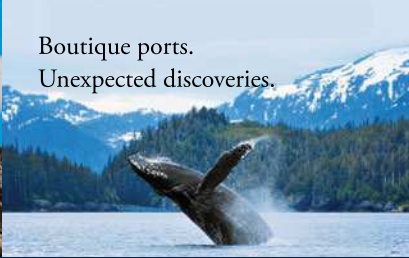




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Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a cover wrap from **Oceania Cruises**.

WTTC warns Spain

THE World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has spoken out against Barcelona's proposal to increase its tax on short-stay cruise passengers, saying the move could weaken the city's competitive advantage.

The response comes after Barcelona's decision last month to double its per-passenger levy to around €8, approx A\$13 (**CW** 20 May).

According to WTTC president & CEO Gloria Guevara, the move could undermine the city's position as a global leader in tourism.

"While we understand the complex challenges of managing a world-class destination, the proposal to increase the tourist tax on short-stay cruise passengers could place Barcelona at a competitive disadvantage compared to other Mediterranean ports," Guevara said.

"Additional costs to visitors to Barcelona would likely reduce the overall economic contribution generated by the cruise industry as tourists adjust their spending habits ashore," she added.

Guevara pointed out that four million cruise passengers visit Barcelona every year, spending an average of around €255 (A\$420) each.

Aman's Caribbean cruises



AMAN At Sea has unveiled the inaugural Caribbean season for *Amangati* (pictured), with reservations now open for voyages sailing between Nov 2027 and Jan 2028.

The season will follow on from *Amangati's* maiden Mediterranean program, with the ship crossing the Atlantic for a collection of five- to eight-night itineraries in the region.

Guests can choose from itineraries exploring the Leeward Islands, Windward Islands, and Dutch Caribbean.

Highlights include St Barts, Nevis, Barbados, Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire, and the British Virgin Islands, alongside secluded anchorages, private marina days, and exclusive island experiences.

Amangati's opening Caribbean chapter concludes with an intimate New Year's Eve celebration at a private resort in Nevis, including a two-night anchorage bridging the end of 2027 and the beginning of 2028.

Also newly released are the final four Mediterranean voyages of *Amangati's* inaugural 2027

season, as well as a 13-night Atlantic Passage centred on wellness, restoration, and extended time at sea.

The four concluding Mediterranean trips include 'Aegean Treasures' (10-18 Oct), taking in the islands and harbours of the Peloponnese; the 'Adriatic at Dubrovnik and Kotor; Italian Flavours' (18-24 Oct), winding from Bari through the Ionian to the coasts of Sicily; 'Coastal Highlights' (24 Oct-01 Nov), drawing on Palermo, Naples, Rome, and 'the Ligurian shore and the Cote d'Azur; and Western Mediterranean' (01-08 Nov), following the Catalan and Valencian coast through to the southern reaches of Andalusia, before arriving in Malaga.

Amangati's inaugural Mediterranean program, revealed earlier this year, includes five- to eight-night itineraries designed around late departures and overnight stays, exploring Dalmatia, Spain's Mediterranean coast, and the French Riviera, including rarely accessed ports such as Beaulieu-sur-Mer. *MS*

Discover Oceania

DISCOVER some of the world's most compelling destinations with Oceania Cruises' 2028 and 2029 collection of voyages.

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Ponant's cool new cruises



PONANT Explorations has opened sales on its Arctic 2028 season, offering more than 35 departures operating between May and Oct 2028.

Among the season's highlights are eight departures aboard the luxury icebreaker *Le Commandant Charcot*, providing guests with a rare opportunity to venture deeper into the polar regions than traditional expedition vessels.

The season will see Ponant visit the geographic North Pole, with *Le Commandant Charcot* sailing through pack ice and along Svalbard's fjords and glaciers.

Polar activities include outings and shore visits in a rubber dinghy, landing on the ice, kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing, and polar plunging.

Ponant will visit Greenland, the Baffin Sea, and the Northwest Passage from May to Aug 2028.

Highlights of the program will include a visit to Thule and Disko Bay, home to the largest icebergs in the Northern Hemisphere.

There will also be encounters with Inuit communities in their villages, and the chance to spot wildlife including polar bears, cetaceans, and more.

The season will also include an 18-night voyage combining a visit to the North Pole with two exclusive stops along Greenland's

northwest coast.

Ponant will then visit Svalbard in Jun and Jul 2028, including on a full circumnavigation, which has not been offered since 2021.

Highlights will include the chance to spot wildlife such as polar bears, Svalbard reindeer, Arctic foxes, walrus, and more.

Activities are included, and led by naturalist guides, and will include shore visits in a rubber dinghy, among others.

Ponant will also visit Iceland in Jun and Jul, with itineraries including the islands of Grimsey and Heimaey, with one included excursion per guest per day.

Highlights will include the opportunity to explore Reykjavik over a full day, with visits to Iceland's famous landscapes, including its fjords, volcanic plateaus, basalt columns, geysers, and waterfalls.

