



Cruise Weekly today

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

Viking's Grand plan

VIKING has announced a new 85-day grand voyage departing Sydney in 2025.

The Australia, Asia & the Mediterranean voyage to Barcelona visits 50 ports, with overnight stays in nine cities.

Viking Venus will arrive in Barcelona on 15 May 2025, after setting sail from Sydney on 20 Feb 2025.

The itinerary is a combination of seven of Viking's popular ocean itineraries, including the 'Komodo & the Australian Coast' from Sydney to Bali.

Prices start from \$64,795 per person in Deluxe Veranda Stateroom, which includes \$2,000 flight credit per couple.

FCTG to relaunch Cruiseabout brand

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) is set to relaunch its Cruiseabout brand in Australia (**CW** breaking news), after it was axed more than five years ago (**CW** 22 Feb 2018).

The relaunch will incorporate a national retail shop network, a local call centre, and online booking functionality.

Cruiseabout will be primarily focused on the fly-cruise segment, offering cruise deals and exclusive rates, as well as exclusive product with key suppliers, all leveraged under the FCTG global supply network.

The Gold Coast-based call centre and online booking capabilities will launch toward the end of the year, with the retail shop network to be inaugurated in Sydney, before rolling out to other capital cities next year.

FCTG Chief Executive Officer Leisure Brands James Kavanagh

told **Cruise Weekly** reviving Cruiseabout will signal a distinctive offering in the market for Australian cruisers.

"We're able to offer a modernised and refreshed retail cruise brand to customers who have been missing out for years now," he said.

"Our model, with its national footprint, Australian based-call centre and online booking functionality all serviced by specialist cruise experts, will be the only one of its kind."

FCTG has also announced the re-establishment of a dedicated wholesale cruise division, to support the needs of Australian cruise customers.

Chief Executive Officer Supply Greg Parker told **CW** the wholesale offering will support the complex requirements of cruise packages and service the needs of FCTG brands, as well as

external independent agencies, via exclusive pricing of unique bundled packages.

Kavanagh noted the global cruise industry is thriving once more, rebounding faster than international departures and arrivals, which prompted FCTG to relaunch Cruiseabout, to greater service Australian cruisers.

"We know from research that cruise has a high return rate for travellers with around 85% of cruisers intent to cruise again and globally, there is approximately four million worth of brand-new cruise customers predicted to cruise over the next 18 months," he estimated.

"We want to be part of the cruise industry's growth story with our revived offering."

Recruiting for roles across the retail network, call centre, and wholesale division will commence shortly.

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A COUPLE has been caught on camera begging a cruise ship captain to stop, after they missed all aboard (**pictured**).

The couple was pleading and yelling out to the captain of MSC Cruises' *MSC Splendida*, which was calling in Bari, and visiting destinations like Mykonos, Istanbul, and Corfu.

However, their efforts were in vain and *Splendida* left without them, as have many vessels when careless passengers neglected the time of their departure.

The couple reportedly had spent around \$16,000 for the cruise, adding to their desperation to get onboard.

View the video of the couple's despair **HERE**.



True North rep

TODAY The Brave is now representing Australian expedition cruise line True North, and will be handling all media requests for the cruise line moving forward.

True North explores destinations such as West Papua, the Buccaneer Archipelago, Montgomery Reef, and more.

Bratton new role at Ponant



PONANT has appointed Sarina Bratton (**pictured**) as Senior Strategic Advisor and Honorary Chair Asia Pacific from her former position as Executive Chair.

Chief Executive Officer Herve Gastinel has announced the significant new role for Bratton, which will see the two work closely on strategic worldwide opportunities including mergers and acquisitions, market intelligence, and development.

"In working closely with Sarina, I have the utmost respect for her as a person and as a professional, Gastinel said.

"She leads by example, listens intently, acts with integrity and puts a strong emphasis on supporting everyone around her.

"The growth of Asia Pacific has had a profound effect on the accelerated growth of the company, since the acquisition by Artemis in 2015."

Ponant's APAC revenue was less than 1% when Bratton commenced with the cruise line 10 years ago, establishing the

cruise line's structure in Australia. APAC revenue now represents 20%, and Ponant now has 13 ships, up from four, with a 14th in development.

Bratton said her long-term commitment to the luxury expedition sector was a natural fit with Ponant from the outset.

"It has been personally rewarding to see the company grow, our people grow, and the meaningful contribution our operation brings to Australia and Australians," she said.

Seabourn 2025

SEABOURN Cruise Line has unveiled its 2025 itineraries, to destinations including Alaska, Canada, and New England.

The cruise line's *Seabourn Quest* and *Seabourn Sojourn* will take guests on 24 unique sailing experiences to natural wonders between May and Nov 2025.

Quest will sail to Alaska, allowing guests to immerse themselves and experience North America's northwest extremity in a myriad of ways.

Optional Ventures by Seabourn excursions allow guests to experience Zodiac cruising in the Hubbard Glacier, kayaking among wildlife in the Inian Islands, bear viewing in Anan Creek, and more.

Sojourn will visit quaint, French colonial towns and major urban cities in Canada and New England on the other side of the continent, including Boston, Halifax, Montreal, and New York City, experiencing natural splendours and colourful local cultures.

The Chat with Jenny
A Conversation with **Anne Rogers**
Tour Designer & Business Consultant
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