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WEEKLY

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Monday 18th Sep 2023

Disney vax rules

DISNEY Cruise Line's COVID-19 vaccination and testing requirements in Australia are no longer in effect, the company has announced, reflecting the change to local laws.

Hitchen to lead CruiseHQ

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has appointed Caroline Hitchen (**pictured**) as General Manager of its newly established CruiseHQ wholesale division (**CW** breaking news).

Hitchen will be responsible for the new dedicated B2B cruise wholesaler (**CW** 30 Aug), which will launch with exclusives and a curated offering of packages, building the best rates with wholesaler airfares, and pre and post land and touring.

She will be tasked with positioning CruiseHQ as "a new age trade B2B model" for travel advisors across the FCTG network of brands and partners, including the independents division.

Hitchen has a strong background in the travel industry, having most recently led Express Travel Group's cruise wholesaler Creative Cruising for four-and-a-half years.

She has also enjoyed stints with Pan Pacific Hotels Group, The Travel Corporation, and Destination NSW.

FCTG Chief Executive Officer Supply Greg Parker described Hitchen's appointment as a "major win" in cementing the



company's commitment to bringing a dedicated B2B cruise wholesaler to the Aussie market.

"Caroline has the specialist experience in cruise wholesaling we need to ensure we can deliver on our vision of an unrivalled partnering model and new age B2B wholesale model," he said.

CruiseHQ's leadership team is now in place, following the earlier announcements of Head of Operations Tina Giannopoulos, Head of Product Carina Mullen, Marketing Manager Caitlyn Paris, and Business Development Manager Viktoryia Shliazhko (**CW** 05 Sep).

"We are committed to making sure CruiseHQ is best-to-market and promotes real value and I believe Caroline is the right leader to help us achieve this," Parker added.

"Under the new age CruiseHQ B2B model, agents will be able to access exclusive pricing and products across airfares, charters, groups, nets, and commits that can be bundled together with hotels, transfers and tours for end-to-end cruise holiday itineraries." *MS*

NCL air credit deal

SAIL away and save \$500 with Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) five-day flash sale.

The air credit offer is available on select 2023 and 2024 voyages, made for bookings until Wed - **HERE**.



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[Learn more here.](#)



New Viking Explorer Sessions

Viking's popular Explorer Sessions will be touring 16 regional locations across Australia this October and November. These are not just events, they're an opportunity for you to wow your clients, earn extra commission, and score bonus *Rewards by Viking* points. A Viking expert will be available to answer any questions you and your clients may have plus they'll get an offer only available to attendees. Register today — but be quick, these information sessions fill up quickly!

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The Chat with Jenny Travel Daily



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Seabourn Kimberley '24

SEABOURN Cruise Line's *Seabourn Pursuit* will offer six 10-day voyages in the Kimberley between Broome and Darwin from Jun-Aug, as part of her first season in the region (**CW** 27 Feb).

Season highlights will include visits to remote settings such as the Bungle Bungle Range, El Questro Wilderness Park, and the Ord River.

Cruisers will explore King George Falls and enjoy Zodiac rides through rivers and sandstone gorges crowded with incredible geological formations.

Pursuit will visit Talbot Bay, offering a once-in-a-lifetime viewing of the Horizontal Falls, and Montgomery Reef, the world's largest inshore reef.

Passengers will also visit Vansittart Bay, Jar Island, and Freshwater Cove, as guests of the traditional landowners, viewing Wandjina aboriginal artwork.

There will be helicopter viewing of the Hunter River and the Kimberley en route to the triple falls of Mitchell Plateau, while complimentary expedition experiences include Zodiac cruising and nature walks.

Other warm-weather destinations for *Pursuit* during her southern hemisphere season will see her cruise from Chile to Melanesia in Mar and Apr 2024, and again in Sep and Oct.

Pursuit will sail between the islands of the South Pacific and the coast of Chile via a series of voyages of 14, 17, and 20 days, with combination cruises of up to 37 days also available.

Highlights include the remote Juan Fernandez Islands off the coast of Chile, spending time at Easter Island, and visiting the remote Pitcairn Islands, including Taputapuatea marae at Opoa on the south coast of Raiatea. *MS*

Cameron Mannix leaves Celebrity Cruises

EXCLUSIVE

CELEBRITY Cruises Director of Sales for Australia and New Zealand Cameron Mannix (pictured) has left the company, with a spokesperson hailing his "relentless support of travel agents and the wider travel industry" during his 11-year career with the Royal Caribbean Group (RCG).

The cruise line noted Mannix has contributed to the ongoing success of all RCG brands.

"We thank Cameron for his relentless support of travel agents and the wider travel industry during his tenure.

"His larger-than-life personality and positivity helped establish Celebrity Cruises as a premium holiday experience over the years, and we wish him well as he prepares to embark on a new journey."

Mannix enjoyed a long



association with Celebrity, becoming its first dedicated Business Development Manager in the Australia & New Zealand market in 2017, before taking on the Director of Sales role in May 2020.

Mannix told *Cruise Weekly* he is planning to take some time off and enjoy a holiday or two before seeing what his next adventure will be. *BP*

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RCI reveals adults-only beach escape

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) has revealed its all-new Hideaway Beach, the highly anticipated adults-only beachfront opening in Jan at Perfect Day at CocoCay.

