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### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a front cover from **Norwegian Cruise Line** and a full page from **Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)**.

## NCL back to 2019 levels in Asia-Pacific

**AUSTRALIA** and **NZ** continue to be a “large opportunity” for Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), with the company this year beating its 2019 numbers, when the local region was its largest revenue-generating international market.

Jason Krimmel, NCL Head of International Business, is making his first visit Down Under this week, meeting the Sydney-based regional team led by Ben Angell.

At an event yesterday he outlined his ambitions for the local market, saying “we feel extremely positive about our future booking patterns going into 2025 and 2026”.

NCL has seen great success with its fly-cruise model, which Krimmel said produced “better quality” guests wanting to experience new destinations and get good value from their cruises, rather than simply low prices.

But while there are huge opportunities to grow the business, some of these are “untapped relative to where we can carry people...it’s relative to the capacity that our partners in the airline industry either granted us or kept to themselves”, he said.

Krimmel outlined aspirations to launch air-inclusive cruise fares out of Australia early next year (more in today’s **Travel Daily**), and also hinted at possible future regional deployments for NCL.

“If we look at what we are doing now with our ships, and more exotic places, there is a likelihood



that we may look at this region in a different capacity, potentially bringing more ships that touch the area,” he said.

“Not necessarily based here, but more ships that come into this region, so that will give clients more exposure to the NCL brand.”

NCL VP APAC, Ben Angell, who’s **pictured** with Krimmel, reiterated the air capacity challenge, saying “I am astounded that, given the challenges with air, what we are seeing from our guests is that they are willing to spend more and booking further out - despite the fact that air is in many cases still very expensive”.

He noted that despite Australia and New Zealand’s extensive COVID lockdowns, the region has bounced back strongly.

“Despite that we’re tracking to

end 2023 as our best year ever since we opened the local office eight years ago,” Angell said.

The company recently announced the debut of its Prima Plus class (**CW 03 Nov**) which will debut with the new *Norwegian Aqua*, and while full details have not yet been released, Krimmel confirmed the vessel will feature an “expanded aft area”.

This means The Haven exclusive keycard-access-only enclave will “practically double in capacity”.

**MEANWHILE** Norwegian Cruise Line has also today launched a Black Friday promotion offering trade partners double dollars on deposited bookings from today until 27 Nov, a \$500 airfare credit for customers, special discounts and more - see the **cover page** for more information. *BP*

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## Aurora unveils Arctic 2025 season

**AURORA** Expeditions has today released its new season, Arctic & Beyond 2025, which includes four brand-new expeditions and seven Ultimate Adventure voyages.

The cruise line's new Arctic & Beyond season features a comprehensive array of departures to the unique and varied destinations of the region including Greenland, Svalbard, Norway, Iceland, and Canada's High Arctic tundra via the Northwest Passage.

Also included in the program are Aurora's popular voyages to destinations such as Costa Rica and the British Isles.

Aurora is making it simpler to reach the embarkation point for its Svalbard itineraries from 2025 by introducing included charter flights from Oslo to Longyearbyen.

"We are thrilled to launch our new season, where we

will continue to bring our expeditioners to incredible destinations where nature reigns supreme, and where few others venture," Chief Marketing Officer Hayley Peacock-Gower said.

"This season promises to deliver life-changing and meaningful adventures, iconic wildlife, connection with local communities, and a focus on protecting the destinations we visit; all guided by our expert team who always follows the experience."

New expeditions include Spitsbergen: Realm of the Ice Bear, cruising round trip from Oslo aboard *Greg Mortimer*, focusing on the largest of Svalbard's islands.

Cruisers will slice through drift ice to find walrus and bearded seals, and sail along fjords surrounded by jagged mountains.

The new 'Iceland's Westfjords &

North Coast' expedition, cruising round trip from Reykjavik on board *Sylvia Earle*, explores the country's Westfjords, one of its remotest and most pristine regions, featuring diverse landscapes with waterfalls, lava fields, and verdant valleys.

Cruisers will visit Husavik, where they can spot nature such as whales and Atlantic puffins.

The Southern Greenland: On the Trail of the Vikings cruise from Reykjavik to Toronto on board *Sylvia Earle* experiences the enormity of Greenland, where passengers will Zodiac-cruise along fjords, and sail along Prince Christian Sound.

Rounding out the new cruises for the season is the Wild Landscapes of West Greenland itinerary, round trip from Toronto on board *Sylvia Earle*.

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#). MS

## Starlink on ships

**AMBASSADOR** Cruise Line has adopted SpaceX's Starlink wi-fi connectivity, enhancing its guest experience with state-of-the-art internet access.

Starlink will be available across Ambassador's fleet by early next month, ensuring guests can stay connected wherever they sail.

The technology will not only be available in public spaces, but also in cabins.

*Ambience* will be the first ship to undergo Starlink installation later this month, with *Ambition's* upgrade set to be completed by early Dec.

It is anticipated broadband speeds will increase by 50% following the installation.

The decision to introduce Starlink across the entire fleet follows a successful trial on board *Ambition* in Sep, which scored high among pax.



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## A Viking-sized success



**RECORD** numbers have attended Viking's regional information sessions (**CW** 13 Sep), with registration for five remaining meetings still open.

Demand from travel advisors and attendees has led to full capacity during many sessions, prompting Viking to schedule additional meetings across its multiple locations.

The sessions commenced in Ballina last month, and have generated strong engagement from both seasoned and new Viking travellers.

They offer advisors and their clients the chance to connect with a Viking expert and engage with past travellers over morning tea, drinks, and canapes.

Managing Director Michelle Black said the regional information sessions are a great opportunity to build client relationships.

"Our regional sessions are designed to support agents by

enhancing and simplifying the booking process," she explained.

"We share information about The Viking Way of exploration, as well as provide travel inspiration by showcasing the destinations and immersive onshore excursions we offer.

"Agents can access exclusive offers for their clients who attend the sessions, encouraging bookings within 14 days of the event." *MS*



**VIRGIN** Voyages founder Richard Branson has gifted an entire plane of people a free cruise on his new line to celebrate its arrival in Australia next month.

Gate 5 at Melbourne Airport was transformed into Virgin's RockStar Quarters - featuring a hot tub, hammock and a sea view vista - reminiscent of some of the cushiest suites available on board the cruise line's ships.

The 176 passengers aboard a Virgin Australia flight to Hobart were greeted with dancers swaying to the cruise line's unofficial anthem, Boy George's *Karma Chameleon*.

Passengers were given the opportunity to win prizes before boarding, as yet unaware of the real prize of the free cruise, which was revealed to great excitement just before take-off by Branson himself via FaceTime over the aircraft's public address system.

### Fred heats up

**FRED.** Olsen Cruise Lines has teased a first glimpse at its new 2025 program, with the launch of two new warm weather voyages in Dalmatia and the Italian Riviera.

*Borealis* will take guests to Dalmatia in Jun 2025, while *Bolette* will visit Cinque Terre, Corsica, and Portofino.

Travel Daily  
**Bon Voyage  
2023**

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◆ 6pm ◆

◆ Marble Bar, Syd ◆

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