



Cruise Weekly today

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

Windstar rejig

THE Israeli-Hamas conflict has seen Windstar Cruises reshuffle its itineraries away from the region, with *Star Legend* to now operate in the Mediterranean rather than the Middle East.

Windstar chief Christopher Prelog said the launch into the region had now been postponed until Mar 2024, with the move also allowing the line to position *Star Legend* in Cannes during Dec's International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) conference.

MEANWHILE Windstar is also highlighting a 2025/26 early booking offer - see **page five**.

Ponant Paspaley Pearl to sail Kimberley

PONANT'S new partnership with pearling company Paspaley launching the new *Paspaley Pearl* (**CW** breaking news) "marks a milestone in the development of boutique expedition travel", according to Sarina Bratton AM, Ponant Chair Asia Pacific.

Announcing the 30-passenger luxury vessel, Bratton said the ship would offer a "new and different standard of excellence in this pristine region".

"With our long-term relationship and vast combined experience, this venture is a testament to our joint commitment to sharing unique and exclusive experiences to discerning travellers," she said.

Ponant and Paspaley have a combined 85 years of expertise in the Kimberley region and remote maritime experiences, with Nicholas Paspaley AC, Paspaley Executive Chairman, saying



"sharing the routes that my crew and I pioneered in the 1970s onboard our peal luggers will provide wonderful opportunities for guests".

Paspaley Pearl will be the only boutique expedition motor yacht in the Kimberley with private balconies, with the ship formerly sailing with the now defunct Island Escape Cruises as its newbuild *Island Escape* (**pictured**).

Paspaley purchased the vessel

at auction for just \$5.5 million (**CW** 13 Jun), about a tenth of the estimated cost of the ship which was delivered in 2021.

Paspaley Pearl will operate locally year-round, offering seven, 10-, 12- and 14-night journeys in the Kimberley, Indonesia's Raja Ampat & the Spice Islands plus Papua New Guinea.

The ship's Kimberley inaugural season will kick off in Jun 2024, with reservations open in Nov. **BP**

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AQV still with Journey Beyond

JOURNEY Beyond (JB) has confirmed it continues to represent American Queen Voyages (AQV) in the Australian and New Zealand markets, following a reshuffle at parent firm Hornblower Group which saw the unexpected departure of AQV President Cindy D'Aoust (*CW* yesterday).

Asked about the reporting lines for Hornblower's previously announced Overnight Division headed up by Journey Beyond chief Chris Tallent, a spokesperson for the company told *Cruise Weekly* "together with Hornblower, we continue to review the optimum structure for the overall group".

Coral's triumph

CORAL Expeditions has just concluded the last sailings of its 30th consecutive year of operations in the Kimberley, which saw it achieve its highest-ever guest sentiment ratings in the region.

Following a whopping total of 52 departures between Mar-Oct hosting over 4,000 passengers, the cruise line recorded an "excellent level 5/5" overall satisfaction rating from 96% of guest reviews, which MD Mark Fifield says "holds us in good stead for years ahead".

Musing on Asian cruising



SENIOR cruise industry figures have gathered in Hong Kong this week for Seatrade Cruise Asia, an industry conference taking place at the city's JW Marriott Hotel.

The event coincided with a visit by Silversea Cruises' *Silver Muse*, with the line's CEO Barbara Muckermann yesterday delivering a presentation on "Luxury Cruising in Asian Waters".

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia MD Joel Katz, **pictured** with Muckermann, is also attending the event, and gave delegates an update on global sustainability measures being undertaken by CLIA member cruise lines.

Some delegates took the opportunity to jump on board *Muse* before she headed off to Vietnam and then Singapore



ahead of starting her southward journey to Australia. *BP*

Pictured inset aboard are Silversea's Chief Marketing Officer, Cinzia Amadio; CEO Barbara Muckermann; Philippa Walker, Marketing Director APAC; and Samantha Choy, Marketing Campaigns Manager APAC.

Scenic earlybird

SCENIC has opened up bookings for its Antarctica 2025/26 voyages, with earlybird savings of up to \$8,500 per person available.

There are five sailings on offer between Nov 2025-Feb 2026.



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Celebrity entertainment ascends



GUESTS onboard Celebrity Cruises' new ship, *Celebrity Ascent*, will be regaled with a fresh line-up of entertainment, including six new live productions, interactive gaming experiences, and more.

