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cruiseweekly.com.au cruiseweekly.co.nz Monday 29th September 2025

## Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of the latest cruise news, a cover wrap from Regent Seven Seas Cruises, plus a full page from MSC Cruises.

## Regent's big deals

TRAVELLERS can enjoy up to 40% off selected 2026 sailings with Regent Seven Seas Cruises as part of its new 'Oceans of Discovery' sale. Find out more on eligible itineraries on the cover page.

## MSC's extra savings

MSC Cruises is offering an extra 10% off its voyages across the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Caribbean, and more.

Find out more about the limited-time offer on page 4.

# Princess Cruises' new Star lights up

**PRINCESS** Cruises President Gus Antorcha was among the executives in attendance as shipbuilder Fincantieri delivered the new *Star Princess* - the cruise line's second Sphere-class ship.

Local dignitaries also turned out for the handover ceremony, including Monfalcone Mayor Luca Fasan and both Fincantieri's CEO and President, Pierroberto Folgiero and Biagio Mazzotta.

Star, which is the sister to last year's Sun Princess, is the cruise line's second LNG-powered vessel, and the second-largest ship constructed in Italy.

"This remarkable vessel is a testament to the innovation and craftsmanship of our long-standing partners at Fincantieri, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to the shipbuilding team for bringing our newest ship to life," Antorcha said.

Star will cater to 4,300 travellers



and is currently en route to Barcelona, where she will enter service with a pair of Western Mediterranean cruises sailing around France, Italy, and Spain.

Afterward, the ship will embark on a 14-day one-way transatlantic voyage to Fort Lauderdale, from where she will sail the Caribbean.

At the end of her Caribbean

season, *Star Princess* will transit the Panama Canal, bound for Alaska for the 2026 season.

"Star Princess is a symbol of our ability to shape the future of the cruise industry, combining tradition and innovation," Folgiero said. ML

**Pictured**: Leaders from Princess and Fancantieri celebrate.





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## The pearls of PNG

**PEARL** Expeditions has announced an exclusive expedition to Papua New Guinea to celebrate the island nation's 50-year anniversary of independence.

Departing Madang on 18 Nov, the 10-night voyage aboard *Paspaley Pearl* will offer behind-the-scenes insight into the country, visiting active volcano sites, pristine coral reefs, World War II tunnels, hidden waterfalls, and more.

Passengers will also hear from two guest presenters - acclaimed news, current affairs and foreign correspondent, PNG-born Max Uechtritz, along with celebrated Australian television presenter and journalist Ray Martin.

"Experience not only the extraordinary diversity of PNG cultures and landscapes, but delve deeply into its rich history - ancient, colonial, wartime and modern - related by two great Australians whose backgrounds, inextricably intertwined with PNG, provide an insider's perspective," said Sarina Bratton, Executive Chair of Pearl Expeditions.

Highlights include witnessing secretive Tolai masked ceremonies, exploring the collapsed rim of Garove Island's volcanic caldera, and swimming among the world's most biodiverse coral reefs in Kimbe Bay - find out more about the new itinerary HERE.

## Riviera to expand into Asia



**A NEW** purpose-built river vessel will herald the debut of Riviera Travel in Asia in 2027.

The British operator will launch *Riviera Alba* on the Mekong River, which will accommodate 50 passengers in 25 suites.

Amenities on board will include a main restaurant serving Asian and international cuisine, a sun deck with a pool, jacuzzi, lounge bar and tea/coffee lounge.

The launch of Riviera's new ship marks a significant increase in confidence in the region, with the line testing the waters over the next year with several chartered sailings of the *Victoria Mekong*.

Alba will facilitate the introduction of a 13-night 'Vietnam, Cambodia and Mekong River Cruise' itinerary sailing from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap, with departures scheduled from Sep to Dec 2027.

