



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of the latest cruise industry news.

Viking ups the value

VIKING is offering up to 35% off its 2026-28 itineraries, including the eight-day 'Danube Waltz' voyage from Budapest to Passau.

The cruise departs 25 Nov and is now available from \$3,195pp for bookings made before 30 Jun.

Also included in the deal is the 'North Pacific Passage' sailing, departing 23 Sep.

Additionally, Viking is doubling its past guest discount on river, ocean and expedition voyages for bookings made during Apr.



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Trafalgar's river ramp up



CRUISE will grow in importance for The Travel Corporation (TTC) over the coming years, following the launch of river cruises with its Trafalgar brand late last week (**CW** yesterday).

Deputy chief executive officer Melissa DaSilva detailed the significant ramp-up of operations to **Cruise Weekly**, as Trafalgar works to ensure it keeps its guests travelling within its brand. "We've now got a very robust plan that takes us through to 2030, where river cruise becomes more than 20% of our portfolio," she explained.

"We know that people don't take a tour every year, but they do love the brand, and they feel comfortable with the brand," DaSilva said of Trafalgar.

"Our travel advisor partners are very loyal and sell our brand, but then when somebody comes in and wants a river cruise, we don't have a product that's going to allow them to do that."

DaSilva said Trafalgar's river cruises, currently consisting of a fleet of three ships, have already sold very well, with many passengers new to the brand.

"It's not just about introducing our guided customers to river, but 60-plus-per cent of the customers that have booked on our inaugural year are new to Trafalgar," she enthused.

"All of our trips are going to include pre- and post- excursions that you can add on, not just hotel stays, [and] as we move into '27 and beyond, really thoughtfully deciding how we deploy our ships so that they match up with our tours." **MS Pictured** aboard *Verity's* inaugural departure are TTC head of marketing Mia Hamzic, House of Travel general manager cruise Jeff Leckey, DaSilva, and Flight Centre head of product cruise & tour Tammy Marquet.

NCL's Tassie tasters

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has announced new four-night round-trip sailings from Sydney in Jan 2027.

Timed for peak summer travel, the short escapes operated by *Norwegian Spirit* will feature a standout experience in Tasmania.

The 'Tassie Taster' cruises will offer just two departures - 06 and 21 Jan - with fares starting from A\$255 per person, per day, with upgrades available from A\$59.

Guests will enjoy time ashore in Hobart, visiting the iconic MONA and Salamanca Markets, as well as exploring the city's vibrant dining and waterfront precinct.

MSC's new island

MSC Group has announced it will open Sandy Cay, a new luxury private island destination, in 2028.

Located in the Bahamas adjacent to the company's existing private island, Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve, the experience will be designed for MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys guests.

Sandy Cay will offer a more intimate, secluded escape and is intended to complement Ocean Cay, which is currently being upgraded (**CW** 29 Jan).



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Aussies hold their nerve

EXCLUSIVE



DESPITE ongoing uncertainty in the Middle East, the appetite for cruising from Australians has remained steadfast and upbeat throughout the crisis, VP sales & GM, APAC for Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises Lisa Pile has observed.

Speaking with *Cruise Weekly* at the Virtuoso forum in Auckland, Pile relayed that her recent interactions with agents and consumers showed a buoyancy of confidence for cruising.

"Australians and Kiwis are very resilient travellers, they want to continue to travel because it is their rite of passage every year to go to places like Europe in summer," Pile explained.

"[Interactions] at the Virtuoso forum have really reassured me that there is optimism there, people still want to travel."

One of the big challenges facing some RSSC and Oceania

customers has been the need to re-route flights to arrive at their overseas departure ports.

While the present geopolitical situation is presenting some hurdles, Pile said that one of the advantages of being such a large organisation is having the resources to assist its partners and customers through the chaos.

"We have an air team in Miami and they have very kindly offered to assist us in finding alternative flights when needed," she said.

Pile added that RSSC has attempted to be "proactive" in its approach to helping guests and advisors impacted by the conflict by providing as much flexibility with bookings as it can. *AB*

Greenock upgrade

SCOTLAND'S Greenock Cruise Port unveiled its recent infrastructure and guest experience improvements on Sun, when it welcomed Ponant's *Le Lapérouse* - the first turnaround call of the year for the port.

The facility's transformation includes widened guest walkways, upgraded security arrangements, enhanced seating areas and passenger flow routes, as well as quicker baggage handling services.

A new welcome facility has also opened within the terminal building to improve guest orientation.

The next cruise season for the region is expected to see more than 77 cruise calls and over 145,000 visitors arrive into Inverclyde, where Greenock is located, and the west of Scotland.

Meyer's new vision

MEYER Werft is set to unveil Project Vision, its concept for the world's first 100% battery-electric cruise ship at trade show Seatrade.

The 1,856-pax vessel is 275 metres long and has a size of around 82,000GT, with a battery system supplied by Corvus Energy from Norway, which has equipped more than half of the world's hybrid and fully electric seagoing vessels with systems.

According to the shipyard, the battery system will enable the ship to cover a large portion of typical European cruise routes, and by 2030, around 100 ports across Europe will offer the required charging infrastructure.

