



Uniworld acquires two ex-Crystal ships

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises has announced the expansion of its fleet with two new Super Ships, the *S.S. Victoria* and *S.S. Elisabeth*, which will set sail in Europe in 2024 and 2025, respectively (**CW** breaking news).

The agency will acquire the ships from Riverside Luxury Cruises, the start-up river line owned by German hotelier Seaside Collection (**CW** 11 Jan), under a three-year, bareboat charter agreement for each ship.

The new additions, which were once a part of Crystal Cruises' river fleet as *Crystal Bach* and *Crystal Mahler*, will offer existing Uniworld itineraries with an all-Uniworld staff.

"We're thrilled to add two stunning new ships to the Uniworld fleet, beginning with the *S.S. Victoria* on the beloved Rhine, fulfilling our promise to maintain the best and most luxurious ships on the rivers," Uniworld President and CEO Ellen Bettridge shared.

"The *S.S. Victoria* and *S.S. Elisabeth* are unique vessels that we know our guests will love, featuring a modern design, some of the largest suites on the rivers, and an ambiance that exudes contemporary luxury.

"Onboard, guests can expect our tiny noticeable touches throughout every aspect, from the impeccable service provided by the Uniworld crew they know and love to the multitude of all-



inclusive amenities available to them," Bettridge explained.

The *S.S. Victoria* (pictured) will debut at the start of the 2024 season in Mar in Amsterdam, when she will operate the eight-day 'Holland & Belgium at Tulip Time' cruise through Belgium and the Netherlands.

She will then sail the eight-day 'Castles Along the Rhine' itinerary from Basel to Amsterdam, featuring fairytale-like towns, historic castles, and fine winemaking traditions.

Next on her agenda will be the 10-day voyage along the Moselle and Rhine rivers, before *S.S. Victoria* finishes the year with an eight-day Christmas-themed cruise sailing round-trip from Brussels.

Her sister ship, *S.S. Elisabeth*, is scheduled to set sail for the 2025 season, with Uniworld yet to announce the details.

The identical vessels can cater

for 110 guests in 55 luxe suites and staterooms, each with full-length windows directly in front of the king-sized beds offering panoramic views, and lavish leather, velvet and marble finishes.

Select suite categories feature walk-in closets and fireplaces, as well as up to 759 square feet of space in the operator's first two-bedroom accommodation with adjoining suites.

Guests can also enjoy a massage room, gym, bistro for snacks, rooftop bar and grill for cocktails and light bites, and fine dining restaurant for breakfast, lunch, and gourmet dinner, with all meals featuring fresh local ingredients collected in destination daily. *JM*

Cruise Weekly today

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

Ambassador offer

AMBASSADOR Cruise Line is offering a 'buy one get one half price' offer for its 2024/25 season, ahead of its Aussie debut in Feb (**CW** 27 Apr). The deal applies to bookings made by 25 Oct - **CLICK HERE**.



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P&O Arcadia is Aus-bound

P&O Cruises UK has introduced its new winter 2025/26 collection, which will see its adults-only ship *Arcadia* visit Australia as part of a 100-night Eastern Circumnavigation World Cruise.

The global voyage kicks off in Jan 2026, marking the first time it has run in nine years, and will sail roundtrip from Southampton to call at 28 destinations including Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Dunedin, Dubai, Singapore, San Francisco and LA.

During the Adelaide call, guests will experience the beautiful scenery and premium wines of the Barossa Valley, while in Melbourne, cruisers will encounter over 200 native species at a wildlife sanctuary in the Dandenong Valley.

Arcadia guests will also have the chance to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge, where they can take in incredible views of the harbour after being led to



the summit of the bridge by a qualified guide.

The winter collection also includes two new Caribbean fly-cruise holidays operated by *Britannia*, with features calls in Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Grand Turk.

Additionally, *Aurora* will sail a 75-night Grand Tour around South America, now extended by 10 days, as well as a 14-night northern lights cruise, while *Azura* will visit maiden port of call, Tangier, Morocco on its Canary Islands fly-cruise itinerary.

The 2025/26 season is on sale from 18 Oct, with an introductory offer of a 10% saving. *JM*

The Chat

with
Jenny

Travel Daily

Missed out on any episodes of Season ONE of 'Conversations with women in travel'?

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Viking in demand

VIKING has seen a boom in demand among Aussie and New Zealand travellers for its Arctic itineraries, which it launched in May (*CW* 25 May).

The three voyages traverse the remote Canadian High Arctic and Greenland destinations while offering exciting onshore excursions, including a Huskie-led sled and hiking to a medieval homestead with a Viking.

"When we launched these three itineraries in May this year, their popularity quickly exceeded our expectations," Viking ANZ MD Michelle Black commented.

The cruise line's quiet season Mediterranean voyages between Nov 2023 and Mar 2024 have also proven popular, with Viking urging travellers to book now as spots are filling fast.

Bahama boost

THE Grand Bahama Shipyard (GBS), of which Carnival Corporation and Royal Caribbean Group each hold a 40% stake in, will undergo a US\$600 million upgrade to boost its capacity.

Two new world-class floating dry docks will be added to the shipyard, enabling GBS to service all cruise ships in operation and under construction, including Icon class and Oasis class.

