



Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant Kimberley

PONANT has opened its 2026 Kimberley season for sale, with 30% savings.

Travellers can choose 16 departures aboard luxury small expedition vessels *Le Soleal* or *Le Jacques Cartier* from May to Sep 2026.

"Our Kimberley expeditions are crafted to not only bring our guests into the heart of this remarkable landscape, but also support and engage with the local communities that call this region home," Chief Executive Deb Corbett said.

Ponant's 'Fly, Stay & Cruise' package also remains available on all 2025 departures - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

HX discusses the ship of the future

EXCLUSIVE

A WIDE range of factors will influence what HX's ships of the future look like, Chief Executive Officer Gebhard Rainer believes, as the line targets 2026 for its fleet's next generation.

HX's present focus is on its current fleet, as it awaits further context about the needs of its future cohort of ships.

"We're very focused on our existing fleet and what's going to happen in the future in terms of the development," he told *CW*.

"By '26, hopefully we will have clearer sight as to what makes sense, what is available and what is sustainable going forward."

"We need to be able to maintain that technology and then go into the next generation of shipbuilding," he added.

Rainer said HX is taking particular interest in future propulsion, particularly as its



sister brand Hurtigruten forges ahead with its carbon-neutral Sea Zero Project (*CW* 14 Oct).

Contemporary technology such as hybrid ships will not necessarily be the best solution of the future, Rainer added.

"In our case, it's [about] watching technological development very carefully as to what the future propulsion is going to be for us," he explained.

"There are others who are betting on LNG; I am not a big fan of LNG because it creates

methane [which is] very bad for the environment...it's not being talked about, but it should be."

Rainer said adjustments to a ship's hull design, to allow her to cut down on fuel consumption, will likely be of importance.

Practical solutions such as better voyage planning, are also pragmatic, present-day solutions.

The HX chief believes the cruise line has topped out with its largest ships, which at a capacity of just under 500, are unlikely to be eclipsed by future builds.

Rainer said HX has reached this size in order to satisfy its "relaxed luxury" positioning, but that future restrictions will likely force vessels down in scale.

"I think it's going to tighten from a regulatory perspective, as to what you can do, how many landings you can have, how many people you can actually take on land at one go," he pondered. *MS*

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Adventure all at sea

DISNEY Cruise Line will aim to make its Singapore-based ship a destination in itself, with no port visits in the inaugural itineraries offered by its upcoming *Disney Adventure*.

The line's maiden Asia-based ship will debut with a three-night cruise on 15 Dec 2025, with 30 voyages total in a debut season of three-, four- and five-night sailings.

Castaway Club members in the United States will have first access to bookings from 03 Dec, with sales opening for the general public on 10 Dec.

Adventure will be the largest in the Disney fleet, acquired from the defunct Genting Hong Kong's Dream Cruises (**CW** 04 Jul 2022).

In partnership with the Singapore Tourism Board, Disney has committed to sailing *Adventure* from the Lion City for at least five years.

MSC corrals for coral

THE MSC Foundation is supporting new valuable research into coral species at risk of extinction.

The research, a global assessment for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, has revealed 44% of reef-building coral species are at risk of extinction.

Celestyal swings for the Gulf



THE Persian Gulf is the next big cruise destination on the globe, Celestyal Cruises Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett believes, as the line is set to invest heavily in the region over the next three years (**CW** 14 Nov).

Celestyal recently signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with Visit Qatar at World Travel Market in London, which will see the cruise line promote the destination among its guests and travel advisors.

Haslett, speaking at an Australian media briefing this week, said he believes the Middle East has the infrastructure set-up to support cruise growth.

"If you look at the projected numbers for this region, over the next 10 years, it's going to be one of the highest growth cruise areas," he explained.

"What we've done is lock ourselves into secure berthing and securing our home port for the next three years... as part

of that, we will jointly promote cruising in the region.

"We will work with local partners to create real, authentic experiences, it's a mutual commitment there to build the cruise market and cruise experience," Haslett added.

The Celestyal CCO said the cruise line's Persian Gulf itineraries will be port-intensive, offering more calls than most of its competitors.

"We're going to have two ships cruising around that region from next year, so we're really doubling down on the effort," he added.

Haslett said Celestyal plans on working with the travel industry to promote Qatar.

"We'll work with them closely working with the trade, especially to do joint promotions, certainly in the Australian market, with our travel agent partners, to pull together some good promotions to really showcase the destination." *MS*

Riviera expands to the Mekong River

RIVIERA Travel River Cruises has added Mekong voyages to its collection, as the line expands beyond Europe.

There are two new sailings available on almost 20 dates from Jan 2026, visiting Vietnam and Cambodia.

