

Cruise Weekly today

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

Clark joins Virgin

VIRGIN Voyages has announced David Clark as its new head of sales for Australia, set to start in the role on 06 Jul.

Clark's new job will see him oversee the sales and commercial strategy of the cruise line's partner travel advisor 'First Mates', with a focus on trade partnerships, long-term revenue growth, and expanding brand awareness across the region.

He joins the cruise line with over 20 years of experience in the travel and cruise sectors, most recently serving as managing director, Australia at Tauck, with other roles at Carnival and Disney.

Hurtigruten renovates smallest ship

HURTIGRUTEN has relaunched *Vesteralen* following an extensive renovation, with the ship returning to regular service between Bergen and Kirkenes.

The highlight of the works is a new coastal heritage concept inspired by Hurtigruten's history.

This will see menus from the onboard restaurant take inspiration from those of the 1930s, while crew uniforms and tableware reference classic designs from Hurtigruten's past.

Guests will also find historic details throughout the vessel, such as coastal artwork, classic design references, and tributes to the generations of ships that have shaped Hurtigruten's legacy.

Changes to the hard product have seen 100 staterooms and public areas refreshed (**pictured**), with new Arctic Superior and Mini-Suites introduced.

"With *Vesteralen* back in



service, it is not just a ship being put back into operation, it is living history with strong traditions being given a new life," chief executive officer Hedda Felin said.

"*Vesteralen* offers a completely unique travel experience, both for those living on the Norwegian coast and tourists."

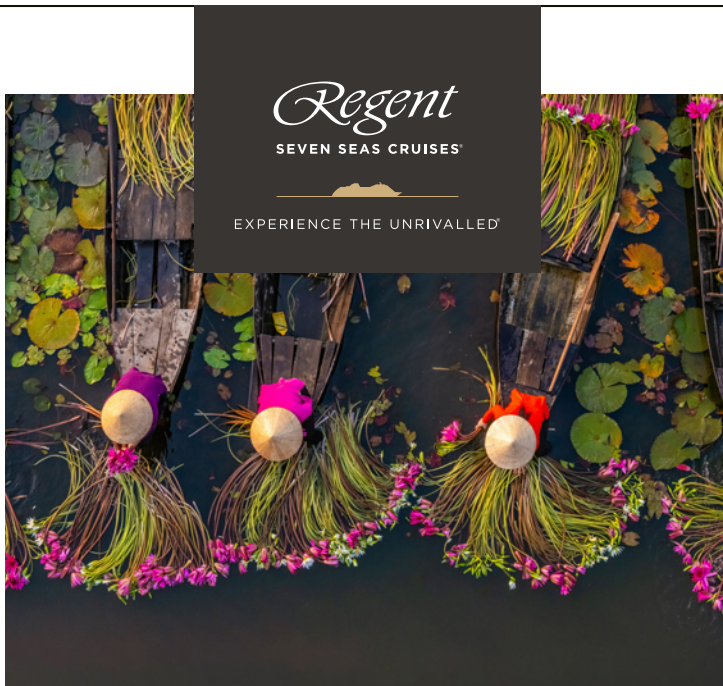
Chief product & hotel operations officer Andre Pettersen said the changes have already been very well received by guests who have been on

board for *Vesteralen*'s first sailings since the renovation.

"Many highlight the special atmosphere on board and the combination of historical details and modern comfort," he said.

"This confirms that we have succeeded in preserving *Vesteralen*'s unique character while elevating the experience to today's standard."

Vesteralen is Hurtigruten's smallest ship in operation with only 133 staterooms. *MS*



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Why more cruise travellers are staying longer on land

OPINION

Fiona Cogar is director of sales for PR, marketing, and sales representative Slojourn Studio.



CRUISING has become one of the most effective ways for travellers to discover multiple destinations in a single journey, offering a level of access, convenience and geographic reach that few other forms of travel can match.

What I find most interesting though is what happens when the sailing ends.

Increasingly, travellers are choosing to stay longer in the cities and countries that captured their attention along the way, turning ports into starting points for richer experiences on land.

For decades, cruise itineraries have been built around constant movement - travellers arrive at a destination, spend several hours exploring, and continue to the next port.

Today, many are returning from those same itineraries with a sense that they have only scratched the surface.

They have discovered somewhere they want to understand more fully, whether that's a Greek island glimpsed from the water, a riverside community along the Mekong, or a region of Italy they simply didn't have time to properly explore.

I often describe it this way:

if travel is a form of artwork, cruising sketches the outline of a journey, while time on land fills in the detail.

The cruise introduces travellers to parts of the world they may never have otherwise considered visiting, but it is often the days spent ashore that create the strongest connection to a place.

The natural beneficiary of this trend in cruising is the hotel sector, which is progressively becoming an extension of the voyage itself.

Great hotels have always been more than somewhere to sleep; they are often one of the most effective ways to access a destination.

They provide context, local knowledge, cultural connection and a genuine sense of place.

The best properties act as doorways to their region, helping guests understand not only where they are, but why it matters.

