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Monday 13th May 2024

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest industry news plus a cover wrap by **Virgin Voyages**.

APT back to Egypt

APT has confirmed it is proceeding with plans to build a new river cruise ship which will sail the Nile River in Egypt.

The company said more details on this project will be provided in coming months.

In addition, sister brand Travelmarvel will welcome a new ship in Europe modelled on its existing *Polaris*, *Capella* and *Vega* river ships, featuring capacity for 182 travellers.

Due to enter service in 2026, this new ship will boost capacity on the Rhine, Main and Danube, and will feature facilities such as electronic slide-down windows.

Ama acts to meet off-peak demand

EXCLUSIVE

GROWING demand for river cruising during shoulder seasons has led AmaWaterways to boost European departures outside the peak summer months of Mar, Apr, Nov and Dec.

Amid record-breaking sales volumes already for the year-to-date, the river cruise brand has now reported seeing triple-digit year-on-year increases for departures in Mar and Apr.

This demand led it to introduce new Rhine and Danube sailings in Feb 2024, with the line repeating the move in Feb next year.

At the other end of the year, the appetite for Ama's 'A Taste of Christmas Markets' themed cruises has seen the line extend these departures from mid-Nov to the new year.

AmaWaterways Managing Director Australia/NZ, Steve Richards, told **Cruise Weekly**



that even though the line's local office only opened two months ago, almost 70% of the bookings taken have been for off-peak or shoulder season departures.

"The main reason is [because] it's less crowded," Richards said.

"You don't have the European domestic tourists and their school holidays to compete with.

"It's also a lot cooler than the peak summer months.

"Traditionally, the Christmas Markets season only lasted a few weeks, however, with growing popularity, many iconic Christmas Markets have announced earlier opening dates starting mid-Nov.

"[This is] allowing the

introduction of 'A Taste of Christmas Markets' cruises during which guests will enjoy an early start to the festive season on beautifully decorated ships, and visits to one or two Christmas markets," he added.

Richards said the current hottest tickets, according to its sales figures, include Mar and Apr 2025 for cruises on the Rhine and Danube, along with Oct-Dec sailings on the Mekong. *ML*

Brilliant bookings

VIRGIN Voyages is introducing 'LetsGoBook', a new booking tool rewarding agents for referrals to the line.

Each agent receives their own dedicated link to send to clients, ensuring commission is paid regardless of which itinerary their clients choose.

More on today's **cover page**.



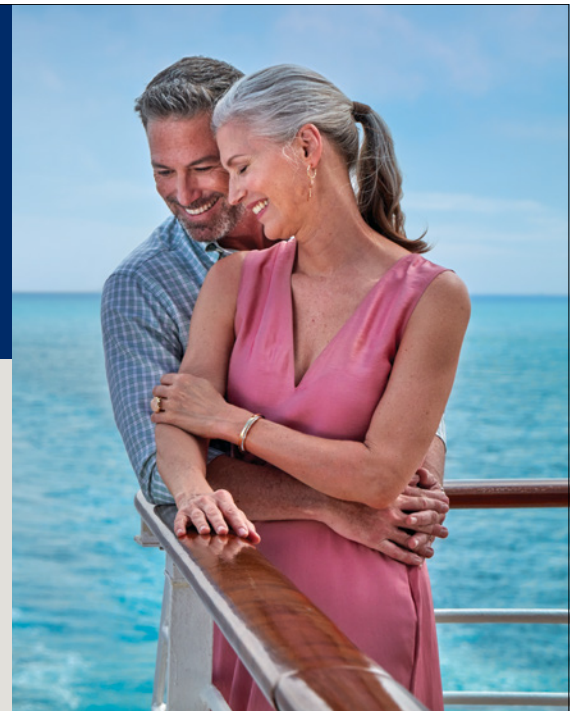
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New Azamara CEO

DONDRA Ritzenthaler has taken the helm as Azamara's new Chief Executive, following the departure of Carol Cabezas in Nov (CW 08 Nov 2023).

Ritzenthaler moves into the top job at Azamara having served as an executive with Celebrity Cruises for more than 20 years.

Bringing more than four decades in cruising to her new role, she has become known for her passion, positivity and dedication to travel partners, during which time she pioneered several initiatives to promote agents.

Ritzenthaler has proven success in sales and well-established relationships with trade partners, and is poised to lead the cruise line "into a new era of expansion and excellence", according to an Azamara statement.

Princess shines on Europe

PRINCESS Cruises has announced its 2026 Europe program, which will be its biggest-ever in the continent.

Five Princess ships will sail in the region, including the new *Sun Princess* (pictured), in a season which will also feature the line's total solar eclipse cruise.

Other highlights of the season will see the cruise line return to Copenhagen after six years, with the 2,670-guest *Sapphire Princess* to provide 12-night Northern Europe itineraries.

