



Cruise Weekly today

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

MSC loyalty refresh

MSC Cruises has refreshed its MSC Voyages Club loyalty program, and introduced a new top Blue Diamond tier. The reinvigorated scheme offers easier access to discounts, extended validity from three to five years, enhanced rewards across all levels, as well as a new top tier loyalty status.

The new Blue Diamond tier will offer guests exclusive benefits, including check-in via the MSC Yacht Club desk, a free wi-fi package, My Choice dining, and more

Blue Diamond members are also offered free shuttle bus tickets in selected ports, a meet and greet with ship's captain or officer, and priority embarkation and access to tender boats in port.

These benefits come on top of the existing Diamond tier membership benefits, while both Diamond and Blue Diamond members will be given the highest priority for a cabin upgrade when available.

The Blue Diamond tier is only reachable by sailing with MSC, and not via schemes such as the Status Match Programme, meaning it only rewards the cruise line's most loyal guests.

Celestyal to Ascend

CELESTYAL Cruises has appointed Ascend Travel Group as its industry representative in Australia (CW breaking news), with the business to manage local trade marketing services.

The appointment follows the departure of Regional Manager Stewart Williams earlier this week (CW 06 Nov), and as Celestyal embarks on an ambitious three-year growth strategy, including an expansion into the Arabian Gulf, with two ships cruising year-round in the region.

Celestyal will also up its focus on new key markets such as Australia, with Ascend Directors Julie Primmer (pictured) and Lynda Wallace to work alongside the cruise line's Business Development Manager Mary Williams on strategic sales, marketing, training, and support services in the local market.

"We are thrilled to have been appointed as the official representation company for Celestyal in Australia," Ascend's Wallace said.

"This partnership marks a significant step forward in expanding Celestyal's presence in the Australian market, opening the door for more travel agents to introduce their clients to Celestyal's Aegean, Adriatic and Arabian itineraries and experience the rich culture and beauty of these regions in a uniquely Celestyal way."

The cruise line's Vice President



Business Development Janet Parton said: "we are looking forward to having Ascend Travel Group on board as we navigate a period of aggressive growth and look to broaden our reach and exposure in Australia, which is a key growth market."

"We are embarking on this new partnership at an exciting time for Celestyal, with the arrival of *Celestyal Journey* in the Arabian Gulf this month marking our first year-round deployment and representing a 30% increase in capacity from 2023-24."

"With both ships set to sail year-round next year, we have ambitious plans to double Australian bookings and with the majority of our business coming via trade channels, our travel agent partners are critical to our success," she added. MS

Getting Onboard

COMPLEX Travel Group has launched Onboard Luxury, a new brand solely focused on high-end luxury travel.

Onboard Luxury will offer a selection of experiences across two key categories, which will include cruise.

The new brand specialises in bespoke, top-tier travel experiences, including 'Explore', which features curated tours and cruises; and 'Relax and Recharge', offering stays and exclusive access to bespoke experiences.

"We've meticulously selected each hotel, tour and cruise supplier to ensure we're offering truly indulgent experiences where every need is anticipated, allowing for true escapism and relaxation," Founder & Managing Director Mark Trim said.

"While there's a broad definition of luxury within the travel sector, luxury travel in our eyes, is more than just a price tag - it's an art form."

"Onboard Luxury focuses on crafting bespoke journeys that blend personalisation with exclusivity and prioritise time and convenience to ensure a seamless and effortless experience from start to finish," he enthused.

Complex also announced its partnership with Luxury Travel Collection as its inaugural affiliate member.



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Riviera sale boost

RIVIERA Travel River Cruises has extended its “triple stacked” offer for Australian travel advisors, with the line’s biggest-ever trade campaign extended to 15 Dec.

Advisors can save up to \$3,000, and earn a \$50 gift card on all bookings.

Meanwhile, those who sell three river cruises will sail free, while groups of eight will see one guest sail free.

“The response to our recent agent campaign has been outstanding, and we are thrilled to extend this initiative,” International Sales Manager Steven Taylor said.

“This extension underscores our commitment to supporting Australian travel advisors who trust Riviera as a quality river cruising product.

“Their enthusiasm and dedication have been instrumental to our success, and we remain focused on providing them with the tools and incentives needed to continue delivering exceptional experiences to their clients.”

Riviera Travel recently launched its earlybird sale for 2026 itineraries, with prices frozen at this year’s levels until 15 Dec.

This offer aligns seamlessly with the agent incentive campaign - call Riviera on 1300 857 437.

New Travelmarvel ship

TRAVELMARVEL will be launching a brand-new ship in 2026, *Travelmarvel Rigel*, headlining the tour operator’s Europe season.

Rigel, named after the brightest star in the Orion constellation, addresses the rising demand for premium river cruises.

The ship is designed as a sister ship to *Capella*, *Vega*, and *Polaris*, bringing enhanced features that cater to repeat and new clientele.

Guests can enjoy the McGear’s Bar, Owner’s Suites, and French Balcony Suites with electronic slide-down windows that open up views along Europe’s waterways.

Relaxation spaces include the Sun Deck and the Sky Deck Terrace & Bar, and a whirlpool.

Dining venues offered include the refined Constellations Restaurant, the laidback True North Lounge, and more.

Rigel will also incorporate advanced environmental systems to achieve the prestigious Green Award ‘Gold’ status.

The ship will launch Travelmarvel’s new eight-day Rhine & Moselle itinerary between Amsterdam (pictured) and Basel, offering travellers the unique experience of sailing the Moselle during the summer - a first for the tour operator.

