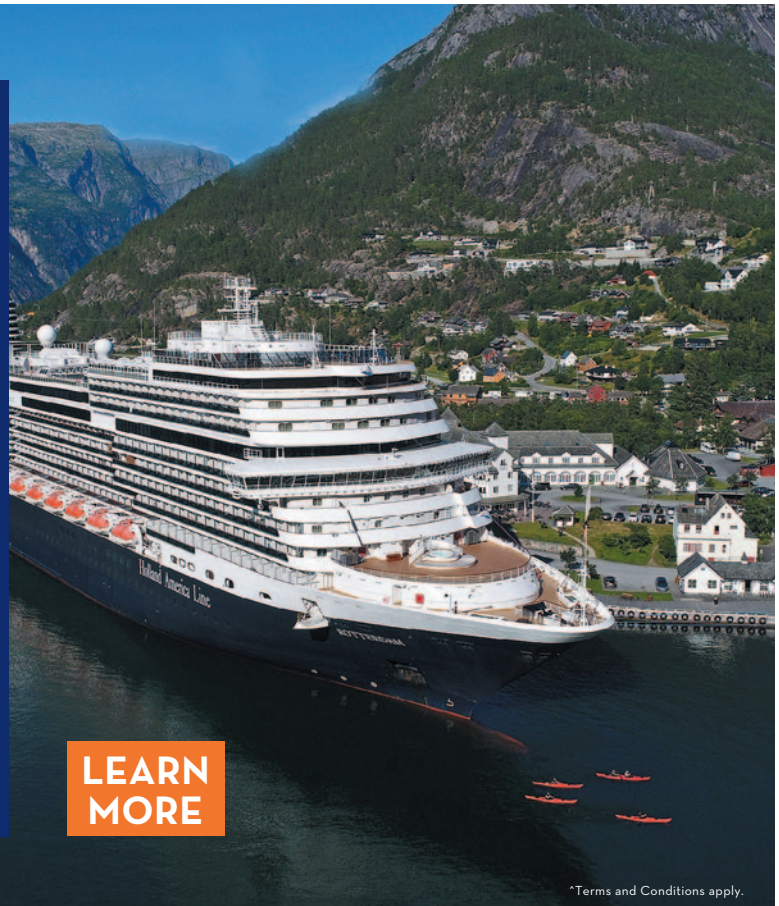
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# Royal exceeds guidance



## Chimu's Carey joins key IAATO committee

**CHAD Carey (pictured)**, the Managing Director of Chimu Adventures and Intrepid Polar, has been elected on a one-year-term to the Climate Change Committee of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO).



The role will see him take part in IAATO's ongoing mission to improve sustainability in polar expedition operations, including collation of fuel data from the 2022/23 Antarctic season, which is currently being submitted by all members (**CW** 11 Oct 2022).

This initial process will form a baseline for future seasons "and then the idea is to reduce that," Carey said.

"I think it's really the expedition cruise companies like us that are leading the way in the travel sustainability space...we are the ones that are focused on the environment."

He said the Climate Change

Committee was also hoping to investigate improvements in ship technology such as water lubrication, new propeller designs, heat reuse and ship management software, while IAATO also has a role in helping lobby for the port infrastructure needed for a sustainable future.

"It's not enough to just get more sustainable fuel...it's also about asking the question, how do you just reduce energy usage more broadly," he said.

**ROYAL** Caribbean Group (RCG) has upgraded its full-year profit expectations by a hefty 33% after seeing a particularly good second quarter result based on "stronger pricing on closer-in demand and further strength in onboard revenue".

CEO Jason Liberty said "our brands continue to fire on all cylinders, resulting in record yields and second quarter earnings significantly exceeding our expectations".

Key highlights included a record US\$3.5 billion in revenues for the Apr-Jun quarter, with net income of US\$459 million and a record US\$1.2 billion adjusted EBITDA.

"Booking volumes in the second quarter remained significantly higher than the corresponding period in 2019 and at record pricing levels," the company said.

"Demand for 2023 sailings has significantly exceeded

expectations and bookings for 2024 sailings are up significantly versus all prior years at record prices...demand from the North American consumer has remained incredibly strong throughout the year, and booking volumes from European consumers who are booking European cruises this summer have accelerated."

Consumer spending on board also continues to be significantly higher than in 2019, with RCG overall holding a record US\$5.7 billion in customer deposits.

The performance enabled Royal Caribbean Group to accelerate its debt reduction efforts, according to CFO Naftali Holtz.

During the quarter the group took delivery of the LNG-powered **Silver Nova (pictured)** and expects to take delivery of *Icon of the Seas* and *Celebrity Ascent* before the end of the year.

