



# CRUISE

WEEKLY

*delivered daily!*



cruiseweekly.com.au  
cruiseweekly.co.nz  
Tuesday 31st March 2026

## Cruise Weekly today

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

## One month left

**ONLY** one more month is left for agents to secure their spot on Hurtigruten's 12-day Norway mega famil, which departs this Sep.

The top 20 agents in Australia and New Zealand who deposit and book the most Hurtigruten product will be guaranteed a place on the trip, with 250 other high-performing advisors from around the world.

Bookings for the incentive must be made between 01 Jan and 30 Apr 2026.

Every single guest earns an entry, so the more people booked, the better the chances of winning - click **HERE** for more details.

# Royal Caribbean needs a Hero

**ROYAL** Caribbean has announced its fourth Icon class ship, the family-friendly *Hero of the Seas*, arriving in Miami in Aug next year.

According to the cruise line, *Hero* will build on the existing Icon class experience of her sister ships, with eight neighbourhoods and "more water, more thrills and more choices".

New features include additional family raft slides, nine swimming pools and accommodation for multigenerational families such as the three-storey Ultimate Family Treehouse.

The Hideaway adults-only space will feature two pools, as well as the largest swim-up bar at sea and an in-water DJ booth, while families can enjoy the new Coconut Cove, with in-water loungers and poolside service, overlooking views of the Central Park neighbourhood.



Guests can choose to dine at 28 spots on board *Hero*, including the new Orelans Parish Supper Club, a multi-course dining venue with live music, craft cocktails and gourmet Cajun and Creole dishes, while at Royal Railway - Hero Station, passengers will be transported to new destinations by train car while enjoying their meals.

Existing spaces will also be given a revamp, such as the Swim

and Tonic pool and swim-up bar for adults, as well as new water features at Splashaway Bay.

"Icon class truly set a new standard for family vacations, and *Hero of the Seas* takes that vision even further," explained Michael Bayley, president and CEO at Royal Caribbean.

Royal Caribbean loyalty members can start booking from 01 Apr, ahead of the official opening on 02 Apr. *JHM*



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Completely modernised with no kids' clubs or waterslides, we've elevated every stateroom, redesigned every bar & lounge and taken the onboard dining experience to the next level.

**These limited sailings are selling fast, so encourage your clients to book today!**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BDM OR CALL 1300 255 200**

\*Price covers the cruise only for the least expensive inside stateroom as stated, is per person based on twin share, inclusive of fuel costs (subject to change). Price, itinerary and offers are correct as at 18 March 2026 and are subject to change, availability and withdrawal. Price does not cover all products and service offerings that relate to the cruise. Price based on 4-Day Australia departing 21 January 2027 & 11-Day Australia departing 12 December 2026. Offers are subject to change or withdrawal at any time and combinability with other promotional offers is subject to change. Other restrictions may apply. For full terms and conditions visit ncl.com. ©2026 NCL Corporation Ltd. NCL Australia Pty. Ltd. ABN 80 607 578 781. Ships' Registry: Bahamas and USA. 3391700 03/26

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\*T&Cs apply

## Azamara goes on

**AZAMARA** Cruises has announced its ship *Azamara Onward* will undergo a two-week dry dock in early Nov 2027 and emerge on 25 Nov, when she departs from Athens to Rome.

The transformation comes as part of the line's Azamara Forward recent fleetwide renovation program.

*Onward* will undergo a series of upgrades, including the transformation of onboard nightlife venues, a new Chef's Table experience, a fresh Discoveries Restaurant, the opening of a recrafted Atlas Bar and the makeover of The Cabaret Lounge.

Meanwhile, staterooms and suites will undergo a refresh, as well as public spaces across the ship.

This dry dock follows the refresh of *Azamara Quest*, with *Azamara Journey* and *Azamara Pursuit* also set to undergo the transformation program at a later date.



## Strong Bris summer



**THE** Brisbane International Cruise Terminal (BICT) has farewelled what it has described as "a strong summer season", reinforcing the city's importance as a cruise gateway for Australia and the Pacific region.

Between 10 Oct 2025 and 30 Mar 2026, 101 calls were made at Brisbane, including five maiden visits, while its busiest month was in Dec, when 22 ships visited the Queensland city.

"Welcoming over a hundred cruise ship calls in six months highlights the strength of Queensland's cruise market and Brisbane's position as one of Australia's leading cruise hubs," Port of Brisbane CEO, Neil Stephens explained.