The new 12-day 'Journey on the Mekong' itinerary, starting from \$5,758 per person, includes seven nights on board a four-star ship, plus five nights in luxurious four-star hotels, with 14 immersive tours and experiences included.

Meanwhile, the 12-day 'Vietnam, Cambodia & Hidden Treasures of the Mekong' itinerary starts from \$7,294 per person, and includes seven nights on board the four-star *Victoria Mekong*, and five nights in five-star hotels; and 19 included experiences.

"While Riviera is world-renowned for our European river cruises, we recognise that our guests are on the lookout for new and immersive experiences and our Mekong itineraries allow us to cater to this desire, with the opportunity to explore a completely different culture and scenery but with the same authentic on board Riviera experience," said International Sales Manager Steve Taylor.

Call Riviera on 1300 857 437 for more.

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CONSIDERING the plight of coral in the Pacific, one recent discovery is at least generating positive headlines.

A videographer working on a *National Geographic* ship in the Solomon Islands has come across what scientists are describing as the world's largest piece of coral ever recorded (pictured).



The discovery is actually a piece of many interconnected corals that form one organism rather than a single reef, but scientists claim it could be more than 300 years old.

As for its size, experts say it is larger than a blue whale and was measured at 34m wide, 32m long and 5.5m high.

The coral's discoverer, Manu San Felix, said he initially thought it was a shipwreck before his dive buddy verified the discovery and said it was like "a cathedral underwater".

The coral appears to have been protected from warming waters due to its size & depth.

Perhaps serendipitously, the discovery was announced at the UN's COP29 climate change conference, currently taking place in Azerbaijan.

NCL's Black Fri reveal



MORE than 400 itineraries scheduled for the 2026/27 northern autumn and winter season have been unveiled by Norwegian Cruise Line as part of its Black Friday promotion.

Running from Sep 2026 to Apr 2027, the season features departures from 20 ports across a fleet visiting 100 destinations in 38 countries.

NCL's Black Friday deal invites travellers to save up to 50% on all currently published sailings, which includes the new season. Cruises are available across 11 different regions, including the Caribbean, Bahamas, Asia and the Mexican Riviera.

Returning from a charter deployment, *Norwegian Spirit* will return to Sydney on 12 Dec 2026 following a repositioning cruise from Lautoka in Fiji.

The ship will offer five round-trip sailings from the NSW capital, including two special 11-day 'Wine Taster' voyages offering visits to Hobart and Penneshaw and an overnight stay in Adelaide and Melbourne to allow guests to visit the Barossa, Derwent and Yarra Valley wine regions.

Spirit's local season will also include four-day taster sailings

from Sydney to Hobart and 11-day one-way cruises between Sydney and Auckland.

Elsewhere, the 2026/27 winter season will see 15 Norwegian Cruise Line ships sail the corners of the Caribbean, with voyages ranging from five-to-13-days.

Ships will depart from 10 different ports including Miami, Port Canaveral, New Orleans, New York City, Galveston, San Juan and Philadelphia (**CW** 19 Jul).

All four Prima and Prima-Plus class ships will cruise from the US, with flagship *Norwegian Prima* making its debut in New Orleans and offering sailings to Cozumel and Costa Maya.

Elsewhere, *Norwegian Viva* will sail from Galveston, while the newer Prima-Plus ships *Aqua* and *Luna* will sail from Miami.

Norwegian Cruise Line President David J. Herrera said he is thrilled to offer travellers more voyage options, destinations and ships in the 2026/27 schedule.

"For added convenience, we will feature weekend turnarounds from ports across the US, including New Orleans, Miami, and Galveston, Texas, making it even easier for guests to set sail on their own schedule." *ML*

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	15 Nov
<i>Royal Princess</i>	16 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	17 Nov
<i>Westerdam</i>	17 Nov
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	18 Nov
<i>Westerdam</i>	18 Nov
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	21 Nov
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	16 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	17 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	19 Nov
<i>Westerdam</i>	20 Nov
<i>Crown Princess</i>	21 Nov
AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	16 Nov
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	18 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	19 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	21 Nov
CAIRNS	
<i>Le Soleal</i>	16 Nov
<i>Silver Nova</i>	17 Nov
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	18 Nov
<i>Crown Princess</i>	18 Nov
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	19 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	20 Nov
<i>Europa 2</i>	21 Nov
PORT DOUGLAS	
<i>Silver Nova</i>	16 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	21 Nov
DARWIN	
<i>Europa 2</i>	17 Nov
<i>Viking Orion</i>	17 Nov
ADELAIDE	
<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	20 Nov
HOBART	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	20 Nov
MELBOURNE	
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	16 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	17 Nov
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	18 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	20 Nov