

Cruise Weekly today

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

A new Heritage

HERITAGE Line will offer a newly created two-night cruise program in Vietnam's Bai Tu Long Bay from next year.

The voyage will sail on board *Violet*, replacing Heritage's classic Ha Long Bay itineraries.

The first departure of the new itinerary will set sail on 02 Jan, with next year's cruise schedule now available on Heritage's website - **CLICK HERE** for full details.

Bai Tu Long Bay is northeast of Ha Long Bay, and encompasses its namesake Bai Tu Long National Park.

The region also features less crowds than its far more well-trodden neighbour.

Kimberley momentum grows for Seabourn

THE response to Seabourn Cruise Line's inaugural Kimberley season last year (**CW** 07 Mar) exceeded the brand's expectations, CMO Mike Fulkerson has told **CW**.

While Kimberley bookings from Australia are strong, the Seabourn marketing head said the relatively arcane reaches of the region made it also particularly appealing to international passengers.

"Our inaugural 2024 season was incredibly well received, and momentum has only grown," Fulkerson enthused.

"Demand for 2025 is strong, and we're already seeing strong interest for our 2026 season from both Australian and international travellers," he said.

Particularly unique for expedition cruising is the Kimberley's traditional significance, Fulkerson added.



"What truly sets these itineraries apart is the opportunity for authentic cultural connection," he explained.

Each Kimberley sailing includes a visit to Ngula Jar Island in Vansittart Bay, where *Seabourn Pursuit* (**pictured**) was named last year by the Wunambal Gaambera traditional owners (**CW** 02 Jul).

This allows guests to discover Gwion rock art, sacred Wanjin

artwork at Freshwater Cove, and Kuri Bay, home to Paspaley's only land-based pearl farm.

Seabourn's success in the Kimberley is drawing Australians to the cruise line's other voyages in the Pacific, as well as in Asia, in addition to the Mediterranean.

"We're also seeing growing interest in our expedition voyages, particularly to Antarctica," Fulkerson said. *MS*

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On location on board
Paspaley Pearl

Today's issue of *CW* comes to you from the Timor-Leste capital of Dili, where we are being hosted on the shakedown voyage of Pearl Expeditions' *Paspaley Pearl*.

LESS than six weeks remain before Australia's newest expedition cruise brand, Pearl Expeditions, embarks paying passengers for the first time. Fresh from her final fit-out in Singapore, *Paspaley Pearl* is gleaming and highly reflective of its brand of luxury.

Cruise Weekly is among the first guests to see the ship in action as we put the dining and exploration to the test.

Paspaley's 'Pearler' of an expedition ship



PEARL Expeditions head Sarina Bratton is nearly ready to welcome the first paying guests on board the new cruise line.

Ahead of the first voyage from Wyndham in Western Australia to Broome, the 30-passenger *Paspaley Pearl* is in the Timor-Leste capital of Dili, where she will complete a series of shakedowns, with media and travel advisors to put the experience to the test.

Paspaley Pearl is already making history before she enters service however, becoming the first leisure passenger ship to conduct a turnaround in Timor-Leste.

The ship will return to Darwin

by the middle of Jul to be fitted with two more Zodiac boats currently being built in Cairns.

There is an abundance of space for explorers to enjoy, with the size of the ship far exceeding its 30-passenger capacity.

"We're trying to create an atmosphere that feels like home," Bratton said.

At the aft, travellers will find a 32-seat al fresco communal dining area (**pictured** inset) where breakfast and lunch will be served.

This space also serves as the ship's muster station in the event of an emergency.

One deck down is another 32-seat main restaurant where

dinner is taken each evening across four tables of six and two tables for groups of four to dine.

Staterooms are spread across two of the three public decks, which are named Ocean, Horizon, and Sun in order of their ascension from bottom to top.

Like the rest of the ship, rooms are spacious, with an oversized shower notably larger than entire bathrooms on some large ships.

On the top deck, travellers will find an eight-person jacuzzi and well-spaced sun loungers to relax as the ship moves to its next call.

Australians will find elements of their own backyard on board too, with home-grown wines among the selection along with Great Northern, Little Creatures and Coopers beers.

Additionally, travellers won't need a power adaptor to keep their devices charged, with the ship equipped with Australian standard 220-volt power outlets.

Paspaley Pearl also offers Starlink wi-fi service on board, although this is yet to be tested once the ship ventures into remote waters.

Today, the ship will set sail across Wetar Strait for nearby Atauro Island, where her Zodiacs will ferry guests ashore to explore the local community. *ML*

Bratton is **pictured** centre, flanked by Pearl Expeditions' Expedition Operations Manager Jorge Villamarin and Head of Sustainability, Mick Fogg.

Windstar gets IT

WINDSTAR Cruises has named Arthur Theodorou Vice President of IT, where he will guide the line's tech strategy amid its fleet expansion.

