



Disney kicks off its first local season

EXCLUSIVE

DISNEY Cruise Line is looking forward to “bringing Disney to life in Australia and NZ’s back yard” as *Disney Wonder* commences her highly anticipated maiden deployment in local waters.

The ship arrived on Fri, with Thomas Mazloum, President of Disney Signature Experiences (pictured), telling *Cruise Weekly* as he stood on the bridge while *Wonder* sailed into Sydney Harbour, “I really couldn’t help but feel such a sense of pride and joy...it was just incredible”.

Mazloum said bringing *Disney Wonder* to Australia and NZ was part of a strategy to serve fans around the globe.

“We know that Aussies and Kiwis love to watch our movies, and many aspire to go to our parks, but it’s often a logistically long way to go,” he said.

“We decided we needed to start serving audiences that previously didn’t have an opportunity to not just experience a Disney cruise, but also have a tough time getting to a Disney theme park...Australia and NZ were a logical choice.”



Mazloum downplayed comparisons to other cruise lines, with the Disney experience key to the company’s offering.

When it comes to affordability, he said “the price is what you pay, but the value is what you get”.

“We’re a media company, we’re in the business of telling stories.

“The cruise line is just another platform which allows us to bring the stories to where people live as a result of this expansion.”

Disney Cruise Line is already one of the company’s highest rated

products, with the Australian and NZ offering ramping things up with additional characters and theatrical performances from across the Disney, Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars universes.

There is still limited availability for the current season, while Disney has already announced the ship (which has been slightly modified to fit under the Sydney Harbour Bridge) will return in 2024/25, and port schedules indicate a third season in 2025/26 as well (CW 29 Aug). BP

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, including a photo page from **Disney Cruise Line**.

Sail free with VV

AUSSIE agents can “turn their sales into sails” with Virgin Voyages’ new Sell Three, Set Sail Free incentive, valid from now until 04 Dec 2023.

The cruise line is offering ‘First Mates’ (travel advisors) in Australia and New Zealand a (mostly) free voyage when they make three Virgin Voyages bookings departing Australia during the upcoming 2023/24 maiden season.

Advisors who are eligible for the bonus sailing will only have to pay the port taxes and fees.

“We are thrilled to offer our First Mates in Australia and New Zealand the chance to set sail on us,” Virgin Voyages’ Vice President of International Sales Shane Riley said.

“We highly value our First Mates and their significant contribution to making our much-anticipated maiden season down under a resounding success.”

All First Mates need to do is log their sales into the sales tracker **HERE** and receive their Access Key to book any Australian or New Zealand cruise in the upcoming season within 30 days.

Pandaw adds more

PANDAW has added new departures in late 2024 for its 10-night Deeper and Further on The Mekong itinerary, which debuted last week, along with two special combo cruises - see **HERE** for details.

HAL tantalises with tastes of Caribbean

GUESTS aboard Holland America Line’s (HAL) Caribbean sailings can now enjoy a new themed brunch, local rum tastings, and a traditional, pirate-inspired rum punch crafted by mixologist David Wondrich.

The Caribbean sailings will also offer new regionally themed menus in the Dining Room and Lido Market, featuring Puerto Rican tostones, Jamaican garlic shrimp, steamed stone crabs, spiced pork belly, and more.

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CRUISE Fans out in force for Disney debut

WEEKLY

Mon 30th October 2023

DISNEY Cruise Line has finally arrived Down Under, with the hugely anticipated debut of *Disney Wonder* in Sydney Harbour on Fri celebrated by the Australasian cruise sector in a special onboard event. Industry partners enjoyed a tour of the recently refreshed ships before a spectacular Disney stage show, followed by an unforgettably immersive dinner experience in the onboard Animator's Palette restaurant.

The gathering was topped off with an opportunity to meet and greet all of the Disney Princesses and many other favourite characters in person.

Those on board were lucky enough to be the first to ever actually sail on a Disney Cruise Line departure from Australia (albeit only for a few hours), as the ship relocated from the White Bay terminal and sailed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge before docking at the Overseas Passenger Terminal in the heart of the city.

Disney Wonder will remain in local waters until Feb 2024, operating cruises from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Auckland.

Aficionados on board included Helloworld Executive Director Cinzia Burnes, **pictured** left with Steve Brady and Karen Deveson, as *Wonder* squeezed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge.



DISNEY *Wonder* Cruise Director, Aussie Trent Hitchcock, with Captain Mickey.



TRAVEL the World's Andrew Millmore gets a selfie with Pluto.



CLIA'S Peter Kollar and Joel Katz enjoying a catch-up with Goofy.



