

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **Celebrity Cruises**.

Celebrity savings

CELEBRITY Cruises is reminding advisors that there is still time left for clients to take advantage of its Black Friday sale.

Travellers can take up to 75% off the fare for a second guest, plus save up to \$1,500 per room, for new bookings made by 02 Dec.

The offer applies on select sailings departing between 30 Nov 2025 and 10 May 2028, with savings per stateroom varying by stateroom category and cruise length.

For more details, including terms and conditions, see the **back page**.

Aurora's third ship makes history

THE christening of *Douglas Mawson* at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal this morning (**CW** breaking news) was an historic homecoming for the 35-year-old cruise line.

CEO Michael Heath welcomed guests, saying the moment was particularly poignant given that the company was actually named after *Aurora*, the ship operated by pioneering Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson.

The ship arrived in Sydney Harbour earlier this week, relocating overnight from White Bay to Circular Quay for today's formal naming ceremony.

She was christened using an appropriately sustainable block of ice by godmother Emma McEwin (**pictured**), who is Mawson's great-granddaughter and a prolific researcher and author in her own right.

The final vessel in the current



Sunstone Ships "X-bow" series, *Douglas Mawson* has a range of distinct features which build on Aurora's experience with sister ships *Greg Mortimer* and *Sylvia Earle*, including a ninth deck observation area, a swimming pool and extensive tastefully decorated public areas.

Ten cabins are available for solo use, and the ship has a maximum capacity of just 153 passengers, or 130 in polar regions.

Today's ceremony is understood to be the first time that a

newbuild cruise ship has been named in Australian waters.

After today's festivities, the ship departs for a shakedown cruise to Hobart with a number of industry guests and VIPs on board, followed by a Tasmanian circumnavigation and then the start of *Douglas Mawson*'s inaugural Antarctic season.

The ship will be deployed in the Mediterranean over the northern summer, with a deeply experiential program focusing on exploring unique smaller ports. **BP**



Regent

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New reef vessel for Port Douglas

ABC Reef Safaris has announced the launch of its new custom-designed vessel, *Voyager* (pictured), which will mark the first new reef tourism vessel in Port Douglas since 2018.

Set to commence operations on 01 Dec, *Voyager* is designed to carry a maximum of 24 guests in premium comfort, offering an intimate journey to the Great Barrier Reef.

With a 6:1 guest-to-crew ratio, passengers will enjoy a curated experience led by ABC Reef Safaris' team of marine biologists, naturalists and master reef guides.

The development of *Voyager* was made possible in part by the Queensland Government's Growing Future Tourism Fund, which supports innovative tourism projects that enhance the state's visitor offerings.

"*Voyager* embodies everything



we love about the Great Barrier Reef, its beauty, its fragility, and its ability to inspire," said Jay Wink, owner of ABC Reef Safaris.

"We wanted to create a vessel that not only delivers the highest standard of comfort and service but also deepens our guests' connection to this extraordinary natural wonder."

Wink added, "We're incredibly proud to be contributing to the

next chapter of reef tourism in Port Douglas".

"With *Voyager*, we've designed an experience that reflects the sophistication and expectations of modern travellers while staying true to our sustainable and educational roots."

The vessel will be formally launched today at a ribbon-cutting event at the Port Douglas Yacht Club. JM

Paradise postponed

ROYAL Caribbean has cancelled previews of Royal Beach Club Paradise Island due to ongoing construction.

The cruise line has ditched at least one preview of the new Nassau destination, which is due to open 23 Dec.

"A few weeks ago, we invited you to be among the first to enjoy a special sneak peek of this brand-new destination," Royal Caribbean wrote to some future guests of *Symphony of the Seas*, who were set to visit the new location on 15 Dec.

"Construction is still in progress, and while the island is shaping up beautifully, it's not quite ready for guests just yet...we want to make sure it meets the exceptional standards we've envisioned before opening it to you."

So far, the grand opening has not yet been pushed back.

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THE vice president of sales for nudist cruise company, Bare Necessities, has laid bare the crucial rules that all passengers must follow while onboard.

