

### Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Imagine Holidays
- Lindblad Expeditions

### Win a \$100 giftcard

**ADVISORS** can score a \$100 Prezzy voucher for each Imagine Cruising booking they make before 30 Jun, with VIP Ricky Martin concert tickets also up for grabs.

Find out more about the incentive on **page 5**, which also highlights the brand's all-inclusive Victoria Falls package.

### What a view this is

**ENJOY** special savings on National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions voyages, with the cruise line's latest sale.

The 'View from the Bridge' offer provides 20% savings on Bridge-level staterooms for select departures this year and the next.

Head to **page 6** for more information on the sale.

## Cruise sets records in '24

**CRUISE** Lines International Association's (CLIA) annual *State of the Cruise Industry* report for this year shows the sector set records in 2024, including 34.6 million people taking an ocean cruise worldwide.

This was up almost 10% on the prior corresponding period, with pax numbers forecasted to grow even further in the coming years.

A total of 37.7 million are expected to cruise this year - which still represents less than 3% of tourism worldwide.

Total pax numbers are expected to rise to 41.9 million by 2028.

Intention to cruise among international travellers remains strong, with 82% of those who have sailed in the past saying they will do so again.

More than two-thirds (68%) of those who have never sailed before also say they would consider taking a cruise.

Generation X and Millennials are the most enthusiastic cruisers, the report found, with 84% of those from the former cohort that have cruised before likely to sail again.

They were closely trailed by Millennials who have cruised before, with 83% saying they will do so again.

The number of first-time cruisers continues to increase, with 31% over the past two years new to the sector, up from 24% pre-pandemic.

"Cruising is more popular than ever and the diversity of experiences now available to cruise guests is phenomenal," Managing Director Joel Katz said.

"Cruise lines have been investing billions of dollars in new ships, new innovations and new experiences, allowing them to cater to increasingly diverse tastes among their guests.

"The outlook for cruising remains strong and cruise lines are preparing to enhance their fleets with a further 56 new ships to be launched into the next decade...at the same time, they are making huge investments in the technologies and propulsion systems that are taking our industry towards its net-zero emission goals."

Australia and the South Pacific is still within the top 10 destination regions in the world, with 1.3 million sailing in local waters last year - up 3.8% on 2023.

This placed the region at sixth in the world, alongside the West Coast of North America, and behind the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, Northern/Central Europe, Asia, and Alaska.

Cruising made an economic impact of \$8.43 billion in the 2023-2024 season, with Australia recording 4.3 million passenger visit days. **MS**

### Star put to the test

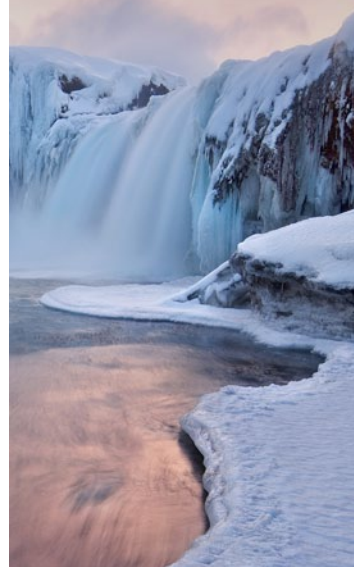
**ROYAL** Caribbean's *Star of the Seas* has set sail on a series of sea trials, marking one of the final construction milestones for the newbuild.

The Icon Class vessel will travel the open ocean over 11 days, during which more than 2,000 experts will carry out a wide range of technical examinations, ahead of *Star's* Aug debut in Florida.

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## Fogarty joins board

**THE** Luxury Travel Collection's Global Product Director Shannon Fogarty (**pictured**) has been appointed to National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions' Travel Advisory Board, as the representative for Oceania.

The appointment recognises Fogarty's "profound understanding and exceptional expertise in the luxury sector", the cruise line said.

Fogarty said she was honoured to join the board.

"At the heart of this opportunity is a shared commitment to purposeful, transformative travel - values LTC hold closely," she said.

"It's a privilege to contribute my insights to such a respected and pioneering organisation," Fogarty added.

