



### Cruise Weekly today

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

## MSC Down Under

MSC Cruises has released a new segment of its world cruise for next year, which will depart from Melbourne.

The segment will sail from the Victorian capital, offering Australians the rare chance to depart on an MSC cruise without boarding an international flight.

Australians can now book the newly released segments and embark on *MSC Magnifica* with a selection of maiden calls for the line, such as Eden, Adelaide, Penneshaw, Albany, Busselton, and Fremantle.

*Magnifica* will then head to the Maldives, the Seychelles, and Madagascar.

The ship will then journey along the African coastline before arriving back in Europe, in the Mediterranean.

"We're incredibly excited to welcome *MSC Magnifica* Down Under for the local cruise season and announce bookings are now open out of Melbourne, giving Aussies the chance to experience an MSC Cruises cruise direct from a domestic port," Managing Director Lisa Teiotu said.

"These new segments feature a choice of 47-, 49-, and 50-night itineraries departing Melbourne and allow our Aussie guests to visit a range of local and global destinations all the way through to Europe without the need to jump on a flight."

The world cruise will see *Magnifica* take a 120-night voyage around the world, visiting 46 destinations across 21 countries.

Prices start from \$11,525 per person - more information at [msccruises.com.au](http://msccruises.com.au).

## Cunard revamps trade engagement

EXCLUSIVE

CUNARD Line has revamped its trade engagement platforms, as it prepares for its "post-home port world", when *Queen Elizabeth* ends her long-running annual Australian program at the end of this summer (CW 06 Nov).

Commercial Director Katrina McAlpine exclusively revealed to CW Cunard's revamped famil program, and its updated trade toolkit, as the line pivots to a full fly-cruise strategy.

"Because we're not going to have a home port ship, we really had to rethink about how we work to make sure that the trade have all the tools they need to sell us confidently," she told CW.

Cunard has created three new famil categories for the trade, which will include trips targeting new-to-brand agents, and itineraries for experienced sellers.

Travel advisors not familiar with Cunard will receive a '101' on the fleet, the cruise line's identity, as well as its guest profile, and how potential passengers can be identified among their clients.

Meanwhile, advisors more seasoned in selling Cunard will be hosted by the cruise line's onboard sales managers for insider sales tips, and receive the same experiences their guests get while on board.

"What are the things that we can do to make sure that you're really well-versed with the insider knowledge? How do you upgrade passengers into the high-value stock so you can have a higher value guest within your portfolio?" McAlpine explained.

There will also be famils crafted for marketing and product managers, with the first of these to depart in Jan next year.

"We've got our marketing manager [and] our media agency that go on board with them, give them a little bit of an overview of how we're going out to market, share a bit of data with them that

we wouldn't otherwise share, [such as] booking lead times," McAlpine added.

"[We're] tapping into all levels of the business, not just frontline staff, and making sure that everyone has the tools, right from how they interact with their guests, with EDMs, and their own platforms, through to how they're selling as well," she explained.

Cunard's toolkit has also been revamped with a series of 10 trade training videos, featuring the local Cunard team.

They are designed to be "fun, short, and punchy", conveying key information to trade partners.

"We haven't had a training platform for Cunard in Australia since we've been established here, and so what we have done is created some training videos for the trade partners," she explained to CW.

"We're not going to have the ships here for long periods of time, so we won't be able to do as many walkarounds, but this video series really brings the whole experience to life," McAlpine added.

The end of the Australian home port season for Cunard will not change the cruise line's devotion to the country's travel trade, McAlpine reinforced.

"We're really committed to this market, [and] we're really committed to trade partners.

"Since we've made the announcement of *Queen Elizabeth* moving to the Caribbean after the summer season, we have had a lot of questions around, how do we sell Cunard if we're not going to be able to see her as often, and how are we going to be able to keep it front of mind?

"For us, that was something really important to address and making sure we can do it in a way that [agents] want to actually engage with...giving them confidence to sell," she added. MS

## Norwegian takes 3

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has broadened its partnership with Australian environmental non-for-profit, Take 3 for the Sea, as the exclusive sponsor of its 2024/25 Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) Program.

Running from now until Mar, the program promotes environmental stewardship, community engagement, and encourages participation in beach clean-ups.

This will mark the third consecutive year of partnership between NCL and Take 3, and as part of the initiative, the cruise line will encourage its local team members and trade partners.

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Disney CRUISE LINE

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### Tassie underway

TASMANIA'S cruise season is underway for 2024-25, with Princess Cruises' *Crown Princess*' arrival into Hobart earlier this week.

*Crown's* call in Tasmania on Mon was her inaugural visit to the state (CW 29 Oct).

This season is expected to bring around 368,000 passengers and crew to Tasmania between Oct and May, with 141 scheduled visits into Hobart, Burnie, and Port Arthur, along with a number of smaller ports.

