



Cruise Weekly today

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

Earlybird deals

HURTIGRUTEN is offering earlybird savings of up to \$1,000 across select 2027/28 voyages, including new season cruise and tour combinations.

The discounted rates are available across Norway cruises, the popular 'Follow the Northern Lights North and South' itineraries, and more.

Additionally, members of Hurtigruten's 1893 Ambassador Loyalty program will enjoy up to \$200 on board credit per cabin plus 5% off voyages for level one members or 10% off voyages for level two members for departures before 30 Apr 2028.

The earlybird offer ends 29 May or when sold out.

CLIA calls for national cruise action plan

A **RECORD** 1.45 million Aussies enjoyed a cruise last year, but 17% more sailed outside the ANZ and South Pacific region compared to 2024, as Australia struggles to become a competitive cruising destination, according to new figures from the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

The organisation's Annual Source Market Report for 2025 also found that Australians who chose long-haul destinations over sailing locally increased from 18.5% in 2024 to 19.7% in 2025.

"The number of Australians cruising is at record levels, and with around 80 new ships coming online worldwide over the next decade, this passion can only rise," CLIA Executive Director in Australasia Joel Katz said.

"However, Australia is struggling to attract ships to our own waters because of regulatory

uncertainties and rising costs, so we are becoming uncompetitive as a destination and losing tourism to other countries."

"Cruising contributes \$7.32 billion a year to the national economy and supports more than 22,000 Australian jobs, so it's vital that we bring together federal, state and territory governments under a national action plan - so we can create greater regulatory certainty, restore Australia's competitiveness, and attract more cruise tourism," the organisation's chief explained.

Despite the challenges, CLIA's newly released report also found that 8% more Aussies sailed in the ANZ region last year compared to 2024.

Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific also remained the most popular cruising destination for Australians, where 80.3% sailed last year.

This was followed by the Mediterranean (6.3%), Asia (4.5%), Alaska (2.5%), the Caribbean (1.7), Northern Europe (1.3%), Hawaii and the US West Coast (0.7%), and South America/Panama (0.4%).

Other Australian cruise passengers enjoyed expedition cruises (0.8%), and trans-atlantic and world cruises (0.5%).

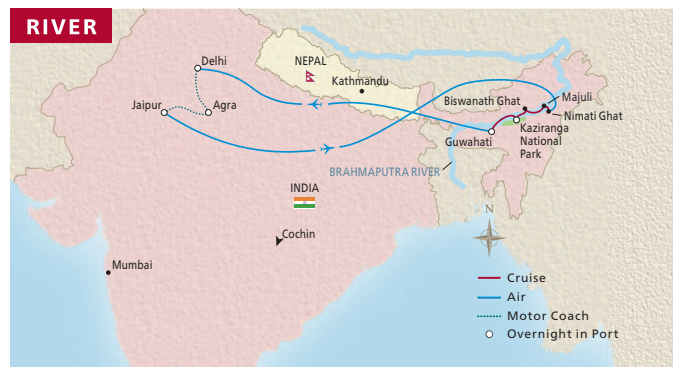
CLIA's Annual Source Market Report found that Australia was again the world's fourth largest cruise market in 2025, with 1.45 million passengers, following on from the US (20.56 million), Germany (2.83 million) and the United Kingdom (2.47 million).

Meanwhile, the continued trend of cruise passengers getting younger was also apparent in the findings, with the average age of Australian cruisers falling from 48.4 to 47.3, and more than a third (34.2%) aged under 40. *JHM*

NEW DEPARTURES RELEASED

Following the sell-out success of our new *Wonders of India* itinerary, we have released new departures across 2028 and 2029.

We will also welcome a second all veranda ship, *Viking Ganges*, sailing on India's Brahmaputra River from 2028. An identical sister ship to *Viking Brahmaputra*, *Viking Ganges* offers the same intimate onboard experience, hosting just 80 guests.



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Trafalgar welcomes all in river cruising

NEWLY launched Trafalgar River Cruises (**CW** 12 Apr) is aiming to bring river cruising to all, in its mission to be the sector's best-in-class multigenerational operator.

Melissa DaSilva, deputy chief executive officer of The Travel Corporation (TTC), revealed that although the first few years of Trafalgar's river product will sail on ex-Uniworld Boutique River Cruises ships, the new line's product will greatly differ from its luxury sister marque.

"[Uniworld is] the fully inclusive, luxury, super sophisticated, experience that their luxury clients have come to know and love, and Trafalgar is really about making travel accessible," DaSilva told **Cruise Weekly**.

This includes Trafalgar offering lower fares than Uniworld, making it more accessible for a broader demographic to also enjoy river cruising.



DaSilva added Trafalgar will target the 10-plus age range for its youngest travellers, and will accommodate them through interconnecting rooms and a range of flexible onboard spaces.

Meanwhile, vice president Damian O'Connor said the line is working on its entertainment, activities and land programs to appeal to its younger guests.

There could also be children's

programs during certain holiday periods, he added, as well as a kid's concierge.

