

Syd Harbour power

THE White Bay shore power project is set to begin construction next month. Works are slated for completed by the end of next year, with ships able to power up during the 2026-27 season.

Disney's Wonder is over



DISNEY Cruise Line is set to depart Australian shores, with the company confirming it will not be returning next season (*CW* breaking news yesterday).

The confirmation ends months of speculation within the cruise industry, with the line seemingly not booking any port calls for *Disney Wonder* (pictured) in Sydney or Melbourne for 2026-27 after three years of local sailing.

However Disney has not closed the door on possibly returning to Australia one day, with a spokesperson saying the destination remains in the cruise line's future calculations.

The company is preparing to debut its new *Disney Adventure* in the Asia-Pacific region in Dec, which will be based in Singapore (*CW* 22 Apr).

Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Chief Executive Jill Abel told *CW* it was "disappointing" to see Disney leave local waters.

"The [ACA] remains committed to working in partnership with governments, destinations, and suppliers to ensure Australia is an attractive and competitive destination, supporting jobs and businesses across the country," she said.

"We hope to welcome Disney back in the near future."

Cruise Lines International Association Managing Director Joel Katz said the organisation has consistently warned of Australia's complex regulatory environment and high operating costs, which make the market less attractive to international brands.

"Demand for cruising remains strong internationally, however without action we risk losing valuable tourism revenue, jobs, and investment to countries with more competitive conditions," he told *Cruise Weekly*.

"There is an urgent need for globally competitive policy settings that provide certainty for long-term planning - and recognise the enormous economic benefits that cruise delivers," Katz said - more from Disney on **page 2**. *MS*

BioLNG in Barca

TUI Cruises' *Mein Schiff Relax* has become the first ship to receive a supply of bioLNG in Barcelona.

The occasion marked the first ship-to-ship bioLNG bunkering in the port.



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Disney's double achievement

DISNEY Cruise Line has celebrated dual milestones this week on two of its future ships, which are currently under construction.

The line's third Wish-class ship *Disney Destiny* was floated out of dry dock at the Meyer Werft Shipyard in Germany on Sat.

Disney also marked the start of construction on its fourth Wish-class vessel with a steel-cutting ceremony.

Joe Schott, President of Disney Signature Experiences, joined Philip Gennotte from Walt Disney Imagineering, Bernd Eikens from Meyer Werft and Cruise Director Carly Scott to help cut the first piece of steel for the yet-to-be-named vessel, while special guest, Captain Mickey Mouse, was also there for the event.

The newbuild ship is set to be approximately 144,000 gross tons, accommodate 4,000 guests and be powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG), like her sister ships *Disney Wish*, *Disney Treasure*, and *Disney Destiny*.

It is the first of four new ships recently announced by the cruise line, which plans to introduce a new class of vessels in 2029 that will be smaller than the Wish-class (**CW** 13 Jan).

MSC seeking local MD



MSC Group is restructuring in Australia again, as the company seeks a managing director for both its MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys brands.

A job ad on was posted on LinkedIn on Fri seeking candidates for the locally-based role, which will lead the Australian operations for the two brands.

MSC last underwent an overhaul of its Australian office in Nov, which saw Lisa Teiotu depart her role as MSC Cruises Managing Director, and oversight of the market handed to United Kingdom-based Vice President Int'l Sales Antonio Paradiso.

Explora VP Nicole Costantin was tapped to head up Australian sales for both brands.

That structure has now been scrapped, with the company currently seeking a local leader for both its contemporary and luxury brands.

The restructure will see Costantin serve as sales boss for Explora, while Brigita Devries will be Senior Sales Manager for MSC,

a role she adopted when she joined the cruise line in 2023.

"We can confirm that we are currently seeking a dynamic managing director to oversee and drive the overall strategic direction and growth of our Australia and New Zealand operations for both our brands," Paradiso told **Cruise Weekly**.

"We believe there will be great interest in the role, and we look forward to interviewing candidates for this leadership position that will support the commercial team, identify and unlock new business development opportunities, and ensure operational excellence across all functions."

MSC recently announced a seven-ship deployment from the US for winter 2026/27, as the cruise line ramps up its focus on the country (**CW** 07 Aug).