The board plays a crucial role in guiding National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions' growth, and navigating the evolving expedition travel market.

Members serve a three-year term, which also sees them receive updates on product changes and other corporate developments, which they provide real time feedback on.



## NCL slams HA tax hike

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has taken aim at authorities in Hawaii after the US state widened its tax catchment on tourists to include cruise ship passengers.

Earlier this month, the Hawaii State Legislature passed a bill (**CW** 07 May) to expand its Transient Accommodations Tax to now include cruise ship passengers, effective from 01 Jan 2026.

The levy, which was previously only payable by land-based visitors through a hotel tax, was also hiked from 10.25% to 11%.

Hawaii Governor Josh Green said he intends to sign the passed legislation into law before its 09 Jul deadline, saying the additional funds will help "mitigate the impact of climate change and the roughly 10 million annual visitors we welcome to our shores".

Green added the additional funds will help the state deal with greater wildfire risk, which devastated Maui in mid-2023, and killed more than 100 people (**CW** 15 Aug 2023).

While other cruise lines visit Hawaii periodically, NCL is the only brand that operates a ship year-round in the Aloha State, with *Pride of America* (**pictured**) running weekly round trip itineraries visiting ports on the state's four main islands of Oahu, Maui, Hawai'i, and Kauai.

The state's new tax is expected to generate up to an additional US\$100 million in revenue.

"Our Hawaii sailings aboard our



home ported *Pride of America* already contribute approximately US\$200 per person in port fees and taxes," a statement to **Cruise Weekly** by Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings this week declared.

"The proposed additional tax increases this to an estimated US\$350 per person, reaching [around] US\$1,400 for a family of four," the line continued.

"The added financial burden not only affects our guests but also presents challenges for us as cruise operators - impacting local businesses and communities that depend on a thriving cruise industry," the statement read.

The tax is facing opposition from CLIA, which was not shy in its objections to the move.

"We oppose extending Hawaii's Transient Accommodations Tax to cruise ships as it violates the US Constitution and federal law, and represents a significant increase to the fees and taxes already paid by passengers which could reduce future cruise tourism," CLIA said.

The organisation stated it valued its relationship with Hawaii and that it is working to resolve the matter in a way that upholds fairness and legality. *ML*

## CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz  
MD, CLIA Australasia

### A bright future

CLIA'S annual State of the Cruise Industry report is always a big source of inspiration, and this year is no exception.

If there's one key theme in our 2025 report, it's that cruise tourism is not only thriving globally right now, it will also present even greater opportunities in the future.

All the underlying indicators are good. Global cruise figures hit record levels during 2024, and we forecast even stronger figures in 2025 and beyond.

At the same time, the intention to cruise continues at very high levels - of those who have cruised in the past, 82% say they will cruise again, and even among those who have never sailed before, 68% say they would consider taking a cruise in the future.

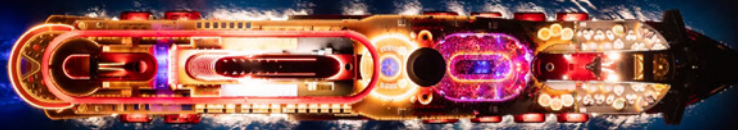
Perhaps even more encouraging are the indicators that prove our industry is succeeding in attracting new cruisers to the seas.

Gen X and Millennials are now the most enthusiastic about cruising (ahead of our loyal Baby Boomers), and first-time cruisers now make up 31% of passengers - up from 24% in 2019.

We're grateful to our trade partners for helping to drive this success, and we know the opportunities for travel agents can only continue to grow.

Download the report **HERE**.

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## Viking delivers strong Q1 earnings

**VIKING** has reported total revenue of US\$897.1 million (A\$1.397 billion) for the first quarter of the calendar year, an impressive increase of 24.9% compared to the prior corresponding period.

The cruise line's revenues came in well ahead of expectations, which it beat by US\$56 million, or 7%.

Viking's gross margin increased 53.9%, and its adjusted gross margin increased 23.8% YOY.

