

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from Silversea.

No Drake shake

SILVERSEA'S Antarctica fly cruise offers travellers a direct connection to their expedition, which will be available from Jan 2026.

Pax staying at Silversea's new Patagonian hotel, The Cormorant at 55 South, can skip the Drake Passage and fly directly to Antarctica - see [page 4](#) for more.

Copper comeback

SOUTH Australia's Copper Coast on the Yorke Peninsula is preparing to welcome its first cruise ship in seven years, with *Seabourn Quest* to dock at Wallaroo Jetty in Mar 2027.

New river generation begins for APT

APT Travel Group has officially welcomed its second new wholly owned river cruise ship, with a ceremony taking place prior to the first sailing of *APT Solara*.

The christening marks a new chapter for the Australian brand following the sale last year of its stake in AmaWaterways (**CW** 07 Mar 2024).

Solara will sail on the Rhine/Main and Danube rivers in Europe, and is the second ship in the company's burgeoning new fleet to enter service, following the christening last week of *Estrela* (**CW** 17 Apr), which sails on the Douro in Portugal.

APT co-owner Lou Tandy served as the godmother to *Solara*, cutting the ribbon to break the champagne across the ship's bow, as part of a long-standing maritime tradition.

"It's a true honour to serve as godmother for a ship that means so much to our team, our guests,



and my family," Tandy said.

Carrying 154 passengers, APT's new ship features Gruner Bar & Dining, a levitating restaurant which can move between the centre deck and sun deck.

Five other dining venues, each focusing on a different European flavour, are available for passengers to dine each evening.

Chief Executive Officer David Cox said *Solara* is everything APT stands for: timeless travel, service, and innovation.

"She's more than just a new

ship; she sets a new benchmark for how we deliver exceptional experiences on Europe's rivers," Cox said at the ceremony.

A third ship - *APT Ostara* - will be christened in Jun in the German city of Nuremberg.

Ostara will be a twin ship to *Solara* and will also operate the company's river itineraries on the Rhine/Main/Danube stretch.

Solara will set sail on her maiden departure of APT's flagship 'Magnificent Europe' itinerary on Fri. *ML*

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Mildura to score new MRPS vessel

A NEW \$7.75 million, five-star river cruise vessel (render pictured) has been announced by Murray River Paddlesteamers (MRPS), set to sail from Mildura to Adelaide from 2027 (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

The cruise line's third vessel, *Australian Sky*, will be built with the support of the Victorian government through its Regional Tourism Investment Fund, as first revealed by **CW** yesterday.

APT will also support the build of *Sky* through a long-term charter partnership, similar to the arrangement the tour operator holds with the ship's upcoming sister vessel *Australian Star* (**CW** 19 Feb 2024).

Sky will carry 38 guests on journeys of three to 11 nights from the Mildura, which has not hosted a cruise vessel in a number of decades.

She will aim to blend a traditional paddle steamer design with premium, contemporary amenities, such as en suite air-conditioned staterooms; a panoramic bar, lounge, and viewing deck; a fine-dining venue; expansive outdoor areas; and Starlink wi-fi.

Sky's 3-, 4-, and 7-night cruises will sail during spring, summer, and autumn, between Mildura and Wentworth.

There will also be an 11-night winter cruise from Mildura to Mannum, outside Adelaide, which will be the longest cruise



ever offered on the Murray.

Guests will enjoy guided shore excursions to wineries, national parks, historic homesteads, indigenous cultural sites, country towns, and outback experiences, such as a riverside campfire, and dinner in a shearing shed.

Cruise fares will be all-inclusive, covering meals, shore excursions, transfers, gratuities, and a range of selected beverages.

Construction is set to begin in Oct, with bookings expected to open mid next year.

"Australians love cruising - and they love the Murray River - but there's been a clear demand for a world-class, five-star product that matches what you'd find on Europe's iconic waterways," Murray River Paddlesteamers

Director Craig Burgess said.

"The strong demand we've seen for *Australian Star* - with 85% of sailings already sold or chartered for 2025-2026 - confirms the appetite for premium, overnight cruising," he explained.

"*Sky* will help us meet that demand, grow regional tourism, and put Mildura firmly on the map as a luxury river cruise destination," Burgess added.

Sky will become the third vessel in the fleet, joining *Star*, which will sail from Echuca; and *Emmylou*, which is being chartered by APT's Travelmarvel (**CW** 27 Aug).

The line has also committed to paying travel advisors 10% commission, plus bonuses for multiple bookings. **MS**

Celestyal fuels up

CELESTYAL Cruises has become the first cruise line in Greek waters to take delivery of a marine biofuel blend made from used cooking oils.

Carried out at the port of Lavrion, *Celestyal Discovery* received the combined blend from Coral Marine Products.

