



## Rhapsody of the Seas rescue mission

**ROYAL** Caribbean's *Rhapsody of the Seas* has been pressed into service to help evacuate US citizens from Israel amid the deepening conflict in the region.

The US Government requested assistance from the cruise line, with Royal Caribbean Group confirming it was now "actively assisting the US Department of State in an effort to evacuate American citizens in the area".

The 2,400-guest *Rhapsody of the Seas* was already in the region, having just cancelled a planned season out of Haifa (CW 09 Oct).

The US Embassy in Israel has advised residents that the evacuation was based on space available aboard the ship, on a first-come first-served basis.

The ship is cruising from Haifa to Limassol in Cyprus, a journey expected to take about 12 hours, with consular staff available on board as well as in port to



assist passengers and provide information about onward travel.

The cruise ship evacuation comes amid the cancellation of Israel flights by multiple airlines.

Royal Caribbean chief Jason Liberty confirmed the assistance in an email to staff, saying "with enhanced safety precautions in place, our ship is providing free passage, including accommodation and food, for Americans in the region wishing to leave and find safer ground".

"This has truly been an incredible effort as our teams worked tirelessly over the past week to make this mission possible...my heartfelt gratitude goes out to all involved and especially to the ship's officers and crew for their unwavering support of this call to serve others in the midst of unimaginable tragedy," Liberty said.

The rescue mission is available to US nationals or their immediate family members. *BP*

### Cruiseco MSC deal

**MSC** Cruises has partnered with Cruiseco to offer travel consultants the opportunity to win a spot on an exclusive Mediterranean faml.

The agent with the most MSC bookings via Cruiseco between 13 and 31 Oct will win the place, which also includes a bonus \$250 onboard credit - more details on **page five**.

### Sun Princess steak

**PRINCESS** Cruises is working with "world-famous butcher" Dario Ceccini on a new pop-up bistro called The Butcher's Block by Dario, located on Deck 9 of its new *Sun Princess*.

### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Cruiseco**.

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## Star Clippers deals

**STAR** Clippers is offering a “triple scoop delight” deal combining 20% savings, a complimentary cabin upgrade and up to €150 per couple shipboard spending credit for bookings by 31 Jan 2024.

National Account Manager, Roger Condon, said with the Mediterranean showing strong popularity with Aussies and Kiwis, Star Clippers was thrilled to be able to offer great deals for early bookers.

*Royal Clipper* and *Star Flyer* will both cruise the Med next year, and packages on offer including the Amalfi Coast & Sicily, Corsica Sardinia & Elba, and Riviera Chic & Corsica, with fares leading in at A\$2,840.

Star Clippers offers a unique tall ship “mega-yacht” experience exploring historic cities, stunning coastlines and hidden gems - [starclippers.com](http://starclippers.com).

# Carnival Luminosa arrives in Qld

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line’s *Carnival Luminosa* sailed into the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal on Sun, arriving after a 31-day transpacific voyage (*CW 14 Sep*) to operate her second Australian cruise season.

Kara Glamore, VP Carnival Cruise Line APAC, said “we’re so excited to have *Carnival Luminosa* back home in Brisbane as we continue to invest in our commitment to the Sunshine State with 31 sailings this season”.

“Our crew can’t wait to welcome Queenslanders back on board for another season of Carnival-style fun,” she enthused.

Carnival’s return will be formally celebrated next Sun 22 Oct with an official ceremony in which the line’s new Flag of Fun will be raised for the first time.

The Flag of Fun has been designed for Queensland, featuring photos submitted by



Queenslanders showcasing all their favourite ways to have fun.

*Luminosa* is expected to inject about \$30 million into the state economy during the season, with the brand’s commitment to Queensland also cemented via its recently announced official partnership with the Brisbane Bullets basketball team.

*Luminosa* will homeport in

Brisbane until Apr next year, with itineraries taking in Airlie Beach, the Great Barrier Reef, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

*Carnival Luminosa* is now undertaking her first cruise of the local 2023/24 season, a seven-night Great Barrier Reef sailing which departed from Brisbane on Sun afternoon. *BP*

- Hailing a cab in NYC
- Soaring over the Greenland Ice sheet

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## Get inked at sea!

**TATTOO-LOVING** cruisers can immortalise their onboard experience in an upcoming world-first event voyage which combines “the world of body art with live music and the experience of a luxury cruise”.

Setting sail aboard Virgin Voyages’ *Valiant Lady* from Miami in Sep 2024, “Inked@Sea” is a collaboration between entertainment industry veteran Nick Kulb and Inked Magazine - more details online at [inkedatsea.com](http://inkedatsea.com).

## Dudley RSSC pact

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises is partnering with former eCruising chief Brett Dudley who will host three upcoming *Seven Seas Splendor* South Africa and South America trips.