Adjusted EBITDA was US\$72.8 million, an increase of US\$77.3 million compared to the PCP.

The numbers come off the back of Viking having sold 92% of its capacity passenger cruise days for this year.

The cruise line is also selling strongly for next year, with just over a third of its product for 2026 already booked.

Advance bookings are tracking



4% higher than the same point last year, with the cruise line ahead in both of its ocean and river product.

"Viking is off to a remarkable start in 2025, with our first quarter financial performance underscoring the continued momentum in our business," Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Torstein Hagen said.

"During the quarter, we increased capacity by 14.9% and simultaneously delivered a 7.1% growth in net yield - clear indicators of the robust demand for meaningful and enriching travel experiences among our core demographic."

Viking remains firmly focused on generating demand into the future, Hagen added. *MS*

## Broome lounge

**BROOME** International Airport has launched a dedicated cruise lounge for passengers flying out after their voyage.

The lounge is complete with a spread of local food offerings, regional beers and wines, and spirits infused with native ingredients.

The first guests to enjoy the lounge will be those disembarking Seabourn Cruise Line's *Seabourn Pursuit* today.

The cruise sector injects more than \$70 million into Broome's economy annually, with 198 cruise visit days recorded last year and similar numbers expected again this year and next.

Expedition is a major driver of the economic windfall of the town, which is set to build a new government-funded cruise terminal (*CW* 06 Feb).

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**WITH** the aim of injecting some serious fun factor into its new private island experience, Royal Caribbean has enlisted the help of a 'famous waterslide influencer'.

The cruise line has hired Alex Ojeda, a travel vlogger who specialises in thrilling destinations, tasking him with the very important job of making Perfect Day Mexico... well, perfect.

Due to open in 2027, the island will boast the tallest waterslide tower in the Americas; the world's first sombrero waterslide; a hydro launch slide that shoots riders 12 metres into the air; and the world's longest lazy river.

"I was hired to help design this waterpark," Ojeda told his more than eight million followers in a video.

He described being involved in "shaping slides, guest experience, and how the thrill flows from tower to tower."

## Crystal hits the Club



**CRYSTAL** has unveiled its new production show, *Club Nights*, which is being billed as a "high-energy musical journey".

*Club Nights* (pictured) takes attendees through five nightlife scenes, and replaces the *Crystal on Broadway* show.

The new production is inspired by the distinct musical styles and atmospheres found in nightclubs around the world, from the twang of country saloons to the glitz of Las Vegas, the grit of a biker bar, the soul of a jazz lounge, and a rocking London pub.

*Club Nights* recently premiered aboard *Crystal Serenity* to world cruise guests, and will be unveiled on *Crystal Symphony* in Nov.

"This show has lived in my imagination for years," Vice President Entertainment Keith Cox said.

"The music was always the driving force - each scene builds around a specific club genre, creating an emotional and visual experience that transports our audience to places they know and love, or maybe have always dreamed of." MS

## Hurti's new CCO

**HURTIGRUTEN** has appointed Iain Powell as its new Chief Commercial Officer.

The cruise sector veteran joined Hurtigruten in Mar 2024 as Vice President Sales & Marketing UK & EMEA, before being promoted to Managing Director Nordics, UK, and Emerging Markets in Dec.

Powell's career also spans other renowned cruise companies, including TUI, Carnival, and Saga.

Chief Executive Officer Hedda Felin shared her excitement for Powell's promotion.

"In a short time, he has demonstrated leadership, business acumen, and the ability to execute," she said.

"These qualities will be critical for the company's continued progress."

Powell said he is delighted to take on this role.

"There's strong demand from people wanting to experience Norway, and we are fortunate to have a truly unique product - world-class journeys through spectacular nature," he said.

"We are very well placed to capitalise on this demand."

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#### EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon

Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury,

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Editorial Director - Damian Francis

Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

[info@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:info@cruiseweekly.com.au)

#### ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

[advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au)

#### GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matthew Vince

#### ACCOUNTS

[accounts@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accounts@traveldaily.com.au)

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd  
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia  
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia  
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220  
Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220



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