



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Chat-ting again

**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises Managing Director Alice Ager is the latest guest on *The Chat with Jenny* podcast, which is back after a summer break.

Ager speaks with Jenny about her life and her career in the travel industry, which in addition to leading Uniworld River Cruises, has also seen her work with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings and Accor.

**CLICK HERE** to listen to the latest episode.

## Virgin cans second Aus season



**VIRGIN** Voyages has cancelled its second season in Australia, as the cruise line remains concerned about “potential escalations in the Red Sea” over the next 12 months (**CW** breaking news).

The cruise line, which is at the end of its first season in Australia, said the Red Sea crisis “puts unacceptable risks for safe passage through the region for our sailors, crew, and vessel”.

“To say that we are disappointed to have come to this tough conclusion is an understatement,” a Virgin spokesperson said.

“These adjustments are happening now in order to minimise potential future disruption to our passengers’ holiday plans knowing there is a high likelihood that changes would need to happen in the future,” they added.

“Our customers and travel agent partners asked us to ensure we give them as much time as possible to make alternative plans,” the spokesperson said.

Virgin said it had been embraced by the Australian market with a warm welcome, and declared its inaugural season “extremely successful”, adding “the love was mutual”.

The line said it is currently working through options to return to Australia and the Asia Pacific region “once regional repositioning opportunities become more tenable”.

“We will share updates on future itineraries across the fleet as soon as possible, and in the event that we return for the ‘25 season, existing booked sailors will have priority to move onto these sailings,” Virgin said.

Impacted passengers also have the option to rebook another voyage, or opt for a full refund.

*Resilient Lady* (pictured) will now complete her Mediterranean sailing season on 20 Oct, and divert course sailing to San Juan for a new Caribbean season offering 7-, 8-, 10- and 11-night voyages, visiting St. Maarten, St. Vincent, and more. *MS*

### Roll out the Matt

**CULINARY** royalty Julie Goodwin, Normie Bero, Darren Purchase, and Katie Spain are set to complete the line-up for Cunard Line’s third Great Australian Culinary Voyage next year.

The team of high-profile chefs are set to join headliner Matt Moran on the cruise, which will set sail from Sydney on 06 Feb.

President Katie McAlister said the prestigious talent for the Great Australian Culinary Voyage reflects the growing profile of the cruise as a highlight on the Australian food calendar, providing an unforgettable six days of gourmet indulgence for guests.

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## More international cruises for Broome?

**THE** Federal Government's green lighting of enhanced border services at the Port of Broome, which could enhance the town's status as a cruise gateway, is a "welcome development" for the industry, Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel said.

The govt yesterday announced further steps can be taken in Broome (**pictured**) to allow it to achieve "first point of entry" status, which could potentially see cruise ships voyage directly to the town from overseas.

The ACA described the news as thrilling, following several years advocating on behalf of Tourism Western Australia, the Kimberley Ports Authority (KPA), Cruise Broome, and the Kimberley Marine Support Base.

"This will be welcome news for cruise lines as with these procedures in place, greater



flexibility will be available as they plan their international itineraries," Abel told **CW**.

"It also is positive news for all the cruise-related businesses onshore who depend on the cruise industry for their livelihood," she added.

"This is true not just for Broome but for other regional ports on the WA coastline which will now become more accessible as a result of this announcement."

The Australian Border Force and the Department of Agriculture will now work with KPA on the design and development of essential security and biosecurity infrastructure and a resourcing

plan to facilitate international vessels arriving in Broome.

"This will now allow for the port to elevate the infrastructure requirements already underway, including the exciting new \$200 million floating wharf connected by a linkspan ramp to a causeway, which was approved in 2023," Abel explained.

"The onshore terminal facilities required for first and last point of access can now be factored into that development."

WA's Minister for Tourism Rita Saffioti said the move would have a major positive impact in Broome and the surrounding Kimberley region.

"The ability for cruise ships to come directly to Broome from overseas in the future would bring more visitors to Broome and Western Australia - directly supporting our critical tourism industry," she said. **MS**

