

CDC may allow U.S. cruises to resume in mid-July if vaccination requirements are met

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has eased its stance on allowing the cruise industry in the United States to restart, according to a report by *USA Today* on Thursday.

In a letter to cruise-industry executives last week, the CDC affirms that cruise operations in U.S. waters could restart by mid-July, depending on the pace and compliance of the cruise lines with the CDC's Framework for Conditional Sailing Order.

The letter said that the CDC would allow cruise lines to skip the need for 'test cruises' before launching revenue sailings, which was a requirement in CSO Framework.

Now, the CDC says that no test cruises are required if the cruise lines prove that 98% of crew members and 95% of all passengers are fully vaccinated.

Ships that don't meet these vaccination levels will need to run the trial voyages. In an Upfront webinar sponsored by the Caribbean Tourism Organization on April 28, Royal Caribbean President and CEO Michael Bayley said that the vaccine rollouts have been "transformational" and that 100% of adult passengers (above 16) now booking cruises report that they have been vaccinated or plan to be. When RCL surveyed crew, more than 98% indicated they would vaccinate.

Fully vaccinated guests can now take a rapid test upon embarkation instead of PCR test, the CDC said. Unvaccinated children will be tested before and after the cruise, said Bayley.

In a statement issued ahead of Royal Caribbean Group's earnings call on April 29, Richard D. Fain, Chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Group, said:

"We are looking forward to resuming operations out of various ports around the world in the coming months. In addition, we have had very constructive dialogues with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recent weeks about resuming cruising in the U.S. in a safe and healthy manner.

"Last night, the CDC notified us of some clarifications and amplifications of their Conditional Sail Order which addressed uncertainties and concerns we had raised. They have dealt with many of these items in a constructive manner that takes into account recent advances in vaccines and medical science. Although this is only part of a very complex process, it encourages us that we now see a pathway to a healthy and achievable return to service, hopefully in time for an Alaskan season."

The CDC letter also reportedly clarified guidance on quarantine guidelines for passengers who may be exposed to or contract



COVID-19. Among these, local passengers may be able to drive home and those who have traveled by air to their cruise may quarantine in a hotel.

This is a developing story that *TMI* will continue to cover.

IAADFS/ASUTIL celebrate successful 2021 Summit of the Americas – A Virtual Experience

IAADFS and ASUTIL have issued a statement expressing their appreciation of the support shown by exhibitors, sponsors, attendees, and the designated media partners during the Virtual 2021 Summit of the Americas – with a special shoutout for “the fantastic work done by the teams at *The Moodie Davitt Report* and FILTR Qingwa, the official virtual stand contractor and designer of the visuals used for the virtual environment.”

“During this difficult COVID-19 period, it was important for us to provide an opportunity for our industry to come together through a cost-effective and user-friendly platform to connect with each other and learn in anticipation of the pandemic recovery that we are all anxiously awaiting,” commented IAADFS President and CEO Michael Payne.

José Luis Donagaray, ASUTIL Secretary General, added, “The excellent sessions featured in the Knowledge Hub gave a huge amount of very important information to help keep our colleagues updated and better prepared for when traffic levels and sales begin to improve.”

The event featured a virtual Exhibition Hub populated with an array of exhibitors representing nearly all categories in the industry.

A cornerstone of the event was a five-day education program in the Knowledge Hub with world-class speakers from within and outside of the duty free and travel retail industry.

Overall participation in the 2021 Virtual Summit recorded more than 2,700 total expo visits and more than 10,000 total stand views, 60% of which converted to deeper views of stand content material such as videos, presentations, downloads, and direct connections with the staff who were representing the stands in the virtual platform.

Stand exhibitors report an average of 338 visitors to their stands during the course of the event. The 21 sessions in the Knowledge Hub were viewed a cumulative total of 2,300 times as of April 10, 2021, with additional session views taking place during the 30-day encore period that began after the official close of the 2021 Virtual Summit on April 9.

The virtual stands and recordings from the Knowledge Hub sessions remain available to registered attendees through the end of the 30-day encore period.

