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Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a cover wrap from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

In the (RCI) Club

CONSTRUCTION has begun on Royal Caribbean International's (RCI) first Royal Beach Club on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

The experience is expected to open next year, offering around seven hectares to RCI pax to enjoy Bahamian food and culture.

The beginning of construction was celebrated on location, where Royal Caribbean Group President & Chief Executive Officer Jason Liberty and RCI President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley were joined by The Bahamas' Prime Minister Philip Davis and Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper to commemorate the milestone.

More with RSSC

UPGRADE and explore more with Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) free two-category suite upgrade.

The cruise line is offering up to 45% off, plus US\$500 of shipboard credit.

See the **cover page** of **CW** for more information.

Aurora's Aussie Antarctica season

AURORA Expeditions' new 25-26 Antarctica season will feature departures from Australia, as revealed by **CW** last month (**CW** 03 Apr), with the line to sail eight new itineraries.

Among the ex-Australia Antarctica cruises, which have been officially released today, is the 'Mawson's Antarctica' voyage, which will depart Hobart on 11 Dec for a 24-day sailing.

The cruise will be new ship *Douglas Mawson's* inaugural voyage, as revealed by **CW**, and will retrace the steps of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, led by the vessel's namesake.

There will also be an immersive Australian cruise, 'Coastal Tasmania: Untamed Wilderness', which will circumnavigate the state across 11 days, departing round trip from Hobart.

The season will include a total of 32 voyages, cruising across three Aurora ships for the first time: the new *Douglas Mawson*, as well as her sister ships *Sylvia Earle* and *Greg Mortimer*.

Dunedin will also join Hobart as a departure port for the season, with destinations to include East Antarctica, the Ross Sea, and the New Zealand Subantarctic Islands, in addition to Tasmania.

Aurora has added two fly/fly Antarctica voyages for the season, due to popular demand, which will see guests able to skip the Drake Passage.



The two new cruises are part of the season's eight total itineraries that include a fly option at the start or end of the voyage.

There will also be two "all-inclusive activity" voyages, which include snorkelling, paddling, camping, snowshoeing, and other activities in Antarctica as part of the price, which Aurora is expecting to be among the most popular for the season.

Aurora is making 36 single staterooms available on board *Douglas Mawson* across the season, which will see solo travellers not required to pay any single supplement, as this

segment of the market continues to boom.

CMO Hayley Peacock-Gower said Aurora's most comprehensive and adventurous season yet gives passengers plenty to be excited about.

"Not only will we be introducing our third purpose-built vessel, the *Douglas Mawson*, but we will explore more of Antarctica's regions than we have before in a single season, visiting the Antarctic Peninsula, the Weddell Sea, East Antarctica, the Ross Sea, Antarctic Circle, South Georgia, the Falklands, and the New Zealand Subantarctic Islands," Peacock-Gower said.

"We're particularly thrilled to be offering passengers the chance to travel to Antarctica from Australia and New Zealand for the first time in 13 years, reconnecting our company to its founding inspiration as well as opening up another lesser explored part of Antarctica to both local and international travellers."

CLICK HERE to view Aurora's new digital brochure (pictured inset) and request a copy. *MS*



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Viking seeking US\$11 billion IPO

VIKING is seeking a valuation of up to US\$10.8 billion in its initial public offering in the United States (*CW* 26 Feb), the cruise line said, as it floated its stock launch overnight.

The IPO of 44 million shares will see existing selling stockholders offer 33 million shares, while Viking offers 11 million.

The cruise line said it is targeting between US\$21 and US\$25 apiece for its shares, which would raise up to US1.1 billion, according to a regulatory filing.

Viking said Norges Bank Investment Management, which manages the Government Pension Fund of Norway, has indicated it wants to buy up to US\$100 million in ordinary shares in the offering.

Selling shareholders have granted the underwriters a 30-day option to purchase up to an additional 6.6 million ordinary



shares to cover over-allotments.

Viking would list its shares on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol 'VIK'.

The proposed offering is subject to market and other conditions, Viking said, and there can be no assurance as to whether or when

the offering may be completed, or as to the actual size or terms of the offering.

The IPO has been the subject of speculation for some months, with the first indications of the move coming earlier this year in *Bloomberg* (*CW* 19 Feb). *MS*



On location onboard
Sun Princess

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you from the idyllic island of Mallorca in Spain, as *Sun Princess* makes her final stop ahead of tomorrow's naming ceremony in Barcelona.