"Queensland is the country's second-largest cruise market and the BICT is central to this, supporting cruise activity and the economic benefits it brings to

regional ports and communities along our state's coastline," he added.

Stephens also mentioned that locally, each ship call contributes an estimated \$1.05 million to the Queensland economy, while supporting local jobs.

During the full 2025/26 cruise season from 01 Oct 2025 to 30 Sep 2026, it is anticipated that 139 cruise ship calls will visit the Queensland capital city.

"We're grateful for the ongoing support of our cruise line customers, particularly our Foundation Partner Carnival Australia," said Stephens.

"Operating the BICT is a genuine team effort, and we want to recognise and thank everyone - from our Port of Brisbane team to all our cruise partners - who plays a role in delivering a safe, efficient and welcoming experience at the BICT," he added. *JHM*

## True North revamp

**TRUE** North has unveiled a \$4 million refit across its ships *True North* and *True North II*, focusing on "performance, comfort and expedition capability", according to the cruise line.

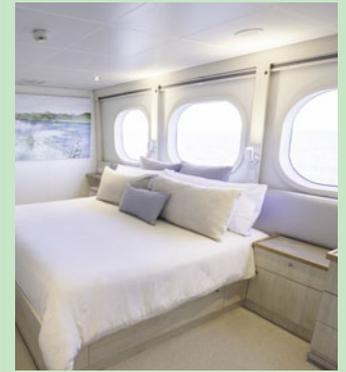
Part of *True North's* upgrade includes the installation of new engines and plenty of interior improvements.

Several cabins on the ship now include an additional Pullman bunk, giving more options for solo travellers.

On *True North II*, guest areas have been enhanced and adventure boats have been added, offering passengers access to remote shorelines, shallow river systems and reef environments.

"We've put a lot into the fleet this year," said Chad Avenell, Director of True North Adventure Cruises.

"It's about how far we can go, how flexible we can be, and what that opens up for guests once we're out there."




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\*T&Cs apply



## Destinations done differently

**LUXURY** cruise passengers are shifting the way that they engage with destinations, a number of cruise executives revealed to *Cruise Weekly's* sister publication, *Travel Daily*.

Despite the cruise sector's love of "waking up with a new view every day", high-end travellers are now moving in the opposite direction, with overnights becoming the new currency luxury cruise lines trade in.

Those who cannot stay overnight remain in port for as long as possible, with some luxury cruise lines such as Azamara, RSSC, and Oceania now boasting up to 10 or more hours in destination.

Meanwhile, cruise lines are becoming more creative when it comes to their shore product, blending together sea and land experiences.

Uniworld's partnership with



Luxury Gold means the river cruise line can now extend its voyages by up to 20 days.

This also allows the cruise line to become a full-service vacation destination, allowing cruisers to reach places they would not typically be able to on a cruise.

As Uniworld boss Alice Ager explained, plenty of passengers ask questions about adding destinations to their trips, which often cannot be offered with just a cruise, but this is now possible on a combination voyage with Uniworld and Luxury Gold.

"We're going to give [travel] a whole new perspective - it's going to be magic," said Ager when Uniworld began working with Luxury Gold two years ago.

AmaWaterways MD for Australia and New Zealand Steve Richards noted a variety of trends which illustrate the way his guests are changing the way they engage with destinations.

The trend comes as luxury cruise passengers seek out alternative destinations in order to avoid overtourism.

"Egypt's gone phenomenal - it's gone from 40% occupancy to 81% versus the same time last year," he explained.

High-end travellers prioritise space, often seeking out alternative destinations for tourist hotspots.

Click [HERE](#) to read *Travel Daily's* new *Luxury on the Move* special report. *MS*

### Miami rail link?

A **DIRECT** rail link between PortMiami and Miami International Airport is on the cards, according to the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization.

First mentioned in the TPO's master plan in 2024, it was suggested as a solution to congestion in the port area.

City officials are now considering the railway as a way to connect the port to one of the busiest international gateways in the US.

Currently, travellers rely on a combination of taxis, rideshare vehicles, hotel shuttles, buses and private coaches to travel between the two locations.

Traffic congestion around both the airport and port have worsened in recent years, driven by rebounding tourism, expanding cruise fleets and population growth. *JHM*



## What's New for 2027

- NEW Star-Ship Emerald Lumi
- NEW Star-Ship Emerald Nova
- NEW Seine River Cruising
- NEW Douro River itineraries
- NEW Themed Cruises

### NEW Europe River Cruising 2027 brochure out now



Rhine, Main, Moselle and Danube, Rhône & Saône, Seine & Douro Rivers

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## PORTHOLE

**POPPING** the question is the of the biggest events in one's life, but for one pair of lovebirds, it was recently spoiled by a cruise worker.