"I'm talking about having dedicated child counsellors on board with interactive and fun things to do for the kids," O'Connor explained. **MS**

Pictured are TTC managing director tour brands EMEA Kelly Jackson, DaSilva, and director of field sales Melinda Wouda.

A night with Ponant

PONANT Explorations has partnered with AmaWaterways to host trade events across Australia's east coast, showcasing its Smithsonian Voyages collection.

The events, dubbed 'A Night at the Museum', will kick off in Melbourne on Tue 12 May, before heading to Sydney and Brisbane, taking place at cultural institutions such as the Australian National Maritime Museum, the ACMI Swinburne Studio and the Queensland Museum Kurilpa.

Each session will run from 5.45pm -7.45pm, featuring a welcome reception, keynote speakers, and the chance to win a Smithsonian Voyage.

Ponant will offer more than 121 different Smithsonian voyage departures.

Click **HERE** for full event details and to register.



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*Prices are per person twin/double share in a lower deck balcony Stateroom. Available and correct at 26/3/26. Subject to availability at time of booking. ^Shipboard Credit is per person, in US dollar (onboard currency) and not redeemable for cash. Shipboard credit is not available to children when their cruise fare is free. Available for new bookings only booked between 01 March to 30 April 2026. Combinable with PONANT Bonus, Free Solo Supplement, PONANT Yacht Club Member Offers, Consortia Contracted Amenities. Not combinable with any other offers. See au.ponant.com for full booking conditions. See au.ponant.com or your Travel Agent for full booking conditions. Mention code SWEETAH at time of booking.

HX's Antarctica victory



HX HAS announced its most successful Antarctica season on record, with the line seeing exceptional guest satisfaction and its highest-ever suite bookings.

The cruise line operated 34 sailings to the White Continent between Oct 2025 and Mar 2026, earning a 93% five-star score across 272 TripAdvisor reviews.

It also recorded a global 5% increase in suite bookings compared to the 2025 season, and up to 80% in select regions.

The season was characterised by expanded activity capacity, with a 188% increase in kayaking capacity and double the camping spots, all while operating fully within the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators guidelines.

A series of enhancements were also introduced to improve the experience before and after embarkation, making travel to and from the expedition seamless and comfortable.

Before the voyage, guests benefited from later departures from Buenos Aires, with charter flights upgraded to JetSMART's new A321 aircraft, while after the expedition, later return flights provided additional time to explore Ushuaia.

Guests also received a curated self-guided map highlighting local businesses offering

complimentary items, alongside a takeaway lunch featuring regional products for their onward journey.

Additionally, the season saw HX mark a series of scientific milestones, including 1,801 Guest Scientist cruise nights donated to global research and 27,869 Green Stay nights, where travellers opted out of cabin servicing to raise funds for its philanthropic arm, the HX Foundation.

Meanwhile, cruise passengers helped raise €124,882 (approx. A\$207,341) for the organisation, supporting conservation, plastic pollution initiatives, and community projects in destinations such as Antarctica and Svalbard.

HX also revealed that 2,307 guests completed the University of Tasmania's 'Introduction to Antarctica' learning module, contributing to more than 4,614 hours of study.

"This has been an extraordinary season - not only in terms of guest numbers and satisfaction, but in the depth of scientific engagement and responsible travel practices," chief executive officer Gebhard Rainer said.

"HX's record-breaking season underscores a clear message: high-quality expedition travel and rigorous environmental stewardship can, and must, go hand in hand." JM



Travel Daily

**SPECIAL REPORT
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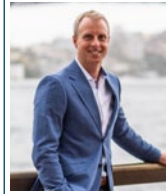
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Four nights. One standout local opportunity

With Ben Angell, Vice President & Managing Director, Asia Pacific - Norwegian Cruise Line®



SHORTER

escapes are no longer a compromise but a conscious choice - prioritising calm, connection

and quality time, without the complexity of long haul travel.

That's where *Norwegian Spirit*® truly comes into her own.

Now firmly established as NCL's ship for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, *Norwegian Spirit* delivers what Australian travellers want most: easy, effortless escapes at an unrushed pace.

This positioning aligns seamlessly with our newly launched marketing messaging, "**Choose Calm Over Kids' Clubs**", introduced to spotlight *Norwegian Spirit's* refined, adult-friendly appeal. It speaks directly to growing demand for relaxed, uncrowded cruising and positions *Norwegian Spirit* as the go-to choice for grown-up getaways - particularly for couples and mature travellers looking to genuinely switch off and enjoy quality time together.

Designed to feel sophisticated yet relaxed, the onboard environment encourages unhurried days and more intentional moments, with unrivalled choice for a ship of her size. Guests can linger over long dinners, enjoy elevated and spacious surroundings or immerse themselves in culturally rich destinations ashore. Increasingly, travellers value this sense of calm and ease as much as the destinations themselves.

Nowhere is this more evident than in our new four-night Tassie

taster sailings.

Departing Sydney, these short yet enriching voyages are designed to feel like a complete holiday. In just four days, guests can step away from their daily routine, explore Hobart and its surrounds and return home genuinely refreshed. Quite simply, four nights can feel a whole world away.

