



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of cruise industry news, plus a full page from **CLIA**.

Luxury gets the love

TODAY marks the start of luxury week, and the final week of Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) Cruise Month initiative.

This week spotlights the surging demand for high-end cruising and the huge growth seen among luxury cruise lines.

Managing Director Joel Katz pointed out the global luxury cruise fleet has more than tripled in size since 2010, and is predicted to expand further over coming years.

"The number of people choosing luxury cruise lines is forecast to grow more than 20% over the next three years as new and more spectacular ships join the world fleet.

"Our surveys of travel agents have found that premium and luxury cruise holidays are showing the greatest growth right now, which means travellers are putting more and more importance on high-end experiences when they take a holiday," Katz added.

Luxury cruising will be the focus this week in CLIA's social media activity, digital advertising, educational opportunities and more - see **page 4** for details.

Cruise rushes to cancel China



BOTH Regent Seven Seas (RSSC) Cruises and Oceania Cruises are revising select Chinese itineraries to replace port calls to the country's mainland, following the implementation of new port fees for American cruise lines.

Recently introduced costs are reportedly in retaliation to a similar port fee payable by Chinese ships in the US.

The country is charging US\$56 per net ton, with the fees increasing to around US\$157 per net ton by 2028, according to maritime industry reporting.

Primarily aimed at American cargo ships, the fee has also been extended to cruise vessels.

Oceania has already cancelled a port call to Shanghai, after its *Oceania Riviera* (pictured) was reportedly asked to pay approximately US\$1.6 million (approx A\$2.5m) in additional port fees for its 16 Oct call; the ship instead visited Busan.

"Due to recently enacted retaliatory regulations [passed] by China, ships can no longer effectively visit mainland Chinese ports," a statement issued by both Oceania and RSSC said.

"We are therefore revising select itineraries to replace port calls in mainland China.

"We share in the disappointment of these necessary changes and are committed to providing our guests with itineraries that deliver exceptional destination experiences," the statement said.

The only American cruise ships that are being exempted from the fees are those that are home ported in China, such as Royal Caribbean's *Spectrum of the Seas*, which sails from Shanghai.

Holland America Line, which is the only other American cruise ship with an upcoming call in China, has also been contacted for comment. *MS*

Celestyal VP out

CELESTYAL Cruises Vice President Brand Marketing PR & Customer Experience Anna Gregori is set to depart the line in the coming weeks, following a three-year tenure with the Greece-based brand.

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Carnival backs TIME

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has inked a new partnership with the Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME).

The cruise line will help support the career advancement program as its latest official partner, assisting in the growth of the travel industry's future.

"Their support not only strengthens our program but also sends a powerful message about the value of mentoring and giving back to the industry," said TIME founder & Chair, Penny Spencer.

Carnival National Sales Manager Mark Richards added: "The future of the Australian travel industry is built by the people who live and breathe it every day.

"At Carnival Cruise Line, we're proud to back TIME through the Carnival Scholarship, helping passionate travel professionals step into leadership and create a stronger, brighter future for our entire industry."

Find out more [HERE](#).

Hurtigruten gets majestic

HURTIGRUTEN has launched limited-time offers for year-round cruises along Norway's 'majestetisk coast'.

Savings of up to 30% are available on selected voyages - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Second-tier cities on the rise



SECOND-TIER cities are on the rise, with next year looking set to be the year many of these destinations step into the limelight, as major sites reach their limit and cruisers seek out less-crowded alternatives.

Unforgettable Croatia is branching out from its traditional embarkation and disembarkation ports of Dubrovnik and Split to offer more itineraries that start and end in historic Sibenik in central Dalmatia.

Thirty-six Unforgettable Croatia cruises will begin in the town next year, up from 10 in 2025, offering guests the chance to explore this less-trodden destination as part of their European vacation.

Unforgettable Croatia aims to emphasise these kinds of places, as its luxury small ships are able to reach smaller destinations larger vessels cannot.

The cruise line is also driving

demand for less-visited European destinations neighbouring Croatia, namely Slovenia, which it is branching out to with land and sea packages.

These cater to demand from Australians wanting to stay longer and visit multiple countries.

Bookings featuring Slovenia have increased by 286% year-on-year, while Montenegro is tracking up 20% overall.

"This surge strongly indicates a growing appetite among travellers for emerging and lesser-known destinations," Unforgettable Croatia co-founder Graham Carter said.

