

### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Scenic Luxury Tours & Cruises**.

### Fly free with Scenic

**SCENIC** Luxury Cruises & Tours is inviting guests to fly free in economy with its Europe river cruises next year - see **page 4** for more info.

### Caledonian Sky sold

**TRAVELMARVEL'S** *Caledonian Sky* has been sold to a Greek shipping company, Kalamata Shipping. The sale was finalised earlier this month, according to reports in the Greek press, following the completion of the vessel's European season for Travelmarvel.

## MSC Cruises sails to New Frontiers

**MSC Cruises** and Meyer Werft have signed a landmark agreement for six next-generation vessels, marking the launch of the line's New Frontier platform.

The brand-new class of ships is thus far made up of four orders and two options, securing full capacity at Meyer Werft's shipyard in Germany well into the next decade.

New Frontier-class ships will feature a maximum capacity of 5,400 passengers, weigh 180,000 gross tonnes, and will be delivered annually starting in 2030.

It makes the new class slightly smaller than the World class MSC is currently building, which tops out at more than 6,700 guests and well over 215,000gt.

The announcement was made today at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs & Energy in Berlin, by Germany's Minister for Economic Affairs Katherina



Reiche, Minister-President Lower Saxony Olaf Lies, MSC Executive Chair Pierfrancesco Vago, and outgoing Meyer Werft Chief Executive Officer Bernd Eikens.

"We will create vessels that redefine the cruise experience while preserving the craftsmanship that keeps Germany at the forefront of

maritime engineering," the MSC Chair said.

"The New Frontier class will enable us to design new and exclusive itineraries, offer exceptional guest experience, and will feature next-generation environmental technologies that will advance our net-zero 2050 commitment," he added. *MS*

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## Medium is best

**MIDSIZE** cruise ships - typically carrying 1,000 to 2,500 guests - generally rank as the most popular vessels, new research has found.

Findings from British online travel agency Cruise.co.uk, cited in *The Independent*, showed 41% of respondents to a 700-person survey favoured midsized vessels for next year's bookings.

These ships are also the most on order around the world, representing 35-40% of vessels under construction.

A third favour large ships, which have a capacity between 2,500-4,000 guests, while around 15% prefer small vessels (below 1,000 pax).

Just 9% of cruisers favour ships that carry more than 4,000 passengers - the kind mostly built by Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises, and now Norwegian Cruise Line.

Bookers are still mostly motivated by the ability to visit multiple destinations, cited by 39% of respondents.

A fifth are moved to book depending on the perceived value for money, while 10% considered onboard facilities and the opportunity to relax.

Lower entry-level fares or special offers would tempt 28% of passengers to book, while a further 24% said all-inclusive pricing would encourage them to commit.

## Tech to clean up for Aus & NZ

**THE** new in-water cruise ship cleaning technology rolling out in Auckland (**pictured**) this summer (**CW** yesterday) offers cruise lines the ability to create effective home port strategies in the region, according to Australian Cruise Association Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel.

"Australia and New Zealand share connected markets and itineraries and what drives innovation, and operational improvement in Auckland delivers learnings and confidence that support the broader Australasian cruise sector," Abel told **CW**.

"Improved maintenance technology adds flexibility and performance confidence, leading to key enablers for future deployment growth.

"For Australia, that means better confidence in building sustainable home port strategies and encouraging cruise line investment decisions."

Co-developed by Port of Auckland and New Zealand Diving & Salvage, with support from Biosecurity New Zealand, the technology targets hard-to-clean areas of vessel hulls such as sea chests and propeller shafts.

The environmentally-friendly technology also reduces the need for offshore cleaning and minimises disruption to passenger and cargo operations.

New Zealand Cruise Association Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Lloyd told **CW** she is "thrilled"



with the result of the new tech.

"[Cruise lines] needed a safety net so that if they were on their way here and part of the ship needed a tidy up, they would be able to do that safely within New Zealand waters and in a way that wouldn't affect the ongoing itineraries and visitor experience - this is the solution," she said.

