CRUISE WEEKLY
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Monday 23rd Nov 2026

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features three pages of the latest cruise news, plus a full page from **Aurora Expeditions.**

Escape with Aurora

AURORA Expeditions' seven-day 'The Great Escape' sale has started now.

The cruise line is offering savings of up to 35% and US$250 per person onboard credit on all new bookings.

Aurora Expeditions' sale is available on a range of itineraries, including the 'Gentle Giants of the Antarctic: A Whale's Tale' 11-day cruise; and the 'Antarctica: Behind the Lens' 11-day journey.

The 'Spirit of Antarctica' 11-day itinerary is also on sale.

The offer ends 30 Nov - head to the **back page** for more info and **CLICK HERE** for all sailings.

APT hails European river recovery

EXCLUSIVE

AFTER experiencing a rocky season along the European rivers, APT Travel Group is celebrating the return to normal water levels, with T*ravelmarvel Capella* recently sailing the Budapest to Amsterdam route for the first time since Jul.

"Previously there were anywhere from one to four ship swaps along that route," CEO David Cox told ***Cruise Weekly***.

"Today, the ships are sailing all the way through and there are no ship swaps - it's the moment that we've been waiting for."

Cox described 2026 as "significantly more challenging than any other year".

"The situation just evolved into something nobody had ever seen on the rivers," he said.

"What we landed on was the learning that you need to be transparent with customers...and



the other key piece was you've got to give them choice."

Affected APT customers were given three options: cancellation with a full refund, a 110% credit for future trips or travel on an amended itinerary with ship swaps, plus a 50% off voucher for future cruises, which most chose.

Given the company owns four identical Travelmarvel ships and two identical APT ships, it aimed to ensure people were shifted to the same kind of vessel during any swaps.

"We were always trying to look at minimising the coach transfers, so across 15 days, the coach transfer piece of it was 15 hours in the worst scenario," he said, noting that if there were hotels that had to be offered, it was usually a night in Budapest or Amsterdam at the start or finish of the sailing.

Unfortunately, the low water levels have impacted forward bookings for 2027, although Cox described this year as "a one-off" which APT has never experienced in its 25-year history.

"If you're considering Europe, yes, there is a risk there, but we really think that history shows that it's a low risk, and if you want to book for 2027, take advantage of the Black Friday deals out there," he said. *JHM*



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Cruise guide OUT NOW
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On location in **Athens**

***Cruise Weekly* is today coming to you from aboard *Viking Vela* as she undertakes a Greek Odyssey itinerary.**

REPRESENTATIVES of top selling Viking agencies are being hosted by MD Michelle Black and director of sales and revenue Keira Smith on the 998-pax *Viking Vela* this week.

The cruise kicked off with an overnight stay in Athens to allow guests to experience the famed Acropolis and the nearby Athens Riviera.

Vela's next port of call is Volos - still on the mainland - before heading into the Aegean to visit several Greek islands.

The itinerary also takes in Ephesus, with a call at Kusadasi.

Save with RSSC

TRAVELLERS can save up to 40% on selected Regent Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) sailings, plus enjoy US$500 credit to spend on board, with the line's newly launched Black Fri sale.

The offer ends 01 Dec, however savings on selected voyages - including the 15-night 'Madagascar Marvels' - will remain available (without the additional shipboard credit) until 31 Dec. *JM*

Action Plan failing cruise

EXCLUSIVE

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has criticised the Australian Government's THRIVE 2030 strategy, suggesting it fails to address the fundamental challenges driving cruise ships away from Australia.

CLIA executive director Joel Katz told ***CW*** the strategy's focus on border processing, visa facilitation and tourism operator capability was important, but does little to tackle the regulatory uncertainty and high operating costs affecting deployment decisions.

Katz said the latest Action Plan "falls well short" of addressing the industry's fundamental challenges, warning that without a change in direction, Australia risks losing even further ground to competing destinations.

"Other countries are actively courting cruise lines and working to secure long-term commitments, while Australia continues to face uncertainty and growing competitive pressures," Katz said.

The industry has raised concerns over the government's rolling short-term exemptions allowing cruise ships to operate in Australian waters under the *Coastal Trading Act*, alongside rising port fees and other operating costs.

Minister for Tourism Don Farrell told ***Cruise Weekly*** on Fri the government remained focused on delivering wins for the cruise sector through THRIVE 2030.

However, Katz added the sector was yet to see a federal tourism policy response that adequately reflected the commercial realities of global cruise deployment.