ASTRID Richardson, Flight Centre Independent with Rachel Kingswell from Travel Associates.



PORT Authority of NSW chief Phil Holliday with his new best friend.



PRINCESS Tiana with Stephanie Johnson and Amy Mortlock from Disney, as well as Kevin Looney and Teena Hollway from Infinity Holidays.



TERRI Bettany from Clean Cruising; Peita Lord from Travel the World; Karen van Huisstede from italktravel The Junction; and Zeena Croudace from MTA Mobile Travel Agents.



CRUISEABOUT chief Darren Lloyd meets Belle.



MARITA Nasic from CLIA gets a cuddle from Goofy.



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Savenio celebrates

TRAVEL advisor members of Savenio were treated to a Sydney Harbour superyacht cruise yesterday courtesy of Silversea Cruises, in the lead-up to the group's conference today which will see initiatives roll out including new member websites - more in *Travel Daily*.



CRUISE lines should provide more information to passengers about the possibility that cabin doors can close suddenly, according to a lawsuit filed against Carnival Cruise Line in the USA.

An attorney for William Tuttle says he was injured in Sep last year after the door between his stateroom and the balcony closed "with substantial force".

The incident allegedly damaged his right index finger leading to "pain and suffering, amputation, disability and loss of independence", the court documents confirm.

USA Today cited the lawyer saying this is an "industry-wide issue...where passengers are inadequately warned about the significant force with which cabin and balcony doors can unexpectedly close".

"The warnings provided, if any, are insufficient to appraise passengers of the true extent of the danger posed by these doors closing forcefully".

Quantum returns to Qld



ROYAL Caribbean International's (RCI) *Quantum of the Seas* has returned to Queensland over the weekend for what the cruise line is calling its "biggest and boldest season" Down Under.

The ship (**pictured**) will homeport in Brisbane, offering 25 three- to nine-night itineraries to destinations in the South Pacific, including Mystery Island and Port Vila in Vanuatu and Noumea, New Caledonia, as well as Queensland favourites like Airlie Beach and Cairns.

Around 115,000 travellers will sail with RCI from Brisbane this summer season - an increase of 15% from last year - with local Queenslanders making up more than two-thirds (64%) of these, while 14% have flown in from NSW and 11% from Victoria.

"*Quantum* and its signature line-up of experiences for all ages and types of travellers became a fan favourite soon after its first season in Queensland," Vice President and Managing Director Australia and New Zealand, Gavin Smith, commented.

Guests can expect to enjoy

locally sourced produce at the ships 20-plus restaurants, bars and lounges, including more than 74,800kg of Queensland bananas, 112,000kg of the state's pineapples, and 341,400kg of Australian potatoes.

RCI has also announced a new partnership with Australian Ponting Wines (**CW** 26 Sep), which will see guests served a range of locally and sustainably sourced wines from SA and Tasmania.

Aussie guests of all ages will have their pick of adventure activities and entertainment aboard *Quantum*, including the RipCord by iFly skydiving simulator, FlowRider surf simulator, rock climbing wall and SeaPlex, which features bumper cars, basketball, roller skating, and more.

The Quantum-class vessel's arrival in Australia follows the debut of RCI's *Brilliance of the Seas* in Sydney last week (**CW** 24 Oct), while *Ovation of the Seas* will return to the harbour city on 03 Nov to operate its seventh season, offering 20 voyages along New Zealand's coastline ranging from three- to 11-nights. *JM*

Newcastle gets cruise boost

THE Port Authority of NSW welcomed the maiden arrival of Royal Caribbean's *Brilliance of the Seas* into Newcastle Harbour on Sat, bringing more than 2,500 pax into the region.

Sixteen cruise visits to Newcastle are set for the summer season, marking steady growth compared to the previous year's 14 cruise calls.

The vessel's arrival also coincides with the start of Port Authority's new 10-year licence agreement with Port of Newcastle, which aims to attract more cruise ship visits into the Hunter and Central Coast region.

Under the partnership, Port Authority will facilitate cruise operations at a Port of Newcastle-owned berth.

"Newcastle has a long and proud history of welcoming cruise passengers for almost two decades of cruise seasons," Port Authority Chief Customer and Commercial Officer John McKenna said. "This new licence agreement is great news for Newcastle and surrounding regions as more transit cruise visits will provide opportunities for local tourism and hospitality operators, boosting the local economy."

He added that the deal also "builds on the success already achieved in Newcastle and will complement the Sydney and Eden cruise markets by offering cruise lines more opportunities to add Newcastle as a destination on their cruise itineraries".