

# CRUISE



WEEKLY

AGENT  
UPDATE

Thursday 12 January 2017

## Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

## Ovation in Syd 2021?

**ROYAL** Caribbean International has reserved space at Sydney's OPT for *Ovation of the Seas* through to Dec 2021.

Australian sailings for *Ovation* have currently only been released up to Mar 2018, but according to the Port Authority of NSW's schedule, *Ovation* is planned to return in Dec 2018.

The megaliner is scheduled to make four calls into Sydney from Dec 2018-Feb 2019 and a whopping 12 between 30 Nov 2019-26 Dec 2020, before dropping off for nearly a year, appearing again 04 Dec 2021.

At the vessel's debut in Sydney in Dec, Adam Armstrong, RCI md ANZ told **CW** he could see the vessel returning "for many years".

## NCLH Aussie expansion

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) plans to boost the size of its Australian business this year and is appointing a dedicated sales team for Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, **Cruise Weekly** can exclusively reveal.

The Oceania and Regent sales teams will be split in two from Mar, and each will have a vp sales and dedicated regional bdms.

Previously vp sales for both brands, Lisa Pile will concentrate on Regent while a mystery "high profile" sales person will head up the Oceania Cruises team.

The strategy will see the company's Australian headcount increase by five and is part of the goal to grow its Aussie business by 50% this year, on the back of a 30% boost in 2016.

"We had our core business which was manageable with one joint team but the business has

grown so dramatically...having dedicated people to sell them is the most sensible thing to do at this point," Steve Odell, svp and md Asia Pacific of NCLH told **CW**.

NCLH is looking to take a big share of business homeporting out of Sydney when *Norwegian Jewel* arrives in Nov.

Other drivers of growth for the business include the capacity boost from the addition of *Seven Seas Explorer* in Jul, which was "pretty much full" last year, along with *Sirena's* debut in Apr.

Australia is the highest yielding market for NCLH and the region takes the cake for the fastest growing market, Odell explained.

"The company looks at us in a very positive way because we're not only bringing high prices but we're bringing early booking curve," he said.

The NCLH office in Sydney opened in 2015.

## Aurora's new ceo

**AURORA** Expeditions has confirmed ex-Rocky Mountaineer APAC director of sales, Robert Halfpenny has been appointed ceo (**CW** 22 Dec).

He will take up the role on 01 Feb, replacing Lisa Bolton who stepped down in Sep and is now ceo of Oceanswims Australia.

## Discovery at Sea rejig

**PRINCESS** Cruises has unveiled plans to plough millions of dollars into expanding its Discovery of Sea youth centre program, incl new experiences and centres.

Program implementation will commence early this year and be fully adopted fleet-wide through 2018 during scheduled ship renovations.

There will be three themes, including The Treehouse for kids aged 3-7, The Lodge for ages 8-12 and The Beach House for youth aged 13 to 17.

The advertisement features a large, stylized 'BIG' in the background. The 'B' contains a photo of a man in a chef's hat, and the 'G' contains a photo of a cruise ship. The text 'Live Life' is written in a cursive font above the 'BIG'. Below the 'BIG' is the text 'NEW YEAR SALE' in large, bold, orange letters. Underneath that, the text 'SAVE up to 30%' is followed by a plus sign, 'up to \$400 ONBOARD CREDIT', another plus sign, and '50% DEPOSITS'. At the bottom, there is a yellow button that says 'LEARN MORE' and the Royal Caribbean International logo. The background is a deep blue with a tropical island scene and a woman in a blue dress on the right.

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## Carnival beach stop

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line has added a private beach destination in the Bahamas to the itineraries of six ships, beginning in May.

Located on the southern tip of the island of Eleuthera, Princess Cays is a white sand beach and watersport base operated by sister brand Princess Cruises.

Around 40 calls are planned by Carnival this year, along with a further 98 in 2018.

The 16-hectare facility includes an observation tower, bars, restaurants, retail stores and private bungalows.

It will feature on several different itineraries of 4-8 days.

**MEANWHILE**, Carnival Cruise Line has announced the appointment of Sean Kenny as senior vice president and chief information officer.

## Meadows champions agents

**THE** president of luxury cruise line Seabourn, Rick Meadows, believes agents are making a comeback in the USA in the face of online competition, offering a more personalised and qualified service.

Meadows said frontline sellers played a key role for Seabourn, talking down suggestions that travel agents were losing out to online travel companies.

"Travel agents are still huge in the US," Meadows told **CW**.

"I personally think there is a rise in the role of the travel agent in America, which is great to see.

"When you look at the health of the travel distribution system in the US, there are more and more travel professionals that have really made their mark and identified how to be really successful."

Speaking exclusively with **Cruise Weekly** in Singapore last weekend, Meadows, himself a former travel agent, said: "For us, the Seabourn experience has



a far greater distribution through our travel agent partners because they add so much more value in the booking process.

"They are able to articulate who we are and what we are all about.

"You're not going to get all that subtly from an online booking."

He added he was excited by how the travel industry in North America had become "more potent" over the last few years.

"It's a positive shift."

