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Oceania sale

OCEANIA Cruises is hosting an Exclusive Upgrade Sale, offering travel advisors upfront commissions in the form of a \$150 gift card.

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The sale ends 30 Nov - head to the **cover page** for more.

Celeb Black Fri sale

CELEBRITY Cruises has launched their best offer yet for Black Fri.

Those who book by the end of the month can enjoy drinks, wi-fi, and service charges included, plus savings of 50% off the second guest's cruise fare, and up to \$300 per stateroom to spend on board.

Plus, book a Europe or Alaska sailing for next year and receive up to an additional \$400 flight credit per person.

The Black Fri offer is available on almost every sailing aboard Celebrity's ships.

For more information and selling tools, **CLICK HERE**.

ACA's restart roadshow



THE Australian Cruise Association's (ACA) restart roadshow, in conjunction with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), has kicked off in Queensland this week.

Supported by Tourism Australia, ACA and CLIA will hold a series of half-day workshops in key cities around the country.

The sessions are designed to help the tourism industry prepare for the arrival of cruise ships, crews, and passengers.

Representatives from state and regional tourism authorities, ports, and cruise line will present at each of the workshops, and will be on hand to take questions from local industry reps.

Following its kick-off in Cairns (**pictured**) this week, the roadshow will continue to Townsville, Airlie Beach, Gladstone and Brisbane.

Sessions will roll out in other states and territories as borders reopen and positive discussions continue with state governments.

"With positive commentary coming from federal and state governments around welcoming

cruise ships back to Australia, we believe it is the right time to hold these discussions with industry to start building a planning framework to support a successful resumption," said ACA Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel.

"We are fortunate to have successful models to draw from with regard to the strict health protocols being followed internationally given around 70% of the CLIA fleet is now operating in 82 countries, which translates to approximately 2,500 sailings since Jul 2020, carrying almost 4 million passengers.

"The past two years have been a huge challenge for the cruise industry which pre-pandemic contributed around 18,000 jobs and over \$5b to the economy."

Abel noted once the green light has been given by government for a restart, it will still be at least 60-90 days before cruise ships begin arriving back into local waters.

"It is our hope that these workshops will play a critical role in helping operators plan for an effective restart," she added.

More from ACA on **page 5**.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a front cover from **Oceania Cruises**.

NI cruising is strong

THE return of Cruise Belfast's cruise sector has fared better than expected, offering Northern Ireland's tourism recovery a welcome boost.

With 72 cruise ship arrivals to Belfast this year, the arrival of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' *Borealis* marked the end of a successful season.

The resumption of cruise tourism began on 17 Jun, with the arrival of MSC Cruises new flagship *MSC Virtuosa*, and since then, Belfast has welcomed the arrival of more than 55,000 passengers, with 15 cruise lines and a number of world-class ships making inaugural calls to the city.

Virtuosa's arrival followed months of close partnership between Cruise Belfast, industry operators, the public health agency, and others, to implement a robust COVID-19 Port Management Plan.

Belfast Harbour Port Director Michael Robinson said:

"we have been delighted to welcome 72 vessels to Belfast this season, with cruise lines including Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, MSC and Saga visiting our shores."


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Opportunity knocks for agents

TRAVEL advisors should be actively engaging with their clients right now to secure cruise bookings, with huge pent-up demand seeing consumers trade up to longer cruises, larger suites and more upmarket experiences.

That was one of the key takeaways from an industry webinar yesterday featuring Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) Peter Kollar, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises' Alice Ager and Nikki Glading from Holland America Line/Seabourn.

The Travel Community Hub event highlighted the cruise lines' ongoing support for the travel agency sector, but participants warned if advisors are hesitant to ramp up their business at the moment, customers are likely to make bookings direct.

Kollar said caution from travel advisors was understandable given the massive trauma the industry has gone through during the pandemic, but noted "that's not happening in the mindset of the consumer, who is desperately dreaming and planning - and so you need to be in front of them right now".

Key booking trends being seen by CLIA at the moment included strong demand for group and multigenerational family travel, as well as a "massive increase in river, expedition, luxury and bucket list voyages like world cruises - they are selling out so quickly now in unprecedented amounts," Kollar said.

He also cited feedback that existing clients with future cruise credits (FCCs) are redeeming them for upgraded voyages, into suites or longer cruises or booking back-to-back itineraries.

"So travel advisors, if you have any clients with FCCs, get onto them because they're ready to spend," Kollar added.

Glading backed his assessment, confirming that HAL/Seabourn are seeing a significant increase in spend per booking.

"Travel agents are giving us objections like the expense of PCR tests and issues around insurance - we don't get that from direct guests, so perhaps advisors are giving a bit too much airtime to that dialogue, or don't have a way to overcome those objections," she said.

She also noted that guests were less brand-loyal, and are prepared to shift to alternate cruise lines based on the varying experiences on offer.

Uniworld's Ager confirmed strong demand for her cruise line's product, with yields per booking up about 20% on 2019 levels, and four out of five reservations for balcony suites and above.

"Customers are not price driven at all," she noted, with a strong trend for group enquiries.

