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Destination: Mekong



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River of Rewards is back for 2027, and this time we're heading to the Mekong!

From 1 October 2026 to 31 March 2027, earn your place on our next Mega Famil through AmaWaterways sales or by taking part in monthly challenges.

Register to participate at riverofrewards.com

Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a cover wrap from **AmaWaterways**.



On location in
Amsterdam

Cruise Weekly is today coming to you from Amsterdam where later this week Viking will formally name seven new river ships.

TODAY we board the new *Viking Rota*, which will be filled with VIP guests eagerly anticipating tomorrow's naming ceremony.

Media from across the globe will join senior Viking executives and the ceremonial godparents of the newbuilds, and after settling in attendees will be treated to guided excursions in Amsterdam.

Tonight we will have dinner on board the ship, with the big event taking place overnight on Thu Australian time.

The jewel in SA's Crown



PRINCESS Cruises has announced it intends to triple its port calls to South Australia in 2028/29, in a move expected to generate an estimated \$22 million in economic benefit for the state.

The cruise line made the announcement at the launch of South Australia's 2026/27 cruise season, with *Crown Princess* (pictured) arriving in Adelaide yesterday morning.

Vice president Asia Pacific Matthew Rutherford said the additional visits would provide more opportunities for guests to discover the best of the state, from Adelaide to rural destinations including Port Lincoln and Kangaroo Island.

"Princess Cruises loves South Australia, as do our guests," Rutherford declared.

"We are offering more opportunities in 2028/29 for Australians to discover this

incredible part of the country.

"We have built a strong connection with this destination over many years and are delighted to continue bringing visitors to discover what makes this state so special."

The full 2028/29 Australian summer program, including the additional calls to Adelaide, will be revealed on 28 Oct, with the itineraries on sale 11 Nov.

Thousands of visitors arrived in Adelaide yesterday to experience South Australia's food, wine and rural tourism offerings.

Guests took part in a wide range of shore excursions, including visits to Hahndorf, Mount Lofty, and Cleland Wildlife Park, and enjoyed wine tasting and culinary experiences in the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, and the Fleurieu.

They also explored Adelaide's cultural attractions, including the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and South Australian Museum. *MS*

More Crystal cruises

CRYSTAL has announced another wave of 2028 and 2029 voyages, with new itineraries aboard *Crystal Symphony*, *Crystal Serenity*, and *Crystal Grace*.

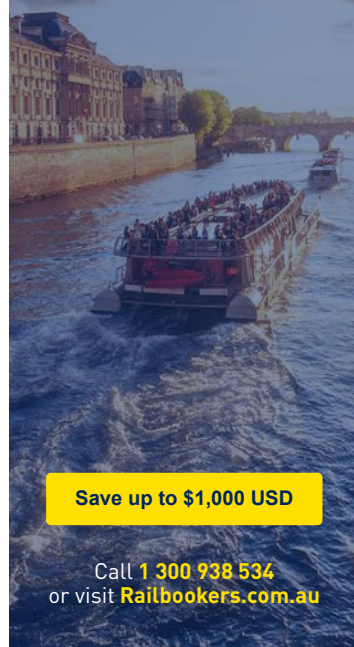
Voyages span Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, South America and the Atlantic.

New ports to make their debut will include Cooktown and Port Arthur in Australia.

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A River of Rewards

AMAWATERWAYS' River of Rewards mega famil program will visit the Mekong next year, with travel advisors invited to sell, engage and earn their way on board.

Qualifying advisors will secure a place on a seven-night journey aboard the new *AmaMaya* in Sep - see the cover page for more info.



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VIEW OFFER



It's not the size, it's how you use it

SMALL luxury ships have emerged as Tasmania's preferred fit to build out its map of rural cruise destinations, the state's top tourism executive has told *Cruise Weekly*.

Tourism Tasmania chief executive officer Sarah Kingston Clark said the destination management organisation sees unique potential in this category of vessel, citing an alignment with its culinary, cellar-door and nature experiences.

She also said expedition vessels are a natural fit for regional ports because of their shallower draft and shorter berth requirements.

"For us, higher value is about the overall economic contribution an itinerary makes to Tasmania," Kingston Clark explained.

"Our research shows that the mid-to-large and small luxury ship segments offer some of the strongest opportunities for



onshore spend and regional dispersal," she added.

"We see particular potential in the small luxury ship segment because it aligns so naturally with what Tasmania does well - premium food, wine and whisky experiences, small-group nature-based journeys, wellness experiences like our outdoor saunas, wildlife encounters and

our rich heritage."

Several small luxury ships already visit Tasmania, from cruise lines including Azamara, Oceania Cruises, and Ponant Explorations (pictured).

Kingston Clark said that Tasmania will continue to attempt to grow calls from mid-to-large ships while also seeking to further develop the state's expedition market. *MS*

It's TIME for Ama

THE Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) has welcomed AmaWaterways as a silver partner, formalising the cruise line's longstanding support for development within the sector.

The partnership reflects AmaWaterways' and TIME's shared commitment to nurturing current and future leaders across cruise, travel, tourism, hospitality and aviation, and to strengthening the connections that help the industry grow.

Over several years, AmaWaterways MD Steve Richards has encouraged team members to participate in TIME as mentees and has supported graduates as they returned as mentors.

TIME chair Penny Spencer said she is delighted to welcome the line as a partner.



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Another RCI WC?

ROYAL Caribbean chief executive officer Michael Bayley said the brand is likely to operate another world cruise in the future.

