

Cruise Weekly today

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

Kaia's debut date

EMERALD Cruises will set sail for the first time on board its newest ship *Emerald Kaia* on 04 Apr 2026, the line said.

The maiden sailing will be an 11-day 'Cyprus to the Acropolis' itinerary from Larnaca to Athens which will traverse the Aegean Sea.

Guests on the inaugural *Kaia* cruise will enjoy a private concert at Ephesus as one of the highlights of the sailing.

Emerald has also celebrated the steel cutting of *Emerald Raiya* (CW 08 Apr).

A ceremony recently took place in Vietnam, attended by a number of executives from Scenic Group.

Princess set to homeport in Fremantle

PRINCESS Cruises will again set sail from Fremantle (pictured) in 2027, in a major boost for Western Australia and the country's cruise sector.

The news was broken by *The West Australian* this weekend, ahead of the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) conference taking place in Fremantle later this week (CW 25 Aug).

Princess' new VP Asia Pacific Matthew Rutherford told the newspaper his cruise line is committed to the state.

"We look forward to continuing to play a significant role in the growth of the cruise market in WA and supporting the beautiful regional towns, so watch this space," he said.

Western Australia's New Minister for Tourism Reece Whitby is set to open the ACA conference, and said his government is fully invested in



the cruise sector.

"We are positioning WA as a unique, world-class cruise destination that offers unforgettable experiences, while supporting the long-term sustainability of the sector," Whitby told *The West Australian*.

"This 'WA Cruise Tourism Strategic Plan' is designed to put our state firmly on the map for

future cruise itineraries, and the Cook Government has backed it with an additional \$1 million investment into cruise tourism over the next four years."

Whitby will address delegates at the conference's welcome function at Gage Roads Freo this Wed, as Scenic's ultra-luxury yacht *Scenic Eclipse II* makes her inaugural visit to the port city. MS

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NORWEGIAN Cruise

Line's *Norwegian Aqua* has completed her first cruise to Bermuda from her seasonal home port of New York City. *Aqua* will sail five- and seven-day Bermuda voyages from the Big Apple for the next month, before she heads back to Miami to sail four-, five- and seven-day Bahamas and Caribbean cruises through Apr.

"We're thrilled to have had *Norwegian Aqua* kick off her voyages from New York City this past week," said Harry Sommer, President & CEO of Norwegian's parent company.

"New York is an incredibly important market for us, so we're excited to showcase our newest ship from here."

Highlights on board *Aqua* include the longest and fastest slides at sea, the Glow Court, and more.

Cruise all about value, diversity, and access

HIGH value, itinerary diversity, and access will define the next five years of cruising, Ponant Explorations Chief Executive Officer Deb Corbett believes.

The head of the French cruise line was speaking at last week's Cruise360 conference, telling a panel moderated by **CW** Editorial Director Damian Francis (**pictured**) of the exciting opportunities this presents for the luxury sector.

"People want more meaningful journeys and to go deeper than ever before to a destination, and I think the small expedition ships are absolutely leading the way for this new trend," she enthused.

"The expedition sector isn't competing on scale - what we do is we lead with access - because access is the new luxury, and that is really exciting."

Carnival Corporation Senior Vice President and Country Manager



Peter Little added the private island-forward strategy pioneered out of the United States is seeing shorter cruises dominate.

"The global trend is to grow the short cruise framework, whether it be a cruise to nowhere or a cruise to a destination," he said.

"You can see that in North America, the private destinations are going really well, so the opportunity is to sell into the fly cruise market," Little explained.

Royal Caribbean Vice President

& Managing Director Gavin Smith said lines are moving shorter in order to bring the entry level price down for new-to-cruise.

"You're seeing the merchandising of Australian cruise again, [getting] that little bit shorter, and getting back to seven nights and weekends, and that's about making it accessible.

"You can get the entry level price down so that it's possible for Australian couples and families," Smith explained. *MS*

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SCOTTISH rock duo The Proclaimers famously sang about walking 500 miles (or was it a thousand), but three fellow Scots have just set a new record by rowing more than 9,000 miles across the Pacific.

Officially, the feat was the fastest unsupported row across the full Pacific Ocean, with the trio setting off from Peru 139 days ago and making landfall in Cairns this past weekend - 20 days faster than the old record.

Jamie, Ewan, and Lachlan Maclean worked shifts to complete the arduous journey, which saw them hit by storms, injuries, seasickness and even a man overboard.

The effort also managed to raise more than £700,000 (A\$1.4 million) toward a series of clean water infrastructure projects in Madagascar.

Like the Proclaimers, these blokes are now probably going to fall down at a nearby door.

Viking's new Douro ship



VIKING has taken delivery of its newest river ship in Europe, *Viking Gyda* (pictured), which will sail Portugal's Douro river.

The delivery ceremony for *Gyda* took place at the West Sea Shipyard in Viana do Castelo.

Built specifically for the Douro and the popular 10-day 'Portugal's River of Gold' itinerary, *Gyda* accommodates 106 guests in 53 staterooms.

She joins sister ships *Viking Helgrim*, *Viking Hemming*, *Viking Osfrid* and *Viking Torgil*, bringing the cruise line's Douro fleet to

five ships.

Viking's order book will see it take delivery of 26 additional river ships by 2028, as well as 10 additional ocean ships by 2031.

These additions will bring the cruise line's fleet to 112 river ships and 23 ocean and expedition ships once committed orders are fulfilled.

"With its rich history, culture, and winemaking traditions, Portugal continues to be a very appealing destination for our guests," Chair & Chief Executive Officer Torstein Hagen said. *MS*

CLIA sues Hawaii

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has filed a lawsuit in the US District Court in Hawaii seeking an injunction against plans by the state to introduce an 11% tax on cruise ships (**CW** 07 May).

Court documents claim the tax and the rationale behind it violates both federal legislation and tonnage clauses in the US Constitution.

CLIA said in the lawsuit the tax will cost cruise lines hundreds of millions of dollars in surcharges over the coming decade and encourage visitors to holiday elsewhere.

Hawaii's state legislature passed the tax into law in May and it takes effect on 01 Jan.

Several Hawaiian shipping and tourism organisations have joined CLIA in the action as co-plaintiffs, including Kauai Kilohana Partners and Aloha Anuenue Tours LLC, which operates on the Big Island.

In the weeks since, Hawaii has sought to act further against cruising by planning to slash commercial shipping access to its harbours.



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