



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Viking**.

Aura's milestone

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line has marked a major construction milestone for *Norwegian Aura*, with the largest ship in the brand's history recently floating out for the first time.

Aura's float out, which took place at Fincantieri's shipyard in Italy, marked the first time the ship touched water, signifying the completion of her external hull construction ahead of her May 2027 debut.

The occasion was commemorated in maritime fashion by welding two ceremonial coins into *Aura's* hull, symbolising good fortune and safe passage for the ship, her crew, and guests.

Attention will now turn to the fit-out of *Aura's* interiors.

The ship is 10% larger than her predecessors, *Norwegian Aqua* and *Norwegian Luna*, and will accommodate approximately 3,880 guests at double occupancy.



Strong demand for cruise



THE cruise sector is seeing strong demand, with global passenger volumes, as well as investments in future fuels, reaching record highs, according to Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) *State of the Industry* report.

Almost 40 million people cruised last year, of which 90% intend to do so again - the highest level ever recorded by CLIA.

About one-third of cruisers are under the age of 40, and approximately one-third of cruise trips are multigenerational, underscoring the appeal of cruise vacations for families and groups.

Cruise tourism generated \$198 billion in global economic impact in 2024, most of which came from shoreside spending, reflecting cruise lines' increasing investment in ports, destinations, communities, and more.

"Cruising is sailing toward the future with exceptional momentum and strength,"

president & chief executive officer Bud Darr said.

"Record demand, growing interest from new cruisers and sustained confidence in the cruise experience are being matched by innovation, technological advancements, and destination partnerships," he added.

"At the same time, we're seeing a meaningful shift in recognition that cruise is a leader in sustainable operations."

Darr also detailed what will continue to drive the sector's growth in the future.

"Ongoing progress and sustained economic impact from the cruise industry requires collaboration across sectors, continued infrastructure investment, advancement of alternative fuels and pragmatic regulation," Darr said.

"The cruise industry is charting a course toward a future defined by opportunity, impact, and responsible growth." *MS*

Viking limited time

A NUMBER of limited-time fares are available with Viking for later this year.

Travellers can also take advantage of Viking's \$1,000 flexible deposit, which allows them to play with confidence - see more on **page 4**.

New Nat Geo brox

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has released its 2026-2028 expedition brochure, highlighting its range of voyages to destinations such as the South Pacific, Iceland, Greenland, and Svalbard.

New expeditions include the 16-day 'Quest for the Antarctic Circle', which will sail aboard both *National Geographic Endurance* and *National Geographic Resolution*, priced from \$29,472 per person.

There is also the new nine-day 'Classic Patagonia: Glaciers and Peaks' on *National Geographic Endurance*.

This itinerary will take travellers to some of the best of Patagonia's peaks, winding fjords and narrows, and majestic glaciers.

A highlight of the program will be the 13-day 'Baffin Island: Exploring Canada's Wild Arctic Frontier' on *National Geographic Resolution*.

CLICK HERE to read the full brochure online.

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*Conditions apply. Gift card value to be awarded as 2,000 PFR points.



The king of showbiz

ROYAL Caribbean has unveiled more of the entertainment experiences aboard its upcoming ship *Liberty of the Seas*.

The vessel will feature an all-new aqua-themed show *Shockwave*, which will showcase gravity-defying high divers, aerialists, robots, and dancers in the AquaTheatre.

Shockwave will blend hip-hop energy and classical ballet to explore the force and fragility of water.

There will also be *Fusion*, a new ice-skating show that captures the forces of nature - fire, wind, water and air - featuring world-class skaters and cutting-edge production.

The show will be set in Absolute Zero, Royal Caribbean's ice skating arena.

Making its cruise ship debut in Liberty's Royal Theater will be the hit Broadway musical, Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, bringing the magical world of Willy Wonka to life at sea.

Legend will also have more than 45 musicians performing across 20 bars, lounges and seven live music venues.



