

Cruise Weekly today

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



On location on board
Ovation of the Seas

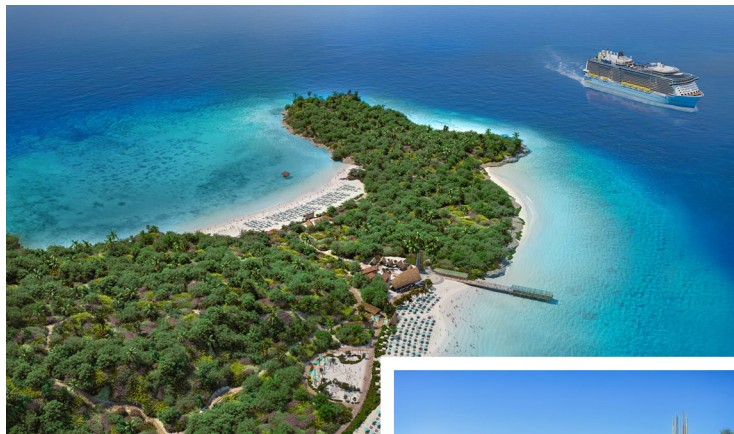
Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Royal Caribbean, which is this week welcoming us on board *Ovation of the Seas* as the ship returns to her southern winter home port of Los Angeles.

TODAY we arrive in Ensenada, on Mexico's Baja California Peninsula, and one of the most popular destinations on Royal Caribbean's map.

Ensenada is Mexico's second-busiest port, after Manzanillo, and the destination is commonly known as 'The Cinderella of the Pacific' - a big billing to live up to.

Some of the main attractions in the town include the Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe and El Faro Beach.

More Lelepa details revealed



EXCLUSIVE

ROYAL Caribbean's much-anticipated Lelepa destination (CW 16 May) will be closer in look and feel to its Labadee private resort in Haiti, rather than one of its Beach Clubs.

The upcoming location (pictured) will be more nature-focused, with less development than Royal Caribbean's upcoming Paradise Island Beach Club and Cozumel Beach Club, Senior Vice President Sales & Trade Relations Vicki Freed confirmed.

While Lelepa will still feature cabanas and other inclusions to bring a Beach Club-style atmosphere, the destination will be lower-touch and more sympathetic to its surrounds, offering a locally inspired experience with serene beaches, nature trails, water activities, dining, and more.

"I think it's going to be a beautiful experience, more of a



natural experience, where it's not going to have big slides," she explained to **Cruise Weekly**.

"It's going to be a really relaxing, beautiful destination, definitely a more ecotourism, nature-focused destination, in comparison to Perfect Day, which has more of the water slides."

Lelepa will be the first private cruise destination in the region, and will open in 2027.

The South Pacific destination has been in discussion for years, and was at one stage mooted to be developed as one of Royal Caribbean's 'Perfect Day' islands (CW 28 Mar 2022), however, the project was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic. MS

Inset: Lelepa's Arrival Bar.

TTC Groups push

AGENTS eager to learn more about Trafalgar's new river cruise venture (CW 06 May) and how to book larger groups are invited to tune in to a new webinar on the subject.

The session will primarily focus on bespoke benefits and perks available to groups of nine travellers and above.

The Trafalgar river cruise session has been set for 1pm AEST on 11 Jun - to register your interest, **CLICK HERE**.

HAL sends three

A THIRD dedicated ship will be deployed by Holland America Line to northern Europe as part of an expansion of itineraries in the region.

Beginning in 2027, *Zuiderdam* will sail the region alongside *Nieuw Statendam* and *Rotterdam*, leaving *Oosterdam* as the primary ship cruising in the Mediterranean.

Rotterdam will continue to be based in its namesake city, while *Zuiderdam* will depart from Amsterdam, with both ships to also offer embarkation opportunities from Reykjavik.

Nieuw Statendam will mark HAL's return to the UK port of Dover (CW 05 May).

According to HAL passenger surveys, northern Europe is consistently ranked as one of the most appealing regions to sail by nearly half of current and prospective guests.

Enhanced gelato

CRYSTAL Cruises will introduce the Badiani gelato brand to its ships to replace its Scoops Gelato Bar.

There will be 22 flavours available, including the brand's signature Buontalenti blend.



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FORMER Carnival Australia VP of Sales and Partnerships Ryan Taibel recently learned how small the world can be during a holiday in the US.

Taibel was among a crowd of more than 13,000 attending a Miami Marlins MLB baseball game when he headed to the bathroom in the sixth inning.

On the way back, he heard his name called loudly, turning around to find Damian Borg from Norwegian Cruise Line.

"Both of us live in Sydney and have worked in the cruise industry for many years," Taibel wrote on social media.

"Yet neither of us knew the other was even in Miami, let alone at the same stadium, at the same time, and at the same concession stand."

Taibel said the encounter was a cool reminder of how connected and close-knit the global cruise community is.

The two are pictured below.



Trafalgar makes a splash

BOOKINGS for Trafalgar's new river cruise business (**CW** 06 May) may have only opened less than a week ago, but TTC Tour Brands Managing Director Toni Ambler, has predicted big things to come from the brand.

"I think what's exciting about the future for Trafalgar is that local connectivity and immersive experiences have always been in our DNA," Ambler told **CW**.

"That part of its DNA will always stay core to the brand and the business, but how we enable that by modes of transport will be really interesting."

Ahead of entering river cruising, Trafalgar conducted research, revealing a gap in the market.

