

Cruise Weekly today

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

Amsterdam closing

AMSTERDAM has confirmed its desire to end ocean-going cruises by 2035, following a feasibility study into the future of the sector in the city.

The Dutch capital was looking into potentially relocating its cruise ship terminal, after first announcing its intention to eliminate ocean cruises two years ago.

However the recently completed study has confirmed its only option is to permanently stop ships from calling in the city.

"Relocating the sea cruise terminal requires a substantial investment of €85 million (approximately A\$146 million) and entails financial uncertainties," quoted deputy mayor Hester van Buren in media reports.

"As a municipal executive, we consider this undesirable... moreover, we prioritise sustainability and livability... all of this means that we will be better exploring the option of ending sea cruises in Amsterdam by 2035 in the coming months."

Holland America Line, as well as Celebrity Cruises, Viking, and Norwegian Cruise Line all base ships in Amsterdam.

Slow cruise on the rise in '26

EXCLUSIVE

CRUISE passengers are quietly rebelling against size and spectacle, with more travellers expected to pay for time, space, and immersion this year, according to a number of senior industry leaders.

Space, as well as unique experiences, and luxury are all key threads that were consistently mentioned to **CW** when canvassing a number of respected travel industry leaders on the direction of the cruise sector in 2026.

Slow travel, which **CW**'s sister title **Travel Daily** produced a special report on last year (**CLICK HERE**), will also be central to the tastes of cruisers.

According to general manager of the Luxury Travel Collection Nikki Glading, travellers will opt more for the luxury of time, as opposed to fast-paced, port-intensive itineraries.

"The biggest trend for 2026 will be the complete rejection of port-hopping itineraries in favour of immersive, extended-stay luxury cruising," she told **CW**.

"High-net-worth travellers are pushing back against the performative '12 countries in 10 days' model, demanding itineraries that spend two to three days minimum in each destination, often with overnight stays in port."

These extended stays, overnights, and fewer ports are

reshaping itineraries, concurred Cunard Line sales & marketing director Amy Williams.

"Longer itineraries and immersive onboard experiences are becoming central to the luxury proposition," she told **CW**.

"In an always-on world, time has become the ultimate luxury."

These trends tie into the growing emphasis premium cruise lines are placing on usable space on board, with larger suites and private outdoor areas, and prioritising flow over crowds.

"There is a quiet backlash under way, and it's a healthy one," Anna Gregori, former Celestyal Cruises vice president brand & marketing, told **CW**.

"As scale pulls more people in, a growing part of the market is pushing back, asking for better over bigger."

"This demand is reshaping cruise from the inside out."

Gregori said the rise in expedition cruising, a once-niche part of the sector, is the clearest signal of this shift.

"Luxury yachts, river ships and expedition-style cruising are growing because travellers want something that feels personal, beautiful, and thoughtfully designed," Rachel Kingswell, GM of Travel Associates, told **CW**.

Some of these smaller ships making their debut this year include Explora Journeys' *Explora III* and Regent Seven Seas' *Seven Seas Prestige*, among others. **MS**

RSSC agent events

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is inviting travel advisors to join a series of exclusive in-person trade events for the launch of its wave season.

The events will showcase RSSC's 'Upgrade Your Horizon' promotion, which includes a free two-category suite upgrade, a 7.5% deposit across all destinations and ships, and up to 30% off select sailings across the next two years.

Australian events will take place in Brisbane (03 Feb) and the Gold Coast (24 Feb), at the Emporium Hotel South Bank and The Langham respectively.

Travel advisors can sign up for the event **HERE**.

Viking goes virtual

VIKING has announced new Virtual Explorer sessions for its Egypt and Mediterranean itineraries, with complimentary sessions now open for registration.

The sessions will offer travel advisors the opportunity to earn Viking points, and follows on from the success of the cruise line's Grand European Virtual Session last year.

The two new free events will take place in Feb and Mar, and are open to both advisors and their clients.

Sign up for the Egypt event **HERE** and the Med **HERE**.

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No CW on Monday

THERE will be no issue of *Cruise Weekly* published on Mon due to the Australia Day public holiday.

The next issue of **CW** will be published on Tue 27 Jan.

Alaska expansion

AMERICAN Cruise Lines is facing a range of local opposition in its goal to expand cruising in Alaska.

Last year was American's biggest season in the state (**CW** 08 Jan 2025), and the cruise line has designs to expand further in Alaska in the coming years.

American is hoping to build and develop a number of docks around Alaska, however, many towns are baulking at the cost - both financial and otherwise, reports Alaska Public Media.

The cruise line recently pulled a US\$4 million proposal to rebuild a dock in Haines in Southeast Alaska amid a wave of pushback from locals.

Residents voiced concerns about American's ships displacing locals from the dock and clogging up the narrow cove, which is located at the end of the Inside Passage.

Meanwhile, the border town of Petersburg is negotiating a deal which may see American lease waterfront land and build its own private dock.

