CRUISE WEEKLY
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Tuesday 10th Nov 2026

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of the latest cruise industry news.

Nominate for CLIA

NOMINATIONS for the 2027 Cruise Industry Awards are closing next week.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) members only have until the end of Fri 20 Nov to nominate themselves or their peers for some of the most prestigious awards available to cruise specialist travel advisors.

Fifteen award categories will be judged this year, 10 of which are open to peer- or self-nomination.

The awards will be announced at a gala celebration on Sat 13 Feb 2027 at ICC Sydney - **CLICK HERE** for more info on nominations.

RCYC appoints new CEO and president



VETERAN luxury hospitality executive Alan Leibman (**pictured** left) has been appointed chief executive of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection (RCYC), in support of the brand's "next phase of growth" (***CW*** breaking news).

Leibman arrives at RCYC alongside another new appointment, Tatiana Ferreira (**pictured** right), who has been named president.

The two succeed Ernesto Fara, who served as both chief executive and president.

A member of RCYC's board, Leibman brings more than three decades of global luxury hospitality experience to the role.

The appointment also marks a homecoming for Leibman, who in 1994, at age 25, became the youngest general manager in the hotel brand's history at the former Ritz-Carlton Double Bay.

Meanwhile, Ferreira, who joined RCYC as chief sales officer less than four months ago (***CW*** 23 Jul), will continue to oversee sales and commercial activities while also supervising information technology, marketing and passenger experience.

The cruise line said that bringing these functions together under her leadership will enable it to accelerate its continued growth and improve its end-to-end guest experience.

"Alan brings decades of global hospitality experience and a genuine understanding of our business," executive chair Jim Murren said.

"Together with Tatiana's commercial strength and her deep relationships across the luxury travel community, we have the leadership to build on our momentum and help define the next chapter of The Ritz-Carlton legacy," he added. *MS*

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Europe is strong

FORWARD bookings remain strong for Scenic Group, particularly in winter where cruising is seeing steady growth of late, according to the company's director global marketing and branded content, Katherine O'Neill.

Europe remains a favourite among its guests, with particular interest in festive season travel, she revealed.

"More guests want to experience Europe's Christmas markets and winter traditions.

"Asia is another exciting area of growth, particularly the Mekong and India, where travellers can really immerse themselves in the local culture, food and history," O'Neill said.

"Forward bookings remain strong, with some of our newest ships and itineraries already fully booked for their first months of operation."

Rainer steps down from HX

HX Expeditions has announced the departure of its chief executive officer, Gebhard Rainer, who has made the decision to return home to the US in order to be closer to his family (***CW*** breaking news).

The company's board is now searching for a new leader, with Rainer (**pictured**) to remain on board during a transition period over the next few months to ensure a smooth handover.

Since joining the line in 2024, Rainer has helped HX strengthen its guest experience and advance its strategic goals, with year-to-date bookings up more than 25% globally, including 24% growth in the UK and 58% in the US.

Rainer also oversaw the introduction of a new digital booking system and guest app.

"The Board has full confidence in the exceptionally strong team Gebhard has built to lead HX through this transition," HX board chair Alex Dichter said.



Reflecting on his decision to leave, Rainer said: "This has been a difficult decision, but returning home to the USA to be closer to my family is important to me.

"HX is a UK company headquartered in London, so leading the team from the US was not viable," he added.

"I am proud of what we have achieved together, strengthening the business and building momentum for the future." *JM*

Eden heats up

***CELEBRITY** Solstice* pulled into Eden yesterday, marking the first cruise arrival of the season for the NSW South Coast town.

The vessel is the first of 25 ships set to call into Eden during summer 2026/27, which runs through to Apr.

Since the port opened in 2005, cruise has become a pivotal tourism driver for the town, as well as the wider Bega Valley region, generating around $14.3 million during the 2024/25 season, which saw over 85% of pax participate in a shore excursion.

"This season we have 43 volunteer Welcome Ambassadors and shuttle guides, with 16 of those local students, as well as 21 dedicated guides and shuttle coordinators," said Cruise Eden manager Debbie Meers.

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Magellan is here

ANTARCTICA21 officially welcomed *Magellan Discoverer* into its fleet last week, making history as the first hybrid-electric expedition ship purpose-built for Antarctica air-cruises.

The vessel features 40 cabins, each with a private balcony, complemented by a dining room that can serve all guests at once, a 360-degree deck, sauna, and a crew and expedition team of 67.

Interiors are designed by Tomas Tillberg Design and inspired by the line's Explorers House in Punta Arenas, Chile.

The newbuild will set sail on her first Antarctic air-cruise on 15 Dec, operating alongside *Magellan Explorer* during the 2026/27 season.

Voyages aboard both ships are now available to book through 2028/29.

Anderson claims a stake in Cruiseabout



CRAIG Anderson, who leads Cruiseabout's Mornington branch in Victoria, has taken out an equity stake in the store, becoming the third team leader to take part in the company's Business Ownership Scheme.

