



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Galveston record

**THE** Port of Galveston set a record last week, welcoming its 1.5 millionth cruise passenger of the year.

The mark breaks Galveston's previous record, set last year, and sets it on track to reach more than 1.6 million passengers by the end of 2024.

A family aboard Disney Cruise Line's recent four-night cruise on *Disney Magic* saw the destination break its record, with Galveston Wharves Port Director & Chief Executive Officer Rodger Rees on hand to congratulate the milestone passengers.

Galveston's growing popularity as a homeport is seeing newer and larger ships sail to more destinations.

The port will open its fourth cruise terminal in Nov 2025, a US\$156m complex, which will include on-site parking.

"The port's continued growth as a homeport is great news for avid cruise travellers, for local people who work in cruise-related jobs, and for the entities that benefit economically, including suppliers, maritime services, hotels, restaurants, shops and other businesses," Rodger Rees enthused.

## Half Moon Cay's glow-up



**CARNIVAL** Corporation's private island Half Moon Cay is being renamed 'RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay', as the company prepares to enhance the destination.

The expansion will provide the opportunity for more guests to visit the destination, which is called by Carnival Cruise Line (CCL) and Holland America Line.

The two brands are partnering on the enhancements to the Bahamian destination, which will include an expanded beachfront experience, lunch venues, a variety of bars, and other features which will reinforce RelaxAway's natural beauty.

A newly-constructed pier on RelaxAway's north shore will allow ships to dock, including Carnival's Excel-class vessels, which will be able to visit the island for the first time.

The newly developed north shore will feature two lunch

venues and a variety of island-themed bars.

Guests will also arrive at new welcome plazas on the island's south shore, with the existing development to receive a refreshing touch-up, a new beach club, an updated lunch venue, and renovated facilities.

There will also be a new tram service, making getting around easy and convenient.

Lounging areas will be expanded, with cabanas added, and a new shore excursion pier on the north side will connect guests with recreational activities.

The destination's enhancements will begin by summer 2026, and continue through to the end of the year, with further details to be shared in the coming months.

CCL President Christine Duffy said many of her line's itineraries in 2026 and beyond will feature a call to RelaxAway. *MS*

### Virgin up 300%

**VIRGIN** Voyages has hit global record sales and triple-digit revenue growth following the Black Friday period.

The cruise line witnessed a more than 300% increase in revenue from the same period last year, and equally, a 300% increase in bookings compared to the same period last year.

This year's Black Friday was the single highest booking day in Virgin's history, the cruise line said.

The brand is experiencing a more than 60% increase in overall revenue growth versus 2023, with 2025 projected to be up 50% again on 2024's record performance.

This news comes as a favourable precursor for the much-anticipated wave season, with projections set to surpass any previous records.

CEO Nirmal Saverimuttu said Virgin could not have achieved the success it has without the aid of travel advisors.

"We are so grateful for the support that we're seeing from our loyal customers and travel agent community and their passion for the award-winning, kid-free experiences we have created and built from scratch together," he said.

In Feb, Virgin scrapped its second season in Australia (**CW** 27 Feb) - **CW** has reached out to the cruise line for comment on its local sales figures.



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## New Atlas package

A **NEW** epicurean cruise journey in the Adriatic in 2026, sailing with Atlas Ocean Voyages, has been packaged by Cruise Traveller.

The cuisine-themed voyage from Rome to Venice is featured in Atlas' recently launched expeditions program for 2026.

'Eternal Cities and Island Dreams' cruises for 16 nights, beginning 06 Sep 2026, with two nights in a hotel in the Italian capital.

Guests then board Atlas' expedition yacht *World Traveller* (pictured) for a 14-night voyage.

The itinerary takes in Capri, the Amalfi Coast, Lipari, Corfu in Greece, and the fjord town of Kotor in Montenegro.

The journey also drops in on towns and islands along the Adriatic Coast in Croatia and Slovenia such as Split, Dubrovnik, Vis, Hvar, Opatija, and Piran.

The expedition includes onboard culinary demonstrations, wine tastings, a gourmet Jospet Grill dining experience, and much more.

The package is available from \$11,985pp twin share, in an Oceanview stateroom, with flights not included.

Solo fares in an Oceanview stateroom are from \$17,655 per person, for those booking by 30 Dec.



## Celestyal first Dubai call



**CELESTYAL** Cruises has marked its maiden call in the United Arab Emirates (pictured) with a dhow escort, a plaque exchange, and a star-studded party.

The cruise line's *Celestyal Journey* arrived on Mon, with a number of traditional dhows guiding the ship into port.

Local dignitaries, influencers, and travel advisor partners were then invited on board for an evening of entertainment and celebrations, featuring special guests Tinie and DJ Charlesy.

The call marked the start of Celestyal's seven-day 'Desert Days' itinerary, sailing round trip from Dubai, and visiting Khasab, Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi, Doha, and Bahrain.

The cruise line's inaugural Persian Gulf season voyages until Mar, before returning in Nov for a second winter season.

*Celestyal Discovery* will join *Journey* in the region at the end of next year, home porting in Abu Dhabi, and offering three-night round trip long weekend 'Iconic Arabia' cruises, calling at Doha and Sir Bani Yas.

There will also be a four-night

midweek 'Iconic Arabia' cruise which will call at Fujairah, Muscat, and Khasab.

"Today marks a significant milestone in our history, as we proudly call in Dubai for our first season," Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett said.

"The dhow escort into port was a magical moment and the perfect way to officially start our long-term relationship with this captivating destination.

"We would like to thank our partners in the region and look forward to a successful first season and beyond."

Celestyal's inaugural Persian Gulf season also includes a memorandum of understanding with Visit Qatar, as *Journey* also home ports in the peninsular country (CW 14 Nov).