For trade partners, these sailings also serve as an ideal introduction to NCL. They provide a low-commitment entry point while naturally encouraging progression to longer itineraries, with a consistent experience and value proposition across every sailing.

Looking ahead to our largest Close to Home season across 2026-2027, trade partners have more flexibility than ever, with sailings ranging from four to 14 nights and our most Sydney departures - including five roundtrip voyages. This breadth allows trade partners to confidently match clients with an itinerary that suits their lifestyle, schedule and travel preferences.

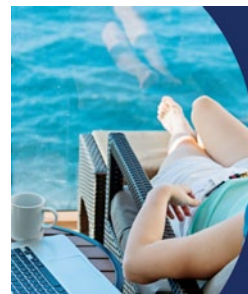
While NCL continues to offer extraordinary cruising worldwide, supported by strong fly cruise demand, it's this growing appetite for closer to home, adult friendly cruising that's resonating most strongly right now - whether clients opt for a four night taster long weekend cruise or a longer sailing.

This momentum represents a clear opportunity for our trade partners.

To support you, our team has developed a new suite of ready-to-share *Norwegian Spirit* marketing assets, designed to help you capitalise on our biggest local season ever. Download [HERE](#).



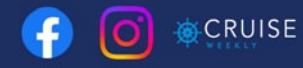
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A river cruise revolution



THERE is nothing that says celebrity and fame like owning your own luxury yacht.

Formula 1 double World Champion Fernando Alonso first encountered a Sunreef 60 Power Eco (pictured) during an event in Cannes in 2022, and he enjoyed his time on board so much that he took delivery of his own \$5.69 million custom electric boat a year later.

Tennis star Rafael Nadal also loves Sunreef solar-powered yachts and purchased his Sunreef *Great White* in 2020.

Kung fu legend Jackie Chan owns a 150-foot JinLong yacht, with three decks, a helipad, sundeck, wet bar and hot tub.

Other features on board include a cinema, gym, sauna and karaoke room.

Meanwhile, fashion icon Roberto Cavalli's yacht features his signature leopard-print furnishings but its jet black exterior and tinted windows were inspired by the Batmobile.

CW is currently pooling together cash for our own yacht - just another easy \$5.68m to go!



EXCLUSIVE

RIVER cruise ship design has changed "dramatically" over the last decade, APT Travel Group David Cox has told *Cruise Weekly*.

"When we entered the European river cruising market 15 years ago, we set out to reinvent what the experience could be, and competition across the category has driven real innovation ever since," he said, referring to the new expansive cabins and elevated experiences onboard APT's ships.

"Today, guests expect their ship to feel like a five-star hotel: sleek, light, bright, contemporary and aligned with its destination."

The cabins on APT's ships have evolved over time, as the line has worked to maximise cabin space while retaining the balcony experience through windows that open the room to the river.

One of the biggest shift in cruise ship design has been in the creative uses of space, as seen on board *APT Solara* (pictured) and *APT Ostara*, featuring distinct dining venues with their own menu and culinary experience, a departure from the single-

restaurant model that was previously on ships.

"Wellness is also a major factor that needs to be incorporated into the design and one we're already moving on," Cox added.


"The ships of the future will incorporate wellness into the experience itself, through the spaces, the programming and the dining philosophy."

Meanwhile, Stacey Van Harn, director of Hecker Guthrie, which designed APT's ships suggested the way that technology will continue to play a significant role in the guest experience.

"In the future, I can envisage a level of personalisation of the guest experience becoming more accessible, [such as] the ability for guests to alter lighting, temperature, and other functionality of their cabins to suit their preferences through in-cabin apps and smart control systems," she told *Cruise Weekly*.

"Things like this will start to get more automated as this technology improves and becomes more widely adopted."

Look out for the **CW** river cruise special report . *JHM*



AUSTRALIAN
CRUISE
ASSOCIATION

ACA UPDATE

with Jill Abel - CEO

On the ground at Seatrade

Reporting from Seatrade Cruise Global in Miami this week, there remains a strong sense of optimism around Australia's cruise future and the role our region can play in the next phase of global deployment.

A clear theme emerging from conversations is the continued recognition of Australia as both a strong domestic cruise market and a highly desirable destination for international visitors.

With a robust global order book of cruise ships launching over the next decade, there is a clear opportunity for Australia to play an increasingly important role in deployment patterns, particularly during the Northern Hemisphere winter.

As fleets grow, the need for compelling and reliable destinations outside peak northern seasons will only intensify.

That said, discussions are also being shaped by a complex global backdrop, with geopolitical uncertainty and shifting economic conditions influencing deployment decisions in ways we haven't seen in recent years.

Cruise lines are balancing strong consumer demand with the need for flexibility across their global fleets, and are carefully considering how different regions fit within broader deployment strategies.

This is where Australia has both an opportunity and a responsibility.

While our fundamentals remain strong, we are competing in a global marketplace where deployment decisions are highly dynamic.

The conversations here at Seatrade reinforce that maintaining our position will require continued collaboration, clear direction and a shared focus on delivering high-quality experiences in a reliable operating environment.