



Cruise Weekly today

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

Cruise key for FCTG

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) says securing better contract margins and working more closely with its network of preferred suppliers is key to ongoing success in cruising.

FCTG is contracting wholesale cruise fares to support its new CruiseHQ offering (**CW 18 Sep**) in order to provide better rates for customers, the company noted yesterday in its first half results presentation.

The period saw FCTG fast-track the growth of its cruise business with the launch of both CruiseHQ, which will be run by Caroline Hitchen, and Cruiseabout (**CW 09 Feb**), manned by Bradley Kennedy.

Silver Ray floats out at Meyer Werft

SILVERSEA Cruises' *Silver Ray* is nearing completion, with its second Nova-class ship floating out at Meyer Werft (**pictured**).

Ray, which is scheduled to debut in Jun, is set to become the sixth addition to Silversea's fleet in just three years.

The ship will soon undertake a conveyance of approximately 32 kilometres down the Ems to the North Sea ahead of her sea trials, which will be a unique journey due to the river's narrowness.

Ray is scheduled to spend her inaugural season in the Mediterranean, before crossing the Atlantic in Dec.

"With the float out of *Silver Ray*, excitement is building for the launch of the second ship in our pioneering Nova-class," President Barbara Muckermann said.

"We received such incredibly strong feedback on *Silver Nova* from guests, travel advisors, and



members of the press following her launch in Aug.

"Sustaining the wave of innovation that is driving our success, the launch of *Silver Ray* will strengthen Royal Caribbean Group's unwavering commitment to delivering a lifetime of vacations for guests, with its

industry-leading global brands."

Ray's float-out represents the project's advancement into its final stages, the shipyard's Project Manager Thorsten Kroes said.

"The Meyer team is now working on getting this beautiful ship ready for her upcoming sea trials," he added. *MS*



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GUESTS on board Fred. Olsen Cruise Line's *Borealis*' Piano Bar & Auditorium will pass by one of the most beautiful natural processes known to man - the maturation of whisky!

Fred. Olsen has partnered with brewing company Adnams to produce an exclusive batch of whisky, which has joined *Borealis*' world cruise for the final step in its decade-long ageing process.

The cruise line believes maturing the whisky at sea will produce a unique flavour, as the rolling waves create more breadth of contact between the liquid and the barrel.

Climactic changes during the voyage will also develop a different taste to the whisky.

The barrel will return to Adnams in the United Kingdom once *Borealis* returns home, where the whisky will be bottled and sold aboard Fred. Olsen's ships.

Borealis back Down Under



FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines' *Borealis* called into Sydney this week, and travel advisors were invited on board for her first visit to Australia since the pandemic.

Borealis has just ticked over the halfway mark for her 101-night around-the-world adventure from Southampton (**CW** 09 Jan), today bringing up day 52 of the cruise.

Agents (**pictured**) were given a full ship tour, which was hosted by Fred. Olsen's local representative Cruise Traveller,

and took in *Borealis*' swimming pool, bars and lounges, restaurants, gym, and more.

The cruise, which began last month, departed Sydney last night, and will visit Newcastle and Cairns before leaving Australia.

Borealis will also visit Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Singapore, and more, before returning to Southampton.

The ship's sister *Bolette* will also visit Australia as part of her world cruise next year. *MS*

RCI Caribbean '25

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) has rolled out new short getaways to the Tropics in 2025-26, including three- to six-night vacations to the Caribbean and Bahamas.

The line-up includes *Quantum of the Seas*' debut in LA, and *Wonder of the Seas*' first cruises from Miami.

Navigator of the Seas will join *Quantum* in Los Angeles, while *Freedom of the Seas* will join *Wonder* in Miami.

Meanwhile, *Utopia of the Seas*, *Explorer of the Seas*, and *Wonder* will cruise from Port Canaveral; *Liberty of the Seas* and *Jewel of the Seas* will sail from Fort Lauderdale; *Mariner of the Seas* will cruise from Texas; and *Enchantment of the Seas* will cruise from Tampa.

Destinations will include Royal Caribbean's Perfect Day at CocoCay in The Bahamas and Labadee in Haiti.

Other destinations across the eastern and western Caribbean include Puerto Plata, Roatan, Cozumel, and St. John - general booking opens from tomorrow.

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EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon

Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury, Matthew Wai

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Publisher - Damian Francis

Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

info@cruiseweekly.com.au

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ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

Advertising - Sharad Goodfella &

Dante Muranty

advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

HEAD OF OPERATIONS & CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Anna Piper

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia

PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia

Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220

Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220

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