

Cruise Weekly today

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

Mitsui's second ship

MITSUI OSK Lines' new cruise ship *Mitsui Ocean Sakura* will enter service in Sep, offering almost 30 cruises as part of her debut program.

The former *Seabourn Sojourn* will be introduced with new onboard additions, such as a sushi bar and a foot bath, to bring her in line with her fleetmate *Mitsui Ocean Fuji*.

Highlights of *Sakura's* inaugural season will include several short voyages of one to three nights, over a three-month program sailing through to Dec 2026.

Reidy departs MSC

MSC Cruises Business Development Manager Brenton Reidy has departed the line, **CW** can reveal.

The cruise line extended its thanks to Reidy for his "dedication, passion, and strong partnership with the trade" over his two-and-a-half-year tenure.

"Brenton has played a key role in strengthening MSC's presence in the region, and the company wishes him every success in his future endeavours," an MSC spokesperson told **CW**.

Oceania goes 'quiet' in the Med



OCEANIA Cruises is set to sail its first-ever full winter season in the Mediterranean in 2027-28 aboard *Oceania Allura* (pictured).

The collection of 17 new sailings is ideal for travellers seeking the cooler atmosphere of a Mediterranean winter.

Journeys range from nine to 26 days, offering the chance to shop artisan and Christmas markets in Rome's Piazza Navona, wander the bazaars of Turkey and Morocco, or take in the spices of North African bazaars.

The program spans from Barcelona in the Western Mediterranean to Istanbul in the east, with other highlights including the Bay of Kotor, Cagliari, Sardinia, and more.

Sales Director James Sitters told **Cruise Weekly** that Oceania has so far been "thrilled" with the response to the new concept.

"As part of the 2027-2028

Collection launch, we saw a unique opportunity to reimagine how travellers experience this iconic region - free from summer crowds, extreme heat, and peak-season pricing," he said.

"Leading the way is our newest ship, *Oceania Allura*, offering guests the chance to explore each port in a more authentic, unhurried way, almost as if they were locals themselves.

"This debut taps into the growing 'quiet Mediterranean' trend," he added.

Sitters said Oceania's expansion into the winter season in the Mediterranean also allows the cruise line to address the demand for the region, while expanding into new destinations such as Greenland (**CW** 18 Sep).

"Our quiet-season program allows us to expand into these bucket-list regions while staying true to the classics," he said. **MS**

Virgin's Aus rep

VIRGIN Voyages Director of Sales Europe & New Markets Matt Lebber (pictured) has had his territory expanded to include Australia, reflecting the market's growth.

"We've seen long-haul demand grow across Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, with sailors choosing Virgin Voyages in record numbers and recognising the incredible value of our experience," Lebber said.

"Our [advisors] and GSAs are the driving force behind that momentum, helping us strengthen our presence across these markets.

"In 2026, we'll build on the excitement of *Brilliant Lady's* spectacular launch, amplifying this year's energy and inspiring even more sailors to discover what makes Virgin Voyages so special," he added.

Virgin unveiled *Brilliant* late last month in Miami (**CW** 20 Oct), with more than 2,000 guests embarking on her inaugural cruise.



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Navigating home

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) *Seven Seas Navigator* will no longer exit the line's fleet, following Crescent Seas' relinquishing of its charter of the ship (**CW** yesterday).

Although RSSC did not reveal any future itineraries for the ship, a spokesperson for the cruise line said she will continue to sail in the fleet.

"We are delighted that this beloved ship will go on providing guests with the highest standards of ultra-luxury and the personalised signature hospitality delivered by her exceptional crew that Regent is known for," the spokesperson said.

"[RSSC] continues to lead the ultra-luxury cruise industry through significant investment in our fleet, including a multi-million-dollar refurbishment for *Seven Seas Navigator* currently planned for late 2026," the spokesperson said.

"More details regarding the ship's refurbishment and subsequent itineraries will be announced soon."

Crescent yesterday announced it will forego its charter for two ships (**CW** 04 Apr), including RSSC's *Navigator*, as it instead focuses on plans for its newbuild.

The line pointed to "far exceeded expectations" for its residential cruise line concept for the change in plans.

Get ready for a HAL of a season



HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has launched its 2025-2026 Australian season, which will feature Grand Voyages, Culinary Ambassador Sailings, and more.