The 18s-and-over seafront is set to add a “completely new vibe” to Royal Caribbean’s private island destination, including an exclusive beach, two heated infinity pools, 20 exclusive cabanas, seven open-air bars, spots to grab a bite, live music, and more.

For a cover charge, guests can enjoy the beachfront views at any one of the resort-style loungers and umbrellas along the shore, or on the in-water hammocks and swings, while playing beach games and listening to the beats of the live DJ by the pool.

Those looking for a more VIP vibe can kick back at a heated infinity plunge pool at The Hideout (pictured), where guests



can enjoy the convenience of perks like a cabana attendant, in-water loungers, an outdoor shower and resort-style seating.

“Hideaway Beach is a completely new vibe and experience that vacationers are looking for on Perfect Day at CocoCay,” President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley declared.

“Everything from its hidden-like

location to the exclusive beach and pools to the private cabanas, is designed for adults who want a day just for them.

“Whether it’s thrill or chill, family time or time to celebrate, families and friends can create their perfect vacation day without compromise, and Hideaway Beach adds to what continues to be an unmatched combination of ways to do just that.” *MS*

Hurtigruten goes Green

HURTIGRUTEN and Arctic Umiaq Line have unveiled their collaboration in Greenland’s west coast, revealing three voyages to choose from (CW 11 Jul).

Cruising aboard *Sarfaq Ittuk*, the two have collaborated to offer an eight-night North Greenland Voyage, which travels from Nuuk up to Uummannaq Island through the Eternity Fjord, and visits Ilulissat Icefjord.

There is also a six-night South Greenland Voyage, which starts with a night glamping in the fjords of Nuuk at Camp Kangiusaq, an overnight at Igaliku and on to Qaqortoq.

The ‘Full Greenland Voyage’, cruising for 14 nights, combines the two, with transfers to and from Nuuk International - for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).



The Svalbard Express

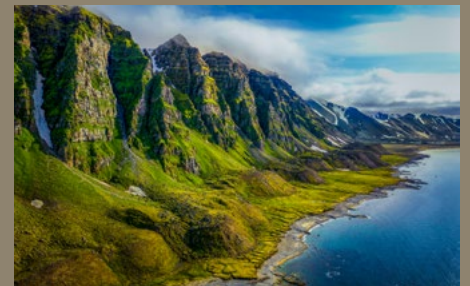
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THOSE with designs on lazing aboard a Carnival Cruise Line ship next to a pool with a page-turner will soon need to come prepared.

Carnival's Brand Ambassador John Heald recently revealed in an answer to a cruiser's question the library is being phased out of the company's ships, with newbuilds to no longer feature an area for bookworms to relax quietly with their latest novel.

Heald attributed the disappearance of the library to Carnival wanting to make more space for bars and restaurants, and unfortunately, a decline in book-borrowing.

Let's hope the disappearance of the library does not mean kids these days have stopped reading!

TA hosting cruise lunches

TRAVEL Associates (TA) is currently hosting luxury cruise luncheons across Australia, bringing in more than 650 new-to-brand clients.

The boutique travel agency network last week held an event in Adelaide and Sydney, welcoming clients to learn about its cruise partners and its expertise in the sector over a luxurious lunch hosted by General Manager Rachel Kingswell, and emceed by Global Brand & Marketing Director Anna Burgdorf.

The two luncheons followed successful events which took place in Melbourne on 01 Sep, with sold-out dates to be hosted in the Gold Coast and Brisbane later this month.

Guests met with TA partners including Silversea Cruises, Explora Journeys, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours, Uniworld Botique River Cruises, Oceania Cruises, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Avalon Waterways, and Tauck.

TA's expert cruise advisors were also on hand for the luncheons, who according to Kingswell, have identified several clear trends among the luxury cruising clientele, including the concept of 'escaping the everyday' and making room for destinations which allow clients to switch off from business and the workplace.

"Similar to the trend of bringing forward 'bucket list travel', this form of 'getting away from it all' cruise experience is a direct result



of our newfound understanding of the importance of time, and how we use it to nurture our own personal wellbeing and for family development," she said.

"We are seeing multi-generational travel and family holidays that bring people closer together by consciously getting away from it all.

"In combination with small-ship cruising and expedition trends, the current desire of clients to select the right itinerary for their needs is driving the trend." **MS**

Pictured is Uniworld MD Alice Ager with Kingswell.

Some Royale news

EUROPEAN Waterways has "popped the champagne" with the launch of its new *Kir Royale* luxury hotel barge in France's Champagne region.

The ultra-deluxe, eight-passenger vessel will debut in the Champagne region in May, featuring major upgrades including a spacious layout with modern furnishings, three sun decks, a spa, an upper observation deck with a panoramic view, and four air-conditioned staterooms with an en suite.

Kir Royale will cruise the Marne and the Canal lateral a Marne, offering a six-night all-inclusive sailing with exclusive excursions to some of the region's legendary champagne houses, such as Moët & Chandon.

Guests will also be treated to unique experiences including lunch at Frerejean Freres, and on-board meals with wine pairings served by *Kir Royale's* master chef.

Lindblad appoints

LINDBLAD Expeditions has welcomed Kathi Riddle as the new Senior Vice President Sales & Revenue Management.

In her new role Riddle will lead revenue management, as well as travel advisor, affinity group, and charter efforts.

Prior to joining Lindblad, Riddle served an almost 30-year tenure with Disney, where she held several leadership roles, including with the company's theme parks division.

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