

Cruise Weekly today

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

Fremantle's new Spirit

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has debuted in Fremantle, with *Norwegian Spirit* docking yesterday in the WA city.

Spirit's call in Fremantle marked the commencement of her Australian season, with the ship this year leaning into its "adult-friendly" onboard ambience.

Close to 2,000 passengers aboard *Spirit* enjoyed the opportunity to explore the city during a 14-hour stay, supporting local businesses and tourism while showcasing the city to overseas travellers.

Spirit is now continuing to Busselton and Albany, which will also be maiden visits, before sailing along Australia's coastline, with calls to Adelaide, Kangaroo Island, Eden, Burnie, and an overnight in Melbourne, where she will stay for more than 30 hours.

The ship's first Australian sailing of the season concludes in Sydney on 21 Dec.

Spirit will sail a curated collection of 10 open-jaw itineraries during her full Australian season, ranging from 11 to 13 days, between Sydney and NZ, where Norwegian will also visit ports such as Timaru and Gisborne for the first time.

She will then reposition to the Pacific for a series of island itineraries, ranging from 11 to 13 days, departing Lautoka, Honolulu, and Papeete.

"We're thrilled to visit Fremantle for the very first time, and our guests are just as excited to explore this beautiful port and the other incredible destinations we'll visit," MD Ben Angell said.

McAlpine to run MSC Group



KATRINA McAlpine (pictured) has been appointed Managing Director of MSC Group's Cruise Division (**CW** breaking news).

McAlpine will be based in the company's Sydney office, and report into VP International Sales, MSC Cruises & Explora Journeys Antonio Paradiso; and Explora Global Head of Commercial Strategy & Sales Operations Francesco Iannaccone.

She will bring extensive commercial leadership experience to the role, with a strong track record across luxury cruising in particular, from her six years as Cunard Line's Commercial Director - a role she was made redundant from in May this year (**CW** 07 Jan).

McAlpine has for the past six months served as B2B Director of cruise packager Imagine Cruising (**CW** 25 Aug).

"On behalf of the Cruise Division, I am delighted to welcome Katrina to the company," Paradiso enthused.

"She brings with her a wealth of experience and will play a key role in strengthening our brands.

"This appointment reinforces our growing presence in the region and showcases our determination to continue delivering on the goals and commitments we've established

for this important market."

MSC Cruises has been without a local Managing Director since the departure of Lisa Teitotu 12 months ago (**CW** 03 Dec 2024).

Explora has never had a local MD, with Nicole Costantin serving as Head of Sales for the brand since coming on board almost three and a half years ago (**CW** 07 Jul 2022). *MS*

Pearl is glittering

PEARL Expeditions has appointed Julie Golding as Head of Commercial & Product Marketing to drive the new line's next growth phase.

Golding will report to General Manager & Head of Sustainability Mick Fogg, leading the commercial sales and customer service team, while also working closely with marketing & PR agency GTI and sales representation agency La Collection.

She will be responsible for implementing integrated sales and marketing strategies to drive growth, while building Pearl's positioning in the boutique expedition market.

Golding most recently served as Ponant Explorations' Key Account Manager, following a restructure of the cruise line's team last month (**CW** 06 Nov).

She has also worked with Silversea, APT, and Globus family of brands in the past, as well as Rocky Mountaineer.

Gregor & Lewis

BESPOKE TRAVEL

Looking for a sea change? A new beginning to start the new year?

Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel is an awarding winning boutique travel agency located in Noosa Heads on the beautiful Sunshine Coast. We are family owned, specialising in small ship & expedition cruising, as well as luxury travel to all corners of the globe. We are looking for an experienced leisure travel consultant to join our team. We are part of the LINK Travel Group and a Virtuoso member.

The successful candidate should have:

- At least 3 years' experience in international travel
- Excellent airfare & ticketing skills
- Good destination knowledge & understanding of the cruise industry
- Strong sales skills
- A sound knowledge of Amadeus & Tramada would be an advantage
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Ability to work in a small team of 6 people
- Passion for travel and a strong customer focus

To be considered for this role, please forward your application and resume to: melindagregor@gregorlewis.com.au by Thursday 18 December 2025.



