



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Cruise Lines International Association**.

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CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) memberships for next year are now open, offering exclusive training, opportunities, and resources to help drive professional development.

A CLIA membership will help strengthen your cruise selling skills and earn recognition as a trusted specialist advisor.

CLIA members can also expand their cruise knowledge and skills through the hundreds of online courses by attending live and virtual events - for more information, see **page 4**.

Cruise a “big winner”

MORE Australians than ever are embracing cruise, according to Luxury Escapes, with Chief Executive Officer & co-founder Adam Schwab describing the sector as one of the “big winners” of its Travel Trends 2024 survey.

Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) are open to exploring a cruise next year, while the average age of a passenger also continues to fall, currently sitting at 47 compared to 49 seven years ago.

“Testimony to the growing popularity of cruise travel, more than 70 ships will visit Australia throughout the 2023-24 cruise season,” the report read.

“Cruise providers are responding to the demand with longer, more bespoke offerings, including the family-focused Disney, and the ultra-extravagant, adults-only Virgin Voyages.”

The report suggested one of

the reasons travellers are turning to cruise is because of some of the key reasons for respondents booking travel to begin with, including experiencing new things, relaxing and unwinding, and spending time with their extended family.

Luxury Escapes is also expecting to see cruisers get more adventurous and head farther ashore next year, on longer, more bespoke itineraries.

Senior Partnership & Contracting Manager Cruise Jules Higgins believes Australia has become one of the most exciting cruise regions in the world.

“This year we are gearing up for a bumper cruise season...our clients are spoilt for choice..

“We also expect to see a rise in potential new-to-cruise travellers committed to making travel decisions based on environmental impacts,” she added. *MS*

Resilient Lady arrives in Sydney

VIRGIN Voyages made a huge splash in Sydney Harbour yesterday with the afternoon arrival of its *Resilient Lady*.

Believed to be the newest cruise ship ever to operate in Australian waters, the ship sailed through Sydney Heads to a spectacular welcome including an appearance atop the Sydney Harbour Bridge by Virgin founder Richard Branson and Nirmal Saverimuttu, the Australian Chief Executive Officer of Virgin Voyages.

Branson then scaled the Harbour Bridge in an exclusive, Virgin Voyages takeover of the iconic Sydney experience.

Today industry guests will be welcomed on board for inspections and other events.

More from Virgin on **page 3** and in **Cruise Weekly** later in the week.

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PRINCESS Cruises is pitching a new partnership, collaborating with Goodstock, the farm-to-table butchery pioneered by former professional baseball player Nolan Ryan.

The new partnership will deliver prime Black Angus beef in *Regal Princess'* main dining rooms and its Crown Grill.

"We are honoured to welcome a true sports and ranching legend, Nolan Ryan, into our Princess Cruises family," Vice President Food & Beverage Sami Cohen said.

"Goodstock by Nolan Ryan Angus beef represents a distinctive, all-American addition to our food and beverage portfolio, and we are excited to offer our guests a taste of his passion".

Queen of Victoria

CUNARD Line's *Queen Elizabeth* arrived in Melbourne on Sun, making the first of the ship's seven calls to the city during its 2023/24 season.

Queen Elizabeth stayed overnight in Melbourne, before departing for Dunedin the next night.

The ship will home port in Melbourne and Sydney for the duration of her season Down Under, sailing 13 Australian itineraries in total, before heading to Japan on 13 Mar.

Uniworld celebrates Bordeaux



LAST night a momentous investiture took place courtesy of Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, with *Cruise Weekly's* own Bruce Piper inducted into the Commanderie de Bordeaux in Australia at Rockpool Bar & Grill.

The not-so-secret society was established a decade ago by former Atout France chief Patrick Benhamou, with Piper joining a rare echelon of elites in the group, including Uniworld Managing Director Alice Ager and of course, Benhamou himself.

Senior travel industry figures were present for the arcane ritual, which also saw Uniworld's Jen Pagett thank its key industry

partners for a stellar year.

As well as expanding the ranks of the travel industry illuminati, the event also celebrated Uniworld's *Bon Voyage*, which sails the waterways of Bordeaux.

The event was curated by Benhamou in impeccable style under his newly established Show 7 Events business.

