

Cruise Weekly today

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

Seeker has arrived

WINDSTAR Cruises has introduced *Star Seeker*, following a Miami christening for the new ship.

The event was held overnight, marking *Seeker's* official entry into service.

She will now embark on her eight-night christening voyage, which departs for San Juan, with scheduled calls in the Dominican Republic and the British Virgin Islands.

Seeker will then cruise a season in the Caribbean before repositioning to Alaska.

CLIA Awards finalists named

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has announced the finalists for its 23rd Cruise Industry Awards, after a record amount of nominations from across the sector.

A total of 83 finalists have been named who will be in the running to win one of 15 awards to be announced at a sold-out gala celebration in Sydney in Mar.

Key awards this year include Cruise Agency of the Year, with finalists in both single and multi-location categories.

Destination HQ, Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel, FBI Travel, Chirn Park Travel, Cruise Express, and Main Beach Travel, will contest the single location category, while multi-location finalists are Hunter Travel Group, RAA Travel, Phil Hoffmann Travel, Ignite Travel Group, Bicton Travel/Claremont Travel, and Gallivanter Travel.

Cruise Consultant of the Year finalists are Lauren Macartney (Clean Cruising), Justin Lubrig (Cruiseabout Whitford City), Kai Floto (Southlands Cruise & Travel), Tina Wheelock (Cruise Express), Laurel Brown (Flight Centre Taree), and Genevieve Thompson (Complex).

Nominated for Home-Based Cruise Agent/Broker of the Year are Shane Black (SW Black Travel), Jessica Bennett (TravelManagers), Lyndall Collins (itravel), Lauren Jenkins (MTA), Lisa Maddox (Spencer Travel), and Karryn

Bartlett (TravelManagers).

Finalists for the Rising Star award, recognising the newest members of the cruise consultant community, are Josh Hall (RAA Travel), Corey Martin (The Cruise & Travel Store), Kim Da Costa (Southlands Cruise & Travel), Thomas Liardo (Cruiseabout Narellan), and Jason Rigg (Phil Hoffmann Travel Glenelg).

CLIA has also added an additional award, in response to the overwhelming amount of nominations, splitting the Network Cruise Promotion of the Year category into two separate categories, covering small networks (up to five agency locations) and large networks (more than five agency locations).

This year will not see a Cruise Champion named, with CLIA removing it from the program for this year.

CLIA Executive Director Australasia & Asia Joel Katz said this year's awards have attracted a stunning 1,200 nominations.

"The judging process will soon get underway and it's clear we have a very high standard of finalist to consider this year," commented Katz.

The awards will be held at ICC Sydney on 07 Mar, with CLIA members without a ticket able to email info-aus@cruising.org to join a wait list.

The full list of finalists is available **HERE**. **MS**

Carnival heads west

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has opened new sailings along the West Coast of the United States for 2027/28.

Guests will be able to explore Mexico's Baja California and Santa Catalina Island aboard *Carnival Radiance* from Southern California.

The schedule features three-day itineraries calling on Ensenada, and four-day sailings featuring visits to Catalina Island and Ensenada.

Radiance will also offer a special four-day trip with back-to-back visits to Ensenada on 03 Jan 2028, as well as a five-day Christmas cruise beginning 23 Dec 2027, with calls in Cabo San Lucas and Ensenada.

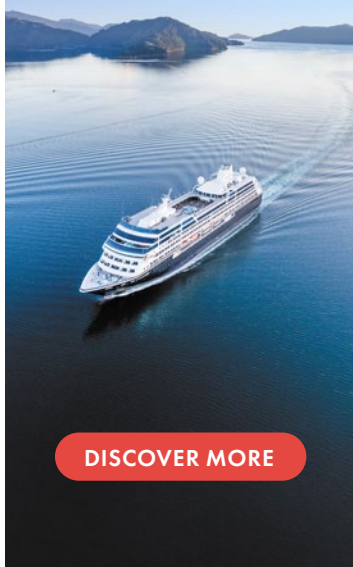


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Luminara in HK

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has made its debut in the Asia-Pacific region, with *Luminara* sailing into Hong Kong over the weekend (**CW** 01 Jul 2025).

To commemorate the maiden call, a traditional maritime plaque exchange to symbolise the new partnership with the city was held, which was attended by Rosanna Law, Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

The superyacht will now begin welcoming guests for various sailings that connect Hong Kong with destinations across the region.

"From the moment of arrival, the city's unmistakable energy, warm hospitality, and iconic skyline made this milestone especially meaningful," the brand shared on LinkedIn.

Heritage adds two

HERITAGE Expeditions has announced two new voyages exploring rarely-visited destinations in Micronesia and the Kimberley.

'Micronesia's Atolls & Islands Odyssey' will depart in Mar 2027, exploring Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Palau.

