



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### CW on Easter break

CRUISE Weekly will not be published tomorrow and Mon due to the Easter public holidays, and will return next Tues 07 Apr.

We wish our readers a safe and enjoyable long weekend.

### Surf's no longer up

WINDSTAR Cruises has cancelled a trans-Atlantic crossing that was scheduled to depart 05 Dec 2026 on board Wind Surf.

The 14-night cruise from Lisbon to St. Maarten was scrapped due to an extension of the vessel's dry dock, according to a statement sent by the line to booked guests.

## Virgin Voyages boosts focus on Australia

VIRGIN Voyages (VV) has revealed it is ramping up its focus on the Australian market, and has welcomed on board new business development manager Pamela Nielsen, who previously worked on the account at Travel the World (CW breaking news).

In addition, the line is looking for a new head of sales for Australia, SVP of growth Stephen Hopkins revealed in an interview with Cruise Weekly yesterday.

The recruitment drive is part of Virgin Voyages' reinvestment in the local market, which also includes resolving the technical and reward issues that the trade has experienced in recent years, he said.

"We know there have been issues in doing business with us, with some of our commission structures and how payments have worked," Hopkins explained, adding that the issues will be ironed out in the next quarter.



Meanwhile, VV has also changed up its deployment, which will suit Australians' travel needs, said Hopkins.

On Mon, Brilliant Lady will sail out of LA for the first time, with 20 other sailings available, followed by a season in Alaska.

"Both of those itineraries are perfect for Australian consumers, something that we know is of high demand," Hopkins enthused.

Before VV pulled its hardware out of Australia two years ago (CW 27 Feb 2024), Resilient Lady was homeported here.

There are currently no plans to homeport in Australia again, although Hopkins said that the

line is "always looking at options".

However, VV's newer ship, Brilliant Lady, is capable of sailing in the region in a different way, VP of marketing and digital innovation Billy Bohan told CW.

"Now that Brilliant Lady can go through the Panama Canal, she can unlock incredible itineraries in Japan, China, Singapore, so you have a whole new world of opportunity," Bohan said.

"But as any travel partner will know, planning the logistics of voyages like that takes many years...obviously we're willing to invest, but we haven't had the opportunity to [return] yet.

"What I will say is that Australia is near and dear to our hearts... so having the opportunity to bring the ship back here would be a dream...we just have to make sure that it's the right time," he added. JHM

**Pictured:** Bohan & Hopkins with director of sales Matt Lebborn.

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### Disney bomb threat

**DISNEY** Cruise Line's *Disney Wonder* was locked down at San Diego Harbor on Mon morning local time, due to what police called "an unspecified bomb threat".

The ship was scheduled for debarkation when B Street Cruise Terminal received the threat at around 7am on 30 Mar, prompting Explosive Detection Canine Units to search the premises.

Guests were permitted to leave around two hours later when police deemed the terminal safe. *JM*

## Peterie joins Aurora team



**AURORA** Expeditions has welcomed Megan Peterie as its new trade marketing manager for APAC and EMEA.

Peterie (**pictured**) brings extensive travel and cruise experience, with previous roles spanning marketing, events, PR and trade.

She joins from Flight Centre Travel Group's FCM Meetings & Events, where she worked closely with the sales team to manage campaigns end-to-end.

Peterie, who is based in Sydney, has also worked at Silversea Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, where she supported both Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania Cruises.

In her new position, she is tasked with supporting the development and execution

of trade marketing initiatives across APAC and EMEA, with a focus on strengthening partner engagement and driving commercial outcomes.

"Megan brings a strong understanding of the travel landscape and how to effectively engage the trade across multiple markets," said Katie Malone, Aurora Expeditions chief marketing officer.

"Her experience across both cruise and global travel environments will be instrumental as we continue to strengthen our trade partnerships and deliver more integrated, commercially focused campaigns across APAC and EMEA."

