

### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Hill departs Viking

**VIKING** Senior Manager PR & Communications Kirsty Hill is leaving the company, **Cruise Weekly** can report.

Hill has worked with Viking for more than two years, with tomorrow being her last day on the job.

Her tenure with Viking has seen her grow the cruise line's fam'l program and launch content collaborations with personalities such as Andrew Daddo, Jessica Rowe, and Kathy Lette.

Hill also helped oversee the launch of Viking partnerships with Universal Pictures, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and more.

## Oceania Cruises cements luxury tag

**OCEANIA** Cruises believes it had been undervaluing itself for years while selling its proposition as premium as opposed to luxury.

SVP International & Consumer Sales Steve Odell told **CW** the announcement of Oceania's fleet renewal, which will see it take delivery of four new ships over the next 10 years (**CW** 11 Jul), was the perfect marker for the line to push itself into the luxury bracket (**CW** 05 Aug).

This move will also see its more premier sister brand, Regent Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC), shift up to ultra-luxury.

"We have a luxury brand, when you compare it to what's around us in the market," Odell affirmed.

"We have incredibly modern hardware and design, we have excellent staff, we have the best cuisine at sea...why are we calling ourselves upper-premium when we really should be calling



ourselves luxury?" he stated.

Oceania is also currently working on a rebranding to fit the elevation of the cruise line's profile, not dissimilar to the same exercise RSSC underwent at the end of last year (**CW** 06 Dec).

The shift also better communicates Oceania's value proposition to consumers, Sales Director James Sitters added, with the "luxury" branding far less esoteric than "upper-premium."

**MEANWHILE**, Oceania has revealed a selection of *Food & Wine* alumni will serve as godparents of its newest ship *Oceania Allura*, which is to be christened in Miami on 13 Nov (**CW** 11 Jul).

The group of six will include *Food & Wine* Publisher Tom Bair and Oceania Chief Commercial Officer Nathan Hickman. **MS**

**Pictured** is Odell and Sitters with Vice President Sales Lisa Pile.

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## A wharf welcome

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) has welcomed the opening of a new floating wharf in Broome (**CW** 09 Sep).

The facility will enable greater space and certainty for operations in the Kimberley region, helping to boost the destination's cruise tourism.

"Broome offers enormous possibilities as a cruise gateway, and the town's new floating wharf will be an incredible asset as we work to unlock the Kimberley region's cruise potential," he added.

**MEANWHILE**, CLIA has released its annual *Environmental Technologies and Practices (ETP) report*, which highlights the environmental technologies utilised by its ocean-going cruise line members.

The number of ships with multi-fuel engines that can switch from conventional fuels to zero and near zero emission fuels both in port and at sea has increased from one ship in 2018 to 19 ships today, with that number set to rise to 23 by the end of the year.

Additionally, the number of CLIA-member cruise line ships with the ability to utilise shore power has more than doubled since 2018.

There are now 166 ships able to plug in at port - an increase of 12% from last year.

## MSC guests moving on up



**HIGHER** spending in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is not limited to the luxury sector, with contemporary brand MSC Cruises also noticing larger receipts from its passengers.

Vice President International Antonio Paradiso told **CW** the cruise line has noticed more bookings for its balcony staterooms over the past few years, with other passengers choosing to move up to the MSC Yacht Club ship-within-a-ship concept (**pictured**).

"There is a will to spend a little bit more money to ensure you have the holiday of a lifetime," Paradiso mused.

"With our first class of ships, 60% of our capacity was inside or outside [staterooms]...with all of our new ships, 70% of our ships are now balcony and above.

"Going to a higher category, like an Aurea Suite or a Yacht Club,

maybe 10 years ago it was a little bit more complicated, now it's a natural sell."

This has also manifested itself in the sale of more spa treatments and wellness packages.

"Before they were probably about 5% of our onboard sales, now they make up for more than 25%, so that tells you there are different customers, and things are changing," the MSC international head explained.

Paradiso, who also oversees MSC's luxury sister brand Explora Journeys, said Australians have taken quickly to this brand too, despite it only being founded four years ago (**CW** 18 Mar 2021).

The trade is largely to thank for this, he added.

"Australia is already the fourth-largest market in the world," Paradiso enthused.

"For both brands, 80% of our business is still trade." **MS**

## Alaska waste issue

**NEW** data released by the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council shows around 700 self-reported waste water discharge violations by 17 cruise ships occurring in the destination throughout the 2023 and 2024 seasons.

