



Cruise Weekly today

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

Ice cold savings

PONANT is offering special discounted luxury expeditions to the Poles.

Guests have the opportunity to enjoy a 'New Year's Cruise' on board *Le Soleal* for 14 nights, exploring New Zealand's subantarctic islands.

The trip is \$17,999 per person in a deluxe stateroom with a balcony.

Also on offer is 'The Great Austral Loop' 18-night itinerary on board *L'Austral* or *Le Boreal* from \$26,299 per person in a deluxe stateroom.

The trip departs on 11 Nov from Ushuaia and returns on 21 Dec.

For more details head to **page 4**.

Ten river ships just the beginning for RCG

ROYAL Caribbean Group (RCG) is not done ordering river cruise ships, with more set to be ordered for Celebrity Cruises, and potentially even Silversea, President & Chief Executive Jason Liberty (pictured) said.

Celebrity will introduce its first two river ships in 2027 (CW yesterday), then will add four each year, Liberty said in RCG's earnings call yesterday.

RCG will then consider deepening its river product, such as entering its other brands like Silversea into the market, and deploying its river ships to other waterways around the world.

"We are very intentful in our words...the word put in front of it was 'initial order'...and so this is not a hobby for us...we are going into this space," he said.

"As we build up this kind of engine for river under Celebrity, it will certainly provide opportunity



for our ultra-luxury guests to consider a river experience under Silversea," Liberty added.

"Just watching the amount of interest from our travel partners, from our guests to get on one of our riverboats as soon as possible is exceptional."

RCG will not be waiting until 2027 to order more river ships, Liberty said, although he did not reveal when the next tranche will be on its way.

"Our ability to scale this, we could probably be the second-

largest operator, and it would be significantly less money than the Xcel 2 ship that we just bought," he added.

"It's not something that has a high barrier of entry on a cost, but there is a high barrier in terms of the execution and making sure we can do this in a flawless way."

Celebrity's river cruise product will not aim to draw on guests from any other river line, Liberty explained; rather, it is about pulling on RCG's passenger base, and keeping its passenger within its family of brands - and creating broader appeal for its product.

"This is about leveraging this incredible sort of business that we have, this incredible flywheel, the incredible leading brands in each one of their segments and making sure that we keep them inside of our ecosystem," the RCG head explained. MS



YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

FLASH SALE

up to

25% OFF

plus

Unlimited Wine, Beer & Spirits
AND
Shipboard Credit up to **US\$1,000**

on select sailings

book now - offer expires 1 February 2025



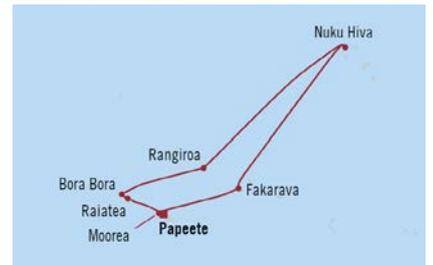
Tabitian Legends

PAPEETE TO PAPEETE

10 Days | 5 Sep 2025 | Regatta

FLASH SALE FARES PER GUEST FROM:	WAS	NOW
Concierge Veranda	AUS\$9,270	AUS\$7,880
Deluxe Oceanview	AUS\$5,930	AUS\$6,460
US\$400 SHIPBOARD CREDIT		

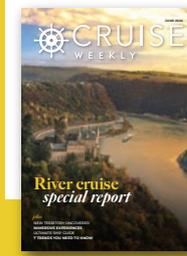
*All offers and fares are subject to Terms & Conditions.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **1300 355 200 (AU), 0800 625 691 (NZ)**
VISIT **OCEANIACRUISES.COM** OR CONTACT YOUR **TRAVEL ADVISOR**

DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT

*Fares and itineraries are accurate as of 15 January 2025 and are subject to change or withdrawal. Flash Sale offer expires 1 February 2025, applies to select categories on select voyages, subject to availability and is capacity controlled. The quoted fares are valid for sale until 1 February, unless sold out prior and include any/all savings/upgrades. Airfares are additional. Cruise fares are per person, twin share (except fares for Solo category, which are for single travellers), in AUD and include all taxes, port fees and onboard gratuities. *50% Reduced Deposits applies for new bookings only and if departure is outside of final payment; valid until 1 February 2025; this offer is not valid on Around the World Cruises and segments. For full terms & conditions that apply, please visit OceaniaCruises.com/terms. All rights reserved. Oceania Cruises is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions. Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. NCL Australia Pty Ltd ABN 8060 7578 781.



Discover our River Cruise Special Report

[Click here](#)

Viking's new Prez

VIKING has appointed Leah Talatac as its new President, reporting into Torstein Hagen, who will remain Chair & Chief Executive Officer.

Talatac has been with Viking for almost 20 years, serving as an important member of the executive team.

