

Cruise Weekly today

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

Hurti hits Iceland

HURTIGRUTEN has added Iceland to its expanding tours portfolio, with three new packages featuring the 'Land of Fire & Ice'.

The first, the 'Grand Nordic Adventure', is a 19-day land and sea itinerary, which travels to Iceland, as well as Norway and Finland.

Departing from Jul, the tour starts in Helsinki, and includes a rail journey across Finland, a stay at Hotel Santa Claus, hiking with huskies, and more.

The journey also features a six-day southbound Hurtigruten Coastal Express cruise from Kirkenes down to Bergen, before flying to Iceland, where travellers will visit Reykjavik, the Blue Lagoon, the country's waterfalls, and Thingvellir National Park.

A second new tour, the 13-day 'Nordic Winter Journey', starts in remote Finnish Lapland, offering travellers the chance to see an aurora, as well as go snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and more.

There is also a summer-only 'Norway's Capital and Coast' tour, which combines Oslo with a six-day southbound Hurtigruten Coastal Express.

Atlas to open Aussie office



EXCLUSIVE

ATLAS Ocean Voyages is planning to open an Australian office and base a ship locally, **Cruise Weekly** can reveal.

President & chief exec James Rodriguez, speaking exclusively to **CW**, said Atlas is currently ironing out the final details of a local office and home ported ship.

"We're actually looking at it now, we're in the process of determining how fast we can do it," Rodriguez said of Atlas' upcoming office.

Although Rodriguez did not offer a timeline for the local bureau's opening, he left no doubt Atlas will soon boast a physical presence Down Under.

"It's a foregone conclusion that we are going to do it, it's just a matter of when."

Rodriguez explained the cruise line had already hoped to be sailing Down Under by now, but that logistics and fleet size had thus far prevented a local program from being realised.

"We hope to have a vessel there in Australia, the South Pacific, in that area of the world," he said.

"We're trying to figure out logically how to get a vessel over there and back in time for the Antarctica season...we've developed all types of different scenarios, which I think will work well with the newbuild (the newly announced *Atlas Adventurer*)." Rodriguez

"We have looked at the Kimberley, because we would love to have already gone there, but our current yachts are in Antarctica between Nov and Mar," Rodriguez explained.

Atlas' urgency to expand in Australia comes as the market is currently the fastest growing for the cruise line.

"This style of the current vessels we have and our style of cruising, really resonate with the Australian market," Rodriguez told **Cruise Weekly**.

"This kind of relaxed luxury is not intrusive, it's not pretentious, it really resonates." MS

She's on her way

ACCOR'S upcoming *Orient Express Corinthian* has entered her final phase of construction, hitting the water for the first time last month.

The ship also completed sea trials ahead of her Jun debut.

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A successful wave

CELESTYAL Cruises has reported early success this wave season, particularly off the back of its key 'unmissable sale' campaign.

The cruise line has witnessed revenue growth and increased demand across all key global markets, trading 61% above the same time last year, and almost 25% above targets.

The Australian market has delivered revenue growth of 52% year-on-year, reflecting both growing awareness of Celestyal's European summer program and strong early booking behaviour.

Responding to the demand, Celestyal has extended its wave offer until 19 Feb and added new sailings to the sale, including seven additional departures of its 'Heavenly Greece, Italy & Croatia' itinerary, as well as four extra departures of the 'Idyllic Greece' cruise.

The offer includes savings of up to 50%, up to €500 speciality food and beverage credit, and up to €180 shore excursion credit per cabin on select sailings.

Meanwhile, the cruise line has also introduced stateroom tablets on board *Celestyal Journey*, enhancing the guest experience aboard the ship.

The technology allows passengers to manage key aspects of their cruise directly from their stateroom.

MSC to upgrade Ocean Cay



MSC Cruises will further upgrade its Ocean Cay MSC Marine Reserve private destination in The Bahamas (**pictured**) with brand-new guest experiences and an extended dual-ship pier.

New food & beverage facilities, an adults-only beach, and a dedicated family lagoon will be among the highlights of the upgrade project, which will be completed by late next year.

