

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news.

Ponant is the first

PONANT'S *Le Jacques Cartier* has become the first cruise vessel to dock at Broome's new floating wharf this week.

The new facility opened last week (**CW** 15 Sep), in what was a key milestone in the destination's mission to become a first point of entry (**CW** 09 Sep).

"These new facilities will make a huge improvement for cruise lines and their guests when they visit Broome, allowing greater space and certainty for operations regardless of the region's huge tides," CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz said in a LinkedIn post this week.

Three out in HX leadership restructure

EXCLUSIVE

HX HAS restructured its leadership team, with Chief Commercial Officer Alex Delamere-White among three executives set to depart the line, as first reported by **Cruise Weekly** (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

CW can reveal that Senior Vice President People & Culture Belinda Henriksen and Chief Expedition Officer Alex McNeil will also be departing as part of a restructure led by Chief Executive Officer Gebhard Rainer, and contributed to by the entire leadership team.

All three will remain with HX for the next few months to maintain a smooth transition.

Also departing will be VP Revenue Management Sara Tomlinson, who is leaving the line independent of the restructure.

HX will not replace any of the three roles culled as part of

the restructure, and there is no impact to the local office.

A spokesperson for the line said the new executive structure represented a "more streamlined approach" that supports its "strategic focus, ensures greater agility, and positions us for long-term success."

"Since separating from [Hurtigruten Group] in 2024, the standalone business has successfully evolved from its start-up phase focused on brand building, into a stable, established organisation, where the emphasis is now on operational excellence and sustainable growth," the spokesperson said.

Delamere-White said his time with HX has been a privilege.

"I am proud of what we have achieved together in establishing HX as a stand-alone business and in building strong foundations for the future," he said.

"Robust teams are firmly in place to continue to lead our commercial strategy, and our trade partners can be assured that these changes will not impact the strength of our relationships or the continuity of our plans.

"With demand across our core destinations remaining healthy, I know the business is well positioned for continued success," he said.

The executive churn belies the commercial strength of HX's business, with demand across its core destinations continuing to perform well, and the cruise line posting strong bookings for the 2026-27 season.

Revenue for next year was tracking up 27% at the end of the last quarter.

This has been fuelled by 50% growth in the United States, the cruise line said. **MS**

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Deck the Hallmark

THE Hallmark Channel and festival promoter Sixthman have announced another Christmas-themed cruise for next year.

Having sold out in 2024 and 2025, the Hallmark Christmas Cruise will return from 23-27 Oct, sailing from Miami to Great Stirrup Cay.

Sailing aboard the brand's *Norwegian Joy*, the cruise has promised to be "heartwarming", bringing the a Hallmark Christmas to life on the high seas.

Passengers are invited to sign up for presale through 25 Sep, with public sales starting on 07 Oct.

The cruise will feature favourite Hallmark stars who will be available for exclusive photo ops, lively panel discussions, holiday cocktail tastings, and more.

Royal locks in new Icon-class ships

ROYAL Caribbean Group (RCG) has confirmed an order for a fifth Icon-class ship, to be delivered in 2028, along with an option to build a seventh, on top of the previously announced option to build Icon 6.

The announcement came as Royal Caribbean inked a long-term framework agreement with shipyard Meyer Turku, securing rights to build its vessels at the facility through the next decade.

"As we continue to reimagine the future of vacations, we are excited to continue collaborating with Meyer Turku to grow the Icon-class - a first-of-its-kind series that delivers exceptional vacation experiences - and position us to usher in a new era of innovation that will disrupt the vacation sector through 2036," RCG President & Chief Executive Officer Jason Liberty said.

Meyer Turku has built two Icon-



class ships to date, including the namesake *Icon of the Seas*, which launched Jan 2024, and *Star of the Seas*, which joined the RCG fleet last month (**CW** 22 Aug).