Apollo backs Trafalgar



TRAFALGAR'S extension into river cruising is a possibility brought about thanks to The Travel Corporation's (TTC) new owner Apollo Global Management, deputy chief exec Melissa DaSilva believes.

The funds required to extend a second TTC brand into river cruising would not have been available under the ownership of the Tollman family, DaSilva (pictured right with TTC head of marketing Mia Hamzic) told *Cruise Weekly* on board Trafalgar's first-ever river cruise last week (*CW* 13 Apr).

DaSilva pointed to the opportunity for investment as the biggest change since the takeover by Apollo.

"There's no way that we would have been able to take this leap under previous ownership," the TTC head said.

"Having the data to back up the business cases allows us to really tap into those funds and to have a much longer-term view, as well as to recuperate those funds...it doesn't have to be in a 12-month period," DaSilva explained.

"There's an appetite for growth and an appetite for volume that is more easily attained by building out the opportunity for us to have more ships."

This outlook also afforded Trafalgar the opportunity to invest in the ships it acquired from sister brand Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

Trafalgar River Cruises vice president Damien O'Connor said the cruise line is exploring a further refurbishment for the ships' interiors, including its inaugural flagship *Trafalgar Verity*, which could happen as soon as next year. *MS*

Turning Japanese

PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its largest-ever Japan season in 2028, announced as part of an expanded Southeast Asia program for 2027-2028.

The new deployment features 96 departures across 61 itineraries, with two ships home porting in Tokyo for the first time: *Diamond Princess* and *Sapphire Princess*.

New for 2027 and 2028 is the expanded late-night stays aligned with major summer festivals across Japan

These include Obon, when the Japanese honour the spirits of their ancestors.

Two Princess ships will visit Osaka for this occasion.

Another highlight of the season is Princess' signature 29-day 'Grand Circle Japan' voyage, which includes fall foliage sailings visiting up to 24 ports.

The cruise line's full Japan season will feature 85 departures across 52 itineraries, ranging from seven to 29 days.

Sailings will visit all four main islands of Japan, following peak cherry blossom blooms from south to north.

There will also be six late-night stays, in Aomori, Hakodate, Hiroshima, Kochi, Osaka, and Tokushima.

All 2027-28 Japan & Southeast Asia voyages are now on sale.

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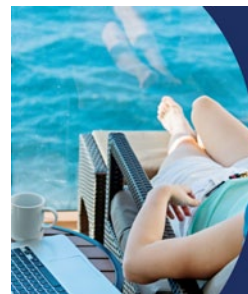
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EXPEDITIONS

More information


Conditions apply



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A DANISH warship which was sunk more than 200 years ago, has been discovered on the seabed of Copenhagen by marine archaeologists.

Working in thick sediment and almost zero visibility 15 meters down, divers are in a race against time to unearth the 19th-century wreck of the *Dannebrog* before it becomes a construction site, home to a new housing district being built off the Danish coast.

Denmark's Viking Ship Museum, which is leading the monthslong underwater excavations, recently announced its findings, 225 years to the day since the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, when *Dannebrog* was sunk.

A truce was eventually struck between British Navy officer Horatio Nelson and Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik, with a ceasefire later bringing the fighting to an end.

Scenic adds more in Aus



SCENIC Group has expanded its 2028 luxury yacht collection, with both *Emerald Xara* and *Scenic Eclipse II* to cruise in Australia and the South Pacific.

The expansion reflects strong demand for expedition and yacht cruising, with a number of new itineraries across both ships, spanning the Kimberley, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, and Papua New Guinea.

This will allow guests to enjoy the Kimberley across both Scenic brands for the first time.

Also included are voyages to East Antarctica and the Ross Sea.

Eclipse II will operate an extended program across the

South Pacific, sailing from Tahiti through the Pacific islands to the Kimberley, the Top End and down to Hobart, before travelling to New Zealand for two voyages to East Antarctica and the Ross Sea, then onwards through Indonesia's Maluku Islands, Japan, and Korea.