Last year saw a record 352,156 passenger and crew member visits during the 2023-24 season, with direct onshore expenditure estimated at \$31 million.

Tourism Tasmania has also developed a 'How to work with cruise' guide for the state's tourism operators looking to offer tourism products to the cruise market.

It provides information on how to deliver shore experiences to passengers, and who to work with.

## Best of two luxurious worlds



IT WAS wall-to-wall luxury on land and sea for this group of agents from Australia and New Zealand recently as COMO Hotels and Resorts teamed up with Seabourn for a deluxe dual-famil.

The trip kicked off with COMO Hotels showcasing some of its most palatial properties in Singapore, France and the romance of Italy's Dolomites and Tuscany region.

Highlights of this part of the famil included fresh croissants at Cedric Grolet in Singapore, a day of hiking in the Dolomites -

the mountain range where San Pellegrino mineral water is made - and biking through seemingly endless vineyards in Burgundy.

After a few nights, the group then expanded, meeting with more agents in Monaco as guests of the Maybourne Riveria Hotel and Visit Monaco.

The group then boarded a Seabourn ship for a cruise across the Med to Barcelona. *MS*

**Pictured** outside the COMO Alpine Dolomites in Italy are: Dana Michael, Y Travel; Jan Smith, Enhance Travel; Lynn Maher, Wentworth Travel; Kate McLean, Mary Rossi Travel; Jonica Paramor, COMO Hotels & Resorts; Deborah Carlin, COMO Alpina Dolomites; and Michelle Sutton, Quay Travel, Auckland.

### Strachan services

PANDAW has appointed Toni Strachan as its new Customer Service Manager to assist all of the line's customers.

Strachan replaces James Talbot in the role and will be based in Ho Chi Minh City.

### Brown loves Allura

US TV host Samantha Brown from *Samantha Brown's Places to Love* will next year host a sailing from Monte Carlo to Athens in partnership with Oceania Cruises.

The Emmy-winning TV host will conduct meet-and-greet sessions, convey expert lectures, a cocktail reception, and a destination-themed Chef's Market Dinner event.



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## PORTHOLE

**DOOMED** multi-year world cruise *Villa Vie Odyssey* just can't seem to catch a break.

Originally meant to depart in May, the ship finally set sail after a four-month delay, but this didn't stop the problems.

The latest drama to hit the passenger contingent came last week when the toilets onboard decided to stop working, causing the smell of sewage to permeate the corridors.

This led to some guests considering whether to abandon the idea of life at sea and leave the ship for good.

Some even dubbed the ship as the *SS Clusterf\*\*k*, with some guests writing on online forums deeming the ship as like a "third-world country".

"Yep, we awakened to the faint smell of s\*\*t marinating in a hundred unflushed bowls, wafting through the corridors, gently mixing with the ocean breeze," one forum entry said.

## Nine exclusive ports for SH



**EXPEDITION** line Swan Hellenic will introduce cruise travellers to nine global ports never before visited by any other cruise line as it wraps up its 2025-26 season.

The line has released itineraries for a series of cultural expedition cruises, with the new ports featuring among a list of off-the-beaten-track destinations.

One such port is Hermanus (pictured), a small town southeast of Cape Town in South Africa, which has never been visited by any other cruise line.

Guests onboard *SH Diana* will call into the small town in Nov 2025 and again in 2026 to explore the old fishing village, with off-ship excursions including a visit to

the Fernkloof Nature Reserve in the Kleinrivier Mountains.

Five more ports will welcome their first Swan Hellenic ship, with Elmina, Ghana and Ilha Baia Dos Tigres, Angola both featuring along with three Gabonese ports in Baie des Tortues, Loango National Park and Mayumba.

Across the southern Atlantic ocean to South America, Swan Hellenic will venture deep into Brazil, exploring towns such as Trancoso, Itacare, Morro de Sao Paulo, and the Abrolhos Archipelago for the first time.

Elsewhere, the season will feature new ports including Vaeroy, Norway, and Donana National Park in Spain. *ML*

## FCCA in St Maarten

**MORE** than 670 destination representatives and 100 global cruise line leaders gathered in St Maarten last week for the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Cruise Conference and Trade Show.

The event sees executives from ports, destinations and cruise lines meet to share ideas on growth opportunities for the region.

This year's FCCA conference featured over 940 rapid-fire 15-minute meetings, a 34% increase on the year prior.

Key topics discussed included more home-porting opportunities, longer stays, port development, increased capacity, summer cruising, and local employment challenges.

FCCA boss Michele Paige applauded event organisers for the overwhelming success.

"It was humbling to see the cruise executives' historic belief in our mission to link stakeholders and cruise lines to develop mutual benefits, proven by the event's record number of one-on-one meetings," Paige said.

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