

### Cruise Weekly today

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

## Middleton's new global Ignite role

**MICHAEL** Middleton has been named Global Head of Cruise at Ignite Travel Group, a newly created role.

Middleton will now oversee both Australia and England in his new role, following Ignite's acquisition of Cruise Club UK last year (**CW** 14 Nov).

He has led the company's cruise division since 2018, driving rapid growth for its flagship brand My Cruises.

"I'm proud to lead a business that is constantly challenging the status quo and finding bold, new ways to connect more people to the joy of cruising," Middleton said.

## ACA to rock out with int'l speakers

**MORE** than 10 new speakers have joined the line-up for this year's Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Conference, which returns to Fremantle 20 years after the city last hosted.

Newly confirmed speakers for the conference include Princess Cruises Vice President Matthew Rutherford, who was named to succeed Stuart Allison in the role earlier this year (**CW** 06 Mar).

CLIA MD Joel Katz and Mystic Cruises Director Itinerary Planning, Port Operations & Land Programs Michael Braathen will also be on deck.

Other new faces in town this year will include Silversea Senior Vice President & Managing Director Adam Radwanski and Ponant Chief Executive Officer Deb Corbett.

The honour roll of cruise glitterati, along with other conference attendees, will also



hear from Stuart MacLeod (**pictured**), guitarist and founding member of rock band Eskimo Joe, and a native of Fremantle.

MacLeod will share stories from his life and career, including from the Fremantle Foundation philanthropic association, of which he is Chief Executive.

Also on the bill this year will be Carnival Corporation Country Manager Peter Little; Royal Caribbean Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith; Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) Vice

President & Managing Director Ben Angell; Celebrity Cruises Vice President & Managing Director Tim Jones; and New Zealand Cruise Association Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Lloyd.

Emceeding the event will be Alana McLean, a familiar voice from the Seven Network and local radio station Mix 94.5.

Joining the conference from around the travel industry will be Tourism Australia Executive General Manager Industry Sally Cope and Select Fresh Provedores Group GM Steven Biviano.

The group of new speakers will join the previously announced Robert de Bruin (Holland America Line); Debbie Holbrook (Princess); and Christine Manjencic (NCL).

More than 150 delegates are expected for the conference, which runs from 03-05 Sep, and is themed 'Anchoring Success Across Every Region'. *MS*

**OCEANIA**  
CRUISES®  
YOUR WORLD. YOUR WAY.®

### EXCEPTIONAL SAVINGS

up to **55% OFF**

FREE Beverage Package  
+ US\$250 Shipboard Credit  
on select sailings & categories

### YOUR WORLD INCLUDED™

Gourmet Speciality Dining  
Shipboard Gratuities  
Unlimited Starlink® WiFi  
And so much more

**VIEW VOYAGES**



### Enclaves of Indochina SEOUL TO SHANGHAI

18 Days | 21 February 2026 | Oceania Sirena

FARES PER GUEST FROM:	WAS	NOW
Deluxe Ocean View	AUS\$11,310	AUS\$7,352

\*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**

Terms and Conditions: \*Offers, fares and itineraries are subject to change or withdrawal without prior notice. Exceptional Savings Offer expires on 1 August 2025. Savings of up to 55% off, Beverage Package and Shipboard Credit in the amount of US\$250 are available on select categories on select sailings, subject to change and capacity controlled. Airfares are additional. Additional Terms and Conditions may apply. Oceania Cruises reserves the right to correct errors or omissions and to change any and all fares, fees, offers and surcharges at any time. Complete Terms and Conditions may be found at [www.OceaniaCruises.com/legal](http://www.OceaniaCruises.com/legal). Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. NCL Australia Pty Ltd ABN 8060 7578 781.

Have your own brand but need  
**support** for your business?

See how we can be your best partner in travel.



 **TravelManagers**  
As individual as you are  
[join.travelmanagers.com.au](http://join.travelmanagers.com.au)

## CLIA's Cruise Month to return in Oct

**CRUISE** Lines International Association's (CLIA) Cruise Month is returning this Oct under the banner #LoveCruise.

This year's campaign will bring a fresh cycle of social media activity, digital advertising, education opportunities, and other promotional initiatives designed to create excitement around cruising, and direct passengers to their local CLIA travel consultant.

