



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news.

Name a Celebrity!

CELEBRITY Cruises has this morning put out a global call on social media for fans to help name its next ship. There's an Instagram poll live on @CelebrityCruises, inviting followers to choose between *Celebrity Vertex* and *Celebrity Excel* within the next 24 hours.

Culinary Regent

EPICUREAN Perfection is the tag line of a new immersive culinary program revealed overnight by Regent Seven Seas Cruises, complimenting 11 newly announced, chef-led Epicurean Spotlight voyages for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

NCLH outlook sharpens

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has entered the year with a record booked position, and at higher pricing, despite posting a net loss of \$2.3 billion for the 2022 full year.

The figure compares to a net loss of \$4.5 billion in the prior year, with an even more positive outlook for 2023, from both an expenditure and sales standpoint.

NCLH has taken several steps in recent months to improve operating efficiencies, reduce costs, and maximise revenue generation opportunities, which are expected to result in a decrease of nearly 15% in adjusted net cruise costs.

Wave season demand for NCLH has been very strong, with the company's brands experiencing record launches for its offers, and posting its highest-ever booking months in Nov 2022 and Jan 2023.

Occupancy is expected to average approximately 100% for the first quarter of the fiscal year, and is on track to reach historical levels for the second quarter.

Capacity is also expected to increase approximately 19% compared to 2019, with the arrival of three newbuilds this year: Oceania Cruises' *Vista*, Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Viva*, and Regent Seven Seas' *Seven Seas Grandeur*.

Adjusted EBITDA is expected to be in the range of \$1.8 to \$1.95 billion for the 2023 fiscal year.

"2022 was an eventful year, as we successfully completed our nearly yearlong 'Great Cruise Comeback', welcomed our newest ship *Norwegian Prima* to our world class fleet and achieved several key milestones on our post-pandemic financial recovery," President & Chief Executive Frank Del Rio Sr said.

World Dream sold

WORLD *Dream*, the 5,000-passenger ship built in 2017 for Genting Hong Kong's now-defunct Dream Cruises, has been sold to an unnamed buyer, identified in multiple sources as Cruise Saudi.

The ship was up for auction by authorities in Singapore after it was arrested in Mar 2022 over unpaid debts, with bids due by late Dec.

The Singapore Sheriff's Office has confirmed the sale but without providing details of the buyer or the price.

Sister ship *Genting Dream* is now sailing for the new Resorts World Cruises business started by interests formerly associated with Genting Hong Kong, while Resorts World Cruises is also chartering *Explorer Dream* which will commence sailing from Hong Kong and Taiwan shortly.

Regent

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Scenic Eclipse II sea trials a success

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours is putting the final touches on its highly anticipated *Scenic Eclipse II* (CW 20 Feb) after the ship successfully completed her sea trials in Europe.

Currently undergoing her final fit-out at the company's 3. Maj Shipyard in Rijeka, Croatia, the ship was put through her paces over two weekend sessions last month in the northern Adriatic.

Scenic Vice President of Marine Operations, James Griffith, said "*Scenic Eclipse II* has been built to the highest standards and it is fantastic to see the Discovery Yacht sail through the sea trials and surpass all expectations".

"The countdown to launch really is now on."

Eclipse II's inaugural sailing is scheduled for 13 Apr from Lisbon to Barcelona, while the ship will officially join the fleet during a naming ceremony in Malaga, Spain on 03 Jun.

NASA scientist and astronaut Kathy Sullivan will officiate as *Scenic Eclipse II's* godmother, while the addition of the newbuild to the fleet will see Scenic expand its ocean-going



operations to more than 50 countries across all seven continents this year.

In the northern summer of 2023 she will explore the Mediterranean, Iceland and Scotland, before moving to the Caribbean and then Antarctica.

In 2024 *Eclipse II* will also operate the brand's first Australian itineraries, with a Kimberley program alongside visits to Polynesia and Indonesia.

Based on sister ship *Scenic Eclipse*, the newbuild offers a range of enhancements including

the new Chef's Garden @ Epicure, an immersive dining experience and presentation area; a new custom salt therapy lounge in the Senses Spa; and an innovative Sky Bar on the Sky Deck which features six private cabanas alongside an oval-shaped Vitality Pool complete with swim jets so guests can do "laps".

Some of the suites have also been upgraded, including circular spa baths in the Spa Suites, and transformed bathrooms with a private mini-spa in the Owner's Penthouse Suites.

Lindblad Expeditions lessens losses

LINDBLAD Expeditions has recorded an annual loss of US\$116.1 million for the year to 31 Dec, on revenues which almost doubled to US\$421.5m.

The result was a US\$8.6 million improvement on the prior year, but was impacted by higher finance expenses and increases in depreciation, mainly due to the addition of *National Geographic Resolution* to the fleet in Sep 2021.

Lindblad is forecasting a return to profit this year, as operations continue to ramp up, predicting total bookings worth US\$550m-\$575m and adjusted earnings of \$70m-\$80m.

The expedition specialist has

US\$566 million in debt, and is anticipating strong guest cash receipts from final payments for upcoming expeditions and trips, as well as deposits for new reservations for future travel.

"The company has substantial advance reservations for future travel with strong gross bookings, partially offset by short-term cancellations associated with the COVID-19 virus, instability in Peru and itinerary changes due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict," the company said in its 2022 financial results release.

Current bookings for 2023 are up 47% compared to the corresponding figure in 2019.