He warned that once vessels were redeployed to other markets, recovering that capacity could take years, as itineraries and commercial arrangements were planned well in advance.

The comments follow a report by CLIA and the ACA, which found the economic contribution of cruise tourism to Australia had fallen 21% in two years. *AB*

Poseidon savings

POSEIDON Voyages is running a limited time sale, with 20% off select Arctic voyages aboard *Sea Spirit*.

Standout cruises next year include the 'British Isles, Faroe Islands and Iceland' tour departing 20 May, the 'In the Realm of the Polar Bear' tour departing 13 Jun and 'The Best of Svalbard in One Week' itinerary departing 25 Jul.

This offer is valid on bookings made before 30 Nov, excluding bookings of three cabins.

Sea Spirit holds 114 pax with a crew of 72. *JB*



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PORTHOLE

***GRAND** Theft Auto VI* is taking the world by storm, and is also exposing players to the world of cruising.

The game, which is set in a fictionalised version of Miami appropriately known as 'Vice City', features a massive cruise ship docked at the city's port, inspired by Royal Caribbean's Voyager-class vessels.

Featuring multi-level balconies and sundecks, the cruise ship can be explored, and has been noted for its specific similarity to Royal's *Voyager of the Seas*.

Such is the detail of the game, there are actually barnacles and seaweed on the propellers.



Cruising into Melbourne



CRUISE travel agency Cruiseabout has opened its first Melbourne store in Doncaster.

The shop, located in Westfield, is the 11th location around Australia, and will be led by Tyson McAvaney (**pictured** third from right), who returns to Flight Centre Travel Group after five years as a sales team leader outside the travel industry.

McAvaney has previously worked at both Cruiseabout and Infinity Cruises, and has been in training ahead of opening.

He is joined by four cruise consultants, all of whom have cruised first-hand.

There is also a consultant role that Cruiseabout Doncaster is currently recruiting for.

"I want us to be known as the local cruise experts, but also as travel experts, full stop," he said.

"I want people to know they can walk through our doors and get expert advice from people who genuinely love travel."

Cruiseabout is also currently recruiting for team leaders to open new stores in both Victoria (Camberwell and Brighton) and New South Wales (Port Macquarie and Miranda).

The opening continues a period of growth for the brand, which has increased to 90 'Cruiseaders', with plans to reach 120 by the end of the year.

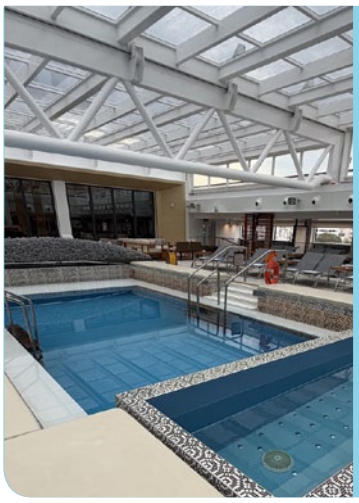
Cruiseabout is working towards 18 stores in FY27. *MS*

Sail away with VV

VIRGIN Voyages has launched its Black Fri sale, allowing travellers to get 80% off a second fare plus up to US$800 in free drinks, or save up to A$149 per night, per passenger on select voyages.

The deal is available to book until 03 Dec 2026, for sailings through 2028.

To learn more or to make a booking, click **HERE**. *JM*



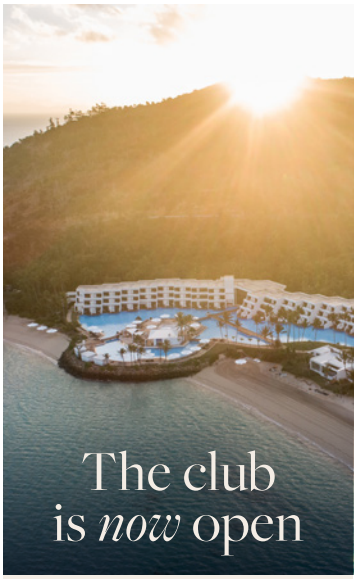
CRUISE WEEKLY

On Board: Viking Vela

Main pool

The sparkling heated pool and hot tub on Viking Vela's deck 7 is a tranquil haven of serenity and can be enjoyed in all weathers thanks to its retracting glass roof and the large, open balcony-style windows found on either side.

It's located adjacent to the pool grill and the pool bar for a casual snack or refreshment, while also nearby is the stylish enclosed Wintergarden which offers an elegant afternoon tea service each day.



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