

Cruise Weekly today

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

Hawaii tax blocked

HAWAII has been blocked from enforcing a proposed 11% tax on cruise ships, just minutes before the impost was due to start on 01 Jan (**CW** 01 Sep 2025).

A federal appeals court ruling saw Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) win an injunction against the state, which sought to include cruise lines under its transient accommodation tax.

The fee includes a specific levy to mitigate climate-related issues, which would have resulted in cruise lines having to pay tax based on the time they spent in port in Hawaii.

CLIA argued that including cruise lines in the tax breached the US Constitution and would discourage travellers from visiting the state.

The US Department of Justice backed CLIA's argument last year, saying the green fee "aims to extort American citizens and businesses" and flies in the face of federal law" (**CW** 25 Nov 2025).

Despite the ruling granting the injunction, the Hawaii attorney general's office maintained the new tax is lawful and it will be ratified during the appeal hearing.

Coral refunds passengers



PASSENGERS aboard Coral Expeditions' *Coral Adventurer* (pictured) have been offered refunds after the ship ran aground in Papua New Guinea late last month.

Adventurer's 80 guests were transferred to a smaller vessel and taken to PNG to board a charter flight back to Cairns, and are being compensated for the affected leg of the journey or provided credits for future travel, a Coral spokesperson told **CW**.

A Papua New Guinean Governor has said *Adventurer* was taking a route which local operators typically avoid when the incident took place.

Rainbo Paita, the Governor of Morobe Province, told the ABC the route *Adventurer* was taking is known for it high reefs.

Adventurer became stuck on a

reef off PNG's coast on 27 Dec, and ended up spending almost four days marooned about 90 kilometres from the city of Lae, before she was pulled free.

Previous attempts to refloat *Adventurer* using propulsion at high tide had failed.

Adventurer's seaworthiness is now under investigation by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) "based on reasonable suspicion" that the ship is "not seaworthy due to potential damage sustained during the grounding", it said.

AMSA also looking into how an 80-year-old passenger died during a cruise aboard *Adventurer* the month prior (**CW** 03 Nov).

Suzanne Rees was found dead on Lizard Island in Queensland after *Adventurer* left her behind on the island in Nov. *MS*

Venezuela impacts

THE United States' recent strikes in Venezuela are impacting the cruise sector, with guest turnaround operations for Windstar Cruises' *Wind Surf* and *Wind Spirit* being impacted.

Turnarounds for the two ships, which are currently sailing in the Caribbean, are being impacted, Windstar has informed guests.

With the closure of St. Maarten and Bridgetown airports, Windstar has secured a berth to delay its departures, allowing flexibility for guests experiencing flight delays.

Both *Surf* and *Spirit* will now sail tomorrow.

Embarking and disembarking guests impacted through delayed or cancelled flights are being encouraged to contact their airlines directly for the most up-to-date information on flight status and rebooking.

Virgin Voyages has also said airline travellers unable to make it to San Juan in time for its upcoming cruise departure from the port will be able to get a full credit.

Cruise lines began skipping calls in the region last month over tensions between the United States and Venezuela.

The *NL Times* reported naval exercises forced Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Epic* to skip Curacao in late Dec (**CW** 19 Dec).



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NCL teases cruisers

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has seemingly undergone a visual update across its social media channels, creating speculation about a larger rebrand

NCL's blue logo, which has been a staple for several years, has now switched to black on several of the line's platforms, which many suggest could be a potential signifier of major changes to the cruise line's brand or onboard offerings.

Alongside the change of colour, NCL has adopted a new slogan, "It's Different Out Here", which was reported to have been filed for trademark in Oct last year.

The new slogan was complimented by an intriguing video posted by Norwegian on Instagram and Facebook, depicting men dressed in 18th century attire dancing aboard an old sailing ship, alongside the same slogan.

A rebrand would coincide with the United States celebrating 250 years since its independence this year.

NCL told **CW** more details are set to be revealed soon.



It's Different Out Here™

Princess parades into '26



PRINCESS Cruises rung in the new year with an Alaska-themed float at the 137th Rose Parade in California this week.

Adorned with more than 300,000 flowers and natural materials, the 'Together in the Magic of Alaska' float depicted *Star Princess* sailing through Alaska - a nod to the inaugural 2026 season in the region for the cruise line's newest ship.

