

Cruise Weekly today

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

Evolve gets festive

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has announced the debut holiday sailings for upcoming river vessel *Evolve*, which will join the line's fleet in 2027.

Sailing alongside sister ship *Connect*, the new vessel will operate a collection of Christmas market itineraries in Europe, effectively doubling its offerings in the region.

Guests will celebrate the festive season along the Danube, exploring the Christmas markets of Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and beyond during the eight-day 'Christmas Markets on the Danube'.

Highlights include a private orchestral performance in Bratislava, an after-hours tour of Melk Abbey, a private visit to the medieval Burg Clam, and wine tasting in Austria's Domane Wachau.

Alternatively, travellers can spend both Christmas and New Year's on the river by joining the 11-day 'Christmas and New Year's on the Danube: A Holiday Voyage', which takes in Budapest, Vienna, and Salzburg or Cesky Krumlov, with festive traditional meals served on board *Evolve*.

East coast gets in the *Spirit*



AFTER arriving in Australia for its third local season last week, Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) *Norwegian Spirit* (pictured) will today set sail on her eastern home port program (**CW** 10 Dec).

Spirit has spent the last week sailing along the coastline of Australia to Melbourne, calling at Fremantle, Busselton, Albany, Adelaide, and Kangaroo Island.

She arrived in Melbourne yesterday for a more than 30-hour overnight stay in the city, and will today set sail on a three-night cruise to Burnie and Eden, before arriving in Sydney on Sun for the first time this season.

Spirit will sail a curated collection of 10 open-jaw itineraries during her full Australian season, ranging from 11 to 13 days between Sydney and New Zealand, where

Norwegian will also visit ports such as Timaru and Gisborne for the first time.

She will then reposition to the Pacific for a series of island itineraries ranging from 11 to 13 days, departing Lautoka, Honolulu, and Papeete.

MEANWHILE, NCL guests can once again opt for the cruise line's Free at Sea Plus promotion, which is being brought back just over 12 months after being killed off (**CW** 02 Oct 2024).

Guests on sailings departing from Feb can access Free at Sea Plus, which offers additional perks on coffee, premium wi-fi and drinks, and more.

Free at Sea Plus also allows guests to indulge in an unlimited open bar at Great Stirrup Cay, NCL's private island destination in the Bahamas. *MS*



On location on board
Norwegian Spirit

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you courtesy of Norwegian, which is this week hosting us aboard *Norwegian Spirit*.

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line's *Norwegian Spirit* has arrived in the eastern states once again, with the much-loved ship to set sail from Melbourne later this afternoon on a three-night journey to Sydney.

Cruise Weekly is on board to get reacquainted with *Spirit* and all she offers, with the ship this season being positioned as Australia's foremost premium cruising experience for adults.

Follow along for the remainder of the week as *Spirit* visits Burnie and Eden on her way to the NSW capital.

BICT's 500th ship

BRISBANE International Cruise Terminal (BICT) recently welcomed its 500th cruise ship since opening in Jun 2022.

Sun's call of Carnival Cruise Line's *Carnival Luminosa* saw the milestone tick over, with the brand also the first to christen the facility when it opened three-and-a-half years ago (**CW** 23 May 2022).

The moment was marked with a cake-cutting.

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MSC heads to Med

MSC Cruises has unveiled new summer itineraries for 2026 in the Eastern Mediterranean, with *MSC Lirica* and *MSC Divina* set to sail in the region.

Both ships will offer seven-night sailings, visiting destinations such as the islands of Greece, historic cities in Turkey, Montenegro's Adriatic gems, and sought-after spots in Italy, with guests to experience a blend of city exploration, beaches, culture, cuisine, and history.

New destinations during the season include Marmaris, one of the most popular resort towns on Turkey's Turquoise Coast, replete with sandy beaches, shopping, and dining, as well as a bustling nightlife; and Syros, a hidden-gem Greek island in the Cyclades.

Lirica will offer itineraries from Venice from 04 Apr to destinations across the Eastern Mediterranean, including Kotor, Montenegro; Syros, Greece; and Ancona, Italy.

Guests will also enjoy an overnight stay in Mykonos, offering the chance to experience the island's famous sunsets and vibrant nightlife.

Commencing 24 Apr, *Divina* will take travellers to destinations including Mykonos and Marmaris, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ephesus, and Naples in Italy - the gateway to Pompeii.

Regent's Med (off)season



REGENT Seven Seas Cruises is following its sister brand Oceania Cruises into the European offseason, unveiling its new 'Navigate the Seasons' 2026-2027 voyage collection.

The new program of more than 30 itineraries, sailing aboard *Seven Seas Navigator* (pictured), will introduce the first winter sailings in the Mediterranean in the cruise line's history.

