



Cruise Weekly today

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

Tassie milestone

TASMANIA is celebrating a milestone for its cruise sector this week, with the state welcoming its 1.5 millionth cruise passenger into the Port of Hobart since the industry's resurgence in 2013.

The achievement highlights the ongoing strength of cruise tourism in the state, with the landmark pax carried by Disney Cruise Line's *Disney Wonder*.

"This milestone is a testament to the collaborative efforts of TasPorts, local tourism operators, and the Tasmanian Government in enhancing the visitor experience and supporting sustainable industry growth," Tasports said.

Swartz to exit Carnival Corp after 25 years

LONG-TIME Carnival Corporation senior executive Jan Swartz has resigned from the global cruise company after close to a 25-year tenure.

Swartz (**pictured**) plans to exit her current position as Executive Vice President, Strategic Operations, in Apr - a role she has held since Jun last year - bringing to a close an extended run with Carnival which started in 2001, when she came on board with Princess in a strategy role.

The high-profile leader confirmed she has not yet locked in any future professional plans, revealing she will instead take some time off while she contemplates her next move.

"I plan...to take six to 12 months off to savour time with family and friends while I think about what might come next," Swartz said.

"I leave with a heart full of gratitude for all of the incredible



relationships and extraordinary experiences I've had over the years, and pride in our team's strength and resilience in bringing the business back to breaking records," she added.

The announcement was made at a town hall meeting at Carnival's US head office, with CEO Josh Weinstein labelling Swartz's value to the cruise business as "irreplaceable".

"We will miss [her] incredible contributions and lasting impact on our business, and the example

she sets for the rest of us in how to lead with deep compassion and genuine kindness," he said.

Swartz will not be directly replaced, with her duties to be allocated either to other areas in corporate, or to one of Carnival's operating units.

Her tenure at Carnival Corp will be best remembered for leading the Princess Cruises brand globally as President for seven years, as well as another three taking charge of the Holland America Group. *AB*

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Cayman cruise win

A **CRUISE** pier development in the Cayman Islands could soon be a reality, after lawmakers agreed to hold a public referendum in Apr.

The announcement follows persistent lobbying by the Association for Cruise Tourism, which said it is essential to develop a permanent berthing pier for cruise ships to stop the decline of the destination's cruise tourism.

A cruise port for the British Territory, which currently relies on tendering, has been proposed several times over many years but has until now always stalled due to environmental concerns and overall costs (**CW** 27 Jun 2023).

Mooloolaba cruise boom



MOOLOOLABA on the Sunshine Coast is anticipating an economic uplift during a normally quiet period for the town, as it prepares to welcome a series of cruise ships through Feb and Mar.

The cruise season will kick off with the arrival of *Viking Sun* this weekend with 930 passengers on board; followed by *MS Azamara Pursuit* with 777 guests on 22 Feb; and *Viking Venus* on 23 Feb, carrying 930 passengers.

The cruise ship *MS Amadea* is scheduled to arrive on 28 Feb, bringing 600 passengers to the shores of Mooloolaba, while the *Seven Seas Mariner* will conclude the cruise season on 30 Mar with 769 passengers.

Sunshine Coast Council Economy Portfolio and Divisional Councillor Joe Natoli said the ship visits will significantly boost the region's tourism sector, as well as its retail, hospitality, and other local businesses.

"Cruise ship arrivals are an important part of the Sunshine Coast's tourism mix as they provide a welcome economic boost for our region," said Natoli.

"This is a great opportunity to showcase the best of what our region has to offer, ensuring a memorable experience for all cruise passengers."

Natoli pointed to the latest Tourism and Events Queensland research, which shows cruise

ship guests to the Sunshine Coast spend an average of \$450 each per day while on shore.

Passengers also frequently return to the destination and encourage their friends and family to visit, providing long-term benefits for the region.

Visit Sunshine Coast staff, Visitor Information Centre volunteers and tourism operators will be at Mooloolaba's wharf from 8am to greet passengers as they disembark, helping them make the most of their shore excursions as they explore the Sunshine Coast on their stopover.

"The cruise ships provide an impressive contribution to the Sunshine Coast economy," Visit Sunshine Coast CEO Matt Stoeckel said.

"These visits are worth around \$1 million a year." *JM*

Oceania cuisine

OCEANIA Cruises has unveiled reimagined menus for its Grand Dining Room venues, which will introduce more than 270 brand-new recipes.

Featuring a signature eggs benedict breakfast selection, a French bistro-inspired lunch and elegant dinner entrees, the updated selection will launch on the cruise line's newest 1,200-guest ship *Allura* in Jul 2025.

New roles ahoy

JOSEPHINE Hanschmann has joined Silversea as its Campaign Marketing Manager.

Hanschmann will look after Silversea's trade marketing, having most recently served as Senior Marketing Specialist with Cunard Line.

She has also previously worked for Ecruising and Viking in her cruise career.

MEANWHILE, Crystal's parent company, Abercrombie & Kent Travel Group, has appointed Debra Fox as MD for the United Kingdom & APAC.