Cruises will depart in Nov, Feb, and Mar, and all call in Melbourne and Hobart/Burnie.

The flagship sailing of the season will be the 14-day 'Australia and New Zealand' cruise, departing from Sydney.

Another highlight will be the 'South Australia Discovery Holiday', departing from Sydney on a 14-day round trip.

This year will also see *Volendam* and *Zaandam* make a special double call in Sydney on 07 Mar, bringing together two vessels amid their Grand Voyages.

Meanwhile, some of Holland America's culinary ambassadors

will be on board during the season, with guests to enjoy the flavours of Masaharu Morimoto, Ethan Stowell, and 'master tea blender' Steve Schwartz.

Flexible standby sailings will also return this season (**CW** 02 Oct 2024), with guests able to join a waiting list for select voyages from \$129pp per day for an inside or oceanview stateroom, or \$199 for a verandah.

Guests have the option to remain on the list for a later cruise if a spot does not become available, or receive a full refund.

Holland America noted travellers are beginning to plan further ahead than usual, securing their preferred itineraries months in advance, and taking advantage of early booking offers. *MS*

Lindblad gets cold

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has expanded its river collection with new itineraries for 27-28.

Demand for Lindblad Expeditions' product has driven the expansion of its portfolio of river itineraries, with the 2027-2028 season to mark the cruise line's most extended lineup of itineraries to date.

New holiday voyages in Europe will be a highlight of the season, which will also span destinations like Egypt, India, and Vietnam.

Lindblad's *Connect* will continue to sail down Amsterdam's canals and through the French countryside with her popular spring and summer itineraries.

Strong demand will also see her sister ship *Evolve* join the fleet, introducing three new Christmas cruises and one holiday voyage exploring the destination's Christmas markets, extending Lindblad's program into winter.

Returning cruises will include *Charaidev II* on India's Brahmaputra River, *Jahan* on the Mekong in Vietnam, and *Oberoï Philae* on the Nile.



HIDDEN GEMS

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Travel Daily



VISITING exotic islands is one of the joys of cruising, but there is an island that guests can actually hike to - and even dine on its ocean floor.

Located between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in Canada, the Bay of Fundy has the highest tides in the world.

Tidal changes typically range 14.5 metres from high to low tide, but have risen to 16.3 metres in extreme conditions.

Visitors are warned to always check the tide times before walking on the island and to be on shore two hours before high tide.

The phenomenon allows guests to enjoy a gourmet three-course meal at Burntcoat Head Park at low tide.

There is also an annual marathon, where participants are literally outrunning the tides and dodging crabs and ocean plant life, as the conditions are only ideal for

A&K's *Pure Amazon* launches



PURE Amazon (pictured), Abercrombie & Kent's (A&K) first South American riverboat, has set sail in the heart of Peru.

The vessel is part of A&K's Sanctuary Collection, and will call Peru's Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve home, as she sails itineraries of three, four, and seven nights.

Pure Amazon carries 22 passengers, who will be able to spot botos, black caimans, three-toed sloths, giant otters, piranha,

macaws, arapaima, and more.

The ship's Peruvian culinary team will prepare changing five-course tasting menus, presented with carefully selected Latin American wines.

Pure Amazon's bar program celebrates the local heritage with pisco cocktails incorporating coca leaf and dragon's blood.

Activities include excursions, fishing for piranha, forest walks, and kayaking, while back on board, pax can enjoy the spa. *MS*

HAL gets frosty

HOLLAND America Line's (HAL) 27-28 South America and Antarctica cruise season has been released, featuring itineraries that take guests from the Chilean fjords and the Bruggen Glacier to Machu Picchu, the Amazon rainforest, and beyond.

From Nov 2027 to Mar 2028, there will be 14-31-day itineraries available for trips on board *Zuiderdam* and *Oosterdam*, embarking from Buenos Aires, San Antonio, Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Passengers will also enjoy the diverse wildlife during their trip, such as penguin colonies along Antarctic shores, botos in the Amazon, and capybaras beside the rivers.

"Our South America and Antarctica itineraries are designed for travellers who want to go beyond the ordinary," said Paul Grigsby from HAL.

"We're proud to offer access to places that few cruise lines reach, with the comfort and personalised service that HAL is known for."



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