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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of the latest cruise industry news plus a cover wrap from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

RSSC half price deal

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is reminding agents that it is offering up to 50% off select cruises sailing across Europe, Asia, South America, the South Pacific and Australia.

The deal also includes 10% off deposits - see **front page**.

Your shout, MSC!

MSC Cruises is currently offering a free drinks package when bookings are made for an inside, oceanview or balcony cabin before 31 Jan.

Drinks include wine, beer, spirits, soft drinks and water.

Viking launches agent marketing centre

VIKING Cruises has announced the launch of a new marketing centre catering for Australian and New Zealand travel agents.

The new purpose-built platform serves as a centralised resource for all of the cruise line's up-to-date agent marketing materials and tools, and is accessible within Viking's existing agent portal.

"Viking's marketing centre is our enhanced sales tool that makes it easy to market and sell Viking to your clients, helping you grow your business and earn more commission," said Viking Cruises' Trade Marketing Manager Erin Kramer.

"The brand-new platform can be found within the existing travel agent portal and makes it easy to seamlessly customise Viking marketing materials with your agency's contact details and call to action.

"Then the marketing centre will



generate a personalised file for you, ready to go," she added.

Specific resources provided within the new platform include current promotions, up-to-date pricing, as well as a range of branded marketing collateral such as flyers, digital banners, video and social media assets like tiles to help agents draft the most effective Facebook or Instagram

posts for clients.

The new marketing centre also helps agents design email marketing campaigns, providing tools to customise templates which can be sent directly from the portal, or downloaded and sent from agents' own platforms.

To access the tool, agents can use their TA Portal log in at www.myvikingjourney.com/agent.

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Ponant ups offset

PONANT has unveiled plans to pursue an ambitious sustainability target moving forward, revealing it will be offsetting 150% of its carbon emissions.

The decision follows a move by the line to eliminate the use of heavy fuel fleet-wide from the start of 2019, and will also accompany funding of scientific projects around the world such as a €265,000 grant to monitor the humpback whale population in Antarctica.

Ponant has also outlined its 2023 sustainability objectives, including a 10% reduction in the use of nitrogen oxides, and an 80% lowering of fine particulate matter waste.

Ecruising discounts

ECRUISING is offering an exclusive packaged deal on an 86-night Sydney to Barcelona sailing departing 04 Mar 2021.

Taking place aboard *Seabourn Sojourn*, the voyage includes a circumnavigation of Australia's southern coast, a two-night stopover in Bali, visits to Victoria and Praslin in the Seychelles Archipelago, & explorations of South Africa's Garden Route coastline.

The cruise is priced from \$41,199ppts - a 38% saving off the standard rate.

Call 1300 369 848 for details.

Aurora ship to Australia?



AURORA Expeditions is investigating the option of bringing a ship to Australia in between polar seasons, MD Robert Halfpenny has told **CW**.

"That is an option being looked at now," he confirmed, adding that Macquarie Island and even Papua New Guinea and Japan were on the line's radar.

Bringing a ship to Australia "would be huge", Halfpenny explained, given Aurora is an Australian company with Australian founders.

"That, I think, would be really good for us, it would carry a lot of pride."

Halfpenny said the new destinations would be in next year's brochure release for the 2022/23 season, but noted there was a variable involved - the company has been approached

by some businesses who wanted to charter Aurora's ship over a couple of months.

The cruise line is looking at a number of other new destinations, including the Northeast and Northwest Passage, Russia and Alaska.

"Where we can explore a region like that in-depth for anywhere between nine to 18 days is basically our sweet spot," Halfpenny explained.

"The ships weren't just built for polar exploration, they have balconies, hot tubs, *Sylvia Earle* has a pool, so they're built for snorkelling and scuba diving in tropical areas as well," he said.

"These ships can go anywhere."

Aurora Expedition's second purpose-built expedition ship, due to debut in Oct 2021, *Sylvia Earle*, is **pictured**.

Eclipse 2020/21

SCENIC Cruises & Tours has released two new brochures featuring sailings to the Arctic and Europe aboard *Scenic Eclipse* in 2020 and 2021.

