

Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant Antarctica

PONANT Explorations has opened bookings for almost 30 voyages to Antarctica for the winter of 2027-2028.

Four ships will explore Antarctica during the limited summer months it is accessible, with highlights including polar expeditions aboard *Le Commandant Charcot*, featuring routes to the Bellingshausen Sea, Charcot Island, and the Weddell Sea for rare emperor penguin encounters.

There will also be voyages between the Antarctic Peninsula and Patagonia, including South Georgia, the Falkland Islands, and Chile.

Norwegian Spirit is “curated for adults”

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line is this season positioning its Australian-based ship *Norwegian Spirit* as “premium cruising, curated for adults”, as the brand witnesses a more mature market seeking out its local voyages.

In the words of Norwegian, *Spirit* has been “crafted for calm”, and is designed with a more refined cruising experience in mind, with no waterslides or kids’ clubs, unlike some of the cruise line’s newer builds.

There is also a focus on quieter decks, upscale dining, and an intimate onboard atmosphere ideal for couples and solos.

This comes as older passengers flock to Norwegian’s local product, Vice President & Managing Director Ben Angell told **Cruise Weekly** recently.

Norwegian’s local passenger demographics are defying global trends, he said.



“Our average age is staying the same, but in some destinations - the South Pacific is a good example - we’re still older.

“We might skew from high fifties up into even the sixties, and what we’re hearing is that there is a gap in the market that no one’s filling here,” he told **CW**.

“It’s older couples primarily that have a lot of free time, they’re often retired, they have a lot of disposable income, and they want a cruise experience on a smaller ship with a huge amount

of variety.”

Other cruise lines are not meeting the needs of these passengers with their local programs, Angell offered.

“If you look at the large ship cruising in this market, they’re skewing younger and younger in the guests they are marketing to,” he said.

Spirit is currently sailing her first departure from the eastern states this season - a three-night sector from Melbourne to Sydney, visiting Burnie and Eden. *MS*



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CRUISE WEEKLY

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 pulled into Burnie today, on her first visit to Tasmania for the season.

Guests are disembarking with a wide variety of options; some will head to Cradle Mountain in the state's Central Highlands, while others are off to Stanley in the North West.

However many will stay in town, exploring Burnie's unique mix of botanical beauty, artisanal experiences, and wildlife encounters - one of the highlights of which is the Little Penguin Observation Centre.

Curacao concerns

SOME cruise lines are skipping Curacao over tensions between the United States and Venezuela, which is causing unsettlement in the region.

The *NL Times* reported naval exercises forced Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Epic* to skip Curacao this week - a Dutch island located off the coast of Venezuela.

Epic instead continued directly to Barbados.

However many lines are still calling in Curacao, including Princess Cruises' *Coral Princess* and Holland America Line's *Zuiderdam*, both of which are in port today.

Scheduled calls in Curacao over the coming days include Ambassador Cruise Line's *Renaissance*, AIDA Cruises' *AIDAperla*, Windstar Cruises' *Wind Spirit*, and Holland America's *Rotterdam*.

HAL 'wraps' up for '25



HOLLAND America Line (HAL) is celebrating this year much like audio streaming service Spotify, highlighting the year's top trends with the release of its 'Wrapped'.

One of the top trends this year saw its guests embrace opportunities to enrich their journeys ashore, with its White Pass Scenic Railroad in Skagway option earning the title of its most popular shore excursion across all ports.

Nearly 44% of Skagway visitors experienced the historic route, with the trip leading in both volume and guest rating.

The cruise line said it offered more Alaska sailings than any other cruise line in 2025, while seven-day Alaska cruises were especially popular, attracting the highest percentage of first-time cruisers this year.

Meanwhile, the Caribbean's top shore excursion was the Stingray Adventure at Half Moon Cay.

HAL ships visited almost 400 ports across more than 100 countries, including 20 new and

notable destinations.

Among the most sought-after experiences was Antarctic scenic cruising, which topped the list of guest favourites.

Jan marked the busiest booking month of the year for the business, with particularly strong demand for itineraries that allowed travellers to linger longer and connect more deeply.

MEANWHILE, three Carnival Corporation brands, including HAL, have secured a deal with global media company IMG to broadcast next year's FIFA World Cup across their fleets.

The games will be shown on IMG's Sport 24 channel on HAL, as well as its sister brands Princess Cruises and Seabourn.

This channel is designed to be internationally available on most cruise ships, as well as aircraft.

Games will be viewable on guests' stateroom televisions, while special matchups will be shown on HAL's Lido Pool big screen or in the immersive World Stage theatre. *MS*




CRUISE WEEKLY

On Board: *Norwegian Spirit*

Cagney's Steakhouse

Norwegian's American-style steakhouse Cagney's is one of the most popular spots on board. The restaurant specialises in Black Angus beef and seafood, while diners can also enjoy its classic cocktails and extensive wine list. Reservations are required, and are best made as soon as you board.



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AN IMMERSIVE *Titanic*-themed show in the UK is drawing criticism for its "grotesque" transfiguration of tragedy into entertainment. 'The Legend of the Titanic: The Immersive Exhibition' show in London recreates the British ocean liner's fateful voyage, using a mix of video projections and virtual reality headset sections; the show has proved popular, scoring highly on TripAdvisor.

However many criticised the show's "aggressive money-making" off a shipwreck which saw thousands lose their lives. "No exhibition on a tragedy should feel fun," *City A.M* newspaper wrote.

"Walking past a sombre stone that displays the names of all those who lost their lives to the tragedy before being ushered into a gift shop selling souvenir emergency whistles borders on grotesque," it added.

Seabourn gets festive

SEABOURN Cruise Line is bringing the magic of the holidays to sea this festive season, with a line-up of celebratory experiences including immersive decor and gingerbread displays (pictured).

Other onboard highlights will include live carols and special festive dining experiences.

Decorated trees and holiday displays will adorn all ships in the Seabourn fleet, spanning beyond the grand foyers and into the buffets, with sweet surprises such as a chocolate Santa Claus, Christmas cookies, and gingerbread houses.

One of the highlights of the season will be the Christmas Eve dinner, which features a duck main course, followed by a special Christmas variety show in the Grand Salon.

Each suite on board receives a special Christmas plate turndown, featuring a selection of sweets.

Christmas Day begins with an indulgent brunch buffet, crowned with a Yuletide Log cake and cookies, as well as seasonal favourites such as eggnog, glogg and gluhwein.

This will be followed by a



Christmas High Tea in the afternoon, offering stollen and Christmas cake, before the classic Christmas dinner, featuring roast turkey and traditional pudding.

The final night of the year will be marked by an elegant New Years Eve gala dinner, with the ships and tables decadently dressed for the occasion.

Celebrations will continue with a spectacular show in the Grand Salon, before guests dance their way into the New Year during a lively party and countdown.

Hot goulash soup will then be served at midnight in all the bars, adding a festive touch. *MS*

USVI redevelopment

THE US Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA), Royal Caribbean Group (RCG), and Cruise Terminals International have jointly announced the redevelopment of the destination's Crown Bay District, which will be expanded into a vibrant, mixed-use location.

Crown Bay's redevelopment will modernise the waterfront by transforming Crown Bay Center into a tourism-focused area complete with commercial, recreational, and cultural spaces.

"This initiative represents the future of tourism in the US Virgin Islands," VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe shared.

"To remain competitive in the rapidly changing global tourism sector, we must continue to innovate and invest in experiences that meet modern travellers' expectations while benefiting our local community."

Multiple RCG ships make calls weekly or bi-weekly during peak seasons, as part of Eastern Caribbean itineraries.



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