*Cruise Radio* reports the ships in question are vessels with open-loop scrubber systems, which means they use sea water to clean the engine exhaust before the water is dumped back in the sea, as opposed to ships with closed-loop scrubbers, which discharge it onshore.

Aaron Brakel, a campaigner at the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, said that although the open-loop system complies with air pollution standards, "it can create a tremendous number of impacts on organisms in the marine environment".

"It's troubling that even with these very weak permit standards and self-reporting requirements, that the ships with open-loop scrubbers are still reporting hundreds of violations every year."

Brakel emphasised that the self-reporting system, required by US law, does not require ships to disclose when or where the violations happen, making it difficult for local officials to hold the cruise industry accountable.



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**WHILE** some people dream about what life would be like living on full time on board a cruise ship, in practice, the reality is far from perfect.

Aussies Marty and Jessica Ansen, who once spent 800 days at sea on 53 consecutive voyages, said there are downsides to the lifestyle, such as not being able to drive somewhere if you want to.

Apparently keeping up with life admin can also be a burden when you're away for so long.

Speaking recently to *A Current Affair*, the Ansens said keeping track of the time can be hard too, especially when crossing time zones during global circumnavigations.

But of course, life on a ship is full of more positives than negatives, with never having to go food shopping or do any cleaning an obvious benefit.

"We don't know how to wash up anymore, we don't know how to make a bed, because we haven't done it for so long," Marty said.

Life at sea however hasn't done any damage to their sense of humour thankfully, with the pair joking they need to stay on board to stay alive.

Even the ship's hotel manager, who has been on board for less time than the Ansens, said returning to the ship is like coming home to visit mum and dad.

## Fred to greet the whole fleet



**FRED.** Olsen Cruise Lines will bring together its entire three-ship fleet in Dec 2026 for a special 'Fleet Fiesta' carnival reunion and sail-away party.

The 1,250-passenger *Balmoral*, 1,353-passenger *Borealis* and 1,338-passenger *Bolette* will meet on 01 Dec 2026 in Las Palmas, Canary Islands (**pictured**).

As part of the event, passengers travelling on all three ships will be able to wander and explore the other two, with each ship to offer a variety of activities on board.

The reunion will conclude with a massive sail-away party at sunset as all three ships continue their journeys in different directions.

Fred. Olsen's Australian distributor, Cruise Traveller, has put together a package for guests keen to be part of the celebration via a 71-night Mediterranean voyage on board *Balmoral*.

Beginning from Southampton on 30 Sep 2026, the itinerary will be a comprehensive circuit of the region, cruising both sides of the Italian coast and as far east as Limassol in Cyprus, where the ship will spend three days.

Other highlights of the 48-stop

itinerary include lesser-visited Greek islands of Kerkira, Syros, and Samos, along with a chance to witness sunrise at the temple of Poseidon in Sounion.

Australians can enjoy a £300 onboard credit (approx A\$611) for bookings made by 24 Sep, with all crew gratuities and selected drinks during lunch and dinner included on all sailings departing after 01 Jan 2026. *ML*

## Kiel fully juiced up

**THE** German port city of Kiel has completed construction of an extensive shore power infrastructure expansion, with three ships now able to connect simultaneously.

Construction of the €50 million (A\$88.2 million) hook-up began in Nov 2024, with two ships now able to connect at the Ostseekai terminal, and a third available at the Ostuferhafen terminal.

A further four ferries can also utilise the service at the same time, making it one of the largest emission-free shore power connections in Europe.

## Antarctic at school

**HX EXPEDITIONS** will expand an existing tie up with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to create two new online courses for its guests to enjoy for the 2025/26 season.

Launching by the end of Oct, an introductory course will be available free to all travellers booked on HX Antarctic sailings to give them an overview of the destination.

For those keen to learn more, a fee-based comprehensive course will then follow, diving deeper into sustainability and the science of Antarctica.

Completion of this secondary course also includes University of Tasmania accreditation, with participants even able to earn credit for further studies.

In the past year since the collaboration was first introduced, more than 2,250 travellers have taken part in the introductory course, with 99% saying they developed a strong sense of responsibility for the future of Antarctica.

Further, 99.5% of students taking the course said they found the content relevant to their voyage, with HX saying the initiative sets a new mark for responsible cruising.

"By offering both an introductory and an accredited comprehensive course, we're ensuring that travellers can take their Antarctic experience beyond the voyage, building knowledge that can inspire lifelong impact," said UTAS Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies Executive Director Nicole Webster.