



Cruise Weekly today

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

Cormier to Aurora

AURORA Expeditions has appointed Greg Cormier as its new Chief Marketing Officer (CW breaking news), replacing Hayley Peacock-Gower who departed in May (CW 07 May).

Based in Toronto, Cormier will be responsible for driving Aurora's global growth, focusing on enhancing the company's digital experience.

He will also be responsible for growing Aurora's market share in North America.

Cormier brings more than 20 years of experience in brand and digital marketing to Aurora, having most recently served as G Adventures' Vice President of Digital Marketing.

Network strategy for Aus?

A MORE whole-of-network-approach could work to abate congestion in Australian key ports, Royal Caribbean Group (RCG) Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith believes.

Speaking last week at the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) conference's 'State of the Industry' panel, Smith said rural ports can help reduce crowding in larger destinations such as Sydney, Melbourne and Fremantle, as the busy summer season begins.

"[ACA] Chairman Phil Holliday and [the Port Authority of New South Wales] have championed the port of Eden, and what that's giving us is an overflow," he said.

"[When] Sydney is busy on one particular day, we can lengthen the cruise by a day and go to Eden," he added.

"That regionality is really something we're looking for,

where there are two or three ports working together trying to manage that responsibility...we see it on the Western Australian coast, where there are a good number of ports between Broome and Albany."

Smith said this strategy works well in the Caribbean, which is the world's busiest cruise region.

"We've got many different regions across the Caribbean that behave very individually, but then also work through their own Caribbean tourist association to present that destination as a consolidated group.

"They still call out their French-ness, their Dutch-ness, their British-ness, their local flavour and culture; they've got their individuality, but you can talk to them as a group."

"That regionality creates a level of cooperation at a port we're really looking for." MS



On location in Shanghai

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you from China courtesy of Viking.

TODAY we commence our Viking experience with a full day docked in Shanghai, where *Viking Yi Dun* is sitting on the famed Bund adjacent to the iconic Oriental Pearl Tower.

Available activities include a suite of shore excursions allowing guests to take in the wonders of Shanghai, although some on board have chosen to do their own thing and explore the destination via the convenient metro network, which is easily accessible from the ship's central location.

More from Viking in China on page two of today's CW.

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Viking debuts new China product

VIKING Chief Executive Officer Torstein Hagen believes there has never been a better time to invest in the Chinese cruise market - in contrast to some of his rivals who continue to withdraw.

He expressed his contrarian approach aboard the *Viking Yi Dun* in Shanghai last night, alongside daughter Karine, who were present for the momentous debut of Viking's first-ever coastal voyages in China for English-speaking guests.

Hagen, who's **pictured** with Lee Siefken from Viking's Australian office, told *Cruise Weekly* he is highly optimistic about the prospects for the unique product.

"This cruise now is the first voyage with western passengers on a Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship," he said.

The ship, formerly known as *Viking Sun*, is this year operating five 10-day departures between Shanghai and Hong Kong, with expectations it will further expand to a longer English-speaking season in years to come.

An extensive portfolio of land add-ons is also on offer, with eight coach-loads of mostly American guests joining the ship in Shanghai after experiencing some of China's attractions.

Yi Dun is operating under a joint venture with state-owned China Merchants Group, which also offers voyages aboard the ship targeting the Chinese and Japanese-speaking markets.

The hotel operations are fully



staffed by English-speaking Chinese crew, but the product is basically identical to the rest of Viking's ocean fleet, with daily included shore excursions, high-speed wi-fi at no additional cost, no-charge specialty restaurants and deep destination immersion - facilitated by Viking's unique partnership with China Merchants Group, which also operates departures for Chinese-speaking guests across the year.

Hagen highlighted Viking's long relationship with China, which saw the company commence its first Yangtze river cruise in 2004 in partnership with a local operator, combining the voyage with visits to Xi'an, Tibet, Chengdu, Beijing

and Shanghai.

Over the years Viking has brought "180,000 affluent English-speaking travellers to China", and while the pandemic put an end to the Yangtze operation, "it would not be illogical" to suggest that Viking is likely to restart Yangtze river cruises in the future too, he said.

The inaugural Chinese domestic ocean cruise itinerary for Viking takes in Zhoushan, Dongtou, Pingtan, Xiamen and Shenzhen, as well as Shanghai and Hong Kong, giving guests an opportunity to explore little-known destinations from the familiar comforts of Viking's classically elegant vessel. *BP*

AIDAprima trials renewable marine fuel

CARNIVAL Corporation's AIDA Cruises has refuelled its *AIDAprima* with 100% renewable bio marine fuel in Rotterdam for the first time, as part of a pilot project aiming to evaluate its performance with a potential wider rollout.