Ager and Glading both stressed the key role of agents, saying they wanted to get behind advisors.

"We need our travel partners more than ever," Ager said.

Princess' 23-24 program



PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its new 2023-24 program, featuring its longest-ever world cruise from Australia. Sailing round trip from Sydney (pictured), the 110-night global odyssey will depart on 03 Apr 2024, with a Brisbane departure also available on 02 May.

Fares start from \$32,299 per person twin share in an interior stateroom.

The voyage will offer more European port calls, including visits to seven exciting new world cruise destinations: Stockholm, Aarhus, Kristiansand, Edinburgh, Crete, Corsica, and Bar Harbor.

There will also be extended visits to Petra, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Reykjavik, Cork, Boston and Tahiti.

Princess will open bookings for its new 2023-24 Australian cruise program early next month - an unprecedented 11 months ahead of schedule.

The cruise line will also offer

up to \$4,000 per stateroom of early booking benefits, including \$1,000 of onboard credit per person and \$1,000 worth of savings for past guests.

The new program is one of Princess' largest yet, featuring 113 departures between Sep 2023 and Oct 2024.

Two Royal-class ships - *Majestic Princess* and *Royal Princess* - will be based in Sydney, while *Grand Princess* will cruise from Melbourne, and *Coral Princess* will sail from Brisbane and Fremantle.

Between them, the four ships will offer more than 40 Australian cruises, as well as more than 30 New Zealand cruises, 10 trans-Pacific sailing options, and eight Asian itineraries.

Sales & Marketing Director Nick Ferguson said the early release of the program reflected the positive long-term booking trends for both cruising in Australia, and int'l travel.





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Aurora appoints CMO

AURORA Expeditions has appointed its first Chief Marketing Officer, Hayley Peacock-Gower (pictured).

The newly created role will see Peacock-Gower spearhead Aurora's marketing operations worldwide, with her more than 20 years' experience.

Peacock-Gower has been promoted in the role from her former position as Head of Global Marketing, with Chief Executive Officer Monique Ponfoort describing her as a meaningful addition to the executive team.

"Her extensive background and skills will add immeasurably in building the marketing, content and strategic partnership platform that will drive growth for the Aurora brand," Ponfoort said.

Peacock-Gower added: "this is an incredible opportunity to innovate with new content and transformative experiences which



will drive interest and demand while positioning the brand for future growth.

"There is no better opportunity both professionally and personally, especially given the timing, as we accelerate meaningful changes in our ongoing care for the planet programs, and our imminent return to what Aurora Expeditions does best; life-changing small-ship expeditions."

New QE2 voyages



CUNARD Line is inviting travellers to "escape the everyday in style" with *Queen Elizabeth* (pictured) as she embarks on 17 new international voyages.

Sailing early next year, the ship will visit 32 ports in 12 countries, navigating Norway's fjords; island-hopping in Spain & Portugal; cruising through the Mediterranean; and transiting the Panama Canal onward to Alaska.

The program includes six overnight port calls and three late-evening departures, including extended time in Tromso and Narvik, offering the possibility to see the Northern Lights.

Other highlight calls include Amsterdam, Genoa, Ibiza, Manzanillo, Grand Turk, and San Francisco, before *Queen Elizabeth* reaches the icy landscapes of Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park and Hubbard Glacier.

"We're thrilled to offer this exciting new Escapes Program to guests who might long for a voyage that promises a sense of freedom, luxury and style," said President Simon Paethorpe.

"For cruise aficionados or those enjoying their first taste of the vibrant and inviting world of *Queen Elizabeth*, together with our renowned White Star Service, this programme has something for everyone."

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MSC Seashore sets sail



THE naming ceremony for MSC Cruises' new flagship *MSC Seashore* has taken place at Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve in the Bahamas.

The cruise line's newest ship is the first to be named at a private island, with MSC's godmother, Italian actress Sophia Loren naming her 16th ship of the brand's 19-strong fleet.

The evening's festivities took place both on board and on the island, and included a stylish gala dinner and live entertainment from American band Nile Rodgers & Chic.

The event also included a ground-breaking for MSC Foundation's Marine Conservation Center, to support its Super Coral Program, which includes a laboratory and coral nursery areas.

The Program seeks to help restore coral reefs in the Bahamas to a healthy state through the propagation of

hardy Super Coral species, to increase the reefs' resilience.

Following the event, *Seashore* began her inaugural US season, with a seven-night cruise.

MEANWHILE, MSC has marked the float-out of the ship set to take over from *Seashore* as flagship, *MSC Seascapes*.

One of three of the line's ships currently under construction, *Seascapes* is one of two which will be delivered 2022, and will be the second Seaside EVO class vessel to enter the fleet.

"The float out of *MSC Seascapes* marks yet another significant milestone in the growth of our fleet and the vessel will pay homage to the oceans through yet another host of highly innovative maritime and design features," said MSC Cruises Executive Chair Pierfrancesco Vago, who is **pictured** with Miami-Dade County's Mayor Daniella Lavigne-Cava and Commissioner Rebeca Sosa.

