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### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Norwegian offer

**ENJOY** the best value at sea with Norwegian Cruise Line. Passengers can score up to 50% off cruises, a free beverage package, and more. Meanwhile, travel advisors can double their money on all Norwegian sailings by registering their bookings with Partners First Rewards between 01 Jan and 31 Mar. Head to the **cover page** for more information.

## Ama announces Aussie team



**AMAWATERWAYS** has introduced its Australian-based sales and marketing team, which will be led by newly appointed Managing Director Steve Richards (**CW** 18 Dec 2023).

He will be joined by Head of Reservations Ian Lyne and Head of Marketing Angela Smith, who will lead their teams.

AmaWaterways' Australian line-up will be completed by three Regional Sales Managers including Brisbane-based Christine Oliver, who will manage Queensland, Western Australia, and the NT.

Kim Vaughan, who is based in Melbourne, will have responsibility for Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania.

They will be joined by Kylie Chapman, based in Sydney, who is responsible for New South Wales and the ACT.

The new team started onboarding yesterday, but is already taking reservations via the United States-based call centre, which will continue supporting the team until the local reservations centre is operational later this quarter.

Travel advisors will be able to reserve next year's river cruises through AmaWaterways' Australian team on more than 35 itineraries across a fleet of almost 30 ships operating in Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America.

"I'm thrilled with the dream team we have brought together

to launch AmaWaterways' full range of remarkable river cruises to the Australian market," co-owner Gary Murphy said.

"Our company was founded 22 years ago with the mission to offer our guests elegantly appointed ships; highest-quality, locally sourced food and wine; a choice of thoughtfully curated daily excursions; and a crew who goes above and beyond, treating every guest like they are part of our family."

Richards said AmaWaterways has an "incredible opportunity" to now offer its entire product range in the Australian market.

"We're a pioneering company at heart, and along with new itineraries and exploring a new river (Colombia's Magdalena River) this year, sharing the AmaWaterways experience with valued travel partners in Australia is yet another step in the journey we're so excited to be taking."

The new AmaWaterways Managing Director last month told **Cruise Weekly** there is already a "huge amount of interest" in the line (**CW** 15 Dec), following its announcement in Sep it will enter the Australian market (**CW** 22 Sep 2023).

Murphy in Aug revealed to **Cruise Weekly** its long-time partner and shareholder Australian Pacific Holdings, parent company of APT Travel Group, had chosen not to charter its ships past 2024. *MS*

### New FCTG GM

**FORMER** Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) executive Bradley Kennedy has returned to the company as Cruiseabout General Manager.

Kennedy was formerly FCTG General Manager Queensland/Northern NSW where he led the Flight Centre brand.

His first stint with FCTG also saw him represent the Universal Traveller/Student Flights marque as National Sales & Operations Manager and Brand Leader.

Kennedy will continue to be based in Brisbane, and told LinkedIn he was happy to be returning to FCTG, where he thought he would be a "Flighty for life" prior to COVID.

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## B-Corp about “continuous improvement”

### EXCLUSIVE

**AURORA** Expeditions will strive for “continuous improvement” following its official certification as a B Corporation (*CW* yesterday), with the line attempting to improve upon its score from its initial verification.

Chief Executive Officer Michael Heath (**pictured**) told *Cruise Weekly* Aurora views the certification, which will be recertified every three years, as a building block for its wider sustainability program.

“It’s about continuous improvement, so yes, we’ve been given certification, and yes, they’ve looked across all those areas that we outline, but really, it’s about us continuing to improve upon what we currently do,” Heath explained.

“While we’ve achieved this first stage, which has been



certification, now it’s about, ‘how do we continue to build on and improve on all those things, how do we make sure that we’re constantly looking to do better on what we’re doing?’”

The three-year certification process saw Aurora take roughly a year to scope through the hundreds of questions which query every facet of its business, Sustainability Manager Sasha Buch outlined.

The process, she explained, scoped out what Aurora had to achieve to attain B Corp certification, and what it had already realised.

Organising all of Aurora’s documents and legal papers to be audited took another year, and the certification process itself took another 12 months, following which the cruise line was named one of the first in its sector to be B Corp certified. *MS*

## Say aloha to NCL

**DISCOUNTS** of up to 50% off Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) sailings to Hawaii is currently available for a limited time.

The 50% off all Hawaii cruises promotion can also be combined with NCL’s value-added Free at Sea program, which includes a complimentary beverage package with premium drinks and cocktails, \$50 shore excursion credit per port per stateroom, the speciality dining package, and wi-fi.

NCL’s *Pride of America* sails round trip from Honolulu year-round, as the only United States-flagged cruise ship, visiting Kahului, Hilo, Kona, and Nawiliwili.

The line also recently announced it is returning to Southern Africa for its longest season in the region to date (*CW* 24 Jan).



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**MICKEY** and Minnie Mouse have debuted new Bahamian-inspired designer outfits (**pictured**), which have exclusively been created for Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point on Disney Cruise Line's island destination.

The garments are specially created by acclaimed local fashion designer, Theodore Elyett with a distinct Bahamian flair inspired by the bright, colourful spirit of Junkanoo, the country's signature festival. Theodore's creations reflect "the culture and colourful hues of island life" of the Disney private destination.



## Just in the nicko time



**GERMAN** cruise line nicko cruises is visiting Australia for the first time this month, with local travel advisors invited on board its flagship last week.

The 1,000-guest *Vasco da Gama* is currently sailing on an around-the-world cruise, which departed Lisbon in Oct.

*Vasco da Gama*, which has previously visited Australia sailing for the now-defunct Cruise & Maritime Voyages, called at the country for the first time with nicko earlier in Jan in Darwin.

The vessel then called in Cooktown, Cairns, and Townsville, before arriving in Brisbane and Sydney, where groups of travel

advisors were invited for lunch aboard the ship (**pictured**).

Cruise Traveller, which is the exclusive representative for nicko in Australia, hosted the group, with Managing Director Joseph O'Sullivan and NSW Partnership Manager Julie Donaldson introducing agents to Captain Adrian Firsov in Sydney.

The travel advisors viewed *Vasco da Gama's* staterooms and public areas, and were even lucky enough to visit the bridge.

She arrived in Eden yesterday following her visit to Sydney, and will tomorrow call at Melbourne, before visits to Burnie, Port Arthur, and Hobart. *MS*

## Get a taste of this

**OCEANIA** Cruises is teaming up with American monthly magazine *Food & Wine* for an Editor's cruise on board *Riviera* this Sep.

The 10-day sailing from Barcelona to Athens will cruise with *Food & Wine's* Editor Hunter Lewis, who will conduct a culinary demonstration on board.

The cruise will call in epicurean hotspots across the Mediterranean, including Saint-Tropez, Rome, and Naples, and will feature Oceania's signature gala brunch, an exclusive Dom Perignon Experience at La Reserve, and more.

Cruise highlights will include two destination-focused Chef's Market Dinners, which will feature locally inspired dishes made with ingredients from markets in the port.

Other special guests on board include champagne, wine, and food writer J'nai Gaither, and American journalist Alex Prud'homme, who is the great-nephew of Julia Child.

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