



### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features five pages of all the latest cruise industry news, including a photo page from **Royal Caribbean & CruiseHQ**.

### Crypto for cruise

**SEADREAM** Yacht Club has become the first cruise line to accept cryptocurrency as a payment option for voyages and full-yacht charters.

The brand is now integrating the cryptocurrency payment solution on its website, with the option to be rolled out over the coming weeks.

### CW back on Tue

**IN LIGHT** of the Australia Day public holiday on Mon, **Cruise Weekly** will return on Tue 28 Jan with all the latest industry news.

## CruiseHQ and RCI are an “iconic match”

**CRUISEHQ** and Royal Caribbean are decidedly an “iconic match”, with the two celebrating their newly launched partnership last night, while dropping a VIP famil for the wholesaler’s top sellers.

The partners jointly hosted an evening at Hacienda Sydney, welcoming 80 esteemed travel professionals to witness Royal Caribbean’s *Ovation of the Seas* depart the city’s Overseas Passenger Terminal.

The famil opportunity was announced on the night by CruiseHQ GM Caroline Hitchen, with 10 lucky travel advisors to sail on board Royal Caribbean’s new *Icon of the Seas* on a seven-day ‘Western Caribbean & Perfect Day’ itinerary in Aug.

The incentive will run from 01 Jan to 30 May, with winners announced on 02 Jun.

The night also saw Royal Caribbean Key Account Manager



Roberta Chaplin showcase the line’s exceptional international product, including *Icon*.

Chaplin said the new ship, the world’s largest cruise vessel, is helping push uptake of the cruise line’s overseas product.

“Royal Caribbean is a great brand Down Under,” she said.

“We can cruise with them through our local seasons, but having those 30-plus home ports around the world is really helping to drive Australians to travel

overseas with a brand they know, love, and trust” - more on p4. **MS**

**Pictured** are Caitlyn Paris, CruiseHQ; Nicole Stojic, Royal Caribbean; Roberta Chaplin, Royal Caribbean; Dave Humphreys, Royal Caribbean; Caroline Hitchen, CruiseHQ; Kim Ryan, CruiseHQ; Carina Mullen, CruiseHQ; Astrid Maier, CruiseHQ; Emily Soden, Flight Centre Travel Group; Jenjira Hawkins, CruiseHQ; and Alicia Palmer, Royal Caribbean.



YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

### FLASH SALE

up to

**25% OFF**

plus

Unlimited Wine, Beer & Spirits  
AND  
Shipboard Credit up to **US\$1,000**

on select sailings  
book now - offer expires 1 February 2025



### Tabitian Legends

PAPEETE TO PAPEETE

10 Days | 5 Sep 2025 | Regatta

FLASH SALE FARES PER GUEST FROM:	WAS	NOW
Concierge Veranda	AUS\$9,270	<b>AUS\$7,880</b>
Deluxe Oceanview	AUS\$5,930	<b>AUS\$6,460</b>

**US\$400 SHIPBOARD CREDIT**

\*All offers and fares are subject to Terms & Conditions.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **1300 355 200 (AU), 0800 625 691 (NZ)**  
VISIT **OCEANIACRUISES.COM** OR CONTACT YOUR **TRAVEL ADVISOR**

**DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT**

\*Fares and itineraries are accurate as of 15 January 2025 and are subject to change or withdrawal. Flash Sale offer expires 1 February 2025, applies to select categories on select voyages, subject to availability and is capacity controlled. The quoted fares are valid for sale until 1 February, unless sold out prior and include any/all savings/upgrades. Airfares are additional. Cruise fares are per person, twin share (except fares for Solo category, which are for single travellers), in AUD and include all taxes, port fees and onboard gratuities. \*50% Reduced Deposits applies for new bookings only and if departure is outside of final payment; valid until 1 February 2025; this offer is not valid on Around the World Cruises and segments. For full terms & conditions that apply, please visit OceaniaCruises.com/terms. All rights reserved. Oceania Cruises is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions. Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. NCL Australia Pty Ltd ABN 8060 7578 781.




