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NCL announces new Prima Plus class

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has opened sales for its new *Norwegian Aqua* (render pictured), the first ship of its next-generation Prima Plus class.

Aqua will debut in Apr 2025 with seven-day Caribbean voyages from Port Canaveral.

Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri will construct the four-ship Prima Plus class, having earlier this year completed the delivery of NCL's two-vessel Prima class - the first time the cruise line and shipbuilder had worked together.

Building upon the Prima class, *Aqua* will deliver an overall 10% size and capacity increase from her sister ships *Norwegian Prima* and *Norwegian Viva*.

Aqua will accommodate 3,571 guests at double occupancy, and will offer more outdoor space and the highest staffing levels of any new contemporary cruise ship.

Highlights will include the



world's first "hybrid-coaster"; NCL's first three-bedroom duplex suites, located in The Haven; and a digital sports complex.

Aqua will also feature captivating hull art designed by world-renowned graffiti artist Allison Huelman.

Her first voyages include calls to island destinations such as Puerto Plata, Tortola, St. Thomas, and Great Stirrup Cay, NCL's private island in the Bahamas.

"*Aqua* is a true testament of

fusing together what represents the future of our brand as the first ship in the Prima Plus Class, and our commitment to pushing the boundaries in guest-first experiences that will make new waves at sea," President David Herrera said.

"[She] will feature new, elevated and exhilarating offerings that once again showcase NCL as the innovator in the industry and as a key contributor to a new era of cruising." *MS*

NZ Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in New Zealand.

AUCKLAND	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	03 Nov
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	07 Nov
<i>Nat Geographic Orion</i>	09 Nov
CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	07 Nov
WELLINGTON	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	08 Nov
BAY OF ISLANDS	
<i>Nat Geographic Orion</i>	08 Nov
<i>Nat Geographic Orion</i>	10 Nov
DUNEDIN	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	06 Nov
FIORDLAND	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	05 Nov
PICTON	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	05 Nov

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SEMESTER 3:
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Sun Princess shows

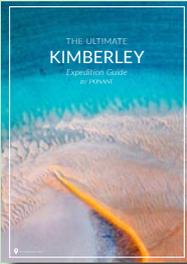
PRINCESS Cruises has released details of four "exceptional production shows" which will feature aboard its new *Sun Princess*.

The cruise line's first Sphere-class ship will launch early next year, with guests set to enjoy *Viva La Musica*, *Stage Struck*, *Vallora - a Pirate Quest*, and *Fiera!*, a reimagined Princess favourite.

All will be performed in the ship's Princess Arena, described as "the most technologically advanced entertainment venue at sea".

New Ponant guide

PONANT has released a new 52-page Ultimate Kimberley Guide, with the document aiming to "spark travellers' sense of adventure".



The guide (pictured) allows guests to plan their trip, detailing Ponant's vessels operating in the region, specific itineraries, recommended travel seasons and highlighting sustainability efforts and protocols.

Aussie agents can order a copy via TIFS, while in NZ it's available via Brochure.net.

Hurtigruten doubles down on trade

HURTIGRUTEN'S Asia-Pacific office will continue to represent both the Hurtigruten Norway coastal cruising product and the recently rebranded HX Hurtigruten Expeditions range (*CW* 25 Sep), with the local operation led by Damian Perry (pictured right) now punching well above its weight in the global passenger mix.

The company yesterday hosted key industry partners at an event in Melbourne, with Perry and Marketing Director Joel Victoria outlining plans to work closely with the travel trade to raise further awareness of the cruise line, which among its various spheres of operation is the largest global passenger operator to Antarctica.

"It's an incredible product and an incredible experience... we want to make sure that we are the very best partner commercially, we want to make Hurtigruten easy to sell for your teams, and profitable for you as a business," Perry said.

The Hurtigruten APAC chief confirmed the cruise line is strongly focusing on its VIP trade resellers.

"That means we're reallocating money and resources and budget from our B2C position into our B2B partnerships," Perry said.

In all other parts of the world Hurtigruten has been split into two separate divisions, one looking after the traditional



Norwegian coastal cruising product, and the other for the revolutionary hybrid expedition cruise vessels, but in Asia-Pacific the business will remain under a single management structure for some time, Perry confirmed.

Hurtigruten's local business is very strong at present, with every single month producing record sales, he said.

