



Cruise Weekly today

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

NCL hails N America

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line President and Chief Executive Officer Frank Del Rio believes there "is no end in sight" to its possible growth trajectory in the North American market.

Speaking to CNBC yesterday, Del Rio said strong future bookings in the region showed the cruise line was in a very strong position.

"Customers today are buying cruises eight, nine, 10 months into the future...they're spending money like there's no tomorrow," he said.

"The North American consumer is alive and well".

Seabourn loyalty

SEABOURN is launching a new Seabourn Club Referral Rewards program, offering the referring Club member and the first-time Seabourn guest shipboard credit of US\$250 per suite.

Club members can redeem up to two referral rewards on a single booking, for a total reward of up to US\$500 per suite.

Seabourn will also offer those booking the 140-day World Cruise: Expeditionary Oceans departure in Jan 2021 a further 5% discount if they have already booked the 2020 146-day World Cruise: Extraordinary Destinations.

Azamara hails success in Sydney

AZAMARA has lauded the success of two of its most recent initiatives - the launch of its Venture Beyond the Sea land programs (**CW** 21 Jun) and its partnership with Creative Cruising (**CW** 05 Nov).

Speaking to **CW** last night at an exclusive event, dedicated to the success of Greece for Azamara in the Australian market, the cruise line's Business Development Manager Belle Osmic spoke about the value which travel agents are seeing through the two new programs.

"Since Jun [Venture Beyond the Sea] has been a big interest for people," she said.

"It has been really popular... at the start, there was a bit of 'how are they going to book, do they put it together themselves', but our guests are so loyal to their agents, they won't do it if they think they're cutting them out.

"Everything we do for our travel partners is commissionable."



Osmic also praised Creative Cruising's ability to inform on and sell Azamara product.

"We will take wholesale partners on because they in turn give that information over to their front line.

"For a specialist brand such as Azamara, wholesalers do a great job of packaging our product.

"The fact they'll package it

together for their retail agents makes it easier to book."

Osmic is **pictured** at the event flanked by newly appointed Royal Caribbean International Managing Director Australia & New Zealand Gavin Smith and Royal Caribbean Cruises Director of Marketing Kathryn Walk.

All the photos from the night **HERE**.

Viking British TV

VIKING Cruises is set to have its British Isles Explorer itinerary up in lights this weekend, with Channel Nine's *Explore TV* program to feature the product as part of its cruising special.

The show will be presented by Trevor Cochrane, who will sample and catalogue the Viking voyage through England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

The show will air on Sun at 4.30pm.

SeaLink Travel launches Brilliant Travels

SEALINK Travel Group has launched Brilliant Travels, a new online platform to promote the Group's experiences, destinations and holiday packages.

Offering the ability to search through the SeaLink product range based on what experience and/or destination a customer is looking for, also being launched is Brilliant Benefits, which will provide members with exclusive offers, discounts, invites to special events and early notification of deals and packages.

"We wanted to create a space where people can go to get inspiration on where to visit next, and to get authentic and unique Australian nature, wildlife, cultural and island experiences," said SeaLink Travel Group Chief Executive Officer Jeff Ellison.

"Our new Brilliant Travels platform brings all these experiences and destinations onto one website making it easier for travellers to find their next brilliant holiday."



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22 April 2020

NCLH rings the bell



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) was invited to ring the opening bell on the New York Stock Exchange yesterday morning.

The "Big Board" extended the invitation to Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings in celebration of its newest ship, Norwegian Encore, which arrived into New York City earlier this week to launch her inaugural season in the United States.

She will homeport from

New York City for the summer 2020 season, having recently completed her inaugural sailing from Munich to Southampton (CW 01 Nov).

Norwegian Cruise Lines' *Norwegian Spirit* is also set to make her first sailing in 2020.

Pictured making a racket are President Frank Del Rio, incoming CEO Harry Sommer and *Encore* Captain Niklas Persson with other members of the Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings team.

Viera's new View



JOURNALIST Meredith Viera has been named godmother of Avalon Waterways' newest ship, *Avalon View*.

Viera will christen the 166-passenger suite ship on the Danube River in Austria in Apr. "I am extremely honoured to be godmother to this beautiful

ship - what a relaxing and magical way to travel through Europe," said Viera.

"Come on board, raise a glass of bubbly, and, as I like to say, take a little time to enjoy the view," she enthused, in reference to the talk show she formerly played moderator to.



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Scenic court battle

SCENIC will appeal a court bid to hand over documents relating to drought-affected cruises.

Passengers from 14 cruises affected by low water levels in 2018 have lodged submissions with the High Court.

The cruise line recently lost an appeal in the New South Wales Court of Appeal over compensation of 1,000 passengers affected by flooded rivers (**CW** 25 Oct).

Aussie Virgin deployment?



VIRGIN founder Richard Branson was in town this week to officially launch the Virgin Voyages brand in Australia (**CW** 13 Nov), dropping plenty of hints about a possible Australian deployment in the process.

Preaching to the crowd from the top deck of Cruise Bar in Sydney, an excitable Branson indicated he had been in conversations earlier in the day about the prospect of bringing one of his ships to Australian shores.

"We just saw the head of the Port Authority about maybe in a year, or two, or three, bringing one of our cruise ships down here and they showed us exactly where it was going to go and we thought, yep that's pretty good," Branson enthused.

Pouring some cold water on the speculation was Virgin Voyages Chief Commercial Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu, who told **Cruise Weekly** that Branson had a tendency to be vocal about future expansion strategy before plans had been firmed up.

"Richard's been known to spill the beans here and there and get a little ahead of himself," he said.

"The reality is Australia is a priority market for Virgin, it's our

third biggest market in the world, we have very high penetration here...in time I think that Australia could be a deployment market, we're not really making that commitment right now but in time we will see."

Pictured: Head of Int'l Sales Shane Riley with Saverimuttu.

Mystic hydrojets

MYSTIC Cruises will be the first to use hydrojets on cruise ships, with the line's *World Explorer* the first to get the treatment.

Set to launch in 2020, the technology aims to bring guests closer to wildlife while minimising underwater noise - a technology the line claims was initially developed for naval warships.

The two onboard Schottel SPJ 82 Pump Jets can propel *World Explorer* at a near-silent cruising speed of five knots.

World Navigator, belonging to Mystic's North American distribution Atlas Ocean Voyages, will be equipped with the innovative propulsion system upon its 2021 launch.



BRAND loyalty is a big issue in the cruise industry, but rarely like this.

Carnival Cruise Line's North American fleet will switch from Coke to Pepsi for 2020, the line confirmed.

According to the company, the reason for the switch was PepsiCo's assortment of noncarbonated options.

"At Carnival Cruise Line, we invite our guests to Choose Fun, and now with PepsiCo's extensive portfolio of brands, we're able to give them more ways to choose a beverage that suits their taste, mood and preference," said Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy.

For those who prefer a different kind of caffeine, the change will also see Carnival ships proving Starbucks' range of ready-to-drink bottled coffees.

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