

Cruise Weekly today

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

CLIA tickets on sale

CRUISE360 travel advisor tickets are now on sale, offering a super early bird rate for Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) agents.

The annual cruise sector event will be held on 17-18 Sep at the ICC Sydney, involving a fresh line-up of speakers, detailed panel discussions, as well as an extensive exhibition of cruise lines and destinations.

CLIA executive director Joel Katz said the event will bring a two-day format to Sydney for the first time, following the success of last year's expanded conference in Brisbane.

"Cruise 360 Australasia has grown to become the most important event of the year for our cruise community, and this year we're planning more than ever before," Katz said.

"This conference is a must-attend event for any cruise specialist travel agent, and it's a fantastic opportunity to gain the latest insights from industry leaders from around the world and across our region," he added.

"Tickets always sell out, so it's important to take advantage of these super early bird prices while they're available," Katz said.

CLICK HERE for further details and bookings, with rates beginning at \$360.

Aurora doubles down on skiing



EXCLUSIVE

AURORA Expeditions is set to increase its skiing and snowboarding program for 27/28 to support increased demand.

Voyages featuring the program will increase by 50% next season, offering the cruise line's guests a chance to take on some of the world's most incredible slopes.

Experienced participants will have the chance to enjoy day trips traversing remote, snow-capped peaks and descending into bays filled with floating icebergs and penguin rookeries.

The program is guided by Aurora's expert team, including alpine activities supervisor Tarn Pilkington, who told **CW** there is no skiing or snowboarding experience like the one available in Antarctica.

"There is nowhere else in the world where you can start and finish a tour near a penguin colony and see humpback whales close to the shoreline," he said.

"There are no ski resorts, no

lifts, no groomed runs, every descent is earned."

Skiers and snowboarders will use zodiacs to access the terrain, which is assessed daily for weather, ice conditions, and safety considerations.

The program is designed for those who are confident and used to variable conditions.

Aurora's team of guides will work with guests to ensure they are adequately prepared, matching their abilities and fitness levels with the terrain.

The program will be released in full later this year.

Aurora recently celebrated the arrival of its third vessel, with *Douglas Mawson* joining the *Greg Mortimer* and *Sylvia Earle* in the fleet in Sydney late last year (**CW** 27 Nov).

It's believed to be the first time a brand new cruise vessel was christened in Australia, with the historic moment commemorated in front of a stunning Sydney Harbour background. *MS*



On location on board
Le Commandant-Charcot

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you courtesy of Ponant Explorations, which is this week hosting us aboard *Le Commandant-Charcot*.

PONANT Explorations' luxury icebreaker *Le Commandant-Charcot* is docked in Hobart this week, before she prepares to sail for Cape Town and Antarctica, and **CW** is one of a lucky few from around the sector to be invited on board.

This is *Le Commandant-Charcot*'s first-ever visit to Australia, and is currently scheduled to be her last before she arrives back in Hobart in 2028 amid her first-ever circumnavigation of Antarctica (see page 3).

While we will not be sailing this week, we will get to experience some of the best of what the ship has to offer, including her bars, restaurants, theatres, and more, during our overnight stay.

Stay tuned to **CW** this week for further coverage.

Cruise off the rails

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Hotel brand's new Nile cruise



HOTEL group Mandarin Oriental will expand its presence in Egypt with a luxury Nile cruise experience, its first offering of this kind.

The cruise will be developed by KG Company and Real Estate & Tourism Investment, and operated by the hotel group.

'Mandarin Oriental, Nile Cruise' will offer three-, four-, and seven-night itineraries between Luxor and Aswan, forming part of a distinctive collection of experiences in the destination.

It will see the company assume management of two iconic properties: Mandarin Oriental Old Cataract Aswan, as well as the Mandarin Oriental Winter Palace Luxor, which will undergo significant renovation before reopening next year.

The vessel is currently in design development, and will blend a "romantic feel with a contemporary finish", Mandarin

Oriental said.

She will feature generously sized suites, three distinctive dining venues, and a dedicated wellness space, complemented by curated cultural programming that will form a pillar of the experience.

Expert-led talks, immersive excursions, and a guided journey from end-to-end will bring depth to each voyage.

"Egypt is one of the fastest-growing global destinations and presents a rare opportunity to create a journey that is both culturally rich and uniquely Mandarin Oriental," the hotel group's chief executive Laurent Kleitman said.