The 2021 Virtual Summit of the Americas: The View from the Top JFKIAT's Roel Huinink: finding a better airport retail concession model



Roel Huinink, President & CEO of JFKIAT, was the featured speaker on View from the Top on Day 3 of the 2021 Virtual Summit of the Americas conference.

In Day three of the Summit of the Americas' View from the Top presentations, **Roel Huinink, President & CEO of JFKIAT**, which operates Terminal 4 at JFK International Airport in New York, discussed the need to find a better retail concession model and the benefits of a strong terminal community culture, which is helping the company come through the current crisis.

Huinink struck a chord when he said mid-way through his talk with moderator Dermot Davitt that he "didn't really believe in MAGs (minimum annual guarantees)," although he does believe there needs to be an incentive in place to "push" a retailer to perform.

With New York City being "very hard hit" early on in the pandemic, international passenger traffic fell to nearly zero, said Huinink, although Terminal 4 never fully closed. Of the 2,000 passengers a day T4 was handling last April, only 200 were international, he said. Nevertheless, his staff, along with its concessionaires Paradies Lagardère, DFS, Dufry, Hudson and SSP, stayed open to serve the passengers that were there.

He credits T4's "strong terminal community and culture" as a key component in dealing with the pandemic, and affirmed that people remained the company's first priority.

"Our employees play a crucial role in the journey at the airport and we did everything we could to keep them safe," he said.

Terminal 4 was the first in the U.S. to provide staff testing for the coronavirus (through XpresSpa), which was eventually expanded to include passenger testing as well.

"This was a lesson in leadership with hands on learning," he commented. "Resilience is crucial, and we could never stop trying to provide as much support as possible."

With minimum passenger traffic, revenue dropped drastically and the operator had to cut costs. These challenges were also felt by its retail and F&B concessionaires, who did a great job remaining open, he said. Huinink went on to discuss JFKIAT's crucial and close relationship with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates JFK, and how they reworked existing agreements with its airline and airport partners.

The challenge was to find a balance between preserving the passenger experience and its concession partners losing money. It helped that PANYNJ was able to grant concessionaires MAG relief from the CARES Act funds it received from the US government.

Huinink says that the MAG relief has been extended and that discussions are ongoing. Back to his comment about the need for an incentive for a retailer to perform, he argued:

"There's a certain expectation from an airport about sales or income per departing passenger as a metric."

The two entities need to come closer together to drive results and the customer experience and that might change contracts in the future, he said.

With the prospect of recovery more within reach – Huinink reports that the airport is now seeing around 50-55% of 2019 levels in domestic traffic and 30-35% in international traffic—T4 is rethinking its expansion plans, and making new commercial plans in light of a changed post-pandemic landscape.

"We need to rethink our total commercial offer because [the pandemic] has changed the business. Do we have the right concepts, in the right locations?" he argued.

Investing in data-driven concepts and e-commerce will be critical: "I hope this pandemic is able to increase the pace of implementation. It's extremely crucial to reach out to the consumer earlier in their journey to get them in the mindset of buying.

"We need to find the model which we still haven't found. How do we all benefit and make the cake bigger?" he said.



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Essence Corp. expands globally with Bath & Body Works

In a major move for the company, Essence Corp. has been appointed by Bath & Body Works (BBW) as its Travel Retail Global Distributor. Essence Corp. has been a current distribution partner of parent company L Brands for both Victoria's Secret and Bath & Body Works since 2014 in the Americas regions.

The Miami-based distribution company says that Essence will "maintain the same qualitative standards of distribution outside of the Americas," as it has in the region.

"This is the first time we will be branching outside the Americas!" noted Essence Corp. Vice President of Sales Antoine Bona.

Speaking at length with *TMI*, Bona commented further on the new global deal:

"Bath & Body Works is really doing very well in the U.S. domestically. They posted positively even in the middle of a pandemic. People are at home.



They are buying decorative soaps and candles, as well as hand sanitizers. BBW has been the bread and butter of L Brands for at least the last 3-5 years."

