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Ponant's Paspaley project proceeding

PONANT is well advanced in makeover plans for the former *Island Escape* luxury super yacht, with a range of enhancements to improve operations underway for the near-new vessel which is expected to debut next year as *Paspaley Pearl* (**CW** 26 Oct).

The cruise line's Chair Asia Pacific Sarina Bratton (pictured), provided an update earlier this week, saying the size of the ship combined with the decades-long Kimberley navigation expertise of the Paspaley pearling family would provide the "opportunity to take guests to places that nobody has been to before".

She estimated more than 50 new Kimberley destinations would become accessible by the boutique vessel under the Ponant-Paspaley partnership.

Works on the ship will include functional changes as well as stylish aspects, with Ponant and



Paspaley working with naval architects and yacht designers.

"We are also waiting on some of the quotes and timelines from shipyards...that's not fun, because it always is way more expensive than you're wanting to spend, and it always takes too much time," Bratton said.

She said with long experience of ship deliveries and possible delays, Ponant is determined to not be in a position where it is disappointing guests or disrupting

their holiday.

"So whatever the date is, when we finally get the website up and the brochure delivered, we're going to be very confident that we're going to be starting there.

"We want to err on the side of caution," she said.

Bratton told **Cruise Weekly** proposed works include relocating the ship's crane to make loading of Zodiac expedition craft easier, while the helicopter landing pad will be repurposed to provide new open public spaces for guests.

"She's the only little boutique vessel with balcony staterooms and suites," she noted.

Bratton said the venture was seeing two iconic family-owned luxury brands coming together - one Australian and one French - "working together to deliver these experiences to not only Australians, but to the world". *BP*

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features five pages of cruise news, plus a cover page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

NCL Black Friday

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line is offering a \$500 air credit off all sailings as part of a Black Fri special offer, with the deal only available for bookings confirmed by Mon 27 Nov - see the **cover page**.

Branson live chat!

AUSSIE and Kiwi travel advisors are being offered a world first opportunity to interact directly with Virgin founder Sir Richard Branson.

A live Q&A session will take place at 9am Sydney time next Mon - to participate, join the Virgin Voyages Facebook group by **CLICKING HERE**.

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*Terms and Conditions apply. +Travel Advisor offer: to receive Travel Advisor gift card offer, bookings must be made between 15 November and 06 December, inclusive with deposits received by 13 December, 2023. Gift cards will be issued 10 days after closure of incentive period. Cancelled and re-booked bookings will not be eligible. Valid for any bookings during incentive dates, not exclusive to Black Friday sailings. For first 50 bookings only across Australia and New Zealand. Bookings under AU\$20,000 will receive an AU\$100 gift card, bookings over AU\$20,000 will receive an AU\$200 gift card. Gift card will be received in form of Prezzy gift card after booking has been verified. All eligible winners will be contacted by Oceania Cruises Inside Sales team at closure of promotion period with details of gift cards.



Blue Lagoon refurb

BLUE Lagoon Cruises' *Fiji Princess* is undergoing a refurbishment in the lead-up to the new year.

Fiji Princess's cabins are being refreshed, which will include painting, updating the beds and cabin furniture, as well as the fittings and furnishings.

The dining experience is also getting an upgrade, with improvements to the buffet station, dining room furniture, and the Lounge Bar.

Blue Lagoon is installing a more robust wi-fi system throughout the *Fiji Princess*, which extends to wi-fi coverage from public areas to cabins, and is adding two permanent UV-filtered water stations in the public areas.

Behind-the-scenes upgrades are also taking place to enhance *Fiji Princess*' engineering fittings.

It is the latest Fijian cruise development, following Captain Cook Cruises charter of *Caledonian Sky* (CW 08 May).

Big savings with Cunard Black Fri

CUNARD Line is offering savings in time for Black Fri, with up to 59% off its cruises.

A select range of local sailings start from \$449 per person, such as the two-night Sydney to Melbourne voyage on *Queen Elizabeth* departing on 05 Mar and arriving on 07 Mar in the Victorian capital.

The 18-night Sydney to Tokyo repositioning voyage on board *Queen Elizabeth* from 10 Mar to 28 Mar is also on sale, from \$2,099 per person in a twin share Inside Stateroom.

Meanwhile, cruisers can score 37% off the five-night Sydney to Tasmania voyage on *Queen Elizabeth*, sailing round trip from Sydney from 05 to 10 Mar.

The savings are available until sold out.

For more information or to book visit cunard.com.

Celestyal adds new ports



CELESTYAL Cruises will sail to three new countries and six new ports from 2024.

Croatia, Montenegro, and Italy will all join the Celestyal destination map from next year, through calls at Dubrovnik, Kotor (pictured), and Bari respectively.

Celestyal is also introducing calls at three new Greek ports, Cephalonia, Corfu, and Katakolo, from next year.