The brand continues to press its strong environmental and sustainability credentials, which will see Hurtigruten continue to have access to certain Norwegian fjords under new regulations to be introduced in 2025, thanks to its low-emission vessels.

Victoria outlined a new brochure strategy for Hurtigruten, which is producing fold-out flyers for

its range including Antarctica, Greenland, Iceland, Svalbard, Alaska, the Galapagos Islands, and more, instead of heavy and often wasted full brochures.

The flyers have maps and itinerary outlines as well as QR codes for clients to find out more online, and can be easily co-branded with trade collateral.

Sales Director Amber Wilson reiterated the importance of travel resellers for Hurtigruten.

"There is no way we could be 130 years old without the support of our trade partners," she said.

Wilson said Hurtigruten is keen to work with travel agencies in all aspects of their operations, from sales to marketing and training, urging the trade to come forward with ideas.

"We're open to absolutely anything to help you get your business to where you want it to grow to and to help us on our journey today," she said. *BP*

Pictured below at the event are David Cox, APT and Pete Williams, Phil Hoffmann Travel.



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THE United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation has accused two cruisers of swiping nearly USD\$13,000 worth of sculptures from a Carnival Cruise Line ship.

Carnival Legend left Baltimore for a round trip voyage to Bermuda a little over a month ago, and returned without two expensive pieces of art.

When Carnival security personnel then reviewed footage from surveillance cameras aboard the ship, they saw two passengers allegedly walking into the art gallery at 2am empty-handed, only to walk out several minutes later carrying objects "consistent in appearance with the missing sculptures".

The two suspects have not yet been charged.

Finders keepers

FINDER.COM.AU has recently revamped its travel insurance engine to include a cruise filter.

Cruisers can use the new tool to show policies that cover cruise and the associated price, comparing quotes from 11 brands.

The filter claims cruise travel insurance can cost as little as \$6 a day.

To use the tool, visit finder.com.au/travel-insurance/cruise-travel-insurance.

Perfecting Papeete's port



THE Cruise Port of Papeete in Tahiti is nearing the completion of a major renovation (render **pictured**), which is on track to be formally unveiled to the public by the end of this year.

Announced at a recent industry update from Tahiti Tourisme this week, the tourism body's local representative, Sarah Elfassy said the upgrade is about bringing cruise tourism on the island up to modern sustainability standards.

"What we are doing is to make the terminal look brand-new and shiny again," she said.

"There will be more restaurants and green spaces and there will also be a rooftop with more green spaces on offer for guests".

The overhaul of the cruise terminal will also seek to incorporate more sustainability focused elements in the design, including an entire space dedicated to the maritime history of Tahiti, while the facility will also use recycled rainwater and natural ventilation as pivotal elements of its greener

sustainability strategy.

Further highlights for cruise tourists will be a new dedicated space showcasing the appeal of local arts and crafts.

When complete, the facility will be capable of accommodating the arrival of 2,400 passengers per day. *AB*

MSC new hire

MSC Cruises has welcomed Luke Mitchell as its new Groups & Product Specialist to advance the company's offering in the Aussie market.

Mitchell's strategic responsibilities in his new role will involve spearheading the development of product offerings and fostering partnerships around the industry, curating distinctive and tailored product that resonates with the preferences of MSC group travel partners.

Mitchell brings a wealth of experience from various senior roles across travel.

AU Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia.

SYDNEY	
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	03 Nov
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	04 Nov
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	04 Nov
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	05 Nov
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	06 Nov
<i>Majestic Princess</i>	07 Nov
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	08 Nov
<i>Brilliance of the Seas</i>	09 Nov
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	10 Nov
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	10 Nov

MELBOURNE	
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	03 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	05 Nov
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	06 Nov
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	07 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	09 Nov

PORT ADELAIDE	
<i>Coral Geographer</i>	03 Nov

BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	03 Nov
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	04 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	05 Nov
<i>Grand Princess</i>	08 Nov
<i>Noordam</i>	09 Nov
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	10 Nov

CAIRNS	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	04 Nov
<i>Le Laperouse</i>	05 Nov
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	06 Nov

AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Grand Princess</i>	03 Nov
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	06 Nov

BROOME	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	07 Nov

GERALDTON	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	10 Nov

HOBART	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	03 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	07 Nov

DARWIN	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	03 Nov