



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Avalon says oui oui

**AVALON** Waterways has launched a free two-night Paris extension on its Avalon Bordeaux cruises.

The promotion is available for new bookings made between now and 18 Apr.

Cruisers will spend two nights in Paris, and be taken on a guided city tour of the city's iconic landmarks, such as the recently re-opened Notre-Dame de Paris, the Eiffel Tower, and the Louvre, before embarking on Avalon's newest eight-day cruise.

The voyage sails along the Garonne and Dordogne rivers where travellers can delight in Bordeaux's vineyards.

## Eden seeks input on cruise sector

**THE** Port Authority of NSW and NSW Maritime have established a new Port of Eden Stakeholder Group, encouraging community members to help shape the coastal town's cruising future.

Applications for the Group close at the end of the month, at which point it will replace the Eden Community Consultative Committee, taking a multi-agency approach to address and consult on key port priorities, prominently cruise tourism.

Local residents, business owners, and industry stakeholders will receive first-hand updates, and be able to provide feedback on projects and policies impacting the Eden and surrounding South Coast region.

One of the Group's key priorities will be to align the development of the cruise precinct with the adjacent Snug Cove Maritime Precinct works (**CW** 10 Oct 2022).

"Cruise and maritime is a vital driver for Eden's economy, supporting local businesses, creating jobs, and helping Eden and the entire Sapphire Coast thrive," Port Authority of NSW General Manager of Cruise Martin Bidgood said.

"The Eden Stakeholder Group will keep community at the heart of future developments, so the benefits are felt by everyone who calls Eden home.

"Eden locals have a vested interest in shaping the future of the cruise and maritime industry in the region."

Cruise Lines International Association MD Joel Katz said Eden's history of working with cruise has seen it enjoy a positive relationship with the sector.

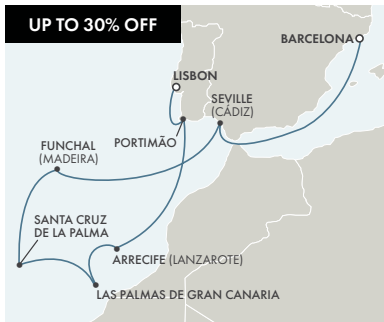
"Eden has earned a great deal of success in cruising thanks to a very passionate local community and careful collaboration among

the various stakeholders.

"Local voices have played a big part in supporting cruise visitation and maximising the economic benefits of cruising, and we encourage their continued efforts through the Port of Eden Stakeholder Group."

The Australian Cruise Association also welcomed the formation of the Group, with Chief Executive Jill Abel saying: "the Eden community has played a vital role in the growth of cruise ship visitation to the town and the broader region's success.

"The economic benefits generated by the cruise industry and the maritime sector are well recognised, providing a boost to local businesses and fostering a strong sense of pride among residents as they showcase their town," she added, calling for a multi-agency approach to developing the area. *MS*



### MAJESTIC COASTS

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On location on board  
*Ovation of the Seas*

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Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of Royal Caribbean, which is this week hosting us on *Ovation of the Seas'* first-ever call in Eden.

**TODAY** is our first full day on board Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas*, as she makes her way to Eden for her inaugural visit to the New South Wales South Coast.

Today's line-up has us trying out *Ovation's* North Star, which elevates passengers high above the ship for unrivalled, 360-degree views of the ocean.

Tonight we will sit down for dinner at Jamie's Italian, available exclusively at sea aboard Royal Caribbean, for rustic, handmade dishes using seasonal ingredients and authentic recipes.

## Celestyal's new Journey



**CELESTYAL** Cruises' 1,260-guest *Celestyal Journey* (pictured) has returned to service for the line following her refit.

*Journey* will now sail in the Arabian Gulf, following her dry dock in Dubai, during which she received a new livery.

The ship's first cruise following the refit was her new Desert Days itinerary (*CW* 02 Dec), sailing round trip from Doha, and calling at Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Khasab, and Sir Bani Yas Island, with an overnight in Dubai.

The €6.5 million (A\$10.7 million) refurb also saw *Journey's* underwater areas treated, and painted with silicon paint, while the power management system was updated to improve operational efficiency.

"We're thrilled our beloved ship *Celestyal Journey* has returned to service, looking and performing better than ever," Celestyal CCO Lee Haslett said.

"The new livery makes it instantly recognisable as a Celestyal ship, while the technical

upgrades will ensure it provides a smooth sailing experience for all who sail on her."

Haslett said Celestyal has seen phenomenal demand for its Arabian Gulf itineraries, with our last three Doha round trip sailings operating at full capacity.

"Since launching the program, we're 35% above target for sailed guests, which demonstrates a real desire to explore this beautiful part of the world on our intimate, mid-sized ships," Haslett said.

Celestyal is celebrating its 10-year anniversary in 2025, with a year of agent rewards and incentives (*CW* 21 Jan).

More than 1,000 experiences will be on offer to travel advisors across the year, such as cash prizes, cruises, as well as tickets to concerts and sports events.

