



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

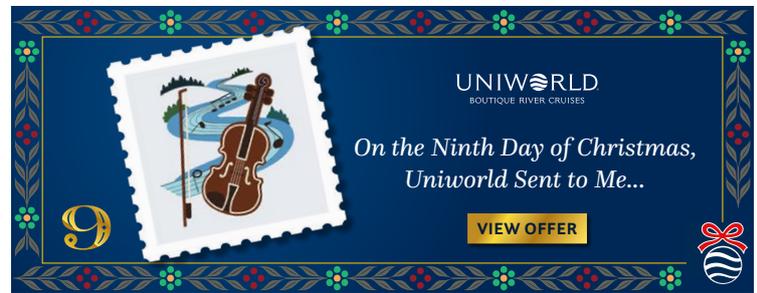
Looking for a sea change? A new beginning to start the new year?

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.



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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CRUISE WEEKLY 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' *AIDAluna* 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.

AIDAluna'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.