



Cruise Weekly today

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

Viking 2028 open

VIKING has opened for sale 2028 sailings of its European Sojourn river cruise, from Amsterdam to Bucharest and vice versa.

The itinerary will depart from May through to Oct 2028, with Viking expecting it to be in high demand.

Traversing eight countries along the Rhine, Main, and Danube, travellers will sail through the heart of Central and Eastern Europe, from the Netherlands to Romania.

The cruise stops in 21 towns and cities, such as Amsterdam, Vienna and Budapest, and includes 19 shore excursions - **CLICK HERE** for more info.

Travelmarvel welcomes fourth ship

TRAVELMARVEL has welcomed its newest river ship, *Travelmarvel Rigel*, which is preparing to set sail on Europe's Rhine, Main, and Danube rivers.

The cruise line has expanded its European fleet with the launch of its fourth state-of-the-art ship, which will depart from Amsterdam tomorrow.

Her first departure will be Travelmarvel's 'European Gems' itinerary from Amsterdam to Budapest, with *Rigel* joining her sister ships *Travelmarvel Polaris*, *Travelmarvel Capella*, and *Travelmarvel Vega* on three of the continent's key rivers.

Travelmarvel's fleet is entirely custom-designed and built to the same standard, with a maximum of 178 passengers, 89 cabins, and a crew of 44.

Onboard highlights include an open-air sun deck, jacuzzi and gym, while guests will stay



in a range of accommodation categories, including Owner's suites and French-style Balcony suites that feature electronic slide-down windows.

"The introduction of *Rigel* reflects Travelmarvel's continued investment in delivering exceptional river cruise experiences," APT Travel Group chief executive David Cox said.

"With four purpose-built ships now operating across the Rhine, Main and Danube, we're building a fleet defined by smart design, innovation and a clear focus on the guest.

"Our priority is straightforward: creating seamless journeys that deliver outstanding value and leave guests feeling confident in their decision to travel." *MS*

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Ponant appoints

PONANT Explorations has appointed Gino Andreetta to chief client & hospitality officer, as part of its strategy to further elevate the luxury expedition experience.

Andreetta will lead the new client & hospitality division, bringing with him more than three decades of experience with Club Med.

He will oversee hotel operations, product development, onboard experiences, and guest satisfaction, reinforcing Ponant's ambition to become the global leader in exploration travel.

Andreetta will also supervise the hotel design and operations, product design & development, explorations, client satisfaction, and onboard activities sectors as part of his new division.

Azamara links up with golf tours

AZAMARA and bespoke golf travel agency Premier Golf have announced a global partnership to combine the cruise line's 'destination immersion' with curated travel experiences based around the sport.

The partnership launches in 2028 with 23 sailings across some of the world's most sought-after golf destinations.

A major focus of the 2028 program will be Asia, aligning with Azamara's newest deployment featuring immersive itineraries throughout Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and the continent's Southeast.

Australia will also be a central point of the partnership through packages built around Seven Mile Beach in Hobart and New South Wales Golf Club in Sydney.

Other highlights will include Cabot Bordeaux in France, Valderrama in Spain, Tokyo Golf



Club in Japan, Kingsbarns in Scotland, and Royal Portrush (pictured) and Old Head of Kinsale in Ireland.

Designed for golf enthusiasts, golf clubs, and affinity groups, guests will enjoy access to the courses, as well as dedicated onboard golf-focused programming and optional pre- and post-cruise golf resort stays that extend the journey beyond the ship.

Each sailing will feature an onboard PGA professional along

with golfer welcome and farewell celebrations; golf-focused lectures, talks, and educational sessions; social gatherings; and curated golf experiences ashore.

Travel advisors will earn 10% commission from Premier Golf on the value of their client's package.

The pair will also launch a dedicated Premier Golf chapter within the Azamara World Academy, providing agents with specialised training, resources, and tools to confidently promote and sell the itineraries. *MS*



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PORTHOLE

HURTIGRUTEN has been getting into the World Cup spirit, as its home nation Norway competes in the tournament for the first time in almost 30 years.

The crew aboard the newly refurbished *Vesteralen* (CW 19 Jun) participated in the viral 'Viking row' chant pioneered by Norway's fans in the stands at the tournament - **CLICK HERE** to view.

Norway is now through to the knockout stages of the Cup.



Social cruise app launches



CRUISE CONNECTIONS START BEFORE YOU BOARD

The rise of pre-cruise social networking is changing the way travelers connect, cruise, and create memories.

- 119K+ REGISTERED
- THOUSANDS OF CONVERSATIONS
- MAJOR CRUISE LINES
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CRUISE-FOCUSED social network CruiseHuddle has launched, helping passengers meet before they sail.

The new platform, which has attracted more than 119,000 registrations in a few days, allows users to identify fellow passengers on the same sailing where they can organise meetups, share travel advice, coordinate excursions, and establish friendships before embarkation day.

Users can browse sailings across major brands, such as Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Disney Cruise Line, to locate the exact ship and departure date of their trip.

Passengers can then enter chatrooms to introduce themselves, meet other cruisers, and coordinate excursions or dining plans before boarding.

There are also live 'ship hub' chats available during the sailing to ask for tips or arrange meetups on board.

The app includes profile verification and age-check features, and is built to function efficiently on ship wi-fi networks.

"Many members are looking for friends, dining companions, excursion partners, or people to explore ports with," co-founder Jay Kuberski said.

"The social aspect of cruising is becoming just as important as the destinations themselves." *MS*

Carnival donates

CARNIVAL Corporation has expanded its surplus meal donation program to the Dominican Republic.

The company is now redirecting high-quality, unserved meals from its vessels to the Archdiocese of Puerto Plata.

Carnival handed over approximately 200 portions of prepared, unserved meals from its ship *Mardi Gras* to area organisations assisting families and the elderly.

The Dominican Republic is the second Latin American country to join the initiative, bringing the program to 19 ports worldwide.

Carnival is soon expected to roll out the program to all ships calling at its private Dominican destination.

"This work depends on clear processes, strong coordination with government and local partners, and a shared commitment to supporting the local community," vice president of government relations for Latin America Vicky Rey said.



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