Navigator's new Mediterranean offseason program will see her sail three extended journeys through destinations such as Rome, Barcelona, Istanbul, Athens, and Lisbon.

Following her Mediterranean season, *Navigator* will embark on a journey across Africa, Asia, Australia, and the South Pacific.

Regent's new program comes

after Oceania debuted a similar season of off-peak Med voyages last month (**CW** 07 Nov).

"The launch of this new season marks an exciting evolution for *Seven Seas Navigator* and for Regent," Chief Luxury Officer Jason Montague said.

"As the leading ultra-luxury cruise line, we are dedicated to curating an exceptional, unforgettable experience for our guests across the fleet.

"From quieter winters in the Mediterranean's most beloved destinations, to adventures in Asia-Pacific and rare overnight stays in iconic ports of call, this extraordinary collection of voyages reflects our continued commitment to delivering immersive and effortlessly luxurious travel experiences." *MS*

Carnival adds two

CARNIVAL Cruise Line has unveiled its next wave of 2027/28 deployments on board *Carnival Firenze* and *Carnival Splendor*.

Offering itineraries from New York City, as well as a special Carnival Journeys cruise from Miami will be *Firzene*.

Meanwhile *Splendor* has added sailings to and from both Sydney and Singapore, including a new four-day cruise to Moreton Island, and two Carnival Journeys Southeast Asia sailings to Singapore and back, following her dry dock in the island country.

The first 15-day Carnival Journeys cruise departs on 31 Jul 2027 from Sydney, and visits Moreton Island, Airlie Beach, and Cairns, as well as Lembang and Benoa.

The following 16-day return sailing to Sydney offers the same itinerary, with the addition of a call in Darwin.

Firenze's 2027/28 deployment program now includes a special 11-day Carnival Journeys Southern Caribbean voyage departing from Miami on 16 May 2027 before she heads to her new home port of New York City.

The one-time sailing will feature visits to the line's private destination Celebration Key; Aruba, Curacao; and the US Virgin Islands.

Firenze will then offer a line-up of voyages from New York.

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A GRANDMOTHER was detained and fined after accidentally bringing a gun on board a recent Royal Caribbean cruise on *Liberty of the Seas*.

Authorities boarded the ship in Nassau to apprehend the 69-year-old woman after she was "found in possession of a firearm and ammunition".

A GoFundMe page has now been set up for the grandmother to pay the US\$8,000 fine (around A\$12,000), with the campaign's founder, her granddaughter, explaining the situation.

"On her trips she usually brings some kind of protection but usually leaves it in the car since you aren't allowed to bring it on the ship.

"Well accidentally she didn't leave it and it was found in her bag when they checked at the Bahamas," the GoFundMe reads - probably best to leave all firearms at home, period.

Seeker gets ready to sail

WINDSTAR Cruises has taken delivery of its newest all-suite yacht, *Star Seeker*, following a handover ceremony on Mon at WestSEA Shipyard in Portugal.

Marking the first new build in Windstar's Star-class, the 224-guest vessel has now entered final preparations ahead of her maiden voyage, which she will set sail on this month from Malaga.

Seeker will make her way across the Atlantic to Miami, where a christening ceremony will take place on 15 Jan led by the ship's godmother Libby Anschutz, daughter of the line's owner Phil Anschutz (**CW** 11 Dec).

The ship will then venture to the Caribbean for an inaugural season, which will see her call on both marquee ports and small islands that larger ships can't reach, with early itineraries featuring the Dominican Republic, the British Virgin Islands, San Juan, and more.

Seeker will then head north for a full Alaska season before making her way to Japan in late 2026 and early 2027.

"Taking delivery of a new ship is one of the most meaningful



moments in a shipbuilding journey," said President Chris Prelog, who was present at the transfer of ownership.

"From the float out to the handover, we've seen *Star Seeker* take shape with extraordinary craftsmanship." JM



China's new Star

STARCRUISES has introduced new short break cruises from Hong Kong on board *Star Voyager*.

The itineraries will feature the highlights of Sanya and Xiamen, with new two- and three-night voyages available from 13 Feb to 29 Mar.

Perfect for quick getaways, these short cruises provide guests with flexible weekend or midweek escapes while showcasing the scenic beauty, rich culture, and local cuisine of two of China's most popular coastal cities.



On Board: *Norwegian Spirit*

The Local

If proof was ever necessary *Norwegian Spirit* is the perfect ship for Australia, it's The Local. This 24-hour pub-style eatery is the perfect Aussie-casual dining spot, open all hours of the day - literally 24/7. Diners can choose from popular dishes like a Reuben sandwich or fish & chips for a quick bite at any time.



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