Peterie can be reached at [mpeterie@auroraexpeditions.com.au](mailto:mpeterie@auroraexpeditions.com.au). *JM*

### HAL's milestone

**HOLLAND** America Line (HAL) has launched a special anniversary sale to celebrate 153 years of ocean exploration.

The cruise line is offering savings of up to 25% off cruise-only fares, as well as on board credits up to US\$400 per stateroom, 50% reduced deposits, and reduced third and fourth kids when traveling in the same stateroom.

Sailings across all HAL regions are part of the offer, with Collectors' Voyages - which combine two back-to-back, non-repeating itineraries - also included in the sale.

"Celebrating 153 years of ocean exploration is about honouring the guests who have travelled the world with us," said Beth Bodensteiner, HAL president.

"The Anniversary Sale is both a thank you to our loyal guests and an invitation to new travellers to experience our thoughtfully designed itineraries, immersive destination experiences and exceptional service - all with added value and special savings," she added.

Running from today until 01 Jun 2026, the Anniversary Sale includes departures from Apr 2026 through Apr 2027, with cruises ranging from four to 69 days.

Find out more **HERE**. *JM*

### Bhaya's got soul

**HA LONG** Bay-based Bhaya Cruises has unveiled new experiences for its wellness program, Bhaya Soul, which was introduced last year.

The upcoming spring and summer seasons will see the return of the 'Soul Sanctuary', a series of hands-on, culturally rooted experiences on selected dates, designed to foster meaningful connection (*CW* 14 Jan).

Additionally, the cruise line has announced extended itineraries on board *Bhaya Legend*, with four- to seven-day voyages that explore quieter corners of Ha Long Bay.

Bhaya is now offering savings of up to 18% on select cruises between May and Sep.



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## PORTHOLE

**VIRGIN** Voyages has announced the addition of Le Club Lifeboat on all of its sailings, following years of high demand.

Located on the lifeboats adjacent to deck 7, Le Club Lifeboat has several features including bunk nooks, a Kid's Grub & Gelato - No Veggies snack station, arts and crafts and an abundance of Lego.

Virgin Voyages said it is the perfect opportunity for the kids to get away from not only the adults, but also other sailors.

Grown-ups stay on the boat, children stay adjacent to it.

This optional package comes at the cheap price of US\$99,999.99.

Sadly for those who liked the concept, this was an April Fool's Day prank, with Virgin Voyages encouraging guests to "go and enjoy a drink somewhere your kids can't find you".

## Avalon's upside-down famil



**AVALON** Waterways' first-ever training charter, which came to an end earlier this week (*CW* 31 Mar), was conceived to "flip the idea of a famil on its head", as the cruise line eyes the concept's return for next year.

National account manager Sarah Hoskin told *Cruise Weekly* that the Avalon training charter aimed to capture less-experienced advisors without prior exposure to river cruising.

"Let's show that we trust you and that we think this will be great for you because we all know it's so much easier to sell something once if you've experienced it" she said.

"That confidence they're going to gain from experiencing it for themselves, getting that sort of

detailed knowledge - that's not going to just help that individual agent in their store, but that's also going to help with that knowledge transfer to the rest of the team."

"We're showing that we're investing in the industry, we're showing that we're investing in river cruise."

National account manager Mitch Spencer told *Cruise Weekly* the ability to experience the product for a less-experienced agent is key to being able to sell it.

"Our task now will be to put it in the hands of our sales team to make sure the engagement with all the agents on board continues," he said, adding next year's return of the concept is the ultimate goal. *MS*

## CCL backs safety

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line (CCL) has donated more than 1,000 towels to local children learning to swim in Vanuatu, as part of its commitment to supporting water safety in the island nation.

*Carnival Adventure* crew members, including hotel director Bas van Es, food & beverage director Larisa Rose and environmental officer Rado Lyubenov, delivered the beach towels during their visit to Port Vila on Sun.

The towels will be handed out during swimming lessons at Paradise Swim and Arts Academy throughout the year.

"Carnival guests love visiting Vanuatu, and this towel donation is one way we can give back to the community who warmly welcomes our ships throughout the year," said Carnival's vice president external affairs Sandy Olsen.



## LUXURY CRUISING REDEFINED

Luxury Travel Collection GM **Nikki Glading** reveals the hottest luxury trends.

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