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Debra Barnett, The Travel Brokers (NZ)

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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest news, a cover wrap from **CLIA Membership**, plus a full page from the **22nd CLIA Awards**.

Join CLIA in 2025

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has announced that memberships for next year are now open.

Expand your cruise knowledge and skills through hundreds of online courses, and by attending live events as a CLIA member.

You can also access valuable tools and downloadable resources in the CLIA member hub, and earn your CLIA certification from the Association's globally recognised training and certification platform.

Head to the **cover page** for more information.

FCTG fast-tracks Ignite brand to UK

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) will expand the holiday packages business model of Ignite Travel to the UK market following the all-cash acquisition of Cruise Club UK (**CW** breaking news).

Ignite Travel is one of the fastest growing brands in the FCTG stable, generating TTV of more than \$500 million in the first half of the 2024 financial year so far across three operating divisions - a 20% year-on-year improvement.

FCTG will roll out Ignite's business model to Cruise Club UK, adopting a structure similar to MyCruises, My Holiday Centre and the Holiday Exclusives B2B white-label division which now provides value-add holiday packages to global supermarket giant Aldi (**CW** 02 Oct 2024).

Flight Centre Leisure CEO James Kavanagh said the acquisition was aligned with the company's objective of increasing margins



through cruise and tour sales, scaling its brands and growing to become a dominant player in the UK leisure holiday market.

"As we look to increase cruise sales and expand Ignite's offering internationally, we are excited by the potential in the UK and the parallels in Australia, where the Ignite model and MyCruises have proven so successful.

"Already, we have seen strong support from suppliers, who are keen to work with us to grow this sector, and from potential customers who responded strongly to a MyCruises-style

offer that Cruise Club recently trialled," Kavanagh added.

Cruise Club UK's founder Paul Edge Snr and son Paul Edge Jnr will continue with the business through the integration, while Ignite founder Randall Deer will become Managing Director of Cruise Club UK.

The Manchester-based company employs around 35 people and turned over around £20 million in retail cruise sales during FY24.

FCTG's purchase of Cruise Club UK follows the resurrection of its Cruiseabout brand and entry into wholesaling with CruiseHQ. *ML*

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COVID response

AN INQUIRY panel into Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic heard that the cruise industry was treated unfairly during the period.

The *COVID-19 Response Inquiry Report* found many cruise & tourism stakeholders were critical of the JobKeeper and the Consumer Travel Support programs.

"Stakeholders in the travel and tourism industries also questioned the government's treatment of different sub-industries," the report read.

"There was a perception that the restrictions were unfairly and arbitrarily applied across travel-related industries such as trains, cruise ships and air travel," it added.

Industry representatives also told the inquiry stranded seafarers and ship owners were inadequately supported, including in relation to their health care, during international border closures.

"Cruise line industry representatives told the Inquiry that seafarers were stuck on ships for many months and that this could have been avoided with more open dialogue and collaboration between the Australian Government, health authorities and the cruise industry," the report read.

CLIA has been contacted for comment on the report.

Demand fuels RCG results



ROBUST demand for Royal Caribbean Group's (RCG) cruises have driven its strong third quarter results, with the company improving its full-year outlook.

Stronger pricing on close-in demand saw RCG better its guidance, as the company's namesake brand, Royal Caribbean, continues to promote its weekend and short break cruises (**CW** 22 Oct).

Continued strength in onboard revenue and lower costs also contributed to RCG's strong Q3.

Fiscal highlights for the quarter saw the company report adjusted earnings per share of US\$5.20, with its full-year guidance for this metric rising to US\$11.57-US\$11.62.

This increase was driven by a strong revenue performance in the third quarter of US\$4.9 billion, and an increase in pricing expectations for Q4.

Other highlights include a load factor of 111%, adjusted net income of US\$1.4 billion, and adjusted EBITDA of US\$2.1 billion.

"Our exceptional third quarter results and increased full year expectations reflect the robust demand for our differentiated vacation experiences," said RCG President & CEO Jason Liberty.

"We see elevated demand patterns continuing as we build the business for 2025, and although the yield comparable will be a high bar, our proven formula of moderate capacity growth, moderate yield growth and strong cost discipline is expected to continue to deliver strong financial results."

