



Cruise Weekly today

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

Pandaw rally cry

ASIAN river cruise brand Pandaw has launched an appeal to raise funds for people affected by last week's earthquake in Myanmar. The company has launched a relief fund - **CLICK HERE** - with the line saying every dollar will go to the rebuilding effort. Latest reports from the ground are an official death toll of 1,700, with around 80% of Sagaing destroyed and much of Mandalay "flattened", with both China and Singapore sending rescue teams.

Uniworld Aperitivo is back



UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises' 'Aperitivo with Uniworld' wine-tasting events are returning across Australia. Travel advisors are being invited to bring clients to their nearest soiree, which led to valuable bookings last year (**CW** 19 Aug). The roadshow will head to Adelaide, the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne throughout May - **CLICK HERE** to register to attend.

Guests will be inspired by destinations and itineraries while enjoying a curated selection of wines, reflecting the regions Uniworld sails through.

The cruise line will also showcase last-minute savings on this year's voyages, plus newly released offers for 2026 and 2027, including exclusive savings available only on the day.

The Aperitivo series is designed for seasoned river cruisers, first-timers, as well as ocean cruisers. Tickets are \$25 per person, plus a booking fee.

"We know how busy agents are, and we want to make their jobs easier," Uniworld Managing

Director Australia Alice Ager said. "Our Aperitivo events are designed as engaging sales presentations that benefit both clients and their agents...we take care of the hosting, the sales pitch, and the follow-ups, ensuring all leads and inquiries go straight back to the agent for conversion," she added.

"Agents are welcome to attend, but it's not essential - simply forward the invitation to your clients and encourage them to bring a friend - we'll handle the rest," Ager enthused.

A comprehensive agent toolkit is also available, featuring social media assets, invitations, and key event links - **CLICK HERE**. **MS**

Explora upgrade

SAVINGS of up to 25% and a one-category suite upgrade are available in a new 'Upgrade Your Ocean' offer launched by Explora Journeys.

The offer is valid on bookings made before 03 Jun across the line's three ships and combinable with other offers.

New RSSC speakers

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has introduced a new onboard guest speaker and performer program featuring well-known names from a variety of fields, with all presentations included.

Speakers signed for upcoming voyages include West End and Broadway stars Christine Allado, Paul Baker and Andrea Ross; former US Ambassador David Litt; and US Air Force rocket scientist William Jacob Rothschild.

"The Regent enrichment and entertainment experience is as spellbinding as it is comprehensive," said RSSC Director of Entertainment Operations and Enrichment, Daniel Bartrope.



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Insignia exiting

OCEANIA Cruises will bid farewell to *Insignia* in 2027 after the ship was sold to startup Crescent Seas to be turned into a residential ship.

The acquisition of *Insignia* is the line's second ship purchase from a Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings brand after *Seven Seas Navigator* (CW 24 Mar) was acquired last month.

Insignia has been sailing with Oceania Cruises since 2002 and will now join Crescent's fleet in late 2027 when it will undergo a \$50 million refurb.

MEANWHILE, Oceania Cruises has released details of *Insignia's* final season in 2027, which will begin with a farewell tour in South America, with the ship to explore South America including the Amazon River and Patagonia.

The send-off forms part of a new 'Tropics and Exotics' collection released by the line, which features more than 120 itineraries sailing in 2026-2027, with sales opening 10 Apr.

Itineraries cover Africa, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, South America and the South Pacific, running from seven-day trips through to *Oceania Vista's* 244-day world cruise.

Highlights of the collection also include *Oceania Riviera* and *Oceania Vista* both making their maiden forays to Australia and the South Pacific this year (CW 26 Mar).

UK port calls on the rise

INCREASING port call and embarkation numbers handled by British cruise ports in 2024 show a solid season for an industry continuing to grow, according to data released by Cruise Britain.

For the first time, over 2,500 cruise ship calls were recorded throughout the year by 134 different ships, which the association said amounted to around one-third of the world's ocean-going cruise fleet.

The number of guests embarking on a cruise also hit a new record, exceeding 1.6 million for the first time, which saw the year close on a 9.9% growth rate.

Ports across the UK welcomed more than two million guests on day visits, collectively contributing around £170 million (A\$352 million) to the British economy.

Figures showed the majority of cruise guests to the UK were travellers from the US and Germany, with the two countries making up over three-quarters of the transit passenger level.

Cruise Britain Chairman Ian McQuade said 57 ports across the country welcomed at least one ship in 2024, a figure in line with historical levels.

"Britain and Ireland cruise popularity goes from strength-to-strength with the diverse multi-country story of discovery really resonating with visitors, whether they be international guests, as the vast majority are, or UK residents exploring their



own country," McQuade said.

"And with the imminent first anniversary of the MoU with Cruise Ireland, we see an increased opportunity to drive growth in the British Isles cruising region."

McQuade added that he expects the coming 2025 season will continue to build on the strong figures witnessed last year. *ML*

MSC World webinar

TRAVEL agents can learn more about one of MSC Cruises' most highly-sought products - its 2027 world cruise - via an informative webinar scheduled for 09 Apr.

