

Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant goes home

PONANT has announced Sandra Cahill as National Sales Manager for Home-based Travel Agents, off the back of her successful performance managing the segment.

The decision reflects the business' commitment to nurturing the evolving sector of mobile advisors, according to a statement from Ponant.

"After two years of incorporating the management of home-based agency tasks into Sandra's role, we witnessed over a 60% increase in sales results," said Ponant Director of Sales, Julie Rogers.

Cahill brings more than 40 years of experience to her role, having worked across cruise, airline, tourism, tour operator, wholesale, DMC and training sectors in her career to date.

Ponant Explorations has also welcomed a new Sales Coordinator in Anne Peitavi, who will work to further elevate service and support.

Cahill is **pictured** below right with Rogers and Peitavi.



Milford Sound still open to cruising

CRUISE ships will not be banned from sailing into Milford Sound, ending an eight-year saga that threatened to take one of New Zealand's natural attractions away from cruise travellers (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

The New Zealand government yesterday said it will spend NZ\$15.2 million on upgrading infrastructure and conservation in Milford Sound Piopiotahi (**pictured**) to protect "the jewel in our conservation crown".

The move was welcomed by the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA), which said the move ends years in limbo around the future of cruising in one of the country's iconic destinations.

"The uncertainty surrounding access to Milford - a critical port of call for both New Zealand and South Island cruise itineraries - has been ongoing for more than four years, leading some cruise lines to reconsider future



deployments," NZCA said.

"Today's announcement provides much-needed certainty and will support regional tourism planning and investment."

Cruise operators entering Milford Sound are required to be a signatory to the Deed of Agreement with Environmental Southland, which sets obligations for environmental preservation.

The NZCA said cruising also provides a financial benefit to the region, with access fees supporting critical services such as harbourmaster and navigation safety operations, coastal water quality monitoring, biosecurity

efforts and coastal planning, which in turn reduces pressure on local ratepayers.

CLIA Australasia echoed the NZCA sentiments, saying the cruise industry is committed to protecting Milford Sound's unique environment and culture.

"The government's decision follows extensive industry advocacy and strikes a sensible balance, acknowledging the natural and cultural importance of Milford Sound Piopiotahi, while also providing clarity for cruise lines and the many thousands of New Zealand workers who rely on cruise tourism," it said. *ML*

Aviareps appoints

INTERNATIONAL tourism representation company Aviareps has announced Tom Fecke as Global Head of Cruise to lead the business' growing cruise line sector.

Fecke has 25 years in the travel and cruise industry under his belt and was previously Secretary General of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) in Brussels.

He has also previously held sales and leadership roles at RCL Cruises, Travelport, Avis Rent-a-Car and Sabre.



I halved my work hours with the **support** of TravelManagers

— Carla Vassallo, Personal Travel Manager, NSW



TravelManagers
As individual as you are
join.travelmanagers.com.au

Book Early and Save Up To 30%
on voyage fare on select
Australia sailings*

Book through 25 July 2025



Disney CRUISE LINE

Book now through your
preferred cruise wholesaler!

*T&Cs apply. ©2025 Disney Ships' Registry: The Bahamas



President X-cels

CELEBRITY Cruises has scheduled its highly popular 2026 President's Cruise for an eight-night Mediterranean adventure departing 13 Sep aboard the new *Celebrity Xcel*.

The sailing will feature Celebrity Cruises' President Laura Hodges Bethge and many of the line's executive team, along with special events and surprise entertainment.

The cruise will explore the Greek islands and Turkey, concluding in Barcelona.

Stormy sky ahead

THE National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has forecast an "above normal" hurricane season in the Atlantic basin for the second year running.

Writing in its outlook for the 2025 season, forecasters at the Climate Prediction Centre say there will be between 13 and 19 total named storms with winds 62kph or above.

Of those, up to 10 are forecast to strengthen into hurricanes of 120kph winds or above, with five tipped to become major hurricanes of 178kph winds or higher.

The basin saw 18 named storms last year, with five intensifying into major hurricanes, while an average season has three major storms.

Hurricane season began this week and runs through Nov.

Cruiseco turns to luxury

HELLOWORLD will house its luxury cruise offerings within a new brand, with the company this week unveiling the Signature Collection by Cruiseco.

The label will sit alongside Viva Gold, another recently launched brand for premium land product, and will feature luxury cruise packages with elite brands.

Introduced at the Helloworld Travel Owners/Managers conference in Vancouver, the company invited delegates to cast a vote for the brand's new logo.

Signature Collection will benefit from Cruiseco's cabin allocations



which allow for fixed prices and availability - a feature which will soon be expanded to river cruises due to their strong popularity.

Helloworld also announced agents will soon be able to enjoy commission on shore excursions booked through Cruiseco, which will soon launch for agents in Australia and New Zealand.

The brand will also see specialist air and cruise packages designed in partnership with the company's Air Tickets division, with major trending destinations and value to be featured.

Helloworld COO and Executive Director Cinzia Burnes said it was terrific to see cruising outperforming the market in general.

"Both the Signature Collection and our new cruise-and-air packages are designed to meet the evolving needs of today's cruise travellers and of course agents," Burnes said.

"They reflect our commitment to delivering tailored cruise experiences across both the luxury and value spectrums - giving agents and their clients more choice, flexibility, and confidence when booking their next cruise."

Burnes is pictured above at the conference in Vancouver.