Internationally, BBW depends on royalty partners, which are like franchisees, notes Bona. BBW had been handling travel retail by themselves, apart from Essence Corp., which is the distributor for the Americas.

"BBW decided to consolidate Travel Retail under Essence Corp. for its expertise and to invest resources to provide customer service and logistics outside of

the Americas," explains Bona. Among the new international accounts under Essence Corp. management for BBW are Dufry, Heinemann, Shilla, Lotte, Bahrain Duty Free, Duty Free Iceland, Flemingo Duty Free and New Delhi Duty Free.

Logistics from Miami

"We will be managing these accounts from Miami. Logistically, we have spoken to all these partners and they are already sourcing Victoria's Secret and other brands out of the U.S. So they have no issues sourcing out of Miami," said Bona.

"Miami is a growing international port, we can truck to Los Angeles and freight to the Eastern Hemisphere or use direct flight routes from Miami to the Middle East and parts of Asia."

Since this is the first time Essence Corp. is expanding to markets outside of the Americas, it will initially be structured out of Miami.

"But in the mid-term when business picks up we will try to have sales reps in the markets – as we do here in the Americas in the Caribbean, Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina," said Bona.

Essence Corp. currently has an independent team of seven people managing the L Brands account



within the company. The team includes two new additions - a planner and a project manager.

The team will be managing the Victoria's Secret business in the Americas and the BBW business in the Americas and internationally.



Essence Corp. opened this Bath & Body Works store in Trinidad in March 2020.

"We have this separate division to handle L Brands due to the nature of the business, which is a little different than many of our other brands," said Bona. "With L Brands we build out standalone stores which require project managers to coordinate with architects, general contractors, mill workers, and installation. We also have a retail supervisor providing sales leadership trainings to all locations. Essence Corp.'s strategy is to mirror an L Brands structure within our company."

Prior to this new deal, Essence Corp. was managing 27 stores in the Americas (20 VS & 7 BBW) and now will add 18 new BBW stores.

Bona explains that Essence Corp. also comps sales data on a weekly basis for L Brands: "We are constantly analyzing KPIs at a weekly level (which we do on a monthly level for most other brands that we wholesale in Travel Retail), looking at the average

ticket, the average conversions instore, comparing the performance of different categories this week versus last week, vs the same week last year, and year to date performance."

A future opportunity?

Bona confirms that in the long term, the global nature of the new contract could be an opportunity for Essence Corp. to distribute other brands outside the Americas.

"But in the short term our focus is to really digest this business, learn this business, support the current business, and develop the business within BBW. Once we are able to attain that, we may start looking for other brands.

"For now though, our priority is definitely to service these brands, service existing customers, and develop business within the existing customers.

"In the medium term, we will look to develop business outside of these customers, and in the long term, yes, maybe we will look for other brands we might manage internationally."



Bath & Body Works
Trinidad

INTERNATIONAL

UK retailer Dixons to close all 35 airport stores: UK Travel Retail Forum reacts

The fallout from the decision by the UK government to remove tax free shopping last year is starting to be felt. UK electronics retailer Dixons Carphone has announced plans to permanently shut all of its Dixon Travel airport outlets.

The group has a total of 35 airport stores, including eight at Heathrow, four at Gatwick, three at Manchester, plus other airports throughout the country.

In a Trading update issue on April 28, the company said: We do not expect passenger numbers to recover sufficiently to compensate for the removal of airside tax-free shopping by the UK Government from 1 January.

“This has led to the difficult decision to close this business, which historically made an annual profit contribution of over £20m.”

The company also reports that its other business since January “has remained strong.”



This Dixons' store in Heathrow London airport is one of 35 the electronics' specialist is closing throughout the UK.

Commenting on the announcement that all 35 Dixon Travel stores in UK airports will be closed, UK Travel Retail Forum Chair Francois Bourienne said:

“When the Government took the decision to remove tax free shopping last year, the UK Travel Retail Forum told the Exchequer Secretary that the impact on airside

retailers and airports would be profound.