Theodorou brings more than two decades of experience driving digital transformation and IT innovation across the maritime and travel sectors.

His background includes leading complex tech ecosystems at land and sea, most recently in the same role at Lindblad Expeditions.



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Could Emerald sail in Australia?

THE huge demand for Emerald Cruises in Oceania does not mean the line will be rushing to base a ship in Australian waters.

Emerald is currently firing on all cylinders around the world, Scenic Group General Manager Sales & Marketing Anthony Laver enthused, which is part of the reason the line has chosen to increase its pipeline of ships over the coming years (**CW** 08 Apr).

However, the Scenic head remained coy on whether these factors meant an Emerald ship will be coming to Australia soon.

"In terms of this region, watch this space," Laver teased.

"There is huge demand for the Emerald product in the Oceania/Asia-Pacific region, but most of our operational expertise is still in Europe and the [Mediterranean].

"[Scenic founder Glen Moroney] has always been clever about not trying to spread things too thin."



Emerald's meaty forward projections demanded the cruise line expand, rather than a desire to push into new markets.

"We looked at the total inventory and capacity and projected, with the current growth rates, where would we be in two or three years time, and there's a big gap in terms of where the opportunities are for our product, our experiences," Laver explained.

Other markets growing comparably to Australia include

India, Latin America, the US, and Asia, where Scenic has just opened an office (**CW** 15 Oct).

"It's now simultaneously growing...It's always been patchy, one market growing here, one market growing there...what we're seeing is global growth and global expansion, which is another one of those triggers for the capacity," Laver explained.

"It's not just Australia selling into those departures, it's four... or five markets selling to that one departure." **MS**

Ritz-Carlton to auction off cruise

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection (RCYC) and Sotheby's have unveiled 'Masterpieces & The Mediterranean', a voyage aboard *Luminara*, which will be auctioned off by the broker.

The seven-night journey sails from 17-24 Oct, with the winning bidder and a guest to travel from Rome to Barcelona, visiting Livorno, Portofino, Saint-Tropez, and Mallorca in *Luminara's* owner's suite.

The bespoke itinerary will see travellers step beyond the velvet rope into private institutions in Florence, Saint-Tropez, Saint-Paul de Vence, and more.

The auction will be available online through Sotheby's Sealed, with bidding open from 20-30 Jun - **CLICK HERE** to view the listing.



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T&C'S APPLY



ROYAL Caribbean passengers have watched a woman jump off a cruise ship pier into the freezing waters of Juneau, of all places.

The woman sprinted across the wooden pier before leaping into the cold harbour, dressed in little more than a t-shirt, shorts, and sandals.

Other guests in the background can be seen wearing pants, coats, and hats, with even Alaskan summers rising to an average of just 17 degrees, with water temperature often much lower.

Commenters on the TikTok detailing the incident, which can be viewed [HERE](#), pointed out the numerous other dangers of the stunt, including potentially polluted water, hidden debris, pilings beneath the surface, and electric shock from stray currents.

Oceania introduces Nikkei

OCEANIA Cruises is introducing Nikkei cuisine to the menu at its onboard restaurant Red Ginger.

Nikkei fuses Japanese and Peruvian elements, with the cruise line unveiling 12 new recipes from the cooking style at its Pan-Asian restaurant.

The innovative menu items recently debuted aboard *Vista*, and will be available on Oceania's newest ship *Allura*, launching next month, before being added to the rest of the fleet by early next year.

Highlights of the new Red Ginger menu will include ceviche Nikkei marinated tuna dressed in leche de tigre, and accented with cilantro, sesame oil, and red chili.

Passengers will also be able to feast on Peruvian-style beef short rib, served with savoury lomo saltado sauce and a miso sweet potato mousseline.

Other menu highlights will include Cazuela de Arroz Nikkei, soft shell crab tempura bao buns, chicken anticuchos, tres leche cube, and yuzu cheesecake.

"The carefully crafted new



Nikkei menu items further augment the ongoing evolution of our driving philosophy of serving 'The Finest Cuisine at Sea,' the cruise line's head Jason Montague commented. *MS*

The king of deals

ROYAL Caribbean is offering end-of-financial-year savings on 2025-2026 cruises in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific.

The cruise line is offering family holiday deals with up to \$1,000 off in savings, plus up to 60% off the passenger's second fare.

Guests can secure their spot for less with half-priced deposits, and kids can sail from just \$59* a day.

The deals are also available on Royal Caribbean's six exclusive Wiggles cruises.



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For confidential discussions and further information, please contact Tom Green.
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On Board: Paspaley Pearl

Ocean Deck Restaurant

Travellers on *Paspaley Pearl* can unwind each day at the ship's main restaurant. A lounge area adjacent to the bar begins the experience before a modest yet tantalising menu is provided in a warmly lit setting. Each course trumps the one before it, but don't pass on the bread with "culturally whipped butter" - you will want seconds.



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