



CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Cruise Weekly today

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

HX charts ESG wins

HX HAS published its *ESG Report 2023*, with the cruise line receiving the best ESG Ranking of a Cruise Company from Morningstar Sustainalytics - the only one to be awarded a 'low risk rating'.

The cruise line has reduced its scope 1 emissions per available guest night by 18% since 2022, despite an accompanying 10% increase in distance travelled.

The former Hurtigruten Expeditions has also managed a 20% reduction in total waste, which translates to a more than 30% reduction in waste per available guest night, given increased sailings last year.

MSC plans trade crusade

EXCLUSIVE

TRAVEL agents can expect to see and hear much more from MSC Cruises in the near future as the line begins an ambitious plan to triple its Australian sales figures in the next two years.

That's the bold objective of MSC Cruises Vice President of International Sales, Antonio Paradiso, who is this week visiting Australia for the first time since taking control of the Australasia market (*CW* 25 Jan).

Speaking exclusively to *Cruise Weekly* yesterday, Paradiso said these goals can be achieved by investing in the trade.

"We need to build closer relationships with the trade and understand their businesses.

"I've had quite a few meetings already and what I've learned is exciting," Paradiso said.

"We mean business - we are here to listen, to learn, to adapt

and to guide them."

Paradiso added he was excited by the opportunities available in the Australia market and "can't wait to implement them".

Webinars was one such avenue Paradiso described as a quick and effective tool to engage with the trade community.

"In the UK, I did one webinar each day - it's the quickest route to market," Paradiso said.

In Australia, MSC Cruises conducts around one webinar per month and agents can expect this to gradually climb to weekly.

Paradiso added that during the pandemic, MSC Cruises realised it wasn't maximising its use of technology and by increasing the frequency, it gave hope to travel agents with messages like 'don't panic, we're getting there'.

"That's the type of relationship I have with trade and I will accept nothing less in Australia." *ML*



On location in Ecuador

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of HX, which is hosting us aboard *Santa Cruz II* this week on a cruise around the Galapagos Islands.

HX'S ground operator, Metropolitan Touring, will be showing us around Ecuador's capital of Quito today.

The small group is set to enjoy lunch today at an authentic Ecuadorian restaurant (guinea pig, anyone?) and participate in a traditional "limpia" cleansing ceremony.

Tomorrow on our last day on the mainland, we are set to visit Quito's Old Town, and Middle of the World City, which marks the equatorial line for which the country is named.

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COULD this be a future shore excursion for cruise lines?

Kayakers have taken to the Seine to help clean the river of pollution ahead of the upcoming Olympic Games.

Officials organising the event have scheduled rowing to take place in the river, from which swimming has been banned for more than 100 years due to unsafe pollution levels.

The effort has now seen a number of kayakers paddle the river with nylon stockings attached to the side of their boats, in hopes it will improve the water quality.

However, experts are warning just one rainy day in the two to three weeks preceding the Olympics could see the events cancelled due to the risk of e. coli - that's a pretty hefty bet!

Pass the Dutch HAL

HOLLAND America Line will introduce a new 'Dutch Day' celebration onboard to mark its origins in the Netherlands.

Available on sailings in Asia, Europe, the Caribbean and Alaska, Dutch Day will include a themed dinner in the main dining room, coinciding with the line's popular Orange Party.

A new partnership with Dutch dessert brand Daelmans Stroopwafel will see one of the delicious treats placed in every stateroom during turn-down.

Carnival Firenze goes Long



CARNIVAL Cruise Line has said "buongiorno" to its new ship *Carnival Firenze*, which was named last week in Long Beach.

It is the fifth new ship Carnival has added to its fleet in the past 18 months, with *Firenze* arriving just ahead of the cruise line's busy northern summer season.

American actor Jonathan Bennett (**pictured left**) served as *Firenze's* Godfather, with he and President Christine Duffy leading the naming of the new ship.

The ceremony included the spectacle of a Catholic priest making a running jump onto the stage to deliver a blessing to *Firenze* and all who sail on her.

It also included a performance of the aria *Nessun dorma* by Carnival's Playlist Productions cast, and was capped off by a performance by Leslie Kritzer, Bennett's co-star from the recent Broadway revival of *Spamalot*.

The 5,000-guest ship will sail year-round from Long Beach, as Carnival aims to solidify its position as the leading cruise line in California.

Like her sister ship *Carnival Venezia*, *Firenze* features new concepts and experiences which

put an Italian-style twist on Carnival's offering.

The ship is the first in the fleet to usher in new technology and harnesses artificial intelligence, which creates guides for optimal, energy-saving routes.

Firenze is also the latest Carnival vessel to utilise shorepower, joining *Carnival Panorama* and *Carnival Radiance* in being able to connect to a port's grid. *MS*

European Ascent

CELEBRITY Cruises' *Celebrity Ascent* has kicked off her first European summer season, arriving in Barcelona this past weekend after a nine-night Italy and France voyage.

Guests enjoyed iconic Mediterranean cities such as Florence and Pisa along with an overnight call in La Spezia.

Ascent's season will offer seven- to 12-night escapes in the Mediterranean, Aegean and Atlantic, departing from Barcelona, Rome and Athens.

The new Celebrity ship's Euro debut comes following the line's exciting new brand launch (**CW** 17 Apr).



CLIA UPDATE
 with Joel Katz
 MD, CLIA Australasia

Fiji leads a Pacific view

AUSTRALIA'S South Pacific neighbours are a big part of cruising's success, which is why it's important for our industry to take a whole-of-region view as we look to the future.

This week, cruise industry leaders are gathering in Nadi for the Fiji Cruise Symposium – part of Fiji's Tourism Super Week – where a big focus will be on the collaborations needed to foster a thriving and sustainable Pacific tourism sector.

Discussions will not only look at Fiji's own vision for prosperity, but also the wider region's development as a chain of interdependent destinations.

We will discuss global issues like our mission to decarbonise cruising, as well as local actions like sourcing quality food from local farmers and suppliers.

New Zealand is another essential component of our regional cruise economy, and last week CLIA released figures showing the Kiwi cruise market is making good progress.

About 86,300 New Zealanders took an ocean cruise during 2023, which is about 80% of pre-pandemic levels.

Though the outlook for cruising is positive, ongoing success is not guaranteed - collaboration among governments, ports and destinations is vital.

