



**BLACK FRIDAY &
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Viking's polar expedition rendezvous

VIKING'S *Viking Polaris* and *Viking Octantis*, the two ships which form the line's newly built expedition fleet, met up for the first time ever on Fri, in a momentous rendezvous in the Antarctic Circle.

The senior officers from both ships undertook a special "plaque exchange" ceremony (pictured), to commemorate the moment which took place in Yankee Harbour off the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Both ships are currently exploring Antarctica for the season, with Viking also offering expedition cruising in the Great Lakes during the off season.

The plaque exchange took place via Zodiac in view of the



two vessels, with participants including Daniel Hansson, *Polaris* Staff Captain; *Octantis* Captain Hakan Gustavsson; and *Octantis* Hotel General Manager Wendy Gouws.

A formal salute also took place aboard the bridge of *Viking Polaris* (inset) where the ship's Captain Margrith Ettlín hosted her



counterpart from *Viking Octantis* Hakan Gustavsson.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news as well as a cover page from **Royal Caribbean International**.

RCI Black Fri deals

ROYAL Caribbean International's (RCI) Black Fri and Cyber Mon sale offers savings of up to \$600.

Kids can sail for up to 50% off, and passengers can also gain up to 30% off the first and second guest.

Half price deposits are also currently available.

For more information, head to the **cover page** of *Cruise Weekly*.



Save thousands on 2023 & 2024 voyages

The savings continue on Viking's 2023 and 2024 voyages, but they won't last long. Book your clients' today to take advantage of savings up to \$5,600 per couple on river journeys, \$8,000 per couple on ocean voyages and \$9,000 per couple on expedition voyages. These cruise-only fares include Viking's popular 15-day *Grand European Cruise* from Amsterdam to Budapest or vice versa and priced from \$3,995 per person. Book before 16 December 2022 and secure your client's preferred stateroom and departure date.

[View offers here.](#)



Quark tragedy

QUARK Expeditions' chartered vessel *World Explorer* has cut short an Antarctic voyage after a tragic accident during a Zodiac excursion which saw two passengers killed.

The incident took place on 15 Nov, near Cape Lookout on Elephant Island, with Quark confirming a Zodiac carrying six passengers and two expedition staff overturned near the shore, tragically resulting in two fatalities.

The weather conditions saw light winds and a smooth sea, with indications the accident was caused by a breaking wave.

World Explorer has returned to Ushuaia, with Quark saying its priority is to support the next of kin as well as passengers and crew while further investigations are undertaken.

Quark says it is cooperating fully with relevant authorities.

NCL debuts in Haifa

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has debuted in Haifa, with the brand committing a Prima-class ship to the port city for 2025.

NCL's *Norwegian Epic* became the first of the brand's 18 ships to homeport in Haifa.

Epic will embark on 11-day open-jaw sailings to five countries, including Israel, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and Italy.

The cruise line also announced *Norwegian Viva* will visit Haifa in 2025, confirming the homeporting in Israel as the kicking-off point for a long-standing commitment from NCL to the Middle-East.

"The Israeli market is hugely important to us, and we know that our Israeli guests have been longing for embarkations out of their beautiful country for a while," said Vice President Israel, Middle East, and Africa Nick Wilkinson.



Live from *Viking Polaris* in Antarctica

Viking's Managing Director, Michelle Black and Communications Manager, Nicole Henry (pictured), are currently escorting a group of key media and trade partners on their 13-day *Antarctic Explorer* itinerary on the brand-new *Viking Polaris*. Having the time of their lives, the lucky group have enjoyed exploring the Antarctic Peninsula on this state-of-the-art vessel. For a limited time, you can book Viking's 13-day *Antarctic Explorer* itinerary from only \$14,995 per person – a saving of up to \$9,000 per couple.

[View offer here.](#)



RCI names *Wonder* mum



ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) has announced the Godmother of its new *Wonder of the Seas* (CW 28 Jan) is a “wonder mom” from Pennsylvania, selected from thousands of TikTok videos submitted in a social media competition.

Marie McCrea (pictured) was nominated by her daughter in the #SearchforWonderMom TikTok contest.

A devoted mother, wife, and cancer survivor, Marie overcame adversity with incredible strength, and will accept the honour of blessing *Wonder* during a celebratory naming ceremony at its first year-round homeport of Port Canaveral on 09 Dec.

McCrea’s duties will begin with an exclusive, invite-only

naming ceremony celebration cruise that visits RCI’s private island destination, Perfect Day at CocoCay.

She and her family will enjoy a seven-night Caribbean cruise and stay in a “home away from home” befitting of the Godmother, the one-of-a-kind Ultimate Family Suite, which features an in-suite slide, a cinema and karaoke room, game consoles, a private balcony and more.

The family will also enjoy five-star hotel accommodations, first-class flights, and spending money.

In the widespread search on TikTok for the ultimate Wonder Mom, more than 16,000 videos were submitted as part of 10.6 billion #SearchforWonderMom hashtag views.