The move, which is effective from Apr, will see Fox relocated to the United Kingdom, from where she will manage both of the markets.



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ROYAL Caribbean's former cruise ship, *Song of America*, has sung its last tune.

Now berthed at the Alang Shipbreaking Yard in India, the fourth-ever ship in Royal Caribbean's fleet will be dismantled and recycled, marking the end to four decades of sailing the high seas.

The vessel has faced a number of changes during her lifetime, including spending 10 years sailing the Greek Isles with Celestyal Cruises as *Celestyal Olympia*.

Renamed in 2024 as *Bella Fortuna* (or *Fortu*) the ship set off on her final journey on 22 Jan 2025, sailing from Port Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE to arrive on India's west coast on 01 Feb.

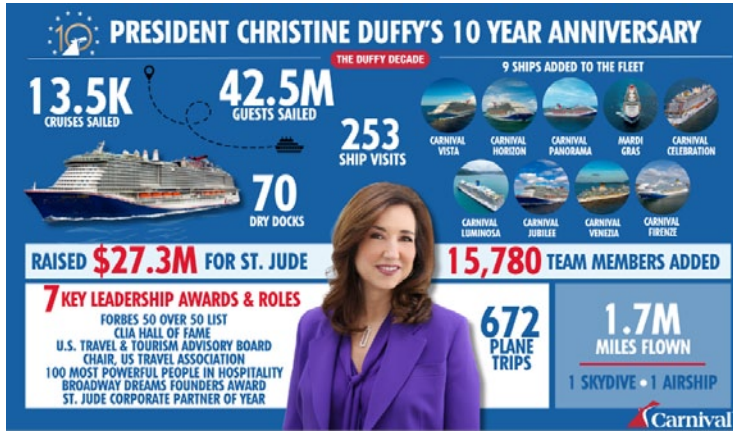
The captain got the ship as far onto the beach as possible, after which anchors and chains were used to stabilise it.

Onlookers wandered down to witness the beached ship, which measures just over 703 feet in length.

Work has already begun to break down *Fortu*, which could take scrappers anywhere from a couple of weeks to several months to complete.

The former *Song of America* will live on in some ways though, with her steel and metal to be recycled, possibly to help build a new ship, while furnishings will be removed for resale and reuse.

Duffy's decade with CCL



CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) President, Christine Duffy, has marked 10 years of steering Carnival Corporation's suite of global cruise lines.

Since assuming the leadership role in 2015, Duffy has "brought a new level of engagement, enthusiasm, innovation and excitement to Carnival", the company said.

Under her leadership, the cruise line has operated 13,500 sailings; hosted a total 42.5 million guests; added nine ships to the Carnival fleet; conducted 70 dry dock ship refurbishments; and hired 15,780 new team members.

During that time, Duffy made 253 visits to Carnival ships, took 672 plane trips, and flew 1.7 million miles.

She was also honoured by *Forbes* magazine; inducted into the CLIA Hall of Fame; served as national chair of the US Travel Association; served on the US Department of Commerce's Travel & Tourism Advisory Board; and was named one of the top 100 US leaders in hospitality.

Throughout the decade,

Duffy has taken to the skies in an airship, jumped out of an airplane for hurricane disaster relief, and led Carnival's efforts to raise \$27.3 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

"With Duffy at the helm, the Carnival fleet is always on the move, and the entire Carnival family joins in wishing her congratulations," CCL stated.

In celebration of the milestone, the cruise line has released a video highlighting Duffy's numerous accomplishments - watch it **HERE**. *JM*

Disney reinstates

DISNEY Cruise Line has reversed its decision to cancel a call to Noumea, New Caledonia, for *Disney Wonder's* 10 Feb sailing.

The cruise line initially cancelled the call in early Jan due to "the limited availability of experiences as a result of the prior unrest".

The company did not explain the decision to reverse the itinerary change.

Discover World Asia

MSC Cruises is inviting agents to tune into an upcoming webinar to learn about MSC Cruises' newest ship, *MSC World Asia*, set to launch in 2026.

Two sessions will take place on Wed 12 Feb, with Bronwyn Knight, MSC Cruises NSW/Qld/ACT BDM to host an 8:30am AEST session while Aaron Eilers, Qld BDM, will host a 12:30pm AEST session.

The 20-minute webinar will include an overview of the ship, as well as itineraries, and will be followed by a five-minute interactive question-and-answer session.

Brigita Devries, Senior Sales Manager, said the webinar will allow agents to "see what makes [the ship] so special and to gain more insight into [her] special features" - register **HERE** by 2pm 11 Feb.

Great Chimu Sale

TRAVELLERS can now secure savings on Chimu Adventure's Antarctic and South American cruises by taking advantage of the cruise line's biggest sale for the year.

The Great Chimu Sale offers up to 25% off select departures and cabins on Antarctic Peninsula cruises in 2025/26; savings of up to \$11,574 on the 11-day 'Best of Antarctica: Whale Journey'; and a US\$2,000 air credit per person on the 12-day 'Spirit of Antarctica' voyage.

Advisors can access the marketing pack **HERE**.