



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news including a photo page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

Apex returns to UK

CELEBRITY Apex has kicked off its second season sailing from the UK port of Southampton, offering a range of four- to 14-night itineraries. The newest Celebrity Cruises ship will sail from the UK port until Oct, exploring northern Europe, the Mediterranean and Canary Islands.

Celebrity Cruises President Laura Hodges Bethge will also join the ship for the line's first-ever President's Cruise in May.

NCL considers more islands



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) may not be done developing its archipelago of private islands, President David Herrera has revealed, following the delivery of yesterday's details about the makeover of Great Stirrup Cay (**CW** yesterday).

Responding to a question from **Cruise Weekly**, Herrera said the success of NCL's two current islands, The Bahamas' Great Stirrup Cay and Belize's Harvest Caye, has the cruise line investigating the possibility of adding more private destinations in the future.

"We have a couple of other opportunities that we're looking at; I don't have any breaking news, but I will tell you that our consumers have spoken," Herrera said on a panel onboard the cruise line's brand-new **Norwegian Aqua** (pictured).

"There might be a couple of other opportunities in the near future," Herrera teased.

"I think we have an advantage, because we can leverage what we already know from Great Stirrup Cay, and we have the size, and the ability to expand and to do so much [more], so we're going to focus on [it] for the moment."

However, Herrera emphasised the development of a successful private island, such as Great Stirrup Cay, is far more than just the land grab.

"The idea of a 'fun in the sun' private island is not just about, 'let's make it a private island and start selling it'...you can't just open up shop and people are going to love it," he explained.

"Deliver the product that your guests want, give them more options, give them the opportunity to customise [with] freedom and flexibility to build what they want to do."

Norwegian Cruise Line yesterday revealed a major redevelopment of Great Stirrup Cay, with capacity to be increased in line with the completion of a multi-ship pier.

"Along with the completion of a new multi-ship pier later this year, we're improving both access and amenities on the island," said Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings President and Chief Executive Officer, Harry Sommer.

"As we anticipate annual guest visits to exceed one million by 2026, we are actively evaluating additional investments in the island to support that growth and expand the amenities our guests can enjoy," Sommer said.

Among these will be a new welcome centre and a tram network to allow guests to explore more of the island.

The island will also see a major new pool area, family splash pad, poolside cabanas and a new adults-only Vibe Beach Club with lawn games area. **MS**

New Tauck cruises

TAUCK will expand its small-ship ocean cruising options for 2026 with two new itineraries taking travellers to the Arctic Circle and South Korea.

The company's first-ever itinerary in South Korea begins with a three-night stay in Seoul followed by an eight-night cruise visiting ports including Sakaiminato, Hagi and Beppu.

Three departures sailing aboard the chartered Ponant ship **Le Soleal** have been scheduled for 2026, with the itinerary also taking in Japan and disembarking in Osaka.

Tauck will also take guests deep into the Arctic Circle in 2026 with a 12-day tour exploring the Norwegian coast.



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Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian Cruise Line, which is hosting us onboard its newly-christened *Norwegian Aqua*.

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's new flagship *Norwegian Aqua* is sailing on her first voyage from her new home port of Miami, with *CW* lucky to be the only trade media aboard.

Guests will enjoy everything *Aqua* has to offer aboard the three-night cruise.

Today will see a tour of The Haven by Norwegian offered, showcasing the cruise line's luxury ship-within-a-ship concept; others will get wet aboard the 'Aqua Slidecoaster' dual water slide-roller coaster.

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you from the refurbished *MS Paul Gauguin*, which is making a stop in Darwin before setting sail for Fiji.

THE flagship of Ponant's sister brand Paul Gauguin Cruises has recently undertaken a significant refurbishment in dry dock in Singapore.

The 330-passenger vessel now sports a redesigned Le Grill, completely transformed pool deck, connecting staterooms and much more.

Cruise Weekly will get the grand tour today with the team from Paul Gauguin before it continues its journey.

Don't miss tomorrow's edition of *CW* for full coverage.