Activities will again follow four weekly themes, covering ocean cruising (05-11 Oct), river cruising (12-18 Oct), expedition cruising (19-25 Oct) and luxury cruising (26 Oct-01 Nov).

CLIA has released the first stage of a Cruise Month Toolkit in preparation (**CLICK HERE**), to help agents plan their own campaigns.

The kit contains digital assets including logos, videos, digital banners, posters, customisable



flyers, and other resources.

Further resources will be added soon, including a new series of social media tiles and a how-to video explaining ways for CLIA members to get involved and mount their own initiatives.

Other activities planned for Cruise Month include a new webinar series presented by CLIA cruise lines, each providing news, product updates, sales tips, and promotions during the period.

"Cruise Month is about creating

excitement around cruising and celebrating the upcoming cruise season, so we'll be rolling out a succession of initiatives designed to inspire travellers and direct them towards CLIA travel agents," the Association's Managing Director Joel Katz said.

"We're encouraging all our members to get involved, so now is the time for travel agents to begin planning their own Cruise Month promotions, events and social media campaigns, so they can take advantage of the focus on cruising."

More details will be announced soon, CLIA said.

The Association is currently celebrating its nomination for Most Outstanding Travel Industry Training Program (**CW** 17 Jul) for the upcoming National Travel Industry Awards, an accolade it will be defending after last year's success in the category. *MS*

## Uniworld training

**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises has introduced its latest series of online agent training events, called 'Pintxos with Uniworld'.

The new series of webinars is pitched as "bite-sized training for travel agents", and will be short sessions, covering a single topic over 20 minutes.

Uniworld will share the latest luxury travel trends and provide valuable tips to sell the cruise line's voyages, including in trending destinations like Egypt and India.

Four events are currently scheduled, starting from next Wed, covering 'Cruise & Rail with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains'; 'Groups & Charters'; '2027 Europe & Beyond'; 'Splendours of Egypt & the Nile'; and 'India's Golden Triangle & the Sacred Ganges' - **CLICK HERE** for more info.



**CYBER SALE**

UP TO **50% OFF**  
**PRE-CRUISE PURCHASES\***



BEVERAGE  
PACKAGES



SPECIALTY  
DINING



INTERNET  
PACKAGES

**FIND OUT MORE**



\*T&C's Apply





## Is this the cure for mass tourism?

**HURTIGRUTEN** has introduced its 'Open Village Experiences' along Norway's coastline, pitched as "the antidote to overtourism".

The cruise line has collaborated closely with locals in three different remote coastal villages to create exclusive, community-led experiences that aim to immerse guests in everyday life.

Guests will be warmly welcomed with a festive village parade in Bessaker, where they will have access to historic buildings where hosts will share personal stories and traditions, alongside live music, woodcarving, and homemade treats like fresh cake, coffee, and a traditional meat soup.

Visitors to Saebo (**pictured**) can attend a church concert featuring local musicians, explore the Avalanche Centre, and engage with guides about the area's natural and cultural history.



Meanwhile, in Traena - one of Norway's oldest fishing communities - guests can tour the Traena Local Museum, Petter Dass Chapel, and more.

The Open Village Experiences will be available exclusively on Hurtigruten's Signature Line voyages between May and Sep.

The cruise line will contribute NOK250 (A\$38) per guest to each community they visit, at no cost to passengers.

Head of Product Development Odd Tore Skildheim said Hurtigruten's aim is for guests to feel truly welcomed and for locals to feel genuinely supported by the cruise line's visits.

"As some of Europe's best-known destinations struggle with the pressures of overtourism, our approach is deliberately different: slower, more meaningful travel rooted in genuine connection," Skildheim said. *MS*

## Trafalgar river deal

**TRAFALGAR** has launched a limited-time deal on its inaugural river cruises next year (**CW** 04 Jun) - its first-ever offer on the itineraries.

Travel advisors will earn \$800 per couple, and clients can save \$2,300, from now until 30 Sep.

Advisors must quote 'TR26IOS' to apply the savings at the time of booking.

"We're incredibly proud of the strong response to Trafalgar's first-ever river cruises, which launched this May," TTC Tour Brands Senior VP Sales Andrew Young said.

"This offer keeps that momentum going while reinforcing our commitment to putting agents first."

"Agents are already showing great enthusiasm, and this offer gives them even more reason to book."