“Sadly, today that impact has led to the closure of Dixon’s Carphone airport shops up and down the country, and the loss of airport jobs crucial to local economies.

“While we commend Dixon’s commitment to helping their staff find roles elsewhere, there is no

escaping the clear negative consequences stemming from a completely avoidable decision by Treasury. Airports will not be able to replace this lost revenue immediately, and will now find it harder to invest in infrastructure, route development, and the recovery from COVID-19.

“UKTRF continues to urge the Government to reconsider its position to avoid causing further damage to UK businesses and UK livelihoods. It should move to reinstate airside VAT-free shopping before further damage is done.”

According to *Business Traveller*, a cross-party group of over 60 elected officials wrote an open letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for the introduction of duty free on arrival shops in British airports, international rail and ferry terminals.

EU: Vaccinated Americans can visit Europe this summer

In another important story out of Europe last week, Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, told *The New York Times* that Americans who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will be allowed to visit the European Union (EU) this summer.

Von der Leyen said that EU member states will “accept, unconditionally” people who are inoculated with European Medicines Agency-approved vaccines.

The European Medicines Agency, which is the EU’s drugs regulator, has approved the Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, all of which are being administered in the U.S.

It was reported on May 3 in the U.S. that more than 100 million Americans are now fully vaccinated against COVID-19, representing about 40% of the adult

population. Approximately 70% of U.S. citizens over the age of 65 have been fully vaccinated.

The EU has been shut down for nonessential travel for more than a year.

IATA statement

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) said that it is encouraged by von der Leyen’s comments that the European Union will grant unrestricted access to vaccinated travelers from the U.S.

“This is a step in the right direction. It gives hope to people for so many reasons—to travel, to reunite with loved ones, to develop business opportunities or to get back to work. To fulfil that hope, details of the EC’s intentions are essential. To be fully prepared, it is imperative that the EC works with the industry so that airlines can plan within the public health benchmarks and timelines that will enable unconditional travel for

those vaccinated, not just from the U.S. but from all countries using vaccines that are approved by the European Medicines Association.

IATA continues: “Equally critical will be clear, simple and secure digital processes for vaccination certificates. The IATA Travel Pass can help industry and governments manage and verify vaccination status, as it does with testing certificates. But we are still awaiting the development of globally recognized standards for digital vaccine certificates.

“As a first step, it is vital that the EU accelerates adoption of the European Green Certificate. President von der Leyen’s comments should add urgency to this work,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General.

“While IATA welcomes President von der Leyen’s comments, the freedom to travel should not exclude those who are unable to be vaccinated. The presentation of negative COVID-19 test results should also facilitate travel. Central to this is acceptance by EU governments of rapid antigen tests that the Commission has approved for use and which fulfil the critical criteria of effective, convenient and affordable.

“The freedom to travel must not be restricted to only those who have access to vaccinations. Vaccines are not the only way to safely re-open borders. Government risk-models should also include COVID-19 testing,” said Walsh.



Hudson unveils second Hudson Nonstop location using Amazon's Just Walk Out technology at Chicago Midway

Hudson will open a second location for its innovative Hudson Nonstop concept, powered by Amazon's Just Walk Out technology, at Chicago Midway International Airport (MDW). Hudson opened the inaugural Hudson Nonstop store at Dallas Love Field Airport (DAL) in Texas on March 1.

Slated to open in mid-2021, Hudson Nonstop at MDW will offer effortless convenience and purchasing speed across all touchpoints of the shopping experience.

Leveraging Amazon's Just Walk Out technology, Hudson Nonstop will allow travelers at MDW to enter the store with their credit card, pick up their travel essentials ranging from snacks to electronics and wellness items, and then leave the store, eliminating the need to wait in checkout lines or stopping to pay in-store.

Developed in partnership with the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) and Midway Partnership, Hudson Nonstop will be the first-of-its-kind, checkout-free store at MDW as part of the airport's concessions redevelopment program. The program, designed to revolutionize the selection of shopping and dining options for travelers across the airport's two concourses, brings together industry-leading brands and fan-favorite local concepts.