The docks are currently being built in China, and are set to be among the largest floating docks in the Western Hemisphere upon completion in 2025 and 2026.

The transformation heralds a "new and promising chapter in the story of Grand Bahama", according to PM Philip Davis, and is expected to bring billions of dollars in economic benefit.

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Azamara is grand

AZAMARA Cruises has released 11 Grand Voyages for 2024/25, with the longer sailings spending more time in port and fares including added amenities such as economy flights and up to \$1,200 in shore excursion credits.

Each Grand Voyage offers Extended Destination Days with 10-plus hours in port, including late and overnight stays to give guests ample time to explore in depth.

Bonuses also include upgraded premium beverage packages, wi-fi for two devices, and weekly laundry service.

The Grand Voyages include a 70-night Greece to Australia itinerary aboard *Azamara Pursuit* departing 26 Oct 2024, as well as a 61-night South Africa to Italy cruise.

For more details, see azamara.com/grand-voyages.

New Tassie cruise guide

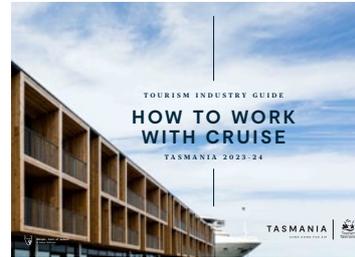
TOURISM Tasmania has published a guide to help local tourism and retail businesses looking to offer product to the burgeoning cruise market.

The 18-page publication provides information on how to deliver shore experiences to passengers, who to work with, and how the cruise distribution system works.

It gives an overview of the state's key cruise ports including Hobart, Burnie and the anchorage of Port Arthur, with details of shore excursion coach parking and additional visitor services.

Expedition ships can also visit Coles Bay, Maria Island, Bell Bay/Tamar, King Island and Stanley.

The report notes that cruise shipping is "an important contributor to the success of Tasmania's visitor economy, with cruise visitors exploring and investing in our regional areas".



It describes how tourism operators and retail/hospitality businesses can access the cruise visitor market, via formal shore excursion programs, independent tours and special retail offers to make cruise passengers and crew feel welcome.

Contact details are provided for Akorn, Bob Wood Cruise Group and InterCruises along with the cruise lines they work with, along with pricing recommendations, trends, and a schedule of planned arrivals for the coming season.

How to work with cruise for 2023/24 is accessible [HERE](#). *BP*

MSC goes all in

CRUISERS can enjoy extra value on 2024 voyages with MSC Cruises, thanks to its new All in Plus promotion.

Guests can enjoy an included Easy Plus Drinks package on selected sailings from Apr to Nov 2024, which offers a wide selection of classic cocktails and frozen drinks, spirits, wines by the glass and beers, plus soft drinks, juices, energy drinks, hot drinks and more.

The offer, which also includes unlimited wi-fi for two devices per cabin, can be applied to a range of itineraries, including a seven-night East Mediterranean sailing aboard *MSC Armonia*, which departs 28 Oct 2024 and is priced from \$1,439 per person, including drinks and wi-fi.

Take advantage of the deal [HERE](#) or call 1300 028 502 before 31 Mar 2024.



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PORTHOLE

ONE Californian woman has made the leap from shark prey to shark protector, becoming an advocate for the feared creatures despite being bitten by a great white.

Maria Korcsmoros, who still suffers with nerve damage and numbness in her foot due to the attack seven years ago, recently hosted the annual Run 4 Sharks & Ocean Health Fair at the Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort to support the non-profit Shark Stewards.

Korcsmoros, who happens to be a triathlete, clearly hasn't let her terrifying encounter deter her from her mission to save the misunderstood fish, and even runs a fitness company called Kiss by a Shark Wellness.



NCL doubles the challenge



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has surpassed its goal of 100,000km just 11 days into its 4th annual Walk for Wellness (W4W), putting it on track to set an even bigger world record.

The impressive achievement has prompted the cruise line to up the challenge, doubling the target to a whopping 200,000km.

The more steps racked up, the more NCL will donate to charity partner, Mood Active, which is dedicated to improving the mental health of Australians through physical activity.

NCL has thanked the industry for its efforts so far, saying, "we hope you are all enjoying the challenge and let's see how far we can step together!"

For this week's W4W challenge, walkers are asked to take three photos of local spots that remind them of a country or city that NCL visits and share which destinations they remind them of and why, with the top two creative entries to win.

Pictured: The NCL Buoys doing their bit yesterday to smash the 100,000km record. JM

50 Degrees North unveils brochure

SCANDINAVIAN tour specialist 50 Degrees North has published its new 2024 brochure, featuring travel tips and itineraries to Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Svalbard.

The 58-page guide also includes a detailed section on the operator's escorted small group tours for summer, winter and Christmas 2024, with the summer collection highlighting six new itineraries.

Several Norwegian Coastal Voyage options are highlighted within the pages, including the seven-day Voyage North cruise from Bergen to Kirkenes and the 15-day Oslo, Bergen & Svalbard Express itinerary, with options for travellers to customise their journey and combine experiences on land with shorter sailings.

The booklet also contains ideas, recommendations and handy QR codes - see the digital brochure **HERE** or request a printed copy via info@fiftydegreesnorth.com.

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