**CRUISE WEEKLY**  
On location in Ushuaia

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is this week hosting key industry partners on an Antarctic expedition aboard Viking Polaris.

THE adventure begins today as we take a charter flight to Ushuaia to board *Viking Polaris*, one of the brand's two Polar Class expedition vessels.

This evening we will embark on our Antarctic sailing aboard the luxury ship, with this weekend including our first crossing of the infamous Drake Passage - whether we will be experiencing the 'Drake shake' or 'Drake lake' is yet to be determined, but either way, we will be in ultimate comfort.

## Iceland, France cruises set to be scrapped

A NUMBER of European destinations are facing the wipeout of their cruise industries, with calls cancelled in both Iceland and France.

Dozens of cruise lines are planning to cancel their visits to Iceland over a new infrastructure fee, which was imposed at the beginning of the year.

Icelandic national broadcaster RUV reports harbourmasters across the country as having received very little notice about the new fee.

The payment, set at ISK2,500 per passenger per day for ships on international cruises, equates to about US\$18 (A\$26) for every passenger on the ship, and is expected to generate ISK1.5 billion (A\$17m) for Iceland.

A letter to a port authority in Iceland from MSC Cruises alleges the new fee is a fivefold increase on the accommodation tax levied on the industry before 2024.

"This new proposed infrastructure fee is at a level where it could affect our assessment of the viability of Iceland in our future itineraries and plans," the letter said.

"We are seeking your kind assistance and swift support as our partner in Iceland to raise concerns and questions with the relevant local and political stakeholders about the wisdom of the introduction of a significant new tax that will likely affect or put at risk the presence and



contribution of cruise tourism to local Icelandic communities, businesses, and its economy."

Cruise Iceland Chair Sigurdur Jokull Olafsson said he hopes the country's government will revisit the issue.

"We would have, first of all, wanted to see this implemented in stages so it wouldn't hit operations as hard as it does now," he told RUV.

"It's reasonable for this sector to contribute...but it must be implemented with adequate notice," Olafsson added.

Some of the biggest cruise operators in Iceland include MSC, as well as Celebrity Cruises, Princess Cruises, Viking, Royal Caribbean, Holland America Line, Aurora Expeditions, and Windstar.

MEANWHILE, Christian Estrosi, the Mayor of Nice, has announced a ban on "low-cost"

cruises to the French Riviera city, among a number of measures to combat overtourism.

The Nice ban will target ships carrying more than 900 passengers, with Estrosi describing these cruise guests as travellers who "consume nothing and leave their waste behind".

His goal is to eliminate these cruise calls from Jul, adding he is working to "cancel all cruises that can still be cancelled ahead of drafting a banning order," *Riviera Radio* reports.

Cannes is looking at a similar ban, according to media reports, with brands such as Celebrity, Royal Caribbean, Holland America Line, Cunard Line, Norwegian, and Viking set to be impacted.


Cruise Lines International Association was contacted for comment on the news in both Iceland and France. *MS*

### Love is in the air


PRINCESS Cruises is celebrating Valentine's Day and launching a pop-up dining event in New York City called Love by Britto.

The shoreside event will take place at Currents at Pier 59, where guests can enjoy a five-course menu and cocktails by the water, surrounded by the artwork of Brazilian painter, Romero Britto.


SPEAKERS




**Wendy Wu**  
Founder,  
Wendy Wu  
Tours



**Cinzia Burnes**  
COO &  
Helloworld



**Steve Labroski**  
CEO,  
itravel



**HOME EX**  
HOME AGENT  
VIRTUAL  
EXPERIENCE

**REGISTER FREE**



Travel Daily  
Learn more about  
Italy with Travel Daily  
Training Academy

[Click here to discover](#)

## Will Australians take up fly-cruising?

### OPINION

Lyndsey Gordon  
is the General  
Manager at PEPR  
Agency, and was  
formerly Head of  
Communications  
for P&O Australia.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to [info@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:info@cruiseweekly.com.au).

**THIS** Australian cruise season will see a plethora of lines grace our iconic shores and sadly for some major brands, it will be the last time they sail here.