Princess has also introduced new round-trip Rome itineraries, with *Sun* to sail seven-, 14- and 21-night Mediterranean voyages departing from the nearby coastal town of Civitavecchia.

Sapphire and *Enchanted Princess* will also offer Mediterranean itineraries round trip from Civitavecchia, ranging from five to 14 nights.



Princess is set to sail on a record-breaking 222 cruises in total from Mar through Nov 2026, with 59 unique itineraries visiting 101 destinations across 29 countries, ranging from five to 42 nights.

"There's incredible demand for European vacations and we don't see that slowing down anytime soon," Chief Commercial Officer Terry Thornton said.

"Guests should book early as our best pricing will be when these cruises first go on sale.

"Our 2026 season delivers the best of Europe with incredible voyages visiting a mix of marquee ports, as well as smaller, off-the-beaten-path spots." *MS*



SOME people love their boat and want you to know it.

A California man has struck back against a city's orders to hide his vessel by painting a mural of it on his fence.

The man said he received a letter from the city of Seaside last year ordering him to hide the boat from the view of the street by building a six-foot fence in front of it.

Insisting he is not a rule-breaker, the man proceeded to build the fence, following which he had a mural of the boat painted on it (pictured).



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14-DAY INDONESIA & AUSTRALIA:
Lombok, Komodo & GREAT BARRIER REEF
FROM BALI (BENOA)
NORWEGIAN SUN | 9 APR 2025



Pura Ulun Danu Beratan, Bali

Bali (Benoa), Lembar (Lombok), Komodo, Darwin, Cooktown, Townsville, Airlie Beach, Port Douglas, Cairns

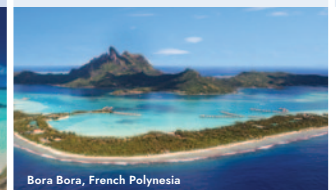
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FROM CAIRNS
NORWEGIAN SUN | APR & AUG 2025



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Cairns, Airlie Beach, Townsville, Noumea, Lifou, Port Vila, Mystery Island, Dravuni, Suva, Lautoka

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New Le Boat base

SELF-PILOTED boat rental company Le Boat has unveiled its new fleet of eight premier Horizon Cruisers, which are now based at the company's new terminal in Canada.

Le Boat's global executive team were on hand this past weekend to inaugurate the new terminal with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"Our customers have been asking when we will be offering luxury boat rental vacations on this National Historic site [so] we are excited to give them what they have been waiting for," said Le Boat Head of Canada Operations, Lisa McLean.

The new base is located at the mouth of the Trent-Severn waterway at Horseshoe Bay Marina, with guests able to choose from a range of suggested cruising routes in and around Peterborough Ontario, northeast of Toronto.

Boats range in size from two- to four-bedrooms, with prices starting from CAD\$2,800 (A\$3,101) for a seven-night rental sleeping up to five.

New cats coming to Fiji



TWO new catamarans designed for efficient resort transfers and daytime snorkelling and cruising excursions are on their way to Fiji's South Sea Cruises Group.

The two new vessels (render **pictured** above) will measure just short of 15 metres and be able to carry up to 40 guests at a cruising speed of between 22-26 knots.

Due to enter service in 2025, the two purpose-built catamarans have been designed in New Zealand by Noah Thompson Design and are now under construction in Fiji by local company Marine Solutions.

Travellers booking half-day reef sightseeing tours on the new

vessels will be able to enjoy an inflatable water slide and the opportunity to swim and snorkel at some untouched Fijian reefs.

"These purpose-built vessels to be operated under our new South Sea Cats brand will be a first of a kind for Fiji and will be available to book from early 2025," said South Sea Cruises Group CEO, Brad Rutherford.

Backed by the new capacity, South Sea Cruises will be able to introduce a new morning transfer between Denarau Marina to resorts on both Tokoriki and Matamanoa Islands, along with an evening transfer to Malolo and Castaway Islands. *ML*

Nova in Alaska

SILVERSEA has kicked off its 2024 Alaska season, with its newest ship *Silver Nova* arriving in the US northwest over the weekend.

The luxury line is scheduled to operate 18 seven-night voyages between Anchorage and Seward during its maiden Alaska season.

Silver Nova's arrival also marks the debut of the line's SALT culinary program in the region, which connects guests to the local culinary scene with dishes such as Alaskan Salmon Pie, the SALT Lab Cooking Class and the SALT Chef's Table.

True North deals

LAST-MINUTE discounts are now available on a selection of Kimberley expeditions aboard True North's pair of vessels.

On *True North II*, a 25 May departure of the 'Kimberley Ultimate' sailing has been slashed by over \$5,300ppts.

In addition, two *True North* Ocean Class cabins on the 'Kimberley Snapshot', also on 25 May, is now \$3,700 cheaper.

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