While Lloyd acknowledged it may take two to three years for the solution to impact deployment, she hopes it will make a difference to cruise lines for the 2027-28 season.

Port of Auckland General Manager Chris Mills said the solution provides much-needed certainty for cruise lines.

"It's an additional service that we can provide to shipping lines in the rare instance where there is the need for spot cleaning," Mills explained.

"It means we can continue to protect New Zealand's incredible marine environment without compromising the reliability of shipping operations."

The solution is welcome news for New Zealand, off the back of Port of Auckland chief Roger Gray's recent spray about the former government's "anti-cruise agenda" (**CW** 28 Nov). *JHM*

## Explora referrals

**EXPLORA** Journeys has launched the Explora Club Referral Programme, designed to recognise and reward the loyalty of existing Explora Club loyalty members while inviting their friends and loved ones to do the same.

The new initiative extends additional benefits to existing members, as well as those who accept an invite to join the Explora Club.

Members can bring in up to 10 new referred guests per year to sail with Explora.

These new passengers must be entirely new to sailing with Explora, and must enrol in the Explora Club to enjoy the benefits; each referred guest receives 200 future journey credits applied towards their first reservation, along with 500 Explora Club points upon the cruise's completion.

The referring Explora Club member is equally rewarded, receiving 200 future journey credits once the newly referred member embarks for their first cruise, with 500 Explora Club points awarded on the voyage's completion.

Guests enrolling in the Explora Club can also apply to match their status held with other eligible cruise loyalty programs to enjoy equivalent recognition with Explora.

The new Explora Club first launched in Apr (**CW** 10 Apr).



Keep your eyes peeled for a 5 January launch!

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**MANY** of us know the stinging feeling of returning to reality after a cruise - that is about to be felt by a very naughty parliament of owls.

The birds, who recently stowed away on Royal Caribbean's *Allure of the Seas* for her cruise to Spain, are now set to be returned to their home in the United States.

Two burrowing owls have been living it up on the Mediterranean coast, having boarded the ship in Miami, nesting in *Allure's* Central Park neighbourhood - that's some expensive real estate.

Unfortunately the birds now face a long stay in quarantine in Spain, before being returned to the US next month.

This is not the first time a stowaway owl has found its way onto a cruise ship, with another sailing from Florida to Mexico almost three years ago (*CW* 09 Mar 2023).

## HAL oranges agents famil



**HOLLAND** America Line (HAL) Key Account Manager Erin King and Business Development Executive Dylan McKechnie recently hosted a group of agents on board *Noordam* as part of her Australian season (*CW* 14 Nov).

The first group sailed from Christchurch to Hobart, taking in the beauty of New Zealand's Fiordland, while the second group continued the journey from Hobart to Sydney.

Throughout the voyage, advisors were immersed in the Holland America experience, including a hosted dinner at the Pinnacle Grill, where they enjoyed the brand's signature fine-dining steakhouse at sea.

Advisors were also invited to tour a range of stateroom categories, providing insight to support more informed and personalised recommendations to their clients. *MS*

## MSC US 2027-28

**MSC** Cruises has unveiled its American itineraries for the winter 2027-28 season.

The program will feature seven ships sailing from three home ports in the United States, covering everything from quick weekend getaways to longer itineraries through Central and South America.

The season will include *MSC World Atlantic's* inaugural voyage from Port Canaveral, kicking off an alternating schedule of seven-night eastern and western Caribbean sailings, complemented by *MSC Grandiosa's* three- and four-night cruises to Ocean Cay and The Bahamas.

Meanwhile, *MSC World America* will lead a line-up of four ships sailing from Miami, including *MSC Seaside*, *MSC Seashore*, and *MSC Seascape*.

The cruise line has also previewed its new 'Let's Holiday' commercial, featuring Drew Barrymore and Orlando Bloom, which was produced on a recent *World America* sailing - [CLICK HERE](#).



# SAILING NEW WATERS

Here's why the cruise industry is setting sail for Southeast Asia.

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