

### Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news plus a full page from CLIA Australasia.

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Head to **page four** of today's **Cruise Weekly** for more.

## Eight new ships for Ama

**AMAWATERWAYS** will expand its river ship fleet to more than 40 vessels, with the line placing an order for eight new ships to arrive by 2030 (**CW** breaking news).

The move means Ama will have doubled its fleet size in a decade, cementing the line's status as one of the largest river lines globally.

Ama's recently-appointed Chief Executive Catherine Powell (**CW** 30 May) said expanding the fleet is a direct response to the strong demand from guests who are eager to discover Europe's beautiful rivers.

"These new ships represent exciting opportunities for our valued travel advisor partners and us to grow together," Powell said.

"With each new ship, we will continue to sail our guests to the heart of every destination while delivering the high-touch service, elegant design and immersive experiences that define



AmaWaterways," Powell added.

The latest order for Europe comes two months after the line made its debut on Colombia's Magdalena River, becoming the first river cruise brand to do so, with its new ships *AmaMagdalena* and *AmaMelodia*.

Amid increasing popularity with Australian cruisers following the opening of its local office last year, AmaWaterways continues to expand both its itineraries and its fleet to grow the market.

The company recently expanded its golf program to France and added new battlefield itineraries to be hosted by Aussie historian Mat McLachlan (**CW** 04 Sep). *ML*

## Riviera goes solo

**RIVIERA** Travel will operate one of its river cruise ships exclusively for solo travellers between Jun and Nov 2027.

The line will dedicate a season onboard its 140-pax *MS George Eliot* entirely to individual travellers, limiting the ship's capacity at 70 pax.

For the season, the ship will operate four seven-night itineraries along the Rhine, Moselle and Danube Rivers.

The increase in dedicated solo cruising comes despite Riviera saying it already operates more than 20 cruises aimed at solo guests each year.

No solo supplement will be charged and the all-inclusive price structure will feature all meals, off-ship excursions and an all-day drinks package.

Cruisers will be invited to a welcome dinner and cocktail reception to start each voyage.



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## Vista visit secured

**OCEANIA** Vista will return to Australia and New Zealand during the 2027-28 season as part of two Grand Voyages.

The sailings were unveiled overnight as part of Oceania's comprehensive full-fleet reveal of global itineraries covering 2027 and through to Apr 2028.

Following its 80-day 'Kangaroo Route' sailing from Sydney to London (**CW** 07 Aug) and the northern summer, Vista will embark on a 59-day 'South Pacific Grand Voyage' from Miami to Sydney in Oct 2027.

Oceania's full 2027-28 season features more than 230 curated itineraries ranging from seven to 96 days and across seven ships, and is now open for reservations.

Highlights of the season will see the line's newest ship, *Oceania Allura*, operate its first winter Mediterranean season, with several overnight stays locked in from Nov 2027 through to Mar 2028.

Europe will be explored in great detail, with ships venturing between the British Isles and the Turkish coast to the fjords of Greenland.

*Oceania Riviera* will return to Alaska with more than a dozen seven- to 11-day round-trip sailings departing from Seattle.

The season also marks the farewell tour of *Oceania Insignia* (**CW** 04 Apr) before it becomes a residential ship.

## HQ eyes bigger charters

### EXCLUSIVE

**MELBOURNE** luxury specialist agent Destination HQ is moving further into full-ship charters, today launching a new European river cruise itinerary that will feature performances by Kiwi music legend Kate Ceberano.

Departing in Aug 2026, the charter of AmaWaterways' double-wide *AmaMagna* will be a 10-day itinerary from Prague to Budapest, featuring a seven-night river cruise and three-day land portion in the Czech capital.

The itinerary also marks the first time AmaWaterways has chartered a ship for a group led by an Australian agency.

Destination HQ's existing luxury customers have already flocked to the new offering, with 60% of inventory already sold.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly**, Destination HQ Managing Director Stuart Ingram said a recent Coral Expeditions charter into Raja Ampat (**CW** 24 Feb) highlighted not just its potential but its popularity among clients.

"I think it kind of opened up a new avenue for the business - we realised there was a niche there for us to exploit, so that did open our eyes for the potential that could be realised in this space".

The Luxury Travel Collection and Virtuoso agency is well versed in escorting groups and believes a key to its success is always having a member of its team on-hand to ensure standards are met or



exceeded for its loyal customers.

Ingram heaped praise on the service and assistance provided by AmaWaterways so far, describing the local team as "amazing to work with".

"They've been very flexible and gave us really flexible payment terms," Ingram added.

"Our main feedback from Coral Expeditions is to make sure we have the right entertainment so we decided to get some celebrities, so we've signed Kate Ceberano, who is coming onboard to do a series of concerts as part of her 40th anniversary tour around Australia, so she is very popular at the moment."

The new AmaWaterways charter is the second currently on sale with the business, alongside an Arctic voyage with Quark Expeditions, which will feature Aussie music icon Daryl Braithwaite (**CW** 15 Jul).

