CRUISE WEEKLY
delivered daily!
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Thursday 12th Nov 2026

Cruise Weekly today

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

Viking goes south

THE 19-day 'Grand Nile Journey' is Viking's Itinerary of the Week, with sailings available from Feb to May and Aug to Oct in 2028.

Guests will sail roundtrip along the Nile River from Cairo to Aswan, stopping to see landmarks like the Pyramids of Giza, Tell el-Amarna and Luxor during the voyage.

Pre- and post-cruise extensions are also available, including two nights in Cairo, five nights in Morocco and four nights in Jordan.

Book before 30 Nov to receive economy airfares up to $2,800pp included.

See more on the **back page**.

Scenic introduces new APAC leader

SCENIC Group has announced the appointment of Ana Sofia Ayala (**pictured**) as its new managing director APAC, effective 18 Jan 2027 (***CW*** breaking news).

Ayala brings more than two decades of international travel industry experience, with the last seven years spent as chief revenue and marketing officer at Voyages Tourism Australia.

She was also previously the global director of eCommerce at Royal Caribbean's Miami headquarters, where she led digital initiatives that grew pre-cruise revenue.

Based out of Scenic Group's Sydney office, Ayala will lead the regional team and help support travel partners as the company continues to expand its worldwide luxury river cruising, yacht cruising and escorted touring portfolio.



The development follows the departure of general manager sales & marketing APAC Anthony Laver last month after nine years in the role (***CW*** 07 Oct).

"Ana Sofia brings a powerful combination of international cruise experience, commercial leadership and a clear understanding of what matters to guests and travel partners," Adam Armstrong, Scenic Group chief commercial officer, said.

"As we enter our next phase of growth, her ability to connect brand, distribution, digital and customer experience will be invaluable," he added.

Reflecting on her new role, Ana Sofia said: "Scenic Group is an Australian success story, with extraordinary ships, journeys and people, and I'm thrilled to be joining in its 40th year.

"With new ships and destinations on the way, this is a pivotal moment for Scenic in Asia Pacific," she added.

Meanwhile, Scenic Group has promoted Angus Crichton to global head of product, now based at the company's office in Zug, Switzerland.

Crichton has been with the company for nearly three decades in senior sales, marketing and product roles. *JM*

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Mekong packages

AMAWATERWAYS has introduced specially priced Mekong cruise and land packages for 2027.

Available on selected departures between Aug and Oct 2027, the packages combine a seven-night luxury river cruise along the Mekong with eight nights exploring some of Southeast Asia's most iconic destinations.

Guests can choose between AmaWaterways' 'Charms of the Mekong' and 'Riches of the Mekong' itineraries, sailing aboard *AmaDara* or the brand-new *AmaMaya*, set to join the fleet in 2027.

"We've really taken the hard work out of planning this trip," AmaWaterways MD AU/NZ Steve Richards said.

"There's so much to see and do in Vietnam and Cambodia, and we've brought together all those must-see places, like Angkor Wat and Ha Long Bay, with the wonderful experiences guests enjoy along the Mekong."

The packages include accommodation onboard and on land, all onboard meals and beverages, daily breakfast during the land stay, guided experiences and more.

Prices start from A$5,965 per person, twin share, or from $8,840 for a Junior Suite package, for new bookings made by 31 Dec.

Cruise pax move upstream



CRUISE passengers are moving upmarket, and the savviest luxury travel advisors are looking to retain these customers as they trade up, Luxury Travel Collection general manager Nikki Glading has said.

Speaking to ***Cruise Weekly*** at this week's Remarkable Soiree, Glading explained how cruise customers have been evolving over time, moving from mainstream and contemporary brands towards increasingly more expensive, sophisticated and luxury products.

"Today's P&O customer is tomorrow's Princess customer, which is tomorrow's Cunard customer, who will be with Seabourn within 15 years," explained Glading.

"That's when an advisor takes their customers and keeps them, and grows with them."

Flight Centre Travel Group MD luxury and independent Danielle Galloway, speaking for the company's wider portfolio, added: "The average booking value across all of our brands has increased over the past three years - it's continued to increase year-on-year.

"This is showing an evolution of the continued higher spend and higher consumer choice around what they are spending a higher dollar on," she added.

The great wealth transfer is also an important driver of the upward move of cruise passengers, Glading said.

"The younger generations spend to have experiences, so we're only going to see it continue to grow," she explained. *MS*

Pictured: Glading; Deb Corbett, Ponant; Galloway; and Julie Rogers, Ponant.

Viva tests the water

VIVA Cruises has launched a new guide to help travel agents understand the changing water levels in Europe and better sell river cruises to their clients.

The *High Water & Low Water on Europe's Rivers* booklet explains concepts such as why water levels fluctuate, how conditions are monitored and operational considerations when disruptions occur.

It also provides an overview of how Viva Cruises works with local authorities to assess conditions and adjust itineraries where necessary.