The sustainable biofuel is produced from organic waste,

and was supplied by VARO Energy with expectations it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 85% compared to conventional fossil-based fuel sources.

The biofuel will be tested during *AIDAprima's* upcoming Norwegian itineraries, assessing its potential for future use.

Scenic tasty trips

SCENIC has announced a new culinary-themed voyage as part of its 'Tastes of Discovery' series, with US celebrity chef Bryan Voltaggio joining a 15-day *Scenic Eclipse* Arctic cruise in Jul 2025.

Guests will enjoy a hosted welcome reception, special dining experiences & more.

New Explora chief



EXPLORA Journeys has announced the appointment of Anna Nash to the newly created position of President.

The appointment of Nash (**pictured**), who has been with luxury hospitality firm Aman for about a decade, follows the departure in Mar of former Explora Journeys founding CEO Michael Ungerer (*CW* 06 Mar).

As well as her time as Chief Commercial officer at Aman, Nash has also worked at companies such as Rosewood Hotels and Orient Express.

She will report directly to MSC Cruises Executive Chairman, Pierfrancesco Vago, who said "her proven expertise within the ultra-luxury hospitality industry, coupled with her exceptional leadership abilities, will help us ensure that our brand is globally recognised as we continue to set new standards in luxury travel".

Fred.Olsen + TUI

FRED.OLSEN Cruise Lines has announced a new partnership with tour provider TUI Musement, offering passengers new options for independent shoreside exploration.

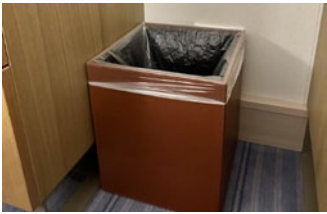
Products on offer include hop-on hop-off buses in various destinations, cooking classes, museum passes and more, with TUI Musement's Nishank Gopalkrishnan saying the move "will positively disrupt the cruise industry".



VIKING founder & Chief Executive Torstein Hagen gave an insight into some of the more obsessive aspects of his personality during a presentation aboard *Viking Yi Dun* in Shanghai last night.

Describing some of the features of Viking's product, he confirmed that his attention to detail even extended to the design of the waste paper baskets (pictured).

"They are square, so that when you throw things into them you have two walls to bounce off," he said, noting that the dining chairs on Viking ships are also square "so gentlemen have somewhere to hang their jackets".



LNG on the up in cruise

NINETEEN Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) ships are now using liquefied natural gas (LNG) for their primary propulsion, up from 13 last year.

That was one of the highlights from CLIA's annual *Global Cruise Industry Environmental Technologies and Practices Report*, which showed continued progress by the sector in advancing its environmental and sustainability agenda.

Investments in ships and technologies for the uptake of transitional and alternative fuels saw 7% of CLIA's fleet, and 13% of the fleet's capacity, using LNG for their primary propulsion.

These numbers were up from 4.9% of the fleet and 9.2% of the fleet's capacity last year.

In the future, ships designed with engines and fuel supply systems able to operate on LNG will be able to switch to zero and near-zero fuels, such as bio or synthetic LNG, with no modification of their engine.

Access to these future fuels was called out at last week's Australian Cruise Association conference as key to a viable local

cruise sector by industry leaders (CW 06 Sep).

"Cruise lines are continuing to reduce their emissions at sea and at berth in pursuit of net zero emissions by 2050," said CLIA Global President & Chief Executive Officer, Kelly Craighead.

"This year's environmental technologies report demonstrates their progress, with the industry investing in engine technologies with conversion capabilities that will allow ships to use more renewable energy sources as they become available, making important incremental steps to employ a range of other environmental technologies and practices to advance the industry's wider sustainability initiatives," she added.

The CLIA fleet also performed strongly in shore power, with 23% more ships than the prior year able to connect to onshore power, and 167% more than 2018.

CLIA said 239 ships will be able to connect to shore power by 2028, based on the number of ships that are expected to be in service, including 60 which are currently sailing. MS

Azamara 2026

AZAMARA has announced its northern summer 2026 deployment, which includes five maiden ports, and three solar eclipse cruises.

The sailings include 77 new itineraries, with all three Azamara ships to spend the summer season in Europe, spanning the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, including extended time in Greece, Ireland, the British Isles and more.

Azamara will visit Sarande, Frederica, Turku, Menton, and Karlskrona for the first time.

There are also new pre- and post- land programs, in destinations such as Iceland and Greece.

"Europe continues to be a leading destination for us globally, so we are delighted to be announcing one of our biggest European deployments to date," Head of Itinerary Planning Michael Pawlus said.

"With three ships in the region from Mar to Oct 2026, we can offer our guests more options than ever before," Pawlus added.

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