The webinar will cover a full look at *MSC Magnifica*, its customer profile, the full itinerary and benefits of sailing on an MSC World Cruise.

MSC Cruises NSW/Qld/ACT BDM Bronwyn Knight will host two 20-minute sessions at 8:30am and 12:30pm, with each including an interactive Q&A session at the end.

CLICK HERE to register.

Praise for Aranoa

ARANUI Cruises' forthcoming arrival of its new ship (*CW* yesterday) is an exciting milestone for the company, according to ANZ representative, Laurent Wong.

"Aranui Cruises' new ship *Aranoa* will soon embark on its main mission: supplying the remote Austral Islands and its residents with provisions, while also offering our guests the chance to be among the first to discover the magnificent, untouched and breathtaking islands in French Polynesia's south."

Wong added the port stop of Raivavae was like the Bora Bora of yesteryear, with a "dazzling blue lagoon", minus the overwater villas.

The arrival of *Aranoa*, which is scheduled for 2027, will be the first time Aranui Cruises has operated more than one ship, with the sailing schedule for the new vessel to be released later this year.

Aranoa (pictured) will be slightly smaller than its sister ship *Aranui V* and will cater for 198 passengers across 93 cabins, of which 62 will feature a private balcony.



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VIRGIN Group founder Sir Richard Branson has partnered with the newest signee of Virgin Music - Latin music sensation Nicky Jam - to launch 'Jam at Sea' - a line of preserves only available on Virgin Voyages' cruise ships.

The first flavour to hit tables will be called Bransonberry.

The blend will feature a mix of strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries with just a hint of champagne.

"As a proud Englishman, I know my way around proper jam and scones," said Branson.

"When I discovered Nicky's passion wasn't just for dropping beats but also for fruit preserves, I knew we had to collaborate."

The condiments will be served as part of Virgin Voyages' afternoon tea service and also available to buy as a souvenir.

"BransonBerry (pictured) is absolutely smashing on our breakfast pastries."

But before you book a Virgin voyage to try a jar of Bransonberry, maybe consider this announcement happened on 01 Apr - April Fools' Day.



Superyachts a growing trend



FUELLED by rising global affluence, tech advancements, and luxury travellers' search for new experiences, the superyacht category is on the rise.

Enter one-year-old start-up, The Superyacht Club.

"We're looking at the part of the luxury market that has been into cruising, but now they're looking for something more bespoke and smaller," founder Asha Martin (pictured) told *Cruise Weekly*.

"It's private and they're not sharing the yacht with anyone else."

"Especially in the smaller yacht category as well, like around Croatia, it's really popular to charter a yacht - there might only be like four to eight [other] people on board."

According to the *Yacht Charter - Global Strategic Business Report*, which was released last year, the global market for yacht chartering is projected to reach US\$12.1 billion (A\$19.2 billion) by 2030.

Interestingly, in the €33 billion global yacht market, over €25 billion came from the superyacht category in 2022, stated a report from the Italian Marine Industry Association and Deloitte.

According to Martin, superyachts are typically defined as a motor yacht that is 24 metres in length or greater.

From working in the funeral industry to now selling tickets for Formula 1 superyacht parties, Martin's life has done an about-turn in the past year since launching her business.

Now, The Superyacht Club has a fleet of thousands of vessels all over the world, taking guests on a wide variety of experiences, from day-charters on Sydney Harbour to week-long immersions in the Pacific or Mediterranean.

While a luxury yacht charter may seem out-of-reach to many travellers, the reality can be quite different, noted Martin.

"Often when you break down the pricing, it can work out to around \$700-\$800 per person per night over a week," she said, adding the costs are quite competitive with luxury hotels.

"You can have an on-water experience, going from port to port, and it can work out to be quite affordable."

For more info about The Superyacht Club, **CLICK HERE**.

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	05 Apr
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	06 Apr
<i>Carnival Adventure</i>	07 Apr
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	08 Apr
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	09 Apr
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	10 Apr

BRISBANE	
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	04 Apr
<i>Carnival Encounter</i>	05 Apr
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	06 Apr
<i>Royal Princess</i>	09 Apr

AIRLIE BEACH	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	04 Apr
<i>Celebrity Solstice</i>	06 Apr

CAIRNS	
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	04 Apr
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	05 Apr

YORKEYS KNOB	
<i>Royal Princess</i>	05 Apr

DARWIN	
<i>Crown Princess</i>	06 Apr
<i>Seven Seas Mariner</i>	06 Apr
<i>Nautica</i>	07 Apr
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	08 Apr
<i>Coral Geographer</i>	08 Apr
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	10 Apr

BROOME	
<i>True North II</i>	04 Apr
<i>Coral Adventurer</i>	05 Apr
<i>True North</i>	08 Apr

FREMANTLE	
<i>Artania</i>	06 Apr

HOBART	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	08 Apr

FIORDLAND	
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	08 Apr

DUNEDIN	
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	09 Apr

CHRISTCHURCH	
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	10 Apr