

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

Splendor on sale

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has opened sales for the first of *Carnival Splendor's* local sailings in 2019.

The departures between 25 Nov and 28 Dec will follow the ship's significant drydock in Singapore, where she'll receive features which cater to the Australian market, including new dining experiences and a new waterpark.

The first departure is a repositioning cruise from Singapore to Sydney and is followed by three sailings from Sydney to the South Pacific.

Bookings for *Carnival Splendor's* 2020 sailings will open in Jun.

2019/20 to be Princess' biggest yet

PRINCESS Cruises will embark on its largest ever Australian and New Zealand deployment in 2019/20, with five ships to homeport out of six cities.

The 900+ day deployment will see over 125 departures offered across Sydney, Perth (Fremantle), Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Auckland.

As part of the deployment Princess Cruises will base two of its four newer ships in Sydney, *Ruby Princess* and *Majestic Princess*, generating a 25% increase in capacity on the 2018/2019 season.

Princess Cruises svp Asia Pacific commercial and operations Stuart Allison told **Cruise Weekly** the line had wanted to base a second large ship in Sydney for many years, given the demand for cruising out of the city.

"People want to be cruising from Sydney and it has been hard



to do because it's been hard to get the berthing slots at OPT," he explained, adding that the berths had to be secured five years ago.

The extra capacity has allowed Princess to introduce fresh offerings, with Allison explaining the line endeavours to do something new in each homeport.

He said the return of the 46-day Indian Ocean and South Africa Odyssey itinerary for the first time since 2016 had generated a lot of interest from travel agents.

Princess has also scheduled

three international cruises sailing roundtrip from Adelaide for the season, following success of the first this summer just gone.

In Melbourne guests will be able to embark on a Queensland cruise for the first time and from Brisbane, a Tasmania cruise.

The 2019/20 season will also see all of Princess Cruises' collection of restaurants by celebrity chefs available on cruises out of Australia for the first time.

Bookings for 2019/20 open 9am on Thu 19 Apr.

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Tuesday 27th March 2018

Medallion rollout delay

THE introduction of Princess Cruises' Ocean Medallion technology on *Regal Princess* has taken longer than anticipated, with the line not currently confirming a date for when its second ship will be fitted.

"Like any IT project these things always take longer than you might have anticipated but the guests who are part of the pilot on board *Regal Princess* are getting a lot out of it," Princess Cruises svp Asia Pacific commercial and operations Stuart Allison told *Cruise Weekly*.

"It's been really well received but we have refined the timing on when it will be rolled out across the fleet," he said, adding "what we want to do is really make sure we nail it".

Princess Cruises began the phased introduction of Ocean Medallion on *Regal Princess* last Nov, with a select group of pax



initially given access (*CW* 26 Oct).

It was originally due to launch on *Royal Princess* on 19 Jan 2018, *Caribbean Princess* on 18 Mar, *Island Princess* in May and *Golden Princess* this coming Nov.

Allison said a date for *Golden Princess*' fitout, which would be the first vessel to offer Ocean Medallion in Australian waters, was not yet being released, and confirmed it was subject to *Regal's* rollout.

Ocean Medallion is scheduled to be introduced to the P&O Cruises fleet when *Golden Princess* transitions in 2020.

Symphony delivered



ROYAL Caribbean International has passed the title of the world's biggest cruise ship from *Harmony of the Seas* to its newest vessel, *Symphony of the Seas*.

The line took delivery of the new ship with a flag-changing ceremony at STX France shipyard in Saint-Nazaire over the weekend.

The maritime ritual signifies the ship's official delivery from the ship builder to Royal Caribbean and was followed by a celebration of the team involved with bringing the vessel to fruition.

"This ship is the perfect

blend of our greatest hits we know guests love and a lineup of vibrant, new restaurants, activities and unparalleled entertainment – all purposefully designed around vacationers' preferences," said Michael Bayley, president and ceo, RCI.

The vessel will welcome her first guests for a five-night preview sailing on 31 Mar and will spend the northern summer homeporting in Barcelona, Spain, before arriving at her year-round homeport of Miami on 10 Nov.

Symphony is pictured on her way to Barcelona.



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Oz cruising set to grow



GREATER future cruise growth is likely to come from younger age groups, especially the under 35s, according to a Cruise Industry Report released by consultancy firm The B Hive.

The report suggests the over 55s sector is potentially moving closer to being exhausted and identifies the under 35s as a market which presents opportunity.

It highlights demand for cruising is estimated to grow between 14-18% in the next 12 months but says there is still space for acquisition of new customers to secure future demand.

Tammy Marshall, founder and

md The B Hive, emphasised findings that cruise visits had a positive effect on destinations' future visitation.

"Three out of five travellers consider cruising a good way to sample a destination and half of those who have taken a cruise to a destination do actually return with two fifths extending their stay at the beginning or end," Marshall said.

The report also laid out varying needs of traveller types, including that for older travellers, cruising is about "freedom from" and the ability to relax.

To read the report, [CLICK HERE](#).

NCL *Encore* inaugural

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has opened bookings for *Norwegian Encore's* inaugural Caribbean voyages from 17 Nov 2019 through to 12 Apr 2020.

During her first season, *Norwegian Encore* will offer seven-day voyages to the Eastern Caribbean from Miami.

Itineraries will first visit San Juan, Puerto Rico, before stopping by St Thomas, US Virgin Islands and Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

"Our decision to have the inaugural season of *Norwegian Encore* cruise the Caribbean reinforces our long-standing relationship with this region and strengthens our support



to some of the most beautiful islands in the world," said Andy Stuart, pres and ceo of NCL.