NOT even average weather could dampen *Sun Princess* passengers' enthusiasm for Mallorca's tree-lined streets, picturesque laneways, magnificent cathedrals, and city fountains which make the island an ideal port of call.

Tomorrow we set sail bound for Barcelona, where Princess Cruises will officially welcome its new *Sun Princess* into the fleet with a variety of festivities throughout the ship, including a celebratory music festival.



Adventure to the world's WILD PLACES

We invite you to join our live webinar on 29 April 24, at 3pm AEST to hear more about immersive, responsible adventures on our purpose-built small ships. We will share our new ANTARCTICA 25/26 season, our most comprehensive and adventurous yet including our brand-new small ship, *Douglas Mawson*.

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WHO doesn't love a good rumour circulating among cruise ship passengers? Princess Cruises will celebrate the naming of *Sun Princess* in Barcelona tomorrow with a grand 'Festival of the Sun' music gala, but just who will perform had travellers throwing up all kinds of names.

Possibilities circling the ship have included Barry Manilow, largely among the US crowd.

Closer to home, even Kylie Minogue's name came up, and curiously enough, a gap in her schedule during her current Las Vegas residency added fuel to the fire, although Princess' PR team quickly quashed this one.

Some said the event could mark the musical comeback of Natasha Bedingfield, who is no stranger to the cruise line, having performed at the naming ceremony of *Royal Princess* in Southampton 11 years ago (*CW* 21 May 2013).

Indeed, the British singer was later confirmed to perform, revealed as part of documentation delivered to guests attending the ceremony.

With the naming ceremony itself taking place at 4pm local time, Bedingfield will take centre stage at 7pm, with guests sure to pack the upper decks to dance the night away.

Sun's resident DJ Brickhouse will then spin tunes to conclude the occasion.

Curtains up at *Sun Princess* theatres



EXCLUSIVE

ELIMINATING the barrier and the disconnect between the stage and the audience is key to the revolutionary new Princess Arena found on board *Sun Princess*, according to the line's VP of Entertainment, Denise Savis.

Speaking to *Cruise Weekly* on board the new Princess vessel, Savis said it has been a challenge but also a thrill working on new entertainment concepts to suit an all-new theatre style.

The Princess Arena has done away with the traditional proscenium stage at the front of the ship, with cast members moving backstage by passing directly through the audience and slipping discreetly between any of nine tilting LED screens.

Sun is barely a month old, but passengers are already raving about *Vallora*, a classic pirates tale of good conquering evil interspersed with classic '80's retro hits the crowd can sing to.

Elsewhere on board, passengers will find the single-deck Princess Live lounge hosting comedy and

game shows or live music in the central Piazza, backed by a three-deck LED screen and encircled by grandstand seating on each level.

Higher up, *Sun's* flagship venue, The Dome, converts each evening from a relaxed day lounge into a unique theatre featuring circle-style acrobatics.

"The dome was a unique challenge because you wanted it to feel, first and foremost, like you're sitting on the edge in Santorini, so you've got these beautiful tiers almost like you are on the edge," Savis said.

"But then we need a total transformation at night into an entertainment space where we could do spectacular shows, so yeah, three very different venues which gave us the opportunity to do very different content."

In line with *Sun's* design philosophy to maximise outbound views, Savis said Princess worked with New York interior design consultancy, iCrave, which proposed both a circular and a flat-glass outlook for the space.

"We equated it to wearing an astronaut's helmet," Savis said.

"We didn't need a total 360 degrees like you're in a sphere because that's never your vantage point, but to give you those unobstructed astronaut views, we came up with the concept of how guests would come into the Dome.

"[Guests] have a spectacular moment as they walk down this central aisle, then turn around and hopefully feel enlightened and inspired when you look up at the amazing three-deck high waterfall and the views up and out from the seating terraces." *ML*



CRUISE WEEKLY On Board: *Sun Princess*

Spellbound by Magic Castle

Think you're going through the door? Think again, as the bookcase slides to reveal a world where nothing is as it seems and your eyes will be deceived. As a roving magician warms you up before the main show, enjoy a menu of 13 cocktails served in anything from a bird cage to a treasure chest. Then, look behind as you return to the ship as the door you just passed through disappears before your eyes.