Piper, Ager, and Benhamou are **pictured** in their Commanderie de Bordeaux robes, celebrating their affiliation with the global society devoted to the vineyards of the region. *BP*

Atlas' world record

ATLAS Ocean Voyages set a record booking week during its Black Fri sale, owing to its compelling "Second Guest Sails Free" promotion.

President & Chief Executive Officer James Rodriguez said the success of the sale reflects the trust the cruise line's travel advisors have in it.

Heritage offers

HERITAGE Line has launched two new unique luxury "Early Bird Crusade" cruise offers for its upcoming 2024 and 2025 sailing seasons.

Guests booking a seven-night Lower Mekong voyage to sail between Jun and Sep in either 2024 or 2025 can save US\$100 per person off the cruise fare and enjoy a US\$100 onboard credit to spend on board, as well as 100 minutes of complimentary treatments in the serene onboard spa.

Meanwhile, guests booking the seven-night Lower Mekong journey between Saigon and Siem Reap or its adventurous new three-night Upper Mekong sailing between Luang Prabang and Huay Xai can extend their experience with a sensational 25% discount off the cruise line's popular one- and two-night sailings in Vietnam's Halong Bay or Lan Ha Bay.

Guests can also take advantage of a complimentary cabin upgrade if available at the time of check-in.



The Chat with Jenny Travel Daily

A conversation with Wendy Wu
Wendy Wu Tours

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Ignite Travel welcomes *Resilient Lady*

THE anticipation of Virgin Voyages' arrival into Sydney Harbour yesterday was so strong at Ignite Travel Group the company chartered a superyacht to watch *Resilient Lady* appear on the horizon before majestically sailing through Sydney Heads.

A lucky group of cruise professionals including representatives of Cruise Lines International Association, Travel the World, and more, witnessed the arrival aboard *Ghost 2*, and were joined on the water by human headline Richard Branson, who also greeted the ship from a gorgeous Italian speedboat.

The inaugural Australian season for Virgin is the culmination of years of work for the Ignite team, which has sold more than 15,500 passengers on the season including more than 700 on sectors of the repositioning cruise from Athens to Sydney.

Speaking aboard *Ghost 2* yesterday, Ignite Chief Executive Officer Ryan Thomas described how the deal was done 18 months ago, just after Australia's borders opened.

Thomas, MyCruises GM Michael Middleton, and Ignite founder Randall Deer, met with the Virgin team in Miami, including VP of Sales Shane Riley, who was also aboard yesterday.

"Within two days we had a deal, within two weeks we were in market; it's been the easiest partnership we've ever had," Thomas said.

The MyCruises team had significant input into the itinerary, which saw the ship stop in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, "which was critical to capturing the appeal to a wider audience in Australia, including the new to cruise market", Middleton added.

MyCruises focused on its commitment to providing unparalleled cruise packages with exclusive bonus value, with the team saying the initiative had further cemented the FCTG-owned brand as "the go-to-choice for people seeking exceptional cruise holidays".

Riley noted Ignite has also helped shape next year's 2024/25 season with special opportunities to sail from Europe to Australia.

"Looking forward, we can't

wait to keep the partnership growing as Virgin Voyages looks to MyCruises as one of its key

source partners," Riley said.

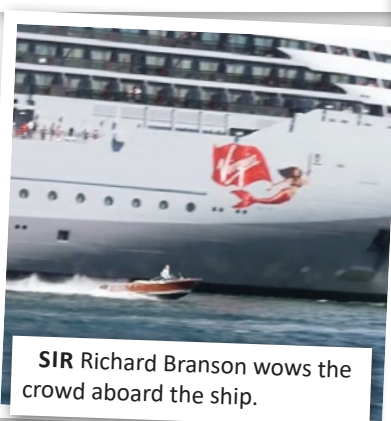
These photos were taken from aboard the superyacht yesterday.



SHARON Hando, Travel the World, with Ignite Travel Group founder Randall Deer.



VIRGIN Voyages VP of International Sales & Marketing, Shane Riley, with Flight Centre Travel Group's Joell Ogilvie.



SIR Richard Branson wows the crowd aboard the ship.





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“

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Carrie Stalbow, Carrie on Cruising, NSW

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