Meadows is **pictured** (right) aboard *Seabourn Encore* with recently appointed senior vice president of global sales and marketing, Chris Austin.

## Ft Lauderdale toll

**FOUR** of five people killed last week at Fort Lauderdale Airport after a crazed gunman went wild at a baggage carousel were in Florida to embark on a cruise, *Heavy* reports.

Victims Michael Oehme, Terry Andres, Olga Woltering & Shirley Timmons (who was celebrating her 51st wedding anniversary with her husband, Steve Timmons - also shot) were all about to join a cruise from Port Everglades.



**CRUISE** visitors to the islands of Cape Verde might find the beaches a little tidier than most thanks to a local man's passion for recycling.

Painter Alcindo Almedia Soares has created a free gym on the isle of Santa Maria by constructing equipment entirely from recycled junk.

In his spare time Soares gathered materials from local beaches to build his gym, which is now the subject of a short video by film-maker Roger Serrasqueiro.

**CLICK HERE** to watch.

## President's Cruise

**CRYSTAL** chairman, president and ceo Edie Rodriguez will host the company's annual President Cruise aboard *Crystal Symphony*.

The voyage from Rome to Dubai on 04 Nov marks the return of Crystal's ocean ships to the Holy Land & is priced from \$4,750ppts.

## CCC Aus Day luncheon

**TICKETS** for Captain Cook Cruises' range of Australia Day Lunch Cruises on Sydney Harbour are on sale from \$99pp (normally \$139pp) on *MV John Cadman 2*.

Other options on 26 Jan are available on *MV Sydney 2000*.

Details at [captaincook.com.au](http://captaincook.com.au).

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## New Bliss details

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line has revealed its next newbuild, *Norwegian Bliss*, will homeport at PortMiami from Nov 2018.

Following her inaugural summer season in Alaska, the vessel will sail seven-day Eastern Caribbean cruises each Sat out of Miami, calling into St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands; Tortola, British Virgin Islands and Nassau, Bahamas.

*Norwegian Bliss* will feature an 180 degree Observation Lounge spanning 1,858m<sup>2</sup>, while guests staying in the Haven will have their own two-storey Haven Observation Lounge.

Accommodation options will include rooms designed for solo travellers, family-friendly connecting rooms and suites.

For renders of *Norwegian Bliss*, see **Cruise Weekly's FACEBOOK**.

## Crystal shows off new team



**HERE** are the faces of the new Crystal team based in the Sydney office, headed up by Karen Christensen as svp and md.

**Pictured** in the back row are:

Cathy Tees, vp sales; Courtney Duddlestone, finance and human resources supervisor; Amelya Grey, bdm; Karen Christensen, svp and md, Australia and New Zealand; Amber Reid, sales & marketing coordinator and Kim Taylor, vp marketing and PR.

Seated are: Michelle Tomkinson, reservations consultant; Richard Miller, reservations consultant; Wanda Ferrand, operations manager and Maggie Staines, reservations consultant.

## Regent returns to Sydney



**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises returned to Sydney Harbour this morning, with the arrival of the newly refurbished *Seven Seas Voyager* (pictured above).

*Voyager* underwent a 25-day refurbishment as part of the

brand's US\$125 million fleet-wide refurb program in late 2016.

Today she commences a 14-night Sydney to Auckland sailing, after which she will embark on a 25-night sailing from Auckland to Singapore.



## South Pacific synergies

2017 is supposedly the year for new beginnings and we are delighted to start the year right by welcoming back New Caledonia as an ACA member. Members since 2001, they had taken a one year absence. "We re-joined ACA because the cruise industry in New Caledonia is growing quickly and it is in our best interests to work strategically with Australia, our closest neighbour" said Jean-Michel Foutrein.

New Caledonia is just one of our South Pacific members which also include Papua New Guinea (2005), The Solomon Islands (2006), Indonesia (2009) and a longstanding MoU with Cruise NZ. We are delighted to have such a diverse regional representation which allows us to share our knowledge, expand itinerary options, and deliver consistency with our shore experiences. Working co-operatively in these areas helps us to strengthen the region as a year round cruise destination which is obviously attractive for the cruise lines.

This year we will also have a united presence at Seatrade Global in Florida with NC, NZ, PNG and Australia sharing one stand. We will get together in advance to develop future strategies and meet with other global cruise associations such as Cruise Europe. I spoke with Alcinda Trawen recently from PNG Tourism who reinforced the benefits of working together saying "Being a part of ACA has allowed us additional exposure in the broader region through networking, participation in Seatrade and the ACA Conferences. All have been fruitful in increasing PNG's exposure as an emerging cruise destination".

## UnCruise wellness

**SEATTLE-BASED** small ship operator UnCruise Adventures is offering a series of three week-long wellness themed cruises to Alaska during Apr.

The departures will feature certified trainers, nutritionists, skincare experts and yoga teachers aboard the 74-guest *Wilderness Explorer* and 60-guest *Wilderness Adventurer*.

Another wellness cruise will operate to Mexico's Sea of Cortes on aboard the 84-guest *Safari Endeavour* in Dec.

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