



Odell back at RSSC

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has appointed Steve Odell (**pictured**) as its new global Chief Sales Officer (**CW** breaking news Sat), just over 12 months after he retired from his role as the cruise line's Managing Director APAC (**CW** 16 Dec 2022).

The 35-year cruise industry veteran officially assumed his new role today, which will see him responsible for RSSC's sales, including maximising opportunities across all booking distribution channels and deepening travel partner relationships.

It is understood he will be relocating to Miami to work from RSSC's head office, and will report directly into President Andrea DeMarco.

"I couldn't be happier to be returning to Regent at such an exciting time for the brand having just launched the sixth ship of the world's most luxurious fleet, *Seven Seas Grandeur*," Odell said.

"The growth of the Regent fleet represents a tremendous opportunity for our fantastic travel advisors around the world and I look forward to growing our luxury cruise business."

DeMarco said Odell is a key appointment for RSSC.

"I'm thrilled to welcome Steve back into the Regent family, whose insight, knowledge and contacts within the luxury travel space will continue to allow us to position Regent for long-term success," she said.

Odell first joined Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings in 2015 (**CW** 20 Nov 2015) to spearhead the launch of the company's Asia Pacific office.

He transitioned to focus on RSSC and sister brand Oceania Cruises in 2019, centring on the two lines' strategic expansion, vision, and growth.

Finalists announced for CLIA Awards

THE countdown to the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Cruise Industry Awards has begun, with today's announcement of finalists.

A total of 79 nominees have been chosen, and will be in the running to win one of cruising's highest honours at CLIA's 21st Awards in Mar.

More than 800 entries were received for this year's awards with 18 categories to be judged, including 11 open to self-nomination or peer-nomination.

Managing Director Joel Katz said this year's award nominations reflected this region's growing community of successful agents.

"This year's nominees include not only the most successful and high-profile travel agents in our community, but also a new and determined generation of travel agents who are part of our expanded CLIA membership," Katz said.

"All these travel agents have been a big part of the spectacular comeback cruising has achieved... our 21st Cruise Industry Awards will recognise their enormous contribution."

Finalists for the Large Cruise Agency of the Year award are Phil Hoffmann Travel, Ignite Travel Group, RAA Travel, Bicton Travel/Claremont Cruise & Travel Centre, and Hunter Travel Group.

Small Cruise Agency of the Year nominees include Cruise Express, Main Beach Travel, Travelrite International, itravel Carlingford, and Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel in Noosa Heads.

Online Cruise Agency of the Year will be contested between Cruise Guru, Clean Cruising. Our Vacation Centre, cruisedeals.co.nz, Ecrusing, and Trip-A-Deal.

Individual categories include Cruise Consultant of the Year, which will be contested by Kara Lane, Ecrusing, Alison Lord, Travel Associates Turrumurra., Martine Hero, Clean Cruising,



Elizabeth Madsen, Flight Centre Kenmore, and Byron Horne, Bicton Travel.

Meanwhile, the Rising Star Award finalists are Kai Floto, Southlands Travel & Cruise, Paige Cameron, My Cruises, Mitchell Tam, Phil Hoffmann Travel, Ben Chidgzev, Bicton Travel, and Vanessa Sokolji, Flight Centre Epping Plaza.

There are also four technical and media categories up for grabs, led by Cruise Month Promotion of the Year.

Recognised as finalists are House of Travel, for its "Omnichannel 2023 Cruise Month Promotion"; Cruise Express, for its "Embracing CLIA Cruise Month"; MTA, with its "What's Your Cruise Personality Quiz"; Rose Febo, and her "Seas The Day" promotion; and My Cruises, which ran the "My Cruises Cruise Month and 24/25 Earlybird Campaign."

Four members of the mainstream media are also being recognised for their work in promoting cruise in Australia.

Finalists of the Media Award are Brian Johnston from Traveller, for his article "Smooth sailing: Who's who in a cruise ship crew"; Andrea Black from Escape, with "Only on a cruise"; Kate Armstrong with Traveller, and

"The Alaskan glacier that makes Game of Thrones' Wall seem feeble", and Imogen Eveson, International Traveller, who wrote, "The New Wave".

Winners will be announced at The Star, Sydney (**pictured**) on 09 Mar, in a ceremony hosted by actor Tim Campbell. *MS*



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P&O to bring Australia together

P&O Cruises Australia is inspiring Aussies to set sail on a journey of meaningful connection with its new brand platform, 'Brings Us All Together'.

Appealing to those seeking genuine connections on their next holiday, the new brand platform launches as P&O Australia embarks on an ambitious season of sailings, taking a record half a million guests on around 180 sailings visiting 46 destinations.

