



Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant toolkit

PONANT has launched a new social media toolkit for travel advisors.

The new tiles and content tool on the Ponant PRO area allows advisors to promote the cruise line's upcoming luxury expeditions on their social media accounts, with a tile and copy included to easily create posts.

The downloadable files include the itinerary map, sail dates, embarkation & disembarkation ports, and imagery.

Destination expeditions include Australia and the Kimberley Coast 2022 and Antarctica 2022.

Silversea Cruises names *Silver Moon*

SILVERSEA Cruises has held the highly anticipated christening ceremony for its new *Silver Moon* in the Greek port of Piraeus, with the event seen as a key milestone in the line's return to service.

Moon officially became Silversea's vessel, in a ceremony watched on by VIP guests including Royal Caribbean Group Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Richard Fain, Chief Financial Officer Jason Liberty, Godmother Gaia Gava, Silversea President & Chief Executive Officer Roberto Martinoli, and Fincantieri Merchant Ships Division General Manager Luigi Matazzaro (pictured).

The ship has been sailing her inaugural season from Athens since late last month, operating a series of 10-day itineraries through the Greek Isles.

Last night's celebration saw a traditional blessing by Reverend



Father Ioannis Patsis, followed by the ship's godmother, Gaia Gaja from Italy's renowned Gaja Winery, smashing a bottle of champagne on *Moon's* bow.

Guests viewed the action on screens throughout *Moon*.

It was the first Silversea christening since the cruise line became part of Royal Caribbean Group, with Fain saying it was a "very proud moment indeed".

"I commend Silversea's leadership team, Captain Georgiev and *Silver Moon's* crew,

the team of Fincantieri, and everyone involved in the ship's launch for their tireless efforts in bringing this long-awaited milestone to fruition," Fain said.

Martinoli said as the first ultra-luxury cruise vessel to set sail in 2021, "*Silver Moon* leads the way in the return of ultra-luxury cruising...she represents our industry's strength and resilience".

For photos from the event see facebook.com/cruiseweekly, while a video of the ship is at cruiseweekly.com.au/videos.



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Aurora expands Virtuoso partnership

AURORA Expeditions has overnight become the newest supplier in Virtuoso's exclusive global preferred partner portfolio.

The move builds on Aurora's existing Asia-Pacific partnership with Virtuoso (**CW** 11 May), and exposes the cruise line's products to an "incomparable list of travel advisors" in more than 50 countries across the world.

Aurora Chief Executive Officer Monique Ponfoort (**pictured left**) said "becoming part of Virtuoso's global network is a milestone accomplishment".

"We've been afforded the opportunity to work with [Virtuoso's] incredibly talented and reputable member agencies in other areas of the world such as the Asia-Pacific, and our home country of Australia, so adding the global team and its adventurous client base to the



mix is a true honour," she said.

Virtuoso Vice President of Global Partner Relations Beth Butzlaff (**pictured centre**) said the group's advisors and their clients continue to seek out and embrace adventure, conservation and "perspective-altering experiences", with Aurora helping to ignite this passion.

The agency network's Chief Executive Officer Matthew Upchurch (**pictured right**) noted the expedition and luxury travel space was continuing to evolve.

"Our shared value of experiential travel resonates with the Virtuoso family, making Aurora an ideal fit for the network," Upchurch enthused.

Virtuoso travel advisors can now access the Aurora profile via the portal, detailing voyages, pricing sheets, images, trip notes and other relevant collateral.

Aurora also confirmed it would soon announce the maiden voyage of its second vessel, named after renowned marine biologist Sylvia Earle.



Cruise Corridors

WHERE to now?

We have always argued that a marine transport corridor is every bit as sensible as an air corridor between Australia and New Zealand.

Of course it still is, but the delta variant and lockdowns in New South Wales, as well as a pause on the air bubble has made any movement on opening the maritime border much harder.

The air travel corridor is on hold officially for eight weeks, which pushes it out till late Sep, but it could be much longer, possibly not happening until we have considerably higher rates of vaccination in both New Zealand and Australia.

Trying to think positively that when that time comes it could mean both governments will be more amenable to working with the cruise industry on coming to terms with our plans for a phased start to cruise.

