

Korea cruise return

INTERNATIONAL cruise ships will visit Incheon in 2022, after more than two years banned from entering.

The Government of South Korea first imposed a ban on cruise ships in Feb 2020.

Refunds “almost fully paid”

EXCLUSIVE
CRYSTAL Cruises has told **Cruise Weekly** it is close to finalising all of its outstanding refunds, hopefully bringing to an end a saga that has raged on since the beginning of the pandemic.

The cruise line said it is committed to paying all refunds, and thanked its valued partners for their patience and understanding over this past difficult year, as *Crystal Symphony*, *Crystal Serenity*, *Crystal Endeavor*, *Crystal Debussy*, and *Crystal Ravel* are all once again successfully sailing.

Cruise Weekly has been contacted by a number of dissatisfied travel advisors over the past two months regarding unpaid refunds, some from well over 12 months ago.

Concerns have also been raised about a perceived lack of genuineness in Crystal's communication with the trade, with some advisors likening the cruise line's messages to creditors as canned responses.

The result has been a stop-sell from many travel advisors on Crystal product, including from large global networks of agencies.

However, Crystal has said it is “now current with guest refunds for past cancelled cruises paid via credit card”, although there remains some refunds due to guests in some markets, including Australia.

The cruise line said the

satisfaction of these guests remains its “highest priority.”

“We sincerely apologise to those whose refunds are delayed,” Crystal said.

“Above all, we are committed to listening to and responding to our valued partners and guests as we continue to provide unparalleled service – before, during and after their cruise – which is a hallmark of the Crystal experience.

“We look forward to the eventual return of cruising in Australia and welcoming guests on board and help create a lifetime of wonderful memories.”

Crystal noted all businesses had felt the impact of the ongoing pandemic, particularly its own.

“Although we have successfully restarted our operations in North America and Europe, challenges remain in other parts of the world, including Australia where unfortunately we were forced to close our Sydney-based office last year (**CW** 09 Apr 2020).

“This was a decision that was not made lightly, and with deep regret, as it affected our employees based there.

“We continue to closely examine our operations in Australia which remains an important market for us.”

Over the past few months, Crystal has returned a number of its ocean- and river-going vessels to service (**CW** 31 Aug), and has also sold its 62-passenger adventure yacht *Crystal Esprit*.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Aurora summit at sea

AURORA Expeditions is calling for registrations of interest for its first-ever Antarctic Climate Expedition in 2023 with the namesake of its second expedition ship, oceanographer Sylvia Earle.

The Expedition welcomes registrations of interest from thought leaders in the fields of science, art, education and economics, all of whom are invited to apply to be part of the Climate Summit.

Limited to around 100 guests from around the world, the by-invitation Climate Summit will comprise conservationists, high-profile personalities and ocean luminaries, to raise public and government awareness of the splendour and importance of the region.

The 12-day Antarctic Climate Expedition starts on 13 Feb 2023, with two nights and a full-day conference in Ushuaia, followed by a nine-day voyage on board Aurora's brand-new ship, *Sylvia Earle*, featuring a transit of the Drake Passage.

The expedition ends with a post-voyage night in Punta Arenas.

View Earle's call to arms and register your interest **HERE**.

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Explorer returns

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has celebrated *Seven Seas Explorer's* return to service.

Excited guests embarked the ship on Fri in Trieste for a journey through Italy, Croatia and Greece.

Helmed by Captain Rosario Vasta, *Explorer* will arrive in Rome on Sat, after which she will continue to cruise Southern Europe before crossing the Atlantic to Miami for a season in the Caribbean from Nov until Mar.

Sailing with Regent Seven Seas' enhanced SailSAFE Health and Safety Program, which includes 100% vaccination of both guests and crew members, *Explorer* is the second of the Regent Seven Seas fleet to return, joining its newest ship, *Seven Seas Splendor*, which returned last month (CW 20 Sep).

Emerald Princess returns



PRINCESS Cruises' *Emerald Princess* has become the fifth of the line's ships to return to vacation service.

Emerald departed from the Port of Los Angeles Fri on a 15-day Panama Canal cruise.

The ship is scheduled to arrive in Fort Lauderdale on 30 Oct, and will sail a series of 10-day Panama Canal cruises, round-tripping from the city through Dec.

MEANWHILE, a *Majestic*

Princess guest has become the first cruiser to place a sports bet at sea, with Princess' real-time wagering feature.

The offering is available whenever *Majestic* is in international waters, or wherever permitted by law.

The guest was joined by Senior Vice President North America Sales & Trade Marketing John Chernesky and *Majestic* Cruise Director Kevin Tugwell (pictured).

Seabourn offers

SEABOURN Cruise Line has relaunched its Early Bonus Savings promotion on select voyages through 2023.

Guests taking advantage of the promotion will receive an additional 10% saving off their base cruise fare when they pay their booking in full by the end of next month.

The offer applies to select voyages that depart on or after Apr 2022 through 2023's northern winter and spring, except World Cruises or Grand Voyages.

The offer can be combined with other promotions to provide even more value.

Seabourn has also updated its "Worry-Free Promise" policy to provide continued flexibility for travellers for bookings made by the end of the year on sailings departing by the end of Apr.

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AN INDIAN couple has floated to their wedding in a cooking pot along flooded streets.

Footage after heavy rains in the southern state of Kerala shows the newlyweds squeezed into a pot while two men and a photographer paddle them down a flooded street.

The couple reportedly borrowed the pot from a local temple, adding that it was "the only option" available at short notice."

Footage later showed the bride and groom arriving safe and dry at a small, partially flooded temple in Thalavady, where they exchanged floral garlands, a tradition in many Hindu wedding ceremonies.

Undeterred by the flooding and landslides caused by heavy rains which killed at least 27 people across Kerala, the pair were unwilling to postpone their big day, and after two years of lockdowns, who can blame them?

FACE-2-FACE: Jacinta Baker

Business Development Manager
WA and Home-Based, NCL

1. What is your favourite part of your job?

When I speak to an agent who is full of excitement about a new booking or enquiry. There are so many feel-good moments in travel, but after a challenging 18 months it is great to celebrate every little win with our trade partners - it is so important.

2. What attracted you to a career in the cruise industry?

The intelligent, driven and passionate people who work in our industry. I wanted to have the opportunity to learn and grow from so many incredible minds surrounding me.

3. What is key to success in the cruise industry?

Knowing your brand inside-out and ensuring you are matching the right product to the right client.

4. How has COVID-19 changed



the way you do your job?

Surprisingly, working from home has allowed me to work more closely with our team and our industry, but also to step back, get creative and innovate. Some of the initiatives that have come to fruition since COVID - like Walk for Wellness - are the projects which we are most proud of.

5. What is the best thing to say to people who are hesitant to cruise?

Don't knock it til you try it! I think so many people have preconceptions about cruising before giving it a go; but as every travel agent knows, choosing the right cruise line for your client is vital. Cruising is such a stress-free and safe way to travel.

True North rebrand

TRUE North has revealed new branding, and new departures for later this year.

A new logo and new crew uniforms were introduced earlier in the year and True North has recently published a brand-new website, which is designed to provide visitors with a much more immersive experience, while at the same time showcasing life onboard the cruise line's ship.

As well as providing a more contemporary look, the new branding also more clearly presents True North's hands-on knowledge, its genuine passion, and its ability to "go where others cannot".

In the coming weeks True North will also begin distributing a new brochure, detailing its amended sailing schedule for later this year.

True North has added two departures for late next month to the bucket-list destination of Rowley Shoals, and two departures featuring Christmas and New Year at Rottne Island, as well as opportunities for private functions.

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

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