For nearly 100 years, Aussies have embraced domestic cruising as an affordable and convenient way to explore their own backyard.

However, as cruise brands adjust their operating models, we may be left with fewer options close to home which begs the question: will Australians venture overseas for their cruise holiday?

It is undeniable the loss of domestic cruise options is disappointing for the 1.3 million Australians who sailed Down Under in 2023 alone.

A more positive view would be to see the shift as the start of a new era of exploration for Australian travellers who are eager to visit multiple destinations or need a nudge to do so.

Over 7 million Australians holidayed overseas in 2023 and 71% of international travellers say they are considering taking their

first-ever cruise.

Regions like Southeast Asia, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and Alaska, offer unique experiences that Australia-based cruises just can't match.

Millennials are some of the most enthusiastic about cruise and are keen and confident to travel to far-flung destinations, prioritising unique, authentic, and immersive experiences.

Meanwhile, frequent cruisers

“  
Whether we  
make the leap to  
overseas cruising  
will depend on  
our willingness to  
adapt  
”

and Baby Boomers, who have the financial means and flexibility to travel abroad, are showing a growing preference for luxurious, once-in-a-lifetime cruise experiences.

The changes to the domestic cruise landscape might provide an opportunity for this audience to broaden their horizons and tick off bucket-list destinations.

The allure of overseas cruising

- exotic destinations, diverse cultures, and a broader range of itineraries - seems like a no-brainer, whatever stage of life you're at.

However, international cruising comes with added complexities.

Travellers face greater financial costs and time travelling to ports of embarkation, which may make cruising less accessible for some families or retirees who have been the backbone of our local cruise market.

Cruise lines will undoubtedly get even more creative with partnerships and pricing to lure the extremely profitable Australian passengers into the fly-cruise market, which may still be relatively untapped, due to the previous strength and growth of the domestic cruise industry.

While the destinations are key for Australian guests, the choice of cruise lines overseas is much greater.

Big-name brands such as Cunard Line and MSC Cruises are evolving to meet the ever-changing profile of international guests by building hardware - or new ships like *Queen Anne* and *MSC World America* - to pique their interest.

It's clear the options are vast for the willing Aussie traveller.

Ultimately, finances and time aside, whether we make the leap to overseas cruising will depend on our willingness to adapt.

### Four Seasons here

**FOUR** Seasons Yachts has celebrated the float-out of *Four Seasons I* at the Fincantieri shipyard in Ancona.

The celebratory event took place one year from the vessel's first sailing on 25 Jan 2026, marking the start of the official one-year countdown to the launch of the first Four Seasons Yachts ship.

The vessel will now be moved to a wet dock for the final phase of construction, which will focus on completing interiors, fixtures, and fittings for suites, restaurants, and all other public spaces.

"The float-out marks a key milestone in bringing Four Seasons' personalised service and renowned experiences to the seas," Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts President & Chief Executive Officer Alejandro Reynal said.

"As we continue our strategic growth, we are creating a luxury ecosystem where guests can stay, live, and travel with a brand they know and trust.

"Our entry into luxury yachting is a key part of this vision, and with one year until we set sail, the excitement and momentum continues to build," he added.

Four Seasons recently released nine new voyages in the Bahamas and Caribbean for the 2026/27 winter, as part of the cruise line's first season.



## UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL: Join Our Mentoring Program and Ignite Your Success!

**TIME** is a Career Advancement Path for all Employees in Travel, Tourism, Hospitality, Cruise and Aviation Industry including Regional, and Rural Areas across Australia

**WHAT TIME CAN  
DO FOR YOU...**

- Further develop your management and leadership potential
- Develop confidence and networking opportunities
- Strategic career planning
- Increase your knowledge of organisational culture & processes

For more information visit - [www.travelindustrymentor.com.au](http://www.travelindustrymentor.com.au)

# CRUISE WEEKLY **Dynamic duo sets sail together**

WEEKLY

Friday 24th January 2025

**CRUISEHQ** and Royal Caribbean came together last night to celebrate their new brand collaboration, inviting 80 travel professionals to a memorable evening at Hacienda Sydney, where attendees witnessed *Ovation of the Seas* depart Sydney Harbour. A highlight of the evening was a presentation from Roberta Chaplin, Key Account Manager Australia/NZ at Royal Caribbean, showcasing the cruise line's impressive international product offerings.