Marina Bay upgrade plan



MARINA Bay Cruise Centre Singapore has begun a major refurbishment project to improve the check-in and embarkation experience for travellers.

In what will be the first major upgrade to the facility since its 2012 opening, the S\$40 million (A\$48m) project will include a new check-in area, lounges and passenger waiting areas.

Vacant land in front of the terminal will also be converted into a larger ground transport area with more spaces for buses,

taxis and rideshare operators.

The refurbishment will better equip the facility to handle larger ships and dual-ship calls, with Marina Bay's forecast showing pax numbers are set to climb from 6,800 to 11,700 per year.

The nine-month upgrade comes after terminal operator SATS-Creuers had its contract extended by eight years with an option for another two, putting it in charge of the facility through to 2037.

A rendering of the new-look cruise terminal is **pictured** above.

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CRUISE ship marketing has become so much more innovative and impressive in recent years with the more widespread use of drones.

MSC Cruises is still celebrating the debut of MSC World America (**CW** 10 Apr) and has begun to roll out a series of ultra-impressive drone videos featuring the new ship.

In one marvel, MSC shows off its new ship from both the inside and outside, with a drone flying from the ship's port side, through two cabins (including encountering a woman in only a towel), over the balcony, into the World Promenade and off the rear of the ship - check it out **HERE**.

Ama makes luxury history in Colombia

AMAMAGDALENA is now officially the first luxury river cruise ship to sail down Colombia's Magdalena River, with AmaWaterways' historic launch taking place on 12 Apr.

After a false start (**CW** 04 Oct 2024), two seven-night itineraries are now available - the 'Magic of Colombia' and 'Wonders of Colombia', sailing between Cartagena and Barranquilla.

Both feature highlights such as a private celebration of the famous Barranquilla Carnival, a heritage tour and performance in the city of Mompox and an exploration of the town of Palenque and more.

The 60-passenger ship was custom-designed in collaboration with the artisans and specialists from the local community, and was inspired by the region's natural beauty.

Onboard *AmaMagdalena*, amenities include a sun deck with



swimming pool, a spacious fitness room, a main restaurant offering Latin American cuisine alongside Western dishes, and an intimate al fresco specialty dining venue.

Later this year, AmaWaterways will launch a second ship on the river in *AmaMelodia*.

"Over five years of research and development have brought this vision to life; being the first ever river cruise line to travel these waters is a true testament to AmaWaterways' pioneering

spirit," said AmaWaterways MD AU/NZ, Steve Richards.

"We've seen strong bookings for Colombia coming out of Australia and New Zealand this year, with travel advisors telling us this has been very appealing to their well-travelled clients who have been everywhere and done everything.

"They're looking for new stories and experiences, and to travel off the beaten track.

"That's what a Colombian river cruise will offer them." *JHM*



You're Invited to an Evening with AmaWaterways

Join us for our trade only event and hear the latest updates from Regional Sales Manager Christine Oliver and special guest appearance by Co-owner, Gary Murphy.

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TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2025
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(registration from 5:30pm)

The Star Casino
Level 6 - Events Centre
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(registration from 5:30pm)

HOTA - Home of the Arts Gold Coast
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NCL christens *Aqua* in glittering ceremony

Tuesday 15 April 2025

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) officially christened *Norwegian Aqua* in Miami yesterday, with the ship's godfather, American actor Eric Stonestreet, making a special appearance.

The event took place at Norwegian's terminal at PortMiami, and featured a preview of the cruise line's newest in-house production, *Revolution: A Celebration of Prince*.

"It is a very special time for all of us at NCL – we are welcoming a new incredible ship into our fleet with the christening of the stunning and action-packed, *Norwegian Aqua*, and we are doing so alongside her godfather, Eric Stonestreet," NCL President David Herrera said.

NCL also revealed major expansion plans for Great Stirrup Cay, its private island destination, with a range of new experiences debuting in the fourth quarter.

Opening later this year simultaneously with the new multi-ship pier will be an oversized heated pool area, which will include a splash zone for children and a swim-up bar for adults.



