



CRUISE

WEEKLY

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On location on
Viking Venus

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is this week hosting us on a leg of its Grand Australia Navigation voyage.

AFTER boarding *Viking Venus* in Townsville, the ship made a call in Cairns yesterday to offer a variety of exciting shore excursions, such as expert-led bush hikes and trips to the Cairns Aquarium.

We are now at sea for two days before we disembark in Darwin, however *Venus* - which is making her debut in Aussie waters - will continue to loop around the continent on a comprehensive 32-day sailing.

Savings of up to \$2,000 per couple are on offer for Viking's 2026 circumnavigation, as well as a generous \$500 of shipboard credit per stateroom.

I'm your Venus in Oz



VIKING continues to make waves in the local market, this time offering Aussies the opportunity to enjoy the regional debut of its modern 930-passenger *Viking Venus*.

Joining the fleet only four years ago as the cruise line's seventh ocean vessel, *Venus* (pictured) has been deployed to Australian waters for the first time as part of an ongoing commitment to growing the local market.

She is currently sailing Viking's all-encompassing 32-day 'Grand Australia Circumnavigation', which includes 15 guided tours in Australia and Indonesia.

Sailing around the continent from Sydney, the ship will make visits in all state capitals except Hobart, calling at Burnie instead, in addition to a host of popular ports such as Cairns, Geraldton, Albany, and Eden.

Passengers will also get the chance to explore Komodo and Bali in Indonesia en route to making four stops in WA.

Venus is making her first foray in

Aussie waters after servicing the popular Viking 'Iconic Western Mediterranean' itinerary, as well as sailing in Southeast Asia to major ports such as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Phuket.

Cruise Weekly is currently aboard the 'Grand Australia Circumnavigation' leg from Townsville to Darwin, and can attest to the impressive range of amenities on board, including quality Italian dining at Manfredi's, and the unique main pool area, which features a retractable roof to maintain utility, even during adverse weather conditions.

The design of the all-veranda ship maximises ocean views in most areas of the vessel, while passengers after wellness services can enjoy the popular LivNordic spa, offering Scandinavian-inspired treatments, including a sauna and snow grotto.

While the circumnavigation currently sailing is the only one available to book for the 2024-2025 season, Viking has two voyages from Sydney on offer in the 2025/2026 period.

The first will depart Sydney on 11 Dec, and the second will set sail on 27 Feb 2026.

Viking is offering savings of up to \$2,000 per couple as part of a current promotion, and \$500 in ship credit per stateroom. AB



On location on
Viking Polaris

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of Viking, which is hosting key industry partners aboard *Viking Polaris*.

AFTER a rainy, but comfortable crossing of the Drake Passage, with only 2-3m swells, we have this morning sailed into Antarctica and been greeted by humpback whales.

This afternoon, the group will venture off the ship aboard the vessel's zodiacs and special operations boats, with the first landing to take place tomorrow.

Big stars for MSC

MSC Cruises has announced actors Drew Barrymore and Orlando Bloom will star in its Super Bowl commercial (CW 10 Jan).

The new American brand campaign will feature the duo aboard *MSC World America*.

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Explorer problem

A WASTEWATER

management issue on board Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) *Seven Seas Explorer* has seen a number of the ship's Alaska voyages revised to skip the Inside Passage.

Cruise Weekly understands three of *Explorer's* itineraries will be affected, with the ship to instead spend a day cruising the Pacific Ocean, before arriving in Klawock.

"We understand that this news may come as a disappointment, however this modification has been made to ensure that the rest of the itinerary remains intact and that our environmental obligations are fulfilled," RSSC told travel advisors whose clients were affected by the itinerary change.

RSSC declined to comment when contacted by **CW**.

Swans take to the sea with Princess

PRINCESS Cruises' *Crown Princess* has set sail from Sydney Harbour on the inaugural Sydney Swans AFL Member Cruise.

