

Cruise Weekly today

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

Prothero out

JIM Murren has been named the new Chief Executive Officer of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection (RCYC), which announced founder & former CEO Douglas Prothero has decided to step away.

Murren has been Executive Chair since Jan, and will now step into the Chief Executive Officer role, alongside his chair responsibilities.

Prothero will continue as a Director on the company's board, and will become a Strategic Advisor to Murren.

The new RCYC head most famously served as MGM Resorts International Chair & Chief Executive Officer from 2008-2020.

Club Med 2 sailing strong

ONE of Club Med's strategic pillars this year is anchoring its Exclusive Collection portfolio in the market, with General Manager Pacific Michelle Davies telling **Cruise Weekly** the revamped *Club Med 2* (CW 29 Mar) will be at the forefront of this strategy.

Davies admitted to hearing surprise from the trade when the renovated *Club Med 2* was relaunched in the market.

However, as the luxury yacht sector booms, with brands such as Ritz-Carlton, Orient Express, and Aman all announcing their entry into the space, Davies said Club Med is here to stay.

"Cruising is something that we want to be part of," she enthused.

"We feel that with this very unique product, we're able to offer our clients something a little bit different to what they've already got in the marketplace."

Club Med's strategy will now see it turn to educating the trade on the yacht.

"We've seen an exceptional amount of interest," Davies said.

"It's definitely taken a big education piece from us to really reaffirm what is *Club Med 2* and how does it differ from its competitors, what is the experience on board, how does it compare to or differ from a standard Club Med resort?"

According to Davies, it has not taken a lot to get travel advisors enthused about *Club Med 2*.

"Speaking to a lot of cruise specialists, there's this huge appetite for small ship cruising, but if clients haven't gotten in early, there isn't a lot of availability for some of those peak destinations and peak departure periods.

"They're really excited to have another player in the market."



On location aboard
Vista

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you courtesy of Oceania Cruises, aboard the brand new **Vista**.

HIGH winds forced the cancellation of our visit to Sardinia, meaning *Vista* spent an unexpected day cruising the Mediterranean today.

Fortunately a day at sea provided more opportunities to experience the ship, such as the spa terrace overlooking the bow, onboard cooking lessons and art classes, or for the sporty, 18 holes of putt-putt golf and a game of the new sensation pickleball.

Tomorrow we experience Corsica and then our trip sadly ends in Rome on the weekend.

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SOLO travellers overwhelmingly prefer a cruise holiday compared to a land-based escape, according to a new survey by UK-based online cruise specialist cruise.co.uk.

About 800 people were polled by the company, with about 70% saying they would choose a cruise for a solo trip over other options.

Cruise.co.uk MD Tony Andrews said "cruising is becoming an increasingly popular option for solo travellers, offering a convenient and safe way to explore the world".

"Cruises provide so much onboard through their entertainment, spa facilities and restaurant choices...when combined with the ability to see multiple destinations from the safety and comfort of a cruise ship, it's clear why a holiday at sea is the preferred choice for solo travel," he said.

Murray's shining new Star



EXCLUSIVE

CONSTRUCTION has begun on Murray River Paddlesteamers' (MRPS) new vessel, and the country's first five-star river ship, *Australian Star*, which will offer year-round, all-inclusive, overnight cruises on the Murray River.

The 38-guest, \$6.75m luxury ship will offer three- and four-night cruises, which guests can combine for a longer, seven-night cruise, from Echuca in Victoria.

The three-deck vessel will be 60% larger than MRPS' current vessel *Emmylou*, offering 19 modern staterooms, multiple outdoor relaxation areas, the company's first elevator for easy

access to all levels, as well as the Cadell Restaurant and the panoramic Hopwood Lounge.

Fares will be announced in Jul, and will cover rail transfers from Melbourne, daily shore excursions, a shoreside campfire dinner under the stars and beer & wine with dinner.

The newbuild "will offer the ultimate in river cruising luxury, ushering in an exciting new era for tourism in Australia", Director Craig Burgess enthused.

"Australians love cruising and they love the Murray River, but they want comfort and facilities akin to those on European rivers.

"Interest in her is already high, and when we open fares for sale...we know demand will be robust," he said.

Australian Star (render pictured) has been supported with \$2.25 million in funding by the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Investment Fund.

The ship will start sailing in Apr 2025, with bookings opening this spring and MRPS offering a 10% commission for travel agents plus bonuses for multiple bookings.

MRPS has also released renders of the ship's interiors which can be viewed online now at facebook.com/cruiseweekly.

Princess circus

PRINCESS Cruises' new *Sun Princess* will feature three circus-style shows exclusively created by Cirque Eloize, staged in the vessel's new Dome arena (CW 07 Feb).

Cirque Eloize has been a key feature of Montreal's cultural scene for three decades, with the Dome to showcase spectacular rotating 20- to 30-minute acrobatic shows titled 'Blue', 'Come Fly Away' and 'Artbeat'.

The performances will be open to all passengers at no additional charge.

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	12 May
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	12 May
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	15 May
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	15 May
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	12 May
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	15 May
CAIRNS	
<i>Silver Explorer</i>	13 May
FREMANTLE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	18 May
BROOME	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	12 May
<i>Le Laperouse</i>	14 May
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	15 May
<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	19 May
DARWIN	
<i>Caledonian Sky</i>	18 May
<i>Coral Geographer</i>	19 May



On Board: Oceania Vista

Mixology: Founders Bar

Mixology is defined as the art and study of preparing, inventing and serving drinks. The Founders Bar focuses on making unique cocktails using crafted ingredients, syrups, bitters and a variety of spirits. Some of the cocktails feature a flavour blasting gun that creates spectacular vapour-filled bubbles. Guest can also look out for pop up beverage carts such as the Bloody Mary bar.



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