

Cruise Weekly today

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

Great Tides coming

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has offered a first look at Great Tides Waterpark ahead of its opening at Great Stirrup Cay on 04 Sep (**CW** 28 May).

Designed for guests of all ages, the all-new experience will feature 19 waterslides, an 800-foot dynamic river, industry-first cliff jumps, and dedicated kids' splash areas.

Great Tides Waterpark will also feature several new extra-fee dining options, including Low Tide Smoke, a slow-smoked barbecue eatery.



Ama's very rewarding famil

AMAWATERWAYS' River of Rewards Danube mega famil, which departed earlier this week, has delivered the cruise line millions of dollars and well over a hundredfold return on investment, managing director Steve Richards told **CW**.

Speaking aboard *AmaSofia* (pictured), AmaWaterways' newest ship, Richards said the famil had delivered \$2.3 million in revenue from travel advisors, who could win their way onto the trip by earning points and hitting monthly booking targets (**CW** 18 Jul 2025).

Richards explained that, on the cost of chartering *AmaSofia*, this represented a 700% ROI.

However, equally as valuable was the awareness the River of Rewards had raised for AmaWaterways, which had only been in business in Australia for just over two years upon the



campaign's announcement.

"I think it's huge for brand awareness because it gave us this trade incentive for six months," Richards explained.

"The key thing was to quickly get the trade to know us, [become] trained, and book.

"There wouldn't be many travel agents that don't know us now after 2.5 years in the market."

Richards said familis have been, and will continue to be, a large part of the line's trade strategy to get travel advisors to experience more of its product.

"[Through] ocean cruising, you can bring the ships to Sydney and you can put 500 people on and that's awesome...we could never do that," he explained. *MS*



On location on board
AmaSofia

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you courtesy of AmaWaterways, which is hosting us on its Danube-bound mega famil aboard *AmaSofia*.

AMAWATERWAYS' mega famil guests are spending a second day in the Wachau Valley today, with the chief attraction of the excursions on offer via a day trip to Vienna.

The Austrian capital is home to nearly one-third of the country's population, and is the fifth-largest city in the European Union.

Tomorrow, *AmaSofia* will finally set sail, making her way to Linz, which is Austria's third-largest city.



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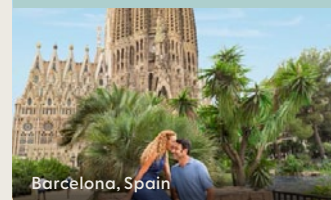
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Chart Your Course

HX EXPEDITIONS has launched a new incentive, Chart Your Course to Antarctica, giving agents the chance to earn their place on an exclusive Antarctica famil.

Advisors will earn one point towards the trip for every cabin booked on an eligible Antarctica 2027 voyage between 01 Aug-31 Oct 2026, and three points for every suite booked.

Bookings must be registered via the form **HERE**.

The five with the highest points will secure a place on the famil, set for Mar 2027.

MSC aims to restore

THE MSC Foundation has partnered with Asociación Vellmarí to launch a new three-year initiative to restore posidonia seagrass meadows in the Mediterranean.

Running from Aug 2026 to Jul 2029, the 'Shallow Bays of the Mediterranean' program aims to plant and monitor between 170,000-180,000 *Posidonia oceanica* plants and bring an extra 20,000m² of degraded coastal habitat under restoration.

The program, which was launched aboard *Explora III*, will also seek to engage more than 30,000 people through marine education, citizen science and community activities.

Europe ports a-plenty



HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has opened bookings for its 2028 Europe season, featuring its most port calls in nearly a decade, its highest number of visits to Spain since 2017 and Norway since 2014, as well as a record six calls at Portofino.

Nieuw Statendam will offer voyages ranging from seven to 14 days to the Canary Islands, Spain, Portugal and Morocco during winter, visiting destinations such as Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, Lisbon and Casablanca.

She will also operate itineraries throughout the Mediterranean, the Low Countries and Northern Europe during the spring, alongside *Rotterdam*, *Nieuw Amsterdam* and *Zuiderdam*, with

departures coinciding with tulip season in the Netherlands.

Summer will see all four ships, as well as *Volendam*, sail throughout Europe on voyages ranging from seven to 35 days, with highlights including Norway's UNESCO-listed fjords and calls in ports such as Flam, Geiranger, Reykjavik, Stockholm and Dubrovnik.

In autumn, *Rotterdam*, *Nieuw Statendam*, *Nieuw Amsterdam* and *Volendam* will continue sailing throughout the Mediterranean and Northern Europe on voyages ranging from seven to 48 days.

The cruise line announced earlier this year that it would expand to year-round European cruising (**CW** 29 May). JM



On location on board
Viking Fjolvar

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you courtesy of **Viking**, which is hosting us aboard *Viking Fjolvar*.