Meanwhile, the new 'Kimberley Coast Adventure Cruise' will depart in Jul 2027 - **CLICK HERE** for more info.

Cruiseabout St. Ives opens



FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) dedicated cruise travel agency Cruiseabout has opened its eighth store, located in St. Ives in Sydney's northern suburbs.

The new shopfront is the second in New South Wales, after Cruiseabout opened its first in Narellan almost 12 months ago (**CW** 07 Mar).

Stephanie Brown, formerly with Travel Associates Beecroft, will be the store's leader, having been a 'Flighty' for almost 20 years.

"We are so grateful for the support of the travel and cruise community for turning out to celebrate and support," Cruiseabout General Manager Brad Kennedy said on LinkedIn.

"We continue to seek out store locations that meet

our customers where they are - almost 40% of our online customers are in New South Wales, and the average St. Ives resident lines up with the average Cruiseabout customers, so it's a move that made sense."

Kennedy also teased the opening of Cruiseabout's ninth store in Apr, but did not reveal where it will be based.

This will be one of at least seven new stores around the country this year, taking its total footprint to 15.

The brand is one of FCTG's star performers, called out in the company's last annual report for its "solid" contribution to TTV (**CW** 27 Aug).

Cruiseabout first relaunched in Dec 2023 (**CW** 24 Aug 2023). *MS*

Vale Patrick Shaw

POLAR Latitudes has announced the passing of its chief executive Patrick Shaw.

The cruise line over the weekend informed the sector of the sad news of Shaw's sudden death.

"Pat was a dear friend, a trusted partner, and a true polar enthusiast who helped us shape Polar Latitudes Expeditions into the company it is today," the firm said.

"His vision, leadership, and spirit will remain a lasting part of who we are.

"Our deepest sympathies are with Pat's family and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time."

Shaw previously served as Quark Expeditions' president and chief executive officer from 2001-2010.

Flooding on MSC

A FAULT in the waterline of MSC Cruises' *MSC Seaview* has led to flooding on board the ship, in an incident which occurred last week on a voyage in South America.

Video footage uploaded to YouTube by Brazilian news outlet *UOL* appears to show standing water in one of *Seaview's* hallways.

Guests can be seen barefoot on a soaked stateroom carpet.

MSC told *USA Today* affected guests were compensated.



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WE ALL commit grammar gaffes from time to time, but some are just so bad they go viral online - even more than a decade later.

Tech billionaire Larry Ellison made the unfortunate choice to name his then-new German-built superyacht *Izanami* - which, spelt backwards, reads 'I'm a Nazi'.

After it was pointed out to him, the Oracle co-founder was reportedly horrified and rushed to paint over the name, settling on the less-offensive alternative of *Ronin*.

Despite having not owned the yacht since 2013, the blunder still haunts Ellison, and is doing the rounds on the internet again.

"That is such a classic billionaire blunder... it is the perfect intersection of high-end pretension and a total lack of basic proofreading," one social media user commented.

Cunard's double delight



CUNARD Line's *Queen Mary 2* (pictured) and *Queen Anne* have both recently departed on world voyages, which are bound for Australia in Mar.

Queen Mary 2 departed Southampton on 11 Jan, and is now heading eastward for Sydney, where she will arrive for an overnight stay 04 Mar.

The 108-night world voyage begins with a transatlantic crossing, before sailing south to the Caribbean and making her first transit of the Panama Canal.

Cunard's flagship will then explore the west coast of the

Americas, before crossing the Pacific Islands for New Zealand and Australia.

Queen Anne has also departed on her 110-night 2026 World Voyage, with guests to visit more than 30 different ports and destinations, including an overnight stay in Sydney from 16-17 Mar.

She will also make overnight visits to Cape Town, Singapore, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Colombo, and Honolulu.

The two ships will circumnavigate the globe for a combined 218 nights. *MS*

New tours for HAL

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has introduced more than 150 new cultural tours, introducing 'Meet the Maker' and 'Community Connections'.

Guests will be offered authentic, hands-on experiences with local culture, in places such as Tasmania, where Holland America will offer a 'Tassie Tasting Trail' 'Meet the Maker' excursion.

Passengers can journey through the region from Burnie to meet the artisans behind some of its most beloved flavours, such as House of Anvers for a taste of handcrafted chocolates paired with morning tea, 41° South salmon farm, Ashgrove Cheese Factory, and Spreyton Cider.

Other cultural tours include a 'Magna Grecia Farm Visit' in Greece, visiting Olympia.

'Community Connections' will include 'At Home With the O'Hanlon Family' in Cork, where guests will enjoy a delicious three-course traditional Irish lunch, featuring dishes like soda bread and Irish stew.

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