



Cruise Weekly today

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

A-ROSA bookings up

A-ROSA River Cruises has reported a strong start to the season, with incoming bookings from around the globe up 35% between Nov 2024 and Feb 2025 compared to the previous year, and up to 50% in record weeks.

The cruise line will kick off its wave season on 05 Mar on the Rhine and the Danube with **A-ROSA ALEA** opening with a mini cruise to the Netherlands, while the Douro season begins 19 Mar with **A-ROSA ALVA**.

HX receives new funding



HX'S CONSORTIUM of new investors has completed its acquisition of the cruise line, with a significant new tranche of €140 million (A\$232m) of funding.

The new capital will help deliver HX's global growth strategy, and marks the final stage of the separation of the expedition line from Hurtigruten Group (**CW** 29 Nov 2024).

The investment by the Consortium - led by Arini Capital Management, Cyprus Capital Partners and Tresidor Investment Management - will support the development of HX, allowing it to invest in its fleet.

This will include upgrades to both *Fram* and *Spitsbergen*, to the ships' cabins, suites, science centres, and restaurant areas, in the second quarter of the year.

"Today's announcement is an important day in HX's history as we continue our journey as a stand-alone company with the resources and strategic support to deliver on our next phase of growth and innovation, which will benefit our employees, guests and strategic partners," Chief Executive Gebhard Rainer said.

"We look forward to exploring new growth opportunities around the globe and enhancing our industry-leading customer offering and creating the very best in mindful travel experiences," he added.

Chief Financial Officer James McArthur led the investment process, saying HX has emerged

as a "reinvigorated, stand-alone and well-capitalised business".

"I'd like to thank our new ownership group for their support and commitment to our plan thus far," he said.

"I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing hard work of our dedicated HX teams around the globe, who are focused on providing the very best for our guests."

HX's growth continues to accelerate this year, following the company's strategic changes, with 2025 bookings 14% higher year-over-year, and 2026 bookings growing over 25% year-over-year on a constant fleet basis.

The cruise line and its former sister Hurtigruten formally split in Australia late last year with the announcement of their new respective APAC leadership structures (**CW** 05 Dec 2024).

HX's Australian leadership team is now being guided by the United States-based Steve Smotrys, expanding from his current role overseeing the Americas market.

He is aided by Australia-based Director of Sales Amber Wilson, and a soon-to-be-announced Senior Marketing Manager.

Damian Perry, who led the formerly combined company, is now guiding a dedicated Hurtigruten Norway APAC team, mirroring the structure across the rest of the world.

Supporting Perry is Hurtigruten's newly promoted Head of Marketing Marisa Jones. *MS*

Windstar new eats

WINDSTAR Cruises has unveiled Basil + Bamboo, a new complimentary specialty restaurant set to launch across its fleet.

The venue offers a blend of Mediterranean and Asian cuisine, and will take the place of Cuadro 44 across the line's fleet this year.

The restaurant will appear first on *Star Breeze* this month, and debut as the new dining venue aboard *Star Seeker* when she launches in Dec.

Guests can expect offerings such as miso soup; tuna tartare; a sampler of sashimi, nigiri, and maki; miso black cod with pea puree; Jamon ibérico de Bellota, and more.

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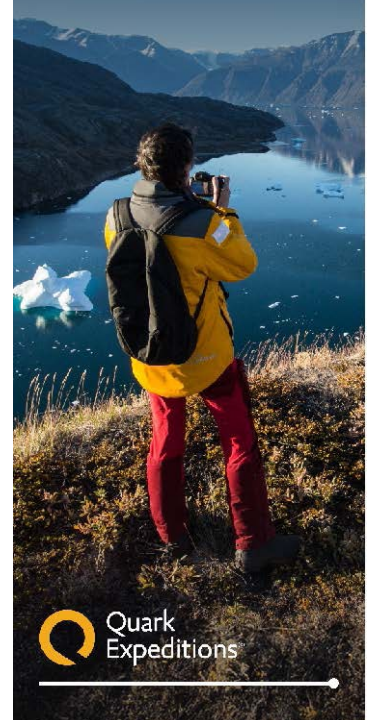


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Oceania appoints

OCEANIA Cruises has named Brennan Quesnele as its new Senior Vice President of Sales. Reporting directly to Oceania President Frank Del Rio, Quesnele brings more than 20 years in cruise to his new role.

Stars twinkle on Scenic's night



SCENIC Group has celebrated its outstanding trade partners at its ninth annual 'Night of Stars' event, which brought together more than 300 members of the travel industry.

This year's Night of Stars was held on Sat at the W Sydney, celebrating the achievements of Scenic and Emerald Cruises & Tours' travel partners.

Night of Stars winners included Phil Hoffmann Travel (**pictured**), recognised for the Highest Sales Multi Location Australia Wide, and Geelong Travel, for the Highest Sales Single Location Australia-Wide.

Other state-based winners recognised for their record sales included Helloworld Travel Miranda (NSW), Helloworld Travel

Strathpine (Queensland), Bicton Travel (Western Australia), Phil Hoffmann Travel Glenelg (South Australia), Launceston Travel & Cruise Centre (Tasmania), and Jamison Travel (ACT).

Highest Sales Home-Based went to TravelManagers, while Global Journeys scooped up the Highest Sales Online Agency gong.

The night was hosted by Australian TV personality David Whitehill, and featured performances from Karen Stokes, winner of *The Voice* in 2023.

"On behalf of all the management team, we congratulate all the finalists our sincere thanks to everyone who joined us for this memorable evening," GM Sales & Marketing Anthony Laver said. *MS*

CCL ups Virginia

CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) has begun year-round cruising from Virginia, with *Carnival Sunshine's* expanded program from Norfolk.

