



CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Monday 28th February 2022

Cruise Weekly today

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

Nicko Aussie GSA

EUROPEAN river line Nicko Cruises has partnered with Cruise Traveller for representation and sales in Australia.

To celebrate the appointment, guests can save up to \$2,950 per couple and \$1,240 for solo passengers on a double cruise package for next year when booking by the end of Aug.

Headquartered in Germany, Nicko is celebrating 30 years of cruising this year.

The line operates 26 river and coastal ships and two ocean ships, the 200-guest *World Voyager* and the 1,000-guest *Vasco da Gama*.

CLIA confident cruise ban will lift

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz has raised hopes the most recent extension of Australia's cruise ban will "finally be the last," citing recent positive comments about the sector by govt officials.

The emergency period restrictions on foreign cruise ships in Australian waters are currently set to expire on 17 Apr (**CW** 14 Feb), and Katz said he was particularly encouraged by statements from Qld Minister for Tourism Stirling Hinchliffe.

Speaking in the state's Parliament last week, Hinchliffe confirmed Queensland's aspirations to "lead the way on cruising's relaunch," saying close work was being undertaken with counterparts in New South Wales and Victoria to develop a "consistent set of guidelines for the speedy and COVID-safe return

of cruise ships to Australian ports".

"Queensland has more ports to more destinations, the longest stretch of coastline and warm winter weather that is the envy of the south," Hinchliffe said.

"We also have a brand-new state-of-the-art international cruise ship terminal ready to go.

"That state-of-the-art cruise ship terminal at the mouth of the Brisbane River will play a key role in the relaunch of the cruise industry."

Katz said it was encouraging to see state ministers speaking publicly in support of the industry, and acknowledging the important contribution it delivers.

"This is the result of more than 18 months of persistent and often frustrating effort by CLIA, cruise lines, travel agents, suppliers and the broader cruise community," Katz said.

"We are now seeing clear signs

of progress as we participate in constructive dialogue with the NSW, Qld, Vic and NT govts," he added, confirming multiple meetings are taking place to work through the protocols that need to be finalised to underpin a cruise restart.

MEANWHILE, there is also rising optimism about the key trans-Tasman cruising market, with Katz confirming similar positive meetings are happening weekly with NZ Government agencies.

"We look forward to more definite news soon about the timeline for a NZ cruise restart in line with the reopening plans for the air border," Katz said.

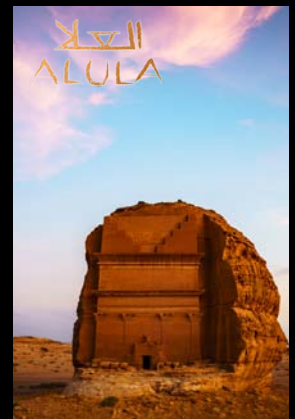
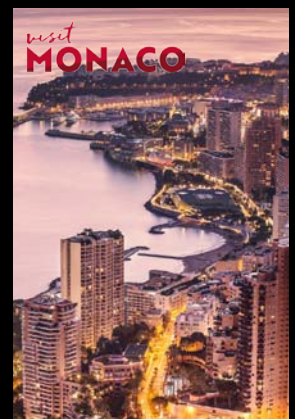
He said there was still much work to be done before detailed plans for the revival of cruising are finalised by governments across the region, but added "we are hopeful for swift progress in coming weeks".



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Russia cruises cancelled



FALLOUT from the Russian invasion of Ukraine (pictured) continues within the cruise industry (**CW** 25 Feb), with APT Travel Group pausing its APT and Travelmarvel river cruise programs for this year.

APT told **Cruise Weekly** the program would be paused until further notice, and it would be contacting impacted guests.

"The APT Travel Group is very concerned with the Russia-Ukraine conflict," a spokesperson told **Cruise Weekly**.

"Naturally, the company's primary concern is the security, safety and wellbeing of its guests and employees.

"Our thoughts are with those in the region."

Also cancelling cruises was Viking, which has called off this year's departures of its Kiev, Black Sea & Bucharest itinerary, and is evaluating itineraries which call in Russia, which "will require modification", the cruise line told **Cruise Weekly**.

"Guests and their travel advisors

on impacted departures have been notified directly by Viking Customer Relations," the cruise line said.

"Our team is actively monitoring the situation and is in close contact with our field offices in the region.

"When necessary changes are made, Viking Customer Relations will notify all impacted guests and their travel advisors."

Oceania Cruises has also altered itineraries to remove Russian and Ukrainian ports from its voyages for the remainder of the year.

The cruise line told guests and travel advisors in an e-mail it is working to confirm replacement ports as soon as possible.

Cruise Weekly also reached out to Hurtigruten for comment, with the cruise line saying the safety of its guests and crews is its number one priority.

Hurtigruten said it is closely monitoring the situation in Russia, a country which the cruise line's homeland shares a 200km border with.

Resilient to sail in Australia in 2023

VIRGIN Voyages has confirmed the cruise line's upcoming third ship *Resilient Lady* will be heading to Australia in 2023.

A Facebook post from Virgin confirmed the country would be among a number of destinations, including Greece, Egypt, Dubai and Singapore, to which it would be sailing on new 14- and 15-night itineraries starting Oct 2023.

Virgin's website already lists for booking a 15-night Singapore, Bali & Australia cruise, sailing 20 Nov 2023, with local ports calls such as Darwin, Cairns, Airlie Beach, and Sydney.

It is unknown whether or not additional Australian voyages will be added to *Resilient's* 2023 program, but for now, the four listed calls are the only local destinations on Virgin's website - **CLICK HERE** for more.

Virgin last week opened its new Terminal V at PortMiami (**CW** 24 Feb).



MANY of us have heard the idiom, "snitches get stitches", but it appears scientists are recruiting a new kind of ocean nark.

Marine biologists in California are recruiting elephant seals to eavesdrop on whales, believing they may already do so without our intervention.

Scientists at the University of California Santa Cruz will glue audio recording devices to the back of the seals, believing they may follow sperm whales in order to hunt for food.

They descend as much as 1.5km underwater when hunting for small fish, squid, and even sharks, and that brings them within earshot of whales and other marine mammals.

The seals themselves do not make much noise, which means they do not contaminate the data, and scientists can get an ear on the far more fascinating wheals.

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