"Hudson Nonstop is really all about the traveler – delivering what they want and how they want it. Our first store is proving that travelers are embracing this innovative new concept, and so we're thrilled to announce our second location opening in mid-2021," said Brian Quinn, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Hudson.

"Midway is an ideal location for Hudson Nonstop given Chicago's fast-paced lifestyle, and we know travelers there will enjoy just how easy it is to 'grab and go' in this contactless and checkout-free environment," said Quinn.

"Offering safe and healthy travel experiences for our passengers is more important than ever, and we are delighted to add to Midway's convenient, contactless options for shopping and dining with the arrival of Hudson Nonstop, powered by Amazon's Just Walk Out technology," said Jamie L. Rhee, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Aviation.

"The elimination of checkout-line friction will appeal to all of our passengers, but in particular our time-sensitive travelers, as purchases can be made at the speed and convenience that best fits their schedule," said Sammy Patel, Chief Executive Officer, Midway Partnership. "The addition of Hudson Nonstop to our concession lineup allows Midway Partnership to offer the next-generation amenities that exceed passengers' and airport employees' expectations and solidifies our focus on enhancing the shopping experience at the airport."

Hudson has operated at Midway for more than two decades, where it manages more than 20 distinct retail offerings, including the iconic FAO Schwarz store.



Rendering of the Hudson Nonstop store scheduled to open at Chicago's Midway International Airport later this year.

Fraport Pittsburgh to host Retail Concessions Job Fair May 11 at Pittsburgh Int'l (PIT)

More than 25 retail shops and restaurants are hiring at Pittsburgh International Airport. Job seekers can learn more at an upcoming Retail Concessions Job Fair at the airport and enjoy free parking, Tuesday, May 11, 2021. Please see the details in the media advisory below.

WHAT: Interested job seekers are invited to explore employment opportunities with more than 25 retail shops and restaurants at Pittsburgh International Airport. Full- and part-time positions range from baristas, bartenders, cashiers, cooks, servers, sales associates, supervisors, warehouse operations, and more. Employers offer competitive wages and benefits and flexible hours.

WHEN: Retail Concessions Job Fair at PIT
Tues, May 11, 2021, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

WHERE: Pittsburgh International Airport – Ticketing Level 3
1000 Airport Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15231

Free parking – check in at "Meet and Greet" table for validation sticker.

Launch Pad BWI 2021: Small and minority businesses are invited to explore concessions opportunities at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI)

Fraport invites small and minority businesses in the Maryland/Washington D.C. Metro to explore an exciting opportunity to start a retail or grab-and-go food and beverage business at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Launch Pad BWI is an "internship" concession program that provides an opportunity for area business owners to participate in the airport's retail program for a limited time. These entrepreneurs have access to operating a business with a low investment, business resources, and ongoing business development training.

Piloted in 2017, Launch Pad has welcomed small and minority businesses to the airport, including Fran's Organic Bodycare and Fashion Spa House. Proposals for the 2021 program are now being accepted.

Learn more at the Launch Pad BWI 2021 Informational Session on May 18. The free virtual event will be hosted in partnership with Fraport Maryland, BWI Marshall Airport, and The Nelson Ideation Group (TNIG).

[Launch Pad BWI 2021 Informational Session](https://launchpadbwi.eventbrite.com)
Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 3 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Register today at
[https://launchpadbwi.eventbrite.com/](https://launchpadbwi.eventbrite.com)



Loch Lomond Group appoints Catherine Bonelli to head up GTR



Independent distiller Loch Lomond Group is bringing Catherine Bonelli, an experienced fashion specialist, to the drinks

world, appointing her as Managing Director of Global Travel Retail (GTR).

Passionate and enthusiastic, Bonelli is well known in the Travel Retail industry following roles at Italian fashion house Paul & Shark and Lacoste.

