CRUISE WEEKLY
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Friday 18th Sep 2026

Cruise Weekly today

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

Trafalgar ramps up

TRAFALGAR has further opened up on its fleet expansion, with plans to introduce new ships in 2028, as well as 10 new itineraries across the Rhine, Main, Danube, Moselle, and Douro.

Journeys will range from seven to 23 days, with full details to be announced soon.

The news follows the launch of Trafalgar's river portfolio this year, with *Trafalgar Verity* on the Rhine and *Trafalgar Reverie* on the Danube (***CW*** 15 Apr 2026).

In 2027, *Trafalgar Dreamer* will also join the brand's river fleet, debuting on the Seine with an eight-day Paris round-trip through Normandy.

Norwegian committed despite restructure

EXCLUSIVE



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line vice president & managing director Ben Angell has told ***CW*** the brand is "absolutely committed" to the Australian market, following the corporate restructure earlier this year which saw many of its most prominent leaders depart (***CW*** 16 Jun).

The company's sweeping reorganisation saw payroll cut by up to 20%, with Norwegian slashing key Australian roles, such as former senior director sales strategy & operations Damian Borg, and a number of BDMs.

However despite the cuts, Angell said the team will continue to evolve as trading conditions normalise, following what has been a broadly tough selling environment for the cruise sector this year.

"We are absolutely committed to the market, we wouldn't have the team here if we weren't; [chief international sales & marketing officer Jason Krimmel] wouldn't be as actively down here as he is," Angell explained to ***CW*** at this week's Cruise360 conference in Sydney .

"We were impacted on a global level, so it's not as if we had changes down here that the globe didn't also experience.

"I think the most important thing is we've got a lot of continuity down here, an incredibly strong team still."

Krimmel, visiting from the United States for Cruise360, said the previous organisation one was built for a cruise market that no longer existed.

"The team structure that we had up until a few months ago was based on the business' return-to-service (from the COVID-19 pandemic) in 2021-2022," he said..."this may not have reflected the way the business is operating in 2026." *MS*

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Travel Daily

SPECIAL REPORT OUT NOW

Luxury on the move:

Welcome to a new era in travel

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A meeting of Ladies

ALL four of Virgin Voyages' 'Lady Ships': *Scarlet*, *Valiant*, *Resilient*, and *Brilliant*, will meet in the open ocean for the first time on 16 Feb 2027.

The convergence, which the brand is calling 'Sisters at Sea', is set to occur 38 nautical miles north of Nuevitas, Cuba, in the Caribbean.

Guests across the four ships can expect front-row seats to the spectacle, as well as a full-day of special programming, including live performances and pool deck celebrations.

Virgin said it will gradually reveal further details as the date approaches.

MSC taking flight

MSC Cruises' *MSC Euribia* will offer Canary Islands voyages during the 2027/28 winter season.

Guests will explore six distinctive island destinations and experience one of the newest ships in the MSC fleet, marking the fourth season of the popular itinerary.

The deployment reflects the continued popularity of winter cruises in the Canary Islands, chief executive officer Gianni Onorato said.

"The Canary Islands are an important part of our winter offering and a program that our guests continue to value highly," he enthused.

GFOB is still trade-first



EXCLUSIVE

NEW Globus family of brands (GFOB) managing director Christopher Leigh (**pictured**) has told ***Cruise Weekly*** he will not be pivoting the company away from its trade-first approach, despite his history in retail.

Leigh said he believes GFOB has the ability to grow its direct-to-consumer presence, but insisted trade is the spine of the company's sales strategy.

"The trade is the backbone, and we need those advisors selling the brands," he said.

"I think the trade's looking at it thinking, 'this guy has come from retail, which is direct-to-consumer', and I think there was a bit of worry at the beginning that, 'is he going to come in and open up GFOB stores all across the country?'.

."I think we definitely have room to grow our direct consumer channel, and that will come from the awareness-building that we do, improving the friction points on our website, but it's a very different environment."

Leigh said improving the relationship between GFOB and travel advisors - which he described as "imperative" - is about making it simpler for agents to sell its product.

This will involve continuing to pursue the 'heroes' and 'fighter products' platform laid down by former managing director Chris Hall - who is now acting in a strategic advisory role for GFOB (***CW*** 12 May).

"We'll look at our best-sellers, and this obviously shifts depending on what's happening in the world," he said. *MS*

Oz love for Europe

EUROPEAN Waterways recorded a 9% year-on-year increase in Australian passengers during its 2026 cruising season, accompanied by a 14% uplift in bookings from Down Under made through travel agents.

Solo Australian passenger numbers saw strong growth in particular, up 14% this year.

Burgundy became the line's most popular region among Aussie guests, with passenger numbers climbing by 67% in 2026, while Champagne also saw a hefty increase, up 50%.

Bookings aboard Ireland's *Shannon Princess* doubled, while *Scottish Highlander* also more than doubled its Australian guests this year.

Rather than Aussies seeking big trips with jam-packed itineraries, the brand is seeing "almost the opposite: travellers wanting to slow things down, concentrate on one region, and truly immerse themselves in its history, culture and way of life", according to John Wood-Dow, co-founder and director of European Waterways.

"The growth we've seen from solo travellers and couples is particularly interesting.

"Luxury increasingly means having the time, access, and freedom to travel at a gentler pace, rather than simply ticking off more places."