Meanwhile, Explora has set its sights on sales for its next year's Monaco Grand Prix cruise, which will be sailed by *Explora I* (pictured) (**CW** 04 Aug). *MS*

Princess' sushi

PRINCESS Cruises has announced the expansion of its Makoto Ocean specialty sushi restaurant to *Diamond Princess* and *Sapphire Princess*.

From next month, guests sailing Antarctica, Southeast Asia, and Japan will be able to enjoy Chef Makoto Okuwa's Edomae-style sushi aboard the two Diamond-class ships.

The venue, which can accommodate up to 80 guests and charges US\$60pp, debuted aboard *Sun Princess* last year, and is set to arrive on *Star Princess* in Oct.

"The expansion of Makoto Ocean is exceptionally meaningful as we bring a guest favourite to those sailing to other regions around the world," said Sami Kohen, Vice President of Food and Beverage at Princess Cruises.

"Makoto Ocean reflects the elegance and authenticity of Japanese cuisine our guests will enjoy across Japan."

The specialty dining restaurant features a menu of premium sushi and Chef Makoto specialties like truffle salmon, snow crab temaki, and toro tartare.

Dishes can be paired with cocktails like the Genmai Negroni (a play on a Negroni with Japanese ingredients) and Kodai No Hana (featuring yuzu juice and doburoku, an ancient style of sake).



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CARNIVAL Cruise Line has been caught in the middle of the age-old butter versus margarine debate - which is arguably even more intense than Coke versus Pepsi.

"John, you need to address the subject of butter on the tables in the Main Dining Hall," a very concerned guest wrote to Carnival's brand ambassador John Heald.

"It has been reported on [social media] that on the Carnival ships the plates of butter are not butter, but margarine....it doesn't say butter anywhere on them.

"This is obviously margarine," the guest concluded, expressing dismay at the "crazy cutback".

Heald refuted the allegations, saying it is "absolutely butter", and told guests to dispel the doubts on social media and "spread this around".

He also declared the matter the beginning of "buttergate".

One week until *Star* sails



PASSENGERS will embark on Royal Caribbean's second Icon-class ship from this week after *Star of the Seas* (pictured) arrived in her new home base of Port Canaveral late last week.

More than 2,000 Royal Caribbean team members were in Orlando to welcome the Icon-class ship for the first time.

Star will offer rotating seven-night itineraries to the eastern and western Caribbean.

Each loop will include a visit to the line's private island, Perfect Day at CocoCay in the Bahamas.

Key entertainment highlights will include *Back to the Future: The Musical*, debuting as the headlining stage show on board the new ship.

Star will also offer 40 different ways to dine, ranging from quick-service bites to buffets and a wide variety of table-service options.

Dining will feature the multi-course experience Lincoln Park Supper Club, an elegant Chicago-esque experience that reflects the city's glamour era, with celebratory cocktails and live jazz music playing all night.

Orlando is no stranger to thrill rides, and *Star* will offer some of the best theme park attractions at sea, with six water slides and seven pools to keep guests entertained during sailing days.

Star sets sail on its first revenue cruise on Sat, with **CW** to board the ship's christening voyage later this week. *ML*

Explora goes deep

HOLISTIC wellness activities based on traditional practices will feature on two new Ocean Wellness Retreats to be run by Explora Journeys, designed to offer guests a chance to pause, reflect, and enjoy "balance, self-awareness, and serenity".

The one-day retreats will take place during sea days on two upcoming Grand Journeys on *Explora I* and *Explora II*, while the ships are repositioning to the Caribbean for winter.

Both retreats will offer guests access to Surya Shakti Yoga, pranayama breathing exercises, sound healing, gong baths under the stars, and guided reflection meditation.

The first retreat will be held on *Explora I* during a voyage from Venice to Miami, sailing from 18 Oct to 12 Nov 2025.

This will be supplemented by a session on board *Explora II* during her transatlantic crossing from Barcelona to Bridgetown from 11-22 Nov.

Multiple day-long retreats will take place during both voyages, with guests able to attend as many as they like.

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EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon

Journalists - Adam Bishop, Janie Medbury

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Editorial Director - 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

Matthew Vince

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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