Meanwhile, *Xara* will operate 15 new itineraries across these regions, including Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia's Raja Ampat islands, before venturing south to Darwin, the Kimberley, and onto Papua New Guinea.

Voyages are now open for pre-registration for 2028. *MS*

NCL back to Philly

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has brought cruising back to Philadelphia, becoming the first line to sail from the city in 15 years.

NCL's *Norwegian Jewel* recently arrived in Philadelphia for a series of voyages to New England, as well as Bermuda and Canada.

Jewel will be followed later by *Norwegian Pearl*, which will sail from Philadelphia from 2026-2028.

NCL's parent company Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings is currently building a brand-new terminal in the city, due to open this cruise season, which will welcome guests and facilitate an easy embarkation and disembarkation process.

MEANWHILE, NCL is set to pay out US\$2 million (A\$2.8 million) over its sales practices in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NCL has agreed to pay the amount to a dozen US states, after allegedly distributing "confusing and conflicting information" about bookings and cancellations.



A NEW ERA OF LUXURY

Goldman Travel Group's **Anthony Goldman** on catering to the luxury traveller.

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Travel Daily



LIMITED TIME FARES FOR 2026

We've launched limited-time fares on river and ocean voyages for travel in 2026 that could save your clients thousands and earn you commission this year! **And with our AU\$1,000 flexible deposit**, your clients have peace of mind to plan with confidence, knowing their arrangements can adapt should they need to.

OCEAN SET SAIL 25 NOV 2026

Itinerary varies for this departure

COMODO & THE AUSTRALIAN COAST

Bali to Sydney

17 DAYS • 2 COUNTRIES • 9 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$6,745pp** in Deluxe Veranda

SAVE UP TO \$10,300 PER COUPLE

OCEAN SET SAIL 23 SEP 2026

NORTH PACIFIC PASSAGE

Vancouver to Tokyo

23 DAYS • 3 COUNTRIES • 8 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$7,745pp** in Deluxe Veranda

SAVE UP TO \$17,900 PER COUPLE

OCEAN SET SAIL 28 SEP 2026

TRADE ROUTES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Bergen to Barcelona

15 DAYS • 7 COUNTRIES • 10 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$6,245pp** in Veranda Stateroom

SAVE UP TO \$8,900 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 8 NOV 2026

LYON & PROVENCE

Lyon to Avignon

8 DAYS • 1 COUNTRY • 7 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$2,395pp** in Standard Stateroom

SAVE UP TO \$11,600 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 7 NOV 2026

PARIS TO THE SWISS ALPS

Paris to Zürich

12 DAYS • 4 COUNTRIES • 10 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$3,395pp** in Standard Stateroom

SAVE UP TO \$12,600 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 28 OCT 2026

GRAND EUROPEAN TOUR

Budapest to Amsterdam

15 DAYS • 4 COUNTRIES • 12 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$5,695pp** in Standard Stateroom

SAVE UP TO \$22,600 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 12 NOV 2026

PASSAGE TO EASTERN EUROPE

Budapest to Bucharest

11 DAYS • 5 COUNTRIES • 8 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$3,595pp** in Standard Stateroom

SAVE UP TO \$12,200 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 11 SEP 2026

CAPITALS OF EASTERN EUROPE

Bucharest to Vienna

17 DAYS • 7 COUNTRIES • 12 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$10,895pp** in French Balcony

SAVE UP TO \$11,200 PER COUPLE

RIVER SET SAIL 17 AUG 2026

MAGNIFICENT MEKONG

Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi

15 DAYS • 2 COUNTRIES • 16 GUIDED TOURS
From **\$7,395pp** in French Balcony

SAVE UP TO \$14,600 PER COUPLE

NO KIDS | NO CASINOS | NO NCFS