Thailand's cruise focus



THAILAND is planning to attract more cruise tourists through its Andaman Gateway initiative, which aims to boost cruise opportunities for Southeast Asia.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will position Phuket as the focal point of a plan to turn the destination into a cruise tourism hub, via the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle project.

TAT officials outlined the vision at the recent Thailand Boat Festival, using the Andaman Gateway to connect Thai coastal areas with other regional cruise hubs like Langkawi and Sabang.

A key focus will be boosting the region's appeal to affluent tourists through the development of a series of high-end, exclusive travel packages designed specifically for this sector.

TAT also plans to align maritime infrastructure and regulations, creating a blue economy across the three nations.

The initiative stresses the importance of sustainable

tourism that benefits local communities, with Wajanan Silpawornwiwat, executive director of TAT's Southern region, highlighting Phuket as central to the plan, while ensuring the entire region benefits.

TAT's focus is also on ensuring its marine tourism sector is not only economically lucrative, but environmentally responsible.

This latest push follows a renewed focus on cruise tourism from the destination over the past 12 months.

TAT last year partnered with the newly revived Star Cruises to home port *Star Voyager* in Laem Chabang, operating two five-night sailings visiting Ko Samui and Singapore (**CW** 01 May).

Other lines with stops in Thailand planned in the next few years include Atlas Ocean Voyages (**CW** yesterday), Azamara Cruises (**CW** 05 Dec), and Explora Journeys (**CW** 11 Sep), as well as The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, Oceania Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, and more. *MS*

Carnival to Africa

CARNIVAL Cruise Line's *Carnival Sunshine*'s 2027/2028 season will bring new continents and a solar eclipse at sea to the brand's guests.

New *Sunshine* sailings announced today include Carnival's first-ever visits to Africa, as well as expanded European itineraries.

Sunshine will operate a series of Mediterranean and North African cruises from May 2027 through Oct 2027, offering a mix of week-long and longer sailings departing from Barcelona and Civitavecchia, designed to support back-to-back vacation opportunities.

The program features calls across Italy, Spain, France, Turkey, and Montenegro, as well as Tunisia and Morocco - Carnival's first calls in Africa.

La Goulette and Tangier will mark the cruise line's inaugural visits to the continent, while there will also be new European ports such as Bari, Bar, and Ajaccio.

A highlight of the season will be Carnival's special solar eclipse cruise, departing 25 Jul 2027 from Barcelona.

Sunshine will be positioned along the path of maximum visibility for the celestial event on 02 Aug 2027, with the cruise to feature themed programming, and visits to Marseilles, Genoa, Salerno, Catania, Valletta, and Tunisia.



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BRISBANE residents are swapping apartments for boats as the cost of housing continues to rise.

Forty-year-old man Jordan Koursaris moved out of his house following his divorce, before deciding he didn't like apartment life.

He then moved alone onto a 1966 boat he bought for \$18,500 called *Mary Rose*.

The vessel is moored at one of the 76 berths at Kangaroo Point's Dockside Marina, which costs \$1,455 per month, including power and water, Koursaris told the ABC.

He is joined at Dockside Marina by his neighbour, Josh Goodswen, another divorcee, who estimates he is now spending around a third of his previous living expenses.

An average one-bedroom apartment in Kangaroo Point goes for anywhere from \$750,000-\$800,000.

PTMs head up to Hurtigruten



FIVE TravelManagers personal travel managers recently discovered Norway's coastal magic with Hurtigruten, sailing from Oslo to the Lofoten Islands.

The family was a unique opportunity to learn about Norway's culture, history, architecture, and landscapes while experiencing the cruise line's product.

PTM Ruan Ross was on her first visit to Northern Europe and confesses she is now hooked.

Her goal is next to visit the region during the summer for a completely different perspective.

"I really think this is a destination that flies under the radar, but I'm convinced that any

client who does this same journey will love every minute."

"The food, the sense of safety, the friendly people, and the charming towns," she said. *MS*

Pictured: Warren Parkes (TravelManagers), Amelia Temby (Hurtigruten), Kerry Harrison (TravelManagers), Anna Schmack (House of Travel), Nicky Fowler (House of Travel), Ruan Ross (TravelManagers), Kay Paulsen (Cruisedeals), Serrin Tabart (TravelManagers), Annelise Westlake (House of Travel), Hugh Bradford (Bradford Travel), Jodie Payne (TravelManagers), Peta Aberhart (House of Travel), Michelle Zienkiewicz (TravelManagers).

More ownership

EXPLORA Journeys is introducing a second Owner's Residence to its upcoming ships *Explora III* and *Explora IV*.

Positioned aft on decks 7 and 8, the Owner's Residences are some of the largest and most exclusive homes that will be available aboard Explora.

Each offers 280m² of space, of which 125m² is devoted to a terrace, covering the full width of the ship.

The 155m² interior encompasses an elegant living and dining area, complemented by a spacious en suite bedroom.

The residence accommodates up to four adults when connected with an Ocean Terrace Suite, and offers the private butler services of a dedicated Residence Manager and team.



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