## Cruises for \$29

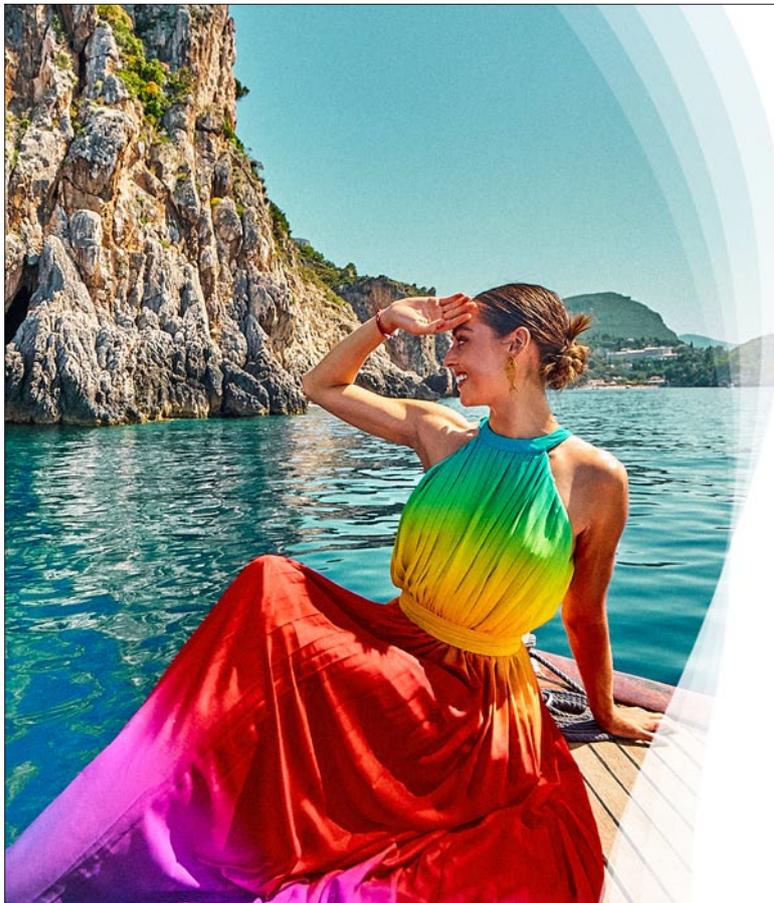
**TO CELEBRATE** the leap year, Celestyal Cruises is offering \$29 cruises this Thu for one day only.

The one-day, "you just have to leap there" offer applies to seven sailings on board *Celestyal Journey* across four itineraries, with departure dates between Mar and Oct.

The seven cruises are the 'Idyllic Aegean', the 'Legendary Ionian', the 'Ancient Athens to Dazzling Doha', and the 'Legendary Aegean' (both four and five nights).

Prices are all-in, and include \$110 per person shore excursion discount, full board, select drinks with meals, and all port and service charges.

Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett said Celestyal wanted to celebrate the leap year with a "truly remarkable cruise offer" to encourage patronage.



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## PORTRHOLE

**A CENTURIES-OLD** mystery of a lost ship has recently been solved - by accident.

*Nemesis*, which went down in Jul 1904, was last seen in distress in rough seas off the coast of Wollongong, on her way from Newcastle to Melbourne to deliver a shipment of coal.

The ship had 32 crew members on board, and in the weeks which preceded *Nemesis'* sinking, their bodies began washing ashore at Cronulla Beach.

The vessel itself was never found however, until Subsea Professional Marine Services stumbled across the wreck two years ago while trying to locate cargo containers lost off the coast of Sydney.

Recently confirmed as *Nemesis*, she was found undisturbed about 26km off Port Kembla, and about 160m under water.

## There's No Doubt Jubilee rocks

**AMERICAN** singer Gwen Stefani named Carnival Cruise Line's *Carnival Jubilee* last week, becoming the first ship to be christened in Galveston.

Stefani spent the day on board *Jubilee*, visiting the bridge to meet Captain Stefano Bonica, cutting the ribbon at several onboard venues, and even blowing the ship's horn.

The No Doubt founder was then joined on stage by Captain Bonica and Carnival President Christine Duffy, as she blessed and named *Jubilee*, pulling a lasso rope and lever that released a champagne bottle which struck the ship's bow to officially christen the vessel.

"I know she has been honoured in so many ways for her music with numerous awards and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and now she has a ship," Duffy said as she introduced Stefani.

"She's also put giving back as an important focus in her



life, especially to a number of children's causes, so we are truly thrilled to have Gwen as the godmother of our flagship *Carnival Jubilee*."

Stefani then treated guests to a private concert of some of her hits, including *Just a Girl*, *The Sweet Escape*, and *Hollaback Girl*.

Galveston Mayor Craig Brown also declared the day '*Carnival Jubilee Day*', which coincided with the 100th birthday of the line's late founder Ted Arison.

**Pictured** is Stefani with Duffy and Carnival Corp President & CEO Josh Weinstein. *MS*

## Star is exploding

**AUSTRALIA'S** first five-star riverboat, Murray River Paddlesteamers' upcoming *Australian Star*, is filling up fast, the line has reported.

The ship, which is still 15 months out from her launch, has already sold one-third of her sailings for her debut season, following the recently announced charter partnership between Murray River and APT (*CW* 19 Feb).

Bookings for the maiden season of *Australian Star* opened on 05 Feb, with Murray River Director Craig Burgess saying the cruise line is delighted to partner with the local tour operator.

"The APT charters, coupled with strong, general early bookings, garner well for the success of *Australian Star* from 2025," he said.

"It's clear our exciting new vessel will prove incredibly popular and successful, drawing more visitors from around Australia and overseas as well as lucrative tour group business," Burgess added - **CLICK HERE** for more info.

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