Wildlife that can be spotted includes puffins, Arctic foxes, Icelandic horses, and more.

The season will wrap up in North America, with visits to UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, Quebec, Lunenburg, and Gros Morne National Park.

There will also be stopovers at locations including Saint Pierre & Miquelon, Montreal, Eastport, and Martha's Vineyard. *MS*



Oceania Cruises Opens Reservations for 2028 & 2029 Collection of Voyages

OCEANIA Cruises has released its 2028 and 2029 Collection of Voyages, with reservations now open, giving travel advisors the chance to start planning ahead with their guests.

The new collection brings together more than 230 itineraries across the globe, ranging from seven to 180 days, along with over 60 overnight stays. For advisors, it's a useful opportunity to have conversations with those clients looking for immersive and experiential travel.

Spanning Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australia/New Zealand, the program balances well-known destinations with smaller ports that offer something a little more unexpected. From Japan's lesser-visited coastal towns to Iceland's remote harbours and Alaska's rugged landscapes, the itineraries are designed for travellers who want to go beyond the usual stops.

Fleet highlights

- *Oceania Riviera* returning to Alaska before heading to Asia, with a stronger focus on Japan beyond the major cities.

- *Oceania Aurelia* launching its first Around the World

sailings in 2028 and 2029, each spanning 180 days.

- *Oceania Allura* extending its time in the Mediterranean with winter itineraries through Greece, Turkey, Italy and Spain.

Across the collection, longer stays in port and late-evening departures continue to be a strong feature, giving clients more time to connect with each destination at their own pace.

With Oceania Cruises always free amenities - including all speciality dining, shipboard gratuities, complimentary WiFi, plus choice of wine & beer by the glass or a shore excursion credit - things are kept simple at point of sale. With bookings now open across both seasons, there's a real opportunity to start meaningful trip planning earlier - whether it's a once-in-a-lifetime world cruise or a shorter, destination-focused escape.

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TRAVELLERS can now help find the Loch Ness Monster by joining night-time expeditions on board a new customised ship launched by volunteer-led operation, Loch Ness Exploration (LNE).

The vessel, which can fit three people at a time, is equipped with hydrophones, sonar, thermal imaging, night-vision observation and 4K cameras, opening up exploration of deeper sections of the lake during its most mysterious hours.

"We started with shore-based observations, public enthusiasm and a simple ambition to keep looking," LNE founder Alan McKenna said.

"To now have a boat of our own, with the ability to scan the loch at night and work from the water itself, is an extraordinary step forward."

The first expedition will take place next month.

Cruise like an Egyptian

AUSTRALIANS are working up a strong appetite for Egypt, with bookings for Travelmarvel's upcoming Nile ship *Travelmarvel Sirius* on track to grow by nearly 300% this month, since conditions shifted in Apr following the outbreak of the Iran war.

Launching in Sep (**CW** 22 Oct 2025), the vessel - which can carry 124 guests across 62 cabins - will offer intimate, premium journeys on the iconic waterway, featuring shore excursions led by fully qualified Egyptologists.

The signature 'Treasures of Egypt and the Nile' itinerary will sail between Luxor and Aswan, complemented by a Cairo stay featuring the Great Pyramids of Giza, the Sphinx, and Dendera Temple, plus a visit to the recently opened Egyptian Museum.

Other highlights include Karnak Temple, the Valley of the Kings and Queens, Abu Simbel and Philae Temple.

On board, guests can enjoy the Nefertari Restaurant, Ramesses Lounge & Bar, the Sun Deck pool and Tutankhamun Terrace Cafe.

Evening experiences include local folkloric performances, a



cultural dance, and a themed Galabeya Party.

"Egypt has always held a powerful allure for Australians, with a history spanning more than 3,000 years that continues to captivate travellers today, and we're seeing it return to the top of travel wish lists," APT Travel Group chief executive officer David Cox explained.

"The response to *Travelmarvel Sirius* shows there's real demand for a seamless, great-value way to experience this extraordinary destination," he said, adding that the ship delivers a "premium river cruise experience on the Nile River at a price point that resonates with Australian travellers". *JM*

Slow down, ships

ROYAL Caribbean has been urged by the US' Center of Biological Diversity to adopt a policy limiting cruise ships to a speed of 10 knots or less when travelling through endangered whale habitats.

The Center said studies show slower ship speeds will lessen the likelihood of fatal strikes with whales.

It follows an incident last week, when a Royal Caribbean ship arriving into the port at Seward, Alaska was found with a dead endangered fin whale on her bow.

Findings from federal officials revealed that the whale was pregnant at the time of death, and had suffered blunt force trauma to the spine, ribs and jaw, in line with a ship strike.

In the United States, it is illegal to kill a whale, even accidentally, under the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* and the *Endangered Species Act*.

The incident remains under investigation with American federal authorities, with a related lawsuit pending against the US Coast Guard.



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