



Hurtigruten Norway's first hybrid

HURTIGRUTEN Cruises has debuted the first of seven of its Coastal Express fleet to be upgraded as part of a €100 million program, with the revamped *MS Richard With* (pictured) retrofitted with brand new engines, battery packages and propulsion systems.

The move follows in the footsteps of sister company Hurtigruten Expeditions, which three years ago debuted the world's first battery-hybrid powered expedition ship *MS Roald Amundsen* (CW 08 Nov 19).

"With *MS Richard With* back in operations as a fully-upgraded ship, guests can sail the Norwegian coast on a quieter, state-of-the-art, and environmentally-friendly ship, while enjoying a traditional experience unlike anything in the



world," according to Hedda Felin, CEO of Hurtigruten Norway.

"Over the next year, all our seven Coastal Express ships will be upgraded to be more sustainable," she added, with the state-of-the-art technology also including systems to significantly reduce NOX emissions.

The *MS Richard With* upgrade project has included hull optimisation to reduce drag, new boilers to improve heat recovery, new propeller blades and a retractable azimuth thruster, as well as wastewater treatment systems and the use of certified biofuels to cut CO2 emissions.

APT Kimberley '23

APT Travel Group has released 11 new itineraries showcasing the best of the Kimberley for 2023, sailing aboard Ponant's *Le Laperouse* and for the first time adding the slightly larger *Le Soleal* to the APT expedition range.

New dates are available across the season operating from 23 Jun-11 Sep next year, with the offering including an onboard APT cruise director and host, and the option of combination itineraries featuring land highlights such as El Questro Wilderness Park, stays in APT's exclusive wilderness lodges, the Purnululu National Park, Bungle Bungles and more.

Regent debuts DJs partnership



REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has become the first cruise brand in Australia to partner with premium retailer David Jones (CW breaking news), with the department store's famous Sydney CBD shop windows now showcasing the Regent product, its burgeoning fleet and array of global destinations.

The branded activation also includes in-store digital screens and a pop-up Regent Cruise Lounge which will be live for four days from next Tue 27 Sep. Regent Seven Seas Cruises

VP of Sales for Australia and NZ, Lisa Pile, said the exclusive partnership was an "exciting first foray for the brand into the luxury retail space".

With cruise sentiment among consumers more positive than ever, "this prestigious partnership with iconic brand David Jones will create intrigue, excitement and stimulate inspiration for future voyages, cementing our commitment to providing unforgettable luxury travel experiences for our guests," Pile said.

New Cal reopening

AUTHORITIES in New Caledonia have finally confirmed that the destination will officially reopen its maritime borders to cruise ships early next month.

The update comes over a month since Carnival Australia announced the return of New Caledonia cruising (CW 18 Aug), with P&O Cruises' *Pacific Explorer* to make an overnight stop in Noumea arriving on 04 Oct followed by another stopover in Lifou two days later.

The return is being eagerly anticipated by locals, with no passenger ships having visited since the onset of the pandemic in Mar 2020.

Travellers entering New Caledonia on a cruise do not require a visa for entry.

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Oceania MCA dinner



OCEANIA Cruises activated its partnership with Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) on Wed, with the cruise line's CEO Howard Sherman and his team hosting an exclusive in-gallery dinner for a small group of privileged guests.

The gathering saw attendees welcomed by MCA Director Suzanne Cotter, **pictured** with Sherman and Oceania Managing Director APAC Steve Odell.

Cotter hailed the contribution of Oceania, with the partnership seeing the cruise line sponsor the MCA's upcoming major summer exhibition by South Korean artist Do Ho Suh, as part of the 2022-23 Sydney International Art Series.

Odell said the partnership between Oceania and the MCA "highlights the genuine synergy between the two brands and our audience's appreciation for art and culture".

The extensive, curated onboard art collection across Oceania's fleet is a key element of the brand, with the ships

showcasing masterpieces worth millions of dollars - making the agreement with the MCA "on brand" for patrons.

The gathering wrapped up Sherman's first Australian visit this week, and he reflected on how impressed he was at Sydney as a bucket-list destination for many North American Oceania clients.

He also highlighted the ongoing strength of the Australian market for Oceania, which is now the brand's second largest source of clients both in terms of cruise bookings and yield per passenger.

"Australians book longer cruises, spend more and also make reservations much further out than other markets," he said, signalling the likelihood of a larger local deployment for Oceania in 2025.

Sherman also confirmed talks were under way for the construction by Fincantieri of two more slightly larger ships which could enter service with Oceania in 2027 and 2029.