It has been nearly three years since the 274-night 'Ultimate World Cruise', which sailed from Dec 2023 to Sep 2024.

Although Royal Caribbean has yet to begin actively planning its next world cruise, Bayley said there was a good chance it would happen again in the future.

"I hate getting that question because there's no answer... we probably will, but we've got nothing planned at the moment," Bayley said, as reported by the unofficial *Royal Caribbean Blog*.

The line's first world cruise visited more than 50 countries and 100 destinations aboard *Serenade of the Seas*.

Princess to make its Amazon return

PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its expansive 2028/29 Americas collection, which will see it return to the Amazon River.

More than 250 departures will take place across the season, spanning Canada to Antarctica, including New England, the Caribbean, Hawaii and South America.

Voyages range from four-day getaways along the West Coast of the United States to an epic new 64-day 'Circle South America' adventure, with Princess' return to the Amazon for the first time since 2014 to be a highlight.

Princess will return to the region with a scenic cruising visit to the river and a call to Santarem.

The Amazon will also be included in Princess' 'Circle South America' itinerary, which combines the second-longest river in the world with Antarctica and the Panama Canal.



There will also be ocean-to-ocean Panama Canal voyages, with Princess to transit the 82-kilometre waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific.

Another itinerary returning to

the program is Princess' popular Hawaiian Island round trip from Vancouver, with the cruise line to make a new call in Canada, visiting the Magdalen Islands and its red sandstone cliffs. *MS*

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN



NOMINATE YOURSELF OR A COLLEAGUE TODAY

For more information on Award Criteria and how to nominate, please visit cruising.org.au.
Nominations are open to all CLIA Travel Agent members and close Friday, 20 November 2026.



NOW you have no excuse for coming home from your cruise with a few extra kilograms.

One traveller recently completed seven marathons in seven days while on a seven-night Mediterranean cruise over the summer.

Paul Manson of Scotland told *ABC News* in the United States he only decided to take on the challenge in Aug - the final month of the US summer - and reached out to Princess ahead of his seven-day journey aboard *Enchanted Princess*.

Despite not knowing if he could even accomplish his goal, Manson began by running his first marathon, which is 42 kilometres, through Rome.

Manson also ran through Naples in temperatures of almost 40 degrees, and on a sea day, he said he completed 185 laps aboard the ship to get in his 42 kilometres.

The ultra runner, who shares his running adventures as 'The Random Runner' on social media, also ran marathons through the mountains of Montenegro and two marathons in Greece, where he finished his journey at the site of the first Olympics.

His final marathon in Sicily was arguably the scariest, with Manson running as Mount Etna was erupting, which saw him covered in ash and jumping into the ocean to celebrate.

NCL has even more *Aura*



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has opened two new inaugural Mediterranean sailings aboard *Norwegian Aura* (pictured), its newest and largest ship.

Following the vessel's anticipated early delivery, the new nine- and 10-day voyages will depart in May, giving travellers the chance to be among the first to experience *Aura*.

Additions include the 02 May 10-day sailing from Trieste to Athens, visiting Croatia, Montenegro and the Greek islands, including Santorini and Mykonos.

There is also a new 12 May nine-day sailing from Athens to Trieste, which will stop in destinations like Rhodes, Mykonos, Santorini, Corfu and Croatia.

Following her Mediterranean debut, *Aura* will head to Miami to begin her Caribbean season in Jun 2027.

"The early delivery of *Norwegian Aura* allows us to welcome guests aboard sooner than expected and begin creating unforgettable

vacation experiences earlier than planned," president Marc Kazlauskas said.

"As our largest and most innovative ship yet, *Norwegian Aura* was designed to bring families and travellers of every generation together, with more freedom, choice and ways to enjoy their ideal vacation so no one has to compromise on their experience," he added.

"We are thrilled to open these inaugural Mediterranean sailings and look forward to welcoming our first guests aboard and introducing them to the ship's new entertainment, dining, wellness and innovative family-friendly experiences."

Aura will be NCL's largest and longest ship to date at nearly 350m long and approximately 170,000 gross tonnes.

The ship will be 10% larger than *Norwegian Aqua* and *Norwegian Luna*, with highlights including Ocean Heights, a first-in-the-fleet outdoor activities complex spanning decks 18 to 21. *MS*



Townsville on Top

I'M IN Townsville this week for the 2026 Townsville Enterprise Tourism Futures Forum, and it's fantastic to see cruise tourism firmly on the agenda, with a dedicated session exploring the industry's future in the region.

I'll be joining Scott Lovett from BDO Australia and Ranees Crosby, CEO of the Port of Townsville, for the Cruising Into the Future panel. It's a timely conversation, with Townsville experiencing significant growth in cruise tourism.

In 2024/25, Townsville was the only Australian destination to record growth in both cruise ship visits and passenger numbers, with passenger arrivals more than doubling over 12 months.

Townsville's port upgrades are delivering tangible results, enabling larger cruise ships to visit.

While just two calls exceeded 2,000 passengers in 2024/25, eight are scheduled this season, with vessels carrying up to 3,000 guests.

The 2026/27 summer cruise season kicked off last month with the arrival of Carnival Cruise Line's *Carnival Encounter*, with another year-on-year increase in cruise ship visits expected this season.

Importantly, this growth delivers real benefits to the local economy.

Each cruise guest spends an average of \$265 during their day ashore, supporting local tourism operators, retailers, restaurants, attractions and more.

It's an exciting time for Townsville, and tomorrow's forum is a great opportunity to explore how the region can continue building on this momentum.