



Cruise Weekly today

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

Star power at MSC

HOLLYWOOD star Drew Barrymore will serve as godmother to MSC Cruises' new ship *MSC World America* and will christen the ship at the new MSC Miami Cruise Terminal on 09 Apr.

Barrymore will join fellow star Orlando Bloom to cut the ceremonial ribbon and trigger the traditional champagne to break across the ship's bow.

"There's something so magical about cruises; they let you discover the world in this really fun, unexpected way," Barrymore said.

"And to be able to name *MSC World America* and send the ship off with well wishes and good luck is such an honour."

Barrymore and Bloom recently starred in a Super Bowl commercial for the line as part of its 'Let's Holiday' campaign (**CW** 11 Feb).

The movie star appears in a special video announcing her role as *MSC World America* godmother - **CLICK HERE**.

The selection of Barrymore also marks a changing of the guard by MSC, with legendary actress Sophia Loren serving as the godmother for every other ship in the MSC cruise fleet.

Princess crowns local boss

PRINCESS Cruises has announced Matthew Rutherford as its new Vice President Asia Pacific (**CW** breaking news yesterday), vacating the role left by Stuart Allison late last year (**CW** 31 Jul 2024).

Rutherford will manage Princess' operations in Australia, Japan, and regional Asia from mid-next month, reporting in to CCO Terry Thornton.

Rutherford has been with Carnival Corporation for more than 10 years, most recently serving as Vice President of Revenue Management and Deployment for P&O Australia.

The transition will also see Senior Director Sales & Marketing Nick Ferguson's role expanded to include Asia Pacific, reporting in to Rutherford.

Ferguson will retain Australia's Sales & Marketing operations, in addition to supporting Japan and regional Asia teams, driving strategic planning and marketing support across the region.

Thornton said of Rutherford: "his well-rounded expertise in revenue management, strategic planning, and data-driven decision-making will be invaluable in driving our growth across the Asia Pacific region."

"We are looking forward to welcoming Matthew in his new role at Princess and positioning him and the team for success."

Rutherford said he is delighted to join one of the world's most



iconic cruise lines.

"It's a privilege to lead this remarkable brand across the Asia Pacific region and I look forward to working with the talented team and their travel partners," he said.

"It's also an exciting time as we celebrate our 60th year of operation and welcome *Discovery Princess* to Australia for the first time in Dec."

Other changes will see Paul Chung of Princess Government Relations Asia/China; Country Director Japan Satoru Horikawa; and Country Manager Hong Kong Gee Chan all report to Rutherford, streamlining Princess' Asia Pacific reporting lines.

"The Asia Pacific region is a key priority market for Princess and is well positioned for growth," Thornton added.

"Rutherford's appointment and the expansion of the team is a vote of confidence in both our people and the region we operate in," he added. *MS*

Hall helms Avalon

GLOBUS family of brands has appointed Chris Hall as its new Managing Director Asia Pacific (**TD** breaking news).

Effective 31 Mar, Hall will take charge of brands including Avalon Waterways.

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On location on board Celestyal Journey

Today's issue of CW is coming to you from on board Celestyal Cruises' new ship *Celestyal Journey*.

CELESTYAL Journey is arriving in her second port of call in the United Arab Emirates today, with passengers set to embark at Sir Bani Yas island.

The key attraction on this destination located southwest of Abu Dhabi is its namesake Sir Bani Yas Wildlife Park, home to thousands of animals.

The familar group will be able to spot gazelles, llamas, giraffes, ostriches, and the local oryx for which the region is so famous.

Sir Bani Yas also offers other active options, like kayaking, mountain biking and archery.

Seabourn sells second ship to Japan

SEABOURN Cruise Line has announced the sale of *Seabourn Sojourn* (pictured) to Japanese line Mitsui Ocean Cruises - the second ship the luxury brand has sold to the Japanese start-up in as many years (*CW* 12 Dec).

The deal will see Seabourn charter *Sojourn* back from Mitsui, and continue to operate all of her published voyages, including visits to Australia on its last world cruise concluding on 15 May 2026.

Guests and their travel advisors with bookings impacted after this date will receive a message from Seabourn with details on changes or rebooking options.

Sojourn will then be delivered to Mitsui, and upon handover, will be deployed by her new owner in a market that is not competitive with her former owner.

