



Upton debuts boutique booking platform

AUSTRALIAN cruise and travel IT veteran Dave Upton (pictured) has launched his new 'Boutique Cruising Booking Platform', which promises to "reshape the way companies in the small ship cruising industry manage reservations and enhance guest booking experiences".

Upton's firm ITbyUs was a pioneer in website development for Australian travel agencies, and also currently represents American cruise booking platform Odyssey Solutions in the local market (*CW* 22 Sep 2016).

His new platform specifically targets cruise companies running several cruises on multiple vessels for about 100 guests.

"Designed with meticulous attention to detail, the new affordable Boutique Cruising Booking Platform is tailored to cruise companies wanting to



offer B2C, B2B and B2B2C (travel agents white-label) capabilities," Upton said.

"Gone are the days of waiting overnight for availability confirmation; this platform enables real-time booking responses, revolutionising the speed and efficiency of the booking process for boutique cruise companies," he added.

"Traditionally the boutique cruise industry has grappled with delayed availability responses and a cumbersome booking process.

"Our new platform not only addresses these issues but sets a new standard for streamlined booking experiences."

Upton said the platform has been designed with user-friendliness at the forefront, both for suppliers and guests.

The system's multilingual capabilities ensure a seamless experience for guests worldwide, he added, while further enhancements will also see the platform cater to yacht charters.

"The launch of ITbyUs' Boutique Cruising Booking Platform marks a pivotal moment in the boutique cruising industry," Upton said.

The website for the new development is now live at bookboutiquecruises.com. *BP*

Big Aurora offer

AURORA Expeditions has announced its Choose Your Adventure sale, which includes a US\$2,000 per person air credit for all Antarctica 23/24 voyages or A\$3,000pp for all Arctic & Global '24 voyages.

The Chat with Jenny



A Conversation with Martine Nunes

of Oceania Cruises

Click [HERE](#) to listen



Vote 1 for APT

APT is inviting the cruise industry to support its bid for 2023 National Travel Industry Awards glory, via nominations for Best River Cruise Operator and Most Outstanding Tour Operator (Global) - for details see [page five](#).

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **APT**.

Cruise360 kicks off tonight in Brisbane

ALMOST 650 members of the Australasian cruise community will descend on Brisbane this afternoon for a pre-event reception ahead of tomorrow's Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Cruise360 conference.

It's the first time Cruise360 has been held in Qld and comes as the industry anticipates a bumper season of cruising Down Under, according to CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz.

"The coming summer

promises near-record levels of cruising in Australasia, so this week's conference will help highlight the increasingly important role Brisbane plays as our second-busiest cruise gateway in this region."

The full day event at Brisbane's Royal International Convention Centre will feature a host of international presenters as well as a large trade show with almost 50 exhibitors.

See **Cruise Weekly** and **Travel Daily** tomorrow for all the action.





Cruise spending big on advertising

ADVERTISING spend by the cruise industry has skyrocketed in Jul according to the latest statistics from Standard Media Index (SMI).

The travel subcategory of Ocean Cruising rose 48% YOY and was one of the major contributors to the Travel category increasing 10.4% for the same period.

The results come at a time when Australia is in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, although inflation is finally softening with the Reserve Bank of Australia deciding to hold interest rates yesterday at its monthly meeting.

Chris Walton, Managing Director of Nunn Media, which holds the media account for Silversea Cruises, explained a "significant focus for the cruise segment in Australia" is the affluent retiree, with this demographic partly responsible for the substantial advertising spend.



"Brands at the luxury end of the market including Viking, Silversea, Scenic and Ponant typically have customers with an average age well into their 60s," he told **CW**.

"This cohort, with mortgages largely paid off, are to a large extent insulated from any cost-of-living crisis and have money to spend," Walton added.

"In the wake of COVID there remains an insatiable appetite amongst older, affluent Australians to travel, and to travel in style."

SMI Managing Director and co-founder APAC Jane Ractliffe told

CW the Travel category has so far grown ad spend 18% this year, as it continues to recover from the COVID downturn.

