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### Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a cover wrap from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

### A gift from NCL

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) is offering advisors a \$100 gift card for every *Norwegian Spirit* booking made this month. See the **cover page** for details.

### Cunard serves sale

**CUNARD** is offering guests up to 20% off fares on a wide range of 2027 voyages, as part of its new 'First Come, First Served' campaign.

From 31 Mar-29 Jun or until sold out, savings are available on cruises across the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, South America and the Caribbean; or a multi-Queen voyage, where travellers can experience two Queens on one trip.

The sale includes *Queen Anne's* maiden 'South American Discovery' itinerary, departing roundtrip from Southampton on 22 Jan 2027, with guests able to save 10% on a balcony stateroom.

Also included in the offer is the 21-night 'Caribbean Christmas Celebration' on *Queen Elizabeth*.

Find out more **HERE**. JM

## Cruiseabout raises the bar



**CRUISEABOUT** has announced a record-breaking culture score, achieving a 94% employee satisfaction rate in its annual Great Place to Work survey - the highest result of any Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) business.

"You can't fake a 94 percent culture score," said Cruiseabout general manager Brad Kennedy.

"It's the result of deliberately building something people genuinely want to be part of and then backing that up with experiences that bring the team together and remind everyone why they do what they do."

The achievement follows two back-to-back leadership conferences for the brand, both of which took place on board cruise ships.

The team leader conference brought Cruiseabout's national leadership group together

onboard Royal Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas*, while the assistant team leader conference followed onboard Princess Cruises' *Crown Princess*.

Both events were supported by Royal Caribbean International, Princess Cruises, CruiseHQ, Scenic Cruises and Europ Assistance.

"Our people sell the experience of cruising every single day - living it together, learning together and connecting onboard is exactly how we stay sharp and stay close to the goal," Kennedy added.

Cruiseabout is now searching for its next generation of leaders to helm its new stores in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a leader for its new home-based sales team.

"We are building something special and we want the right people to help us steer that ship," Kennedy said. JM

### CLIA Awards return

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) has confirmed the Cruise Industry Awards will return to the International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney on Sat 13 Feb 2027.

CLIA executive director for Australasia Joel Katz said next year's event will build on the success of the 2026 Awards. JB

### Sweet Oceania

**OCEANIA** Cruises has announced the Floating Pastry Academy, a multi-year training program for its onboard chefs.

Powered by digital training platform The Butter Book, over 200 pastry and bakery chefs will undertake a three-year program mixing theory with practical assessments, both online and in-person on board Oceania's vessels.

The initiative reinforces the cruise line's commitment to serving top quality cuisine at sea and preserving French gastronomic heritage.

"This new academy reflects the respect we share for the traditions that shaped us, and for a passion for culinary excellence at sea," said Chef Eric Barale, Oceania Cruises executive culinary director.

"This new program will reinforce the consistency, refinement and precision our patisserie demands." JB



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## Avalon airfare deals have taken off

**AVALON** Waterways is now offering flight-inclusive packages - a feature head of commercial Brett Simon believes is now more important than ever.

The roll-out of flight-inclusive packages was first foreshadowed by **Cruise Weekly** last year (*CW* 15 Oct), and since then, Avalon's parent company Globus family of brands has hired an air team to aid travel advisors.

Speaking to **Cruise Weekly** aboard last week's Avalon training charter, Simon said the ability to include air as part of a traveller's booking is now far more pivotal, due to factors like the presently unfolding Iran war.

"[In] every other office that we have in the world, we've always booked air - it has a massive attachment rate," he explained.

"We see more and more demand for going away longer, doing back-to-back coach trips



finished by a river cruise, so if you can offer it as a one-stop-shop and put it all together with a flight, it's really good value."

In order for the air promotion to be applied, travel advisors must book the cruise portion

online and then call the team to add the flights to the booking, Simon explained. *MS*

**Pictured:** *Avalon Envision* prepares to embark on her training charter voyage in Switzerland last week.

### Quark incentive

**QUARK** is offering agents an extra 5% commission on all Arctic 2026 bookings.

Clients can choose from a range of worldwide voyages, including 'Spitsberg via the Faroes and Jan Mayen' on board *Ocean Explorer*.

There is also the 'South Greenland Adventure: The Majestic Alpine Arctic' sailing on *Ultramarine*, and an Iceland circumnavigation exploring glaciers and volcanoes. *JHM*



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## Tas season downturn

**TASMANIA** is expecting fewer ship visits in 2026-27, given broader nation-wide trends such as rising operating costs, regulatory complexity and global shipping disruptions, according to TasPorts interim CEO Allan Gray.