The new brand platform has been created in partnership with creative studio Supermassive, and celebrates P&O's distinctive ability to help foster deeper connections among families, friends and loved ones, as well as their fellow passengers.

P&O engaged Cameron Bruce, musical supervisor on the epic biographical drama film *Elvis*, to unveil the new platform.

Bruce created a new choral



arrangement of Fleetwood Mac's *Everywhere*, sung en masse by a 300-strong choir comprised of local singing groups, past guests, and P&O fans, while on board *Pacific Encounter* in Nov, off the Queensland coast.

The live performance, directed by Justin McMillan, forms the heart of P&O's new brand campaign, which is live across multiple platforms from today.

The track will also be available to stream, and will be integrated into all future Sail Away parties, which brings all guests together

to celebrate the beginning of their voyage.

"P&O has long enjoyed unparalleled awareness, consideration, and preference in the Australian cruise market. 'Brings Us All Together' presents an exciting opportunity to further differentiate P&O across the cruise and travel landscape by welcoming new guests on board our cruise ships who are searching for an authentic and connected holiday experience," Chief Commercial Officer, Kathryn Robertson said. *MS*

Spain cruise fracas

SPAIN'S attempt to limit cruise ship visitation is facing legal challenges, with government officials saying there is no legal standing to approve the restrictions.

Two congressional deputies had sought answers to government plans to manage responsible levels of cruise tourism, according to reports.

The deputies want a stricter regulatory framework to manage cruise ship traffic and its environmental impacts.

The government said prior agreement is first required with cruise lines, industry service providers, and others.

The national moves come as Barcelona's local government proceeds with cruise ship limits, having recently closed its Terminal South at the World Trade Center Barcelona (*CW* 10 Oct).

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THIS is why you always have champagne on hand!

A champagne bottle has plugged a hole in a row boat which opened up following a marlin attack.

The rowing crew was partway through the 3,000-mile challenge called the 'The World's Toughest Row', from San Sebastian to Antigua.

The boat was punctured in three places by the marlin, with the women saying the ordeal was "utterly terrifying".

She said they had the champagne from Christmas Day and New Year's Eve.

"I saw the fish coming at the boat and then we heard a crunch," one of the women told the media.

"It happened so quickly and our training kicked in we tried to utilise what we had on board to save our journey."

"The poor marlin fish must have got a massive headache."

Cruising figures triple

ONE in four Australians will go on a cruise this year, according to new research from the Tourism & Transport Forum, as passenger numbers surge.

Cruise figures have more than tripled since last year, according to a national survey of 2,000 Australians, which revealed the percentage of us who plan to cruise this year has risen from 7% to 26% in the past 12 months.

Millennials and Generation Z are driving the increased demand, with 35% of Australians under 35 planning to cruise this year, versus 18% of over 65s.

More than a quarter of Australians are also "cruise curious", meaning they have never been on a cruise before, but are now considering it.

The most cruise curious Australians are those under age 35, and are most likely to be from the NT or New South Wales.

Chief Executive Officer Margy Osmond said the news is welcome for the tourism industry, with cruise ships increasing tourism spending onshore.

She said the results of the survey prove any misconception

cruises are only for retirees and families is outdated.

"Cruises offer great value for money, which Australians care about now more than ever," Osmond said.

"Combined with all the exciting new experiences available in Australia's cruise sector, that's why we're seeing cruising take off," she added.

"We need government to work with industry to further support the cruise sector, to make sure the increased appetite for cruise holidays can be met and to help boost the economy."

Far North Queensland topped the list of most popular Australian cruise destinations for this year, followed by Tasmania, and Sydney, while Kangaroo Island also scored highly.

Osmond said this is a great result for FNQ tourism operators, who lost revenue due to the floods and cyclone over the holidays.

New Zealand is the most popular overseas cruise destination for this year, followed closely by Europe, and other Pacific islands, including Fiji. *MS*

MSC adds Texas

MSC Cruises is further expanding its American footprint with the opening of its new home port in Texas (*CW* 22 Dec 2022).

Galveston is MSC's fourth American home port, with departures to begin in Nov 2025 with seven-night sailings onboard *MSC Seascape*.

The cruise line today opened sales for the year-round sailings from the port, with destinations highlights including Costa Maya, Cozumel, and Roatan.

"This announcement is the latest step in our strategy to continue to grow our US footprint," Chief Executive Officer Gianni Onorato said.

"Earlier this year we began operations from our third US home port, New York City, where we now sail year-round, and we are proud to add Galveston to that growing line-up alongside PortMiami and Port Canaveral."

"We are committed to bringing our newest, largest, most innovative ships to the US," he added.



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