



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Crystal deals

CRYSTAL Cruises has announced a special explorer fare for its voyages next year, with the program providing an opportunity for guests to save up to 20% on sailings.

Guests can receive exclusive savings by planning their voyages a full 12 months in advance and paying in full within 14 days of booking.

Crystal has also extended its "suite dreams" offer, which provides a complimentary suite upgrade when booking by the end of next month.



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## Virgin to avoid Middle East



VIRGIN Voyages has changed *Resilient Lady's* (pictured) Mar repositioning cruise, becoming the latest line to avoid the Middle East and reroute around Africa.

*Resilient*, currently home ported in Melbourne, will embark from Sydney on her season-ending repositioning voyage, and will now cruise a brand-new route stopping in Eden and Fremantle, before heading to Port Louis, Durban, Cape Town, Walvis Bay, Praia, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Casablanca, Barcelona, Valletta, Santorini, and Piraeus.

Virgin joins other companies in avoiding the Red Sea, such as Carnival Corporation, MSC Cruises, and Silversea Cruises.

"The safety of our passengers and crew is our number one priority," a Virgin statement said.

"Like many other cruise brands, we have been watching the current conflict in the Middle East closely, connecting regularly with global security experts to consider the impacts to the repositioning voyages planned for *Resilient Lady*."

"We remain concerned about potential escalations in this part of the world over the next 12 months and the risk that this presents for safe passage through the region."

All passengers on these former three legs of the repositioning voyages will have guaranteed spots on the new sailings at

no additional cost, and a price protection commitment in place.

Passengers can also choose to receive a future voyage credit based on their paid balance or a full refund, while travel advisors commissions will also be protected, Virgin said.

The cruise line added it is now conducting a full review of other geographically similar repositioning voyages and linked sailings, with passengers to be updated in the coming weeks on any further changes made. *MS*

### Cruiseabout sailing

CRUISEABOUT has "set sail", with the launch of its website [www.cruiseabout.com.au](http://www.cruiseabout.com.au).

The site is backed by Cruiseabout's team of agents, and comes just over a week after the brand appointed its new General Manager Bradley Kennedy (*CW* 30 Jan).

"Our crew is not just a team; they are passionate specialists navigating the vast sea of cruise options to create an experience for every customer," Kennedy said in a Cruiseabout LinkedIn post.

Flight Centre Travel Group last year announced it would be relaunching the Cruiseabout brand (*CW* 24 Aug 2023) after it had been axed in 2018.

### Bahamas tax shock

PRIVATE Bahamian islands owned by cruise lines are set to be hit with a surprise tax reform from the government.

The destinations' exemption from the VAT tax is set to end by 01 Mar, ending their nine-year exempted status.

The move was confirmed earlier this week, with the Ministry of Finance saying the changes are designed to place the cruise lines' private island activities on a level taxation playing field with Bahamian providers who service their guests at other destinations.

Among the private islands which stand to be impacted by the move are Royal Caribbean International's Perfect Day at CocoCay, MSC Cruises' Ocean Cay, Disney Cruise Line's Castaway Cay, and Holland America Line's Half Moon Cay.

*Seatrade Cruise News* described the industry as "shell shocked" by the news, with sources saying the move would make the Bahamas less attractive when compared to similar destinations.

The cruise industry and its passengers in particular have been targeted as a source of increased revenue for the Bahamas recently, with departure taxes increased in last year's budget.

### New SeaDream VP

SEADREAM Yacht Club has named Kari Tarnowski as Vice President of Marketing.

The former American Queen Voyages and Crystal Cruises executive will head up all of SeaDream's marketing efforts globally, including digital, advertising, and brand positioning, as well as the development and execution of the line's marketing strategy.

Tarnowski has also previously worked for Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Silversea Cruises.



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line is set to be the star of tonight's episode of *Better Homes and Gardens* on Channel 7.

This Fri's instalment will chronicle Norwegian's return to Asia on *Norwegian Jewel*, on board an adventure hosted by Adam Dovile (pictured) and Melissa King.

Viewers will have a chance to win their own Asian cruise.



## Avalon adds Bordeaux

**AVALON** Waterways is setting sail in Bordeaux (pictured) next year with a new cruise and multiple combination sailings.

The cruise line this week announced new one-, two- and three-week sailings through Bordeaux with a new cruise on the Garonne and Dordogne rivers aboard *Avalon Artistry II*.

The Bonjour Bordeaux: Chateaux, Wineries & Charming Villages eight-day cruise starts and ends in the southwestern French city, with visits to Cadillac-sur-Garonne, Cussac-Fort-Medoc, Blaye, Bourg, and Libourne.

There are also multiple cruise combinations which include the Seine, Saone, Rhone, and Rhine, allowing cruisers to extend their time in France.

The addition of Bordeaux sees Avalon increase its French offering by 30%.

"Wine-lovers aren't the only cruisers raising a glass to Avalon's



new Bordeaux itineraries," President Pam Hoffee said.

"Along the shores of the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers, we're elevating immersive experiences for guests, offering them deeper discoveries of the richest traditions in Southwest France," she enthused.

"From unparalleled panoramic cruising aboard the *Avalon Artistry II* to on shore chateaux visits, Sauternes tastings and creme puff baking classes mixed with e-biking through vineyards and free time in postcard-perfect places like Saint-Emilion, Bourg and Arcachon, for Avalon guests in Bordeaux, the world is their oyster," Hoffee added. MS

## Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

Port	Cruise Ship	Departure Date
SYDNEY	<i>Norwegian Spirit</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Majestic Princess</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Noordam</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Norwegian Spirit</i>	10 Feb
MELBOURNE	<i>Resilient Lady</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Resilient Lady</i>	11 Feb
PENNESHAW	<i>Azamara Journey</i>	11 Feb
	<i>Disney Wonder</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Regatta Grand Princess</i>	10 Feb
BRISBANE	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	11 Feb
AIRLIE BEACH	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	26 Jan
	<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	28 Jan
HOBART	<i>Seabourn Odyssey</i>	10 Feb
DARWIN	<i>Volendam</i>	10 Feb
AUCKLAND	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Seabourn Sojourn</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Silver Shadow</i>	10 Feb
CHRISTCHURCH	<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Vasco Da Gama</i>	11 Feb
WELLINGTON	<i>Viking Orion</i>	09 Feb
	<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	10 Feb
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	11 Feb

## RCI last-minute deal

**ROYAL** Caribbean International (RCI) is offering last-minute deals on local sailings aboard *Quantum of the Seas*.

The offers are available in Feb and Mar for seven- and eight-night cruises to destinations in Queensland and the South Pacific.

Deals lead in from \$679 per person for an interior cabin - **CLICK HERE** for more info.

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