



Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news including a photo page from **MSC Cruises**, plus a full page from **AmaWaterways**.



On location in Portugal

Today's issue of CW is coming to you en route to Portugal, where we will board the inaugural cruise of Avalon Waterways' **Avalon Alegria**.

WE LAND in Lisbon later today, where guests will spend a couple of days prior to heading to Porto to board the all-new, purpose-built, **Avalon Alegria** on one of her brand new cruises along the Douro.

Carnival to add fifth Excel-class ship

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has ordered another Excel-class ship from Meyer Werft shipyard, which will be the company's fifth.

The new vessel is scheduled for delivery in 2028, and follows on from last month's order (**CW** 14 Feb), which was Carnival's first new commission in five years.

This fifth Excel-class ship, which will be delivered a year after the fourth, will be built on the same platform as her sisters, and will be powered by LNG.

She will carry more than 6,400 guests, which will make her the same size as the ship ordered last month - far larger than any of the vessels in the line's existing fleet.

"Carnival's Excel-class fleet will soon be a quintet of these very popular ships that provide outstanding guest amenities and tremendous operating efficiencies," the cruise line's President Christine Duffy said.

"Since the introduction of *Mardi Gras* in 2021 and the subsequent expansion with *Carnival Celebration* in 2022 and *Carnival Jubilee* in 2023, these Excel-class ships are driving excitement, demand, and strong guest satisfaction ratings.

"With the arrival of *Carnival Firenze* in Apr, we are completing the addition of five ships to our fleet in less than 20 months, and then we will pivot to another phase of growth."

Carnival Corporation Chief Executive Officer Josh Weinstein said the company's recent ship orders signal an aggressive newbuild strategy from 2027.

"This measured capacity growth strategy will result in our adding one to two ships per year beginning in 2027, and we will be identifying additional fleet plans over the coming months for our cruise lines to meet

capacity demand and improve execution across all aspects of our operation, with the benefit of yielding higher return on invested capital," he said.

"Carnival Cruise Line continues to perform at an outstanding level, and we are focused on adding capacity across the company where it aligns with demand and our position in the marketplace," Weinstein added.

"This new order continues to balance our commitment to growth with our responsible capital approach to utilise strong free cash flow over the next several years to strategically improve our balance sheet, significantly reduce our leverage levels, and continue to transfer value from debt holders to shareholders," he enthused.

This order is contingent upon financing, which is expected to be completed later this year. *MS*

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Wed 27 March 2024

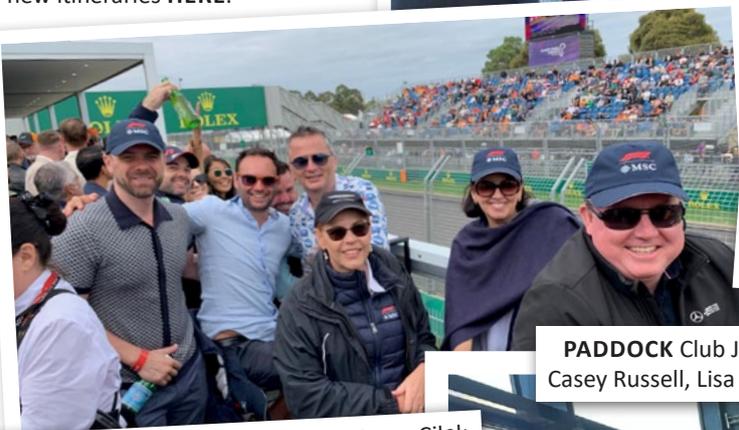
AS PART of the MSC Cruises Global Partnership with Formula One, valued travel partners were hosted in Melbourne over the weekend at the sellout annual motor-racing event.

The event included once-in-a-lifetime experience, including visiting the Paddock, Pit Lane Walk, Paddock Club, 330 CLUB, hearing from Spanish professional driver Marc Gené, getting up and close to the current F1 drivers and more.

Read more about MSC's Global F1 Sponsorship **HERE**, and keep track of MSC Cruises deals and new itineraries **HERE**.

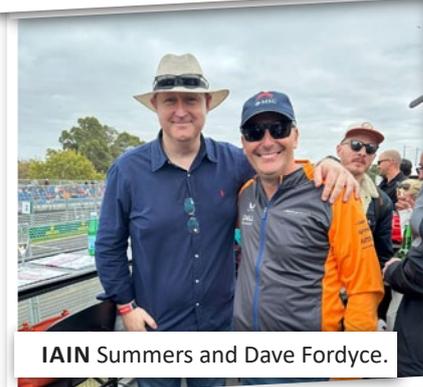


GARETH Evison, Brad Kennedy, Brigita Devries, Michelle Warren, Noriye Oto, and Bronwyn Knight.



