

RSSC sells out

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has sold out its 2025 World Cruise before it even officially opened for bookings.

Guests are continuing to sign up to the wait list for the sailing, which at 150 nights is the longest in RSSC's history.

Selling out in record time, reservation requests will open early, on 07 Jul for the 2024-2025 Legendary Journeys Collection of Grand Voyages, meaning it is not all bad news for those who missed out.

"We have received unprecedented interest in this sailing and this phenomenal booking record shows once again that people, just like the world itself, are now open to travel and are not going to wait around and let opportunities pass them by," said President & Chief Executive Jason Montague.

"It is remarkable that luxury travellers continue to sign up, or want to remain on the wait list, in case some guests cancel their reservation between now and the sailing in two and a half years' time – people simply want to explore as much as possible."

RSSC's 2025 World Cruise, *Away in Wonder*, embarks on 07 Jan 2025, from Miami to San Francisco, with guests to sail three oceans and visit 97 ports of call.

Quark Arctic launch

QUARK Expeditions has celebrated a successful Arctic season launch with *Ultramarine's* inaugural voyage in Spitsbergen.

The line has extended its Arctic 2022 season to the end of Sep, with the surge in demand for polar voyages due to the recent lifting of travel restrictions around the world, offering guests opportunities to explore the destination.

Fiji welcomes back cruise



FIJI'S cruise ship market has obtained the green light to resume, thanks to the government's COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Taskforce.

The move welcomes back international mass-market cruise lines, which will now join the small local companies which are already operating, such as Blue Lagoon Cruises (**pictured**).

It comes six months after the resumption of air travel into Fiji, and follows a two-year ban on cruises.

To ensure the safe return of cruising, the industry will resume in line with entry conditions established by the government for air travel.

Additional measures will also be put in place, with all travellers 16 years and above (both passengers and crew members) to be fully vaccinated with a Fiji-recognised COVID-19 vaccine.

A rapid antigen test will need to be taken within 24 hours prior to disembarkation at a Fijian port, and all cruisers will require valid medical travel insurance, with international coverage for COVID-19.

All shore excursions will be guided by health & safety protocols, including the Care Fiji Commitment.

Prior to the pandemic, international cruise ships berthed in Fiji several times a year and significantly contributed to visitor spend and arrival statistics.

According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics, cruise brought in 74,000 visitors through the country's three ports of Lautoka,

Suva and Savusavu in 2019.

The cruise industry is also crucial for boosting small and medium sized enterprises, and directly benefits the local community.

A Fiji Cruise Study report stated that in 2018, cruise lines and their passengers, & crews spent FJD\$44.2 million (AUD\$29.7 million).

Tourism Fiji Chief Executive Officer Brent Hill said the resumption of cruise ships was welcome for the country.

"These large ships contribute money directly into our economy and what's even better – they support SMEs and help rural economies in Fiji to grow and earn a living," he said.

"We are absolutely thrilled that once again Fiji has worked together to make things happen for our tourism industry".

Hill said Tourism Fiji will continue to work closely with national stakeholders to further promote safe cruising.

An emerging market for the industry, Fiji can now focus on expansion plans hinted at by Hill to **Cruise Weekly** last month at the Fijian Tourism Expo (**CW** 13 May), which include proper integration with the community for mutual benefit.

"It's infrastructure, it's not just building an enormous jetty or port," Hill insisted.

"There are some parts of Fiji that are just stunning, and I'm sure that with that education, we can have the cruise sector do it in a way that's really respectful and really helps the villages out."

Cruise Weekly today

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

Cruise back in SA

THE welcoming of cruise ships back to South Australia's shores has been enthusiastically greeted by the industry, with Royal Caribbean International looking forward to berthing its Quantum-class ships at Adelaide's upgraded Outer Harbour later this year.

Ovation of the Seas will call on the port in Dec, before *Enchantment of the Seas* arrives in 2024.

Local Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith said Royal Caribbean is "thrilled" about the return.

"South Australia always offers a unique holiday experience for our guests and is a staple destination for any Australian cruise," he said.

"Our cruises have been planned to showcase the best of what South Australia and Adelaide has to offer, including shore excursions to the Art Gallery of South Australia, Glenelg Beach, the Adelaide Hills, and the celebrated wineries of the Barossa Valley."

Carnival Corporation President Australia Marguerite Fitzgerald said the reopening of South Australia was another positive step forward in the resurgence of the country's \$5 billion per year cruise industry.

The company's P&O Cruises Australia's flagship *Pacific Explorer* will play an important part in the restart of cruising in the state, with Fitzgerald adding the industry's return will be warmly felt in rural destinations such as Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln.

"We very much look forward to being able to showcase some of SA's most sought-after destinations," she said.



Wined and dined on the Rhine



A GROUP of eight travel advisors recently sailed the Rhine River with Viking, revelling in the rich landscapes and cultures of the region.

The agents were among the first from the Australian trade to sail on the eight-day Rhine Getaway river cruise from Amsterdam to Basel since 2019.

The group was hosted by Commercial Manager NSW/ACT & Tasmania Ramon Drew, as well as Senior Trade Marketing Executive Ethan Larkin.

Agents travelled through four countries along the Rhine, visiting historic cities and medieval towns offering a variety of authentic shore excursions immersing them in the local way of life.

The Flavours of Alsace excursion in Strasbourg was a group highlight, with Cruise Express' Tina Wheelock saying: "the shore tours made me feel like I was living like a local for the day."

"The guide was so knowledgeable yet relaxed." Meanwhile on board, agents

were treated to destination-inspired cuisine, as well as al fresco wine and cheese tastings on the Aquavit Terrace.

Flight Centre Narellan's Debbie Evers said it was great to be back cruising after the last couple of years.

She said the opportunity provided valuable insight into travelling overseas post-COVID.

"Experiencing it first-hand makes it easier to explain to clients the whole process and because I have experienced it, clients are more at ease with what I am advising them".

Viking is reminding agents they can still win one of 100 free Europe river self-famils this year (CW 10 Jun).

The first 100 agents to make two or more new twin share or single supplement reservations for any 2022 Viking Europe river cruise before 30 June will win a complimentary self-famil stateroom on a select eight-day Viking river cruise in Europe this year.

Sailing for solos

SOLO travellers are flocking to Sail Croatia in droves, with the cruise line reporting almost a quarter of all new guests booking on their lonesome.

Navigator party sailings are currently attracting the most singles at 35%.

"Now more than ever it's clear your personal circumstances shouldn't be a barrier to enjoying your ideal holiday," said director Grant Seuren.

"Whether you're on your own or want to enjoy the independence of solo travel, our cruises are becoming increasingly popular with solo travellers, as they provide a safe, tailored and welcoming environment for everyone.

"We're proud to see so many like-minded travellers from all corners of the globe sail with us."

Sail Croatia's cabins are twin-share, with guests matched with a travelling companion after the fact, but pax can also book a private cabin.



IF YOU missed out on the annual Vivid Sydney festival this year, never fear, as Lake Macquarie is here to Float Your Boat.

Sydneysiders who failed to get to (or are already missing) Vivid can head north to Float Your Boat, the annual festival of light, which takes place on Awaba, Australia's largest coastal salt water lake.

Float Your Boat sees dozens of vessels light up the night skies above Lake Macquarie on the weekend of 24 and 25 Jun.

The festival enjoys a cult following among passionate boat owners who turn out to showcase their decorated vessels in a glittering parade around the Lake.

Float Your Boat features two flotillas, as vessels compete for cash prizes.

Spectators are invited to join the lakeside celebrations this coming weekend.

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