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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news and a front full page from **Cunard**.

Cunard savings

CUNARD is holding its annual savings event, offering up to 30% off launch fares and down payments of just 5%. See the **front page** for more.

Jazz-ing it up

AMERICAN Cruise Lines' *American Jazz* (CW 27 Feb) has passed its sea trials.

The 190-passenger ship is the third "modern riverboat" for the cruise line, and has now been accepted into the fleet ahead of its 2021 Mississippi River schedule.

The six-deck *Jazz* has "a contemporary, elegant design".

Katz chats govt, pathway to return

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz has reinforced his organisation is constantly engaging the Australian and NZ govts.

Speaking in a webinar hosted at The Travel Industry Hub yesterday by **Cruise Weekly** Publisher Bruce Piper, Katz said the process of involving governments in the industry was happening, but that it was taking time.

"We are working with the government to present the work the cruise industry is doing, we are taking the time the cruise ships are not operating to work out what the protocols will be upon their resumption," he said.

"We are engaging with both the Australian and New Zealand governments, we're putting our position, we're getting responses, the process is happening, it's just happening very slowly."

Katz also spoke to the unique problems the cruise industry faced in restarting operations.

"The challenge we have because of the scale of our industry is, where restaurants and gyms are starting to open, cruise is all of that put together.

"I often get asked why cruise has not put forth a set of protocols like the airline industry has, and my response to that is it is a much more complex process.

"We really need to see more momentum around travel recovery."

Katz said CLIA was engaging each individual cruise line and working through the operational issues they each faced in order to collate an underlying industry standard all lines would need to comply with.

He also outlined why it was so important to the cruise industry in particular for governments to

profile what a path to resumption may look like.

"It is very hard for people to plan, not least in the cruise industry...the lead times to get back up and running are significant.

"By having a pathway, a timeline, even if it has to change due to health concerns, etc, everybody has got something they can work towards.

"It is the whole supply chain... from the fruit and vegetable grower to the winemaker, everybody is impacted by the cruise industry not operating."

Plans suggested to governments include proposals for intrastate, interstate and trans-Tasman cruising, allowing for a cruise restart based on various border opening scenarios.

A replay of the webinar can be viewed at www.thetravelindustryhub.com.



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Darren Rudd's first official interview as AFTA CEO. Read all about his plans for AFTA in the August issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK to read

travelBulletin



Miami moving on

PORTMIAMI is moving forward with a number of major cruise line expansion projects, despite the current pause in sailing in the country.

Carnival Corporation, Disney Cruise Line, MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Virgin Voyages are all expanding at PortMiami with either new or updated terminals and extra berths.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said his constituency was committed to growing business at PortMiami, as it has just issued \$335 million in bonds to the facility for the new projects.

"These bonds are critical to maintaining the progress at our port," he said.

Norwegian Cruise Line is in the final stages of constructing its new mollusc-shaped Terminal B facility (**CW** 31 Jul).

Virtuoso "disappoints" Crystal

EXCLUSIVE

CRYSTAL Cruises says it is disappointed at a letter sent by the Virtuoso consortium to its members, with the cruise line reaffirming that despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 it "remains committed to honouring our contractual obligations with guests and travel partners".

Last month Virtuoso emailed its travel agency owners/managers and advisors across the globe, noting the announcement by Crystal's parent company Genting Hong Kong (**CW** 21 Aug) in which it said it would be making no further payments to financial creditors apart from what it described as "critical services" for its business operations.

"Virtuoso is also aware of some delinquent payments that Crystal Cruises has to Virtuoso member agencies, member agency clients, and Virtuoso," the update noted.

"At the current time, we recommend that each member carefully consider whether or not it is advisable to book any Crystal Cruise on behalf of any client or make any payments to Crystal Cruises," the organisation said.

Virtuoso also noted it had initiated discussions with the owners of Crystal "to attempt to resolve this financial situation for the benefit of the Virtuoso network".

In a formal response received overnight Crystal told **Cruise Weekly** it was aware of the Virtuoso letter, and reiterated that "it is important to understand that the company is not going out of business".

"The actions taken by our parent company are a balance sheet restructuring and with the support of its lenders, Genting Hong Kong will emerge from this a stronger company."

Stop Hainan from me

GENTING Hong Kong is developing a number of domestic cruise itineraries out of Hainan, after recently announcing its intention to establish a presence in Sanya, China (**CW** 31 Aug).

The company is working to forge a strategic partnership with Sanya's Administration to establish a joint venture company to facilitate the operations of Dream Cruises' flagship in the city.

"We are keen to support the Chinese Government's efforts in rebuilding its travel and tourism sector by providing a safe and care-free vacation option for consumers," said Genting President Kent Zhu.

The strategy will also fall alongside the Hainan Cruise Port Sea-Upstream Route plan to legitimise the island as a cruise destination.




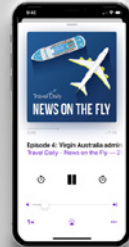
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Drinks on MSC!

MSC Cruises is offering a premium drinks package to those booking a Bella or Fantastica cabin before 30 Nov.

The package covers all guests in the stateroom, with travellers able to access unlimited drinks priced up to €10 or US\$10.

The Premium Drinks for All promotion is available on departures in the Caribbean Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe from 27 Mar 2021 to 02 Dec 2021.

Pax can also upgrade to the Plus package - 1300 028 502.

An over-whale-ming time



A GROUP of Royal Caribbean International's (RCI) Queensland

travel partners last week had a whale of a time transforming into marine biologists for the day.

The quintet ventured out into the waters off the Gold Coast aboard *Blue Manta*, a vessel much smaller than RCI is used to, with local operator Humpbacks & Highrises taking the group on a whale-watching journey.

The five were joined by Queensland District Sales Manager Erin King, with the group conducting scientific work such as collecting skin samples from the water and listening to whale vocalisation through an underwater hydrophone.

The team also enjoyed a high-octane display of whale tail-slapping, and "mugging" – when the mammal approaches and swims around a vessel.

Pictured hard at work are, back row: Olaf Meynecke, Humpbacks & Highrises, Natalie Blackmore, Helloworld Strathpine, & Belinda Layt, Savenio, and front row: Kelly-Ann Ritche, Flight Centre Aspley, Liz Madsen, Flight Centre Toowong, April Lord, Clean Cruising and Erin King.



IT SEEMS singer Ed Sheeran is just waiting to be scooped up as an ambassador by a cruise line, and he may have just helped indicate which one through the naming of his child.


Sheeran and his wife Cherry (pictured) earlier this week became parents with the birth of their firstborn, a girl who they named Lyra Antarctica Seaborn Sheeran.

The good people at Seabourn Cruise Line were contacted for comment regarding the birth, but *Cruise Weekly* is yet to hear back from them - perhaps they are busy organising a promotional deal.



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Scandi-lous

HURTIGRUTEN has launched a range of exclusive Scandinavian journeys for 2021 and 2022.

The tours include Norway Expeditions and Follow the Lights escorted group tours, with the latter offering Hurtigruten's Northern Lights promise offering those who don't get to see an aurora another six- or seven-day classic voyage free of charge - for more, [CLICK HERE](#).


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