The state has also been impacted by cruise brands pulling out of Australian waters, including Disney, Cunard, Virgin and P&O, which have redeployed their vessels internationally.

Eighty-one cruise calls are scheduled this coming season,

down from 101 last year.

"While there are fewer ship visits, the number of people coming ashore remains strong, which supports local businesses and regional economies," Gray pointed out.

"While we are seeing some reduction in vessels numbers, premium, luxury, and expedition cruise segments remain strong."

Gray also noted that the long-term outlook for the state's cruise industry remains positive, due to high global demand and significant investment across the sector. *JHM*

## MSC cancels ME

**MSC Cruises** has cancelled its Middle East sailings, with *MSC World Europe* operating seven- and 14-night itineraries to the French Antilles during the Northern Hemisphere winter 2026/27 season.

It marks her first time in the region, as she replaces *MSC Seaview*, which will instead be redeployed to Brazil and Argentina during that time - the itinerary for South America will be available shortly.

Guests are being contacted and provided with info about options, including moving their bookings or receiving a refund.



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**LONG-TERM** residential cruising specialists Fabled Voyages is now allowing passengers to live with their pets full-time at sea.

The new Pets Onboard program allows for dogs weighing up to 18kg and cats up to 9kg with a one-time deposit of \$1,439 per pet and a monthly charge of \$185 to cover cleaning and care considerations for long-term pet care.

Pets Onboard was designed to eradicate one of the main barriers stopping people from partaking in long-term travel, with the cruise line's website explaining: "At Fabled Voyages, we believe you shouldn't have to choose between the life you want and the companions you love most."

"Dogs and cats are welcome on board the ship, allowing residents to continue life, routines, and global exploration without leaving anyone behind."



## Scenic marks 40 years



**SCENIC** Group celebrated its 40th anniversary with partners watching a performance of *The Phantom of the Opera* over the Sydney Harbour last night.

It was a timely event, as Scenic's chairman and founder Glen Moroney began operating land tours when he first established the business in Newcastle in 1986, including coach journeys to watch the iconic production.

Anthony Laver, Scenic's GM, sales and marketing, APAC said the event was "much more than marking 40 years in business".

"It is about recognising the innovation that has brought Scenic Group from its early days starting in Newcastle, to the global business network it has created today with its valued partners," he said.

"The joint celebration of *Phantom of the Opera* makes this especially meaningful, as it is a powerful reminder of where we started, how far we have come, and all the people who have supported us along the way." *JHM*

**Pictured:** The Scenic team with attendees last night.

## A royal arrival

**CUNARD'S** *Queen Mary 2* (TD 19 Jan) arrived in Singapore last Fri on her 108-night world voyage, following a six-day trip through Hong Kong and Vietnam.

During her overnight stay on 27 Mar, guests were invited to an elegant gala event held in the Roselle-Simpor Ballroom at the Marina Bay Sands hotel to enjoy *The World Voyage* dining celebration.

*Queen Mary 2* is now making her way to South Africa for a 16-night journey, calling at Port Klang, Malaysia and Port Louis, Mauritius along the way.

Following an overnight stay Cape Town, she will travel to Walvis Bay, Namibia; Dakar, Senegal; and Tenerife and Cádiz in Spain before arriving in Southampton to finish her voyage on 30 Apr. *JB*



## From Melbourne to Miami

IT WAS great to be back in Melbourne recently for Tourism Australia's Regional Tourism Organisation Forum and Destination Australia, aligning on the priorities shaping our visitor economy, with a strong focus on collaboration, distribution and driving international demand.

With the soon-to-be released Tourism 2035 Strategy by Tourism Australia and Austrade's THRIVE 2030 strategy shaping the conversation, the alignment with cruise was clear and compelling.

The sector is already delivering across these national priorities, driving international visitation, dispersing guests into regional communities, and connecting travellers with the kinds of experiences global visitors are increasingly seeking.

From agritourism and cultural attractions to signature experiences and Aboriginal tourism, these offerings are central to Australia's tourism proposition, and where cruise can play a powerful role.

Often providing a first introduction to a destination, cruise helps drive awareness, visitation and repeat travel across regional Australia.

These conversations come at an important moment as we look ahead to Seatrade Cruise Global in Miami, now just weeks away.

With a strong Australian and New Zealand presence once again, Seatrade provides a valuable platform to reinforce our region's appeal and continue building relationships with global cruise decision-makers.

I look forward to sharing more from Miami in my next column.