Highlights of the itinerary include a visit to the Cu Chi

tunnels and Angkor Wat temples, a sampan boat tour in the Long Thuan village and a wander through the Wat Roka Kaong.

Riviera Travel North America President Stuart Milan said the company's expansion to Asia allows it to introduce its personal approach to cruising to one of the world's most enchanting rivers.

"We are excited to invite our returning guests, along with travellers who have yet to experience our product, to join us on this incredible journey," Milan said of the new ship.

The announcement of the new ship is the second by the line in as many weeks and follows the dedication of one of its ships entirely to solo travellers for the 2027 European season.

George Eliot (CW 18 Sep) will offer guests their own double cabin, with itineraries also featuring communal gatherings designed for guests to mingle. ML

### Cruise the Greats

**AMERICAN** Cruise Line has launched three Great Lakes itineraries for the 2026 season, in response to guest demand.

The new sailings will be operated by *American Patriot* from May to Aug, marking the first time in decades that an American ship will offer domestic cruises in the growing Great Lakes cruise market.

The vessel will dock near the heart of small towns, city parks, and private marinas, giving passengers an authentic experience not available with other cruise lines.

The Great Lakes collection includes a nine-day cruise visiting the Thousand Islands and Niagara Falls, while an additional nine-day itinerary highlights Lake Michigan, Green Bay inlet, and the Upper Peninsula.

The line-up also includes a signature 14-day cruise, dubbed the 'American Great Lakes', sailing 1,300km through three of the bodies of water - Erie, Huron, and Michigan.

All cruises offer an included pre-cruise hotel stay and free domestic airfare.

"Guests have long asked for our style of cruising on the Great Lakes," said Charles Robertson, President & CEO of American Cruise Lines.

"We are now proud to offer these cruises as only American can, aboard a new small ship sailing 100% domestically."





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# **Stay Updated**

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FOR a PhD student, the act of submitting their final thesis can be one of ultimate exhilaration as years of exhaustive work is finally capped off.

So why not do it in a memorable way?

University of New South Wales (UNSW) student Christina Schmidt decided to do just that by pressing 'submit' on the deck of the Nuyina.

Schmidt was one of 60 scientists aboard the Australian research ship as she sailed from Hobart to Antarctica, conducting experiments for a variety of studies and projects.

Her PhD focused on Antarctic 'bottom water', which is the dense water mass that drives Earth's ocean circulation.

The journey saw Schmidt conduct experiments to measure chemicals in seawater. with the final manuscript being sent back to Australia just as the first glacier came into view.

# Aurora's 100th NWP



**AURORA** Expeditions recently completed its 100th passenger transit of the Northwest Passage.

The cruise line's Sylvia Earle (pictured) completed the milestone voyage with her recent transit of the Bering Strait.

Aurora just got in the milestone at the end of its 2025 Arctic season, which has now come to a close.

"Reaching the 100th passenger transit of the Northwest Passage is not only a moment of pride for Aurora Expeditions but a recognition of the growing

interest in small-ship exploration of this remote and remarkable region," Chief Executive Officer Michael Heath said.

"We are honoured that Sylvia Earle and her expeditioners have become part of this extraordinary chapter in polar history."

The Northwest Passage is the sea lane between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through the Arctic Ocean, near the northern coast of North America.

The route travels via challenging waterways in the Arctic Archipelago of Canada. MS

## Sydney's Crown

**THE** arrival of Princess Cruises' Crown Princess into Sydney Harbour last week means the 2025/26 summer season has officially kicked off.

The ship has just finished her 113-night World Cruise, during which she sailed 33,500 nautical miles, visited 42 destinations across 24 countries and five continents, and crossed the equator twice.



## Europe on the rails

**CRUISE** Express has launched a new 14-day itinerary offering guests the chance to experience some of the world's classic rail journeys.

Departing on 31 May 2026, the package includes airfares and train fares on the Eurostar and traditional locomotives through the Appenzell Alps and Klostertal Valley.

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