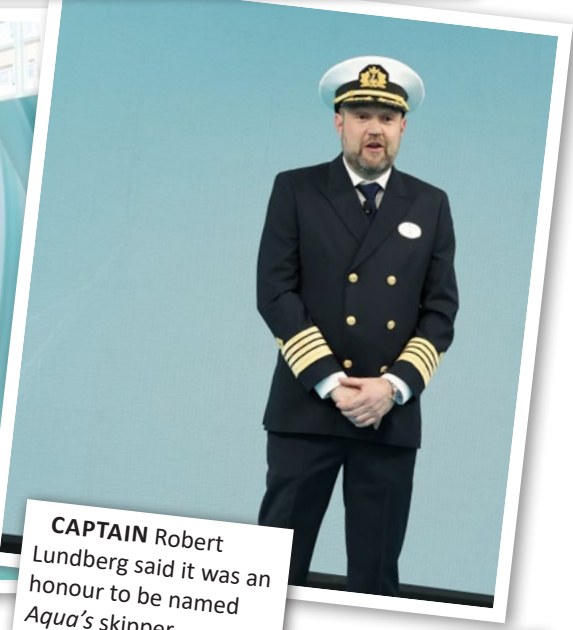
HERRERA introduces some of *Aqua's* crew members - "our secret sauce", as he described.



NCL President David Herrera introduces the new *Norwegian Aqua*.



THE initial details of Great Stirrup Cay's make-over are revealed.




CAPTAIN Robert Lundberg said it was an honour to be named *Aqua's* skipper.



THE christening ceremony is opened by the stars of Norwegian's new in-house production, *Revolution: A Celebration of Prince*.






ERIC Stonestreet officially names the new *Norwegian Aqua*.



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Ponant's plush preview



PONANT Explorations recently hosted a group of trade partners from across the APAC region, including Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore, on a 13-night famil trip through Indonesia.

The cohort sailed the 'Sacred Temples and Natural Sanctuaries' itinerary from Singapore to Darwin aboard the newly refurbished *MS Paul Gauguin* operated by Ponant's sister brand, Paul Gauguin Cruises.

Coinciding with the ship's return to service on 01 Apr following a seven-week, multi-million

dollar drydock in Singapore (*CW* 08 Apr), the famil was an opportunity for the trade partners to experience the vessel's refreshed features, along with immersive local encounters.

Highlights included a visit to the Borobudur Temple, a traditional dance welcome in Surabaya and even a Tahitian dance class with the on board performers.

After the group disembarked, *MS Paul Gauguin* made a 24-hour call in Darwin yesterday before continuing her journey back to French Polynesia. *JM*

SeaDream Bahamas

SEADREAM Yacht Club is debuting a series of Bahamas luxury yachting voyages directly from Palm Beach, Florida this week.

The seven-day sailings will explore Emerald Bay, Gordon's Beach, Andros Island, San Salvador, Staniel Cay, and Taino Beach aboard the 112-guest superyacht, *SeaDream II*.

The boutique cruise line will offer two roundtrip departures from Palm Beach, and two from San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 2025 and 2026, before adding a third Palm Beach roundtrip in 2027.

Atlas cruise saving

TRAVELLERS can take advantage of a new offer from Cruise Traveller on an Atlas Ocean Voyages food-themed sailing around the British Isles.

The 12-night 'Celtic Shores' package begins in Dublin on 19 Sep with a free night's stay in the Irish capital, before guests board *World Voyager* for an 11-night cruise to Amsterdam.

The deal is available from \$8,165pp - a saving of \$2,775 - for bookings made by 15 Jun, and includes complimentary champagne and US\$200pp onboard credit - see [HERE](#).




On Board: *Norwegian Aqua*

The Haven by Norwegian

The Haven by Norwegian is the cruise line's signature ship-within-a-ship retreat. Accessible by private elevators, this enclave offers a personal concierge, and a 24-hour butler, while you enjoy private facilities such as the Haven Lounge & Bar, an infinity pool, outdoor sauna, and cold room, all exclusively for suite guests.

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Cruise Weekly is Australasia's leading travel industry cruise publication.

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