The experiences will be won each month through booking incentives, and will be gifted to agents who complete training modules on the new Celestyal Compass travel advisor portal (*CW* 16 Dec 2024). *MS*

### It's a pass for Scenic

**PASSPORTCARD** is partnering with Scenic Group to provide its guests with travel insurance.

Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours and Emerald Cruises guests will have access to comprehensive cruise and trip coverage, including protection against cruise delays, missed ports, medical emergencies, unexpected trip cancellations, and medical expenses.

"Cruising is one of the fastest-growing sectors in travel and this partnership ensures that Scenic and Emerald Cruises guests are looked after by PassportCard just as well as they are looked after when travelling with Scenic or Emerald Cruises," PassportCard Chief Executive Officer Peter Klemt said.

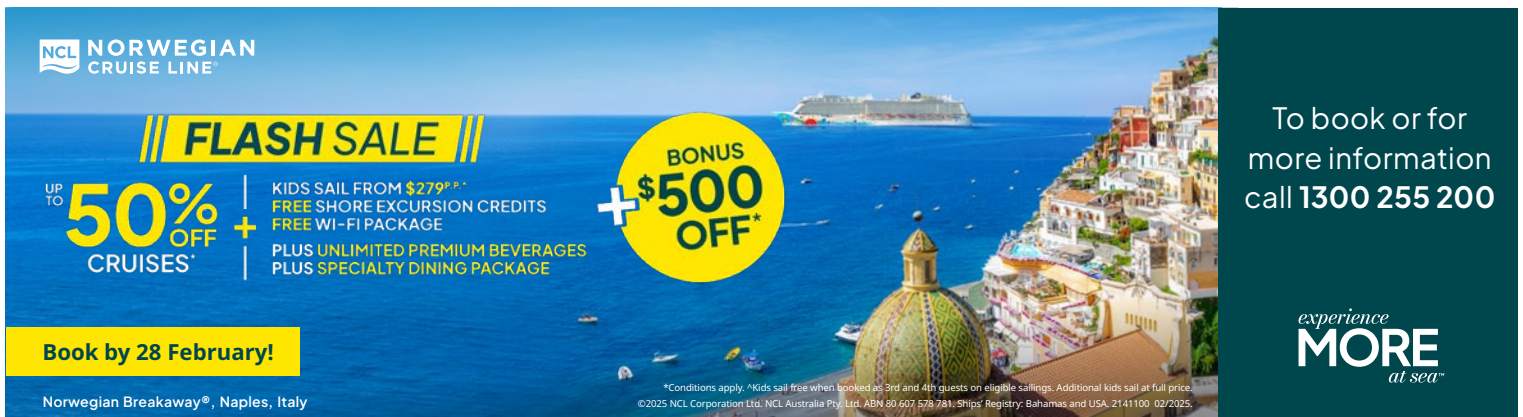
"With instant payouts for overseas medical costs, stolen cash or delayed luggage, our comprehensive coverage will ensure their guests are provided with peace of mind before, and while, embarking on their next cruise adventure," he added.

"Many Australians are seeking a luxury cruising holiday and need to ensure they have the cover, for specific cruise-related events, including disruptions such as itinerary changes, missed ports, and onboard medical emergencies," Klemt enthused.

### Agents missing out

**AGENTS** may be missing out when it comes to cruises, according to an Expedia report, with just over one-in-three travellers believing it is important to use a travel advisor for cruise vacations.

Barely more than a quarter (28%) of respondents said they typically use an advisor to book a cruise.



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## The Key to FUN!

**CARNIVAL** Corporation leaders have begun the five-month countdown to the opening of its new exclusive Celebration Key destination.

The company's Chief Executive Josh Weinstein and Chief Maritime Officer Lars Ljoen joined Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy for a behind-the-scenes look at the new destination on Grand Bahama, as construction enters its final phases.

The trio placed commemorative keys into Celebration Key's signature Suncastle - the centrepiece of the destination's five portals - in a nod to the maritime tradition of a keel-laying for a new ship.

The Carnival leaders also joined team members planting palm trees for the 'Plant a Tree' community engagement program, launched last year as part of a broad preservation initiative involving the replanting of thousands of native trees on the property.

About 1,000 sabal palms were saved and replanted across Celebration Key.



## Oceania new culinary tours

**OCEANIA** Cruises has unveiled a dozen new Culinary Discovery Tours for this year.

These immersive, small-group, chef-led experiences offer travellers the opportunity to access local markets, restaurants, and hands-on cooking classes in destinations in Europe, Asia, and North America.

These new, exclusive excursions are limited to just 18 passengers, and are available in destinations including Amsterdam, Halifax, Victoria, and Busan.

The tours include foraging for wild sea herbs on Belfast's coast, indulging in a plant-to-plate luncheon inside an Amsterdam greenhouse, and witnessing the precision of traditional knife-making in Kobe before a teppanyaki feast of wagyu beef.

