

### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features three pages of the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **Cruiseco**.

### Cruiseco incentive

**AN EXCLUSIVE** \$100 booking bonus agent offer is available with Cruiseco until the end of the month.

Those who book a Royal Caribbean cruise out of Singapore can earn a \$100 gift card, celebrating Cruiseco's new Book & Go packages.

The offer is available on all Royal Caribbean cruises departing Singapore between Oct 2025 and Mar 2026 - more on **page 4**.

### APT UK changes

**APT** and Travelmarvel brands have de-merged in the United Kingdom to become two standalone brands.

The move allows Travelmarvel UK to operate with a clearer market focus, APT Travel Group told **CW**.

Travelmarvel UK has also introduced a refreshed brand identity to support the cruise line's emergence as a standalone brand.

APT Luxury Travel and Travelmarvel have always operated as standalone brands in Australia, meaning there is no change in the local market.

## Signature to provide full service

### EXCLUSIVE

**HELLOWORLD** Travel's new luxury Signature Collection by Cruiseco (**CW** 17 Jul) is aiming to help advisors offer their high-end clients an entire holiday, with luxury cruise at the centre.

The company's General Manager Cruise Steve Brady (pictured) said the increasing importance of cruise to Helloworld's network constantly challenges it to ensure it is meeting its advisors' needs.

"We have a range of agents who are specialists in this space, as well as strong volume through the breadth of our networks," he told **Cruise Weekly**.

"It was time to make sure we were showcasing the incredible work that our networks already do, as well as ensuring we are supporting their growth in this cruise segment."

Brady said the launch had already sparked interest from several other cruise lines.

Helloworld is now in discussions with a number of potential members for the new invitation-only network.

"[Luxury is] about experiencing the destination, cultural enrichment and authenticity," Brady declared.

"We're taking that learning with Signature Collection and building out broader itineraries that include a cruise, as well as further experiences to deliver an entire holiday," he added.



"That might mean a luxury rail journey and unique hotel stay to see a destination more thoroughly pre- or post-cruise or working with another partner to deliver an entire land itinerary alongside a cruise."

Luxury is one of a number of cruise segments Helloworld is planning to zero in on, as it builds value for its network.

"Expedition is another area we see potential for the immediate future...there is also ongoing potential in the river cruise space," Brady added. **MS**

### McAlpine Imagine

**IMAGINE** Cruising has appointed former Cunard Commercial Director Katrina McAlpine as its Director B2B Sales (**CW** breaking news).

The appointment comes as the company accelerates its trade-focused strategy following a period of strong growth and partnerships.

Imagine Cruising said with McAlpine now leading the trade sales team, it will continue to build its reputation as a trusted, agent-first partner, while expanding its portfolio of curated holidays that combine cruise, touring, rail and hotel experiences.

Speaking on her new role, McAlpine said: "I look forward to working closely with our partners to grow our relationships, provide meaningful support, and help them sell more bespoke, high-yield holidays with confidence."



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## Wonder to California

**DISNEY** Cruise Line is expanding its sailings in California and Texas in 2026-27, with *Disney Wonder* to trade Australia for San Diego.

The ship will make her way to the city in Oct 2026, offering three- to seven-night sailings through to Apr 2027.

Meanwhile, the cruise line's *Disney Magic* will also kick off the season in Oct 2026 from San Diego, with three- to seven-night voyages.

*Magic* will stop in Santa Catalina Island, as well as Cabo San Lucas, Ensenada, and Puerto Vallarta.

The ship will then head to Texas for four-, five-, and seven-night sailings, visiting destinations such as Progreso, as well as the line's Castaway Cay private destination.

Florida will also be well-represented as part of the program, with five ships sailing from the state.

## Whitby to open ACA '25



**WESTERN** Australia's Minister for Tourism Reece Whitby is set open the 2025 Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Conference in Fremantle next week, which is themed 'Anchoring Success Across Every Region' (**CW** 23 Jul).

Whitby will address delegates at the welcome function at Gage Roads Freo on Wed 03 Sep, as Scenic's ultra-luxury yacht *Scenic Eclipse II* makes her inaugural visit to Fremantle.

"This is a significant moment for ACA and for Fremantle," ACA Chief Executive Jill Abel said.

"Minister Whitby's presence, along with *Scenic Eclipse II* sailing past the function, sets the tone for a conference focused on innovation, regional opportunity, and industry collaboration."

Minister Whitby added, "It's a privilege to open the 2025 Australian Cruise Association Conference here in Fremantle".

"WA's cruise industry generated \$385 million in economic impact in 2023-24 and supported more than 1,200 local jobs, making it a vital contributor to Western Australia's tourism sector"

"I look forward to this event building on that success, strengthening industry partnerships, and highlighting the vital role cruise plays in driving regional tourism."