Chaplin highlighted the vast and diverse array of sailings available, including *Icon of the Seas*, and reaffirmed Royal Caribbean's commitment to offering unforgettable cruise experiences to travellers worldwide.

On the night, CruiseHQ General Manager Caroline Hitchen also announced an exciting VIP famil opportunity for top-selling agents through CruiseHQ.

The incentive will see 10 lucky travel advisors enjoy a seven-night sailing on board Royal Caribbean's *Icon of the Seas* in Aug.



**ROYAL** Caribbean x CruiseHQ.

**ATTENDEES** enjoy catching up against the stunning view of Sydney Harbour.

**ASTRID** Maier, Roberta Chaplin, Caitlyn Paris, Kim Ryan and Jen Hawkins.



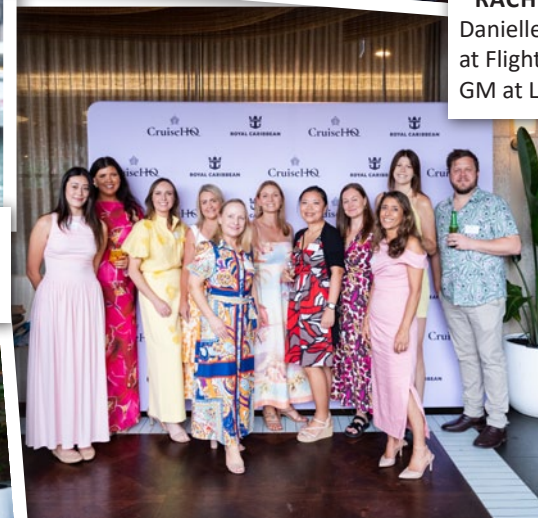
**CAROLINE** Hitchen, GM at CruiseHQ; Dave Humphreys, Director of Sales at Royal Caribbean; and Roberta Chaplin, KAM at Royal Caribbean.



**RACHEL** Kingswell, GM at Travel Associates; Danielle Galloway, Global MD Luxury Independent at Flight Centre Travel Group; and Nikki Glading, GM at Luxury Travel Collection.



**THE** Envoyage team.



**CRUISEHQ** and Cruiseabout.



**ROBERTA** Chaplin, KAM at Royal Caribbean; and Joell Ogilvie, MD Specialist Brands at Flight Centre Travel Group.

**BELINDA** Goldie (owner) with her The Cruise and Travel Store team.



**NICOLE** Stojic, Head of Retail Sales at Royal Caribbean; Myles Stedman, CW; Roberta Chaplin, KAM at Royal Caribbean; and Alicia Palmer, Trade Marketing Manager at Royal Caribbean.





## Stay Updated

on the latest cruise news

Follow Cruise Weekly on social media to get your cruise news first




**IF YOU** have a passenger booked on a Gulf of Mexico cruise, they soon may not be.

Newly elected President of the United States Donald Trump wants to rename the Atlantic oceanic basin after his own country, to the 'Gulf of America', in order for the nation to "reclaim its rightful place as the greatest, most powerful, most respected nation on Earth".

If you're doubting whether Trump can actually do such a thing, believe it or not, he can, and he has already signed the executive order empowering himself to do it.

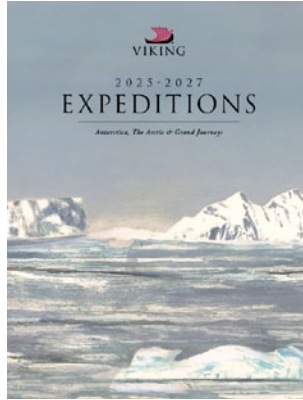
However, there is a catch. While Trump has decreed the United States' Geographic Names Information System to standardise the use of 'Gulf of America' domestically, the President cannot enforce international use of the name.

The International Hydrographic Organization, a body which works to ensure the correct nomenclature of the world's bodies of water, encourages countries warring over such a dispute reach an agreement on a single name.

