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Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a cover wrap from **Ponant** and full pages from:

- Silversea
- Disney Cruise Line

Ponant offers more

PONANT'S BDM team is on hand to educate advisors about its unique destinations. The brand also offers top commissions, exclusive perks, competitive pricing, and special deals and more - see the **cover page** for details.

Track those kids

PARENTS aboard Royal Caribbean's newest ship *Star of the Seas* will be able to track their kids using a bracelet and the onboard app to provide real-time locations.

River set to Ignite the cruise sector

EXCLUSIVE

IGNITE Travel Group is doubling down on the river market, newly promoted Global Head of Cruise Michael Middleton has told **CW**.

The Ignite veteran, who recently made the step up to a global role with the company (**CW** 23 Jul), said he is on the search for dedicated product managers to service the river sector, as the space begins to continually attract younger passengers.

The new global role will see Middleton inherit oversight of the company's newly acquired Cruise Club UK business, based in Great Britain (**CW** 14 Nov 2024), in addition to his role as head of Australia's My Cruises brand.

The experienced cruise executive will be tasked with ensuring both markets are served with a holistic view.

River is a "key focus for us", Middleton (**pictured**) reinforced,



adding "our business is looking at growth and we are always looking at what is next.

"We are just about to go out and advertise to bolster our product team again [with] four new roles," he enthused.

River presents an opportunity to bring first-time passengers to the sector, Middleton believes, with the Ignite cruise executive particularly bullish on its ability to attract families.

The key to solving this market is offering shore experiences tailored towards families, he suggested, similar to those which are available with popular

multigenerational ocean lines, such as Royal Caribbean and MSC.

"I think there is an opportunity for river cruising to crack the family market," he explained.

"A lot of the river operators are really starting to appeal to a different demographic."

Luxury is another sector the company sees as open to new-to-cruise travellers, Middleton believes, with Ignite set to favour this segment going forward.

"It is making sure we can get some synergy, some benefits, identifying opportunities where both markets can be aligned...opportunities where we can double down on certain products," Middleton concluded.

Ignite may also look at introducing 24/7 support, with Cruise Club UK's Europe-oriented operating hours potentially able to service overnight enquiries from Australian customers. *MS*

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Helloworld toasts its cruise success

HELLOWORLD Travel thanked its global cruise partners last week by bringing together 70 industry leaders and top-selling travel advisors for a special Cruise Appreciation Event at O Bar & Dining in Sydney.

The night served as a celebration of strong industry partnerships, and a chance to reflect on cruise's future success.

Helloworld Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director, Cinzia Burnes, opened the evening by expressing gratitude for the company's many cruise partners for their ongoing support, noting several encouraging signs of sales growth in Australia.

"As we move into the FY26 period, we are already seeing strong indicators of year-on-year growth across the cruise sector," Burnes observed.

General Manager Cruise Steve



Brady echoed the leader's sentiments, praising the efforts of advisors in supporting Helloworld's cruise offering.

"Our agents continue to play a vital role in driving cruise sales through innovation and customer engagement," he said.

Brady also highlighted recent developments from Helloworld's wholesale cruise businesses, Cruiseco and Creative Cruising, including the successful rollout of

the new Signature Collection by Cruiseco (**CW** 17 Jul), as well as enhanced fly & cruise offers.

"These initiatives have been very well received by the trade, and we're excited to share that even more new releases are planned for the next 12 months."

Pictured are Brett and Louise Dann, Hunter Travel Group; Burnes and Brady; and Regent Seven Seas Cruises VP Sales & General Manager Lisa Pile. **MS**

Get on Rallio now

GET started with Rallio for Silversea, a social media platform which offers travel advisors a turnkey solution to quickly and easily post the cruise line's content to Facebook and Instagram.

Rallio is a great way to keep clients engaged with the latest Silversea news and updates - see more on **page four**.

DCL bids farewell

DISNEY Cruise Line (DCL) is encouraging Aussies to join the family brand on its final season Down Under.

To sweeten the deal, DCL is offering 50% discounts on the third and fourth guests booked on a select number of sailings across Australia and NZ.

Disney Wonder will no longer homeport locally after Feb 2026 - see **back page** for info.

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PORTHOLE

CRUISE lines are being consulted by the US Navy on a variety of technology issues such as ship maintenance, as the American military looks to improve its systems.

The US Navy has reportedly faced significant problems keeping its ships ready to sail, and now President Donald Trump's pick for top admiral is looking to cruise lines for ideas.

Admiral Daryl Caudle recently told the US Senate Armed Services Committee that the Navy needed to fix how it conducted ship maintenance in particular, and "learning from the best in the world (cruise lines) certainly should be on the table".

Caudle added that cruise brands like Norwegian Cruise Line and Carnival Cruise Line were consulted earlier this year on world's best practice to keep ships in tip-top shape.

The US Navy has been dealing with issues tied to maintenance for decades, from shipyard backlogs to limited dry dock availability, creating a stark difference between the military and the cruise sector in terms of turnaround times.

The Navy can take years to upgrade a vessel, while cruise line can achieve significant upgrades in less than a month.

Thankfully, cruise lines have rejected the idea of installing rocket launchers on its ships as a return favour from the Navy.

Vanuatu ready to return



CARNIVAL Adventure has become the first cruise ship to return to Port Vila after the Dec earthquake which devastated the destination (**CW** 19 Dec 2024).

The Carnival Cruise Line vessel arrived on Fri (**CW** 18 Jul) with 2,846 guests onboard, spending the day in Port Vila.

The Vanuatu Government organised a welcome ceremony for the guests and crew members (**pictured**), who will bring a much-needed economic boost to Vila.

"We are delighted to be returning to Port Vila, to bring a much-needed economic boost to the city following the devastating earthquake late last year," Carnival Corporation Country Manager Peter Little said.

"The Port Vila community has done it tough without cruise visitors this year, so it's great Carnival guests can help lift spirits, while spending money with local businesses."

Passengers disembarked at a temporary tender location, with the road between the cruise port and downtown remaining closed due to a landslide brought about by the earthquake.

Carnival Splendor and *Carnival Encounter* are also due to visit

Port Vila this month, with CCL set to be the only cruise line calling into the destination until Nov.

However, the last nine months have not been all bad news for Vanuatu, with Royal Caribbean earlier this year confirming a 2027 arrival date for its Lelepa private destination in the country (**CW** 16 May). *MS*

Breeze eases off

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has cancelled a number of 2027 cruises on *Carnival Breeze* out of Galveston, Texas.

According to reports, the affected cruises were set to depart on 11 Jan, 05 Mar, 13 Mar, 18 Mar and 22 Mar, 2027.

Carnival has e-mailed guests who had already booked these cruises to advise of the change.

The communication informed passengers that "due to a short-term change in itinerary and dry dock plans (scheduled maintenance) for *Carnival Breeze* for the specific timeframe referenced above, we are sorry to inform you that the above voyages, including yours, have been cancelled".



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