The cruise line's new *Celestyal Journey* (CW 28 Jun) will sail the new seven-night Heavenly Adriatic itinerary, which will feature full days in Cephalonia, Kotor, Bari, and Corfu, as well as a late-night stay in Dubrovnik and half day in Katakolo.

This new voyage is now on sale as part of the live Black Fri promotions, with deals from \$949 per person, ahead of 2025

sailings going on sale in the coming weeks.

Celestyal has also updated two further sailings for next year, replacing the Three Continents itineraries on 09 and 16 Mar with the Idyllic Aegean itinerary, following the temporary suspension of calls to Israel.

The updated itinerary is also featured in the live Black Fri promotions from \$809pp.

"As a business we really do take the time to listen to customer and agent network suggestions - and Italy, Croatia and Montenegro came out on top," said Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett.

"Our team is set to make waves across the industry next season, with new destinations, a completely updated fleet, a fresh new brand identity, and a renewed sense of direction." MS



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Ships' registry: The Bahamas ©2023 Disney

NZ Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in New Zealand.

AUCKLAND	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	24 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	25 Nov
<i>Noordam</i>	26 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	28 Nov
<i>Royal Princess</i>	28 Nov
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	29 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	01 Dec
CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	24 Nov
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	28 Nov
<i>Noordam</i>	01 Dec
WELLINGTON	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	25 Nov
<i>Seabourn Odyssey</i>	26 Nov
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	27 Nov
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	28 Nov
<i>Noordam</i>	30 Nov
PICTON	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	27 Nov

MSC to redevelop its Ocean Cay reserve

MSC Cruises has announced it will develop its Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve to enhance the guest experience and its conservation at its private destination in the Bahamas.

The agreement was signed earlier this week at a ceremony in Bimini (pictured), attended by the country's Prime Minister Philip Davis and Minister of Tourism Chester Cooper, as well as other government officials.

Developments will include additional amenities for passengers, new staff accommodation, new environmental infrastructure, and MSC Foundation's Marine Conservation Centre.

Guest facilities will be enhanced with the introduction of excursion centres to support watersport activities and island tours, a sea dive and snorkel centre, additional food and beverage



outlets, and other facilities.

The Marine Conservation Centre will be built as a base for biologists and coral reef experts, housing interactive pavilions, a lecture hall, and more.

It will provide passengers visiting the island with educational opportunities about

the importance of the marine ecosystem and the need to protect the world's oceans.

The development will also see a third solar farm installed, an advanced waste water treatment plant, and a landscaping plan to further diversify the sustainable environment on the island. MS

YOU'RE INVITED TO A VIKING SHIP INSPECTION

Join us this summer for an exclusive ship inspection of our magnificent ocean vessels. Experience the Viking Difference firsthand at one of three locations, but hurry, spaces are strictly limited. Reserve your spot by selecting your preferred location below and use the password "Viking".

SYDNEY

NEWCASTLE

MELBOURNE




Friday 24th Nov 2023

EARLIER this month a select group of high-achieving Travel Associates advisors were treated to an eight-day Mediterranean voyage with Viking, cruising from Ravenna, the city of mosaics, to the historic heart of Athens.

The journey was more than a cruise; it was a well-earned prize for an exclusive Travel Associates competition earlier this year.

The advisors, along with their chosen guests experienced the allure of the Italian coastline and the enduring grandeur of Athens.

They encountered the coastal beauty of Croatia's Dalmatia, the grandiose palace at Split, and Dubrovnik's ancient streets.

They were charmed by Kotor's dramatic bay in Montenegro and stepped into the pages of history in Corfu's Old Town and at the ancient site of Olympia in Katakolon.

The voyage combined Viking's award-winning onboard experiences with the joy of discovery The Viking Way, equipping advisors with authentic experiences to inspire their clients, as they lived the stories they can go on to tell.



AMANDA George, partner; Marlena Holden, partner; Cat Williams, partner; Daneil Rottenberg, partner; Adam Crane, TA Belconnen; and Jonathan House, TA Runaway Bay.



MALCOLM Hyslop from Wye & James TA with Viking's Shaun Kavanagh.



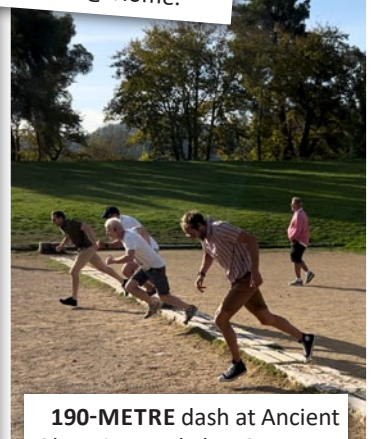
SHAUN Kavanagh, Viking; Daniel Rottenburg, partner; Cat Williams, partner; Simon Treloar, Viking; Tammy Houston, Houston & Turner TA; and Roland Kautzky, TA @ Home.