Her sale follows former fleetmate *Seabourn Odyssey* joining the same Japanese cruise



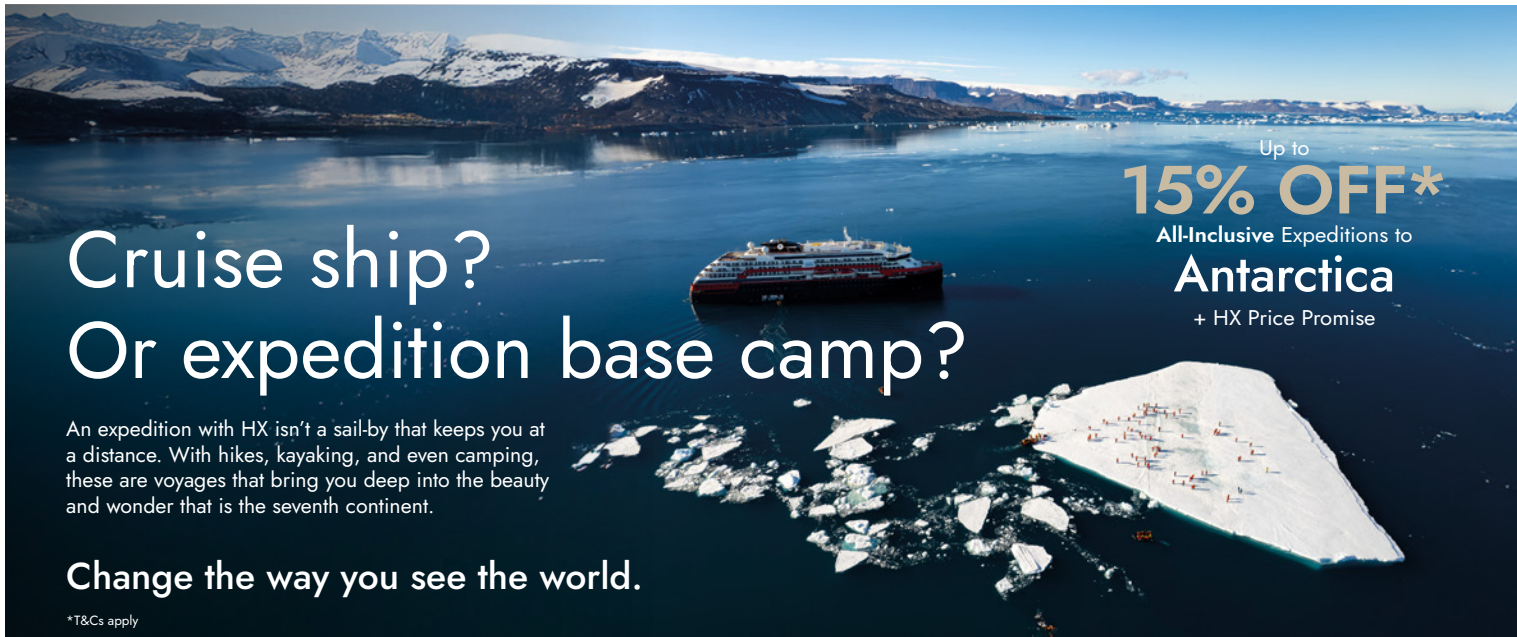
line last year (*CW* 13 Oct 2023).

"With this transition, [we] will have one of the youngest and most modern fleets in the business, perfectly suited to offer the private yacht-like experience that makes us one of the world's most popular choices in ultra-luxury cruising," Seabourn

President Mark Tamis said.

"We are proud that after 16 years in the fleet, *Seabourn Sojourn* will continue her journeys with Mitsui Ocean Cruises.

"In the coming year, we will find special ways to celebrate *Sojourn's* legacy with guests and crew," he added. *MS*



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Let NCL entertain

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has introduced a new onboard entertainment strategy headlined by the introduction of four new stage productions.

The new strategy involves taking more entertainment outside the theatre to include more cast to guest interactions and an expansion into youth and family entertainment.

This will be delivered through 'Mini Moments of More' which will see ship entertainers incite daily flash mobs in venues including the pool deck, atrium, restaurants and more to keep guests "on their toes".

The four new original musical productions will take to the stage across nine Norwegian Cruise Line ships beginning from Sep 2025, the line said.

The new productions are inspired by guest feedback, with each new show created at the NCLH studios in Tampa.

Leading the lineup will be a throwback party entitled 'Bring Back the 90s', which will take guests on an 'Alice in Wonderland' style story set to memorable tunes from the 90s.

Popular Australian ballroom dance production 'Burn The Floor' has also inspired the creation of a new show titled 'Red, White and British', which celebrates iconic UK musicians.

NCL will also debut a concert experience with 'Icons: The Bands' and a new ballroom dance show 'Ignite the Night'.

Agents party with Celestyal



CELESTYAL executives were in Sydney last week to celebrate the cruise line's 10th birthday, including a dinner with travel agents and distribution partners.

Hosted at Aalia Restaurant, the event was an opportunity for Celestyal's Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett and Vice President Business Development Janet Parton to mark the milestone and thank the local industry for their part in the cruise line's growth in the region.

Celestyal enjoyed a record year in 2024, with bookings up 37% in the Australian market, Haslett pointed out.

"With the vast majority of our business coming via our trade channels, our travel agent partners are critical to our success and we are grateful for their support," said Haslett.

