

### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Film tix available

**CRUISE Weekly** is giving away five passes to the Scandinavian Film Festival, on behalf of Hurtigruten.

The festival is returning to Palace, Palace Nova, and Luna Palace Cinemas over the next two months, presenting the best new cinema from the Nordic region.

A selections of dramas and romances from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland will all feature.

**CW** is giving away double passes to the first five who email [competitions@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:competitions@cruiseweekly.com.au), telling us who the sponsor of the 2025 Scandinavian Film Festival is.

## Explora marks triple milestone in Italy

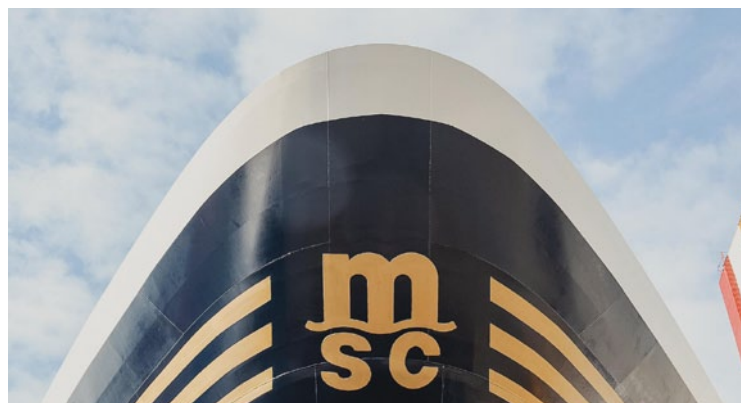
**EXPLORA** Journeys has celebrated three major milestones in the construction of its fleet, with the float out of *Explora III* (pictured), the traditional coin ceremony for *Explora IV*, and the steel-cutting for *Explora V*.

These moments, celebrated at Fincantieri's shipyard in Genoa Sestri Ponente, mark a pivotal milestone in Explora's path to a six-ship fleet by 2028.

*Explora III* will join the fleet next year, followed by *Explora IV* and *Explora V* in 2027, and the LNG-hydrogen fuelled *Explora VI* in 2028.

Explora Customer Journey Strategist Caroline Cooney-Hurrell was honoured as godmother for the coin ceremony of *Explora IV* in recognition of her commitment to the cruise line over the past five years.

Cooney-Hurrell played a key



role in establishing the Explora Experience Centre operations, ensuring exceptional service and care for Explora's guests.

"Today marks a proud milestone for Explora Journeys as we celebrate three remarkable ships - each a symbol of our ambition to redefine ultra-elegant ocean travel," President Anna Nash said.

"This triple celebration reflects the strength of our vision and the

power of collaboration between our team, our partners at Fincantieri, and the unwavering support of the Aponte-Vago family," she added.

"Guided by our values of care, respect, and excellence, we are not just building ships - we are creating a legacy of transformative journeys that will endure for generations to come," Nash explained. *MS*

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## Carnival Liberty is free to return to cruising

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line's *Carnival Liberty* has returned to service from New Orleans, following her troubled dry dock in Europe.

*Liberty's* return to Louisiana follows a delay to her dry dock, brought on by striking metalworkers, which saw her relocate from the Navantia Shipyard in Spain to another facility in Marseille (**CW** 01 Jul).

Among the additions is a new Heroes Tribute Bar & Lounge, a special space honouring military service members aboard *Liberty*, which has now rejoined her sister ship *Carnival Valor* in NOLA.

*Liberty* also now features a WaterWorks aqua park (pictured), with new slides added, and a new minigolf course.

The ship's spa, now branded as a Cloud9 Spa, received a full revitalisation, including refreshed decor, upgraded beauty stations,



a modernised fitness centre, a new Elamis Boutique, as well as steam rooms and saunas.

Younger cruisers will find an array of enhanced amenities, like new gaming stations at Camp Ocean and a revamped Arcade and Club O2.

Other additions include a Dream Studio for guests' personalised photo sessions, as well as a Carnival Adventures venue - a one-stop shop for guests to learn about and book shore excursions.

The dry dock also prioritised accessibility, with sweeping

upgrades throughout the ship, from enhanced pathways to improved amenities in several public spaces and cabins.

The first guests to experience *Liberty's* new features embarked yesterday on a weeklong Caribbean cruise.

The Conquest-class ship will continue to offer sailings to popular destinations in the Western Caribbean.

*Liberty* will also make her first visit to *Celebration Key* next week, Carnival's new exclusive destination (**CW** yesterday). *MS*

## Tides turn in Nice

**IN A** win for the cruise industry, an administrative court in Nice has suspended the efforts of local mayor, Christian Estrosi, to ban large cruise ships from visiting the French Riviera.

The court issued a temporary injunction following Estrosi's unlawful attempt to board Royal Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas* while she was anchored last week, to force her to leave (**CW** 07 Jul).