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PASSENGERS aboard P&O Cruises' *Iona* in the United Kingdom recently had their departure delayed by a day after more than half a dozen containers of bananas fell off a nearby cargo ship.

Sixteen containers were lost from a vessel in Southampton, near where *Iona* was docked, on Sat night local time.

Eight of them were carrying bananas, while two held plantains, and one avocados.

The issue caused *Iona* to become stuck in port for around 24 hours while the mess was cleaned up.

It was an inauspicious start to the cruise in more ways than one, with bananas famously considered bad luck in maritime superstition.

Prestige floats out

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises has floated out its first new ship class in 10 years, with *Seven Seas Prestige* hitting the water late last month.

The float-out ceremony took place at Fincantieri in Italy, with officials from the shipyard serving as Madrina, shattering a champagne bottle against the ship's hull.

Grace's suites revealed



CRYSTAL has revealed the first suite renderings of *Crystal Grace* (pictured), showcasing the new ship's suite categories.

The luxury vessel, which is scheduled to debut in 2028 (**CW** 14 Oct), will include all-suite, all-veranda accommodations with enhanced storage.

Select suites will offer wraparound verandas, marking a first-ever configuration for the cruise line.

Grace's most common suite will be the 31m² Aquamarine Veranda suite, which features a vanity area and a comfortable sofa, with afternoon canapes served daily.

There will be multiple versions of the room, which includes a 7.9m² veranda - some with a separate shower and bathtub, while others will offer a spacious walk-in shower and walk-in closet.

Meanwhile, the generous 114m² Penthouse suites are designed for guests seeking an elevated residential-style retreat.

These suites feature a 61m² veranda, with the four Penthouse suites at the aft of the ship on decks 7 and 9 including a 91.2m² wraparound veranda.

Each suite offers two walk-in closets, separate living and dining areas with panoramic ocean views, a study, and a built-in bar.

A Jacuzzi bathtub, separate shower, bidet and guest bathroom complete the Penthouse, while passengers are also able to enjoy unlimited dining at specialty restaurants, unlimited laundry service, and afternoon canapes.

Grace will officially debut on 21 Jun 2028, following a series of preview voyages. *MS*

Record Cruise Month

OCT'S Cruise Month generated record interest in cruising, according to analysis by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

Record levels of engagement from both consumers and advisors produced Cruise Month's best-ever results, CLIA said, with social media reach more than doubling from the previous year.

Oct's digital activities, which included social media activity and digital advertising, resulted in major increases in consumer engagement over last year's campaign, including a 285% increase in clicks generated via LinkedIn and a 140% increase in clicks via Facebook and Instagram.

New visitors to the CLIA website increased by 12% over the previous year, while overall page views increased 33%.

More than 3,000 CLIA advisors visited the Cruise Month Toolkit to make use of its marketing resources, a 51% increase over 2024.

Advisors also increased their involvement in this year's expanded Cruise Month webinar program, with more than 4,800 webinar registrations over the month, a 43% increase on 2024.

CLIA Managing Director Australasia Joel Katz said the campaign's increased support "has helped lift the excitement around cruising".



SAILING NEW WATERS

Here's why the cruise industry is setting sail for Southeast Asia.

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Meet the crew

**Cruise Weekly speaks with
Holland America Line's
Tihana Glumac.**

Job title: Cellar Master aboard
MS Noordam

Home country: Croatia.

*How long have you been
working on cruise ships?* More
than 20 years across various
cruise lines. I joined the
Noordam just a month ago.

*What's the best thing about
working aboard MS Noordam?*

I think *Noordam* has the best itineraries, currently it's the only
Holland America Line ship cruising in destinations like Australia
and New Zealand as well as Asia. I have a great team and I love
seeing them flourish. I also very much appreciate the flexibility
of my role; Holland America has only one Cellar Master on each
ship and the company is able to extend or shorten contracts
depending on each person's family requirements, which is great.