Advertising spend overall was down -1.3% YOY in Jul, from a record result in the prior corresponding period.

Airlines also helped the Travel category rise with a 20.4% spend increase YOY.

The largest spending subcategory within Travel so far this year has been the Domestic Tourism Agency market, with SMI figures showing its spend has decreased 15% YOY, after it registered significant extra bookings last year to promote local travel post-COVID.

SMI accesses actual spend from media buying groups and uses the data to report on the advertising spend statistics across media categories as well as industry sectors. *DF*

New CLIA report

A **NEW** report from Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) shows the industry's environmental progress, through advances in the sector's environmental and sustainability agenda.

CLIA's *2023 Global Cruise Industry Environmental Technologies & Practices Report* shows investments in technologies and alternative fuels which will accelerate the cruise sector's transition toward net zero.

"Our data shows a step change in the uptake of new environmental technologies by our cruise line members," President & Chief Executive Kelly Craighead enthused.

"Already today cruise lines are building the ships of the future which will run on new, more sustainable engine technologies," she added.

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NCL to Baltimore

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has started sailing multiple itineraries from The Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore in the United States. Itineraries include Canada, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.

Three for MSC in the ME

MSC Cruises will have three ships sailing in the Middle East during winter 2023-2024, with a range of new ports of call, as the line consolidates its prominence in the region.

The company's seven-night Arabian Gulf voyages will round trip from Dubai with *MSC Virtuosa*, and will feature a new port of call in Manama.

The ship will sail 17 new seven-night voyages in the Gulf during the season, with calls including Manama and Sir Bani Yas.

Guests can embark from Dubai, Doha or Abu Dhabi (**pictured**), while *Virtuosa* will also serve as accommodation for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix from 24-26 Nov.

Meanwhile, the cruise line's seven-night Red Sea sailings from Egypt with *MSC Orchestra* will feature a new port of call, Sharm El-Sheikh.

Orchestra's new itinerary from Safaga, with 20 seven-night sailings to Jeddah, Aqaba, Sharm El-Sheikh, and Ain Sokhna, will also offer guests a range of different embarkation ports.

MSC Opera returns to the region to round out the cruise line's three-ship line-up, after a successful 2022-23 season, with 22 separate seven-night sailings in 2023-24, from Dubai to Abu Dhabi, Sir Bani Yas, Muscat, and either Khasab or Fujairah.

MEANWHILE, the cruise line is hosting an exclusive webinar on its MSC Yacht Club for agents.



The webinar, which will offer an in-depth look at the prestigious MSC Yacht Club experience, is scheduled for 13 Sep, with three sessions throughout the day at 8:30am, 3:30pm, and 5:30pm.

The 20-minute webinar will be followed by a five-minute interactive Q&A session.

"At MSC Cruises, we are committed to providing our travel partners with the tools and knowledge they need to excel in their roles," Sales Manager Brigita Devries explained.

"Our MSC Yacht Club webinar will equip partners with the expertise to offer their clients the epitome of luxury cruising.

"We look forward to showcasing the extraordinary MSC Yacht Club experience and answering any questions agents may have." *MS*

Travel agents are invited to register in advance **HERE**.

Disney's Treasure



DISNEY Cruise Line overnight unveiled details of *Disney Treasure*, the sister ship to last year's *Disney Wish* (**CW** 04 Jul 2022), saying the vessel will "unlock fun, adventure, and relaxation for families" from late next year.

Treasure will embark on her maiden voyage, a seven-night Eastern Caribbean cruise from Port Canaveral, on 21 Dec 2024, followed by an inaugural season of week-long Eastern and Western Caribbean itineraries.

Treasure will introduce a brand-new family entertainment restaurant, Plaza de Coco, the world's first dining experience themed to the Disney film *Coco*.

A ride called 'AquaMouse: Curse of the Golden Egg' will take guests on a "zany misadventure" in two-person vehicles propelled by jets through over 200m of tubes.