VIKING host playing waiter - Greek Cooking Class shore excursion.



GATHERING at Viking Venus atrium.



190-METRE dash at Ancient Olympia, Katakolon Greece.



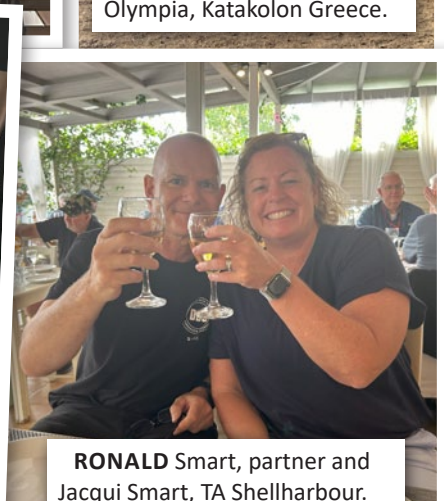
CHEF'S Table experience.



ALL hands on - Greek Cooking Class.



UNDER the stars at the Aquavit Terrace.



RONALD Smart, partner and Jacqui Smart, TA Shellharbour.

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PORTHOLE

FORMER Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) Chief Executive Officer Frank Del Rio Sr recently made one big move, retiring from his post atop the company (**CW** 21 Mar), and now he's making another.

Del Rio Sr is selling his Florida mansion (**pictured**), located at 111 Mariner Beach Lane in Vero Beach, for USD\$15.9m.

The seven-bedroom, nine-bathroom, 5,648ft² home on Florida's Treasure Coast was built in 1997, and features crystal quartz countertops, a summer kitchen, a salt water pool, and more.

Why is Del Rio Sr selling up now, you may wonder - believe it or not, it is because he wants to go on more cruises.

"When you run a cruise line you hardly ever have a chance to go on a cruise," Del Rio Sr told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Del Rio Sr's upcoming cruise will be a 20-day to Antarctica on board Oceania Cruises' 1,250-guest *Oceania Marina*.



Seabourn syncs up



SEABOURN Cruise Line made history earlier this week as its expedition ships *Seabourn Pursuit* and *Seabourn Venture* met in Antarctica (**pictured**).

The sister vessels met on Wed at the entrance of the scenic Neko Harbor to honour *Pursuit's* inaugural season in Antarctica.

Passengers and crew members gathered on the expansive bows of both ships to celebrate the historic convergence, commemorating it with caviar and champagne.

Pursuit had just embarked on her maiden season in Antarctica, while *Venture* is beginning her second season in the continent.

"It was a very exciting day, and we could not think of a better way to commemorate our first trip to Antarctica than meeting up with our sister ship, *Seabourn Venture*," *Pursuit* Captain Stig Betten said.

"Many close friends and colleagues from each ship cheered and toasted to each other as we embarked on our expeditions to Antarctica,

marking a new era in ultra-luxury expeditions," he added.

Venture Captain Jeroen Schuchmann said the meeting was an incredible moment.

"Seeing our two ships sail side by side at the start of our Antarctica season solidifies the fact that we at Seabourn are able to introduce so many more individuals to breathtaking, remote destinations that few will ever visit."

Both ships will operate 11- to 13-day voyages to Antarctica, as well as 21-day voyages to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

"It was amazing to wake up this morning and join our guests and team virtually at this historical moment for our Brand," President Natalya Leahy said.

"Watching our two purpose-built ultra-luxury expedition ships, *Seabourn Venture* and *Seabourn Pursuit*, next to each other today, and watching our guests raising champagne to each other with a breathtaking backdrop of Neko Harbor made me so proud." *MS*

AU Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia.

SYDNEY	
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	24 Nov
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	26 Nov
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	27 Nov
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	30 Nov
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	01 Dec

MELBOURNE	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	29 Nov

PORT ADELAIDE	
<i>Coral Geographer</i>	24 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	01 Dec

BRISBANE	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	24 Nov
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	25 Nov
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	28 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	30 Nov
<i>Coral Princess</i>	01 Dec

CAIRNS	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	27 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	27 Nov
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	28 Nov
<i>Viking Orion</i>	28 Nov
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	28 Nov
<i>Resilient Lady</i>	30 Nov

TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	29 Nov

AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	26 Nov
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	27 Nov
<i>Resilient Lady</i>	01 Dec

FREMANTLE	
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	27 Nov

DARWIN	
<i>Resilient Lady</i>	27 Nov

Big year for Tassie

THE Tasmanian Government is expecting nearly 300,000 cruise ship passengers to visit the state this year.

Bon Voyage 2023

Signing off 2023 in style!

Wed 6 Dec, 2023 ◆ 6pm ◆ Marble Bar, Sydney Hilton

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