



Cruise Weekly today

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

No CW on Monday

THERE will be no issue of *Cruise Weekly* on Mon 08 Jun due to the observance of the King's Birthday public holiday. The day is recognised across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, as well as the ACT and NT. **CW** will resume regular publishing on Tue 09 Jun.

Fortuna's new voyage

MARGARITAVILLE at Sea has officially acquired *Costa Fortuna*, as it plans to rebrand her into *Margaritaville at Sea Beachcomber* from 2027 (**CW** 12 May 2025). She will commence a 12-week dry dock in Sep.

Link adds Panache Cruises to the fold

LINK Travel Group has added international luxury cruise specialist Panache Cruises as a new member, the joint venture agency group announced.

Panache last month launched in the Australian market specialising in luxury cruise packages (**CW** 01 May), and was welcomed into Link from 01 Jun.

The UK-based company will now have access to Link's comprehensive offering via technology, product, and supply.

The travel agency will be led locally by head of sales operations Juliana Nasmith, and overseen from the United Kingdom by founder & chief executive officer James Cole.

"From our first meeting there was an instant connection between the two companies, and we were immediately impressed by the vision that James and Juliana have set out for Panache



Cruises in the Australian market," Link general manager Scott Darlow said.

"Seeing what they have achieved in both the UK and USA, and how they achieved that success, leaves us in no doubt that Panache Cruises are well set up for success Down Under.

"We are excited to stand

side by side with them on this journey and know that they will complement the existing Link membership and enjoy being part of it". **MS**

Pictured are Link chair Danielle Galloway; Panache founder James Cole; Panache head of sales Juliana Nasmith; and Link GM Scott Darlow.



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A new Quest arises

SEABOURN Quest has finished her dry dock with interior enhancements across her suites, public spaces, dining venues, and spa.

Each suite has received new mattresses and plush wool carpeting, while her Penthouse and other premium suites have been provided with updated veranda furniture.

Other highlights of the transformation include the reimagining of The Club, now with a speakeasy-style ambience and a reconfigured bar design, allowing guests to move freely between the bar, seating, and dance floor.

Quest's atrium, corridors, and stairways have received new carpeting with water-inspired patterns, with changes designed to better assist guests in navigating the vessel.

The main pool deck has also been redesigned with a new sound system and lighting, alongside a new teak deck.

Seabourn Square now sports a warm, living room atmosphere, with new bistro-style seating.

Quest will continue her Mediterranean season through to Nov, with a series of seven-day voyages across Europe, with ports of call in Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Greece, as well as Turkiye.

Voyages can be combined to create 14- and 21-day sailings.

CruiseHQ's new marketing head



EXCLUSIVE

CRUISEHQ has appointed a new head of marketing, Nicole Gabriel (pictured), *Cruise Weekly* can exclusively reveal.

Gabriel will lead CruiseHQ's national B2B marketing strategy, overseeing all trade campaigns, advisor communications, brand positioning, and cruise line partner activity across Australia.

The new CruiseHQ marketing head, who will start on Tue, brings more than 20 years of leadership experience across premium brands and the travel industry, most recently serving as Travel Associates community marketing manager, where she led advisor-facing marketing strategy across a national network of luxury specialists.

Gabriel replaces former CruiseHQ marketing manager Caitlyn Paris, who last month took up a role with independent agent network Envoyage as global

content & social media manager.

GM Caroline Hitchen said Gabriel joins the leadership team at an exciting period of growth, with the wholesaler having scaled rapidly since its launch in Apr 2024 (*CW* 30 Aug 2023).

"Nicole brings deep marketing expertise, a strong understanding of the travel advisor community, and a genuine passion for the industry," Hitchen said.

"As CruiseHQ continues to grow, having a leader of Nicole's calibre driving our marketing strategy is a significant step forward for the business and for our advisor partners," she added.

Added Gabriel: "Cruise is one of the most exciting and fast-growing segments in Australian travel, and I'm looking forward to working closely with our advisor community and cruise line partners to build on the incredible momentum the business has already created." MS

\$300 OBC ending

VIRGIN Voyages' offer of up to \$300 onboard credit in the Caribbean is ending soon.

The promotion is available on Caribbean sailings between Jun 2026-Apr 2027, with a free balcony upgrade also on offer.



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P&O Cruises has announced that it will stand solid as the front-shirt sponsor of Southampton FC, despite the club's recent espionage incident, in which it admitted to spying on three other teams in the EFL Championship.

Carnival UK & P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow said in a recent statement: "P&O Cruises is deeply rooted in Southampton, our home port city and its community."

"We recognise both the challenges and the triumphs that have defined its football club in recent weeks.

"Throughout this period, the team, at the most senior level, has openly acknowledged these issues and expressed sincere apologies."

P&O has been based in Southampton since the early 19th century, predating the establishment of the soccer team by more than 40 years.

Advertising spend rising



CRUISE advertising spend has risen 9% year-on-year so far in 2026, part of an overall 12% surge in travel industry marketing.

This year's advertising spend has been led by luxury cruise lines such as Viking and Silversea, according to reports by digital travel platform Nomad Lawyer.

Contemporary cruise lines such as Royal Caribbean, Carnival Cruise Line, and Norwegian Cruise Line have also been active in the marketplace.

Adam Ferrier, founder of advertising agency Thinkerbell, spoke to **Cruise Weekly** about the variety of prevailing strategies witnessed in the sectors' advertising this year.

"Short breaks to get people to

try cruising are a popular way into the market, while loyalty programs are having their time in the sun, to keep them cruising with one particular brand," Ferrier explained.

Ferrier also noted the cruise sector's investment in ships over the past decade, with almost 150 new vessels debuting; as well as the hundreds of millions spent on private islands.

"There has been massive capital investment in big ships over the last 10 years, which have forecast people's desire to have a simple 'have it all'-type holiday.

"They've now got to fill these ships, hence a buoyant cruising market making a lot of noise," Ferrier explained. *MS*

Now you're cooking

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) will bring its Culinary Arts Kitchen to *Seven Seas Prestige*, introducing more than 60 cooking classes and 25 Epicurean Explorer Tours to its new ship.

Starting from US\$129 per guest, the two-hour culinary classes explore a wide variety of the world's cuisine and cooking traditions.

Grill enthusiasts can uncover the secrets of world-renowned Argentine barbecue, complete with expert pairings of South American varietals, while those seeking lighter fare can embark on a Mediterranean culinary journey, discovering the region's celebrated diet while preparing signature dishes from France, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

The concept was first introduced aboard RSSC's Explorer-class ships, and have been crafted by executive chef & director of culinary enrichment Kathryn Kelly.

These will be joined by chef-guided shore excursions through local markets.

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