One of the standout offerings is a brand-new nightlife experience called 'Ascent After Dark: Shine the Night', where guests are asked to don metallic

attire for an open-air celebration under the stars, complete with a DJ, live performances, and a prism light show.

There will also be three all-new production shows featuring world-class singers, dancers and specialty artists, as well as interactive activities, including an 80s-inspired retro gaming experience, sketch art classes, and a "singalong extravaganza".

Cruise insurance surge

THE resurgence of cruise, along with the continued after effects of the pandemic, are leading to a massive rise in the number of travellers who are purchasing cruise travel insurance.

New data from travel insurance provider InsureandGo shows a 96% rise in cruise travel insurance purchases from its customers from Jun-Dec 2022 to Jan-Jul 2023, with Aug alone up 336% compared to Aug 2022.

The soaring popularity of cruise among new traveller demographics is also a key factor that's driving the insurance surge.

Travellers in the 26-40 age group led the cruise insurance boom, with 170% more choosing to take out a policy in the first half of 2023, versus the last half of 2022.

While the data showed an uptake in insurance across all traveller types, including singles, couples and families, those sailing

solo across all age groups saw the biggest increase, up 110%.

"Cruise companies have made a conscious effort to broaden their appeal, which we can see in recent launches such as Virgin Voyages and Disney Cruises," InsureandGo Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Etkind said.

"Virgin Voyages is an over-18s only cruise, which counts a tattoo parlor, HIIT workout classes and a casino as part of its entertainment offerings...it's no surprise that an eclectic mix of people are booking cruises and taking out cruise travel insurance this year," he highlighted.

At the same time, the data reflects a 22% fall in domestic insurance purchases, indicating heightened domestic traveller confidence in recent months, as well as a 47% drop in the average cancellation rate of domestic routes compared to Jun 2022. *JM*

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AT FIRST glance you would think the seaside town of Seaburn in England's Sunderland had just been covered in a fresh dumping of snow - which wouldn't be too unusual, given the UK has entered its winter season.

The "snow", however, is in fact a thick blanket of sea foam, which washed up on the town's shoreline this week.

The eerie phenomena is apparently the result of storm winds whipping up the seawater, which contains alginates from seaweed - a natural foaming agent.

While the stuff isn't dangerous, officials say it's probably best to avoid coming into direct contact with it.



Special Murray sailing



MURRAY River Paddlesteamers has announced a special, one-time-only river cruise which sets sail in Dec just before Christmas.

The Lock and Summer Saunter sailing will depart Torrumbarry Weir on 18 Dec for a leisurely, two-night sojourn to Echuca in Victoria, aboard *PS Emmylou*.

The unique cruise begins with with a short, complimentary coach tour from Echuca to Torrumbarry Weir where guests will board the wood-fired paddlesteamer for a rare journey downstream through Lock 24 to enjoy the pristine river's scenery and wildlife.

Guests will then sail back upstream, spending the night at the historic Perricoota Station before enjoying a full day of

cruising the next day, culminating in riverside campfire and barbecue dinner under the stars, with the third day taking guests on the final leg into the heritage river port of Echuca.

Including a special 30% discount, fares are priced from \$800 per person, twin share, for twin and double cabins, while solo travellers can book twin cabins without the usual single surcharge.

The fare includes onboard meals, daily shore excursions and experiences, V Line train both ways between Melbourne and Echuca, cruise transfers, wi-fi, gratuities, select drinks and more.

The offer is available until sold out - for more information, call 03 5482 5244 or [CLICK HERE](#). JM

Voyager renewed

ATLAS Ocean Voyages has announced that one of its luxury yachts, *World Voyager*, has completed her extensive refurbishment at the Viana do Castelo shipyard in Portugal.

The vessel is now on her way to Ushuaia, Argentina to commence her Antarctic season on 08 Nov.

The expedition cruising operator has also introduced the Expedition Team Leaders for its 2023/24 Antarctica season, including Galapagos Naturalist Guide, Jean-Roche de Susanne, who will guide *World Voyager* guests.

Radiance flooding

A BURST water line onboard *Carnival Radiance* caused minor flooding during a cruise earlier this month from Longbeach, California.

Despite the incident causing a stir on social media after a pax posted a video of water gushing into her room, Carnival said the flooding affected "an area of the ship that accounts for less than 2% of its staterooms".

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