

### Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Ponant Explorations**.

## Cruise big for Link

**CRUISE** was one of the standout stars of Link Travel Group's 2026 fiscal year, with the sector surging by more than 20% for the invitation-only collective of premium travel agencies.

The rise was off an already high base, Link noted, and the company believed results could be attributed to sustained client demand across the category.

Link also said it was growing its muscle in cross-selling and driving ancillary revenue.

The results came as Link announced its data for FY26, which resulted in a third consecutive year of overall growth for the network, with turnover eclipsing \$1 billion.

This number was significantly up on last year's result, which was made more remarkable given the disruption caused by the Iran war during Q4.

"Delivering a third consecutive year of growth, and a record turnover once again over \$1b, is an outstanding achievement for our members, especially against the backdrop of the disruption we saw," general manager Scott Darlow said.

## Royal beats estimates



**ROYAL** Caribbean Group has raised its annual profit forecast overnight after beating estimates for the quarter ending 30 Jun.

The company increased its annual adjusted profit forecast to US\$17.73-US\$17.87 per share, from its prior forecast of US\$17.10-US\$17.50 per share.

Quarterly revenue rose 6% to US\$4.83 billion (approximately A\$6.92 billion), beating estimates by roughly US\$10 million.

Demand from higher-income travellers helped Royal Caribbean weather broader consumer caution, while strong pricing and onboard spending helped offset pressure from higher costs such as fuel (up 27% YOY).

The result sent Royal Caribbean's shares up 5% overnight, despite the company reporting a modest hit to bookings due to travel disruptions caused by the Iran war.

Uncertainty linked to the hostilities has made some travellers wary of booking cruises, hurting demand and adding to fuel-cost pressures for the sector.

Royal Caribbean said the impact has been mostly localised to Mediterranean itineraries and the third quarter, resulting in lower

revenue growth of 9%, down from 10%.

"The strong second quarter performance demonstrates the continued strength of our brands, the appeal of our vacation experiences, and the momentum in our business," chair & chief executive Jason Liberty said.

"We expect another year of approximately double-digit growth in revenue and earnings, driven by consumers' preference for our leading brands and supported by our strong booked position, leading margin profile, and fortified balance sheet."

Liberty said the company continued to expand and differentiate its portfolio.

"*Legend of the Seas (pictured)*, which launched earlier this month as the third ship in our Icon-class, is part of a platform that is reshaping the cruising experience and delivering exceptional returns," he said.

"Its successful debut represents another important milestone in the execution of our innovation pipeline as we continue to redefine the vacation experience.

"At the same time, we are deepening guest engagement through our loyalty and technology platforms - strengthening our relationships with guests, increasing repeat rates, and positioning us to capture a greater share of the growing US\$2t global vacation market," Liberty added. *MS*

## Ponant stays close

**PONANT** Explorations' new voyage takes guests across New Zealand's South Island and the Subantarctic Islands.

Sailing round trip from Dunedin aboard *Le Soleal*, the 14-night trip will see guests visit Milford Sound, Doubtful Sound, as well as the Macquarie, Campbell, and Antipodes Islands.

See more on the **back page**.

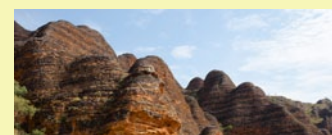
## A marvellous deal

**TRAVELMARVEL** has launched its 'freedom to explore' sale for next year, offering travellers enhanced savings on 2027 cruises of seven days or more.

The sale runs until 12 Aug, or while stock lasts, and includes itineraries such as the 21-day 'Reflections of the Rockies and Alaska Cruise', which couples can now save \$3,200 on.

Meanwhile, the 10-day 'Kimberley Coast Adventure' also offers savings of up to \$3,000 per couple.

The deal is valid when paying in full by 30 Sep, and is combinable with other Travelmarvel offers, such as the 'travel with friends' discount, the 5% future travel voucher, and more.



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## Virgin heads north for the first time

**VIRGIN** Voyages has announced its first-ever season in the Scandinavia and Baltics region, with *Valiant Lady* to home port in Amsterdam in summer 2028.

The ship will offer six brand-new sailings between 09 Jul-04 Sep 2028, including four longer 'Marvelous Voyages' and two Western Europe crossings, with maiden calls at 15 ports.

'Scandinavia & Stockholm Overnight' kicks off the season on 19 Jul visiting five countries and six ports over 12 nights, including Oslo, Copenhagen, Gdansk, Berlin, Aarhus, and Stockholm, where guests will stay overnight.

*Valiant* will also operate a seven-night Norwegian Fjords itinerary, featuring Molde, Nordfjordeid, Flam, and Bergen.

The ship will then sail on another seven-night cruise in the region, where guests will enjoy a full day at the Munch Museum



and the Opera House rooftop in Oslo, settle in for a dinner and Tivoli Gardens after dark during a late-night stay in Copenhagen, and experience the nightlife of Hamburg, Germany's second-largest city.

Rounding out the Marvelous Voyages lineup, *Valiant* will depart Amsterdam on an 11-night 'Arctic Circle & Norwegian Fjords' itinerary, with highlights including a visit to a husky farm in Tromsø and a midnight sun deck party under 24-hour daylight.

