



### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Riviera Travel River Cruises**.

### Riviera Travel offer

**RIVIERA** Travel River Cruises has unveiled its latest bonus promotion, which offers \$1,000 per person off any 2024 or 2025 voyage of seven nights, or \$1,500 per person off any 2024 or 2025 sailing of 10-14 nights.

One of Riviera Travel's featured cruises is its 'Transylvania Castle Hops & Mountain Tops' voyage, which now retails from \$13,399pp.

Travel advisors who sell four river cruises can get a free voyage for themselves - for more information, head to **page 4**.

## MSC adds new Open Booking program

**MSC** Cruises has launched a new 'Open Booking' program, which will allow guests on board its fleet of ships to make a future reservation without the need to commit to a particular vessel, itinerary, or sailing date.

Open Booking allows guests to pay a reduced deposit of US\$100/€100/£100pp on board their cruise, following which they are given a certificate that allows them up to 12 months to choose their next sailing.

Guests receive up to US\$200/€200/£200 of onboard credit per cabin if they select their ship and departure date within 60 days of making their Open Booking.

They can also book within one year and still enjoy up to US\$100 in onboard credit.

The Open Booking can also be used as a gift for family members or friends before the ship and sail

date is chosen.

Travel advisors who made the original cruise reservation will also benefit from the Open Booking program, and receive full commission once the ship and sail date is selected.

The new scheme, which is set to launch in Australia soon, is set to complement MSC's 'Future Cruise' program (**CW** 26 Jul 2023), which was introduced last year,

and offers travel advisors full commission when their guest books their next sailing while on board a ship.

"We want to offer our guests more flexibility in choosing their next ship and sailing date and the Open Booking program gives guests on board up to a year to make that decision while earning future credit for their next holiday at sea," MSC said. *MS*



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**SYDNEY** | Tuesday 27 February

**MELBOURNE** | Thursday 29 February

**ADELAIDE** | Thursday 7 March

**BRISBANE** | Tuesday 12 March

**GOLD COAST** | Thursday 14 March

**PERTH** | Thursday 21 March

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## HAL room upgrade

**HOLLAND** America Line (HAL) has enhanced its Alaska cruisetours with a room upgrade at McKinley Chalet Resort, which will see land guests promoted to the Denali Suite balcony category.

## Firenze senior officers



**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line has welcomed on board its senior officers and lead entertainment team for *Carnival Firenze*, the latest addition to the company's fleet (**CW** 05 Feb).

Senior officers Captain Crescenzo Palomba, Chief Engineer Rosario Capilli and Hotel Director Renil Kuruvilla have joined the crew (**pictured**).

Meanwhile, Gordon Travel is *Firenze's* new Entertainment Director and Joey Boyes is the Cruise Director.

President Christine Duffy said she is certain this team is the perfect group to deliver the *Firenze* offering to her guests.

"Our inaugural team members launching Carnival Firenze are fortunate to work alongside some of the most skilled and

experienced leaders in the cruise industry," she added.

"This ship is a special addition to our fleet as we expand our operations on the West Coast (of the United States), where we already embark more guests than any other cruise line.

"We have a unique opportunity to bring our signature fun to a beautiful vessel inspired by the iconic city of Florence to our popular home port of Long Beach," Duffy said.

The Italian-themed *Firenze* promises a taste of 'la dolce vita' to her 5,000 guests, and will sail year-round from Long Beach, offering cruises to Mexico.

Carnival also recently ordered its fourth Excel Class ship, marking its first newbuild in five years (**CW** 14 Feb). *JHM*

## Explora chef award

**EXPLORA** Journeys Vice President Food & Beverage Alban Gjoka has been inducted into the prestigious Academie Culinaire de France.

Gjoka was awarded in New York City on 02 Feb.



  
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**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line is upping its efforts against one of its biggest onboard problems - chair-hogging.

The situation is one of the most complained-about on cruise ships, and Carnival has decided to crack down on it, introducing a new sticker system that reminds passengers "chairing is caring".

According to *Cruise Hive*, Carnival Brand Ambassador John Heald said crew members monitoring the pool deck are placing stickers on empty chairs which seemed to be saved with a towel, a book, a pair of flip flops, or any other personal item.

The sticker notes the time it was placed, and when personal items will be removed.

For the record, the sticker informs guests their belongings will be removed after 40 minutes - do you think this is too long?

## MSC cooking up a storm

**MSC** Cruises' 2024 World Cruise will welcome three celebrity chefs on board *MSC Poesia*.

South African celebrity chef Reuben Riffel, veteran Brazilian chef Allan Vila Espejo, and Swedish chef Niklas Ekstedt have been invited to join the second leg of the cruise, when they will craft special menus for guests.

Riffel will serve a menu inspired by local flavours, with guests having the chance to taste authentic cape spiced pickled fish, peppered Karoo lamb, and malva pudding.

Espejo will dish up authentic Manioc soup, Bahia-style fish stew with vegetables and coconut milk, and a traditional Brazilian chocolate coconut cake.

Ekstedt will plate up dishes inspired by natural ingredients and his farm-to-ocean ethos including poached lobster and confit salmon.

The chefs will also be on hand to greet guests in person as they taste their delicacies in *Poesia's* main restaurants.

The cruise has already circumnavigated Africa, and is set to visit 52 destinations across

more than 30 countries.

**MEANWHILE**, MSC has also announced it is the official partner of the 35th Alliance Francaise French Film Festival, which is set to grace cinemas across Australia from 05 Mar to 21 Apr.

"At MSC Cruises, we are honoured to join forces with the Alliance Francaise French Film Festival, a beacon of cultural diversity and unity," Marketing Manager Michelle Warren said.

"Just as the festival delves into a captivating array of films, MSC Cruises offers an unparalleled selection of ships and destinations, inviting travellers to embark on enriching journeys."

**FURTHERMORE**, the cruise line has also expanded its Contact Centre to further enhance its passengers' experience.

The Johannesburg-based customer service centre has added three members to its team to extend its service hours from Mon to Fri, 8am to 7pm, and Sat from 9am to 1pm.

The expansion underscores MSC's "unwavering dedication to elevating service standards". *MS*

## Celts & Vikings trip

**SWAN** Hellenic has unveiled its May and Jun Celts & Vikings cruises, offering three unique itineraries across the British Isles and Iceland.

All three cruises in the series are aboard Swan Hellenic's purpose-designed boutique ice-class ship *Vega*, with the first the 'Spirit of the Celts' which sails from Portsmouth to Dublin, visiting Fowey, Tresco, Bantry, Dingle, Galway, Killybegs, Iona, Stornoway, Loch Ewe, Oban, Portrush, and Rathlin Island.

The 11-night cruise departs on 24 May.

'In the Wake of Celts and Vikings' sails from Dublin to Reykjavik, visiting Iona, Portree, Ullapool, Stromness, Lerwick, Torshavn, Djupivogur, Grimsey, Akureyri, Isafjordur, Vigur, Dynjandi, and Latrabjarg, across 12 nights, departing 04 Jun.

'Iceland in Depth' is an eight-night round trip from Reykjavik which visits Dynjandi, Isafjordur, Vigur, Grimsey, Hrisey, Akureyri, Seydjsfjordur, Djupivogur, and Heimaey.

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Travel & Cruise Weekly







### BONUS PROMO

**\$1,000 AUD per person**  
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