"As we wrap up our first inaugural season in the Arabian Gulf, we were thrilled with the

response to our first year-round program of cruising, and look forward to welcoming more Australian guests onboard when we return to the region with both ships from December." *JM*

Pictured at the Celestyal partner dinner in Sydney are: Karen Kotselas from Sun Island Tours; Carina Mullen from Cruise HQ; Celestyal VP BD Janet Parton; Jade Shaw from Luxury Escapes; and Celestyal CCO Lee Haslett.

Nice tax backtrack

NICE Mayor Christian Estrosi has backflipped on plans to introduce a cruise ship tax in the French city (**CW** 11 Feb).

Instead, in an effort to appease both environmental and tourism concerns, Estrosi has flagged a plan to impose a cap of 65 ships annually at Villefranche-sur-mer, each with no more than 2,500 pax.

New colours for HX

HX EXPEDITIONS has unveiled its new fleet livery colours, marking the final stages of its rebranding following its split from former sister brand Hurtigruten.

Inspired by marine wildlife, the new colours include indigo blue, sand, pearl, and arctic white, signalling a departure from the red and black previously used by the Hurtigruten Group.

MEANWHILE, HX has established a new local sales and marketing team, led by Amber Wilson.

The team includes industry veterans who have worked across Hurtigruten Group, as well as new talent, including Shannon Davis as Senior Marketing Manager; Gareth Coakley and Kristy Fruin as Key Account Managers; and Jemma Gormack as Marketing Exec.

New Silversea hire

LUXURY cruise line Silversea has promoted Sarah Puglia its new Manager of Key Accounts and Sales Enablement.

Puglia first joined Silversea in Oct 2022, and has until recently been the Sales Manager for Queensland, Western Australia and the NT.

Puglia takes up the role after it was vacated by Anoushka Kudav, who recently took a role with Abercrombie & Kent Travel Group (**CW** 26 Feb).



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TIME to break out the warm and fuzzy feels.

Royal Caribbean will soon welcome its newest (and cutest) crew member, Sailor **(pictured)**, as Chief Dog Officer on *Star of the Seas*.

Following in the steps of the also-adorable Rover, who recently celebrated her one-year anniversary as Chief Dog Officer on *Icon of the Seas* (CW 29 Jan), Sailor is sure to make an impression in her very important role when *Star* debuts in Aug 2025 from Florida's Port Canaveral.

She is tasked with "living her best life" and spreading joy on board to guests and crew - sounds like a pretty sweet gig if you ask us, and we reckon it will come very naturally to her. Sailor will be rewarded for her efforts with nonstop playtime on the Caribbean's private beaches, like Perfect Day at CocoCay, as well as enjoying lodgings onboard the ship in the "dog-friendliest room ever".

Royal Caribbean will share more details on Sailor's journey in the months to come.



Superyacht arrives in Cairns

PRIVATE groups seeking a luxury superyacht experience will soon have a new option when Morris Nautical bolsters its North Queensland fleet with a new yacht arriving **(pictured)** this month.

The company will soon take possession of the 41-metre *M.Y. Northern Escape*, which relocates to tropical North Queensland after three seasons in the Mediterranean.

M.Y. Northern Escape joins *M.Y. Beluga* and *M.Y. Flying Fish* in the Morris fleet, offering exclusive luxury charters from Cairns, complete with a crew of seven.

Bookings can be tailored to take guests to remote Queensland islands, secluded beaches and lesser-known diving sites.

Guests can extend their adventure with a stay at Orpheus Private Lodge or Pelorus Private Island, both in the Morris stable.

Built by the Italian shipyard Benetti, the new addition caters to 12 travellers across five suites, each equipped with a massage table and wellbeing space.

The ship's upper deck features a sunbathing area, hot tub and al fresco dining area along with an infinity swimming pool.

Morris Nautical Owner, Chris Morris, said the arrival of the new superyacht offered a rare chance for groups to explore the region.

"*Northern Escape* is the jewel in the crown of the Morris Nautical fleet and seeing her in Australian waters is a proud moment."

Morris Nautical CEO and Captain of *M.Y. Northern Escape*, Sam



Aldred, said he is looking forward to exploring north Queensland with his high-yielding clientele.

"The region's pristine waters, secluded islands, and the Great Barrier Reef provide a unique and exceptional charter experience, offering something truly different from the typical Mediterranean routes," Aldred said. *ML*

Pandaw's Hooghly

RIVER expedition line Pandaw has introduced two new 10-night Indian itineraries on the Hooghly River.

Pandaw said the new 10-night 'Brahmaputra' expedition sails round-trip from Kolkata and includes two nights exploring the 'City of Joy', as the former capital of the British Raj was known.

Guests will visit temples, palaces and artisanal villages in the West Bengal countryside.

Solo guests can take advantage of no single supplements on both new itineraries on selected dates.

The line said the new cruises have been designed to avoid the high cost of Indian hotels and for travellers to join the ship directly from the airport.

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