Passengers will also master the art of searing bonito over an open flame in Kochi, experiencing authentic paella on a boat ride through Valencia's rice fields, and exploring South Korea's famed seafood markets.

"Our guests seek more than just incredible cuisine - they crave authentic connections with food, culture, and people," Chief Luxury Officer Jason Montague said.

"The Culinary Discovery Tours are true behind-the-scenes experiences, guided by top chefs who bring each destination to life



and are eager to share epicurean secrets, one bite at a time.

"These unique excursions allow travellers to savour the essence of destinations in a way that only Oceania Cruises can deliver." *MS*

## A Legend is born

**AMERICAN** Cruise Line's *American Legend* has been christened in Key West.

The celebration took place while *Legend*, the newest ship in American's 'Project Blue', was docked at Mallory Square, just steps from Key West's town centre.

*Legend* was visiting the town on one of American's popular eight-day Florida Gulf Coast & Keys cruises, which sail round trip from St. Petersburg.

The ceremony included speeches, plaque exchanges, and musical performances.

## MEET THE SPEAKERS



**WENDY  
WU**

Founder  
Wendy Wu  
Tours

**SESSION**

How I built it:  
The story of Wendy Wu

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## Discover the all new *River Cruise Special Report*





**A GERMAN** man has set a new Guinness World Record for underwater living, after completing a 120-day tenancy in what he calls a 'SeaPod'.

The man was submerged in the underwater home, built to combine marine-grade engineering with environmental responsibility, 15km off the coast of Panama.

The SeaPod was submerged 11 metres under the water, and is accessible via a tube with a spiral staircase, through which family members and his doctor were able to visit.

The capsule was also fitted with cameras to monitor his physical well-being and prove that he had not left the habitat during this time.

The man was closely monitored by a team of health professionals, and emerges as the new record-holder for underwater endurance.

## Cruise tax hit?

**THE** federal government of the United States has promised to introduce new taxes targeting cruise lines, according to new Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

He said ships operating using a "flag of convenience" - registration in a country other than the one its owner is headquartered in - would be targeted with the taxes.

## Princess crowns successful famil



**LAST** night, travel industry professionals celebrated the end of Princess Cruises' trade marketing famil on board *Diamond Princess* over cocktails and canapes.

The five-day trip sailed from Brisbane to Sydney, calling in Newcastle, and was attended by more than 60 travel agents and travel marketing professionals.

The Princess team ran information sessions on Tue (**CW** yesterday), sharing the cruise line's latest news, as well as the current landscape of the sector.

Guests also had the opportunity to take advantage of *Diamond's* offerings, such as its personalised on-demand service, multiple dining options, shows at the Princess Theatre, a 1980s deck party, movies under the stars and the Japanese bathhouse.

In Newcastle, attendees enjoyed shore excursions including

ATV'ing in the sand dunes, dolphin-watching, and a food and wine tour of the Hunter Valley.

"We deeply value our trade partnerships, which is why we're delighted to welcome frontline travel agents and marketing product teams aboard *Diamond Princess* for our annual trade marketing famil," Senior Director Sales and Marketing Nick Ferguson told **Cruise Weekly**.

"This event is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the Princess experience, reinforce our position in the cruise sector, and offer an exciting glimpse into what's ahead - including developments in fly-cruise and domestic cruising, as well as the much-anticipated arrival of our next Sphere Class ship, *Star Princess*," he added. **JHM**

**Pictured:** the Princess team celebrates the end of the successful famil at Skywalkers Bar.

## Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Viking Orion</i>	21 Feb
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	21 Feb
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	21 Feb
<i>Viking Venus</i>	21 Feb
<i>Costa Deliziosa</i>	21 Feb
<i>Crown Princess</i>	22 Feb
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	23 Feb
<i>Amadea</i>	24 Feb
<i>Amadea</i>	26 Feb
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	27 Feb

MELBOURNE	
<i>Azamara Onward</i>	23 Feb
<i>Viking Orion</i>	24 Feb
<i>Costa Deliziosa</i>	24 Feb

BRISBANE	
<i>Arcadia</i>	21 Feb
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	22 Feb
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	23 Feb
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	24 Feb

PERTH	
<i>Island Princess</i>	23 Feb

ADELAIDE	
<i>Azamara Onward</i>	25 Feb
<i>Azamara Onward</i>	26 Feb

HOBART	
<i>Norwegian Sun</i>	21 Feb
<i>Westerdam</i>	26 Feb
<i>Viking Orion</i>	26 Feb
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	27 Feb

DARWIN	
<i>Zuiderdam</i>	22 Feb
<i>Seabourn Quest</i>	24 Feb
<i>Silver Muse</i>	26 Feb

NEWCASTLE	
<i>Viking Venus</i>	21 Feb
<i>Amadea</i>	26 Feb

TOWNSVILLE	
<i>Viking Venus</i>	26 Feb

CAIRNS	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	21 Feb
<i>Silver Muse</i>	21 Feb