This journey includes visits to destinations like Cochem, where guests can enjoy a scenic drive and a wine tasting at Weinmuseum Schlagkamp,



sampling five regional wines, with prices starting at \$3,695pp.

Also included in Travelmarvel’s early 2026 preview is the Croatia coastal cruising and land tours across Europe, plus Douro cruising aboard *Estrela*.

The popular European Gems river cruises remain a highlight of Travelmarvel’s program, featuring the iconic 15-day journey from Amsterdam to Budapest along the Rhine, Main, and Danube rivers, as well as an extended 21-day adventure, which includes stays in destinations such as Paris and Prague.

“The launch of *Rigel* is a proud moment for Travelmarvel, as we continue to elevate the standards in premium European river cruising,” Chief Executive Officer David Cox said.

“With advanced technology and carefully crafted features, *Rigel* enables us to offer even more enriching and memorable journeys that reflect the exceptional benchmarks our guests expect.” *MS*

PortMiami record

PORTMIAMI welcomed a record-breaking number of cruise passengers in the 2023-24 fiscal year, with 8.2 million travellers transiting through the facility.

The port experienced a 12.79% increase in cruise passengers compared to its previous record of 7.3 million passengers in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

“PortMiami continues to break records and uphold its status as the Cruise Capital of the World,” Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said.

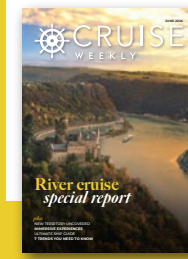
“I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire PortMiami team and our valued cruise line partners on reaching this extraordinary achievement,” she added.

“PortMiami has not only transformed our iconic skyline and bolstered our economy, but its ongoing commitment to creating more sustainable development ensures that our port remains a forward-thinking, future-ready gateway to the world.”

This fiscal year will see MSC Cruises’ new Cruise Terminal AA open, which will become the largest cruise terminal in the world.

Construction will also begin on the new Cruise Terminal G for Royal Caribbean International in summer 2025.

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CARNIVAL Cruise Line is not shy about leaning into the “matchy matchy” theme many of its passengers partake in aboard its ships.

Victoria Ehgoetz, a member of Carnival’s PR team, noted her synchronicity yesterday with *Carnival Luminosa’s* colourways, at an event on board, sporting blue pants, a white top, and her trademark red hair.

Ehgoetz highly dubiously claims the outfit was not worn on purpose.



Aussies booking longer



EXCLUSIVE

CELEBRITY Cruises’ Australian guests are booking longer, more complex journeys, Managing Director and Vice President Tim Jones has told **CW**.

As a result, Celebrity is branching out its distribution strategy and partnering with Wendy Wu Tours (**CW** 16 Jul), as well as the nascent Aldi Holidays brand, through Ignite Travel Group (**CW** 02 Oct).

“We find from an Australian guest perspective, they will book the 10- to 12- nights, and they’ll do back-to-backs,” Jones told **CW** aboard *Celebrity Edge* (pictured) earlier this week.

“When we invest on that big trip to Europe, we want to make the most of it when we get there, and we go and stay five or six weeks often, and then a cruise becomes an integral part of that five- or six-week holiday.

“We want to combine land, we don’t just want to do cruise, and those travel partners [and] our product enables our guests to do that,” he added.

This product profile is part of the reason Celebrity is so reliant

on trade distribution, Jones said. “Travel advisors [are] our partners in helping drive our business forward, they’re hugely valuable to guests.

“Particularly the more complex an itinerary becomes, having that dedicated advice and knowledge from the travel partner is exactly what guests needs, so they’re very valuable to our business.”

MEANWHILE, Celebrity is offering up to \$400 off its voyages, and up to 75% off the second guest, as part of its Black Friday sale.

The offer is available between 08 Nov-19 Nov, on cruises such as the 12-night New Zealand itinerary on *Edge*, and the 11-night Greece, Croatia & Malta sailing on *Celebrity Eclipse*.

The cruise line also recently announced its 2026-27 deployment, which will see the debut of *Celebrity Xcel*, among a number of other firsts.

Celebrity will offer more than 600 sailings to almost 300 destinations in 74 countries, including Australia, which will see both *Edge* and *Celebrity Solstice* return. **MS**

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

PORT	SHIP	DATE
SYDNEY	<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	08 Nov
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	09 Nov
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	11 Nov
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	11 Nov
	<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	13 Nov
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	14 Nov
MELBOURNE	<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	08 Nov
	<i>Diamond Princess</i>	09 Nov
	<i>Disney Wonder</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	11 Nov
	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	12 Nov
	<i>Disney Wonder</i>	13 Nov
BRISBANE	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	21 May
	<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	12 Nov
ADELAIDE	<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Diamond Princess</i>	12 Nov
	<i>Diamond Princess</i>	13 Nov
	<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	13 Nov
	<i>Diamond Princess</i>	14 Nov
HOBART	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	11 Nov
	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	12 Nov
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	12 Nov
	<i>Royal Princess</i>	13 Nov
	<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	14 Nov
CAIRNS	<i>Le Soleal</i>	09 Nov
	<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	10 Nov
	<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	13 Nov
BROOME	<i>Crown Princess</i>	10 Nov
EDEN	<i>Royal Princess</i>	11 Nov
AIRLIE BEACH	<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	12 Nov

Win a \$1k gift card

CUNARD is giving agents the chance to win one of five \$1,000 gift cards when they complete its new bite-sized training videos to enhance their knowledge of the brand.

Agents who complete the training as well as answer all 30 questions correctly on the follow-up quiz will be entered into the draw.

The winners will be announced on 17 Dec on Cunard’s trade website and Facebook page.

Agents can participate in the incentive via Cunard’s trade portal, **HERE**.