The ships can also be built as hybrids with small generators, which could enable transatlantic crossings.



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New cruise player

MEXICAN hospitality group Grupo Vidanta's new adults-only luxury cruise line VidantaWorld has debuted its first ship, *Elegant*.

The 216-passenger yacht-like vessel features expansive spaces, butler service and an almost one-to-one crew to guest ratio.

Elegant will embark on her maiden voyage from Funchal this weekend, followed by seven-night Mediterranean cruises through Sep.

From the Adriatic Sea and the French Riviera to Italy and the Greek Islands, the slower paced voyages will feature late departures & overnight stays.

"We've created a voyage that delivers the high-end experience and flexibility today's luxury travellers are seeking," Ivan Chavez, EVP of Grupo Vidanta enthused.

Crystal Grace unveils specialty dining

CRYSTAL has released renders offering a first look at the specialty dining venues on board its newest ship *Crystal Grace*, which is set to debut on 11 Jun 2028 (*CW* 10 Dec 2025).

Designed by Tillberg Design of Sweden in collaboration with Crystal's culinary partners, the collection of specialty venues includes Japanese-Peruvian fusion restaurant Umi Uma, which will feature a full-height glass wall with ocean views.

The 84-seat venue will include a sushi bar available on a drop-in basis, while the main dining room will require a reservation.

Signalling the cruise line's ongoing collaboration with global restaurateur Riccardo Giraudi, *Crystal Grace* will also be home to Beefbar, which will include a dedicated, covered outdoor dining space in addition to its main interior area.



A shared bar will connect the steakhouse to Italian restaurant Osteria d'Ovidio, which will also offer an alfresco dining section.

"From the beginning, our vision for *Crystal Grace* was to build on the strength of our culinary partnerships while giving each venue a renewed sense of place and design," said Crystal vice president of food & beverage operations Gunter Lorenz.

"Working closely with our partners, chef Nobu Matsuhisa, chef Massimiliano Alajmo and Riccardo Giraudi, we've refreshed each restaurant with thoughtful design updates and the flexibility to introduce new menu elements over time.

"The result is a collection of dining experiences that feel both familiar and excitingly new for our guests," he added. *JM*

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PORThOLE

A 24-YEAR-OLD message in a bottle was discovered in NZ after being washed ashore following Cyclone Vaianu. The Jack Daniels bottle encrusted with shells was found by a family on Taiura's Ocean Beach on the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula. Inside was a note which said, "Hi, My name is Jack". "It appears [smudged] big game about [smudged] fishing but [smudged] luck fishing is as good as my [smudged]. "I put this note in a bottle 17/02/2002 [smudged]. "If someone finds it my luck will [smudged] contact me, Jack [smudged]."

The family is attempting to track down the author.

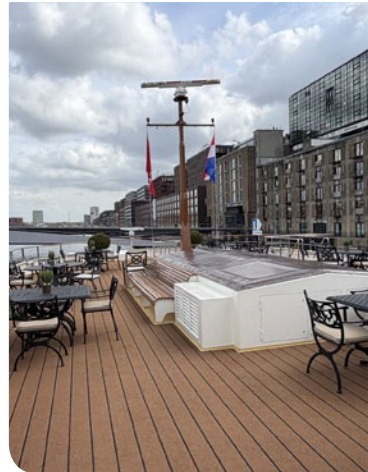


The Western Med, Viking style



NINE travel agents recently had the opportunity to experience Viking's newest ocean ship, Viking Vesta (**CW** 01 Jul 2025), sailing the eight-day 'Iconic Western Mediterranean' itinerary. Hosted by the cruise line's PR manager Nicole Tapster, the voyage departed Rome and concluded in Barcelona, featuring stops in Florence, Marseille, Sete, and Villefranche-sur-Mer. A highlight for the group was the 'Le Castellet & Bandol Wine Tasting' excursion, which saw them explore the historic 11th-century hilltop village of Le Castellet (**pictured**) on a guided walk, followed by wine tastings and local snacks at Domaine de Frégate in Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer. On board, agents enjoyed a

Beatles-themed night at The Star Theatre, Korean- and Californian-inspired menus at The Chef's Table, sunset drinks in the Explorer's Lounge, and Norwegian waffles at Mamsen's. *JM*



Cruising in Croatia

BEYOND Travel has opened bookings for its 2027 cruise season in Croatia, headlined by its eight-day signature itinerary, 'Best of Dalmatia'. The voyage allows travellers to immerse themselves in the Dalmatian coastline, combining relaxed cruising with cultural encounters, regional cuisine and guided insights into the region. To celebrate the launch, Beyond Travel is offering earlybird savings of up to \$1,170 per cabin on select sailings until 29 May.



On Board: Trafalgar Verity

Sun-deck

One of the most popular venues aboard *Trafalgar Verity* is the ship's sun-deck, positioned at the top of the vessel. This space offers unobstructed 360-degree views of the Rhine, making it the perfect vantage point for some of the towns and landscapes located along the banks of the river. The area is furnished with sun loungers, offering areas to relax individually or as a group.



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