Highlights of the Arctic and Fjords brochure include the new Wild Alaska and British Columbia itinerary, which explores glacial valleys, cedar forests & many Alaskan fjords.

Also new is the Viking Voyage: The Arctic to America cruise, retracing the steps of Vikings thousand of years ago.

Meanwhile, the Europe and Mediterranean brochure features 10 new European adventures, including departures from Venice visiting Paros and Kea Island.

MSC's Qld recruit

MSC Cruises has announced the appointment of Shannon Morgan to the role of Business Development Executive, Queensland.

Morgan joins the cruise line with plenty of industry experience, including sales roles with Wendy Wu, Globus and most recently, Sales Director for Pandaw River Expeditions.

"Shannon is a wonderful addition to our MSC family, bringing with him extensive industry knowledge," the cruise line said in a statement.

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A splash of kindness



CARNIVAL Cruise Line has partnered with The Children’s Hospital at Westmead to introduce Splashy Cove on board *Carnival Splendor*, a mini waterpark plastered with fun drawings created by the hospital’s patients.

The new philanthropic attraction opened to much fanfare by *Splendor’s* goddaughter and patient of The Children’s Hospital at Westmead, Matilda Jenkins.

The waterpark forms part of an ongoing relationship between the hospital and the cruise line, which has in its first three years raised \$227,800.

Pictured: Westmead’s friendly Bandaged Bear; Sydney Children’s Hospitals Foundation Nicola Stokes; young star Matilda Jenkins; Carnival’s Vice President & General Manager Australia Jennifer Vandekreeke and *Splendor’s* Captain Alessandro Lemmi.



CRUISE & Maritime Voyages (CMV) has announced it will not be renewing the charter contract for its *Astoria* vessel, meaning she will sail her final season with the company this year.

The decision arrives on the back of CMV purchasing two former P&O Cruises ships last year, with both scheduled to join the fleet from 2021 (**CW** 29 Nov 2019).

Having joined the cruise line’s fleet back in 2015, *Astoria’s* farewell season will include a range of northern European cruises departing from Poole and Hull in England.

Managing Director for CMV Australia Dean Brazier cautioned Australian guests that there are only a limited number of spots

available on board *Astoria* before she officially departs the fleet.

“For Australians planning their European breaks this year, this is the last chance to sail on board this classic cruise liner,” Brazier said.

“*Astoria’s* size provides a fantastic opportunity to reach smaller ports and more destinations,” he added.

Cruises include a 13-night sailing of Iceland in search of the northern lights departing 12 Mar, as well as an 11-night voyage of the Scottish lochs and Ireland.

To mark her exit from the fleet, CMV is also offering up to 65% off her final sailings, with fares from under \$100ppts, per night.

Call 1300 307 934 for more info.

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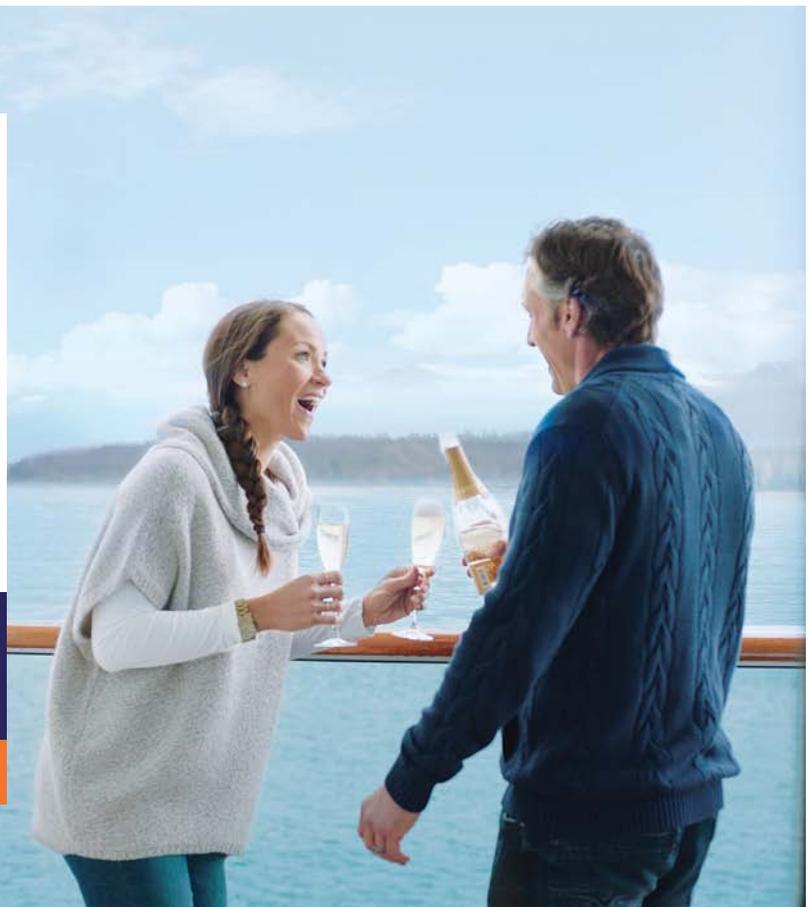
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Palma cruise limit?