Amanda Bratton reposted a throwback video from 2017 on TikTok that showed the moment her surprise engagement was ruined on a *Carnival Breeze* sailing, thanks to a cake that arrived too early.

In the video, Bratton is sitting at a table with her partner when one of the staff comes over with a cake saying, "We're going to sing Happy engagement", followed by the staff breaking into song.

Unfortunately, Bratton's partner had not yet proposed, but as soon as the cake arrived, he hurriedly got ready to take out the ring.

However, what started out as a ruined plan eventually turned into a memorable moment for the husband and wife.

## Agents get a whiff of Cologne



**DURING** Avalon Waterways' recent training charter (see **page 1**), *Avalon Envision* called into Cologne, one of Germany's largest cities.

Travel advisors departed on a range of shore excursions around Cologne, including a pedal through the city, a walking tour through its old town, and visits to some of the destination's most famous attractions, such as Cologne Cathedral and the

Schokoladenmuseum Koln.

Later in the day *Envision* set sail for Amsterdam, with advisors at night enjoying a gala dinner celebrating the famil.

During the trip, the ship also called into ports such as Heidelberg and Breisach. *MS*

**Pictured** with guide Federico are Jazmyn Guppy, Flight Centre Armadale; Stacy; Siobhan Smith, Helloworld Hobart; and Keren Lynam, Flight Centre Palmerston.

## Celestyal cancels

**CELESTYAL** has confirmed the cancellation of all of its Apr 2026 departures, with its ships repositioning to Athens.

The next planned departures are on board *Celestyal Discovery* from 01 May for a three-night 'Iconic Greek Islands' sailing and *Celestyal Journey* from 02 May for the 'Heavenly Greece, Italy and Croatia' cruise.

Both ships are currently located in the Arabian Gulf and remain fully operational.

## Tracy gets hooked

**SEVERAL** cruise lines have recently pulled sailings through Tracy Arm near Juneau from their Alaska itineraries following a landslide and tsunami last summer which left the fjord unstable.

At this stage, both Carnival Cruise Line and Holland America Line have replaced the fjord with Endicott Arm.

A statement from the United States Geological Survey confirmed that continued rockfall will occur on the arm.



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OR A  
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Destination	Itinerary	Ship	Tour Start	Duration	Cabins From	Suites From
Antarctica	Highlights of Antarctica	MS Fridtjof Nansen	19/11/26	12 Days	\$14,517 pp	\$22,837 pp
Antarctica	Iconic Antarctica – The Explorer's Route	MS Roald Amundsen	31/10/26	16 Days	\$16,334 pp	\$22,833 pp
Antarctica	Life Returns – Springtime Expedition to Antarctica	MS Fram	16/10/26	23 Days	\$23,754 pp	\$31,894 pp
Galápagos	Galápagos Islands – In Darwin's Footsteps	MS Santa Cruz II	01/07/26	9 Days	\$10,304 pp	\$13,502 pp
Greenland	Discovering Greenland – From Reykjavík to Nuuk	MS Fridtjof Nansen	02/06/26	14 Days	\$13,432 pp	\$18,874 pp
Alaska	Alaska's Inside Passage – Fjords of The Great Land	MS Roald Amundsen	02/05/26	10 Days	\$5,549 pp	\$9,081 pp

## OFFERS END 30 APRIL

For all included voyages and destinations and to make a booking, visit [agentportal.travelhx.com](https://agentportal.travelhx.com) or call us on AUS 1300 159 127 NZ 03 288 2085



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**Discount Offer** applies to new bookings made from 24 March 2026 to 30 April 2026 ("Offer Period") for selected HX departures from 20 April 2026 to 31 March 2028. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and applies to all offer occupancies.  
**Suite Upgrade Offer** applies to new bookings made from 24 March 2026 to 30 April 2026 ("Offer Period") and is capacity controlled for selected HX departures from 16 October to 30 December 2026. Departures may be removed at any time. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offer is subject to suite availability at the time of booking. Availability must exist in the following suite categories – ME (MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen) and Q2 (MS Fram). Offer is not applicable to any other suite category (ie MG on MS Fram and MF, MD, MC, MB and MA on MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and apply to all offer occupancies.