She led Viking's successful IPO last year (**CW** 03 May 2024), which was the largest of the year on the New York Stock Exchange.

Talatac will also continue to serve as Chief Financial Officer, while assuming her new responsibility as President.

She will lead Viking's executive committee in her new role as President.

Virgin breaking records



VIRGIN Voyages has celebrated a record-breaking start to the year, with triple-digit revenue growth and nearly sold-out staterooms driving record first quarter revenue.

Receipts are up 60% year-over-year, while Virgin has also witnessed a 40% jump in new bookings, thanks to a standout Black Friday and festive season, with particularly high demand for Mediterranean summer voyages and the upcoming *Brilliant Lady's* (pictured) deployment in the United States (**CW** 30 Oct 2024).

There is also limited availability in the second quarter, with Virgin seeing significant repeat rates of up to 60%, and a notable new-to-cruise audience.

Chief Executive Officer Nirmal Saverimuttu said highlights of the year will include *Brilliant's* arrival, as well as new food concepts, new music, more comedy-based entertainment,

the return of Virgin's 'Eat & Drink' month, and special sailings such as the 'Celebration Voyages' and 'Marvelous Voyages'.

"Thanks to our travel agents who have championed our growth based on their clients' feedback, and to our loyal 'Sailors' who are delivering record repeat rates, last year was a brilliant one and delivered massive growth from new customers, along with existing cruisers and those new to cruise.

"Our strongest start ever is a testament to our award-winning service and experience, with no hidden costs and plenty of value inclusions, the launch of additional destinations with longer itineraries from eight-14 nights and more than 30 new ports coming online from Alaska and Iceland to Turkey and Portugal...I also can't forget about the bucket-list Panama Canal voyage," Saverimuttu said. *MS*

On location in Chiriguano Bay

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

VIKING *Polaris* has been blessed with incredible weather today, with low winds allowing for a lunchtime barbecue aboard the ship's top deck.

Located on Brabant Island, Chiriguano Bay provides a serene and sheltered area surrounded by towering glaciers and mountains.

With the water teeming with humpback whales and other wildlife, the expedition team has been hard at work today showing guests the surrounds on special operations boats, kayaks, and zodiac expeditions.

New river brochure

AMAWATERWAYS has released its 2025/26 brochure for Australian agents and guests, covering the line's itineraries in Europe, Asia, Egypt, Africa and Colombia.

Designed in a new format, the brochure is easier to read and contains new features, including a large river map, a fold-out reference guide with dates for all itineraries, a land package section, and key selling points for each cruise.

"Travel brochures continue to be an important part of the planning phase for many of our guests, so we're delighted to launch this beautiful book that provides plenty of information, plus genuine travel inspiration," Managing Director Steve Richards said.

AmaWaterways' 2025 & 2026 'Heart of the River' brochure is now available to order for travel advisors via TIFS



SPECIAL OFFER

UP TO 35% OFF*

CRUISE FAVOURITES



LEARN MORE



ROYAL CARIBBEAN

On Board: *Viking Polaris*

The Nordic Spa

Designed with the holistic wellness philosophy of Scandinavia in mind, the Nordic Spa features a thermal suite with a sauna, steam room, cold plunge, thermal pool and snow grotto. Perfect to enjoy after a day of exploring Antarctica, or paired with a relaxing massage or facial from the onboard spa team.





Stay Updated

on the latest cruise news

Follow Cruise Weekly on social media to get your cruise news first




CRUISE passengers are probably aware that smoking and having sex on their balconies is a no-no.

But don't even think about hanging your laundry out to dry on a Carnival ship.

Photos of two cruise ships with clothes flapping in the wind on balconies have been making their way around social media lately.

In addition, a video from Facebook personality Jayson Judson is currently circulating, claiming that Carnival Ambassador John Heald warned passengers about hanging their clothes on balconies because of "environmental concerns and it simply looks bad".

In fact, if cleaning staff come across garments on balconies, they will remove them.

Instead, Carnival provides self-serve washers and dryers.

Internet commentators have obviously weighed in with their thoughts, plenty of whom agreed with Heald.

"A clothesline looks tacky... an item or two on the back of a chair is alright if attached securely," one said.

"Hang your clothes INSIDE YOUR CABIN," another yelled, going HAM with caps lock.

"Horrible! Honestly I just don't understand people's thinking," said an exasperated social media user.

Ponant's new Discovery



PONANT has announced a new series of Discovery Sessions events around the country in Feb and Mar.

The first edition of the events for the year will see Ponant destination experts, including Commercial Manager & Expedition Leader Ryo Ijichi, discuss the cruise line's itineraries, share first-hand experiences, and offer other exclusive insights.

Joining Ponant for the events will be sister brand Paul Gauguin Cruises, ahead of the multi-million dollar refit of its flagship in the coming months.