The initiative allows team leaders to buy a share in the store they run and receive a bigger chunk of the profit it generates.

Since taking the reins at Mornington in Mar 2025, Anderson (**pictured**) has since established himself as one of the top-performing team leaders in Cruiseabout's network.

"I decided to buy into Mornington because I 100% back my team and my leadership," Anderson explained.

"We have shown what we can do in our first 12 months, and I am so passionate about what we can achieve in the coming years that it made sense to put my money where my mouth is."

Commenting on the move, Cruiseabout general manager Brad Kennedy said that it is a strong example of the Business Ownership Scheme in practice.

"He is not managing a store for someone else anymore; he owns a piece of it," said Kennedy.

"When a leader has skin in the game the way Craig now does, everything changes: how they hire, how they coach, how they look after a customer who walks in on a quiet Tuesday."

Anderson has confirmed that his day-to-day operations will not change, with the major difference being that he is now in a position to provide formal feedback to Cruiseabout HQ through the owners' advisory board. *JB*



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PORTHOLE

TWO Newport Beach fishermen came across the catch of their lives recently - not a fish...but a Royal Caribbean pianist.

Sean Norton and Grant Garrett were returning home from a marlin fishing trip near Catalina Island when they found the 37-year-old man in the Pacific Ocean, more than 32km off the coast.

The man, who is has yet to be identified, had supposedly been treading water for the past nine hours before he was rescued, telling the two fisherman that he played piano on *Ovation of the Seas*, which was en route from Ensenada, Mexico to Long Beach, California.

He has since been retrieved by the US Coast Guard, which is currently investigating how the incident occurred.

The pianist is expected to make a full recovery.

"We are providing support and assistance to our crew member during this difficult time," Royal Caribbean said in a statement to *CBS*.

"To respect the privacy of our employee, we have no additional details to share."

The incident comes two months after a man from California disappeared after going overboard on *Carnival Panorama*, which had also been sailing from Mexico to Long Beach.

Hurtigruten opens 2028/29



HURTIGRUTEN has opened bookings for 2028/29, with sailings running from 01 Apr 2028 through 31 Mar 2029.

The upcoming season will be highlighted by expanded Signature Line voyages, featuring in-depth trips along the Norwegian coastline, including Svalbard in the summer and Copenhagen and Oslo in the winter, with each voyage ranging from eight days one-way to 15 days roundtrip.

In addition, Hurtigruten has also bolstered its lineup of Signature Explorer Voyages - eight-day itineraries that give travellers the opportunity to immerse themselves in one region, such as the inner fjords or the Arctic Circle.

The season also includes Hurtigruten's Original Coastal Express voyages, sailing between Bergen and Kirkenes.

Calling at 34 ports, the trips will carry local guests and cargo alongside international passengers, giving travellers a glimpse of Norwegian lifestyle and culture.

"There's plenty to get excited about with our 2028/29 season, and even more ways for our market to experience the very best of Norway," said Damian Perry, managing director, Hurtigruten Asia-Pacific.

"We've seen such a fantastic response to our new Signature voyages that we're making three of our newest itineraries permanent, which is great news for travellers and trade partners alike," he added.

"Whether it's exploring Norway's spectacular coastline, spending more time getting to know a particular region or experiencing life in its coastal communities, there's something very special about seeing Norway with Hurtigruten."

MEANWHILE, travellers can enjoy a reduced deposit of 10% when they book the new season before 16 Nov. *JB*

Riverside perks

RIVERSIDE Luxury Cruises has launched a range of earlybird incentives for European river sailing across 2027 and 2028.

For 2027 sailings, travellers can save 15% when booking before 28 Feb 2027, as well as save 10% on bookings made between 01 Mar and 31 May.

Additionally, an extra 10% discount is also available when booking sailings seven nights or more.

Those wanting to set sail in 2028 can earn a earlybird promotion of 18% across all voyages, suite categories and packages, valid on bookings made before 30 Jun 2027.

A 12% saving is also available on bookings made between 01-31 Jul 2027, as well as a 10% long stay bonus.

Find out more **HERE**.

Zurvas' big Dream

FORMER Celestyal executive Jarrod Zurvas has rejoined SeaDream Yacht Club as its vice president of sales APAC.

He spent the past 20 months with Celestyal, serving as director of business development Asia Pacific.

Zurvas' first tenure at SeaDream saw him lead sales in the APAC region from Jul 2024 to Mar 2025.

Across his career, he has held senior sales positions at cruise lines such as Captain Cook Cruises, Quark Expeditions and Variety Cruises, as well as serving as BDM for both Scenic and Carnival.

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EDITORIAL
Editor - Myles Stedman
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Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
Business Development Manager - Kara Stanley
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER
Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS
accounts@traveldaily.com.au
info@traveldaily.com.au
Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220
Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220

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