



Cruise Weekly today

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

APT Seabourn pact

APT'S new partnership with Seabourn Cruise Line (**CW 22 Feb**) is expanding in Antarctica, with guests now able to book a 10-night charter cruise aboard *Seabourn Venture*.

There is also a 15-day Antarctic Voyage in early 2026, which allows cruisers to explore Buenos Aires before flying to the embarkation part of Ushuaia.

APT Exotics Product Manager Kelly D'Aucourt said the partnership with Seabourn brings a whole new elevation of luxury to cruising Antarctica for its passengers.

"Guests can expect exceptional dining experiences with lavish buffets," she said.

Uniworld announces new Super Ship

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruise Collection has announced its new 'Super Ship' *Emilie* will debut in 2026.

The vessel will set sail in Europe, and will be inspired by Austrian painter Gustav Klimt, named after his life companion, fashion designer Emilie Louise Floge.

She joins other new Super Ships including *Victoria* which will debut on the Rhine and Moselle in 2024, and *Elisabeth*, which will debut on the Rhine next year.

"We're thrilled to introduce a brand-new ship to our fleet in 2026, just in time to celebrate Uniworld's 50th anniversary," the cruise line President & Chief Executive Officer Ellen Bettridge (**pictured**) said.

"Our commitment to excellence is unwavering, and this outstanding new vessel reaffirms our dedication to providing the best and most luxurious ships on



the rivers.

"We believe in delivering the highest level of quality to our guests, and our portfolio truly embodies the best of the best in the market."

Uniworld has added five other Super Ships to its fleet since 2020, including the *Mekong Jewel* on the Mekong in Vietnam and Cambodia; *Aria Amazon* on the

Maranon and Ucayali rivers in Peru; *Sao Gabriel* on the Douro in Portugal; *La Venezia* on the Venetian Lagoon; and *Sphinx* on the Nile in Egypt.

Travellers can currently enjoy early bird savings of 10% on all of Uniworld's 2025 river cruises.

Book and pay by 31 Mar to save 10% from \$4,859 per person - for more details, **CLICK HERE**. *MS*

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AmaWaterways opens Aussie call centre

AMAWATERWAYS has opened its reservations office for Australia, offering local travel advisors easy access to guest relations and more.

The team, led by Head of Reservations Ian Lyne, recently completed an intensive five weeks of training, and is now operating 8:00am to 5:00pm Mon to Fri, reachable at 1800 867 126.

AmaWaterways has paid particular attention to localising aspects of its operations that will most benefit Australian advisors, which includes offering Australians more 14-night cruise itineraries, prices in AUD, a new website, soon-to-be-released brochures, and lucrative commercial arrangements with trade partners.

Reservations and enquiries have come from all corners of Australia, with Sydney delivering a high proportion to date.



AmaWaterways' longer 14-night cruises, such as its 'Magnificent Europe' itinerary, are proving popular, as is Asia, with an influx of inquiries and reservations taken for its Mekong cruises.

"We're dedicated to becoming one of the easiest, friendliest and most knowledgeable teams in this market," Lyne said.

"The team has made incredible progress throughout their training, but what's most

satisfying is the exceptionally positive welcome we've received from our wonderful trade partners," he added.

AmaWaterways recently received investment from a new backer, L Catterton, which entered into a definitive agreement to acquire a significant stake in the cruise line, symbolically ending APT's long-term capitalisation of it (CW 07 Mar). MS

New ATIA summit

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line VP & MD Ben Angell will speak at the Australian Travel Industry Association's (ATIA) 'Beyond Borders' travel summit.

The inaugural meeting, which will take place in Sydney on 25 Oct, will be the day before the National Travel Industry Awards, which will also return to the NSW capital.

Other confirmed speakers include Globus family of brands MD Gai Tyrell, Flight Centre Travel Group CEO Graham Turner, CTM board member Laura Ruffles, and The Travel Corporation MD Touring Brands Toni Ambler.

