



CRUISE

WEEKLY

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Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **Martin Randall Travel**.

Cruise with Martin

MARTIN Randall Travel offers cultural cruises for the culturally curious.

The touring expert designs river and ocean cruises for travellers who love history, art, music, and archaeology.

Martin Randall sails the Rhine, Danube, Douro, Nile, and Mekong, as well as the Greek and Dalmatian coasts, in small ships which have been exclusively chartered.

Each itinerary is led by a specialist lecturer, while select cruises feature private concerts in extraordinary historic settings, or privileged access to sites - head to **page four** for more information.

Mexico cancels Royal Perfect Day project

ROYAL Caribbean's Perfect Day Mexico (**pictured**) mega-resort project in Costa Maya has been rejected, one of the country's top environmental leaders revealed overnight (**CW** breaking news).

The decision from the Secretariat of Environment & Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) follows backlash from local residents and environmental groups over the US\$600 million (A\$836 million) development's ecological impact.

SEMARNAT secretary Alicia Barcena said Perfect Day Mexico would not be approved, noting Royal Caribbean is taking steps to withdraw the development.

The project was slated to begin opening next year in the village of Mahahual, designed to mirror its successful Bahamian counterpart, Perfect Day at CocoCay.

Royal Caribbean told **Cruise Weekly** it is disappointed by



SEMARNAT's decision, but respects the role of Mexico's environmental authorities.

"We continue to believe in Mexico, and are optimistic in the potential to advance our investment responsibly.

"Over the coming weeks, we will re-engage stakeholders to move forward in a way that delivers shared prosperity through the development of essential environmental infrastructure, the creation of thousands of local jobs, and community programs that support the people of

Mexico," the statement said.

Set to feature a water park, lazy river, beaches, pools, dining, and bars, Perfect Day Mexico had been called out by environmental campaigners Greenpeace, which also warned that the region was at a "crucial juncture".

"We must not do anything that affects that area, which has a very important ecological balance, and is particularly important for the reefs," president of Mexico Claudia Sheinbaum said during a press briefing.

A Change.org petition with more than four million signatures was also demanding the project be halted, claiming Perfect Day Mexico threatened the "local way of life", such as community access to beaches.

The cancellation does not impact the construction of the cruise line's other Mexican Beach Club project in Cozumel. *MS*

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Midnatsol refresh

HURTIGRUTEN'S new Signature ship *Midnatsol* is ready for her first voyage post her refurbishment.

The newly renovated ship features the new Arran and Rost restaurants on deck 8.

Menus are based on ingredients from the regions *Midnatsol* sails through, and they are also accompanied by local beverages.

The Panorama Lounge has also received a new bar.

Meanwhile, a full refurbishment of *Midnatsol's* cabins has taken place, while the gym and sauna have both been upgraded.

Technical improvements have also been carried out, with *Midnatsol* now adapted to comply with the international polar codes.

Midnatsol will now sail to the Norwegian coast during the winter, alternating with *Finnmarken* on weekly departures from Hamburg on the North Cape Line voyage.

She will then head to Svalbard during the summer, sailing between Bergen and Longyearbyen in rotation with her fleetmate *Trollfjord*.

Chief executive officer Hedda Felin said demand for Norwegian coastal and Svalbard voyages is being driven by travellers who want more time in each destination and a closer connection to local culture.

"We are seeing strong growth in demand for voyages along the Norwegian coast and to Svalbard from Australia, both in summer and winter."

Explora VI bookings open



EXPLORA Journeys has unveiled its northern summer 2028 collection, which will see the line achieve its six-ship fleet vision.

The new season marks the inaugural voyages for *Explora VI*, as the line fully realises its €3.5 billion (A\$5.69b) fleet investment.

Marking the cruise line's most expansive collection to date, the season will span 178 destinations across almost 30 countries, and include the debut of *Explora VI* in Aug 2028.

The new collection includes the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, Iceland, and Greenland, with other highlights including Alaska, the East Coast of the United States, Eastern Canada, and more.

Explora will overnight in destinations like New York City, Reykjavik, and Istanbul, and make maiden calls to remote island retreats such as Korcula and the Faroe Islands.

From Apr through Oct, *Explora I* will visit six countries and 25 destinations in the Mediterranean, while *Explora II* will explore the Western

Mediterranean, North Africa, and the French and Italian Rivas.

Returning to Alaska from May through Sep, *Explora III* will navigate 20 destinations across the USA and Canada; *Explora IV* will sail Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea between May and Oct; and *Explora V* will traverse the Norwegian fjords and the North Atlantic before reaching Iceland and Greenland.

