



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

Adventure delayed

SHIPBUILDING delays have forced Disney Cruise Line to postpone *Disney Adventure's* Singapore debut to next year.

The new mega-ship was originally set to arrive in Dec, but will now sail in Mar, with three months' worth of voyages set to be affected.

Those who were booked on *Adventure's* inaugural sailing on 15 Dec will automatically be moved to the new debut on 10 Mar, and will receive a 50% refund, Disney said.

Guests unable to be moved will be offered a full refund and a 50% discount for a future sailing on a date of their choice, valid for cruises departing by Mar 2027.

MSC ideally suited to Australian tastes

MSC Cruises' ships offer the ideal cruising style for Australian passengers, Vice President International Sales Antonio Paradiso told *CW*.

The line's approach to contemporary cruising, particularly its flexi-porting option, is suited to guests from Australia, who Paradiso highlighted as some of the world's highest-value passengers.

"We give way more flexibility in terms of embarkation and disembarkation, you can board an MSC ship wherever you want - it could be Barcelona, Civitavecchia, Naples, Marseille, Nice, Genoa," he said.

"This works really well for Australians, especially when they're spending two to three weeks in Europe - this is where we believe MSC has value."

The cruise line also offers a more relaxed, "attentive-but-not-



intrusive" service style, which is designed to cater to its highly international guest profile.

Paradiso believes these factors also make MSC an attractive proposition for Australian guests.

"The whole atmosphere on board is different, because

we tend to cater for multiple nationalities, so there will never be a predominant one that takes over, so you truly enjoy that international vibe."

Pictured are Paradiso and Marketing & PR Manager Michelle Warren.

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Oceania enhanced

OCEANIA Cruises has enhanced voyage inclusions for all guests, with a new choice of amenities under its Your World Included program.

Guests will have the opportunity to choose one of two additional amenities: a shore excursion credit of up to US\$600 per guest or complimentary wine and beer during restaurant lunch and dinner hours.

This is in addition to its current suite of onboard amenities such as free speciality dining, unlimited wi-fi, and gratuities.

The new program is available for bookings made on or after 17 Sep - call 1300 355 200.

Plenty of Celebs on the river



CELEBRITY Cruises Vice President International Giles Hawke believes the line will benefit from a steady funnel of passengers from around the sector into its new river cruise product (**CW** 04 Sep).

Hawke said the research the line conducted in the lead-up to the launch uncovered a range of sources for its river cruises.

"We're expecting to get a lot of Celebrity customers and we think there will be some from the wider Royal Caribbean Group, because we've got reciprocal loyalty schemes, so we'll be talking to their customers about it as well," he explained.

"Fifty percent of them already take river cruises or plan to take a river cruise, so if we think of the number of customers we're taking every year on the ocean, then we're going to need to build a lot more river ships.

"We know that there will be agents who will be talking to their database and their customers who maybe go on other river cruise companies or other cruise lines, and will want to come with us," Hawke added.

He believes the guest demographic will be similar to that it hosts on its current ships, as it attempts to recreate the experience of its ocean product on the rivers.

"I think the sweet spot will

be 45-60, so it'll probably bring down the average age of river a bit," Hawke shared.

Celebrity's initial order is for 10 river ships (**CW** 29 Jan), and Hawke believes when that commission is fulfilled, "we'll be in a different place to where we are when we've got two".

MEANWHILE, Hawke revealed local demand for Celebrity has been "fantastic", as having some of the cruise line's newest hardware in Australian waters boosts enthusiasm for its fly-cruise product.

"I think having [Celebrity] Edge here is amazing for the brand, and I think good for the Australian cruise industry.

"It's a good advert for us because when people go on Edge, then they'll travel the rest of the world on Edge-class in all our major destinations so they know what they're going to get."

The only challenge for the Australian market, Hawke said, is locals booking early enough to get on Edge in local waters, with the ship also attracting fly-cruise pax from around the world.

"Australians book a little bit later for domestic product, the international markets start to fill her up, so I think there's a need for Australian agents to sell earlier into Edge.

"They'll risk not having enough space to sell into." MS

Dreamlines CEO

OPERATOR of Cruise1st and CruiseAway in Australia, Dreamlines-Cruise1st Group, has appointed Nishank Gopalkrishnan as CEO.

He brings a wealth of experience in running travel and technology businesses at a global scale, having most recently served as Chief Commercial Officer at TUI Musement, the tours & activities business of the TUI Group, one of the world's largest tour operators.

Gopalkrishnan has also held leadership positions at MakeMyTrip, and ran the travel startup Triposo, which was later successfully acquired by TUI Musement.



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THE question of how much screen time and wi-fi access is a polarising one for parents, especially when reactions like the following take place.

A TikTok video has gone viral showing a 10-year-old boy having a total meltdown after learning he won't have wi-fi access on his Disney Cruise Line sailing on *Disney Magic*.

Of course, the ship does offer free wi-fi through its Navigator app, but the boy's parents opted not to buy one of the tiered packages.

The video shows the boy being consoled by his grandfather, who assures the boy he will learn to live without it and just to have fun.

Comments on the video were mixed, with most saying they were sure once the boy sees his favourite Disney characters and all the fun he can have on board, he will soon learn not to want wi-fi as much.

Shorex vital to deployment

A **STRONG** shore excursion program is one of, if not the most important factor to influencing deployment, attendees at last week's Australian Cruise Association (ACA) conference were told.

The 'decoding deployment' panel, moderated by ACA Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel, heard from Holland America Line Director Deployment & Itinerary Planning Robert de Bruin that a good shorex program is "almost at the top of the list" of a cruise line's considerations on where to home port a ship.

"It's hugely important...shore excursion for us is a big part of our revenue on board, so how you build a big strong program with enough capacity is usually important to the decision of whether we're going to 'port A' or 'port B,'" he explained.

"Without a shorex program, it's pretty hard to bring 2,000 passengers to shore, and they have nowhere to go.

"That's where, if we don't have a strong shorex program, we see the community pushing back," de Bruin added.

Mystic Cruises Director Itinerary Planning Port Operations & Land Programs Michael Braathen said shorex is by far the largest onboard revenue generator on his ships.

"If you don't have the capacity, the guests are going to complain, so it's very important when you're planning an itinerary to understand what there is to see and do there, how much capacity you can fulfil."

Celebrity Cruises Managing Director Tim Jones said the equation of whether to stay at sea or visit a port is a large part of why the line has brought in an expert in the field.

"It's guest experience and it's revenue...do we stay at sea, do we spend longer at 'port A' than 'port B'...what are we going to generate by going to 'A', staying in 'B', or just keeping the ship at sea," Jones considered.

Princess Cruises Director of Deployment and Itinerary Planning Debbie Holbrook added research shows its guests rate a destination far higher when they organise a shore excursion through the ship. *MS*

Cunard from away

CUNARD has announced it will bring the globally acclaimed theatre production *Come from Away* on board *Queen Elizabeth* during her maiden Caribbean voyage, which departs 16 Oct.

The show, which debuted 10 years ago to sold-out crowds on Broadway and in London's West End, depicts the true story of the 6,579 air passengers grounded in a small Canadian town in the wake of 9/11, and the Newfoundland community that invited these 'come from aways' into their lives.

Cunard has partnered with Music Theatre International to bring to the sea a fresh take on the story, with the production to be performed in *Queen Elizabeth's* Royal Court Theatre twice during each voyage, with matinee and evening performances available.

"It's a show that resonates deeply with audiences, celebrating compassion and connection - values that we share at Cunard," Cunard President Katie McAlister said.



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