PADDOCK Club Jean Summers, Noriye Oto, Casey Russell, Lisa Teiotu, and Michael Middleton.

CHRIS Swanepoel, Paul Mercuri, Tanyu Cilek, Bronwyn Knight, Louise Dann, and Brett Dann.



IAIN Summers and Dave Fordyce.



BRAD Kennedy of CruiseAbout and Caroline Hitchen of CruiseHQ.



ASHKAN Ghasemi, Lisa Teiotu, Martijn Leenders, and Michelle Warren.



MICHELLE Ryan, Lisa Teiotu, Gareth Evison, Jean Summers, Martijn Leenders, Ashkan Ghasemi, Casey Russell, and Michelle Warren.



MARC Gené meeting and chatting with Ashkan Ghasemi, Maite De Hedervary, Martijn Leenders, Lisa Teiotu and Adam Bennett.



MICHAEL Middleton and Lisa Teiotu.



STEVE Brady & Ferrari.

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THERE is often conjecture over what the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will pay for, but the minister overseeing it is certain a cruise does not qualify.

Minister for Government Services Bill Shorten has vowed to investigate a disability provider who claims the NDIS will partially cover the cost of a 1980s-themed cruise.

9News is reporting the man in question, through a company he is thought to be Chair of, was organising the cruise, and telling NDIS participants "support costs" could be covered by the scheme.

Shorten told 9News he is worried the promotion gave the impression the scheme paid for cruises.

"The NDIS cannot be used to pay for people to go on cruises and we're absolutely going to investigate this," Shorten told the broadcaster.

Hello Australia

AMAWATERWAYS is here to support Australians, with its local reservations team now operating and ready to take calls (**CW** 14 Mar).

The cruise line's carefully curated river itineraries ensure unforgettable and enriching experiences - for more information, head to **page 4** of today's **CW**.

True North refits vessels



TRUE North has unveiled a major makeover ahead of the 2024 season for both of its small ships, *True North* (pictured) and *True North II*.

Guests joining the much anticipated upcoming Kimberley season will be the first to experience the new Ocean Premium Cabin class (inset), one of the more significant changes from the refit.

The new class features a more flexible and adaptable room setting, now offering the choice of a twin share or double bed layout when booking.

Both vessels received new paint jobs and crane overhauling, while other innovations for the season include both ships becoming fully paperless for chart navigation, and an overhaul and rebuild of the *True North II's* gearboxes, with both generators receiving a top-end rebuild.

"While guests will typically be spending the majority of their time exploring off the vessels - whether this be snorkelling, fishing or enjoying a heli-picnic - we want to ensure that their time

on deck or recharging in their cabins is in the most relaxing environment possible," Director Chad Avenell said. *MS*

Baltimore fallout

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) has told CNN its port logistics team is working on alternatives for *Vision of the Seas* sailings from Baltimore, following the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse last night.

RCI said it will communicate any updates to guests and travel partners once plans have been finalised.

The cruise line is one of the largest operators from Baltimore, with almost 500,000 cruise pax departing from the city last year.

Another Baltimore cruise leader, Carnival Cruise Line, told CNN it was premature to comment on the possible impact on upcoming sailings, but that its thoughts are with the affected.



News from Fiji

BULA and greetings from Fiji.

The tourism industry plays a key role in Fiji's economy and with more than 333 islands in our country, cruising is definitely a growth sector.

In 2022, Tourism Fiji participated in our first ACA conference in Townsville in FNO.

Attending this event inspired us to establish the Fiji Cruise Symposium, a forum aimed at fostering collaboration and driving growth within the industry.

We are excited to see the return of the 2024 Fiji Cruise Symposium in May, now integrated into the broader Tourism Superweek event.

This initiative underscores our commitment to supporting local operators and expanding Fiji's expedition cruise segment.

We are also thrilled, after a decade-long absence, for Tourism Fiji to be returning to Seatrade Cruise Global in Miami.

This re-engagement reaffirms our commitment to growing cruise sector in our region and presents exciting opportunities for collaboration and growth.

We are extremely grateful to the ACA community for allowing us to be a part of this association, which has provided invaluable insights and networking opportunities that contribute to our ongoing success in this realm.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Miami for the Seatrade conference as we work together in shaping a vibrant future for cruise in our region.

Vinaka vakalevu.



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