Differences in opinion should see cartographers attempt to include both names, meaning some maps may soon indeed show 'Gulf of America' - only time will tell if your cruise itinerary will change as well.

## Viking's Grand Voyages

**VIKING** has gone to press with its '2025-2027 Antarctica, The Arctic & Grand Journeys Expeditions' brochure, showcasing voyages across Antarctica, the Arctic and the Great Lakes of North America.



The 84-page publication (**inset**) spotlights detailed itineraries for three new Grand Journeys and two new Great Lakes expedition voyages, sailing between Mar and Oct annually.

Readers will also find additional departure dates on Viking's most popular expeditions, offering more availability and choice in sailing dates and stateroom categories for agents and their clients.

The 87-day 'From the Arctic to Antarctica' sailing from Nuuk to Ushuaia to Buenos Aires is one of the new Grand Journeys highlighted, along with the 13-day 'Chilean Fjords & Scenic Shores' from Santiago to Ushuaia to Buenos Aires; and the 69-day 'Longitudinal World Cruise VI' from Buenos Aires to Milwaukee.

The brochure is available digitally (**HERE**) or to order now through Coughlins (**HERE**).

**MEANWHILE**, Viking has revealed the 2025 reward for its top-performing travel advisors in Australia, as part of its trade incentive program, Viking Platinum Club 2025.

A group of 10 travel advisors will explore scenic fjords, charming

towns and iconic cities on a 15-day 'Viking Homelands' ocean voyage on board new ship *Viking Vela*, which departs Bergen, Norway on 04 May 2026 and arrives in Stockholm, Sweden on 18 May.

To be eligible for the ocean voyage, advisors must finish in one of the top 10 positions in Australia by achieving one of the highest numbers of new bookings between 01 Jan and 31 Dec 2025.

The agents will be able to bring a travel companion, receive a free stateroom upgrade, Silver Spirits Beverage Package, a US\$300 shipboard credit, \$2,000 Viking air credit towards flights, and two free optional shore excursions.

They will also enjoy 50% off additional bookings and 8,000 bonus Rewards by Viking points to redeem on travel or rewards.

"This voyage celebrates the dedication and expertise of ten passionate and hard-working travel advisors for delivering unforgettable Viking experiences to their clients," said Michelle Black, MD ANZ at Viking.

"With docking locations in the heart of the three city overnights, these advisors are set to experience the best our signature Scandinavian voyage has to offer in the homelands of the Vikings.

"We also recognise the agencies who rear this elite class of travel professionals, and we look forward to rewarding their efforts too," added Black. *JM*

## Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	24 Jan
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	24 Jan
<i>Regatta</i>	24 Jan
<i>Crown Princess</i>	25 Jan
<i>Regatta</i>	25 Jan
<i>Pacific Adventure</i>	27 Jan
<i>Celebrity Edge</i>	27 Jan
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	27 Jan
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	28 Jan
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	28 Jan
<i>Crown Princess</i>	29 Jan
<i>Ovation of the Seas</i>	30 Jan

MELBOURNE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	24 Jan
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	26 Jan
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	27 Jan
<i>Viking Orion</i>	27 Jan
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	30 Jan

BRISBANE	
<i>Quantum of the Seas</i>	24 Jan
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	25 Jan
<i>Carnival Luminosa</i>	26 Jan
<i>Diamond Princess</i>	27 Jan
<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	28 Jan

ADELAIDE	
<i>Pacific Explorer</i>	29 Jan

HOBART	
<i>Norwegian Sun</i>	24 Jan
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	24 Jan
<i>Norwegian Sun</i>	25 Jan
<i>Crown Princess</i>	27 Jan
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	27 Jan
<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	28 Jan
<i>Disney Wonder</i>	28 Jan
<i>Westerdam</i>	29 Jan
<i>Viking Orion</i>	29 Jan
<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	30 Jan

DARWIN	
<i>Seven Seas Explorer</i>	26 Jan
<i>Viking Venus</i>	30 Jan

NEWCASTLE	
<i>Seven Seas Voyager</i>	27 Jan