What is your favourite cruising destination? Anything a little
bit out of the ordinary, particularly Asia. Japan in particular is a
destination I love very much.

Explain what your job is day-to-day? I'm in charge of anything to
do with wines on board, from provisioning from our head office
to local purchasing and overseeing the service on board. As well
as the global contracts for supply, we have the opportunity to
purchase wines locally, which means for example on this voyage
we have 16 Australian and New Zealand wines in total. I work
closely with the Executive Chef, the restaurant managers, guest
services and housekeeping. All of the dining venues are under
me regarding beverage supervision, and I have two sommeliers
working for me. We also have wine tasting events on sea days. My
main job is making sure that everyone is happy.

Who is the most famous person you've served? My most famous
guests are people I look after in the summer season when I'm not
on the ship. I usually work until May on board, and then I go to
Dubrovnik where I work in a secret Michelin-starred restaurant. I
can't tell you its name because it's only for celebrities who don't
want the paparazzi around. I've looked after the Djokovic family,
Michael Jordan, royal families from around the world, football
players like Ronaldo, Messi...we keep them very silently in our
hidden place.

How do you spend your time at home? As well as working during
the Croatian high season I love to do hiking. I used to be a
handball player in the national team, but I'm now keeping my legs
safe so I don't do any sport - even though I'm really good at it!



Crescent bespoke

CRESCENT Seas is
introducing bespoke
residences at sea, as part of its
new Customization Program,
announced at this year's ILTM
in Cannes.

Future residents have been
invited to co-create their
dream homes at sea aboard
its newbuild *The Ocean*, which
will arrive in 2028.

Residences start at US\$3
million and are available for full
customisation, allowing owners
to personalise layouts, finishes,
and features, in collaboration
with design partners.

Future owners can detail
wrap-around balconies,
outdoor showers, dual
vanities, full kitchens, and
flexible multi-room layouts.

AIDA renovation

AIDA Cruises' AIDA LUNA is
about to become the second
ship to complete the line's
Evolution initiative after seven
weeks in the shipyard.

The vessel spent almost
seven weeks at the
Chantier Naval shipyard
in France, during which
time all staterooms were
modernised, new restaurants
and snack bars added, more
entertainment and family
options on board, two new
wellness suites, and more
digitisation throughout.

AIDA LUNA's exclusive areas
have been enhanced, with
suite guests able to look
forward to a new dedicated
lounge and Sky Deck with two
new whirlpools.



A city fit for a Princess

IT WAS wonderful to be back in
Sydney last week for our end-of-year
celebration at the Opera House,
sharing an afternoon of connection
and conversation with members and
industry colleagues.

A highlight was *Viking Orion*
serendipitously sailing past,
continuing her journey down the
east coast before heading to NZ to
complete her 93-day voyage.

We also held our final Board
meeting of 2025, which was
particularly uplifting.

Exciting developments were shared
across the board - from expanding
deployments to new destination
planning initiatives.

A standout highlight was the rapid
progress of SA Tourism Minister's
Cruise Working Group, which,
despite being formed just over a year
ago, is already delivering outcomes.

We were also delighted to welcome
former Board member Scott Lovett
back to the table, this time in his new
capacity with BDO.

Lovett shared the draft Positioning
Paper that will form a core pillar of
ACA's federal advocacy strategy,
and will play a key role in shaping
a national cruise strategy and
ensuring the industry's voice is both
coordinated and forward-looking.

Sydney provided a fitting backdrop
to these discussions; as Australia's
largest cruise gateway, the city
remains an essential cog in the
national cruise engine.

The inaugural arrival of *Discovery
Princess* over the weekend further
underscored this strength,
reinforcing Australia's position
as a "stand-out destination" and
highlighting that staying globally
competitive is key to attracting even
more ships to our region.



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