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MORE VALUE

NCL's Free at Sea offers the best value at sea. With more included in our fare your clients get exceptional value and you get more commission.



MORE EARNINGS

At NCL we focus on Europe, Hawaii, Alaska & beyond. So our guests spend more, stay longer and add on flights and land. Which means more earnings for you.



MORE REWARDS

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Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a cover wrap from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

Best value at sea

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line offers the best value at sea, which means more for pax and more for travel advisors.

More value means Norwegian's Free at Sea offer, with more commission and more included in fares.

More earnings means guests spending more, staying longer, and adding flights and land, which means more earnings for travel advisors.

More rewards means selling more and getting more, with travel advisors able to earn points with Norwegian's exclusive rewards program - see the **cover page**.

AQV shuts down, Hornblower sold

AMERICAN Queen Voyages (AQV) has shut down, saying it has been unable to rebound from the effects of the pandemic (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

AQV has cancelled all future voyages and is offering its booked passengers refunds, saying it has become "financially unsustainable" since COVID-19.

"We are deeply proud of our crew and the outstanding travel experiences and service we have provided to our guests," a statement posted on the AQV website says.

"As we reflect on the journey we have shared over the years, we are filled with gratitude for the privilege of serving our guests, partners, and agents and for being part of our incredible local communities," AQV added.

"It has been an honour to bring joy to so many lives, and we are deeply touched by the

relationships we have formed and the memorable experiences we have created."

Those wishing to apply for a refund from AQV are encouraged to visit aqvrefunds.com, which at time of publication was down.

The cruise line was owned by Hornblower Group, which overnight announced it is being acquired by investment firm Strategic Value Partners (SVP), which will provide the company with a new equity expenditure.

SVP will become a majority owner of Hornblower, with Crestview Partners to maintain a significant but minority holding.

The new majority owner said it will attempt to sell AQV, and if this cannot be achieved, it will wind the line down.

"The steps we are taking today will enable us to address AQV and strengthen our financial foundation as we

continue serving our guests and commuters around the world," Hornblower Chief Executive Officer Kevin Rabbitt said.

"With the support of our financial stakeholders, we will continue to advance our business initiatives and drive growth."

Crestview Partners will also become the sole owner of Journey Beyond, which was previously a stand-alone operating unit of Hornblower.

Journey Beyond (JB) is operating normally and continuing to serve guests as usual, which will include contacting Aussie AQV pax.

JB said it is committed to refunding any deposited money received from AQV guests, and is working through impacted agents and guests in order of departure.

Head to **CW's** sister title **TD** for more information on the effect of Crestview's sole ownership on Journey Beyond. **MS**

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PASSENGERS on board a Northern Lights and whale-watching vessel in Norway recently were treated to a rare sight - and no, it was not the aurora borealis.

Passengers encountered a pod of whales, as one might expect, but not the type they were anticipating.

News.com.au's Shireen Khalil, who was on board the vessel, said the pod of sperm whales (**pictured**) is a species which is not known to frequent the Norwegian Sea.

"Historically, they just never come here and there's no deep trenches apart from the trench outside of Andenes which is just south of here," one of the ship's expedition leaders said.



APT Seabourn partnership

APT and Seabourn Cruise Line have announced an exclusive, multi-year luxury expedition partnership, which will set sail in 2025/26.

The pact will see APT charter Seabourn's two expedition vessels, *Seabourn Venture* (**pictured**) and *Seabourn Pursuit*, for cruises in the Kimberley, as well as the UK, Iceland, Greenland, and Antarctica.

The new 10-day Kimberley Coastal Expedition visits the region's majestic natural wonders including King George Falls, Bigge Island, Mitchell Falls, Montgomery Reef, Horizontal Falls, and more.

Prices start from \$11,995 per person with early bird savings of up to \$7,600 per couple, and 30% off selected cabin upgrades.

Cruises are on sale now for Northern Europe, the Arctic and the Kimberley in 2025, with APT's brand-new Antarctica itineraries set to launch in early Mar for 2026 departures.

The announcement was made in Sydney yesterday on board *Seabourn Odyssey*, with the cruise line's President Natalya Leahy in town.



"We are delighted to join forces with APT, a trusted name in the travel industry renowned for its commitment to excellence.

"Seabourn is known for offering the pinnacle of ultra-luxury experiences, and we look forward to sharing this with APT guests.

"Together, we're excited to offer travellers exclusive opportunities to explore the world in unprecedented luxury."

APT Travel Group Chief Executive Officer David Cox said the tour operator is excited to embark on this new journey with Seabourn to create unforgettable experiences for its guests.

"This collaboration represents a significant milestone for both companies as we elevate the luxury experience for our guests in partnership with Seabourn," he said. *MS*

HLO's faith in cruise

INCREASED cruise capacity will continue throughout the fiscal year, Helloworld believes, in response to ongoing strong traveller demand, both in Australia and globally.

Helloworld expects to see more local capacity, the travel agency predicted in its interim financial results for the half year ended 31 Dec.

"The year ahead is looking very positive for continued travel growth, driven by increased capacity from airlines and cruise operators globally, and the superb service from our travel agents and brokers throughout Australia," Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director Andrew Burnes said.

Cruise also continues to be a key driver of Helloworld's wholesale division's total transaction value and revenue, as more lines come to Australia, and invest heavily in market activities for their overseas voyages.

"These half-year results are a demonstration of the strong demand for leisure travel that is continuing," Burnes said.

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