Around 800,000 spectators watched as the finely detailed 'ship' cruised through Pasadena, featuring florals that evoked the icy glow of Alaska's coastal waters, including silverleaf protea, coconut, blue statice, and lunaria.

The 17-metre-long, 6.5-metre-high float also featured an animation depicting Alaskan wildlife, from whales rising out of the water to eagles, sea otters, and a bear clutching a salmon.

Four Princess teammates rode on the float - two from Princess' shoreside offices and two crew members - while 12 performers danced to a reimagined version of *The Love Boat* theme song - a tribute to the line's intertwined heritage with the television show.

"What better way to welcome the new year than on the world-famous Rose Parade stage, celebrating the breathtaking beauty of Alaska and the debut of our remarkable new ship, *Star*," said Marie Lee, Princess Cruises Chief Marketing Officer.

"Our float pays homage not only to our passionate Princess crew who bring Alaska voyages to life, but also to the local Alaskans - the storytellers, guides, artists, naturalists, and communities - who welcome our guests each season and make every journey extraordinary," she said. *JM*

Tas teaches cruise

TASPORTS and Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) have partnered to launch a new education module designed to help tourism operators take advantage of the state's growing cruise industry.

The new 'Tassie Cruise Tourism' module aims to strengthen understanding of how the segment contributes to the local visitor economy.

Operators and volunteers will be given insights into the logistics of cruise tourism and strategies to encourage visitors to explore more experiences across Tasmania.

"Every year the cruise industry injects around \$140 to \$150 million into Tasmania's economy supporting local tour operators, small businesses and regional employment," TasPorts Chief Executive Officer Anthony Donald said.

"Helping Tasmanian businesses capture the benefits of having these vessels in port is one of the reasons why we have partnered with Tourism Industry Council Tasmania to develop its latest Tassie Cruise Spotlight training module."

CLIA MD Joel Katz welcomed the initiative, which he said reinforced Tasmania's "competitive position as a compelling destination for cruise passengers and wider tourism" - **CLICK HERE**.





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NEARLY 5,000 swimmers have attempted a polar plunge in Washington State, in what may be a new world record.

Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce, Blaine Birch Bay Park & Recreation, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, and more, teamed up to organise the attempt, which took place on New Year's Day.

A prior record stood at 2,461 participants, but was broken in Dec in Norway, when 3,134 took the plunge into the country's freezing waters, with no wetsuits allowed.

The 01 Jan attempt in Birch Bay had 6,213 registered participants, of which 4,917 were officially counted going into the water.

Guinness World Records adjudicators say they are still reviewing the official numbers, as there were some issues during the count, meaning a nervous wait for the town.

Carnival calls into 2026



CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) was once again at the forefront of New York City's iconic New Year's Eve Celebrations for the fifth year running, with Chief Executive Officer Josh Weinstein responsible for lighting the brand-new Constellation ball to kick off the new year.

CCL was the official cruise line partner of the event, as well as of one of the Times Square musical performances featured in *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve*.

"We're thrilled to bring Carnival fun back to Times Square for

our fifth year as we celebrate a phenomenal year for our company," Weinstein said.

"2025 has been transformative with the successful opening of Celebration Key, record-high guest satisfaction, and continued momentum across Carnival Corporation," he added.

"As we light the Ball in 2026, we're looking forward to delivering even more unforgettable vacation happiness to families around the world—something our guests repeatedly tell us we do so well." MS

Penang goes large

PENANG, Malaysia will pivot to attract high-value cruise tourism, including promoting more time spent on land and increasing the level of spending, instead of just focusing on arrival numbers.

State Tourism & Creative Economy Committee Chairman Wong Hon Wai revealed Penang will double down on strategic collaboration with cruise operators to maximise economic benefit to the state, with an emphasis on the destination's gastronomy.

The efforts include engagement sessions, facilitation of application processes, and the promotion of Penang as a key port of call in the region, with the govt to also encourage cruise lines to utilise local services such as licensed tour guides, local transport providers, food operators, and small traders.

Wong said that while specific spending targets are yet to be set, the focus will be on drawing in large-scale cruise ships and middle- to high-income passengers.

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