



Cruise Weekly today

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

Aqua expands to Africa



SMALL ship luxury cruise line Aqua Expeditions has announced the expansion of its fleet, and the addition of new sailings in Seychelles and Zanzibar, departing in Dec 2025.

Guests can choose from four different itineraries on board the explorer yacht, including five- and nine-night adventures, discovering Seychelles' inner and outer islands respectively.

There is also the option of a 14-night exploration of the Seychelles archipelago, which will rotate with 10- and 11-night sailings in the Seychelles and the Tanzanian islands.

Founder Francesco Galli Zugaro said he had longed to launch itineraries into Africa since launching his business almost 18 years ago.

"I've done 16 safaris in my

life so far, and every single one is affirmation that experiential travel really stems from Sub-Saharan Africa safaris, because there's always been a wildlife nature component...and guests are always accompanied by naturalists," Zugaro told **CW**.

Since joining Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) as a preferred supplier earlier this year, Aqua has committed to its new partner's luxury showcase and roadshow next year (**CW** 03 Jul).

Aqua is also currently conducting a training program for FCTG's advisors, and will be running famil trips on its ships for top product managers next year.

The cruise line's focus is on remote destinations with minimal human interaction, and its exclusive 1:1 crew-to-guest ratio with a maximum of 16-40 guests per ship.

"We're closer to private yachting than the cruising industry," Zugaro said.

"Our guests have never been on big ships, and probably will never go on big ships

"They're what I call 'affluent explorers'...we're appealing to their sense of exploration and adventure, and doing it in a way that doesn't sacrifice any of the creature comforts that they have come to expect when they travel at a really high-end level but in a relaxed ambience." *JHM*

Cruise casino suit

CRUISE lines could soon face a class action suit in Australia, with a number of disgruntled passengers coming forward, having racked up thousands in debt in on board casinos.

Carter Capner Law says it is gearing up to file the suit, alleging "unethical" practices in P&O Cruises Australia's casinos, *Yahoo News* reports.

The firm is alleging guests are incentivised to gamble through offers of credit, free alcohol, and free cruises.

Carter Capner said it has been "inundated with stories" from allegedly affected passengers, accusing both P&O and Royal Caribbean as the key culprits.

The firm first began investigating in May, following the death of a Sydney man, who went overboard from *Pacific Adventure* after reportedly racking up a \$4,000 gambling debt (**CW** 07 May).

Cruise Weekly contacted both cruise lines for comment, with P&O saying: "We have Responsible Conduct of Gaming Policies in place on all P&O ships and take those policies seriously."

New Albatros CEO

ALBATROS Expeditions has welcomed Jakob Lunoe as its new Chief Executive Officer.

The cruise line's new head began his career in the travel industry as a tour leader in South East Asia, the Mediterranean, and Africa.

His background further extends to senior positions in the tech sector, with particular expertise in digital transformation and customer engagement strategies.

"I've always dreamed of returning to the travel industry, and Albatros Expeditions felt like the perfect fit," he said, explaining the cruise line will become even more guest-centric.

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Home Ex speakers

1000 Mile Travel Group Chief Executive Officer Nicola Veltman and Robyn Sinfield, owner of Home Travel Company, are the latest industry professionals to join the speaker line-up for Home Ex, the upcoming virtual event hosted by *Cruise Weekly's* sister title *Travel Daily*.

In her practical learning session, Veltman will discuss the power of automation and how the tools can be used by businesses to save time, boost productivity and enhance the customer experience.

Meanwhile, Sinfield will take part in the session 'Helpful advice for hungry advisors', where she will share how she launched her own business and the insights she has gathered along the way.

Other speakers at Home Ex include Helloworld Chief Operating Officer Cinzia Burnes; industry legend Wendy Wu; GetAboutAble Chief Executive Officer Gemma Axford; iTravel Chief Executive Officer Stevel Labroski; and Mike and Mandy Dwyer from Main Beach Travel.

More speakers will be announced shortly.

Taking place on 10 Mar, Home Ex is a new on-demand virtual experience, aimed at home-based travel agents and accessible to the entire travel industry - [CLICK HERE](#).

Royal's new Asian tune



ROYAL Caribbean's *Anthem of the Seas* (pictured) has taken the stage in Singapore, arriving in Asia for the first time.

Anthem offers 30 holidays to choose from, with visits to some of Asia's top destinations.

The ship will sail three- to four-night cruises to Malaysia and Thailand, visiting destinations like Penang, where cruisers can explore the cultural city of George Town; and Phuket, known for its bustling night market.

Cruisers can also embark on a longer five-night 'Spice of Southeast Asia' vacation to Penang and Phuket.

Meanwhile, the eight-night 'Bali Adventure' takes travellers on a unique journey to the island's coast, where they can visit iconic sights like Tanah Lot and Uluwatu.

Those looking for a more immersive journey to Vietnam and Thailand can enjoy a 10-night cruise through Southeast Asia, where guests can visit the Ho Chi

Minh City Museum of History, as well as The Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand.

Anthem will also celebrate the upcoming holiday season with a four-night Christmas getaway on Christmas Eve, to Penang and Phuket, or a five-night voyage on 28 Dec to Malaysia and Thailand.