Lastly, *Explora VI* will visit Sicily, Sardinia and the French Riviera, before heading to the Adriatic.

"This new Journeys Collection is a true celebration of all that *Explora Journeys* stands for, fulfilling our long-held vision of six ships sailing the world's oceans by 2028," president Anna Nash said.

"By opening sales today, we are inviting our guests to secure their place in what will be a landmark year," she added.

The line is currently offering an early booking benefit, rewarding guests planning in advance with preferred rates and the first opportunity to secure specific suites aboard *Explora VI*. *MS/JM*

Aza dives into Asia

AZAMARA Cruises will offer its first-ever full Asia season in 2028, with 33 sailings aboard *Azamara Pursuit*.

The program will introduce nine combination cruises, allowing guests to explore multiple countries across the continent, including Japan, South Korea, and China, within a single extended journey.

Select itineraries are timed to align with more than 10 regional festivals across Asia.

The line's 2028 season will also see 85 European cruises offered, featuring immersive exploration in destinations like Greece, Italy, and Croatia.

Azamara will visit 12 maiden ports across Europe and Asia, including Caen, France; Sokcho, South Korea; Tokushima and Miyazaki, Japan; and Delphi, Greece, with more than 360 late nights and overnight stays throughout the season.

Travellers can also enjoy expanded scenic and river cruising, with routes including the Guadalquivir river into Seville, the Garonne into Bordeaux, the Seine into Rouen, the Yangtze River into Shanghai, and the Mekong Delta to Ho Chi Minh City.

"Our country-intensive sailings in regions like Greece and Italy remain a core part of what we offer, and with the addition of Asia-focused itineraries in 2028, we're expanding the range and depth of destinations guests can experience across our deployment," head of itinerary planning Michael Pawlus said.

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A FORMER competitive figure skater who now plies her trade on cruise ships believes her new profession is much more rewarding than competing for medals.

Alexandra, 33, from the Czech Republic, has spent the last five years performing across Royal Caribbean's ships, after stepping away from competing professionally when COVID-19 brought pro skating to a halt.

"We are there not to show a perfect performance in terms of points or in terms of technical difficulties, we are there to entertain, to make sure everybody's having a great time," she told the *Daily Mail*.

Rough seas can be a challenge, however, there is always a workaround.

"We always try to find a version of tricks that we are able to do while the ship is rocking a lot so that we can stay safe."

RSSC unveils 2028/29 season



REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has announced its ultra-luxury voyage collection for the 2028/29 season, headlined by a 150-night world cruise.

Departing in 2029 on the refreshed *Seven Seas Mariner*, the 'Eras of Exploration' world sailing will voyage to the Amazon before heading south to Antarctica, then visiting the South Pacific, Australia, Southeast Asia, India, Arabia, and the Mediterranean, before concluding in Rome.

The season also features three Grand Voyages and all-inclusive cruises through Africa and Arabia, Alaska, Asia, Australia, New

Zealand, Canada, New England, the Caribbean, the Panama Canal, the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, South America, and the South Pacific.

Seven Seas Explorer and *Seven Seas Mariner* will sail into local waters to offer six itineraries across Australia ranging between 10-21 nights, with two featuring visits to New Zealand's Doubtful, Dusky, and Milford Sounds.

A highlight of RSSC's 2028/29 season will be the debut of *Seven Seas Prestige*, which is set for delivery later this year, and will make her Canada and New England debut in autumn 2028 with five 11-night itineraries. *JM*

HAL goes Grand

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has opened bookings for its 2028 Grand Voyages, with extended itineraries exploring Antarctica, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, and more.

Voyages aboard *Volendam* and *Zaandam* span six continents, with a focus on marquee destinations, scenic cruising, and longer stays.

The 129-day '2028 Grand World Voyage' circles the globe with a full Antarctic experience and scenic cruising through South America's most dramatic destinations, including the Chilean fjords, Glacier Alley, the Beagle Channel, and Easter Island.

Guests cross the equator twice and experience a sail past Null Island in the Atlantic, where the prime meridian and equator intersect.

Meanwhile, the 90-day 2028 'Grand Australia & New Zealand Voyage' offers a focused exploration of the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia, with a number of overnight calls and multi-day stays.



THE ART OF THE RIVER CRUISE SHIP

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Each itinerary is conceived as a coherent cultural journey, led by a specialist lecturer. Select cruises feature private concerts in extraordinary historic settings or privileged access to sites. Small groups, close moorings and history brought to life create rare, memorable experiences for culturally curious travellers.

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