The third Icon ship, *Legend of the Seas*, is scheduled to sail next year (**CW** 23 Sep), while the fourth - which hasn't yet been named - is set to be delivered in 2027 (**CW** 09 Sep).

Overall, the Finnish shipyard

has constructed 25 ships for RCG since the mid-1990s.

"The long-standing collaboration between Royal Caribbean Group and Meyer Turku will continue to have a significant positive impact on Finland's economy, creating jobs across the country and energising our unique maritime ecosystem," Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Opro said. *JM*



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WITH just 15-20 minutes on stage, cruise lines really pushed the envelope with their presentations at last week's TravelManagers conference.

Special consideration should go to the Carnival Corporation team, which showcased its five brands attending the conference in a *The Dating Game*-style presentation.

Carnival Cruise Line's Mark Richards, Cunard Line's Lauren Togher, Seabourn Cruise Line's Belinda Layt, Holland America Line's Helen Courias, and Princess Cruises' Elly Eves all appeared as suitors personifying their cruise line, as part of the wacky presentation (**pictured**).

Unfortunately **CW** did not spot any sparks flying between the cruise lines, but we certainly have a big-time crush on them all.



Explora offer

EXPLORA Journeys has introduced its 'An invitation to discover' offer, which can see guests receive up to \$1,500 shore excursion credit per suite - call 1800 595 257.

ATG's record bookings



EUROPE'S river cruises remain a cornerstone of APT Travel Group's (ATG) offering, with high demand across the Rhine, Main, Danube, and Douro helping drive a record booking week for the company earlier this month.

The success of APT's trio of new generation vessels *Solara* (**pictured**), *Ostara*, and *Estrela* has seen the company book slots to build two more of the ships (**CW** 11 Sep), as it attempts to address demand.

Chief Executive Officer David Cox hinted to **CW** earlier this year that more hardware is on the way, citing staterooms selling out almost a year in advance of departure dates.

Canada is also outperforming expectations, the company said, with strong bookings for its rail-and-cruise experiences.

"We are seeing unprecedented enthusiasm for our 2026 programs...the response has been outstanding," Cox said.

"Importantly, travellers at the high-end luxury level are showing they can tell the difference between true luxury products and other products so-called luxury

that don't measure up.

"Consumers are well informed and are well aware of luxe-washing occurring in the marketplace...they want thoughtful curation in the product and a brand that delivers on its promise." **MS**

Hitting a new Lowell

AZAMARA Cruises and Lowell Observatory in Arizona have announced a partnership for the line's solar eclipse cruises next year (**CW** 02 May).

Guests will enjoy engaging lectures, stargazing sessions, interactive demonstrations, and live eclipse narration.

Lowell's astronomers will not only guide the viewing itself but also bring context and storytelling to the experience.

CEO Dondra Ritzenthaler said the program is an extension of its Destination Immersion.

"Astronomers really bring the eclipse to life through stories, guidance, and hands-on experiences that deepen understanding while creating moments of awe," she said.



NZ season is underway

NEW Zealand Tourism Minister Louise Upston was on hand this week to welcome the first international cruise ship of the season, signalling a positive step forward for cruising in Aotearoa.

With the arrival of *Crown Princess* in Auckland on Monday, New Zealand will begin to welcome many thousands of guests and millions of dollars in visitor spending this summer.

While the number of ships visiting New Zealand has declined in recent times due to regulatory difficulties and costs, the government has shown a determination to address these problems and increase visitation.

After advocacy efforts by CLIA, our cruise lines, and the New Zealand Cruise Association, Minister Upston will now chair a biannual cross-government and industry forum, focused on development for the cruise sector.

The forum's aim is to maximise cruising's contribution to the New Zealand economy, and we welcome this whole-of-government approach.

Crown Princess will arrive in Sydney on Fri, signalling the start of the season in Australia.

Here, too, CLIA is working to achieve better settings for cruising, so that Australia can become more competitive and attract a greater share of cruise tourism into the future.



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