

A&K more Japan

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has added an autumn departure to its guest-favourite Japan cruise.

The second departure to the Wonders of Japan sailing in Sep offers an alternative to the cherry blossom voyage in Mar.

Guests will explore Japan's gardens and UNESCO World Heritage Sites on a venture to five islands - Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa.

Full of unique shore excursions with scholars and experts, guests can also enjoy a pre-cruise stay in Osaka, with the option of a post-cruise extension in Tokyo.

CLICK HERE for more information.

Princess links with cashback platform

CASHBACK platform Cashrewards has announced a partnership with Princess Cruises, allowing travellers to earn up to 8% back from a range of destinations across the world, including Australia.

Princess will bolster Cashrewards' roster of travel cashback partner brands, including Booking.com, Expedia, Wotif, Virgin Australia, Hotels.com, Agoda, and Luxury Escapes.

"We're excited to partner with Cashrewards on this new platform and we're looking forward to seeing it roll out across the country, providing even more incentive for people to take their dream holiday," Senior Director of Sales Nick Ferguson said.

Cashrewards Chief Marketing Officer Nicole Bardsley believes cruisers will be able to earn an average of \$400 cashback when booking with Princess.

CLICK HERE for more info.

Oceania's steady growth



OCEANIA Cruises is having ongoing internal discussions about future newbuilds, with the launch of *Vista* last week (**CW** 09 May) and sister ship *Allura* in 2025 marking the start of a new era for the brand, according to the Senior Vice President Sales Nikki Upshaw.

Speaking aboard *Vista* last week, Upshaw told **Cruise Weekly** "while we don't have any formal plans for further out than *Allura*, there's no question that there's ongoing conversations about the next builds".

It's been a decade since Oceania last expanded its fleet with the 2012 debut of *Riviera* (**CW** 15 May 2012), and Upshaw confirmed "we don't expect we would go another 10 years between *Allura* and our next ship, you know, there's going to be more of a steady growth".

Oceania's target market continues to be affluent 50-70 year olds, but that requires ongoing innovation because "the 60-year-old of today is very different to two decades ago when Oceania launched," she said.

Any additions would continue Oceania's firm positioning in the upper premium category.

"We feel we pioneered upper

premium, or upper upper premium, and it's our sweet spot to be able to engage a cruise guest, to move from a premium experience onto a smaller, more sophisticated ship," she said.

Upshaw, who is pictured with VP of Sales APAC Jason Worth also confirmed a strong surge in business locally after COVID.

"Australia and NZ have always been important, but we're very excited about this growth because we feel our style of cruise experience very much fits into the upscale Aussie and Kiwi traveller, it's relaxed, it's comfortable, it really fits well into the way that they like to travel."

She said the Australian market was consistently in the top three for Oceania globally.

While there has been strong interest in the debut of *Vista* leading to a price premium of between 2% and 5% for her initial itineraries, Upshaw said she believes the overall impact will be to showcase the brand and generate interest across the fleet.

The debut itineraries for sister vessel *Allura* in 2025 will be released in Aug, while the full Oceania program for that year, including for *Vista*, will come out in Sep, Upshaw confirmed.

Cruise Weekly today


CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise news, including a photo page from **Oceania Cruises**.

Hurti savings


SAVE up to 30% on all 24/25 departures with Hurtigruten Expeditions' Early Bird Sale.

From now until the end of Aug, cruisers can enjoy early bird savings of up to 30% on cruises departing from 23 Apr 2024 through to 18 Mar 2025, across destinations including Antarctica, Alaska, Greenland, the Galapagos, and the British Isles.

The saving is available for all new bookings.



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Conroy brings up 50

SILVERSEA Cruises' Mark

Conroy is set to transition into a Senior Advisor role, after more than 50 years in the travel industry.

Conroy has been Managing Director The Americas since 2016, and will now pledge his expertise to support Silversea's sales team.

Reporting to Senior Vice President of Global Sales Massimo Brancaloni, Conroy will be replaced by another cruise industry veteran, Joe Leon.

"At the forefront of our US operations, Mark has played a vital role in our company's growth in the market since joining in 2016, helping to establish Silversea as the world's leading ultra-luxury cruise line by continuously building strong personal relationships," the line said.

Seabourn shoots for the Starlink

SEABOURN Cruise Line is installing SpaceX's Starlink wi-fi technology on both its expedition ships, *Seabourn Venture* and *Seabourn Pursuit* (pictured).

The enhanced internet capabilities will offer elevated connectivity and provide guests with faster service and more reliable wi-fi wherever Starlink's services are available.

Venture is the first ship in the Seabourn fleet to offer Starlink wi-fi technology, which began with its 12 May voyage (**CW** yesterday), just in time for the ship's second Arctic season.

Seabourn's second expedition ship *Pursuit* will be equipped with the enhanced wi-fi connectivity after she launches in the northern summer.

"We are committed to providing the best ultra-luxury expedition experiences at sea, and the Starlink partnership will



offer a significantly enhanced connectivity experience during our expedition journeys," President Natalya Leahy said.

"From the polar regions to Australia and the South Pacific, our guests will experience a more reliable connection, allowing them to share those special

moments and experiences with their loved ones as they sail on *Seabourn Venture* and *Seabourn Pursuit*."

Vice President Technology Kathleen Erickson added Starlink offers internet capabilities and functionality to meet growing service demands globally.

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Wed 17th March 2023

Aussies & Kiwis bid bon voyage to *Vista*

THE excitement of last week's christening ceremony for Oceania Cruises' *Vista* in Valletta persisted throughout the voyage, which wrapped up in Rome on Sat. Rubbing shoulders with guests including godmother, celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis, was a highlight for many, while the exclusive performance during the event from the one and only Harry Connick Jr thrilled fans of the legendary crooner.

