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Friday 6th March 2026

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a cover wrap from **Cruise Lines International Association**.

Tahiti year-round

WINDSTAR Cruises is set to expand its presence in Tahiti with two yachts that will operate year-round from Mar 2027, marking the brand's biggest South Pacific deployment to date.

Aligning with Air Tahiti Nui's recent announcement of a Sydney-Papeete direct service from Dec 2026, the line's 148-guest sailing yacht *Wind Star* will be joined in Tahiti by the 312-guest all-suite motor yacht *Star Breeze*.

Wind Star will continue to operate the signature seven-night 'Dreams of Tahiti' voyage, with lead-in fares for Australian guests from \$4,616 per person.

Meanwhile, *Star Breeze* will offer longer, more exploratory itineraries including the Tuamotus and Marquesas, alongside select South Pacific sailings featuring Fiji.

The 11-night 'Far Flung French Polynesia & Marquesas Magic' itinerary is priced from \$7,307 per person.

Shore excursions will include lagoon snorkelling, vanilla plantation visits, pearl farm experiences, and more.

Seabourn's foody focus



SEABOURN Cruise Line is sharpening its culinary focus, president Mark Tamis said.

The cruise line's head, in Sydney last week as *Seabourn Sojourn* arrived on her world cruise (**CW** 12 Jan), told **CW** the brand will be stepping up its culinary program, both onboard and ashore.

"We have a hyper focus on the culinary experience, and you'll be hearing a lot more about that over the next couple of months.

"A really acute focus on fresh and local, because that's how our guests want to explore their environments," he explained.

"[This is] one of the most important things that we can be doing for our guests."

Seabourn's culinary program focuses on an all-inclusive, ultra-

luxury experiences prioritising fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and destination-inspired menus.

The cruise line recently rolled out significant fleet-wide enhancements to its casual venues (**CW** 27 Feb).

All dining is included in Seabourn's cruise fares, with no additional surcharges for specialty restaurants.

Other highlights in Seabourn's culinary program include 'Shopping with the Chef' and 'Dine Like a Local', in addition to a range of food-focused shore excursions and in-suite dining.

Tamis (**pictured** with marketing lead Catherine Rynd) even joked he would've loved to have had last week's event at the new Sydney Fish Market. *MS*

Get ready for CLIA

THERE is only one sleep left before the CLIA Cruise Industry Awards take place at ICC Sydney for the first time, supported by headline partner Visit Qatar.

"A very clear theme in many of the nominations this year is the elevation of the indispensable travel advisor - something that feels more relevant than ever right now," CLIA executive director Australasia Joel Katz said.

For more information, see the **cover page**.

Azamara is open

AZAMARA Cruises has opened bookings for segments of its 2028 world cruise, as well as a number of grand voyages and combination cruises.

The 2028 world cruise spans 175 nights, with a number of newly introduced segments and extended sailing options.

Travellers can now book one of 14 segments of the cruise.

There are also nine Grand Voyages available to book, which combine multiple segments into immersive sailings of 35 nights or more.

These extended adventures provide deeper regional exploration across Asia, Africa, and the South Pacific, with additional amenities and inclusions for 2028.

CLICK HERE for more information or to book.



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Ritz unveils 2027

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has unveiled its summer 2027 Asia and Alaska sailings aboard *Luminara*.

The program will offer 21 voyages between Apr and Oct 2027, including 15 exploring Alaska, four across Asia, and two transcontinental crossings.

Following its debut season in Alaska this summer, *Luminara* will return to the region with an expanded range of itineraries sailing between Vancouver, British Columbia, and Whittier, Alaska, with additional calls to Juneau and select departures navigating the Inside Passage.

Nearly all voyages of eight nights or longer include a glacier day, along with scenic cruising through Tracy Arm Fjord, with every sailing featuring two guest speakers.

Shore excursion highlights include wilderness dining in Ketchikan, seaplane journeys over glacier fields, and an exclusive dining experience at the Taku Glacier Lodge.

In Asia, the brand will introduce Seoul and Tianjin as new ports, while Northern Japan will also debut as a new region for The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, with calls in Otaru and Akita.

Highlights include food tours through Fukuoka and hands-on matcha workshops with master artisans in Uji. *JM*

Aussies backing Cunard



THE Australian market continues to strongly support Cunard Line, senior vice president Liz Fettes told *Cruise Weekly*, despite the brand having ended its seasonal home port program in the country (*CW* 06 Nov 2023).

