



### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Windstar**.

### Windstar groups

**WINDSTAR** has launched a new group offer allowing advisors to earn a Tour Conductor Credit for every seven guests booked, plus a US\$100 bonus commission for every guest - see the **last page**.

### Princess promotion

**TERRY** Thornton has been named as Chief Commercial Officer of Princess Cruises, just seven months after joining the line as SVP of Commercial Development & Integration. He succeeds Deanna Austin who is retiring after 36 years as a senior leader at Princess.

## Cruise a focus for NT maritime plan

**INCREASING** cruise ship visitation to Australia's Top End has been highlighted as one of the key opportunities for the Northern Territory maritime sector, according to a newly released draft Maritime Industry Development Plan ([CLICK HERE](#)). Community members, industry associations and businesses, port owners and managers and other relevant stakeholders are being invited to provide feedback on the framework which includes a range of proposed actions including delivering the upgraded Gove Port (Nhulunbuy) Tourism Precinct to allow more cruise ships to visit. The report also notes the 2020 Darwin Port Development Plan, which envisaged a staged expansion of the city's existing cruise ship facility to provide the capability to berth vessels up to 230,000 gross tons carrying as



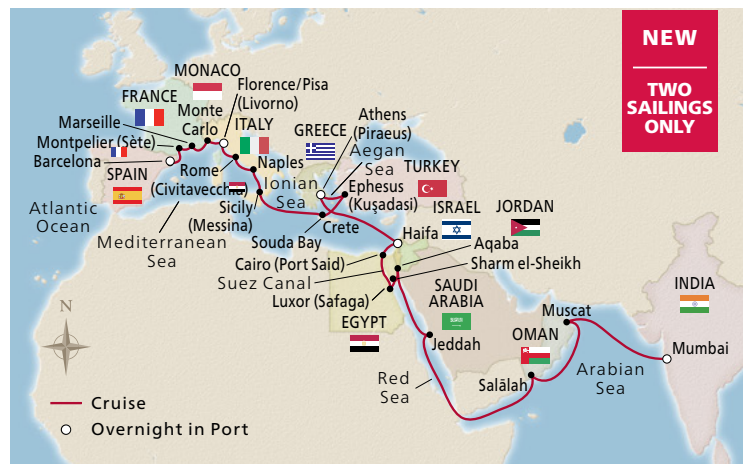
many as 6,600 passengers. NT Chief Minister, Natasha Fyles, said her Government was firmly focused on diversifying the Territory economy, with the maritime industry able to deliver direct jobs, opportunities and investment for the community. "Darwin is strategically

significant, being centrally located on the Northern Australian coastline we have the capability to be the leading destination of new and current industries." The plan includes the development of new superyacht berths and a holistic approach to ports across the Territory, as well as the Darwin Ship Lift which will "pave the way for hundreds of jobs and position Darwin as a major international player in the marine services industry". An overall aim is to articulate a shared vision for the Territory marine sector and provide a framework for the development of infrastructure, workforce and maritime business capabilities. The public consultation on the plan includes a survey which should be completed by 01 Nov, as well as the ability to make written submissions. [CLICK HERE](#) to access survey. *BP*

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## Brett Walsh joins Royal from ANA



**LONG-TIME** aviation executive Brett Walsh (pictured) is switching to the cruise sector, taking a new role at Royal Caribbean Group as Head of Travel Procurement and Planning - Asia Pacific.

Walsh was most recently Country Manager Australia for Japanese carrier All Nippon Airways, and prior to that held senior roles with Airalin and Thai Airways International as well as at Metro Travel Sydney.

## Almost 25% plan to cruise

**NEARLY** a quarter of Australians who plan to travel domestically this year aim to do so on a cruise, according to a new consumer study released by Southern Cross Travel Insurance (SCTI).

The company polled 500 Aussies who "intend to travel domestically in the next 12 months" and found a 23% propensity to cruise, with demand strongest amongst families with children eight years and older (26%) followed by empty nesters (19%).

SCTI CEO Jo McCauley said the arrival of ships like *Disney Wonder* meant the popularity of domestic cruising among families "comes as no surprise".

The company is responding to the demand by adding a new cruise add-on to its domestic travel insurance policy which first launched in late 2020 to support travellers during the pandemic.

"Now that the cruising industry is well and truly bouncing back, we're responding to customer demand for cruise cover when travelling around the country," McCauley said.

"There are significant costs associated with domestic cruises, and since the pandemic travellers are even more aware of the chance of cancellations due to unforeseen circumstances; this was identified in our research as a key customer concern," she added.

Key insurance needs include cancellation cover, the protection of travel costs associated with a cruise and valuables coverage.

The new policy extension supports customers with claims for lost or stolen items, cancelled or disrupted travel plans which mean they are unable to cruise due to missing their ship's embarkation, and falling ill or being injured before departure. *BP*

## Heritage snaps

**HERITAGE** Expeditions has announced a partnership with Australian photographer Ewen Bell, who will offer "bespoke, small-group photography workshops" on three of Heritage's 2024 departures.

Heritage Commercial Director and Expedition Leader, Aaron Russ, said the sessions would welcome just eight participants per voyage aboard *Heritage Adventurer*.

The initiative continues a longstanding association between Bell and the cruise line, which has welcomed him on board multiple voyages since 2009.