The government of the prefect had petitioned the court to block the actions of Estrosi, arguing that the authority to manage cruise ship calls is at the state and federal level, and as such, the mayor and the metropolis had overstepped their authority.

In a statement this week, Estrosi said he will consider pursuing the ship ban in court.



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T&C'S APPLY



## Chef Michel Roux to return to Cunard in '26

**CUNARD** Line has announced its Le Gavroche at Sea residencies with Michel Roux for 2026.

Next year will be the third season of the residence, with the iconic restaurateur to host four exclusive dining experiences on board *Queen Anne*.

Three residencies will take place on seven-night Norwegian fjords voyages in May, Aug, and Nov, with a further Le Gavroche at Sea scheduled for an Iceland and British Isles sailing in Jul.

"Le Gavroche at Sea has quickly become one of the highlights of our voyages, and we're thrilled to welcome Michel back to *Queen Anne* for a third season," President Katie McAlister said.

Roux's Le Gavroche at Sea residencies have proven hugely popular with guests, with this year's season already sold out.

Each residency features a five-course tasting menu served in Sir



Samuels Steakhouse & Grill.

Guest numbers are limited to just 50 per evening, making these events some of the most exclusive experiences on board.

Guests can also enjoy an enhanced seafood offering at Carinthia Lounge, where the 'Oysters at Carinthia' experience will serve Norwegian seafood every evening during the Le Gavroche voyages.

Roux (**pictured**) will also take

to the Royal Court Theatre for a live cooking demonstration, sharing insights into his culinary philosophy and techniques, and will appear as an Insight Speaker, offering guests a more personal opportunity to connect and participate in signing sessions.

New Cunard Sales & Marketing Director Amy Williams recently told **CW** of the line's focus on cuisine as key to its brand proposition (**CW** 24 Jun). **MS**

## Destination Daryl

**CRUISE** agency Destination HQ has launched an exclusive Arctic voyage with Quark Expeditions, which will see Australian singer Daryl Braithwaite perform on board.

The cruise will travel from 30 May-09 Jun, with Destination HQ chartering the Quark-operated *Ocean Explorer* for the voyage.

Travelling with only 110 guests on board, as opposed to the usual 138, the voyage journeys from Helsinki return, and includes two nights' accommodation in the city.

The expedition will travel to Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago, visiting destinations such as Fjortende Julibreen glacier, Smeerenburg, Alkefjellet and the Hinlopen Strait.

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**EVER** wondered what it's like to work on a cruise ship?

Well, 28-year-old Alley Kerr from California, who has worked on more than 100 cruises as a singer and dancer, has dished the details of life on board - and it is not as glamorous as one may think.

"There are so many things I really loved about it...but then there's the slop," Kerr, who is now a travel YouTuber, revealed to *The Independent*.

As well as the "not great quality" food, another challenge was the rivalry with other crew members, who she said were "always looking for a way to get performers in trouble", because entertainers would get more privileges.

Kerr admitted that the great pay packet and the fact that she got to visit an "unreal" number of countries far outweighed the downsides, and said she's still open to cruise ship gigs.

## Ponant opens Kimberley '27



**PONANT** Explorations has opened sales for its 2027 Kimberley season with exclusive early booking offers.

The program features 14 departures between May and Aug 2027 aboard the purpose-built small expedition ships *Le Jacques-Cartier* and *Le Soleal*.

Itineraries are designed for inquisitive travellers seeking encounters with nature, wildlife, and indigenous culture.

Each expedition includes daily expert-led shore excursions and onboard lectures hosted by industry-leading scientists, naturalists or experts, offering access to the region's history.

Ponant is offering up to 30% bonus savings off the brochure

fare, in addition to a free solo supplement, which is available on five select departures.

"Our Kimberley expeditions continue to resonate with modern travellers looking for depth, discovery and connection, with small ship access, expert guides and a spirit of curiosity at the heart of each itinerary," Chief Executive Deb Corbett said.

"This region delivers time and time again and we are proud to offer our best value for early bookings, whether guests are travelling solo or sharing the experience with others."

Ponant will sail on seven of its 'Australia's Iconic Kimberley' voyages in 2027, exploring the region for 10 nights. *MS*

## Panama tax over

**PANAMA** has ended incentives for home porting cruise ships after determining the program did not generate the expected economic impact for the destination.

The government had been reimbursing Panama Canal transit tolls for cruises that embarked or disembarked passengers in the country, but according to local media reports, the program came to an end last month.

Tourism officials had hoped to see greatly increased national benefits, including more cruise traffic, provisioning, hotel nights and passenger spend, which they say did not eventuate.

## Saudi regulations

**SAUDI** Arabia has revealed its first-ever cruise ship regulations to boost tourism in the Red Sea.

The guidelines focus on ensuring maritime safety, security, and quality throughout cruise journeys in the Red Sea.



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