"By uniting our first river cruise, with truly iconic historic hotels in Luxor and Aswan, alongside the upcoming Mandarin Oriental Shepherd Cairo, we are introducing a seamless, end-to-end experience that unfolds across land and water." *MS*

Dance on *Europa 2*

GUESTS aboard Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' *Europa 2* will experience performances by Olympic choreographers over the 2026 and 2027 seasons.

Diego Tortelli, who is the head of choreography for the closing ceremony of the 2026 Winter Olympics, will present a newly developed version of an existing work, which will blend classical technique with contemporary narrative.

His work will be exhibited on board *Europa 2's* sailing from Civitavecchia-Dubrovnik in Aug, and the Palma-Lisbon cruise in Oct.

Meanwhile, Yoann Bourgeois, head of choreography for the Paralympic opening ceremony, will bring his signature fusion of dance, movement, and contemporary circus to *Europa 2* next year, on Aug cruise from Civitavecchia-Palma.

AmaWaterways ad

AMAWATERWAYS is amplifying its 'Journeys That Move You' campaign with a new national television commercial, which will air across Australia.

The spot brings AmaWaterways' refreshed brand identity (*CW* 23 Dec) to life on screen, celebrating the warmth, elegance, and sense of discovery that define the cruise line's approach to sailing.

Highlights of the ad include moments on board and ashore, reflecting what its guests value most: human connection, heartfelt service, and the freedom to explore.

MD Steve Richards described the commercial's launch as an exciting moment for the brand, which is still building its visibility in Australia.

"This campaign is about introducing local audiences to the genuine warmth, connection and unforgettable experiences that define an Ama journey," he said.



 **CRUISE
WEEKLY**

On Board: *Le Commandant-Charcot*

Snow Room

An increasingly popular feature on many cruise ships, *Le Commandant-Charcot* boasts a snow room, allowing guests to immerse themselves in cold therapy while they travel to some of the coolest destinations on earth. The treatment is said to reduce inflammation, swelling, and sore muscles.

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CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) made the most of Valentine's Day this year, hosting its largest vow renewal at sea.

The annual tradition saw more than 1,000 married couples across 28 ships celebrate their enduring love for one another.

Virtually officiated by Carnival's chief fun officer Shaquille O'Neal, the symbolic ceremonies included a champagne toast, cake and other surprises.

"A big congratulations to all the couples who are sharing such a meaningful part of their lives with us," said Christine Duffy, CCL president.



Ponant to sail around Antarctica



PONANT Explorations has opened bookings for its first-ever circumnavigation of Antarctica aboard *Le Commandant Charcot* (pictured) in 2028, which will feature a departure from Hobart.

The voyage will begin in Jan from Ushuaia, travelling for 62 days, and will unfold in two legs, the second of which will commence from Hobart.

A 30-day westward journey along Antarctica's coast will kick off the voyage, departing from Argentina to Tasmania.

This will be followed by a three-day stopover in Hobart, then a 31-day return voyage along Antarctica's eastern coastline back to Ushuaia.

New experiences and highlights for Ponant include sailing the Ross Sea along one of the world's largest ice shelves and marine sanctuaries, and getting up close to little-known and inaccessible destinations, such as Marie Byrd Land, Wilkes Land, Adelie Land, the Balleny Islands, and the ship's namesake, Charcot Island.

Passengers will also observe wildlife such as penguins, humpback whales, Antarctic minke whales, orcas, seals, elephant seals, sea lions, petrels, and more; and visit Mount Erebus, the southernmost active volcano on earth.

CLICK HERE for more info on the full voyage. *MS*

Virgin offers OBC

VIRGIN Voyages is offering an additional US\$300 onboard credit for round trip voyages departing Miami or San Juan.

This deal is stackable with others, including 80% off a second guest, and US\$350 in free drinks.

The deal ends 26 Feb - **CLICK HERE** for more details

MSC feels the love

MSC Cruises has launched a Valentine's Day sale, with 10% off select cruises.

Available to book now until 17 Feb for sailings between 01 Apr 2026-15 Mar 2027, the offer applies to cruises in the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Alaska, Northern Europe, South America, the Canary Islands, and the cruise line's Grand Voyages.

Included within this are select sailings on MSC's newest World-class ship, *MSC World Asia*, which will be operating in the western Mediterranean from Dec 2026.

Visit *MSC Book* for more information on the deal.



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