The blend has been deemed fully compliant with new ISO standards and will reduce CO2 emissions by around 21%.

AmaSintra debuts

AMAWATERWAYS has launched its third river ship on Portugal's Douro river, with *AmaSintra* setting sail on its maiden itinerary late last week.

The line's co-founders Rudi Schreiner and Chief Brand Ambassador Kristin Karst were both present at a christening ceremony for the ship, which took place in Porto.

Carrying 102 guests across 51 rooms with private balconies or floor-to-ceiling windows, *AmaSintra* features a sun deck with pool, fitness room and a restaurant serving local dishes and traditional favourites.

The ship is now in service operating the line's seven-night 'Enticing Douro' itinerary, which takes guests into the rich wine-growing regions of Porto, Regua and Salamanca.

Departures are available in Portugal onboard *AmaSintra* from Mar to Dec each year.

DISCOVER



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AMERICAN consumers may now be using a flowerpot, bucket, clothes hangers or various other household items using recycled items from Disney Cruise Line ships.

As part of a new recycling initiative, DCL is turning old mooring ropes into household products instead of burning them or sending to landfill.

As part of its latest crop, more than 32 kilometres of rope has been turned into items to reduce waste.

Onboard the line's new ship *Disney Treasure*, nearly 90% of guest uniforms and even cast costumes in *The Little Mermaid* stagemusical have been made from recycled plastics.

The line has also transformed the way it does F&B at its new Disney Lookout Cay at Lighthouse Point private island, with all meals served with reusable plates and cups.

At some eateries on the island, guests can even enjoy a drink with an edible straw to truly finish their meal.

Since the line stopped using plastic straws across its fleet, it has saved 14 million of them from ending up in landfill.

Disney is also encouraging its shoreside vendors to develop new solutions from packaging, a move which has seen the line now buy reusable merchandise bags and guest linens in bulk to reduce plastic wrapping.

CCL's fleet grew three sizes



CARNIVAL Cruise Line's popular annual 'Grinchmas in July' departures are set to return this year, to allow cruisers to get a taste of a wintery Xmas at sea.

And like the Grinch's heart growing three sizes, Carnival's sailings have also grown for 2025, with three ships to feature the legendary Dr Seuss character across 10 themed departures.

Six voyages are scheduled for Sydney onboard *Carnival Splendor*

and *Carnival Adventure*, with four more from Brisbane marking the concept's debut in Queensland onboard *Carnival Encounter*.

Six Grinchmas departures from Sydney are scheduled between 01-16 Jul, while four Brisbane voyages will set sail between 05-19 Jul.

Guests onboard will have the chance to meet The Grinch and various Dr Seuss characters, including Thing 1, Thing 2 and some surprise visitors.

Activities will include the popular Ugly Christmas Sweater competition, Christmas carols and an all-green Grinch deck party with themed games and a scavenger hunt.

In addition to Christmas decorations, guests can enjoy a variety of themed drinks, festive dining and snow in the atrium.

"Due to overwhelming demand over the past two winters, we're thrilled to bring back our Grinchmas in July sailings in 2025 - this time spreading even more holiday cheer across all three ships," said Carnival Cruise Line Vice President, Kara Glamore. *ML*

Princess opens AK

PRINCESS Cruises is counting down to the start of its 2025 Alaska season, which will feature seven ships departing from five home ports.

The season will include visits to five different national parks and two departures focusing on less-visited ports, with a 22-day sailing from San Francisco taking guests to 11 ports and four different glaciers.

An expanded range of Cruisetours is also on offer, with nine to 15-day itineraries combining scenic rail journeys.



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

A proud summer

AS OUR summer cruise season comes to an end, I think we can be incredibly proud of the success we have achieved in the Australian market.

Aussie cruisers are still among the most passionate in the world, heading to sea in huge numbers.

We expect to see some encouragingly strong figures when 2024 data for Australia is available in the near future, coming after record numbers at the global level.

An expanded choice of itineraries means cruise lines have been visiting more Australian ports this season, spreading the \$8.4 billion-a-year impact of cruising to more than 100 destinations around the country.

At the same time, there are signs Australians are exploring cruise options farther from home, opting for fly-cruise destinations in Europe, Asia and North America in greater numbers.

The choices available in cruising have never been more diverse and continue to expand.

Cruise lines have announced another nine new ships in recent months, giving us a total of 77 new vessels set for construction between now and 2036.

With such positive indicators, we can be confident of continued success well into the future - and continuing opportunities for our travel agent partners.



EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman
Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon
Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury,
Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper
Publisher - Damian Francis
Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller
info@cruiseweekly.com.au

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matt Vince

HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Anna Piper

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8007 6760 or (NZ) 0800 799 220
Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220



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