**UNIWORLD**  
BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISES

## PINTXOS WITH UNIWORLD *Bite-sized Training*

We've designed these short, sharp training webinars just for you - in delicious, digestible bursts. We'll cover our top selling itineraries, ships and insider knowledge that will give you the confidence to put Uniworld in front of your clients.

Golden Eagle Luxury Trains	Wed, 30 July 2025	1:30pm AEST
Groups and Charters	Thu, 7 August 2025	11:30am AEST
2027 Europe and Beyond	Thu, 4 September 2025	11:30am AEST
Egypt	Wed, 10 September 2025	11:30am AEST
India	Thu, 11 September 2025	11:30am AEST

Stay tuned for more sessions to come.  
We look forward to seeing you!

**REGISTER HERE**



**CARNIVAL'S** new Celebration Key private destination has experienced minor teething issues as guests were welcomed for the first time this week - understandable for a new facility.

However, road traffic probably wasn't one of the problems considered.

The first few days at the new destination has seen a few minor golf cart skirmishes, near misses, and scooter accidents as people got a bit excited about experiencing all the fun Celebration Key has to offer.

This has prompted Brand Ambassador John Heald to ask his loyal army of social media followers to take care when riding the scooters and golf carts around the island.

"We did have a scooter incident today when somebody was driving very quickly and banged into another guest.

"So I have been asked by 'the beards' (Heald's nickname for Carnival management) to please remind all of our scooter riders to please drive slowly when you are at this wonderful resort."

True to form, Heald has also fielded his share of nonsensical questions on the new island.

Perhaps the best would be whether the lagoon-style swimming pool was heated - to which the answer is yes - by the sun.

## Ponant doubles Spirit-class



**A SECOND** catamaran has been added to Ponant's Spirit-class fleet, as the French line further develops its micro-ship division.

Known as *La Desirade*, the new vessel is 23m long, and caters to nine travellers and four staff, including the captain, a private chef, first mate, and hostess.

The all-inclusive experience will see *La Desirade* sail seven- and 14-night itineraries initially, from Corsica to Sardinia through to Oct, before the ship repositions to the Caribbean, where she will operate in the winter.

Like her fleetmate *Spirit of Ponant*, which debuted in Apr last year (**CW** 08 Apr 2024), the new ship will offer suggested but fully customisable itineraries, within weather and safety limitations.

Guests can craft both the sailing pace and ports of call, along with daily menu options, with the chef drawing on fresh local ingredients and flavours showcasing the regions the ship visits.

Daily shore excursions are also tailored to guests' wishes.

With four staterooms, including

an Owner's Suite complete with a suspended floating terrace, *La Desirade* features a spacious indoor communal lounge, two outdoor lounges, an open-plan kitchen, and trampolines.

Guests can participate in a range of water sports including standup paddleboarding, snorkelling, water skiing, underwater scootering, and wing foiling from an inflatable dinghy. **ML**

### Two at Celebration

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line is putting its new Celebration Key private island (**CW** 21 Jul) through its paces, with two ships docking yesterday for the line's first 'Double Fun' day.

*Carnival Glory* and *Carnival Conquest* delivered nearly 7,000 guests to the new 26-hectare destination on Grand Bahama for the day.

Later this week, Carnival's first Excel ship *Mardi Gras* will become the fleet's largest vessel to dock at Celebration Key, alongside *Carnival Pride*.



### Cruise momentum builds in Victoria

**THIS** week I've had the pleasure of joining cruise line and inbound partners in Victoria for a series of cruise industry workshops and family activities across Phillip Island, Geelong, and Melbourne.

It's been a fantastic opportunity to engage with local operators and regional tourism bodies who are eager to grow their involvement in the cruise sector.

Victoria's cruise industry continues to expand, generating \$637 million in total economic output last season.

Melbourne remains a key turnaround port, particularly for new market entrants, while Geelong, Phillip Island, and Portland are growing.

Following the recent announcement by Minister for Tourism Steve Dimopoulos that Victoria is developing a Cruise Shipping Strategy, I've welcomed the opportunity to engage in the consultation process and contribute to shaping a plan that supports sustainable growth across the state.

This week's workshops have provided a platform to discuss global trends including new ship builds and evolving expectations, and explore opportunities for alignment between local product and cruise line needs.

A big thank you to Visit Victoria and our regional hosts for such a warm welcome.

The quality of product, passion and professionalism on display this week confirms that Victoria is well positioned for future growth.