Explora release

EXPLORA Journeys has released details of the 2024/25 journeys for its *Explora I*, with bookings now open.

Itineraries will start on the east coast of North America, before sailing to the Caribbean and South America and then crossing the Atlantic to Europe.

Some of the highlights include a New York-Quebec autumn voyage, an exclusive experience of the Rio Carnival, journeys up the Amazon River and into the Brazilian rainforest, as well as a 14-night transatlantic crossing via Cape Verde and the Canary Islands before arriving in Lisbon - see explorajourneys.com.

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Queen Victoria</i>	1 Mar
<i>Celebrity Eclipse</i>	1 Mar
<i>Viking Orion</i>	1 Mar
NEWCASTLE	
<i>Oceania Regatta</i>	1 Mar
MELBOURNE	
<i>Norwegian Spirit</i>	1 Mar
PENNESHAW	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	2 Mar
PORT ADELAIDE	
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	1 Mar
BRISBANE	
<i>MSC Poesia</i>	1 Mar
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	2 Mar
AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	1 Mar
CAIRNS	
<i>Silver Whisper</i>	1 Mar
BROOME	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	2 Mar
FREMANTLE	
<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	2 Mar
BURNIE	
<i>Norwegian Spirit</i>	2 Mar
DARWIN	
<i>Queen Mary 2</i>	2 Mar
CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>ms Noordam</i>	2 Mar
<i>Viking Mars</i>	2 Mar
WELLINGTON	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	1 Mar
<i>Seabourn Odyssey</i>	2 Mar
BAY OF ISLANDS	
<i>Nat Geo Orion</i>	1 Mar
DUNEDIN	
<i>Viking Mars</i>	1 Mar
KAIKOURA	
<i>Seabourn Odyssey</i>	1 Mar
NAPIER	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	2 Mar
PICTON	
<i>ms Noordam</i>	1 Mar
<i>Europa</i>	2 Mar



THE plot thickens - it turns out that the famous "Ketchup Guy" who allegedly survived 24 days at sea with just a bottle of tomato sauce also spiced things up with garlic seasoning. The startling revelations came along with the good news that food manufacturer Heinz has managed to locate the lucky sailor after putting out a call on social media (*CW* 27 Feb).

Heinz wants to reward Elvis Francois for his ketchup (and now garlic)-fuelled survival efforts by giving him a new boat, and tracked him down on the Caribbean island of Dominica.

In an interview posted on the Facebook page of local media outlet *EmoNews*, Francois confirmed he spent 24 days on the ocean after his boat "developed some issues".

"I didn't have so much to make it, but just a bottle of ketchup and garlic seasoning". He tried eating seaweed but "it was too strong".

"Everything happens for a reason...the ketchup has vitamins, my body was still OK."

Heinz said its Instagram campaign to find Francois had reached almost five million people and received a record 4,000 likes, with the company saying "anyone who shared, liked or commented on the post...played an important part in finding Elvis".

CLIA's Brent St showstoppers



CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has partnered with Sydney's Brent Street performing arts training centre for the entertainment at the upcoming CLIA Awards.

Taking place in just a week and a half at Luna Park Sydney, the cruise sector's night of nights will see more than 40 Brent Street students (**pictured** in rehearsals this week) take to the stage, as an acknowledgement of the support cruising has received from the

entertainment sector.

CLIA MD Joel Katz said "the cruise industry is a major employer of dancers, singers, musicians and other performers".

"We want to help showcase the amazing talents of our young entertainers, and the Brent Street team have responded with a spectacular show for our guests."

The glittering gala CLIA's will be held on Sat 11 Mar, and will be the industry's biggest celebration in more than three years.

Viking sets a new record for reservations

VIKING has announced that Jan was the line's most successful single month of bookings in its history, with 18 of its all-time top 20 booking days occurring between 01-31 Jan.

The milestone included the strongest single day for Viking bookings in 25 years, with Chair Torstein Hagen saying "we are pleased that our approach to destination-focused voyages continues to resonate with

curious travellers".

Europe was a key destination for Viking passengers, with some itineraries across the cruise line's river and ocean fleet almost sold out for 2023.

Viking has opened early 2025 sailing dates on selected ocean itineraries in response to the strong demand, while the line also noted ongoing strong levels of enquiry for its expedition voyages to Antarctica and North America's Great Lakes.



It's a wrap!

OUR final cruise restart workshop was held in Sydney last week, a fitting end to our roadshow which saw us traverse every Australian state and territory since early 2022.

It is exciting to look in the rear-view mirror and see how far we have come. Our first workshops in 2021 were heavily focused on health protocols and there was a certain sense of "what if?"

This has progressed over time to far more hopeful discussions, with key themes in Sydney being around the plethora of new ships we will see in market and exciting new itineraries being planned.

Over 40 operators and industry members were in the room last week, with the consensus that the rebound is happening a lot faster than originally expected. In fact, the cruise lines are reporting that the 2023/2024 bookings are on track to exceed previous pre-pandemic years.

This also naturally delivers opportunities onshore for our members. While Sydney has traditionally been a turnaround port, there are a growing number of transit calls that allow for greater flexibility in shore excursions. Pre- and post- cruise touring was also discussed as a growth opportunity.

As we wrap, I would like to thank our valued partners - CLIA and Tourism Australia - and all the communities who hosted us, allowing us to convene these important meetings and sample some of the amazing experiences on offer to our cruise visitors.

We have a lot to be hopeful for in 2023 and beyond.