Disney Cruise Line Castaway Club members can book a *Treasure* cruise from 12 Sep 2023, while bookings will open to all guests on 20 Sep 2023.

See more by **CLICKING HERE**.



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A SCHOONER which sank in 1881 on Lake Michigan in the United States, and was known for having a dubious maintenance record, has ironically been found relatively intact 142 years later by shipwreck hunters.

Trinidad was discovered at a depth just shy of 100 metres by Brendon Baillod and Robert Jaeck, around 16km off the shore of Wisconsin after a two-year search.

The schooner, which was largely used for transporting wheat from the Midwest across the Great Lakes, was, according to insurance records, far from "ship shape", and sunk after she started taking on water in the spring of 1881.

All of the crew survived, although a Newfoundland dog on board wasn't so lucky.

Baillod told *The New York Times* most schooners of that era lasted two to three times longer than *Trinidad* did.

Despite this, the wreckage was found in incredible shape, with Baillod explaining, "we were stunned to see that not only was the deckhouse still on her, but it still had all the cabinets with all the dishes stacked in them and all the crew's effects".

He likened it to a "time capsule" and hailed it as one of the best-shaped wrecks he has found in Wisconsin waters.

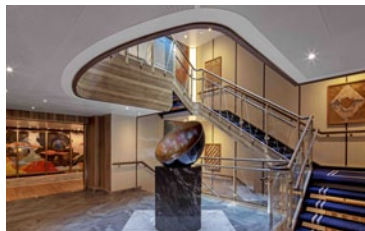
Seabourn's Pursuit of art

SEABOURN has unveiled a collection of custom art on board its newest ship, *Seabourn Pursuit*, which promises to "take guests on a curated journey across the seven seas".

The permanent installation consists of more than 700 bold, colourful and playful artworks developed by London-based curatorial studio Double Decker, in collaboration with artists, designers and fabricators from around the world.

"We had a vision to deliver a dynamic and harmonious experience of exploration by creating a unique synergy to unite the masterful interior design by Tihany Design and the bespoke art collection with the powerful, state-of-the-art capabilities on this purpose-built luxury expedition ship," Seabourn President Natalya Leahy said.

Leahy believes the art collection will "elevate the onboard experience", offering guests an "unexpected layer of imaginative discoveries" and inspiring them with "the smallest details, symbols, [and] hidden messages



in every corner to provoke a deep sense of personal exploration and appreciation".

Artworks include the 'Magical Sky', a sculpture installation located in the Main Atrium (pictured), and 'Water Drops', a series featuring Murano blown glass evoking the feelings of water, sea and ice.

Guests dining at The Restaurant can check out the '0° Series', a photographic collection showcasing tropical flowers in ice, while in the Constellation Lounge, visitors will see 'Beyond the Sky', twin glass pieces designed to reflect sea and sky.

Other captivating works include the 'Graphic Glass Panels' adorning the Atrium Staircase, inspired by winding coastlines, and 'Oscillation', a wall sculpture made from recycled materials. *JM*

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CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

'Riding the Wave' at C360

THE countdown to Cruise360 has officially kicked off!

In a matter of hours, we'll have gathered in Brisbane to celebrate the strength of our Australian cruise community and to share the insights that will help us on the path to future prosperity.

This year's Cruise360 conference is shaping up to be one of our best yet, and we have a packed program in store.

We've gathered an impressive cast of respected travel agency leaders, cruise line innovators, sales experts and expedition leaders from across our region and around the world.

Each will share their experience and insight, which we hope will inspire our members and help equip them with the knowledge needed to drive their success.

Our theme this year is 'Riding the Wave', and everything in our Cruise360 program has been designed to help members reach the crest and fully capitalise on cruising's renewed prosperity.

Cruise360 launches tonight with an industry welcome event, ahead of tomorrow's conference and trade show.

If you can't be there, our media partners *Travel Daily* and *Cruise Weekly* will keep you updated with all the news from Cruise360 - our first conference in Brisbane, and already one of our biggest.





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