

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of the latest cruise news.

Turning a cruise page

SEABOURN Cruise Line is welcoming leaders from magazine *The Atlantic* on select *Seabourn Ovation* sailings this Oct and Nov as part of its three-year partnership with the publication (**CW** 25 Mar).

The inaugural line-up includes David Frum, who writes on politics, policy, art, literature and history; Megan Garber, whose work explores the intersection of culture and media; and Yvonne Rolzhausen, who is head of fact-checking.

Also on board will be Evan Smith, managing director of events, sailing on cruises in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

Cruisers rethinking summer travel

CRUISERS are rethinking what constitutes the “best” time to sail Europe, with heat, water levels, pricing, and value all pushing demand away from the traditional summer peak season.

The rising heat is one of the key factors that is making this period less attractive, with this year’s heatwaves breaking temperature records in almost 20 countries across the continent.

Cruise Weekly spoke to a number of travel advisors who recently cruised in Europe between Jun and Aug, who said temperatures are causing their clients to rethink their plans.

“Because of the stiflingly hot last two summers, it is pushing people to travel in the shoulders to save money and not try to sightsee while it’s sweltering,” Travel Associates’ Kiyah Rook told **Cruise Weekly**.

“I do still have a lot of customers

who go for school holidays and uni break and they do want it to be hot, but I think it is getting outdated,” she added.

Envoyage’s Maria Summers said as many as 90% of her clients are avoiding peak season, and that she is actively encouraging them to book outside those months.

“Jun, Jul, Aug is kind of out of the equation for Europe,” she explained to **Cruise Weekly**.

“They’re now looking at going in those cooler months, the beginning of the season, Mar, Apr, maybe even into early May, and then late Sep, Oct, Nov, even Dec,” she said.

Shoulder season is increasingly offering a less crowded experience, as well as better value across the cruise sector.

Rook said promotions from brands such as Oceania, which has been offering seven-night Dec cruises for less than \$3,000, are a

great way for potential guests to enter the market without a large upfront commitment.

“A few years ago when you looked after Oct, you couldn’t find anything,” she said.

Summers added that as well as the increasing temperatures during the peak summer season, prices during these months had become too inflated.

The recent low-water disruption of many river cruises is also accelerating interest in earlier-season departures (**CW** 20 Jul).

AmaWaterways reservation agent Bridget Pawley said travel in May across the next two years has been surging of late.

“After all the publicity around low water levels in parts of Europe during Jul and Aug, I’m seeing more people looking at travelling earlier in the season and May is definitely getting a lot more attention,” she said. **MS**



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Philly declares cruise independence

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) and PhilaPort last week celebrated the opening of Philadelphia's new cruise terminal, marking a permanent new home for the sector in the city (**CW** 17 Apr).

The ribbon was cut on the PhilaPort Cruise Terminal on Fri, following Norwegian's return to Philadelphia earlier this year, when it became the first cruise line to sail from the city in more than 15 years.

The new terminal supports NCLH's seven-year agreement with PhilaPort through 2033, reinforcing the company's long-term presence in the market.

Norwegian Jewel is now sailing from Philadelphia, departing 26 Sep, while *Norwegian Pearl* arrives in the city in Nov, offering voyages from five to 14 days to Bermuda, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, as well as Canada and



New England, through Apr 2028.

The cruise line also recently unveiled new seven-day Bermuda and Atlantic Coast voyages from Philadelphia aboard *Norwegian Gem* in summer 2028.

Cruise operations at the new terminal are projected to generate nearly US\$300

million (A\$419 million) in annual economic output throughout the state of Pennsylvania, supporting tourism, hospitality, transportation, and other businesses across the region.

NCLH also announced US\$50,000 in contributions to local communities. *MS*

Royal choosing Texas

GALVESTON Wharves and Royal Caribbean Group are discussing plans for a new cruise terminal at the facility's pier 14.

The port authority said a final development agreement would outline the terms for the financing, construction, and operation of the new cruise terminal and berth, which will then be presented to the Galveston Wharves board of trustees for approval.

"We're excited to be included in [Royal Caribbean's] expansion plans and will be honoured to receive *Icon of the Seas*, one of the boldest and most exciting cruise ships sailing today," Galveston Wharves port director & chief executive Rodger Rees said.

The port recently completed an impact study considering the fifth terminal (**CW** 15 Jul).



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THE Chicago River was full of not ships last week, but ducks, as the annual Chicago Ducky Derby saw 90,000 rubber ducks float upstream, raising funds for Special Olympics Illinois.

To kick off the race, a truck dumped the ducks into the river, giving them 15 minutes to float until there was a winner declared.

Funds were raised for the Special Olympics by onlookers 'adopting' the ducks, costing US\$10 for a lone duck and US\$30 for six.

The sponsor of the winning duck won themselves an SUV and the runner-up earned themselves US\$2,500 in cash.

Overall, the race raised more than US\$480,000, with proceeds going towards providing meals and medals for the athletes taking part in Special Olympics Illinois, which organises competitions for those with disabilities.

HAL unveils Alaska 2028



HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has opened its 2028 Alaska season with a number of rare new voyages, first-time experiences, and the arrival of the reimagined *Oosterdam*.

The 2028 season features cruises ranging from seven to 18 days aboard *Oosterdam*, as well as *Noordam*, *Eurodam*, *Koningsdam*, *Westerdam* and *Zaandam*, sailing round-trip from Seattle and Vancouver, with one-way options from Vancouver and Whittier, and a new itinerary from San Diego to Vancouver.

Highlights include a rare 11-day 'California to Alaska: Shores, Fjords & Glaciers' trip, as well as a first-time scenic cruising through Nootka Sound on select 'Great Alaska Explorer' and 'Great Bear Rainforest' itineraries.

The 2028 Alaska season will also mark the debut of the reimagined *Oosterdam* (pictured) in Alaska, following her Evolution transformation (**CW** 16 Apr).

She will be the first ship to go through the comprehensive, multi-million-dollar revitalisation project late next year. *MS*

Carnival goes Long

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has commenced its 2028/29 season with expanded sailings to Mexico departing from Long Beach, California.

The line will offer year-round voyages of three to eight days aboard two of its ships, including *Carnival Radiance*, which will operate short getaways calling at Ensenada, and four-day itineraries that also include Catalina Island.

Meanwhile, *Carnival Panorama* will offer six-day cruises to the Mexican Riviera which feature two days in Cabo San Lucas, while its eight-day itineraries will also incorporate stops at La Paz, Mazatlan and Puerto Vallarta.

The new sailings are scheduled to run from May 2028 through Apr 2029, giving guests a range of options to experience Mexico from Carnival's key home port in the US's West Coast (pictured) - see the full range **HERE**.



RIVER CRUISE CHANGES COURSE

Here is how the booming sector is entering a new era.

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Cruise Weekly is Australasia's leading travel industry cruise publication.

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