



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Silversea**.



On location on board
Avalon Envision

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you from **Avalon Waterways' Avalon Envision**.

WE are in Basel on a special training charter of *Envision*, which is sailing to Amsterdam. Dozens of Aussie advisors are boarding to commence sailing up the Rhine, with stops in France and Germany. While on board, agents will learn about Avalon's products, including the ports it visits.

NCL: Local sailings on the rise

EXCLUSIVE

AS the impacts of the Middle East conflict continue to ripple through the industry, Norwegian Cruise Line passengers are opting for local adventures, just in time for its largest ever Sydney season, MD and VP Ben Angell shared with **Cruise Weekly** this week.

The upcoming program includes 10 departures and five new roundtrip itineraries on board *Norwegian Spirit*, ranging from four to 14 nights around ANZ and the South Pacific.

"I do want to recognise the very real impact that the conflict in the Middle East is having around the world," Angell said.

"Our thoughts are with those directly affected, but we also acknowledge the uncertainty it creates for guests and trade partners in the broader industry."

However, he noted the

resilience of ANZ guests, especially NCL passengers, who tend to be older, experienced travellers who have lived through similar geopolitical issues.

They are what Angell described as "watch-and-waiters".

"What we tend to see in the initial period of any large global event like this is a small group that will make a decision very quickly," Angell explained.

"That normally happens in the first week to two weeks, then most people that book with NCL tend to watch and wait and see what happens over the coming period," he added.

Others prefer to book their next trip close to home, when value and simplicity play a more important factor, Angell said, referring to NCL's upcoming program and latest 'Just Cruise' proposition (**CW 03 Mar**).

Meanwhile, the cruise line has

also launched shorter sailings for the first time - four-night 'taster' cruises from Sydney in early 2027.

These shorter escapes may appeal to former NCL guests who have not yet tried *Spirit*, Angell explained, although they may also lure in younger couples in their 40s.

He also observed that some of the passengers who book domestic trips will eventually plan their European getaways further down the track.

"In the interim, it's on us to work as closely as we can with our guests and travel partners and make sure that we're focused on supporting with clear communication and flexibility where it's possible," Angell said.

"We approach all of this with an unwavering commitment to our guests' and travel agents' wellbeing and peace of mind," he added." *JHM*



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Cunard styles

CUNARD guests can now call on celebrity fashion stylist Micaela Erlanger while preparing their wardrobe for glamorous events, from afternoon tea to gala nights.

Erlanger's services will be available to all Grill Suite guests on journeys from 15 May 2026 to 15 April 2027.

Engine issues

AMASOFIA'S debut in Amsterdam experienced technical issues last week following its christening, with passengers disembarking early (**CW** 18 Mar).

While the problems are being addressed by the AmaWaterways team, guests were given the chance to continue to enjoy the Rhine with a localised shore itinerary, the line told **CW**.

Virgin's ladies meet up

VIRGIN Voyages is set to hold what it believes to be the largest event ever in the open ocean, bringing all four of its ships to the same spot at sea on 16 Feb.

During the Sisters at Sea event, *Scarlet Lady*, *Valiant Lady*, *Resilient Lady* and *Brilliant Lady* will meet at a single coordinate in the Caribbean, around 38 nautical miles north of Cuba - the first time a cruise line has brought its entire fleet together at one location, said the line.

Accompanied by over 15,000 sailors and crew, the day will feature music acts, special activations and exclusive Sailing Club perks, along with an onboard announcement about the cruise line's future plans.

The event will be the marquee fixture for the sailings of all four ships throughout Feb 2027, departing from either Miami or San Juan.



"When we launched *Scarlet Lady*, we had a vision, and that vision was always four ships but one community," said Sir Richard Branson (pictured).

According to the line, Sisters at Sea comes off the back of its strongest wave season to date, with rising metrics including revenue, booking velocity and forward demand, reflecting increasing popularity for Virgin's cruise offerings. **JB**

CLIA LIVE is a go

CLIA Live is taking place in Brisbane today, bringing together 27 cruise lines to host two days of valuable travel agent training.

It is the first of eight events for CLIA members this autumn, which includes Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Auckland and the Gold Coast.

This year's theme is 'Find the Perfect Cruise Match: Discover the Personality Behind Every Brand', focusing on teaching agents how to match the right cruise line with the right client.

Silversea savings

SILVERSEA has exclusive savings of up to \$11,000 per suite on a range of voyages.

For two weeks only, it is also offering up to US\$1,000 in shipboard credit for bookings by 31 Mar. - see page **five**.



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Katz: Huge opportunities await

AS the cruise industry prepares for yet another big year of growth, there are plenty of untapped opportunities for the market, according to Cruise Line International Association Australasia MD Joel Katz.

“A huge driver of this growth will be the new-to-cruise guest,” he told *Cruise Weekly*.