Hundreds of Swans season ticketholders departed on the first-ever cruise hosted by an AFL team, with the voyage to sail round trip to Hobart.

Crown sported a *Cheer Cheer the Red & the White* banner (pictured) referencing the Swans' fight song, as the cruise departed following months of anticipation.

The cruise will be joined by Swans Chief Executive Officer Tom Harley, Executive General Manager Leon Cameron, and WAFL Coach Scott Gowans.

Womens players Chloe Molloy and Cynthia Hamilton will also join the cruise, as will club greats Josh Kennedy and Ted Richards, who both played in the Swans' 2012 championship.

Harley said the cruise has been



tailor-made to give members an unforgettable adventure, jam-packed with entertainment and activities for all ages.

"We're proud to partner with Princess Cruises for this exciting opportunity, and give our members this unique opportunity to immerse themselves in a once-in-a-lifetime Sydney Swans experience," he said.

"We have some fantastic events planned on board and I am looking forward to connecting

with our Swans members and am excited to see everything that *Crown Princess* has to offer."

The cruise line's Senior Director of Marketing & Sales Nick Ferguson said guests are buzzing with excitement.

"AFL is a sport that brings people together, and we believe in the power of community," Ferguson explained.

"Moving into our second year of partnership with the Sydney Swans underscores our commitment to local organisations and we look forward to being part of the Swans journey to success."

"Travelling on board the magnificent *Crown Princess* is exciting enough, but having the opportunity to leverage our strong partnership with the Sydney Swans to enable this unique cruise is such a special moment," he said. *MS*

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AUSTRALIA Day was celebrated in style aboard *Viking Polaris* this weekend with an Aussie feast prepared at the World Cafe.

Snacks for the day included ANZAC biscuits and lamingtons, while lunch featured Aussie classics such as beef & onion pie and delicious seafood.

In true Australian style, the meal was completed with a classic Aussie pavlova.

While the Kiwis on board claim ownership of the original pavlova, this one was delicious for all who tried it (pictured).

Polaris' current sailing has a large Australian contingent on board, including 10 top-selling advisors, their partners, and part of the team from the Sydney Viking office.



Serenity now for Crystal



CRYSTAL has unveiled three Grand Journeys for 2026 on board *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony*, created in collaboration with sister brand Abercrombie & Kent.

The 89-night Los Angeles to Singapore trip will take guests to Hawaii and French Polynesia, before sailing to New Zealand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

The cruise will then continue to Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, and more.

Guests can also enjoy a trip from Mombasa to Tokyo, which features Zanzibar, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the Andaman Islands.

The third journey departs from

Lisbon, featuring a total solar eclipse viewing, and spanning 12 European countries including Denmark, Belgium, and France, before returning to Portugal.

"These extended itineraries offer exclusive opportunities for immersion in some of the world's most unique and sought-after destinations," A&K Travel Group CEO Cristina Levis said.

The two ships feature a reduced passenger capacity with nearly one staff member per guest, in addition to redesigned suites, entertainment and specialty dining restaurants, including the only Nobu at Sea, Umi Uma, Beefbar and Michelin-starred Osteria d'Ovidio. *JHM*

Ritz in Alaska

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has unveiled its ultra-luxury itineraries in Alaska (**CW** 21 Nov), which will sail aboard *Luminara* in the summer 2026 season.

The cruises will depart from Whittier and Vancouver between May and Sep 2026, offering 13 voyages calling on 11 ports across both Alaska and Canada.

Among the highlights are scenic transits past the Hubbard and Sawyer glaciers, visits to destinations such as Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, Klawock, Icy Strait Point, Wrangell, and more.

Guests will also discover the untamed allure of Valdez and Petersburg, known for their dramatic scenery and coastal charm, as well as the picturesque ports of Haines and Prince Rupert in BC.

"Our new Alaska itineraries offer a new and unparalleled way to explore the remarkable region by sea, combining access to secluded destinations," Chief Executive Officer Jim Murren said.

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