Colin Matthews, CEO of Loch Lomond Group said: "It is with great pleasure that we welcome Catherine to Loch Lomond Group as Managing Director of GTR. With vast experience and knowledge of the sector, we are confident that she will make a very positive impact on our GTR offering across the world."

Bonelli said: "Loch Lomond Group has a fantastic range of brands and it's a real honor to join the company. Only last week, Glen Scotia was awarded 'Best whisky in the World 2021' for the Glen Scotia 25 Year Old at the San Francisco Spirits Competition.

"I'm looking forward to working with the team to grow the business around the planet, to accelerate the awareness of Loch Lomond brands and to give customers the possibility to taste such qualitative spirits."

Loch Lomond Group's various brands are listed in numerous duty free retailers, including locations

in France, Germany the Nordics, China, the Middle East and the U.S.

For further information visit www.lochlomondgroup.com



André de Almeida joins re-named Secret Garden Distillery as Managing Director

André de Almeida, most recently with Loch Lomond Group, has joined newly renamed Secret Garden Distillery as Managing Director. Originally founded as the Old Curiosity Distillery by entrepreneur and herbologist Hamish Martin, the company has appointed de Almeida to continue the expansion of its brand and the range of Spirits and Health & Wellness products available in the UK and internationally.

As of May 3, 2021, the business was re-named The Secret Garden Distillery and their gins will be known as Secret Garden Gin.

In the role of Managing Director, de Almeida will be responsible for expanding the Secret Garden Distillery's presence across its markets, working with existing distributors and customers as well as developing new partnerships.

André de Almeida, who brings his experience from senior GTR/ duty free and domestic roles for Edrington, William Grant & Sons and Loch Lomond Group, amongst others, comments: "I am excited to join the Secret Garden Distillery at this stage of their journey. Hamish has built a unique business proposition underpinned by his passion and with nature at the heart of everything. There are some exciting developments to come in the next few years and I am looking forward to bring these to fruition."

Martin, Founder of the Secret Garden Distillery, said: "I am so delighted that Andre, with his wealth of experience, has chosen to join the Secret Garden Distillery as its new MD. He has embraced all our beliefs and understands the ethos and our one true value; to be rooted in nature."

Situated on a 7.5-acre site based on the outskirts of Edinburgh, the garden features its own gin botanical garden. The Secret Herb Garden has over 600 naturally and sustainably grown varieties of herbs and plants, including a wide range of junipers, angelica and a dedicated apothecary rose garden.



Alchemy Americas introducing revolutionary SL Lashes to LATAM and Caribbean markets

Alchemy Americas has expanded its portfolio of unique beauty products with SL Lashes magnetic lashes, a "wonderful, revolutionary" new brand, which the company is representing for the Americas.

The 2-year-old French brand is currently sold 99% online and has made \$17 million in revenue, reports Alchemy Americas founder Cedric Mahe-Rodriguez.

"SL Lashes are very successful in Europe, USA, the Middle East and thanks to Alchemy Americas soon in our part of the world as well," Mahe tells *TMI*.

The innovative lashes come in 24 different styles and can be used up to 40 times with simple care, making them extremely eco-friendly. They are available individually and in value sets, ranging in price from around \$30 to over a hundred dollars. The high-quality lashes come in natural, glam and dramatic styles, and even offer colored varieties. They have also launched a hybrid magnetic transparent eyeliner earlier this year, which the company says is the world's first.

"It was really love at first sight! SL Lashes seduced Alchemy Americas whole team with their hypnotizing magnetic lashes and magnetic eyeliners. Their proposal of 'no glue, no mess, no stress' is revolutionary, very clever and appealing to pretty much any woman who has experienced the mess of the glue, flaking mascaras or lash extension appointments," commented Mahe.

"Kourtney Kardashian was an early adopter and now hundreds of thousands of happy customers have followed in the U.S., Europe and Middle East. We are excited to bring SL Lashes to the Latin American and Caribbean customer very soon. Please contact us to discover more about the brand and request samples."

Contact: cedric@alchemyamericas.com