He'll be joining Heritage cruises in Japan (24 May-08 Jun), the Kimberley (11-21 Aug) and the Southern Ocean (18-29 Dec), and as well as the intimate workshops will also provide lectures for all guests.



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## Great Guinea deal

**CRUISE** Traveller is offering savings of \$11,540 per couple plus a bonus flight credit on its luxury, all-inclusive voyage through New Guinea and Indonesia for bookings made by 31 Oct - [CLICK HERE](#).

## An eco-friendly *Icon*



**ROYAL** Caribbean International's new *Icon of the Seas* has completed its first-ever liquefied natural gas (LNG) bunkering operation (**pictured**), in the lead up to the second round of the giant newbuild's sea trials.

The ship received the fuel from a special LNG bunker vessel called *Kairos* operated by Finland's state-owned energy firm Gasum.

*Kairos* has been designed to supply LNG to a range of types and sizes of vessels at all possible refuelling locations in Northwest Europe, according to Gasum.

Switching to LNG from traditional maritime fuels allows for the complete removal of SOx pollutants and particles, and a reduction in NOx emissions of up to 85%, the company said.

In addition LNG reduces carbon emissions by about 20% and can be freely substituted with renewable liquefied biogas (bio-

LNG or LBG) which means the two fuels can be flexibly mixed at any ratio.

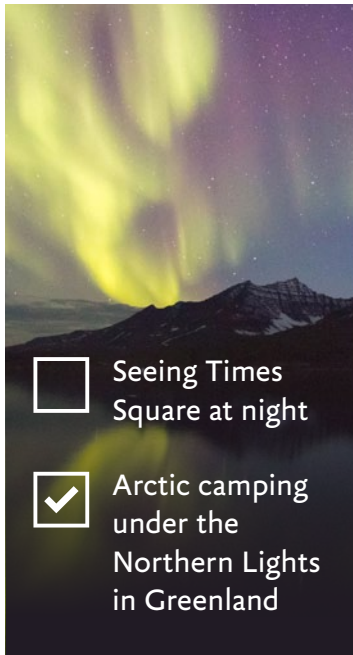
As well as LNG power, *Icon of the Seas* utilises other technologies to reduce its environmental impact, including the ability to use shore power connections, air lubrication of its hull and onboard waste heat recovery systems.

Gasum noted that volume growth in the maritime LNG bunkering segment had been gathering speed steadily during 2023, and "is expected to further pick up pace towards the end of the year".

Royal Caribbean's highly anticipated *Icon of the Seas* will be the world's largest cruise ship when it debuts in Miami in early 2024, with facilities such as six waterslides, new family neighbourhoods, scores of restaurants and much more. *BP*

## Royal discounts

**ROYAL** Caribbean has announced its 10.10 Sale, with guests who book before 16 Oct to enjoy up to \$550 instant savings, kids cruise free, 5% off seniors discount and 30% off fares - more info [HERE](#).



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## PORThOLE

**TAKING** a cruise is definitely a better way to experience the aquatic environment than having a fish tank at home - and that's certainly been the case for a Belgian couple accused of smuggling historic artefacts from Turkiye.

The pair enjoyed their time in the destination but the trip turned into a nightmare after "innocently" picking up three rocks from a vacant lot during a trip to Manavgat, near Antalya.

Officials screening the woman's luggage on departure spotted the items, which she said were intended to be put into her home aquarium.

She's now been detained and is facing charges of "smuggling archaeological stones" in violation of a Turkish law banning the removal of "cultural and natural assets".

In hindsight, a gift shop would probably have been a better spot to pick a souvenir.

## A musical Encounter



**P&O Cruises Australia** delivered the gift of music to children in the South Pacific by bringing more than 80 members of the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra to the region aboard *Pacific Encounter*.

During the seven-day voyage, the musicians, aged between 11 and 25 years old, visited schools in Noumea and Port Vila to perform concerts with the children, as well as making a surprise donation of more than 100 musical instruments.

Pacific Encounter Captain Roger Bilton, **pictured** with some of the orchestra, said, "it's not every day that we have a full orchestra travelling onboard, and transporting such precious cargo

for a noble cause".

"Our guests were even treated to a special performance on board during their trip, making the cruise truly one to remember."

The voyage marked the 40th anniversary of the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra, with P&O donating drum kits to the group at its various destinations.

Tour Organiser Wayne Thomson said the instruments will inspire children in the South Pacific to learn how to play music.

"The trip has been a lot of hard work by our members and P&O, but it was worth it to see the smiles on the kids' faces as we surprised them with their own musical instruments," he said. *JM*

## Iceland plots new cruise tourism tax

**VISITORS** to Iceland are set to be hit with higher visitor taxes in 2024, including an expansion of previous levies to also include the cruise sector.

The move was confirmed in a recent *Bloomberg Television* interview with Icelandic Prime Minister, Katrin Jakobsdottir.

She said the tax would be a broader version of a previous accommodation tax which was imposed in the years prior to 2020, and that was suspended due to the pandemic.

"It is intended to expand taxation to cover passengers on cruise ships alongside hotels, recognising the impact on our seas as well as land," a spokesperson for the Iceland Government said.

Jakobsdottir noted that tourism to Iceland had grown exponentially in the last decade "and that obviously is not just creating effects on the climate...it's also because most of our guests who are coming to us are visiting the unspoiled nature, and obviously it creates a pressure".

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*Cruise Weekly* is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

*Cruise Weekly* is Australasia's leading travel industry cruise publication.

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