

### Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

### Explora II steel cut

MSC Cruises' newly launched luxury brand Explora Journeys has celebrated a major milestone with the start of construction of its second ship, *Explora II*.

Set to welcome guests in 2024, a year after her sister ship *Explora I*, the new cruise line is on track to fulfil its commitment to launch four luxury ships by 2026 - one per year.

*Explora II* will offer 461 oceanfront suites, all with private terraces and generous outdoor space.

MSC Cruises Executive Chair Pierfrancesco Vago said the start of construction of *Explora II* signals the company's firm commitment to its tourism partners for the coming-to-market of its new luxury brand.

## Cairns ready for cruise



**MEMBER** of the Australian Parliament for Leichhardt Warren Entsch has said the country's cruise industry will play a very important role in its tourism mix moving forward, as his constituency, Cairns and Far North Queensland, readies to welcome travellers back.

Speaking as part of a representative group of local businesses featured by Carnival Australia to illustrate the partnership between cruise tourism and the many attractions of Far North Queensland, Entsch reminded that his constituency was among the first impacted by the pandemic and will be one of the last to recover.

"Pre-COVID, our region attracted more than two million domestic and international visitors each year, and the sector was worth \$3.5 billion annually... that has all but been reduced to nothing but a trickle" Entsch said.

"However, what attracted visitors to Cairns and Far North Queensland in the first place certainly hasn't been diminished by COVID-19."

Cairns Mayor Bob Manning (pictured second from the left with the Woodward family, proprietor of local tour package company Capta Group) said the city can shine once again by catering to the rapid increase in overall passenger demand and international market size from Baby Boomers, who are seeking more varied and adventurous destinations.

"One of the key growth areas for our tourism industry pre-COVID was the expansion of cruises coming into the Cairns Port," he said.

"Visits by ships has been made even simpler following the successful completion last year of the state government's dredging of the channel which now allows vessels up to 300 metres."

Despite the tap for this vital cruise tourism opportunity having been switched off since Mar 2020, there is still no prospect of when it might be turned on again, which yesterday forced the cruise line to cancel *Carnival Splendor* sailings through to and including 7 Feb and *Carnival Spirit* sailings through to and including 20 Feb.

### I want to Break Free

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line is inviting travellers to celebrate a new era in cruising with its Break Free Sale.

Offering up to 30% savings together with all five of its popular Free at Sea offers, travellers can also access up to US\$2,900 in bonus value.

As part of its Partners First philosophy, Norwegian has also developed a comprehensive travel advisor toolkit now available at Marketing HQ to help travel partners market the Break Free Sale.

The deal is available to be booked by 02 Nov, and terms and conditions apply - for additional info, **CLICK HERE**.

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## Chairman's Cruise

**TRAVELLERS** are invited to join Paul Gauguin Cruises' Chairman's Cruise in French Polynesia in 2022.

Each year, Paul Gauguin/Ponant Asia Pacific Chair Sarina Bratton, selects a voyage to host as a special journey for Yacht Club members and new guests from Australia.

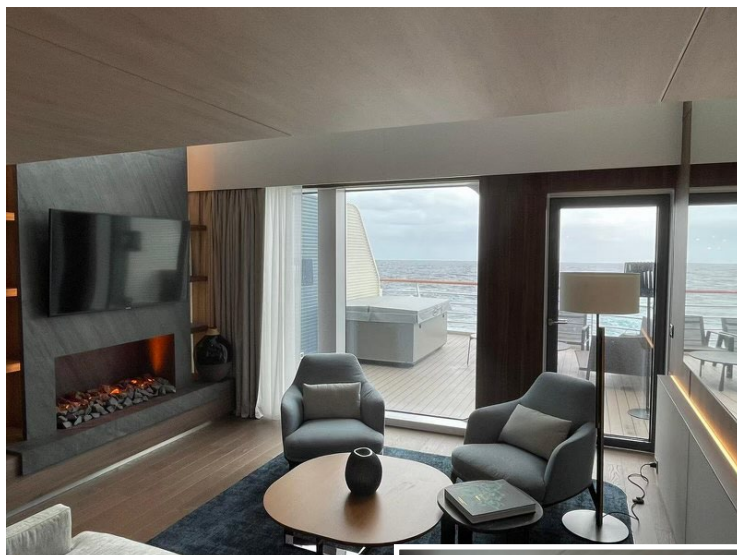
The 11-night voyage travels to Tahiti, the Society Islands & the Tuamotus, together with Expedition Manager Mick Fogg, who has helped handcraft included extras and surprises along the way, such as several shore excursions.

To celebrate next year's Chairman's Cruise, Paul Gauguin will be hosting a cocktail party the night before departure, which will give everyone a chance to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new friends in a relaxed environment over champagne and canapes.

There are also pre- and post-hotel packages available.

Discover the voyage [HERE](#).

## Ponant's peek inside



**PONANT** launched *Le Commandant Charcot* during a ceremony late last month (**CW** 05 Oct), and **Cruise Weekly** has been given an exclusive look inside (pictured and inset).

The cruise line just completed a shakedown voyage to the North Pole, which will feature heavily in *Le Commandant Charcot's* inaugural season.

Departing from Spitsbergen, the ship will sail for 15 nights on



three departures to the North Pole from Jul to Aug 2022.

Another highlight will be Nordaustlandet, located in Svalbard, which can be visited on either a nine- or 11-day cruise.

Departing twice on 15 or 28 Jun 2022, the program will take in the scenery of Kongsfjorden, then the Northwest Spitsbergen National Park, the Northeast Svalbard Nature Reserve, Kvitoya, and the Hinlopen Strait renowned for its glaciers and basalt islands.

Ponant launched sales for *Le Commandant Charcot's* second season a fortnight ago (**CW** 20 Sep), just a few weeks after she reached the North Pole for the first time (**CW** 08 Sep).



**THE** Port of Baltimore was forced to step in earlier this week when a hoax began to circulate regarding a pride of escaped lions at the facility.

A Photoshopped picture began circulating online showing a pride of lions roaming free at the Port, which quickly stepped in to tell local news the photo is fake.

In **Cruise Weekly's** opinion, we suggest someone may have gotten a bit creative, after two similar reports emerged recently, regarding escaped lions at a port in India, and escaped lions in Baltimore, South Africa.

Either way, be sure to research thoroughly next time something similar raises the alarm, and remember - if it's not in **CW**, it probably didn't happen!

## Good for the mind

**RESEARCH** conducted by Norwegian Cruise Line and Omnipoll has revealed mindful travel will be a major travel trend for next year.

Almost everyone polled (90%) believes taking a holiday to be an important contributor to their sense of mental wellbeing, while an even greater amount (94%) said the excitement and sense of emotional wellbeing kicked in the moment they started to plan their holiday.

Also important is the ability to spend time with family and loved ones (93%).



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