"While Slovenia may not boast the same volume of UNESCO-listed sites as some of its neighbouring countries, it more than compensates with its breathtaking landscapes, pristine lakes, and an increasingly recognised wine region." *MS*

See Explora III first

EXPLORA Journeys has announced an exclusive opportunity for guests to experience its upcoming ship *Explora III* ahead of her official launch and maiden journey.

Taking place from 24-29 Jul 2026, 'A Mediterranean Prelude to *Explora III*' is designed as an intimate and immersive behind-the-scenes preview ahead of the ship's inaugural voyage from Barcelona to Lisbon from 03-10 Aug.

Departing from Genoa and concluding in Civitavecchia, the once-off preview journey will sail the coastlines of the French and Italian rivieras, exploring Marseille, Saint-Tropez, Nice, Tuscany, Florence, and more.

Guests will also have the opportunity to meet Explora Journeys' leadership, designers and officers.

"This exclusive preview journey is our way of honouring those who have grown with us and believed in our vision from the beginning," said Anna Nash, President of Explora Journeys.

"It's an intimate celebration of what's to come - a chance to step aboard *Explora III* before her official debut, connect with the visionaries who brought her to life and discover how our 'Ocean State of Mind' philosophy continues to evolve with every new chapter."



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A FAMILY in WA had a blast from the (very distant) past last week when they discovered not one, but two messages in a bottle dating back more than 100 years.

The unique discovery was made by the Brown family during one of their regular beach clean-ups on Wharton Beach, about 600km south-east of Perth.

Debra Brown said her daughter Felicity found the bottle, which was likely exposed after erosion from winter storms.

One of the letters was written by World War I soldier Malcolm Alexander Neville to his mother, just months before he was killed in action in France in 1917 at age 28.

In the letter, Neville told his mother the food has been "really good" and said the troop ship he was on - *HMAS Ballarat* - "is heaving and balling, but we are happy as Larry - your loving son, Malcolm".

The same bottle contained a second letter, which was inked by Private William Kirk Harley, who survived the war and went on to have children.

After doing some research, the family managed to track down Neville's great-nephew, as well as Harley's granddaughters, and is planning to send the letters back to each family.

Hat's the way I like it



THE Norwegian Cruise Line sales team hosted an exclusive retreat at boutique hotel The Tamborine in Queensland earlier this month, in the lead-up to the National Travel Industry Awards.

Fifteen of Norwegian's key partners came together to celebrate excellence, deepen relationships, share strategic insights, and celebrate the shared success of the cruise line's 'Partners First' approach - its commitment to collaboration, transparency, and mutual growth.

Activities included relaxed dining, a bespoke gin blending experience, bathhouse spa treatments and a special Akubra fitting and gifting to mark the occasion in true Australian style.

"It is always a pleasure to work with our valued trade partners to strengthen collaboration, spark new ideas, and build momentum for the season ahead," Senior Sales Director Damian Borg said.

"We look forward to more shared wins, and continued growth as a result." MS

Pictured: partners gather with their freshly fitted Akubras



Inset: CruiseHQ General Manager Caroline Hitchen sports her new Akubra.

Seattle's big season

THE Port of Seattle's cruise season has come to an end, with record passenger numbers transiting through the facility.

Cruising in Seattle contributed US\$1.2 billion to the destination's hospitality and business sectors, across almost 300 total ship calls.

Another highlight for the season saw the Port of Seattle expand shore power to all three of its cruise berths.

HAL launches golden age cruise

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has teamed up with Pan Am to launch a first-of-its-kind voyage inspired by the former US airline's 'flying boat' Clipper routes across the Caribbean, Mexico, and Latin America.

The 28-day 'Pan Am 100th Anniversary Legendary Voyage' will immerse guests in the glamour of travel's golden age through themed meals, period-inspired decor and historical programming as they visit 18 destinations throughout the region.

Departing from Miami, Florida on 30 Oct 2027, *Zuiderdam* will sail along Pan Am's Great Circle Route, a pioneering path that spanned the entire Caribbean, venturing out to harder-to-reach destinations.

Guests will visit nine ports from among Pan Am's original destinations, allowing them to explore the airline's history.

These include including San Juan, Puerto Rico and Willemstad, Curacao.

The itinerary also includes a call at HAL's private island, RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay.

"Pan Am and Holland America Line both helped pioneer modern travel - Pan Am in the skies and Holland America Line at sea," shared Paul Grigsby, HAL Vice President of Itinerary Planning and Deployment.

"This collaboration is a tribute to the golden age of travel and humanity's enduring drive to explore."



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