



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

NZ recovering well

NEW Zealanders are heading back to sea in large numbers, with 86,300 taking an ocean cruise last year, new data from CLIA Australasia reveals.

In what was the first full year of cruise operations back in New Zealand, the figure shows the market has returned to 80% of its pre-pandemic level of 106,300 set in 2019.

Similar to Australia, Kiwis are showing a preference for cruising close to home, with 77% exploring waters in Australia and the South Pacific.

The average age of NZ cruise passengers fell from 52.4 in 2019 to 49.3, with almost a third aged under 40.

Amsterdam capacity cut

RIVER cruise capacity in Amsterdam will be halved over the next five years as the city takes steps to combat overtourism and improve quality of life for the city's residents.

Amsterdam City Council will slash the number of river ships calling into the city's canals to 1,150 per year by 2028.

To put that into perspective, the Dutch capital saw 1,327 river ships in 2011, however this number has ballooned in the years since to hit 2,300 last year.

River cruises will not be the only casualty of the move, with the city also planning to deny all construction applications for new hotels within the city precinct unless another hotel closes.

Amsterdam is aiming to cap overnight stays to just 20 million annually, a move it hopes will see a minimum of 271,000 fewer tourists visit each year.



For river cruises, Amsterdam is the start and end point for several itineraries including a 15-day journey to and from Budapest - a highly popular cruise promoted by many major operators.

"Amsterdam must be and remain liveable, for residents and visitors," a statement from Amsterdam City Council read.

"That is why we take measures to combat overtourism.

"River cruises contribute to the crowds and emissions in the city, with tourists, overnight stays, bus movements and supply traffic."

The new ban builds on a similar restriction last Jul on ocean-going ships from berthing in the city. *ML*

Star Alaska-bound

PRINCESS Cruises' second Sphere-class vessel, *Star Princess*, will be deployed to Alaska for its maiden summer in 2026, the line has revealed.

Originally slated to make its debut alongside sister ship *Sun Princess* in the Mediterranean next year, the recent delay to the delivery of *Star Princess* (*CW* 22 Apr) has resulted in a change of plans.

With nine scheduled sailings in *Star Princess'* maiden Mediterranean season now shelved, the 4,300-passenger ship will now cross the Atlantic to sail from Fort Lauderdale for its maiden Caribbean season alongside *Sun Princess*.

Star Princess will then transit the Panama Canal bound for Alaska and the US west coast, with details of its specific home port and itineraries going on sale from 18 Jul.

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with Jenny

Travel Daily
A conversation with Jill Abel

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ROYAL Caribbean International has made one of *Star of the Seas'* most important officer appointments, naming Sailor as the ship's Chief Dog Officer (CDO).

Sailor will make his first appearance when *Star* launches next year, joining his colleague Rover, who was named Royal Caribbean's first-ever CDO earlier this year (**CW** 22 Jan), when he took the helm of the new *Icon of the Seas*.

The new Chief Dog Officer's duties include greeting crew members and guests, enjoying walks around the deck, and assisting *Icon's* Captain.

Royal Caribbean captured the moment Rover found out he would be joined by another CDO - **CLICK HERE**.

APT Asia launched

APT has launched its 2025 Asia Adventures selection, with a seven-night luxury cruise along the Lower Ganges in India among the highlights.

The voyage showcases parts of India less travelled and calls in Kalna, Matiari, Murshidabad and Chandannagar aboard the stylish *Ganges Voyager*.

Travellers can enjoy the seven-night cruise as part of APT's 17-day 'Golden Triangle, Kolkata and Lower Ganges Cruise' holiday, priced from \$15,895 per person twin share.

No room at The Dome

EXCLUSIVE

PRINCESS Cruises might have underestimated how popular its innovative onboard entertainment venue, The Dome, has become among its guests.

The Dome, located forward on Decks 17 and 18 on *Sun Princess* and soon on *Star Princess*, is the exciting new geodesic theatre presenting music, dance and acrobatics (**pictured**) via several new shows during each voyage.

However, as **Cruise Weekly** noted while onboard for *Sun Princess'* naming ceremony in Barcelona this week, the venue is severely limited in capacity compared to the number of guests onboard, with slightly more than 200 seats per performance for up to 4,300 passengers overall.

Complicating matters further is the lack of a reservation system in The Dome as there is no charge for guests to enjoy shows, and therefore no incentive for guests to turn up for a pre-reserved seat.

As a result, hundreds of guests are being turned away at the door, with others opting to wait up to two hours to ensure they secure a seat for one of the evening's two performances.

This drawback applies to all guests, even those travelling in the new Sanctuary Collection categories (**CW** 24 Apr) and those holding higher-tier status in the Princess Cruises Captain's Circle loyalty program.

Passengers were overheard complaining about the inability to make reservations for theatre performances, even with a ready walk-in crowd eager to fill seats



left by 'no-shows'.

A Princess Cruises spokesperson told **CW** it recognises the high demand, saying there are plans to increase the frequency of performances in The Dome as *Sun Princess* scales up to full operation in coming months.

In the Princess Arena, the main theatre on *Sun Princess*, guests are also unable to reserve seats.

Passengers who purchase the Princess Premier upgrade can access a limited number of allocated seats in the 980-pax arena - however all seats are still on a first-come-first-served basis.

The same perk does not apply to performances in The Dome.

Princess Cruises has confirmed to **CW** a reservation system is not on its radar at the moment, but that it will assess demand and how to manage the challenge.

As a result, guests will need to allow for flexibility and plan their evenings accordingly for now. *ML*

Explora President

CHRISTOPHER Austin has been appointed President of Explora Journeys' North American division.

Austin joined the luxury brand in Nov 2020 and brings more than three decades in the cruise sector to the role.

Viking 2024-26 brox

AGENTS can now order print and digital copies of Viking's new 2024-26 Ocean Voyages brochure, which offers details on more than 100 itineraries.

The 200-page guide includes itineraries for two new Viking ships, with *Viking Vela* set to enter service in Dec and *Viking Vesta* following in Jul next year.

Both ships will debut on Med and Northern Europe voyages.

Cruise Calendar



Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	28 Apr
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	29 Apr
<i>Coral Princess</i>	30 Apr
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	03 May
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	03 May
CAIRNS	
<i>Scenic Eclipse II</i>	30 Apr
TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Scenic Eclipse II</i>	28 Apr
FREMANTLE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	02 May
BROOME	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	28 Apr
<i>True North</i>	03 May
GERALDTON	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	01 May
DARWIN	
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	02 May
AUCKLAND	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	26 Apr
BAY OF ISLANDS	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	27 Apr