## Lindblad Q2 sales rise 37% to US\$125m

**LINDBLAD** Expeditions has recorded tour revenues of US\$124.8 million for the three months to 30 Jun, seeing the company report an overall quarterly loss of US\$25.6 million.

CEO Sven Lindblad said the strong sales growth was the result of continuing to ramp up operations and "put the pandemic behind us".

"While we are proud of what we have achieved thus far, what really excites us is the opportunity ahead, given the massive interest in experiential travel," Lindblad said.

The company, which has a total debt position of US\$635 million, has substantial forward bookings, partially offset by short-term cancellations.



### CRUISE WEEKLY

#### On Board: *Crystal Serenity*

#### Aurora Spa

Literally a haven of serenity, the onboard Aurora Spa is named for the goddess of dawn with a range of "sunrise-inspired signature treatments designed to bring new energy, light and balance".

State-of-the-art treatments include exclusive partnerships with ELEMIS and Kerastase, including LED and cryo-facial experiences, as well as hot stone massages and light therapy.

## Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly's fortnightly consumer magazine called *Keep Dreaming* is specially designed for agents to send their clients - giving you a reason to reach out to your database.

*Keep Dreaming* is full of destination articles, cruise stories and more to inspire.



Click here to view *Keep Dreaming* magazine

Click here for a toolkit to help you share it with clients

Travel & Cruise Weekly



**NO ONE** likes being woken up from a nap, and apparently sea lions are no exception.

A couple of the huge mammals were seen chasing tourists away at La Jolla Cove in San Diego, after a beachgoer got a little too close to one of the slumbering creatures in the hopes of snapping an epic pic.

Onlooker Charlianne Yeyna captured the incident on video and, naturally, posted it to TikTok, where it went viral.

"I started recording because it was really funny to watch, for me to see all these tourists getting blown away by these giant sea lions," she told *NBC San Diego* (see the vid [HERE](#)).

Although the cute creatures are generally mild-tempered and not a threat to humans, a spokesperson for SeaWorld San Diego has advised people to "be cautious and keep their space at a reasonable distance".

## HAL joins the choir



**HOLLAND** America Line (HAL) has announced a new entertainment offering for its 14-day Australia and New Zealand cruise, which sails from Auckland to Sydney on 27 Jan next year.

Australian music phenomenon Pub Choir will take to the stage over several evenings on board *Noordam* to regale guests with lively and participatory performances in the ship's Rolling Stone Lounge.

Pub Choir leader and former music teacher Astrid Jorgensen will split the crowd into three groups to harmonise performances of popular tunes, in

what is described as "the world's funniest, easiest music lesson".

Vice President Sales and Partnerships for HAL in Australia Ryan Taibel said Pub Choir is "one more highlight for Holland America Line's award-winning live music performances".

The internationally-acclaimed music act has been praised by the likes of Kate Bush, Mariah Carey and Sir Barry Gibb - for more info on the sailing, [CLICK HERE](#).

### Maldives package

**CRUISE** Traveller is offering extensive savings and bonus spending money on a unique itinerary from the Maldives to Australia with Silversea.

The new fly/cruise package includes "everything door-to-door" such as flights, hotels, dining, excursions, tips and the cruise itself, plus hotel transfers throughout.

The 34-night package in May 2024 will cruise aboard *Silver Dawn* with savings of over \$10,000 per person.

For more details, call 1800 507 777.

### Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

PORT	SHIP	DATE
SYDNEY	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	28 Jul
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	31 Jul
	<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	03 Aug
BRISBANE	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	29 Jul
CAIRNS	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	01 Aug
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	04 Aug
AIRLIE BEACH	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	31 Jul
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	03 Aug
BROOME	<i>Le Ponant</i>	28 Jul
	<i>Le Soleal</i>	29 Jul
	<i>Coral Geographer</i>	01 Aug
	<i>Le Laperouse</i>	02 Aug
	<i>SH Minerva</i>	03 Aug
DARWIN	<i>Le Soleal</i>	28 Jul
	<i>Caledonian Sky</i>	29 Jul
	<i>Silver Explorer</i>	30 Jul
	<i>National Geographic Orion</i>	30 Jul
	<i>Heritage Adventurer</i>	31 Jul
AUCKLAND	<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	31 Jul
	<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	30 Jul

### Jubilee ups the fun

**THE** "fun" phase of construction has kicked off on *Carnival Jubilee*, which now sports Carnival's iconic winged funnel, just days after the newbuild floated out at Meyer Werf (**CW** 25 Jul).

Work has also begun on **BOLT**: The Ultimate Seacoaster, which will encircle the new funnel, as well as immersive ocean-themed experiences in two new zones.



**The Chat** with Jenny

A Conversation with **Nicola Veltman**  
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