Bookending the season are two Western Europe crossings travelling the same route but in opposite directions - Barcelona to Amsterdam departing 09 Jul, and Amsterdam to Barcelona departing 25 Aug.

The first features a full day at the Hassan II Mosque and the medina in Casablanca, while the second will call at Tangier.

Bookings open to Sailing Club loyalty members on 13 Aug, before opening to the public the day after - more details [HERE](#). JM

## TTC eases the pain

TTC Tour Brands has enhanced its groups program, offering exclusive benefits for agents booking group tours with Trafalgar River Cruises.

Agents can earn points with the Groups Amenity Points rewards program, which are redeemable toward added beverage packages, shore excursions, onboard credit, as well as a complimentary berth for every eight guests booked.

TTC can also offer agents a range of discounts such as 5% group discount, 50% off for the 10th guest, or the 18th guest travelling free.

In addition to discounts, the TTC team will also offer personalised support ranging from itinerary planning, quoting and booking management, real-time visibility, faster confirmations, and more.

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Discount offer applies to new bookings made from 1 May 2026 to 31 August 2026 ("Offer Period") for selected HX departures from 15 May 2026 to 31 March 2028. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and applies to all offer occupancies. Offer applies to new bookings made from 1 May 2026 to 31 August 2026 ("Offer Period") and is capacity controlled for selected HX departures from 16 October 2026 to 31 December 2027. Departures may be removed at any time. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offer is subject to suite availability at the time of booking. Availability must exist in the following suite categories - ME (MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen) and Q2 (MS Fram). Offer is not applicable to any other suite category (ie M2 on MS Fram and ME, MD, MC, MB and MA on MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and apply to all offer occupancies.



**A SMALL** beach town in North Carolina is inviting its residents to build and race homemade cardboard boats for a good cause.

The Dutchman Dinghy Dash in Oak Island, NC, is this weekend returning for its fifth year, challenging participants to build a boat made almost entirely out of cardboard and race her over more than 100 metres without sinking.

Teams will compete in two-person boats built under a strict set of rules, restricting construction materials such as fibreglass, epoxy, Styrofoam, plastic fasteners, and waterproof coatings.

Paddles must also be only constructed of cardboard.

There is no entry fee, however participants are asked to donate US\$10 worth of non-perishable food items, with proceeds benefiting a local charitable cause.

## Sinner cruises to victory



**WORLD** number one tennis player Jannik Sinner, fresh off his second Wimbledon triumph, joined guests on board *Explora III* for her maiden journey last week.

Sinner was on board from 24-25 Jul during the voyage from Genoa to Marseille, where guests had the opportunity to participate in interactive wellness and social experiences alongside the Italian star and members of his team.

The Italian five-time Grand Slam winner shared the discipline, mindset, and philosophy behind his approach to elite performance, while guests also enjoyed first access to 'In Balance: A Jannik Sinner Ocean Wellness Programme', a new signature offering developed in collaboration with Explora.

During the cruise, Sinner also inaugurated *Explora III's* new padel court.

Anna Nash, president of Explora, welcomed Sinner as the very first honorary Diamond member of Explora Club, the brand's loyalty program, presenting him with a diamond chaton.

Honorary Diamond membership was also extended to members of Sinner's performance team in recognition of the teamwork behind his achievements. **MS Pictured** are MSC Group executive chair cruise division Pierfrancesco Vago, Anna Nash, Jannik Sinner Foundation director Christina Tauber, *Explora III* godmother Rosalba Giugni, MSC Foundation executive director Daniela Picco, and Sinner.

## Princess Alaska '28

**PRINCESS** Cruises has opened bookings for its 2028 Alaska voyages, with 185 departures across 14 itineraries and eight vessels on offer.

Ships featured during the 2028 season include *Star Princess*, *Discovery Princess*, and *Emerald Princess*, with sailings ranging from four to 16 days, departing across Seattle, Vancouver, Anchorage, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Ports of call across the seasons include towns such as Juneau, Ketchikan, and Skagway, while cruisers will also explore Alaska's glacier regions, including Glacier Bay National Park, Hubbard Glacier, College Fjord, Endicott Arm, and Dawes Glacier.

Guests will also be able to stay at a number of Princess' properties across the state as part of wider land packages, ranging from Denali Princess Wilderness Lodge, Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge, Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge, and Kenai Princess Wilderness Lodge.



## WIN a July in July with Carnival

Make a Carnival booking via GoCCL between 1-31 July 2026 (AEST) for your chance to **WIN 1 of 4 LIMITED EDITION** custom Carnival x July Carry On Trunks!

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Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury, James Bale  
Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper  
Editorial Director - Damian Francis  
Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller  
[info@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:info@cruiseweekly.com.au)  
Social Editor - Alexandra Lilly

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### ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan  
Business Development Manager  
Kara Stanley  
[advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au)

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER  
Matthew Vince

### ACCOUNTS

[accounts@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accounts@traveldaily.com.au)

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd  
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia  
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia  
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220  
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<sup>†</sup>Butler Service is available in select suite categories only; 97% of accommodation features a private balcony. <sup>‡</sup>Conditions apply.  
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