Liberty also said RCG will be proceeding with a Royal Beach Club in Vanuatu - a destination which at one stage was pegged for a new 'Perfect Day' location (**CW** 28 Mar 2022). *MS*

Viking on sale

VIKING'S Grand Australia Circumnavigation is on sale, with now the last chance for travellers to score this trip from \$19,995 per person.

The trip also visits Komodo and Bali - **CLICK HERE**.



ROYAL CARIBBEAN

Important Policy Announcement Regarding



COURTESY HOLDS

Please refer to ClubRoyal.com.au/news for more information and training

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SOMETIMES the best ideas come to us in our sleep but they don't always result in being able to travel the world.

UK photographer Stephen Payne said he had an idea one morning to buy a boat and adopt the nomadic existence after his 92-year-old mother passed away in 2019.

So despite not knowing anything about sailing, Payne bought the 11-metre motorised boat in 2020, named *Jaywalking The World*, and taught himself how to sail.

Unfortunately, his new life at sea began badly as the pandemic struck and trapped him inside in a Berkshire marina during lockdown.

Since being released, Payne has spent the past four years sailing the coastlines of France and Italy enroute to Malta, where he has spent the year.

"It's the greatest decision I've ever made," Payne said.

Ponant 'Swap2Zero' funds



PONANT has secured a European Commission grant for its 'Swap2Zero' project, one of the world's first transoceanic ship designed for carbon neutrality (*CW* 06 Jul 2023).

The INNOVFUND grant will help drive the development of a pioneering mix of renewable energy solutions, advancing Ponant's ambitious decarbonisation goals.

The cruise line is continuing with its program to have a decarbonised ship by 2030 while contributing to the development of innovative solutions for more sustainable tourism.

Ponant CEO Asia Pacific Deb Corbett said: "this is a commitment to both technological advancement and to the principles of responsible tourism.

"With Swap2Zero, we're reinforcing our dedication to minimising our environmental impact while offering unparalleled experiences to our guests," she added.

"Responsible tourism is at the core of everything we do, and this project is a key step forward in shaping a more sustainable future

for the industry."

Swap2Zero's sail power system and hull will provide an average of 50% of the propulsion energy using the force of the wind.

Ponant has also partnered with digital modelling platform Syroco to support the design of Swap2Zero (*CW* 23 Nov). *MS*

Brilliant in Alaska

VIRGIN Voyages has unveiled its maiden season of cruises in Alaska, with *Brilliant Lady* to sail a collection of seven- to 12-night voyages from May-Sep 2026 and on sale from 13 Nov.

Featuring departures from both Seattle and Vancouver, the line will visit ports including Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau and Prince Rupert, along with scenic cruising along the Tracy Arm Fjord.

Guests can partake in shore activities such as lumberjack shows, dog sledding, glacier trekking, and salmon fishing.

The ship's 'Treat Yourself' snack bar will also offer locally sourced Alaskan seafood.



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

A win for agent training

CLIA has always believed the most highly trained travel agents are the most successful agents.

That's why we're delighted to have won the 'Most Outstanding Travel Industry Training Institution' award at the NTIAs.

It's an important recognition for CLIA's extensive professional development program and the role it plays in supporting our community of travel agents.

It's also a sign of the hard work and commitment our members put into education and training.

Our courses have never been more popular and the level of engagement from our members has never been stronger.

Our events - including CLIA LIVE seminars around the country and our flagship Cruise360 Australasia conference - have attracted record attendances, reflecting the hunger for insight among cruise specialist agents.

CLIA's focus has been on developing skills and knowledge among our members so they can benefit from cruising's global strength, and this will continue into 2025 as we further enhance our training and events.

You can find out more about our education programs and member benefits - [CLICK HERE](#).

Congratulations to the ATIA team for bringing the industry together for the NTIAs, and to all the winners this year.



Sparkles from HAL

HOLLAND America Line has partnered with Washington-based winemaker Four Feathers Wine Services to create its own branded sparkling wine label.

The new Holland America Line Sparkling Wine will be available across 11 ships by the end of Oct and can be ordered by the bottle or glass.



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NOMINATE NOW

For more information on Award Criteria and how to nominate, please visit cruising.org.au.
Nominations are open to all CLIA Travel Agent members and close Friday, 29 November 2024.