

### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **CLIA Memberships**.

### Sell more cruise

**AGENTS** can strengthen their cruise selling skills by joining the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) - find out how on the **back page**.

### Ships avoid Erin

**EIGHT** cruise ships across seven cruise lines have adjusted their itineraries to steer clear of Hurricane Erin, a Category 4 tropical storm impacting the Atlantic ocean near the Caribbean.

Carnival Cruise Line, Disney Cruise Line, MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, and Holland America Line (HAL) have confirmed changes so far.

Among the affected ships is the new *MSC World America*, which has shifted from her planned Eastern Caribbean itinerary to a Western Caribbean route instead.

Additionally, HAL's *Zuiderdam* will no longer visit St. Johns in Canada due to severe weather resulting from the hurricane, which - while not due to make landfall - is expected to affect the US East Coast and Canada's Atlantic Coast.

## RCI plays short game



**ROYAL** Caribbean's (RCI) shorter cruises are here to stay, and may soon also be sailing out of Europe, President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley has said.

The cruise line's head, speaking on board the new *Star of the Seas* last week, said shorter sailings of under a week have proved to be the ideal balance of what current and future guests are seeking.

"From a business-building perspective, the on-ramp to the cruising experience is a shorter product, because people don't really understand it, they're not sure about it, and the idea of committing to seven days or 10 days of vacation for an experience that you don't really know is more challenging," said Bayley, **pictured** with staff at the introduction of *Star*.

"However what we found several years ago when we started putting really top class hardware into the short market

when we opened Perfect Day at Cococay - the response was just phenomenal," Bayley described.

"In Asia, we've started to explore shorter cruises out of Singapore, which have become quite popular...we have even spoken about trying them in Europe," the RCI President added.

The line also offers a variety of shorter cruises out of Australia.

However there will still be plenty of week-long voyages out of Australia in the future, with Bayley revealing its upcoming Lelepa private destination will play a starring role in RCI's local program when it makes its debut in 2027 (**CW** yesterday).

Vanuatu, where Lelepa is located, is typically visited on nine- or 10-day round trips departing Australia.

One factor which is yet to impact Royal Caribbean though is Trump's tariffs, with the cruise line so far seeing "no effect whatsoever", Bayley said. **MS**

### Carnival appoints

**CARNIVAL** Corporation & plc has announced the appointment of Sandy Olsen as its new Vice President, Corporate & External Affairs for Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific.

The appointment will see Olsen return to Australia from the US, where she has spent the past three years focusing on Carnival's government and stakeholder relations.

"It has been a privilege to be part of the Carnival team in the US, and I am looking forward to returning home to work alongside my friends in the Australian cruise and travel industry," Olsen said.

She will transition to her new role over the next few weeks and will attend Cruise360 in Brisbane later this month.

### A chance to win

**MSC** Cruises has partnered with Back-Roads Touring to launch a new booking incentive for Flight Centre, Travel Associates and Cruiseabout agents.

From 01 Aug-30 Sep, agents who book an MSC Cruise sailing or a Back-Roads Touring trip will enter to win one of three offers in SA, Vic and Tas.

Booking confirmations should be sent to **Brenton. reidy@msccruises.com.au** and **k.traghard@topdeck.travel**.

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## NSW gets eco tick

**THE** Port Authority of NSW has become the first port in Australia to be certified by leading maritime environmental program, Green Marine, following a rigorous assessment of its sustainability practices.

The assessment looked at the air emissions, water quality, community relations, noise, and waste management at all six port locations in NSW.

Additionally, the Port Authority has obtained Silver Partner status under the NSW Government's Sustainability Advantage program.

"These achievements reflect the progress we've made in embedding sustainable practices across our operations, as we work towards net zero by 2040," said Group Executive, People, Environment and Legal Amy Beaumont.

## River and ocean collide

**SEABOURN** has teamed up with Uniworld Boutique River cruises to launch a new cruise package in 2026 combining two of their most popular small ship itineraries.

The offering merges Uniworld's seven-night 'Venice and the Jewels of the Veneto' itinerary onboard *SS La Venezia* with seven nights on *Seabourn Quest* sailing the 'Adriatic and Grecian Gems' between Venice and Athens.