The guide is available for free through the cruise line's training portal, which can be accessed **HERE**.

LNG is still the way

LIQUEFIED natural gas (LNG) remains the leading-choice alternative fuel for cruise ships, according to Fincantieri's newly released *Sustainable Maritime Transport Outlook*.

Created in conjunction with energy company Eni and consultancy firm RINA, the report stated that Europe is set to reduce its emissions by 80% through 2050, hence cruise lines in the region are expected to rely on bio-LNG and e-LNG, ensuring operators can build on existing vessels and infrastructure.



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*T&Cs apply. *10% deposit offer valid for all new bookings between 9 November 2026 and 16 November 2026, for departures between 1 April 2028 and 31 March 2029. See website for full details.

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PORTHOLE

CARNIVAL Cruise Line is looking to lure younger guests with the launch of a new brand activation on live-streaming platform Twitch.

Taking place 15 Nov as part of the 'Find Your Fun Again' campaign, the interactive livestream dubbed 'Play Carnival' will see CCL cruise director Erin Weigand join streamer iJustine, as they play a custom-built game onboard *Carnival Celebration,* emulating the spaces and experiences found on the vessel.

The session will see Weigand introduce new challenges to iJustine, as well as pass on requests from viewers, as the streamer attempts to gain her cruise director badge while ensuring that the Fun Metre doesn't drop to zero.

Participating viewers will also have the chance to win a Carnival Cruise, however the full details of how to win are yet to be revealed.

Those missing out on the action will be able to watch the full livestream on Instagram and TikTok the next day.

"We're constantly looking for new ways to push the boundaries on how we connect with consumers, and Play Carnival takes that thinking to a whole new level," said Michael Sotelo, vice president of brand, product and social media at Carnival Cruise Line.

Marella enters golden age



MARELLA Cruises has unveiled a range of new spaces aboard *Marella Discovery 2*, following her transition to an adults-only cruise ship (***CW*** 30 Jun 2026).

Amplify Karaoke is the cruise line's first dedicated karaoke venue, offering a private lounge for up to seven guests that can be booked by the hour, with thousands of songs available.

Taking inspiration from the golden age of travel, the Lost Luggage Bureau (**pictured**) is a speakeasy bar offering a 90-minute immersive experience, complete with live music, actors and signature cocktails.

Guests can select between two stories - The Case in Question and Smugglers Society, both welcoming up to 42 guests and each providing a unique lineup of drinks and entertainment.

For escape-room lovers, Red Handed takes place in the backstage area of a fictional 1920s cabaret lounge, in which teams of six have an hour to solve seven puzzles across two spaces.

Finally, The Loft is a 24-hour, all-inclusive venue, combining a library, board games, as well as arts and craft.

Additionally, the space runs the Crafts Ahoy program with one session on port days and two sessions on sea days - activities include painting and sketching.

According to Marella Cruises, guests have provided positive feedback since *Discovery 2* transitioned to adults only.

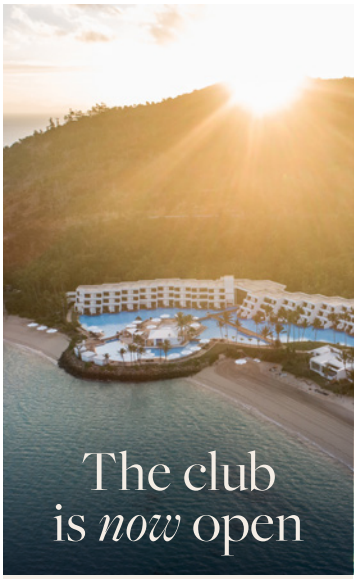
"Our customers have told us how much they value adults-only cruising and our investment in *Marella Discovery 2* shows how we're continuing to modernise our fleet," said Marella Cruises CEO Chris Hackney.

"We've looked closely at what guests love across our ships, as well as wider consumer trends around relaxation, social connection, immersive entertainment and creative wellbeing, to create four distinctive new venues that will appeal to our loyal customers and those new to cruise alike." *JB*

Aurora's new deals

AURORA Expeditions is offering savings of up to 25% on voyages to Scotland and Norway, available on bookings made before 22 Dec.

Featured itineraries in Jun-Jul 2027 include the 12-day 'Wild Scotland' sailing aboard *Douglas Mawson* and the 14-day 'Wild Scottish Isles & Norwegian Fjords' tour aboard *Sylvia Earle*.



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Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper
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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VIKING

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*Conditions apply. Economy flights included up to AU$2,800 pp (use code FOU28). New bookings only. Prices in AUD per person, twin share, subject to availability. Prices correct at time of publishing. Grand Nile Journey based on 25 August 2028 departure. Offers apply to selected 2027 -2029 Viking River, Ocean & Expedition voyages. Available from 05 Aug 2026 to 30 November 2026. For full T&Cs visit viking.com.