



Cruise Weekly today

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

MSC Book's 10 years

MSC Cruises is offering "heartfelt gratitude" to travel advisors on the 10th anniversary of **MSC Book**.

The occasion will see special digital gifts for agents who complete a short survey to help gather travel trade insights about **MSC Book**, which has nearly 120,000 global users, and has booked more than 10 million pax.

MSC will also host webinars to unveil future enhancements of the reservation platform.

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Disney CRUISE LINE

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Viking christens Vela



VIKING has celebrated its partnership with shipbuilder Fincantieri, in the naming of its newest ocean vessel *Viking Vela*.

The 998-guest ship was named in Fincantieri's hometown of Trieste, with the shipbuilder's VP & Project Manager, Cruise Business Unit, Ivana Elice, serving as the ceremonial godmother, having overseen the design and engineering of Viking's ocean ships for 12 years.

Elice was presented with a historic Viking broad axe by Metropolitan Opera Chair Ann Ziff, who also served as the godmother of *Viking Saturn*.

The same axe was previously used in the naming of *Saturn* in Jun 2023 (**CW** 08 Jun 2023).

After the presentation, Elice pressed a button that allowed a bottle of Norwegian aquavit to break on the ship's hull.

The naming also saw guests enjoy performances by Sissel Kyrkjebø, one of the world's leading crossover sopranos, and godmother of *Viking Jupiter*, as well as acclaimed Italian singer Alessandro Safina.

"We are proud to welcome the *Viking Vela* to our growing, award-winning fleet," Chair & Chief Executive Officer Torstein

Hagen declared.

"With Fincantieri as our partner, we believe we have built the world's most elegant fleet of small ocean ships.

"We thank Ivana Elice for being the godmother of the *Viking Vela*...in her role at Fincantieri, she has cared for our ocean ships during their construction just as a godmother would, and we are very appreciative of her contributions as a member of the extended Viking family."

Vela, which was delivered to the cruise line last week (**CW** 04 Dec), will spend her inaugural season sailing itineraries during the offseason in the Mediterranean Sea, before continuing on to Northern Europe.

The ship features 499 staterooms, all of which have verandas; as well as elegant Scandinavian design, light-filled public spaces, and abundant al fresco dining options.

It has been a strong few months for Viking, which last month reported an increase of 11.4% in total revenue for the third quarter of 2024, or US\$171.9 million compared to the same period last year (**CW** 20 Nov). *MS*

Pictured are Karen and Torstein Hagen with Elice and Ziff.

Carnival strikes with big new catch

CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) has set sail with the Sydney Thunder as the cricket team's new official partner for the 2024/25 BBL.

The cruise line's Senior Director of Sales & Marketing Anton Loeb described the line and the Sydney-based cricket team as a "perfect match" for each other.

"We can't wait to bring even more energy and fun to the BBL14 season," he said.

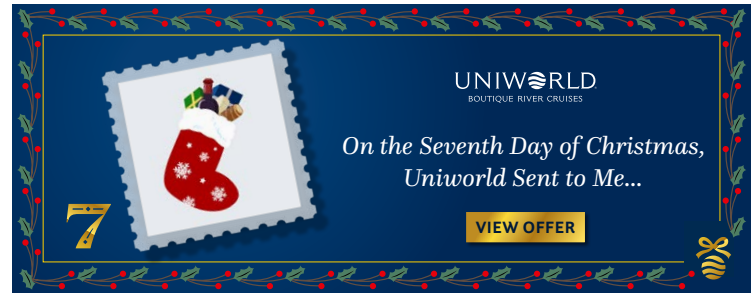
"We are committed to creating meaningful connections with Australians, whether they're cheering in the stands or enjoying a holiday at sea."

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Virgin Voyages to revamp group bookings

VIRGIN Voyages will approach groups differently next year, the cruise line has announced

Travel advisors will be offered 10% off retail rates for groups, as part of a number of key changes Virgin is making to help advisors sell next year.

There will also be no minimum number of cabins to book to secure the group saving.

Travel advisors will still earn a 'travel conductor cabin', which continues as 10 booked cabins earning an 11th free, or a 2% bonus commission.

Virgin is introducing steadier and more stable pricing, with no more dynamic rates, promising that booking early will secure the best price.