"We're thrilled to introduce *Anthem* to the region and look forward to welcoming holidaymakers onboard as they embark on new adventures with Royal Caribbean," Vice President Asia Pacific Chad Grospe said.

"Whether it's a short three- to four-night escape or a longer adventure to fan-favourite destinations across Malaysia, Thailand and more, every type of holidaymaker can look forward to a variety of experiences on deck, from showstopping entertainment to restaurants and spots to grab a bite with flavours from around the world," the local Royal Caribbean head added. *MS*

Oceania is cooking

OCEANIA Cruises has launched an array of new culinary classes for next year, in celebration of 15 years of The Culinary Center - its first-ever hands-on cooking school at sea.

New classes have been added for next year, including a spotlight on Australia, Polynesia, and the US.

One of the new classes for next year will be 'Down Under Abundance', a workshop which celebrates the sea, the mountains, and the vineyards of Australia.

Also on board for next year will be 'It's a Dessert Party', hosted after dinner at 8pm, which will see guests prepare a lava cake, paired with a glass of Champagne, or crepes Suzette, alongside a Grand Marnier spritzer.

The Culinary Center boasts more than 60 classes taught in custom-built teaching kitchens with individual stations and professional-grade equipment.

The classes offer the chance to explore a destination's culture and history through food, or to hone core kitchen skills alongside instructors.

The Culinary Center was first announced 15 years ago ahead of the launch of *Marina*, and is now available on four of Oceania's ships, including *Riviera* and *Vista*, and *Allura*, which will join the fleet in Jul.

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THE first-ever cruise for dogs has been announced, with Cruise Tails and United States-based travel advisor Expedia Cruises arranging the voyage aboard Margaritaville at Sea's ship *Islander*.

The cruise, sailing out of Tampa, has the capacity for 2,650 passengers and 250 dogs, with all four-legged friends requiring a clean bill of health from their vet to board.

Pooches will be pampered with grooming and massages, and every balcony stateroom will have a relief station, according to *Entrepreneur*.

There will also be dog shows, training classes, costume contests and parades, as well as designated dog-free zones, including the ship casino and the onboard spa.

Fares have not been released yet, but those panting to learn more can [CLICK HERE](#).

Maud transitioned

HURTIGRUTEN has retaken possession of *Maud* from sister brand HX after the ship spent three years operating expeditions for the label.

The ship has now returned to offering Hurtigruten's classic 11-night Coastal Express route between Bergen and Kirkenes.

In doing so, the ship has taken back its original name and is again sailing as *Midnatsol*.

How's the Mekong Serenity?



APT'S Vietnam and Cambodia 25/26 season is out now, featuring the *Mekong Serenity*.

One of APT's most popular holidays, the 13-day 'Vietnam & Cambodia Highlights' tour, will return for the 2025/26 season, featuring unique experiences in 13 destinations.

These include witnessing sunrise at Cambodia's Angkor Wat, and a Buddhist blessing ceremony with resident monks at a local monastery in Oudong.

This will be combined with a seven-night cruise along the Mekong on board *Serenity*.

Prices starts from \$7,395 per person, including savings of up to \$3,000 per couple.

There is also a 17-day 'Vietnam & Cambodia Discovery' trip, which will see guests able to enjoy a seven-night cruise aboard *Serenity*, as well as a three-day voyage through Ha Long Bay.

This tour includes immersive experiences in 15 destinations, including a speedboat journey to the Cu Chi Tunnel and VIP seats to Phare, The Cambodian Circus.

Pricing starts from \$9,995 per person, including savings of up to \$3,400 per couple.

The season features a range of APT's 'Signature Experiences', including dining at Vietnam House Restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, and a private visit to Theam's Gallery in Siem Reap, where guests will explore the gallery before indulging in a five-course Khmer dinner while watching a traditional apsara dance.

Serenity was launched last year, billed as one of the most luxurious ships on the Mekong.

The vessel offers just 44 spacious all-private-balcony suites, four dining venues, an outdoor pool, and onboard spa and fitness centre. *MS*

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	22 Nov
<i>Silver Muse</i>	22 Nov
<i>Crown Princess</i>	23 Nov
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	25 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	27 Nov
<i>Europa 2</i>	27 Nov
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	28 Nov
<i>Viking Orion</i>	28 Nov

MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	22 Nov
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	24 Nov
<i>Silver Muse</i>	24 Nov
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	25 Nov
<i>Silver Nova</i>	27 Nov

BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	22 Nov
<i>Silver Nova</i>	23 Nov
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	24 Nov
<i>Europa 2</i>	25 Nov
<i>Viking Orion</i>	26 Nov

ADELAIDE	
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	24 Nov
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	27 Nov

HOBART	
<i>Heritage Adventurer</i>	23 Nov
<i>Silver Muse</i>	26 Nov
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	26 Nov

DARWIN	
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	25 Nov
<i>Westerdam</i>	28 Nov

NEWCASTLE	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	28 Nov

CAIRNS	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	22 Nov
<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	22 Nov
<i>Westerdam</i>	24 Nov
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	25 Nov
<i>Regatta</i>	28 Nov
<i>Crown Princess</i>	28 Nov

TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	23 Nov