



RCI's Homeport to become 'Club Royal'

EXCLUSIVE

ROYAL Caribbean International's (RCI) 'Club Royal' travel partner platform, previously known as 'Homeport', will see the cruise line work more closely and personally with its travel advisor partners, according to Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith (pictured).

Speaking exclusively with **Cruise Weekly** yesterday, Smith said the cruise line recognised the difficulty of the return to full-time service for agents.

He said the reinvigorated and renamed Club Royal would offer more personalised help to RCI's agent partners, with many of them having lost staff during the pandemic.

"In the background, we've taken that opportunity to develop a loyalty program for travel consultants, that will allow us to work with them on an individual



basis, rather than necessarily through a network or through a buying group," Smith explained.

"We will be able to recognise their loyalty to the Royal Caribbean brand by offering them individual incentives, be it enhanced commission, be it early information about program releases, be it about being able to

identify consultants who should come on famils with us.

"It should allow us to have a more personal relationship with travel consultants and technology enables that," he enthused.

Also providing agents a boost ahead of wave season is RCI's 'RoyalUp' bid-based stateroom upgrade program (**CW** yesterday), under which already booked passengers can make offers to upgrade to a higher stateroom category.

Not only will agents receive full commission on the upgrade amount for successful bids, but they can also go to market with a competitively priced opportunity at the lower end of the ship for later bookers.

RoyalUp also protects the most expensive premium accommodation opportunities for both the cruise line and the agent, Smith said.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Eden wins award

THE new Eden Welcome Centre has been shining bright ever since its opening, and has been recently recognised with another accolade, winning the NSW Australian Institute of Architects' Blakett Prize.

The highly coveted award honours projects in rural New South Wales promoting design excellence.

Port Authority of New South Wales Chief Executive Officer Philip Holliday said the Eden Welcome Centre represents the culmination of outstanding design, as well as public engagement that has translated into a beautiful and functional building.



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Kiwi agents enjoy CLIA Live



OCEANIA Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises made the most of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia's CLIA Live training session in Auckland yesterday, hosting the Kiwi trade for a cocktail after-party.

Some of the participants are **pictured** enjoying the hospitality at the gathering, including Jeff Leckey and Pauline McLennan from House of Travel, Oceania Cruises BDM Gabby Oliver, and Tracey Brennan from Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

Carnival Corp refinance effort

CARNIVAL Corporation has announced a US\$1.25 billion offering of Senior Priority Notes, which will be secured by a contribution of "12 unencumbered vessels".

Each of the ships involved in the deal will continue to be operated under one of the company's brands, with Carnival saying it expects to use the net proceeds of the offering to make "principal payments on debt and for general corporate purposes".

The notes, due for repayment in 2028, are being offered to qualified institutional investors outside the United States, and will also be "fully and unconditionally guaranteed on an unsecured basis" by Carnival Corporation and certain other subsidiaries, the company said.

World Europa F&B

MSC Cruises is further elevating the food & beverage experience aboard *MSC World Europa*, with new international partnerships focused on artisanal expertise.

Chef Niklas Ekstedt will headline the new speciality restaurant 'Chef's Garden Kitchen', with an innovative menu full of fresh and natural ingredients for a farm-to-ocean concept.

Meanwhile, 'brewmaster' Teo Musso has worked with MSC to create an exclusive range of "Oceanic" craft beers brewed on board.

These partnerships bring together international experts in their field who have been carefully selected, as they share common values with MSC, focusing on quality and passion, as well as working with carefully chosen ingredients.

The two concepts will join *World Europa's* list of seven new gustatory venues she will launch.

NTIA WINNER

Congratulations to itravel Carlingford's

Emily Kadinski, awarded *Most Outstanding*

Travel Consultant - Leisure



Royal Caribbean Group





RICHARD Branson will join Virgin Voyages' *Valiant Lady's* 'MerMaiden' Halloween-themed cruise later this month.

Valiant will set sail on 30 Oct from Miami, and will cruise for six nights.

Guests will also be able to participate in the breaking of a Guinness World Record, as they gather to form the world's largest mer-folk gathering.

Attendees will receive a mermaid tail, a digital photo, bragging rights, a certificate, and access to an exclusive cocktail party.

Windstar p'ship

WINDSTAR Cruises has partnered with Coral Gardeners, a Tahiti-based organisation determined to "revolutionise ocean conservation and create a global movement to save the coral reefs".

The organisation works to grow, plant, and monitor thousands of heat-resilient corals with the goal of bringing life back to the ocean.

The three-year partnership begins this month with Windstar's USD\$35,000 donation to Coral Gardeners to adopt coral for all guests sailing with the cruise line in French Polynesia for the remainder of the year - its 35th season of cruising in French Polynesia.

NCL Partners Retreat



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) recently gathered a select group of some of its most valuable travel partners for an exclusive 'Partners Retreat' in the Hunter Valley, to thank them for their ongoing support.

The occasion featured briefings from Managing Director & Vice President APAC Ben Angell and Director of Sales Damian Borg.

Guests also enjoyed VIP experiences at Tyrell's winery (**pictured above**), a barbecue cooking masterclass at De Bortoli

Wines, and a private dinner at Eremo Restaurant.

"At NCL, we believe in investing in the long-term success of our valued travel partners," Borg said.

"It's all part of our Partners First philosophy and we're incredibly grateful for their ongoing support."

Pictured below, Travel Associates' Shannon Fogarty, NCL's Angela Middleton, and Creative Cruising's Caroline Hitchen sample some of the best drops Tyrell's has to offer.



CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Education key to success

CLIA has always believed the most highly trained travel agents are the most successful travel agents, so a huge part of our focus over recent years has been on providing high quality education to ensure our members are the best equipped to benefit from cruising's revival.

That's why we're delighted to have won the 'Most Outstanding Travel Industry Training Institution' accolade at the NTIAs on the weekend. It's a sign that our work has been noticed – at a time when travel agent training has never been more important.

It's also a sign of the hard work and commitment travel agents have put into education and training through the pandemic era. Our training programs have never been more popular and the level of engagement from our members has never been stronger.

I firmly believe Australian travel agents are world leaders on this front. CLIA's most recent market research shows that 82% of Australians who have cruised in the past six months used a travel agent to make their bookings.

This is way above the global rate of 65% and it shows how much Australians value the care and expertise they receive from dedicated, well-trained travel professionals.