Joy returns from Miami

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's *Norwegian Joy* has resumed cruising from Miami, offering additional Caribbean sailings.

Joy is Norwegian's ninth ship to return to service, offering a series of seven-day roundtrip Caribbean voyages calling to Roatan, Costa Maya, Cozumel, and Harvest Caye, the cruise line's private resort destination in Belize.

The week-long itinerary is available through 23 Apr.

Guests looking to celebrate the holidays at sea in a tropical paradise can book *Joy's* 11-day cruise from Miami on 23 Dec, visiting Willemstad, Oranjestad, Castries, St. John's, and St. Thomas.

Passengers can also celebrate New Year's Day in Puerto Plata.

"The momentum of our Great Cruise Comeback continues as *Norwegian Joy* resumes voyages from our beloved hometown of

Miami to join our other world-class vessels sailing from our brand-new terminal to continue delivering unforgettable guest experiences," said President & Chief Executive Officer Harry Sommer.

"With the launch of our ninth ship, we now have more than two-thirds of our berths in operation, and we couldn't be more excited.

"*Joy's* comeback is perfectly timed with the recent launch of our Greatest Deal Ever and latest deployment of itineraries, we're making it even easier for our guests to book a well-deserved getaway offering them more destinations and ships to choose along with the best value at sea."

From next month, PortMiami will be home to four Norwegian vessels, including *Joy*, *Norwegian Encore*, *Norwegian Getaway*, and soon to restart, *Norwegian Pearl*.

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ENCOUNTERS with wildlife are one of the many activities cruisers enjoy on shore excursions - but visitors to Las Vegas in the middle of the Nevada desert this week got a taste of something more commonly encountered on the ocean.

The Sin City police department confirmed a crackdown on the sale of scores of baby turtles, which were being offered by some entrepreneurial locals to passers-by on the famous Las Vegas Strip.

Officers released a video on Twitter showing the dramatic "rescue" they undertook when they discovered the illegal sales, captioned as "this is a first - even for Vegas".

You have to admit that the red-eared-sliders (**pictured**) are extremely cute - but are perhaps not the sort of thing you'd buy on impulse during a Vegas binge because it's illegal to release them into the wild.

They are expected to grow to about 30cm in diameter, and will eventually need a giant tank or pond to live in, reported local TV station *8NewsNow*.



FACE-2-FACE: Katrina McAlpine

Commercial Director Australia & New Zealand, Cunard Line



1. What is your favourite part of your job?

Currently, it's the tangible excitement preparing for our return to cruising. Even though for Cunard it's still a while away in Australia, I can't wait to see one of our sister brands' ships sail into Sydney Harbour again.

2. What attracted you to a career in the cruise industry?

I landed in the industry by coincidence when I was 20 years old, fresh off the plane from New Zealand on a temping contract doing administration work. I immediately fell in love with the company and the industry and the rest is history.

3. What is key to success in the cruise industry?

Listening to our guests. We need to build our brands, products and services so that they deliver what the guests want and need now, as well as have the foresight for what guests will want and need in the future. The key to turn those desires into strategies and visions, is our people both aboard and shoreside. We have such incredible people in our business, and I feel inspired to work with them all every day.

4. How has COVID-19 changed the way you do your job?

I think it is fair to say that almost everything has changed. We work remotely at the moment, we have gained some new people in the team and lost some on the way, we have had to drop our actual jobs in lieu of what needed to be done for the business at any given time – the list is endless. I think our resilience and empathy has changed, and our ability to do a lot more with a lot less. A really positive by product is being able to get closer to customer touchpoints during this period, and it has been a timely reminder as we are ramping back up in operations that our guests are the centre point of everything we do at Cunard.

5. What is the best thing to say to people who are hesitant to cruise?

I think it is always key to understand what their hesitancy is rather than assume. This is where our travel agent community is so valuable, their incredible knowledge to find the right cruise for the guests and help to educate is amazing. So I guess I would say talk to your travel agent!

Want to appear in face-2-face? [CLICK HERE](#) to send through your details!



Restart, roadshows

TODAY'S column is coming to you from Qld as we tour the state on the first of our roadshows.

These half-day sessions are being run in conjunction with Cruise Lines International Association and supported by Tourism Australia, with the goal of helping the industry prepare for the long-awaited arrival of cruise ships back into Australia.

It is exciting to be back in front of our industry after such a long break and at a time when the governments are engaging in more positive commentary around a cruise restart.

We know that when that happens however there will still be a considerable time before we see the carefully phased reentry of ships into Australian waters – these sessions are about developing frameworks to make sure we are ready to welcome back passengers and crews safely to our shores.

We are fortunate to have strong modelling from cruise lines internationally who have enjoyed a successful resumption with around 2,500 sailings since Jul 2020.

Their prevention, mitigation and response protocols will add huge value to our work here.

As our cruise communities in the gateway cities and regional ports are the backbone of our industry, we are delighted to be working with them to help rebuild their businesses alongside the local government and cruise representatives who are contributing to these sessions.

The past two years have been a huge challenge for our industry – this roadshow feels like a beacon of hope.