“Aussies love to cruise and we have always had one of the highest market penetration rates in the world, but that still leaves many millions of Australians who have yet to take their first cruise.”

The number of first-timers is increasing around the world - 31% of passengers over the past two years sailed for the first time, up from 24% in 2019.

“That means it’s a great time to suggest a cruise to travellers who haven’t sailed before, and there are plenty of new developments in cruising to help entice them,”



Katz added.

Meanwhile, the old stereotype of cruise being just for older travellers continues to shift, with the average age of an Australian cruise passenger now being 48.4, down from 50.4 in 2019, and almost a third of cruisers are aged under 40.

“So much has evolved in cruising over recent years as cruise lines develop a greater focus on experiences, dining,

interior design, technology and other elements that appeal to younger travellers, making new generations a huge opportunity,” Katz explained.

Meanwhile, he pointed to upcoming trends this year including the growth of fly-cruise, the considerable investment in river cruise products, brands and destinations and the potential for the luxury cruise market.

“Luxury cruising has been growing rapidly and the number of ships in the world’s luxury fleet has more than tripled since the start of last decade,” Katz added.

“Cruise specialist travel agents often tell us luxury lines are in demand and the higher cabin grades sell out first, which is an indicator of the potential in this segment.”

To read more, click [HERE](#) to download *Travel Daily’s* Future Forward special report. *JHM*

Turkiye aims high

TURKIYE intends to have over 2,000 cruise ships arriving to its ports by 2028, according to the country’s transport and infrastructure minister Abdulkadir Uraloğlu.

Speaking to local press, Uraloğlu said that Turkiye aims to welcome 1,500 ships by the end of this year and 1,750 by the end of 2027.

The government plans to reach these targets through improved infrastructure across the country’s major ports, including Kuşadası, Istanbul and Bodrum.

Uraloğlu said that these developments will greatly increase the country’s tourism sector and in turn will boost economic and social development, adding that the ports will stimulate Turkiye’s cultural and touristic assets on a global scale. *JB*



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A writer for BuzzFeed has written a Disney Cruise Line cheat sheet to help first-timers to look like seasoned passengers with 22 tricks.

The first step is if you are sailing out of Fort Lauderdale, Port Canaveral or San Diego, pack a pirate costume for the ever-popular pirate night.

Another helpful tip was to check in as soon as you can to get an earlier port arrival time, giving you time to enjoy a leisurely lunch onboard.

A surprising suggestion was to ditch the day excursions at ports of call, as the writer emphasised the expansive offerings at Disney's own private islands.

One controversial suggestion was to get an early sleep as the events in the morning are supposedly far superior to the evening with most bars and restaurants closing around 10-10:30pm. *JB*

Star power at Seabourn

SEABOURN has released the speaker lineup for the Conversations series on its 2027 World Cruise, which will include mountaineer Sir Peter Hillary.

Taking place on board *Seabourn Quest*, the 145-day adventure will feature a range of thought leaders, adventurers and storytellers, from flight lieutenant Mandy Hickson (pictured) and offroad bike racer Joey Evans, to former ballet dancer and bestselling author Li Cunxin and Emmy-award-winning sound producer Paul Massey.

"Their stories will add another dimension of discovery to an already unforgettable Seabourn experience," said Joe Chantry, Seabourn's VP of entertainment.



On Board: *Avalon Envision* Sky Lounge

Avalon Envision features an expansive top-level Sky Deck designed for relaxation, recreation, and panoramic views as she sails down the Rhine. The Sky Lounge includes premium seating, shaded areas, and even a small pool. Also integrated is a Sky Grill for al fresco dining and barbecues, and a full-ship walking track.

Hotels no threat

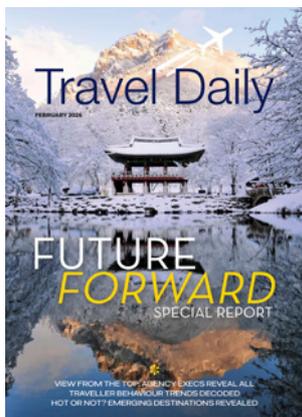
FAR from feeling threatened by the proliferation of hotel players in the luxury cruise market, Silversea's chief sales head believes the brands can be of benefit to the industry.

"Cruise represents 3% of worldwide travel, and there is plenty of room to continue growing and elevating the profile of the sector," the cruise line's SVP of global sales and e-commerce, Carol Cabezas, told sister title *TD*.

"I for one think there are benefits to having different kinds of players enter the market, so long as they are providing the right kind of education and marketing to support the trade in truly understanding what each product is about."

"If that happens, then I think it supports by providing another type of experience within the cruise universe."

The hotel brands expanding into cruise include The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, Four Seasons Yachts, Aman at Sea, Orient Express, and Waldorf Astoria. *AB*



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