The Quark-operated *Ocean Explorer* will depart Helsinki on 30 May 2026, with Braithwaite and his band performing onboard.

Ingram is pictured above with Destination HQ luxury travel advisor, Sophie Anderson. **ML**

## MSC Euribia empty

**MSC** Cruises will reposition its *MSC Euribia* ship between Europe and the Middle East via the Cape of Good Hope in order to avoid ongoing hostilities in the Red Sea.

Both repositioning sailings from Kiel to Dubai will operate without any guests onboard.

The line has confirmed to **CW** the ship will operate its season of three-, four- and seven-night itineraries in the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar from Nov and to "ensure the safety of our passengers and crew, our utmost priority", the line said.

## Cabo wine tasting

**PRINCESS** Cruises has announced an exclusive wine experience in Cabo San Lucas as one of 13 new Mexican Riviera shore excursions for the 2025-26 season.

Guests can visit Vinedo Las Tinajas, the first winery in Todos Santos, for a guided tour of the vineyard and production areas led by a winemaker, as well as a tasting of white, rose, and red wines paired with artisanal bruschetta.

The fresh shore excursion line-up also includes a glass-bottom boat ride through El Arco; a visit to Mexico's largest turtle sanctuary; a horseback-riding adventure at Cerritos Beach; a hands-on pinata workshop; and connecting with a local fishing family in Baja.



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IT'S a tired old cliché that the worst part of a holiday is when you have to go home, especially when you're on one of those private Caribbean islands run by the cruise lines.

Depending on your life perspective, a new music release from Disney Cruise Line is either celebrating the island lifestyle, prolonging the misery of leaving or making your home sound like a Caribbean island.

The line has launched a new streaming album, with the exhaustively long title of *Fun in the Sun Beach Bash from Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point*.

Jams you'll hear on the album include those heard around the island recorded by Disney's Beach Bash cast, along with two tracks by Bahamian musician, producer and self-described notary, Fred Ferguson, who penned the leading track 'Ery'ting Cool'.

Other tracks carry the fun in the sun titles of 'Bahama Roller Coaster Ride', 'Surf's Up' and 'Magical Destination' - the whole album is a banger.

Anybody who has been to Lighthouse Point though may recognise Ferguson's tune as the one playing over the loudspeakers on the walk back to the ship - how cruel is that?

The album is now available to stream on Apple Music, Amazon, Spotify and YouTube.

## Royal seeks lifetime appeal



**ROYAL** Caribbean has the potential to deliver travel advisors clients for a lifetime, according to new statistics presented by the cruise line.

Business Development Manager Rob Patane, speaking at this week's TravelManagers conference in Nusa Dua, said not only has the average age of a Royal Caribbean cruiser hit a new low, but the line is also welcoming more multigenerational families.

This allows advisors to birth a

Royal cruiser who will book with them and with the line for life.

"In seven years with Royal, the average age of a cruiser has come down four years, which is great for longevity of your customer's database," he said.

"You're going to have a lot of people doing a lot more holidays for longer.

"Twenty-eight percent of all cruise travellers sailed between multiple generations - it's actually even higher for two generations or more, at one in three travellers - and that's the area that we play best in, offering a product built specifically for multi-generational families and friends."

Patane called on TravelManagers' advisors to consider the opportunity for cruise within their business, with 31% of Royal Caribbean passengers new to the sector.

"Cruisers rank number one for travellers at a guest satisfaction rating at 4.5," he enthused.

"I'm not asking you to bring your guest for the whole holiday - consider us particularly in your fly-cruise sale as a package." *MS*

## Xcel passes trials

**CELEBRITY** Cruises has completed sea trials for its new ship *Celebrity Xcel*, which the line said passed "with flying colours".

Ahead of the ship's debut in Nov, Captain Kyriakos 'Kirk' Matragkas undertook a series of maneuverability and operational tests off the coast of Saint-Nazaire in France.

The fifth ship in Celebrity's Edge-class will debut in Fort Lauderdale in Nov before repositioning to the Mediterranean for summer.

## UK growth plans

**A NEW** strategic framework outlining commitments to support the ongoing growth of the UK cruise and tourism sectors has been launched.

Signed by CLIA UK, the UK Government and the UK Chamber of Shipping, the plan will encourage investment and boost collaboration between the government and industry.

Central elements to the plan include workforce development, accessibility, and positioning the UK as a primary destination for cruise tourism and innovation.

Cruise will be integrated into UK national tourism and national planning strategies, with ports featuring in int'l marketing campaigns.

Additionally, money will also go toward educating port communities on how they can benefit from cruise through tourism and port infrastructure opportunities.

## New board for ACA

**PORT** of Brisbane Executive General Manager Brendan Connell has been elected as the new Chair of the Australian Cruise Association (ACA).

The organisation's revised Board will also see TasPorts' Kristy Little serve as Deputy Chair, while Port Authority of NSW's Martin Bidgood will take on the role of Treasurer.

ACA Chief Executive Jill Abel said the new board's expertise will guide members well through existing opportunities.





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