



Uniworld trading strongly for 2023

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises' bookings for next year are already up about 50% when compared to the same period in 2019, with average prices up 8%, according to Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bettridge.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly** in Las Vegas during Virtuoso Travel Week, Bettridge (**pictured**) said passengers are taking longer trips on average, and are adding extensions as part of a post-COVID trend toward higher spending on travel.

"People have realised just how important travel is to their wellbeing and lifestyle," she said.

As well as its standard itineraries, Uniworld has seen great local success for its upcoming 'World River Cruise', which combines multiple products into a single voyage.

More than 40% of the passengers booked are Aussies,



with Bettridge saying she's "so proud" of Uniworld's local team for their efforts to showcase the 42-night package taking in back-to-back voyages in Egypt, Italy, on the Danube, then in France and finally on the Douro in Portugal.

Bettridge said the pandemic had provided opportunities for innovation, including Uniworld's Mystery Cruise, and next year's iteration of the World Cruise, which starts on the Amazon before

heading to Europe, and finally wrapping up in Vietnam on the line's new Mekong river ship.

Another popular move has been the creation of a wi-fi "heat map" so passengers are aware of spots where connectivity is patchy so they can plan their online activity.

Questioned about low river levels in Europe, she said about six departures had been proactively cancelled, with happy clients taking up alternative itineraries in most cases.

Rain is expected in Europe this week, which will mitigate the situation, she added.

Bettridge also downplayed speculation Uniworld could be a buyer for the defunct Crystal Cruises river ship fleet, saying "I don't know if they're even for sale yet".

However "we continue to pay attention to the situation, you never say never," she added.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a full page from **Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection**.

Uniworld events

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection is inviting travel advisors to discover a world of luxury river voyages.

Elevate your knowledge of the sector to an entirely new level at Uniworld Cruises' free information sessions, where the line will celebrate its new 2023/24 brochure, win prizes, and share a glass of wine and some nibbles with the team.

Travellers are also invited to learn about the art of river cruising for next year and beyond with Uniworld.

For more information, head to **page 3**.



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THE recently discovered shipwreck of James Cook's *Endeavour* is being eaten by "termites of the ocean", according to an expert.

Shipworms and crustaceans called 'gribbles' have infiltrated the wood of the vessel, as reported by *The Guardian*.

University of Plymouth marine biology lecturer Reuben Shipway dived down to the wreck, which is sunken off Rhode Island, and found shipworms had infiltrated a piece of wood belonging to the site.

"It means one of the most important wrecks in human history is being destroyed right underneath our noses," Shipway said.

"This is a vessel that connects the UK to Australia, and to America, because it also played a really important role in the battle for American independence.

"It's our shared cultural heritage, and it's being destroyed."

No more tax

PRINCESS Cruises has removed its vaccine requirement for most voyages, and has eliminated pre-cruise testing for its vaccinated pax.

It was not the only Carnival Corporation brand to make changes to its vaccination mandate, with Cunard also doing so recently.

Return of cruise big for Auckland



MAYOR of Auckland Phil Goff said it is great for his city to have tourists and international visitors back, after the city on New Zealand's North Island welcomed the return of the cruise industry on Fri (**CW** 12 Aug).

P&O Cruises Australia's *Pacific Explorer* became the first ship in two-and-a-half years to arrive into Auckland Harbour, where she was hailed by a tugboat water salute, special offers from downtown businesses, and more.

"The return of cruise ships bringing international visitors will provide a welcome economic boost to affected businesses, particularly in the hospitality and accommodation sectors," Goff said.

"It will also help enhance the vibrancy of our city with more people shopping, dining, and spending time in our rejuvenated downtown.

"The lockdowns and border closures, while necessary to protect New Zealand from COVID-19, have had a significant

impact on businesses through Auckland (**pictured**), particularly in the city centre."

Returning visitors will be able to enjoy the significant upgrades completed in downtown Auckland over the past two years, such as 'Te Komititanga', the public square outside Commercial Bay; the upgraded Quay Street and new harbourfront park; the improved Karangahape Road, and more.

"Despite the impact of the pandemic, Auckland is becoming a truly world-class, vibrant, and people-friendly place to visit, and I'm pleased to welcome passengers on the *Pacific Explorer* to our city," Goff added.

Pam Ford, who is Director of Investment & Industry for Tatakai Auckland Unlimited, the city's economical development agency, said the return of international visitor spend was also welcomed by the destination.

"This is great news for central city businesses and tourism operators," she said.



**CRUISE
WEEKLY**
On location in
Las Vegas

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you from Las Vegas courtesy of Travel Associates and Virtuoso, which is hosting its annual Virtuoso Travel Week here in Nevada.

VIRTUOSO Travel Week is this year expecting more than 5,000 attendees, including key luxury cruise suppliers meeting with Virtuoso travel advisors from across the globe.

Taking place at the Aria and Bellagio resort complexes, the event includes thousands of eight-minute "speed dating" appointments across the week, complemented by scores of networking opportunities and major announcements.

New P&O brochure

P&O Cruises Australia has released a new 35-page brochure, filled with idyllic Australia and South Pacific cruising inspiration for 2022-2024.

Alongside dreamy island destinations, new special event cruises are featured in the brochure, including P&O Australia's much-anticipated PRIDE voyages, departing Sydney and Melbourne.

There is also the once-in-a-lifetime five-night Ningaloo King of Eclipse cruise, departing Fremantle.

The digital brochure can be read **HERE**.

YOU'RE INVITED

to discover a world of luxury river cruising.



Elevate your River Cruising knowledge to an entirely new level at Uniworld's free information sessions.

We invite you and your clients to one of our free information sessions. At our trade events, we invite you to celebrate our new 2023/24 brochure, win prizes and share a glass of wine and nibbles with our team.

Your clients are invited to learn about the art of river cruising in 2023 and beyond with Uniworld. From our one-of-a-kind, award-winning ships, our all-inclusive amenities and our carefully curated experiences, Uniworld offers a truly luxurious and immersive way to travel.

We look forward to seeing you. Space is limited, so please RSVP.

BRISBANE	Tuesday 30 August	Cloudland – Fortitude Valley
GOLD COAST	Wednesday 31 August	Mercure – Carrara
SYDNEY	Monday 12 September	The Kirribilli Club – Lavender Bay
CANBERRA	Wednesday 14 September	The Boathouse – Barton
MELBOURNE	Wednesday 21 September	The Savoy – Little Collins St
ADELAIDE	Thursday 13 October	Adelaide Pavilion – Veale Gardens
HOBART	Date to be announced soon	Pre-register here
PERTH	Date to be announced soon	Pre-register here

RSVP *for* **TRADE EVENTS**

REGISTER YOUR CLIENTS

1300 780 231 | events@uniworldcruises.com.au

Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, Travel House, 35 Grafton Street, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022