Four new dining experiences will be added to the island to complement the three existing venues, with a signature specialty restaurant to be added, alongside new buffets and food markets.

Sneakers Cove Family Beach will receive an upgrade, with a new range of experiences including a kids' playground, splash pad, and ropes course, as well as table tennis and foosball.

There will be a new exclusive

retreat for adults, Paradise Sands, which will offer daytime relaxation and evening cocktails at sunset.

MSC is also introducing a greater variety of cabanas to the island, as well as a new marine conservation experience, 'Shifting Perspective', which will invite guests to explore marine conservation through immersive, hands-on experiences, from coral restoration and scientific discovery to interactive exploration of ocean ecosystems.

Lastly, the island's pier will be extended to accommodate two ships simultaneously.

Work also continues on the development of a second private island adjacent to Ocean Cay.

This as-yet-unnamed destination will connect guests to nature, pristine beaches, and the ocean, as well as offer luxury facilities and water features. *MS*

Viking new brox

VIKING has unveiled its new 2026-2028 river brochure, featuring its expanded fleet and range of itineraries.

The 232-page guide features a refreshed design, and new content - **CLICK HERE**.

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Wendy Wu Tours



MANY expedition cruisers are seeking out the concept of an "immersive experience", and Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours recently delivered that - and then some.

The United States Coast Guard was recently called in to help free the cruise line's *Scenic Eclipse II*, after she became stuck in Antarctic ice earlier this month (**pictured**).

Eclipse II was about eight nautical miles from McMurdo Sound at the time she became beset by ice.

Heavy icebreaker *Polar Star* came to *Eclipse II*'s aid, conducting two close passes to break the cruise ship free, then escorting her approximately four nautical miles to open water, where she continued on.



Having a whale of a time

TWO of the world's leading whale biology experts will sail with Swan Hellenic during its upcoming Cape-to-Cape cruise, as part of its support of citizen science platform HappyWhale.

Sailing from Ushuaia (**pictured**) to Cape Town on board *Diana* from 05-25 Mar, whale experts professors Ken Findlay and Jonathan Codd will lead a discovery program for guests.

"Having scientists of this calibre on board allows our guests not just to observe, but to actively participate in research that has real-world impact," said Antony Jinman, expedition leaders manager at Swan Hellenic.

"This voyage demonstrates how exploration, education, and conservation can come together in a truly unforgettable experience," he added.

With 35 years of experience in marine mammal science, Findlay has played a major role in whale conservation across the Southern Hemisphere, while Codd, a polar biologist, has created a unique interactive experience that allows guests to contribute as citizen scientists, studying whale



populations, behaviour, and long-distance migration.

Passengers will also have the opportunity to track individual whales, document their movements, and share data with HappyWhale that will support global conservation efforts.

Also on offer will be workshops and lectures on whale biology, ecology, and conservation, as well as identification techniques and population surveys.

The cruise will sail through the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula, then make its way to South Georgia, home to large king penguin colonies.

Passengers will enjoy views from the volcanic islands of Tristan da Cunha, as well as icebergs and glaciers, and take part in activities such as kayaking in Antarctica. *JHM*

Star unveils 2027

STAR Clippers, which is now working exclusively with Entire Travel Group (**CW 09 Dec**), has released its Mediterranean 2027 program, which introduces almost 30 new ports of call.

The new season expands Star Clippers' focus on smaller ports across the Adriatic, Greece, Turkey, and the Western Mediterranean, with highlights including the cruise line's first visit to the Albanian Riviera on the Ionian Sea.

New Greek and Turkish ports include Gavrio, Pigadia, Astypalea, Kastellorizo, Parga, Skyros, Fethiye, Cesme, Datca, Kaş, and Kekova.

Other new ports around the Mediterranean include Agropoli, Vibo Valentia, Marina di Pisa, Carloforte, Trapani, Termini Imerese, Pensicola, Roses, Ceuta, as well as a return to Barcelona.

Account manager Roger Condon said guest feedback shaped the refreshed program, adding, "Our guests asked for smaller ports, fewer crowds, and more authenticity."

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