Beyond Borders will be hosted by ATIA Director of Membership & Industry Richard Taylor, as well as Destination Webinars founder Charlie Trevena and Travel Agent Achievers' Roslyn Ranse.





VIKING

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See website for T&Cs



PRINCESS Cruises kicked off its year in style last week, taking a number of trade partners to the Sydney Swans' home opener against the Melbourne Demons.

In Dec Princess announced it had become the official cruise line partner of the Swans for the next two seasons (**CW** 13 Dec 2023), and the collaboration got off to a winning start, with Sydney flying away with the game in the last quarter to win 86-64.

Fans at the Sydney Cricket Ground were shown Princess ads throughout the stadium, which reminded the crowd of the new partners' joint mission: "cruising to victory".



Captain Cook sale

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises Fiji is offering early bird savings on its expeditions to Tonga and Samoa on board its new ship *Caledonian Sky*.

The cruises are set to depart in Aug 2024 and Mar 2025, with savings of up to 20%, plus a \$2,000pp travel credit.

The voyages have been timed to align with the annual humpback whale migration.

Virtuoso cruise sales up



VIRTUOSO'S sales for its preferred cruise network were up 60.4% last year, according to the network's market trends presentation at its 2024 Forum.

Cruise emerged as a forerunner for Virtuoso, beating out touring (21%), destination management (17%), and hotels (15%).

'Ocean luxury' and 'ocean premium' cruises were Virtuoso's best performers, up 67% and 66% year-over-year respectively.

'River' also performed well, up 52%, while 'contemporary' as up 43% and 'expedition' 12%.

The only cruise sector to decline in sales YOY was 'small ships', which was down 13% compared to 2022.

Future cruise sales, which tracks trading one and two years out, were up 51% in 2023 when compared to the prior year.

Cruise also stacked up well against the rest of the travel industry, with 25% of travellers interested in ocean cruise in the next two years.

MEANWHILE, Virtuoso also honoured a number of its cruise members and partners in its regional awards at its Forum.

Travel Associates was Virtuoso's top cruise producer of the year, recording the highest overall

network sales out of all of its members, while Viking was recognised as the most sold cruise partner.

The annual cruise growth awards went to Spencer Travel (member) and Silversea (partner), while Regent Seven Seas Cruises was also named Virtuoso's Most Engaged partner. **MS**

Pictured: the Virtuoso team takes the stage at the Forum.

Croisi in Belgium

CROISIEUROPE has launched a brand-new hotel barge cruise through Belgium's little-known waterways, the line's first voyage of its kind outside France.

The six-night cruise will take in beautiful towns, with passengers to enjoy a wide range of architectural and cultural discoveries.

The cruise, which launches in Apr 2025, will operate between Ghent and Halle, and visit Bruges, Oudenaarde, Perennes-lez-Antoing, Mons, Brussels, as well as Strepv-Thieu, where passengers will traverse the second-largest boat lift in the world.

Seabourn new CMO

SEABOURN Cruise Line has named Mike Fulkerson Chief Marketing Officer, which will see him responsible for directing the company's brand cultivation, performance evaluation, and more.

Fulkerson has more than two decades of experience in hospitality, wellness, and consumer marketing, and will report directly to President Natalya Leahy.

He was most recently Chief Marketing Officer for spa company Canyon Ranch, where he led its marketing strategy and development.

Prior to that he worked for Marriott International.

Viking China growth

VIKING is charting a big plan for inbound Chinese cruise tourism, fuelled by visa-free policies being introduced by the country.

The cruise line is planning to introduce multiple inbound cruise routes for foreign visitors, according to state-owned newspaper *China Daily*.

The country has been adopting a visa-free policy for a number of countries recently, with Viking planning to introduce four inbound routes of 10-20 days.

The voyages will be operated by China Merchants-Yidun, the country's first locally flagged luxury ocean cruise ship.

The routes will stop at cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, as well as smaller cities such as Fuzhou.