Around 150,000 guests per year will sail from Virginia.



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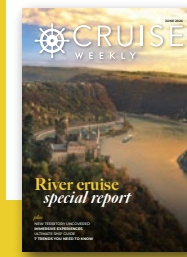
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Tauck celebrates 100 years in Italy

TOUR and cruise operator Tauck celebrated its 100-year anniversary last week, gathering in Florence with more than 700 employees, family members, and special guests.

The group converged on Italy from more than 30 countries, taking over 13 hotels across Florence from 03 to 06 Feb.

The gathering included general plenary meetings and focused breakout sessions, daily sightseeing excursions, gala evening events, and an array of voluntourism activities.

Attendees participated in two afternoons of volunteer work, contributing more than 1,400 hours of labour to projects around Florence.

Activities included restoration and beautification projects, an initiative designed to integrate the English language into educational programs offered



by Florence's museums, and art-themed projects that "upcycle" discarded items and employ marginalised members of the local community.

The tour operator also provided a generous grant to help restore the historic Madre Terra floor mosaic in the Florence Baptistery, which dates back to approximately 1200 AD.

Tauck recently announced the expansion of its river fleet, with two new ships for next year, set to launch on the Seine and Rhone

(CW 24 Oct). MS

Pictured are Sales and Marketing Director Shauna Sullivan Reilly; Managing Director David Clark; President Jeremy Palmer; National Account Manager Helen Eves; National Account Manager Jerry Pilgrim; Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Tombaugh; Reservations rep Sophie Cirina; Head of Customer Service Serisha Ramdhani; Reservations rep Samantha Bicknell; and SVP Global Sales/ Customer Service Steve Spivak.

Scenic WC hits Asia

SILVERSEA recently hosted two Contotempo World Cruise 2025 events during calls in Hoi An and Singapore.

The cruise line's Hoi An for Foodies shore excursion on 01 Feb saw passengers disembark *Silver Dawn* to board a rustic boat for a sunset cruise down the Thu Bon River.

Guests enjoyed local delicacies, champagne, and other regionally inspired drinks, before being dropped off at one of three restaurants of their choosing: Tok Bar and Restaurant, Dao Tien Restaurant, and the Cargo Club Cafe & Restaurant.

The following week, Silversea's guests enjoyed a bird's-eye view of Singapore, with private access to the SkyPark Observation Deck at Marina Bay Sands Singapore's CE LA VIE Singapore.



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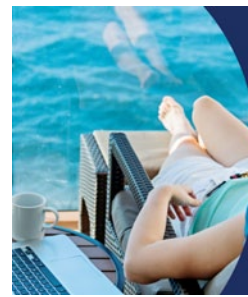
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CUNARD is inviting travellers to contribute holiday photos to a new physical exhibition by British photographer Mary McCartney ahead of the line's 185th anniversary this year.

The 'Sea of Glamour' exhibit will debut at Liverpool's Liver Building in May, featuring a huge collection of photos from the Cunard archives, including celebrities to sail with the line.

The exhibit will then transfer onto Cunard's fleet for a world tour onboard its ships.

The cruise line's call-out comes alongside a study showing the proliferation of digital images is creating a generational memory gap, with only 3% of people printing holiday photos to store in a physical album.

The survey revealed only half of adults believe their photos will be accessible in 50 years.

Celebrity dines out

CELEBRITY Cruises has been recognised by *Forbes'* Travel Guide's inaugural ratings for restaurants on cruise ships.

It was the only cruise line to have two restaurants awarded, with Fine Cut Steakhouse on both *Celebrity Ascent* and *Celebrity Apex* meeting the criteria for service excellence.

Additionally, four Celebrity ships earned an overall rating by *Forbes* this year.

Zaandam receives facelift

HOLLAND America Line's (HAL) *Zaandam* has set sail on her 'Amazon Explorer' Legendary Voyage with new onboard enhancements, including upgrades to the library, activity areas, spa, and more.

The enhancements were made during *Zaandam's* recent dry dock, ahead of her departure on the 27-day cruise.

Zaandam's Greenhouse Spa & Salon received significant updates during her dry dock, with the thermal suite completely rebuilt to include a new infrared sauna, Caldarium steam room, and experiential rain shower.

The spa's relaxation lounge now has a new beverage counter and new lounge seating.

Guests will see new, custom manicure stations in the salon, state-of-the-art pedicure thrones, as well as new salon chairs and shampoo wash basins.

These areas of the ship were also both made more accessible for guests with disabilities.

The Fitness Center received a new custom storage area, new bathrooms, and modernised finishes throughout the area.

Zaandam's library also underwent a facelift, with the space completely refurbished with a new, modern design and an updated book collection.

Several activity areas on board also received improvements, with Explorations Cafe transformed into a multi-use space, including new puzzle and games tables.

A new Art Studio was added on board, providing guests with a dedicated space to let their creative juices flow



during *Zaandam's* art & craft programming, including water colouring, painting, origami, crochet, and more.

Zaandam's Neptune Lounge, a private space for Neptune and Pinnacle suite guests, received new flooring in parts of the lounge, updates to the food catering area, a refreshed concierge desk with upgraded seating, and larger televisions for better viewing. *MS*

Cruise in Glasgow

A PROPOSAL for cruise ships to sail along the Clyde River directly into Glasgow has been presented to Scotland MPs by local port operators.

The idea for ships to bypass the existing port of Greenock is generating support among conservative Scottish politicians, who hope to boost the economy by increasing capacity for luxury cruise lines.

Under the plan, ships would use the King George V dock in Govan, which played host to a number of ships during the COVID-19 pandemic.

West Scotland Members of Scottish Parliament, Russell Findlay, pledged his support and said the idea would be "a huge boost" to Scotland's most populous city.

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