The season began with two specially themed F1 voyages, which will take place during the Qatar and Abu Dhabi grand prix (CW 11 Nov).

Celestyal also hosted a number of Aussie agents on the inaugural cruise, during which they had the chance to meet British former F1 driver, David Coulthard. MS

## A&K annual survey

**ABERCROMBIE & Kent** (A&K) is seeking feedback as part of its annual travel advisor survey, which this year will also include Crystal.

The survey will attempt to capture how the brands are performing in the market, what they can be doing better, and how they can assist agents to grow their business - **CLICK HERE** to complete the survey.



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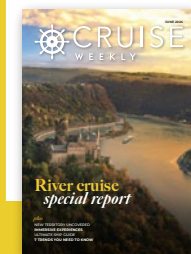
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### Year in Review here

*CRUISE Weekly's* sister title *Travel Daily* has just unveiled its latest *Year in Review* special report, looking back on the major news that broke during the year - and how the industry has evolved.

The *Year in Review* is a jam-packed issue, including analyses, predictions, and features, looking at the hottest travel trends and the current state of the industry.

Off the back of their presentation at *TD's* new event Travel24 this year, Accenture analysts Michelle Newton and Victoria Loutas discuss holiday hacking, 'wellcations', responsible tourism and other travel trends industry professionals should know.

The report also looks into which ASX-listed travel companies succeeded and struggled - [CLICK HERE](#) to read.

## Mitsui christens new ship



**MITSUI OSK Lines** has marked the debut of *Mitsui Ocean Fuji*, formerly *Seabourn Odyssey* (**CW** 26 Sep), with the Headmaster Designate of Ikenobo school, Senko Ikenobo, naming the ship.

The christening event was held on board *Ocean Fuji* at the Tokyo Int'l Cruise Terminal, with the cruise line's President Tsunemichi Mukai and the ship's Captain Kim Roger Carlson thanking everyone in attendance for their support.

*Ocean Fuji's* sister ship *Nippon Maru* was also in port to greet the newly christened vessel (**pictured**), with guests on both ships waving flags as the pair

exchanged three-horn salutes.

"Senko Ikenobo is highly admired for her dedication and passion for meticulous ikebana artistry in Japan, making her the perfect choice to name *Mitsui Ocean Fuji*," Mukai said.

"Guests will enjoy beautiful encounters with Japan and an authentically and carefully crafted cruise experience blending our distinct Japanese culture with inspiring and unique ways to value time and space."

*Ocean Fuji* is sailing a series of debut cruises over the next two months, including a special New Year's sailing. *MS*

### CLIA welcomes 100

**CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA)** saw 100 new travel agent members join its ranks following a workshop earlier this week at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Cruise Terminal.

Led by CLIA Head of International Training & Development Peter Kollar, the full-day event provided agents with insight into the latest developments within the global cruise industry and the opportunities it presents within Asian markets.

"This workshop demonstrates the growing interest in cruising among Hong Kong travel agents," Kollar said.

The training initiative was jointly organised by CLIA, the Hong Kong Travel Agent Owners Association, and Worldwide Cruise Terminals, with the support of Norwegian Cruise Line.

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**A 132-YEAR-OLD** message in a bottle has been uncovered at a Scottish lighthouse.

The bottle was found at the Corsewall Lighthouse, located at Corsewall Point.

The find was discovered by an engineer conducting an inspection at the lighthouse, which itself is more than 200 years old.

The bottle was hidden inside the wall of the lighthouse, with the inspection team carefully removing the cork, which was stuck in place, and had to be unfastened using a drill.

Inside was a note dating back to Sep 1892, bearing the names of three engineers who had installed the light at the top of the lighthouse, as well as the names of three lighthouse keepers.

The engineer said he and his team would put the bottle back into its hiding place along with a message of their own.

## Aranui celebrates 40 years



**ARANUI** Cruises has celebrated 40 years of sailing to the Marquesas Islands with a special birthday cruise.

Guests were treated to a series of birthday treats on board the cruise, including unique souvenirs, special entertainment from local bands, and a dazzling Polynesian night at Nuku Hiva complete with a Marquesan show, fireworks (pictured), a local feast, and an official ceremony, including partners and dignitaries.

All guests who cruised this year enjoyed birthday celebrations and received limited-edition gifts during a Polynesian-themed night.

Aranui Cruises Australia Representative Laurent Wong

said the birthday sailing capped off an exciting year for the line.

"It is an incredible achievement to notch up 40 years of service for all of us at Aranui.

"Serving the communities of the Marquesas Islands with our ongoing cargo deliveries, while providing countless incredible memories for our guests and crew over the years, has truly been the experience of a lifetime and we can't help but feel incredibly proud and grateful."

Aranui also worked with Australia-based film maker Guido Pezimenti to create a short film that captures the connection between the cruise line and the destination - view **HERE**. MS

## Unforgettable news

**UNFORGETTABLE** Croatia has reported a marked increase in bookings through the trade this year.

The record-breaking season for the luxury small-ship operator saw almost a quarter (24%) more bookings through partners compared to last year.

More than 1,300 guests booked via an agent, as Unforgettable Croatia marked the conclusion of its May-Oct sailing season.

Revenue and bookings were both up almost 50% from Australia for the season, with local travellers now accounting for 15% of all guests on board.

The upswing in local bookings coincided with the arrival of European Travel Specialist Aurore Bertomeu earlier this year, who is based in Melbourne.

"We'd like to thank agents for all their support in achieving this significant increase in bookings," Chief Commercial Officer Graham Carter said.

"We can't wait to see how our relationships develop in 2025 and beyond," he said.

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