



Cruise Weekly today

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

MSC Greek dreams

WARM winter temperatures will see MSC Cruises base a ship in Turkiye and Greece throughout the northern winter for the first time.

With nearly 25 days of sunshine per month forecast for the upcoming winter, the line has introduced a new seven-night itinerary exploring the eastern Mediterranean.

Starting 16 Nov, *MSC Sinfonia* will operate round trip and one-way voyages calling in a variety of ports including Izmir, Istanbul, Bari and Corfu, with multiple embarkation points.

Four other ships will sail to a range of other sun-kissed ports including Valencia and Tunis.

C360 grows to two days

CRUISE Lines International Association's Cruise360 conference will extend to two days next year (**CW** breaking news Fri), and will make a return to Brisbane.

CLIA Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz announced the hotly anticipated news at this year's Cruise360 on Fri, closing the day with a round of applause.

Cruise360 is also returning to Brisbane's Royal International Convention Centre in Bowen Hills, which hosted the event for the first time last year (**CW** 07 Sep).

"Next year's event will evolve to a two-day event," Katz revealed.

"There's so much happening in cruise, and we want to be able to offer more.

"I'm also pleased to confirm we're returning to Brisbane in 2025 on the success of last year's Cruise360, and of course, celebrating the rise of our



Olympic city as an important cruise gateway."

When asked why it is extending the conference, CLIA told **CW** its travel advisor members have been asking for more time, more opportunities to attend the trade show, more networking, and more professional development.

The event moved to what many referred to as a "one-and-a-half-day" format this year, with a day of river cruise product training before the conference proper.

More from this year's conference in **Cruise Weekly's** Cruise360 special issue, coming out later today. **MS**

Third Pandaw ship

PANDAW will introduce a third ship to its Lower Mekong itineraries in response to increased demand over the 2025 peak season.

Indochina Pandaw will debut from Feb 2025, cruising the river between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap.

The ship will join *Bassac Pandaw* and *Mekong Pandaw* on the itinerary, with all sailings now available to book.

Alaska wi-fi speed

ROYAL Caribbean Group has begun a community-based program to bring Starlink high-speed internet to locals, cruise guests and businesses in the Alaskan city of Juneau.

The move is aimed at fighting a significant decrease in local internet speeds during the busy summer cruise season.



En gladlaks.

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AVID readers of *Cruise Weekly* will remember our report earlier this year on Life at Sea Cruises, which promised a 3.5-year world cruise only to cancel because it failed to find a ship to operate it.

While that operation remains tied up in litigation, another venture - Ville Vie Residences - with the same executive in charge, at least managed to purchase a ship for the voyage in *Braemar*, formerly operated by Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines and renamed as *Villa Vie Odyssey*.

However, three months after *Odyssey* intended to set off on its own three-year global journey, the ship remains stuck in Belfast undergoing repairs to its rudders and gearbox.

Travellers who have bought staterooms on the ship and are waiting to depart are allowed to spend their days onboard, before needing to disembark each evening.

Guests have spent between US\$100,000 and \$900,000 to buy their staterooms but have spent the time exploring Europe by train and somewhat more reliable cruises, while others have settled in with the Northern Irish locals.

But with the ship still unable to set a firm departure date, another much-vaunted dream of living on the open ocean appears, for the time being, to still be a pirate's fantasy.

Princess catches finals fever



EVERY cruise line executive knows they need to be able to make quick decisions, plan on the go, and be able to put trust in teammates - skills also needed by AFL players at the highest level.

So when Princess Cruises took its senior leadership team for an offsite corporate strategy day with the Sydney Swans AFL team, some clear synergies in thinking were noticed and developed.

The cruise line recently took its Sydney team to Swans HQ for its Quarterly Commercial Conference, where the group was able to build greater camaraderie among their teammates and ensure the operation was running smoothly and energetically, heading into the 2024/25 summer peak.

The event saw the Princess team meet to discuss strategy and learn some skills from Swans players that will come in handy in the cruise business.

Princess Cruises is also the official cruise line of the Sydney Swans, with both the ladder-

leading Swans and Princess Cruises set for a big month as seasonal ships arrive for summer.

Princess has another huge year to come in 2025, with a second Sphere-class ship - *Star Princess* - joining the fleet in mid-year.

Earlier this year, the line also introduced its new Sanctuary Collection (**CW** 24 Apr) suite category on both *Sun Princess* and *Star Princess*.

Perks for guests upgrading to these suites include a private top-deck retreat and swimming pool, two exclusive restaurants, plus all the benefits of Princess Premier as an add-on package such as MedallionNet Max and unlimited beverages and speciality dining.

The recently enhanced package (**CW** 21 Aug) also now includes unlimited boutique fitness classes and unlimited digital photos.

The Princess Cruises team is **pictured** above at Swans HQ ready to begin some training drills in case they're needed for the team's AFL finals campaign. *ML*

Lines defy protest

VIRGIN Voyages docked in Amsterdam this past weekend despite ongoing environment protests which have caused numerous other lines to divert to alternate Dutch ports.

Norwegian Cruise Line also has a ship scheduled to call today, however has left open the possibility of rerouting depending on events taking place at the dock.

Protestors from Extinction Rebellion have repeatedly tied themselves to lock gates over the past month, forcing both cruise and freight ships to delay arrival or divert entirely.

Jewel of the Seas, Seven Seas Mariner, Serenade of the Seas, Ambassador Ambition and Disney Dream have all been forced to cancel or significantly delay planned port calls in the Dutch capital due to protests.

Celestial cuts 50%

CELESTYAL Cruises has launched a new spring sale offering travellers up to 50% savings on more than 120 global itineraries.

Eligible voyages include the four-night 'Aegean Odyssey', which sails round-trip from Athens and now starts at \$809 per person twin share.

The longer seven-night 'Desert Days' sailing from Doha calls in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Bahrain, and is now on sale from \$859pp twin share.

Take a third or fourth guest in the cabin and their discount can grow as high as 60%.

To avail the offer, bookings must be made by 31 Oct 2024.