Fremantle Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge will join delegates at the Fri morning conference breakfast, while Deputy Mayor Jenny Archibald will also attend the welcome function, joining cruise sector dignitaries.

Guests will hear from Stu McLeod, CEO of the Fremantle Foundation and guitarist for rock band Eskimo Joe, as he reflects on the city's creative spirit and community impact (**CW** 23 Jul).

This year's conference marks ACA's return to Fremantle for the first time in two decades, bringing together over 150 delegates representing ports, tourism organisations, cruise lines, shore excursion operators, and government stakeholders.

The program will explore how Australia can strengthen its position in the global cruise market through sustainable growth and regional dispersal, with key panels and presentations including a discussion on the rise of expedition and luxury cruising.

"This year's program is our most ambitious yet - bringing global insights, operational expertise, and regional innovation into one place," Abel said.

"Fremantle is the perfect setting to ignite the next phase of growth in the Australian cruise industry."

Register to attend **HERE**. JM

## Tas upgrade project

**A MILESTONE** has been reached in the redevelopment of Tasmania's Macquarie Wharf 6, with three shortlisted contractors now developing designs for the major project.

TasPorts said the redevelopment will strengthen its cruise capabilities, with new features such as shore power infrastructure and upgraded portside facilities set to be built at the port.

The redevelopment of Wharf 6 is the first stage of a broader project, which will deliver a dedicated Antarctic berth with shore power and upgraded facilities, securing Tasmania's position as a global gateway to the Southern Ocean.

## Japan to hit 1 mil?

**JAPAN** is aiming for one million local cruise passengers annually by 2030 to boost the country's cruise market, which has yet to rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

According to reports, the country's Ministry of Tourism is targeting 700,000 Japanese cruise passengers on domestic ships by the end of the decade, and 300,000 on international ships.

Japan is a popular destination for many of the world's biggest cruise lines, and local businesses are starting to take note.

Many Japanese firms are now building their own ships, including Nippon Yusen (NYK Line), which just christened the LNG-powered *Asuka III*, which is said to be the country's "largest cruise ship ever" (**CW** 17 Jul).

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**IT ISN'T** often that cruise industry workers get to go undercover, but CEO of cruise retailer Harding+ Chris Matthews recently took on one such assignment, boarding Princess Cruises and Carnival Cruise Line sailings as a guest to observe the retail experience first hand.

While, disappointingly, the retail boss didn't don a disguise, he did avoid name tags, meetings, or special treatment, and struck up conversations with guests to hear honest feedback.

"Any retail CEO will tell you that listening to guests and colleagues is critical," he said.

"Going undercover gave me a raw, honest insight into what's working and what we can make even better."

Thankfully, Matthews discovered that the retail teams "delivered all that we stand for in the best ways for guests".

## Couples will Xcel on Celebrity



**CELEBRITY** Cruises' upcoming flagship *Celebrity Xcel* is going all-in on couples enrichment, through the 'Day Night, All Day Long concept', Captain Kyriakos Matragkas has said.

The veteran Celebrity captain, who has spent 25 years at the helm of the cruise line's ships, said many of the onboard product evolutions on *Xcel* are designed for romance.

This includes the ship's open-air restaurant Bora, and new shows in *Xcel's* theatre.

"Bora will have a warm, intimate vibe that makes it perfect for a

romantic dinner under the stars.

"[It] will also serve our first-ever brunch concept, where couples and groups of friends can enjoy an upbeat atmosphere with live music, a delicious Mediterranean-inspired menu and over-the-top customisable Bloody Marys," Matragkas added.

"To keep the romance alive, *Celebrity Xcel* is also offering one of the most expansive entertainment offerings I've ever seen - from new shows in The Theatre and The Club, dance parties, and a candlelit concert experience," he said. *MS*

## Disney cruise boom

**DISNEY** Cruise Line sailings for 2026 are nearly half booked, the brand revealed during The Walt Disney Company's recent third-quarter earnings call.

Chief Financial Officer Hugh Johnston said the ratio of booked rooms is even higher on Disney's newer ships.

"Forward bookings look great, and we're running at very high occupancies in terms of the cruise ships," Johnson told investors.

He also shared that the Disney Experiences segment - which includes the cruise line, theme parks, and more - has an operating income of US\$2.5 billion, which is up 13% compared to the PCP.

Walt Disney Company Chief Executive Officer Bob Iger also explained to investors why he believes new ship *Disney Adventure* will be a success in Singapore (*CW* 22 Aug).

"[It is a] region that we think has huge Disney brand affinity, and it creates a huge opportunity for us," Iger said during the earnings call.



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