Ponant polar perfection



ANTARCTIC cruising is clearly in vogue for Australian travel advisors this week, with this contingent aboard Ponant’s *Le Commandant Charcot* enjoying some amazing experiences due to the advanced capabilities of the custom-designed icebreaker.

The group is pictured at their voyage’s first landing at Robert Point in the Shetland Islands where they saw a working

Chilean research hut, and enjoyed a hike to a lookout for a stunning vista of glaciers.

From left: Julie Rogers of Ponant; Stephen and Alison Lord from Travel Associates Turrumurra; Paul Rickard of Helloworld Travel Caloundra; Tracy and Alan Reis from Reis & James Travel Associates; and Graham and Laurice Burke of Helloworld Travel Kenmore.

Celestial deal

CELESTYAL Cruises has announced 50% off on almost 100 voyages in 2023 and 2024.

The cruise line is turning its Black Fri sale into a “Big Blue Holiday” deal, allowing passengers to upgrade to an “Enhanced” all-inclusive fare for just \$145 per person.

Celestial recently launched a new two-tiered pricing structure to provide more choice and value, with “Enhanced” fares offering an unlimited premium drinks package, a daily hour of complimentary wi-fi, 25% off speciality dining, and a pre-bookable shore excursion discount of \$220pp.

“Entry level” fares offer complimentary dining and select drinks with meals, entertainment, and more.

Murray resilience

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers is inviting travellers to support the Echuca and Moama communities by visiting the region and taking a cruise.

The towns are doing it tough due to the south eastern Australia floods, with Murray River Paddlesteamers cancelling seven overnight cruises.

The line is still a few weeks away from reopening, but has offered savings of 15%, and halved its solo surcharge, to help stimulate economic activity in the region.

Complimentary bonuses are also on offer for those who book before 15 Dec.

Call Murray River Paddlesteamers on 03 5482 5244.

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UP TO USD **\$400**
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CRUISE Whitsundays has this past week been celebrating its brush with fame, featuring in the recently released web documentary series 'Down to Earth with Zac Efron'.

Available now on Netflix, the second season of the documentary showcases follows Efron (pictured) and wellness expert Darin Olien as they learn about sustainable living practices while travelling around Australia - which has become something of a second home to the US heartthrob.

The Reef World - Cruise Whitsundays attraction can be found in the Great Barrier Reef episode of the show, which focuses on the environmental factors facing coral reefs, and the restoration techniques being used to try and rehabilitate and sustain them.

"Zac, who has been diving globally for over 15 years, was in awe of our beautiful patch at Hardy Reef - listening to the genuine excitement and enthusiasm he and Darin had after their dive was inspiring," Cruise Whitsundays said.



Key Vanuatu reopenings



P&O Cruises Australia has continued to reopen cruising to Vanuatu, calling Mystery Island and Luganville on the weekend.

The cruise line's *Pacific Adventure* arrived to Mystery Island on Fri and Luganville yesterday, on her 10-night cruise around the South Pacific.

Adventure and her 2,000 guests were welcomed back to both destinations, for whom the cruise sector is the key economic driver.

The visit was celebrated with a number of community initiatives, including boat operation training.

P&O Australia earlier this month became the first cruise line to return to Vanuatu (CW 10 Nov), which is the final destination in the brand's "opening" of the South Pacific's cruise sector.

The comeback tour has also included Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia.

"*Adventure* becoming the first cruise ship to return to Mystery Island and Luganville completes the set of Vanuatu destinations that underpin our

deep attachment to Vanuatu and its island communities," said P&O President Marguerite Fitzgerald.

"As our international region's main cruise organisation, we felt honoured that P&O was invited to be the first cruise line to return to Port Vila with *Pacific Encounter's* recent visit.

"It is an additional honour for P&O to be the first cruise line to be invited to visit Mystery Island and Luganville in Vanuatu's trial reintroduction of cruise tourism."



On location in Antarctica

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, aboard the brand new *Viking Polaris*.

EXPEDITION cruising, by its very nature, requires an adventurous spirit, with the team aboard *Viking Polaris* having to adapt plans daily to deal with a variety of weather and sea conditions.

Over the weekend this changeability led to the serendipitous discovery of a previously undocumented penguin colony on an icy outcrop called Breakwater Island, with the scientists on board particularly excited about the huge population of playful gentoo penguins.

As well as visits to the island, many guests enjoyed a trip to the bottom of the ocean aboard the ship's submarines and ventured out on Special Operations Boats.



On Board: *Viking Polaris*

The Library

Located on Deck 5, The Library is one of the many comfortable spaces to curl up with a good book, meet with friends or enjoy a drink on board. As its name suggests, The Library is replete with books, including plenty of fiction novels which can be borrowed as well as comprehensive reference books covering Antarctic wildlife, exploration, expeditions and other fascinating topics.



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