Australian booking trends see the market often book longer cruises (*CW* yesterday), and in higher stateroom categories, Fettes revealed, making them valuable guests for both the cruise line and travel advisors.

"The Australian market has done really well in over-indexing on grill suites, which is totally ownable," Fettes enthused.

Cunard's Mediterranean program also continues to prove popular among Aussies, she said.

The next step will be welcoming aboard travel advisors to

experience the product and ensure the cruise line retains strong ties to the Australian trade, Fettes said.

"There'll be opportunities where we'll do seven-night famils, get them educated on the product in a destination that their clientele already loves," she said.

The cruise line is also planning to expand its virtual 'Afternoon Tea with Cunard' event into an in-person occasion.

Fettes said this would likely take place in the second half of this year or into 2027.

"This is us just doubling down with partners, how we still stay relevant, how we make sure that we're retaining the guests that have sailed with us and continue to build that trust in loyalty," Fettes explained. *MS*

HLC's new Nature

HAPAG-LLOYD Cruises (HLC) is introducing more warm-weather expeditions in the 2027-28 season, with *Hanseatic Nature* to visit Madagascar and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean.

Nature will offer 10 cruises between Oct 2027 and Mar 2028, exploring the remote islands, atolls, and coastlines of West Africa.

Two cruises are now available for booking: a 12-night journey from Mahe to Mauritius in Dec 2027, and a 15-night voyage from Mahe to Mauritius via Madagascar in Jan 2028.

There is also a combined route, which will operate between Cape Town, Madagascar, the Seychelles, and Mauritius - [CLICK HERE](#) for more info on the program.

Helloworld is hiring

HELLOWORLD Travel is hiring a marketing manager - cruise to help shape the future of cruise marketing across the company's brands.

HLO is seeking someone who is "energised by creating impactful campaigns, collaborating with leading cruise partners, and driving market-leading growth" in the cruise sector.

The position will also lead end-to-end marketing campaigns - [CLICK HERE](#).



VIEW FROM THE TOP

Phil Hoffman Travel COO **Michelle Ashcroft** shares how agents can support travellers' evolving needs.

[» CLICK HERE TO READ](#)



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line will sail onto televisions around Australia this weekend, with *Norwegian Spirit* to star on Seven's *Sydney Weekender*.

Host Sophie Falkiner will board the ship to explore its most popular dining experiences, giving viewers a taste of NCL's global flavours, elevated menus and new four-night Taster sailings.

"With demand for close-to-home cruising continuing to grow, this coverage will help boost awareness and support your client conversations," the cruise line said.

The TV spot coincides with Norwegian Cruise Line's reduced 'Just Cruise' fares, available across all destinations in 2026/27.

Keen viewers can tune in on Sun 08 Mar at 5.30pm AEDT.

Spirit will also feature in two more episodes later this month, on 15 and 22 Mar.

Luna delivered to NCL



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has taken delivery of *Norwegian Luna* (pictured) the newest Prima Plus-class ship in its fleet.

NCL took delivery of *Luna* from Fincantieri's Marghera shipyard, with the ship set to debut all-new attractions at sea, as well as a number of guest favourites.

The 3,565-passenger ship features 17 dining options as well as 18 bars and lounges.

Onboard highlights include the Aqua Slidecoaster, a hybrid between a waterslide and rollercoaster, exclusively available on NCL.

Luna's all-new Midway space offers an outdoor amusement-park-style area featuring carnival-inspired games, while the new Moon Climber challenges kids and adults alike with a multi-level obstacle course.

Interactive play spaces include The Luna Game Zone, offering everything from retro arcade favourites to cutting-edge virtual reality experiences.

Meanwhile, the Glow Court introduces a high-tech complex with an interactive LED floor that transforms from a daytime play space into a club at night. *MS*

Riverside weddings

RIVERSIDE Luxury Cruises will host weddings on its ships, with the brand having launched wedding group packages on its Rhone, Rhine, and Danube voyages.

The cruise line will be able to accommodate smaller weddings in its Vintage Room, its private dining venue, which can host up to 12 guests.

Couples will also be able to charter the entire ship if they want a larger wedding, which will allow them to host their ceremony in any of the ship's public spaces.

The wedding packages include a chef-curated wedding dinner, wedding cake, and floral arrangements created in collaboration with suppliers sources from along the river.

Riverside can also arrange other details, such as wedding attire, in-suite touches, and booking private excursions.



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