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Largest-ever Cruise360 kicks off in Sydney

THE 2026 Cruise360 conference - the region's largest cruise industry event, hosted by Cruise Lines International Association, is taking place in Sydney from Thu 17 Sept to Fri 18 Sep 2026.

Held at the ICC Sydney, the event kicked off yesterday with a record turnout of almost 1,000 travel industry members and advisors in attendance.

This year's official theme is 'Future Ready. Client Ready. Cruise Ready', with the two-day schedule packed with panel discussions from international cruise experts and local industry leaders.

Key focal points for the 2026 conference include streams targeting growth opportunities in river cruising, luxury clientele acquisition, and the profitability of expedition cruising.



RACHEL Kingswell, FCTG; Caroline Hitchen, CruiseHQ; and Rachel Lochhead, FCTG.



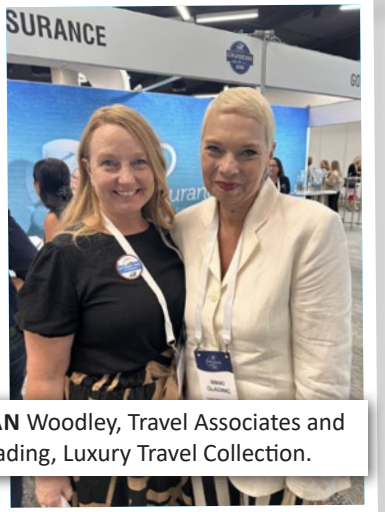
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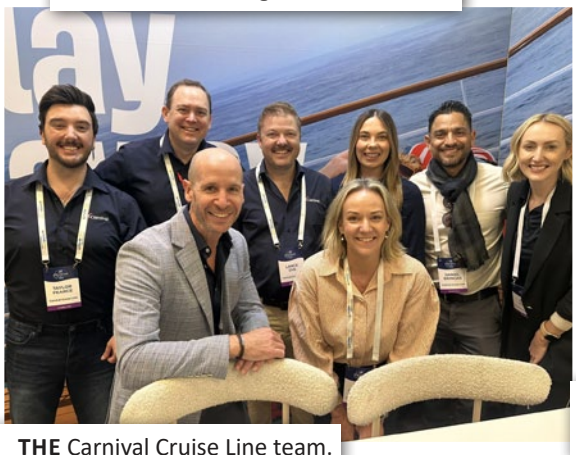
TRAFALGAR'S Andy Young gets comfy on one of the river cruise line's beds.



GILLIAN Woodley, Travel Associates and Nikki Glading, Luxury Travel Collection.



BEN Angell, Norwegian Cruise Line; Danielle Galloway, FCTG; and Emmalita Malmberg, ATIA.



THE Carnival Cruise Line team.



THE Cunard team: Nicky Fardon, Lauren Togher, and Claire Murphy.



ROYAL Caribbean once again played centre stage with its giant duck.

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PORTHOLE

VIKING will be the newest star of the small screen next month, appearing on televisions around the country in a five-part *Explore TV* series.

Set to air on Channel 9 at 4.30pm every Sun from 18 Oct-15 Nov, the series will follow the line's 'Pharaohs & Pyramids' itinerary.

The episodes, which will be hosted by Trevor Cochrane, will follow the ship's journey along the Nile, offering viewers a deeper understanding of the history, culture, and stories behind destinations including the Pyramids of Giza, Karnak Temple, the Valley of the Kings and Abu Simbel.

"The series offers viewers a glimpse into what makes a journey along the Nile so special," Viking MD ANZ Michelle Black said.

Viewers will also have the chance to a win a 12-day Viking voyage for two.

Loyalty program takes flight



EXCLUSIVE

SWAN Hellenic is preparing to launch a loyalty program, chief commercial officer Mario Bounas has told ***Cruise Weekly***, as the line has seen its repeat bookings soar recently.

Bounas (**pictured** right with sales director Kirsty Fruin) said the scheme will begin rolling out in 2027.

"When you take somebody on their first expedition and they find the right partner, they'd like to come back again," he said.

"We know our repeat rates are high, and that's great for agents because they'll earn commission more and more as they keep retaining the right partners and working with the right lines."

The news comes as Swan Hellenic this week also opened its first-ever Australian office, located in Sydney.

Although the cruise line's staff will remain based around Australia, Bounas said the team of five now has a place to catch up regularly. *MS*

Jubilee goes short

CARNIVAL Cruise Line's *Carnival Jubilee* has debuted its first-ever short cruises on one of its Excel-class ships, with new four- and five-day getaways disembarking from Galveston in 2028/29.

The new line-up of shorter cruise options aboard *Jubilee* include stops at Carnival's Paradise Collection exclusive private island destinations.

Jubilee will offer a mix of four-, five-, six- and eight-day cruises from Apr 2028 through Apr 2029.

The ship's new four-day western Caribbean itineraries visit Cozumel, while new five-day western Caribbean sailings call on Cozumel and Progreso.

Meanwhile, *Jubilee* will offer six-day western Caribbean voyages departing 29 Oct 2028, and visiting Cozumel and Isla Tropicale.

The ship will also sail eight-day Bahamas and Caribbean cruises departing 01 Apr 2028, featuring visits to Celebration Key, RelaxAway Half Moon Cay, Nassau, Cozumel, Isla Tropicale and Montego Bay.



ELEVATED EXPERIENCES

APT Travel Group CEO David Cox on catering to discerning travellers.

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