Guests will enjoy the best of Venice and the Venetian lagoon, including the islands of Burano, Mazzorbo and Torcello, with included experiences such as an after-hours visit to St Mark's Basilica and a private wine tasting at Dominico di Baglio.

Private coach transfers for the short 20-minute trip from *SS La Venezia* (pictured) to embark *Seabourn Quest* are included.

"Our agents tell us that they are already combining Mediterranean



cruises with our boutique river cruises so this was a no-brainer of an idea," said Alice Ager, Uniworld MD, Australia & New Zealand.

"We are thrilled to make this partnership official and hope that this the first of many combo cruises to come."

Alex Pikardt, Senior Sales Director ANZ for Seabourn added: "This is a beautiful proposition offering the finest river and ocean cruising available in one trip, I think our agents will love this and I anticipate these first packages will sell really quickly."

The 15-day combo itinerary will begin 05 Jul or 30 Aug 2026 and is available to book now from \$11,400 ppts. *JM*

## Ovation gets more

**ROYAL** Caribbean International has announced *Ovation of the Seas* will receive 40 new staterooms during its upcoming refit (**CW** 19 Jun).

As part of the cruise company's Royal Amplified refurbishment program, the 2016-built ship is set to enter drydock ahead of its 2026 summer season in Alaska.

The new accommodations will be added to decks 12, 13 and 16, taking over spaces that are currently occupied by public areas, such as the ship's conference centre.

Royal has also flagged a significantly expanded Casino Royale, as well as new restaurants, a new nightclub, bar and a Starbucks as part of *Ovation's* refresh.

*Harmony of the Seas* and *Liberty of the Seas* will also undergo refits.

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 **AMAWATERWAYS**



**A WELL-KNOWN** Australian scientist believes he has figured out the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle - and, sadly for conspiracy theorists, it has nothing to do with aliens, sea monsters, or a wormhole into another universe.

Karl Kruszelnicki, familiar to the Australian public as 'Dr Karl', has insisted that the loss and disappearance of ships and planes in the mysterious area of ocean - marked roughly by Florida, Bermuda, and the Greater Antilles - is merely a fact of probabilities.

"The number [of ships and planes] that go missing in the Bermuda Triangle is the same as anywhere in the world on a percentage basis," Dr Karl said.

His opinion matches that of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, which wrote in 2020: "There is no evidence that mysterious disappearances occur with any greater frequency in the Bermuda Triangle than in any other large, well-travelled area of the ocean."

Environmental factors and evidence suggesting the area may cause a magnetic compass to point to true north instead of magnetic north can also help explain the mystery.



## Royal boosts variety



**ROYAL** Caribbean passengers should not fear a further shift toward Americentrism, President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley has said.

The CEO labelled the increase in Royal Caribbean ships home porting in the United States as a brief post-COVID course correction, as the cruise line frantically redeployed vessels to destinations which were willing and able to cruise.

"Coming out of the pandemic, the consumer became a little bit more regionalised, or even localised...that consumer's beginning to thaw out more and more, which is why you're seeing more deployment activity," explained Bayley.

"I think you'll see a gradual shift in sourcing, you'll see gradual shift to our deployment, [as] you go into markets like Europe and Asia and so forth."

Bayley painted the current cruise landscape as vastly different from the reality of post-COVID, as market dynamics shift.

"There's great demand now coming from Europe again," Bayley enthused.

"There's also a little bit of inbound softness from Europe

and Canada [to the United States]," he added.

Bayley emphasised varying where Royal Caribbean's ships go is just as important as diversifying what is available on board. *MS*

**Pictured left is *Star* alongside her fleetmate *Symphony of the Seas*, at Royal Caribbean's private island Perfect Day CocoCay.**

## MSC adjusts route

**MSC** Cruises has revised its 2026 World Cruise to avoid the Red Sea region, which will mean a significant change to the final segment.

While the adjusted itinerary has not yet been released, the cruise line has notified guests booked on the 118-night *MSC Magnifica* voyage that some ports, as well as the Suez Canal transit, will be scrapped.

"This decision was made with your safety, comfort, and peace of mind as our highest priorities," the company told guests, citing "ongoing political instability" in the region.

Those booked on the cruise, which is scheduled to depart from Italy on 05 Jan, can request a full refund once the updated route is disclosed.

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