OUR eight-day famil from Paris to Normandy has continued to the medieval town of Rouen in the French countryside, where we will enjoy an overnight stay.

Earlier today, agents participated in a number of shore excursions, including wandering the quaint seaside town of Honfleur, an active tour exploring Rouen and its half-timbered houses, plus a visit to Saint-Michel-d'Halescourt - a working farm and homestead.

To end the day, we will head into Rouen tonight to take in the light show at the cathedral.

A Royally good sale

FOR one week only, Royal Caribbean is offering travellers US\$100 in onboard credit per stateroom on eligible voyages from Singapore.

Combinable with other offers, the '8.8 Sale' is available for bookings made by 10 Aug for *Navigator of the Seas* departures between 02 Jan-28 Mar 2027 and *Quantum of the Seas* sailings between 25 Oct 2027 and 24 Mar 2028.

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WE HOPE the thought of robots crawling underneath your ship while cruising does not creep you out too much, because it may soon be the reality for guests travelling with Carnival Cruise Line.

The company is currently testing out a new type of robot that uses magnets, cameras and sensors to cling to the steel hull and scan for fouling, corrosion and damage.

Thankfully, the robots do not look like something out of *The Terminator* - they are roughly the size of a large suitcase, featuring a tracked or wheeled drive that can grip the surface.

If the trial is successful, the hull-crawling robots could allow Carnival Cruise Line to inspect the difficult-to-reach areas of its ships during a normal port call, reducing costly dry docks.

Viking cocktail reception



A SELECT group of high-performing Australian travel agents enjoyed a sunset cocktail reception last night while on a Viking famil in France.

Taking place on the sun deck of *Viking Fjølvar*, the event was the ideal way to relax after a day of exploring the French countryside.

As the group enjoyed cocktails and canapes, Viking's Shaun Kavanagh thanked the agents for supporting the cruise line.

The advisors are now halfway through the eight-day 'Paris and the Heart of Normandy' itinerary,

which includes shore excursions such as exploring Notre-Dame and the Louvre, a visit to Montmartre Hill, a cycling trip to Monet's Garden, a walking tour of villages including Rouen and La Roche-Guyon, and more.

However, sitting in the front row at the spectacular Moulin Rouge in Paris was a special highlight.

Custom-built to navigate the Seine, *Viking Fjølvar* debuted in Jun, docking right in the heart of Paris at Port Grenelle, a walk away from the Eiffel Tower, Louvre and Arc de Triomphe.

She has capacity for 168 guests and 84 staterooms and sails roundtrip from Paris on the Seine, including the new 'Christmastime in Paris and Normandy'. **JHM**

Pictured: Back row - Kavanagh, Peter Nikolov, Cat Woods, Viking; Kelsie Brown, RACT Travel; Kieran Mackenzie, Cruise Travel Centre; Christine Benbow, RACT Travel; Renay Marrett, Helloworld Travel Newcastle; Front row - Summer Matthews, Cruise Travel Centre; Maddison Green, Cruise Travel Centre; and Freya Berry, Helloworld Travel.



From Paddock to Port

LAST week I attended Tourism WA's Cruise Exchange, where we met with tourism operators from across the state before spending two days immersed in Busselton and Margaret River. It was a powerful reminder that the value of cruise is measured well beyond the port.

Every destination had its own story to tell, but one message was consistent: when a cruise ship arrives, the benefits ripple throughout the community.

Wineries, attractions, coach operators, cafes, retailers, accommodation providers and countless small businesses all share in the opportunity. Cruise is often the catalyst that introduces visitors to regions, inspiring many to return for a longer land-based holiday.

That experience couldn't have been more timely, coinciding with the launch of the Australian Paddock to Port Alliance in Sydney yesterday.

The initiative shines a spotlight on the thousands of Australian businesses, producers and workers whose livelihoods are supported by a successful cruise industry.

Too often, cruise is viewed simply as ships visiting ports. In reality, every voyage relies on an extensive supply chain stretching from Australian farms and food producers to tourism operators, transport providers, travel advisors and local communities.

As Australia competes for future cruise deployment, we need to keep telling this broader story.

Cruise doesn't simply bring visitors ashore, it supports regional economies, sustains Australian jobs and creates opportunities that extend well beyond the waterfront.

That's a story worth championing.



On Board: AmaSofia The Lark Lounge & Bar

The Lark Lounge & Bar is AmaSofia's main lounge and central public hub. Located on deck 3, also known as the 'Violin Deck', this panoramic venue serves as a social gathering spot, an informal dining venue, and the primary entertainment space for passengers. The lounge features floor-to-ceiling windows, an observation deck, and more.



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EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman

Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury, James Bale

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Editorial Director - Damian Francis

Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

info@cruiseweekly.com.au

Social Editor - Alexandra Lilly

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

Business Development Manager

Kara Stanley

advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd

Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia

PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia

Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220

Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220



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