The Australia and New Zealand contingent made the most of the 11 on-board eateries, the well-appointed staterooms, the entertainment, the array of destinations visited, the extensive spa facilities, onboard activities like art classes, the culinary centre, and of course *Vista's* innovative mixology program.

After the seven-night VIP cruise, *Vista* departed on her maiden voyage from Rome to Venice, the first of a sold-out Mediterranean summer program. In Sep she will cross the Atlantic to Canada and New England, before heading south for a homeport season out of Miami visiting Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.

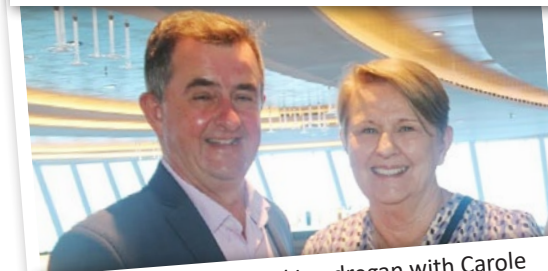
Oceania will release its 2025 program, including *Vista* itineraries, in Sep this year.



IT'S A tough job, but someone has to do it: some of the Aussie and Kiwi contingent enjoy the conviviality of *Vista's* Martini Bar.



KAREN Merricks from MTA Mobile Travel Agents with Stacey Brownsey from Helloworld Travel Mackay & Mt Pleasant.



VIRTUOSO'S Michael Londregan with Carole Smethurst of Bicton Travel.



NARELLE Melhiush from Holiday World Travel with Cruise Connections NZ's Libby Stafford and Creative Cruising's Caroline Hitchen.



THE Oceania Cruises APAC team: Ryan McPherson, Jason Worth, Martine Nunes, Constance Seck and James Sitters.



ELIZABETH Clarke from The Cruise Centre with Paulette Cherny OAM from Travelcall.



ID NEW Zealand's Debbie Summers, radiant after a day of on-shore retail therapy.



SOME of the Kiwi contingent: Ruth and Jeff Leckey from House of Travel with Julia Hindman from Flight Centre.



MOST cruisers love the ocean, but this is ridiculous!

A Florida man living underwater is refusing to resurface, even after breaking the record for the longest time living under the sea.

The university professor broke the record on the weekend, having lived inside a Florida Keys lodge for scuba divers for more than 70 days without depressurisation.

The man woke up for the 74th time at Jules Undersea Lodge, officially breaking the record, but now, he is refusing to re-terrestrialise.

He says he plans to stay at the lodge until 09 Jun, when he reaches 100 days, and completes his underwater mission, dubbed Project Neptune 100.

Going by the name 'Dr. Deep Sea', he eats a protein-heavy meal of eggs and salmon and exercises with resistance bands.

His research includes daily experiments in physiology to monitor how the human body responds to long-term exposure to extreme pressure.

The outreach portion of his mission includes conducting online classes and broadcasting interviews from his digital studio beneath the sea.

While he says he loves living under the sea, the one thing he misses is the sun!

A Grand day for HAL

HOLLAND America Line's (HAL) first Grand World Voyage since 2020 has successfully concluded, after 128 days, 57 port visits, and 34,651 nautical miles.

The World Voyage concluded at Port Everglades, from whence *Zuiderdam* departed on 03 Jan.

It is the 59th World Voyage HAL has completed since its first such cruise departed aboard *Statendam* on 07 Jan 1958.

During the voyage, guests dressed to the nines for events that featured a Grand Masquerade, Derby Night, Casino Royale, Mardi Gras Night of Music, and "Once Upon a Time".

More than a dozen casual, themed evenings around the Lido pool included a glamp-out, Burgers and Beer, Grand Fair, a surprise party with *Zuiderdam*'s team members, Biergarten Festival, "Let Them Eat Cake", and "An Evening in France".

Other highlights included volunteers knitting more than 600 blankets for quilting charity Project Linus, and USD\$10,000 raised for the Bernhard Nordkamp Centre in Namibia,

which was presented to the organisation during *Zuiderdam*'s call at Walvis Bay.

Passengers also celebrated HAL's 150th anniversary in Amsterdam (*CW* 19 Apr) with President Gus Antorcha.

"A world cruise is more than just a travel experience; it's building a community of friends and family," he said.

"Like our guests, we have been eagerly anticipating the return of our Grand World Voyage, and the 2023 world cruise was an exceptional journey for not only the places we visited, but the memories made along the way.

"Our guests generously gave their time and funds for some worthy causes during the journey, for which I extend gratitude on behalf of everyone at Holland America."

Zuiderdam also visited the Null Island buoy (0°N/S & 0°E/W), where the Equator crosses the prime meridian.

The visit saw guests become an 'Emerald Shellback' - the rarest kind of "shellback" (a sailor who has crossed the Equator).

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CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Training is key

IN A resurgent cruise and travel sector, a shortage of skilled workers threatens to undermine Australia's ability to rebuild tourism and meet the demands of a growing market.

That's why CLIA has joined with TAFE NSW to offer a program that helps CLIA members recruit new trainees and foster their skills development, while at the same time benefitting from government contributions.

Launched last week, the program enables trainees to complete a Certificate III in Travel or Certificate IV in Travel and Tourism with TAFE NSW and secure immediate employment with CLIA member cruise lines or CLIA member travel agents.

It allows a trainee to benefit from both formal training and on-the-job experience.

For the employer, it provides an immediate boost to their workforce while at the same time building the skills and knowledge available to them.

Trainees will also work towards their CLIA Accreditation, with access to the CLIA Learning Academy to supplement their development.

This helps strengthen our mission to ensure CLIA travel agents are the best equipped and most knowledgeable cruise specialists in the country.

For more info, [CLICK HERE](#).