The cruise line's voyage lengths now range from four to 16 nights, with more than 25 new ports and 30 itineraries added recently.

Accompanying this will be



longer sale windows, with itineraries available more than two years in advance.

Cruises for the northern spring of 2027 are set to open soon, Virgin said.

Other changes will see the cruise line test its new app with cruisers, particularly in response to the difficulty of booking dining on board its ships.

Virgin will also update menus across its restaurants and in the Galley, with dining still included.

A whole new dining concept is

launching on board *Scarlet Lady*: Lucky Lotus by Razzle Dazzle, with more new venues to come.

"All 5,000 members of our crew (land and sea) are passionate about delivering irresistible experiences and being 'Brilliant For Your Business,'" an open letter from Chief Executive Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu said.

"We appreciate that you've made us the brand of choice for adults of all ages seeking an elevated but not stuffy adult escape," he mused. *MS*

Heritage's next shot

HERITAGE Expeditions has announced wildlife photography workshops with award-winning photographer Rachel Bigsby on two of its Subantarctic Islands voyages next year.

Bigsby's bird and wildlife photography workshops, which are limited to just eight guests per voyage, will sail on board flagship *Heritage Adventurer* for her 06 Dec 2025 and 21 Dec 2025 cruises.

"Rachel is an accomplished and incredible talent beyond her years and a tenacious, self-taught trailblazer," Commercial Director Aaron Russ said.

"Her genuine passion for nature is evident in both her incredible work, which not only beautifully captures the natural world, but also informs and educates on its importance," he added.

We're turning Black Friday **Green**

Choose experiences over things.

Green Friday is a movement that raises awareness of the environmental and social impacts of consumerism. This November, ask your clients to consider investing in unique travel experiences. Explore breathtaking destinations, make unforgettable memories, commune with wildlife and nature. Choose a journey that will change the way they see the world.



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A BRITISH zoo has renamed one of its female king penguins after discovering the 10-year-old bird is, in fact, a male.

Birdland Park and Gardens in Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, recently announced that 'Maggie' will now go by the name 'Magnus', following a DNA test confirming that the penguin had in fact been misgendered when the zoo first acquired him in 2016.

"Discovering that Magnus is actually a male and his gender differs from what we initially believed presents another unique hurdle in our efforts to establish a successful breeding program here in the UK," Alistair Keen, the head keeper at Birdland, told *The Telegraph*.

Suspicion was raised about the penguin's gender when the zoo keepers noticed "her" making the first move with a fellow penguin - a behaviour typical of males.

Norwegian Takes 3



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line joined Take 3 for the Sea's International Volunteer Day Beach Cleanup in Sydney last week.

The Norwegian team collected 1,070 pieces of rubbish over half an hour, totalling 2.2 kilograms.

The collected debris included 412 cigarette butts, 147 pieces of plastic food packaging, and more than 150 fragments of solid plastic, primarily microplastics that had broken apart over time.

"I was so surprised by the amount of small rubbish hiding in plain sight," Sales Coordinator

Jordan Dryland said.

"This was such a great learning experience today with Take 3, who are such a great movement."

William Karrfi, Guest Services, added: "it was a very eye-opening experience...I learnt today how much plastic pollution there actually is."

Norwegian has this year broadened its partnership with Take 3 for the Sea, to become the exclusive sponsor of its 2024/25 Surf Life Saving Club Program. *MS*

Pictured: the Norwegian team at North Steyne Beach.

Diana back at sea

SWAN Hellenic's *Diana* has departed from Ushuaia on her first dedicated Antarctica cruise of the season, after the repair of her propulsion motor (*CW* 03 Dec).

Diana recommenced sailing late last week, completing a series of final sea trials and a minor adjustment in the Beagle Channel, before proceeding on her first dedicated Antarctic expedition cruise of the 2024/25 season.

Swan Hellenic was forced to make repairs to *Diana* after the Antarctica leg of a 21-day cruise from Cape Town had to be abandoned following a malfunction with the ship.

The cruise line said it is certain the delay will not lead to reduction in the time scheduled for exploring the Antarctic Peninsula.

"We are pleased that the prompt and efficient coordination of all parties involved on board and ashore enabled *Diana* to depart for Antarctica with less than about 40 hours' delay," Chief Executive Andrea Zito said.

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