Virgin sustainable fuel deal

VIRGIN Voyages has announced a new alliance with three global sustainability innovators, as part of its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The move also includes a new partnership with the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials, an independent global membership organisation aiming to drive a sustainable transition to a bio-based and circular economy.

The line will enter into long-term agreements for sustainable marine fuels (SMF) with biofuels producers Argent Energy and GoodFuels, as well as a company called Twelve which uses proprietary technology to eliminate emissions by capturing CO2 from the air - companies which are all working to reduce the environmental impact of shipping through innovative fuel solutions.

Virgin Voyages CEO Tom McAlpin said adopting sustainable fuels, such as those made from "abundant, problematic waste",

was paramount to reducing emissions.

"In order to significantly reduce our carbon footprint further, we must transition to lower-carbon fuel sources as soon as possible.

"We could do this today with our existing engines if more sustainable 'drop-in' fuels were available in our ports of call.

"Unfortunately, these fuels are not yet widely available, and in most cases are not cost competitive," McAlpin said.

"We want to work with partners to pioneer for this essential change," he said, with the new agreements seen as an important first step in developing the appropriate infrastructure and creating supportive policies for routine commercial use.

Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson said the company would always aim to be a leader in the industries in which it operates.

"We aspire to make the cruise industry better in many ways, including through climate action."

Murphy out at HAL

SALLY Murphy, long-time Holland America Line and Seabourn BDM for SA/WA, has been confirmed as another departure from the Carnival Corp brands, alongside Tony Archbold (**CW** 18 Jul) and Nikki Glading (**CW** 16 Aug).

Murphy has apologised to the industry in a LinkedIn post for not saying farewell, as she was on leave when advised of the decision and only recently became aware there was no formal announcement of her redundancy after 11 years.

Splendor en route

CARNIVAL Splendor guests have lost a day of their lives as the ship crossed the international date line as part of her current transpacific itinerary between Seattle and her new homeport of Sydney.

The momentous crossing was commemorated with wild onboard celebrations which can be viewed at cruiseweekly.com.au/videos.

The ship will arrive in Sydney in one week's time, before her inaugural local post-pandemic departure on Sat 01 Oct.



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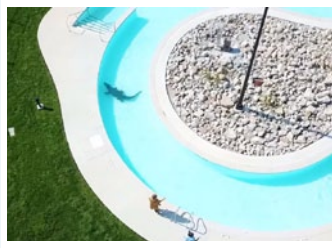


CRUISE ships offer lots of water-based activities, but here's one that hopefully will never be seen on board.

A water park in Illinois, USA has marked the end of the summer by giving an exclusive experience to one last visitor - a 39-year-old alligator.

Splash Cove in the city of Decatur features a meandering "lazy river," and welcomed the season's final reptilian rider (**pictured**) in a joint promotion with the nearby Scovill Zoo.

Officials noted that it had been a few weeks since the last human guests at the water park, allowing the water's chlorine to dissipate enough to make it safe for the reptile's quick swim.



Carnival extends Starboard pact

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has confirmed a five-year extension of its agreement with Starboard Cruise Services, which is a division of premium luxury retailer LVMH.

The pact covers Starboard's existing nine-ship Carnival portfolio as well as introducing Starboard as the retail partner for the line's upcoming flagship *Carnival Celebration*.

Aboard *Celebration* guests will be offered "first-at-sea brand launches" as well as destination-inspired merchandise and "the largest logo assortment offered on a Carnival ship to date".

RCG refinancing

ROYAL Caribbean Group has launched a proposed private offering of US\$1 billion in "senior guaranteed notes" as well as US\$1 billion in "senior secured notes," with the proceeds to be used to redeem existing high-interest financial instruments due for repayment in 2023.



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Kiwis get a taste of Howard



TRAVEL partners from across Australia and New Zealand took part in a specially convened Oceania Cruises' Presidential Forum in Sydney this week.

Participants made the most of the opportunity to engage directly with the line's President Howard Sherman along with other senior executives including VP ANZ Jason Worth and Senior VP and MD APAC Steve Odell.

The day included a trip to iconic Sydney seafood eatery Doyle's, with attendees including House of Travel NZ GM Cruise, Jeff Leckey and Oceania's New Zealand BDM Gabby Oliver (**pictured**).

H-L specials

LANDMARK Travel is offering 25% discounts on a limited allotment of staterooms

for the upcoming local deployment of Hapag-Lloyd cruises' five-star *MS Europa 2*.

Prices on a 16-night Bali to Fiji voyage via Darwin, Cairns, Airlie Beach, Brisbane and Noumea departing 20 Dec 2022 lead in at \$16,262, while a Sydney-Bali cruise departing 07 Feb 2023 now starts at \$11,642 for 16 nights - more details on +61 2 9977 7100.

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