G climbs the poles

G ADVENTURES is boosting its polar expedition offering with the relaunch of its Arctic polar program, off the back of its *Expedition ship* setting sail this Oct in Antarctica.

The tour operator says it also plans to double its small ship portfolio by Jul.

Four new Arctic itineraries with 10 departures are now available for bookings, including the eight-day 'Realm of the Polar Bear' and 15-day 'Arctic Highlights Southbound'.

Further expeditions across the Arctic circle and Scottish Isles will launch shortly.

HAL's 2027 eclipse

HOLLAND America Line has turned its attention to the 2027 solar eclipse, with bookings now open for two cruises to be positioned near the path of totality.

The 2027 solar eclipse will take place on 02 Aug, with the best viewing opportunities mainly over northern Africa.

Two HAL ships - *Nieuw Statendam* and *Oosterdam* - will be positioned off the west coast of Morocco and eastern coast of Tunisia respectively.

Nieuw Statendam is offering a 28-day voyage departing from Rotterdam or Dover, while *Oosterdam* will operate a 14-day round-trip sailing from Athens, which will also explore the Mediterranean.

See Bluey at sea

BLUEY and Bingo are back on Disney Cruise Line for its 2025-2026 sailings across Australia and New Zealand.

The furry sisters will be on board *Disney Wonder* from Oct 2025 to Feb 2026, embarking on three- to 10-night cruises sailing from Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

Passengers can engage with the characters (**pictured**) at a variety of onboard events.




Virgin VOYAGES

Always included

- WIFI
- 20+ EATERIES
- ESSENTIAL DRINKS
- FITNESS CLASSES
- TIPS & GRATUITIES

BOOK VIA VOYAGE STORE

REPRESENTED BY
TraveltheWorld

Expert advice from
AUSSIE BASED
Virgin Voyages Specialists

Earn
16%
commission

+ Seamless net payment to **Travel the World**

BOOK NOW



PORTOFINO is described by many as a gem of a town and one of the most popular spots to visit during a call in Genoa.

Maybe it's this reason that jewellery brand Swarovski opted to take over one of the quaint eateries in the town for its latest activation.

Visitors to the Italian town can now immerse themselves in all things Swarovski at the Cracco Portofino Restaurant, which sits right by the water.

The activation mirrors a similar Swarovski Cafe which recently took over the Palazzo Citterio during the 'Masters of Light: From Vienna to Milan' exhibition in Milan last year.

"Swarovski shimmer" will be highly visible throughout the restaurant, allowing guests to fully immerse themselves in the historic brand.

Seating and umbrellas will reflect Swarovski's colours, with guests also able to snap a selfie at a branded octagonal frame backdrop.

The takeover doesn't stop with the decorations, with even the food enjoying a sparkly makeover.

Diners can enjoy a Swarovski-inspired cocktail and dessert, with each dish served on porcelain from the Swarovski x Rosenthal collections, designed by Swarovski Global Creative Director and former model Giovanna Engelbert.

The queen of world cruises



MORE than 3,000 Aussies have set sail on Princess Cruises' *Crown Princess*, which is embarking on the biggest world cruise to ever depart from Australia.

Crown will visit 42 destinations in 22 countries across five continents visited over 113 days.

Passengers will explore bucket-list attractions in Asia, the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, North and South America, with the cruise also taking them to 50 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The cruise will visit iconic destinations like Tahiti, the historic cities of Europe, New York City, and the Panama Canal.

The voyage was initially set to visit the Middle East, however ongoing volatility in the Red Sea saw that segment scrapped last year (**CW** 02 May 2024).

Joining the cruise is Australian cruising royalty couple Jessica and Marty Ansen (**pictured** with Captain Christopher Lye), who have become some of the country's top cruising experts,

after spending 2,335 days at sea across 111 Princess cruises.

The couple also has over 30 more voyages booked over the next 12 months. **MS**

MSC heads south

MSC Cruises will homeport *MSC Opera* in La Romana, Dominican Republic and Fort-De-France, Martinique as part of its expanded southern Caribbean presence during the 2026/27 winter (**CW** 28 May).

Marking the first time an MSC ship will sail year-round in the region, the ship will offer alternating seven-night cruises, with port highlights including Catalina Island, Bridgetown, Saint John's and Samana Bay.

MSC Opera will be joined by *MSC Seaview* during the peak winter, which will be based solely in Fort-de-France and sailing week-long cruises to Guadeloupe, St Maarten, Antigua, Barbuda and more.



Cruising is up, again

THE number of Australians taking holidays at sea has grown yet again, and our travel agent community can take a huge amount of credit for that success.

CLIA data released this week shows 1.32 million Aussies took an ocean cruise during 2024, a 5.9% increase on the previous year.

This will come as no surprise to cruise specialist travel agents, who have been busier than ever over recent years.

But within the data are signs of further opportunities in the future, with one being the increase in fly-cruise holidays.

The portion of Australians who take a flight and cruise in long-haul destinations has been increasing, and in 2024 reached 18.5% (up from 15.2% in 2023).

Fly-cruise holidays present more options, longer itineraries and higher-value sales, making them an excellent suggestion for agents to recommend to their clients.

Another opportunity is the continuing growth in younger guests, as new generations are attracted to cruising.

The average age of an Aussie cruiser is now 48.4 years, down from 50.4 in 2019, and one third of cruisers are now under 40.

There is a wealth of information in CLIA's latest Source Market Report for Australia - **CLICK HERE** to download a copy of our infographic for more details.