In the absence of direct collaboration with government though this is crystal ball gazing.

The cruise lines have had to pull back because of uncertainty in New Zealand and Australia, and who can blame them?

It's all go everywhere else so it's very frustrating.

Once again it comes back to getting vaccinated, so hurry up!

Crystal adds Miami

CRYSTAL Cruises has updated its current Bahamas program with the addition of Miami as both a port of call and an embarkation point.

The move is effective from 07 Aug, with the change allowing passengers the convenience of an American city departure with ample flight options.

Crystal Serenity resumed sailing on 03 Jul, with President Jack Anderson citing a "terrific response".

Kimberley shift

THE Kimberley Ports Authority (KPA) has this month taken over responsibility for the ports of Derby, Yampi Sound and Wyndham.

The transfer is the second phase of the WA Government's ports governance reform program, with the additions formerly under WA Department of Transport control.

KPA CEO Craig Faulkner said the change would facilitate planning, development & trade.

Yarra ferry concern

THE Save The Bay coalition, which is opposing any plans for a cruise terminal in Sydney's Botany Bay, has raised concerns about new ferry wharves planned for La Perouse and Kurnell.

The group emailed members overnight suggesting the project could be a "first step for the cruise ship terminal in Yarra Bay" and urged the public to make submissions about its environmental impact.

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IF YOU'RE hoping to celebrate your next Antarctic expedition with a tippie, it'd better be aboard the ship!

Home brewing has been banned at Australian Antarctic stations, with alcohol limits being tightened.

Australian Antarctic expeditioners have passed down knowledge about how to make a good home-brewed beer for years, but it is a tradition that it is about to end, with a new alcohol policy being implemented by the Australian Antarctic Division, which outlaws home-brew and recommends no more than 10 standard drinks per week.

Polaris floats out



VIKING has marked the float out of its second expedition ship, *Viking Polaris* (pictured) set to debut next year.

The 378-guest ship met the water for the first time on Tue, ahead of her launch next year in the Arctic and Antarctica.

Polaris will now move into its final stage of construction in the outfitting dock.

After final fitout, *Polaris* will be delivered at Fincantieri's VARD shipyard in Soviknes.

"We are now one step closer to our launch of the thinking person's expedition, with new voyages that will allow our guests to explore the ends of the world and closer to home—in comfort," said Viking Chair Torstein Hagen.

"We are grateful for our long-standing partnership with Fincantieri, who has helped us build the world's most beautiful ocean ships and are now helping us perfect expedition cruising.

"We look forward to welcoming guests on board *Viking Polaris* and *Viking Octantis* next year."

MEANWHILE, the cruise line has welcomed guests back on board in Malta, for the Welcome Back roundtrip from Valletta.

Guests embarked aboard *Viking Sea* and sister ship *Viking Venus* in Valletta for the cruise line's return to the Mediterranean.

Exclusively available for vaccinated guests, both ships are sailing three new itineraries roundtrip from Valletta, including the 11-day Malta & the Adriatic Jewels, the 11-day Malta & Greek Isles Discovery and the 21-day Malta, the Adriatic & Greece.

Viking has partnered with Lufthansa to offer non-stop flights from Newark Liberty International Airport to Malta, exclusively for its guests.

"We are delighted to be back in the Mediterranean and to be homeporting in Valletta," Hagen added.

"On behalf of the entire Viking family, we thank the Government of Malta for its support and partnership in developing these fantastic new voyages," he said.

AIDAluna restarts

AIDA Cruises' *AIDAluna* will restart in Sep from Germany.

The ship will be the seventh in the fleet to restart operations this year, with a variety of travel dates for three- and four-day cruises now available for booking up to 14 Oct.

AIDAluna will call at Gdynia on the four-day cruise and Gothenburg on the three-day.

MRPS restarting

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers (MRPS) is back cruising as scheduled, with the Victorian State Government's announcement of changes to restrictions last Tue.

Cruises can proceed, following outdoor fixed-seating, outdoor non-seated and accom guidelines.

Capacity limits will apply for sightseeing cruises, and face masks must be worn aboard when not seated for drinks and meals.

All onshore tours will depart from the Victorian side of the Murray River at Toorumbarry Weir, and shorex on four-night cruises have been replaced.

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