A hotel stay creates space for a region to reveal itself gradually.

It allows travellers to spend time with local guides, visit communities and producers, discover regional food traditions, experience wellness practices rooted in local culture, and

explore landscapes that sit well beyond the shoreline.

There is also a luxury in having time - whether to linger over dinner, wander through villages, or to follow their curiosity.

Across Slojourn Studio's portfolio, we're seeing this play out in different ways. In Cambodia, travellers preparing to sail the Mekong are extending their stays at Song Saa Private Island, where overwater villas

and jungle sanctuaries provide access to Khmer culture, marine conservation experiences and a side of Cambodia many visitors never see.

In Greece, guests are staying with

Andronis to experience Santorini beyond its famous viewpoints, exploring vineyards, local villages, and culinary traditions, while enjoying access across four distinct luxury properties.

Elsewhere in the Mediterranean, Daios Cove in Crete is attracting travellers looking to decompress after weeks at sea, combining cultural experiences with KEPOS by GOCO, one of the region's most sophisticated wellness retreats.

In Italy, travellers are extending

their journeys through itineraries designed by luxury DMC Italy Charme, involving private villas, regional food experiences and deeper immersion in destinations that might sit outside the traditional cruise route.

Meanwhile, in India, guests sailing the Ganges are turning to local DMC Anecdotes for access to artisan communities, regional festivals and cultural experiences that provide a richer understanding of the country beyond the river itself.

What these travellers share is not necessarily a desire to see more places, but to experience them more meaningfully.

The convenience of cruising allows travellers to become more selective about where they choose to spend additional time on land, seeking experiences that provide greater cultural context, local insights, and a stronger sense of place.

As cruise travel continues to grow, I expect demand for pre- and post-cruise stays to grow alongside it.

Travellers are no longer viewing ports solely as arrival and departure points; they are increasingly seeing them as the beginning of a deeper relationship with a country.

For hotels, that presents a significant opportunity.

For travellers, it may be about remembering both where they went and remembering how a place made them feel.

“
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THE cruise sector has spent the past 12 months in a game of one-upmanship in celebration of the United States Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary), and Carnival Cruise Line's latest contribution is a limited-edition bottle of bourbon.

The tippie is the result of a partnership between Carnival and Diageo's Bulleit brand, which has produced a single-barrel bourbon that will be exclusively available to Carnival passengers in onboard stores on 14 ships.

From a barrel that was personally selected by Carnival president Christine Duffy, the limited-edition bourbon has tasting notes of suggesting it offers "bright fruit notes layered with crisp floral elegance on the nose and features delicate spice on the palate with a refined, silky mouthfeel, finishing with a softer spice profile balanced by a smooth, rounded body."

The bourbon is the latest announcement as part of Carnival's massive 'Birthday Celebrations at Sea', centred around Independence Day.

Celebrations will feature 10 special 250th-themed sailings, fleetwide patriotic deck parties, limited-edition food and drinks, and two epic, multi-ship meetups for a spectacular fireworks show.

Rotterdam to the Med



HOLLAND America Line's (HAL) flagship *Rotterdam* will sail the Mediterranean for the first time next year, with bookings now open for a series of itineraries kicking off in spring 2027.

The series of 10- and 11-day voyages will include a mix of destinations across the Western and Eastern Mediterranean, with highlights including Lisbon, Naples, Kotor, Rhodes, and Alexandria, alongside scenic cruising past Stromboli and through the Strait of Messina.

She will conclude her season with a 14-day transatlantic crossing between Barcelona and Fort Lauderdale.

HAL's shore excursions will showcase experiences such as exploring the ruins of Ephesus from Kusadasi in Turkey, and Pompeii from Naples, as well as visiting Kotor's old town.

"We know how much our guests love sailing on *Rotterdam*, and the Mediterranean is always in high demand," the cruise line's vice president of revenue planning Paul Grigsby said.

"There's something really special about seeing the flagship sailing in iconic ports like Bilbao, Naples, and Rhodes for the first time, and it's a moment we're excited to share with our guests."

The announcement comes just two months after *Rotterdam* finished her dry dock (CW 29 Apr), which was highlighted by live music enhancements with added seatings across her Billboard Onboard venue, and the Rolling Stone lounge, as well as a redesigned central lounge, and Crows Nest panoramic bar, allowing for more opportunities for live shows.

Additionally, the 2027 and 2028 cruising seasons will also see a range of itineraries sailed on HAL's other vessels.

Highlights of the season will include the 28-day 'Pan Am 100 Years Legendary Voyage' sailed aboard *Zuiderdam* (CW 30 Jan), visiting 18 destinations.

The itinerary will emulate Pan Am's Great Circle Route, which saw the airline fly across the Caribbean and Latin America. JB

Carnival cancelled

A *CARNIVAL Splendor* sailing from Singapore departing 01 Sep 2027 has been cancelled as a result of a change in dry dock scheduling.

Guests booked on the sailing have reportedly been notified via e-mail, with compensation offered if they choose to reschedule their voyage.

A full refund will be provided if guests choose not to rebook.



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