THE Spanish port city of Palma in Mallorca has flagged plans to limit the number of cruise ships visiting the island. The Balearic Government has already imposed a ban on tourist rentals in multi-family homes and issued a temporary hold on the construction of new hotels, and now may have the cruise industry in its sights. Speaking during a political debate, the city's Mayor Jose Hila expressed a need for tourism to be more sustainable in the future. "We no longer aim to grow in quantity but in quality with tourism that is civil and respectful of the destination," he argued. He added that with only 420,000 inhabitants, Palma receives 9 million tourists a year and it was time to limit the number of cruise ships.

Coronavirus policy

A SELECT number of cruise lines have started to take measures against the outbreak of Coronavirus in China. Astro Ocean Cruises revealed it would offer full refunds to any passengers that have been diagnosed with the virus, as well as for any guests who cannot join the trip due to pneumonia-related management measures. Costa Cruises also released a statement suggesting it would be working closely with local cruise authorities in China to improve its passenger screening procedures.

Royal Car-avaggio!



A GROUP of top-selling New South Wales-based agents got their hands dirty with some painting last night at Cork & Chroma in Sydney, thanks to Royal Caribbean. Tasked with coming up with their best beach sunset, some

agents had a bit more game than others, but the gentle craft of painting was clearly the winner on the night. **Pictured** are aspiring Da Vincis, Susan Farrow and Miki Bouteay from American Express Centurion making their next masterpieces.

Coral Expeditions heads to the East Indies

CORAL Expeditions has introduced seven new sailings exploring the East Indies to its program for 2021. The collection of new itineraries visit a range of small islands in the region such as Misool in Raja Ampat, Alor in the Lesser Sundas and Buton in Sulawesi. Scheduled to take place aboard *Coral Adventurer*, the expeditions will aim to take in the "rich history, culture and wildlife of the region".

"The Indonesian archipelago is vast and little-seen, yet it offers an amazing diversity of attractions within easy reach of the northern Australian coast," said Coral Expeditions Commercial Director Jeff Gillies. Highlights include a 12-night Raja Ampat & Spice Islands cruise departing Darwin 02 Jan 2021, as well as a 10-night Island Realms of the East Indies sailing from Darwin to Bali leaving 30 Jan 2021. Call 1800 079 545 for details.

Lindblad fly free

LINDBLAD Expeditions is offering a fly free promo until 30 Jun when bookings are made on select 2020 Antarctica sailings. Free return Economy airfares from Sydney or Melbourne to Santiago or Buenos Aires are available - call 1300 363 055 for more information.



CRUISE passengers are always on the lookout for new ways to achieve immersive shore experiences, so perhaps a chap from California (**pictured** below) might give some passengers a few inspiring ideas. Caught leaving a beach wearing a full seaweed suit by a Google Maps camera, the man has been dubbed by online image hunters as "The Seaweed Man of San Diego".

Unfortunately, the internet is scant on the details as to why the man decided to don an entire coral reef for his summer wear collection, but just like adventure cruising, a little bit of mystery never hurts, right? Perhaps he was just trying to 'weed' out his worst shirts?