Kat Whitmire, who helps plan two cruises each year - including the Big Nude Boat - revealed to *Business Insider* that asking permission before taking a photo on board with someone else in it is "the most important one", while wearing clothing when in the formal dining room is also the norm.

Whitmire added: "Men can't be overly excited - we say that if they start to feel things around moving down there, jump in cold water, or think about baseball."

Regent takes centre stage

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) welcomed trade partners to an exclusive dining and arts experience last night at the Sydney Opera House.

Hosted by the line's Vice President Sales & General Manager Asia Pacific, Lisa Pile (**pictured**), and the Executive Director of the Australian Ballet, Claire Spencer, guests were given a preview at what is coming up for RSSC in 2026, including the debut of *Seven Seas Prestige* and its newly refurbished ships.

"It is a fantastic partnership," Pile said of the long-standing collaboration between the cruise line and the Australian Ballet, which was renewed for an additional three years in 2024 (*CW* 26 Mar 2024).

"We know that our guests both in Australia and abroad love the partnership...the reason we know that is because they tell us."



Following the presentation, attendees were treated to dinner before settling in to enjoy a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* by the Australian Ballet. *JM*

Solo savings in 2026

UNFORGETTABLE

Croatia has removed single supplements on *MV Memories* in 2026, for bookings made between 28 Nov-17 Dec.

Click **HERE** for more info.

The art of Italy

PONANT Exploration has teamed up with the Kering Group - the parent company of luxury houses such as Gucci - to launch a cruise celebrating Italy's arts and crafts scene.

The 11-night 'Livorno-Venice' voyage will depart Florence aboard *Le Boreal* on 08 Sep 2027, and will feature an exclusive exhibition dedicated to 'The Art of Travel' and a Cafe Ginori experience in the ship's observatory lounge.

Guests will enjoy visits to the Gucci Archive, housed in a 15th-century Renaissance palazzo, and the Palazzo Gucci in the heart of Florence.

The journey also includes a private tour and tasting at a wine estate in the hills of Chianti; a three-day exploration of Verona; and a tour of the House of Ginori 1735's historic Florentine Manifatture.

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Cruising excellence celebrated

YESTERDAY the cream of the Australasian cruise sector gathered in Sydney for the third annual Signature Luxury Travel & Style Cruise Awards.

Curated by a 19-strong panel of esteemed travel advisor cruise experts from across Australia and New Zealand, the awards highlighted finalists and winners in 13 categories across ocean, expedition and river cruising.

Addressing the attendees, CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz spoke about the huge growth in luxury cruising, with the global luxury cruise fleet having grown over 300% since 2010.

"More than a dozen brand new cruise ships are set for launch in 2026, and around a quarter of those are in the luxury space," he said.

The winners included Explora Journeys, taking out top spot for ocean ships with over 750 passengers, as well as newcomer The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection which won in the 50-300 passenger yacht category. Silversea took out the 25-250 passenger ocean ship award, while Regent Seven Seas Cruises was chosen as the winner for ocean ships with 251-749 pax.

Expedition cruise companies also featured, with Seabourn taking out the luxury expedition category, Quark winning in the premium expedition category and Ponant winning for experiential "tall ships" award.

Other awardees included Abercrombie & Kent, Ponant, Hurtigruten, Viking, AMA Waterways, Oceania, Aurora, Scenic, SeaDream, Aqua Expeditions, Crystal, Windstar, Celebrity, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean, Tauck, Uniworld, HX Expeditions, MSC Cruises and Captain's Choice - for the full list of winners [CLICK HERE](#).



SIGNATURE editor and event MC extraordinaire Christian Barker with Phil Hoffmann, Phil Hoffmann Travel and Jeff Leckey, House of Travel.



JUSTINE Sealey from Ramsgate Travel & Cruise and Elizabeth Clarke from The Cruise Centre by Travelcall were among the expert judges.

SUSIE Coughlin from Riverside Luxury Cruises with Quark's Tenille Hunt.

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises' Lisa Pile celebrates another win.



FRAN Gildon from Azamara with Adventure World chief Neil Rodgers.

AURORA Expeditions' Ben Piper with Viking Cruises MD Michelle Black.

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