The vessel's features and amenities will be revealed over the next few months.

Norwegian Encore will be approximately 167,800 gross tonnes and accommodate up to 4,000 guests.

Unpack all of Carnival Australia's recent announcements in the March issue of *travelBulletin*.

[CLICK](#) to read *travelBulletin*



Ovation dazzles agents



AGENTS and media were treated to "A Big Day Out" on board Royal Caribbean International's biggest ship sailing in the region, *Ovation of the Seas*, while the vessel was docked in Sydney on Fri.

The group tested out some of the megaliner's features, with highlights included taking to the skies in The North Star, an observation capsule which hoisted the group close to 90 meters in the air, providing a 360° view of the harbour.

When safely back on deck, Royal treated visitors to a bite to eat at its Jamie's Italian restaurant featuring some of the British celebrity chef's famous antipasti planks & plates.

The good times were capped

off in style by offering up a few cocktails whipped up by the ship's resident robotic mixologists "Mix" and "Mingle".

Speaking to **CW** on board, cruise director Mike Hunnerup said the secret to the ship's success was the sheer volume of entertainment it offered for a competitive price point.

"In terms of bang for your buck, cruising on *Ovation* can't be beaten," Hunnerup said.

"We refer to 'The Big Four' which are The North Star, the Flowrider, the Bumper Cars and iFly - they're four things you won't find on any other ship in Australia and very few ships in the world," he added.

Pictured: *Ovation of the Seas* docked in Sydney.

Burnt out or fired up?

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Duffield home based

KYLE Duffield is a home based retail travel adviser at Home Travel Company and no longer works for Cox & Kings.

Cruise Calendar

This week's port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Voyager of the Seas</i>	27 Mar
<i>Explorer of the Seas</i>	28 Mar
<i>Noordam</i>	28 Mar
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	29 Mar
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	30 Mar
<i>Sun Princess</i>	30 Mar
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	31 Mar
MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Eden</i>	27 Mar
<i>Sea Princess</i>	28 Mar
<i>Pacific Eden</i>	31 Mar
BRISBANE	
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	27 Mar
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	28 Mar
<i>Pacific Aria</i>	30 Mar
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	31 Mar
<i>Radiance of the Seas</i>	31 Mar
CAIRNS	
<i>Pacific Aria</i>	02 Apr
DARWIN	
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	28 Mar
<i>Coral Expeditions 1</i>	29 Mar
ADELAIDE	
<i>Sea Princess</i>	30 Mar
HOBART	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	28 Mar
<i>Noordam</i>	30 Mar
AUCKLAND	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	31 Mar

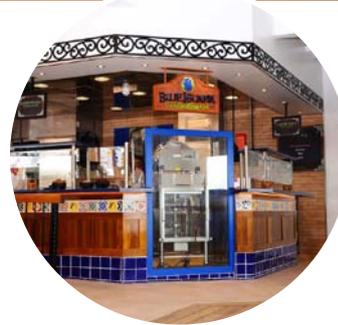
A makeover for *Paradise*



CARNIVAL Cruise Line's *Carnival Paradise* has returned to year-round service from Port Tampa Bay with an array of new spaces and innovations.

During an extensive month-long dry dock the vessel was fitted with a new WaterWorks aqua park (pictured), 38 new staterooms, an array of food and beverage concepts and 98 balconies were added to existing accommodations.

The fresh offerings include Blueguana Cantina (inset), Blueguana Tequila Bar, Guy's Burger Joint, RedFrog Rum Bar, Camp Ocean, Circle "C", a relocated mini golf course and



retail & photo enhancements. From Tampa, *Paradise* sails four-day cruises to Cozumel and five-day itineraries to Cozumel and Mahogany Bay (Roatan), Key West or Grand Cayman, along with four- to eight-day sailings to Cuba.

MSC Cruises artificial intelligence

MSC Cruises will introduce artificial intelligence (AI) on its new ship, *MSC Bellissima*, with a voice-enabled cruise personal assistant.

The assistant will be a conversational, voice-enabled AI innovation that can communicate, learn and predict guests' needs in order to make relevant suggestions.

It will aim to provide tailored information and quick and easy answers to questions from passengers' own cabin.

Flagged as a new feature of MSC's digital innovation program MSC for Me, the service has been developed in partnership with HARMAN, a subsidiary of Samsung Electronics.

The personal assistant will make its debut on *MSC Bellissima* and be available on all future new ships with plans to roll it out fleetwide.

Money laundering

A CRUISE ship employee has been charged in Perth with money laundering.

The 29-year-old Moldovan national was arrested on 22 Mar after he was found to be in possession of around \$18,000 in cash.

Australian Federal Police officers attended the Fremantle terminal and arrested the man, seizing the money and related property.

Police will allege the money is reasonably suspected to be the proceeds of crime.



SEAFARERS near the Scottish town of Fort George thought they were witnessing a dramatic ocean rescue last week when a coastguard helicopter lowered an officer by winch to help a man seen offshore in the Moray Firth.

But as the would-be rescuer reached the man, a somewhat awkward conversation ensued.

"I'm okay, thanks," said the intrepid local, who turned out to be a regular open-ocean swimmer with a taste for the bracing waters of Scotland's wild north.

BBC Scotland reports the helicopter and a rescue boat were dispatched after a local dolphin watcher raised the alarm, having spotted the swimmer in open waters.