The sessions will be held in Canberra (Hotel Realm, 24 Feb); Melbourne (Leonda by the Yarra, 26 Feb); Sydney (Four Seasons Hotel Sydney, 03 Mar); Brisbane (Waters Edge Weddings & Events at Portside, 10 Mar); Noosa (Peppers Noosa Resort & Villas, 11 Mar); and Newcastle (Merewether Surfhouse, 26 Mar).

Those in attendance will hear about Ponant's Antarctic explorations, the Northern Lights,

the Arctic, Japan's ancestral sea routes, European sailings, and Australia's Kimberley coast, as well as Paul Gauguin's French Polynesia cruises.

CLICK HERE to register. *MS*

Seabourn Alaska '25

SEABOURN Cruise Line is gearing up for a bumper 2025 Alaska season, as *Seabourn Quest* makes her maiden arrival to the destination.

From May to Sep 2025, the ultra-luxury ship will sail on 18 seven-day itineraries between Vancouver, British Columbia and Juneau, Alaska.

Each sailing will include a scenic cruise of glaciers like Tracy Arm, Endicott Arm or Glacier Bay National Park, with the northbound and southbound voyages able to be combined to create a longer 14-day round trip.

Guests can also enjoy Ventures by Seabourn, a collection of optional excursions including hiking, kayaking and Zodiac cruises.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



STEVE LABROSKI

CEO
itravel

SESSION

Helpful advice for hungry advisors

LIVE FROM 10 MARCH

REGISTER FREE



EDITORIAL

Editor - Myles Stedman
Deputy Editor - Matt Lennox
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 - Laura Aghajanian
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au

HEAD OF OPERATIONS & CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

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



YOUR CLIENTS' FRONT ROW SEAT TO THE POLES

Up to \$6,599 savings per person on Polar Luxury Expeditions[^]



SAVE UP TO \$3,199pp*

EXPEDITION TO NEW ZEALAND'S SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS

Dunedin to Dunedin
29 December 2025

14 nights on board *Le Soléal*



New Year's Cruise

from ~~\$19,899~~ \$17,999 per person
in a Deluxe Stateroom with balcony*



SAVE UP TO \$4,699pp*

THE GREAT AUSTRAL LOOP

Ushuaia to Ushuaia
11 November & 21 December 2025

18 nights on board *L'Austral* or *Le Boréal*



Includes 1 night in Buenos Aires, return flight Buenos Aires/Ushuaia and tour in Ushuaia†

from ~~\$28,699~~ \$26,299 per person
in a Deluxe Stateroom with balcony*



SAVE UP TO \$6,599pp*

EXPEDITION TO THE THULE REGION

Kangerlussuaq to Kangerlussuaq
2 August 2025

16 nights on board *Le Boréal*



Includes return flight Paris/Kangerlussuaq & transfers†

from ~~\$34,299~~ \$31,299 per person
in a Deluxe Stateroom with balcony*

1300 737 178 | au.ponant.com | reservations.aus@ponant.com

*All advertised price is in Australian dollars (AUD), per person and subject to change at any time without notice. Special offer is a 10% discount per person valid on a selection of polar expeditions, on new bookings made between 3 January and 14 February 2025 included. Offer is not retroactive, is subject to availability and may be removed at any time. Offer is combinable with PONANT Yacht Club discounts, Join The Club offer, the PONANT Bonus Offer and standard permanent back-to-back offer (COMBO10). Offer not combinable with Flight Credit offers, Free Single Supplement, Shipboard credit or any other offer. To take advantage of this offer, please quote code HOLIDAYS when speaking to a Ponant consultant or your preferred travel agent. Expedition to New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands: advertised discounted fare is based on a 10% discount calculated on a Deluxe Stateroom cabin double occupancy on SO291225 departure; advertised maximum saving based on Prestige Suite Deck 5 category on SO291225 departure. The Great Austral Loop: advertised discounted fare is based on a 10% discount calculated on a Deluxe Stateroom cabin double occupancy on LY111125 departure; advertised maximum saving based on Prestige Suite Deck 5 category on BO211225 departure. Expedition to the Thule Region: advertised discounted fare is based on a 10% discount calculated on a Deluxe Stateroom cabin double occupancy on BO020825 departure; advertised maximum saving based on Prestige Suite Deck 5 category on BO020825 departure. †Advertised saving is calculated on 10% savings on Prestige Suite Deck 5 category onboard *Le Boréal*, based on double occupancy on Expedition to the Thule Region departure on 2 July 2025. †Included flights, accommodation and transfers are operated by PONANT's preferred airline and local suppliers and subject to special terms and conditions; included flights are operated in economy class, business class available under certain conditions. All pricing and discounts correct as of 10 December 2024, and may change at anytime. Other terms and conditions may apply. Visit au.ponant.com for more information. Photograph: © Studio PONANT - Julien Fabro.