Just 20 guests will be hosted, with Dudley also curating unique land experiences.

## New chief for Fred

**FRED.OLSEN** Cruise Lines has appointed Samantha Stimpson as its new CEO.

Stimpson will be based in the line’s head office in Ipswich in the UK, joining the company from her previous role as Chief Commercial officer at German travel group FTI Touristik.

“Samantha brings a strategic mindset, extensive knowledge and management experience with a strong understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the travel industry,” said a spokesperson for the Fred.Olsen Board.

“We are very pleased that Samantha joins us, as we see exciting possibilities for Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines for the future,” the spokesperson said.

She will take over from current Fred.Olsen MD Pete Deer, who will instead become the three-ship cruise line’s Chief Financial Officer.

## Tas cruise joins luxury lodges

**LUXURY** Lodges of Australia has welcomed the addition of On Board, the operator of intimate small ship expeditions which explore Tasmania’s wild and remote frontiers.

On Board operates the newbuilt *Odalisque III* on a signature five-day discovery of Port Davey on Tassie’s remote Southwest coast.

The spectacular region is no accessible by road, and is described as “one of the world’s few remaining places of raw, untamed beauty”.

The local family-owned and operated experience begins and ends in Hobart with a 40-minute transfer to the “floating wilderness lodge” (pictured).

With capacity for 12 passengers, the product offers a range of expertly guided adventures on land and sea - complemented by a feast of Tasmania’s finest sustainable seafood, wines and other beverages.



Founder Pieter van der Woude said he was thrilled to have On Board join the Luxury Lodges portfolio, saying “we feel very privileged to join some of Australia’s most innovative experiential tourism providers and together offer unforgettable, life-changing experiences of our nation’s landscapes, cultures and our style of warm, authentic Tasmanian hospitality”.

Luxury Lodges of Australia Chair, Penny Rafferty, said On Board’s carefully considered itineraries offer guests “the kind of uniquely Australian experience that aligns perfectly with the Luxury Lodges of Australia DNA” - see [onboardexpeditions.com.au](http://onboardexpeditions.com.au). *BP*

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## PORTHOLE

**ABU Dhabi's Saadiyat Island** has set a new world record with a display of 1,100 messages in bottles. Unfortunately they weren't all randomly washed up from love-lorn cruise passengers, but more prosaically came from a project in which hotels on the island invited guests to write messages about their affection for the destination.

The notes were put into bottles and arranged on the beach in the shape of the phrase "I (heart) Saadiyat Island" (**pictured**), with Guinness World Records sufficiently impressed to grant recognition for the stunt.



## 50 years of luxury barges

**EUROPEAN Waterways** has launched its new luxury hotel barge cruising brochure for 2024/25, with the company marking 50 years as "pioneers of inland waterways cruising".

Derek Banks, who manages the business alongside John Wood-Dow, said "growing up next to each other on the banks of the River Thames, John and I discovered our shared passion for the extraordinary experiences of river life beyond the crowds of the large cities and well-worn tourist spots".

"We decided to share this passion with as many people as possible, taking them off the beaten path to explore the history, culture and gastronomic traditions of the picturesque European countryside - all while travelling in complete luxury and comfort," Banks said.

Wood-Dow added that for European Waterways guests "it's truly about the journey, more than the destination".

The program introduces a new vessel, the eight-passenger *Kir Royale*, which will cruise France's Champagne region from May 2024, with the ship featuring a spa



pool, four air-conditioned ensuite cabins and three sundecks.

Guests will be treated to tours and tastings at some of the region's most prestigious houses including Moët and Chandon.

Christmas market tours aboard the 12-passenger *Panache* (**pictured**) will operate in Nov and Dec visiting the Alsace and Lorraine region of France, while there are other options on the Canal du Midi, in Scotland and also in the Venetian Lagoon.

Launch discounts are on offer for bookings by 30 Nov - see the brochure by **CLICKING HERE**. *BP*

## Amsterdam to boost cruise tax

A **NEW** budget from the city administration in Amsterdam has confirmed a hefty 37.5% increase to the daily fee charged for cruise ship passenger day visitors.

The impost will rise from the current €8 per day to €11, while fees for nightly hotel stays will also increase to 12.5% of the room rate.

Budget documents say tourist taxes are rising "to fund the extra spending so that visitors make a bigger contribution to the city".

"This will also help tackle overtourism, and mean the financial burden [for locals] will not increase", with resident property taxes and parking fees remaining unchanged.

The municipal executive plans more green spaces, to fund community centres and allocate more money to waste collection and city cleaning.

"Investments will be made mainly in those neighbourhoods and districts where they are most needed," the budget notes.

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