According to the data, 20% of its customers were booking a river cruise whilst booking their Trafalgar coach tours.

Interestingly, 74% of their guests were booking a river cruise after their Trafalgar tour.

"We see [river cruise] as a real opportunity to introduce a new mode of transportation to get those repeat passengers," explained Ambler (pictured with GM Sales, Andrew Young).

Aimed at a broad section of the market, particularly families, the cruise line will offer interconnected rooms and itineraries including activities to cater to kids six years and older.

Trafalgar has also drawn on the expertise of TTC stablemate Uniworld by using its ships, which



have delivered "life-changing river cruise experiences for years".

"That's all been tried and tested, this is not a new concept."

"I think it would be really hard to go into river without [that knowledge] because it's so saturated now," Ambler observed.

"You really have to have a solid understanding of the market and how to operate in it."

In 2026, Trafalgar will sail with two former Uniworld ships, offering an eight-day cruise on the Danube on the *Trafalgar Reverie* and a 10-day cruise on the Rhine on the *Trafalgar Verity*.

The following year, another Uniworld ship will join the fleet and two newbuild super ships.

Trafalgar will then embark on "a strong road plan" to expand the fleet into 2029.

Packaging will be what sets it apart from others in the market, noted Ambler.

"That's where the magic is going to come - where we can package in a seven-day cruise plus a seven-day tour to deliver a really immersive, multi-mode, multi-dimensional travel experience, all under the one brand." *JHM*

Royal Cunard visit

CUNARD'S new ship *Queen Anne* has been visited by one of the members of the British Royal Family (**CW** 15 May) in Liverpool, from where the brand launched its first transatlantic crossing 185 years ago.

Anne, Princess Royal, made an official visit to the new ship during her call in Liverpool on 27 May.

The port city was Cunard's headquarters for almost 130 years, which the cruise line paid tribute to by naming *Queen Anne* in the town, as well as naming it godparent of the new ship (**CW** 04 Jun).

Queen Anne's Liverpool visit took place during a 14-day round-trip British Isles cruise from Southampton, visiting ports in Scotland and Ireland. "Liverpool is not just where Cunard was founded - it's where our story began."

"This great city, with its proud maritime history and strong sense of identity, has shaped Cunard from the very beginning," said Cunard Line President, Katie McAlister.

"The docks, the river, and the people of Liverpool are all part of our heritage and remain central to who we are today."

"The bond between Cunard and Liverpool has grown over generations," McAlister added.

"We feel a strong connection to this city and are always

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Azamara meet-up

THREE of the four Azamara ships have rendezvoused in Barcelona, the line celebrating the occasion with a series of special events.

Guests on *Azamara Journey*, *Azamara Quest* and *Azamara Pursuit* enjoyed one of the line's AzAmazing Evenings, heading to the city's 19th century Renaissance mansion Finca Mas Solers for hors d'oeuvres and a Spanish guitar concert.

Two of the three ships will spend the northern summer sailing in Europe, while *Quest* will sail to Iceland to operate a Canada and New England season.

Frederik in power

KING Frederik X of Denmark was among a host of dignitaries invited to inaugurate a new shore power plant at the Copenhagen Cruise Terminal.

While Australia's Queen Mary of Denmark was not in attendance, the ceremony saw AIDA Cruises become the first line to connect to the grid.

Copenhagen is now the 14th port in Europe where AIDA Cruises connects to shore power during its down time, with the line's ships scheduled to make 73 calls to the Danish capital this year.

Croisi unveils Amazon plans



THREE 11-day itineraries have been unveiled by CroisiEurope for its maiden adventures along the Amazon River in South America, beginning in 2027 (**CW** 07 Mar).

Operated by the newbuild vessel *RV Brazilian Dream*, the 32-passenger ship will operate its flagship 'The Amazon & Rio Negro' itinerary round-trip from Manaus in Brazil.

Croisi will also offer the one-way 'The Amazon & Rio Tapajos' between Manaus and Santarem in northern Brazil, along with the 'Cruise Along the Amazon' between Manaus and Tabatinga, a city almost intersecting the

Brazilian border with Colombia and Peru.

Each itinerary will take travellers off-ship on both day and night excursions to major national parks and wildlife reserves as well as provide interactions with local indigenous communities.

Guests will also be able to learn more about the region via a series of expert lectures onboard the sustainability-focused vessel.

The four-deck ship will see travellers able to choose from spacious accommodations starting from 35m², each with a private balcony, all the way up to one of two presidential suites. *ML*



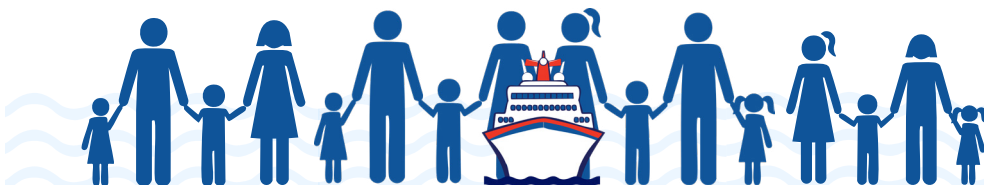
On Board: *Ovation of the Seas*

Schooner Bar

Royal Caribbean is all about live music, and nowhere does that come alive more than the Schooner Bar on deck five. This popular onboard venue delivers perfectly mixed cocktails in a nautical-themed lounge. The Schooner Bar also often features a resident piano player, with participation strongly encouraged.



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